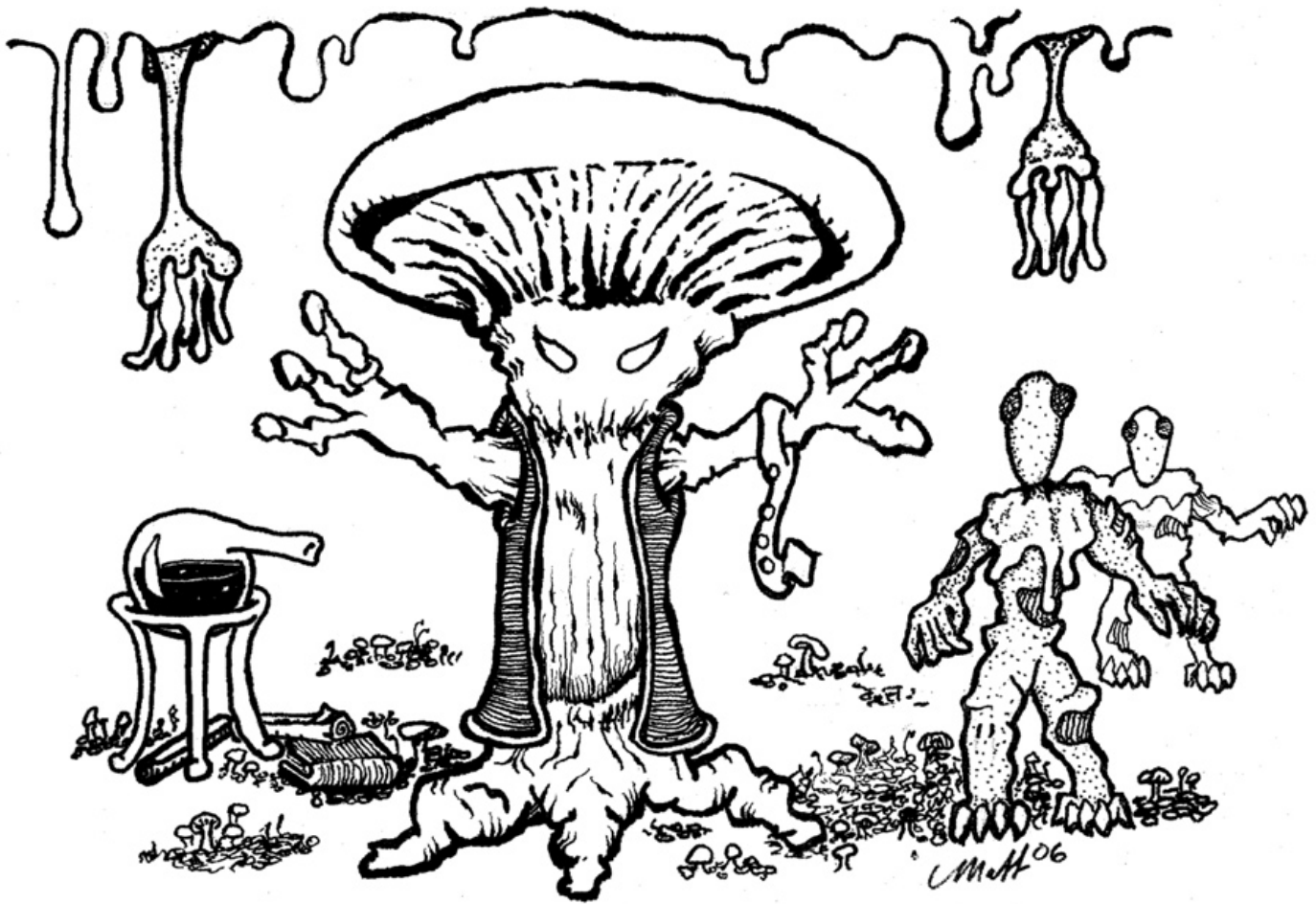


# ADVANCED ADVENTURES MODULE #1

## The Pod-Caverns of the Sinister Shroom

by Matthew Finch

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 2-4



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**ADVANCED ADVENTURES** are designed for the OSRIC roleplaying system. You can download the free player's manual from: <http://www.knights-n-knaves.com/osric>.

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## The Pod-Caverns of the Sinister Shroom

**Background:** Strange doings are underfoot in the wild hills bordering the realm of decent and civilized folks. Villagers and cattle have gone missing; woodcutters have disappeared; misshapen beings have been seen shuffling through the forests. Some brave villagers have tracked a group of stolen oxen as far as the rocky banks of a small river in the hills. The trail disappeared down into a fissure in the limestone rock, where a fast-running stream plunges down to the dark caverns below. The villagers do not have much money, but they do have three **potions of healing**, bestowed upon them a year ago by a traveling cleric. They will happily give these to any adventurers willing to rid them of the threat to their village. One potion will be given at the outset, and the other two upon the party's successful return.

### START (from the surface)

You are standing near a cold mountain brook, about five feet across and fast-running, which tumbles from the rocks above and thence down into a cave-like crevice in the earth. The crevice is almost ten feet wide, with a ceiling of eight feet. The sound of the water echoes from the cave mouth.

### START (from the river)

If the party is starting the adventure from the Shadowvein River on the third level, they would simply begin in area 47, with whatever description the game master chooses to provide.

### Notes for the Game Master

This two-directional adventure can be played either upward or downward through the Pod-Caverns. The traditional approach to the dungeon is, of course, to explore downward from the surface. The dungeon follows the course of a small tributary river as it wends its way deeper and deeper through a series of limestone caverns to a large subterranean river below. These caverns house the laboratory and lair of the Shroom, a sorcerous creature that resembles a tall, ambulatory toadstool. The Shroom is preparing to attack the villages near his lair, and has been working to build an army of pod-men (see "New Monsters") for this purpose. His minions have been stealing oxen and occasionally kidnapping villagers to provide nutrients for his pods; the Shroom uses red meat to supplement fish caught in the streams and waterways running through his lair.

The adventure is also designed to be run in reverse. As previously noted, there is a large underground river, the Shadowvein, flowing through the dungeon's deepest level; if the party is already traveling on such a river, this adventure may be used by the GM to provide the players an interesting avenue back to the surface. If the party is adventuring upwards from the river, of course, the Shroom's plans and motivations are irrelevant; his lair is simply a treasure-laden obstacle blocking the party's pathway to the surface. However, if the party is exploring downward, it is likely that their mission is to find and destroy the Shroom.



## KEY TO THE FIRST LEVEL

### Wandering Monsters:

A check for wandering monsters should be made once every three turns. The chance of encountering a wandering monster is fairly small (1 in 10 chance).

1. 1d4 pod men patrolling.
2. 1d6 giant rats scavenging.
3. 1d3 huge spiders hunting for rats.
4. 1 giant centipede hunting for rats.

### Rooms and Areas

1. **ENTRY TUNNEL:** The tunnel down into the caverns winds along a narrow and uneven path, following the river's natural course. Stalactites hang low from the ceiling, and the rock floor is treacherously slippery from the splashing water. The subterranean air has a placid, piercing chill, all too familiar to veteran adventurers. Suddenly, the river-carven tunnel slopes abruptly downward, and just ahead there is the unmistakable sound of a waterfall dashing down to rocks below (see area 2 for a description of the waterfall).
2. **ENTRY CAVERN:** The stream running down the tunnel plunges thirty feet down into a large cavern below. The descent to the cave floor may present a challenge, for the rocks at the edge of the waterfall are extremely slippery. Anyone venturing to the very edge has a 2 in 6 chance of falling to the rocky pool below. The cavern wall directly to the south of the waterfall is crusted with fungus growth that has a durability and tensile strength almost as great as the stone from which it grows, and can be used to climb up or down as easily as by a ladder – provided that one does not slip on the rocks getting to it. It is via this fungus ladder, created by the Shroom's magic, that the pod-men venture in and out of the cavern. *Note:* if the party retreats from the caverns and then returns, the Shroom will have removed the fungus ladder.

About five feet below the waterfall, a bamboo-like wooden pipe is fed by the flow of water, channeling it around the cavern wall at a height of 25 feet, to irrigate the snagwort plants hanging by the chamber's southern exit (see below). Only a small amount of water from the waterfall is actually channeled into the pipe; the waterfall continues unchecked over the pipe, down to the cavern floor. The pipe is not stable enough to support a person's weight, and this is obvious at a glance.

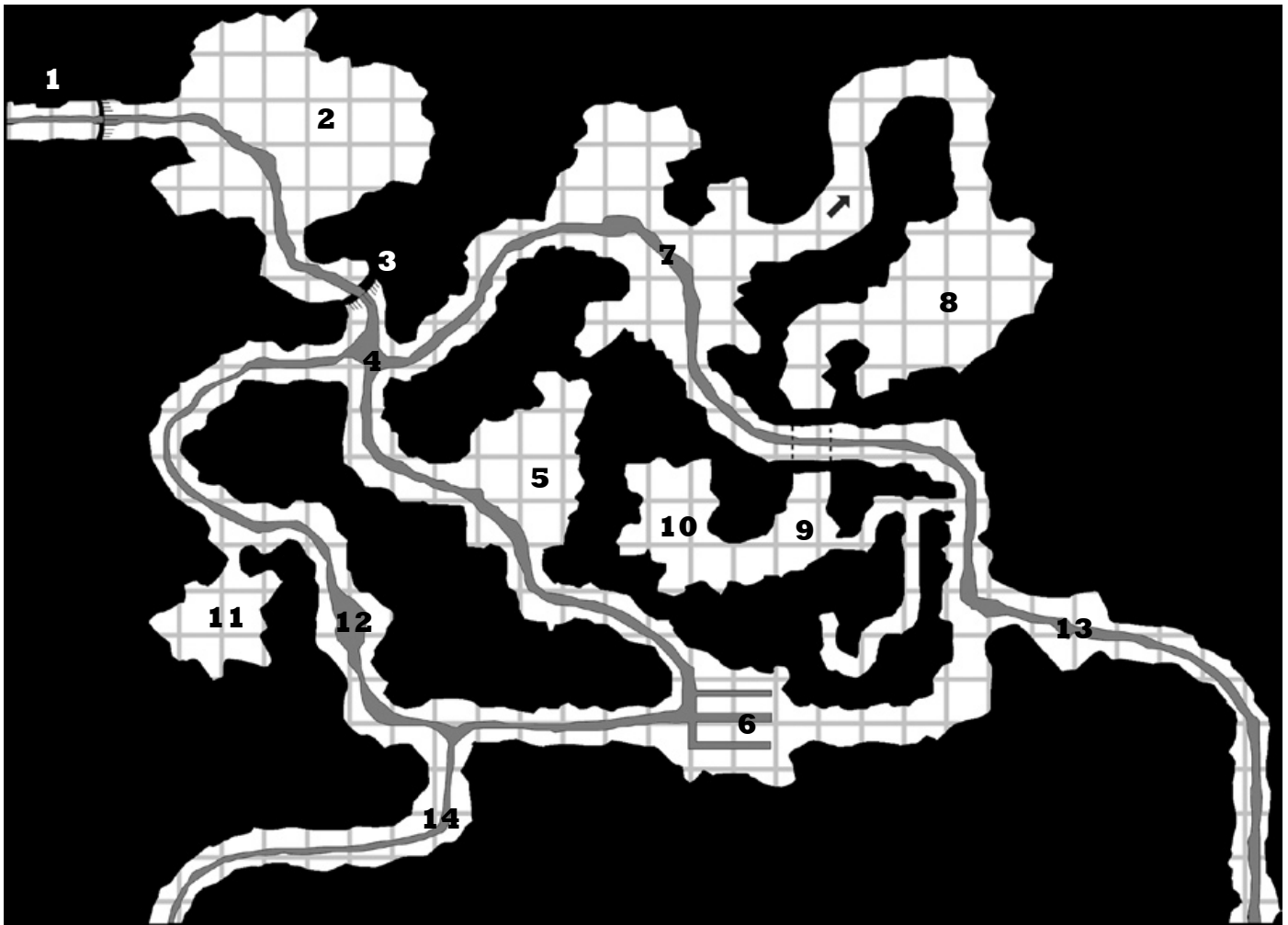
At the bottom of the waterfall a vast chamber extends into the darkness, echoing with the sound of the waterfall plunging down to the streambed. Drops of water fall occasionally from the stalactites above, glittering in whatever light the party carries.

The southern exit from the cavern is flanked on either side by an extraordinarily ugly plant, each hanging from the cave ceiling as if growing directly from the stone. These are hanging snagwort plants (see "New Monsters"). If anyone comes within ten feet of the snagworts, they will lash out and attack.

**SNAGWORTS (2):** SZ M, MV 5 ft., AC 6, HD 3, Hps 15, 12. Att 1 (1d6 automatic per round after first round), AL N.

A small casket of wood, about six inches across, has been hidden in the bottom of the pool where it is not visible to casual inspection. The little casket has an

## The First Level of the Pod-Caverns of the Sinister Shroom



elaborate wooden latch, which is not trapped. Inside the box there is a wooden key that may be used to divert the waterfall at location 3 for a period of 6 turns.

3. **WATERFALL:** The tunnel drops precipitously down to a lower elevation, falling about thirty feet through a very narrow channel. There is no gap on either side of the water, and only about two feet of clearance in the channel that is not filled with rushing, gurgling water. On one side of the tunnel there is a round wooden indentation, like a door, and on the other side there is a small keyhole (the key from the pool in location 2 fits the keyhole). If the key is used, the round door will open, diverting the waterfall through a side channel. The door re-closes itself automatically after 1 hour, forcing the waterfall back into its normal channel.

Concealed by the waterfall's flow, there is a wooden-runged ladder, apparently formed by natural growth of roots, leading down the cliff face where the waterfall normally flows. It is easy to descend this ladder with no risk (provided the waterfall has been diverted, of course).

If the party does not divert the waterfall, it may pose a difficult obstacle. There is not enough clearance to climb down without being pushed by the force of the falling water, and the best a climber can hope for is to merely get drenched in almost-freezing water. At worst, the water can pull the climber off a rope or handholds, plunging him down the full length of the thirty-foot drop.

Any character attempting to descend by means of a rope or other such handhold must roll lower than his strength on 3d6 or be swept away — this check must be made for each round of the descent (which will ordinarily take 3 rounds, one for each ten feet). A thief character attempting to climb down without the benefit of a rope or other handhold must roll below his strength on 5d6, or be swept downward.

There is another small keyhole at the bottom of the waterfall, and the same key may be used to divert the waterfall in and out of its normal channel from the bottom. Leaving the caverns by this route is almost impossible if the waterfall cannot be shifted to the side channel. There is only the one wooden key, located in area 2, but the index finger of any pod man grown by the Shroom will act as a key to the lock.

4. **IRRIGATION DIVIDER:** There is a four-way intersection here. In the middle of the intersection a large growth of wood, apparently of natural origin (though it is actually shaped by the Shroom's magic) divides the flow of the river into three parts, diverting it so that a channel of water runs down the center of the other tunnels, all of which slope gradually downward from this point.
5. **GOO CHAMBER:** The ceiling of this cavern chamber is ragged with the spiky points of innumerable stalactites, and the floor is uneven and slippery. In the middle of the room, away from the river's path, a pool in the cave floor glows with an eerie bluish light.

The pool is filled with a phosphorescent goo from a slow drip in the cave ceiling. The goo has no unusual qualities other than phosphorescence, but the Shroom has trained the mad trees in location 6 not to attack anyone or anything that has been smeared even slightly with the strange substance.

6. **MAD TREE ROOM:** This chamber is lit by glowing moss that hangs from the ceiling in long, frilled strands. Nine trees are growing here, their roots constrained in large earthenware pots. Each tree stands about nine feet tall, and the pots are arranged in three neat rows of three. The floor is grooved, causing channels of water to flow beneath each tree pot, obviously an irrigation system. A low, angry muttering sound fills the room, but the adventurers will be unable to tell if it is the trees, the moss, or an echo of some other sound originating in the corridors beyond.

These trees are the warped and insane offspring of the treant held captive in location 19. They cannot speak, and have only a chaotic and rudimentary intelligence, suffused with hatred for all warm-blooded creatures. The trees spend most of their time in a state of quiescence, and unless the adventurers have made an absolutely staggering quantity of noise in making their approach, the trees will be asleep when the party reaches this cavern. At the moment anyone enters the chamber, the trees will quietly begin to awaken, a process not apparent to anyone but a druid. Each tree will become fully awake within 1d4+2 rounds, and step from its pot to attack.

**MAD TREES (9):** SZ M; MV 10 ft.; AC 6; HD 3, HPS 20, 20, 18, 17, 17, 16, 16, 10, 9; ATT 2 (1d8); AL N.

7. **UPPER POD CHAMBER:** Several large objects hang from the fifteen-foot high ceiling of this chamber. For a moment they will be mistaken for human bodies, but it will soon become clear that they are some sort of pod-like plant growth hanging by short, thick stems from the ceiling. There are 20 of these man-sized pods, each measuring about six feet from top to bottom and about four feet in circumference. All but two of them seem to have split open from top to bottom along a seam, revealing a slime-coated interior. The entire room smells unpleasantly of rotting fish.

These are the Shroom's pods, used to grow his mindless servants, the pod-men. Two of the pods are in use. One of these has only recently been seeded, and contains a disgusting mass of unformed vegetable tissue, slime, and rotting fish (a nutrient formula). The other contains a fully-grown pod-man. If any of the other pods in the room are disturbed in any way, the pod man will split open its pod and move to attack.

**POD MAN (1):** SZ M, MV 60 ft. AC 9, HD 3+1, HPS 13; ATK: 2 (1d6/1d6), Special: grab and hold with first hit, AL N.

There is a secret compartment in the southern wall of this chamber, used by the Shroom as a cache of emergency items in case of need. The concealing panel of the compartment is held in place by a counterweight system behind the rock face, anchored by one of the pods. If the pod is cut down, the panel will spring open. Without cutting down the pod, it will be extremely difficult (if not impossible) to force open the panel, even if the adventurers have detected its presence by normal means. The secret compartment contains a **potion of healing** and a **potion of invisibility**.

8. **SIDE CHAMBER:** The floor of this chamber is covered thickly with small, bulb-headed mushrooms. If any of these are crushed (by walking through them, for example), they will ooze a sticky paste of spores that instantly begins to glow with a cheerful yellow color. The spores are harmless, but any person walking through the mushrooms will end up with a pair of softly-glowing boots. The spore-stain has one odd property; it is unaffected by *invisibility* spells and will not disappear with the rest of a character's equipment. The glow wears off after 24 hours.

A carved stone head, about the size of a clenched fist, floats in midair in the center of the room. This strange magical object drifts through the air, following any light source it detects, at a distance of about ten feet. Unless the adventurers experiment with it, it will likely appear that the head is following a person. The head does nothing and has no other magical properties: it simply follows light. If the head eventually follows the adventurers out of the dungeon, it will shoot upward toward the sun and never be seen again.

9. **STONE MOUTH:** A huge stone face is carved into the wall where the tunnel widens out. The carving's mouth is a hole that opens to a narrow tunnel beyond. It is not difficult to climb through the mouth, for the bottom lip is only three feet up the wall. On the other side, the passageway is a mere four feet wide, just enough for the adventurers to file through one at a time.

10. **LODESTONE MOSS CHAMBER:** The walls of this chamber are lightly crusted with small patches of a strange blue-green lichen. If the party enters, they will likely feel the effects of the lichen, which is a rare plant known as lodestone moss. The moss attracts metal, and anyone carrying a sword or other metal object will feel a slight tug from the "magnetic" field. The moss does not grow in large enough quantities (in this room) to cause any difficulties: it will merely be a curiosity. The magnetic properties persist for only 24 hours if the moss is torn from the walls.

11. **SHAMBLING MOUND LAIR:** Ropy pillars of fungus grow from ceiling to floor here, ranging from one to four feet in diameter. A young shambling mound grown by the Shroom makes its lair in the back of the chamber, hidden from sight by the many fungus pillars. In addition to guarding the passage, the shambling mound guards a treasure casket, trapped with a poison dart trap (3 darts, 1d3 damage, poison +3 saving throw, attacks as 2HD monster). The casket contains 1,200 gp, 10 pps, 1 **potion of healing**, and a **fungus staff**. The staff is made of a spongy fungus material that can be looped or folded (it is coiled in the casket). Whenever combat threatens (e.g., a surprise roll is called for) the staff snaps straight for battle and becomes a **+1 quarterstaff** in all respects. This ability acts as a warning, granting anyone with the staff in hand to be surprised only on a roll of 1. If it is stored in a backpack or other container, it may very well damage the container when it straightens.

**YOUNG SHAMBLING MOUND:** SZ M, AC 1, HD 6, HPS 27, ATT: 2 (2d6/2d6), suffocates enemies in 2d4+4 rounds.

12. **FISH MINCER:** At this point the river's flow turns a small wooden waterwheel. The wheel is attached by a couple of direction-changing gears to a large wooden box at the river's edge. At the top of the box, there is a funnel, and at the bottom there is a spout positioned to allow a container to be placed underneath. A clicking and creaking noise comes from inside the box. This

machine is a fish mincer, used to render river trout into a nutrient paste for the cultivation of pod men. The sound in the box is the mincing apparatus, a moving bristle of extremely sharp blades, like a garbage disposal. An entire halfling thief will not fit into the funnel, but a person's hand could be badly damaged.

13. **GIANT LEECH WATERFALL:** The tunnel drops suddenly down to a deep pool fifty feet below, the river pouring over the edge in a fast-moving torrent. A few jagged rocks jut out from the stream just before the water tips over the edge. The pool below contains 5 giant leeches of 1 hit dice, and 2 giant leeches of 2 hit dice.

**GIANT LEECHES (5):** SZ S, MV 30 ft., AC 9, HD 1, HPS 8,6,5,4,2; ATT 1 (1-4, drain blood for 1 hp/round) Special: only 1% chance of detection per round. 50% chance to cause disease.

**BIG GIANT LEECHES (2):** SZ S, MV 30 ft., AC 9, HD 2, HPS 12, 7; ATT 1 (1-4, drain blood for 2 hp/round) Special: only 2% chance of detection per round. 50% chance to cause disease.

Beyond the leech pool, the tunnel begins to slope down more and more toward area 20 in Level Two. The tunnel is choked with stalagmites and stalactites, and in places becomes so narrow that the adventurers will need to move in single file.

14. **STEEP TUNNEL DOWN TO LEVEL TWO:** This tunnel continues downward at a fairly steep slope to area 15 on Level Two. Stalagmites rise from the tunnel's uneven floor, and the party will often need to duck beneath stalactite growths. In some places it is necessary to squeeze past areas where the stalagmites and stalactites have grown together into pillars.

## KEY TO THE SECOND LEVEL

### Wandering Monsters:

A group of 6 pod men constantly patrols this level, and there is a 1 in 6 chance of encountering the patrol for every 3 turns spent exploring. If the patrol is wiped out by the party it will not be replaced until the Shroom figures out that his patrol is dead, which could take as long as a day.

If the patrol is destroyed, other wandering monsters will begin to emerge from the crevices and hidden crannies of the limestone caverns. A check for wandering monsters should be made once every three turns. The chance of encountering a wandering monster is 1 in 10.

1. 1 Ochre jelly (3 HD)
2. 1d6 Stirges
3. 1d4 huge spiders
4. 1d4 giant centipedes

15. **CONNECTION TO LEVEL ONE:** This tunnel connects upward to area 14 on the first level. See area 14 for a description of the tunnel itself.

16. **PRISON AND PERSON-MINCER:** The tunnel opens up into a large cavern with strange contents. Four cages of a strange, fleshy substance seem to grown from the stone floor along the southern wall, and roughly in the center of the room stands a large wooden box with a funnel on top and a spout at the bottom. The box is connected to a small water wheel that turns with the river's flow.

**CAGES:** the cages are made of a weirdly elastic fungus-substance, virtually impossible to break or cut, which snaps naturally back into shape after being stretched or pulled. The cages are affixed to the floor by a vine that (unlike the cages themselves) can easily be severed with a knife. The cage-fungus is impervious to anything less than a +2 blade or acid, if the command word is not known. The command word ("Fahoorth") is to be found in room 29.

**CAGE A:** This cage imprisons a female human prisoner named Merithina. Merithina is the daughter of a wealthy merchant, and an accomplished trader in her own right. She leads small caravans of her family's merchandise from place to place in search of profit, and on her last journey she was captured by a roving group of pod men. The pod men brought her and five of her guards to the Shroom for mincing or pod-conversion. Merithina knows that all of her bodyguards save for Ulster (cage D) are dead, with one possible exception. A guard named Thuskar was never imprisoned here, and Merithina hopes he is still alive somewhere in the depths of the caverns. Her father will pay a reward of 500gp for Merithina's safe return.

**CAGE B:** This cage is enchanted, making anything within it seem to be a grumpy, uncommunicative dwarf. It actually contains a troll.

**TROLL:** SZ L, MV 120 ft. AC 4, HD 6+6, HPS 25; ATK: 3 (1d4+4/1d4+4/2d6), Special: regenerates 3 hps/round.

**CAGE C:** This cage is empty, its inhabitant having recently been minced for pod-nutrients. Merithina and Ulster (see cage D below) both witnessed the mincing, and are consequently nervous about their own futures.

**CAGE D:** This cage contains the only survivor of Merithina's caravan, a second level fighter named Ulster (FT 2, HPS 13). He is distraught after the experience of seeing his comrades minced one after another, but will happily assist a party of adventurers if they arm and equip him.

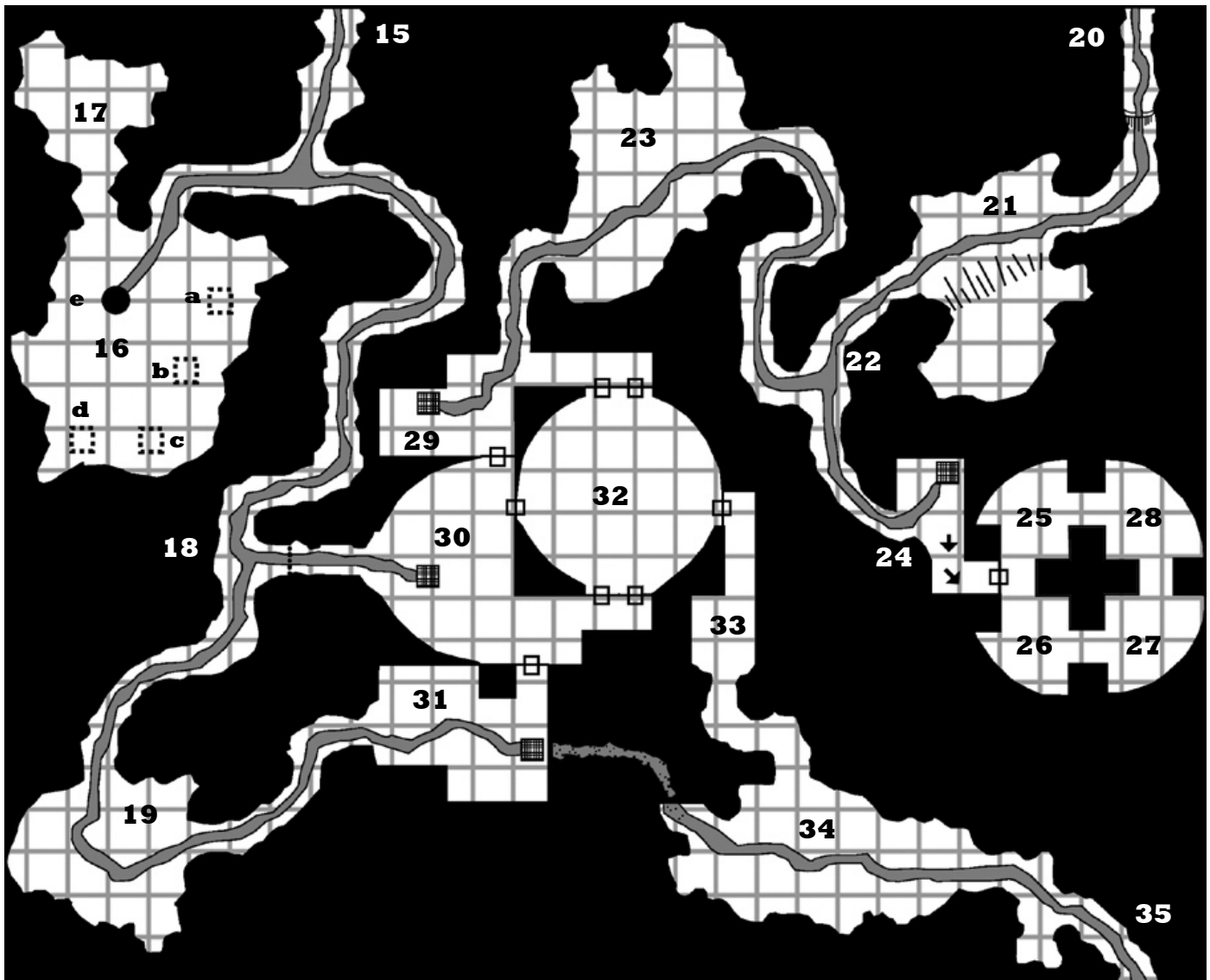
**PERSON-MINCER (E):** The river runs into the chamber and pours away into a deep shaft in the floor next to the person-mincer, turning a small water wheel. The wheel is attached by a small driveshaft to the mincer's box, which creaks ominously from the inside. The funnel at the top of the mechanism is six feet in diameter, and the hole leading into the box is about four feet in diameter. The interior contains a slowly turning apparatus of sharp blades: sticking a hand or a halfling thief down the funnel will have disastrous consequences. A human can also fit into the box, and this is, regrettably, the mincer's primary use.

17. **POD CHAMBER:** This chamber contains 10 pods hanging from the ceiling, two of which contain resting pod men. The other 8 pods are empty, with only a disgusting fishy slime at the bottom. Eight pod men guard and cultivate the pods.

**ACTIVE POD MEN (8):** SZ M, MV 60 ft., AC 9, HD 3+1, HPS 13; ATK: 2 (1d6/1d6), Special: grab and hold with first hit.

**RESTING POD MEN (2):** SZ M, MV 60 ft., AC 9, HD 3+1, HPS 13; ATK: 2 (1d6/1d6), Special: grab and hold with first hit.

## The Second Level of the Pod-Caverns of the Sinister Shroom



18. PORTCULLIS TRAP: The eastward-leading passage from this junction contains a portcullis trap that will fall shortly after any party passes through. At the river junction itself, a net stretches through the fast-flowing water to snare trout for pod nutrient.

19. CAPTURED TREANT: In this chamber there is a medium-sized tree, about twelve feet tall but very broad, mortared into place and secured with chains. This is a treant named Leafloom, a prisoner of the Shroom. The Shroom harvests Leafloom's seeds and insinuates noxious chemicals into them to make them into mad trees (see room 6). Leafloom is almost insane himself, under the circumstances, but will aid the party in any way he can, especially if the party frees him from the mortar and chains. Even before being freed, he will warn the party about the snagworts in the room, but does not know that the moss on the ceiling is vampiric moss.

Leafloom's prison is guarded, and before the party can interact with him they will likely be involved in combat. Two snagwort plants flank each entrance to the chamber, and there is a large growth of vampiric moss on the ceiling.

**HANGING SNAGWORTS (2):** SZ M, MV 5ft, AC 6, HD 3, Hps 20, 15. Att 1 (0 at hit; 1d6 automatic per round thereafter).

**VAMPIRIC MOSS:** SZ L, MV 20ft, AC 4, HD 3, Hps: 15, Att 1 (1d4 automatic after first round).

**LEAFLOAM:** SZ L, MV 120ft, AC 0, HD 7, Hps 30, Att: 2 (2d8/2d8)

20. PIRANHA WATERFALL: This waterfall is not steep at all, but it leads into a pool that covers the entire floor of the passage below. The pool is ten feet deep, and teems with cave piranhas.

**CAVE PIRANHAS (10):** SZ S, MV 120ft (swim), AC 6, HD 1-4 hps, Hps: 4, 4, 4, 3, 3, 3, 2, 2, 1, 1, Att 1 (1d2 bite).

21. GAUNTLET CAVERN: The river flows through this large cavern, wending its way between tall formations of stalagmites. The southern wall is a steep upward slope leading to a higher level within the same cavern. The interior of this higher level cannot be seen from the cave bottom. The upper cavern area contains a nest of 4 stirges and a guard post manned by 5 pod men

Each pod man is equipped with three thin glass bulbs and a sling with which to throw them. The corked bulbs contain fungus spores that explode in a 20ft radius if the bottles are broken. If a bottle should be uncorked, the spores will escape into only a five-foot radius, but if a player specifically states that a character is opening the bulb with great care, it is possible for the character to uncork one without releasing any spores at all. Anyone inhaling the spores must make a saving throw vs. poison at +3 or be affected as follows: the spores grow rapidly in the respiratory system, causing immediate discomfort (no spell casting is possible, all attacks, damage and saving throws are at -1). After 3d12 rounds, if the effects are not stopped, the victim becomes so breathless that all actions are slowed as if under the influence of a **slow** spell. After 3d12 days, the character will die from asphyxiation and the corpse will begin releasing spores into the air as it rots away (1d4 days). The spore effects can, of course, be removed by means of a **cure disease** spell.

**POD MEN (5):** SZ M, MV 60ft, AC 9, HD 3+1, HPS 18, 13, 13, 5, ATK: 2 (1d6/1d6), Special: grab and hold with first hit, AL N.

**STIRGES (4):** SZ S, MV 30ft (fly 180ft), AC 8, HD 1+1, HPS 3,3,3,3, ATK: 1 (1d3), Special: drain blood 1d4 damage after hit until 12 points are drained, AL N. (the stirges do not, of course, molest the bloodless pod-men).

In the top level of the cavern there is a large pile of bones and scraps, remnants of victims carried up from the lower part of the cavern. If the party sifts through the mess, they will find 120 gp, 200 sp, 5 pp, 3 longswords (not magical), 20 arrows (one of which is a **+1 arrow**), three pairs of boots, a cloak, and some **magic thieves' tools** (+5% to open locks).

22. IRRIGATION DIVIDER: A wooden divider splits the river into channels here.

23. LARGE POD HALL: This pod hall was originally used for excess pods, but the Shroom's expanding army has grown to the point where he needs to use all available space. At the moment, the Shroom is growing over a hundred very young pods in this chamber. Although the pods are full sized, most of the unformed pod-men within are no larger than a house cat, and their contents are not remotely formed into a humanoid shape. All the pods contain a foul glop that smells of fish (the shroom uses minced trout in his nutrient formula). Five full-sized pod men are tending the cavern, and they are supervised by one very large pod man the size of an ogre.

**POD MEN (5):** SZ M, MV 60ft, AC 9, HD 3+1, HPS 18, 13, 13, 5, ATK: 2 (1d6/1d6), Special: grab and hold with first hit, AL N.

**LARGE POD MAN:** SZ L, MV 60ft, AC 9, HD 4+1, HPS 20, ATK: 2 (1d6+1/1d6+1), Special: grab and hold with first hit.

24. GRATE ROOM: In this room, the river runs down through a massive grate in the floor, disappearing from sight in a splashing torrent (draining to irrigation pipes over areas 25-28). The southern passageway from this cut-stone chamber descends and turns in a very steep slope.

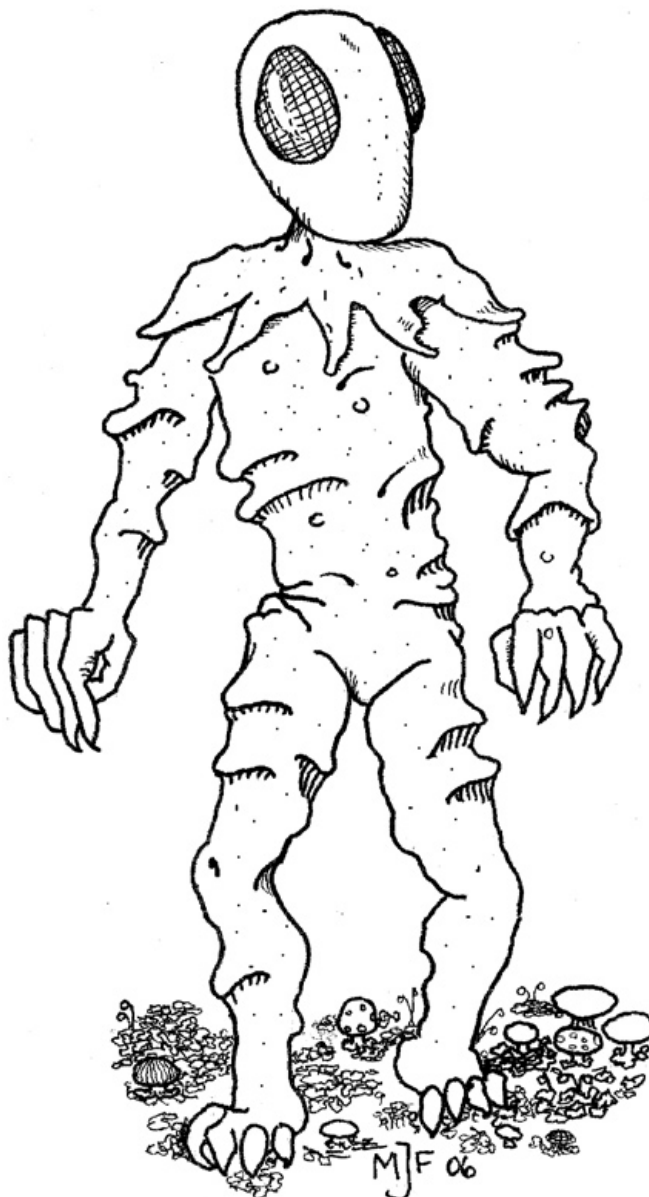
25 - 28. POD CULTIVATION CHAMBERS: Each of these rooms is hung with 15 large pods containing mature pod men kept in a state of hibernation until the Shroom needs

them. The stones of the ceiling are pierced with many holes, and water drips slowly from these to irrigate the pods hanging beneath. If a flesh creature enters one of these rooms, five pods per round will split open in that room (the pod men being able to move and act after one round). Moreover, pod men will begin to emerge in the other chambers, (one per round in each chamber). In area 28, there is a boss pod man, the caretaker of the four-room complex. This massive pod man is as large as an ogre and has four arms. If there is combat in any of the four pod rooms, he will show up fairly soon to investigate what is happening.

**NORMAL POD MEN (15 per room):** SZ M, MV 60ft, AC 9, HD 3+1, HPS 13 each, ATK: 2 (1d6/1d6), Special: grab and hold with first hit.

**LARGE POD MAN:** SZ L, MV 60ft, AC 9, HD 4+1, HPS 20, ATK: 2 (1d6+1/1d6+1), Special: grab and hold with first hit.

29. LIBRARY: The Shroom's library is obviously the workplace of an insane or truly alien mind. The stone walls bulge and warp into melted-wax like shapes, a phantasmagorical nightmare of bulbous growths and abstract traceries. The river winds its way through a cut-stone channel



in the floor and empties through a grate in the floor, crashing noisily against rocks below. The river runs down through a narrow channel to area 34.

A round desk carved in the same bizarre patterns as the walls stands near the floor grate, covered with papers and scrolls. The desk chair is a massive piece of carved wood, obviously not intended for a human. A scroll cabinet stands near the desk, and there is a bookcase with smoked-glass doors standing against the wall.

**THE DESTK:** The documents on the desk are written in a spidery script (the language is goblin and the alphabet used is goblin). Most of them are long and involved mathematical calculations involved in cultivating pod-men; nutrient requirements, growth-cycles, and the like. The adventurers will likely find clues to the meaning of the calculations in the occasional notation such as "nutrients," but the documents are of no practical use to the adventurers or anyone else. Amid the sheaves of parchment there is one containing the single word "Fahoorth." "Fahoorth" is the command word to make the cages in area 16 release their prisoners.

**THE SCROLL CABINET:** The scroll cabinet is not trapped. It contains a **scroll of flesh to stone**, a **scroll of fireball**, and a **cursed scroll** (reading it causes an intense fear of plants for 1d6 days if the subject fails a saving throw).

**THE BOOKSHELF:** The bookshelf's glass doors are magically trapped; if any substance other than a fungus opens them, they will begin shrieking loudly enough to warn the Shroom in room 32. The bookshelf contains a spell book with the following spells: Level 1, **charm person**, **enlarge**, **magic missile**, **protection from good**; Level 2, **mirror image**, **web**; Level 3, **feign death**, **fly**. The other books are about horticulture, and would likely be worth 500 gp to a sage interested in such matters.

Unusual noises from this room may alert the Shroom to the party's presence. See the description of room 32 for the Shroom's likely responses to intruders.

30. **VAT ROOM:** This room contains three forty-gallon vats standing on low stone tripods. A slow fire burns beneath one of the great cauldrons, which is giving off wisps of greenish steam from the liquid within. Near the vats, a single six-foot pod hangs from the ceiling; unlike all the other pods found in the cavern complex, this one is a fleshy reddish pink, and has pulsing green veins running across its surface. The room also contains a long worktable, its surface covered with untidy piles of parchment notes.

**VAT A (HEATING OVER FIRE):** The solution in this vat is a pale green in color, with the consistency of milk (and a sugary taste). If a full pint is consumed (takes 2 rounds) the solution will heal 1d4 hit points of damage. The vat contains 20 gallons (160 pints), but the solution will only last for 6 days if it is not kept heated and stirred occasionally. The solution will only heal 1d4 hit points total over the course of a 24 hour period; taking additional doses of it before 24 hours have elapsed confers no benefit.

**VAT B:** The stuff in this vat is extremely gummy and sticky, like an adhesive stew. It tastes bad, and if ingested it cannot be kept down. At the bottom

of the vat there are several cat bones and a small, jeweled collar worth 200 gp.

**VAT C:** This vat contains a blue fluid used in converting humans into special pod men; this particular ingredient helps make the pod-creatures loyal. The skin of anyone drinking it will turn slightly green (for 1d6 days). Moreover, if the drinker fails a saving throw vs. poison he or she will find it very difficult to engage in violence against the Shroom (this effect persists for as many days as the green skin). When fighting the Shroom, the character must make a saving throw vs. petrification in any round he/she tries to attack the Shroom; if the saving throw fails in any given round, the character's will power fails, and a different target must be selected.

**THE POD:** The pod contains a human who is being converted into a pod man by the Shroom. Converted pod men are more powerful than normal pod men, retaining most of the abilities they had as humans. The person being converted is one of Merithena's bodyguards (Merethina is a prisoner, described in area 16). His name is Thuskar, and he is a level 3 fighter. However, he is half converted into plant matter; not a pleasant sight. He cannot talk and is half insane. Armor will not fit on him. However, if he sees the Shroom he will attack it with any weapon to hand. Thuskar-plant will doggedly follow whoever released him from the pod, trying to help when possible. He will slowly revert to human form over the course of months.

**THE WORKTABLE:** The worktable is covered in sheaves of parchment written in a strange, spidery hand. The language is goblin, and the alphabet is elvish. Three of the documents may be of great interest to the adventurers, but it takes 3d6 rounds to find each one. The order in which the documents are found is up to the Game Master.

**DOCUMENT 1:** This large pile of vellum pages discusses the research the Shroom has conducted upon snagworts. It describes that the command word "Shothuar" will cause any of the Shroom's snagworts to become passive and allow people to come near without attacking.

**DOCUMENT 2:** This set of loose pages contains most of the details for the process of converting a human into a pod man. The process cannot be attempted by a magic user of lower than 8<sup>th</sup> level (or by a Shroom). It is also possible to use the clues in this document to duplicate the process of making a plant pod man, but the Shroom is so familiar with this process that he has never written it down. Only an eleventh or higher level magic user could actually create pod men from scratch. The document would be worth at least 2,000 gp in a city.

**DOCUMENT 3:** This stack of pages describes the mistaken experiment that created the funghemoth (area 34). All it says is that "the unexpected result of the experiment has been forced into a larger cavern, where it has, so far, remained peaceful. I can keep it back with its discipline stick, but it has become a very irritating obstacle."

The other scrolls and pages on the workbench are of no particular interest to adventurers, but as scholarly notes they could be worth up to 250 gp to a sage.

Noises from this room may alert the Shroom, resulting in a counterattack. The Shroom's powers and likely tactics are outlined in the description of room 32.

31. **POTION AND DEVICE ROOM:** This room contains a wooden rack with twenty bottles of liquid, and a strange and ominous piece of equipment. The device looks like a long wooden chair, with many wooden needles on articulated stalks bristling around it, curving up and out from the beneath of the chair, where they are attached to the bottom. There is a funnel near the chair's headrest that seems to pour liquid into the chair. The attachments do not appear to be mechanical, not does the chair radiate magic. The wood of the chair is still alive (and must be watered periodically). If anyone should sit in the chair, the spikes will all stab in at once, causing a total of 1d4 hit points of damage, and if any sort of liquid has been poured into the funnel, it will be injected via the spikes. This chair is used to inject human subjects with the fluids that convert a person into a pod man.

**THE POTIONS RACK:**

- Bottle # 1:** Fish oil
- Bottle # 2:** A sulphurous smelling liquid with unpleasant green specks suspended in it (poison)
- Bottle # 3:** Blue liquid with a consistency like water (no effects)
- Bottle # 4:** Grey liquid with white cloudiness (**potion of animal control**)
- Bottle # 5:** Brown liquid with consistency like tea (poison)
- Bottle # 6:** Dark red liquid with consistency like milk (bat blood)
- Bottle # 7:** Dark red liquid with consistency like milk (**potion of polymorph self**)
- Bottle # 8:** Empty (the emptiness is an illusion; contents are a **potion of healing**)
- Bottle # 9:** Blue-black liquid with the consistency of water (ink)
- Bottle # 10:** Chunky liquid. If this bottle is opened, it releases a gas. The gas necessitates a saving throw vs poison or anyone breathing it will begin screaming and running in circles for 2d6 turns.
- Bottle # 11:** Blue liquid, highly viscous, almost a gel (poison)



- Bottle # 12:** This bottle contains an eye suspended in a clear liquid. The eyeball is bigger than the mouth of the bottle. The liquid is vinegar, and the eye is glass.
- Bottle # 13:** The contents of this bottle cannot be seen, for the outside is painted with a scene of galloping horses. The liquid in the bottle is beer. If the flask is smashed, two riding horses will magically appear.
- Bottle # 14:** Holy water
- Bottle # 15:** Unholy water. Underneath this bottle is a scrap of parchment, apparently some sort of note. Stains render most of the note illegible; the few words that can be deciphered read "the finger is the key."
- Bottle # 16:** The contents of this bottle cannot be seen, for the bottle is painted black. It contains 200 glass beads and a ring worth 200 gp.
- Bottle # 17:** This bottle contains liquid wood. When the earthy-smelling brown liquid is poured out, it will freeze in ten seconds into solid wood, in whatever shape the liquid has assumed before it froze.
- Bottle # 18:** Labeled as goblin urine (the label is correct).
- Bottle # 19:** Labeled as poison (the label is correct)
- Bottle # 20:** Liquid wood. As with bottle 17, when the earthy-smelling brown liquid is poured out, it will freeze in ten seconds into solid wood, in whatever shape the liquid has assumed before it froze.

**Note:** If the Shroom should manage to capture one of the party members, it will use the injection chair in this room to begin the process of converting the character into a pod man, as it has been doing to Thuskar (see location 30).

Keep in mind that noises from this room may alert the Shroom (see room 32) and invite a counterattack.

32. **SHROOM ROOM:** This chamber is the Shroom's residence and bedroom. It is lavishly furnished with tapestries, a massive, reclined couch with bedclothes on it, a water pipe on a low table in the middle of the room, an enormous brazier (five feet across) full of unlit coal beside which is a filigreed watering can, and a cabinet containing three cut-glass decanters and a silver goblet.

If the adventurers have stopped to play with the items in room 29 or 30 (or if someone was affected by screaming gas in room 31), the Shroom is likely to know that intruders are present, and will likely choose to leave this room and counterattack with the help of his two pod-men bodyguards. If the Shroom has time to get ready for the battle, he will cast **enlarge** on one of his two bodyguards, and **mirror image** and **protection from good** on himself before entering combat (unless conditions dictate otherwise, he will leave this room and attack with all his spells in effect). If the battle goes badly, he will either cast feign death or attempt to flee through the eastern door of this room toward the river.

**THE SINISTER SHROOM:** AC 6, HD 6+1, HPS 40, ATK: 1 for 1d8/1d12 (longsword), spells (4/2/1):

- First Level:** charm person, enlarge, magic missile, protection from good
- Second Level:** mirror image, web
- Third Level:** feign death

**POD MAN BODYGUARDS (2):** AC 9, HD 4, HPS 32, 30, ATK: 2 (1d6/1d6), Special: grab and hold with first hit.

The tapestries are worth a total of 2,000 gp (4 tapestries weigh 40 pounds each). The three cut-glass decanters are each worth 100 gp, and the silver goblet is worth 200 gp. The water pipe has no particular value, but might fetch 20 gp. The Shroom's book of spells is hidden under a loose stone in the floor together with 3 gems worth 150 gp each. The spellbook contains the following spells:

**First Level: charm person, enlarge, jump, magic missile, protection from good**  
**Second Level: flame arrow, mirror image, web**  
**Third Level: feign death**

The brazier and watering can are simply a means of heating the room and humidifying it for the Shroom's comfort; neither has any value.

Just beside the eastern door of this room there are two holes carved into the stone, each just large enough to fit a human head into. Just above these holes, a wooden peg holds a strangely carved wand (the wand is not connected with the holes, but the players will not know this). The two holes appear to be filled with a stringy, mold-like substance. These holes contain the controls for the portcullis traps in area 33. At the back of each hole, concealed by the elastic, stringy mold, there is a wooden mushroom. Each mushroom, if pulled upward and twisted, will remain locked in the upward position. From the upward position, they can be twisted and pushed back into the "down" position. If the mushroom is lifted but not locked by twisting it, it will simply drop back into the down position. Whenever one of the mushrooms is set in a new position, there is an audible sound of water rushing through a pipe in the wall, but the raising and falling of portcullises is not audible from this location (an advance scout would be able to see what is happening in area 33, of course). The mold can be pushed aside with a tool of any kind, but it will spring back into place if it is not held. The portcullis traps in room 33 are set to operate in different ways by combinations of the "up" and "down" positions of the mushrooms.

**Both mushrooms in the "down" position:** Locks (and raises if necessary) the southern portcullis in the "up" position and sets the northern portcullis to fall when someone passes through. This is the "escape south" position.

**Left mushroom up, right mushroom down:** Sets both portcullis traps to fall when someone passes through one of them. This is the "guard south" position.

**Left mushroom down, right mushroom up:** Raises and locks both portcullis traps.

**Both mushrooms up:** Locks (and raises if necessary) the northern portcullis in the "up" position and sets the southern portcullis to fall when someone passes through. This is the "escape north" position.

The wand hanging above the portcullis controls is used to frighten the funghemoth in area 34; it has nothing to do with controlling the portcullises. If the Shroom retreats toward the lower level, it will grab the wand and take it with him, to keep the funghemoth at bay.

33. **PORTCULLIS TRAPS:** There is a portcullis trap in both entries to this room, their settings controlled by a water-driven system of counterweights deep in the walls. The waterflow into the counterweight system is controlled by two stopcocks in room 32. Unless the party has changed

the settings, the northern portcullis will fall shortly after anyone passes beneath it, and the southern portcullis will be locked in the "up" position. This setting is designed to allow the Shroom to flee from his room to the river, with a portcullis falling between himself and his pursuers, but if the Shroom is not retreating in front of the party (or if the party approaches from the south) the portcullis may operate to cut off the party's retreat. If a portcullis is set to fall, it is triggered by a pressure plate just inside the room. If anyone steps on the pressure plate, there is a faint sound of running water (possibly enough for a split-second reaction) and then the portcullis will fall and lock.

34. **CAVERN OF THE FUNGHEMOTH:** The river runs from the western to the eastern end of this long cavern, pouring in a waterfall from a point high on the west wall. The southern half of the great cavern is lush with tall growths of pale fungi, mainly mushrooms. The fungi do not seem to grow near the river banks, and in some places tunnels appear to have been cut into the jungle of mushrooms. This cavern is the funghemoth's lair; the massive creature lives concealed in the tangles of fungus in the southern half of the cavern. The pathways through the fungus jungle were made when the funghemoth crushed its way through.

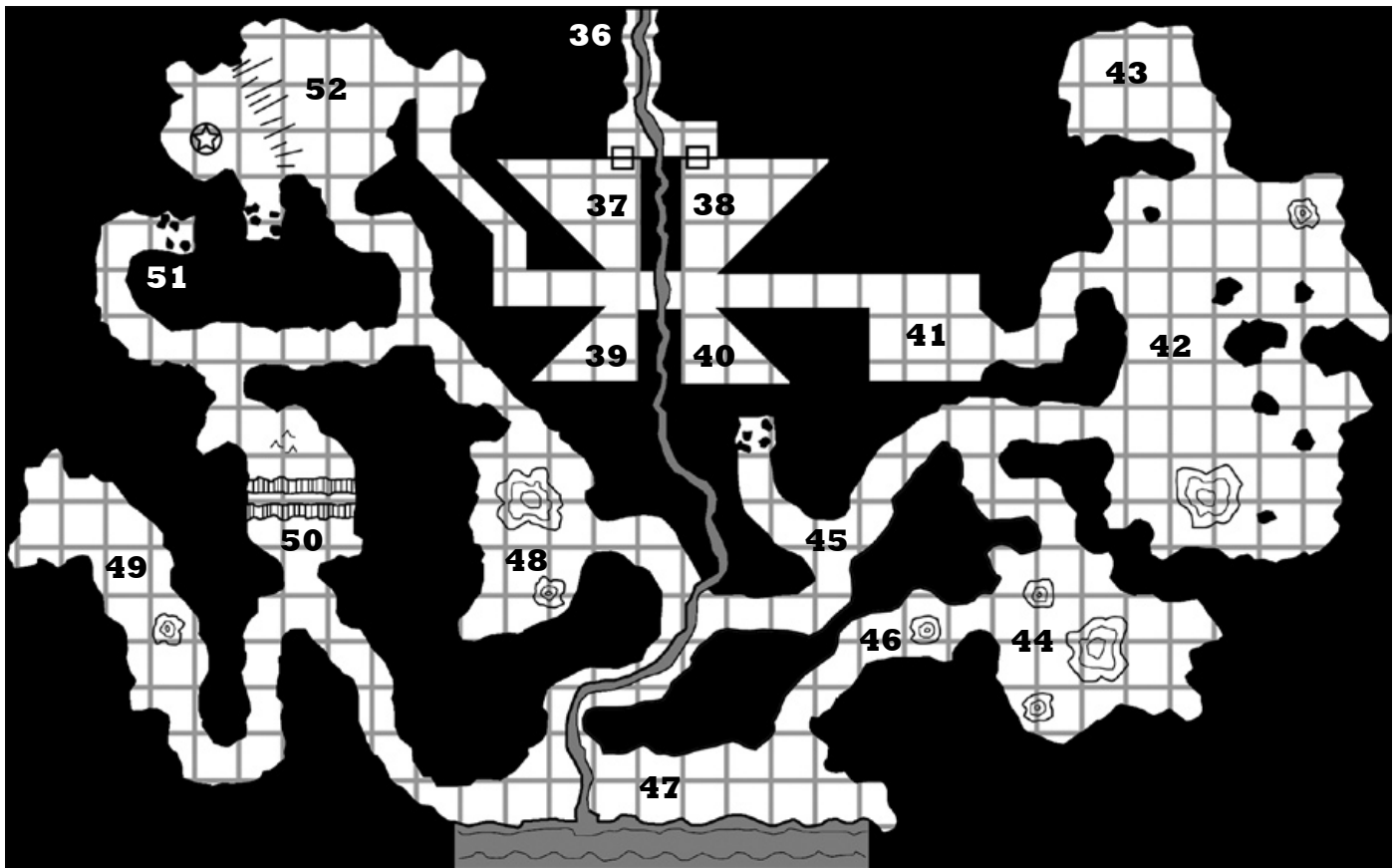
If the funghemoth senses prey in the cavern, it will move to attack; it can flop to the river and sink beneath the water over the course of a single round. Emerging from the river takes a full round. If the party prominently displays the wooden wand found in area 32, the funghemoth will not attack. Although it failed to take much of the Shroom's training, it learned that when the Shroom brandished the wand it meant painful punishment. When it sees the wand, it will retreat to its lair in the undergrowth.

**FUNGHEMOTH:** AC 7, HD 8 (attacks as HD 5), HPS 40, ATK: 3 (1d4/1d4/2d6), Special: randomly determines effects (see monster description).

In the tangle of fungi in the southern half of the cavern, the funghemoth's feeding area contains the indigestible bits of several pod men and some small humanoid bones (goblin). Scattered around the area there are 900 gp, 3,000 sp, 8,000 cp, a gem worth 300 gp, a noxious and ruptured suit of small-sized leather armor (which has been through the entire gastric system of the funghemoth), a candle, and a rusted **+1 longsword**. The longsword (despite the rust) is still a +1 weapon. Indeed, if the rust should be completely cleaned from the blade, the sword will lose its magical properties until it is permitted to rust again (taking only a few days).

35. **RIVERBEND AND CONNECTION TO LEVEL THREE:** At this point in the tunnel, the river bends slightly, and at the point of the bend a pile of bones sits in a small puddle beside the river. These are the bones of three goblins killed and eaten by the funghemoth (location 34), washed up to the riverbank. From this point, the tunnel descends rather sharply toward the third level (location 36). The slope is steep enough that if the party does not take precautions each party member has a 1 in 6 chance of falling and sliding for 1d4 points of damage (presumably after the first fall, the party will tie themselves together or use some other method to prevent a repeat occurrence). The descent to the third level entails underground travel over a distance of approximately 300ft, and the slopes and uneven floor will reduce all movement rates to 60ft/turn.

## The Third Level of the Pod-Caverns of the Sinister Shroom



### KEY TO THE THIRD LEVEL

#### Wandering Monsters:

Check for wandering monsters once every three turns spent on this level. There is a 1 in 10 chance of an encounter.

1. 1d2 killer frogs
2. 1 ochre jelly (3 HD)
3. 1 water snake (SZ S, MV 90ft (swim 90ft), AC 7, HD 1-6 hps, ATK: 1 (1d4), Special: venom causes convulsions for 3d6 rounds if saving throw fails.)
4. 1d8 giant rats

**36. FOYER CORRIDOR:** The two doors here are both locked from the northern side, but can be battered down if the party approaches from the south. If the party approaches from the north, the latches to unlock the doors will be clearly visible and easy to use. The stream rushes through a small aperture in the stone between the doors. The aperture is a one-foot high arch of cut stone, and is too small to enter. From the sound of the rushing water within, it is apparent that anyone trying to follow the stream through this entrance would soon be dashed to death against the rock walls of the channel.

**37. ABANDONED POD CHAMBER:** This mortared stone chamber contains several large husks hanging from the ceiling (adventuring parties coming from the surface will recognize these as dried-out pods). The room is dusty and clearly abandoned. Inside some of the pods, there are the remains of partially grown pod-men, recognizable as having a vaguely humanoid shape but with no bones. They are simply rotted shapes of vegetable matter held loosely together with filaments like the veins of leaves.

**38. OCCUPIED POD CHAMBER:** This chamber is mortared stone, and contains several large, dried, husk-like plants hanging from the ceiling. These are abandoned pods, like the ones in room 37. Five rogue pod men inhabit this room, mutants in whom the Shroom's control failed to establish itself. They will attack any flesh-being that enters the room. Four belt pouches have been stacked neatly in one corner by the pod men, containing 200 gp in the first pouch, 300 cp and a gem worth 50 gp in the second pouch, 75 gp in the third pouch, and 25 pps in the fourth pouch.

**ROGUE POD MEN (5):** SZ M, MV 60ft, AC 9, HD 3+1, HPS 20, 19, 17, 15, 10, ATK: 2 (1d6/1d6), Special: grab and hold with first hit.

**39. OLD STORAGE ROOM:** This room has wooden shelves around the walls. The shelves are almost rotted through, and are very shaky looking. There are many jars and bottles on the shelves, but most of them have been broken. Ten intact containers remain.

**Container 1:** An earthenware jar containing a foul paste. (no value)

**Container 2:** Corked bottle containing golden liquid. (no value)

**Container 3:** Corked bottle containing blue liquid. This is a potion of water breathing.

**Container 4:** Large earthenware pot with lid (empty)

**Container 5:** Wax-sealed brass lamp. Contains one flask's worth of oil.

**Container 6:** Wooden box with iron lid. Contains a glass bottle, which in turn contains fluids used in making pod men.

**Container 7:** Earthenware mug shaped like a gargoyle head with a wax-sealed lid. Contains a smaller

earthenware mug shaped like a gargoyle head, which contains another earthenware mug shaped like a gargoyle's head. The process continues down to the point where the mug is the size of a speck of dust. This last mug contains a microscopic bag of holding. If **enlarge** or **dispel magic** is cast upon the dust-speck mug, the bag of holding may be taken out and used. If it is enlarged, even by the mere application of an enlarge spell, the bag will permanently remain at a normal size.

**Container 8:** Metal sphere with a small corked hole. The sphere contains a single die with six sides. If anyone rolls the die out of the container, the resulting number will cause a magical effect. The sphere and the die will both disappear after the die has been rolled twice (reappearing at some random location in the world such as on an abandoned shelf in an underground cavern).

1= lose 1 hit point permanently.

2= gain 1 hit point permanently.

3= all diseases cured and all hit points restored.

4= hit points reduced to 1 (not permanently)

5= entire party is teleported to a random location in the complex (roll d% and ignore results higher than the room numbers).

6=transformation for 1d6 turns into a small blue frog capable of levitation and long jumps, but not speech. The frog's player should privately be informed that he is coated with a contact poison (+4 on saving throw vs. death).

**Container 9:** Wooden box with a metal lock and hinges. The box contains 4 cp and one gold piece. The gold piece is magical and will return to its owner three times before staying with a new owner.

**Container 10:** Mushroom-shaped wooden statue (lid screws off). Contains a rolled up slip of paper that reads: "Too bad, flesh-man, I got here before you."

40. **ABANDONED STORAGE ROOM:** This dusty chamber contains a large (empty) vat with a capacity of 20 gallons, some rusted pruning shears, a broken bill hook, and a sheaf of 20 blank pages of parchment. If charcoal is rubbed lightly over the top sheet of parchment, the indentations will reveal an accurate map of the dungeon's first (top) level. Note: this should be a reward for excellent thinking; the GM should NOT make any suggestions about indentations in the parchment. In any case, the map will be of little use if the party has already adventured through the first level.

41. **SHRIEKING SKELETONS:** There are six skeletons in this room, all impaled on wooden stakes that seem to rise naturally and seamlessly from the stone floor.

Over the western arch leading from the room, the same message is carved into the stone in common, orcish, and kobold: "Beyond this corridor lies the realm of the dreaded Shroom. Turn back, intruder, or die."

If any flesh creature enters the room, the skeletons will begin screaming, "Turn back, turn back! Aaaagh! Turn back!" Their heads turn to follow anyone walking past, and their arms and legs jerk spasmodically as they shriek. Other than this, however, they are not animated and pose no threat to a party of adventurers. It is quite unnerving to walk through the room while the skeletons are screaming, of course. They will cease to scream if they are removed from their spikes.

42. **GHOST'S CAVERN:** This is a huge cavern, approximately 100 feet from north to south. There are some large pillars in the eastern end of the chamber, one of them

quite colossal, where stalactites and stalagmites have grown to meet each other and fused over the course of centuries. A faint dripping of water can be heard, as droplets fall into the two pools in this room, a smaller one in the northeast corner about ten feet across and a larger one in the southern part of the chamber. The southern pool will immediately draw the party's attention, for there is a very fat female goblin taking a bath in it (the pool is unnaturally warm and used for bathing by the goblins of area 43). The female goblin is named Guzutch, and she is the shaman for the goblins in area 43. She has been predicting the arrival of "slug men" for quite some time, and the party, with their soft human skins, fit the description perfectly as far as she is concerned. She will waddle toward the party, still dripping with water, with arms outstretched – clearly not hostile, and clearly planning to deliver a big hug to the first party member she reaches.

Guzutch will, provided the adventurers don't kill her, welcome the party with – literally – open arms, trying to hug each and every one of them. She is convinced that they will be friendly, for whispers in the cave have told her that "slug men" will be sent to her by the god of the goblins. She has been told by these whispers that if she can get a human to place his hand, smeared with goblin blood, upon the large pillar in the eastern edge of the chamber, a great treasure will be revealed.

Guzutch is, in fact, deceived by the whisperings of a ghost who has been trapped in the pillar for centuries. Note that Guzutch will not mention the whispering unless she is closely questioned – as far as she is concerned, she has simply been hearing the voice of the goblin-god speaking to her. There is indeed an impression in the side of the pillar, shaped like a human hand, and if a human places his hand, smeared with some goblin blood, into this space, the pillar will crack apart and the ghost will be freed from its captivity to feed. The undead creature wears a necklace worth 150 gp, but has no other treasure.

The ghost's conniving in his name has – quite naturally – annoyed the god of goblins, and there is a 5% chance that he will destroy the ghost when the pillar opens, appearing himself before the adventurers. In this case, the goblins had better all be alive or things will go badly for the party; even the best and most extravagant groveling will only win their survival in exchange for the performance of a quest on the goblin god's behalf. If the goblins are all alive, on the other hand, the goblin god will be pleased. He will give each party member a rock conjured from the thin air, and grant one wish for the entire group. The shortest party member will be the one selected to speak the wish. The rocks do nothing, but if one is lost the character who lost or discarded it will contract dysentery for 2d6 weeks, with a 5% chance of dying at the end of this period. The bowel-curse of the goblin god can be cured with spells or other normal means, and may also be removed with a Remove Curse spell.

**GUZUTCH, goblin shamaness:** SZ S, MV 60ft, AC 10 (6 when dressed), HD 2, HPS 10, ATK: 1 (mace 1d6); AL LE, Spells:

**First Level: cause light wounds, sanctuary, cure light wounds**

**GHOST:** SZ M, MV 150ft, AC 4, HD 4, HPS 30, ATK: 3 (1d4/1d4/1d8), Special: odor causes retching, successful hit causes paralysis.

43. **GOBLIN LAIR:** This cavern is the home of 15 goblins (in addition to their shaman Guzutch, detailed in area 42 above). The goblins have little treasure (75 gp, 1,000 sp, 2,500 cp), but they also own two canoes, each capable of carrying as many as four persons.

**GOBLINS (15):** SZ S, MV 60ft, AC 6, HD 1d8-1, HPS 7, 6, 6, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3, 3, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, ATK: 1 (1d6), AL LE.

44. **CAVERN OF THE THREE POOLS:** This cavern contains three natural pools, glimmering beneath the stalactites growing thickly from the ceiling. The northern and southern pools are small, about ten feet across. The middle pool is larger, with a diameter of about twenty feet.

**NORTH POOL:** There is a stone sarcophagus visible at the bottom of this pool's 20 feet deep crystal-clear water. The sarcophagus contains a mighty treasure (and a guardian), hidden away many decades ago. It is locked and bolted to the pool's stone bottom, and it is virtually impossible to unbolt and bring to the surface – unless the players are quite creative, they will have to open the sarcophagus down at the bottom of the pool.

The sarcophagus is locked, and the lid is trapped. A PC attempting to open the sarcophagus can hold his breath underwater for 4d6 segments + 1 segment per point of con bonus to hp (e.g., a character with 15 constitution would be able to hold his/her breath for 4d6+1 segments). Attempts at picking the lock will suffer a penalty of -5%. It is also possible to pry the lid open, breaking the lock (requires two people unless a crowbar is used). When the lock is broken or opened, or if the trap is sprung by an unsuccessful attempt to disarm it, two things will happen. The lock will jet out a quantity of squid ink, darkening the entire pool and rendering it impossible to see. Also, a spring-loaded bear trap will snap closed, automatically catching one person near the sarcophagus unless the prying or unlocking has been done somehow with no one closer than ten feet to the bottom of the pool.

Breaking free from the bear trap requires a successful bend bars type check, which may be attempted once per segment. If additional characters wish to help break a companion free, a maximum of three characters can assist. Each helper may add half his/her bend bars percentage to the roll, and one roll can be made per segment for the joint attempt.

The sarcophagus contains a ghoul, who will immediately attack, and a significant treasure. The treasure includes: 25pp, 400gp, a crown worth 1,200gp, ten 50gp gems, and a carefully wrapped **shield +1**.

**GHOUL:** SZ M, MV 90 ft., AC 6, HD 2, HPS 9, ATK: 3 (1d3/1d3/1d6), Special: successful hit causes paralysis.

**THE MIDDLE POOL:** This large pool also has crystal clear water and also contains a sarcophagus bolted to the bottom. This sarcophagus is neither locked nor trapped. It contains five heavy chests. If the party observes the pool for a period of 1 turn or more, they will see one of the water snakes (see below) swim through one of the cracks in the side of the pool. A close examination from the surface can also reveal the existence of the cracks, if a player specifically states that he/she is looking at the sides of the pool.

**Chest #1 (100 lbs):** 11 gp, 50 sp, 939 cp.

**Chest #2 (200 lbs):** 30 gp, 1 lead ingot, 2,097 cp.

**Chest #3 (300 lbs):** 30 lead ingots. 5 of the ingots have a gold core worth 20 gp each.

**Chest #4 (300 lbs):** 5 pp, 100 gp, 2,085 cp

**Chest #5 (300 lbs):** 5 gems worth 10 gp each, 50 gp, 2 lead ingots, 2,075 cp

The pool also contains numerous cracks leading to an underground stream. Water snakes swim in and out of these cracks, and will be attracted to activity in this pool. Not all the snakes will enter the pool at once, but more and more will investigate if noises continue. During combat, 1d2 snakes will enter the pool each round.

**WATER SNAKES (10):** SZ S, MV 90 ft. (swim 90 ft.), AC 7, HD 1-6 hps, ATK: 1 (1d4), Special: venom causes convulsions for 3d6 rounds if saving throw fails.

**THE SOUTH POOL:** Unlike the other two pools, this one contains no sarcophagus. There is a chest at the bottom, and an obvious opening near the pool bottom. The opening leads to an underground river (the same that holds the snakes in the middle pool). A crocodile lairs in the opening, and will attack anyone entering the pool. It will also grab ropes or other such things, thinking them to be food, and will pull on them. The chest contains 325 gp.

**CROCODILE:** SZ L, MV 60 ft., AC 5, HD 3, HPS 22, ATK: 2 (2d4/1d12), Special: 3 in 6 chance to surprise opponents.

45. **PIERCER CORRIDOR:** There are 5 piercers (all of the 1 HD variety) living at this intersection.

**PIERCERS (5):** SZ S, MV 10 ft., AC 3, HD 1, HPS 8,5,4,4,3, ATK: 1 (1d6), AL N.

46. **POOL:** A ten-foot wide pool of clear water blocks the tunnel at this point. The pool is fifteen feet deep, but contains nothing of interest to a party of adventurers.

47. **DOCK CAVERN:** A dark, fast-running river splashes violently against its stone banks in the south of this large cavern. The river is 80 ft. across at this point, and it is possible that the party will not be able to see the other side with normal light sources. The river is called the Shadowvein, and it runs through numerous underground caverns downstream before emptying into a larger body of water (on the surface or underground, according to the GM's campaign needs).

48. **GIANT FROG LAIR:** This cavern contains two dark pools, one about twenty feet across and the other about ten feet in diameter. The large pool is the lair of a giant frog.

**GIANT FROG:** SZ S, MV 30 ft. (swim 90 ft.), AC 7, HD 2, ATK: 1 (1d6), Special: swallow whole on a natural 20.

49. **LONG CAVERN:** This cavern is not more than twenty feet wide, with many clusters of stalactites hanging from the low ceiling. There is a pool about twenty feet into the cavern, surrounded by tall stalagmites. The room is empty of any items of interest to adventurers.

50. **CHASM:** A 10 ft. wide chasm cuts across this room from the eastern to the western wall, blocking north-south passage unless the adventurers find a way to cross it. The chasm is 100 ft. deep, but contains several shelves from which a falling person will bounce on the way down. The first shelf is thirty feet into the chasm, the second is

forty feet into the cavern, and the third shelf is eighty feet down. Thus, a fall will be broken into a thirty-foot (6d6 damage), a ten-foot (1d6 damage), a forty-foot (10d6), and a twenty-foot (3d6 damage) drop. Each of the shelves is piled high with refuse and fish bones, and damage caused by each fall will be cut in half by these successive cushions of garbage. Because the chasm is not straight down, having many shelves and lumps in the walls, the bottom is not visible from the top no matter what sort of illumination is used. There is no exit from the bottom of the chasm other than to climb back to the top. At the bottom of the cavern there is a six-foot deep accumulation of fish bones. A **wand of lightning bolts** with 5 charges is buried among the bones at the bottom, along with a stylishly conical hat. There is a blue robe as well, but it is badly torn in many places.

51. **DEAD END:** A rock fall has blocked the tunnel at this point. Messing about with the rocks will cause another collapse, causing 1d10 points of damage to anyone within 20 ft. of the rocks.
52. **GLUE MOSS ROOM:** In the southern part of this chamber, a 20 ft. high cliff leads up to a balcony-like hollow. The cliff side is covered with a red moss-like growth. This growth is glue moss, which is sticky enough to allow a +20% to any attempt to climb the cliff. However, as the moss grows deeper, about 15 ft. from the top, it gets so sticky that it will trap any climbing character who has less than a 16 strength. At the top of the cliff side there is an ancient idol. When any person comes within ten feet, the idol's facial features will shift to mimic those of the intruder into its shrine. For a period of 1 day, the character will be unable to speak unless the player can think of a way to make the speech rhyme. However, the shrine confers a benefit upon the character as well: while the character is under the rhyming curse, he will gain a +1 on all saving throws.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure's conclusion obviously depends upon the direction the adventurers took through the dungeon. If the module was used as the exit from a series of adventures on an underground river, the emergence to the surface will be the beginning of the next challenge, a blank slate for the Game Master's next fiendish plot.

If, on the other hand, the party explored downward through the Shroom's domains, the discovery of the underground river (coupled with the goblins' canoes) will suggest an interesting course of action. What wonders and perils will they face if they choose to ride the river into deeper depths? Only the Game Master knows...

## NEW MONSTERS

### FUNGHEMOTH

FREQUENCY: Very Rare  
 NO. APPEARING: 1  
 SIZE: Large  
 MOVE: 90 ft.  
 ARMOR CLASS: 7  
 HIT DICE: 8 (attacks as 5HD monster)  
 ATTACKS: 3  
 DAMAGE: 1d4/1d4/2d6  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard  
 LAIR PROBABILITY: 50%  
 TREASURE: 1-8k cp (50%), 1-6k sp (25%), 1-4k ep (25%), 1-3k gp (25%), 1-8 gems (30%), 1-4 jewelry (20%), 1 weapon or armor (10%).  
 INTELLIGENCE: Animal  
 ALIGNMENT: Neutral  
 LEVEL/X.P.: 6 / 550 + 10/hp

Funghemoths are a fairly rare occurrence, but when wizards mix alchemy, magic, and fungi, an error of judgment or an ill-supervised experiment can result in the creation of one of these beasts. Funghemoths are enormous masses of fungoid tissue, capable of movement and hungry for whatever food they can find or kill. A funghemoth has one yawning opening in the front, with which it ingests food and attacks prey, along with two subsidiary mouths mounted on short stalks. The subsidiary mouths are quite vulnerable to being severed, and a natural roll of 20 with a bladed weapon will lop off one of these mouths, eliminating one of the funghemoth's attacks.

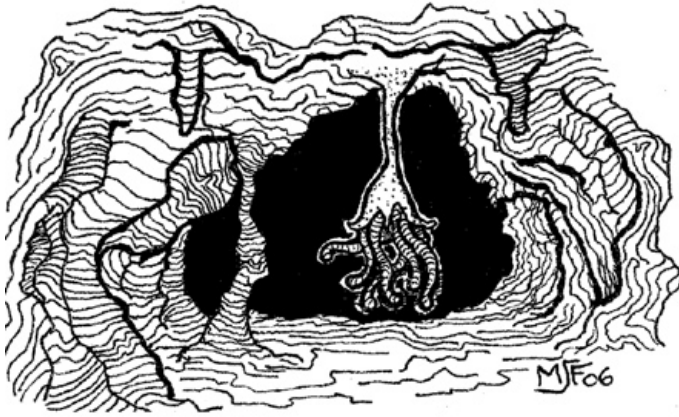
Each round, in addition to its melee attacks, the funghemoth's agitation causes a random effect:

1. The funghemoth breathes fire in a cone shape (1 ft. at the origin, 30 ft. range, 15 ft. wide at the end). Saving throw for half damage, damage 3d6.
2. The funghemoth shoots out a ball of lightning in a randomly determined direction (10 ft. wide, range 60 ft.). Saving throw versus aimed magical weapons (such as wands) applies for half damage, damage 3d6.
3. The funghemoth becomes electrically charged for one round, causing damage of 1d6 to anyone hitting it with a metal weapon. The electricity is quite visible; the creature is wreathed in a lightning-like crackle of blue electrical discharges.
4. The funghemoth changes color.
5. The funghemoth emits spores if it is hit. Anyone within ten feet of the hit location must make a saving throw versus poison or act as if under the effects of a **confusion** spell for 1d4 rounds.
6. The funghemoth hacks up a disgusting ball of fungoid tissue from its main mouth. The fungoid ball has no properties other than being disgusting.

The structure of a funghemoth's body, generated randomly by the interaction of alchemy and magic, is not well suited to precise movements. In consequence, a funghemoth attacks only as a monster of 5 hit dice, although it has the hit points (and experience point value) of an 8 HD monster.

### HANGING SNAGWORT

FREQUENCY: Rare  
 NO. APPEARING: 1d10  
 SIZE: Medium  
 MOVE: 5 ft./round  
 ARMOR CLASS: 6  
 HIT DICE: 3  
 ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE: See below  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: None  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard  
 LAIR PROBABILITY: 100%  
 TREASURE: None  
 INTELLIGENCE: Animal  
 ALIGNMENT: Neutral  
 LEVEL/X.P.: 2 / 65 + 2/hp



Hanging snagworts are a strange variety of dungeon plant, a cluster of slime-covered tendrils hanging at the end of a thick, rope-like strand. Within a range of ten feet or so, a snagwort can lash out by swinging its ropy strand. If this attack scores a successful hit, the tendrils (which are short, about ten inches long) affix themselves to the target with a strong adhesive. This initial attack causes no damage, but the bond caused by the vegetable glue is virtually unbreakable except by magical means. Once the snagwort is dead, the glue will lose its adhesive properties in 1d6 hours. The dead snagwort, in other words, will still be attached to the character for quite a while, possibly causing great inconvenience and weighing 40 pounds. While the snagwort is alive, it can neutralize the glue at will. Once the snagwort is attached to an opponent, the plant can, in following rounds, smash the victim against nearby surfaces for 1d6 points of damage without needing to make further attack rolls.

If a snagwort is being attacked with missile weapons and has no enemies within range, it will flatten itself against a ceiling or behind cover. This will usually give it enough cover to merit a -4 on attack rolls against it. A lone snagwort can be easily killed with missile weapons, provided that the party keeps a safe distance.

### POD-MAN

FREQUENCY: Rare  
 NO. APPEARING: 2d10  
 SIZE: Medium  
 MOVE: 60 ft.  
 ARMOR CLASS: 9  
 HIT DICE: 3+1  
 ATTACKS: 2  
 DAMAGE: 1d6/1d6  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: Grab and hold (see below)  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: None  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard  
 LAIR PROBABILITY: 25%  
 TREASURE: None  
 INTELLIGENCE: Semi  
 ALIGNMENT: Neutral  
 LEVEL/X.P.: 3 / 105 + 3/hp

Pod-men are commonly found as servants of a Shroom (q.v.), for the Shrooms cultivate them in far greater numbers than they appear in the wild. They are shambling, human-like plants with strange gaps in their bodies and knobby growths of fungus sprouting from their outer surface.

Pod men grow in large pods that resemble enormous pea-pods hanging from a ceiling or growing on vines. Cultivated pod men are usually grown hanging from the ceiling, for vine-grown pod men (seen in the wild) are subtly

inferior to the cultivated ones (in what way, the GM can decide: perhaps mutations, perhaps lower hp, or whatever seems right). The pods are somewhat protective, and any creature inside one of them gains a +1 saving throw against fire attacks and a bonus of 4 to armor class.

It takes a full round for a pod man to emerge from a pod. Pod men are slow, always attacking at the end of the round.

Once a pod man hits successfully for the first time, it grabs and holds onto the victim with that hand. The hold causes the victim a -4 to subsequent attack rolls, but inflicts no damage. The pod man will then attempt to beat the victim to death using its free arm. The hold of multiple pod men is cumulative, each one causing a further -4 penalty to the victim's attack rolls.

Some pod men are created by transforming a human being into plant matter in a specially prepared pod, by vile magical and alchemical processes. Such pod men can be considerably tougher than normal pod men (gaining additional hit dice as determined by the GM), and have a pinkish and fleshier appearance than those grown from scratch.

### SHROOM

FREQUENCY: Very Rare  
 NO. APPEARING: 1-6  
 SIZE: Large  
 MOVE: 90 ft.  
 ARMOR CLASS: 6  
 HIT DICE: 6+1  
 ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE: By weapon  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: Spells  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: Spells  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard  
 LAIR PROBABILITY: 60%  
 TREASURE: 300-1,800 pp (30%), 2-20 gems (55%), 1-12 jewelry (50%), any 1 magic or treasure maps (15%)  
 INTELLIGENCE: Genius  
 ALIGNMENT: Neutral Evil  
 LEVEL/X.P.: 5 / 425 + 8/hp

Shrooms are evil geniuses, toadstool creatures with considerable magical powers. They lurk in the deep places of the earth and in dank forests, plotting ruin against surface dwellers and scheming to gain power for themselves by any means possible. They are highly adept with magic that influences plants, and most of them are knowledgeable enough to create lairs where they can manufacture pod-men (q.v.) as servants.

Shrooms are highly individualistic, and the GM should feel free to invent all kinds of these sinister malefactors. Most will have the spell-casting abilities of at least a fourth level magic user, and all have strange powers to create and shape the plants of their environments. Although these powers take time to employ and will not be relevant in combat, they can be used to create a considerably hazardous lair.

The flesh of a shroom is delectable, but deadly. Any person eating shroom-flesh must make a saving throw versus poison or be affected as if by a **feeblemind** spell. The condition may be reversed by a **heal** or **restoration** spell. The effects of the toxin can actually turn out to be beneficial in the long run; there is a 5% chance that a feebleminded character who has been healed or restored will permanently gain a point of intelligence from the effects of the shroom-flesh.

## VAMPIRIC MOSS

FREQUENCY: Rare  
NO. APPEARING: 1  
SIZE: Large  
MOVE: 20 ft.  
ARMOR CLASS: 4  
HIT DICE: 3  
ATTACKS: 1  
DAMAGE: 1d4 (see below)  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Suck blood  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: None  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard  
LAIR PROBABILITY: 90%  
TREASURE: None  
INTELLIGENCE: None  
ALIGNMENT: Neutral  
LEVEL/X.P.: 3 / 125 + 2/hp

Vampire moss is a dangerous subterranean hazard, a mass of vegetable substance that feeds upon red blood. Vampire moss usually drops upon unwary explorers, but it is capable of slow normal movement when necessary. When vampire moss attacks, its first attack is merely to

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attach itself to prey and inflicts no damage. Subsequent attacks inflict 1d4 hit points of damage automatically. In addition to inflicting damage from its blood drain, vampire moss has a chance to make its victim maddened. Every round in which a victim takes damage from vampire moss he or she must also make a saving throw against poison. If the saving throw fails, the victim will use any weapon in hand to attack random enemies (other than the vampire moss) nearby. Once the saving throw has failed, no further saving throws are allowed. If there is no one for the victim to attack (within ten feet), the victim may attack the vampire moss even if he or she is in a maddened state.

Anyone covered with vampire moss can attack it normally or try to tear the moss away. Tearing the moss away takes 1d4 rounds, and the final round of tearing away causes 1d6 hit points of damage per round to the person covered with moss. Once the moss is torn away it will need to make another successful attack to latch on to another victim.

A vampire moss attached to a victim is a fairly large target, but the GM may assign a small chance that the victim's allies might hit the victim while trying to kill the moss.

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## The Pod-Caverns of the Sinister Shroom

Strange doings are underfoot in the wild hills bordering the realm of decent and civilized folks. Villagers and cattle have gone missing; woodcutters have disappeared; misshapen beings have been seen shuffling through the forests. Some brave villagers have tracked a group of stolen oxen as far as the rocky banks of a small river in the hills. The trail disappeared down into a fissure in the limestone rock, where a fast-running stream plunges down to the dark caverns below. Gird your loins, stand behind the dwarf, and get ready to face The Pod-Caverns of the Sinister Shroom!

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# Advanced Adventures

## The Pod-Caverns Of The Sinister Shroom

By Matthew Finch



An OSRIC™ module designed for 6-8  
adventurers of levels 2-4

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