

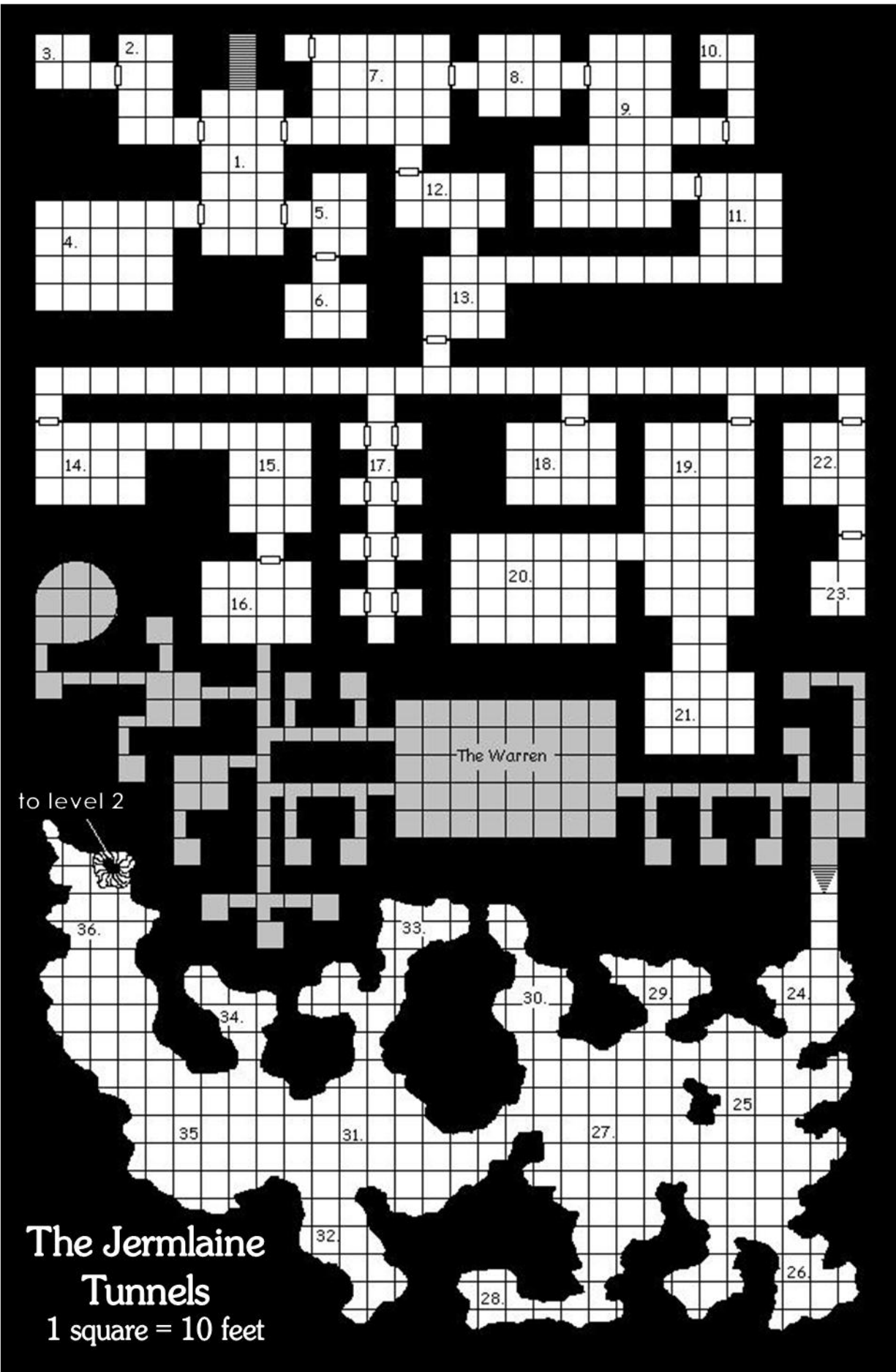
For First Edition
Advanced D&D

Dragonsfoot presents
Shrine of the Oracle
An adventure for 4-8 first level characters



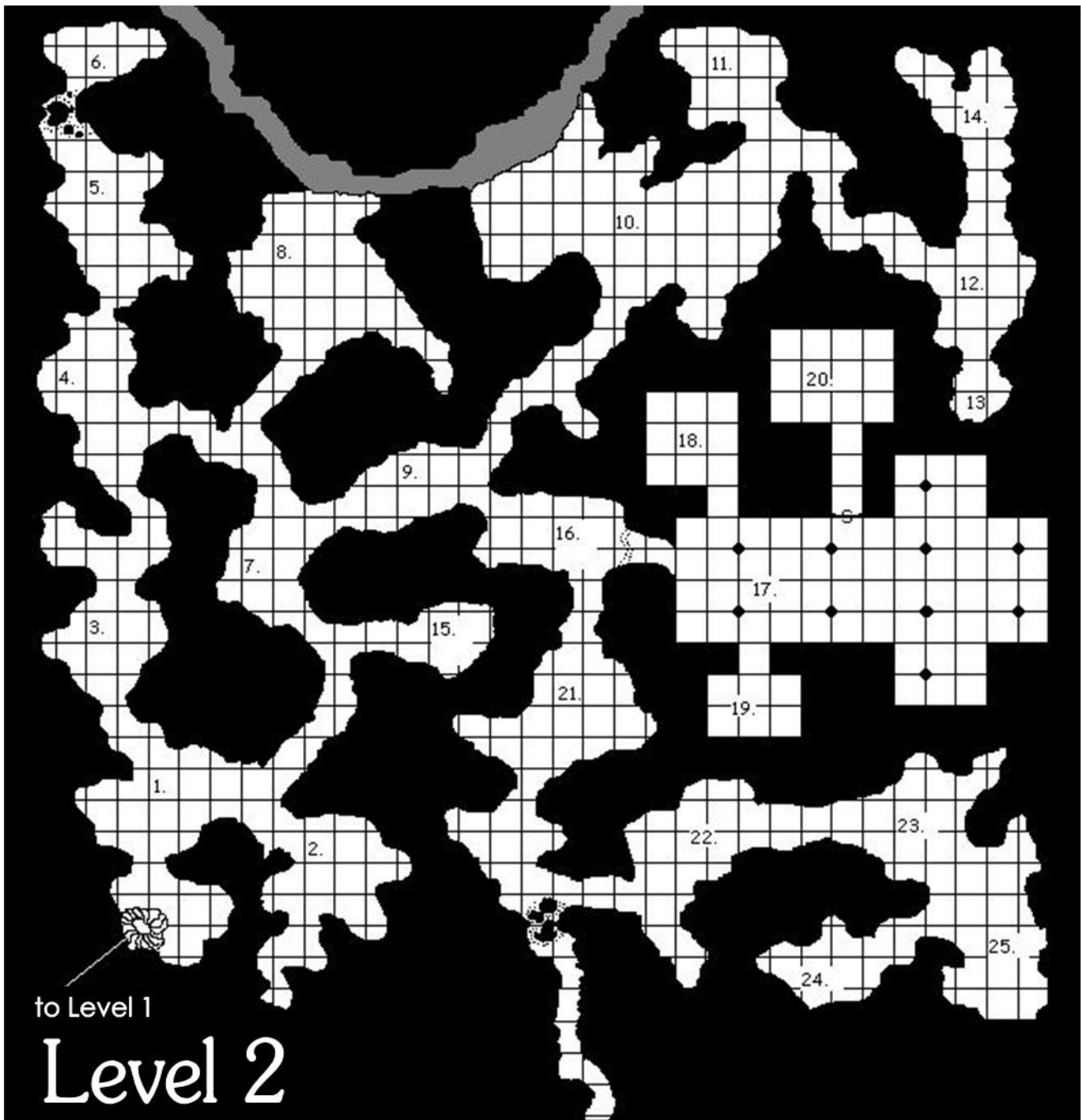
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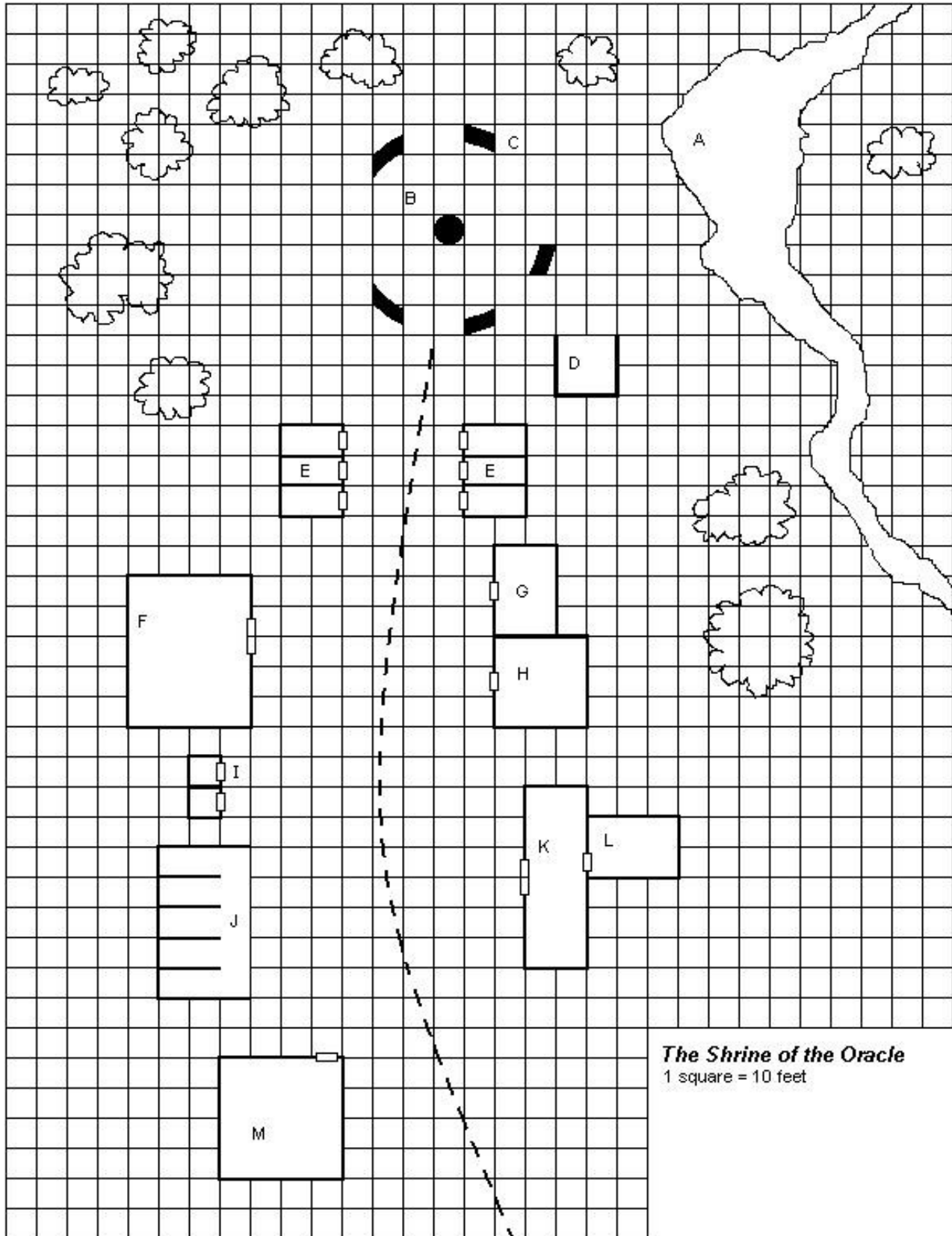
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**The Jermlaine
Tunnels**
1 square = 10 feet



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The Shrine of the Oracle
1 square = 10 feet

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The Shrine of the Oracle can stand alone as a scenario. However, it has also been written as the conclusion of a trilogy of introductory adventures for first level characters. The preceding two scenarios, *The Spider Farm* and *The Melford Murder*, are also available as free downloads from *Dragonsfoot*.

Events leading up to the adventure: *If the adventure is being played in conjunction with the previous adventures in this series, then Maenae will have become aware of the PCs, who will by this stage be establishing a reputation. In this case, she will send a messenger to Melford asking them to come to the Shrine of the Oracle so that she can thank them and reward them for their services to the community.*

The PCs may also be aware of either or both of the following facts:

1. They may have heard the rumour that some kind of vampire-like undead creature is at large in Melford. Its activities are very subtle, but have not gone totally unobserved. (DM note: *This refers to Magdalene Colerre, who is a penanggalan - cf. The Melford Murder*);
2. They may suspect or know that Maenae wishes to recruit Savula Vogg, the mobility-impaired fourteen-year-old daughter of Reiner Vogg, as a future Sibyl.

If the adventure is to be played as a standalone the adventurers will need a reason to come to the Shrine. This may include a need for clerical services such as cures or raising the dead, or a desire to consult the oracle and learn the future.

The Shrine has also been designed to take account of the possibility that there may be a PC Sibyl - part of the purpose of the module is to provide a reasonable option for a background and religion pertaining to a cleric character. In this case the reason for venturing to the Shrine should be self-evident.

The Journey to the Shrine:

The *Melford Murder* adventure contains a wilderness area map and a random encounter table suitable for administering the journey to the Shrine. If the whole series is being played, then this map should be consulted and the encounter table used; otherwise, the DM will need to place the Shrine within his or her campaign world and employ whichever encounter tables he or she deems suitable.

The Sibyls: Clerics of the Oracle have the power to cast a druidic spell - *Reflecting Pool* - in place of one of their second level spells. They may wear armour of any kind. However, their vestment during the rites of their god must be a simple white toga, and this is how they are normally garbed when not expecting trouble. Thus, the Sibyls are given two AC stats. All Sibyls are either Chaotic Good or Chaotic Neutral.

Sibyls do not have surnames. Upon being appointed as a Sibyl, they discard their former name and take up a name drawn from the Oracle's Holy Writings.

Maenae - level 9 cleric. S11 I14 W17 D16 C16 Ch11, AC8 or -3 (plate mail +1, shield +2 and DEX bonus), hp 61, #AT1, dam 1d6+3 (mace +2). Spells: *Command* (x2), *Cure Light Wounds* (x4), *Reflecting Pool*, *Silence 15'r* (x2), *Hold Person* (x2), *Prayer*, *Animate Dead*, *Cure Disease*, *Cure Blindness*, *Cure Serious Wounds* (x2), *Flame Strike*. Alignment CN.



Magic items: Plate mail +1; Shield +2; Mace +2; Staff of Life (casts once per day any one spell from the following list: *Restoration*; *Regeneration*; *Cure Blindness*; *Cure Disease*; *Neutralise Poison*); Scroll of *Resurrection*, *Dispel Evil* and *Symbol*; Potions of *Levitation*, *Speed*, *Invisibility* (x2) and *Hill Giant Strength*.

The local High Priestess, Maenae is easily the most powerful NPC in the area. In her youth, she established a towering reputation by slaying several giants in the Darkshroud Peaks to the north. Now 67 years old and increasingly concerned about the decline of her religion down to a mere 3 Sibyls, she appears small and frail, and has a habit of blinking nervously. This apparent frailty and weakness is an illusion - she is still immensely tough.

As a result of her earlier adventuring, Maenae became fabulously wealthy. Much of her money has gone into funding local projects (such as replacing the ford at Melford with the bridge there, which she paid for) and into helping to maintain her shrine, and she is now merely very rich.

If the PCs are stupid enough to attack the Shrine, Maenae **will** kill them all without mercy.

Mishpat - level 5 cleric. S11 I12 W16 D9 C10 Ch16, AC10 or 4 (chainmail and shield), hp 29, #AT1, dam by weapon. Spells: *Cure Light Wounds* (x4), *Command*, *Reflecting Pool*, *Augury*, *Silence 15' r*, *Hold Person* (x2), *Dispel Magic*. Alignment CG.

Mishpat seems giggly and flighty initially, but this is a pose, and in fact she is calm and competent under pressure. Mishpat is 25 years old and extremely attractive (Comeliness 18, if the Comeliness rules are in play. On a 21st Century street, she'd stop traffic. Rachel - level 2 cleric. S13 I10 W15 D10 C15 Ch11, AC10 or 4 (chainmail and shield), hp 12, #AT1, dam by weapon. Spells: *Cure Light Wounds* (x2), *Command*, *Bless*. Alignment CN.

Rachel is the junior Sibyl. She was called to the service of the Oracle late in life after her husband died. She is about 45 years old and weighs about 170lb's; she does the cooking and cleaning for the Shrine, and doesn't like it. She is desperate for a new and more junior Sibyl to join the Shrine so that she can make the new recruit do the menial work.

The Guardians

There are five Guardians of the Shrine. All are men-at-arms with banded armour, shield, spear and hand axe: AC3, HD1, hp 6 each, #AT1, dam 1d6, AL CN.

The Worship of the Oracle

The rites of worship of the Oracle are reasonably strenuous and demanding. At least once a week, the Sibyls must gather around the monolith (B) in worship for at least two hours. At least once a month, the Oracle requires a sacrifice of silken cloth, which is to be ritually burned (this costs at least 100gp, so the Sibyls are always on the lookout for donations.)

In addition the Sibyls need feeding and clothing, and the Guardians need feeding, arming, equipping and wages. All in all, the Shrine is an expensive place to run.

Fortunately, the Oracle receives a constant stream of pilgrims looking for visions of the future. These pilgrims pay fees starting from about 10gp, varying according to the nature of their question; the Sibyls also perform marriages, funerals and other ceremonies for donations, and Maenae sometimes sells *raise dead* spells for a fantastic amount of money (generally 5000gp.)

Area Key

A - The Pool of the Oracle. At certain hours, supplicants may bathe here; at other times, the guardians or Sibyls do so. The water is cool (but not too cold), clear, and refreshing, but it is not otherwise magical.

B - The Omphalos. This huge stone is where the spirit of the Oracle resides. The player characters will not be able to communicate with it (unless there is a PC Sibyl.) It is very ancient, and covered in markings which will be vaguely disturbing to Lawful beings with a Wisdom of 14 or more. These markings are subject to *Comprehend Languages* or similar magic, although a nonbeliever reading them would certainly constitute a desecration of the Oracle's worship. The Sibyls learn to read them as well, because they constitute the holy writings of this religion and detail the correct worship of the Oracle.

C - Monoliths. There were originally seven monoliths surrounding the Omphalos. What happened to the missing two is not known. The remaining five are large and impressive. Legend has it that these monoliths can sometimes move.

D - Pen of the Holy Goat. The Holy Goat is consecrated to the Oracle and forms a part of his worship. It is a kind of totem animal. When the Holy Goat dies, the Sibyls go far and wide to locate another goat of similar appearance which was born at the time the previous Holy Goat died. The present Holy Goat is a fat, pampered, lazy animal which Rachel has spoilt outrageously. It is AC7, has 5hp, and can butt for 1d4 damage, but it is too tame to do so unless actually harmed.

E - Supplicant's cells. Individuals desiring to receive a vision of the future must be *blessed* by a Sibyl and then spend one day naked and fasting, praying for guidance. This is where they wait.

F - House of the Sibyls. Maenae, Mishpat and Rachel all live and keep their property here. The door will be

locked. The temple's funds are concealed beneath a loose flagstone in the floor. The underside of this stone has been marked with several *glyphs of warding* using the rune Peh (paralysis) while the funds themselves are contained in a chest marked with the glyph Ruh. This glyph is specific to this religion and causes the person touching the box to repent their sacrilege and become a worshipper of the Oracle (save -v- death applies here.)

The chest is also locked and trapped. The trap will fire poisoned darts at anyone fiddling with it (similar to drow sleep poison, save -v- poison at -4 or fall unconscious for 2d4 hours.) Inside the chest is as much money as the DM deems appropriate, but at least a thousand platinum pieces are suggested.

G - Anointing room. This is where the (naked) supplicants anoint themselves with water from the pool (A) and receive the blessing of the Sibyls.

H - Robing room. This is where the clothing and personal effects belonging to the supplicants are kept. These effects are normally of no value, being peasant clothes, sandals, etc. Valuable items will be taken by the High Priestess or her assistant and stored with the temple funds in area F.

I - Latrines. Rachel has the job of cleaning these. It is her least favourite task, and she may well attempt to prevail upon a player character she sees as sympathetic to do this job for her - this would be an easy way into Rachel's good graces!

J - Stables. There are no horses here at present, unless the PCs have brought some with them.

K - Dining area. This is where the Sibyls and the Guardians eat. It will be empty apart from tables and chairs, except at mealtimes.

L - Kitchens. This is where Rachel cooks. She is quite a decent cook, and anything she produces usually turns out rather well.

M - Barracks of the Guardians. The men-at-arms who guard the temple are quartered here.

Meeting with Maenae: If the adventure is part of the series, then Maenae will desire personally to thank and reward the player characters for their services to the community. She will make a brief speech of gratitude and hand them a purse of 250gp.

If not, the player characters will presumably approach Maenae and present their petition. In either case, you need to play Maenae carefully, because she will use this first meeting to form a judgment of the PCs. If they appear to be generally

respectful, helpful and grateful, and they seem willing to put themselves out to make a positive community to the local area, then she will be well disposed towards them. In this case, she will offer to provide them with future clerical services such as heals, cures and the raising of the dead at reduced rates. If they appear to be disrespectful, ungrateful or indifferent then she will make no such offer.

After this discussion is over, Maenae will make mention of a local dungeon which is situated in the woods nearby. A party of adventurers disappeared into it recently, and she would like to know what happened to them. Would the PCs consent to explore the dungeon and find out?

Journey to the Dungeon

The dungeon entrance is situated a couple of miles out from the Shrine into the Brownditch Woods; since it is so close, only one random encounter check need be made on the journey to and from the dungeon. For general wanderings in the forest, encounters need to be checked three times each day and once per night.

In either case, a creature will be encountered on a 1 on 1d12. Use the following table to determine the nature of the encounter:

01-06 - **Centaur.** These are the undisputed lords of the wood, and they keep the worst of the evil creatures out. They have no great love for humans, dwarfs or half-orcs, but will not usually attack them on sight.

Centaur roster:

11 centaur males - 6 with oaken clubs (hp 17 each, dam 1d8/1d6); 3 with composite longbows (hp 19 each) and 2 with shields and lances (hp 21 each, AC 4, dam 1d8/1d6).

22 centaur females - hp 14 each, dam 1d6/1d6.
16 centaur foals - hp 9 each, non-combatant.

They speak only their own tongue. Their lair is in a shady glen in the heart of the woods where their treasure (1,831 gp, 1,342 sp and 13,219 cp) is kept.

07-11 - **Harpies.** These two harpies have evaded the centaurs thus far because they can fly. If they are killed, they will not be encountered again (i.e. there are only two harpies in the woods).

2 harpies - one with a dagger (hp: 13, dam: 1d4/1d3/1d3) and one with a shortsword (hp: 12, dam: 1d6/1d3/1d3).

They speak only the harpy tongue. The dagger carried by the larger harpy has a sculpted silver pommel set with citrines and would sell for 90gp.

12-21 - **Stags**. 1d2 stags (hp: 13 each) and 1d6+6 deer (hp: 9 each). The stags will attack only if the deer are threatened.

22-26 - **Goblins, petrified**. Some years back, a medusa dwelt in these woods. (Maenae killed her). She left a legacy of many petrified goblins in the Brownditch Woods, since she enjoyed terrorising a local tribe which is now long-since departed.

The party will encounter 1d3 petrified goblins. These are obviously not a threat of any kind.

27-36 - **Boar**. 1d4 wild boar will be encountered. If there is only one, it will be a rogue male, very ornery; 2 or more will be a boar, a sow and possibly young, and will not attack if treated with proper respect.

37-46 - **Bears**. 1d3 black bears will be encountered. They will not normally attack if treated with respect.

47-55 - **Stirges**. 1d6 stirges will be encountered. They will attack on sight.

56-64 - **Oblivix**. Patch of oblivix equivalent to three creatures. The characters may well not find the moss, which is about one and a half feet square and set high in the branches of a nearby tree, but they will certainly notice its spell-stealing powers! There is no treasure.

65-71 - **Owl**. This encounter may be of value to druids looking for an animal scout, or of nuisance value to magic-users with familiars that might serve as prey for the birds. Otherwise it presents no threat. The owl has 2hp.

72-80 - **Raven**. See "owl"; the raven has 2hp.

81-90 - **Orc**. There will be 2d6+6 orcs. If the Melford Murder is in play, these will be raiders into the forest from the Red Tusk clan, and should be deducted from the roster provided in that module; otherwise they will simply be a roving warband. They will attack on sight if there are elves or dwarfs in the party; otherwise they can be bribed not to attack with at least 50gp.

91-00 - **Bandit**. There will be 2d6+4 bandits. If the Melford Murder is in play these will be raiders into the forest from the Goat Skull clan, and should be deducted from the roster provided in that module; otherwise they will simply be a roving warband. They can be bribed not to attack for an offer of 30gp or more.

DM Notes: This dungeon area is where a group of NPC first level adventurers met their end. If the characters are aware of this (from rumours encountered in the Melford Murder or from Maenae herself) they may have learned the following story:

Sathrena's Tale

Sathrena and her party - comprising Sathrena (1st-level human magic-user), Torin Mulekick (1st level dwarfish cleric), Yrrion (1st level human thief), Kayleigh (1st level human fighter) and Grot (1st level half-orc fighter) - ventured into the dungeon and wandered around, rather ineptly exploring it. They managed to vanquish a few creepy crawlers and a couple of bats, before they reached a nasty net trap set by the Jermlaine which they failed to detect. The trap caught all five of them, whereupon they were eaten by the creepy crawlers. Because the bodies are relatively out of the way (in area 20), the Jermlaine have yet to discover the bodies and recover the equipment, so it is still lying on the floor near where they died.

Doors in the dungeon: Unlike doors in most dungeons, the doors in the Jermlaine Tunnels are flimsy and relatively easier to open. Improve each character's chance of successfully opening doors by 1 in 6. Exception: The door into room 3 is much tougher; see the description for that room.

Wandering Monsters

Wandering monsters will be encountered on a 1 on 1d12; check for them every 3 turns.

- 1 - 2d6 giant rats
- 2 - 2d4 giant centipedes
- 3 - 1d3 large spiders
- 4 - 2d4 Jermlaine - subtract any Jermlaine slain from the Jermlaine roster
- 5 - 1d3 fire beetles
- 6 - 1d3 stirges

Jermlaine Roster: There are 40 Jermlaine in the tunnels, all of whom live in the Warrens. However, sometimes they venture out into the entrance caverns. Please note that despite the relatively large size of this clan of Jermlaine, they do not have an "Elder" who drains magical items; this individual died of old age a year or so back, and no other Jermlaine has attained the age and experience to take his place.

- 10 Jermlaine with 1 hp
- 10 Jermlaine with 2 hp
- 10 Jermlaine with 3 hp
- 10 Jermlaine with 4 hp

These creatures will form groups of 2d6 Jermlaine and harry the party as they traverse the caverns. The DM will need to play them intelligently; the Jermlaine will not close with the party in melee if they can possibly avoid it.

Movement in the Warrens is limited by the narrow passages and restricted head height. Only a gnome or halfling could move at full speed. Other characters will have their normal move reduced by 3" (for dwarfs and elves) or 6" (for humans, half-elves or half-orcs) – a character who is so encumbered that his or her move rate would be reduced to nil by these restrictions is too burdened to move and will need to shed some of his or her equipment, i.e. there is no minimum movement rate here.

A thorough search of the largest room in the Warrens might reveal a loose stone in the north wall (same chance to locate as a secret door). Behind this loose stone is a red felt woodsman's hat (imagine Robin Hood's hat) with a green feather which radiates *alteration* magic. This is a *Hat of Comprehend Languages* (qv).

Encounter Key

1. ENTRANCE CHAMBER: This room is slightly damp, with water running down the walls and a couple of puddles here and there on the floor. Player characters who successfully track Sathrena's party will find that they went directly into room 7.

If the player characters encounter any Jermlaine in these tunnels, and then subsequently leave to recover and recuperate, then when and if they return to this chamber a second time, the Jermlaine will set an ambush here. In this event the DM should place 2d4 Jermlaine in this room. They will be behind a flimsy barricade and they will pelt the party with darts.

2. DEAD GNOLL CHAMBER: This room contains a dead female gnoll. If any member of the party speaks gnoll or is familiar with gnoll culture, they will discover from certain signs on the corpse that she was formerly a member of the Pigroot clan. According to the tattoos on her body, she was outcast from the clan for violation of some rule. It is unclear why the gnoll-bitch came into this cave system.

There are rot grubs in the body. Anyone handling it (for example, in order to turn it over and inspect its back) must save -v- poison or be infected with a rot grub. If open flame is applied to the grub immediately, then the character will only take 1d6 damage from the fire; otherwise the character will die when the grub burrows into some vital internal organ.

If the body is handled by a person wearing gloves, or using a pole or weapon of some kind to turn it over, then the grubs will be observed without risk to the party.

The body is several weeks old, and has been efficiently stripped of most of its equipment. A character tracking in this room will observe the Jermlaine footprints here. Describe them as "like the footprints of tiny, barefoot humans, but smaller even than a halfling or gnome". The door from here to area (3) is locked.

3. LOCKED CHAMBER: This door is much stouter than the others in the dungeon, being formed of thick planks of well-seasoned oak bound with iron. Mace and axe blows will be ineffective; the only way of opening it via sheer strength would be to take a battering ram to it.

There is a bronze lock on the door, which may be opened by a thief who makes a successful *pick locks* roll.

The room on the other side contains various barrels and chests. Most of the barrels once contained wine (now long-soured and horrible to the taste) and most of the chests once held clothing of linen and silk (now long-since mildewed to worthlessness.) However, a thorough search of the room will reveal that one garment - possibly a former cloak - still contains a filigree silver brooch worth 70gp.

4. WATERLOGGED CHAMBER: This room is dripping with moisture which runs down the walls and has pooled on the floor to a depth of about four inches. It is noisome and musty. The west wall of the room has a thick patch of greyish fungus growing on it, and there is a pile of rubble in the northwest corner of the room.

The fungus is not harmful, but the DM should have any player character who disturbs it roll a d20 in any case (a little paranoia is good for the PCs!) A loose stone in the wall behind the fungus conceals a silver earring, set with a small piece of jet (value: 50 gp.)

The pile of rubble contains six Giant Centipedes (hp: 2x2, 4x1).

5. POLTERGEIST'S CHAMBER: The doorway which leads to this room has runes in an unknown language scratched into it. (The writings are in the rudimentary Jermlaine tongue, warning that the room is haunted and advising people not to enter).

This room has significant marks and chips on the walls, and lumps of masonry and broken loose stones litter the floor. It is the lair of a Poltergeist (hp: 3) which cannot leave the room. The player characters

are unlikely to have silver or magical weapons with which to defeat the Poltergeist as yet, but a cleric can turn it in this room (it counts as a ghoul) and thus keep it at bay. If successfully turned, it will flee to the northeast corner of the room.

The Jermlaine are terrified of the Poltergeist and will not pass the doorway into this room unless they are sure it is dead.

6. DUSTY CHAMBER: This room is thickly coated with dust and choked with (normal) spider webs and cobwebs. Thanks to the Poltergeist, no living creature has been here for many years. However, there is a mouldering skeleton near the south wall of the room which, if investigated, will prove to be the body of a male human. None of his gear has survived the passage of time except for a carved ivory scroll case (value: 5 gp), which contains a clerical scroll of three *Neutralize Poison* spells.

7. DEAD BEETLE: The corpse of a huge dead beetle (nearly man-sized) lies on its back near the centre of this room. It has been cut and crushed in several places, and the room has obviously been thoroughly searched. (This beetle was slain by Sathrena and her party on their way through.)

If the player characters pass a successful tracking roll in this room, they will locate the party's tracks which lead off to the south towards area 12.

The door in the northwest corner of the room leads to a small room which was obviously the beetle's lair. There is nothing of value therein.

8. SHRIEKER ROOM: This room contains a shrieker (hp: 12.) This shrieker is old, and no longer shrieks quite so loudly as most of its species; for each round that it shrieks, there is a 2 in 6 chance of attracting a wandering monster (from the wandering monster table at the beginning of the adventure.) It has no treasure.

9. GIANT RAT CHAMBER: There are 12 giant rats in this chamber (hp: 4,4,3,3,3,2,2,2,1,1,1,1). They are very hungry and will attack anyone entering immediately.

There is a rotting wooden desk in the southwest portion of the room. A thorough search of this desk will reveal 17 silver pieces stuck with glue to the underside of one of the drawers.

10. TRAPPED CHAMBER: There are scratchings on the door to this chamber similar to the ones leading into room 5. If translated from the Jermlaine, they will warn of a trap in this room, although the scratchings do not go into any specifics.

The 10` square section of corridor just to the south of room 10 contains an arrow trap. If it is not found by a PC thief, it will fire 1d3 arrows at the party. Each attacks a random target (rolling as a 1HD monster) and will inflict 1d6 damage per successful hit.

Room 10 itself contains some rotting barrels on the north wall. These contain brackish water. If they are emptied out, the player characters might find a gaudy bronze brooch set with zircons (value: 50 gp) at the bottom of one of the barrels.

11. STIRGE ROOM: The floor of this room is littered with guano. This might provide a clue to the player characters that there are monsters herein: 6 stirges (hp: 6,5,4,4,4,2) hang from the rafters. A search up among the stirges' nest will reveal a still-legible *Scroll of Protection from Poison*.

12. DEAD CENTIPEDES: There was clearly a fight with a group of giant centipedes here. Ten dead giant centipedes lie about the floor, all hewn up or crushed by various weapons. The room has obviously been searched and ransacked.

If the player characters are successfully tracking Sathrena's party, they will see that the tracks lead off further to the south, into area 13.

13. EMPTY CHAMBER: Sathrena's party clearly rested here. There are several discarded ration wrappers, an apple core, and a broken bootlace lying on the floor.

If the player characters are successfully tracking Sathrena's party, they will see that the tracks lead south, then east, taking the door into room 19.

14. JERMLAINE GUARD CHAMBER: There are 7 Jermlaine here from the roster. If the Jermlaine have not yet been alerted to the players' approach, these Jermlaine will be lax – they will be watching and gambling on a fight between a large spider (hp: 6 normally, but only 1 remaining) and a blinded fire beetle (hp: 7 normally, but only 3 remaining.) If the alarm has been sounded, these Jermlaine will be alert and careful.

If the player characters have raided the Jermlaine tunnels before, but left to recuperate and then re-entered the dungeon a second time, a Jermlaine ambush of 1d4+1 Jermlaine from the roster and 1d4+1 giant rats will be set in this room.

15. GIANT RAT PENS: This is where the Jermlaine breed their Giant Rats. There are a total of 7 adults (hp: 4,3,3,3,2,2,2) and 12 young (hp: 1 each) in this area. The room is littered with bones and the remnants of disgusting giant rat meals.

16. GIANT RAT KING: There are 9 giant rats of the largest size here (hp: 4 each). Their tails are intertwined and have grown together into a kind of knot, which means that they all must move as a group.

These giant rats have the power to speak with one another telepathically, and they almost literally inhabit one another's minds - they are in some ways more of a collective than a single entity. They are also more than usually intelligent for giant rats.

The other giant rats pay homage to this Giant Rat King. Slaying it will cause them to leave the dungeon - in other words, once all nine of these critters are dead, remove all encounters with giant rats (if they come up as a wandering monster, treat this as "no encounter.")

If the "knot" in the giant rats' tails is cut open, it will prove to contain a gold ring set with a bloodstone (value: 120gp.)

17. FORMER PRISON: Long ago, this corridor was used as a prison by a Lord of the Kingdom of Vermil. When the place was abandoned, the prisoners starved to death. Each prison cell contains a single human skeleton which has long-since been picked clean by the dungeon vermin.

These corpses will animate into eight skeletons (hp: 5 each) and attack the party if the door to even one of the prison cells is opened. Note that the cell door locks have long since rusted through, and it will be easy for the skeletons to burst out of their cells.

18. GIANT TICK ROOM: This room contains two giant ticks (HD: 3 each, hp 16, 14.) These are the most powerful monsters in the entrance area to the dungeon, and even the Jermlaine give them a wide berth.

The floor of the room is a noisome morass of Giant Tick leavings, and the stench in this room is absolutely foul. There are several Jermlaine skulls. If these are picked up and examined, one will prove to contain a filigree silver anklet with little silver bells of the kind used by dancers. The work is of very high quality, and the piece could fetch as much as 300gp.

19. EMPTY CHAMBER: This room once contained a fairly unpleasant spiked pit trap, but Sathrena's party detected it and neutralized it.

Anyone successfully tracking Sathrena's party will find that the tracks lead directly to area 20.

20. SATHRENA'S CHAMBER: Here the party will find the bodies of Sathrena & Co. as detailed at the start of

the module. They were caught in a net trap in the room and have been largely eaten by the local creepy crawlers. From this room, it is possible for the players to recover:

Sathrena's spellbook: *Read Magic, Detect Magic, Write, Erase, Sleep, Enlarge*. She also has a Bullseye Lantern, but the oil has been depleted.

Torin Mulekick's suit of dwarf-sized chain mail armour, his warhammer, his medium shield, his iron holy symbol, his helm, his vial of holy water, and his pouch of 6gp, 14sp and 12cp.

Yrrion's suit of leather armour, his shortsword, his thieves' picks and tools, his shortbow, his quiver containing a dozen silver-tipped arrows, and an electrum ring he had purloined and secreted in one of his boots for later resale (value: 15gp.)

Kayleigh's suit of banded mail, her large shield, her helm, her *longsword +1* (NSA), and her backpack which contains a 50' rope, a tinderbox, flint and steel, and a couple of spare flasks of oil.

Grot's suit of half-orc sized scale armour, his two-handed sword, his helm, and his pouch containing 13gp, 11sp and 2cp.

All of this gear is pre-owned but still relatively new, and it could attract up to 75% of its PHB prices on resale.

21. ZOMBIE CHAMBER: This room contains 4 zombies (hp: 12, 10, 9, 7.) They are programmed to attack any creature which enters the chamber, or any creature which attacks them with missile fire. The Jermlaine are afraid of them and avoid them.

One of the zombies wears a beaten bronze circlet set with a beautifully-cut piece of rock crystal (value: 100 gp.)

22. TRAPPED CHAMBER: The entrance to this room contains a scything blade trap. The Jermlaine have not marked it because it passes at a height of 4' and thus presents no threat to them - a gnome or halfling would be similarly immune.

The trap rolls "To Hit" as a 2HD monster and inflicts 1d8 points of damage.

The room itself contains 9 giant rats (hp: 4,3,3,3,2,2,1,1) who will attack on sight.

23. FREEZING CHAMBER: The door to this room is ajar, and requires no roll to open.

Even considering the chill, damp nature of the dungeon, the room feels preternaturally cold. The

giant rats have been using it as a kind of larder, and all sorts of unpleasant, rat-gnawed leavings are lying around. In amongst the mass of rotting meat is a *shortsword of slowness*. This +1 weapon will cause any target to be slowed (as the spell, but limited to one target) on a natural "to hit" roll of 20.

UPPER CAVERNS

The cavern environment: These are natural caves, dank and dripping with moisture; the only light is provided by the occasional patch of phosphorescent moss. The footing in these caves is treacherous, and the party's overall movement speed should not exceed 6" to avoid the risk of accident. If the party attempts to move faster than this, have each party member roll 1d20; if their result is in excess of their DEX score, they have slipped over, suffering 1hp of damage and costing them 2 segments while they regain their footing. This does not apply to barefooted halflings or to the Regressed (q.v.), as much of the risk arises from the slippery leather soles of a typical pre-industrial boot.

Wandering Monsters

Wandering monsters will be encountered on a 1 on 1d12; check for them every 3 turns.

- 1 - 1d3 piercers
- 2 - 2d4 giant centipedes
- 3 - 1d3 large spiders
- 4 - 2d6 Regressed - subtract any Regressed slain from the Regressed roster
- 5 - 1d3 giant ants
- 6 - 1 gelatinous cube

Regressed Roster

The following Regressed dwell within the Upper Caverns:

- 30 Regressed males armed with assorted stone and bone weapons (hp: 6 each, damage 1d6)
- 30 Regressed females armed with assorted stone and bone weapons (hp: 4 each, damage 1d4)
- 1 Regressed minor cleric with a bone mace (hp: 9, attacks as a 2HD monster, damage 1d6+1, spells: *Cure Light Wounds*, *Cure Light Wounds*)

Encounter Key

24. LATRINE CAVE: This cave is used as a waste disposal area and latrine by the Regressed who dwell in the Upper Caverns, since it is ventilated by a series of narrow (6") cracks which lead via a tortuous

route to the surface. It is foul and reeking with filth. There is a 20% chance of meeting 1d3 random Regressed (from the roster) in this cave at their eliminations. A search of the sewage will reveal nothing of interest or value, but particularly if the search is conducted by anyone who is wounded, the DM should determine whether there is a risk of infection (see DMG, "Disease.")

25. FARM CAVE: Here is where the Regressed who dwell within the Upper Caverns farm for fungus. Rotted sewage is brought from the latrine (above) into this cave, as are corpses and other biological waste produced by the Regressed, and smeared into a foul sludge onto the floor onto which mushroom spores are transmitted. There is a 75% chance of encountering 2d4 random Regressed (from the roster) in this cave, at work on their farming activities.

26. CAVE OF PAINTINGS: The walls and ceiling of this cave are covered with paintings made by Regressed, which are primarily of a religious nature. There are many paintings of an amorphous reddish blob with three pseudopods, a single central eye and a massive maw gaping with teeth, engaging in assorted obscene and disgusting activities, while the whitish-pink Regressed look on in adoration or participate in some way in the rites. Any good character with a WIS of 15 or more will find the paintings quite disturbing and will wish to leave the cave. There is a 50% chance of encountering 1d4 random Regressed (from the roster) in the cave, working on the paintings.

27-31. DWELLING CAVES: These caves are dormitories and dwelling caves for various groups of Regressed. Each will contain 2d4 males and 2d4 females from the roster, plus 3 juveniles (non-combatant and not listed on the roster). They will be sleeping, resting, cooking, cleaning, and otherwise performing domestic activities if the alert has not been given.

One of the females in cave #28 was in the process of cutting up some giant rat meat to cook over a dung fire until the PCs arrived. She has set aside the knife she was using for this purpose to take up her bone club, since she is unaware of its magical properties; it is a *Hound's Tooth Dagger* (see "new magic items").

32. STALAGMITE CAVE: This cave is filled with stalactites and stalagmites, some of which have grown together into columns. A vein of quartz crystals glints in the wall opposite the entrance. The cave is fantastically beautiful, and good-aligned characters with a WIS of 15 or more will feel safe and at peace here. There are no signs of Regressed activity in the cave at all.

Evil things do not normally enter this cave; it makes them uncomfortable, though it does not actually harm them in any way. If the characters choose to rest in this cave, no wandering monsters will be encountered, although the DM should pretend to roll wandering monster dice as normal to conceal this fact from the players.

33. FIRE BEETLE CAVE: The Regressed use fire beetle glands for lighting, and fire beetles are also a primary protein source in their diet. This is where the beetles are kept. There are 7 beetles in the room (hp: 7,7,6,6,5,4,3). The unnumbered alcove in the tunnel leading to this room contains their feed store.

34. STORE CAVE: This is where the Regressed keep their supplies of food, hide and bones. The room is packed with dried fungus, dried meat (hard to identify which animal, but there's certainly giant rat meat), dried fish (from the stream and pool on level 2), skins (primarily giant rat skins, some of which are being cured with salt), and bones. There is nothing of value here.

35. DINING CAVERN: Here, the Regressed gather irregularly in order to eat. The cavern will be empty when the PCs arrive, but the grisly remains of the repulsive meals eaten by these creatures will be everywhere in evidence.

A thorough search of the cavern will reveal a carefully-carved bone flute lying discarded among the litter of bones on the floor. The flute is non-magical but is well-made and has a pleasing tone; it could be sold for perhaps 15 gp.

36. PRIEST'S CAVE: Any Regressed who have not been placed elsewhere will be in this cave (see roster). It is normally the dwelling place of the Regressed Priest and it is here that he receives his congregation. If the Regressed are not aware of the players' approach, then they will be at worship in a rite which involves drinking a fermented mushroom brew; any Regressed encountered in this cave will be either mildly (50%) or severely (50%) intoxicated as a result (see DMG, "Effects of Alcohol or Drugs"), save the Priest, who is very tolerant of the drug and will not be affected.

In the centre of the cave is a bronze cauldron being heated over a dung fire. It contains a transparent, colourless, odourless hot liquid, which is the brew the Regressed have been drinking; any player character who so much as samples it must make a saving throw vs. poison or become mildly intoxicated (cf. DMG). If the character takes more than a sip, adjust the chances of success on the save downwards; if he or she takes a swig or gulp, s/he is automatically mildly intoxicated and must save vs poison to avoid becoming severely intoxicated. Very large doses

can be fatal! The effects of the drug take 8 hours (24 turns) to wear off. Intoxicated characters may accidentally fall down the sinkhole to level 2; the DM should determine the chances of this according to the circumstances. It is a 10' drop which causes 1d6 points of damage.

The Priest wears a piece of crude jewellery consisting of an unusual purplish rock crystal on a chewed-leather thong. The stone is of a rare kind and could be sold for as much as 200gp.

LOWER CAVERNS

The cavern environment: Similar to the Upper Caverns, these are natural caves, dank and dripping with moisture; the only light is provided by the occasional patch of phosphorescent moss. The footing in these caves is treacherous, and the party's overall movement speed should not exceed 6" to avoid the risk of accident. If the party attempts to move faster than this, have each party member roll 1d20; if their result is in excess of their DEX score, they have slipped over, suffering 1hp of damage and costing them 2 segments while they regain their footing. This does not apply to barefooted halflings or to the Regressed, as much of the risk arises from the slippery leather soles of a typical pre-industrial boot.

Wandering Monsters

Wandering monsters will be encountered on a 1 on 1d12; check for them every 3 turns.

- 1 - 1d6 stirges
- 2 - 2d6 giant centipedes
- 3 - 1d4 large spiders
- 4 - 1d6+6 Regressed - subtract any Regressed slain from the Regressed roster
- 5 - 1d4 giant ants
- 6 - 1 gelatinous cube

Regressed Roster: The following Regressed dwell within the Lower Caverns:

- 60 Regressed males armed with assorted stone and bone weapons (hp: 7 each, damage 1d6)
- 60 Regressed females armed with assorted stone and bone weapons (hp: 5 each, damage 1d4)
- 3 Regressed minor clerics with bone maces (hp: 10, attacks as a 2HD monster, damage 1d6+1, spells: *Cure Light Wounds* x2)
- 1 Regressed chieftain with a bone morning star (hp: 21, attacks as a 4HD monster with +1 "to hit" owing to STR, damage 2d4+2 counting STR bonus, spells: *Command*, *Cure Light Wounds* x2, *Hold Person* x2).

Encounter Key

1. **SINKHOLE CAVE:** In the ceiling of this cave is the sinkhole leading to the first dungeon level. A rope formed of plaited strips of chewed hide leads upwards. There is a substantial pool of water on the floor along the western wall which is partially filled with sand; it contains what appear to be little blind cave worms. Closer inspection will reveal these to be leeches. Any character searching the sand at the bottom of the pool is 50% likely to suffer leech bites. These do no damage in game terms, but there is a 5% chance that the bites will lead to a random parasitic disease (cf. DMG). There is nothing of value in the cave.

2. **TANNING CAVERN:** Here, the Regressed tan the various hides and skins which they use. The tanning process involves steeping giant rat skins in urine, and the stench is absolutely incredible; characters venturing in here must check against their CON (same percentage chance of success as their System Shock roll) or be rendered helpless with retching. A search of the cavern will reveal a discarded Regressed "pretty rock" (actually a garnet, value 110gp).

3. **CAVE OF STATUETTES:** As part of their primitive culture, the Regressed make miniature statuettes and sculptures which usually depict scenes of religious significance for them. Most of these are carefully painted and highly polished. They have been set in various niches and naturally-formed wall sconces.

There are 118 statuettes in the room, all made of stone or bone. Most depict the Regressed themselves, but several show creatures the characters will have encountered in the caves, such as giant rats or jermlaine; there are also a number of statuettes depicting a strange-looking reddish creature with three pseudopods, a central eye, and a mouth dripping with fangs. Good-aligned characters with a WIS score of 14 or more will find that this last category of statuettes tends to make them feel uncomfortable.

Some of the statuettes are fashioned to a reasonably high artistic standard, and the better ones might be collected and sold in Melford for a total of maybe 300gp.

4. **GREEN SLIME CAVE:** The approaches to this cave to the south and east are each marked by a skull set atop a femur – an obvious warning of danger. The ceiling of the cave has a large patch of Green Slime in the centre. The slime can only be avoided by characters moving carefully through in single file, sticking close to the wall.

5. **COLLAPSED CAVERN:** The approach to this cavern slopes upwards; the cave itself is a good eight feet higher than cave 4, and its floor slopes in turn up to the pile of rubble in the northern wall. The cavern is noticeably drier than the other caves hereabouts.

A search of the rubble will reveal a cache of Regressed treasure, hidden here by a Regressed who feared that his bedroll would be robbed by his friends. There are three small zircons (value: 15gp each).

6. **CAVE BEHIND RUBBLE:** Centuries ago, an adventurer came down here with the intention of slaying the "god" worshipped by the Regressed. He was brave and well-prepared, but eventually the superior numbers of the Regressed overwhelmed him and he was captured. The subhumans chose to punish him by walling him up in this cave alive; and in the generations that have followed since, the existence of his remains has been forgotten.

The adventurer died alone in the darkness, naked, and without hope of rescue. Nevertheless, he did his best to leave a message for anyone who might follow him and understand. Scratched upon the walls of this cave using a flint, he left his last words.

The writing on the walls will name the Regressed "god" as Velikul, actually a being from another world, and explain that although Velikul is not a god, it is powerful, clever and highly evil. The unnamed adventurer advises the characters to stop up their ears before fighting the beast, explaining that its voice is its greatest power.

Aside from the adventurer's skeleton and these writings, there is nothing else in the cave.

7-15. **DWELLING CAVES:** Each of these caves will contain 2d4 male and 2d4 female Regressed (from the roster). If the alarm has not been sounded, they will be engaged in various domestic tasks; those in caves 8 and 10 will typically be fishing.

At the bottom of the deep pool in cave 10 is a skeleton encrusted with mineral deposits. It is the remains of a dead Regressed and is in no way remarkable; it has no treasure, not even a scroll tube containing a helpful map of the dungeon. However, any character descending to this depth will be subject to attack by the carnivorous fish which dwell in the pool. 1d6 fish will attack. They roll "to hit" as monsters with less than one hit die and inflict 1d2 damage per attack. These fish have 1hp each and are not worth any experience. There are hundreds of them in the water.

16. **GREAT PRIEST'S CAVE:** This cave is the home of the

leader of the Regressed and his three subpriests; all these will be present when the party arrives. Here also will be found any remaining Regressed not placed elsewhere or already killed (see roster), plus any that have previously fled encounters with the PCs. They will fight to the death to guard the entrance to their temple (areas 17-20 below). There is no treasure in this cave.

The entrances to the temple are covered with two curtains formed of hanging giant rat tails.

17. THE TEMPLE OF VELIKUL: This room is carved smoothly from the rock, having been enlarged and formed into a regular shape with fantastically-carved columns by the worshipful Regressed. Velikul itself will always be found here (cf. New Monsters).

If the player characters have cleared the rubble and located the writings in cavern 6, they should be well-equipped to deal with Velikul. If not, this will be a difficult and dangerous encounter, and the DM should emphasize the party's feelings of fear and foreboding as they approach the temple. Weaker parties should be encouraged to go and seek help from the shrine (Rachel, and possibly some men-at-arms, will be sent to assist; in this case the Shrine will certainly demand a cut of any treasure obtained with its assistance!)

18. TREASURE CHAMBER: Here, the Regressed place their offerings to Velikul. This includes shiny coins, mostly taken from dead Jermlaine: a total of 2,843 cp, 955 sp, 801 ep, 653 gp, and 105pp will be found. Additionally, the Regressed have placed many pieces of rock crystal in the room, mostly of low value. The party will find 1d6 rock crystals with a base value of 100gp and 5d6 rock crystals with a base value of 10gp each.

19. VELIKUL'S LIBRARY: Velikul is very intelligent and quite studious in nature, and has been careful to preserve the various writings that it has encountered over the aeons that it has lived in these caves. The Regressed were formerly a more advanced culture which has degenerated under Velikul's malign influence, and in ages past they produced many documents, most of which are still stored here. Although the original books and scrolls have largely long-since vanished in the damp, dank conditions, Velikul has been careful to copy their contents onto scraped pieces of giant rat skin, writing with an ink made from soot and substances extracted from the cave fish.

Although the room is mostly filled with ratskins crammed with tiny writing, a few real scrolls have survived undamaged, generally because they are magical in nature. The following scrolls will be found in Velikul's library:

Clerical: *Remove Curse, Neutralise Poison, Cure Disease, Dispel Magic*

Druidic: *Hold Animal, Summon Insects*

Magic-user: *Charm Person, Comprehend Languages, Mirror Image, Knock, Alvar's Wondrous Receptacle (new spell, qv.)*

Illusionist: *Hypnotism, Gaze Reflection*

The ratskins themselves contain a wide assortment of writings and would take a long time to read. Passages that the player characters might find interesting include:

- A meticulous description of the process of creating a homunculous, with a full ingredients list
- Recipes for three different kinds of scroll ink
- A treatise on the habits and hunting patterns of the penanggalan

DM Note: If the Melford Murder is in play, then any character reading this last passage will realise that there must definitely be a penanggalan at large in Melford. The character will also be aware of the ways of recognising one, including the need for windows that need hands to operate being left open and large jars of vinegar; if the characters put the pieces of the puzzle together correctly, they should be able to defeat Magdalene Colerre without risk to themselves, simply by destroying her jar of vinegar and then waiting for her to die.

20. SECRET TREASURE ROOM: On the wall by the secret door which leads to this room is a puzzle comprising movable numbered tiles. It comprises a grid of five tiles by five tiles, with nine separate tiles off to one side, each tile being individually numbered. The puzzle looks like this:

7		3	8	1	1	2	3
	5		2	4	4	5	6
6	2	4	3		7	8	9
2		2	5	3			
2	4	5		7			

The only way to open the door is to solve the puzzle by filling in the blank spots with correctly-numbered tiles. **DM note:** this has been done correctly if each of the lines, both horizontally and vertically, adds up to 20. The tiles used, reading across the blank spaces from the top left, are 1, 3, 6, 5, 8, and 2.

(The human servants of Velikul who wrought this puzzle in years past, before they became Regressed, rather foolishly believed that only a priest of Velikul would have the wisdom to understand the concept

of a magic square, and therefore thought that with their cunning puzzle, they were sealing out the profane from their inner sanctum forever.)

This room contains those of the Regressed offerings that Velikul really values. (It cares nothing for coins). The room contains many works of art, mostly paintings made with primitive brushes on stretched giant ratskin "canvasses", but also miniature statuettes and pieces of jewellery. Some of these items are particular to the Regressed culture, or couched in terms that would be pleasing only to a mind as alien as Velikul's. Others depict disturbing scenes of mutilation and torture that could not be sold on the open market. However, the characters will find 3d6 art objects that could be resold, each with a base value of 100gp.

21. GIANT FLY CAVERN: There are three giant bluebottles in this cavern (cf. Monster Manual II: Fly, Giant), hp: 17, 15, 12. In the Regressed religion, they are sacred to Velikul, and so have been allowed to live here unharmed; they are presently feeding on the bloated corpse of a dead Regressed. If searched, the corpse will prove to contain 6 growing giant bluebottle maggots (which are repulsive, but not dangerous).

22. CAVE OF THE CUBE: If the party has already encountered the Gelatinous Cube as a wandering monster and killed it, it will not be here. If they have encountered it and wounded it, it will be resting in its favourite spot somewhere along the north wall of the cave and will try to hide from them when they approach. If it has not yet been encountered, it will be lurking near the entrance to this cavern and will attack the party by surprise.

Lying on the floor near the south wall of the cave are various bits and pieces of metal accumulated by the cube on its wanderings. There is a human-sized suit of plate mail (non-magical, and needs to have its leather straps and padding replaced before being usable), a *military pick* +1, a *ring of feather falling* and a beautifully-wrought silver coronet set with small jacinths (value: 450gp).

23. ZOMBIE CAVE: There are 8 zombies in this cavern (hp: 12, 11, 10, 10, 8, 7, 7, 5). They are lying on the ground as if they were inanimate corpses. They are programmed to remain so unless attacked or turned, or until the characters enter area 24, at which time they are programmed to stand and attack the least-armoured living creature in sight. When no living creatures are in sight, they are programmed to lie down again. If turned, they will flee towards area 24.

A niche concealed in the shadows near the ceiling of this cavern contains a long-hidden bundle of 7 arrows +1.

24. COFFER CORPSE CAVE: Two coffer corpses (cf. Fiend Folio, Coffin Corpse) lurk in this cave; their attention will be attracted by any fighting in area 23 and they will join any fight there within 1d6 rounds. If the characters enter this cave, they will attack on sight.

One of the coffer corpses is wearing a heavy gold bracelet inlaid in silver with runes in Dwarfish (they read: "*Pledged in eternal service to Morri Axethane*"). The bracelet could be sold for perhaps 150 gp.

25. GLOOMY CAVE: This cave feels particularly dark and cold. There appears to be nothing here. A sufficiently careful search of the east wall of this cave would reveal a niche which has had a very well-fitting rock wedged into it to conceal it. If the rock is pulled away, a small sack will be visible behind it. This sack is actually a *bag of holding* and it is full of ancient triangular silver coins from the near-forgotten Kingdom of Vermil. There are 15,697 silver pieces in total.

The tunnel leading away to the south from the tunnel between areas 21 and 22 leads out towards the surface and emerges in a thicket about four hundred yards from the dungeon entrance.

Regressed

FREQUENCY: *Very Rare*

NO. APPEARING: 20-200

ARMOUR CLASS: 8

MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE: 1+1

% IN LAIR: 50%

TREASURE TYPE: P,T

ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *None*

SPECIAL DEFENCES: *None*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *Semi-*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic Evil*

SIZE: M

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Attack/Defence Modes: *Nil*

LEVEL/XP VALUE: 11/20+2/hp

Regressed arise when a group of humans, through long association with and worship of a particularly chaotic and evil being, begin to revert to an earlier evolutionary state. Generally they begin to lose the power of language, although they can usually communicate with one another reasonably

effectively via a system of hoots, grunts, shrieks and gestures. The societies formed by the Regressed are chaotic and violent in the extreme, and the strong will tend to dominate the weak most cruelly; typically leader-types will be associated with the Regressed religion and possess minor clerical powers.

Many Regressed cultures arise underground, and in this case the Regressed will possess senses which are attuned to the darkness. Although they do not have true infravision, their acute hearing, light-sensitive eyes and enhanced olfactory capabilities enable them to act effectively even in total darkness.

For every 10 Regressed, there will be a leader-type with maximum hp. For every 30 Regressed, there will be a tribal cleric of 2nd level; if 100 or more are encountered, there will be a tribal priest of 3rd or 4th level. There will also be females (as the males, but with 1d6+1 hit dice instead of 1d8+1) equal to 100% of the number of males, and young equal to 50% of the number of males. These Regressed are in addition to the number shown on the die.

Description: Regressed resemble stooped, hunched humans with low, beetling brows and protruding jaws. Their legs are noticeably shorter than those of most humans, but their arms are longer, and those which live underground tend to be very pale of skin. They have normally abandoned the use of clothing, and compensate for this by a thick growth of body hair. Often they will bear scars arising from the fighting, torture, and foul religious observations of their kind.

Velikul

FREQUENCY: *Unique*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOUR CLASS: 10

MOVE: 6"

HIT DICE: 35hp; *treat as a 5HD monster*

% IN LAIR: 100%

TREASURE TYPE: *Custom treasure*

ATTACKS: 3

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d8/1d8/1d8

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Shriek*

SPECIAL DEFENCES: *None*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic Evil*

SIZE: *L*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Attack/Defence Modes: *Nil*

LEVEL/XP VALUE: V/355 xp

Resembling an amorphous mass with three pseudopods, a central eye, and a gaping maw full of slavering fangs, Velikul is a survivor of a forgotten age. It has dwelt among its worshippers for so long

that it has come to believe that it is a god; and for some unfathomable reason, it pleases some Chaotic power of the Outer Planes to grant spells to Velikul's worshippers when they pray to Velikul.

Foul though Velikul's appearance undoubtedly is, its voice is sweet and reasonable. Incongruously, its tones are those of a young but well-spoken human child, and it can be very persuasive.

Velikul can use its voice in two ways: Either to *hypnotise* its audience (therefore making them vulnerable to a *suggestion* spell), but only if it can speak to them uninterrupted for three rounds during which no combat is taking place, or as a *command* spell. Even while attacking Velikul may issue one *command* each round.

A character who blocks up his or her ears before encountering Velikul will be able to muffle the sounds it makes sufficiently to render the character immune to all of the effects of its voice.

Hat of Comprehend Languages

This hat empowers the wearer to understand (but not speak) written or spoken languages. It is more limited than the mage spell *comprehend languages* because it is restricted to the tongues of humanoid creatures (which are those which would be considered "giant-class" to a ranger).

Hound's Tooth Dagger

This dagger, formed of a huge sharpened dog's tooth set with a bone handle, appears to be a magical +1 weapon, and normally functions as such. However, on a natural "to hit" roll of 20, it will magically conjure a dog (cf. *Monster Manual: Dog, Wild*) which will also begin to attack the target which is struck. The dog has 4hp and can be attacked as normal, and it will disappear in any case when its target is dead. It never needs to check morale and cannot be commanded to do anything other than attack the creature it has been conjured to fight.

The hounds thereby summoned resemble the animals which form a part of the Wild Hunt (cf. *Deities & Demigods*). Black-furred, their eyes glow a spectral green, and they bring with them a preternatural chill in which their breath steams like jets of fog. It is not possible for more than three dogs at a time to be summoned by the Hound's Tooth Dagger.

Alvar's Wondrous Receptacle

(Conjuration/Summoning)

Level: 2

Components: V,S

Range: Nil

Casting Time: 2 segments

Duration: Random, see below
 Saving throw: None
 Area of Effect: Caster

This spell creates a temporary magical extradimensional space from which the caster can draw forth magical darts to throw at his or her foes. The darts thereby summoned are +1 on both "to hit" rolls and damage; they can hit creatures which would only normally be hit by magical or silver weapons.

Every round the caster can draw forth up to three darts and hurl them. Whether they hit or miss, they vanish the round after being drawn forth.

Each round, roll 2d6 to determine whether the spell's duration has ended and the 'receptacle ceases to exist. If the roll is equal to or less than the number of rounds for which the spell has been in effect, then the spell is over. Therefore, on round 1, the spell's duration cannot expire. On round 2, it will expire only on a "2" on 2d6; on round 5, it will disappear if the dice roll is "5" or less.

The Oracle (Demigod)

Armour Class: -8
 Move: 24"
 Hit points: 131
 No. of attacks: 4
 Damage: 3d8
 Special attacks: Age
 Special defences: +3 or better wpn to hit
 Magic resistance: 75%
 Size: L
 Alignment: *Chaotic Neutral*
 Worshippers' alignment: *Clerics Chaotic Neutral/Chaotic Good; Druids Neutral*
 Symbol: *Monolith*
 Plane: *Astral*
 Cleric/Druid: *14th cleric*
 Fighter/Paladin/Ranger: *Nil*
 Magic-User/Illusionist: *18th M-U*
 Thief/Assassin: *Nil*
 Monk/Bard: *Nil*
 Psionic Ability: *VI*

Attack/Defence Modes: *Nil*
 S 10 I 19 W 20 D 20 C 10 Ch 10 Co N/A (invisible)

The Oracle is an insubstantial, immaterial, invisible creature that dwells on the Astral Plane. Worshippers contend that it is made of transparent fog and the only way of sensing its presence is a slight drop in temperature.

The Oracle has a limited mastery over time, which explains its seemingly preternatural speed and apparent foreknowledge of the future. It may cast *Time Stop* 3 times per day over and above its normal powers, and it may *age* any non-divine target of its choice by 2-20 years once per round.

It is worshipped in only one place in the multiverse, an obscure shrine near the village of Melford, and at present has only three priests and a few hundred worshippers. It does not appear to demand any more than this and its religion is non-evangelical. Like all demigods it may grant spells up to 5th level of clerical power from its own resources; rumour has it that through its association with other gods of time, thought and knowledge (such as Thoth of the Egyptian pantheon) its priests could be granted 6th or 7th level spells if they achieved a sufficiently high level.

It would theoretically be possible for a druid to worship the Oracle. So far as is known, none actually do so at present.

The Oracle usually makes its wishes and predictions known via its earthly avatar, a Holy Goat chosen specifically for this purpose by its priests. There is a complex system of divination based on the movements of the Holy Goat around the Oracle's sacred monoliths.

The worship of the Oracle is expensive, demanding the sacrifice by burning of costly cloths and objects of art. Its temple makes back this money through the sale of priestly services such as *Cure Disease* and *Raise Dead*.

AFTERMATH

With the defeat of Velikul and the final clearance of the last few caverns of the dungeon, this trilogy of adventures draws to a close. There is more than sufficient experience to be earned in these caverns for adventurers who began *The Spider Farm* as first level characters to reach second level, and indeed if the party is a small one with few or no henchmen, you may find that some have climbed as high as third level of experience herein.

Feedback and comments from people who have played the adventure are very welcome indeed. If you played through any of my work, why not review it for *Dragonsfoot* and post your comments on the forums at <http://www.dragonsfoot.org>? Alternatively, the author can be emailed at papersandpaychecks@yahoo.co.uk and loves to receive constructive criticism.