

N7

ADVANCED FANTASY ADVENTURE

420195

MYSTERY BENEATH THE CHURCH

FOR CHARACTERS LEVELS 1-3



by rc pinnell

The adventure that began in the N6 MASS FOR THE MISSING PRIEST continues. If the characters have not experienced the first module in the series, it is important for the DM to study it before beginning play in this one, in order to provide them with some of the background information found only there.

This module includes the general information necessary in order to conduct the adventure. But in some cases, it will require the DM to have (or gain) access to more detailed, specific data that is too lengthy to include in a work such as this. In such instances, you (the DM) will be referred to the appropriate manual.

ADVANCED FANTASY ADVENTURE

MYSTERY BENEATH THE CHURCH

(PART 2 OF THE MINOTAUR MARSHES SERIES)

FOR CHARACTERS LEVELS 1ST-3RD

PREFACE

This is the second part of the Minotaur Marshes trilogy (being N7) and while some modules in a series are designed to be playable as separate products, with little to no connecting plot, such is not the case, here. Characters adventuring in this scenario are expected to have already completed the first in the series (N6). If you (the DM) wish to allow characters to participate in this adventure without having experienced the first installment, you will have to come up with reasons to allow it. Characters that actually completed the first part, will have knowledge (and an understanding) of the village and region that others will not. Thus, you (the DM) will have some work to do to make it all *gel*.

For returning characters the adventure begins where it left off. Having just discovered a secret door in the lowest dungeon level beneath the church, they can continue on their journey or return to the village and spend time resting and replacing any spent items they may need.

The plot and history behind this adventure need not be repeated in its entirety. In summary, the main reasons the characters may have come to the village of Hogg Bottem is either to find the missing priest, Brother Filus; discover why shipments of crayfish meat are no longer being sent to other parts of the realm; or to find a missing relative. Once the characters arrived, they met the residents and likely explored the abandoned warehouses and church. After searching these areas, battling creatures and recovering small amounts of treasure, they managed to reach the bottom dungeon level beneath the church, only to discover a secret door leading somewhere.

START

The characters may begin the adventure by continuing through the secret door. If such is the case, the matrix that follows will guide you (the DM) as to what they might discover as they explore. However, it is possible for the characters to enter through the marsh caves in the western bank of the peninsula. If you wish to allow them this access, then further information from the residents should be divulged to encourage them to explore from that direction. If they (and you) choose the latter, a simple rowboat will be provided to them that they may use upon request. To promote investigation from the marshes, use the following table, allowing all named residents to randomly provide 2-5 (d4+1) hints. (Roll d8, 2-5, per resident. If duplicate rolls result, choose a clue not already rolled.)

1. If my memory serves me, someone said they saw caves in the west bank of the peninsula...once.
2. Sometimes, when you stand on the west bank, you can hear sounds below, splashing about.
3. You don't suppose creatures from the marsh found a way into the church through the west bank?
4. The west bank is much higher above the marsh than the village-proper. Don't know why that's so.
5. I haven't gone near the west bank in a long time. Those marsh caves look like hungry mouths to me.
6. Brother Filus once asked me if there were caves along the marsh banks. Don't know if he ever found one.
7. Wouldn't surprise me if there were caves along the banks. Water does strange things to land.

8. You know, it wouldn't surprise me at this point if there was more below the church besides cellars.

APPROACH FROM THE MARSH

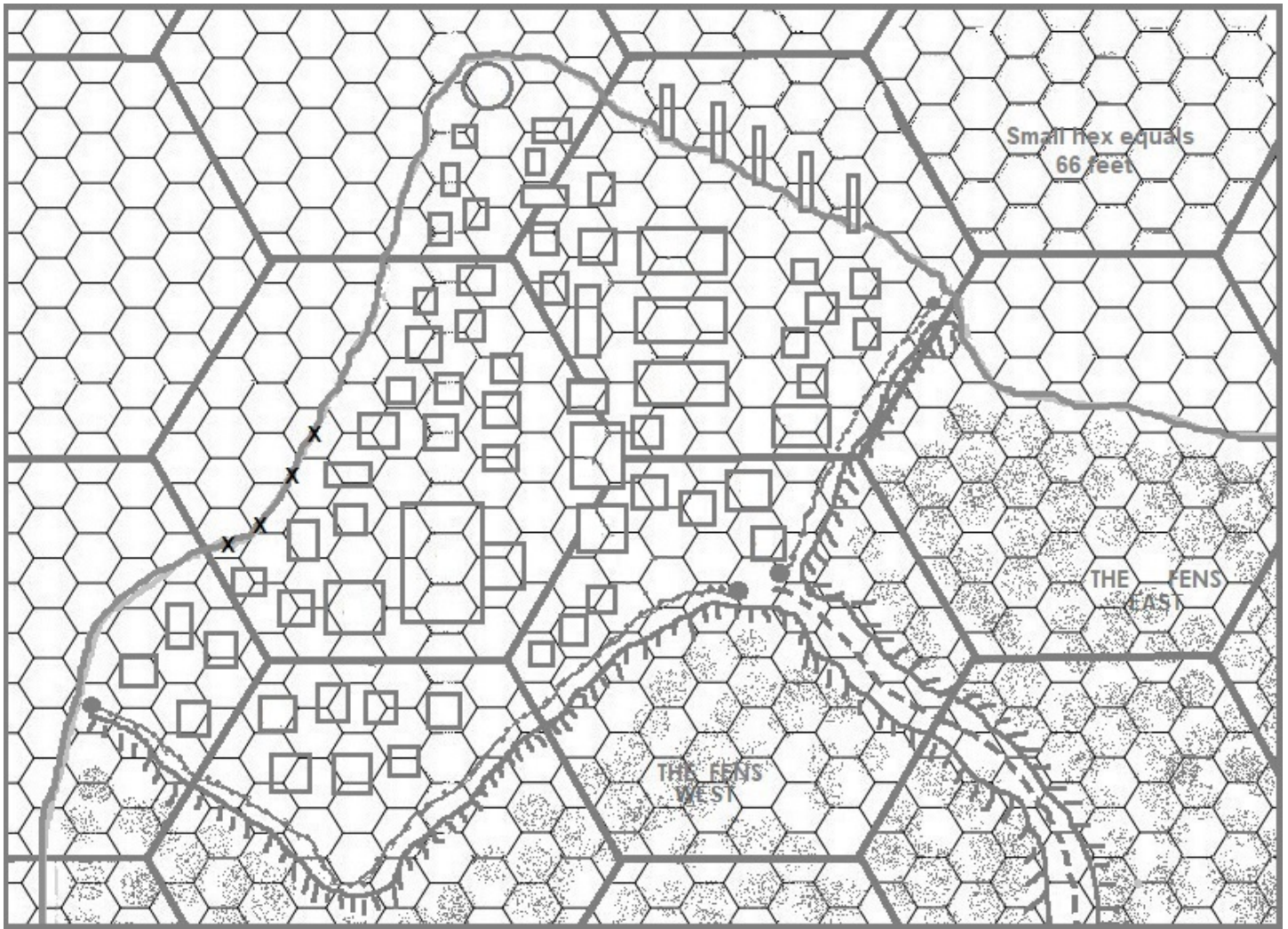
The rowboat to be provided will sufficiently transport up to 8 lightly burdened characters; 6 if moderately burdened; but only 4 if heavily burdened; in addition to duplicate supplies. (Figure on a total of 15,000 coin-weight in all.) Though winds come up from time to time, using a sail along the shore of the marsh is not feasible due to the heavy growth of reeds, small trees and thick moss floating atop the water. Rowing or poling is the only realistic means of propelling the boat along. To do so will require at least half of those on board, while another steers the boat; ideally, having one at the bow to move obstacles aside. In the open water under the best of conditions, the rowboat can reach a speed of 2 mph (See DMG, p54) Such speed will not likely be the case as characters explore the marsh caves, in this adventure. With each large hex on the marsh map representing 1/10th a mile, the figure of 3 rounds to cross one at such speed can be determined. But crossing much of the marsh does not include the "best of conditions." In addition to the flora earlier mentioned, floating debris (tree limbs, trunks and even animal corpses!) will also impede the speed and forward motion of the rowboat. Thus, for the purposes of this scenario—and to keep it simple—it is not unreasonable to just allow the characters to reach the caves in two to three (2-3) Turns, after setting out.

Exploring the western bank and approaching the caves from the marsh will not go unnoticed. There are creatures that like to lurk and patrol along the shore, in the water and the sky above, in search of their next meal. You (the DM) may construct your own table as to what type of creatures might be randomly met and when according to time of day, or use the following table. (Or do both.)

01-03. Algid (1-2)	AC5	M6"	HD5	ATK2	D1-10/1-10	AL CN	S M	(FF/p.11)
04-07. Assassin-bug (2)	AC5	M6"/18"	HD1+1	ATK1	D1-4	AL N	S S	(FF/p.12)
08-12. Beaver, giant (1-3)	AC6	M6"/12"	HD4	ATK1	D4-16	AL N	S M	(MM/p.9)
13-17. Blood hawk (1-4)	AC7	M24"	HD1+1	ATK3	D1-4x2/1-6	AL N	S S	(FF/p.15)
18-25. Bullywug (2-12)	AC6	M3"/15"	HD1	ATK3	D1-2x2/2-5	AL CE	S M	(FF/p.16)
25-26. Bunyip (1)	AC10	M12"	HD5	ATK1	D1-6	AL N	S M	(FF/p.17)
27-28. Catoblepas (1)	AC7	M6"	HD6+2	ATK1	D1-6+stun	AL N	S L	(MM/p.13)
29-30. Cifal (1)	AC6	M6"	HD8	ATK1	D1-12	AL N	S M	(FF/p.19)
31-39. Crayfish, giant (1)	AC4	M6"/12"	HD4+4	ATK2	D2-12x2	AL N	S L	(MM/p.15)
40-50. Crocodile (2-5)	AC5	M6"/12"	HD3	ATK2	D2-8/2-12	AL N	S L	(MM/p.15)
51-53. Crocodile, giant (1)	AC4	M6"/12"	HD7	ATK2	D3-18/2-20	AL N	S L	(MM/p.15)
54-62. Frog, giant (2-20)	AC7	M3"/9"	HD1-3	ATK1	D1-3/1-6/2-8	AL N	S S-M	(MM/p.41)
63-65. Frog, killer (2-9)	AC8	M6"/12"	HD1+4	ATK3	D1-2x2/2-5	AL N	S S	(MM/p.41)
66-74. Frog, poisonous (1-6)	AC8	M3"/9"	HD1	ATK1	D1+p	AL N	S S	(MM/p.41)
75-80. Leech, giant (2-8)	AC9	M3"	HD1-4	ATK1	D1-4+drain	AL N	S S-M	(MM/p.60)
81-86. Owl, giant (1-2)	AC6	M3"/18"	HD4	ATK3	D2-8x2/2-5	AL N	S M	(MM/p.77)
87-88. Shambling mound (1)	AC0	M6"	HD8	ATK2	D2-16x2+s	AL N	S L	(MM/p.87)
89-94. Snake, constrictor (1)	AC5	M9"	HD6+1	ATK2	D1-4/2-8+c	AL N	S L	(MM/p.88)
95-99. Snake, poisonous (1)	AC5	M15"	HD4+2	ATK1	D1-3+p	AL N	S L	(MM/p.88)
100. (Special*)								

Generally, creatures are more active in the early morning hours between sun up and midday, and from dusk to nightfall; as hunters stalk their prey according to the habits of the hunted. For game purposes, you may follow the guidelines found in the DMG (p.47), considering a 1 in 10 chance per time-zone of some type of encounter occurring during the more active checks, and on a 1 in 12(or 20), for other times. If an encounter is indicated, consult the appropriate monster manual to gain in-depth information about each creature indicated. None of the creatures encountered will have any treasure, unless specifically decided otherwise by you (the DM).

The, *Special*, listing above is reserved for unique encounters to occur. You should determine these for your-self. Such rare events could include encounters with Harpies, Undead, a Will-O-(The)-Wisp, etc. It should not be used to throw a *total-party-killer* at the group (Hill Giants, Lich, etc.), but clearly something that is rare, even for this location.



Not evident from the map above, the peninsula was built-up by the village founders to keep the swampy fens from flooding the buildings during the rainy season. The docks appearing to sit atop the marsh are, in fact, 18' above the waterline. Ladders attached to the pilings allow descent into the boats awaiting below as they bob on the water. Cranes and other devices were once attached to the piers to lift various items from the boats onto the docks. These are no longer present, being disposed of long ago. As of now, the top of the west bank, which has a 90 to 100-degree slope, is from 20' to 22' above the waterline.

The map (above) indicates 4 cave entrances along the western bank of the peninsula (X). The northern most is approximately 16' across, with a height of 6' above the waterline. The next one down is around 12' across and also 6' above the waterline. The third is about 9' across, but the height of the opening is only 4' above the waterline, with the southernmost cave opening being a mere 7' across, with a height of 2' above the water. But these do not appear easily to identify as caves in the side of a hill. Over the span of time thick grass/moss has grown and hangs down obscuring the majority of each entrance; in the case of the smallest one, completely hiding it from view. With the entire bank overgrown with vegetation, it is difficult to determine the caves from a distance beyond 60'. Even with the characters actively seeking the features, as informed by the residents of their existence, the clustered stands of reeds and small trees choking the shoreline greatly inhibit discovery of the caves. Thus, past 60' the chance of spotting any indication of a cave entrance is a mere 1 in 12 per turn looking. From 30' to 60' the chance becomes 2 in 10; from 15' to 30', 2 in 8, and from 5' to 15' 4 in 6. Once a cave entry has been discovered, its location will thereafter require no check to find again.

APPROACH FROM BENEATH THE CHURCH

Characters entering through the secret door as described will find themselves within a narrow, man-made passage. The height within is rather low—only 6’—with a width of 5’. The walls and ceiling appear to be wooden planks attached to support posts every 10’ covered in patches of moss and lichens; cracks and missing slats reveal hard packed, but slimy, mud, beyond. The air within is heavy and humid. Smoke from a torch will fill the passage within 3 turns, causing eyes to burn and breathing to become difficult, until alleviated by some additional ventilation. These passages connect only the 4 rooms shown on the map; the natural tunnels connecting the caves are generally wider (6’-7’), with hard packed floors and walls.

WANDERING CREATURE ENCOUNTERS

Rooms and chambers occupied by a creature, as listed in the KEY, will not be prone to having a random encounter within unless/until the occupant has been driven off or destroyed. Once the area is empty and has remained so for a minimum of 9 hours, it is possible that one or more of the beasts appearing on the table to follow, might have entered and taken up residence within. Use your own common sense should such determinations be needed. Also, no random encounter will occur within the man-made passages until the doors/portals that access them have been triggered/opened. For general encounters within the natural passages, use the following table, or make your own chart.

Di Roll	Creature (Numbers of)	AC	MV	HD	ATK	DAM	AL	Size	Source
01-03	Ant, giant (1-4)	3	18"	2	1	1-6	N	S-M	MM/p.7
04-06	Bat, giant (1-6)	8	3"/18"	½ or 1	1	1-2 or 1-4	N	S-M	FF/p.14
07-13	Beetle, giant-fire (1-4)	4	12"	1+2	1	2-8	N	S-M	MM/p.9
14-17	Bullywug (3-10)	6	3"/15"	1	3	1-2/1-2/1-4	CE	S-M	FF/p.16
18-28	Gibberling (4-16)	10	9"	1	1	1-8	CN	S-M	FF/p.43
29-37	Jermlaine (5-20)	7	15"	½	1	1-2 or 1-4	NE	S	FF/p.53
38-50	Kobold (3-12)	7	6"	½	1	BWT or 1-4	LE	S	MM/p.57
51-54	Ogrillon (1-4)	6	12"	2	2	2-7/2-7	CE	M	FF/p.70
55-77	Rat, giant (5-30)	7	12"/6"	½	1	1-3+d	N	S	MM/p.81
78-86	Skeleton, animal (2-8)	8	6"	1-1	1	1-4	N	S-M	MM2/p.109
87-90	Skeleton* (1)	6	12"	6+3	1	2-12 or 1-6	N	L	Special*
91-97	Zombie, juju+ (1-4)	6	9"	3+12	1	3-12	N(E)	M	MM2/p.131
98-00	Zombie** (1)	7	6"	7+3	1	1-12	N	L	Special**

Skeleton* This creature will only be encountered once; if rolled again after its initial appearance, skip this result and go to the next higher listed encounter. Characters will likely be shocked at the sight of a totally reassembled **Minotaur-skeleton**, but such was the result of the tinkering going on by the person responsible for the construction of the rooms found herein. This magically-animated *construct* has remained stranded down here for over a century; since the passing of its maker. Other than the information above, it conforms to the typical skeleton found in the Monster Manual. (Note: the damage shown is as a Minotaur without a weapon, but due to its animated/Undead state, it delivers more than normal.)

Zombie** This creature is another magically-animated *construct* left behind when its maker died. Its body, however, has remained more or less, intact, though it is mummified. The **Minotaur-zombie** will only appear once, like the skeleton version above, and if rolls beyond the first indicate its presence, these are to be skipped, reducing the result to the previous listed encounter. Like the skeleton version, any information other than that above is to be found in the Monster Manual, and applies equally as if it were a typical zombie.

+ The Zombie, juju is a difficult challenge for a group of 1st and 2nd level characters, even in large numbers. It is recommended that only 1 such creature per roll be utilized until all 4 have been encountered, and destroyed. Once all 4, and the listing ahead and after it, have been destroyed, ignore all future rolls above 86.

A usual encounter check should be made once every 3 Turns, but occurring only on a roll of 1 on a d12.

KEY TO THE CAVES & ROOMS BENEATH THE CHURCH

a. This tunnel goes beyond the map (see map after Key) and splits, with one going northerly, passing under the village, the other branching southerly, exiting in the south bank at the East Fens. Or, you may have the tunnels lead to other locations, all together.

b. The dotted lines marked at these symbols indicates that the tunnels enter/exit the cave noted above the waterline. This usually prevents the marsh water from entering the inner caves, but flooding has been known to occur. The floor of the tunnels, at these locations, is a foot above the waterline of the cave.

1. **ROOM-MUSEUM** (33' x 21 ½') This room contains a large collection of various items; some atop shelves that line the north and south walls, some in frames hanging on the west and east walls. Anything that you can imagine to be reasonable within the boundaries of this adventure and your own campaign, might be found herein. It is a trophy room, of sorts, that *Drucilla* (the builder of this chamber and one of the founding members of the village) stocked with bits and things she took pleasure in displaying. Many were obtained through her explorations of the marshes, with some being from encounters she had to overcome, while others were simply things she found. Several shelves are filled with the horns of Minotaur that she discovered, scattered across the various islands of the marsh. There are also skulls, of the same and of other creatures to be found, as well as hides and skins; some in their entirety and some, mere sections. On the east wall among various displayed items, easily seen, is the stretched-out (cloak-like) skin of some creature. Attached at places to a large wooden frame, it can be lifted off its hooks and held if closer examination is made. Flipping it over reveals a parchment on the other side revealing a map of the marsh (see map after adventure text). The general outline and some features are noted, but the oddity of this is that a small portion, more or less in the middle, is missing. This missing piece is the same as that found in the first part of this series; if characters did not participate in that, the item is still obtainable should they return to the surface, and the church, and find it. Otherwise, you may place the missing section somewhere else within this *dungeon*-level.

Among all the items found within this chamber the most striking will likely be the figure of a metal snake coiled atop a stone podium in the southwest corner. This is actually an **Iron Cobra**, left here to protect the chamber's contents from molestation. AC 0, Move 12", HD 1(7 hp), ATK 1, D 1-3 + sleep poison, AL Neutral, Size Small (3' long). Consult the Fiend Folio, p.52-53 for more detailed information regarding this creature. It has been here for over a century and, thus, its sleep-poison (of which there is only 1 dose left) is rather weak—victims make Saves at a bonus of 2 to their roll. It will animate should anything within the chamber be moved, but will attack last in the first round of combat due to its long *hibernation*. If it can be captured and deactivated, it will be worth 1,000 GP if returned to a major city; 2,000 if the command-word is also known (this may be located on the beast's belly, carved within if you so decide. Otherwise, the command will be elsewhere, as you determine it.)

2. **STORAGE ROOM** (24' x 24') The horrific stench within this chamber will be nauseatingly noticeable even before entering. The chamber is cluttered with barrels and crates of all sorts of animal and vegetable items having decayed long ago. Remaining in the room, even with the doors open, will eventually overwhelm anyone, causing dizziness, burning eyes and a strong desire to vomit, until the latter occurs; this happens in 1 to 3 Turns, and renders the victim immobile for 1-10 rounds as he or she convulsively retches. Leaving the doors open allows ventilation to occur, clearing the air in 3 to 6 Turns (d4+2) and to a point where one can remain within without ill effects. Should characters be subject to the aforesaid effects it is probable (3 in 6 chance) that the two creatures currently hiding within the chamber will attempt to reach out and steal any small items that they can. These two **Snyad** are away from their lair, looking for anything edible or of use. They are AC -4, Move 21", HD 1-1 (6, 4 hp) AL Neutral, Size S (2 ½' tall) They do not involve them-selves in melee combat and will avoid confrontation, escaping into their tunnel if need be. A small band of these creatures has established a lair (J on map), but that is left for you

to develop if desired. Each of them will have 3-24 copper pieces. Consult the Fiend Folio (p.83) for more detailed information on the beings. The contents of the room are, otherwise, beyond any use to the characters, unless you wish to place something yourself.

3. **CAVE** The entrance to this cave has been described previously. A wooden dock two feet above the water allowed Drucilla to moor a boat here, between expeditions into the marshes. There is a 3 in 6 chance a **Giant Catfish** will be swimming in the cave. AC 7 Move //18", HD 7 (23 hp), ATK 1 D 3-12, poison spines + swallow whole, AL Neutral, Size L (16'); more information can be found in MM2 (p.23). The walls of the cave are wet and covered in moss and slime, otherwise, the cave is empty. The water is 5' deep within.

4. **CAVE** Access to this chamber is through a tunnel that is blocked by a huge, tight fitting boulder. The actual opening in the wall is about 4' high by 3' wide, and the obstruction is wedged in so tight that it requires an elf successfully checking for secret doors to even spot it; otherwise, any non-elf will only notice something odd about the wall on a roll of 1 in 20. The boulder must be pulled out of the tunnel, it cannot be pushed further in; or, it can be disintegrated by spell, or the hammering away with picks and such. The use of a disintegrate spell is well beyond the capabilities of characters intended for this adventure, thus, to remove the object will require them to strike it in an attempt to crack and smash it. Since it can automatically be struck with little effort, it will take a net total of 50 hit points of damage, or more, before the boulder shatters. For every strike upon it, weapons or tools must make a successful Save vs. Crushing Blow as per the DMG (p.80), or become dull/broken and useless. Pulling the boulder out requires a successful *Lift Gates* roll; but at a penalty of one half-normal chances for a single character. Once the obstruction is removed, characters may enter the tunnel and proceed.

The tunnel emerges at the edge of the eastern end of a great cavern. Its walls go up 15-20' before forming the ceiling of the chamber. The ledge (c) the characters end up at extends along the southeastern wall, but observation reveals this comes to an end around half-way. Other ledges (d-e) may be seen with the appropriate light source to allow it; ledge (f) can be seen from ledge (e) with the correct type of light; ledges (g-h) can be seen from (f); and (e-f-h) can be seen from (g). The floor of the chamber cannot be seen as it is 50' below the ledges. Other tunnels entering the chamber at the floor level, as well as the one leading to ledge (h), give access to areas that are left to you (the DM) to expand and develop if you so wish. For the purpose of this adventure, the only encounters within will be found as follows:

d. The skeletal remains of a previous explorer lay upon this shelf. Its gender is not evident from the little that is left. Rotted pieces of cloth cling to its bones and skull. It is missing the third finger of the left hand.

e. There is a 3 in 8 chance that 1-10 **Large Spiders** will be on this ledge as characters enter the chamber. They will flee down the walls if threatened with enough fire, but will otherwise attack immediately when someone reaches the ledge they are on. AC 8, Move 6" * 15", HD 1+1 (HP 8, 2x7, 2x6, 3x5, 2x4) ATK 1, D 1+poison, AL Neutral, Size S. Oddly, scattered upon the ledge are some coins (3-30 CP, 3-30 SP, 2-20 EP, 2-10 GP, 1-10 PP).

f. Laying partially hidden by dirt on this ledge is a short scabbard. Within it is a +1 *Magic Dagger*.

g. The husk of a giant cricket rocks back and forth here. Inside it are 5 **Huge Centipedes**, digesting what they have just eaten. If disturbed they will attack. AC 9, Move 21", HD 1 hp ea., ATK1, D poison (being smaller and weaker than larger ones of their species, the poison of these inflicts 4-16 points of damage rather than immediate death; Save for half is allowed), AL Neutral, Size-Small (1/2' long).

h. A small tunnel in the wall has allowed creatures to find their way to this ledge from time to time. At the present, 3 **Large Scorpions** have just reached the ledge. AC 5, Move 9", HD 2+2 (HP13, 11, 9), ATK 3, D 1-4/1-4/1 +poison (+2 bonus on Saves vs.), AL Neutral, Size-Small.

Without magic there is no easy way for characters to reach each ledge beyond the one they enter onto. It is possible for them to descend to the floor below and climb back up, or come up with other means. A thief

can easily move along the cavern walls from ledge to ledge. You should adjudicate whatever actions the players design to explore the chamber to determine if possible or not.

5. **CAVE** Though not one of the largest to be explored, it is the third biggest of the dry ones; the floor being of packed, but sandy earth and the walls not dripping with moisture from clinging moss. The ceiling goes from 6' at the walls to a height of 9' at its greatest. It appears naturally formed, and there is no apparent signs of what it may have been used for, if it ever was. Currently, there are 6 **Land Lamprey** within that will attack anything that enters the chamber. AC 7, Move 12", HD 1+2 (HP 9, 2x7, 6, 5, 4) ATK 1, D 1 hp per round (see MM2 p.80 for details), Alignment Neutral, Size Small (3' long). They have no treasure.

6. **CAVE** The largest of the water caves, this chamber is not easy to negotiate. Though only 4' deep with marsh water, a species of reeds has adapted to the low-light within, growing thick and to heights of 7' in the center portion of the great cavern. With the ceiling height being from 8' at the walls to 12' at places where it peaks, it feels claustrophobic despite its size. Characters entering from the land tunnel (b) will have to push their way through thick reeds, immediately dropping into the water. The smaller of the adjacent alcoves, the western chamber has thick, dripping moss covering most of the ceiling section. It is within this that there is a 1 in 6 chance per Turn characters exploring will be attacked by a pack of 24 **Piranha** that have some-how managed to find this location. They are, AC 2 (due to speed), Move 24", HD ½ (HP 6x4, 6x3, 6x2, 6x1), ATK 1, D 1-2, AL Neutral Size Small (4" long). Up to 6 will attack a single target of Small size, 8-10 for a Man-sized victim, and 12-15 for a Large creature. Note: if the characters have no open wounds and are not currently bleeding into the water, the chance the creatures will attack drops to 1 in 12. Weapons of normal to large size are virtually useless when attacking them (give such a -4 penalty to hit), and blunt weapons suffer not only their striking ability but will inflict only 1 hp of damage if successful at all. Residing within the larger, eastern alcove of the great chamber is a small, sub-adult, **Pan Lung** dragon! This creature discovered the marshes only a few years ago and found refuge in this cave when she was under attack by other beasts. She is AC 2, Move 12"/12"/9", HD 6 (18 hp), ATK 3, D 1-3/1-3/2-16, SA constriction and possible spells, AL Chaotic Neutral, Size Large (54' long). [See Fiend Folio (p.29) for more information on the creature.] She speaks only the language of the Pan Yung, thus, communicating with her will be difficult at best. But she will not be shocked by the sight of explorers; she remembers a human female moving through the caves, long ago. But if attacked, she will defend herself. Her only treasure is 8,000 GP in the form of 20 gems and 10 pieces of jewelry (determine the value of each yourself if necessary). Her story—how she came to be here, is left to you to create. If left alone, she will pay intruders half of her treasure if they prove they have eradicated the killer fish from the main cave.

7. **CAVE** This is likely the second largest of the water caves, if including the connected alcove. The depth of the murky water is from 4' to 5', with the ceiling height ranging from 4' to 5' above the water. Stalactites covered in dripping moss make passing through the chamber awkward in places, as some hang as much as 2', with the sinewy fibers reaching the water and floating there. (Note: the tunnel connecting this chamber and the previous one averages 6' in height, providing enough air space to travel within.) The water of the main portion is filled with **Leeches!** (*Large* and *Huge* types.) Every Turn spent within the water and moving through risks the chance of these creatures attaching themselves to unsuspecting explorers. As they are much smaller than the Giant type, they can wiggle through openings in clothing and armor and are, thus, difficult to eradicate. Killing them, however, is easy, requiring a dosing of salt, scraping them off, smashing them with one's fist or object, or cutting them with a blade. For, once attached, they remain until they are destroyed, or for 1 to 3 Turns as they feed. Encounter chance: 2 in 6/Turn. Appearing: 4-24/Large, 2-16/ Huge. AC 10, Move 1", HD 1 hp/Large, 1-2 hp/Huge, ATK 1, D 0/Large, 1/Huge + blood drain; 25% chance of infecting with a disease, AL Neutral, Size Small (3"-6"/Large; 6"-1'/Huge). The amount of blood these creatures can withdraw from a victim is not (likely) life threatening: 1 hp/Turn attached, however, up to the maximum shown may attach themselves to one victim, as there are literally hundreds, if not thousands, of these creatures within the water.

The alcove is accessible through a short tunnel and is more or less the same in regards to walls, ceiling and water depth. However, it is not filled with the smaller leeches as mentioned above. Instead, there are 4 **Giant Leeches** within. AC 9, Move 3", HD 3/2x2/1 (HP 15/10-8/6) ATK 1, D 1-4 + blood drain and chance of disease (50%), AL Neutral, Size Small to Man. Hidden beneath the water is also a rotted wooden chest (3' x 2' x 5') that will crumble to pieces if disturbed. Within will be found 5,000 CP. How it got here and why is left for you to decide, and embellish if desired.

8. **CAVE** The entrance tunnel to #7 also leads to this chamber. However, a quick glance at the map shows that the passage leading to it steadily rises in elevation above the waterline making it possible for this cave to remain, more or less, dry. It is currently occupied by some creatures that somehow discovered it, after having escaped their own certain death at the hands of their own kind in a rebellion that left the leader, in the southern portion, badly wounded; its most trusted and loyal servants stand guard in the northern part. Ten (10) **Lizard Men**, demoralized and hungry, have created a camp in the northern portion of the cavern. AC 4, Move 6"/12", HD 2+1 (HP: 17, 2x15, 3x13, 2x11, 2x9), ATK 1, D 1-4 (barbed darts) or 1-6 (javelin) they will throw before closing to fight with clubs for 2-8, AL Neutral, Size M (7' tall). Their cave contains 10 beds made of moss along the perimeter and a small campfire where smoke rises off of pieces of meat being roasted on sticks around it. Though they are Neutral, and not happy with things as they stand, they will not allow their leader to be harmed; but might be interested in offers of food or aide. They have no treasure. Recuperating from its near-death, a **Lizard King** occupies the southern section. It is AC 6 (due to injuries and inability to defend itself properly), Move 10"/6" (due to its injuries), HD 8 (15 hp) ATK 3 (at -4 to hit), D 1/1/1-4 (having lost its trident to its successor), MR 20%, AL Chaotic Evil, Size Large (8' tall). Having just survived the massacre that caused this group to flee their home, they wandered for some time before discovering the marshes and this cave. They have not been here very long, and have not explored the entire marsh; they are only familiar with this cave and its neighbor (#7). A few of them entered the inner cave (#6) but fled quickly upon discovering what dwelled within. Among them they have a total treasure of just 1,000 GP in small gems, 1-2 pieces of jewelry, and lesser coins that they might use to barter for aide.

9. **CAVE** The smallest of the water-caves, this one is sometimes the home of a creature that spends most of its time patrolling the marsh. Upon entering it there is a 1 in 10 chance the occupant will be present, and react to intruders. It is a **Bunyip**, AC 10, Move 12", HD 5 (30 hp), ATK 1, D 1-6, AL Neutral (CG), Size, Man-sized (6' long). See Fiend Folio (p.17) for more information regarding the creature. Though it has no treasure, per se, a skeletal hand rests on the floor of the chamber and, upon one of its fingers is a *magic ring!* (**Ring of Swimming** or **Water Walking**, at your discretion.)

10. **CAVE** Though this chamber has a wide entrance tunnel its actual dimensions make it the second to the smallest of the water-caves. That said, the water is not very deep (3'-4' on average), with tall stalks of reeds growing upward to heights of 5'-7'; the ceiling being around 8' above the waterline. It is one of the most dangerous of the caves the characters might enter, as there is a 1 in 20 chance that from 1 to 4 large creatures might be found within. These are **Babblers**, a weird mutation of lizard-man, caused long ago when the magical concoctions of a wizard that lived on one of the marsh islands were dumped into the waters. If they are not present it is because they are out in the marshes. They are AC 6, Move 6" or 12" (see Fiend Folio, p.13), HD 5 (HP 25, 23, 21, 19), ATK 3, D 1-6/1-6/1-8, AL Chaotic Evil, Size Large (8' tall). This cave is but one of the locations where they hide their treasure; an assortment of items taken from explorers from past adventures. The one here contains: 2,000 CP, 1,750 SP and a +1 **magic-shield!** If the Babblers are not present, the chamber will still be occupied, as an intruder has entered in their absence and is snooping around. A **Boalisk!** AC 5, Move 12", HD 5+1 (16 hp), ATK 2, D 1-3 (bite)/2-7 (constriction), SA Gaze (See MM2, p.19), AL Neutral, Size Large.

11-13. **CAVES** This trio of dry caves are the smallest to be explored. The walls and ceilings are rockier with less moisture and moss on them, while the floors are comprised of loose soil. Lurking within the each of the first two are the remains of past explorers that met their demise within. A cleric and ranger they were, but are now **Yellow Musk Zombies!** Each performs as follows:

Cleric L4, AC 4, Move 9", HD 2 (attacks as)/24 hp, ATK 1, D 2-7 (flail), AL Neutral Evil, Size Man; item—**Staff of Curing**.

Ranger L3, AC 6, Move 12", HD 2 (as above)/32 hp, ATK 1, D 1-8+2 (sword), AL (same), Size (same); items--+1 **sword**, +2 **leather armor, potion of healing, potion of giant (hill) strength**.

Within the last cave (#13) is the creature that created the zombies—a **Yellow Musk Creeper!** AC 7, Move 0", HD 3 (15 hp), ATK 2-12, AL Neutral, Size Large. [Consult the Fiend Folio (p.97) for details on how to run these encounters. Since you're reading this, it is assumed you have access to such material. If you do not, it is easy enough to search the internet or visit forums to find what you need. Be resourceful.]

14-15. **ROOMS** The last two rooms to be explored are/should be, the laboratory (#14) and morgue (#15). Access into the former is via a secret door that is so well designed, even Elves will have a difficult time locating it (1 in 20 chance if *passing* it, 1 in 12 if *actively searching*). Or, you may simply rule that they do not find it until all other chambers/caves have been explored. The walls, floors and ceilings of both rooms and connecting passage are well built and in good condition; the ceiling in the lab being 7' up and that in the morgue being 9', with normal and secret doors/portals being 3' wide by 6' high.

THE LABORATORY Light in the lab can be provided by way of hooks in each of the corners that can be used to suspend lanterns. Tables line the east wall at various heights and are covered with hundreds of various sundry items associated with a magic user's lab; everything from tools to chemicals can be found, but nothing of value to the characters, unless you decide otherwise. Beneath the center table in the wall behind it is a small secret panel (2' wide by 3' high) that accesses a small room beyond. A brick oven is built against the south wall, about 3' in height, where upon sits an iron cauldron 2' across and 3' deep. It is filled with liquid that gives off no odor, but if investigated, a roll of 1-3 on a d 6 will result in a watery creature emerging from within that will attack. This is a **Water Weird!** AC 4, Move 12", HD 3+3 (18 hp), ATK 0, D Nil, SA Drowning, AL Chaotic Evil, Size L (10' long). Complete information regarding this creature is found in the Monster Manual (p.100). Why this creature appears is beyond the characters' ability to determine. Beyond the secret panel beneath the table is a small chamber, the floor of which is filled by a large chest (2' wide by 6' long by 1' deep). The chest is locked (but not trapped), requiring either a thief to unlock it, or the chest lid to be smashed open. Either way, once opened, characters will find within hundreds of parchments and scrolls; many written in the language of magic, some in a tongue unknown, but none in the *common-speak*. The vast majority of them refer to the builder's experiences as she explored the marshes in search of its secrets. That she found an island with the ruins of what may have been a tower at one time, and the remains of creatures that she gathered up, and brought back to her laboratory to examine and dissect. Some speak of how she suspects the reason for the villagers' long lives may have something to do with the giant crayfish they catch in the marsh and consume; and that the same meat may have had ill effects on herself. Among the many scrolls are 3 that may benefit the characters. These being, a Scroll of Protection—Elementals; Scroll of Protection—Plants; Scroll of Protection—Poison. (The latter two being described in the Unearthed Arcana manual.)

THE MORGUE A passageway leading north from the laboratory goes about 12' then turns east and becomes a flight of steps that descend into the last room—the morgue (#15). Before entering the characters will detect the aroma of vinegar beyond the door. Once the door is opened the smell will begin to dissipate, the air becoming barely tolerable after 3 Turns. (Until then, those entering will suffer from burning eyes, running nose and ringing ears, causing vision to blur and dexterity to suffer; resulting in a -2 to hit and -4 to defense.) Basically rectangular, there are 6 small alcoves, 3 to the north, 3 to the south, where a coffin stands within one (x), and a large clay pot filled with liquid in each of the others. The mystery of why these are here, and who constructed them, will become evident upon exploration. Originally, the space was used by the builder to keep and store parts of animals that she found in the marsh. After her passing, the rooms remained unused, until they were discovered by a creature that took residence within—a **Penanggalan!** It is mainly this creature's fault for the lack of children within the village, as it tends to feed off of the very young, and pregnant women (always causing miscarriage). If discovered, it will react accordingly. (Consult the Fiend Folio, p.71, carefully for details regarding this creature.) AC 10; or 8 when detached from body, Move 12"/12" when head-gut detached from body, HD 6*³/₄ head & gut (32 or 16 hp) , ATK 1, D 1-4 or by weapon type, SA blood drain, SD yes, MR yes, AL Lawful Evil, Size Man-sized. Since the creature has no interest in any victim that isn't human, it has more or less ignored everything within the caves; focusing, instead, on the village above, and the long-lived

residents that have provided it with fresh blood for the past decades. While she has no treasure of her own, she is aware that some of the creatures in the caves, do.

This ends the adventure N7: **The Mystery Beneath the Church.**

But what became of Brother Filus? Will his fate yet be discovered?

Perhaps so, in the last part of this series, the N8: **Monsters in the Mist.**

MAPS

