

# Five Lairs



## Five Lairs for Old School Fantasy

by Rick Stump and the Fun Lads Five

## Five Lairs

**Five Lairs** is designed to add depth and flavor to any old school fantasy campaign.

This product is compatible with OSRIC and AD&D 1e and is easily modified to be compatible with any Old School fantasy role playing game.

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**Layout and Design:** The Harbinger Games Design Team

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Thank you for feedback from the OSR Community, especially William Stretch, Erik Jensen, and David McGuire.

## Introduction

Hello! Thank you for purchasing a copy of *Five Lairs*. This book is designed to supply you with 5 locations ready to be dropped into any existing world with little, if any, modifications. Each location has a monster, NPC, or villain and maybe even a unique magic item. Please feel free to modify the lairs, creatures, etc. for your own game.

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Thank you again!

**Note on Maps:** Since these lairs are designed to fit into your world no compass rose is included; please assume that 'North' means 'top of the map'.



## The Misty Cave:

The Misty Cave is typically part of a larger cavern complex, often in a 'border area' between different factions of subterranean groups. At the same time it can be a standalone location or a 'way point' along an underground road.



The cavern is as large as 85' wide and arches to 50' high in the center. The floor is typically covered by 20 to 30 inches of water but the areas marked 'deep pools' plunge down to 60 to 90 inches. Stalactites drip from the ceiling and stalagmites thrust up from the water.

The air is filled with an odd odor reminiscent of rot, yeast, sulfur, and copper; much of this is caused by the hot mineral water bubbling up from a thermal spring. The icy-cold water groundwater trickling down the cavern walls and dripping from the stalactites fill the cavern with constant sound. The mingling of

the hot and cold water creates a perpetual layer of mist above the surface of the pool that fills the cavern. The odd bubble of warm water and stray draft cause this mist to swirl around in constant faint motion that is always catching the eye.

The walls and stalactites have patches of phosphorescent fungi growing on them that shed a faint, eerie yellow-red light here and there throughout the space giving visitors a rough idea of the cavern's vast size. If visitors are using light sources the multiple odd shadows from the stalactites and stalagmites, the glowing fungi, and the swirling mist create a chaotic mix of light, shadow, and movement. This makes creatures that do not live in the pool 1 in d6 more likely to be surprised (i.e., if normally surprised on 1-2 in d6 here they are surprised on 1-3 in d6) and limits clear sight to about 20 feet while vague shapes are visible out to the edges of the cavern.

The mix of hot and cold air and water makes infravision useless beyond about 10' and completely incapable of seeing anything under the layer of mist.

The water itself is dark and foul. Anyone walking in the water is twice as likely to contract a disease or parasite as normal. Anyone who is submerged in the water is 4 times as likely as normal and anyone who drinks the water has only a 10% chance of *not* contracting a disease or parasite. Those searching the area thoroughly will find bits of rotten, uncooked flesh floating about and the odd bare bone across the floor beneath the water. Anyone that is in the water of the pool will reek of its stench until they and their clothes are washed.

When the party arrives roll a d6; on a 1 there is the fresh body of a mundane animal, human, demihuman, or humanoid (equal chances) at the edge of the pool.

Dwelling within the pool is an otyugh of large size and great cunning. It is capable of speaking very simple Common and a pidgin of Goblin, Orcish, etc. good enough to communicate with most intelligent creatures. It is clever enough to arrange deals and to honor them, usually. Some local creatures pay it a 'toll' of a body (animal, humanoid, etc., as the list above) in return for safe passage through the cavern; the otyugh calls this 'go safe foods'. Others pay what it calls 'now foods' to leave things in its lair that it will guard. You can get access to any of your stuff it is guarding with 'get stuff foods'.

When creatures it does not recognize first appear roll a reaction check; on a positive check the otyugh will speak up and say something like,

"Give go safe foods and safe go through. No give foods, no be safe."

The obviously not-from-a-human-throat voice will echo throughout the chamber, its source impossible to locate.

On a neutral result there is a 50/50 chance it will offer safe passage as above or attempt to drag off the trailing party member as a snack.

On a negative result it will attack from the murk, focusing on targets in heavy armor first.

Treasure will depend on the number and type of other creatures you place nearby, but the otyugh will have at least a few hundred gold pennies in coins and jewelry scattered along the fringes of the pool.

**The otyugh:** Hit Dice: 8 Hit Points: 50 A.C. 3 Attacks per round: 3 (tentacle/tentacle/bite)  
Damage per attack: 1d8/1d8/1d4+1 Special: Cannot be surprised; bite 90% likely to infect the target with a disease. Move: 60'/round

**Suggestions:** The Misty Cave can be used to build on the 'ecology' of a larger dungeon. The way the otyugh is willing to bargain with others and its nature means it can be the border between humanoid

clans, the barrier to a deeper level, or even just a 'time suck' to slow down adventurers with a time limit.

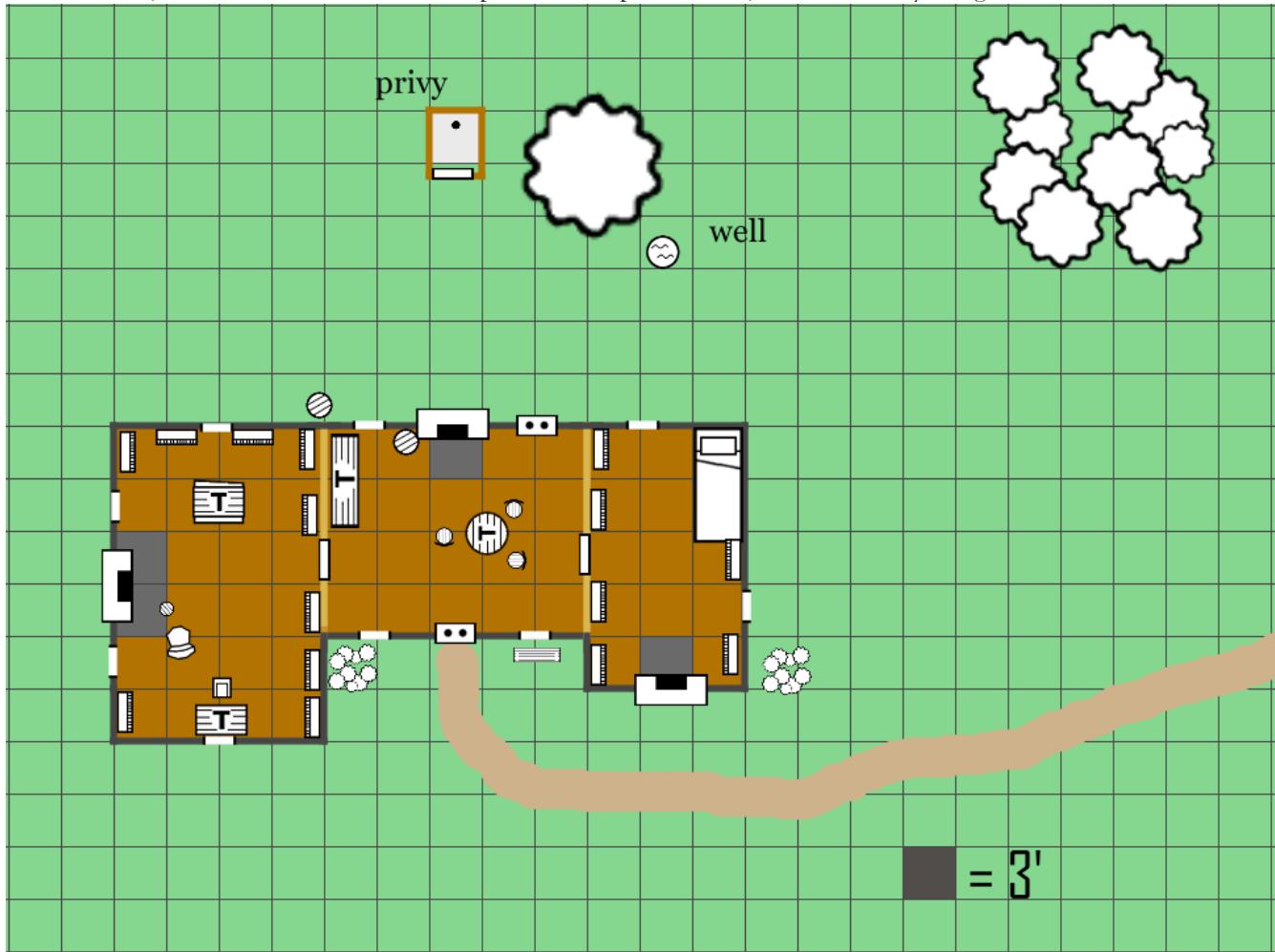
Another idea is to have a sought-after magic item lost in the deep pools – not even the otyugh knows it is there. Even a relic (perhaps the tooth of a saint or a powerful ring) could be scattered in the debris. Or a rare spell could be housed in a waterproof case that resembles a femur.

Last, the otyugh itself may be more than it seems; an adventurer *Polymorphed* and now unaware of its former nature or even a dead companion who was *Reincarnated* by an old foe!



## The Sage's Cottage:

Although the cottage is typically placed in a settled but rural frontier area it can be anywhere from a remote mountain to the middle of a large city. The sage's cottage is not usually a place for combat but instead for negotiations between a PC or party and an NPC with knowledge they need. The sage can also be a mentor, an NPC used to deliver exposition or plot hooks, or almost anything else.



### **The exterior-**

Saric's cottage is sturdy and well-made with mortared stone walls and a slate-tiled roof. The windows have exterior and interior shutters and the 4 windows into the library also have gnomish glass windows that can be opened inward like shutters.

There is small pear tree by the well, a well-pruned blueberries thicket near that, and rosebushes (yellow) by the front of the cottage. In the back of the cottage are a barrel for catching rainwater that runs from the roof (used for washing clothes) and a neat stack of seasoned firewood. Just outside the front door is a bench; on sunny days Saric can often be found on this bench smoking a pipe and reading a book. The privy is sturdy and, if used, rather comfortable and free of odor.

### **The Interior-**

The interior walls and floors are of well-fitted, well-joined evergreen oak that has been lacquered to a lovely dark hue. The doors have wooden hinges, not leather, and are hung tightly so they do not stick or

squeak. Both fireplaces have a slate hearth and a broad mantle.

The main room is cozy and clean with things in good order. There is a barrel of water to the left of the large fireplace (refilled from the well) and a stack of wood to the right. A long table on the west wall holds cooking utensils, pots, pans, basins, etc. Underneath the table are wooden boxes and ceramic containers holding flour, oil, sugar, raisins, and all the other staples of a country kitchen. Shelves on the wall above the table hold small jars of spices and 4 large country hams hang from rafters above the preparation area. In cool weather soup or stew will be simmering in a pot over the fire; in hot weather a ceramic jug of tea will be chilling in a basin of water.

The table is small and has only three stools; Saric obviously does not entertain often, but he is a thoughtful host.

Through the eastern door is Saric's bedchamber, a room he will almost certainly never take visitors into. The bed is always made and is goose down over a rope frame. The walls are lined with 6 tall bookshelves, all packed with erudite tomes. Under the bed is a long cedar clothes press on cunningly-carved wooden rollers which hold Saric's spare clothing. His wealth (5 pearls of 100 g.p. each, a sack of 100 g.p., and a diamond ring worth 1,000 g.p.) are hidden under a secret panel on top of one of the rafters in this room.

Through the western door is Saric's study. Within are 9 more stuffed bookshelves, a large table covered in neat stacks of books, parchment, and vellum along with penknives, quills, ink, and vials of sand. On the south wall is a reading desk and chair. By the large fireplace is a comfortable leather chair with ottoman; this fireplace has hooks and such so it may be used for cooking.

**Saric:** Sage, human, count as a 0-level human for combat. H.P. 3, A.C. 10

Saric carries a dagger as a tool and sometimes uses a staff. He can fight with either.

He can cast *Command* three times a day, *Charm Person* once a day, and *Tongues* once per three days. He is fluent in the 6 most common languages used by humans and the three most common dead languages formerly used by humans as well as Elvish, Orcish, Dwarven, Gnomish, Goblin, Kobold, Halfling, and most Giant languages.

Major area of study: Humankind.

Odds of knowing the answer to a general/specific/exacting question is 72%/59%/37%

Special foci within Humankind: Psychology, Politics and Genealogy, and Languages

Odds of knowing the answer to a general/specific/exacting question is 93%/87%/72%

Minor Fields of study: Humanoids & Giants & Demi-Humans

Odds of knowing the answer to a general/specific/exacting question is 60%/35%/16&

Odds of knowing the answer to a general/specific question in other fields is 40%/14%

General questions take 1 day (actually just a few moments to an hour, but he charges by the day).

Specific questions take 1d4 days. Exacting questions take 2d4+1 days.

Saric charges 200 g.p. per day.

Example: Fiona's share of the treasure included an old map in a language no one could read. She had heard of Saric and his skill at languages and knowledge of how men think. Knowing her henchwoman Eileen wished to learn about the spell *Charm Person* Fiona set out to meet him.

Two weeks later she arrived at his cottage, knocked, and soon was discussing her questions over tea and toast with jam. Saric asked to see the map. He pored over it for a long moment and said,

[DM rolls dice on a 'specific' question within special foci field and gets a 44%, well below the max]

"Yes, I can help you. This is in an Ormarian dialect of Loblolly using Q'ordan runes. It will take me a few days...."

Saric is in his 60's, about 5'8" tall and 145 lbs. He is bald with a fringe of sandy brown hair and light brown eyes. He has a rich voice and an upper-class pronunciation. He usually dresses in soft leather shoes, linen trousers and tunic, and a belt. In cool weather he adds a cloak and in Winter he wears a woolen robe.

He is neat and clean without being fastidious or annoying. He enjoys conversation and seems to genuinely like people. He will ask about a person and remember their details even if he does not see them again for years. He writes a prodigious amount of correspondence with other scholars, distant academies, friends, family, nobles houses, gnomish princes, former clients, and more.

He accepts payment in coin, jewelry, rare/old books (at twice their value, often) and magic items.

### Of interest-

Altogether the books in Saric's cottage are complete enough to act as wizard's library for most wizard spells of first through third level (for any given spell roll percentile – on a 70% or less the library is sufficient). Saric will grant wizards he knows and likes access for only 100 g.p. a week if they wish to use it for research. Strangers must pay his usual 200 g.p.a day.

The Privy is a gift from a satisfied former client and is actually a *Pristine Privy*. The inside is cool when it is hot and warm when it is cool (can be used to avoid exposure, but not to protect from magical damage), odors are greatly reduced, and any "organic material" placed within the chamber pot area will vanish in 10 minutes (this only eliminates feces, urine, vomit, and such). On a command word (known to Saric) it will shrink down to a 1" cube (harmlessly ejecting anyone or anything within) or grow to full size.

Saric's tobacco pouch is actually a magic item called a *Pipelover's Dream*. Each morning at dawn it 'tops off' with tobacco until it is full with enough for 12 pipe bowls of tobacco. The tobacco (only) within the pouch stays at just the preferred level of moisture despite immersion, etc. Over time the flavor, cut, etc. of the tobacco will shift to match the owner's preferences.

### On thieves-

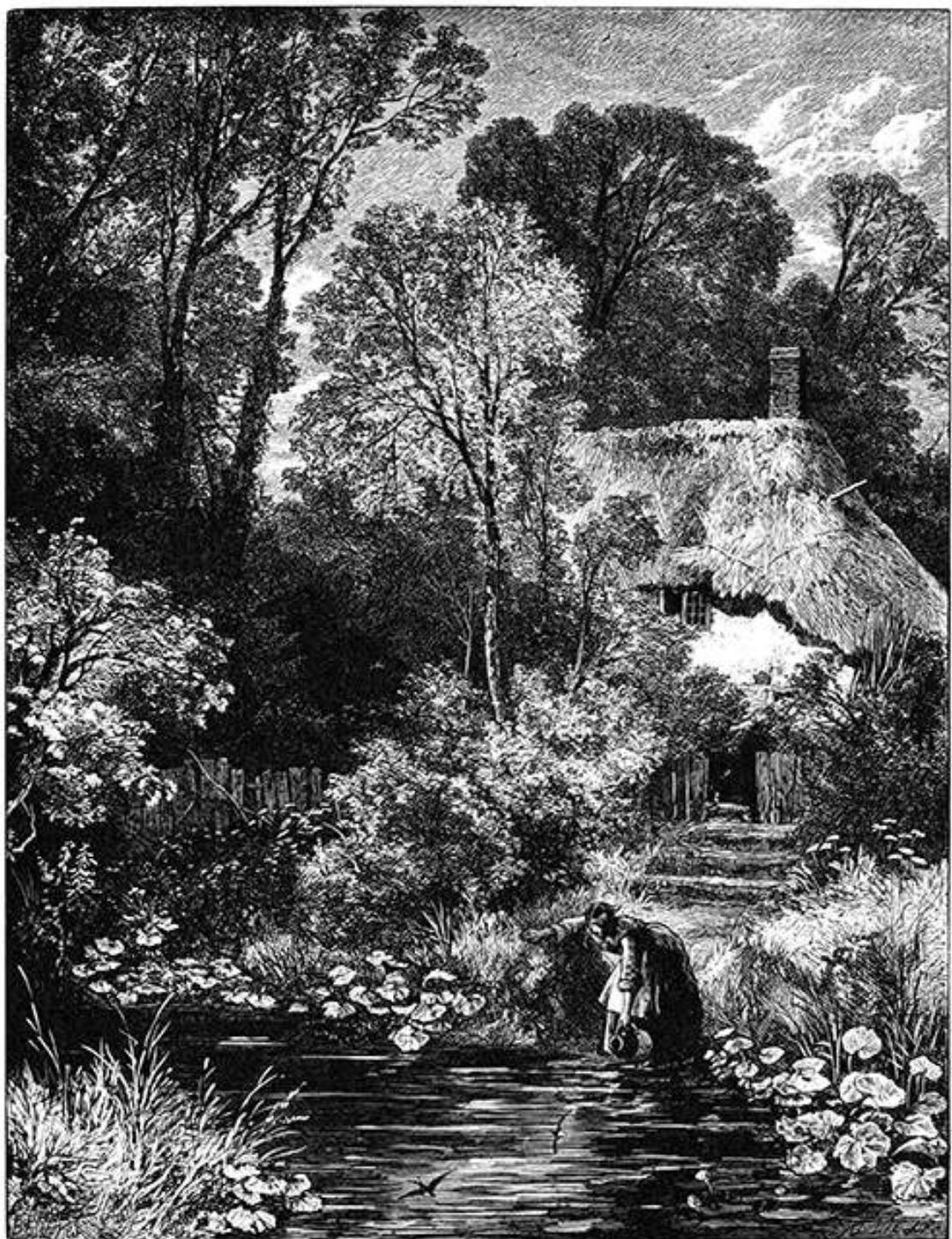
Saric is not just known to many adventurers, he is liked and owed favors by the powerful. While robbing him may seem easy, and might be accomplished quickly, the thief would soon find skilled adventurers on his trail, the sort that are good at getting things back. If the thieves are known they might find themselves unwelcome in certain towns or even duchies, perhaps to the extent of being arrested on sight. If Saric is killed such reactions would be even worse.

### How to use Saric-

With his knowledge of languages, genealogies, and humanoids he can be an invaluable tool for the players and a great way for the game master to vacuum money out of the pouches of characters. The lost tomb of the Orcish Overking? He might be able to provide some clues, maybe even a map. The command word for a Staff? It might be in his notes. A treasure chest may only be opened by the rightful heir to a kingdom that fell centuries ago? He might be able to trace the proper descendant.

Saric is a great way for players to learn the value of a sage.





## The Haunted Windmill:

The windmill can be placed anywhere that a constant breeze can be expected; the default location is a hilltop near the sea but any place outside of a city, town, or village will do. It is best if within quick walking distance (1-2 hours) of 1-3 small villages in an area away from the frontier.

### The legend-

Everyone in the local villages can tell some variation of the legend of the haunted windmill;

*"Long ago, before the king's grandfather was born, a powerful mage came and settled in the next valley. The mage was mighty; the earth itself helped him build a doughty tower, the clouds came down to make sure the crops in his fields grew, and even fire answered him and called him master.*

*"As mighty as he was, he was not a bad lord and people came to live here as his liegemen. The valley grew and the mage built the old bridge, dammed the great pond, and many other things.*

*"But an old enemy of his, who he thought he had killed, slunk into the valley and struck without warning. A great battle began in the dead of night between the foul armies of the attacker and the soldiers and servants of the mage. By dawn the mage and his enemy both were dead, their armies were shattered, the tower thrown down, and even the villages had been damaged. Within a month the ancestors of our own king came to protect the valley that had lost its master.*

*"One of the few buildings that survived was the windmill the mage had built. Without the mage and his magic a storm blew off the wind vanes and the top that very same Winter. There had been a village there, but they left long ago. You see, something from the old battle was not destroyed. Something, some say a magical servant of the mage, some say one of the attacker's monsters, is still here, near the windmill. And sometimes it kills people who come too close."*

If people are asked everyone knows someone, sometimes a few someones, who vanished either in the area around the windmill or after saying they were going to visit it. There are 4-5 stories of people being found mangled or burned near the windmill and one popular tale is of how 3 boys who went into the windmill on a dare were found with their heads pulled off their bodies!

Despite the stories and heedless of the orders of every mother within 20 miles to stay away it seems every village boy over the age of 11 has been to the windmill at least once. A group of older boys sending a kid brother into the windmill to 'look for the ghost' is a rite of passage in the local villages and most men can tell their own story of creeping in just a few feet before rushing out.

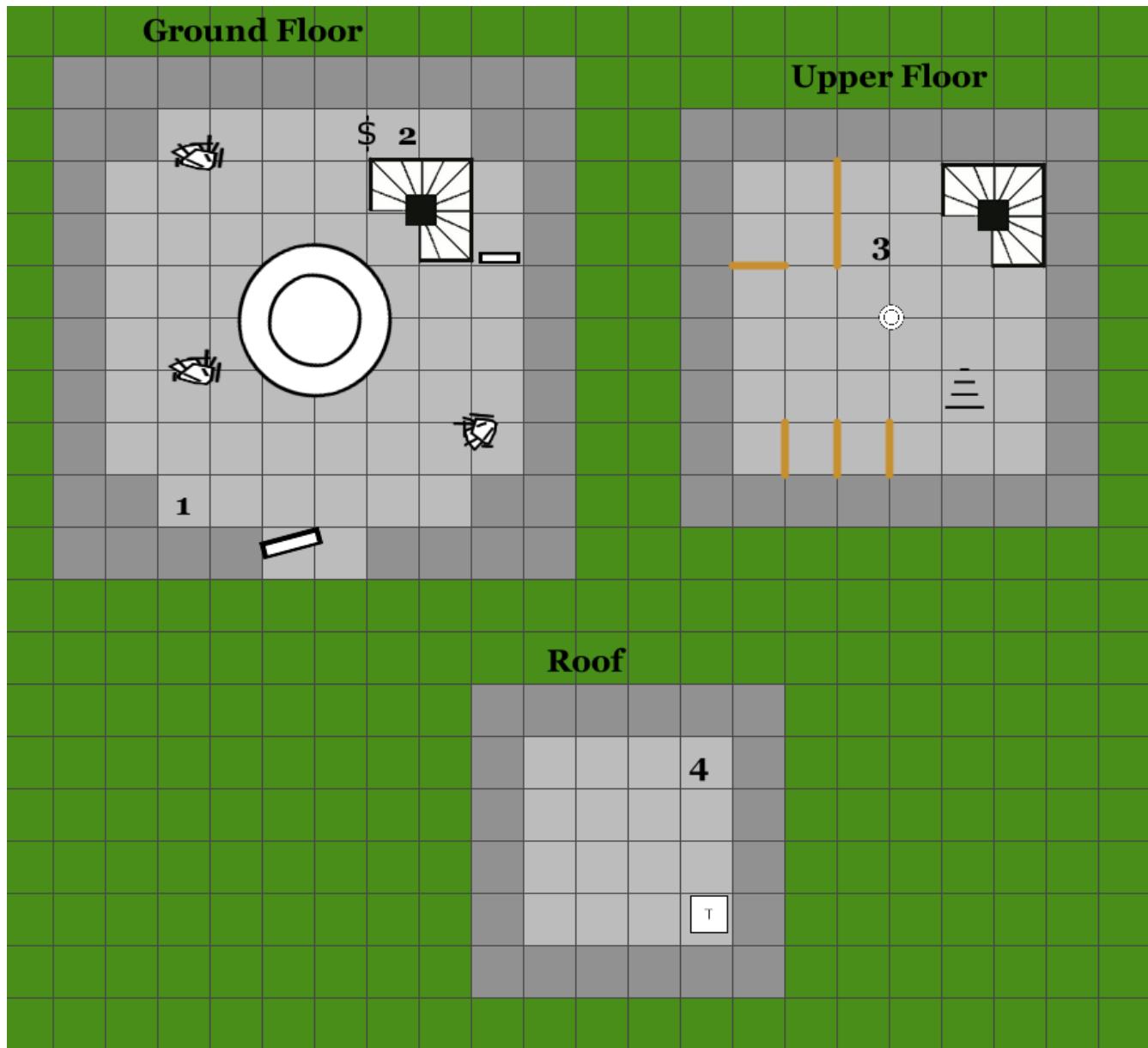


And a very few of these men can tell stories of sending in a younger friend, cousin, or even brother who never, ever came out again....

### The truth-

The legends are broadly true, as any scholar or sage with knowledge of local history could attest (a character with a similar skill can also verify this on a successful check at -2/-10%); before the current rulers took over a powerful mage established his domain in the area, ruled for decades, and then perished in a battle with a foe whose name and motivation are lost to history.

Even the tales of a lingering guardian are true – the windmill still hides one of the mage's secrets.



Each square is 3'

### The local area-

It is up to the GM if the ruins of the abandoned village still exist at the base of the hill. If they are still found they can easily be stocked with a few giant rats or worse. While lush with grass, no trees or bushes grow on the tall hill which the mill tops. There is a quick-running stream at the base of the hill to the north.

## The exterior-

While this tower mill was obviously well-constructed time and the elements have taken their toll. The wooden 'cap' and actual windmill portion are long gone, exposing the top floor to the elements. The masonry is beginning to crumble and a few stones have come loose. One of the double doors is missing and the other is jammed partially open. The windowless structure is rather imposing.

Any PC that can check (a dwarf or gnome, someone with the engineering skill) can determine it is sound enough to enter.

**1: Main Room-** This room feels oddly claustrophobic despite its large size. The stone floor is covered in dust, wind-blown leaves, and the debris of long-collapsed furniture and such. The center is dominated by a complex arrangement of gears, hammers, levers, and more. A character with the appropriate knowledge (engineering skill, miller skill, a dwarf or gnome, papermaker, etc.) can determine that this was once a very sophisticated arrangement that allowed the mill to grind grain, process wool, crush seeds for oil or fruit for juice, and even make paper! Any PC that recognizes what it was will be impressed. But it is all junk, now, long destroyed by the elements.

A careful search will reveal dried blood, some of it extremely old, splashed about in at least 6 locations but essentially hidden under the dust and debris.

In the northeast corner is a stone staircase winding its way up and a lone door – behind the door is nothing but dust, debris, and old mouse nests.

**2: The Hidden Room-** Behind this secret door is the last of the experimental servants of the long-dead mage. Placed here because of the location of the mill on a hilltop, there is no other record if its existence surviving anywhere in the world. The last (garbled with the fog of battle) instructions it received were 'kill anyone that enters the mill and obey previous orders'. Its previous orders were to wait inside the room with the door shut. As a result for many long decades the servant has waited in the room until some hapless person found and opened the secret door. If this happens it kills anyone it sees within the mill, pursuing them as far as a mile away. Afterward it returns to the room and shuts the door to wait for the next person 'lucky' enough to find the secret door. Once a month the servant comes out in the middle of the night and 'disposes of any garbage' which includes throwing bodies into the stream to the north.

The room is dusty and largely empty. If you wish it can contain an old tome with the details of how to build a new servants (this will be expensive, difficult, and requires a high-level mage). A chain protrudes from the wall about 2 inches.

The servant is detailed at the end of this section.

**3: The Upper Floor-** This area is dark, still, and oppressively quiet. Low wooden walls only 2' high mark off areas formerly for storing grain, fruit, wood, etc. In the middle of the room is the drive shaft for the mill. Everything is coated in a film of dust and grime, cobwebs choke the corners, and the floor is scattered with dead beetles and mouse droppings. In the middle of the western wall is a pile of black river pebbles. Although the pebbles are very small the pile reaches about 4 inches high. If the pebbles are sifted through the searcher finds a single red pebble at the very bottom of the heap.

A rickety oak ladder in the southeast leads to a trapdoor in the ceiling.

**4: The Roof-** This open space is windswept and bare. The sockets that formerly locked the wooden cap in place are filled with leaves, but nothing else. A search will reveal only that a reinforcing chain protrudes a few inches from the wall in the northeast, someone has carved 'Jerald loves Marnie' on the south wall, and the partially-melted hilt of a longsword, its blade snapped off and nowhere to be found, in the

northwest corner. The hilt has been here no more than 3 or 4 years.

**The Servant-** Copper Golem. HD: Fights as an 11 HD monster, Hit Points: 50, A.C. 4, Attacks per Round: 2 (fists), Damage:  $1d8+2/1d8+2$ , Move 120'/round, Electrical attacks heal 1 h.p. per die of damage/level of spell; cold spells *Slow* the golem to  $\frac{1}{2}$  movement and 1 attack per round for 1d4 rounds; no other magic has any effect on the golem. Once per 5 rounds the golem can trigger an effect similar to *Shocking Grasp*; the round this power is activated its punches deal out an additional 15 points of electrical damage, This damage ignores metal armor.

Example: *Sir Oscar wears +2 Mail and Plate armor and carries a +1 wooden shield, giving him an Armor Class of 0. While fighting a copper golem the golem activates its Shocking Grasp power and strikes, rolling a 7 which is not enough to strike A.C. 0. However, since 6 points of the A.C. come from metal armor (the base A.C. of plate and mail is 4) the electrical damage was only against A.C. 6 – an attack roll of 7 **does** strike A.C. 6 so Sir Oscar takes 15 points of damage. If the golem had rolled a 14 Sir Oscar would have taken  $1d8+2$  from the punch and 15 from the electricity. If the golem had rolled a 2 it would have missed completely.*

The golem may only be struck by weapons of +2 or greater enchantment, all others simply glance off with no effect.

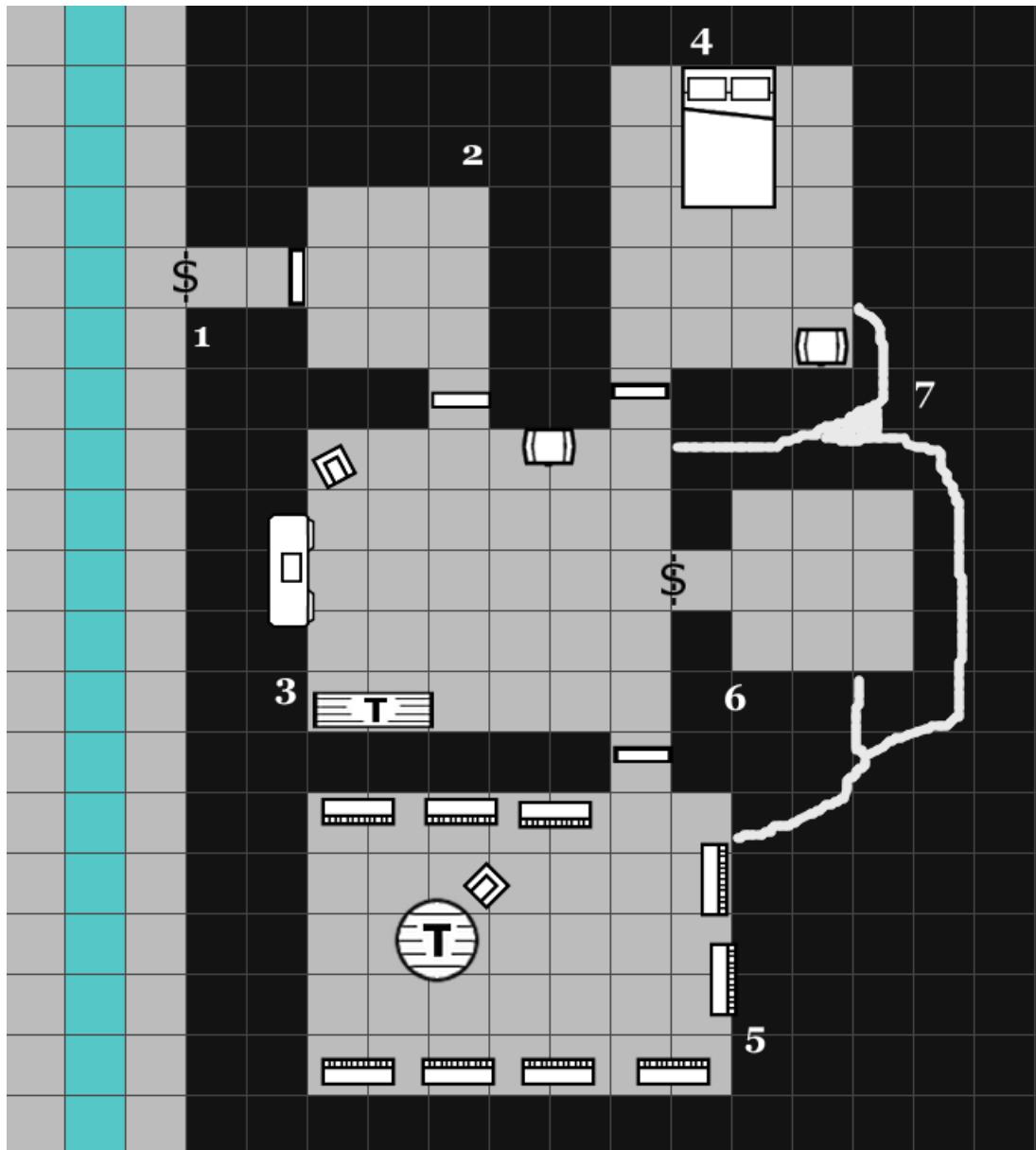
**Notes-** I have had good effects with introducing this as an element near a village or other area where adventurers rest between forays into dungeons or such. The adventurers hear the children telling tales of the haunted windmill and, if they ask, the adults know all the tales, too. I have even had adventurers visit the mill once or twice without finding the servant (including a great session where they waited nearby all night on a full moon and heard the golem moving about inside 'looking for garbage' but did not see it before it returned to its hidden room!).

The chain is a minor plot point. It acts as a simple lightning rod channeling lightning that strikes the tower to the golem in its hidden room. If the golem takes damage but returns to its room the next thunderstorm will heal it to full hit points (8 h.p. of healing per bolt of natural lightning).



## The Hidden Study:

This lair is best suited for inclusion in the sewers of a major city but can be placed anywhere underground, especially if you have a mega-dungeon, underground trade routes, or something similar. I have had success in inserting it into published modules to add a twist to an older adventure.



Each Square is 3.3'/ 1 meter

**Background-** This is the bolt-hole of a powerful mage. Relatively well-hidden and rarely used it has everything he might need in an emergency, including a guard.

**Throughout the lair-** The floors, walls, and furniture are clean and free of dust, cobwebs, and such as if it was freshly cleaned within the hour.

**1: Secret Entrance-** The door appears to be just another section of stone wall. If found the door is opened by pressing two separate fake stones at the same time. The narrow passage is just wide enough for one large man in armor. Once the outer door is closed the inner door opens freely. As long as the outer door is open the inner door must be forced (as a Bend Bars/Lift Gates or Major Test of Strength check). Forcing open the inner door triggers a blast of magical fire that fills the entrance hall, doing 16 h.p. of damage, save vs. wand for half damage.

**2: The Antechamber-** This 10' x 10' room is lit by a piece of steel in the middle of the ceiling that emits *Continual Light*. If the time is taken to pry it out (30-45 minutes, with the proper tools) it begins losing radiance within hours and the magic will cease permanently in a day.

Just inside the room to the left is a wrought iron boot scraper mounted into the floor and to the right is a wrought iron boot jack, likewise mounted to the floor. Along the north wall are hooks, racks, and rings designed to hold boots, armor, and heavy weapons properly so they are readily accessible, easy to clean, and (if wet) they will dry quickly. On the east wall are a series of pegs at head and waist height designed to hold cloaks, capes, coats, belts, etc. A well-made woolen cloak with a lining of sky-blue silk hangs from one of these pegs. If touched it animates and attacks the person who touched it!

**Animated cloak:** Enchanted item/weapon. HD: Fights as a 3 HD monster, Hit Points: 12, A.C. 6 or 10 if enveloping someone, Attacks per Round: 1 (enveloping), Damage: 1 plus special, Move 90'/round (flight). The cloak flutters and flaps through the air, attacking the person who touched it. It strikes once per round and does 1 point of damage if it hits. In addition, if its attack roll succeeds by 5 or more above the minimum roll needed to hit, it envelopes its target. If the cloak has a successful attack two rounds in a row, it also envelops its target.

An enveloped target automatically takes 1 point of damage at the end of each round from constriction as the cloak smothers the victim. Unless the victim has no need to breathe after the third round of being enveloped they must make a save vs. death; if the save fails they lose 10% of their maximum hit points (rounding down). If it succeeds they gasp enough air. This continues until the cloak is destroyed, the character breaks free, or a *Dispel Magic* or *Remove Curse* is cast on the cloak – either spell automatically renders the cloak inert.

The wearer can attempt a Bend bars/Lift Gates/Major Test of Strength roll each round to tear themselves free; if it succeeds the cloak falls inert until touched again.

While enveloping a target the cloak is A.C. 10 but all melee, missile, or spell damage done to the cloak is also done to the target. Once the cloak takes 12 hit points it is effectively destroyed.

**Suggestions-** A Robe of Useful Items with only a few items remaining is also hanging on a peg; the boot jack is actually made of pure adamantine but because of grime only a close examination can reveal this; the *Continual Light* object is easily removed and maintains its enchantment.

**3: The Living Chamber-** On the west wall is a large fireplace equipped with the hooks and chains required for cooking. There is no fuel, but if a fire is built the smoke is dispersed to the surface through baffles and tubes that prevent exit or entrance. There are sconces for lamps in each corner. The chair by the fireplace is very comfortable and is worth about 100 g.p. (although it weighs 100 lbs.). The table is bare except an iron and silver tinderbox (worth 10 g.p.) that holds flint, steel, and tinder. The chest on the north wall between the doors is unlocked and contains 4 small oil lamps and a jug with the

equivalent of 8 flasks of oil. These lamps fit the wall sconces perfectly.

**Suggestions-** At the GM's discretion you could place a trap in the chest; put a secret bottom in the chest which holds 100 g.p. - one of which is a goldbug; have the fireplace filled with a magical fire that never needs wood.

**4: The Bedchamber-** This room has a rather spacious bed that holds a large feather mattress (huge and unwieldy but worth 10 g.p.). The chest contains fresh bed linens and two lamps for the sconces that flank the bed on the north wall.

**Suggestions-** Unless a command word is uttered 3 rounds after someone lays on the mattress it attacks as a Rug of Smothering/4 HD Trapper; the chest has a poison gas trap - all within 10' must save vs poison or sleep for 24 hours; a small chest under the bed holds clothing worthy of being worn in the presence of the emperor; total worth 2,000 g.p.

**5: The Library-** This room has walls lined with bookshelves and in the center is a table and comfortable chair. The room is lit by a *Continual Light* spike in the ceiling identical to the one found in the entrance room. The western wall is covered with a mural showing a man in robes staring out over a sea of fire towards a city made of brass. On one of the bookshelves rests a writing case; inside are a small pen knife, 3 quills, a vial of ink, 10 sheets of parchment, and a vial of sand for drying ink. The case weights 2lbs when loaded. The book cases on the east wall are turned to face the wall, but they are empty.

**Suggestions:** The shelves may contain any rare books, letters, etc. you wish including treasure maps, prophecies, magic item formulae, and the like. Some books may also have *Explosive Runes*, bookworms, *Fire Trap*, frontispiece illustrations that come to life and attack, etc. One of the reversed bookcases hold the enchanted head of a medusa - if the bookcase is turned those who look at it must save or be turned to stone.

**6: The Secret Room-** The door to this room is made of stone and is very sturdy and locked; the keyhole is hidden behind a pivoting stone in the wall. It is also secured with a *Wizard Lock* spell of 12<sup>th</sup> level. The interior is unlit.

**Suggestions:** As with any hidden room this may contain treasure of any sort, such as rare tomes, jewelry, unique magic items, etc. Also consider the classics of guardian familiars, mimics, trappers, and lurkers above. A nice twist is a treasure chest filled with fragile treasure covered with a *Programmed Illusion* of a mimic attacking so that overwhelming force from the players destroys portions of the treasure.

**7: The Home of the Watcher-** The creator of this bolt-hole has left behind a creature called a Smoke Spirit to return items to their proper place when moved, reset traps, etc. The Smoke Spirit typically lives in a small warren in the walls but small tunnels connect its tiny home with the living chamber, the bedchamber, the library, and the secret room. These tunnels are hidden by concealed doors near the ceilings (treat as secret doors). Each door is fitted with a small peephole so that the spirit can spy upon interlopers.

The spirit's preferred tactic is to lurk at one of the doors until no one is looking in its direction, then quickly open the door, use its breath weapon, then silently shut the door. The first time this is done the spirit surprises on a 1-6 in 6 (so that only characters with lower than normal odds of being surprised have any chance of not being caught unaware); thereafter the odds are still 1-4 in 6. Surprised creatures cannot

tell the origin of the attack.

The spirit will only engage in melee if forced to do so. When reduced to less than 50% of hit points it retreats to its small chamber and hides, fleeing if pursued. If struck with any sort of magical spell other than healing it immediately attempts to *Gate* in two more smoke spirits (because of the compulsion this is the only time it can use this power).

The tunnels are only 1' in diameter (and are still very constricting on the spirit!); the spirit's chamber itself is only 3 1/2' high, 3' wide, and 5' long. It can contain whatever treasure you deem appropriate.

**The Watcher:** A Smoke Spirit only 2' tall. HD: 3 Hit Points: 10, A.C. 4, Attacks per Round: 2 (claws), Damage: 1-2/1-2, Move 120'/round (running), 240'/round (flying). Breath weapon once per two rounds for 1d4 damage. It can target a single creature within 20', never misses, and there is no save. The creature struck is *Blind* for 1d4 rounds 50% of the time. Once per hour it can attempt to *Gate* in 1d2 more smoke spirits (restricted as in the description); this is only 20% likely to work.

When a smoke spirit dies its body bursts into flame causing 1 hit point of damage to all creatures within 10', no save. Creatures wearing a Ring of Fire Resistance or similar are immune.



## The Pommel Star Cave:

Designed to be placed along a seacoast, this lair can also be placed on a tall mountain, a remote island, deep within a forest, etc.

A key concept is that the Pommel Star Chamber is sealed off and inaccessible to the world for long stretches of time. As the time of the conjunction nears, it 'opens up' a day or a week before, then 'closes up' again a day or two after the conjunction ends. The full power of the Star Chamber is only active on the day of the conjunction. The duration of the delay between openings of the cavern should be long, but is up to you.

**What it is:** Long ago a small cult of magic-users obsessed with astronomy and astrology had a headquarters near what is now the Pommel Star Cave. Over time they learned to focus the power of the stars to create a number of unique items and creatures.

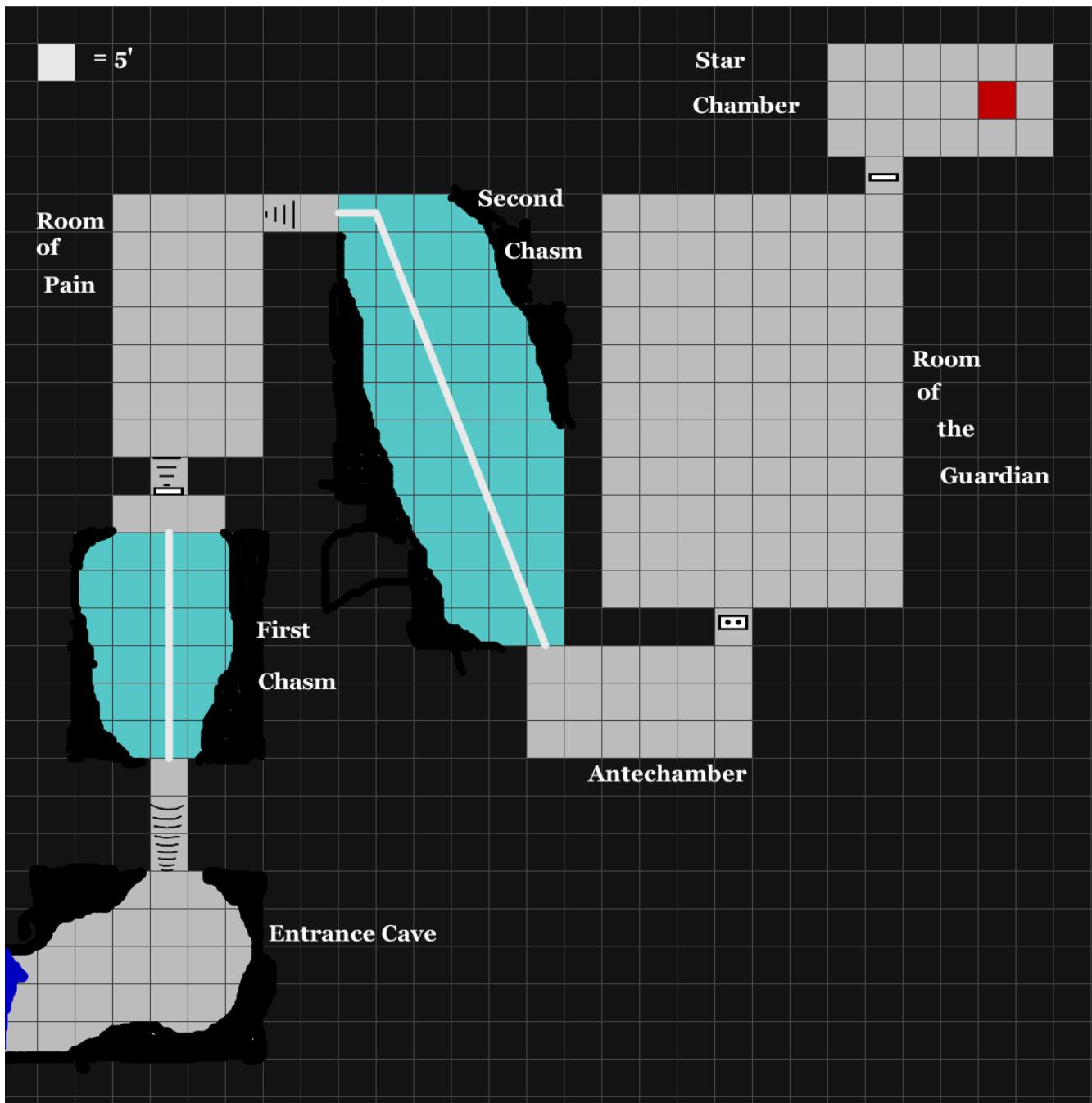
One of their unique discoveries was learning how to focus and heighten the magic of the stars when certain planets and constellations achieved particular alignments. Perhaps their greatest achievement was associated with focusing the celestial power of something they called the Pommel Star in a constellation they called the Warrior. The Pommel Star Cave was created so that this beneficial energy could be harnessed each time the proper alignment occurred. They also set up a defense so that only members of their cult could gain access at the critical time.

The cult is long gone but their creation remains.

**Legends:** Although obscure, some knew of the cave when the cult existed and references to it exist in tomes. While a few facts are known (the effect is in the deepest chamber; the power is only active for a short period of time; there is a long gap in between activations) legends grew up around the cave and its powers, some of which are true (or close to true) and some of which are wild exaggerations, like;

- The cave can cure any disease and reverse any handicap
- The cave grants immortality
- The guardian of the cavern is a fierce demon
- You can only pass through the outer caverns if you carry no silver
- A curse kills anyone entering the outer chambers who has not slept naked under the stars for three nights in a row
- The cave grants you a wish
- The cave makes you stronger or faster
- The cave improves magic items

**How to involve the players:** The players may learn of the legend of the Pommel Star Cave through their own research or from tomes found during an adventure; a sage can tell them of it; a local noble hires them to learn how to enter the cave safely and will pay them by allowing them to also use it; an old foe holds a member of the party hostage until they show him how to safely enter it so he can gain its power; the party finds a badly-injured man, nude, near the coast – he attempted to enter the cave and was driven away by the guardian.



**Entrance Cave-** This sea cave is completely submerged at high tide and visitors must wade through knee-deep water even at an ebb tide. The cavern is floored with sand over solid stone and has nothing but a few crabs within. In the north wall is a steep stair case rising almost 20' - this is solid rock until 2-3 days before the magic becomes active. This rock wall is impervious to magic, including divination spells. No part of the complex other than the entrance cave may be seen via divination spells or scrying devices. The complex is blocked from the Astral and Ethereal Planes preventing spells like *Blink*, *Dimension Door*, *Duo-Dimension*, *Teleport*, *Vanish*, or other, similar, spells from working in any other chamber but this one.

**First Chasm-** From the small landing at the south until the ledge to the north, this area is blanketed in an effect similar to an *Anti-Magic Shell* which neutralizes all magic-items, spell-like abilities, spell-effects, etc. and prevents the casting of any spells (such attempts have no effect but still remove the spell from

memory!) Once out of the area magic items work normally, spell effects resume, etc.

A narrow bridge, just 1' wide, crosses the chasm; 25' below the bridge is a forest of jutting, razor-sharp obsidian spikes and tossing sea. Falling into the chasm causes 4d6 of falling damage and 2d8 of damage from hitting the rocks. The walls of the chasm are very smooth and slick - without ropes only characters with the Climb Walls ability have a chance to climb out. Any person moving at 1/4<sup>th</sup> movement or less has no chance of falling from the ledge; people moving between 1/4<sup>th</sup> and 1/2 movement have a 10% chance of falling; people moving between 1/2 and 3/4<sup>th</sup> movement rate are 25% likely to fall. People moving faster than that are 40% likely to fall. Thieves, monks, and other such classes may be able to move at greater speed safely while characters with lower dexterity scores may face greater risks - this is up to individual game masters.

The ledge at the northern end has pegs and hooks on the east and west walls. The door is easily opened. On the other side of the door is a steep staircase going up about 8'.

**The Room of Pain:** This room is open, clean, and free of dust, dirt, and insects. This room (like the rest of the complex) is filled with a soft, diffuse light that seems to have no source and casts no true shadows anywhere, making it impossible to hide. This light also automatically dispels all forms of *Darkness* and any *Illusions* and reveals anything *Invisible*.

**The rest of the complex, from this room on, is also filled with the Disruption Field.**

**Effects of the Disruption Field:** Through unique magics forever lost to time, the cult of astrologers filled the majority of the Pommel Star Cavern with a magical field that slowly destroys inanimate matter and causes pain to anyone touching the same. Normal cloth is destroyed in just 5 or 6 rounds while leather lasts twice that long. Liquids 'boil away' in two rounds, food in 4. Soft metals, like gold, are destroyed in 30 minutes but adamantine items can linger for up to 2 hours. Magic items last twice as long as non-magic items. There is no saving throw to prevent this effect!

The destruction of these items releases energy so that touching them causes damage; 1 hit point of damage the first round, 2 hit points of damage the second, etc. until a maximum of 9 hit points per item per round is reached; this damage continues as long as the item is touched until the item is completely destroyed.

This also affects anything worn! Any person wearing clothing of any sort takes damage per round. To simplify things, assume a set of standard clothing counts as two items total whether it is a robe or a complex courtier's outfit. But a suit of armor is a second item, as is a shield and a cloak. Note that the field affects spell components and will make casting spells dangerous or impossible!

Example: Ontam the Strong enters the Room of Pain. He is wearing undergarments, boots, trousers, a tunic, wearing plate mail, carrying a shield, a throwing axe, and a backpack full of food and gear. He is also carrying a sword. On the first round he takes (clothing [counts as two]+armor+shield+backpack+2 weapons = 7) seven points of damage. He immediately drops his sword and tears off his backpack. On round two he only has 5 items, so he takes 10 points of damage. He tears off his armor and the rest of his gear, taking only 12 points (clothing and cloak plus half his armor) in round 3 and is naked in round 4, meaning he takes no damage. In round 5 he picks up his longsword, immediately taking 5 points of damage (it has been in the field for 5 rounds). In 5 rounds he has taken 34 hit points of damage. Any water or food in his backpack is already destroyed, as are his clothes.

Alann the Wise entered at the same time wearing his robes, boots, trousers, belt, backpack, and carrying his mace (4 things) and takes 4 points of damage in round one. He immediately flees back down the stairs and leaves the field. In the second round he takes no damage; none of his gear is destroyed.

The pain and magical effects of the Disruption Field also cause anyone wearing or carrying anything to move as if encumbered, i.e., at  $\frac{1}{2}$  base movement rate and unable to run.

The field harms any creature affected by *Polymorph* or *Shape Change* effects; such creatures are affected each round as if they were wearing 4 items. Undead of any sort within the field take 9 points of damage per round, no save allowed.

The Disruption Field is not stopped by *Globes of Invulnerability* or *Walls of Force* but is blocked by an *Anti-Magic Shell* or *Prismatic Sphere*. The shell of a Scroll of Protection from Magic will stop the field for 1 round, then collapse.

In the northeast corner of the Room of Pain is a staircase that goes up about 7' to a small landing.

**Second Chasm:** Similar to the First Chasm, the 1' wide bridge in this room is 40' above churning water and razor-sharp rocks; any creature falling in will take 10d6 from the fall and 3d8 from the rocks. The limitations on movement speed here are the same as the First Chasm. Instead of the general *Anti-Magic* effect of the first room, however, a power akin to a *Stone of Weight* affects anything in the room that is not touching the bridge. Anything in the room that is not touching the bridge is magically 10 times heavier than normal: missiles fall short; animals are far too heavy to fly; etc. This magic cancels the effects of spells like *Levitate* and *Fly* or magic items like *Brooms of Flying*. It also prevents creatures that fall into the chasm from climbing out without great effort.

The bridge itself is a magical construct akin to a *Wall of Force*. Because of this, any creature within an *Anti-Magic Shell* or similar effect cannot touch the bridge; to such a person, the bridge does not exist! Because of this, no person protected by such a spell can cross.

The Disruption Field is in full effect in this room, and the magical light also fills it.

**The Antechamber:** This clean, dust-free room is well lit and empty. The door in the northeast is enchanted such that as long as the Guardian is undefeated it will only allow one creature at a time through; as soon as the first creature goes into the next room the door slams shut impossibly fast.

The Disruption Field and Magical Light effects are in full force in this room.

**The Room of the Guardian:** This large room has an arching ceiling rising to 20' in the middle. Unlike the other rooms the floor is covered with sand almost 2" thick. The northern door is enchanted to only open if the guardian is defeated. The door to the south will be magically sealed for 5 rounds; after that anyone in the room may open it to leave – as with entering, it opens and closes magically fast, only allowing the person within to exit.

When the room is first entered the guardian will be standing in the middle of the room. It will immediately move to engage intruders only pausing if the intruder is opening the door – it will allow them to leave.

The guardian appears as a black silhouette filled with a star field. It glitters and shines with the light of many stars and makes a faint sound, like crystal chimes, when it moves. It is akin to an Invisible Stalker or Aerial Servant in some ways, but summoned from the spaces between the stars. The guardian will not leave the room except to remove anything that somehow blocks the door from closing.

**The Guardian:** Summoned Star Being. HD: Fights as a 4 HD monster, Hit Points: 20, A.C. 10, Attacks per Round: 2 (fists), Damage: 1d4/1d4, Move 180'/round,. Immune to all magic, poison, disease,

and fear. Does not need to eat, sleep, drink, or breathe. Never checks morale. Only struck by +1 or better weapons or monsters capable of hitting creatures only struck by +1 or better weapons. Pummeling and overbearing attacks by creatures unable to strike creatures only hit by +1 or better weapons are ignored and have no effect.

If the guardian is injured but not destroyed it is restored to full hit points at sunrise or sunset, whichever is soonest. Every time the conjunction nears a new guardian is summoned from the stars.

**Star Chamber:** This room is filled with the special light and subject to the disruption field. In the eastern portion of the room is a red tile covered in astrological symbols and runes with a mirror image on the ceiling directly above it. Any intelligent living creature entering the room after the guardian is defeated intuitively knows that to gain the boon of the Pommel Star they must wait until the two tiles are glowing then stand on the lower one for 2 full rounds. They also know that they can only ever be affected by the powers a single time; even a *Wish* might not be enough for a person to gain two benefits from the Pommel Star. How long the conjunction lasts is up to you, although I recommend at least long enough for all PCs to receive a boon.

If someone stands on the tile during the conjunction they gain a boon. The following table is suggested, but feel free to create your own.

| <u>Roll (d12)</u> | <u>Benefit</u>   |
|-------------------|--|
| 1                 | +1 to Strength (+10% to exceptional scores, if already 18)*                      |
| 2                 | +3 hit points (permanent; may exceed usual maximums)                             |
| 3                 | +1 Intelligence  |
| 4                 | +1 on all saving throws (permanent)  |
| 5                 | +1 magical bonus to hit and damage on a weapon of the person's (mental) choice** |
| 6                 | +1 Wisdom  |
| 7                 | +2/+10% on all Reaction checks   |
| 8                 | +1 Dexterity   |
| 9                 | +2/+10% on all Loyalty checks  |
| 10                | +1 Constitution  |
| 11                | +1 Charisma  |
| 12                | +1 to armor class (permanent)  |

\*if the person receiving this boon has an 18(90) to 18(99) Strength they only gain an 18(00) strength. If they have an 18(00) they gain a 19 Strength.

\*\* One weapon that the character owns (whether with them or not) gains a permanent magical +1 to hit and damage; this can improve magical weapons.

Example: *Firewalker left his +2 great sword at the balcony in the First Chasm and later receives this boon and mentally chooses his great sword: it is now a +3 great sword.*

Do not prompt the players, but it is possible for them to choose their own hands and feet as the weapon! If they do so, they may now strike creatures only hit by +1 or better weapons with pummeling and overbearing attacks. If the character is a monk they may now use their stunning and killing attacks on such creatures as well.

When the conjunction ends the magic of the Star Chamber ends, although the light and disruption field continue until the caverns are resealed.

**Notes and Suggestions:** This entire lair is one large trick/puzzle. Players are extremely resourceful and

may very well find a number of ways to beat the guardian. The most obvious one is simply recruiting an ogre or other creature tough enough to strike creatures only hit by +1 or better weapons. If you like you can introduce a potion that gives the drinker a +1 to hit and damage for an hour so a fighter can 'brawl for it all'. You can also have characters find/research a spell that creates an immaterial +1 weapons made of magical force (and thus immune to the disruption field) and last long enough that a bold character could get to the guardian and fight him with a time limit. Or you can simply modify the lair to have a 'loophole' and make the adventure as much about finding it as beating the guardian.

If the party does not have easy access to a method of getting to the star chamber feel free to increase the boons granted by the star chamber! If you find it to be very challenging perhaps use this table, instead;

| <u>Roll (d4)</u> | <u>Benefit</u>   |
|------------------|--|
| 1                | +2 to the characteristic of the player's choice (to racial maximums, perhaps)  |
| 2                | +1 level (if multi-classed, choose) – this can exceed racial limits  |
| 3                | +10% on all encounter, reaction, and loyalty rolls and +2 henchmen (permanent)   |
| 4                | Either: gain a special familiar appropriate to alignment or, if the character already has a familiar, the familiar has its hit points doubled and gains the ability to <i>Dimension Door</i> once a day, taking its master if they are touching. |

Optionally, all who enter the Star Chamber at all are also *Healed* and any curses, including lycanthropy or mummy rot, are immediately and automatically removed, as are any *Charms*, *Beguiling*, *Geasa*, or *Quests*.

Feel free to create your own, of course.



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