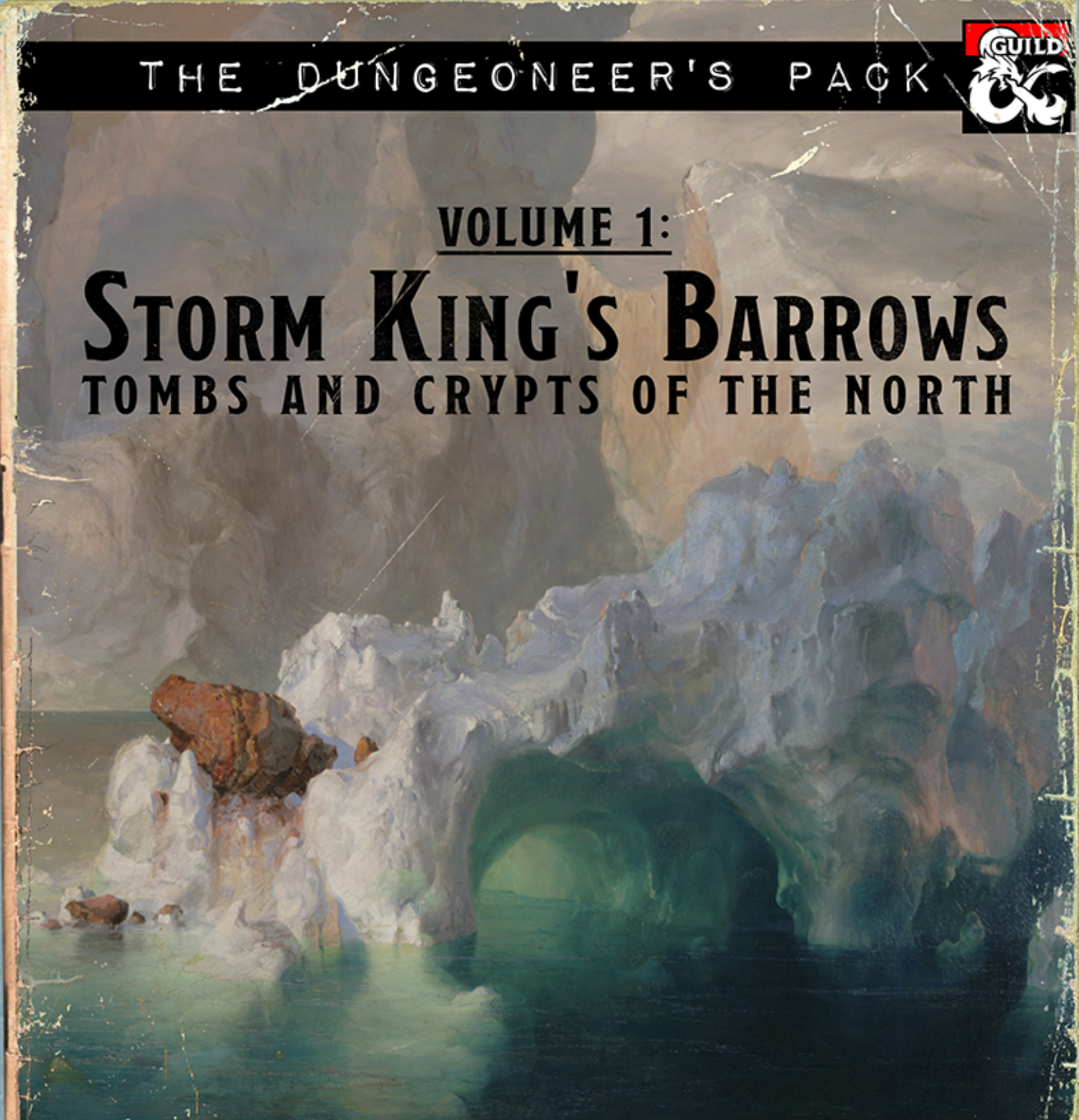
THE DUNGEONEER'S PACK

GUILD

VOLUME 1:

STORM KING'S BARROWS

TOMBS AND CRYPTS OF THE NORTH



JASON BAKOS, MATT BUTLER, KEN CARCAS, R P DAVIS, ANDREW DEMPZ, CHRISTIAN EICHHORN, DAVID FLOR, EDDIE GIOFFRE, LUKE INSTONE HALL, DARREN PARMENTER, GEORGE SAGER, CHRISTOPHER WALZ, MICAH WATT

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Storm King's Barrows - Version 1.3

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On the Cover

Frederick Edwin Church's The Icebergs. The painting was inspired by the sketches he made during a voyage to the North Atlantic. Church's adventure was documented and released under the title After Icebergs with a Painter.

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The Dungeoneer's Pack Volume 1: Storm King's Barrows

Tombs & Crypts of the North

Ten unexplored dungeons in the north of the Sword Coast and a party of eager adventurers is the recipe for an exciting evening. Delve into abandoned chapels, beleaguered mines, haunted barrows and demon-infested crypts. Put an end to evil machinations, unearth ancient treasures, or perish by the hands of your enemies.

Foreword

Welcome traveler! I am glad that you found the time to sit down and peruse this book which I hold so dear. It consumed many hours of my life, but I consider them well spent. Only a small portion of the work stems from my own pen, mind you. A whole party of eager writers assembled after I raised the call, invoked the old treaties and lit the signal fires. You see, I found that working alone in your private laboratory has its upsides, of course. But your real potential is only unlocked if you band together with a group of like-minded people, set out there, and slay that figurative dragon!

After many weeks and months of word weaving, cautious balancing, and ferocious painting the work was done. The *Dungeoneer's Pack's* first volume *Storm King's Barrows* was ready to be released upon an unsuspecting world. And somehow a copy found its way into your hands. Truly inconceivable, is it not? If you find joy in this book, then don't hesitate to write a **Letter** or send a **Raven** my way. I am always eager to hear about the adventures you might experience.

I will also let you in on a secret. I have planned many more books! There are innumerable unexplored ruins and untold horrors hidden deep beneath the earth or covered in hot desert sand. Enough to last you a lifetime!

Difficulty Adjustments

The following dungeons are either tailored to one specific party level or optimized for a wide range of possible party compositions. If the latter is the case, use the following instructions to calculate the appropriate APL and adjust the dungeon accordingly. The details regarding party size and appropriate level can be found at beginning of each individual dungeon.

To figure out whether you should consider adjusting the dungeon, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the total by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's APL. To approximate the party strength for the dungeon, consult the following table.

Determining Party Strength

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

The Team

Jason Bakos (Writer)

Jason Bakos is a story weaver at heart. With a vivid imagination and a love for the awe-inspiring, his interests include fantasy, manga, music and martial arts. He found his way to the world of D&D as a natural progression of his writing and gaming hobbies. With his main interests being his medical school studies, the DM's Guild is a means of experimentation in the fields of writing and game designing. In it, he has released adventures, such as the well-received **King to an Empty City**, and soon other types of supplements.

Ken Carcas (Editor)

An avid role player for 42 years, Ken started with D&D Basic (Blue Book) and Keep on the Borderlands back in 1976. It took his best friend 4 weeks to convince him to play this '...awesome game...' that didn't look all that 'awesome' at the time. Once he started, Ken was hooked, and the rest is history. Although Ken's best setting is, and will always be Dungeons & Dragons, having played every edition since release, Ken has also dabbled in games such as Gamma World, Star Trek, Boot Hill, Star Frontiers, Rune Quest, Dragon Quest, Shadowrun, most of the White Wolf stuff, and some of the smaller obscure Indie releases. Ken joined the guild from almost the day it started, believing it to be the best thing for D&D since the 3.5 edition OGL. Downloading little bits and pieces as he saw fit, Ken noticed the somewhat poor quality in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. He started messaging writers with their mistakes, with several telling him 'where to go' in a not so kind way. Jeff C Stevens followed closely by, yes, M.T. Black, were the first writers to take his comments with any form of respect. This started Ken editing and proofreading on the guild. Suppose you can say that Ken was probably the guilds first original editor and proofreader. Ken hopes you enjoy this publication and he looks forward to seeing what the future holds for the greatest roleplaying game ever.

Matt Butler (Writer)

Matt Butler has been playing D&D for over 10 years, but only recently began creating supplements for the Dungeon Master's Guild. He started his writing career with a series of short stories, one of which, *Footsteps in the Darkness*, won 4th place in the Fish Publishing Flash Fiction Contest. When he's not hard at work writing Abyssal Tides, his epic fantasy novel, he spends his time creating supplements for the Dungeon Master's Guild. His debut title, **The Library of Biblius**, is now a copper bestseller. His other works include; *Lady Sepa and the Soul Weeper*, *Curse of the Gumdrop Ooze*, *The Hag's Hexes* and the forthcoming sourcebook *Surviving the Feywild, a Guide*.

R P Davis (Editor)

R P Davis is a wordsmith and voice artist living in the highlands of central Pennsylvania, USA. He has been a tabletop gamer the entire time he's been sentient, and a role-playing addict for more than 30 years. In that time he's written countless things, from simple spell effects to D&D campaign worlds to complete role-playing games. He has presented and participated in panels at sci-fi and fantasy conventions alongside such luminaries as Kenneth Hite and George R R Martin. With his wife he owns and operate Reconstructing History. He's also a musician and composer, having studied music at Mansfield University of PA. He started writing for the Guild in August 2016. One of his recent entries to the guild is **Magicka Serrella - A Book of Magic**. Stay tuned for his upcoming tile *Mordekainen's Lost Notebook* as well!

Andy Dempz (Writer)

Andy Dempz was a Red Box baby who stole peeks at his friend's older brother's *Deities and Demigods* (complete with Elric and Cthulu, of course). Sometime after the release of 2nd Edition he took an extended break to play guitar in hardcore punk bands (though he would never claim to be a bard), study martial arts on multiple trips to Japan (nor a monk), and work as a master automotive mechanic (not a... tinker gnome?). He returned to D&D to find the 5th Edition an elegant update to the game he grew up with, and the seeds for his written adventures are often sown in the multiple overlapping campaigns he DMs in his home of Ann Arbor, MI.

Christian Eichhorn (Writer & Lead)

Christian Eichhorn joined the ranks of the DMs Guild's writers at the beginning of 2018 and was involved in many projects since then. He grew up with cRPGs like Baldur's Gate, Icewind Dale, Planescape Torment and Fallout which put a spell on him. Some 15 years later, he played his first round of proper P&P and realized what he had missed during this time. Seemingly always a storyteller at heart, he started to DM for several groups and wrote down the grand adventures the players would enjoy. They can now be found on the DMs Guild for others to peruse and play out. In his *leisure time* he also studies Biophysics which offers a nice balance to writing. His first entry on the DMs Guild was an adventure named **Ravenhome** which has evolved a lot since then!

David Flor (Writer)

David Flor is the pseudonym of Quighlagh Sluresh, an extra dimensional being of immense power and influence in and among many worlds. Before the dawn of history, Quighlagh Sluresh was there, opening the minds of the yet-to-evolve Humans. He altered the course of the species' development to allow for a greater appreciation for the hypothetical and unknown by an adjustment of their brains to produce "reward" effects through a combination of naturally produced chemicals, mostly dopamine. Quighlagh Sluresh found that the goal of evolving the humans was best served by taking a place among the locals and passing as one of them. His mysterious plans are now coming to fruition, and the thin guise of David Flor's physical form now spends much of its time on Autopilot wandering the streets of Miami, pretending to be in search of the most cheesy cheese breads and a beer that's better than Duvel. Feel free to peruse his other works at your leisure:

The Festival of Magic

Eddie Gioffre (Writer)

Eddie Gioffre has been playing RPGs for over 20 years, including most versions of D&D. His first published work was for *Polyhedron* magazine (issue 100), and since that time has written for the D&D Adventures League website, his own blog, and several other products available on DMs Guild.

In his spare time, he enjoys reading, watching sci-fi, history, and documentaries on TV, and spending time with his wife and young son. He also enjoys running D&D at various local game stores and conventions as well as his ongoing weekly game, now entering its 11th year.

Luke Instone-Hall (Artist)

Luke Instone-Hall is a young artist from the Midlands of England, who was born in 1996 and already had a passion for drawing at an extremely young age. As an aspiring comic book and fantasy illustrator he has worked on –and is working on– several DMs Guild community projects, most notably the *Monster of the Guild* bestiary. Studying illustration at the University of Gloucestershire based in Cheltenham, England he loves to write stories, illustrate them and enjoys playing D&D with his friends. In the future, he plans to write and illustrate many comic books and become a widely known name in the indie comics industry as a popular comic book artist.

He constantly endeavors to produce the vision of his writers in visual form to bring their work to life, be that in a role playing, comic book or general illustrative setting. He can often be found working under the name *Dire Wolf Art* for example on **Instagram** among others.

Darren Parmenter (Writer)

Darren Parmenter is an 18 year old High School student living in New South Wales, Australia. He has been playing Dungeons and Dragons since he was 9 and has taken up the role of Dungeon Master when he was 16. He has now taken his first step into the guild at the age of 17 with *The Warlock's Crypt*. Darren is also an avid war gamer and player of Warhammer 40,000, Age of Sigmar and Bolt Action.

George Sager (Writer)

George Sager: teacher, creator, dungeon master, Canadian, autobiographical blurb writer. As a youth George harboured a semi-secret attraction to Dungeons and Dragons, imagining to one day be invited to play by a group of true enthusiasts. In university this dream was realized and derailed on the same day. Unwelcoming jerks do apparently DM too. A few years later, while teaching English in South Korea, the fire was finally and irrevocably lit by a group of loveable idiots and a quest that began in a Sunless Citadel. George's love of D&D has only grown; incorporating a love of Fifth edition, dungeon mastery, and content creation. His creature submission was selected to be published in the upcoming *Kobold Press Creature Codex*. He's also written content for *Goblin Stone*, and plans to release his first solo creation through the Guild this summer.

Rob Twohy (Fantasy Grounds Conversion)

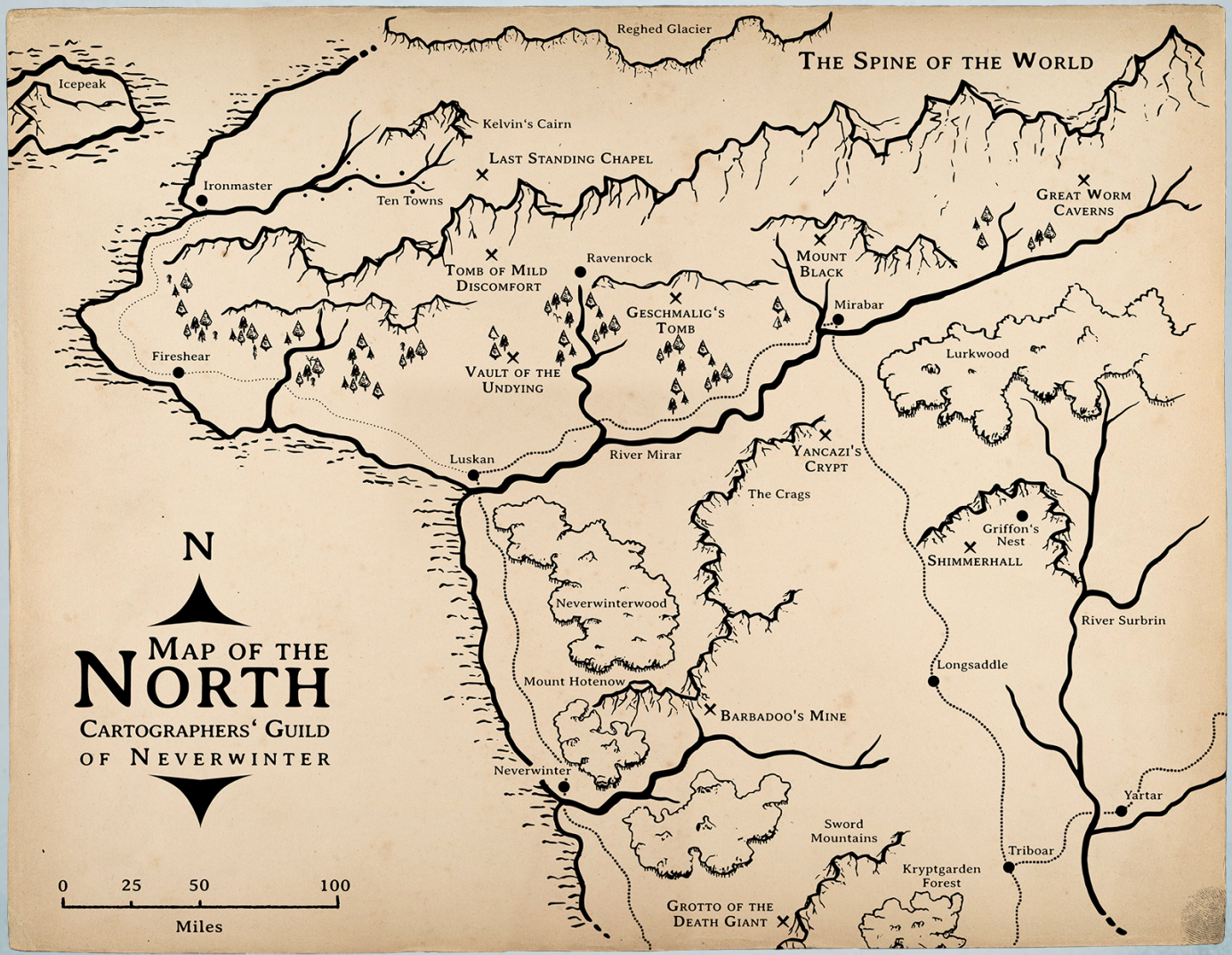
Rob Twohy (rob2e) is the Mad Wizard of Fantasy Grounds! Between his own titles and collaborations with other authors, he has over 75+ items on the DMs Guild. He also has done conversions for the SmiteWorks USA, LLC store directly where they sell Fantasy Grounds. Rob loves helping authors convert their works (PDFs) into the Fantasy Grounds format to share with more users in an automated fashion. A former stand-up comedian and liver transplantee, Rob now spends most of his time gaming, and/or creating. Look for Rob at all points "rob2e" on the InterWebs. Twitch, Twitter, **Patreon**, YouTube, wherever...

Christopher Walz (Writer)

Christopher Walz is the bestselling author of *The Midnight Revelry* and *Rising Sands*. His first memory of Dungeons & Dragons is picking up his brother's 2nd edition *Monstrous Manual* and looking at the pictures before he could read. He has been playing roleplaying games for 15 years and is eager to share his adventures with you. His latest release at this time is **The Call of Atropus**, a horrifying single session adventure utilizing creatures from *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*.

Micah Watt (Writer)

Micah Watt is an author, storyteller, Dungeon Master and RPG designer who has been playing, running and dissecting TTRPGs for more than 25 years. Hailing from sunny Australia, where he lives with his ever-patient wife and mini darklord-in-training (ie toddler son), he is scarred and hardened veteran of countless edition wars. He's authored more than a dozen products across DrivethruRPG and DM's Guild, including several medal-earning, 5 star rated, bestselling products. He's also been known to name drop legendary authors such as Richard A. Knack (of Dragonlance fame) that he is currently collaborating with on a new RPG setting and adventure series. His products, critical product reviews and general thoughts on gaming can be found at pyromaniacpress.com. For further adventures from Micah Watt have a look at **The Temple of the Opal Goddess**.





Breve Heeros Onli!

Mount Black. A mountain filled with a myriad of creatures' lairs, a crippled dragon that wants to control it once again, and a friendly kobold who can guide you to glory - for a price.

By George Sager

This adventure is designed to be incredibly flexible and can be run for 4-7 7th to 15th level characters. The example provided is optimized for 4 characters with an APL of 7. Mount Black is designed to be found anywhere within the northern mountain range. One place it can be found is 50 miles north of Mirabar, rising forebodingly higher than any of its neighbouring mountains.

Adventure Background

The inside of Mount Black is a criss-cross of tunnels and caverns that have been home to hundreds of different creatures over the years. Who originally built these tunnels and lairs into the mountain is lost to time.

Until recently a pair of black dragons controlled the largest portion, requiring tribute from the various other mountain denizens.

A group of self-proclaimed adventurers successfully navigated the tunnels and slew one dragon, Grystrix, while the other, Shevra, was away from the lair.

When she returned she took out her rage on the clan of kobolds that had served them, becoming permanently maimed and losing her only good eye in the process. Heep, a fast-talking female kobold scale sorcerer, was the sole survivor. Heep convinced Shevra that she has a plan to get revenge on adventurers and regain total control of the inner mountain at the same time. If Heep stands to make a profit as well, who could blame her?

Adventure Summary

Our heroes meet Heep at the base of Mount Black, and negotiate the kobold's help to successfully navigate one of the deadly tunnels within. If they survive, they may find an entrance to the lair of Shevra, the former mistress of the mountain.

Adventure Hooks

Heep and the lairs of Mount Black can be easily stumbled upon, but here are a few ways you might pique your players' interest:

Lost Adventurer

In a tavern in a northern town the adventurers overhear someone seeking help in rescuing their lost comrade. They may even be directly asked for help. This person's headstrong paladin friend set out weeks ago, bragging that she was going to single-handedly clean out a lair of evil creatures within Mount Black. The paladin was confident in her quest, and was even to meet a guide who knew Mount Black's secrets intimately at the base of the mountain. The distraught friend offers a reward for any party that will go to Mount Black and return with the paladin or evidence of her disappearance. To sweeten the pot, you can give the paladin a +2 weapon which is promised to the characters if they find her. The paladin is thought to be in such dire straits that she would give up the weapon upon rescue. Heep, the paladin's fabled contact, is happy to remember the paladin and send the party after her, for a price.

Hint From the Competition

The adventurers have made a name for themselves. Many love them, some do not. An adversary or a jealous competitor arranges for the party to be tipped off about a sure-fire quest to Mount Black that will increase their renown and provide a relatively easy path to riches and loot. Their directions will inevitably lead them straight to Heep. The competition had a run in with Heep in the past, and didn't fall for her sales pitch. They left Heep alive on the condition that she take care of any competition they sent her way. Heep was going to do this anyway, so naturally she played along.

Crossing the North

Using either of the above hooks will lead the characters to where they begin to see signs of Heep's presence (literally). The simplest hook is having the heroes encounter this trail of signs as they travel overland through the north.

Breve Heeros Onli!
Part 1: Meeting Heep

An Encounter in the Wilds. The heroes meet **Heep** (Appendix A) at the base of Mount Black. The party is crossing the northern country when they begin to spy intriguing signs. "ADventOOr Awayts!" "Com THIZ WaY!" "Breve Heeros Onli!" "Trezure, gold, untolt majiks!" Following the trail of signs leads the heroes to the foot of Mount Black, where they find a makeshift market stand presided over by a single kobold on a stool. The stand is painted with two words: "Heep Helps!"

Heep is an unusually friendly-looking kobold with wide eyes, a pattern of reticulated green, blue, and black scales, and a bit of an underbite. She is wearing warm boots, an overly large tunic, and a jaunty red and gold scarf that is clearly of superior quality. She smiles, and calls out to the party in Common.

> "Hello strong, sizeable heroes! Welcome to Heep's Dungeon! Will you be proving your dominance today?"

Interested heroes are soon in the middle of Heep's lively sales pitch. Heep jokes, teases, flatters, and talks with the adventurers like they're all co-conspirators. Her main points are:

- Heep is an excellent tunneler
- Heep knows every inch of the tunnels within the mountain, as well as which creatures live where
- Some of the creatures are more dangerous than others
- Successful adventurers are guaranteed to find great sport, glory, and riches within
- Heep can even help ensure their success, for a price

All of this is essentially true, although her motives are not pure. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check** confirms this. Heep seems like a charming, self-interested deal-maker, but not really a liar.

> "I wouldn't send you down THAT tunnel. Chundress the Bold and his band were mutilated SO badly there, and they all had weapons of silver! You don't look like you've got anything like that. Am I right?"

Assessing the Marks. Heep asks questions of the party, trying to get them to boast about their equipment and skills. She does this to:

- A. Size them up so as to send them to the "right" bit of dungeon
- B. Learn about any particularly nasty or potentially expensive items they carry
- C. Shake them down for some gold or interesting trades by selling them gear and information

Heep is cagey about exactly what types of beasts live within. She reveals nothing specific without getting paid first. Directions to a specific tunnel typically cost 50 gold, with an additional 50 gp for each trap the characters want to be forewarned about. She also sells information on the creatures within, like the strengths and weaknesses that she knows about. Each tidbit is honest, and costly.

A Crafty Trader. Heep has very little that could be stolen at her stand itself. When the heroes want something, she retreats behind a bush and climbs up a rope hanging within a small crevice in the mountainside to her stockpile room. In that cave is where Heep keeps her wealth, as well as tons of gear collected from dead adventurers. She'll try to sell any regular gear the party doesn't have, always at a 400% markup. If the heroes complain about her prices, she says something like, "You could always go into town. Might not take you a month to get back here."

If they party does not have climber's kits (PHB 151), she insists they buy some, as the team will have to negotiate some steep rock faces. She has dampness-resistant torches, 10 foot poles to spring traps, and even several grayish hooded robes that she claims will provide a measure of camouflage within the caverns.

Everything Heep sells has seen some use, but appears to be in good working order. If the heroes inspect any gear, the only thing they might notice is a sharp ammonia smell that the items seem to give off when closely examined. If asked about this, Heep shrugs and explains that things smell funny underground. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals there might be more to this than Heep is putting into words. If they argue, Heep begrudgingly refunds any money they spent on gear they find "too smelly."

Heep's Ploy. Depending on how formidable Heep believes the party is, she sends them to different areas within the mountain. Heep's goal is to send adventurers to an area full of creatures likely to be just a bit tougher than they can handle, killing them outright or softening them up for the dragon.

Heep's deal with Shevra is to funnel hapless adventurers into the dungeon in a way that best benefits Shevra (and by association Heep). Adventurers that are too powerful are lured to areas with deadly traps they have not been warned about. Others are sent on suicide missions against different mountain denizens. The hoped-for scenario is the death of the adventurers, after they've taken such a toll on their enemies that creatures no longer feel the mountain is safe, which cedes more control to Shevra.

Ultimately Shevra will also get loot to add to her hoard – at least, any loot Heep didn't get to first. Heep tells the most foolish and headstrong parties about the dragon, intending them to be killed in her lair after being softened up by some creatures on the way. She might also send a very weak group with expensive items directly to Shevra, encouraging them and exaggerating the extent of Shevra's injuries.

Shevra waits near the top of the mountain in a cave that connects to her lair. Once an adventuring party has left, Heep rings a series of bells to transmit a coded signal to the dragon. "7 rich fools. Your Lair. Via Harpy's nest."

Rigged Equipment. Characters who buy items from Heep are in trouble. While the gear in her climber's kits is useful for clambering up or down a cliffside, they are also much noisier, and the monsters within hear them being hammered in and ready themselves to ambush any intruders. Blind Shevra uses the ammonia smell to help her pinpoint adventurers that make it to her lair. Those holding smelly gear tend to be the first she attacks.

Convicting Heep. Heep's fine scarf is a potential clue. Keen adventurers who wonder about it can make a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (History) check** to remember that the scarf is one worn specifically by Lord's Alliance members in the north. If asked, Heep claims that it was traded to her for her knowledge of the mountain, a lie. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check** catches the lie. Heep then relents and admits that it was retrieved from a customer that tragically fell in battle. This is the truth but characters that succeed another **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check** know that Heep is not as upset by this as she acts. If Heep is attacked, she immediately Disengages and runs to her stockpile, pulling the rope up behind her, or severing it if a Small-sized adventurer manages to follow behind.

The Old Kobold Double-Cross. Ultimately Heep is a survivor, and if she is ever truly at risk she bargains with the truth about the dragon and promises to help the party slay it. She gives them accurate information about a secret back entrance to the lair and the time when Shevra usually sleeps. She promises to send false ringing signals up to the dragon (allowing the party to attack Shevra while she is unconscious or surprised). Then Heep would do everything in her power to get far far away.

Unruly Tributaries. Every dungeon lair includes a hidden access point that connects a creature's territory with the dragon's lair. Residents of the mountain all used to use these tunnels to pay tribute to the dragons for their protection, but since Grystrix was slain, they have all opted not to do so anymore.

Part 2: Lair of the Weretigers

The beauty of Mount Black is that any dungeon can be swapped in at this point, depending on your characters' levels, and how badly they've fallen for Heep's sales pitch. Here is one example of a simple dungeon route within Mount Black. You can populate this route with different creatures, depending on what difficulty you want to achieve. For this example it is a lair of **weretigers** (MM 210).

Light Conditions. Heavy curtains separate different areas in the lair, blocking light and even noise to a certain extent. There is no light source that the characters don't bring with them.

Traps. In each room add one or two simple or complex traps. The majority of the traps should be easily avoided or disarmed if the party paid for the knowledge. There will always be some traps that Heep does not warn them about.

Doors. Unless stated otherwise, all entrances are covered with thick curtains that obstruct the view inside.

Area 1: Entrance, Cavern Below

Each of the different inhabited tunnels has many entrances, but Heep always insists the element of surprise is best when climbing down from above. High on the mountain, when characters reach the place Heep described, a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals the hidden entrance (rolled with advantage if they've been told the way and paid the fee). Just as Heep said, the characters then have to climb down a sheer 80 foot rock face to get into the tunnels below.

Weresentries. The cavern below the cliff entrance is thought to be fairly safe by the lair's inhabitants, but still they leave a small contingent to guard it. 3 **weretigers** (MM 210) hide in the darkness at the bottom of the cliff. They make **Wisdom (Perception) checks** against the party's **Dexterity (Stealth) group check** with advantage to detect the party coming if the characters are using Heep's climber's kits, bringing their own light source, or otherwise being noisy in their descent. The weretigers hide and use ranged attacks to surprise the characters once they're half way down. If no characters are surprised, or the weretigers are defeated in less than 3 rounds, the guards do not call out to warn their comrades.

Area 2: Main Hall

Read or paraphrase the following:

> Beyond the curtain is a wide, high-ceilinged room. Ancient pictographs are carved into the floor, and enormous mismatched stone pillars stand in two rows before you that stretch into the distant darkness.

This wide room is dotted with ancient pillars that can block sightlines and serve as cover. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (History) check** reveals that the pillars were made ages ago, some by dwarves and some by goblinoids. In either case, it's clear that the original inhabitants are long gone. The room is the largest part of the lair, and is used as a general living space.

Monsters. If the guards in Area 1 got the drop on the party and called out a warning, 4 **weretigers** (MM 210) will have taken up positions behind different pillars to defend against intruders. Otherwise 2 unprepared weretigers are chatting in this room along with 3 weretiger non-combatants (children, or elderly members in human form).

Tactics. The weretigers fight to the death to defend their home and their families, though the ones in human form may parley before attacking to give the players a chance to go back the way they've come.

Area 3: Holding Area

At the end of this short tunnel is a heavy door that has been locked from the characters' side (the key is still in the lock). Beyond is a cavern that the weretigers use as a holding cell for intruders to their lair.

Blind Prisoners. Inside the holding area are 10 **grimlocks** (MM 175). These creatures were recently ousted from their own lair within Mount Black by invaders. When they tried to take over some of this lair, they were captured and locked away to be dealt with at a later time. Wary from their capture, the prisoners do not immediately attack the characters, though they defend themselves.

Characters that somehow communicate with the grimlocks learn that their lair was recently attacked by different groups of adventurers. The grimlocks learned that Heep had been sending these groups, and are upset because they'd made a deal with Heep to send them only inept adventurers, and have been paying Heep treasure for the protection. Ultimately they were forced to flee their lair. They believe the adventurers who attacked them likely died at the claws of the dragon.

The Old Kobold Double-Cross – Again. If the characters should share this information with the weretigers they find that Heep offered them a similar deal. It may become clear that Heep has been playing many different sides for profit. An alliance with the weretigers is possible.

Treasure. This room was previously used to hold a variety of intruders. Their corpses can be looted for 297 gold pieces, any regular adventuring equipment or basic weapons, a *deck of illusions* (DMG 161), and a *bag of tricks (rust)* (DMG 154).

Area 4: Larder

This room contains crates and barrels of dried food. 2 **weretigers** (MM 210) in human form are here doing inventory of their food stores. They transform and attack if they feel threatened.

Area 5: Miscellaneous Tunnels

These tunnels lead to many different places, including several dead ends within Mount Black. Adventurers that can see in these tunnels can make a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check** to see which tunnels are the most traveled. Footprints lead down a long and winding way that eventually opens up to another area on the outside of the mountain. If the party decides to explore these tunnels at random have them roll 1d20 and use the results from the Exploring Mount Black table.

Area 6: The Den

This area is quite large and contains bedrolls for more than 20 creatures. Within are 7 non-combatants, and the weretiger leader, **Rufus** (Appendix A), along with 3 other weretigers that fiercely defend this area. Adventurers that investigate this room for secret passages may find the entrance that the creatures once used to bring tribute to the dragon's lair. It is well hidden and can only be found with a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check**. If Heep told the characters where to look, reduce the DC to 12.

Treasure. Rufus carries *Pathcarver* (see Appendix B). A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check** discovers the meager hoard of these creatures beneath some otherwise empty crates. 2090 cp, 1000 sp, 48 gp, seven gems worth 50 gp each, and a *brooch of shielding* (DMG 156). If you've chosen to populate the lair with different creatures, roll on the appropriate Treasure Hoard table (DMG 137).

Exploring Mount Black

d20	Result
1-7	This tunnel leads to several branches that all seem to be long unused dead-ends.
8-14	This tunnel leads adventurers in a long circuit that brings them back to where they started. In that time more creatures have returned to the lair and they are ambushed by 3 of them.
15-17	The heroes find a partially open secret door. Beyond is a room filled with old treasure. 611 sp, 291 gp, and several gems worth 250 gp.
18-19	This tunnel connects to another lair that mirrors this one. The creatures within are two CR ratings higher than the weretigers (or creatures used in this lair).
20	This tunnel leads them to an opening above Shevra's lair. Luckily, the dragon is asleep 20 feet below.

Part 3: The Dragon's Lair

Area S1: The Tribute Room

This cavern has many narrow tunnels connecting to it, each of which leads back to various creatures' lairs. The space is lit during the day by natural skylights in the 80 foot ceiling. In the centre of the room is a stone platform and a standing bell with a pull-chain. In the past, creatures left their offerings on the platform and rang the bell to notify the dragons, who would acknowledge their offering from the darkness above and dismiss them. The bell was always mostly for show, as the acoustics of this cavern are such that even the slightest noise echoes to where the dragon can hear it in her lair. Creatures have disadvantage on **Dexterity (Stealth) checks** in this area.

Area S2: Shevra's Lair

Difficult Ascend. In shadows 70 feet above the floor of the Tribute Room are two great openings that connect with the dragon's lair. The dragons long ago had their kobold minions alter the rock faces below these opening, making them jagged and difficult to climb. Characters must make a **successful DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check** every 20 feet to climb up to the openings above (made at disadvantage if the adventurers have no climbing gear).

Failing one of these checks loosens some rocks and makes enough noise to alert the dragon. Failing two in a row causes the hero to fall back to the bottom. At the end of a fall, a creature takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it fell, to a maximum of 20d6. The creature lands **prone**, unless it avoids taking damage from the fall.

The Lair. Within the lair itself Shevra can use Lair Actions. The cavern is enormous and completely dark except for within 30 feet of the outer entrance (marked X). The ceiling is 100 feet above and covered in stalactites. There is a pool of dark, cold water within the lair that is 40 foot deep (marked W). One tunnel connects to this lair (marked K). If the heroes investigate it they find an old and now abandoned lair which shows clear signs of being inhabited by kobolds. This was Heep's former home, but now there is nothing useful within.

Tactics. **Shevra** (Appendix A) spends much of her time resting near the outer entrance. From here she can safely escape to the outside to hunt, and she can also hear Heep's signals from far below. Otherwise Shevra can be found perched atop her hoard in the dark cavern.

Shevra has grown weary since her maiming, though she is content to talk with intruders if Heep has notified her that they are no serious threat. When she attacks she fights cautiously, killing from a distance if possible, and she tries to end fights quickly. She Disengages and flees through the outer entrance if lowered to one quarter of her hit points, likely only to return to take her revenge on Heep.

Treasure. Shevra and her mate amassed a large hoard over the years, and when she returned home, the group that slew Grystrix was forced to flee before they could collect any of the treasure. 1450 cp, 15,000 sp, 4,000 gp, 201 pp, five art objects (worth 250 gold each), ten gems (worth 100 gold each), a *dragon slayer longsword* (DMG 166), a *portable hole* (DMG 185), and a *bag of devouring* (DMG 153). This is the treasure if the version of Shevra in Appendix A was used. Otherwise roll twice on the appropriate Treasure Hoard table for Shevra's CR (DMG 137).

Adventure Conclusion & Continuation

If the heroes defeat Shevra they can claim her hoard. The remaining creatures within Mount Black eventually discover that the dragon is gone and fight amongst themselves for potential control of her domain. If the party returns to Heep, she is surprised to see them. She congratulates them and tries to sell them on invading another lair. This one should be similar to the first but with much tougher monsters.

If the party learns of Heep's double-dealings and confronts her, she denies it at first, and then plays the victim, acting as pitiful as she can. Heep flees rather than fighting, and begs for her life, offering herself as a servant if she is in mortal danger. If the party slew Shevra and collected her hoard, Heep is out of a job. She is also legitimately impressed. She congratulates and flatters the party, coming up with reasons that she should travel with them for a while. Heep wants to continue to be attached to a powerful ally (or group) that she can manipulate or benefit from as opportunities arise.

Appendix A: Monsters & NPCs

Heep

Small humanoid (kobold), neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 44 (8d6 + 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)	18 (+4)

Skills Deception +6, Persuasion +6, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Spellcasting. Heep is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, mage hand, mending, poison spray*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, chromatic orb, expeditious retreat*

2nd level (2 slots): *scorching ray*

Sorcery Points. Heep has 3 sorcery points. She can spend l or more sorcery points as a bonus action to gain one of the following benefits:

Heightened Spell: When it casts a spell that forces a creature to make a saving throw to resist the spell's effects, Heep can spend 3 sorcery points to give one target of the spell disadvantage on its first saving throw against the spell.

Subtle Spell: When Heep casts a spell, she can spend l sorcery point to cast the spell without any somatic or verbal components.

Pack Tactics. Heep has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of her allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, Heep has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Shevra

Large dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 127 (15d10 + 45)
Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6, Wis +6, Cha +5
Skills Perception +9, Stealth +5
Damage Immunities acid
Senses blindsight 15 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Amphibious. Shevra can breathe air and water.

Actions

Multiattack. Shevra makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6). Shevra exhales acid in a 30-feet line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 49 (11d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Rufus

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), neutral

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 180 (24d8 + 72)
Speed 30ft. (40 ft. in tiger form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +4
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common (can't speak in tiger form)
Challenge 4 (1 ,100 XP)

Shapechanger. Rufus can use its action to polymorph into a tiger-humanoid hybrid or into a tiger, or back into its true form, which is humanoid. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The weretiger has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pounce (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only). If Rufus moves at least 15 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, Rufus can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Innate Spellcasting. Rufus' spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, prestidigitation*

1/day: *invisibility*

2/day each: *misty step, counterspell, cone of cold*

Actions

Multiattack. Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). In humanoid form, Rufus makes two attacks with *Pathcarver* or two longbow attacks. In hybrid form, Rufus can attack like a humanoid or make two claw attacks.

Bite (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft ., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with weretiger lycanthropy.

Claw (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Pathcarver (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft ., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Longbow (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (ld8 + 2) piercing damage.

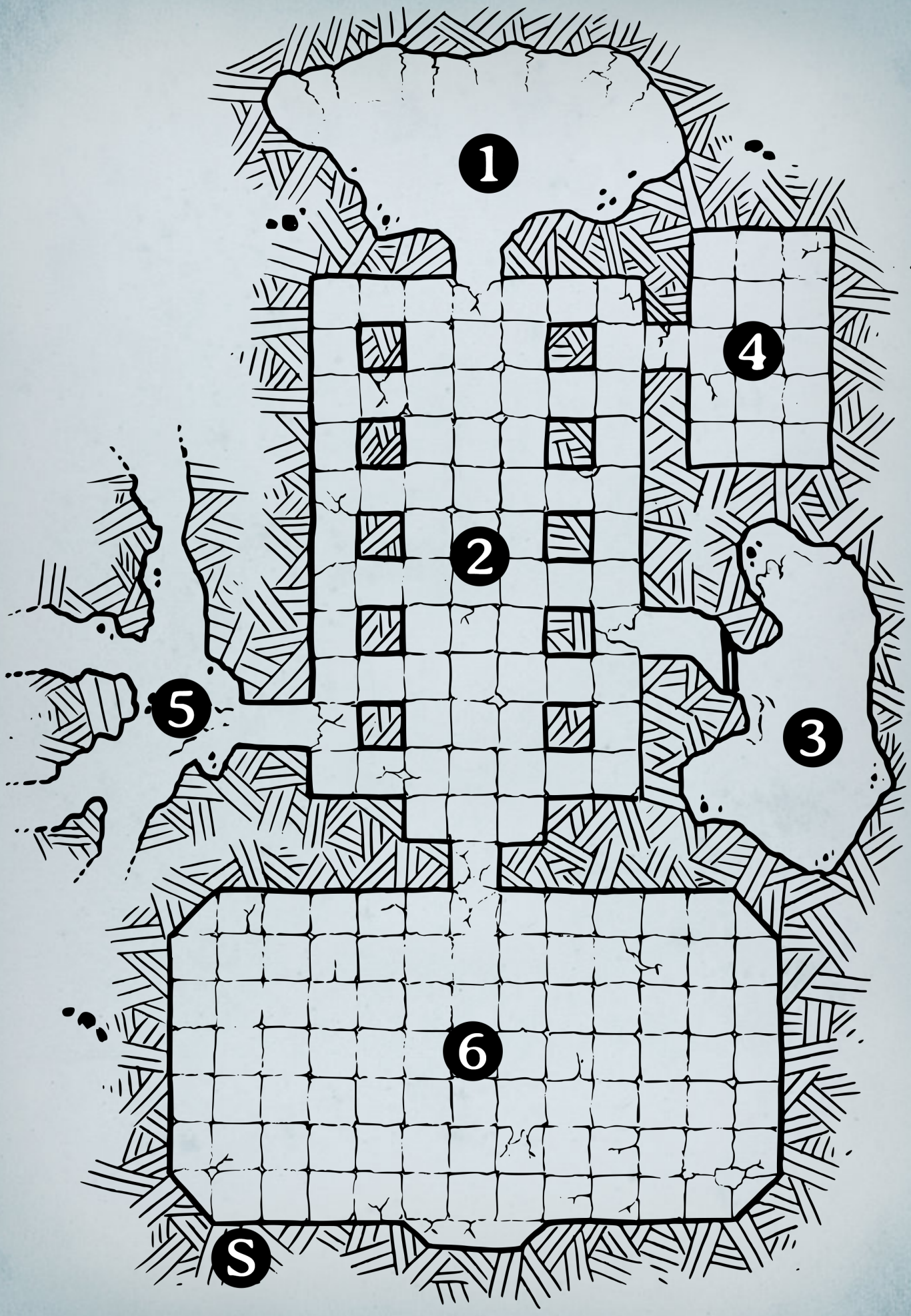
Appendix B: Items

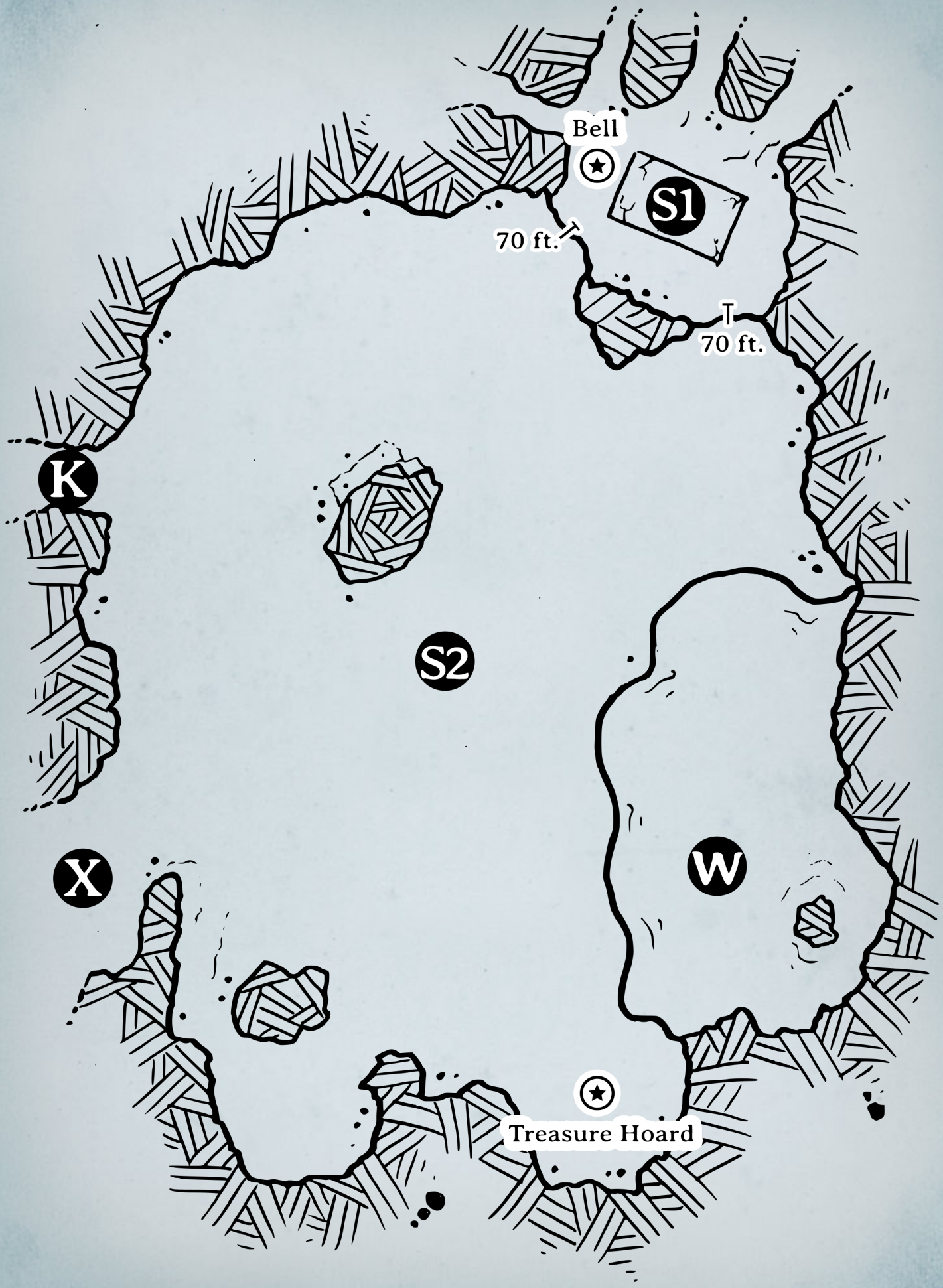
Pathcarver

Weapon (scimitar), very rare (requires attunement)

This unusually long machete helps its wielder get where they are going, cutting down obstacles that stand in the way. You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Compass. While you hold *Pathcarver*, you can use an action to learn which way is north.


1
2
3
4
5
6
S


Bell
S1
70 ft.
70 ft.
K
S2
X
W
Treasure Hoard



Geschmalig's Tomb

Descend into the depths of a tomb which has remained undisturbed for decades. However, a few weeks ago, the gears of war started turning, grinding the northern folk to dust. An undead host marches, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. A decisive strike to cut off the snake's head might save thousands of lives!

By Christian Eichhorn

This dungeon is designed for 3-7 8th to 12th level characters and is optimized for five characters with an average party level (APL) of 10. The dungeon is placed in the northern parts of the Sword Coast but can be used in any setting with some adjustment.

Adventure Background

The Rise …

Geschmalig, a great uthgardt barbarian, feared by his enemies and adored by his comrades, was the unknown mortal child of the Raven Queen. In fear for her child, the Raven Queen hid Geschmalig within one of the many Material Planes. She chose the freshly conjoined Abeir-Toril -aptly named the Cradle of Life- as the perfect home for her offspring.

Staying true to her nature, she placed the babe in front of the home of a childless wife to an uthgardt warchief, in the hope that one day her child would prosper, grow strong and return to his true home.

Geschmalig grew up in Raven Rock, the ancestral home of the Black Raven tribe. He was known for his ferocious and promiscuous nature. He could best any person foolish enough to accept his challenge in a duel and no woman could withstand his advances. His fellow tribesmen began to grow tired of his antics and prayed that Uthgar would return to set him straight. All of this changed when Geschmalig stumbled upon a strange man during one of his hunts. Geschmalig challenged him to a fight, and they wrestled for several hours. With no man victorious, a deep friendship was won that day. The young man was as wild as nature herself, and Geschmalig took a liking to him. He brought him back to Raven Rock where they celebrated for seven days and seven nights. Udiken, the man from the wilds, learned many new pleasures during this time. Together, Geschmalig and Udiken set out to make war on their fellow tribes and the weak southlanders. They would string victory to victory, like pearls on a necklace. Together, they subjugated almost the entire north. Rumors emerged that one -or maybe both- were Uthgar returned.

... The Fall ...

Alas, on the brink of fulfilling their dreams, Udiken was struck with a peculiar disease and died a painful death. Geschmalig abandoned his worldly ambitions and set out on a quest. He would only rest when he found a way to return his best friend to the realm of the living. After many years of travel, he brought a dubious man back with him. The tribe's shamans were enraged and demanded of Geschmalig to kill this strange sorcerer. Geschmalig should return to the old ways, but he was having none of that. Both Geschmalig and the sorcerer ventured to the glacier where Geschmalig had dug an icy grave for Udiken. The sorcerer began his dark work, and after a few minutes, Udiken stired in his grave. Geschmalig's joy turned into horror when he witnessed a grotesque husk shamble forward. In his rage, he cut the sorcerer in two.

Geschmalig threw himself against Udiken, attempting to return him to his grave. The two tumbled down the glacier locked in close combat. It was a fierce battle which brought them to the edge of a ravine. The ground gave way, and after a long fall, Geschmalig lay dead. The remains of Udiken were carried away downstream.

... And Rise Again.

A century later, whilst Geschmalig has laid dormant in his tomb, Udiken awakened. He found himself trapped in an icy prison that was slowly thawing. During his incarceration, Udiken received visions and from a valuable ally, the god of evil secrets, Vecna. After Udiken broke free, he set out with a single purpose in mind; to raise his friend from the dead like Geschmalig did for him so many years ago. First, Udiken acquired a powerful artifact that was gifted to him by Vecna. Then he sought out the shamans of the Black Raven tribe. He needed access to the tomb and a person skilled in the arts of magic. He attempted to convince the shamans that in his absence, he had devised a way for Uthgar to be reborn using Geschmalig's remains, the vessel which was destined by prophecy. However, the shamans chased him away as a heretic and lunatic.

Cast out and furious, Udiken was approached by Karzai, who was one of the Black Raven tribe's lesser shamans. Karzai was swayed by Udiken's words, and for the good of his people, he was willing to do Udiken's bidding. Udiken presented Karzai with the *Eye of Vecna* which Karzai had to accept for the plan to work. After the successful transplant, they made their way to the tomb. And with Karzai's newfound powers they raised Geschmalig from the dead.

But all was not as it seemed. Karzai realized his mistake when Udiken surprised him and violently gouged out the *Eye of Vecna* from its socket, taking it for himself. Now Karzai is incarcerated in the tomb, Udiken's undead servants raid the countryside for bodies, and Geschmalig sits on a throne of bones, waiting for his troops to assemble.

Adventure Summary

The characters uncover the tomb of Geschmalig in a hidden valley which lies roughly 40 miles north-east of Raven Rock. On the upper level, they battle numerous sentries, have the chance to free several captives and encounter Sinser and Melissa. The graverobbers decide to accompany the characters to uncover more of the tomb's riches. On the lower level, the characters discover the imprisoned Karzai. He may decide to share some valuable information with the characters. The characters also find Salem, one of Udiken's victims who is now a servant of his. Finally, the characters face the possessor of the *Eye of Vecna* Udiken with his elite troops. In the Throne Room, the characters encounter Geschmalig who was raised from the dead but suffers from a clouded mind.

Adventure Hooks

Rumors about an undead host circulate the Sword Coast. It is said that undead raiding parties pillage smaller settlements and abduct the inhabitants. According to the latest news, the undead dare to lay siege to Mirabar. A legion of skeletons marches under the banner of a black raven and people point to the uthgardt tribes as possible culprits. Word on the street is that the cities of Luskan and Neverwinter received an ultimatum. Undead ravens brought missives from a mysterious person named Udiken, who demanded tribute in form of weapons and slaves. He threatened to raze the cities to the ground if his demands were not met.

A Request of the Lords' Alliance

The characters are approached by Sir Merryweather, an agent of the Lords' Alliance. The Lords' Alliance does not have enough men and women to fend off both the giants and the undead. However, the Lords' Alliance has large reserves of gold. Lord Merryweather argues that this is the time to strike at the heart of the problem. The characters are tasked to travel to Raven Rock and find the source of the undead host. The characters are not admitted to enter Raven Rock, but they are told about Geschmalig's tomb from which the undead emerge.

Refugees Under Attack

While traveling the North, the characters chance upon a group of beleaguered uthgardt tribespeople. The refugees are attacked by a dozen undead but manage to hold the skeletons back with a firm shield wall. If the characters destroy the skeletons, the uthgardt tell the characters about the fate of the North: Geschmalig and Udiken have risen from the dead and make war on the living. Only a fool or a true hero would be brave enough to face them in battle! The refugees point to Raven Rock as a starting point for an investigation, one of the last bastions against the undead.

Geschmalig's Tomb

Part 1: Valley of the King

On their way to Raven Rock, the characters have several chances to follow the tracks of undead raiding parties which roam the countryside. The undead do not cover their tracks which makes it easy for the characters to follow them. The tracks lead the characters to the valley where Geschmalig's Tomb is located. With a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check**, the characters learn that the raiding parties return with prisoners and loot. Following any of the tracks leads the characters to a secret and previously uncharted valley roughly 40 miles north-east of Raven Rock.

When the characters reach the valley, read or paraphrase the following:

> You find your way into a hidden valley where you are awed by the sight of a gigantic statue looming in the distance. It is hewn from a steep mountainside and depicts a ferocious warrior. Adjacent to the statue you notice a sizeable gate which might lead further into the mountain. The entrance is clearly marked by flickering flames. They emerge from a pair of large braziers next to the giant stone arch.

Sights, Sounds, and Smells. The valley is enclosed by an impossibly large mountain range which even dwarfs the gigantic statue. Due to its location, the valley lies in almost perpetual darkness. Only 1 or 2 hours during the day will the sun stand high enough to illuminate the rough landscape. The characters hear the howling wind and witness large plumes of snow which are blown from the snow-tipped mountains. The howling of the wind is sometimes interrupted by the sound of cracking ice and the rich sounds from the occasional minor rockfall. The bitter cold air smells of fresh snow.

Extreme Cold. The temperature in the valley is well below 0 degrees Fahrenheit (-17 degrees Celsius). A creature exposed to the cold must succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution saving throw** at the end of each hour or gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on the saving throw, as do creatures wearing cold weather gear (thick coats, gloves, and the like) and creatures naturally adapted to cold climates.

High Altitude. Traveling at altitudes of 10,000 feet or higher above sea level is taxing for a creature that needs to breathe, due to the reduced amount of oxygen in the air. The valley itself and the way to the valley lie between 10,000 and 15,000 feet. Each hour a character spends traveling at high altitude counts as 2 hours for determining how long that character can travel. Characters can acclimatize to the high altitude by constantly spending 30 days or more at this elevation.

Return of the Raiders. Not all the undead are off to lay siege to Mirabar. Every 16 hours a raiding party consisting of 6 **uthgardt skeletons** (Appendix A) returns to the valley with looted armaments and 1d12+6 captives.

Silent Stalker. The undead winter wolf **Ninuraa** (Appendix A) stalks the valley and tries to ambush the characters when it gets a chance. Ninuraa disengages and flees when it loses half its hit points. If Ninuraa manages to escape, the wolf retreats into the Throne Room to lick its wounds, triggering the alarm trap in Area 1 on its way into the complex.

Geschmalig's Tomb: General Features

Geschmalig's tomb is an extensive underground complex with many rooms and corridors. The tomb's general features are summarized here.

Sights, Sounds, and Smells. The air gets more and more stale the deeper one ventures into the complex. The silence is broken only by the screaming of Udiken's victims. The closer one gets to the Vat Chamber the louder the screams become.

Doors and Walls. The walls were originally hewn from natural stone and later engraved. A character with the Stonecunning trait can tell that these halls existed long before they were substantially altered and fashioned into a tomb. The ancient caves served as a shelter for thousands of years before they were remade into the final resting place of Geschmalig. The walls are adorned with scenes of great battles and celebrations. A raven is featured prominently in most of them. The walls are 20-foot high, and there are no doors unless otherwise stated.

Lighting. A few lit braziers in Area 2, 3, 6 and 7 spend a modicum of light, helping the captives find their way to the Vat Chamber. All other corridors and rooms are completely dark and count as **heavily obscured areas**.

Part 2: The Tomb Complex

Area 1: The Entrance

Entering these haunted halls, you are greeted by an eerie silence. The ground is littered with bones, broken equipment and torn clothing. Several alcoves line the walls, each containing upright standing sarcophagi. Several small braziers are dispensed from the ceiling and illuminate the room with a modicum of light.

Alarm Trap. Silent alarm traps are located 30 feet into the room as well as in front of the sarcophagi. The traps come in the form of pressure plates which are marked on the corresponding map. The alarm traps in the passageways can be avoided by stepping over them. The traps located in front of the sarcophagi must be deactivated before the sarcophagi can be inspected. A character with a **passive Perception of 18 or higher** notices the pressure plates or manages to find them with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check**. A trap can be disarmed with a successful **DC 12 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check**.

If a silent alarm trap is triggered, the following happens:

- Udiken becomes aware that intruders entered the complex. The repercussions of this are described later in the text.
- 5 **mummies** (MM 227) emerge from the sarcophagi.
- 6 **uthgardt skeletons** (Appendix A) from Area 3 enter Area 2 and prepare to ambush the intruders.

Tactics. The mummies attack whichever enemy stands nearest to them. The mummies also attack if the characters inspect the sarcophagi. If the characters flee outside, or the mummies find no enemies, they mill around for 1 hour before returning to their sarcophagi. If the characters move further into the complex, the mummies follow them.

Hidden Treasure. A *ring of warmth* (DMG 193) is hidden in one of the sarcophagi. The characters find the item if they search the sarcophagi for 5 minutes or succeed in a **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check**. The ring bears the initials 'ADJ' and may prove a plot point for the DM during further adventures.

Difficulty Adjustments. This is a fight of **medium difficulty**. Make the following adjustments as required:

- If the party is very weak, remove 2 mummies.
- If the party is weak, remove 1 mummy.
- If the party is strong, add 3 mummies.
- If the party is very strong, add 5 mummies.

Area 2: The Main Hall

A character who succeeds on a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check** or has a **passive Perception of 16 or higher** hears muffled coughs and scraps of conversation from Area 3. If the characters create excessive noise whilst in Area 2, the sentries in Area 3 are alarmed, and a stealthy approach becomes impossible.

Tracks. A character who succeeds in a **DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check** or has a **passive Perception of 17 or higher**, notices the following things of interest:

- Human, gnome and undead footprints, leading from Area 1 to Area 4 and away from Area 4 into Area 3.
- Dozens of tracks, human and undead, leading from Area 4 into the barely lit southern corridor of Area 6. The human tracks only go one way: Deeper into the complex.
- Dozens of tracks, all undead, leading into and away from Area 5.

Area 3: The Cells

The blood runs cold in your veins at the sight of this chamber. Dozens of people are crammed inside large cells like animals. Several undead sentries stand guard here, unflinching, seemingly never tiring. Surprisingly, amongst those you can see, there appears to be no sign of old or young captives.

Monsters. 8 **uthgardt skeletons** (Appendix A) stand guard in this room unless 6 of them left to prepare an ambush in Area 2. The sentries are constantly alert and attack any seen creatures on first sight. The uthgard skeletons have advantage on their passive Perception (+5).

4 alcoves are located along the southern wall of the room. The alcoves and sarcophagi are like those found in Area 1. The sarcophagi contain rotten humanoid remains mixed with rags and bandages. If the group is strong to very strong, several mummies hide within the sarcophagi, attacking 1 round after the skeletons spot the characters. Details can be found in the difficulty adjustments below.

Tactics. The uthgardt skeletons try to knock the characters **Unconscious** (PHB 292), dealing non-lethal damage when a character falls below half of his or her hit points. If all characters participating in a fight are knocked unconscious, they are relieved of their equipment and locked within their respective cell.

The mummies attack whichever enemy stands nearest to them.

Difficulty Adjustments. This is a fight of **easy difficulty**. Make the following adjustments as required:

- If the party is very weak, remove 3 uthgardt skeletons.
- If the party is weak, remove 2 uthgardt skeletons.
- If the party is strong, add 2 **mummies** (MM 227).
- If the party is very strong, add 4 mummies.

The Captives. The cell doors are barred by large timber pieces which can be removed easily enough. The men are held in the eastern cell block and the women in the western. The captives are in bad condition, with many of them suffering from hypothermia.

If the characters defeat the sentries and free the captives, a leader named Haror (LN male human **tribal warrior** MM 350) arms himself with a discarded spear and thanks the characters for their help. Haror tells the characters that the captives need weapons and supplies to flee from this place. If the characters could only find enough weapons, the now freed captives might hunt for themselves during their flight. Haror also tells the characters that captives are lead away at regular intervals and never return.

The Grave Robbers. Among the captives are **Sinser** and **Melissa** (Appendix A). They were captured by a returning raiding party after they plundered Area 4. Sinser and Melissa were relieved of their equipment, aside from a black opal worth 1,000 gp which Sinser hides on his body. Sinser and Melissa have 2 objectives: Recover their equipment and plunder more of the tomb's riches. Pretending to be proper adventurers, they ask the characters for their help in retrieving their stolen property and eradicating the evil that haunts these halls. Sinser and Melissa support the characters in a reserved manner, never risking their lives to save a character.

DM Note

Should the characters be knocked unconscious during any point of the adventure, they awake in the cells as specified above. Give the characters time to attempt an escape. At some point, they are visited by Udiken to be interrogated. Udiken makes them an offer: Swear fealty and serve him alive or become a mindless undead drone. If the characters show no inclination to join Udiken willingly, the cell is opened in an attempt to lead the characters to the Vat Chamber one by one. If the characters accept, Udiken prepares a ritual so Vecna may put a *geas* of 8th level (PHB 244) on the characters. His first order for the characters is to conquer the city of Mirabar in Geschmalig's name.

Area 4: The Offering Chamber

Hundreds of small shrines line the walls of this room. Old wax runs down the walls, forming large pools on the floor. These rivers of molten candles hint at the fact, that each of the little shrines was once well tended to. However, everything of worth seems to be long gone, and the room is robbed of its former glory.

Hidden Treasure. In the past, this room was the destination of many worshippers which wanted to offer a last parting gift to Geschmalig. Many uthgardt made a pilgrimage to his burial place, to honor the fallen king. Most of the offerings were looted during the last decade, long before Udiken elected the tomb as his base of operation. A hidden compartment which held the most expensive parting gift was looted by Sinser and Melissa shortly before they were captured. A character who searches the room and succeeds in a **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check** finds the secret mechanism that opens and closes the secret compartment.

Area 5: The Armory

A veritable mountain of weapons, armor and scrap metal is stored in this room. Most of the items are simply piled up in a large spherical hole in the ground. Some of the items are still covered in blood and gore which hints at the fact, that the former owners did not give them up peacefully. A large opening is located in the ceiling, allowing some rays of light to fall inside.

In the past, animals and other offerings were burned in this room. Now, the room is filled with hundreds of weapons and several pieces of armor. The equipment was looted from the villages and towns the undead managed to conquer. The items were pillaged to outfit the growing undead army. Any items taken from either the characters or Sinser and Melissa are haphazardly stored here. With a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, the characters find *Grimbalding's War Mask* (Appendix B) hidden among the pillaged items.

Sinser and Melissa

Melissa and Sinser are old childhood friends. Sinser was part of a Luskan based thieves' guild until he got into trouble for lining his own pocket. Melissa stayed true to her friend, and they took the first boat which left Luskan and found themselves in Targos. The friends took up some mercenary work, but soon found that tomb raiding was more lucrative.

Melissa is a simple fighter but wears the symbol of Torm around her neck which is also prominently featured on her shield. She looted these items from a corpse but found that they open many doors. Since then she plays the part. As proficient grave robbers, Sinser and Melissa heard about Geschmalig's tomb a long while ago. They outfitted an expedition, acquired a map and set off to pilfer whatever could be found. They managed to sneak into the complex, avoiding Ninuraa and the traps. However, a returning raiding party took them by surprise.

Part 3: The Lower Level

Sights, Sounds, and Smells. The smell notably changes on the tomb's lower levels. It reeks of burned flesh and something metallic. The further the characters approach the Vat Chamber the stronger the smell becomes. A horrifying scream which ends with a terrible gurgling noise can be heard frequently as another captive is thrown into the vat.

Area 6a: The Corridors

> Two narrow staircases descend before you. The end of the staircases is barely visible in the all-consuming darkness. You hear faint screams echoing in the distance, sending shivers down your spine.

The stairs descend 30 feet downwards, and each stair leads into an 80-foot long corridor. With a **passive Perception of 15 or higher** or a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check**, a character notices that the corridor to his right (south) is in frequent use and the corridor to his left (north) shows no sign of usage.

Trap. A pit trap is installed in the northern corridor as marked on the corresponding map. The trap can be spotted with a **passive Perception of 17 or higher** or a successful **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check**.

The trap can also be found with a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check** if a character is actively searching for traps. The trigger is a simple pressure plate which can be avoided once spotted.

If a creature triggers the trap, a 40-foot long section of the floor swings open. The pit's floor is covered with deadly spikes and filled with water. A character that falls into the pit must make a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** to grab a small lip around the pit, preventing the fall. A character takes 22 (4d10) piercing damage on a failed save.

The Alarm Trap in Area 1 was Triggered

Udiken's servants have activated additional traps if the characters triggered the alarm trap in Area 1. Both the northern and the southern corridor feature a dart trap in this case. The trigger is a simple pressure plate which is placed 5 feet before the end of the corridors. The affected area is 10 foot long and is marked on the corresponding map. The trap can be spotted with a **passive Perception of 18 or higher** or a **successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check**. The trap can also be found with a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check** if a character actively searches for traps. To disarm the trap, a character must succeed in a **DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check**.

If the trap is triggered, all affected creatures must make a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw**. On a failed save, the creature is **Paralyzed** (PHB 291) for 10 minutes. The character can repeat the saving throw after each minute that passes. The paralysis can be healed by expending one use of a healer's kit and a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Medicine) check**.

Additionally, 4 **uthgardt skeletons** (Appendix A) storm into the corridor in an attempt to knock those characters unconscious which avoided the trap.

Area 6b: A Forgotten Cave

A character that falls into the pit described in Area 6a notices a flooded passageway at the bottom. After a 30 second dive, the shaft leads into a natural cave which did not become part of the tomb complex. If the characters investigate the cave, they find a half-buried skeleton beneath a large rock. Next to the skeleton lies an almost ruined notebook and around its neck it carries the amulet *Heart* (Appendix B). The notes inside the book are written in Bothii. Most of the notes pertain to the construction of the tomb. The last note, written with a shaky hand, says:

> My legs are crushed, and I only have a few minutes left. When my body is found, please tell my wife and children that I loved them. Bring them the amulet. – Jarrond Tarr

This might prove a future plot point at the DM's discretion.

Area 7: The Antechamber

The murals decorating the walls of this large hall change in tone, and it seems like the story now revolves around two men who take on the world. Two large stone pillars in the midst of this chamber are decorated with large banners, all featuring different animals or symbols. Among them are elks, tigers, griffons, and wolves.

If the characters avoided the alarm trap in Area 1, 4 **uthgardt skeletons** (Appendix A) guard 12 captives in Area 7. A rope is tied to the hands and neck of the captives, and each skeleton leads 3 prisoners. The skeletons are alert and attack any seen characters. A character approaching in a stealthy manner must succeed in a **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check** if he is noticed by the captives. Otherwise, a commotion gives the character away. If combat erupts, the skeletons let go of the captives and engage the characters. The prisoners attempt to flee during the fight.

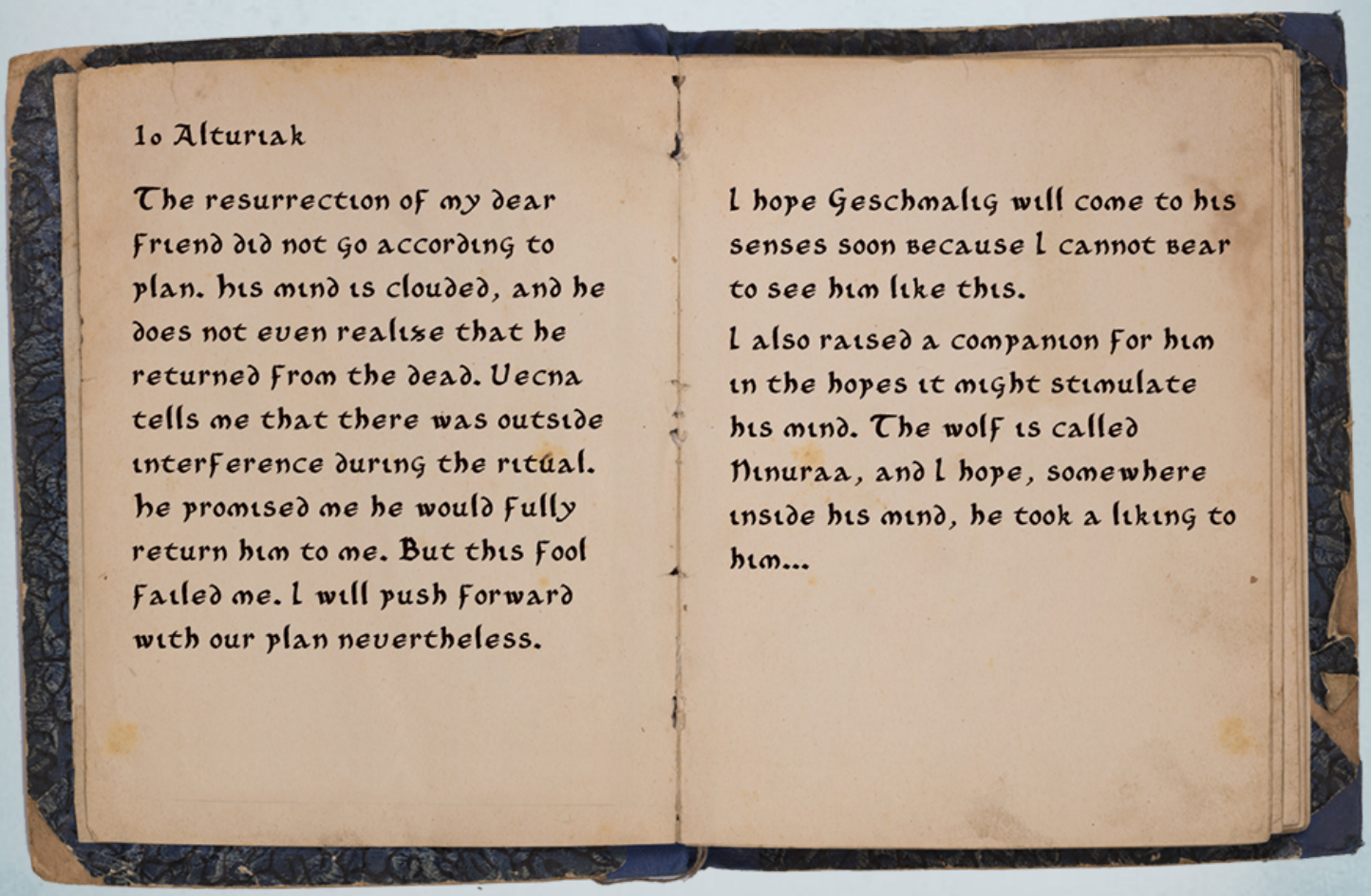
If the alarm trap in Area 1 was triggered, the room is empty.

Area 8: Karzai's Prison

This disturbing chamber is soiled, and discarded scraps of food litter the ground. Inside a cage that stands at the far wall sits an old man who regards you with a sunken face.

Karzai the Fooled. The cage can be unlocked with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools)** check or forced open with a successful **DC 15 Strength check**. The key to Karzai's cage can be found in Area 10. If the characters free **Karzai** (Appendix A) and interrogate him, he tells them what has transpired in the recent weeks. He also voices his suspicion that Geschmalig's revival went not according to Udiken's plan. From what Karzai tells them, a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** or **DC 25 Intelligence (History) check** results in a character realizing that the eye in Karzai's narrative is the *Eye of Vecna*.

Karzai lost one of his eyes and the wound festers. His lust for revenge can be kindled if the characters succeed in a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check** and manage to treat Karzai's wounds with a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Medicine) check**. Karzai's sacred bundle can be found in Area 10.



10 Alturiak

The resurrection of my dear friend did not go according to plan. His mind is clouded, and he does not even realise that he returned from the dead. Uecna tells me that there was outside interference during the ritual. He promised me he would fully return him to me. But this fool failed me. I will push forward with our plan nevertheless.

I hope Geschmalig will come to his senses soon because I cannot bear to see him like this.

I also raised a companion for him in the hopes it might stimulate his mind. The wolf is called Ninuraa, and I hope, somewhere inside his mind, he took a liking to him...

Area 9: Salem's Workshop

Large stacks of bones and scrap metal are piled up in this chamber, and the walls are lined with workbenches. In the middle of the room, an impossibly large skeleton is dispensed from the ceiling. Several hooks are attached to its joints, and it hangs two feet above the ground. A man looks at you perplexed when you enter the room. One of his arms and half of his face are laid bare, and instead of flesh, only bone remains.

Salem the Boneworker. Salem (N male elf **necromancer** VGTM 217) was once a prisoner of Udiken. However, when his time to receive Vecna's baptism came, Salem screamed out a last appeal. Salem swore that he would serve Udiken with his arcane powers but would be more useful with an intact tongue. Udiken was intrigued but only changed his mind after Salem already lost some of his body to the vat. Now Salem serves Udiken by constructing the siege skeletons. The **siege skeleton** (Appendix A) the characters find in Salem's workshop isn't quite finished yet. It is still missing its legs, but it is undead and attacks the characters if Salem commands it to do so.

A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Medicine) check** reveals, that Salem's wounds are sterile and that he is in no risk of dying. However, the constant intense pain drove him to the edge of insanity. A battle is raging in Salem's mind. He tries to combat Vecna's corrupting influence. When the characters first encounter Salem, he looks at them quizzically and resumes his work. He mutters that he needs to finish his work quickly or the pain won't go away. A successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check** helps Salem to clear his mind. After his mind is cleared Salem must succeed in a **DC 10 Charisma saving throw**, or he drifts under the influence of Vecna.

The True Salem. If Salem succeeded in driving back Vecna's influence, he is distraught and warns the characters about the impending danger. If the characters triggered the alarm trap in Area 1, Salem points out that Udiken must have prepared an ambush. Salem inquires if the way out is clear. He wants to leave this place as soon as possible. The characters can convince Salem to join them in the fight with a successful **DC 25 Charisma (Persuasion) check**.

The False Salem. If Vecna's influence is too strong Salem leads the characters to their doom. He tells the characters that he will aid them in their struggle, but Salem betrays them as soon as the fighting starts. A character realizes that Salem's offer is poisoned with a **passive Insight of 20 or more** or a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check**.

Area 10: Udiken's Chamber

Several maps adorn the walls of this chamber, and a few tables are covered in stacks of paper. The maps depict the north with several settlements are already crossed out.

The stacks of paper covering the tables show statistics about troop movements, equipment, and losses. There are also plans for a large-scale campaign to raid the south, including metropolises like Luskan and Neverwinter.

If the characters take 5 minutes to search the room, they find the key to Karzai's cage, Karzai's sacred bundle, and Udiken's diary. The diary, written in Bothii, details Udiken's life, how he was approached by Vecna during his incarceration in the ice, and his desire to revive his friend.

The characters find the following paragraph of interest:

The resurrection of my dear friend did not go according to plan. His mind is clouded, and he does not even realize that he returned from the dead. Vecna tells me that there was outside interference during the ritual. He promised me he would fully return him to me. But this fool failed me. I will push forward with our plan nevertheless. I hope Geschmalig will come to his senses soon because I cannot bear to see him like this. I also raised a companion for him in the hopes it might stimulate his mind. The wolf is called Ninuraa, and I hope, somewhere inside his mind, he took a liking to him.

Area 11: Burial Chamber

Six sarcophagi are located in this room. The lids are tightly closed, and the room lies deserted.

The Alarm Trap in Area 1 was Avoided

The 6 sarcophagi in the room are empty.

The Alarm Trap in Area 1 was Triggered

Each sarcophagus contains 1 **uthgardt skeleton** (Appendix A). The skeletons attempt to deceive the characters by keeping still, and the skeletons only react should they be attacked. At this point, all skeletons animate and attack the party, attempting an ordered retreat into Area 12. If the skeletons remain undisturbed, they join the fight 2 rounds after the characters engaged Udiken in Area 12.

Area 12: The Vat Chamber

> This room reeks of foul magic and unnatural decay. In its midst, a pool was torn into the ground. Ill vapors emerge from this cesspit which is filled with a glowing green substance. A figure looms on the opposite side of the pool, only illuminated by the bubbling liquid beneath.

Facing Udiken. The staircase descends 20 feet and leads into the Vat Chamber. Udiken addresses the characters with the following words whereby his voice sounds like a rusty hinge:

> Very interesting indeed. You are the first volunteers to our ever-growing army who found their way here of their own accord. Why don't you throw away your weapons and make this easier for you? The more damage we deal to your precious bodies, the weaker you will be after you've turned. Can you fathom what I'm offering you? Eternal life with a body far more powerful than the weak husks you cling to. After we've accomplished our mission, there will be no more war, no strife, no inequality. Isn't this what you came here for ... to end all the suffering? So how do you want to spend the rest of your short lives? Blithefully in the knowledge to serve an exalted goal or kicking and screaming?

The Eye of Vecna. Udiken is in possession of the *Eye of Vecna* (DMG 224), and he inserted it into his skull after he took it from Karzai. A **passive Perception of 15 or higher** or a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** allows the characters to spot the out-of-place eye looking at them.

Monsters. **Udiken** (Appendix A) and 4 **uthgardt skeletons** (Appendix A) are present in the room. 2 **siege skeletons** (Appendix A) wait on the stairway leading to the Throne Room (Area 12) and join the battle after 1 round.

Tactics. If the characters decline Udiken's offer or make any move to intervene or attack, a gesture from Udiken causes the uthgardt skeletons to toss 8 bound captives into the vat. 8 freshly turned uthgardt skeletons emerge from the vat after 3 rounds of combat and join the battle unarmed. If the uthgardt skeletons in Area 11 remained hidden, they join the fray after 2 rounds. Any unarmed uthgardt skeleton arms itself with weapons of the fallen. If no weapons are available, the skeletons attempt to grapple (PHB 195) the characters. The skeletons work in tandem to gain advantage on their grapple checks and try to force the affected character into the vat.

Udiken orders the siege skeletons to attack the weakest armored character. If Udiken loses more than three-quarters of his hit points, he attempts to retreat to the Throne Room, using whatever skeletons remain to block his retreat.

Lair Effects. A creature which falls into the vat or starts its turn inside the vat must make a **DC 16 Constitution saving throw**. The creature takes 27 (6d6+6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

If a creature drops to 0 hit points and fails its death saving throws due to damage taken from the liquid inside the vat, the following happens: The creature is raised from the dead and emerges under Udiken's control.

Lair Actions. When fighting inside his lair, Udiken can invoke the ambient magic to take a Lair Action. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Udiken takes a Lair Action to create a large partially decayed hand which emerges from the vat and tries to grapple a target. The hand has a Strength of 14 (+2), a reach of 15 feet, 20 hit points and an AC of 10. After a successful grapple, the hand lifts the target into the air and pulls it into the vat during its next turn. If the grapple fails, the hand turns to liquid sludge and falls to the floor. Once Udiken used this lair action 3 times, he must finish a long rest before he can use it again.

Udiken's Death. If Udiken dies, all undead still within the tomb must each succeed in a **DC 10 Charisma saving throw**; failure results in the undead creature turning to dust. Geschmalig uses one of his legendary resistances to remain in his undead state without realizing it.

All undead raised by Udiken that are located outside of the tomb automatically fail their saves, falling to dust where they stand.

Treasure. Udiken carries the sword *Hellraiser* (Appendix B) and the *Eye of Vecna* (DMG 224).

Difficulty Adjustments. This is a fight of **deadly difficulty**. Make the following adjustments as required:

- If the party is very weak, remove 1 siege skeleton and remove the 6 uthgardt skeletons hiding in room 11.
- If the party is weak, remove 1 siege skeleton and remove 3 of the uthgardt skeletons hiding in room 11.
- If the party is strong, add 2 siege skeletons.
- If the party is very strong, add 2 siege skeletons and 4 **wraiths** (MM 302).

The Alarm Trap in Area 1 was Avoided

If the alarm trap in Area 1 was not triggered, the fight against Udiken is altered in the following ways:

Monsters. Only **Udiken**, 2 **siege skeletons**, and 2 **uthgardt skeletons** work in the Vat Chamber when the characters arrive. 2 captives in the process of being turned emerge from the vat unarmed after 3 rounds of combat.

Tactics. If Udiken loses more than one-quarter of his hit points, he attempts to retreat to the Throne Room, using whatever skeletons remain to block his retreat.

Difficulty Adjustments. This is a fight of **medium to hard difficulty**. Make the following adjustments as required:

- If the party is very weak, remove 1 siege skeleton and 1 uthgardt skeleton.
- If the party is weak, remove 1 siege skeleton.
- If the party is strong, add 2 siege skeletons and 2 **wraiths** (MM 302).
- If the party is very strong, add 2 siege skeletons and 4 wraiths (MM 302).

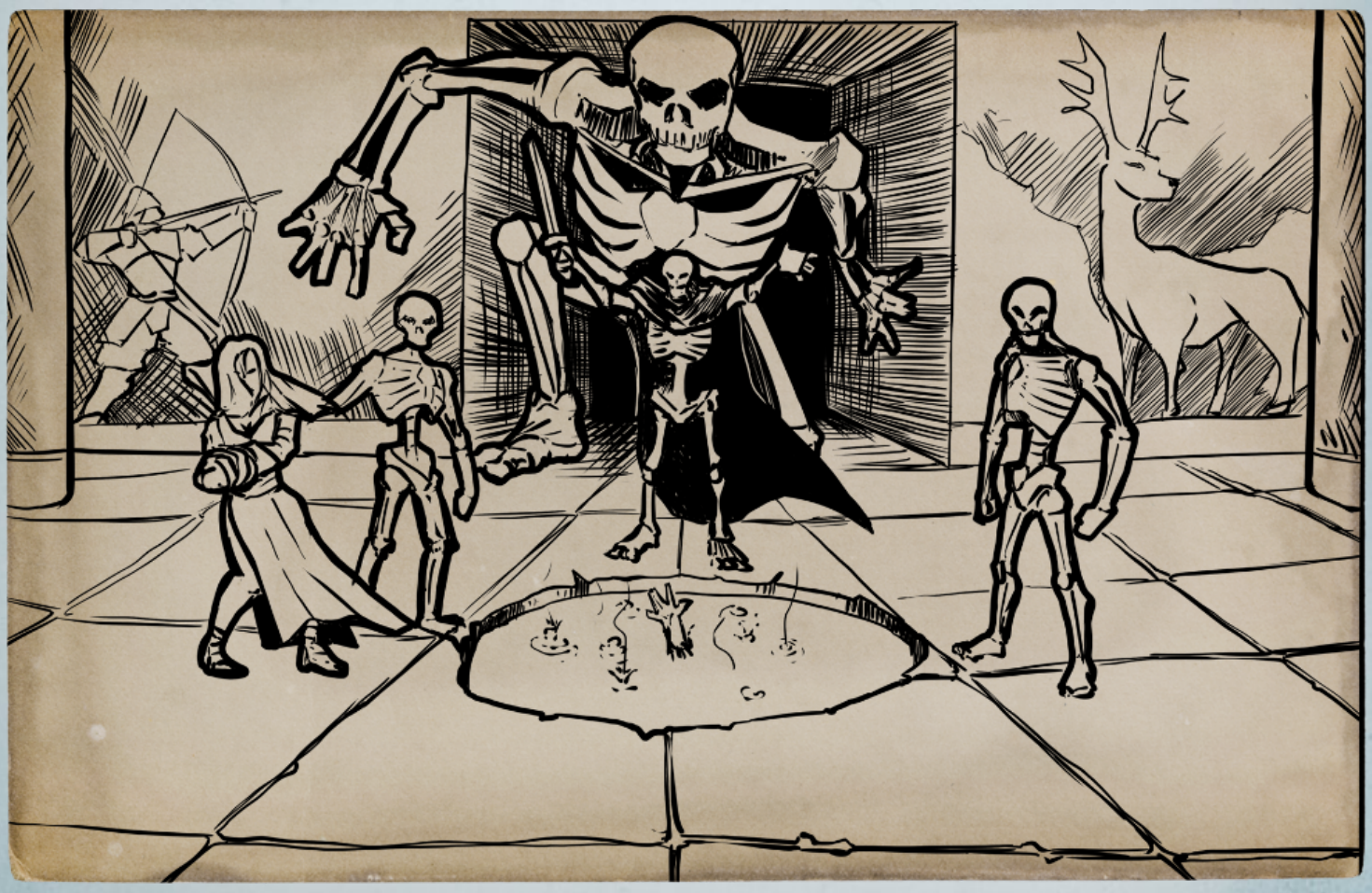
DM Note

The *Eye of Vecna* (DMG 224) is a powerful artifact and makes the encounter with Udiken potentially deadly, even for parties of higher level. If Sinser, Melissa or Karzai are with the characters at this point, consider using the eye's *disintegrate* (PHB 233) feature on one of the NPCs.

Area 13: Staircase

The walls of this staircase are adorned with large murals depicting battles, feasts and large-scale hunts. Two persons are prominently featured on almost every picture.

This staircase leads down into the Throne Room. The descent takes several minutes, and if Sinser and or Melissa are still with the characters at this point, they turn and run. A successful **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check** prevents them from deserting the characters.



Part 4: Facing Geschmalig

Area 14: The Throne Room

> A high throne stands in the midst of this room, a few steps leading up to the disturbing construct. It is made from hundreds of bones and a large skeleton clad in plate armor sits enthroned upon it. You feel its piercing gaze on you even though its eyes decayed a long time ago.

The Throne Room is the former burial chamber of Geschmalig. It has a circular shape with a diameter of 60 feet. The throne is made of large bones and was constructed by Salem on Udiken's orders. In the past, a sarcophagus was placed in the middle of the room, but it was moved to the back of the wall to make room for the throne.

A Confused Mind. Although Geschmalig remains aware of his environment and events, he does not yet realize that he is undead. It might take many months or years until Geschmalig grasps the situation. Udiken is feeding him information about the military campaign, and Udiken hopes that Geschmalig leads the host south when the time comes.

Geschmalig is a towering skeleton with thick bones and is clad in an impressive full plate armor. On Geschmalig's right side stands his trusted greatsword *Conquest* (Appendix B) and one of his gauntleted hands is always resting on the sword's hilt. Some tufts of hair still hang from Geschmalig's scalp, hinting at the former glory of his mane.

If Ninuraa managed to escape, the wolf stands guard by Geschmalig's side. Depending on whether Udiken made it into the Throne Room during his retreat, Geschmalig reacts differently to the characters.

> **DM Note**
> Geschmalig's reaction results from his innate hatred for the undead. It is fueled by the unpleasant events following his attempt to raise Udiken from the dead and the heritage of his mother, the Ravenqueen. The Ravenqueen's meddling is also the reason that the resurrection ritual during which Geschmalig was to be raised did not go according to plan.

Udiken Reached the Throne Room

Geschmalig is hurriedly informed about the attack by Udiken. Geschmalig addresses the characters with the following words:

> Finally, some contenders find their way to my throne room. I feel like I've gone a bit rusty and there is nothing better than a fight to remedy that. So, who of you is willing to face me in single combat? Or do you rather want to kneel, not risking your precious lives?

Udiken wants to kill the characters as soon as possible, but he also does not want to act against the wishes of Geschmalig. If the characters raise the topic about Geschmalig being the leader of an undead army, he is confused and questions them further about the topic.

If the characters succeed in a **DC 25 Charisma (Persuasion) check**, they can convince Geschmalig that he is undead and that an army of skeletons is raiding the North on his behalf. Realizing what has transpired, Geschmalig strikes Udiken forever dead with a single strike from *Conquest*. Ninuraa's allegiance lies with Geschmalig and the wolf stays out of the fight between Geschmalig and Udiken.

In any other case, Geschmalig insists on the duel and forcibly removes the characters from his lair if they refuse. Udiken attempts to rid himself of the characters immediately.

Udiken Didn't Reach the Throne Room

If Udiken is killed and does not reach the Throne Room, the characters find a confused Geschmalig upon the throne. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters enter the Throne Room, sounding absent-minded:

> Who are you and where is Udiken? I heard the sound of battle and was almost of a mind to join in. Did the Griffon tribe attack again? No, it can't be. We defeated them a few years back, I think. So, are you here to challenge me or do you bring gifts from far away lands? Maybe a fine wine or a mighty steed?

Give the characters time to tell Geschmalig of his situation and of Udiken's deeds. After that, a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check** convinces Geschmalig that the characters are telling the truth. In any other case, Geschmalig becomes violent and tries to remove the characters from his lair by force.

Area 15: A Secret Chamber

Unbeknownst to Geschmalig and Udiken, a secret door leads away from the Throne Room as marked on the corresponding map. The corridor behind the door leads into a little chamber dedicated to Udiken, Geschmalig's best friend in life whose corpse was never found.

A **passive Perception of 18 or higher** or a successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check** allows a character to notice the presence of the secret door. Alternatively, a character is able to find the mechanism which opens the door with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** if he is actively searching for anything unusual.

When the characters enter the small shrine, read or paraphrase the following:

> A small chamber lies before you, lit by a flickering green light. On a small rack rests a simple leather armor beneath which a copper brazier is placed. The small flame sends dancing lights across the surface of the armor, a calm and beautiful display compared to the rest of the tomb.

Treasure. The *Hide of the Wild Man* (Appendix B).

Concluding the Adventure

If Geschmalig's eyes are opened, and he realizes that he is undead, he proclaims that it is best to return to his grave. He accepts his cursed fate as punishment for his attempts to revive Udiken. Geschmalig assures the characters that he may find his true death after a thousand years of suffering. If Ninuraa is alive, Geschmalig offers the characters the following: Either Ninuraa prevents people from entering the tomb or Ninuraa joins the characters until they release it, or Ninuraa perishes. If the characters accept Ninuraa's service, Geschmalig commands Ninuraa to follow the characters and adhere to their commands. Geschmalig will not part with his sword and armor when he returns to his grave.

If the characters slay Geschmalig in combat, they find his sword *Conquest* and his *adamantine plate armor* (DMG 150).

After Udiken's death, the undead host threatening the North and Mirabar has perished. At the DM's discretion, rumors and stories emerge of undead falling to dust in the midst of combat or as they marched on undefended settlements.

Continuing the Adventure

The *Eye of Vecna* might be in the character's possession if they looted Udiken's corpse. Should they decide to keep it, a clash with Vecna is guaranteed. The characters also earned themselves the gratitude of the Raven Queen without realizing it. The Raven Queen's and Vecna's influence are limited on this plane. Nevertheless, they might send powerful agents to further their respective goals.



Appendix A: Monsters & NPCs

Ninuraa

Large undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)
Hit Points 120 (16d10 + 32)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +4
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4
Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Resistances piercing
Damage Immunities poison, cold
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages understands Common, Giant, and Winter Wolf but can't speak
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. Ninuraa has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. Ninuraa has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack. Ninuraa makes three melee attacks one of which can be a Bite attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d10+4) slashing damage.

Vecna's Breath (Recharge 5-6). Ninuraa exhales a cloud of miasma in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Uthgardt Skeleton

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 45 (6d10 + 12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +4, Con +4
Skills Athletics +4
Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Resistances piercing
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages understands Common and Bothii but can't speak
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The uthgardt skeleton makes two melee attacks with its spear.

Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Tireless Servants. Uthgardt skeletons are thick boned and fearsome undead which retained most of the fighting prowess the hardy tribesmen had in life. They are empowered by the spirit of the Undying King whose influence permeates the planes and corrupts the most innocent.

Melissa

Medium humanoid (human), neutral

Armor Class 19 (splint armor, shield)
Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +5
Skills Athletics +6, Animal Handling +4, Survival +4
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Shield Breaker. If Melissa hits a creature which is wielding a shield, she reduces the AC of the hit creature by 1. This effect is cumulative to a maximum reduction of 2. The applied malus is annulled at the start of the creatures next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. Melissa makes three melee attacks with her morningstar.

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Sinser

Small humanoid (gnome), neutral

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 45 (10d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +6
Skills Investigation +5, Perception +5, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, thieves' cant
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Sinser deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage to a creature he hits with an attack if he has advantage on the attack roll. The attack must use a finesse or a ranged weapon. Sinser doesn't need advantage on the attack roll if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it, that enemy isn't incapacitated, and Sinser doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Multiattack. Sinser makes two melee attacks with his shortsword or two ranged attacks with his shortbow.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Smokebomb. Sinser throws a small smoke bomb on a point within 30 feet range. It explodes and creates a heavily obscured area within a 10-foot radius. The smoke spreads around corners and lasts for 1 minute or until a wind of at least 10 miles per hour disperses it.

Karzai

Medium humanoid (human), neutral

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 38 (7d8+7)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Medicine +2, Nature +3, Survival +2
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Bothii
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Karzai can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 10; +2 to hit with spell attacks) with a sacred bundle:

At will: *dancing lights, mage hand, message, thaumaturgy*

1/day each: *augury, bestow curse, cordon of arrows, detect magic, hex, prayer of healing, speak with dead, spirit guardians*

Siege Skeleton

Large undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (iron plating)
Hit Points 60 (8d8 + 24)
Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +5
Skills Athletics +5
Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Resistances piercing
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Siege Attack. The siege skeleton deals double damage against objects, constructs, and structures.

Actions

Siegehammer. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 21 (4d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Shock Troops. These abominations are constructed from several smaller skeletons. They have some semblance to a regular skeleton but look distorted and feature several spikes and plates of armor which were bolted to their bones. What would be their right arm is a large hammer with which they can crush any opposition or structure.

Udiken

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 170 (20d12+40)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Cha +6
Skills Perception +5, Survival +5
Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Resistances piercing
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Bothii
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Legendary Resistance (1/Day). If Udiken fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Turn Immunity. Udiken is immune to effects that turn undead.

Actions

Multiattack. Udiken makes two melee attacks with *Hellraiser*.

Hellraiser. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 2 (1d4) necrotic damage.

Eye of Vecna

See page 224 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for further details on the Eye of Vecna and its properties.

Minor Beneficial Property. You can make two additional attacks per round.

Major Beneficial Property. You have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Minor Detrimental Property. The Eye of Vecna emenates an unnatural purple light in a 5-foot radius around you and you have disadvantage on all Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Geschmalig

Medium undead, neutral

Armor Class 18 (adamantine plate armor)
Hit Points 190 (20d12 + 60)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +6
Skills Athletics +7
Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Resistances cold, piercing
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Bothii
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Geschmalig fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Turn Immunity. Geschmalig is immune to effects that turn undead.

Actions

Multiattack. Geschmalig makes three melee attacks with his greatsword *Conquest* one of which can be an ice sickle attack.

Conquest. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

Ice Sickle. Geschmalig attacks all creatures standing in a 10 ft. cone in front of him with a sweeping attack. The blade creates a magical ice sickle that slashes his enemies. On a failed DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, the affected creatures each take 14 (4d6) cold damage and are knocked prone. On a successful saving throw, the creatures only take half of the determined damage and remain standing.

Appendix B: Items

Conquest

Weapon (greatsword), rare (requires attunement)

Made from the bone of a white dragon, this weapon of immense power was created by Geschmalig, a once mighty uthgardt warlord of the Black Raven tribe. Stories tell that with the use of this weapon, Geschmalig subjugated large parts of the Icewind Dale and came close to unifying the northern tribes. Although the history of the blade is buried in blurred truths, this greatsword bears distinguishing marks, testifying to the fact that its former wielder was as ferocious as a blizzard and as deadly as a plague.

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. You gain resistance to cold damage. This weapon deals an additional 1d6 cold damage on a hit.

Ice Sickle (Recharge 6). With a wide slashing attack, you create a magical crescent of ice which you hurl against your enemies. Each creature in a 10-foot cone must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed saving throw, a creature takes 4d6 cold damage and is knocked prone. On a successful saving throw, the creature only takes half of the determined damage and remains standing.

Heart

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This amulet was made by a loving wife for her husband who was ordered to build a grand tomb for Geschmalig. Despite her best efforts and prayers, it did not lead him back to his home.

While you wear this amulet, you gain resistance to cold damage. You are aware of the position of Raven Rock and know how to find it on the shortest possible route while the amulet guides you. Using a bonus action, you recover 1d10 hit points and gain 10 temporary hit points. You can use this feature again after a short or long rest.

Grimbalding's War Mask

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

A war mask like this one is worn by a warrior that goes to war and is only doffed once the war is won or the wearer falls in battle. The warrior Grimbalding was not killed in battle, however. He was poisoned by a dear friend who betrayed him for a trifle of gold. Since that day this war mask is haunted by Grimbalding's restless spirit.

Battle Furor. On your turn, you can enter a state of ecstasy as a bonus action. This state lasts for 3 rounds, and you gain the following benefits:

- Your speed is doubled during your current turn if you use your movement to advance on an enemy and make a subsequent melee attack against that foe.
- You and your allies within 10 feet of you gain 10 temporary hit points when you reduce an enemy to 0 hit points with a melee attack.

You must finish a long rest before you can use this ability again.

Haunted. This war mask is haunted. Only a shaman can establish a connection with the restless spirit. Until the spirit's intent is made known to the wearer, he or she is haunted by nightmares and his or her maximum hit points are reduced by one-quarter.

DM Note

There is only one way to appease Grimbalding's spirit: Find one of the descendants of the person who poisoned Grimbalding and slay him or her. Grimbalding will make the presence of a descendant known to the wearer. If the wearer refuses to do his bidding, Grimbalding curses him or her.

Grimbalding's Curse. The curse causes a creature to slowly rot away. The afflicted character can no longer regain hit points through normal rest and receives 7 (2d6) necrotic damage after a short or long rest.

Mark of Honor. All uthgardt barbarians greatly respect the wearer of this war mask. At the DM's discretion, a character wearing this mask has advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks if the target is an uthgardt.

Fulfilling Grimbalding's Wish. If Grimbalding's spirit is appeased, it passes on to the afterlife. The war mask retains all of its magic properties.

Hellraiser

Weapon (shortsword), rare (requires attunement), cursed

This is the sword of Udiken who was at one point a servant of Vecna the Arch Lich. Its looks are plain, and nothing hints at the powers hidden inside this weapon. But once attuned to it the wielder feels an unhallowed energy radiating from this sword which slowly takes a hold of his mind and body. It is a tool of destruction tainted by Vecna and the wielder should by vary of Vecna's influence.

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. This weapon deals an additional 1d4 necrotic damage.

Raise Dead. Thrice per day, you can raise a zombie (MM 316) from the corpse of a humanoid creature that received damage from this weapon. Use your bonus action to activate this ability. The zombie follows your orders, turning to dust one hour after being raised.

Rot. On a critical hit, the targeted creature takes an additional 1d4 necrotic damage and has disadvantage on all Constitution saving throws for 7 days.

Curse. This sword is cursed and becoming attuned to it extends the curse to you. If you remain cursed, you are unwilling to part with the sword, keeping it within reach at all times. You also have disadvantage on attack rolls with weapons other than this one, unless no foe is within 60 feet of you that you can see or hear. The disadvantage on attack rolls does also not apply to weapons you wield alongside *Hellraiser* in a dual weapon fighting style.

While you are attuned to this weapon your hand and sword arm will slowly turn black. The discoloration will stop somewhere in the vicinity your collarbone.

Hide of the Wild Man

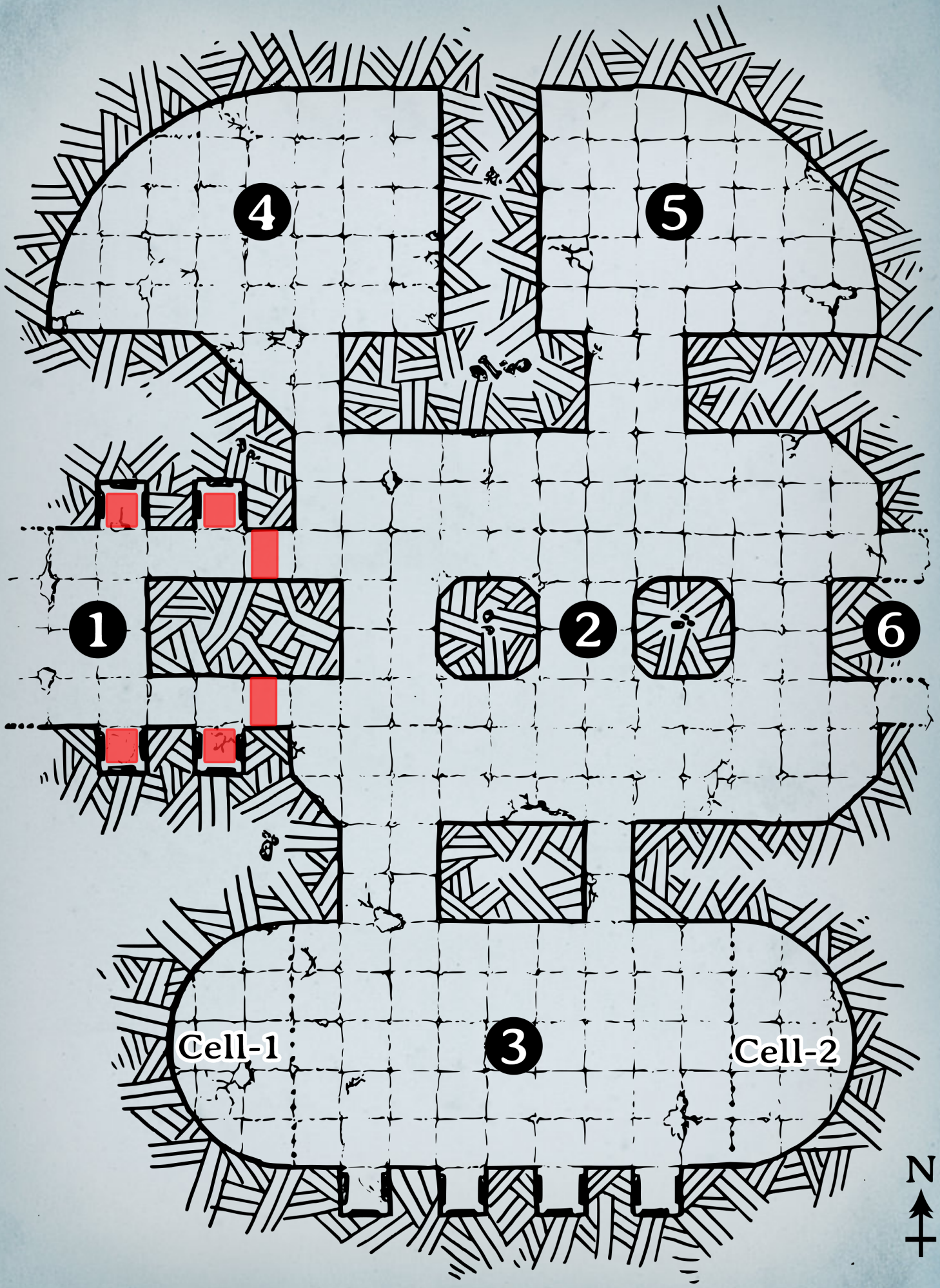
Armor (leather), very rare (requires attunement)

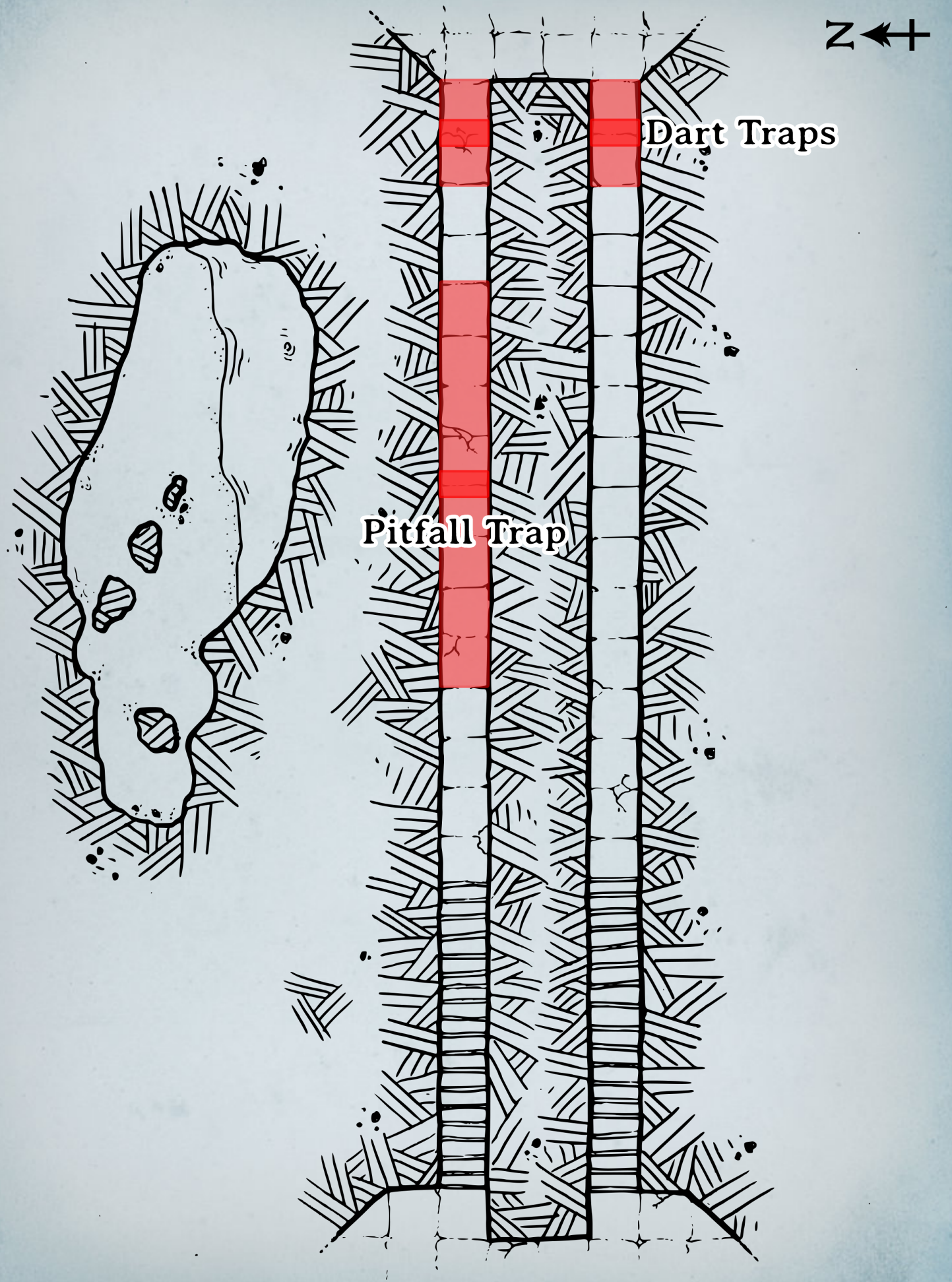
This armor is made from the hide of several different animals. Udiken crafted it himself before he encountered Geschmalig in the wilds. After Udiken was introduced to the company of men he doffed this armor never to wear it again. It was then taken to a hallowed grove devoted to Silvanusbefore finding its final resting place next to Geschmalig's grave.

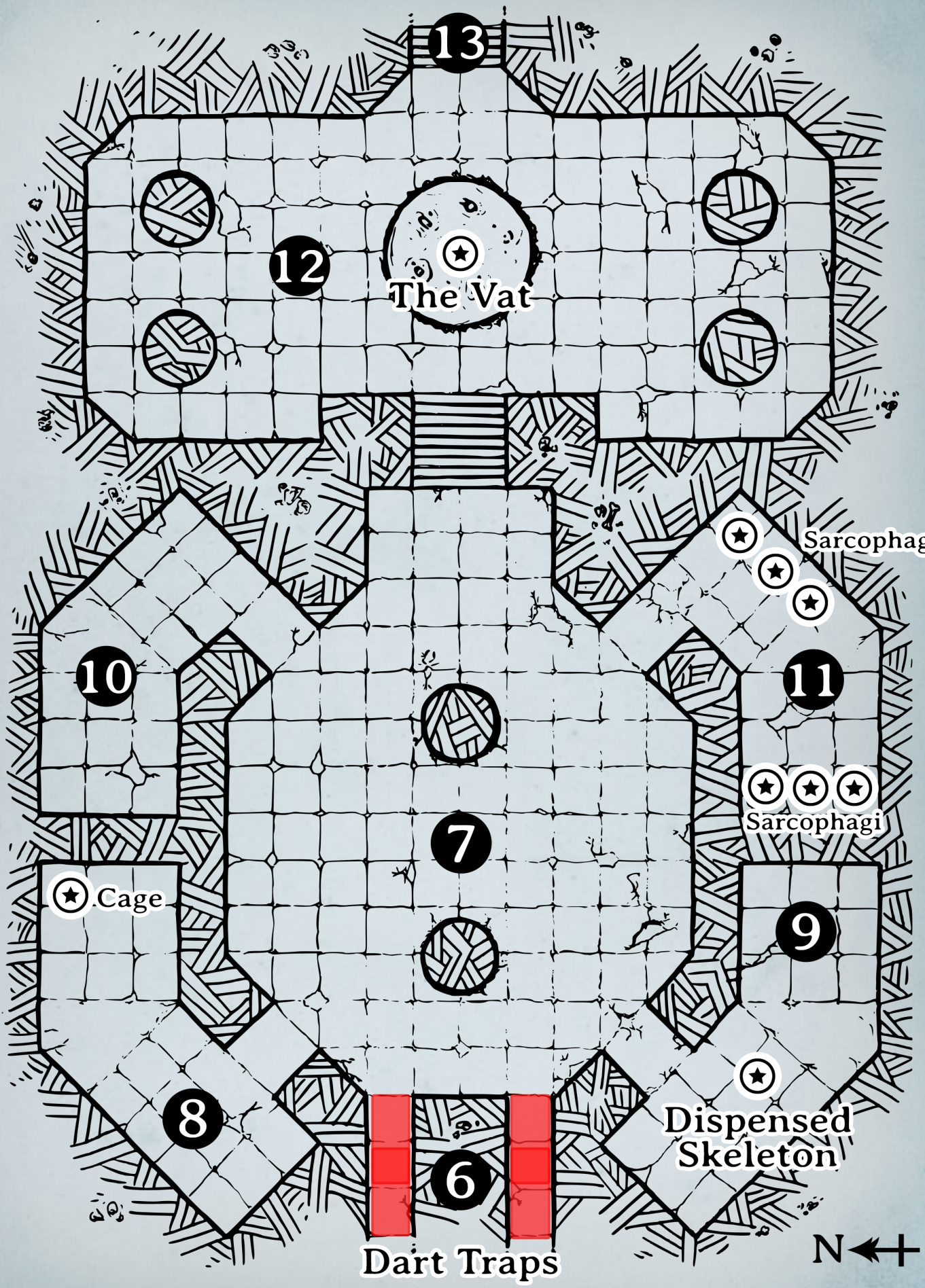
You gain a bonus + 2 to AC while wearing this armor.

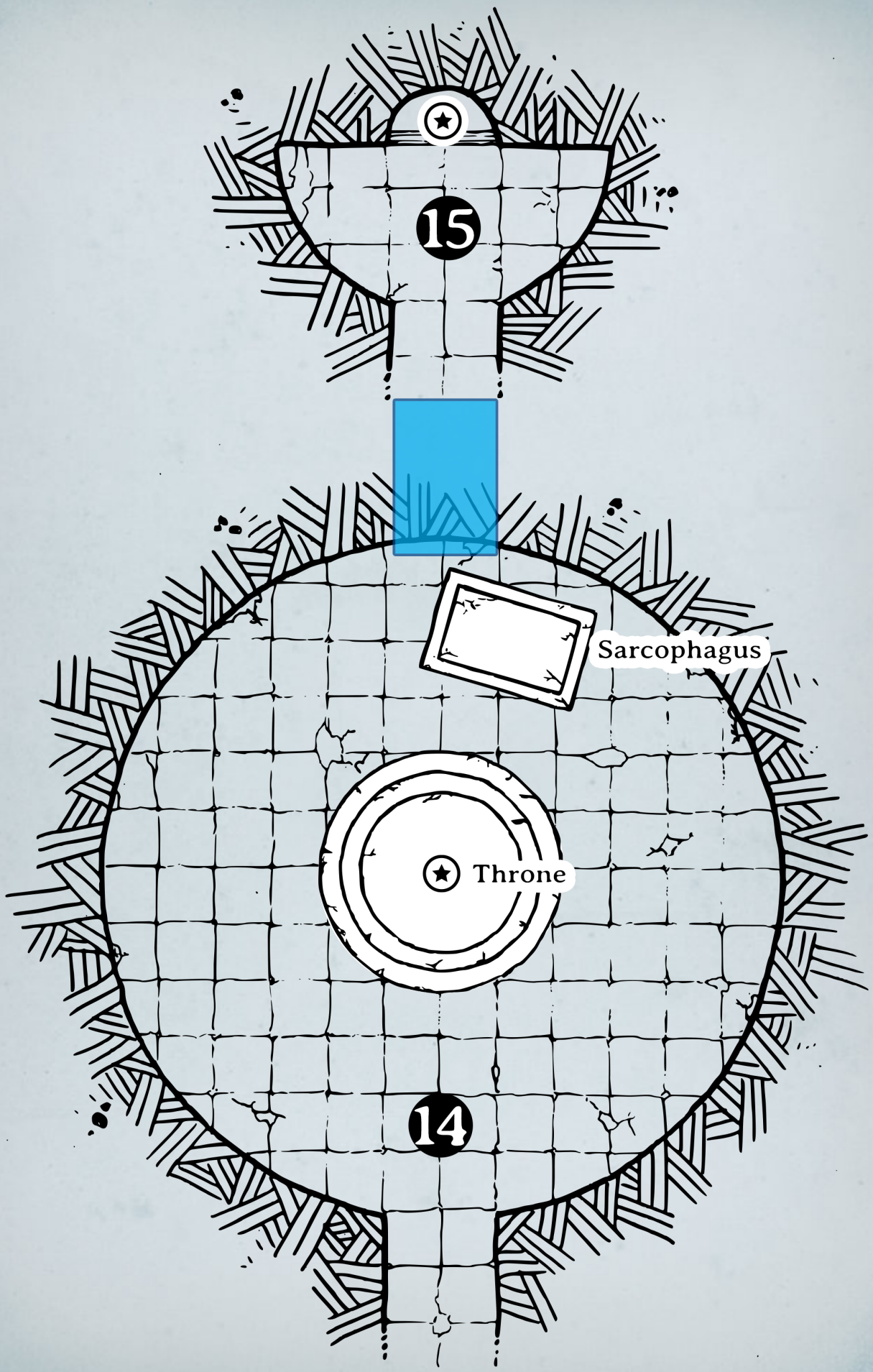
The wearer of this armor can speak with animals (as per the spell), including monstrosities.

Once per Day. You can use an action to either turn into a mammoth, a winter wolf or a yeti for up to 1 hour. Half of the damage you take in your animal form is subtracted from your hit points when you revert to your original form.


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6
Cell-1
3
Cell-2
N


Dart Traps
Pitfall Trap


13
12
The Vat
Sarcophagi
10
11
Sarcophagi
7
Cage
9
8
Dispensed Skeleton
6
Dart Traps
N


N
15
Sarcophagus
Throne
14



Grotto of the Death Giant

In the foothills of the Sword Mountains lies the prison tomb of a long-forgotten giant deity. What does it have to do with recent caravan raids along the trade route between Waterdeep and Neverwinter? One group of daring explorers just might find out.

by Eddie Gioffre

Grotto of the Death Giant is a location-based adventure designed for 3 to 7 1st to 4th level characters and is optimized for 5 characters with an average party level (APL) of 4.

Adventure Background

This adventure is set in a dungeon temple in the Sword Mountains, about 100 miles southeast of the city of Neverwinter in the Forgotten Realms. It can easily be adapted to other settings and locations.

Eons ago, among the pantheon of giant gods, one deity, Karontor, was so full of self-loathing and hatred that he sought out the destruction of the rest of the noble giant races.

One such cult to Karontor was started by an outcast stone giant, who founded a hidden underground temple in the North and infused the temple with a fragment of Karontor's power. This fragment, in the shape of a large black onyx stone, came to be known as the Black Heart of Karontor.

Powerful clerics of the other giant gods learned of this cult and razed the temple. All the followers of Karontor were destroyed and the god lost all favor in the Realms. The clerics, unable to dispel the fragment of godly power, encased it within a magical cage and buried deep within the temple, now the god's tomb.

Over the centuries, magical catastrophes on Faerûn, such as the Time of Troubles, the Spellplague, and the Sundering, have all weakened the magical cage that encases Karontor's power.

Now, Karontor's voice is heard by another outcast, Gomph, a tribeless firbolg eager for revenge. Karontor has led his newest disciple back to this forgotten temple to reignite the flame of the dead cult. Along the way, Gomph has made allies with some of the ogres along with local goblins in the region, enticing them with money and power. Now Gomph follows visions sent to him when he communes with the Black Heart of Karontor in the lowest chamber of the temple (Area 7). From these visions, he has instructed his followers to raid and loot the nearby caravan route for supplies and treasures that will be used to grow his army and attract more pure giant followers (such as ogres, fomorians, and hill giants).

If left unchecked, Gomph and Karontor will create an army that will not only threaten the currently unstable giant society, but will also spill death and destruction over to the human cities and settlements of the area.

Adventure Summary

The adventure is divided into two parts:

Part 1: Wild Boys. While journeying along the forests and foothills around the Sword Mountains, the party encounters some strangely-marked humanoids out on a raid. Later the party encounters a pair of trappers out in the wild. The men are just returning to the city after a successful haul.

Part 2: Exploring the Grotto. The party finds the entrance to the underground tomb and finds the emergence of a new cult worshiping a long-forgotten deity.

Depending on any Adventure Hooks (see below) you use in this adventure, the grotto may reveal other treasures as well.

Adventure Hooks

Dutiful Caravaneers

The party is part of a caravan traveling between Waterdeep and Neverwinter when they are attacked by goblins and ogres at a choke point in the road. They are tasked by the caravan company to find the lair of these strangely-scarred attackers and eliminate the threat to the trade route in any way possible.

Mushroom Hunter

The party is hired by a local herbalist looking for certain mushrooms that grow in the area. The fungi are unique to the region and contribute to the creation of especially potent versions of *potions of stone giant strength* (DMG 187) with aduration of 2 hours instead of 1 and *arrows of storm giant slaying* (DMG 152) that do 8d10 damage instead of 6d10.

The Lord's Request

The Lord of Neverwinter has heard of the attacks by the stone giants on settlements elsewhere in the North (see Chapter 6, "Canyon of the Stone Giants" in Storm King's Thunder). He offers a 1000 gp reward for any party that is willing to explore various areas in the North in search of possible giant treasures that might be used to bargain with or in a war against the stone giants. This hook can allow you to tie in several adventures from this book or other sources into a larger campaign.

Karontor Religion

DC	Information
10	Symbols and markings are from an obscure giant deity.
12	The god was called Karontor. His first followers had a temple somewhere in the North.
15	Karontor was the god of self-loathing, hatred, deformity, and beasts. Branding and self mutilation are central components of ceremonies in his honor. Karontor gave his first followers a shard of his divine power, known as the Black Heart of Karontor.
18	Karontor's cult was defeated by a conclave of followers of the other giant deities. The Black Heart of Karontor was locked in a magical cage and hidden beneath his forgotten temple.
20+	The magical cage was created through the power of each of the other giant's most devout followers casting magic upon the cage. Some called down arcane and divine energy, while others wielded enchanted weapons striking the cage and transferring magical energy into it.



Grotto of the Death Giant

Part 1: Wild Boys

If you are using Adventure Hook #1, this encounter should be what brings the party into the adventure. If one of the other Adventure Hooks is being used, this encounter should still be run to provide additional foreshadowing of what they can expect later when exploring the grotto.

> As you move through the woods, further and further away from the trade route, the forest grows more dense, and you find every path is tricky to negotiate. Rounding a bend you see felled trees and branches strewn about.

The goblins and ogres didn't build this choke point, but they are taking advantage of it. Check the party's **passive Perception** against the goblins' and ogres' **passive Dexterity (Stealth)** to see if they are noticed. It's possible the party might notice the ogres and not the goblins due to the latter's +6 bonus to Stealth.

Once in melee combat, the party notices that the goblins (or half-ogres — see Adjustments below) have the crude white symbol of a wolf's head painted on their armor. The ogres have the wolf's head symbol branded on both arms. All followers of Karontor have disfiguring cuts on their faces and arms.

Characters easily recognize these creatures as matching the description of humanoids that have been recently raiding caravans on the trade route between Waterdeep and Neverwinter.

Characters can make an **Intelligence (Religion) check** to recall lore about Karontor. Compare the check result against the Karontor Religion table to see what is recalled. Information learned is cumulative, so if a character rolls an Intelligence (Religion) 15, they learn the information from DC 10, DC 12, and DC 15. If a character already knows a piece of information and rolls that number again, they learn the next more difficult piece of information. For example, if the character already knows the information from DC 15, and rolls that value again, they learn the information from DC 18 (assuming they don't already know that).

Features of the Area

Creatures. The party encounters five **goblins** (MM 166) and two **ogres** (MM 237).

Tactics. The goblins and ogres attack with ranged weapons as long as they can. The goblins make use of their Hide ability and reposition themselves during each of their turns. The ogres use up their 3 javelins before rushing into melee combat with the party. Both the goblins and ogres fight to the death and can't be reasoned with.

Rewards. The goblins don't have anything of value. Their weapons and armor are shoddy and in need of repair. If anyone in the party needs arrows, about 10 serviceable ones can be found among the goblins' possessions. One of the ogres (or half-ogres) has a small pouch containing 8 gp.

Adjustments. Make the following adjustments as required:

- For Very Weak parties, remove three goblins, replace the ogres with one **half-ogre** (MM 238) and reduce the half-ogres hp to 18.
- For Weak parties, remove three goblins, and replace the with two half-ogres.
- For Strong and Very Strong parties, add one ogre.

Travelers in the Area

If you want to expand the module slightly, you can run the following brief role-play encounter to help provide the heroes with more background about the adventure or the area.

> For the last several days, you've journeyed along the trade route from Waterdeep to Neverwinter, and only recently have turned off the path on your way to the Sword Mountains. The travel has been easy, though game has been sparse. Now you find yourselves relying more on your dry trail rations than expected, supplementing your food with the the bountiful supply of fruits and berries ripening on the trees and bushes all around you.

Trappers in the Mountains. Later, as the party is about to settle down for the evening, they come across a pair of trappers. They are called Dale and Arik and have the statistics of a **scout** (MM 349). The trappers might be willing to share information with the party in exchange for some food. Additionally, the trappers won't suggest it, but they might be willing to help with guard duty during the night before parting ways in the morning.

> As you start to make camp, you are shocked to see a pair of men traveling through the thick forest, almost silent in their motions. They make no threatening gestures as they emerge from the forest.
>
> "Hail, and well met, strangers," a gruff voice speaks. The two men look to be more savage than man, covered in various furs and pelts and sporting large, thick beards. The one who spoke also has a ragged scar over one of his eyes, and his beard and hair sport grey streaks.
>
> "I am Dale, and this here is my friend, Arik. We are traveling through the area. You are the first people we have seen in several months. Where do you hail from?"

Here the heroes can share information, great or small, and question the trappers. The trappers are not intentionally hiding any information, but they aren't necessarily forthcoming either. Reward good roleplaying and allow the trappers to reveal any or all of the following pieces of information:

- The men are in the area trapping beavers. Certain parts of the beaver, if harvested, preserved, and taken to Neverwinter or Waterdeep are highly sought after for use in the creation of the latest popular perfumes.
- They used to be wolf trappers, but that got too dangerous as Dale got older. He lost an eye from an attack by a wounded and cornered wolf.
- There are few of the animals that the trappers typically encounter in the area. The few wolves are weakened and near starving. They have no meat on their bodies, sores, and dull coats.
- Most creature activity is near the foothills of the Sword Mountains.

A Suspicions Pair. Any characters who encountered the deformed goblins and ogres might suspect that Dale and Arik are part of the same cult, but they should also notice that Arik is not disfigured, and neither seem to have the white wolf symbol on their person or branded on their arms.

If the party offers the trappers the chance to share camp for the evening, they accept (but again, they do not ask). They offer to take watch, either alone or with characters.

If they share watch with a character, grant that character advantage on any **Wisdom (Perception) checks** to notice creatures in the area.

In the morning the trappers leave, heading back to Neverwinter, as they have to get the beaver pelts to market before they rot.

Features of the Area

Tactics. The trappers are not looking to fight the party, but will defend themselves. If combat does break out, they will Disengage and Dash to flee the first chance they get.

Experience. Depending on how the players role-played this encounter, DMs can award up to 900 XP for the encounter.

Part 2: Exploring the Grotto

After spending some time in the area, the heroes notice a trail leading to a strange patch of overgrown bushes. Upon further inspection, the overgrowth conceals a cave entrance.

Once the party finds the cave entrance, read the following:

> After several hours of searching the area, you come across a dense patch of overgrowth the seem to be concealing the opening to a large cave.

Anyone searching the immediate area outside the cave entrance can see the trampled-over tracks of various creatures going to and from the cave (no check required).

Anyone proficient in the Survival skill can make a **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check**. Success reveals that there are a dozen or so different creatures coming and going from the cave.

For the following room descriptions, see the accompanying map in Appendix for reference.

Area 1: Cave Entrance

After passing through the overgrowth, the party enters a large, empty cave.

> Through the dense overgrowth outside, you push your way into the wide empty cave around you. The cave stretches about 20 foot deep, and three times as wide. The ceiling is 30 foot high at the center of the cave and curves down to 15 feet where it meets the walls. In the northern corner there is a small pool. Water trickles down from the cave wall and collects in the natural basin. From there it flows out of the room to elsewhere underground.
>
> Near this pool is what appears to be the debris from several travelers who previously used this cave for shelter.

Anyone taking a sip or drink of the water must make a **DC 11 Constitution saving throw** or suffer the effects of **sewer plague** (DMG 257). The water, like the mushrooms in this area (see Plot Hook #2 above) are infected with the negative energy leaching out of the Black Heart of Karontor. Gomph has warned all goblins (and half-ogres) not to drink from the stream. To the firbolg, ogres, and other giants, the water is not poisonous.

To distract the party, next to the water basin, Gomph has told his followers to leave what looks like debris from past travelers. Anyone searching the debris can make a **DC 5 Wisdom (Perception) check** to find the following: 9 cp and a rusty dagger (it does 1d4-1 damage on a successful hit, and breaks on a miss of 5 or more).

In the northeast corner of the cave is a narrow tunnel that leads deeper into the cavern. Characters can only notice this tunnel when they get within 10 feet of it.

In the southeast corner is a rock bluff raised 5 feet off the cave floor. A narrow path leads up along the western wall. This bluff is rimmed with large boulders.

Features of the Area

Creatures. Hiding behind the boulders on the rock bluff are 3 **goblins** (MM 166) on guard duty.

Anyone with a **passive Perception higher** than the goblin's **passive Dexterity (Stealth)** will notice them hiding; otherwise the rock bluff appears empty.

Goblins behind the boulders gain **half cover** (PHB 196). If they use their shortbows, they lose their shield bonus to AC.

Tactics. Any hero that is surprised is unable to act on their turn in the first round of combat. The goblins will target these characters first. If the entire party is surprised, they will wait for the party to explore the natural water basin and debris in the northern part of the cavern (which is as far away from their position as possible in this room). The goblins will switch to melee weapons when needed. If possible, one of the goblins uses their Nimble Escape ability to Disengage and warn the other goblins in Area 2.

The party might be able to convince the goblins to abandon their post. Treat this as a **contest** (PHB 174), between either the party's **Charisma (Persuasion)** (grant the party advantage on their roll if they offer food or money as part of the attempt), or **Charisma (Intimidation)** roll, contested against the the goblin's **Wisdom (Insight)** roll.

Rewards. The two goblins have no treasure.

Adjustments. Make the following adjustments as required:

- For Very Weak parties, remove one goblin.
- For Strong and Very Strong parties, add two goblins just inside the narrow tunnel and give each goblin maximum hit points (hp 12).

Area 2: Goblin Lair

Down the south hallway and around the corner, the tunnel opens up into a natural cave. In eons past, it was just a trash room for the stone giant cultists who established the first temple to Karontor in the North.

As the party gets within 20 feet of the room, they hear the goblins within, unless one of the goblins from Area 1 alerted the goblins here. In that case, check each character's Passive Perception versus the goblins' Stealth roll.

> As you turn the corner, you gag on the stench that flows from the open cave. Within you can see that this room serves as the living quarters for a dozen or so humanoids, with dirty sleeping pallets scattered about, mixed in with the filth and grime around the room.

Features of the Area

Creatures. In the room are eight **goblins** (MM 166) and one **goblin boss** (MM 166).

Tactics. If the goblins are surprised, they spend their first turn reaching for melee weapons and moving toward the party (adjust AC for lack of shield in this case).

If the goblins are aware of the characters in the hall, 5 goblins will ready actions to shoot at any enemy that turns the corner. The remaining 3 goblins and the goblin boss will attempt to hide off to the sides and strike any enemy that enters the cave.

In following rounds, the goblin archers will use their Nimble Escape to Disengage and keep themselves at a distance from the heroes. They will switch over to scimitars as their brethren are killed or if they can no longer effectively attack at range. They will fight to the death, fearing any betrayal will lead to a more painful end by Gomph and his followers.

Rewards. This room has enough sleeping pallets (all dirty and lice infested) for a dozen goblins (the rest, including a second goblin boss, are out on various raiding patrols. Rummaging through the goblins' gear turns up 25 cp, a single gaming die (5 gp), and a broken earring (3 gp). Parties searching the area for mushrooms (see Adventure Hook #2 above) can find some in various nooks around this room.

Adjustments. Make the following adjustments as required:

- For Very Weak parties, remove four goblins.
- For Weak parties, remove two goblins.
- For Strong and Very Strong parties, remove two goblins and add two goblin bosses.

Area 3: Ogre Guard Post

Following north, about 30 feet in, the tunnel changes from natural stone to a carved hallway. This part of the temple was crafted centuries ago by the original stone giant cultists. Along the walls are carvings depicting ancient legends of Karontor. They show a hunched over, scarred god leading armies of branded stone giants in victorious battle against other giant clans.

Any player studying the wall carvings will recognize the branding marks and symbols on the stone giants armor as the same markings on any previously encountered ogres and goblins.

Characters studying the wall carvings can make an **Intelligence (Religion) check**. Consult the Karontor Religion table above to determine what they recall.

The hallway continues north, then turns west before continuing deeper underground. Along the hallway is a side passage with a pair of rooms.

> You continue down the hallway before turning. This part of the temple has finely carved walls. Centuries old, they must have been carved out of the rock by the stone giants that originally created this temple. Around the corner the hallway continues west. There is also a pair of rooms off to the north.

Features of the Area

Creatures. The room contains one **ogre** (MM 237) on guard duty.

Tactics. The ogre on guard duty is bored and not particularly alert. He has -5 on his passive Perception, or rolls a **Wisdom (Perception) check** with disadvantage to notice the party. The ogre first tries to run down the hall and alert the other ogres in Area 4. If that is not possible, he will call out to the ogres in Area 4. If the ogres in Area 4 succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** (with disadvantage), they hear the activity down the hall. One ogre from Area 4 will come to investigate, while the others begin making preparations as described in Tactics for Area 4 below.

Rewards. The ogre has no treasure or anything of interest on him (his treasure is part of the collective treasure in Area 4).

Adjustments. Make the following adjustments as required:

- For Very Weak parties, replace the ogre with a **half-ogre** (MM 238).
- For Strong and Very Strong parties, add one ogre.

Area 4: Ogre Lair

> Down the hallway is a huge, steel-banded wooden door, spanning almost seven foot wide. The door is closed.

Down the side hallway is a large door, beyond which is the barracks for the ogres when not out raiding. The area has bedrolls and personal belongings for 7 ogres, but only 3 are currently in the room (1 is on duty in Area 3, 2 are located in Area 6 with Gomph, and 2 are out on raids with their goblin minions).

If the ogres have not been alerted by the guard in Area 3, they make enough noise to alert the party of their presence and might be caught surprised. Once the party enters the room, read or paraphrase the following:

> Scattered around the room are the bedrolls for over a half dozen large creatures, along with javelins and greatclubs stacked in one of the corners.

Features of the Area

Creatures. The room contains 3 **ogres** (MM 237).

Tactics. If alerted to the heroes' presence in the temple, either from the guard on duty in Area 3, or hearing the heroes approach, 1 ogre stands in the middle of the south wall, brandishing his club and trying to lure the heroes into the room. Another ogre is hiding along the west wall. If that ogre's **Dexterity (Stealth) roll** is higher than any of the characters' **passive Perception** scores, he is not noticed by the characters entering the room. The first character the hidden ogre attacks is considered surprised (no action or reaction versus that ogre only). Both have readied actions to attack the any character that walks into the room. Any remaining ogres attack with their javelins from the far side of the room, and switch over to their greatclubs as needed.

Rewards. Searching the bedrolls in the main room yields: 12 gp, 30 sp, 3 gems (1 azurite and 2 blue quartz) worth 10 gp each, a woman's gold bracelet (20 gp), and a *potion of healing* (DMG 187). One of the ogres (or half-ogre) has a key that opens the door to Area 5.

Adjustments. Make the following adjustments as required:

- For Very Weak parties, replace all ogres with two **half-ogres** (MM 238).
- For Weak parties, remove one ogre.
- For Strong and Very Strong parties, add two ogres.

Area 5: Storage Room

Down the western hallway on the north side is a rather nondescript-looking door. The only interesting thing about the door is the lock that keeps it secure.

The door to this room is locked. If the party recovered the key from the ogre in Area 4, it will open this door, otherwise someone will need to make a successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check** to unlock the door. Inside are various treasures and supplies gathered from recent raids on the nearby trade route.

Anyone succeeding on a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check** hears the faint sounds of mice squeaking and squealing from within. Once the door is opened, the rats attack. They can enter and leave the room through cracks in the walls. The cracks are too small for even the smallest characters to use.

Features of the Area

Creatures. Within the room from various hiding places scamper 4 **swarms of rats** (MM 339).

Tactics. The swarms start to form around and attack whoever steps into the room.

Rewards. The swarms don't have any treasure themselves, but the raiding party has gathered the following gear and supplies from their recent raids, including:

- One half empty cask of ale (the ogre with the room key has been sneaking in here and drinking from this cask) worth 4 gp.
- One full cask of ale worth 8 gp.
- Four bottles of wine worth 10 gp each.
- A small chest filled with mostly fake gems and jewelry, though there are a few valuable pieces with a total value of 100 gp. Anyone examining the chest who succeeds on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check**, notices that there is a false bottom. In the false bottom are 2 *potions of healing* (DMG 187).
- Traveling supplies such as a bedroll, a waterskin, a lantern, and 5 torches.
- A small collection of weapons, including a longsword, a pike, 4 daggers, 2 longbows, and a quiver with 10 arrows.

Anyone casting detect magic will find the lantern and 5 of the arrows are magical: *lantern of revealing* (DMG 179) and 5 *arrows +1* (DMG 150).

If you are using Adventure Hook #1 (see above) any lost supplies from the caravan raid can be found here. If you are using Adventure Hook #2, some wild mushrooms can be found to be growing in a corner behind the casks of ale.

Adjustments. Make the following adjustments as required:

- For Very Weak parties, remove 3 swarms of rats.
- For Weak parties, remove 2 swarms of rats.
- For Strong and Very Strong parties, add 2 swarms of rats.

Area 6: The Temple

As you follow down the southwest hallway, it ends in a pair of bronze double doors. Across the doors is the engraving of a deformed and scarred creature, similar to depictions on various walls throughout the temple. It also features an etching of a white wolf.

The southwest hallway ends in a pair of bronzed double doors, with the detailed etchings across them. Characters can make another **Intelligence (Religion) check** and consult the Karontor Religion table to determine what they know about this god. Anyone succeeding on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check** recognizes the deformed creature as a **fomorian** (MM 136). If they succeeded on any previous check to know that this dungeon was a temple to Karontor, reduce the DC to 10. Karontor's avatar is typically a fomorian.

The Ritual. Within is the ancient temple created for the giant god Karontor. Gomph and his followers are in the temple in the middle of a ceremony, scarring an ogre and granting him additional power from the giant god.

Any character listening at the door will hear voices on the other side. If they speak Giant, and succeed on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check**, they understand that a ritual is going on, calling upon the power of Karontor to strengthen his devout followers.

Once the characters enter the room, read or paraphrase the following:

Opening the door, you see a large carved room, with torches on the walls at regular intervals spreading flickering light throughout the room. Along the far wall of this room is a tapestry displaying the symbol of a white wolf's head, a more ornate rendition of the same symbol seen on the armor of the denizens of this temple and on the carvings that adorn these walls. Near the far end of the room is a stone altar. Around the altar is a robed figure, almost 8 foot tall, wielding a sharpened stone blade and flanked by several ogres. One ogre appears to have been just cut by the cultist and the divine energy of clerical magic had been cast into the wound.

Anyone looking at the wounded ogre and succeeding on a **DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check** knows that the spell was *sacred flame* (PHB 272).

Features of the Area

Creatures. The following creatures are in the temple:

- 3 **ogres** (MM 237). They have all undergone the firbolg's ritual, and therefore are under the effects of a *bless* spell for the first 4 rounds after the party enters the room.
- Gomph, the firbolg cleric of Karontor. Treat as a **priest** (MM 348), with the following additions (based on the firbolg entry in *Volo's Guide to Monsters*):
    - Gomph gains the following spells usable once per short or long rest: *detect magic* (PHB 231) and *disguise self* (PHB 233).
    - Gomph can cast *invisibility* (PHB 254) on himself once per short or long rest, with the following limitations: The spell duration lasts until the start of Gomph's next turn or until he makes an attack, a damage roll, or forces someone to make a saving throw.

Tactics. Once Gomph and the ogres notice the party, the ogres move to attack while Gomph stays back and uses his spells to assist, switching to his mace only as a last resort. If more than half of the ogres are killed, Gomph casts *invisibility* on himself and runs down into room 7. Then he uses the spell scroll of *meld into stone* (PHB 259) to hide from the party as noted in room 7.

Rewards. The only item of value in the room is Gomph's ceremonial stone dagger. It is fine example of stone giant craftsmanship and worth 500 gp to the right collector in any major city on the Sword Coast.

Adjustments. Make the following adjustments as required:

- For Very Weak parties, remove 2 ogres, and reduce ogre hit points to 40.
- For Weak parties, remove one ogre.
- For Strong and Very Strong parties, add one ogre, and increase all ogre hit points to 70.

Area 7: Burial Chamber

The natural stairwell at the back of the temple room (Area 6) descends for 60 feet before opening into a wide natural cave. Toward the back of the cave are several smoldering braziers surrounding a divination circle. Each brazier gives off light in a 20-foot radius, and dim light for an additional 20 foot. Beyond that, the cavern is in darkness. The south east corner of the room is on a raised outcrop of rock, 10 foot high, most of which is covered in shadow. A narrow natural stairway leading up to the outcrop is hidden in shadows along the eastern wall.

Once the characters enter the room, read or paraphrase the following:

> The natural stairwell descends in a spiral 60 feet before opening up into a huge natural cavern. To the south east is a raised outcrop of rock, 10 feet higher than the rest of the cavern floor. Toward the back of the cavern is a series of four smoldering braziers arranged around a circular, mystical diagram drawn on the floor. The braziers shed a bit of light throughout the room. You can barely see a bedroll and other supplies in the far back of the cavern. As you enter the room, the ground shakes. Erupting from the center of the divination circle is an undead, deformed giant creature covered in rotting flesh. It speaks in ragged tones, its voice seemingly rumbling from out of the grave.
>
> "You and your kind are not welcome here. For too long we have allowed the small races to run wild over our lands. Now, here, a new day will be born for all giant and giant-kin alike willing to rise up and cast away beauty for hatred, comfort for pain, and weakness for power.
>
> "The weakening of the prison my brethren once built around me has allowed me to slip loose and granted me the freedom to unleash my revenge."
>
> As the voice finishes speaking, the braziers around the room flare and small smoldering elemental creatures appear next to the braziers.

If the characters previously identified this as the temple of Karontor, they recognize this might be his avatar. Due to Karontor's weakened state, this avatar appears as a smaller undead version of the deity's typical form.

If they had not previously identified the god Karontor, allow an **Intelligence (Religion) check** with advantage and compare the results against the Karontor Religion table to determine what the characters know.

When a character attacks the avatar of Karontor with magical attacks (spells or enchanted weapons), have them make a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice that the cracked magical cage around the Black Heart of Karontar pulses.

The easiest way to defeat the avatar is by infusing 30 points of magical energy back into the magical cage around the Black Heart of Karontor. This can be in the form of "damage" from magical weapons (such as the +1 arrows from room 5) or spells. For spells that don't cause damage, count 5 points for each cantrip, 10 points for each first level spell, and so on.

Features of the Area

Creatures. The characters face the following creatures:

- 4 **magma mephits** (MM 216) with 30 hit points each.
- 1 avatar of Karontor. The creature appears as an undead fomorian. Use the stats of an **ogre zombie** (MM 316) with the following changes:
  - Increase its hit points to 104.
  - The weapon has the appearance of a great club, but uses the stats for an ogre zombie's morningstar.

Tactics. The mephits attack individual characters in the room. The undead manifestation attacks a random character in the room, unless a hero attacks the Black Heart of Karontor; then it focuses its attacks on that character.

Rewards. The characters can find the following items:

- Various coins, including 500 cp, 3,000 sp, and 1,100 gp.
- *Potion of resistance* (DMG 188)
- Spell scroll with the *meld into stone* (PHB 259) spell. **Note:** If Gomph survived the battle above and fled down here, this scroll is gone. He used it to hide from the party in the surrounding cavern walls. Unless they take a long rest down here, Gomph will emerge from the stone walls after 8 hours and flee the temple. See Continuing the Adventure below for a suggestion on Gomph's next course of action.
- If DMs are using Adventure Hook #2, wild mushrooms can be found to be growing in various nooks around the cavern.

Adjustments. Make the following adjustments as required:

- For Very Weak parties, replace the four magma mephits with two **smoke mephits** (MM 217) and reduce the ogre zombie's hit points to 63.
- For Weak parties, replace the magma mephits with smoke mephits.
- For Strong and Very Strong parties, add four magma mephits. Four appear in the first round and four more appear in the second round of combat. Also grant the ogre zombie maximum hit points, 126.

Concluding the Adventure

Depending on what Adventure Hook you used for the party, by the end of the adventure the heroes should have completed their quest as well as confronted the leader of the newly-formed cult of Karontor in the North. For parties following up on the caravan attacks (Adventure Hook #1), they are able to stop the attacks and earn the favor of the trading and merchant guilds throughout the North.

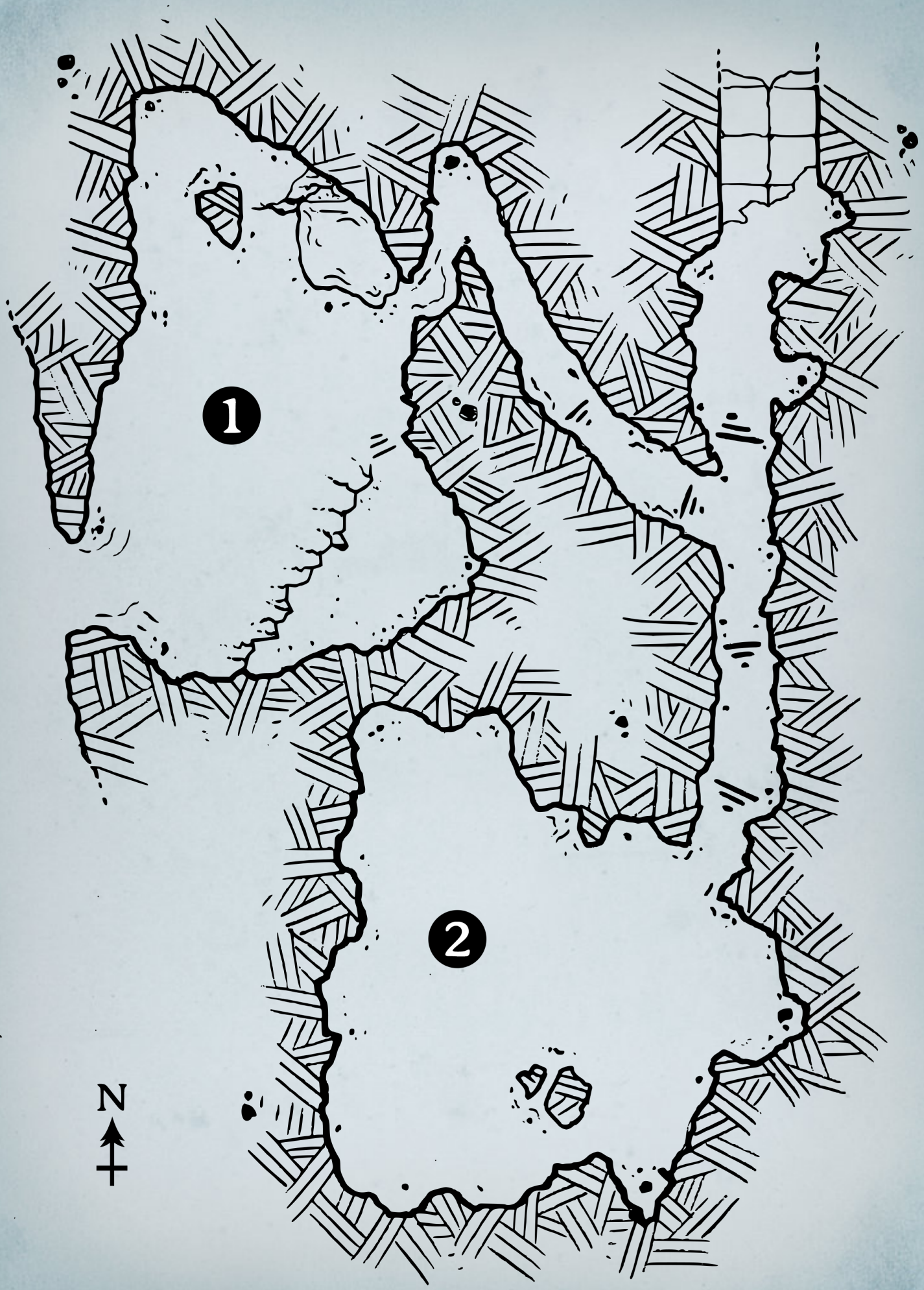
For parties hired to find special mushrooms for use in crafting certain magic items (Adventure Hook #2), the mushrooms that grow throughout this temple (see rooms 2, 5, and 7) can be used. Note: Repairing the magical cage around the Black Heart of Karontor will render the mushrooms and tainted water in the area inert in 1 month.

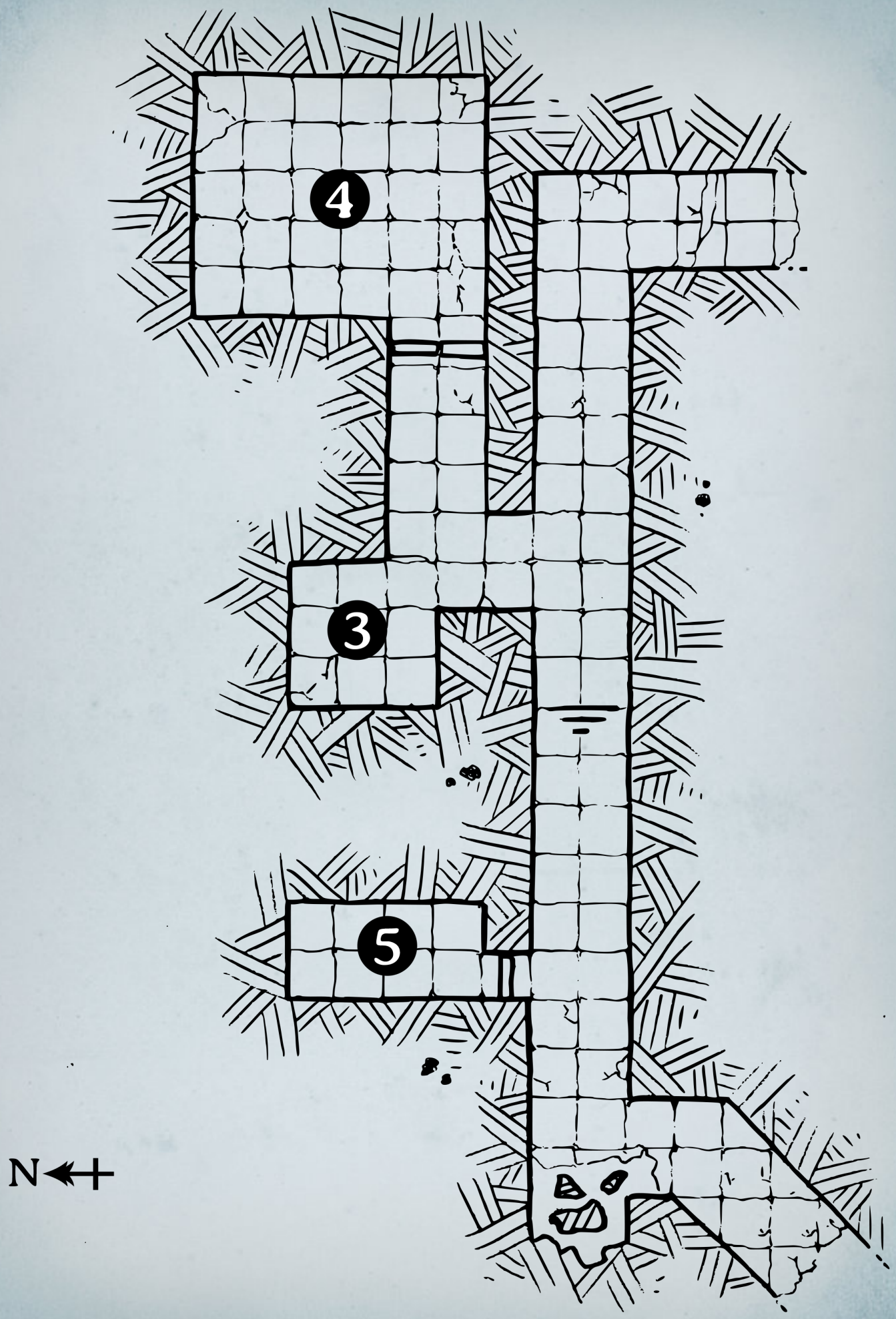
For parties looking for giant treasures (Adventure Hook #3), Gomph's ceremonial stone dagger is an excellent treasure that just might be useful for opening diplomatic talks with the stone giant clan.

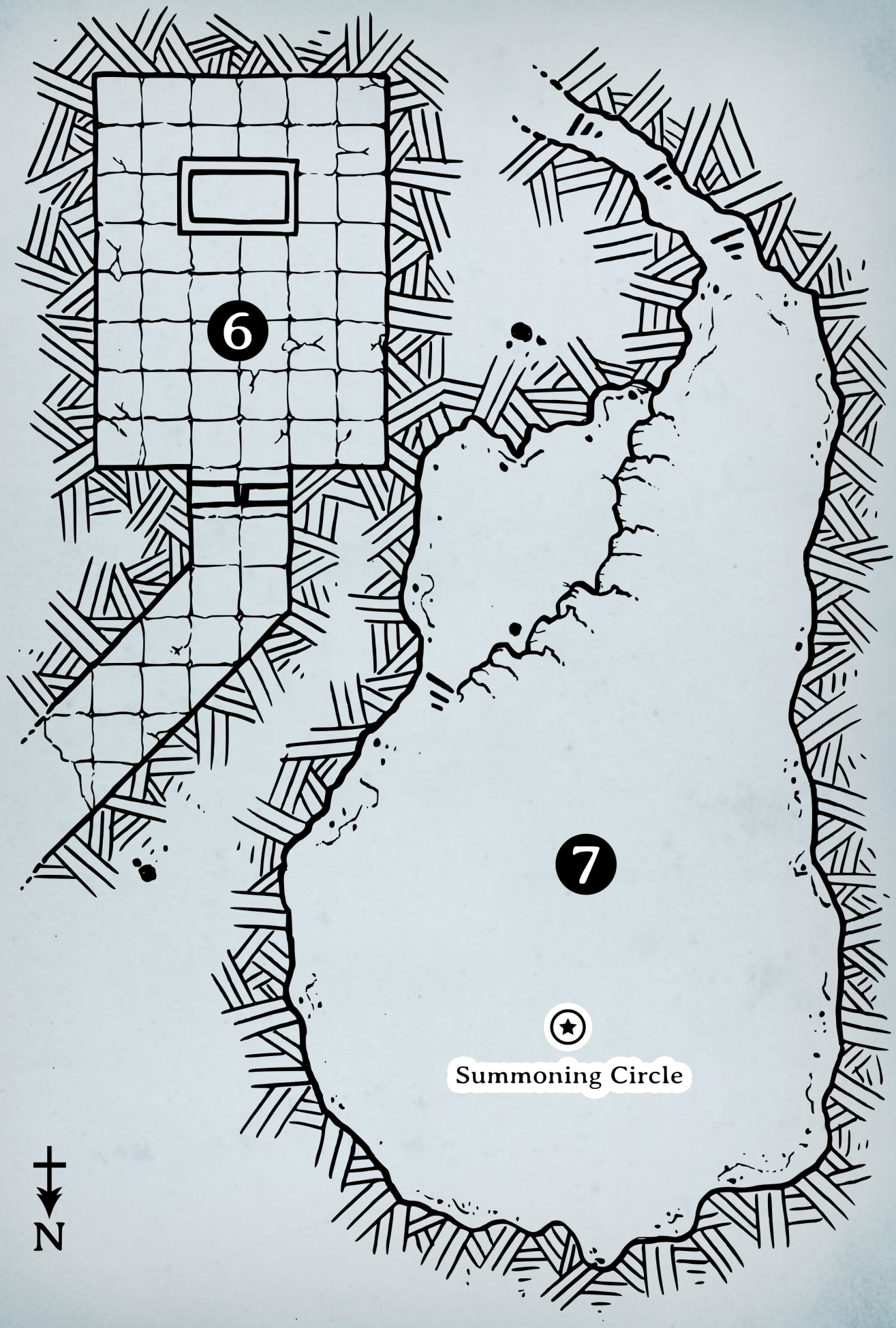
Continuing the Adventure

DMs wanting to continue the adventure have several options. If Gomph escaped, he will certainly try to restart the cult of Karontor elsewhere in the North, and may try to get revenge on the characters who stopped him this time. If the characters examine the Black Heart of Karontor, they will learn that their efforts to repair the magical cage are only temporary, it will eventually weaken and Karontor's power will again be felt throughout the North. This may lead the heroes into the heart of the giant kingdoms in an attempt to create another conclave of powerful giants to reforge the cage anew.




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Summoning Circle
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Saving Barbadoo's Mine

Explore a mysterious and deadly mine filled with a brand new magical substance called brightsteel. Do you have what it takes to save a wealthy cloud giant from his deadly fire giant rival and earn his favor?

By Matt Butler

This dungeon is designed for 3-5 8th to 10th level characters and is optimized for 4 characters with an average party level (APL) of 9. The dungeon is placed in the northern parts of the Sword Coast near Neverwinter but can be used in any setting with some adjustment.

Adventure Background

Several citizens of Neverwinter have reported seeing smoke rising from the side of Mount Hotenowand are concerned it might be on the verge of erupting again. In reality, Barbadoo, a wealthy and powerful cloud giant has been kidnapped by his longtime rival, an old and scarred fire giant named Kragnor. Barbadoo was visiting his brightsteel mine on the side of Mount Hotenow when he was attacked by Kragnor and his minions. His travelling cottage, tiny compared to his true home, is currently on fire and his son is in grave danger. Kragnorhas wanted Barbadoo's mine for centuries. Brightsteel is an exceedingly rare and hard-to-mine ore (see the Brightsteel sidebar) that could make Kragnor a very rich giant. With the dissolution of the Ordening, he has finally seized his chance and now has Barbadoo in chains deep within the mine.

Adventure Hooks

Smoke on the Horizon

Citizens of Neverwinter have seen smoke on the horizon and fear the worst. They're offering 25 gp to anyone who comes back with knowledge of its source and cause.

Spelunking for Metal

Krickle, the dancing druid, is offering 100 gp for every pound of brightsteel recovered from a mysterious mountainside mine. He can be found dancing between the foothills leading to the mine.

Brightsteel

Brightsteel is a magical ore similar in appearance to silver, except that it is much more lustrous. In its natural state it is similar in strength to tempered steel, however any weapon or armor made from this ore is 50% heavier than normal. Brightsteel weapons deal an extra 1d4 force damage on a hit. Once per day, brightsteel weapons can provide as much light as a torch of the same size for 30 minutes. They cost three times as much as a normal weapon of the same type. When used as a torch, brightsteel glows with an eerie olive-green light and feels warm to the touch. Brightsteel is a very tricky ore to work with and brightsteel weapons or armor can only be created by an expert blacksmith skilled in forging unique metals.

Adventure Summary

Play begins on the side of Mount Hotenow. Barbadoo has been kidnapped and his son is in danger. When the adventurers reach his flaming cottage they must try to save his young son from Kragnor's hired ogres. If they succeed, they gain a powerful ally in Dooba and learn of his father's fate first hand. If they fail, they still have a semi-intact giant's cottage to explore containing several clues to the fate of its owner.

However the adventurers learn of Barbadoo's fate, it leads them to the entrance to the mine all the same. There are two places anadventurer could slip into the mine apart from the incredibly heavy doors barring their way, but those places are guarded by deranged xorns recently driven mad by the capture of their master. Though it might be safer to open the doors, both options hold their own dangers. If they make too much noise, Kragnor becomes aware of their presence and fortifies his defenses against intruders. After surviving the first part of the mine, the adventurers run across a newly awakened roper pretending to be a stalagmite. This part of the mine is lousy with raw brightsteel ore and very enticing to the party, but they must stay on their guard here. There appears to be two carts filled with piles of brightsteel, but one of them is a clever mimic in disguise. In addition to that, it is very possible Kragnor will hear the plight of the adventurers and send one of his pets to "help" them.

If the adventurers survive, they will have to face Kragnor and his pet gibbering mouthers. Based on how much noise they've made thus far, he will be in one of three states when they arrive: unprepared, semi-prepared, or fully prepared.Regardless of his preparedness level,he has set up a few surprises that the adventurers must overcome before they can hope to save Barbadoo. If they prove victorious they'll win the favor of a very wealthy and powerful giant. And if they fail all of Neverwinter may be in danger.

Saving Barbadoo's Mine

Citizens of Neverwinter have engaged the adventurers to investigate smoke rising from the side of Mount Hotenow. While en route to the scene, the party encounters a wandering elven druid named Krickel busting a move at the base of the mountain. He dances around the party and is at times hard to understand due to the fast rate of his speech, but he seems to be friendly enough. He is on a mission but would rather let his feelings loose and dance to the beat of nature. If the party would take up his quest for a mysterious green ore called brightsteel, he would be willing to pay up to 100 gp per pound. He goes on to say that the brightsteel can be found within a mysterious mountainside mine protected by a terribly powerful giant. He says it will be dangerous, but if the party is interested, he would be more than happy to point them in the right direction. For stats on any of the monsters or items included refer to the Monster Manual and Dungeon Master's Guide respectively with the notable exception of brightsteel. Brightsteel is a new magical substance detailed in the Brightsteel sidebar.

Part 1: Saving Private Dooba

The path leads up the side of Mount Hotenow and directly into a warzone. Read or paraphrase the following when the adventurers reach Barbadoo's cloud:

> As you climb the worn and rocky path up the mountain, your nostrils are assaulted by the thick stench of burning timber. Suddenly, a thunderous explosion sends you to your knees. You hurry to crest the next rise and see what looks to be a cloud embankment that has run aground on the cliffside. In the center of the cloud is an enormous stone cottage, the roof of which is currently on fire. As you approach, you see a huge creature easily twenty foot tall run from the house. It is a dark-skinned humanoid with a fiery red beard clad in thick plate mail. A moment later you see a large creature descend from the storm clouds gathering overhead. Its shape suggests a dragon, but as it gets closer, you realize it only has wings and back legs. The huge warrior whispers something in the dragon creature's ear before bounding away towards a large mine just ahead. The dragon creature flashes a terrible toothy grin and dives straight into the burning cottage. Inside you hear the wail of a terribly frightened child.

Features of the Area

Front Door. The large oak door has been broken apart and lies in a pile of smoldering splinters next to the flaming door frame. Any creature passing through the threshold must succeed on a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw** or take 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Bedroom Door. When the adventurers make their way through the flaming debris and finally reach this 20 foot tall by 5 foot wide oak door, the wyvern succeeds in breaking it down.

Dooba's Room. One of only two rooms that remain intact, this 60 foot by 60 foot stone room has a large four poster bed. The bed has 3 foot thick oak legs that provide half cover for any Medium or smaller creature. At the foot of the bed is a large 10 foot by 5 foot by 5 foot steel chest that provides total cover for any Medium or smaller creature. After 10 rounds, the roof begins to burn and every creature in the room begins to take 3 (1d6) fire damage at the beginning of every round. After 20 rounds the roof collapses and anyone still inside must make a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 10 (3d6) fire damage on a failed save, and half as much damage on a successful one.

Barbadoo's Child. Dooba is a child cloud giant and stands roughly 10 foot tall. He appears to be around 12 years old and is a very shy and private giant, but will support the party with spells from his *staff of healing* (DMG 202). The staff has 7 charges. If the battle starts to turn sour, or if he runs out of charges on his *staff of healing*, he uses misty step and attempts to flee.

Creatures. 3 **ogres** (MM 237) and a wily **wyvern** (MM 303) begin to attack the adventurers as soon as they become aware of them. Hiding under the bed is the cloud giant child **Dooba** (Appendix A). The ogres do not notice Dooba when they first break in as he is obscured by a shroud of supernatural darkness, however the adventurers only need to have a **passive Perception of 11 or higher** to see through his deception.

Tactics. Kragnor's wyvern is incredibly loyal and will fight to the death. It targets the strongest-looking adventurer and focuses exclusively on them until they fall. It then moves through the party methodically. The ogres, however, are just in it for a paycheck. If the wyvern and two of the ogres fall, the third ogre attempts to flee or surrender. In broken Common, he offers to give the party his share of the loot (3 pounds of brightsteel) in exchange for his freedom. If pressed, he tells Kragnor's plan to seize control of the mine.

Development. If Dooba survives the encounter, he emerges from his hiding spot and violently hugs the closest party member. He then unloads his story on the party and asks for their help in saving his father. Dooba knows that Kragnor has long been a rival of his father and plans to kill him and take control of the mine. He doesn't know why Kragnor kidnapped Barbadoo instead of just killing him, but he has a hunch it has to do with the xorn that Barbadoo uses as workers.

If the heroes agree to help, Dooba gives them his *staff of healing* and offers to make each member of the party a pair of *winged boots* (DMG 214) as soon as his father is returned safely. He also gives them his father's enormous spare key to the mine. If the heroes ask for a map or description of the mine, Dooba reminds them he is a child and not really allowed in the mine, so he is unable to give them such help. Dooba is far too terrified of Kragnor to go into the mine and remains at the house trying to contact his mother, Wearshego.

If Dooba does not survive, the party is free to loot his room and the bodies. Inside Dooba's massive chest is a large leather-bound journal that details Dooba's fears for his father. He knows that Kragnor is after the mine and will stop at nothing to remove Barbadoo as an obstacle. The journal is written in Giant, but contains enough passages in broken Common to convey the general message. The chest contains a few more items of value, but the collapsing roof means they'll have to be quick about retrieving them.

Rewards. The ogres are carrying 9 pounds of brightsteel ore between them in large leather sacks slung over their shoulders. The wyvern is wearing a large gold insignia around its neck worth roughly 150 gp. Dooba carries around a *staff of healing* (DMG 202), a large steel key on a chain, and 20 pp in a small belt pouch. Dooba's steel chest contains a giant set of artisan's tools, a 20 foot roll of leather, a 20 foot roll of cloth, and a fist-sized ruby worth 2,500 gp set in a giant steel ring.

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is weak, remove 1 ogre
- If the party is strong, add 1 ogre.
- If the party is very strong, add 1 ogre and decrease the time it takes for the roof to collapse from 20 rounds to 15.

Part 2: Breaking and Entering

The mine is a few hundred feet north east of the cottage, and can be reached without incident. Kragnor has sealed the doors. The key from Part 1 unlocks the doors. There are also two 6 foot tall fissures in the mountain next to the doors, one to the north and one to the south. Read the following when the party approaches the twin 30 foot tall brightsteel doors:

> You see a pair of huge gleaming doors looming before you. Each door is roughly 30 foot tall and very heavy. Clearly they were meant to be used by a giant as each jewel encrusted handle is a full 10 feet off the ground. Etched along each door's surface is a rugged-looking giant grappling with several smaller rocky creatures, each of which has at least three arms and three legs. The creatures seem to be attempting to gnaw on the giant's fingers, but he holds them back with a broad smile. Around his neck is a thick necklace with a charm the size of a wagon wheel. The scene covers both doors completely. Just to the north, around 30 feet down the path, you see a small fissure in the rock that seems to lead further into the mountain. From it, you smell the faint aroma of burning timber and hear rock being slowly churned and ripped apart. Just to the south, around 40 feet down from the doors, you see another small fissure, a little smaller than the other. You don't smell anything, but the rock is unusually free of dust and grime giving the path an unnatural shine.

Features of the Area

Front Doors. The 30 foot tall brightsteel doors are 15 foot wide, 3 foot thick, and locked from the inside. The keyhole to the internal lock is 10 feet off the ground. Any adventurer attempting to unlock the door with the greatsword-sized key must succeed on a **DC 18 Strength check** to generate enough force to turn the lock. Once the doors are unlocked they swing open surprisingly easily on their polished brightsteel hinges.

Northern Fissure. This 3 foot wide fissure is a possible entrance to the mine. Any adventurer attempting to enter must make a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice the two **xorn** (MM 304) lying in ambush.

Southern Fissure. This 2 foot wide fissure is extremely shadowy but seems to lead further into the mine. Any adventurer attempting to enter must make a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice the two **black puddings** (MM 241) pretending to be large patches of shadow just inside.

Creatures. 2 **xorn** (MM 304) rage through the northern fissure while **black puddings** (MM 241) lie in wait through the southern fissure.

Tactics. The xorn have been driven mad after being released from Barbadoo's control and are running amok. They blindly attack any creature within 30 feet of them that possesses something containing metal or gems. They have no sense of self preservation and fight to the death.

The black puddings drop onto the first adventurer to enter the passageway. They then attack the adventurers at random, never leaving the safety of the shadowy passageway. If either one of them drops below 5 hit points, it attempts to Disengage and flee into the tiny cracks in the cave wall. Later, when the party is least expecting it, surviving black puddings return to attack from the shadows.

Development. All three paths lead into the main tunnel. Here, a large set of steel tracks lead further into the dangerous mine. Roll 1d20 in secret after the adventurers begin their trek into the heart of the mine. On a 1, Kragnor becomes aware that he is not alone in the mine and sets his exploding runes (detailed in Part 4). On a 2-20, Kragnor remains unware of the party's presence.

Rewards. The xorn carry nothing of value, but the northern path is littered with small globs of brightsteel totaling 5 pounds. The black puddings contain several things of value inside their oily bodies including 63 gp, 3 pp, and 17 sp. Each handle to the large doors has a basketball-sized ruby set into it. The rubies, each worth 10,000 gp, can be removed on a successful **DC 20 Strength check**. Failing the check by 5 or more means the gem is shattered in the process of removing it. Collecting the ruby shards yields 500 gp in bits and pieces.

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is weak, remove 1 black pudding and 1 xorn and replace them each with a **grey ooze** (MM 243).
- If the party is strong, add 1 xorn and 1 black pudding.
- If the party is very strong, add 1 xorn, 1 black pudding, and 4 grey oozes.

Part 3: Killer Stalactite... Or is it Stalagmite?

The three paths all lead to the main tunnel of the mine. Read the following when the characters' eyes adjust to the dim light:

> As you stumble into the darkness, the first thing you notice is the acrid smell, like burning timber. Your eyes slowly begin to adjust to the dim light streaming down from above you and you notice the tunnel is lit with dozens of driftglobes. They hover roughly 1 feet below the 30 foot high ceiling and emit a sickly yellow glow. The driftglobes bob and weave through the mine on their own and provide dim lighting at best, as they seem to be more decoration than anything else. There is a large set of gleaming steel tracks that lead further into the mine. Just around the downward sloping bend in the tunnel you see a large bulbous area sticking out 100 feet to the south. There, you see a mine cart the size of a wagon flipped off its wheels next to the track. The track leads further into the mine towards a dim orange glow. You can just make out the tell-tale shine of brightsteel peeking out from beneath the overturned minecart. You're not sure why, but you begin to feel like you're being watched. As you approach, you notice a small path that winds off to the east. You can't see the end of the path, but it fills you with an unplaceable feeling of dread. You also notice a second overturned mine cart 100 ft. down the main tunnel filled with more brightsteel ore.

Features of the Area

Driftglobes. The *driftglobes* (DMG 166) provide light as a torch, centered on the steel track. There is no other source of natural or artificial light in the mine except for a dim orange glow coming from the heart of the mine.

Cart Tracks. These 3 foot wide steel tracks sit on a small 2 foot high rise of stone in the center of the tunnel. The tracks remain relatively clear of debris and seem to have been recently maintained, perfect for walking along.

Cave Floor. The ground to either side of the track is covered in a mixture of rubble, dust, and brightsteel shards. It is difficult terrain; any creature moving faster than half their speed must make a successful **DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check** or fall prone at the end of their movement.

Southern Chamber. The unsettling southern path leads to a chamber filled with 10 **gray oozes** (MM 243) being controlled like a hive by an insidious **psychic gray ooze** (MM 240). They lie in wait for any creature dumb enough to fall into their crudely constructed pit trap.

Northern Chamber. The northern chamber contains the overturned mine cart and several deadly enemies. A **roper** (MM 261) lies in wait next to the mine cart pretending to be a large stalagmite, using the mounds of brightsteel as bait.

Creatures. 10 **gray oozes** (MM 243) and 1 **psychic gray ooze** (MM 240) lurk in the southern chamber. A **roper** (MM 261) and eight of its **piercer** (MM 252) offspring lie in wait in the northern chamber, and 3 crafty **mimics** (MM 220) pretend to be the second ore-filled mine cart.

Tactics. Any creature that gets within 50 feet of the roper must make a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw** or become Restrained by one of the roper's tendrils. The roper attacks the weakest-looking member first. The roper is a predator and motivated by its primal need for food. If the party proves to be too much to chew, it attempts to Disengage and hide until it can heal itself. Beginning on the second round of combat, two piercers detach from the ceiling. They continue to drop at the same rate every subsequent round, attacking the party at random, until all eight of them have dropped. The piercers fight to the death.

The gray oozes have constructed a pit trap leading into the southern chamber. Any creature attempting to enter must succeed on a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw** or fall 20 feet, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from falling. Any adventurer with a **passive Perception of 11 or higher** easily notices the crudely covered trap. If the trap is triggered or the heroes enter the room, the oozes descend on the party. They attack from all sides.

The mimics wait patiently until an adventurer tries to remove a piece of ore and becomes stuck fast to their adhesive bodies. They then return to their original forms and swarm the party hoping to overwhelm them. Each mimic targets a different adventurer and fights tooth and pseudopod until one of them is dead.

Development. After the party defeats a group of monsters and moves further into the cave, roll 1d20 in secret. On a 1-5, Kragnor becomes aware that he is not alone in the mine and sets one of his three prepared traps (detailed in Part 4). On a 6-20, Kragnor remains unware of the party's presence.

Rewards. The overturned cart is filled with 100 pounds of raw brightsteel ore. Any adventurer attempting to remove the ore must succeed on a **DC 18 Strength check** to flip the heavy wooden cart. The roper is old and contains a few things of value in its gut including *boots of elvenkind* (DMG 155), a *cloak of elvenkind* (DMG 158), 7 pp, and 3 baseball sized diamonds worth 3,000 gp each. The mimics and grey oozes have nothing of value.

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is weak, remove 1 mimic, 4 gray oozes, and 4 piercers.
- If the party is strong, add 1 mimic, 2 gray oozes, and 2 piercers.
- If the party is very strong, add 1 mimic, 4 gray oozes, and 4 piercers.

Part 4: Fiery Doom!

The tracks end in a large chamber similar to the one the party encountered earlier. Read the text below when the party makes it around the last bend:

> As you inch forward, sweat begins to drip down your brow. The temperature is almost unbearable at this point and, as you peer around the corner, you can see why. The chamber is smoky, making it hard to see, but through the haze you see a large wood bonfire burning brightly in the center of the room. Kragnor, the giant you saw earlier, stands just over the fire holding another giant by the hair. This giant is blue and wrapped in thick iron chains from his shoulders to his ankles. As you watch, Kragnor shoves the other giant's face into the fire for a moment, eliciting a horrible shriek from his captive and filling the room with the smell of burning flesh.
> "Kragkornarkreexorn, Barbadoo! Far Ge Kul Bar!"""
> [Common: "I finally figured out how you control the xorn, Barbadoo!"] Kragnor yells at the other giant in Giant. The other giant, presumably Barbadoo, spits in Kragnor's face. "Mel bev... ger... nasul, Kragnor. Mel bev!" [Common: "You'll never control this mine, Kragnor. NEVER!") Barbadoo yells in reply. "Pulkar, Barbadoo? Reznar!" [Common: “Really Barbabdoo? Watch me!"]

Give the players a chance to intervene. If they do not act continue:

> Kragnor laughs and shoves Barbadoo's face back into the fire then throws him off to the side. Kragnor grabs the large amulet you saw on the door to the mine and raises his arms into the air. The ground next to the bonfire shudders and one of the creatures from the mine door [a xorn] slowly emerges from the ground. Both giants are completely wrapped up in what is happening and seemingly don't notice your presence at all. Through the haze you can see several large stalactites hanging from the ceiling, one of which is poised directly above Kragnor.

If the party sets off one of the traps on their way into the chamber, read the following text:

> As you dust yourself off, you see Kragnor staring down at you from above. "Ha ha, tiny people. I thought you were Wearshego," he says in a booming voice, shaking his head. "I don’t know what you think you're doing here, but thank you for showing up all the same. My pets haven't eaten in days." He pulls two bottles from his pocket. He uncorks them and drops them. As you scramble away, a gelatinous pink goop filled with gnashing teeth and blinking eyes begins to pour from each of the uncorked bottles.

Features of the Area

Pit Trap (Prepared Trap). Kragnor had his xorn to dig out a 15 foot area underneath the mine track. Any creature with a **passive Perception of 14 or higher** easily notices the trap, as it is meant for someone of great size. Creatures who notice the trap can avoid it by using the 4 foot wide strips on either side of the pit. Any adventurer attempting to walk across the pit trap must make a **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw** or fall into the 40 foot pit, taking 14 (4d6) falling damage.

Exploding Runes (Prepared Trap). These 3 square foot symbols are charged with arcane energy and set to explode as soon as someone steps over them. Any creature with a **passive Perception of 15 or higher** notices the runes and can avoid them. If a creature steps on a rune, it explodes. Each creature within 5 feet of an exploding rune must make a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Falling Net Trap (Prepared Trap). A 60 foot wide net is hidden in the shadows among the stalactites that hang above the mine tracks. Any adventurer with a **passive Perception of 15 or higher** notices the net and the small thin trip wire that activates it. When the net is triggered it restrains all creatures within its area. A trapped creature can make a **DC 14 Strength check** to free itself or another creature within reach at the beginning of its turn. The net has AC 10 and 20 hit points. Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net destroys a 5-foot-section, freeing any creature trapped in that section.

Bonfire. The large bonfire puts out a thick black smoke that obscures most of the chamber. The bonfire also deals 14 (4d6) fire damage to any creature that falls into it.

Stalactites. Several stalactites hang from the ceiling in this area and can work as improvised weapons. It takes 5 points of bludgeoning, slashing, or piercing damage to break one loose. A stalactite which is broken loose falls on creatures directly beneath it. A creature beneath a falling stalactite must make a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Creatures. Kragnor, the **fire giant** (MM 154), commands 2 **gibbering mouthers** (MM 157) and a reluctant **xorn** (MM 304).

Tactics. After unleashing his gibbering mouthers, Kragnor attacks the strongest adventurer with his greatsword. Each round, he alternates between attacking the strongest adventurer and knocking stalagmites loose with his Rock attack. As a free action on his turn, Kragnor can command the xorn, but must roll 1d4 to do so. On a 1 or 2, the xorn obeys the command. On a 3 or 4, the xorn attacks Kragnor instead.

Kragnor does not believe in surrender and fights to the death, as do the gibbering mouthers. The xorn, on the other hand, only fights until it drops below 10 hit points; when this happens, it melds into the surrounding stone and sinks into the mountain to heal. Kragnor knows he is huge and if he is slain attempts to fall onto one of the adventurers. Any creature within twenty feet of his falling body must make a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, and half as much on a successful one.

Development. Hanging from Kragnor's belt is the key to the huge manacles attached to Barbadoo's wrists and legs. Barbadoo is **Unconscious** (PHB 292) but can be awakened with the application of healing magic. On awakening he is grateful and praises the party for their martial prowess. After a few congratulatory high fives (some of which may bowl over a few smaller adventurers), he leads the party back to his home.

Rewards. Any creature searching Kragnor's body will find, in addition to his giant-sized greatsword, a *dwarven thrower* (DMG 167) which he wears around his neck on a steel chain, as well as a *gem of brightness* (DMG 171), 2 jug sized vials with two *potions of greater healing* (DMG 187) in each, and finally a set of giant sized artisan's tools.

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is weak, remove 1 gibbering mouther and raise the chance that the xorn will attack Kragnor from 3 and 4 to 2, 3, and 4.
- If the party is strong, add 1 gibbering mouther.
- If the party is very strong, add 1 gibbering mouther and make the xorn totally obedient to Kragnor.



Concluding the Adventure

Dooba was Saved. If Barbadoo is able to reunite with Dooba, he offers the party the *winged boots* (DMG 214) Dooba promised them. In addition, Barbadoo gives the party a small amulet with a light green cabochon in it that they can use to contact him when they want to cash in their favor. He tells them if they speak his name three times into the amulet they can communicate with him as though using *sending stones* (DMG 199). Barbadoo makes sure to warn the party that if they go too far, it'll take him a while to get to them, so they shouldn't expect him to instantly come to the rescue.

He thanks the party profusely for saving him (and his son, if applicable) from certain doom before sending the heroes on their way and attempting to repair the fire damage to his roof.

Dooba Died. If Barbadoo is unable to reunite with Dooba, he mourns his loss deeply and weeps for his lost son. Now that Kragnor and Dooba are dead, Barbadoo wants nothing more than to leave this mine and never return. He offers the heroes the rights to the mine but informs them that the necklace that controls the xorn won't work for small folk. He and gives them his last key and wishes them luck before departing on his smoldering cloud.

Continuing the Adventure

If the adventurers gain control of the mine they can choose to do any number of things with it. They can keep it and attempt to clear the 15 xorn still left rampaging throughout the mine. If they're successful, the mine can produce as much as 50 pounds of ore per day with a team of 10 experienced miners. Should the adventurers gain the *winged boots* (DMG 214) they were promised they could fly through the area, discovering all manner of things not seen from the ground. Hidden castles, lost crypts, mountainside monasteries, or even the nesting grounds of a horrifying flying monstrosity. Anything could be lurking for them above the clouds.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my beautiful fiancée, Madison, for keeping me sane during the development process. You are the reason this turned out as well as it did.

Appendix A: Monsters and NPCs

Dooba

Huge giant, neutral good

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 104 (16d12)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +7, Cha +7
Skills Insight +7, Perception +7
Senses passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Giant
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Keen Smell. Dooba has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Innate Spellcasting. Dooba's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will : *detect magic, fog cloud, darkness*

3/day each: *feather fall, fly, misty step, telekinesis*

Actions

Multiattack. Dooba makes two Slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 24 (4d10 + 2) bludgeoning damage.


N
Southern Chamber
Northern Chamber
Pit Trap
Explosive Runes
Pit Trap
Eastern Chamber



Stone Giant's Lost Rock

A crafty xorn stole from the giants and dwarves alike. Their most precious relics are hidden away in its lair, waiting to be recovered by a band of fearless adventurers. However, the xorn was a mere pawn in the machinations of a ruthless woman…

By Micah Watt

This short adventure is intended to be provided as a hook while the PC's are on the road from locations within the greater *Storm King's Thunder* storyline. It could, of course, be used at any time adventurers are traveling from place to place.

The adventure is designed for 4-6 characters of level 3 (Tier 1, APL 3) but has notes for adjusting to fit higher or lower power parties.

DMs familiar with *Storm King's Thunder* will be aware that the action in Nightstone theoretically takes characters from level 1 to level 5, but unless using the milestone system this is not achievable with the available challenges. Stone Giant's Lost Rock can be used to bolster lower level parties after Nightsone, or it can be scaled to 5th level characters using the **Very Strong** guidance.

Adventure Background

The Adventure takes place amid the backdrop of Storm King's Thunder, where the Ordning (giant hierarchy) has been shattered and the various sub-races vie for power and position to re-order giant society.

The characters meet an affable stone giant named Grindelgar, who seeks some 'small folk' to intercede in a growing conflict before it gets out of hand.

Recently some underground dwelling small folk stole a sacred relic from his tribe's holding – a stone carving of their god – and the tribe are considering attacking the small folk in reprisal.

Grindelgar would like the characters to intercede before such an attack occurs.

Adventure Overview

The characters are hired by Grindelgar and directed to a small dwarven clanhold nearby.

There the characters discover the clan is being blackmailed by a xorn who has stolen a sacred relic of theirs. In exchange for its safe return the dwarves are committed to paying in malachite. Swiftly they realized they had been swindled as the Xorn has depleted the local malachite supply, so they told the creature of the Stone Giant's relic, which it sent its servitors to steal. The looming giant reprisals have them worried.

The dwarves are honor bound to leave the treacherous xorn in peace, but since the characters are not so restricted, ask that they venture forth into the xorn's caverns and retrieve both relics.

Upon confronting the Xorn, the characters learn that the dwarven clan chief's daughter engineered the whole plot as a means to seize power. She confronts the characters in the climax.

Adventure Hooks

Travelers

The adventurers meet Grindlegar on the road traveling from one location to another. He hires the characters directly.

Homecoming

One or more of the characters are members of the Brawnanvil Clan or used to call Shimmerhall home. News of the clan desperately needing malachite has reached them and they seek to discover the nature of the need.

Guards

Word has gone out that the dwarves of Shimmerhall are buying malachite. A merchant hires the characters as guards to escort him to Shimmerhall so that he might negotiate with the clan.

Part 1: The Road to Shimmerhall

The traveling conditions have been mild as you progress down the Trade Way, allowing you the opportunity to take in the land around you as you travel – most of which is undulating hills and rocky crags, with the occasional stands of woods in the distance. Despite the pleasant weather you have seen few travelers in the last few hours, the reason for which becomes apparent as you round a bend in the road between hills and find yourself staring at a giant no more than fifty yards away.

The great grey-skinned creature is casually seated across the road, blocking the way, his head turned in your direction. His flinty features twist in what appears to be a pleasant smile.

The giant's name is Grindelgar, a pleasant, slow-talking fellow from a local clan of stone giants to the west, deeper into a craggy valley region. He has come seeking assistance from the "wee folk" and assumes that travelers along the road can help him. Several groups traveling in the opposite direction from the characters have already fled at the sight of him, and he is trying to put on his most amiable expression.

The giants live a secluded life in their caverns and care very little about the activities of others. However, recently a group of "wee folk" entered their domain and stole a precious relic – a 2-foot statuette of Stronmas carved from a single piece of malachite. The item has significant religious value and the normally placid giants have become agitated. While stone giants are often slow to make a resolution, he fears that they may choose to attack or otherwise become problematic for the local wee folk. Since all wee folk look the same to them, the consequences could be far reaching into the region. Grindelgar, young and rash by the standards of his kin,has taken it upon himself to try to persuade some wee folk to intercede before things get out of hand.

The folk who stole the relic live in an underground burrow that is too small for the giants to access without force. They can bring that force to bear but he'd prefer to see this resolved peacefully. What he wants are some negotiators to act before the situation gets violent.

He is willing to pay the party in a 'pinch' of emeralds, as he knows these have value to the small ones. For medium creatures, this is a handful of uncut emeralds worth 500gp. He will show the emeralds but only pay on completion of the job. If however the characters return later seeking the emeralds as trade for the Stone Grindlegar will agree to hand them over (see Area 9 and interacting with the Xorn). Betrayal at this point by the characters (such as fleeing without returning the stone) results in the giants invading and destroying Shimmerhall.

If the characters agree, he leads them via a solidly constructed road to a rocky valley a few hours walk from the Trade Way. In the valley (which he doesn't enter for fear of provocation) he says they will find a 'burrow' door, which is the abode of the thieves.

Storm King's Thunder. If this adventure is run as part of the Storm King's Thunder storyline, Grindelgar is concerned the otherwise neutral storm giants will see the loss as potentially angering Stronmas and are even more motivated to attack. Grindelgar can impart as much or as little information about the Ordning as the DM sees fit to divulge.

Part 2: The Burrow

When the characters enter the ravine, it will be clear they are heading toward a dwarven outpost of some kind. The road has been carefully laid with marker stones of dwarven make, and carvings of stone faces, with runes and anvils adorning the walls at various points. A **passive Perception 12 or higher** or a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** for those that are actively looking spot the occasional arrow slits in the ravine walls overlooking the road, suggesting there are tunnels within the walls themselves. Eventually, the characters arrive at a massive stone gatehouse built into the face of a tall cliff; the doors are closed, and sentries are in clear view above.

Getting in is reasonably easy so long as the characters are friendly and suggest they might have business within. The dwarves are a clan of crafters and traders, and the party doesn't seem like a threat. Requests to see the clan leader will be granted. The characters can find out from the sentries that the hold is called Shimmerhall, and the clan leader is Brelden Brawnanvil.

The hold is quite extensive, though the characters will be taken in a direct route to the clan's main hall, a vast affair with vaulted ceilings, heavy bas-relief and a stone throne at the far end for holding audiences. By the time the characters arrive, Brelden Brawnanvil, his wife (Ferna), 4 daughters (Rella, Riega, Marla, and Drava), and his advisor (Nevrin, cleric of Moradin) are all present.

Despite being clannish and gruff, they are friendly enough, at least at first. If accused of the theft, Brelden will tell the characters to mind their own business, stating the clan's actions are none of their affair. If confronted by the possibility of giant attack, however, his attitude changes fairly rapidly. After a quick conference (in Dwarvish). characters that speak Dwarvish or those that make a **DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check** will note that the eldest daughter Rella and the advisor Nevrin are vocally against involving the characters. Eventually, after much debate, Brelden decides to confess the issue.

Three weeks ago, a creature of earth – a xorn – tunneled up from below into our treasury and consumed a number of precious gemstones and took our hearthstone, a sacred relic that represents the clan's history and honor. We took counsel and decided to bargain rather than fight the creature. It demanded it's weight in malachite for the stone's return, a deal we thought at the time was within our ability to fulfill. We struck the bargain, thinking to trade with our nearby partners for the malachite.

Little did we know this xorn has been active for some time in the region and has hit other holds similar to ours with the same tactics and demands. There is simply little malachite to be had, and with the deal struck, we imperil our honor further if we break our word and attack the scheming creature. The xorn may be dishonorable but we keep our word when given. It grows impatient, however, and we were forced to consider other means. We didn't take the giant's stone, but we did tell the Xorn about it. It's such a small piece to them we thought it would be insignificant. On that information, the xorn sent its own minions to acquire it. I fear the giants will not see the distinction.

Clan honor is as important as life. We cannot go back on our word, even if it means war with the giants. However, if you – as independent adventurers – were to seek out and retrieve the stolen objects, we could not be accountable for your actions. We'd have met our obligations as befits our honor. Whatever happens to this scheming xorn after that is not our concern.

The dwarves are still waiting on 5 pounds of malachite (around 200 gp in total) as the final installment of their bargain with the xorn. They have had to range far and are not expecting it for a number of weeks. If the xorn were killed or driven off and the characters were to retrieve their Hearthstone as part of their activities, Brelden would happily gift it to them instead. Of course, if the Xorn still lives, he must go through with the deal. They can tell the characters that the xorn has some svirfneblin (deep gnomes) as attendants.

If the characters agree, Brelden can show the characters to an entrance to the current xorn's lair, a disused complex not far from the dwarven hold that is accessed through some old and unclaimed tunnels.

If the characters think to try to make peace between the dwarves and giants and take the time to consult Grindelgar, he will confirm the giants steadfastly believe these 'wee folk' stole their stone and are unlikely to be swayed by their word alone.

The Xorn and the Daughter. While Brelden is being forthright with the characters, he is, in fact, being betrayed by one of his own. His eldest daughter, Rella, is warlike in nature and grows impatient with her father's honorable, diplomatic ways. She wants war with the giants and she wants the position of clan leader. When the xorn first arrived months ago, she saw her chance. She met with it secretly and suggested the scheme of blackmail. She set it loose on the local area first to deplete the malachite (that it eats as a delicacy) and then encouraged it to steal the Hearthstone. It was she who counseled for trade rather than combat, and it was she who suggested her father inform the xorn of the giant's relic. This has all been engineered to undermine her father, sow dissatisfaction with his rule, and force a clan vote to place her in charge, which she would be 'reluctantly obligated' to do in the difficult times ahead. She has recruited the corrupt advisor Nevrin with the promise of marriage. However, if the characters were to discover it was her plan from the xorn, all would be ruined. She plans to follow and ambush the characters to ensure this doesn't happen.

Part 3: The Xorn Tunnels

Terrain. The entire complex is shaped stone that, while worked, seems to follow the natural contours of the original caverns – except for Areas 6-9 which are clearly heavily altered.

Light. There is no natural light in Areas 1-4, and Areas 5-9 have the lighting conditions stated in the description.

Ceiling Height. The tunnels are all 10 foot in height, while the caverns have their height stated under their descriptions

Area 1: Ceiling Entry

A crack in the stone here drops twenty feet into a dark cavern below. The floor's rough but showing signs of being at least partially worked.

The Entrance. The dwarves assigned to guide the party say that the xorn can be found near the aqueduct, but don't further elaborate. They drop a rope ladder (which they will pull up behind the characters to avoid the appearance of co-operation to the xorn) and are prepared to wait nearby (within calling range) for 24 hours before returning without the characters, assuming their demise. The climb requires no check with the ladder but requires a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check** without it.

Pursuers. Not long after the characters enter the complex, Rella and Nevrin appear and murder the escorts, an act which they intend to blame on the characters, then follow the characters into the complex.

Area 2: Underground River

The sound of running water can be heard ahead, and the stone tunnel opens into a natural cavern that is bisected by a narrow but rushing underground river. Across the cavern, two tunnels lead away.

The cavern is 20 foot high. The river is around 3 foot deep at the center, is considered **difficult terrain**, and the flow is powerful enough to require a **DC 10 Strength check** to maintain footing. Failure indicates being swept away at a rate of 30 feet toward Areas 3-4 and potentially over the falls there. Anyone nearby can make a reaction to try to grab the unfortunate, requiring a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check** to haul them in. Failure indicates the rescuer has swept away too. Trying to wade up or down the river requires the same check each round.

Area 2a: Cave Fisher Ledge

Of potentially more concern than the river is that the recent traffic has lured a **cave fisher** (VGTM 130) to the area. It has taken up residence on ledge 15 feet above the cave floor. It will try to use its filament to entrap the first creature crossing the river to the other side.

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is very weak or weak, reduce the river crossing DC by 2
- If the party is strong, increase the river crossing DC by 2
- If the party is very strong, increase the river crossing the DC by 2 and add a second cave fisher

Area 3: Waterfall Cave

The tunnel opens up into a large cavern with a high ceiling bristling with stalactites. The cavern is bisected by a 10-foot drop from the upper level to the lower, and a rushing waterfall crashes down from above to collect in a small pool.

Areas 3 and 4 share a ceiling, with Area 3 being 30-foot high and Area 4 being 20-foot high. Climbing the water slicked, rough cliff requires a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check** but getting to it may require immersion in the pool.

Area 3a: Pool

This is an icy pool where the underground river calms briefly before flowing into a crack in the cavern wall and continuing its journey. It is quite deep (some 15 foot at its lowest point), but aside from a few fish, the lake holds little of interest.

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is strong, creatures immersed in the lake must make a **DC 10 Constitution saving throw** or gain 1 level of **exhaustion**.
- If the party is very strong, creatures immersed in the lake must make a **DC 14 Constitution saving throw** or gain 1 level of **exhaustion**.

Area 4: Stalagmites and Mushrooms

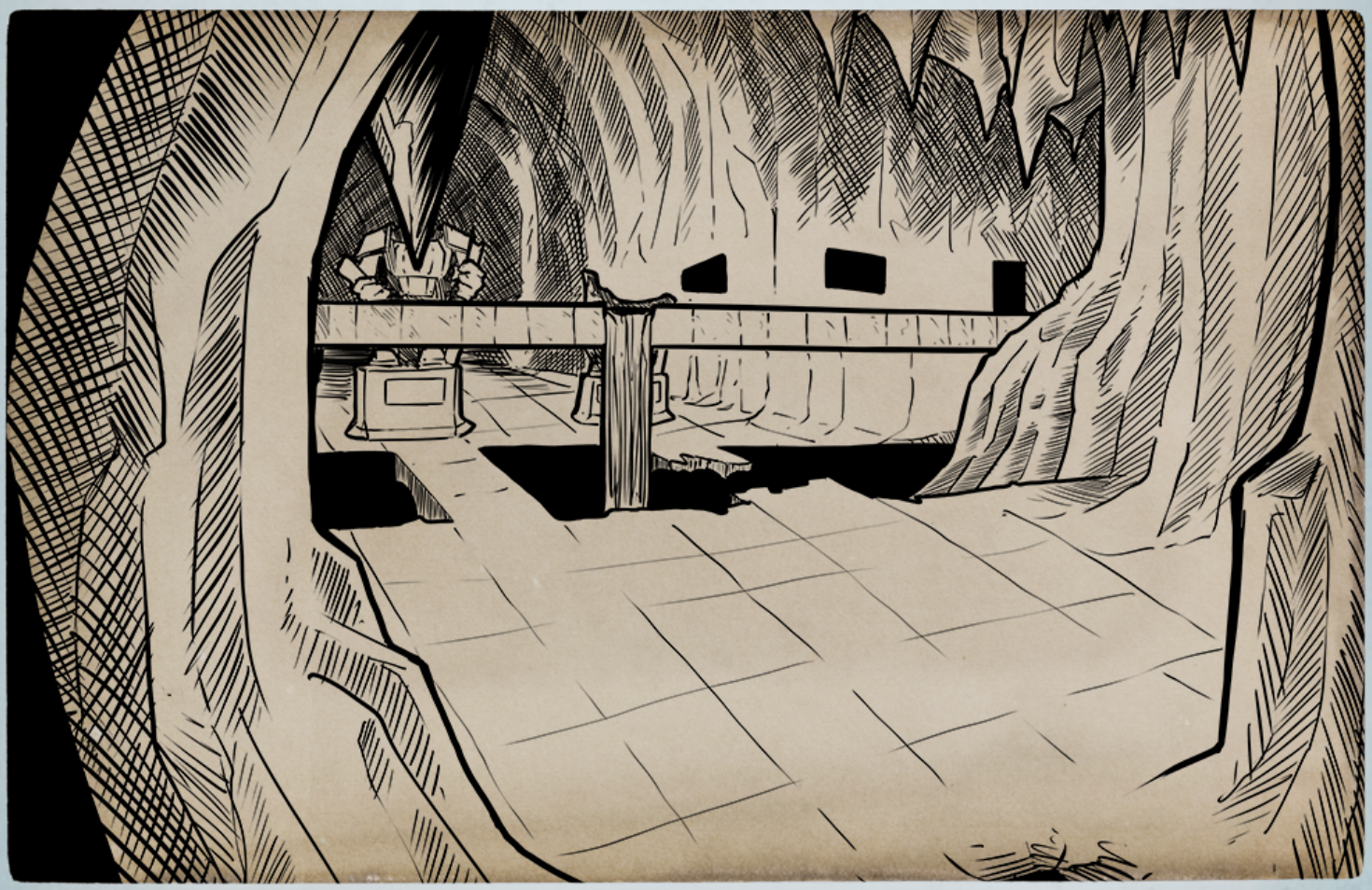
The upper section of this split cavern is riddled with stalactites and stalagmites, some meeting to form thin rock pillars.
An earthy smell permeates the area and a patch of fungi grows to the west.

The ceiling here is 20 foot high. Despite possible misgivings, the mushrooms and fungi are perfectly safe to approach, touch and eat. Unfortunately, their presence has to do with the colony of 6 **stirges** (MM 284) living amid the stalactites above – their dung being the medium that the fungi grows in. The stirges hungrily attack any warm-blooded creatures.

Falling From the Waterfall. Anyone swept in from Area 2 should be given one chance to grasp the rock pillar close to the water's edge before going over. A **DC 10 Strength check** is required to grab its rough surface and use their momentum to slide out onto the stone here. Failure results in a fall. Given the depth of the water below, anyone falling from the cliff or waterfall takes only (3) 1d6 bludgeoning damage but becomes fully immersed in the icy pool.

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is very weak, remove 3 stirges.
- If the party is weak, remove 2 stirges.
- If the party is strong, add 2 stirges.
- If the party is very strong, add 6 stirges.



Part 4: The Old Halls

Area 5: The Upper Aqueduct

Rushing water can again be heard as you ascend into a dimly lit cavern that opens up to reveal an aqueduct directing the underground river. A short stone bridge crosses the waterway allowing access to a stone structure on the far side.

To the west, the cavern overlooks an even larger expanse, where the aqueduct spans the width of a worked chamber that is illuminated by shafts of sunlight. The roaring of falling water can be heard from that direction.

The chamber is 20 foot high and has **dim lighting**. There is a **svirfneblin** (MM 164) guard in Area 6 that watches this chamber at all times. The svirfneblin has advantage on his passive Perception (+5) and regularly scrutinize the area with Wisdom (Perception) checks. If the characters are spotted, the svirfneblin in Area 6 quickly arm themselves and challenge the entry, blocking the door and using the windows for cover (Area 6).

The waterflow here is similarly powerful to Area 2, requiring the same checks to remain upright if crossing. If a creature is swept away there is a 75% chance they are swept into Area 2, and a 25% chance they are swept into the other fork, which eventually deposits them aboveground several miles away.

Anyone attempting to balance on the edge of the aqueduct (to access Area 7 for example) must make a **DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** or fall into or off the span (DMs discretion).

Area 6: Service House

A stone chamber has been constructed here, its arched doorway carved with runes and its fascia rendered in bas-relief of dwarven engineers constructing an aqueduct.

Several windows overlook the surrounding areas. The ceiling of this area is 20-foot high and has **dim lighting**. This was once a service house to the aqueduct, but all contents have long since been removed. Anyone that can read Dwarvish can translate the runes, which read "Aqueduct 23, a testament to the brothers Drallin and Furin Shatterstone".

Currently, 4 **svirfneblin** (MM 164) are camping within the area. They are mercenaries working for the xorn and will challenge intruders. If the characters wish to parlay and succeed in a **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) check**, the svirfneblin will guide them to the xorn. 2 svirfneblin remain to guard the area while 2 svirfneblin escort the characters. The deep gnomes know nothing of Rella's betrayal but they were the ones who stole the stone giant's relic at the Xorn's instruction.

These svirfneblin have light crossbows and 10 bolts each in addition to other equipment listed in their statblock. Within their camp, the deep gnomes have explorer's packs (1 for each of them) and a communal sack of topaz gems worth 200 gp (their payment for service from the xorn, who hates the taste of the amber gems).

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is very weak, remove 2 svirfneblin.
- If the party is weak, remove 1 svirfneblin.
- If the party is strong, add 1 svirfneblin.
- If the party is very strong, add 2 svirfneblin.

Area 7: The Aqueduct

The roar of falling water reverberates around this immense chamber, which is lit by several shafts of light that emanate from skylights in the ceiling a hundred feet above. Cracked and worn bas-reliefs carved on the walls are set with hundreds of crystals, reflecting and sparkling in the illumination.

A massive stone aqueduct spans the hall from west to east at a height of twenty foot, carrying an underground river across the expanse. In the center of the span, a spur cuts to the south, creating an impressive waterfall into a deep chasm, the spray creating rainbows in the reflected radiance. A slick stone bridge crosses the chasm to the west, a second to the east long ago collapsed.

Deeper into the cavern, behind the stone waterway, are the remnants of two enormous statures, their features worn and broken.

The ceiling of the cavern is 100 foot high, reaching the surface and allowing sunlight to penetrate in shafts, bathing the area in bright light. The aqueduct is 20 foot high from the cavern floor, and supported every 10 feet by a thick stone pillar.

Crossing the stone bridge is safe unless a creature is taking the Dash action, in which case a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw** must be made. Failure indicates the creature has fallen into the chasm. The DM may choose to apply falling damage 14 (4d6 bludgeoning damage) or allow characters to dive – requiring a successful **DC 10 Dexterity check** - for reduced or no damage.

The chasm drops away 40 foot to the surface of an underground river, which is wide and reasonably calm, requiring a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check** to remain afloat and swim. The river eventually surfaces at the same place as the spur from Area 5.

Area 8: The Brothers

Two stone plinths rise from the floor here, supporting the shattered remains of a pair of immense statues. Each plinth has a corroded copper plaque engraved with dwarvish runes. The statue to the east is almost complete, standing around fifteen foot high, and depicting a stout dwarf holding a staff or hafted weapon in one hand and a scroll in the other. The head is missing, and the top of the shaft has been broken off.
The western statue has fared less well, with only legs and lower body intact.

The plaques are written in dwarvish script. The eastern, intact statue plaque reads "Drallin Shatterstone, The Visionary" while the western reads "Furin Shatterstone, The Artisan".

Area 9: Xorn Nest

Towards the north, the massive chamber has seen a catastrophic collapse at some point, tonnes of earth and stone ending the hall abruptly. In one corner, a mound of stone debris has been piled into a hollowed nest.

This is the current lair of the **xorn** (MM 304), Xerizaxgrrengrr ('Zeri') by name. It is a shrewd, aggressive bully of a creature, unafraid to brazenly discuss its blackmail and secure in its ability to escape via its earth glide power if needs be. If confronted with its crimes it laughs, saying it was given permission by the dwarf lord to take the malachite statue and the dwarf lady to take the Hearthstone (it can't be more specific as the dwarves all look the same to it, and it could barely make out the gender difference as it is).

Demands to return either are met by scorn, though it might be open to trade. The one thing it loves more than malachite is emeralds and would trade both stones for a handful (such as the reward promised by Grindelgar) if the characters think to bargain.

The xorn will fight for its treasure but will retreat if reduced to half of its hit points or less. If forced to retreat, it will for now, though it might follow the characters and plot its revenge in the future (DMs discretion as this falls outside of the scope of the adventure).

Within the nest, the characters can find the Hearthstone (a 3-foot granite carving of an anvil with the Brawnanvil clan arms chiseled into it) and a slightly nibbled, but mostly intact malachite statue of Stronmas. There are also the heads of both dwarven statues and a *silver raven figurine of wondrous power* (DMG 169).



Part 5: The Ambush

As the characters attempt to leave, Rella and Nevrin spring their trap. They will face the characters across the chasm, blocking the intact bridge. If being run for an Strong or Very Strong party, they also bring a number of trusted warriors to snipe from Area 5 (any living svirfneblin stay out of the 'dwarven affair').

> As you cross back toward the chasm, two figures emerge from one of the tunnels and block the bridge. The first is Rella, eldest daughter of the clan chief, dressed in battle armor and carrying a greatsword. The second is Nevrin the priest of Moradin, brandishing a war maul.
> Rella shakes her head and speaks. "It's a shame it's come to this, but I can't have you returning and spoiling my plans. My fool father is a coward, and the Giants have lived too close for too long. It's an insult to our ancestors that we haven't destroyed them. I'll see to that. Sadly, neither you nor father will be around to see it!" Rella isn't interested in negotiation. She can't be sure of the characters knowledge of her involvement, or their intentions, and she can't trust them, so combat is inevitable.

Rella has the statistics of a **knight** (MM 347), while Nevrin has the statistics of a **priest** (MM 348). There are 2 dwarven **thugs** (MM 350) stationed at Area 5 that attack with crossbows.

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is very weak, remove 2 thugs.
- If the party is weak, remove 1 thug.
- If the party is strong, add 1.
- If the party is very strong, add 2 thugs and Rella has the statistics of a **champion** (VGTM 212), while Nevrin has the statistics of a **war priest** (VGTM 218).

Concluding the Adventure

It is likely that the characters are forced to slay the implacable Rella. While Brelden is saddened to hear of his daughter's betrayal, he is not surprised. In truth, she was not as subtle as she believed. He had begun to realize a pattern to her advice and the attention and attitude of Nevrin. The characters story fits his suspicions, and while he cannot condone their slaying of his daughter, he cannot fault them for defending themselves.

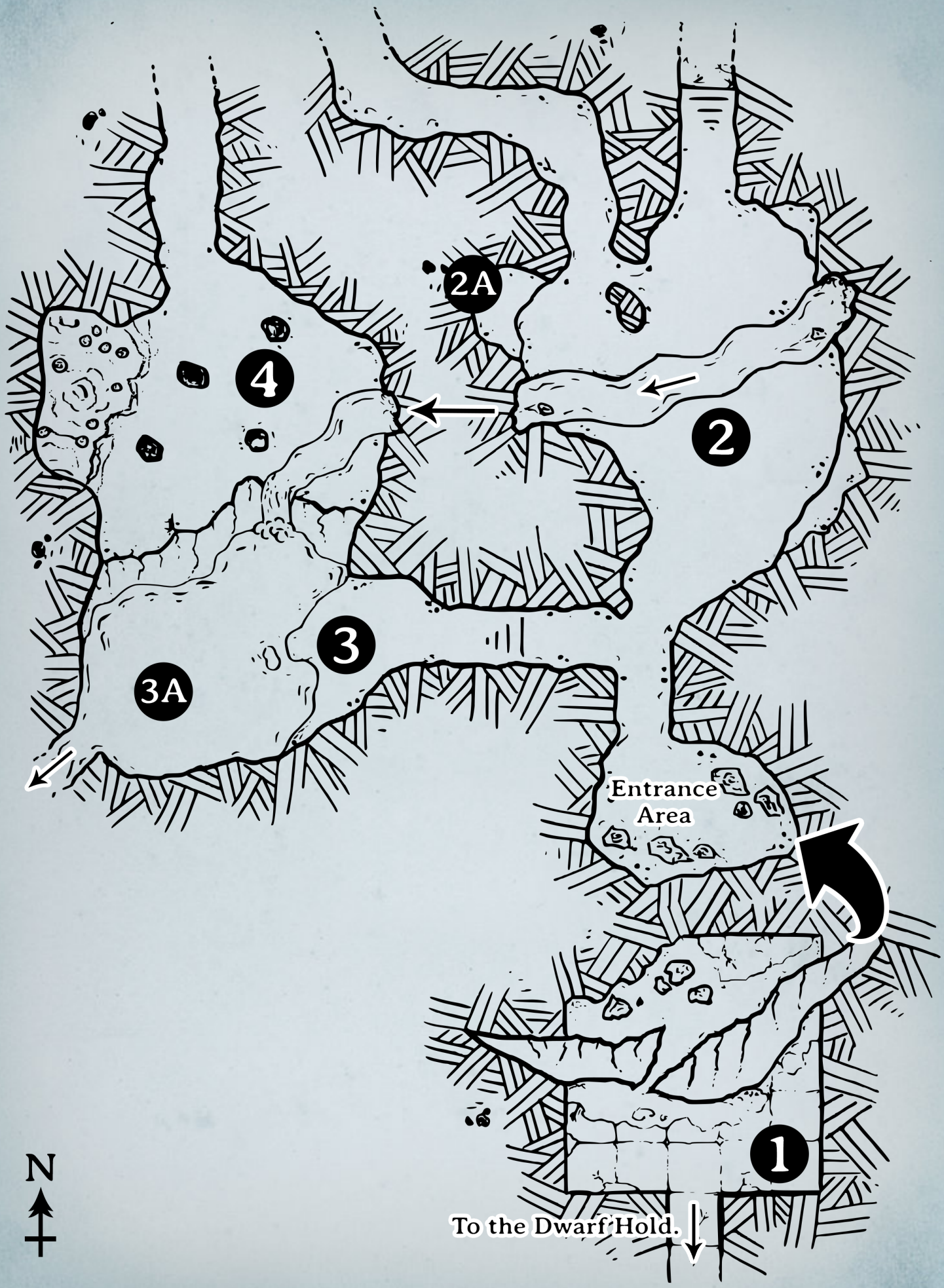
If by their actions they manage to capture Rella she confessed her treachery and loudly denounces her father. She will be imprisoned to await trial.

The return of the Hearthstone mitigates some of the ill feelings, as does any news of the slaying or routing of the xorn and its minions. The return of the Statue of Stronmas will alleviate potential war with the giants, and so he is grudgingly thankful. If the characters had to trade their emerald reward for the statue he replaces it in gold. Regardless, the characters are asked to leave the hold soon after, as their presence is an unwanted one by a grieving family.

Grindlegar is more appreciative of the characters efforts. He considers them friends and offers them the hospitality and sanctuary of the Giant Hold any time they are in the region. It is a hard and unyielding sort of place, unsuited and uncomfortable to softer humanoids, but it's the thought that counts. If they were required to give up their emerald reward (even if they received payment from Brelden), he offers them instead a skin of fine giant wine, which is exquisite to drink and may be sold for up to 200 gp to a tavern, inn or similar beverage trader.

Experience

In addition to accumulated combat XP, the characters should each receive 500 XP for returning both stones, regardless of the method used to do so.


2A
4
2
3
3A
Entrance
Area
1
To the Dwarf Hold.
N


To the Stone Giants
N
Statue
Statue
9
8
7
6
5
20 ft.



The Barovian Book Of The Dead

Claustrophobic terror awaits as the dead rise from the earth, trapping the adventurers in the Last Standing Chapel!

By Andrew Dempz

This dungeon is designed for 3-7 8th to 10th level characters and is optimized for five characters with an average party level (APL) of 9.

Adventure Background

Count Strahd von Zarovich, vampire and wizard, is confined to the demiplane of Barovia (as detailed in *Curse of Strahd*) and seeks to sow fear and death in the land of the living until such time as he can himself return. As one of his efforts to this end, he arranged the creation of the *Barovian Book of the Dead* and sent it back to the Material Plane with some Vistani, a wandering people who can freely travel to and from Barovia. He dispatched the book with instructions to place it somewhere that it could eventually be found and used. The book consumes the life energy of anyone who touches it, and then uses that energy to raise the dead, who are set free to spread terror among the living.

The book came to rest in the North in the antechamber of a crypt below a lonely chapel. The chapel is the last standing building of a monastery community which came to ruin when it was the site of a battle between marauding giants and an assembled force of the local free peoples. Since that time it has been avoided by the superstitious locals and has fallen into disuse and neglect. Its only visitors in decades have been travelers seeking emergency shelter from the wilderness. The book was left there by Strahd's Vistani servants in hopes of both corrupting a once-holy site and awakening the battle dead whose bodies sank into the soft earth long ago.

> **DM Note**
>
> If Strahd does not have a place in your campaign, any other patron of the undead can be substituted by changing the title of the Book and the drawings in the guest book. For example, in many settings Orcus can be used instead of Strahd.

Adventure Summary

The adventure begins with the characters meeting **Iannar June** (Appendix A), a halfling whose trade is finding and selling rare books and arcana. Iannar suggests traveling together to the chapel to search for anything worth retrieving.

Shortly after arriving at the chapel, Iannar ventures into the lower level and falls victim to the book's curse. The battlefield's dead rise and try to gain access to the book, assaulting the chapel in waves and eventually forcing the characters underground. The dead stop rising after the physical connection is broken between Iannar's spent body and the book.

Upon returning to the upper level, the characters find the ancient enmity between the giants and the Northerners has persisted, and they have to reckon with the risen giant skeletons.

Adventure Hook

Somewhere along their travels the adventurers meet the halfling Iannar June. Iannar introduces himself and invites the adventurers to travel with him. Iannar is generally friendly and optimistic and believes that he keeps himself on the safe side of adventuring by exercising a sensible degree of caution. He only offers vague explanations for how he heard of the Last Standing Chapel, what he hopes to find there, and who he intends to sell it to. This is both a matter of trade secrecy and a slight sense of foreboding. He hasn't had a good sale in some time and, while he doesn't want to let on specifically, he'd like the adventurers' company. He has a wealthy customer in Waterdeep with particular arcane interests, and he received a tip in a tavern from some fellow travelers that there might be something in the chapel that could fit the bill. However, he prefers to research his objectives more thoroughly and this is pushing the limits of his comfort zone.

If the adventurers choose not to accompany him, he sets out alone. Unless they change their course entirely, the adventurers pass by the chapel as the necromantic magic begins to raise the dead from the earth. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters first encounter Iannar:

"The name's Iannar, Iannar June, explorer, excavator, and all-around arcane antiquities trafficker. Folks who want certain things found find me and then I find them, the things I mean, which I then bring back to the folks who wanted them, and I make a tidy living from it. Gets me invited to some splendid receptions as well, one of the perks of the profession. I don't get into the whole 'fighting monsters to take their treasures' act. I'm not cut out for it. There are plenty of things worth having just lying about, lost or nearly forgotten.It just takes a little research and a bit of luck to find them. I have plenty of luck, s'long as I don't push it too far, you know?

"We happen to be within a day's travel of a site I wanted to explore. Got a tip there might be something worth finding at the Last Standing Chapel. It's a chapel, of course, on the grounds of an old battle site. It was part of a monastery, but the other buildings all got smashed right down to their foundations. The locals have avoided it for ages, claim it's full of bad luck. But I figure that means it could be my good fortune, because it's likely to still have whatever it had way back then. Either way, it should be a dry night's sleep.I'd prefer a roof over my head when those black clouds catch up with us, you know? Seeing as how we seem to be going in the same direction, why don't we travel together, at least 'til then? Good company is as rare as a decent road in these parts."

Iannar June

An archaeologist and treasure hunter, Iannar specializes in researching and locating objects of arcane and historical significance. He is motivated by an academic appreciation for antiquities and the coin they can bring when delivered to the right hands (usually spent on warm food and comfortable lodgings) and prefers to avoid the limelight.

Iannar's Traits

- ***Ideal.*** "This belongs in a museum, when it can be studied and appreciated. Or at least with the right person."
- ***Bond.*** "I am fortunate to have found and held so many wondrous items, and to have had a warm bed waiting on my return."
- ***Flaw.*** "Ooh, now what is that?"

The Barovian Book Of The Dead

Part 1: The Last Standing Chapel

Lonely Ruin. The Last Standing Chapel was originally part of a larger monastery. Decades ago, a local militia force fought and killed some giants there who had been marauding throughout the region. All of the other buildings were destroyed during the fighting but the chapel remained unscathed. The locals died by the dozens in the battle, and the monastery grounds were abandoned. Nature has struggled to reclaim the land, and has only been somewhat successful. Bits of stone and brick, sun bleached bones, and battered weapons and armor protrude from the soft earth. The stone chapel has weathered the ages relatively well. It is structurally intact although thick, dry vines cover much of its exterior. The grounds are quiet except for the light, cold wind and the occasional raven.

Arrival. The adventurers and Iannar arrive late in the day. It is already getting dark as the storm clouds catch up to them, and a light, cold rain begins to fall. They have no trouble getting the heavy front doors open, and they can bar them shut if they like. There are window openings in the stone walls every few feet on both of the long sides. They are uniformly covered with the dry vines, but some enough light can still get through to provide dim light conditions inside the chapel until the sun sets. The vines covering each window opening can be cleared. Each vine has AC 15, 10 HP, and is resistant to bludgeoning and piercing damage (if you prefer simplicity, the vines blocking one window can simply be cleared in a round or two by a character or skeleton). There are empty sconces on the walls that can hold torches. The chapel is dry and moderately dusty.

The Interior. Both sides of the room have rows of stone benches for worshippers. Some have been overturned and broken, but most are intact and in place. They can be set upright against the window openings or moved 5 feet per turn with a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check**. While a bench can be moved by one character, you can make it clear that they look heavy enough to be a two person job. The check is made with advantage if another character provides help.

The north end of the chapel has a 1 foot high altar. There are the remnants of a campfire and no other loose furnishings. The altar walls had a bas-relief triptych of religious scenes, but they have been defaced. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation or Religion) check** reveals that the chapel was dedicated to Lathander, god of dawn and renewal. Succeeding on the check by 5 or more reveals that the bas-relief was damaged intentionally, to dispel whatever blessings it originally had.

The Guestbook. The only other loose furnishings in the room are a guest book, quill, and ink pot that sit on a shelf in the northwest corner. The first twenty pages or so of the book have normal entries from travelers and pilgrims. The pages after that only have drawings of a crest featuring a raven on a shield and banner, the crest of Strahd. The drawings are differentiated from one another by the handwriting and artistic skill of whoever drew them. Some show signs of beginning as log entries before turning into drawings of the crest, as if done under magical compulsion. A character who tries to write in the book must succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma saving throw** or find themselves compelled to draw the crest instead.

Secret Entrance. The west panel of the triptych has a secret mechanism. When a small lever is pulled the northernmost floor tiles will retract, revealing a staircase. The stairs lead down to the crypt. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals the small lever. This check can be made with advantage if done while inspecting the bas-relief.

If the characters find the secret door, Iannar excitedly squeezes through the door and races down the stairs to be the first to investigate. If they do not come across the door, Iannar finds the door while they are distracted with another task. He makes a **Dexterity (Stealth) check** contested by the adventurers' **passive Wisdom (Perception)** scores to avoid being noticed. If he escapes notice entirely, the characters are alerted to his absence when they hear an anguished scream from the crypt below.

Part 2: The Book and the Crypt

The Underbelly. The crypt is roughly tunneled out of the bedrock below the chapel. Dust and loose stone chips cover the floor. The main chamber is 30 foot long and 15 foot wide. Six statues line the side walls. All have been damaged and defaced in some way. There is a stone shelf at the south end of the chamber that was originally used to hold the bodies of deceased monks before they were interred. A few empty urns and loose embalming tools are scattered on the shelf and the floor near it. The *Barovian Book of the Dead* (Appendix A) sits at the edge of the shelf.

The Catacombs. The tunnels to the sides of the main chamber lead to the catacombs in which the deceased monks were interred. Their bodies were embalmed and wrapped in linens marked with sacred script. The markings on four of the bodies were defiled and changed to necromantic ones. This can be discerned on a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana, Investigation, or Religion) check**.

Iannar's Folly. Iannar does whatever he can to get to the book and open it before the characters can. Whoever opens it first unleashes its curse. Anyone who touches it must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw** or become **Paralyzed** (PHB 291) while taking 1d4 necrotic damage at the start of each of their turns until separated from the book. As long as it is conscious, the creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect and breaking free from contact with the book on a success.

Rise of the Skeletons. Once per day when the book delivers its necrotic damage, all the dead within a 300-foot radius of the book are reanimated and cursed with undeath. If Iannar got into the crypt and opened the book without the characters noticing his absence, they hear him scream as the book begins dealing its damage. Two rounds later, the first of 29 **skeletons** (MM 272) from the battlefield reach the chapel and begin attacking the vines over the window openings and trying to force the door open to gain access to the book. Any skeletons that gain access to the chapel attempt to kill any living beings present before proceeding to retrieve the book. Two window openings are attacked in the first round with an additional opening attacked by another skeleton every other round after that. If a skeleton attacking a window opening is killed, it can replaced as part of a subsequent attack on the window openings.

Once a window opening has been cleared of vines, one skeleton can enter the chapel through it per round by using 5 feet of its movement to climb in. The skeletons cannot get past window openings that were blocked by stone benches or through the front door if it was barred or blocked by benches. The skeletons stop trying to enter the chapel once the book is no longer in contact with a living being (whether they are separated from it or killed by it).

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is very weak, remove 11 skeletons.
- If the party is weak, remove 6 skeletons.
- If the party is strong, add 5 skeletons.
- If the party is very strong, add 11 skeletons.

Rise of the Mummies. In the lower level of the chapel, the four monks with defiled wrappings rise as **mummies** (MM 227). The remainder are protected from the curse by the blessings of Lathander written on their wrappings. The mummies' goal is to retrieve the book and leave the chapel. If the characters are in the lower level, the mummies attack them before going after the book. The mummies in the northeast tombs smash through the thin wall between the tombs and the bottom of the stairs and attack any characters trying to escape.

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is very weak, remove 2 mummies, add 4 **zombies** (MM 316)
- If the party is weak, remove 1 mummy.
- If the party is strong, add 4 zombies.
- If the party is very strong, add 1 mummy.

Part 3: Against the Giants' Skeletons

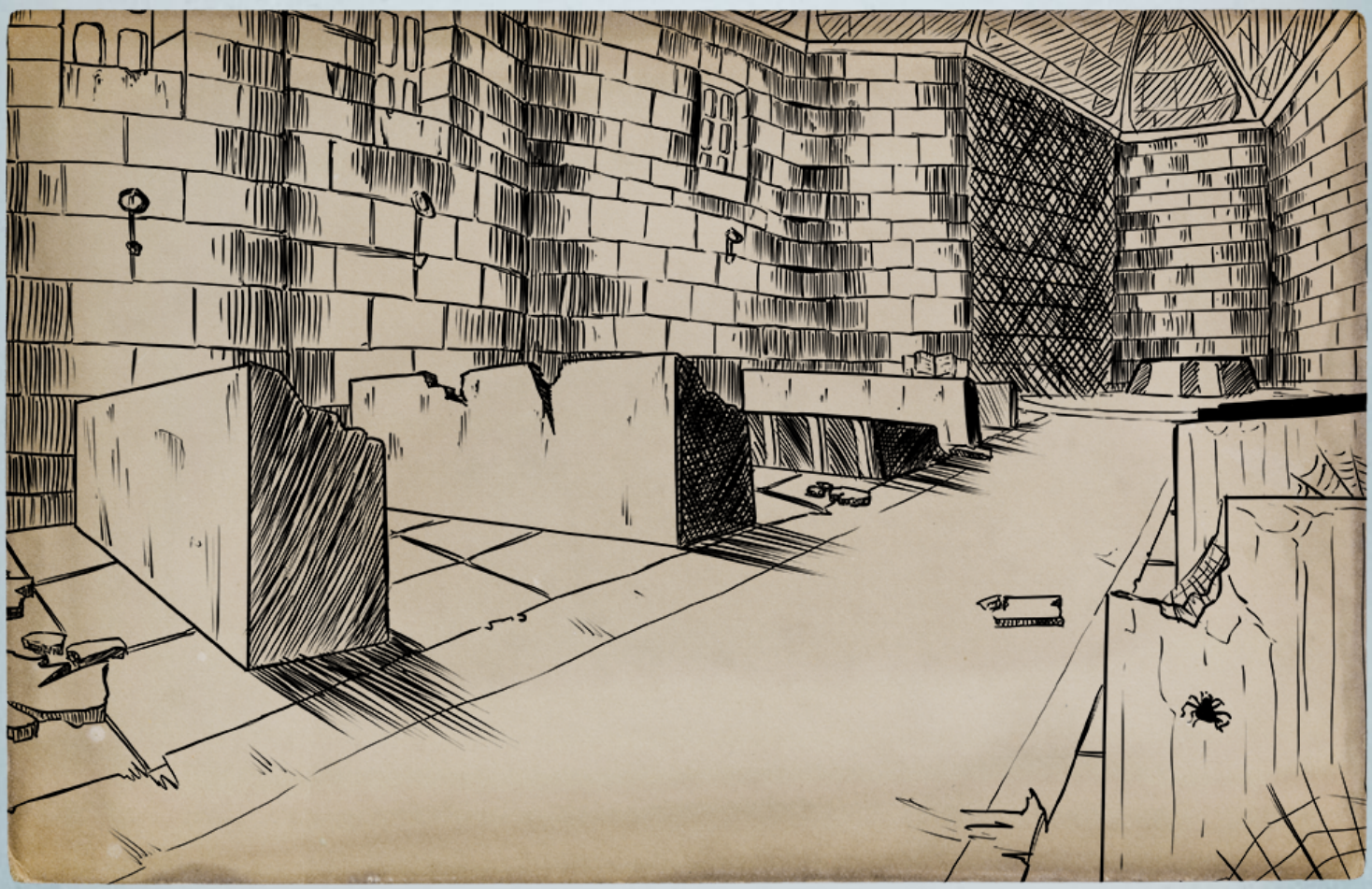
The last undead to rise outside the chapel are two **giant skeletons** (Appendix A). When the characters exit the chapel, they see the giants finishing pulling themselves from the earth before they turn on their ancient enemies, the ordinary skeletons. After they cleave through what skeletons remain outside, they attack the characters. If the characters successfully barricaded themselves inside the chapel, the giant skeletons destroy the ordinary skeletons and then attack the chapel to get to the book. They attack any living beings present before taking the book.

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is very weak or weak, remove 1 giant skeleton, add 1 **minotaur skeleton** (MM 273).
- If the party is strong, remove 1 giant skeleton, add 5 minotaur skeletons.
- If the party is very strong, add 1 minotaur skeleton.

Unlike the humanoid skeletons, the giant skeletons can attack the chapel door and roof to gain access to the interior. The door and roof each have AC 17 and 27 hit points. The hit points for the door are doubled if it was barricaded with stone benches. At your discretion, attacks on the roof can prompt the characters to make **DC 12 Dexterity saving throws** to avoid 1d6 bludgeoning damage from falling debris, depending on where the characters are and what portion of the roof is being attacked.

The giants do not rise and attack if the characters are still in the lower level. If the giants have risen and the characters retreat to the lower level of the chapel, the giant skeletons attack the floor of the chapel to get to the book after breaking through the roof or the door. The floor has AC 17 and 34 hit points. Any character standing under the section being attacked has to make a **DC 12 Dexterity saving throw** or take 1d6 bludgeoning damage from falling debris.



Concluding the Adventure

The Fate of the Book. If the characters defeat all the undead, they have to decide what to do with the book. It can be handled as long as a significant barrier is kept between it and bare flesh. What counts as a significant barrier is up to you. If they leave the book behind, it could resurface as a formidable tool in the hands of a villain someday. At your discretion, it can be destroyed with appropriate means, such as burning it in a temple's sacred flame or drowning it in a holy pool.

Relentless Giants. If the characters escape the chapel and make a run for it without destroying the giant skeletons, the giant skeletons give chase, retrieve the book if possible, and proceed to roam the countryside, laying waste to any communities of the living that they can find.

Under Strahd's Spell. As for Iannar, it is entirely possible that he won't survive the encounter with the book and the undead. If he isn't paralyzed by the book, he does his best to escape or hide during the fighting. If questioned afterwards, he explains that he was overcome by a compulsion to open the book. His motivations for seeking it out may provide further plot threads for the characters to follow, such as investigating his customer in Waterdeep or the travelers who first told him about the chapel.

Appendix A: Items

Barovian Book of The Dead

Wondrous item, very rare

A repository of malice and resentment, the *Barovian Book of the Dead* conveys Strahd von Zarovich's enmity towards the world of the living. Within its pages are instructions for the rituals for creating most of the known forms of undead. However, these prescriptions are of a secondary importance, as the book will create undead by drawing on the life energy of anyone unlucky enough to come into contact with it. Any creature which touches the book must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw** or become **Paralyzed** (PHB 291). In addition, a paralyzed creature takes 1d4 necrotic damage at the start of each of their turns until separated from the book. As long as it is conscious, the creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect and breaking free from contact with the book on a success.

Once per day when the book delivers its necrotic damage, all the dead within a 300-foot radius are reanimated and cursed with undeath. The form they take depends on the state of their corpses. The book regains this ability daily at dawn.



Appendix B: Monsters & NPCs

Iannar June

Small humanoid (halfling), neutral good

Armor Class 13 (padded)
Hit Points 16 (3d8+3)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +3, Int +4
Skills History +6, Investigation +6, Perception +2, Sleight of Hand +3, Survival +2, Stealth +3
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Halfling
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Brave. Iannar has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Halfling Nimbleness. Iannar can move through the space of any creature that is of a size larger than his.

Lucky. When Iannar rolls a 1 on an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, he can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

Naturally Stealthy. Iannar can attempt to hide even when he is obscured by a creature that is at least one size larger than him.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage. [Iannar carries three daggers.]

Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) slashing damage.

Giant Skeleton

Huge undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 115 (10d12 + 50)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	4 (-3)	6 (-2)	6 (-2)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages understands Giant but can't speak
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Evasion. If the giant skeleton is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

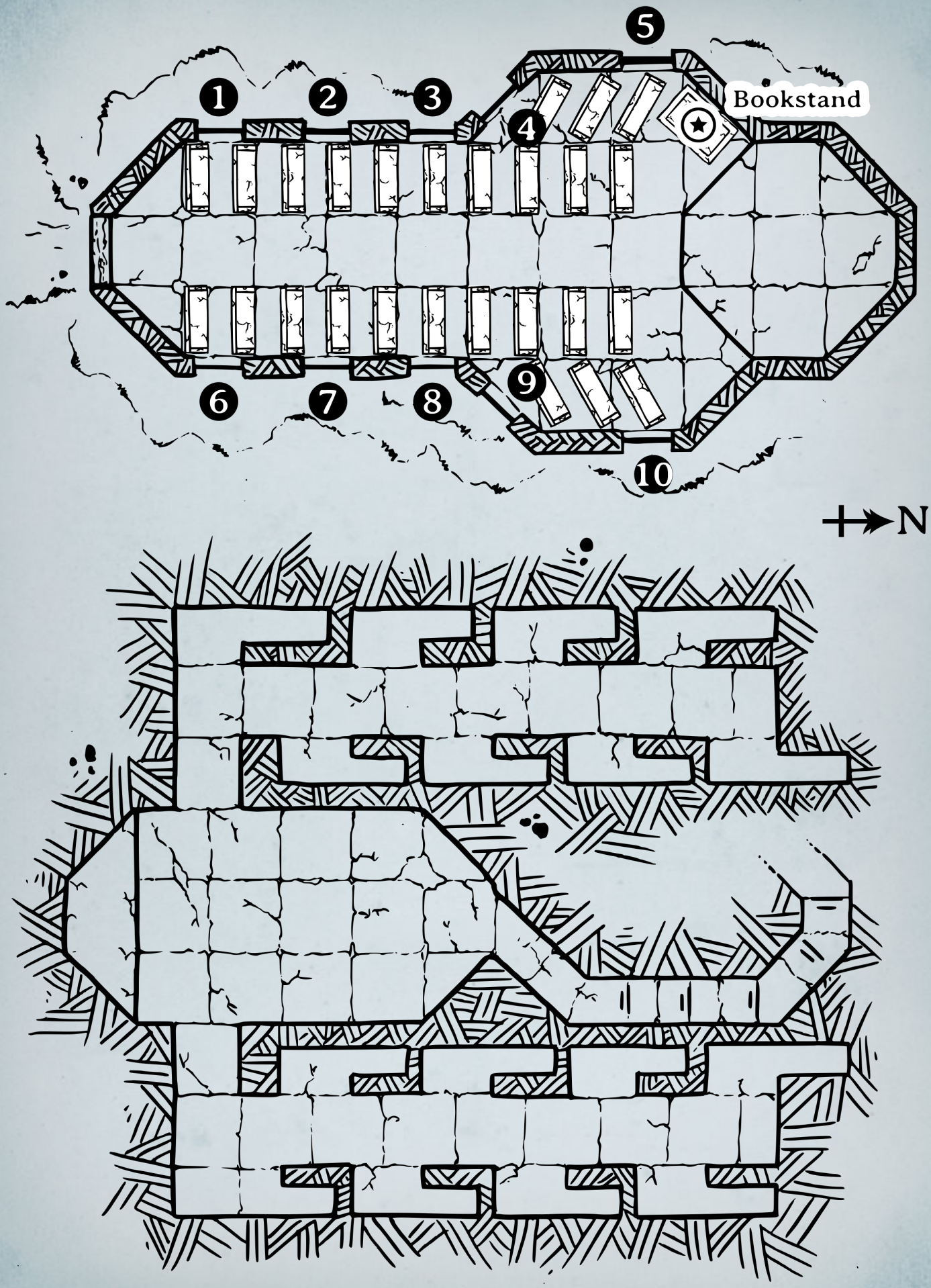
Magic Resistance. The giant skeleton has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Turn Immunity. The giant skeleton is immune to effects that turn undead.

Actions

Multiattack. The giant skeleton makes three scimitar attacks.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6+5) slashing damage.


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The Great Worm Caverns

The heroes uncover the secrets of an Uthgardt tribe while contending with dark magic and draconic forces in this action-packed dungeon crawl.

By Christopher Walz

This adventure is designed for 5 9th to 11th level characters and is optimized for five characters with an average party level (APL) of 10. Each encounter provides options for weaker or stronger parties.

The Great Worm caverns are presented in *Storm King's Thunder*, page 88. This version of the dungeon, however, is much larger and meant to be a prominent setting for adventures in the North. If the Great Worm tribe interests you, then consider using this expanded version to flesh out your campaign.

If you would like more information on the Uthgardt culture, we recommend the information in *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide* as well as *Storm King's Thunder*, page 65. The tribe's assault on the Eye of the All-Father is detailed in *Storm King's Thunder*, page 124.

Introduction

The Great Worm tribe is one of the last Uthgardt barbarian tribes to still claim territory in the North. They were founded, like all Uthgardt tribes, when their founder-turned-god Uthgar tamed the northern regions of the Sword Coast.

At that time, a now-extinct species of arctic couatl protected the prehistoric humanoids of the land. The couatl were impressed by Uthgar's bravery and dedication to his people. The serpentine celestials gifted the people who would become the Great Worm clan a portion of their territory. The Great Worm Caverns were the ancestral burial mound and place of worship for the tribe.

Since then, the tribe has fallen from grace and become nearly extinct. While some humans in Luskan and Icewind Dale might claim heritage from the tribe, they have long since abandoned their ancestral ways.

The current chieftain of the Great Worm tribe is called **Wormblod**. He is a vile man, far from the shining image of Uthgar. He hoards riches from his people and even allied with white dragons - the ancestral enemy of the couatl. The tribespeople who follow Wormblod are prevented from crossing into the afterlife and many still roam the Caverns, bound forever between life and death.

Wormblod has taken some of his most loyal followers, as well as a white dragon wyrmling, to assault the Eye of the All-Father. The Great Worm Caverns have been left abandoned except for the undead animated by Wormblod's shamans -- and a great, sleeping beast far below.

Adventure Hooks

On the Run

The characters are fleeing from orcs, giants, or some other threat and seek refuge in a large cavern. Their pursuers do not dare cross into the cave.

Ancestral Heritage

The characters are hired by Arn Gunnerson, a fur merchant from Luskan, to delve into the caverns. The man claims to be descended from the Great Worm tribe and will pay handsomely for pieces of his heritage.

Draconic Allies

If the characters are pursuing draconic allies, such as Klauth and the Cult of the Dragon, they are asked to prove themselves by slaying the white dragon, Winterhorn, who lairs in the Caverns. Older chromatic dragons believe Winterhorn to be a growing nuisance in the North who should be dealt with sooner rather than later.

Contact with the Tribe

If the characters have already made contact with the Great Worm tribe or discovered Wormblod's assault on the Eye of the All-Father, they may want to investigate the Caverns on their own.

Part 1: The Upper Caverns

These caves served as the burial grounds and worship center for the Great Worm tribe. They snake through the Spine of the World just above the first layers of the Underdark.

Sights, Sounds, and Smells. The cavern walls are carved with prehistoric images of humans hunting large game, such as mammoths and giant elk. Characters who succeed on a **DC 15 Intelligence (History or Religion) check** notice a theme in the iconography: a winged serpent looking on from the heavens. In addition, they identify the serpent as a couatl. Typically, couatl are associated with the jungles of Chult and Maztica.

There is a constant dull roar of rushing water from the river below. In quiet moments, characters with a **passive Perception of 13 or higher** hear fading whispers in Bothii, the Uthgardtian language. If they speak Bothii or use magic to understand it, the words recount the histories of the tribe.

The dungeon smells crisp and clean, like the mountainside after a fresh snowfall.

Doors and Walls. The dungeon is built from naturally occurring caves and utilizes regular doors. If there are doors in a room, they are detailed in the room description.

The walls are all thick, natural stonework. Unless otherwise noted, the walls are 60 foot tall.

Lighting. The entire dungeon is completely dark, creating a **heavily obscured area**. There are unlit torch sconces and braziers throughout the dungeon.

Extreme Cold. The Caverns are unnaturally cold. Creatures inside the dungeon must succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution saving throw** every hour they spend in the dungeon or gain one level of exhaustion. The saving throw DC increases by 1 for every hour spent in the Caverns, to a maximum DC 15. Resistance or immunity to cold damage prevents this effect. Cold weather gear, such as thick cloaks, will not protect creatures from this supernaturally cold environment. This effect ends if Winterhorn is slain or leaves the dungeon for 24 hours.

This effect is a critical part of the dungeon - do not forget it! Emphasize how cold the Caverns are every chance you get. The cold should feel as deadly as a monster or sinister trap.

Returning to the Caverns. If the characters retreat to seek healing or to better equip themselves, a band of Great Worm tribes people return and reinforce the Caverns. The band is made up of 3 **berserkers** (MM 344), 2 **uthgardt shamans** (SKT 243), 8 **tribal warriors** (MM 350) and 2 **winter wolves** (MM 340). You can replace the uthgardt shamans with **druids** (MM 346) if you are not using *Storm King's Thunder*.

The raiding party spreads out and patrols areas 3 through 8 and fights to the death defending the Caverns. The undead do not attack them and they are immune to the extreme cold.

Undead Patrols. 3 **barrow wights** (Appendix A) and 4 **frozen echoes** (Appendix A) patrol Areas 2 through 8 (they cannot pass the wall of ice into Area 6, however) at all times. Each time the characters enter an unexplored area, roll a d4. On a roll of 1 the patrol is in this area.

If the characters are using Stealth and are not carrying easily spotted light sources, they may be able to catch the patrol by surprise. The undead guardians are smart enough to know that animals and most humanoids in the area fear entering the Caverns. If the characters send an animal companion or familiar to scout ahead and it is discovered, the patrol attacks it and begins searching for intruders.

If the characters are particularly loud while exploring the dungeon, the patrol sets up an ambush for them.

Tactics. The barrow wights use their *reckless* trait unless they are below 20 hit points. They engage heavily armored characters first and gang up on a single character. The wights use their *life drain* attack after landing a few good blows with their weapons, hoping to seal the character's fate as a frozen echo.

The frozen echoes use their flying speed and *incorporeal movement* trait to close in on lightly armored characters like wizards.

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is very weak or weak, remove 1 barrow wight.
- If the party is strong or very strong, add 1 barrow wight.

When the characters are ready to enter the dungeon, read or paraphrase this aloud to set the scene:

> Freezing rain beats down from the towering Spine of the World, transforming your hair into glittering knives. A low fog clings to the cavern's massive mouth, which seems to exhale unnaturally frigid air.

Area 1: The Living Door

The cave entrance leads to a huge set of stone stairs, descending 200 feet below ground. As the characters reach the bottom, read or paraphrase this aloud.

> The stairs descend 200 feet into a cavern dominated by an enormous set of rowan doors. The doors sprout white buds and are carved with the image of entwined winged serpents. Snow is piled in great drifts along the chamber's perimeter.

The doors were crafted by the first members of the Great Worm tribe using wood from the magical rowan tree in Area 6. The tribe's shamans used to speak a command word to open the door, but it has been lost to time. The door requires a DC 12 Strength check to open or close. If the characters successfully sneak into this area, opening the door creates enough noise to alert the wights and zombie polar bear.

Characters who succeed on a **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check** identify the serpents as couatls, which are not found this far north.

Creatures. 3 **barrow wights** and 1 **zombie polar bear** (Appendix A) lie buried in the packed snow and ice. Characters with a **passive Perception of 13 or higher** notice the creatures and are not surprised when they attack.

Tactics. The wights stay at range and throw their handaxes at lightly armored characters. Each wight has 4 handaxes. If they are engaged in melee combat, they use their *reckless* trait and gang up on a single foe.

The zombie polar bear rushes into combat and attacks the nearest character. It should position itself in such a way that moving past it toward the wights causes opportunity attacks. If a character deals radiant damage to the zombie polar bear, it begins to focus that character. Remember to use the zombie's *undead fortitude* trait!

Both the wights and polar bear fight to the death. They will pursue characters 200 feet up the stairs or deeper into the Caverns. They cannot leave the Great Worm Caverns.

Rewards. The wights wear golden torcs, rings, and other jewelry worth 150 gp.

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is very weak or weak, remove 1 barrow wight.
- If the party is strong, add 1 barrow wight.
- If the party is very strong, add 1 barrow wight and increase the zombie polar bear's hit points by 20.

Area 2: Ice Bridge

The rowan doors open onto a bridge made of slick ice. As the characters open the doors, read or paraphrase this aloud.

> A blast of howling wind nearly pushes you off your feet. A long bridge made of solid ice reaches perilously across a dark chasm. You hear the sound of rushing water below.

The bridge is 15 foot wide, 60 foot long, and 15 foot tall. The river is 100 feet below the bridge. If a character falls off the bridge, they take 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage from falling. Any character who falls into the river must also make a **DC 12 Constitution saving throw** or gain 1 level of **exhaustion**. Resistance or immunity to cold damage prevents this effect. The rushing waters quickly wash the characters deeper into the cavern, slowing as they enter Area 9 (see Developments, below, for more information).

Crossing the Bridge. Characters without a climb speed must make a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** to move at half speed across the bridge, otherwise they move at one-quarter speed. If the characters use climbing gear, such as pitons and a secured rope, to traverse the bridge, they gain advantage on these skill checks. Characters can move at full speed if they succeed a **DC 18 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**.

Spiritual Assailants. The howling winds in the chasm are the spiritual remnants of Great Worm tribespeople. Every round the characters spend crossing the bridge, choose a target at random. If any of the characters have a background that ties them to the Great Worm tribe, they are not targeted.

Howling winds assault the target. Creatures targeted by the winds must make a **DC 13 Strength saving throw** or be pushed 10 feet in a random direction and knocked prone. To determine the direction, assign a number from 1-8 to each square adjacent to the character. Roll a d8 to determine the direction they are pushed.

Developments. The fast moving river rushes down a slope to Area 9. If a character is reduced to 0 hit points from falling damage, they are safely washed ashore on the western river bank in Area 9. If a character survives the fall, they can fight the current with a successful **DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check**, remaining within 5 feet of where they landed. Climbing up a 100-foot length of rope lowered from the bridge requires a successful **DC 12 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**. The walls of the chasm are too slick with ice to climb without a rope or magical aid.

Area 3: The Frozen Altar

The deadly ice bridge ends in a large chamber cut from the natural stone cavern. As the characters enter, read this aloud.

> In the center of this chamber is a raised dais housing a stone altar cut from the cavern floor. The altar is encased in a pillar of solid ice that radiates a deathly chill. The walls of the cavern are covered in paintings and carvings depicting successful hunts and religious rites.

A Plea for Help. As soon as the characters enter this area, **Korgandr**, the couatl in Area 6 attempts to contact the party. Even in its weakened and imprisoned state, the couatl can sense the true nature of the characters. It knows the alignment and intentions of every character without fail. For example, if a character is only interested in looting the tribe's riches, the couatl knows this.

If most of the characters have self-serving or evil intentions, the couatl does not contact them. If the party is mostly good or neutral, it targets the character with the lowest Wisdom score. If that character fails a **DC 18 Wisdom saving throw**, they fall unconscious and begin communicating with Korgandr in a hazy, poorly defined dreamscape that resembles the Great Worm Caverns. The details of this dream are up to you.

Korgandr quickly says that it does not wish to harm the characters and, in fact, wants to help them if they seek to cleanse the Caverns. It identifies itself as a couatl and tells the character it is imprisoned in area 6. If they are able to reach the chamber, it can provide more assistance. It warns, however, that the evil and hatred in Wormblod's heart has birthed a profane guardian in Korgandr's prison. The couatl does not know the exact nature of the monster.

Korgandr does, however, know about Winterhorn, the white dragon sleeping in the lower level of the caverns, as well as how to bypass the trap in Area 7. It also knows about Area 3a, but keeps this knowledge hidden, wanting to protect the sanctity of Sturm's tomb.

The Altar. The altar rests on a 5-foot-tall dais. The carvings along the altar have been marred with huge claw marks. The altar itself is encased in solid ice 3 foot thick - the work of Winterhorn's dragon breath.

Secret Door. The secret door on the northern wall can be discovered with a **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check**. The door is sealed with an *arcane lock* (PHB 215) spell.

Characters who succeed on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** discover the door opens when two carved stones on the door are turned to create an image of an infinitely entwined winged serpent. The door can also be forced open with a **DC 25 Strength check**. If the *arcane lock* spell is dispelled, the DC decreases by 10.

Developments. Forcing the door open is loud enough to alert the undead patrol.

Area 3a: The First Tomb

This small hidden chamber is the resting place of **Sturm Wyrmheart**, the tribe's first Great Chief. As the characters enter, read this aloud.

> The secret door slides back into the wall to reveal a small tomb. The sarcophagus in the center depicts a lifelike carving of a stout human male gripping a greatsword. Images of winged serpents line the edges of the stone lid.

Trap. Sturm's sarcophagus was set with a trap crafted by an ancient dwarven ally. If a character attempts to open the sarcophagus, the delicately balanced pressure plate beneath triggers the trap. A cave-in occurs in the 5-foot-by-5-foot entry to the tomb, hoping to seal the tomb robbers in until they die from exhaustion. Any character in that area when the trap is triggered must succeed a **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw** or take 33 (6d10) bludgeoning damage and become restrained until the rocks are cleared. A character who succeeds the saving throw can choose whether they jump into or out of the tomb to dodge the falling rocks.

Characters who are not restrained by the rocks can make a **DC 15 group Strength check** to clear the rubble. A group ability check succeeds if half of the party passes. Each Strength check requires 1 hour and can be repeated until successful. Remember to check for exhaustion due to the extreme cold condition each hour.

The trap is revealed on a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check**. Dwarves have advantage on this check due to the complicated stonework involved. The trap can safely disarmed with a **DC 16 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check**. Failure by 5 or more triggers the trap.

Rewards. If the characters open Sturm's sarcophagus, they find his skeletal corpse wearing a *mantle of spell resistance* (DMG 180) and wielding a *giant slayer greatsword* (DMG 172). There is also 250 gp in grave offerings inside the sarcophagus.

The cloak is made from the scales of a slain adult white dragon and lined with winter wolf fur. The greatsword is inscribed with its name, Hearthguard, in Bothii, the Uthgardt language.

Developments. The trap is loud enough to alert the undead patrol. The frozen echoes use their incorporeal movement trait to fly through the rubble and attack.

Area 4: The Cavern of Echoes

The passageway leading to this cavern houses hundreds of crypts carved into the stone walls. The chamber is used by Great Worm tribal shamans to speak with their ancestors. Since Wormblod has been Great Chief, these ancestors have fallen silent. As the characters enter, read this aloud.

> Dozens of sepulchers are carved into the walls. Each houses a fallen Great Worm warrior, buried with their arms and armor. The cavern to the south emits an eerie whisper at the edge of your perception.

Fading Echoes. Characters with a **passive Perception of 18 or higher** can hear faint whispers in Common and Bothii. What these whispers say is up to you. For example, you could foreshadow events that have not yet come to pass or historical events important to your campaign the characters have yet to discover.

Creatures. If the characters disturb the sepulchers, including taking the pearl or battleaxe detailed in the Rewards section, 4 **frozen echoes** (Appendix A) coalesce and attack.

Tactics. The frozen echoes make use of their incorporeal movement trait, fading into the floor or walls to move past heavily armored characters. They focus their attacks on characters who have disturbed the sepulchers, ignoring other characters unless there is no other valid target.

The ghostly undead fight until half of their number are slain, when they Disengage and retreat to Area 7, where they Hide and wait to ambush the characters.

Rewards. If the characters spend 1 hour searching through the sepulchers, they find a black pearl worth 200 gp and an *adamantine battleaxe* (XGTE 79). Whenever the battleaxe is used to hit an object, the hit is a critical hit.

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is very weak or weak, remove 1 frozen echo.
- If the party is strong, add 1 frozen echo.
- If the party is very strong, add 1 frozen echo and increase all frozen echoes' hit points by 15.

Area 5: Ritual Chamber

This area is used by tribal shamans to perform sacred ritual magic. As the characters enter, read this aloud.

> Odd trinkets and arcane talismans are strewn about this chamber. Bags of bones, incense, and tufts of fur have been shoved into small alcoves cut into the walls. A circle of well-used torch poles section off the center of the area.

Characters who succeed a **DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check** determine that a magic circle against fiends spell has been repeatedly cast in this area - a ward against the demonic guardian in Area 6, should it turn hostile. The circle is not active when the characters enter.

Sacred Rites. There are enough material components needed to conduct the Rite of the Flame-Heart, a magical ritual created by the Great Worm tribe that has been lost under Wormblod's leadership. There are only enough components to perform the ritual one time.

Characters who pass a **DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check** are able to recall the requirements of the ritual well enough to perform it. Characters with a background that ties them to the Uthgardt have advantage on this check.

The ritual takes 10 minutes and results in a display of fire taking the shape of couatls as they bless the recipient in sacred flame. The ritual gives one character the following benefits for 24 hours:

- Removes all levels of **exhaustion**.
- ***Damage Resistance.*** cold
- ***Fiery Blood.*** Any creature that hits the character with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 1d6 fire damage.
- ***Restore Hope.*** As an action, the character can restorehit points equal to 2d8 + their Charisma modifier to every creature they choose within 15 feet. Any creature affected by this ability may also remove one ongoing frightened or paralyzed effect. This ability can only be used once.

The Rite of the Flame-Heart

Before their corruption, the Great Worm tribe brought hope and warmth to an otherwise desolate landscape. This shamanistic ritual was used to bless the tribe's champion with the heart of a couatl so that they could lead the tribe into battle against giants, dragons, orcs, and other menaces in the North.

The details of the ritual, including the rare components consumed to complete it, are up to you. Recording the details of this religious rite could be a great milestone for a sage or scholarly acolyte. You could also treat this ritual as a plot hook and send your players on a quest to gather the rare materials.

Rewards. If the characters do not perform the ritual, they can remove 30 gp worth of charcoal, incense, and herbs, such as those needed to cast the *find familiar* spell. Also among the arcane detritus are marked mammoth bones worth 25 gp, which can be used to cast the *augury* spell.

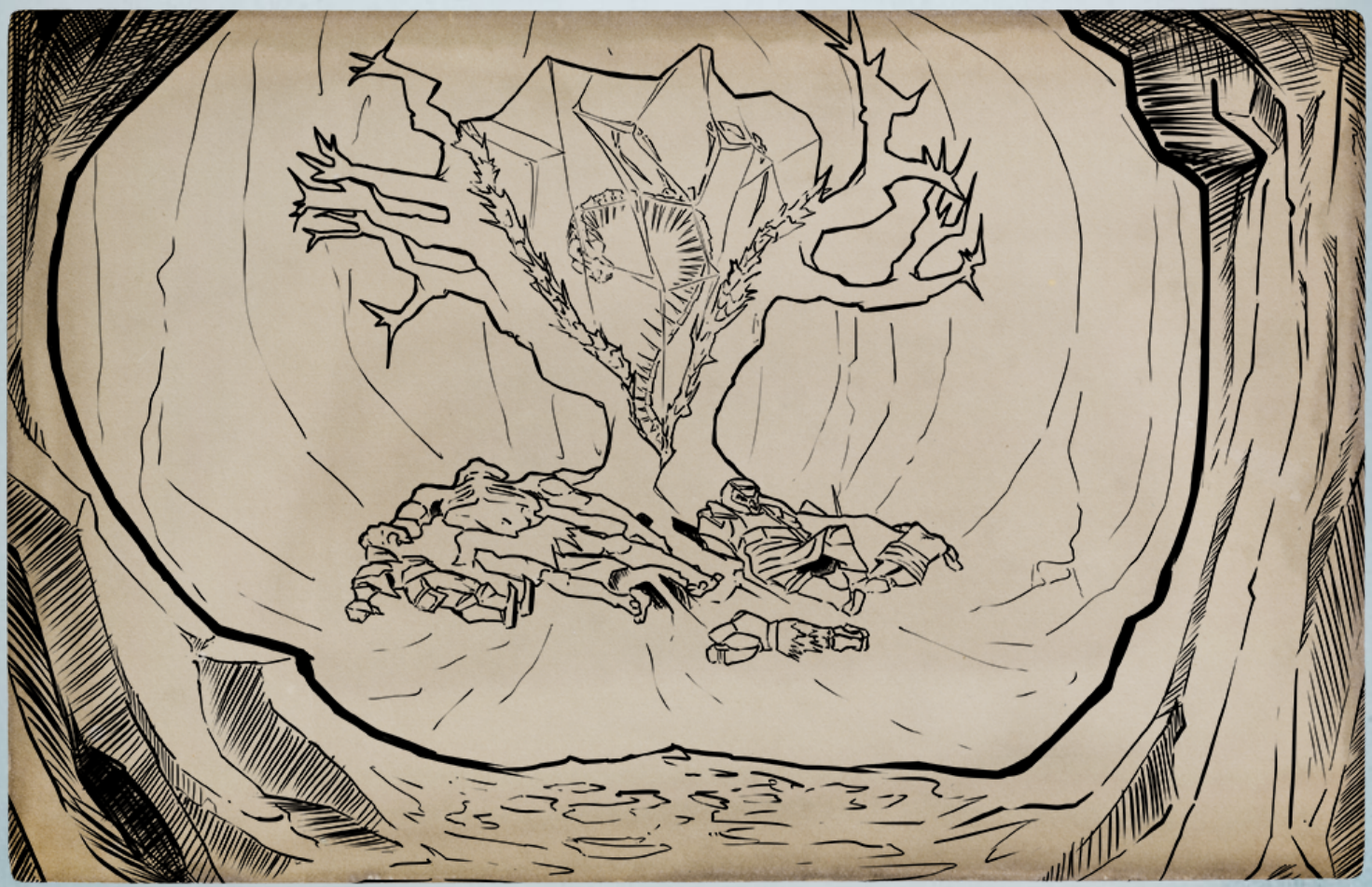
Area 6: The Heart Tree

Before Wormblod had the area sealed off, this cavern was the center of the tribe's religion. As the characters approach the passage, read this aloud.

> This passage is sealed with a dense wall of ice. The wall hungrily pulls heat from your body as you near it.

Ice Wall. The ice wall blocking this passage is 15 foot thick. The wall has AC 15 and 30 hit points per 5-feet section. The wall has vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to acid, cold, necrotic, poison, and psychic damage. Destroying the wall with weapons makes enough noise to alert the undead patrol. When the characters enter the chamber beyond, read this aloud.

> The center of this chamber is dominated by a living rowan tree, its branches bearing small white buds. The trunk of the massive tree has been cloven in two, the wound encased in ice. You can see a serpentine body in the block of ice. Partially devoured corpses litter the ground.



The Heart Tree. This rowan tree is said to be the site where Uthgar first met with the couatls. Not even the celestials understand why the tree exists in the Caverns but take it as a sign of their gods.

After Wormblod became Great Chief, he struck down Korgandr, thought to be the last of the arctic couatl, and carved out a grisly tomb in the tree. The warlord had Winterhorn encase the tomb in ice.

Korgandr's spirit still clings to life and has been able to remain hidden from Wormblod's loyal shamans. The couatl has waited to reveal itself until it sensed an opportunity to strike back at Wormblod.

Creatures. Wormblod carries such hatred in his heart that a **vrock** (MM 64) was attracted to the Caverns. The Great Chief's followers sacrifice captives to the demon, hoping to win its favor.

The vrock inhabited the Abyssal layer called Thanatos, the home of Orcus, the Demon Lord of Undeath. Thanatos is a frozen, desolate place and the vrock thus feels quite at home in the Caverns. The vrock has superficial arctic qualities, such as white feathers and icicles hanging from its wings, but its statistics are unchanged.

The dark magic that seeped out of Thanatos when the vrock appeared still infests this chamber. Any living creature slain and partially devoured by the vrock rises again as a zombie under the vrock's control. 3 **zombies** (MM 316) and an undead young frost giant (use stats for an **ogre zombie** MM 316) attack with the vrock.

Tactics. If the characters made a lot of noise breaking through the ice wall, the vrock Hides (+2 Stealth bonus) in the tree and readies an action to use *stunning screech* when all of the characters are in range. After stunning the characters, the vrock swoops down toward a lightly armored character and attacks with its beak and talons. The vrock prefers to attack characters who appear to be wizards, as it fears wizards can banish him back to the Abyss.

While surrounded by at least half of the characters, the vrock uses its *spores* ability. The demon will continue to fight using its beak and talons, seeking to knock out a poisoned target so that the poison finishes them off.

The zombies fight mindlessly, attacking whomever they can reach.

The vrock fights until reduced to 35 or fewer hit points, then it Disengages and flees to area 3, where it attempts to lure the characters into fighting it on the bridge in area 2. The vrock will pursue the characters if they flee.

The zombies fight until they are slain and will pursue the characters if they flee.

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is very weak, remove the ogre zombie and reduce the vrock's hit points by 30.
- If the party is weak, reduce the vrock's hit points by 30.
- If the party is strong, add 1 ogre zombie.
- If the party is very strong, add 1 zombie, 1 ogre zombie, and increase the vrock's hit points by 30.

Developments. If the characters defeat the vrock and its zombies, Korgandr manifests as a ghostly couatl. If the characters are carrying Sturm's cloak or sword from area 3a, the couatl becomes displeased with the characters and asks that they return the relics. He can be persuaded to allow the characters to use them against Winterhorn with a successful **DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check**. If the characters slay Winterhorn, Korgandr is moved by their bravery and allows the characters to keep the items. If the characters refuse to return the relics and cannot persuade Korgandr, he fades away and refuses to assist them any longer.

If Korgandr remains on good terms with the characters, the couatl casts *greater restoration* (PHB 246) on one character. Korgandr also describes how to bypass the trap in Area 7 by lighting the braziers and saying the correct prayers to Uthgar.

Wormblod's Demise

If you are playing the Storm King's Thunder campaign and the characters carry proof that they have killed Wormblod, Korgandr becomes easier to persuade. Consider giving the characters advantage on Charisma checks made against Korgandr or foregoing the checks altogether. In Korgandr's view, Wormblod is a disease upon the land and slaying him is an honorable act.

Area 7: Passage of Flame

This natural passage contains a steep stone stairway leading down. The walls are inlaid with numerous Uthgardt crypts, similar to Area 4. Every 10 feet there is a small brazier resting on the floor. The tribe has trapped the base of the stairs. As the characters approach, read this aloud.

> Sepulchers line the walls of this passage, which leads deep below the surface. Every ten feet there is a small silver brazier inlaid into the stone floor. Soot mars the wall above each brazier.

Sacred Scenes. The carvings along the walls and ceiling tell how Uthgar brought light to the North. Characters who can read Celestial, either naturally or magically, can determine that the writing near each brazier is a prayer honoring Uthgar and the couatl.

Trap. The final 10-foot by 10-foot area contains a *glyph of warding* (PHB 245), set to trigger if each brazier has not been lit while saying the prayer inscribed next to it. If a character steps on the warded area, any creature within a 20-foot-radius sphere must make a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw**. A target takes 22 (5d8) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The glyph can be found with a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check** to search the area or through *detect magic* (PHB 231) or a similar effect. It can be dispelled as a 3rd level spell.

Rewards. If the characters search the sepulchers for 10 minutes or succeed on a **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, they find a *potion of growth* (DMG 187) tucked into one of the sepulchers. The potion was brewed using the blood of a frost giant the dead warrior defeated.

Developments. If the characters trigger the glyph, Winterhorn hears the explosion and rouses from his slumber. The explosion is loud enough to alert the undead patrol.

Part 2: The Lower Caverns

This section of the Caverns is no longer used by Wormblod and his followers. It serves as a lair for Winterhorn, the tribe's draconic ally.

Area 8: Hall of Trophies

This carved chamber houses war trophies taken during Wormblod's conquests. As the characters enter, read this aloud.

> The walls of the chamber are decorated with broken arms and armor, war banners, and even polished humanoid bones. An icy tunnel leads down from the western wall.

Bloody Conquests. The items here are non-magical and no longer fit for adventuring, but may be of interest to collectors or specialty merchants.

Icy Tunnel. The passage leading down to Area 9 is completely covered in supernaturally cold ice. When a character first enters the tunnel on their turn, they must make a **DC 10 Dexterity saving throw** or fall prone and fall down the stairs, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage. They stop at the base of the tunnel in area A.

Area 9: Winterhorn's Hoard

In the past, this grand cavern was used by Great Chiefs as a throne room and great hall. Now it is the lair of Winterhorn, an adult white dragon. The walls in this cavern are 80 foot tall and covered in thick ice. As the characters enter, read this aloud.

> This huge cavern rises far above your head, disappearing into blackness. The underground river from above washes through the center of the grand chamber. Coins and gemstones litter the ground, twinkling like stars as they catch the light. Icy walls rise from the floor like foreboding guardsmen. Inside the walls you see the frozen remains of yetis, orcs, and even a remorhaz.

Ice Walls. Winterhorn has created several branching walls of ice in his lair. Each wall is 30 foot tall and 6 inches thick. Each 10-foot section has AC 5 and 15 hit points. The walls have vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to acid, cold, necrotic, poison, and psychic damage. Winterhorn can freely move through a wall without slowing down or needing to climb. The portion of the wall the dragon moves through is destroyed, however.

Icy Waters. This section of the underground river is 30 foot deep and choked with ice. Creatures without a swim speed must make a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check** to move at half speed through the water. Creatures must also make a **DC 12 Constitution saving throw** when they first enter the water and every minute they remain in the water or gain 1 level of **exhaustion**. Resistance or immunity to cold damage prevents this effect. The river winds through underground passages for several miles, eventually joining a larger river deep in the Underdark.

Creatures. Winterhorn, an **adult white dragon** (MM 101) slumbers atop a mound of gold and gems on the western bank of the river. The dragon has a single massive horn protruding from its snout. Winterhorn's scales are light grey and white. His sleek form is covered in scars from many battles.

While sleeping, whispers and other soft sounds made 15 or more feet away do not wake Winterhorn. However, due to the dragon's high passive Perception score, even a whisper made within 10 feet will wake him. Speech at a normal volume, including the verbal components of spells, made within 50 feet will also wake him. If the characters are careful and plan accordingly, they may be able to surprise a dragon in his own lair!

If Winterhorn is awake when the characters arrive, he is Hiding (+5 Stealth bonus) on the cavern's ceiling, waiting to surprise the characters. Unless the characters have a light source that reaches 80 feet to the ceiling, they have disadvantage (-5) on their passive Perception scores to notice Winterhorn.

Creating Tension with Winterhorn. If the characters did not wake Winterhorn by triggering the trap in Area 7 or falling down the tunnel in Area 8, you have a great opportunity to create a tense scene. Describe every cold breath the dragon exhales and his massive weight shifting as he stirs. Every step the characters take should feel dangerous.

Tactics. If Winterhorn is awake and successfully hidden, he waits to drop onto the characters when they are vulnerable, such as when crossing the icy waters. He initiates combat by using his powerful cold breath, hitting as many of the characters as possible. Winterhorn continues to attack using his multiattack action. He targets the largest, most well-armed characters first but will spread his attacks out, hoping to bring down several characters in one round.

If the dragon was caught by surprise, he is enraged and unleashes his cold breath on the nearest characters, not caring to line up a proper use of the ability.

After fighting for one round, Winterhorn uses two Legendary Actions on wing attack and flies 40 feet away, preferably behind a wall of ice or into the river. Remember that if a character is frightened of Winterhorn, they cannot approach him!

Winterhorn continues to use similar tactics while he waits for his breath to recharge. The dragon supplements his multiattack with a tail attack Legendary Action.

He makes use of his incredible mobility, always moving around the cavern and forcing the characters to fight in unfavorable terrain. If you employ a "stand and deliver" tactic with Winterhorn, you and your players will be disappointed in this dragon's capabilities.

If the characters try to Hide from Winterhorn, or there is a particularly troublesome Rogue, Winterhorn uses his detect Legendary Action to prevent them from sneak attacking.

Winterhorn uses his legendary resistance trait to resist spells and effects that would reduce his movement or prevent him from making multiple attacks, such as slow.

Winterhorn has access to the white dragon's Lair Actions (MM 103) while in this area. He uses them to hinder ranged attackers, such as creating a cloud of freezing fog around archers and spellcasters, or separating them from their allies entirely with a well-placed wall of ice. If the fight begins to go poorly for Winterhorn, he uses his lair action to cause icicles to fall on low health characters.

Additionally, if the party shows they are capable of reviving unconscious characters with healing magic, Winterhorn uses his Legendary and lair actions to prevent this. For example, after knocking out a character, he might use his lair action to block them off with a wall of ice.

Remember that while white dragons are not incredibly intelligent, they are cunning hunters. Unlike a haughty red dragon, Winterhorn respects the characters as capable warriors and fights wisely. He knows that giving in to hubris is the way to a quick death in the hostile North, even for a dragon.

Winterhorn fights to the death defending his hoard. If the characters flee, he pursues them to the best of his ability, but his Huge size prevents him climbing the passage in Area 7. He can, however, swim up the river to ambush the characters on the bridge in Area 2.

Rewards. If the characters are lucky or skilled enough to survive Winterhorn, his massive hoard is theirs for the taking. It includes:

- 372 pp and 12,143 gp in both modern and ancient currencies.
- A diamond worth 300 gp, 2 amber gemstones worth 100 gp each, 2 quartz gemstones worth 100 gp each, an amethyst worth 100 gp, a pearl worth 100 gp, and a large moonstone worth 100 gp.
- A quiver of 20 *arrows +1* (DMG 150) and a broken *oathbow* (DMG 183). The bow and arrows were used by an elven ranger from the High Forest who tracked Winterhorn for over a year. Her fabled bow was shattered in the dragon's maw as her party met their end.
- A *bag of holding* (DMG 153) that contains a *potion of heroism* (DMG 188), 2 *potions of greater healing* (DMG 187), and spell scrolls of *magic weapon* (PHB 257), *melf's acid arrow* (PHB 259), and *gaseous form* (PHB 244). The items were created by a master alchemist in Silverymoon, and were being transported to be sold in Neverwinter when the caravan was attacked by Wormblod.
- A *belt of dwarvenkind* (DMG 155) and *warhammer +1* (DMG 213) taken from an ill-fated Cleric of Moradin from Citadel Adbar,
- A *berserker greataxe* (DMG 155) used by a fallen Uthgardt chieftain, and his *warhorn of frozen gales* (Appendix B).

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is very weak, reduce the DC of cold breath and wing attack by 2. Also, reduce Winterhorn's hit points by 60.
- If the party is weak, reduce the DC of cold breath and wing attack by 2.
- If the party is strong or very strong, increase Winterhorn's hit points by 60.

Concluding the Adventure

As Winterhorn breathes his last icy breath, Korgandr's spirit manifests before the characters. Read this aloud.

> The great wyrm crashes down, ice falling in giant sheets from the ceiling as the cavern shakes. Winterhorn's warm blood melts the ice and snow, pouring from his myriad wounds. He struggles to find his footing before at last letting out a final roar, trying to summon the power of his dragon breath. The cold, blue light slowly fades from Winterhorn's eyes.
>
> A surge of warmth fills the cavern and your hearts feel emboldened as a ghostly couatl, a majestic winged serpent, appears before you.

Even if the characters have not contacted Korgandr, the couatl appears and thanks the heroes. The couatl claims that they have saved the legacy of the Great Worm tribe. The spirits of the tribe will now rest easy.

Sealing the Caverns. After the characters leave the caverns. Korgandr uses what strength he has left to cause a massive collapse at the Caverns' entrance and place magical wards and protections over the Caverns. This last effort greatly strains the couatl, however, and his spirit leaves to join his celestial allies in the Outer Planes.

Ashes to Ashes. The Great Worm Uthgardt tribe will slowly dwindle and fade from existence after Wormblod is slain at the Eye of the All-Father. The remaining tribespeople will be absorbed into other Uthgardt tribes or abandon their culture all-together and spread out across the North, settling in Luskan, Neverwinter, and the Ten Towns of Icewind Dale



Appendix A: Creatures and NPCs

Zombie Polar Bear

Large undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 10 (natural armor)
Hit Points 47 (5d10 + 20)
Speed 30 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	6 (-2)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages -
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Keen Smell. The zombie has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The zombie makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Frozen Echo

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)
Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Stealth +4
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Understands Bothii and Common, but can't speak
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The echo can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the wight has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Icy Grip. *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d8) cold damage and the target cannot regain hit points until the end of their next turn.

Frozen Echo

Caught Between Worlds. An echo is created when a dying person is prevented from fully crossing into the afterlife. A shard of their spirit is left behind and quickly gives into madness, lashing out at the living. The echoes in the Great Worm Cavern were created after the tribe lost the couatls' blessing.

Barrow Wight

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (chainmail)
Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2
Damage Resistances cold, necrotic, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons.
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Bothii, Common
Challenge 4 (1,000 XP)

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the wight can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. The wight makes two greataxe attacks or two handaxe attacks. It can use its Life Drain in place of one melee attack.

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a frozen echo under the wight's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. The wight can have up to 4 frozen echoes under its control at one time.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

Handaxe. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 6) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

Appendix B: Items

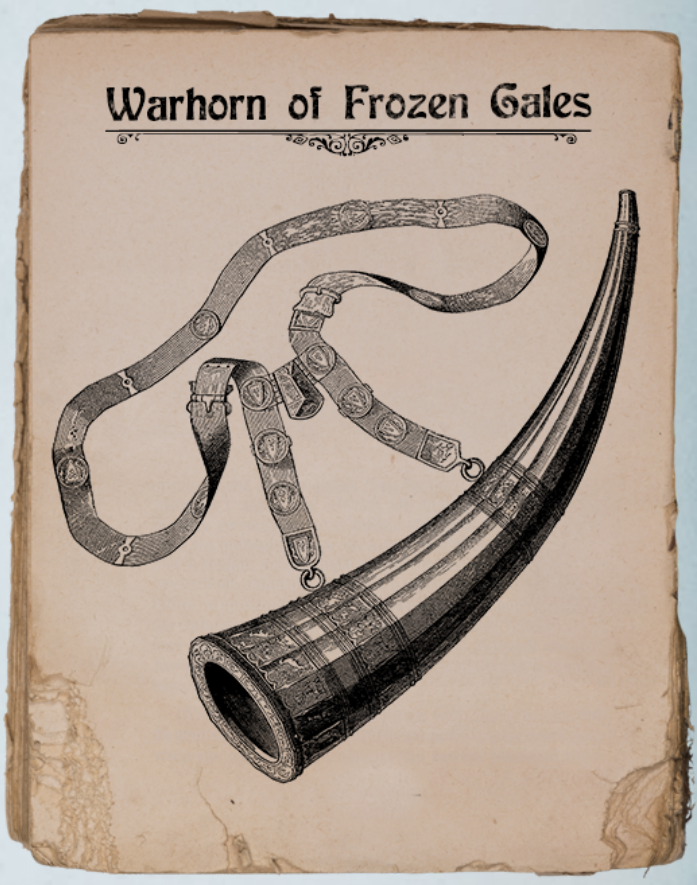
This appendix contains information on magic items not found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

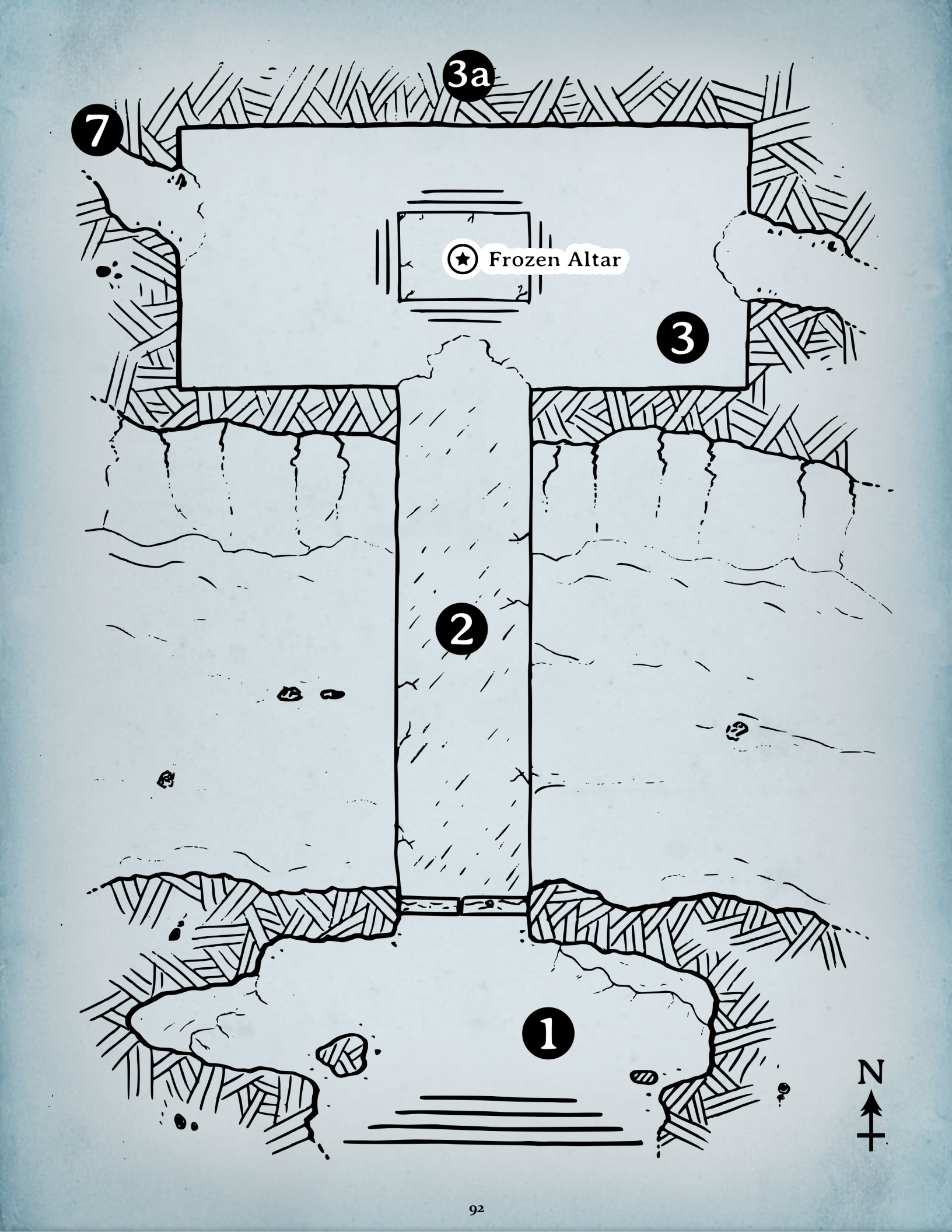
Warhorn of Frozen Gales

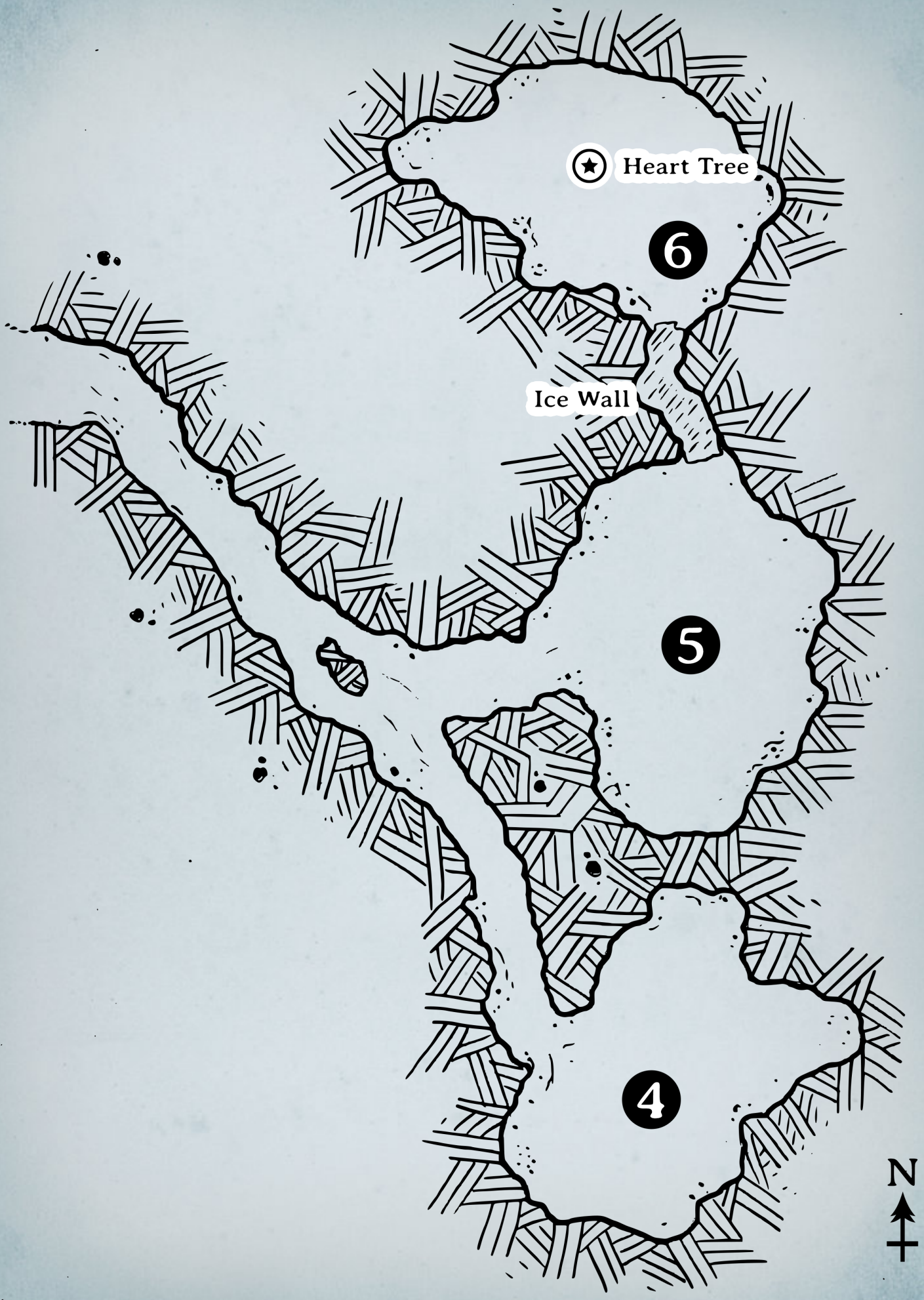
Wondrous item (rare), requires attunement

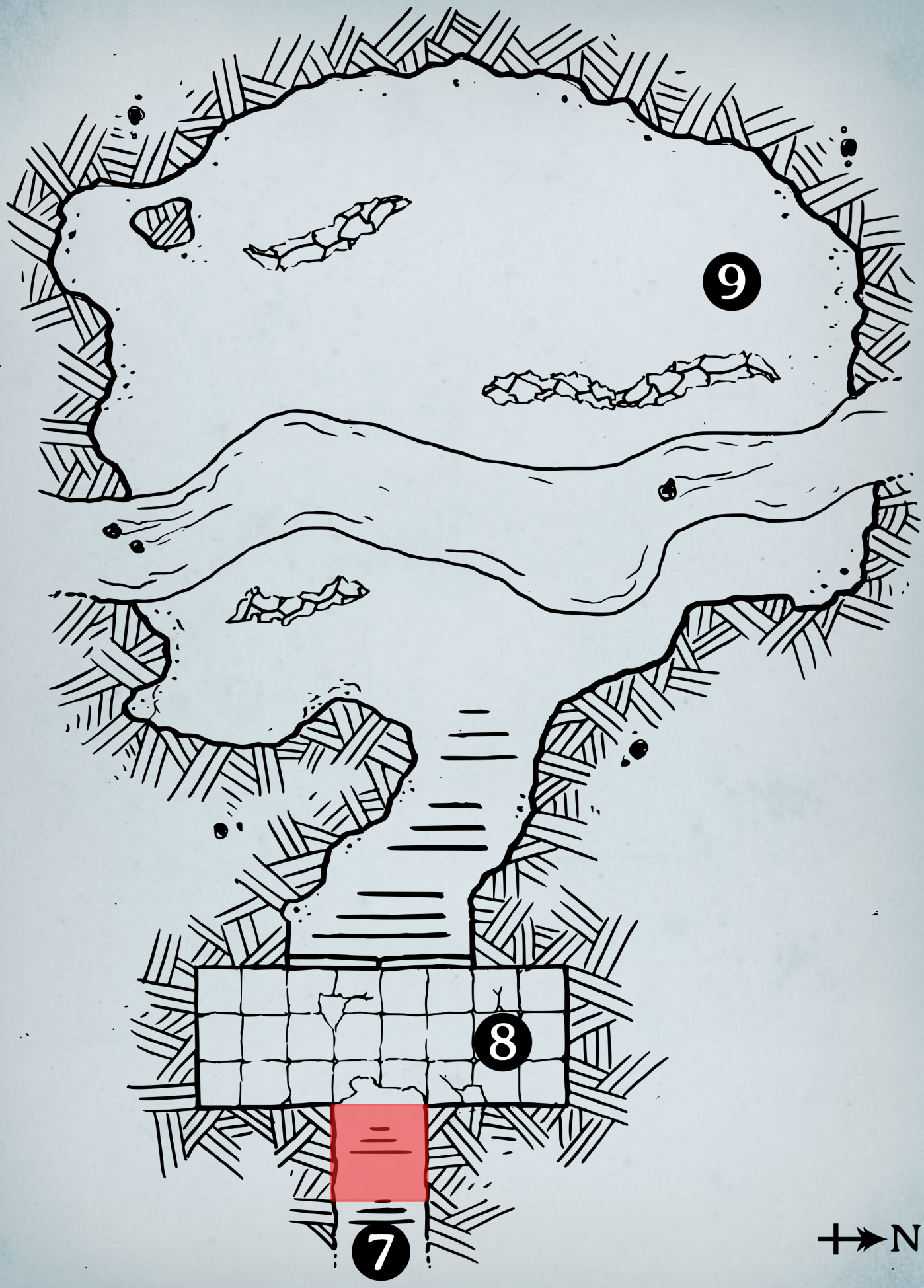
This iron-banded Uthgardtian warhorn is carved from a mammoth's tusk and decorated with images of the frozen north.

You can use an action to speak the command word and blow the horn, which can be easily heard 200 feet away. An icy windstorm appears around you and any creatures you choose within 15 feet. Ranged weapon attacks made against these creatures have disadvantage. Additionally, whenever a creature hits someone affected by the horn with a melee attack within 5 feet, they take 10 cold damage. These effects last for 1 minute. The warhorn regains this ability after you finish a long rest.




3a
7
Frozen Altar
3
2
1
N


Heart Tree
6
Ice Wall
5
4
N


9
8
7
N



The Tomb of Mild Discomfort

Centuries ago, two powerful wizards clashed. Emerging victorious, Acererak the Eternal built a tomb for his fallen opponent, Queen Azaria the Arcane. Now, years later, you dare disturb the peace of her resting place, only to find that the traps are not as much deadly as they are mildly discomforting.

By Jason Bakos

The dungeon is placed in the northern parts of the Sword Coast but can be used in any setting with some adjustment. The dungeon is optimized for five characters with an average party level (APL) of 6. A dungeon exploration adventure packed with fun traps, clever puzzles, and spicy encounters that will get you excited! With the promise of a few fun hours of gameplay, will you dare explore the Tomb of Mild Discomfort?

This adventure offers:

- A dungeon best described as a light-hearted yet still dangerous version of the Tomb of Annihilation.
- Two new NPCs: Valmeros the Collector, and Halaertha Pebbleback the Historian.
- A brand new Magic Item, the Staff of the Earth, alongside other magic items, waiting to be found.
- Warning: At least one spellcaster character is needed for this adventure to begin!

Adventure Background

Hidden deep in the Spine of the World was a city of peculiar dwarves. The fabled Magicforge was a city of dwarves who all practice the arcane arts daily. Eons ago, Acererak the Eternal met with the Dwarven city's Queen, demanding that she hands over an artifact he wished for. When the battle-loving, arcane-wielding Queen Azaria refused to hand over the Bag of Arcane Winds, they argued, and in the heat of the moment, they both attacked. This incident lead to a battle of epic proportions between the Demilich and the Wizard Queen, which ended in Azaria's death and the destruction of Magicforge.

Having promised the Queen to build her a tomb, more as a taunt, really, Acererak created this underground structure, and as he always did, filled it with dark traps and dangers, to guard it against aspiring explorers. Having a reputation to uphold, the Lich made this a work of art. However, this is no typical tomb. At first, Acererak couldn't be bothered with including anything too powerful. After a while, the idea of having traps that would simply cause some mild discomfort to the explorers appealed to his sadistic and humorous side. Thus the Tomb of Mild Discomfort was created.

Adventure Summary

This adventure consists of the exploration of the Tomb of Queen Azaria, dubbed "The Tomb of Mild Discomfort" by its creator, Acererak. Reaching the Tomb requires following one of the plot hooks provided below. Once there, it's up to the heroes to proceed with clearing the resting place of the Arcane Queen. Keep in mind that to enter the tomb, at least one spellcaster must be present. It is also important to remember that if anyone attempts to cast any magic that would teleport anyone or anything, in any way, they appear in the Oubliette instead of the target area.

Adventure Hooks

To reach Queen Azaria's tomb, one must get hold of a map that leads to it. Many maps were made by Acererak, who spread them all around the world. The maps can be found in a plethora of ways, which could include, but not be limited to:

- Found in a loot from a previous adventure.
- Given or bought by an old, retired explorer.
- Given as a reward for a quest.
- Given out by a Guild that hires aspiring adventurers to explore the tomb. This could of course include any of the famous factions of the Sword Coast, such as the Lord's Alliance or the Order of the Gauntlet.
- Lent as a guide from a collector that wants the Queen's Staff for themselves.
- The Tomb can also be found by accident, presenting itself to those who get lost in the Spine of the World as a grand sculpture on the face of a cliff.

The Tomb is fairly isolated, but if one were to describe its location, notable cities in the general vicinity would be Neverwinter and Luskan. It's quite possible that the party begins their travel from one of these places. As an extra bonus for the DM who looks to easily integrate this adventure into their story, or as a one-shot, two NPCs are provided, each easily usable as the trigger of the adventure.

Valmeros

This red tiefling with a golden tongue will sell out everything for the sake of wealth. A smooth talker and a keen observer, Valmeros (LN male tiefling **mage** MM 347) is the perfect example of a naturally gifted con man. His love for peculiar magic items could only be matched by his vast wealth, though the plethora of connections he has in the underworld of Neverwinter is also worthy of praise. He usually hangs out in bars, where he scouts for eager adventurers (prey in his eyes) to send off to adventures in search of the items he so desires. Get on his good side, and you shall enjoy a good –albeit bumpy– journey to wealth. Double cross him, or even worse steal from him, and suddenly you have made a very powerful enemy.

Halaertha Pebbleback

A dwarven lady with a long-lost heritage from Magicforge, the city Queen Azaria once ruled over. She works for a huge Historians Guild based in Neverwinter called "Bookmarks." Halaertha (LG female dwarf **commoner** MM 345) has a passion for piecing together the Magicforge's history. Halaertha approaches the heroes on behalf of the Bookmarks, or perhaps puts up a quest on a quest board, which our adventurers accept. She can give adventurers the map, as long as they sign a few contracts that legally bind them to describe in great detail all that they find in Queen Azaria's Tomb.



The Tomb of Mild Discomfort

Part 1: Arrival

When the characters arrive at the site of the tomb, read or paraphrase the following:

> You find yourselves in awe, staring at a huge carving on the side of this icy mountain cliff. It consists of huge columns, various decorative designs, and at the base, two large, green devil faces. Below the flared nostrils of each face is a heavy silver door, identical to the other in every detail.

One of the doors leads to the dungeon, the other one to a trapped room that also hides a secret chamber. The whole carving is made to be absolutely symmetrical, down to the last detail. The doors especially cannot be distinguished from one another, giving no clue as to which is the real entrance and which is the trap. If the DM wants to include the False Entrance, they can first ask which door the explorers enter first, and appoint that as the false entrance. Cheating, but there's a secret room in it.

Area 1: False Entrance

> The corridor before you is made of plain stone, roughly worked, and it is dark and full of cobwebs. The ceiling overhead is obscured by hanging strands of webbing. A pair of iron doors block your passage.

A **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals that the ceiling is unstable, ready to collapse at a moment's notice. In reality, there's an iron slab that's stuck in the ceiling, ready to fall on any trespasser. This is well hidden, and casual search of the area yields no information about this. When the doors are opened or if the ceiling is prodded with any force, the trap is instantly triggered and the fake ceiling drops. Creatures under the collapse must make a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Opening the iron doors reveals only dirt.

In reality, there's a secret room behind these fake doors, which can be accessed with the use of the *mold earth* cantrip, or any other magic that moves soil. The *staff of the earth* (Appendix A) found in the dungeon can, of course, be used to achieve this. This room is purposely difficult to locate, and the only real hint the heroes have can be found in the last line of Acererak's poem, found inside the Tomb.

The room is simple, a small cube with walls 15 foot wide. In the center, there's a pedestal with a glass vial and a crown on it, surrounded by intricate arcane runes. Succeeding on a **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check** reveals these items were part of a ritual in which the Queen's intellect has been passed down to the crown, making it a *headband of intellect* (DMG 173).

Area 2: Real Entrance

> The corridor before you is made of plain stone, roughly worked, and it is dark and full of cobwebs. The ceiling overhead is obscured by hanging strands of webbing. A pair of iron doors block your passage.

Once inside, the explorers' path is block by another door. Runes are inscribed everywhere on the door, and the words "Honor the resting Queen with Magic" are inscribed in the middle of the door's design. To unlock these doors, one must cast any spell or cantrip. One can also unlock them with a successful **DC 16 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check**, or a **DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check**. The doors unlock, but remain closed. When a character opens them, they easily give in, and open, only to give out a loud noise and quickly shut again. This is actually the effect of the *thaumaturgy* (PHB 282) cantrip. The doors are still unlocked, and the characters simply have to open them again. It's not really a trap, just a small inconvenience.

Area 3: Acererak's Foreword

This room is empty, save for three levers on the wall to your right, and a small board with some writing on it, on the opposing wall. The board reads: "In this Tomb I, Acererak the Eternal, gave Queen Azaria the Arcane her final resting place. Be wary of the levers. Walk through fire and admire the art to forge your path. Avoid the obnoxious scholar. Dare to make the jump. Use the Queen's weapon to correct your first mistake, and gain her power."

The writing refers to the levers in this room, the lava fountain in Area 4 the Antechamber, Mitsos' silver skull, in Area 6 the Infinite Pillars room, the Tomb Guardian in Area 8 and the False Entrance's secret room.

No Leverage. The levers are a puzzle that the characters must overcome. To open the door, the levers must all be pulled downwards with perfect synchronization. The starting position is upwards. To do this, the players must voice their intention to lower all three at once, and each character must succeed on a simple **DC 11 Dexterity check** to perform it in timing with the others. If the very first thing the characters do is to pull the levers in tandem, increase the DC to 15. If the levers are pulled in any other combination or order, a spectral hand appears on any pulled levers, and begins to raise them excruciatingly slowly. It takes exactly ten minutes for the levers to be able to be lowered again.

Acererak used magic of the highest degree to pull this off, meaning this effect cannot be dispelled, and nothing the characters do can stop the spectral hands.

There are no repercussions, no matter how many times the levers fail to align, just mild discomfort for the players and the characters alike, except that every time a lever is pulled, wild magic floods the room. This happens only once every ten minutes, even if more than one levers were pulled. Use the *wand of wonder* magic item's table (DMG 212) to determine the effect. If the effect has specific targets, then choose any part member at random. This is an homage to the huge arsenal of arcane powers the Queen used in the fight against the Eternal Lich. The first time the players fail to pull the levers, the voice of Acererak echoes in the room, saying "Have a taste of the Queen's arcane powers!"

Area 4: Antechamber

This large hall's primary distinctive feature is the lava fountain in its center. Molten rock is ever pouring from this beautiful iron fountain, on top of which, you can see a strong iron hammer levitating. It rotates as it shines, obviously heated by the immense heat from the lava. On the walls are carvings of dwarves forging weapons and arcane focuses, and a large iron door prohibits any further advancement.

To continue, the characters must solve this room's puzzle, which consists of two pieces.

The First Part. The fountain is the first part of the test. The characters must walk through the lava to reach the hammer. Of course, the lava itself is magical. While it does not inflict any damage at all to the characters, it burns through any clothing and other non-magical equipment or items. The explorers need to then reach for the hammer, which is not really burning, but has the spell *major image* (PHB 258) cast on it to make it appear gleaming red. Picking it up fulfils the first part of the test. Casting *detect magic* (PHB 231) reveals an aura of abjuration and illusion on the fountain, transmutation and illusion magic on the hammer, and some transmutation magic on a key mold drawing on the wall.

The Second Part. To open the doors, one must forge the key. To do that, one must locate a dwarf drawing who is holding a key mold, ready to strike with her hammer. This can be found with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check**. The key mold the dwarf is holding is embossed, in contrast with all the other art on the wall, so anyone with a **passive Perception of 16 or higher** notices it. Also, a *detect magic* wields results, as mentioned above. Hitting the key mold drawing with the hammer makes the key appear and drop on the ground. If anyone tries to pick it up, they suffer 9 (2d8) fire damage, and must succeed in a **DC 16 Constitution saving throw** or immediately drop it. If they touch it, the mouth of the dwarf engraving animates, saying "It's just out of the forge, give it some time to cool." The door can also be opened with a successful **DC 22 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check**, or with a successful **DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check**. If this happens, the dwarf forging the key from the key mold materializes, scowls at whoever opened the door and says "Boo" before it disappears into thin air, leaving the key behind.

Part 2: Deeper into the Tomb

Area 5: Corridor

This corridor is a normal, marble corridor with no intricate carvings. There are two traps in this corridor.

Stinking Trap. The first one is a move sensor that exists right before the arch of the door that leads to Area 6. Whenever a creature moves through this point in space, the spell *stinking cloud* (PHB 278) is cast on that creature, and the character is also left with a weird taste in his or her mouth. This trap can be detected with a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check**, and disarmed either with a successful **DC 16 Dexterity (Thieves' tools) check**, or a successful *dispel magic* spell of DC 16 (PHB 234).

Teleport Trap. The second trap is located just after the arch of the door to Area 7. It is a pressure plate that activates when the first character walks on it, opening a pit in the floor. Once the body of the character has fallen completely below the level of the floor, it magically closes. To the remaining characters, it would seem that their party member is gone. In reality, the affected creature has been teleported just outside of the tomb, and is free to enter again. Indeed, an unfortunate event. To detect the trap, a character must succeed in a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** to observe how the floor over the pressure plate is just slightly uneven.

Area 6: Room of Infinite Pillars

As soon as you walk through the door, you find yourselves standing on a platform with no safety bars. Ahead of you, a vast room spreads. A variety of pillars rise from the pitch black pit that has taken the place of the floor. At the other side of the room, a pedestal with a staff on it is on one of the pillars. Behind it, on the wall, a large painting of this very room is drawn, showing dwarves with horrifying expressions falling to their deaths in between the pillars. "Does the creator of this dungeon seriously expect us to jump there?" you find yourselves wondering.

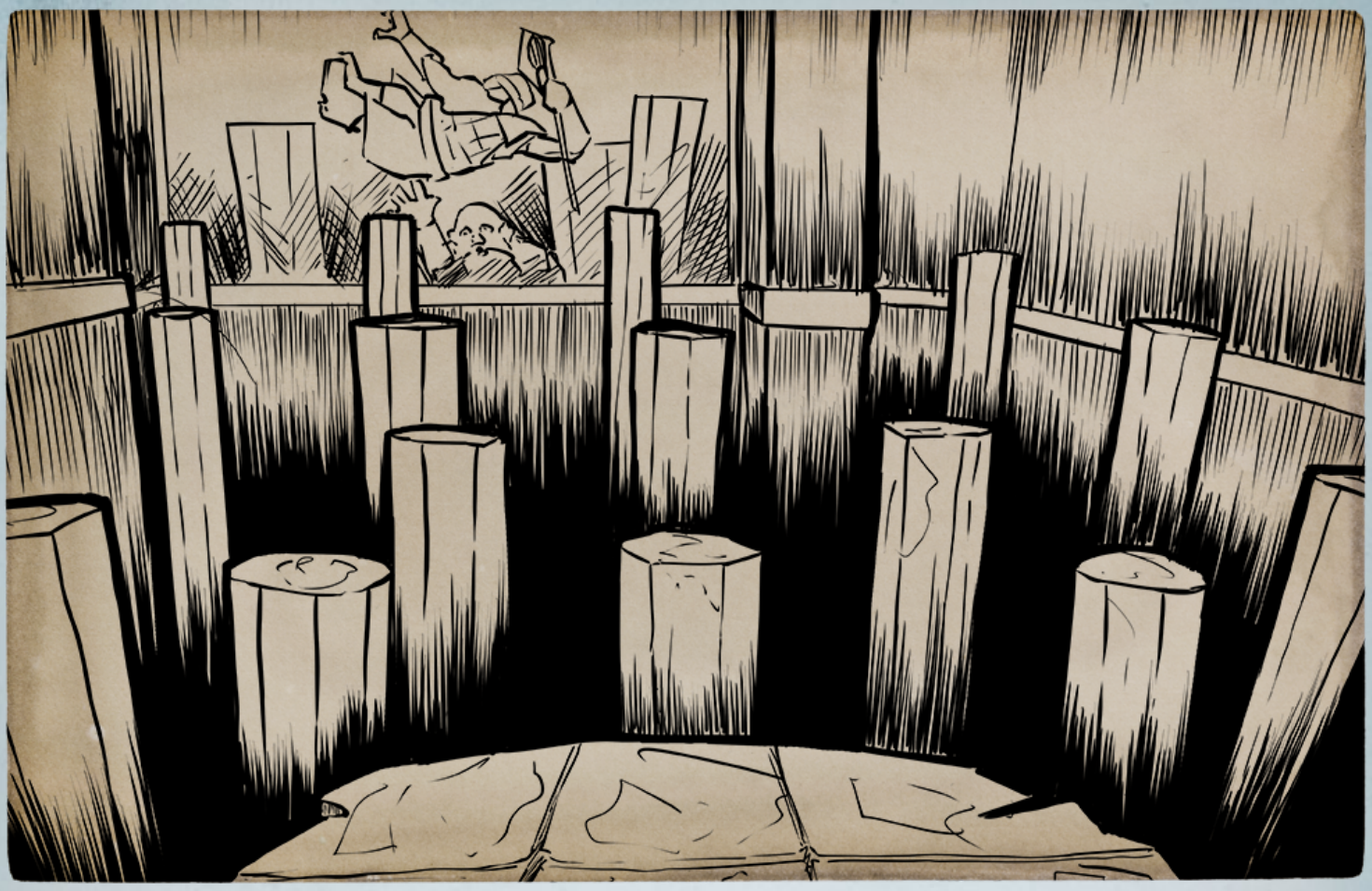
The design of this room is deceiving. The floor actually exists, just 10 feet below the platform that the characters first stand on, and the pillars only extend from that floor up, to various heights. Acererak has used powerful illusion magic to make the pillars seem to extend infinitely, and the room to be so deep you can't see the end of it. The *detect magic* spell (PHB 231) reveals that the floor gives off an aura of illusion.

Jumping Challenge. The challenge of this room is simple: The characters must succeed in jumping onto the tops of the various columns, which are on the level of the platform, and reach the final one to claim their prize. Should they fail, nothing really bad happens. They fall, take falling damage as described later, and then be able to stand up. When anyone touches the floor for the first time, a stone staircase appears that connects the invisible floor with the starting point. Any spectators would think that the one who fell is now walking on air. Reaching the pedestal is not as simple as it seems. There are 7 pillars to jump to in order to get to the staff on the podium. Each pillar is marked on the DM's version of the map. To get from the platform to the first pillar, a creature must succeed on a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check**. Each time a creature clears the first jump, magical winds blow, making it progressively harder to make the next jump. The next check has a DC of 11, and thus, the final jump, a DC of 17. Should one fall, the damage they take is decided based on the difficulty of the jump. Falling from the first pillar deals 4 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, from the second, 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage, while the fall from the final one deals 22 (7d6) bludgeoning damage. One can attempt to make the jump with any other check or spell, as long as they are not flying. Anyone that tries to fly, whether through natural or magical means, is instantly teleported back to the platform at the entrance of the room.

Trapped Pillars. There are traps on some of the other pillars. Instead of assigning a trap to specific pillars, choose one of these traps whenever a creature steps on a pillar that's not one of the seven correct pillars:

- The spell grease is cast on top of the pillar.
- The creature who steps on it instantly teleports to Area 10 (use only once),
- The top of the pillar turns into a sticky pool of mud and a creature landing on it gets stuck in the mud. A creature can use its action to make a **DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check** to free itself.

Treasure. The staff on the final pedestal belonged to the Queen. It is the *staff of the earth* (Appendix A). It cannot be pulled away from the pedestal unless someone is standing on its pillar.



Area 7: Skull and Armors

As soon as you enter the room, torches flare to life, illuminating its contents. In the middle, a pedestal with intricate decoration carvings. Around it, four suits of armor are resting on the ground, with the one facing the door looking more solemn and menacing than the others. The room is decorated with seven gems that float in the air and reflect the light from the torches, making them look like shining stars.

Well Guarded Gems. The gems float in the air, and can be easily moved with a touch, as if they were floating in water. They are an homage to the *crown of stars* spell that the lost Queen favored. If anyone attempts to remove them from the room, the gems are instantly teleported back into it.

The armors belonged to the Queen's four royal guards, back when Acererak visited. They activate and spring into action as soon as anyone touches any of the seven gems.

Monsters. For the three identical armors, use the stats for **animated armor** (MM 19), and for their leader, use the statistics of a **helmed horror** (MM 183). When they rise, their swords start giving off an annoying, high frequency buzzing sound. The three animated armors wield swords, so they deal slashing damage instead of bludgeoning. In addition, the annoying buzzing causes an additional 1d4 psychic damage on a hit.

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is very weak or weak, remove 1 animated armor.
- If the party is strong or very strong, add 1 animated armor.

Mitsos' Skull. A silver skull rests on a pedestal in the middle of the room. It is a trap. The skull contains the soul of an old acolyte of Acererak's called Mitsos, who was amazingly clumsy. In a lich transformation ritual gone wrong, the apprentice managed to merge his own soul with the skull, forever bound to it.

When a creature touches it, the skull levitates into the air and begins to follow that creature everywhere. The skull never strays more than a few feet away, teleporting back to the character's side if it loses sight of him or her. Amazingly curious in nature, the skull follows whoever is bound to it, always trying to understand what they are doing. Its relentless stream of comments and questions are so excruciatingly annoying that they count as a curse, causing the bound character to make all ability checks with disadvantage. It knows nothing of the tomb but pretends to know all about it.

Roleplay the skull as having an unending thirst for knowledge and a complete lack of any social skills, which result in something more than mild discomfort.

Acererak has warded the skull with powerful magic, rendering it impervious to damage and spells. Its curse is too powerful to be broken with any spell other than *wish*, which can be used either to destroy the skull or end the curse. If the curse ends but the skull survives, it teleports back to its pedestal and waits. The curse can also be ended by feeding books to the skull, which it craves. The skull chews up and destroys any non-magical book fed to it, leaving no trace of the books behind. Once it destroys 10,000 pages from books, the skull teleports back to its pedestal and the curse ends for the affected character. Mitsos' accident was how Acererak was later inspired to recreate this room in another dungeon of his creation.

Area 8: The Tomb Guardian

Opening the heavy door, you find yourselves faced with a statue that depicts a powerful, heavily armored warrior holding a shield. As if he's guarding it, behind him is a large iron door. On the door, drawings that magically move depict in their full glory highlights of the fight of the Queen with the Demilich Acererak. In the four corners of the room, you see four more statues, each holding an arcane focus of some sort, poised as if they are casting a spell.

This is the final challenge the explorers must face before laying their eyes on the Tomb of Queen Azaria. The shield-wielding warrior is Gronar the Immovable's avatar, a construct depicting the Queen's most faithful servant. The four other statues are all famous wizards from the kingdom of Magicforge, their names lost to history. As soon as anyone enters the room, the statues attack.

Monsters. For Gronar's statue, use the stats of the **shield guardian** (MM 271). The statues of the 4 casters cannot move, have an AC of 18 and 100 hit points each.

Tactics. The shield guardian stands tall in front of the gates to the resting place of his Queen, protecting it and attacking anyone who dares to approach it. On initiative counts of 20, 15, 10 and 5, each caster's effect activates, according to the Wizard Statue Spells table below. Each statue is assigned with an initiative from the list and can cast the corresponding spell. The statue that casts *thunderwave* is one of the two on the side of the door to the Queen's tomb, so when it casts the spell it creates distance between the intruders and the door. A *dispel magic* spell of DC 17 (PHB 234) deactivates a statue. Otherwise, activated statues must be physically destroyed.

Wizard Statue Spells

Initiative	Spell
20	*Scorching ray* spell (PHB 273), cast using a 2nd level spell slot, +6 to hit.
15	*Magic missile* spell (PHB 257), cast using a 2nd level spell slot.
10	*Thunderwave* spell (PHB 282), cast using a 2nd level spell slot, save DC 15.
5	*Melf's acid arrow* spell (PHB 259), cast using a 2nd level spell slot, +6 to hit.

Difficulty Adjustments. Make the following adjustments if the party is weak or strong:

- If the party is very weak or weak, cast the spells using a 1st-level spell slot and lower the DC for the dispel magic to 15. In addition reduce the statues' hit points to 50 and their AC to 16.
- If the party is strong, cast the spells using 3rd-level spell slot once, with remaining castings as written.
- If the party is very strong, cast the spells using 3rd-level spell slot twice, with remaining castings as written.

Part 3: Azaria's Grave

Area 9: The Tomb

> A dome-like tomb spreads before your eyes. All around, a magical wind dances, with a faint aura in all the colors of the spectrum, interchanging. In the center, a golden sarcophagus is etched with the words "Queen Azaria the Arcane". It lies on a large circular dais that has eight symbols etched around the outer perimeter. Around the queen's name, you find circles with letters of different languages. The walls are simple and there is no light source, save for the magnificent arcane wind.

Arcane Winds. The wind is the one real tribute Acererak has paid to the Queen who gave him such a dangerous but good fight. The artifact that he was looking for was a bag, that once opened, would let out gusts of magical wind, the power of which is far too large to even consider legendary. When he built the tomb, Acererak left behind just a tiny portion of the wind, to forever envelop the resting place of this accomplished spellcaster.

The Inscription. The words in the numerous circles around the queen's name are all the same words, just written in different languages: Elvish, Dwarvish, Draconic, Celestial, Abyssal, Infernal, Primordial, and Sylvan. The words read: "Arcana divided in parts, choose your own and weave magic."

One Last Challenge. The characters can open the tomb either by clearing the challenge set by Acererak, or by force. Either way, once they open it, they find the skeletal remains of a female dwarf, dressed in ceremonial clothes. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** or a **DC 12 Intelligence (Medicine) check** reveals that the skull was opened and that the brain was extracted from the corpse. To claim the true reward of the queen, one must cast at least one spell of any school while standing over a rune corresponding to that spell's school of magic. The adventurers can figure this out by trial and error or make a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation, Arcana or Religion) check**.

The Riddle is Solved. As soon as the spell is cast, the sarcophagus' lid disappears, blending in with the arcane wind, and an animated illusionary image appears in the center of the room. This opens the sarcophagus, and in the hands of the queen, a *potion of heroism* (DMG 188) rests in a beautiful crystal clear bottle shaped like an octangular shield. Read or paraphrase the following to describe it:

> The spectral winds pick up speed and gather around the center of the room. An image is formed there, depicting a man in decorated robes holding a staff, standing in the presence of a queen on her throne. The image shifts, and you can see those two unleashing powerful spells. For one last time, the winds form the image of the wizard, opening a small bag, from which the same winds blow, filling this very room with an aura in the colors of the rainbow.

The Riddle is Ignored. Opening the sarcophagus manually is an easy task. Inside, they find nothing, but all of the party becomes cursed.

Curse – The Arcane Queen's Bane. Opening the sarcophagus of the queen by force defiled it, resulting in the spirit of the Queen haunting you. When you cast a spell or use an action to cast a spell from a magic item, roll a d100. On a roll of 40 or lower, the spell is nullified as if counterspell had been successfully used against it. To rid yourself of this curse, you must refrain from using magic for an entire 24 hours, or have the spell remove curse cast on you.

Area 10: Oubliette

Any creature that tries to magically transport itself out of the tomb, or casts any spell that causes a creature to instantly move from one place to another, arrives here instead.

Upon teleportation, read or paraphrase the following:

> Instead of your desired destination, you arrive in a dimly-lit octagonal room with one door and a sign on the wall, inscribed with the words "Acererak is laughing at your discomfort".

The door is unlocked, and beyond it there are some stairs. The stairway goes upwards and is so long the destination can't be seen. If any character takes more than a few steps on the stairs, they are magically teleported right outside of the Tomb. They can now walk into the Tomb without any problems. They just lost some precious time, which, depending on the situation, could prove to be more than a minor problem.

Concluding the Adventure

The characters have explored the Tomb of Queen Azaria and are free to take the journey back home. They have conquered the fairly dangerous traps, and if they respected the warnings of the tomb's creator, they should know the history of the tomb.

There is a need to turn in the quests they have received from the plot hooks, if they did. Narrating what they found in the tomb to Halaertha should be an easy task, but in Valermos' case they must hand over the *staff of the earth* and the *potion of heroism*, if they managed to take them. In return, he will pay them 500 gp each. They have also earned his trust, which means that he might use them again in case he needs capable hands. Feel free to use this NPC as a potential plot hook provider for adventures to follow. If they were hired by a Forgotten Realms faction, each might have specific conditions and goals. The DM is encouraged to include any detail they think will drive the story forward in that case.

Continuing the Adventure

This adventure consists of the exploration of one of Acererak's many tombs. This of course means that the characters might want to explore other tombs made by the demilich, out of curiosity, greed, or a need for closure, perhaps even revenge. As mentioned above, Valmeros might provide the group of adventurers with another task, and the same holds true for Halaertha and the organisation she represents, as well as the five big factions.

Appendix A: Items

Staff of the Earth

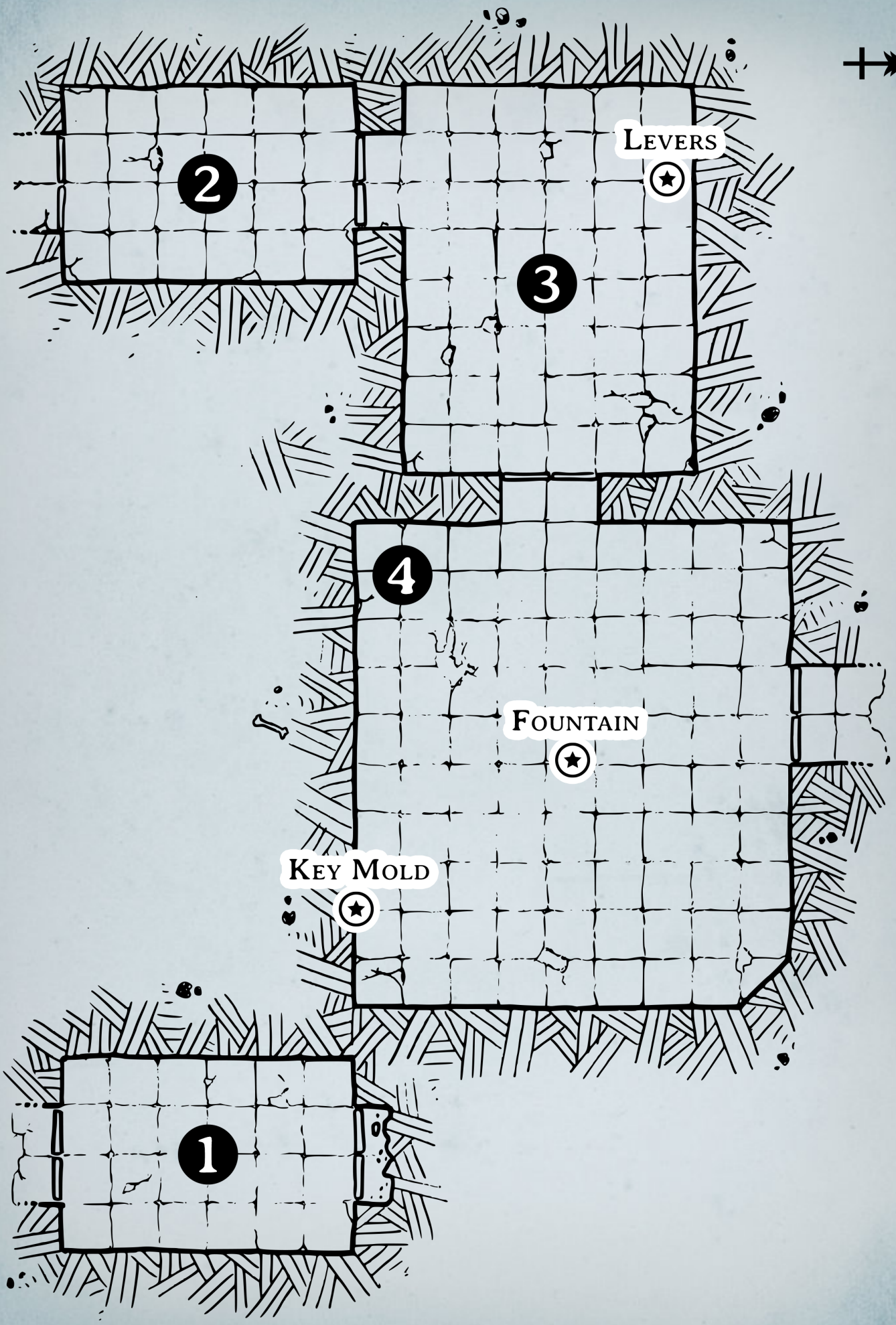
Staff, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

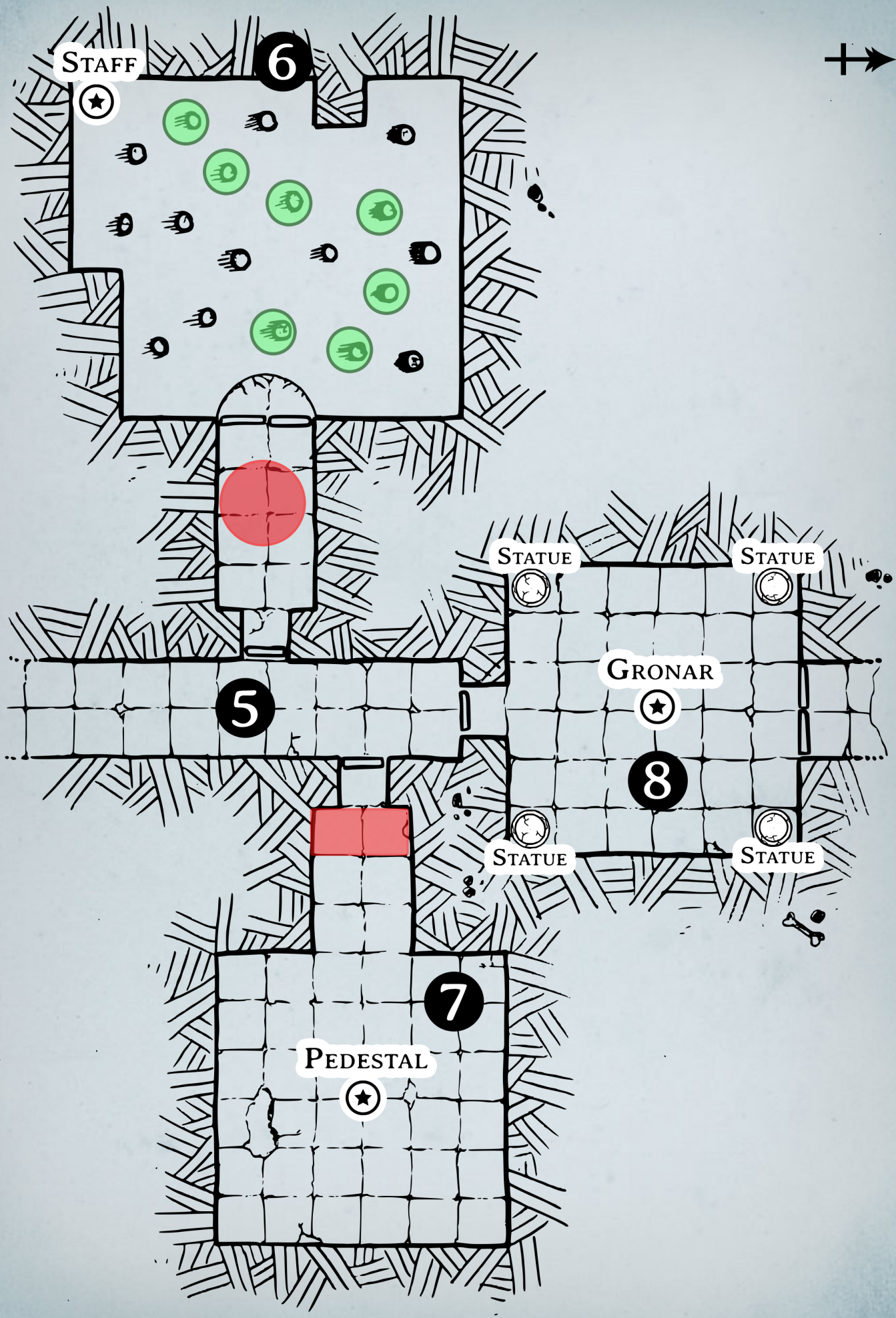
This arcane staff is made of a very light yet durable stone, weighing as much as a wooden staff of the same length would. On the top, there is a hammer with an magic gem in it, protruding from the sides and the top. This staff has 10 charges. The staff regains 1d6+4 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff crumbles to dust, and is destroyed.

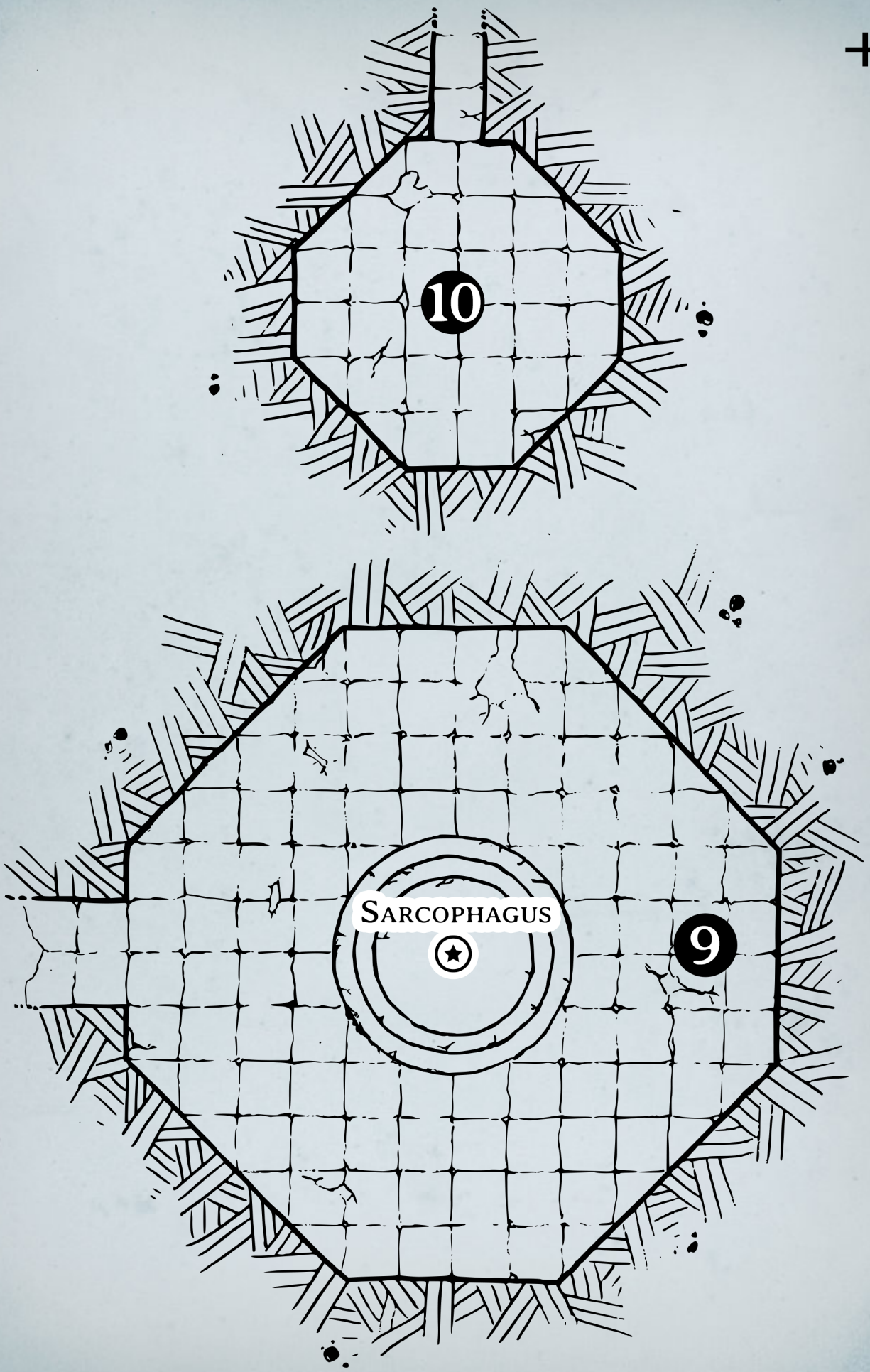
While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast one of the following spells, using your spell save DC:

- *earth tremor* (1 charge) – XTGE 155
- *earthbind* (2 charges) – XTGE 154
- *erupting earth* (4 charges) – XTGE 155
- *Maximilian's earthen grasp* (3 charges) – XTGE 161
- *mold earth* (0 charges) – XTGE 162




N
2
Levers
3
4
Fountain
Key Mold
1


Staff
6
N
Statue
Statue
Gronar
5
8
Statue
Statue
7
Pedestal


N
10
Sarcophagus
9



The Vault of the Undying

Recent tremors of unknown origin have shaken the area just south of Raven Rock, revealing a long-forsaken crypt that has been buried underneath the snow and ice for nearly a century. Many have tried to enter the crypt, looking for fame and fortune, but all have been sent fleeing due to some unknown terror beneath the surface. If there are riches to be had within the crypt, no one has seen them.

By David Flor

The Vault of the Undying is a short adventure optimized for a party of 5 characters of 7th - 8th level. It can be loosely tied in to the events of Storm King's Thunder or it can stand alone in the campaign setting and environment of your choice.

Adventure Summary

The crypt was meant to be the resting place of a powerful sorcerer named Vasha who, as his life neared an end almost a hundred years ago, embraced the powers of necromancy to give him life beyond death. As he completed his ritual to grant him eternal undeath, he was sealed in to the crypt by those who wished to stop him. A magical ward was placed upon the entrance to the crypt, and the entrance was buried underneath several feet of earth in the hope that he would never see the light of day again.

While imprisoned in his crypt, Vasha began work on his creation - a giant scorpion-shaped construct made of solid stone - as he waited for the day he would be freed from his prison. The crypt remains sealed from the outside, at least until someone (such as the party) inadvertently breaks the outer seal and grants Vasha his freedom.

Adventure Hooks

Hey, What's That?

The crypt opening can simply be discovered while the party is heading north towards Raven's Rock and other nearby areas. Go See What's Happening. Local residents may mention the existence of the crypt and how they have sent people to investigate them, only to have those people return screaming in fear.

A Giant McGuffin.

In order to link the crypt to the events of Storm King's Thunder, the party could discover the existence of another giant's relic rumored to be held deep within this vault. For a time the relic's location was considered a myth, but with the appearance of the crypt entrance the possibility of the relic being inside is gaining credibility.

The Vault of the Undying

Enter the Vault

Ceiling and Walls. The walls are smooth stone, carved from the hillside. Unless otherwise specified, the roof is 10 foot high.

Lighting. The entire vault is unlit and dark. Creatures without darkvision will require an additional light source.

Doors. All the doors in the crypt are solid stone. The doors are unlocked, can be pushed open fairly easily, and will remain open unless they are pushed closed. Opening and closing any of the doors will make a modest amount of noise as they scrape across the stone floor.

Area 1: Entry Hallway

> Through a break in the hillside you see a hallway that descends into darkness.

Breaks in the cobwebs and displaced dust make it apparent that there has been a fair share of foot traffic through here. A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check** reveals that a lot of the movement has been hurried as if someone was running. If the same skill check beats **DC 15**, it is apparent that the running was away from the darkness and towards the outside.

Area 2: Antechamber

> The hallway ends into a nondescript 20-foot by 20-foot room. At the far end of the room is a set of stone double doors, 10 foot wide. Spanning the doors is a black, 8-foot wide rune that has been etched into the stone.

The rune is a *symbol of fear* (PHB 280), placed here by the mages who sealed the vault in the hope that, if the vault was ever discovered, it would turn away anyone who approaches. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** identifies the rune as abjuration magic.

As soon as any living creature comes within 10 feet of the door, the symbol glows bright red. Every living creature within sight of the symbol must make an immediate **DC 16 Wisdom saving throw**; on a failure, they are overcome with fear for one minute and will do anything they can to flee the vault as quickly as possible. On a successful save, a player is immune to the symbol's effect for 24 hours.

The rune can be disabled multiple ways:

- An adjacent character can attempt a **DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check**. On a success, the rune stops glowing and has no more effect. If the skill check fails by more than 5 the rune becomes unstable for the next 24 hours; any subsequent Wisdom saving throws to resist the rune's effects are made at disadvantage.
- The doors can be destroyed (AC 12, 30 hp, resistant to piercing and slashing damage from non-magical weapons)
- A successful *dispel magic* spell of DC 16 (PHB 234) permanently deactivates the rune.

The doors are actually panels that slide open, and they require a successful **DC 15 Strength check** to open them. Unless the doors are held open with something, they will slide closed in 1 minute.

Area 3: Warded Hallway

The inner doors are sealed with an *arcane lock* (PHB 215) spell designed to keep Vasha inside the vault. They are also warded with a powerful magical symbol designed to harm undead creatures. If the outer doors were pried open and no effort to keep them open was made, they grind shut in 1 minute. They can be opened from the inside in the same manner, either by prying them apart (**DC 15 Strength check**) or by destroying them (see Area 2 above). If the *symbol of fear* rune on the doors wasn't deactivated, it will reactivate as soon as the doors close. Upon passing through the outer doors, read or paraphrase the following:

> As you pass through the stone doors, you see a hallway 10 foot wide and 15 foot long that ends in another set of doors. The doors at the far end glow with a faint, pale amber light, and there is another dark, 8-foot wide rune carved in to them.

A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check** identifies the amber glow as an *arcane lock* spell. If the same skill check beats a DC 15, the player recognizes that the rune is some sort of abjuration magic, but is different than the rune in the previous room.

Radiant Ward. The rune remains dormant until any creature touches the inner doors. As soon as the doors are touched, the rune glows with a bright light and releases a blast of intense radiant energy that floods the hallway. Each creature within the hallway must make a successful **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 21 (6d6) radiant damage on a failed save. If the save is successful and the outer doors are still open, the radiant energy dissipates into the antechamber quickly and they take no damage, but if the outer doors are closed the radiant energy concentrates in the 15-foot hallway and they take half damage on the successful save. The effect resets after a few seconds. The rune can be disabled with a **DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check**. A successful *dispel magic* spell of DC 16 (PHB 234) permanently deactivates the rune. If either skill check fails by more than 5, the radiant effect described above triggers again and floods the hallway.

Arcane Lock. Even if the rune is disabled, the doors are still protected by an *arcane lock* spell. They offer significantly more resistance than the outer doors, requiring a successful **DC 17 Strength check** to pry open. The doors can also be destroyed (AC 12, 30hp, resistant to piercing and slashing from non-magical weapons), but that will cause considerable noise and alert the denizens of the crypt. A successful *dispel magic* spell of DC 16 also breaks the *arcane lock*. Once the doors are breached, the *arcane lock* snaps out of existence. Unlike the outer doors, when these doors are opened they remain open.

Area 4: Outer Vault

This large 30-foot by 30-foot chamber has a domed ceiling that is at least 20 foot high at the center. Standing in the center of the room is a statue of a large scorpion, positioned as if it was guarding the entrance, its pincer arched over its head in an attack position. On the right wall and the far wall are more stone double doors, and smaller doors stand at the far corners of the room.

The statue is actually a dormant construct. A *detect magic* spell reveals traces of transmutation magic, but it is currently harmless and appears to be only for decoration.

The Vault Doors. Upon inspection, the doors to the south have a circular depression spanning the seam between the two panels. The doors are magically locked, immune to all damage and attacks, impervious to spell effects such as *knock* (PHB 254), and can only be opened by using *Vasha's Key* (Appendix B).

There are only two keys in existence. One is in possession of Vasha on the other side of the door (see Area 8) and the other one is located in the upper crypt (Area 7). There are also two false keys in the upper crypt (see *Vasha's False Key* in Appendix B).

If an authentic *Vasha's Key* is placed in the depression between the doors, the doors slide open and grant access to the inner vault. The doors automatically close and re-seal in 1 minute.

If a living creature places one of the false keys in the depression between the doors, a blast of necrotic energy bursts forth from the door in a 20 foot radius. Each creature within the area must make a **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 27 (6d8) necrotic damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that fails the saving throw by more than 5 or rolls a natural 1 also gains one level of exhaustion. The necrotic blast also destroys the false key that was used in the process.

Encounter. Once Vasha is defeated (see Area 8), the **scorpion construct** (Appendix A) activates and attacks any living creature that enters the chamber.

Area 5: Collapsed Hallway

The hallway ends abruptly in a mound of large rocks, rubble and dirt.

This hallway led deeper into the crypt, but since the earthquake that uncovered the vault it has been blocked by an impassable mound of stone, rock and dirt. There is nothing else of significance here.

Area 6: Lower Crypt

This small crypt is approximately 20 foot long and 15 foot wide. On each side of the room is a pair of large stone sarcophagi covered in cobwebs and a thick layer of dust.

At the far end of the chamber is tall statue of a cloaked humanoid, his hands outstretched and cupped underneath a large bronze bowl. The statue is 8 foot tall and of a nondescript humanoid standing straight. The bronze bowl, which is at a height of about five feet from the ground, is hammered tightly into the stone hands of the statue and cannot be removed without damaging the statue.

Upon inspection, the bowl contains a single gold coin that is, like everything else in this room, covered by a thick layer of dust and cobwebs. If the coin is disturbed in any way, the four skeletons in the chamber animate and attack (see below).

The four sarcophagi are made of smooth stone and have been untouched for decades. They are sealed pretty tightly, requiring a successful **DC 15 Strength check** to slide open, or they can simply be smashed open (AC 12, 30 hp, resistant to piercing and slashing from non-magical weapons). Inside each coffin are the skeletal remains of a warrior, still clutching a tower shield and longsword. Three of the skeletons and corresponding equipment are virtually identical, but the sarcophagus in the northeast corner contains a skeleton wearing a breastplate. It is also clutching a *+1 longsword* and a *+1 shield* that glow with a pale blue light.

Encounter. Three **skeletal warriors** (Appendix A) are the former protectors of Vasha, and the northeastern sarcophagus contains the remains of **Daelyn** (Appendix A), Vasha's captain of the guard. They lie here in wait for the day Vasha will once again be free, to stand at his side in glory. Opening a sarcophagus is not enough to animate them, but if the bodies are disturbed in any way all four animate and attack. If the coin within the bronze bowl is touched in any way, or if any of the four sarcophagi is opened by force, all four skeletons animate. One animated, those skeletons that are still within sealed sarcophagi break through the stone covers with little difficulty and attack any living thing in the chamber.

Treasure. Daelyn is wearing a breastplate. He also wears the equipment he wore in life as Vasha's lieutenant, a very ornate *+1 longsword* and a gold and silver studded *+1 shield*. Beyond that, there is nothing of value in the room.

Area 7: Upper Crypt

The leftmost outer door has the inscription "Tomb of the Unseeing" etched in it in Giant, and the rightmost door also has the same words etched into them in Abyssal. As soon as any living creature passes through the double doors, they must make an immediate **DC 16 Constitution saving throw** or become blinded, similar in effect to the *blindness/deafness* (PHB 219) spell, except that the effect lasts only as long as they remain in the chamber. The blindness can be cured with a *lesser restoration* (PHB 255) spell, or the effect will end if the player leaves the room. If they attempt to re-enter, they must make another Constitution saving throw as above. A successful *dispel magic* spell of DC 18 (PHB 234) suppresses the effect for 1 hour.

Upon entering the room, assuming anyone can see, read or paraphrase the following.

> This small crypt is approximately 20 foot long and 20 foot wide. On each side of the room is a pair of large stone sarcophagi, each on a raised stone platform. Stranding against the far wall are three large chests.

Each sarcophagus contains the remains of a skeletal warrior with a badly aged shield and rusty sword, but they are completely dormant and long dead.

The Three Chests. The three chests against the southern wall are locked and trapped. If any of the chests is touched by someone who is not blind (closing one's eyes is not enough), a blast of bright light with the intensity of direct sunlight erupts out of the lid. Every creature within the room must make a **DC 16 Constitution saving throw**, taking 21 (8d6) radiant damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. In addition, if a creature fails the saving throw by 5 or more they are also blinded (as per the *blindness/deafness* spell) for 1 hour. Creatures that are already blinded are not affected by the burst. Each chest's trap can be disabled with a successful **DC 17 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check** (requires thieves tools and proficiency); failing the check by more than 5 triggers the trap, even if the person attempting it is blind. The chests can also be individually dispelled with a *dispel magic* spell of DC 16. A blind creature can open a chest without incident, but when any creature that isn't blind touches a chest or its contents the trap goes off.

Treasure. Each one of the three chests contains a "key" - a circular gold disk approximately five to six inches in diameter that is decorated with ornate runes - that would seem to be usable to open the doors to the inner vault (Area 4), but only one of them is an authentic *Vasha's Key* (Appendix B) while the other two are *Vasha's False Keys* (Appendix B). Roll a d6 to determine which is the authentic key: on a 1-2 it is the westernmost chest, on a 3-4 it is the center chest, and on a 5-6 it is the easternmost chest. In addition to the keys, each chest contains the remains of multiple simple weapons that have decomposed and rusted into pieces. Sifting through the debris they also find the following in each chest:

- Left Chest: A pouch containing 17 pp and a *potion of superior healing* (DMG 187).
- Center Chest: A pouch containing 3 pp, 24 *+1 sling bullets* (DMG 150) and an ordinary sling that has rotted away into uselessness.
- Right Chest: A pouch containing 28 pp and 17 gp.

Area 8: Inner Vault

As the players enter the vault, read or paraphrase the following:

> This large chamber feels colder than the rest of the crypt, and the smell of death and decay is much more apparent as you enter. At the southern end of the chamber is a raised platform with three ornate stone sarcophagi. The three lids have been tossed aside and lie in a pile of rubble beside each sarcophagus. Hovering several feet over the center sarcophagus is a horrid, wraith-like creature clutching a long quarterstaff. It is wearing rusted chain mail, a ragged red cape, and an ornate gold crown atop its barren skull. Standing next to him, at ground level, are two skeletal warriors holding large shields and brandishing longswords.

As soon as Vasha sees the party, he speaks:

> You, foolish mortals, have our thanks. We are once again free from the confines of this vault, and will once again make the world tremble at our power! Now... prepare to die.

The double panels leading out are still magically locked (see Area 4) and require *Vasha's Key* (Appendix B) to open.

Encounter. **Vasha the Undying** (Appendix A) floats a few feet above his sarcophagus. Two **skeletal warriors** (Appendix A) stand next to him at ground level. As soon as Vasha makes his introduction, he and the skeletons attack. Vasha remains at range as best he can while the skeletons try to move into flanking positions to focus on the targets that seem to pose a greater threat to Vasha (clerics, paladins, and spellcasters).

Treasure. Vasha is wearing a *headband of intellect* (DMG 173), which boosts his Intelligence score to 19. It cannot be removed while he is alive, but can easily be taken from his remains once he falls. He is also in possession of an authentic *Vasha's Key* (Appendix B), the other authentic one being located in the upper crypt (Area 7). Vasha's quarterstaff is mundane but decorated with 500 gp worth of precious gemstones.

Conclusion

Once Vasha is defeated, the **scorpion construct** (Appendix A) in the outer vault (Area 4) activates and attacks anyone who attempts to leave.



Appendix A: Monsters & NPCs

Scorpion Construct

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 147 (14d10 + 70)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistances piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Understands common but does not speak
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Immutable Form. The construct is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The construct has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The construct's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. The construct makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8+4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). The scorpion has two claws, each of which can grapple only one target.

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d10+4) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Skeletal Warrior

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (tower shield)
Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)

Damage Resistances cold, necrotic
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages Common
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Fearless Soldier. While Daelyn is alive and within sight of the skeletal warrior, the skeletal warrior is immune to fear effects and has advantage on saving throws against turn undead.

Actions

Multiattack. The skeleton makes two longsword attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+2) slashing damage.

Reactions

Parry. The skeletal warrior gains 2 to its AC for a melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the skeletal warrior must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Vasha the Undying

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +4
Skills Arcana +7, History +7
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Magic Resistance. Vasha has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spellcasting. Vasha is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Vasha has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, fire bolt, light, shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *crown of madness, suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, dispel magic, lightning bolt*

4th level (2 slots): *ice storm, phantasmal killer*

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, Vasha has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Multiattack. Vasha makes two quarterstaff attacks. He can use his Life Drain ability in place of one of those attack.

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 20 (4d8 + 2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

Create Specter. Vasha targets a humanoid within 10 feet of him that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under Vasha's control. Vasha can have no more than six specters under its control at one time.

Daelyn, Captain of the Guard

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (breastplate, +1 tower shield)
Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +5
Damage Resistances Necrotic
Damage Immunities Poison
Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Magic Weapons. Daelyn's weapon attacks are magical.

Turn Resistance. Daelyn has advantage on wisdom saving throws against turn undead.

Actions

Multiattack. Daelyn makes two longsword attacks.

Longsword +1. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+3) slashing damage.

Command (Bonus Action). Daelyn barks an order to a skeletal warrior of his choice within 30 feet that is able to make an attack. That skeletal warrior makes one longsword attack as a free action.

Reactions

Parry. Daelyn gains 2 to its AC for a melee attack that would hit it. To do so, Daelyn must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Appendix B: Items

Vasha's Key

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This "key" is actually a circular gold disk approximately five to six inches in diameter. There are ornate runes carved along the perimeter of the disk.

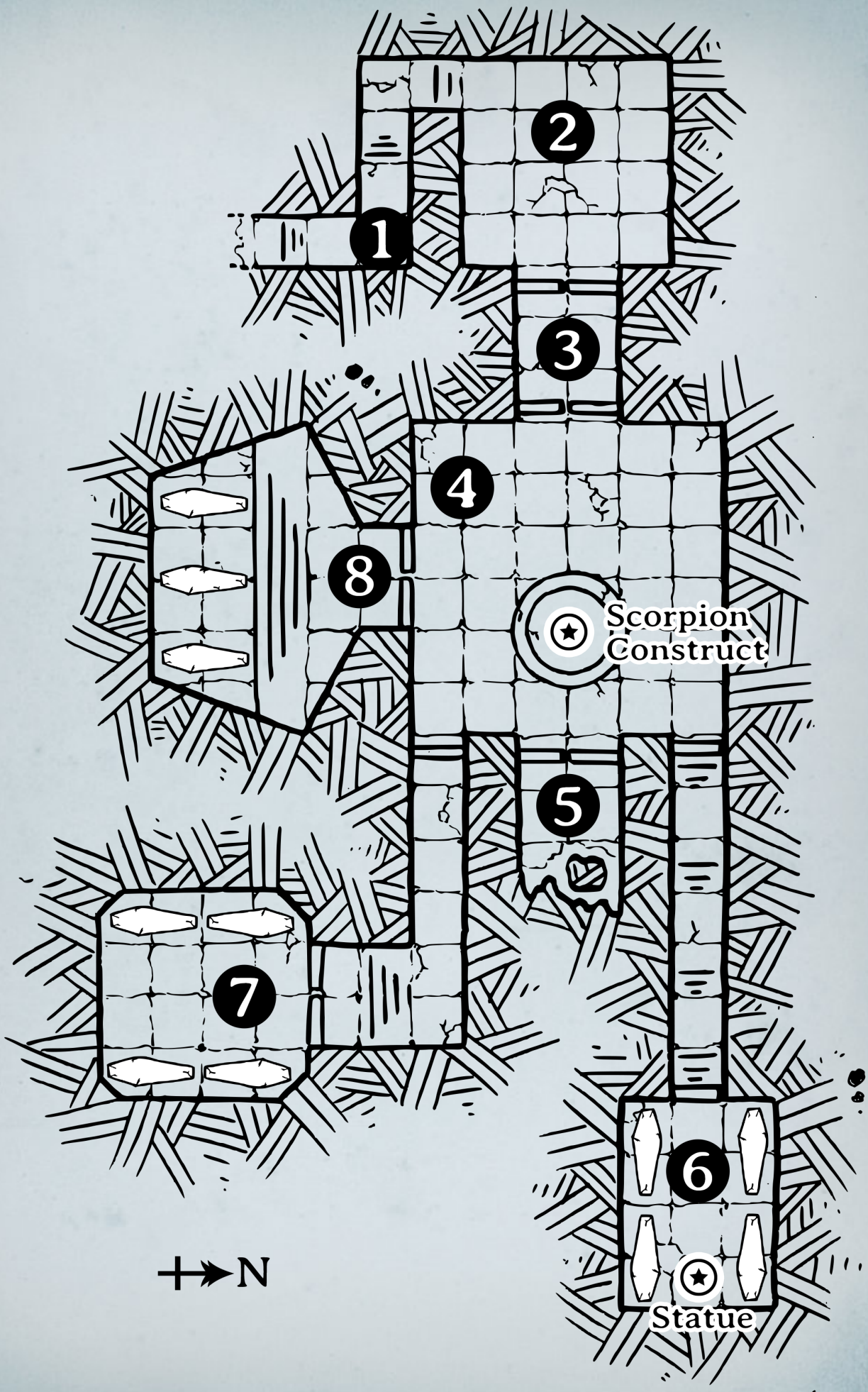
As an action, when the key is pressed against a door, chest or other locked object and the command word is spoken, the key casts the *knock* spell on the object it is touching. Every time it is used, the user must roll a d20; if the result is a 1, the key crumbles into dust and can no longer be used. Once used to unlock an object, the key cannot be used again in this manner until after a long rest.

The key can be used at any time to open the doors between the outer vault (Area 4) and the inner vault (Area 8) because it is designed to; it does not actually cast the *knock* spell in order to open the doors. It also is not at risk of crumbling if used in this manner.

Vasha's False Key

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This "key" looks identical to *Vasha's Key* (see above), and if attuned to it reveals the same properties as a real key. The only way to tell them apart is with a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** (to discern the difference in the runes) or by using a *detect magic* spell. Using *detect magic* reveals that these false keys have a strong aura of necromancy inside them. If a living creature attempts to use one of these false keys in a manner similar to a real *Vasha's Key* (such as to open the inner vault or to cast the *knock* spell), a blast of necrotic energy bursts forth from the key in a 20-foot radius; each creature within the area must make a **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 36 (8d8) necrotic damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a successful one. Any creature that fails the saving throw by 5 or more also gains one level of exhaustion. The necrotic blast also destroys the false key that was used in the process.


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Scorpion Construct
Statue
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Yancazi's Crypt

The place commonly known as 'The Warlocks Crypt' is the final resting place of the warlock, Orfeon Yancazi, a worshipper of Demogorgon until he overthrew his master. At least, that's how history tells it. In truth, Orfeon Yancazi failed to destroy Demogorgon and was thus punished, his form being transformed into the likeness of his patron and his mind just as twisted. He became imprisoned within his crypt by those he once called friends.

By Darren Parmenter

This dungeon is optimized for 5 10th level characters.

Characters adventuring into the crypt will be required to uncover a ritual to discover the true nature of what lies within. The characters will either need access to someone that can read Abyssal script or be accompanied by Victor Lentori, to complete the adventure.

Adventure Background

'The Warlock's Crypt' is located within an area of hills and broken mounds known as The Crags; a harsh terrain renowned for being occupied by goblinoids, gnolls and orcs.

A day's ride south of Mirabar along The Long Road, the crypt can easily be reached on foot or by horse and is a popular location for those 'Orfeon Yancazi fanatics' looking to pay respects to their 'legendary' hero.

A small inn, called The Inn of the Resting Warlock, is located near the crypt. Its caretaker, Victor Lentori, manages the inn primarily for those pilgrims visiting the area. Visitors and pilgrims tend to come every 2 or so weeks.

At the time of the characters arrival, the inn is quiet (there are no pilgrims visiting the area at this time), unless the DM wishes to add an element to the adventure outside of what is presented.

Adventure Hooks

The DM is encouraged to give the characters a reason for visiting Yancazi's Crypt, via The Inn of the Resting Warlock, and the following hooks are provided to facilitate that reason:

- Magical disturbances within the area.
- Wish to further study the ancient crypt.
- Another warlocks patron knows who is inside the crypt and wishes to destroy it.
- Rumors of a magical artifact buried with the warlock.

Yancazi's Crypt

Part 1: The Inn of the Resting Warlock

The Inn of the Resting Warlock is currently managed by **Victor Lentori** (Appendix A) a retired officer of the Mirabar militia. When the characters first approach the inn, read or paraphrase the following:

> A small wooden building sits to the side of the road. An aging human male sits in a chair beside the door. He smiles warmly as you approach and says: "Welcome travelers; my name is Victor and I'm the caretaker of this crypt."

Victor invites everyone in and proceeds to walk inside.

The interior of the building is small with a staircase leading upstairs to accommodation for travelers passing through and pilgrims visiting the crypt. The characters can stay here for 5 sp per night (which includes a modest evening meal) whilst they pay their respects at the crypt.

Although Victor has never been inside the crypt, he holds a key to the crypt around his neck. A successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check** will persuade him to allow the characters access to the crypt if the characters show good intent.

Victor's Knowledge. Victor knows the following information regarding the crypt:

- If asked, he does not know anything aboutor of the existence of the underground level.
- Victor believes this crypt to be the final resting place of OrfeonYancazi.
- Orfeon Yancazi spoke fluent abyssal and was an expert with abyssal script and runes.
- He is aware of stories that 'holy relics' within the crypt can somehow protect themselves should someone try to take it.
- If asked, although he has heard stories, more fables than real, he does not know what kinds of creature are within the crypt.
- The fables tell of guardians within the crypt, should the crypt be somehow defiled.
- To his knowledge, no-one to date has attempted to enter the crypt or ask for the key.
- Some pilgrims have reported seeing a guardian collecting the offerings. No one, to date, can agree on what this guardian looks like. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals Victor is holding something back. If questioned over the matter, a successful **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check** will convince Victor to reveal that he believes these sighting to be '... the fanciful imaginations of fanatics hoping to see something more than what's really there ...'. He believe the goblinoids from within The Crags collect the offerings, which probably accounts for why pilgrims see little to no trouble from these pesky creatures.

In reality, the creatures of The Crag usually avoid the crypt, having seen Orfeon Yancazi, and felt his wraith, on a number of occasions and want nothing to do within him. Orfeon Yancazi has, on occasion, managed to capture a goblinoid for sacrifice on the shrine in Area W9.

An occasional patrol of goblins, bugbears or gnolls do brave the area, attempting to steal what offering yet to be taken below (the DM is encouraged to include a patrol of either of these creatures if they feel a small fight would help 'juice up' the area before entering the crypt proper).

Roleplaying Victor. Use the following information to roleplay Victor:

- Victor will share information about the history of the crypt and its occupant.
- He will warn the characters about touching the treasure by saying "Do not touch the offerings; 'It' can be feisty sometimes". There is nothing (... It ...) directly guarding the offerings (see Arrival at 'The Warlocks Crypt' below).
- If successfully persuaded, Victor is happy to accompany the adventurers inside. Having been retired for a number of years, a little adventure would be a welcome change.

A well-traveled path leads several miles west into The Crags where it ends at the entrance to the crypt. At a leisurely pace, the party should arrive at the entrance within 4 hours of setting out from the inn. It is possible for a careful traveler to set out from the inn at dawn, visit the crypt and its immediate area, and still return to the inn before nightfall. This is what most pilgrims choose to do if they don't want to spend a night within The Crags.

Part 2: Arrival at the Crypt

Upon approaching the crypt, read or paraphrase the following:

> Large stone doors stand shut and flanked by identical large humanoid statues wearing plate mail armor with a sword at the waist. Gifts of flowers and ornaments lie scattered around the base of these statues. The small path you traveled in on leads away back into The Crags.

Investigating the doors reveals them to be sealed shut. The doors can be unlocked with a successful **DC 20 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check**. The lock can also be broken with a successful **DC 25 Strength check**. Victor Lentori has the keys to unlock the door.

A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (History) check** reveals the statues depict images of Orfeon Yancazi. His name, in Abyssal script, is also displayed on a plaque on the base of each statue. If the characters search through the gifts, they will find 10 gp in loose coins, 1 day's worth of fresh, usable preserved rations and a silver flask of ale worth 5 gp.

Yancazi's Sighting. Every couple of weeks, Orfeon Yancazi makes the trip from below to collect his offerings. He is yet to make this current trip and (adventure allowing) will do so on the following day. A rare pilgrim has caught sight of Orfeon Yancazi during his collection trip, giving rise to the stories of the guardian '... It ...'. If Orfeon Yancazi sights a pilgrim during one of these trips, he puts on a theatric display, always believable enough that any pilgrim run from the area. Stories of '... It ...' have been described as anything from a 9 foot monstrous beast to a warrior in armor. No one can really ever agree on what '... It ...' is but the stories are enough to keep the pilgrims coming to pay their respects.

Secret Entrance. Unbeknownst to Victor or anyone visiting the crypt, a successful **DC 25 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals a well-hidden secret door located at the rear of the crypt. This is how Orfeon Yancazi makes his exit from the crypt to collect his offerings. To do so causes him significant pain, therefore only allowing him to exit the crypt for a short period of time. This pain is what keeps him imprisoned, a pain he is yet to discover a cure for. He must return to the crypt with 10 minutes or else the pain becomes unbearable to the point of nearly passing out. The secret door leads into Area W1 and is marked on the corresponding DM map.

Part 3: Offering Chamber

General Information. The crypt has the following properties:

- The ceilings are 20 foot high.
- Walls and floors are made from polished stone.
- The crypt is dimly lit by an ambient magical glow within the crypt. The crypt counts as a **lightly obscured area**.
- None of the doors are locked unless specified otherwise.
- Aside from the secret door on arrival, all secret doors within the crypt can be found with a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check**.

Area W1: The Crypt

When the characters first enter the crypt, read or paraphrase the following:

> The two large doors part to reveal a large stone-tiled room with a large sarcophagus sitting in the center. Statues, similar to those outside, stand in the two far corners depicting a man in a different pose wearing plate mail armor with a sword hanging by his side. Large stone slabs occupy each corner and various gifts and offerings are scattered across them.

Two doors stand within the far wall and one on the eastern and western wall.

If the characters approach the sarcophagus in the center of the room, read or paraphrase the following:

> The large stone sarcophagus displays carvings of the Warlock, Orfeon Yancazi. A small inscription, written in Abyssal runes, reads, "Here lies Orfeon Yancazi, Slayer of Demogorgon."

A successful **DC 15 Strength check** removes the lid to reveal an empty sarcophagus. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals it to have never been occupied in the first place.

The sarcophagus hides the entrance to the real crypt where Orfeon Yancazi is currently imprisoned. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check** of the sarcophagus reveals scratch marks at the base of the sarcophagus indicating that it can slide. Any attempt to slide the sarcophagus fails. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** can identify residual magic that can be activated by a ritual.

The characters can find this ritual in the surrounding rooms on the walls written in Abyssal script. Once the ritual is spoken in the correct order, read the following:

> The sarcophagus in the center of the room slides heavily along the floor revealing a staircase leading down. The stench of rot can be smelt from within.

The Ritual. The correct order for the ritual is as follows:

- All Heroes encounter challenges,
- Those that beat them become legends,
- Those who fail them,
- Will become monsters.

If the characters search through the offerings, read or paraphrase the following:

> A variety of items litter the slabs along the edges of the room. Rusted armor, coins, and weapons can be seen amongst the offerings. Magically preserved foods and flowers lie amongst the treasure. The most prominent item is a large valuable looking ruby sitting on one of the slabs, its red aura emanates from the gem, pulsating like a heartbeat.

The Offerings. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals one of the weapons on the slab to be magical, and strong residual transmutation magic from the ruby which flows over all the items and treasure on the slab.

If the characters attempt to take any of the items, the treasure forms into a **treasure golem** (Appendix A). The treasure golem will use *Immolation* (Appendix B) during the encounter. It understands Common and Abyssal and its password is 'tentacled baboon' spoken in Abyssal. The DM is encouraged to change the magical longsword into a weapon a member of the party can use. This should occur if a character within the party does not own or should own a stronger magical weapon.

Once the treasure golem is killed, it collapses to the floor, scattering the treasure and items within the surrounding area. The ruby at this point cracks, becoming non-magical.

Treasure. The characters can find the following items of value:

- 80 gp in mixed coins
- a suit of plate armor (PHB 145)
- *Immolation* (Appendix B)
- a large cracked ruby worth 100 gp

Area W2: East Chamber

When characters enter the room, read or paraphrase the following:

> This small room has a large mural carved into the far wall with some demonic looking runes carved into the wall above.

If the characters examine the mural read the following:

> The mural is split into 2 sections. The first section shows a lone figure delving into a deep network of tunnels. The second section shows the same figure meeting with a larger group of people within a large cavern.

A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (History) check** will reveal that the lone figure in the mural is the same person who rests within this tomb.

The First Part. Any character able to speak Abyssal, or Victor, can read the following on the wall above:

> All Heroes encounter challenges,

Area W3: North-East Chamber

This room is similar in layout to Area W2. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters examine the mural:

> The mural in this room depicts 7 people, one of which is Orfeon Yancazi, doing battle against an imposingly large demonic creature. As the story within the mural progresses, 3 of the combatants disappear from the carvings while the rest stand over the body of the demon.

A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion or Arcana) check** will reveal that the demonic figure is Demogorgon.

The Third Part. Any character able to speak Abyssal, or Victor, can read the following on the wall above:

> Those who fail them,

Area W4: North-West Chamber

This room is similar in layout to Area W2. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters examine the mural:

> The mural depicts a group of adventurers exploring a vast network of caverns and tunnels. The adventurers frequently come into contact with demonic figures and grotesque monsters during their adventures.

The Second Part. Any character able to speak Abyssal, or Victor, can read the following on the wall above:

> Those that beat them become legends,

Area W5: West Chamber

This room is similar in layout to Area W2 above. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters examine the mural:

> The western chamber is a small stone room that has a large mural carved into the far wall. The mural depicts what appears to be the final days of the warlock, Orfeon Yancazi. It appears to show this crypt and a large ornamental sarcophagus in the center of the room with the warlock lying within. A runic inscription lies above the mural.

The Fourth Part. Any character able to speak Abyssal, or Victor, can read the following above the mural:

> Will become monsters.

Part 4: The Warlock's Crypt

Area W6: Staircase

Once the characters have recited the ritual over the sarcophagus, the sarcophagus moves to one side, showing a staircase descending beneath it.

A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals medium sized foot prints within a dusty debris lining the stairs. Unless the characters have previously seen any of the demons featured within this adventure, they will be unable recognize the foot prints to be demonic in nature. They will wrongfully be recognized as those belonging to an owlbear or any other creature the characters have previously seen.

As the characters begin to walk down the stairs, read or paraphrase the following:

> Stone stairs lead down into the darkness. The stench of rot grows stronger the further down you go.

Area W7: Arcane Gateway

When the characters reach the bottom of the stairs, read or paraphrase the following:

> At the bottom of the series of stairs and landings, a short corridor opens into a small room, split down the middle by a large metal gate. The room is largely bare of any furnishings or decorations, similar to the rest of the crypt you've seen thus far. An eerily chill appears to emanate from beyond the gate.

Once the characters choose to look beyond the gate, read or paraphrase the following:

> Looking beyond the metal gate, you see nothing but a foggy kaleidoscopic haze, finding it hard to focus on anything past this point. A large lock is positioned in the center of the gate.

Arcane Gateway. The gateway separates the inner crypt from the outside world. It is of an arcane construction, complete with runes and arcane script, and imbued with spells and glyphs to protect from intruders. The gate is nearly impossible to break, needing a successful **DC 30 Strength check** to do so. The lock can be picked with a **DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check**.

A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** will reveal the gate's magical properties:

- Looking through the gate while within 15 feet of it may cause a creature to come under the effects of a DC 15 *confusion* spell (PHB 224).
- Touching the gate for the first time causes the *glyph of warding* (PHB 245) inscribed on it to explode dealing 27 (6d8) acid damage. A successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw reduces the damage to half. The *glyph of warding* resets after 3 hours.
- Picking the lock without using a key will cause the gate to expel a burst of magical energy that removes 1 spell slot from each character in a 30-foot radius, starting with the highest levels first. Any characters that do not have spell slots suffer 7 (2d6) force damage.

The effects can be bypassed using a *knock* spell (PHB 254) to open the gate or by using *dispel magic* cast at 5th level (PHB 234). 3 rounds later, the effects of a *knock* or *dispel magic* are removed.

Hidden Enemies. The moment the gate is unlocked, a character who succeeds in a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** or has a **passive Perception of 13 or higher** notices 2 **shadow demons** (MM 64) lurking on the other side of the gate. The shadow demons will attack any character that attempts to pass through the gateway.

Area W8: Crypt

Stepping through the gateway sends a chill down your spine as the temperature drops dramatically. The stench of rot lingers in the air and your breath mists in front of your face. The room is similar to the previous room except a door stands closed on both the opposite wall and the one to the North. Large claw marks in the far wall smolder with a slight heat. The far doors appear unremarkable while the northern door has a symbol of a forked tail wrapped around a sword.

Stepping through the gateway marks the entrance to the true crypt where Orfeon Yancazi is imprisoned. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check** on the gouge marks allows the characters to recognize the tell-tale signs of a **glabrezu** (MM 58).

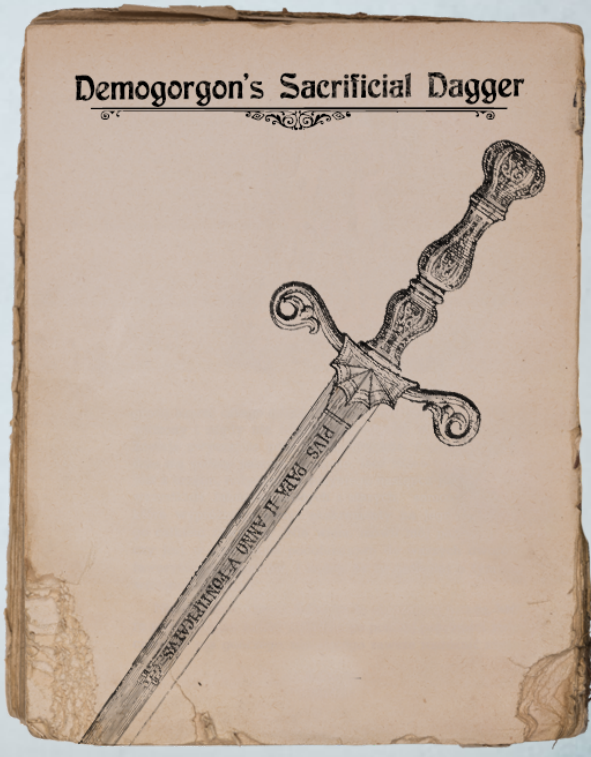
A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion)** check allows the characters to recognize the symbol on the northern door as that of Demogorgon, the warlock's patron.

Area W9: Shrine to Demogorgon

Sacrifices to Demogorgon. Within this room, a stone shrine is carved out of the far wall with a statue depicting the demon lord, Demogorgon, standing on top. Bloodstains cover the base of the shrine and a gilded knife sits at the feet of the statue, its blade covered in dried blood. Several mutilated bodies, in various forms of decay and rot, can be seen lying at the base of the shrine. Investigating the mutilated bodies identifies them as goblins and bugbears. These creatures where captured and offered up as sacrifice to Demogorgon. All appear to have their throats slit and missing their internal organs. The organs, a chosen delicacy amongst demons, are fed, after the sacrifice, to the various loyal demons scattered throughout the tombs interior.

A Bout of Madness. When the characters first enter this room and lay eyes on the statue, they must make a **DC 13 Wisdom saving throw**. Failure results in the character being afflicted with a **madness**, needing to roll on the Short-Term Madness table (DMG 259). If the saving throw results in a total of 5 or less, the character must roll on the Long-Term Madness table (DMG 260) instead. The statue has no effect on a successful saving throw.

Sacrificial Dagger. If the characters investigate the dagger, they will see that its hilt is made of gold and contains Abyssal runic writing. Any character that can read abyssal knows the runes state, 'Blood Drinker sacrifices in the name of Demogorgon'. The dagger is called *Demogorgon's Sacrificial Dagger* (Appendix B). There is nothing else of interest in this room.



Area W10: Antechamber

The doorway opens into a large chamber with six stones pillars extending to the ceiling. In the center of the room stand two large monoliths, with a large mural spanning the length of the far wall. The monoliths appear to have pictures carved into the sides similar to the ones in the main crypt above.

Hidden Enemies. When the characters enter the room, a character who succeeds in a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** or has a **passive Perception of 15 or higher** notices 4 **barlgura** (MM 56) hiding amongst the stone pillars. These barlgura will attack the characters once they approach the monoliths.

Orfeon Yancazi's True Story. The first monolith contains darker images of the battles fought by Orfeon Yancazi in the Underdark and the struggles fought between the party. The second monolith contains images of a party of adventurers running away from a large demonic monstrosity. They appear badly injured with some of their numbers missing from the image as if things did not go as planned in a recently fought battle. The large mural on the far wall depicts Orfeon Yancazi slowly being transformed into a demon before he is finally imprisoned in the tomb by his former party.

Should the characters care to inquire about the relevance of the murals or the significance of the murals from one to the other, a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals the final image of the large mural appears to contain the true story of Orfeon Yancazi and his fall from glory. A character with a **passive Wisdom (Insight) of 15 or higher** comes to the assumption that the crypt above merely depicts how Orfeon wanted to be remembered.

Area W11: Small Corridor

You open the door to find an empty wide corridor with a single door opposite you and a double set of doors to the right some 20 feet away.

A wide empty corridor connects to 3 rooms. Aside from the sparseness of the corridor and the unusual width for such a short corridor, the area is devoid of anything out of the ordinary.

Should the party make a loud enough noise to penetrate the double doors to Area W14, have the false Orfeon Yancazi attempt a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** to hear the noise within the corridor. It is left up to the DM to decide whether the false Orfeon Yancazi chooses to investigate or not.

Area W12: Hellpit Gateway

The doorway opens into a long corridor that appears to end in a small room off to the right.

Once the characters travel to the far end, read or paraphrase the following:

Within this room is another arcane gateway, similar to the one at the entrance to the tomb. This gateway, however, has a large forked tail wrapped around a sword engraved into the lock. A large demonic looking creature stands before the gateway.

The demon is a **glabrezu** (MM 58). It will communicate with characters telepathically in their spoken language and will try to convince them to unlock the gate. He will promise treasure and power to anyone that can open the gate. Once opened the door is opened or if the characters refuse to help him, he will become aggressive and attack the nearest character.

The gate functions the exact same as the gate in Area W7 except the acid damage is replaced with fire damage. Nothing can be seen on the far side because of a similar dull haze.

Area W13: Hellpit

The gateway opens into a large room supported in each corner by a large stone pillar. A gaping hole opens in the floor that stretches 40 foot across and descends into an impermeable darkness. On the far side of the room stands a large demon in plate armor and carrying a longsword. Two heads sprout from his shoulders and tentacles protruding from his back. He opens his mouth and says "Greetings adventurers, it has been a long time since I've had visitors. Let's have some fun, shall we."

There are a variety of demons hiding in this room and in the pit. **Orfeon Yancazi** (Appendix A) stands across the pit. He will attempt to incapacitate the characters to use as sacrifices to his patron after the fight. If the fight goes badly, he will attempt to flee from the area further into the tomb.

When the characters get close to the edge, a **chasme** (MM 57) hiding within the pit will fly out and attack the characters. The chasme will attempt to grapple a character and carry them into the pit for later eating, dropping them off on a crevice 60 feet down before attempting to grab another character. The chasme will avoid any characters that are unconscious, preferring to target characters that are still active.

The pit extends 200 feet downward before the reaching the floor. A large portal shifts and twirls within the rock face and a large sea can be seen beyond broken only by large rocky protrusions erupting from the surface.

A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check** will allow characters to recognize this as the Gaping Maw, the realm of Demogorgon within the Abyss. If this check succeeds by 5 or more, the characters know that the only way to close this portal is to throw a demonic implement or item back through the portal opening. This can be achieved by throwing *Demogorgon's Sacrificial Dagger* (or something similar) into the portal.

The pain Orfeon Yancazi constantly experiences is preventing him from making more than the briefest trips beyond the portal. Should he be able to find a cure, this portal and the world above would once again be his playground.

Treasure. Should Orfeon Yancazi be killed here, the characters can find a suit of +2 *plate armor* (DMG 152), and the *Sword of Souls* (Appendix B) on the body of Orfeon Yancazi.

Area W14: Study

A large desk stands in the middle of this room. A large tome can be seen open on the desk, roughly one quarter the way through the volume. Large shelves line the walls filled with books. A small door leads to the south and east. The western wall has a set of large double doors. Sitting behind the desk in the middle of this study is a middle-aged man with black hair. He says "Welcome adventurers. I am Orfeon Yancazi, the resident of this tomb. Mind my bodyguard, she can be a little overprotective sometimes." At that, he motions to a snakelike lady with 6 hands standing by the far wall. "So, what brings you to my fine home?"

The person sitting behind the desk is not the real Orfeon Yancazi. It is actually a **yochlol** (MM 65) transformed to look like him. The yochlol knows any information that the real Orfeon Yancazi would know and is indistinguishable from the real person.

Roleplay Orfeon Yancazi as a well-meaning man. He will talk to the characters unless he is provoked, or they try to leave. He will ask the characters about their travels and what the world outside is like in his absence.

If the characters act aggressively towards him or his bodyguard or if the characters inquire about Area W13, the yochlol and his bodyguard attack. Orfeon will revert to his true form as a yochlol demon and both it and the **marilith** (MM 61) bodyguard, will move to attack the nearest melee characters.

A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check** of the desk reveals hidden in one of the draws a series of notes written in Abyssal. Studying the notes reveals research into the cure for chronic and debilitating pain. These are Orfeon Yancazi's research papers into curing his condition. Though not complete, they could be sold for 100 gp to an interested apothecary (or similar) if one could be found. Any character proficient in Medicine who devotes 100 hours of costing and research into these papers can find a cure on a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Medicine) check**. Failure results in a further 20 hours of costing and research and a cumulative -1 to the check for each successive check. An eventful success yields not only the cure but the application of a ritual that requires 5,000 gp in materials that causes the permanent chronic pain experienced by Orfeon Yancazi. The application of this research and ritual is left to the DM to devise as it falls outside of the presented adventure.

The books and tomes within the bookcases hold texts relating to the history of the surrounding area and any Abyssal influence that may have occurred. Although the exact nature of these texts is left to the DM to decide upon, any collector will pay 1,000 gp for the collection should an interested party be found.

DM Note

This is a deadly encounter and intended as a deterrent for the players. If you feel like the challenge should be lower consider to swap the marilith for another yochlol in disguise. A character will know about the ranking of a marilith as a type 5 demon and its immense power with a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check**.

Area W15: Dining Room

A small wooden table sits in this unfurnished room. The table has cutlery set for 2 people and a single chair. A thick layer of dust covers everything in this room.

This is the beginning of a series of living areas for the tombs resident (Area W16-W19). It has all be unused for some time. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals that this area has probably been unused for almost 50 years.

Area W16: Bathroom

A large stone tub is set into the floor of this room. A basin sits on the far wall with a cracked mirror hanging above it. Dust covers this room and appears undisturbed for a long time.

The stone tub appears to be a form of bathtub used for cleaning. The cracked mirror appeared to once have been whole but a large cracked indent in the middle of it appears to have broken it some time ago. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals that the hole is fist shaped and contains flecks of ancient dried blood upon its surface.

Area W17: Kitchen

On the far side of the room, a large cauldron hangs above an unlit fireplace. Benches and cupboards line the walls with various cooking equipment stacked amongst them. Dust coats the floors and benches in this room but tracks through the dust lead to a dark lump in the corner. The room contains the smell of sulphur and spoiled food.

The dark lump in the corner of the room is a **mane** (MM 60). It will not move or attack until it is touched.

A second mane lurks in a nearby cupboard and will not render assistance to its fellow mane within the room. If the cupboards are searched, an opposed **Dexterity (Stealth) check** vs. a **Wisdom (Perception) check** will determine whether the characters are surprised when the cupboard is opened and the mane attacks.

The cooking equipment appears clean but well used. Dust covers them thickly and the fireplace appears unused for a long time. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals the cauldron to have an enchantment aura. The *cauldron of cooking* (Appendix B) is cursed.

The cauldron contains what appears to be goblin parts stew. Orfeon Yancazi has attempted to supplement his 'bland ration supply' with the occasional fresh stew of leftover sacrificed goblin body parts. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine or Survival) check** reveals that, although the leftovers of the stew appear fresh, that they have probably been here over a week. If any character attempts to eat the stew (hot or cold), must succeed in a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** or be poisoned. The character suffers a malus of 1 to his or her constitution score. A new saving throw must be attempted every hour to negate the effects. Failure results in a cumulative malus of 1 to the character's constitution score. Should the character's constitution score be reduced to 0, the character dies.

One cupboard contains 1 day's fresh rations. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals them to have a major enchantment and minor necrotic aura. If this check succeeds by 5 or more, the characters know these rations reappear in the cupboard at dawn or once eaten. They also know that if any rations leave the crypt, they will instantly fall to dust. The rations, though highly nutritious and would enable an individual to survive on solely them alone, are extremely bland with the taste and consistency of dry paper.

Siting next to the rations is a wine bottle with a label written in Elven script saying, 'Wine of Life'. The wine bottle functions as a *decanter of endless water* (DMG 161).

Area W18: Bedroom

A small bed lies on the far side of this room. Its sheets neatly made and covered in a thick layer of dust. A large wooden cupboard stands on an adjacent wall.

Upon nearing the bed for the first-time, the characters must make a **DC 10 Wisdom saving throw** or be knocked **Unconscious** (PHB 292) for 1d8 hours as a magical aura lulls them to sleep. Those who fall unconscious in this manner will experience vivid prophetic dreams detailing an event in the future.

DM Note

Use this as a way of foreshadowing other events within your world or for granting information that the characters may have missed or need for later adventures.

The magical aura can be negated by making a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** or by casting *dispel magic* (PHB 234). This spell will be identified as a form of *sleep* spell (PHB 276) used to assist people in sleeping. Casting *dispel magic* (or similar) on the bed will deactivate the bed for 1 turn, at which time the aura restarts. Removing the bed from the tomb destroys the magical effect of the bed. The wooden cupboard contains 10 sets of outdated fine clothing worth 5 gp each.

Area W19: Armory

> The door leads into a small armory. A small chest sits against the far wall. A rack full of weapons sits on the adjacent walls. The opposite wall to that holds a suit of armor.

The chest is unlocked and contains 150 pp, 2 diamonds worth 500 gp, a scroll of the *remove curse* spell (PHB 271) and 3 *potions of greater healing* (DMG 187).

The weapon rack contains 2 longswords, 3 daggers, a mace, a glaive, a trident and a spear. The armor is an ornamental suit of studded leather armor once belonging to a waterdavian captain. It is worth around 3,300 gp to a collector as the uniform is no longer being used.

The waterdavian captain's armor, one of the longswords and the trident function as **animated objects** (MM 19), guardians for within the armory. These objects attack any creature who enters the room that is not either a permanent occupant of the tomb or does not have demonic blood. For each point of slashing or piercing damage the waterdavian captain's armor takes drops the value of the armor by 100 gp. But a collector will still pay 10 gp for the armor, for historical reasons, where it totally destroyed by slashing or piercing damage.

Concluding the Adventure

If the portal in Area W14 is closed, then any demons within the area will disperse within a tenday as they are hunted down or banished back to the abyss. If the characters reveal what they saw within the crypt, it will tarnish the name of the warlock within and the true story of his actions will spread. Otherwise, the area returns to normal without the level of notoriety the crypt once had.

Continuing the Adventure

If Orfeon Yancazi somehow manages to escape through either guile, persuasion or shear luck, he will seek revenge on the characters. He will summon various demons to harass the characters and if not eventually dealt with, may eventually try to summon his patron into the world. If his research on his severe pain was not found or stolen, he will finish and perform the ritual within 2 months, allowing him to finally leave the tomb.

If the characters killed Orfeon Yancazi but did not manage to close the portal in Area W14, eventually more demons will appear within the tomb and work their way, unhindered, to the crypt above. This could eventually cause the characters to return to a large demonic incursion within the area, threatening the region, including the nearby town of Mirarbar.



Appendix A: Monsters & NPCs

Treasure Golem

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 171 (18d12+54)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	4 (-3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +9
Skills Stealth +5
Damage Vulnerabilities acid
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, slashing and piercing from magical attacks
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, slashing and piercing from non-magical attacks, fire, poison, psychic, necrotic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The treasure golem makes 3 attacks. 2 fist attacks and 1 crush attack.

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (4d6+6) bludgeoning damage.

Crush. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d12+6) bludgeoning damage.

Engulf (Recharge 5-6). The target must succeed in a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be grappled and suffers 7 (2d6) fire damage. Grappled creatures take 7 (2d6) fire damage at the start of their turn as the molten core of the golem burns them alive. Creatures Engulfed can attempt a DC 18 Strength saving throw to break free at the start their turns.

Made of Treasure. Treasure golems resemble large armored warriors comprised of treasure. The treasure can be anything from coins, armor, or weapons. Treasure golems are known to wear magical armor and wield magical weapons that are part of the hoard they are protecting. If no armor or weapons are present, a treasure golem merely becomes a flood of coins and gems engulfing everything they pass over. A treasure golem can be discovered by the presence of a large pulsating ruby within a treasure pile.

Tireless Guardians. Treasure Golems are created to protect large hordes of treasure or offerings of a temple. The more treasure added to their piles, the bigger the golem grows. Many priests employ powerful wizards to create such a creature to protect their offerings to their gods and temples. Only those who know the password can safely take from a hoard protected by a treasure golem; this password is picked by their creator at the time of their creation. It is common for dragons to employ these creatures to protect their vast hordes of treasure. These guardians have amassed so much treasure that they have grown to gargantuan sizes and are capable of destroying all but the most powerful adversaries.

Born from Fire. The ritual used to create these creatures involves a precious ruby worth 2,500 gp to imbue with the powers of life and fire. Only the strongest wizards have the willpower to complete such a task without completely burning themselves out. The ritual also involves a small contribution of treasure to give the golem some form before they can grow larger.

Orfeon Yancazi

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 20 (+2 plate)
Hit Points 220 (20d12+80)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Cha +9, Str +10
Skills Athletics +8, Acrobatics, +8
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning slashing and piercing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Abyssal, Common, Undercommon
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Spellcasting. Orfeon Yancazi is a 11th level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (Spell save DC 16. +8 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following Warlock spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): *blade ward, chill touch, eldritch blast, true strike*

5th level (3 slots): *arms of hadar, hellish rebuke, hex, crown of madness, ray of enfeeblement, suggestion, counterspell, fear, hunger of hadar, vampiric touch, blight*

6th level (1 slot): *Eyebite*

Two Heads. OrfeonYancazi can maintain two concentration spells at a time. In addition, if he is only concentrating on one spell he has advantage on any checks to maintain the spell.

Sword of Souls. Any creatures slain by Orfeon's sword attack cannot be brought back to life unless by a wish spell as the sword entraps their soul within itself.

Legendary Resistance (1/Day). If Orfeon Yancazi fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed in stead.

Magic Weapons. Orfeon Yancazi's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. OrfeonYancazi makes three attacks: two with his tentacle and 1 with his sword

Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (1d8+8) slashing damage and an additional 7 (2d6) psychic damage from the souls entrapped within the blade.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (6d6+8) bludgeoning damage. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be restrained. This save can be repeated at the start of the target's turn.

Humbe Origins. Orfeon Yancazi was once a simple guard captain in Waterdeep before his regiment was slaughtered by an unknown monster. At that moment, he agreed to a pact with Demogorgon to save the lives of his men. He was ultimately tricked and now the souls of his men are trapped in his weapon, the *sword of souls*. Since that moment, he grew his power until he sought out a group of adventurers to take down his master.

False Tales. The popular story amongst historians is that Orfeon and his party defeated Demogorgon in his realm, destroying him forever. The story became legend since he has not been heard from since the event and that Orfeon supposedly died during the encounter. The true story was that Demogorgon was defeated on the Material Plane but never in his realm. Demogorgon since punished Orfeon for his treachery, distorting his mind and body into a cruel, twisted image of Demogorgon himself until he was eventually entombed within his crypt by his previous party.

Twisted Transformation. Orfeon Yancazi has been transformed into the likeness of Demogorgon himself; a large 2 headed demon with two barbed tentacles sprouting from his back. His skin is scaly and reptilian in appearance, but he otherwise retains normal human features. His mind, however, is a mere fragment of the man he once was. His thoughts are constantly lingering on the edge of insanity and he has become a force of true evil. The only thing preventing him from being unleashed on the world to cause chaos and destruction is his permanent chronic pain and the magical rune gates keeping him within his tomb.

Victor Lentori

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 52 (7d10+14)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +5
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Abyssal
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Aggressive. Once per short rest, Victor can use a bonus action to make another round of attacks with his greatsword.

Actions

Multiattack. Victor Lentori makes two melee attacks with his greatsword.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6+3) slashing damage.

Warrior & Landlord. Victor Lentori is the current caretaker of the crypt of Orfeon Yancazi and proprietor of the Inn of the Resting Warlock. He acquired the inn after retiring as an officer in the Mirarbar militia from an old friend who now resides in Neverwinter. His days as an officer have long since passed due to his age and he has now opted for a quieter and more peaceful life and a caretaker and innkeeper. But he isn't one to ever back down to the occasional adventure to keep life interesting. Victor takes his job very seriously and learned to speak Abyssal to help travelers explore the crypt and to add to his own knowledge about it.

Seasoned & Fearless. Even in the face of demons like glabrezus Victor will stand his ground. Another day, another enemy that needs killing.

Appendix B: Items

Cauldron of Cooking

Wondrous item, rare, cursed

Curse. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine or Survival) check** reveals that, although the content of the cauldron appears fresh, the content is poisoned. A creature eating from the contents (hot or cold), must succeed in a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** or gets **poisoned**. The poisoned creature suffers a malus of 1 to its constitution score. A new saving throw must be attempted every hour to negate the effect. Failure results in a cumulative malus of 1 to the creature's constitution score. Should the creature's constitution score be reduced to 0, the creature dies.

Casting *remove curse* (PHB 271) on the cauldron permanently removes the curse effect. The cauldron retains the following perks:

Cleansing. Anything cooked within this magical cauldron will remain fresh and safe to eat for as long as it remains within cauldron, whether the cauldron remains hot or is allowed to go cold. Any poison or inedible material placed within the cauldron becomes edible and the poisoned effect becomes negated. After 24 hours within the cauldron, once removed, the food remains edible for 1 hour, after which time it reverts to its original state prior to entering the cauldron and being cooked.

Immolation

Weapon (any weapon), very rare (requires attunement)

This magic weapon is made of ebony and you gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. Each time the wielder scores a 15+ to hit (die roll plus modifiers), the weapon flares upon contact, causing an extra of 7 (2d6) fire damage. Additionally, the target is set on fire, taking an extra 2 fire damage at the start of its turn for 2 (1d4) rounds. The fire cannot be extinguished by non-magical means and the duration is cumulative.

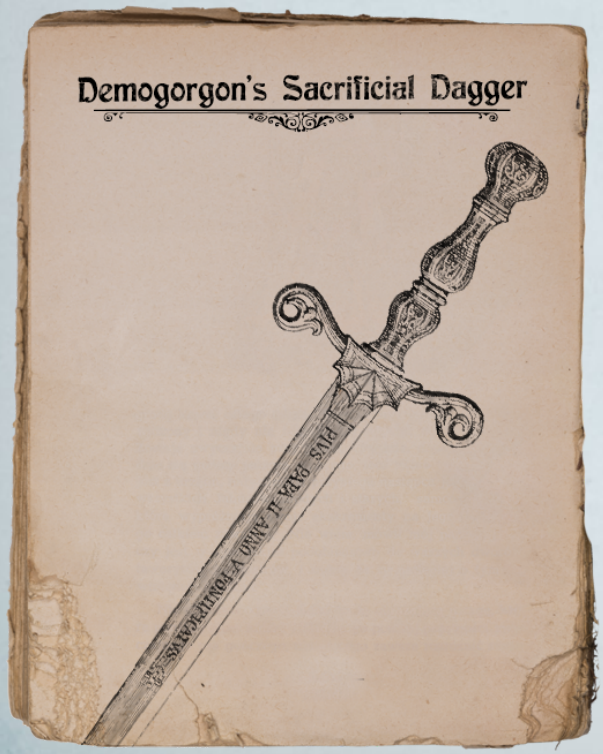
Demogorgon's Sacrificial Dagger

Weapon (Dagger), rare (requires attunement)

Demogorgon's Sacrificial Dagger is one of many of its kind, all used to grow the power of the one it is attuned to. These daggers are notoriously used by cults who worship the Prince of Demons. Anyone killed by this blade is sent to suffer under the eternal punishment of Demogorgon. Strangely, most of the sacrificed creature's blood is absorbed into the dagger, which gives the blade its sickly red shine.

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. Any non-evil aligned characters suffer the following effects when touching the dagger:

They take 3 (1d6) fire damage as the dagger brands their skin with the mark of Demogorgon upon any areas that it touches. While a character has this mark, they must make a **DC 10 Wisdom saving throw** whenever they see a demon or devil. On a success, the branded creature is immune from being **Frightened** by that particular demon or devil for 24 hours. Failure results in the character being **Frightened** of that particular demon or devil for 1 minute. Multiple saving throws may be required where multiple demons or devils are within sight of the branded creature. Though the creature is not directly cursed, this particular brand can only be removed with the use of a *remove curse* (PHB 271), *wish* (PHB 288) or similar spell. In extreme cases, the affected limb can also be removed to remove the brand and the curse from the affected person.



Sword of Souls

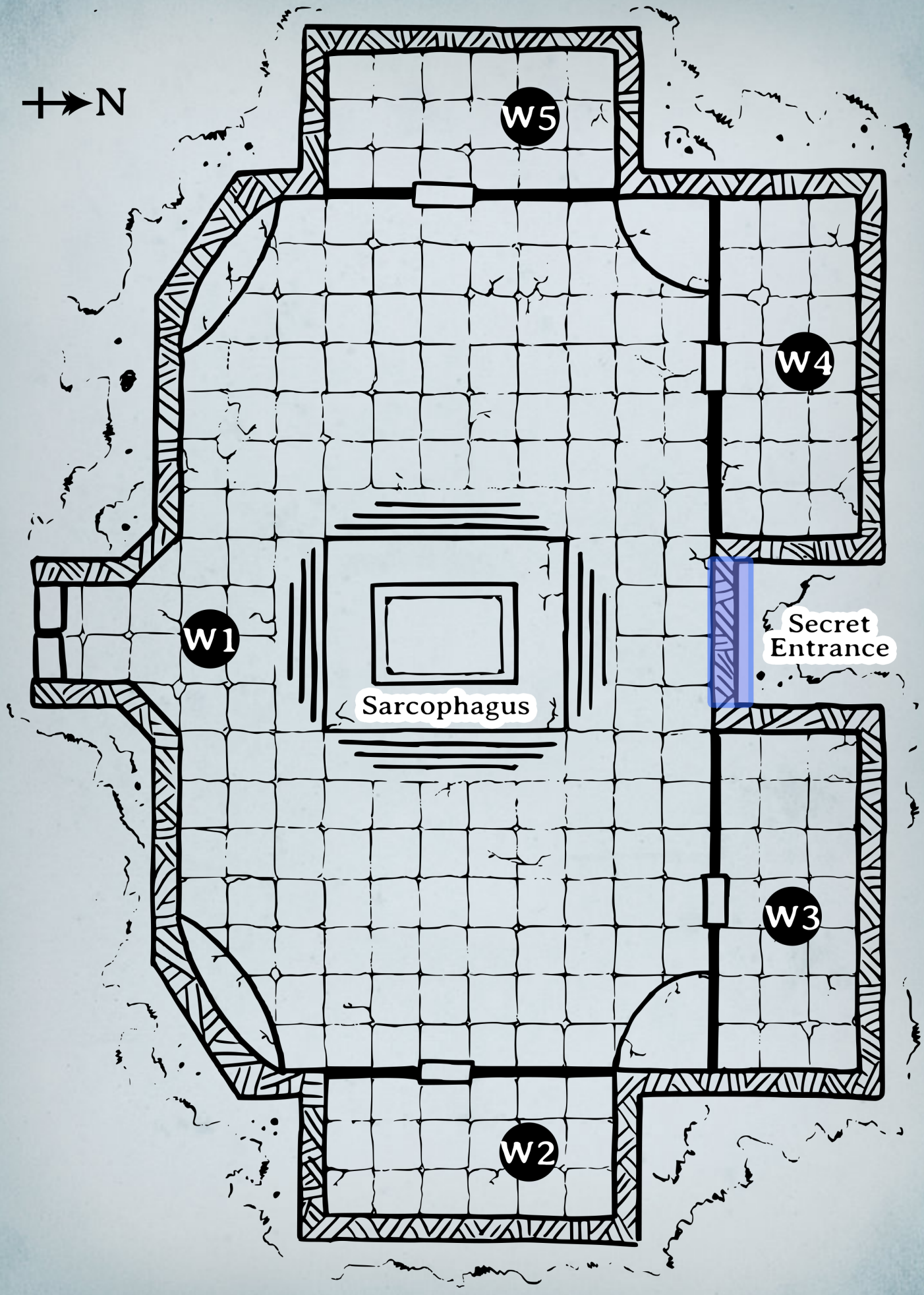
Weapon (Longsword), very rare (requires attunement), cursed

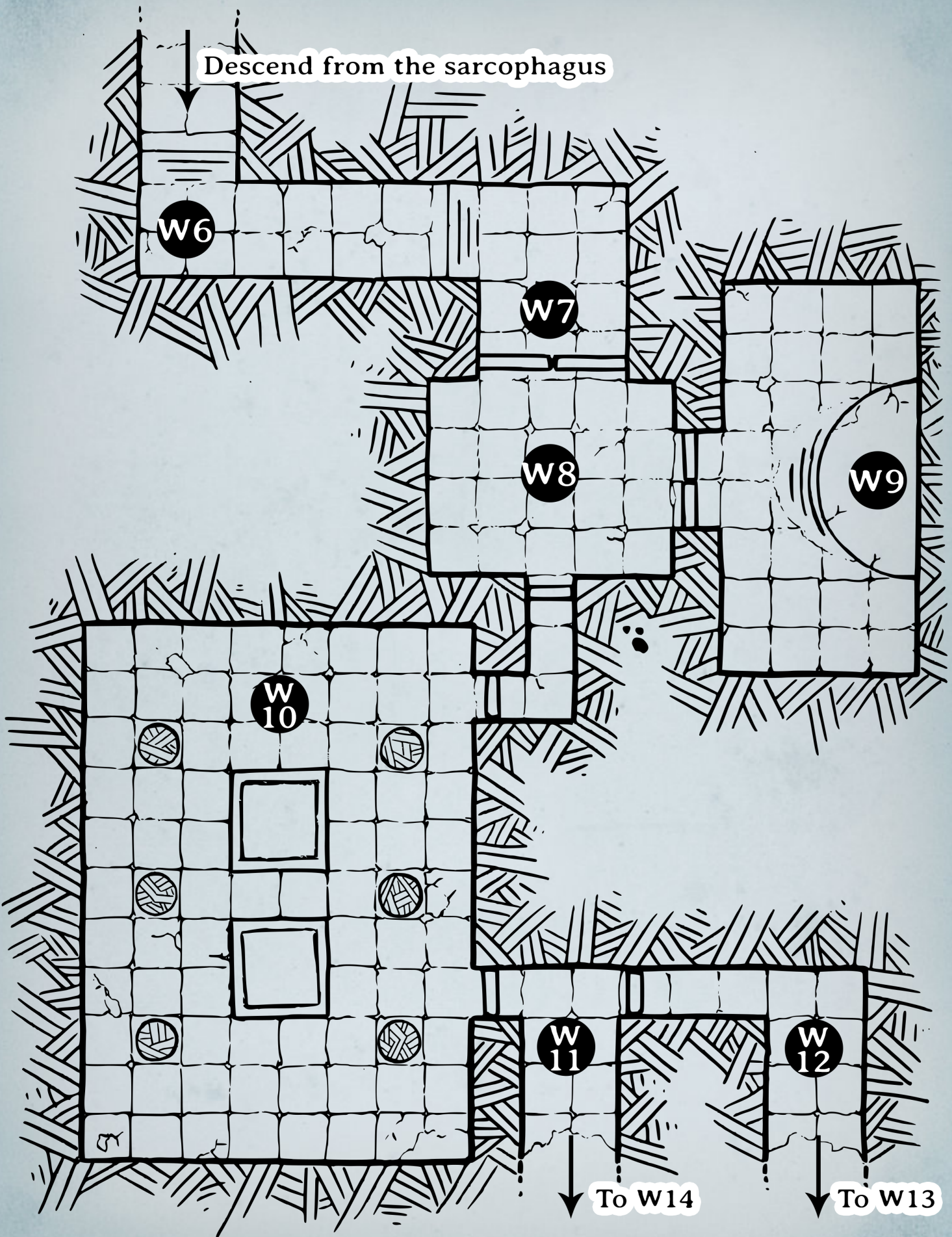
The *Sword of Souls* is the cursed weapon of Orfeon Yancazi. It is a black longsword that is full of the souls of those that he has killed. This weapon is cursed by Demogorgon to render its wielder insane as the weapon whispers to the wielder. Casting *identify* (PHB 252) on the sword will reveal all the positive benefits of the sword but not anything relating to the curse.

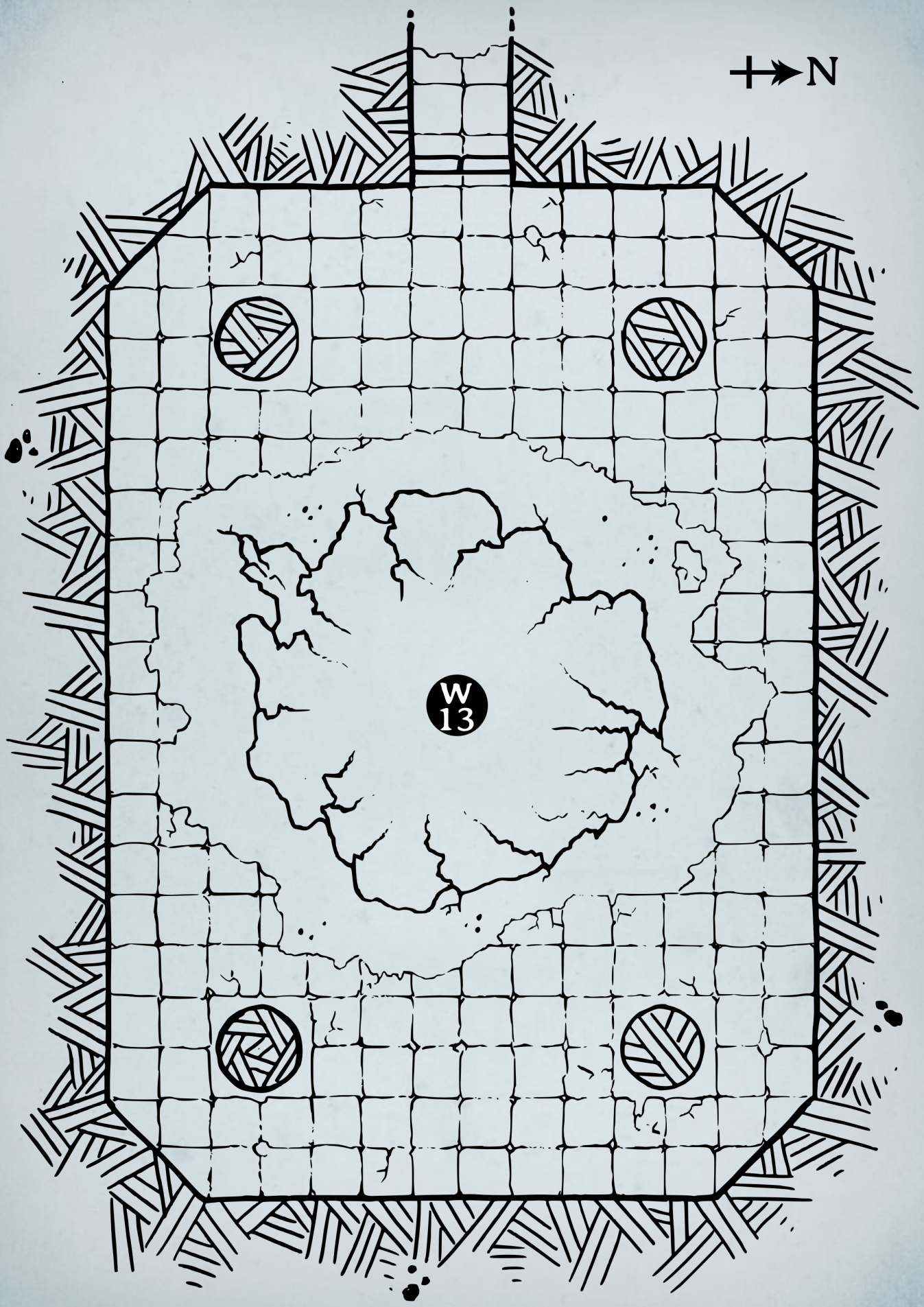
You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. Upon attunement, the sword grants the wielder a few unique abilities, as well as activating the curse effect. Any sentient creature slain by the sword are trapped within the blade. They cannot be brought back to life by any means short of a *wish* spell (PHB 288). In addition, the wielder can call forth any trapped soul to question them for information. The souls will answer any question asked to the best of their knowledge from when they were alive. As an added benefit, any critical hits scored with this weapon deals an additional 2d10 psychic damage and heals the wielder for the same amount.

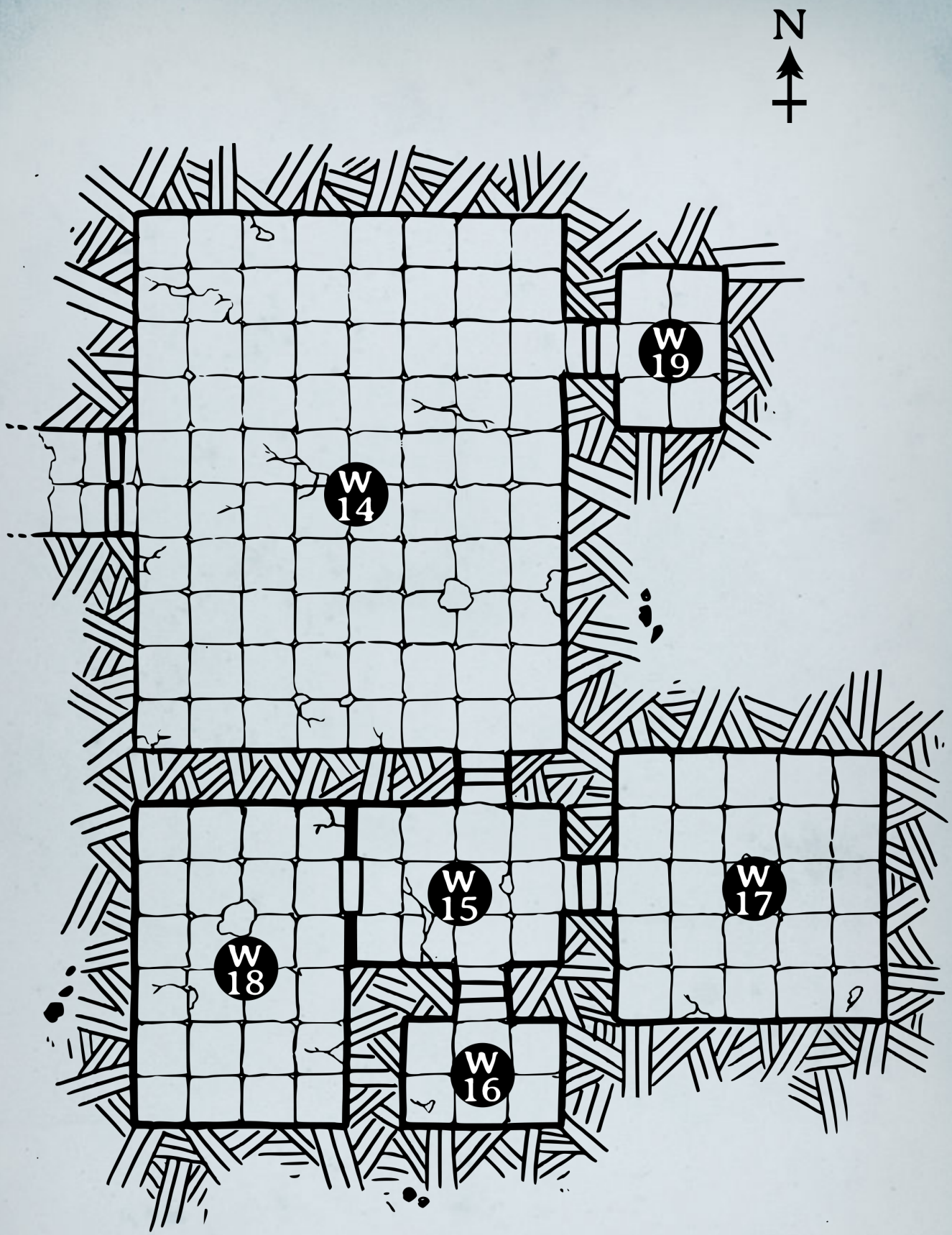
The sword, however, is cursed to render the wielder slowly insane. The wielder cannot drop the weapon for any reason; being separated, for any reason, will deal 1d4 psychic damage to the wielder for every hour apart. The wielder gains the following character flaw after 2 months; "I hear whispers in my head, they tell me to do such unspeakable things. Sometimes I can't help but agree to their requests." After 6 months the wielders alignment changes to chaotic evil.

Casting *remove curse* (PHB 271) on the sword allows the owner to remove the attunement of the sword to itself and therefore remove the cursed effect.


N
W5
W4
W1
Secret
Entrance
Sarcophagus
W3
W2


Descend from the sarcophagus
W6
W7
W8
W9
W 10
W 11
W 12
To W14
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N
W
13


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W 19
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