

INFINIDUNGEON ADVENTURE ANTHOLOGY

A collection of adventures by JVC Parry and Andrew Welker
for the world's greatest roleplaying game

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Trouble on the Grogmarr River | 3 |
| Introduction | 4 |
| Adventure Overview | 4 |
| Part 1: Iceslip Bridge | 5 |
| Part 2: Frozen Lake | 6 |
| Part 3: Haunted Watermill | 8 |
| Part 4: Waterfall | 10 |
| Part 5: Orc Ambush | 11 |
| Part 6: Bloodscar Band Outpost | 12 |
| Part 7: Alligator Swamp | 14 |
| Part 8: The Dam | 15 |
| Part 9: Orc Encampment | 16 |
| Conclusion | 17 |
| Rewards | 17 |
| The Lost King | 19 |
| Introduction | 20 |
| Adventure Overview | 20 |
| Friends and Foes | 20 |
| Temple Entrance | 22 |
| Temple Level | 22 |
| Dungeon Level | 28 |
| Cult Level | 31 |
| Ritual Level | 33 |
| Conclusion | 35 |
| Rewards | 35 |
| Temple Level Map | 36 |
| Dungeon Level Map | 38 |
| Cult Level Map | 39 |
| Ritual Level Map | 40 |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Gates to the Castle | 41 |
| Adventure Overview | 42 |
| General Features | 43 |
| City Exterior | 43 |
| Lower City | 45 |
| Random Encounters | 46 |
| Upper City | 48 |
| Castle Rand Exterior | 49 |
| Castle Rand Interior | 50 |
| Conclusion | 53 |
| Gates to the Castle Appendix | 54 |
| The Gates of Aguafuus | 57 |
| Introduction | 58 |
| Adventure Overview | 58 |
| Part 1: High Hall | 60 |
| Part 2: Maze of Machines | 61 |
| Part 3: Crying Chasm | 62 |
| Part 4: Fey Crossing | 64 |
| Part 5: Mandrigo's Lair | 65 |
| Castle Map | 66 |
| Part 6: Castle of Quartz | 68 |
| Part 7: Altar of Sustenance | 73 |
| Conclusion | 73 |
| The Gates of Aguafuus Appendix | 74 |
| The Mad Descent | 77 |
| Introduction | 78 |
| Adventure Overview | 78 |
| General Features | 79 |
| Bridge to Madness | 79 |
| Face the Fallen | 80 |
| Fortress of Fortitude | 81 |
| The Gatehouse | 82 |
| Symbols of Significance | 83 |
| The Pit | 84 |
| Mystery Mansion | 86 |
| Fallen Giant | 88 |
| Ruins of Your Life | 89 |
| Palace of The Speculator | 90 |
| Conclusion | 91 |
| Rewards | 91 |



TROUBLE ON THE GROGMARR RIVER



PROTECT THE INNOCENT

A tribe of pillaging orcs has been terrorizing a nearby village. Can our heroes neutralize the threat before devastation comes to innocent souls?

Trouble on the Grogmarr River is an adventure for use with the Yarro Studios *Trouble on the Grogmarr River Infinitudungeon* scroll. Intended for a group of two to five characters of 1st to 4th level, this adventure takes most groups 2 to 4 sessions to complete.

INTRODUCTION

Trouble on the Grogmarr River is an *Infinidungeon* adventure for 1st to 4th level parties that sees the characters take a fleet of rowboats filled with explosives to a dam at the river's end, in order to destroy an orc encampment.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The characters are approached by a council of local nobles led by Lady Arathorn. Arathorn explains to the characters that the villages under her protection are being constantly raided by orcs who are encamped beneath the dam of the Grogmarr River. They have tried to assault the orcs before but failed, as the orcs' defensive front is nigh impossible to overcome. Instead, Arathorn needs the characters to travel down the Grogmarr River with a fleet of rowboats filled with explosives. She wishes the characters to detonate these at the dam, causing its destruction, and pouring the contents of the river down onto the orcs. This should wash away their camp, leaving the villages free of violence.

Arathorn will not accompany the characters, but she's happy to send a small detachment of four knights (including Ser Jasper) with them in order to help out where they can. She informs the characters that the best place to start the journey down the river is from Iceslip Bridge, at the base of the mountains. From here, the rowboats will have to make it past a watermill, the occupants of which should not find out about the dam's destruction, past a goblin outpost populated by the notorious Bloodscar Band, and through a small lake and to the Grogmarr Dam. Here they need to detonate the explosives and flee, lest they're caught in the blast.

LADY ARATHORN

Lady Arathorn (CN female human **noble**) is a stern but just ruler. She is in her middle age, has short-cropped black hair that is starting to grey, a strong jawline, high cheekbones, and a thick nose. She takes great pride in wearing a silver breastplate enameled with the Arathorn coat of arms – a hammer striking a tree stump. Arathorn's heritage is mostly human but she has a dwarven grandfather, and is somewhat short of stature. Despite this, she commands a powerful presence and is not the sort of person you'd want to argue with.

Arathorn wants the orc encampment destroyed for two reasons, only the first of which she is willing to reveal to the characters. Firstly, the orcs have indeed been attacking the villages under her protection. The raids are mostly nonviolent – the orcs come to steal food and tools from the villages, but leave promptly when guards or knights arrive. She doesn't let the characters know this fact, instead insisting that their raids will cause deaths down the line if the villages run out of food for winter.

The second, hidden reason, is that a statue of Arathorn's grandfather stands beneath the dam. He was the dam's engineer, and the fact that orcs have taken up host around his statue annoys her. Although Arathorn is good to her people, she does not include the orcs in this category, and is insensitive of their needs. Characters might notice the statue, bearing the same Arathorn coat of arms, at the adventure's denouement. Arathorn is so prejudiced against the orcs that she would rather see the dam destroyed and her statue retrieved than have it remain there under orc control.

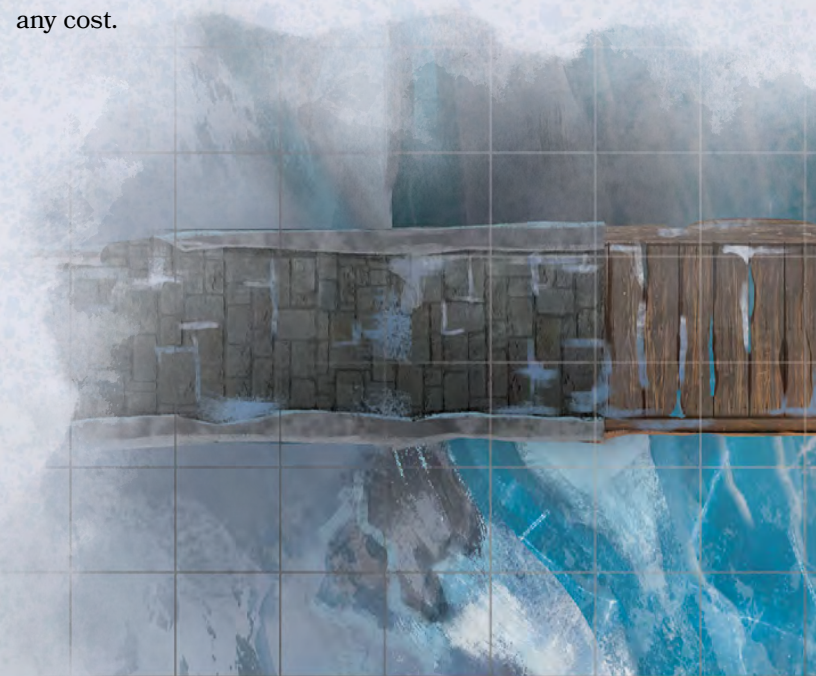
SER JASPER THE SWIFT

Ser Jasper (LG nonbinary human **knight**) is supposedly a valiant knight loyal to their order and devoted to the protection of the villages Lady Arathorn is bound to protect. In reality, Jasper is embroiled in a love affair with Arathorn that clouds their judgment. They are being manipulated by Arathorn but cannot see it.

Jasper earned the moniker 'the Swift' after running a message to a village that was in the path of a giant's rampage. Rather than running, Jasper swam through freezing waters in order to cut time off the journey. They arrived just in time to evacuate the village, saving hundreds of innocent lives. It was at an award ceremony for this event that Jasper and Arathorn first met.

Jasper doesn't know Arathorn's hidden motives, but believes her to be true to her word and believes that the orc encampment must be dealt with. They led the failed attempt to rout the orcs with a frontal assault, which was thwarted by a steep pass through which the knights had to travel to reach the encampment. The orcs have erected a gate here which is nigh impassable without siege equipment, but there is little that could make it through the pass to the gate. This failed assault has made Jasper feel like they have something to prove, and that they have let Arathorn down. They won't let it happen again.

If the characters question the plan at any point, Jasper seeks to drive them on. They are single-minded and determined to make a success of this mission at any cost.



PART 1: ICESLIP BRIDGE

The characters meet Lady Arathorn and a detachment of four **knights** led by Ser Jasper the Swift just before dawn on a cold autumn day. Read or paraphrase the following:

The sun is just beginning to cast its early morning rays over the ice-capped mountains to your east. What little orange light makes it through the peaks casts long shadows across the snow, illuminating the heavy tracks leading to the bridge ahead. Here, framed by furs, stands Lady Arathorn, her heraldic breastplate catching the sunbeams. She is accompanied by four knights clad in chainmail, led by Ser Jasper the Swift, who you were introduced to by Arathorn at this mission's conception.

The air is filled with frigid spray and an immense crashing – the source of both is the whitewater that comes pouring off the mountains beneath Iceslip Bridge. Here many small streams converge to create the Grogmarr River, down which you must soon travel.

Mission. Once at the bridge, Lady Arathorn quickly recaps what is due to occur and explains that Ser Jasper and their entourage are coming along, though in a separate boat. She indicates six small rowboats which have been hoisted down to the central islet beneath the bridge. Beside them are the barrels of explosives. She reiterates that the explosives must be taken down the river to the dam, where they can be detonated.

Rowboats. The six rowboats are each around 5 feet wide and 15 feet long, and can seat three individuals or barrels. The characters are able to make use of as many as they need. Each rowboat has an AC of 13, 30 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. A boat reduced to 0 hit points capsizes. Unimpeded, a rowboat moves at a pace of 30 feet per turn (initiative count 0, losing ties). A character can use an action to row and unimpeded rowboat and increase the speed to 60 feet.

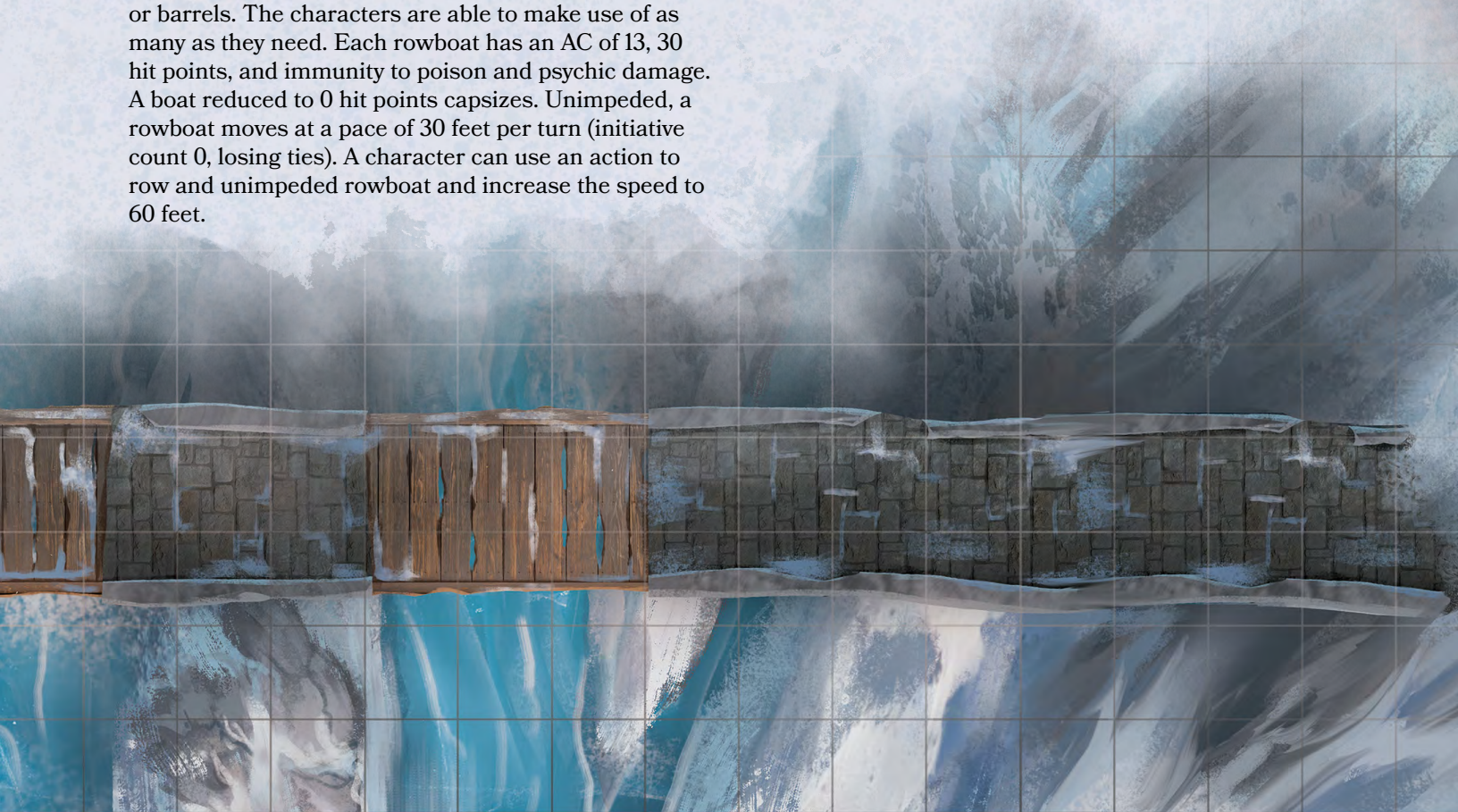
Explosives. Alongside the rowboats are five barrels of explosives. The explosives can be detonated by lighting a fuse, which provides a 1 minute to flee before they explode. If the barrels themselves take fire damage or are thrown about, they explode immediately – each creature within 30 feet must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failed save or half that on a successful one.

If a barrel becomes submerged or gets wet on three occasions, the powder within becomes useless. It must be dried out again before it regains its explosive quality – this takes far longer than the adventure has scope for, thus the barrel is essentially lost.

The characters need at least three barrels to make it to the dam to be sure of success. Any fewer and there is a chance of failure. Each barrel is size Small. Ser Jasper's barrel (see below) makes it to the dam unless character actions intervene.

Departure. Once the characters have decided who goes in which rowboat with which explosives, they can depart. Ser Jasper insists that they travel in a rowboat with one of their three knights and a single barrel of explosives – unless something happens as a result of the characters, assume that Jasper and their barrel make it to the dam unharmed – narrate their actions rather than roll for them. As they depart, read or paraphrase the following:

The rowboats are dragged to the edge of the freezing Grogmarr River one by one. The crew hop aboard, and push off into the center of the river. As they are carried by the current they disappear into a cloud of spray.





PART 2: FROZEN LAKE

The first obstacle the characters face is a frozen lake. The surface is covered by the ice, though the river still flows beneath it. Read or paraphrase the following:

You escape the spuming spray erupting from the convergence of streams by Iceslip bridge, row past a central islet, and are immediately stumped. Ahead of you the lake through which the river flows is frozen – at least on the surface. There is a larger island in the middle of the lake upon which two ancient pines bend in the wind.

Lake. The surface of the lake is frozen over with a foot of ice. Characters at the front of a rowboat can use any slashing weapon to break the ice ahead of them by succeeding on a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check, or by attacking the ice. The ice has AC 13, 5 hit points, vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Three checks or patches of ice must be overcome for each boat in order to progress.

Failed attempts to attack or break through the ice mean a character gets through the sheet, but a complication occurs – roll on the following table:

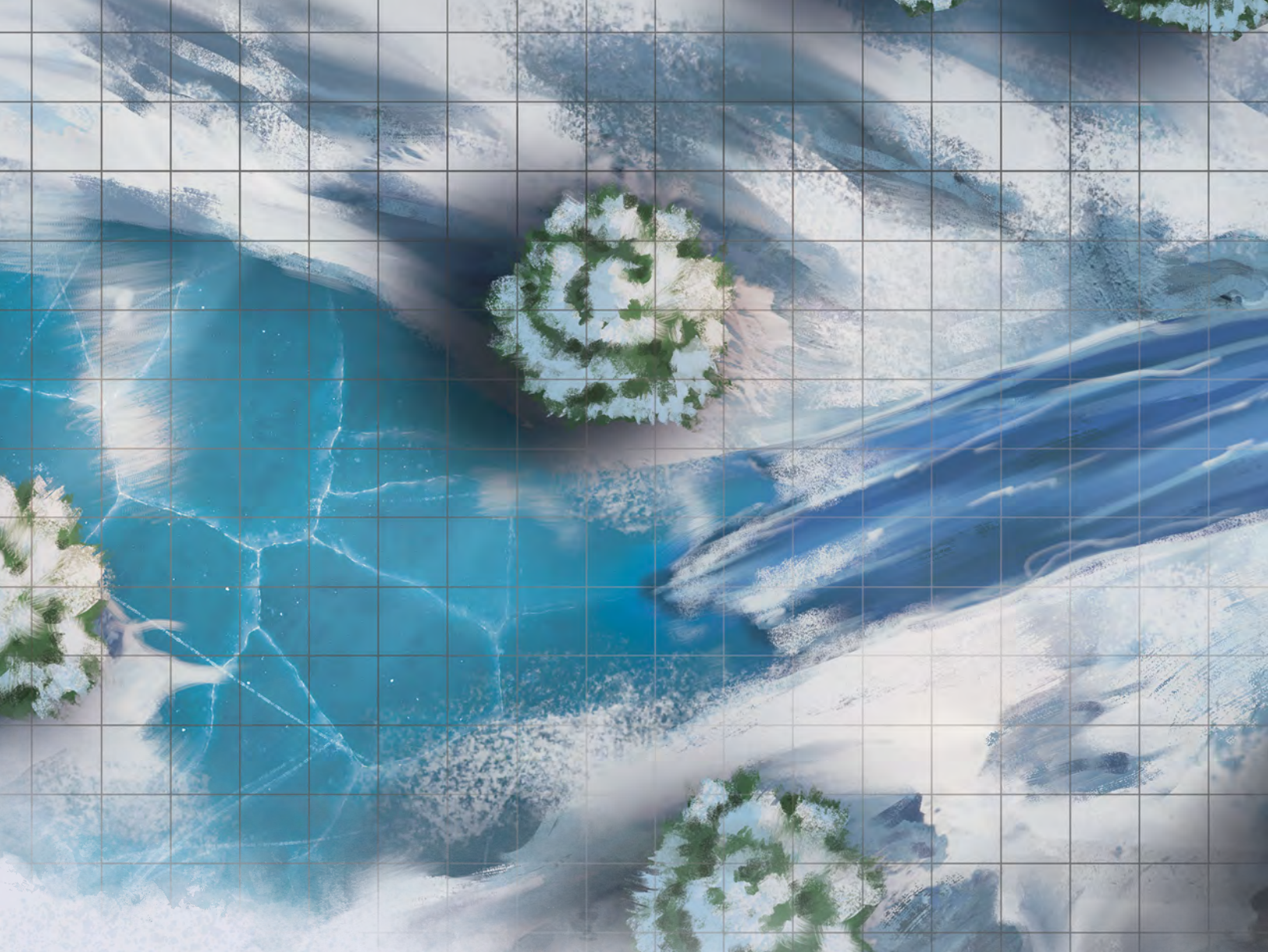
d6 Complication

- 1-3 **Splashes.** You break through the ice, but the force of your swing causes you to plunge your tool into freezing water, splashing it over yourself and whatever is in the central rowboat seat.
- 4-5 **Rocking.** You break through the ice, but your swing unbalances the rowboat somewhat. Everyone within must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the frigid water. Objects make the save with a +0 bonus.
- 6 **Puncture.** You break through the ice, but you overswing and sink your tool into the rowboat, dealing damage to it.

Shore or Sheet. Characters might decide to get the rowboats out of the lake entirely and carry them either over the ice sheet or along the shore. Both present different difficulties.

Shore. Where the sheet ends and the shore begins is not easy to determine. Characters can attempt a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Nature) check to get an understanding. Either way, the shore is difficult terrain, giving plenty of time for the mephits to catapult snowballs (see next page).

If a character accidentally steps on the sheet instead of the shore, which has a 10% chance of happening each time they move, consult the information below.



Sheet. The sheet of ice atop the lake is seriously slippery. Characters moving across it at a normal speed must succeed on a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to stay on their feet. If both characters carrying a boat fail, anything within the boat must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall out (objects make this save with a +0 bonus). If a creature or object fails this check by 5 or more, it plunges down through the ice into the freezing water (see below). Characters moving half of their normal speed don't need to make a check.

Freezing Water. The water of the lake is utterly freezing. If a creature falls into the water or starts their turn there, they must immediately succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 4 (1d8) cold damage. For each turn they spend in the water, the save difficulty increases by 1. A creature can pull itself on to the shore by spending 10 feet of movement, or onto the ice by succeeding on a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check.

Mephits. Lying upon the island are six **ice mephits**. These mischievous elementals enjoy nothing more than winding people up, and are more likely to interfere than attack.

Their favorite trick is freezing the ice around ice fishers' lines when they catch something. In a similar vein, the mephits can freeze the ice back over when a character makes a successful check to break through it, encasing their tool in the ice sheet. Getting a tool back requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. After three failed checks, the weapon breaks and becomes effectively useless.

The mephits can also work together in pairs to bend the branches of the pines, using them as catapults to fling massive snowballs. A creature targeted by a snowball must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or fall overboard (either into the water or onto the ice; objects have a +0 bonus) and take 2 (1d4) cold damage.

If attacked, the mephits fight back. If reduced to half their hit points or fewer, they flee.

PART 3: HAUNTED WATERMILL

Once the characters have broken through or circumnavigated the frozen lake, they reach a portion of the river which flows freely again. Built upon the banks here is a watermill. When they reach it, read or paraphrase the following:

The river's pull drags you closer and closer to a sturdy-looking watermill nestled on a bend of the bank. The tall, solid stone structure is spattered in frost-touched moss. The wheel attached to it churns rapidly in the water, sending spray onto the walls of the mill. The wheel is clearly ancient, but the wood remains sturdy. As you get closer, you see a pale form move across the mill's tenebrous jetty and into the building.

Water Wheel. The water wheel entirely blocks the river. Rowboats that are pulled straight into it take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from it, and everyone within must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the frigid water. Objects make the save with a +0 bonus. The characters have a few choices to avoid this occurring:

Over the Wheel. Characters might try to jump onto the wheel, lift their rowboat onto it, and allow the spinning wheel to carry the boat over the top, running ahead or behind them. This is dangerous, but fast. The character must first climb on to the wheel and balance, requiring a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. They then need to pull the boat up onto the wheel, requiring a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Failure on any check results in the boat taking damage (as above) and the character taking equal damage. If a character fails by 5 or more, they are caught in the wheel and pulled under the water.

Destroy the Wheel. Seeing the wheel up ahead, characters might try to destroy it. The wheel has resistance to fire damage thanks to being constantly wet, but other attempts to damage it work as normal. The water wheel is AC 15 and has 30 hit points, and is immune to poison and psychic damage. Detonating a barrel of explosives near the wheel is enough to destroy it in one go. Once the debris has cleared, the rest of the rowboats can pass without issue. If the wheel is destroyed, the ghosts within the mill (see below) become more powerful, and direct all of their attacks against the character responsible for its destruction.

Around the Wheel. Characters might choose to take a slower approach by getting out onto the shore and carrying the rowboats and their contents over the shore. Unfortunately, the bank is slippery with ice, snow, and spray. Characters moving across it at a normal speed must succeed on a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to stay on their feet. If both characters fail, anything within the boat must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or fall out. Characters moving at half of their normal speed don't need to make a check.

Ghosts. Once, the small but well-liked Tarken family lived in the mill. Two fathers, Bern and Yarrik, and their adopted daughter Eloessence. When the Bloodscar Band of goblins moved into the area and established their outpost (see Part 6), they thought it pertinent to sack the mill and kill the humans inside. Now, the ghosts of the Tarken family haunt the mill and the surrounding river. They use the statistics of **specters**. They attack any intruders, motivated by the fear they felt upon death at the Bloodscar Band's intrusion. They try to drown intruders, but cannot directly influence other living beings. They can, however, move inanimate objects like boats, rope, barrels, and the furniture inside their mill.

Characters that get a look at the ghosts see that Bern is covered in horrific bites that have taken out chunks of his flesh, and has a symbol; a crude wolf skull cut deep by a blade, on his bare chest. Yarrik has half a dozen crossbow bolts in his back. Their daughter Eloessence has a stab wound in her belly.

Killing the Tarken family ghosts causes them to disappear, but only for a few rounds. When they rematerialize they continue their efforts to drown any intruders. The only way to get rid of the ghosts permanently, and put them to rest, is to recover a golden plate engraved with an idyllic depiction of the mill from the Bloodscar Band Outpost (see part 6). The goblins stole this wonderful piece of art from the mill when they attacked. Replacing it causes the ghosts to calm down, thank the characters, then slowly fade away.

Mill. The door to the mill has been broken down, and the inside has been ransacked. Although the ghosts have done their best to put everything back in the right place, several pieces of furniture are broken and covered in bite marks, there are arrows stuck in the walls, and there are dark bloodstains on the floor. There is a pale circle on one wall curiously devoid of dusk (where their prized gold plate once hung). Characters can easily find sturdy rope and pulleys if they look for it.

Characters who succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check find something the goblins didn't – a magical rope that, when attached to an object, reduces its weight tenfold, making it easy to lower or raise things.





PART 4: WATERFALL

After the watermill has been overcome, the characters will have to contend with an enormous waterfall with a strong current that threatens to plunge them, and their boats, into a deep pool at its bottom. Read or paraphrase the following:

Suddenly, you feel the current start to pick up. The boats are rapidly drawn downriver which, you realize in a panic, is not at the same level as you! An immense waterfall, previously camouflaged by the churning water wheel, plunges in a thundering cascade down a sheer rock face.

Waterfall. The stream flows down a 70-foot tall rock face, causing a waterfall. A creature or object that falls down the waterfall must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Objects make the save with a +0 bonus.

Such a drop is certainly enough to set off the barrels of explosives unless their fall can be softened in some way.

There are a few ways to tackle the waterfall that reduce the chance of taking massive damage, destroying boats, and detonating the explosive barrels.

Over the Falls. A character that succeeds on an DC 18 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check can navigate the boat down a slightly less dangerous route of the waterfall, reducing the damage the boats and their contents take somewhat, but preserving their speed. A failure here is catastrophic, resulting in the destruction of the boat, and a high chance of a barrel detonation.

Down the Cliff. Characters who succeed on a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check can steer or row their boats toward the edge of the stream and haul them up onto the shore. From here, they can get out and clamber down the cliff with a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Failure results in the character slipping and taking bludgeoning damage (1d6 for every 10 feet fallen). Any barrels dropped in this manner detonate.

Mechanics or Magic. Although it's likely to take longer, the characters might be able to find some engineering solution to their problem. They might be able to use ropes and pulleys (such as those recoverable from the mill) to safely lower the boats and barrels. If they searched the mill, they might also have discovered the magical rope, which can be used to lower almost anything with ease and speed.

Alternatively, the characters might know some spells that can help them descend the waterfall or the cliffs. Any magic that reduces falling damage can be used to break the fall, any magic that assists climbing can be used to descend the cliff face, and any magic used to shape water can be used to lower objects and people safely and with great speed.

Plunge Pool. Characters that end up in the pool of water at the bottom of the waterfall might notice, if they have a passive Perception of 15 or higher, that there is a treasure chest sunk down at the bottom, nestled between the wreck of a keelboat. If they can succeed on a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check to dislodge the chest, and then swim to the surface with it, they can attempt a DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to open it. Inside the chest is 200 gp, a magical plague mask that purifies the air breathed by the wearer (it uses the statistics of a *necklace of adaptation*), and a +1 *light crossbow* engraved with crows.

The chest and treasure belonged to a notorious plague doctor who peddled false remedies and useless tinctures to communities high up in the mountains. When he was discovered, he used his magical crossbow to fend off the mob and commandeer a boat to escape. Unfortunately, his skill at deception was much better than his ability to captain a ship, and the waterfall got the better of him.

PART 5: ORC AMBUSH

The surge of the waters after the waterfall continues to push the boats eastward. When the characters reach the small bush on the southern shore, they are ambushed by orcs who have been lying in wait for them.

Characters with a passive Perception of 17 or higher notice the orcs before they can spring the ambush. Read or paraphrase the appropriate paragraph:

Spotted. As the surge of the waterfall pushes you downstream, you catch a glimpse of a figure crouched down in the bushes on the bank. As you squint to make them out, you notice half a dozen orcs lying in wait for you on either side of the bank!

Ambushed. As the surge of the waterfall pushes you downstream, you are shocked to see an enormous net rising up from the waters ahead. Before you can do anything to prevent it, you and your boats become entangled in the web of ropes. Holding either end are a small band of orcs.

Net. If they can, the orcs pull up a net that was previously submerged beneath the water at the last second so that the characters and their boats become caught in the net. Disentangling themselves and their boats from the net requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Alternatively, the net can be attacked. It has AC 10 and 5 hit points, is vulnerable to slashing and fire damage, is resistant to bludgeoning and piercing damage, and is immune to poison and psychic damage. While caught in the net, characters are unable to do anything other than try to escape.

Orcs. There are three **orcs** on either side of the river. One orc on either side must hold the net tight to ensure the boats stay entangled, and don't drift downstream. The other two orcs on either side (four total) are equipped with five javelins each. They hurl these at trapped creatures, or at their boats to try and capsize them. When they run out of javelins, all the orcs flee, dropping the net. The orcs also flee if two or more of them are killed.

Ser Jasper. In response to the orc ambush, Ser Jasper loses their cool. They rapidly free themselves from the net and try to behead as many orcs as they possibly can, cursing them and threatening them with the destruction of their encampment in vulgar tones.

If you have time in your session, Jasper can trip one of the orcs (named Barug) and hold them at swordpoint, snarling slurs at them and generally being a horrible person. This gives the characters the chance to intervene, and gain some knowledge from the orc about the encampment. They might ask questions along the following lines:

- How did you know we were coming? *"We over'ear'd your conversation on Iceslip Bridge. It ain't 'ard to miss a glittering troop of knights all clad in steel wanderin' about."*
- Why have you been raiding the villages? *"We ain't got nothing to live off! We need tools to farm and food to eat. Lady Arathorn denies our emissaries in 'er court, an' won't give us nothin', so we 'ave to take what we can get. We never 'urt anyone though! Just nick their stuff!"*
- Who lives in the encampment? *"There ain't many of us, just a few families. We 'ad to flee the mountains when the dwarves burnt down our old fort."*
- Why did you ambush us? *"We don't want our 'ome destroyed! We ain't got nowhere left to go!"*

The characters' interaction with Barug should allow them to gain insight into the bigger picture. The orcs are only encamped here because they have nowhere else to go, and their raids on the villages were nonviolent. This revelation is vehemently denied by Ser Jasper, who tries to kill Barug. Jasper's sense of self-worth is too wrapped up in Lady Arathorn's narrative for him to see the truth of the situation. He accuses the orc of lying, and tries to convince the characters to make it to the dam and see the encampment, which should prove that it is filled with orc warriors.

PART 6: BLOODSCAR BAND OUTPOST

After overcoming the orc ambush, and potentially gathering some interesting information from the captured orc, Barug. Once they've dealt with that dilemma, they find themselves in a slower moving part of the river, upon which a band of goblins have built an outpost. Unless the characters have taken measures to disguise their boats as floating debris, they are spotted by the goblin lookout. Read or paraphrase the following:

From up ahead you hear the sound of a warbling blast. To the right on a small islet you spot a cramped wooden shack, barely held together by rusting nails, atop which is a goblin furiously blowing into a horn. The goblin is hearing the skull of a wolf atop its head, and has covered its face with blood-red dye.

Goblins. The goblins here are part of the Bloodscar Band, a notorious group of criminals well-known in the local area, and instantly recognizable by their skull headdresses and red dyed faces. If the characters are not from the region, Ser Jasper warns the characters to be on their guard. The Bloodscar Band are brutal, and often collaborate with wolves.

The band at the outpost consists of five **goblin** archers armed with shortbows, and four **goblin** thugs armed with vicious-looking scimitars. In addition, there are three wolves in the forest to the north of the river waiting to be called to attack by the goblins.

Archers. The archers stand on each of the roofs. They have regular arrows, but can also fire arrows fashioned like grappling hooks. They shoot these arrows first, aiming for the boats. If they hit a boat with a grappling hook, they then tie their end of the rope to a mooring post affixed to the roof on which they stand, preventing the boats from traveling more than 50 feet away. Unhitching a boat requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check.

After firing their grappling bolts, they use regular bolts to shoot at creatures within the boats. If you wish to make the encounter more difficult, you can have them use flaming arrows, and aim for the explosive barrels.

Thugs. The goblin thugs are stationed in the easternmost buildings – two to a building. When they see that a boat has been grappled and tied on by an archer, they swarm that boat. The Bloodscar Band are merciless killers, preferring to kill first and steal later.

Captain. The **goblin** captain, a nasty piece of work named Skarrit Bloodbringer, is counting his coins in the central building when the alarm is sounded. Upon hearing the alarm, he runs out to see what's going on. He can shoot arrows at passing boats, or climb aboard with the thugs to attack in melee. If he is reduced to half his hit points or less, or two of the thugs are killed, he blows a whistle that summons the three tame wolves from the forest to the north.

Wolves. When summoned by Skarrit, the three **wolves** attack any non-goblins. Although tame, the wolves can be called off the attack by blowing Skarrit's whistle again, being distracted by food, or by a DC 14 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check.

Bridges. Even without goblin involvement, the outpost is difficult to navigate thanks to three bridges which stretch across the narrow waterways. Characters must get out of their boats and haul them over to pass, which requires a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check, or smash through them using an attack. The bridges have AC 15 and 15 hit points, immunity to poison and psychic damage, and are vulnerable to bludgeoning damage thanks to their rotten state.

Buildings. The buildings of the outpost are in poor repair. They are made of rotting wood shabbily constructed into small, single-room buildings. These are shoddily decorated with the ears of victims, wolf skulls and claws, and surprisingly delightful rugs woven from river reeds. Characters can find a small amount of treasure here (30 sp in each hut) and a moderate amount from the central building (116 sp and 40 cp). There is also a *folding boat* to be found in the central building, as well as the golden plate stolen from the Tarken family when they were murdered by the Bloodscar Band. Returning this plate to the mill brings the Tarken family ghosts peace, allowing them to pass to the next life (see Part 3).

Goblin Boat. As well as the magical boat in the central shack, there is a small boat fit for three Small creatures or two Medium creatures moored by the westernmost shack. If the characters are running low on boats, they can commandeer this one as a replacement.



PART 7: ALLIGATOR SWAMP

Beyond the Bloodscar Band outpost is a peculiar swamp. As well as being filled with vicious alligators, used to dining on the corpses of the Bloodscar Band's victims, there is an ancient enchantment on the place that causes a foul miasma to rise from its surface. When characters arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

Up ahead the water slows from a crawl to a standstill. Here, large lily pads decorated with intricate black flowers cover the water's surface. Rising from the stagnant swamp is a thick miasma that reduces your sight down to a few arms lengths.

Swamp. There is no current in this part of the river. A creature in a boat can use their action to row the boat up to 30 feet on their turn. A boat can only be rowed once per round.

Miasma. The mist rising from the swamp is caused by an ancient enchantment, the source of which is on the central islet – a cursed standing stone. While the stone still stands, the mist remains. A creature that starts its turn in the mist must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become nauseated and confused by the foul gas. Such a creature acts randomly on its turns (as if by the *confusion* spell), and might even take actions to capsize their own boats, or those of their allies. Wrapping a filter of some sort around their face allows characters to make the save with a +3 bonus. A character wearing the enchanted plague doctor mask found in Part 4 also has advantage on this saving throw.

Alligators. Lurking in the swamp are five alligators (**crocodiles**) who have become accustomed to eating humanoid flesh. The Bloodscar Band dump the corpses of their victims here to be disposed of by the reptiles. If a boat capsizes, the alligators are quick to attack flailing swimmers.

If you wish to make the encounter harder, the alligators have a heightened Intelligence (score of 6; modifier of -2) thanks to the standing stone on the islet. They can work together to try and capsize boats, giving them a chance to devour the rowers that fall in.

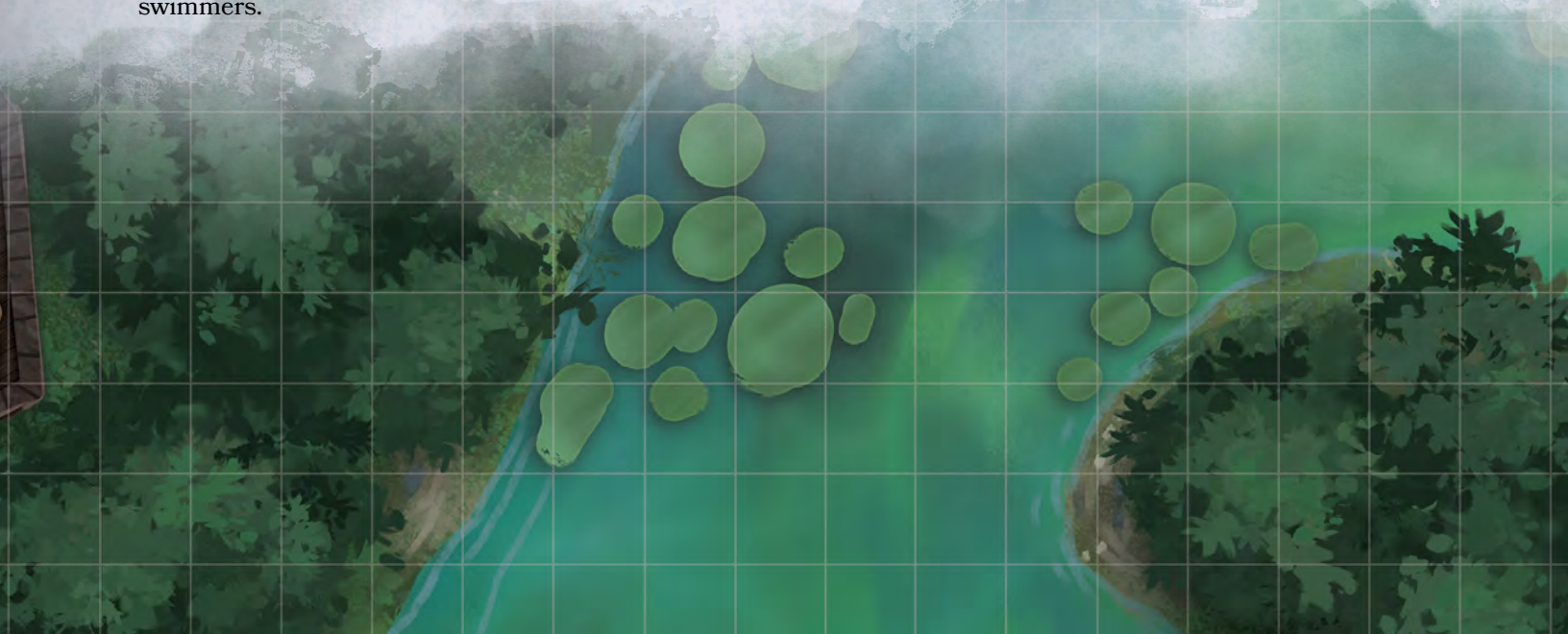
Standing Stone. On the central islet of the swamp is a standing stone, which can be seen by characters with a passive Perception of 12 or higher. The stone is covered with engravings of a foul reptilian god, through which magic light flows like molten silver. This stone has been enchanted and is the source of the swamp's foul miasma (and perhaps the alligator's heightened intellect).

Characters can deal with this stone in one of two ways. The first is to topple it, the second is to disenchant it. Toppling the stone is easier, but yields no reward.

Topple. To topple the stone all a character needs to do is succeed on a DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check. As soon as the stone falls, the magic within it subsides, and the miasma clears. Failed attempts tire out the character who is straining to shift the stone, making them take 1 level of exhaustion. Levels of exhaustion gained in this way are recovered upon finishing a short or long rest.

Disenchant. To disenchant the stone, characters must first succeed on a DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check. If they succeed, they discover that they must kill an alligator and use its blood in a ritual to disenchant the stone. Once they have the alligator blood, they can attempt another DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a success, they disenchant the stone. As reward, they gain the boon of the reptile god; until the end of their next long rest, they gain a fast swim speed, natural armor of 13 + their Dexterity modifier, and a vicious bite (1d6 + Strength modifier piercing damage) that gives them temporary hit points equal to the damage dealt.

Water Lilies. Characters who succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Nature) check realize that the lilies that grow around them are a natural antidote. If consumed, they provide a temporary (1 minute) immunity to the poisoned condition.



PART 8: THE DAM

After passing through or clearing out the swamp, the characters finally arrive at the dam. This huge stone structure is nothing to be scoffed at. The walls that hold back the river are twenty feet of solid stone, that rise as many feet above the water level. Once characters arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

You finally make it to the dam. You can see here where the water flows through a grate just beneath the surface, where they are restricted, allowing only a small, steady flow to crash through to the other side. The stone wall is immensely thick, but also rises twenty feet above the water level.

Dam. At this point, the characters can abandon their boats and climb the walls of the dam. Without the use of grappling hooks (such as those used by the Bloodscar Band goblin archers), they will struggle to achieve the climb – it requires a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check. Characters might come up with ingenious ways to ascend, such as felling a nearby tree to use as a ladder, or making a humanoid pyramid.

Encampment. Once atop the dam, the characters can see the encampment below. Read or paraphrase the following:

Around a hundred feet beneath you is an orc encampment, hemmed in by a palisade wall. Through the encampment runs a fast-flowing stream, fed by the dam. It's clear that if the dam were to burst, the cascade of water and debris that would follow would entirely wipe the encampment off the map. It consists only of three squat houses and a single fort. However, in the center of the town you spot a grand statue bearing the Arathorn coat of arms.

Characters who stop to observe the encampment for a few minutes see the orc families going about daily business: chopping wood for fires, working on new homes, cooking meat and baking bread, and so on. The orcs haven't noticed the characters or the knights up on the dam.

At this point, characters might start to realize that everything is not as it seems. There are not obvious weapons or warriors in the encampment, they appear peaceful. Furthermore, there is a statue of Arathorn's ancestor that stood in the center of the camp. This might alter whether the characters are happy to blow up the dam or not.

Ser Jasper. No matter what, Ser Jasper tries to blow up the dam using his barrel. They are single-minded on the issue, and believe everything Arathorn has told them. Unless the characters intervene, they light the fuse of the barrel of explosives and run for cover. Shortly after the barrel detonates. Characters can prevent this occurring by throwing the barrel into the water of the swamp behind them.

If this occurs, or if the characters try to take the barrel from Ser Jasper, they attack alongside any remaining knights, who are loyal to Ser Jasper. They don't aim to kill the characters, merely knock them unconscious. If all the characters are knocked unconscious, they awake a few minutes later tied up around any remaining barrels with the fuses burning down – they must act fast or be blown sky high along with the dam!

Explosion. Depending on how many barrels the characters manage to get to the dam, the explosion has a chance of entirely blowing up the dam.

- 3 or more barrels. The dam explodes entirely. A surge of water and stone chunks cascades over the falls, smashing into the encampment and destroying it entirely. All orcs within perish in the deluge.
- 2 barrels. There is a 50% chance of total success. On a total success, the above occurs. On a partial success, some of the dam is destroyed and goes over the edge. Half of the orcs below are killed, but the rest survive (see Part 9).
- 1 barrel. There is a 20% chance of total success. On a total success, see the first bullet point. On a partial success, a small chunk of the dam is destroyed and goes over the edge. A fifth of the orcs below are killed, but the rest survive (see Part 9).
- 0 barrels. There is no chance of success. Ser Jasper is infuriated, and demands that the characters descend to the encampment with him to massacre the orcs face-to-face.

On a partial success, Ser Jasper is infuriated. He blames the characters for the mission's failure and demands they descend down to the orc encampment to finish the job. He attaches a grappling hook to what remains of the dam and begins to abseil down to the encampment below.

PART 9: ORC ENCAMPMENT

Depending on what happens at the end of part 8, the characters might find themselves in the orc encampment. If they do, read or paraphrase the following:

Partially Destroyed. Around you is what remains of the orc encampment. Several of the buildings have been washed away, leaving only the shattered foundations. Still standing tall in the center of the camp is the solid bronze statue of a dwarf wearing a breastplate bearing the Arathorn coat of arms.

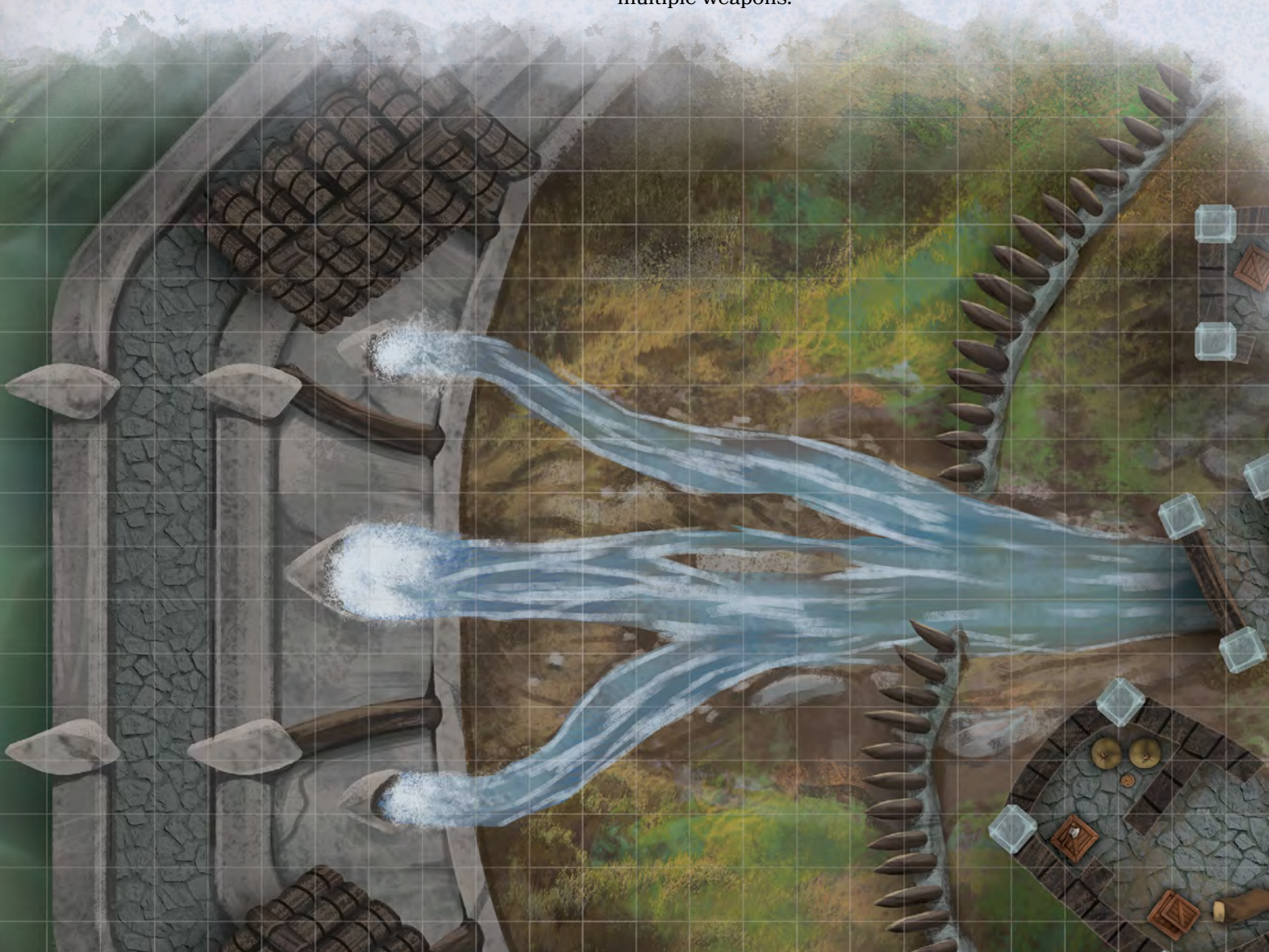
Undamaged. You find yourself at the orc encampment. The palisade wall is easy to circumnavigate thanks to the stream flowing through it. Around you the orcs look scared. They clearly have no clue what's to come. Standing tall in the center of the camp is the solid bronze statue of a dwarf wearing a breastplate bearing the Arathorn coat of arms.

Orcs. If the camp is undamaged, there are twenty adult orcs (CN orc **commoners**) in the camp, along with eight orc warriors (CN orc **guards**), and around half a dozen orc children. Although the warriors are trained and armed, they seem reluctant to draw their weapons, and only attack in self-defense. The leader of the encampment is a warrior named Gharush (CN orc **veteran**).

Gharush tries to plead with the characters not to attack them and their community. She warns them that they will fight back if forced to, but would much rather come to a peaceful deal. Gharush thinks that surrendering the statue to the knights would be enough to buy their survival.

Gharush has the same information as Barug (see Part 5), which she uses to try and convince the characters to spare the orcs.

Ser Jasper. Ser Jasper ignores Gharush entirely and draws their sword, charging toward the orc leader with murder on their mind. Unless characters intervene, battle breaks out between any remaining knights and orcs. The orc commoners flee if dropped below half their hit points. Otherwise they use whatever they have to hand to fight back including pitchforks, pots and pans, cooking knives, daggers, and wooden construction poles. Orc warriors have spears, and Gharush has multiple weapons.



CONCLUSION

The adventure could end in a myriad of ways. The characters might not make it down the river, being thwarted by the ghosts of the Tarken family, the Bloodscar Band goblins, or the alligator-infested swamp. If the characters have luck and skill on their side, they'll make it to the dam, but there's no guarantee they'll have all the barrels of explosives they need. Because of this, they might descend to the orc encampment and try to finish the job with swords and spells.

Alternatively, the characters might realize that not all is as Lady Arathorn claimed. The orcs are clearly not dangerous warriors intent on massacring the local villages, but refugees in desperate need of a home and sustenance. In this case, they might have to contend with Ser Jasper, who is intent on destroying the encampment and making Arathorn proud. Their personal feelings for Arathorn cloud their insight into the situation at hand.

The reality of the situation is that Arathorn is mostly motivated by her hatred of orcs. She wants her ancestral statue restored to glory, and is happy even to destroy the dam in order to achieve this. She would happily accept the return of the statue for the orc's lives, and could even be convinced to provide them with food to prevent the raids, but ultimately the characters have to make the decision whether to try and make a deal with Arathorn, or to kill the orcs.

Hopefully the characters see that the situation is morally repugnant, they deal with Ser Jasper, and convince Lady Arathorn to make a peaceful deal with Gharush and her orcs.

REWARDS

No matter how the characters resolve the situation, they are richly rewarded by Arathorn. A good lump sum of gold should be enough, but feel free to throw a few magic items into the mix as well if your characters are in need. The characters might also forge a good alliance with Lady Arathorn and/or with Gharush and her orc community.

CHANGING THE STAKES

The information presented in this sidebar can be used to make the adventure slightly easier or harder for the characters. The easier approach can be implemented any time through Ser Jasper, while the harder approach must be decided on from the outset.

Easier. The characters are given a stash of *potions of healing* to help them keep up with the challenges the river presents. One per character should do the trick. These potions can be given by Lady Arathorn at the introduction of the adventure, or can be administered by Ser Jasper when the characters need them most.

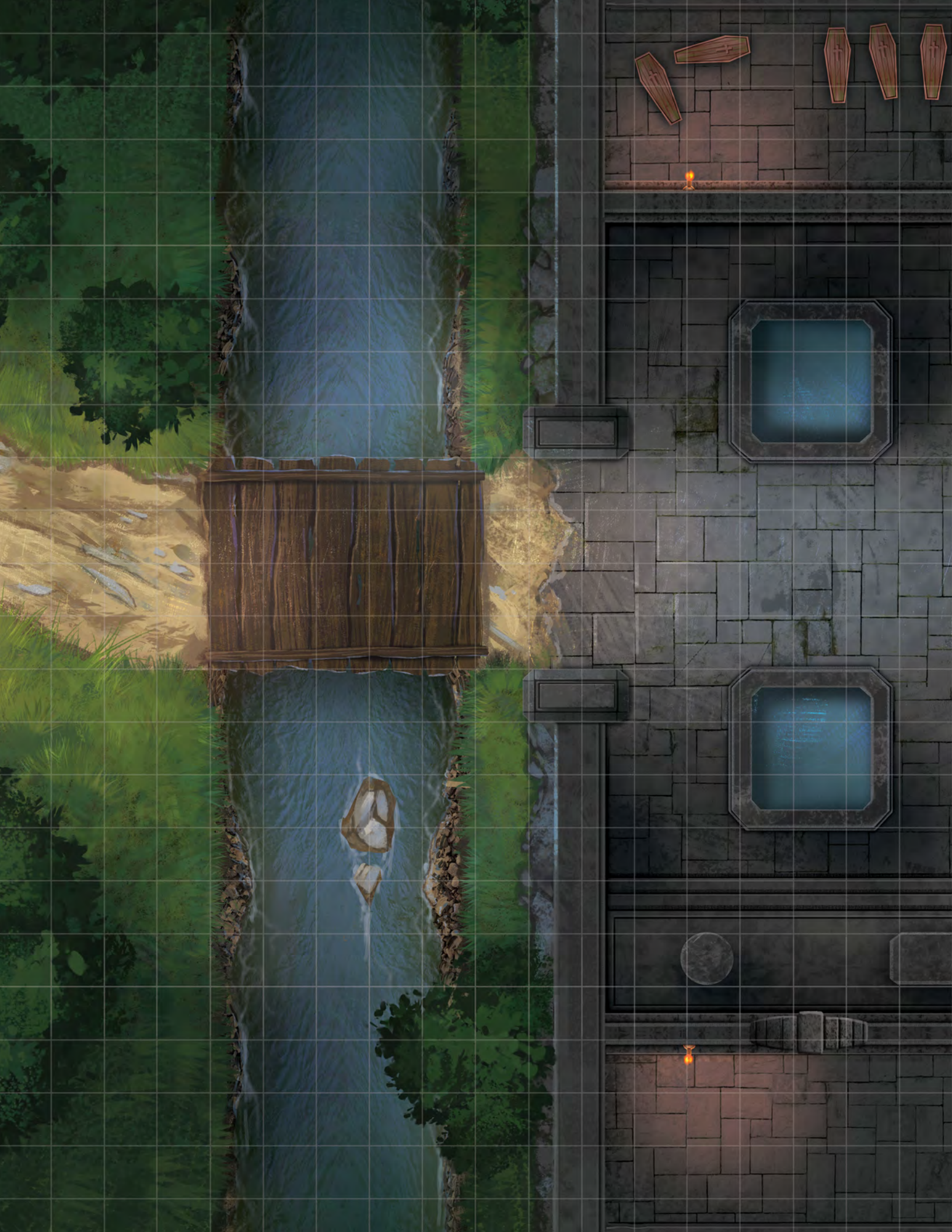
Harder. Rather than having the characters set the fuses at the dam at the end of the Grogmarr River, each barrel has a clockwork timer on it that has already been set off. The reasoning for this is that the barrels might get wet, and thus their fuses be useless. This puts time pressure on the characters to get to the dam, drop off the explosive barrels, and get out of there before they blow.

You can measure out the time in three ways: turn count, real time, or narrative time.

Turn Count. The first method is to roll initiative and run the entire river adventure as if it were combat rounds. This allows you to accurately keep time, but might slow down gameplay. An appropriate amount of turns for this difficulty is 35 turns. Bear in mind this gives characters little to no chance to interact with what's occurring around them though, so a limit of 50 turns might be a nice balance between pressure and adventure.

Real Time. Another method is to measure real time. The number of hours the players have for the characters to achieve their goal should be adjudicated by you, as each gaming group differs, but a rough guide of 3 hours would be high pressure, and 6 hours would allow for more adventure.

Narrative Time. The third method is to measure narrative time. Each time the characters engage in a distraction or encounter an issue, the clock ticks down by one. This includes things like chasing mephits, breaking through frozen lakes, dodging water wheels, and so on. To put the pressure on, use a d12 to count down. When it hits 0, the barrels explode. To give characters more time, use a d20. There are roughly seven unavoidable obstacles (three in Part 2, and one each in parts 3, 4, 5, and 6).



THE LOST KING



RESTORE THE TEMPLE

A profane cult has overrun the once-sacred temple of the water goddess. Can our heroes successfully infiltrate the cult and solve the temple's puzzles to prevent the return of an evil elder god?

The Lost King is an adventure for use with the Yarro Studios *The Lost King Infinidungeon* scroll.

Intended for a group of two to five characters of 1st to 4th level, this adventure takes most groups 2 to 4 sessions to complete.

INTRODUCTION

The Lost King is an *Infinidungeon* adventure for 1st to 4th level characters in which the party assaults a temple that has been taken over by water mages. The cultists have cut off the water supply to the local town, and are using the redirected stream to fuel a ritual which will summon a primordial elemental.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

Not long ago, the characters were traveling through the wilderness when they discovered a settlement in need. The town's water supply had been cut off, and the people were dying of thirst. The characters were approached by Jessanther Brightwater, the high priestess of a local temple. She explained that the temple had been overthrown from within by a cult who worshiped a primordial water elemental named the Sea King.

Jessanther needs the help of the characters. Many of her clergy were injured during the attack, and they have not the strength to rid the temple of the cultists and reroute the stream which surrounds it. She thinks that the cult have channeled the waters into the temple so that they may use the flowing element to summon the primordial Sea King.

Although this eventuality is terrifying, Jessanther knows a way to defeat the primordial. There are four relics within the temple that belong to its founder, Tahlia of the Flowing Waters. Tahlia was a conduit of the world's water goddess, and when she founded the temple she brought prosperity and peace to the area. When she died, she left behind relics of immense power that, when used properly, can defeat the Sea King. The relics are:

- *Tahlia's Skull*. This can be found in T10. Sepulcher. The cult may or may not know of this relic, but it is unlikely that they would be able to retrieve it without the knowledge that it is not inside a coffin, but buried beneath a flagstone engraved with the symbol of two crashing waves.
- *Scepter of the Swell*. This can be found in T11. Puzzle Chamber. The cult knows of this relic, but it is protected by an ancient puzzle that is hard to crack. Jessanther doesn't know how, but perhaps the characters can work it out.
- *Robes of the Flowing Waters*. These were once stored in the temple's museum, but doubtless the cult have taken them. They know their importance and will have guarded them accordingly (they are now in D2. Ceremony Hall).
- *Tome of the Deep*. Location unknown (actually in U6. Holy Symbol). Tahlia's sacred tome is somewhere in the temple, but it is not known where. Two of the clergy stayed when the cult took over to try and discover its location. Jessanther has not heard from either of them since.

If these relics can be placed in the holy pools at the temple's entrance (area T1), then the primordial Sea King will be weakened, provided it is within the temple. Legends say that all waters within the temple, when the relics are reunited in the holy pools, will be bent to the will of the goddess of water, and thus the primordial would have to struggle against her power or the characters'.

The cult is led by Unduin Wavebinder. She was an acolyte of the water goddess, and dedicated to Jessanther, until the high priestess told her she was not ready to go through an initiation ceremony to join the inner circle of the religious order. Scorned, Unduin began researching other ways to amass power, and was eventually corrupted by the influence of the Sea King.

FRIENDS AND FOES

THE SEA KING

The Sea King is an evil **water elemental** that seeks to return to and take over the material plane. If summoned, its power will gradually grow beyond that of the typical elemental until it becomes nigh unstoppable.

CRASHING WAVE JESSANTHER BRIGHTWATER

Jessanther is the high priestess, or Crashing Wave, of the water goddess's temple. She is a powerful wielder of holy magic, but without support she is unable to take back her temple. Jessanther feels great guilt for scorning Unduin, and holds herself responsible for planting the seeds of the cult in the temple. She would much rather the cult members were captured and reeducated in the ways of the water goddess than killed.

Jessanther is a **priest** with the following changes:

- She is lawful good.
- She knows the spell *sleet storm* instead of *dispel magic*.
- She is blessed by the water goddess and has innate spellcasting. She can cast *control water* once per day and *create or destroy water* at will, without material components. Wisdom is her innate spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13).

CULTISTS

All cultists in this adventure are armed with 10 darts each (Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage), in addition to their typical scimitars.

STIRRING STREAM UNDUIN WAVEBINDER

Unduin is the head of the cult of the Sea King. She fell under the influence of the primordial elemental when trying to amass power for herself. The primordial now has her under full control, and is using her and the cult that sprung up around her to summon it to the mortal realm. Should they succeed in their summoning, the Sea King will wreak havoc across the world.

Unduin is completely possessed by the Sea King. Her overzealous nature means she cannot see the primordial as evil, because it is a pathway to ultimate power for her. She is narcissistic and power-hungry, and will stop at nothing to achieve a mastery over magic and maintain her devout cult.

Unduin was once a member of the temple of the water goddess, at the rank of Stirring Steam, but when she was told she could not yet become a member of the inner circle of the temple, she began searching for other ways to attain power.

Unduin is a **cult fanatic** with the following changes:

- She is lawful evil.
- She knows the spell *ray of frost* instead of *sacred flame*.
- She is empowered by the Sea King and has innate spellcasting. She can cast *control water* once per day and *create or destroy water* at will, without material components. Wisdom is her innate spellcasting ability (spell save DC 11).

DOWSER RHAF OREN

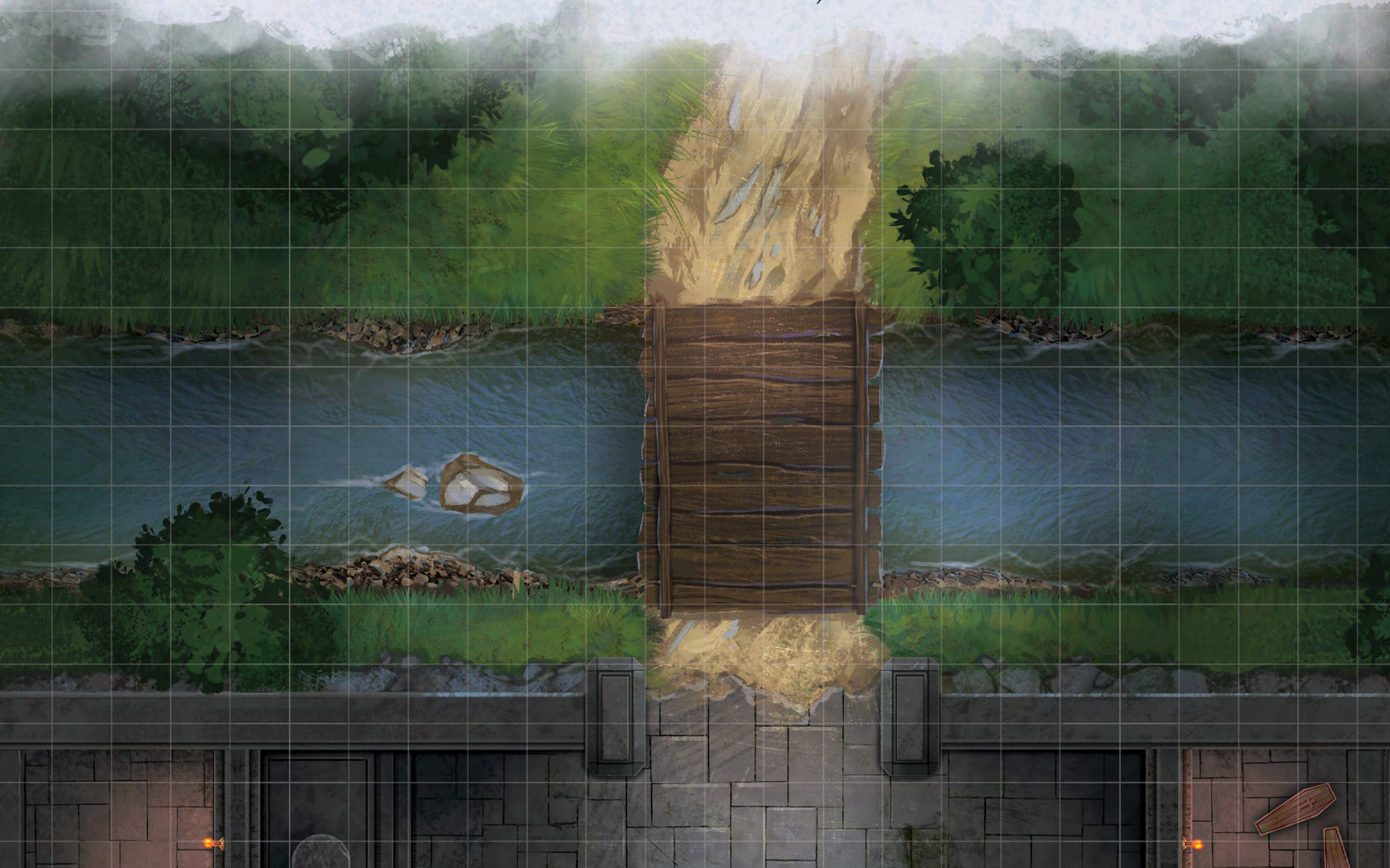
Rhaf is one of the two clergy who stayed behind in the temple when the cult rose to power. He held the rank of Dowser – one who finds water. This role saw him leave the temple every few months in search of sites where new temples could be constructed, and the faith of the water goddess perpetuated. Rhaf stayed to try and thwart the cult by discovering the final relic of Thalia of the Flowing Waters, but was killed before he could stop them. His body can be found in the storeroom of the temple level.

DIVINER HANCE YARTON

Hance was the other clergy member to stay behind and fight against the cult. He is the temple's divination expert, and worked closely with Rhaf to find new bodies of water that needed protecting and uniting under the water goddesses sphere of influence. Hance managed to uncover some information about the final relic, but is currently holed up in his bedchamber as the cultists discovered him. He is waiting with the hope that help will come, so that he may pass on their information.

Hance is an **acolyte** with the following changes:

- He is neutral good.
- He knows the spell *guidance* instead of *light*, and *fog cloud* instead of *sanctuary*.
- He is blessed by the water goddess and has innate spellcasting. He can cast *augury* once per day and *identify* at will. Wisdom is his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 12).



TEMPLE ENTRANCE

The adventure begins when the characters arrive at the temple's exterior. Here they must overcome the cultists guarding the temple's only entrance. Should they succeed, they will be able to search the temple for the relics, unite them, and defeat the Sea King. When the characters arrive at the temple's entrance, read or paraphrase the following:

The surging stream before you fills your ears with roaring. The sturdy wooden bridge which spans it is soaked by the spray. Standing before the entrance to the temple of the water goddess are four humanoids dressed in tightly wrapped blue and black robes that bear a whirlpool insignia.

Cultist Guards. The four **cultists** try to prevent the characters from gaining access to the temple. They do this using the following tactics:

First Turn. With powers bestowed by the Sea King, the cultists work together to summon a wall of water across the bridge. The wall is magical difficult terrain, 5 feet thick, and a creature that first enters the stream or starts its turn in the area takes 1d4 bludgeoning damage.

Second Turn. Each of the cultists summons a *steam mephit* from the stream. These elementals obey the commands of the cultists, and attack characters in melee to give the cultists the chance of attacking at range.

Third Turn Onwards. The cultists stay at range from the characters, using their darts.

Bridge. The bridge is blasted with spray from the stream each turn. A creature that moves across the bridge at normal speed must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw for each 10 feet it moves. On a failed save, the creature falls prone. A character dashing across makes this throw with disadvantage. A creature can walk at half their speed (effectively halving their speed for the turn), giving them advantage on the saving throw. The mephits and cultists automatically succeed on this saving throw, protected by the powers of the Sea King.

Stream. The stream here is nearly overflowing, as all the waterways that normally lead to the town have been redirected here. A creature that falls into the stream is pulled under the waves unless they succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw. A creature pulled under must hold their breath or begin to drown. Due to the choppy waters, getting back to the surface or swimming more than 5 feet requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check.

The stream flows southwards at a rate of 30 feet per turn, dragging any characters within with it.

TEMPLE LEVEL

Once characters gain entrance to the temple, they can explore the rooms in search of the relics of Tahlia of the Flowing Waters that will allow them to defeat the Sea King the primordial elemental. The characters have clues as to where some of the relics are thanks to Jessanther, though they'll need to find some themselves. The first room characters enter is the Holy Pools.

T1. HOLY POOLS

When characters enter the Holy Pools, the first room of the temple, read or paraphrase the following:

Staring down from the arched, painted ceiling above is the benevolent face of the goddess of water. Her fair aspect is surrounded by flowing waters that are entirely under her control, at once feeding and eroding the world beneath her feet. She looks down upon four great marble fonts, each of which contains water whose surface perfectly reflects her face, despite the improbable angles. These must be the holy pools that Jessanther was referring to.

Holy Pools. Indeed, these fonts are filled with holy water from the elemental realm that are sacred to the temple of the water goddess. If each of the four relics (the skull, scepter, robes, and book) is placed within these pools, the painting of the water goddess on the ceiling becomes animated. Its fair aspect becomes troubled and angered, and an aspect of the water goddess is formed by the water from the fonts, which rises up and coalesces into humanoid form. This aspect then seeks out the Sea King and attempts to bind it, giving the characters a chance to destroy the primordial elemental.

Cultists. Though there are no cultists in this chamber, there are four cultists and two cult fanatics in the Hall (the chamber to the east). Unless the characters succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity (Stealth) group ability check when they enter the Holy Pools room, the cultists notice them and come to attack.

Locked Doors. The stone doors on the southern wall of this chamber are both barred from the other side. Opening them requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. They lead to the collapsed corridor.

RULES TIP: SUFFOCATING

A creature can hold its breath for a number of minutes equal to 1 + its Constitution modifier (minimum of 30 seconds).

When a creature runs out of breath or is choking, it can survive for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 round). At the start of the next turn, it drops to 0 hit points and is dying, and it can't regain hit points or be stabilized until it can breathe again.

T2. COLLAPSED CORRIDOR

Beyond the southern locked doors of the Holy Pools is a corridor which is collapsing due to the flow of an underground reservoir that was previously still. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

A low vibration shakes the floor of this long corridor, and a rumbling can be heard from beneath it. Further along, you notice that the flagstones of the floor have fallen away, leaving a deep sinkhole in their wake.

Falling. If a creature begins to fall below the unstable floor or into the already present sinkhole, it must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature falls into the reservoir below and is spat out in the stream to the north of the temple's entrance 30 seconds later. On a successful save, the creature jumps 5 feet to an unoccupied adjacent space. If there are no adjacent unoccupied spaces, they instead fall into the reservoir.

Unstable Floor. The floor of this corridor is weakened thanks to the flow of the underground reservoir. Any weight placed on the floor could cause it to collapse. If more than two Medium creatures (or in excess of 400 lbs.) stand within 20 feet of each other, it begins to fall away in a 20-foot diameter circle centered on the weight sources.

A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the floor is sturdier near the walls, and that characters can safely cross the room by skirting along the edges of the room. A dwarf's Stonecunning trait applies to this check.

Sinkhole. Getting across the sinkhole, which is as wide as the corridor (preventing creatures from skirting the edges) and roughly 20 feet across, requires jumping, rope, flight, teleportation, or some other ingenious method.

A character who can't jump the necessary distance can attempt a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to jump as far as they can and latch on to the far side of the gap. The creature can then climb up the remainder of the wall. On a failed check, the creature falls into the reservoir (see above).

RULES TIP: JUMPING

When a creature moves at least 10 feet on foot immediately before a jump, it can jump up to an amount of feet equal to the creature's Strength score (long jump) or 3 + the creature's Strength modifier (high jump). Without a running start of at least 10 feet, a creature can only jump half the distance.

A creature cannot jump farther than its current speed, even with magical aid.

If there is some complication that interferes with the jump, the GM may require the character to succeed on a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to safely complete the jump.

Noise. Any loud noise in this chamber, such as the floor collapsing, draws the attention of the cultists on the Landing (the chamber to the east). The cultists there come to investigate. If possible, they use their darts to attack at range, or use the water from the underground reservoir to further smash the floor, increasing the difficulty of checks made to dodge its collapse.

T3. HALL

This hall to the east of the Holy Pools was used to meet with the townsfolk and hold general meetings. When the characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

The arched ceiling of this grand chamber supports a majestic chandelier that casts glittering light throughout. Upon the floor is an intricate mural of wave-like forms. Set into the walls are numerous bookcases stacked with holy books. Rooting through these, defacing or tearing apart the tomes, is a group of cultists.

Cultists. There are six **cultists** going through the books in this chamber. They appear to be searching for something specific in the books and, when they fail to find it, throw them aside or tear out pages in frustration. If they notice the characters (either here or in the Holy Pools), they attack.

Thanks to the light from the chandelier, characters are unable to sneak past the cultists. However, if they wait for ten minutes, the cultists give up their search of the bookshelves and head to the Puzzle Chamber, at which point characters can progress.

Bookshelves. The books on the shelves are holy books of the water goddess. The cultists are looking for clues as to the relics they are unaware of (the skull and tome). Fortunately, none of the books here will help them.

Trapped Door. The door in the northeast door leads to the Library, and is locked, hence why the cultists have not searched through the books within. The door can be picked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools, or forced open with a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check. Characters with a passive Perception of 13 or higher notice that the door is trapped.

Smashing down the door triggers the trap, which magically produces a fireball within the library, incinerating all the books inside. A creature within 5 feet of the door must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 14 (4d6) fire damage, or half that on a successful one.

The trap is set off by a magically enchanted fire crystal wedged into the hinge of the door. If the trap is detected, the crystal can be removed with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Failure triggers the trap.

T4. CELLS

On the southern wall of the Hall are five doors. All, save the easternmost, lead to cells which are fundamentally similar. If the characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

You emerge into a small, bare chamber which serves as a cell. The contents are mundane. They appear to have been used for private rest, meditation, or prayer by the clergy of the water goddess.

Contents. The cells don't contain anything special, but they do provide a place for characters to hide from searching cultists, or to rest, as the doors can easily be barricaded with things like beds.

T5. CELLAR

The easternmost door on the south wall of the Hall leads not to a Cell, but to a Cellar. Trapped within the Cellar is a devil, who has been there for many decades. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This dank, unlit chamber is strangely warm and humid – an entirely uncomfortable atmosphere. You can just make out a grate that covers a hole in the floor, and a lever beside it. The grate is locked shut with dozens of hefty iron padlocks, and is etched with holy symbols. As you survey the room, a snarling voice emerges from beneath the grate.

“Welcome. It's been a long time since I had visitors.”

Devil. Trapped within the grate is a **bearded devil** by the name of Razoraxi Vax. The infernal being has been trapped here for many decades after a failed attempt to corrupt the clergy for its master. The devil was captured by Jessanther, who it despises, and sealed in the cellar of the temple by holy bindings.

Razoraxi Vax is a wily creature, and desperate for freedom. It knows that the means to free it (a short ritual that takes only a few minutes) must be detailed in a book or scroll nearby, and offers the characters infernal boons for freeing it. It can cause the character's weapons to burn with hellfire, summon an infernal steed for them, fight alongside them for sixty-six hours, or some other boon in return for its freedom.

Razoraxi Vax is keen to recover its *Stygian dagger* if released. Its has no idea where the dagger is, but know that Jessanther took it from the devil. The dagger is in T7. Ooze Chamber, where Jessanther tried and failed to destroy it.

Cellar. The grate itself has numerous locks, the keys to which can be found in T12. Meeting Room. They can also be picked by way of a successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools, or forced open by way of a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. There are nine locks in total. The holy binding symbols prevent the grate being opened even once the locks are removed. They require a ritual to dispel, which is detailed in a book in the Library. Finally, the grate must be removed by pulling the lever beside it. Doing this frees Razoraxi Vax.

T6. LIBRARY

The door in the northeast corner of the hall is locked and trapped, but leads to the library. If the characters triggered the trap, the entire room has been incinerated. If characters overcome the door and enter the Library, read or paraphrase the following:

This room is bare save the bookshelves cut into the walls. These are stocked with a massive variety of books and tomes, some of which looks truly ancient. Many of them are covered with cobwebs, suggesting they have not been touched in many years. Others have creased spines and worn edges, indicating more frequent use.

Books. Characters who spend some time searching this room can discover two books of interest. The first is entitled “The Binding & Entrapment of Devils & Their Counterparts: A Practical Manual of Imprisonment”, the second “Scions of the Flowing Waters”.

The first book is filled with information about how to trap devils and contains the ritual needed to free Razoraxi Vax from T5. Cellar.

The second book contains a wealth of information about early worshipers of the water goddess, including Tahlia of the Flowing Waters. It contains a clue about the unknown relic (the tome);

“It is notable that Tahlia would always carry a great tome with her which, at one time, was said to rest on the bottom of the ocean floor. Tahlia was gifted this book, so the legends say, by the water goddess herself when a shoal of fishes dredged it from the depths and carried it to shore for Tahlia. Within were said to be numerous secrets that Tahlia was bound to keep secret, but which brought her closer to her deity. Upon Tahlia's death, the tome was considered too powerful to be passed on until the water goddess gave her permission, and thus it was sealed within her temple at the source of a sacred spring.”

This should provide characters the clue that the tome is the final relic of Tahlia, and that it can be found near the Sacred Font (actually in U6. Holy Symbol).

T7. OOZE CHAMBER

Through a short corridor that smells strongly of general waste is a small chamber. This chamber contains an enormous ooze that digests and destroys anything the clergy needed to be rid of, including old furniture. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

An enormous glob of splurgulous splatter flobs on the floor of this chamber. It bubbles and oozes like a failed alchemy experiment, and seems part way through digesting some old furniture.

Ooze. The glob on the floor is, in fact, a **gelatinous cube**. Unless the characters promptly close the door, it shoots out a pseudopod and tries to engulf them.

Treasure. Stuck in the far corner of the ooze is a chest which it seems unable to digest. If the characters can kill the ooze, or at least fish the chest out of it, they can bust open the weakened chest with ease. Within it is an evil-looking dagger of black iron. This dagger is Razoraxi Vax's *Stygian dagger*. A creature hit by the dagger must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or temporarily lose their memories and be charmed by the attacker for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. Razoraxi Vax will do anything to recover this dagger.

T8. STOREROOM

This room was used by the clergy to store mundane goods, but has since been used as a dumping room for corpses by the cult. It contains the body of Dowser Rhaf Oren, which has a clue for the tome relic. When character enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Slumped throughout this storeroom are four corpses of priests and priestesses of the water goddess. Three are dressed in pale turquoise robes bearing an embroidered symbol of two crashing waves. One wears a high-collared cape with the same symbol upon it, and has a twin-pronged staff nearby.

Dowser Rhaf Oren. The characters might recognize Rhaf's body if they spent time talking to Jessanther about the clergy who stayed behind. Rhaf stayed to search the temple for the tome relic, and was partially successful before he was found and killed. In one of his pockets is a crumpled scroll that bears three drawings of circles of holy symbols. These are the same as those in U6. Holy Symbol. The third circle is a symbol which must be drawn into the book there to free the relic. The staff is ceremonial, not magical.

T9. TRAPPED CORRIDOR

This trapped corridor protects the sepulcher from intruders. It works by magically detecting intruders, then shooting beams of pressurized water through the pillars on the northern wall. These beams begin to fill the sealed chamber, drowning anyone within. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Six beautifully carved pillars line the northern wall of this chamber. Each depicts a wonderful marine animal, turtles, dolphins, and the like with its mouth open wide. Curled up on the floor around halfway is a cultist.

Cultist. The cultist is obviously dead. A successful DC 16 Wisdom (Medicine) reveals that the cultist was battered and then drowned.

Trap. The corridor is protected by a magical trap. Any non-clergy that steps in front of the first pillar triggers the trap. A beam of water blasts out from the pillar's mouth toward the intruder. The creature must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw to dodge the beam or take 13 (3d8) bludgeoning damage and become stunned until the end of their next turn. The beam then continues to spray, but can be easily moved around.

As creatures move past the pillars, each shoots a beam at them which continues to blast. Once three have been triggered, the room starts to fill with water at a rate of 5 feet per round. The ceiling is only 20 feet high, so the entire place fills in four rounds. Creatures inside then begin to drown.

The trap can be thwarted in a few ways. Plugging the pillar mouths stops the water beams, and can be achieved with a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check. Deactivating the magical triggers can be done by casting *dispel magic* on a pillar, which also stops the beam. The characters can also open the doors (which lock once the trap is triggered). Opening a door requires a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check to find the hidden locking mechanism and a DC 14 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to unlock the door. Opening a door against the weight of the water requires a successful DC 11 Strength (Athletics) check. This drains the room through grates beneath the doors.

If it looks like the party is doomed to drown, you can have the cultists in T10. Sepulcher open the door and drain the room as they leave with another coffin.

T10. SEPULCHER

This room contains the bodies of previous clergy, as well as the hidden Tahlia's Skull relic. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Three cultists are working on lifting a coffin out of this chamber. There are several coffins remaining within, but it seems there may have been more. The walls are covered with holy inscription and painted with portraits of the dead.

Cultists. There are two **cultists** and a **cult fanatic** in this chamber removing a coffin from it. They have been taking the coffins to R4. Ritual Room to search them for the skull relic. When they spot the characters, they drop the coffin and attack.

Relic. Hidden beneath one of the coffins is a flagstone with two crashing waves etched into its surface. It is noticed immediately by creatures with a passive Perception of 18, or can be found with a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. Characters have advantage on this check if they know to look for the symbol. On a failed check, they still find the stone and symbol, but three more cultists enter the room just as they discover it.

Prying up the flagstone requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. Beneath is an unlocked chest which contains *Tahlia's Skull* relic.

Removing the relic from its place causes the five **skel-~~etons~~** inside the coffins to animate and attack the relic's bearer. Whirling water fills the space between their bones, causing them to move like humans.

T11. PUZZLE CHAMBER

This chamber contains an ancient puzzle designed to hide the Scepter of the Swell relic. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

The floor of this high ceilinged chamber is engraved with a flowing pattern that appears to spin clockwise around the chamber. Six stone obelisks, each sporting an ornately carved surface, stand spread throughout. The walls are decorated with ancient murals, mostly faded and flaked, that depict clergy of the water goddess pouring water from ewers into holes in the floor.

Puzzle. Characters that examine the obelisks discover a hole near the top of each, and find that they are engraved with one of the following scenes:

- Top right: Low clouds hugging the ocean.
- Top left: A stream running from the hills to the plains.
- Middle right: A spring bubbling up from the hills.
- Middle left: Waves surging across the ocean.
- Bottom right: Gulls flying over an estuary (where a river meets the ocean).
- Bottom left: Storm clouds pouring rain onto the hills.

In order to solve the puzzle, characters must sync the obelisks in the order of the water cycle: spring, stream, estuary, ocean, clouds, storm clouds. Characters who succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check pick this up easily. Any attempts made to move the obelisks fails though – they are embedded deep into the earth. To make them movable, characters must pour water into them, causing them to levitate. The water must match that expected to be found in the scene described (i.e., all must be fresh water apart from the slightly salty estuary and the very salty ocean). Characters might make this link by looking at the murals on the walls. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Intelligence (Nature) check also reveals this.

Once the pillars have been placed in the correct order, they sink back into the earth as the floor of the chamber is covered with a magical swirling illusion. A pit opens in the center of the chamber's floor, covered by the swirling water illusion. As the illusions calms, it appears to drain, revealing the *Scepter of the Swell* relic.

Cultists. When an obelisk rises from the ground to levitate, it makes a massive grinding noise, alerting the cultists guarding T13. Landing and D1. Antechamber. They come running in to attack.

T12. MEETING ROOM

This meeting room was used for private gatherings of the clergy, but has been wrecked by the cultists. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is wrecked. The ornately carved desk which would once have stood pride of place in its center has been smashed to pieces, and lies forlorn on the cold tiles. Chairs and crates are strewn around the place as if thrown by a whirlpool.

Notes. Searching through the wreckage of the desk yields some scrolls which haven't dissolved in the water yet. They contain notes about Unduin Wavebinder's rejection from the inner circle, her improper response, and then scattered mention of strange things occurring in the temple. All of these hint toward the founding and growth of the cult in the clergy, and the temple's eventual overthrowing.

Keys. Characters that search the chamber can easily find a locked wooden box that contains the keys to the grate in the Cellar. The box can be opened with ease.

T13. LANDING

Several cultists stand guard on this low landing. They may have left to investigate disturbances in the Collapsed Corridor or Puzzle Chamber. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Stairs lead up to a door on the western wall of this landing. A group of cultists sits around on the crates in the corner, while one keeps watch over the doors.

Cultists. One **cultist** watches the doors while three others and a **cult fanatic** chat about the plans of the cult while sitting on the crates. The cultist watching the door cannot be snuck past easily, but could be charmed or temporarily blinded so that the characters can slip past.

The cultists not paying attention are talking about the search for the relics. They know the skull must be in the coffins in T10. Sepulcher somewhere, that T11. Puzzle Chamber protects the scepter, and that the lava barrier should deter anyone trying to take the robes.

If the guard spots intruders, they warn the other cultists who join the fight. Noise in either T2. Collapsed Corridor or T11. Puzzle Chamber disturbs all the cultists, who go there to investigate. If noise occurs in both places at the same time, they split the group evenly.

T14. PRAYER ROOM

A stone door sculpted to resemble two crashing waves provides entrance to this prayer chamber. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This room is empty save for barrels and crates.

Storage. Inside the barrels and crates are prayer books and kneel mats for use during prayer. They are valuable, but stealing from the temple could have severe consequences. Each barrel's contents is with 50 gp, and each crate's 75 gp.

Oddly, there are barrels of sea salt in here that don't seem to have been moved or opened in years. This salt can be used to help solve the Puzzle Chamber.



DUNGEON LEVEL

The cult has overtaken this level of the temple and filled it with lava to protect the *Robes of the Flowing Waters* relic.

D1. ANTECHAMBER

This chamber is being guarded by cultists who protect the relic beyond. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Hanging from the ceiling by nearly invisible threads are dozens of fish cast in silver. They catch the light of the lit torch below, casting twinkling reflections throughout the room.

Cultists. There are two **cult fanatics** guarding this chamber and those beyond. They might have been drawn into T11. Puzzle Chamber owing to the noise of the obelisks.

D2. CEREMONY HALL

This chamber contains the *Robes of the Flowing Waters*, which were found by the cult and protected by a pool of lava. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is almost unbearably hot owing to the molten stone which forms a pool on the northern wall and in the southern corners. The bubbling lava spews specks of searing stone into the air at regular intervals. Hanging in a glass case on an islet in the lava is a set of beautiful robes.

Relic. The *Robes of the Flowing Waters* relic is protected by the lava barrier and glass case, though the latter can be smashed with ease.

Lava. Lava pools on the floor of the chamber. Characters that touch the lava for the first time on a round take 22 (4d10) fire damage. Characters standing within 5 feet of the lava must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw at the start of their turns, taking 2 (1d4) fire damage on a failed save, to avoid the lava's searing stone spray.

After every hour a creature spends in the chamber, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take 1 level of exhaustion from the heat.

Cultists. There are four **cultists** guarding the relic. Once per day, each can summon a **steam mephit** from the lava as a bonus action.

D3. SACRED FONT

This font provides a place for characters to heal provided they can cleanse the font. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Dappled light covers the walls and ceiling on this chamber, reflected up from a font filled with what must be holy water. As you draw near to receptacle, you notice that there is something stuck at the bottom of it, surrounded by an aura of green pestilence. You can hear the flowing of water beneath your feet from the three steel grates in the floor.

Font. The font is contaminated with a piece of **gray ooze** that the cultists created in an earlier ritual. This ooze is unique; it adheres to wood with a magnet-like attraction, which can be determined with a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) or Intelligence (Nature) check. Wooden objects are immune to the acid damage of this ooze.

Once the ooze is removed from the font, the font is restored to its previous hallowed state. A creature that drinks the water as an action gains the benefits of a short rest. It can gain this benefit only once per day.

If removed from the font (such as when placed into waterskins or bottles), the water loses its magical properties.

Grates. A subterranean spring flows under this chamber. Characters who succeed on an DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check can tell that the water is flowing from the southeast to the northwest. Its source roughly aligns with the door in the southeast corner of this chamber.

Characters can open the grates with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Following the river upstream takes them beneath U6. Holy Symbol. Following the river downstream takes them to T2. Collapsed Corridor.

D4. MUSEUM

This room was partially destroyed by the cult in their search for the robes relic. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber, which must have at one time been a museum, is now mostly destroyed. A few glass cases remain intact, but most are smoldering in the lava that covers the floor or lie smashed on the hot flagstones.

Lava. Lava pools on the floor of the chamber. Characters that touch the lava for the first time on a round take 22 (4d10) fire damage. Characters standing within 5 feet of the lava must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw at the start of their turns, taking 2 (1d4) fire damage on a failed save, to avoid the lava's searing stone spray.

After every hour a creature spends in the chamber, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take 1 level of exhaustion from the heat.

Treasure. The characters can amass treasure of high value from what remains in this chamber, but stealing from the temple could have severe consequences. One of the items is a magical sword that deals an extra 1 radiant damage on a hit. Another is an *eversmoking bottle* that creates fog instead of smoke.

D5. TRAPPED CHAMBERS

This corridor of chambers has been trapped by the cult to prevent progress through them. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

You emerge through the door into a featureless, empty chamber.

Trap. The trap only activates when a creature tries to move from the east to west through this series of four chambers. A creature moving into the chambers triggers the following effects:

- First Chamber (Westernmost): Two **ice mephits** appear in the room and attack.
- Second Chamber: Water blasts from holes where bricks are missing from the walls. Each creature in the chamber must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or take 10 (4d4) bludgeoning damage.
- Third Chamber: Water rapidly fills the room and rises to boiling temperature. Creatures within must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (4d4) fire damage.
- Fourth Chamber (Easternmost): A whirlpool forms in the chamber and throws the characters back to the first chamber, unless they succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw.

D6. DIVINATION ROOM

This chamber was used to scry on foes of the temple. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

As you enter this wide chamber, your mind is assaulted with images of a swirling green whirlpool, from which emerges a water elemental screaming with rage. You pull away from the being, back through a great hall filled with robed cultists. As the vision subsides, you get a feeling in the pit of your stomach that you have glimpsed the future.

Other than the illusion, there is nothing of note in this chamber.

D7. DIVINER'S BEDCHAMBER

Hidden in this bedchamber from the cult is Diviner Hance Yarton (see Friends and Foes). He has discovered a clue he shares with the characters. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Before you is a sparse chamber with a few modest furnishings, plenty of crates and boxes filled with books, and a small tapestry of the goddess of water.

Hance Yarton. When the characters enter, Hance crawls out from under the bed looking disheveled and scared. He tells the characters that he was the temple's diviner and stayed behind to help find the final relic. When Dowser Rhaf Oren was killed, he fled here and has been hiding since. He doesn't know the location of the final relic, though he thinks Rhaf may have, but he does know part of how to unlock it from its protection. To properly reveal the truth of its bindings, its location must be shrouded in fog.

Hance also tells the characters that the next level of the dungeon is swarming with cultists. Hance has no idea where they all came from – the cult must have been recruiting from outside the temple as well as within.

D8. ROBING ROOM

This chamber is filled with robes that belonged to the temple clergy. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Hanging from rails attached to the ceiling are dozens of robes in different shapes and sizes. All have the same general design though; pale with two crashing waves on the breast – the uniform of the temple's clergy.

Hidden Robes. Characters that succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check discover a hidden compartment in the wall which can be opened with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Within are six sets of folded cultist robes in various sizes, hidden from when the cult was still undercover. These can be used as disguises. Disguised characters must succeed on DC 10 Charisma (Deception) or Charisma (Performance) checks can passingly act as cultists until engaging in obviously suspicious behavior.

D9. CLEANSING CHAMBER

Before entering the Communion Room, one must thoroughly clean themselves in a ritual that reflects having a clear head and pure heart. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

The walls here are lined with small basins for washing oneself. Hanging from hooks around each are numerous brushes and scrapes designed to help properly clean. Atop each basin is a mirror, though many have clouded with age.

Cleansing. Characters that spend a few minutes tidying themselves up in this chamber get a +3 bonus to any checks made in the Communion Room. They can ascertain this with a DC 11 Intelligence (Religion) check.

D10. COMMUNION ROOM

This room is used to speak with the goddess of water. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Despite the bubbling pool of lava and desecration, this room retains its former majesty. Hundreds of porcelain masks, each depicting a different aspect of the goddess of water, hang from the walls. Many of these have been smashed, but the majority are still intact.

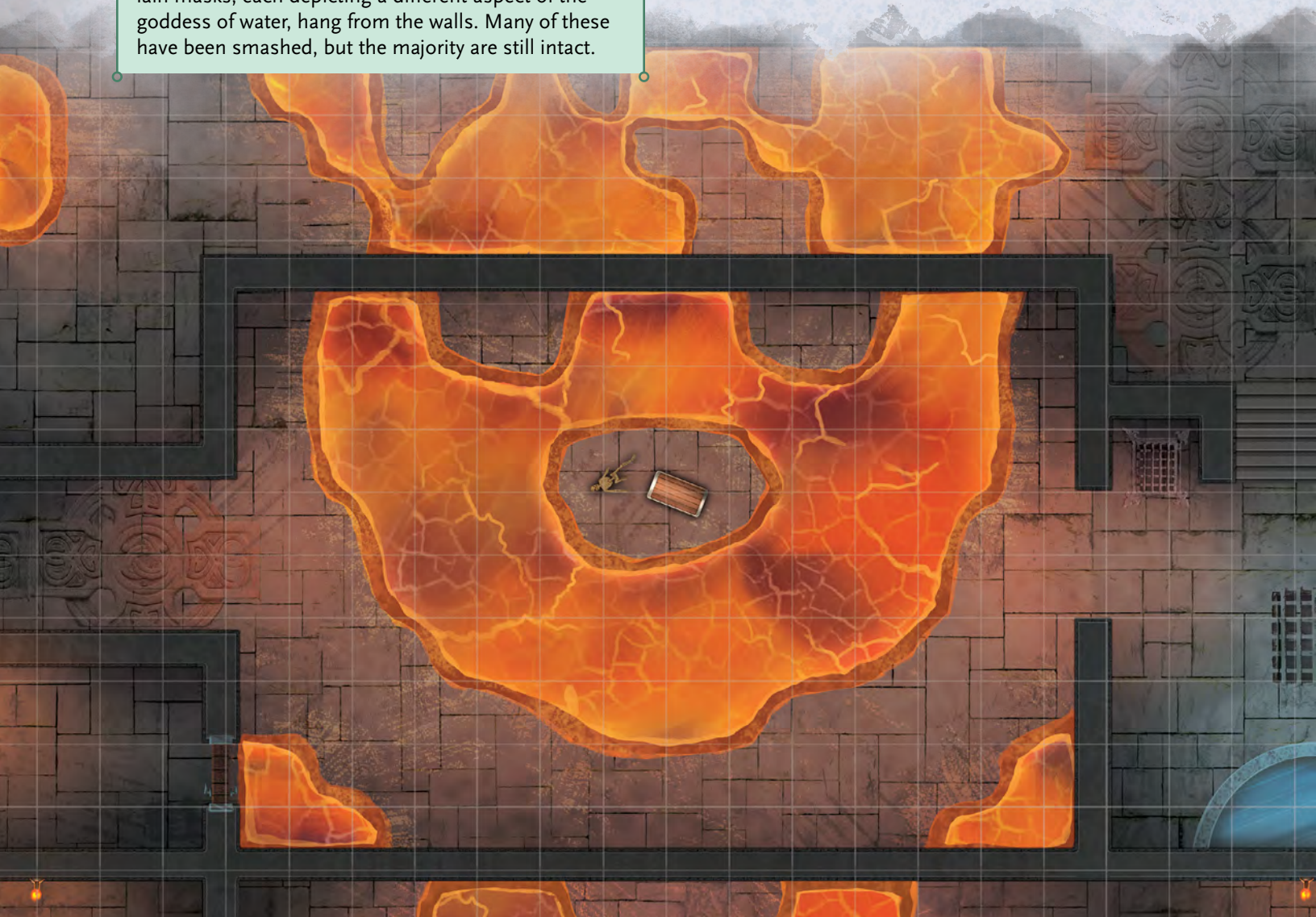
Lava. Lava pools on the floor of the chamber. Characters that touch the lava for the first time on a round take 22 (4d10) fire damage. Characters standing within 5 feet of the lava must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw at the start of their turns, taking 2 (1d4) fire damage on a failed save, to avoid the lava's searing stone spray.

After every hour a creature spends in the chamber, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take 1 level of exhaustion from the heat.

Communion. Characters can spend time meditating here to commune with the goddess of water. They must succeed on a religion check, the difficulty of which varies based on what they hope to achieve. Examples are given below:

- DC 10: one-time minor magical effect, such as by the *thaumaturgy* spell
- DC 15: limited-use magic powers, mundane objects
- DC 20: semi-permanent magic powers, magic items, clues
- DC 25: permanent magic powers, legendary items, truths

Failure on any of these checks causes an **ice mephit** to form and attack – it is formed by water spurting from the mouths of the hundreds of masks and coalescing in the center of the chamber.



CULT LEVEL

This level of the temple is overrun with cult members. Getting through without stealth or subterfuge is almost an impossibility.

U1. DINING ROOM

Even before characters enter this chamber, they can hear the noise from within. There are dozens of cultists in here celebrating the overthrowing of the temple, and toasting the arrival of the Sea King. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This enormous dining room has five grand tables laid out for a meal, as well as a bar stocked with wine. The place is swarming with cultists celebrating and toasting each other with glasses of wine. Their sounds of their merriment echo throughout.

Cultists. The cultists are distracted by their celebrations, and don't notice the characters as long as they succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) group ability check. Alternatively, characters might sneak through by using disguises or illusions. Any reasonable attempt at stealth is likely to succeed. Otherwise, the forty-eight **cultists** attack.

U2. KITCHEN & PANTRY

This kitchen was used by the temple clergy, and has been co-opted by the cult. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This large kitchen is exactly as you might expect for a temple of this size. There are numerous stoves, generous worktops, and hundreds of pots and pans.

Cult Chef. There are three **cultists** in the kitchen working on cooking meals. They are extremely distracted by their roles, giving characters advantage on checks made to sneak past or fool them.

Salt. There is little of note in these chambers except salt in both Kitchen and Pantry, which can be used in the Puzzle Chamber, and a valuable bearskin rug in the Pantry worth 150 gp.

U3. WORKSHOP

This chamber is used for repairing and creating items useful for the temple. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is lined with tools and folded tables. It is clearly a workshop of some variety.

Tools & Items. Each character can find one mundane item of their choice worth up to 10 gp. Additionally, there is at least one set of each type of artisan's tools.

U4. ARMORY

Although sparse, this armory gives characters an opportunity to stock up on non-lethal weapons. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is clearly an armory, though most of the weaponry in here appears to be designed for non-lethal combat. There are racks of quarterstaves and cudgels, and shelves stocked with a few strange-looking orbs.

Weapons. Characters can pick up quarterstaves, clubs, and other similar weapons from the racks in this chamber.

Bombs. On the shelves are half a dozen *mist bombs* and five *water bombs*. These bombs can be thrown up to 20 feet and when they hit their target (a surface, object, or creature), they explode. A creature hit by one must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. A *mist bomb* creates a cloud of mist that lingers for 1 minute, as if by the *fog cloud* spell. A *water bomb* conjures 10 gallons of water, as if by the *create or destroy water* spell.

Secret Door. Characters with a passive Perception of 15 or higher notice a secret door on the eastern wall. It can be opened with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

U5. HIDDEN TREASURE

The door to this chamber is secret, and must be opened from the Armory. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Sat atop a plinth on the far side of this chamber is a treasure chest that appears unlocked.

Treasure. The unlocked chest contains magic items of the DM's choice that are appropriate for your characters. The items are likely water-themed, such as a *ring of water walking*, *cloak of the manta ray*, or *decanter of endless water*.

U6. HOLY SYMBOL

Bound within the holy symbol is the *Tome of the Deep* relic. Characters should have enough clues from Hance, Rhaf, and the Library to discover it. If not, other locations such as D10. Communion Room and D6. Divination Room can help. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

At the far end of this long corridor is a hexagonal plinth engraved with holy symbols that glow with a soft turquoise light. In the center of the ring of symbols is a pictogram of a book.

Relic. In order to free the relic from the holy symbol, the characters must take the following steps:

- Step One: Shroud the room in mist or fog. In doing so, the characters reveal an illusion of the water goddess who dives through the floor.
- Step Two: Get into the subterranean stream beneath this chamber – the easiest way is via the grates in the Holy Font room.
- Step Three: Beneath the holy symbol is another ring of symbols. These can be dispelled by succeeding on a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Religion) check or by using a *dispel magic* spell.
- Step Four: Return to the holy symbol surface. The outer glowing symbols will have disappeared, but the book remains. The symbol discovered by Rhaf must be drawn atop this to open it.

When opened, the plinth atop which the symbols were etched slides open, revealing the *Tome of the Deep* relic.

U7. DORMITORY

This dormitory chamber is now empty save for cultist robes in various sizes, which could be used as a disguise. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Around twenty hammocks hang from the walls and ceiling of this chamber, some accessible only via step-ladders. Hanging beneath these are sacks containing personal trinkets.

Disguises. Many of the hanging sacks contain spare changes of cult robes, which can be used as disguises.



RITUAL LEVEL

This level of the temple is being used by the cult to summon the Sea King.

R1. NARTHEX

Several cultists guard R4. Ritual Room. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Four cultists stand guard in this chamber, they appear sternly dedicated to the task.

Cultists. The four **cultists** guard this chamber with their lives. They can each summon an **ice mephit** as a bonus action once per day. Every three hours the cultists rotate with others from the Dining Room, leaving this area empty for one minute.

R2. FLOODED CHAMBER

This area is flooded with water from the Ritual Room. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Whatever purpose this chamber once served is lost. It is entirely flooded with water which surges and spirals seemingly of its own accord. As you enter, a liquid serpentine form emerges from the water, roiling and twisting as it does so.

Serpent. The elemental serpent attacks characters in this chamber, and can join the fight in R1. Narthex if you desire. It cannot stray more than a 30 feet away from the room. It uses the statistics of a **giant constrictor snake** with the following changes:

- It is an elemental, rather than a beast.
- It is immune to poison.
- It is fluent in Aquan, a dialect of Primordial.

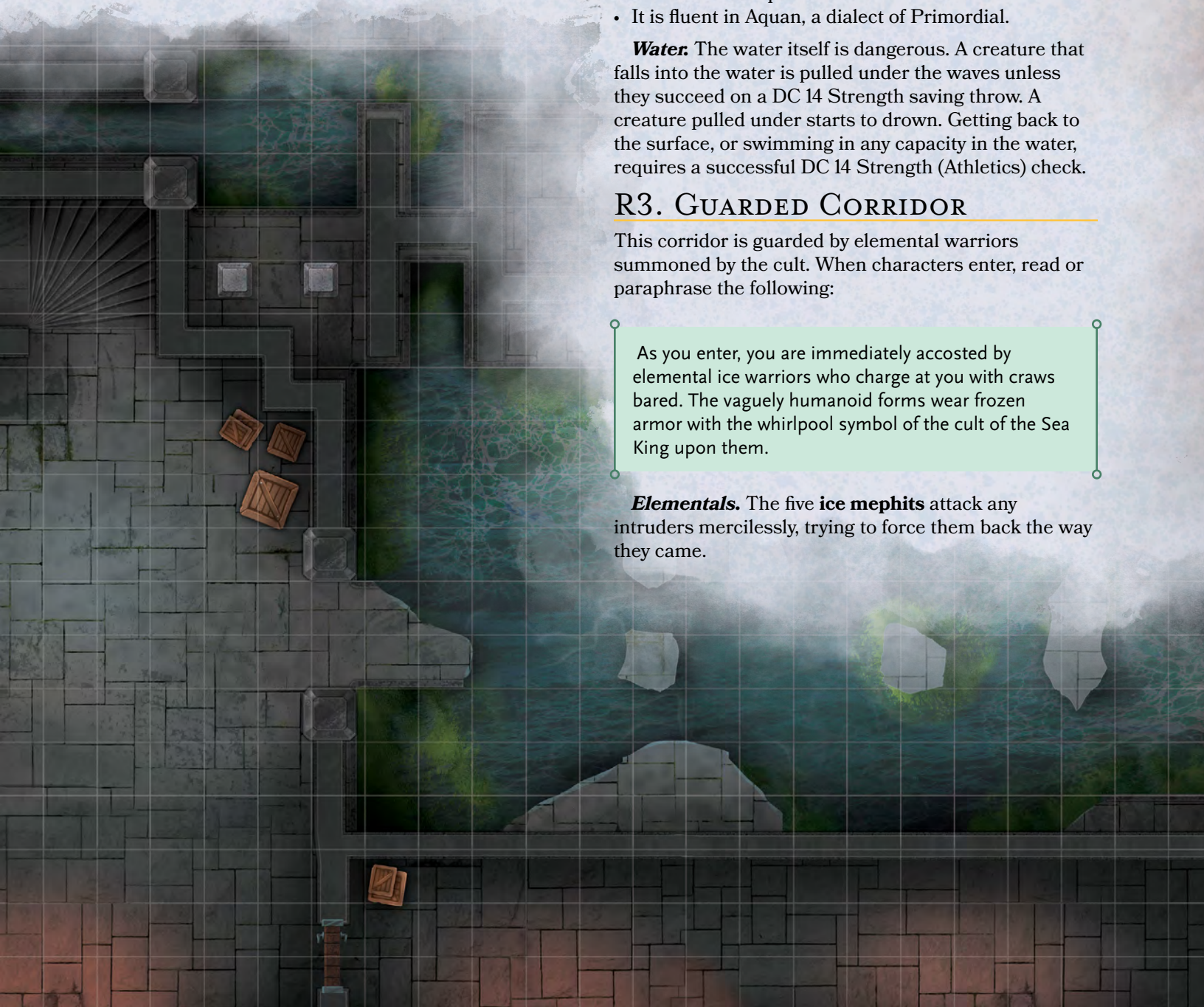
Water. The water itself is dangerous. A creature that falls into the water is pulled under the waves unless they succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw. A creature pulled under starts to drown. Getting back to the surface, or swimming in any capacity in the water, requires a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check.

R3. GUARDED CORRIDOR

This corridor is guarded by elemental warriors summoned by the cult. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

As you enter, you are immediately accosted by elemental ice warriors who charge at you with claws bared. The vaguely humanoid forms wear frozen armor with the whirlpool symbol of the cult of the Sea King upon them.

Elementals. The five **ice mephits** attack any intruders mercilessly, trying to force them back the way they came.



R4. RITUAL ROOM

It is here in this chamber that the ritual to summon the Sea King is taking place. By the time the characters arrive, it is too far progressed and cannot be stopped by them. They must find the relics to defeat the primordial elemental. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Standing on a stone obelisk at the far end of this chamber is a cultist, waving her hands in the air in arcane gestures that send the water at her feet flying into the air. The obelisk she stands atop has an enormous whirlpool at its base that churns the water to a frothing tsunami. All around are cultists joining in with the ceremony. As you start toward them, the lead cultist suddenly begins floating. She becomes encased in water which roils and becomes a deep green, before taking on an almost bestial shape. The cultists chant “Sea King” at the top of their lungs, and the summoned elemental roars in assent.

The Sea King. The Sea King is a violent and evil **water elemental** that attacks all creatures within reach.

Without the magical aid of the water goddess, as represented by the avatar summoned by the four relics, Sea King is immune to all damage. Any damage is instead directed toward the magic circle.

To defeat the Sea King, the characters must find the four relics and place them into the holy pools in area T1, at which point an aspect of the water goddess comes to the aid of the characters and reduces the Sea King’s immunity to all damage to resistance to all damage it isn’t normally immune to.

Water flows into the room, pulled in by the magic circle described below. If the party dispels the magic circle or otherwise stops the inflow, and then drains the water to another area, then the Sea King loses all damage resistances it doesn’t normally have.

Cultists. The cultists do their best to attack the characters while the Sea King begins tearing the temple apart. They might become victims of the primordial, as it cannot tell mortal friend from foe.

Magic Circle. The magic circle can be destroyed by casting *dispel magic*, or by incantations that can be determined with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check. Characters who have studied the books in Unduin Wavebinder’s Chamber automatically succeed on this check.

Lever. The lever in the room was pulled to redirect the water here; a successful DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that it is linked to another room somewhere nearby.

Coffins. The coffins are empty, having been searched for *Tahlia’s Skull* to no avail.

Water. The water itself is dangerous. A creature that falls into the water is pulled under the waves unless they succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw. A creature pulled under starts to drown. Getting back to the surface, or swimming in any capacity in the water, requires a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check. A creature that ends its turn in this water takes 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage.

R5. UNDUIN’S CHAMBER

This room has been used by Unduin as a base. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

You find yourselves in a bedchamber and study combined. Arcane books are spread out across an ornate desk that is also strewn with alchemical ingredients.

Books. The books on the table give an insight into how the ritual to summon the Sea King works, and details how to stop it (see R4. Ritual Room). Specifically, it has the incantations to destroy the magic circle.



R6. RITUAL CELLS

These cells were like the others on the Temple Level, but have been cleared and flooded by the cult. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

These empty cells must have been used for meditation. One of the cells has a lever on the wall.

Lever. One of the cells contains a lever linked to that in the Ritual Room. Pulling it causes the water to drain from this level as it is redirected back toward the town, but it cannot be pulled until the magic circle in the Ritual Room is dispelled, as the flow of water is too strong.

R7. VAULTS

These vaults contain the goods of the temple and are all locked. It requires a DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to pick the locks, or a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check to force them open. Inside they are filled with treasure, but it all belongs to the temple. The characters could find *potions of healing* or other useful items here at your discretion.

R8. JESSANTHER'S CHAMBER

This room belongs to the head priestess Jessanther Brightwater. It is filled with her personal effects and holy books. It can be used as a place to rest, as the cultists superstitiously avoid it, or it could contain information and clues to help the characters if they are stuck.

CONCLUSION

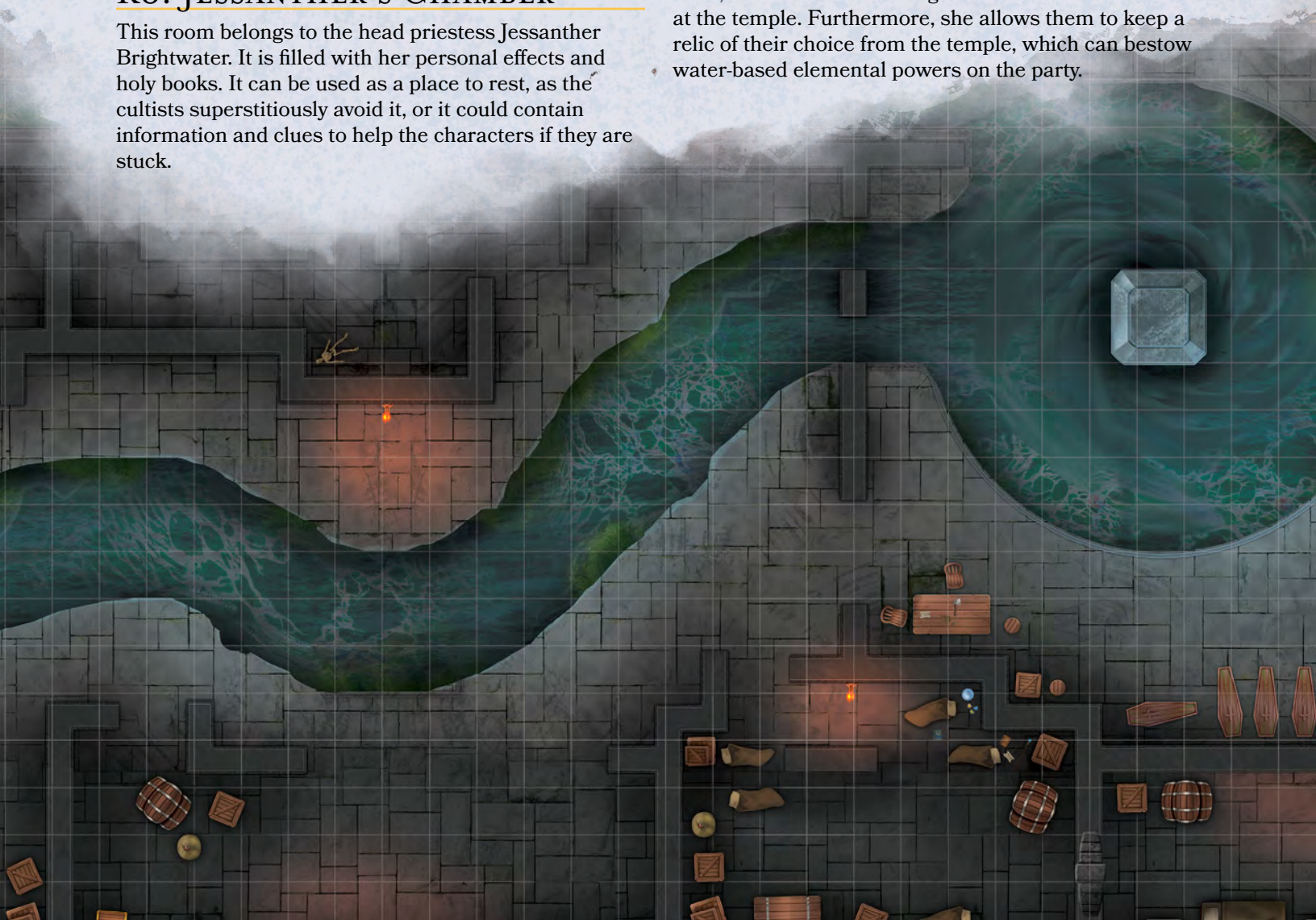
Hopefully the characters manage to stop the Sea King from destroying the temple and running riot across the world. The elemental wants nothing more than the total destruction of civilization and to flood the entire mortal realm, to start a new civilization afresh beneath the waves.

The Sea King needs to be stopped by amassing the relics in the holy pools, dispelling the magical circle linking this plane to the elemental water plane, and then by pulling the lever to drain the temple and redirect the water back to the town. This all weakens the Sea King, meaning it can be destroyed by the characters and the aspect of the water goddess summoned by the relics.

Once the Sea King is destroyed, the characters can apprehend Unduin Wavebinder and bring her to justice at the hands of Jessanther. Jessanther feels great guilt for rejecting Unduin, which she feels may have started the cult. Because of this, she merely exiles Unduin rather than imprisoning her.

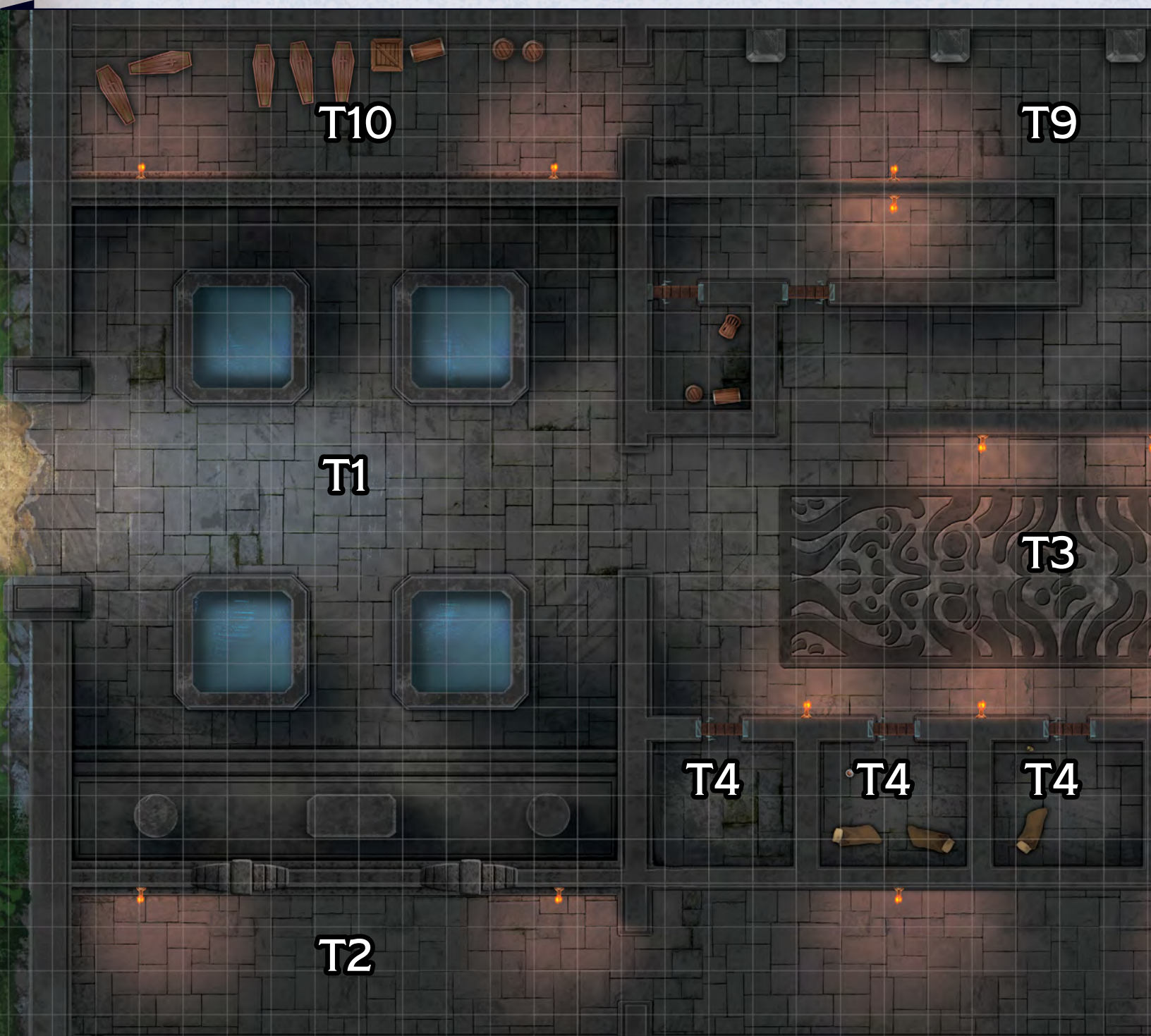
REWARDS

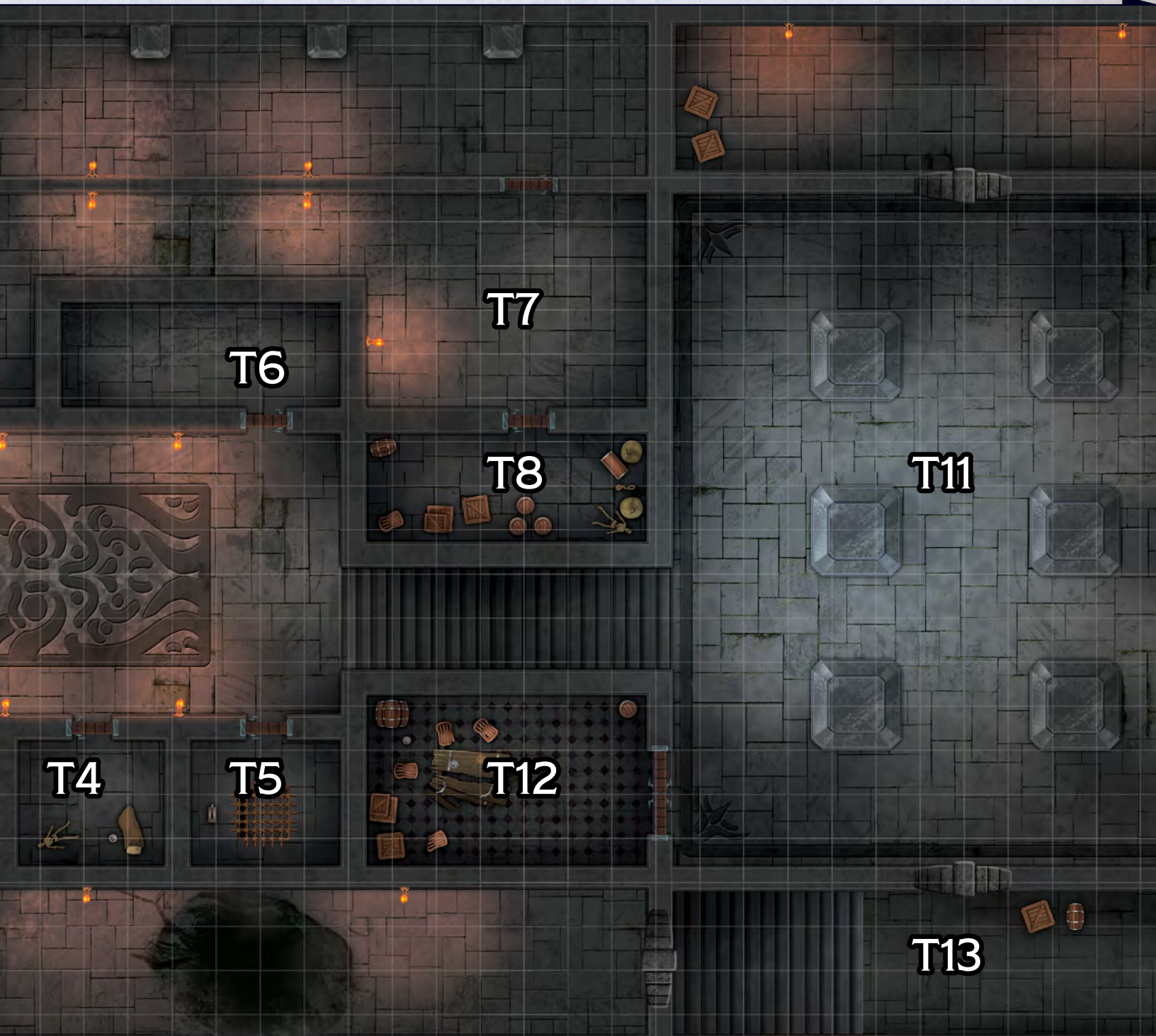
As a reward for saving the temple, Jessanther offers the characters a free place to stay whenever they are in need, as well as free healing and resurrection services at the temple. Furthermore, she allows them to keep a relic of their choice from the temple, which can bestow water-based elemental powers on the party.



TEMPLE LEVEL MAP

- T1. Holy Pools
- T2. Collapsed Corridor
- T3. Hall
- T4. Cells
- T5. Cellar
- T6. Library
- T7. Ooze Chamber
- T8. Storeroom
- T9. Trapped Corridor
- T10. Sepulcher
- T11. Puzzle Chamber
- T12. Meeting Room
- T13. Landing
- T14. Prayer Room





T6

T7

T8

T11

T4

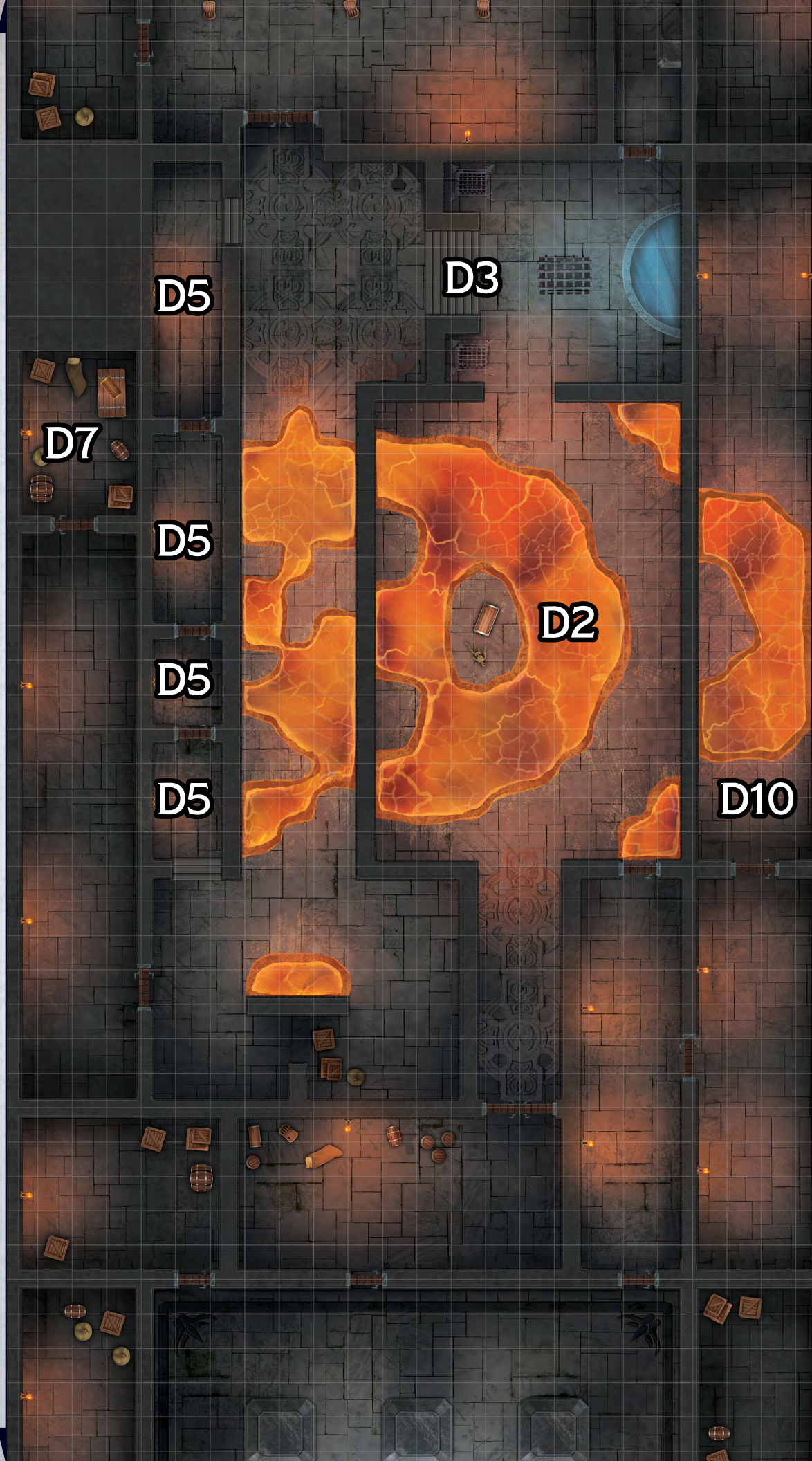
T5

T12

T13

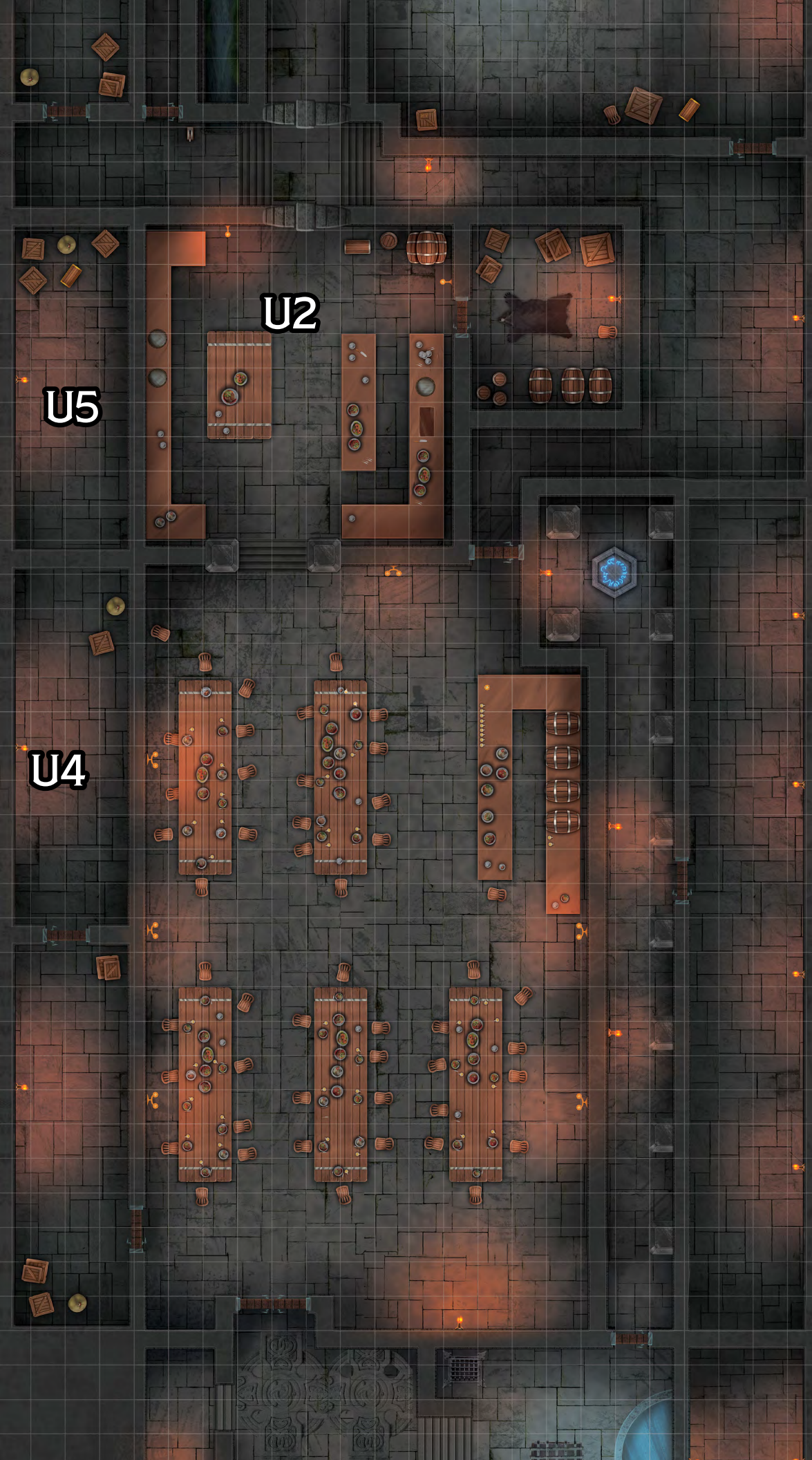
DUNGEON LEVEL MAP

- D1. Antechamber
- D2. Ceremony Hall
- D3. Sacred Font
- D4. Museum
- D5. Trapped Chamber
- D6. Divination Room
- D7. Diviner's Bedchamber
- D8. Robing Room
- D9. Cleansing Chamber
- D10. Communion Room



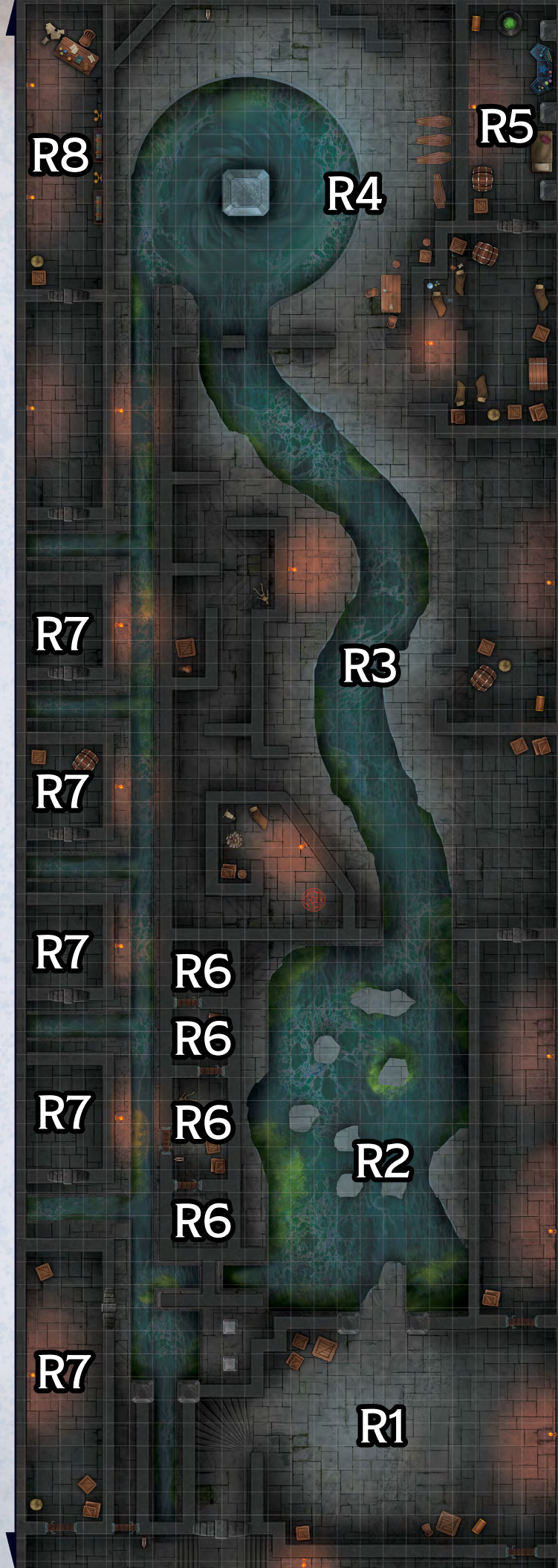
CULT LEVEL MAP

- U1. Dining Room
- U2. Kitchen & Pantry
- U3. Workshop
- U4. Armory
- U5. Hidden Treasure
- U6. Holy Symbol
- U7. Dormitory



RITUAL LEVEL MAP

- R1. Narthex
- R2. Flooded Chamber
- R3. Guarded Corridor
- R4. Ritual Room
- R5. Unduin's Chamber
- R6. Ritual Cells
- R7. Vaults
- R8. Jessanther's Chamber





GATES TO THE CASTLE

DEFEAT THE ZOMBIE HORDE

An evil necromancer has taken over the town. Can our heroes sneak their way to the city center and destroy the undead hordes at their source?

Gates to the Castle is an adventure for use with the Yarro Studios *Gates to the Castle Infindungeon* scroll.

Intended for a group of two to five characters of 5th to 10th level, this adventure takes most groups 2 to 4 sessions to complete.

CONTENT WARNING

Gates to the Castle is a horror adventure. There are vivid descriptions of cannibalism, corpses, and harm to animals, children, and the elderly.

INTRODUCTION

Gates to the Castle is an *Infinidungeon* adventure in which characters make their way through an undead-infested city to the castle at its center. Here, they must take on a necromancer who has the citizens captive. Only by defeating the necromancer can they weaken the undead in the city and clear them out, allowing the citizens to escape the castle and return to their daily lives.

This adventure is intended for a party of two to six level 5-10 characters. Smaller or lower level parties may especially need to value stealth over strength.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The city of Mansidalia has come under assault. An army of powerful undead have stormed the walls, overthrowing the guards and forcing the citizens to pull back to the castle. Here, they were ambushed by Court Witch Fell Bessy, who revealed herself to be a powerful necromancer. She had been planning to usurp the Prince Regent since she was appointed Court Witch.

In order to reach Fell Bessy and defeat her, the characters must make it to Castle Rand where she has most of the civilians hostage. The undead that she has unleashed on the city are incredibly powerful, and swarm the streets. It is highly unlikely that the characters will be able to defeat them without first defeating Fell Bessy, which weakens them significantly.

FELL BESSY

Fell Bessy (see Appendix) has been the Court Witch of the Prince Regent for many years. She was always loyal to the Prince, providing wise counsel and curing him of a serious ailment that nearly ended his life a year past. It seems this act has run its course, as Fell Bessy has revealed herself to be not just a witch, but a necromancer. Shadow magic has enabled her to raise an army of powerful undead in the city who have ransacked the place and now swarm its streets. Bessy remained in Castle Rand, where the citizens fled to. This gave her the chance to take them hostage. In return for their lives, she wishes to depose the Prince Regent.

PRINCE REGENT

The Prince Regent (LG human male **noble**) is a somewhat weak-willed individual. Although he has a fair mind for governance, the reality is that he relies heavily on his advisors. Placing much of his trust in Fell Bessy has proven to be his downfall.





GENERAL FEATURES

Undead Foes. While Fell Bessy's altar is active, her undead hordes comprise **fell skeletons**, **fell zombies**, and **fell wights** (see Appendix). If her altar is deactivated, these transform into normal **skeletons**, **zombies**, and **wights**.

Time of Day. The DM determines the time of day. The default adventure begins during sundown, when the wights' Sunlight Sensitivity traits are not in effect. Adventurers make Stealth checks as normal. You can make the adventure easier by setting it on a sunny day, giving the adventurers advantage on Stealth checks made to sneak past wights. Alternatively, you can make the adventurer harder by setting it on a dark night. Adventurers using their own light source in the dark suffers a -5 penalty to Stealth checks.

CITY EXTERIOR

The exterior of the city is mostly farmland spotted with verdant copses and laced with well-trod roads. A few of the undead that can be found within the walls of the city stalk through the fields, and have cornered a family of farmers in their windmill. When characters reach the outside of the city, read or paraphrase the following:

Smoke rises above the walls of the city, spiraling up into the otherwise picturesque skies. As far as the eye can see are fields of golden corn, spread like butter over bread. The landscape is broken up here and there by tufts of trees and winding roads. Just outside the city walls is a small cottage and a windmill. You can see figures pacing around outside the mill.

Undead. There are three undead pacing around the outside of the mill, one **fell wight** and two **fell zombies**. They appear to be searching for an entrance which isn't blocked up.

Farming Family. Stuck inside the mill are a family of farmers who were chased there by the undead. In an immense feat of strength they manage to slide the millstone from its stand to barricade the door, but they are now trapped within.

If the characters can rescue the family and find a way to free them, such as climbing up to a high window and lowering a rope for them to climb out, the family can reveal what happened to the characters. Read or paraphrase the following:

"It seemed like any regular day. We headed out the fields to work for the morn as usual, but when we returned for our luncheon it was clear something was wrong. Smoke was rising from the city, and strange figures were up on the walls. When we got to the mill there were these rotting creatures inside. They chased us out, so we looped around and got back in. We managed to shift the millstone to block the door, but then we were trapped."

CITY WALLS

The city walls are patrolled by undead. There are two **fell zombies** stationed in each tower arming the ballistae, and a patrol of four **fell skeletons** paces the walls – returning to the gates every 10 minutes. In order to gain access to the city, the characters must either face these undead and open the gate, or sneak past them and scale the walls.

Ballistae. A ballista can only be fired once each round, and takes the actions of two operators to fire. It makes a ranged weapon attack (+6 to hit, range 120/480 ft., one target) and deals 16 (3d10) piercing damage on a hit.

Rocks. The skeletons and zombies can drop large rocks on any characters on or within 10 feet of the wall. A targeted character must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. A creature takes no damage on a successful save. A creature climbing the wall who is knocked prone falls to the ground.

Approaching the Gate. Characters that succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check approach the gate without drawing the attention of the undead guards. If they fail or do not attempt to move stealthily, the zombies target them with ballistae and the skeletons with shortbows or large rocks.

Charge the Gate. The gate is a heavy oak affair fortified with iron bands. Opening it requires a successful DC 17 Strength (Athletics) group ability check.

Scale the Walls. The walls are 30 feet tall, made of rough-hewn bricks. A creature can use its action to attempt a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to climb the wall. On a success, the creature climbs 15 feet. If the success is by 5 or more (DC 17), the creature instead climbs 30 feet. If the creature fails the check, it climbs 10 feet and then falls off the wall. Creatures make this check with advantage if they have a grappling hook, climbing spikes, or similar equipment.



LOWER CITY

When characters get into the city proper, they realize that it is absolutely swarming with powerful undead. When they make it past the city walls, read or paraphrase the following:

The city streets are choked with smoke, through which stalk undead creatures that are disgusting to behold. They range from twisted humanoid skeletons whose empty eye sockets glow with a malignant purple light to half-humanoid, half-bestial hunks of warped flesh that stumble and claw their way through the streets surrounded by clouds of flies. The infernos that blaze throughout the city continue to pump smoke into the air, and seem to burn with an immense heat.

Characters who succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check deduce that it is unlikely they'll be able to fight their way to the castle; stealth is their most likely route to success.

The following section describes a method of tracking the party's stealth level, as well as some encounters they meet along their way that may help or hinder their passage.

STEALTH SYSTEM

It is assumed that the characters are sneaking when they enter this part of the adventure. Otherwise, they are prone to being quickly overwhelmed and eaten.

After climbing over the wall and again after completing each random encounter, the party makes a DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) group ability check. If the party fails three consecutive Stealth checks, they are noticed by the undead hordes. If the party splits, keep track of each character or small group's stealth level separately.

Being Noticed. Characters who do not sneak or who fail too many Stealth checks are noticed by the hordes. They roll initiative and are immediately attacked by 3 **fell wights** and 3d6 **fell zombies**, which immediately eat any character reduced to 0 hit points. Characters can use their action to attempt to sneak away, which requires a successful DC 18 Dexterity (Stealth) check. Characters make this check individually, and have advantage on this check if they are in broad daylight (thanks to the wights' Sunlight Sensitivity) or if they make a suitable distraction in another area of town.

Characters that get away group together and count as if they had failed two consecutive Stealth checks.

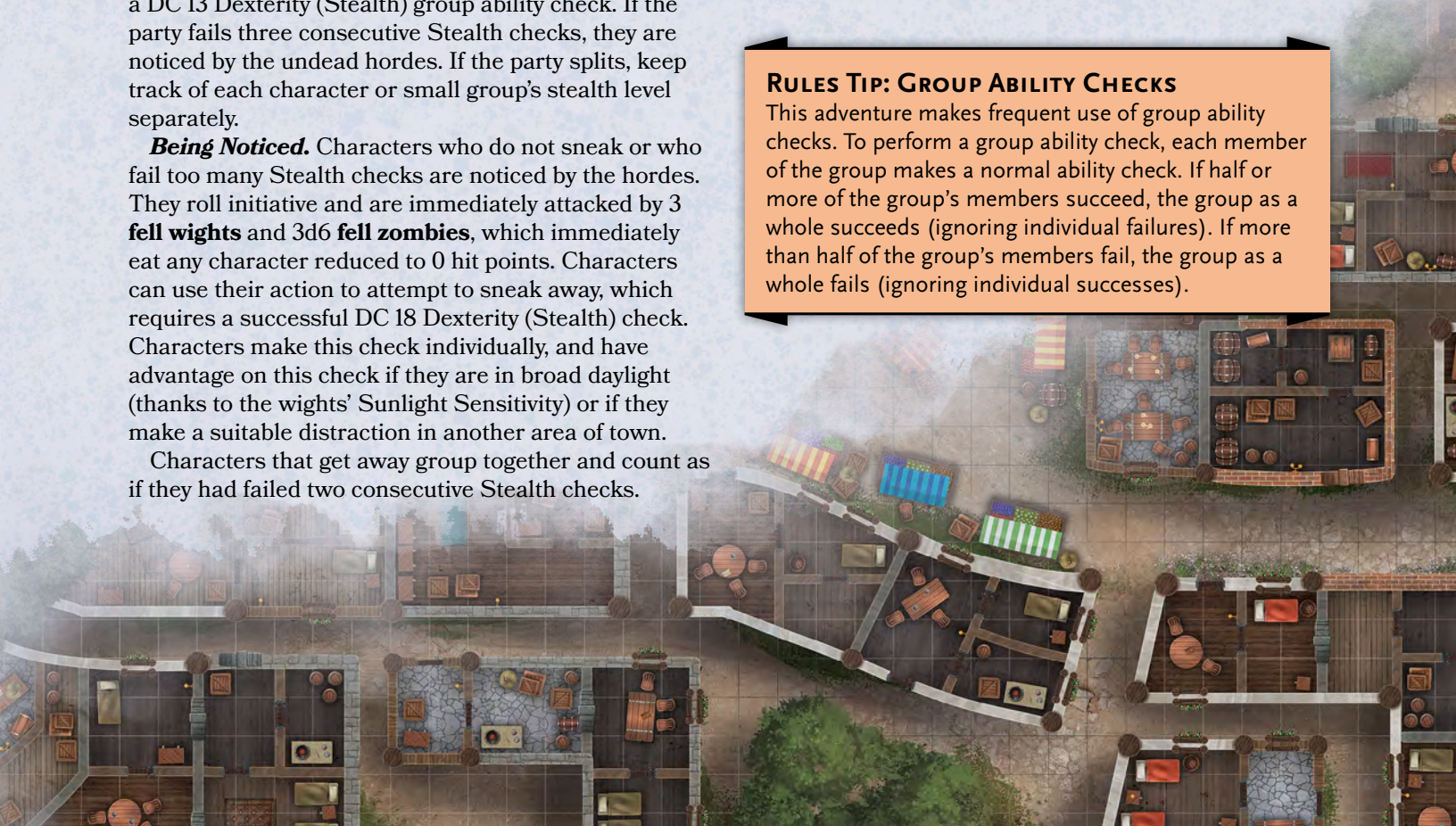
BONUSES AND PENALTIES

The party can add bonuses or subtract penalties from their Stealth checks made after each encounter by doing the following:

- If the party moves primarily through buildings or on rooftops, rather than the street, they have a +2 bonus to the next Stealth check.
- If the party covers their trail after an encounter with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check (no penalty for failure), they have a +2 bonus to the next Stealth check.
- If the party creates a suitable distraction in another area of the city with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check, they have a +5 bonus to their group Stealth check. Failing this Performance check instead gives a -5 penalty to the next Stealth check.
- If a character makes any noise, including speaking above a whisper, knocking over objects, breaking open doors, or dislodging roof tiles, that character has a -2 penalty to the next Stealth check.
- If a character is spotted by an undead during an encounter, it attempts to alert the others. The spotted characters take a -5 penalty to the next Stealth check.
- If a character attacks a creature during an encounter, that character has a -2 penalty to the next Stealth check.
- If a character casts a large, obvious, and visible spell effect, such as a *fireball* or *lightning bolt*, that character has a -5 penalty to the next Stealth check.
- If the characters are in broad daylight, they make these Stealth checks with advantage (thanks to the wights' Sunlight Sensitivity).
- If a character is using its own light source in the dark, it has a -5 penalty to these Stealth checks.

RULES TIP: GROUP ABILITY CHECKS

This adventure makes frequent use of group ability checks. To perform a group ability check, each member of the group makes a normal ability check. If half or more of the group's members succeed, the group as a whole succeeds (ignoring individual failures). If more than half of the group's members fail, the group as a whole fails (ignoring individual successes).



RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

While the characters make their way through the city they should be faced with at least three encounters from the following tables. You may choose to include more or fewer, depending on the length of your sessions. There are two tables – one for street encounters and one for building encounters.

OUTSIDE ENCOUNTERS

The following encounters can occur while characters are making their way through the streets.

| d4 | Encounter |
|----|----------------|
| 1 | Horsing Around |
| 2 | Inferno |
| 3 | Blockade |
| 4 | Broken Shield |

HORSING AROUND

When this encounter occurs, read or paraphrase the following:

Rearing up in the middle of the street is a horse, its rider missing, surrounded by the monstrous undead. The creatures claw at its hide, tearing through its flesh with their vicious claws. It looks as if the creature won't escape.

The characters have to choose whether to let the **draft horse** perish at the hands of four **fell skeletons** or whether to intervene and save its life, at the cost of being noticed by the undead. The characters might manage to come up with a clever way to distract the undead and save the horse that doesn't involve them being caught themselves, such as by knocking over barrels using ranged attacks.

INFERNO

When this encounter occurs, read or paraphrase the following:

The street ahead is blocked by ash and smoke. There's no way to see through the darkness. Who knows what lurks within.

A cloud of ash and smoke means that the characters cannot see up the street ahead. They must either choose to double back on themselves, or to plunge into the darkness without their senses to aid them. There is a 50% chance that there is a **fell skeleton** in the smoke cloud which the characters accidentally bump into.

To increase the pressure, have a horde of undead begin to wander up the street behind the characters, forcing them to think fast about going through the smoke or coming up with an alternative (such as running over the rooftops).

BLOCKADE

When this encounter occurs, read or paraphrase the following:

Up ahead the street is blocked by wooden *cheval de frise*, at which undead throw themselves heedless of the damage it causes their forms.

The characters must deal with the blockade. Perhaps they are forced to turn back, try an alternate route, or perhaps they must clear a portion of the blockade stealthily to get past without being noticed by the undead.

Clearing the blockade requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) group check. Alternatively, a character can scale the barricade with a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

Failing one of these checks counts as a failed group Stealth check, for the purposes of being noticed by the horde.

BROKEN SHIELD

When this encounter occurs, read or paraphrase the following:

Stood frozen solid with fear against a nearby building is a city guard. He desperately clutches at the halves of a shield cleft in two. As you watch, one of the halves drops from his shaking grasp. You hear a snarl not far off.

The guard, named Barn Barrow (LN male mountain dwarf **guard**), is too terrified to move and will be devoured unless the characters intervene. They can get the guard moving with a successful DC 19 Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) check, or they can forcefully move him with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

If the characters can convince the guard to talk, he lets the characters know that what remains of the city guard are holed up in the Upper City, fighting back against the undead as best they can.

INSIDE ENCOUNTERS

The following encounters can occur while characters are making their way through a building.

| d4 | Encounter |
|----|------------------|
| 1 | It's Locked |
| 2 | Trapped Civilian |
| 3 | Feast |
| 4 | Guard Dog |

IT'S LOCKED

When this encounter occurs, read or paraphrase the following:

You push on your exit, and are dismayed to find that it does not budge.

The characters find themselves stuck, as the door or window through which they were hoping to leave is locked. The lock can be picked with a successful DC 17 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, or can be barged down with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. Breaking down the door gives the party a -2 penalty to their next Stealth check. Failure on either check causes a loud noise, either through snapping a lockpick or throwing yourself at a door. The party then suffers a -5 penalty to the next Stealth check.

To make matters worse, include a **fell skeleton** in the building that has followed their tracks. It hasn't noticed the characters yet, but will do unless they can get the door open as soon as possible.

TRAPPED CIVILIAN

When this encounter occurs, read or paraphrase the following:

A soft whimper can be heard from within the building, and a harsh banging and scratching. Someone is trapped behind a locked door at which one of the disgusting undead creatures throws itself. As you watch, the undead manages to smash through one of the door's boards.

The characters have a hard choice to make. Do they intervene and save the life of the trapped civilian and put themselves at risk of being noticed, or leave the civilian to their fate and pass by unnoticed?

The undead is a **fell zombie**.

If you want to spice up the encounter, have the trapped civilian notice them and call out for help. If you want to make it even worse, the civilian is a child or elderly person.

FEAST

When this encounter occurs, read or paraphrase the following:

A horrendous slopping, tearing sound fills this building. It is accompanied by no less sickening crunches and slurps. In the next room, a pack of undead are feasting upon the cadaver of some unlucky soul.

The 2d6 **fell zombies'** senses are somewhat dulled while they feast on the corpse, so the characters have a chance to sneak past them or away from them. Each character makes an individual DC 8 Dexterity (Stealth) check to pass by unnoticed. On a failed check, a character knocks something from a sideboard or display stand. That character must attempt a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw to catch the item before it drops to the ground and smashes. If the character fails, it counts as a failed group Stealth check and the nearby zombies immediately notice them and attack.

GUARD DOG

When this encounter occurs, read or paraphrase the following:

You hear a low growling from around the corner. Peering carefully around, you see a hulking hound, its head held low to the ground, its teeth bared. It snarls a warning, which begins to rise in a deadly crescendo.

The characters must act quickly to stop the dog barking and revealing their location. The characters can silence the dog with a successful DC 19 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, a *silence* spell or similar magic, or by killing it (though attacking the dog gives them a -2 penalty to their next Stealth check).

If they don't act immediately or if their first attempt fails, the dog barks. This counts as a failed group Stealth check. If they continue to do nothing or if subsequent attempts fail, the dog continues to vocalize at them. Each failed attempt counts as an additional failed Stealth check.

UPPER CITY

Once you've run as many encounters as you feel comfortable with, the characters can advance to the Upper City. If you wish to extend this area of play, consider running some of the encounters that went unused in the Lower City. Otherwise, move on to the encounter with the barricaded guards.

BARRICADED GUARDS

The Upper City once played host to the most affluent members of the city. However, both poor and rich suffered the same fate when the undead attacked, and the streets are now littered with corpses. When characters arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

The once fine streets of the Upper City are now stained with blood that splatters underfoot. The lavishly decorated and ornately ornamented buildings around you seem drained of color, their fine architecture blending into a landscape of despair. Not far off you hear the sounds of desperate combat.

In the central courtyard of the Upper City, a group of five **guards**, badly injured and exhausted, are attempting to fight off a horde of undead. They have managed to erect a makeshift barricade around six feet tall from overturned carts, cheval de frise, benches, and the like, but have already taken numerous casualties. The undead that surround them are slowly managing to break through the barricade and pull the guards out into the swarm, where they are quickly overwhelmed and brutally devoured by the animated corpses.

A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that there is no easy way for the party to defeat the undead and save the guards, and that it is very unlikely the guards themselves will prevail. Rather, if the guards are to be saved, the most likely route to success is for the characters to convince them to flee to the castle with the party.

It takes a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince the guards to accompany the party. The party makes this check with advantage if Barn Barrow (the guard from the Broken Shield random encounter) is with them.

The five guards can make a group Stealth check to sneak away with the party. The guards make this check with advantage if the party creates a suitable distraction. This could be something as simple as letting off a fireball away from the barricade, or could be a more elaborate ruse.

WHAT HAPPENED HERE

The captain of the guard squad, Merrabil Huntsworn, is one of the guards lucky enough to have made it out with their lives. Merrabil can give the characters more information about what happened here:

"I was in court when Fell Bessy went wild. It was just after word came in that the Prince Regent had made it to his mother's castle. She started cackling like mad, her hair took on a life of its own – well, more than usual – and a purple light glared from her eyes. As she rose into the air she started reciting incantations. We tried to stop her but it was no good, any time we tried we were flung back by tendrils of purple magic. Then we heard the shrieks from outside. Undead monsters were roaming the streets – they'd dug themselves up from the graveyard. We tried to beat them back but they were strong, well, you know that of course. Anyway, that's how we ended up here, trapped."

If the characters ask about Castle Rand, Merrabil can tell them the following:

"Castle Rand was well defended, but I've no doubt they've been overrun. We tried to get the civilians back up there into the fort, but I guess if Fell Bessy stayed put she's got them now. I can only hope we did the right thing leading them to her instead of the undying hoard out here."



CASTLE RAND EXTERIOR

When the characters have made their way through the Upper City, they must first traverse a path through a forested area of the outskirts of Castle Rand. Hidden here in the wooded belt is Castle Rand's jester, Ballysaryx, who has helpful information for the characters. When characters arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

On the outskirts of the Upper City is a forested belt, no more than a hundred feet deep, that is traversed by a cobbled pathway. As you begin to move through this manicured woodland, you hear a 'psst' aimed in your direction.

If the characters pay heed to the summons, read or paraphrase the following:

Searching for the source of the noise, you spot a brightly colored jester's outfit crouched down on the mossy floor. The strange creature wearing the multi-colored affair is desperately clutching at the bells of the jester hat, trying to silence them. He has the torso of a human, and the hindquarters of a goat. His large ears stick out from beneath the hat at awkward angles.

The court jester is a **satyr** summoned by Fell Bessy for the Prince Regent's amusement. The fey creature has developed a liking to the Prince Regent, who fed him well. The creature tells the characters that Castle Rand is occupied by Fell Bessy and her undead warriors. He warns the characters not to approach lest they wish a hideous death to be visited upon them. Despite this, it does have useful information. Read or paraphrase the following:

"We saw it with our own bright minces! That witchy cast a magic on a shrine in that Princey's chamber. It turned purple as, um, purple as, eh... purple as purple! That witchy spotted us when we tried to sneak under his bed, so we fled!"

A successful DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that this shrine is the source of power creating undead, and that it must be destroyed if the city is to survive.

If the characters insist on entering Castle Rand, the satyr gives them a key to the Prince Regent's bedchamber in hopes to aid them with their quest.

GATEHOUSE

After traveling through the wooded belt, the characters find themselves face to face with Castle Rand. The entrance to the castle is well protected. When characters arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

Pushing out of the Upper City, you find yourselves face to face with Castle Rand. The formidable structure is even more foreboding thanks to the presence of four undead knights outside its enormous gates. The creatures seem at least dimly aware of their surroundings, despite their heads beginning to be long-devoid of any sensory organs.

The entrance to the castle is guarded by four **fell wights**.

Luckily, the warriors have been commanded only to guard the gates. Thus, if a character can get past the undead and slip through the gates, the knights stop attacking them. Characters can deduce this information from the undead knights' behavior with a successful DC 19 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Arcana) check.

The gates they guard can be opened with a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check.



CASTLE RAND INTERIOR

Once the characters have overcome the guards at the gate, they enter Castle Rand proper. Here they must seek out Fell Bessy and slay her, or at the very least destroy her profane altar, which causes the undead in the city to be weakened. From that point onward, the characters can recover the civilians and fight their way out of the city to restore their freedom.

When characters enter the interior of Castle Rand, read or paraphrase the following:

In stark contrast to the rest of the city, Castle Rand is as beautified as if the Queen herself were attending a royal occasion. The gardens are well tended, with roses bursting forth from the greenery like floral explosions. Tapestries flap gently in the breeze, still displaying the coat of arms of the Prince Regent. If there were no undead patrolling the place, you would assume nothing was out of the ordinary.

GARDENS

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Around you are immaculately manicured gardens. Rose bushes are in full bloom alongside blossom-laden cherry trees and bright poppies pushing up from the loamy earth.

Undead. Patrolling the gardens is a detachment of four **fell skeletons**. If they spot the characters, they charge over to attack. Characters can sneak past them through the vegetation with a successful DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check.

GUARD ROOM

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

North of the castle's entrance is a small rest chamber used by the guards taking shifts. Now it is strewn with bodies of the guards, some of which are already twitching with the first signs of undeath.

Corpses. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the bodies will rise as zombies in only a matter of minutes, unless action is taken now to destroy them. If the altar in the Prince Regent's bedchamber has already been destroyed, then the corpses have already turned to 2d6 + 3 **fell zombies**.

Map. There is a map of the castle interior on the table, which the characters can use to their advantage when navigating the palace.

ARCHERY RANGE

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This stretch of the garden has been converted into an archery range. At the far end of the stretch are several targets that look like flattened hedgehogs thanks to the vast quantity of arrows poking out from them.

Treasure. Characters that investigate the targets notice that some of the arrows are obviously magical. They bear the Prince Regent's coat of arms on their shafts, and serve as +1 arrows. There are a total of eight.

KITCHEN

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

South of the gatehouse is a cramped kitchen fitted with two ovens and, curiously, two beds.

There is nothing of note in this chamber. Characters who succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check realize it could be used to rest.

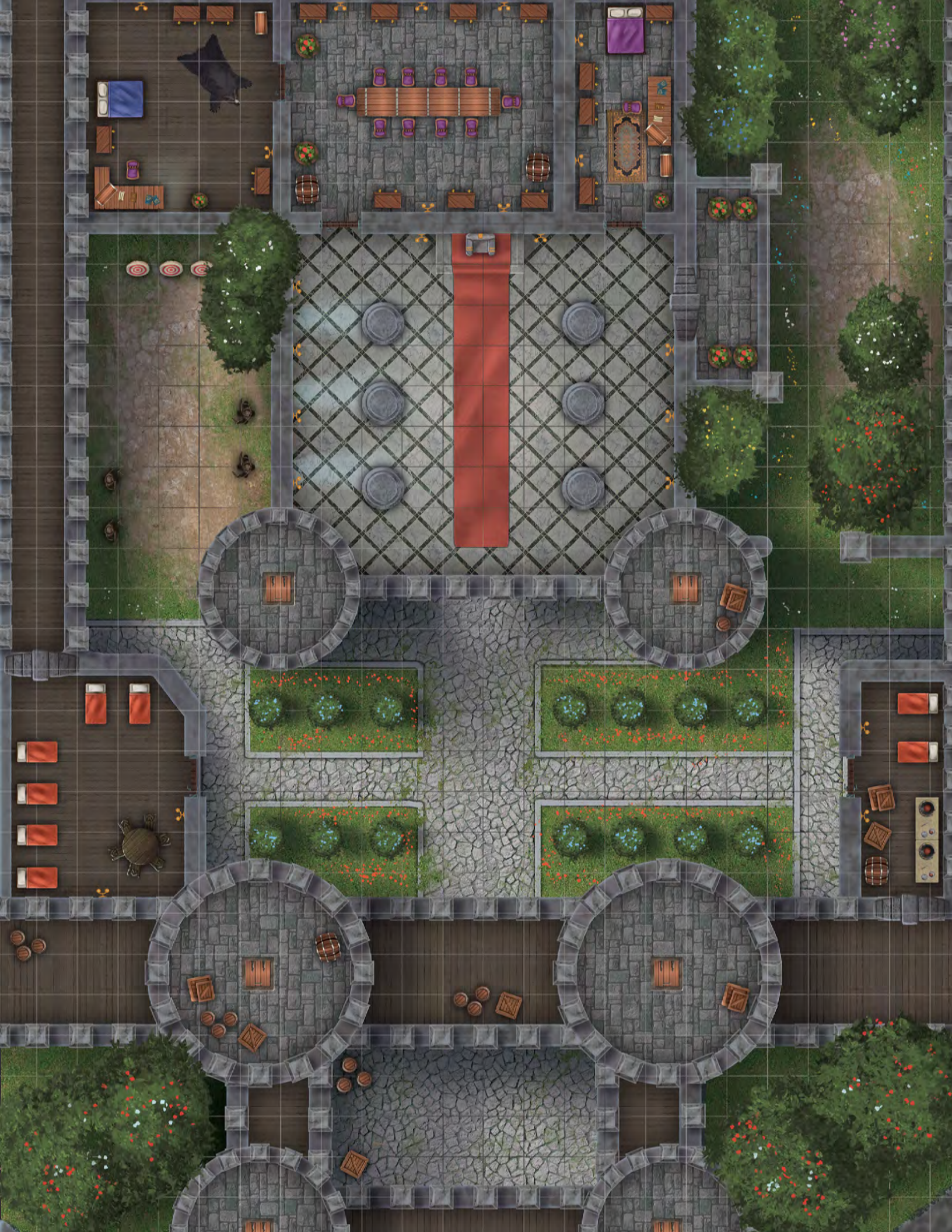
THRONE ROOM

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

You find yourselves in an enchantingly decorated throne room. A crimson runner flows across the marble flooring, and leads up toward a magnificent throne. There are six enormous marble pillars supporting the painted ceiling, secured to which with chains are a few dozen civilians. They all look terrified, and many are injured. Keeping watch over them all from the throne is an undead behemoth; an immense skeleton clad in purple plate mail and wielding a spiked mace from which purple smoke emanates.

Creatures. The **skeleton guardian** (see Appendix) here is the size of an ogre, heavily armored, and is almost indestructible while the shrine in the Prince Regent's Chamber remains intact. Due to its special Regeneration trait, it can only be killed if it takes radiant damage.

Around the base of the pillars are a few dozen injured, exhausted, and terrified civilians (NG human **commoners**). They are being held hostage by Fell Bessy. They will be freed when the Prince Regent agrees to surrender the city to her. If he refuses, they will be slaughtered one by one and their heads sent to the Prince.



STORE ROOM

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This small chamber appears to be used as a garden store. There are barrels of potting soil, stacks of terracotta pots, and garden tools arranged on racks. A few potted herbs fill the air with an aromatic aroma.

Treasure. Characters that search through the room discover a small chest of drawers which is filled with tinctures and potions. While most are simply treatments for skin rashes and upset stomachs, there is a *potion of invisibility* and a *potion of greater healing* in there.

FELL BESSY'S BEDCHAMBER

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

The decor in this chamber is in stark contrast to the rest of Castle Rand. Purple tapestries depicting scenes of extraplanar events hang from the walls, the four-posted bed is decked out with rich purple silk sheets and pillows, and numerous desks in the chamber are covered in books that appear to depict the dark arts in full force.

Books. The books in this chamber give hints toward the ritual that Fell Bessy has cast. They detail rituals once could perform to create an aura of undeath, which would cause corpses in the area to animate as undead monsters under the caster's control. They describe that in order for the effect to be made permanent and powerful, it must be focused into a shrine. A character that succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Religion) check can also decipher from the text how to destroy the altar. It can be deactivated for 24 hours by attacking it with a magic weapon (such as a *+1 arrow*) or have *dispel magic* cast on it at the 3rd or 4th level. It can be permanently destroyed if it takes 10 radiant damage, is doused with holy water, or if a creature performs a 10-minute ceremony that requires a successful DC 19 Intelligence (Religion) check.

Treasure. Characters that search the chamber and succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check discover a small box hidden beneath the bed. The box is unlocked and contains a *dagger of venom*.

BANQUET HALL

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Sat around the banquet table in a sick mirror of real life are ten undead warriors. They are clad in a variety of armors, each displaying long-lost crests and coats of arms. They appear to be reenacting a great feast, though there is no food or drink on the table.

Creatures. The ten **fell skeletons** here are expired knights from the city's graveyard. They have reverted to their old ways of feasting after a successful mission. If they spot the characters, they rise from their 'feast' and attack.

It is obvious to the party that sneaking through the chamber is almost impossible, as it is well lit and the knights are facing all directions thanks to the seating plan.

Perhaps the best way to overcome this chamber is for the characters to cause a distraction outside the chamber, luring the undead knights out, or to sprint straight through into the Prince Regent's Bedchamber and barricade the door behind them.

PRINCE REGENT'S BEDCHAMBER

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

A regal bedchamber stretches out before you. It is fully equipped with a lush four-posted bed, a pot of exotic-looking indoor plants, a bearskin rug, and a wealth of mahogany furniture. Notable, one piece of such furniture gives off an aura of purple magic accompanied by a charnel stench. Sat at a desk in the far corner is a woman whose black hair wafts around her head like a dark halo. She is furiously scrawling a letter.

Fell Bessy. When characters enter, **Fell Bessy** (see Appendix) is writing a letter to the Prince Regent outlining her demands for the handover of the city to her, lest she start killing innocent civilians. If the characters try to attack her, they will have to face her vast array of necrotic magic, as well as her ability to summon fey creatures as guardians. Furthermore, Fell Bessy is not affected by the shrine's necrotizing aura (see below).

Fell Bessy has a habit of monologuing while she confronts the characters. She explains in detail how she has been waiting for many years for the right time to strike. She has been examining the Prince Regent's character, and slowly manipulating him to care an awful lot about his subjects. Then, when he left to visit his mother, Bessy struck. She had been researching necrotic magic in secret for many years, and had finally come across a ritual of such immense power that she might overthrow the city. She created this shrine to make the magic permanent, and she shall use her undead army, which merely grows as more folk die within the walls of the city, to rule the realm for a thousand years.

Fell Bessy also has the ability to teleport herself to the Fey Realm, a plane which she has a deep connection with; she was tutored in necromantic magic by a powerful hag.

Shrine. This shrine is manifesting the magic that makes the undead warriors so powerful in the city. Whilst it is active, the undead pose a major threat. Once destroyed, they lose the Regeneration and Unholy Weapons traits (returning to normal skeletons, wights, and zombies) and can be relatively easily destroyed.

The shrine emanates a stinking aura of magic. A creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the shrine must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of their next turn. Furthermore, a creature that takes damage within the aura has their hit point maximum reduced by the same amount as the damage taken. A humanoid killed within the aura rises 1d4 turns later as a fell zombie.

Dispelling the shrine is no easy task. The books in Fell Bessy's chamber detail how it can be done, as can succeeding on a DC 21 Intelligence (Arcana) check. It can be deactivated for 24 hours by attacking it with a magic weapon (such as a *+1 arrow*) or having *dispel magic* cast on it. It can be permanently destroyed if it takes 10 radiant damage, is doused with holy water, or if a creature performs a 10-minute ceremony that requires a successful DC 19 Intelligence (Religion) check.

CONCLUSION

Hopefully, the characters successfully snuck through the undead-infested city and managed to make it to Castle Rand. Here, they may have been able to apprehend Fell Bessy, perhaps killing or imprisoning her, but at the very least destroying her profane altar which bestows such great power upon the undead creatures she had summoned to besiege the city. With the altar destroyed, the characters could free the civilians from the clutches of the undead, and fight their way back out through the city, liberating it from its undying oppressors.

Of course, the characters might have decided to side with Fell Bessy, ignoring the protests of the Prince Regent and becoming her captains, commanding an army of undead for their new evil patron!

REWARDS

The characters are rewarded by the royal family, specifically the Prince Regent, for their assistance in such an awkward matter. By liberating the city from Fell Bessy, the characters have earned themselves a seat at the royal table, and one of them may attend the royal council to advise the Prince Regent about major decisions that affect the entire realm. Furthermore, the Prince Regent bestows 1,000 gp to each character and procures a common or uncommon magic item of the character's choice.

GATES TO THE CASTLE APPENDIX

FELL BESSY

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (studded leather)

Hit Points 110 (20d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10 (+0) | 13 (+1) | 12 (+1) | 17 (+3) | 18 (+4) | 16 (+3) |

Saving Throws Con +5, Int +7, Wis +8

Skills Arcana +7, Deception +7, Insight +8, Religion +7

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Druidic, Sylvan

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +4

Legendary Resistance (1/Day). If Fell Bessy fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Freedom of Movement. Fell Bessy casts *freedom of movement* on herself before combat. Her movement is unaffected by difficult terrain, and spells and other magical effects can neither reduce her speed nor cause her to be paralyzed or restrained. She can also spend 5 feet of movement to automatically escape from nonmagical restraints, such as manacles or a creature that has her grappled. Finally, being underwater imposes no penalties on her movement or attacks.

Spellcasting. Fell Bessy is a 13th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *druidcraft*, *guidance*, *mending*

1st level (4 slots): *create or destroy water*, *cure wounds*, *entangle*, *fog cloud*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *heat metal*, *lesser restoration*, *spike growth*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *sleet storm*

4th level (3 slots): *blight*, *conjure woodland beings*, *freedom of movement*

5th level (2 slots): *antilife shell*, *cloudkill*, *contagion*

6th level (1 slot): *circle of death*

7th level (1 slot): *finger of death*

ACTIONS

Chill Touch. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (3d8) necrotic damage, and the target can't regain hit points until the start of Bessy's next turn. If the target is undead, that creature also has disadvantage on attack rolls against Bessy until the start of her next turn.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Fell Bessy can take 2 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Fell Bessy regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Animate. A corpse that Bessy can see within 30 feet raises as a **fell zombie** or **fell skeleton** (see Appendix) under her mental control.

Cast Spell. Fell Bessy casts a cantrip or a spell using a 1st- or 2nd-level slot.

Conjure. Fell Bessy casts *conjure woodland beings*.

FELL SKELETON

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 10 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 15 (+2) | 6 (-2) | 8 (-1) | 5 (-3) |

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands all the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Unholy Weapons. The skeleton's weapon attacks are magical. When it hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 2d8 necrotic damage (included in the attack).

Regeneration. The skeleton regains 10 hit points at the start of its turns if it has at least 1 hit point. If it takes radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the skeleton's next turn.

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

FELL WIGHT

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 15 (+2) | 14 (+2) | 16 (+3) | 10 (+0) | 13 (+1) | 15 (+2) |

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Unholy Weapons. The wight's weapon attacks are magical. When it hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 2d8 necrotic damage (included in the attack).

Regeneration. The wight regains 10 hit points at the start of each of its turns. If it takes radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the skeleton's next turn.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wight makes two longsword attacks or two longbow attacks. It can use its Life Drain in place of one longsword attack.

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) 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 zombie under the wight's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. The wight can have no more than twelve zombies under its control at one time.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands. It also deals 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage. It also deals 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

FELL ZOMBIE

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 20 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 13 (+1) | 6 (-2) | 16 (+3) | 3 (-4) | 6 (-2) | 5 (-3) |

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Unholy Weapons. The zombie's weapon attacks are magical. When it hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 2d8 necrotic damage (included in the attack).

Regeneration. The zombie regains 10 hit points at the start of its turns if it has at least 1 hit point. If it takes radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the zombie's next turn.

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

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

SKELETON GUARDIAN

Large undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 21 (+5) | 10 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 6 (-2) | 8 (-1) | 5 (-3) |

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +6

Skills Athletics +8

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

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 7 (2,900 XP)

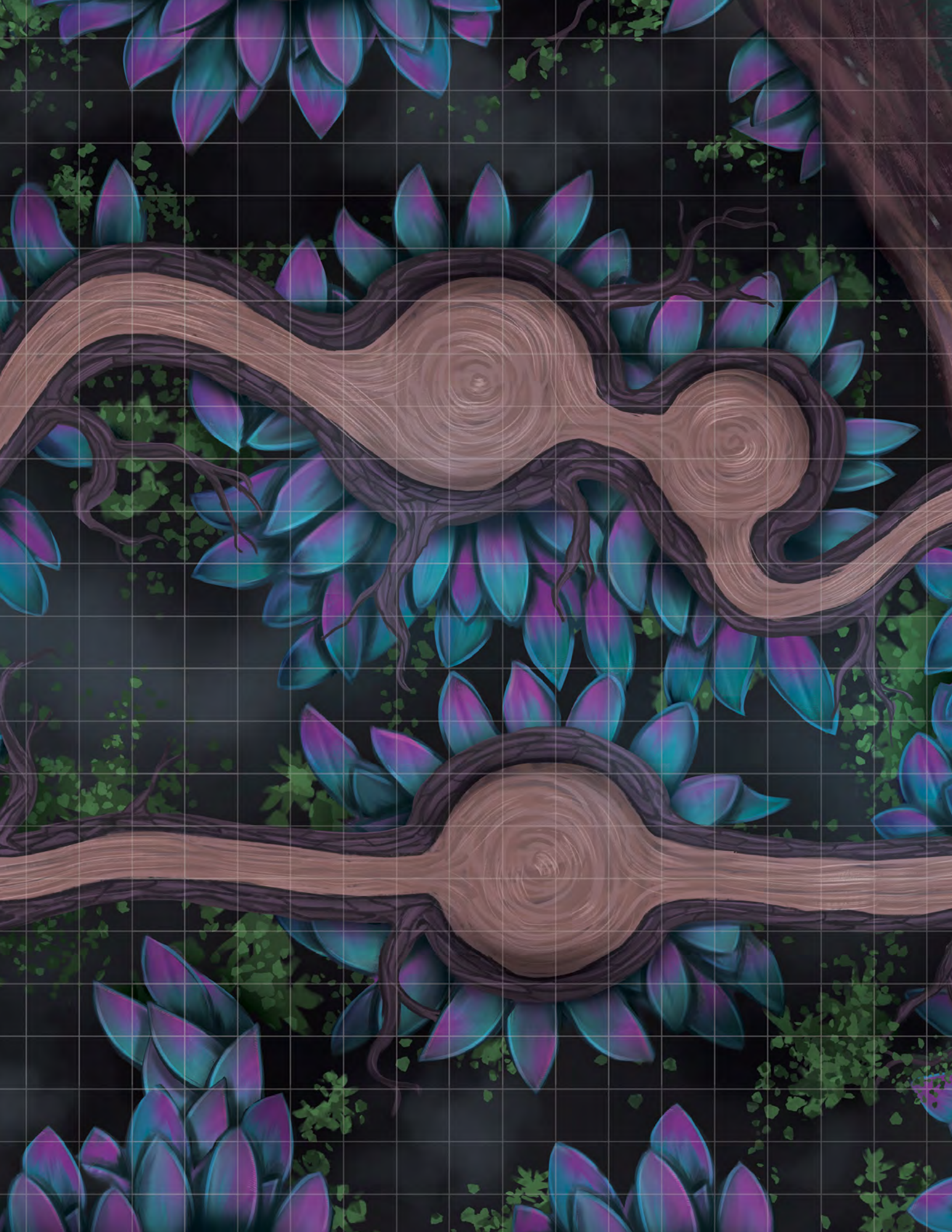
Proficiency Bonus +3

Regeneration. The guardian regains 10 hit points at the start of each of its turns. If it takes radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the guardian's next turn. The guardian only dies if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The guardian makes two morningstar attacks.

Giant Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (4d4) poison damage and be poisoned for 1 minute. The poisoned creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.





THE GATES OF AGUAFUUS

CROSS INTO THE REALM OF FEY

A scheming court mage has kidnapped the king! Can our heroes brave evil automotons, threatening environments, and a scheming archfey to rescue him?

The Gates of Aguafuus is an adventure for use with the Yarro Studios *Gates of Aguafuus Infindungeon* scroll.

Intended for a group of two to five characters of 5th to 10th level, this adventure takes most groups 2 to 4 sessions to complete.

INTRODUCTION

The Lost King is an *Infinidungeon* adventure for parties of 5th to 10th level that sees the characters undertake a search for a kidnapped king in the tower of his greatest foe. Within the tower the characters discover a portal to the faerie realm, where they must fight through the castle of a fey queen to recover their monarch.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The characters have been approached by Princess Peregoth about her father, the King. Although the realm has not yet been told, the King is missing. He went hunting late in the evening three days prior and never returned. His horse came cantering back to the castle bereft of rider. At present, all suspicion lies on the mage Tharazion Gateforger. The characters are asked to find the lost king and, in return, they shall be rewarded with a sizable plot of land upon which they may build a stronghold of their own design. The current belief is that Tharazion has the King trapped inside his tower.

In reality, Tharazion Gateforger was working on behalf of a powerful fey, Queen Aguafuus. The Queen rules over a vast expanse in the faerie realm, but was cursed many centuries ago so that the realm requires mortal sacrifice to be sustained. Without the soul of a mortal, it withers and dies. To this end, the Queen sought a powerful soul to keep her realm alive. With the help of Tharazion and her faerie minions, Queen Aguafuus kidnapped the king whilst on his hunt, and brought him through a fey realm portal to her Quartz Castle, to the Altar of Sustenance where he is bound – his soul being drained so that the reign of the Queen may continue.

The adventure begins when the characters have already made their way up Tharazion's bizarre tower. On the way up the characters had to contend with collapsing portals, animated object guards, and magical traps. Now they are at the tower's zenith, they can finally find and question Tharazion, and continue their search for the lost king.

PRINCESS PEREGOTH

Princess Peregoth (LG female human **noble**) is a no-nonsense kind of woman. Despite her young age, she plays an active part in the ruling of the realm. She is distressed at the loss of her father, King Peregoth, but believes that rather than waiting around for the army to respond, she ought to tackle the problem directly by hiring adventurers to facilitate his discovery.

If pressed about why it's taken a few days, she reveals that the characters are not the first adventuring party she's sent looking for her father. She sent another group, the White Horses, two days ago, but none of them have returned.

KING ARTUS PEREGOTH

Artus Peregoth (LG male human **noble**) has been king for the past five and a half decades. He is a monarch generally liked by the populace, and has some skill on the battlefield. As of three days ago, after a fateful hunting trip, he is missing. He was abducted by animated armor and fey creatures working for Tharazion and Queen Aguafuus. Since then he has been tied to the Altar of Sustenance in the faerie realm, behind the Queen's Quartz Castle. Here he shall remain until freed, or until his soul has been drained to maintain the Queen's domain.

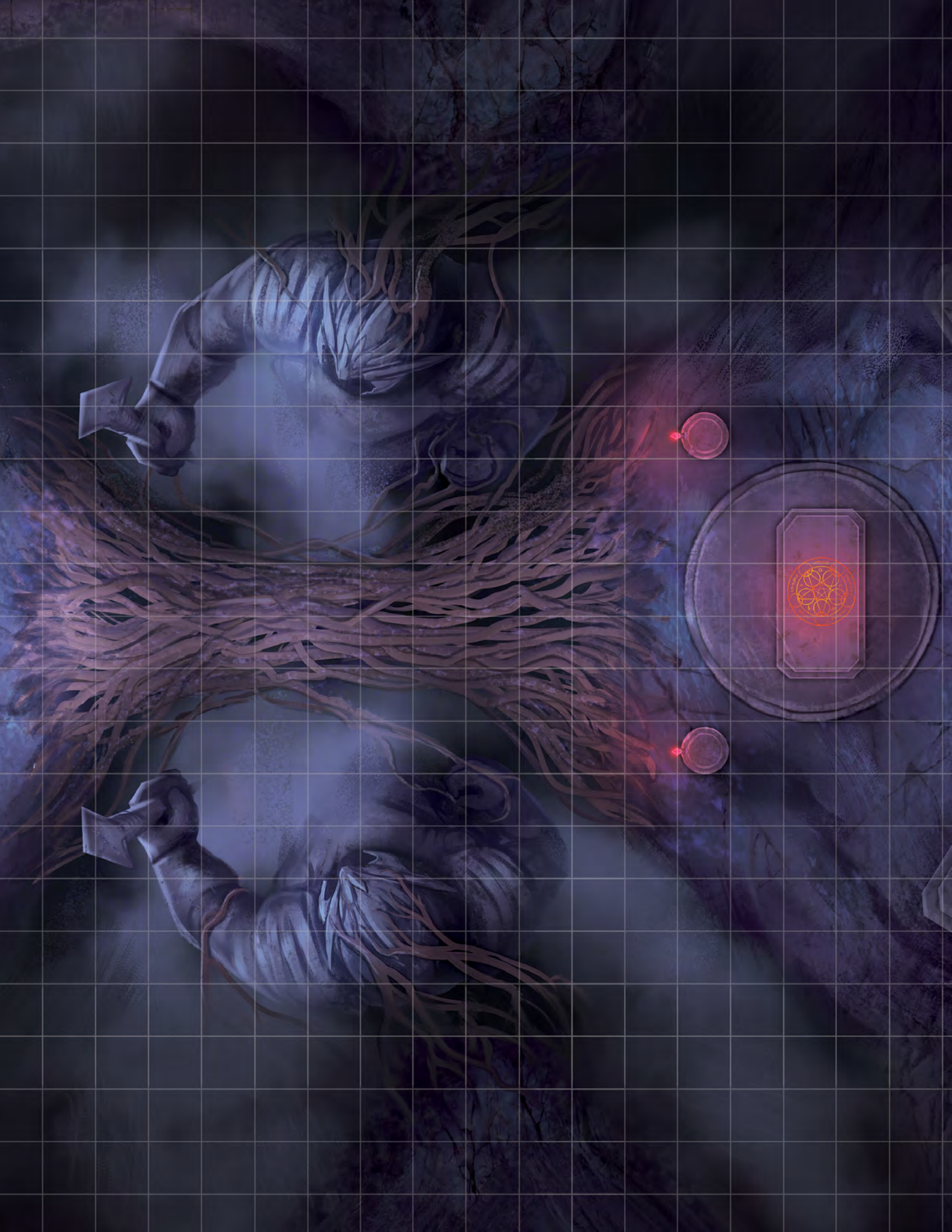
THARAZION GATEFORGER

Tharazion Gateforger is an elderly mage who was once court wizard for King Peregoth. However, three decades ago, Tharazion made a mistake that ruined his career, and caused a grudge between the king and himself that has never been forgotten. Tharazion was known as an expert manipulator of portals and, during a procession, was supposed to open a portal for the king that would allow him to appear on the balcony of his castle. Unfortunately, somewhat distracted, Tharazion's portal took the king to the balcony of a brothel on the other side of the square.

Since his dismissal from the position of court wizard, Tharazion has dedicated himself to better perfecting planar travel through portals. Several years past he managed to open a gateway to the faerie realm, and unfortunately found himself in Queen Aguafuus' Quartz Castle. Astonished but somewhat impressed, the Queen offered Tharazion a deal. If he could guess which reflection of her was the real one, he could leave a free man. If not, he would be bound to her will for eternity. She then proceeded to split herself into numerous reflected duplicates. Tharazion could not tell them apart, and thus became a thrall of the Queen. Since then he has been working to kidnap mortals to feed to the Queen's realm. The more power the individual wields in life, the longer they can sustain the realm.

Tharazion uses the statistics of a **mage** with the following changes:

- He is lawful evil.
- He knows the spells *dimension door* and *banishment* instead of *greater invisibility* and *ice storm*.
- He knows the spell *animate objects* instead of *cone of cold*.



QUEEN AGUAFUUS

Queen Aguafuus is a powerful fey being who carved out a realm of her own from prismatic crystals, trees of scintillating foliage, and coruscating stone. She is a master of illusions, and has long used this to her advantage. Many centuries ago the Queen was cursed by a foul hag who was jealous of her queendom. The curse dictates that the Queen's beautiful realm can only be sustained by the souls of mortals; the more powerful the soul, the longer they can maintain the majesty. Since this time, the queen has been working with numerous mortal agents (including Tharazion Gateforger) to keep a steady supply of influential people arriving at her Altar of Sustenance.

PART 1: HIGH HALL

The adventure starts straight in the action. The characters have just cleared out the lower levels of Tharazion's tower and arrived at its apex. They burst through the eastern door to discover more animated guardians, and a terrifying drop that turns their legs to jelly. Read or paraphrase the following:

You've fought your way up the tower of Tharazion with, so far, little resistance. A few collapsing portals and animated guardians, but nothing too testing. The mage is the prime suspect in the disappearance of the king, thanks to a rivalry that goes back decades.

You reach the apex of the mage's tower, smash open a wooden door with your trusty boot, and find yourself in a green-lit hall. Two bridges span a gap which sports a terrifying view of the ground several hundred feet below. There are five suits of animated armor here looking to bar your progress. Each has a hollow, metal shell of a chest in which floats a key.

Guardians. There are five suits of **animated armor** in this chamber. Four of these constructs are magically programmed to shove creatures off the side of the bridge, rather than make a normal attack.

The final suit is armed with a heavy crossbow (Ranged Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d10) piercing damage), and stands in front of the door on the eastern wall. This suit tries to pick off any ranged spellcasters or archers before the melee combatants make it past the other four suits.

Keys. Each suit of armor has a hollow chest, within which floats a key. These keys correspond to holes in the eastern door. A key can be plucked from the chest of a still-animated suit with a successful DC 17 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Failure allows the suit to make an attack against the character.

If a key is pulled from a suit, it visibly slumps, somewhat depleted of magic. Its attacks only do half damage and it has disadvantage on ability checks until the key is replaced.

Bridges and Drop. Two sturdy bridges span the hundred foot drop in the center of this chamber. A creature that falls down the drop takes 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall, unless they can stop their fall. Only a low balustrade prevents a creature toppling to their death.

Stairs. The stairs on the western and eastern walls reach a height of 20 feet.

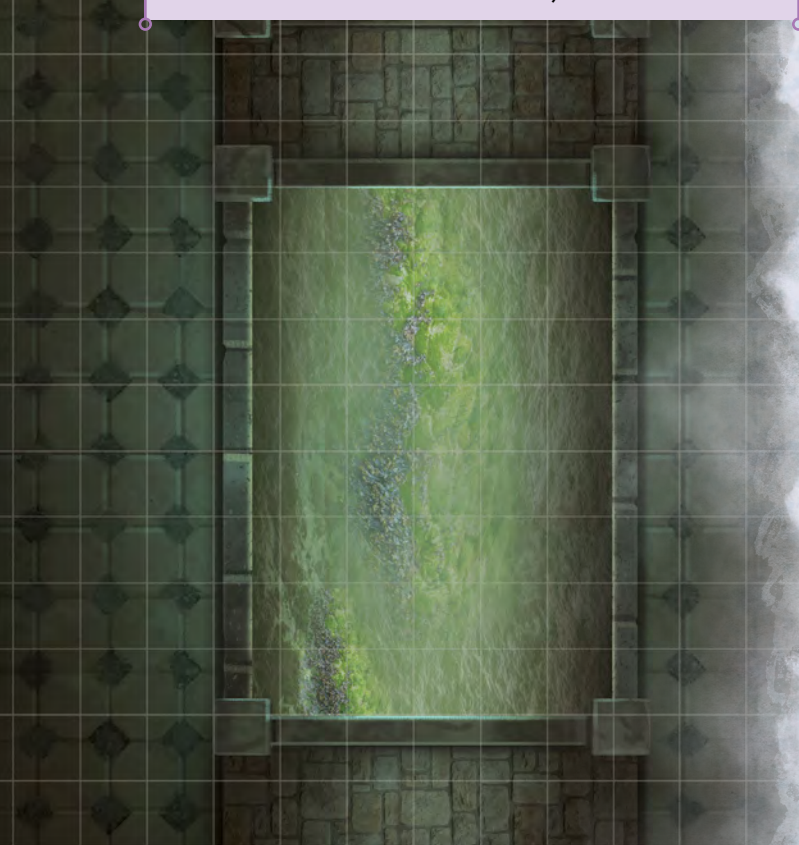
Locked Door. The door on the eastern wall that leads further into the tower is locked. There are five keyholes, each of which corresponds to one of the keys from the suits of armor (see above). To unlock the door with no keys requires a successful DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools or a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to force it open. For each key the characters have, any of these checks receive a +4 bonus.

On a failed check, any keys inserted into the door disappear, and reappear inside the animated armors in the room, which stand back up and are restored to full hit points. If the armor is no longer in the room, the key remains in the door.

RULES TIP: SHOVING

Using the Attack action, you can make a special melee attack to shove a creature, either to knock it prone or push it away from you. If you're able to make multiple attacks with the Attack action, this attack replaces one of them.

The target must be no more than one size larger than you and must be within your reach. Instead of making an attack roll, you make a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (the target chooses the ability to use). If you win the contest, you either knock the target prone or push it 5 feet away from you.





PART 2: MAZE OF MACHINES

Once the characters manage to open the door, they find themselves in a maze created by Tharazion. The maze is patrolled by animated constructs, each of which has an inbuilt alarm. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

You make it through the locked door and find yourself in a maze, featureless except for torches in sconces on the walls providing dim light. You can hear the ring of metallic footsteps echoing throughout the corridors of this elaborate construction.

Maze. The maze can be played out in two ways. You can cover the maze entirely with pieces of paper, and remove them one by one as the characters make their way through the chamber, providing a real maze-like experience. This can also be achieved on digital tabletops by using fog. Alternatively, each time the characters reach a significant junction i.e. one that is clearly not a dead end, one of them must make a DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check. On a success, they head in the right direction, on a failure, roll to determine their direction randomly. If characters have been through an area before, allow them to roll with advantage.

Armor Patrols. Patrolling the maze are eight suits of **superior animated armor** (see Appendix).

If a suit of armor's alarm is triggered, all the other suits converge on the location, intent on destroying any intruders. When they are all in the same small area, the armors are empowered. Their halberds burst into flame, dealing extra fire damage on a hit.

Torches. Although they appear mundane, the torches are actually magical. They provide dim light, just enough to see by but with plenty of shadows, and they cannot be extinguished while in this chamber. Once outside of the maze, they can be extinguished as normal. A character that succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check can tell without touching them that they are magical.

Characters who succeed on a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check notice that the sconces in which the torches are kept are trapped. The torches sit on small, weight-sensitive buttons that are compressed by the torches presence. Behind the torches are small funnels built into the sconces that are stained with oil. A character that removes a torch from a sconce releases the button, triggering the trap. Oil sprays from the funnel in the back of the sconce, which is ignited by the torch's flame. Each creature in a 15-foot cone originating from the torch must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) fire damage on a failed save or half that on a successful one.

The trapped sconces can be overcome in three ways. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools can disarm the trap by breaking the button. Alternatively, a non-flammable, malleable item, such as clay, can be used to block the oil funnel. The final method is a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to swap the torch for a similarly sized item, such as a shortsword, when removed. An audible click can be heard, and a character that acts fast enough can replace the torch or similar item and prevent the trap triggering.

A creature holding a magical torch in the maze can see the shortest path to the exit, illuminated by a magical fiery pathway. The fire of this pathway can only be seen by the torch's bearer, and doesn't deal damage.

PART 3: CRYING CHASM

Beyond the maze is an enormous cavern, the floor of which is hundreds of feet below, so far down that it is shrouded by clouds of smoke and ash that hang in the air. There is a single pathway across the chasm, but it is broken and treacherous. Chambers on the far side contain clues for progressing through the adventure, and a side chamber contains valuable treasure, but is nearly impossible to reach. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

You emerge into a natural cavern – curious given you were only recently in a tower. The floor falls away just beyond you down to some immeasurable depth. The bottom is shrouded in clouds of smoke and ash, making it impossible to tell just how far one would fall with a misstep. There appears to be only a single pathway across the cavern - a crumbling staircase heading down toward the far side where several chambers remain just about intact. Off to your left is a chamber in a far better state than the others, though it seems impossible to reach.

As you make your way toward the chasm's edge, you notice a figure on the far side. They step from the shadows into the light, revealing themselves.

"Turn back. You'll meet your end here if not." Shouts Tharazion across the expanse. "The King is lost. Give him up."

Chasm. The chasm is clouded by magical ash and smoke – an illusion that prevents characters from seeing the true depth of the chasm, and from any creatures who have survived the fall and might need help. The clouds prevent sight and sound from passing from the bottom of the chasm – one hundred feet below – and the stairway level.

A creature that slips and falls into the chasm takes 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage. On the chance that they do survive, they must succeed on three DC 14 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks to climb back up the stairway. Failure on one of these checks results in the character slipping and falling again, this time taking 17 (5d6) bludgeoning damage.

Stairway. Descending through the cavern is a ruined stairway. From east to west, it descends 60 feet and spans 150 feet. Because it has been here for so long, the stonework is brittle and crumbling. In places it has fallen away completely. A creature that walks along the stairway at normal speed must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to stay on their feet. On a failure, they fall prone and must succeed on a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity saving throw, or slip over the edge. If you desire, they can repeat the saving throw to try and catch onto a ledge before they

fall. A creature running across the stairway makes the check and saves with disadvantage. A creature walking at half their speed makes the check and saves with advantage.

In some areas the stairway has fallen away entirely. Here a character must jump over the gap or find another way to cross, such as using ropes or chains to swing themselves across, teleporting, being thrown, or other ingenious methods.

Tharazion. Tharazion the mage is on the other side of the chasm, and slings spells at the characters as they advance toward him. More information is included in Feast Hall.

Shadows. As soon as the characters step foot on the stairway, shadowy forms begin to rise from the chasm. These shadows can sap the strength from characters, making it harder for them to carry on. These shadows also moan at an intense volume, deafening any creature within 15 feet. They can also cast *hideous laughter* at will (spell save DC 9; Charisma is their spellcasting ability).

The shadows target the character at the front of the party unless another character is flying. They attack flying characters first above all others. A flying creature that falls prone simply falls, unless it can hover. A falling creature takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it falls, up to 20d6 bludgeoning damage.

Side Chamber. Reaching the side chamber requires traversing a 16 foot gap. The door is not locked, but has set into the frame with age. Opening it requires a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check. On a failure, the door still opens, but the character takes 11 (2d10) piercing damage from splintering wood. Inside the side chamber is a treasure chest and a skeleton. Touching the chest causes the **skeleton** to animate and attack.

Inside the chest is a wealth of treasure, namely 250 gold coins and 10 gemstones worth 50gp each. The chest also contains a *potion of flying*, a *potion of stone giant strength*, and a magical silver flute shaped like a serpent. Once per day, a character can play the flute to summon a **constrictor snake** that obeys their commands and can attack for 1 hour.

Far Chambers. There are four chambers on the far side of the chasm: the feast hall, the store room, the adventurers' camp, and the portal chamber.

FEAST HALL

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Despite its age, this chamber has been well maintained. Immaculate tapestries depicting Tharazion and other planes of existence hang on the walls. A long table set out with a delicious feast of roast boar, root vegetables and potatoes has been laid out, along with cut crystal glasses of blood-red wine.

Tharazion. Tharazion guards this chamber against intruders. Ever since the White Horses, another adventuring party, made it this close to getting through the fey realm portal, Tharazion has been defending it. He has used magic to make this room a nicer space to inhabit.

If captured and questioned, Tharazion tells the characters whatever they need to hear to keep him alive. Tharazion explains that he was tricked by Queen Aguafuus into kidnapping mortals to maintain her Quartz Castle. He tells characters where the portal is, and that they must drink the wine to pass through.

Feast. Everything at the feast table is edible and delicious, but not without danger. Characters who eat the meat must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frantic with hunger, devouring everything they can, including living creatures when the available food has run out. This curse can only be lifted by a *remove curse* spell or similar magic, or by depriving a cursed creature of food for a day.

The feast magically restocks whenever the room is empty of living creatures. Characters that wish to pass through the fey portal must drink the wine.

STOREROOM

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

The northernmost chamber is stocked with crates and barrels, all of which are coated with inches of grime and dust. As you scan the storeroom, you notice something moving in a corner.

Hanharad. The unfortunate creature moving in the corner is Hanharad Ironguts (CG male mountain dwarf gladiator), a dwarven adventurer and member of the White Horses adventuring party. He can be identified as such by his horse-emblazoned breastplate. Hanharad has been driven insane thanks to eating the cursed meat from the magical feast. Tharazion has been keeping him in this state of madness, afraid that the dwarf might kill him if allowed to recover. The dwarf attacks in a rabid rage, hoping to eat any character he can.

If the characters remove the curse on Hanharad (see Feast Hall), they gain a valuable ally. Hanharad can tell the characters of the White Horses' adventure. They made it this far and chose to camp while they deciphered the riddle of the fey portal (see Portal Chamber). Hanharad got hungry during their rest and decided to eat of the magical feast, which drove him insane and alerted Tharazion, who then came and killed the rest of the White Horses.

ADVENTURERS' CAMP

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

To the south is an empty chamber that has been used as a makeshift camp. Ashes in a ring of stones mark out a fire pit, which is surrounded by three bedrolls, each of which is embroidered with a white horse.

Treasure. Characters can find one piece of mundane equipment each at this camp, including things like rope, crowbars, rations, etc. Furthermore, if they succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check they discover a *+1 quarterstaff* stashed behind some crates, two *potions of healing* wrapped up in a blanket, and an empty silver flask etched with the white horse motif worth 50 gp.

PORTAL CHAMBER

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

A pair of stone steps descend toward a strange painting hanging on the far wall. It is demarcated by an ornate, oval frame of glimmering quartz and polished wood. The painting itself is of an amazing forest landscape. Enormous trees rise from a chasm not unlike the one you just crossed. Iridescent leaves sprout from buds on their branches, making platforms that rustle gently in an updraft... which is strange, as paintings don't normally move.

Portal. Though it appears to be a painting, the far wall contains a framed portal to the fey realm, specifically to Queen Aguafuus' domain. However, characters cannot pass through the portal until they have drunk the magical wine from the feast hall. Characters that examine the frame realize there is an inscription at the base, which reads:

Caged in the corpse of its cousin, a dog afeared.
Blood red in your vines, a new world appears.

This riddle should allow the characters to determine that they need to drink the wine to pass through. If not, successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) checks to decipher the riddle can reveal prompts:

- "Corpse of its cousin" refers to a barrel, which is made from dead wood.
- "Vines" might look like a spelling mistake, but it is not.
- "A dog afeared" refers to the noise a frightened dog makes.

Once the characters have drunk the magical wine, they can pass through the painting like a portal, and into the second half of the adventure.

PART 4: FEY CROSSING

Once characters have deciphered the riddle of the fey portal they can pass through, finding themselves here. Nature in the world of the fey is invigorated beyond its usual limits. Plants grow larger, brighter, and in more colors than in the real world. When characters pass through the portal, read or paraphrase the following:

You step through the portal painting into another plane of existence. Here, nature appears invigorated beyond what you thought possible. Just as in the painting, enormous trees emerge from a deep chasm, their iridescent leaves forming platforms around them. On either side of the chasm are blue bushes that ripple in the breeze, making a noise like silver wind chimes.

Trees. The enormous trees provide a walkway across the chasm. Once a creature sets foot upon them though, their leaves begin to waft, creating a powerful breeze that becomes more intense as time passes. They do not stop until no creatures remain on the trees. The following effects occur on initiative count 20 (losing ties) each turn, based on the length of time the leaves have been wafting. The effects stack, i.e. on the third turn, characters face the effects of the first, second, and third turn at once.

- First Turn. The breeze pushes back on characters, forcing them to move at half speed from east to west, or double speed from west to east.
- Second Turn. The wind picks up, blasting into the characters. When a character moves for the first time on a turn, they must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or fall prone.
- Third Turn. The gale now rages, dealing 5 (2d4) thunder damage to any creature on the tree walkway.
- Fourth Turn. The gale whips up and forms an **air elemental**. The turn counter is reset next turn. The elemental attacks the character who is closest to the western edge, and remains until killed.

Chasm. A character that falls off the edge of the trees and into the chasm below seems to disappear after around ten feet. This is because the chasm is actually a portal. The character falls through the portal and becomes encased in a tree – whichever tree is empty and closest to the eastern edge.

The character's features are visible through the bark, which changes shape for them, but they cannot break free without first succeeding on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw. If they fail, creatures outside the tree can chop them out by dealing damage to the tree, which has AC 15, 10 hit points, vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to psychic damage.



PART 5: MANDRIGOR'S LAIR

Once characters make it across the fey crossing, they come to a cave bordered by crystalline pink and purple grass. Lairing within the cave is a mandrigor, the Queen's castle guardian. The characters must overcome the beast to reach her fortress. When characters arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

Spearing up from the earth beside you are swathes of crystalline grass in scintillating pink, purple, and heliotrope. The clear passage ahead leads into a cave, which is dimly lit by a throbbing pink light originating from neon crystals that pepper the walls and ceiling. Emerging from within is beautiful plucked music.

Glass Grass. The nonmagical grass around the path edges is crystalline and sharp. A creature that moves through it inevitably snaps some of the blades, which lacerate like shattered glass. They take 5 (2d4) slashing damage for every 5 feet moved through the glass grass. Creatures with a passive Perception of 12 or higher notice a small clearing in the grass to the north.

Bridge. The bridge that extends from the small northern clearing is an illusion, which a character can determine with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Arcana) check. A creature that steps on the bridge falls into the pit below, and takes 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage from the 30-foot fall, plus 5 (2d4) slashing damage from the grass growing at its base. All

of this is masked by permanent *darkness* and *silence* spells, which prevents characters seeing or hearing the bottom of the pit.

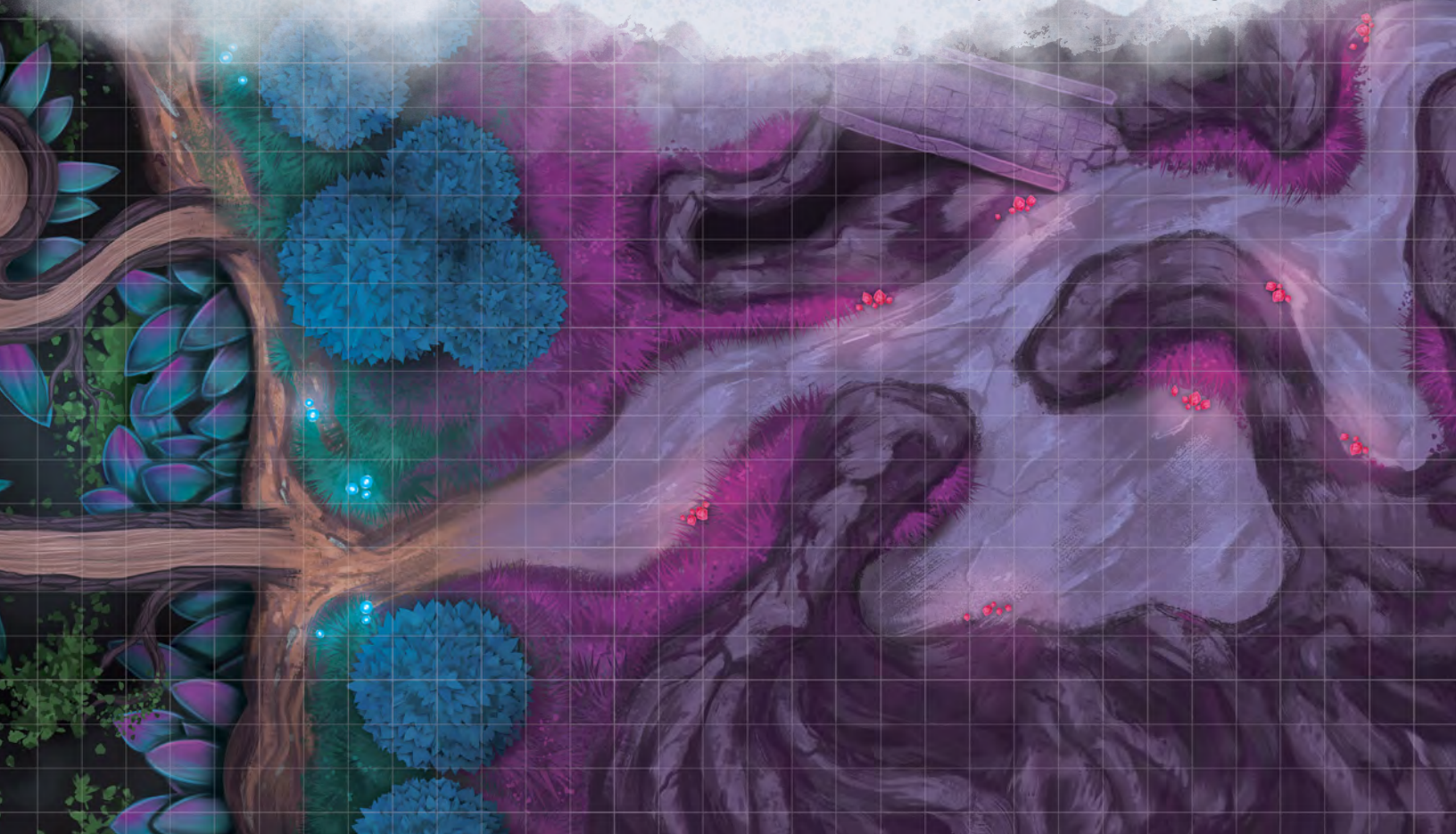
In order to escape the pit, a character must be hoisted up by rope, as the sides of the pit are too sheer to be climbed without magical aid.

Magical Harp. Where the bridge meets the cave is a magical harp. It is the source of the beautiful music, though it looks bizarre. Its frame is made of crystal but has a dozen humanoid eyes popping out from it, and the strings are gutstrings which drip with ooze. If the harp sees a character approach, it stops playing the music, causing the mandrigor to awaken (see below). A character can trick the harp into playing again by using stealth, invisibility, or darkness to hide themselves, or they can play the harp themselves with a successful DC 18 Charisma (Performance) check.

Mandrigor. Slumbering for the time being in the large cave chamber is a mandrigor. A mandrigor looks somewhat like a manticore, but has black hair, crystalline growths erupting from its spine and tail, and a pink crystal skull where its head would normally be. It uses the statistics of a **manticore**. As long as beautiful music is playing, the mandrigor sleeps. It has been trained to search for intruders and kill them when it awakens, which occurs if the music stops.

Playing any magical instrument (such as the flute from the side chamber of the Crying Chasm or the harp here) causes the mandrigor to sleep. Playing a regular instrument requires a DC 18 Charisma (Performance) check to cause the mandrigor to slumber again.

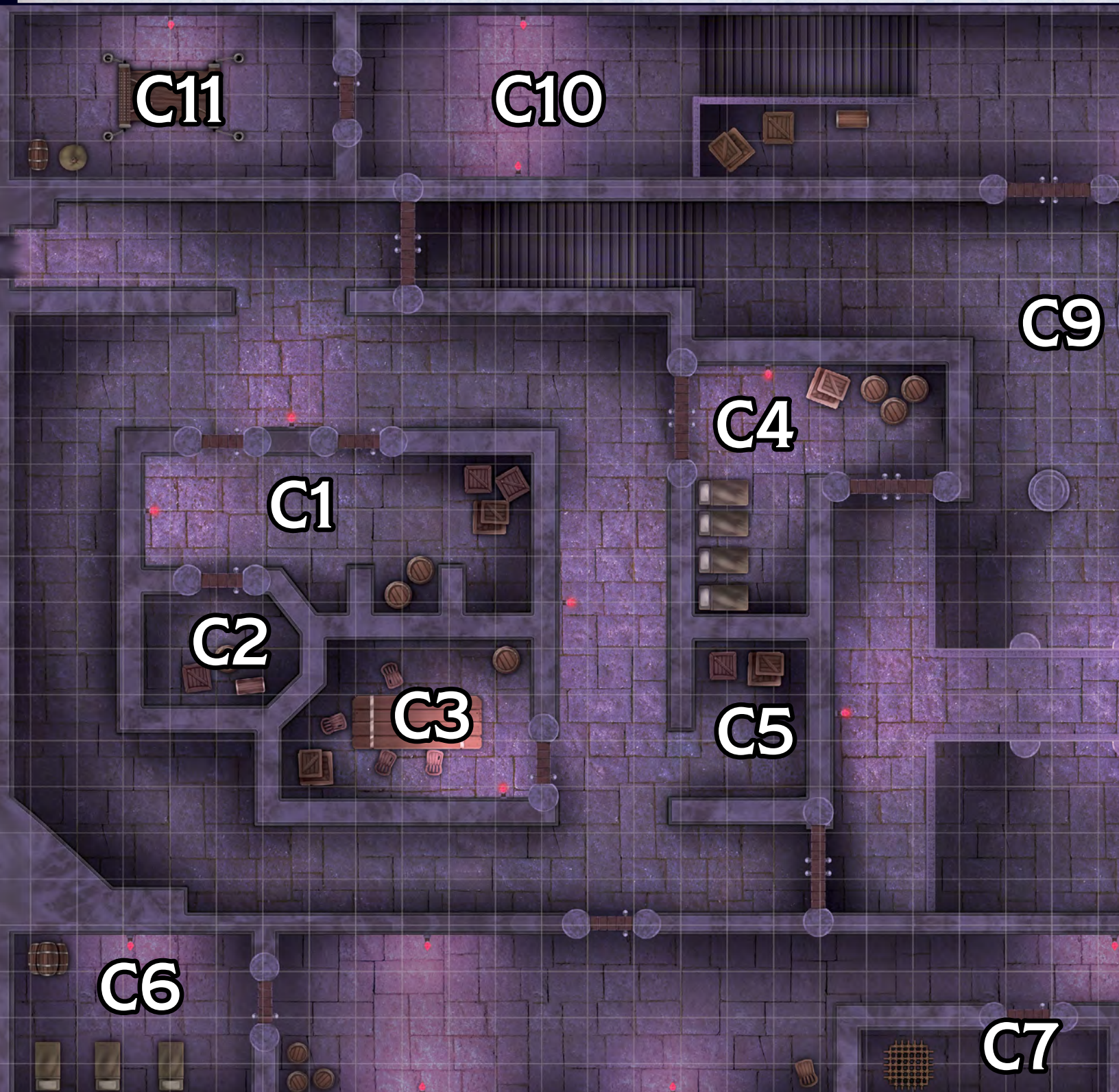
The mandrigor attacks by firing crystalline shards from its tail into characters, then slashing out with its quartz claws when they come into melee range.

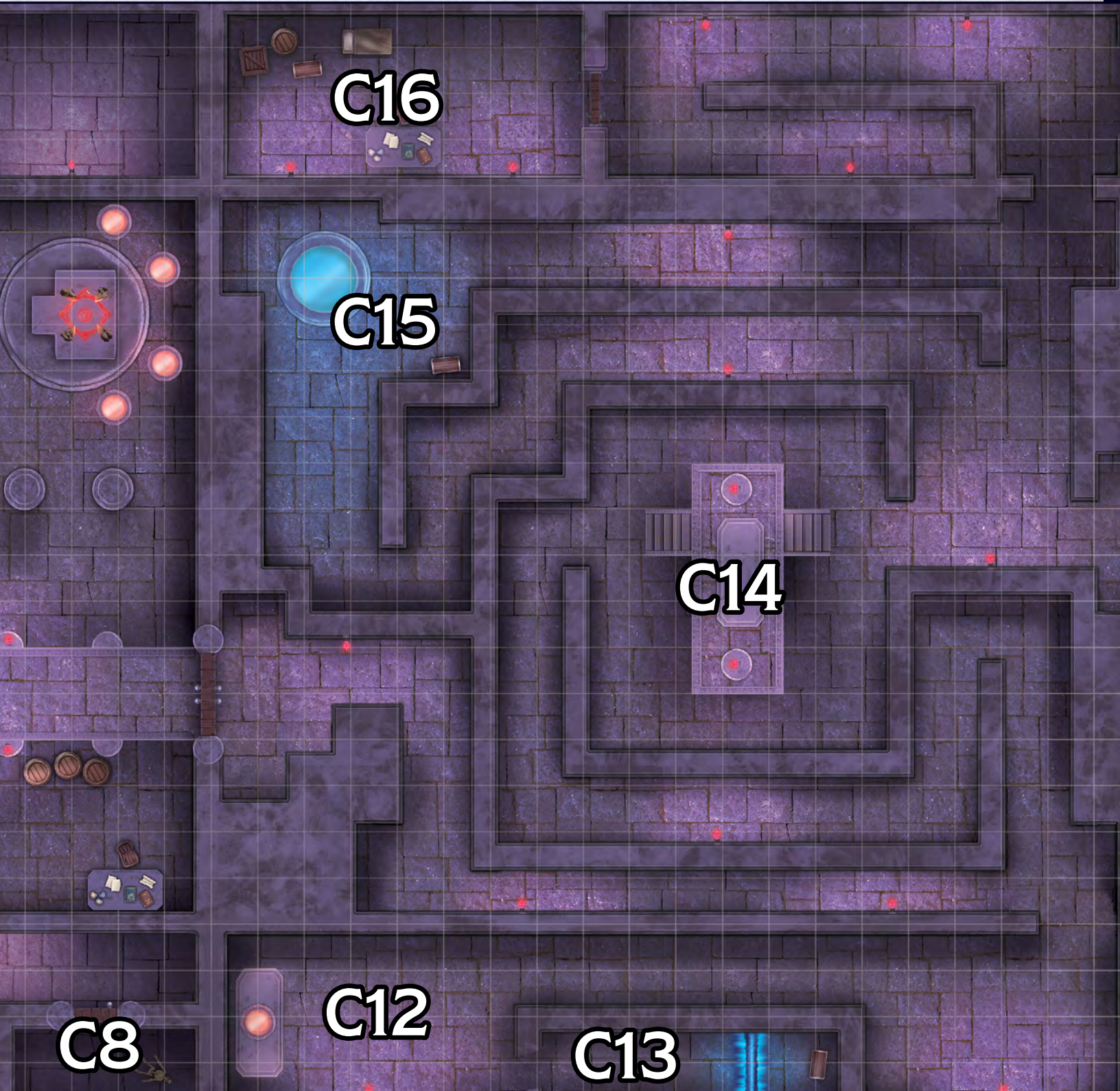


CASTLE MAP

- C1. Store Room
- C2. Treasure Chamber
- C3. Dining Room
- C4. Dormitory
- C5. Empty Store
- C6. Sprite Dormitory
- C7. Prison
- C8. Skeleton Chamber

- C9. Summoning Chamber
- C10. Trapped Chamber
- C11. Torture Chamber
- C12. Shrine
- C13. Trapped Treasure
- C14. Crystal Altar
- C15. Magic Font
- C16. Queen's Bedchamber





C16

C15

C14

C8

C12

C13

PART 6: CASTLE OF QUARTZ

Once characters have got past the mandrigor castle guard, they can enter the quartz castle proper. The castle is made entirely of the precious stone. In some places it is polished to a glass-like finish, in others it has been roughed up to make a stone-like texture. It has numerous chambers which can be explored separately. The general features are described below. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

You emerge out of the rear of the cave and into a magnificent castle. The walls, ceiling, and floor of the fort are built of bricks cut from quartz, some of which gleam with brilliant light, others of which are opaque as stone. Directly ahead of you is a wooden door engraved with the depiction of a fey woman's angular face. To your right is an archway leading to a corridor.

GENERAL FEATURES

The following features apply to all chambers within the quartz castle.

Musical Footfall. Stepping on the quartz stones emits a wind chime like tone which can be heard in the nearby vicinity. Unless characters have a way of muffling their footfall, they cannot surprise any creatures within the castle.

Sprite Patrols. Patrolling the castle are sprites with glittering pink wings and vicious bows. There are two groups of six **sprites** which patrol the corridors and chambers for the Queen under cover of invisibility. If they discover an intruder, they aim to knock the intruder unconscious using their poisoned arrows. They then command the **silichites** (see Appendix) to drag the intruders to the Altar of Sustenance.

Locked Doors. Any doors which are locked in the quartz castle can be opened with a moderate brawn or pick lock check, unless mentioned otherwise.

Lighting. The Quartz Castle is well lit by glowing pink crystals in sconces on the walls.

C1. STORE ROOM

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This store room is filled with rolled up tapestries, crates, barrels, chandeliers, and other pieces of furniture.

Treasure. Some of the furniture in this room, such as the chandeliers, are extremely valuable. It is not easy to carry, but is worth a lot back on the material plane (300 gp each) if the characters can get it there.

C2. TREASURE CHAMBER

The door to this room is locked (see General Features). When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the locked door is a wooden treasure chest with brass hoops and lock.

Chest. The chest is magically trapped. A creature can spot this with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Arcana) check. Disarming the trap requires a *dispel magic* spell or a DC 18 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. A failure triggers the trap.

The trap is triggered if the chest's lock is unsuccessfully picked, rather than opened with a key (which is in the pocket of Fezix (see C9. Summoning Chamber)). When triggered, the trap expels magical pink gas in a 10-foot radius sphere. Each creature in the area must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious for 1 minute. Following this, a magical tune is played by the chest, which alerts the silichites in the Dormitory and Dining Room.

Treasure. Inside the chest are numerous treasures, including *gloves of missile snaring*, *eyes of minute seeing*, and a *mace of terror*. Also in the chest is the crown of King Peregoth, which is easily identifiable. All these treasures once belonged to victims of the Altar of Sustenance.

C3. DINING ROOM

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Sat around a regular dining table are four irregular creatures, munching down on a meal of granite and basalt. The creatures aren't dissimilar to bipedal frogs, but they have purple crystalline growths protruding from their skin.

Silichites. These frog-like creatures are **silichites** (see Appendix). They are part fey, part elemental, and eat rocks. The tongue of a silichite can shoot up to 15 feet and pull creatures near. Its bite can turn the target to stone so that it might be consumed by the silichite. They can also swallow living creatures whole, but their digestion is less well adapted to deal with such a meal – rather, silichites swallow petrified creatures to imprison them and take them to their Queen.

C4. DORMITORY

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Resting atop beds with woven reed mattresses are four frog-like creatures. Their slow, steady breath suggests that they are sleeping.

Silichites. The elemental creatures here are slumbering, unless awoken by the alarmed chest in the Treasure Chamber. If an intruder moves through their room and doesn't succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check, they awaken and attack. Remember that characters must already find a way to muffle their footprints thanks to the musical footfalls (see General Features).

Treasure. A ring of keys hangs on one of the beds. It can be removed without disturbing the silichite sleeping within by succeeding on a DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. The keys on the ring open the Prison, the grate inside the prison, and the Torture Chamber.

C5. EMPTY STORE

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This storeroom seems devoid of anything of interest.

Uses. This storeroom is empty. If the archway can be blocked, or an illusion cast across it, characters could use this spot to rest.

C6. SPRITE DORMITORY

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

The furniture in this room, save for the reed mattress beds, is all minuscule, as if made for a person the size of a cat.

Sprites. There are four invisible **sprites** in this chamber. If they outnumber the characters, they attack. Otherwise they trail the characters until the odds of victory are in their favor before attacking.

Treasure. Characters that search the room discover a silver ewer in a normal-sized barrel in the northwest corner. The ewer has a ram's head design on its handle, and has depictions of satyr reveling etched into its surface. The ewer is worth 75 gp.

C7. PRISON

The door to this chamber is locked (see General Features). The key is in the Dormitory. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber stinks of sweat and dirt. It is small, dingy, and entirely unpleasant to be in. Part of the floor has been replaced with a rusted iron grate, beneath which is a ten-foot-deep pit.

Prisoner. Trapped inside the pit is a **satyr** called Ramsey Ramshorn. Ramsey was trapped by Queen Aguafuus after starting a revel in her domain. The grate covering the pit is locked – the key is in the Dormitory. It can be opened like a locked door (see General Features).

If Ramsey is freed, he asks the characters to escort him out of the Quartz Castle. In return he gives them the information that the Magic Font can only be drunk from with a silver vessel. He used to have a silver ewer for drinking wine from, but the sprites took it when they arrested him. He overheard this from the silichites, who claimed that drinking the font's waters allows one to see through illusions.

C8. SKELETON CHAMBER

The door to this chamber is locked (see General Features). The key is in the Dormitory. When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Slumped in the corner of this chamber is a humanoid skeleton. As you enter, its skull rolls around on its neck so that it appears to be looking at you.

"Well, well, well," it mutters in a rasping drawl, its teeth smacking together in a clattering staccato, "What brings you folks here?"

Skeleton. The slumped **skeleton** (unlike most skeletons, this one can speak Common) is that of a mortal from the real world who was drained of their soul at the Altar of Sustenance, but whose magical prowess in life has kept their skeleton animated no matter what the Queen and her minions try.

The skeleton cannot remember anything about who it once was, but knows the layout of the Quartz Castle well, and knows that King Peregoth is trapped on the Altar of Sustenance. It can warn the characters about the guardian statues animating, and about the Queen's ability to project illusory reflections of herself and reflect spells.

C9. SUMMONING CHAMBER

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

You descend the stairs into a pool of pink light. Behind an altar, upon which a magical circle has been inscribed, are four crystals that glow with an intense light. To the south is a raised walkway supported, like the arched ceiling above, by columns worked to resemble giants holding up the architecture. Beyond the walkway is a desk, at which is a sat a fey elf in deep concentration.

Fezix. Sat at the desk in the southern region of the chamber is **Fezix** (LN nonbinary elf; see Appendix). If they notice the characters enter, Fezix demands to know what they're doing in the Quartz Castle. Unless the characters succeed on a Charisma (Deception) or Charisma (Intimidation) check contested by Fezix's Wisdom (Insight) check, Fezix firmly asks that they leave. If they refuse, Fezix calls for the silichites, who arrive the following round unless already dead.

If forced, Fezix can fight the characters. They start by activating the magic circle in the northern region of the chamber. This summons a stone giant.

Fezix wields a *staff of the woodlands*, and has the keys to the chest in the Treasure Chamber, and to the Trapped Chamber.

Magic Circle. Fezix can use the magic circle and crystals to summon a **stone giant** that is immune to all damage while the circle is maintained. To dispel the circle, the characters must first destroy each crystal, then the circle itself.

Each crystal has AC 13 and 30 hit points, immunity to poison and psychic damage, and vulnerability to bludgeoning and thunder damage. A creature that destroys one must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving or become cursed for 1 minute. While cursed in this way, a creature suffers from one random effect (see below). Once all of the crystals have been destroyed, a DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check can dispel the magic circle, allowing the summoned giant to be damaged.

| d6 | Curse Effect |
|----|--------------|
|----|--------------|

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | The cursed creature is blinded as their eyes turn into quartz crystals. |
| 2 | The cursed creature begins to turn into a quartz crystal, becoming incapacitated, then petrified on a second failed save. |
| 3 | Any object the cursed creature touches with their hands turns to quartz, making their weapons useless. |
| 4 | The cursed creature's tongue turns into a quartz crystal, preventing them from speaking and suffocating them on a second failed save. |
| 5 | The cursed creature's feet turn to quartz, reducing their movement speed by half. |
| 6 | Quartz crystals begin pouring from the cursed creature's ears, deafening them and making the ground within 5 feet of them difficult terrain. |



C10. TRAPPED CHAMBER

The door to this chamber is locked (see General Features). The key is in Fezix's possession (see C9. Summoning Chamber). When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This empty chamber contains little save a staircase leading up to a landing. A broom and some crates sit beside the stairs.

Trap. A character that steps on the staircase triggers a trap. Suddenly, quartz crystals start firing from the crystals in sconces on the walls and shoot at the triggering character (+7 to hit). The crystals deal 16 (3d10) piercing damage on a hit. When a creature reaches the top step, the stairs turn into a slide. Any creatures on the stairs must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall down them, taking 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage in the process. After this, clambering up the ramp requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

Characters with a passive perception of 18 or higher notice small, shattered crystals on the floor, giving them some idea of this trap. Furthermore, the crates are filled with crystals. A successful DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to disarm the trap at the stairs is enough to prevent it triggering. On a failed check, the trap is triggered.

C12. TORTURE CHAMBER

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

A grisly rack sits pride of place in this chamber, in stark contrast to the beauty of the quartz castle around it.

Rack. A creature that touches the rack gets a glimpse of the torture that occurred here. This gives them some insight into the power of Queen Aguafuus. Choose one aspect of the Queen's combat abilities and reveal it to the character. The character must then succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a **doppelganger** of the character appears opposite them and attacks. When killed, the doppelganger smashes into crystals.

C12. SHRINE

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Atop a shrine is a bronze plate, which is etched with the angular features of a fey woman. Other than the plate, the shrine is devoid of items.

Plate. A creature that comes within the sight of the plate causes a *magic mouth* (as by the spell) to appear on the woman's face. She is a manifestation of Queen Aguafuus, and warns the characters to turn back for their own good. Unless they immediately flee the scene, she begins shrieking – a sound like shattering glass. This alerts the silichites near the Crystal Altar (see C14. Crystal Altar) and any nearby sprite patrols (see General Features).

C13. TRAPPED TREASURE

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Through an archway is a forcefield of glittering turquoise, beyond which a treasure chest can be glimpsed.

Force field. A creature that touches the force field takes 7 (3d4) force damage. Passage through the force field by living things is impossible. Rather, a creature that desires the treasure must use an object or undead creature or construct to bring the chest out.

Treasure. The treasure chest is filled with coins, but these are all illusory. A creature that touches the illusory coins becomes slowed as if by a *slow* spell. This curse lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. Dispelling the coin illusion requires a *dispel magic* spell. Beneath the illusion is a genuine magic item; a *circlet of blasting*.

C14. CRYSTAL ALTAR

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Worshiping at an altar are four of the crystal-covered, frog-like creatures. They seem enraptured by their ceremony, which seems to be slowly creating creatures from the small crystals strewn across the altar.

Silichites. There are four **silichites**, two of which are priests, worshiping at the altar. Unless all of the silichites are killed or silenced within three rounds, the ceremony they are working on succeeds, summoning a crystal golem, which attacks intruders mercilessly. The other way to disrupt the ritual is to cast *dispel magic* or to perform a counter ritual by succeeding on a DC 22 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

The summoned golem is a **stone golem** with the following changes:

- It is vulnerable to bludgeoning and thunder damage.
- As a bonus action, it can roll into or out of a ball. While a ball its speed increases to 60 ft., and it can only make one Slam attack on its turn.

C15. MAGIC FONT

When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

A cut crystal font, ten feet across, stands at a height of four feet in the corner of this chamber. Within the font is a vibrant turquoise liquid that swirls and flows of its own accord. Staring into it, you see illusions of tiny water creatures.

Font. The font is filled with a potion that can provide characters with the ability to see through illusions for 1 hour. Unfortunately, the potion can only be drunk using a silver vessel. Any other attempts to scoop liquid from the font fails, as does drinking directly from the font.

Drinking vessels of any metal other than silver become red hot when placed into the liquid. A creature can either drop the heated item into the font, where it dissolves, or take 7 (2d6) fire damage to pull it out.

Around the edge of the font is a riddle which should provide insight into the use of silver drinking vessels to get at the potion:

When hair, I am slow.
When liquid, I pour quick.
Drops gems from the hoof.
Kills wolves from the shooting stick.

This riddle should allow the characters to determine that they need a silver vessel to drink the potion. If not, successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) checks to decipher the riddle can reveal prompts:

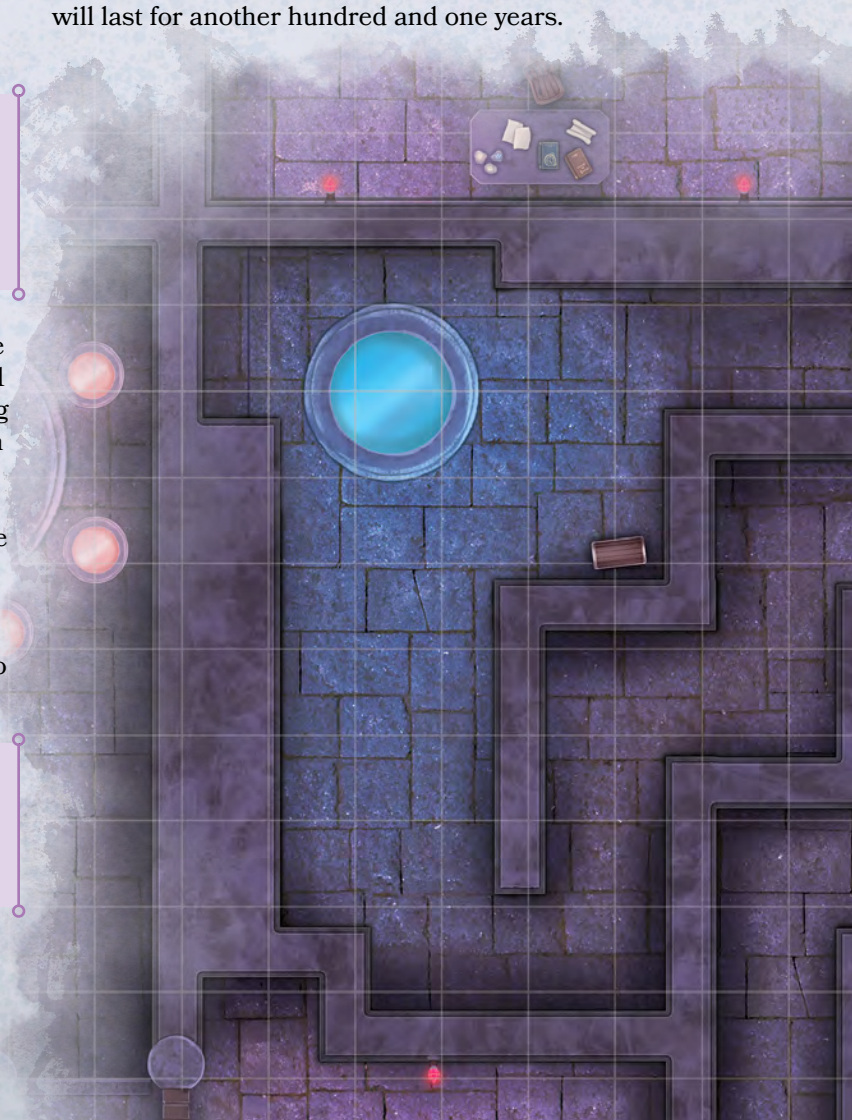
- What color hair might a slow person have?
- What kind of metal comes after the word 'quick'?
- Can you remember the legend of Silver Hoof?
- What kind of bullets kill werewolves?

C16. QUEEN'S CHAMBER

The door to this chamber is locked (see General Features). The key is in Queen Aguafuus' possession (see Part 7: Altar of Sustenance). When characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

A meagerly decorated bedchamber stands before you. There are a few small tapestries of no great note, a plain but many-cushioned bed, and a desk covered in arcane writings.

Desk. Atop the desk are documents on which the Queen has been working out, through some arcane method, the amount of time her realm will last for when powered by the soul of King Peregoth. She has measures from previous victims and plenty of magical calculations that have allowed her to work out that it will last for another hundred and one years.



PART 7: ALTAR OF SUSTENANCE

Once the characters have made it through the Quartz Castle, they can find the Altar of Sustenance, where King Peregoth is tethered. The altar is guarded by enormous statues, a twisting root bridge, and Queen Aguafuus herself. When characters arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

Stretching out before you is a bridge of twisting roots that spans a mist-filled void. Rising up from this void are two statues, standing in stoic vigil over the bridge, with spears in hand. On the other side of the void is a softly glowing altar, with King Peregoth bound atop it, connected to it by more entangling roots.

Stood behind the king is a being both beautiful and terrifying to behold. Her features are angular and sharp, and their skin glitters with a crystalline quality. As the woman, clearly a queen, observes you, she offers a few choice words.

“Your king will remain here. His soul feeds my realm. Unless you wish to suffer a similar fate, you will turn back.”

Queen Aguafuus. Queen Aguafuus (see Appendix) is a powerful fey creature with numerous dangerous attacks. She is capable of firing magic missiles at will, can cause crystals to erupt from beneath characters, and can manifest a crystal spear to fight with in melee. She also has the ability to create illusory reflections of herself (making her almost impossible to hit), to reflect the damage of spells, and to create doppelgangers of the characters.

The Queen is open to negotiation with the characters. If they can offer her a steady supply of mortals to power her realm, or at least to replace King Peregoth, she is willing to listen. The characters may even be permitted to leave and return with such a humanoid – this gives them a chance to find someone powerful who is evil, instead of good. The Queen is sharp tongued and far from verbose, but is courteous and listens carefully. As a powerful fey, she can bind the creatures into service if they agree.

If the characters wish to take the king and cannot provide an alternative, combat ensues. The Queen uses the following tactics:

- First Turn. The Queen makes illusory reflections of herself, making her harder to hit.
- Second Turn. The Queen conjure crystalline spikes on the bridge, by way of the *spike growth* spell.
- Third Turn. The Queen animates the statues – crystals appear in the eyes of their helmets, and they attack.
- Fourth Turn. If the characters are still at range, she uses her spells to hold them back. If they are in melee, she creates a crystal spear to fight with them.
- Final Breath. When the Queen is about to be killed, she warns the characters back. If they kill her, her domain will begin to crumble, potentially killing the characters and the king. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check knows that in order to kill the Queen safely, the king must be freed first.

Root Bridge. The root bridge is difficult terrain, and grapples creatures of its own accord on initiative count 20 (losing ties) of each round. It makes a Strength (Athletics) check (+5 bonus) contested by the target’s Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. On a success, the target creature is grappled, who must use an action to make the contested check again to attempt to escape.

King Peregoth. The king is bound to the altar of sustenance by roots which penetrate his veins and draw his soul into the altar. Creatures with a passive Perception of 10 or higher can tell simply removing the roots would kill him instantly. In order to free him, the roots must first be withered or killed by magical means – spells or magic weapons work just fine. There are four sets of roots which must each be destroyed. Then, the king can be safely taken off the altar, at which point the Queen’s realm starts to dim.

Once the king has been removed from the altar, the Queen loses the Spell Turning trait.

CONCLUSION

Hopefully, the characters manage to free King Peregoth, and may defeat both Queen Aguafuus and Tharazion Gateforger in the process. Even if they don’t defeat his captors, the characters can still complete the quest by returning King Peregoth to the mortal realm. They might do this by stealing him back from the Queen, or by coming to a deal with the powerful fey to buy his freedom.

REWARDS

If the characters successfully return the lost king, they are rewarded, as promised by Princess Peregoth, with a sizable plot of land upon which they may build a stronghold of their own design. Furthermore, they become allies of the Peregoth house, who can offer them special quests and magical items.

Party members may also have claimed Fezix’s *staff of the woodlands* or other magic items from the Queen’s domain.

THE GATES OF AGUAFUUS APPENDIX

FEZIX

Medium humanoid (elf), lawful neutral

Armor Class 12 (hide; 16 with *barkskin*)

Hit Points 93 (17d8 + 17)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10 (+0) | 11 (+0) | 13 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 19 (+4) | 12 (+1) |

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Druidic, Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +3

Staff of the Woodlands. Fezix wields a *staff of the woodlands*. While holding it, they have a +2 bonus to spell attack rolls (accounted for in their statistics). Their staff has 10 charges. Fezix can expend one or more charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using their spell save DC: animal friendship (1 charge), awaken (5 charges), *barkskin* (2 charges), locate animals or plants (2 charges), speak with animals (1 charge), speak with plants (3 charges), or wall of thorns (6 charges). Fezix can also use their action to cast *pass without trace* without using any charges. Other uses of the *staff of the woodlands* can be found in its item description.

Spellcasting. Fezix is an 11th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Fezix has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *guidance*, *produce flame*, *shillelagh*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *entangle*, *fog cloud*, *jump*
2nd level (3 slots): *heat metal*, *moonbeam*, *spike growth*
3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning*, *conjure animals*, *plant growth*
4th level (3 slots): *blight*, *conjure woodland beings*, *wall of fire*
5th level (2 slots): *conjure elemental*, *insect plague*
6th level (1 slot): *conjure fey*

ACTIONS

Staff of the Woodlands. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit (+9 with *shillelagh*), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage if wielded with two hands, or 10 (1d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage with *shillelagh*.

Produce Flame. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +9 to hit, range 30 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (3d8) fire damage.

QUEEN AGUAFUUS

Medium fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 130 (20d8 + 40)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 14 (+2) | 16 (+3) | 15 (+2) | 17 (+3) | 18 (+4) | 20 (+5) |

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +7, Wis +8, Cha +9

Skills Acrobatics +7, Insight +8, Perception +8, Persuasion +9

Condition Immunities charmed, petrified

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Sylvan

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +4

Spell Turning. When the queen is targeted by a spell of 4th level or lower, there is a 50% chance the spell has no effect on her and instead targets the caster, using the slot level, spell save DC, attack bonus, and spellcasting ability of the caster.

Innate Spellcasting. The queen's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *magic missile*, *mirror image*, *phantasmal killer*, *spike growth*
3/day each: *animate objects*, *geas*
1/day each: *dominate person*

ACTIONS

Animate Guardians (1/Day). The queen animates up to two Large statues for 1 hour, which obey her verbal commands. These statues use the statistics of a **shield guardian**, but lack the Bound and Spell Storing traits.

Crystal Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The queen can take 2 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The queen regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Cast Spell. The queen casts a spell using her Innate Spellcasting ability.

Doppelgang (3/Day). The queen summons a **doppelganger** in an unoccupied space she can see within 60 feet of her.

SILICHITE

Medium elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 17

Hit Points 60 (8d8 + 24)

Speed 20 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 12 (+1) | 18 (+4) | 16 (+3) | 7 (-2) | 10 (+0) | 6 (-2) |

Condition Immunities petrified

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Primordial (Terran), Sylvan

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Fey Ancestry. The silichite has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put it to sleep.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The silichite makes two bite attacks. It can replace one of these attacks with its Tongue action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw against being magically petrified. On a failed save, the creature begins to turn to stone and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified for 24 hours.

Tongue. The silichite targets one Medium or smaller creature that it can see within 15 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or be pulled into an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the silichite.

Swallow. The silichite makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller creature that is petrified. If the attack hits, that creature takes the bite's damage and is swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, and it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the silichite. The silichite can only have one creature swallowed at a time.

If the silichite takes 10 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the silichite must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 5 feet of the silichite. If the silichite dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

SUPERIOR ANIMATED ARMOR

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 18 (+4) | 11 (+0) | 13 (+1) | 1 (-5) | 3 (-4) | 1 (-5) |

Damage Immunities fire

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 6

Languages –

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Antimagic Susceptibility. The armor is incapacitated while in the area of an antimagic field. If targeted by *dispel magic*, the armor must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

False Appearance. While the armor remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal suit of armor.

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

Alarm. If the armor sees an intruder for at least two rounds, it raises a loud alarm, as if by the *alarm* spell. Creatures with a passive Perception of 16 or higher can detect this alarm before it triggers.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The armor makes two halberd attacks.

Halberd. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage. This attack deals an additional 5 (1d10) fire damage if the armor is within 15 feet of at least two other suits of **superior animated armor**.





THE MAD DESCENT

ENTER THE GAUNTLET

A conniving archdevil has prepared a series of challenges themed to the Nine Hells. Can our heroes overcome the infernal gauntlet and win hellish prizes beyond value?

The Mad Descent is an adventure for use with the Yarro Studios *The Mad Descent Infindungeon* scroll.

Intended for a group of two to five characters of 11th to 16th level, this adventure takes most groups 2 to 4 sessions to complete.

CONTENT WARNING

The Mad Descent is a challenge for adventures, and involves emotional manipulation and depictions of what amounts to mental and physical torture. The *Mystery Mansion* subquest is a murder mystery that contains references to suicide and self-harm.

INTRODUCTION

The Mad Descent is an *Infinidungeon* adventure for level 11-17 characters in which the party undertakes a series of trials set by an archdevil in order to gain a magnificent boon or magic item. Each trial is related to one of the nine levels of hell in some way.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

This adventure begins with the characters at the end of a hard-fought battle. They've just come off the back of their most recent adventure, and are taking some time to recover from their injuries and count up their wealth. Here, at this moment, when the characters least expect it, they are approached by a scheming archdevil who wishes to test and tempt them. Read or paraphrase the following:

The sudden smell of sulfur assaults your nostrils. The acrid stench seems to come from nowhere, but, as you glance around, you notice a pillar of ashy smoke appearing not far away. It continues to thicken and, at the moment at which it becomes entirely opaque, an infernal figure steps out of it. It is uncannily tall with an angular, smug face. Two spiraling horns wind up from the back of its skull and over its forehead, forming a sort of crown above which a crown of flames inexplicably burns. Its long limbs sport bony protrusions from each joint, though these don't seem to bother their exquisite outfit.

The devilish figure strides toward you on insectoid legs. "Good day adventurers. Please excuse my somewhat overdramatic entrance. You may call me The Speculator. I would like to extend you an offer. I can see that you are already proficient campaigners, but I have something that might further improve your prowess, provided you have the skill to reclaim it."

The Speculator then details its deal. If the characters can overcome a gauntlet set out in an infernal demiplane, they may choose a boon of their choice from its collection. This boon could be an infernal award, bestowing permanent features on a character, a rare magic item of the character's choice, or a hoard of wealth sufficient to purchase a small fort or wizard's tower. The gauntlet consists of a series of nine challenges, each related to a level of hell in some fashion. If the characters would like to undertake the gauntlet, all they must do is sign a contract, which The Speculator produces in a flash of flame, with their blood.

What The Speculator doesn't tell the characters is that if the characters fail their challenges or are reduced to 0 hit points, their souls are forfeit to The Speculator. A character who succeeds on a DC 21 Wisdom (Insight) check can tell that the devil is hiding something. If the character examines the contract in detail and succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check, they realize the real risk of its challenges.

The rest of the adventure assumes that the characters accept the gauntlet of The Speculator, which it refers to as *The Mad Descent*. If you feel your characters might not accept the challenge or if you are working with a short time slot, consider starting the adventure after the characters have already accepted the deal and signed the contract. As soon as the contract is signed by all complying party members, they disappear in a cloud of sulfurous smoke along with The Speculator and appear in an infernal demiplane.

THE SPECULATOR

The Speculator is a unique archdevil who has carved itself out a portion of hell into an infernal demiplane. It uses the statistics of a **pit fiend**. This demiplane bends to its will and thus can be contorted into any structure The Speculator desires. Using this power, the archdevil has created a gauntlet of nine challenges that are designed to emulate the nine layers of hell. The Speculator takes great pleasure in enticing adventurers and heroes to undertake the gauntlet, with the promise of riches, magic items, or infernal boons for their success. No one has yet overcome all of the challenges – and The Speculator is confident that no one ever will.

The Speculator's utmost goal is to harvest the souls of powerful individuals – these souls can be traded on the infernal market for a wide variety of things, and essentially serve as currency. The Speculator is also somewhat of a gambler and needs the souls to fuel its addiction. Several of the challenges of the infernal demiplane have been won in bets with other archdevils from the various levels of the hells.

INFERNAL DEMIPLANE

The infernal demiplane is a portion of hell that has been sealed off by The Speculator. It responds to The Speculator's wishes and has been sculpted by it into a gauntlet that mimics the nine layers of hell. A creature that falls to 0 hit points in the infernal demiplane dies instantly. A creature that dies in the infernal demiplane has their body destroyed, and their soul condemned to serve The Speculator for eternity.

Such creatures are reincarnated as lesser devils in the infernal demiplane. They might take the form of stunted, fleshy humanoids (**lemure**), skeletal centipedes (**giant centipede**), oversized naked bats (**giant bat**), or some other hideous form. No matter what form they do take, they retain the face they sported in life.

GENERAL FEATURES

Lava. Many obstacles in this adventure threaten characters with falling into lava. A creature that enters lava for the first time or starts its turn there takes 55 (10d10) fire damage and must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or submerge beneath the lava's surface, immediately dying to the immense heat. Creatures immune to fire damage do not die, but simply swim.

Light. Thanks to the prevalent lava, the entire demi-plane is filled with bright light.

BRIDGE TO MADNESS

When the characters first arrive in the infernal demi-plane, they are faced by a rickety wooden bridge that crosses a warping, twisting moat of lava. When they arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

You appear on the top of an obsidian cliff face, looking down over a moat of twisting lava. Jumping back from the edge of the cliff, you hear a familiar, snarky laugh.

"Sorry about that. This teleportation lark isn't too accurate. Consider this a pre-gauntlet challenge," The Speculator chuckles, indicating the rickety wooden bridge that crosses the moat of lava, "Seems sturdy enough for me. See you at the skull."

On the other side of the rope bridge is an enormous obsidian skull, its eye sockets glowing with a flaming corona.

The bridge represents a unique challenge. Much like the River Styx that flows through hell, this bridge saps a creature's sense of self. It might appear dangerous from a physical perspective, and it certainly is, but there's much more at stake than a creature's body.

Physical. The bridge is hard to cross. A creature that moves on the bridge for the first time on a turn must succeed on a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatic) check (player's choice) or begins to slip from the bridge. A slipping creature must then succeed on a DC 18 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (player's choice) or fall from the bridge. A creature that falls can repeat the saving throw to grab onto the bridge at the last moment. If they fail this second saving throw, they fall into the lava.

A creature moving across the bridge at half speed has a +5 bonus to the initial ability check. A creature moving across the bridge while sprinting has a -5 penalty to the check.

Mental. In reality, the bridge is 90 feet long. However, the mind-warping effects of the bridge make it seem far longer. A creature that ends their turn on the bridge must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or have their speed reduced by 10 feet to a minimum of 10 feet. This speed reduction ends when they have finished crossing the bridge.

After a creature spends 5 rounds on the bridge, it must succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw at the end of each of its turns, or begin to lose its sense of self. The creature's Intelligence score reduces by 1d4 on each failed save. A creature whose Intelligence score is reduced to 2 or below totally forgets who they are and what they're doing, and sits down with a speed of 0. This Intelligence reduction ends once the creature has finished crossing the bridge.

After 10 rounds, the bridge collapses into the lava, taking any creatures still on it along.



FACE THE FALLEN

When the characters reach this challenge, read or paraphrase the following:

Before you is an enormous obsidian skull that glows with fiery heat. The air around the skull ripples with the intense temperature. Within, you can see the figure of a heavily armed, skeletal devil gracefully spinning a glaive. Before you can enter, The Speculator appears beside the skull's entrance.

"Simple enough – defeat that ugly brute in there. They're nothing special, well within your capabilities, I'm sure. The first layer of hell is an infinite battlefield you see, so why not put the best of its inhabitants to the test? Best of luck."

No spells or other magical effects can pass into or out of the skull, but function fine within. The characters must enter, either through the mouth or the top, in order to start the challenge. Once they have entered, the entrances seal over with a film of lava that cannot be passed through without taking 55 (10d10) fire damage.

Infernal Combat. In order to overcome the challenge, the characters must defeat the **bone devil**, which can summon a **bearded devil** as a bonus action on each of its turns.

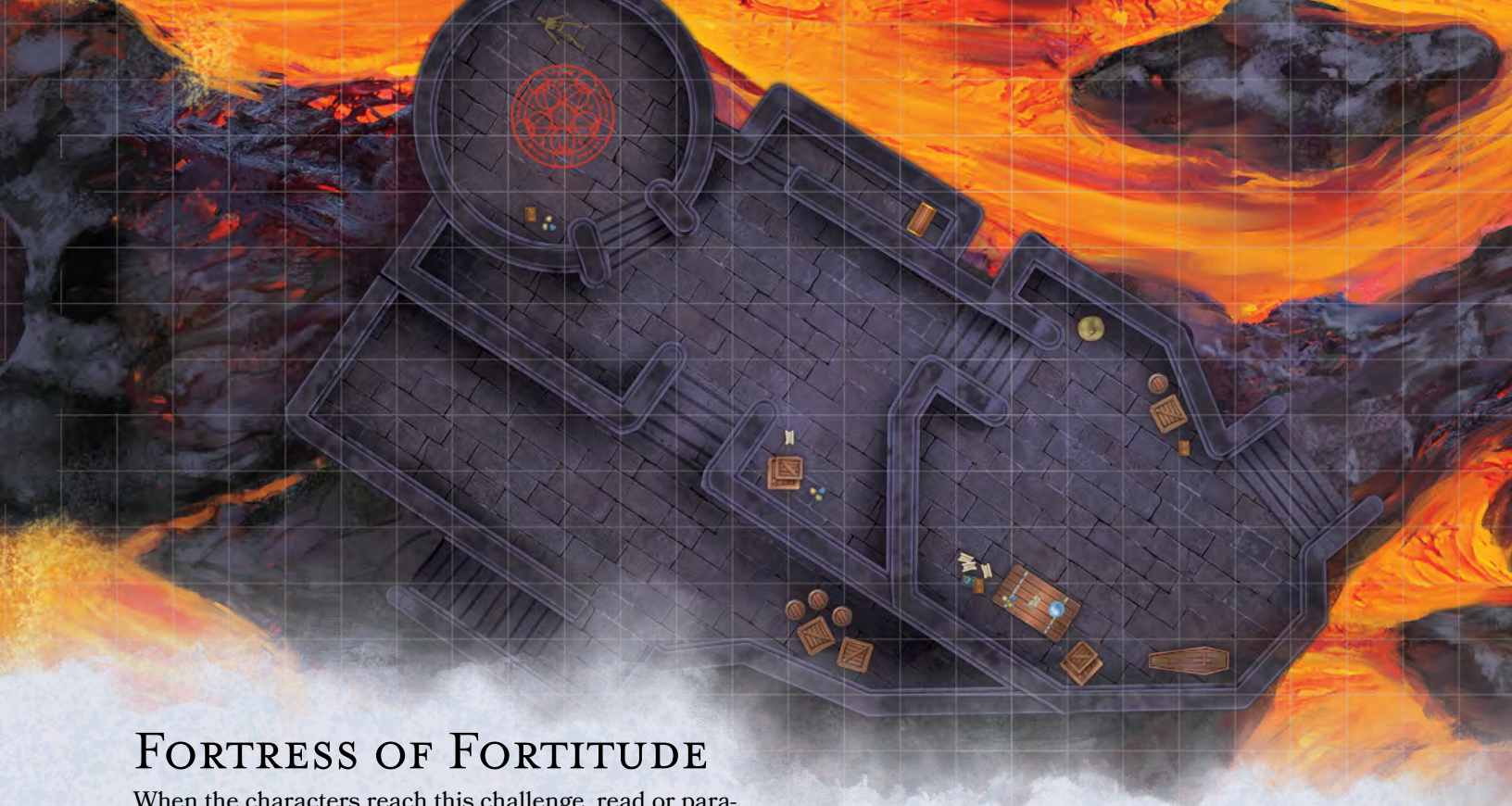
Fires of Hell. This is designed to be a simple test of combat prowess, reflecting the first layer of hell with its battlefield. The only twist is that each turn the characters take fire damage from the intense heat inside the skull. On initiative count 20 (losing ties) each round, all creatures in the skull take an amount of fire damage equal to the round of combat. For example, on the third round, all creatures take 3 fire damage. Note that the devils are immune to fire damage, and so do not take this damage. Unless the characters can defeat the devils rapidly, they are likely to be cooked alive.

Once the characters have overcome the challenge, the lava seals melt away (immediately ending the Fires of Hell effect), allowing them to leave and move onto the next challenge.

FAILING A CHALLENGE

If the characters fail a challenge, they are doomed. Upon failure, The Speculator appears and mockingly consoles them on their failure. It lets the characters know that the challenges really are difficult, and they shouldn't feel bad about their inability to succeed – rather, they should feel foolish for accepting to undertake the gauntlet in the first place! The Speculator then destroys the characters one by one with beams of infernal flame that shoot from its crown. The beams incinerate the characters, turning them to ash. Their souls are then reincarnated as hideous lesser devils (see Infernal Demiplane for more information).





FORTRESS OF FORTITUDE

When the characters reach this challenge, read or paraphrase the following:

You proceed toward a towering fortress of iron blocks. There appears to be no entrance on the ground floor of the fort, but a steep staircase leads to a higher level where a tower branches off from the main body of the structure.

As you take in the immense architecture, The Speculator leans out of a window near the top of the building. Despite their distance, you can hear their voice perfectly.

“Well done on that previous challenge - you really showed those grunts what for! They won’t forget that beating in quite some time I bet! Anyway, upwards and onwards. Well, downwards actually. Regardless, this is the Fortress of Fortitude - I won it in a game of cards from the Lord of the Second, he’s still terribly sore about that, but he does live in a rather mournful place. The challenge here is pretty simple; get out the other side.”

In order to overcome this challenge, the characters must make it from one side of the fortress to the other. As soon as the characters touch the iron blocks of the structure, they are wracked with pain and the screaming of deceased allies, family, and friends in their heads. This aims to mimic the second layer of hell, which is filled with despair and casualties of the eternal war on the first layer.

Pain and Suffering. The first time creatures enter the fort, or whenever a creature starts its turn within the fort, it must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be wracked with near-overwhelming pain.

All terrain counts as difficult terrain for a creature suffering such pain. The creature must also make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened and use their movement and action to attempt to leave the fortress at the closest entrance or exit.

This is a good opportunity for you, the GM, to dredge up some difficult memories of the characters. Perhaps they failed to save some innocent commoners during an adventure, and they are haunted by it. Maybe they lost a close ally or pet that they haven’t fully grieved for. Maybe there are foes they were forced to kill that they would rather have spared. *Please ensure your players are comfortable with this form of emotional turmoil before engaging in it.*

Permanent Effects. If the characters can make it out of the fort, the pain and screaming stops. However, unless the characters can dispel the magic circle within the fort, the experience has lasting effects. If a character failed any Constitution saving throw in the fort, their movement is permanently reduced by 5 feet. If they failed a Wisdom saving throw, they are prone to bouts of despair; any time they roll a 1 on a d20, they are stunned for 1 minute. A *greater restoration* spell or similar magic ends these effects.

Magic Circle. The magic circle within the fort can be dispelled in order to prevent or remove these permanent effects. Dispelling the circle first requires a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check to identify the obscure magic ritual. Following this, a character must make a successful DC 17 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to alter the symbols in a way that lessens their power. Finally, a character must dispel the ritual circle by casting *dispel magic* at any level, or by hitting it with an enchanted weapon.

THE GATEHOUSE

When the characters reach this challenge, read or paraphrase the following:

“Gods, that was terribly unpleasant,” remarks The Speculator, “I’m terribly sorry about that. Good job for overcoming it though - you remain impressive! I assure you this next challenge is more light-hearted than that affair. You’ll have a great time, trust me.”

The Speculator gestures toward an enormous gatehouse seemingly made of braided chains. The walls rise high into the blackened sky, their links reflecting the orange glow of the lava that flows all around you. As you make your way into the gatehouse, two shattered gargoyle statues begin reforming. As their stone jaws lock back into place, they turn to look at you.

“CLOSE!” One of the gargoyles screams. The doorways behind and ahead of you seal shut as a mass of chains flows across them. “RIDDLE!” The next statue bellows. Searing red letters appear across the basalt flagstones:

‘Easily beaten. Never free.
Many folks desire me.
My natural realm is underground.
And by my hand monarchs are crowned.’

This challenge is one of wit. The characters must solve the riddle, whose answer is ‘gold’. This challenge is designed to teach the characters a lesson about greed. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals that the ruler of the third level of hell is motivated entirely by wealth and greed, and a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that The Speculator finds covetousness disdainful.

Gargoyles and Clues. Except for the commands “Close” and “Riddle,” the gargoyles speak only Terran, a dialect of Primordial. Creatures who speak Primordial can ask the **gargoyles** for clues, making a Charisma (Persuasion) check contested by the gargoyle’s Charisma (Deception) check.

If a character succeeds on the contest, the gargoyle asks it a question such as one of the following. Characters can attempt this contest multiple times, receiving a different question clue each time.

- What objects or people are easily beaten, defeated, or molded?
- What objects or people have a high cost or are constantly enslaved?
- What objects or people do people tend to want most?
- What objects or people are typically found underground?
- What objects or people can symbolize kings and queens?

Killing the gargoyles does not prevent the effects of incorrect answers, but prevents the characters from inquiring for clues.

Incorrect Answers. If the characters answer the riddle incorrectly, the gargoyles attack. Furthermore, an animated chain shoots forth from the walls and grapples the creature that gave the incorrect response. The creature is restrained while grappled in this way and takes 27 (6d8) bludgeoning damage at the end of each of its turns if it remains restrained. As an action, it can attempt a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to escape the chains.

The gargoyles will cease attacking if the characters ask them to do so in Primordial, but will resume attacking upon further incorrect answers.

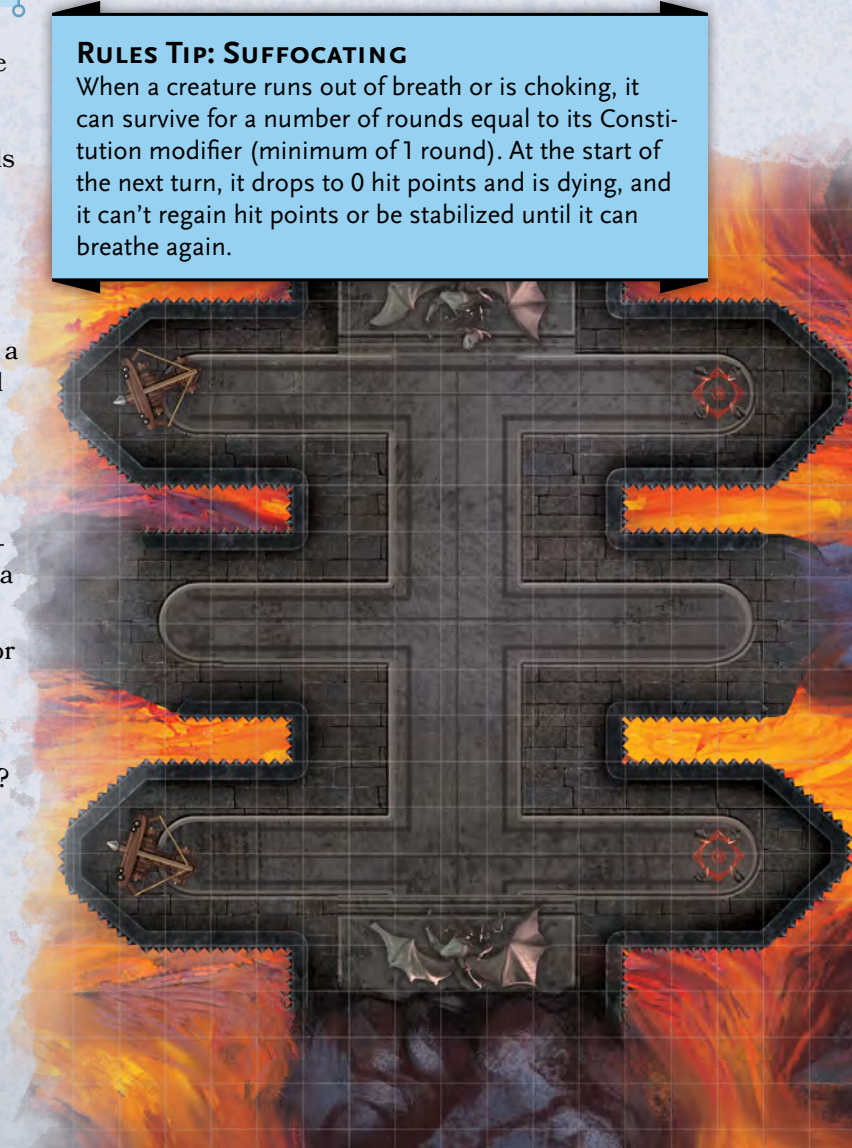
Although the gargoyles animate only once and can be killed, the chains continue to shoot forth for each incorrect answer.

To up the ante, have the chains choke grappled characters.

Correct Answer. When the characters finally come to the right answer, all the chains (including those making up the gatehouse) turn to gold pieces and fall upon the characters. Each creature within the gatehouse at the time must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half that on a successful one. Characters that attempt to stuff the gold into pockets or bags find that it immediately turns to acid, destroying containers and dealing 1d4 acid damage per 10 gp taken.

RULES TIP: SUFFOCATING

When a creature runs out of breath or is choking, it can survive for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 round). At the start of the next turn, it drops to 0 hit points and is dying, and it can’t regain hit points or be stabilized until it can breathe again.



SYMBOLS OF SIGNIFICANCE

When the characters reach this challenge, read or paraphrase the following:

“Goodness, I can’t believe that worked! How exciting. Most people just die in there. Onto the next I suppose!” chuckles The Speculator, pointing toward a series of islands emerging from a pool of bubbling lava. Inscribed upon the stones are arcane symbols that glow with magical light. “I really must stress that you’re careful about this one. That lava’s hot as hell – literally!” Set just beyond the far bank of the lava pool is a barrier of glowing energy that is an amalgamation of green, yellow, orange, and blue. This barrier prevents you from making it to the next challenge, but wouldn’t stop you from reaching the bank.

This challenge is one of magical intellect and prowess, befitting the fourth level of hell, which is a place of wanton magical destruction and chaotic convalescence of energies. In order to pass, the characters must carry each symbol-inscribed boulder across the magical barrier.

Symbols. There are four symbols – blue, green, orange, and yellow. Each corresponds to a damage type – blue for cold, green for poison, orange for acid, and yellow for lightning.

RULES TIP: JUMPING

When a creature moves at least 10 feet on foot immediately before a jump, it can jump up to an amount of feet equal to the creature’s Strength score (long jump) or 3 + the creature’s Strength modifier (high jump). Without a running start of at least 10 feet, a creature can only jump half the distance.

A creature cannot jump farther than its current speed, even with magical aid.

If the creature is jumping from a large, stable surface to another large, stable surface, the jump requires no ability check. If there is an obstacle to jump over, if the creature is carrying cumbersome equipment, if either surface the creature is jumping to or from is small or rickety, or some other complication interferes with the jump, the GM may require the character to succeed on a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to safely complete the jump.

Stones. Each stone has one symbol and weighs 150 pounds. Characters with a low or moderate strength may need to doff their armor and equipment to carry a stone. With a running start, a character can throw a stone up a number of feet equal to its Strength score, or half that without a sufficient running start.

The stones must be carried across in a particular order: orange, yellow, green, and finally blue. If a stone would fall into the lava, it immediately teleports safely to its starting position.

Important Knowledge. A creature that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognizes the barrier as a variant of the *prismatic wall* spell, and which damage type each color corresponds to. Casting *dispel magic* on the wall at 9th level dispels the wall, allowing characters to move to the next challenge. Casting it at a lower level has no effect.

A subsequent DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the stones must be carried across in a particular order: orange, yellow, green, and finally blue.

Carrying Stones. The stones are very heavy and exude a draining effect on the body and mind of any creature carrying one. When a creature throws a stone or makes a jump while carrying one, the creature must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or take 1 level of exhaustion.

Island Hopping. The islands are rugged and rocky, making jumping between them difficult. Most islands are 10 feet apart, and jumping between them requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If a creature fails this check, it must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or begin to fall from the island. A creature that falls can repeat the saving throw to grab onto the boulder at the last moment. If they fail the second saving throw, they fall into the lava.

If a character hops from one island to another while carrying the wrong stone, the character takes 19 (3d12) damage of the corresponding type and must make a Dexterity saving throw. They are thrown back to the banks of the first island (where the green stone is found) and take 19 (3d12) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half that on a successful one. On a failed save, the creature also lands prone and drops the stone.

Crossing the Barrier. When a stone reaches the far bank, the symbol ceases to glow and the corresponding color disappears from the barrier. Once all four symbols have reached the far bank, the barrier disappears.

RULES TIP: CARRYING CAPACITY

A Small or Medium creature’s carrying capacity, including equipment and armor, is a number of pounds equal to 15 times its Strength score, or double that for each size above Medium. While pushing, dragging, or carrying weight in excess of its carrying capacity (up to double the capacity), a creature’s speed drops to 5 feet. A creature cannot push, drag, or lift more weight than twice its carrying capacity.

If multiple creatures carry an object together, they can add their carrying capacity together.

THE PIT

When the characters reach this challenge, read or paraphrase the following:

Ahead of you is an arena of sorts. It appears to be made of basalt and obsidian, and a gateway sculpted into a leering visage draws you in. Stood beside the gateway is The Speculator.

“You cracked that puzzle pretty easily. Sorry if it’s left you feeling a little drained, it’s those darn symbols. I can’t seem to scrub all the magic out of them. I won them in a bet you know - I had to wrangle a thousand hellhounds to do it, but it was worth it. Anyhow, that’s all in the past now! You’ll like this one I think, it’s just another fight. You adventurous types seem to really get off on a bit of hack and slash.”

As the arena gateway opens, you can see that the floor is marked with a web of lava and that a devil made of ice is pacing the edges of the chamber. The lava seems to have no impact on them, as its footsteps send the lava splattering across the basalt floor. The devil wields a vicious spear that looks perfectly capable of piercing any armor. As you set foot into the arena, hundreds of imps and lesser devils appear in the stands in a puff of smoke and begin cheering. The ceiling slides shut, the room turns frigid, the devil bows low before you, and it charges.

This challenge is dressed as a combat encounter but is actually a race against time to escape the arena. The fifth level of hell is a massive prison, encased in ice, and thus the challenge reflects this. In order to overcome the challenge, the characters must open the gateway on the far side of the arena – no mean feat given that it is magically locked, and is slowly turning to stone.

Arena Features. The arena’s open roof is actually barred by a permanent *wall of force* spell (cast at 9th level). A similar wall bars the 25-foot-radius battle space from the seating.

Deception. Initially, this challenge might seem like a combat encounter. However, characters who succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check can tell that The Speculator is concealing some truth. Furthermore, characters that succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Religion) check realize that the shift from infernal heat to freezing cold indicates a change of level of hell to the fifth, which is a prison, not a battlefield.

Characters with a passive Perception of 16 or higher notice two things; first, the ice devil is wearing a key around its neck. Second, the gateway on the other side of the arena is slowly disappearing - turning into stone like the rest of the arena wall.

Devil. The enemy is an **ice devil** with the following changes:

- The devil regenerates 30 hp at the start of each of its turns while the arena's exit is closed. It cannot be killed until the exit is opened.
- **New Action: Spear of Tartarus.** Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d6 + 6) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) cold damage. Critical hits made with this spear roll the damage dice one additional time. As part of its Multiattack, the devil can replace the claw attack with a spear attack.
- **New Bonus Action: Accuracy Boost (1/Day).** As a bonus action, the ice devil gains a +5 bonus to attack rolls made with its magic spear.

If the devil is banished, the key around its neck is not banished, but drops to the floor. All of the devil's other equipment is banished with it.

Lava. The lava here is not deep, nor is it hot. Rather, it is freezing cold. It is 1 foot deep and counts as difficult terrain for Small creatures. A creature that enters the lava for the first time in a round or starts its turn there takes 27 (5d10) cold damage.

Exit. The exit has a magical locking mechanism and key hole, plus other magical protections. Characters with a passive Perception of 16 or higher notice it is quickly petrifying, becoming one with the wall and threatening to trap the characters forever.

On initiative count 0 (losing ties) on each round, the door gets closer to

complete petrification. After 5 rounds (likely 5 turns for each character), the door is permanently sealed.

After each round, the DC for checks made on the door increase by 1.

A *wall of force* (cast at 9th level) covers the open roof of the arena, preventing characters from leaving by way of flight.

Escape. Rather than standing and fighting, the characters need to escape.

A successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the location of the door's locking mechanism and key hole.

A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) or Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals the mechanism's protections, once found. A small *wall of force* (cast at 5th level) prevents the keyhole from being accessed, and a *wall of force* (cast at 9th level) also bars the gateway from the other side. If the door opens, both walls of force dissipate.

A *dispel magic* spell or a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check removes the magical barrier, allowing access to the keyhole.

A successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check detects the key around the ice devil's neck.

A successful DC 20 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check can steal the key from the ice devil's neck. A creature automatically succeeds on this check if the ice devil is incapacitated.

A successful DC 20 Dexterity check made with thieves' tools picks the door's lock, if the keyhole is accessible. Alternatively, a character can unlock the door using the key from the ice devil, requiring no check.

A successful DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check opens the heavy door, if it has been unlocked.

Characters who fail to escape the fight pit are likely doomed, as they cannot kill the devil within.

Treasure. If the characters manage to wrestle the spear from ice devil, The Speculator permits them to take it with them. The spear is a +1 spear that requires attunement and deals an additional 3d6 cold damage on a hit. On a critical hit with the spear, you roll the damage dice one additional time. Once per day as a bonus action, you can gain a +5 bonus to attack rolls made with the spear for 1 minute.

MYSTERY MANSION

When the characters reach this challenge, read or paraphrase the following:

“Alright, you got me, that one wasn’t a fair fight at all. Well done for working it out though, that’s the challenge that kills most of those who accept the deal. The audience was made up of them – of course, they delight in it now. They didn’t enjoy it so much their first time around. So congratulations on making it to the sixth level of hell! Not so much lava to worry about here eh? I’ll be upfront with you on this one – solve the murder and you’re free. Simple. I’ll need a method and a motive if you’re to be freed.”

The Speculator sweeps its arms in the direction of a dilapidated mansion. It is covered with icicles that hang precariously from the awnings, and the stones of the walls have been fractured by veins of ice. As you make your way into the abode and turn the corner, you’re confronted with the frozen corpse of a young man.

“Terribly sad,” mutters the archdevil as it saunters in behind you, “his ghost is absolutely livid. I know I really should have put him to rest by now and claimed his soul as my own, but I’m just so busy all the time. The hellhounds need feeding, my darned nails need manicuring, I need to be fitted for a new suit - it’s not easy keeping up this level of sartorial excellence you know. On that note, I’m off to try on some new ties. Enjoy yourselves.” The Speculator leaves and slams the door behind itself. As the door hits the frame, it seals shut as a line of hot lava melts them together.

This challenge is a departure from the norm – it does little to mimic its layer of hell save for the freezing climate. In order to progress, the characters must examine the crime scene for clues, and determine what caused the man to die.

Characters must come up with the correct method (icicle) and motive (accident) in order to succeed on the challenge. Failure results in death at the hands of The Speculator (though that’s not the end of the adventure).

The Truth. The truth is that he died an accidental death – an icicle fell from the roof of the eastern room into his neck. He stumbled into the first room and removed the icicle, opening the wound. The icicle then melted in his blood as he died. After his death, The Speculator discovered the corpse and asked a bearded devil to come and chisel a fake diary and story onto the walls of the northern room to make it appear a suicide. The man has self-inflicted wounds from a troubled adolescence which provide further false evidence. The devil makes the diary using a chisel, which they then tossed away in the eastern room as they left.

THE CORPSE

Characters that examine the corpse can find several important details, some of which require checks.

Stab Wound. This gaping hole in the neck is clearly the lethal wound. A DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that the wound was caused by a dagger, knife, shortsword, or similarly sized implement.

Pool of Blood. A frozen pool of blood surrounds the man’s body. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check tracks the blood to indicate the man came from the east. A successful DC 18 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that the blood is slightly watered down.

Scars. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals scars on the man’s wrists. A successful DC 16 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that these wounds are self-inflicted but years old.

Hand. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the man’s hand is curved, as if he had been clutching a dagger, knife, shortsword, or similarly sized implement.

List. A successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a mundane shopping list in the man’s pocket: eggs, cheese, bread, and apples (see Wall Diary).



THE MANSION

Characters that search through the mansion can find several important clues, some of which require checks.

Footprints. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check notes footprints around the corpse. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the character also discerns two sets of footprints; one belonging to The Speculator, and one to a bearded devil.

Wall Diary. Scrawled on the walls of the northern room is a diary of sorts. It details the man falling for the schemes of a devil and being imprisoned here. Each day he dreams of his lost love in the mortal realm and tries to end his life to be reunited with her in the afterlife. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (History) check reveals that the diary was written with a chisel or similar implement. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the character also realizes the handwriting on the wall doesn't match the handwriting on the shopping list.

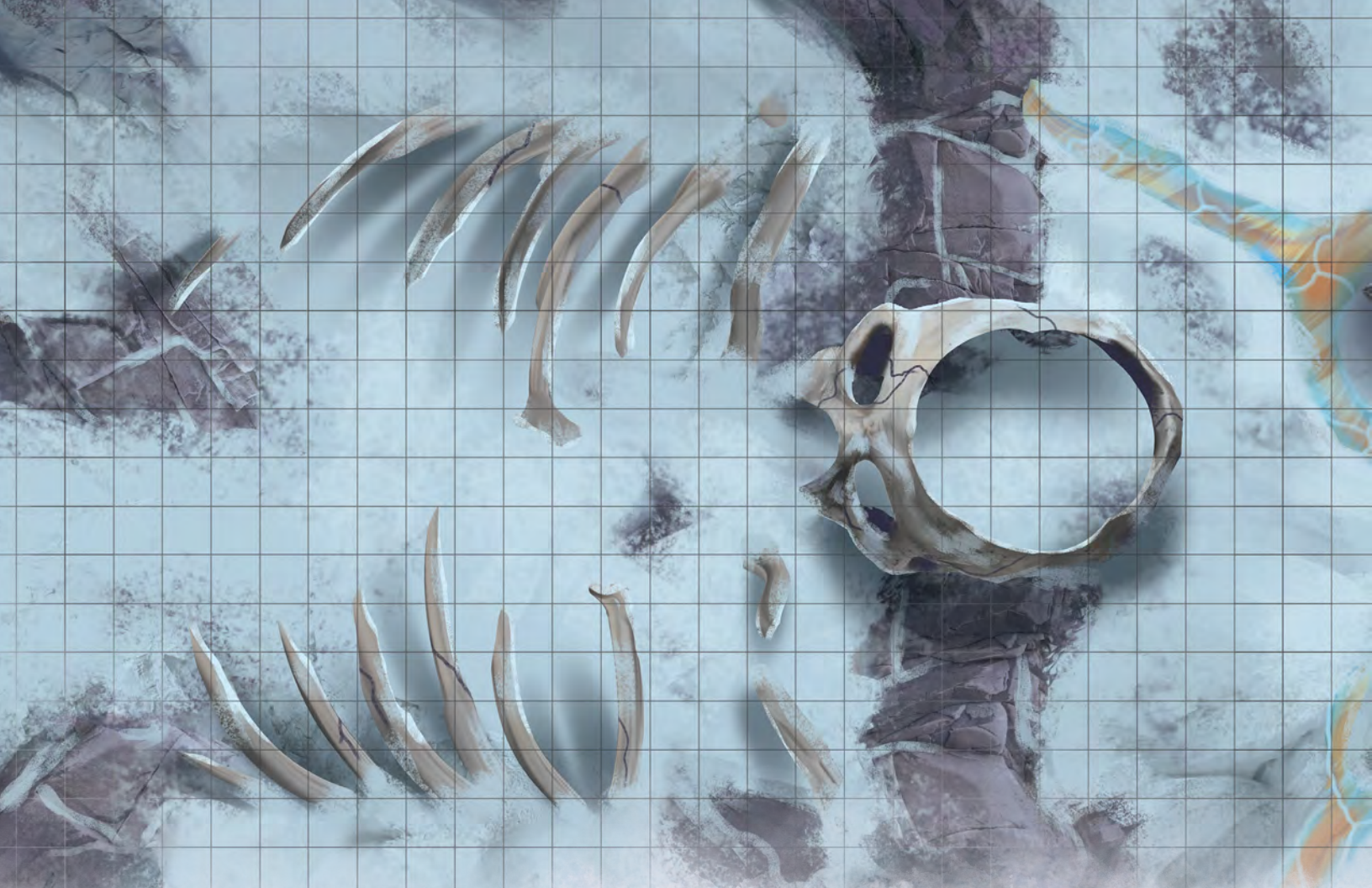
This check is subject to a dwarf's Stonecunning trait.

Dagger. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check or Wisdom (Survival) check detects a bent dagger poking out from the snow. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the dagger was probably used to chisel the diary into the wall.

Ceiling. A successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that while most of the ceiling in the eastern room is covered with icicles, there's a bare portion just large enough for a single icicle.

SOLVING THE MYSTERY

If the characters correctly determine what happened – that the man died an accidental death by icicle – they can summon The Speculator to tell them. The Speculator is pleased, though not as pleased as it would be if the adventurers had gotten it incorrect. If the adventurers do get it wrong, The Speculator cackles with glee, and its eyes burn bright. It, a **pit fiend**, attacks. If any of the characters die at The Speculator's hands in this subquest, fret not. Because they died in an already haunted house, the characters' souls don't become fodder for the hells but instead remain bound here as **ghosts** (much to The Speculator's frustration). As ghosts, they can talk to the ghost of the man who died here, who explains he was tricked into imprisonment by The Speculator, and then died accidentally. With this information, the characters can summon The Speculator again and overcome the challenge. The Speculator then resurrects them using his hellish magic.



FALLEN GIANT

When the characters reach this challenge, read or paraphrase the following:

Up ahead is the skeletal remains of a fallen giant. Most of its bones are buried beneath the snow, but its ribcage juts up through the ice forming an ivory canopy above your heads. Above the fractured collarbones is the giant's enormous skull.

"Impressive isn't it? It's no mean feat to trick a giant I can tell you. Savvier than they look. They've been around for a long time I suppose. This is the only one I know of in the hells! On that note, it needs protecting. Other archdevils constantly try to steal what I have here, they covet my domain - and who can blame them! Ensure not a single bone is taken and you'll be rewarded."

The challenge here is to protect the skeleton from a hoard of devils which is on its way to steal them. Of course, this is all an affectation, the devils are loyal to The Speculator rather than the lord of the seventh, but this is an ode to the many times they have attempted to steal from The Spectator and failed.

Challenge. The characters must protect the skeleton from marauding devils. If any devils remain inside the skeleton's area i.e. on any square of the map that is at least 25% covered by the skeleton, after six rounds of combat, the characters lose. The devils steal a rib, clavicle, or whichever bone is most appropriate, and the characters fail the challenge. If, after six rounds, the characters maintain control of the area, the devils flee and the characters can progress to the next challenge.

Skeleton. Unfortunately for the characters, the skeleton is cursed with a biting chill that freezes mortal creatures to the bone. A creature (other than a devil) that starts its turn within 10 feet of a bone must succeed on a DC 8 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion. These levels are recovered after the creature finishes a short or long rest.

Devils. The devils arrive in three waves, occurring on initiative count 20 (losing ties) of relevant rounds. The first wave, on the first round of combat, consists of fifteen **imps**. They retaliate if attacked, but otherwise try to disperse around the giant's skeleton and spend their actions trying to pry away the bones. The second wave arrives on the fourth round of combat and consists of six **barbed devils**. These creatures try to protect any remaining lesser devils and attack the characters. On round four of combat, the third wave arrives. The third wave consists of ten **bearded devils**. These mimic the behavior of the first wave of devils; only attack if attacked, otherwise, try to steal the bones.

RUINS OF YOUR LIFE

When the characters reach this challenge, read or paraphrase the following:

“Nicely done! Those pesky little infernals have been well and truly seen off. Good luck with the next challenge - it’s a bit more personal.”

Up ahead the snowstorm that has been raging clears, revealing a small ruined stone building, vaguely mausoleum-like in construction. Snow and ice have piled up against and within the structure, but you can just make out a few stray items inside that have not yet been consumed by the cold.

The eighth layer of hell is little more than a frozen wasteland stalked by devils. It’s seemingly eternal ice sheets drive those who wander them to insanity, and this challenge has been created to mimic that. Any character that is insane at the end of the fifth round fails the challenge, while characters that are not insane may proceed to the next challenge.

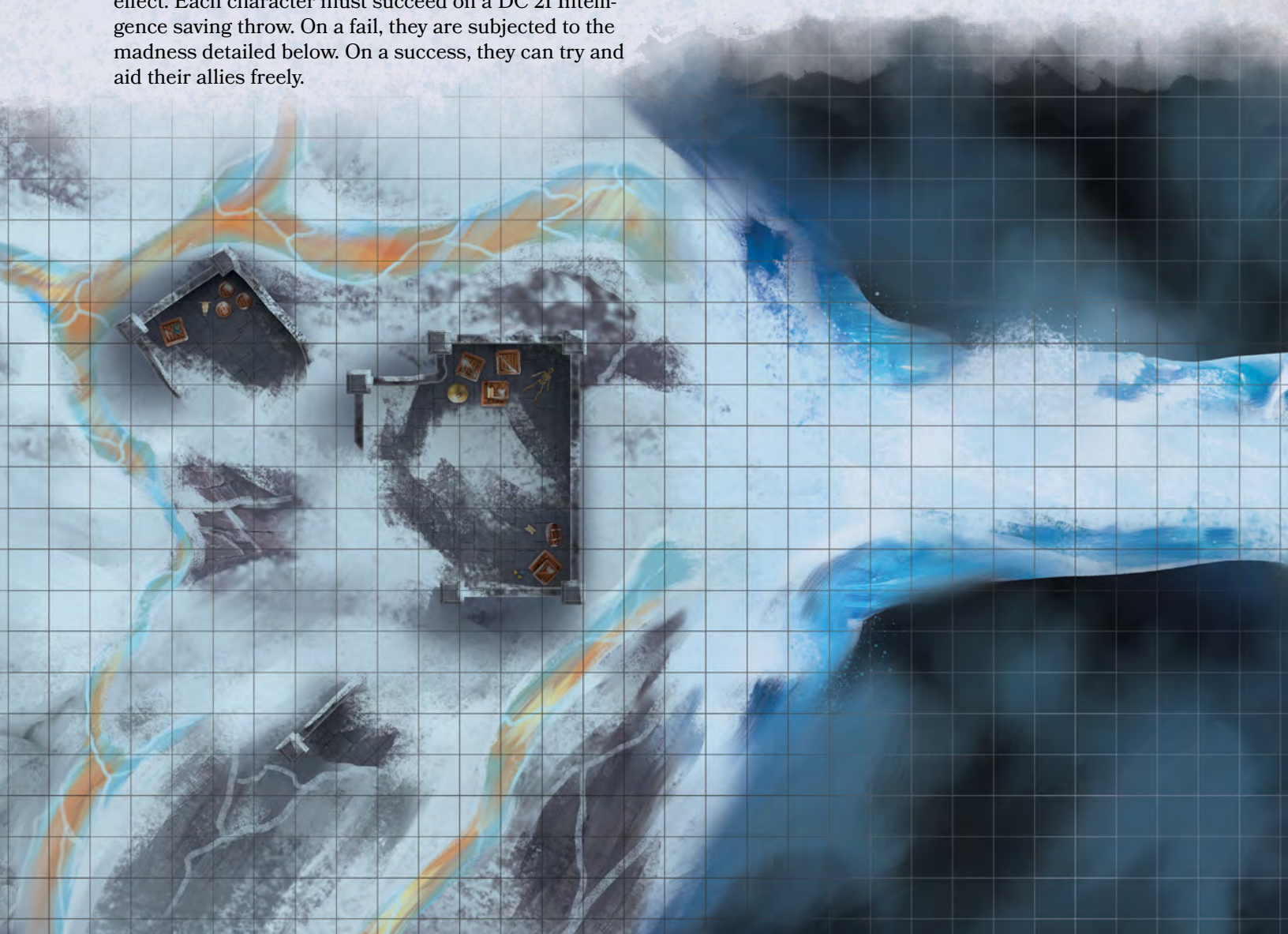
Ruins. As the characters make their way toward the ruins, they are each targeted by an individual magic effect. Each character must succeed on a DC 21 Intelligence saving throw. On a fail, they are subjected to the madness detailed below. On a success, they can try and aid their allies freely.

Madness. A creature that fails the initial Intelligence saving throw starts seeing things. The ruins take the form of a place they are terrified of, the items within becoming mementos of things they regret or fear, and they see figures that appear real to them but are in fact illusions.

A character afflicted in this way must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw at the start of each of its turns. On a failure, they gain a level of madness that can only be cured by healing magic of 5th level or higher. The madness might cause them to attack an ally (believing them to be a foe), to bury themselves in the snow in order to hide from their past, or take other harmful actions.

A character that succeeds on the Wisdom saving throw still sees the maddening images but doesn’t gain a level of madness. If a character reaches three levels of madness, they become incurably insane and are doomed to fail the challenge.

The GM should work closely with the players here to describe exactly what it is their characters are most afraid of – share the cognitive and creative load with the players by asking them to describe what their characters see, and what it is about those things that scare them the most.



PALACE OF THE SPECULATOR

When the characters reach this challenge, read or paraphrase the following:

On the far side of a chasm, spanned by a broad bridge, is a magnificently malignant palace sculpted from infernal ice. Its facade is covered with effigies of mortals being tortured by devils, and being exposed to the most horrific of scenes. Their faces are contorted and twisted with the horror they experience, sending shudders down your spines. In the center of a broad colonnade is the entrance to this hideously beautiful structure: a pair of ice doors that resemble The Speculators face that swing open as you approach.

Within the palace is a throne room in which The Speculator is reposed. “Well, well, well. I must congratulate those of you who’ve made it this far. You’ve stood the test of eight layers of hell. Truly, I am impressed. You are the first to make it this far. This final challenge might be somewhat harder I’m afraid.”

The Speculator rolls out an enormous scroll - an infernal contract of sorts. An initial scan of the document seems to sign over your souls to The Speculator, no matter what the results of the challenge. “Work your way out of that one.” The Speculator chuckles.

In order to overcome the ninth challenge, reflecting the hierarchy of the ninth layer of hell, and all its precursors, the characters must find a flaw in the contract, all while attempting to fend off the biting remarks of The Speculator as they do so.

The Contract. In order to ‘defeat’ the contract, the characters must succeed at a number of skill checks. Each of the checks has a very hard difficulty, but they can be repeated. The consequences of failing the checks are detailed alongside them. The checks must be accomplished in the following order:

DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) Check. The character works to actually decipher precisely what the contract says. Although it initially appears the character’s souls are doomed, it seems that there might be some loophole in one of the subclauses.

On a failed check, the words seem to twist and warp the character’s mind. They gain a level of madness that might see them try to fight their allies, or even take on The Speculator (**pit fiend**) – a fight they will likely lose.

DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) Check. The character needs to press the case with The Speculator itself, trying to see if the archdevil might accidentally reveal the flaw in the contract.

On a failed check, The Speculator sees what the character is trying to do and revokes their ability to do such a thing again by turning their eyes, ears, and tongue to ash. The character is blinded, deafened, and cannot speak.

DC 20 Intelligence (History) Check. The character must recall the exact rules of the hells in order to see if the faulty clause does indeed contradict them.

On a failed check, the character accidentally recalls an infernal binding clause. Searing chains appear from nowhere and bind the character. The character is grappled and restrained and takes 28 (8d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Performance) Check. Once the flawed clause has been identified and the contract exposed as invalid, the character must actually present the case to The Speculator.

On a failed check, they can’t articulate the case correctly, and their soul is forfeit to The Speculator. They suffer the same fate as if they had failed the challenge – their bodies are turned to ash by a searing beam of infernal flame from The Speculator’s crown, and they emerge from the pile of ashes as a lesser devil.

CONCLUSION

Hopefully, the characters are able to overcome the nine challenges of the infernal gauntlet set out by The Speculator, and retain possession of their souls. During this process, they would likely have had to confront various aspects of their own personalities that might scare them, or at least have a lasting effect on their personalities. They will have had to face their weaknesses and expose their worse fears and regrets.

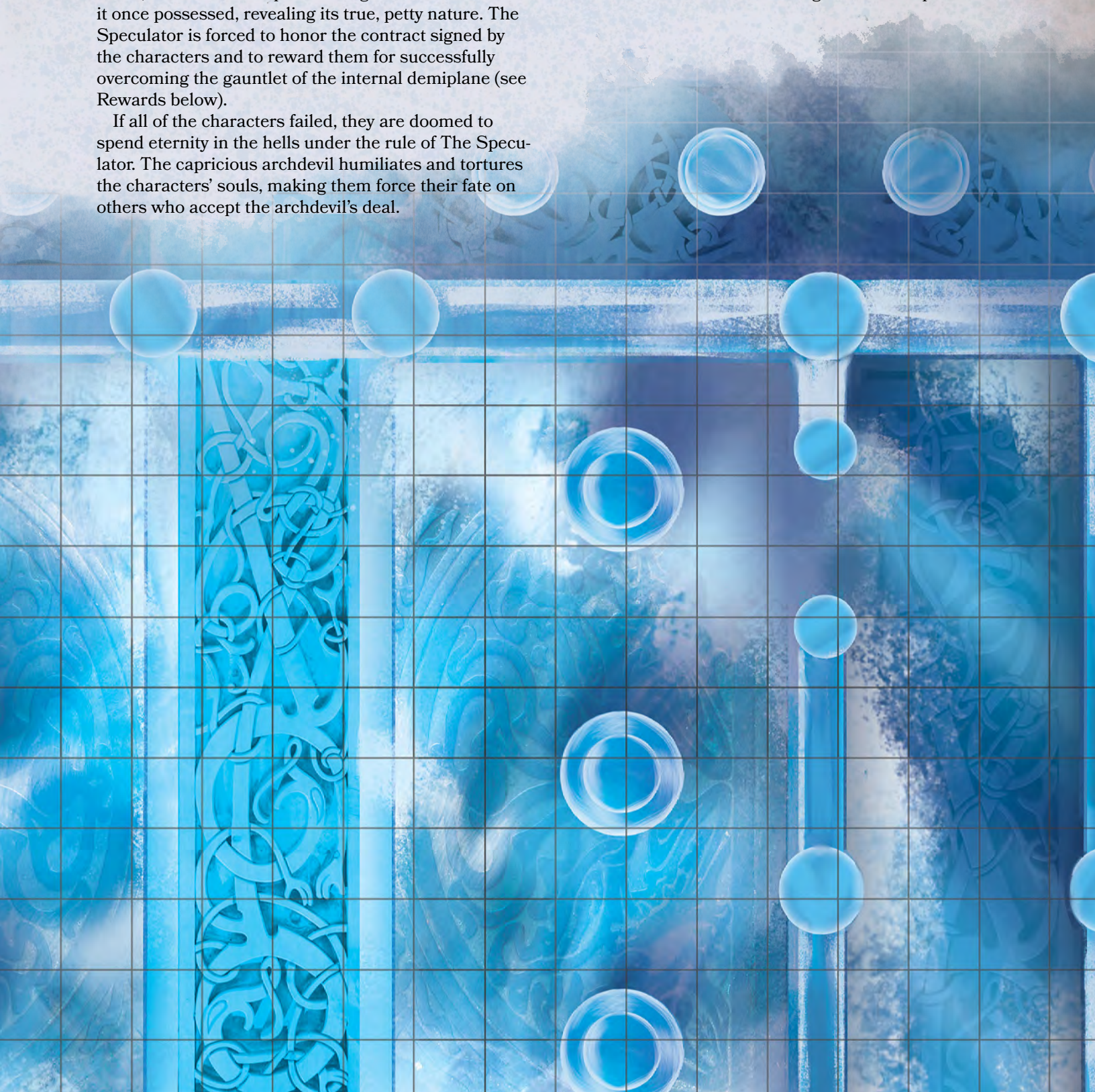
If successful the characters have outwitted The Speculator, who flies into a petulant rage and loses all charm it once possessed, revealing its true, petty nature. The Speculator is forced to honor the contract signed by the characters and to reward them for successfully overcoming the gauntlet of the internal demiplane (see Rewards below).

If all of the characters failed, they are doomed to spend eternity in the hells under the rule of The Speculator. The capricious archdevil humiliates and tortures the characters' souls, making them force their fate on others who accept the archdevil's deal.

REWARDS

If the characters succeed, they are able to claim one reward each. This reward could take the form of a powerful infernal boon, a mercenary contract giving them command over infernal warriors, a very rare magic item, or a vast sum of wealth. The Speculator despises handing over its rewards and might send their devils after the characters in the future to try and reclaim what they fairly earned.

Characters may also have secured the *spear of Tartarus* from the ice devil during The Pit subquest.

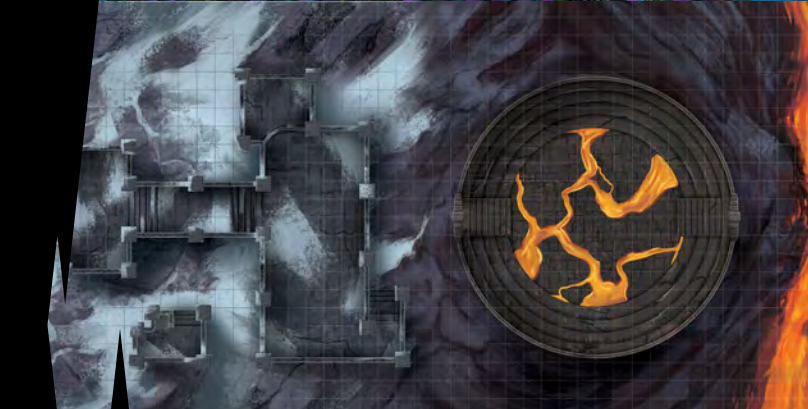


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