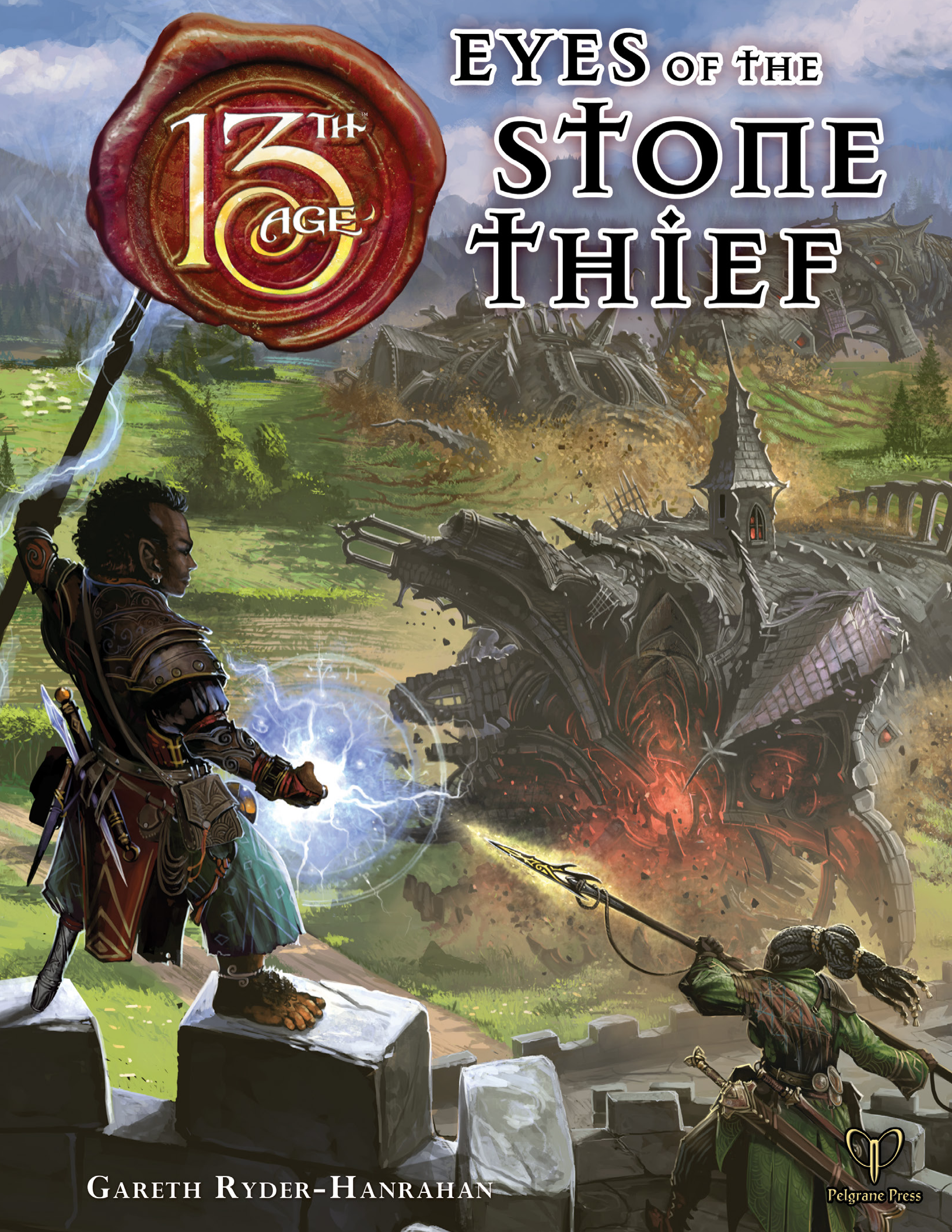

13TH AGE
EYES OF THE STONE THIEF
GARETH RYDER-HANRAHAN
Pelgrane Press



EYES OF THE STONE THIEF

A *13TH AGE* ADVENTURE

BY **GARETH RYDER-HANRAHAN**

Pelgrane Press

13TH AGE IS A FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAME BY
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Introduction

Dungeons are where we started gaming, and they still have a powerful hold on our imagination. Roleplaying games have evolved and changed since Gygax and Arneson sent bunches of hirelings to die horribly underground, but we still return to the dungeon's door time and again. Perhaps the dungeon appeals to some primal urge, to recapitulate tales of journeys into the underworld with Inanna or Orpheus. Or maybe it's just fun to pit wits and dice against a labyrinth of monsters and traps.

In the world of *13th Age*, there are living dungeons, chaotic spasms of hate-filled architecture that swim up from the depths and erupt onto the surface, their corridors and chambers spreading out like a cancer beneath the ground. Most living dungeons rise up and become permanent features of the world, or get killed by adventurers before they can establish themselves.

But there's one living dungeon out there that's different, one that's unique. It doesn't claw its way blindly to the surface, to survive or perish as fate dictates. This dungeon is awake, aware, and cunning like some wild beast made of stone and iron.

It's called the Stone Thief.

And it's going to destroy people and things you love until you hate it too.

And then one or the other of you will have to die.

The Stone Thief & Its Lair

The living dungeon is sometimes called the Lair of the Stone Thief. The eponymous Stone Thief is the animating spirit of the dungeon. At the start of the campaign, this intelligence is blind and cannot communicate with the adventurers who trespass in its domain. Depending on how things turn out, the dungeon may reacquire its stolen Eyes and take charge, or get mutated into an all-consuming weapon of mass destruction, or come under the control of rivals of the player characters.

Using this Book

We designed this campaign to start with PCs who are nearing the end of level 4, and to bring them up to the start of level 8, but we don't expect the player characters to spend all four levels buried in some unending dungeon crawl. Instead, the Stone Thief is a recurring villain. The dungeon rises, the player characters go in, kick its stony ass, and drive it away—but then it comes back stronger and nastier. As the Lair of the Stone Thief can reconfigure its internal structure, no two visits to the dungeon are the same, but the player characters can still make progress and gain vital intelligence about the lower reaches with each expedition into the depths.

At the same time, the dungeon makes its own feints and attacks against the player characters. This dungeon eats places—castles, villages, neighborhoods, even natural surface features — and turns them into new dungeon levels. Over the course of the campaign, the dungeon goes after whatever the player characters cherish, then spits it back at them.

By the end of this campaign, your players will hate the dungeon just as much as it hates them.

Consider what you want the dungeon to be in your game.

The Dungeon as Central Villain: If you're running a highly focused game (and don't plan on continuing into the epic tier), then you can make the Stone Thief into the main bad guy of the whole campaign. If you go with this option, then your player characters' backstories and some of their one unique things should relate to the dungeon and why it has to be defeated.

The Dungeon as Major Plot: The dungeon can be a major plotline, or even *the* major plotline in the champion tier phase of your campaign. The Stone Thief isn't a static location—its attacks change the world. If the big question of your campaign is "can the player characters save the Empire from collapse?" then the dungeon can play into that story as one of several apocalyptic threats that the characters must thwart.

The Dungeon as Side Quest: We're pushing the idea of the player characters being drawn into a bloody vengeful quest to slay the dungeon, because that's fun. However, you can also dip in and out of the material in this book, scrapping it for parts or just using the level-appropriate bits of the Stone Thief as a one-shot.

Treasure, Madness & Revenge

What drives player characters to risk their lives in dark, hate-wrought labyrinths beneath the earth? Greed for treasure is a strong motive, and there is certainly gold aplenty to be found in those lightless depths. Treasure, though, only works once—*loot and get out*, that's the tomb robber's motto. In this campaign, the player characters will be returning to the same dungeon several times, so you need something richer and deeper than mere greed.

Revenge. That's the key. The dungeon must be a hated enemy of the player characters, a worthy foe that they'll want to hunt down and smash. Give the players reasons to hate it.

During Character Generation

If the hunt for the dungeon is going to dominate your campaign, then put it center stage from the beginning. As part of character generation, ask each player why they want to destroy the Lair of the Stone Thief. For example:

- How did the dungeon hurt you in the past?
- Describe the day the dungeon devoured your home?
- Who do you love, and why are they now imprisoned in the dungeon's depths?
- What is the ancestral oath you inherited, handed down from mother to daughter through countless ages?
- Who revealed your cosmic destiny, telling you that your fate and that of the dungeon are intertwined, and one must kill the other?
- Some denizen of the dungeon wronged you in the past, and now you pursue that quarry into the dungeon's black maw. Who was it and why?

Even if a character picks a higher goal, such as saving the world from the dungeon's depredations, or a noble quest (*"the dungeon swallowed a shrine, and I must recover the holy cup of healing"*), then consider giving that adventurer an added reason for revenge later on.

In Play

The Stone Thief can appear anywhere in the world. It rises up, gobbles buildings, and then sinks back down. So, it's going to go after whatever the player characters' love. Any location or person important to the adventurers is a prime target for the dungeon's predations.

- Your old wizard mentor and his tower?
- The tombs of your ancestors?
- That castle you just conquered and claimed as your own?
- The little village where you grew up?
- The mansion where you keep all your stuff?
- The magical grove with the healing fountain that's the only cure for your lover's sickness?

All are targets. Make the player characters watch in horror as whatever they love gets dragged into the maw of the earth. If the player characters seek something, take it away. If they build something or adopt something, take it away. Just as they raid the dungeon's depths, have the dungeon raid the surface world. Reward players who become obsessed with stopping the dungeon.

Of course, pick your targets carefully. You're unlikely to have to go after *all* the player characters individually. If Krag the Dwarf is already enthusiastic about smashing the Stone Thief, then you don't need to send the dungeon off to eat his ancestral halls. Instead, have the dungeon swallow the enchanted cavern where Krag's buddy Wu Jiang communes with the spirits. You can also use the dungeon as a threat. Later in the campaign, the characters may gain the ability to track the Stone Thief's movements. What if they see the dungeon heading toward somewhere important to them?

Icons

A living dungeon as nefarious and intrusive as the Stone Thief is of interest to all the icons. Indeed, some of them are already engaged in a scheme to gain control of the dungeon (see *The Witch of Marblehall* on page 240 for instance), but any icon can send the player characters to battle the Stone Thief.



Archmage: The Stone Thief is ages old. It preyed upon the great cities of lost civilizations, and swallowed up secrets that are now lost to the surface world. Somewhere inside that magpie labyrinth of stolen ruins lie books of lore and arcane grimoires from the elder days. There were other Archmages in the past, after all, and the current inheritor of their position does not know everything they did. There were Archmages who broke their oaths and experimented with forbidden magic, and those secrets could slumber within the Stone Thief. He even fears that the Stone Thief is the product of one such experiment.

Some say that the reason the Archmage lives on a floating city is because he fears to set foot on the treacherous ground. One never knows what's lurking below...



Crusader: Living dungeons gnaw their way up from Hell, or so they say. The Crusader isn't taking any chances. The Stone Thief needs to be killed before it turns into a fortified hellhole, or something worse. Of course, others have tried and failed to kill the dungeon in the past. So, the first step is to learn more about it. Step two, the Crusader suspects, involves luring it with a prize the Stone Thief cannot resist. If a city has to be sacrificed to stop the dungeon, so be it!



Diabolist: The Diabolist collects monsters and horror—maybe for her own amusement, maybe to keep them away from the rest of the world. The Stone Thief would be the crowning glory of her zoo of nightmares. She wants the dungeon's heart gifted to her on a velvet pillow, so she can bind the living dungeon to her will. The thing is, the dungeon's heart is guarded by demons, and the best way to get past a gauntlet of demon guardians is to have the Diabolist on your side.



Dwarf King: The dwarves know the Stone Thief of old. Stone Thief? Feh! Call her by her true name, *Makh Miz Adaor*, She Who Undermines. Call her *Makh Adaz Akor*, The Howling Pit. Call her *Khazar Vuk Varag*, Oldest of Hatreds. Long, long before the Stone Thief broke through the underworld to the surface, she was a bane of the dwarves in the deep. (The dwarves always refer to the dungeon as 'she'.)

You think you hate the Stone Thief? The Dwarf King hates her more. Kill her before his own obsession makes him do something… unwise.



Elf Queen: Unlike the other icons, the Elf Queen bears little antipathy toward the Stone Thief. It has rarely swallowed up any of the elven woods or interfered with her magical works. The dungeon is wary of one as powerful as the Queen.

However, the dark elves who dwell in the caverns beneath the woods have their own plans for the Stone Thief. They desire to use it as a weapon against their foes. They cannot capture the dungeon without the Elf Queen's help, but the shifting tides of politics within the Court of Stars means that even the Queen must sometimes bow to pressure and do that which is distasteful to her. She would only consent to bind the Stone Thief in a web of enchantment if she had no other choice, and her dark elf courtiers intend to force her hand.



Emperor: For the Emperor, the threat posed by the Stone Thief is clear. All living dungeons are a danger to civilization, but especially the Stone Thief. The growing cities of humanity draw the dungeon like fat sheep draw wolves. It is the Emperor's duty to see that the Stone Thief is destroyed.

Of course, previous Emperors said just that, and they failed. There are oracles and mad prophets who claim that the Stone Thief is the grave of kingdom, and that it shall swallow even the high throne of the Dragon Emperor before it meets its end. Twelve ages have passed, twelve great civilizations crumbled down and were swallowed by the earth. Why should the Empire be any different?



Great Gold Wyrm: The Wyrm remembers the Stone Thief, and what it took from him when the world was young.

What Was Stolen?

In my campaign, the Stone Thief stole part of the Golden Citadel after its destruction, creeping in like a jackal to prey on the ruins.

Kieran Turley came up with the brilliant idea that the dungeon stole the Great Gold Wyrm's treasure hoard. The Wyrm may be a semi-divine celestial paladin, but he's still a dragon, and he still dreams of lying on a bed of gold. Maybe that bed of gold could be a connection so the mortal world, so the Wyrm can find his way back to the lands of the living?



High Druid: If, as some claim, the Stone Thief is the harbinger of ruin and the destroyer of cities, it could become a predator to curb the encroachment of civilization. The dungeon would have to be properly tamed first, of course—the High Druid would never loose such an indiscriminate beast unless provoked. Evil, though, is a word civilization invented. Wild nature knows nothing of evil or good, only survival and growth. Even a Stone Thief may be put to use.

Gamemaster

As the chart on page 27 makes clear, the High Druid is the icon with the fewest connections to the dungeon, which makes sense as she's the most recently arrived icon. Any connections she makes will be defined in play through the campaign.



Lich King: The One-Eyed King's former citadel on Omen is now overrun with a mad profusion of living dungeons, which blindly swell up from the underworld and spill out onto the island. Indeed, Omen cannot contain all the dungeons that crawl there, and at times whole labyrinths are forced over the cliffs and calve like glaciers into the waters of the Midland Sea.

The Lich King has no power in Omen. The treasures he accumulated in his reign as the Wizard King are denied to him, left buried beneath that writhing pit of crazed killer architecture. If he could recover those treasures, though, then he could reclaim his lost empire.

And what better tool to recover treasures from a pit of living dungeons than a Stone Thief?



Orc Lord: If there's one thing the Orc Lord knows, it's weapons. The Stone Thief is a scavenger, an opportunist, not a warrior. It could, though, be forged into a weapon, or even a machine of war. Imagine a siege engine the size of a dungeon, one that swims beneath the walls of even the greatest city or fortress, and devours it from within! The thought of such power fires the hot blood of the Orc Lord. All he needs to do is claim the Stone Thief and make it into that weapon…

He's already made one attempt to conquer the dungeon—he sent his once-trusted lieutenant, the orc warlord Fangrot, to hunt the Stone Thief. Fangrot failed (see page 187), but perhaps a player character can succeed in his place.



Priestess: The other icons fear or covet the Stone Thief. Only the Priestess knows its pain.

Most living dungeons are mad idiots. They writhe and grow like a fungal bloom on a corpse, swallowing up whatever terrain they encounter. They are mindless monsters. The Stone Thief is something else—it has a mind, however warped. It has a soul, however corrupt and bitter.

Can a dungeon be redeemed?



Prince of Shadows: Oh, the Prince and the dungeon are old enemies. It was the Prince who stole the Stone Thief's Eyes long ago, blinding it. In certain taverns and markets in Shadow Port, where they deal in things that should never see the light of day, the brokers whisper that the Stone Thief sought to find and consume the Prince's most secret sanctum. What is the connection between one thief and the other?



The Three: The Stone Thief has swallowed many monsters, lair and all, to populate its corridors. The Three have their own monstrous allies and minions. Little wonder, then, that dungeon and dragon circle one another warily, each looking for an advantage over the other.

The Blue has a special interest in the dungeon. She rules the ruined city of Drakkenhall. There are many buildings there that could be meat for the living dungeon. The Stone Thief could grow strong by feeding on the city, strong enough to become a potent weapon against the Blue's foes.

Some Unique Things

- I am the only survivor of a village that got eaten by the Stone Thief.
- I alone can translate the language written in mysterious onyx ruins found throughout the Empire.
- It is my destiny to save the world.
- I'm the best in the world at squeezing through tiny gaps.
- I'm the living child of the living dungeon.
- I'm the only one ever to escape from Dungeon Town—and then return to the dungeon.
- I'm the rightful heir to an Eye of the Stone Thief.
- I was attacked by undead who flayed me and stole my skin. They left me for dead, but I survived. Now I want my skin back!
- The Orc Lord trained me to be the perfect assassin. I rebelled.
- I'm an agent of a secret order of dwarven dungeon hunters.
- I'm the avatar of a city. My skin is a map of its streets, and the Stone Thief left me with a wound that will not heal when it stole from my home.
- I have a pet rock, and it taught me to speak its language. It guides me still.
- I've got a really nice castle. Shame if anything happened to it.

PLAYING THE CAMPAIGN

We've written enough adventures and even long-form campaigns to know that it's foolhardy to assume that we can predict how your games will go, even in a constrained environment like a dungeon. If you look at most published adventures, they have lots of details in the early sections (partly because it's good to set the scene, but mainly because the designer knows the players haven't had a chance to go off track yet), but get fuzzier as they go on, relying on the GM to drag the players back to the main plot. Some adventures include natural chokepoints to make things predictable again, so you'll see lines like *"no matter how the players obtain the map, it leads them to the desert of such-and-such."*

So, when we say *"here's a likely sequence of events in the campaign"*, it's even more likely that your campaign will look absolutely nothing like that, and that's fine. Consider this an illustration of how the campaign can go.

The adventurers are sent to visit a servant of an icon one or more of them have a relationship with, only to find the servant's home village is under attack from below in **The Theft** (page 343). They charge into the dungeon on their **first expedition,** passing through the **Maw** and the **Gauntlet** to reach the **Gizzard**, where they have a chance to rescue their ally. They level up from 4th to 5th.

They do some research, and discover they need **The Stone Thief's Eye**. When they go to get it, they run into **the Opposition**. When they reach the hiding place of the Eye, the dungeon rises again, so it's time for a **second expedition**. This time, they pass through **The Gauntlet**, the **Gizzard,** and a region based on the stolen village before getting lost in **the Grove** as the dungeon starts to submerge. They find sanctuary in **Dungeon Town**, rest up, then escape via the **Sunken Sea.** They level up from 5th to 6th.

They visit the **Inverse Observatory** to learn the dungeon's next target, and discover the Stone Thief's attacking somewhere important to them. Teleporting back down to the surface, they battle their way down through the dungeon via the **Maw** and the **Gizzard** to the **Ossuary** and the **Pit of Undigested Ages**, and even manage to slay the lord of **Deep Keep**, but it's too late—the dungeon flees from them, sinking back into the earth, and they have to escape or be crushed. Escaping earns them level 7.

When they decide that they need a way to force the dungeon to stay on the surface, they start **Preparing a Trap.** Meanwhile, the Stone Thief makes its own preparations for the final confrontation by recruiting a **Giant Monster.**

The Stone Thief takes the lure and is caught in the adventurers' trap. It cannot sink until it breaks free, so they have a chance to launch one final expedition into the depths. They race through the **Gauntlet**, through the ruins of **Deep Keep** and down the **Maddening Stair**, where they encounter the **Giant Monster**. Defeating it, they pass through the fabled **Onyx Catacombs** before they finally reach the **Heart of the Stone Thief**... If they survive, they hit level 8 and the epic tier.

Note this route through the campaign skips some subplots entirely—the characters never deal with the Witch of Marblehall or visit the Koru behemoths. Similarly, some portions of the dungeon only get delved once, but other levels—notably the Gauntlet—are encountered several times. Repeated visits to the same section of the dungeon do not mean that the characters face the same dangers every time. The Gauntlet, for example, gets nastier and tougher after each battle, so the players will learn to dread the sight of blood-stained flagstones and the sound of distant machinery.

Full Heal-Ups, Leveling Rate & Dungeon Crawls

The suggested leveling rate in *13th Age* is one level every four full heal-ups, which equates to around once every sixteen battles. That's fine when the characters have only a few fights per adventure, and there's plenty of running around, talking to NPCs and general roleplaying in between smashing skulls. In a dungeon, though, the gaps between fights can be as short as the distance between one room and the next, and if you stick to that leveling rate (and your players are the thorough sort who clear dungeon levels of everything bigger than a fiendish dire cockroach), the characters could race through the levels too quickly.

For this campaign, try giving them one level per expedition into the dungeon. That reinforces the centrality of the dungeon to the campaign, and gives them a real sense of accomplishment when they climb out of the pit. Give incremental advances when needed to boost the group's strength or mark notable victories.

As for full heal-ups, they still happen once every four battles or so. Be stingy with the dramatic full heal-ups where the characters briefly pause and get to regain their recoveries and expended powers in thirty seconds of rest (although crossing from one level of the dungeon to another is usually worth a heal-up). Make the characters hunt for safe places to hide, and make allies in the dungeon valuable by denying the adventurers easy access to heal-ups away from safe places. Throw some wandering monsters at them if they take a heal-up without first securing the immediate area.

STRUCTURING YOUR CAMPAIGN

Alternate between expeditions into the dungeon, surface quests (page 289), and your own campaign material. Use Enemy Actions (page 343) to drag the focus of the game back to the dungeon as appropriate. Too much time spent in the dungeon, and you risk neglecting your players' one unique things and personal plotlines (unless they relate to the Stone Thief, in which case, dungeon crawl your heart out). Too little time, and the Stone Thief plot will lose momentum.

In playtesting, the first expedition into the dungeon was nearly always a short one, with the aim of stopping the Stone Thief from stealing something. The PCs head through the Maw down to the Gizzard, possibly detouring through some other levels on their way. They smash the Gizzard, and leave the dungeon when it vomits them out.

Subsequent expeditions delve deeper into the dungeon. It's great fun to have the dungeon capture the PCs at least once, and make them find their way to a sanctuary like Dungeon Town or one of the hiding places in the Grove. Try to ensure that the PCs pick up two or three leads to more surface quests each time they go delving. The protean nature of the dungeon means that every clue is a floating clue, so drop plot hooks in the PCs' path as needed. If they haven't learned about the Inverse Observatory yet, for example, then you can stick the Blind Spire (page 145) anywhere in the dungeon.

By the third or fourth expedition, the Stone Thief becomes wary of the PCs. Finding ways to stop the submergence die from cutting their expeditions short becomes a priority. It's a nice ego boost to the players when the dungeon runs away from them in fear—and then you've got justification for the dungeon turning around and hurting them by stealing what they care about.

When the PCs approach 7th level, start lining things up for a final confrontation with the dungeon. If you haven't already, suggest to the players (possibly through *Trials and Councils,* page 339) that they need to find a way to deal with the dungeon permanently. At the same time, think about what the dungeon's ultimate threat might be. Enemy actions like *The City Devoured* or *Apotheosis* (page 349) are threats on the right scale, but some other endgame might suit your campaign better, especially if you're also thinking about where the game will go in the epic tier.

THE DUNGEON & YOUR CAMPAIGN

The Stone Thief campaign is designed…

Actually, ignore that. Channel the spirit of the dungeon. When the Stone Thief sees a big, impressive, interesting-looking castle, it steals it, rips it apart, digests it, and makes it part of itself.

Do the same with this book.

(Apart from the stealing part.)

The most important parts of your campaign aren't in this book —they're on the players' character sheets, and in your own notes and ideas. Use the material in this book in conjunction with your players' one unique things, backgrounds, and icon relationships, and with your own adventures. In between surface quests and expeditions into the dungeon, run your own scenarios. (You'll soon find unexpected connections and synergy bonuses between your adventures and the material in this book!)

Take the elements presented here, mix them up, and make them part of your campaign. Don't ignore your players' one unique things or their ongoing plots—bring the dungeon to them instead. There are lots of ways to use the concept of a vengeful, sneaky living dungeon in a campaign. Some sample plots are listed below—as always, look at the icons your players choose and use them as a guide when designing adventures.

The Stone Thief is effectively a giant crawling plot device that can be plugged into your own campaign. Ignore the fact that it's a living dungeon for a moment, and think of it as a doomsday weapon, or a way to overcome magical defenses, or a way to sow chaos and confusion across the land. How might the big villains of your campaign use such a powerful device? How might such plans threaten the adventurers?

The Orc Lord's Invasion

This plot is so obvious, it's baked right into the campaign, but you could bring it to the foreground if your PCs have lots of Orc Lord negative relationships. The Orc Lord wants to capture the Stone Thief to use it as a living siege engine/invasion flotilla. He sent Fangrot to find a way to control the dungeon some years ago, but his former lieutenant vanished. Early in the campaign, the PCs battle orc bands that are also looking for the dungeon. When they make it inside the Stone Thief, they learn about Fangrot's betrayal—maybe they can trick Fangrot's forces into fighting those of the Orc Lord.

The Lich King's Conspiracy

The Lich King doesn't want to destroy the Empire—he wants to rule it once more. In this scheme, the Lich King uses the dungeon to weaken and divide the Seven Cities. He might, for example, send the Stone Thief to consume Vigil so he can move freely, or to Horizon to destroy some of the magic wards keeping demons at bay. He also weakens the defenses of Concord, leaving it vulnerable to secret attacks by Drakkenhall, or sets the Dwarf King and the Emperor at odds. His ultimate goal is to plunge the Empire into chaos, so the people reject the rule of the Emperor and beg the Lich King to once again rule them with a bony fist.

The twist here is that the Stone Thief can actually become a threat to the whole Empire if it approaches *Apotheosis* (page 349). The Lich King's efforts to create a false danger to the Empire may inadvertently give the Cult of the Devourer (page 302) the power they need to make a very real apocalypse.

Rescuing the Great Gold Wyrm

The antagonists don't need to be villains. What if some paladins loyal to the Great Gold Wyrm tried to seize control of the dungeon so that they could delve into the Abyss to rescue him? Of course, the Stone Thief would be destroyed if they tried to brave the infernal realms too soon. They must feed the dungeon, strengthen it, and prepare it for the fiery redemptive trials that await it. A few sacrifices on the surface are nothing compared to the sacrifices the Wyrm has already made on the Empire's behalf!

GAMEMASTER

My playtest campaign started out with all the PCs working as holy troubleshooters in the city of Santa Cora under the patronage of the Priestess. Their adventurer-tier adventures all revolved around weird cults, elven intrigues, and the tension between different faiths and the secular authorities. Dungeons and quests hardly ever figured in those early games. My goal there was to make Santa Cora feel like home to the players, so that when the Stone Thief started stealing bits of it, the players *cared*.

I also connected their one unique things to the dungeon. The dwarf ranger was the last survivor of a secret order of dwarf rangers, so I made them dungeon hunters who tracked down and killed living dungeons. The elf wizard was destined to be the 'Avatar of a New God,' so the Cult of the Devourer fixated on him and believed he held the key to apotheosis. The rogue was a spy for the Three, so I gave the Three an interest in capturing the dungeon (and set them up as the Witch of Marblehall's secret backers). By the time the dungeon actually showed up and ate the lighthouse of Vigil, exposing the city to attack by the Lich King's legions, it felt like a natural development of the campaign instead of an awkward attachment.

Factions & Allies

The Stone Thief overflows with monsters and is chock full of traps, but there's also space for intrigue and plotting. One of the charms of a megadungeon setting is dealing with different factions who each control a level or part of a level, and who can be allied with, plotted against, betrayed, undermined, and ultimately defeated by clever player characters.

The major factions are the Cult of the Devourer and the orcs of Deep Keep. The orcs are the first organized threat that the PCs meet in the dungeon, and they introduce the concept that the Stone Thief is a weapon that can be controlled as well as a destructive force of nature.

In the early stages of the campaign, the cult is a minor presence, encountered in the form of solitary lunatics (like **Cypriac**, on page 96), half-glimpsed shadowy figures, or rumors of darker powers. Later, the PCs discover that the cult is the best source of the rituals they'll need to bind or destroy the dungeon, and the cult's Secret Masters are the penultimate foe in the campaign.

See the *Who's Who* section (page 26) for more on the various factions and their relationships.

There are also lots of potential allies for the player characters in the dungeon. Most of these are only barely surviving in the dungeon themselves, but with the help of the player characters, they can establish themselves as significant powers in their own right. The allies most central to the campaign are the Provost of Dungeon Town (page 33), the Witch of Marblehall (page 34), and—as extremely unreliable allies—the Custodians (page 29), especially the Vizier and Gravekeeper.

Foreshadowing and Hinting

A great benefit of a campaign book this size—other than building upper body strength when you lift it—is that you've got plenty of advance warning of where the game might go. You know that the PCs will pass through the Pit of Undigested Ages, or visit the behemoth at some point in the course of the campaign, even if the path between the current game session and that future encounter is obscure. Encounters rise out of the possibility froth like mountains rearing out of the mist, and while the players fumble their way forward, you can drop hints and foreshadowings as appropriate.

For example, one of the encounters in the Pit of Undigested Ages revolves around a lost civilization of serpent people that predated the current Empire. Because you've been forewarned that your game will eventually end up there, you can drop in serpent-themed battles, items and other references earlier in the campaign, knowing that there'll eventually be a payoff. Better yet, you can do this without having to push the players too much, because the constrained nature of the dungeon setting funnels them toward that payoff. In a game where the PCs bounce around the Dragon Empire like kids in a sandbox, they might never follow the plot hook that leads to the lost serpent civilization. There's no escaping their fate in the dungeon.

STUCK?

If you're ever at a loss for what to do next, have the players roll their icon dice. Then take a look at Background Checks (page 308), pick one of the icons, see what information that icon can give the characters, and hand them a lead on a surface quest.

DUNGEONEERING

ICONS & THE DUNGEON

The influence of the icons extends everywhere, even into the depths of the underworld. Just because the player characters are deep in a trackless labyrinth doesn't mean they can't benefit—or suffer—from their relationships. Roll for icon story-guide results at the start of each session as normal. Even in a dungeon, there are plenty of ways to work the icons into the game's events.

Ruins & Relics: The adventurers find a ruin that the Stone Thief stole from the surface. This ruin was once important to an icon, and the character's relationship with the icon lets them find something hidden, or tap the ruin's latent power, or use it as a sanctuary, or recognize that there's something important there.

Some of the icons, like the Three or the Great Gold Wyrm, are many ages old. Others are the current holders of ancient and hallowed titles, like the Archmage, Emperor, Elf Queen, or Dwarf King. Any of these could have age-old ruins associated with them. For more recent icons, like the Crusader or the Priestess, remember that they have historical antecedents—the Priestess may be a new icon, but a temple dedicated to the Oracle might respond to one of her followers. (Anyway, the current age is plenty long enough for an icon to build a fortress, the Stone Thief to steal it, and the place to fall into ruin and get infested by monsters).

Finding Magic Items: The adventurers uncover a magic item associated with an icon. Only a PC who has a connection to that icon can wield that item.

Dungeon Denizens: Some of the dungeon denizens serve one particular icon or another. The orcs and humanoids of Deep Keep, for example, are definitely strongly connected to the Orc Lord, and the Lich King's malice haunts the crypts of the Ossuary. It's possible that a character might find an ally living in the dungeon—but it's much more likely they'll find an enemy. You can give boons to a character in the form of temporary inspiration. For example, the Crusader lends strength to the warrior's arm, so she gets, say, a bonus equivalent to an adventurer-tier rune for one fight against a demon.

Adventurers from the Surface: The player characters aren't the only people to brave the dungeon depths. They might run into another adventuring party, or a lone agent of some icon. Alternatively, if they're close to Dungeon Town, they could encounter some unfortunate who was dragged into the dungeon and needs rescuing. (This makes for an excellent obligation incurred by rolling a 5 with icon dice—the PCs get a benefit after they save the life of this potential ally from the dungeon's horrors.)

Flashbacks & Good Fortune: In a perilous dungeon like the Stone Thief, avoiding a potential threat can be much more valuable than any treasure. You can use icon boons to give hints and tips to a player, and then have the player decide how their relationship with that icon saved them in this instance. For example, say there's a concealed magical trap in a chamber. A servant of the Archmage might trace arcane runes in the air, illuminating the magical wards that trigger the trap. The Great Gold Wyrm or the Priestess might whisper a warning in the ear of their chosen champion, alerting him to the trap, while someone familiar with the ways of the Prince of Shadows or the Three might have seen a similar trap before in their patron's fortress.

Delayed Boons: Finally, you can always 'save up' icon results for later. This works especially well for hostile icons—the characters struggle out of the Stone Thief in the nick of time with some fabulous magic item, only to run straight into the Diabolist's forces. What was briefly theirs is now, once again, hers…



Traps & Obstacles

Traps in *13th Age* aren't intended to be stand-alone encounters. They're either there to whittle away at the adventurers' resources by eating up recoveries, or to make a battle more interesting—as in, it's much more interesting to fight a bunch of ghouls with paralyzing touches in a room filled with randomly swinging mechanical battleaxes that you can't dodge when paralyzed. Other obstacles work as barriers, either by blocking the characters from reaching a section of the dungeon or, more often, preventing them from retreating to safer ground.

Traps & the Escalation Die

Traps that are part of a battle usually make use of the escalation die as a pacing mechanism. For example, if a room starts filling with water, then when the escalation die reaches 1, the characters' boots get wet. At 3, short characters have to start swimming. At 4, everyone's floating, at 5, there's only a small gap between the ceiling and the water, and at 6, it's time to cast *water breathing*. In location descriptions, we use the following format.

Trap Description: What the trap looks like.
DC: The difficulty to find or disarm the trap.
Attack: If the trap makes attack rolls, here's its attack bonus and damage. Some traps get to add the escalation die to their attacks.
ED0: The trap's state before the fight begins, if any.
ED1: What happens when the escalation die increases to 1.
ED2: What happens when the escalation die increases to 2, and so on.

Some powers mess with the smooth progression of the escalation die, like the fighter's *combat mastery* power or the Quick to Fight champion-tier feat. If those come up, then you can either skip a particular trap effect or have two effects happen in one round. For example, if the characters are supposed to get shot by a hail of arrows at ED3, and the PCs jump right from ED2 to ED4, you can either have the hail of arrows happen at ED4 instead, or salute their use of powers and just skip the ED3 arrow-blast. To be honest, it won't come up often and your players probably won't notice one way or the other.

Survival & Exploration

13th Age isn't a game where the players track every iron ration and spent arrow, and if the characters are carrying ten-foot poles, it's because they've got the veteran dungeoneer background. Hunger and thirst are only an issue in unusual, adventure-dependent circumstances, like when the characters get trapped underground and have to fight some monster to reach a pool of water. Most of the time, logistics and supplies get hand-waved in favor of more action.

Story-guide Dungeon Generation

Have one or more PCs make icon relationship rolls. Each die rolled represents a corridor or room in this part of the dungeon. You don't need to use all the rolled dice, just the ones that spark something in you.

- **1s** a monster, trap or other hazard with no benefits
- **2s** a corridor, passageway, tunnel or other linear route
- **3s** a junction, intersection, tunnel fork, or hole in the wall
- **4s** empty or deserted rooms
- **5s** a monster or trap with a reward
- **6s** a room or location that's safe, beneficial, or interesting in some fashion

You can even draw inspiration from how the dice end up on the table—if there's a 2 touching a 5, then that's a corridor leading to a room where there's both a monster and a treasure of some sort.

You can use the icons involved as inspiration for the sort of buildings that once made up this part of the dungeon, and the type of monsters encountered, but don't be too beholden to that, or you'll end up with a very repetitive dungeon ("*another* dragon's lair? Thanks, Great Gold Wyrm.")

Treasure

You'll find treasure hoards and magic items throughout the dungeon. Going into dungeons, killing monsters, and taking their stuff is a time-honored tradition. That said, the *13th Age* rules mostly divorce treasure from power, so you won't break anything by giving more or less loot. As long as the PCs have a few healing potions and runes (easily provided through icon benefits), they can get by without gold. It's just fun to find heaping piles of treasure, and only the most heartless GM would deny his players that primal pleasure.

In fact, we recommend erring on the side of generosity. Give the PCs lots of money, but also give them things to spend it on. Let them build strongholds, buy property, and invest in magical laboratories. Ask a paladin or cleric if their religion expects them to tithe, and if so, who gets their 10%. Use icon complications as financial entanglements—*"the Diabolist's power helps you bind that demon—but one of her spies in Axis has a little problem and needs you to splash some money around in court to make him look like he's got impressively rich friends."*

Then, when the time comes for the Stone Thief to retaliate, you can hit the PCs right in the GP box on their character sheets.

Magic items are another matter. Treat the placement of the ones in this book as suggestions, nothing more. Move items around so everyone in the party gets appropriate gear at a reasonable rate, and add or remove items from treasure hoards as needed.

KILLER DUNGEONS

Killing player characters is both a time-honored tradition and a huge headache for the GM. It can blow holes in the story when the guy who seemed to be the hero gets killed by Random Orc #53, but nothing captures the thrill and uncertainly of interactive fiction like having your character's survival depend on the dice and your wits. Personally, having been the softest, most forgiving gamemaster for years, I've come to believe that the benefits of PC death outweigh the problems. I still don't kill characters that often, and I'll let them survive if it makes for a more interesting story, but it's never wholly off the table.

In this campaign, we want the players to hate and fear the Stone Thief, and one of the best ways to do that is to kill off a player character or two. Some of the battles in the dungeon are marked with Killer. These battles are especially—even unfairly—lethal. We've provided suggestions on toning down the lethality once you've got a few PC deaths on your conscience.

If you want the best of both worlds—PC deaths, but also keeping the original player character's stories going—there are several ways to bring player characters back from the dead.

- The dungeon consumes the dead character, turning the PC into a denizen. That means the PC is now a part of the dungeon. He can leave for a short time, but feels an irresistible compulsion to return. When the dungeon submerges and collapses in on itself, the walls close around the character, placing him in a state of suspended animation—he doesn't need to find a sanctuary, as the dungeon sustains him. Most importantly, the PC's life is now tied to that of the Stone Thief. If the party doesn't find a way of separating the dungeon from its denizens before they slay the Thief, then they'll also be killing their companion.
- The threat of the Stone Thief is so great that one of the icons intercedes to resurrect the slain player character. This resurrection comes at a cost—the character must dedicate their renewed life to defeating the Stone Thief.
- The dead player character wakes up in the Ossuary. The Flesh Tailor is a brilliant necromancer, and was able to bring the player character back from the dead. The character isn't *technically* undead, but is now a mix of living and reanimated tissue. Now, all the PC has to do is convince the Flesh Tailor to let him go.

FIGHTING THE LIVING DUNGEON

Swords are no good against stone. Spells may sunder rock, but even the mightiest destructive incantation is unlikely to destroy the Lair of the Stone Thief completely (at least, not without collateral damage that would be even worse than the dungeon's continued existence). To fight the dungeon, the characters must first learn how it works.

STEALING FROM THE SURFACE

The Stone Thief is, well, a thief. It grabs sections of the surface, drags them underground, and devours them. It then recycles structures and places from the surface into new parts of the dungeon. Say the dungeon consumes the settlement of Oldtown (no doubt because your player characters weren't there to stop it). The whole city slides into a gaping pit that opens beneath it. The buildings—and the people—slide down into this pit in a catastrophic avalanche, and are devoured by the dungeon. After gorging on the city, the dungeon sinks down into the surface to digest its meal.

Next time it rises, the dungeon is different. There's a whole new level made from bits of Oldtown. The arrangement of these scavenged places might not match their configuration on the surface, so adventurers find themselves walking through the gutted remains of a halfling burrow only to find one of the great arenas of Axis has replaced the feast-hall. The dungeon turns whatever it steals into a mixed-up, trap-filled, monster-haunted mockery.

As for the people who got swallowed—well, the dungeon uses every part of its prey. Corpses get turned into undead in the Ossuary; survivors may be driven insane and left to wander the halls as grisly warnings to future intruders, or else merged with monsters to create new horrific hybrids. A few lucky survivors might make it to the questionable refuge of Dungeon Town or another shelter.

Interrupting the Dungeon: The dungeon 'processes' swallowed material in a region called the Gizzard. As each structure gets pulled apart and assimilated into the Stone Thief's corpus, the dungeon becomes temporarily vulnerable. Its raw substance is exposed as it absorbs the new material. If an adventurer manages to wound the dungeon in this weak spot, the Stone Thief vomits up much of what it stole and cannot absorb any more until the wound is healed. See page 84 for what happens in such a situation.

THE SUBMERGED DUNGEON

When the dungeon sinks back into the underworld, it contracts. Rooms fold in on themselves. Corridors shrink, the walls crushing anything or anyone unlucky enough to be still trapped within. Some rooms get left behind, masonry sloughed off like a lizard sheds its skin.

The Stone Thief takes care of its own denizens and monsters. It magically protects some creatures that are part of the dungeon, preserving them even as the walls close around them. In some cases, the monster's lair remains intact while the rest of the dungeon collapses around it; in others, the dungeon entombs the monster, but keeps it alive in magical stasis as long as the dungeon remains submerged. In the chthonic theology of the Cult of the Devourer, being placed in stasis by the Stone Thief is a sign of great favor—the god-to-come has chosen to make you part of itself.

Those who are not considered denizens of the dungeon—like adventurers, or unlucky survivors of a region stolen by the Stone Thief—do not get the benefit of this magical protection. If you're in the dungeon when it submerges, then you're going to be crushed to death, or else trapped in a single room with a hungry monster for several weeks.

Warning Signs: The Stone Thief is stealthy, in as much as a titanic multi-level monster-filled dungeon can be called 'stealthy'. It cannot, however, slip away without any warning at all. Potential signs that herald submergence include:

- Earthquakes and tremors
- Doors slamming shut on their own
- A sense of static electricity in the air
- Monsters running away in search of a safe area
- Horns blowing wildly, far far below
- Magical lights and other spell effects flicking on and off for a moment

Sanctuaries: These are places in the dungeon that offer shelter from the collapse. By hiding in a sanctuary when the dungeon submerges, the adventurers can ride inside the Stone Thief until it returns to the surface and expands again.

The characters may also learn how to create their own sanctuaries by learning Shell-Shaper Charms (see *On the Back of the Behemoth*, page 318). In desperate straits, an icon benefit might point the player characters toward the nearest suitable sanctuary.

When To Submerge?

The threat of the dungeon sinking away puts a time limit on any explorations of the Lair of the Stone Thief. The PCs have to race through the levels before the dungeon dives back down. Rather than making this completely arbitrary, use a submergence die (or tokens, or some other visual representation—make sure you put it somewhere the players can see it, as long as they don't get it mixed up with the escalation die). Unlike the escalation die, the submergence die isn't necessarily a d6. Instead, the size of the die varies from a d4 to a d12. A smaller die might mean the characters caught the dungeon minutes before it departs, or the dungeon is eager to flee. A bigger die means the dungeon is gorging itself on a particularly succulent bit of the surface, or the characters were in place the moment it broke through the soil and they have plenty of time to get through.

As a guideline, use a d4 for the PCs' first expedition into the dungeon, a d6 for their second, a d8 for their third and subsequent trips, reserving the d10 for when the dungeon is gorging on a particularly choice place, and the D12 for when the characters know the dungeon's next target and get there ahead of it.

The submergence die starts at 0. Increase the submergence die by 1 when:

- The adventurers enter a new level of the dungeon.
- The adventurers kill a significant denizen of the dungeon, like the warlord of Deep Keep. Such bosses have their effect on the submergence die noted in their write-ups.
- The players roll lots of 5s on their icon relationship rolls.
- The players incur a campaign loss.
- There's only a few minutes to go in the gaming session, and you want to get them out of the dungeon so you can end at a logical stopping point.

When the submergence die reaches its maximum value, the dungeon starts to descend.

Effects of Sinking

When the dungeon starts to descend, the following events happen:

- The dungeon shakes. The deafening noise of stone tearing and grinding through stone assails the characters from every side.
- Doors, portcullises, and other portals slam shut throughout the dungeon. They can be forced open with brute force (Strength check, DC 15), unless they lead down to a lower level, in which case they are almost impossible to open (DC 30).
- Except in sanctuaries, the walls close in. The corridors and chamber constrict. Things that are part of the dungeon are not crushed; instead, they're absorbed into the walls. Other objects—anything that wasn't processed in the Gizzard—are crushed. The constriction starts at the lowest level of the dungeon and travels upward, so if the characters keep heading toward the surface, they can stay ahead of it and not get crushed to death. If they're delayed or blocked, then the clock really starts ticking—assume that if they spend six rounds trying to get past an obstacle, or the escalation die in a fight hits six, then the walls have constricted so much that all characters must begin making Dexterity checks (DC 25) each round to avoid being crushed for 2d20 damage until the leave the area.
- Some parts of the dungeon get left behind. The Stone Thief sometimes leaves rooms or even whole sublevels behind, like a lizard casts away its tail, leaving them entombed in a vestigial dungeon without any exits. If the inhabitants of these cast-off chambers are very, very lucky, they end up close to the surface, and they can tunnel their way out before they starve to death. Otherwise… well, let's draw a veil over *that* scenario.

We're Staying Put!

As most of the dungeon shuts down while it's submerged, it's very hard to do any exploring. The adventurers can still explore sanctuaries like Dungeon Town, Deep Keep, or Marblehall, but otherwise they're stuck until the dungeon surfaces and unfolds again. Encourage the players to run like hell the first time the dungeon starts submerging—they'll make it back to the surface just before the dungeon entrance snaps shut behind them.

Later in the campaign, when the characters get deeper into the dungeon, fleeing might not get the characters back to the surface. They'll still escape to a sanctuary, but they'll have to tag along as the dungeon swims through the earth for several days before it surfaces once more.

List of Sanctuaries by Level

Level	Sanctuaries
Maw	None
Gauntlet	The Belfry (page 67)
Gizzard	None
Ossuary	The Chapel (page 133)
Sunken Sea	Most of the sea-caves remain open, to avoid putting the water of the sea under excessive pressure
Grove	The Drow Caves (page 140), the Hag's Cottage (page 154)
Dungeon Town	The Wild Caves (page 94)
Deep Keep	The Keep (page 180)
Maddening Stair	An argument could be made for the Castle on the Edge (page 193)
Pit of Undigested Ages	None
Marblehall	Entire level
Onyx Catacombs	The entire level, other than the Catacombs themselves.
Heart of the Stone Thief	None.

Dungeon Ectoplasm

The Stone Thief cloaks itself in stolen buildings, but in certain places, the characters get to peek beneath the cloak and stab at the dungeon's vulnerable naked 'flesh'. The raw substance of the dungeon is called ectoplasm; it looks like a mass of writhing white worms or tendrils that sink and merge into the stone, scrabbling at cracks and imperfections as it searches for a way in. The ectoplasm disintegrates if cut off from the main body of the dungeon (although the Witch of Marblehall found a way to preserve it—see page 236).

The presence of dungeon ectoplasm is a sign that the PCs are entering a region that is still being absorbed by the Stone Thief.

Slaying the Dungeon

Finding a way to kill the Stone Thief is a major goal of the whole campaign. See *Slaying the Thief* on page 352 for possible methods; clues to those methods are salted throughout the dungeon and the surface quests associated with the campaign.

Not All Living Dungeons Are Like This!

Just so we're clear—the Stone Thief is an aberration, even by the standards of living dungeons. Living dungeons are magical malignancies—reality cancers that grow and writhe according to their own impossible version of physics. Each one is different. Some are literally living fleshy dungeons, where you walk down veins, batter down bony door-valves and hack at exposed monster glands. Others look like normal dungeons, but spontaneously conjure more rooms and corridors, generating new sublevels and monsters out of nothing (as if some divine hand reached down and treated the world like a scrap of graph paper).

The Stone Thief is exceptional in several ways. Other living dungeons swim straight to the surface, instead of sneaking from place to place through the underworld. Other living dungeons don't need to clothe themselves in stolen buildings. Perhaps the Stone Thief is so old—and it is exceptionally old for a living dungeon—that it lacks the generative power it once had, and must substitute stolen craftsmanship and ingenuity for its own ossified vitality.

Structure of the Dungeon

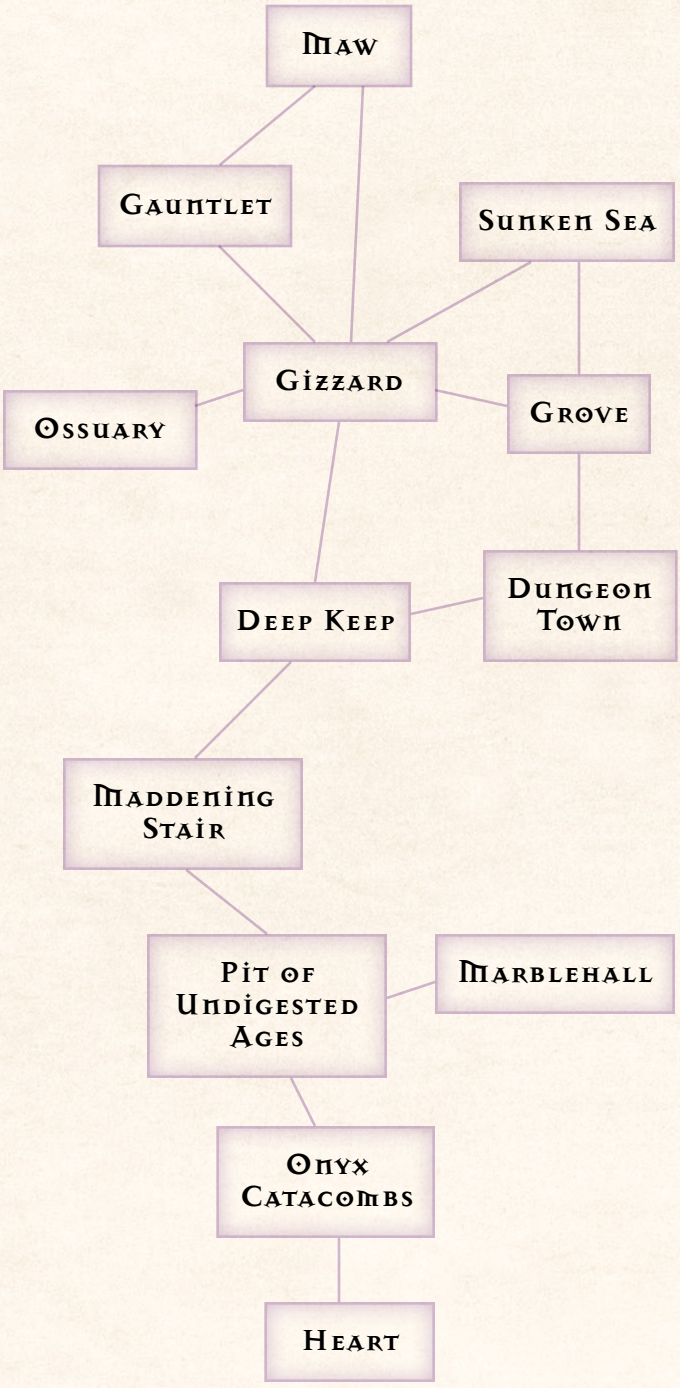
The Stone Thief is a living dungeon. It swims through the earth, rising up to swallow buildings and monster lairs to add to itself. Each time it breaches the surface, it unfolds, spitting out corridors and chambers and labyrinths beneath the earth and remaking itself anew. The components of the dungeon rarely change, but each time they are arranged in a new configuration.

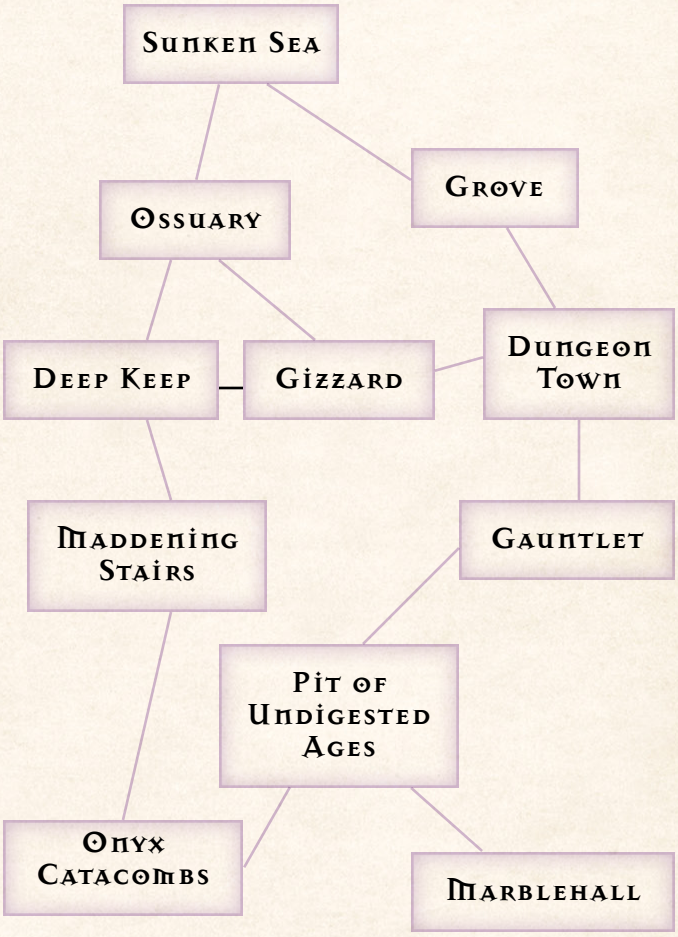
The dungeon is divided into thirteen major levels. One level, the Maw, is almost always at the surface. It's the mouth of the lair, the dungeon's primary entrance. The dungeon's Heart is always at the bottom, and it is rare for the Onyx Catacombs or the Maddening Stair to be encountered above Deep Keep. Marblehall is always found attached to the Pit of Undigested Ages.

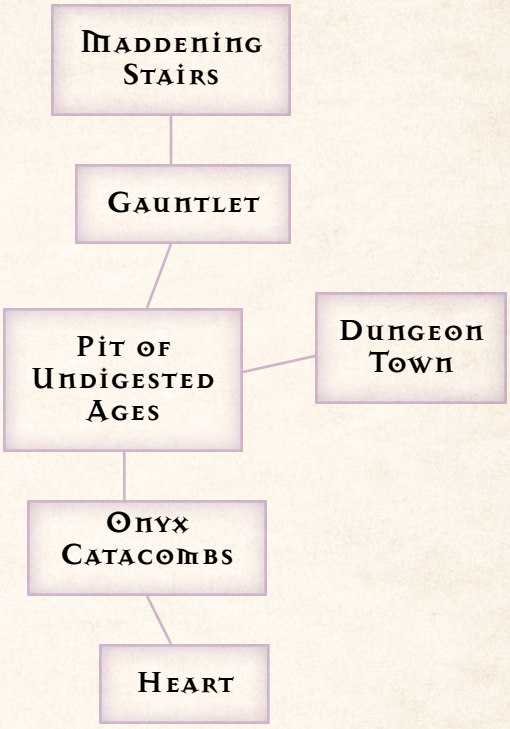
The eleven intervening levels, though, can be reshuffled and moved about. Sometimes, the door at the end of the Maw leads into the Gauntlet; sometimes, it leads to the Ossuary or to Deep Keep or to some other part of the dungeon. The Lair of the Stone Thief cannot be mapped, but the characters can learn the secrets of individual levels.

Moving Levels

The Stone Thief is alive. More, it's malicious—as the player characters delve deeper, it becomes aware of them and starts trying to kill them. It moves the more dangerous regions into their path, and pulls levels they've repeatedly beaten away from







Above is the 'standard' configuration of the dungeon—the adventurers enter through the Maw, then make their way down the levels.

Above right is how the dungeon might arrange itself if it 'surfaced' underwater.

And to the **right** is how the dungeon might be encountered toward the end of the campaign, with the cleared levels trimmed out.

them. Once the characters break the power of Deep Keep, for instance, that level might not be present the next time they return to the dungeon. The dungeon can even lay traps for the player characters—it can drop the Gauntlet or the Ossuary in their path, or even stick the water-logged entrance to the Sunken Sea on the far side of a watertight door, so when the characters open it, they get a lake of sharks in the face. The dungeon has to 'play fair'—there's *always* a route from the entrance all the way down to the lowest level, if you can find it and survive it.

In general, each visit to the dungeon should have around 75% new material and 25% familiar ground, unless the characters deliberately seek out existing contacts or go looking for reckonings with old foes.

Level List

These are the thirteen major levels in the Stone Thief at the start of the campaign.

The Maw

(Pages 36–47, Adventurer Level 4–5)

The usual entrance to the Stone Thief, the main part of the Maw is a churning pit of stones that swallows whole buildings. Any adventurer taking the quick route through the Maw by jumping into the pit is unlikely to survive. The safer route is to enter the warren of caves and small chambers that wind around the pit. The Maw is infamously treacherous and unstable. Earthquakes, cave-ins, and rockfalls can cut an expedition off before they reach the dungeon itself. Most of the Maw's denizens are scavengers, parasites, and sewer monsters who ride along in the Stone Thief's jaws, hoping to catch some scraps for themselves.

The Gauntlet

(Pages 48–68, Adventurer Level 4–6)

The Gauntlet is the great filter of the dungeon, and its defense against intruders. As the name suggests, the Gauntlet is a maze of lethal traps designed to murder anyone who braves the dungeon. Whirling blades, poisonous darts, hissing gas pipes, explosive runes, and the cream of the *13th Age Bestiary* all await those who try to cross the Gauntlet. The Gauntlet is usually encountered at the bottom of the Maw, but when the dungeon is feeling cautious, it puts the Gauntlet up as Level 1.

The Gauntlet also gets pushed into the path of any adventuring party that is doing too well and needs to be taken down a notch.

The Gizzard

(Pages 69–86, Adventurer Level 4–6)

This bizarre region is where the living dungeon absorbs the stolen parts of the surface and remakes them into parts of itself. It is a patchwork realm of incomplete halls and citadels, inhabited by the dungeon's weird servitors. Adventurers who reach the Gizzard can try to temporarily stop the dungeon from absorbing any more matter by wounding the dungeon directly—assuming they can avoid being eaten themselves!

Dungeon Town

(Pages 87–101, Adventurer level 4–6)

Part of the dungeon here is a natural sanctuary, a cavern that remains untouched when the Stone Thief submerges. Over the ages, survivors of places swallowed by the dungeon have made their way here and built a small settlement. The settlement itself—Dungeon Town—is relatively safe. The problem is that the dungeon hates this canker, this loathsome worm-riddled sore in its stone flesh, and so the corridors and caves *around* Dungeon Town are a constantly shifting labyrinth crammed with every grudge monster the dungeon can breed.

The Sunken Sea

(Pages 102–122, Adventurer level 5–6)

The Stone Thief's peregrinations brought it under the Midland Sea and beyond; at times, it has stolen islands and ports and even ships at sea. All that water has to go somewhere, and it ended up in this underground sea surrounded by flooded tunnels. The Sunken Sea connects to any rivers, lakes, or other bodies of water near where the dungeon rises whenever the Stone Thief returns to the surface, so brave adventurers can sometimes escape by swimming—assuming they can get past the things in the water!

The Ossuary

(Pages 123–136, Adventurer level 5–6)

The quiet catacombs of the Ossuary are, as one might expect, haunted by the undead. The Stone Thief is awash with blood; every time it rises to the surface, it consumes hundreds of lives, and death breeds undeath. Most of the creatures that rise from the catacombs are mindless undead, slaves to the dungeon, but there are also intelligent undead creatures here that have forged an unlikely truce with the Stone Thief.

The Grove

(Pages 137–159, Adventurer level 5–6)

The Stone Thief consumes more than just caves, cities, and castles—it has also devoured forests, swamps, and jungles. It discards most such matter, though, keeping only the most dangerous and powerful animals and plants in this region, called the Grove. It's an underground swamp, a fen dimly lit by glowing mushrooms and blazing swamp gas elementals. This is where the Stone Thief breeds its monsters…

The Grove can also be a trap. When the dungeon wants to catch a foe unawares on the surface, it moves the Grove up to the top level. Victims wander through an unfamiliar forest under the light of the sun, unsuspecting that they are actually in a dungeon that will soon close around them.



Deep Keep

(Pages 160–188, Adventurer level 5–7)

The Deep Keep is a monstrous patchwork fortress ruled by the orc warlord Fangrot and his hordes. The orcs tried to conquer the dungeon, but stalled here and are now in an uneasy truce with the Custodians. Deep Keep blocks the main route to the lower reaches.

The Maddening Stair

(Pages 189–207, Adventurer level 6–7)

This level is a long staircase that descends along the walls of a huge chasm. Traps and other perils await those who try to climb down to the dungeon's lower levels.

The Pit of Undigested Ages

(Pages 208–226, Adventurer level 6–7)

This level consists of monuments and relics from past ages, all of which have some magical properties or protection that kept them from being digested by the dungeon. The Stone Thief can still move them around, but it cannot destroy or remake them according to its whims—not yet anyway, not until it is strong enough. There are secrets here long lost to the surface world, guarded by the terrible curses of ages past.

Marblehall

(Pages 227–243, Adventurer level 6–7)

The Marblehall is not part of the Stone Thief. It is the fortress of the Witch of Marblehall (page 34), who seeks to control the dungeon. She tricked the dungeon into swallowing her home, then used secret charms to prevent it from being absorbed. Marblehall is like a tick that burrowed into the flesh of the Stone Thief. From this citadel, the Witch seeks a way to deliver the Stone Thief to her icon patron.

The Onyx Catacombs

(Pages 244–269, Adventurer level 6–7)

The fabled Onyx Catacombs are the stronghold of the cult that worships the living dungeon. Here, they have built a dark city where their undying Secret Masters plot and dream of the destruction of the surface world.

The Heart of the Stone Thief

(Pages 270–279, Adventurer level 7–8)
The dungeon's uttermost heart, where no intruder has ever dared tread in all the long ages of the world.

Secrets of the Stone Thief

Each level has its own secrets, but these ones are important throughout the dungeon.

The Eyes of the Dungeon

Long ago, the Prince of Shadows stole the Eyes of the Dungeon and spirited them away. Without these Eyes, the dungeon is blind and cannot hunt or maintain itself properly. It needs the Cult of the Devourer (page 302) to guide it to suitable targets for its hunger, and the Custodians to monitor its internal workings.

One of the Eyes is still said to be in the Prince's possession. The location of the second Eye is for the player characters to discover, but the dungeon would do anything to get it back (see page 313).

Blockheads & Stone Imps

These creatures are creations—or, possibly more accurately, secretions—of the dungeon. Blockheads are the dungeon's workforce. They're primarily encountered in the Gizzard, but may be found in other places, especially where adventurers have been meddling. Blockheads look like human bodies with masonry blocks for heads, and that's exactly what they are. The bodies magically absorb some of the strength and toughness of the stone blocks, making them ideal laborers.

Stone imps are simple golems, formed from the rubble and splintered stone left in the dungeon's wake. They look like gargoyles that got stepped on by a Koru behemoth, all broken teeth and faces salvaged from broken statues.

Custodians

The Custodians (page 29) are elemental spirits who manage the upper levels. They appear as stone faces that manifest on a wall inside their respective levels. Each level writeup has at least one encounter with that level's Custodian, but you can have them pop up at any time, either to watch the PCs or to clean up after the adventurers have blasted through one bunch of monsters.

Denizens

Denizens of the dungeon are creatures who are in a symbiotic relationship with the Stone Thief. They're part of the dungeon. When the dungeon submerges, the walls close around them in a stone cocoon that keeps them in suspended animation; the dungeon can heal their wounds and keep them alive indefinitely. The trade-off is that they're forever tied to the dungeon and cannot leave it. Some denizens were spawned by the dungeon, formed from half-digested meat and stone chips and magic. Others came from outside and joined with the Stone Thief.

Most of the unintelligent monsters in the dungeon are denizens. Intelligent monsters are split roughly 75/25—most of the orcs aren't, apart from the stoneborn. Most of the Cult of the Devourer cultists aren't, apart from the Secret Masters. Creatures that aren't denizens get crushed when the dungeon submerges, unless they flee to a sanctuary.

The Witch's Family

The Witch of Marblehall put her family and servants under a magical delusion—instead of seeing the dungeon, they believe they're still on the surface, on the ground of the Artalin estate. The PCs might run into wandering nobles or guards from Marblehall who treat them as if they're mad—*what do you mean, how did I get into this dungeon? What dungeon? This is the front lawn! Are you insane?*

A Stone Thief Timeline

Before the Empire: The Stone Thief slithers out of the depths of the underworld.

Sometime during the 1st Age, or slightly before: The ancestors of the Cult of the Devourer are exiled from the Empire. They don't take it well.

Many ages ago: The cult hits upon the idea of using the Stone Thief as the instrument of their revenge. They colonize its lower levels, in much the same manner parasites colonize a whale's belly.

Also many ages ago: The Stone Thief steals places of power and wonder from across the Empire.

Last few centuries: The Stone Thief is seen less and less often in the Empire.

More recently: The Orc Lord (possibly before his presence was known in the Empire) sends Fangrot to capture the dungeon. The orcs capture some of the upper levels, but get locked in a stalemate with the cult.

The Witch of Marblehall's mysterious patron sends her to capture the dungeon.

The Prince of Shadows steals the dungeon's Eyes.

To compensate for the loss of its Eyes, the Stone Thief consumes some elemental spirits and puts them in control of the upper levels as Custodians.

The Vizier joins forces with the orcs and helps them secure Deep Keep as their fortress.

The dungeon consumes Marblehall.

The campaign begins.

WHO'S WHO

The Stone Thief is a great stone beast swimming in the depths of the earth. Like a shark, it has parasites, pilot fish, remoras, and other hangers-on. There are factions and powers inside and out of the dungeon that might play major roles in the campaign. So, who's who in the dungeon?

Campaign Icons

All these factions are written up like icons, because they work just like icons in the closed environment of the dungeon. They're the movers and shakers within the confines of the Stone Thief. While the influence of the real icons reaches even into the depths of the dungeon, they're not active players in the way these factions are.

Optionally, players could even assign icon relationship points to these factions.

Alternatively, you can map some of the dungeon factions to the icons, and use those correspondences to interpret story-guide results. For example, if the Orc Lord is supposed to feature in the next game session, you could use Fangrot the Warlord instead. They're very different orcs with opposing goals, but they can fulfill a similar role in the adventure. Possible mappings include:

Stone Thief: Prince of Shadows

Fangrot: Orc Lord

Flesh Tailor: Lich King

Provost: Crusader

Witch of Marblehall: Diabolist, Elf Queen or Three, depending on her patron



The Three

Potential Patron of



Diabolist

Potential Patron of



Elf Queen

Potential Patron of



Great Gold Wyrm

Mysterious rivalry



Archmage

Threatens the Empire

Ancient Enemies



Emperor

Banned by ancient laws



Priestess

Anathema to

Potential Patron of

Witch of Marblehall



Seeks to bind

Cult of the Devourer



Old distrust

Worships as a god



Lich King

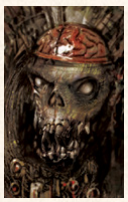
Wants to recruit

The Stone Thief



Growing power within

Flesh Tailor



Provost of Dungeon Town



hates and defies

In thrall of

Fangrot



inspires and drives



Crusader

Enslaved by

Custodians



Secretly colludes with

Wary interest

Stole the eyes of

Sent to capture the Stone Thief

Fences loot for



Orc Lord



Prince of Shadow



High Druid

Troublesome earth spirits



Dwarf King

The Stone Thief

The Stone Thief is the dungeon, the living spirit that animates and drives it. Most other living dungeons are idiot things, spawning and growing like blights or infections. The Stone Thief is different—or was different, anyway. It had its own cruel intellect, its own unknowable purposes. It even had its own aesthetic, and devoured those places it found beautiful.

It is a hungry monster. The more places of power it devours, the stronger it gets. It is a dungeon that eats cities and palaces. Emperors have died in its maw. The Stone Thief has waxed and waned over the ages, but never been destroyed. It is as canny as it is cruel, and is always quick to escape back into the depths when threatened.

The Stone Thief has no grand plans to conquer the Empire or become a god. It doesn't plan. It acts on instinct, on hatred, and on hunger and anger. Nothing so malicious and cruel could not be called evil, but at the same time, it is closer to a savage beast or a willful natural disaster than a conscious entity.

See page 280, and really, the whole of this book for more on the Stone Thief.

Quote

"The sound of the earth tearing asunder, the cataclysm of a rockslide, buildings toppling into the abyss... and then, from far below, the wet noises of tentacles slapping on stone, and very distant screaming."

Usual Location

The Stone Thief is the 'usual location' of the campaign. It swims throughout the underworld, a shark circling the Dragon Empire, looking for signs of weakness or tasty things to devour. Deprived of sight, it hunts by smell and taste and instinct—and by the signals sent to it by the Cult of the Devourer.

Common Knowledge in the Dungeon

The story of the Prince of Shadows and the Eyes of the Stone Thief is commonly known, although some dungeon denizens think it's a myth. The self-awareness of the Stone Thief is a matter of debate.

Adventurers & the Stone Thief

Adventurers are tasty, but sometimes tickle or get stuck in the dungeon's craw.

Allies

The Custodians work for the Stone Thief, with varying degrees of enthusiasm and loyalty. The Cult of the Devourer worships the dungeon, or at least worships what they think the dungeon can become.

None of the greater icons consider the Stone Thief an ally.



Enemies

The Witch of Marblehall wishes to bind the Stone Thief to her will. Once, so did Fangrot. The Provost wants to destroy the dungeon—and so do half of the surface icons. The Prince of Shadows stole the dungeon's Eyes.

History

To stop the Stone Thief from wrecking the modern Empire (or because it interfered with his own plans, or maybe because it amused him), the Prince of Shadows stole the Eyes of the Stone Thief. Without its Eyes, the Thief is blind and must now blunder through the earth. It has other senses—not that it ever saw through those Eyes as we understand seeing—but its reach is limited. It thrashes in blind fury, eating surface features to momentarily stave off its pain, fumbling toward apotheosis.

The Prince's meddling was a stopgap measure. Even without its Eyes, the Stone Thief could still grow strong enough to threaten the Empire if it consumes enough places of power.

The Campaign Ends Badly...

... when the Stone Thief regains its Eyes, then hunts down and devours so many places of power that no one can stop it.

The Custodians

The Custodians are a gaggle of elemental earth-spirits from the underworld that the Stone Thief half-devoured some time ago. After the Prince of Shadows blinded the dungeon, they were promoted to ad hoc managers of the various sub-levels. The Custodians are all terrified of the Stone Thief, since it can finish its consumption of them and destroy them utterly whenever it wants. The longer the dungeon stays blind and broken, the longer they get to keep their temporary custody of the various levels. The one thing all the Custodians agree on is that their survival depends on keeping the Stone Thief dependent on them.

Of the seven Custodians:

- **The Doorkeeper** is the runt of the pack. It's stuck guarding the Front Door in the Maw (page 46), and is mostly harmless.
- **The Mad Butcher** runs the Gauntlet (page 54). It carefully cultivates a reputation as a giggling maniac, but it can connive with the best of them when it has to.
- **The Architect** in the Gizzard (page 84) considers itself the leader of the Custodians, and is the only one who's really loyal to the Stone Thief.
- **The Gravekeeper** (page 136) and **the Pearlkeeper** (page 120) both stay in their respective domains of the Ossuary and the Sunken Sea—one because it's imprisoned, the other because it just doesn't care. Before the Flesh Tailor locked the Gravekeeper away, the Gravekeeper was a close ally of the Vizier.
- **The Curator** (page 214) lives in the Pit of Undigested Ages. It's the most erudite of the Custodians, and the most powerful.
- **The Vizier** (page 180) monitors Deep Keep, and through its partnership with the warlord Fangrot, controls the residents of that level too. It's the most ambitious of the group, and quarrels with the Architect.
- **An eighth Custodian** once ran the Grove, but was destroyed.

Quote

"Intruders! Intruders! Time to play!"

Usual Location

Each Custodian is tied to a specific region of the dungeon. They can leave their assigned section for short times, but are bound to return to watch over their charges. Most Custodians have a preferred manifestation point, where they form faces in the stone surfaces to address the monsters in their service.

Common Knowledge in the Dungeon

The Custodians are a mixed bunch. Some of them are benign, others insane or monstrous. They're all dangerous, though, because they can control the shape of their region. Insult a Custodian, and it'll move the corridors around so your path brings you to the Gauntlet or somewhere equally horrible.

They hold a secret council in the heart of the dungeon every so often (see The Conclave Chamber, page 173).

Never trust a Custodian. They're all plotting against each other, and if you get caught up in their schemes, don't expect any pity from them. They're hard as stone.



Adventurers & the Custodians

The Custodians are supposed to destroy any adventurers who wander into their domains. However, resourceful or desperate adventurers can be useful tools and spies. You don't want to die in this dungeon, right? Let's talk...

Allies

No one really trusts the Custodians. The Stone Thief is their ally and patron by necessity. The Custodian of Deep Keep works closely with Fangrot.

Enemies

The Cult of the Devourer consider the majority of the Custodians to be malignant spirits that must be cleansed from the dungeon, just as soon as they figure out a way of killing a bunch of living walls. The Flesh Tailor imprisoned the Custodian of the Ossuary, but the other Custodians are sufficiently wary of that necromancer (and sufficiently contemptuous of the Gravekeeper) that they have yet to retaliate.

Outside the dungeon, the Dwarf King knows the Custodians of old, and doesn't like them.

History

Who knows? The Custodians lie about their origins.

The Campaign Ends Badly...

... when the Custodians trick the adventurers into weakening the Stone Thief so they can take over, ripping the dungeon apart into seven new living dungeons.

To Name It Is To Shape It

Back when the Custodians were free-floating elemental spirits, they didn't have or need names. They took on names and roles to preserve their own identities as separate entities from the Stone Thief. Having a name keeps them from being completely subsumed into the dungeon. They don't feel comfortable with their names, but they're a necessary evil.

THE CULT OF THE DEVOURER

These lunatics worship the Stone Thief as a god. (Calling their god a thief is blasphemy, punishable by death.) Some of them are religious fanatics, and believe that they'll be rewarded should the Stone Thief consume everything. (Exactly what form this reward will take beyond "we'll be eaten last" is a matter for their theologians, and given that this religion considers mass murder and eating pebbles to be sacraments, don't expect any coherent answers from them).

Other members of the cult are more practical, and treat the dungeon as an occasionally tractable force of nature. They hire themselves out as chthonic siege philosophers. Say you're an evil wizard, and you really want to get rid of that town full of paladins down the road. You get the Cult of the Devourer to set up a secret temple in the town, the temple's magical emanations attract the living dungeon, and the paladin town gets eaten from below by the Stone Thief.

The cult descends from a band of rebels exiled by a previous Emperor in a distant age, and its members still have a grudge against the Dragon Empire. Because the cult is a major antagonist, it gets a full write-up starting on page 302.

Quote

"The day of the Devourer is at hand! All the works of the usurpers will be consumed, and the Devourer will rise! All who do not bow before us will be condemned to the living dungeon!"

Usual Location

The cult's main temple is in the Onyx Catacombs, in the lowest levels of the living dungeon. Lesser temples can be found anywhere in the surface world, wherever corruption and madness fester.

Common Knowledge in the Dungeon

The cult's reach is limited. There are the Secret Masters of the cult, but they're stuck down in the Onyx Catacombs doing strange unholy rituals and dreaming of the apocalypse. There are the rank-and-file members of the cult, but they're up on the surface plotting and scheming the overthrow of civilization. Contact between the two parts of the cult is limited—the Secret Masters communicate with their followers through the notoriously unreliable medium of dreams. On the rare occasions when some brave cultist makes a pilgrimage to the mouth of their god, they usually don't get past the dangers of the dungeon.

Adventurers & the Cult of the Devourer

Evil adventurers may be employed by the surface cult to carry messages or tribute to the main temple. The Secret Masters of the cult are unlikely to tolerate intruders, unless the adventurers can help them bring the dungeon to apotheosis by eating key magical sites.

Allies

The Custodians think of the cult as 'dungeon groupies', but are wary of the power of the Secret Masters.

The Flesh Tailor is a former member of the cult, and is sometimes sympathetic to their aims.

The Stone Thief is the object of the cult's fanatical worship, although the dungeon's conception of apotheosis and apocalypse may vary from that of the cult. The cult wants the dungeon to destroy the Dragon Empire so it can rule over the remains; the dungeon wants to consume the world and make everything part of one vast eternal nightmare prison.

The cult has had truck with the Diabolist in the past, and lately, agents of the Three have made overtures to them.

Enemies

The cultists loathe the Witch of Marblehall. The heretic must be destroyed for profaning the sacred dungeon of the Devourer! She must be annihilated, body and mind and soul! (After we learn her secrets, whisper the more pragmatic cultists.)

The cult and Fangrot's orcs hate each other, but neither side is yet ready to risk a confrontation. The cult grudgingly pays the orcs a toll for the use of the Great Gate through Deep Keep.

On the surface, the Emperor and the Archmage are agreed that the cult is a threat to their interests. The Dwarf King would agree with that assessment, if there were any cultists left in the dwarf-lands, but there aren't, because he killed them all. The cultists, for their part, loathe the Emperor, Archmage, Priestess, Dwarf King, and Elf Queen with equal fervor; the latter is barely aware of their hatred.

The Crusader tends to smite anything described as a 'cult' as a matter of policy.

The Great Gold Wyrm, in his spiritual agonies, sometimes eavesdrops on the dream-communications of the Secret Masters, and shares those visions with his followers.

History

The cult was founded by a cabal of sorcerers exiled from the Empire in a past age. They vowed to take revenge on civilization.

The Campaign Ends Badly...

... when the cult successfully brings about the apotheosis of the dungeon.

GAMEMASTER

The cult doesn't have any strong positive associations with icons outside the dungeon. That's deliberate—the icons are the powers and princes of the 13th Age, and the cult is a relic from a previous time. It's a laughable collection of isolated, inbred cult families and crazy urban terrorists, run by a bunch of ancient wizards who can't even reliably communicate with their own servants. In the early stages of the campaign, present the cult as out-of-touch and eccentric. Let the players assume that Fangrot and the Custodians are the real foes in the dungeon. Then, as they penetrate deeper into the dungeon, they discover that the cult is actually a genuine threat to the Empire and to the player characters.

The Flesh Tailor



Before his death, the Flesh Tailor was a member of the inner circle of the Cult of the Devourer. Those who die in the service of the cult are interred within the sacred precincts of the living dungeon, where they get reanimated as an undead minion and spend eternity as part of the Devourer.

The Flesh Tailor, though, came back as a free-willed, sentient undead. He possesses considerable necromantic abilities, and is now the master of the Ossuary level of the dungeon. The Cult of the Devourer still counts him as one of their own, but the Flesh Tailor's loyalty—and sanity—are both very questionable. It's hard to trust a creature that sees your skin and bones as artistic supplies.

For an undead horror, the Flesh Tailor's surprisingly approachable. He's got plenty of enthusiasm for his work, which is infectious.

See page 127 for more on the Flesh Tailor.

Quote

"You have a beautiful face. Hold still."

Usual Location

The Flesh Tailor's court lies in the Ossuary, and he rarely leaves that level.

Common Knowledge in the Dungeon

The Flesh Tailor treats corpses the same way the dungeon treats castles and cities—as raw material to be reworked and remade in new and more 'pleasing' forms. He may have started out as something like a lich, but he didn't stay that way. He keeps upgrading his undead form, adding new limbs and rune-engraved bones and body parts to enhance himself.

He also makes new undead creatures. The Stone Thief has always made use of the undead, and the Ossuary is a chill font of necromantic power that spawns zombies, wraiths, and all manner of other horrors. The reign of the Flesh Tailor, however, has brought a macabre creativity to the dungeon. Notably, he can flay the skin from living people and disguise his zombies in masks of reanimated flesh to make spies he sends to the world above.

Adventurers & the Flesh Tailor

The Flesh Tailor loves adventurers. Strong limbs, healthy organs, delicious brains. They're usually more use to him dead than alive, but circumstances sometimes warrant temporary alliances.

Allies

The Flesh Tailor was once a member of the Cult of the Devourer. Ah, to be alive and consumed with hatred for the entire world! While death has brought clarity to the Flesh Tailor's mind, he still has allies in the cult. He's also powerful enough to completely cow the Ossuary Custodian.

Outside the dungeon, the Flesh Tailor's thoughts turn—unsurprisingly—toward the Lich King. From his bone throne on Necropolis, the Lich King's whispers are relayed by corpses and ghosts to the Flesh Tailor, offering the necromantic artist a place in the undead aristocracy—if he can deliver the living dungeon into the Lich King's claws.

Enemies

Fangrot and the Provost of Dungeon Town would both like to see the Flesh Tailor destroyed, as his undead prey on their followers when the dungeon fails to provide corpses for his work.

History

The Flesh Tailor was born in Glitterhaegen, long ago, to a family of cloth merchants. He ran with a gang of troublemaking aristocratic rebels, the sons and daughters of wealthy merchants and landowners. They dabbled in demon worship and other bizarre occult traditions, and the boy who would become the Flesh Tailor joined the Cult of the Devourer. He was one of the few adherents of the cult who ever reached the sacred temple within the dungeon. He aspired to be one of the masters of the cult, but the Stone Thief is fickle, and a wandering monster killed him.

The cult interred him in the Ossuary, and he rose as the Flesh Tailor.

The Campaign Ends Badly...

... when the Flesh Tailor peels off his mask of skin and pledges fealty to the Lich King.

FANGROT THE WARLORD

The only safe way to the lower levels of the dungeon goes through Deep Keep, and Deep Keep is ruled by the orc warlord Fangrot. He charges high tolls for passage through his territory—and for adventurers, the price is usually their lives!

The Orc Lord sent Fangrot to capture the living dungeon. While the warlord succeeded in securing a fortress within the dungeon, he has yet to deliver the Stone Thief to his master, and it's whispered that he's lost his bloodlust for the Orc Lord's war, and is content to rule, loot and pillage from his mobile subterranean keep.

The adventurers may meet Fangrot on page 180.

Quote

"The dungeon's brought us another bounty! Grab what you can carry, and burn the rest!"

Usual Location

The warlord rules Deep Keep.

Common Knowledge in the Dungeon

Fangrot and his orc horde are the most numerous and best-armed force in the upper levels. They're underground pirates and scavengers—when the dungeon consumes a town or a castle, they storm into the Gizzard to loot what they can. The only route to the lower levels goes through Deep Keep.

Adventurers & Fangrot

Adventurers and orcs mix like oil and a burning torch. Fangrot only negotiates with adventurers after he's tried murdering them three or four times.

Allies

The Vizier, the Custodian of Deep Keep, is Fangrot's chief counselor and sycophant, and may be the power behind his throne. (It's definitely the wall behind his throne.)

The Cult of the Devourer sees the orcs as a gang of two-legged guard dogs, and so tolerates their presence in Deep Keep. This truce does not apply to any orcs who trespass into the lower levels.

Oddly, the orcs have had some dealings with the Prince of Shadows. What good is looted treasure if you can't fence it?

Enemies

The Provost of Dungeon Town and the Flesh Tailor are both foes of Fangrot.

Secretly, so is the Orc Lord—Fangrot failed him by not taking control of the living dungeon. If the other orcs knew of the Orc Lord's displeasure, Fangrot's leadership might be overthrown in a bloody coup.



History

The Orc Lord sent Fangrot and his warband to conquer the Stone Thief some years ago, before he revealed his presence to the Empire. The Orc Lord wanted Fangrot to capture and break the living dungeon, so that the Orc Lord could use it as a weapon.

Fangrot failed to find a way to control the dungeon, but rather than return to the Orc Lord empty-handed, he broke his oath of loyalty and stayed in the Stone Thief. He and his followers are marauders now, who loot and pillage whenever the dungeon reaches the surface. The younger orcs in the warband know no other way of life, but the veterans are old enough to remember the surface world and what the Orc Lord commanded them to do, and grumble that Fangrot's failure has unfairly disgraced all of them.

The Campaign Ends Badly...

... when Fangrot's mission is completed, one way or another, and the dungeon becomes a war machine in the Orc Lord's vanguard.

GAMEMASTER

The player characters probably only meet Fangrot seconds before they stab him to death; they are more likely to have direct dealings with Fangrot's lieutenants, Grimtusk and Greyface.

The Provost

The fragile community of Dungeon Town is made up of strays and survivors. Embattled and besieged, they cling to life inside the dungeon, hoping to stay alive until they find a way out or somehow reclaim what the Stone Thief stole from them. Dungeon Town would have fallen into anarchy long ago if it were not for the Provost. He is the stalwart leader of the town, the inspiring general who coordinates their defenses, and the stern judge who ensures there is no weakness or corruption that might weaken their resolve. He's wary of adventurers—Dungeon Town is precariously balanced within the dungeon, and too much heroism can bring unwanted attention.

See page 98 for more on the Provost in the dungeon.

Quote

"You're not safe here. Sleep lightly."

Usual Location

The Provost is always found in Dungeon Town.

Common Knowledge in the Dungeon

Dungeon Town is more of a wild rumor than common knowledge in the dungeon—a story that monsters whisper to their spawn at night. In these stories, the Provost is a terrible, wrathful figure, a grey-faced titan smashing monsters with his iron-shod staff.

The inhabitants of Dungeon Town see the Provost as their protector and leader. His will sustains them and his strength protects them. Only the most ungrateful or paranoid souls would ever whisper that the Provost is more like Dungeon Town's gaoler than its champion.

Adventurers & the Provost

Dungeon Town always needs more heroes and defenders. Adventurers can slay monsters, or bring needed supplies to the isolated community. However, they must obey the Provost's rules and restrictions. Those who cross him never return to Dungeon Town.

Allies

None within the dungeon. The Witch of Marblehall might take pity on Dungeon Town if she knew about it, but only a few wild rumors have reached her. Outside the Stone Thief, most of the citizens of Dungeon Town are subjects of the Emperor.

The Provost and the Crusader have a great deal in common, especially when it comes to dealing with weaklings and traitors.



Enemies

Form a queue. The Provost's most pressing threats are the Flesh Tailor and warlord Fangrot, but almost every power in the dungeon hungers to destroy Dungeon Town.

History

The Provost was once a knight. The dungeon consumed his home while he was away on errantry. He sought out the Stone Thief in the hopes of finding what was stolen from him. He wandered the dungeon's labyrinths for many years, until he found the cavern refuge and founded Dungeon Town.

The Campaign Ends Badly...

... when the Provost finds what he seeks.

Picking a Patron

Choose the Witch's patron based on the icon relationships among the characters. If half the PCs have negative relationships with the Diabolist, then that's your obvious choice. Go for a patron that will create interesting conflicts or elicit strong feelings in your players.

The Witch of Marblehall

The Witch is a powerful wizard. Through her secret arts, she tricked the dungeon into consuming her family's home, the palace of Marblehall. The dungeon could not digest Marblehall, so now it must drag the whole castle through the earth, an indigestible canker in its bowels. From this stronghold, the Witch seeks a way to bind the Stone Thief to her will, while the dungeon lays siege to Marblehall.

Marblehall and the Witch are described on page 227.

Quote

"This place can be your sanctuary, or your tomb. Choose."

Usual Location

The Witch does not leave Marblehall.

Common Knowledge in the Dungeon

The Witch found a way to keep the Stone Thief from consuming Marblehall—and that is a secret many powers wish to possess.

Adventurers & the Witch

Marblehall can be a sanctuary in the deeper dungeon, or a hellish deathtrap for adventurers, depending on whether or not their goals align with those of the Witch. Her goal is to bind the Stone Thief for her patron, and she may employ adventurers to aid her in this purpose.

Allies

None in the dungeon. Outside, the Witch works for one of the icons (see the sidebar).

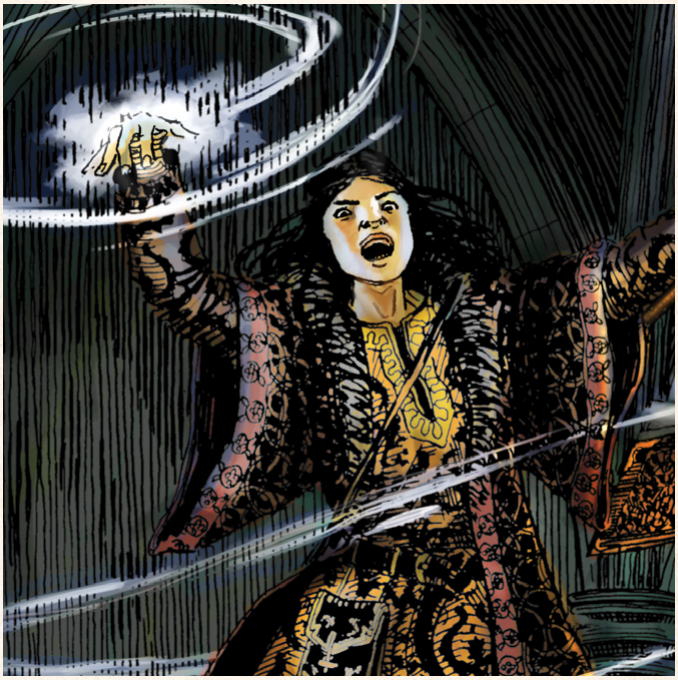
Enemies

First and foremost, the Stone Thief hates the Witch. If she ever left the protection of Marblehall, the whole dungeon would convulse and contort to destroy her. The Cult of the Devourer despises her for profaning the sacred dungeon; the Custodians fear her power.

History

The Witch is the eccentric daughter of a noble house in the Empire. Her family indulged her arcane experiments, believing them to be a harmless obsession—right up until the Stone Thief devoured the great mansion of Marblehall.

The Witch had prepared for that. Through secret arts, she made Marblehall indigestible to the Stone Thief. When the dungeon ate her family home, it choked on the mansion, and was forced to swallow the whole thing, unbroken and uncorrupted. Marblehall is now a canker or a bezoar in the stomach of the dungeon.



The Campaign Ends Badly ...

... when the Witch catches the Stone Thief and gives its reins to her patron.

Who is the Witch's Patron?

The Witch of Marblehall is secretly apprenticed to one of the icons. The identity of this icon affects the Witch's methods and goals, and whether or not she is a potential ally for the adventurers or a foe to be destroyed.

The Diabolist: The Witch sold her soul to a demon in exchange for power. The Diabolist hauled that demon out of hell and now owns the Witch's soul. She'll get it back if she successfully binds the Stone Thief.

The Elf Queen: The Witch is a changeling—as a child she was stolen by the dark elves and studied magic under their tutelage in the timeless depths of the forest. She's a magical prodigy, and so they sent her to capture the Stone Thief as a final test.

The Three: The Witch was in Highrock when it fell and preserved herself by weaving a spell of suspended animation around herself. The Blue unravelled her magic and took control of the spell—if the Witch betrays the Blue, then the dragon can release the pent-up time, aging her by hundreds of years in an eyeblink.

DUNGEON FORMAT

The next thirteen chapters each describe one level in the living dungeon. Each level description uses the same format for ease of reference. That format is as follows:

Features & Factions describes the main events and points of interest in the level—things you'll need to keep in mind throughout any exploration of this region. It also notes any influential factions or NPCs that the adventurers might encounter and parley with, as opposed to murdering on sight.

Descriptors gives notes and concepts for describing this region of the dungeon. As the Stone Thief steals from the surface world, it consumes many different styles of architecture, giving each level a distinct appearance. Over the course of the campaign, the players will learn to associate descriptors with the appropriate region, letting them navigate the subterranean maze ("*arrow-slits and a tapestry? Sounds like we've found Deep Keep again. Let's hunt some level-appropriate subspecies of orc!*")

Map: The Stone Thief's corridors and rooms move around, so the maps presented are more impressionistic than accurate.

Minor Encounters are curious side rooms, curiosities, puzzles, roleplaying encounters, or just plain weird stuff to lend flavor to the gaps between fight scenes. You can place them anywhere on the level.

Numbered Encounters are the set-piece battles, key individuals, and especially complex traps of the level. The numbers correspond to the locations on the map, not necessarily to the order the player characters encounter them in. Most numbered encounters also list a few **variations**—suggestions for making the encounter tougher, or how to change it should the player characters return on a later expedition, or alternate plotlines you could follow instead.

Exits describe portals to the next levels, whatever they are (see *Moving Levels*, page 21). The transition from one level to the next should always be obvious—either mark it with a big gate or magic portal, or have a clear discontinuity in the architecture.

The Maw

Levels 4–5

The Maw is an earthquake with intent. It's a giant sinkhole that opens up beneath whatever the Stone Thief wishes to steal. The main feature of this level is the rumbling rockslide that carries buildings or whatever else is nearby into the depths of the dungeon. Most creatures or victims caught in this rockslide get pummeled to death by the shifting stones long before they hit the Gizzard. Those who manage to take shelter inside a building can ride the rockslide down and survive. If they're lucky, they make it to Dungeon Town. Usually, though, the dungeon eats them.

Features & Factions

The Maw is neutral ground in the dungeon—while all the major groups in the dungeon might want to take control of the front door, the Maw is too unstable and too far from their centers of power for that to be feasible.

Descriptors

Mismatched bits of ruins, billowing dust, earth tremors, debris falling from the ceiling, the clamor of the falling rocks, and screams from the chasm.

Minor Encounters

Traps

- Ye olde pit trap (DC 15 to spot/disarm, otherwise, it makes a **+10 attack vs. PD** against a random nearby PC—on a hit, the victim takes 2d6 damage and falls into the pit). Moments later, the floor of the pit trap opens onto a chute that dumps the victim out into the Maw, if their friends don't pull the unfortunate adventurer out of the pit to safety in time.
- A cave-in (**+5 attack vs. PD against all characters**—1d12 damage). Picking through the rubble, the characters find the skull of a creature from a distant part of the Dragon Empire (for example, if they're near New Port, they find what's clearly the skull of a frost giant from the Frost Range—they can tell because the skull still has an ice-rimed beard attached).

The Survivor

The adventurers encounter a survivor, **Tal**, from the surface. He's unwounded, but terrified—he's crouched shivering and whimpering in a corner. The adventurers need to rally his spirits so he can flee the dungeon on his own, or else bring him back to the surface.

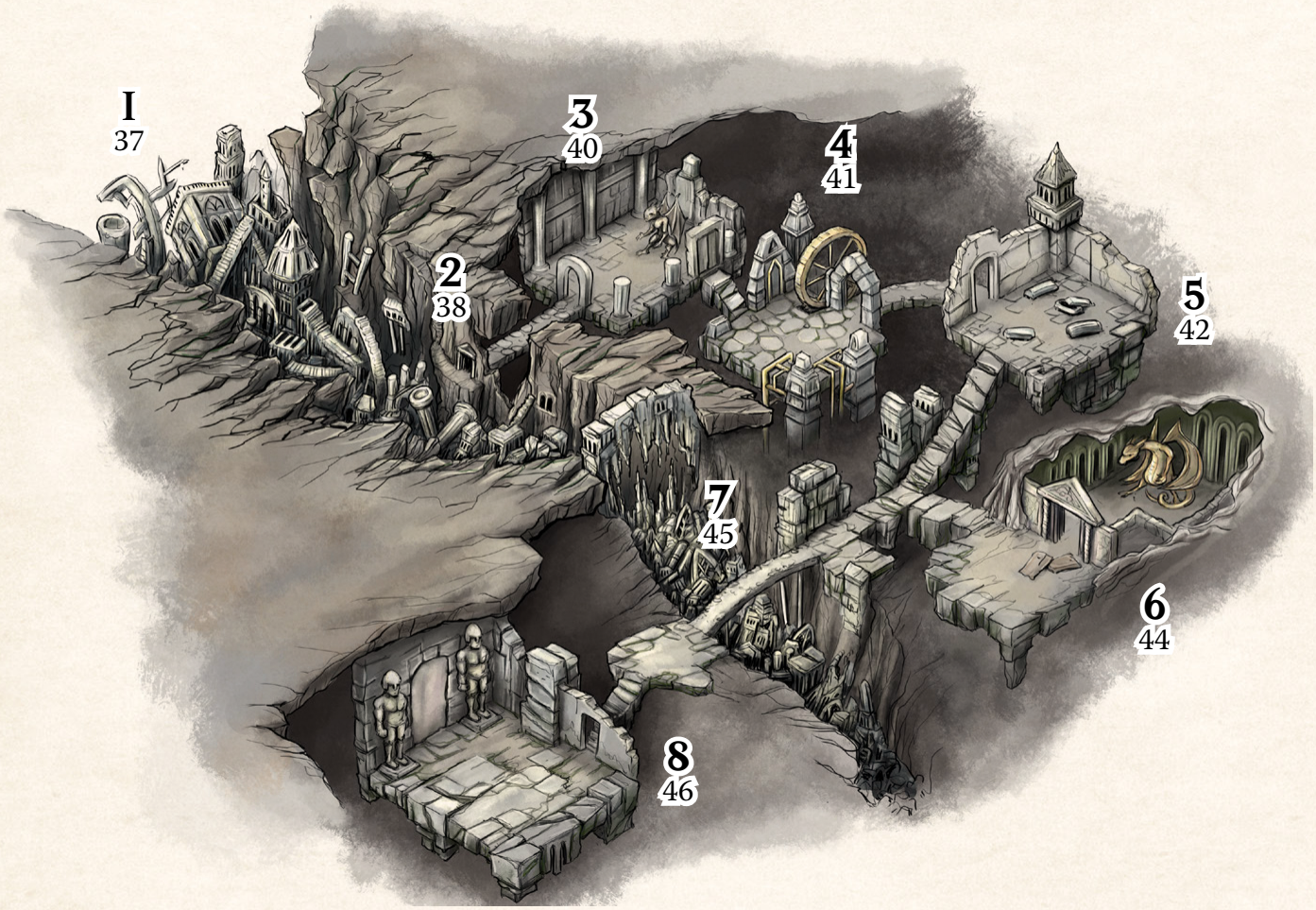
Quake

The ground bucks beneath the adventurers' feet, throwing them about. Huge cracks appear in the walls of the chamber. Then, a strange milky-white web of tendrils sprouts from the edges of the damaged wall and pulls the broken parts back together like a surgeon sewing up a wound. This dungeon is alive…

Flayed Chest

In a side room, the PCs find a wooden chest that contains clothing and some mundane items—and the flayed skin of a man. The skin's not bloody, but it's still warm to the touch, as if something had shed it quite recently. Thinking back, did they see someone who looked just like the flayed face of this skin walking around on the surface just before the dungeon attacked?

–



I. THE CHASM

The Maw opens a yawning gap in the world, causing the earth to fall away into a churning whirlpool of loose stones and other debris. If the dungeon is swallowing part of a city or a castle or a charming bijou elven citadel, then that structure bobs up and down in the sea of stones like a doomed ship. The characters spot the remains of previous thefts embedded in the walls of the chasm—stairs like the bones of dinosaurs, shattered fragments of walls, skeletons who died clawing their way out of their unexpected tomb—as well as a large set of stone double doors, flanked by marble pillars that support an ornate pediment (triangular bit) that shelters the entrance from the swirling chaos beyond the doorstep.

A narrow pathway runs down the cliff face to **3. The Front Door**. It's just wide enough for the adventurers to climb down without having to make any Dexterity checks to avoid falling, unless there are complications (like, say, the Maw opened up when the characters were in the middle of a fight and their foes keep shooting them as they climb into the dungeon.)

Anyone who falls into the landslide takes 4d6 damage per round until rescued or they climb out (Strength DC 20). A character who fails and gets dragged away by the landslide can climb into a building and ride the torrent through the Gates of the Stone Thief.

Variations

- The narrow path isn't there. The characters have to climb down the shaking, unstable cliff by making Dexterity checks at DC 20; failure means the character falls unless caught by another party member.
- The characters are on the wrong side of the chasm from the entrance; to get across, they've got to hop and jump from stone to stone in the rockslide. Doing so requires a DC 20 Dexterity check from each character. For added fun, a flight of harpies (one per player character) fly out of the Front Door and attack the characters as they cross the pit. A hampered character can still hop from rock to rock; weakened gives a –4 penalty to jumping.
- The characters open the Front Door, only to find a wall of stone facing them. The dungeon has closed off the side entrance into the Maw, so the only way in is through the Gates of the Stone Thief. Oh, and that narrow ledge in front of the door retracts into the cliff wall in 1d3 rounds.



2. GATES OF THE STONE THIEF

A set of titanic stone gates, 'borrowed' from a dwarven fortress of some previous age, carved to resemble the jaws of some tremendous beast. The torrent of stone carrying things stolen from the surface pours through these gates and flows inexorably through a wide tunnel that spirals down and down toward the Gizzard (page 69). This is the quick-and-dirty route to entering the dungeon. We're assuming saner parties will take the slower route, entering via the Front Door (location 3) and crawling through the upper levels to the Gizzard.

If the characters try riding a building down through the gates, they get peppered with attacks from orcs on the *Spear-Fishing Bridge* (page 45) as well as two more bands of orcs along the tunnel leading to the Gizzard. The orcs perch on ledges above the river of stone. Narrow staircases lead up from these ledges to other parts of the dungeon—if the PCs take that route, they end up near Jawgate (page 70).

Complications

The speed of the rocky torrent is tremendous—the characters start each battle far away from each band of foes, then move to nearby in the third and fourth rounds, then are far away again in the fifth round, and whipped out of range at the end of the sixth. Jumping from a moving building to a ledge on the tunnel wall is DC 20; failure means falling into the landslide and taking 4d6 crushing damage per round until the PCs gets out.

In addition to the monsters en route, roll on the Torrent Random Hazard table every time the escalation die becomes even.

Torrent Random Hazard Table (d10)

1: **A moment of calm.** No hazard. Isn't that nice?
2: **Dust and debris.** –2 to all ranged attacks this round.
3: **Quake!** All characters must make an easy save (6+) at the start of their turn or lose their next move action.
4: **Falling Stalactite!** Attacks one random character with **+15 vs. AC**—3d6 damage.
5: **Buzzsaw Blade!** A giant blade salvaged from a sawmill emerges from one wall. The characters can dodge it with a DC 15 check while moving; those who fail (or don't move) take 3d8 damage.
6: **Smash!** Another building (or just a huge boulder) smashes into the player characters' ride. Everyone gets hit by debris for 1d12 damage.
7: **More Foes!** Another orc archer joins the battle.
8: **Unlikely Stop!** The torrent of stone suddenly slows to a crawl, leaving the characters perfectly lined up for their enemies'

ranged attacks. The enemies may add the escalation die to their attacks this round.

9: Lots More Foes! Add another large monster to the fray. This newcomer should be the same level as the PCs. Possible options: owlbear, troll, ettin, or bulette. The creature squirms out of a hole in the tunnel ceiling, drops onto the characters' building, and attacks.

10: It's Breaking Apart! The characters' ride breaks apart. They've got to jump to safety before the end of the round, or they'll fall into the torrent.

Orc Sniper

Orcs consider bows to be cowardly weapons, suitably only for runts and those too lame to march. These archers have a lot of frustration to work out.

4th level archer [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +8

Short Sword +9 vs. AC—13 damage

R: Orc Bow +9 vs. AC—14 damage
Dangerous: The crit range of orc snipers expands by 3 unless they are staggered.

Rapid fire: Once per battle, the orc sniper can make a free *orc bow* attack.

Nastier Specials

Poisoned arrows: Orc bow attacks deal 5 ongoing poison damage on a natural 16+.

AC 20
PD 18 **HP 50**
MD 14

Hobgoblin Warmage

These guys are from the 13th Age rulebook, but we're reprinting their stats here for ease of reference.

5th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +6

Warstaff +8 vs. AC—15 damage

R: Fireblast +10 vs. PD (up to 2 nearby enemies in a group)—10 fire damage (or 20 if used against a single target), and the target loses its next move action

C: Concussive blast +10 vs. PD (all enemies engaged with the warmage)—10 force damage, and the warmage pops the target off of it
Natural 20: The target is also dazed (save ends).

AC 20
PD 19 **HP 70**
MD 14

Orc Master Shaman

And these guys are upleveled versions of monsters from the core book.

5th level leader [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +8

Spear +8 vs. AC—15 damage
Dangerous: The crit range of attacks by orcs expands by 3 unless they are staggered.

R: Battle curse +10 vs. MD (1d3 nearby enemies or 1 far away enemy)—16 psychic damage, and for the rest of the battle, all attacks by orcs deal +1d8 damage against the target (non-cumulative)

AC 20
PD 14 **HP 70**
MD 19

What's In A Name?

If the thought of bugbears and hobgoblins fighting side by side with orcs bugs you, feel free to re-skin the warmages (and bugbears, both brutish and original-flavor) as orc warmages and orc brutes. The presence of hobgoblins isn't important to the adventure.

Gates Fight Chart: 4th or 5th Level PCs

Number/Level of PCs	Orc Snipers	Hobgoblin Warmage	Orc Master Shaman
3 x 4th level	2	0	1
4 x 4th level	3	0	1
5 x 4th level	3	1	1
6 x 4th level	5	1	1
7 x 4th level	5	2	1
3 x 5th level	*6*	*0*	*1*
4 x 5th level	*6*	*1*	*1*
5 x 5th level	*8*	*1*	*1*
6 x 5th level	*8*	*1*	*2*
7 x 5th level	*8*	*2*	*2*

Variations

- Instead of bringing the characters to the Gizzard, the Stone Thief (or a Custodian) diverts the flow of stone to another level—popular choices might be dumping the character down the Maddening Stair, or into the Sunken Sea, or dropping them off at the entrance to the Gauntlet.
- Characters who are so high-level they can shrug off the 4d6 damage from falling into the rockslide get to swim in lava instead.

3. The Front Door



The Stone Thief greets intruders with this seemingly unremarkable chamber. Six huge black pillars support the ceiling, where the faded and peeling remains of a once-beautiful mural can be seen. Close examination of the mural reveals that it was once a map of the lands around the Midland Sea, but none of the city names are familiar. Notably, there's a huge metropolis marked in the region that's now known as the KneeDeep, and Omen is still shown to be a flourishing trade city and not a monster-spewing nightmare.

At the far end of the room is a heavy stone door. Squatting in the middle of the room is an ugly statue of a bestial creature—a **gargoyle**, its features mostly concealed by the stone wings that enfold it. However, the characters can see the silver key it clutches in its hand. (If there are extra gargoyles, then they're lurking above the Front Door as the characters enter.)

Attempting to take the key starts the battle. If a player character just walks up and tries to pry it out of the 'statue's' claw, then the gargoyle gets the advantage of surprise (the gargoyle gets to attack, and the escalation die increases by one). The gargoyle watches the characters, too, so if they start preparing for a fight by casting buff spells or aiming ranged weapons, that also starts a fight.

On closer examination, those pillars aren't stone—they're hollow glass specimen cases, filled with a murky dark-colored vapor. Shapes swirl inside the vapor, as the pillars are inhabited by **wraiths**. The wraiths can use their *spiraling assault* ability from within the pillars, so as soon as the adventurers start fighting the gargoyles, the wraiths wait for the escalation die to hit 2, then bombard them with negative energy. The wraiths can also retreat back inside the pillars to hide.

Smashing a Pillar: Inflicting 20 damage on a pillar smashes it—and releases the vapor into the room. It's poisonous, targeting 1d3 nearby characters (those with lungs, anyway) with a **+9 attack vs. PD** for 1d12 damage, and the target becomes vulnerable to the wraiths' attacks (save ends). Most attacks on a wraith hiding in a pillar hit the glass first, except for light-based or spirit-based blasts like *turn undead*.

Opening the Door: It's locked. The gargoyle's key opens it. Forcing the door or picking the lock is DC 25. The orcs of Deep Keep are allied with the gargoyle and know the password that convinces it to let them borrow the key. The same applies to any replacement guardians of the Front Door.

Gargoyle

Gargoyles are either monstrous statues or creatures summoned from stone. Most must serve their creators for decades before they are free to lead their own lives.

5th level troop [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +4

Furious claws and fangs +9 vs. AC—9 damage
Natural 11+: The gargoyle can make two more melee attacks as a free action (but never more than three total attacks per standard action, even if you roll another 11+).

Flight: Gargoyles can fly, but not very well. They would rather crawl or climb.

Nastier Specials

Rocky hide: The gargoyle has *resist damage 12+* against attacks targeting AC.

Statues, statues, everywhere: Because they often look like statues, gargoyles are capable of springing a surprise on inattentive PCs. When there's a chance of such an ambush, give the PCs a champion-tier skill check (usually DC 20) to notice the gargoyles and avoid being surprised (see page 164 of the core rulebook)

AC 24
PD 21 **HP 60**
MD 14

Wraith

Some wraiths recall their former life just enough to scream questions about places they used to know. They don't wait for the answers or stop draining your life, but they want you to know they remember.

5th level spoiler [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +10
Vulnerability: holy

Ice-cold ghost blade +10 vs. PD—14 negative energy damage
Natural 16+: The target is also weakened (save ends).

C: Spiraling assault +10 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—10 negative energy damage, and after the attack the wraith teleports to and engages with one target it hit
Limited use: The wraith can use *spiraling assault* only when the escalation die is even.

Flight: The wraith hovers and zooms about.

Ghostly: This creature has *resist damage 16+* to all damage (yes, even holy damage) except force damage, which damages it normally.

A wraith can move through solid objects, but it can't end its movement inside them.

Nastier Specials

Drain life: The wraith heals half the damage it deals when it hits with a *natural 18+* attack roll.

AC 19
PD 14 **HP 66**
MD 17

Variations

- The dungeon's front door needs a guardian. There'll always be something here when the characters return.
- Like, say, a drider or two.
- If the dungeon ate a monster lair to replenish itself, it could replace the Front Door with part of that lair.
- To skip the battle, stick another gargoyle here. As soon as the adventurers enter, it scurries up, hands them the key, then flaps off into the shadows to hide. It's not stupid—it's heard what the PCs can do.

Front Door Fight Chart

Number/Level of PCs	Gargoyle	Wraith
3 x 4th level	1	2
4 x 4th level	2	2
5 x 4th level	2	3
6 x 4th level	2	4
7 x 4th level	3	4
3 x 5th level	*1*	*3*
4 x 5th level	*2*	*4*
5 x 5th level	*2*	*6*
6 x 5th level	*3*	*6*
7 x 5th level	*4*	*7*

4. Goblin Scavengers



Shrieks and squeals of glee—or disappointed wailing—can be heard as the characters approach this encounter for the first time. When the dungeon swallows a place, goblins swarm up from Deep Keep to grab what loot they can before it is consumed by the Stone Thief.

This band of scavengers is encountered in a room that was clearly ripped from a dwarf stronghold long ago. The ceiling is dwarf-height, unlike the corridors that enter and leave it, and the room does not match the surrounding stonework in the slightest. This may be the adventurers' first inkling that the Stone Thief incorporates chunks of consumed places into itself, so draw their attention to this curiosity. It was once, in fact, a pump room that contained machines for sucking water out of a mine, so there are plenty of rusted pipes and the skeletal remains of ancient plumbing. Between the low ceiling and the wreckage of the machinery, moving through this room is tricky—the goblins and other small creatures get a +4 bonus to initiative, representing their ability to duck under or wriggle around obstacles that impede a larger creature.

Depending on what the dungeon recently consumed, the goblins here are found picking through whatever they dragged up by *Spear Fishing* (see page 45). They may be picking the pockets of the corpses of victims of the dungeon, or picking desultorily at bits of raw wild rabbit. As soon as they spot the adventurers, they flee. Some sprint down the corridor toward Level 2, but most clamber into the mouth of a nearby drain pipe, dragging any scavenged creature with them.

We haven't bothered with goblin stats here—these guys are no match for the PCs. Use Goblin Scum stats (page 229 of the *13th Age* core rulebook) if it's an issue.

Life in the Dungeon

Glorta and her... well, ilk know they live in a sentient, hostile dungeon. Most of the orcs of Deep Keep are in a liminal space between true denizens of the dungeon and unwelcome intruders. The Stone Thief tolerates their presence within its halls, but does not go out of its way to protect them. For example, should Glorta step into the Gauntlet, the dungeon will move the worst traps out of her path, but if Glorta tried to lead a party of adventurers through the Gauntlet, then, well, one extra goblin-sized corpse won't jam up the saw-blades in the slightest.

The relationship is like that between a sailor and a wild and tempestuous ocean. She lives on the ocean, and survives thanks to the ocean's bounty. If she can judge the ocean's moods, she can avoid its storms and reefs, but a slight moment of weakness or inattention can doom her to a watery grave. Only this ocean has more saw-blades and fireball traps.

Following the Goblins: Chasing after the ones who fled down the corridor means running headlong into the ghoul lair (see below).

Only a small character like a halfling or a gnome (or an exceedingly agile thief) can follow the goblins down the narrow drain pipe. The pipe takes a sharp turn downward, leading to another level of the dungeon (either Deep Keep or the Sunken Sea). Point out to the brave explorer that they're going to split the party if they keep going this way.

A ritual could shrink the player characters down to pint-size, allowing them to follow the goblins through the pipe and giving them a one-way short cut to a deeper level.

Interrogating the Goblins: Stunning a goblin with a well-aimed spell or a rock to the head means the characters can interrogate her. The goblin, Glorta, spills everything she knows at the slightest provocation, describing Deep Keep, the Gizzard, the Ossuary, and the Maw as well as some of the major perils. Most of what she reveals is either wildly inaccurate or a lie. If the characters are cruel, then Glorta may direct them into traps or nasty encounters. Adventurers with a positive relationship with the Orc Lord or who are kind and considerate toward her (or zap her with good old *charm person*) get warned about the dangers of the Gauntlet, and Glorta might even talk the characters past the *Spear Fishing* encounter.

Variations

- The dwarven machinery has magically repaired itself, and is now busy sucking water out of the ruins being processed in the Gizzard. The characters can follow the clanking pipes down through the Gauntlet.
- The sturdy doors at either side of this room slam shut, and the room starts to fill with boiling water. At the same time, a swarm of demon-touched, heat-immune sahuagin (stats on page 107) swim out of a trapdoor and attack. The room fills based on the escalation die, with all characters taking damage equal to the value of the die x 1d4 each round from the boiling water. Reversing the flow of the machinery to drain the room requires a skill check at DC 25, and the controls are guarded by the sahuagin assassins.

  If the escalation die hits 6, then one of the doors opens, except that the dungeon has reconfigured itself to add a short branch corridor that runs at a steep angle to the brink of the chasm (see page 37). The water rushes down this chute, dropping the adventurers and any surviving sahuagin into the chasm unless they can pull themselves free of the torrent.

5. Ghoul Cleaners



Like Location 4, this chamber was broken off from some larger structure quite unlike the rough stone tunnels of the Maw. It was, in fact, originally part of the Ossuary complex (see page 123), so it matches the bone-white cobblestones of that region. The chamber contains a number of stone caskets, scattered randomly around the room. One of these caskets has cracked open, and the characters can see a rotting corpse within, looking back at them. The corpse's single eye moves to follow the characters as they move.

The caskets contain a pack of **ghouls**. The carrion eaters pick the upper levels clean of any meat missed by the automatons of the Ossuary. When the dungeon contracts before it submerges, the Maw is the last level to be compressed. The rumblings and stirrings, though, can be felt some time in advance, and it is those tremors that wake these ghouls. They are normally active, therefore, only for a few minutes before the dungeon sinks.

What's the Value of the Submergence Die?

More than 1–2 points below full: The ghouls ignore anyone who trespasses through their lair, as long as the intruders do not attack or disturb the ghouls. Moving through the room quietly requires a DC 15 check.

1–2 points below full: The ghouls are awake and active. Anyone who enters the room gets attacked.

Full: The dungeon's sinking, and the ghouls are abroad! After all, paralyzing monsters are just what you want to run into when the walls are closing in around you…

Ghoul

They hunger only for what they used to be.

3rd level spoiler [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +8
Vulnerability: holy

Claws and bite +8 vs. AC—8 damage
Natural even hit: The target is vulnerable (*attacks vs. it have crit range expanded by 2*) to attacks by undead until the end of the ghoul's next turn.

Pound of flesh: The ghoul's *claws and bite* attack deals +4 damage against vulnerable targets.

Infected bite: Any creature that is slain by a ghoul and not consumed will rise as a ghoul the next night.

Nastier Specials

Paralyzing bite: When the ghoul hits a vulnerable target with a natural even attack roll, the target is also stunned (save ends).

No Way Out: Once per battle, add the value of the submergence die to the ghoul's attack roll.

AC 18
PD 16 **HP 36**
MD 12

Ghoul Fleshripper

This creature has feasted well on the dead. Its fingers, gnawed to the bone, end in claw-like fingertips. Long teeth glisten with whatever fluids pass for saliva in its mouth.

4th level wrecker [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +9
Vulnerability: holy

Bony claws +7 vs. AC (2 attacks)—6 damage, and the target is vulnerable (save ends)
Critical hit: Until the target saves against the vulnerable effect, it also takes 2d6 ongoing damage each turn.

Infected bite: Any creature that is slain by a ghoul and not consumed will rise as a ghoul the next night.

Nastier Specials

No Way Out: Once per battle, add the value of the submergence die to the ghoul's attack roll.

AC 19
PD 18 **HP 54**
MD 13

Ghoul Licklash

A long, ropy tongue extends from the distended jaw of the creature. The tongue sweeps along its body, like an animal grooming itself. The flicker of pleasure in its eyes reveals that it savors the taste of any flesh, even its own.

4th level blocker [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +8
Vulnerable: holy

Bloody claws +8 vs. AC—12 damage, and target is vulnerable (save ends)

C: Flesh-seeking tongue +8 vs. PD (one nearby enemy)—8 damage
Natural even hit: The target pops free from each enemy it's engaged with and is pulled to the ghoul licklash, who engages it.
Natural odd hit: The target is vulnerable (save ends).
Critical hit: The licklash can make a *flesh-seeking tongue* attack against a different target as a free action.

Infected bite: Any creature that is slain by a ghoul and not consumed will rise as a ghoul the next night.

Tongue lash: Once per round when a nearby enemy makes a ranged attack, the ghoul licklash can make a *flesh-seeking tongue* attack against that enemy before the attack as a free action.

Nastier Specials

No Way Out: Once per battle, add the value of the submergence die to the ghoul's attack roll.

AC 21
PD 17 **HP 48**
MD 13

Ghoul Champion

They can never sate their terrible hunger, but they sure try.

6th level spoiler [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +8
Vulnerability: holy

Claws and bite +12 vs. AC—16 damage
Natural even hit: The target is vulnerable (*attacks vs. it have crit range expanded by 2*) to attacks by undead until the end of the ghoul's next turn.
Natural 19–20: Any other ghouls engaged with the target get to make a free attack.

C: Horrific Yowl +12 vs. MD (all nearby vulnerable enemies)—10 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends)

Five pounds of flesh: The ghoul's *claws and bite* attack deals +8 damage against vulnerable targets.

Infected bite: Any creature that is slain by a ghoul and not consumed will rise as a ghoul the next night.

Nastier Specials

No Way Out: Add the value of the submergence die to the ghoul's attack rolls.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 90**
MD 16

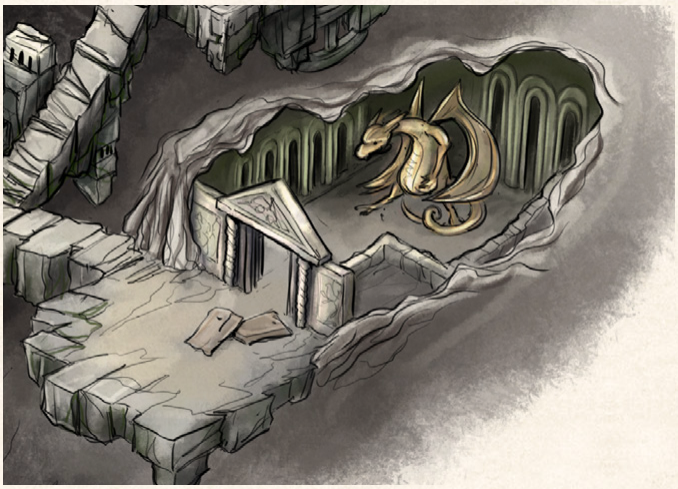
Ghoul Cleaners Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Ghoul	Fleshripper Ghoul	Licklash Ghoul	Ghoul Champion
3 x 4th level	**2**	**1**	**0**	**1**
4 x 4th level	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1**
5 x 4th level	**4**	**1**	**1**	**1**
6 x 4th level	**4**	**2**	**1**	**1**
7 x 4th level	**4**	**2**	**2**	**1**
3 x 5th level	***0***	***3***	***1***	***1***
4 x 5th level	**0**	**4**	**2**	**1**
5 x 5th level	**0**	**4**	**2**	**2**
6 x 5th level	**0**	**5**	**3**	**2**
7 x 5th level	**0**	**7**	**3**	**2**

Variations

- The ghouls stuffed prisoners into their caskets for later consumption. They chained the caskets shut with heavy, nigh-unbreakable chains (DC 25) to ensure the prisoners do not escape. The characters may have to drag the caskets back to the surface to rescue these unfortunate victims.
- The chamber is empty—the ghouls have fled.

6. Stolen Palace



The façade of a magnificent villa greets the characters as they enter this cavern. The villa is mostly intact and must once have been the home of a wealthy noble or provincial governor from some earlier century of this age, judging by the décor. It has lots and lots of dragons and draconic themes, suggesting it was built during the reign of an early Dragon Emperor. Doubtless it once commanded an inspiring view over some great vista, but now it's half-buried in a cave. The doors of the villa were torn off their hinges in some long-ago battle and lie blasted and scorched on the ground.

Exploring the villa, the characters find a central courtyard. In the middle of the courtyard is a bronze statue of a rampant dragon, its head rearing back in challenge to anyone who enters. There is something curious about its eyes, which are like dark voids. Around the statue are broken cobblestones and dead gardens. The rest of the villa is either empty and abandoned, or weirdly *missing* as if whole rooms were removed stone by stone (and that is, of course, exactly what happened). The characters do find another curious thing—a stone trapdoor that they cannot open by any reasonable means. There is no handle or catch or lever to open it. The trapdoor is marked with the symbol of the Emperor.

The statue's eyes are made of some magical stone that seems to drink in the light. If the characters are exploring the dungeon with burning torches or lanterns, then the flames bend toward the statue's eyes. If they've got a magical light source, then it grows dimmer as they wander around the villa. The statue feeds on ambient heat and arcane power.

A close examination of the statue shows that the whole thing can be rotated on its metal base, although the grinding of metal makes a tremendous noise that echoes through the whole cave. Engraved on the stones around the statue are the words THE GREAT GOLD WYRM GREETS THE DAWN OF A NEW AGE.

A Sanctuary: Those with a relationship with the **Great Gold Wyrm**, the **Emperor**, or the **Priestess** feel a sense of safety here. Monsters will not pursue the characters here unless provoked.

Opening the Vault: This puzzle made more sense on the surface. If the statue is turned to face due east—or what was due east when the formerly south-facing villa was built—and charged with a blast of magical energy, it drinks in the arcane power and uses it to unlock the trapdoor. Several clues point to the building's original orientation, discoverable with a DC 15 check:

- Moss on the statue grows only on what was the southern side.
- An old map in the ruins shows the original location of the mansion.
- A painting shows the mansion as it once stood, with the Queen's Wood (north of what is now Drakkenhall) in the background. The painter was clearly facing north, so the mansion was once south-facing.

If the statue faces any other way, though, then the arcane power gets released as a burst of fire—it was originally a last-ditch defensive weapon for the villa, and blew the doors down when the Stone Thief stole this place. The blast targets any characters standing in front of the statue with a **+10 attack vs. PD**, inflicting 1d6 damage per level of the spell that was channeled into it.



The Hidden Vault: The vault contains 200 gp per player character, plus a single magic item. If any of the characters have a positive relationship with the Emperor or the Great Gold Wyrm, you might also stick in a second item here for them. The villa was once owned by a loyal warrior of the Dragon Empire who fought against the Wizard King, so items that counter magical or undead foes are a good idea.

Variations

- The Stone Thief is done with this villa; the Great Gold Wyrm's power permeates the ruin, making much of it indigestible. When the dungeon next submerges, this chamber remains behind, leaving the ruin entombed in a cavern buried beneath the ground.

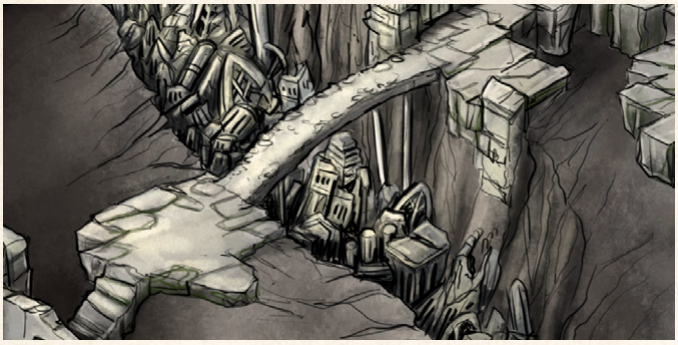
Hero's Shield

Increases your maximum hit points by +4 (Adventurer), +10 (Champion), +25 (Epic).

When you successfully save against a condition or effect, one nearby ally who is also afflicted by that condition or effect can immediately roll a save against the effect (champion: two nearby allies; epic: three nearby allies).

Quirk: Always steps in to defend others, even when it's inappropriate or unwanted.

7. Spear-Fishing Bridge



A narrow stone bridge arches over the ongoing landslide of the chasm below. A gaggle of goblins and other humanoids stand on the bridge, equipped with long spears, sticks, and even fishing lines. They try to hook any interesting or valuable debris that floats past, and to skewer any still-living victims.

Narrow Bridge: The bridge is so narrow that only two regular-size characters can comfortably fight alongside each other. Characters can shove their foes off the bridge as part of a death-blow description (*instead of skewering the hobgoblin warmage, Edric the Valiant boots it off the edge*), or make a DC 25 skill check to grab and fling a foe. Any character who gets staggered while engaged on the bridge must make a normal (11+) save to avoid falling off.

Falling into the chasm means falling damage of 2d6, then 4d6 worth of crushing damage per round. Nasty.

The Spear Fishers: The goblins are willing to throw spears at enemies in the chasm, but they won't fight hand-to-hand. They scarper as soon as they spot the characters, leaving only the bugbears and hobgoblins to face the PCs.

Variations

- The bridge collapses under the adventurers, dumping them into the chasm below. Fortunately, they land on a semi-intact tower; if they can scramble in through a window, they can ride the tower into the dungeon below. See Gates of the Stone Thief, page 38.

Bugbear

Bugbears are goblin giants. Their massive frames allow them to wield weapons that are almost comically large. It's not funny for long.

3rd level troop [humanoid]
Initiative: +6

Oversized weapon +8 vs. AC—10 damage
Natural even hit: The attack deals +5 damage.
Miss: If the target is engaged with two or more foes, it takes 1d8 damage.

AC 19
PD 17 **HP 55**
MD 12

Hobgoblin Warmage

Hobgoblins with magical talent who manage to survive long in their warrior culture are even more vile, vicious, and deadly than the rest.

5th level caster [humanoid]
Initiative: +6

Warstaff +8 vs. AC—15 damage

R: Fireblast +10 vs. PD (up to 2 nearby enemies in a group)—10 fire damage (or 20 if used against a single target), and the target loses its next move action

C: Concussive blast +10 vs. PD (all enemies engaged with the warmage)—10 force damage, and the warmage pops the target off of it. Note that the warmage's *concussive blast* ability forces anyone on the bridge struck by it to make an average (11+) save or be knocked into the chasm below.
Natural 20: The target is also dazed (save ends).

AC 20
PD 14 **HP 70**
MD 19

Bugbear Brute

Take a bugbear. Nail a helmet to its thick skull. The helmet doesn't offer any added protection, but the nails make it bad-tempered and nasty.

6th level blocker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +8

Oversized weapon +11 vs. AC—14 damage
Natural even hit: The attack deals +6 damage.
Miss: If the target is engaged with two or more enemies, it takes 1d10 damage.

R: Flung Stone +11 vs. AC—12 damage
Natural 18+: The bugbear thwacks its target right between the eyes—or in some other sensitive place. The target is dazed until the end of its next turn.

Iron Shield: Bugbear brutes don't take damage from missed melee or weapon attacks.

Enrage: When the escalation die reaches 4, the bugbear brute gets mad. It drops its shield (losing its *iron shield* ability and reducing its AC by 2), and starts wielding its oversized weapon with both hands: **+13 vs. AC**—25 damage.

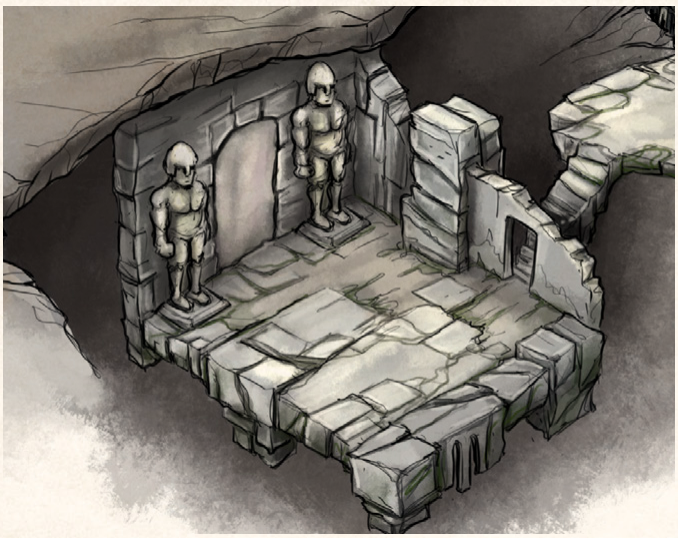
AC 22
PD 16
MD 20

HP 100

Spear-Fishers Fight Chart

Number/Level of PCs	Bugbear	Warmage	Brute
3 x 4th level	**2**	**1**	**0**
4 x 4th level	**2**	**1**	**1**
5 x 4th level	**3**	**1**	**1**
6 x 4th level	**2**	**1**	**2**
7 x 4th level	**2**	**2**	**2**
3 x 5th level	***3***	***1***	***1***
4 x 5th level	***3***	***2***	***2***
5 x 5th level	***3***	***2***	***3***
6 x 5th level	**6**	**2**	**3**
7 x 5th level	***6***	***2***	***4***

8. The Doorkeeper



Two huge stone statues flank a suspiciously blank section of wall. There are no other exits other than the one the characters entered by. Let them poke around, looking for secret doors or being paranoid about those statues coming to life as golems. After a few moments, the wall contorts into a stone face and inquires politely what the characters are looking for.

This is the Doorkeeper, one of the Custodians that monitor the dungeon while the Stone Thief is blind. Unlike its fellows, the Doorkeeper is quite friendly to outsiders and curious about the world above. It asks the characters about the place that the dungeon is busy consuming piece by piece. If the characters threaten it, it flees, its mouth widening to become a doorway leading to a stairwell going down to the next level. If they chat with it, the Doorkeeper talks amiably about the upper levels of the dungeon (the Maw, the Gauntlet and the Gizzard), the Stone Thief, and its fellow Guardians, but if the characters ask too many questions, it starts to glance nervously over its shoulder (or would if it had shoulders to look over or a neck to turn.)

After a short time, the Doorkeeper declares it must challenge the intruders with a riddle (see sidebar). A correct answer opens the door to the next level. Should the characters fail to answer the riddle correctly, the Doorkeeper hocks up a pack of stone imps to attack them. It's quite apologetic about this, but it's got a job to do, and part of that job involves vomiting little monsters onto adventurers. The Doorkeeper reappears in any round in which the escalation die is even to add another 1d4 + 1 stone imp rejects to the mix; if the characters stick a sword or a polearm in the Custodian's mouth when it opens, they can force it to stay open and pass through the yawning portal to the next level.

Variations

- The Doorkeeper asks a different riddle. If the characters held its mouth open with a sword on their last visit, it thalks wid a thisp becauth od the sword wounth.
- The Doorkeeper shows up to welcome the PCs to the dungeon. It asks an absurdly simple riddle to fulfill its duties (*"what looks like a duck, and walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck? A duck"*), then gossips with the adventurers about recent events both in and out of the dungeon. Use it to update them on changes to the dungeon since their last expedition.

Stone Imp

Mismatched things made from fragments of scavenged buildings and weirder debris.

6th level troop [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +0

Stone Claws +11 vs. AC—20 damage

[When the escalation die is 3+, use this attack instead] **Stone Haymaker +6 vs. AC**—30 damage
Natural even hit: The target is stunned for one round.
Natural even miss: Deal 2d6 damage to both target and stone imp.

Imp Scavenging: When the stone imp starts its turn staggered, it rolls a normal save. If the save succeeds, it uses a quick action to consume and eliminate one nearby stone imp reject in order to heal 25 hit points.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 90**
MD 16

Stone Imp Reject

These smaller imps are only half-complete and are made of the stone fragments left over from the construction of their larger cousins.

6th level mook [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +0

Stone Claws +11 vs. AC—12 damage
Natural Even Hit: The reject grabs on. Until the reject is dislodged or killed, the target takes a –2 penalty to AC per reject grabbing it. The reject may only use its *chew and gnaw* attack while clinging to a victim. A victim may dislodge a number of rejects equal to her Strength or Dexterity modifier, whichever is higher, by making a DC 25 check as a quick action.

Chew and Gnaw +6 vs. AC—8 damage

AC 21
PD 18 **HP 25 (mook)**
MD 15

Mook: Kill one stone imp reject for every 25 damage inflicted on the mob.

Exits

- Through the Doorkeeper's mouth
- Across another bridge over the torrent of stone
- Down a spiral staircase that runs along the walls of a shaft; the torrent of stone falls down the middle
- A huge stone gate, looted from a dwarven stronghold

Doorkeeper Fight Chart

Number/Level of PCs	Stone Imp	Stone Imp Reject
3 x 4th level	**1**	**2**
4 x 4th level	**1**	**5**
5 x 4th level	**2**	**3**
6 x 4th level	**2**	**6**
7 x 4th level	**2**	**9**
3 x 5th level	***2***	***5***
4 x 5th level	***3***	***5***
5 x 5th level	***4***	***5***
6 x 5th level	***4***	***10***
7 x 5th level	***5***	***10***

Riddles in the Dark

Here are some thematic riddles for the Doorkeeper to use; feel free to substitute your own. If your players aren't in the mood for puzzles, then an icon benefit could provide the answer, as long as the player narrates how the icon helps the character find the answer. Maybe the Archmage has manticores in his menagerie, or the Elf Queen sends wisdom in a dream.

Q:
Four legs in the morning and a foul word for the dawn
Four legs in the afternoon and a rumbling belly for the beast
Four legs in the evening and a sting to send you to sleep
What am I?
A: A manticore

Q:
This thief is what a fool calls wisdom
He creeps in when the heart's left open
Weakens strong arms, ruins trust
Make wives unfaithful, makes tools rust
Priests fear him most of all—
But he'll protect you in the street from liars and fakirs.
Who is he?
A: Doubt

Q:
I am a beast with many faces.
Often, you'll meet me with my brother.
Though not a spell, I am cast;
Though not large, I am fate's master.
And though not a friend, you'll praise me until I bite you.
A: A die.

THE GAUNTLET

LEVELS 4–6

The Gauntlet is the dungeon's welcome mat for unwelcome adventurers. Running the Gauntlet involves surviving a cavalcade of death traps, all designed to eliminate intruders. Ancient enchantments ensure that the Stone Thief has to play fair to a degree—it can't just drop intruders into a pit of lava. It can, however, drop a stolen tower into that lake of lava, and force the adventurers to find their way out of the tower before it sinks. It doesn't have to make things easy.

The adventurers might encounter the Gauntlet anywhere in the dungeon. It usually comes after the Maw—the Stone Thief places the Gauntlet there to stop any invaders from the surface—but it can be moved into the path of a particularly troublesome band of intruders on the lower levels. Each time the adventurers pass through, the Gauntlet is tougher than the last time. It's a deathtrap with conviction. Escape it once, and it holds a grudge until you're dead.

SOUR ADRENALINE

Counting variations, we've included ten or so killer traps in this level, but you should only use two or three of them per passage through the Gauntlet. If the players have to fight their way through three successive trap-filled chambers, that's exciting and challenging. Four or five chambers in a row, and it all seems a bit repetitive, and by the sixth, they'll be throwing themselves into the traps just to end the torment. Pace your use of deathtraps. Once they're through the two or three chambers of Gauntlet proper, let the players catch their breaths and get used to environments that aren't completely lethal. Give them a chance to taste life again.

And then bring the Gauntlet back, nastier than before...

FEATURES & FACTIONS

No factions control the Gauntlet. There's an immortal, unkillable minotaur-thing, but it's safely walled up in one room.

The Custodian of this level is called the Mad Butcher by its fellows, and that's an accurate description.

DESCRIPTORS

The level grew around a dwarven temple to the forge, which provided the raw material for the original generation of traps and killing machines. As anyone with a suitable background (or a connection to the **Dwarf King** or the **Archmage**) knows, Grommar was a legendary dwarven master-smith who, in his dotage, became obsessed with forging a weapon that could kill death when it came for him. Together with his followers, he built a secret temple to the god of the forge, and there he set to work forging that perfect blade. Some say Grommar went mad and stopped eating or sleeping until he worked himself to death; other tales hold that he wounded death, and is now the immortal lord of that hidden temple.

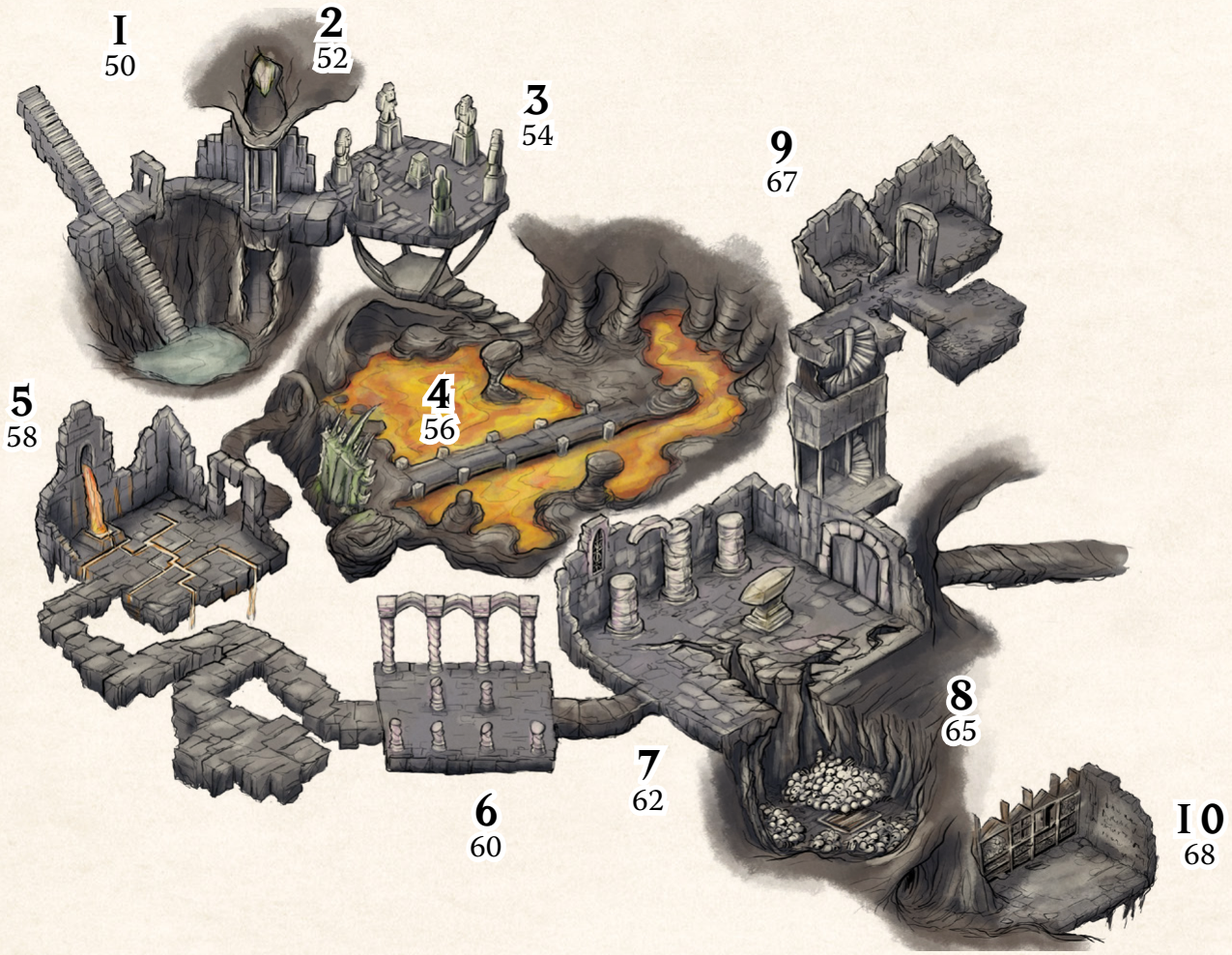
In truth, Grommar's temple was devoured by the Stone Thief. So, most of this level has a dwarven forge theme, with lots of fire, molten metal, and heavy machinery. It's a killing floor.

MINOR ENCOUNTERS

TRAPS

Throw in a trap or two whenever the characters move through the Gauntlet.

- *Corridor of Blades trap:* A pair of circular saw blades emerges from the walls and advance toward the adventurers—one at waist height, one at head height. The characters can easily dodge the blades by ducking under the lower one. However, as one character ducks, the floor of the corridor erupts as a marble plinth rises beneath the character, propelling him right into the path of the blade. The trap makes a **+10 attack vs. PD**—3d8 damage; half damage on a miss.
- *Pendulum Axe trap:* The characters come to a long, high-ceilinged room with one door in the far wall, flanked by a pair of fat-bellied dragon statues. As they enter, a portcullis slams shut behind them, trapping them in the room, and a ticking noise begins to emanate from above. Suddenly, a huge axe swings like a pendulum from the ceiling toward one of the characters (**+10 vs. AC**—2d12 damage the first time it hits; after that, it can easily be avoided). The dragon statues contain alchemical explosives and detonate thirty seconds after the characters enter the room. The axe is the pendulum for the clock connected to the explosives—stopping the pendulum stops the countdown. Otherwise, the characters have six rounds to get through the locked far door (DC 25 to unlock or force) before the statues explode and make **+10 vs. PD** attack against everyone in the room—8d6 fire damage; half on a miss.
- *Killer Squid trap:* A hail of poison darts shoots out of concealed holes in a mosaic of a squid (DC 20 to spot/disarm, **+10 vs. AC** to hit). Characters hit by the darts are poisoned; they may either lose a recovery, or fight through the fever and take a –2 to all attacks until the escalation die reaches 3 in the next fight.
- *Dogged Boulder trap:* A boulder falls into the corridor and rolls toward the characters. Dodging it requires a DC 20 check; squished characters take 3d8 damage. As the boulder rolls past, the characters hear the high-pitched laughter of this level's Custodian (see page 54)—then the boulder



reverses and attacks again. The boulder keeps chasing the characters until they get rid of it (luring it into a pit, blowing it up, fleeing to an encounter).

- *Dungeon Lurch:* A magical white flame burns atop a pedestal without any visible source of fuel. If a character touches the flame, it deals no damage, but seems to burn with greater intensity proportional to the character's level. If the flame's touched by characters with a total level of 15 or more, the whole dungeon quivers and the submergence die increases by 1.

Dwarven Armory

A small octagonal chamber containing dwarven suits of armor and weapons. All are of excellent quality, but non-magical.

Dwarf King/Orc Lord/Crusader: That shield over there—the runes on it prove that it was made for one of the great heroes of the dwarves, Oryn Axebiter. Oryn was famed for his wars against the orcs, although some tales insist that when his beard turned grey and his heart grew cold, he became a follower of the Crusader.

Returning the shield to the Dwarf King would be a deed worthy of reward. However, as Oryn's name is infamous among the orcs, a character bearing the shield openly gains a temporary one-point negative relationship with the Orc Lord and the enmity of other orcs. Conversely, desecrating the shield would curry favor with the Orc Lord.

The Marble Tiger

Half-a-dozen identical marble plinths line this corridor. Five are empty; the sixth bears a life-size and extremely realistic statue of a recumbent tiger. When the characters aren't looking, the statue moves to a different plinth and another pose, as if it was stalking them. The tiger isn't actually dangerous as long as the characters keep an eye on it, and it can't move beyond its six plinths. Characters foolish enough to look away from the statue while within paw's reach of a plinth deserve what they get.

Lair of the Vampire

Hiding in this fetid lair is a madman named **Verlon**; he was a miner on the surface before the Stone Thief swallowed him. He's now a denizen of the dungeon, kept alive because it amuses the Custodian of this level. Verlon survives by eating the remains of other victims of the Gauntlet, and to preserve what little remained of his mind, he convinced himself that he's a vampire. After all, only an undead monster would eat corpses like that, and if you're going to be an undead horror, go for the one with style and fashion sense.

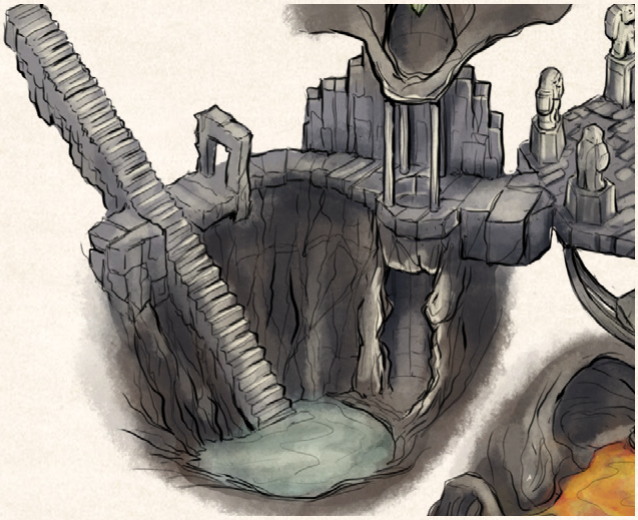
Verlon tries to scare the adventurers away by claiming to be a vampire. He's got the pale skin, and his drawn gums do make his teeth look like fangs, but he's essentially harmless. If cured of his delusion (through the intercession of an emissary of the

Priestess, perhaps, or disabused by a follower of the **Lich King**), Verlon offers the characters the only treasure he has, which the dungeon sought when it consumed his mine—an egg. He doesn't know what sort of creature the egg came from, but it's a big, leathery egg, perhaps a dragon's egg or the egg of some underworld horror unknown to the surface world.

Variations

- If the characters kill Verlon, or if it amuses the Stone Thief, then the Flesh Tailor might turn Verlon into an actual vampire and send him after the characters.
- Should the egg hatch into a monster, the dungeon can cause the creature to grow rapidly.

1. The Falling Stair



The narrow stairs wind down through the rock, twisting this way and that, until the adventurers come to a stone corridor that branches off the stairs. The steps continue down, and the characters catch a whiff of some fetid stench from below. Halfway along the corridor stand two statues depicting stern-faced dwarves with hammers. Past the twin stone statues, the characters can glimpse a distant doorway into the Arena (page 62).

As soon as anyone steps off the stairs into the corridor, the trap triggers. All the steps in the stairway tilt, turning into a steep, slippery slide that sends the rest of the adventurers plummeting into the depths. The first character to step off gets to the corridor. Whoever is next in line (in the marching order if you have one, has the highest Dexterity, or is the target of your cruel whim) can choose to throw themselves forward off the stairs into the corridor and avoid the fall.

For a few seconds.

Then, the chunk of corridor between the stairs and the statues breaks off and falls down the slide, too, faster and faster. This chunk of corridor only falls if one or more characters made it into the corridor.

Spotting the Trap: It's DC 20 to spot the pressure plate in the corridor that triggers the Falling Stair.

Jumping Clear: As the stairs start to fall, a character on the stairs can jump to the corridor with a DC 20 check, but the DC increases by 2 for each other character who already made the jump (it's a narrow corridor). A character in the corridor can jump or sprint past the dwarf statues with a DC 15 check before the ceiling falls. Jumping all the way from the stairs to the safe part of the corridor is a staggering DC 30.

The Slide

It takes three rounds of sliding to reach the bottom of the pit. The walls of the slide are smooth and slick, so it is hard (DC 15) to slow the fall or climb out of the chute. A character could possibly drive a weapon into a crack in the stone and use that to arrest their slide, but remember, there's several tons of masonry in the form of a chunk of corridor coming down that chute too, so retaining mobility is essential.

Hitting Bottom: At the bottom of the chute is a cavern, two-thirds filled with stagnant water. A layer of offal, filth, and grisly bits of waste from the other death-traps bobs up and down on the surface of the lake, its tranquil rotting disturbed only by the sudden high-velocity entrance of the adventurers. Hitting the water at speed inflicts 1d6 damage.

However, if a section of corridor also detached, then those in the water must immediately swim clear (DC 15) or be struck by the falling masonry (2d12 damage, and if you take 10 or more damage, you're buried by the falling rocks and are trapped (possibly underwater) until you break free with a DC 15 check).

The Filth Hydra

Wallowing in the fetid slime is a filth hydra. You know how most hydras are driven by their insatiable hunger, with so many mouths to feed? The filth hydra isn't proud—it's learned to survive on carrion, on slime, on sewage, and on the bits of rotten meat that fall from the Gauntlet's mechanical trap. It's also aquatic—it can breathe through one of its heads while it keeps its body and the rest of its heads underwater, hidden beneath the scum of rotten flesh and gore that floats atop the lake.

The hydra knows about the trap, by the way, so it stays clear of any falling debris.

The Surrounding Wreckage: If the level and number of the PCs warrants it, a nest of tentacled flying horrors (the *terribly hungry stars,* a leveled-up version of the monster from page 235 of the core book) roosts in the wreckage at the bottom of the Well of Blades. The hydra won't eat them because the alien flesh tastes terrible. The aberrations have lost their will to do whatever it is that aberrations normally wish to do and have sunk into pure barbarism as part of the dungeon ecology. If the PCs aren't strong enough to handle the hungry stars alongside the hydra, use the stats later when you need an impromptu menace.

GAMEMASTER

The hydra is a worthy challenge for the average 5th level party. For a 6th level group, it's a pushover, so we've added the hungry stars to the mix to add to the challenge. For a 4th level group, it's a very trying fight—point out that they can retreat toward the Well of Blades, or climb back up the shaft. The hydra dares not leave the water.

Filth Hydra

If you could see it, it would look like a sickly-pale blubbery lizard-thing with many heads, but you can't see it. You can only feel its teeth.

Huge 6th level wrecker [BEAST]
Initiative: +13

Gnashing Teeth +11 vs. AC (5 or 6 attacks)—11 damage
Natural 18+: If the hydra is submerged, the target is hampered until the end of its next turn.
Natural even hit or miss: The hydra's next *gnashing teeth* attack, if it has an attack left this turn, can be against any nearby enemy instead of against a creature engaged with it.
Miss: 6 damage.

Periscope head: If the hydra keeps one head above the water, it can submerge the rest of its body. This periscope head cannot be used to attack. While submerged, the hydra has a +6 bonus to its AC and takes no damage from missed attacks, unless the attack has some excellent reason it should be able to do damage to an underwater hydra.

Spotting the periscope head in the dark requires a quick action and a DC 15 check before each attack; success indicates that this PC can attack the periscope head with a ranged attack. (Exceptional stunts could lead to a melee attack against the head, which is trying to hold itself far out of the way, but normal melee attacks won't work.) Hitting the periscope head for 25 damage is enough to wound the head so badly that the hydra is forced to surface in the next round. It can submerge again in the round after that by switching to a different head.

Too tough to trick: Whenever the hydra would suffer any of the following conditions, it ignores the condition and takes 5 damage instead: confused, dazed, hampered, stunned, or weakened.

Roiling Swirl: If the hydra has at least two *gnashing teeth* attacks left during a turn, it can expend one of those attacks to move to engage a nearby enemy as a free action (but it will take opportunity attacks for doing so.)

Resist Opportunity Attacks: When an opportunity attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 16+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

Sprout Sixth Head: The first time the hydra is staggered, as a free action it gains 45 hit points and a sixth (or seventh, if it's on the surface) *gnashing teeth* attack. It is considered undamaged as its new hit point total, but will be staggered again when it reaches half this new baseline.

Sprout Seventh Head: The second time the hydra is staggered, as a free action it gains 45 hit points and a seventh (or eighth) *gnashing teeth* attack. Use the new hit point baseline as before.

Nastier Specials

Diseased: Any natural 18+ attack with *gnashing teeth* also deals 10 ongoing poison damage.

Grab 'em: If three gnashing teeth attacks hit the same foe in a round, that victim is grabbed.

AC 19 (25 submerged)
PD 19 **HP 180**
MD 16

Terribly Hungry Star

Robbed of their alien will by the Stone Thief's magic, these tentacle flying horrors seem content to fatten themselves on the hydra's kills and to tease it whenever it comes to the surface.

6th level wrecker [ABERRATION]
Initiative: +11

Ripping tentacles +11 vs. AC—20 damage
Natural even hit: If the target is taking ongoing psychic damage, the attack deals +4d6 damage.

[Group ability] **R: Warp-pulse +11 vs. PD (1d3 enemies in a group)**—10 ongoing psychic damage
Natural 16–18: While the target is taking the ongoing psychic damage, it is dazed (–4 attacks).
Natural 19–20: While the target is taking the ongoing psychic damage, it is confused instead of dazed.

Group ability: For every two hungry stars in the battle (round up), one of them can use *warp-pulse* once during the battle.

Limited flight: Hungry stars flap and glide and hover, always within seven or eight feet of the ground. No one knows how that works.

AC 18
PD 16 **HP 110**
MD 17

Hydra's Lair Fight Chart

Number/Level of PCs	Filth Hydra	Terribly Hungry Star
3 x 4th level	**Fly, you fools!**	**0**
4 x 4th level	**1**	**0**
5 x 4th level	**1**	**0**
6 x 4th level	**1**	**1**
7 x 4th level	**1**	**2**
3 x 5th level	***1***	***0***
4 x 5th level	***1***	***1***
5 x 5th level	***1***	***3***
6 x 5th level	***1***	***4***
7 x 5th level	***1***	***6***
3 x 6th level	**1**	**2**
4 x 6th level	**1**	**4**
5 x 6th level	**1**	**6**
6 x 6th level	**1**	**8**
7 x 6th level	**1**	**10**

The Hydra's Lair: The only light comes down a circular shaft from far above. The characters can easily wade or swim over to the bottom of this shaft and start climbing up—this is the foot of the Well of Blades.

More adventurous adventurers can swim around in the lake. There's a cache of treasure (about a thousand gold pieces worth of jewelry, gems, and loose, filthy coins) as well as a narrow flooded tunnel that leads elsewhere in the dungeon—depending on your needs, it's either a way to a later encounter in the Gauntlet, a short cut down to the Gizzard, or a waste chute that drops into another level like the Sunken Sea (page 102) or Dungeon Town (page 87).

Fool Me Once...

On the 2nd and subsequent visits to the Gauntlet, start with the Well of Blades instead. Or, if you're feeling cruel, put a perfectly safe stairs next to the Well of Blades.

2. The Well of Blades



The well is a cylindrical shaft some twenty feet wide and one hundred feet high. At the top of the well is a glowing crystal that sends pearly white light down to the characters below. The walls are sheer in most places, but there are some sections of carved stonework (a winding and partially broken bas-relief depicting dwarven miners tunneling in the depths of the underworld) where the characters can make out footholds and handholds.

Long straight grooves or slots run along the inner walls of the well. These slots never cross each other, but seem to be arranged randomly. A character cannot easily climb the well without crossing one or more of these slots. Climbing the bas-relief requires a move action and a DC 10 check; climbing the sheer walls is a harder DC 25. A character needs to make four successful checks to make it to the top of the well. Failing a check on the bas-relief just means you don't move this turn, failing a check while climbing the sheer wall sends you to the bottom.

Lurking in the dark recesses of the ceiling, out of the light of the crystal, are swarms of undead spiders. They'll wait until the PCs start to climb before attacking.

The Blades: Those slots conceal huge circular-saw blades. When the trap starts, the blades begin to move in and out of the slots.

DC: The trap is patently obvious to spot. Disarming it is a different matter—a rogue could stick a hand into one of those slots and do something clever with the gears inside. That requires a DC 25 check, and if the roll fails, the thief is automatically hit by a blade.

The blades attack two ways: 1) while characters are moving past them; 2) at initiative count 10.

Moving past the blades: Whenever a character successfully climbs the wall with a natural odd roll on their skill check, the character is unable to avoid coming close to a blades slot and is attacked once by the trap.

Initiative count 10: At initiative count 10, the trap attacks a number of vulnerable characters on the wall, up to the number on the escalation die. For example, if the escalation die is 3 and there are two characters on the wall that have become vulnerable thanks to the attacks of the undead spiders, the trap will attack each of the two characters once.

Attack: The blades attack a single target at a time, **+13 vs. AC**—2d6 damage; half damage on a miss.

Nastier option: As a rule, each vulnerable character only gets attacked once by the blades. But when the escalation die reaches 6+, go ahead and use all the attacks as you see fit, piling onto vulnerable PCs.

Undead Spiders

One round after the PCs have begun climbing, hideous undead spiders scuttle down toward them. The hairy grey bodies of the shambling things block out the light of the crystal, plunging the shaft into lattice-shadows of quivering spider-legs. The spiders were originally hunting spiders before being transformed in the nightmare laboratories of the Ossuary.

What's a zombie-spider like? Brittle, for one thing. Hack off a limb, and there's nothing but dust inside the creature's exoskeleton. They can no longer spin natural webs, so they've got spools of ice-rimed steel wire instead. Their venom's brewed from the bile of dead men, and it corrodes the soul of the victim.

The spiders don't crawl down the walls—that would put them in danger of getting sawn in two by a blade. Instead, they descend on their steel strands and swing back and forth, snapping their mandibles and slashing their forelegs at the adventurers on the well walls. In practical terms, this means that no one fighting on these walls is ever considered engaged with an enemy, the spiders are swinging back and forth so they can't make proper opportunity attacks. On the other hand, whenever you want to make a melee attack against an enemy, there's someone swinging or moving past in the chaotic mess, so go ahead and allow most attacks to find a target.

PCs on the bas-relief can hold on and fight. For the fun of it, let's just ignore any weird penalties they might take in these precarious situations. It's not like the undead spiders are the most skilled combatants. Fight normally, if you can. But if a PC who is using a two-handed weapon or a sword and shield fumbles and something terrible happens, well, you should be able to figure out all kinds of fun things to do to characters who are fighting with their hands instead of holding on.

Well of Blades Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Undead Spiders
3 x 4th level	**5**
4 x 4th level	**6**
5 x 4th level	**7**
6 x 4th level	**8**
7 x 4th level	**9**
3 x 5th level	***7***
4 x 5th level	***8***
5 x 5th level	***9***
6 x 5th level	***10***
7 x 5th level	***11***
3 x 6th level	**9**
4 x 6th level	**12**
5 x 6th level	**15**
6 x 6th level	**18**
7 x 6th level	**21**

If a PC gets the smart idea of returning to the bottom of the well to fight, send a crippled undead spider against them: a spider with normal stats but no ability to climb, which should only be a problem for people on the bottom of the well. Each other PC who returns to the bottom triggers 1d3 new undead spiders—the message should be clear: climb or die!

Undead Spider

Skitter skitter skitter. Kill kill kill.

5th level spoiler [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +10

Bite +10 vs. AC—15 damage
Natural 16+: The spider injects its venom. The victim takes an extra 2d8 poison damage and is vulnerable to all attacks (save ends).

C: Throw Steel Web +10 vs. PD—25 damage and the target must make a DC 20 check or be dragged down one level of the well by the weight of the web, losing one of the successful climb checks they need to reach the top. Usable only on vulnerable targets.

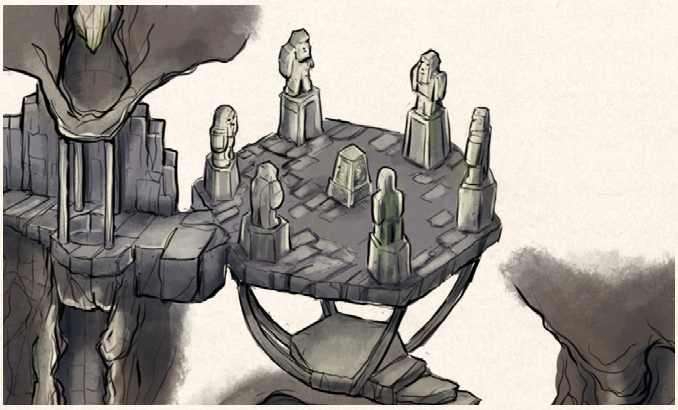
Brittle: When rolling damage against a spider, any damage die that rolls its natural maximum (6 on a d6, 8 on a d8, and so on) may be rolled again and added on to the total.

AC 22
PD 15 **HP 60**
MD 19

Variations

- The characters start at the top of the well instead of the bottom, and have to climb down. Halfway down, the bas-relief dwarves come to life—treat them as a huge stone golem with lots of short arms. It gets to make two attacks per round each on any characters climbing on it. These attacks are **+12 vs. AC**, inflict 20 damage (5 on a miss), and on a natural 16+, knock the target into the path of a blade.
- The characters start at the bottom of the well, but there's no bas-relief. All the walls are sheer apart from the blade slots. Either climb the sheer face (DC 30) or climb at DC 15 without any opportunity to avoid the blades.

3. GOD'S HAMMER



For a short race, the dwarves sure do like to make big statues of their gods. There are seven big statues in this room, each seated on thrones atop a huge dais with a door in it. Each one represents one of the seven lesser dwarf gods of craftsmanship—stonecutting, ironsmithing, goldsmithing, runesmithing, jewel-cutting, sculpting, and brewing. Each statue carries a stone hammer or other tool appropriate to its craft.

In the center of the room, equidistant from the seven statues, is an engraved plinth.

Weirdly, the statues are faceless. They weren't made that way originally. The Stone Thief erased those faces, and the Custodian of the Gauntlet can now manifest there to animate the statues.

Craft Gods and their Weapons

Stonecutter: Mallet and chisel
Blacksmith: Hammer
Goldsmith: Smaller hammer and tongs
Runesmith: Thunderbolt
Jewel-cutter: Smaller hammer and saw
Sculptor: Smaller hammer and chisel
Brewer: Beer stein



Exits

Only one of the doors is the correct exit from the room, and that door changes every time. The plinth in the middle of the room has a riddle pointing to the correct door.

The first time through, the riddle reads:

Scorn he who tempted thee
Scorn he who wrote me
Scorn he who found me
Honor he who inspired me

The answer to this riddle is the **Sculptor**. Choosing the Brewer, Goldsmith, Jewel-cutter (he who tempted thee), the Runesmith (he who wrote me), or the Stonecutter (he who found me) triggers the trap. Choosing the Blacksmith has no effect.

A character with a connection to the Dwarf King or some suitable lore (or who is a dwarf) can recognize the statues as depictions of the seven crafters.

Variations

- Next time the characters encounter this room, the plinth has changed. Now, it bears a *rune of blinding pain*—the character who reads it is blinded (dazed) and takes 7 ongoing damage. A hard save (16+) ends both effects. Oh, the answer to this "riddle" is the Runesmith.
- They're back here again? Then the plinth reads "no way out" and *all* the statues come to life. The door unlocks when three statues go down or when the escalation die reaches 6.

Blessings of the Gods

Priestess or **Dwarf King**: Through your connection with the icon, you invoke one of the divine spirits that slumbers in these statues. Once the fight is over, pick one of the seven crafts—the next time you attempt that craft, you'll succeed with divine grace.

Hammer Time

When the trap triggers, usually by someone trying the wrong door, the Mad Butcher—this level's Custodian—animates one of the statues, fighting from inside its body until it decides to shift into one of the remaining statues. The Mad Butcher looks like someone hacked a rough face onto a sacrificial altar. Flakes of rusty dried blood fall when it contorts its face. It doesn't speak. It only laughs, a shrill mechanical giggling. The statues are functionally stone golems (page 232 of the *13th Age* core rulebook), but each has a nastier special associated with its godly role, and the Mad Butcher has its own trick.

Note that these golems *lack* the regular golem's trait of immunity. You can hit them (or rather, the Butcher) with effects.

Dwarf God Statue

Stay still and let me bless you, child.

Large 8th level blocker [construct]
Initiative: +11

Massive stone fists +12 vs. AC (2 attacks)—35 damage
Miss: 15 damage.

Finishing smash +14 vs. AC (one staggered enemy)—80 damage, and the golem pops the target free and moves it a short distance away from the golem
Natural even hit or miss: 20 damage, and the target is hampered (save ends).
Natural odd hit or miss: 20 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Change Statue: The first time the golem is staggered, the Custodian shifts to another statue, animating it as a new golem form. This new body has full hit points, and any ongoing effects or conditions stay with the old body, which topples over. Anyone engaged with the golem must pass a DC 25 Dexterity check or be crushed by the toppling statue (4d8 damage).

Stonecutter or Ironsmith: The golem gains a hammer attack instead of the two fist attacks.
Hammer: +12 vs. AC—75 damage
Natural 16+: Target is dazed (save ends)

Goldsmith: If the golem strikes a foe, all gold coins carried by the victim become painfully hot. The victim takes 10 fire damage at the start of each of its turns until they divest themselves of all gold (dropping a bag or backpack takes a move action).

Runesmith: As a move action, the golem can inscribe a random champion-tier rune on its weapon. It can replace an existing rune with another randomly-rolled one. Oh, and if any of the adventurers are using runes, they must make a hard save (16+) every round to avoid their rune being negated by the golem.

Jewel-Smith: That gem-saw is tough enough to cut through diamond. Natural 16+: the golem's target takes 10 ongoing damage.

Brewer: Natural 16+: The golem's target is blind drunk (confused) until the end of its next turn.

Sculptor: Natural 20: The golem's target must start making last gasp saves as it turns to stone.

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 280**
MD 18

4th level party: The Mad Butcher can only change statues once.
5th level party: The Mad Butcher can change statues a second time. Add another 140 hit points onto the statue's total—it changes bodies when it hits 280 and 140 hit points.
6th level party: The Mad Butcher can change statues three times. Add another 280 hit points onto the statue's total—it changes bodies when it hits 420, 280, and 140 hit points.

Treasure

There's treasure hidden in the dais beneath each golem. This treasure can be found only after the golems move, so the characters can only get the treasures corresponding to golems that they fought.

Stonecutter: A magic chisel, capable of cutting through any nonmagical stone. With this, you can accomplish astounding feats of tunneling and mining, digging a tunnel at the rate of 50 feet per day. Not fast enough to help during combat, but it could be very useful if you're, say, entombed underground. *Quirk:* Can't stop tapping your fingers loud enough so that everyone can hear. Tap. Tap. Tap.

Blacksmith: A magic anvil. Any items forged on this magic anvil are especially well-made and sturdy. How the adventurers get a magic anvil back to the surface is left as an exercise to them.

Goldsmith: Gold! 250 gp per character.

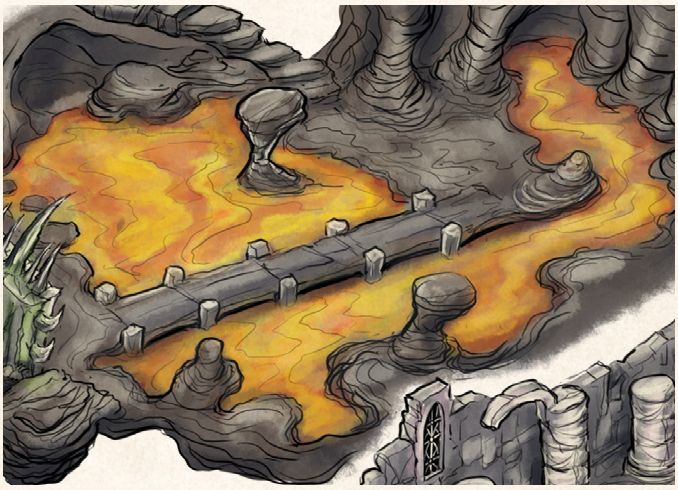
Runesmith: Runes! 1d3 champion-tier runes!

Jewel-cutter: Gems! Worth 250 gp per character at least.

Sculptor: A perfectly carved stone statuette of a fighting dog. Once per day, throw it on the ground and it turns into a slavering hound that fights by your side. Treat it as a 5th level ranger's animal companion. As a move action, you can pick it up again, turning it back into a statue. *Quirk:* Treats the stone animal as if it were a real animal, insisting on feeding it, watering it, petting it, naming it, and so on, sometimes even when there are real people that also need to be taken care of.

Brewer: Keg of magic beer. Any dwarf who swigs from it in battle gets the maximum possible value of their recovery when rallying or using *that's your best shot?* There's enough beer in here for ten good swigs. Overindulging in magic beer causes dwarven vision quests.

4. GIANT'S CAUSEWAY



That, down there, is not a lake of fire. Technically, it's a stew of lava, molten metal, and elemental flame, as well as whatever passes for bile in the stomach of a living dungeon. In any event, touching it would not be a good idea. Fortunately, there's a bridge wide enough for a giant that crosses the chamber, leading to a large doorway carved to resemble the mouth of a demon.

The bridge is made up of dozens of huge basalt flagstones. Some of the flagstones are solidly fixed to rocky pillars, and are stable. Others just float on the fiery slime below, and if anyone steps on one of those, they're likely to sink or topple into the flames. Other small 'islands' of basalt rise just above the level of the lake.

There is a safe path across the bridge. Anyone following precisely the right sequence of flagstones can cross the bridge without touching any of the treacherous blocks. The orcs of Deep Keep and the other dungeon denizens know this path. If the characters have a guide, or spy or scry on a monster, they can follow this path. Alternatively, a ranger with Tracker or a similar background allows the characters to spot tell-tale scrapes and muddy prints on the blocks with a DC 20 check.

The bridge ends at a demonic doorway. Anyone with knowledge of demons (**Crusader/Archmage/Diabolist/Great Gold Wyrm** relationships, raise your hands or claws) recognizes that demonic doorway as depicting a despoiler—a breed of demon best known for its lies. It's a false door—if anyone tries to open it, the doorway bites them (**+10 vs. AC**—4d8 damage).

The real exit from this chamber is through a secret door off to one side of the bridge. The dungeon denizens use floating slabs as 'rafts' to cross from this secret door to the bridge. Spotting the secret door requires a DC 20 Wisdom check, or convincing an orc to act as tour guide.

Crossing the Bridge

If the characters know the correct route across the bridge, they can follow that. The route winds its way across the blocks like a game of hopscotch played by a drunkard, but it's safe up until the very end, where it seems to stop suddenly. At that point, the route requires the would-be traveler to step onto one of the loose blocks and punt it across to the little basalt island in front of the secret door.

If the characters don't know the correct route, then here's how the trap plays out:

- Crossing the bridge requires traversing six rows of blocks. Each time a character enters a new row blindly, roll a d6; on a 3+, it's a safe block. Several characters can share a block if they want, but they'll get in each other's way, raising any check DCs by +5.
- If they pick an unsafe block, it either sinks or detaches from the bridge and starts to float away into the lake.
- The character(s) on the block can either jump forward or back. Either requires a DC 20 check. Jumping back is safer, assuming there's a safe block to go to. Jumping forward may mean the character ends up on another unsafe block. You can keep jumping, but the DC goes up by +5 each time you jump without pausing.
- If the block's sinking, then a failed jump check means you've grabbed onto the edge of another block, and are dangling over the lake of fire. Take 2d6 fire damage per round until you drag yourself up with another check.
- If the block's floating away from the bridge, then you're on your own little boat. You can try paddling with a suitable tool like a metal blade, or try jumping to safety (DC 25). Using a weapon to paddle damages it, making it unusable until repaired. Assuming the characters have someone with a vaguely suitable

Hazards

Fumes

The toxic fumes rising from the lake aren't good to breathe. All characters in this room take 1d6 fire damage every so often. Hit them with this damage when they first enter the room, and whenever they delay or stop moving. When the fighting starts, hit them with the damage in any round when the escalation die is even.

The fumes also make it hard to see. Any attacks made against foes you're not engaged with take a –2 penalty. The fumes may conceal the orcish sentries (see below) from the adventurers. Secretly make a check (DC 20) for the party's scout/lookout/highly perceptive type; if successful, they see the orcs watching them.

Crusader: You've spent a lot of time around toxic fumes. Ignore the penalty to attacks.

Lake of Fire

Close proximity to the lake of fire (hanging above it, flying low over it) inflicts 2d6 fire damage per round. Actually going for a swim means 4d6 fire damage per round (if you're a player character) or just instant death (for most bad guys).

background in the party, they can repair damaged weapons during the next full heal-up. (Magic weapons may endure the heat for longer, but won't be happy about it.) A floating block sinks when the escalation die reaches 6.

- All the blocks in front of the door at the end of the bridge are sinkers, and the door can't be opened. The only way past the causeway is to hop on one of the floating blocks and punt over to the island in front of the secret door.

Orcish Sentries

Off to one side of the bridge, mostly concealed by the fumes, is a band of orcish sentries. The warlord of Deep Keep sent them here to watch for intruders (anyone coming through the Gauntlet must cross the bridge, and anyone who encounters the Gauntlet is someone who threatens the whole dungeon). At least, that's what he told them. There's no way that this is a punishment detail. Sitting on a tiny island of basalt in the middle of a lake of fire, wearing a leather mask to protect you from the toxic fumes? It's an honor.

Should the adventurers get across the causeway with ease, then the orcs just spy on them and report their number and nature to the warlord, so Deep Keep is ready for the intruders when the time comes. However, if the adventurers get into trouble on the bridge, then the orcs decide to take advantage of the situation and attack.

The orcs have little iron-hulled boats lined with insulating furs and spells of protection that can sail on the lake of fire. Some of the orcs carry long iron billhooks that they can use to pull foes off the bridge (or pull bodies out of the lake for looting).

Each orc-boat carries two or three orcs, with at least one warden per boat, but up to six player characters can cram into a single boat if they don't mind molten metal splashing over the edges. Pushing a boat with a punt requires a move action, and maybe a skill check for any fancy boat-themed heroism.

Orc Boatmen

Like many sailors, they can't swim. That's not an issue here.

4th level spoiler [humanoid]
Initiative: +8

Billhook +10 vs. PD—8 damage
Natural even hit: The target is hampered (save ends). The target may remove the billhook (and the hampered condition) at the cost of suffering another 8 damage.
Miss: Orc boatman suffers 1d10 damage from overextending and messing about on boats.
Critical hit: If the target is close to the edge of the bridge, or is on a boat, then the target gets pulled into the lava unless it makes a hard (16+) save immediately.

Reach tricks: The billhook has an especially long reach. The orc can attack nearby foes without becoming engaged with them.

Dangerous: The crit range of attacks by orcs expands by 3 unless they are staggered.

AC 19
PD 18 **HP 50**
MD 14

Orc Wardens

Stalwart defenders of their fellow orcs—or at least, the fellow orc with a knife at their back.

5th level troop [humanoid]
Initiative: +9

Jagged Sword +10 vs. AC—14 damage
Natural even hit: The orc can make a *shield bash* attack as a free action against the target.
Natural even miss: The orc can *duck for cover* as a free action.

Shield Bash +10 vs. PD—4 damage
Natural 16+: The target is dazed until the end of its next turn.

R: Javelin +10 vs. AC—10 damage

Duck for cover: As a standard action, the orc can duck behind its heavy iron shield, increasing its AC and PD by +2 until the start of its next turn.

Dangerous: The crit range of attacks by orcs expands by 3 unless they are staggered.

Nastier Specials

Shield Ally: Ranged attacks on any orcs near the warden take a –2 penalty.

AC 21
PD 19 **HP 72**
MD 15

Orc Commander

Ambitious orcs get promoted based on the number of adventurer heads they bring in.

6th level leader [humanoid]
Initiative: +10

Jagged Sword +11 vs. AC—21 damage
Critical Hit: Until the end of the commander's next turn, all orcs in the battle benefit from their *dangerous* ability even if they are staggered.

R: Javelin +13 vs. AC—10 damage

Blood for Blood: Whenever an orc in the battle scores a critical hit on an enemy, the orc commander may make a free *jagged sword* or *javelin* attack immediately as an interrupt action.

Dangerous: The crit range of attacks by orcs expands by 3 unless they are staggered.

Nastier Specials

Sound the Alarm: The first time an orc commander is staggered in battle, it sounds a war horn. Roll a d6; on a 4+, the next time the PCs encounter orcs in the dungeon, those orcs are ready for them and gain surprise.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 90**
MD 16

Giant's Causeway Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Orc Boatmen	Orc Wardens	Orc Commanders
3 x 4th level	1	2	0
4 x 4th level	2	2	0
5 x 4th level	2	2	1
6 x 4th level	2	2	1
7 x 4th level	3	2	1
3 x 5th level	*2*	*2*	*1*
4 x 5th level	*2*	*3*	*1*
5 x 5th level	*4*	*3*	*1*
6 x 5th level	*4*	*5*	*1*
7 x 5th level	*4*	*6*	*1*
3 x 6th level	3	4	1
4 x 6th level	4	4	2
5 x 6th level	4	5	2
6 x 6th level	4	6	3
7 x 6th level	4	7	3

Variations

- Replace the bridge with a solid arch of obsidian, and stick a fire giant on it.
- The Underriver (page 122) empties out into this chamber, creating billowing clouds of impenetrable steam as icy water pours over molten metal.

5. The Forge



The sound of hammering echoes through the tunnels as the adventurers approach this area. The forge was once Grommar's workshop where he made weapons. Now, the Stone Thief has turned it into a killing floor. Magical golems now work the bellows and wield the hammers, working far faster than any mortal smith. They build custom weapons, each one made to slay a particular living creature. As soon as the characters enter the chamber of the forge, the golems begin working on blades crafted to kill individual player characters. Other golems—living suits of armor—rise to defend the forge. These golems vary in strength and structural integrity.

As the golem-smiths work frantically, they fill the chamber with sparks and smoke, making it hard to see. The smoke conceals another threat, that of the forge-wraiths. These undead creatures are the shades of angry dwarves who died with their life's work incomplete. They take their frustration out on the living.

The Weapon With Your Name On It

At the start of the battle, the golem-smiths complete one slaying blade. They hurl this blade into the air to be grabbed by a forge-wraith, then start work on the next blade. Each round, roll 1d4. If the roll is less than the escalation die, the golems complete another blade and throw it to a forge-wraith or a golem. When the golems complete a blade, they shout out the name of the person it is intended to slay.

Once there's a slaying blade in play for each player character, then the golems down tools and join the fight.

The slaying blades are each attuned to a particular player character. The blade automatically inflicts crit damage on that player character when it hits. Any of the monsters in this battle can wield a slaying blade, as follows:

Slaying Blade +12 vs. AC—25 damage, or 50 damage as an automatic crit on its designated victim

If a creature carrying one of the slaying blades is killed, then another foe can pick up the fallen weapon. (For that matter, so can a player character, if any of them want to carry around a sword dedicated solely to killing one of their compatriots.)

Golem-Smith

They know metalwork like the back of their hands.

6th level blocker [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +5

Hammer +11 vs. AC—20 damage
Natural 16+: The target chooses either to be dazed until the end of its next turn, or takes another 10 damage.

C: Spit Sparks +9 vs. PD (1d4 nearby enemies)—5 fire damage if the target is in heavy armor, 10 fire damage otherwise

Golem immunity: Can't be dazed, weakened, confused, made vulnerable, or touched by ongoing damage.

Quick fix: In any round when the golem-smith is unengaged, it can restore 20 hit points to any other construct. It can't use this ability on itself, and it can't do this while working on slaying-blades.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 100**
MD 16

Animated Armor

They get knocked down, but one gets up again.

6th level mook [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +9

Fist +11 vs. AC—12 damage

Reassemble: When a single attack destroys more than one animated armor, roll 1d6. If the roll is less than the number of animated armors destroyed in that attack, a single animated armor reassembles itself from the wreckage of the group.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 23 (mook)**
MD 16

Mook: Kill one animated armor for every 23 damage done to the mob.

Forge-Wraiths

Bodies of soot, eyes of sparks, talons of hot metal, personalities of unpleasantness.

6th level troop [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +10

Claw +11 vs. AC—15 damage
Natural even hit: The wraith may immediately make another *claw* attack as a free action on a different foe it is engaged with.
Natural even miss: The wraith pops free and may immediately make a *fiery glare* attack as a free action.

R: Fiery Glare +11 vs. PD (one nearby enemy, or a far away enemy at –2 atk)—10 fire damage.
Natural 18+: The target is also vulnerable (save ends)

Flight: The wraith hovers and moves about.

Smoky: The wraith gains *resist damage 16+* when staggered. Force damage, holy damage, and damage inflicted by a slaying blade cannot be resisted.

Nastier Specials

Choking Smoke: Any creature engaged with the wraith takes 10 damage at the start of their turn.

AC 22
PD 16 **HP 90**
MD 20

Forge Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Golem-Smiths	Forge-Wraiths	Animated Armors
3 x 4th level	1	2	2
4 x 4th level	1	2	4
5 x 4th level	1	3	2
6 x 4th level	2	3	4
7 x 4th level	2	3	6
3 x 5th level	*1*	*3*	*5*
4 x 5th level	*2*	*3*	*5*
5 x 5th level	*2*	*4*	*5*
6 x 5th level	*2*	*4*	*10*
7 x 5th level	*3*	*4*	*10*
3 x 6th level	1*	3	4
4 x 6th level	1*	4	6
5 x 6th level	2*	4	6
6 x 6th level	2*	5	8
7 x 6th level	3*	5	8

*For 6th level PCs, use stone golem stats instead.

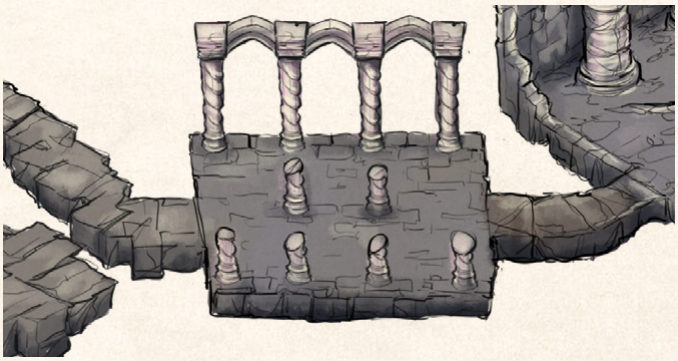
Swords of Slaying FAQ

Q: Do the swords of slaying work outside the forge?
A: Yes.
Q: Can the adventurers lure foes to the forge, so the golems make slaying blades targeting those foes?
A: Sure. One restriction, though—the golems can only make 13 swords per day.
Q: If I'm slain by a sword of slaying, does the sword still work on me if I get resurrected later?
A: Being dead is probably more of a pressing problem than hypotheticals involving magic swords.

Variations

- For a harder fight, heat things up. The sparks from the forge inflict 3 x escalation die damage each round to all living beings, and the slaying swords come out of the forge red-hot—they inflict 10 ongoing fire damage on a successful hit.

6. MAZE OF THE MEDUSA



This chamber was once the treasure vault of Grommar's fortress. Huge runic pillars support the vaulted ceiling. Far above, carvings depicting the Dwarf King and other heroes of the deep can be dimly discerned. At the far side of the room waits a medusa, bow in hand. She stands in the open, without any cover or any protection, as if daring the adventurers to charge toward her.

If they try that, they run head-first into an invisible wall. This chamber is a maze with transparent walls. The maze isn't that hard to solve, but the characters have to do it under fire. Getting through the maze using conventional tactics requires that the character spend four move actions running through the maze, and then make a DC 25 Wisdom check. If successful, the character has found the correct route through. If the check fails, then the character took a wrong turn somewhere, and can try again after another 1d3 moves.

(Non-conventional ways of getting through the maze also work, like climbing the pillars, flying, teleporting, hitching a ride on a harpy, knocking over a pillar or magically countering the runes that generate the force walls. The force walls themselves can't be climbed.)

By the way, the layout of the maze shifts every few rounds. Characters who take a moment to survey the situation can spot the runes on the pillars glowing with a DC 20 Wisdom check. These runes generate the force walls. The runes can't be destroyed without smashing the pillars that bear them, but awareness of the maze layout reduces the DC to navigate it to 15, and drops the number of moves to run through it to two.

Archmage: You've seen runes like this before, and know how to manipulate them. You can bring down the force field, but you'll need to spend a full round performing the counter spell and must succeed at a DC 20 Intelligence check.

THE MEDUSA

She's unimaginably old. The Stone Thief stole her long ago. In a botched attempt to end her own life, she looked into a mirror and was partially turned to stone, but the dungeon's magic would not let her go. Now, she yearns for death but cannot die, as the harpies continuously remind her.

The medusa can leave her post and perish, but only if someone else takes her place. If the adventurers look like they're in danger of being wiped out by this battle, the medusa can offer to spare their lives if one of them takes over as custodian of this maze. Any character who accepts this is bound to remain in the Stone Thief for as long as the dungeon lives, and is teleported back to this room whenever the dungeon submerges or whenever the character is reduced to 0 hit points or below.

The medusa's arrows are inscribed with runes that are the exact inverse of those on the pillars. They can penetrate the force walls without penalty. The player characters can fire back over the walls, but suffer a –4 penalty to their attacks.

HALF-STONE MEDUSA

Stone has consumed her. Stone has claimed her.

Double-strength 6th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +11

Snakes and daggers +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—10 damage, and 10 ongoing poison damage
Natural 18+: The medusa can make a *petrifying gaze* attack against the target as a free action.

R: Poison arrow +11 vs. AC (one nearby or far away enemy)—15 damage, and 10 ongoing poison damage
Natural 20: The medusa can make a *petrifying gaze* attack against the target as a free action.

[Special Trigger] **C: Petrifying Gaze +11 vs. MD (one enemy)**—20 psychic damage, and the target must start making last gasp saves as it turns to stone

Caught by an eye: Whenever a nearby enemy attacks the medusa and rolls a natural 1 or 2, the medusa can make a *petrifying gaze* attack against that attacker as a free action.

Escalating threat: At the start of each of the medusa's turns, roll a d4. If you roll less than or equal to the escalation die, the medusa can also use *petrifying gaze* as a quick action once during that turn.

Half-Stone: The medusa moves extremely slowly. She cannot disengage or intercept.

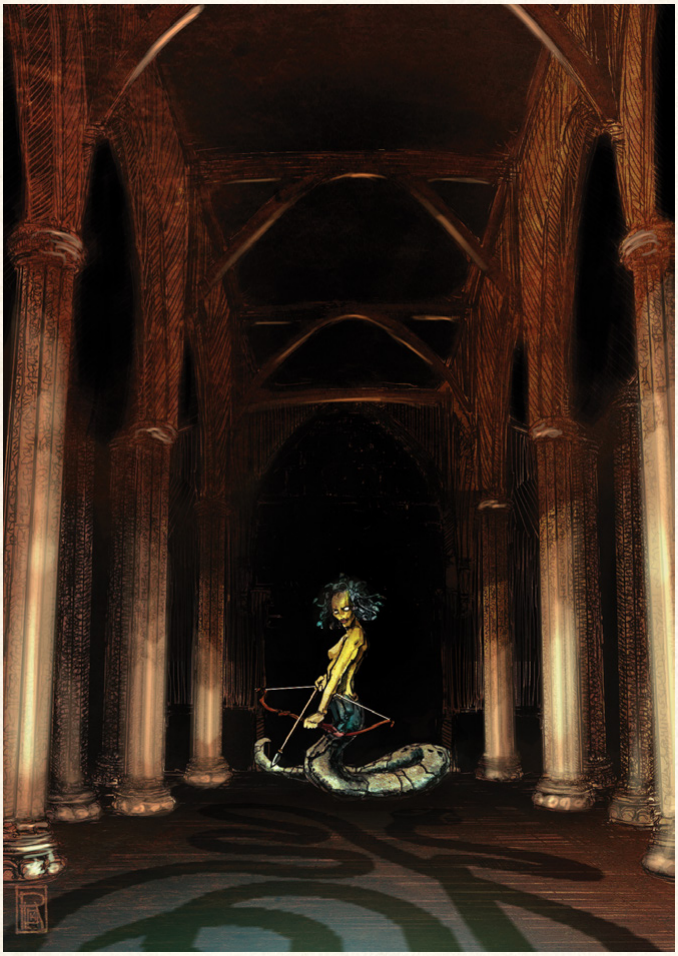
Resist weapons 14+: The medusa's stony skin means that weapon attacks targeting her automatically miss unless the attacker rolls a natural 14+ on the attack roll.

Nastier Specials

The medusa may make two *poison arrow* attacks per round, as long as they're on different targets.

AC 22
PD 14
MD 20

HP 150



The Harpies

Lurking in the shadows above is a pack of harpies. They emerge from their nests of bone and cloth as soon as the fight begins. They're wont to torment the medusa just as much as they're here to murder player characters, so they taunt and mock her as they sing. A clever character might be able to goad the medusa into taking a pot-shot at a harpy.

Harpy

Their discordant screeches merge with the creak of stone in a grisly chorus of suffering.

4th level spoiler [humanoid]
Initiative: +7

Talons +6 vs. AC—10 damage
Cull: The harpy gains a +5 bonus to attack and damage with this attack against any enemy suffering from any fiendish song effect.

R: Bombing Run +8 vs. AC—7 damage
Cull: The harpy gains a +5 bonus to attack and damage with this attack against any enemy suffering from any fiendish song effect.

C: Fiendish song +10 vs. MD (1d3 nearby enemies)—5 psychic damage
Natural 16–17: The target is hampered (easy save ends, 6+)
Natural 18–19: The target is weakened instead of hampered (easy save ends, 6+)
Natural 20: The target is confused instead of weakened (easy save ends, 6+)

Flight: The harpies can flap over the invisible walls.

Stone the Crows: Whenever a harpy becomes staggered, the medusa may choose to turn it to stone. If she does this, the harpy falls on one of the adventurers. This attack is **+10 vs. PD** and inflicts 10 damage on a successful hit.

AC 18
PD 14 **HP 44**
MD 17

Harpy Diva

Queen of the harpies! Queen of the harpies!

Double-strength 7th level spoiler [humanoid]
Initiative: +14

Talons +10 vs. AC—40 damage
Cull: The harpy gains a +5 bonus to attack and a +20 bonus to damage with this attack against any enemy suffering from any fiendish song effect.

R: Bombing Run +10 vs. AC—30 damage
Cull: The harpy gains a +5 bonus to attack and a +20 bonus to damage with this attack against any enemy suffering from any fiendish song effect.

C: Fiendish song +12 vs. MD (1d3 nearby enemies)—15 psychic damage
Natural 16–17: The target is confused (easy save ends, 6+)
Natural 18–19: The target is helpless (easy save ends, 6+)
Natural 20: The target is *charmed*—treat as confused, but the victim can use limited powers and acts to help the harpy diva (easy save ends, 6+)

Flight: The harpies can flap over the invisible walls.

AC 23
PD 17 **HP 200**
MD 21

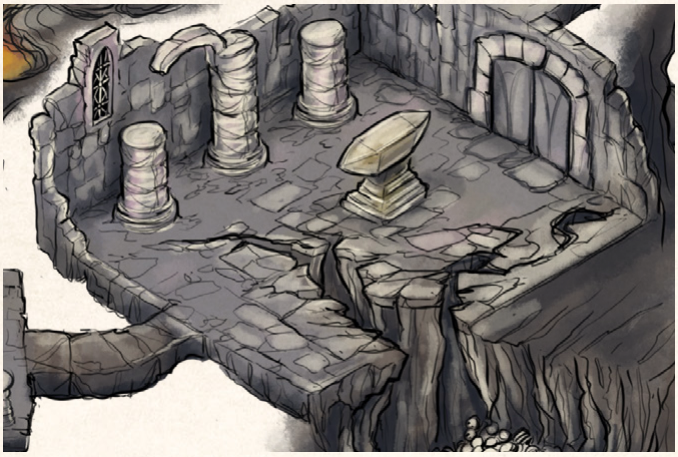
Maze of the Medusa Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Medusa	Harpies	Harpy Divas
3 x 4th level	1	2	0
4 x 4th level	1	3	0
5 x 4th level	1	4	0
6 x 4th level	1	5	0
7 x 4th level	1	6	0
3 x 5th level	1	6	0
4 x 5th level	*1*	*9*	*0*
5 x 5th level	*1*	*3*	*1*
6 x 5th level	*1*	*6*	*1*
7 x 5th level	*1*	*9*	*1*
3 x 6th level	1	0	2
4 x 6th level	1	0	2
5 x 6th level	1	0	3
6 x 6th level	1	0	3
7 x 6th level	1	0	4

Variations

- If the PCs don't destroy the medusa's corpse, then the next time they return, they discover the Flesh Tailor has reanimated her as an undead medusa, and the walls of the maze can now scythe through PCs as they shift from one configuration to another. Tread carefully.
- The harpies' lair connects to the open skies of the Grove (page 137).

7. The Arena



The first thing that the adventurers notice as they approach any entrance to this area are the doors. The Arena was once a magnificent dwarven temple, with titanic iron-shod doors wide enough for a dozen dwarves to pass through shoulder-to-shoulder, and tall enough for a stone golem to pass through without stooping. The frames of these huge doors are still present, but they have been sealed almost completely with five-foot-thick walls of stone, leaving only a single narrow gap barely big enough for the average adventurer.

Inside, the adventurers find themselves in a vast chamber. A huge altar in the shape of an anvil stands in the center of the room, atop a seven-tiered dais. Two statues of dwarf smiths flank the altar, each bearing a hammer. Seven pillars of stone, each carved in the likeness of some dwarf hero of past ages, bear the weight of the vaulted roof. Suspended between the pillars on creaking chains are six crucibles—ceramic pots big enough to boil a whole elephant, used to hold molten metal. Hunks of rubble and fallen stones lie scattered around the once-magnificent floor, as do piles of old bone fragments.

There's also a massive gaping crack in the floor, a yawning chasm that leads down into the darkness (and to the Beast's Lair; see page 65). The characters can hear snoring and grunting from down there—something big sleeps fitfully in the darkness.

Careful examination of the side wall reveals a hidden door, leading up to the Belfry (see page 67).

The Monster

It's clear that there's a reason why the Stone Thief keeps the doors of this part of the dungeon small—it doesn't want its pet wandering loose in the upper levels. The huge hole in the floor of the temple leads down to the lair of a great minotaur. The minotaur is sleeping when the characters arrive in the Arena, but soon it scents their blood…

For a tougher fight, then the minotaur is accompanied by a host of dwarven ghost mooks—the spectral remains of Grommar and his followers, bound to haunt the monster that killed them.

Killer: Give the player characters a chance to flee or stun the minotaur by dropping molten metal on it if you want them to survive.



Great Minotaur

This thing should have died long, long ago. Its rank fur stinks like a slaughter-house; its misshapen, overgrown horns make it stoop and stagger. Something glitters amid the scars and fur on its barrel-sized chest.

Triple-strength 8th level wrecker [BEAST]
Initiative: +12

Monstrous claws and horns +13 vs. AC (2 attacks)—30 damage
Natural 16+: The minotaur pops the target free and knocks it a short distance away. The target is dazed until the end of its next turn.
Miss: Half damage.

[Special trigger] **Furious charge +15 vs. AC**—100 damage
Miss: 3d20 damage.
Limited use: Escalation die 4+ and the minotaur moves before attacking an enemy it was not engaged with at the start of its turn.

Escalating damage: Whenever the escalation die increases, openly roll a d10. Add the result of the roll to the damage dealt by each of the great minotaur's *monstrous claws and horns* attacks. Tell the PCs the minotaur's horns and claws are growing and absorbing magical power, and that they can hear the bones of the monster's ribcage grinding against the metal of the blade in its chest. It's getting stronger. Retreating may be a wise move for lower-level adventurers—remind the players that the exits of this room are too small for the monster to move through.

Blood Frenzy: The minotaur gains a +4 melee attack bonus against staggered enemies.

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies with 48 hit points or less are dazed (–4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

Immortal: The minotaur cannot be permanently slain until Grommar's Blade is removed from its chest (see below).

Nastier Specials

No Escape!: If the adventurers flee, the minotaur may immediately make a free *furious charge* attack on one adventurer. The players elect which of them takes the brunt of this attack.

AC 24
PD 22
MD 18

HP 400

Death-Bound Shade

These specters cannot rest until the minotaur perishes. Every creature killed by the beast joins their unhappy host.

7th level mook [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +12

Icy Hands +12 vs. AC—18 cold or negative energy damage, whichever is nastier

Strength of Death: Foes engaged with the great minotaur are vulnerable to the death-bound shade's attacks.

Dread: Death-bound shades fear or respect certain icons. A character with an outstanding benefit from the **Priestess**, **Dwarf King**, or **Lich King** can use it to banish 1d6 death-bound shades. The banished shades flee into the void, never to be seen again.

Dragged Into Death: A dying hero may battle against these shades from the threshold of death. Unconscious characters who roll a 12 or more on a death save may destroy 1d4 death-bound shades. Alternatively, a character may voluntarily fail a death save to destroy 1d8 + Charisma bonus death-bound shades.

AC 22
PD 22 **HP 27 (mook)**
MD 17

Mook: Destroy one death-bound shade for every 27 damage dealt to the mob.

Arena Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Minotaur	Death-Bound Shades
3 x 4th level	1	0
4 x 4th level	1	2
5 x 4th level	1	3
6 x 4th level	1	4
7 x 4th level	1	5
3 x 5th level	*1*	*0*
4 x 5th level	*1*	*2*
5 x 5th level	*1*	*4*
6 x 5th level	*1*	*7*
7 x 5th level	*1*	*12*
3 x 6th level	1	4
4 x 6th level	1	6
5 x 6th level	1*	10
6 x 6th level	1*	15
7 x 6th level	1*	20

*start using nastier specials

Grommar's Blade & the Undying Minotaur

Grommar succeeded in making a weapon so perfect it could kill death. Unfortunately, he was forced to use it in self-defense and stabbed the great minotaur with it when the beast lumbered out of the Maw of the Stone Thief to despoil his temple. As long as that blade rests in the minotaur's heart, the creature cannot be permanently slain. Its death is already within it, pinned on the perfectly honed tip of Grommar's Blade.

If the characters succeed in defeating the minotaur, then they must quickly remove the blade before the creature reanimates. At the very least, that's going to require a DC 25 check; alternatively, make the players come up with a clever plan to pull the sword from the sternum.

The blade itself is a *+2 sword of greater striking* (when the escalation die is 3+, add +2d8 damage), but once per level, on a critical hit, it can make an attack against *anything*—a shadow, a spell, an emotional bond, someone's fate, someone's death. The thing you target has to be within sword's reach. *Quirk:* Whispers about (and gets glimpses of) mysterious shadowy figures and invisible forces lurking beyond the perception of mortals.

Sneaking Past

The characters can tiptoe from one hunk of rubble to another, staying out of sight. The minotaur can't see very well, but it's got a keen sense of smell. If the characters try sneaking, it's DC 20—pick a random player character to make the roll if they all move. If the check fails, the minotaur scents their presence and starts to search for them. A stealthy character can try luring the minotaur away from the group with another DC 20 check. If successful, the character draws the minotaur out of position, allowing the others to escape, then sneaks back to rejoin the party. If the roll fails, then the brave PC is Target #1 for the monster.

Fighting the Minotaur

Use the minotaur's ability to pop enemies free (which is a euphemistic way of saying 'send them flying with a savage, bone-crunching swipe') to keep the battle mobile.

The Crucibles: The magical crucibles overhead contain cold, congealed globs of metal—but if a character activates the dwarven runes of fire inscribed on each one, the metal melts back into a liquid and can be dumped on a foe below. Activating a rune requires a DC 20 check; dropping molten metal does 3d10 damage on 1d3 creatures below.

The Pillars: Doing 100 damage to a pillar smashes it; smashing three pillars causes part of the ceiling to cave in, burying anything below in a pile of fallen masonry (4d10 damage, and at least one round of being stuck and dazed).

Running Away: If the characters are in trouble, then **Bartholomew** (see page 67) pops his head out of the secret door to the Belfry and urges the characters to follow him.

The minotaur cannot make it through the narrow doors of the Arena, so if the characters leave this area, it can't follow them.

Variations

- The doors to the Arena are no longer mostly bricked up—the minotaur can follow the adventurers through the whole Gauntlet!
- Hang a prisoner from the chains. If the characters can't rescue this victim, the minotaur gets to play piñata.
- If any of the pillars fall, they smash through the floor, opening a pit down to the Beast's Lair (see below).
- If the minotaur gets killed, then the Stone Thief replaces its pet with another monster (see Giant Monster, page 345).

8. The Beast's Lair



The minotaur of the Arena (see page 63) dwells here, amid the piled bones of its previous victims and rather a lot of pungent dung. The characters can climb out of this lair to the Arena (page 62) by clambering over the piles of bones. Doing so requires a DC 20 check; failure means the character still climbs out, but the minotaur hears the bones clattering and is alerted to the characters' presence.

Treasure

There are a few coins and potions buried in the bones, but the real treasure's still looped around the waist of one skeleton. It's a champion-tier *unyielding belt.* It increases the wearer's maximum recoveries by +2, and (recharge 6+) whenever one of the wearer's allies is slain or reduced to 0 hp or below in battle, the wearer may heal using a recovery.

The Archive Door

The biggest pile of bones sits atop the giant trapdoor to the dwarven archive. A successful DC 25 check lets the characters spot the buried door; otherwise, they can learn of it from Bartholomew (see the Belfry, page 67). Opening the door is easy enough—just dig through the bones and pull the handle on the trapdoor, and then let precisely balancing dwarven engineering do the rest. Unfortunately, opening the door causes the whole pile of bones to slip, slide, and collapse in on top of the trapdoor. Any characters near the door may get dragged down by this grisly landslide. (And if the minotaur doesn't know they're here, they just rang an alarm bell for him.)

At the same time, the undead guardians waiting on the far side of the trapdoor start crawling up, so the characters get to fight with a bunch of skeletons even as they're sliding down on a torrent of bones.

The Boneslide

ED0 to ED2: Any characters near the trapdoor must make a DC 25 check or be dragged toward the trapdoor. Dragged characters are considered stuck and vulnerable.

The Skeletons

ED0 to ED2: It's hard to spot an animated skeleton when all you can see is bone bits raining down around you. Until the escalation die reaches 3+, all the skeletons in the bone pile have the following ability:

Ignore Targeted Attacks 11+: When a single-target attack hits the skeleton, the attacker must roll an 11+ on the attack roll or it misses instead.

Skeleton Host

The head bone's connected to the neck bone, the neck bone's connected to the shoulder bone, the shoulder bone's connected to... the spine of the next skeleton over.

5th level mook [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +9
Vulnerability: holy

Bone Fingers +10 vs. AC—9 damage

Resist Weapons 16+: When a weapon attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 16+ or it only deals half damage.

Crumbly: If a skeleton has 5 or fewer hit points left after being hit by an attack, but is still alive—well, not *alive* alive, but still up and fighting—roll a d6.

1–3: The skeleton collapses into a pile of bones. It gets to make one last *bone fingers* attack before dying.

4: The skeleton's arms come off as it grapples with a foe. That foe takes a –2 penalty when trying to disengage from the skeleton mob. The skeleton is destroyed.

5: The skeleton's hands come off. They're still animated, and wriggle their way inside the target's armor/robes/magic pantaloons. The character takes 5 ongoing damage. The skeleton is now effectively weaponless and can be removed from the battlefield.

6: The skeleton's head comes off and rolls around the floor. Anyone moving nearby in the rest of the round must make a DC 10 skill check as part of that movement or get bitten for 5 damage.

AC 21
PD 15 **HP 15 (mook)**
MD 19

Mook: Kill one skeletal host for every 15 damage dealt to the mob.

Skelepede

It's a centipede with rib-bones for legs and a skull for a head. Suddenly, you realize why that bone-pile was so heavy on pelvises and limbs.

5th level wrecker [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +11
Vulnerability: holy

Bite +10 vs. AC—20 damage
Natural even hit: The skelepede pops free from the target.

C: Scuttling Crawl +10 vs. AC (up to 3 nearby enemies)—8 damage
Running Start: The skelepede can only make a *scuttling crawl* if it starts its turn unengaged. Roll the attacks one at a time; if it misses with any of the individual attacks, the *scuttling crawl* attack ends prematurely with that target.

Twist and Writhe: If an attack on a skelepede misses with a natural 1–5, it may immediately pop free.

AC 21
PD 18 **HP 72**
MD 18

Scrimshawed Skelepede

The Flesh Tailor improved the original skelepedes by carving arcane runes into the bones of these monsters. As they skuttle, the runes combine into potent arcane configurations.

7th level wrecker [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +13
Vulnerability: holy

Bite +12 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural even hit: The skelepede pops free from the target.

C: Scuttling Crawl +12 vs. AC (up to 3 nearby enemies)—13 damage
Running Start: The skelepede can only make a *scuttling crawl* if it starts its turn unengaged. Roll the attacks one at a time; if it misses with any of the individual attacks, the *scuttling crawl* attack ends prematurely with that target.
Spells of Bone: If the skelepede's *scuttling crawl* attack hits two enemies, the skelepede may teleport a short distance.

If the skelepede's *scuttling crawl* attack hits three enemies, the skelepede inflicts 2d6 negative energy damage on all nearby enemies.

Read the Bones: Whenever a scrimshawed skelepede makes a *scuttling crawl* that hits three enemies, any nearby characters may roll any Lich King relationship dice they possess, as they glimpse the future in the restless bones of the monster. Any benefits come in the form of predictions, foresights or lottery numbers.

Twist and Writhe: If an attack on a skelepede misses with a natural 1–5, it may immediately pop free.

AC 23
PD 20 **HP 100**
MD 20

Beast's Lair Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Skeleton Host	Skelepedes	Scrimshawed Skelepedes
3 x 4th level	**6**	**1**	**0**
4 x 4th level	**6**	**2**	**0**
5 x 4th level	**9**	**2**	**0**
6 x 4th level	**9**	**3**	**0**
7 x 4th level	**9**	**4**	**0**
3 x 5th level	***6***	***3***	***0***
4 x 5th level	***6***	***3***	***1***
5 x 5th level	***9***	***4***	***1***
6 x 5th level	***9***	***5***	***2***
7 x 5th level	***12***	***6***	***3***
3 x 6th level	**12**	**0**	**3**
4 x 6th level	**12**	**0**	**4**
5 x 6th level	**15**	**0**	**5**
6 x 6th level	**15**	**0**	**6**
7 x 6th level	**20**	**0**	**7**

Variations

- Whatever monster stalks the Gauntlet has its stinking bed here. When the adventurers first delve into the dungeon, the minotaur is that monster. If they succeed in slaying the immortal minotaur, then the Stone Thief steals another suitable beast (see *Giant Monster* on page 345) and replaces this lair with the monster's home. The door to the archive remains, although it may now be exposed.

9. The Belfry



A hidden spiral staircase winds up through the wall of the old cathedral to this small complex of rooms. Once, these were the quarters of the apprentices who tended the forge-fires during the night. Now, the only living thing here is an ex-adventurer named **Bartholomew.** (He was an adventurer up until about twenty minutes after his adventuring party entered the Stone Thief, when he decided that all he really wanted was a nice, quiet life.)

Elicit player sympathy by tying Bartholomew to an icon the players respect or serve.

- **Emperor:** Bartholomew's a street urchin from Axis; he was given shelter by the church and became a fighting cleric. When word reached the church of a newly-discovered dungeon, he found a few adventurers in the local inn and went off to thwart this evil before it could threaten the Empire. Play him as a well-meaning, civic-minded sort of cleric who's in over his head.
- **Priestess:** Bartholomew is an acolyte from Santa Cora. While praying at the Cathedral, he had a vision of a terrible evil, and gathered a band of adventurers to face it. In the vision, he saw a grey-faced thief with no eyes groping blindly in the darkness, and each time she reached out, he saw that her hands were drenched in blood. This thief had a bag of hearts, ripped from the bodies of the great and the good.
- **Prince of Shadows:** Bartholomew's dressed as a cleric, but it's clear that it's just a disguise. He admits that he and the rest of his party pretended to be priests to rob an isolated monastery, because the Prince wanted a particular bottle of wine made by the monks. While exploring the monastery cellars, there was 'an earthquake' and they ended up here. He has the wine, though—if the characters help him escape, they can bring it to the Prince's agents and claim credit. He just wants his life back.

Bartholomew's party didn't get very far into the dungeon—they were scattered by the Falling Stair, and Bartholomew ended up here in this dead end. He doesn't know what happened to the others—they may all be dead.

The Other Adventurers

The other members of Bartholomew's party were:

- Efric, a gnome bard
- Tallis, a half-elven ranger
- 'The Beard', a dwarf fighter
- Arzimyat, a (probably) human wizard

He became separated from them when they entered this part of the Gauntlet—he fled into this Belfry while the others ran through another door and went deeper into the dungeon. He doesn't know what happened to them, but he suspects horrible fates befell them.

Optionally:

- Ask each player to speculate on the fate of one of the lost adventurers. If the player's speculations amuse you, then you can integrate them into the dungeon. 'Canonically', Efric is stuck down in a secret prison in Deep Keep, but don't let that stop you.
- Pick a PC. That character knows one of Bart's erstwhile companions. Ask the player to describe the circumstances and nature of this acquaintance.

Further Information

Bartholomew has managed to find out a little about this dwarven ruin. It was once a temple to some forge-god, built by a dwarf named Grommar. He even found a plan of the temple, but it all seems to have changed. He cannot account for how a dwarf temple that was clearly built in the mountains east of Forge has ended up here (and remember, Bartholomew doesn't know the dungeon moves, so his conception of 'here' is equally wrong). The plan does show an archive and a magical laboratory somewhere directly below them, as well as a temple and a forge across a 'bridge of fire'. From this, the PCs can discern two key facts about the Stone Thief:

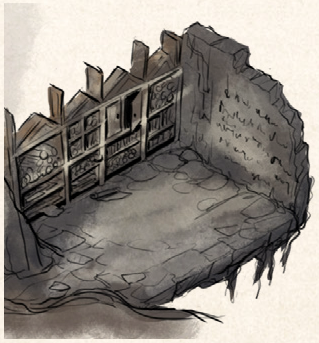
- The dungeon moves.
- It consumes buildings from the surface and makes them part of itself.

Bartholomew even guesses that if the dungeon could be interrupted in its meal, it might vomit the stolen building back up again.

Optionally, use Bartholomew to introduce a plotline related to the dungeon:

- His party fought a cabal of strange cultists, who worshipped 'the Devourer'.
- While exploring the dungeon, he met a starving madman dressed in tattered rags. The madman claimed to be a noble of the Empire and showed Bartholomew a signet ring as proof of this claim. The signet ring bore the crest of Marblehall.
- A patrol of orcs passed through the room below. They avoided the minotaur by sneaking past when it was sleeping. He overheard the orcs talking about how they were looking for 'runaway slaves' who might try to get back to the surface or to 'the Provost'.

10. GROMMAR'S LIBRARY



This was the library where Grommar the Mastersmith wrote down his observations on metalworking and magic. When the Stone Thief stole his citadel and trapped him in this chamber, he kept writing. He ran out of parchment, so he used the walls. He ran out of ink, so he used his fingernails and his teeth to scrape runes into the stone. Finally, he ran out of sanity.

Grommar's skeletal remains lie on the floor, at the bottom of one wall covered with his scribblings.

Grommar's Rantings

Picking through the deranged scribbling on the wall, the characters learn

- They're in a living dungeon, which Grommar identifies as *She Who Undermines.* Those familiar with dwarven legend know that this is another name for the fabled Stone Thief.
- Grommar rants about being trapped in this library and forced to listen as death devoured his acolytes and servants.
- He talks about 'whispers and mocking voices' in the stone, and speculates about 'evil elementals'. His writing becomes increasingly hard to decipher from this point on.
- While imprisoned here, he developed a magical ritual to forge a weapon that could kill the living dungeon. The weapon requires several exotic components, including:
  - The ichor of a Koru behemoth
  - Meteoric iron from the overworld
  - Everburning coal from the underworld
  - The soul of a hero
  - The blessing of the Dwarf King
- There's also a sixth component to the ritual, but before the characters can interpret Grommar's crazy script, the wall quivers and reshapes itself into the face of this level's Custodian, the Mad Butcher. As the Custodian warps the wall, the writing becomes unintelligible.

Grommar's Formula

A way to kill the Stone Thief, or the meaningless ravings of a once-brilliant craftsman? Adventurers who go after every prophecy and occult plot-token shopping list deserve whatever they get. If you don't intend for this formula to produce a weapon that can kill the Stone Thief, then consider the possibility that it was planted by the Mad Butcher or the Cult of the Devourer—maybe bringing dungeon ectoplasm and everburning coal into the presence of the Dwarf King will allow the Stone Thief to break through the runic wards protecting the city of Anvil and let it consume the Dwarf King's treasury at last.

If Grommar was onto something, then see *Forging a Weapon* on page 354.

Fast Drop

The Custodian shrieks at the adventurers. *"Who killed my pet?"* it roars, referring to the long-dead Grommar. It blames the adventurers for murdering the dwarf, and raves that they have made an enemy for life—and then he'll 'send them down to the Flesh Tailor', so he can torment them for eternity. The Mad Butcher turns the floor into a chute that plunges the party down to another level of the dungeon (preferably somewhere nasty, like the Ossuary or the Sunken Sea).

If the PCs labor under the burden of too many hit points, relieve them by lining the chute with buzz-saws and spikes (4 dice of damage each, with the size of the dice depending on how much the adventurers angered the Butcher.)

Exits

- Down the Butcher's chute.
- Along a moving walkway that slants downward.
- Via a crumbling staircase.
- Through a door that says "abandon all hope" on the opposite side.
- Through a hole in the wall, smashed by a round boulder that rolls down the corridor toward the PCs.

The Gizzard

Levels 4–6

The Gizzard is where the Stone Thief digests its stolen goods. It's the one place in the dungeon—outside the Heart—where the Stone Thief can't hide behind masks and façades. The real substance of the living dungeon is exposed here. In this place, it's vulnerable.

Anything swallowed by the Maw ends up here.

Features & Factions

The Gizzard is the crossroads of the dungeon—whenever the Stone Thief steals from the surface, denizens gather in this level to take slaves, steal treasure, salvage supplies, and to feed. The Custodian called the Architect controls the level, although orcs from Deep Keep grow increasingly bold in staking their claims to the pick of the treasure.

Descriptors

Heat, acrid smells, and billowing, choking dust, the sound of stones smashing off each other. The level's primary illumination are purple-white flashes of underground lightning that burst when the Stone Thief consumes an especially large or magic-rich object.

Minor Encounters

New Passageway Forming

The characters come across a part of the living dungeon that's still being constructed. It's a sight both fascinating and unnerving. Stone blocks that glisten with the ectoplasm of the Stone Thief's substance slide into place along a round tunnel that slowly grows, groping through the rock like a tree-root. As the stone blocks lock together, they turn the organic curves of the wet tunnel into the regular geometric shapes of a dungeon corridor. If the characters wait here for a few minutes, the living dungeon forms a new route leading to another level, like the Sunken Sea or the Grove.

Survivors

A few stunned and confused survivors stagger out of the Hall of Ruin. They've no idea what happened, or where they are. Unless the player characters help them, they'll be enslaved or eaten, or enslaved then eaten, or even eaten then animated then enslaved.

Blockhead Wreckers

At some point in the past, the Stone Thief swallowed a part of another, smaller dungeon that was once the lair of an evil sorcerer. This dungeon has been digested piece by piece, leaving only this last chamber to be processed. A team of blockheads sorts through the sorcerer's arcane paraphernalia and lab equipment, clearing the way for the Stone Thief to digest the chamber without being irritated by any magical contaminants.

The Three: The character recognizes the chamber—this was the lair of the blue sorcerer **Azial the Whisperer**, an infamous spymaster said to have a network of agents operating in Glitterhaegen, Axis, and Horizon. If Azial's lair got eaten, then Azial is likely dead, which means his network of spies is suddenly missing a leader. A quick-acting and ambitious adventurer could take over Azial's role—if only Azial's roster of agents could be found. It must be somewhere in this dungeon.

Helm of Thought Stealing

An ornate helmet is partially embedded in the wall here. The helm can still be worn, but cannot be moved from its station. Examining the helm suggests that it is a magical item; the runes suggest it is something to do with thought or memory, but it has the unmistakable air of the **Crusader** about it. A pair of manacles lies bolted to the wall next to the helmet, and a close examination of the floor nearby finds traces of dried blood.

You put the helmet on? Brave fool—have a **+10 attack vs. MD.** On a hit, the character takes 3d6 psychic damage *and* has some memories stolen from their mind. The dungeon is interested in knowing who these intruders are, and if they have any places of power worth consuming. So, a character hit by this attack may give the dungeon its next target. If the attack misses, the character gets a fleeting mental image; maybe the PC sees the dungeon's next target, or knows the way to a particular place in the dungeon. Feed the PCs whatever clue they need. Oh, the helmet's attack increases by +5 each time someone sticks their head in.

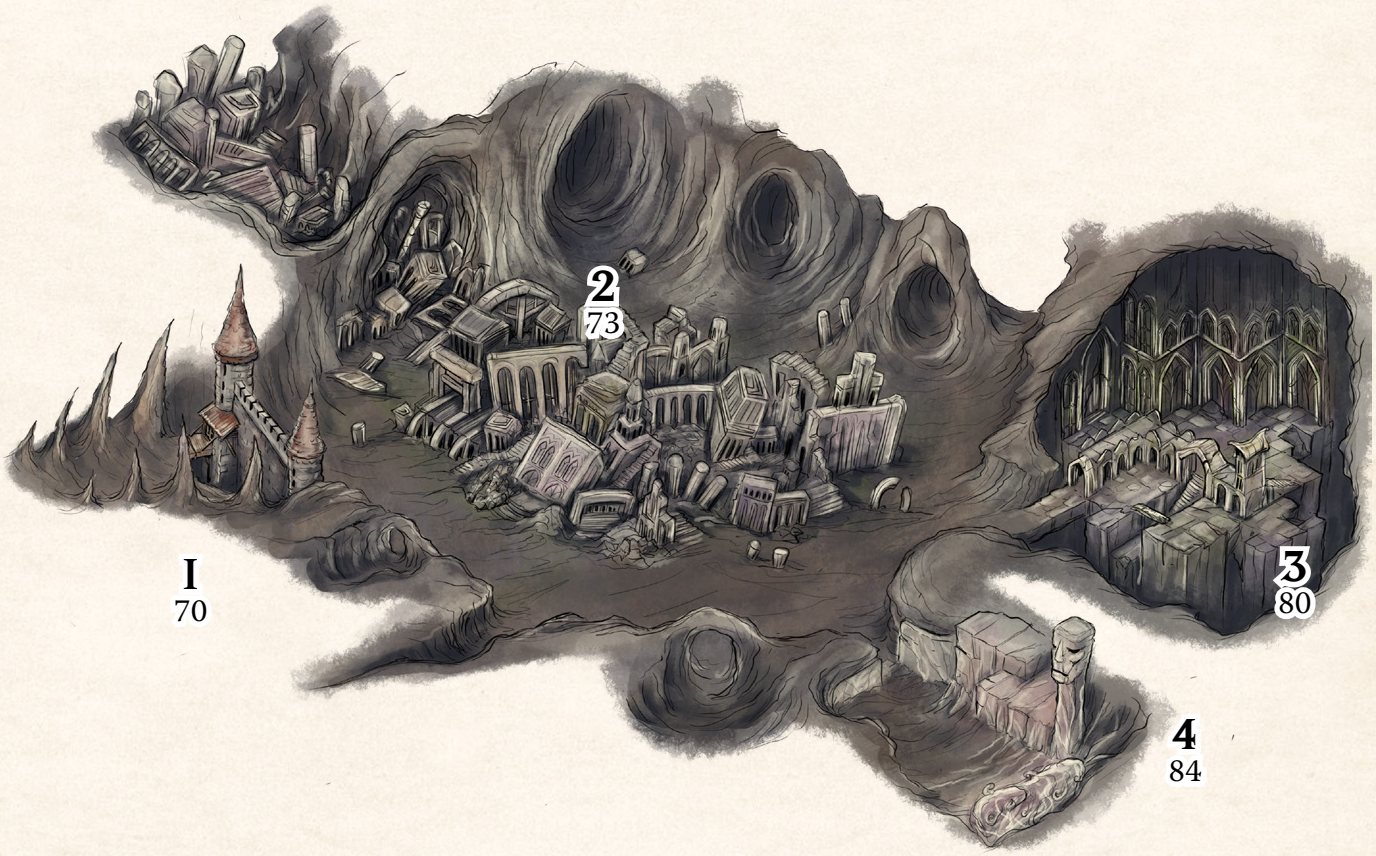
Attempting to remove the helmet from the wall angers the dungeon—throw a monster at the player characters. If they keep trying, increase the submergence die. And if *that* doesn't dissuade them, then let them wrench the helmet from the wall, but that starts the dungeon sinking. Maybe a Crusader benefit could let the characters free the helm without ending the dungeon crawl prematurely.

Freed, the helmet is a *helm of thought stealing.*

Helm of Thought Stealing

+1 MD

(Recharge 11+): When you hit a foe with an attack that targets Mental Defense, you also steal their surface thoughts. Depending on circumstances, this might give you useful information ("*she's an assassin sent by the Three! Also, she's secretly in love with the party's bard!*") or just give you a +1 bonus to all defenses against that foe's attacks until one of their attacks actually damages you. *Quirk:* Unconsciously mutters what other people are thinking.



I. JAWGATE

No one likes to be disturbed when they're eating. The Jawgate ensures that adventurers and other vermin can't break into the Gizzard from the Maw while the Stone Thief gorges itself.

The Jawgate is a gatehouse, stolen from some human castle in ages past. It sits awkwardly against the natural stone of the cavern—another clear example of how the dungeon reuses structures from the surface. It consists of a moat crossed by a drawbridge, and behind the drawbridge is a portcullis. The battlements of the gatehouse scrape against the roof of the cavern in places, but there's enough room for the orcs in the gatehouse to shoot arrows from their wicked crossbows at intruders.

Fangrot (the warlord of Deep Keep) stations orcs at the Jawgate to watch for intruders, but the gate itself is under the control of the Gizzard's Custodian. The orcs have rigged up a system of levers to prise open the gate when they go looting on the surface. From this, the characters can learn that the orcs are not 'part' of the living dungeon. They're intruders, just like the adventurers.

Oh—why is it called Jawgate? See those spiky stalactites and stalagmites at the ends of the cavern? They're teeth…

Hazards of the Gatehouse

The Moat: The moat is filled with filthy slime instead of water. Jumping across it is a DC 25 check; wading through doesn't require a check, but it takes a full move action to slog through the goop. Also, there may be a **gelatinous cube** hidden in the muck. This ooze doesn't leave the moat, but can slap its pseudopods at anyone close to the moat, or trying to climb the walls. It can also swipe at those on the drawbridge, but at a –2 penalty to its attacks.

The Drawbridge: There's something odd about the drawbridge. A normal drawbridge has a winch to lower and raise it, right? This one has a complex mess of gears and pulleys to *force* it to open. The drawbridge is down if the orcs are unaware of the presence of intruders in the dungeon. If they have advance warning of adventurers, then they raise the bridge. Raising or lowering the bridge takes three rounds.

Characters can lower the bridge by having a rogue scale the wall and activate the mechanism in the gatehouse with a DC 20 check. (It doesn't have to be a rogue, if you've got some stereotype-defying Bat-paladin with a knack for stealth and sabotage. But it's probably going to be the rogue).

The Portcullis: The orcs (or the Custodian) can release the portcullis and have it slam down on anyone coming through the gate. Lifting the portcullis requires a DC 30 check when using brute force, or you can use the orcish mechanism in the gatehouse above.

Portcullis: +15 vs. AC—15 damage.

Natural 16+: The target gets pinned by the falling portcullis, and is stuck (hard save ends, 16+).

The Orcs

As soon as the orcs realize they're under attack, they man (orc?) the walls and close the drawbridge. (They leave the portcullis up in the hopes of catching someone when they drop it, but can lower it early if they need to). Their heavy hitter—the ogre champion—blocks the gateway, while the others shoot crossbow bolts or fire spells from above.

Orc Lord: A character who has the Orc Lord's favor can intimidate Fangrot's followers. 1d6 + 1 dungeonspawn fall back for each benefit expended; also, an excellent skill check might even convince some of these orcs to switch sides.

Raise the Alarm!

The orcs of Deep Keep watch for intruders. If one group of orcs encounters the adventurers, they'll send word to the others to prepare for attackers. The adventurers can avoid giving advance notice of their presence by sneaking past the orcs, or by eliminating the defenders so quickly and thoroughly they never get a chance to raise the alarm. Sneaking past requires a DC 20 Dexterity check and a plan to distract any orc sentries so the less stealthy members of the party can get through undetected. Alternatively, mugging some orcs for their uniforms—hey, brutish iron helmets and mismatched bits of scavenged armor held together with leather straps count as a uniform—could let the characters bluff their way past with a DC 25 Charisma check.

Those with a relationship to the Orc Lord can potentially trade on the icon's authority. Allies of the Orc Lord could convince some of the orcs to switch back to their original loyalty and abandon Fangrot; enemies of the Orc Lord might be welcomed in Fangrot's halls, if they can convince the orcs to parley.

If the orcs do raise the alarm, then increase the number of defenders in the Jawgate and the Slaver Camp by counting the number of adventurers as being one higher. So, if you've got four PCs, then use the fight chart row for five PCs of the appropriate level.

The Jaws of Death

The Jaws close to defend the living dungeon against pesky intruders. Row by row, the teeth slam down and the cave floor tilts, sending the unwary sliding towards the moat.

ED1: Small stones fall from the ceiling. The ground shakes.

ED2–3: The stalactites at the side of the cave smash down. Anyone in that area of the cavern gets attacked as follows:

Closing Jaws +10 vs. AC—15 damage

ED4: The cavern floor tilts. Everyone in the cavern must make an easy save (6+) or slide toward the moat. Sliding toward the moat means falling into the moat if you're nearby it, or moving close to it if you're not.

ED5: The save to avoid sliding becomes a normal one (11+).

ED6: Now it's a difficult save. Oh, also, the gelatinous cube spasms.

Gelatinous Cube

Anyone who encounters a gelatinous cube is clearly in a place where they should be expecting to be smothered in a jelly-like substance that cleanly reflects the image of their flesh dissolving back into their disintegrating eyeballs.

Huge 5th level blocker [ooze]
Initiative: +4

Shlup'n'schlorp +10 vs. PD—30 acid damage, and the cube engulfs the target (functions like a grab; see below) if it's smaller than the cube

Miss: The cube can make a *spasms* attack as a free action.

[Special trigger] **C: Spasms +10 vs. AC (up to 2 attacks, each against a different nearby enemy)**—15 damage

Engulf and dissolve: Targets engulfed/grabbed by the cube take 30 acid damage at the start of the cube's turn but are not viable targets for additional attacks by the cube. Multiple targets can be held within the cube simultaneously.

Any engulfed creature that is also staggered must begin making last gasp saves or become paralyzed as the cube's toxins overwhelm it.

AC 20
PD 18 **HP 200**
MD 15

Ogre Champion

You don't have to be an orc to be one of the Orc Lord's favored champions. Ogres like this guy make the point that you're probably better off not being an orc.

Large 5th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

Champion's battle-axe +10 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 5, 10, 15, or 20: The ogre champion can take another standard action this turn.
Miss: Half damage.

R: Heavy javelin +10 vs. AC (one nearby or far away enemy)—26 damage
Miss: 10 damage.

Orc Lord's enemies: Whenever a nearby dwarf or elf enemy attempts to use their racial power, they must roll a hard save (16+). On a failure, the power fails and has no effect that turn (but they can try again next turn).

Slayer of wizards: Creatures engaged with the ogre champion take opportunity attacks from it when casting close spells as if they were casting ranged spells.

AC 21
PD 19 **HP 140**
MD 18

Orc Dungeonspawn

The chunks of stone embedded in their hides remind them where they were spawned.

5th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +7

Orc Stabbing Sword +10 vs. AC—9 damage

R: Heavy Crossbow +10 vs. AC—9 damage

Dangerous Mook: The crit range of melee attacks by orc dungeonspawn expands by 3 until half the orc dungeonspawn mob has been dropped.

AC 21
PD 19 **HP 18 (mook)**
MD 15

Mook: Kill one orc dungeonspawn for every 18 damage you deal to the mook.

Treasure

Searching the gatehouse turns up a pile of treasure taken as tolls and tribute by the ogres. Assume 250 gp per character, plus a champion-tier healing potion each. They'll need it after that fight.

Crusader: Amid the treasure pile, the character finds a brass ring marked with the symbol of the Crusader. This is a *ring of truth*—one battle per day, the wearer gets to make an additional save at the start of their turn against any illusions or other effects.

Orc Blood Sorcerer

Black blood of the earth fuels their magic. Your blood's just a quick booster shot.

6th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

Ritual Dagger +11 vs. AC—12 damage, and add one point to the Blood Magic pool.

R: Blood Call: +11 vs. MD (one nearby target)—5 damage, and add two points to the Blood Magic pool.
Natural even hit: The target becomes vulnerable until the start of the blood sorcerer's next turn.

R: Blood Blast: +11 vs. PD (1d3 nearby targets)—5 damage per point spent from the Blood Magic pool.

Group Ability—Blood Magic Pool: Blood sorcerers accumulate magical power in a pool shared by all the blood sorcerers in the combat. Use a die or tokens to track the accumulated points. If all blood sorcerers in the combat are slain with points left in the Blood Magic pool, then the body of the last sorcerer explodes, inflicting 1d6 damage per remaining Blood Magic point to all nearby creatures.

Gather Blood: As a move action, the blood sorcerer can gather power. Until the start of the blood sorcerer's next turn, add one to the Blood Magic pool for each creature in the battle that dies (including the human slaves carried by the slave-takers) or suffers a critical hit. If the blood sorcerer takes damage while using this ability, it must succeed on a save (11+) to continue gathering blood. Multiple blood sorcerers can use this ability at the same time, but each death still only contributes one point to the pool.

Summon Demon: As a standard action, the blood sorcerer summons a demon. The demons available for summoning are listed in the fight chart. Frenzy demons cost 5 points; hezrous cost 10. Once the sorcerers have summoned all the available demons, this ability cannot be used.

Nastier Specials

Resurgent Demons: When a summoned demon is slain, return half the points used to summon it to the pool.

AC 22
PD 16 **HP 90**
MD 20

Variations

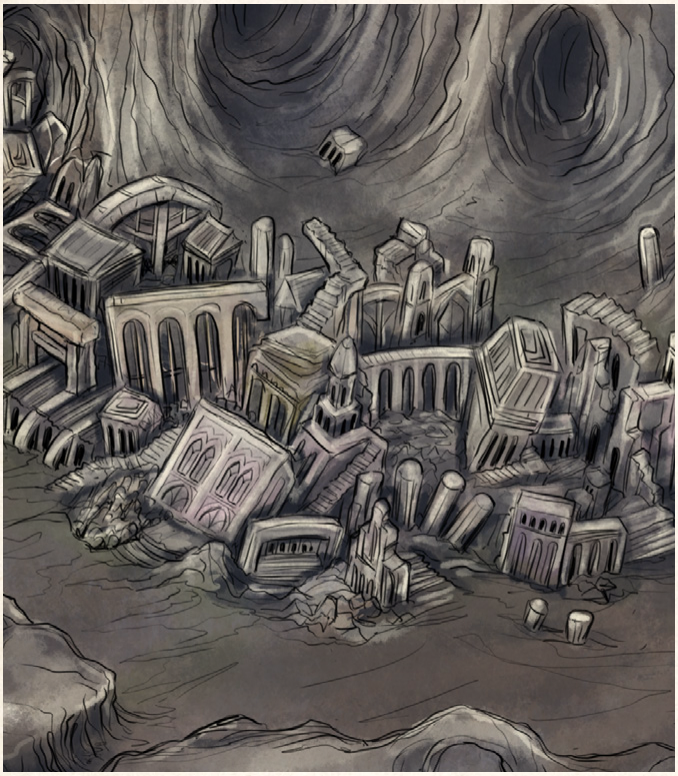
- If the Stone Thief recently consumed a populated target, Jawgate may already be at war by the time the characters arrive.
- One of the losers in the orc civil war (see page 168) makes a last stand at Jawgate.

Jawgate Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Gelatinous Cube	Ogre Champion	Blood Sorcerer	Orc Dungeonspawn	Frenzy Demon*	Hezrou Demon*
3 x 4th level	0	1	0	5	0	0
4 x 4th level	0	1	1	5	1	0
5 x 4th level	0	1	1	6	1	0
6 x 4th level	1	1	1	7	1	0
7 x 4th level	1	1	2	8	2	0
3 x 5th level	*1*	*1*	*1*	*5*	*1*	*0*
4 x 5th level	*1*	*1*	*2*	*7*	*2*	*0*
5 x 5th level	*1*	*2*	*2*	*8*	*2*	*0*
6 x 5th level	*1*	*2*	*3*	*10*	*3*	*1*
7 x 5th level	*2*	*2*	*3*	*12*	*3*	*1*
3 x 6th level	2	1	1	8	2	0
4 x 6th level	2	2	2	10	3	0
5 x 6th level	2	2	2	12	4	1
6 x 6th level	2	3	3	15	4	1
7 x 6th level	2	3	4	15	4	2

* Summonable reinforcements

2. Hall of Ruin



The Hall of Ruin is a huge cavern in the dungeon—one of the largest single areas in the upper dungeon, comparable to the caverns housing the Grove and Deep Keep. It's so big it's divided into several lettered zones on the map. The Hall of Ruin is where the landslide of the Maw ends. If the dungeon just consumed a location from the surface, then all those buildings ended up here. It's like the aftermath of an earthquake. The smashed remains of buildings teeter or topple. Survivors stagger blindly or call for help from beneath the rubble.

(If by some strange circumstance the adventurers end up here when the dungeon isn't feeding, then the hall is empty apart from one janitor blockhead, pushing a broom.)

2A: The end of the landslide. The churning rubble and earth sinks away into the ground at this threshold, magically filtered out by the Stone Thief. All that remains are the stolen surface features.

2B: The ruins. Whatever the Stone Thief just stole ends up here, along with the undigested remains of older meals. It looks like the wreckage of a magpie city. Dozens of stone carcasses lean against each other or lie toppled into rubble. Paved streets lead nowhere; city walls jut out at random. It's a graveyard for cities. Gray-faced figures skulk amid the ruins; some are shell-shocked and terrified survivors of the dungeon's latest attack, but others are orc slavers or hunting monsters.

Random Hall of Ruins Structure Table

Either roll 3d12, one die for each column, or else pick and choose based on the icon associations or your whim.

Roll	Origin	Description	Structure
1	Demonic	Reduced to rubble	Castle or watchtower
2	Underworld	Mostly smashed to pieces	Temple or monument
3	Dwarven	Surprisingly intact	Bathhouse or casino
4	Monstrous	Partially demolished	Market or port[4]
5	Imperial Human	Unusual decorations	Palace or tomb
6	Imperial Human	On the verge of collapse	Arena or plaza
7	Other Human	Stolen ages ago	University or wizard's tower
8	Elven	Stolen recently	Fortress or civic building
9	Halfling	Still holds treasure	Prison or dungeon
10	Gnomish	Haunted	Aqueduct or other utility
11	Elder Race[1]	Hides some survivors	Granary or storehouse
12	Something Weird[2]	Unusual peril[3]	Magical Structure[5]

1: Serpent people, naga, dragons, or maybe just a long-lost human civilization.
2: Crashed flying realm, giant living statue, elven tree, portal to another plane of existence…
3: Maybe the building is enchanted or trapped in some manner.
4: Seaport, starport, tele-port, dimensional portal-port, hellport…
5: Like Boltstrike Tower or Vigil

If a randomly generated building is suggestive of a particular race/class/icon, then ask the appropriate player to describe the origin and function of the ruined structure. For instance, in playtest, I rolled an Elven Wizard's Tower, so the elf wizard in the party got to describe what it looked like and what might be found within. That's how I learned that elven wizards grow their towers from enchanted seeds, and that if you dig up a seed, you can use it to tickle the gullet of a living dungeon.

2C: Exit tunnels. The Hall of Ruin's sheer size makes it a crossroads in the dungeon. These tunnels lead to other regions of the Stone Thief. One path always goes down to Deep Keep via the **Slaver Camp** (see page 80), and another leads to the Ossuary. Other tunnels can lead to whatever regions you've placed adjacent to the Gizzard in this iteration of the living dungeon.

2D: On the far side of the cavern from the terminus of the Maw is a strange passageway leading toward the **Gizzard Chamber**. Glowing milky-white veins writhe in the rocky walls of the tunnel, and the stone floor of the tunnel undulates in a disturbing manner.

The Scavengers

Three distinct groups of scavengers prowl through the wreckage. The adventurers may choose to sneak through the hall avoiding fights with a DC 15 Dexterity check (pick a random character unless circumstances suggest otherwise; failure means they're surprised by the foes), or engage these groups one at a time, or even start a battle royal if they're feeling ambitious and have a bunch of *fireballs* at hand.

First, there are the **carrion eaters**—wights and ghasts from the Ossuary, chaos beasts and other abominations from the Grove, even rust monsters—skulking at the fringes of the Hall of Ruin, looking for easy pickings.

Second, **orcs** and other humanoids from the Deep Keep search methodically through the ruins, looking for survivors. Any survivors who look like they're capable of working get dragged off to the **Slaver Camp** (page 80). Any survivors who fight back are either killed on the spot, or captured for use in the Fighting Pit. The dead, and any survivors who aren't going to survive much longer are left where they lie or butchered for meat.

Third, there are the **blockheads,** the automaton servants of the Stone Thief. They ignore the other two groups of scavengers and focus solely on the architecture. They carry off blocks of masonry and other debris and carry it down to the Gizzard Chamber.

If the dungeon just consumed a place known to the characters, then set the fight in a location they'll recognize. For example, if the dungeon ate part of Axis, then the characters might come across the wreckage of their favorite inn or one of the Emperor's palaces, now beset by scavengers.

If the characters return to this hall again, feel free to mix up the monsters encountered. For their first fight in the ruins, though, throw them against some classic dungeon denizens.



Monstrous Scavengers

Lots of different dungeon denizens come to the Gizzard when new prey arrives. In this particular case, the characters run into a prowling manticore, possibly accompanied by a few rust monsters. The two species have a sort of symbiosis—the rust monsters dissolve the metal shells of armored corpses, then the manticore eats the tender carrion flesh within.

Manticore

The Cult of the Devourer promised the manticores that when the Emperor is devoured and the Empire remade, all old treaties will be honored.

Large 6th level archer [BEAST]
Initiative: +13

Battering paws +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—20 damage
Natural 16+: The manticore can make a single *volley of tail spikes* attack (one attack roll) against a different target as a free action.

Crushing leonine jaws +11 vs. AC—30 damage; OR 50 damage against a creature taking ongoing poison damage

C: Volley of tail spikes +13 vs. AC (1d3 nearby or far away enemies in a group)—5 ongoing poison damage (hard save ends, 16+)

Flight: Manticores are poor fliers in tight spaces, but out in the open, they are more capable.

Poison reservoirs: Each time the manticore uses its *volley of tail spikes* attack, it takes 1d6 damage, or 2d6 damage if it is staggered.

AC 22
PD 20
MD 16

HP 182

Rust Monster Obliterator

Scrap metal and roofing nails do not a balanced diet make. These beasts are starving.

5th level spoiler [DEMON]
Initiative: +8

Caustic bite +10 vs. AC (one creature wearing light armor or no armor)—18 damage, and 5 ongoing acid damage

Natural 14+: The target is now considered to be wearing no armor (the armor is damaged beyond repair; adjust defenses accordingly). If the target's armor is magical, the target must roll a hard save (16+). On a success, the armor isn't affected. This effect is permanent until the creature obtains new armor.

Rusting antenna +10 vs. PD (one creature wearing heavy armor)—10 damage, and the target is now considered to be wearing no armor (the armor is damaged beyond repair; adjust defenses accordingly). If the target's armor is magical, the target must roll a hard save (16+). On a success, the armor isn't affected. This effect is permanent until the creature obtains new armor.

Each time the rust monster obliterator destroys heavy armor with this attack, it gains a different random demon ability until the end of the battle (see random demon ability chart and roll 1d8 to determine the ability; reroll duplicate abilities).

Corrupting body: Whenever a creature hits the rust monster with a melee weapon, the attacker must roll a save; on a failure, the weapon is destroyed. Magic weapons require an easy save (6+) instead. This effect is permanent.

Rust's targets: Magic items wielded by creatures with 100 hp or more are not affected by the rust monster's ability to destroy items (but the target still takes damage).

Saving quirks: Before rolling a save for a magic item, a PC can gain a +5 bonus to the save by agreeing to roleplay the item's quirk as a huge element of their personality until the next full heal-up. Failure to live up to this roleplaying agreement means that the item hasn't received the support it needs from its owner to survive the rust monster's destructive effects, and the item is destroyed at the end of the next battle even if its owner saved.

Nastier Specials

Tail whirligig: When an enemy targets the rust monster obliterator with a spell, the rust monster rolls a save. On a success, the spell has no effect on the rust monster. If the rust monster is staggered, it must roll a hard save (16+) instead.

AC 21
PD 19 **HP 72**
MD 15

Random Demon Abilities Reminder (d8)

1: *True seeing*
2: *Resist fire 18+*
3: *Invisibility* when first staggered
4: *Resist energy 12+*
5: *Fear aura*
6: *Teleport 1d3 times each battle*
7: *Demonic speed*
8: *Gate in allied demon* (in this case, a frenzy demon)

Hall of Ruin Monstrous Scavengers Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Manticore	Rust Monster Obliterator
3 x 4th level	**1**	**0**
4 x 4th level	**1**	**0**
5 x 4th level	**1**	**1**
6 x 4th level	**1**	**1**
7 x 4th level	**2**	**1**
3 x 5th level	***1***	***1***
4 x 5th level	***1***	***2***
5 x 5th level	***2***	***1***
6 x 5th level	***2***	***2***
7 x 5th level	***3***	***2***
3 x 6th level	**2**	**1**
4 x 6th level	**3**	**1**
5 x 6th level	**3**	**2**
6 x 6th level	**4**	**2**
7 x 6th level	**5**	**2**

Undead Scavengers

The undead just want to pull corpses from the rubble and carry them off to the Ossuary for reprocessing. If the adventurers leave them to their grisly task, they could avoid a fight. That said, to a wight, a living adventurer is just a corpse that needs a little prep work.

Ghast

This one doesn't stumble like the others. It steps with a predator's grace. And then it suddenly leaps behind you and bites, and for some reason you can't turn your head to fight back. . . .

5th level wrecker [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +12

Finely honed claws +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—8 damage, and the target is vulnerable (save ends)

Paralyzing bite +11 vs. AC (one vulnerable enemy)—12 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends)

C: Hungry howl +11 vs. MD (each nearby enemy)—The target must choose one: 15 psychic damage; OR 5 psychic damage and the target is vulnerable (save ends)
Limited use: 1/battle.

AC 22
PD 18 **HP 74**
MD 14

Wight

Wights "go rogue" more often than other undead creatures. They have the cunning and instincts to survive in small bands, but they lack the capability for long-term planning or abject obedience that other undead often demonstrate.

4th level spoiler [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +7
Vulnerability: holy

Sword +9 vs. AC—10 damage
Natural even hit or miss: Unless the wight is staggered, the attack also deals 8 ongoing negative energy damage.

Nastier Specials

Barrow-touch: The wight's attacks against enemies taking ongoing negative energy damage are against PD instead of AC and have an expanded crit range of 18+.

AC 21
PD 17 **HP 48**
MD 13

Corpse Collector

The Flesh Tailor's necromantic assistants are magically enslaved to serve him for eternity. They take their repressed hatred out on the undead they create.

Double-strength 6th level leader [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +10
Vulnerability: holy

Bone Claws +11 vs. AC—40 damage
Natural 14+: One nearby undead ally may take an extra standard action immediately after the corpse collector.

Hasten Death: While the corpse collector is not staggered, whenever a nearby PC uses a recovery, that character must make an easy (6+) save. If the save fails, the character loses a recovery.

Animate Dead: Any characters slain in this battle rise immediately as wights.

AC 22
PD 18 **HP 160**
MD 18

Hall of Ruin Undead Scavengers Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Wight	Ghast	Corpse Collector
3 x 4th level	**2**	**1**	**0**
4 x 4th level	**3**	**1**	**0**
5 x 4th level	**2**	**2**	**0**
6 x 4th level	**3**	**2**	**0**
7 x 4th level	**4**	**2**	**0**
3 x 5th level	***2***	***1***	***1***
4 x 5th level	***2***	***2***	***1***
5 x 5th level	***4***	***2***	***1***
6 x 5th level	***4***	***4***	***2***
7 x 5th level	***6***	***4***	***2***
3 x 6th level	**0**	**2**	**2**
4 x 6th level	**0**	**4**	**2**
5 x 6th level	**0**	**6**	**2**
6 x 6th level	**0**	**6**	**3**
7 x 6th level	**0**	**8**	**3**

The Orcs

The orc bands consist of a bunch of nasty cave orcs and a smaller number of orc slave-takers commanded by orc blood sorcerers. Sneaking past the orcs is tricky thanks to the keen senses of the cave orcs. Parleying with the orcs/*charm*ing them/eavesdropping on them is possible to get information about Fangrot, the slave camp, and Deep Keep. An especially successful information gathering attempt results in the characters learning about **Grimtusk** in the Slaver Camp.

Nasty Cave Orc

They butchered their comrades in the darkness, and grew strong by feasting on their flesh.

5th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +8, or +14 at night or in dark caves

Obsidian knife +10 vs. AC—6 damage, and +1d6 damage for each other orc engaged with the target (max +4d6)

R: Rock +9 vs. AC—8 damage

Hears everything: Increase the DC to sneak past cave orcs silently by +5.

Nocturnal predator: If the battle is at night (or in darkness), the orc gains a +2 attack bonus. If the battle is during the day (or in daylight) it takes a –2 penalty to all defenses.

AC 21
PD 20 **HP 18 (mook)**
MD 13

Mook: Kill one nasty cave orc mook for every 18 damage you deal to the mob.

Orc Rager

It's not combat. It's therapy for orcs with anger management issues.

7th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +12

Greataxe +12 vs. AC—16 damage
Dangerous mooks: The crit range of melee attacks by orc ragers expands by 3 until half the orc rager mob has been dropped.

Dying strike: When an orc rager drops to 0 hp, it can make a final attack as a free action. (GM, since it isn't always important which mook dies, feel free to make these extra attacks come from the ragers engaged with a PC.)

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 27 (mook)**
MD 16

Mook: Kill one orc rager mook for every 27 damage you deal to the mob.

Captured by the Orcs

Any captured player characters get brought to the **Slaver Camp** (page 80), then marched down to Deep Keep and thrown in the **Fighting Pit** (page 175). Other slaves are forced to serve the orcs in various menial ways, like harvesting mushrooms or fishing from the Underriver. Weak slaves get eaten.

Orc Slave-Taker

Where there's a whip, there's a way.

5th level troop [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +9

Sword +10 vs. AC—16 damage
Natural even hit or miss: The orc may also make a *whip* attack against any target.
Natural 1: The orc's slave breaks free. The orc is stunned until its next turn, and loses its human shield.

C: Whip +9 vs. PD—5 damage, and the target takes a –2 penalty to its next skill or attack roll if it does not attack the orc slave-taker.

Human Shield: The slave-taker uses one of the slaves to protect itself against attacks. When attacking the slaver-taker, you may take a –4 penalty to your attack roll to avoid the slave. If you do not, the slave is killed by your attack. The orc still takes the full damage from the attack even if the slave got in the way.

AC 21
PD 19 **HP 72**
MD 15

Orc Blood Sorcerer

The initiation rite to become a blood sorcerer requires that the supplicant allow a demonic tick of prodigious size to suckle from his veins. The sorcerer's blood mixes with all the rest in the tick's belly, linking him to the source of this sanguine sorcery.

6th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

Ritual Dagger +11 vs. AC—12 damage. If this is the first time this enemy has been struck by a ritual dagger in this combat, add one point to the Blood Magic pool

R: Blood Call: +11 vs. MD (one nearby target)—5 damage, and add two points to the Blood Magic pool
Natural even hit: The target becomes vulnerable until the start of the blood sorcerer's next turn.

R: Blood Blast: +11 vs. PD (1d3 nearby targets)—10 damage per point spent from the Blood Magic pool

Hall of Ruin Orcs Fight Chart

Number/Level of PCs	Nasty Cave Orc	Orc Rager	Orc Slave-Taker	Orc Blood Sorcerer	Frenzy Demon*	Hezrou Demon*
3 x 4th level	5	0	1	0	0	0
4 x 4th level	3	0	1	1	1	0
5 x 4th level	3	0	2	1	1	0
6 x 4th level	5	0	2	1	1	0
7 x 4th level	3	0	2	2	1	0
3 x 5th level	*4*	*0*	*2*	*1*	*1*	*0*
4 x 5th level	*4*	*0*	*2*	*2*	*1*	*0*
5 x 5th level	*6*	*0*	*3*	*2*	*2*	*0*
6 x 5th level	8	0	4	2	2	0
7 x 5th level	8	0	4	3	1	1
3 x 6th level	0	4	3	1	1	0
4 x 6th level	0	4	4	2	2	0
5 x 6th level	0	6	4	2	1	1
6 x 6th level	0	8	4	3	2	1
7 x 6th level	0	8	6	3	2	1

* Summonable reinforcements.

Group Ability—Blood Magic Pool: Blood sorcerers accumulate magical power in a pool shared by all the blood sorcerers in the combat. Use a die or tokens to track the accumulated points. If all blood sorcerers in the combat are slain with points left in the Blood Magic pool, then the body of the last sorcerer explodes, inflicting 1d6 damage per remaining Blood Magic point on all nearby creatures.

Gather Blood: As a move action, the blood sorcerer can gather power. Until the start of the blood sorcerer's next turn, add one to the Blood Magic pool for each creature in the combat that dies (including the human slaves carried by the slave-takers) or suffers a critical hit. If the blood sorcerer takes damage while using this ability, it must make a save (11+) to continue gathering blood. Multiple blood sorcerers can use this ability at the same time, but each death still only contributes one point to the pool.

Summon Demon: As a standard action, the blood sorcerer summons a demon. The demons available for summoning are listed in the fight chart. Frenzy demons cost 5 points; hezrous cost 10. Once the sorcerers have summoned all the available demons, this ability cannot be used.

Nastier Specials

Resurgent Demons: When a summoned demon is slain, return half the points used to summon it to the pool.

AC 22
PD 16
MD 20

HP 90

Rescuing the Slaves

Freed slaves need help getting out of the dungeon. The quickest way out is for the adventurers to head to the **Gizzard Chamber** and stab the Stone Thief until it opens an exit. The characters could head up through the Maw, but that means crossing the Gauntlet. Alternatively, one of the orcs could mention something about a place called Dungeon Town. If they could find that place, maybe they'd find safety there.

The Blockheads

Unlike the other groups of scavengers, the blockheads show no interest in the adventurers. They just carry on with their mission of gathering up useful material for the Stone Thief. They carry stones down to the Gizzard Chamber to be absorbed into the dungeon.

If a large building survived intact, then a group of blockheads bring a tendril of the Stone Thief up from the Gizzard Chamber. These are ropy, slimy grey-white tentacles that are only partially real, and phase in and out of our reality. When they bring the tendril to the building, they unravel one end, and carefully drape strands of the tendril over the structure. Then the tendril merges with the stone, integrating the stolen material into the living dungeon of the Stone Thief.

When the adventurers first attack the blockheads, increase the submergence die by 1. If they keep slaughtering them, the blockheads fall back toward the Gizzard Chamber. Stats for blockheads are on page 85.

3. SLAVER CAMP



Any survivors caught by the orcs of Deep Keep get dragged to this dismal outpost to be clapped in chains before they are marched down the shifting passageways to the lower levels. The orcs built their outpost in the half-digested ruins of a high elf citadel that the dungeon consumed long ago. Now, the citadel is a skeletal shade of its former self. Its lustrous walls of solid moonlight are partially dissolved, and slime drips from the ceiling. Many of the floors are now unstable, and the orcs have thrown rude wooden walkways across the crumbling mosaics and shimmering pools.

Of course, if you've been captured, enslaved, and are possibly about to beaten by orcs, the state of the décor is the least of your problems.

Elf Queen: This citadel still has some lingering magic. Gathering its threads around you and charging the magical weave with your own life force (i.e. at the cost of a recovery) makes you (and only you) invisible while within its walls.

Lasher & Kazok

The orc Lasher commands this outpost. She works for Fangrot's most trusted lieutenant, Grimtusk, which is why she got assigned the plum role of gathering slaves and loot from the dungeon's latest acquisitions. It's the easiest form of conquest ever—all the good parts of sacking cities, but no boring sieges or risky battles. She just has to sit on her throne and watch the slaves and gold roll in. Seeing off other scavengers and looters keeps her in fighting shape.

Kazok is another orc leader, only he's part of Greyface's faction (see page 160 for more on Deep Keep politics). Eavesdropping on the orcs lets the PCs learn about the divisions in Deep Keep; befriending or capturing either one can get an introduction to the corresponding leader.

Orc Lord: You recognize the ritual scarring on Kazok's arms. It's the result of a pledge of loyalty to the Orc Lord. The rite involves implanting purple worm larvae beneath the skin, and is notoriously painful. This orc must be fanatically devoted to the Orc Lord.

Prince of Shadows: You've heard the name Grimtusk before, through fences and dealers in the underworld. He's sold rare artifacts to the Prince of Shadows. Looks like he got them in the dungeon. He must know a way to contact the surface.

Camp Guards & Slaver Patrols

Waiting until Kazok departs with the slaves means the adventurers face fewer foes—use the lower values on the fight charts if the adventurers face the orcs piecemeal. (Of course, that also means they can't rescue any captured slaves unless they follow them down to Deep Keep.) If the characters get defeated in this battle, the orcs take them prisoner and bring them down to the slave pits in the levels below.

Orc Commanders (Lasher/Kazok)

Tactics? Strategy? Remind me—which one of those helps you when an orc is spilling your guts on the floor?

Use the same stats for both Lasher and Kazok.

7th level leader [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +12

Nasty Sword +12 vs. AC—28 damage

Canny Leader: Whenever the escalation die would increase, the orc commander may make a hard save (16+). If successful, the die does not increase. Keep track of the number of times this ability is used. When there are no orc commanders remaining in the fight, increase the escalation die by that value.

They're Losing! Get Them!: Whenever an enemy engaged with the orc commander uses a recovery, one nearby orc other than the commander may make a melee attack as a free action.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 108**
MD 17

Nasty Cave Orc

Nasty cave orcs are especially petty and cruel, even to each other. As soon as one shows the slightest weakness, the rest pounce. The survivors are very, very nasty indeed.

5th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +8, or +14 at night or in dark caves

Obsidian knife +10 vs. AC—6 damage, and +1d6 damage for each other orc engaged with the target (max +4d6)

R: Thrown Rock +9 vs. AC—8 damage

Hears everything: Increase the DC to sneak past cave orcs silently by +5.

Nocturnal predator: If the battle is at night (or in darkness), the orc gains a +2 attack bonus. If the battle is during the day (or in bright light) it takes a –2 penalty to all defenses.



AC 21
PD 20 **HP 18 (mook)**
MD 13

Mook: Kill one nasty cave orc mook for every 18 damage you deal to the mob.

Orc Rager

Between fights, orc ragers sit around morosely, or just lie in the ashes staring into the fire. Combat is the only time they are truly alive.

7th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +12

Greataxe +12 vs. AC—16 damage
Dangerous mooks: The crit range of melee attacks by orc ragers expands by 3 until half the orc rager mob has been dropped.

Dying strike: When an orc rager drops to 0 hp, it can make a final attack as a free action. (GM, since it isn't always important which mook dies, feel free to make these extra attacks come from the ragers engaged with a PC.)

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 27 (mook)**
MD 16

Mook: Kill one orc rager mook for every 27 damage you deal to the mob.

Orc Slave-Taker

Dwarves, too tough. Halflings, too weak. Humans? Just right.
5th level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +9

Sword +10 vs. AC—16 damage
Natural even hit or miss: The orc may also make a *whip* attack against any target.
Natural 1: The orc's slave breaks free. The orc is stunned until its next turn, and loses its human shield.

C: Whip +9 vs. PD—5 damage, and the target takes a –2 penalty to their next skill or attack roll if they do not attack the orc slave-taker.

Human Shield: The slave-taker uses one of the slaves to protect itself against attacks. When attacking the slaver-taker, you may take a –4 penalty to your attack roll to avoid the slave. If you do not, the slave is killed by your attack. The orc still takes the full damage from the attack even if the slave got in the way.

AC 21
PD 19 **HP 72**
MD 15

Orc Blood Sorcerer

Whatever bargains the Diabolist has with the infernal powers don't apply to the blood sorcerers. Their summoning is of a different order.

6th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

Ritual Dagger +11 vs. AC—12 damage. If this is the first time this enemy has been struck by a ritual dagger in this combat, add one point to the Blood Magic pool.

R: Blood Call: +11 vs. MD (one nearby target)—5 damage, and add two points to the Blood Magic pool.
Natural even hit: The target becomes vulnerable until the start of the blood sorcerer's next turn.

R: Blood Blast: +11 vs. PD (1d3 nearby targets)—10 damage per point spent from the Blood Magic pool.

Group Ability—Blood Magic Pool: Blood sorcerers accumulate magical power in a pool shared by all the blood sorcerers in the combat. Use a die or tokens to track the accumulated points. If all blood sorcerers in the combat are slain with points left in the Blood Magic pool, then the body of the last sorcerer explodes, inflicting 1d6 damage per remaining Blood Magic point on all nearby creatures.

Gather Blood: As a move action, the blood sorcerer can gather power. Until the start of the blood sorcerer's next turn, add one to the Blood Magic pool for each creature in the combat that dies (including the human slaves carried by the slave-takers) or suffers a critical hit. If the blood sorcerer takes damage while using this ability, it must make a save (11+) to continue gathering blood. Multiple blood sorcerers can use this ability at the same time, but each death still only contributes one point to the pool.

Summon Demon: As a standard action, the blood sorcerer summons a demon. The demons available for summoning are listed in the fight chart. Frenzy demons cost 5 points; hezrous cost 10. Once the sorcerers have summoned all the available demons, this ability cannot be used.

Nastier Specials

Resurgent Demons: When a summoned demon is slain, return half the points used to summon it to the pool.

AC 22
PD 16 **HP 90**
MD 20

Ogre Champion

Where there's a giant battle-axe, there's an even easier way.

Large 5th level wrecker [GIANT]
Initiative: +10

Champion's battle-axe +10 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 5, 10, 15, or 20: The ogre champion can take another standard action this turn.
Miss: Half damage.

R: Heavy javelin +10 vs. AC (one nearby or far away enemy)—26 damage
Miss: 10 damage.

Orc Lord's enemies: Whenever a nearby dwarf or elf enemy attempts to use their racial power, they must roll a hard save (16+). On a failure, the power fails and has no effect that turn (but they can try again next turn).

Slayer of wizards: Creatures engaged with the ogre champion take opportunity attacks from it when casting close spells as if they were casting ranged spells.

AC 21
PD 19 **HP 140**
MD 18

Running Huge Battles

A worst-case scenario here pits seven player characters against more than fifty foes. To avoid repetitive stress injuries from dice rolling, keep the following in mind:

- You can split the packs of mooks and low-level bad guys into groups. Having a bunch of slavers and cave orcs show up halfway through the battle is more dramatic than having them stand around waiting for an opening in which to ineffectually flail at the player characters.
- Encourage the PCs to use the terrain to their advantage so they're not swarmed by hordes of bad guys. That means you can concentrate the fight on the key participants.
- If the PCs don't take out the blood sorcerers early, they'll get stomped by added hezrous. You may wait to point this out to players who are lost in dice- or blood-lust.
- Remember, the players can always flee—or get captured and dragged off to the slave caves down in Deep Keep.

Slaver Camp Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Nasty Cave Orc	Orc Slave-Taker	Orc Blood Sorcerer	Ogre Champion	Orc Commander	Frenzy Demon*	Hezrou Demon*
3 x 4th level	**3 (5)**	**1 (2)**	**0 (0)**	**0**	**1 (2)**	**0**	**0**
4 x 4th level	**3 (5)**	**2 (3)**	**0 (1)**	**0**	**1 (2)**	**1**	**0**
5 x 4th level	**5 (7)**	**2 (3)**	**1 (2)**	**0**	**1 (2)**	**1**	**0**
6 x 4th level	**5 (7)**	**3 (4)**	**2 (2)**	**1 (2)**	**1 (2)**	**2**	**0**
7 x 4th level	**6 (9)**	**3 (4)**	**2 (3)**	**1 (2)**	**1 (2)**	**2**	**0**
3 x 5th level	***5 (7)***	***2 (3)***	***1 (2)***	***0 (1)***	***1 (2)***	***1***	***0***
4 x 5th level	***5 (7)***	***2 (3)***	***1 (2)***	***1 (1)***	***1 (2)***	***2***	***0***
5 x 5th level	***6 (9)***	***3 (4)***	***2 (3)***	***1 (2)***	***1 (2)***	***2***	***1***
6 x 5th level	**6 (9)**	**3 (4)**	**2 (3)**	**2 (3)**	**1 (2)**	**3**	**1**
7 x 5th level	**7 (10)**	**4 (5)**	**3 (4)**	**2 (3)**	**1 (2)**	**3**	**2**
3 x 6th level	**10 (15)**	**4 (5)**	**2 (3)**	**2 (3)**	**1 (2)**	**2**	**1**
4 x 6th level	**10 (15)**	**5 (7)**	**3 (4)**	**3 (5)**	**1 (2)**	**3**	**2**
5 x 6th level	**15 (20)**	**5 (7)**	**3 (4)**	**3 (5)**	**1 (2)**	**4**	**3**
6 x 6th level	**15 (20)**	**7 (10)**	**4 (6)**	**4 (6)**	**1 (2)**	**5**	**3**
7 x 6th level	**15 (20)**	**7 (10)**	**4 (6)**	**4 (6)**	**1 (2)**	**6**	**4**

* Summonable reinforcements. (Foes in brackets only show up if the PCs tackle all the orcs simultaneously.)

Treasure

There are two treasure caches here. First, there's whatever loot Lasher gathered from the most recent additions to the Hall of Ruin. This pile of salvage is prominently located in the slaver camp, and can be found easily. It consists of 200 gp worth of treasure per player character in a mix of coins, jewels, gems and other treasures. Throw in some runes and healing potions too if the adventurers run short. (Depending on where the dungeon just ate, the adventurers may know the real owners of this treasure.)

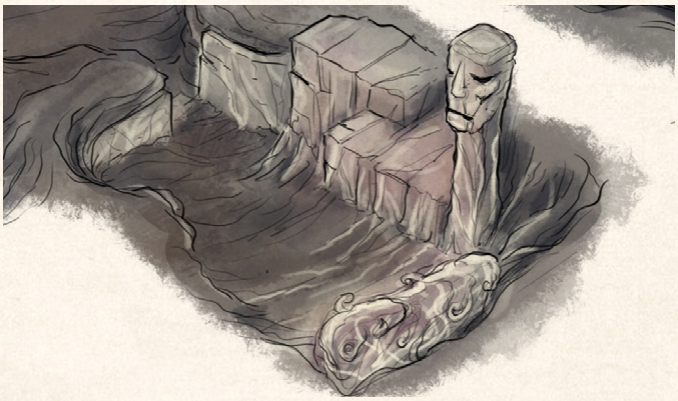
The second treasure cache is Lasher's private stash, which is hidden underneath one of the walkways. It can be found with a thorough search, by spying on Lasher, or in exchange for Lasher's life. She's hidden especially valuable items for trade to the Prince of Shadows via the Underriver exit (see page 122). The cache contains 500 gp per player character in rare treasures, along with three unique items.

- A bottle of **Iliaster**, an extremely rare substance prized by upper-class devils, and customarily used to toast the conclusion of a successful Faustian bargain. More cautious wizards esteem it for its use as a ritual component. The characters can trade this bottle to servants of the **Diabolist**, the **Archmage**, or the **Crusader** to gain a 1-point positive or conflicted relationship—at least, until the bottle runs dry.
- **The Shard Sword:** This elven weapon exemplifies the strength—and deep divisions—in the people of the woods. It's always a +2 champion-tier weapon, but it changes properties depending on where it is. Underground, it reflects the dark elves, and is *cruel* (recharge 11+). On the surface by day, it reflects the wood elves—when you strike a foe, they're suddenly stuck (save ends) in a tangle of weeds and nettles (recharge 11+). On the surface under the starlight, it becomes a weapon of the high elves—when you strike a foe who is under the effects of some save-ends spell or ongoing magical damage, they automatically fail their next save (recharge 11+). *Quirk:* Radical mood swings at dusk and dawn.
- **The Talisman of Forgotten Gods:** A rare religious symbol looted from the depths of the living dungeon, the talisman is a +2 holy symbol that works like a *knot of divine harmony* (see *13th Age* core rulebook, page 292), only you're drawing on the rites and ceremonies of long-forgotten inhuman deities. And they were forgotten for a reason…

Variations

- If the dungeon hasn't eaten a suitable prize, this outpost has a much smaller garrison.
- Observant PCs might spot orcs smuggling items out of the dungeon, to begin their long trek to the Prince of Shadows.
- An orc civil war or coup in Deep Keep results in orc turning on orc here too.

4. The Gizzard Chamber



Here's where the adventurers get their first glimpse of the Stone Thief itself, without the façade of all those stolen lands. The Gizzard is where the Thief absorbs what it stole.

This chamber is illuminated by the eerie white glow from the far wall. Between the characters and that wall is a large open area that may contain 'the Prize'—something recently stolen by the Stone Thief that the adventurers hope to rescue. If the dungeon just ate, say, a temple sacred to the Priestess, then the holy altar of that temple is the Prize. Defeating the living dungeon here rescues the Prize.

Surrounding the Prize (if there is one) is a large number of blockheads carrying material salvaged from the Hall of Ruin above. They're following the instructions of this level's Custodian, a stone face that peers down from a large stone pillar. The Custodian fusses and micro-manages the blockheads like a perfectionist theater director, instructing them on exactly how they should present their offerings to the Stone Thief.

Most of the walls of the cavern have the same writhing, milky-white veins as the tunnel that leads here. The far wall, though, exposes the stuff of the living dungeon. It's a seething, churning chaotic nightmare, sprouting and reabsorbing tendrils and tentacles in weirdly symmetrical patterns—fractal complexity, if anyone in the 13th Age knows what a fractal is.

The far wall of this chamber isn't stone. It's ectoplasm, the compacted ghosts of thousands of cities, shot through with demon energy. It's the living flesh of the living dungeon. It's what a dungeon looks like when you strip away the masonry and the earth, the monsters and the treasure—it's the shape of death and madness.

Dealing enough damage to that exposed flesh can wound the Stone Thief and force it to return what it just stole.

The Architect

The Custodian of this level calls itself the Architect. It's a prissy, pedantic nitpicker, but that doesn't mean it's not dangerous. Unlike other Custodians like the Mad Butcher, it doesn't hate living creatures, except when they leave splotchy red stains on the stonework that are hard to clean. The Architect considers itself the most diligent and loyal of the Custodians, the only one who really understands the wishes of the Stone Thief.

The adventurers can negotiate with the Architect by offering it information about the missing Eyes of the Stone Thief, goings-on in the dungeon outside the Gizzard, or other valuable secrets such as good places for the dungeon to go hunting. The Architect seizes on anything that might give it an advantage against the other Custodians.

Attacking the Stone Thief

Any character may attack the exposed flesh with a melee or ranged attack as a quick action. Don't bother making attack rolls—assume a character next to the exposed area can attack the wall and automatically hit. Just roll the damage. They can also use spells as standard actions to hit the wall, or include it as a target in multi-target spells or effects.

To wound the Stone Thief sufficiently to end the fight, the characters must deal damage equal to the number of player characters x 150. So, if there are four player characters, they need to deal 600 damage to the walls to get the Stone Thief to retreat.

Point out the exposed flesh of the dungeon to the players, and tell them that it's clear that damaging the dungeon interferes with its ability to absorb the Prize. They can see that any damage causes the dungeon to convulse in pain. If they're still unsure what to do, the Architect can give the game away (*"stop them before they damage the Master!"*)

Defending the Stone Thief

If the adventurers start attacking the exposed flesh of the dungeon, the Architect acts to defend the Stone Thief. A host of stone imps sprout from the walls and leap to protect the Stone Thief, while the Architect hurls spells from its lofty perch. It also raises the alarm, calling orcs up from Deep Keep.

ED1: Increase the submergence die by 1.

ED2: The orcs join the fight.

ED4: The Stone Thief writhes in pain and alarm. All characters may either rally as a free action, or reroll one attack made this round.

ED5: Increase the submergence die by 1.

ED6: The Stone Thief manifests and curses 1d3 of the player characters. This attack is **+15 vs. MD**, and inflicts 20 damage. On a critical hit, the character is stuck and must start making last gasp saves as it begins to turn to stone (making the save also ends the stuck condition).

Defeating the Stone Thief

The final blow cuts deep, and the dungeon howls in pain and frustration. The ground quakes, and anything in the Gizzard Chamber gets vomited back up to the surface, more-or-less intact. The dungeon spits the player characters out too. Optionally, some of the structures in the Hall of Ruin might also be spat back up. The Stone Thief then sinks into the underworld and flees at great speed.

Blockheads

Zombie bodies, with blank stone blocks for heads. They're the dungeon's laborers. Today, they'll be digging your grave.

6th level mook [construct]
Initiative: +4

Stone Fist +11 vs. AC—12 damage
Natural 16+: The blockhead headbutts its foe, inflicting another 8 damage.

Part of the Dungeon: Enemies engaged with a blockhead don't get their free attack on the Stone Thief.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 20 (mook)**
MD 16

Mook: Kill one blockhead mook for every 20 damage you deal to the mob.

Nasty Cave Orc

Their useless eyes bulge out so much they sometimes burst with excitement.

5th level mook [humanoid]
Initiative: +8, or +14 at night or in dark caves

Obsidian knife +10 vs. AC—6 damage, and +1d6 damage for each other orc engaged with the target (max +4d6)

R: Rock +9 vs. AC—8 damage

Hears everything: Increase the DC to sneak past cave orcs silently by +5.

Nocturnal predator: If the battle is at night (or in darkness), the orc gains a +2 attack bonus. If the battle is during the day (or in daylight) it takes a –2 penalty to all defenses.

AC 21
PD 20 **HP 18 (mook)**
MD 13

Mook: Kill one nasty cave orc mook for every 18 damage you deal to the mob.

Orc Heavy Tusker

Huge tusks, powerful jaws, and a tiny piggy mind. Tuskers are all the more dangerous because they are too stupid to feel pain and perpetually angry at the world.

6th level troop [humanoid]
Initiative: +11

Club'n'tusk +11 vs. AC—18 damage
Furious charge: The attack instead deals 25 damage on a hit if the orc tusker first moves before attacking an enemy it was not engaged with at the start of its turn.

Miss: 8 damage, and the orc tusker pops free from all enemies.

AC 23
PD 20 **HP 90**
MD 16

Stone Imp

The Architect's personal retinue of imps are made from bits of elegant statues. A slim marble arm here, a horse's head there, a Dwarf King's legs there, all jammed together.

6th level troop [construct]
Initiative: +0

Stone Claws +11 vs. AC—20 damage

[When the escalation die is 3+, use this attack instead]
Stone Haymaker +6 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural even hit: The target is stunned for one round.
Natural even miss: Deal 2d6 damage to both target and stone imp.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 90**
MD 16

The Architect

He has a vision. You're not in it.

Double-strength 7th level caster [Construct]
Initiative: +10

C: Hail of Stones +12 vs. PD (any engaged foes)—40 damage
Natural roll exceeds target's Strength: The target pops free and is knocked off the pillar, suffering another 10 damage.

R: Stone Bolts +12 vs. AC (1d3 nearby or far-away targets)—20 damage
Natural even miss: The Architect may immediately make another *stone bolts* attack, but cannot target any enemy it has already struck with a stone bolt this round.

R: Crevasse +12 vs. PD (1d3 nearby targets in a group)—20 damage
Natural even hit: The target falls into the crevasse, taking another 10 damage and losing their next move action.

Vomit Imps: As a standard action, the Architect may summon a stone imp. It may use this ability up to twice per battle, but only when the escalation die is 4+.

Fight Harder, Fools: If the Architect is unengaged, it shouts orders to its stone imp minions as a free action. The stone imps gain a +1 bonus to their attack rolls.

Pillar of the Community: The Architect stands atop a tall pillar. Only enemies atop the pillar are considered nearby. Climbing the pillar is DC 15.

Load-Bearing Boss: Increase the submergence die by 2 if the Architect is destroyed.

AC 22
PD 21 **HP 200**
MD 17

Gizzard Chamber Fight Chart

Number/Level of PCs	Blockheads	Stone Imps	Orc Heavy Tuskers	Nasty Cave Orcs	The Architect
3 x 4th level	3	0	1	3	1
4 x 4th level	3	1	1	3	1
5 x 4th level	5	1	1	5	1
6 x 4th level	5	2	2	5	1
7 x 4th level	5	3	2	5	1
3 x 5th level	*5*	*2*	*1*	*6*	*1*
4 x 5th level	*5*	*3*	*2*	*6*	*1*
5 x 5th level	*8*	*3*	*3*	*8*	*1*
6 x 5th level	*8*	*5*	*4*	*8*	*1*
7 x 5th level	*8*	*5*	*5*	*8*	*1*
3 x 6th level	6	4	2	10	1
4 x 6th level	9	6	4	10	1
5 x 6th level	9	8	6	15	1
6 x 6th level	12	8	8	15	1
7 x 6th level	12	10	10	15	1

Exits

All exits from the Gizzard take the form of long winding corridors or cave passageways that bear an alarming resemblance to intestines. Dwellers in the dungeon often leave chalk marks or other clues to say where a passageway currently leads, but these messages cannot be trusted. A better method is to sniff the air—nearby levels each have their own distinct odor (must and decay for the Ossuary, earth and rot for Dungeon Town, rust and blood for the Gauntlet and the like).

DUNGEON TOWN

Levels 4–6

This part of the dungeon isn't a proper level. It's an embarrassment to the Stone Thief, an unwanted network of caves that became entangled in the living dungeon long ago and cannot be removed. The Custodians refer to this region as the Midden, and dump unwanted rooms and monsters here.

FEATURES & FACTIONS

The heart of this region is the great warren called the Wild Caves, which are composed of material shed by a Koru behemoth. The Stone Thief cannot digest these shells, so it cannot reshape them. The caves are a constant. The little settlement of Dungeon Town lies in these caves, watched over by its protector, the Provost. He guards Dungeon Town against the swarms of monsters that besiege it.

For a community of only a few dozen, Dungeon Town is rife with spies from every other faction in the dungeon, as well as agents of the icons of the surface world. The two factions with the most influence are the Cult of the Devourer and the Prince of Shadows.

DESCRIPTORS

It's the dungeon's dumping ground, so expect lots of slimes and oozes, lots of broken things and other junk, and lots of half-finished ruins. Bodies too mangled to be of use in the Ossuary and too diseased or tainted (or holy, in the case of some paladins and clerics) to be eaten get dumped here, too.

If they're lucky, refugees from places eaten by the dungeon make their way here.

MINOR ENCOUNTERS

Dead Refugee

The body of some unfortunate victim of the Stone Thief lies here. This one made it farther than most in the search for Dungeon Town—possibly because she was a servant of one of the icons. Roll relationship dice to determine who she was working for. Optionally, she might have died to keep a magical treasure out of the Stone Thief's clutches.

Orc Slaver Camp

The orcs of Deep Keep built a temporary camp here, to hold slaves before carrying them down to the mushroom farms. This camp was abandoned after it got smashed by bulettes. Picking through the shattered cages and empty manacles, the characters find several sets of orc armor, including full-face masks. This garb gives a +5 bonus to attempts to infiltrate Deep Keep in disguise.

Tapping Noise

Something is tapping on the far side of this wall. It doesn't seem to be in distress—just a regular tap-tap-tap, tap-tap-tap. It alters its pattern if the characters tap back. Should they tunnel into the wall, they free the invisible tapping from its stony prison, and it then adheres to one of the characters. Every so often, the haunted character feels unseen fingers going tap-tap-tap, tap-tap-tap… loud enough to alert enemies.

Fungal Patch

Quivering lines of green-glowing fungi seem to spell out cryptic messages on the wall in no known language, spiralling down and down through the caves.


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1. The Stalker's Maze

The Stone Thief hates Dungeon Town, but cannot touch it directly. The cavern that shelters the settlement is a part of the living dungeon, but ancient magical spells prevent the Stone Thief from changing the cavern's shape or size. It's ossified, stuck, like a hunched back or a useless withered limb. The living dungeon cannot touch Dungeon Town, but it can stop all but the luckiest from getting there. The Stalker's Maze is the first of these impediments.

The maze is a warren of low dark tunnels dug out of loose dirt by a school of bulettes. These monsters range ahead of the Stone Thief when it submerges and swims through the earth, but always return to this region when the dungeon surfaces. The maze keeps changing as the burrowers dig new tunnels and the old ones collapse.

A small clan of derro—exiles even from their own bizarre society—also live in this maze. They've forged a mutually beneficial death pact with the bulettes. The derro lure victims into position, the bulettes grab them, and then everyone shares in the murderfest.

Footsteps in the Maze

The derro have scouts stationed throughout the maze. There are many hiding places for these skulking wretches, especially when they can use their cloaking dark powers to deepen the shadows. Also, derro think nothing of burying themselves alive, leaving only a single eye exposed to peer out. Spotting a derro scout requires a DC 30 check—and if spotted, the derro bursts out and squeals for his cohorts to come to his aid anyway, so all the adventurers do in that situation is avoid a surprise attack.

If the derro remains undetected, it squeals a signal to the lurking bulettes.

Dwarf King: There's something familiar about these tunnels, a sort of psychic stain. It's the wrong sort of darkness. There are derro nearby!

Bulette Eruption

The ambush proper begins when the bulettes burst out of the ground and attack the adventurers. These bulettes use their burrowing abduction attack when they can, hoping to snatch one or more adventurers and carry them away. Any abducted adventurers are brought to the Killing Room in the Derro Lair (see below).

If any bulette becomes staggered without any of the PCs getting grabbed, then the ambush fails and the monsters flee. Derro hold grudges just as well as the next dwarf, so they'll try again when the adventurers next pass this way.

PCs left behind when their comrades are taken can plunge into the crumbling tunnel, or wait for a bulette to return to fetch its next victim (the bullete comes back in two rounds). The bulette burrow leading to the Killing Room is unstable; roll a d6 if an adventurer tries to follow a bulette. If the result is greater than the escalation die, the tunnel collapses while the adventurer is inside. That's 3d6 damage and you're buried alive (hard save, 16+, to dig your way out and emerge in the Killing Room).

The Killing Room

This room is quite simple in its design. There's a floor of loose earth, red and scabby with old spilled blood. Around that, there's a stone walkway. The derro stand on the walkway. The bulettes emerge from the loose earth, spit out a grabbed victim, then sink back down. The derro swarm the victim and commit as many atrocities as they can before the bulette returns with the next unlucky adventurer. That means that any grabbed adventurers may have to survive multiple rounds alone with the derro killing pack.

Dead victims get stripped of their gear. The derro keep any equipment or treasure, and the bulettes get the meat.

Killer

Abducted adventurers are in for a really, really hard time—not only do they get stomped by the bulette carrying them, they face thoroughly unfair odds when dumped in the Killing Room. A fair GM might pick an adventurer who's got a chance of surviving (like a high defense fighter, or a wizard who's got sleep prepared, or a rogue who can *shadow walk* or who has the Swashbuckle talent).

For a fairer fight, let the other player characters grab onto a bulette's tail as it burrows away. They take 2d8 damage from being dragged through the dirt, but arrive on the killing floor at the same time as the abductee.

The derro scouts in the tunnel aren't included in the battle tables—they'll scurry away instead of fighting.

The Derro Lair

The lair is only accessible via bulette tunnel—when the derro want to move between maze and lair, they call one of their bulettes and hope it's not too hungry when it arrives. In addition to the home entertainment system of the Killing Room, the adventurers find:

- **Derro Quarters:** The derro don't sleep—they just squat in darkened rooms, rocking back and forth keening to themselves.
- **Storerooms:** No containers, no organization—they hold food like meat and mushrooms, body parts, clothing, interesting stones, stolen weapons and armor, scrimshawed thigh bones, tools and other supplies just get thrown in random piles of filth like a teenage boy's bedroom.
- **Derro Prison:** This room is where those derro who are too unstable—too *improved*—to function are kept. The last occupant of the room is dead when discovered by the adventurers, having eaten his own intestines in a grisly last meal. The scratched runes on the walls may provide useful information, or might just be the random ravings of someone who thought eating their own guts was a good idea.

- **Treasury:** The derro keep the pick of their loot here. There's a pile of gold and gems (200 gp per adventurer), along with a healing potion or three. There's also a *+2 derro living shortsword*—it looks like a blunt bat of grayish flesh, covered in tiny puckered mouths, but it burrows and chews into the flesh of anyone you stab it into. Increase one of the damage dice rolled for the shortsword by one step each time you hit during a battle. So, if you're 4th level and you do d8 with shortswords, you'd normally do 4d8 damage when you hit. The second time you hit this battle, you deal 3d8 + 1d10, the third time 2d8+2d10 and so on, to a maximum of 4d10. *Quirk:* Treats the weapon like a pet and feeds it treats.

Trained Bulette

To train a bulette, start by obtaining psychic powers at terrible cost from the dark powers of the underworld and going insane. The rest is just teaching the monster to read your mind-beams.

Large 5th level wrecker [BEAST]
Initiative: +7

Gigantic Claws +12 vs. AC (2 attacks)—15 damage
Natural 14+: The bulette can grab a victim.
Natural 18 or 20: The bulette can grab a victim and make a *burrowing abduction* attack against it as a free action.

Burrowing Abduction +12 vs. PD (grabbed victim only)—10 damage, and the bulette attempts to burrow into the ground (see page 200 of the *13th Age* core rulebook). It needs to make a normal save (11+) to burrow away. It then carries the victim to the Killing Floor and leaves it there at the start of the victim's next turn.

Chew +12 vs. AC (grabbed victim only)—20 damage
Natural 14–16: Actually, it's 30 damage.
Natural 17–19: Make it 40 damage.
Natural 20: Gulp. Start making those last gasp saves inside the bulette's stomach.

Trained Burrower: The bulette responds to commands given by the derro.

AC 22
PD 19 **HP 170**
MD 14

Derro Maniac

The derro love the Stone Thief a little too much for even the dungeon's comfort.

4th level troop [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +8

Shortsword +9 vs. AC—12 damage
Natural 16+: The derro can cast one of the following close-quarters spells as a quick action this turn.
Cloaking dark: All nearby derro gain a +1 bonus to attacks and defenses until the end of the derro maniac's next turn (cumulative).
Sonic squeal: Two random nearby non-derro creatures take 2d4 thunder damage.

R: Light repeating crossbow +9 vs. AC—10 damage
Natural 16+: The target also takes 5 ongoing poison damage.
Natural 19+: As above, and the derro maniac can make another *light repeating crossbow* attack as a free action.

AC 19
PD 16 **HP 52**
MD 18

Derro Sage

They know the answers to all questions. All the questions important to the derro, anyway, which means the answers are all either "soon", "yes", or "knives, lots of knives."

4th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +7

Staff +7 vs. AC—7 damage
Natural 16+: The derro can cast one of the following close-quarters spells as a quick action this turn.
Cloaking dark: All nearby derro gain a +1 bonus to attacks and defenses until end of the derro sage's next turn (cumulative).
Sonic squeal: Two random nearby non-derro creatures take 2d8 thunder damage.

R: Mind scream +9 vs. MD—12 psychic damage, and the target is confused (*make a basic or at-will attack vs. ally*) until the end of the derro sage's next turn
Natural 16+: The derro sage can make another *mind scream* attack against a different nearby target as a free action.

Nastier Specials

Group gibbering: The derro sage starts a group of derro gibbering as a quick action. It can maintain the gibber as a free action at the start of each turn by taking 1 damage. Each nearby non-derro creature that hears the gibber must roll a d6 at the start of its turn and takes psychic damage equal to the die roll or to the number of gibbering derro, whichever is lower.

AC 18
PD 15 **HP 40**
MD 18

Derro Slasher

Derro slashers infiltrate surface cities via the sewer networks to play games. Hide and seek, then murder in the dark.

6th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

Slash +11 vs. AC—20 damage
Natural 16+: The derro can cast one of the following close-quarters spells as a quick action this turn.
Vanish: The derro slasher vanishes from the battlefield. It returns at the start of its next turn anywhere, reappearing anywhere nearby.
Cripple: One nearby enemy is hampered until the end of its next turn.

R: Mind scream +9 vs. MD—15 psychic damage, and the target is confused (*make a basic or at-will attack vs. ally*) until the end of the derro slasher's next turn
Natural 16+: The derro slasher can make another *mind scream* attack against a different nearby target as a free action.

AC 18
PD 15 **HP 90**
MD 18

Derro Master-Sage

What was that she said? In the middle of her endless gibbering, she mentioned your name, and something about a secret. You couldn't quite catch it. Maybe if you keep listening to the mad gibbering, she'll repeat herself. Next time, you'll hear it. Next time, you'll understand.

7th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

Staff +12 vs. AC—25 damage
Natural 16+: The derro can cast one of the following close-quarters spells as a quick action this turn.
Consuming dark: Choose two nearby targets. Both targets take 5 ongoing damage, and suffer a –1 penalty to all attacks and defenses vs. derro (save ends).
Sonic squeal: Two random nearby non-derro creatures take 2d12 thunder damage.

R: Mind scream +12 vs. MD—25 psychic damage, and the target is confused (*make a basic or at-will attack vs. ally*) until the end of the derro sage's next turn
Natural 16+: The derro sage can make another *mind scream* attack against a different nearby target as a free action.

Nastier Specials

Group gibbering: The derro sage starts a group of derro gibbering as a quick action. It can maintain the gibber as a free action at the start of each turn by taking 1 damage. Each nearby non-derro creature that hears the gibber must roll a d6 at the start of its turn and takes psychic damage equal to three times the number of gibbering derro.

AC 23
PD 17 **HP 100**
MD 22

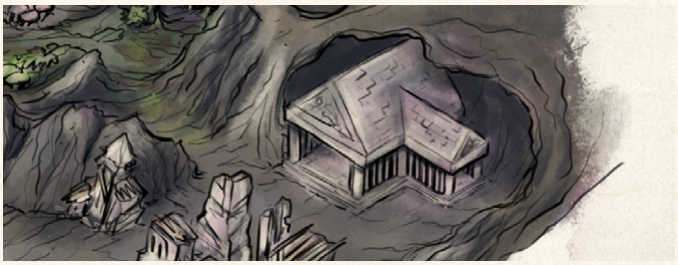
Stalker's Maze Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Trained Bulette	Derro Maniac	Derro Sage	Derro Slasher	Derro Master-Sage
3 x 4th level	1	2	1	0	0
4 x 4th level	1	3	1	0	0
5 x 4th level	2	3	1	0	0
6 x 4th level	2	3	2	0	0
7 x 4th level	2	4	3	0	0
3 x 5th level	*2*	*4*	*2*	*0*	*0*
4 x 5th level	*2*	*5*	*3*	*1*	*0*
5 x 5th level	*2*	*5*	*3*	*1*	*0*
6 x 5th level	3	5	4	2	0
7 x 5th level	3	6	4	3	0
3 x 6th level	3	0	0	3	2
4 x 6th level	4	0	0	3	3
5 x 6th level	4	0	0	5	3
6 x 6th level	4	0	0	5	4
7 x 6th level	4	0	0	7	5

Variations

- The derro have departed on a bizarre pilgrimage into the depths of the dungeon, drawn by whatever is in the Well of Desire in the Dwarf King's treasure house down in the Pit of Undigested Ages. They leave behind cryptic messages to that effect.
- The derro made the mistake of capturing the Provost of Dungeon Town. The PCs find a room full of dead derro with staved-in skulls.

2. The Lure of Books



Get the Archmage drunk, and before he's too deep into his cups, he'll start bemoaning the loss of the Quillgate Library (before he starts turning things into other things or juggling meteor swarms). The library once stood on the cliffs at Throne Point. Ships from every city on the Midland Sea, and further afield too, brought books and scrolls to the librarians of the Quillgate. An earthquake collapsed the cliffs, and the heedless sea swallowed the library and all its lore. Fishermen along the Fairwind Sound still sometimes find clumps of rotted parchment in their nets.

The books in the library were alive, animated by magical spells that woke the tales and secrets contained within, and some of those books screamed for help as the library crumbled. The Stone Thief heard them. It stole part of the library before it was lost and preserved it here—but in exchange, those treacherous books had to swear to serve the Stone Thief. The rest of the library's entombed down in the Pit of Undigested Ages (page 208).

6th Level PCs?

This battle is designed for level 4 and 5 PCs only—toughening it up to suit 6th level characters diminished the humorous elements so much that it lost its charm. If your PCs don't visit this part of the dungeon until they're 6th level, just skip this battle or use the 5th level fight chart and give them an easy victory.

Visiting the Library

The library looks suspiciously inviting from the threshold—there's a lectern facing the doorway, and the book on that lectern is always something of interest to those who trespass here. One book or another hastily flits over to the lectern when they hear someone coming. If a thief comes to the door, then a book on *Dragon's Ransoms & King's Beds—Treasure Hoards of History* jumps into position. If it's a wizard who knocks, then a spellbook like *The Concordance of Flame* or *Practical Geomancy* takes the place of honor. If it's a starving slave, then the book on the lectern might be *A Salient Treatise on Edible Fungi*.

A glowing crystal sphere hangs from a chain above the lectern; the globe sheds a warm circle of light, making it an ideal spot for reading. There's a comfy chair nearby, too.

The other books that serve the Stone Thief lurk atop the bookshelves, or on the ledge above the door, ready to attack. The rest of the books sit bound, gagged, and chained on the bookshelves, unable to move.

The Librarians

The Flesh Tailor created these grisly undead to care for the books. The librarians are animated skeletons. Each one carries three books—one is a manual of swordfighting, one a spellbook, and the last a lurid book on torture and anatomy, penned by the Flesh Tailor himself. At the start of the battle, the librarians lurk out of sight behind bookshelves. They join the fight when the player characters damage any of the books.

Gamemaster

This battle assumes that you've got a pile of books at hand that the players can read. Smartphones and laptops work too—a random Wikipedia page can substitute for a page of a book. If either solution is impractical for your group, then you can change the *bibliophiliac trance* to read:

Bibliophiliac Trance +10 vs. MD—Stunned (save ends).
Natural 16+: Two saves are needed to end the stun.
Natural 20: Three saves are needed to end the stun.

Bloodsucking Book

One can tell how recently a book fed by the color of the ink. A sated book is full of red ink.

5th level spoiler [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +7
Vulnerability: fire

C: Bibliophiliac Trance +10 vs. MD (1 nearby enemy)—no damage, but the player of the targeted character must immediately start reading a book out loud. The player may roll a save at the end of each page. While reading, the player character is stunned. Only the bloodsucking book that stunned that character will attempt to *feast* on him.
Critical Hit: If you have a suitably impenetrable academic tome to hand, give that to the player to read. Otherwise, the player only gets a save every two pages.
Limited Use: 2/battle.

Feast +6 vs. AC—15 damage. Only one bloodsucking book can feast on a particular target in any round

Clumsy Flier: The bloodsucking book can flap about the place with the aerodynamics of a book that's been flung across the room by a disappointed reader.

AC 21
PD 15
MD 19

HP 50

Small-but-Vicious Pamphlet

The Archmage experiments on orphans! The Priestess runs the Cathedral as a tax dodge! The Great Gold Wyrm was pushed!

4th level mook [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +5
Vulnerability: fire

Papercut Bite + 9 vs. AC—7 damage
Natural 18+: Ink from the bite seeps into the character's mind, poisoning it. One icon relationship die becomes temporarily conflicted. Ask the player to describe how the pamphlet changed their character's opinion of the icon. The relationship die stays conflicted until the character reconciles with the icon (or reaffirms their opposition to the icon, in the case of a negative relationship). A character may only be affected by this ability once.

Clumsy Flier: The small-but-vicious pamphlet flaps about the place with tremendous enthusiasm but not much effect.

AC 20
PD 14
MD 18

HP 15 (mook)

Mook: Kill one small-but-vicious pamphlet for every 15 damage you deal to the mob.

Undead Librarian

The dead of certain lands are avid readers, so it is the custom that each corpse be buried with a night-light and a supply of books. Listen in the graveyard at night, and you might hear the rustling of pages underground. Ghouls rise in such places when the families forget to supply fresh reading material.

6th level wrecker [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +9
Vulnerability: holy

Cruel Claws + 12 vs. AC (2 attacks)—10 damage. If the undead librarian still has its Anatomy Book, add 5 ongoing damage (save ends)

Sword Strike +12 vs. AC—25 damage. If the librarian still has its Fencing Book, add the escalation die to the attack roll and the damage

R: Spell of Destruction + 12 vs. MD—25 damage. If the librarian still has its Spell Book, the target is also vulnerable (save ends)

Consult the Books: The librarian carries three books with it—an Anatomy Book, a Fencing Book, and a Spell Book. If a character attacks a librarian with a natural 18+, one of the books is destroyed in addition to any other damage. The books can also be removed in other ways—called shots, *thief's strikes* and the like.

Shush! If a player speaks above a whisper, or if a bard uses a bardic song or battle cry, the librarian rebukes that character for 10 psychic damage.



Guardian of the Library: The librarians only attack those who threaten the books. If a character isn't actively endangering library property or a librarian, they are unlikely to attack.

AC 23
PD 21
MD 17

HP 100

Lure of Books Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Bloodsucking Book	Vicious Pamphlet	Librarian
3 x 4th level	1	3	1
4 x 4th level	2	4	1
5 x 4th level	3	5	1
6 x 4th level	3	5	2
7 x 4th level	4	5	2
3 x 5th level	*5*	*5*	2
4 x 5th level	*6*	*6*	2
5 x 5th level	*7*	*7*	3
6 x 5th level	*8*	*8*	3
7 x 5th level	*9*	*9*	4

Treasure

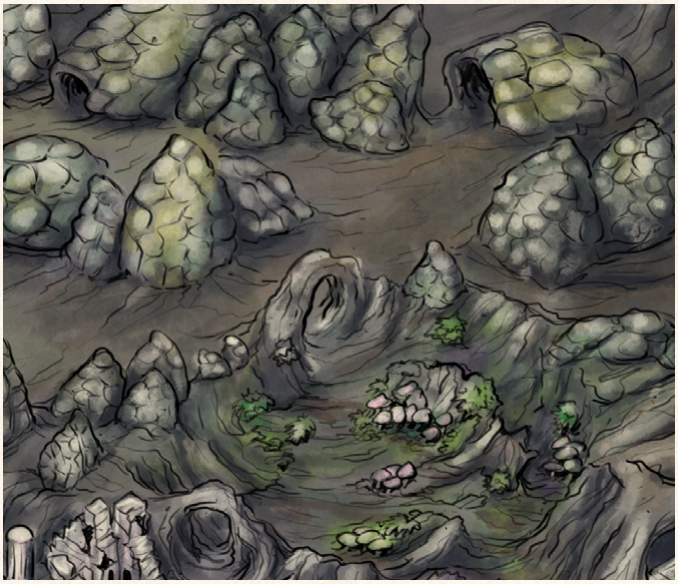
Freed from their chains, the other living books flap around the player characters like a flock of enthusiastic bricks who think they're butterflies. They can't speak, but they can fall open to just the right page to reveal some useful information (say, a description of the Cult of the Devourer, or an eyewitness account of the Sunken Sea, or information about the Inverted Observatory).

Obviously, this is a great place to find a magical book like a spellbook or a *Manual of Enlightened Flesh*.

Variations

- A band of orcs from Deep Keep discovered the library and is in the process of looting it when the PCs arrive.
- A secret adjunct to the library contains spellbooks or other vital scrolls.

3. Wild Caves



The tunnels and corridors leading to this area from the rest of the dungeon end at an odd junction. No matter what form the passageway takes—bare rock, earth, brick, or worked stone—the entrance to the cavern is marked by a sudden discontinuity. Tiny tendrils of ectoplasm constantly sprout and recoil from the cracks in the stone. The living part of the living dungeon ends here—for some reason, the Stone Thief has no influence in these Wild Caves.

The Wild Caves are lodged in the Stone Thief and carried with it, but it cannot eject the caves. All the dungeon can do is spit monsters into the caverns to wipe out the infestation of Dungeon Town.

The Wild Caves are a sanctuary—if the dungeon submerges, the adventurers are safe here. The dungeon doesn't like to be reminded of this fact, so increase the submergence die by one when the adventurers enter the Wild Caves.

The Mushroom Forest

Edible mushrooms grow in great profusion in parts of the cave. So too do inedible and highly toxic ones. The inhabitants of Dungeon Town have, through trial and burial, learned how to distinguish one strain of mushrooms from another.

Spoor of the Behemoth

A close examination of the cave walls is illuminating. Beneath the dust and packed dirt of centuries, these caves are not made of rock. They're the shell of some gigantic beast—so large that there can be only one explanation. These caves are made up of shells shed by a Koru behemoth!

If the adventurers spend time searching (and that means at least one tangle with a monster), they discover evidence that these shell-caves didn't just fall from the back of a behemoth. At some point in the past, they were worked and shaped. The characters find runes and charms carved into the otherwise impenetrable substance of the cave wall.

High Druid or Dwarf King (or a lot of research): These shells came from the behemoth known as Stoneroost. It might be worth a visit (see page 318).

Wandering Monsters in the Caves

The Stone Thief cannot attack Dungeon Town directly, but it can drop monsters on the doorstep. If the player characters aren't careful, they'll run straight into one of these bands of rampaging monsters. (If they are careful, they still have to get past the creatures, but at least then they can get the drop on them.) Throw one or more monster packs in the path of the player characters as they explore the caves. You can also use these monsters as the forces attacking Dungeon Town (page 87).

Dire Snail

The plague of dire snails began when a particular slimy living dungeon broke through to the surface. Do all these monsters secretly serve a single master snail?

Large 6th level troop [BEAST]
Initiative: +7

Bite +11 vs. AC—40 damage
Natural 16+: The snail may immediately make a *snail flail* attack as a free action.
Natural 18+: The snail grabs its foe in its mouth and uses it as a bludgeon while making a *snail flail* attack as a free action. The foe takes 1d6 damage per target hit by the snail flail.

C: Snail Flail +11 vs. PD (1d3 targets engaged with the snail)—10 damage
Natural even hit: The target loses a move action in its next turn.

Slime Trail: The snail secretes acidic slime. Any creature who starts its turn engaged with the snail and does not disengage must spend its move action avoiding the slime trail. If it does not, it takes 5 acid damage and has its initiative reduced by 5.

Hide in Shell: The snail only exposes its vulnerable head and neck for part of each turn. It has a +6 bonus to AC against creatures with a lower initiative score than it.

Nastier Specials

C: Slime Spray +9 vs. PD (all nearby enemies)—20 acid damage, and the victim's initiative is reduced by 5.
Limited use: 1/battle.

AC 20 (26 to those with lower initiative)
PD 20 **HP 180**
MD 16

Pale Lizard

The assassins who serve the Black breed these lizards in captivity as hunting beasts and mounts. They feed them a diet rich in meat that causes their hides to darken to midnight-black.

7th level wrecker [BEAST]
Initiative: +12
Vulnerability: lightning

Savage Bite +12 vs. AC—25 damage
Natural attack roll higher than target's Strength: The lizard may make a *ripping claws* attack as a free action.

[Special trigger] **Ripping Claws +12 vs. AC**—15 damage

Lashing Tail: The pale lizard has a +5 bonus to disengage checks, and inflicts 10 damage when it pops free of a foe.

Pounce: If the pale lizard is unengaged at the start of its turn, it may pounce on one nearby foe with a lower initiative than the lizard as its standard action. It may then make a *savage bite* and a *ripping claws* attack on that foe.

Nastier Specials

Blood-Dark Beast: The pale lizard gains a +2 bonus to AC until the start of its next turn whenever if it inflicts a critical hit.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 36 (mook)**
MD 18

Mook: Kill one pale lizard mook for every 36 damage you deal to the mob.

Hunched Giant

Giants captured by the Stone Thief often go mad from claustrophobia.

Large 7th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

I Think That Was a Stalactite He Hit Me With +12 vs. AC—40 damage
Natural even hit or miss: The giant may make a *no, it was a stalagmite backswing* against any nearby target as a free action.

[Special Trigger] **No, It Was a Stalagmite Backswing +12 vs. AC**—15 damage

R: Thrown Boulder +11 vs. PD (one nearby target or far away target at –2 atk)—35 damage

Ow, My Head: If the giant rolls a natural 1 for an attack, it takes 10 damage and adds one to its Tantrum score.

Building Fury: The giant has a Tantrum score, which starts at 0. Add one to the giant's Tantrum score each time it suffers a critical hit or becomes staggered. When the Tantrum score increases, roll a d6. If the result is less than or equal to the Tantrum score, the giant immediately throws a Tantrum and makes a number of *tantrum stomp* attacks against random nearby creatures (friends or foes) equal to its Tantrum score. Reset the Tantrum score to 0 after this occurs.

Crybaby: If the giant's Tantrum score is greater than 0 when the giant drops to 0 hit points, it can make a *tantrum stomp* attack before it dies.

[Special Trigger] **Tantrum Stomp +11 vs. PD (a number of nearby targets equal to score)**—10 + Tantrum score damage.

AC 23
PD 22 **HP 200**
MD 17

Ogre Bully

Ironically, these are one of the smaller types of ogre. They can't compete with their stronger siblings, so they end up beating up kobolds for coppers.

5th level mook [GIANT]
Initiative: +7

Big Club +10 vs. AC—9 damage

Bully: If three or more ogre bullies engage the same target, the third and subsequent bullies deal +5 damage on a hit.

Easy Pickings Only: If the number of enemies equals or exceeds the number of ogre bullies and their allies, the remaining bullies flee.

Fear the Orc Lord: The bullies respect the Orc Lord. Each relationship die with the Orc Lord among all characters counts as an extra enemy for the purposes of determining *easy pickings only*.

AC 21
PD 19 **HP 20 (mook)**
MD 15

Mook: Kill one ogre bully mook for every 20 damage you deal to the mob.

Variations

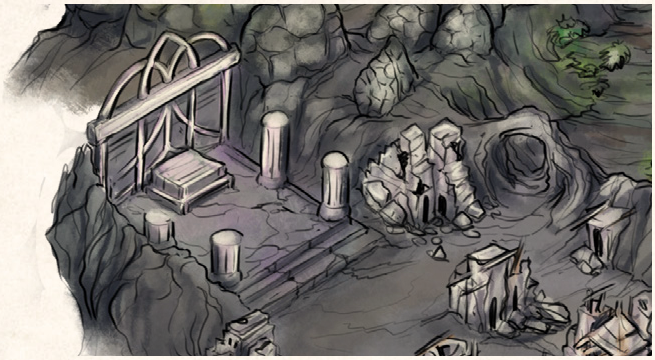
- The dungeon might throw any sort of monster at Dungeon Town, especially ones that it can't make better use of elsewhere. Unleash the fire elemental war-elephants and nalfish... nelfetch... nafleshee... boar demons!

Wild Caves Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Dire Snail	Ogre Bullies	Pale Lizard	Hunched Giant
3 x 4th level	1	3	0	0
4 x 4th level	1	5	0	0
5 x 4th level	2	3	0	0
6 x 4th level	2	5	0	0
7 x 4th level	2	8	0	0
3 x 5th level	*1*	*5*	*2*	*0*
4 x 5th level	*1*	*8*	*3*	*0*
5 x 5th level	*1*	*5*	*2*	*1*
6 x 5th level	*1*	*5*	*3*	*1*
7 x 5th level	*1*	*5*	*3*	*1*
3 x 6th level	0	6	2	2
4 x 6th level	0	8	3	2
5 x 6th level	0	8	2	3
6 x 6th level	0	10	3	3
7 x 6th level	0	10	5	3

- There has to be a colony of fungaloids somewhere in the Wild Caves.

4. Temple of the Devourer



The Cult of the Devourer (page 30) practices a form of ritual worship that draws the Stone Thief to them. That means that over the ages, the dungeon has swallowed dozens of cult temples, and is thoroughly sick of them. This particular temple is on its way out of the dungeon—soon, the dungeon will slough it off, leaving the temple buried deep underground.

All but one of the cultists who once worshipped in this temple are dead or long gone—the survivors set off in search of the Secret Masters in the deeper dungeon, leaving behind **Cypriac**, an old cult sorcerer. He's half-blind, half-mad, half-deaf, and half-starved at least, and may be entirely one or more of those things. He's forgotten more than half the words for things, too. He's more of a ruin than most of the dungeon.

He tends the temple out of habit. From his warped perspective, he's in a sort of purgatory. The dungeon is the Devourer. It consumed his temple—then rejected it. It should have devoured both the stones of the temple and the flesh of the cultists within, not left him here in this underground wilderness. (The truth is that, by chance, the temple ended up in the area of the cavern that the Stone Thief cannot touch.)

Encountering Cypriac

The old man attempts to defend the temple against any 'heretical intruders'. His aim isn't what it was, either—if he tries a spell, it goes awry and blasts the stonework off to the side. He brandishes his ritual dagger, but grabs a spoon instead. Play him as pathetic and pitiful, a harmless old coot. Exhausted, he invites the adventurers to rest in the temple while he proselytizes at them.

Optionally, roll icon relationships when the adventurers meet the old man. The cult has a grudge against the Empire and the icons of civilization, so successful rolls with the Emperor, Archmage, Dwarf King, and the like may make Cypriac less willing to talk to the characters.



If they do persuade him to stop flailing his spoon at them, Cypriac can tell them about the cult, the dungeon, and himself, all filtered through his religious convictions. The Stone Thief is the Devourer, the God-to-Come; the Empire will be devoured and the world put to rightness; the cult is all-powerful, guided by the all-knowing Secret Masters, and the heretic intruders—that's you young folk—will die screaming. Would you like more tea?

Notably, Cypriac grumbles that he will never:

- descend the Maddening Stair
- pass the test of the Alabaster Sentinel
- enter the Chamber of Transcendence
- do homage to the Blood of the First Master, the first and greatest of thieves
- join the Secret Masters in their eternal vigil
- witness the destruction of the world, and the making of the better world to come.

All of which are things that the player characters may have to do over the course of the campaign, with the exception of the last two if they're lucky.

The Temple

The temple is twice-ruined, once by its passage through the Maw, and again when the other cultists looted anything useful. Cypriac has repaired the place as best he can, but most of the furnishings and ritual implements are missing. The murals on the wall—and the bloodstains on the altar—do reveal something of the history of the cult and their plans for the dungeon. Use the temple to foreshadow the cult. Optionally, Cypriac can let slip some vital clue about the cult, or the characters might find a letter from a cult temple in a major city like Santa Cora.

The Treacherous Old Man

Cypriac may be too old and weak to fight the intruders directly, but he can still hurt them.

- If they accept food or drink from Cypriac, and don't watch him, he'll slip poison into the meal. Cypriac eats too—he's willing to die for the cult. Those who consume the poison perish in a few hours, unless the adventurers find a cure. Myrdin the Wizard of Dungeon Town might have a cure; other potential saviours are Nioba Shieldspinner or Hag Pheig in the Grove (page 137). Alternatively, perhaps a cure could be made from the fungi and mosses that grow in the caves outside.
- If they question him for too long, he realizes he can mislead them and starts giving them false information. He might point them in the direction of a monster's lair, or a trap, or trick them into mistrusting the Provost.
- If they leave him alive, he might later find other members of the cult and report to them.
- If all else fails, he can just run out into the Wild Caves shrieking, and lead monsters—the holy beasts of the Devouring God—back to the temple.

Variations

- Cypriac's missing or dead if the PCs return here again. He's a prime candidate for becoming some sort of vengeful undead.
- For a more nuanced take, a band of refugees from the surface might take shelter under Cypriac's protection.

5. DUNGEON TOWN



All through the rest of the Stone Thief, the adventurers walk through ruins that were once palaces and castles, manors and tenements, cities and villages. The dungeon steals places where people once lived and transforms them into places of death. Ironically, the one place where people can actually live in the dungeon is also the one place devoid of stolen homes. Dungeon Town is a shanty town built of scavenged materials like stone blocks, timbers harvested from the Grove, flotsam from the Underriver, and scraps of clothing. The barricades that protect the town are the oldest and sturdiest feature—they're made from the nigh-impenetrable shards of the Koru shell.

Dungeon Town glimmers in the darkness of the dungeon. Unlike a surface settlement, Dungeon Town's buildings are not constructed as shelter against the elements. There is no weather down here. Light, not shelter, is the most pressing concern of the denizens. Candles and torches are used as currency, and the residents are adept at finding their way in almost total darkness.

The population of Dungeon Town waxes and wanes. When the Stone Thief consumes a great many people, then some lucky few find their way to this sanctuary. Some of those who find safety here cannot endure the loneliness and the darkness, and go mad or else strike off into the dungeon in hopes of finding a way back to the surface. The rest linger on, surviving as best they can under the Provost's regime. Right now, about fifty souls are in his care.

5a. Gates

The main entrance to Dungeon Town is via these ramshackle gates, made from the dented armor and broken weapons of hundreds of fallen adventurers. A dwarf smith who once lived in the town forged the gates long ago, and the residents add to them regularly. So far, the gates have held out against everything the Stone Thief has thrown at them. (The people of Dungeon Town consider themselves to be at war with the Stone Thief, and believe that they are heroically holding out against the worst horrors of the living dungeon. Their sworn foe is barely aware of them, and the monsters it sends are the equivalent of a dog scratching at a flea. Perhaps the player characters will make more of an impact on the dungeon.)

Getting past the gates is a matter for roleplaying. The residents are paranoid about infiltration by the dungeon denizens—a refugee could be a doppelganger, or a rakshasa, or one of the Flesh Tailor's custom skin-job zombies. The gate guards will still open the gates for the adventurers, but escort them to the Provost immediately.

5b. Provost's House

The Provost's House is the only stone building in town. It's a squat drum tower, with its battlements almost scraping off the roof of the cave. The origin of the tower is a matter for idle speculation—was it here before the town, was it somehow carved from the stony matter of the shell, or did the Thief steal it and the Provost somehow bring it here? A lookout watches from the top of the tower at all times, with a warhorn, a bow, and a bundle of arrows tipped with alchemical-lambent rags. These arrows burn with a harsh cold light for several minutes when lit.

Inside, the Provost's House is spartan. Weapons hang on the wall not as a vain display of martial pride, but in constant readiness for battle. The long table is used for meetings and battle plans, not feasts; the Provost eats the same gruel as the other citizens of Dungeon Town. His bedroom is spare, with only a few salvaged books as a concession to any life outside duty.

5c. Shelters

These lean-tos, tents, and shacks are where the denizens of Dungeon Town live. No two are alike. There are usually a few empty shelters, where newcomers to the town can stay until they find a place that suits them better.

5d. The Thief's Market

The one perk to living inside a malevolent living dungeon is the shopping, or at least the bartering. When the Stone Thief steals from the surface, some of the loot ends up here. The townsfolk scavenge from the Gizzard and other parts of the dungeon. The Thief's Market is where they trade what they found. Gold and treasure are of little use in the dungeon, but many survivors dream of one day escaping back to the surface laden down with riches. Most of the items bartered here, though, are purely functional—food, cloth, lamp oil, candles and torches, and other mundane necessities.

The smuggler **Darin Half-an-Inch** runs the market—and takes the choicest items for himself.

Prince of Shadows: Those signs scratched on the wall, those tattoos on his fingers, the rhythm he taps out on his knee—Darin is an agent of the Prince, and he can provide healing potions and other supplies to his compatriots, as well as information about ways out of the dungeon.

5E. THE LOBSTER POT INN

Easily in, but not easy out—even in the darkness of the dungeon, humans gather round a fire to get drunk and tell tales. The fare at the Lobster Pot is basic; you can have mushroom stew or surprise stew (mushroom stew with dungeon monster bits, if you've ever wondered what otyugh tastes like). They also serve a distilled spirit nicknamed Provost's Piss. It may make you blind, but if you're living in a lightless dungeon, that's not really a problem.

5F. MYRDIN'S SNAIL

The strangest home in Dungeon Town belongs to the wizard Myrdin. Unlike most of those trapped in the Stone Thief, Myrdin sought out the living dungeon, in hopes of recovering ancient magical secrets from the Pit of Undigested Ages. He never made it that deep—he staggered into Dungeon Town a few months ago, followed by his *charmed* giant dire snail. (He *charmed* it in the heat of combat, and the spell never wore off.) He's reshaped the snail's shell into a comfortable, if somewhat moist, bijou wizard's tower. If asked about this, Myrdin draws the characters' attention to the shell-shaping runes out in the Wild Caves; he used a much simpler, less powerful version of the same incantation.

Myrdin can provide magical services (healing potions, sage counsel, alchemical concoctions, ritual magic) in exchange for news of the outside world. For larger favors, he asks that the adventurers bring him back interesting relics from the Pit of Undigested Ages.

The wizard brought a single-use *teleport* scroll with him into the dungeon, but is determined to use it only in the direst of perils.

Archmage: Any friend of the Archmage is a friend of Myrdin. He might even entrust his *teleport* spell to them.

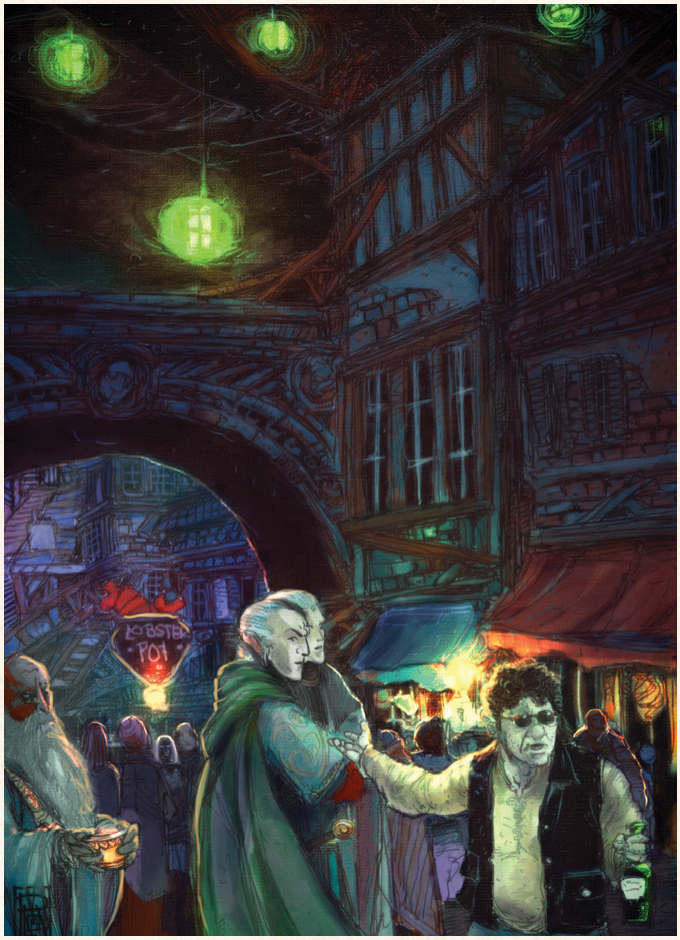
MEETING THE PROVOST

The Provost begins the meeting by staring at the adventurers well past the point at which it becomes uncomfortable. Even the bravest souls quail before that stern gaze, cold not like ice, but like a knife blade in winter as it strips away your skin and leaves you naked and exposed. He can detect falsehoods and deceptions (and if there are any shapeshifters or doppelgangers in the group, he'll spot them). Finally, he speaks.

Demonstrate his alarming powers of insight by having him talk about something the adventurers keep hidden (an unrevealed one unique thing is ideal). The Provost treats the player characters as fellow professionals—he acknowledges and respects their skills, but gives orders by dint of his greater experience and seniority.

Crusader: The Provost reminds you of the Crusader—but where the Crusader is fire and steel, the Provost is cold and stone. This is a man not to be trifled with. Still, you know how to work with such a man.

The Provost permits the characters to rest in Dungeon Town for one sleep, but if they are to stay longer, they must accept his laws. They are:



- **Serve as you are able:** There are no free rides in Dungeon Town. Everyone works. If you can fight, then you must help defend the town against monster attack. If you can't fight, then you'd better have some other skill. Even a child can gather mushrooms or tend a cooking fire.
- **Don't weaken the town:** The Provost doesn't care what you do under his roof, as long as it doesn't sap the strength of the town. Get drunk and brawl in the tavern if you want, as long as you're ready to fight when the horn-call sounds. Rob another citizen if you must, but murder is forbidden. The unspoken aspect of this law is that the weak and sick are criminalized. If you're too sick or too old or too weak to work, then you're a drain on the town's resources. Into the surprise stew pot with you!
- **No lies of hope:** There's no easy way out of the dungeon. Oh, some lucky few have found exits back to the surface—it's not impossible—and you can leave Dungeon Town and go in search of a way out if you want. What's forbidden is inciting *others* to leave the town. One traveler might be able to sneak out without the Stone Thief noticing, but if everyone in town tried to escape together, the dungeon would surely destroy them. Attend to your own doom, and leave others to find their own fates.

The Provost's Goals

If Dungeon Town becomes a major part of your campaign, then the question of the Provost's motivations and goals will need to be explored. Who is the Provost, and what does he want? The bare facts of his history are common knowledge in Dungeon Town—he's a former knight whose castle was devoured by the dungeon, and he came here to rescue any survivors, but so far he hasn't found them. From that starting point, you can build the Provost's character in several directions.

Despair: The Provost has given up on any hope of finding his lost family. Now, he only wants to hurt the dungeon as badly as it hurt him. Protecting the people of Dungeon Town lets him feel like he has at least accomplished something in his fight against the Stone Thief, but he's very close to giving into despair completely. Can the player characters rally his spirits for one last battle?

Tyranny: The Provost is a mad tyrant. He keeps Dungeon Town 'safe,' but he keeps people trapped in this hell instead of leading them to safety. He's a cult leader in a compound, waiting for the forces of darkness to come to destroy him. Do the player characters drink his mushroom kool-aid, or do they recognize the danger he presents?

Treachery: The Provost is still looking for his family. He's almost given up hope, but when the player characters arrive, he feels rejuvenated. He helps them in their quest to defeat the Stone Thief—and then one of the Custodians contacts him, and whispers that his family are still alive in the depths of the dungeon. It will release them—but only if he betrays the player characters.

Fear: The Provost walked the labyrinth of the Stone Thief for years. His mind was almost shattered by the things he saw down there. Dungeon Town is the closest thing to a safe place in the whole dungeon. He has to stay here. *Everyone* has to stay here. Anyone who wants to leave must be in league with the dungeon...

Heroism: The Provost is a failed, burnt-out hero. He tried to defeat the dungeon, and failed. If the characters show him that there are still champions and heroes in the world, then they can re-ignite his spirits and gain him as an ally.

Life in Dungeon Town

'Life' is an extremely magnanimous description. Let's go with 'survival' instead. This place may play at being a functional community, but it's really just a refugee camp protected by a warlord and his followers. If you're not one of the Provost's guards, watching the gates for monsters and other intruders, then you're probably one of the scavengers who keep the town running. The scavengers gather mushrooms from the Wild Caves. The braver ones go further afield—to the Grove for other plants, to the Sunken Sea for water and fish, and down to the Gizzard for salvage whenever the dungeon consumes a surface structure.

Finding sources of light is a constant problem. The wizard Myrdin can provide *light* spells in emergencies, but most citizens must do without magical illumination, and instead make do with carefully husbanded candles and torches. A sliver of candle is worth its weight in gold down here.

Bizarrely, there's an active smuggling network in Dungeon Town that goes all the way to the Prince of Shadows. Darin Half-an-Inch runs this end of it. He takes items that are worth a fortune on the surface, then sends them to the Prince via the Underriver exit (see page 122). If he can't reach the Underriver, then he finds some desperate sap who's leaving Dungeon Town, and entrusts them to him. If the courier's lucky enough to escape, the Prince's agents can collect the goods on the surface. Darin works with one of the orcs, Grimtusk (see page 177, and if the Provost knew that Darin was in league with an orc, the smuggler's life would be forfeit). Darin runs the ring out of loyalty to the Prince of Shadows, not out of immediate greed. There are easier ways to make money than by plucking treasures out of the maw of a living dungeon. Privately, he suspects that the Prince is playing a deeper game, and that the icon somehow expects the living dungeon to one day find something that justifies such complex preparations.

Monsters at the Gates

If the player characters take a full heal-up at Dungeon Town, throw some monsters at the gates of the settlement. Make the players feel responsible for the security of this sanctuary. Each time they visit Dungeon Town, the attacks get worse, and the Provost grows more tyrannical and heavy-handed.

Dungeon Town is a temporary part of the Stone Thief campaign. It's here to give the player characters a place to rest and recuperate once or twice, not a permanent stronghold where they can feel secure. Make sure to smash the place by the end of the campaign. The destruction of Dungeon Town can be the result of a campaign loss for fleeing, or the result of the Provost's death or madness. Dungeon Town is going to be destroyed one way or another.

Exits

- Most exits from this level look like accidents, where the dungeon has cut itself open on part of the Wild Caves and exposed a route to another region.



The Provost

To some, the dungeon is a prison. To him, it is a penance.

Triple-strength 9th level leader [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +18

Provost's Staff +14 vs. AC (2 attacks)—80 damage
Natural miss: 40 damage
Natural hit, 12–15: The target is dazed or weakened (Provost's choice, save ends)
Natural hit, 16+: The Provost may make another *provost's staff* attack against any other nearby target.

R: Chilling Glare +14 vs. MD (1d6 nearby or far-away targets)—25 damage, and the Provost inspires fear in those targets for the rest of the battle (creatures with 60 hit points or fewer are dazed and do not benefit from the escalation die when engaged by the Provost).

Iron Will: If the Provost fails a save, he may choose to succeed instead by taking 25 damage. If the Provost is subject to an ongoing condition that does not allow a save, he may choose to remove it as an interrupt action by taking 25 damage.

Unyielding: When the Provost is staggered, he gains an additional *provost's staff* attack.

Final Blow: When the Provost dies, he may deal damage equal to the attack that killed him to any one nearby creature.

AC 25
PD 19 **HP 540**
MD 23

Dungeon Town Guard

To survive in a living dungeon, you need skill, courage, and luck. These guys usually have only one of the three.

4th level troop [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +7

Sword +9 vs. AC—14 damage

[Group ability] **Desperate Attack +12 vs. AC**—20 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends)

Group Ability: Each round, for every three Dungeon Town Guards in a battle, one of them can use *desperate defense* or *desperate attack*.

Desperate Defense (group): Reduce damage from an attack by half (round down).

Monster Slayers: Dungeon Town guards get a +1 attack bonus when attacking large or huge creatures, and +1 bonus to AC, PD, and MD against attacks from large or huge creatures.

AC 20
PD 18 **HP 50**
MD 14

THE SUNKEN SEA

LEVELS 5–6

The underworld extends beneath the unnaturally calm waters of the Midland Sea. Before the Prince of Shadows stole its Eyes, the Stone Thief could avoid breaching the middle realm when it was underwater, but in these latter days, the dungeon is blind and so it must deal with the perils of opening its Maw to the ocean.

The caverns of the Sunken Sea are, therefore, one of the newer levels of the dungeon. All these chambers are partially or completely flooded. Usually, when the dungeon rises, it puts the Sunken Sea below the other levels, so any water drains into this weird cistern, but if the dungeon finds itself underwater, it moves the Sunken Sea to the 'top' and this level becomes the watery entrance.

FEATURES & FACTIONS

The Underriver (page 122) begins or ends here, depending on which way it's flowing today. Adventurers following or crossing the river run into smugglers out of Dungeon Town or Deep Keep.

A colony of **sahuagin** (picked up from a sodden ruin in the Fangs) dominates the flooded sections of the level. They're not unthinking monsters—their homicidal intent is considered and reasoned. They got swallowed by the dungeon recently, and are only now exploring it themselves. They try to capture and torture the adventurers for information instead of killing them (page 106). There's also a **crew of shipwrecked sailors** (page 116).



The Underriver always offers an exit from the dungeon. The Sunken Sea itself may also be an exit if the dungeon has risen underwater, but that's an exit to the bottom of the Midland Sea. Unless the characters have a lot of *water breathing* spells or a bathyscaphe handy, they're not getting out that way.

Light: Bio-luminescent organisms in the water shed a ghostly light throughout this level. It's about as strong as moonlight at most; enough to sail by, but not enough to tell the difference between a rock and a lurking monster.

STORY & STRUCTURE

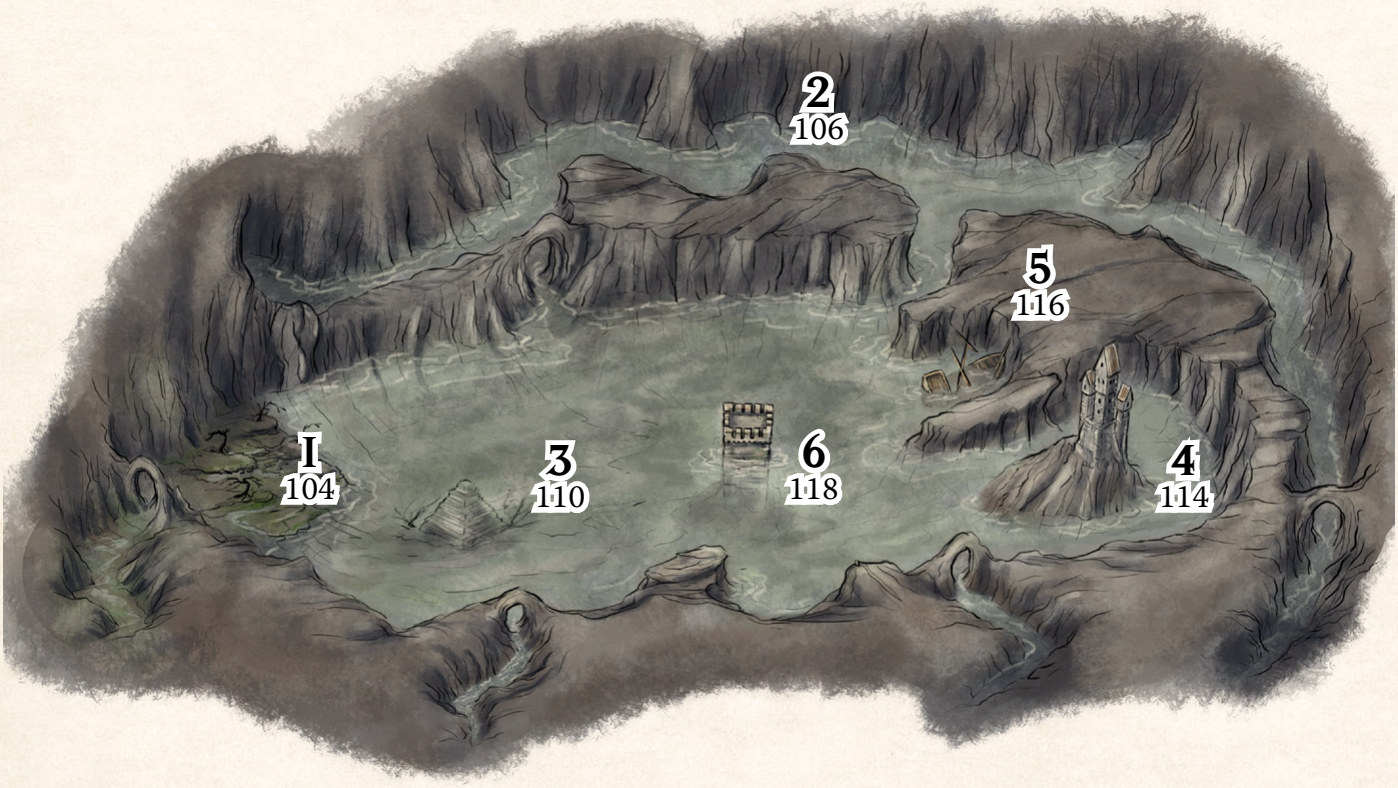
Other levels of the dungeon have—or at least imply—a story. The Gauntlet is all about survival; the Gizzard about salvaging what you can from ruin; the Ossuary about death in all its forms. As the PCs crawl through those levels, there's a clear progression.

The Sunken Sea isn't like that. It's deliberately designed to be about exploration and discovery. Circumstances may add a discernable narrative to the disparate encounters (like "we're looking for the exit" or "escape from the sahuagin kingdom"), but usually this level is all about going "hey, what's that thing over there?" Note that the map of the Sunken Sea is much more open than other levels—the PCs can see the Lonely Tower and the Flooded Temple and the *White Dragon* caves from the entrance, so they can decide where to explore next.

DESCRIPTORS

Every level of the dungeon has its own aroma. The Gauntlet smells of iron and rust. The Grove is a breath of fresh air after the stale corridors. The Ossuary is dust and incense; the Gizzard is like a quarry with an underlying chemical stink. The Sunken Sea smells of dead fish and rotting seaweed. You could bottle that stink and sell it as a troglodyte aphrodisiac.

Everything here is damp. Water drips from the ceiling and flows through the walls; it's never quiet in the Sunken Sea. The shifting level of the sea means flotsam and other debris gets deposited at random unlikely places. The seas can rise or fall suddenly—unwary travelers may find themselves in over their heads very quickly.



Minor Encounters

Wreck of the Cloudswimmer

The wreck of a once-magnificent vessel rots here on the seabed. It was once richly appointed, with ornate fittings and many magical wards and gizmos. The designers did make some odd choices, though, like the large windows on the underside of the ship…

…that's because it's a *flying* ship, or it used to be. The magical aerial engines are long since rusted and destroyed. However, if the adventurers explore the wreck, they find a soggy book that can be fixed with a *mending* cantrip or interpreted with a lot of patience. The book is the log of the *Cloudswimmer*, and it includes a reference to where the ship comes from (see *Getting Around,* page 310).

Jellyfish Nursery

A half-dozen small yellow jellyfish jet around this little tidal pool. Someone (a sahuagin priest, to be precise) has carved arcane marks into the pool. These jellyfish are living *potions of water breathing*—as long as you've got one of these slapped over your mouth and nose you can breathe water. The jellyfish lasts about an hour before growing tired and detaching to swim away. Characters captured by the sahuagin (see **Encounter 2: The Hungry Ones**) have jellyfish forcibly applied to their faces; the powers of the jellyfish can also be discovered by unlikely experimentation.

The sahuagin consider the jellyfish to be their property. Taking the magic water-breathing jellyfish is punishable by death. Of course, breathing air is also punishable by death in their bulging fish-eyes, so the adventurers may as well grab what they can.

Lonely Boot

An old leathery boot lies here, stalwartly defended by its current tenant, a small hermit crab. Once the adventurers defeat this terrible guardian by turning the boot upside down and shaking vigorously, they can claim their prize. Inside the boot are several bones, easily identified as those of a human ankle and foot, as well as the soggy remains of an old sock and a single gold coin. The boot is magical—it's a *boot of water walking* (its mate is in the stomach of dread Swordapus, page 105). Normally, *boots of water walking* permit the wearer to treat water as solid ground for the purposes of movement, but with only a single boot, all the wearer can do is hop or stand on one leg atop the waves. The boots also give a +1 bonus to disengage checks and other fancy footwork. *Quirk:* Messiah complex.

Gambling Skeletons

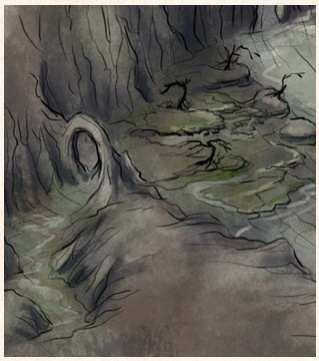
Three undead skeletons, obviously former sailors, sit in a circle. Two of them throw knucklebones, passing a small pile of coins back and forth between them. The third can't throw—they're using his knucklebones, so he just sits with a long-empty clay jar of grog caught in his jaw. The skeletons do not speak, but gesture for one of the characters to join their game. If a character accepts this invitation, a telepathic message from one of them outlines the rules of the game. If the adventurer wins, the skeletons playing the game will truthfully answer one question each. If the adventurer loses, they must do a favor for the Lich King. Each participant in the game rolls two d6, and the highest roll wins. Reroll ties; cheating is permissible (and if the character gives the handless skeleton a drink to replace the empty grog jar, the dead man will jiggle his knucklebones to let his benefactor win.)

Win, and the skeletons answer two questions. They're not omniscient, but they know a lot about this level of the dungeon.

Lose, and the PC gains a temporary 1-point conflicted relationship with the Lich King. This relationship lasts until the player rolls 5 on that relationship die, meaning the favor gets called in. (A 6 means the Lich King protects his investment somehow).

The skeletons don't fight back if attacked; they've got a dozen gold pieces if looted.

1. The Sunken Sea



The ceiling of this huge cavern is lost in the darkness—except when the dungeon puts this level at the surface, and the ceiling gapes open like a clamshell with an ocean pouring into it. Water churns around the jagged rocks and seethes in sea-caves. Getting anywhere quickly in this huge underground sea requires a boat or some other vessel.

Building a Boat: An improvised raft can easily be constructed from debris in the dungeon. An improvised raft is not what you want to be standing on when a sea monster attacks—please, sink their raft at least once. If a player character has a suitable background, they can build a sturdier vessel to sail the Sunken Sea.

Clambering Along The Cliffs: The rocks are slippery with slime and rotting seaweed. The characters can climb along, but they'll need to make DC 20 checks, with failure resulting in someone taking a plunge into the dark waters below.

Swimming: There aren't any waves in the Sunken Sea, but there are unexpected and vicious currents as the sea floods into previously inaccessible chambers. The Stone Thief is cruel enough to open up a cave directly below a swimmer. A short dip doesn't require a skill check, but call for one if the adventurers try setting off across the wide Sunken Sea. Failure means the character loses a recovery, or else becomes separated from the rest of the party and must navigate some hazard on their own before finding their companions again.

Swordapus

The old octopus called Swordapus always shows up at the worst possible time. This canny mollusk has seen dozens of adventurers come and drown in the cavern, and has learned their ways. Four of its tentacles carry rusted swords. Of the other four, two are reserved for grabbing and catching enemies, while the last two are used for hand gestures—perhaps by exposure to the weird magical energies of the Stone Thief, or by careful practice and observation, Swordapus has learned to cast spells. (The other standard explanations for magic monsters: a wizard made it, or it's a half-something).

Swordapus likes to lurk and stalk, waiting until the adventurers are in some difficulty before attacking. Excellent opportunities for Swordapus include:

- The adventurers built a boat and have set off into the murk of the Sunken Sea.
- They're climbing along the cliffs, ideally just after one or more of them fell into the waters below.
- They're resting and there's only one of them on watch.



- They're fleeing from some other danger.
- The dungeon is submerging and they're racing to the exit before they're trapped forever.
- They're fighting some other danger.

In short, Swordapus isn't just a giant sea monster—it's a petty vindictive git of a giant sea monster.

Swordapus

Eight arms, no waiting.

Huge 7th level wrecker [BEAST]
Initiative: +12

Weapon-Wielding Tentacle +12 vs. AC (4 attacks)—13 damage
Natural 1–2: The sword breaks. Swordapus loses one *weapon-wielding tentacle* attack, and gains one *lashing tentacle* attack.
Critical Hit: Instead of dealing damage, Swordapus may choose to steal a melee weapon held by its target. Swordapus loses a *lashing tentacle* attack and gains another *weapon-wielding tentacle* attack (applying any magical benefits from the stolen weapon). The lost weapon can be retrieved when Swordapus is staggered or killed, or with a DC 25 check.

Lashing Tentacle +12 vs. PD (2 attacks)—7 damage
Natural even hit: The target is grabbed. If the target is still grabbed on Swordapus' next turn, it may make a free *big giant beak* attack on the target.
Natural odd hit: The target pops free. If the attack roll was a 17 or 19, the target is thrown far away from Swordapus.

R: Spellcasting Tentacle +11 vs. MD (2 attacks, each targeting a different nearby enemy)—7 psychic damage
Natural attack roll greater than target's Wisdom: The target is entranced and drawn toward Swordapus' beak. The entranced target uses its move action to go toward the beak, but is otherwise free to act normally. This effect is save ends (11+), but if the target is engaged with Swordapus and entranced at the start of Swordapus' next turn, Swordapus may make a free *big giant beak* attack on the target.

[Special trigger] **Big Giant Beak +11 vs. AC**—60 damage, and 15 ongoing damage; Swordapus also swallows one item belonging to the character.

Many Arms: Swordapus may make up to eight tentacle attacks in any round. It may only make one tentacle attack per target, but may use up to 4 *weapon-wielding tentacles*, up to 4 *spellcasting tentacles*, and up to 8 *lashing tentacles* in any round as long as the total does not exceed the number of tentacles. Alternatively, Swordapus may forego all tentacle attacks for a round to make a single *big giant beak* attack.

Octopus Ink: When Swordapus is staggered, it sprays those around it with ink. All nearby creatures are dazed (save ends).

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 324**
MD 17

Sahuagin Mutant

There may be stranger sahuagin mutants in the deeps, but the ones that swim to the surface to kill you simply have twice the number of arms and teeth.

Large 6th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +12

Four-armed frenzy +11 vs. AC (1d4 attacks)—15 damage
Natural 4, 8, 12, 16, 20: The target takes 10 ongoing damage.

R: Heavy crossbow +10 vs. AC (one nearby or far away enemy)—30 damage
Natural 16+: The target takes 10 ongoing damage.

Limited escalator: The sahuagin mutant adds the escalation die to its attacks until the die is 5+.

Water breather: Sahuagin breathe underwater and swim very well.

Nastier Specials

Punisher: When an enemy intercepts the sahuagin mutant, it takes 4d8 damage from the mutant's claws and teeth.

Ripper: When an enemy makes a melee attack against the sahuagin mutant and rolls a natural odd miss, that enemy takes 2d8 damage.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 200**
MD 15

Unreasonable Numbers of Arms Fight Chart

Number/Level of PCs	Swordapus	Sahuagin Mutant
3 x 5th level	**1**	**0**
4 x 5th level	**1**	**0**
5 x 5th level	**1**	**1**
6 x 5th level	**1**	**1**
7 x 5th level	**1**	**2**
3 x 6th level	***1***	***0***
4 x 6th level	***1***	***1***
5 x 6th level	***1***	***2***
6 x 6th level	***1***	***3***
7 x 6th level	**1**	**4**

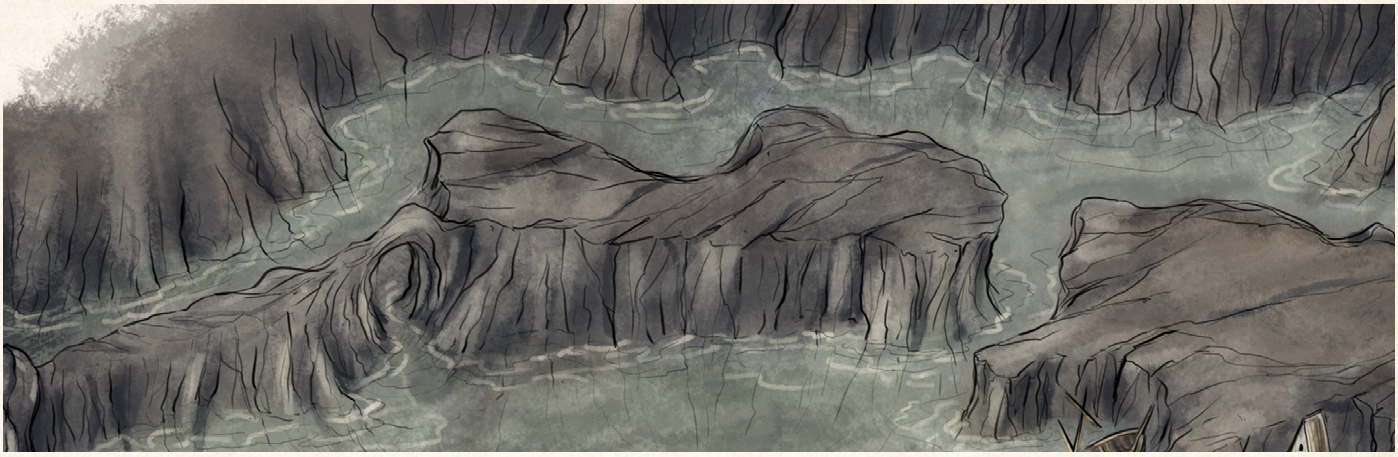
Treasure

Swordapus has swallowed plenty of valuables over the years, like a mollusk piñata of arcane might. In addition to a level-appropriate pile of gold and gemstones, the adventurers also find two magic items—a single *boot of water walking* (as described on page 103), and a *message bottle*. When this magical bottle is thrown into any body of water, it immediately sinks and vanishes. It then reappears some time later at another body of water specified by the person who threw it. The size of the body of water is irrelevant, as long as it is big enough to contain the bottle (so, anything from *the Iron Sea* to *the fourth holy-water font from the right in the portico of the seventh level of the Cathedral*). Any items in the bottle travel with it, but the heavier the contents, the longer it takes to travel. The bottle is made of fragile elven-glass and is very breakable. *Quirk:* Feels compelled to re-contact obscure old acquaintances.

Variations

- Characters exploring the Sunken Sea might be attacked by a sahuagin patrol and brought to the caves of The Hungry Ones (see below).
- Swordapus is smart enough to leave salvaged rowboats or other little boats on the shore for travelers to find. If someone takes the bait, then the monster waits until they're in deep water, then attacks.

2. The Hungry Ones



A tribe of sahuagin dwell in this part of the dungeon. Their home in the swamps of the Fangs—a pyramidal temple to a god from some previous age—was stolen by the Stone Thief and sank to the bottom of the Sunken Sea. The dispossessed sahuagin took up residence in this warren of partially flooded caves and channels. (Why did they leave their temple? See page 110 for details on the state of the place…)

The sahuagin have never heard of the Stone Thief. There they were, minding their own business, worshipping dread demon gods and drowning victims in the sacrificial pools, when suddenly the ground opens up beneath their temple and half the swamp drains into this weird underground lake. Being naturally paranoid, they assume that the Archmage or Elf Queen or some other filthy land-dwelling spellcaster attacked them. They intend to capture anyone who looks like a servant of a filthy land-dwelling spellcaster and torture them for information. Then they'll torture them for religious reasons. Then, if they're still alive, they'll torture them for fun.

Filthy Land-Dwelling Spellcaster: "The sahuagin think you trapped them in this dungeon" is an excellent complication to throw at the roll of a 5 for a relationship with the Archmage, Elf Queen, Priestess, or any good-aligned icon, really. The sahuagin attack the hated one in preference to other targets, and they gain a +2 bonus to their first attack in the battle.

Machinations of the Sea Devils

The sahuagin king's plan, once he works out that he's in a living dungeon, is to get his tribe out of the dungeon and back to the saner world of the surface. If they can get the dungeon to vomit out their temple again, preferably somewhere moist, then so much the better, but he's prepared to lead his people to a new home if necessary. That means whenever the dungeon surfaces, there's a chance that a tribe of angry demon-worshipping fish monsters will spill out of it and colonize the nearest convenient body of water.

The adventurers may be able to ally with the sahuagin, at least temporarily. The sahuagin are amphibious, but fear to stray too far from the water. If the adventurers bring back intelligence on a way out of the dungeon, or even better, a way to get their sacred temple back, then the creatures may consider mercy (or at least 'undertaking a sequence of actions that a non-sahuagin might interpret as being merciful, even though the concept is unthinkable to the fish monsters themselves').

I Was A Sahuagin Prisoner

Any character knocked unconscious in a battle with the sahuagin (or in some other part of the level, if the sahuagin could sneak in and carry away the floating victim) gets dragged down to their caves. The rest of the party must rescue their lost comrade, or else the prisoners have to work out a way to escape on their own.

Here's what the sahuagin do to the characters they capture.

- First, they slap what looks and feels like a translucent yellow stinging jellyfish across the victim's mouth and nose. This creature provides a limited *water breathing* effect, allowing the prisoner to breathe underwater. They carry the prisoner to the sahuagin lair, where any weapons or armor (but not smaller items) are removed and stowed in a side cavern. The prisoner then gets carried to the cave at the back of the sahuagin lair. This prison has no bars or gates, but the only way in or out is via a long water-filled passageway.
- There, the prisoner is interrogated by a sahuagin sorcerer. If there are multiple prisoners, the sorcerer takes one of them away down the tunnel for a private interrogation. The sorcerer can speak the language of surface dwellers, but prefers to read memories directly—he keeps drowning the prisoner, who experiences flashbacks to significant moments in the past. This occult waterboarding continues until the sorcerer learns all the prisoner knows about the living dungeon—a process that may take several hours and costs 1d3 recoveries—fewer if the character cooperates. As the sorcerer speaks the common tongue of the dry-land world, the prisoner can try negotiating or pleading between drownings.
- After that, a sahuagin priest takes custody of the prisoners and uses a gold-hilted dagger to carve strange marks into their flesh. It hurts, especially when the priest literally rubs salt into the wounds. Lose another 1d3 recoveries. The priest works alone, so if the character wants to try attacking their captor, this is their best opportunity.

Diabolist: Those runes are part of a sacrificial ritual. You can impress this priest by speaking the true name of his demon patron, giving you a +4 bonus to any attempts to intimidate or inveigle him.

Crusader: Those runes are part of a demonic ritual. You gain a +2 bonus to attacks against this priest.

- The penultimate torment comes at the hands of a trio of sahuagin guards, who pick the toughest-looking character and beat their chosen victim for fun. This costs a further 1d4 recoveries.

Any prisoners who lose all their recoveries are knocked unconscious and can't help with any escape attempts.

- Finally, the prisoners get hauled back out to sea, laden down with gold chains, rings, belts, crowns, and other treasure, and dropped so they sink down to the Flooded Temple (page 110). Wise adventurers escape before this fate befalls them.

Sahuagin Names

Sages say sahuagin names aren't pronounceable by human tongues, which isn't true. It's just that the names are absurd concatenations of gurgles, yowls, and apostrophes that are really hard to remember, and the sahuagin fly into murderous rages if you drop a syllable. Far better to refer to them by nicknames and physical features, so you've got Bluefin the King or Redbelly the Sorcerer.

Fighting the Sahuagin

We've listed two battles in this section. The sahuagin raiding party is exactly what it sounds like—it's the sort of fighting force the characters might meet while exploring the Sunken Sea. The sahuagin host is what they face if they attack the sahuagin lair directly, or if the sahuagin swim forth en masse to conquer.

Sahuagin Warrior

Sahuagin warriors have an incredibly sensitive sense of smell. They can scent blood in the water from miles away. These particular sahuagin are trapped in a relatively small body of water, which stinks even to a human nose. To them, it's like sticking their noses in acid every time they take a breath. Murderously furious doesn't cover it.

6th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

Trident and Bite +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—12 damage

Natural 20: Increase the escalation die by 1, and the target is hampered (*makes only basic attacks*) until the end of its next turn.

R: Barbed crossbow +10 vs. AC (one nearby enemy, or a far away enemy at –2 atk)—12 damage, and 7 ongoing damage

Blood Frenzy: Make a note of the escalation die when the sahuagin becomes staggered. The sahuagin gains a bonus to its melee attacks and damage equal to the escalation die value for the rest of the battle.

AC	**21**	
PD	19	**HP 70**
MD	15	

Sahuagin Sorcerer

Sahuagin sorcerers believe they can increase their own strength by eating the bone marrow of other sorcerers. Their leech-like mouths flare wide whenever they scent another natural spellcaster.

6th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

Coral Wand +11 vs. AC—18 cold damage
Natural attack roll greater than target's Strength: The target is stuck until the end of its next turn.

R: Drowning Curse +11 vs. MD (one nearby or far away target)—15 psychic damage
Natural 16+ on a staggered target: The target starts drowning and must begin making last gasp saves.

Alchemist: Each round, roll 1d6 to determine what ghastly concoction the sorcerer fishes out of its robes.

1: **Acid:** As a free action, the sorcerer hurls acid on one nearby creature. **+11 vs. PD**—5 ongoing damage
2: **Occluding Ink:** All ranged attacks targeting the sorcerer and its nearby allies take a –2 penalty until the end of its next turn.
3: **Maddening Poison:** As a free action, the sorcerer fires a venomous dart at one nearby creature. **+11 vs. MD**—the target is confused until the end of its next turn.
4: **Invisibility:** The sorcerer becomes invisible until the end of its next turn.
5: **Frenzy Oil:** Any nearby sahuagin in a *blood frenzy* increase the attack and damage bonus by 1 for the rest of the battle.
6: **Healing Potion:** The sorcerer heals 20 hit points.

Blood Frenzy: Make a note of the escalation die when the sahuagin becomes staggered. The sahuagin gains a bonus to its melee attacks and damage equal to the escalation die value for the rest of the battle.

AC 23
PD 16 **HP 75**
MD 20

Hell Shark

When hellholes form underwater, the explosion that results from cold sea water rushing into the fires of the infernal realm can fling hell sharks far inland. The infamous rain of sharks along the Demon Coast is remembered to this day.

5th level mook [DEMON]
Initiative: +11

Bite +10 vs. AC—10 damage

Frenzied Escalator: Hell sharks may add the escalation die to their attack rolls when attacking staggered targets.

Blood Lust: Hell sharks always attack staggered targets in preference to non-staggered ones. They'll even disengage from non-staggered enemies in order to go after staggered foes.

AC 21
PD 19 **HP 15 (mook)**
MD 15

Mook: Kill one hell shark mook for every 15 damage you deal to the mob.

Sahuagin Priest

The priests read the future in the swirls of blood in the water. Their foretelling is always for violence.

7th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +11

Trident and Bite +12 vs. AC—28 damage

R: Frenzy Dance +12 vs. MD (1d3 nearby or far-away targets)—20 damage. A sahuagin engaged with the target also takes 20 damage and may immediately make a basic attack on the target as a free action. The priest also takes 20 damage.
Natural 20: Increase the escalation die by 1, and the target is hampered (*makes only basic attacks*) until the end of its next turn.

Blood Frenzy: Make a note of the escalation die when the sahuagin becomes staggered. The sahuagin gains a bonus to its melee attacks and damage equal to the escalation die value for the rest of the battle.

Summoning Rite: Once per battle as a standard action, a priest may summon one hell shark for every sahuagin in the battle in a *blood frenzy.*

AC 23
PD 16 **HP 75**
MD 20

Sahuagin King

To become King of the Sahuagin is not necessarily an honor. The priests select the king-to-be and force him to swallow the eggs of a species of demonic eels. The king rules until the eggs hatch in his bloated stomach and the eels gnaw their way free.

9th level leader [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

Trident and Bite +14 vs. AC (2 attacks)—25 damage
Natural 20: Increase the escalation die by 1, and the target is hampered (*makes only basic attacks*) until the end of its next turn.

C: War Horn +14 vs. MD (1d3 nearby targets)—15 damage, and any sahuagin engaged with the target who are in a *blood frenzy* may immediately make a basic attack on the target.

Blood Frenzy: Make a note of the escalation die when the sahuagin becomes staggered. The sahuagin gains a bonus to its melee attacks and damage equal to the escalation die value for the rest of the battle.

Defend the King: If the king is staggered, all sahuagin in the battle not already staggered enter a *blood frenzy*.

AC 25
PD 23
MD 19

HP 180

Sahuagin Raiding Party Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Sahuagin Warrior	Sahuagin Sorcerer	Sahuagin Priest
3 x 5th level	**3**	**1**	**0**
4 x 5th level	**3**	**1**	**1**
5 x 5th level	**4**	**2**	**1**
6 x 5th level	**4**	**2**	**2**
7 x 5th level	**5**	**2**	**2**
3 x 6th level	***3***	***2***	***1***
4 x 6th level	***4***	***2***	***2***
5 x 6th level	***5***	***3***	***2***
6 x 6th level	***5***	***3***	***3***
7 x 6th level	**6**	**3**	**3**

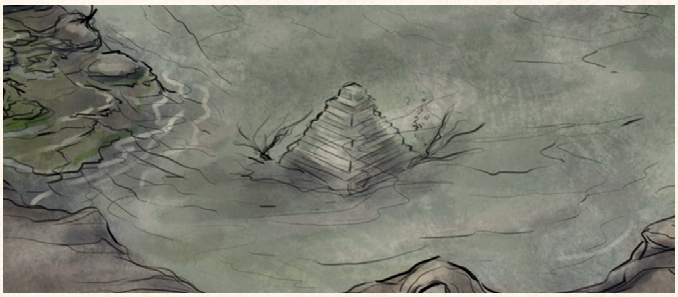
Sahuagin Host Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Sahuagin Warrior	Sahuagin Sorcerer	Sahuagin Priest	Sahuagin King
3 x 5th level	**4**	**2**	**1**	**1**
4 x 5th level	**5**	**3**	**1**	**1**
5 x 5th level	**6**	**3**	**1**	**1**
6 x 5th level	**7**	**3**	**2**	**1**
7 x 5th level	**8**	**3**	**2**	**1**
3 x 6th level	***6***	***3***	***2***	***1***
4 x 6th level	***7***	***3***	***3***	***1***
5 x 6th level	***8***	***4***	***3***	***1***
6 x 6th level	***9***	***4***	***4***	***1***
7 x 6th level	***10***	***5***	***5***	***1***

Variations

- The sahuagin raid the wreck of the *White Dragon* and carry some of the crew away.
- The sahuagin king is at the end of his reign—the eel eggs in his stomach have hatched. The sahuagin need a new king. The PCs could steal the eel eggs of kingship and eat them, giving themselves temporary authority over the sea devils.

3. FLOODED TEMPLE



A pyramidal temple rests on the floor of the Sunken Sea. It's surrounded by now-dead banyan trees and other debris—it was stolen quite recently from the surface along with the sahuagin tribe who lived in it. Getting to the temple means swimming (or sinking) to the bottom of the sea. Without *water breathing* spells, that's a one-way trip.

The sahuagin did not build this temple. Who knows what dread hands raised the stones of this vile ziggurat, or inscribed those blasphemous and mind-shattering symbols on the tiles that decorate it? Who can contemplate the ghastly horrors that once swept its non-Euclidian corridors, or complained about how hard it is to get blood out of a sacrificial altar? What ghastly—well, it's a temple for demon worshippers. It draws adjectives and evil to it in equal measure.

After its builders were justly wiped out, the pyramidal temple squatted in the swamp of the Fangs, its unholy powers dormant and slumbering. The sahuagin claimed it as their own, but were unable to reactivate the temple's magic despite all their chanting and sacrifices. Now it's going to be part of the Stone Thief—unless the player characters can stop it in time.

The temple is a place of infernal power. The Stone Thief is trying to integrate the temple into itself, and that infernal power is currently resisting the dungeon's insinuations. From outside the temple, the characters can see ghostly white worm-shapes rising from the sea-bed of the Sunken Sea (see The Gizzard on page 69 for more on these tendrils). The tendrils are clearly trying to find purchase on the tiled walls of the ziggurat.

The Stone Thief's magical assault has done what the sahuagin were never able to do—infernal power again courses through the pyramid.

Crusader: Those symbols on the temple—this is a hellish place. It should be destroyed. You gain a +2 bonus to all attacks against demons in this place.

Diabolist: Can't you hear the screaming? There's infernal power here, and the demons are *suffering*. They don't want to be trapped as part of the dungeon forever. If you rescue them, maybe you can cut a deal...

Structure of the Temple

The temple's surrounded by the remains of those sacrificed by the sahuagin. There are a few recent victims—drowned men, wrapped in golden offerings and marked with the signs of sacrifice—and uncounted numbers of older skeletons hidden amid the roots of the dead banyans and swamp reeds. Fortunately, none of these sacrifices have risen as undead (though a story-guide result for the Crusader or Priestess, perhaps coupled with a suitable ritual, could whistle up a few vengeful ghosts).

The pyramidal temple is made up of three levels. There are entrances on the top and bottom levels, but the lower entrance on level 1 is impassable due to the architectural chaos of the lowest level. Looking in through the archway, the characters see the walls moving and shifting as if writhing in agony, the white tendrils slithering over the stones, and the occasional bubbling burst of hellfire and sulphur as the temple resists the dungeon. Anyone going in there gets crushed to death by a moving wall in an instant.

The characters can instead enter safely (as much as one can safely enter a hellish temple under siege by a living dungeon) by swimming in through what was once a shaft open to the sky.

Level 3: This level contains sacrificial altars, images of demonic horrors devouring handfuls of tiny people, and little red plumes of old blood rising through the water from the gullies between floor tiles. Oh, and a pack of blazing shade demons and sahuagin madfish. These unthinking savages attack anyone and anything, living or dead, that tries to enter the temple.



Sahuagin Madfish

What's worse than a mutant sahuagin? A demon-possessed one. What's worse than a demon-possessed mutant sahuagin? Meeting one.

8th level wrecker [humanoid]
Initiative: +12

Claw and Bite +13 vs. AC—30 damage

Natural miss: The madfish makes another *claw and bite* attack. It may do this a number of times per round equal to the escalation die. It stops making extra attacks in a round once it scores a hit.

Natural 20: Increase the escalation die by 1, and the target is hampered (*makes only basic attacks*) until the end of its next turn.

Hellfire: When the escalation die increases, any foes engaged with the madfish take damage equal to twice the new value of the escalation die.

Blood Frenzy: Make a note of the escalation die when the sahuagin becomes staggered. The sahuagin gains a bonus to its melee attacks and damage equal to the escalation die value for the rest of the battle.

Demon-touched: Roll a d6 on the Demon Random Abilities table (page 209 of the *13th Age* core rulebook). The madfish has that ability.

Possessor: If the madfish is slain by a foe, make an attack against the foe **+13 vs. MD**. If the attack hits, that foe is confused (save ends). That foe gains the Demon Random Ability possessed by the madfish for the remainder of the battle.

AC 24
PD 18 **HP 144**
MD 22

Blazing Shade

The hottest fires of hell are enough to set the souls of the damned alight.

8th level spoiler [demon]
Initiative: +15

Fiery Touch +12 vs. PD—40 fire damage

R: Fiery Bolt +12 vs. PD (one nearby or far away enemy)—40 fire damage

Invisible: Blazing shades cannot be seen. On dry land, the only signs of their presence is a shimmering heat haze and the scorch marks of their footsteps. Underwater, they look like vaguely humanoid figures surrounded by bubbling boiling water.

Any attack on a blazing shade has a 50% chance of missing, unless the attacker can see invisible creatures. If a melee attack on a blazing shade misses with a natural 1–5, then the attacker accidentally comes in contact with the demon's super-heated form and takes 15 fire damage.

Combustion Attack: Once the blazing shade becomes staggered, it gains the power to make a *combustion attack*.

C: Combustion Attack +12 vs. MD (one nearby creature)—The shade merges with its victim, removing itself from the battlefield. The target must begin making last gasp saves. Each failed save inflicts 20 fire damage on the victim. If the victim dies, then the shade returns to the battlefield at full hit points. If the victim makes the save, the shade is destroyed.

AC 24
PD 18 **HP 144**
MD 22

Number/Level of PCs	Madfish	Blazing Shade
3 x 5th level	**1**	**1**
4 x 5th level	**1**	**1**
5 x 5th level	**2**	**1**
6 x 5th level	**2**	**1**
7 x 5th level	**3**	**1**

Number/Level of PCs	Madfish	Blazing Shade
3 x 6th level	***2***	***1***
4 x 6th level	***2***	***1***
5 x 6th level	***3***	***1***
6 x 6th level	***3***	***1***
7 x 6th level	***3***	***2***

Level 2: This level contains a portal to the Abyss. It's a shimmering spherical rent in the fabric of the universe, surrounded by flames hot enough to blaze underwater. Six rings of occult symbols—one each on the four walls, floor, and ceiling—circumscribe the physical dimensions of this portal. Surrounding the portal are more disturbing mosaics, as well sahuagin ritual items, which are all either sharp or slimy or both.

An imp named **Cackle** skulks here, frantically searching through the junk left by the sahuagin for some weapon to defend itself with. Every so often, a ghostly tendril pokes through the floor and slithers toward the portal, whereupon Cackle paddles over and slaps the tendril with whatever comes to hand until the tendril withdraws in pain.

As soon as the characters arrive, Cackle waves them over and fills them in on what's happening (using telepathy to speak underwater). The dungeon is trying to absorb the temple, and if it gets control of this portal, it will be able to draw on the powers of Hell, sucking like a giant stone tick on the fiery blood of the Abyss. This, Cackle hisses, would be a bad thing for everyone. The demons don't need any more useless gift-wrapped sacrifices right now—they need to get this portal open. Right now, it's only open wide enough to let a minor demon like Cackle through, as well as idiot guardians like the blazing shades or the things possessing the madfish, but if the characters help Cackle, they can *gate* in something that will ensure the Stone Thief can't claim this temple as a prize.

Interrogating Cackle: The imp *really* doesn't have time to chat right now, but can telepathically squeal brief answers to questions. Likely topics of conversation include the sahuagin (*stupid crazy fish*), the Stone Thief (*very dangerous, don't want to be eaten by a living dungeon*), what will happen if they help him (*big demon comes through, saves portal. Temple still physically stuck in dungeon, but not* part *of dungeon if you get the distinction. Like being trapped in Hell, and having your soul eaten*), and potential rewards for helping Cackle (*not his department, but he's sure they'll be very accommodating*).

Helping Cackle: A character with a suitable background, or with connections to the Diabolist/Archmage/Three, knows how to open the portal correctly with an Intelligence skill check (DC 20). Otherwise, the characters have to use Cackle's brute-force approach of 'grab a rune and pull, and try not to singe your soul too badly.' At the very least, this costs everyone a recovery; the longer-term effects of infernal exposure are up to the players.

Once the portal opens, a trio of **despoiler mages** step through and start to cast a spell of warding. In response, a group of stone hands—some giant-sized, some human in scale—rise out of the floor and attempt to smash the mages. If they wish to see the infernal forces triumph over the Stone Thief in this one battle, the adventurers must protect the demons from the Stone Thief's attacks.

Stone Hands

Blind, the dungeon fumbles and flails with the strength of an earthquake.

8th level wrecker [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +12

Smash +13 vs. AC—35 damage
Natural 16+: The target is grabbed.

Crush +17 vs. PD (includes grab bonus; grabbed victims only)—40 damage
Natural roll exceeds target's Constitution: The target is dazed (–4 attack) until the end of its next turn.

C: Swipe +13 vs. AC (up to three nearby targets)—12 damage
Break free: The hand gains a +5 bonus to disengage attempts made this round against foes struck by this attack.

Demon Smasher: If a stone hand starts its turn unengaged, it may smash one of the three despoiler mages. Roll a d20; on an 11+, one of the mages is slain. For each slain mage, add cumulative +1 modifier to the d6 rolls to determine ritual completion (see **completing the ritual**).

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 144**
MD 18

Lesser Stone Hand

These smaller hands are only loosely bound to the stone that girds them; the white ectoplasm of the animating spirit can be seen through cracks in the shell.

8th level mook [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +12

Smash +13 vs. AC—23 damage
Natural 20: The hand grows into a full-size stone hand with 72 hit points. It spends the next round stunned, but acts normally after that.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 36 (mook)**
MD 18

Mook: Smash one lesser stone hand mook for every 36 damage dealt to the mob.

Number/Level of PCs	Stone Hand	Lesser Hand
3 x 5th level	**2**	**3**
4 x 5th level	**2**	**5**
5 x 5th level	**3**	**5**
6 x 5th level	**3**	**5**
7 x 5th level	**4**	**5**
3 x 6th level	***2***	***5***
4 x 6th level	***3***	***5***
5 x 6th level	***3***	***5***
6 x 6th level	***4***	***5***
7 x 6th level	***5***	***5***

Completing the Ritual: At the start of each round, roll 1d6 + 1. If the result is equal to or less than the value of the escalation die, the demons complete their ritual. (A player character with Ritual Casting can join in, giving a –1 modifier per PC ritualist to the d6 roll; this might also be a time to cash in **Diabolist** benefits.)

When the ritual is completed, there's a flash, and the Stone Thief's attack on the temple ceases. Also, the temple suddenly isn't on the sea bed any more—it's now on an island in the middle of the Sunken Sea that wasn't there before.

As one, the mages thank the adventurers for their assistance. Hell is in their debt—the characters can either ask the despoilers for help immediately, or get a favor to be redeemed at some future point by Hell's appointed broker in the Dragon Empire, the Diabolist.

Squishing Cackle: The imp is no match for a party of adventurers. Once Cackle's dead or discorporated, the portal is vulnerable to the Stone Thief. Those white ghostly tendrils rise out of the floor and batten onto the portal like leeches, adding the temple's infernal power to the strength of the Stone Thief.

The walls start to close in, and the tiles decorating them shift and warp so that they now depict the triumphs of the Stone Thief. Time for the player characters to run now—unless they want to try grabbing something from the treasury before they make their escape. That's a DC 25 Dexterity check, with failure meaning the character's limb gets severed as the walls smash together.

A Plague On Both Your Houses: Or at least on one party's temple and this dungeon; the characters may choose to screw over both sides, probably by sabotaging the portal or attacking the demons once they come through. Two of the despoiler mages can't fight—they're busy warding the temple against the Stone Thief—but the one free mage can *gate* in more blazing shades or a mook squad of hooked demons.

Killing one of the trio means that the Stone Thief doesn't get to tap the temple's power, but the demons don't get a foothold in the mortal world. Score one for the good guys.

Treasure

Assuming the temple survives, the characters can recover the sahuagin's treasure hoard from the depths. There's a lot of heavy gold jewelry, as well as goods and treasures stolen from wrecked ships plying the Midland Sea between Concord and Axis (so, lots of elvish handicrafts, jars of halfling jam and enchanted marmalade, bolts of spidersilk, and the like). There's also an alarming magical breastplate made of brass and shaped to resemble the roaring face of a balor. This is the *Visage of the Dread Commander*. It's +2 heavy armor, with the following power (recharge 11+): The first time one of your allies dies this battle, the breastplate roars a challenge, increasing the escalation die by 1. *Quirk:* Suggests excessively violent solutions to problems.

Elf Queen: One chest bears the mark of the Elf Queen. It recognizes your touch and pops open. Inside is a letter from the Queen to another of her agents. (If the player rolled a 6 for this benefit, then recovering the letter wins them a favor from the Queen. If it was a 5, then the PCs have to deliver the letter to qualify for the Queen's favor).

Cackle

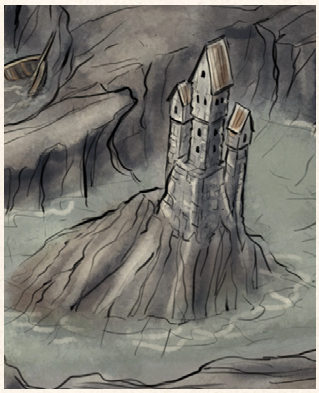
If he survives, Cackle attaches himself to the party, either because they showed promise or because he lost an unholy temple to an upstart dungeon and can't show his face in the infernal realms again for a few centuries. Hey! Wizard? Wizard? Want a free familiar?

Cackle knows a little about the dungeon, especially if the Witch of Marblehall is working for the Diabolist. He can also warn the PCs about the Clock of Hell (page 197), the Godtick (page 183), and the Pyramid of Skulls (page 224).

Variations

- If the adventurers fail to stop the dungeon from absorbing the temple, then the Stone Thief has access to a new source of magical power. Add more demon battles on the lower levels, use more monsters with nastier specials, and even drop a campaign loss on the players.
- If they save the temple from the Stone Thief, then the dungeon vomits the temple out when it next reaches the surface. Depending on where the dungeon rises, this may or may not be a good thing, especially if the portal is open. The temple extends several levels below ground, by the way—the PCs have only had a glimpse of the infernal perils and treasures within.

4. The Lonely Tower



The only structure on this little rocky island is a crumbling tower. It's clearly a wizard's tower, judging by the protective wards and (inanimate) gargoyles, but a distinctly non-magical bonfire burns on a balcony on the topmost level. From a distance, the characters might have mistaken it for a lighthouse, but up close it looks like a signal fire.

The door to the tower is locked and bolted from the inside, but if they knock, they rouse the only inhabitant of the tower—the 'Mad Wizard' **Hvathier.** He's a wild-eyed man with an unkempt beard and scraggly hair. He dresses in a wizard robe, complete with pointy wizard's hat, and carries a heavy black staff shod with mithril. The staff radiates magical energy. He points the business end of the staff at them and demands they leave his island.

Hvathier isn't actually a wizard. He was a sailor on a merchant ship that was swallowed by a 'whirlpool'. He alone survived and washed up on this island some months ago. The tower was empty when he found it. He lit a signal fire using the books from the tower for fuel. Not being a fool, he decided that if any monsters or horrors saw his fire and came calling, his best chance of survival would be to pretend to be a mighty wizard and scare them away. It worked twice—the sahuagin are hesitant to attack the tower, and he scared away an orc scouting party from Deep Keep. (Hvathier's mad wizard act also scared away smugglers from Dungeon Town, but he's unaware of this.) He survives on fish and the magically replenishing contents of the tower's pantry.

If challenged, Hvathier slams his staff into the ground, releasing a harmless but impressive flash of magical energy. If that fails to deter the adventurers, he runs back into the tower and tries to bar the door against them. Since he's a 0th level nobody, and they're mighty adventurers, that door won't stop them for long.

If befriended, then Hvathier slowly lets his guard down. He'll even offer to trade his staff to the adventurers if they can get him out of this dungeon.

Suffer-Ye-Fools Staff

This +2 staff automatically blasts the first foe to strike the wielder in combat for 1d10 damage for every level of difference between the wielder and the foe, as long as the wielder is of higher level than the foe. If the foe is equal or higher level, then the staff only inflicts 1d10 damage.

It also inflicts 1/5th of this damage on any nearby foes. It's recharge 16+. *Quirk:* Becomes caustic and dismissive when answering stupid questions.

Exploring the Tower: Hvathier is only marginally literate, and he's already burned more than half the books in the upstairs library. From the remaining volumes, and from other documents, the adventurers can determine that this tower was the home of the infamous wizard **Iyana of the Red Wastes**, who was reputedly carried off by a flock of vrocks. There are no obvious magic items or spellbooks, but the pantry magically restocks every night and there's some mundane treasure worth looting if the player characters are into that sort of thing.

There's also a locked door. Hvathier has the key to this door, but (partially due to the staff's quirk, partially due to his own nervousness and greed) is hesitant to give it up. When he first found the tower, the door was unlocked. He opened it and found the staff inside, but there's some sort of guardian monster in there too. He fears that if he opens the door, it will free the guardian. He only saw the monster for an instant, but it looked like some sort of glowing… demon… thing.

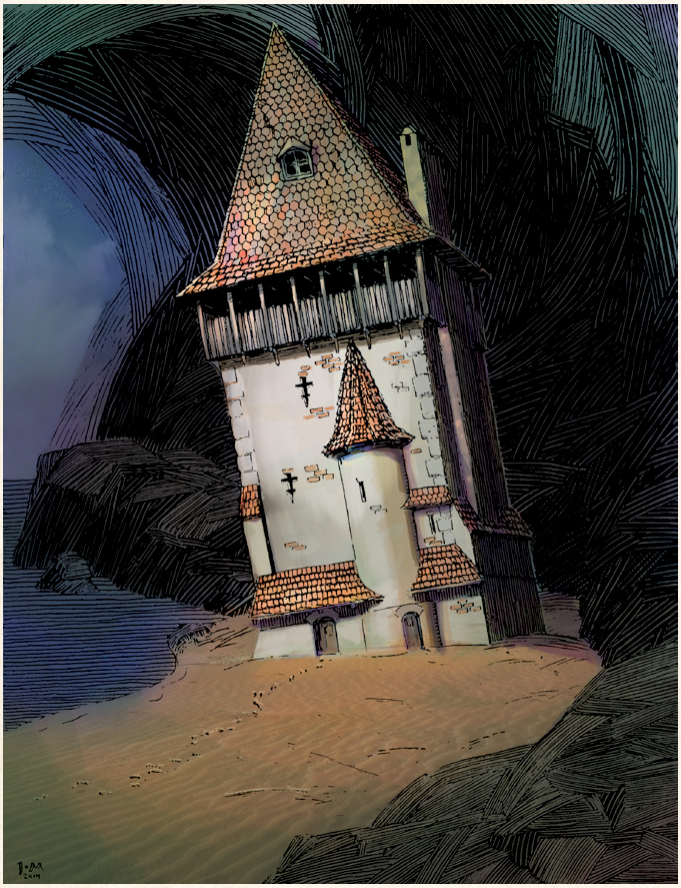
The Locked Room

The locked room is almost empty. No guardian monsters, or even invisible guardian monsters. There's just a lectern and a big spellbook.

The spellbook contains all of Iyana's spells and research. It also contains something unusual—a living spell that she managed to capture just before she was eaten by vrocks. Living spells are higher-dimensional entities that can manifest in the overworld as fractal patterns of arcane energy, but down in the messy material realm of the mortal world, they can only exist inside a wizard's head or in a spellbook. The first arcane spellcaster to read Iyana's spellbook gets an unexpected surprise as the living spell jumps from book to mind. (Wizards or sorcerers are obviously the best targets, but the living spell can also stow away in a bard's brain, or a ranger with the Fey Queen's Enchantments.) The spell takes up a spell slot, but it can be prepared at any level available to its host.

This particular living spell is called **Phemuel of the Ninety-Seventh Azord**. What an Azord is, or why there are so many of them, are concepts that don't translate into the languages of lower-dimensional beings. That's true of a lot of things that Phemuel is familiar with—he yearns to return to the astrigances of the unether, where he and his fellow living spells vort the oblurious celestials. He's never been in the lower dimensions before and finds it alarmingly blorty. Still, he's not the worst entity to have stuck in your brain—he's quite friendly and eager to help, especially if the adventurers agree to bring him back to the overworld, or at the very least, bring him to the Archmage (Phemuel claims to be an old friend of the Archmage, and speaks of him with great respect).

As long as Phemuel's stuck in the host's brain, that character gains a temporary background of Arcane Intuition +4, representing Phemuel's knowledge of arcane magic from the spell's side of being cast. The character may also 'cast' Phemuel as a daily spell.



Variations

- Other levels of the tower might contain other guardian monsters. Take a look at Marblehall (page 227) for ideas if you're stuck—any of the Witch's pets might equally be found here.
- Iyana has a one-shot *teleport* spell scroll, which she unfortunately dropped when she was carried away by the vrocks. Right now, she's trudging through the Red Wastes looking for that scroll, accompanied by the spell-blasted carcasses of a dozen zombie vrocks. When she finds it, she's going to *teleport* home. Woe be to anyone she finds squatting in her tower when she arrives.
- If you've a fighter-heavy group who don't appreciate all the wizardly rewards in the tower, then you could add in some magic weapons for them.

Phemuel of the Ninety-Seventh Azord (1st Level Spell)

Ranged spell ◆ **Daily**
Target: One nearby or faraway creature
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. MD
Hit: 1d20 damage, and the target is vulnerable to arcane magic (save ends)
Miss: Roll the damage anyway, but the spell does not inflict any damage.

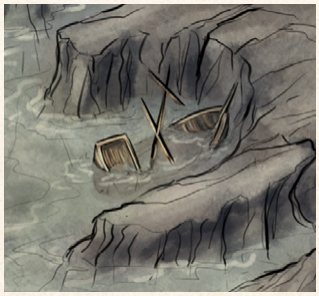
3rd level spell	3d20 damage.
5th level spell	5d20 damage.
7th level spell	7d20 damage.
9th level spell	9d20 damage.

Special: Note the values of the dice rolled for damage. For the rest of the battle, the caster can use any of these values instead of rolling when making an attack roll with an arcane spell on the target of *Phemuel of the Ninety-Seventh Azord.* After the battle, the caster may use any remaining rolled values for spell or magic item recharge rolls. Rolled values may only be used once each.

For example, Phemuel is cast as a 3rd level spell, and the caster rolls a 5, an 11 and an 18 for damage. Next round, the caster casts three dooms *and uses the 18 instead of rolling. After the battle, the caster uses the 11 to recharge a* cloak of evasion.

Evocation and Phemuel: Phemuel objects to being evoked by a wizard, in the same way a centaur might object to spurs or a whip. He might consent to being *evoked* in an absolutely dire, end-of-the-world emergency, but not as a matter of course. Repeated evocations of *Phemuel of the Ninety-Seventh Azord* drive the living spell murderously insane.

5. WRECK OF THE WHITE DRAGON



The *White Dragon* was a trade ship out of Drakkenhall. A whirlpool opened beneath her, sucking her down into the Sunken Sea. The crew has been trapped down in the dungeon for some weeks, and they have little hope of escape. The sahuagin took many of them, and more were lost to ill-fated escape attempts. The remaining survivors under **Captain Bluescale** now desperately defend their ship in the hopes they'll find a safer way out.

The ship ran aground in this rocky cavern in the Sunken Sea. She's too badly damaged to be refloated, even when the waters rise enough to lift her off the rocks, but given time, Bluescale believes she can be mended.

Encountering the Crew

Captain Bluescale keeps men on watch at all times in the crow's nest of the ship. Unless the adventurers sneak up on the camp, they'll be spotted and challenged.

Of the dozen survivors, notable ones include:

- **Captain Bluescale** is human—more or less. Long ago, he swore fealty to the Blue, the dread dragon ruler of Drakkenhall, and the magical effects of that oath become more obvious with each passing year. Blue scales cover half his face, and he's got a tail that he wraps around his belly like a scaly cummerbund. Level-headed Bluescale is one of the Blue's trusted couriers, and he still hopes that the Blue will somehow save his crew from the dungeon.
- **Lorgo the Half-Ogre** is the ship's first mate. He's a cranky ogre. Technically, he's half ogre, half ogre mage, but he doesn't like to talk about the arcane half of his heritage.
- **Sister Selra** is a missionary from Santa Cora. She was the only passenger on the *White Dragon* en route to Drakkenhall, on a surely doomed endeavor to bring the light of the gods to the monsters of that damned city. She has taken the lead in caring for the wounded and starving crew.
- **Voller** and **Kedric** are two of the crew. Both are human. Voller grew up in Drakkenhall and has sailed under Bluescale for several years. He doesn't quite trust his captain—he knows Bluescale's real loyalty is to the dragon, not the crew, and so the captain believes the mission is more important than the crew's safety. Kedric signed on when the ship was docked at Santa Cora. He'd heard tales of how weird Drakkenhall was and thought he could deal with serving under a half-dragon mutant captain on a ship crewed by monsters. Being swallowed by a dungeon, though, has frayed his sanity like old rope. If the *White Dragon* were still afloat, he'd be planning a mutiny. As they're shipwrecked, it's just a murderous coup instead. He knows he doesn't have a chance of beating Lorgo in a fight, so he's hoping that some adventurers or dungeon monsters kill the ogre so Kedric can deal with the captain.

Repairing the Ship

Fixing the ship means finding timber. Intact boards can be found by cavern-combing, or by raiding the Gizzard or the Grove. Once the ship is fixed, she can be sailed again—either out of the Sunken Sea if the dungeon opens itself to the ocean once more, or down the Underriver on a wild roller-coaster ride to the surface.

GAMEMASTER

The Three: Bluescale recognizes the character as an agent of the Three—whatever the character asks, the captain will give it if it is in his power to do so.

Prince of Shadows: If the ship is involved in smuggling, the character spots certain secret signs that one of the Prince's agents is on board.

Priestess: Whatever the truth about Sister Selra is—doomed missionary! Living saint! Cult priestess! Shapeshifter!—the character knows it.

Secrets of the White Dragon

Something sinister is going on with the ship. Pick the plot that gives the best twist for your campaign.

- Hidden in the ship's hold is a gift for the Witch of Marblehall. The Blue is the Witch's patron (or else is trying to lure the Witch into her service). This gift is a lifesize white marble statue of the Witch, perfect in every detail. The statue is magically linked to the Witch—it'll take any damage or corruption she suffers in her attempt to yoke the dungeon to her will. The reverse isn't true—damaging the statue won't hurt the Witch—but it's still a valuable bargaining chip. Bluescale's orders are to bring the statue to the Witch at all costs, so he'll try to persuade or trick the player characters into helping him find Marblehall.
- The 'innocent' Sister Selra is a member of the Cult of the Devourer. She accidentally drew the dungeon to her. She sets off in search of the Onyx Catacombs soon after the adventurers arrive in camp; once her absence is discovered, Bluescale begs the characters to rescue her from this nightmarish dungeon, unaware that Selra knows more about it than anyone else on the ship. If the PCs track her down, use one of the cultists from pages 305-307.
- There's a vampire in the cargo, hidden in a coffin filled with dirt. Her name is **Countess Aljana;** she was in the service of the Lich King, but fled the Necropolis after stealing a magical gemstone from his palace. The Stone Thief wants to add a vampire to its menagerie, which is why it consumed the ship. Aljana's been feeding off the human members of the crew, but hates ogre blood and can't digest the captain's dragon-tainted ichor. She's suborned Kelric to her will; his 'mutiny' is really just her taking control of her diet. Use the vampire spawn stats (page 249 of the *13th Age* core rulebook) for Aljana.

- The ship was sunk deliberately. It's all part of a scheme by the Prince of Shadows to steal something big and immensely valuable from the dungeon. (One playtest group hid a purloined Eye of the Stone Thief down here, which is just the sort of thing the Prince of Shadows would do). The *White Dragon* is the getaway ship.

Captain Bluescale

<CENSORED>, you <CENSORED> sons of a <CENSORED> centaur!

8th level leader [humanoid]
Initiative: +15

Cutlass +13 vs. AC—35 damage
Natural 16+: Bluescale may immediately make a *lightning breath* attack as a free action.
Miss: Bluescale may make a *tail swipe* attack against a different nearby foe.

[Special trigger] **C: Lightning Breath +13 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)**—10 lightning damage

[Special trigger} **Tail Swipe +13 vs. PD**—20 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends)

Blue in the Mouth: Bluescale shouts foul, blasphemous, or extremely offensive curses in battle, and only those who match him swear for cod-nautical swear can weather his storm of invective and attack him successfully. Attacks on Bluescale take a –2 penalty if the attacker does not shout out a suitable curse—and each curse must be longer and more unlikely than the one before to avoid the attack penalty.

Nastier Specials

Stormcaller: A thick fog blows in (even underground) when the fight begins, giving a –2 penalty to ranged attacks on Bluescale. Whenever the escalation die is even, Bluescale may make an extra free *lightning breath* attack that round.

AC 24
PD 20 **HP 144**
MD 20

Lorgo

Lorgo's ogre magi mother loves her wayward son, and will take revenge on anyone who kills him.

Large 7th level wrecker [giant]
Initiative: +10

Whalebone Club +12 vs. AC—50 damage
Cleave: If this attack reduces its target to 0 hit points or below, Lorgo may attack again.

Half-Magi: As a standard action, Lorgo can try to tap his latent magical gifts. Roll 1d6.
1: Magical feedback—Lorgo is dazed for one round.
2: Lorgo can fly for the next two rounds.
3: Lorgo becomes invisible for the next two rounds, or until he attacks.
4: Lorgo heals 20 hit points.
5: Lorgo can cast *cone of cold* once in the next two rounds.
6: Pick any result.

C: Cone of Cold +13 vs. PD (up to three nearby enemies in a group)—50 cold damage

Nastier Specials

Mother, Aid Me! When Lorgo is staggered, he calls on his mother for aid. A psychic projection of an ogre mage appears and fights alongside him. This projection uses the standard ogre mage statistics (*13th Age*, page 240). The projection has 85 hit points. It vanishes when Lorgo is slain.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 200**
MD 17

Sister Selra

Kindly missionary, religious fanatic, or diabolical cultist—there's a mystery beneath that fetching wimple.

7th level caster [humanoid]
Initiative: +14

Mace +12 vs. AC—25 damage
Natural attack roll greater than target's Wisdom: The target may not attack Selra again this battle as long as there are other available foes to choose.

C: Blazing Light +12 vs. MD (all nearby foes)—20 holy damage. A character may choose to take half damage from this attack, but takes a –2 penalty to their next attack.

Healing Chant: While Selra is not staggered, mook damage must be assigned in blocks of 20—a mook is either killed outright, or left wholly uninjured.

Nastier Specials

Cure Wounds: Twice per battle, Selra can restore 50 hit points to any ally as a free action.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 200**
MD 17

Shipwrecked Sailor

The sorriest—and most desperate—sailors you ever laid eyes on.

6th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

Salvaged or Improvised Weapon +11 vs. AC—12 damage

Starving and Desperate: The shipwrecked sailors add the escalation die to their attacks, but also add it to any damage inflicted ***on*** them by enemies.

Mutinous Dogs!: If Captain Bluescale or Lorgo is near a shipwrecked sailor and has 24 hit points or fewer, then the shipwrecked sailor attacks its ally instead.

AC 22
PD 16 **HP 20 (mook)**
MD 20

Mook: Kill one shipwrecked sailor mook for every 20 points of damage you do to the mob.

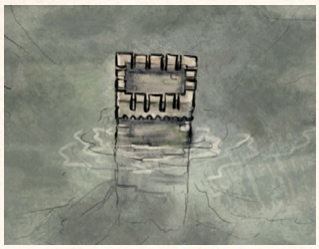
Number/ Level of PCs	Bluescale	Lorgo	Selra	Shipwrecked Sailors
3 x 5th level	**Pick either one***		**0**	**5**
4 x 5th level	**Pick either one***		**0**	**5**
5 x 5th level	**1**	**1**	**0**	**5**
6 x 5th level	**1**	**1**	**1**	**5**
7 x 5th level	**1**	**1**	**1**	**10**
3 x 6th level	***1***	***1***	***0***	***5***
4 x 6th level	***1***	***1***	***1***	***5***
5 x 6th level	***1*** **	***1***	***1***	***10***
6 x 6th level	***1*** **	***1***	***1*** **	***10***
7 x 6th level	***1*** **	***1*** **	***1*** **	***10***

* The other one can become a recurring vengeful nemesis of the PCs.
** Start using nastier specials

Variations

- The Stone Thief swallows ships from other lands. What sort of crew might be on a dwarven ironclad out of the secret dwarf naval port, or on a Lamphaven lightship?

6. The Cascade



The Cascade is a stone tower that rises from the seabed. Its barnacled battlements rise to just above the surface of the Sunken Sea. The tower was clearly stolen from some mighty fortress and reshaped when the dungeon turned it into a water sentinel. The characters can still see scars in the stonework where the dungeon pinched shut windows and arrow-slits. There are no visible doors or entrances—it's just a featureless column of stone.

Clearing seaweed off the top of the tower, the adventurers discover a trapdoor. Beyond, the stairs of the Cascade lead down beneath the Sunken Sea and off to another part of the dungeon—maybe even past the doors of Deep Keep to one of the fabled lower levels!

The Cascade also leads to a control room for the whole Sunken Sea level, which the characters can use to escape the Stone Thief in certain circumstances.

This encounter consists of a number of chambers linked by steep stairs. Each chamber in turn fills with water as the characters descend, so if they linger too long in any one area, they'll drown.

Rising Waters

In each of these battles, the escalation die determines the water level. A cruel GM might make the characters choose between taking a moment to heal up between levels, and starting the escalation die at 2 or more in the next room. So, if they wait to heal up after fighting the hellclams, they'll have less time to spare in the middle chamber.

ED0: It's a little damp, but that's no impediment to a band of brave adventurers.

ED1: Ankle-deep. No penalty beyond soggy boots.

ED2–3: Waist-deep. Still no penalty.

ED4: Small characters must now swim to get anywhere. That means a skill check to do any fast movement, and disengaging from a foe takes a –2 penalty.

ED5: Everyone's swimming.

ED6: Everyone is drowning (DC 20 skill check or 2d12 damage).

First Chamber: Hellclams

Giant clams blanket the floors and walls of this room. Blasphemous runes grow naturally on their shells, and an eerie reddish glow spills out of the gap between their lips. The clams cluster thickly around one section of the floor—they're covering the trapdoor that leads down to the next section of the stairs.

As soon as the characters enter the chamber, the hellclams gape open and *gate* in a number of frenzy demons.

Diabolist, Crusader, Archmage, Great Gold Wyrm: The character knows all about hellclams and how best to fight them (and, in the case of the Archmage, how best to cook them with garlic, butter, and holy water). Their attacks that hit inflict 2d6 extra damage on hellclams.

Clam Initiative and Fleeing

Roll initiative for each hellclam separately. It's much more fun if the characters have to juggle their actions to take advantage of the hellclams opening.

Even if you don't usually use the optional rules for delaying and readying actions, you may want to bring them in for this fight, to help with mopping up the final clams.

Killing half the hellclams clears the trapdoor; the characters can then flee through it if the battle goes awry. Otherwise, they've got to flee back up, against the rushing waters.

Hellclam

7th level blocker [DEMON]
Initiative: +10

Clam Snap +12 vs. AC—15 damage
Natural even hit: The hellclam can grab the target.

Clambake +16 vs. PD (one enemy it's grabbing; includes +4 grab bonus)—35 fire damage

C: Flame Blast +12 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—12 fire damage

Open Clamshell: The hellclam only pops open for a short time each round. If a character attacks on an initiative count within 2 of the hellclam's initiative, the hellclam takes a –4 penalty to its defenses and is doubly vulnerable (expand crit range by 4, normally 16+). If the hellclam doesn't act this round, it stays closed and doesn't open itself up to attacks.

Snap: Once per round, the clam can make a clam snap attack as a free action against a moving nearby target it is not engaged with; on a natural even hit, the target is grabbed and its movement stops.

Clamgate: As a standard action, the clam can open to *gate* in another demon. The clam has to stay open until the end of its next turn, so any attacks on it get the *open clamshell* bonus. If the clam is still alive at the end of its next turn, it gates in 1d6 slaughterspawn, up the maximum number of reinforcements.

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 100**
MD 17

Gamemaster

If a character spends a round searching the remains of a dead hellclam, there's a 50% chance of finding an infernal pearl. What's an infernal pearl good for? Ask the Diabolist.

Tough Frenzy Demon

'Tough' is a misnomer. These guys didn't start out bigger or stronger than their siblings. They were just meaner.

7th level wrecker [DEMON]
Initiative: +12

Claw +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—13 damage

Raging Frenzy: Whenever a frenzy demon misses with a melee attack, it gains a +1 attack bonus and deals +1d6 damage until the end of the battle (maximum bonus +4, +4d6).

Nastier Specials

Frenzy All The Way: When a frenzy demon is slain, it may transfer its *raging frenzy* bonus to another nearby frenzy demon. The bonus is still capped at +4 attack, +4d6 damage.

AC 23
PD 19 **HP 100**
MD 19

Slaughterspawn

The sages say these are the echoes of wrongful deaths, monsters born of sins yet unpunished. Sages say a lot of stuff that's utterly unhelpful when a thing that looks like a swarm of metal wasps buzzing around a cloud of fire tries to stab you in the face.

6th level mook [DEMON]
Initiative: +10

Jagged Metal +10 vs. AC—15 damage

Shrieking hate: A slaughterspawn gets a bonus to damage equal to the number of slaughterspawn killed so far in this battle.

AC 22
PD 17 **HP 23 (mook)**
MD 17

Mook: Kill one slaughterspawn mook for every 23 damage dealt to the mob.

Number/ Level of PCs	Hell-clams	Tough Frenzy Demons	Slaughter-spawn	Slaughter-spawn Reinforce-ments*
3 x 5th level	1	1	5	5
4 x 5th level	2	1	5	7
5 x 5th level	3	1	5	10
6 x 5th level	3	2	5	10
7 x 5th level	3	2	10	15
3 x 6th level	*2*	*1*	*7*	*7*
4 x 6th level	*3*	*1*	*7*	*7*
5 x 6th level	*3*	*2*	*10*	*10*
6 x 6th level	*3*	*3*	*10*	*10*
7 x 6th level	*4*	*3*	*10*	*15*

* Not present at the start of the fight

Second Chamber: Prison Gate

This chamber is a prison, although who keeps their prisoners in a nearly inaccessible room in a half-flooded tower in a living dungeon is a mystery. Maybe it's someone from the level below, or perhaps the tower was a prison before the Stone Thief stole it. Most of the prisoners in the cages are long dead.

The Living Prisoner: There's one living prisoner, though, and it might be someone the player characters recognize. It could be an NPC from elsewhere in the dungeon, or someone from a place previously consumed by the Stone Thief. Unless the player characters rescue this unfortunate, the prisoner will drown. Good candidates, if you're stuck for inspiration, are:

- **Ilias,** a dark elf from Shieldspinner's community in the Grove (page 142)
- **Edmur**, a minor cousin from Marblehall (page 227)
- One of **Bartolomew**'s fellow adventurers (page 67).

The Gate: The trapdoor to the next level is barred from below. How do the characters get through a magically reinforced stone trapdoor? That's up to them, but they've got to act quickly—keep increasing the escalation die to show the water pouring into the room. If all else fails, brute force in the form of a DC 30 Strength check can force it open.

Undead Prisoners: If things are too easy for the PCs, then hit them with some undead prisoners. Waterlogged double-strength zombies (page 251 of the *13th Age* core rulebook) should work.

Third Chamber: Riddle Gate

There's no exit from this chamber to the next chamber. When the adventurers enter the room, though, the far wall reshapes itself into the visage of a Custodian—the Pearlkeeper. This particular Custodian spends most of its time sleeping at the bottom of the sea; it wears a long beard of kelp, and its face is covered with barnacles and shells. It stares blindly at them with milky salt-crystal eyes, and recites a series riddle in tones both sepulchral and utterly bored. To pass through this chamber, the adventurers must correctly answer at least one riddle.

The first riddle:
What foe is this? It murders you when it surrounds you, yet you die when it is gone. It can carry bigger burdens than dragons, but has not the strength to climb a hill. It is bigger than the mind can encompass, but can hide behind the eye that seeks it. It comes for you—name it.

The answer to this one should be obvious, given the current predicament—it's water.

The second riddle:
At dawn a mighty king arose, wearing a white-gold crown.
He made war upon a rocky land, and charged in very bold.
And there he fell, and broke, and died all alone.
Yet a thousand more kings followed him, wild banners in the storm.
Name him.

The answer, of course, is 'a wave'.

The third riddle:
Three men shared a house. One was full of folly and never did any work, but was the most loved. The next strove hard and provided for the other two. The last spent all day in bed, and feared to leave the house. Name this house of sorrow.

The answer is 'life'. The first is the man as a child; the second as an adult, and the third when he is old and dying.

If your players respond well to pressure, then give them three minutes of real time to get past the riddle gate. Alternatively, give them one answer per increase of the escalation die. If they're stuck, then cashing in an icon benefit gives a hint—or the answer outright.

Answering one riddle correctly convinces the Custodian to let them past—it melts into the wall, revealing a trapdoor in its place. Two riddles gets them an exit and a cryptic warning—if the Cascade is leading to another level, hint about something dangerous there. If it leads out, hint about the dungeon's next target on the surface. Three correct answers gets them three questions that the Custodian is bound to answer honestly before it reveals the exit—but the water keeps rising as they contemplate their questions, so they'd better act promptly.



The Pearlkeeper

The other Custodians consider the Pearlkeeper to be a liability. It's become eccentric and mystical since becoming a Custodian, and now just spouts sea water and cryptic prophecies instead of attending to its level, which is why the Sunken Sea is so full of flotsam and jetsam. They installed a control room run by blockheads to bypass the Pearlkeeper and manage the basic functionality of the level.

Optionally, you can use the Pearlkeeper to deliver hints and cryptic advice to the PCs. It could show up anywhere, ask them a riddle, and give them a hint if they get it right.

The Final Chamber

The control room consists of a bank of rusted levers, manned by a single harmless blockhead. The levers are unmarked. There's also a large exit door that, depending on the dungeon's current layout, either leads to the surface or down to another level.

From left to right, each lever does the following:

- Opens or closes the clamshell dome of the Sunken Sea. Opening it may allow the PCs to escape (or waters to flood in and fill the level, or cause a gigantic cave-in depending on what's outside this level right now).
- Opens or closes the sluice gates that lead to the Underriver. Pulling this lever might cut off or open access to the Underriver, or even cause the whole Sunken Sea to flood other parts of the dungeon.
- Opens or closes the hatch at the top of the Cascade. Unless the PCs pull this lever soon after entering this room, it'll start to flood.
- Opens or closes the exit from the Cascade.
- Does absolutely nothing. This lever is not in use.
- Raises the submergence die by one, then resets.

The Underriver

The Underriver flows through the upper levels of the Stone Thief. Its course is different every time the dungeon rises. Instead of a natural channel in the rock, it finds a new path through the stolen architecture. In some places, the dungeon dredges up bits of aqueducts and sewers for the river; in others, it courses down corridors and floods dungeon rooms. An unwary adventurer might open a door, only to get a fast-flowing river in the face.

The Underriver always starts or ends in the Sunken Sea. Sometimes, the river flows out of the dungeon, and sometimes it siphons off some surface body of water like a lake or a river or a well or a moat, and carries that water down to the Sunken Sea. That means that the Underriver almost always leads to an exit from the dungeon.

In between its start and finish, the Underriver might flow through any upper levels of the dungeon. When it's near Dungeon Town (page 87), the denizens place nets to catch fish or use the river for smuggling treasure to the surface. When it comes near Deep Keep, the orcs place nets to catch smugglers.

The Underriver In...

The Maw: It runs through a series of narrow caves and gullies, only to explode out onto the surface in a high-pressure waterfall.

The Gauntlet: It runs through a culvert beneath the level. Chutes dump blood and body parts down into the waters to be washed away.

Gizzard: Here, the river becomes clogged with debris. It becomes a muddy sewer, flowing sluggishly through corridors.

Ossuary: Corpses wrapped in tarpaulins float down the river. No one ever sees where these corpses come from, but there's a 10% chance that there's something undead beneath those oilskins.

Grove: It bursts onto the surface here, and flows excitedly across the open ground. Trees hasten toward it and drink hungrily.

Dungeon Town: It surges through the Wild Caves without any channel or course in a flash flood.

Deep Keep: It runs through a maze of stolen moats and sewers under the Keep.

Underriver Encounters

1: A wooden boat sails by. There's no one on board, but there's fresh blood smeared on the side.

2: A blind cave fish swims past, clutching what appears to be a little silver serving-dish in its mouth. It gives the impression of being in a desperate hurry. It darts down a little hole in the bank of the Underriver and vanishes. If the characters listen at the hole, they hear in the distance what sounds unmistakably like a dinner party.

3: A pair of orcs tramp along the riverbank, looking for escaped slaves. They grumble about Fangrot and the situation in Deep Keep as they go.

4: A tidal bore rushes down the river. Anyone in its path gets washed away.

5: The tunnel walls convulse, and a lake's worth of dead fish shoot down the river in a huge piscine glob.

6: A drowned body clutches something of value in its cold hand.

7: The river pours down a sudden waterfall, dropping into a lower level of the dungeon that it doesn't normally flow through. This could be a short cut down to the Pit of Undigested Ages or the Onyx Catacombs—or, if it's a very, very big waterfall, the Maddening Stair.

8: The river's frozen by unnatural cold. There's a captured winter-spirit lurking in a cave nearby. The spirit begs to be brought out of the dungeon to the surface and offers its blessing as a reward—but if returned to the lands above, it'll bring unnatural and unseasonable winter down wherever it finds itself, and this particular spirit is native to the icy lands beyond Moonwreck.

9: The river flows into a sewer network, once used as the hideout by a gang of thieves. The ghosts of the thieves still haunt these sewers, and they can be laid to rest only by carrying out one last heist.

10: A huge monster, like a chimera, tries to slake its threefold thirst at the riverbank. On seeing the PCs, it decides that blood is sweeter than water.

Exits

Other than the Underriver, all exits from the Sunken Sea involve some method for preventing the water from flooding the rest of the dungeon.

- A magical curtain of energy that is impermeable to water.
- Via a mechanical airlock.
- A hand-cranked elevator that ascends out of the water.
- A steep stairs that leads up to a short corridor, then descends steeply again.
- Across a narrow bridge over a chasm.

The Ossuary

Levels 5–6

The Stone Thief cares little for the dead. Corpses are irritants, waste matter to be ground to mulch and bone meal when the dungeon submerges. Since the rise of the Lich King, however, the Stone Thief has come to realize that the *un*-dead can be useful servants. It devoured what was once a sanctified tomb complex, and turned it into the Ossuary, where the dead rise to serve the Stone Thief.

Features & Factions

Recently, the necromancer who calls himself the Flesh Tailor took control of this level by imprisoning the former Custodian. The Stone Thief doesn't care who provides the undead guardians as long as the dead keep shambling. The Tailor is the undisputed master of the level now, and none of the other factions dare challenge him.

Descriptors

The tombs and burial customs of dozens of cultures—somber dwarf-wrought tombs from past ages of the Dragon Empire, gnomish mummies, skyburial slabs from the barbarians of the Giantwalk Mountains, dusty catacombs robbed from distant cities. Dust, silence, bones and more bones. Stillness.

Minor Encounters

Flensing & Cleansing

A pair of blockheads marches down a corridor, each dragging two corpses from the most recent theft. They leave these corpses on stone stabs in a side room. A few minutes later, a trio of skeletons arrives to examine the bodies. They probe the corpses' injuries with their bony fingers, measure the remains like coffin-makers, and scrub them with acid. Two of the bodies are judged too badly damaged to be used for anything more than blockheads, so the skeletons cut off those heads and put stone blocks in their place. The stones fuse with the neck stumps, and two new blockhead servitors struggle upright and amble off toward the Gizzard. The skeletons bring the other corpses to the Temple of the Flesh Tailor (page 127).

Lich King: You know some simple command words in the secret tongue of necromancers. You could command these skeletons to bring you to their master.

Chapel of Remembrance

This little village church is blessed with a curious power, detectable to those who serve the **Priestess** or the **Lich King**. It exists on the borderland between life and death. With a suitable ritual, the characters can call up the shade of anyone who died because of the Stone Thief and compel them to answer three questions. Excellent candidates for a post-mortem interrogation include Grommar the Mastersmith (see page 68), any of the members of the Cult of the Devourer, or the late owner of one of the Eyes of the Stone Thief.

Uncorrupted Corpse

While exploring the catacombs, the characters find what appears to be a sleeping man in a coffin. The coffin cracked open when the dungeon last surfaced. On closer examination, they can tell that he is dead, but his body has not decayed in the slightest. In fact, it smells faintly of roses and dragonhide. He is dressed in a simple tunic, and his only decoration is a golden badge on a chain around his neck; the badge once bore some mark, but it's been rubbed away.

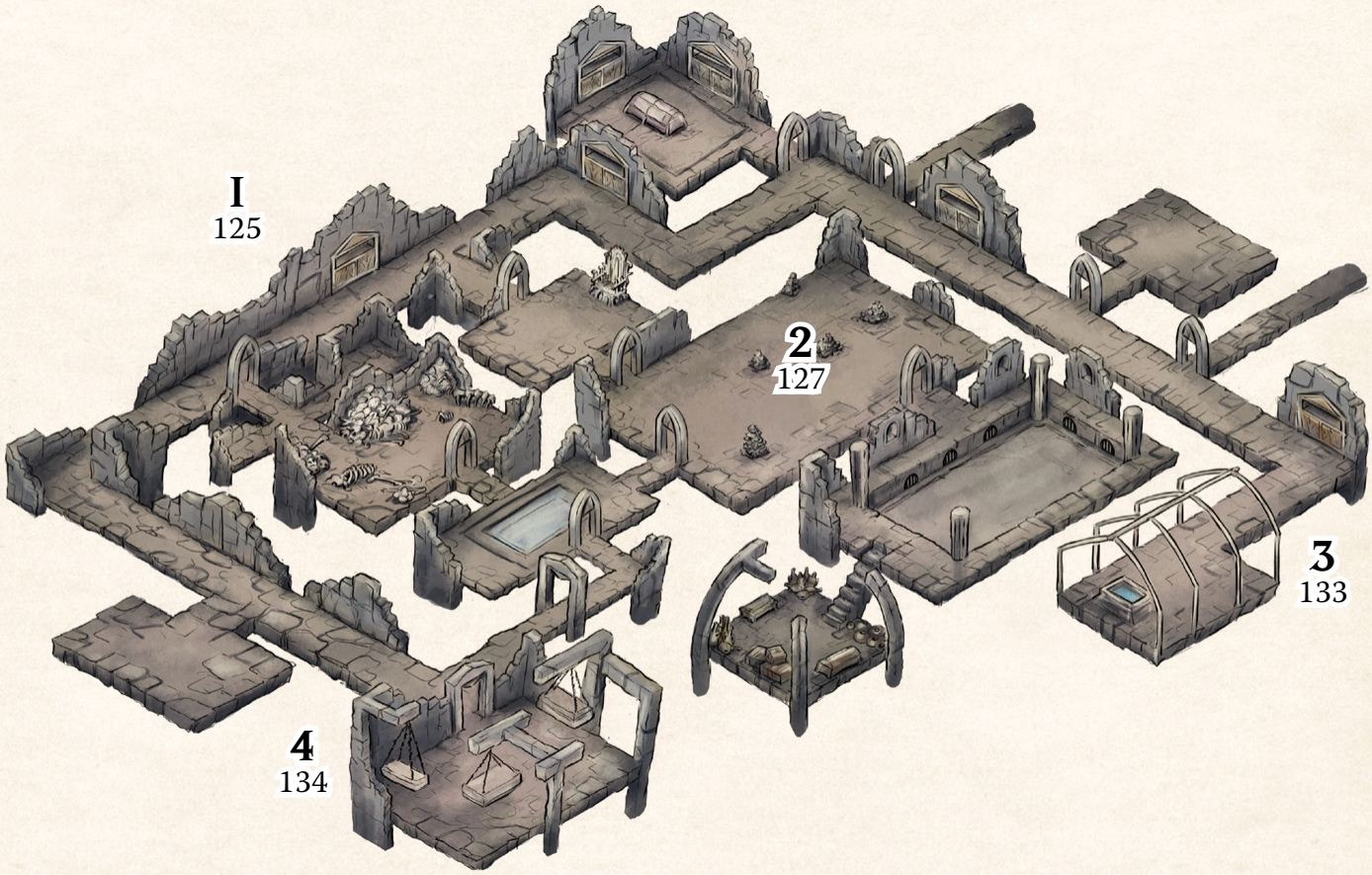
Great Gold Wyrm or **Priestess:** This must be the body of a great paladin, preserved from corruption by divine forces. If the Flesh Tailor found this body and worked his evil on it, he could animate the body of the holy warrior as an unholy monster of tremendous power. The character can remove the divine protections and let the body rot naturally, but that would mean going against the will of the gods. Could there be some unseen divine purpose in keeping this corpse uncorrupted? Is it meant to be an inspiring symbol—and, if so, who could it inspire down here in the darkness?

If the characters let the body rot, nothing happens. If they leave it, then add another grim guardian to the Flesh Tailor fight (page 131), but at a suitable moment, that guardian reveals itself to be the paladin, and switches sides.

Bone Bell

A bone bell made from the skull of a giant hangs from the ceiling. The clapper is a skeletal fist. A bellrope of woven hair hangs down, tempting the characters to ring it. This bell can only be heard by the undead, and ringing it draws them to it. The characters could use the bell to lure undead guards away from their posts, or—if they bring the bell out of the Ossuary—even trigger a fight between the undead and the orcs of Deep Keep. The bell only works once if removed from its resting place here.

Lich King: You can hear the tolling of the bell when it is rung, even though you're not (as far as you know) currently undead.



Preserving Font

Icy-cold water spills from an urn carried by a statue of a cherub and pools in a marble basin. The water in the basin is clear and appears pure, even though the walls and floor nearby are stained with black slime. A character who drinks the water heals 3d10 hit points per draught, without needing to spend a recovery. However, note the amount of hit points regained in this manner—these restored hit points are unnatural and will block an equal amount of any natural healing or true healing magic. For example, if a character regains 100 hit points by drinking from this font, they will be unable to regain any further hit points until they have fruitlessly absorbed 100 hit points of healing from another source.

If a character takes a full heal-up, this restriction on healing goes away.

Lich King/Priestess/Great Gold Wyrm/Archmage: You recognize the danger of the fountain before anyone takes a drink from it.

Ghost Casks

This section of the catacombs is lined with rows of niches for corpses like all the rest of the level, but instead of ragged skeletons, the niches here are filled with thousands of wooden casks and glass bottles, as though this was some wine cellar of the dead. Sensitive characters hear whispering voices coming from inside the containers. These casks and bottles contain ghosts—the unquiet spirits of those who were killed by the Stone Thief and its denizens. Most of these ghosts are confused and hostile, and they won't take kindly to being released. They are not strong enough to attack a player character, but will haunt their rescuer. (As an easy way to model this, assume that the ghost is strong enough to cast a cantrip-like effect a round or two after the haunted victim rolls a natural 1 on a d20 in any situation. Feel free to replace *mending* with its reverse; angry ghosts are worse than mice for chewing through waterskins and hiding in your shoes.)

A haunting ghost can be removed by putting it to rest, with a suitable ritual, or with an icon benefit.

Any icon: The character is drawn to one of the bottles that contains a sympathetic soul—a fellow devotee (or fellow committed foe) of a particular icon. The ghost in the bottle whispers advice and counsel to the player character. In effect, it's a *lore bottle* (see *13th Age* core rulebook, page 293).

Tailored Undead

The Flesh Tailor's signature creation, a tailored undead is an undead monstrosity that wears the skin and appearance of a deceased humanoid. The Tailor has a mortician's eye (he screws it into his skull when he needs it) and uses spells, alchemy, and judicious tailoring of the flesh to make the creature appear to be alive. Spotting the deception is DC 25, dropping to DC 10 over time (the smell gives it away).

The Flesh Tailor usually uses zombies; a simple spell animates the vocal cords, bestowing upon the creature the power to speak a few pre-programmed phrases, which is enough to fool most casual enquiries. When he needs one of the tailored undead to go undercover for long periods, he wraps an intelligent undead creature like a lich or ghast in a mask of flesh and sends them out to do his bidding.

1. The Catacombs

Catacomb tunnels like these run throughout the Ossuary. Small niches line the walls of the tunnels. Each niche contains one or more skeletons. Some were carefully interred, laid down with great pomp, wrapped in a winding sheet and buried with weapons and other grave goods. Others were just crammed onto the shelves, so a dozen corpses share one slot. Larger, more ornate tombs stand at intersections or in side chapels, while the mid-ranking dead lie in crypts along the floor of the corridors.

Every one of them is undead. The empty eye-sockets of every single corpse burn with an eerie spark; in the darkness, the catacombs are like the constellations of some subterranean starscape. Fortunately for the player characters, these undead creatures are resentful of being animated and enslaved by the very dungeon that murdered them. They'll only attack when ordered to do so by the Flesh Tailor or one of the other dungeon denizens—or if the players indulge in a little tomb robbing. See **Clawing Skeletons**, below.

Grim guardians sweep through the catacombs, tirelessly searching for intruders.

Gamemaster

Emperor: You recognize the heraldry of these tombs, and know which were the wealthiest families—and which were the ones famed for their heroism and loyalty. Do you want to know where the best treasure might be, or are you foolish enough to expect old bones to remember oaths sworn in life?

Priestess: The memory of the song of the Priestess lifts your spirits. "Tyrants and tormenters shall pass, and the dead shall have deliverance." If you defeat the Flesh Tailor, you'll be able to request one act of service from the assembled dead.

Lich King: The dead acknowledge your authority. As long as you do not disturb them, some will let you—and only you—pass without challenge.



Clawing Skeletons

While every corpse in the Ossuary is undead, most of them are just your basic decrepit skeletons. Rather than clog the battlefield with another hundred 7 hp mooks, treat them as a hazard. Also, any helpless or unconscious characters get dragged away by the clawing skeletons. Their unconscious (or dead) forms get stuffed into a niche, or into the tomb of a tomb lord if there's one nearby. Finding them requires a DC 15 check.

ED1–2: Skeletal hands grab at any characters near the walls—which, in a narrow corridor, means everyone. **Skeletal Hands +10 vs. PD**—2d6 damage

ED3: The hands get grabbier. **Skeletal Hands +10 vs. PD**—2d6 damage, and the character is stuck (save ends). The character may automatically wrench free at the cost of another 1d6 damage.

Grim Guardians

These armored skeletons are the Flesh Tailor's lieutenants. They patrol through the catacombs, looking for intruders. If they find any, they command the ranks of the dead to rise and attack. When they speak, it's the death rattle of a dying friend.

8th level leader [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +14

Massive two-handed blade +13 vs. AC—50 damage
Natural odd hit or miss: The grim guardian may not use its *massive two-handed blade* attack for one round.

C: Deathly Curse +13 vs. PD (one nearby target)—3 damage
Natural 16+: The target is vulnerable until the start of the grim guardian's next turn.

Call the Dead: As a standard action, the grim guardian calls forth a number of skeletal shamblers equal to the escalation die.

Nastier Specials

Watchful Guardian: If the grim guardian is not staggered, it may make a hard save (16+) at the start of each round. If successful, the escalation die does not advance this round.

AC 25
PD 18 **HP 130**
MD 22

Tomb Lord

Nothing is more frustrating than spending all that money on a tomb, and then being called forth to serve the forces of darkness. Why not tomb-share with an adventurer?

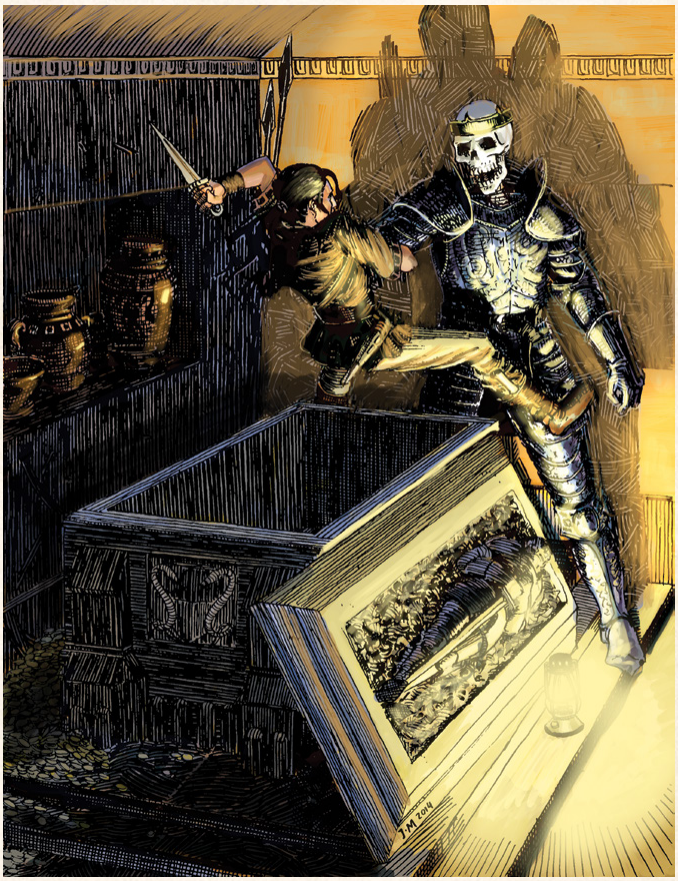
7th level spoiler [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +12

Spectral Claws +12 vs. AC—28 damage
Critical: The tomb lord may *entomb* its target as a free action instead of inflicting extra damage.

Entomb: If a nearby foe is unconscious or helpless, or if the tomb lord inflicted a critical hit on its foe, that enemy may be entombed. The tomb lord grabs the enemy and flings them into the open tomb from which the tomb lord emerged, and the heavy stone lid slams shut. While there is a victim in its tomb, the tomb lord may use any one of that victim's at-will spells or attacks as its standard action. Use the victim's attack bonuses and damage values, so if the tomb lord entombs a wizard with a 5th level *ray of frost,* the tomb lord may now cast *ray of frost* using the wizard's Intelligence + level to determine the attack roll. It doesn't get the benefit of any feats or items.

The entombed victim may break free with a hard save (16+). If there's someone helping from the outside, or if the tomb lord is staggered, then the save drops to an easy one (6+).

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 108**
MD 17



Necromagus

An uncast spell lingers in the mind, even after death.

7th level caster [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +13

Spectral Claws +12 vs. AC—28 damage

R: Rotting Curse +10 vs. MD—15 damage, and 5 ongoing damage. Anyone who fails a save to avoid ongoing damage from *rotting curse* may not add the escalation die to their attacks as long as they are afflicted by the curse. (So, you get to add the escalation die to your first attack after being hit. After that, you might lose it.)

R: Weaving Shades +10 vs. MD—10 damage, and the character takes 1 damage at the start of each subsequent round. The ongoing damage ceases only when all the necromagi in the fight are slain. A character may only be targeted by *weaving shades* once per battle.
Miss: 3 damage per necromagus involved in the attack.

Combined Casting: Multiple necromagi can work together to cast *weaving shades*. The damage increases by +5 and the start of round damage increases by +1 for each necromagus after the first involved in the attack. Make only one attack roll for the whole necromagi circle.

Whispers of the Dead: When the necromagus chants a spell, its dry voice whispers from a hundred bony jaws as it borrows the voices of the other undead. It gains a +1 bonus to its ranged attack spells for each non-mook undead creature engaged with the target, to a maximum of +5.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 108**
MD 17

Skeletal Shamblers

The rank and file of the Flesh Tailor. Well, they're rank, anyway.

6th level mook [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +6
Vulnerability: holy

Bony Claws and Teeth +11 vs. AC—12 damage

Weight of Numbers: When an engaged enemy misses an attack against a mob of at least three skeletal shamblers, one of them takes advantage of the opening and inflicts 12 damage.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 20 (mook)**
MD 16

Mook: Kill one skeletal shambler mook for every 20 damage you deal to the mob.

Variations

- Between the Flesh Tailor's inventive genius, and the dungeon's magpie habits, any type of undead might be encountered in these corridors. Drop in your favorite beasties from the *13th Age Bestiary*.
- If the dungeon swallowed a place known to the player characters, then some of the grim guardians might be the remains of those known to the player characters.
- For added fun, stick a secret passage—or a pit trap or a slide—inside a tomb lord's tomb.

Catacombs Fight Chart

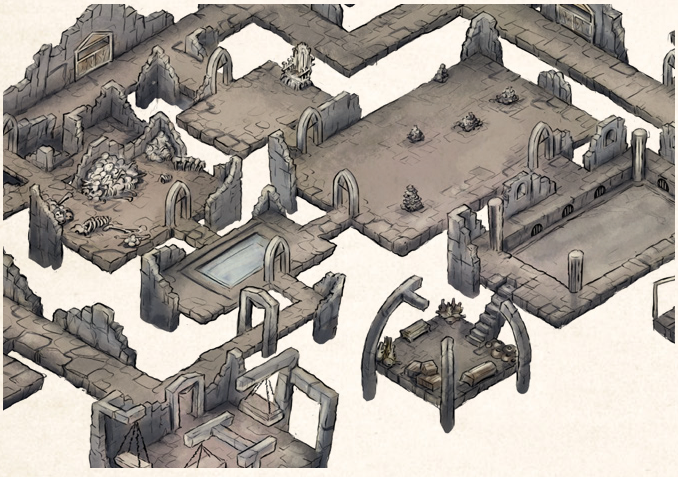
Number/ Level of PCs	Grim Guardian	Tomb Lord	Necro-magus	Skeletal Shambler
3 x 5th level	1	0	1	5
4 x 5th level	1	1	1	5
5 x 5th level	1	1	2	8
6 x 5th level	2	1	2	8
7 x 5th level	2	2	3	10
3 x 6th level	*1*	*1*	*2*	*7*
4 x 6th level	*1*	*2*	*2*	*7*
5 x 6th level	*2*	*2*	*3*	*10*
6 x 6th level	*2*	*3*	*3*	*10*
7 x 6th level	*2*	*4*	*4*	*10*

Looting Tombs

If the characters indulge in a time-honored bit of tomb robbing before or after the fight, roll a d6 to determine their loot. Adventurers who know what they're looking for (through backgrounds/icon benefits) may pick the result instead of rolling.

1: Nothing.
2: A few copper coins.
3: 50 gp.
4: An adventurer-tier healing potion (or champion-tier if you're feeling generous).
5: 500 gp.
6: Either a champion-tier rune, or *+2 boots of momentum* (recharge 16+): Gain momentum. *Quirk:* Becomes impetuous. There's only one pair of boots, and they're really only useful for a rogue.

2. Temple of the Flesh Tailor



This complex is the lair of the Flesh Tailor (see page 130). A stripe of vile-looking yellow mold, running down both walls and across the floor and ceiling of a corridor or covering a door, marks all entrances to this section of the level. One of the adventurers immediately recognizes the substance as **yellow mold**, a horrific biological weapon created by the Lich King in a past age. A single spore from this perilous substance can turn a man's lungs to brownish sludge in a matter of minutes. The Archmage cast a spell that eradicated all yellow mold from the surface world, although there are still patches in the Necropolis—and, apparently, here in the living dungeon.

If anything touches the mold, it spits forth a cloud of spores. A nearby unprotected character cannot avoid being infected; one who takes precautions may make a DC 25 check to avoid infection.

An infected victim must start making last gasp saves after a few minutes (minutes equal to Constitution score, if it becomes an issue). A successful last gasp save means the character resists the mold; four failed saves means they're dead. The adventurers can get past the mold (or cure its effects) with a ritual, but doing so takes time—throw more undead monsters and give the Flesh Tailor the benefit of preparation if the characters sit around conjuring magical sunlight.

The one part of this complex that is *not* protected by yellow mold is the Audience Chamber, where the Flesh Tailor meets with supplicants and clients.

Areas of the Temple

2A. Audience Chamber

This chamber is remarkably… cozy. On one side, there's a throne made of bone, with cushions bound in human flesh, flanked by braziers that burn with ice-cold flames—the sort of thing you'd expect to find in a necromancer's lair. On the other side of the room, though, are comfy leather (cow-hide) seats, a cheery fireplace, and a side table with some excellent bottles of wine and a few silver goblets. There's also a silver bell.

The Flesh Tailor meets with visitors here—usually ones from the Cult of the Devourer, but he might meet with the adventurers if there's a possibility of mutual gain. He doesn't come in person; instead, he sends out one of his tailored undead wearing ceremonial robes and a suitably imposing face. He usually just sends one of his zombies, but a disguised ghast greets more dangerous visitors. He speaks through the undead creature, to avoid exposing himself to danger. See **Meeting the Flesh Tailor** on page 130.

2B. Crypt of the Cult

This ancient burial vault is obviously much, much older than the surrounding chambers. The rest of the Flesh Tailor's temple clearly dates from a recent age—the inscriptions are in the common tongue, the burial rites are akin to those practiced in the modern day. This crypt, though, is nothing like that. The walls are the same milk-veined living stone that the characters may have seen in the Gizzard (page 69), and instead of graves, the floor of the crypt is covered in little stone cairns. Each cairn is a pyramidal pile of stones containing a single corpse. The corpse sits hunched-over, legs drawn up beneath its chin, bony arms clutched round and tied with a purple rope. The more recently interred bodies wear purple robes; older burials contain only skeletons, or have fallen in on themselves as the weight of the piled stones crushes the decaying remains within. Every stone in every cairn is marked with a cryptic rune, piled seemingly at random except for the topmost keystone, which bears the symbol of the Devourer.

These cairns contain the deceased masters of the Cult of the Devourer. When a master dies, they are placed in this chamber within the holy Stone Thief to await the promised apotheosis when the dungeon eats the world. Some of them have waited a very long time.

Searching, the adventurers find that some of the cairns have been deliberately demolished and the remains inside removed. (The Flesh Tailor used some of his former colleagues in his experiments.) One relatively recent cairn seems to have burst open from the inside (the Flesh Tailor once lay here).

The Dead Masters: Like everything else here, these guys are undead. They're not animated undead, though—they're just lingering spirits of evil. If any of the tombs are disturbed, they lash out with psychic hate, **+15 vs. MD**—13 damage, and the target is confused (save ends). Furthermore, those hit by this attack suffer terrible nightmares—they regain only half their maximum recoveries at the next full heal-up.

The dead masters slowly become part of the Stone Thief as they decay. When the cairn completely crushes them to dust, that completes their integration into the stone body of their god. Before that holy consumption, though, they dream with the Stone Thief. The cult can commune with the Stone Thief through these dead masters.

The purple ropes that bind these corpses are magical—they restrain the dead master. Loosen a rope, and the master shares its dreams with you. If a character tries that, they get hit with the same psychic hate attack, but also gain a temporary 3-point background Dreams of the Stone Thief. This background fades over time, but gives the character disjointed and nightmarish memories of the cult's rites and beliefs.

Remove or cut a rope completely, and there's a 1 in 6 chance that the dead master animates and attacks—treat it as a mindlessly homicidal skeletal shambler.

2C. Chapel of Faces

This disturbing room contains a long marble-lined pool. Dozens of disembodied heads lie at the bottom of the pool, staring blindly up through the cool water. If the characters fish any of the heads out, they discover that some of their faces have been expertly flayed from the skulls, and then sewn back on. These heads were removed to make blockheads (see page 25), and are now used as faces by the Flesh Tailor.

If the Flesh Tailor knows the adventurers are coming, then he prepares a little amusement for them. He uses his flesh-shaping talents to create approximate duplicates of the player characters' faces, then leaves them here to be discovered. If the characters remove any of their doppelganger heads from the pool, the head comes to life and opens its mouth, revealing a seething mass of live yellow mold. The unlucky character must make a hard save (16+) to avoid inhaling the spores.

2D. Boneyard

This pile of bones and dissected corpses is the Flesh Tailor's stockpile of spare parts. Whenever a monster dies within reach of his minions, it gets dragged here and added to his grisly hoard before becoming part of his grisly horde.

2E. Necrolab

The central chamber of the temple burns with necromantic energies. The air here is icy cold, but thrills with unseen power. Here, the Flesh Tailor taps the power of the Ossuary to create his art. Niches and crypts in the walls and floor contain his favorite pets.

The Flesh Tailor's power is considerably enhanced in this room, so he makes his stand here if he has to fight the adventurers.



2F. Treasure Vault

This chamber is concealed beneath the Necrolab and is accessible only by a secret door in one of the underfloor crypts. The vault contents are described on page 132.

Meeting the Flesh Tailor

The Flesh Tailor looks human at first glance. Only a close examination reveals that his face is a mask of animated, unliving skin that crawls over his bony skull. He dresses in the purple robes of the Cult of the Devourer, accessorized with the pick of the grave goods. He's a flamboyant lich.

The Tailor is crazy and monstrous, but he's no fool. He's capable of suppressing his desires to peel the skin off the adventurers and turn them into zombie puppets in the short term, in order to advance his long-term goals of increasing his necromantic power and control of the dungeon. If the characters can bring about, say, the death of Warlord Fangrot, or procure for him certain necromantic items or tomes unavailable in the dungeon, then the Tailor might be willing to aid them. He'll only entertain the idea of an alliance if the adventurers pay him proper respect, and if they do not trespass within his temple.

Fighting the Flesh Tailor

Two sets of statistics are presented for the Flesh Tailor. If the characters defeat him once, he builds a new and much more powerful undead body for himself. (Alternatively, if the adventurers don't meet the Flesh Tailor until they're 6th or 7th level, then skip his humanoid form entirely and go straight to the monster version.)

Reasons to Return

- The corridors of the Stone Thief twist and move, forcing the characters back into the cold catacombs of the Ossuary.
- A friend of the PCs survives when the Stone Thief consumes a surface feature, but flees from the Gizzard into the Ossuary. To rescue her, the PCs must again brave the Flesh Tailor.
- That 5 on a **Crusader/Priestess/Great Gold Wyrm** roll? To get the benefit, the Flesh Tailor must die.

The Flesh Tailor (Initial Form)

A man may smile, and smile, and be a villain. Especially if the second smile is the grin of a fleshless skull.

Double-strength 7th level caster [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +12
Vulnerability: holy

Bone Claws +12 vs. AC—40 damage
Natural 16+: 10 ongoing damage that cannot be saved against; instead the damage keeps getting dealt until the target heals in any fashion.
Miss: 15 damage.

C: Icy Burst + 12 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—25 damage, and anyone engaged with the Flesh Tailor pops free. A character may choose not to pop free, but suffers another 25 damage if they remain engaged.

R: Death Spell +12 vs. MD (one nearby or far away enemy)—40 damage, and the Flesh Tailor heals 20 hit points. The target's life becomes linked to that of the Flesh Tailor. If the Flesh Tailor drops to 0 hp, the target is also reduced to 0 hp. This link may be ended by a successful save (16+).

Maintain Undead: If any other undead creature drops to 0 hit points, the Flesh Tailor may spend 20 hit points to keep that creature in the fight. The undead creature gets restored to half its starting hit points. The Flesh Tailor may use this ability as many times as it wishes, but must pay 20 hit points for each creature it preserves. If fighting in the Necrolab, it only costs the Flesh Tailor 10 hit points. Creatures maintained in this fashion perish when the Flesh Tailor is destroyed.

No More Mr. Flesh Guy: The first time the Flesh Tailor is staggered, it pulls off its flesh to reveal the bone beneath. It regains 40 hit points and has a fear aura for the rest of the battle. Any foes with 36 hit points or fewer are dazed (–4 attack) and do not benefit from the escalation die when engaged with the Flesh Tailor.

Runaway Skull: When the Flesh Tailor is reduced to 0 hit points, his skull sprouts bat wings and flies away into the darkness. It automatically escapes unless the PCs know this is going to happen and prepare for it.

Load-Bearing Boss: When the Flesh Tailor is defeated, increase the submergence die by 1.

AC 23
PD 17
MD 21

HP 200

Grim Guardians

The Flesh Tailor's personal guards are made from the remains of those foolish enough to challenge him. They're mostly orcs and adventurers.

8th level leader [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +14

Massive two-handed blade +13 vs. AC—50 damage
Natural odd hit or miss: The grim guardian may not use its *massive two-handed blade attack* for one round.

C: Death Curse +13 vs. PD (one nearby target)—35 damage
Natural 16+: The target is vulnerable until the start of the grim guardian's next turn.

Call the Dead: As a standard action, the grim guardian calls forth a number of skeletal shamblers equal to the escalation die.

AC 25
PD 18 **HP 130**
MD 22

Necromagus

The laboratory assistants of the damned.

7th level caster [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +13

Spectral Claws +12 vs. AC—28 damage

R: Rotting Curse +10 vs. MD—15 damage, and 5 ongoing damage. Anyone who fails a save to avoid ongoing damage from *rotting curse* may not add the escalation die to their attacks as long as they are afflicted by the curse. (So, you get to add the escalation die to your first attack after being hit. After that, you might lose it).

R: Weaving Shades +10 vs. MD—10 damage, and the character takes 1 damage at the start of each subsequent round. The ongoing damage ceases only when all the necromagi in the fight are slain. A character may only be targeted by weaving shades once per battle.
Miss: 3 damage per necromagus involved in the attack.

Combined Casting: Multiple necromagi can work together to cast weaving shades. The damage increases by +5 and the start of round damage by +1 for each necromagus after the first involved in the attack. Make only one attack roll for the whole necromagi circle.

Whispers of the Dead: When the necromagus chants a spell, its dry voice whispers from a hundred bony jaws as it borrows the voices of the other undead. It gains a +1 bonus to its ranged attack spells for each non-mook undead creature engaged with the target, to a maximum of +5.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 108**
MD 17

Flesh Tailor Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Flesh Tailor	Grim Guardian	Necro-magus	Skeletal Shambler
3 x 5th level	1	1	0	5
4 x 5th level	1	1	1	8
5 x 5th level	1	1	2	8
6 x 5th level	1	2	2	10
7 x 5th level	1	2	2	15
3 x 6th level	*1*	*1*	*2*	*7*
4 x 6th level	*1*	*2*	*2*	*10*
5 x 6th level	*1*	*3*	*2*	*10*
6 x 6th level	*1*	*3*	*2*	*15*
7 x 6th level	*1*	*4*	*3*	*15*

Killer

Flesh Tailor, Mk II is a lethal encounter for 5th level PCs, and tough for 6th level ones. Let a level go by after the PCs defeat him before making them face him again.

Skeletal Shamblers

The rank and file of the Flesh Tailor. Well, they're rank, anyway.

6th level mook [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +6
Vulnerability: holy

Bony Claws and Teeth +11 vs. AC—12 damage

Weight of Numbers: When an engaged enemy misses an attack against a mob of at least three skeletal shamblers, one of them takes advantage of the opening and inflicts 12 damage.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 20 (mook)**
MD 16

Mook: Kill one skeletal shambler mook for every 20 damage you deal to the mob.

The Flesh Tailor (Monster Form)

It's a hulking patchwork monster made up of the bones of a dozen other monsters. Wings of a wyvern, claws of a manticore, claws of an owlbear, pulsing, still-living troll organs stuffed inside a heaving ribcage—and atop it all, a familiar skull. The Flesh Tailor, Mark II.

Triple-strength 10th level wrecker [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +16
Vulnerability: holy

Bone Claws +15 vs. AC (2 attacks)—80 damage
Natural 18+: The Flesh Tailor may immediately make a *strip flesh* attack on the target.
Miss: 40 damage.

[Special trigger] **Strip Flesh +15 vs. PD:** 40 damage, and the target is hampered until it heals 20 hit points by any means

C: Puppet Spell +15 vs. MD (1d3 enemies)—Each target must immediately make a basic melee attack against a nearby ally, or take 80 damage. Cruel GMs might let the Tailor compel other behavior, like eating a big fistful of yellow mold or permitting the Tailor to flee.

Life-Draining Aura: At the start of the Flesh Tailor's turn, roll 3d10. Each enemy engaged with it whose Constitution score is lower than the total rolled loses one recovery.

Insidious: The Flesh Tailor may make a free *puppet spell* attack in any round when the escalation die is odd.

AC 26
PD 24
MD 20

HP 648

Treasures of the Flesh Tailor

The Tailor's treasure vault contains the expected huge pile of grave goods and other monetary treasure (be generous if they've got this far—500 or more gp per character), and a bunch of epic-tier healing potions (the Flesh Tailor's own brand, so don't think too much about the meaty taste or the chewy bits floating in the broth). There are also some more interesting treasures:

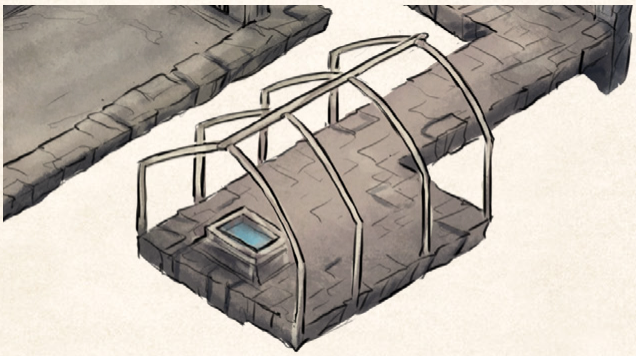
- An eerie parchment scroll, written in silver ink, containing an invitation to visit the Lich King on the Necropolis "to discuss matters of state pertaining to the Undying Peerage." The bearer of the invitation may visit the Necropolis freely "without hindrance or fear of attack." There is, however, nothing about *leaving* again.
- A *wizard robe* (recharge 11+). This purple robe gives +2 AC. Immediately after casting a spell, gain a bonus to AC equal to half the level of the spell just cast, rounding down. This protection lasts until the start of the wearer's next turn. *Quirk:* Mutter cantrips and other minor spells in your sleep.
- *The Book of Passage* (recharge 16+): An alarmingly detailed first-person account of death. When a nearby enemy dies, heal using a recovery... or when a nearby ally falls below 0 hit points, you may spend one of your own recoveries on their behalf. *Quirk:* Obsesses about mortality.
- *The Hammer of Dawn* (recharge 6+): This +2 weapon is especially potent against the undead. When you strike a critical hit against an undead creature, it flashes with holy fire, inflicting 2d10 damage on all nearby undead. *Quirk:* Sings strident hymns of battle at inappropriate times.

Revenge of the Flesh Tailor Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Flesh Tailor	Grim Guardian	Necro-magus	Skeletal Shambler
3 x 5th level	1	0	0	0
4 x 5th level	1	0	0	7
5 x 5th level	1	0	1	7
6 x 5th level	1	1	1	7
7 x 5th level	1	1	2	7

Number/ Level of PCs	Flesh Tailor	Grim Guardian	Necro-magus	Skeletal Shambler
3 x 6th level	*1*	*0*	*1*	*10*
4 x 6th level	*1*	*0*	*2*	*15*
5 x 6th level	*1*	*1*	*3*	*15*
6 x 6th level	*1*	*2*	*4*	*15*
7 x 6th level	*1*	*4*	*4*	*20*

3. The Chapel



This chapel once stood on the outskirts of Highrock, until the dungeon stole it. Some tranquil power protected the chapel from being absorbed wholly by the Stone Thief, so it got shunted off here to the side of the Ossuary. This chapel has a peculiar property that makes it immensely valuable to the adventurers—it is a sanctuary like Dungeon Town or Deep Keep. When the dungeon submerges, the chapel does not constrict and collapse in on itself like the other rooms. The characters could take refuge here and ride with the dungeon until it rises again.

Priestess: This is a place of power and safety for those in need. You know how to tap this divine sanctity—either with a religious ceremony (treat this as an impromptu ritual that doesn't cost a spell), or (if a cleric) by treating your *turn undead* spells as if cast at two levels higher (so a 3rd level *turn undead* spell cast on this holy ground affects undead as if it was a 5th level spell).

The Door

The entrance to the chapel is magically barred. The door—made of oak bound in iron and decorated with images of angels battling demons and other horrors—appears locked from the inside, although there is no keyhole. Only those in need can open the door; if a character who is staggered, has spent at least 25% of their recoveries, is suffering from ongoing damage or some other condition, or who is in mortal peril touches the door, it opens. Otherwise, it remains shut short of a DC 30 smash or a ritual.

The Dead Adventurer

In one corner of the chapel lies the skeleton of a former adventurer. These are the remains of **Sir Orfeo**, a knight of the Empire who descended into the dungeon many years ago to rescue his wife Hela, who was stolen by the dungeon when it consumed his manor. Hela died long ago, but Orfeo's spirit lingers still. He claims that he can rest only when Hela's bones are found and buried beside his, but he knows that her remains are long gone—what he wants is revenge on the Stone Thief, and for that he needs a body. He offers to help the adventurers if they agree to carry his bones with them as they go.

Mechanically, treat Sir Orfeo as a magical item that gives the same benefits as someone fighting in spirit (see page 166 of the *13th Age* core rulebook). In life, Sir Orfeo was a warrior who served the Emperor, but he admired the resolve and strength of the Crusader more. When he fights in spirit, describe images and memories from his life, especially those that drive the character toward Orfeo's goal of seeking revenge on the Stone Thief. *Quirk:* Flexes hands as if reaching for a longsword that isn't there.

Oh, and if an adventurer attuned to Sir Orfeo's spirit carries too many magic items, then the ghost temporarily possesses the adventurer.

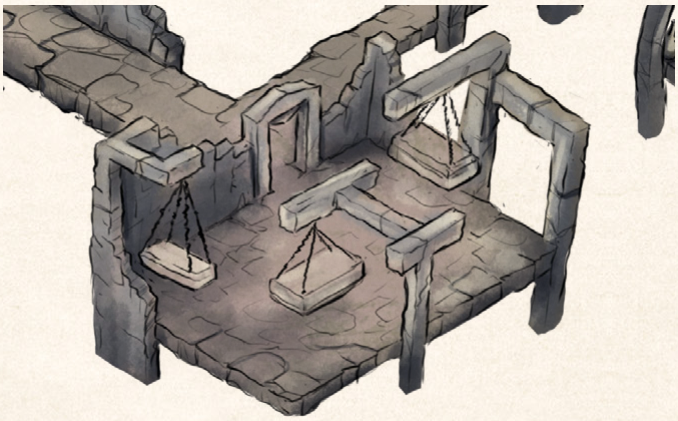
Blessed Font

Water miraculously wells up from a stone basin in the chapel. Anyone drinking from this font regains one expended recovery and may make a save against any ongoing effects. They must also roll their icon relationship dice; those who roll a 5 or a 6 for an icon like the Priestess or Great Gold Wyrm feel cheered and strengthened by their devotion, and can attempt to recharge one daily power by rolling a 16+. Those who have connections to darker icons like the Diabolist or Lich King still get the benefit, but feel unwell after drinking. This ill-feeling has no game effect, but should be mentioned repeatedly to the player.

Variations

- If you've already got plenty of plot threads pointing at the destruction of the Stone Thief, then swap Sir Orfeo's mission of vengeance for something else. Maybe he's a committed servant of the Crusader, or has a grudge against the merchants of Glitterhaegen.
- Maybe Hela's not dead—what if she was a secret member of the Cult of the Devourer, and is now risen to the exalted ranks of the undying Secret Masters?

4. IMPRISONED GUARDIAN



The Custodian of the Ossuary, the Gravekeeper, was imprisoned and replaced by the Flesh Tailor in one of the many pointless, petty struggles that happen when you cram dozens of powerful entities into a confined dungeon. The Flesh Tailor decided against destroying the Custodian, fearing that killing the stone spirit would have unpredictable and deleterious effects on the Ossuary level itself, so he imprisoned the custodian in this part of the dungeon, and to ensure no one freed the Custodian, he placed guards and traps around it.

As the adventurers approach this chamber, they hear muffled thumps and noises. The door to the chamber is covered in yellow mold (see page 127), but the mold is mostly dead, its yellow faded to a yellow-tinged gray. The characters can open the door without much risk of spores (DC 10 to open safely).

Inside, five stone coffins hang suspended from the ceiling by iron chains. Each coffin jolts back and forth as whatever is inside the coffin struggles to break free. Each coffin is attached to its chains with four heavy clasps. The chains run up to holes in the ceiling and vanish in the darkness.

The floor of the room is covered in what appears to be a greenish furry carpet that quivers when the adventurers walk on it. On close examination, it turns out to be made up of thousands of hairy caterpillars, each of which is a foot long. The caterpillars are not sleeping, but are extremely lazy and passive. They allow themselves to be walked on, and don't even fight back if the characters kill a few of them. Short of blasting the whole room with a *fireball* or spending quite a while slashing at caterpillars, there's no obvious way to clear them. And why would you want to get rid of the cute fuzzy things?

The Stain: High on one wall, just below the ceiling is a wet orange stain that has clearly leaked down from the room above. This sticky orange substance is an alchemical creation of the Flesh Tailor. It's harmless to the touch, but mildly poisonous if ingested. It also drives those hairy caterpillars into a killing frenzy. Anything that has touched the orange goo gets attacked by suddenly ferocious caterpillars, which turn from passive creepy-crawlies to many-legged piranha in an instant.

The Coffins

One of the coffins contains the Custodian of this level; the other four contain tomb lords created by the Flesh Tailor to deceive would-be rescuers. (Pick whether Coffin One or Coffin Four contains the real Gravekeeper).

Coffin One: The occupant claims to be the **Gravekeeper**, an elemental spirit bound to serve the Stone Thief who was imprisoned here by the Flesh Tailor. The Custodian can only move through stone, so hanging it in a stone coffin is the only way to keep it trapped. Break the coffin open and let it touch a wall, so it can escape! It promises to help the adventurers.

Coffin Two: The occupant claims to be a kidnapped prince named **Aerol**, who was swallowed by the dungeon while out hunting. Free him, and his father will reward the adventurers with a king's ransom in rubies.

Coffin Three: The prisoner in this coffin claims to be **Kaedri**, a wood elf adventurer who ventured into the Stone Thief in search of treasure and became trapped here. Please, let her out so she can find the rest of her party!

Coffin Four: The occupant also claims to be the **Gravekeeper**, an elemental spirit bound to serve the Stone Thief who was imprisoned here by the Flesh Tailor. The Custodian can only move through stone, so hanging it in a stone coffin is the only way to keep it trapped. Break the coffin open and let it touch a wall, so it can escape! It promises to help the adventurers.

Coffin Five: This one holds someone who says she is a former member of the Cult of the Devourer, a sect who worships the dungeon. The Flesh Tailor is one of them, and he imprisoned her here for mocking the cult's apocalyptic belief in the Devourer. Let her out, and she'll reveal the secrets of the cult.

Examining the chains reveals the presence of a trap—some of the coffins are counterweighted, so when the clasps are opened, the chains released, and the coffin lowered to the ground, it will trigger some peril behind the ceiling. Unfortunately, there's no way to tell what that peril is. The trap can be disarmed (DC 10), but only by putting on an equal weight at the moment the four clasps on the coffin are opened. The characters need to find another stone coffin or something equally heavy.

If the characters open one of any of the four coffins that does not contain the Custodian, then the tomb lord inside bursts forth and attacks.

If they open a second such coffin, or open the Custodian's coffin, then the trap triggers. The detached chains retract into the ceiling. The door slams shut.

ED0: Orange goop sprays out of the holes, covering everyone still in the room.

ED1+: The caterpillars, driven mad by the scent of the orange goop, attack. Each round, they hit each gooped victim for damage equal to three times the value of the escalation die (so, 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, and 18 damage). At the same time, some of the tomb lords in the coffins pop out and attack. The tomb lords are immune to the caterpillar attacks—they don't have flesh to be gnawed off.

A character can avoid the caterpillar damage by:

- Leaving the room.
- Wiping off the orange goo, which requires a standard action per PC.
- Burning or blasting off the caterpillars with a spell. Hitting a PC for 25 fire or acid damage gets rid of the caterpillars—*reckless fireball*, now is your time to shine!
- Getting stuck inside a coffin.

Tomb Lord

Your resting place is prepared for you, and they don't take no for an answer.

7th level spoiler [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +12

Spectral Claws +12 vs. AC—28 damage
Critical: The tomb lord may *entomb* its target as a free action instead of inflicting extra damage.

Entomb: If a nearby foe is unconscious or helpless, or if the tomb lord inflicted a critical hit on its foe, that enemy may be entombed. The tomb lord grabs the enemy and flings them into the open tomb from which the tomb lord emerged, and the heavy stone lid slams shut. While there is a victim in its tomb, the tomb lord may use any one of that victim's at-will spells or attacks as its standard action. Use the victim's attack bonuses and damage values, so if the tomb lord entombs a wizard with a 5th level *ray of frost,* the tomb lord may now cast *ray of frost* using the wizard's Intelligence + level to determine the attack roll. It doesn't get the benefit of any feats or items.

The entombed victim may break free with a hard save (16+). If there's someone helping from the outside, or if the tomb lord is staggered, then the save drops to an easy one (6+).

Nastier Specials

Animated Coffins: Whenever the escalation die is odd, the tomb lord may make a free *entomb* attack rolling +9 vs. PD against a nearby foe. On a hit, that foe is entombed.

AC 23
PD 21
MD 17

HP 108



Imprisoned Guardian Fight Chart

Number/Level of PCs	Tomb Lords
3 x 5th level	**2**
4 x 5th level	**3**
5 x 5th level	**3**
6 x 5th level	**4**
7 x 5th level	**4**
3 x 6th level	***3***
4 x 6th level	***4***
5 x 6th level	***4***
6 x 6th level	***4***
7 x 6th level	***4***

The Custodian

The Gravekeeper plays no part in the battle—the reason the Flesh Tailor put a carpet of flesh down was to prevent the stone spirit from escaping even if it broke free of the coffin. To free the Custodian, the adventurers need to carry the slab it's currently incarnated in over to the wall, or else clear a section of floor of caterpillar bits.

Once freed, the Gravekeeper can:

- Tell the characters about the Stone Thief, the Custodians, the Cult of the Devourer, and the general layout of the dungeon.
- Move rooms in this level about, giving them a quick exit back to the surface, or connecting them to any other level above Deep Keep.
- Help the characters defeat its rival, the Flesh Tailor.
- Turn on the characters and try to kill them—it's bound to serve the Stone Thief, so its gratitude for being rescued runs out quickly.

Exits

- Climbing down into an open grave.
- A wide marble staircase, leading up to a pair of double doors.
- Scaling the bell-rope of a church spire—the exit is via the roof of the buried church.
- A wall of skeletons parts, as the skeletons scuttle away to reveal a pathway.

The Gravekeeper

Graverobber would be a better title—the Custodian cares nothing for the entombed, and wants only the tomb itself.

Double-strength 7th level caster [construct]
Initiative: +10

C: Spew Graveyard Muck +12 vs. PD (any engaged foes)—30 damage, and 10 ongoing negative energy damage
Natural even hit or miss: The Gravekeeper may make a free *gravedigging* attack.

R: Gravedigging +12 vs. PD (one nearby or far away target)—10 damage, a grave opens up beneath the target, and the target is stuck (save ends). Until the end of the battle, the target gains the minimum possible benefit from any expended recoveries—assume any dice rolled to determine recovered hit points roll natural 1s.

C: Death Knell +12 vs. MD (all nearby foes)—15 damage, and the gravedigger summons two grim guardians
Limited Use: 1/battle, as a free action when the escalation die is odd.

Nastier Specials

It Tolls For Three: The Gravekeeper may use *death knell* up to three times per battle, but only once per round.

AC 22
PD 21 **HP 200**
MD 17

THE GROVE

LEVELS 5–6

KIDNAPPED BY THE DUNGEON

The Stone Thief can open the caverns of the Grove and reshape the level to match the terrain on the surface. This means that an unfortunate traveler can stray into what looks like just another part of the forest, but they're really in an open-air part of the dungeon, and when the Stone Thief sinks, they're carried away when the cavern closes around them like a granite fly-trap. The living dungeon doesn't usually bother with such duplicity—it prefers to devour its victims, not lull them with sylvan charms—but it can use the Grove as a nasty surprise for over-confident adventurers.

FEATURES & FACTIONS

The Grove is outside the main body of the dungeon, and the factions here have little influence in the rest of the Stone Thief. A small band of **dark elves** (page 140) live in the remains of the great elven tree that connects this level to the greater dungeon. They ambush anyone—orc, cultist, victim, or adventurer—who comes too near their tree.

The other foe of note her is **Grandmother Pheig** (page 154), a powerful hag who recently arrived in the dungeon. She has bound a number of dangerous monsters to her will, to protect her when she sleeps and walks in the land of dreams. She can enter the dream-communications between the Cult of the Devourer (page 302) and their minions on the surface, and plots against the cult. She can also enter the dreams of any player characters who sleep in the Grove, planting magical suggestions as they slumber.

DESCRIPTORS

The Grove is like walking through a forest on a damp, cloudy night, although there's a disconcerting lack of wind. The open areas of the level are boggy and slimy; in the forested sections, the trees are unnaturally strong and still, as if they have somehow been infused with the strength of stone.

MINOR ENCOUNTERS

FRUIT OF THE DUNGEON

A strange tree with gray—almost rocky—bark. Its branches bow under the weight of the fruit they bear, a crop of pale-skinned and unusually large apples. In certain light, tendrils of white ectoplasm drip from the tree like sap from a wound. The Stone Thief can consume buildings and other features of the landscape, but has not yet managed to master the assimilation of living beings. This tree—once sacred to the goddess of the harvest in a distant land—is the dungeon's first experiment in overcoming this deficiency. The tree is partially petrified to make it part of the dungeon.

Eat a fruit? Time to make a hard save (16+). Succeed, and the PC gets a vision of some other part of the dungeon, or the dungeon's next target, or what the dungeon fears, or some other clue. Fail, and the character starts to turn to stone and must start making last gasp saves.

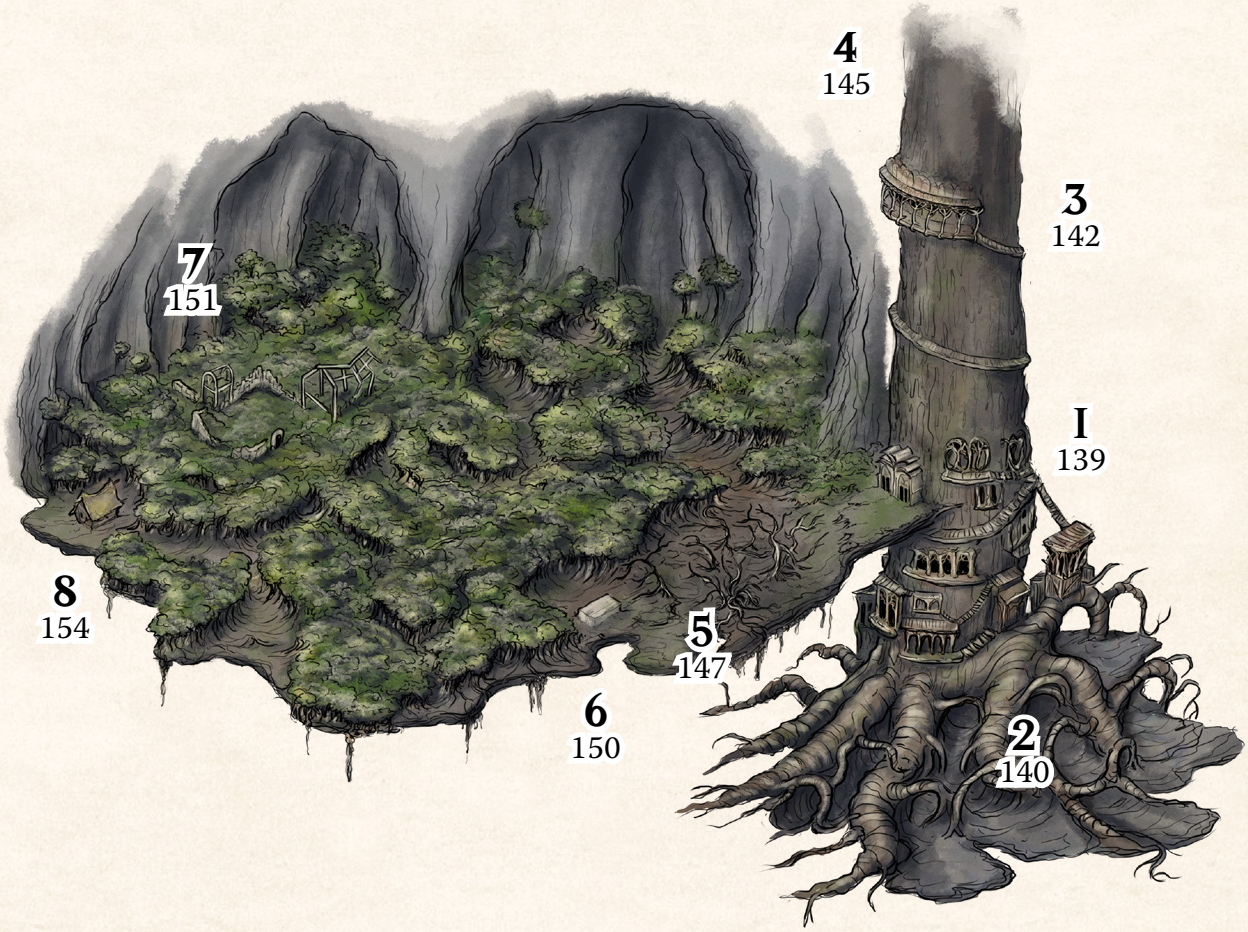
High Druid: Through your connection to the High Druid, you can renew the natural life in this tree, driving out the taint, at least temporarily. Saves against the fruit become easy (6+).

Priestess: If you bring a corrupted fruit back to her, she can cure the taint and grow a new tree of the harvest. It's always a good idea to have a goddess owe you a favor. The tactical possibilities of invoking the harvest goddess are an exercise for the PCs.

Dwarf King: Ok, these are clearly corrupt, *evil* apples, pulsing with evil dungeon juices. That's fine—you know the secret dwarven recipe for the Hard Cider of Purgation. Normally, it's made with the ground-up bones of your foe, but it'll work with dungeon apples. Drink the cider, and—if you survive both the poisonous brew *and* the ensuing hangover—you'll become the dungeon's worst nightmare. There are enough apples here to make 2d4 doses.

GAMEMASTER

Hard Cider of Purgation (potion): Make a hard save (16+) to avoid losing a recovery. If you are in a battle with a foe whose kin were an ingredient in the cider, increase the escalation die by one. After the battle, you're at –2 to all skill checks until your next full heal-up.



Smashed Custodian

The ground here is treacherous; spikes and spires of twisted stone jut from the ground, or rise frozen into unlikely shapes. If the characters have seen similar attacks before, they identify it as the aftermath of a battle with a Custodian or another entity that can shape the dungeon. On the side of the largest outcropping, they find the shattered visage of a Custodian.

So, who killed the Custodian? Use this encounter to foreshadow one of the other powerful potential allies in the dungeon.

- **Nioba Shieldspinner:** The Custodian's remains are covered with spider-webs that still crackle with a lingering magical charge.
- **The Hag Pheig:** Lots of claw marks from a variety of monster types, plus gobbets of something black and acidic enough to melt rock, and the footprints of someone leaning on a stick.
- **The Provost of Dungeon Town:** The killing blow was delivered by a staff or other large bludgeoning weapon—concentric circles of cracks radiate out from the point where the Provost stove in the Custodian's stone skull.
- **The Witch of Marblehall:** The Custodian was pinned in place, somehow—there are partially erased symbols drawn on the cliff face, and it looks like the Custodian tried but was unable to escape. A lightning bolt blasted it to death.
- **The Orcs of Deep Keep:** This was a hit, pure and simple. The orcs' allied Custodian, the Vizier, kept its rival from moving while an orcish assassination squad hacked it to pieces.

Noisome Hole

The characters find a filthy, muddy, slimy, and stinking hole, full of rotten tree roots and animal bones. If they climb down into it and push their way through, they find a tunnel leading to some incongruous area of the dungeon (the Ossuary, the Pit of Undigested Ages, or the Onyx Catacombs are ideal).

Bloody Battlefield

In a clearing, the characters find the remains of a battle that was fought recently on the surface between orcs and soldiers of the Empire. Pick the icon that'll appeal most to your players, or roll for a story-guide result.

Emperor: There's one survivor, a dying soldier named **Anja**. With her last breaths, she tells the characters that these orcs were on their way to besiege a city or town of your choice (ideally, one near a place that's important to a PC). The dungeon must be searching for something or someone near there. Optionally, Anja found a mysterious scroll on one of the dead orcs, bearing the name **Gelmar the Mason**. Anja dies with this name a mystery to her, but if the characters investigate the surface town, they learn that this Gelmar is secretly a member of the *Cult of the Devourer* (page 302).

Orc Lord: There's one survivor, an orc named **Khul**. He spits blood through cracked tusks and hisses a curse on the name of Fangrot. He and his fellows were sent by the Orc Lord to find the treacherous warlord and bring him to justice, but the idiot humans got in their way, and that left them vulnerable to the dungeon's attack. Fangrot must die!

Priestess: There are no survivors, but these fallen warriors deserve to be mourned. Do you conduct a ceremony in the name of the gods of the Empire, or the wild gods of the orcs, or do you try to balance both sides? Choosing one side or the other results in a prophetic dream that gives the clues described above. Choose both sides? Make a Wisdom skill check at DC 25. Succeed, and get all the clues. Fail, and you anger both sets of the deceased. You'll be haunted by them throughout the rest of the level.

Gnome at Home

A hollow tree is the home of the nigh-feral gnome **Tubrid**. He's managed to survive here in the Stone Thief for months. He's not a denizen of the dungeon—when the place submerges, he scurries back to his hollow tree, where he's got a stash of water and scavenged food. Tubrid watches the player characters and tests them with minor illusions before making himself known to them. If treated fairly, he can describe this level and pass on what he's heard about other parts of the dungeon.

The Hag Pheig (page 154) visits Tubrid's dreams when he sleeps, so she will learn anything the PCs tell the gnome when he next rests.



1. The Elf Tree

This titanic tree is the only reliable route that connects the Grove to the rest of the dungeon (other tunnels open between the levels at the whim of the living dungeon). It was a sacred tree in the forests of the elves, a symbol of the unity of the three tribes, until the Stone Thief stole it and ruined it. The shadowy, spider-infested caves of the dark elves connect to the labyrinthine tunnels of the rest of the dungeon; the middle wood elf section connects to the fruiting caverns of the Grove proper, and the hidden spires of the high elves is a perilous dead end.

Of the elves who dwelled here, only the dark elves survive in any numbers thanks to the protection of their matriarch. Monsters from the Grove devoured the few wood elves who survived the initial attack of the Stone Thief, while the high elves vanished.

Those approaching from the main body of the dungeon find the passageway sloping upward and the incidence of cobwebs increasing as they approach the caverns of the drow. Those who were swallowed by the dungeon when the Grove was on the surface can reach the rest of the complex by finding the great hollow tree and climbing down to the drow caves.

2. The Drow Caves



Some of the drow who were in the tree when it was stolen survived, and they now defend their small enclave with all their might. Anyone passing through the Drow Caves gets ambushed. Denizens of the dungeon, orcs, or cultists get sacrificed by **Nioba Shieldspinner**; wandering adventurers may meet the same fate, or be spared, but stripped of all their magic and useful gear and sent off in search of Dungeon Town. Elves or other servants of the Elf Queen are questioned, and may be allowed to pass unharmed.

Unlike Dungeon Town, this cave is not a natural sanctuary—the dark elves would be crushed when the dungeon submerges if it were not for the magical might of their leader, **Nioba Shieldspinner.** Through her magic, she can protect the caves, but she must make regular sacrifices to power her rituals. Usually, captured orcs provide enough power, but when her larder is bare, she looks toward Dungeon Town…

The Ambush

If there's an elf in the party, or someone in the party has a positive or conflicted relationship with the Elf Queen, then the drow may choose to parley instead of launching an ambush.

The drow have their ambush technique well-honed. First, the spider-sorceresses hit the adventurers with a barrage of *greater maledictions of webs* to get them all stuck; then the darkbolts pop out and threaten them at arrow-point, demanding they surrender. Anyone who has made it this far into the Stone Thief is likely to be a dangerous foe, so the drow won't press the attack until the adventurers choose to escalate the confrontation.

If the intruders break free, then the drow cave stalkers hidden in the shadows intercept the attackers, giving the sorceress and darkbolts time to fall back and regroup. Then the cave stalkers vanish and the ambush begins again.

Drow Spider-Sorceress

If her smile seems familiar, she's failing to disguise her contempt.

6th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +11

Sharpened wand +11 vs. AC—20 damage

R: Darkfire +11 vs. PD (one nearby or far away enemy)—20 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends)
Limited use: Once the sorceress hits with *darkfire*, she can't use it again until the target saves.

C: Greater malediction of webs +11 vs. PD (up to 2 nearby enemies in a group)—10 damage, and the target is stuck (save ends) and takes 10 damage each time it fails the save

Dark orison: Each time the spider-sorceress misses with an attack, the crit range of attacks by drow and spiders in the battle expands by 1.

Spider speaker: The first time each battle an enemy hits the spider-sorceress with a melee attack, that attacker takes 16 ongoing poison damage from her familiar.

AC 22
PD 16
MD 20

HP 84

Drow Darkbolt

A rush of wind, a flicker of movement at the corner of your eye, and a sudden stab of pain.

7th level archer [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +12

Dagger and spidersilk line +12 vs. AC (one nearby enemy)—22 damage
Miss: 8 damage.

R: Exsanguinating barbed arrows +12 vs. AC (one nearby or far away enemy)—20 damage, and 6 ongoing damage
Natural even hit: As a free action, the darkbolt can make a second *barbed arrows* attack against a different enemy with a –2 attack penalty. If it gets another natural even hit, it can make a third (and final) *barbed arrows* attack against a different enemy with a –4 attack penalty as a free action.

Darkbolt vanish!: If unengaged, when the darkbolt attacks and rolls a natural even miss, it can step into a shadow-dimension that turn as a move action. While in the shadows, it can't be seen or targeted with attacks, and it reappears anywhere nearby at the start of its next turn.

Wall-crawler: A darkbolt can climb on ceilings and walls as easily as it moves on the ground thanks to its rope-dagger and spiked bracers.

AC 23
PD 21
MD 17

HP 100

Drow Cave Stalker

As part of their training, their masters blind the students with acid and set them loose in caves where hideous monsters dwell. To graduate, learn to navigate with tongue-clicks and the echoing replies of stone. To graduate with honors, kill your masters and take their eyes.

8th level blocker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Whirling Swords +13 vs. AC—30 damage

Ambush Strike +13 vs. AC—20 damage
Natural Attack roll greater than the lower of the target's Dexterity or Wisdom: The cave stalker may use any one of the following special effects:
- The target is dazed until the end of its next turn.
- 10 ongoing poison damage.
- 20 damage.

Limited Use: Only when hidden in the shadows.

Ambush Defender: A cave stalker can intercept from the shadows. This counts as an *ambush strike*.

Stalker vanish!: If unengaged, the stalker can step into a shadow-dimension that turn as a move action. While in the shadows, it can't be seen or targeted with attacks, and it reappears anywhere nearby at the start of its next turn. The stalker cannot vanish in the same turn it used an *ambush strike*.

Wall-crawler: A cave stalker can climb on ceilings and walls as easily as it moves on the ground thanks to its rope-dagger and spiked bracers.

Eyeless Eyes: Increase the DC to sneak past a cave stalker by +10.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 144**
MD 18

Drow Caves Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Spider-Sorceress	Darkbolt	Cave Stalker
3 x 5th level	**2**	**1**	**0**
4 x 5th level	**2**	**1**	**1**
5 x 5th level	**2**	**2**	**1**
6 x 5th level	**3**	**2**	**1**
7 x 5th level	**3**	**2**	**2**
3 x 6th level	***2***	***2***	***1***
4 x 6th level	***3***	***3***	***1***
5 x 6th level	***3***	***3***	***2***
6 x 6th level	***4***	***4***	***2***
7 x 6th level	***4***	***4***	***3***

The Drow Encampment

The cave-palace of the dark elves is hidden amid the twisted roots of the tree. Glowing crystals light the cave, but the cunning stonework (and the occasional artfully placed spider sentry) ensures that no light spills out into the passageway outside, making the palace almost undetectable to those who are unaware of it. A tribe of three dozen dark elves are living here until they can bring their tree back home to the Queen's Wood. They survive by foraging in the Grove, and by growing their own mushrooms.

The Silver Mine: A rich vein of silver ran beneath the part of the Queen's Wood where the Elf Tree once stood, and the Stone Thief stole that mine as well as the tree above it. The drow continued to work the mine, although they have no way of smelting or using the silver they have stockpiled, except on their infrequent trading expeditions to Dungeon Town. They may offer it as a bribe or reward to the adventurers.

Moon Pool: While mining, the drow uncovered this mysterious pool in the depths of the earth. The Moon Pool is a pond of glowing white liquid, icy to the touch. If the liquid is removed from the pool, it quickly evaporates, leaving nothing behind but a lingering chill. Nioba believes this liquid is moonlight that was somehow trapped underground, and distilled or congealed into a physical form. She has yet to find a way to tap its magic, but it could certainly be used as a ritual or magic item component.

The Prisoner: A recent ambush caught a member of the Cult of the Devourer. This cultist, **Aldurne**, was a messenger, carrying a letter from the surface branch of the cult to the Secret Masters. The letter is now in Nioba's hands. The contents of the letter are up to the gamemaster, but it might give the location of a cult stronghold on the surface, provide a route of investigation for the adventurers, hint at the involvement of an icon in the cult, or just clue them in about the existence of a crazy dungeon-worshipping cult. The elves keep Aldurne drugged and semi-conscious at the back of a storage cave, and intend to sacrifice him to fuel Nioba's spells.

Secret Sanctum: Another secret passageway leads to a secret inner sanctum. This passageway is warded with a protective spell, afflicting everyone who enters (**+15 vs. MD**—target falls asleep, hard save ends, 16+). A silver spiderweb runs between two tree-roots so old and tough they feel like granite; this is where Nioba carries out her rites and sacrifices to protect the drow. The victim is laid in the spiderweb, then stabbed with a ritual dagger.

Nioba Shieldspinner

Ambition is the poison that clouds Nioba's mind. She could have led her people out of the living dungeon to safety, but instead, she chose to remain. There is power in the Stone Thief—power she believes she can harness for her own ends. She wants to return to the Court of Stars in glory, not as a homeless beggar. For that, any sacrifice is justified.

Double-strength 9th level leader [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +18

Sharpened wand +14 vs. AC—100 damage

R: Darkfire +14 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies)—50 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends)
Limited use: A victim currently weakened by darkfire cannot be targeted by the attack.

C: Master malediction of webs +14 vs. PD (up to 6 nearby enemies in a group)—30 damage, and the target is stuck (save ends) and takes 15 damage each time it fails the save

C: Blood Curse +14 vs. PD (one nearby enemy): 100 damage, and the target is helpless (save ends)
Limited use: Nioba can cast *blood curse* only once, unless she makes a sacrifice.

Web Shield: At the start of her turn, Nioba chooses one enemy and erects a web shield to protect her from that foe's attacks. Attacks by that enemy targeting Nioba take a –4 penalty until that enemy spends a move action to step around the shield.

Inspire Fanaticism: The first time Nioba is staggered, or whenever she suffers a critical hit, all other nearby drow gain an additional standard action in their next turn.

Sacrifice: If there is a helpless humanoid victim nearby and Nioba is unengaged, she may engage that victim and attempt to sacrifice that enemy with a coup de grace attack. If this attack kills the enemy, Nioba either heals 50 hit points or gains an additional use of her *blood curse* power.

AC 25
PD 19
MD 23

HP 350

Using Nioba in the Campaign

Nioba's designed as a potential rival for the PCs. If she learns from them that there's a way to bind the dungeon, then she'll abandon her refuge (dooming most of her followers) and pursue the ritual.

3. The Bole Climb



The path to the Grove winds around the trunk of the dead tree. The adventurers must scramble from branch to branch, and hack their way through dead foliage. Rotten boughs crack and break beneath their weight. On the way up, the adventurers come upon the ruins of the wood elf village. Rampaging monsters smashed the once-beautiful tree houses, and little remains except for the occasional overgrown platform or hollow-eyed broken hut.

Encounters on the climb:

- A break in the foliage gives the adventurers a moment of perspective as they can see all the way down to the foot of the tree. They're climbing a dead tree that lies against a cliff face that's hundreds of feet tall. One slip here, and they're plant food. The adventurers come upon a three-foot-wide crack in the trunk of the tree. It looks like the tree is partially hollow, and there's something golden and shiny inside the crack. If anyone sticks a body part into the crack, it slams shut (4d8 damage) trapping the unfortunate explorer. The tree's bark is hard as stone, so freeing the victim may take some time. The shiny thing is nowhere to be found when the PCs prise the crack open, but they see it again in another similar crack a little way up the tree.
- A half-dozen wood elf bodies hang from a branch. The remains are nothing more than bones and a few worm-ridden bits of flesh. This is clearly some predator's forgotten larder.
- Up ahead, the characters hear someone crashing through the trees. A band of orcish scouts from Deep Keep got lost exploring the Grove, and now they're trying to find their way out of this elvish hellhole. The adventurers can either ambush the orcs, or leave them to the dark elves at the bottom of the climb to deal with.
- A branch collapses beneath the heaviest adventurer. That character must make a DC 20 Dexterity check to avoid falling and taking 2d6 damage. On a failure, the character must make another DC 20 check; failing that means another 2d8 damage and another fall, and so on. If the character keeps failing checks, assume that the character hits the bottom of the tree around 2d100 damage.

Ghosts of the Tree

The slaughter of the wood elves left its mark on the tree. As their blood soaked into the dying bark, and their bodies were entombed in leaf mold, it gave rise to specters. These creatures attack anyone who trespasses in the ruined realm of the wood elves.

Elf Queen: You know how to deal with these specters—in the Queen's name, dismiss them! The character may 'attack' once per round by rolling **Charisma + Level vs. MD** as a free action; on a hit, the target is weakened.



Priestess: You know how to deal with these benighted creatures—prayer and mourning. Conflict birthed them, conflict prolongs them, and conflict will only sustain them. Gather the elven dead and bury them, and let the undead have peace. Finding the bodies in the leaf mold destroys the matching undead.

High Druid: You know how to deal with these remnants. They are part of the tree; as long as the tree is caught in this dreadful stasis, so are they. You must move the cycle on again, and finally kill the tree so it can rot and give rise to new life. Whenever you use a recovery (or allow an ally to use a recovery), you inflict damage equal to the hit points restored on any undead engaged with you.

Orc Lord: You know how to deal with dead elf ghosts haunting a dead elf tree—fire. Burn the place and be done with it! The dead elves gain *vulnerability: fire*.

Fighting in a Tree: The narrow, slippery branches and thick dead foliage of the tree make for a treacherous environment. Characters must make checks when moving more than a few feet (DC 15). Failing the check means the character can't get to where they want to go this round—they've got to scramble up branches, jump across a gap, move carefully across a slippery patch or navigate some other obstacle. Rolling a natural 1 means the character slips and falls, taking 2d6 damage and ending up on a lower branch.

Elf Spectral Warrior

Their empty eyes do not see you. They relive battles they lost long, long ago.

7th level troop [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +12
Vulnerability: holy

Moonlit Sword +12 vs. AC—25 damage
Natural 16+: The enemy is limned in eerie light (save ends). All ranged attacks targeting the illuminated character have their critical range expanded by 3.

R: Rotten Arrows +12 vs. AC—20 damage
Critical Hit: The arrow pins the enemy to the tree. The enemy is stuck. They can work themselves free by making a hard save, or by pulling the arrow free (and taking another 10 damage).

Spectral Movement: A spectral warrior may become ghostly as a quick action. While ghostly, the spectral warrior has *resist damage 16+* to all damage except force damage, can move through solid objects, and cannot attack.

Elven grace: Spectral warriors may take an additional standard action whenever the escalation die is even.

Nastier Specials

Rot Trap: The spectral warriors can walk on branches too weak to hold the PCs' weight. When a player character moves to engage a spectral warrior for the first time, that PC must make a DC 20 Dexterity check. Failure means the branch cracks beneath the character, preventing the PC from reaching the warrior. The PC must choose another action instead of attacking the warrior.

AC 23
PD 17
MD 21

HP 100

Elf Banshee

In ages past, banshees heralded the passing of elven nobles and heroes into the afterworld. These days, they're more likely to be the ones to send elven adventurers there.

9th level caster [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +14
Vulnerability: holy

Spectral Claws +14 vs. AC—40 damage
Natural 18+: The banshee may immediately *wail* as a free action.

R: Death Curse +14 vs. MD (one nearby or faraway enemy)—40 damage
Natural roll above target's Constitution: The target loses a death save for the rest of the battle (effectively, it now dies after failing three death saves, and the effect is cumulative).

[Special Trigger] **C: Wail +14 vs. PD (all nearby living creatures)**—20 damage
Natural roll above target's Constitution: The target loses a death save for the rest of the battle (effectively, it now dies after failing three death saves, and the effect is cumulative). A character with no remaining death saves who hears a *wail* must immediately start making last gasp saves.

Mourn the Fallen: The banshee *wails* whenever a nearby spectral warrior is destroyed.

Nastier Specials

Rising Song: Add the escalation die to the natural value of the roll when determining if the banshee's *wail* or *death curse* beats the target's Constitution.

AC 25
PD 19 **HP 350**
MD 13

Bole Climb Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Spectral Warrior	Banshee	Twigling
3 x 5th level	**2**	**0**	**4**
4 x 5th level	**3**	**0**	**4**
5 x 5th level	**2**	**1**	**4**
6 x 5th level	**3**	**1**	**6**
7 x 5th level	**4**	**1**	**6**
3 x 6th level	***2***	***1***	***3***
4 x 6th level	***3***	***1***	***5***
5 x 6th level	***4***	***1***	***8***
6 x 6th level	***4***	***2***	***8***
7 x 6th level	***5***	***2***	***10***

Rotten Twigling

Born of muck and fallen twigs, these constructs whisper to one another by rustling of leaves. It sounds peaceful, but they're actually screaming for your death, just like all the other trees that rustled when you walked by.

8th level mook [construct]
Initiative: +10
Vulnerability: Fire

Spiky Thorny Fingers +13 vs. AC—23 damage
Team player: If another twigling has already hit this target in this round with *spiky thorny fingers*, then the third twigling to attack may use *vine garrote.*

[Special Trigger] **Vine Garrotte + 13 vs. PD**—10 damage, and 10 ongoing damage as long as this twigling remains engaged with the target.

Clingy: If a melee attack misses a twigling with a natural roll of 1–5, all attempts to disengage or pop the twigling free take a –5 penalty.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 36 (mook)**
MD 18

Mook: Kill one twigling mook for every 36 damage dealt to the mob.

Treasure

If the players came up with a clever way past the elven ghosts/ impressed you in the fight/whine about not getting enough treasure, then they might find a *bow of the sudden forest* hidden in the tree. It's a +2 longbow (recharge 11+): If the bow is used to deliver the killing blow to a foe, then an elm tree sprouts from the enemy's remains, growing to full size in a few moments. Try to avoid using it indoors. *Quirk:* Speaks ... very ... slow ... ly.

Variations

- It's a big, big tree. One wonders what sort of arboreal bugs crawl beneath the bark.
- If the characters return this way, the Stone Thief causes the tree to break as they climb it. They've got to race up the tree as branches crack and fall away behind them.



4. THE BLIND SPIRE



To reach the Blind Spire, the adventurers must keep climbing the Elf Tree past the 'ground level' of the Grove, into the cavern roof. The last few branches of the spire are very fragile, requiring a DC 25 check to climb them successfully. Failure means the branches collapse under the weight of the adventurers as they pass, stranding them in the Blind Spire until they find another way out.

This spire was a high elf astrological observatory. Here, sages watched the movements of stars and other celestial bodies across the night sky of the overworld, and divined the future in their stately celestial ballet. The proliferation of flying realms in recent ages has complicated astrology considerably—it's one thing to be born under the Sign of the Weeping Titan when the pole star is retrograde, but it's another entirely to divine what it means when that shooting star turns out to be another botched experiment from Horizon. Now, the great windows of the spire look out only onto solid rock.

The high elves fled the spire when the Stone Thief devoured it, escaping via *teleport* magic to the Court of Stars. They left behind their experiments and annals, hoping to return for them one day. They did not, however, leave them unprotected.

Star Mites

The walls of the magnificently appointed spire are decorated with various astrological symbols, including beautiful carvings of the constellations. These carvings depict whatever the constellation is currently supposed to be (whoops, don't the constellations change with each age in your game? they do in mine), while the position of the stars in each constellation is marked with a white jewel. Every so often, these jewels spit out star mites; there are already dozens of the things bobbing around inside the spire.

Star mites are tiny glowing balls that float around until they hit a creature. Then, they magically adhere to that creature. It's not painful, although they are warm to the touch, and it's not inconvenient, unless you're trying to be stealthy. One star mite isn't a problem. If you've got two attached to you, then you feel oddly light as the mites lift you up slightly. At three, you find yourself

floating with every step. At four, you're swimming in mid-air; at five, they push you against the ceiling and keep you there.

Out of combat, dodging star mites requires a check (DC 15 or more, depending on how many there are in the room). In combat, give characters a choice on whether to fight safely—deliberately dodging any nearby mites—or recklessly. Reckless attackers pick up another mite on a natural attack roll of 1–5. Those who fight safely only get a mite on a natural 1, but take a –2 penalty to attacks.

Attached Mites	Penalty
1	–5 to hiding in shadows
2–3	No added penalty
4	Uncontrollable levitation (as the spell on page 151 of the *13th Age* core rulebook)
5 or more	5 damage per round as the mites crush you against the ceiling. (Hey, look on the bright side—back when the spire was at the top of a tree in the open air, five mites meant a one-way trip to the overworld...)

Mites are immaterial and cannot be attacked; the only way to destroy them is with magic—one force damage kills a mite, and a ritual can wash them all away. They quickly decay outside the spire, so leaving the spire gets rid of them.

The Celestial Guardian

The elves left this construct to protect their observatory. They don't know where it came from—they salvaged it from the overworld centuries ago. It's a hollow armature of ornate brass plates, held together with invisible beams of force. It looks like an invisible dinosaur that got dressed up by drunken gnomish jewel-smiths, and hits like an invisible monster that doesn't care how campy you think it looks.

Double-strength 8th level wrecker [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +13

C: Force Blast +13 vs. PD (one nearby enemy)—50 damage
Natural even hit: The target pops free, gets hurled across the room, and loses their next move action.
Natural even miss: 25 damage.
Natural odd hit: The guardian may make an immediate *secondary force blast* attack.
Natural odd miss: 10 damage to all engaged enemies.

[Special Trigger] **Secondary Force Blast +13 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)**—25 damage
Natural even hit: The target pops free, gets hurled across the room, and loses their next move action.

Unstable Matrix: For every 50 points of damage suffered by the guardian, it gains another *force blast* attack every round. In any round when the guardian makes more *force blast* or *secondary force blast* attacks than the value of the escalation die, it becomes vulnerable until its next turn.

Limited Targeting Algorithm: A character may not be the target of more than two *force blast* or *secondary force blast* attacks per round.

Overworld Entity: The guardian has *resist energy 16+*.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 250**
MD 18

Terribly Hungry Star

'Star' is, of course, a misnomer. The only astrological prediction you could get out of these tentacled monsters is "your face is about to be eaten."

6th level wrecker [ABERRATION]
Initiative: +11

Ripping tentacles +11 vs. AC—20 damage
Natural even hit: If the target is taking ongoing psychic damage, the attack deals +4d6 damage.

[Group ability] **R: Warp-pulse +11 vs. PD (1d3 enemies in a group)**—10 ongoing psychic damage
Natural 16–18: While the target is taking the ongoing psychic damage, it is dazed (–4 attacks).
Natural 19–20: While the target is taking the ongoing psychic damage, it is confused instead of dazed.

Group ability: For every two hungry stars in the battle (round up), one of them can use *warp-pulse* once during the battle.

Limited flight: Hungry stars flap and glide and hover, always within seven or eight feet of the ground. No one knows how that works.

AC 18
PD 16 **HP 110**
MD 17

Blind Spire Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Celestial Guardian	Terribly Hungry Star
3 x 5th level	**1**	**0**
4 x 5th level	**1**	**1**
5 x 5th level	**1**	**2**
6 x 5th level	**1**	**3**
7 x 5th level	**1**	**4**
3 x 6th level	***1***	***2***
4 x 6th level	***1***	***4***
5 x 6th level	***1***	***6***
6 x 6th level	***2***	***2***
7 x 6th level	***2***	***4***

Once the guardian is defeated, it collapses into a pile of metal plates, screws, and sprockets as its internal force beams shut down. One of the small metal scales still has some lingering energy—it's an *overworld scale* that gives +2 MD, and (recharge 16+) when touched to the user's skin as a free action, gives a brief burst of rejuvenating energy that ensures that the user heals the maximum hit points when they next heal using a recovery. *Quirk:* Sometimes flaps arms unconsciously, as if trying to take flight into the overworld.

Teleport Circle

The high elves fled the spire via a *teleport circle*, a potent elven artifact that temporarily enhanced their natural teleportation abilities. The circle's magic was almost completely expended when they escaped, but a little still lingers. A character with an outstanding benefit from the Archmage or the Elf Queen could drain the arcane energy from a magic item to refuel the *teleport circle*. Then, as long as someone in the party can teleport in some fashion (*highblood teleport, the queen's shadows*, or a *blink* spell), the characters could use the circle to leave the dungeon. This particular circle is keyed to bring travelers to the Elf Queen's Court and nowhere else, and the elves don't take kindly to uninvited guests.

Treasures of the Blind Spire

In addition to whatever monetary treasure or potions the adventurers loot at the whim of a kindly GM, the real treasure of the Blind Spire comes in the form of the books and scrolls in the library.

- One book describes the Inverse Observatory, a wonderful flying realm where storm giants study the world below with cunning instruments. The observatory's magical sight can even penetrate the earth and see the things that crawl beneath the hills and plains and seas. A marginal note suggests that the Inverse Observatory could locate and track dangerous living dungeons like the Stone Thief. Another marginal note, in different handwriting, comments on the first note, saying that such a scheme is utter folly, that the storm giants never permit outsiders to use the observatory, and that only a band of crazy, foolhardy adventurers would even contemplate such a hopeless quest. The first commenter responds that according to her astrological divinations, just such a band of crazy, foolhardy adventurers are destined to one day read this very book, and that their chances of surviving the Inverse Observatory are at least fifty-fifty. The note also suggests that they consult page 333, where there's an almanac that predicts the movements of the Inverse Observatory for the next few weeks. (GM, also see page 326 for more on the observatory.)
- Another scroll contains a horoscope drawn up for one of the player characters. If any of them have an earth-shaking one unique thing, use this to spill details about how they can fulfill their destiny. Of course, if the high elves of the spire foresaw this destiny in the stars, and then fled to the Elf Queen's bower, that means that *she* knows all about the player character. Give the character a temporary 1-point relationship with the Elf Queen; the nature of the relationship depends on the destiny and how it might impact the elves. Conflicted is always a fun choice.
- There's also a magical book, a *Concordance of Auspicious Conjunctions.* After every full heal-up, the reader may select any one ability score. All skill checks made using that ability score gain a +3 bonus. However, one other ability score (determined randomly or cruelly by the GM) takes a –3 penalty as it's unlucky to do those things today. *Quirk:* Asks everyone what star sign they are, then makes cryptic notes that not even the character can decipher.

5. The Breeding Ground



The Stone Thief collects monsters as well as buildings. It can pull structures apart and reshape them, making them part of itself. It can't do the same with living beings… yet. It desires this power, and in an attempt to gain mastery over blood and sinew, it stole a **Druid Circle** (see page 150) and unleashed the wild magic that was once locked within.

Those wild, uncontrolled powers gave rise to this region of the Grove, called the Breeding Ground. It's a mucky, dangerous swamp, where every footstep threatens to plunge the traveler neck-deep into black slime. Thick, foul-smelling mists and clawing weeds make the place even less pleasant. If the characters wish to reach the Druid Circle, though, they must cross the Breeding Ground.

Perils of Wild Magic

Anyone with the requisite magical lore (a suitable background, or a relationship with any suitable icon like the High Druid (*this is wrong*), Archmage (*this is interesting*), Elf Queen (*this is vile*), Crusader (*this must be destroyed*), the Three (*this is our hobby*), or Diabolist (*this is fun*) recognizes the dangerous presence of raw magic in this part of the Grove. This sort of chaotic arcane energy tends to mutate anything exposed to it.

Unless the characters take magical precautions of some sort, then roll on the Weird Magic Side Effects table once for each player character. Roll again if they take a full heal-up in the Breeding Ground or Druid Circle.

Weird Magic Side Effects (1d12)

1: The character's eyes change color. For the next few hours, they see everything in shades of these new colors.
2: One of the character's magic items gets a temporary personality boost. That item's quirk now dominates the item's bearer.
3: A weird fungus sprouts from the character's ear. If anyone eats it, they hear the character's thoughts for the next few hours.
4: If the character has a familiar or animal companion, then the character's mind gets swapped with that of the pet for the next few hours. If they don't have such a companion, then a squamous thing slithers out of the swamp and follows them around.
5: The character becomes allergic to something common, like iron or water.
6: The character sheds their skin. On the up side, they now look several years younger—but what do they do with all this old skin?
7: The character starts sneezing uncontrollably. Each time they sneeze, they sneeze out one of their unspoken dreams.
8: The character slowly starts to turn to stone, beginning with their feet. This transformation reverses itself if the characters leave the area afflicted by the chaotic magic.
9: Two player characters exchange minds for the next few hours. Hand over those character sheets!
10: The character slowly begins to transform into a woodland animal. This transformation reverses itself if the characters leave the area afflicted by the chaotic magic.
11: The character begins babbling in an arcane tongue, coming out with a salad of prophecies, wild nonsense, and the occasional word of magical power.
12: Roll again twice.

The Abominations

The muck of the Breeding Ground spontaneously forms itself into monsters. These creatures are patchwork abominations, like chimeras made by a blind idiot. They are shambling ruins, with mismatched bones poking out through their hides like a jester's motley shirt, made up of scales and fur and skin and armor plates jammed together at random. The abominations rise out of the muck in a rough circle around the adventurers.

Lesser Abomination

Brains.... brains... livers... kidneys... any internal organs... we're not picky...

7th level mook [aberration]
Initiative: +10

Flailing Appendage +12 vs. AC—15 damage
Natural 20: The lesser abomination gains an unstable mutation (see below).

Unstable: Lesser abominations become vulnerable when the escalation die is even.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 27 (mook)**
MD 17

Mook: Kill one lesser abomination mook for every 27 damage you deal to the mob.



Greater Abomination

They're the first drafts of new monsters—unfinished, unpolished, dripping with ichor and shame and self-loathing.

8th level wrecker [aberration]
Initiative: +13

Flailing Appendage +13 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 16+: The abomination may immediately make another *flailing appendage* attack against a different target.
Natural even miss: The abomination takes damage equal to the target's level.
Natural odd miss: The abomination pops free and sinks into the mire. It misses its next turn, but reappears anywhere on the battlefield next turn.

Unstable Mutation: At the start of the battle, and when the escalation die is odd, the greater abomination gains an *unstable mutation* (see below).

Unstable: Greater abominations become vulnerable when the escalation die is even.

Retreat and Reform: When the greater abomination is staggered, it pops free and sinks back into the mire. Next turn, it rises back up anywhere on the battlefield. It may reroll all the *unstable mutations* it has accumulated.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 144**
MD 18

Titanic Abomination

It can't be comfortable to have that many teeth in one mouth.

Large 8th level wrecker [ABERRATION]
Initiative: +13

Flailing Appendage +13 vs. AC—50 damage

Natural 16+: The abomination may immediately make another *flailing appendage* attack against a different target.

Natural even miss: The abomination takes damage equal to the target's level.

Natural odd miss: The abomination pops free and sinks into the mire. It misses its next turn, but reappears anywhere on the battlefield next turn.

Unstable Mutation: At the start of the battle, and when the escalation die is odd, the titanic abomination gains another *unstable mutation*

Unstable: Titanic abominations become vulnerable when the escalation die is even. If it suffers a critical hit while vulnerable, it gains another *unstable mutation*.

Unstable Mutations

1: Gain another *flailing appendage* attack.
2: **R: Spit Poison +13 vs. PD**—20 damage, and 10 ongoing poison damage (save ends). Increase the ongoing damage by 10 each extra time it gains this ability.
3: *Resist energy 12+* (choose the type of energy based on the energy attack that inflicted the most damage on the abomination, if any)
4: Armored Scales, +2 AC
5: Second Brain, +2 MD
6: Excessive Numbers of Organs, +2 PD
7: Regeneration—the abomination can heal 30 hit points once per battle.
8: Escalating Tentacles—the abomination deals 8 + the escalation die damage on a miss.
9: Nasty Claws and Teeth—increase its *flailing appendage* damage by +5.
10: Rudimentary Wings—the abomination flaps into the air, gaining *flight* and a +5 bonus to disengage attempts.
11: **C: Swamp Gas Breath +13 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)**—20 poison damage. On a 16+, the breath catches fire, and all hit targets and the abomination take an extra 20 fire damage.
12: Degenerative Mutation—the abomination loses 3d10 hit points per round, every round.

Retreat and Reform: When the titanic abomination is staggered, it pops free and sinks back into the mire. Next turn, it rises back up anywhere on the battlefield. It may reroll all the *unstable mutations* it has accumulated.

Consume: The titanic abomination may consume a nearby lesser or greater abomination as a free action once per turn. If it eats a lesser abomination, it may add the escalation die to its attack rolls this round. If it eats a greater abomination, it gains any *unstable mutations* possessed by that abomination. Mutations stack.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 288**
MD 18

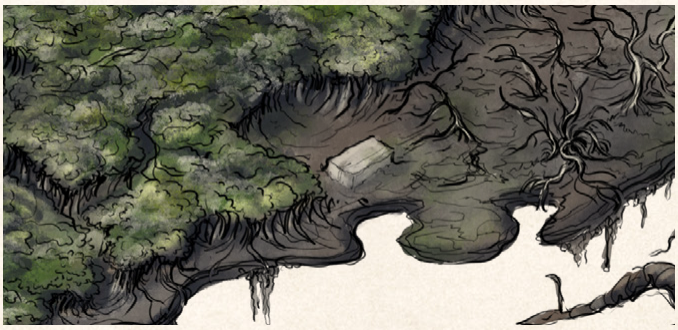
Breeding Ground Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Lesser Abomination	Greater Abomination	Titanic Abomination
3 x 5th level	**3**	**2**	**0**
4 x 5th level	**6**	**2**	**0**
5 x 5th level	**3**	**1**	**1**
6 x 5th level	**6**	**1**	**1**
7 x 5th level	**6**	**2**	**1**
3 x 6th level	***5***	***2***	***0***
4 x 6th level	***10***	***2***	***0***
5 x 6th level	***5***	***2***	***1***
6 x 6th level	***10***	***2***	***1***
7 x 6th level	***10***	***3***	***1***

Variations

- They encounter abominations birthed from their own spilled blood. These things look like funhouse-mirror crossbreeds made up of bits of the adventuring party. They've got the wizard's beard and the halfling's left leg and the dwarf's fighting arm. The abominations even share fragments of the characters' memories, so they moan their innermost secrets as they shamble into battle.
- Tired of muck-monsters? Deploy the crustycaps from the *13th Age Bestiary* (page 174)! The bad word is "word".

6. DRUID CIRCLE



Trees stand in a perfect circle around a rough-hewn altar. An owl perches on the altar, but flies off when the characters approach. The air buzzes as if thronged with invisible bees. There's a palpable sense of power here. Searching, the characters find a strange creature with the body of a muscular human, but the head and magnificent antlers of a stag. He's dead—from the look of his wounds, he was caught in a landslide at the Maw, and then fought off attacks from the abominations to die here at the side of the altar. The creature was the protector of the altar.

If there are any **Elf Queen** or **High Druid** benefits hanging around, then the characters can rest here safely; they each get a free recovery and a +5 bonus to all recharge rolls.

If the characters don't have the protective favor of a nature-aligned icon, though, then they're in danger—the altar is in need of a new protector. Pick one of the PCs randomly. That character feels called toward the altar. The character can resist, but needs to make a hard save (16+) to do so, dropped to 11+ or even 5+ if the player can justify why that character would refuse the call of the wild. If the character fails to resist and walks forward to touch the altar, they are anointed as protector of the altar. This position comes with a 1-point relationship with the **High Druid**, +1 to their total number of recoveries, and a pair of fetching antlers, but also compels the character to rescue the sacred circle from the Stone Thief.

The wild magic in the Grove spills out of this circle of standing stones. It's clearly a place of power. Decide which of these facts are true:

- The circle marks a spot where the veil between dimensions is thin. The adventurers can rend this veil to escape the dungeon—if they want to risk jumping into a hellish otherworld.
- A former High Druid raised this circle, and the stones remember his ancient lore. If the characters can rescue the circle from the dungeon, the current High Druid will owe them a tremendous debt.
- The circle contains a spirit of chaos and malice. The magic bleeding from it fuels the Breeding Pits. If they leave it chained, the dungeon will make more monsters. If they free it, they're loosing a terrible evil on the world. Maybe they can bargain with it…
- The circle is outside time. There's one standing stone for each player character, because these are gravestones and the characters' future corpses lie in graves beneath the grassy mound. The Stone Thief jealously stole the characters' graves out of petty malice.

  A shade of the wisest adventurer appears and warns them of the perils of crossing their own timelines. However, in this hour of need, it can offer some advice. It promises to answer one question from each player character, although it may withhold an answer that risks paradox. Enterprising characters can even loot something from their own future remains, although meddling with the barrows shifts the circle back to its proper time, ending the magical bleed.
- The stone circle channels the energy from ley lines—magical lines of power that connect key sites. If the Stone Thief rises in just the right place, and the circle aligns with the right crossing of leys, then the characters could tap enough power to mortally wound the living dungeon. All they need to do is lure the dungeon to the right place, then race to the stone circle and complete the ritual.

Ending the Breeding Ground

An anointed protector of the circle can choose to withdraw the magical power that feeds the Stone Thief's perversion with a simple thought. Otherwise, to end the Breeding Ground, the characters must find a way to cut the circle's connection to the Stone Thief. A ritual would work, possibly with the help of the **High Druid, Elf Queen,** or **Priestess.** The Hag Pheig could also work a charm to end the Breeding Ground.

Alternatively, luring a titanic abomination to the circle and killing it on the altar would short-circuit the whole affair, but that would also result in a massive explosion of chaotic magical energy.

If the characters don't end the Breeding Ground, then have the Stone Thief send out a slithering tide of abominations every time it attacks the surface, in addition to all the other damage it causes.

7. Herbarium



The herbarium was once part of a monastery (either the solemn-prayer-and-fasting sort, or the mystic-martial-arts-then-prayer-and-fasting sort, as you prefer). All that remains now is the ivy-covered wall around an extensive if overgrown herb garden, the shattered ruins of a large glasshouse, and a dark outbuilding where the gardeners once worked.

The Herb Garden

Several of the plants in the garden have magical properties. Use icon story-guide results to determine what useful magical herbs can be found here (use any outstanding results from the last icon rolls if you're feeling stingy; get the players to roll their relationships again if you're feeling magnanimous). Even if all the story-guide rolls come up empty, the characters still find enough *wealweed* to brew up a champion-tier healing potion each with a few hours' work.

Unless otherwise noted, each herb only works once.

Archmage: A patch of glittering *spellblossom* marks where a wizard once died. Ground to dust, the seeds from this plant provide about a minute of invisibility to one character.

Crusader: *Blazing bracken* is normally found only on the edges of hellholes. A barrier made from the twigs of this plant that have been soaked in holy oil makes a potent wall against demons—an adventurer-tier demon can't force its way past until the barrier decays, while a champion-tier demon requires a minute or so to push through. Epic-tier demons laugh at your pathetic hedge.

Diabolist: *Toadstools from hell*, by contrast, make demon summoning easier. A circle of these fungi weakens the dimensional barriers, allowing demons to crawl into our reality. They can be used as a component in a demon-summoning ritual.

Dwarf King: *Dauntroot* grows deep underground—it's a mystery how the monks managed to cultivate it in their garden. It looks like a dull grey carrot. A character who eats dauntroot and nothing but dauntroot—breakfast, lunch, and dinner, with dauntroot chips for snacks—gets an extra use of the *that's your best shot?* dwarven racial ability. There's enough dauntroot in this patch to last for two full heal-ups.

Elf Queen: The delicate bell-like flowers of *auralanthe* whisper of the influence of the Elf Queen on this place, long long ago. One character may breathe deeply of the magic of this plant. The next time that character sleeps, the Elf Queen speaks in their dreams. What wisdom or boon she offers is up to the gamemaster.

Emperor: *Dragonblade grass* grows in the fields around Axis and beside many Imperial highways. Chewed, it sharpens reflexes, giving a +1 bonus to initiative for two full heal-ups.

Great Gold Wyrm: Brushing aside the earth, the character finds a golden mandrake root, twisted and gnarled as if enduring tremendous agony. When pulled out of its bed, the root roars, and that roar inspires the adventurer to greater heroism. In the character's next fight against evil creatures, their melee weapon dice increase by one step (d8 to d10, d10 to d12, etc.).

High Druid: Hidden in the living earth, the character finds a tiny green sproutling that vibrates with magic. Placed against a stone surface, this *quakevine* grows with incredible speed and destructive power, sending expanding tendrils into every crack and imperfection. It can smash and ruin a single door, wall, or other barrier.

Lich King: *Wightgrass* is found on the isle of Necropolis, and on the coasts where the Lich King reaches out to claim his lost empire. The white blades are icy cold to the touch. Make a grass circlet out of wightgrass and wear it on your head or around your neck, or just keep it in your pocket to automatically pass your next death or last gasp save. Tales that this puts you in the Lich King's debt are just peasant nonsense.

Orc Lord: The ashen-gray weed in this patch has no name in the Empire—the Orc Lord's legions brought it from some distant land. It can be harvested and turned into a narcotic, and many orcs in the legion are addicted to its soporific, rage-sapping qualities. The ash-weed can be traded to the orcs of Deep Keep, or used to distract the slavers or Fangrot.

Priestess: *Starchimes* are blue-silver plants that ring like bells under the stars. They bring rest and renewal—if a character takes a full heal-up outdoors while carrying a starchime, the plant gives a +1 bonus to all recharge rolls until the next full heal-up.

Prince of Shadows: While searching the herb garden, the character finds a leather pouch hidden in the dirt. Inside are three weighted knucklebones, a cryptic note, and a vial of poison. The note is written in a cypher, but it's clear that *someone* was supposed to pick up this poison and carry out an assassination.

The Three: The character digs up a three-headed mandrake root. One of the heads screams in pain when pulled from the earth, attracting the attention of a monster. (Either sic the spectral elves (page 143), the abominations (page 148) or the hag's thralls (page 156) on the adventurers, or throw your favorite wandering beastie at them.) The other two heads stay silent for now, but will each once let out an earth-shattering (and monster-distracting) screech when cut.

The Outbuilding

This building contains gardening tools, broken alchemical equipment, and a pile of dusty books on herb lore. Picking through the debris, the adventurers do find a journal kept by one of the gardeners, where he describes how a traveler from a distant land donated an orchid bulb to the garden. He warned that the orchid had some very curious properties—according to the jungle tribes, the Koru behemoths love to snack on the plant, and would travel several miles out of their way to consume a jungle full of these flowers. The traveler hinted that the orchid had other strange powers connected to the behemoths or the primal energies that fuel them.

The Glasshouse

The glasshouse is a ruined tangle of broken windows and twisted metal, overgrown with strange plants from distant jungles—and, in the middle of it all, a glowing orange-green Koru Orchid! Can the adventurers leave such a treasure to rot in the dungeon? Could this be a more obvious trap?

The plants surrounding the orchid are, as any cynical dungeon veteran might guess, carnivorous monsters, but the Stone Thief's magic makes this fight doubly dangerous. When fighting begins, the broken glass walls of the glasshouse quiver, crack, and then shoot razor-edged shards of glass at the adventurers.

ED0: The glass begins to crack.

ED1–2: Glass shards go flying, attacking 1d3 adventurers in the glasshouse: **+10 vs. AC**—10 damage. On a natural even hit, the character also suffers 5 ongoing damage from bleeding wounds.

ED3: Part of the metal frame of the glasshouse collapses in a malicious fashion, sending a guillotine-like blade of glass flying toward one player character: **+15 vs. AC**—30 damage. *Natural 20:* The guillotine chops off a limb.

ED4–5: More glass shards, again attacking 1d3 adventurers in the glasshouse, only this time they're **+15 vs. AC**—10 damage. On a natural even hit, the character also suffers 5 ongoing damage from bleeding wounds.

ED6: The whole glasshouse collapses. Any characters inside are attacked: **+15 vs. AC**—20 damage and 5 ongoing damage.

Lateral Thinking

As all the foes in this battle are slow-moving, a stealthy thief could try sneaking into the greenhouse to recover the orchid without a fight. The orchid is too large to move with *mage hand*, though a ritual based on that cantrip might work, assuming no wandering monsters arrive while the caster is occupied. If the characters try shooting from outside the greenhouse, the stewpot plant roars with such ferocity that it alerts the Stone Thief—increase the submergence dice by 1, or by 2 if the PCs stick to their ranged attacks and keep shooting.

Giant Jungle Stewpot Plant

The flesh of this plant is delicious. One way or the other, the winners of this fight eat well tonight.

Huge 8th level spoiler [PLANT]
Initiative: +10
Vulnerability: fire

Grasping Vines +13 vs. AC (3 attacks)—20 damage
Natural even hit: The stewpot can grab the target.
Natural 18 or 20: The stewpot can grab the target and make an *into the pot* attack against it as a free action

Into the Pot +17 vs. PD (one enemy it's grabbing, includes +4 grab bonus)—50 damage, plus 30 ongoing acid damage (disengaging ends). If there's already a victim in the pot, then the stewpot throws the character out of the greenhouse for 50 damage instead.

Immobile: The stewpot is rooted to the ground. It can't move or be moved.

Tripping tendrils: Once per round, the stewpot may make a *grasping vines* attack as a free action against a moving target creature it is not engaged with; on a natural even hit, the target is grabbed and its movement stops.

Feed Me! When staggered, the stewpot plant may use *angry vines* instead of *grasping vines*. It can mix *angry* and *grasping vines* attacks.

Angry Vines +13 vs. AC (up to 3 attacks)—50 damage
Natural 18 or 20: The stewpot can grab the target.
Restricted Targeting: A creature may only be targeted by a single *angry vine* in a round.
Limited use: The stewpot can only use this attack while it's staggered.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 432**
MD 18

Thorn Creepers

In the wild, they grow mainly on the fringes of hellholes. Their vulnerability to fire makes this a questionable survival strategy.

8th level archer [PLANT]
Initiative: +10
Vulnerability: fire

Thorny Branches +13 vs. AC—15 damage
Natural even hit: 10 ongoing damage.

R: Thorn Spray +13 vs. PD—15 damage
Natural even hit: 10 ongoing damage.

Thorn Armor: Any melee attacks on a thorn creeper that result in an even miss inflict 10 damage on the attacker.

Slow: Thorn creepers can only shuffle slowly. It takes them two move actions to cover the same ground as a single normal move action.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 144**
MD 18

Bloodweeds

The sages say that bloodweeds were created by the Green Dragon in days of yore. The sages are dead wrong—these plants first bloomed in the High Druid's garden—but she's not going to correct them anytime soon.

8th level mook [PLANT]
Initiative: +10

Blood-Sucking Tendrils +13 vs. AC—15 damage
Suck Blood: If the target of a *blood-sucking tendrils* attack is already suffering from ongoing damage, increase that damage by 5.

Blood Feast: If a nearby enemy suffers 30 points of ongoing damage in a single turn, a new 36 hp bloodweed sprouts on the battlefield.

Slow: Bloodweeds are rooted to the ground, but can grow toward a foe incredibly quickly. It takes them two move actions to cover the same ground as a single normal move action.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 36 (mook)**
MD 18

Mook: Kill one bloodweed mook for every 36 damage you deal to the mob.

The Koru Orchid

Koru behemoths feed on invisible springs of magical energy that are usually invisible; so do overworld plants like these orchids. This particular blossom contains a tremendous charge of magical power, making it a tasty snack for a behemoth.

More properties of this magical plant can be uncovered through research, or by consultation with an icon like the **High Druid, Archmage,** or **Elf Queen**. The characters could:

- Use the orchid as a component in a ritual, potion or magical item.
- Lure a behemoth off course with the orchid.
- Trade the orchid for a favor from another icon.
- Find other sources of magical energy by scattering orchid seeds from on high, and seeing where the flowers grow.

With research—or by talking to a knowledgeable ally like the Hag Pheig or the High Druid, the PCs can learn another use for a Koru Orchid. If such a bloom is fed a mix of lich bonemeal, behemoth blood, and an infusion of magical energy, it becomes absolutely irresistible to a Koru behemoth. It won't just lure a behemoth off course, it'll drive the monster crazy.

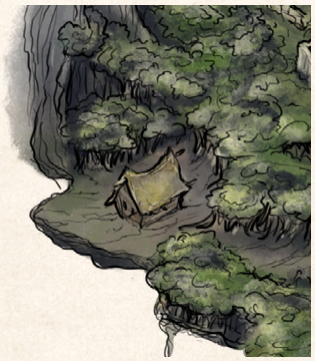
Of course, the only other time anyone tried to make such a super-charged orchid, the resulting feeding frenzy shattered the land, as three behemoths fought to consume the plant. (Some tales claim that one of the behemoths died in the fray, and its remains lie buried beneath the Red Wastes.)

Herbarium Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Jungle Stewpot	Thorn Creeper	Bloodweed
3 x 5th level	1	0	0
4 x 5th level	1	0	3
5 x 5th level	1	1	3
6 x 5th level	1	1	6
7 x 5th level	1	2	6

Number/ Level of PCs	Jungle Stewpot	Thorn Creeper	Bloodweed
3 x 6th level	*1*	*1*	*3*
4 x 6th level	*1*	*2*	*3*
5 x 6th level	*1*	*2*	*6*
6 x 6th level	*1*	*3*	*6*
7 x 6th level	*1*	*3*	*9*

8. HAG COTTAGE



This little farmstead looks like the sort of small but prosperous place you'd find in the countryside outside Axis or Horizon in the heartland of the Empire—there's a thatched cottage surrounded by some animal sheds and stone storehouses. A low, stone wall surrounds the yard. Smoke rises from the cottage's chimney from a cooking fire.

Slumbering in the cowshed is a **manticore**; hanging out in the barn are some **fat trolls**. The manticore has a cowbell around its neck, and the trolls carry pitchforks and other farm tools. These creatures are clearly under some enchantment, as they just stare blearily at the adventurers and do not attack (unless the adventurers make an obviously hostile action, in which case roll for initiative). They are in thrall to the little old woman who lives in that cottage—the **hag grandmother**, **Pheig**.

Like the other monsters in her farm, the hag was caught by the Stone Thief. Pheig has the wit and magical power to escape the dungeon, but she chose to stay when she discovered a curious side effect of her abilities. Like many of her sisters and daughters, the hag can ride the dreams of those nearby, sowing malice and misfortune through this nocturnal intrusion. On the surface, she could invade the dreams of innocents, but here, she can sneak into the dream-messages that flow between the Secret Masters of the Cult of the Devourer (see page 302) and their minions in the world above. So far, Pheig is content to simply spy on the cult, but her long-term goal is to use her power of dream suggestions to subvert the cult to her will, making her the secret mistress of the Secret Masters of the dungeon.

Encountering Pheig

Pheig is too old and canny to try any tricks on the adventurers. She knows that they're unlikely to buy the *I'm an innocent old grandmother who just happens to live in a dungeon* routine, and while she might disguise herself as a seductive maiden purely to mess with the adventurers, she won't hide what she is for long. Instead, she offers them a deal—help her take over the living dungeon, and she will help them in return. Would they like some newt tea?

Play Pheig as a monstrous witch who's too old to bother with a lot of the fuss of being a monstrous witch. Cackling hurts her throat, tricking adventurers is really just foreplay, and if they're going to try to put an end to her, could they please fight outside in the yard? That way, if she survives, so does her crockery, and if the adventurers win, then they can stay in the nice warm cottage instead of camping amid the burning ruins. *Fireball* and thatched roofs don't play well together.

She can offer:

- Information about the internal structure of the Cult of the Devourer.
- The location of cult strongholds on the surface.
- The fact that the cult seek the missing Eyes of the Stone Thief.
- Possible targets for the cult's plan to devour places of power.
- If the PCs have the Koru Orchid, she recognizes it and can tell them its virtues. If they don't, she mentions that such a flower grows not far from her cottage here in the dungeon, and she could tell them of its powers—for a price.
- The route to Dungeon Town, or an exit from the living dungeon.
- A place to rest and recuperate.
- Gallons of newt tea and mandrake cake.
- Magical assistance, such as removing curses, brewing potions, or healing rituals.

Pheig's offer is genuine up to a point. She'll betray them in some fashion at the right time, and is quite willing to point this out to them. No sense in concealing her evil intentions, and anyway, having everything out in the open means they can get on with things.

Pheig As an Ally

If the PCs accept Pheig's offer, then she sends them off to find what she needs for the ritual of binding—an Eye of the Stone Thief or other connection to the dungeon and a copy of the ritual stolen from the Cult of the Devourer. She may also call on them to battle the Cult of the Devourer or other powers in the dungeon if they threaten her. She'll forge the chain she needs herself (page 352) and can supply the needed magical force. Meanwhile, she haunts the PCs' dreams, setting up suggestions that they'll turn the dungeon over to her when they bind it.

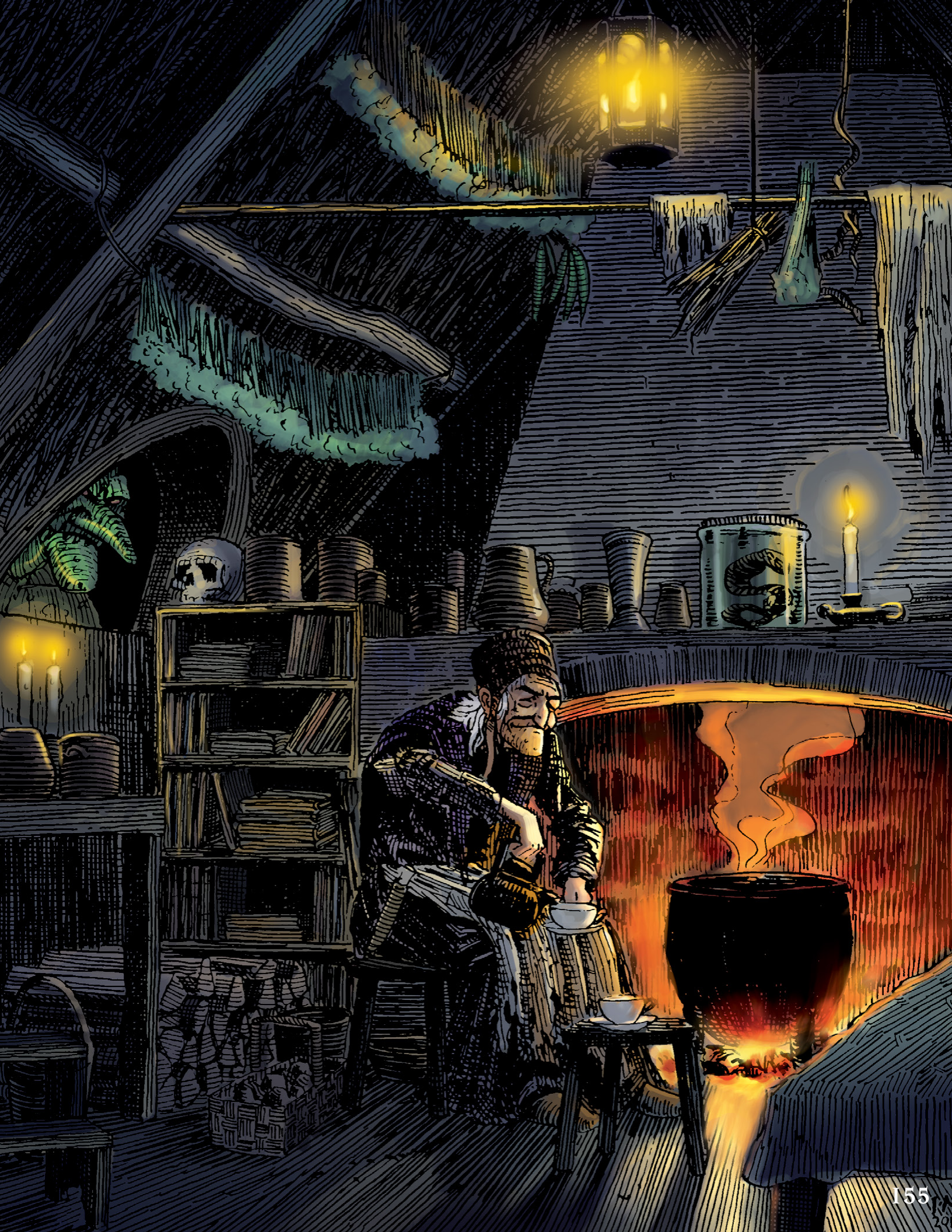
Another option for Pheig is to use the PCs as a stalking horse—she sends them off in search of the Koru Orchid, then contacts the cult and warns them about the dangers posed by the adventurers. The cult tries to thwart the adventurers, Pheig gains credibility with the cult, and she can still use the adventurers again for some other mission after the orchid is destroyed.

Fighting Pheig

The manticore and the trolls are under Pheig's magical command; if she's attacked, they come to her aid. Remember, they get a +2 bonus to their first attack roll in the fight thanks to her *blood pact* power.

Killer

This can be a very tough fight for the player characters—optionally, have Pheig flee the scene using *dusk walk*, so the adventurers only fight her minions. The hag can then show up again later in the campaign with more enthralled monsters.



Manticore

It stalks towards you, venom dripping from its jaws, muscles rippling beneath its tawny hide. Its all-too-human mouth opens, and it speaks in a voice full of malice and hunger in equal measure. "Moo," it says. "Moo."

Large 6th level archer [BEAST]
Initiative: +13

Battering paws +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—20 damage
Natural 16+: The manticore can make a single *volley of tail spikes* attack (one attack roll) against a different target as a free action.

Crushing leonine jaws +11 vs. AC—30 damage; OR 50 damage against a creature taking ongoing poison damage

C: Volley of tail spikes +13 vs. AC (1d3 nearby or far away enemies in a group)—5 ongoing poison damage (hard save ends, 16+)

Flight: Manticores are poor fliers in tight spaces, but out in the open, they are more capable.

Poison reservoirs: Each time the manticore uses its *volley of tail spikes* attack, it takes 1d6 damage, or 2d6 damage if it is staggered.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 182**
MD 16

Fat Troll

As long as they get plenty of protein, trolls can keep growing year after year.

Large 8th level troop [GIANT]
Initiative: +13

Greedy wicked claw +12 vs. AC (2 attacks)—40 damage

Trollish regeneration 30: While a troll is damaged, its rubbery flesh heals 30 hit points at the start of the troll's turn. It can regenerate five times per battle. If it heals to its maximum hit points, then that use of *regeneration* doesn't count against the five-use limit.

When the troll is hit by an attack that deals fire or acid damage, it loses one use of its *regeneration*, and it can't regenerate during its next turn.

Dropping a troll to 0 hp doesn't kill it if it has any uses of *regeneration* left.

Stuck Fast: If an attacker making a melee attack against the troll rolls a natural 1–3, their weapon becomes stuck in the troll's regenerating flesh. Pulling the weapon free requires a move action.

Lazy: Fat trolls don't get a move action when the escalation die is odd.

AC 23
PD 23 **HP 250**
MD 17

Pheig, Hag Grandmother

Twisted. Wizened. Evil. Your mother's mother.

Double-strength 9th level spoiler [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Iron claws +14 vs. AC (2 attacks)—30 damage
Natural 14+: The hag triggers one *hag ability* as a free action.
Natural 18+: The hag triggers two *hag abilities* as a free action (can't be the same ability twice).

R: Evil eye +14 vs. MD—50 ongoing damage (hard save ends, 16+)
Natural 16+: The attack roll also targets a second different enemy of the hag's choice (but not a third with another 16+).
Natural 18+: As above, and the attack roll also targets a third different enemy of the hag's choice (but not a fourth with another 18+).

Death curse: Each hag can lay a curse upon the one who ends its horrible life. After dropping to 0 hit points, a hag always lingers long enough to pronounce the words of the curse. The only known way to remove the curse is to seek the aid of another hag, though there may be some ways to end such a curse that are not readily known. Pheig's death curse is "*cursed be you who brought my end—you shall doom your truest friend.*"

Delusionist: All hags have the ability to twist the perceptions of others. If the hag has a short time to prepare, it can hide a small hut, disguise a volunteer or captive as a monster, disguise itself as a harmless peasant woman, etc. A DC 30 skill check is required to overcome the delusion and see the truth of it (if a player gives a reason for not trusting what their character sees; perhaps add subtle clues toward that end). The magic fades as soon as the hag enters combat.

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies with 60 hp or fewer are dazed (–4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

Blood pact: The hag is able to create mystical pacts between creatures, sanctifying alliances between monsters. The hag generally extracts a price from such monsters, such as periods of servitude/slavery that they owe her. *Each creature allied to the hag through a pact gains a +2 bonus with their first attack each battle if the hag is present.*
Hag ability: The hag spits blood in the face of the target and makes a command. The target must roll an immediate save; on a failure, as a free action it makes basic attack against an ally or against itself (target's choice).

Dusk walk: *Once per day the hag can implant a suggestion in the mind of a target sleeping within a day's travel of her. Hags use these suggestions to sow discord and suffering. The hag rolls an attack:* ***+14 vs. MD****; on a hit, she implants a suggestion in the target that they must obey when a condition she chooses is met (*"When you see the mayor, loudly insult his ugly wife." "When you pass the village smith, throw dung at him." "At sunset walk into the deep swamp without a lantern."*) Suggested actions can't cause direct harm (the target can't be forced to fight another or harm themselves), can be no longer than 12 words, and affects the target for a week or until triggered.*

Hag ability: The hag becomes immaterial, pops free from all enemies engaged with her, and enters the land of dreams, re-appearing next to any nearby conscious creature (or a nearby or far away creature that is unconscious). The hag then makes the following attack: **C: +14 vs. MD (each nearby unconscious enemy)**—The hag implants a suggestion in the target that they must obey when they become conscious (usually "When you awake, flee this fight and discard your equipment.") Suggested actions can't cause direct harm. The round after the target acts on the implanted suggestion it can start rolling normal saves to throw off the effect.

Breath stealing: The hag enjoys killing sleeping victims by using stealth or subterfuge to get close to them and stealing their breath as they sleep. *The hag starts combat with 20 temporary hit points.*

Hag ability: The hag steals a recovery from the target and heals 40 hp.

AC 25
PD 19 **HP 360 (see *death curse*)**
MD 23

Hag Farm Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	The Hag Pheig	Manticore	Fat Troll
3 x 5th level	**1**	**1**	**0**
4 x 5th level	**1**	**0**	**1**
5 x 5th level	**1**	**1**	**1**
6 x 5th level	**1**	**1**	**1**
7 x 5th level	**1**	**1**	**2**
3 x 6th level	***1***	***1***	***0***
4 x 6th level	***1***	***1***	***1***
5 x 6th level	***1***	***2***	***1***
6 x 6th level	***1***	***2***	***2***
7 x 6th level	***1***	***3***	***2***

Treasure in the Cottage

Searching the farmhouse turns up all sorts of unwholesome things, starting with the remains of the family who used to live here (skinned and stuffed in the thatching). There are jars of eyes and other body parts, either as spell components or dinner ingredients, as well as a bowl caked with disturbing remnants of a hag's skin care regime. The adventurers may find some useful magic items, along with any icky potions or runes you wish to give them.

- **Pheig's Cauldron:** The enchanted cauldron is bigger on the inside than the outside, but only when filled with boiling water. So, it's an iron pot, but you could cook a dragon in it. The adventurers can use this as an extra-dimensional storage space for items they don't mind boiling. Note that the amount of water in the pot doesn't change, so you can't flood the dungeon with boiling water. The cauldron contains a few gallons of water at most—it just can store almost anything else you can fit through the mouth.
- **Pheig's Bed:** The bed is clearly out of place with the rest of the cottage—it's a magnificent four-poster bed, much too big and expensive for this humble farmstead. The sheets and mattress, though, are matted with filth and a wide variety of bodily fluids from many different creatures. There's a whole ecosystem in there.

  Pheig enchanted the bed to work with her ability to travel in dreams. A character who sleeps in this bed can *dusk walk* like Pheig. The bed's magic only works on moonless nights.

Variations

- Other possible minions for Pheig include a brace of orcs from Deep Keep, some sahuagin, or—if she wants to start a feud with Nioba Shieldspinner—some drow.

THE CASTLE WITH YOUR NAME ON IT

This encounter isn't marked on the map—it can be, pardon the pun, dropped in anywhere in the Grove other than the Elf Tree. You can also use it in any of the other large open areas in the dungeon (the Gizzard's Hall of Ruins, anywhere on the surface of the Sunken Sea or the Pit of Undigested Ages, or even dropped down the Maddening Stair). It's calibrated for 6th or 7th level player characters. Use it when you need an added danger, or when the players do something that really angers the Stone Thief or a Custodian.

The ceiling of the cave directly above the player characters bulges. The bulge grows hugely, obscenely, as if the rock is turning to rubber or gelatinous flesh. Then, suddenly, it bursts and a castle falls out of it.

It's not a large castle. It was once a border fortress in the Wild Wood, before it was abandoned and claimed by a sorcerer. It's a shoddy fortification, but that doesn't make it any less alarming as a projectile weapon.

Ask each player character how they dodge the incoming castle. The player character with the least entertaining description gets attacked by falling debris: **+15 vs. PD**—3d20 damage, half on a miss. The castle lands more-or-less intact, although the drawbridge cracks and falls open a moment after the dust settles—revealing the surprised, angered, and somewhat shaken faces of the surviving hill giants.

These particular hill giants are the minions of the Sorcerer. The Sorcerer's name is **Ryxaraz**, but he's decided that the best way to cultivate respect and terror is to adopt the same eponymous style as the icons. If it's good enough for the Diabolist, it's good enough for Ryx—er, the Sorcerer. He exemplifies the problems many sorcerers suffer from—despite having enough personal charisma to attract followers, and enough magical potency to level a small city, he's got terrible impulse control and isn't very bright in addition to being somewhat deranged. He impresses his hill giant minions by claiming credit for absolutely everything of note that happens, from his glorious solar conjuring of the sun every morning to the way he commanded a giant living dungeon to eat their home and spit it at some adventurers.

If Ryx—sorry, the Sorcerer survives this fight, he decides that the PCs are clearly his nemeses, and can show up again later in your campaign. He's comic relief with altogether too much firepower.

KILLER

For an easier fight, Ryx and his minions start the battle staggered—they got badly beaten up when the Stone Thief dropped them out of the ceiling.

HILL GIANT

Hill giants carry their personal goods in massive sacks. The contents of such sacks—shiny rocks, interesting bones, broken keepsakes—bear a disturbing resemblance to the contents of a child's pockets.

Large 6th level troop [GIANT]
Initiative: +8

Massive gnarly club +10 vs. AC—45 damage
Miss that's a natural 6+: Half damage (sometimes close is good enough).

R: Two-handed boulder throw +8 vs. PD—35 damage

Nastier Specials

Big bully: The giant deals double damage with its attacks against staggered targets.

AC 20
PD 20 **HP 200**
MD 14

ARMORED HILL GIANT

On closer inspection, their 'armor' is the rotting remains of a dozen human knights in plate mail, roped into a grisly jerkin. Grisly jerkin is fun to say.

Large 8th level troop [GIANT]
Initiative: +11

Absurdly massive longsword +12 vs. AC—90 damage
Miss that's a natural 6+: Half damage (sometimes close is good enough).

R: Two-handed boulder throw +10 vs. PD—55 damage

Cut The Rope: If a character hits the rope holding the giant's grisly jerkin together, either with a DC 20 skill check or by rolling a critical hit on the giant, the giant's AC is reduced by 4 and the giant loses its next move action.

Collector: The giant gains a +2 bonus to its attacks against foes in heavy armor.

Nastier Specials

Bigger bully: If a hill giant's attack reduces a nearby foe to 100 hit points or less, then the armored giant may immediately make an *absurdly massive longsword* attack on that foe as an interrupt action. If it does, the armored giant is weakened until the end of its next turn.

AC 26
PD 22 **HP 300**
MD 18

The Sorcerer

Nothing can resist his irresistible spells!

9th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +15

Staff +12 vs. AC—30 damage

C: Chain Lightning + 14 vs. PD (1d3 nearby foes)—20 electrical damage

Natural even hit: The lightning bolt jumps to another nearby foe. The Sorcerer may make another attack roll against that foe.

R: Fireball +14 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies in a group)—30 fire damage

Command Giants: At the start of the Sorcerer's turn as a free action, pick an allied giant. That giant may add the escalation die to its attacks and damage on its next action.

Fly: The Sorcerer can fly on wings of magic.

AC 23
PD 19 **HP 170**
MD 23

Treasure

The Sorcerer and his giant goons had made a nice living, waylaying travelers between New Port and Santa Cora. The treasury in the castle contains 400 gp per PC, along with two champion-tier healing potions. Optionally—

- A character with a relationship to the **High Druid** finds evidence that some foe was using Ryxaraz as a proxy to attack the Druid's followers. Roll a story-guide result to learn who is behind this. The perpetrator's involvement might be discerned by scribbled notes in Ryxaraz's autobiography, or by the type of gold coin found in the treasure, or in instructions passed to the sorcerer to guide his attacks.
- A character owed a benefit from the **Priestess** finds a *periapt of wound closure*. If that benefit came with conditions, then the periapt is attached to the skull of a famous saint, whose remains must be brought to Santa Cora for burial. That saint offended another icon, and so the characters will have to fend

Number/ Level of PCs	The Sorcerer	Armored Giant	Hill Giant
3 x 6th level	1	0	4
4 x 6th level	1	1	2
5 x 6th level	1	1	3
6 x 6th level	1	1	4
7 x 6th level	1	2	2
3 x 7th level	*1*	*1*	*2*
4 x 7th level	*1*	*1*	*4*
5 x 7th level	*1*	*2*	*2*
6 x 7th level	*1*	*2*	*4*
7 x 7th level	*1*	*3*	*4*

Periapt of Wound Closure

+1 to saves when you have 10 hp or fewer (adventurer); 25 hp or fewer (champion); 50 hp or fewer (epic).

(recharge 11+): When you suffer ongoing damage, reduce the ongoing amount by 5 (adventurer); 10 (champion); 20 (epic). If this reduces the ongoing damage to 0 or less, it counts as successfully saving against it.

Quirk: Cannot abide suffering.

Exits

As the majority of the Grove lies within a single huge cavern, all exits other than going down the Elf Tree take the form of tunnels leading down into the ground. The entrance to the tunnel might be:

- A cave mouth.
- A well.
- An opening in a hollow tree.
- A chasm.
- A boggy sinkhole that sucks the PCs down.

DEEP KEEP

LEVELS 6–7

The fortress of Deep Keep guards the one reliable route in the dungeon down to the lower levels. There may sometimes be other ways to get down to the Onyx Catacombs or the Pit of Undigested Ages, but you can't rely on those temporary and unpredictable passageways. The only certain route down is via the Great Gate.

Over the ages, the Stone Thief has guarded this vital spot by piling fortress upon fortress. Deep Keep today is an absurdly large fortification, an accretion of towers and keeps and walls and battlements stolen from a hundred castles, all crammed without a thought for those who might dwell in this monstrous castle. Deep Keep is so large and complex that no living being knows all its nooks and murder holes.

Once, the dungeon stocked Deep Keep with monsters and its own breed of orcs and goblins. Those defenders were displaced some years ago by the orc warlord Fangrot (see page 187) and his warband, who came to the dungeon to conquer and bind it for their master, the Orc Lord. Unable to penetrate deeper into the dungeon, Fangrot claimed Deep Keep as his own.

DESCRIPTORS

Dark, hot caves that stink of sweat. Stone ruins, scarred and marked by orc graffiti. Always, the sound of drums and the tramp of iron-shod feet. Other sections of the dungeon might feel abandoned—Deep Keep is always terribly alive with hideous industry.

BLOOD AND (ORC) SKULLS!

There are lots of orcs in Deep Keep. Lots and lots of them. Our assumption is that the players won't opt for a frontal assault—they'll either sneak through, or come to an arrangement with the orcs, or play one orc faction off against each other, or launch a slave revolt, or do something else that's brilliantly clever (or, at least, so entertaining that the GM has to sit back and say "sure, if you roll well enough, go ahead, try…."). If your players do go for the kick-in-the-door approach, then resolve the bulk of the fighting through narrative description coupled with skill checks. Fail a check, lose a recovery or mark off a daily power. That simulates the adventurers hacking and blasting their way through an army of orcs without bogging the game down in endless repetitive rolls. Spend the time instead on the interesting fights against Fangrot and his henchmen.

GAMEMASTER

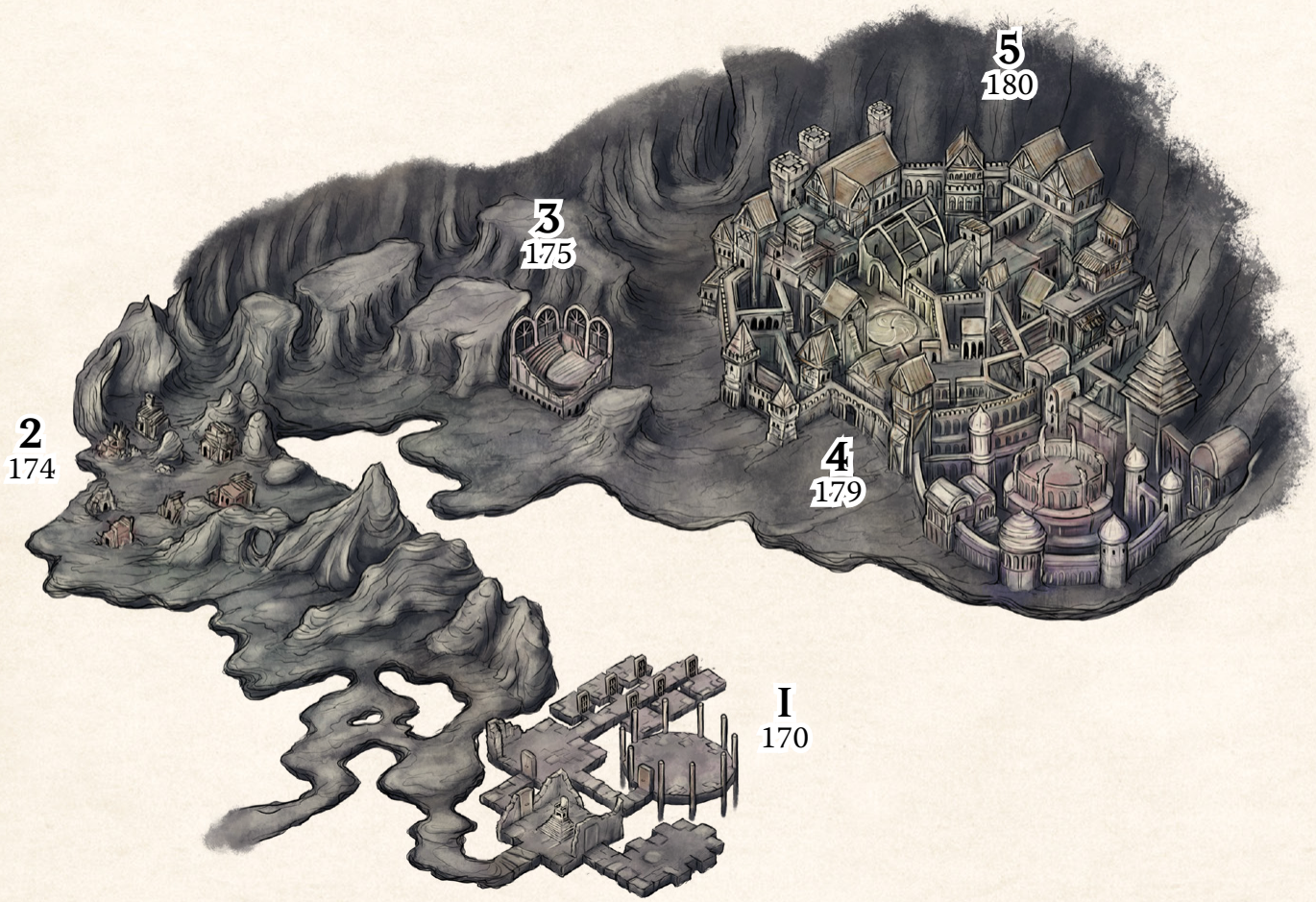
Warning! This level's politics and fight charts are more complex than on other levels. Read the **Features & Factions** section carefully.

FEATURES & FACTIONS

Fangrot's orcs control this level. They're not a unified force—Fangrot's command of his followers slips day by day. The major subfactions and power blocs in the orcs are:

- **Fangrot's Orcs:** These orcs are personally loyal to Fangrot, and they enjoy the conquests and loot brought by the Stone Thief. It's a good life, pillaging and ruining from the back of a living dungeon. Oh, they might not have control of the dungeon's destiny, but what does that matter? Occasionally, some of them do grumble that the Orc Lord sent them here on a mission, and that Fangrot should really think about the Orc Lord's commands, but they don't want to ruin a good thing.
- **Grimtusk's Orcs:** Ambitious and sneaky, Grimtusk and his cronies are chiefly interested in loot and power. Unlike Fangrot, they don't have a shred of loyalty left to the Orc Lord—they're out for themselves and no one else. They want to get rid of Fangrot and put Grimtusk in his place.
- **Greyface's Orcs:** Old Greyface and his circle of veterans still consider themselves loyal to the Orc Lord. They're here on a mission—find a way to gain control of the Stone Thief and deliver the living dungeon in chains to the Orc Lord. It's now clear that Fangrot doesn't have the will to complete the task set for him.
- **Stoneborn Orcs:** The stoneborn are the younger orcs in the tribe. They were spawned here in the Stone Thief, and they're more like the demonic denizens of the dungeon than the other warriors of the Orc Lord. They may say they follow Fangrot, but their hearts are with the Stone Thief. This faction doesn't have a leader, but they're all eerily of one mind—a single soul as cold and pitiless as stone.
- **The Slaves:** The orcs capture survivors from places swallowed by the dungeon and put them to work in the mushroom fields or fighting pit.

The other player in the politics of Deep Keep is the Custodian of this level, the **Vizier**. The Vizier approached Fangrot soon after the orcs stormed the upper levels of the Stone Thief and offered them a deal. It would turn Deep Keep into a sanctuary if the orcs dealt with the Cult of the Devourer. With the Stone Thief blind, the Custodians would be the ruling power in the dungeon if it were not for the crazy human cultists in the basement. Rather than take on the cult directly, the Vizier plots to use Fangrot's orcs to carry out the purge instead. So far, though, Fangrot's stalled, claiming that his orcs need to build up their strength.



Orc Loyalties

The faction that a particular orc supports can be of vital importance if the adventurers plan to foment civil war among Fangrot's followers. Roll or pick from the Orcish Loyalty table below when the characters meet an orc and interact with it in a way that doesn't immediately involve initiative rolls and stabbings.

Roll	Faction	Areas of Control	Leader found at	Attitude and Goals
1–2	Fangrot	Defense of Deep Keep, the Great Gate	The Great Hall	Malicious but lazy; drive the adventurers away, kill them if possible, but stay strong to beat up other orcs
3	Grimtusk	Looting the Gizzard, Slave Farms, Fighting Pit	The Fighting Pit or off in the dungeon	Chaotic, violent, and greedy; loot, pillage, destroy and conquer. Classic orcs.
4	Greyface	Slave Farms, scut work in Deep Keep	The Great Gate or off in the dungeon	Bitter and angry; find a way to overthrow Fangrot without losing the sanctuary of Deep Keep
5–6	Stoneborn	None, but growing in all areas	None	Kill the strangers! Serve the Stone Thief!

What's Orcish for Parley?

Diplomatic or morally neutral adventurers can talk to the orcs instead of putting them to the sword. Convincing the orcs to talk is DC 25 normally, but reduce that DC based on good roleplaying, previous interactions with the orcs (i.e. if the stranger who flings *fireballs* wants to talk, you listen), or relationship rolls.

Characters who are members of the Cult of the Devourer, or who can convince the orcs that they're cultists, get escorted to Fangrot's throne room to pay their toll for the Great Gate.

Orc Lord: A 6 means the character meets one of Greyface's loyalists, dropping the DC to parley by 10. A 5 means the loyalist needs something from the adventurers, like making one of the other orcs disappear quietly.

Prince of Shadows: Similarly, a 6 means the characters meet one of the Prince's agents among Grimtusk's buddies. On a 5, the character is drawn into the smuggling operation. Here, hold this cursed item before Fangrot's orcs find it!

Sneaking Around

This level of the dungeon rewards stealth and conspiring over direct attacks. It's relatively easy to move around most of Deep Keep without being seen—assume the PCs can stick to the shadows and avoid orc patrols, and only call for skill checks when the PCs try to accomplish something more than 'stay out of trouble.'

The characters can even infiltrate the orc fortress. Many of the orcs wear armor and clothing looted from the surface, so a player character who puts on a gruff voice and an orcish attitude can pass for an orc, at least for a short time with a good Charisma skill check. A half-orc PC might look sufficiently orcish for the old, *"I'm a new guard, these surprisingly well-armed adventurers are my prisoners, and I'm taking them for processing in the castle"* routine to work. Another option is to have a wizard do a *disguise self* ritual, or a cleric of trickery/illusion pray for a similar effect.

In general, sneaking around is DC 20 in the caves outside Deep Keep, and DC 25 inside the fortress itself. (For added verisimilitude, you could drop those DCs to 17 and 22 respectively, and add the Alert Level (see opposite) to the DC.)

Another option is for the player characters to pretend to be members of the Cult of the Devourer, which will get them to Fangrot's throne room.

Fangrot Saga

At some point during their exploration of this level, the player characters should hear the tale of how Fangrot led the orcs into the dungeon. They might hear it:

- Being told by one orc to another.
- From a slave, as they hide and wait for a patrol to pass.
- Being sung drunkenly in the Fighting Pit bar.
- Recited by an orc bard in the Great Hall.

According to the story, the Orc Lord sent Fangrot and his three lieutenants—Grimtusk, Greyface, and Gallblood—out to capture the fabled living dungeon, so that it might devour the walls of men and dwarves and open the passes into the Empire. The Orc Lord even entrusted Fangrot with the *Axe of Doom*, a weapon that heralds the fall of empires.

For many months, the warlord and his warband chased the dungeon across the wild lands and unknown regions west and south, below the Red Wastes and the Giantwalk Mountains. Finally, they caught the dungeon and discovered that a cult of vile sorcerers dwelt within it. Fangrot drove the sorcerers into the depths, but the dungeon fled before he could conquer it. It sank back down into the earth, the walls closing in as it descended, forcing the orcs to flee.

Again they chased. Again they caught the dungeon, and this time Fangrot had a plan. He possessed a magic spear in addition to the *Axe of Doom*, and when the dungeon tried to escape, he hurled the spear into the living stone of the Thief, pinning it in place. The Thief thrashed and wracked and roared in pain, but it was caught.

Fangrot roared in triumph, but treacherous Gallblood was jealous of the warlord's success. He broke the spear, and the dungeon sank again, only this time Fangrot was caught by the closing walls. The other orcs retreated, giving their warlord up for dead.

Again they chased, and this time it was Greyface who led them across the desert in pursuit of the Thief. When they finally caught the dungeon a third time, they descended into it—and found Fangrot waiting for them on the throne of Deep Keep. By his strength and ferocity, he had claimed this keep and carved out a sanctuary for his warband. This, he declared, would be their home. Here they would grow strong, until the time came to seize control of the rest of the dungeon and complete the mission given to them by the Orc Lord.

Fangrot's Lies

The saga makes for a pretty song, but it's not accurate. What really happened is this: The dungeon broke free of Fangrot's spear and began to submerge. Gallblood and Fangrot were both trapped within the dungeon as the walls closed in, and Fangrot left his lieutenant to be crushed while he fled, looking for an exit.

There was no way out, but just as the shrinking chamber threatened to crush the orc to death, a face appeared out of the rock. The Custodian of Deep Keep offered Fangrot a way to survive—become a denizen of the dungeon and enter suspended animation instead of being crushed.

The truth is that Fangrot can never complete his mission to capture the dungeon, because he's *part* of the dungeon. He's a denizen, a monstrous extension of the dungeon. Unlike most of the other orcs, who are still outsiders to the living dungeon and so need the sanctuary of Deep Keep to survive when the dungeon submerges, Fangrot could survive being entombed by the closing walls. Unlike the other orcs, he would be utterly subservient to whoever controlled the dungeon with the Rite of Binding (page 352), if the Stone Thief ever came under the power of another.

Passage through the Great Gate

The orcs control the Great Gate that leads to the lower levels of the dungeon, where the Cult of the Devourer holds sway. While both factions loathe each other, neither is willing to risk a fruitless confrontation, at least not until their own plans are closer to completion. So, they currently have an arrangement that members of the cult are permitted to pass through the Great Gate on payment of a toll. The price of this toll varies depending on current relations and Fangrot's mood, but usually involves a cut of any magic items and gold paid to the cult.

Captured Adventurers

If the adventurers suffer a campaign loss or are defeated in battle on this level, the orcs take them as captives instead of killing them outright. Captured adventurers may be sent to the Slave Farms (page 174) or the Fighting Pit (page 175). They'll be stripped of weapons and equipment, but they'll have their lives. Oh—if it comes up, improvised weapons like slave manacles have a –1 penalty to hit and do the same damage as a small weapon, or else have a –2 penalty to hit and do normal weapon damage.

Alert the Orcs

This level is absolutely crawling with orcs, so rather than describe a dozen different battles, let's streamline things a little with a mechanic called Alert Status. Alert Status goes from 0–6 and determines how aware the orcs are of the threat posed by the player characters. You may want to use a die to track Alert Status, just like the escalation and submergence dice, but since it's mainly a GM-facing mechanic, it's not as important to keep it in front of the players at all times.

At Alert 0, the orcs are completely unaware of any danger. They go about their orc business, unmolested by disturbing thoughts of violent death at the hands of wandering adventurers. At Alert 1–2, they're on their guard. Alert 3–4 means they definitely know that foes are close at hand, and that's as high as the Alert normally goes. Alert 5 means Deep Keep itself is under attack; Alert 6 is reserved for when the orcs go to war.

Set the initial Alert Level based on the players' previous actions, or by rolling 1d6 –2.

Raise the Alert Level when:

- The orcs first learn of the player characters' presence near Deep Keep.
- The adventurers kill some of the orcs.
- Sentries in Deep Keep spot intruders.
- It's dramatically appropriate.

Let the players know the Alert Level.

Using the Alert Level: First, use the Alert Level as a guide to the orcs' movements and actions. If you can't decide if the orcs have taken a particular precaution, like stationing guards at a door or searching the slave quarters for weapons, then roll a d6—if it's greater than the Alert Level, then the orcs haven't bothered with that particular action.

More importantly, the Alert Level determines the size and nature of battles in the keep. At low alert—0 to 2 on the Alert Level die—the characters are up against scouts and guards. At medium alert (3–4), they face more and tougher foes. At high alert (5–6), the big orcs come out to play.

Alert Level 0–2

Orc Tracker

The pigs smell better than the orc trackers, but the orc trackers have a keener sense of smell.

6th level spoiler [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

Orc-Sword +11 vs. AC—20 damage, and *pig-sticker* triggers.
Dangerous: The crit range of melee attacks by orc trackers expands by 3 unless they are staggered.

R: Whip +8 vs. PD (one nearby target)—10 damage, and *pig-sticker* triggers.
Natural 16+: The target is vulnerable until the start of their next turn.

Pig-Sticker: Any hunting pigs engaged with the tracker's target may immediately make a free attack on that target.

Expert tracker: Any attempts to hide from or evade an orc tracker take a –5 penalty.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 80**
MD 16

Orc Veteran

Survivors of many battles both in the dungeon and on the surface, these orcs have more scar tissue than unmarred flesh.

8th level troop [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Orc-Sword +13 vs. AC—35 damage
Ripping Teeth: If an orc veteran crits a foe, it also deals 10 ongoing damage.

R: Orc-Bow +12 vs. AC—30 damage

Dangerous: The crit range of orcs expands by 3 unless they are staggered.

I've Seen This Before: Once per battle, when an orc veteran is attacked, you may declare that it has fought a foe possessing such an attack before. For the rest of the fight, all orc veterans gain +2 to their defense against that specific attack. You may not specify basic attacks this way.

Fighting Discipline: If two or more orc veterans engage the same target, the orc veterans may add the escalation die to their attacks.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 144**
MD 18

Demonic Hunting Pigs

The orcs take the biggest, toughest demonic pigs and eat them. Then they take the ones who were clever enough to stay lean and mean, and train them to hunt.

8th level mook [BEAST]
Initiative: +16

Gore +13 vs. AC—20 damage

Tusked Charge: When the pig attacks a foe it moved to engage this turn, its crit range expands by +3.

Roast Pork, Straight Off the Bone: If a pig is killed by a fire attack, any nearby dwarves may heal using a recovery.

Nastier Specials

Demon pig: Give the pigs a random demonic ability.

AC 24
PD 24 **HP 36 (mook)**
MD 16

Mook: Kill one demonic hunting pig mook for every 36 damage you deal to the mob.

Deep Keep Fight Low Alert Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Orc Hunter	Orc Veteran	Demonic Hunting Pig
3 x 6th level	1	1	3
4 x 6th level	1	1	5
5 x 6th level	1	2	5
6 x 6th level	2	2	8
7 x 6th level	3	2	10
3 x 7th level	*2*	*2*	*5*
4 x 7th level	*2*	*3*	*5*
5 x 7th level	*3*	*3*	*8*
6 x 7th level	*4*	*3*	*10*
7 x 7th level	4	4	10

Alert Level 3–4

Orc Veteran

Bonds of friendship forged in battle are strong, but loyalty to a warlord is stronger.

8th level troop [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Orc-Sword +13 vs. AC—35 damage
Ripping Teeth: If an orc veteran crits a foe, it also deals 10 ongoing damage.

R: Orc-Bow +12 vs. AC—30 damage

Dangerous: The crit range of orcs expands by 3 unless they are staggered.

I've Seen This Before: Once per battle, when an orc veteran is attacked, you may declare that it has fought a foe possessing such an attack before. For the rest of the fight, all orc veterans gain +2 to their defense against that specific attack. You may not specify basic attacks this way.

Fighting Discipline: If two or more orc veterans engage the same target, the orc veterans may add the escalation die to their attacks.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 144**
MD 18

Ogre Stalker

They never speak, except when they whisper something in the ear of their latest victim.

Large 7th level wrecker [GIANT]
Initiative: +14

Brutal Axe +11 vs. AC—50 damage
Miss: 25 damage.

Big Bully +11 vs. PD (each enemy engaged with ogre)—3d6 damage, and all targets except ones of the ogre's choice pop free from the ogre.
Quick use: This power only requires a quick action (once per round) instead of a standard action when the escalation die is even.

Slayer of wizards: Creatures engaged with the ogre stalker take opportunity attacks from it when casting close spells as if they were casting ranged spells.

Nastier Specials

Invisibility: Once per battle, the ogre stalker can become invisible until it attacks.

AC 21
PD 19 **HP 140**
MD 18

Orc Blood Sorcerer

The blood sorcerers are neutral in the orcs' internal strife. No matter who wins, there will be blood, and that's all that matters.

6th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

Ritual Dagger +11 vs. AC—12 damage. If this is the first time this enemy has been struck by a ritual dagger in this combat, add one point to the Blood Magic pool.

R: Blood Call: +11 vs. MD (one nearby target)—5 damage, and add two points to the Blood Magic pool.
Natural even hit: The target becomes vulnerable until the start of the blood sorcerer's next turn.

R: Blood Blast: +11 vs. PD (1d3 nearby targets)—10 damage per point spent from the Blood Magic pool.

Group Ability—Blood Magic Pool: Blood sorcerers accumulate magical power in a pool shared by all the blood sorcerers in the combat. Use a die or tokens to track the accumulated points. If all blood sorcerers in the combat are slain with points left in the Blood Magic pool, then the body of the last sorcerer explodes, inflicting 1d6 damage per remaining Blood Magic point on all nearby creatures.

Gather Blood: As a move action, the blood sorcerer can gather power. Until the start of the blood sorcerer's next turn, add one to the Blood Magic pool for each creature in the battle that dies (including the human slaves carried by the slave-takers) or suffers a critical hit. If the blood sorcerer takes damage while using this ability, it must make a save (11+) to continue gathering blood. Multiple blood sorcerers can use this ability at the same time, but each death still only contributes one point to the pool.

Summon Demon: As a standard action, the blood sorcerer summons a demon. The demons available for summoning are listed in the fight chart. Frenzy demons cost 5 points; hezrous cost 10. Once the sorcerers have summoned all the available demons, this ability cannot be used.

Nastier Specials

Resurgent Demons: When a summoned demon is slain, return half the points used to summon it to the pool.

AC 22
PD 16
MD 20

HP 90

Stoneborn Orc

Born of the living dungeon, they share its fate, for good or ill.

8th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +12

Jagged Sword +13 vs. AC—23 damage

Dangerous Mook: The crit range of melee attacks by stoneborn orcs expands by 3 until half of the stoneborn orcs have been dropped.

Stony Skin: When damage spills over from one mook to the next, the next mook in line may make a hard save (16+). If successful, all the remaining damage gets applied to that mook instead of spilling over again. For example, if a pack of stoneborn orcs get hit by an attack for 200 damage, the first mook takes 36 damage and dies. The second mook may then attempt a save; if it succeeds, it takes the rest of the damage and dies, but the third mook is safe. If the second mook fails, then the third mook gets to make a save to protect the fourth mook, and so on.

Nastier Specials

One With The Dungeon: Add the submergence die to the stoneborn orc's hit points. Once per battle, a stoneborn orc may add the submergence die to its attack roll.

AC 24
PD 20
MD 18

HP 36 (mook)

Mook: Kill one stoneborn orc mook for every 36 damage you deal to the mob.

Deep Keep Medium Alert Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Orc Veteran	Orc Blood Sorcerer	Ogre Stalker	Stoneborn Orc	Frenzy Demon*	Hezrou Demon*
3 x 6th level	1	1	1	3	1	0
4 x 6th level	2	1	1	5	1	0
5 x 6th level	2	1	2	5	1	0
6 x 6th level	2	2	2	8	2	0
7 x 6th level	3	2	2	10	2	1
3 x 7th level	*2*	*1*	*1*	*5*	*1*	*0*
4 x 7th level	*2*	*1*	*2*	*5*	*1*	*0*
5 x 7th level	*3*	*2*	*2*	*5*	*2*	*0*
6 x 7th level	*3*	*3*	*2*	*8*	*2*	*1*
7 x 7th level	*4*	*3*	*2*	*10*	*2*	*1*

* Summonable reinforcements below chart

ALERT LEVEL 5–6

Master Blood Sorcerer

The initiation rite to the rank of Master Sorcerer is so sordid and vile it would make the Diabolist blush.

8th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Ritual Dagger +13 vs. AC—30 damage. If this is the first time this enemy has been struck by a ritual dagger in this combat, add one point to the Blood Magic pool.

R: Blood Call: +13 vs. MD (one nearby target)—18 damage, and add two points to the Blood Magic pool.
Natural even hit: The target becomes vulnerable until the start of the blood sorcerer's next turn.

R: Blood Blast: +13 vs. PD (1d3 nearby targets)—13 damage per point spent from the Blood Magic pool.

R: Clotting Curse: +13 vs. PD (one nearby or far away target)—25 damage, and the crit range for attacks on the target expands by X, where X is the number of points spent from the Blood Magic pool (hard save ends, 16+)

Group Ability—Blood Magic Pool: Blood sorcerers accumulate magical power in a pool shared by all the blood sorcerers in the combat. Use a die or tokens to track the accumulated points. If all blood sorcerers in the combat are slain with points left in the Blood Magic pool, then the body of the last sorcerer explodes, inflicting 1d6 damage per remaining Blood Magic point on all nearby creatures.

Gather Blood: As a move action, the blood sorcerer can gather power. Until the start of the blood sorcerer's next turn, add one to the Blood Magic pool for each creature in the combat that dies or suffers a critical hit. If the blood sorcerer takes damage while using this ability, it must make an easy save (6+) to continue gathering blood. Multiple blood sorcerers can use this ability at the same time, but each death still only contributes one point to the pool.

Summon Demon: As a standard action, the blood sorcerer summons a demon. The demons available for summoning are listed in the fight chart. Frenzy demons cost 3 points; hezrous cost 7. Once the sorcerers have summoned all the available demons, this ability cannot be used.

Nastier Specials

Resurgent Demons: When a summoned demon is slain, return half the points used to summon it to the pool.

Blood Master: If the number of points in the Blood Magic pool is higher than the escalation die, the blood sorcerer may add the escalation die to its attacks.

AC 24
PD 18 **HP 144**
MD 22

Elite Orc Guard

These guards defend the Orc Lord's most important strongholds. They feel no pain; they know no fear.

9th level blocker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Orc-Sword +14 vs. AC—40 damage
Killer Combo: If an elite orc guard scores a critical hit against a foe, another elite orc guard engaged with that foe may immediately make a free *orc-sword* attack on the same target.

R: Orc-Bow +14 vs. AC—40 damage

Dangerous: The crit range of orcs expands by 3 unless they are staggered.

Shield Wall: An elite orc guard may reduce its AC by 4 to give a +2 AC bonus to a nearby ally.

Nastier Specials

Brutality: When an elite orc guard is staggered or slain, it may immediately make a free *orc-sword* attack on a nearby foe.

AC 23
PD 23 **HP 180**
MD 19

Armored War Troll

They just press chunks of hot metal onto the troll's flesh—the regenerated scar tissue keeps the armor plating in place.

Large 8th level wrecker [GIANT]
Initiative: +13

Great Mauling Paw +12 vs. AC (2 attacks)—35 damage
Rend: If both *great mauling paw* attacks hit the same target with a natural attack roll of 16+, that target takes 30 ongoing damage.

Wary Advance: If the war troll makes only a single *great mauling paw* attack in a round, or does not attack on its turn, it gains *resist damage 16+* until the start of its next turn.

Trollish regeneration 20: While a war troll is damaged, its uncanny flesh heals 20 hit points at the start of the war troll's turn. It can regenerate five times per battle. If it heals to its maximum hit points, then that use of *regeneration* doesn't count against the five-use limit.

When the war troll is hit by an attack that deals fire or acid damage, it loses one use of its *regeneration*, and it can't regenerate during its next turn.

Dropping a war troll to 0 hp doesn't kill it if it has any uses of *regeneration* left.

Nastier Specials

Siege Ballista: The troll has a giant crossbow mounted on its back, operated by one of the stoneborn mooks. While riding the troll, the orc gains the following attack:

R: Siege Ballista +12 vs. PD (one or two nearby or far away targets, as long as they're roughly in a straight line) —60 damage

Limited Use: The *siege ballista* attack cannot be used two rounds in a row.

Of course, PCs who kill the mook can hop on the troll's back and use the ballista. We'll assume the coolness bonus from ballista-jacking balances out any penalties for firing from troll-back. If firing at the troll carrying it, roll 2d20 and take the best result.

AC 21
PD 21 **HP 280**
MD 18

Stoneborn Orcs

They never speak and don't show much emotion, but you can't shake the impression they're all sharing a joke at your expense.

8th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +12

Jagged Sword +13 vs. AC—23 damage

Dangerous Mook: The crit range of melee attacks by stoneborn orcs expands by 3 until half of the stoneborn orcs have been dropped.

Stony Skin: When damage spills over from one mook to the next, the next mook in line may make a hard save (16+). If successful, all the remaining damage gets applied to that mook instead of spilling over again. For example, if a pack of stoneborn orcs gets hit by an attack for 200 damage, the first mook takes 36 damage and dies. The second mook may then attempt a save; if it succeeds, it takes the rest of the damage and dies, but the third mook is safe. If the second mook fails, then the third mook gets to make a save to protect the fourth mook, and so on.

Nastier Specials

One With the Dungeon: Add the submergence die to the stoneborn orc's hit points. Once per battle, a stoneborn orc may add the submergence die to its attack roll.

AC 24
PD 20 **HP 36 (mook)**
MD 18

Mook: Kill one stoneborn orc mook for every 36 damage you deal to the mob.

Deep Keep High Alert Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Master Blood Sorcerer	Elite Orc Guard	Armored War Troll	Stoneborn Orc	Frenzy Demon*	Hezrou Demon*
3 x 6th level	1	1	1	3	1	0
4 x 6th level	1	2	1	3	1	0
5 x 6th level	2	2	1	3	2	0
6 x 6th level	2	3	1	5	2	0
7 x 6th level	2	4	1	8	2	1
3 x 7th level	*1*	*1*	*1*	*5*	*1*	*0*
4 x 7th level	*1*	*2*	*1*	*8*	*1*	*0*
5 x 7th level	*2*	*3*	*1*	*8*	*2*	*0*
6 x 7th level	*2*	*3*	*2*	*8*	*2*	*0*
7 x 7th level	*3*	*4*	*2*	*8*	*2*	*1*

* Summonable reinforcements

DEEP KEEP IN CHAOS

If the adventurers don't sneak through this level, then it's likely they'll end up getting involved in a slave revolt or orcish civil war. Here's how to run all that.

Slave Rebellion! If the characters can free the slaves and lead them in a revolt against the orcs, they can bring down Fangrot and put an end to the power of Deep Keep. Doing so will result in the effective destruction of this level of the dungeon, unless the characters can make their own deal with the Vizier. Starting a slave rebellion is discussed on page 174.

Orc Revolt! Cunning PCs can convince two of the four orc factions to rebel against Fangrot.

- Grimtusk is ambitious and greedy. If the characters find him in the Fighting Pit and convince him they'll support his coup, they can replace one warlord with another. Grimtusk is even more of a monster than Fangrot, but at least he'll owe them a favor. See page 177.
- Greyface is still loyal to the Orc Lord and the original mission of binding the Thief. Fellow agents of the Orc Lord or those who can remind Greyface of what an orc should be can fire his spirits and trigger a revolt against Fangrot. They'll need to track him down at the Great Gate first. See page 179.

The stoneborn orcs might also revolt against Fangrot if the Stone Thief recovers one of its Eyes (see page 313). In that scenario, the PCs might end up allying with the Vizier and Fangrot against the stoneborn—defeating the stoneborn buys the Vizier and its puppet Fangrot time before the dungeon destroys them.

Mass Battles!

If the players do start a revolt or rebellion, don't bother with tracking the hit points of the various combatants, except the ones the PCs are actually fighting right now. Just describe the carnage going on around the place as rebel orcs (or slaves) battle Fangrot's loyalists, while the PCs take on the toughest part of the enemy forces. (Think of it like a battle in a Shakespearean play—there's a hundred slaves fighting fifty orcs just offstage, but onstage the PCs are up against five trolls, and the offstage fight is just background color.)

Optionally, you can represent allied and enemy forces with d6s. At the start of battle, give each side a number of d6s from one to three depending on the strength of each fighting force (call them 'Ally Dice'). A bunch of ill-equipped slaves might warrant one Ally Die; trained gladiators give two Ally Dice, and a huge mob of well-motivated slaves are worth three Ally Dice. On the orc side, use the Alert Level as a guide. Low alert is worth one Enemy Die, medium two Enemy Dice, high three Enemy Dice.

Each round, roll the dice for each side. On a 6, that side does something that affects the PCs' fight; on a 5, that side does something that affects the fight, but at a cost. Possible interjections into the battle include:

Help*	Hindrances
A slave chucks a spear into an orc that one of the PCs is engaged with. The orc takes 3d8 damage.	An orc takes a pot-shot at a PC—it's a **+10 attack vs. AC** for 4d8 damage.
The cheering of the slaves invigorates a PC; that PC can heal using a recovery.	Add a bunch of orc mooks to the fight as reinforcements.
The orcs fall back; increase the escalation die by 1.	The orcs hold firm; the escalation die doesn't increase this round.
The slaves push forward: remove one Enemy Die.	The orcs push forward: remove one Ally Die.

* Or allied orcs, in the case of a civil war.

Let cool PC stunts and killing big foes remove Enemy Dice. Removing all Enemy or Ally Dice doesn't mean there aren't any enemies or allies left, just that they're not going to affect the PCs' fight for the rest of the battle.

Example: *The PCs have freed the gladiators in the Fighting Pit and are trying to fight their way out. The GM gives the players two Ally Dice to roll, and puts down two Enemy Dice on her side of the table. She picks different colored dice, because one is for the orcs and the others are for the monsters that broke out of the gladiatorial arena.*

The battle starts, and all the dice get rolled. On round 2, one of the Ally Dice comes up with a 6. The GM asks the players to describe how one of their allies helps out, and a player decides that Iron Feather gouges out the eyes of an orc warrior that the PCs are fighting. That definitely sounds like the orc is hampered.

Next round, the Enemy Dice come up with a 5 and a 6—the 6 is for the orcs, so the GM decides that orc reinforcements show up, and she adds 5 level-appropriate mooks to the fight. The 5 is for the arena monsters, so the GM describes how Iron Feather has been pinned by an owlbear—unless a PC does something to save the monk, they'll lose one of their Ally Dice.

MINOR ENCOUNTERS

Orcish Conspirators

The PCs overhear a pair of orcs talking loudly up ahead. The orcs looted a case of wine from the dungeon's most recent theft and are quite drunk. If the PCs sneak up and listen (DC 20), they can eavesdrop on the orcs, who are complaining about conditions in Deep Keep. Roll a d8 to decide which captain the orcs follow (1–2 Fangrot, 3–4 Grimtusk, 5–6 Greyface, 7–8 they're working for different captains; roll 2d6 to decide which), and hence, who gets blamed for all the problems in the dungeon.

Once you've given the PCs enough of a taste of the level's internal politics, one of the orcs chucks the empty bottle over his shoulder, which smashes into one of the lurking player characters.

Slaughtered Monster

A giant monster of some sort (manticore, dragon, otyugh, hydra, slime, or something weirder, like an abomination (page 148) or a tailored zombie (page 125) or even an archivult (page 189)) wandered into Deep Keep and got slaughtered by the orcs. From its corpse, the PCs can tell that that they're up against a large number of exceedingly well-trained orcs.

- **Orc Lord:** There's a broken dagger embedded in the monster's skull (or equivalent organ, in the case of something headless). The PC recognizes the weapon as belonging to a notorious orc captain (Fangrot, Grimtusk or Greyface).

Magic Mushroom

A mushroom of unusual size, color, and magical aura grows in an out-of-the-way cave. It's clearly a supernatural fungus, as most mushrooms don't glow with arcane energy in the visible spectrum. What is this mushroom?

- If you've got access to the *Bestiary*, then it's clearly a fungaloid colony spore, ready to sprout into a whole fungaloid empire. The PCs can act as advisors and godparents to this new kingdom, and possibly convince the fungaloid empress to ally with them in a war with the walking nutrient bags called 'orcs'.
- **High Druid:** It's not spoken of outside the secret circles in the Wild Wood, but one of the previous High Druids went mad and fled into the underworld, where he's said to be breeding new and stranger forms of life. He leaves these mushrooms behind as signposts for his followers on the surface—presumably, the Stone Thief once swallowed a cave that the Mad Druid passed through. Apparently, if you eat the mushroom, you'll enter into psychic contact with the Mad Druid. That's unlikely to be a good thing. He's mad, after all. Maybe you should feed the mushroom to someone else.

- **Archmage:** Ah! You suspected this might happen. The living dungeon doesn't just assimilate physical structures into itself, it also absorbs sources of magical energy. It seems that parasites inside the dungeon—this mushroom, for example—have adapted to feed on the dungeon's ambient arcane energy. In effect, this mushroom is a magic sponge. It won't affect spells, as they're too fast-moving for it to digest, but given time, it could suck the magic out of an enchanted item, or drain a magical stockpile of power. Actually, that'd be horribly dangerous if it got loose onto the surface. Imagine what would happen to Horizon if it got infested by thaumophagic fungi! Better kill it with fire—after taking a sample for study, of course…

Stoneborn Orcs

The characters come across a strange cave full of rock formations that, from certain angles, look like petrified humanoid figures. As they move through the cave, the rock formations become more and more like statues, and some even seem to be breathing, very slowly and shallowly. These are new stoneborn orcs, in the process of being born from the Stone Thief. There are hundreds in this cave alone—and thinking back, there were other outcrops and stalagmites in other caves that could have been more embryonic stoneborn orcs.

Escaped Slaves

A trio of desperate slaves runs into the PCs. The trio are all survivors from a recent theft by the Stone Thief (so they may be established characters known to the player characters; if not, they're peasants named Shalla, Vica, and Isan). There are orcs hot on their heels, and the caves echo with the sounds of demonic oinking from the hunting pigs.

Shalla claims to be the fastest runner in her village and volunteers to lead the orcs away if the PCs help protect her friends. If the PCs agree, drop the Alert Level by 1; otherwise, raise the Alert Level by 1 and have the appropriate orc patrol come around the corner.

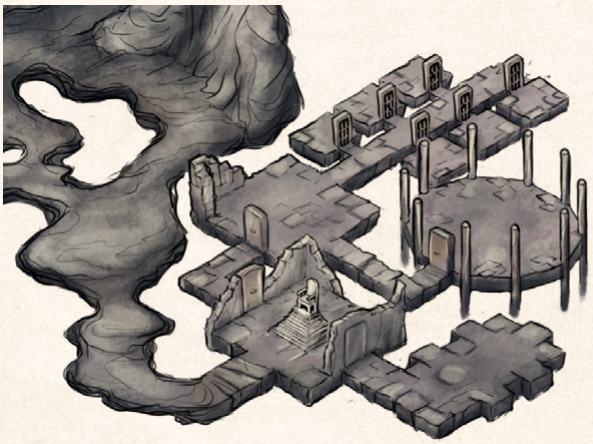
Trapped Chest

The PCs find a wooden chest that was hastily concealed beneath some debris. The chest contains an artifact looted from one of the dungeon's recent thefts; Grimtusk's followers found the artifact and intend to send it to the Prince of Shadows as soon as the Stone Thief rises and they can smuggle it back to the surface. (If recent thefts don't suggest a good artifact, then it's the egg of a metallic dragon).

The chest is trapped; a single strand of cat hair sticks out of the gap between the lid and the body of the chest (DC 20 to spot). If it's opened, the cat hair falls to the ground and instantly grows into a magical ghost cat. This cat bounds away toward Grimtusk; if the PCs don't instantly react to stop it, raise the Alert Level by 1 and Grimtusk knows where they are.

Prince of Shadows: That cat hair trick is one of the Prince's gimmicks. This chest must belong to one of his agents.

1. SECRET SANCTUM



This area consists of four rooms—the entrance, the outer guard post, the inner conference chamber, and the prison. The Custodians of the various levels of the dungeon meet here, on neutral stone, to discuss weighty matters like "how can we avoid the Stone Thief destroying us all if we fail her." They also meet here with important allies, like Fangrot or the Secret Masters of the Cult of the Devourer.

1A. Entrance

The entrance to the sanctum was stolen from the lair of a long-dead wizard (dead dead, not Wizard King dead). The chamber has walls of polished black marble, inlaid with arcane symbols that change and move as magic ebbs and flows through the cosmos. A throne of ebony and silver stands atop a high dais. Thirteen steps, each one high and narrow, rise up to this imposing seat.

The actual entrance to the sanctum is off to one side. Observant characters may notice (DC 30) that there's a suspiciously door-shaped gap in the cavalcade of arcane symbols on the wall. The door can be opened by touching it.

Killer: The Throne: Sitting on the throne awakens the ghost of the dark elven wizard **Perido**, and she's not happy that someone is touching her stuff. Her ghost materializes and threatens to annihilate the intruders who have disturbed her resting place.

Unlike most Killer encounters, there's no need to downplay this one. Any player who messes with magic thrones in a dungeon deserves everything they get.

The Ghost of Perido

A secret conspiracy within the Silver Folk plot and prepare for the night when Perido returns. Once the Stone Thief's hold on her spirit is broken, their dark prayers will be answered.

Triple-strength 8th level caster [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +16
Vulnerability: holy

C: Arcane Winds +13 vs. PD (all nearby enemies)—20 damage
Natural 16+: The target is hampered until the end of their next turn.

C: Blasting Curse + 13 vs. MD (up to three nearby enemies)—50 damage
Natural 14+: The target pops free of Perido and is stuck until the end of their next turn.
Natural 16+: As above, plus the target suffers 25 extra damage.
Natural 18+: As above, plus the target is stunned until the end of their next turn.

R: Triple Blast: **Obsidian Shards +13 vs. AC (one nearby or far away creature)**—50 damage, and Perido may immediately make a *triple blast: poisonous serpents* attack against the same target as a free action as the shards melt and become sinuous black serpents.

[Special trigger] **R: Triple Blast: Poisonous Serpents +13 vs. PD (target of *obsidian shards*)**—25 damage, and 25 ongoing poison damage, and Perido may immediately make a *mind-burning curse* attack against the same target as a free action.

Perido

In life, Perido was a daughter of the Elf Queen (probably not the current Queen, unless she's a lot older than she claims to be) who rebelled against her mother and tried to unite the three strands of elven magic into one. Perido's wizardry welded the high arcana of the high elves to the wild forests of the wood elves, all refracted through the dark secrets of the dark elves. Hundreds of miles of forest were blighted by Perido's witchcraft; the trees became obsidian statues, and the mists became poison gas. She tore the stars from the sky and tried to rewrite the workings of fate—and despite all her power, the Elf Queen still defeated her wayward daughter in a duel of wizardry.

(Some say that the Queen had help, or cheated in that duel. Others say that Perido was unable to bring herself to slay her mother).

Defeated, Perido was triply punished. For her crimes against the high elves, she was exiled from the collective consciousness of the elves. Her connection to her mother—and through her, to all other elves—was forcibly severed.

For her crimes against the wood elves, she was bound to the living world, cursing her with undeath. Her soul will remain in the land as long as the world endures.

For her crimes (or conspiracy) with the drow, she was imprisoned in the Palace of Contemplative Regret for the rest of her life.

The Palace, however, vanished several centuries later. All that remained was a sinkhole—the spoor of the living dungeon.



[Special trigger] **R: Triple Blast: Mind-Burning Curse +13 vs. PD (target of *poisonous serpents*)**—25 psychic damage, and the target is confused (hard save ends, 16+).

Ghostly Form: Perido has *resist damage 16+* to all damage (even holy damage) except force damage, which damages her normally. She can move inside solid objects.

Conjure Shades: As a move action, Perido may conjure a number of elfshades equal to the number of player characters (7th level PCs—twice the number of player characters).

Dying Curse: If Perido is destroyed, she jumps into the mind of the character who struck the killing blow. From this bolthole, she plots revenge. Getting rid of the hitchhiking ghost is a matter for another adventure. Initially, the only sign of the possession is the mysterious 1-point conflicted relationship with the Elf Queen that the character suddenly acquires…

Nastier Specials

Free Shades: Perido may *conjure shades* when she first rolls initiative.

Possession: As a move action, Perido can attempt to possess a nearby victim. This attack is **+13 vs. MD**; if successful, it inflicts no damage, but Perido inhabits the victim's body. The victim may make a hard save (16+) each round to expel Perido, but reduce the save if the victim makes an especially passionate or desperate plea to the GM, or invokes an icon benefit.

If someone attacks Perido while she's possessing a victim, the victim gets another save to force Perido out. If the save succeeds, then the attack hits Perido. If the save fails, then apply the attack's damage and effects to the victim instead.

Perido may still attack while possessing a victim.

AC 24
PD 18
MD 22

HP 400

Elfshades

Those elves who joined Perido's rebellion now suffer with her.

8th level mook [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +12
Vulnerability: holy

Spectral Sword +12 vs. PD—20 damage
Natural 16+: Another elfshade appears.

AC 24
PD 18 **HP 36 (mook)**
MD 22

Mook: Kill one elfshade mook for every 36 damage dealt to the mob.

Perido's Throne: Once the ghost is defeated, the throne may be examined safely. A hidden catch in the left arm opens up a concealed treasure compartment in the base of the chair. (The matching catch on the right arm opens up a trapdoor at the foot of the dais, but since the throne room got moved from Perido's prison to this cave in the Stone Thief dungeon, the trapdoor now goes nowhere.) The treasure compartment contains easily-portable jewels valued at 500 gp per character, along with a magical *wand of imperious doom* and a *ring of ambition.*

The Wand and the Ring

Wand of Imperious Doom (recharge 16+): In addition to the standard champion-tier +2 to arcane spell attack and damage, this wand permits the caster to add a one-word command to any spell that hits the target's Mental Defense. The target is compelled to obey this command if possible, although they get an easy (6+) save if the command would take more than one round. *Stop, kneel,* or *begone* are good standbys. *Sleep* only works if the target is already dozing, and *die* really only works if the target is already on the verge of death. *Quirk:* Bossy.

Ring of Ambition (recharge 16+): Increase the escalation die by 1. Use this only when engaged with a foe who is 4 or more levels higher than your level.

Also, you may choose to reroll any positive icon relationship die that didn't roll a 5 or 6. Doing so makes that relationship conflicted, as you're putting yourself on the path of treachery and unchecked ambition. *Quirk:* Ambitious.

1B: Guard Post

The secret entrance leads to a short corridor carved of a strange bluish stone that glistens and gleams. Dotted along the corridor are several niches, each of which contains a stone brute of prodigious size and strength. These guards don't attack unless threatened, or unless there's a conclave in progress. Unless they're bored.

Stone Brute

Like a pile of rubble with fists.

Large 8th level troop [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +8

Stone Claws +13 vs. AC—65 damage
Natural even hit: The target is grabbed.

Stone Haymaker +8 vs. AC (or +12 vs. AC when targeting a grabbed victim)—100 damage
Natural even hit: The target is stunned for one round.

Runic Tablet: Each stone brute has a magical runic tablet held in its chest. When the brute is destroyed with a melee attack, the tablet is revealed, exposing the Rune of Destruction. The character that dealt the killing blow sees the rune and takes 75 psychic damage.

A PC who knows about the rune (through bitter experience, supernatural senses, a tipoff from the Archmage, etc.) can choose to attack warily; that gives a –2 penalty to the PCs' attacks on the brute, but avoids exposure to the rune.

Killing a brute with a critical hit destroys the rune before it can be read.

AC 24
PD 18 **HP 288**
MD 22

Number/Level of PCs	Stone Brute
3 x 6th level	1
4 x 6th level	1
5 x 6th level	2
6 x 6th level	2
7 x 6th level	3
3 x 7th level	*2*
4 x 7th level	*2*
5 x 7th level	*3*
6 x 7th level	*3*
7 x 7th level	*4*

1C: The Conclave Chamber

This curiously shaped room has ten sides of equal size. The door is on one wall; the other nine walls are for the remaining seven Custodians and their master, the Stone Thief, if she ever deigns to manifest. Unless the characters sneak in here while there's a conclave going on, the walls are mostly blank. One wall (the Mad Butcher) is marred by blood flecks. Another (the Pearlkeeper) is damp to the touch, and there are a few dead barnacles. Another wall is broken and scarred, and moss grows profusely in the cracks.

The only other notable feature is a map, engraved on the stone floor. It's a map of the dungeon in its current configuration.

Eavesdropping on the Custodians

It can be fun for the players to get a chance to listen in on the debates of the Custodians. Don't play out a whole scene of stone faces talking to one another—just summarize the arguments and give the players the relevant facts and a few evocative lines.

Actions of the Adventurers

- The intruders—clearly, the player characters—have been causing lots of trouble on the upper levels.
- *She*—the Stone Thief—has fixated on them. *"One of her little obsessions,"* as the Vizier puts it.
- The intruders must be stopped. If the PCs haven't already gone down the Gauntlet, then the Mad Butcher is assigned the task of eliminating them. Otherwise, the Architect sighs and agrees to send the characters "downstairs" so the archivults can take them. At some point soon, the PCs find an out-of-place stairwell that connects to the Maddening Stair (page 189).

The Danger of the Eyes

- There are rumors that someone is after the Eyes again.
- The Custodians' positions rely on the Thief staying blind. If she can see again, she'll have no need for them.
- "*The Prince has one of the Eyes. Who has the other?*" wonders the Vizier.

The Troublesome Orcs

- The Architect complains about the Vizier's "foul pets," and bemoans the day they ever let Fangrot establish a foothold in the dungeon.
- The Vizier counters that they need the orcs to keep the "Cult" in check—without the orcs, the Secret Masters would become too powerful for the Custodians to deal with.
- The Architect complains they're exchanging one peril for another, but the Vizier assures the other Custodians that everything is in hand. "*You don't have hands,*" observes the Doorkeeper. "*None of us do. You're thinking like flesh people, now.*"
- The other faces withdraw, leaving only the Curator and the Architect. The Curator assures its fellow Custodian that the living dungeon will know its own when the time comes, and that the dungeon-spawned orcs will soon outnumber the interlopers. The Vizier will soon be quite unnecessary…

Marblehall

- The Custodians demand that the Curator explain the mysterious extra level the dungeon recently acquired. It's attached to the Pit, so he should know all about it.
- The Curator blames the Architect—after all, the Gizzard level is responsible for integrating new thefts into the larger structure.
- The Custodians debate how to deal with this strange intrusion. They cannot enter Marblehall directly, but neither can the Witch emerge without provoking a confrontation.
- *"Wall her up and let her starve,"* hisses the Butcher, *"she's not a denizen. She can die here."*

1D. Prison

This little dungeon-in-a-dungeon was ripped from a dwarven prison, so the ceilings are uncomfortably low. The Custodians use this room to store living beings they want to question, or who they think might come in useful. (It's possible that an unconscious player character might end up here, especially if they're trapped in the dungeon when it submerges.)

Of the half-dozen cells, three are occupied. The first prisoner is **Oroon**, a halfling acolyte of the Cult of the Devourer. The Custodians captured her on pilgrimage to interrogate her about cult activities on the surface. She rants about 'evil spirits' and the coming of the Devourer for as long as the player characters wish to listen. More usefully, she promises to reveal secrets about the cult and what she's heard about the lower levels if the player characters free her. She'll string them along with a mix of half-truths and crazy ramblings until an opportunity arises to make a break for it.

The second cell contains a humanoid creature in a lurid yellow robe. He looks mostly human, but has a growth of fish-like scales instead of a beard, and eyeballs blink amid the tangles of his hair. He speaks no known language (maybe the dungeon picked him up in some distant land, or he's a weird magical mutant or extraplanar entity—either leave him as a forever-cryptic bit of weirdness for the players to fret about, or else hang your own plot around his fishy neck). He refuses to leave his cell and becomes aggressive if the adventurers try to force liberty on him.

The third cell is home to **Efric**, a gnome bard adventurer. He's the most recent addition to the menagerie. The Custodians brought him here to be their record-keeper and secretary.

Keeping minutes for the committee meetings of a bunch of middle-management elementals was not the fate Efric expected when he became an adventurer. If freed, he tells the characters everything he knows:

- He's an adventurer who entered this dungeon with **Bartholomew** (see page 67) and several other companions.
- The Custodians who took him prisoner are elemental servants of the Stone Thief. The Eyes of the Stone Thief were stolen long ago, so the dungeon relies on these Custodians to keep things running smoothly.
- There's a cult in the lower levels who worship the dungeon, and there's a powerful witch who frightens the Custodians.
- One of the Custodians, the Vizier, is secretly advising the leader of the orcs of Deep Keep, wherever that is.

Variations

Depending on circumstances elsewhere in the dungeon, a Custodian might decide to appear to the PCs and offer them a deal. For example, if the dungeon has caught the scent of one of the missing Eyes, the Vizier or even the Curator (page 214) could pop up and offer the PCs a deal—get the Eye before the Stone Thief swallows it, and the Custodians will owe the adventurers a favor.

2. Slave Farms



This warren of caves and crumbling ruins is where the orcs of Deep Keep grow mushrooms and cave fungi, and where they fatten their demonic swine on fungi and monster offal. Many creatures in the dungeon don't need to eat often to survive, as the Stone Thief keeps her denizens in suspended animation when the dungeon submerges. Most of these orcs, though, are intruders instead of denizens, so they still have mortal needs.

The orcs capture slaves from places consumed by the dungeon, but also raid the surface when the opportunity presents itself, charging out of the Maw (or whichever level of the dungeon holds the entrance) and ranging afield to pillage and destroy. The slaves are worked to death, and their emaciated corpses get stripped of all meat before ground up and fed to the pigs, or traded to the Flesh Tailor in the Ossuary (see page 123). Few last more than a few weeks.

The slave farms are a doleful place. Slaves toil in the half-light to gather mushrooms under the watchful eyes of the orcs and the hungry eyes of the pigs. Fall, and the orc-whips crack. Fall and stay down, and end up a snack for piggies.

Sneaking Through the Caverns

It's a DC 30 check to sneak through these caves without being noticed by anyone. However, a result of 20–29 means that the characters have successfully evaded the orcs, but were spotted by either slaves or some pigs in a corral. Quick action of some sort can convince or trick either group into keeping silent (signaling to the slaves that rescue is at hand; distracting the pigs, a *sleep* spell, or something similar). Otherwise, the orcs start looking for intruders, and the characters must battle an orcish hunting party (see below).

Hungry Piggies

The hogs bred by the orcs in the dungeon are infernally tainted swine. Their eyes glow red in the darkness, and they snort out sulphurous breath. They're very, very hungry for the flesh of the living. In a fight in the Slave Farms, roll 1d6 at the start of every round. If the result is less than the escalation die, then a herd of pigs breaks out of their pen and swarms through the fray. The player character who has the lowest hit points gets pig-rushed, as do any staggered or downed foes. Treat this as a **+10 attack vs. PD** that inflicts 4d8 damage. If the pigs face any resistance, they run off grunting into the darkness after the attack.

Pigs, by the way, are excellent trackers. If you want to ramp up the players' paranoia, a pig-pack might stalk them through the dungeon as they explore. Whenever the characters think about stopping to rest, they hear the sound of hellish oinking in the distance.

Eating corpse-fed, orc-raised, demon-tainted bacon may be hazardous to your health.

Battling the Slavers

The adventurers can charge in and start slaughtering orc slavers. Taken by surprise, the slavers are no match for their attackers, and the adventurers cut through them easily. Other slavers flee to raise the alarm, resulting in the arrival of a hastily assembled orcish hunting party. The characters have time to break the chains of a handful of slaves before the orcs arrive.

Freeing the Slaves

The characters can rescue a few slaves easily—all they need do is sneak into a cave, kill the orc slave-master, break the chains, and lead the slaves out of the immediate area.

Freeing all the slaves, though, is a bigger challenge. Potential solutions:

- Smuggle weapons to the slaves, so they can fight back against the orcs when the time comes.
- Free the slaves in the Slave Quarters inside Deep Keep itself.
- Rally the slaves by spreading word of a planned revolt, raising their spirits and preparing them in secret. If the player characters are slaves, this may be their only option.
- Rescuing the gladiators in the Fighting Pit (page 175), since the gladiators have some combat experience and can help lead the revolt.
- Distract the orcs, giving the slaves an opportunity to rise up and fight.
- Or, of course, just kill all the orcs in Deep Keep.

If the slaves are freed, they look to the characters to answer other questions, such as "where do we go?" "how do we escape this dungeon before it sinks and crushes us?" and "where do we go after we escape—it ate our homes?" Deep Keep won't be a sanctuary any longer, unless the characters can make their own deal with the Vizier (see page 188).

Variations

- The pit is empty—the orcs have herded all the slaves back to Deep Keep, as they expect the dungeon to submerge shortly. The player characters have time to scout out the area before it contracts around them.
- Raiders from Dungeon Town attempt an ill-considered attack on the Slave Farms; unless the player characters help them, the would-be liberators will be enslaved themselves.

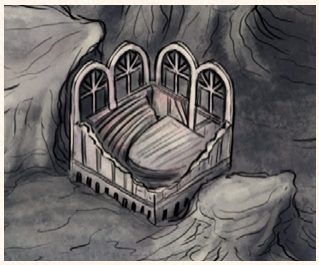
Slaves

The orcs' slaves come mostly from whatever places were recently swallowed by the dungeon, but add in slaves to tug on the heartstrings of players who might be motivated by the plight of a particular group. If there's a gnome player character in the party, throw in some gnome slaves kidnapped from the Gnomelands. If the half-orc character has a bitter grudge against the Imperial legions, then give her some captured legionnaires to scorn—or to rescue, purely so she can throw moral rocks at them from her new high ground.

Other potentially useful slaves:

- **Old Atho**, a human, captured years ago. He's the oldest of the slaves and knows places to hide to keep clear of the orcs when they're angry. He tried to escape before, years ago, but was forced to retreat back to the Deep Keep when the dungeon began to submerge. He can tell the characters about Fangrot and the orcs' failed mission to capture the Stone Thief for the fabled Orc Lord.
- **Borrower**, a halfling street thief from Drakkenhall. She's a dab hand with lockpicks and sneaking around, and is so small that she goes unnoticed by the orcs. However, she's absolutely terrified of Greyface and his slavers; unless the PCs can build up her courage, she's of limited use.
- Optionally, allow the PCs to spend icon benefits to describe a really useful slave they find in the pit.

3. Fighting Pit



The Fighting Pit was once an elegant opera house decorated with mirrors and gilt and painted statues of nymphs and satyrs, before the dungeon swallowed the place and the orcs claimed it for their sport. The orcs watch from an upper balcony that overlooks the stage and ruined stalls below. They herd monsters onto the stage, then bar the doors and toss slaves down to fight the monsters. If they're in a merry mood, they throw a weapon down to the slave; otherwise, they laugh as the monsters tear the unarmed victims to bloody rags. Orcs armed with long polearms keep agile or flying gladiators from escaping the pit.

The current 'champion' of the Fighting Pit is a monk named **Iron Feather**; the question of whether or not her fists and feet count as weapons for the purposes of the pit is a matter of heated debate among the orcs, and many of them want to chop off the offending limbs 'in the interests of fairness'.

The star monsters are a floth of dire owlbears (a floth, you ask? The collective noun for birds is a flock, for bears a sloth, hence a floth. Or a slothiament, if you're pretentious). The biggest owlbear is possessed by a demon, giving it infernal powers. Grimtusk's warriors regularly add new monsters to the menagerie—the one thing they're not short of in the Stone Thief is a ready supply of monsters.

An Evening's Entertainment

If the adventurers are on friendly terms with the orcs (or in disguise), then the gallery above the fighting pit is a great place to hang out and meet like-minded orcs. Adventurers looking to spread sedition and rally a force against Fangrot can find interested allies here. Possible encounters include:

- A brawl breaks out between followers of Fangrot and followers of Grimtusk. The losers get thrown into the pit below. The brawl rolls toward the player characters—either they take a side, or get punched by both sides.
- An orcish scavenging gang return from the Gizzard with several casks of wine from the surface. The characters recognize a mark on one of the casks—it's a magical vintage made from the Archmage's own vineyards. Only wizards have the mental fortitude to drink it; untrained imbibers start hallucinating wildly. Do the characters warn the orcs?



- A pilgrim seeking the Secret Masters of the Cult of the Devourer shows up in the bar, seeking permission to pass through the Great Gate and descend into the levels below. Unfortunately, this pilgrim lost the requisite bribe on her way through the dungeon, and once the orcs learn that, they're going to enslave her. Do the adventurers intercede?

Meeting Grimtusk

Grimtusk and his cronies run the Fighting Pit. The orc crime boss can regularly be found at his favorite table overlooking the carnage below.

If the PCs are looking for help from Grimtusk, then either

1: They've got a good relationship with the Prince of Shadows and can cash in an icon benefit for an audience with the orc;

2: Grimtusk has already fought the PCs, or they've accomplished something big enough within the dungeon to garner a reputation; or

3: They've proved themselves in the Fighting Pit.

If none of those apply, then Grimtusk has his warriors throw the PCs into the pit. If they survive, they can try talking to the orc again.

Bribery: Grimtusk can get the characters through the Great Gate without Fangrot knowing about it if they agree to carry a package from him to the Prince of Shadows. The package is something that the dungeon stole that's immensely valuable—roll icon story-guide dice to determine who wants the item back. Get the package to Shadow Port and into the hands of the Prince, and Grimtusk will smuggle the characters through the Great Gate. (This plotline can lead into *The Second Eye* in *Eyes of the Stone Thief*, page 315).

Murder and Assassination: More ambitious characters can agree to help Grimtusk overthrow Fangrot. Few things can convince the warlord to leave his sanctum in Deep Keep, but a good gladiatorial fight is one of them. Step one—the player characters establish themselves as hated enemies of Fangrot. Step two—Grimtusk 'captures' them and enslaves them as gladiators. Step three—Fangrot comes to watch the show. Step four—at the right moment, the PCs break out of the pit and take Fangrot by surprise. See *Battling Fangrot*, page 187. If necessary, step five is a bloody purge of any orcs loyal to the previous warlord, and the establishment of Grimtusk's glorious new regime.

As warlord, Grimtusk intends to carry on his policy of looting and stealing. He won't free the slaves or return to the Orc Lord's plan of binding the dungeon (although he will consider offers that give him control of the Stone Thief). However, if the PCs want to try killing the Stone Thief, he won't stand in their way—he assumes they'll never survive the lower levels of the dungeon.

Fighting in the Pit

Pit battles work just like normal battles, with the following exceptions:

- Retreating isn't an option. You can yield, and maybe the orcs will drag you up with their billhooks, but there's nowhere to run to. (Of course, if you blast a hole in the wall with an empowered *lightning fork*, or pick the lock on the gates leading to the monster cells, then you can flee through the exit you created, but you've got to make said exit in the middle of a fight.)
- Getting far away from your foes requires a skill check of some sort. You need to hide in the shadows at the back of the auditorium, or shimmy up a pillar, or climb into an opera box. Otherwise, everyone is nearby.

A sample pit fight is described below, but if you need more, the Fighting Pit is a great excuse to use obscure monsters from other sources, like the *13th Age Bestiary* or levels of this dungeon that your players never visited.

Grimtusk

Let's make a deal...

Double-strength 8th level leader [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Nasty Sword +13 vs. AC (2 attacks)—40 damage
Natural roll exceeds target's Dexterity: Grimtusk also grabs an item belonging to his target.

Canny Leader: Whenever the escalation die would increase, Grimtusk may make a hard save (16+). If successful, the die does not increase. Keep track of the number of times this ability is used. When Grimtusk is defeated, raise the escalation die by that value.

They're Losing! Get Them!: Whenever an enemy engaged with Grimtusk uses a recovery, one nearby orc other than him may make a melee attack as a free action.

Pick of the Loot: Grimtusk may redirect an attack targeting him so it targets a nearby allied orc instead, or allow a nearby orc to make a melee attack as a free action. He may use this ability twice per battle, plus once for each time he steals an item from a foe.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 200**
MD 17

Freeing the Gladiators

Iron Feather and the other gladiators are kept chained in cells beneath the Fighting Pit. These cells are within the protective sanctuary of Deep Keep, so they usually remain unchanged when the dungeon submerges and collapses. The cells are right on the edge of the protected area so unlucky prisoners may be crushed by shifting walls. As champion, Iron Feather gets moved to Deep Keep itself when the dungeon submerges, to ensure her safety. A specimen like her deserves to get torn apart by a slavering monster, not squashed by the whim of the Stone Thief.

The best time to rescue these gladiators is just before the dungeon starts to submerge. The guards leave as soon as the alarm sounds, giving the adventurers a window of a few minutes to sneak in, open the cells, break the manacles, and bring the gladiators out of bondage—and, one would hope, to somewhere safe.

Other gladiators include:

- **Courteous Ash:** A dwarf adventurer who got drunk and woke up in the dungeon, Ash's prized possession is her magical axe *Fury.* One of its properties is that it only exists when Ash is angry—the weapon pops into her hand whenever she wants to hit something. The orcs were unable to disarm her, so she's kept in chains except when they let her fight in the pit. She's in the habit of keeping her emotions cool by being absurdly formal and polite in all situations.
- **The Golden Hero:** A professional gladiator from one of the arenas of Axis. Specifically, one of the shady, faked arenas of Axis—the Golden Hero is a showman and performer, not a fighter. He can work a crowd and perform some impressive-looking but utterly impractical wrestling moves, but he's no use in an actual fight. The orcs keep him around because he entertains them.
- **Mad Krexos:** A human sorcerer, driven insane by his experiences in the dungeon. The orcs haven't been able to determine how powerful a sorcerer Krexos is, because he casts his spells at random. He only barely survived a bout with a pack of hunting spiders, then blew a vrock to bits with a single *chaos pulse.*

Owlbears from Hell

The orcs' favorite monsters in the Fighting Pit at the moment are a pack of owlbears, some of which are demonically possessed.

Dire Owlbear

Also known as the fell owlbear or Western Spotted Owlbear to sages, or 'agh, no, run' to the layperson who does not appreciate violent beauty.

Large 7th level wrecker [BEAST]
Initiative: +11

Rip and Peck +12 vs. AC (2 attacks)—40 damage, and until the end of the owlbear's next turn, the target is hampered (makes only basic attacks) while engaged with the owlbear.

Vicious hybrid: If the escalation die is even, make a third *rip and peck* attack.

Miss: 10 damage.

Screw the Cubs, I'm Hungry: An owlbear that scores a critical hit against a hampered enemy tries to bite off its victim's head. The victim must immediately make a save (11+). Succeed, and the victim is merely stunned until the end of its next turn. Fail, and... well, at least that owlbear is out of the fight until the PC recovers, as it's busy lapping up the arterial spray. The PC instantly drops to –40 hit points.

Fury: When the dire owlbear is staggered, it gains a +2 attack bonus and deals +10 damage, but takes 4d6 damage at the end of each of its turns.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 216**
MD 17

Possessor Demon

Ever twitched for no reason? Ever had an inexplicable stabbing pain at the back of your eye? Ever murdered your family without cause? Maybe a possessor demon passed through you.

8th level spoiler [DEMON]
Initiative: +11, but don't roll—it acts on the same initiative as its host
Vulnerability: holy

[Special trigger] **Unholy Touch +13 vs. MD**—30 damage, and the target becomes vulnerable to attacks from the demon's host (save ends)

Possessor: This attack is triggered whenever the demon's host hits with an attack. (To speed things up, use the same d20 roll for both attacks.)

Possessor: This demon can possess a host. While inhabiting a host, the demon cannot be attacked except by spells that target Mental Defense. If the host is slain, the demon must manifest physically. While manifested, the demon can be attacked normally. It temporarily loses its *unholy touch* power, but gains *demonic claw* instead.

Demonic Claw +13 vs. AC—30 damage

As a standard action, an unhoused demon may possess a nearby unpossessed ally.

Nastier Specials

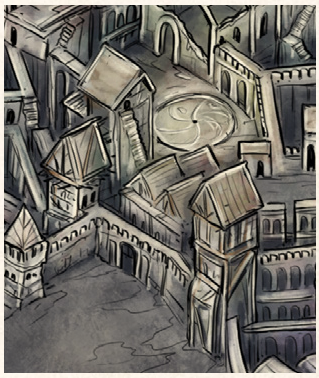
Body Thief: The demon may try to possess enemies by making a **+13 vs. MD** attack on a foe. On a hit, the victim is confused until the end of their next turn. The demon enters the body of the confused target and may use its *unholy touch* attack with any attacks made by the confused victim. When the confusion ends, the demon is ejected and manifests physically again.

AC 20
PD 16 **HP 90**
MD 20

Owlbears From Hell Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Dire Owlbears	Possessor Demon
3 x 6th level	**1**	**1**
4 x 6th level	**1**	**1**
5 x 6th level	**2**	**1**
6 x 6th level	**2**	**1**
7 x 6th level	**3**	**1**
3 x 7th level	***2***	***1***
4 x 7th level	***2***	***2***
5 x 7th level	***3***	***2***
6 x 7th level	***3***	***3***
7 x 7th level	***4***	***3***

4. The Great Gate



Deep Keep exists to protect this portal into the dungeon's lower levels. The Great Gate is a huge circle of metal set into the floor, like a giant's seal. Magical runes and warding symbols adorn its outer surface. In the center of the circle is a depiction of the Devourer, the God-Dungeon to come in the warped theology of the Cult of the Devourer. The gate opens at the touch of anyone who has been initiated into the Cult of the Devourer—the maw of the Devourer opens to swallow the faithful—but the orcs have rigged an elaborate system of chains, pulleys, and gears that allow them to force the gate open.

The gate looks right down the chasm of the Maddening Stair, so anyone who just jumps into the open portal has a very, very long fall ahead of them. The only safe route is to climb carefully down to a narrow ledge that leads to the start of the Maddening Stair (page 189).

Meeting Greyface

The old orc captain is more perceptive than most of his kind; he might spot disguised player characters. He's also canny enough to know that someone willing to sneak into the lower levels is not to be trifled with, so he may offer the player characters a deal. Of all the orcs in Deep Keep, Greyface is the most determined to live up to the Orc Lord's example and complete the mission given them. The Orc Lord wants this living dungeon as a weapon, and if allying with the player characters to bring down Fangrot and put the orcs back on the right path is what it takes, so be it.

Unlike Grimtusk, Greyface doesn't demand that the player characters prove themselves or make them run errands for him. He speaks with the brutal honor of the Orc Lord; while they share a purpose they are allies. Once Fangrot is dead, they are enemies again and he will do his best to kill them.

To get close to Fangrot, Greyface suggests that the player characters pretend to be emissaries of the Cult of the Devourer, here to offer more tribute to the warlord. When a really impressive tribute or pile of loot arrives in Deep Keep, Fangrot likes to show off with a feast. All Fangrot's sycophants, as well as Grimtusk and his cronies, will be gathered in the Great Hall of Deep Keep.

Greyface's scouts found a black pudding in the depths of the dungeon and managed to lure it into a big chest (step one, put a slave in the chest…). The player characters can use that chest as their 'tribute.' When Fangrot throws the chest open to show his followers the tribute he brings in, the pudding will burst out and attack. The PCs and Greyface's troops can use that opportunity to attack. See *The Great Hall*, page 186.

Orc Lord: If one of the PCs has a strong positive relationship with the Orc Lord, then Greyface may become their long-term ally, as long as that character keeps looking for a way to bind the dungeon.



Greyface

Loyalty is everything.

Double-strength 8th level leader [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Nasty Sword +13 vs. AC (two attacks)—40 damage
Natural roll exceeds target's Strength: The target pops free, and Greyface may make a *nasty sword* attack on another foe he is engaged with.

Canny Leader: Whenever the escalation die increases, Greyface may make a hard save (16+). If successful, the die does not increase. Keep track of the number of the number of times this ability is used. When Greyface is defeated, raise the escalation die by that value.

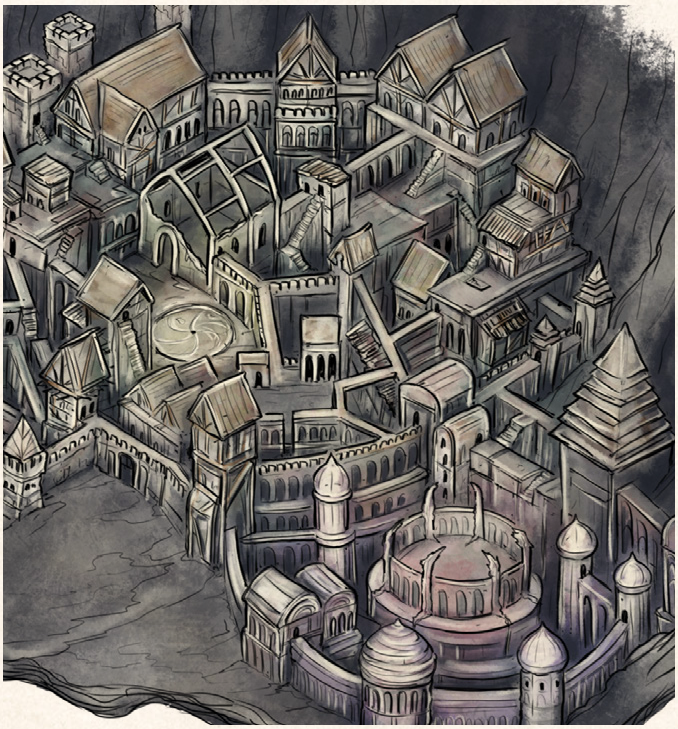
For the Orc Lord!: As a free action once per battle, Greyface may shout a war cry. For the rest of the battle, all orcs may add the value of his *canny leader* ability (i.e. the number of times he's blocked the escalation die from increasing) to their attack rolls.

They're Losing! Get Them!: Whenever an enemy engaged with Greyface uses a recovery, one nearby orc other than him may make a melee attack as a free action.

AC 23
PD 21
MD 17

HP 200

5. DEEP KEEP



A hundred castles crammed together without logic or design, Deep Keep is an architectural nightmare, a weaponized Gormenghast. The fortress is much, much too large to actually defend or maintain, so Fangrot's forces are clustered around the Great Gate, leaving more than five-sixths of the fortress uninhabited.

Uninhabited by orcs, that is. Player characters who go exploring in the dusty labyrinths and endless towers and battlements of Deep Keep might run into all sorts of nasty monsters. Excellent candidates: driders, manticores, phase spiders, stone golems, black puddings, or (from the *13th Age Bestiary*) thunder bats, gelahedrons, lammasu, liches, and warbanners.

Getting Into The Keep

There are four entrances into the keep.

- The most direct route is to go through the Gatehouse. It's heavily guarded (use the High Alert fight chart, and add on an armored war troll for every three PCs (or for every two 7th level PCs). If the PCs pretend to be members of the Cult of the Devourer, or somehow convince the orcs that they deserve an audience with Warlord Fangrot, they get escorted to the Great Hall. Sneaking through the Gatehouse is difficult (DC 30).
- Climbing over the walls requires a DC 25 check; failure means the characters are spotted as they climb, raising the Alert Level by 1 and sending a hunting party of orcs after them. Fortunately, the orcs have to take the long way around, so the characters may be able to vanish into the maze of battlements and rooftops within the walls of Deep Keep.
- Large and unguarded doors lead from the caves straight into the Slave Quarters (Area B), but there's no easy way from the slave quarters to the rest of the fortress.
- Cautious PCs can just trek off into the caves and find an uninhabited part of the fortress to break into. It's easy to storm the castle when nobody's watching. Well, nobody but some wandering monsters.

Moving Around In Deep Keep

As noted on page 163, moving around inside the fortress without being spotted is DC 25. Failure either raises the Alert Level or results in a fight with the orcs.

Inside Deep Keep: Minor Encounters

Secret Passageway

A secret door (DC 25 to find the entrance) opens onto a dusty corridor lined with ropy cobwebs. It's obvious that no one has been down this passageway in decades. The passageway winds its way through the bowels of Deep Keep; the characters can hear orc voices coming from above and below and to the sides, so close they must only be inches away on the far side of the wall, then runs up a narrow spiral staircase and along an abandoned gallery to end in another secret door. Through a spyhole, the characters look out on another location in Deep Keep—maybe the Blood Mages' Temple or Uthe's Shrine, or even Fangrot's Chambers. If they attack from hiding, they have the advantage of surprise.

Siege Preparations

The characters come upon a great workshop, now silent and abandoned. There are dozens of half-finished siege towers, catapults, and other war machines. From the look of them, they were built right here in the dungeon from salvaged parts, or looted from the castles that went into the building of Deep Keep. They're all of orcish design. Only a few are complete, however, and most of them are rusted or rotten. This is what remains of the invasion force that Fangrot was ordered to build by the Orc Lord. When Fangrot secretly abandoned his mission, he also ordered that the construction of siege engines be stopped.

Orc Lord/Crusader: Hey, those barrels over there—they're full of Blasting Pitch! Blasting Pitch is a rare and highly unstable substance, difficult to produce and even more difficult to store safely. It's used to bring down castle walls if you don't have a war-wizard ritual or siege giant handy. It's too slow to use in combat, but it makes a terribly big boom if you add the firing catalyst—and those wineskins over here look like they're full of the catalyst. Just open the stopper, let the catalyst drip into the barrel… and well, stand very, very, very far away.

The Deep Bell

Every time the Stone Thief begins to submerge, this magical bell sounds from the topmost tower in Deep Keep. The bell was taken from some temple on the surface, but now it warns the non-denizen orcs that it's time to herd the slaves back to the shelter, before the walls close in on them and the dungeon descends into the underworld once more.

Ringing the bell, therefore, will distract the orcs as they rush to the Slave Farms.

Priestess: The bell is a holy relic, taken from a chapel atop the Sea Wall. Once, it rang to warn townsfolk of an approaching sea monster. The sea monsters that dwell in the Iron Sea *really* hate the noise of this bell. In fact, if you were to ring it when the Stone Thief is under or near the Iron Sea, then maybe one of the monsters would stomp over to the dungeon to get to the hated bell.

Cult Pilgrim

Pilgrims and messengers from the Cult of the Devourer regularly pass through Deep Keep, because it's the safest and most direct route to the Onyx Catacombs and the citadel in the deeps. This particular pilgrim is a noblewoman of the Empire named **Galinde Vermoon**; she's a courtier in Axis, but also a secret member of the cult. She's staying in Deep Keep while she negotiates the price of her passage with Fangrot. Galinde brought a chest of gold with her as tribute to Fangrot (protected by a magical ward that disintegrates the gold if she dies or anyone tries to open it without speaking the command word only she knows), but she also carries another treasure—a magical ring that's intended to be her tithe to the cult. Fangrot's refusing her permission to pass through the Great Gate until she hands over the ring.

The ring, by the way, is an heirloom of her husband's noble house; the *Signet of House Vermoon* allows any true-blooded member of the house to call their tame enchanted castle, the Castle of Legs, which comes running to attend to the ringbearer. There are three such rings, and each one only recharges when the other two have been expended. So, if the cult gets the ring, the Castle of Legs will be stuck forever in its current abode.

Only those descended from House Vermoon can use the ring; as she married into the family, Galinde can't use it. It should be noted, though, that old Vraxuth Vermoon was a notorious scoundrel who sired any number of illegitimate children across the Empire, so it's possible that a PC has enough Vermoon blood to command the Castle of Legs.

Emperor: You recognize Galinde Vermoon as a courtier of Axis; what's she doing in the dungeon as an apparent guest of the orcs?

Shrine to the Orc Lord

Hidden in an obscure storeroom is a shrine to the Orc Lord. It's the sort of shrine you'd see in any orc camp—crossed swords, broken pots, teeth, and a bloody image of the great warrior cleaving his way through the weak humans and dwarves. But why is it kept in this little storeroom? Surely a huge orc fortress like Deep Keep should have a correspondingly glorious shrine to the Orc Lord?

Orc Lord: Humble or not, the Orc Lord's power is palpable here. If you honor this shrine in a suitable way, you gain an extra Orc Lord relationship die until your next full heal-up.

Locations in Deep Keep

A: Orc Barracks

The barracks in Deep Keep is crowded and noisy, despite the vast size of the fortress. The orcs prefer to stick to the safe zone around the Great Gate, just in case the dungeon suddenly submerges. It smells like a locker room crossed with an abattoir, which is a pretty accurate summation of life in the barracks too.

It's not obvious at first glance, but there's a strict pecking order in the barracks. The orcs who work directly for Fangrot get the best quarters; they get the bunks closest to the firepits, and they're the ones waited on by human slaves from the kitchens. Fangrot's orcs are bigger, fatter, and lazier than the rest.

Next come Grimtusk's orcs—their sections of the barracks aren't quite so nice, but they've got the pick of the loot from the Gizzard, so they've got better equipment and the occasional luxury. One orc uses a priceless elven tapestry as her blanket; another orc has a fine chain shirt made by the dwarves, as well as an even finer keg of beer.

At the bottom of the pile are Greyface's followers. Their part of the barracks is cold and cobwebby, and their gear is noticeably poorer and shabbier, even by orc standards. Whenever they grumble, Fangrot's followers and Grimtusk's goons combine forces to teach the Greyfaces their place.

The stoneborn orcs are outside this rude social structure. They don't have a barracks—they don't fear the dungeon submerging, because they're part of the dungeon. They sleep entombed in the stony embrace of the Stone Thief that spawned them.

Fighting in the Barracks: Wait, do you mean "cleverly tricking the orcs to fight each other by playing on their clear social divisions?" or "charging in and rolling initiative?" If the PCs pull off the former (say, with a DC 20 Charisma skill check or an illusion), then reduce the Alert Level by 1d4.

If they attack the Room of Far Too Many Orcs, then use the Medium Alert Level fight chart, but *double* the number of foes of each type.

B: Slave Quarters

The Slave Quarters are a hellishly crowded set of rooms, with rough-forged grates welded in place across doorways to keep the slaves from escaping into the rest of the keep. When the dungeon submerges, the caves and corridors outside the keep shrink away to nothing. Any slaves left outside the sanctuary perish. To maintain the slave population, the orcs herd both their slaves and their demon pigs into these quarters. In places, the orcs have removed the ceilings and replaced them with more gratings, so they can watch the slaves from above. Imagine the most overcrowded, dank, hateful prison—now add hundreds of sweating demonic pigs, and replace the jailors with bored orcs.



C: Blood Sorcerers' Temple

The creepy sect of blood sorcerer orcs who serve Fangrot have their sanctum here. Only blood sorcerers and their demonic servants are allowed inside—after all, the other orcs might object to that giant glowing portal to Hell. The portal is vampiric—it sucks up blood that comes near it, and it doesn't care whether or not that blood is free-flowing or still encased in veins and arteries. Get too close to the portal, and it'll pull your blood out of your pores like a gory magnet. Even the blood sorcerers aren't immune to this effect, so the portal is tended by specially exsanginated sorcerers who wear protective blood-soaked robes. The portal grabs their bloody robes instead of the few drops remaining in their veins.

Sitting in the middle of the portal is a grotesquely bloated demon, the Godtick. Slaying this demon would deprive the blood sorcerers of their powers, and considerably reduce the arcane might of the orcs of Deep Keep.

The PCs can either attack the demon directly, or sneak in and sabotage the portal.

(By the way, the Godtick was here before the orcs arrived. The Stone Thief stole it from a hellhole, and the orcs carried it out of the Pit of Undigested Ages as a trophy.)

Bloodsucking Portal

The exsanguinating effects are barely perceptible in most of the temple—spill a drop of blood on the floor, and it'll roll toward the portal, and don't expect small cuts or bruises to heal quickly—instead they grow considerably more intense near the portal itself.

Those near the portal lose hit points equal to 1d4 x the escalation die each round, and all recovery dice are reduced by one size (so, if you normally heal 5d8 hp when you use a recovery, here you only heal 5d6 hp). The bloodsucking damage applies to both player characters and their foes (roll once for damage and apply it to everyone). The recovery penalty applies only to PCs, since monsters don't get recoveries.

Sabotage

To sabotage the portal, a PC needs to sneak up to it and spend several rounds meddling with the control runes and altering the goetic balance of the dimensional doorway. In other words, they've got to make a skill check (DC 25). On a success, they take 6d6 damage; on a failure, they take 12d6 damage from the blood draining effects of the portal. Taking the same precautions as the blood sorcerers reduces the damage dice type to d4s.

Successfully meddling with the portal gives the PCs three options.

- **Option one**—just close it. The Godtick gets banished back to whence it came (but is still alive), the blood sorcerers lose their power, and everyone suddenly feels much less enervated.
- **Option two**—squeeze it. The portal convulses, popping the Godtick and squirting demonic ichor everywhere. This starts a fight, but the Godtick begins the battle staggered and the escalation die starts at 1d4.
- **Options three**—*expand* the blood draining effect. This hits everyone in Deep Keep, and is strong enough to kill many of the orcs (and pretty much all the slaves, if the PCs time the attack for when most of the slaves are in the pens instead of the farms outside). The sudden influx of blood pops the Godtick, as above, but also wreaks havoc throughout the level.
- **Crusader:** Technically, this is a small hellhole, and as a student of the Crusader's ways, you have Option Four—conquer the hellhole and claim it. This looks a lot like Option Three, only instead of blood draining, it's a blast of hellfire that burns the heart out of Deep Keep. You'll kill most of the orcs in one fell blow. You'll also effectively be laying claim to the fortress around the hellhole, setting yourself up in direct opposition to Fangrot, and this dungeon level isn't big enough for the both of you.
- **Diabolist:** You can get rid of the Godtick in a less violent manner—let it attach itself to your soul, and you can carry it out of this dungeon and bring it to the Diabolist's realm.

Master Blood Sorcerer

Those who profane the sanctum of the Godtick must perish—slowly, horribly and juicily.

8th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Ritual Dagger +13 vs. AC—30 damage. If this is the first time this enemy has been struck by a ritual dagger in this combat, add one point to the Blood Magic pool.

R: Blood Call: +13 vs. MD (one nearby target)—18 damage, and add two points to the Blood Magic pool.
Natural even hit: The target becomes vulnerable until the start of the blood sorcerer's next turn.

R: Blood Blast: +13 vs. PD (1d3 nearby targets)—13 damage per point spent from the Blood Magic pool.

R: Blood Curse: +13 vs. PD (one nearby or far away target)—25 damage. The sorcerer may spend any number of points from the Blood Magic pool; the crit range for attacks on the target expands by 1 for every point spent (save ends).

Group Ability—Blood Magic Pool: Blood sorcerers accumulate magical power in a pool shared by all the blood sorcerers in the combat. Use a die or tokens to track the accumulated points. If all blood sorcerers in the combat are slain with points left in the Blood Magic pool, then the body of the last sorcerer explodes, inflicting 1d6 damage per remaining Blood Magic point on all nearby creatures.

Gather Blood: As a move action, the blood sorcerer can gather power. Until the start of the blood sorcerer's next turn, add one to the Blood Magic pool for each creature in the combat that is slain or suffers a critical hit. If the blood sorcerer takes damage while using this ability, it must make an easy save (6+) to continue gathering blood. Multiple blood sorcerers can use this ability at the same time, but each death still only contributes one point to the pool.

Summon Demon: As a standard action, the blood sorcerer summons a demon. The demons available for summoning are listed in the fight chart. Frenzy demons cost 5 points; hezrous cost 10. Once the sorcerers have summoned all the available demons, this ability cannot be used.

Nastier Specials

Resurgent Demons: When a summoned demon is slain, return half the points used to summon it to the pool.

Blood Master: If the number of points in the Blood Magic pool is higher than the escalation die, the blood sorcerer may add the escalation die to its attacks.

AC 24
PD 18 **HP 144**
MD 22

Godtick

Entities like this are parasites on the gods. Some pantheons have been bled dry by godtick infestations; the senior clerics prop the divine husks up to keep the faith going, lest they lose their power.

Large 8th level leader [DEMON]
Initiative: +16

Demonic Claw +13 vs. AC (4 attacks)—20 damage
Grasping Claws: If two or more attacks hit the same target, the Godtick may make a free *blood-sucking proboscis* attack on that target.

Blood-Sucking Proboscis +13 vs. PD—50 damage, and add 2d6 points to the Blood Magic pool.

R: Blood-Red Ray +13 vs. PD (one target per point spent from the Blood Magic pool)—25 fire damage

Group Ability—Blood Magic Pool: Blood sorcerers accumulate magical power in a pool shared by all the blood sorcerers in the combat. Use a die or tokens to track the accumulated points. If all blood sorcerers in the combat are slain with points left in the Blood Magic pool, then the body of the last sorcerer explodes, inflicting 1d6 damage per remaining Blood Magic point on all nearby creatures. The Godtick counts as a blood sorcerer.

Blood Reserve: At the start of the battle, the Godtick adds 10 points to the Blood Magic pool.

Bloated: As long as there are points in the Blood Magic pool, the Godtick is immobile.

Desperate Hunger: If the Blood Magic pool is empty when the Godtick is staggered, the Godtick ceases to be immobile and may add the escalation die to its melee attacks.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 300**
MD 18

Blood Sorcerers' Temple Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Master Blood Sorcerer	Godtick	Frenzy Demons*	Hezrou Demons*
3 x 6th level	2	1	3	0
4 x 6th level	2	1	4	1
5 x 6th level	3	1	4	1
6 x 6th level	3	1	5	2
7 x 6th level	4	1	5	2
3 x 7th level	*5*	*1*	*5*	*1*
4 x 7th level	*6*	*1*	*6*	*2*
5 x 7th level	*7*	*1*	*7*	*3*
6 x 7th level	*8*	*1*	*8*	*3*
7 x 7th level	*9*	*1*	*9*	*4*

* Summonable reinforcements below chart

D: Blind Uthe

One of the many things that Greyface and his grognards grumble about is the lack of spiritual devotion in Fangrot's band. Other orc tribes have shamans and clerics, but there are none in the service of Deep Keep, and those who show signs of being chosen by the orc gods have a strange habit of perishing in the dungeon. (Fangrot fears that a shaman would be able to expose him as a dungeon denizen and traitor to the Orc Lord). The only shaman in the keep is an old seer named Blind Uthe.

Uthe's hearing is phenomenal; PCs sneaking around the castle must beat DC 30 to avoid being detected by her hairy ears. If they keep their mouths shut, though, she assumes they are orcs here for a blessing. Play Uthe as an eccentric and indulgent aunt to a castleful of rowdy boys; orcs raiding and pillaging the surface world is just exuberance. Should the players attack, Uthe can call in bodyguards from outside her dusty little shrine.

Uthe's Blessing: Roll relationship dice to see what spiritual emanations, if any, Uthe picks up when she reads the characters' fortunes by throwing a cupful of teeth on the floor and listening to the clatter they make. (Remember to reverse any negative icon relationships—a PC who hates the Orc Lord won't be sent to talk to Greyface).

She advises those who get the **Orc Lord** to speak to Greyface, and to *"bring fire"* with them (in other words, inspire Greyface to action). A **Prince of Shadows** result means she encourages that PC to talk to Grimtusk, *"and look upon him with another eye"* (does she mean 'see him as an ally' or 'he'll lead the PCs to an Eye of the Stone Thief'? Or is she just speaking cryptic gibberish in which the players will retroactively discern hidden meanings later on?)

A **Crusader** or **Diabolist** results mean she sends the PC to the Blood Sorcerers' Temple, saying that *"a bloated destiny"* awaits them there.

Anyone rolling a result unfriendly to the orcs (Emperor, Archmage, Dwarf King or the like) raises Uthe's suspicion. She'll



mutter something like *"your fate smells of beer and stone dust and gold—what's your name again, young orc?"* If the player can come up with a plausible spiritual cover story, Uthe moves onto the next supplicant. Otherwise, she raises the alarm.

If all the players get through without alarming Uthe, she asks if they want a blessing of wisdom or a blessing of strength from the gods.

- **Blessing of Wisdom:** Uthe enters a spiritual trace and answers three questions for the player characters. Her answers come right from the orc gods themselves, so they're a) relatively omniscient, and b) somewhat biased—so, if the characters ask something like "how can we defeat Fangrot," the answer will be one that furthers the desires of the orc gods. Uthe is bound to relay the answers truthfully while in the trance, but once the blessing is complete, she can act on the information revealed in the spiritual encounter. So, if the PCs ask how they can best kill Fangrot, Uthe knows they intend to murder the warlord.
- **Blessing of Strength:** Until their next full heal-up, all PCs gain the *lethal* racial power normally reserved for half-orcs (those already with *lethal* get to use it twice per battle).

Raising the Alarm

Uthe's bodyguards are just outside her shrine, and they will burst in to defend the shaman if needed.

Blind Uthe

Orc magic is wild magic, the magic of meat and blood and slaughter. Savage sacraments for a savage people.

9th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +13

Uthe's Stick +10 vs. AC—35 damage

C: Curse-Chant +14 vs. MD (all nearby enemies)—25 psychic damage, and until the start of Uthe's next turn, if a melee attack targets Uthe and the attacker rolls an odd hit, that attack is redirected to a nearby target of Uthe's choice.

R: Battle-Curse +14 vs. MD (1d3 nearby enemies)—40 psychic damage, and for the rest of this battle, melee attacks by orcs deal +1d10 damage against the target (non-cumulative)

Seer: Uthe can see the future, albeit dimly. Each round, pick one PC at random. Uthe has foreseen the actions of that PC. She may take her standard action this round or *shout a warning* as an interrupt action to that PCs' action.

Shout a Warning: As a free action, Uthe may command a nearby orc. That orc may immediately make a free move or attack action.

AC 24
PD 18
MD 22

HP 144

Elite Orc Guard

Oddly, Uthe warned them that today would not be a lucky day for them.

9th level blocker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Orc-Sword +14 vs. AC—40 damage
Killer Combo: If an elite orc guard scores a critical hit against a foe, another elite orc guard engaged with that foe may immediately make a free *orc-sword* attack on the same target.

R: Orc-Bow +14 vs. AC—40 damage

Dangerous: The crit range of orcs expands by 3 unless they are staggered.

Shield Wall: An elite orc guard may reduce its AC by 4 to give a +2 AC bonus to a nearby ally.

Nastier Specials

Brutality: When an elite orc guard is staggered or slain, it may immediately make a free *orc-sword* attack on a nearby foe.

AC 23
PD 23
MD 19

HP 180

Orc War Spirit

These spirits haunt battlefields and other places where the orcs wreak havoc. They can only be seen when the blood-sprays rain down on them.

8th level mook [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +14

Spectral Claws +12 vs. AC—15 damage

Harass: A foe engaged with two or more orc war spirits is vulnerable to attacks by orcs.

Invisible: Orc war spirits are invisible (even while attacking) unless a nearby creature suffers a critical hit, in which case they are visible for the rest of the round.

AC 20
PD 18
MD 22

HP 30 (mook)

Mook: Kill one orc war spirit mook for every 30 damage dealt to the mob.

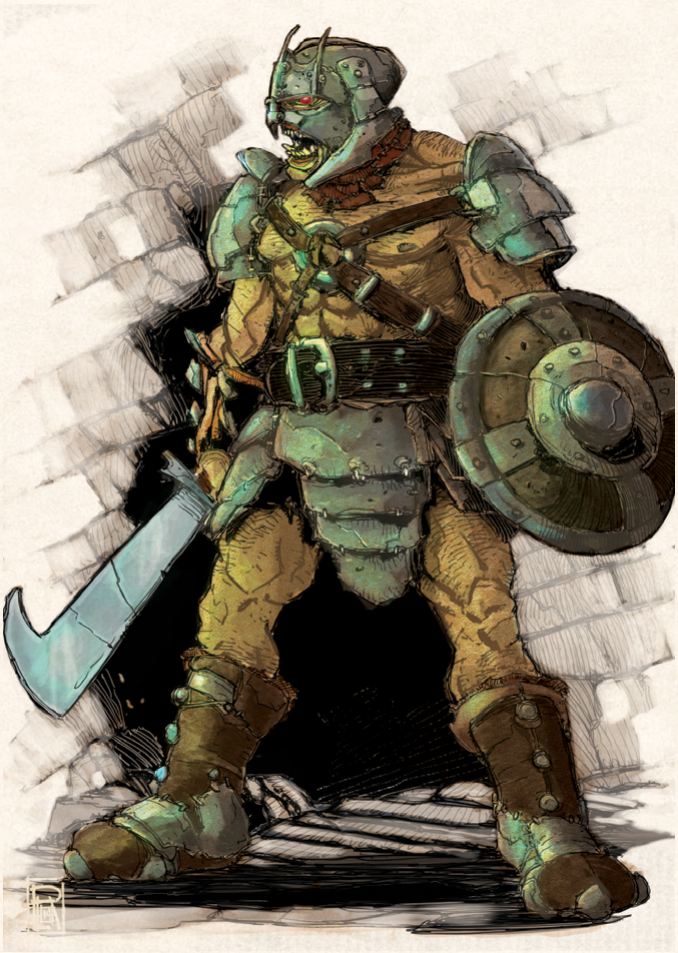
Blind Uthe Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Blind Uthe	Elite Orc Guard	Orc War Spirits
3 x 6th level	1	1	3
4 x 6th level	1	1	6
5 x 6th level	1	2	6
6 x 6th level	1	2	6
7 x 6th level	1	3	6
3 x 7th level	*1*	*2*	*3*
4 x 7th level	*1*	*2*	*5*
5 x 7th level	*1*	*3*	*5*
6 x 7th level	*1*	*3*	*10*
7 x 7th level	*1*	*4*	*10*

Uthe's Shrine

The shrine Uthe tends has its own magical potency. It's a spiritual fulcrum. A character with an **Orc Lord** relationship benefit or a magic item like a *knot of divine harmony* (*13th Age* rulebook, page 292), or who improvises a religious ceremony with a suitable skill check or ritual spell, can alter the fate of the orcs of Deep Keep through the altar. Pick one of the following effects:

- A named orc gets cursed—this works like the *curse of chaos* tiefling racial power, where the victim gets horribly screwed once per battle when they roll a natural 1–5, but it's once *per player*, not per battle. Everyone gets to whack the orc piñata, spiritually speaking.
- If you're using the Mass Battle rules, then the players get to add an Ally Die (if they're working with one of the rebel orc factions) or remove an Enemy Die (if they're leading a slave revolt) at the start of a battle.
- Blow up the shrine and gain a temporary 1-point negative relationship with the Orc Lord (or maybe the Priestess—that would be an ecumenical matter), and when you next roll icon relationships, reroll any Dwarf King, Elf Queen, or Emperor dice that aren't 5s or 6s. (Positive or conflicted Lich King dice, too—remember, the previous Orc Lord helped bring down the Wizard King, long ago.).



E: The Great Hall

The Great Hall in Deep Keep was stolen from some giant's steading in the mountains. Titanic granite pillars support a ceiling lost in the darkness despite the light shed by the roaring bonfire in the fireplace. Fangrot's throne sits atop a huge pile of booty looted from the surface world, and supplicants must struggle up the unstable slope of coins, armor, weapons, and other treasures to kneel on jewels before the warlord. The hall is almost always thronged with orc warriors and harried slaves. The only time it empties is when the dungeon breaches the surface and the scouts report that there's good looting to be had nearby.

Fangrot never goes on these looting expeditions. Anyone who questions the warlord's strength is welcome to challenge him to single combat, right here in the hall—there's a row of severed heads on pikes near the throne that bear silent testament to Fangrot's might. (Of course, the reason he doesn't leave the dungeon is because he *can't* leave the dungeon—he's a denizen, and would sicken outside the confines of the Stone Thief).

Any orc can challenge Fangrot to single combat, and the challenger can name a champion, so it's possible that a player character might end up going *mano a orco* with Fangrot. (Neither Grimtusk nor Greyface favor this option, as a warlord who doesn't fight his own battles is basically a throat waiting to be slit, but it's an option nonetheless).

Fighting in the Hall: Most of the time, a fight in the hall is suicide—take the High Alert Chart (page 167) and *triple* it, then add Fangrot to the mix (see opposite). Waiting until most of the orcs go looting on the surface means the characters only face a regular orc force for the current Alert Level, plus Fangrot. Alternatively, if the characters have successfully stirred up a rebellion against Fangrot or a slave revolt, then the Great Hall becomes a battlefield. The player characters still face a High Alert fight, but at least it's not tripled.

If staggered in a fight in the great hall, Fangrot drinks his *potion of invisibility* and retreats to his chambers.

Treasure in the Hall: In the unlikely event that the players manage to grab the whole pile, there's at least 1,000 gp per character in coin, jewels, and other easily portable stuff, plus the same again in lesser coins, art, furniture, and other treasures. There may also be a few magic items that the orcs found no use for.

F: Fangrot's Chambers

The warlord's chambers are on the level above the Great Hall. All the entrances are locked and trapped. The lock is DC 25 to pick

Unwanted Treasures of Deep Keep

Wyrmsclaw: This sacred relic of the Great Gold Wyrm is a +2 sword. It's especially potent in the hands of a paladin, giving one extra use of Smite Evil per relationship die with the Great Gold Wyrm. *Quirk:* Wracked by agonizing dreams as the wielder shares the Wyrm's torment.

Blazing Symbol: A holy symbol that burns with an inner light, the *blazing symbol* is a +2 holy symbol. *Recharge 16+:* When casting a cleric spell for broad effect, you can inscribe a holy rune in the air instead of choosing targets for the spell. Until the end of the round, any ally who touches the rune gains the benefit of the spell. Allies must be next to you, engaged with the same enemies as you, or move past the rune to get the benefit—just being nearby isn't going to cut it. *Quirk:* Proselytizes to the masses at the drop of a mitre.

Shrinking Chest: On command, this large hardwood chest shrinks down to the size of a matchbox. When the lid is opened, it returns to normal size, along with the contents. The lid can only be opened if the chest has room to expand safely, so you probably can't feed the chest to a dragon and then expand it (at least, not without destroying the chest).

The chest can hold a single human-sized person, maybe two if they're both thin and not concerned about personal space, or it can be used to store a reasonable amount of gear. Shrunken people can breathe and peer out through the keyhole.

The orcs never discovered the command word to the chest, but one of the PCs knows it because they've got a relationship with the icon who made it, right? (Or because they've got the Linguist feat. If you take Linguist, you deserve to have your sacrifice recognized once in a while.)

Quirk: Loves the smell of furniture polish a little too much.

quietly; the trap is DC 20 to spot/disarm, and if triggered drops a block of stone down in front of the door, blocking the passage and hitting anyone in front of the door with a **+15 attack vs. PD**—4d8 damage; on a natural 16+, the victim is also stuck (hard save ends).

The interior has the late-period Conanesque décor befitting a successful barbarian warlord. Just because Fangrot is an orc doesn't mean he can't appreciate a nice silk cushion or a four-poster bed looted from an elven palace.

Notably, there's a full-length mirror standing on its own in an otherwise bare side room. The other orcs believe that this is a magical mirror that Fangrot uses to scry on the surface world and plot the dungeon's attacks, but the mirror is only an ordinary piece of glass. It's the wall behind it that matters—this room is where the Vizier, the Custodian of this level, manifests to speak with Fangrot.

The other treasure in this area is kept in a secret room behind a solid wall. The Vizier can make the wall vanish at will; without a helpful Custodian, the player characters must smash through the wall to find the hidden vault. A PC can find the hollow wall by tapping on it with a DC 20 check. See *Fangrot's Treasure*, page 188.

Battling Fangrot

Fangrot has an inner circle of elite bodyguards who are utterly loyal to him. If the warlord has occasion to leave Deep Keep, they go with him (so, even if the PCs lure Fangrot out of his fortress, they'll still need to fight these guys). Otherwise, they wait here or go feasting in the Great Hall.

Fangrot's most dangerous ally, though, is the Vizier. The Custodian manifests in the warlord's quarters at the start of any fight. If the PCs battle the warlord elsewhere on the level, the Custodian appears when the escalation die reaches 3. (If your PCs are still only 6th level, or are already battered and wounded when they face Fangrot, delay the Vizier's manifestation or have it only show up after Fangrot's death).

Fangrot

The warlord of Deep Keep is past his prime. His hide is grey, his eyes bleary, his fangs rotten. You have a chance now. You did not before.

Double-strength 9th level leader [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +18

Brutal Smash +14 vs. AC—75 damage
Natural 12+: Fangrot may make another *brutal smash* attack on the same target. The target may avoid incurring this extra attack in exchange for popping free of Fangrot and losing the benefit of the escalation die until the end of their next turn.
Critical hit: In addition to inflicting critical damage, Fangrot also destroys a weapon or other magic item carried by the target. The target may avoid losing this item in exchange for popping free of Fangrot and losing the benefit of the escalation die until the end of their next turn. Lost items may be repaired after the fight at the GM's whim.
Miss: 30 damage.

Dangerous: The crit range of melee attacks by Fangrot expands by 3 unless he is staggered.

Cunning Defense: A foe who moves to engage Fangrot must make a normal save (11+) or draw an opportunity attack from Fangrot.

Master of Deep Keep: While Fangrot is not staggered, if he is unengaged at the end of the round, he heals 30 hit points and all nearby orcs may add the escalation die to their attacks next round.

Load-Bearing Boss: If Fangrot dies, increase the submergence die by 2.

Invisibility Potion: Fangrot carries an invisibility potion, which he drinks when he becomes staggered. If attacked outside his chambers in Deep Keep, he uses the cover of invisibility to flee back there and ready his defenses—he regains all lost hit points and increases the Alert Level to 6. If attacked in his chambers, he uses the cover of invisibility as the GM wishes.

Nastier Specials

Orc-Hate: Fangrot may make a free *brutal smash* attack on any foe with a positive or conflicted Orc Lord relationship. He may do this once per relationship die.

Denizen: Once Fangrot becomes staggered, the Vizier may include Fangrot as a target when it uses its *stone shape* power. Each use of *stone shape* on Fangrot either heals 30 hit points, or until the end of the battle, increases one of his defenses by 1 or his damage by +1d8.

Follow-Up: Once per round, if a foe chooses to pop free of Fangrot to avoid a bonus *brutal smash,* Fangrot may move and make a free *brutal smash* on another unengaged foe.

Very Dangerous: Fangrot's critical range does not drop when he becomes staggered.

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 360**
MD 19

Elite Orc Guard

Fangrot's inner circle of bodyguards have been with him since the Orc Lord gave him this doomed mission. They'll stand with him to the end.

9th level blocker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Orc-Sword +14 vs. AC—40 damage
Killer Combo: If an elite orc guard scores a critical hit against a foe, another elite orc guard engaged with that foe may immediately make a free *orc-sword* attack on the same target.

R: Orc-Bow +14 vs. AC—40 damage

Dangerous: The crit range of orcs expands by 3 unless they are staggered.

Shield Wall: An elite orc guard may reduce its AC by 4 to give a +2 AC bonus to a nearby ally.

Nastier Specials

Brutality: When an elite orc guard is staggered or slain, it may immediately make a free *orc-sword* attack on a nearby foe.

AC 23
PD 23 **HP 180**
MD 19

Vizier

Face, face on the wall, who's the most duplicitous one of all?

Double-strength 9th level caster [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +14

C: Stone Shape +14 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—The Vizier shapes the dungeon, summoning weapons or obstacles out of the living stone. 30 damage, and the target must make a DC 30 Dexterity or Constitution check to avoid another 30 damage or one of the following conditions of the Vizier's choice—dazed, stuck, or 10 ongoing damage (all save ends).

Whispered Advice: As an interrupt action, the Vizier may whisper a warning to an ally. That ally may reroll an attack on a foe, or force a foe to reroll an attack. The Vizier can use this ability a number of times equal to the Alert Level.

Nastier Specials

R: Stone Bolts +14 vs. AC (1d3 nearby or faraway targets)—30 damage
Natural even miss: The Vizier may immediately make another *stone bolts* attack, but cannot target any enemy it has already struck with a *stone bolts* this round.

AC 25
PD 19 **HP 360**
MD 23

Fangrot's Treasure

The hidden room contains items that Fangrot valued above all the loot stolen by the Stone Thief.

The Rite of Binding: Fangrot captured a scroll containing the Rite of Binding (page 352) from the Cult of the Devourer. Depending on the needs of your campaign, the scroll might be damaged and incomplete (so the PCs still have to find a copy elsewhere), whole (in which case they still need the components of the ritual), or even come with a connection to the dungeon (a chunk of living stone from the deepest level of the dungeon, hewn from the Stone Thief with the *Axe of Doom*).

The Broken Spear: This is the spear Fangrot used to stop the dungeon from escaping in Fangrotsaga (see page 162). It's a +2 spear with two properties. First, it's an Earthspear (see page 304); drive it into the dungeon wall, and it reduces the submergence die by 2. Second, it's a *cruel* weapon, inflicting 10 ongoing damage if it hits a foe with 40 hit points or fewer. The cruel power is recharge 11+. *Quirk:* Makes subordinates' lives a misery.

Fangrot's Chambers Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Fangrot	Vizier	Elite Orc Guard
3 x 6th level	1	0	1
4 x 6th level	1	0	2
5 x 6th level	1	1	1
6 x 6th level	1	1	2
7 x 6th level	1	1	3
3 x 7th level	*1*	*0*	*3*
4 x 7th level	*1*	*1*	*2*
5 x 7th level	*1*	*1*	*3*
6 x 7th level	*1*	*1*	*4*
7 x 7th level	*1*	*1*	*5*

The Axe of Doom: This weapon once belonged to the Orc Lord himself, and it still bears his mark. Fangrot couldn't bear to use the weapon after he became a denizen, so he hid it here out of shame.

It's an epic-tier +3 axe that inflicts +5 damage on a hit for every relationship die the wielder has with the Orc Lord. Second, every time the wielder inflicts a critical hit with the axe, it gives a temporary bonus positive relationship die with the Orc Lord, to a maximum of three bonus dice. These extra dice stack with existing relationships in the same way as dice gained from a bard's Balladeer talent. The extra dice last until the next full heal-up. *Quirk:* Fanatical devotion to the Orc Lord. If the axe takes control, you think you *are* the Orc Lord. (Or maybe you are... what if the Orc Lord isn't an orc, but a weapon the chosen orc carries?)

Exits

- The Great Gate is the only reliable exit from this level.
- Tunnels lead up from the Slave Quarters to the rest of the dungeon, and the shifting stairs and passageways of the keep occasionally open onto a lower level.

THE MADDENING STAIR

LEVELS 6–7

The Maddening Stair leads down from the Great Gate, connecting the upper levels of the dungeon to the far more dangerous lower reaches (except when it doesn't—the Stone Thief has been known to connect this level to the Maw, so that anything swallowed by the dungeon topples down this chasm into the lightless depths). This whole level is arranged around a vertical shaft. A stairs, or rather a series of linked stairs, winds around the sides of the shaft, allowing travelers to climb down to the levels below.

GAMEMASTER

Several encounters on the Maddening Stair (#2, #3, #6 & #7) are designed to introduce the Cult of the Devourer and pull the players into the battle for control of the Stone Thief. If the focus of your campaign has been the single-minded eradication of the dungeon, then these encounters can add some juicy intra-party conflict and double-dealing by offering players the opportunity to get involved in various intrigues. If the thought of potential player vs. player conflict is distasteful to your group—or, conversely, if your players have been juggling disparate goals and icon loyalties since the start of the game—then you can downplay the dragon's hypnotism or Ajura's destiny-meddling.

FEATURES & FACTIONS

The stair is neutral territory. Orcs from Deep Keep rarely go past the first landing. Cultists from the church of the Devourer patrol parts of the stair; it is a place of religious devotion to them. The stair figures strongly in the dreams sent by the cult's Secret Masters as a test of devotion. Descend the stair, the dreams whisper, and you will find us.

The physical stairs are the obvious dominant feature of the level. In some places, the stairs are narrow steps cut into the cliff face; in others, travelers must navigate a quivering rope bridge, or a crumbling spiral staircase, or stride down a marble staircase ripped from some palace long ago. There's always some way to keep going down the Maddening Stair, but some sections require more courage than others.

Like the rest of the dungeon, the stair changes each time the Stone Thief rises to the surface. Isolated fragments of older sections of the stair cling to the walls of the shaft like fossils.

Flying and Feather Falling: The Stone Thief does not appreciate short cuts. Anyone who tries to fly down the shaft gets attacked by flocks of shrieking archivults. The characters might be able to skip one battle safely using *fly* spells, but trying to traverse the whole shaft by flying is hopeless. Anything short of a dragon would get torn to pieces by the archivults, who nest in huge numbers in colonies on the sides of the shaft opposite the stairs.

The archivults refer to wizards using *feather fall* as slow food.

ARCHIVULTS

ARCHIVULT KING

It looks like a vulture made from the scrapings of church bells and pieces of old leather, if vultures had teeth.

8th level wrecker [BEAST]
Initiative: +13

Raking Claw +13 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 16+: The archivult automatically grabs its target.
Natural even miss: The archivult automatically pops free and may move away.

Flesh-Rending Bite +17 vs. AC (grabbed targets only; includes grab bonus)—30 damage

Shrieking Call: If the archivult is not staggered, roll a d6 at the start of each of its turns. If the roll is less than or equal to the escalation die, add that many lesser archivults to the combat.

Death Grip: An archivult doesn't stop gripping when killed. To escape the grab, the victim must either disengage or reduce the archivult to –72 hit points.

Flyer: Archivults fly like evil rags caught by an even more evil wind. It's a sort of sinister clumsiness, borne aloft on mismatched wings. It still works, though.

AC	24	
PD	21	**HP 144**
MD	21	

LESSER ARCHIVULT

Birds throw their chicks out of the nest to teach them to fly. Archivults throw theirs out for kicks.

8th level mook [BEAST]
Initiative: +13

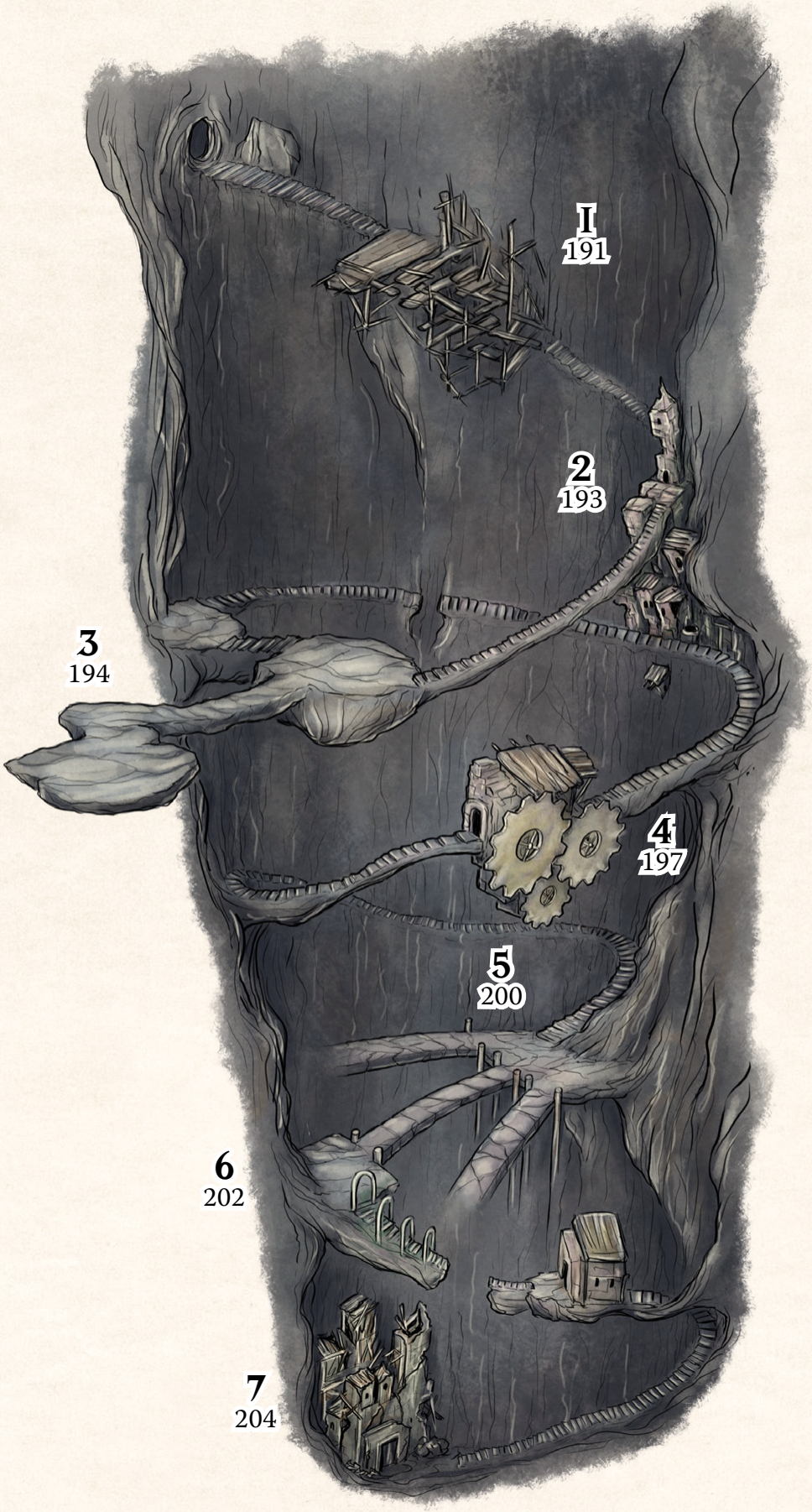
Raking Claw +13 vs. AC—20 damage

Flesh-Rending Bite +17 vs. AC (grabbed targets only; includes grab bonus)—30 damage

Follow the Leader: Lesser archivults can't grab, but get the grab bonus when attacking creatures held by archivult kings.

AC	24	
PD	21	**HP 36 (mook)**
MD	21	

Mook: Kill one lesser archivult mook for every 36 damage dealt to the flock.


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Descriptors

Precipices, precipices, and more precipices. This level is all about narrow ledges and inching forward in single file along a seemingly infinite drop. (If you use miniatures in your game, line them up along the table edge and tell the players that if any of them get knocked off, the corresponding PC slips…)

Minor Encounters

Shrine of the Pilgrims

Pilgrims from the Cult of the Devourer have passed this way thousands of times over the ages, seeing the chapel and the city in the deeps below. Some nameless pilgrim built this little shrine in the dungeon long ago. It's a small side room off the Maddening Stair containing a few rough beds, a lantern, and a chest of supplies (dried food, waterskins, wine, and maybe even some healing potions). It's perfectly safe to rest here, though paranoid players may not see it that way.

The Waterfall

A rushing underground river emerges from a cleft in the cliff face and pours over the edge as a titanic waterfall. The stairs runs through the falls, forcing the PCs to push through the surging waters.

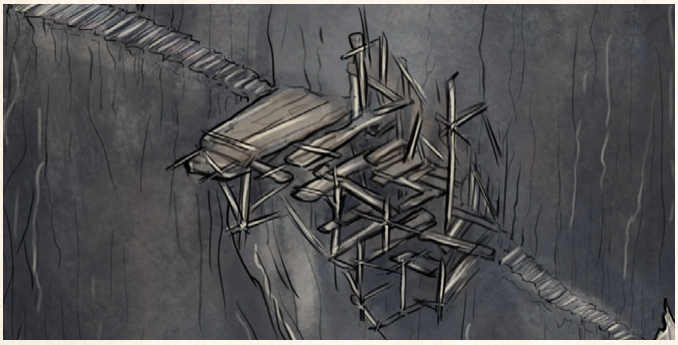
High Druid/Priestess: The spirit of the river shouts a warning to the PC as they pass through. To hear the full message, the PC must stand and take the full brunt of the waterfall, possibly requiring a skill check to avoid being washed over the edge. The river-spirit can bring news from outside the dungeon.



Figures Far Below

Peering over the banister, one PC sees a strange procession of about a dozen figures, all wearing elaborate masks. The procession marches solemnly down the stairs and vanishes out of sight around a corner. The last figure in the procession turns to look straight at the PC before vanishing. Have the player roll icon dice to determine what these figures could signify, or else leave it as a mystery.

1. An Orc and a Hard Place



The stairs here give way to a series of thick wooden planks that extend out from a sheer cliff face. To cross, the adventurers have to jump from plank to plank. The gaps between individual planks are no more than four feet, so even an armored dwarf can hop without much difficulty.

Unless the planks start retracting into the wall, which most of them do. (A rogue with Trap Sense can spot this trap before it triggers.) The adventurers must race across the remaining planks as fast as they can in order to reach the other side. Call for a DC 20 check from each adventurer—success means the character hops in the direction of safety. Failure means the character slips and ends up clinging to the edge of one of the few safe planks or the side of the cliff.

Even the characters who succeed aren't out of trouble. As they approach the far side of the gap, a phalanx of orcs emerges from a side cave. Judging by the long pikes they level at the approaching adventurers, and the wide grins on their faces, these orcs knew the adventurers were coming, and that anyone making the last desperate leap across the final gap would land exactly where they just set their pikes. The lead orc holds up his hand and yells for the party to stop.

If the characters don't stop, then they're going to end up leaping into the middle of the orcish pike formation, and that's going to hurt. The orcs get to make a free attack each (**+14 vs. AC**—45 damage; crits on an 17–20), and then you're into regular combat.

Should the characters stop, they all end up perched on the last non-retracted plank before the orc-held ledge. A standing jump from here would be tremendously difficult (DC 30). The orc leader glances over his shoulder, then turns back to the adventurers and holds up a coil of rope. *"Pay the toll, get the rope,"* he barks.

Orcish Tollbooth

This band of orcs are Grimtusk loyalists (see the breakdown of orcish factions on page 161), stationed here to watch for foes coming up the Maddening Stair. They're supposed to be guarding Deep Keep from below instead of extracting tolls from adventurers and cult pilgrims. Their captain, **Sourblood**, negotiates with the adventurers—he'll help them across in exchange for something he wants. If the characters haven't gotten enmeshed in Deep Keep politics, then Sourblood wants them to help Grimtusk in kicking Warlord Fangrot off his throne, and he demands that they swear an oath to that effect. (His blood sorcerer can sanctify the oath; should the oathsworn break their word, they're permanently vulnerable to attacks made by orcs.)

If Deep Keep has already fallen, then Sourblood is out for himself and wants a way out of the dungeon. He knows there's a side exit through another cave (see *3. The Sleeper's Cave,* page 194) some distance down the stair, but needs the adventurers to "make sure it's safe." Oh, and traveling expenses to the tune of 500 gp per player character.

Fighting the Orcs

Orcish Piker

8th level troop [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +13

Long Pike +10 vs. AC—45 damage

Dangerous: The crit range of orcish pikers expands by 3 unless they are staggered.

Skewer: Unengaged foes moving to engage orcish pikers incur an attack of opportunity. Orcish pikers get a +4 bonus to their attack rolls when making opportunity attacks.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 144**
MD 18

Sourblood

Tactics? Strategy? Remind me—which one of those helps you when an orc is spilling your guts on the floor?

8th level leader [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +12

Nasty Sword +13 vs. AC—38 damage

Stay Dangerous: As long as Sourblood isn't staggered, all orcs remain *dangerous* even when staggered.

Canny Leader: Whenever the escalation die would increase, the orc commander may make a hard save (16+). If successful, the die does not increase. Keep track of the number of times this ability is used. When there are no orc commanders remaining in the fight, raise the escalation die by that value.

They're Losing! Get Them!: Whenever an enemy engaged with the orc commander heals using a recovery, one nearby orc other than the commander may make a melee attack as a free action.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 144**
MD 18

Orc and a Hard Place Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Sourblood	Piker
3 x 6th level	1	2
4 x 6th level	1	2
5 x 6th level	1	3
6 x 6th level	1	3
7 x 6th level	1	4
3 x 7th level	*1*	*3*
4 x 7th level	*1*	*4*
5 x 7th level	*1*	*5*
6 x 7th level	1	6
7 x 7th level	1	7

Treasure

Searching Sourblood's little encampment, the characters find food, drink, and other provisions. Hidden beneath a large stone is a small hollow, and in that hollow is a chest containing 300 gp per player character, a healing potion or two, and a *cursed +3 eye-seeking spear.* The critical range of this weapon in a battle expands by +1 per attack until it scores a crit, like a fighter's *carve an opening* manuever. The downside is that if you roll a natural 1 while wielding the spear, you must immediately make an attack on a nearby ally (or yourself). *Quirk:* Can't help wondering what eyeballs taste like.

Variations

- Sourblood and his crew have captured some Cult of the Devourer cultists, in violation of the bargains struck between the cult and Fangrot. They're holding the cultists for ransom.
- The orc camp is abandoned; the orcs have fled. The downside is that there's now a large gap in the stair. Time for some acrobatics?

2. The Crumbling Castle



A small castle keep leans at a dizzying angle over the precipice. The stairs runs up to the battlements at the top of one of the castle's towers, and the characters can see more stairs emerging from a side door on the far side of the keep. It's clear that the only way forward is to go through this precarious castle. The whole keep sways slightly when the first character puts their weight on it—one wrong step could tip it over the edge. (Clearly, some magic keeps the building from just cracking and falling apart.)

As the characters make their way through the castle, they feel it shift and sway under their feet even when they're not moving. Listening intently, they hear voices echoing through the deserted rooms. They're not alone in the keep!

Fellow Guests

The other travelers gingerly picking their way through the ruins are a band of cultists who are coming *up* the stairs from the Onyx Catacombs far below. They're all members of the Cult of the Devourer. Fighting the cultists in such unstable ground would not be wise, and the cultists are aware of that too. This is a rare opportunity for the player characters to confront or spy on the cult without combat. They can either ambush the cultists, parley with them, or hide and then eavesdrop on them or follow them.

The leader of the little band of cultists is a human thief named **Jac.** She grew up on the docks of Shadow Port, and might have joined the Prince of Shadows' outfit if the cult had not discovered her first. She's not a fanatical cultist, but believes that the Secret Masters will reward her loyalty as the dungeon approachs apotheosis.

She might be:

- On her way up to Deep Keep with a message for Fangrot from the Secret Masters
- Escorting a visitor to the cult back up to the surface. If the cult is in league with, say, the Three, then Jac might be accompanied by an agent from Drakkenhall
- Going to meet a spy in Dungeon Town
- Returning to the surface with instructions for another temple (*"have the temple in Axis start the rites that will guide the blind god to devour the city!"*)
- An emissary to the meeting of the Custodians of the dungeon
- Sent to investigate some carnage caused by the player characters

Or whatever other plot hook you wish to dangle in front of the players.

Eavesdropping on the cultists get the characters clues about the Onyx Catacombs, the Chamber of Transcendence (page 254), Maeglor the Apostate (page 204) or the goals of the Secret Masters.

Confronting the Cultists

If the adventurers confront the cultists inside the castle, then one of the lesser acolytes attempts to tip the castle over the end—he would gladly sacrifice his life if it mean eliminating a band of adventuers who have profaned the divine dungeon! Jac, being a more sensible sort of cultist, stops him. She has no wish to die today, and while the adventurers are clearly much more powerful than she is, she guesses they don't wish to die in a falling castle today either.

Jac might offer to trade information about the cult or the lower levels of the dungeon, in exchange for useful things the player characters might know (like the location of an Eye of the Stone Thief, or a source of magical power for the dungeon to feed upon). She might also try to point them towards a foe of the cult, like the Witch of Marblehall, the Flesh Tailor or (if she's made her presence felt in the dungeon) the Hag Pheig.

If it does come to a fight, then use Cult Acolyte statistics for most of the cultists.

Jac, Cult Agent

9th level spoiler [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +16

Sudden Dagger +14 vs. AC—40 damage
Critical Dodge: If Jac inflicts a critical hit on a foe, she may also pop free.
Sneak Attack: +20 damage against foes with a lower initiative than Jac

Outmaneuver: If a foe makes a melee attack on Jan and misses with a natural 1–5, that foe's initiative drop by 4 to a minimum of 1.

Tricky: Jac gets a +2 bonus to all her defences against foes who have a positive or conflicted relationship with the Prince of Shadows.

Grudge-Bearer: Jac's crit range expands by +1 for every positive relationship point the target has with any of the following icons: Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess or Prince of Shadows.

Nastier Specials

Quick Fingers: On a critical hit, Jac steals one item from her target.

AC 25
PD 23
MD 19

HP 200



Toppling The Castle

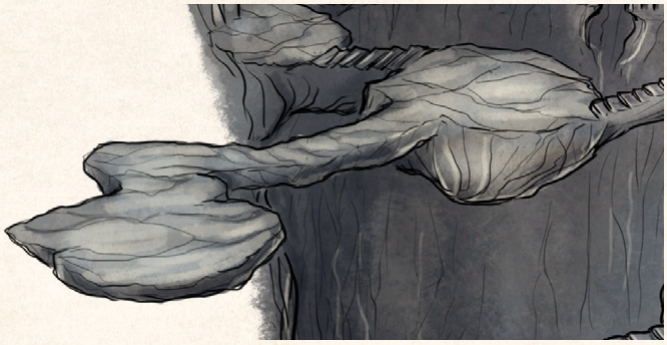
If the characters get into a fight in the castle, roll a d6 every round. If the result is lower than the value of the escalation die, then the castle starts to slip over the edge, and will fall at the end of the next round. Anyone in the castle when it falls over the edge is probably splattered.

Dropping the castle increases the submergence die by 1.

Variations

- Searching the castle reveals a will, written by the unfortunate lord of the castle after his home was swallowed by the Stone Thief. It's an odd mix of lament and legal document, but the upshot is that Lord Varnet leaves his domain to anyone who brings his remains out of this cursed dungeon and buries them with the rest of his family.
- If the castle does fall, the Stone Thief might decide to replace it with The Castle With Your Name On It (see page 158).

3. The Sleeper's Cave



A narrow crack, only wide enough for a single adventurer to wriggle through at a time, leads off the stair to this encounter. The passageway winds through the rock to emerge in a natural cavern with a low ceiling. The stalagmites give the impression of iron bars, as if this was a tremendous prison cell for its lone occupant. Curled up tight on a bed of gold is a black dragon, one so old and withered that his scales have turned gray-white at the edges. His wings have atrophied from centuries of neglect; his eyes gaze blearily at the intruders.

This dragon is **Chryaxas**. The Stone Thief took him long ago. Now he is—he claims—too old to fly, even if he could escape. Once, he was the guardian of the lower levels, and anyone who dared descend the Maddening Stair had to defeat him, but he grew tired of devouring adventurers and started letting them past out of boredom. The Stone Thief saw that he had outlived his usefulness as a monster, so locked him away here. Abducted, enslaved, discarded like a worn-out toy, it's a sorry fate for a dragon. Oh, but you should have seen him in his younger days, when his scales were like onyx and his breath was death itself!

Chryaxas offers the characters a bargain—sit a while, have a cup of tea, and entertain him with witty conversation and news of the outside world, and he will reveal what he knows about the dungeon. He might even be willing to part with a trinket or two from his much-diminished hoard. After all, over the centuries, he's come to realize that friendship is the true treasure.

If the characters accept the dragon's offer, then Chryaxas hisses a command, and a group of orcs emerge from another cave, bearing food and drink for the guests. The orcs appear entranced; the dragon explains that these creatures attacked his lair, and he cast a *charm* spell upon them. No sense in killing the poor, weak-minded beasts if bloodshed can be avoided.

Three: If a character has a positive relationship with the Three and rolls a 5 or a 6, then Chryaxas lets them in on his scheme for escape. If the character has a negative relationship, they get the same benefit on a 5 or 6 as a devotee of the Great Gold Wyrm. If they're conflicted, then Chryaxas offers a bribe to keep silent.

Great Gold Wyrm: The character is familiar with the blandishments and treacheries of the black dragons. As soon as Chryaxas starts his hypnotism, the character recognizes what's going on. (You can also use an icon benefit from the Great Gold Wyrm to clue the players in about what's really going on if it's rolled later).



Lies, Damn Lies, and Black Dragons

Chryaxas is lying through his yellowed, rotten teeth and acid-dripping gums. He wants to escape and to claim the treasures of the Stone Thief for himself—and intends to use the player characters as his tools. The dragon has mastered a form of very subtle magical persuasion. The longer he talks to you, the more he sinks his psychic claws into your mind. The dragon rambles about the dungeon and his past exploits, and happily answers the players' questions. He can describe the Pit of Undigested Ages and the Onyx Catacombs, and warns the characters about the perils of the Labyrinth of Darkness. He can also explain the relationship between the Stone Thief, the Custodians, and the Cult of the Devourer. Chryaxas uses long, wordy, overly convoluted sentences that, like this one, coil around and around themselves, occasionally shooting off on tangents before returning to their original winding, circling, coiling course, full of sibilants and sometimes strangely lulling sentences that slither on for so long that the listener loses track of what the original point was in the first place.

Have each player character roll a d20 without telling them why. What they're actually doing is rolling Chryaxas' **+14 attack vs. their Mental Defense**. Each character struck by this attack falls victim to the dragon's enchantment. For each such victim, secretly note that one of their icon relationship dice has become a conflicted relationship with the Three. Don't tell the players that this has happened—but whenever that die comes up a 5 or a 6, they get help from an agent of the Three in some fashion, or have a momentary flashback to this conversation with Chryaxas, or even a flash of telepathic contact with the imprisoned dragon. Where possible, this 'help' pushes the characters toward finding a way to bind the Stone Thief and free Chryaxas. The dragon's hypnosis can result in the characters hallucinating or deceiving themselves—mistaking, say, a sinister cultist of the Black for an acolyte of the Priestess.

Expect the players to become first frustrated ("hey, I rolled a 6! Why can't I get any help from the Archmage?") then paranoid ("whenever you make me roll my relationship dice, you always get me to roll different-colored dice for my 2-point positive relationship with the Archmage—and that slimy-looking apprentice only shows up when I roll a 6 on that black die") as they work out they've been pawns in a sinister conspiracy. Play fair and drop clues—for example, the same agent of the Three might show up as both a "messenger from the Crusader" and "a mendicant devotee of the Great Gold Wyrm."

The characters can rid themselves of this curse by working out that they have it. Alternatively, some other wise individual could sense they're under enchantment.

Chryaxas's Endgame

If the dragon gets lucky and the players a) don't realize that they're being duped, and b) manage to assemble the components needed to bind the dungeon, then Chryaxas has a chance of escaping the Stone Thief in triumph. The black dragon is too old to fly, but who needs to fly when you've got a mobile lair that eats treasure hoards? Chryaxas is nominally loyal to the Three, and might relocate the Stone Thief to Drakkenhall—at least until his ambition grows too great. You could even posit a final boss fight where, instead of fighting the Stone Thief, the player characters must kill the dragon who has become master of the dungeon.

Fighting Chryaxas

The dragon can't fly, but it knows its cave home so well it can slither into the shadows, duck down side tunnels, and collapse the ceiling onto unwary player characters. It's also got foot soldiers, in the form of hypnotized orc rager mooks.

Chryaxas the Cripple

Huge 9th level spoiler [DRAGON]

Initiative: +17
Vulnerability: thunder

Claw and Bite +14 vs. AC (3 attacks)—30 damage
Natural 16+: The target also takes 15 ongoing acid damage
Miss: 20 damage.

C: Acid Breath +14 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away creatures)—50 acid damage, and 15 ongoing acid damage
Miss: 4d12 acid damage.

R: Lying Whispers +14 vs. MD (one nearby or far away creature)—The target must roll any positive or conflicted relationship dice they possess with the Great Gold Wyrm, and any negative or conflicted dice with the Three. Take damage equal to the total result x 5. The target is hampered (save ends) and loses the benefits of the escalation die for the rest of the combat.

Home Ground Advantage: Each round, roll a d4. If the result is equal to or less than the escalation die, then Chryaxas may perform a terrain trick of some sort as a free action. Possible tricks:

- Automatically disengaging and vanishing into the shadows.
- Triggering a concealed trap (**+15 attack vs. PD**, 4d8 damage).
- Inflicting a condition like stuck or hampered (save ends).
- Gaining a +2 bonus to attacks against a particular foe.

Each time Chryaxas uses a terrain trick, step up the die by one type. So, next time, he has to roll under the escalation value on a d6, then a d8, then a d10 and so on.

Resist Acid 18+: When an acid attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 18+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

AC 25
PD 21
MD 23

HP 470

Treasure: Chryaxas' Hoard

The treasure hoard of a dragon, even a crippled old wyrm like Chryaxas, is worth a fortune. The dragon gathered coins and jewels from the places devoured by the dungeon, and it added magic weapons and armor from unfortunate adventurers on top. Throw 500 gp per player character on the pile in 'easily portable treasures,' and there's twice that in smaller denominations that the characters are unlikely to be able to carry out of the dungeon easily. (If someone mentions there's a pack mule on the equipment list on page 58, nod sagely and make the noise of a pack mule getting savaged by all the horrors a living dungeon can muster.)

Magic items that might be found here:

- **Teapot of Serene Convenience:** This slightly kitschy halfling teapot produces an endless amount of piping hot tea. The tea cools as normal once it leaves the teapot, so its utility as a weapon is limited to, at most, a nasty scalding. Still, infinite tea. It might even give a +5 bonus to diplomacy checks if the other party appreciates tea as much as you do. *Quirk:* Becomes extremely fastidious about table manners in every situation.
- **Dagger of Shameful Deeds:** It's a +2 dagger. If it strikes a killing blow, the attacker becomes invisible for 1d4 rounds or until they attack, and the victim's corpse becomes invisible for 1d4 hours (or until it attacks, in the unlikely contingency someone bothers to raise an invisible corpse as a zombie). *Quirk:* Becomes morally flexible when money is on offer.
- **Armor of the Shining Hero** (recharge 11+)**:** +2 plate armor (heavy). When you score a hit, one nearby ally is so inspired by your example that they may immediately roll a save against a save ends effect afflicting them. *Quirk:* Boastful.

Exits

- The tunnel at the back of the lair may lead out of the dungeon, or just up to another level. If you're feeling especially cruel, it leads to the Grove, so the players may assume they've escaped even if they haven't.

Variations

Instead of plotting to gain control of the dungeon, Chryaxas might have some other goal:

- He wants the PCs to lure the dungeon into the Queen's Wood, where it will devour the prison holding the Green trapped by the Elf Queen's magic.
- He needs to restore his youth and vitality—maybe he wants the PCs to fetch him something that will cure him, like the healing magic of the Druid Circle (page 150) or a draught of water from a holy font in the Ossuary, or perhaps he wants the PCs to arrange his rebirth through the serpent folk of the Pit of Undigested Ages (page 210).

4. The Clock of Hell



The clock is a huge machine of brass cogs, embedded in the side of the chasm. Below the cogs is a pair of huge metal doors, marked with runes of binding and banishment. Mechanical creatures scuttle between the teeth of the cogs, diligently tending to the clock and ensuring it runs properly. Each tooth of each cog is marked with a different arcane rune, and they form new runic patterns as the gears meet and mesh. It's a combinatorial engine of incredible power, all bent to a single task—keeping those doors closed.

The cogs slowly turn, gears grinding out the long years. The clock was made ages ago to prevent a catastrophic outbreak of demonic power. Those who bound it (probably a previous incumbent of the Archmage role, or some precursor of the Crusader or Priestess—or maybe the Diabolist) were unable to stop the outbreak, but they managed to contain it behind the metal doors. The clock is counting down to the day when the magical seals on the door will fail—but that could be in thousands of years' time, and thanks to the clock, the people of that distant age will have time to prepare for Hell's onslaught.

The Stone Thief swallowed the Clock of Hell in the intervening years. Not even the living dungeon is foolish enough to open those doors—to do so would spawn a new and terrible hellhole—but the demonic power contained within the clock could be tapped and used by the Stone Thief.

That's the backstory.

Great Gold Wyrm/Crusader/Archmage: You've heard of the fabled Clock of Hell, but never expected to find it embedded halfway up a cliff face in the depths of a living dungeon. You thought it was lost centuries ago. If that clock ever struck, it would be a very, very dark day indeed.

Diabolist: You've heard of the fabled Clock of Hell, but never expected to find it embedded halfway up a cliff face in the depths of a living dungeon. You thought it was lost centuries ago. The Diabolist would owe you a huge favor if you brought her the clock; failing that, just getting an accurate reading on the countdown would be almost as valuable.

Malice of the Stone Thief

If, by this point in the campaign, the Stone Thief is still missing its Eyes, then the characters can just follow the stairs past the Clock of Hell. It's an impressive piece of arcane engineering, but not immediately dangerous to them.

If, however, the Thief can see the characters, then it takes this moment to strike at them. The stairs, in the form of a long stone bridge, goes past the upper cogs of the clock. As the characters pass, the bridge shakes, then collapses. The characters must leap to the nearest cog or fall to their deaths far below. The jump is only a short one, and the cogs are so huge that a human can safely stand on a single tooth. From there, they can see that the stairs continue on the far side of the clock.

So, what's stopping the characters from clambering across the face of the clock to safety?

Clockworkers

These mechanical monsters, doubtless a variety or creation of the zorigami (see the *13th Age Bestiary*) are fiendishly complicated clockwork scarabs. The bigger models, stalwarts, are there to protect the delicate machinery of the Clock of Hell. Their small cousins, rippers, were designed to clear debris out of the clock teeth by eating it. (Adventurers count as debris). Finally, there are a small number of prayer wheels, holy engines made to deal with any leakage from Hell that comes through the gate.



The Cogs

The characters must cross four huge cogs to reach the safe side. The characters start on Cog 1. The clockworkers can scuttle out of the workings of the clock anywhere, but at least one emerges on Cog 4. Adjacent cogs are nearby; other cogs are far away.

Each of the four cogs has magical properties. A character standing on the appropriate cog can spend a move action pushing the cog to trigger an effect. (So can the stalwart clockworkers or prayer wheels, but not the smaller rippers). The effects are:

Cog 1—Thunderstruck: The bell sounds. Everyone on the clock takes 2d8 thunder damage (4d8 if vulnerable to thunder).

Cog 2—Tempo: Add or subtract one from the escalation die.

Cog 3—Elemental Power: Everyone on the clock gains a vulnerability chosen by the character from the following list: fire, cold, lightning, acid, thunder, or holy, and immunity to a different energy type from the same list. They lose any previous immunities or vulnerabilities gained from the clock.

Cog 4—Turn Back Time: Reroll the last roll made. This can be used as an interrupt action; the character who invokes this power sacrifices their next move action.

GAMEMASTER

The clockworkers start with *immunity to thunder damage*. The obvious tactic is for them to seize control of Cogs 1 and 3, make the PCs vulnerable to thunder while protecting themselves from the most commonly used spells of the PCs, and keep ringing the bell until the intruders are squished by the sonic damage.

Breaking the Clock

Keep track of the number of times in the battle that the cog powers are used *by the player characters*. After all, the characters are meddling with a magical device made to hold back the powers of the Abyss. (The clockworkers are part of the clock and automatically compensate for their interference with its functioning.)

Roll a d20 whenever the number reaches a multiple of 5. If the result is higher than or equal to the number, the clock's gears grind together and a chorus of demonic voices roar from the far side of the metal doors.

If the result is less than the number, the Clock of Hell breaks. If this happens, the following things occur in rapid succession.

- **The bell tolls:** The clock sounds the alarm by ringing its bell frantically. The noise can be heard all over the Empire; it echoes through the Cathedral of the Priestess, and is met by answering warhorns from the Crusader's fortress at First Triumph.
- **The doors of Hell burst open:** The magic doors beneath the clock crack, buckle, and break as a host of demons smash against them from the far side.
- **The Stone Thief flees:** The living dungeon could swallow the clock, but a hellhole is another matter. The dungeon immediately submerges, casting off this part of the Maddening Stair and leaving it entombed in solid rock. Optionally, you could allow the player characters to leap off the clock back to the stair before it gets cast off.
- **A new hellhole opens:** Boom. With a cataclysmic explosion, a new hellhole erupts from the wreckage of the clock. On the bright side, the player characters miraculously survive the explosion, and are now lying stunned at the bottom of this new gaping wound in the land. They may wish they hadn't survived, though—not only do they have to fight through the forces of Hell to escape, they've also got to explain to the Great and Powerful that they opened a new and tremendously dangerous hellhole an age or three ahead of schedule. Looks like they've got their epic tier quest lined up...

GAMEMASTER

You know, if the Stone Thief were somehow prevented from moving, then the characters could use the hellhole explosion to destroy the dungeon. Yes, they're trading one huge threat to life as we know it for another, but better the devil you know...

Stalwart Clockworker

Dependable as clockwork, these chaps.

8th level blocker [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +13

Grinding Gears +12 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 16+: Caught in the gears. 10 ongoing damage until the character disengages from the clockworker or makes a save (11+).

R: Spit Hot Brass +12 vs. PD (one nearby target, or a far away target at –2)—15 damage, and 5 ongoing fire damage
Natural 16+: The target is stuck (save ends).

Master Intercept: If a foe tries to move past the clockworker, they roll a hard save (16+). If this save fails, the foe's move is canceled and the clockworker gets to make a free *grinding gears* attack immediately.

Clockface Crawler: Clockworkers don't need to worry about staying on the gears—they can cling to sheer surfaces.

Thunder Immunity: Clockworkers take no damage from thunder-based attacks.

AC	**25**	
PD	23	**HP 150**
MD	18	

Prayer Wheel

Automated prayers are the latest theological innovation. Riverside property in Santa Cora is hotly contested, as all the big religions jostle to build water-powered millwheels connected to clacking prayer machines.

8th level caster [construct]
Initiative: +11

Grinding Gears +12 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 16+: Caught in the gears. 10 ongoing damage until the character disengages from the prayer wheel or makes a save (11+).

C: Holy Light +13 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away creatures)—15 holy damage
Sear the Soul: Demonic creatures, and that probably includes those who have a relationship in any sense of the word with the Diabolist, take an extra 2d8 damage.

Mechanical Curse: Whenever a character uses one of the cog abilities, the prayer wheel spits a curse at the one who dares profane the sacred clock. Pick a number between 1 and 20. If the player of the cursed character rolls that number naturally on a d20 roll, or says that number for the rest of the fight, the character takes 2d8 damage. If there are multiple prayer wheels, pick multiple numbers.

Clockface Crawler: Prayer wheels don't need to worry about staying on the gears—they can cling to sheer surfaces.

Thunder Immunity: Clockworkers take no damage from thunder-based attacks.

AC 24
PD 18 **HP 133**
MD 22

Variations

- Instead of another combat, crossing the clock could be a puzzle or skill test instead. Turn the wrong cog, and the clock starts ticking much, much faster.
- If the dungeon's submerging, then anywhere is better than here —even Hell, and the clock's doors swing both ways…

Ripper Clockworker

There's a reason they call the spiky bits on cogs 'teeth.'

8th level mook [construct]
Initiative: +12

Ripping Teeth +13 vs. AC—23 damage

Overclocked: A ripper may choose to overclock itself at the start of its turn. It gets to roll 2d20 and take the best result for its next attack roll, but is destroyed at the end of its turn.

Clockface Crawler: Rippers don't need to worry about staying on the gears—they can cling to sheer surfaces.

Thunder Immunity: Clockworkers take no damage from thunder-based attacks.

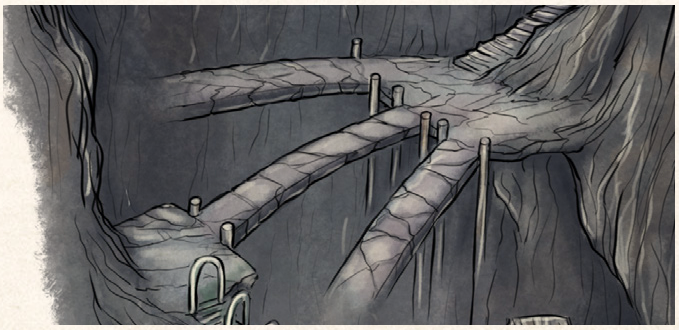
AC 24
PD 22 **HP 36 (mook)**
MD 18

Mook: Destroy one ripper clockworker mook for every 36 damage dealt to the mob.

Clock of Hell Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Stalwart	Prayer Wheel	Ripper
3 x 6th level	**2**	**1**	**3**
4 x 6th level	**2**	**1**	**6**
5 x 6th level	**2**	**2**	**3**
6 x 6th level	**2**	**2**	**6**
7 x 6th level	**3**	**2**	**6**
3 x 7th level	***3***	***1***	***5***
4 x 7th level	***3***	***2***	***5***
5 x 7th level	***4***	***2***	***10***
6 x 7th level	***4***	***3***	***10***
7 x 7th level	***5***	***3***	***10***

5. SHIFTING STAIRS



All the way down the Maddening Stair, there's been only one path to follow, a single stairs that winds around the sides of the pit. Here, suddenly, the staircase turns sharply and splits into three arches of stone that fan out as they cross the chasm. All three stone bridges are identical.

No matter which bridge the characters choose, or even if they split up, as soon as the characters start to cross the bridges, they find themselves teleporting between them at random. For example, one moment, all six adventurers might be on the leftmost bridge, and next moment, two of them find themselves standing on the left bridge, three in the middle, and one on the right.

Teleporting

At the start of the round, roll a d8 for each player character. On a 1–2, they're on the leftmost bridge; 3–4 middle, 5–6 right. On a 7–8, the player gets to pick.

If the Stone Thief has an Eye, or if an adventurer has somehow incurred the dungeon's wrath in particular, then ignore the dice roll and just be malicious. *"Oh, hey, yeah, everyone ended up on the same bridge, apart from you, guy-who-stabbed-the-Stone-Thief back in the Gizzard. Sucks that you've got to solo this monster."*

Only the player characters are afflicted by this teleportation. The monsters stay on their assigned bridge, unless they've been grabbed by an adventurer.

Relative position is maintained between bridges, so if a character gets moved to an empty bridge, runs ahead, then teleports back to an occupied bridge, they'll be behind their foes.

Bridge Jumping

It's possible to jump between bridges, but it's tough—it's a DC 25 check. Failing by 5 or less means the character *nearly* made it, manages to grab onto the parapet with outstretched fingertips, and can pull themselves up with a move action. Spells or abilities that allow flight or distant teleportation also work.

Ranged attacks can reach between bridges. Attacking from the left-most to the right-most bridge or vice versa counts as being far away for the purposes of ranged attacks.

If a character ending up on an empty bridge wants to flee, they can—leaving their friends behind.

The Three Foes

One or more of the bridges is barred by a dangerous monster. If you've only got three players, use one monster; four or five players, use two; and if six or more, use three monsters.

The bridgekeepers are all monsters collected by the Stone Thief from across the world. The fire giant and the ice ape are both magically bound to their bridges—whenever they try to leave, they just get teleported back. The giant has gone mad from this magical imprisonment; the ape doesn't have the intelligence to understand its predicament, but started out murderous and got worse from the situation. The third foe, the blade thrall, isn't bound to the bridge, but this place provides a ready supply of potential hosts for the living weapon.

Fire Giant Pyromancer

Pyromancy and necromancy are closely interwined for the giants. They burn their dead and interrogate the smoke; they reanimate cold embers, and summon up the spectral flames of long-extinct fires.

Large 9th level caster [GIANT]
Initiative +13
Vulnerability: cold

Flaming Whip +14 vs. AC (3 attacks)—20 damage
Natural roll greater than foe's Dexterity: The whip trips the target. The target loses their next move action.
Natural 16+: 10 ongoing fire damage.

C: Torrent of Flame +14 vs. PD (1d3 nearby foes)—20 damage, and 20 ongoing fire damage

R: Fiery Arrows +14 vs. AC (1d3 nearby or far away foes at –2 atk)—30 damage
Natural 16+: 10 ongoing fire damage.

Wall of Fire: Once per round, when a character moves to engage the fire giant, the giant may conjure a *wall of fire* as a free action. This wall makes a **+14 vs. PD** attack against that character and causes 10 fire damage and 10 ongoing fire damage. The moving character may choose to abort their action and automatically avoid the wall's attack.

Fan the Flames: Any characters engaged with the fire giant take a –5 penalty to saves against any ongoing fire damage. If the escalation die becomes odd while a character is engaged with the giant, increase any ongoing fire damage that character is currently subject to by +5. The giant's presence does give any nearby characters a +5 bonus to saves against ongoing cold damage.

Resist Fire 18+: When a fire attack targets this character, the attacker must roll a natural 18+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

AC	**24**	
PD	20	**HP 340**
MD	23	

Ice Ape

It was found locked inside a glacier that floated south on the Iron Sea.

Large 9th level wrecker [GIANT]
Initiative: +13
Vulnerability: Fire

Frozen Paws +14 vs. AC (2 attacks)—30 damage, and 10 ongoing cold damage
Natural even roll: The ice ape grabs its victim. The ape may then begin to make *glacial embrace* attacks on that victim. The ape may only grab a maximum of two creatures at a time, and it loses one *frozen paw* attack for every victim it has currently grabbed.

Bite +14 vs. AC—80 damage, and 20 ongoing cold damage

Glacial Embrace +18 vs. PD (grabbed victims only, includes +4 grab bonus)—50 cold damage, and the victim must make an immediate (11+) save. If the victim fails two such saves while grabbed, the victim is frozen solid and becomes helpless. The helpless state ends when the victim is no longer grabbed.

R: Throw Victim +14 vs. AC (one nearby or far away enemy; the ape must have a grabbed victim)—50 damage, and the thrown victim also takes 50 damage. On the bright side, the victim is no longer grabbed.

Icy Breath: The ice ape's frosty breath gives all nearby characters a –5 penalty to any saves against cold damage, and a +5 bonus to saves against ongoing fire damage.

Icy Blood: If a melee weapon hits the ice ape, that weapon's damage type changes to cold (save ends).

Resist Cold 18+: When a cold attack targets this character, the attacker must roll a natural 18+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

AC	**25**	
PD	23	**HP 360**
MD	18	

Blade Thrall

The thrall doesn't matter—only the sword. Always and forever, only the sword.

Double-strength 9th level spoiler [HUMANOID]
Initiative +18

Cut of the Devil-Sword +14 vs. AC (one attack per engaged foe)—50 damage
Natural even hit or miss: The target becomes vulnerable to the blade thrall's attacks. This vulnerability ends when the target disengages from the blade thrall.
Miss: 25 damage.

Exploit Advantage: The blade thrall may 'spend' a foe's vulnerability to it to redirect an attack targeting the thrall so that it now targets that foe instead.

Cage of Steel: Attempts to disengage from the blade thrall take a –5 penalty.

Right Place, Right Time: The blade thrall has a +2 bonus to attacks made on characters who teleported this round.

AC	**25**	
PD	23	**HP 360**
MD	19	

The Sword of Boundless Slaughter

This legendary weapon was made by, or *is* a god of death, depending on which fearfully whispered translation of certain terrible and ancient glyphs you believe. When a new bearer picks up the weapon, they see a brief vision of a far-distant wasteland, a world where there is no living thing save a shadowy figure who wields the *Sword of Boundless Slaughter*. (Or *is* the *Sword*, if you go for the second translation).

Anyway, it's a cursed +3 sword. The sword's evil spreads through the bearer, so whenever the bearer levels, they lose access to one of their chakras, in the following order: Weapon (already consumed by picking up the blade), Glove, Cloak, Helm, Necklace. A victim who loses the Necklace chakra becomes enthralled by the blade.

For each chakra consumed in this fashion after the first, the sword inflicts an extra d12 damage on a successful hit.

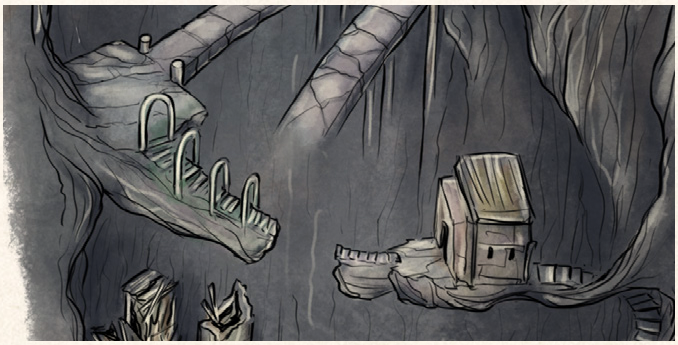
Quirk: 'Destined to rule over a dead world after the sword has murdered every living thing' isn't technically a quirk, so let's go with 'excessively morbid.'

Crusader: There are certain tales that say that this is the destined weapon of the Crusader.

Variations

- If the PCs return this way having slain one of the guardians, then the corresponding bridge is gone. Kill two guardians, and only one bridge remains. Kill all three—then the adventurers have a problem.
- A nastier special for the whole encounter—kill the guardian, and the bridge beneath starts to collapse immediately.

6. Stairs of the Dreamer



The stairs in this region are carved from jade inlaid with gold and mother-of-pearl. There is an air of sanctity here, of serenity. Unseen wind-chimes jingle in the air-currents caused by passing unseen archivults. It's all very tranquil until the characters come to a huge gap in the stairs. There's no way forward.

What there is, though, is a pair of small daises. One is empty; sitting cross-legged on the other dais is an ageless woman, wearing the robes of a monk. She appears to be meditating when the characters arrive. Woken, she lazily unfolds and opens her eyes, which resemble those of a snake. A forked tongue flickers out when she speaks.

Ajura, She Who Enlightens Through Darkness

The monk introduces herself as Ajura. She has been here a long, long time, for she awaits a great change in the world. Ajura believes that true enlightenment will only become possible in a future age, and that is it therefore the duty of all beings of power to hasten the passage of the world through all its cycles. As ages tend to end with catastrophes, Ajura is effectively a cheerleader for the apocalypse. She's not a member of the Cult of the Devourer, but applauds their destructive intentions.

She explains to the characters that these stairs are the stairs of a dreamer. Step forward into the void and walk in the realm of dream! But first, choose—walk in Ajura's dream to gain the bridge, or leave one of their number behind to dream their own bridge? She assures them that the dreamer will be carried across by the magic of their bridge once the dream ends—assuming the other travelers survive the crossing.

There's no other way to move past this area. It may stink of a trap, but sometimes the adventurers have to hold their noses and plunge on regardless.

Dreaming the Bridge

If a character remains behind, then all the prospective pontifex needs to do is climb onto the dais and start to dream. Shaping a bridge in dream requires a DC 25 skill check; failure means that the dreamer accidentally adds more perils to the dream encounters, or reveals more than they should. Once the dreamer starts dreaming, the bridge appears—a misty, unstable, and ever-shifting pathway across the gap.

Crossing the bridge means walking in the mind of the dreamer. Ask the dreamer to describe the scenes the other adventurers encounter. If the dreamer tries to conceal aspects of themselves from the others—say, a particular memory, emotional association, or belief—then this manifests as perils and monsters in the dream. The more the dreamer tries to hide, the more dangerous the dream becomes. Ask the player to describe the perils encountered, and assign stats based on those descriptions and the degree of concealment. (If you're stuck for inspiration, then some level-appropriate monsters with obvious symbolism include stone giants or stone golems (*13th Age* core rulebook, pages 226/232) for 'thou shalt not go this way'; rakshasa (*13th Age,* page 245) for illusions or concealment; elder naga (*Bestiary,* page 175); or shadow dragons (*Bestiary*, page 234) for secrets mystical or dark, respectively.)

Ajura's Dream

Should the characters ask Ajura to provide them with a bridge, then they must traverse her dreams. This manifests as a narrow path that snakes along a cliff in a fog-shrouded mountain range. The characters occasionally glimpse eerie monasteries on distant mountainsides that seem both long-abandoned and watchful. Along the path, they encounter thirteen statues, twelve of which represent the endings of the twelve previous ages. The first statue, for example, depicts the Wizard King. Bone-white flowers sprout from the cracks in the stone. Most of the other statues are too broken and eroded for their features to be discerned—are those giants? Ants? Mirrors?

The thirteenth statue, though, is different. It's a pillar of frothing, protean mud that keeps bubbling into different shapes. Sometimes, the Eyes of the Stone Thief stare out at them; sometimes, they see the looming shadow and dripping axe of the Orc Lord, or the mud hisses steam as it falls into the shape of the great Red. It's clearly showing potential future architects of the apocalypse.

Abruptly, a number of snakescale horrors emerge out of the fog in a threatening fashion. Roll initiative!

Fighting Ajura

Ajura is not intended to be a combat encounter, so we haven't provided statistics for her. If attacked, she turns to smoke and vanishes. She plays no further part in the *Eyes of the Stone Thief* campaign, but if you want to bring her back in your game, we've got her pegged as a 12th level Spoilermonk or thereabouts, with lots of nasty martial arts and snake-themed powers.

Snakescale Horror

9th level troop [HUMANOID]
Initiative +14

Clawed Strike +12 vs. AC—25 damage, and 10 ongoing poison damage
Natural 16+: The target is stuck (save ends).

R: Lashing Serpent +15 vs. PD—25 damage, and 10 ongoing poison damage
Natural even hit: The snakescale horror may make another *lashing serpent* attack immediately at another target near the first target.

Elusive Serpent: Snakescale horrors have a +5 bonus to disengage checks.

Shedding Skin: The first time the snakescale horror becomes staggered, it sheds its skin. It loses its *lashing serpent* and *elusive serpent* abilities, and gains the following abilities instead:
Bite +15 vs. AC—50 damage
Natural 18+: 10 ongoing poison damage.
Nerve Strike +13 vs. PD (targets suffering from ongoing poison damage only)—40 damage, and the victim is helpless (save ends)

Block: Once per round, the snakescale horror may choose to take only half damage from a melee attack.

Brute: Attempts to disengage from the snakescale horror take a –5 penalty.

Nastier Specials

Regrow Skin: As a move action, a staggered snakescale horror may swap back to its original set of abilities.

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 180**
MD 19

Stairs of the Dreamer Fight Chart

Number/Level of PCs	Snakescale Horror
3 x 6th level	**2**
4 x 6th level	**2**
5 x 6th level	**3**
6 x 6th level	**3**
7 x 6th level	**4**
3 x 7th level	***2***
4 x 7th level	***3***
5 x 7th level	***4***
6 x 7th level	***5***
7 x 7th level	***6***



Cliffs: Those cliffs can help answer that age-old question "when you dream of falling, what happens when you hit the bottom?" In this case, you wake up out of the dream, discover you're standing on nothing more substantial than someone else's imagination, and plummet again down an even bigger cliff.

To The Statue: If a character becomes helpless or is knocked unconscious by the snakescale horrors, they attempt to bring that character to the statue—in metaphysical terms, they're trying to align that character with the end of the age. If they succeed, this part of the dream fades, and the unlucky character either:

- Gains a new conflicted relationship with whichever icon is most likely to bring about the end of the age; or
- Has their one unique thing evolve to match their fate as fulcrum of destiny. For example, a character in my campaign was the 'Avatar of a New and Unknown God.' If he'd fallen victim to Ajuna's machinations, then he'd become the 'Avatar of the Devourer.'

Ajura's Betrayal

If the characters set one of their own party members to dream a bridge, take that player aside midway through the crossing. Describe how they distantly hear a voice whispering to them from the waking world. It's Ajura, and she has a knife to the character's throat. "Don't wake up," she hisses. "Wake and they fall. Sleep. Sleep and listen."

She offers a choice: swear a binding oath to obey her when the time comes, or die… and if the dreamer dies, the dream ends and the rest of the party will fall to their deaths. Ajura intends to call in the oath at the climax of the campaign if doing so ensures the end of the age and the continued progress toward universal enlightenment. She might, for example, stop the characters from destroying the Stone Thief, or make sure that the binding spell gives control of the dungeon to some evil icon. The character who swore the oath can break it, but doing so incurs a lethal curse that swiftly and unavoidably kills them.

If Ajura's the one providing the dream, then she can threaten the whole party at once.

Other Dreams

Once the characters get past Ajura's trap, they may pass through other dreams as they cross the bridge. Possible other dreamscapes ripe for trespassing include:

- The characters might take a wrong turn and end up in one of their own dreams. Again, hiding things from the rest of the party means adding perils to the dream.
- If any of the characters have a connection to the Great Gold Wyrm or the Elf Queen, they might encounter those icons in the dreamscape.
- The Hag Pheig (page 154) might put in an appearance.

The Cult Dreams

Finally, the characters must pass through the dreams of the Cult of the Devourer. In this dream, the characters glimpse the Citadel of the Secret Masters (page 260). They can sense the overwhelming presence of the Masters like suppurating wounds in the dream, oozing evil out into the world. Beams of psychic energy burst from the Masters; some are probing for intruders, others are messages to the cult's agents in the world above.

The characters must choose—do they try to avoid the cult's notice, or try to eavesdrop on the dreams? Sneaking past requires a DC 20 check; eavesdropping on the dream communication without being noticed is DC 35, but success gets the characters a clue about the Cult of the Devourer, like:

- The location of a cult temple on the surface (and hence, a likely next target for the living dungeon).
- The cult's ultimate goal of turning the Stone Thief into a weapon of divine mass destruction.
- The location of an Eye of the Stone Thief.
- The cult's possession of a ritual to bind the dungeon.

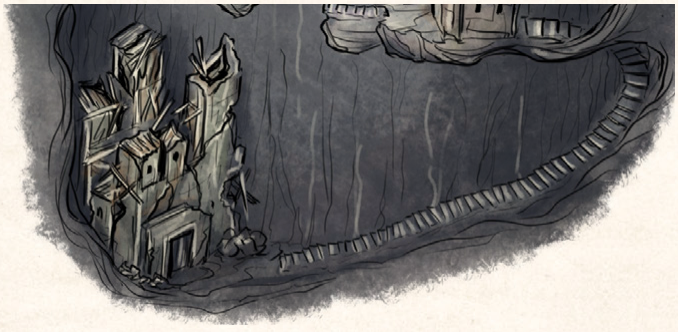
If the characters get noticed, then the cult readies for a confrontation by:

- Ambushing the characters when they reach the Pilgrim's Gate.
- Sending the dungeon after a place associated with one of the characters.

Variations

- Ajura might be the servant of an icon like the Diabolist or the Three who has an interest in the dungeon's fate—her talk about the march of the ages towards enlightenment is just a cover
- Ajura's mission might be nothing to do with the dungeon—you can use her to seed hints about where your game will go in the epic tier.

7. The Pilgrim's Gate



At the end of the Maddening Stair, the characters come upon a ruined temple abutting the wall of the chasm. It's the only exit from this level of the dungeon. The temple may be ruined, but it's clearly not abandoned. Torchlight can be seen through the empty windows, and there's the smell of food cooking on a stove. The door to the temple is barred from the inside, but there's a doorbell to ring.

This temple belongs to the Cult of the Devourer. Pilgrims from the surface who make it this far have navigated the trials of the dungeon's upper levels, and they now approach the sacred precincts of the cult. This temple's purpose is to welcome travelers from the surface world, and to keep out intruders. It's also a shrine to honor the pilgrims who almost made it—their bones decorate the walls as a grisly monument to misplaced faith.

The lone custodian of the temple is a half-elf named **Maeglor**. He takes a less fanatical view of the cult than most of his fellow adherents (which explains why he's stuck guarding the front porch instead of counted among the ranks of the Secret Masters). Maeglor invites the characters into the temple and provides them with food and drink. He deflects any questions about himself if he can, but answers honestly if asked directly. He pretends to assume that the characters are acolytes of the cult—why, no mere *adventurer* could have made it this far into the bowels of the living god—then springs his offer on them after educating them about the cult. (If the adventurers are actually disguised as cult

pilgrims, then have each PC make a skill check (DC 25) to fool Maeglor; if they succeed, he skips the offer to anoint them and goes right to plotting the overthrow of the Secret Masters).

If the characters attack Maeglor, he flees through the temple to the stairwell guarded by the Alabaster Sentinel—see page 206.

Maeglor's Heresy

The Cult of the Devourer believes that the Dragon Empire wronged their ancestors centuries ago, and that the proper response is to breed a god-dungeon to destroy the world. Maeglor agrees with the first tenet, and believes that the cult does indeed have a legitimate grievance against the Dragon Empire. It's the second part he has trouble with. The whole concept of the Devourer seems needlessly nihilistic to him. Instead, he argues that the cult should use the empowered Stone Thief to wipe away the corrupt or hidebound powers of the surface world, and then take over.

Playing Maeglor

- You're one of those horribly annoying villains who knows you're a villain, but believe the ends justify the means. You've made your peace with the idea of being evil, and you don't have any delusions about being a misunderstood hero. This manifests as a level of smug superiority normally exhibited only by high elves and gamemasters.
- Be smooth, solicitous, and unfailingly polite. Never threaten the player characters. Tell them that if they want to kill you, you have no way to stop them. You're at their mercy, so they may as well listen to what you have to say.
- Smile, clasp your hands together, and bow. Indulge the player characters, then give them the benefit of your superior wisdom.

History Lessons

Murals on the walls of the temple trace the history of the cult, and Maeglor eagerly explains the symbolism to the visitors. After all, he points out, some branches of the cult have been cut off from the main body for centuries, with only the uncertain and sometimes confusing dreams sent by the Secret Masters for guidance. Even the most devoted pilgrim, then, might need a little theological refresher course before passing onward into the Onyx Catacombs below.

The first mural shows the exile of the ancestors of the cult. An Emperor of old—possibly the Wizard King himself, although Maeglor insists that the Wizard King was traditionally depicted with a staff, not a scepter—gestures toward a glowing portal held open by a previous Archmage. An armored knight forces those first cultists—who, according to the mural at any rate, are wise scholars, sensitive artists, philosophers, puppy-lovers, and brave heroes to a man—through the portal.

The second mural shows the cult wandering through a strange land, being menaced by demons and other monsters. Defended by a ring of armed warriors, the leaders of the cult gather in a circle to swear an oath of vengeance directed at the Emperor and his lackeys.

The third panel in the mural shows the cult dividing. Some return to the Empire in secret, while others continue to travel the world. Maeglor draws the character's attentions to the magical symbols in one part, and speculates that the cult learned mystical rites unknown in the Dragon Empire.

The fourth panel shows the cult sorcerers building a magical fortress in a desert; the fifth shows that fortress being devoured from below by the Stone Thief. At this point, Maeglor wonders aloud if the cultists learned of the living dungeon when it consumed their sanctum, or if they knew about the dungeon already and lured it with a prize the Thief couldn't resist. Other cultists surround the dungeon, stabbing it with what appear to be spears.

The sixth panel shows the cult leaders communing with the dungeon. There are more magical glyphs in this panel, which show the cult knows rites to summon the Stone Thief.

The seventh panel shows the Stone Thief devouring places of power across the Empire, guided by the cult. The mural might give away the location of several cult temples, if the players still need leads pointing them that way.

The eighth panel depicts the cult preparing to bind the Stone Thief. From this panel, the characters can learn some of the items needed to command the dungeon (see page 352, *Slaying the Thief*), but not the rite itself.

The ninth panel shows the great treachery—a shadowy figure flees the dungeon, carrying with him two gleaming gemstones of incalculable worth. It must be the Prince of Shadows carrying away the Eyes of the Stone Thief.

The tenth panel shows the cult leaders gathering once more, in a pattern similar to that shown in the second mural. From this panel, though, it is clear they have been warped and changed by their time in the dungeon, becoming something far from the humans they once were. They send out dreams to the other branches of the cult.

The eleventh panel shows pilgrims descending the dungeon. Actually, it mostly shows pilgrims dying horribly at the claws of monsters and the spikes of traps as they battle through the dungeon, but one band of pilgrims makes it to a building that resembles this very temple. These pilgrims have been drawn to resemble the original exiled ancestors of the cult, and carry with them treasures and symbols of power.

The twelfth panel shows the dungeon gorging itself on the sources of power matching those symbols, guided by the cult. The dungeon has grown vastly since the fifth panel.

The thirteenth and final panel depicts the Devourer. In this mural, the living dungeon is big enough to swallow the whole Empire. The Emperor and the Archmage cower as the god-dungeon consumes them. The cult leaders stand in a circle atop the dungeon, like a crown on a dragon's head, one with their monstrous progeny/prison, and glorious and triumphant amid universal devastation. After letting the characters admire the devastation for a moment, Maeglor sneers at it, saying "not exactly the best approach, I think."

Maeglor's Offer

Soon, the Cult of the Devourer's plans will come to fruition. Their surface temples will guide the dungeon to places of power, making the Stone Thief stronger with each theft. Then, the Secret Masters will bind the dungeon from within, guiding it to its destiny as the Devourer. Finally, it shall destroy the world—or perhaps, Maeglor suggests, it could *remake* it. The living dungeon could be a force for great good in the right hands. Imagine if the Stone Thief began by consuming the Lich King's fortress, or wiped out the legions of the Orc Lord? Or if it toppled the corrupt Imperial dynasty, or freed the elven Court of Stars from the malign influence of the dark elves? Why, the cult could guide the world to a better age instead of destroying everything!

Oh, the Secret Masters have their own plan for the world after the Devourer rises, but it's terribly dull. They'll rule over the wasteland, and all their enemies will be punished forever. They're so blinded by vengeance that they don't see the potential.

All the characters need to do is eliminate the Secret Masters of the cult, leaving the way open for Maeglor to take the reins of power. They'll also need to get the binding ritual itself, kept inside the cult's secret ritual vault in the Catacombs. The vault (page 256) is easy to spot—it flies.

As proof of his intent, Maeglor tells the characters about the last guardian. The way out of the Maddening Stair is guarded by a magical golem built by the cult. It will destroy anyone who tries to pass, except those anointed by the cult. Maeglor offers to anoint the characters, giving them the magical seal needed to bypass the guardian.

The Anointing

The anointing ceremony demands the characters swear a magical oath. This oath is the initiation oath of the cult (see page 303). As described, a player character who swears the oath gets a 1-point negative relationship with the Emperor (or another civilized icon like the Archmage or Dwarf King), and is permanently vulnerable to the attacks of the cult. Those who swear the oath can also be targeted by the Punishment of Traitors rite (page 303).

Because the characters may not know what the oath entails (and Maeglor lies, describing it as an 'empty formality' if they ask), you might want to conceal the negative relationship aspect until after the characters have made the decision.

A DC 30 check (or possibly an icon benefit from the Priestess or Great Gold Wyrm) can clue the characters in about the true nature of the oath.

The Alabaster Sentinel

The path down into the deeper dungeon is guarded by a gigantic golem of white marble. This titan is the Alabaster Sentinel, and only the anointed may pass. It stands over the stairwell at the end of the temple, eternally vigilant.

If the characters are all anointed and oath-sworn members of the Cult of the Devourer, then they can just walk past the statue and go down to the next level. However, if they're not oathsworn, then they must battle the statue. If he's still alive, Maeglor fights alongside the golem, which can also call up a skeletal legion of dead pilgrims.

Sneaking Past

The Sentinel looks into the souls of those who come near it, searching for the taint left by the initiation oath of the cult. It perceives the world through a combination of spiritual awareness and the telluric vibrations in the living stone of the dungeon. That means that sneaking past it is epically hard (DC 35 and a damn good tale of how you're so stealthy, you can hide your soul).

The Alabaster Sentinel

The hand that wrought this monument and the face it commemorates are both dust ten thousand years old. Only the stone remembers, and those memories are bitter.

Huge 9th level troop [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +12

Crushing Fists + 14 vs. AC (2 attacks)—60 damage
Natural 16+: Choose one—either you're stunned until the end of your next turn, or you take another 40 damage.
Miss: 20 damage.

R: Blazing Eyebeams +14 vs. PD (2 attacks on any two nearby or far-away targets)—50 fire damage
Natural even hit: 10 ongoing fire damage.

Invulnerable: As long as the sentinel is not staggered, only attacks that do at least 50 damage can damage the sentinel. Any lesser damage is ignored.

Construct Immunities: The sentinel is subject to conditions, but cannot be confused, stuck or helpless. It's also immune to illusions, charms, and other mind-affecting spells.

Load-Bearing Boss: When the sentinel is staggered for the first time *or* defeated, the submergence die increases by 1.

AC 26
PD 23 **HP 540**
MD 19

Maeglor the Apostate

9th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +16

Stone Stave +14 vs. AC—40 damage
Natural 16+: The target is stunned (save ends) and pops free of Maeglor.

C: Shadow of the Past +14 vs. MD (one nearby enemy)—No damage, but the character is struck helpless while beset by visions of the cult's past. The character gets one chance to escape the vision each round—see the sidebar.

C: Fires of Ancient Hatreds +14 vs. MD (all nearby enemies)—The target must roll any positive or conflicted icon relationship dice with the Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, or Priestess. Take 20 damage for each die that rolls a 5 or 6. The character may avoid the damage from a roll by turning the die into a negative relationship instead.

AC 25
PD 19 **HP 180**
MD 23

Visions of the Past

Characters struck by Maeglor's *shadow of the past* power find themselves transported into a vision taken from the cult's history. In game terms, the character must make a skill check each round against DC 25 to escape. Potential visions include:

- Standing in chains before the Emperor and the Archmage of a previous age. The character must drag the heavy chains through the portal to escape the vision.
- Wandering through whatever distant jungle the Archmage exiled the cultists. How does the character lead them to safety?
- The character is in the first citadel of the cult, just as it's devoured by the Stone Thief. Time to start dodging falling stones and riding the citadel down into the Maw.
- The character steps into the leg-irons of a cultist captured in a past age, during the rule of a dark and tyrannical Emperor who tortured his foes. How does the character resist the cunning tortures of the elven Imperial Inquisitors?
- The character remembers being a pilgrim, stumbling blindly through the nightmare of the living dungeon with only a simple wooden staff as protection against all the monsters and traps. How do they escape?

Exits

- The Pilgrim's Gate is the obvious exit from the level.
- Smaller staircases or doors at the bottom of the central shaft may lead to other levels, but the PCs must search to find them.

Pilgrim Shade

Those who failed to reach the Secret Masters may still serve them in death.

9th level mook [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +15

Bony Claws +12 vs. AC—20 damage

Old Grudges: The pilgrim shade's *bony claws* attack deals +5 damage for every positive relationship die with the Emperor, Archmage, Priestess, Dwarf King, or Elf Queen possessed by the target.

Ghastly Horde: If a character is engaged with multiple pilgrim shades, reduce that character's Armor Class by 1 for every three shades, rounding down.

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 45 (mook)**
MD 17

Mook: Kill one pilgrim shade mook for every 45 points of damage dealt to the mob.

Pilgrim's Gate Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Pilgrim Shades	Alabaster Sentinel	Maeglor the Apostate
3 x 6th level	**0**	**1**	**0**
4 x 6th level	**3**	**1**	**0**
5 x 6th level	**6**	**1**	**0**
6 x 6th level	**3**	**1**	**1**
7 x 6th level	**6**	**1**	**1**
3 x 7th level	***0***	***1***	***1***
4 x 7th level	***5***	***1***	***1***
5 x 7th level	***10***	***1***	***1***
6 x 7th level	***15***	***1***	***1***
7 x 7th level	***15***	***1***	***1***

The Pit of Undigested Ages

Levels 6–7

The Stone Thief is old. Old, and crazy. Over the ages, it has assembled a collection of once-famous buildings that, for one reason or another, it has left intact instead of assimilating them into its patchwork architecture. Some of the structures are magically potent in their own right, and the Thief dares not consume them until it is strong enough to handle the influx of magical energy. Others it keeps out of sentiment, if such a concept can be applied to a living dungeon.

Walking through this level is like browsing the shelves of some eccentric, obsessive collector. Time has taken its toll on the older structures, but even the stolen structures from before recorded history are fabulously well preserved.

Guardian Statues

Unless the Custodian takes an interest in the PCs, they can easily avoid these cumbersome monsters.

Guardian Statues

The emperors and tyrants of many past ages erected monuments to their egos. The Thief took them and fashioned these gargantuan statues into patchwork guardians.

Huge 9th level troop [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +9

Ponderous Fist +6 vs. AC (2 attacks)—100 damage
Natural even hit: Target's choice—be dazed (save ends) or take another 50 damage.
Natural miss: The guardian statue causes *collateral damage.*

[Special trigger] **R: Thrown Building +10 vs. AC (1d3 nearby or far away targets)**—75 damage, and the target is dazed and stuck (save ends both).

Building Speed: The guardian statue gets to add the escalation die to its attacks.

Collateral Damage: When the guardian statue misses, its wild swing collides with a nearby building or the cave wall or the ceiling or the floor next to its target, causing collateral damage. Roll a d6 each time this happens. Mark off each item as it happens—each entry in the table can only happen once. If an entry is rolled a second time, the giant just pummels the ground into rubble to no effect.

1: A chunk of masonry hems the PC in, leaving the character with nowhere to dodge the giant's next attack! The target of the attack must succeed at a DC 20 Dexterity check; on a failure, the giant gets a +4 bonus to its attack if that attack targets that PC.

2: Rockfall! All nearby characters are attacked with a **+10 vs. PD** attack for 4d6 damage.

3: Chasm! The giant smashes open a hole in the floor. The target of the attack must succeed at a DC 20 Dexterity check or be stuck (save ends), and the giant gets a +4 bonus to its attacks against stuck targets.

4: Incoming! A huge block of stone is sent flying toward one of the player characters. That character needs to avoid it with a DC 20 Dexterity check; if the check fails, the character takes 3d6 damage and is stunned (save ends).

5: Rip and rend! The statue knocks down a chunk of a nearby building, which it then picks up. Next turn, it may make a *thrown building* attack instead of a *ponderous fist* attack,.

6: Opportunity! The guardian statue's rampage has left an opening for the player characters. Pick a random PC and have the player narrate what the opening is; taking advantage of it requires a DC 20 check of some sort, but success gives the PC a +4 attack bonus against the statue.

Armless: If the statue suffers a critical hit while staggered, it loses one of its arms. It may now only make one attack per round, but gains a +2 bonus to its attacks.

Nastier Specials

The giant may *stomp* instead of making a *ponderous fist* attack.

C: Stomp +14 vs. PD (1d3 nearby creatures): 30 damage, and target's choice: become dazed (save ends) or take another 20 damage.

AC	25	
PD	23	**HP 540**
MD	19	



Features & Factions

The Pit is not controlled by any faction, and it is rarely visited even by the Cultists of the Devourer. Guardian statues wander through the level on long, lonely patrols, but these sentinels are mindless and care only about protecting the ruins. The level has a Custodian, called the Curator, but this spirit resides in the ruins of Quillgate and takes little interest in the dungeon outside.

The Witch of Marblehall managed to 'hook' her family's mansion onto the living dungeon, and her sublevel is always attached to the Pit of Undigested Ages. She tries to keep the entrance to Marblehall secret.

Descriptors

Crumbling walls bear mysterious inscriptions. Strange, inhuman architecture forms ruins of great beauty that loom above the PCs. They are the only things moving in this vast, unexpected stillness and silence within the dungeon. Carved marble statues stare blindly as they pass by.

Minor Encounters

The Mirror of Truth

A full-length mirror hangs on a wall here, facing the PCs. Pick one of the player characters and have their player honestly describe the other characters in the group as that character sees them, including anything that colors the character's impressions of the other party members. For example, if Razeel the thief thinks the dwarf is a doughty warrior, but that the paladin is dangerously obsessed with killing the Stone Thief, he might see the dwarf as more glorious and impressive than he appears at first glance, while the paladin's otherwise handsome countenance is marred by a twisted scowl and burning eyes.

The other characters see this description as their reflection in the mirror.

Diabolist: Deceit and jealousy are in the purview of the Diabolist. With her favor, you can control the mirror and make it show what you want it to show.

Doomed Scholar

The characters find the skeletal remains of some other trespasser in the dungeon. Little scraps of silver thread left in the decayed robes suggest that these are the bones of a wizard. Picking through the corpse's belongings, the characters find a diary. The later entries are incoherent scribbles, but it seems that this poor fellow was a wizard who became trapped in the Stone Thief and spent his last few weeks exploring the Pit of Undigested Ages. He's noted his observations and theories about the structures down here—use the journal to give the PCs clues about the various locations if none of them has a suitable background.

Archmage: There's a magical cipher hidden in the diary. The poor dead wizard found some magical treasure and hid it in a cleverly concealed cache on this level. The cipher reveals the location of the cache.

Echoes of Memory

While exploring the dusty corridors, one of the PCs experiences a psychic flashback to the Stone Thief's attack on a nearby ruin. The character glimpses the ruin as it was just before the Thief stole it.

Great Gold Wyrm: The psychic flashback takes the character back to a time before the Great Gold Wyrm made his fateful sacrifice and dived into the Abyss to hold back the demons. The Wyrm was there that day the Stone Thief rose, watching the dungeon's attack. Perhaps all this is part of the Wyrm's centuries-long scheming, and he gives his faithful servant some weapon or secret to be carried forward out of memory.

Ancient Coins

The characters discover a stone coffer containing 500 ancient coins, made of some greenish metal. These coins predate the Dragon Empire. The coins might be worth as much as three gold pieces each to the right collector, if the characters can find someone with the wealth to buy them and the historical knowledge to recognize their true worth.

The Three: You've actually seen coins like these before, because they are associated with the Black's assassins. There are certain caves in the Fangs—go there, and leave an offering of these coins along with a scroll bearing a name. Whatever inhuman assassins dwell in those caves will take the coins and—if the price is right—kill whoever is named in the scroll within a month.

You've seen coins like this, but never so many! 500 coins might be enough to buy the death of an Emperor!

1. Serpent Temple



Before the Wizard King, the sorcerous serpent folk ruled the land from their strongholds at Throne Point. This temple was built late in their reign, a fortress made to resist the predations of the barbarian apes that besieged the ophidian civilization.

This place resembles the roots of a banyan tree, only made of stone. Hundreds of overlapping and intertwining stone tubes of all sizes make up the walls. While there are lots of small openings, there is only one tube big enough for the player characters to climb into. A lot of wriggling through the darkness brings the characters into the inner sanctum of the temple. From their vantage point, the characters see:

- Snakes. Lots of snakes. The floor of the temple crawls with all manner of snakes of all types and sizes. They're still alive, presumably preserved by the magic of the Stone Thief.
- Several circular pools of reddish liquid, each about five feet across. It is too watery to be blood, but it doesn't look wholesome. There's something beneath the water in each pool.
- An egg-shaped crystal globe in the middle of the temple. It glows with magical power.

At this point, a moon-white snake slithers out of the writhing mass and heads straight for the player characters. It bares its fangs as it approaches.

- **Archmage/High Druid/Priestess/Three:** You've heard/instinctively know that this snake is a magical messenger of the serpent folk. If you let it bite you, it will transmit its message straight into your veins. You may not like what it shows you, and you don't have to let it bite you, but don't attack it!
- **Crusader/Lich King:** The Wizard King had to deal with many lingering serpent folk infestations. They're a treacherous, deceitful, and malicious people, and serpents like that can bewitch you if they bite you. Killing it, though, will draw the wrath of the other snakes.

If the characters do kill the snake, then the icon's warning gives them a +4 bonus to initiative for this fight.

Bite of the Snake

So, you've volunteered to be bitten by a magical moon-snake. Excellent! Make a Wisdom skill check against DC 30.

Succeed: Knowledge flows into your mind! You know what this temple is for, and how to activate the globe safely. Gain the +3 background Lore of the Serpent Rulers.

Fail by 1–10 (Result of 20–29): You're vulnerable to serpent folk attacks targeting MD and feel compelled to go into the temple and touch that globe. You can resist this compulsion—it's not overwhelming—but it seems to you to be a very good idea to touch the globe. You might even sleepwalk toward that globe if you're not watched every minute of the night.

Fail by 11 or more (Result of 19 or less): That just hurts. Take 2d20 damage.

Natural 1: The snake chokes on your blood and dies. Combat time!

Exploring the Temple

Any investigation of the temple is hampered by the carpet of surly serpents. The snakes snap at anyone who gets too close, and they try to herd intruders away from the walls toward the crystal globe in the center of the temple.

Attacking a snake, or smashing through the wall leading to the treasure chamber, starts the *Rise of the Serpent Folk*!

Snake Bite +10 vs. AC—4d6 poison damage.

Natural 20: The skin around the wound turns green and scaly. The victim is now permanently vulnerable to serpent folk attacks that target MD.

If the players can come up with a plausible way around the snakes, or a method of calming them, they can discover the following facts:

- Those red wells each contain a slumbering serpent man.
- The glyphs and alarming bas-reliefs on the temple walls suggest that this place was made as a refuge for the declining serpent folk civilization.
- There's another chamber to the side of this one, but there's no way in except for a narrow hole that's only big enough for a snake to crawl through. Maybe there's a way to open the wall from the far side—or the characters can blast their way through.

The Magical Globe

The crystal egg contains the souls of thousands of serpent folk, held in magical stasis. The serpent folk intended to slumber in this vessel until the auspicious age for their return, but the Stone Thief stole their temple before the time of the serpents slithered round again.

A character who knows how to use the globe can release some of the souls contained within it, allowing them to return to the preserved bodies in the red wells—see *Rise of the Serpent Folk*, below.

A character who touches the globe without the proper knowledge of how to use it is targeted by a **+15 attack vs. MD**—4d6 psychic damage, and the character gains the knowledge of how to operate the globe correctly.

Natural 1–5: The character glimpses the age-old wisdom of the serpent folk and gains the Lore of the Serpent Rulers background at +5.

Natural even hit: Some of the serpent souls escape—time for *Rise of the Serpent Folk*.

Critical: It's *Rise of the Serpent Folk*, but the Moon Serpent soul possesses the PC who touched the globe instead! Take the player aside and explain to/show them the Moon Serpent sidebar. If a fight breaks out, the possessed character fights using their own abilities as well as the Moon Serpent's powers; the PC can make a save to break free whenever the escalation die is even.

Rise of the Serpent Folk

Spirits stream from the globe as writhing phantasmal shapes before entering their hosts. The vast majority flow into the carpet of snakes on the floor of the temple—as one, they stop moving and rise up as though charmed, their eyes glowing. Some spirits, though, sink into the preserved serpent folk bodies in the red wells, and these clamber out of the fluid tanks, reborn. One of them who bears the symbol of a full moon on its forehead acts as spokesnake. With a wave of her scaly hand, she casts a spell of translation so she can speak to the apes.

Moon Serpent knows that she and her followers are trapped in a living dungeon. They knew it as the *Nest-Eater*, but Stone Thief will do as an approximation. Moon Serpent's people studied the lore of living dungeons eons before humanity arrived; she hints that she can help the PCs defeat the dungeon if they help her in return. She explains that to bring about the rebirth of the serpent folk, she needs bodies. The souls of her followers now possess these snakes, and if the snakes bite a humanoid, the magical venom will transform that body over time into a serpent folk. She needs a few hundred victims, and ideally a way to get this temple out of the dungeon—which means binding the Stone Thief instead of destroying it.

Bringing back the serpent folk: The quickest solution is to offer up one of the groups in the dungeon with enough living humanoids to serve Moon Serpent's needs—the Cult of the Devourer in the Onyx Catacombs, the orcs of Deep Keep, the refugees of Dungeon Town, or the drow of the Grove are all suitable hosts. The characters would have to smuggle possessed snakes into those respective strongholds, but with stealth and diligent work, they could resurrect enough serpent folk to make Moon Serpent a power in the dungeon.

Returning the serpent folk to the surface is another matter. On the one hand, they're a bunch of evil, manipulative, mind-controlling snakes who consider all other creatures their slaves; on the other, they're wise, cultured, and not actively planning to destroy the world. The assistance of one or more icons would be needed to protect the serpent folk while they re-establish themselves.

The Moon Serpent

You've been possessed by the spirit of a serpent ruler—an ancient and alien ophidian spellcaster. The souls of hundreds of other serpent folk slumber in the globe, and you want to free them. Your goals are to:

- escape the dungeon, ideally with your temple intact.
- obtain bodies for your followers, which you will then transform into suitable serpent folk forms.
- re-establish the serpent kingdoms on the surface.

When negotiating, you have:

- The threat of your considerable magical power.
- Occult secrets relating to the Stone Thief.
- Treasure to offer as a bribe.

Convince the other players to help you achieve your goals!

Killer

The serpent folk have a lot of nasty powers, and they're on their home sand. The PCs have plenty of opportunities to avoid this fight, so pull no punches if they go tomb robbing.

Serpent Attack!

If a fight breaks out—either because the characters killed a snake, or because negotiations with the revived serpent folk went poorly, or for some other reason—then the serpent folk in the pools rise to join the battle, and the globe releases spirits into the snakes to defend the temple.

Moon Serpent Sorcerer

The moon, the serpents hiss, is an egg, and it will hatch at the dawn of the age when they rule the world once more.

9th level leader [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Slashing Fangs +14 vs. AC—40 damage
Natural 16+: 15 ongoing poison damage.

C: Poison Bolt +14 vs. PD (one nearby target)—30 damage, plus 10 ongoing poison damage

R: Forgotten Moonlight +12 vs. MD (1d3 nearby foes)—20 psychic damage, and note the value of the dice rolled for the *forgotten moonlight* attack. When the target next rolls a d20 result equal to or higher than this value, the moon serpent sorcerer may compel the target to reroll the die. A character may only be targeted by *forgotten moonlight* if they are not already subject to its effects.

[Special trigger] **C: Hypnotic Trance +14 vs. MD (one nearby or far away target)**—20 psychic damage, and the target unconsciously exposes their weaknesses. All attacks now target the victim's lowest defense (save ends).

Hypnotic Dance: As a move action, the moon serpent sorcerer may sway. Roll a die; if it is odd and the escalation die is odd, or if it is even and the escalation die is even, the moon serpent successfully dances until the start of its next turn. If a foe rolls a natural 1–2 with an attack (or a 1–5 while attacking the moon serpent), the moon serpent may immediately make a *hypnotic trance* attack on that foe.

Nastier Specials

Look into my eyes: If the *hypnotic trance* attack is a critical hit, the victim is also confused (save ends).

AC 25 PD 21 MD 23 **HP 180**

Golden Serpent Warrior

Members of the Golden Serpent Caste are depicted as winged in the murals on the temple walls. Evidence of unseen magical powers, or the work of a slave who knew how to flatter his masters?

8th level troop [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +13

Golden Sword +13 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 18+: The serpent warrior may also make a free *bite* attack.

[Special trigger] **Bite +13 vs. AC**—10 damage, and 10 ongoing poison damage

R: Golden Bow +13 vs. AC (one nearby or far away target)—30 damage, and 10 ongoing poison damage.

Warrior's Dance: As a move action, the golden serpent warrior begins to dance. Pick odds or evens; until the serpent's next turn, if any natural melee attack roll on the serpent match its choice of odds or evens, the attacker takes 25 damage.

Nastier Specials

Swifter Serpent: Reduce the threshold for the bonus *bite* attack by the value of the escalation die. For example, when the escalation die is 3, the serpent gains a free bite attack when it rolls a natural 15 (18–3) or higher.

AC 24 PD 22 MD 18 **HP 144**

Black Serpent Assassin

The age-old techniques of these assassins are preserved in the Black Dragon's secret monasteries of death.

7th level spoiler [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +13

Spinning Blade Strike +12 vs. AC—15 damage
Natural 16+: The black serpent assassin may make a second *spinning blade strike* attack as long as it targets a different enemy.

Deadly Thrust +12 vs. AC—10 damage.
Precise attack: Add the difference between the serpent's attack total and the target's defense to the damage.

Dance of Death: As a move action, the serpent assassin may nominate an enemy and begin to dance. Pick odds or evens; each time that enemy rolls a natural d20 result that matches the selected type, the serpent's next attack on that foe gains a +2 bonus. The serpent may keep dancing for several rounds to accrue this bonus, but it only applies to a single attack and the accumulated bonus is lost if the serpent stops dancing.

AC 23 PD 21 MD 17 **HP 108**

Snake Swarm

Snakes... Why did it have to be snakes? Because you're in a snake temple, dumbass.

7th level mook [BEAST]
Initiative: +10

Bite +12 vs. AC—15 poison damage
Natural 20: The target is permanently vulnerable to serpent folk attacks that target MD.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 27 (mook)**
MD 17

Mook: Kill one snake swarm mook for every 27 damage dealt to the mob.

Serpent Temple Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Moon Serpent	Golden Serpent	Black Serpent	Snake Swarm
3 x 6th level	1	1	1	5
4 x 6th level	1	1	2	5
5 x 6th level	1	2	2	5
6 x 6th level	2	2	2	5
7 x 6th level	2	2	3	5
3 x 7th level	*1*	*2*	*2*	*7*
4 x 7th level	*1*	*3*	*3*	*7*
5 x 7th level	*1*	*3*	*4*	*10*
6 x 7th level	*2*	*3*	*4*	*10*
7 x 7th level	*2*	*4*	*4*	*10*

Treasure: Secrets of the Serpents

The secret treasury can be opened by one of the serpent folk or with a Lore of the Serpent Rulers check (DC 20), picked open by a rogue, or blasted open with a magic ritual. On the other side is a fabulous pile of treasure, all coated with a magical slime that turns to poison gas when exposed to light, choking the character holding the loot—it's **+15 vs. PD**—20 ongoing poison damage (hard save ends, 16+).

Assuming the characters survive that last trap, they can loot this outpost of a long-dead civilization with all the tomb-robbing zeal of a culture that has yet to invent scientific archaeology. The treasury contains roughly 500 gp per player character, although the coins of the serpent people resemble coiled snakes with remarkably sharp fangs that draw blood whenever you stick your hand into your coin-purse or a treasure pile, so getting an exact accounting may be painful. There are also several potent magic items made by the serpent rulers of old; in the hands of anyone other than a serpent folk, these items are effectively *cursed.*

Bow of the Slow Death: This +3 longbow is made from a greenish resin and strung with a copper-like metal, both of which are unknown in the present age. Recharge 11+: The bow inflicts 15 ongoing poison damage on a target, but that damage will never kill a foe—at best, the poison damage may reduce a target to 1 hit point. This restriction does not apply to mooks of equal or lower level to the attacker. *Quirk:* Sadistic.

Helm of the Serpent Prince: +2 MD. Recharge 16+: While wearing the helm, you may glimpse the future. If you haven't acted so far this round, you may interrupt an enemy's action as if you'd readied an action in response to that condition. However, if your 'readied' action is an attack and you miss, the psychic confusion between your vision of the future and the present reality dazes you until the end of your next turn.

Quirk: Finishes other people's—you just did it there, didn't you?

Uttercloak: This inky black cloak gives +2 PD. Recharge 16+: On command, it can expand, becoming more diffuse as it does so. The cloak can cover a wide area, deepening the shadows and allowing a character to hide in them with a +2 bonus, even under noonday sun.

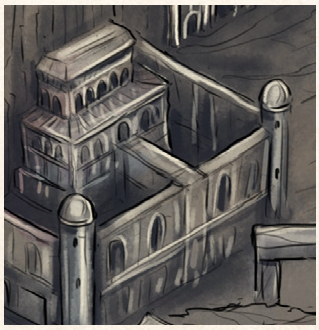
When the cloak shrinks back down after covering an area, something always goes missing, as if dragged away by the retreating tide of darkness. The GM decides what or who the missing thing is, and where the cloak takes it. *Quirk:* You can hear shadows when they move, as if the thing casting the shadow were moving. So, if an armored knight stood in front of a flickering candle, so that his shadow darted first one way, then another, you'd hear a constant annoying clanking. A shadow falling across the pages of this book would be like something brushing against high-quality glossy paper. You get used to it shortly after it drives you mad.

Ring of Myriad Venoms: The blood of the wearer of this ring becomes poisonous. If the character is bitten by a foe, that foe takes damage equal to the wearer's level. The effect is a magical one, so the wearer's blood cannot be harvested, bottled, and sold as poison—at least, not without deceiving one's customers.

Quirk: Licks lips more than is strictly necessary.

Chalice of Ouroboros: This onyx chalice depicts a serpent catching its tail in its mouth. It casts *resurrection* once, then loses all power and becomes a non-magical drinking cup. To use the chalice, it must be filled with the blood of the creature that slew the recipient of the *resurrection*. If you got killed by a rolling boulder, you're out of luck unless your friends can get blood from a stone. If old age took you, then things are about to get highly metaphysical one way or the other.

2. Quillgate Library



The Quillgate Library stood on Throne Point before the Stone Thief took it. Parts of the library may appear elsewhere in the dungeon (for instance, near Dungeon Town—see page 92), but the Resplendent Athenaeum now rests in the Pit, a tomb for all the lore and wisdom it once held in trust for the Empire. As the sages remember and the bards sing, Quillgate was a library founded by a previous Archmage. The price of entry into Quillgate was an arcane secret or spell, and violence was forbidden within the library's walls. By luring practitioners of diabolic magic and other secret sorceries to the neutral ground of Quillgate, that Archmage hoped to gain an understanding of all forms of magic, and to bring about a new age of enlightenment by spreading learning and science across the world.

Most utopian schemes fail, but this one got eaten by a dungeon before it could come to fruition. The loss of Quillgate crushed the spirits of the Archmage, and he broke his staff, buried his spellbooks, and vanished from history. His successors chose to become less engaged with the world, and retreated to the flying ivory towers of Horizon.

Once the party's expert on magic has finished boring everyone in the party with the potted history of Quillgate, the party can try to get in. The doors are fabulously ornate works of brass and jade, crawling with arcane symbols and magical wards. Flanking the doors are two statues of elephant-headed sentinels. Whispering a secret to one of them opens the library. A character with a suitable arcane background can roll (DC 15) to come up with a magical secret that isn't in the library (Quillgate got swallowed several ages ago, and magical theory has progressed since then.) Other characters may reveal something about themselves that's suitably magical. As Quillgate is part of the Stone Thief, the dungeon will of course use any secret knowledge gained in this fashion against the player characters.

The sentinels prevent anyone who doesn't share a secret from entering the library—the would-be intruder may step through the door of the library, but suddenly steps out again on the same side.

Inside, the library is a sorry wreck. The stone shelves are cracked and broken, their contents spilled in piles on the floor. Chandeliers that once spilled magical light now hang lifeless and dark from bowed, mildew-stained ceilings. Everywhere there are drifts and mounds of books and scrolls, flurries of loose pages, and the shattered remains of lecterns and benches. Cruelly, everything is covered in obscuring gray dust, so it is impossible to tell one book from another without laboriously wiping it clean. Finding a specific book in here is virtually impossible.

Borrowing a Book

If the characters are looking for a specific book, or want to try researching a specific topic, they can spend a long time sorting through piles of chaff. Have one character make a skill check using an appropriate perception-related background, with a +1 bonus for every other PC helping. The difficulty for the check is DC 30; failure means the submergence die increases by one. If the dungeon starts to submerge as a result of a failed check, then the quaking of the earth sends a pile of books toppling, revealing the very tome the characters are looking for. They can grab it as they run for the exit.

Alternatively, a ritual could fetch the book desired in a fraction of the time. Wizards, eh?

Topics of Interest

The Quillgate contains many rare books. Notably, the characters could find:

- A spellbook containing any new spells you want to introduce into the game.
- A treatise on living dungeons, describing ways to slay them.
- A partial description of the beliefs and rites of the Cult of the Devourer, suggesting that they possess a ritual to bind or summon the dungeon. The book is regrettably sketchy on the specifics of the ritual, but the characters could infiltrate or beat up the cult to obtain it.
- A book treasured or hated by a particular icon. The Diabolist or the Crusader might kill to get hold of the *Infallible Compendium of True Names of Demons*, while the Priestess would love to get hold of the one surviving copy of the *Hymnal of the Overworld Gods.*

The Curator

One of the walls contorts into the shape of a titanic visage—that of a wise stone sage, the wisdom of the ages graven in the lines on its stony brow. This is the Curator, the Custodian of this level—the wisest and most powerful of the Stone Thief's unwilling servants. It's spent the last few decades locked up in one of the most extensive arcane libraries in the world, so it's picked up lots of magical tricks. What it wants first, though, is information. It asks the player characters about recent events in the dungeon and the world above. Notably, it asks about their knowledge of the Cult of the Devourer and its rites. It poses as an absent-minded old professor, a foolish academic who's always lost in the books. It might even curry favor with the player characters by providing them with a safe place to rest, finding a specific book for them, or offering to teleport them out of the dungeon.

The Curator has an ulterior motive. It's read all the books in Quillgate, and it wants more. Somewhere in all those books of lore, it hopes, is a way to disentangle itself from the Stone Thief. It plans to trick or convince the player characters into helping the dungeon consume the library in Horizon. It intends to give them

the summoning rite used by the Cult of the Devourer to call the dungeon (see page 303) and get them to enact the ritual in Horizon.

- If the PCs are unaware of the existence of the rite (based on their answers to the Curator's questions), then the Curator claims that it wants to escape the dungeon—it's come to love learning for its own sake, and has discovered a spell of sympathetic union that will connect two similar places. All the characters need to do is cast the ritual in a great library, like the one in Horizon, and it will pluck Quillgate out of the dungeon and bring it to the surface. The Curator is lying—performing the ritual will just bring the Stone Thief to Horizon.
- If the PCs know about the rite and would see through any deceptions, then the Curator takes a different approach. It will share the secret of how to kill the Stone Thief *if* the characters give it what it wants. Surely the sacrifice of one city is worth destroying the dungeon—especially considering the cult's plans to magnify the dungeon's power until it threatens the whole world? The Curator does know a way to kill the Stone Thief—pick one of the methods described in *Slaying the Thief* on page 352, ideally one that won't destroy Quillgate.

If the characters refuse to cooperate, the Curator melts into the wall. It'll show up elsewhere on the level to cause problems for them—add the Curator to another battle when the escalation die is 3+.

Who Cares About Horizon?

Threatening Horizon works best if the players care about it, or at least have a few positive relationships with the Archmage. If that doesn't describe your group, then maybe the Curator has developed a taste for infernal lore and wants to read the Diabolist's book collection, or has a hankering for elven poetry and intends to swallow the Elf Queen's library.

The Curator

Double-strength 9th level caster [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +15

C: Stalking Flames +14 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—40 fire damage
Miss: Next round, any foe targeted but missed by the first *stalking flames* attack is subject to another attack. This follow-up attack is free.

C: Constricting Chains +14 vs. PD (all nearby enemies)—20 damage, and the target is stuck and weakened (save ends both).
Limited use: 1/battle.

C: Legend Lore +14 vs. MD (one nearby enemy)—80 psychic damage, and the target is taken over by one of their magic items. Pick the most inconvenient or damaging quirk, and run wild with it (save ends)
Limited use: 2/battle.

AC 25
PD 19 **HP 360**
MD 23

This structure looks like a jagged chunk of rock the size of a castle, as if the Stone Thief had swallowed a desert mesa and mistaken it for a building. A dwarf or other basement dweller can tell that this is in fact a freestanding underground structure of some sort, a dungeon within a dungeon. A few minutes searching reveals a narrow passageway halfway up the side of the huge lump of rock, leading into the dungeon inside.

The corridors of this inner dungeon are clearly dwarf-wrought, judging by the perfect craftwork and the low ceilings. This was once a treasury—and dungeon—of the Dwarf King, stolen long ago by the Stone Thief.

3A. KEYSTONE DOOR:

> *A huge stone block stands in the center of this room. Three short metal rods extend from opposite sides of the block, and resemble handles for lifting the block. The block itself is unadorned except for these rods, but the walls of the chamber are carved with the likenesses of Dwarf Kings of old. Friezes of dwarven runes run beneath the carvings, warning intruders that this is the treasury of Forge—thieves and dragons stay out!*
>
> *There are no other exits visible.*

Lifting the block requires the player characters to beat a DC of 60 by each rolling a Strength check and adding them (traditionally, the block was lifted by six sturdy dwarves—if you have fewer than six PCs, drop the DC by 10 per PC under six). Beneath the block is a locked trapdoor, flanked by four steel rods flush with the floor. Unlocking the trapdoor is DC 25, and just inside the trapdoor is a lever that causes the rods to rise up and take the weight of the block. However, to unlock the trapdoor, one PC has to climb under the raised block as the rest of the party lifts it. The block is warded against levitation magic, and the room is designed so that part of the block is always over the trapdoor, no matter how the PCs move it around. A new Strength check must be made each round to hold the block up; if the check is failed, the PC under the block takes 3d20 damage (and if any of the d20s roll a 20, a limb is crushed beyond healing).

DWARF KING: The kings of ages past want their treasure liberated from the Stone Thief. The trapdoor will open at a touch of the PCs' hand, without the need for a check. The PC somehow knows this from looking at the carvings.

3B. PETRIFIED ZOO:

> *The staircase ends in a large cave with glittering walls. Dozens of statues stand frozen in the shadows of the cave—dragons, dark elves, chimera, wilder monsters—each one caught in a moment of savagery. There are also nine statues of dwarves, but most of them look downcast or defiant, not enraged.*

These 'statues' are enemies of the Dwarf King, turned to stone by his word. The dwarf statues are those of criminals. If the characters touch the dwarf statues, they can telepathically hear the pleas of the condemned criminals. Most are insane derro, but four are of particular interest to the player characters. A dwarf PC, or a student of dwarven history, may recognize these villains from history.



The spells holding these prisoners trapped are decayed and fragile; the PCs may release any of the petrified dwarves if they wish, by touching the statue and concentrating. The prisoners can feel the weakness of the spells, and can try to convince or trick the PCs into freeing them.

DORFIN THE THIEF: A thief who dared to steal from the Dwarf King, Dorfin pleads that he has learned his lesson. On discovering that the PCs are not, in fact, the Dwarf King returned to question him, Dorfin changes his tune and claims that he can unlock the second trapdoor that leads to the treasure vault (E). If freed, Dorfin will aid the player characters in exchange for a share of the loot; he then sneaks away into the shadows to resume his life of crime. (7th level spoiler [Hm]; Init +14, Sword +12 vs. AC, 28 dmg; nat 16+ lose a magic item, mv. act: vanish, n/s sneak +22; AC23 PD21 MD17 HP 100).

PRINCESS SHATTER: A member of the dwarven royal family who led a rebellion against her kinfolk, Shatter still has many followers in the underworld. She claims she knows the royal secret to open the second trapdoor to the vault (E). If freed, Shatter may aid or attack the PCs before trying to find her way back to Forge to resume her plot to usurp the throne. Centuries have passed since her last attempt, but the current Dwarf King is weaker than his ancestor, so Shatter has a greater chance of succeeding now. (7th level leader [Hm]; Init +10, Hammer +12 vs. AC, 25 dmg; hates Dwarf King, n/s frees another prisoner at ½ hp; AC24 PD20 MD18 HP 110).

HELA OF THE WALKING MOUNTAIN: Hela was a notorious dwarven sorceress in league with the

Diabolist. She has no knowledge of (or interest in) the treasure, but promises to share her lore with the player characters if freed. She answers three questions truthfully (she is an expert in arcane matters, including the lore of living dungeons in general and the Stone Thief in particular), before *teleporting* back to her lair, the fabled Walking Mountain. If attacked, she *teleports* immediately.

THEOBALD THE TRAITOR: Theobald was a dwarven general who betrayed his people to the orcs. He cannot help the characters with their present plight, but claims to know a secret passage into the heart of Forge that bypasses all the dwarf city's defenses—many would pay dearly for such a secret! (7th level wrecker [Hm]; Init +10, Hammer +12 vs. AC, 30 dmg; nat even hit gain esc. die next round, n/s gain extra att when at ½ hp; AC24 PD20 MD18 HP 110).

3C. PETRIFIED DRAGON:

> *The statue of a dragon looms out of the shadows. Her wings are so vast you initially mistake them for the arched ceiling of the gloomy cavern. Smaller wyrms coil at her feet. Her stone face is caught in the moment of a fierce snarl—or a searing breath.*
>
> *Suddenly, the skin of the statue ripples, and stone gives way to black scales. The stone dragon lurches into life!*

This dragon is Midhogg, an infamous black dragon and age-old enemy of the dwarves. The Stone Thief's meddling destabilized the spell of petrification keeping her trapped, and the PCs' arrival gives her a chance to escape. If she can dump the spell on one of them, she can escape the Dwarf King's curse. See stats below.

Midhogg's first hit transfers the curse to the unlucky foe. That foe begins to turn to stone; if that foe hits Midhogg, the curse returns to the dragon. Midhogg must fail to save against the curse three times to return to statue form.

GREAT GOLD WYRM: Midhogg automatically fails her first save.

MIDHOGG: (9th level wrecker [Dr]; Init +13, Claw/bite +14 vs. AC, 30 dmg; nat 16+ 15 ongng acid dmg, miss 20 dmg, Acid breath +14 vs. PD, 50 acid dmg, +15 ongng acid dmg; miss 4d12 acid dmg, resist acid 18+, stone curse; AC25 PD23 MD21 HP 500)

MIDHOGG'S BROOD remain statues, animated by the dragon's desperate wrath. (8th level mook [Dr]; Init +12, Claw/bite +13 vs. AC, 20 dmg; nat 16+ 5 ongng acid dmg, curse hunter; AC24 PD22 MD20 HP 36)

3D. DWARVEN ORACLE:

> *A stylized statuette of a dwarf sits on a plinth at the end of this corridor. His mouth is open, as if speaking; his jeweled eyes glitter with what can only be mischief. Next to him on the plinth is an ale-horn, and in front of the plinth is a wooden cask.*

The statue contains an oracular spirit, activated by drinking. A PC may fill the ale-horn and pour the contents into the statue's gullet; the spirit will then answer one question posed by the character who gave it a drink, and its answers are always infallibly correct. However, being ethereal, the spirit gets drunk really easily. Should a PC ask a question, have another player give the answer. This answer will turn out to be correct in some fashion, although the accuracy may be skewed by the spirit's drunkenness.

The cask contains enough magic ale for as many answers as you wish. Drinking the spirit's magic ale gives both a visionary trance and a severe case of poisoning by hallucinogenic mushrooms (lose a recovery).

3E. THE SECOND TRAPDOOR:

> *Again, you are confronted by a huge block of stone that presumably blocks a hidden trapdoor. Unlike the first block, though, this stone has no convenient handles for lifting. However, this room is larger and there is space to push the block off to one side instead of lifting it.*
>
> *The carvings in this room are different too—the Dwarf Kings depicted seem stern and threatening, as if carefully watching the stone in the middle of the room.*

The PCs hear a tapping noise from inside the stone block if they listen. The block contains a number of bound vampires, who swirl around inside the hollow stone in gaseous form. The block's surface appears to be uniform, but there are hundreds of hairline cracks in the rock. Push the wrong spot, and the pressure opens the crack enough for the vampires to pour out.

Two of the villains from location B know the secret spot on the block that can be pushed safely; PCs may discover it with a DC 25 Wisdom check. Pushing the block requires a DC 20 Strength check; if the characters do not know the safe spot, any pushing on the block opens a crack and frees the vampires. If the safe spot is known, the vampires are released only on a natural 1–2.

DWARF VAMPIRES: (8th level spoiler [Un]; Init +13, Claw +11 vs. AC, 45 dmg; Deathly touch +13 vs. PD, 15 neg. dmg; nat 14+ weak, nat 18+ free blood drain +13 vs. PD, 10 ongng dmg + gain esc. die, mist form; AC24 PD22 MD18 HP 144)

DWARF VAMPIRE PRIESTS: (8th level caster [Un]; Init +13, Claw +11 vs. AC, 45 dmg; Gather darkness +13 vs. MD, 13 ongng dmg, bolster undead, force sv. reroll, mist form; AC24 PD22 MD18 HP 144)

3F. WELL OF DESIRE:

> *In the middle of this room is a well. Something shimmers in the dark waters, glimmering with colors you've never seen before. It makes you feel ill just to look at it. The well is marked with many potent runes of warding. On the far side of the room is a heavy golden door that bears the sigil of the Dwarf King.*

Long ago, a previous Dwarf King abandoned his throne and went on a perilous mission into the underworld. He sought the cryptic entity or entities whose psychic touch turned stalwart dwarven miners into raving derro. Years later, the Dwarf King returned—broken, gibbering and dying, but bearing an indescribable thing, which he claimed could be the salvation of the dwarves. His son and heir wisely imprisoned that thing in this well.

PCs in this room are struck by the thought that whatever is in the well must be immensely valuable, or that it is the weapon they need against the Stone Thief, or that they must possess the thing in the well.

Have each player describe what their character thinks is in the well. Make a +15 vs. MD attack against each PC; those hit are confused (hard save ends, 16+) and either try to murder their comrades or try to break the runes of warding holding the thing in the well.

Touching the well activates a trap—animated steel chains burst out of the water and clamp around the hand of the PC, dragging them down to drown in the well below. (+15 VS. PD—4d8 damage, and start making last gasp saves; DC 20 to unlock/disarm).

The true nature of the thing in the well is left as a plot hook; maybe it is a fragment of whatever underworld intelligence corrupted the derro, or a demonic artifact, or a primordial intellect devourer, or a calcified past age, or unhatched age to come.

3G. ATRIUM OF VENGEANCE:

> *The side walls of this room are covered with thousands of small nooks, each one containing a tablet or scroll. There are two other doors—a small one to your right, while directly opposite you is the collapsed ruin of a once-titanic doorway. To one side of the wrecked doorway is the skeleton of a dwarf, at the foot of a strange carving.* (Show the players the illustration on the page opposite.)

This chamber once adjoined the fabled Hall of Vengeance, where the Dwarf Keep keeps the Axe of Seven Bloods. The Stone Thief tried to steal that hall too when it consumed the treasure, but it was driven away by heroes of Forge. The remains of those heroes lie crushed beneath the rubble-strewn remains of the original entrance to the Hall. The only survivor was the dwarven priestess Hjordis, who starved to death in this chamber. She completed the carving before she died, which depicts the Stone Thief fleeing the dwarven lands in a panic. Anyone touching the carving feels the dungeon's terror at the prospect of being trapped and destroyed—the Stone Thief fears anything that can hold it in place.

A dwarf (or cleric with a *knot of divine harmony*) may perform the funeral rites for Hjordis with a DC20 Wisdom check; doing so correctly gains her blessing, and that character may automatically roll a 6 on one future Dwarf King relationship roll.

Searching the scrolls and tablets finds details on all the criminals in 3B and 3C.

The intact door leads to 3H.

3H. HALL OF JUSTICE:

> *This chamber was clearly a courthouse. Seats for three dwarven judges loom grimly over a circular glyph on the floor, where the condemned prisoners once stood. There are no other exits.*

The Curator (p. 214) manifests when the PCs enter.

If this is their first meeting, then the Custodian introduces itself and explains that they are close to a fabulous hoard, the treasury of the Dwarf King himself! The Curator controls access to the hoard—and if the PCs aid him, it will help them obtain wealth beyond measure. The Curator then makes the same offer as outlined on p. 215. (It has no intention of helping the PCs, and will renege on any agreement it makes as soon as they have completed their side of the bargain.)

If they refuse, or if they have already met the Curator and parted on poor terms with it, then it attacks them. It retreats when reduced to 1/4 of its starting hit points (90 hp or less).

In the battle, it causes the glyph on the floor to slide towards the characters, and any character who stands on the glyph begins to turn to stone. Give the Curator the following attack while in this room:

C: GLYPH OF PETRIFICATION +14 VS. PD (one nearby enemy): 60 damage, and the target must begin making last gasp saves. This is a free attack, but it can only be used when a target is not already making last gasp saves.

Defeating the Curator opens the way to the treasury.

3I. TREASURY: Treasure Type H: 4,300 sp, 3,000ep, 600 gp, 31 gems (10x100gp jade, 10x100gp garnet, 10x200gp pearl, 1x1000gp diamond), 1 epic-tier *healing potion*, 2 epic-tier *runes*, +2 *axe of vengeance*, +2 *staff of striking*.

An adventurer who takes any of these treasures without permission from the Dwarf King gains a 1-point negative relationship with the Dwarf King (the icon takes these things personally); those who return the bulk of the treasure to its rightful owner may keep 10% of the value and gain a 1-point positive relationship with the Dwarf King.

TREASURY MAGIC ITEMS

STAFF OF STRIKING
RECHARGE 11+: Make a basic melee attack as a free action in a turn when you cast a spell.
QUIRK: Pugnacious.

AXE OF VENGEANCE (+2 melee weapon)
When you hit with this weapon while you are staggered, deal 2d6 damage to that enemy.
QUIRK: Quick to take offence.


RUSS 2014

Dorfin the Thief

Iron boots can be stealthy on the right feet.

7th level spoiler [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Short sword +12 vs. AC—28 damage
Natural 16+: Dorfin steals a magic item other than armor or anything held by the target. If the item is one Dorfin can use, he does so immediately.

Vanish: As a move action, Dorfin may attempt to *vanish*. He may only do this if unengaged, and must succeed at a save to do so (average illumination: 16+, deep shadows: 11+, darkness: 6+). Dorfin may return to the battlefield on a later round, or simply flee.

Nastier Specials

Sneak Attack: Dorfin inflicts an extra 22 damage on a hit or miss if his foe is taken by surprise or engaged with another enemy.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 100**
MD 17

Princess Shatter

Anvils can be broken, that which is forged can be unmade—and crowns can be taken.

7th level leader [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

Hammer +12 vs. AC—25 damage

Enemies List: Princess Shatter may make a free *hammer* attack each round against any nearby foe on her enemies list. At the start of the battle, only foes with a positive or conflicted relationship with the Dwarf King are on that list; PCs who inflict a critical hit on Shatter or stagger her get added to the list.

Nastier Specials

Royal Pardon: Princess Shatter may free another petrified prisoner when she becomes staggered.

AC 24
PD 20 **HP 110**
MD 18

Theobald the Traitor

Theobald possesses the unbreakable determination of dwarf-kind, the strength of will that cannot be broken. It's a terrible trait for a general, as it leads to facing ten-to-one odds and getting beaten by the armies of the Dwarf King. Twice.

7th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

Hammer +12 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural even hit: Theobald may add the escalation die to his attacks next round.

Nastier Specials

Warming up: Theobald gains an extra *hammer* attack when staggered.

AC 24
PD 20 **HP 110**
MD 18

Midhogg

This is Midhogg after she just expended most of her strength breaking free of the Dwarf King's curse. You don't want to meet her on a good day.

Huge 9th level wrecker [DRAGON]
Initiative: +13

Claws and bite +14 vs. AC (2 attacks)—30 damage
First hit on her turn: Transfer the *Stone Curse*, if cursed
Natural 16+: The target also takes 15 ongoing acid damage.
Miss: 20 damage.

C: Acid breath +14 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies)—50 acid damage, and 15 ongoing acid damage
Miss: 4d12 acid damage.

Intermittent breath: A huge black dragon can use *acid breath* 2d3 times per battle, but never two turns in a row.

Resist acid 18+: When an acid attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 18+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

Stone Curse: Midhogg starts under the effects of the *Stone Curse*. At the end of her turn, she must make a hard save (16+). If she fails a number of such saves (see the Fight Chart) over the course of the battle, she is destroyed. If Midhogg hits a PC while under the curse, she transfers the curse to that character. That PC begins to turn to stone and must start making last gasp saves. If the PC hits Midhogg with a melee attack while under the effects of the curse, or successfully saves against the curse, the curse returns to the dragon. The curse ends when the dragon dies.

Quickening: If Midhogg is not under the effect of the curse, she gains an additional *claws and bite* attack. If the escalation die is 3+, she gains a second additional *claws and bite* attack.

Nastier Specials

Breaking Free: Whenever a foe becomes staggered, the number of failed saves needed to re-petrify Midhogg increases by one.

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 500**
MD 21

Midhogg's Brood

Her children are forever stone, but her will is strong enough to breathe a little life into them.

8th level mook [DRAGON]
Initiative: +12

Claws and bite +13 vs. AC—20 damage
Natural 16+: The target also takes 5 ongoing acid damage.

Curse Hunter: If an engaged foe who bears the curse targets Midhogg with a melee attack, the brood attempts to throw itself in the path of the attack. The brood must roll 11+; if successful, the attack hits the brood instead and the curse remains on the foe.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 36 (mook)**
MD 20

Mook: Kill one brood mook for every 36 damage dealt to the mob.

Petrified Dragon Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Midhogg	Failed Save Limit	Brood
3 x 6th level	1	2	0
4 x 6th level	1	3	0
5 x 6th level	1	3	3
6 x 6th level	1	4	3
7 x 6th level	1	4	5
3 x 7th level	*1*	*2*	*5*
4 x 7th level	*1*	*3*	*5*
5 x 7th level	*1*	*3*	*10*
6 x 7th level	*1*	*4*	*10*
7 x 7th level	*1*	*4*	*15*

Dwarf Vampires

These were spawned by the Vampire Queen, a dread icon of the 9th Age. They'd be classy, old-school vampire nobility if they hadn't been stuffed inside a stone casket for centuries.

8th level spoiler [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +13
Vulnerability: holy

Claw +11 vs. AC—45 damage

Deathly Touch +13 vs. PD—15 negative energy damage
Natural 14+: The target is also weakened until the end of its next turn.
Natural 18+: As above, and the vampire may make an immediate *blood drain* attack as a free action.

C: Blood Drain +13 vs. PD (weakened targets only)—10 ongoing damage, and the vampire may add the escalation die to its attacks for the rest of the battle.

Mist Form: Dwarf vampires dropped to 0 hit points return to their casket to slumber.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 144**
MD 18

Dwarf Vampire Priests

Acolytes of the Vampire Queen, they still whisper her litanies in the dark of their eternal vigil.

8th level caster [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +13
Vulnerability: holy

Claws +11 vs. AC—45 damage

C: Gather Darkness +13 vs. MD (1d3 nearby enemies)—13 ongoing damage, and if the target becomes weakened, that weakened effect lasts as long as the ongoing damage does.

Bolster Undead: As a standard action, choose one: allow a nearby dwarf vampire to make an attack as a free action, or allow a nearby dwarf vampire to make a save against one ongoing effect.

Queen's Curse: Once per battle, force a nearby foe to reroll a successful save.

Mist Form: Dwarf vampires dropped to 0 hit points return to their casket to slumber.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 144**
MD 18

4. Geomantic Tower



Desert sands still cling to the cracks in the mortar of this tower. A weary sentinel, it seems overshadowed by the other treasures kept on this level. Unlike the other stolen structures, the tower neither seethes with magical energy, nor is it the product of some long-vanished civilization. Human hands raised this tower of mud-bricks. It stands some four stories tall, although the uppermost story collapsed before the Stone Thief consumed and preserved it.

The exterior walls of the tower are covered with magical symbols. A skill check (DC 20) or invocation of a suitable icon benefit tells the PCs that these are geomantic patterns and runes. This tower is a crude attempt to map places of magical power and the flow of energies through the underworld—it's like the Inverse Observatory, if the observatory were built by desperate, short-lived, and reckless mortals using mud instead of immortal storm giants forging the celestial metals of the overworld.

The tower was built by the Cult of the Devourer after they were exiled from the Empire, but before they drew the Stone Thief to them and embarked on their fanatical scheme to deify the dungeon.

Traps of Hatred

Magical traps in this tower guard it against enemies of the cult. A character who has undergone the rite of initiation (see page 303) does not trigger the traps. It's DC 25 to find the traps—they can't be disarmed, but can be bypassed by not moving over the enchanted triggering symbol.

Mind-searing single-target spelltrap +15 vs. MD (one target who triggers the trap)—1d10 damage, plus another 1d10 damage for every positive relationship point the character has with an icon that's an enemy of the cult, usually the Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, and Priestess. Conflicted relationships add 1d6 damage instead; negative relationships are welcome here.

Exploding fireball spelltrap +15 vs. PD (all nearby foes)—1d10 fire damage, plus another 1d6 damage for each positive relationship point in the group with an enemy icon. Conflicted relationships add 1d4 to the damage.

Death curse spelltrap +15 vs. PD (one nearby target with the most positive enemy icon relationships, not necessarily the person who triggered the trap)—2d8 damage, plus start making last gasp saves. On the fourth failure, the target sinks into the floor to be entombed forever (or at least until your allies dig you out).

Exploring the Tower

Searching the tower reveals several items of interest:

- One internal wall bears thirteen pictograms, identical to the ones at Pilgrim's Gate (page 204). If the characters haven't had that history lesson, they can learn the cult's history here.
- A chest in front of the pictograms contains several rusted weapons. They look a little like harpoons but are encrusted with dirt, suggesting they were plunged into the earth.
- A decayed ritual chamber on the middle level contains a crumbling book describing the rites of the cult. The rite of initiation is described in sufficient detail to enact it, but the text also makes it clear that being initiated gives the cult a supernatural hold over the initiate. The sections describing the other secret rites are too badly damaged to be read (though they could be reconstructed with *mending* and some research).
- On the upper level, half-buried in rubble from the collapsed fourth level, is a casket containing three crystal vials of a black liquid. These are *philters of dreaming*. Two are full; one is only two-thirds full. Taking a sip from a philter opens up psychic communication with the First Master (see below).
- Behind a secret door on the lowest level, the characters find a trapdoor. A heavy slab of stone blocks the trapdoor, and the stone is marked with spells of warding and warning. Anyone touching the stone who *is* an initiate of the cult gets hit by a wave of unreasoning terror and must roll against DC 25 to not panic and run out of the tower. Anyone who touches the stone who *isn't* an initiate just takes 4d20 damage instead, and if any of the dice roll 20s, the character is permanently scarred by the blast of icy darkness.

Philter of Dreaming

Upon consuming this potion, you fall into a deep sleep and pass into the realm of dreaming. While there, you can attempt any one of the following with a skill check:

- (DC 10) Spy on the dreams of a sleeper.
- (DC 15) Send a message through the dream realm (as per the *message* form of the *utility* spell).
- (DC 20) Plant a suggestion in the mind of a sleeper. The suggestion must be a thought that the sleeper might have plausibly come up with on their own—you can't incept a dragon into handing over its treasure hoard, but you could convince one that it really should scout outside its lair tomorrow.
- (DC 25) Cram a full day's rest into a few seconds. At the very least, you're refreshed and can spend recoveries freely; a generous GM might even let you roll for recharges or even have a full heal-up.

Failing the check means you get lost in the lands of dream, or bring back an unwanted passenger when you wake up.



The trapdoor leads to the resting place of the First Master, the founder of the Cult of the Devourer and the first of the Secret Masters. He was just a boy when his people were exiled from the Empire, and as an old, old man he found a way to call the dungeon. According to the cult's twisted theology, he'll be exalted as the Head of the Devourer when the dungeon becomes a god. Until then, he's kept locked in this basement.

Lair of the First Master

Opening the trapdoor reveals a narrow shaft dropping straight down, like a well. A skeleton peers up at the characters—the remains of another adventurer who got thrown down the shaft by the cult. This poor rogue nearly escaped by climbing back up the shaft, but was unable to open the trapdoor from the inside. She drove her magical short sword into the wall to give her a handhold, and her ragged bones are still caught on that weapon.

Wise player characters will grab this weapon (a *+2 shortsword of uncertainty* (recharge 16+)—make attack rolls against all nearby enemies, and choose one of them to be your actual attack; *Quirk:* indecisive) and leave, sealing the trapdoor behind them. Foolhardy heroes can press on, climbing down the shaft into a cellar knee-deep in bones. The First Master waits for them there. Long ages in the dungeon have warped him; he's still an immensely old man, but he's the size of an ogre and has teeth and nails of stone and a beard of steel wire. All the bones in this room are the remains of adventurers and other enemies of the cult who were given as offerings by the cult.

Ravings of the Master: The First Master has a direct connection to the Stone Thief. He's got the living dungeon pouring through his brain, so he mumbles and rants a running stream-of-consciousness commentary on the dungeon. ("*Granite shelf, tree roots, tendrils probing—Bitterwood! Arcane tympanum, clay bricks, blood and salt, bones breaking under the pressure. Consumed, the pieces hurled into the ocean within. Turning south, scenting heavy metals, gold and lead running thick in the veins of the land. Complex delights, hunger rising. Glitterhaegen.")* Listening to his ravings, the characters might learn something about the Stone Thief's next moves or the intentions of the Cult of the Devourer.

The First Master

Trapped in a dungeon for a dozen ages. Little wonder he's trying to eat your skin.

Triple-strength 10th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +20

Crazed Savage Fists +15 vs. AC (4 attacks)—30 damage
Share the Pain: A foe can be targeted only by one *crazed savage fists* attack each round.
Natural 6+: The First Master pops free and moves to another nearby or far away target.
Last In, First Out: When the First Master has extra *crazed savage fists* attacks but cannot target an enemy with them, he makes a free *frenzied bite* attack on the target of his last *crazed savage fist*.

Frenzied Bite +15 vs. AC—60 damage, and the First Master clings to the target. The target is hampered while the First Master is engaged with that target.

R: Curse of Stone +13 vs. MD (one nearby or far away target)—120 psychic damage, and the target is stuck (save ends).
First failed save: The target starts to turn to stone, and must start making last gasp saves immediately.
Cult member: If the target is an initiate of the Cult of the Devourer, the first save is automatically failed.

Fear: Any foe with 72 hit points or less is dazed and does not benefit from the escalation die while engaged with the First Master.

Very Old Grudges: The First Master's crit range expands by +1 for every positive relationship point the target has with any of the following icons: Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess.

Escalating Frenzy: If the escalation die is 3+, the First Master gains a fifth *crazed savage fists* attack.

Load-Bearing Boss: When the First Master is slain, increase the submergence die by 1.

AC 26
PD 22
MD 22

HP 648

The Head of the First Master

There's no treasure but the *First Earthspear* in this noisome pit, but the First Master's head remains alive as long as the Stone Thief endures. This head is clearly linked to the life force of the living dungeon, and it can be used as the magical connection to the dungeon needed for one of the rituals.

A kind gamemaster might allow a lower-level group of player characters to use the First Master's blood as a connection instead, so the PCs need only wound the maniac and escape instead of grinding him down to 0 hp.

First Earthspear

+3 Harpoon (treat it as a spear, or lance, or javelin. Or harpoon.)

This ancient weapon has two magical powers. First, it's a perfectly reliable and reusable Earthspear—just drive it into a wall of the Stone Thief, and it reduces the submergence die by 3.

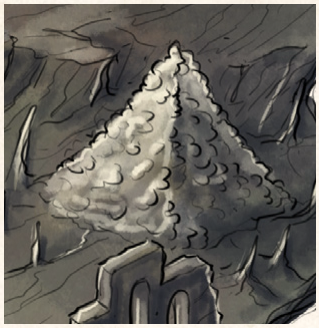
Second, it's an epic *weapon of vengeance* (+3d6 damage while you are staggered).

Quirk: Starts raving like the First Master.

Variations

- Maybe the First Master is actually still sane, and was imprisoned by his former followers when they became corrupted by worship of the dungeon. He just wanted revenge against his enemies, not a world-consuming apocalypse.
- The Curator might visit the First Master, seeking to learn about his connection with the dungeon in the hopes of one day breaking free.

5. Pyramid of Skulls



This structure is a gigantic pile of skulls—human skulls, dwarf skulls, elf skulls, orc skulls. Monster skulls, from those of small lizards and other animals to giants and dragons. Skulls of things that are fortunately extinct in the present age. There's a stepped ziggurat underneath the skulls, but it's almost completely buried. A cloak of flickering darkness dances around the bone pile, so the characters cannot tell at first glance if there's anything alive amid the craniums. They can tell, though, that there's something golden at the very apex of the skull pile.

A ring of wooden stakes, encrusted with an unidentifiable black substance, surrounds the pyramid. A gnoll skull sits atop each stake, stripped of all flesh and fur, but still possessed with unnatural life. The skulls chatter to each other in an ancient dialect of gnoll whenever anyone approaches. They're betting on which of the strangers will get closest to the top of the pyramid and the prize that waits there.

That prize is a weapon made by the gnolls at the height of their civilization—long before humans settled the land, the gnolls ruled with a bloody claw and sated the divine blood-thirst of their demon gods with innumerable sacrifices. At least, that's what the gnolls claim. Either way, they made the *Hellpike* and built this ziggurat to honor it.

If a character crosses the ring of stakes, they suddenly know three things. First, the weapon they desire most in all the world is at the top of the pyramid, waiting for them to claim it. Second, they've crossed over into the realm of the demon kings of the gnolls. Consequences are different here—if one of them dies, their killer can choose to return them to the real world unharmed. Death is at the whim of the victor, which means the player characters can kill each other 'safely' if they wish. Third, the other player characters stand between you and that weapon.

Yep—it's time for PC vs. PC combat. Dying at the hands of another player character—or a monster—is the only way to leave the pyramid. The whirling cloak of shadows that covers the pyramid means that even if two player characters cross the barrier together, they'll be separated and have to make their own way up the pyramid.

Climbing the Pyramid

The pyramid is a maze—one minute you're scrambling over a pile of skulls, the next you're climbing a narrow staircase or squeezing through one of the gnoll runs that snake through the ziggurat. It's full of dead ends and impassable walls of skulls, made all the more frustrating by the fact that you can always see your ultimate destination—the pike at the top—but cannot see a clear route to get there.

In game terms, have each player character make a skill check. The character who gets the best result is the one who climbs highest on the pyramid this turn, and has the choice to stay out of the fighting this turn, or else ambush one of the other characters as they climb. Pit the other climbers against each other according to your whim as gamemaster. Any left-over characters can fight a gnoll death priest (7th level PCs—a death priest and four death acolytes). When you're down to only two survivors, move onto *Claiming the Hellpike*.

Quick Resolution: If you've a large party, or slow players, then consider starting everyone off vulnerable (attacks on them have their crit range expanded by 2), and expanding the crit range by an additional point in each subsequent fight. That should make things bloody and resolve the battle more quickly.

Gnoll Death Priest

They worship the Hellpike as an incarnation of death. Killing you is a sacrament to them.

7th level wrecker [humanoid]
Initiative: +11

Sacred Pike +12 vs. AC—32 damage
Death Ferocity: For each foe that the target has already killed in the Pyramid of Skulls, increase the pike's damage by +8.
Pack Ferocity: If more than one gnoll is engaged with the target, each gnoll melee attack that misses the target deals half damage.

Deathly Escalator: The death priest may add the value of the escalation die to its attacks while it's staggered.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 90**
MD 17

Gnoll Death Priest Acolyte

When you die, they'll ceremonially consume your corpse.

7th level mook [humanoid]
Initiative: +11

Sacred Pike +12 vs. AC—18 damage
Pack Ferocity: If more than one gnoll is engaged with the target, each gnoll melee attack that misses the target deals half damage.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 24 (mook)**
MD 17

Mook: Kill one gnoll death priest acolyte mook for every 24 damage dealt to the mob.

Hands of a Killer

If a PC dies in this phantasmal realm, their killer gets to claim a boon from them. The victorious player gets to decide what that boon is—it might be the payment of a favor, the use of an icon benefit, a change in attitude (*"I'm tired of you badmouthing elves all the time—when you die, you dream of the beauty of the Elf Queen and fall in love with her"*) or some other magical geas. Don't go overboard—any boons should have about as much effect on a player character as a magic item's quirk, and anyway, the GM can veto anything that's excessive.

The death priests get to demand a boon from intruders, too. Those slain by a death priest now owe the infernal deities of the gnolls a debt. What does an infernal gnoll-god want? Ask the Diabolist.

Oh, by the way—if a character does 'die' here, their skull joins the pile. They wake up outside the ziggurat with their skull still intact, but there's also a perfect copy—or maybe a shade or psychic impression—of the skull somewhere on the pyramid. Sometimes, the player character dreams of staring out through the empty eyeholes of that bleached skull at the millions of others who also failed to win the Hellpike.

Yes, the skulls can be removed from the pyramid, but doing so annoys the gnoll demon lords.

Claiming the Hellpike

Once you're down to two player characters, the rules change. Again, the characters just *know* this, as the demon lords sear the knowledge onto their souls. The *Hellpike* demands a real death in order to claim it. Either one player character kills the other, or else the demon lords will take someone of their choice at a later date, and the wielder of the *Hellpike* will be their weapon. The wielder will be unable to avoid this fate—one day, the demon lords will call for a death, and it will be at the wielder's hands. Maybe the character will get lucky and the demon lords will pick someone who deserves death.

The characters can agree to back away now if they wish, but they both have to agree to give up their claims on the pike. If neither does, or only one is willing to back down, then they must fight to someone's death.

The winner gets the *Hellpike*. Claiming the weapon increases the submergence die by 1, as the Stone Thief suddenly realizes that one of its treasures is no longer safely held in the pit. The ziggurat starts to collapse. Its stones crack and crumble to dust, sending all those uncounted thousands of skulls tumbling down. The gnoll skulls on the stakes cackle wildly, and shriek wild hymns to their infernal lords.

It's almost like murdering your companions to get a demonic artifact is a bad thing.

Variations

- For a more conventional encounter, let the PCs stick together as they climb the pyramid, and throw some nice juicy demons at them instead.
- There's no chance, of course, that a demon takes the form of a 'killed' player character, and it's a treacherous rakshasa who walks out of the pyramid instead of the adventurer.

The Hellpike

Cursed epic-tier +4 Pike

The *Hellpike* sends the soul of any creature slain by it straight to Hell, regardless of their faith, alignment, cosmic destiny, spiritual get-out-of-jail-free cards, or other mitigating factors. Especially powerful entities may cling to this world for a short time, but they're going to get dragged down sooner or later. (That, or they'll open a hellhole around themselves).

Once per full heal-up, the wielder of the pike gains a temporary 2-dice positive relationship with the Diabolist whenever they slay a creature of equal or higher level (other than demons, devils, or those who are already servants of the Diabolist). It's a 3-point relationship if it was someone the Diabolist *wanted* killed.

When you roll a natural 6 on an attack roll, if you've got one of those temporary dice left, you immediately get a suitable icon reward from the Diabolist, just as if the GM had called for a relationship roll and you'd rolled a 6. You lose a temporary die when this happens. Similarly, if you roll a natural 5, you get a benefit with strings attached, but it costs you a temporary die. In effect, the weapon's got a chance of drawing *her* attention whenever you attack with it.

Oh, when you die, you go to Hell too. No resurrections for you unless you've made arrangements with *Them* in advance to let your soul return to the land of the living. It's not so much a quirk as a clause in the small print. If you need a *quirk*, though, try 'worryingly gleeful.'

Exits

- A crack in the cave wall that the PCs must squeeze through.
- A rusted iron door that hasn't been opened in centuries.
- A passageway from a lost king's tomb.
- A black onyx staircase leading down to a dark maze that absorbs all light

MARBLEHALL

Levels 6–7

This sublevel consists of a single building—the house of Marblehall. As described on page 332, the Witch of Marblehall (Casila Artalin) used the dungeon-summoning ritual to trick the Stone Thief into consuming her family's mansion. The dungeon came as, well, a thief in the night, before the Witch expected it to arrive, so it also swallowed several members of her family and their servants, along with their dinner guests. To protect them, she bewitched them with an illusion, so they are mostly incapable of noticing that they're trapped in a living dungeon. The rituals of life continue in Marblehall as they have for generations, even though the family's circumstances have changed drastically.

If the characters are guests of the Witch, then they can enter Marblehall freely. If they're her enemies, or just wander into her realm by mischance, then they must deal with her magical defenses.

We also suggest checking out the *Keys of Marblehall* adventure (page 331).

Features & Factions

This is the Witch's domain. Not even the Stone Thief has any power here—the Witch prepared her family home to be invulnerable to the living dungeon's insidious thievery. That means that Marblehall's internal configuration doesn't change. It's stuck inside the living dungeon, but isn't part of the dungeon.

The only 'factions' here are the Witch and her magical servants, and her family and their mundane servants. The latter are all bewitched to remain ignorant of what's going on, which makes them appear insane to the PCs. This curse convinces them that Marblehall is just as it always was, and to misinterpret all evidence to the contrary. Depending on your interpretation of the curse, the Witch might have intended it to protect her family and servants from the dangers of the living dungeon, or maybe it's just whimsy.

Descriptors

Marblehall is a magnificent country house, as fine as any in Axis or Forge. Lots of marble (obviously), oil paintings, statues, ceiling murals, tapestries, fine furniture, and magical heating and lighting—if you're going to be trapped in a dungeon for eternity, this is certainly one of the nicer ones.

Minor Encounters

Sir Leopold

Leopold is one of the Witch's cousins. He fancies himself to be a shining knight, and he certainly has a very shiny suit of armor. Before Marblehall was swallowed, he amused himself by hunting beasts and 'monsters' in the woods of the Artalin estate. Now, he's under the Witch's curse and still thinks he's doing exactly that, even though the monsters right outside his door are infinitely more dangerous than anything in the woods of his youth. However, Leopold's squire Etwin has broken free of the curse and knows exactly what's going on. He's terrified that if the Witch finds out he's no longer under her illusion, she'll do something even worse to him, but he also frets that if he isn't constantly vigilant, Leopold will wander out the door and get eaten. When the PCs arrive, both Leopold and Etwin look to them for help; Leopold, in his cursed delusion, assumes the PCs are the new groundskeepers, and demands that they explain to his cowardly squire that Sir Leopold can battle any monster in the woods. Etwin begs the PCs to play along so they don't alert the Witch, but that they also help him keep Leopold from going adventuring in a champion-tier deathtrap.

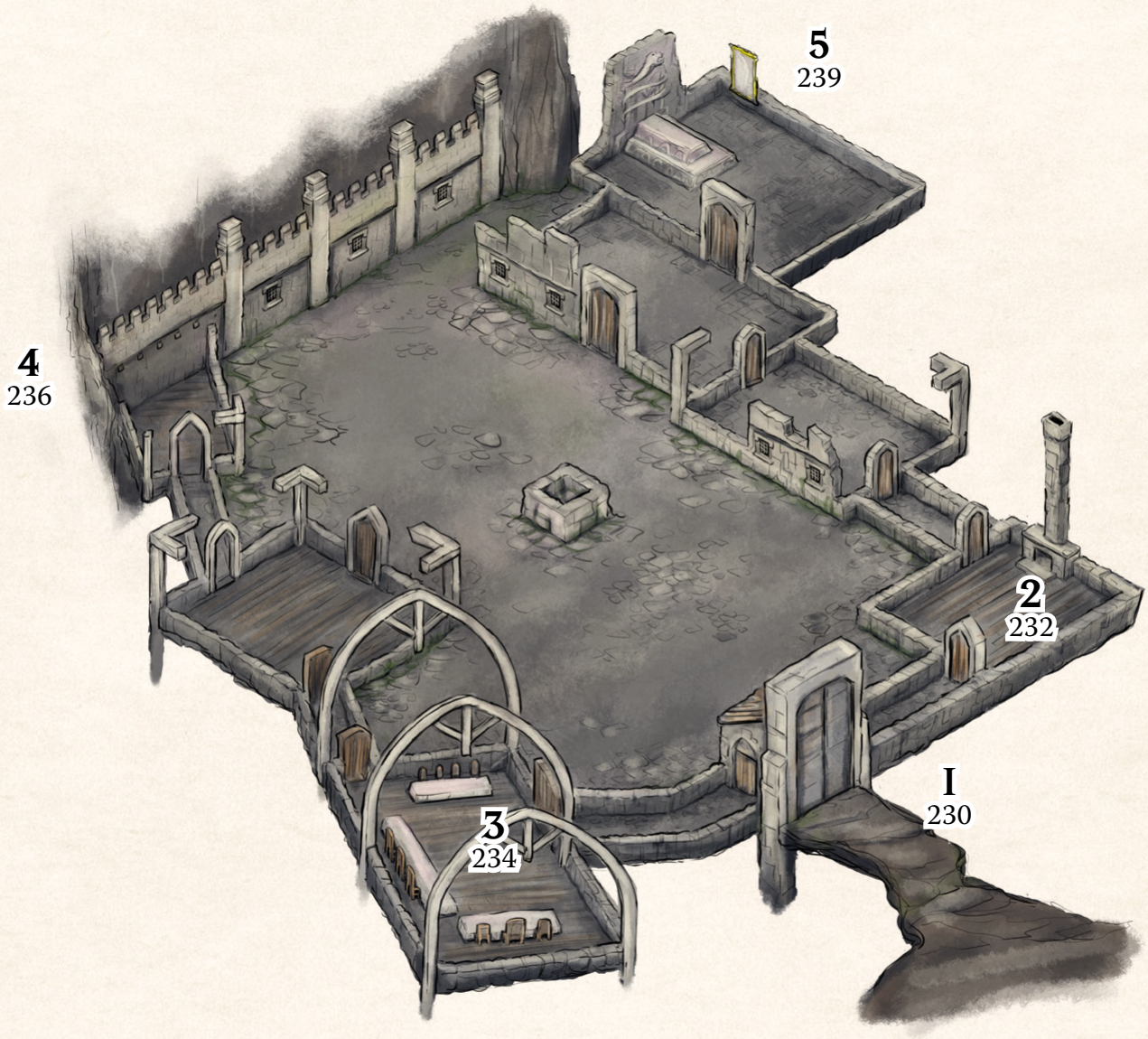
Play Leopold for laughs—the PCs have to bow and scrape and play low-status yokels while he preens about what a brave adventurer he is. Why, he's faced kobolds on the field of battle. Twice.

The Curse Strikes!

The Witch's curse begins to affect the player characters. At first, it manifests as momentary flashes of Marblehall-as-it-was—an empty bowl suddenly seems to be overflowing with succulent fruit, or sunlight starts pouring through a window that looks out only onto solid rock. Have each PC make a save; those who fail suffer from the curse in the next encounter. That means they'll perceive themselves to be in a magnificent and wholly subterranean mansion having a ball, and interpret all events to fit with that delusion. So, if they're then attacked by, say, the arkad demons, they'll see them as overly attentive footmen instead of murderous extradimensional horrors.

The Library

The Library at Marblehall focuses more on dwarven culture, Imperial history, and dull treatises on geology than arcane lore. There's also an extensive collection of salacious bard songs, assembled over the years by **Uncle Martyn**, one of the elder members of the Artalin family. He spends his days in the library, practicing his singing, which means he's alone most of the time. His solitude has given him time to think, and he's on the verge of breaking free of the Witch's curse (of course, to him, she's not the Witch—she's his lovely if odd niece Casila).



If the PCs help him break free—or, conversely, push him back into his delusion so he is more compliant—he can tell them about Casila. She has her own sanctum in the old chapel, but she comes to the library to read and consult the books sometimes. She was especially interested in one book on architecture, the *Catalogue of Imperishable Works*. If the characters examine that book, they discover annotations by the Witch describing other likely targets for the Stone Thief.

By the way, Martyn's collection of scandalous songs includes one that's clearly a coded reference to an icon (roll dice to determine which one that is). If a bard with the Balladeer talent learns that song, they can gain an extra positive relationship die to any foes of that icon, as well as an additional cursed die for the embarrassed icon.

The library also contains an account of the events in Marblehall at the end of the 12th Age—see *Passage Perilous*, page 232.

Terrified Servants

The servants of Marblehall are more resistant to the curse than the Artalin family, and this particular band of three palace guards have realized that something terribly strange is going on in Marblehall. They've taken one of the guests from the banquet (see page 234) as a hostage (she has no idea what's going on, since she's still under the full effects of the curse), but the curse prevents anyone from reacting properly to their threats other than the Witch, and they know she'd *disintegrate* them if she found them. So, they wander the halls in the hopes of meeting someone who can be intimidated into helping them.

Enter the PCs. The footmen—half-starved, bedraggled, maddened, and desperate—demand to know what happened to Marblehall and how they can escape, and they threaten to kill their hostage unless the PCs answer. The footmen are no match for the PCs, so this encounter is about giving the players a chance to demonstrate overwhelming power without killing anyone, as well as showing them that Marblehall is a darker place than the amusingly deluded nobles might suggest.

Mirror, Mirror

As described in *The Keys of Marblehall*, the Witch possesses a magical mirror that she can use when conditions are right to contact her icon patron on the surface. Reliable communications out of the dungeon are a rare treasure, so she keeps her mirror safely locked away in her Sanctum (see page 239). This mirror is a decoy, made to precisely resemble the real thing.

If a character looks into the mirror, roll a **+15 vs. MD** attack. On a hit, the character falls victim to the mirror and is shown a vision of a horrible potential future, one so ghastly that the shock may be lethal. Take that player out of the room (or whatever the equivalent is for your play environment—open a side chat window with them, disconnect their brain jar from the collective) and describe how they see something flicker in the depths of the mirror for an instant. Ask them to think about what sight would scare their character most.

Then, go back and tell the other players what's really going on while the player of the cursed PC waits. The next battle is going to be an illusion experienced by the mirror-cursed PC. In that battle, everyone else is going to die. The players should do their best to sell the defeat to the cursed PC—they should end up dying, but make it look convincing and plausible. Make sure they keep track of powers and consumables that get used, so the correct values can be restored afterward. If there are any long-simmering personality clashes in the party, then maybe those can come to the fore in the illusionary fight.

Bring the cursed player back in and ask them what they saw in the mirror. The horror of their vision costs them a recovery.

Now, play through the next battle and cheat. Have the monsters roll exactly what they need to hit the PCs every time, be unfair, give the bad guys extra-nasty specials, and arbitrarily cut off escape routes. Embrace your inner rat bastard dungeon master. (It's best to use a comparatively unimportant battle, like the Arkad Demons (page 231) or the Dungeon Intrusion (page 242)—don't use the confrontation with the Witch.) Kill off the PCs, one by one, until only the cursed character is left, then go for the total party kill.

When that character is down and making death saves, their first successful save means they wake up. For the rest of the party, only an instant has passed. The unfortunate player character who got hit by the mirror has still lost any recoveries/hit points/powers expended in the fake battle. If the unlucky character never makes a successful death save, they wake up down another recovery when they 'die'.

The Portrait

One of the player characters spots a portrait on the wall that depicts a young noblewoman in a rich gown. Something about her eyes seems strangely familiar. Wait a moment—that's the PC's grandmother! No one ever knew where she came from, and she always refused to talk about her family. Could Gran have been a member of the Artalin dynasty—and if so, doesn't that make the player character an Artalin?

The Hoard of the Artalins

The Artalin family is famously wealthy. Even if the player characters are on a quest to save the world from a malicious living dungeon, they can justify a quick side trek to find the family's treasure vault. It's guarded by another clutch of arkad demons, as well as a complex lock (DC 30 to open). Inside is a vast hoard of thousands of gold pieces.

This raises two issues:

- How do the players transport such a pile of treasure out of the dungeon?
- Unlike the other treasure in the Stone Thief, this gold unambiguously belongs to the Artalin family. If the characters take it, they'll be stealing from one of the noble families of the Dragon Empire. That positive relationship with the Emperor may be imperiled...

1. The Doors of Marblehall



Before the PCs get to the battle itself, they've got to navigate the discontinuity between the living dungeon of the Stone Thief itself and the Marblehall sublevel. The dusty corridors and vaults of the Pit of Undigested Ages end in a line of stone that writhes and boils. White tendrils of ectoplasm dart and recoil at the foundations of the palace. If the characters visited the Wild Caves (page 94), then they saw a similar phenomenon there. As long as they don't poke the angry dungeon with a ten-foot stick, they can just jump over the discontinuity and continue on to Marblehall.

In front of the doors, the PCs find signs of past battles—dead orcs, shattered stone imps, the exploded remains of other, more exotic monsters. From the look of the wounds, most of the damage was done with a barrage of *fireballs* and other blasting spells, but there are also demonic claw marks and sword cuts. Judging by the state of the remains, there were at least four waves of attackers.

The Doors of Marblehall were made by the best dwarven craftsmen; they stand so tall that a giant could enter without bowing, and are decorated with plates of gold and black adamant. These ceremonial doors are rarely opened, but there is a smaller portico built into each of them for day-to-day use.

Unless the characters are expected by the Witch, the doors are locked. Optionally, if any of the PCs share a positive icon relationship with the Witch's patron, an icon benefit might open the doors for them. Otherwise, a huge ornate keyhole awaits the attention of the party's designated burglar, or they could try the equally huge and ornate doorbell. (Or, if they have the key from the Folly (page 337), they can simply unlock the door and slip inside).

Picking the Lock: The lock is DC 30; failure means the thief can get the door open, but it takes another round or three—ask for another skill check at DC 20, then DC 10 in subsequent rounds. Meanwhile, the arkad demons materialize and attack.

The arkad demons materialize and attack on a success, too, but the PCs can choose to escape through the open door.

The Bell: The PC who rings the bell senses an insidious presence in their mind, trying to ascertain who they are. Make an attack: **+15 vs. MD**; on a hit, the Witch learns whatever the first thing was that the PC tried to conceal from her telepathic assault (so, if the PCs are here to kill the Witch, that thought is what the Witch picks up). On a miss, have the PC roll their relationship dice to determine the 'taste' of their mind that the Witch detects.

The Witch opens the door if the adventurers appear interesting or harmless. If they're threatening, she summons the arkad demons to slow them down and prepares her own defenses. If they're not threatening, but appear potentially useful, then she sends the arkad demons to test the PCs; if they can beat up her minions, then they may be able to get the ritual element she still needs (see page 352).

The Arkad Demons

The guards are summoned spirits from some otherworldly dimension where corded muscles and giant flesh-ripping claws are as fundamental as breathing. Despite their horrific appearance and equally horrific treatment of intruders, they are unfailingly courteous, like the best footmen in the Empire. They apologize for the mess when they rip a foe's throat open, and congratulate sir on his fine choice of weapon when they suffer a critical hit. In addition to their claws, they carry magical halberds that animate and fight on their own.

The halberds phase out of existence when the guards depart.



Arkad Demon

Red looks excellent on sir today. Sir is to be complimented on his choice of blood color. The only thing that might improve sir's ensemble would be sir's intestines, worn as a dashing cravat. Spiffing.

8th level troop [DEMON]
Initiative: +13

Claw +13 vs. AC (2 attacks)—18 damage

Phase Strike: If the arkad demon phased in this round, its *claw* attacks have their crit range expanded by 2.

Phase Out: As a move action, the arkad demon may attempt to phase out of our reality. It needs to make a normal save (11+) to do so; when phased out, it removes itself from the battlefield.

Phase In: As a move action, a phased-out arkad demon may appear anywhere on the battlefield. Roll a d8; if the result is equal to or less than the value of the escalation die, the arkad demon is dazed (–4 to its attacks) until the start of its next turn.

AC 24
PD 18 **HP 144**
MD 22

Animated Halberd

No one knows if they're actually animated weapons, or if there are phased-out Arkadi wielding them in some alien dimension.

7th level mook [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +11

Strike +12 vs. AC—18 damage
Miss: 9 damage.

Flying: The halberds float in the air and fight as if wielded by invisible hands.

Grabbable Weapon: Instead of attacking, a PC can try to grab a halberd with a DC 20 Strength check. If successful, the PC grabs the halberd and can wield it as a weapon. The halberds are +2 melee weapons that can hit phased-out Arkadi. The halberd-wielder can see into the Arkadi dimension. If the PC rolls a natural 1–5 while wielding the halberd, the weapon breaks free and immediately makes a *strike* attack on its former wielder.

AC 23
PD 18 **HP 27 (mook)**
MD 18

Mook: Kill one halberd mook for every 27 damage you deal to the mob. Grabbed halberds are exempt from spillover damage.

Raising the Alarm

If the PCs are trespassers in Marblehall, and the Witch knows they're coming, then she augments her defenses. Treat the PC group as having an extra character. For example, if you've got three PCs, use the monster chart row for four adventurers.

Arkad Demon Sergeants

Sir has been exceedingly rude to the staff. Yes, I mean the halberds. Sir's life is regrettably forfeit.

9th level leader [DEMON]
Initiative: +15

Claw +14 vs. AC (2 attacks)—25 damage

C: Phase Grab +14 vs. AC (one nearby foe)—50 damage, and both the demon sergeant and that character phase out and vanish from the battlefield. The phased PC may phase back in by making a successful normal save (11+).

Phase Strike: If the arkad demon phased in this round, its *claw* attacks have their crit range expanded by 2.

Phase Out: As a move action, the arkad demon may attempt to phase out of our reality. It needs to make a normal save (11+) to do so; when phased out, it removes itself from the battlefield.

Phase In: As a move action, a phased-out arkad demon may appear anywhere on the battlefield. Roll a d8; if the result is equal to or less than the value of the escalation die, the arkad demon is dazed (–4 to its attacks) until the start of its next turn.

Phase Commander: While the arkad demon sergeant is phased in, all arkad demons need only make an easy save to phase out, and may roll 2d8 when phasing in to avoid being dazed.

AC 25
PD 21 **HP 180**
MD 21

Doors of Marblehall Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Arkad Demon	Animated Halberd	Arkad Demon Sergeant
3 x 6th level	2	2	0
4 x 6th level	3	3	0
5 x 6th level	2	3	1
6 x 6th level	3	4	1
7 x 6th level	4	5	1
3 x 7th level	*2*	*3*	*1*
4 x 7th level	*3*	*4*	*1*
5 x 7th level	*4*	*5*	*1*
6 x 7th level	*4*	*6*	*2*
7 x 7th level	*5*	*7*	*2*

Variations

- Marblehall is under attack by forces of the Stone Thief. To get into the mansion, the characters have to carve their way through a host of stone imps.
- If the PCs are returning to Marblehall, the dungeon might move the entrance corridor so it brings them somewhere nasty and dangerous instead.

2. PASSAGE PERILOUS



Like any big country house, Marblehall is said to be haunted. Old Artalin family legends insist that, when the plague came at the end of the 12th Age, one branch of the family walled themselves up in the east wing of the mansion to wait out the contagion. They waited in their living tomb for months and refused to come out for fear of sickness, even when a mendicant cleric arrived with a relic that could cure the sick. They starved to death and perished, and their ghosts still haunt the mansion.

When the Stone Thief swallowed Marblehall, it shook the ghosts to wakefulness.

Meeting the Ghosts

This scene begins when the PCs open a door in Marblehall. Long ago, that door was bricked up by the Artalins. On the far side, the PCs meet a young woman, who shrieks in alarm at the sight of the open door. *"Come in and shut it, quick!"* she insists. *"Don't let the plague-ridden in!"* She introduces herself as **Gwendola Artalin**.

Priestess/Lich King/DC 20 check: She's a ghost. She may not know it, but she is.

Unlike the other residents of Marblehall, Gwendola can see the PCs for what they are and doesn't assume they're servants. However, she and the other ghosts are locked in their own memories and believe that there are hordes of plague-ridden horrors just outside the door. She asks the PCs a hail of questions—is there anyone left alive? Is it true the Emperor is dead? How did they escape infection?

After a few moments, more figures appear, led by the head of the Artalin family in this era, **Benedict Artalin**—he's the one who insisted they wall themselves up and wait out the plague. He's looking forward to the world after the apocalypse, because he hopes a universal contagion will clear out the beggars and the riff-raff. He accuses the player characters of breaking into his mansion and bringing disease with them. The only safe thing to do is to kill the characters and burn their bodies!

Remembering the Tale

If the players have encountered the tale of the Ghosts of Marblehall already, a kind GM might allow a bard or other academically-minded PC to remember it with a skill check or an icon benefit. The tale always emphasizes the irony of how the Artalins could have survived if they'd trusted outsiders—the cure was right outside, but their fear and disregard for the lower classes doomed them.

The PCs can avoid a fight here if they can convince the ghosts through roleplaying or a ritual that they are not diseased, or persuade them to leave the walled-up east wing and go in search of the mendicant cleric. Otherwise, Benedict Artalin decides that the PCs must die to prevent them spreading the plague.

Attack of the Ghosts

When the attack begins, the door that the PCs entered through bursts open, and a host of ghostly plague zombies stumble through. These zombies aren't even real ghosts—they're the spectral manifestations of the Artalins' terror of the plague. In the back of the zombie horde, the PCs spot one zombie wearing the robes of a cleric and carrying a sacred relic (the PC with the best relationship to the Priestess gets to describe it, otherwise pick a random character).

Add the listed number of plague zombie ghost mooks to the battle at the start of each round. The plague zombie ghost cleric mook arrives when the escalation die hits 6, unless the PCs somehow dodge through the horde of zombies and grab the relic before that. The relic can 'cure' a ghost with a successful Wisdom + Level attack vs. the ghost's MD; a cured ghost vanishes.

After the fight, the ghosts vanish, but the relic remains.

Relic of the Mendicant

+2 Holy Symbol

Recharge 16+: When you cast a spell for broad effect, one of the allies affected can be far away.

Quirk: Wanderlust.

Shade of Benedict Artalin

There's a distinct family resemblance between the Witch and Benedict. Something in the nose, perhaps, or the obsessive drive to impose one's will on the world.

9th level leader [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +12
Vulnerability: holy

Ghostly Touch +14 vs. PD—30 damage
Natural even hit or miss: 10 ongoing cold damage.

Icy Hatred: Whenever a nearby enemy successfully saves against cold damage, one engaged shade may immediately make a free *ghostly touch* attack on them.
Limited Use: 1/round, or unlimited if the escalation die is 3+.

AC 25
PD 19 **HP 180**
MD 23

Artalin Shade

They've been trapped with their relatives for centuries. No wonder they hate all living things.

8th level troop [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +10
Vulnerability: holy

Ghostly Touch +13 vs. PD—20 damage
Natural even hit or miss: 10 ongoing cold damage.)

Moment of sympathy: The first time an Artalin shade is injured by a PC, that player may choose to briefly describe the shade's history, personality, and place in the family, as the shade's memories flash through the PC's mind. If the player does this, that shade is vulnerable to all attacks for the rest of the battle (expand the crit range of attacks against the shade by 2).

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 144**
MD 18

Plague Zombies Ghost

Technically, they're phantasmal plague zombie ghost mooks.

7th level mook [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +3

Plagued Grab +12 vs. AC—15 damage
Natural 20: 10 ongoing negative energy damage. This damage ends only when all the zombies are slain or when the battle ends. On the bright side, plague zombie ghost mooks won't attack diseased PCs.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 27 (mook)**
MD 17

Mook: Kill one plague zombie ghost mook for every 27 damage dealt to the mob.

Perilous Passage Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Benedict Artalin	Artalin Shade	Plague Zombie Ghosts per round*
3 x 6th level	**1**	**1**	**3**
4 x 6th level	**1**	**2**	**3**
5 x 6th level	**1**	**2**	**5**
6 x 6th level	**1**	**3**	**5**
7 x 6th level	**1**	**5**	**5**
3 x 7th level	***1***	***3***	***5***
4 x 7th level	***1***	***4***	***5***
5 x 7th level	***1***	***5***	***7***
6 x 7th level	***1***	***6***	***7***
7 x 7th level	***1***	***7***	***7***

* Add the listed number of plague zombie ghost mooks to the fight each round.

3. The Banquet Hall



Just before Marblehall got eaten, the Artalin family had just sat down to a private banquet with a select few guests—guild leaders from Glitterhaegen and dwarven nobles from Anvil, there to discuss trade agreements and portage rates in the coming year. The Witch's curse means that they're all still eating and drinking, even though the plates are empty and the wine-cups dry. Servants still run to and fro, frantically carrying trays of empty plates. The guests repeat the same conversations over and over. There is some food still left—the endlessly repeating banquet never makes it to the dessert course—but of the sweets, only the dwarven seedcake is still edible. The trifle is full of newts.

Presiding over the banquet at the high table is the lord of Marblehall, **Thale Artolin**. At his right hand, in a place of honor, is the dwarven noble **Lord Sunhammer.** Other notable guests include… well, roll the relationship dice. If an Emperor, Priestess, Archmage, Dwarf King, Crusader, or Prince of Shadows benefit shows up, then the relevant PC recognizes one of the guests as someone that the icon would like to remain alive—a noble of the Empire, an influential cleric, a well-placed spy.

A passing servant insists that the PCs take a glass of 'wine' or a tankard of 'dwarven beer', which proves sadly empty. Other guests engage the PCs in vacuous talk. After a few moments, the PCs are approached by Thale Artolin and Lord Sunhammer.

If the PCs are foes of the Witch, skip right onto Banquet Brawl, below. If they're potential allies, then their responses here may affect their relationship with her. Should the PCs try to break Thale out of the curse, then the Witch may interpret that as an attack on her. On the other hand, if they lull Thale back into his delusions, he suggests that they go and fetch Casila and bring her to the banquet—she's off in the old chapel, somewhere over that way.

Banquet Brawl

The dwarven guests suddenly stiffen. So do several other guests, and some of the servants. The thrill of magic runs through the room as the Witch alters the curse she laid on those unfortunates. Now, Lord Sunhammer and his dwarven retinue and some of the other guests see the player characters as their worst enemies. They pull out their ceremonial axes and attack.

When a PC gets hit by a foe in this battle, ask the player who the foe thinks he's hitting…

Non-Lethal Attacks: These enemies are under the effects of the Witch's illusions; killing them would be an evil act, even in self-defense. Usually, a player can choose to knock out a defeated foe rather than killing it. However, if you want to add a bit of moral quandary, then have the tough guests like Lord Sunhammer and the drunken wizard fight too fervently to make knock-out blows easy. The PCs can either choose to slay these foes, or take a –4 penalty to their attacks in order to do non-lethal damage for the last few hits needed to bring the bewitched victims down.

Pleading with the Witch: Diplomatic player characters could try persuading the Witch to relent and stop using innocents as cannon fodder. Practical characters could just threaten her family—the ones she didn't bewitch into attacking. The likelihood of either approach succeeding depends on your conception of the Witch.

Similarly, the Witch may intend to use her thralls to drive the PCs away, and she will be horrified when they start chopping down innocents, or she may be amused by the carnage and hurl her mind-slaves onto the PCs' swords.

Lord Sunhammer

This was a secret trade negotiation, so the mysterious disappearance of Lord Sunhammer has caused no end of consternation back in the dwarven lands.

8th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +13

Warhammer +13 vs. AC (2 attacks)—19 damage, and the target becomes vulnerable to attacks from dwarves

Take Advantage: If a nearby unengaged creature takes an action that would trigger an attack of opportunity, Lord Sunhammer may immediately attempt to disengage with his current foes and engage with that enemy as an interrupt action.

Old Grudges: If Lord Sunhammer is slain, his killer gains a 1-point negative relationship with the Dwarf King.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 144**
MD 18

Dwarven Warriors

Lord Sunhammer's bodyguards and drinking buddies.

7th level troop [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +11

Axe +12 vs. AC—38 damage

Doughty: When a dwarven warrior becomes staggered, it automatically saves against any ongoing effects.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 100**
MD 17

Great Hall Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Lord Sunhammer	Dwarven Warrior	Drunken Wizard	Feast-Goer
3 x 6th level	1	1	1	5
4 x 6th level	1	2	1	5
5 x 6th level	1	3	1	5
6 x 6th level	1	3	1	10
7 x 6th level	1	4	1	10
3 x 7th level	*1*	*3*	*1*	*10*
4 x 7th level	*1*	*5*	*1*	*10*
5 x 7th level	*1*	*5*	*1*	*15*
6 x 7th level	*1*	*7*	*1*	*15*
7 x 7th level	*1*	*9*	*1*	*15*

Drunken Wizard

Hic! Hic! Failball! No, wait, that's not it...

7th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +11

Wildly Flailing Staff +12 vs. AC—25 damage

Random Spell: Roll a d6 to see what the wizard pulls out of his befuddled brain.

1: *Drink Geas:* **+12 vs. MD**—the target must procure a drink for the wizard before the wizard's next turn or take 25 damage.
2: *Animate Beard:* Any attempts by nearby creatures to disengage take a –5 penalty this round.
3: *Polymorph:* **+12 vs. PD**—the target turns into an animal (save ends). Use the ranger animal companion stats for the transformed player character.
4: *Unseen Servants:* Trays of drinks floating toward the wizard give all nearby foes a –2 penalty to their attacks until the end of the round.
5: *Dispel Magic:* One random ally is freed of the Witch's curse.
6: *Wait, I remember! Fireball.* **+12 vs. PD (2d3 nearby enemies)**—25 fire damage.

AC 23
PD 18 **HP 108**
MD 21

Feast-Goers

Even a dessert fork can be a lethal weapon when the Witch's curse holds sway.

7th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +7

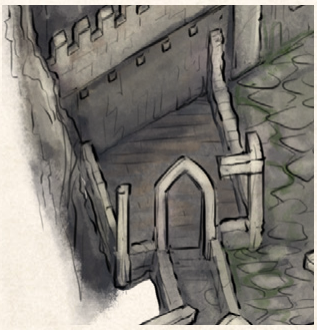
Improvised Weapon +7 vs. AC—13 damage

Mingle: Feast-goers gain a +1 bonus to damage for every other feast-goer engaged with their target.

AC 23
PD 18 **HP 27 (mook)**
MD 21

Mook: Kill one feast-goer mook for every 27 damage dealt to the mob.

4. The Ritual Chamber



The Witch already tried and failed to bind the Stone Thief. She had the three requisite ritual components—a set of enchanted chains, the backing of an icon, and a connection to the dungeon, in the form of a reliquary containing painstakingly cultured dungeon ectoplasm, the very stuff of the living dungeon. When she tried to complete the ritual, the reliquary shattered, releasing a seething mass of magically charged dungeon-slime. The Witch sensibly fled this ritual chamber and sealed the now-tainted ectoplasm up inside.

If the characters are guests of the Witch, then she stations an arkad demon here to warn them not to enter. If they're sneaking through Marblehall, then they deserve whatever they get for opening sealed doors.

The Door Seal

The entrances to this room are each closed and sealed with a brass plate, affixed to the portal with red wax. The plate bears runes and magical symbols of containment, as any wizard or scholar can recognize. From behind the door, the characters can hear a buzzing, bubbling noise, like a swarm of angry bees drowning. If opened, the seal detaches from the door with an audible pop.

The Ritual Chamber

This room was originally a small atrium, an enclosed garden open to the sky. Now, of course, it looks out only onto solid rock. The Witch appropriated it as a ritual space, and filled the garden with symbols of her icon patron. Trestle tables bear abandoned arcane paraphernalia and secondary ritual components.

- **Diabolist:** The atrium is hot and sticky, with a hint of sulphur. Red flowers bloom in great profusion amid the carnivorous fly-traps. The plants partially conceal obsidian pillars engraved with the secret names of the lords of Hell.
- **Elf Queen:** Strictly speaking, the atrium should not be big enough to contain this forest. Nonetheless, standing in this room gives the uncanny impression that the visitor is deep in the wild woods beneath a starry sky.
- **The Three:** Carved statuettes of three dragons stand in a triangle around the ritual area. The magic of the statues has warped the atrium around them, so the Black statue stands in a dank, swampy park of the garden, the Blue stands in a parched region that crackles with unseen forces, and the Red looks like it recently exploded, as all the plants around it are scorched and blackened.

The Ectoplasm

Floating in the middle of the atrium is a tangled globule of chaos. Part of it resembles the dungeon ectoplasm that the PCs may have seen elsewhere; other bits seem to be trying to shape themselves into tiny dungeon corridors and rooms. As the PCs enter, it lashes out at them blindly with tentacle corridors.

Congratulations, It's a Dungeon

The Witch intended to use a cultured sample of the Stone Thief's ectoplasmic essence, but the vessel containing that ectoplasm burst. What she's actually succeeded in doing is spawning a new living dungeon—a tiny one, confined to the binding circle in the atrium. Unlike the Stone Thief, this new dungeon can spontaneously generate its own tiny dungeon levels. It's fueled by the powers of the Witch's icon patron, so the 'theme' of the dungeon varies depending on that patron.

- **Diabolist:** Rathell Dungeon, an infernal sewer-maze of sulphur, nasty deathtraps, and predatory monstrous cats, all sized for rats. Creep through a warren of narrow tunnels, lit only by guttering green flames.
- **Elf Queen:** Rootrot Dungeon, a maze of darkness and insects, where the walls are made of rotten wood that can give way at any moment, dropping you into a seething tide of carnivorous grubs.
- **The Three:** Wyrmtwine Dungeon, a labyrinth that draws on the essence of all three dragons, shifting from dark swamp to blazing desert to all-consuming flame as the adventurers explore it.



Fighting the Dungeon

Because the dungeon is no larger than a cow, it's statted as a large monster with a lot of regeneration. However—and here's the tricky bit of this fight—the dungeon can shrink PCs down and swallow them. Shrunken characters can climb into the dungeon and make their way through it at haste. (Conveniently, time flows slightly faster inside the dungeon, so shrunken characters can run into a trap or other encounter each round if there are unshrunken PCs on the outside.)

Shrunken PCs

The dungeon shrinks its victims down to about two inches high, proportionately speaking, so shrunken gnomes might be inhaled by unwary monsters. Shrunken characters take a –4 penalty when attacking normal-sized foes, and automatically inflict minimal damage—if your attack normally does 7d10 + 10 damage on a hit, it would be 17 damage instead.

The shrinking effect wears off if the dungeon is slain, or after a few minutes.

Shrunken Battles

As shrunken characters make their way through the dungeon, they'll run into equally tiny foes that seem normal-size to them (and so use the normal combat rules). We've provided stats for one mook type and one tough monster type, but you can add further micro-battles within the dungeon if you want to, ahem, expand this scene.

The best way to kill the baby dungeon is to get shrunken, then climb into the dungeon, get past some hazards, then stab the dungeon's Heart. PCs who enter the dungeon at the same time can stick together; those who enter separately follow their own route through the dungeon, but everyone meets up in the dungeon's central chamber.

A PC who is swallowed by the dungeon has to get past three hazards to reach the heart; those who voluntarily enter the dungeon only need to get past one.

Potential hazards include:

Rathell:

- A tidal wave floods the corridor. Strength check (DC 20) to avoid being washed away and losing a recovery to drowning.
- A mouse-trap lures the PC with a lump of gold. (Or cheese, if the PC is more likely to respond to that. You never know with halflings.)
- An endless wheel, where the PC is pursued by a boulder—no matter how far or fast the PC runs, they never get away. The only way to leave the wheel is to jump on top of the boulder as it rolls toward them (Dexterity check (DC 20); failure means 4d6 damage), then jump from there onto the axle and climb out.
- Possible added monsters: rat ragers (use orc rager stats), vrocks, coursing manticores (from the *Bestiary*)

Rootrot:

- Mushroom spores and slimes are always a good source of poison or acid damage traps.
- A dead end—the PC has to break through the rotten wall to escape. However, only one wall leads to the next corridor, while all the others conceal a writhing mass of flesh-eating maggots (**+10 vs. AC—**4d8 damage).
- Mean dryads.
- A stirge's nest. Move softly, and maybe those eggs won't hatch and you won't be eaten by starving hatchlings.

Wyrmtwine:

- A maze in the shape of a magical symbol. It's DC 20 to recognize the symbol and navigate the maze correctly; failure means that the PC's path draws a damaging symbol instead, and that character takes 4d6 damage.
- A cloud of poisonous gas that can be burnt away by a fire or lightning attack. What, you can't breathe fire? Then you've got to rush through the cloud! Getting through requires a DC 20 Constitution check to avoid 4d8 damage.
- Some dragons have insect parasites that clean away bits of dead hero from the cracks in their scales. These bugs are about the size of your hand—your full-size hand. You're a lot smaller now. How do you hide your scent, hero?

The Dungeon's Heart: At the center of the little dungeon is its Heart, a beating crystal that accreted around the magical chain the Witch intended to use to bind the dungeon. If a PC smashes this crystal, the dungeon is destroyed. The crystal is protected by the dungeon's double-strength foes, one per PC that makes it into the central chamber.

Nascent Dungeon

Large 8th level spoiler [ABERRATION]
Initiative: +16

Lashing Tentacorridor +13 vs. AC—40 damage, and the victim shrinks in size
Natural 16+: The victim is also swallowed.

Generative Force: The dungeon heals 80 hit points per round.

AC 24
PD 20 **HP 280**
MD 20

Rathell Rat Zombies

You'd think it was just a mangy rat, if it weren't for the burning light in its little eyes.

6th level mook [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +12

Infected Bite +11 vs. AC—10 ongoing damage

Squeaking Pack Attack: This creature gets a +1 attack bonus per other rat zombie engaged with the target it's attacking.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 23 (mook)**
MD 16

Mook: Kill one rat zombie mook for every 23 damage dealt to the mob.

Cats of Rathell

These are actually just normal cats. You've just never seen them eye to eye before.

8th level wrecker [BEAST]
Initiative: +14

Claw +13 vs. AC (two attacks)–20 damage

Play With Food +13 vs. PD—20 damage, and the target is hampered (basic attacks only, save ends)
Restricted Targets: Only usable against staggered foes.

Agile: Attempts to disengage from a cat take a –5 penalty.

AC 24
PD 18 **HP 120**
MD 22

Rotroot Grubman

Body of a human, face of a carnivorous grub.

6th level mook [DEMON]
Initiative: +11

Grab +8 vs. AC—10 damage, and the target is grabbed.

Latch On +12 vs. PD—15 damage, plus 5 ongoing damage.

AC 22
PD 17 **HP 23 (mook)**
MD 17

Mook: Kill one grubman mook for every 23 damage dealt to the mob.

Rootrot Mossmen

At the center of that evil fuzzball is an evil moss wizard. How many hits does it take to get to the center of a fuzzball?

8th level caster [PLANT]
Initiative: +14

C: Mossblast +11 vs. PD (one nearby target)—30 damage, and the target becomes covered in moss, suffering a cumulative –1 attack penalty (a hard save (16+) or taking at least 20 fire damage removes all accumulated moss).

Spore Cloud: When the mossman first becomes staggered, all those engaged with it become covered in moss and suffer a cumulative –1 attack penalty (a hard save (16+) or taking at least 20 fire damage removes all accumulated moss).

Moss Growth: Whenever the escalation die becomes even, any character suffering a penalty from being covered in moss takes 10 damage per –1 attack penalty currently affecting them.

AC 24
PD 19 **HP 144**
MD 19

Wyrmtwine Worms

These slithering worm-things, like degenerate limbless dragons, are still wet from the egg.

6th level mook [DRAGON]
Initiative: +11

Bite +11 vs. AC—8 damage

C: Breath Weapon +11 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—3d6 damage

Group ability: The worms gain one *breath weapon* attack for every 5 worms present.

AC 22
PD 17 **HP 23 (mook)**
MD 17

Mook: Kill one worm mook for every 23 damage dealt to the mob.

Wyrmtwine Dragonlings

These draconic hatchlings were spawned from the chaotic essence of the new dungeon and never came from an egg.

8th level wrecker [DRAGON]
Initiative: +14

Claw and bite +13 vs. AC (2 attacks)—16 damage
First natural even hit or miss: Roll a third *claw and bite* attack.

C: Fiery Breath +13 vs. PD (1d3 nearby foes)—20 damage

Intermittent Breath: The dragonling can use *fiery breath* 1d4 times per battle, but never two turns in a row.

AC 24
PD 19
MD 19

HP 144

Fleeing

If the PCs flee this battle, then the baby living dungeon breaks its bonds, slithers through Marblehall, and eventually rips its way out of the Stone Thief. Since it's imbued with the magical power of an icon, it'll make its way toward that icon's stronghold.

The Dungeon Defeated

Should the PCs slay the nascent dungeon, it melts away, leaving behind the magical chains procured by the Witch for her ritual. These chains are a potent item in their own right and may be claimed as treasure or used in a future binding ritual.

Chains of the Threshold

Recharge 16+: When a creature dies nearby, you may use the chains to temporarily bind its spirit as a quick action. You may demand one favor from that spirit, which usually means you're granted a one-shot power based on the late monster's abilities. For example, a bound dragon spirit might give you a fiery breath similar to the dragonspawn racial ability (see *13th Age,* page 71) or reveal the location of its hoard. A favor is roughly equal in power to an icon benefit, more or less. *Quirk:* Miserly.

5. Witch's Sanctum



Casila Artalin, the Witch of Marblehall, awaits the player characters in the old chapel attached to her family mansion. The chapel was once dedicated to the Great Gold Wyrm and the Gods of Light, but the Witch has redecorated, and uses the holy altar as a worktable. Books and scrolls lie scattered around the feet of her cushioned chair. Her guards—monsters sent by her icon patron—stand ready to defend her against any dungeon denizens who get this far.

- **Diabolist:** There are no guards visible, but there are magically-charged summoning pentacles on the floor. At a word of command, vrocks spring forth to defend their mistress.
- **Elf Queen:** Winter-furies—spirits of ice and driving wind—haunt the old chapel.
- **The Three:** Medium red dragons coil around her throne.

An ornate mirror hangs in the air next to the Witch. This mirror is the Witch's communications channel with the outside world. Bookcases and magical laboratory equipment can be glimpsed in the darkness at the back of the chapel.

Meeting the Witch

If the characters are expected, then the Witch has a table with food and drink waiting for them, and greets them with all the courtesy one would expect from a daughter of the nobility. She engages in small talk, asking them about the trivial details of their journey, and treating their quest through the living dungeon as if it was an afternoon stroll made unpleasant by sudden rain.

If the PCs are trespassing and are unaware of the Witch, or know her only by reputation, then she's more cautious. She addresses them from a distance, and her guards bar the way to her throne.

The Witch could be a useful ally for the PCs, especially if any of them are friendly toward her patron icon. She suggests an alliance if they are willing to listen; she possesses a ritual that can bind the living dungeon, removing it as a threat to the Empire and stopping the Cult of the Devourer from using the Stone Thief as an apocalyptic weapon. To complete the ritual, though, she needs

a mystical connection to the dungeon. If the PCs don't have such a thing, she suggests where they could obtain one. Finding an Eye of the Stone Thief, or raiding the cult stronghold in the Onyx Catacombs (page 260) are obvious choices. The Witch might even offer the modified, destructive form of the ritual (*The Rite of Destruction*, page 353) as a sweetener. After all, the two rites are almost identical, and she could try switching back to the binding at the last moment.

If the PCs aren't willing to deal, then the Witch suggests other ways they could be useful to each other. They could carry a message to her icon patron, or obtain magical supplies for her so she can bolster Marblehall's defenses. In return, she can provide arcane assistance and counsel, or teleport the PCs out of the dungeon with a one-shot ritual. (Of course, she might be lying. Maybe she'll send her minions after the PCs and attack them when their guard is down, then force them to get the mystical connection she needs. Or maybe her plan is to *charm* a vulnerable player character into helping her.)

Should a player character threaten her (in her own home! The cheek!), or if the players are determined to destroy the dungeon or use it for their own ends, then it's fight time.

Battling the Witch

Using the blessing of her icon patron, the Witch splits into three. The Witch is only slain if all three aspects of her are destroyed. The appearance and demeanor of the aspects depends on her patron.

- **Diabolist:** An innocent maiden, the Witch as she is now, and the demon that holds the Witch's soul.
- **Elf Queen:** The Witch in the garb of a high elf, wood elf and dark elf, respectively.
- **The Three:** Red Witch, Blue Witch, Black Witch, with eyes and robes to match.

Gamemaster

For simplicity's sake, we've avoided giving the various Witch-aspects special abilities based on their appearance, but if you like complex fights, you can easily add them in. The elf-Witches could have the elven racial powers, the dragon-witches could have appropriate resistances and breath weapons, and the demon-witches might use some random demon powers (for her demon aspect) and a defensive bonus against characters aligned with good icons (for her 'innocent' side).

The Witch of Marblehall

Ambition drove her; hatred traps her here. In this, is she a mirror to the adventurers.

Double-strength 8th level caster [humanoid]
Initiative: +17

Sword +11 vs. AC—75 damage

C: Witch's Curse +13 vs. MD (one engaged enemy)—target's choice: 100 damage, or 50 damage and the Witch pops free
Natural 14+: The target is stuck until the end of its next turn.

R: Lightning Blast +13 vs. PD (one nearby enemy)—50 lightning damage
Natural even hit: Make another free *lightning blast* attack against another nearby enemy who has not been the target of a *lightning blast* this turn.

R: Triple Strike +13 vs. PD (all nearby enemies)—50 damage
Restriction: All three aspects of the Witch must cast this spell simultaneously. If an aspect is slain, this power cannot be used.
Natural 14+: 15 ongoing fire damage.
Natural 16+: One Witch may immediately make a *lightning blast* attack as a free action.
Natural 18+: The target is hampered (save ends).

Split Soul: If the Witch fails a save with an ongoing effect, she may transfer that effect to one of her other selves.

Teleport: The Witch may teleport as a move action, but only to the location of one of her other selves.

AC 24 PD 18 MD 22 **HP 288**

Vrock (vulture demon)

Vulture demons embody contagion. The presence of a horribly virulent disease has been known to summon them from the Abyss. In the Red Wastes near the borders of the Abyss, it's common to toast another's health by saying "Get better soon, or we'll kill you before you summon a vrock."

6th level spoiler [demon]
Initiative: +9

Filth-covered claws +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—7 damage, and 5 ongoing poison damage
Natural even hit: The vrock can make a *demonic screech* attack as a free action.

[Special trigger] **C: Demonic screech +11 vs. MD (1d3 nearby enemies),** 5 psychic damage, and the target is vulnerable (*attacks vs. it have crit range expanded by 2*) until the end of the battle

Nastier Specials

Predation: Creatures hit by the vrock's *demonic screech* attack that are already vulnerable are also hampered (save ends).

AC 21
PD 18 **HP 88**
MD 18

Winter-Fury

When the winter wind howls through the leafless trees, you hear their battle-cry from afar.

6th level spoiler [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +13

Icicle-Sword +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—9 cold damage
Heartseeker: Icicle-sword attacks crit on a 16+ when attacking foes who aren't wearing heavy armor.

Howling Escalator: If a character attacks this creature, the winter-fury may add the escalation die to its attack rolls for the rest of this round.

Nastier Specials

Freezing Winds: Attempts to disengage from a winter-fury take a –5 penalty. If a character attempts to disengage and fails, the winter-fury automatically inflicts 10 cold damage on that character.

AC 21
PD 18 **HP 88**
MD 18

Medium Red Dragon

Breathing fire makes a red dragon hungry. Eating makes a red dragon bloodthirsty. Bloodthirstiness gets a red dragon into fights, where it likes to use its fiery breath.

6th level wrecker [DRAGON]
Initiative: +11
Vulnerability: cold

Fangs, claws, and tail +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—8 damage
First natural even hit or miss each turn: Roll another *fangs, claws, and tail* attack.

C: Fiery breath +11 vs. PD (2d3 nearby enemies)—10 fire damage
Miss: Half damage.

Intermittent breath: A medium red dragon can use *fiery breath* 1d3 times per battle, but never two turns in a row.

Resist fire 12+: When a fire attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 12+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

AC 21
PD 20 **HP 90**
MD 16

Witch's Sanctum Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	The Witch	Guards
3 x 6th level	**3**	**0**
4 x 6th level	**3**	**0**
5 x 6th level	**3**	**1**
6 x 6th level	**3**	**2**
7 x 6th level	**3**	**2**
3 x 7th level	***3***	***2***
4 x 7th level	***3***	***2***
5 x 7th level	***3***	***3***
6 x 7th level	***3***	***3***
7 x 7th level	***3***	***4***

Slaying the Witch

If the PCs slay the Witch, then the mirror by her throne spins to face them. The characters get a brief glimpse of the Witch's patron, then the mirror cracks and falls to the ground. Everyone gains a 1-point negative relationship with the icon (+1 positive relationships become +2 conflicted, +1 conflicted or +1 negative relationships become +2 negative.) That's assuming, of course, the same thing didn't already happen (see *The Keys of Marblehall*, page 331)—don't hit the PCs twice with the same penalty.

Treasure

Depending on the needs of your campaign at this point (and if the Witch is dead, you should be heading into the endgame), the Witch's library might contain:

- Details on the ritual of binding or ritual of destruction (see *Slaying the Thief,* page 352), or notes that tell the PCs that the Secret Masters have such a ritual (over in the Onyx Catacombs, page 256).
- Details on the ritual of Calling the Devourer (see *Call the Devourer*, page 303).
- A one-shot scroll of *teleport*, allowing the PCs to escape the Stone Thief.

In addition to a level-appropriate pile of gold and healing potions, consider the following magic items as rewards.

Broach of the [Icon]

This golden talisman is connected to the Witch's icon patron, so it's the *Broach of the Diabolist/Three/Elf Queen*.

+1 to saves when you have 25 or fewer hp
Recharge 6+: When you make an attack roll, roll your relationship dice too. Gain a +1 bonus with that attack for every relationship die with the [icon] that rolls a 5 or 6. *Quirk:* Sings the praises of the [icon] a little too readily.

Wand of Eager Sorcery

+2 wand
When you hit with a spell, increase your initiative by +1. *Quirk:* Touchy. (Who are you calling touchy! *Fireball!)*

Phoenix Cloak

+3 PD

Recharge 16+: Automatically pass a death save as if you'd rolled a natural 20, allowing you to act normally in the turn you come back from the dead. Also, you're wreathed in flames for one round, inflicting 25 fire damage on everyone nearby (including allies). *Quirk:* Ambitious. *Insanely* ambitious.

Dungeon Intrusion

This battle isn't on the map—run it whenever you wish. If you're feeling cruel, it might even happen in the middle of another encounter.

Ever since the Stone Thief swallowed Marblehall, it's been looking for a weak point in the Witch's protective shell charms. Now, finally, it's found one, and it happens to be right where the player characters are standing.

The ornate marble floor ripples, then erupts into a maggot-like mass of writhing white tentacles of ectoplasm. The tendrils seep into the stone, and a hole opens in the floor. Through the hole, the characters see a corridor of the dungeon—and there's a whole horde of monsters rushing down it.

These monsters are accompanied by a pair of blockheads, the dungeon's servants. If the PCs don't slay the monsters and kill off the blockheads, then the dungeon will fortify this breach, bypass the shell charms, and consume all of Marblehall. The residents of Marblehall will get slaughtered or become denizens of the dungeon, and the Witch will suffer as many torments as the Stone Thief can muster (and the dungeon's next few incursions onto the surface will be to swallow drow torture chambers and other houses of pain).

Stone Imp

The dungeon will dash as many of these monsters against the gates of Marblehall as it takes to break through.

6th level troop [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +0

Stone Claws +11 vs. AC—20 damage

[When the escalation die is 3+, use this attack instead] **Stone Haymaker +6 vs. AC**—30 damage
Natural even hit: The target is stunned for one round.
Natural even miss: Deal 2d6 damage to both the target and the stone imp.

AC	**22**	
PD	20	**HP 90**
MD	16	

Manymouth

It's a roughly spherical thing covered in mouths. It drags itself along on sucker-tongues, and bites at anyone nearby.

Large 8th level wrecker [ABERRATION]
Initiative: +10

Bite +13 vs. AC—30 damage
Miss: 10 damage.

C: Rolling Bite +13 vs. AC (number of attacks equal to escalation die + 1, each against a different nearby enemy)—30 damage
Miss: 10 damage.

Snap! If an enemy misses a melee attack on the manymouth with a natural 1–5, the manymouth may immediately make a free *bite* attack on that enemy.

Stress Eater: If the manymouth is staggered or suffers a critical hit, it must immediately make a free *bite* attack on a nearby mook.

AC	**23**	
PD	23	**HP 250**
MD	18	

Shrieking Bowmen

Wherever the Stone Thief picked up these weirdos, it's the sort of place where you wear an eyeless hood over your face and shriek war cries at the top of your lungs until you die.

8th level Archer [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14
Vulnerability: thunder

Stab +13 vs. AC—20 damage
Natural attack roll greater than target's Dexterity: The shrieking bowman pops free and may immediately make a free *shrieking bow* attack.

Shrieking Bow +13 vs. AC—25 damage
Natural attack roll greater than target's Wisdom: Any foes engaged with that target are considered to have a fear aura until the start of the bowman's next turn.

Shriek of Triumph: Whenever a player character is staggered or knocked unconscious, all shrieking bowmen may add the escalation die to their attacks for the rest of the round.

AC	**24**	
PD	20	**HP 133**
MD	20	

Blockheads

Zombie bodies, with blank stone blocks for heads. They're the dungeon's laborers. Today, they'll be digging your grave.

6th level mook [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +4

Stone Fist +11 vs. AC—12 damage
Natural 16+: The blockhead headbutts its foe, inflicting another 8 damage.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 20 (mook)**
MD 16

Mook: Kill one blockhead mook for every 20 damage you deal to the mob.

Intrusion Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Stone Imp	Manymouth	Shrieking Bowman	Blockhead
3 x 6th level	**2**	**1**	**0**	**5**
4 x 6th level	**3**	**1**	**0**	**8**
5 x 6th level	**1**	**1**	**1**	**5**
6 x 6th level	**2**	**1**	**1**	**8**
7 x 6th level	**3**	**1**	**1**	**11**
3 x 7th level	***2***	***1***	***1***	***10***
4 x 7th level	***4***	***1***	***1***	***10***
5 x 7th level	***4***	***2***	***2***	***15***
6 x 7th level	***5***	***2***	***3***	***15***
7 x 7th level	***7***	***2***	***3***	***15***

The Onyx Catacombs

Levels 6–7

When the first Secret Masters of the cult followed their leader down into the darkness, they found the Onyx Catacombs waiting for them. The Stone Thief swallowed this dark city of temples and obsidian towers before the 1st Age began, before the Wizard King raised up his throne over the lands around the sea.

The Catacombs are now the fortress of the cult. The undying Secret Masters have their palace here—and when the Devourer destroys the usurper's empire and the surface cities are brought to ruin, then the Catacombs will rise up and become a new throne for the new kings of the world.

Features & Factions

The Cult of the Devourer rules this level. The cultists try to keep wandering monsters out of the precincts of their stronghold, although this policy is under theological review. After all, if the dungeon is (or will be) a god, and the monsters are spawned by the dungeon, then if a cultist gets eaten by a monster, is that not a holy and blessed act, and would thwarting that not be blasphemy? This belief is held exclusively by the semi-dead Secret Masters, and is not shared by the living acolytes of the cult.

Living members of the cult—mostly pilgrims who made it down through the upper levels of the dungeon, but also a few unlucky enough to be born down here without ever knowing the light of the surface world—exist to serve the Secret Masters. In most cases, calling them 'living' is being generous. Most cultists are ash-faced, frightfully gaunt, and shuffle like zombies through the bowels of their holy dungeon. Their only hope is to serve their masters with such fanatic devotion as to earn the chance to ascend. Every few years, one living cultist is given the honor of being buried alive in the Chamber of Transcendence. If their faith is strong enough (in other words, if the Stone Thief chooses them), they rise as Secret Masters. Those who nearly make it become powerful cult mummies (page 255). Those who fail utterly, or those who are never offered the chance at transcendence, are brought up to the Ossuary where they may serve the Stone Thief as lesser undead.

Like the Pit of Undigested Ages, this level crackles with barely contained magical energy. For centuries, the cult has prepared to transform and exalt the living dungeon by feeding it places of power. Untold reserves of elemental power are stored in the glass towers of this level, ready for the day when the dungeon rises to glory. (They're also ready for the moment when the Secret Masters enact the Rite of Binding to take control of the Stone Thief; the only thing better than a Living God-Dungeon is a Living God-Dungeon with your withered hand on the tiller.)

Descriptors

A dead city ruled by a creepy cult who worship an unborn yet malignant god? We're deep in Lovecraft country here—or underneath it, anyway. Everything in the Onyx Catacombs is spooky and wrong. Emphasize senses other than sight here; describe how things feel and smell and taste and sound whenever possible. The acid tang of the air, the disturbing *softness* of the stone walls, as if they were slightly yielding and rubbery, and the distant sound of shuffling feet and endless chanting.

Minor Encounters

Streets of the Silent City

Exploring the dark streets, the PCs encounter a strange ghostly figure. It's not undead, but it does blaze with magical power. This is the spirit of **Beld**, a young equerry from the 8th Age. He lived near the Temple of the Whispering God, and his home was swallowed along with the temple when the Stone Thief struck. He remembers running into the temple to take shelter, then the ceiling collapsed and everything went dark. By some mischance, Beld's soul became enmeshed in the magical energy extracted from the temple, so he's now bound to the cult's reserves of magic. He's either a magically supercharged ghost or an aberrant tangle of human consciousness within the arcane weave, depending on how you look at it. Or, just as accurately, he's a twelve-year old street urchin who happens to be immaterial and immortal as long as the dungeon doesn't consume him.

Beld stays clear of the Cult of the Devourer—he's learned that the Secret Masters have the magical might to seize hold of the stored arcane power and 'smooth out the wrinkles,' causing him agonizing pain, and he strongly suspects they could destroy him if he stood still for long enough. Theoretically, Beld could tap that power to become an immensely powerful arcane spellcaster, if someone taught him how to cast spells (Step 1: teach the nervous spell-ghost to read…)

Should the PCs befriend Beld, he can tell them about this level and the cult's activities. He doesn't dare trespass in the cult's stronghold, but he knows the other parts of the level well.

- **Archmage/Diabolist/Three:** You're pretty sure you could tap Beld's power to really supercharge one of your spells. You're just not sure if there's be anything left of him afterward.
- **Great Gold Wyrm:** Beld's fate reflects that of the Great Gold Wyrm. By drawing on the Wyrm's blessing, you could free Beld from this half-life, but that might entail taking his place while his soul passes onward, and you don't know what that would do to you.



That Sinking Feeling

Good news—any PCs who are initiates of the Cult of the Devourer are safe. Everyone else starts sinking into the ground as the dungeon instinctively tries to swallow them. How do the PCs pull themselves free? Just wrenching their feet out of the stone requires a DC 20 check and costs a recovery, but perhaps they can come up with a less damaging solution. They had better hurry—not only does the DC rise each round, but they can hear footsteps approaching…

The Failed Pilgrim

A trail of blood leads into a side tunnel. **Teja**, a cultist from the surface, made it all the way down through the dungeon, only to collapse within sight of the sacred precincts. She got mauled by a pack of archivults on the Maddening Stair and will be close to death when the player characters arrive. (Base Teja's race and class on one of the player characters to elicit sympathy.) As she bleeds to death, she raves about the Secret Masters and how the dungeon is a god, testing the faithful to determine if they are worthy to see the old age washed away and dwell in the bliss of the remade Empire to come.

Poor Teja is a committed follower of the cult; she was raised to believe in the cult's warped teachings. If the PCs just heal her and let her go, she'll report their presence in the Onyx Catacombs to the Secret Masters, but it would be heartless to ignore her suffering. What do they do with this failed pilgrim?

The Field of Torment

Those who betray the cult are subject to the Punishment of Traitors rite (page 303), which condemns such apostates to eternal imprisonment in the depths of the earth. The cursed traitors are swallowed by the ground and sink into their rocky tombs forever… or, at least, until the dungeon comes for them. From the Stone Thief's perspective, eternally entombed ex-cultists are like little flecks of tasty food floating in the rocky seas. Those traitors end up here, on the field of torment. You see, over time, their entombed bodies petrify, becoming still-living stone fossils, and the living dungeon can pull stone apart and reshape it according to its whims. The traitors—still alive, still horribly

conscious despite being statues—get shuffled and twisted by the dungeon. The field looks like a wall of half-finished statues and assorted body parts. Sometimes, it might let most of one traitor accrete, allowing him the chance to scream in agony before the Stone Thief rips its plaything apart again.

If any allies of the player characters ever got hit by the Punishment of Traitors, they turn up here. For that matter, if any player characters were struck by the rite, they're here too—perhaps they could be rescued with a counter-ritual using *sanctuary* or *dimension door*. Alternatively, the characters could talk to one of the petrified traitors when he bubbles to the surface; this apostate is **Jirek**, a warrior of the cult who ended up following the Crusader into battle, choosing to abandon the cult in order to protect the world against the forces of Hell. He still believes in the cult's ultimate goal of destroying the 'corrupt' Dragon Empire, but considers the Secret Masters to have betrayed the cult themselves. They should be here in this torment, not him!

Tomb of the Emperor

In this forgotten corner of the level where no one has trod in centuries, the PCs find the tomb of the Emperor, or *an* Emperor at any rate. In ages past, the gods prostrated themselves before him, and the mere whisper of his true name shook the heavens, but now his coffin lies discarded in a side room. The rest of his once-glorious tomb—one of the vanished wonders of the Midland Sea—was long ago stolen and recycled by the Stone Thief.

What do the characters find in the tomb, beyond age-old dust and bone fragments? You could answer an **Emperor** benefit with some magic item, but you can also use the tomb to seed future quests for the epic tier of your campaign. For example:

- The inscription on the tomb speaks of a prophecy that the heroes of all thirteen ages must gather on the island of Omen to do battle with a foe from beyond space and time. All ages and all times will be as one in that timeless conflict. This dead Emperor fought in that battle—perhaps it killed him. Now, the player characters must take on the mantle as heroes of their age and sail to Omen and the world's ending.
- The Emperor's signet ring bears the symbol of the Wyrm Prince, the fabled son of the Great Gold Wyrm. The Wyrm Prince once led the war-flights of the Empire, but long ago vanished into the age-long sleep of dragon-kind. With this ring in hand, the PCs must seek out the hidden lair of the Wyrm Prince, wake him from his enchanted slumber, and then ride him into the jaws of the Abyss to rescue his father.
- The coffin lid's heraldry includes a genealogy of the Imperial line… and it doesn't match the official histories! There's only one explanation—the Emperor is the descendant of usurpers who stole the throne! There's a real Emperor out there, heir to the magical power and authority that will be needed in the perilous times to come. The heroes must restore the true dynasty to the throne—and the throne's current incumbent has no intention of losing his 'rightful' place…
- Why does the skeleton of this Emperor have a stake through the ribcage? And why such big, sharp teeth? And why did the whole corpse just turn to mist and vanish when the PCs opened the tomb? What do you mean, "Vampire Empress turns half the nobility into her vampire thralls and plunges the Empire into civil war?"

Visitors from Above

The PCs spy on a meeting between one of the Secret Masters and some emissary from the surface or another level of the dungeon. If the cult is in league with a villainous icon, then they might meet with an emissary of that icon, here to deliver payment for the cult's services in the form of raw magical energy for the Crafthouses (page 249). Alternatively, the cult might be visited by orc diplomats from Fangrot's court, or by one of the Flesh Tailor's puppets.

1. Labyrinth of Darkness



Killer: Even if an intruder could somehow bring sunlight down into this lightless maze and illuminate every twist and turn, navigating the labyrinth would be a challenge. It's the 'of darkness' part of the labyrinth that makes it really dangerous. Magical darkness pervades this whole part of the dungeon. *Light* spells don't fully work here, and the same goes for any sort of supernatural vision. It's not complete darkness, but it's impossible to see more than about five feet in front of you. The only people who can see properly down here are initiated members of the Cult of the Devourer. Everyone else has to navigate the labyrinth by touch, feeling their way along the obsidian walls, running their fingers along the eerie carvings of serpents and monsters until they suddenly find the empty air of a side turning.

For added fun, the Stone Thief keeps the labyrinth well stocked with monsters.

The Maze

Getting through the labyrinth requires three successful Intelligence checks at DC 25. Failing a check means the character gets lost and wanders the labyrinth for what feels like an eternity; two failed checks cost a recovery. The player characters can stick together and follow the smartest or most adept member of the party, unless they get separated by the cave mouths.

Natural odd fail: A cave mouth attacks the character, **+12 vs. AC**—5d6 damage, then flees into the darkness.

When sticking together like that, all the PCs are considered to be nearby one another. Should they get separated, another skill check is needed to find their way back together. The DC for this one starts at 15 (or 20 if the PCs stay quiet and don't shout to guide the lost party members home through the maze).

Blind in the Maze

Time to play murder in the dark. It's not completely lightless, so bad guys aren't invisible. They are hard to see though—PC melee attacks have a 50% miss chance in the first round of combat, and any ranged attacks on enemies who aren't engaged with you have a 50% miss chance throughout the battle. Still, that's a lot of potential missing, and coupled with the cave mouth's ability to split the party, it makes this battle into a dangerous fight. If you want to make it fairer, let players negate the miss chance by coming up with interesting ways to sense or spot their targets. Let them kill mummies by scent or lure shriekers with a yell.

Lurkers in the Labyrinth

The most common monsters found in the labyrinth are cave mouths. These elementals are lesser versions of the Custodian spirits encountered elsewhere in the living dungeon. They manifest as doors or archways in the wall of the passage. When someone passes through, *chomp*, the cave mouth slams shut, biting off a few fingers or a whole limb if it's lucky. In a more conventional environment, cave mouths would be merely nasty, but here in a lightless maze that can be navigated only by touch, they're positively ghastly.

Undead mummies—failed aspirants to the rank of Secret Master—also stalk the labyrinth. As members (well, ex-members) of the cult, they can see in the dark, and they just love tightly clustered packs of player characters.

Finally, strange creatures called shrieking stranglers lurk in the quieter corners of the maze. They communicate with each other using high-pitched squeals and howls that only a child or elf can hear, and they hate all other sounds.

Cave Mouth

Don't mind me, I'm just a cave entrance.

7th level blocker [ABERRATION]
Initiative: +10

Bite +12 vs. AC—28 damage
Natural 14, 16, 18: The cave mouth stays shut. Divide any nearby player characters into two groups. These groups are now separated until the cave mouth is staggered, or until the separated groups join up again by making a skill check. The cave mouth can't make *bite* attacks until it opens again.
Natural 15, 17, 19: The target is grabbed.
Natural 20: Apply both the above effects.
Miss: 7 damage.

Grind +16 vs. AC (grabbed victims only; includes grab bonus)—50 damage
Natural 18+: The victim is hampered (save ends).

Nastier Specials

Surprise Attack: Cave mouths gain a +4 bonus to their first attack in a battle.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 100**
MD 15

Cult Mummy

It might have been a Secret Master, but it failed at the last hurdle. Of all the words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: "it might have been!" Closely following behind "agh, no, mummy rot!"

Double-strength 8th level wrecker [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +9
Vulnerability: fire, holy

Fists +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—20 damage
Natural even hit: The target contracts *dungeon rot* (see below).
Both fists hit same target: +20 extra damage.

C: Mummy Breath +10 vs. PD (all nearby enemies in a group)—10 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends)
Limited Use: 1/battle.

Dungeon Rot: Bits of the victim's flesh turn to stone and flake off to embed themselves in the walls. Left unchecked, the victim dissolves and is consumed by the dungeon. Dungeon rot inflicts 30 ongoing negative energy damage (save ends). If the victim fails a regular save against dungeon rot at the end of their turn, the victim must choose to either increase the ongoing damage by +20 (cumulative) or spread the *dungeon rot* to a nearby ally.

Grudge-Bearer: The mummy's crit range expands by +1 for every positive relationship point the target has with any of the following icons: Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess.



Mortal terror: The presence of a mummy unnerves opponents. Any opponent with 200 hit points or fewer suffers fear when attacking a mummy (–4 on attacks and no escalation bonus). Each time the opponent attacks a mummy, hit or miss, they can make a save; if they succeed at a normal save (11+), they no longer suffer fear effects from any mummies this battle.

Grit: If the mummy takes 20 damage or less, prevent that damage.

Nastier Specials

Thoroughly Rotten: The mummy may use *mummy breath* an extra time when it becomes staggered.

Stone Armor: For every 30 damage inflicted upon a creature by *dungeon rot*, increase the mummy's AC by +1 until the start of its next turn.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 288**
MD 18

Shrieking Strangler

It sounds like it was human, once. That, or it's torturing someone as it runs. It's hard to tell in this dim light.

8th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +16
Vulnerability: thunder

Frantic Claw +13 vs. AC—25 damage

Howl: When the escalation die increases, roll a d8 for each surviving strangler. If the result is equal to or less than the value of the die, add another shrieking strangler to the fight. The total number of shrieking strangers cannot exceed the listed number of reinforcements.

Quiet Please: If an enemy makes a loud noise (singing, battle cries, thunder damage, but not spellcasting or normal speech), then any stranglers engaged with that enemy get to make a free *frantic claw* attack immediately.

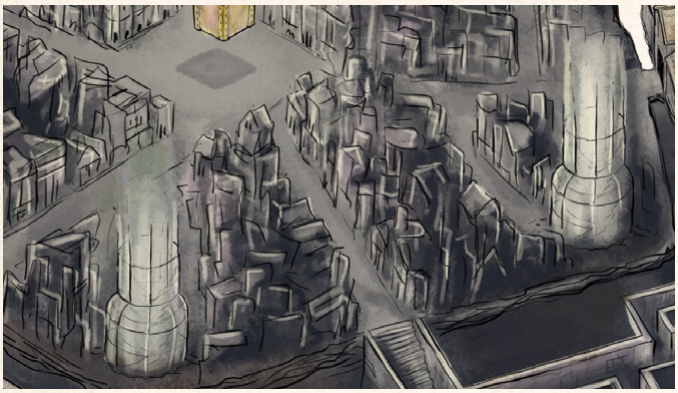
AC 23
PD 18 **HP 36 (mook)**
MD 22

Mook: Kill one shrieking strangler mook for every 36 damage inflicted on the mob.

Labyrinth of Darkness Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Cave Mouth	Shrieking Strangler	Cult Mummy
3 x 6th level	1	3	1
4 x 6th level	1	6	1
5 x 6th level	2	6	1
6 x 6th level	2	9	1
7 x 6th level	2	6	2
3 x 7th level	*2*	*5*	*1*
4 x 7th level	*2*	*10*	*1*
5 x 7th level	*2*	*5*	*2*
6 x 7th level	*3*	*8*	*2*
7 x 7th level	*3*	*8*	*3*

2. The Crafthouses



Anyone with any magical sensitivity can feel these places from far away. They make your skin crawl, and make the air smell of ozone and incense. They make certain words crackle and pop in your mouth—any word that sounds like it might be part of a spell blazes with eager arcane power, desperate to find any route or crack into existence. Just thinking about casting a spell near one of these places causes low-level arcane discharges.

Get close, and even the most stolid dwarf or magic-dead forgeborn can feel the raw, surging power that's barely contained inside these walls. Each Crafthouse is a round tower made of glass, built around a central pillar. The walls are hollow, and the vacuum inside brims with magical power harvested by the cult over the long ages of their exile. When the time is right and the day of the Devourer is at hand, they'll open the floodgates of the Crafthouses and let all this power flow into the living dungeon. The cultists built these Crafthouses out of a substance that the Stone Thief cannot digest to ensure it didn't steal this power prematurely.

Where did all this power come from? Some is from the sacrifices and devotions of the surface cults. In many cases, the cult also taps magical currents in the otherworld, breaks elemental spirits down to their essences, and recycles both the magical items and souls of adventurers unlucky enough to be captured in the dungeon. They also collect magical energy as payment in exchange for using the Stone Thief as a siege weapon (page 302).

There are five Crafthouses on the level, all identical.

Added Security

If the characters rob or destroy a Crafthouse, then the cult reinforces the defenses of the others—treat the party as being two characters stronger when working out future Crafthouse battles (so, for a party of four PCs, use the six PCs row on the fight chart).

Two Crafthouses down? The Secret Masters lock away their remaining storehouses by using their dungeon-warping powers to close off the corridors leading to the towers. They've been gathering this arcane power for centuries; no sense in letting some adventuring reprobates ruin everything.

If the PCs manage to take out three Crafthouses somehow, consider jumping to the cult's terminal response in *With My Last Breath, I Stab At Thee* (page 267).

Stealing Magic

The Stone Thief can't rob the Crafthouses, but the adventurers can try. One doesn't need to be a high-level thief to case a transparent tower, and from outside the characters can see the dangers they'll need to overcome to gain access to that store of magic.

First, they need to get through the crystal door.

Then, they need to climb the spiral stair that winds around that central pillar, which is almost certainly trapped. That stair leads to a spherical chamber in the middle of the Crafthouse, where you know there's got to be some sort of guardian monsters, probably an arcane spirit. Then, finally, there's a control sphere built into the pillar—that's the prize.

Only a DC 30 check lets the would-be thief spot the fourth, secret danger. It's a hollow tower made of glass, but it's bearing the weight of the cave ceiling. All the weight rests on that central pillar. Remove the control sphere, and *crack... creak... rumble... squish.*

The cultists don't need to ever remove the sphere—the pillar is a magical conduit right into the Stone Thief. When the time comes, they can just inject all that stored thaumic energy right into the dungeon's veins.

The Door: This portal opens at the touch of a Secret Master's hand. If the PCs don't have such a hand to use, the door can be picked with a DC 25 Dexterity check. Fail, and an alarm is raised—when the escalation die hits 3 in the battle with the thaumaunts, a cult enforcer, cult sorcerer, and cult assassin (see page 305) arrive at the entrance to the tower and move up to join the fight.

The Stairs: Non-initiates of the cult get their lifeforce drained with every step. A character climbing these stairs loses up to six recoveries. Sprinting, jumping, or using other unlikely acrobatics as part of a skill check reduce the loss (beat DC 15, only lose 3 recoveries; beat DC 20, 2 recoveries, DC 25, 1 recovery; DC 30, lose no recoveries; DC 35, lose no recoveries and do a perfect landing, causing all the thaumaunts to hold up little score cards and clap politely at your gymnastic prowess). Disarming the traps requires a DC 25 check and a lot of patience. Alternatively, the players may be able to come up with a clever way to avoid touching any of the steps, like a *levitation* ritual.

A character can't be reduced below 0 recoveries, and suffers no added mechanical penalties for being drained beyond the point of exhaustion. Being sucked dry like that is, however, a horrific and disturbing experience.

The Guardians: The spherical chamber is guarded by **thaumaunts.** These creatures are not magically talented elderly female relatives, but are magical echoes of malicious spells (the wizard in the party recognizes them as thaumic haunts, but the barbarian in the party tells him to shut up and start hitting them). They resemble insects made of light, with carapaces that look weirdly like the distorted faces of long-dead evil wizards.

Sneaking past the thaumaunts is virtually impossible (DC 30). They don't perceive with their eyes, but by feeling disturbances in the magical aether. If the check to sneak past them fails, the character has one round to do something with the control sphere before the thaumaunts materialize and attack. (If the PCs don't even try to sneak, then the thaumaunts are there waiting for them when they reach the chamber.)

Sphere of the Thaumaunts

In addition to the very real danger of being zapped by a thaumaunt, there are two additional perils. First, the player characters are fighting inside a glass bubble that's inside a brimming storehouse of magical energy, which is a lot like having a 'bring your own gold and barbecue sauce' party under a red dragon's nose. Magical discharges and arcane sparks add an unpredictable element to the fight—whenever a PC casts an arcane spell, roll a d6. On a 1–3, magical feedback means the caster takes damage equal to the level of the spell multiplied by the result of the d6 roll (x1, x2 or x3). On a 4–6, the spell requires only a quick action to cast (if it's an at-will spell) or the caster gets a +5 bonus when trying to recharge the spell after this fight (so daily spells recharge on a 16+, as if the caster was in the overworld).

Second, remember there's a load-bearing glass pillar and magic control sphere in the middle of this room. An errant area-effect spell or wild swing might have unforeseen consequences...

Thaumaunt

The evil that wizards do lives after them. To cast a spell is to warp reality—did you really expect that wouldn't leave a scar?

9th level caster [ABERRATION]
Initiative: +13

C: Arcane Discharge +12 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—20 force damage, and if the target can cast arcane spells, randomly pick one of its spells to be turned into a spellshadow. That spell is unavailable until the matching spellshadow is slain.

Natural 18+: A spellshadow is spawned from a background or one unique thing of the target. The target cannot use that facet of their being until the spellshadow is slain.

R: Spellsear +14 vs. MD (one nearby or far away enemy)—60 damage, and the target is hampered (save ends)

Spawn Spellshadows: If a thaumaunt is hit by an arcane spell, it spawns a spellshadow matching that spell. The caster may not use that spell again until the spellshadow is slain.

AC 23
PD 23 **HP 180**
MD 23

Spellshadow

These lesser thaumaunts are twists in the magical weave, locking the essence of a spell up in their insectoid bodies.

8th level mook [aberration]
Initiative: +13

Spellbite +13 vs. whatever the spell used to create the Spellshadow targets—20 damage

Made from a spell: Spellshadows are (usually) formed from an arcane spell, so each one has a power based on the effects of that spell. A spellshadow born of *magic missile* might inflict force damage; one made from *fireball* might blast 1d3 nearby foes for 10 fire damage each instead of hitting one target. An *invisibility* spellshadow is, well, invisible. Spellshadows born straight from the wellspring of the soul (those formed from a PC's one unique thing) can be very weird.

AC 23
PD 18 **HP 36 (mook)**
MD 22

Mook: Kill one spellshadow mook for every 36 damage dealt to the mob.

Crafthouse Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Thaumants
3 x 6th level	**2**
4 x 6th level	**2**
5 x 6th level	**3**
6 x 6th level	**3**
7 x 6th level	**4**
3 x 7th level	***2***
4 x 7th level	***3***
5 x 7th level	***4***
6 x 7th level	***5***
7 x 7th level	***6***

Stealing the Magic

Once the PCs get to the control sphere—by hacking their way past the thaumaunts, or by other means—they can try tapping the magic of the tower. The easiest way to do this is grab the control sphere and run, although that starts the collapse of the tower (see the sidebar). A truly light-fingered PC could do the classic 'swap the McGuffin for another item of roughly the same size and weight' with a DC 25 check.

The control sphere can be used as a potent one-shot magic weapon against spellcasters like the Secret Masters.

Collapsing Crafthouses

If the Crafthouse breaks, then have each PC in the danger zone make a Dexterity check to run like hell. The result of this check determines what happens to that PC.

25+: Not only do you get out okay, but you can also help one other player character escape—move them one step up this chart, so your buddy who rolled a 1 and got squashed flat now counts as having rolled a 15.

20+: Singed by magical discharges—3d6 damage.

15+: Flying chunks of crystal slice you up badly—3d10 damage.

10 or less: Caught when the ceiling falls in. Probably squashed flat—3d20 damage.

If the characters leave the sphere in place but manipulate the arcane symbols on it with a DC 25 Intelligence check (or by invoking a benefit from the **Archmage** or another icon with expertise in meddling with the forces of the cosmos), they might be able to:

- Sabotage the cult's ritual when the Secret Masters finally go ahead with their plans for the dungeon's apotheosis (page 349).
- Use this magic to fuel their own binding or destruction ritual (see page 352).
- Use this magic to charge up a real dungeon-burner of a blasting ritual or spell (treat this as a quick gather power, as per the sorcerer ability, only any arcane spellcaster can do it once in one battle. Sorcerers who double up inflict *triple* damage, and totally deserve some weird arcane side effect for channeling that much power).
- Discharge the cult's accumulated energy harmlessly.

Control Sphere

The control sphere can be hurled at a spellcaster as a ranged attack. On a hit, the spellcaster takes 1d6 damage per level of the attacker, and is hampered (save ends). Even after saving, if the spellcaster rolls a natural 1–5 when casting a spell that battle, it becomes hampered again as the control sphere interferes with the delicate balance of magical fields.

Control spheres are one-shot weapons when used in this fashion.

3. CHAMBER OF TRANSCENDENCE



The complex is divided into two parts. The upper levels, aka the cloisters, are where the older living acolytes of the cult wait in their little cells, praying and nursing their divine grudges against the Empire. After many years of this devotion, the Secret Masters choose one of these supplicants to be brought down to the lower level and entombed in the chamber of transcendence, where they might join with the dungeon and ascend to the rank of Secret Master—or just starve to death.

The Chamber contains a direct and potent connection to the Stone Thief. If the PCs can get their hands on that, they can use it in a ritual of binding or destruction.

The Upper Cloisters

Most of these cells are empty, but some are home to elder members of the cult. These devotees are all old as counted by their race—human women whose lined faces resemble a map of the dungeon drawn in grey wrinkles, scraggly-bearded old dwarves with mad eyes, ageless elves—and it's hard to tell if they're still alive. (The clue is when they roll for initiative). Lower-ranking cultists tend to them, bringing them bowls of water and mushroom gruel, or richer fare if the Stone Thief recently consumed a feast-hall or harvest fair.



The cloisters end in a stone wall made up of immensely large and heavy blocks. All the cells have a view of this wall, and it's covered in devotional candles and offerings. The wall (and the place beyond the wall) is clearly of ritual significance to the cult.

As well as cells, the cloisters contain store rooms, chapels, armories, and workshops—all the practical machinery for running a cult temple in the depths of a living dungeon. There's little treasure or peril in this 'backstage' section, but it's nice to know that somewhere in this dungeon, there's a little broom cupboard where they keep the sponges and rags for cleaning up the sacrificial altars. The adventurers can sneak through these side rooms easily enough to stay out of sight of the devotees in the cells and their servants. Less than stealthy characters could grab a hooded robe and use it as a disguise, as is traditional when infiltrating cult temples.

The Procession: While lurking, the PC witnesses a strange ceremony. (If they're not lurking, or interrupting the ritual, this becomes a fight scene). An honor guard of cultists arrive from the Citadel of the Secret Masters, escorting one of the Secret Masters themselves. The cultists trudge through the corridors of the dungeon, but the Master rides on a slab of stone that slides along the floor, animated by its magical will. At the cloister, the Master picks one of the devotees. The devotee is too starved and feeble to stand, so the cult acolytes must drag him upright, then help him kneel before the Master.

After a brief ceremony, with plenty of invocations of the God-to-Come who shall devour the usurpers, the Master gestures toward the stone wall at the end of the cloisters. The dungeon quivers, then the wall parts and rolls back, revealing a staircase leading down. The devotee takes a few unsteady steps toward the stairs, then half-stumbles, half-crawls down them. The Master gestures again, and the wall begins to close.

The player characters may be able to slip down the stairs before the wall slams shut.

If the PCs choose to attack, then the cultists try to protect the Secret Master at all costs. The Master retreats to the citadel if possible.

Breaking through the Wall: Alternatively, the PCs can wait until the Secret Master and his bodyguards depart, and then bring the wall down through some other method, like a ritual or a DC 30 Strength check.

Cult Acolyte

8th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +11

Ritual Dagger +13 vs. AC—20 damage
Natural even hit: 10 poison damage.

Die for the Cult! If a nearby non-mook member of the cult is hit by an attack, the acolyte may leap in the way. Reduce the damage from the attack by the acolyte's remaining hit points, then remove the acolyte from the battle. Any remaining damage hits the original target of the attack instead of transferring to other mooks.

Henchmen: If two or more cult acolytes engage the same target, any non-mook cultists have a +1 bonus to their attacks against that target.

AC 23
PD 18 **HP 36 (Mook)**
MD 22

Mook: Kill one cult acolyte mook for every 36 hp you deal to the mob.

Cult Enforcer

7th level blocker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +12

Crushing Mace +12 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 16+: The target loses a move action in its next turn.

Stalwart: If the enforcer is not staggered, then at the start of the enforcer's turn, choose one enemy engaged with it. That enemy does not gain the benefit of the escalation die until the start of the enforcer's next turn.

Grudge-Bearer: The enforcer's crit range expands by +1 for every positive relationship point the target has with any of the following icons: Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess.

Nastier Specials

Nothing Left To Live For: If there isn't a higher-level cultist left in the fight, then the enforcer may add the escalation die to its attacks, and can attack twice each round.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 108**
MD 17

Cult High Priest

9th level leader [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Ritual Dagger +14 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 18+: The target takes 20 ongoing damage and is stunned (save ends both), and the high priest pops free. The high priest may no longer make *ritual dagger* attacks.

Stone Talons +14 vs. AC—40 damage
Natural even hit or miss: 10 ongoing poison damage.

R: Death Curse +14 vs. MD—40 damage. Until the start of the high priest's next turn, the target is vulnerable to attacks made by members of the cult.

Command the Cult: If the high priest is unengaged, then at the start of the high priest's turn, roll three d20s and put them aside. Any other cultist may take one of these d20s and use it instead of making a normal roll.

Grudge-Bearer: The high priest's crit range expands by +1 for every positive relationship point the target has with any of the following icons: Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess.

Nastier Specials

Fanatic: The high priest's *command the cult* power works even when the high priest is engaged, as long as the high priest is also staggered.

AC 25
PD 19 **HP 180**
MD 23

Cult Champion

Double-strength 9th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +16

Crushing Hammer +14 vs. AC—70 damage
Natural 18+: The target's weapon, shield, or one of its magic items is destroyed by the champion, or else the target takes another 50 damage.
Natural odd hit: The target loses its next move action.
Miss: 30 damage.

Wild Swing +14 vs. AC (1d3 nearby targets)—40 damage

Vengeful: If a target that the cult champion is engaged with attacks a non-mook cultist, the cult champion may immediately make a *crushing hammer* attack on that target as an opportunity attack.

Grudge-Bearer: The cult champion's crit range expands by +1 for every positive relationship point the target has with any of the following icons: Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess.

Nastier Specials

Guilt by Association: The cult champion's *grudge-bearer* ability also applies to conflicted relationships.

Skilled Defender: Any attempts to disengage from the cult champion take a –5 penalty.

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 360**
MD 19

Secret Master

Double-strength 9th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +16

Stone Stave +14 vs. AC—80 damage
Natural 16+: The target is stunned (save ends) and pops free of the Secret Master.

C: Call the Devourer +14 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—The Secret Master shapes the dungeon, summoning weapons or obstacles out of the living stone. 30 damage, and the target must make a DC 30 Dexterity or Constitution check to avoid another 30 damage or one of the following conditions of the Secret Master's choice—dazed, stuck, or 10 ongoing damage (all save ends).

R: Maw of the Devourer +14 vs. PD (one nearby or far away character)—40 damage, and the target becomes stuck (save ends).
Consumed by the Dungeon: If the target fails to save against being stuck, it must start making last gasp saves instead. Fail the fourth save, and it's entombed within the dungeon forever.

C: Fires of Ancient Hatreds +14 vs. MD (all nearby enemies)—The target must roll any positive or conflicted icon relationship dice with the Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, or Priestess. Take 40 damage for each die that rolls a 5 or 6. The character may avoid the damage from a die by turning the die into a negative relationship instead.

Wicked Prayers: As a standard action, the Secret Master may give all other members of the cult a +1 bonus to all attacks. If multiple Secret Masters are in play, the bonus stacks. The bonus is cancelled if the Secret Master suffers more than 30 damage in a round.

AC 25
PD 19 **HP 360**
MD 23

Upper Cloisters Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Secret Master	Cult Enforcer	Cult Champion	Cult High Priest	Cult Acolyte
3 x 6th level	1	1	0	0	3
4 x 6th level	1	2	0	0	3
5 x 6th level	1	2	0	1	3
6 x 6th level	1	2	0	1	3
7 x 6th level	1	1	1	1	3
3 x 7th level	*1*	*2*	*0*	*1*	*5*
4 x 7th level	*1*	*2*	*1*	*0*	*5*
5 x 7th level	*1*	*2*	*1*	*1*	*5*
6 x 7th level	*1*	*3*	*1*	*2*	*5*
7 x 7th level	*1*	*5*	*1*	*2*	*10*

The Chamber of Transcendence

The lower part of this structure is the sacred Chamber of Transcendence. Six niches surround a central chamber. In the middle of the chamber is a pillar, and resting on that pillar is a crystal vial of blood. Tendrils of glowing white dungeon ectoplasm rise from the pillar and caress the bloody vial, stirring and merging with the contents. It's the blood of the First Master (page 223), and it symbolizes the glorious union of cult and living dungeon. Want to become a Secret Master? Lie in your niche and stare at the vial until you're on the brink of death, while you hope you become part of the dungeon and it'll sustain you.

Each niche contains a low stone bed, and there's a figure on each bed, dressed in ceremonial garb of robes, golden masks, and jeweled breastplates. Paintings on the walls tell of the history of the cult and the days of triumph to come.

Practical PCs may focus on that glowing vial, which can be used as a connection to the Stone Thief when using a ritual (page 353). More mercenary PCs stopped listening when you said "golden masks and jeweled breastplates," while cynical veterans are probably already rolling for initiative and picking the best spell to throw at the figures on the beds.

Before the fight starts, though, the PCs hear one of the figures groan.

The Central Pillar: Is trapped—it's DC 25 to spot/disarm, and if activated, the trap floods the room with good old poison gas. Also, it wakes up any mummies present (see *The Transcended*, below). The gas inflicts 1d12 ongoing poison damage to everyone in the room (save ends), and those affected by the gas are hampered (the same save also ends this condition).

The Dying Man: His name is **Rhiner**, and he comes from a small mountain village outside Axis. His family has served the cult for countless generations, and he was raised to believe in the days of vengeance to come when the Devourer rose. He thought it about as likely as the stories told by other priests about other, more distant gods. Then, twenty years ago, the Secret Masters called him in a dream. They needed supplies of a certain rare ritual unguent, so Rhiner sold his farm and left his family to go to Horizon and buy the unguent. The dreams guided him up to the fabled Magma Keeps of the fire giants, and there he saw the living dungeon consume one of the giant's citadels. Summoning up all his courage and his faith, he walked into the Maw, and after many trials and perils, he found his way down the Maddening Stair to the sanctum of the Masters.

Now, he's here, old and dying. He's too weak to remove the golden face mask, so he can't even look up and see who the player characters are. If they talk to him, Rhiner confesses his doubts—what if the Secret Masters were tricked by the Stone Thief? What if this living dungeon isn't the prophesied avatar that will wipe away the usurpers? He's supposed to meditate on the crystal vial until the dungeon consumes his soul and makes him one with it, but he feels nothing, and he's getting weaker...

The players could use a ritual to spark a connection between Rhiner and the vial, either out of pity or to get a malleable spy into the ranks of the Secret Masters. They could kill him or let

him perish; Rhiner is a member of an evil cult, after all. Tender-hearted followers of the **Priestess** could ease his passing, or even offer a deathbed conversion to some other deity (presumably, a very forgiving one that would overlook membership of a doomsday cult).

Treasures of the Vault

Looting the vault likely triggers an attack (see below), but either way, the following items are here to be claimed.

The Blood of the First Master: Holiest relic of the cult, and due to take a starring role in the upcoming ritual of binding when the dungeon achieves apotheosis. The vial of blood has no powers beyond being a connection to the dungeon.

The Golden Masks: Most of these have no magical properties and are purely of religious significance. They're worth 200 gp each (assume one per player character), although they might be worth twice that to a collector of alarming religious relics. One of the masks, though, is a *golden mask of the occulted soul.*

Potions: A chest of burial robes and other ritual items also contains a clutch of epic-tier healing potions, one per character.

Golden Mask of the Occulted Soul

+2 MD

Recharge 16+: If an attack targeting Mental Defense misses you, you may not be targeted by that attack for the rest of the battle. *Quirk:* Flint-hearted.

The Transcended

Stealing from the chamber or disturbing the bodies awakens the mummies. The unseen wardens join in when the escalation die hits 1 or if the PCs try to make a fighting withdrawal.

Cult Mummy

They might have been Secret Masters, but failed at the last hurdle. Of all the words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: "it might have been!" Closely following behind "agh, no, mummy rot!"

Double-strength 8th level wrecker [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +9
Vulnerability: fire, holy

Fists +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—20 damage
Natural even hit: The target contracts *dungeon rot* (see below)
Both fists hit same target: +20 extra damage.

C: Mummy Breath +10 vs. PD (all nearby enemies in a group)—10 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).
Limited Use: 1/battle.

Dungeon Rot: Bits of the victim's flesh turn to stone and fly off to embed themselves in the walls. Left unchecked, the victim dissolves and is consumed by the dungeon. Dungeon rot inflicts 30 ongoing negative energy damage (save ends). If the victim fails a regular save against *dungeon rot*, the victim must choose to either increase the ongoing damage by +30 (cumulative) or spread the *dungeon rot* to a nearby ally.

Grudge-Bearer: The mummy's crit range expands by +1 for every positive relationship point the target has with any of the following icons: Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess.

Mortal terror: The presence of a mummy unnerves opponents. Any opponent with 200 hit points or fewer suffers fear when attacking a mummy (–4 on attacks and no escalation bonus). Each time the opponent attacks a mummy, hit or miss, they can make a save; if they succeed at a normal save (11+), they no longer suffer fear effects from any mummies this battle.

Grit: If the mummy takes 20 damage or less, prevent that damage.

Nastier Specials

Thoroughly Rotten: The mummy may use *mummy breath* an extra time when it becomes staggered.

Stone Armor: For every 30 damage inflicted by *dungeon rot*, increase the mummy's AC by +1 until the start of its next turn.

AC 24
PD 22
MD 18
HP 288

Unseen Wardens

Even spells that reveal invisible things cannot wholly discern the features of these unseen spirits. All that can ever be seen of them is a dim outline, with its long clammy fingers wrapping around your throat…

8th level spoiler [DEMON]
Initiative: +15

Invisible Hand +13 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural even hit: The warden may grab its victim.

Strangle +15 vs. PD (Grabbed victims only, includes +4 grab bonus)—30 damage, and the victim is hampered until the end of their next turn if they are still grabbed.

Invisible: Unseen wardens start a battle invisible. They remain invisible until they attack. A visible warden becomes invisible at the start of its turn. Any attack on an invisible unseen warden has a 50% miss chance—with the exception of a warden who's grabbing a foe, in which case the miss chance drops to 10%.

Nastier Specials

Hidden: Grabbed victims also become invisible. That means that the unseen warden's miss chance is unaffected even when the warden is grabbing someone. Grabbed victims become visible again when they attack.

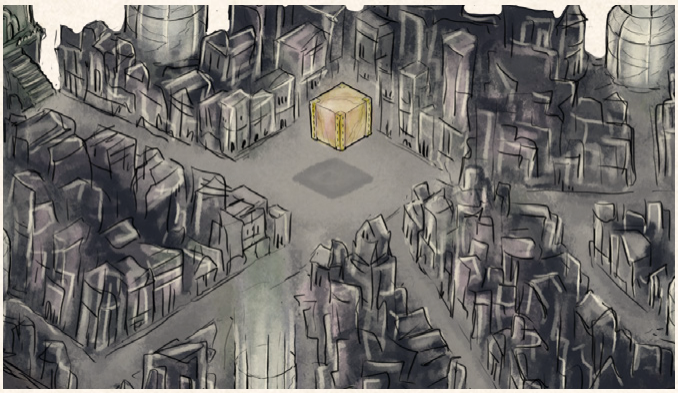
AC 23
PD 18
MD 22
HP 100

Chamber of Transcendence Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Cult Mummy	Unseen Warden
3 x 6th level	1	1
4 x 6th level	1	1
5 x 6th level	1	2
6 x 6th level	1	2
7 x 6th level	2	1

Number/ Level of PCs	Cult Mummy	Unseen Warden
3 x 7th level	*1*	*2*
4 x 7th level	*1*	*3*
5 x 7th level	*2*	*2*
6 x 7th level	*2*	*3*
7 x 7th level	*2*	*4*

4. The Ritual Vault



The cult worships the dungeon and intends to force-feed the Stone Thief so much magical energy it becomes a godlike entity. However, their relationship with it is complex, as they also intend to bind it using a magical ritual. For its part, on some instinctual level, the dungeon is aware they're plotting against it, but tolerates the cult as long as they keep guiding it to suitable places to consume. If the Stone Thief knew exactly what the cult had planned, it would act against them, so to keep the dungeon from discovering the ritual, the cultists keep the ritual in a special vault.

A flying vault. It's in the dungeon, but it's not part of the dungeon, and so it's shielded from the Stone Thief's perceptions. The vault is a cube of metal that hovers two dozen feet off the ground. To enter the vault, the Secret Masters levitate up, open the hatch, and climb in.

The vault, by the way, wasn't made by the Secret Masters. Get an icon story-guide result to determine who made a flying metal cube that the dungeon later stole. Our money is on the Archmage, with the Dwarf King or Lich King as a close second. If it's the Prince, roll again to see who he originally stole it from.

The Vault Guards

Right now, the vault is hovering above the courtyard shown on the map, watched by a band of elite cult enforcers led by a cult champion. The champion rides on an animated stone horse, and he uses this added speed to his advantage. This particular champion is a former knight of the Empire, Sir Acron; if challenged, he claims that he is honor-bound to defend the Ritual Vault, but if a worthy foe faces him in single combat, he will permit the foe's companions to depart unharmed. This promise will be honored by Acron's immediate subordinates, not the rest of the cult.

When the escalation die hits 3+, the Secret Master inside the vault opens the hatch to see what is causing all the fuss and clamor outside.

Cult Acolyte

8th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +11

Ritual Dagger +13 vs. AC—20 damage
Natural even hit: 10 poison damage.

Die for the Cult! If a nearby non-mook member of the cult is hit by an attack, the acolyte may leap in the way. Reduce the damage from the attack by the acolyte's remaining hit points, then remove the acolyte from the battle. Any remaining damage hits the original target of the attack instead of transferring to other mooks.

Henchmen: If two or more cult acolytes engage the same target, any non-mook cultists have a +1 bonus to their attacks against that target.

AC 23
PD 18
MD 22

HP 36 (Mook)

Mook: Kill one cult acolyte mook for every 36 hp you deal to the mob.

Cult Enforcer

7th level blocker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +12

Crushing Mace +12 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 16+: The target loses a move action in its next turn.

Stalwart: If the enforcer is not staggered, then at the start of the enforcer's turn, choose one enemy engaged with the enforcer. That enemy does not gain the benefit of the escalation die until the start of the enforcer's next turn.

Grudge-Bearer: The enforcer's crit range expands by +1 for every positive relationship point the target has with any of the following icons: Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess.

Nastier Specials

Nothing Left to Live For: If there isn't a higher-level cultist left in the fight, then the enforcer may add the escalation die to its attacks, and can attack twice each round.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 108**
MD 17

Cult Champion

Double-strength 9th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +16

Crushing Hammer +14 vs. AC—70 damage
Natural 18+: The target's weapon, shield, or one of its magic items is destroyed by the champion, or else the target takes another 50 damage.
Natural odd hit: The target loses its next move action.
Miss: 30 damage.

Wild Swing +14 vs. AC (1d3 nearby targets)—40 damage

Vengeful: If a target that the cult champion is engaged with attacks a non-mook cultist, the cult champion may immediately make a *crushing hammer* attack on that target as an opportunity attack.

Grudge-Bearer: The cult champion's crit range expands by +1 for every positive relationship point the target has with any of the following icons: Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess.

Stone Steed: When the champion moves to engage with a foe, it gets a +2 bonus to its first attack roll.

Nastier Specials

Guilt by Association: The cult champion's *grudge-bearer* ability also applies to conflicted relationships.

Skilled Defender: Any attempts to disengage from the cult champion take a –5 penalty.

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 360**
MD 19

Stone Horse

Wondrous Item
It's a small statuette of a horse. On command, it turns into a life-size animated stone warhorse. If slain, it turns back into a small statuette and can be reactivated after the next full heal-up. You can ride it, but it's really uncomfortable without a good saddle. Having a horse doesn't give any set benefits in combat, but a kind GM might allow the occasional equine stunt like riding over an enemy. *Quirk:* Strange craving for apples.

Ritual Vault Courtyard Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Cult Champion	Cult Enforcer	Cult Acolyte
3 x 6th level	1	0	3
4 x 6th level	1	1	3
5 x 6th level	1	1	6
6 x 6th level	1	2	6
7 x 6th level	1	3	9
3 x 7th level	***1***	***2***	***4***
4 x 7th level	***1***	***3***	***6***
5 x 7th level	***1***	***4***	***8***
6 x 7th level	***1***	***5***	***10***
7 x 7th level	***1***	***6***	***12***

In The Vault

Clambering through the hatch into the vault, the PCs find themselves in the cozy interior of the metal cube. The walls are lined with bookshelves and scroll cases, there's a fireplace with a fire burning merrily in the hearth, and there are several comfortable overstuffed armchairs—one of which is occupied by a haggard Secret Master. If the characters crept in, they have the advantage of surprise. If the Master expects them, then he's summoned up a few hook demons to even the odds a little.

Hang On to Your Dice

At a suitably dramatic juncture in the fight—when the escalation die hits 2, when the Master is staggered, critted, or hit with some nasty ongoing effect, or when it's clear that the PCs have the upper hand—the Master slams a withered hand onto the wall above the fireplace, activating the cube's flight mode.

For the next 1d4 rounds, the cube flies/bounces/crashes/rolls through the dungeon at insanely high speed. At the start of each creature's turn, it must make a save (11+). Succeed, and the creature can act normally. Fail, and the creature rattles around inside the wildly flying cube, takes 2d12 damage, and is hampered for the round.

So, where does the cube end up? That depends on the 1d4 roll.

1: **Nearby:** It smashes through a few walls, but lands near the courtyard.
2: **Somewhere on this level:** It rattles and rolls and bounces until it lands near a Crafthouse (page 249), or back in the Labyrinth (page 247), or skids to a halt right in the middle of the Upper Cloisters above the Chamber of Transcendence (page 252).
3: **Somewhere in the dungeon:** Pick a level. Pick an encounter on that level. The cube lands in the middle of it.
4: **Somewhere far, far away:** The cube smashes through a wall and bounces up a shaft that connects to the Maw, then flies all the way out of the dungeon and soars through the sky for a brief but glorious moment before it slams into the ground.

(Obviously, you can override this if it's dramatically justified. If this is the second-to-last session of the campaign and the PCs are about to make their final assault on the dungeon, you don't want to kick them back up to some other level.)

Secret Master

Double-strength 9th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +16

Stone Stave +14 vs. AC—80 damage
Natural 16+: The target is stunned (save ends) and pops free of the Secret Master.

C: Call the Devourer +14 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—The Secret Master shapes the dungeon, summoning weapons or obstacles out of the living stone. 30 damage, and the target must make a DC 30 Dexterity or Constitution check to avoid another 30 damage or one of the following conditions of the Secret Master's choice—dazed, stuck, or 10 ongoing damage (all save ends).

R: Maw of the Devourer +14 vs. PD (one nearby or far away character)—40 damage, and the target becomes stuck (save ends)
Consumed by the Dungeon: If the target fails to save against being stuck, it must start making gasp saves instead. Fail the fourth save, and it's entombed within the dungeon forever.

C: Fires of Ancient Hatreds +14 vs. MD (all nearby enemies)—The target must roll any positive or conflicted icon relationship dice with the Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, or Priestess. Take 40 damage for each die that rolls a 5 or 6. The character may avoid the damage from a die by turning the roll into a negative relationship instead.

Wicked Prayers: As a standard action, the Secret Master may give all other members of the cult a +1 bonus to all attacks. If multiple Secret Masters pray, the bonus stacks. The bonus is canceled if the Secret Master suffers more than 30 damage in a round.

AC 25
PD 19 **HP 360**
MD 23

Hooked Demon

Are the hooks to torture the demon or its victims? Yes. And yes.

9th level mook [DEMON]
Initiative: +12

Hooks and barbs +14 vs. AC—27 damage
Natural 16+: The hooked demon can make another *hooks and barbs* attack as a free action (and yes, this can keep going up to a maximum number of attacks equal to the escalation die + 1).

Nastier Specials

Bleeding wounds: Whenever the hooked demon hits a creature with *hooks and barbs*, that creature takes 10 damage each time it makes a non-basic attack (save ends).

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 45 (mook)**
MD 27

Mook: Kill one hook demon mook for every 45 damage dealt to the mob.

In The Vault Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Secret Master	Hooked Demon
3 x 6th level	**1**	**0**
4 x 6th level	**1**	**2**
5 x 6th level	**1**	**4**
6 x 6th level	**1**	**6**
7 x 6th level	**1**	**6***
3 x 7th level	***1***	***3***
4 x 7th level	***1***	***6***
5 x 7th level	***1***	***6****
6 x 7th level	***1***	***9****
7 x 7th level	***1***	***9****

* Either run straight into another battle when the cube lands, or have the cube smash into some random monsters on its crazy flight and add them to the fight.

Finding the Scroll

Searching through the pile of books and papers dislodged by the flight takes time (call for skill checks if the PCs are on a time limit), but the PCs soon find an ornate metal scroll case that radiates importance. It also radiates death magic—it's crawling with blazing runes of destruction and is icy cold to the touch.

The scroll case is clearly trapped with a potent curse of death. Disarming it requires a ritual of some sort, or a really impressive (DC 30) skill check. Otherwise, the person who opens the scroll case drops dead on the spot. Initiated members of the cult are immune to the curse. Inside is a metal sheet inscribed with the ritual of binding (see page 352).

Increase the submergence die, as the dungeon shivers. The Stone Thief can feel its doom approaching.

The PCs can also loot some useful magic items and books of lore from the debris, like a *scroll of unspoken passions* or the *Book of the Exile*. If you want to give even more treasure, then the Secret Master might carry a *sword of explosions.*

Repairing the Flying Cube

The ritual vault was a flying machine before the cult captured it and turned it into a secure holding location for their ritual. It can be repaired after its flight, although probably not in time to factor into the rest of the Stone Thief campaign. Perhaps the characters can use it to visit epic-tier parts of the overworld?

Treasure

Scroll of Unspoken Passions

Wondrous Item

Once per level, name a person you've met. The scroll magically fills with the text of the letter they really, really want to write. It takes their deepest, most secret, most unspoken desires and translates it into the form of a brief letter. The scroll's power isn't limited to humanoids—if you really want to know what a dragon or a living dungeon or a god secretly wants (or hates—the letter might be a poisonous rant), you can divine it with this scroll. *Quirk:* Addresses everyone formally, beginning with *dear so-and-so...*

Book of the Exile

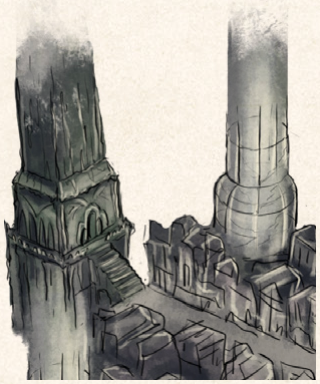
Recharge 11+: Written by a wizard who claimed to be an exile from another dimension (or was possessed by an alien being from another dimension), it describes commonly understood magical techniques from a bizarre and unconventional perspective. When you attack with a spell, you may choose which defense the spell targets (hitting MD instead of PD, for example). Describe how the spell is altered to achieve this effect (*"my fireball burns your* mind!). *Quirk:* The more you use this book, the more alien words and phrases you kizort na ab'sah in conversations. You're not even aware you're jaconth vir. Quoozle?

Sword of Explosions

+2 melee weapon

Recharge 16+: When you kill a foe with this weapon, apply any excess damage as fire damage to 1d3 nearby foes. For example, if a foe has 50 hit points left and you hit them for 70 damage, that means you kick out 20 points of fiery spillover damage. Oh, and the guy you just dropped explodes. *Quirk:* Temper tantrums. *Violent* temper tantrums.

5. Citadel of the Secret Masters



The citadel of the Secret Masters is the capital-in-waiting. From this gloomy tower, the cult will rule when the surface world is destroyed and their triumph is complete. Until then, it lurks in the darkness. The citadel is made from calcified dungeon ectoplasm, so it looks like a fortress made from frozen white lightning. There's little logic to the layout of the citadel—corridors begin and end at random, narrow hallways widen into courtyards then shrink back down, staircases twist back on one another or end in blank walls. Walking through the citadel is like moving through the febrile dreams of the dungeon.

It's a surreal environment; emphasize that. Have the players chase a single red-robed cultist through a maze of corridors and staircases, the red of the robes a bloody contrast against the milky-white glowing walls.

Killer Encounters in the Citadel

A key question: do the Secret Masters know the PCs are here? If the adventurers are expected, then the leaders of the cult throw everything they have at them, resulting in three big and very challenging battles. Don't tone these fights down—this is one of the big battles of the campaign. If you need to give the players an edge, do so with bigger-than-normal icon benefits or by bringing in allies and support from elsewhere in the dungeon.

Let disguised player characters skip the first battle, or give them an advantage by splitting the enemies into an initial force and reinforcements that charge in later.

The Secret Masters wait at the top of the citadel. The player characters must fight their way up the stairs to the topmost tower to confront these villains.

5A. Waves of Acolytes

Once the Secret Masters realize they're under attack, they buy time to prepare their defenses by sending waves of low-ranking cultists to slow the adventurers down. Cultists pour out of the citadel to die in droves. Some gladly give their lives for the cult; others are so crazed by their long imprisonment in the dungeon that they throw themselves on the swords of their enemies, and still others attack because they know the Secret Masters will show even less mercy than the adventurers.

This is a big, mook-heavy fight. Let the players show off their destructive capabilities. Break out the *fireballs* and *lightning forks*.

Masterful Interference

The Secret Masters can rearrange the structure of the citadel using their powers. Whenever the escalation die is odd, add a feature to the battlefield that hinders the players. Possible options:

- A trench opens up between the party's melee warriors and the cult high priests.
- Stone arms grow from a wall and grab the party rogue.
- One of the cultists turns to stone as a PC stabs him, trapping the PC's weapon in the sudden statue.
- The floor falls away, forcing a PC to leap to safety or fall into a pit.

ED2: A cloud of black vapor pours down the stairs from higher in the citadel. This fog resurrects any fallen cultists as cult zombie mooks. The zombie mooks rise one round after being slain. Already-dead mooks rise up when the escalation die hits 3.

Cult Acolyte

8th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +11

Ritual Dagger +13 vs. AC—20 damage
Natural even hit: 10 poison damage.

Die for the Cult! If a nearby non-mook member of the cult is hit by an attack, the acolyte may leap in the way. Reduce the damage from the attack by the acolyte's remaining hit points, then remove the acolyte from the battle. Any remaining damage hits the original target of the attack instead of transferring to other mooks.

Henchmen: If two or more cult acolytes engage the same target, any non-mook cultists have a +1 bonus to their attacks against that target.

AC	**23**	
PD	18	**HP 36 (mook)**
MD	22	

Mook: Kill one cult acolyte mook for every 36 hp you deal to the mob.

Cult Sorcerer

7th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

Stone Stave +12 vs. AC—25 damage
Natural 16+: The target pops free from the sorcerer and is stunned.

R: Earth Take You + 12 vs. PD—20 damage, and the target is stuck (hard save ends, 16+; a nearby ally can spend a move action to give an extra save that succeeds on an 11+. The effect also ends if all sorcerers are killed).

C: Darkness Consume You +12 vs. PD (1d3 nearby stuck targets)—40 damage

R: Bewildering Shades +12 vs. MD—20 psychic damage
Natural roll higher than target's Wisdom: The target is confused until the end of its next turn.

Merge with Earth: As a move action, the sorcerer may sink into the ground, and is considered to be burrowing.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 144**
MD 18

Cult Enforcer

7th level blocker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +12

Crushing Mace +12 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 16+: The target loses a move action in its next turn.

Stalwart: If the enforcer is not staggered, then at the start of the enforcer's turn, choose one enemy engaged with the enforcer. That enemy does not gain the benefit of the escalation die until the start of the enforcer's next turn.

Grudge-Bearer: The enforcer's crit range expands by +1 for every positive relationship point the target has with any of the following icons: Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess.

Nastier Specials

Nothing Left to Live For: If there isn't a higher-level cultist left in the fight, then the enforcer may add the escalation die to its attacks, and can attack twice each round.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 108**
MD 17

Cult High Priest

9th level leader [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Ritual Dagger +14 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 18+: The target takes 20 ongoing damage and is stunned (save ends both), and the high priest pops free. The high priest may no longer make *ritual dagger* attacks.

Stone Talons +14 vs. AC—40 damage
Natural even hit or miss: 10 ongoing poison damage.

R: Death Curse +14 vs. MD—40 damage. Until the start of the high priest's next turn, the target is vulnerable to attacks made by members of the cult.

Command the Cult: If the high priest is unengaged, then at the start of the high priest's turn, roll three d20s and put them aside. Any other cultist may take one of these d20s and use it instead of making a normal roll.

Grudge-Bearer: The high priest's crit range expands by +1 for every positive relationship point the target has with any of the following icons: Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess.

Nastier Specials

Fanatic: The high priest's *command the cult* power works even when the high priest is engaged, as long as the high priest is also staggered.

AC 25
PD 19 **HP 180**
MD 23

Cult Zombie

6th level mook [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +7
Vulnerability: holy

Twitching Fist +11 vs. AC—12 damage
Natural even hit or miss: Both the zombie and its target take 2d10 damage.

Headshot: A critical hit against a zombie drops it to 0 hp.

Undead Tide: If a character ends a turn engaged with more zombie mooks than the character's level, that character may not add the escalation die to their attacks next round.

AC 22
PD 16 **HP 23 (mook)**
MD 20

Mook: Kill one cult zombie mook for every 23 hp you deal to the mob.

Acolytes Fight Chart

Number/Level of PCs	Cult Acolyte	Cult Sorcerer	Cult Enforcer	Cult High Priest
3 x 6th level	6	1	1	1
4 x 6th level	6	2	2	1
5 x 6th level	12	2	2	1
6 x 6th level	12	2	2	2
7 x 6th level	12	3	3	2
3 x 7th level	*5*	*2*	*2*	*1*
4 x 7th level	*10*	*3*	*3*	*1*
5 x 7th level	*10*	*4*	*4*	*2*
6 x 7th level	*15*	*5*	*5*	*2*
7 x 7th level	*15*	*5*	*5*	*3*

5B. The Melting Citadel

Should the characters survive that first attack, the Secret Masters choose to sacrifice part of their citadel to protect themselves. The citadel begins to melt. Walls flow like molten wax, bubbling and dribbling away. The ceiling melts away, and the stairs turn into a steep climb up a mounting landslide. Behind the characters, the lower part of the citadel collapses into a chasm.

Cult assassins riding on flying archivults fly in through the widening gaps in the ceiling, but the real threat here is being washed away in the flood. Each round, all non-flying PCs must make a skill check at a rising DC, using Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, or Wisdom depending on how they're navigating the obstacles. A character who fails a check is in danger of being swept away; two failed checks means the character is right on the brink of the chasm; three checks and it's game over as the PC plummets into the darkness. Maybe they fall into the *Heart of the Stone Thief* (page 270), or maybe they just land there and splatter.

Three successful checks are needed to make it past the challenge. A character who is staggered by an attack must now make an added successful check to pass.

Let the players narrate what happens to their character with each skill check, and apply mechanical conditions based on that description—players will put their PCs into far more desperate straits than even the cruelest GM would contemplate.

ED0: DC 15

ED1–2: DC 20

ED3+: DC 25

As long as the assassins stay mounted on their archivults, they don't need to make checks; an assassin forced off his flying steed needs to make a hard save (16+) to avoid being swept away each turn.

Note that these archivults lack the ability to summon more of their kind—there aren't that many carnivorous birds hanging around the cult's citadel.

Stealing an Archivult

A critical hit on an assassin, or a suitable skill check, or the use of a power like *thief's strike* or *dimension door,* or about half the things monks do allows the PC to kick the assassin off his filthy flying steed and hijack the archivult. The archivult doesn't take kindly to being ridden in this fashion, but it can be subdued with a hastily muttered *charm person* or a solid punch to the face. Once in the saddle, the PCs can soar over the torrent of liquefying stone.

Flowstone Dragons

When the escalation die hits 4, or when an adventurer reaches the 'safe' end of the torrent, the Secret Masters intercede again, forming the liquid stone into a number of dragon-statues. These flowstone dragons slither out of the walls, hardening into solid shapes as they lurch toward the player characters. The dragons cannot fly, but they block the only path to the higher reaches of the citadel. Daring characters could try flying or sprinting past the dragons, but any unslain dragons in this battle follow the adventurers up the tower to the final meeting with the Secret Masters.

Archivult King

It looks like a vulture made from the scrapings of church bells and pieces of old leather, if vultures had teeth.

8th level wrecker [BEAST]
Initiative: +13

Raking Claw +13 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 16+: The archivult automatically grabs its target.
Natural even miss: The archivult automatically pops free and may move away.

Flesh-Rending Bite +17 vs. AC (grabbed targets only; includes grab bonus)—30 damage

Death Grip: An archivult doesn't stop gripping when killed. To escape the grab, the victim must either disengage or reduce the archivult to –72 hit points.

Flyer: Archivults fly like evil rags caught by an even more evil wind. It's a sort of sinister clumsiness, borne aloft on mismatched wings. It still works, though.

AC 24
PD 21
MD 21

HP 144

Lesser Archivult

Birds throw their chicks out of the nest to teach them to fly. Archivults throw theirs out for kicks.

8th level mook [BEAST]
Initiative: +13

Raking Claw +13 vs. AC—20 damage

Flesh-Rending Bite +17 vs. AC (grabbed targets only; includes grab bonus)—30 damage

Follow the Leader: Lesser archivults can't grab, but they get the grab bonus when attacking creatures held by archivult kings.

AC 24
PD 21 **HP 36 (mook)**
MD 21

Mook: Kill one lesser archivult mook for every 36 damage dealt to the flock.

Cult Assassin

8th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +16

Murderous Stabbing +13 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 16+: The cult assassin frenzies and may immediately make another *murderous stabbing* attack on the same target. The cult assassin takes 25 damage.
Natural even miss: The cult assassin frenzies and may immediately make another *murderous stabbing* attack on the same target. The cult assassin takes 25 damage.

R: Assassin's Arrow +13 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 16+: 15 ongoing poison damage.

Surprise Attack: If the assassin attacks with surprise, it gets a +2 bonus to its first attack and deals an extra 20 damage.

Fanatic: The cult assassin keeps fighting even when reduced to 0 hit points. It dies when it is not engaged with a foe, or when it reaches –72 hit points. It may not spend hit points to make extra *murderous stabbing* attacks when at 0 hp or below.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 144**
MD 18

Flowstone Dragon

Large 8th level blocker [DRAGON]
Initiative: +12

Claws +12 vs. AC (2 attacks)—20 damage
Natural even hit or miss: The dragon may make a *bite* attack as a free action.

[Special trigger] **Bite +12 vs. AC**—20 damage

C: Ectoplasmic Breath +11 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—8d10 damage, and for every damage dice that rolls a natural 8, 9 or 10, any flowstone dragon in the battle gets a +1 bonus to attacks against that foe next round.

Intermittent breath: The flowstone dragon may use its breath twice per battle, but never two turns in a row.

Sinuous yet Tough: Attempts to disengage from a flowstone dragon take a –5 penalty.

Not an escalator: Unlike regular dragons, these sluggish flowstone dragons don't get to add the escalation die to their attack rolls.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 250**
MD 18

Melting Citadel Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Cult Assassin	Archivult King	Lesser Archivult	Flowstone Dragon
3 x 6th level	1	1	0	1
4 x 6th level	1	1	3	1
5 x 6th level	2	2	0	1
6 x 6th level	2	2	3	1
7 x 6th level	2	2	6	1
3 x 7th level	*2*	*2*	*5*	*1*
4 x 7th level	*2*	*2*	*5*	*2*
5 x 7th level	*3*	*3*	*10*	*2*
6 x 7th level	*4*	*4*	*10*	*2*
7 x 7th level	*5*	*5*	*10*	*2*



5C. Tower of the Secret Masters

At the top of the stairs, the PCs barge into the chamber of the Secret Masters. The leaders of the cult stand in a silent circle facing the characters, guarded by the remaining cult champions. The Masters are motionless, but their minds are united in a shared dark dream, and it is through this living nightmare that they address the characters. (Or maybe they just start blasting—how much room is there for negotiation here?) Horrific monsters congeal out of the dream, writhe on the glowing floor for an instant, then sublime back into the collective unconscious of the Masters.

If you think that the Masters think they can come out of this intact, then they try to bribe or intimidate the PCs.

- They might conjure visions of the PCs' enemies being destroyed by the Devourer—got the Lich King as a 2-point negative relationship? Then you see the living dungeon chewing Necropolis to rubble.
- They might offer the PCs a place in their new world order—join us and you can rule in the 14th Age!
- They might offer the PCs something else they desire, like returning something stolen by the Stone Thief in the past.
- If the PCs are already beaten up—and they haven't had a full heal-up in a while to get here—then the Masters can just raise their hands and threaten to blast the group with *fires of ancient hatreds*.

Option two for the Masters is to start the Apotheosis/Binding ritual right now. If the Stone Thief recently stole a place of power or two (see *Elemental Hunger*, page 343), then the time might be ripe for *Apotheosis* (page 349). The Masters could open the Crafthouses and channel all their accumulated arcane power into the dungeon, triggering its apotheosis. They then start the binding ritual—if the PCs fail to win this fight, then the dungeon becomes the Devourer under the control of the cult, which is one of the 'game over' conditions for this campaign, the Dragon Empire, and probably the 13th Age. Even if the PCs beat the Masters and stop the ritual, they still have to deal with a metastasizing dungeon.

If the Masters can't negotiate and aren't in a position to pull the trigger on their master plan (maybe because the PCs blew up a Crafthouse or two, or just because you don't want to move to the end of the campaign yet), then they will use option three to try fleeing into the realm of dreams. In this setup, the Masters cut their losses and try transcending their physical forms to become spirits of vengeance. If the PCs don't cut them down now, they'll flee the dungeon (leaving it to rampage) and show back up again with some new evil scheme to bring down the Empire.

Dreams of the Masters

There are thirteen Secret Masters present, minus any the player characters killed in previous encounters. Fortunately, most of them are off walking the paths of their dark dreams. They're hurrying back to their bodies as fast as they can, but it's not easy for them to extricate themselves from the dreamscape. In game terms, that means that some of the Secret Masters start ready to fight, some wake up midway through the combat, and some are there just as spooky décor. The Fight Chart for this battle lists the numbers of active Secret Masters as well as the values of the escalation die on which more Masters awaken.

Curse of the Apostates

Did any of the player characters take the initiation oath of the cult? If they did, and the PC hasn't yet found a way to break the magical bond, then that character is in trouble. As a quick action, one Secret Master can zap an oathsworn PC with a special attack once per round:

[Special trigger] **Curse of the Apostate +14 vs. MD**—50 psychic damage.

Cult Champion

Double-strength 9th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +16

Crushing Hammer +14 vs. AC—70 damage
Natural 18+: The target's weapon, shield, or one of its magic items is destroyed by the champion, or else the target takes another 50 damage.
Natural odd hit: The target loses its next move action.
Miss: 30 damage.

Wild Swing +14 vs. AC (1d3 nearby targets)—40 damage

Vengeful: If a target that the cult champion is engaged with attacks a non-mook cultist the cult champion make immediately make a *crushing hammer* attack on that target as an opportunity attack.

Grudge-Bearer: The cult champion's crit range expands by +1 for every positive relationship point the target has with any of the following icons: Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess.

Nastier Specials

Guilt by Association: The cult champion's *grudge-bearer* ability also applies to conflicted relationships.

Skilled Defender: Any attempts to disengage from the cult champion take a –5 penalty.

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 360**
MD 19

Dreams of the Devourer

7th level spoiler [ABERRATION]
Initiative: +14

C: Venomous Thoughts +12 vs. MD (one nearby enemy)—25 damage, and the victim must choose a number from 1 to 20. When they roll this number on a d20 for the rest of the combat, they take 10 poison damage. The same number may be chosen multiple times, but the poison damage stacks.

Teleport: When a dream is staggered, it can *teleport* as a free action to any nearby location.

Nightmares: Any characters who staggers or slays a dream is weakened until the end of their next turn.

Cultist: Dreams count as being part of the Cult of the Devourer.

AC 23
PD 19 **HP 90**
MD 21

Secret Master

Double-strength 9th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +16

Stone Stave +14 vs. AC—80 damage
Natural 16+: The target is stunned (save ends) and pops free of the Secret Master.

C: Call the Devourer +14 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—The Master shapes the dungeon, summoning weapons or obstacles out of the living stone. 30 damage, and the target must make a DC 30 Dexterity or Constitution check to avoid another 30 damage or one of the following conditions of the Secret Master's choice—dazed, stuck or 10 ongoing damage (all save ends).

R: Maw of the Devourer +14 vs. PD (one nearby or far away character)—40 damage, and the target becomes stuck (save ends)
Consumed by the Dungeon: If the target fails to save against being stuck, it must start making last gasp saves instead. Fail the fourth save, and it's entombed within the dungeon forever.

C: Fires of Ancient Hatreds +14 vs. MD (all nearby enemies)—The target must roll any positive or conflicted icon relationship dice with the Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, or Priestess. Take 40 damage for each die that rolls a 5 or 6. The character may avoid the damage from a die by turning the roll into a negative relationship instead.

Wicked Prayers: As a standard action, the Secret Master may give all other members of the cult a +1 bonus to all attacks. If multiple Secret Masters pray, the bonus stacks. The bonus is canceled if the Secret Master suffers more than 30 damage in a round.

AC 25
PD 19 **HP 360**
MD 23

Tower of the Masters Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Cult Champion	Dream	Secret Master	Another Secret Master Awakens...
3 x 6th level	1	1	1	0
4 x 6th level	1	1	2	Round 3
5 x 6th level	1	2	2	Round 3
6 x 6th level	1	3	2	Rounds 2 & 5
7 x 6th level	2	3	2	Rounds 2 & 5
3 x 7th level	*1*	*3*	*2*	*Round 3*
4 x 7th level	*1*	*5*	*2*	*Round 3*
5 x 7th level	*2*	*5*	*2*	*Round 3*
6 x 7th level	*2*	*5*	*2*	*Rounds 2 & 5*
7 x 7th level	*2*	*5*	*3*	*Rounds 2 & 5*

Treasure of the Tower

If you don't let the PCs level up after this fight, you're a cold-hearted monster of a GM.

The Masters have a collection of loot and tribute here that they haven't yet converted into raw magical power; there should be at least one epic-tier item for every player character, as well as the *Chain of Hate,* which is always present. If you can't conceive of a treasure hoard without treasure, then stick a few thousand gold pieces under an altar too. That said, without the will of the Secret Masters holding this place intact, the whole citadel is going to slide into that abyss pretty soon, so leaving might be a good idea unless the characters want to plunge right into the Heart of the Stone Thief immediately.

Chain of Hate

Occupies the neck chakra
+1 to saves when you have 50 hp or fewer, or if you're engaged in battle against servants of the Archmage/Emperor/Great Gold Wyrm/Dwarf King/Elf Queen/other enemy of the cult.

Gain an extra icon relationship. This relationship must be negative. You radiate hatred for that foe, and may attract supernatural aid or attention drawn by the sheer force of your loathing. *Quirk:* Monologues like an evil overlord.

With My Last Breath, I Stab At Thee

Being part of the dungeon, the Secret Masters took their last mortal breaths a very long time ago, but one can forgive them a little poetic license under the circumstances. These meddling adventurers have just thwarted a scheme ages in the making, and they have broken the ambitions of a cult as old as the Empire. All over the land, the sensitive suffer from terrible nightmares as the dark dreams of the cult shatter.

Still, one thing remains to the Secret Masters—they can hurt the player characters with a final expenditure of their hoarded power. What form might this last gasp take?

- If the characters are trying to assemble the components of the binding ritual, then the Secret Masters could smash the characters' connection to the dungeon, or destroy some other component.
- They might cause the dungeon to submerge immediately, forcing the characters to flee to a shelter as the Onyx Catacombs collapse around them.
- The Masters could yield their stored power to the Stone Thief, giving the dungeon the strength to attack a major city on the surface or break through magical wards. This could drive the dungeon into a furious rampage; if the characters don't find a way to stop it, the Stone Thief will lay waste to the lands above.
- They could yoke the souls of one or more player characters to that of the Stone Thief—if the dungeon dies, so do those PCs.
- They could blast some other part of the dungeon, devastating it. Say farewell to Marblehall or Dungeon Town.
- There's always the option of one last searing blast that curses (or horribly wounds) a PC.

6. Dreaming Horrors

This battle isn't on the map—run it when the PCs run afoul of the Secret Masters, or when they inflict noticeable damage on the cult, or just after they get hold of something valuable like a connection to the dungeon.

A blast of psychic energy buffets the PCs, causing them to black out. They go down in order of mental defense, lowest to highest. There's no escape from this assault—a high MD just means the character has a round or two to act before being knocked unconscious. Initiated members of the cult have no defense whatsoever—they go down instantly.

The characters are dreaming, and know that they're dreaming, but it also feels completely real. They find themselves in the ruins of the future, after the triumph of the Cult of the Devourer. Pick a place of importance to the player characters—their home, the fortress of a common icon, a city, or their very first dungeon. The characters find themselves there, looking out at the wreckage of the Dragon Empire.

The dungeon is everywhere. The cult succeeded in transforming the Stone Thief into a Living God-Dungeon, and it's consumed everything. Its corridors run under every part of the Empire; every mountain is hollowed-out with catacombs and dungeon chambers. At night, the horizon blazes actinic white as mile-wide tendrils of ectoplasm reach up into the overworld, clawing at the flying realms and pulling the stars down to feed the Stone Thief's divine hunger. The land is pregnant with countless hordes of dungeon-spawned monsters, and hillsides swell and burst, disgorging orc hordes and dragon flights to torment the few survivors.

As the characters explore the ruins of wherever they are, they're attacked by just such a horde of creatures—a baleful cyclops accompanied by sublime oozes and dungeon marauders.

Baleful Cyclops

Anything they look at bursts into flame. For ages, sages believed that this ability was responsible for the benighted state of baleful cyclops culture, because they were assumed to be unable to read due to this visual deficiency. It is only recently that the Asbestos Scrolls were discovered by Horizon scholars.

Large 8th level troop [GIANT]
Initiative: +12

Giant Axe +13 vs. AC (2 attacks)—30 damage
Natural 16+: The cyclops may make a free *baleful eye* attack against that target.

C: Baleful Eye +11 vs. PD (up to three nearby enemies)—20 ongoing fire damage

Eye Strike: If an attacker inflicts a critical hit on the cyclops, the attack hits the large and vulnerable eye, and the cyclops is weakened until the end of its next turn and cannot make *baleful eye* attacks in addition to any other effects. If the critical hit inflicts 75 or more damage, the eye is permanently destroyed and the cyclops loses its *baleful eye* attacks. A permanently destroyed eye explodes, inflicting 20 ongoing fire damage on the giant and all nearby creatures.

Nastier Specials

Strength of Giants: Twice per battle, the cyclops can make a *slam* attack as a quick action (once per round).
Slam +11 vs. PD (one enemy smaller than it)—20 damage, the target pops free from the giant, and loses its next move action.
Natural 16+: The cyclops may make a free *baleful eye* attack against that target.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 275**
MD 18

Sublime Ooze

The creation of these weird monsters is attributed to a mad wizard, which is slander. She wasn't mad—she just hated all other living things and wanted them to be destroyed by her ooze monsters in a perfectly rational fashion.

8th level spoiler [ABERRATION]
Initiative: +10

(Only when liquid) **Acidic Splash +10 vs. PD**—10 damage, and 10 ongoing acid damage
Natural 14+: The ooze grabs the target and solidifies around the target. The target is stuck and hampered until the ooze takes 40 damage.

(Only when solid) **Constrict +14 vs. PD (grabbed targets only, includes grab bonus)**—35 damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the ooze becomes liquid.

(Only when gaseous) **C: Toxic Swirl (up to 3 nearby creatures) +10 vs. PD**—10 acid damage, and after the attack the ooze teleports to one of the targets, becomes liquid, and engages it.

Sublime: If attacked when liquid or solid, the ooze may choose to become gaseous.

(Only when solid) Resist magic 12+

(Only when liquid) Resist weapons 12+, vulnerability: cold

(Only when gaseous) Resist damage 12+

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 120**
MD 18

Dungeon Marauder

If all the world is a malicious dungeon, the only sane response is to go mad and start throwing spells at anything that moves.

7th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +11
Dagger +11 vs. AC—20 damage

R: Magic Missile +13 vs. PD (one nearby or far away enemy)—25 force damage
Sustained Fire: If the dungeon marauder targets the same foe next round, it gains a +4 bonus to its *magic missile* attack on that foe.

R: Hexcurse +13 vs. MD (one nearby or far away enemy suffering ongoing damage)—20 damage, and the marauder starts taking the same ongoing damage as the target. Neither the target nor the marauder may make a save against that ongoing damage as long as the hexcurse is in effect. The *hexcurse* can be broken by slaying the marauder, or the marauder may cancel the *hexcurse* at the end of its turn.

AC 23
PD 17 **HP 100**
MD 21

Dreaming Horrors Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Baleful Cyclops	Sublime Ooze	Dungeon Marauder
3 x 6th level	**0**	**1**	**2**
4 x 6th level	**0**	**2**	**2**
5 x 6th level	**0**	**2**	**3**
6 x 6th level	**1**	**1**	**2**
7 x 6th level	**1**	**2**	**2**
3 x 7th level	***1***	***1***	***1***
4 x 7th level	***1***	***2***	***2***
5 x 7th level	***2***	***2***	***2***
6 x 7th level	***2***	***3***	***3***
7 x 7th level	***2***	***3***	***4***

Dying in the Dream

All this is an illusion forced on the adventurers by the Secret Masters of the cult, but that doesn't mean it's not lethal. A PC slain in this illusion is likely killed in the real world, although a kind GM could rule that if *everyone* dies in the dream, they wake up in a cult prison cell. Actually, that might not be a kindness.

Traveling to Axis

Should the adventurers survive that initial attack, they feel drawn to travel across the land to Axis. It's a dream, and dream logic applies—even if they try to resist this compulsion and go in the opposite direction, they find themselves heading toward the capital. Let the players decide how they travel to Axis, and have each player describe one horror they see along the way. The cult is trying to demoralize and intimidate the intruders by demonstrating the power of their Devourer, so these horrors may be quite personal to the player characters.

The great city of Axis has become a thing of horror. The whole city was devoured and reborn as part of the Living God-Dungeon; palaces and towers shift and slither like scales on a dragon's back. Each breath the dungeon takes sends passageways and corridors rushing across the land like weirdly geometric foam on breaking waves. Monsters of all kinds watch the adventurers as they make their way through the nightmare city toward the Thronehold.

Confronting the False Emperor

The Emperor awaits the player characters. Like his city—like his empire, like his world—he is a ruin of a man, broken by the horrors unleashed when the Devourer rose to consume everything. His skin is pallid and sickly, his eyes hollow, his beard unkempt. Despite his rich robes, he looks like a prisoner trapped in a dungeon for many long years. Bodies of other enemies of the cult hang from the ceiling as grisly trophies—if any of the PCs have relationships with the Archmage, Priestess, Elf Queen, or Dwarf King, their bodies are up there, as are the remains of other heroes and champions.

Behind the Emperor stand thirteen hooded figures—the skeletal Secret Masters of the cult. All of them hold part of the same length of steel chain, the chain they used to bind the Stone Thief as it became a Living God-Dungeon. The Emperor may speak, but the adventurers can clearly see that it's these thirteen skeletons who are doing the talking.

The Emperor declares that this is the ending of the 13th Age, and the Cult of the Devourer shall be the architects of the world to come. They shall rewrite the land as they see fit, exalting those who are worthy and destroying the unworthy. The Devourer is their slave and their god, and nothing can stand against the dungeon in its time of triumph. He bitterly regrets his foolish, futile attempts to fight the cult—if only he had knelt before them and submitted to them, then all this suffering could have been averted. For the player characters, though, it is not too late. They have the chance now to swear loyalty to the cult and the Devourer, the God in Chains.

Swearing loyalty to the cult means undergoing the rite of initiation; if any of the characters accept, the dream ends.

If the characters refuse, the Secret Masters blast them all with a combined *fires of ancient hatreds.* Don't bother rolling to attack—with all thirteen Masters acting as one, they're going to hit. Instead, each player character must roll any positive or conflicted icon relationship dice with the Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, or Priestess. That PC takes 40 damage for each die that rolls a 5 or 6. A character may avoid the damage from a die by turning the die into a negative relationship instead.

If there's another icon that's previously thwarted the cult, or if a particular player character has been a thorn in their side but doesn't have a relationship with the cult's traditional foes, add that icon to the cult's enemies list.



Breaking Free of the Dream

To escape the dream, the characters must demonstrate their defiance of the will of the Secret Masters. Ask the players how this defiance manifests in the dream. Possible options:

- Attacking the Masters works pretty well. Their stats are on page 307, and the characters don't have to kill all of them—just inflicting a symbolic critical or two or blowing a daily spell is enough.
- A dramatic speech coupled with a DC 25 Wisdom or Charisma check could work.
- *Fires of ancient hatreds* triggers off of successful icon rolls, so each time the PCs take damage, they're also racking up potential benefits. What could be done with those benefits and, say, the illusionary corpse of a supposedly defeated Priestess or Archmage? What better show of defiance than to seize hold of the Secret Masters' own fantasies about total victory and shove it back in their faces in the form of a resurrected and wrathful icon?

The Heart of the Stone Thief

Levels 7–8

All the other regions of the dungeon are reshaped from stolen places, from broken buildings and the carcasses of cities. The Stone Thief dresses itself in rags and ruins—except here, at the innermost level. The Heart is the oldest and most dangerous part of the dungeon.

The Heart is not normally accessible, not even to the Custodians or the Cult of the Devourer. The portals to this level only open when either:

- The PCs defeat the Secret Masters, resulting in the collapse of their citadel and the opening of a breach into the Heart.
- The PCs trap or inflict significant damage on the Stone Thief.
- The PCs enact the ritual of binding or destruction, mortally wounding the dungeon.

This is the dungeon's last line of defense.

Fuzzy Dungeon Warning!

Even more than the rest of the levels, the Heart varies wildly depending on past events in the campaign and the nature of the player characters. If you're not comfortable with improvising battles, you'll need to do a bit of prep work before running this level—you can't just follow the text blindly. Good luck!

Features & Factions

There aren't any factions here. This is the dungeon's territory.

Descriptors

Panic. That's the mood of this level. No one is supposed to be down here. The dungeon is throwing everything it can at the adventurers to stop them; it's exposed and vulnerable. Dungeon ectoplasm leaks through the cracks between rooms.

1. The Wounded Dungeon

The passageway down to the Heart is via a gaping tear in the dungeon. Climbing down, stolen stone gives way to something more like… meat. The walls and floor of this region are made of a reddish substance that's hard as rock, but it bleeds when touched. The adventurers leave a trail of bloody footprints behind them as they descend. Veins of dungeon ectoplasm flash angrily through the red stone, marbling it with white light, and the PCs all feel a sense of oppressive fury. They are trespassing in the heart of the Stone Thief, and the dungeon is very aware of them.

The bloody passage opens near the ceiling of a much, much larger chamber. From this vantage point, the PCs look down onto a volcanic inferno. A set of stairs leads down into the unmoving flames. Long ago, the dungeon stole a volcano just as it was about to erupt. The dungeon's essence flowed into the explosion and the molten rock, freezing them in the moment of eruption.

The rough-hewn stairs run down the side wall of the cavern, before connecting to a narrow bridge of stone that joins with a spiral path that runs down into the volcano's mouth. In the distance, half-hidden by frozen clouds of sulphurous yellow gas and smoke, the PCs can see that the spiral path ends in the entrance to a passageway. The only way down into the Heart is to pass through the frozen eruption.

As the PCs descend, the dungeon unfreezes the eruption for a moment, letting a wave of heat and a rush of superheated poisonous air flash over them (3d8 damage each). The eruption freezes again if the PCs stop. The volcano boils and churns with growing intensity when the PCs move again. The message is clear—trespass any further into the dungeon's heart, and the Stone Thief will unchain the volcano right in front of them.

No one ever said being an adventurer was safe.

Great Gold Wyrm: It's said that earthquakes are caused by the Wyrm writhing in pain in the depths of the Abyss. If that's true, then maybe you can call in a favor from the Great One in this hour of peril. You may cancel one of the escalation die events (see below) after you learn what it is.

High Druid: The High Druid can hold volcanoes and earthquakes in check, and you can channel her power. You may increase or decrease the escalation die once during this fight.

Charging into a Volcano

In addition to fire, flying debris, and the upcoming explosion of molten rock, the PCs have to contend with fire giants and volcano dragons. The progress of the eruption is tracked using the escalation die.



Other Ways To Use A Chained Volcano

If the PCs trapped the Stone Thief and started performing a ritual on the surface to put an end to the dungeon, then here's what happens. The ground quakes, then rips open, revealing a huge crater, and right in the middle of that crater is the frozen volcano. The clear implication is that if the PCs keep casting the ritual, the Stone Thief will let the eruption off the leash.

Fortunately for the PCs—and the rest of the world—it's possible to chant and run. They can complete the ritual while dodging attacks from this encounter, then head down into the dungeon to finish the job.

ED0: Poisonous gases hit all PCs (**+10 vs. PD**—1d12 poison damage, 1d12 fire damage)

ED1: A huge chunk of burning rock sails toward one randomly chosen PC (**+15 vs. AC**—4d8 damage)

ED2: The choking gases grow thicker, attacking all PCs (**+15 vs. PD**—2d12 poison damage, 1d12 fire damage)

ED3: The earth quakes violently. Everyone must make a DC 20 Dexterity check or be weakened until the end of the round.

ED4: A hail of flying boulders and exploding rocks rains down. 1d3 randomly chosen PCs get attacked (**+20 vs. AC**—3d10 damage)

ED5: Nothing. Zilch. An eerie calm. Apart from all the giants and dragons.

ED6: Boom. Anyone in the volcano's line of fire is killed, unless they've got some supernatural immunity to having a volcano erupt in their face or can teleport out of the way.

Traversing the Path

It takes four move actions to get from the start of the path to the door in the mouth of the volcano, with a bit of dramatic wiggle room. Flying/teleporting PCs can take a more direct route, and they only need two or three moves, although they still need to dodge past dragons and giants.

Volcano Dragon

The dragon wants only to escape the grasp of the Stone Thief, and she will let herself burn in the eruption if the player characters don't kill her first.

Large 7th level wrecker [DRAGON]
Initiative: +12
Vulnerability: cold

Fangs, claws, and wings +12 vs. AC (2 attacks)—18 damage
Natural 16+: The target takes 5 extra damage from a wing buffet.
Natural 18+: The target takes 10 extra damage from a claw strike.

[Special trigger] **Tail smash +12 vs. PD (one nearby enemy)**—18 damage
Miss: 9 damage.
Limited use: When a nearby enemy attacks and rolls a natural even hit against the dragon, the dragon can make a *tail smash* attack against it as a free action.

C: Volcanic breath +12 vs. PD (each nearby enemy)—20 fire damage, and 5 ongoing fire damage
Natural 18+: The target takes 10 ongoing fire damage instead of 5

Burning skin: When an enemy is engaged with the volcanic dragon at the start of its turn, it takes 5 fire damage.

Continuous breath: A volcanic dragon can use *volcanic breath* 1d3 times per battle, but if it does not use its breath weapon on consecutive rounds, it loses its remaining *volcanic breath* attacks for the battle.

Resist fire 14+: When a fire attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 14+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

Escalator: A dragon adds the escalation die to its attack rolls.

Flight: A dragon flies reasonably well, powerful and fast in a straight line though not as maneuverable as more agile flyers.

Nastier Specials

Dragon ability: This fight is complex and dangerous enough without it, but you can give the volcanic dragon a random draconic ability from the table on page 217 of the *13th Age* rulebook if you wish,

AC 23
PD 22 **HP 220**
MD 16

Fire Giant

They were frozen along with the eruption and slept for long eons in the Stone Thief's cold embrace. You think you're cranky in the morning? Imagine if your alarm clock was a volcano erupting in your ear, and you had to fight adventurers before you had coffee.

Large 8th level wrecker [GIANT]
Initiative: +12
Vulnerability: cold

Flaming greatsword +13 vs. AC (2 attacks)—35 damage
Natural even hit or miss: The target also takes 10 ongoing fire damage.

R: Flaming black-iron javelin +11 vs. AC—40 damage
Natural even hit or miss: The target also takes 10 ongoing fire damage.

Fiery escalator: The fire giant adds the escalation die to its attacks against targets taking ongoing fire damage.

Resist fire 16+: When a fire attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 16+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

Nastier Specials

Burning blood: When a fire giant becomes staggered, it deals 10 ongoing fire damage to each enemy engaged with it.

Strength of giants: Twice per battle, the giant can make a *slam* attack as a quick action (once per round).
Slam +12 vs. PD (one enemy smaller than it)—10 damage, the target pops free from the giant, and the target loses its next move action

AC 25
PD 21 **HP 285**
MD 17

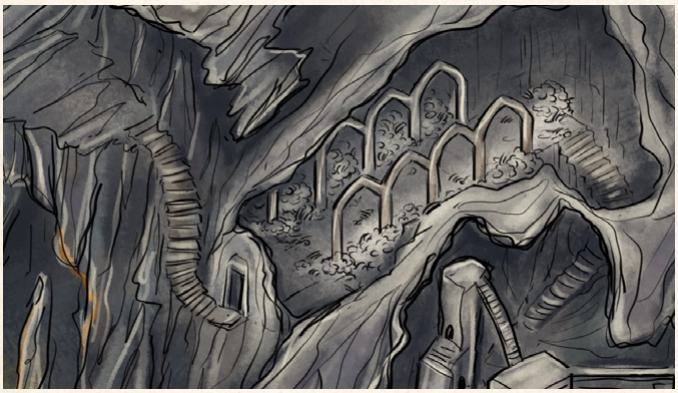
Wounded Dungeon Fight Chart

Number/Level of PCs	Volcano Dragons	Fire Giants
3 x 7th level	**1**	**1**
4 x 7th level	**2**	**1**
5 x 7th level	**1**	**2**
6 x 7th level	**2**	**2**
7 x 7th level	**1**	**3**
3 x 8th level	***1***	***3***
4 x 8th level	***1***	***4***
5 x 8th level	***1***	***5***
6 x 8th level	***2***	***6***
7 x 8th level	***2***	***7***

Escaping the Eruption

Fortunately for the PCs, there's a very large and thick stone door just inside the entrance of the mouth of the volcano. If they slam it shut, they can stop the eruption from spilling down the corridor with them, but they'll also be trapped inside the Heart. There's no retreating now...

2. The Fallen



The passageway in the mouth of the volcano is blessedly cool and sheltered despite the eruption just behind the player characters. Beyond, a set of stairs leads down into a crypt; it's made of the same disturbingly bloody stone as the earlier passageway. Bones lie scattered around the floor of this crypt in their thousands. Some are parts of complete skeletons; others are just shards of bone. The more intact corpses betray their origins: armor, backpacks, piles of gold, shattered potion bottles, motley crews of mismatched races—these are all the corpses of adventurers who died in the dungeon. They've been torn by claws, crushed by falling blocks, burned by fire traps, chewed up by ghouls, etc.

As one, all the dead whisper *join us.*

Near-Death Experiences

Visions of death swallow the PCs. Ask each player to describe one incident where their character nearly died. This can be a recollection of an event earlier in the campaign (*"that time the minotaur charged me, and I survived only because the elf teleported over with a healing potion!"*) or an encounter invented by the player (*"that time in the Grove when the trees started strangling us, and I called on the High Druid to calm them!"*). Now, describe how the player's narration was slightly incorrect—things actually got worse for the players, not better. (*The elf got killed by the minotaur before she could give you the potion. The High Druid didn't listen to your pleas.*)

It's Not A Retreat, It's Tactical Fleeing

The PCs can still flee a fight that's going poorly, but they can't leave this level of the dungeon. Have a player describe how, exactly, the party escapes their current peril and where in this hellscape they hole up to heal.

The player may then make a save. If the save is successful, the character shakes off the vision and may act normally. If the save fails, then the vision continues. The player must narrate how their character got out of that new situation. If they can come up with something, then you counter it again, and the player gets another save. If they fail again, the PC can't avoid death, but they wake up weakened (hard save, 16+, ends).

While the characters wrestle with visions of the many, many ways they could have perished in the Stone Thief, the dead adventurers rise up to add one more way to die.

Dead Adventurers

If there are any notable victims of the Stone Thief in your campaign, like major NPCs who got eaten by the dungeon, or better yet, player characters who died and whose bodies were lost, then they can show up here in undead form. Use the closest monster stats, and add a special ability or two to reflect the unique traits of that particular corpse.

Pick undead adversaries to match your group—if your PCs are a fighter, a paladin, and two wizards, then approximate them with a dead warrior, dead cleric wearing a paladin's hat, and two dead wizards.

Fallen Heroes

Like the PCs, all these dead adventurers had relationships with the icons to one degree or another. If a PC has an icon benefit that you want to fill, they might be joined by the spirit of one of these dead adventurers once the fallen hero has been freed from the curse of undeath. A fallen hero lets an adventurer heal using a recovery or automatically succeed at a save, then departs. The heroes hang around until needed, so this benefit doesn't have to be used immediately.

Shambling Undead Adventurer

Adventurers are gamblers by nature. They always wait one turn too long, hoping their luck will turn. Sooner or later, the dungeon always wins.

9th level mook [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +13
Vulnerability: holy

Rusted Sword +14 vs. AC—30 damage

Old Habits Die Hard: Add the escalation die to the shambling undead adventurer's damage.

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 45 (mook)**
MD 19

Mook: Destroy one shambling undead adventurer mook for every 45 damage dealt to the mob.

Undead Fighter

Looks like she intercepted one foe too many.

9th level troop [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +13
Vulnerability: holy

Sword +14 vs. AC—40 damage
Natural even hit: The target becomes vulnerable (save ends).
Natural odd hit: The undead fighter may make a *shield bash* attack as a free action.
Miss: 15 damage.

[Special trigger] **Shield Bash +14 vs. PD**—20 damage

Extra Tough: When an undead fighter becomes staggered, increase any one of its defenses by +2.

Threatening: Attempts to disengage from the fighter take a –5 penalty.

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 200**
MD 19

Undead Rogue

Check for traps, they said. Scout ahead, they said. Little wonder undead rogues hate the living.

9th level wrecker [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +15
Vulnerability: holy

Short Sword +14 vs. AC—40 damage
Sneak attack: If the rogue's target is engaged with another undead creature, the rogue inflicts +25 damage.
Natural 18+: The target is dazed (save ends).

Momentum: The rogue gains a +2 bonus to all defenses at the start of its turn. This bonus is lost when the rogue is hit by an attack.

AC 24
PD 23 **HP 180**
MD 20

Undead Cleric

Where are their gods now? Dead, they worship only the dungeon that stole their faith.

9th level blocker [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +13
Vulnerability: holy

Mace +14 vs. AC—45 damage
Natural 16+: The cleric may make a *necrotic blast* attack as a free action.

C: Necrotic Blast +12 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—20 ongoing negative energy damage

Death Prayer: All enemies take a –1 penalty to their saves. This ability stacks with the death prayers of other undead clerics, so three undead clerics give a –3 penalty to all saves.

Heal: Once per battle as a free action, the cleric restores 45 hit points to any nearby ally.

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 200**
MD 19

Undead Wizard

When their magic failed them, they perished. Oh, but lightning bolt—how can they stay mad at you?

9th level caster [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +13
Vulnerability: holy

Dagger +11 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 18+: The wizard laughs maniacally and may make another *dagger* attack as a free action.

C: Lightning Bolt +14 vs. PD (1d3 + 1 nearby enemies in a group or in a rough line)—50 lightning damage

Wizard's Tricks: Each round, roll 1d6 to see what the undead wizard pulls out of its skullcap.
1: *Blink:* The wizard teleports away from all enemies engaged with it and gains *resist damage 16+* until the start of its next turn.
2: *Flight:* The wizard can fly until the start of its next turn.
3: *Shield:* The wizard's AC improves by 2 until the start of its next turn.
4: *Invisibility:* The wizard or one nearby ally becomes invisible until it attacks or until the end of the battle.
5: *Haste:* One of the wizard's allies may immediately make a basic attack.
6: *Disjunction:* Pick a magic item belonging to one of the players. That item does not function for the rest of the battle.

AC 24
PD 19 **HP 175**
MD 25

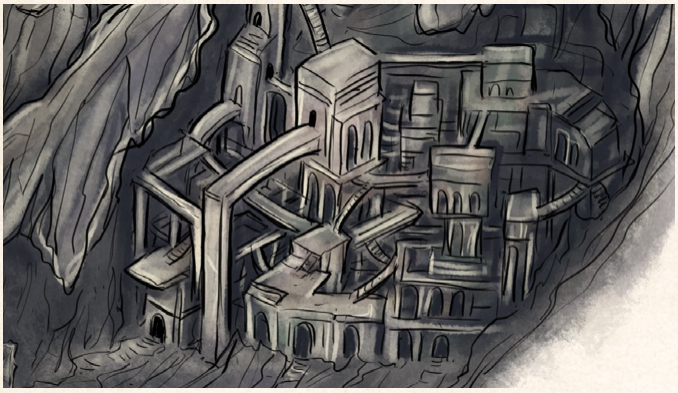
The Fallen Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Undead Adventurer	Shambling Mook
3 x 7th level	3	3
4 x 7th level	4	3
5 x 7th level	5	3
6 x 7th level	6	6
7 x 7th level	7	6
3 x 8th level	*3*	*9*
4 x 8th level	*4*	*9*
5 x 8th level	*5*	*15*
6 x 8th level	*6*	*15*
7 x 8th level	*7*	*15*

Variations

Instead of undead, the dungeon might launch a psychic assault on the intruders, assailing them with memories of past defeats and friends lost.

3. The Ultimate Labyrinth



Optionally, if the dungeon went to the bother of getting a *Giant Monster* (page 345), and you haven't thrown that foe against the PCs yet, then replace this battle with that monster. Or, if you're feeling really mean and want to make this a **killer** battle**,** add said Giant Monster to this battle.

Stairs from the crypt lead down. The air grows colder still, even though that volcano is still rumbling in the distance. The stairs lead to a tunnel, and that tunnels opens up into the strangest cavern the PCs have yet seen in the dungeon. Thousands of chunks of stone and pieces of buildings float through the air in a vast red-lit cave, borne aloft by snaking tendrils of dungeon ectoplasm. It's like the inside of a child's toy-chest filled with castles and building blocks, if the child was possessed by a demon and had telekinetic powers, and the chest was the sort that comes with a ribcage.

Abruptly, the whole cavern spasms, and for a split second, the PCs see all those stolen structures hurtling toward them. Then, suddenly, each PC finds him- or herself alone in a cramped dungeon corridor. The Stone Thief has built a new labyrinth *around* the player characters, with each PC locked in their own personalized maze. Once the clamor and crash of construction stops, the PCs can even communicate with one another by shouting through the dungeon walls.

Unsplitting the Party: At this level, it's possible that some PCs have powers that can get them through a solid wall (a rogue with the Shadow Walk epic feat, for example, or a wizard with the Ritual Casting champion feat and a *dimension door* spell). If two or more PCs are in the same strand of the labyrinth, they can face the traps and challenges together and use their highest bonuses for any skill checks.

Navigating the Labyrinth

Each labyrinth is a maze of stairs, twisting corridors, and dead ends that winds and intertwines with the labyrinths built for the other PCs. It's also full of traps. Call for skill checks at DC 25; the first PC to pass is the first to make it through and into the next encounter. Other PCs emerge from the labyrinth based on the number of rolls it takes them to succeed. For example, if Edric the Paladin passes on his first attempt, but Dana the Rogue takes three attempts, then Edric emerges in round 1 of the False Thief fight and Dana in round 3.

The characteristic tested in each skill check varies from check to check. Pick a challenge for the PC to overcome. Each failed check inflicts 2d12 damage.

- **Strength:** A hail of stones; a howling wind; crushing walls; a closing portcullis.
- **Dexterity:** A volley of arrows or darts; a crumbling floor; a pit trap that opens under the PC; a moving walkway over an abyss.
- **Constitution:** Toxic gas; poisonous spore mold in the air; magical runes of agony.
- **Intelligence:** A particularly fiendish riddle; a magical rune of warding; a maze of shifting walls.
- **Wisdom:** A secret door in a room of traps; a psychic onslaught; a litany of demonic curses.

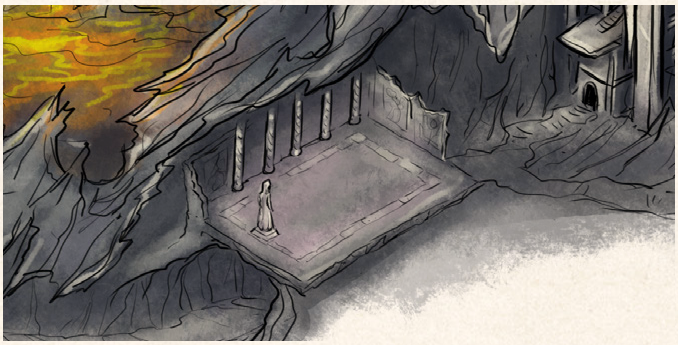
(The Stone Thief cares nothing for your charisma.)

If any traps elsewhere in the dungeon were particularly memorable or effective, feel free to bring them back as a greatest hits compilation.

The Last Temptation

Optionally, instead of a trap, a PC might be tempted or challenged by the dungeon. Is there anything the Stone Thief has left to bribe with? Is the character still thinking of switching to the binding ritual instead of the rite of destruction? Would the PC respond to, say, the dungeon offering to wipe out some other enemy if only he spares the Stone Thief's life?

4. The False Thief



All the labyrinths exit into this 'final' chamber. One by one, the PCs emerge into a vast hall stolen from some magnificent palace. Faded and crumbling murals depicting the icons of some past age decorate the walls. At the far end of the hall waits a stone woman in a hooded cloak of basalt. Two jeweled eyes glitter beneath her hood.

This isn't the Stone Thief—it's just a decoy, a puppet built by the dungeon similar to the stone imps. As such, this would be an easy fight if the PCs were all together. However, since the player characters will probably exit from the labyrinth in ones and twos, the early arrivals find themselves outnumbered. In addition to the Stone Thief decoy, stone sentinels guard her throne, and stone brutes lurk in the rafters, dropping down whenever a PC joins the fight.

Spotting the False Thief

Several clues may give the puppet away. (The PCs still have to fight her, but they are less likely to fall for the next trap if they're not fooled here).

- This Stone Thief has two eyes. Has the dungeon recovered both its lost Eyes?
- When the puppet moves, almost invisible strings of ectoplasm connect it to the floor for those who look for such effects.
- **Prince of Shadows:** It takes a thief to catch a thief. This is too easy.

The False Thief

The living dungeon wears a thousand thousand stolen masks; even this body was taken from some other place and time.

Double-strength 9th level wrecker [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +18

Stone Daggers +14 vs. AC (4 attacks)—30 damage
Critical hit: The target begins to turn to stone. The target is stuck (save ends), and if the target fails to save against being stuck, they must start making last gasp saves.

R: Burning Ectoplasm Storm +12 vs. PD (1d3 + 1 nearby or far away targets)—50 damage, and the target is vulnerable to the attacks of the stone brute mooks (save ends).

One With The Dungeon: As a move action when the escalation die is even, the false thief may teleport anywhere on the battlefield.

Dungeonquake: When the false thief is staggered, the ground shakes and a number of stone brute mooks equal to the escalation die appear.

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 360**
MD 19

Stone Sentinels

These brutish guardians were made to defend the Stone Thief's heart. No adventurer has ever gotten this far before, so they're very, very hungry.

9th level blocker [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +16

Stone Claws +14 vs. AC—50 damage.
Never Saw It Coming: If this was an opportunity attack, the target is also dazed until the end of the round.

Patient Sentinel: Stone sentinels get to make opportunity attacks against close-quarter spells.

Master blocker: Attempts to disengage from the stone sentinel take a –5 penalty.

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 180**
MD 19

Stone Brute Mooks

The slapdash construction of these hastily made stone brutes is reflected in their fragility. Of course, they're made of stone and adventurers are made out of soft, easily ripped flesh. Fragility is relative.

9th level mook [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +13

Stone Claws +14 vs. AC—31 damage
Natural Even Hit: The brute grabs on. Until the brute is dislodged or killed, the target takes a –2 penalty to AC per brute grabbing it. The brute may only use its *chew and gnaw* attack while clinging to a victim. A victim may dislodge a number of brutes equal to their Strength or Dexterity modifier, whichever is higher, by making a DC 25 check as a quick action.

Chew and Gnaw +12 vs. AC—45 damage

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 45 (mook)**
MD 19

Mook: Kill one stone brute mook for every 45 damage inflicted on the mob.

False Thief Fight Chart

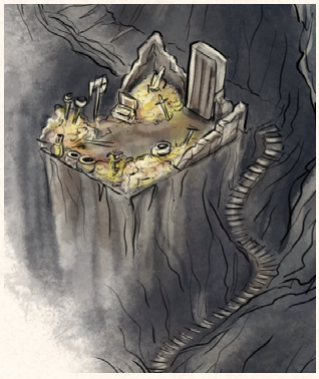
Number/ Level of PCs	The False Thief	Stone Sentinels	Stone Brute Mooks
3 x 7th level	1	0	3
4 x 7th level	1	1	0
5 x 7th level	1	1	3
6 x 7th level	1	1	6
7 x 7th level	1	2	3
3 x 8th level	*1*	*2*	*5*
4 x 8th level	*1*	*3*	*8*
5 x 8th level	*1*	*4*	*11*
6 x 8th level	*1*	*5*	*15*
7 x 8th level	*1*	*7*	*15*

Death of the False Thief

When the false thief is slain, she falls to the ground and cracks. The floor breaks where she lands, revealing a tunnel underneath the hall. Following the tunnel leads to a staircase that climbs up and up, until the PCs find themselves in another passageway. The passageway leads on into the darkness to the right, but to the left there's an open door, and through that they can see the Treasures of the Stone Thief.

If the players ended up here because they're in the middle of trying to slay/bind/trap the dungeon, then run *The Last Chase* (page 279). If they somehow got this deep in the dungeon without a plan, you can still run *The Last Chase* if this is a good time to end the Stone Thief campaign arc; otherwise, the tunnel connects to another, unexplored part of the dungeon like the Pit of Undigested Ages (page 208) or somewhere worse.

5. Treasures to Last a Lifetime



The Stone Thief's treasury is incalculably vast. Snowdrifts of gold coins deep enough to drown a giant, gemstones the size of hen's eggs scattered underfoot, the crowns of kings and emperors collecting dust for a dozen ages, jewels made by the greatest dwarven and gnomish smiths, holy relics looted from the temples of hundreds of lost gods. The hoard of a great and fearsome dragon would be lost in this vault the way a drop of water is lost in the ocean.

Magic? Oh, there is magic here, fabled items of such power and wonder that the living dungeon coveted them. Why, from the doorway the characters can see glowing swords, suits of armor forged for ancient heroes, and books of magic long lost to the surface world.

Like everything else in the dungeon, this room is a trap, but let's take a moment anyway to think about it a little more. If gold were experience points in *13th Age*, the PCs could probably level by osmosis just by breathing the air here.

Loot the Room

If the players shut the door and walk away, move on to encounter 6, *The Last Chase* (page 279). Otherwise, ask them what they're looking for in the treasure hoard—are they searching for magic items, looking for traps, or just shoveling diamonds into their pockets as fast as they can?

Magic Items: If the PC grabs an item at random, roll 1d12 on the list of Wonders of the Dungeon. If they're looking for something in particular, roll a d6; on a 5 or 6, they find it this round.

Looking for traps: Searching the room reveals no obvious traps… but the ceiling is noticeably warmer than the floor, and it's getting warmer still, as if the upper levels of this structure are on fire. Also, there's this distant sound reverberating through the walls when you press your ear to them, a sort of stretching, ripping, cracking noise.

Treasure: 2d6 x 200 gp per round spent looting seems about right.

Wonders of the Dungeon

All of these are epic-tier items.

1. Arrow of Time

+3 ammunition

During a full heal-up, make a basic ranged attack roll and note the result as you loose this arrow. The arrow vanishes. At any point in the future, you may speak a word of command as a quick action, and the arrow reappears in flight toward a foe; apply that previously rolled ranged attack to that foe. *Quirk:* Obsessed about being punctual.

2. Star Armor

+3 AC (heavy armor)

Recharge 11+: Gain flight for a number of rounds equal to the escalation die when you activate this armor. You fly by 'walking' in the air, so you cannot travel faster than your normal pace. *Quirk:* Looks down on people.

3. Scabbard Indomitable

Increase your maximum recoveries by 3.

You must have your primary weapon or implement sheathed for this effect to work. Until you draw your primary weapon or implement, enemies take a –4 penalty to any attacks on you if there any allies nearby. *Quirk:* Makes grandiose speeches at the drop of a hat.

4. Enchiridion of Heroes

Recharge 6+: This book contains instructions on how to be a hero, complete with friendly and comprehensive advice on swashbuckling, thwarting liches, rescuing princesses, and slaying dragons. When you make a natural roll on a d20 that's lower than the escalation die, you may activate this book to reroll it. *Quirk:* Seeks out opportunities to be heroic.

5. Boots of the Giant

+3 bonus to disengage checks

Recharge 16+: You grow to huge size (like a giant). Pick one:

- When making a melee attack, you may increase all your damage dice by one step (so, if you normally roll d10s for damage, roll d12s instead).
- Make a *stomp* attack on each smaller enemy engaged with you. Stomp uses your Strength + level vs. the target's PD, and inflicts 1d6 damage per level and dazes your foes (save ends).
- Perform a giant-sized skill check, like punching through a castle wall or swallowing a cow.
- You shrink back down after taking your giant action, and become weakened (save ends).

Quirk: Growth spurts when you sneeze.

6. Mantle of the Celestial Warden

+3 PD.

Recharge 11+: When you cast a divine spell that targets a demon, heal using a free recovery or automatically make a save against an ongoing effect caused by a demon. *Quirk:* Supernaturally sensitive to threats to reality as we know it.

7. Thiefskin Gloves

You may use *thief's strike* as though you possessed that power (*13th Age,* page 130) and the associated epic feat once per level. If you've already got both of those, the gloves let you use that power on even the Prince himself.

Quirk: Kleptomania.

8. Jewel of Soulkeeping

+1 to saves when you have 50 hp or fewer

If you die, your soul remains in the jewel. Someone else—ideally, one of your allies—may then take this item. They don't get the bonus to saves, but may use the following power instead.

Recharge 16+: Call forth the ghost in the jewel as a quick action. The ghost materializes nearby. The ghost appears just as they did in life, if a little more translucent, but starts staggered and may only use the powers they possessed before dying. (You don't get to make recharge rolls if you're dead). The ghost has no special resistance to damage and does not count as undead, unless they were undead before they died (the second time, that is).

In summary—die while wearing an empty jewel, and you get to come back as a summonable ghost of yourself. It gives you something to do until the rest of the party gets you to someone who can resurrect you.

If the ghost is slain again, the jewel shatters. *Quirk:* Gives unasked-for advice, in the case of the ghost. Receives said advice, in the case of the bearer.

9. Godseye Ring

Once per level, name a god whose true name you know. You see from that god's perspective for an instant. We're not sure what sort of perception bonus omniscience gets you, but it's probably a big one—as long as you pick the right god for the job. You could, for example, get insight to a magical phenomenon by seeing as the god of magic sees. Please note that what a god sees may make no sense whatsoever to mortals, and you're basically taking your sanity in your hands whenever you peek behind the curtain.

10. Relic of the Devourer

+3 holy symbol

Recharge 11+: This symbol was forged by the Cult of the Devourer as the receptacle for their misplaced faith in the dungeon; it's a talisman of a god that may now never exist. When you cast a spell that uses a recovery, you may take that recovery from any one of your allies instead of the target of the spell. *Quirk:* Stares hungrily at people.

11. Blade of the Charnel Ground

+3 melee weapon

Recharge 11+: When you make a Cleave attack that drops an enemy to 0 hit points, you may make another free Cleave attack. You may keep Cleaving until you fail to drop an enemy with a Cleave attack. *Quirk:* Bully.

12. A Pile of 1d6 + 1 epic-tier healing potions.

The Dungeon's Trap

The Stone Thief can choose to slough off rooms or even whole levels, leaving them entombed in the earth. It'll hurt, but it can even afford to lose this treasury if it gets these cursed meddling adventurers off its back (or, more to the point, away from its Heart). So, soon after the PCs enter the room, the Stone Thief rips the treasury free from itself. The doorway out of the treasure constricts, the walls closing in like a clogged artery.

If the players learned the shell-shaper charms from the Koru behemoths, or have some other way of manipulating the matter of the dungeon, they can fuse the treasury back onto the dungeon, nailing it in place like Marblehall or the Wild Caves in Dungeon Town. Otherwise, their best option is to throw themselves through the closing gate—if they act immediately, it's a DC 20 Dexterity check. For each round they linger to grab more treasure, the DC goes up by 5. If a PC fails, they escape but are crushed by the closing walls for 1d6 damage per point of difference between the DC and their result. So, fail by 10, take 10d6 damage. Squish.

Once the DC hits 40, the walls slam shut and the treasury is cut adrift. Any PCs still in the treasury—well, they're now buried in a cavern hundreds of feet under the surface, with no exits. They'd better pray there's a *teleport* scroll somewhere in this treasury, because they can't eat or drink gold (dwarf PCs may take that as a challenge.)

Oh, that warmth from the ceiling. The Stone Thief was considerate enough to leave that volcano running, and the treasury is in the path of the expanding magma. Drinking the gold will become considerably more of an issue in a few minutes for any characters who fell for the lure of treasure.

Variations

Instead of a treasure vault, the dungeon tries to to trick the PCs into believing they've won. The dungeon quakes and writhes, as if breaking through to the surface one last time. The PCs find themselves in a place stolen by the dungeon. Outside, they can smell fresh air and trees, making them think they've escaped—but they're really just in the Grove. They're still underground.

6. The Last Chase

The Stone Thief turns and runs for the last time. If the PCs somehow trapped it on the surface, it breaks free, ripping whole levels to pieces and inflicting massive internal damage on itself. As it runs, more of the dungeon breaks away. Some pieces fly off and embed themselves just below the surface of the lands above, becoming new dungeons to be explored by future adventurers. Other parts of the Stone Thief get stuck deep in the underworld, cut off and lost for all time.

For the adventurers, the last flight of the Stone Thief is like riding on the back of some tremendous, maddened whale as it plunges through the waves—only here the waves are mountains. All the characters can do is stagger up the bucking, quaking corridor, shielding their ears from the literally earth-shattering cacophony of a dying dungeon.

As the dungeon flees, it tries to scrape the adventurers off its back by flinging parts of itself at them, vomiting up rooms that explode into being around them. Flip through the Upper Levels section of this book and open a page at random. That's where the PCs find themselves. After a round or three, flip again. And again. And again. If there are surviving monsters in any of the randomly generated locations, they attack out of sheer panic.

Finally, unable to shake the adventurers loose, the dungeon *breaches*.

The Stone Thief erupts out of the ground like a suddenly emerging mountain. An outside observer, if they survived the hail of flying debris and the skull-cracking thunderclap of the cataclysm, might see the living dungeon in its entirety for one brief moment, with all its hundreds of stolen pieces and its maddening complexity exposed, the stone skin flayed from its architectural anatomy.

Then the dungeon smashes back down, and breaks. The earthquake can be felt across the Dragon Empire.

In the Inverse Observatory, the Telluric Lens flares white.

In Axis, the dragons that guard the Emperor raise their heads and let out gouts of fire as salute or warning.

In the dwarf-lands, the bells ring out in celebration. She is fallen! The dungeon is dead! The Thief is caught!

In the Orc Lord's camp, the warlord smashes his massive fist into the ground in frustration as another plan for conquest fails.

In the Hell Marsh, the hellholes erupt in answer. From her tower, the Diabolist tries to read her future in the flames.

In Horizon, in Santa Cora, in Drakkenhall, and in the silent streets of the Necropolis, the fall of the Stone Thief is heard. The age changes in that moment, as the icons and other great powers of the world consider the new balance of power in the Empire.

A sudden wave washes over the cliffs of Omen, and the other living dungeons that writhe there howl in mourning for their lost sibling.

The PCs pick themselves out of the wreckage and rubble of the dungeon. They're back on the surface, surrounded by the vast ruin of the defeated dungeon. The sunlight—intolerably bright after the endless dim corridors underground—hurts their eyes, but the wind is fresh and pleasant and carries the smell of the sea and the living earth.

And then, bits of the wreckage quiver. Tendrils of white ectoplasm wriggle out of the stones, and knit themselves together. Piece by piece, brick by brick, something new is built out of the dungeon...

Run *the Fate of the Thief*, page 355.

PREY

The Stone Thief takes from the surface world and drags what it steals into the underworld, remaking it into new levels of the dungeon. The locations in this chapter are potential targets for the Stone Thief. Each is presented in its original surface incarnation, and as a dungeon encounter. Use them as is, or as models for when the Stone Thief steals locations created by the players and corrupts them.

Devouring a Location

When the Stone Thief steals, here's what happens to the unfortunate surface location.

- **The Maw opens beneath it,** and the location tumbles into the chasm. The magic of the Stone Thief preserves some of the structures, but smaller, weaker buildings collapse. Most of the people who fall into the chasm get killed, either from falling or getting smashed by sliding rocks.
- **Everything ends up in the Gizzard:** On this level of the dungeon, the surviving buildings are digested by the dungeon (see page 69). During this process, the structures remain as they were on the surface. The digestion process lasts until the dungeon is ready to submerge and move on. Meanwhile, the most intact corpses get brought to the Ossuary (page 123) for processing. The thoroughly mashed corpses get eaten. Any survivors have a chance to flee into the other levels of the dungeon—if they're lucky, they'll make it to the exit at the Maw or to the safety of Dungeon Town before the walls close in. The Stone Thief can also choose to preserve its victims, turning them into denizens of the dungeon. This keeps them alive, but it also binds them to the living dungeon. They cannot leave the Stone Thief's confines.
- When the dungeon next surfaces, **the place is remade**. The Stone Thief doesn't have to stick to the original configuration of the structure—buildings can be turned inside out, or pulled apart into separate rooms, or remade into labyrinths of rooms linked by stone corridors. Like a magpie, the Stone Thief keeps whatever features drew it to devour that surface location—whatever is unique about the place is preserved in a mocking, perverted way, and whatever natural dangers were there are exaggerated. Think of it as a deranged architectural taxidermist.
- Over time, the location becomes **stocked with monsters**. The undead created in the Ossuary may also be returned to the twisted remains of their former home.

Choosing Targets

Over the course of the campaign, the dungeon will consume places associated with the player characters. The best targets are

- **Already established in the campaign**—it's much more impactful to destroy a place the players have visited than it is to strike at their backstories. It's even more effective to attack places the players have built. Encourage the players to 'put down roots' in the campaign world. Instead of roving

How the Dungeon Hunts

Another thing to consider is how the dungeon finds its prey.

The dungeon might attack the player characters initially by mischance.

At the start of the campaign, the Stone Thief is blind, so it can only detect targets by scenting their magical aura or tasting their stone from a few miles away. It roams through the Empire and the lands beyond at random—it might spent months grubbing around within a particular mountain, then strike out on a long migration across the underworld, devouring anything interesting it finds along the way.

The dungeon might be guided by the cult.

Without its Eyes, the Stone Thief relies on the Cult of the Devourer to find suitable targets for it. The cult has a ritual that can call the Devourer. The ritual doesn't compel the dungeon, it merely sends out a vibration that the Stone Thief can sense over a great distance. In ages past, the cult used their rite as part of their venerations, and to bring the Stone Thief to destroy their enemies (or they would sell the dungeon as a siege engine). Now, with the dungeon's blindness, the cult has taken on greater importance as the Stone Thief needs their help when hunting.

So, if the dungeon deliberately targets a place, there might be a cult member or even a cult temple involved. There could be cultists lurking in the sewers of a town, or a cult guard working in a castle. The rite doesn't need to be enacted right on the spot where the dungeon rises—a cultist could perform the rite on a mountaintop to draw the dungeon to the valley below.

The dungeon stalks its prey.

Once the PCs have gone on one or two expeditions into the dungeon—and especially, once they've *bled* in the dungeon—then the Stone Thief knows their scent. Even without its Eyes, the dungeon can follow a familiar target across the breadth of the Empire. Later in the campaign, the PCs may be the ones that bring devastation with them, as their presence is what draws the Stone Thief.

The dungeon sees its prey.

Once the Stone Thief recovers one or both of the Eyes of the Stone Thief, it can 'see' magical emanations instead of merely scenting them. It can now choose its own targets according to its own malicious thoughts and desires.

adventurers, give them a chance to own property, to rule over a domain, or put them in charge of some fortress or other location.

- **Distinctive in some manner**—fortresses, towers, magical landmarks, flying realms, or any other place that is instantly recognizable.
- **Cherished by the players**—attack what they love, or at the very least, attack what's important to them. Be vindictive.
- **Inhabited**—this last criteria isn't as important as one might initially think, as players get attached to 'their stuff' just as much as they connect to the average nonplayer character. Still, if you've an established supporting cast of NPCs, then the dungeon can consume some of them.

Making an Encounter

Once you've picked your target, consider the following questions.

- **Do you want the players to be able to save this place?** It takes time for the dungeon to consume and assimilate stolen locations. If the characters can get to the Gizzard in time (page 69), they can stop the dungeon from consuming this place. Last-minute dramatic rescues can be fun, but the majority of Stone Thief attacks should be unpreventable. If the characters always stop the dungeon in the nick of time, it loses a lot of power as a villain. Killing the Stone Thief at the end of the campaign might put everything right again, so you can afford to make things seem dark and hopeless early on.
- **Is this a new level, or part of an existing level?** How big is the stolen location? If it's a single building or object, then it probably works best as a single encounter. If it's a big place like a castle or a forest, then consider turning it into a whole level of the dungeon and adding more stolen locations on as encounters within that level.
- **What are the most distinctive features of the place?** Discard the original layout of the place and focus on the most important and memorable features. For a stolen temple, it might be the altar or holy sanctum. For a halfling burrow, it might be the comfortable sitting room and the garden outside.

  Take those features and make them horrific or dangerous—consecrate the altar to dark gods, fill the garden with man-eating plants, and stick a halfling lich in the player character's favorite arm chair.
- **What would hurt the player character?** Assuming the location is tied to a particular player character, consider what would really hurt that character. Approach this from both a game-mechanics angle ("a monster that eats ongoing spell effects would work really well against the wizard") and a narrative angle ("Yedris is all about reuniting the three branches of the elves, so maybe a battle where he has to fight a high elf caster, a wood elf archer, and a dark elf wrecker would be fun.")

  Be cruel, but you should probably stop short of grotesque horror. Given a choice between a princess in a tower being menaced by a dragon, and a princess being gorily torn apart by a dragon, go for the option that best suits your group and the tone of your campaign.
- **What happens to the NPCs?** For each recurring character, pick one of the following options. The NPC:
  - Escapes the attack and can tell the characters about what happened when the Stone Thief attacks.
  - Survives the attack and ends up lost in the dungeon. Perhaps they make it to Dungeon Town and come under the influence of the Provost, or get enslaved in Deep Keep.
  - Survives the attack, but is claimed by the dungeon as a denizen. The NPC can only be rescued by slaying the Stone Thief.
  - Survives the attack, but is transformed by the dungeon into a monster.
  - Is killed in the attack.
  - Is killed in the attack, but gets brought back as an undead monster, which might be self-aware or mindless.
  - Vanishes.

  If you turn an NPC into a monster, then consider including a way to save the unfortunate and reverse the transformation, or show that death is a release for the poor tormented victim of the dungeon.
- **What monsters fit here?** Add monsters and traps that fit the battle. Possible options:
  - Statues coming to life.
  - Any dead interred in or near the location return as undead.
  - Oozes and slimes work great as a contrast with a beautiful place.
  - Monsters related to old enemies—for example, stocking a paladin's temple with demons, or letting orcs defile a dwarven clan stronghold.

Nightmare Foreshadowing

If you're stuck for an idea, then you can use the players to help. During a full heal-up after the characters have learned a little about the Stone Thief, describe how they each suffer nightmares about being hunted by the dungeon. You could even mix in visions of the Cult of the Devourer's dream messages (page 302) or the haunting presence of the Hag Pheig (page 154) to hint at future battles. Then ask each player to describe their character's nightmare—what does the character worry about when pursued by a living dungeon? Where would be the worst place for the dungeon to attack?

Then make their nightmares real.

Aftermath

Also, consider what's left after the Stone Thief has passed by. How does the surface change now that some key feature has been consumed? For example, if the Stone Thief steals the magical lighthouse of Vigil (see *13th Age*, page 281), the Seven Cities are suddenly blind to any dangers coming from Omen or Necropolis. The living dungeon is a natural disaster with intent and malice—it can wreak havoc on the surface far worse than mere property damage.

SAMPLE TARGETS

Below, you'll find two sample targets for the Stone Thief. Work them into your campaign as mundane surface locations first, then have the dungeon steal them.

Other likely targets from the *13th Age* rulebook include:

- Anvil fort (weakening the defenses of the dwarves).
- An arena from Axis (and the PCs have to fight through a gladiatorial game to proceed in the dungeon).
- A dwarven mine (sprouting rich new veins of gems).
- A crashed flying realm (what's scarier than a living dungeon that hates you and stalks you through the underworld? One that can also fly…).
- Part of the Golden Citadel (a buried section, where secrets lost with the fall of the Great Gold Wyrm lay entombed).
- One of Gorogan's petrified organs (what would the dungeon want with a demon's heart? Or stomach? Or infernal genitalia?).
- The Northern Colossus (possibly an alternative 'final boss' form for the dungeon—see page 356).
- Part of Old Wall (magically regenerating stone + stone-warping dungeon = trouble).
- Part of the Sea Wall (and then the dungeon swallows the monster that comes through the breach—see *Giant Monster*, page 345).
- Vigil (blinding the Empire to the Lich King's plans).

GREENWELL VILLAGE

Greenwell is a bucolic little village in the countryside. It grew up around, obviously, a well. The well isn't green, but the surrounding countryside very much is. Two roads cross at Greenwell, supporting a small inn called the Bucket. There's a smithy and a temple to whatever harvest or nature deities you have in your campaign. The village's real pride, though, is the windmill on yonder hill, built by a merchant from the nearest city.

That nearest city (and its associated icon) determines the current conditions in Greenwell.

Axis: Greenwell is right in the heart of the Empire, and many of its sons and daughters serve in the Imperial legions. It's a place of quiet strength and solid loyalty to the Empire.

Horizon: The winds that fill the mill's sails aren't winds of the surface world at all. Sometimes, it actually spins backward, turning flour into grain and grain into wheat. Once in a while an escaped magical experiment or the result of a botched summoning spell wanders into the village.

Santa Cora: Followers of the Priestess built the windmill; they say it symbolizes the unity of the natural world we can see, the invisible world we can't, and the lives of mortal men. Unfortunately, not everyone agrees with that theological position, and the villagers are often troubled by competing sermons from clerics of blustery storm gods or wild-haired druids ranting about how nature cannot be tamed. The villagers just ignore them and get on with making daily bread for Santa Cora.

Glitterhaegen: The Greenwell actually connects to an underground river. Follow the twists and turns of that subterranean stream, and you'll emerge from a sea-cave near Shadow Port. Enterprising smugglers row up the river, and more than fresh water comes out of the Greenwell on certain nights.

New Port: Greenwell is one of the many new villages that sprang up around New Port. It's built on land that was covered in forest until recently, and the industrious villagers continue to fell trees and clear ground for crops. This has brought them into conflict with followers of the High Druid; while the skirmishes have yet to turn really violent, there have been brawls and clashes between villagers and forest-folk.

Concord: Greenwell was founded by halflings, and old halfling families still own most of the land around here, even if they've got human tenants to work the farms. Tensions between landlords and tenants have risen lately over the windmill. The halfling squire who owns the mill, Barnabrow Green, fell in love with a beautiful elven maid and started charging a higher price for milling corn so he can give her gifts and tokens of affection.

Drakkenhall: When the old city of Highrock fell to the hordes of monsters, the inhabitants of the nearby village of Greenwell stayed put. They fortified their homes and held out against the lizardfolk raiders and goblin thieves. These days, there's an uneasy peace, for three reasons. First, you can't raid and pillage and despoil and also stay in one place—even monsters have to eat, and so food from Greenwell goes to Drakkenhall, just like it went to Highrock's markets long ago (they sell a lot more raw meat these days). Second, the Blue put the village under her protection as a gesture of good faith to the Empire. Third, and perhaps most relevant, Greenwell is now home to a high proportion of half-orcs with muscles like shire horses and attitudes like cornered boars.

THE ADVENTURERS COME HERE, BECAUSE…

- A former adventurer named Culvan retired here. He knows something the adventurers need to know, like the location of one of the Eyes of the Stone Thief or a secret possessed by the Cult of the Devourer.
- One of the adventurers comes from Greenwell. It's home.
- The adventurers are just passing through when the dungeon strikes.
- Omens portended a great danger would arise in this quiet village. The adventurers get sent here to protect it.
- The characters are sent here on an unrelated mission—say, to deal with some minor problem in the village—when the dungeon consumes it.
- The characters are tracking the dungeon, and catch up with it as it eats Greenwell.

ENCOUNTERS

- As neutral parties, the adventurers are called on to resolve some dispute. Use the village's quirks as the basis for this argument (halflings vs. humans arguing over the mill for Concord, an apprentice complaining about the old woman

who doused his summoned fire sprite for Horizon, tree-cutters vs. druids near New Port, etc.). Keep the dispute trivial or even comical.

- In the Bucket, conversation around the fire turns to tales of heroism and high adventure. One old graybeard turns to the adventurers and demands that they tell a story about their past exploits. Lurking in the crowd is an unknown but talented songwriter—if she survives, then she makes up a song based on the best or most amusing tale told by the adventurers, and that song spreads across the Dragon Empire as a popular ballad.
- The mill is attacked by some level-appropriate nuisance monster like an owlbear or some troublesome gnolls.

Attack of the Stone Thief

The ground quakes as the Stone Thief strikes. First one building, then another, and then more slips into the widening chasm. There is an undeniable *intent* behind the way the chasm moves—cracks in the ground snake around the temple, marking the outermost extent of its foundations, then the chasm suddenly widens to swallow the whole building intact. The inn is next, and then the pit grows toward the windmill on the hill.

The dungeon takes care to keep the buildings as intact as possible, but it cares nothing for the villagers. Those lucky enough to be indoors when the Stone Thief attacks have a chance of surviving all the way down into the Gizzard (see page 69). Those outdoors may fall into the chasm and be ground to paste by the churning rocks if they cannot outrun the earthquake. Soon after the dungeon's attack begins, orc raiders from Deep Keep emerge in search of loot and slaves. Adventurers rushing to the rescue of the villagers must fight their way past these orcs in order to reach the Maw (page 36).

The consumption of the windmill marks the end of the first portion of the attack. The shaking of the earth diminishes. The torrent of stone pouring into the chasm slows to a trickle, then stops altogether, leaving the rent ripped open in the remains of the village like a scar on the landscape. The orcs grab what they can and lope back toward the dungeon's entrances.

Soon, the Stone Thief submerges, leaving only ruin in its wake.

Greenwell Village in the Dungeon

Little in Greenwell is of interest to the Stone Thief. Villages like this are common in the Empire. Bits of the stolen town end up scattered in the upper levels. For example, the crypt and graveyard of the village temple is incorporated into the catacombs of the Ossuary (page 123), while the remains of the Bucket wait amid the wreckage of the Hall of Ruins in the Gizzard (page 69) until the inn is crushed by the dungeon's next prey. The town's windmill, though, is brought to the Grove (page 137) and becomes the centerpiece of a new encounter.

The Windmill

Transformed into a thing of horror, the windmill's sails turn without wind in the underground forest of the Grove. Instead of grain, the windmill is remade to grind out secrets. Place a victim on the millstone, and the magic of the windmill will drag out their innermost secrets, no matter how much they try to resist. The Cult of the Devourer uses the windmill to interrogate prisoners, especially those prisoners who might know of important items like the missing Eyes of the Stone Thief, or the location of places of power that the Stone Thief can consume. Player characters captured on the upper levels of the dungeon by the cult (possibly as a result of a campaign loss) are brought to the windmill to have their secrets wrenched from them.

Prisoners in the transformed windmill are kept in burlap sacks hung from nails on the interior walls. These sacks are extremely tough (DC 15 to cut through from the outside, DC 20 from inside). The Stone Thief adds blades and spikes to the machinery of the windmill, making any attempt to stop the wheels from turning hazardous. The Thief also had the Flesh Tailor create a special undead guardian for the windmill, the Miller.

The Miller

Double-strength 6th level spoiler [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +9
Vulnerability: holy

Dead Hands +10 vs. AC (2 attacks)—16 damage
Natural 16: The target is grabbed.

What to do with you? At the start of its turn, if it has a grabbed victim, the Miller either stuffs that victim into a sack or puts them under the millstone. In either case, the Miller must make a **+14 attack vs. PD**; on a hit, the Miller does what it wants with the victim. On a miss, the target takes 10 damage and remains grabbed, but is not stuffed in a stack or placed under the millstone.

Victims stuffed in a sack are trapped until they escape by passing a DC 15 Strength check.

Victims under the millstone suffer millstone damage (see below).

AC 21
PD 20 **HP 180**
MD 16

Cultist Initiate

5th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +8

Ritual Dagger +10 vs. AC—9 damage

AC 21
PD 15 **HP 18 (mook)**
MD 19

Mook: Kill one cult initiate mook for every 18 hp you deal to the mob.

Trap: The Windmill

The windmill's machinery attacks the characters at the start of some rounds. As the fight goes on, the windmill's sails spin faster and faster, increasing the rate of attacks by the machinery. The machinery uses the following attack: **+10 vs. AC**—2d10 damage.

ED1: One attack.

ED3: One attack.

ED4: Two attacks.

ED5: Two attacks.

ED6+: Three attacks.

Trap: Ground by the Windmill

A character placed beneath the millstone is subject to a **+10 attack vs. MD**—4d10 damage. This damage may be avoided if the character *truthfully* answers a question asked by the Miller or the cultists.

Windmill Fight Chart— 4th or 5th level characters

Number/ Level of PCs	Miller	Cultist Initiate
3 x 4th level	**1**	**0**
4 x 4th level	**1**	**1**
5 x 4th level	**1**	**3**
6 x 4th level	**1**	**4**
7 x 4th level	**1**	**5**
3 x 5th level	***1***	***5***
4 x 5th level	***1***	***5***
5 x 5th level	***1***	***8***
6 x 5th level	***1***	***8***
7 x 5th level	***1***	***12***

Tollgate Square

It's your first time in the city, friend? Don't bother with those inns—they'll charge you too much, and you spent enough getting in the gate, right? No, follow me—my cousin has a place where you can sleep and eat for three coppers. Here, I'll take your bags! Follow!

Tollgate Square is a slum district in one of the cities of the Empire. As the name suggests, it surrounds an open plaza next to one of the city gates. The square itself is lined with prosperous shops and taverns, eager to serve traveling merchants who pass through the tollgate. It's the warren of alleyways and tenements behind the square that give this area its bad reputation.

Axis: Tollgate Square abuts the old gate on the road to Glitterhaegen. The last Emperor but one built a new and much bigger gate to cope with the increased traffic and trade, so the old Tollgate sees more peddlers and beggars than merchants. The only reason Tollgate still stands is because of an ancient bargain struck by a still older Emperor—once every few years, a delegation of ghosts from a mysterious kingdom (or perhaps entities from another plane of existence) streams out of the Tollgate and proceeds in solemn procession to the Blessed Palace. The identities and origins of these strange visitors are locked away in the Imperial archives, and are not common knowledge. The locals have learned to ignore these strange and silent, blue-glowing visitors, and have stopped trying to lure them to the brothels and gambling dens behind the square.

Horizon: The Archmage created Tollgate out of irritation. Once, he was beset by those seeking trivial love potions, cures for baldness, glimpses of the future, or his endorsement for some course of action—as well as swarms of penitent frogs, many of whom were formerly people before he polymorphed them for one reason or another. (The other frogs—the frogs that were always frogs—were just along for the ride.) To fend off this tide, he enchanted the gate so that visitors could only pass through it if they paid a coin—and the coin required changed depending on the visitor. So, an apprentice with legitimate business in Horizon could get through by paying a copper; a rich merchant might be charged a platinum piece or even an elvish trine, and if the Archmage really didn't want to see you, the Tollgate would demand a rare coin, like one of the cursed, icy-cold gold pieces that bear the face of the Wizard King, which are the only legal tender in the Necropolis.

The slums of Tollgate Square are crowded with people who discovered to their eternal regret that you've got to pay on the way out, too.

Santa Cora: The tolls charged at the city gate are levied only on the wealthy, and the money gathered is spent on the poor. Alms are given out in Tollgate Square every day at noon by followers of the Priestess. It's said that the blessing of the Priestess descends on those who give especially generously, so the poor of Santa Cora flock to Tollgate Square when a party of adventurers nears the city.

Glitterhaegen: All the gates into Glitterhaegen charge a toll; the money goes to the upkeep and glorification of the city. It's a point of pride, therefore, to enter by the most expensive gate you can afford. How they gossip in the coffee-houses and salons if a supposedly wealthy noble tries to sneak in by one of the *cheaper* gates! And, of course, no one would be seen dead down in Tollgate Square; that's the gate for beggars, misers, and thieves.

New Port: A previous governor decided that New Port should be a glorious and beautiful city of marble and gold, and so he wanted to rid it of the poor. He declared that anyone entering the city must pay a toll of one gold piece. The common folk of New Port were appalled at this decree. Even the gate guards were outraged. The practice of the 'Coin of the Commons' began—when a traveler passed through the gate, they would hand the gold piece back to the person behind them. Many thousands of people entered the city on the back of that one single coin, which became a symbol of solidarity and hope. When the governor tried

to confiscate the coin, the city rioted and overthrew him, a revolt remembered as the Cheapest Rebellion, "when a whole army was raised by a single gold piece." The Coin of the Commons is in use at the Tollgate. Centuries of daily use by hundreds of hands have worn all the features away, but the coin has acquired a considerable magical charge.

Concord: Tollgate Square lies in the human part of Concord. The Tollgate was enchanted by the Elf Queen; only those whose hearts are dominated by greed and love of money are compelled to pay the toll. Those whose souls are inspired by other things, by poems and dreams and magic, may pass through the gate freely. The elves praise the magic of the Tollgate, arguing that it lets one spot dull merchants and misers without having to go to the bother of talking to them. The dwarves (who get hit by the tolls more often than other races) grumble and speculate that the other gates of the city bear similar enchantments, only those ones exact a more spiritual price. If the Tollgate takes coins from those who love money, then what if the other gates steal poems or dreams or magic from those who love those things?

Drakkenhall: 'Toll' sounds much better than 'shakedown by a bunch of ogres.'

The Adventurers Come Here, Because...

- One of them lives in this city. Having fixated on them, the Stone Thief tracks them back to the city they call home and devours part of it to strike at the adventurer.
- There's a secret temple of the Cult of the Devourer in one of the tenements. For months, they've been praying and chanting, sending out magical vibrations to draw the dungeon to them. Now, at last, their prayers have been answered.
- They're visiting the city to consult with some sage or representative of an icon.
- The adventurers have learned that there's a source of magical power beneath Tollgate Square—maybe it's a magical ward that protects the city (and that, if destroyed, would leave the rest of the city vulnerable to the Stone Thief), or a gate to another plane, or the tomb of some hero from a previous age.

Attack of the Stone Thief

In this attack, the Thief moves swiftly. The shock of the dungeon's rise causes some of the rickety tenements to collapse, or to fall onto neighboring buildings. Billowing clouds of dust flood the streets, turning the crowds of terrified, fleeing citizens into an anonymous mob of ghosts. The adventurers must push through the panicked crowds while dodging collapsing buildings and falling debris if they want to catch the dungeon.

Instead of orcs, undead emerge from the dungeon's entrances—especially ghouls and other creatures that spread their curse to their victims. The intent of this wave of undead is to sow chaos in the city and cover the dungeon's retreat. To dissuade any pursuit, it also moves the Gauntlet or the Maddening Stair up to the surface levels, just behind the Maw.

Tollgate Square in the Dungeon

Once consumed, Tollgate Square might be added to the Gauntlet or the top of the Maddening Stair. As they explore the dungeon, the PCs come across the familiar tollgate, jammed incongruously across a dungeon corridor. Through the gate, they see Tollgate Square beyond, cloaked in shadow. The tollbooth is unmanned, but there's a coin-box with a slotted lid.

If a character puts a coin into the box, they feel a strange force pulling at their mind, probing for memories of the past. The character may choose to share a memory with the Tollgate; if that memory contains a place of power or importance to the character, then the Stone Thief may later steal it.

What the characters meet in Tollgate Square depends on how many of them paid the toll.

- **All the characters paid:** No monsters, just the treasure.
- **Some but not all paid:** Monsters, then treasure.
- **Few or none paid:** Just the monsters, no treasure.

Raging Wyvern

Allergic to its own poison, the constant agony drove it mad. Now it yearns for the release of death.

Large 7th level wrecker [BEAST]
Initiative: +14

Tearing Jaws +12 vs. AC (2 attacks)—25 damage
Natural even hit: The raging wyvern may make a *deadly tail stinger* attack during its next turn.

[Special trigger] **Deadly Tail Stinger +12 vs. PD**—25 damage, and the target takes 10 ongoing poison damage (difficult save ends, 16+)

Wary: If the raging wyvern is unengaged, it may make a free *deadly tail stinger* as an interrupt action against a foe who moves to engage it.

Frenzy: When the escalation die is 4+, the raging wyvern gains an additional *tearing jaws* attack every round.

Nastier Specials

Frenzy: When the escalation die is 4+, the raging wyvern gains an additional *tearing jaws* attack every round.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 216**
MD 17

Gatekeeper Mage

They wear dark robes that conceal every feature. It's better that way. What's under the robes isn't good to look upon.

8th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +15

Caustic Touch +11 vs. PD—30 acid damage

C: Portgate +13 vs. PD (one nearby target)—25 damage, and the target is teleported a short distance to engage with an ally of the gatekeeper mage. If there are no nearby allies, this attack inflicts 10 ongoing damage and does not teleport the target.

R: Warp +13 vs. PD (one nearby or far away target)—30 damage, and the target may not make ranged attacks until the end of their next turn.

Nastier Specials

Reactive Portgate: Once per battle, the gatekeeper mage may cast *portgate* as an interrupt action in response to being attacked. If the *portgate* attack hits, the attack on the gatekeeper mage is redirected to another target instead.

C: Banish +13 vs. MD (one nearby target)—The target is transported to an extradimensional prison (save ends). The target takes 15 damage each round while imprisoned. When the imprisonment ends, the target may reappear anywhere nearby.
Limited Use: Only when the escalation die is even.

AC 24
PD 18 **HP 144**
MD 22

Cavernwight

Cavernwights cannot abide sunlight, so they seek out dark places to hide. That sound from your cellar? That gurgle from the sewer grating outside your house? It's probably nothing.

7th level spoiler [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +10
Vulnerability: holy

Claw +12 vs. AC—20 damage
Natural even hit or miss: Unless the cavernwight is staggered, the attack also deals 10 ongoing negative energy damage. If the wight is staggered, the attack still deals 10 ongoing negative energy damage, but the victim automatically passes any saves against that ongoing damage.

No escape: A foe taking ongoing negative energy damage takes a –5 penalty to disengage attempts.

Death field: A foe taking ongoing damage from a cavernwight gains the minimum benefit from any recoveries used (assume all dice rolled in the recovery roll are 1s).

Nastier Specials

Barrow's Call: A character taking ongoing negative energy damage takes a –4 penalty to attacks against any foes other than a cavernwight.

Barrow's Touch: The cavernwight's attacks against targets taking ongoing negative damage is against PD instead of AC, and the wight's crit range expands by 2.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 108**
MD 17

Cavernwight Spawn

7th level mook [UNDEAD]
Initiative: +10
Vulnerability: holy

Claws +12 vs. AC—15 damage

Barrow's Touch: The cavernwight spawn's attacks against targets taking ongoing negative damage is against PD instead of AC, and the spawn's crit range expands by 2.

Nastier Specials

Barrow's Grasp: The spawn's *claw*s attack inflict 5 extra damage against foes taking ongoing negative energy damage.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 27 (mook)**
MD 17

Mook: Kill one cavernwight spawn mook for every 27 damage dealt to the mob.

Tollgate Square Fight Chart —5th, 6th or 7th level characters

Number/ Level of PCs	Raging Wyvern	Gate-keeper Mage	Cavern-wight	Cavern-wight Spawn
3 x 5th level	1	0	0	0
4 x 5th level	1	0	1	0
5 x 5th level	1	0	1	3
6 x 5th level	1	0	2	3
7 x 5th level	1	1	2	3
3 x 6th level	*1*	*1*	*0*	*0*
4 x 6th level	*1*	*1*	*1*	*3*
5 x 6th level	*1*	*1*	*2*	*5*
6 x 6th level	*1*	*2*	*2*	*5*
7 x 6th level	*1*	*2*	*3*	*8*
3 x 7th level	2	1	0	0
4 x 7th level	2	1	1	3
5 x 7th level	2	1	2	5
6 x 7th level	2	2	2	5
7 x 7th level	2	2	3	8

Treasure

A treasure chest sits in the middle of Tollgate Square. It's not trapped or cursed, and it's not a monster in disguise, although paranoid players may assume that a chest sitting out in the open has to be a hidden threat of some sort. Inside, there's a pile of gold coins (300 gp per character) and a magic item or two. Here's three to choose from:

Weapon of the Warden (+2 melee weapon—recharge 11+): When you intercept a foe, you may immediately make a basic melee attack on them as an interrupt action. *Quirk:* Always has to have the last word.

Blast Ring (recharge 16+): You may fire a blast of energy from the ring as a ranged attack. This attack targets a single enemy, uses your **Dexterity + Level vs. PD**, and inflicts 1d8 fire damage per level. *Quirk:* Loves hot food.

Coin of the Commons (recharge 16+): After you make a d20 roll, you may choose to pass that result to an ally and roll again. The ally must use the result you passed to them for their next d20 roll, no matter what that roll is for. *Quirk:* Generous with money.

The Tenement Climb

All but one of the old exits from the square are gone; the square is now surrounded by walls of solid stone. The only way onward is to climb a rickety wooden staircase up to the tenements behind the Hag's Daughter tavern. Up there, the characters can see that all the alleyways and backstreets behind the square have vanished, leaving apparently bottomless pits in their place. To cross the tenement district and continue exploring the living dungeon, the characters must jump from one tottering building to another while under fire from the orcs lurking in the ruins.

Jumping

Jumping between two adjacent buildings requires a DC 20 check. Failing means the character jumps across, but has to stop moving to catch themselves afterward. Failing by 10 or more means the character only barely makes it to the far side, and ends up hanging over the edge. They can pull themselves up with another move action; until then, they're stuck and vulnerable.

On a natural 1, the PC's singularly graceless landing destabilizes the tenement, and it starts to topple. Anyone who doesn't jump clear in the next round or two is going to fall into the lightless depths far below...

(By the way, there's no need to roll for the orcs—they automatically succeed unless a PC takes action to stop one of them, or you want to wrap up the fight quickly by having some of the foes fail and fall.)

Chasing the Orcs

The orcs studied the layout of the tenement blocks and know the best firing positions and choke points. The archers shoot from the upper stories of the tenements, while the guards lurk on the levels below, ready to intercept anyone trying to get to the archers or to escape the trap. The bat gliders flit from building to building, watching for intruders.

Orc Sniper

Their stone arrowheads were chipped from the walls of the living dungeon, so the Stone Thief guides their flight.

7th level archer [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +12

Short Sword +12 vs. AC—25 damage
Dangerous: The crit range of melee attacks by orcs expands by 3 unless they are staggered.

R: Longbow +12 vs. AC—28 damage

Rapid Fire: Once per battle, the orc sniper may make a second *longbow* attack as a quick action.

Precise Aim: Once per battle, the orc sniper may add the escalation die to its attack rolls for the round.

Nastier Specials

Smeared Poison: Longbow attacks inflict 10 ongoing poison damage on an 18+.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 100**
MD 17

Orc Bat Gliders

These orcs are stoneborn, spawned here in the living dungeon. The Stone Thief's breath lifts them up on unseen thermals, filling their bat-like wings.

7th level spoiler [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Sword +12 vs. AC—28 damage
Dangerous: The crit range of melee attacks by orcs expands by 3 unless they are staggered.

R: Blazing Grenade +12 vs. PD (up to three enemies in a group)—10 damage, and 5 ongoing fire damage. Targets taking ongoing fire damage are vulnerable to ranged attacks.

Flight: The bat-winged orcs glide around the tenements.

Nastier Specials

Swooping Intercept: The orc bat glider may intercept a nearby enemy who is moving in any direction, not just one trying to move past the bat glider.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 90**
MD 17

Orc Heavy Guard

The charge of the heavy guard is ponderous but powerful, an avalanche of steel and orc.

8th level blocker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Big Sword +13 vs. AC—40 damage
Dangerous: The crit range of melee attacks by orcs expands by 3 unless they are staggered.
Natural even hit or miss: The orc may immediately make a *shield bash* attack as a free action.

[Special trigger] **Shield Bash +13 vs. PD**—20 damage or the enemy pops free and becomes dazed for one turn (enemy's choice)

Group Ability: For every two orc heavy guards in the battle (round up), one of them can use *shield wall* as a free action once during the battle.

Shield Wall (group): Ignore all damage from an attack triggered by an intercept.

Nastier Specials

Fanatic: The orc heavy guard doesn't drop when reduced to 0 hit points; it stays alive to defend one of its allies. Choose that ally now. Roll a d8 at the start of every round; if the result is equal to or less than the escalation die, the orc heavy guard keeps fighting. If the result is greater than the escalation die, or if the chosen ally is defeated, the orc heavy guard dies.

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 144**
MD 16

Tollgate Tenements Fight Chart —5th, 6th or 7th level characters

Number/ Level of PCs	Orc Sniper	Orc Bat Glider	Orc Heavy Guard
3 x 5th level	2	1	0
4 x 5th level	2	0	1
5 x 5th level	2	1	1
6 x 5th level	3	1	1
7 x 5th level	4	1	1
3 x 6th level	*3*	*1*	*0*
4 x 6th level	*3*	*1*	*1*
5 x 6th level	*4*	*2*	*1*
6 x 6th level	*5*	*2*	*1*
7 x 6th level	*5*	*2*	*2*
3 x 7th level	2	1	1
4 x 7th level	4	1	1
5 x 7th level	6	2	1
6 x 7th level	6	2	2
7 x 7th level	8	2	3

SURFACE QUESTS

This section of the campaign covers events and battles outside the dungeon. The adventurers escape the dungeon, follow some of the clues and quests they learned of in the depths, and gather what they need for their next expedition into the depths. Meanwhile, the Stone Thief continues to prey on the surface world and stalk the adventurers from below!

RUNNING SURFACE QUESTS

The descriptions for these quests are looser than the write-ups of the dungeon levels. That's partly due to the nature of dungeons, with their constraints on the movement and actions of the player characters, but it's also because the surface quests are where you really integrate the *Eyes of the Stone Thief* adventures into your campaign. Use the time spent on the surface to bring back places, NPCs, and plot lines from the character's adventurer-tier career, and sow the seeds of foreshadow and doom for their fate once they reach the epic tier.

Remember to let your campaign breathe, especially in the early stages. The overarching quest to destroy the Stone Thief can become oppressive if that's all every session is about. When the characters are on the surface, let them pursue digressions and side treks. Let them get into unexpected difficulties, and include plots that aren't related to the Stone Thief campaign. The living dungeon can always swallow the player characters again when it's time to return to the main plot.

CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

All the usual improvisational tools like icon relationships, failing forward, and creative interpretations of backgrounds apply, but we've also had great success with challenging questions. Many of the quests involve perilous challenges of some sort—navigating the perilous streets of Shadow Port, climbing the leg of a Koru behemoth, sneaking past a castle full of giants, and the like. Instead of detailing every aspect of these challenges yourself, try getting the players to do the work for you. Ask one player a leading question, like *how do you overcome this challenge?* Then, instead of rolling immediately, ask another player to elaborate by asking *what went wrong* or *what problem didn't you know about* or *someone unexpectedly showed up—who or what was it?*

Phrase your questions in a way that gets the player to create specifics; don't give them any room to wriggle out. Don't ask *"did anything go wrong with your cunning plan?"*—it's too easy for a player to say "no, it all worked perfectly." Better to ask *"so, what went wrong with your cunning plan?"* Move from player to player when questioning instead of focusing on one person—go around the table, and bring in quieter players instead of always having the louder, more assertive voices dominate the session.

If a player is stuck for inspiration, maybe an icon roll can jog some ideas, or throw the question open to the table. Once the players have framed the scene, then you break out the d20s and play through the terrible scrape they've created for themselves.

There are two great virtues to asking questions like this. First, it lets the players shape the campaign by taking control of their own destinies. Once they realize that they don't need to wait for the GM to give them a choice of Option A, B, or C, but they can instead go for D, or Q, or B-but-with-a-cunning-twist, they'll start pushing the story more and more, which is great fun for everyone. Second, players create far, far worse situations for themselves than the cruelest GM would ever dare inflict on a group…

Good challenging questions:

- How do you accomplish this task?
- How do you overcome this obstacle?
- How do you find out that bit of information?
- You know someone who can help—who is that?
- What went wrong?
- Someone betrayed you—who was it, and what did they do?
- Your character doesn't know something that's about to prove crucial—what are you missing?
- You found something unexpected—what did you first think it was?
- There's something wrong with the thing you found—what's the problem?
- You see trouble—what sort of trouble?
- Along the way, you run into an obstacle that bars your way. What's the obstacle?

For example, in playtesting, the players were sent to intercept a flying castle. Here's how things went down:

GM: You! How did you all get to the castle?

Player 1: I got two 6s on my relationship with the Priestess. My character prayed, and invisible hands grasped us and carried us into the sky.

GM: Cool. So, player 2, what went wrong?

Player 2: They dropped us early.

GM: How early? Over the sea early, or from a height?

Player 2: From a height. As soon as we got to the flying island with the castle on it, they dropped us. Stupid lazy gods.

GM: Ok, so you're plummeting onto a flying island. Player 3, you're all falling toward something unpleasant. What is it?

Player 3: A nest. A dragon's nest!

GM: You can see all the little black hatchings craning their necks and opening their jaws to gobble up the meaty morsels as you fall toward them. So, are the parents there too, or are they lurking out of sight?

Player 4: They're dead. There's a dragon's corpse lying next to the nest.

Player 1: You fool! You've Batmanned them!

GM: That's a 5 on your Lich King relationship there, isn't it?

Player 4: Er, yeah. Why?

GM: No reason. I'm just going to scribble down some zombie dragon stats while you all work out a way to avoid the falling damage…

Player Input & the Dungeon

If you do let the players frame scenes and take control of the story outside of the dungeon, we recommend *not* doing so when adventuring inside the Stone Thief. Limiting player input brings the game back to an old-school feel. It makes the dungeon feel hostile and mysterious in contrast to the anything-goes surface world.

Quests

The quests divide into two types—those driven by the player characters, and those triggered by the Stone Thief or another foe that the player characters must respond to by thwarting their foes' plans. The player-driven quests all list various ways for the adventurers to get involved. You don't need to run every one of these quests—let the players follow the plot hooks that appeal to them, and build to a climax based on those choices (see *To Catch A Thief*, page 350, for more on how to bring the campaign to a satisfying conclusion).

The foe-driven quests (Antagonist Action, to borrow a term from GUMSHOE) can happen at any time. They're presented in the likely order of use. Hit the players with the ones that appeal most to you, and the rest can happen off-screen as campaign losses.

Player-Driven Quests

Eyes of the Stone Thief: The Prince of Shadows stole the Eyes of the living dungeon. One he keeps; one someone else has. The dungeon wants them both back. With an Eye, the characters can spy on the Stone Thief, or use the Eye when trying to bind the dungeon. The chase is on!

On the Back of the Behemoth: Clues in the dungeon point the characters toward the Koru behemoth Stoneroost. The magic of the behemoth can be a potent weapon against the Stone Thief.

Getting Around: The Stone Thief moves with tremendous speed through the underworld. To pursue the dungeon, the characters need a faster mode of transport. How do they chase the dungeon across the face of the world?

The Inverse Observatory: This flying observatory, ruled by jealous storm giants, can track the movements of the dungeon through the underworld.

Background Checks: Where can the PCs learn more about the Stone Thief?

Trials and Councils: A council of the wise and powerful of the Empire assembles to discuss the matter of the fabled Stone Thief.

The Keys of Marblehall: The mysterious Witch of Marblehall defied the Stone Thief. By delving into her past and her connections to the surface, the characters unlock her secrets.

To Catch a Thief: The characters prepare to defeat the Stone Thief.

Preparing a Trap: The Stone Thief is wily. It will flee if faced with a genuine threat. The characters must find a way to trap the dungeon before they can finally defeat it.

Slaying the Thief: The characters seek a way to destroy the living dungeon. Possible options:

- **Binding:** With the right ritual, and a magical connection to the dungeon, the characters can try to bind it to their will.
- **Destructive Rites:** A variation of the binding rite can destroy the dungeon—if the characters can complete it in time.
- **Forging a Weapon:** The dwarf-smith Grommar hinted that it might be possible to make a weapon that can kill the Stone Thief.
- **Battle of the Behemoths:** With a rare orchid, a little preparation, and a lot of luck, the PCs can trick a Koru behemoth into smashing the dungeon.
- **From Hell's Heart:** There are darker and more destructive powers in the world than the dungeon, and one of them could be used to blast the Stone Thief.
- **Killing the Thief:** The final challenge.

Enemy Actions

The Theft: The Stone Thief consumes a location on the surface world.

Elemental Hunger: The Thief hungers for power.

Race Against The Cult: The adventurers learn that the Cult of the Devourer is engaged in a sinister plot, and they must stop it before the cultists call the dungeon.

Revenge of the Thief: Angered by their meddling, the Stone Thief seeks ways to hurt the adventurers.

Giant Monster: The Stone Thief restocks its monster supply.

The City Devoured: The Stone Thief targets one of the great cities of the Empire for destruction.

Apotheosis: The dungeon becomes a god and the world ends.

The Opposition

The characters aren't safe once they leave the dungeon. The evil of the Stone Thief reaches up to torment them on the surface. This chapter contains several groups of antagonists who can show up to thwart the adventurers as they look for a way to kill the living dungeon.

You're unlikely to need all the listed Opposition teams—use one of them as the ongoing bad guys, and throw one of the others in for variation. For the ongoing bad guys, the players should encounter them on three separate occasions—the first time, they kick the party's collective asses. The second time, it's closer to a fairer fight, but the bad guys escape. (For your convenience, we've listed a way for each group to flee.) In the final battle, of course, the player characters finally get the satisfaction of thoroughly defeating their long-running rivals.

The magic of the leveling system ensures that progression—the Opposition are calibrated as 10th level foes, so they'll be an overwhelming challenge when first encountered (at 5th level), tough but not invincible the second time around (at 6th), and finally eminently defeatable at 7th level.

The Opposition show up at various inopportune moments in the suggested adventures:

- Just as the player characters find the first Eye of the Stone Thief, the Opposition show up to steal it from them (page 314).
- The Opposition races to seize the Inverse Observatory (page 326) before the PCs can use it.
- The dangers of a Koru behemoth aren't enough—the Opposition shows up there too (page 318).
- If the player characters try to destroy or bind the dungeon, they have to contend with Opposition (page 352).

You can also use the Opposition:

- To attack the player characters just as they emerge weakened and exhausted from the dungeon.
- As a battle in the dungeon, especially on the Maddening Stair (page 189) or the Heart of the Stone Thief (page 270).



- To threaten the player characters in ways that a living dungeon cannot (*"we have your child—now hand over the dungeon-binding ritual"*).
- As general-purpose rivals or foes.

Keeping Bad Guys Alive

Even the meekest player tends to take a practical attitude to throat-slitting in fantasy games. Adventuring parties respond to even hinted threats with deadly force, and villainous monologues get cut short by the clatter of initiative dice and *fireballs*. Letting foes escape feels like a defeat to some players—if the enemy is routed and fleeing, that's the time to trample them from behind and slaughter them.

Our recurring villains use various methods to escape the vengeful wrath of the player characters, but to avoid disappointment (or an obsession with eliminating the escaped foes), remind the bloodthirsty players that they'll get another chance to defeat these foes later in the campaign. Encourage the players to focus their animosity on the main nemesis of the campaign, the Stone Thief, not these lesser rivals.

Home Brew Homicidal Villains

Use your own recurring villains if they're already established in the campaign. All you need to do is decide how these existing villains fit into the saga of the Stone Thief. Are they mercenaries hired by some rival icon? Are they connected to the Cult of the Devourer? Or maybe they start out by screwing with the player characters out of revenge for old defeats, and only later become aware of the Stone Thief and come up with their own schemes to take advantage of the dungeon's predations.

The Opposition and Icons

Your best choice for the Opposition may be determined by the players' icon relationships. If the Orc Lord figures large in the players' negative relationships, or they've got lots of positive links with civilized icons like the Emperor/Dwarf King/Priestess, then the Orc Lord's Assassins may be the ideal recurring bad guys for the campaign. If you're getting a lot of mileage out of thwarting the Lich King's plans, then re-skin the Spellblight as undead spirits in thrall to Necropolis.

Opposition	Potential Icon Associations
Vengeful Company	**Crusader**—the living dungeon spawns demons! It must die! **Dwarf King**—sent to kill the dungeon for its crimes against the dwarves. **Emperor**—a secret task force dispatched by the Emperor. **Great Gold Wyrm**—crazed, take-no-prisoners paladins and zealots driven mad by sacred dreams. **Priestess**—again with the crazed zealots, only this time motivated by devotion to *her.* If none of the above fit, and you still want to use the Vengeful Company, then consider tying them to the Provost of Dungeon Town (page 98). Maybe he's trying to destroy the dungeon from within.
Spellblight	**Archmage**—conjured servants of the mad wizard. **Diabolist**—she provided the Spellblight with stolen bodies. **Elf Queen**—it's her deniable shadow agent. **High Druid**—Arcane magic, reclaimed by nature, as a forest reclaims a wizard's tower. **Lich King**—technically, the Spellblight is a collection of ghosts, and so falls under the command of the One-Eyed King. **Three**—each of the three lent a part of their strength to the making of the Spellblight. Alternatively, you can connect the Spellblight to the Witch of Marblehall (page 240), giving you a second-order icon connection—it's working for her, and she's working for one of the icons.
Orc Lord Assassins	The obvious association here is the Orc Lord—the assassins intend to complete Fangrot's mission and bind the Stone Thief. You could also have the assassins working for Fangrot, with orders to stop the player characters. At a stretch, orcs could show up in the service of the Diabolist, Crusader, or the Three.

Describe the garb, tactics, and magic of the Opposition in terms of their iconic master. If the Vengeful Company serve the Crusader, then they're all hollow-eyed, battle-scarred veterans wearing armor that looks battered and blackened, as if it's been through a fire. If they're working for the Emperor, then they're a band of knights in shining armor that look like they rode off the pages of a child's storybook.

The Opposition and the Players' Goals

Orchestrate circumstances so the player characters and the Opposition are, well... opposed, hence the title. As recurring bad guys, the Opposition are not mere recovery-sucking speed bumps on the way to the next encounter—they're actively trying to do something beyond killing the player characters, and that something is going to be bad for the adventurers.

If the PCs want to kill the dungeon, then the Opposition wants to preserve it—presumably to bind it and use it for their own nefarious schemes. If the PCs intend to bind the dungeon, then the Opposition's goal might be to kill it or to thwart the binding ritual. If the PCs are trying to rescue some victim from the dungeon, then the Opposition are bent on some goal that will make it impossible to save anything stolen by the Stone Thief.

Cult of the Devourer

The Cult of the Devourer (see page 302) can stand in for the Opposition if that fits your campaign better. A strike force of cult champions and high priests led by a Secret Master should put a crimp in the plans of any party; add in some summoned demons for muscle if you want. The cult is strongly opposed to the Emperor, Priestess, and Archmage, and it might be allied with any of the evil icons on a temporary basis (the cult's ultimate goal of bringing about the apotheosis of the Stone Thief and destroying the world doesn't fit with any of the long-term schemes of the icons, so any associations are perforce temporary). Still, the cult's allies should be icons opposed by the player characters—make them minions of the Lich King or the Diabolist if those icons are the real Big Bads of your campaign.

The Dungeon as Opposition

Another option is to have the Stone Thief show up to ruin the player characters' plans. Obviously, this only works if the PCs are somewhere on the surface (ruling out the Inverse Observatory or the Back of the Behemoth options), but the Stone Thief could rise from the depths to devour, say, the library where the characters are about to consult a wise sage, or swallow the last remaining deposit of everburning coal in the whole underworld. The PCs then have to mount an expedition into the dungeon to recover what was stolen.

The Vengeful Company

This band of rival adventurers can be mercenaries for hire, loyal lackeys of some villain, or out for revenge on the living dungeon. They cover all the classic fantasy adventuring party tropes. Each member of the Vengeful Company is roughly equal in power, so grab a number of evil opposites equal to the number of player characters and let fly. (If you've more than seven player characters, then a) we salute your GM-fu, and b) the bad guys have a surprising number of twin siblings.)

Strategy & Tactics

The Vengeful Company can show up anywhere. Unlike the Orc Lord's Assassins or the Spellblight, they can be encountered on the streets of Axis or in some dive bar in Glitterhaegen without it being overly remarkable. They move in exactly the same circles as the player characters. Use this fact to set up meetings with the Vengeful Company in places where the player characters can't respond with violence immediately. For example, if the adventurers visit the palace of the Elf Queen to consult the astronomical records of the high elves, then have them run into Laurende Witherleaf at court.

Where possible, the company lets the player characters do the hard work, then swoops in to take the prize. They can also sow trouble to distract the player characters from the quest; use the Company to stir up problems for the player characters that don't directly relate to the Stone Thief plotline.

Travel: The Vengeful Company has access to the same sort of transport as the player characters. If the characters get *teleport*, then the Company also acquires that spell. If the characters steal a skyship, then give the Company a similar vessel or a dragon or a giant flying carpet.

With the exception of Tara, the members of the Company are not very stealthy. When they're not letting the characters clear out the monsters, then show off their toughness by having them carve their way through hordes of foes, just like the player characters do. Try to instill a sense of grudging respect in the players.

In Battle: The Company's tactics are brutally simple. The front-line fighters protect the spellcasters; Tara and Laurende sneak around to cause havoc, and the spellcasters fling magic at their foes until everyone is defeated.

Escaping: The Vengeful Company can escape a fight in several ways:

- Azanth opens a rift in reality and they all escape into some howling netherworld. If the PCs pursue, they're lost in another dimension that only Azanth knows how to navigate.
- Drao pulls his surviving companions into the Ghostlands, and the Vengeful Company travels through the land of the dead.
- If the battle is taking place outdoors anywhere near the Koru barbarian migration route, then Stoneroost (see page 318) shows up, and Harun's tribe swoop down on gargoyle mounts to pick up the Vengeful Company.
- Laurande calls in a favor from the Elf Queen, and the Vengeful Company melts into starlight. Any PCs who know the ways of the elves know their foes have teleported to the Queen's Wood.

Borys Firesword

The bards sing of the deeds of Borys Firesword. Women swoon at the thought of Borys Firesword. Great kings and generals nod approvingly and talk in low, respectful tones of Borys Firesword. Blessed indeed were the dice on which Borys Firesword rolled his Charisma, and it lets him get away with being a cruel, prideful warrior. He boasts he's the best swordsman in the Dragon Empire, and that boast gets repeated and taken up in story and song. Borys Firesword—everyone thinks he's better than you, and don't you just hate that?

Borys might:

- Seduce a player character (or someone close to a PC) to gather information about the adventurers' plans.
- Challenge the adventurers to a duel or other contest to distract them.
- Overplay his hand through arrogance.

Playing Borys: Adopt a confident sneer. Praise the player characters for trying—it's hard for them to have to witness your innate talent win out over their meager abilities.

Variations

- Borys is a hulking brute encased in rune-marked armor. He doesn't speak—he has a tormented goblin slave on a chain as his 'herald' who speaks for him. *"Eek! My master wishes it to be known that you shall all perish!"* In battle, he slings the goblin on his back or uses the wretch as an improvised bludgeon. There are always more goblins to be broken in.
- Borys was a dragon-riding knight of the Empire, until he and his mount tangled with the Red. Now he's hideously scarred and burnt. His sword caught fire in the fury of the Red's breath, and it never stopped burning.

Borys Firesword

10th level troop [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +18

Flaming Sword +15 vs. AC—40 damage, plus 10 ongoing fire damage
Natural 16+: Borys may immediately make a *firebolt* attack as a free action.
Miss: 20 damage, plus 5 ongoing fire damage.

R: Firebolt +15 vs. PD (one nearby enemy, or one far away enemy at −2 atk)—20 damage, plus 5 ongoing fire damage

Veteran Warrior: Attempts to disengage from Borys take a −5 penalty. Once per round, Borys may roll a normal save to intercept an enemy who is moving to engage one of his nearby allies. Borys remains engaged while intercepting.

Arrogant Escalator: As long as Borys is not staggered, he may add the escalation die to his attack rolls.

Dogged: Once Borys becomes staggered, he may ignore all damage from a hit (but not a crit) against AC up to twice per battle.

AC 26
PD 24 **HP 216**
MD 20

Azanth Choketongue

Ambitious Azanth is a stranger to the Dragon Empire. She learned her magical craft in the far south, beyond the Red Wastes, and knows spells that are not found even in the Archmage's books. She labors under a magical curse (or perhaps the consequences of a demonic bargain) that makes her words literally poisonous—those who hear her speak grow sick and perish. The rest of the Vengeful Company have, through whispered team building exercises, developed a resistance to this verbal venom.

Azanth might:

- Know occult secrets from outside the Empire that the PCs need.
- Bewitch their allies and turn friends against each other with poisoned words.
- Betray the rest of the Vengeful Company for power (or the patronage of the Diabolist/Three/Lich King/Cult of the Devourer/Stone Thief).

Playing Azanth: Don't speak—just smile and nod mysteriously, as if you know far more than anyone else can comprehend. If you talk, it's to snarl a nasty insult.

Variations

- Azanth is a former enforcer for the Shadow Port mob. She found her arcane calling late in life—she got the name 'choketongue' for throttling people with her bare hands.
- Azanth is actually the name of a magical hooded cloak, created by a long-dead wizardess. The cloak possesses human hosts and uses them as tools to work its magic. Kill the host, and the cloak just flaps off like a purple bat to find some other unfortunate peasant to be the vessel for its arcane might.

Azanth Choketongue

10th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +17

Dagger +15 vs. AC—20 damage
Natural even hit or miss: Azanth's dagger comes to life and dances in the air. Azanth may make an extra dagger attack during each of her turns following this one. Azanth can have multiple dancing daggers.

C: Poisonous Words +15 vs. MD (one nearby enemy)—Azanth whispers horrible truths about the victim's allies. This turns any positive relationships held by the victim into conflicted ones, and causes the victim's allies to no longer consider it an ally, screwing up bard songs, beneficial spells, and so on. The victim can resist this by taking 40 damage for each positive point they wish to preserve instead.

C: Mind-Blinding Curse +15 vs. MD (up to three nearby enemies)—20 damage. Creatures struck by the curse must treat Azanth as though she was invisible for the rest of the battle (50% miss chance with all attacks). A victim may choose to remove the curse at any time; doing so inflicts 70 psychic damage on the victim.

R: Yawning Void +15 vs. PD (one nearby or far away enemy)—50 damage, and the victim is hampered (save ends) by the tentacles of the night horrors that emerge from a hole ripped in reality. All creatures engaged with the target, friend or foe, also suffer a **+15 vs. PD** attack that does 25 damage on a hit.

Spellshield: As long as Azanth is not staggered, the first attack on her each round that she is aware of targets her MD instead of her AC or PD.

AC 24
PD 20 **HP 190**
MD 28

Tara Zalbera

Zalbera is a professional vampire. She weighed up the pros and cons, and decided that the next step in her career as a thief, burglar, and adventurer was to gain the power and immortality of the undead. She's got a powerful vampire stashed in a sealed coffin somewhere. She drains his blood and uses it to brew a potion that gives her most of the vampiric powers without the drawbacks of actually having to hide from the sun or drink other people's blood to survive. She just does it for fun.

Tara might:

- Break into the PCs' rooms and ransack them for information.
- Have contacts all across the Empire—she's been around for a long time, after all.
- Need to replenish her supply of blood potion to keep going.

Playing Tara: Pretend to be a devil-may-care adventuress, when actually you're as cold and calculating as a spider.

Variations

- Too many potions mean that Tara has crossed over into being a full vampire. She can't abide the sunlight.
- She's actually a construct created by the Stone Thief, made from the blood of the Prince of Shadows and the living stone of the dungeon itself.

Tara Zalbera

10th level spoiler [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +25
Vulnerability: holy

Sudden Knife +15 vs. AC—50 damage
Natural 16+: Tara can make a *vampiric gaze* attack as a free action.

Knife to your Throat +15 vs. PD—no damage, but if the target of this attack takes a standard action or move action during their next turn, Tara may make a *sudden knife* attack with a +4 bonus to hit as an interrupt action that deals double damage if it hits.

C: Vampiric Gaze +15 vs. MD (one nearby enemy): The target is confused for one turn.

Sneak Attack: If Tara's target is engaged, confused, dazed, weakened, vulnerable to her attacks, or unaware of her and has a lower initiative score, then Tara's attack deals an extra 30 damage.

Mist Form: Once per battle, Tara can turn to mist as a quick action. If engaged, she gets a +5 bonus to her disengage check. While in mist form, she cannot attack and has *resist damage 16+*. She may return to her solid form at any time.

Blood Potion: When Tara is staggered or when the escalation die reaches 4 or 6, Tara takes a drink of vampire blood potion. Each drink gives her one of the following benefits:

- An extra use of *mist form* (usually to escape the battle).
- +40 hit points.
- Tara adds the escalation die to her attacks in her next turn.

AC 26
PD 20 **HP 200**
MD 24

Drao of the Ghostlands

Drao walks in two worlds. One of his eyes is green, and it looks upon the living world; the other is grey, and it looks upon the land of the dead. An uncountable host of shades and spirits that only he can hear follow him wherever he goes, begging him to lay them to rest. Once, he tried to answer their pleas, but there were too many. A man might spend his whole life toiling ceaselessly to fulfill their requests, and only lay a tiny fraction of that ghostly horde to rest before dying and joining them himself.

Drao might:

- Know something about a player character that no one living should know.
- Resurrect a dead player character—but demand something in exchange.

Playing Drao: Be distracted by voices only you can hear. Be deliberately gentle and calm, as if trying to contain something darker and more violent.

Variations

- Those aren't human ghosts—Drao's haunted by the spirits of every monster slain by adventurers.
- The unfortunate cleric is an open door for the dead; each round, he's possessed by a different ghost.

Drao of the Ghostlands

The Priestess and Drao are close friends. They are both haunted; he by ghosts, she by gods.

10th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Graven Hammer +15 vs. AC—50 damage
Natural 16+: The target phases out of our reality into the spirit world (save ends). While ghostly, the character cannot attack or interact with anyone except for Drao, but can move through solid objects. The character automatically takes 2d10 damage each round while ghostly from the attacks of Drao's retinue. Only one character can be phased at a time.

C: Chant of the Dead +15 vs. MD (all nearby enemies)—20 damage, and until the end of its next turn, the target is affected by Drao's *ghostly allies* power as though it was engaged with him.

R: Life-Stealing Prayer +15 vs. MD (one nearby or far away enemy)—30 damage, and the target loses a recovery. One ally of Drao's heals 30 hit points.

Lingering: If an ally of Drao is slain, that ally continues acting despite being dead. The ally must make a hard save (16+) every round to remain in the mortal world.

Ghostly Allies: Drao's retinue of ghosts pluck and push at anyone nearby. Foes engaged with Drao who cannot see invisible creatures take a –2 penalty to their attacks on Drao, and on a roll of a 1–5, take 2d10 damage from unseen hands.

AC 26
PD 23 **HP 200**
MD 23

Haron of Stoneroost

Haron comes from a barbarian tribe that lives on the hard stony back of the behemoth Stoneroost (see page 318). As a young warrior, he hunted the gargoyles as is the custom of his tribe. One great gargoyle carried Haron off the back of the behemoth and dropped him in the Dragon Empire. It took three cycles of migration before he found his way home again, and in that time he developed a taste for the ways of civilization. He's got all the classic barbarian physical features—brooding brows, iron-hard muscles, moves like a panther—but dresses in the finest silks and drinks wine from crystal goblets when he's not cleaving skulls with his stone axe. He returns to his homeland whenever Stoneroost lumbers close to the Empire.

Haron might:

- Show up at Stoneroost if the PCs visit there on another errand.
- Start a brutal tavern-style brawl somewhere totally inappropriate, like the Cathedral or an opera house.
- Seek a way to make the barren back of Stoneroost bloom with life, bringing the bounty of the living lands to his tribe.

Variations

- Haron doesn't have a gargoyle-hide cloak—he's a were-gargoyle. He transforms at night.
- Haron was exiled from Stoneroost. He's not welcome back home.

Haron of Stoneroost

Rock beats everything.

10th level wrecker [humanoid]
Initiative: +18

Huge Stone Axe +15 vs. AC—50 damage
Natural 16+: Make it 60 damage instead.
Natural 18+: Let's make it 80 damage total.

C: Whirlwind Attack +15 vs. AC (up to three nearby enemies)—30 damage

Gargoyle Cloak: At the start of his turn, Haron may choose to gain +2 AC or the power of flight until the start of his next turn.

Barbarian Rage: Once per battle, Haron may begin to rage. While raging, he may add the escalation die to his attack rolls. Each turn, roll 1d6; if that roll is less than or equal to the value of the escalation die, Haron takes 10 damage.

AC	**24**	
PD	25	**HP 220**
MD	19	

Laurende Witherleaf

Witherleaf is a wood elf... well, assassin is such a loaded term. Think of her as a specialist in hurrying people along the cycle of life. That sort of nefarious work is normally left to the drow, but Witherleaf has got a talent for it. Her fellow wood elves abhor her cold-hearted nature, but the Elf Queen owes her a favor for certain unspecified services rendered, so Laurende is still welcome in the forests.

She never laughs, and only allows herself a small, secret smile when aiming her bow at the heart of some unsuspecting target.

Laurende might:

- Assassinate a contact or ally of the player characters at the worst possible moment.
- Frame them for murder.
- Cash in her favor with the Elf Queen to somehow impede the adventurers.

Variations

- Laurende's secretly an agent of the High Druid or the Lich King.
- She's not an elf—she's the shade of a long-dead goddess of the hunt, and the dungeon is her last quarry. As the adventurers hunt the dungeon, they're unwittingly worshiping her. Soon, they'll dream of her.

Laurende Witherleaf

After summer, autumn. After life, an arrow in the throat.

10th level archer [humanoid]
Initiative: +20

Swift Scimitar +12 vs. AC (3 attacks)—10 damage
Natural 18+: Laurende pops free and may immediately make a *deadly bow* attack as a free action.

R: Mark the Quarry +15 vs. MD—20 damage. If Laurende makes a *deadly bow* attack against the target as her next action, she may add the escalation die to her attack roll and her crit range.

R: Deadly Bow +15 vs. AC—50 damage
Natural 16+: 10 ongoing damage.

Elven Grace: Laurende gains an extra standard action on rounds when the escalation die is even.

Elven Swiftness: Laurende gains a +5 bonus to disengage checks, and may perform astounding leaps and feats of agility as part of a move action.

AC	**26**	
PD	20	**HP 190**
MD	24	

The Gilded Singer

The Company found the Gilded Singer in the depths of another dungeon, far away beneath the Giantwalk Mountains. The Singer is a beautifully elegant automaton in the shape of a man, made of silver and jewels. Perhaps the gnomes made him in the depths of time. It cannot speak, but it has a music box nestled within its enchanted gears and pistons and wires that can play any of several songs so enchantingly it breaks the hearts of its listeners. The Singer obeys the commands of the other members of the Company, but they must keep a close eye on it—for all its serene beauty, the machine seems bent on causing suffering when left unattended.

The Gilded Singer might:

- Appear as a statue or a treasure in the background of a scene to spy on the adventurers.
- Sing a song that reveals a long-forgotten secret, if the characters can find the metal recording cylinder that holds the song.

Variations

- The Gilded Singer is just a magical puppet—the operator is a horribly ugly gnome whose grotesque appearance kept him from being appreciated for his singing voice.
- The Gilded Singer is a creature from the overworld, sent to gather entertainments for its jaded celestial makers who no longer distinguish between beauty and horror.

The Gilded Singer

10th level spoiler [CONSTRUCT]
Initiative: +13

Precise Spear +15 vs. AC—50 damage
Mechanical Attack: Note the natural attack roll when attacking using *precise spear*. If the Gilded Singer stays engaged with the same foe, it may use that value on subsequent turns when attacking instead of rolling.

C: Enchanting Note +15 vs. MD (up to three nearby foes)—20 damage, and the enemy takes a –4 penalty if it attacks the Gilded Singer next turn.

C: Shattering Note +15 vs. PD (up to three nearby foes)—15 ongoing damage

Recorded Song: The Gilded Singer may sing any one of the following songs at the start of its turn as a quick action. It may sustain the same song from round to round, but loses the current song if it uses *enchanting note* or *shattering note*, or if it suffers a critical hit, or is staggered. Once it loses a song, it cannot sing that song again this battle. The exception is the *discordant song*, which is always available.

- *Song of Woe:* All enemies take a –2 penalty to all saves (so, an easy save is made on 8+, an average on 13+, and a hard on 18+. This also applies to death saves and last gasp saves, by the way).
- *Song of Disruption:* All spells cast by enemies take a –1 penalty to hit.
- *Song of Slumber:* All foes with 72 hit points or fewer must make an easy (6+) save each round or fall asleep.
- *Stolen Song:* When the Gilded Singer begins to sing this song, it must target a nearby foe with a **+15 vs. MD** attack. If the attack hits, the Singer steals that foe's voice. If the targeted foe is a bard, then select one of the bard's songs—that song is stolen and cannot be used as long as the Singer maintains the *stolen song* effect. Spellcasters may still cast their spells. The victim of this effect can only speak in a painful, throaty whisper.
- *Discordant Song:* All nearby foes take damage equal to twice the value of the escalation die.

Construct: The Gilded Singer has the usual construct defenses—no ongoing damage, no conditions.

AC	**24**	
PD	23	**HP 200**
MD	23	

The Spellblight

The Spellblight is the name for a cabal of wizards who once, long ago, sought to challenge the Archmage of their day. They pooled their power, weaving their minds into a single entity whose intellect could encompass the world-shattering spells they hoped would bring them victory.

It wasn't enough. The Archmage destroyed the mages in an arcane duel, disintegrating their bodies. Their collective minds, unable to disentangle themselves and unable to die, fled into the overworld. They're up there still. It's possible to call the Spellblight down from the heavens and temporarily embody them. Their arcane powers rapidly destroy any borrowed bodies from within, but for a few weeks or months, you've got a half-dozen or so powerful arcane spellcasters who share a mind.

Depending on who embodied the Spellblight, its appearance and bonus abilities differ.

Archmage: The Archmage provided the Spellblight with vat-grown bodies. They look like identical robed humans, only they've got bright blue skin and are completely hairless.
Spellblight Power—*Arcane Mastery:* All Spellblight gain *resist arcane magic 16+*.

Diabolist: Sorry, you thought you were selling your *soul?* No, the mistress doesn't want your soul. Your soul is an unremarkable, tawdry thing. Very commonplace. No, what the mistress wants is your body. Please vacate it at once.
Spellblight Power—*Body Thieves:* The Spellblight has a choice of bodies—anyone who owes the Diabolist a debt is a potential host.

High Druid: The Spellblight take their bodies from trees. It's hard to tell at first, but what looked like brown skin and reddish hair is actually polished bark and russet leaves. Their arms are branches; their faces those of dryads who gave their essence to defend the wildwoods.
Spellblight Power—*Wild Growth:* Anyone moving near a Spellblight must make a save to avoid being entangled and stuck until the start of their next turn.

Elf Queen: She gave the Spellblight the bodies of elven knights of old.
Spellblight Power—*Elven Swords:* Each Spellblight may make a free *elven sword* attack each round as a quick action.
Spellblight Power—Elven Sword +15 vs. AC—20 damage, and the target takes a –1 penalty to melee attacks against the Spellblight next turn.

Lich King: The Spellblight's skin is white as marble and cold as a grave in winter. Its eyes are dead and empty despite the melancholy beauty of its face.
Spellblight Power—*Feast on Life:* Whenever a foe uses a recovery, all Spellblight gain a +1 bonus to their attacks on that target next turn.

Three: Only a close examination would reveal that the creature's skin is covered with fine scales, and its eyes are those of serpents. Of course, the fangs and the dragon breath are a dead giveaway.
Spellblight Power—*Breath Weapon:* Each turn, roll 1d6. If the result is equal to or lower than the escalation die, the Spellblight breathes on its foes. **C: Breath Weapon +15 vs. PD (1d3 foes)**—20 damage (fire, acid, or lightning). *Natural even hit:* 10 ongoing damage.

The Spellblight's instructions are to thwart the adventurers and further its master's plans, which does not always mean killing the adventurers. It might teleport in to steal an Eye of the Stone Thief, or stop the player characters from luring the dungeon into a trap, using its arsenal of spells to interfere with them instead of attacking them directly.

Strategy & Tactics

First, the Spellblight needs to find the adventurers. It can travel very swiftly on wings of magic, but it still needs to track them down. Once it finds them, it touches them to lock in its *scrying* power. After that, it can harry the adventurers with *teleports*.

The Spellblight is like an intelligent construct—it has a vast, calculating intellect, like a marvelous piece of clockwork. However, it isn't at all *wise*. It likely has to return to its master for further instructions between missions, giving the adventurers some breathing space.

Travel: Flight, teleportation, or traveling in magical disguise—the Spellblight can show up anywhere.

In Battle: In battle, the Spellblight uses its lesser spells to disable party members, then focuses its fire on the most damaging and dangerous enemies remaining. Use one Spellblight per player character.

Escaping: Again, *teleport*. *poof*

The Spellblight

Magic magnifies your will. Your triumphs and your failures both take place on a grander scale when you're a wizard.

10th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +18

C: Burning Hands +12 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—30 fire damage

R: Lightning Bolt +12 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies in a straight line)—30 lightning damage
Natural even hit: Make another *lightning bolt* attack against an enemy near the target who has not already been the target of a *lightning bolt* this round.

Two Spellblight may combine their powers to cast either of the following spells. One makes the actual attack; the other spends its action incanting and concentrating.

C: Slow +14 vs. MD (1d3 nearby enemies)—50 damage, and the target may not add the escalation die to its attacks (save ends)

R: Wall of Ice +14 vs. PD (up to three foes in a group, anywhere on the battlefield)—50 cold damage, and the target is walled away from the rest of the battlefield. The trapped victims may escape the wall of ice with a DC 25 Dexterity check.
Miss: No damage, but one target still gets walled away.

Three Spellblight may combine their powers to cast either of the following spells. One makes the actual attack; the other two spend their action incanting and concentrating.

C: Mindburn +16 vs. MD (one nearby target)—150 psychic damage, and the target is hampered for the rest of the battle. The target may reduce this damage (in 50-point increments) or avoid the hampering by choosing to lose access to one class feature or background until the next full heal-up.

R: Spellquake +16 vs. MD (all enemies on the battlefield)—30 damage, and the Spellblight alters the battlefield in some fashion. It might turn the area into a (temporary) flying realm, conjure a maze of mirrors, open a dimensional portal, or otherwise discombobulate its foes.

Teleport: The Spellblight may teleport any distance when the escalation die is even.

Transfer Condition: A Spellblight may move any condition afflicting it to another Spellblight at the start of its turn.

AC 25
PD 23 **HP 200**
MD 23

Orc Lord's Assassins

The Stone Thief angers the Orc Lord. His rage sears continents and sacks cities, but he reserves a special rancor for that troublesome dungeon. Not only did it escape his first attempt to seize control of it, the warlord he sent to capture the dungeon—Warlord Fangrot—has betrayed him.

Betrayal cannot be tolerated. The Orc Lord holds his horde together with charisma and ruthlessness. If he allows this failure to endure, if he allows Fangrot to continue to defy him, then that's the crack in the shield, the infected wound that will bring everything down.

So, he sends these assassins into *spit* civilized lands to do what must be done. These are his elite agents—not the most powerful warriors in his command, but quick, clever, agile, and ruthless. They will find the weaknesses of the Stone Thief and bring the dungeon, Fangrot, and the Orc Lord's other enemies back in chains.

Strategy & Tactics

The Orc Lord's assassins can't move openly within civilized lands. When the adventurers are within the confines of the Empire, they're safe from attack. If circumstances force them to follow the player characters into civilized lands, then the orcs move as swiftly as they can and flee once they have their prize. Elsewhere, though, the orcs stalk the player characters, watching for the right moment to strike at them—suddenly, brutally, and with terrible ferocity.

The goblin scouts that accompany the orcs are more flexible—there are goblins from Drakkenhall to First Triumph and all points in between.

Travel: The assassins ride swift wyverns, black as night and hungry as wolves. These hunting beasts can follow a scent for hundreds of miles even in flight.

In Battle: Throatcutter occupies the party's front-line fighters, while the blood sorcerers and orc fanatics carve up the weaker foes. Lots of mooks means lots of Blood Points for the sorcerers to work with; if the players wipe out the mooks first, they'll likely face a few demons next round. The wyverns circle overhead, striking wherever they can do the most harm and letting their poisonous stings do most of the work.

Escaping: Grab a wyvern and flee. Really, only Master Throatcutter needs to escape—there are always more orcs to shore up the numbers of assassins.

The Enemy of my Enemy...

Using the Orc Lord's Assassins as the Opposition creates an interesting dynamic in the dungeon. The characters could ally with Warlord Fangrot against the orcs from the surface (*"let us past Deep Keep and we'll kill the assassins when we meet them again"*) or vice versa (*"Give us the Eye of the Stone Thief, and we'll give you Fangrot's head"*), or play one off against the other (*"thanks for the Eye! Here's Fangrot's head. Watch out, his body's still attached!"*)

Master Throatcutter

It's a title, an honorific *and* the only name he answers to. Master Throatcutter's an old, old orc. He's been with the Orc Lord for a very long time. He forgets the years; it's easier to reckon time in kills, in notches on his daggers, and by that method he's up in the thousands. Master Throatcutter is not as fast as he once was, and his blood is thick and slow and cold compared to the savage fire of a young orc, but he knows more about killing up close than anyone else in the world.

Master Throatcutter might:

- Capture a player character and interrogate them about the living dungeon.
- Hurt an icon badly enough to remove them from play (no icon benefits) for a few sessions (*he shivved the Priestess and survived!?!*").
- Fight dirty by poisoning the adventurers or tricking them.



Master Throatcutter

Double-strength 10th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +18

Jagged Sword +15 vs. AC (2 attacks)—50 damage
Natural even miss: 20 damage.
Natural odd miss: Throatcutter gains a +1 bonus to his AC until the start of his next turn.
Natural even hit: 15 ongoing poison damage.
Natural odd hit: Pick one of the target's spells/powers/special attacks/items. That ability can't be used in the target's next turn.
Very Dangerous: Master Throatcutter's crit range expands by 3 unless he's staggered AND his opponent is not staggered.

Assassins' Bow +15 vs. AC—100 damage
Deadly Aim: If the escalation die is 2 or more, the bow deals 50 extra damage.

Damn Dirty Fighter: If anyone engaged with Master Throatcutter rolls a natural 1–5 on a d20 for any reason, Master Throatcutter may make an immediate *low blow* against them.

[Special trigger] **Low Blow +15 vs. PD**—20 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends)

Fight Another Day: As a move action, Master Throatcutter can attempt to flee the field of battle. Roll a d6. If the roll is less than or equal to the escalation die, he flees. If he succeeds, he immediately vanishes (smoke bomb, grabs a trailing rope from his wyvern, uses a hostage as a shield, emergency *teleportation amulet*). Each time in the campaign that Throatcutter uses this power, add a +1 modifier to the dice roll.

AC	**26**	
PD	23	**HP 450**
MD	23	

Master Blood Sorcerer

Are these part of the same cult of sorcerers that serve Fangrot? Or are there other sects of orc spellcasters? And does it really matter when they're melting your face?

9th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +16

Ritual Dagger +14 vs. AC—40 damage, and add two points to the Blood Magic pool.
Natural 16+: Add another two points to the Blood Magic pool.

R: Blood Call: +14 vs. MD (one nearby target)—15 damage, and add four points to the Blood Magic pool.
Natural even hit: The target becomes vulnerable until the start of the blood sorcerer's next turn.

R: Blood Blast: +14 vs. PD (1d3 nearby targets)—25 damage per point spent from the Blood Magic pool.

Group Ability—Blood Magic Pool: Blood sorcerers accumulate magical power in a pool shared by all the blood sorcerers in the combat. Use a die or tokens to track the accumulated points. If all blood sorcerers in the combat are slain with points left in the Blood Magic pool, then the body of the last sorcerer explodes, inflicting 1d6 damage per remaining Blood Magic point on all nearby creatures.

Gather Blood: As a quick action, the blood sorcerer can gather power. Until the start of the blood sorcerer's next turn, add one to the Blood Magic pool for each creature in the combat that dies. If the blood sorcerer takes damage while using this ability, it must make a save (11+) to continue gathering blood. Multiple blood sorcerers can use this ability at the same time, but each death still only contributes one point to the pool.

Summon Demon: As a standard action, the blood sorcerer summons a demon. The master blood sorcerer may summon hooked demon mooks (4 points; multiple mooks can be summoned as a single action), giant vrocks (16 points), or nalfeshnee (20 points).

AC 25
PD 19 **HP 170**
MD 23

Orc Fanatics

An orc fanatic fights as though he does not expect to survive this battle, which is usually pretty accurate.

9th level mook [HUMANOID]

Hooked Sword +14 vs. AC—20 damage
Advantage of Surprise: If the escalation die is 2 or less, the orc fanatics deal +20 damage with *hooked sword* attacks.

Vengeful: The orc fanatics gain an extra attack for every three fanatics (round down) killed since their last turn. For example, if the mob contains eight fanatics, and six are killed, the remaining two fanatics can make two attacks each, or one fanatic could make one attack and the other make three.

AC 25
PD 22 **HP 45 (mook)**
MD 22

Mook: Kill one orc fanatic mook for every 45 damage dealt to the mob.

Goblin Elite Scout

These scouts spy on the Imperial legions, sabotage supply lines, and set the countryside ablaze in advance of the Orc Lord's coming.

9th level mook [HUMANOID]

Venomous Short Sword +14 vs. AC—15 damage, plus 10 ongoing poison damage

R: Cunning Dart Crossbow +14 vs. AC (one nearby target, or one far away target at −2atk)—10 damage, plus 10 ongoing poison damage

Really Shifty Bugger: Goblins gain a +5 bonus to disengage checks, and may automatically pop free if an attacker rolls a 1–5 when attacking them.

Know Your Weakness: At the start of a battle involving elite goblin scouts, make one **+14 vs. MD** attack per three elite goblin scouts. If this attack hits, the target must nominate one of their spells/powers. If the target uses that spell/power in the battle, the target becomes vulnerable until the start of their next turn.

AC 25
PD 19 **HP 45 (mook)**
MD 23

Mook: Kill one elite goblin scout mook for every 45 damage dealt to the mob.

Battle Wyvern

You train a horse for battle by teaching it not to panic and flee. You train a wyvern for battle by teaching it not to rampage and eat everyone on both sides of the fight.

Large 10th level wrecker [BEAST]
Initiative: +15

Ripping Talons +15 vs. AC (2 attacks)—50 damage
Two hits on the same creature in one round: The wyvern may make a free *deadly tail stinger* attack on that creature during its next turn

Tearing Jaws +15 vs. AC—120 damage
Natural even hit: The wyvern may make a free *deadly tail stinger* attack during its next turn.

[Special trigger] **Deadly Tail Stinger +15 vs. PD**—40 damage, and the target takes 20 ongoing poison damage (difficult save ends, 16+)
Natural 16+: The target is impaled by the stinger. The target is now grabbed, and the wyvern may not make any more *deadly tail stinger* attacks until the grab ends. Any ongoing poison damage afflicting the target automatically increases by 10 points per round.

Flight: The wyverns are poor but dogged flyers.

Swoop: If the escalation die is even, and the wyvern is not engaged, then it may make a free *deadly tail stinger* attack this turn.

AC 26
PD 19 **HP 440**
MD 24

Orc Assassins

Number of PCs*	Master Throat-cutter	Master Blood Sorcerer	Orc Fanatics	Goblin Scouts	Battle Wyvern
3	1	1	4	4	0
4	1	1	6	6	0
5	1	1	6	6	1
6	1	2	9	9	1
7	1	3	12	12	1

* PC level is irrelevant—this is an overwhelming fight at lower levels, but as the PCs grow in strength, they become better able to handle the rematch. Assume that Throatcutter can get reinforcements from the Orc Lord to replace any orcs slain in earlier fights.

The Cult of the Devourer

Foes both within and without threaten the Dragon Empire. There are obvious, overwhelming threats like the Orc Lord or the Lich King, and then there are more subtle dangers, like the Cult of the Devourer. This secret society has agents in many places, hiding their occult beliefs, conspiring in secret, all preparing for the day when the Stone Thief rises as a Living God-Dungeon to devour all civilization.

(That part, where the cities of the Empire get eaten, won't be subtle. Up until their god ends the age, subtlety is the rule. After that, no subtlety, just triumph and carnage.)

Membership in the cult is hereditary for the most part. According to cult traditions, their ancestors were exiled (unjustly) from the Empire many ages ago, and they swore to bring down civilization and have their revenge. In the intervening centuries, the descendants of the exiles crept back into society, but the oaths of vengeance are still passed down, parent to child. The cult also recruits or blackmails useful minions. Others seek out and join the cult to get access to the cult's arcane secrets.

These days, the cult worships the Stone Thief as a god. Some cultists believe their ancestors were exiled for this veneration of the living dungeon, but it's more likely that the cult adopted the dungeon as a doomsday weapon long after they were exiled. At this point, who's using who as a weapon is unclear—that's the problem with pinning your hopes on sentient dungeons. They just don't bring about the end of civilization when you want them to.

Truth in Advertising

The cult doesn't actually call itself the Cult of the Devourer, although that's how it is referred to in the histories of the Empire. Different branches of the cult use different names, usually variations on the 'Oathsworn' or the 'Sworn Brotherhood' or the 'Loyal Ones.' A single name isn't important when they all share the same dreams.

The Secret Masters

The undying (actually, unaging—they die just fine when stabbed) masters of the cult dwell in the depths of the Stone Thief, in the Onyx Catacombs (page 244). The youngest of them went down into the darkness more than eighty years ago. There, in the stolen ruins of that dark city, they worship the Stone Thief and try to guide the dungeon toward apotheosis by eating sources of magical power. They're immensely powerful spellcasters. Also, they've got scurvy, rickets, and all sorts of other interesting conditions associated with living underground for decades.

The Surface Cult

The surface cult is made up of several different branches, united only by their loyalty to the Secret Masters. Most cultists hold true to the ancient oaths of vengeance, working to bring about the apotheosis of the Stone Thief and the end of the world. Others are less committed, and they see the cult as a criminal syndicate or sorcerous cabal. They pay lip service to the idea of ending the world and don't dare openly defy the Secret Masters, but prefer using the cult's resources and magic for their own ends. Still others are cultists only out of tradition—there are little isolated villages where all the peasants go to a cave and pray for the dungeon to come to the world instead of going to a church and praying for a good harvest, but are otherwise just plain folks.

Apart from the few unbalanced fanatics who make the perilous pilgrimage into the Stone Thief, there's little direct contact between the two parts of the cult. The Secret Masters have one huge advantage—the magical oath sworn by all initiates of the Devourer allows the Secret Masters to force them to obey orders, on pain of being swallowed by the earth.

Dream Communication

The Secret Masters communicate their commands to the surface cult using dreams. (*Message* spells are unreliable from within the living dungeon.) These dreams can be hard to interpret, and they usually take the form of intense and troubling nightmares about being buried alive. The leaders of the surface cult cannot respond in kind—the Masters call them, not the other way around. When the surface cult need to report to the Masters, they must either wait for a dream message, or else send a pilgrim to find the Stone Thief and try to deliver a letter.

Powerful entities and dreamers can tap these dreams. The Great Gold Wyrm is especially adept at this, and doubtless the Diabolist, the Priestess, the Elf Queen, the High Druid, or the Archmage could do so if they chose. The Hag Pheig (see page 154) eavesdrops on the cult from within the dungeon. Sensitive souls (sorcerers with fey heritage, for example) can also find themselves trespassing in the dreamworld. And, of course, the player characters might blunder into a dream through some unlikely confluence of circumstances (nearly dying in the dungeon, a botched divination spell, going undercover in the cult and participating in an initiation ceremony).

Rites & Mysteries of the Cult

The cult's eschatology revolves around the coming age when the world will be devoured and the 'usurpers and traitors' of the Dragon Empire punished. Rank-and-file cultists believe that when this new age comes to pass, they'll take over and rule the ruins. Their more... committed brethren believe that there won't be much left, but it's worth it as long as the cult's enemies get what they deserve, or the world is destroyed, but they'll join with the Devourer and attain some form of godhood. Until that day, the cult demands that its followers conceal themselves, strengthen the cult, and worship the Stone Thief. Some branches of the cult practice human sacrifice (or elven/dwarven/gnomish/halfling sacrifice—they're not picky. Half-orc sacrifice is more trouble than it's worth.)

The cult possesses a rare form of magic that draws on the power of the underworld. Cult members with the talent for arcane wizardry learn this magic, so they can throw all sorts of nasty spells of stone and darkness and destruction at their enemies. The cult also summons various underworld creatures as servants and guards, like ankhegs, bulettes, or gargoyles.

Here are three rites of note:

Initiation: Those who join the cult must swear a magical oath that binds them to the Secret Masters, the overthrow of civilization, and the Devourer. The oath can only be sworn voluntarily, without coercion of any kind. A player character who swears the oath gets a 1-point negative relationship with the Emperor (or another civilized icon, like the Archmage or Dwarf King), and is permanently vulnerable (attacks against them have their crit range expanded by 2) to the attacks of the cult. The benefits are that they share the dream communications sent by the Secret Masters, may learn the secret spells of the cult, can attend meetings, and possibly get to bring down the cult from within. Those who have sworn the oath may also freely pass the Alabaster Sentinel (see page 206) and other cult warding spells.

Call the Devourer: This ritual attracts the attention of the living dungeon. It creates telluric vibrations that echo through the underworld, drawing the Stone Thief like blood draws a shark. When the dungeon rises, the Maw opens directly beneath the place where the ritual was performed.

A single enactment of the ritual is unlikely to catch the dungeon's attention. The cult must often perform it night after night for many months until the Stone Thief swims close enough to hear their prayers. The efficacy of the ritual may be increased by arcane means. Ritual sacrifices work, but so does building a network of underground tunnels to serve as a channel and amplifier for the cult's signals.

The primary use of this ritual is to draw the Stone Thief to places of power. Of course, since these places of power are rarely unguarded, the cult can't just set up a temple on the exact spot. Instead, they build hidden temples within a few miles of the target place, draw the Stone Thief into the right area, and then hope the dungeon senses the magical bounty they've found for it. (If the Stone Thief still had its Eyes, then it wouldn't need the cult—see page 313 for more on the Eyes of the Stone Thief).

The cult also uses this rite to attack their enemies. If the enemy happens to live atop a wellspring of magical energy, that makes things easier, but usually the cult has to build a secret temple adjacent to the stronghold of their intended victim, conduct the rite over and over, then escape when the dungeon rises and devours their temple and everything around it. The last time the cult attacked a major city successfully was four hundred years ago, when the Stone Thief consumed part of Highrock (the cult, of course, takes credit for the fall of that city—in your campaign, they may be wholly responsible, or else they just took advantage of an ongoing cataclysm).

The third use of this rite is as part of the cult's own ceremonies of veneration. They pray to the Devourer to come—but not yet, oh Lord, not yet.

For more on this rite and how the player characters might use it, see *Luring the Dungeon* on page 350.

Punishment of Traitors: Those who betray the cult meet a particularly horrible fate. The cult knows a curse that buries the victim alive. Only those who have been initiated into the cult are vulnerable to this rite. Only a superior in the cult (a cult leader or Secret Master) may bestow the curse, but there's no known way to resist or break it.

The curse dooms the victim to be sucked into the earth and buried alive. If the victim sets foot on the ground, they must immediately start making last gasp saves. Failing

The Secret Rite

The Secret Masters of the cult in the Stone Thief have another ritual—a rite of binding that they believe will enable them to command the living dungeon when it becomes the Devourer. Optionally, copies of this rite might be found in a cult stronghold on the surface, but it is more likely that the characters just find references to the rite. If they want the full ritual, they'll have to go and take it from the Secret Masters in the Onyx Catacombs (page 256).

Oath-Cursed Characters

If the player characters wind up as oath-sworn cultists, either by trying to infiltrate the cult or through the machinations of Maeglor (see page 206), then they're vulnerable to being blasted with the *Punishment of Traitors* curse. No one has ever escaped this curse—until now! The player characters might:

- Have the help of an icon like the Priestess to break the curse.
- Bargain with earth spirits to free the cursed character from being entombed in the underworld.
- Travel to the distant land where the cult first learned their elemental magic and discover a counterspell (or, if travel isn't in the cards, find a practitioner of the elemental magic in the Dragon Empire).
- Get entombed in the earth, only to be eaten by the Stone Thief. The cursed characters are now denizens of the dungeon, unable to leave until the living dungeon is finally slain.

four last gasp saves means the victim sinks into the ground and—presumably—suffocates, although cult tradition insists that the traitors remain alive and conscious in their deep graves until the Devourer comes for them.

Presumably, fleeing to the overworld or getting a permanent *flying* spell could allow a traitor to escape this punishment. No one has managed this so far.

CULT TEMPLES

Cult temples may be found all over the Empire, if you know where to look. The temples are always kept hidden, either in underground caves, or disguised as secular buildings like warehouses or guildhalls. If the cult has managed to stay hidden in a region for centuries, their temple complex may be surprisingly large; night by night, year by year, generation by generation, the devoted followers of the cult toiled to expand their place of unholy worship. Such established temples are rare, though—more often, a cult temple is little more than an altar in a basement, along with a ritual space where the cultists may enact the ceremony of calling the Devourer.

Temples that might show up in your campaign:

- Leave the bustle of the market square and hurry down the cobbled streets that wind through the slums. Watch the walls as you pass by and read the secret messages written in the cracks in the plaster. They will tell you which alleyway to turn down. Step over the slumbering beggars—and be warned, some of them are temple guardians with steel knives beneath their rags, and they will kill you if you betray our secrets—and knock at the third door along. Knock three times, then twice. No more, no less. There will be no answer, but the door will unlock and then you may descend the steep, narrow stairs that leads to our temple. It is a humble place, with water-stained walls and no light save the lanterns we carry with us, but what does that matter? Here, hidden from prying eyes and pricking ears, we sing the songs that will end this corrupt city. Each night, our call rings out in the deeps, and the dungeon hears it. Closer, ever closer, draws the Thief.
- We have always lived in the shadow of the mountain. My grandfather's grandfather had two sons. One was my grandfather's father, and he was loyal. The other was a rebellious boy, and he talked about leaving the mountain and going out into the Empire. He talked about going to see elves, and the sea, and did not listen when his father told him of the evils of outsiders, just as I am telling you. His father pleaded with him to listen, but he was headstrong, and was determined to go.

  So, one night, the door in the cellar opened—that door over there, the one you must never touch except on holy nights. There is a door like it under every house in this village. The door opened, and they came out and dragged the rebellious boy away. They carried him down to the temple and laid him on the altar, and then they brought my grandfather's father down and handed him a knife.

  That is loyalty, as true as the stones of this temple. That is faith, as hard as stone. We have built something here, in the shadow of the mountain, that is bigger than any one life, and it has endured many times longer than any one life. In time, you will add your work to the temple, making it stronger and bigger, and you will tell your sons this story. And one day—perhaps tomorrow, perhaps next year, perhaps in a dozen more ages of the world—the god will hear the prayers we sing in this temple, and it will rise and devour the outsiders.

  And then we will leave the valley and enter a new world that has been washed clean.
- You look at me, and you do not see me. Why should you? I am a servant, a porter in this school for wizards. There are a thousand thousand more wonderful and beautiful things to see here than a quiet man who carries baskets of robes down to the cellars to be washed. Students go to and fro, carrying their books of spells and gossiping in whispers about their classmates, and they pay no attention to me. Wizards go to and fro, talking in low tones about some intrigue in Horizon, and they do not notice me. You do not notice me.

  I have dreamed of your destruction. They are not my dreams—the Masters sent them to me. In the dreams, they taught me how to make the shrine in the cellar, how to chant the rites of calling. Soon, the god will come and devour this house of wizardry.

  And as it steals the school, as you all flee before its glory, as you weep that some enemy has struck you with a most unexpected attack, you still will not see me. Why should you? I am a servant, a servant of Secret Masters.
- Welcome to our guildhall! Magnificient, I'm sure you'll agree. Yes, that's solid gold. So's that. So's she. Our guild has been blessed with good fortune. We've got mines all over the Empire. Don't listen to the lies of the dwarves—they're not the only ones who know where to find wealth in the dark places underground. No, we have… other sources, which need not concern you. Please, come this way. So, you want a loan? We'd be happy to help. All we ask is a little favor in return…

EARTHSPEARS

One common item that the PCs might find in a cult temple is a ritual item called an Earthspear. Each spear is covered with runes of earth power, suggesting that it was designed as a weapon against the dungeon. In effect, they're a magic dungeon-hunting harpoon—for each Earthspear thrust into the dungeon's walls, the submergence die *decreases* by one. Using an Earthspear requires hitting AC 25 with a melee or ranged attack. Each spear can only be used once. A cult temple generally contains 1d4 + 1 Earthspears.

The cult, by the way, has no idea what Earthspears do—they've forgotten that these weapons were used by their ancestors to trap the dungeon, long ago.

CULTISTS

HENCHMEN

Both cult initiates and cult acolyte mooks have abilities that help their non-mook superiors. Technically, these powers really 'belong' with the non-mook foes, but rather than repeat the sample powers over and over, we've stuck them in the mook write-ups. Just remember to check the mook statblocks before a fight involving cultists.

OLD GRUDGES

Several cult powers key off icon relationships with icons that the cult has a grudge against (initially, the 'civilized' icons—the Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, and Priestess.) If, over the course of the campaign, another icon threatens to seize control of their holy dungeon, then that icon gets added to the enemies list. So, if the Orc Lord's stalled efforts to seize the dungeon get underway again, or if a PC working for the Diabolist comes close to binding the dungeon, add the Diabolist to that list of icons.

CULT INITIATE

How many cultists are there? Not many. But enough.

5th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +8

Ritual Dagger +10 vs. AC—9 damage

Blend In: Anyone in the Empire might be a member of the cult. If the initiate attacks with surprise, it gets a +2 bonus to its first attack.

Die for the Cult! If a nearby non-mook member of the cult is hit by an attack, the initiate may leap in the way. Reduce the damage from the attack by the initiate's remaining hit points, then remove the initiate from the battle. Any remaining damage hits the original target of the attack instead of transferring to other mooks.

AC 21
PD 15 **HP 18 (mook)**
MD 19

Mook: Kill one cult initiate mook for every 18 hp you deal to the mob.

CULT ACOLYTE

The acolytes aspire to become high priests and enforcers before the world is devoured.

8th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +11

Ritual Dagger +13 vs. AC—20 damage
Natural even hit: 10 poison damage.

Die for the Cult! If a nearby non-mook member of the cult is hit by an attack, the acolyte may leap in the way. Reduce the damage from the attack by the acolyte's remaining hit points, then remove the acolyte from the battle. Any remaining damage hits the original target of the attack instead of transferring to other mooks.

Henchmen: If two or more cult acolytes engage the same target, any non-mook cultists have a +1 bonus to their attacks against that target.

AC 23
PD 18 **HP 36 (mook)**
MD 22

Mook: Kill one cult acolyte mook for every 36 hp you deal to the mob.

CULT ASSASSIN

*Die! Diediediediediediedie *__dies__**

8th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +16

Murderous Stabbing +13 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 16+: The cult assassin frenzies and may immediately make another *murderous stabbing* attack on the same target. If it does so, the cult assassin takes 25 damage.
Natural even miss: The cult assassin frenzies and may immediately make another *murderous stabbing* attack on the same target. If it does so, the cult assassin takes 25 damage.

R: Assassin's Arrow +13 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 16+: 15 ongoing poison damage.

Surprise Attack: If the cult assassin attacks with surprise, it gets a +2 bonus to its first attack and deals an extra 20 damage.

Fanatic: The cult assassin keeps fighting even when reduced to 0 hit points. It dies when it is not engaged with a foe, or when it hits –72 hit points. It may not spend hit points to make extra *murderous stabbing* attacks when at 0 hp or fewer.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 144**
MD 18

Cult Sorcerer

Taught magic in their dreams by the Secret Masters, the sorcerers channel the elemental power of the Stone Thief to the surface.

7th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

Stone Stave +12 vs. AC—25 damage
Natural 16+: The target pops free from the sorcerer and is stunned.

R: Earth Take You +12 vs. PD—20 damage, and the target is stuck (hard save ends, 16+; a nearby ally can spend a move action to give an extra save that succeeds on an 11+. The effect also ends if all sorcerers are killed).

C: Darkness Consume You +12 vs. PD (1d3 nearby stuck targets)—40 damage

R: Bewildering Shades +12 vs. MD—20 psychic damage
Natural roll higher than target's Wisdom: The target is confused until the end of its next turn.

Merge with Earth: As a move action, the sorcerer may sink into the ground, and is considered to be burrowing.

AC 24
PD 22 **HP 144**
MD 18

Cult Enforcer

The enforcers keep discipline within the cult as well as protect their superiors. They've murdered many of their friends and neighbors to keep the temple secret.

7th level blocker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +12

Crushing Mace +12 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 16+: The target loses a move action in its next turn.

Stalwart: If the enforcer is not staggered, then at the start of the enforcer's turn, choose one enemy engaged with the enforcer. That enemy does not gain the benefit of the escalation die until the start of the enforcer's next turn.

Grudge-Bearer: The enforcer's crit range expands by +1 for every positive relationship point the target has with any of the following icons: Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess.

Nastier Specials

Nothing Left to Live For: If there isn't a higher-level cultist left in the fight, then the enforcer may add the escalation die to its attacks, and can attack twice each round.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 108**
MD 17

Cult High Priest

The high priests aspire to one day travel to the bowels of the god and enter the Chamber of Transcendence, so that they might ascend—or, rather, descend—to join the Secret Masters.

9th level leader [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Ritual Dagger +14 vs. AC—30 damage
Natural 18+: The target takes 20 ongoing damage and is stunned (save ends both), and the high priest pops free. The high priest may no longer make *ritual dagger* attacks.

Stone Talons +14 vs. AC—40 damage
Natural even hit or miss: 10 ongoing poison damage.

R: Death Curse +14 vs. MD—40 damage. Until the start of the high priest's next turn, the target is vulnerable to attacks made by members of the cult.

Command the Cult: If the high priest is unengaged, then at the start of the high priest's turn, roll three d20s and put them aside. Any other cultist may take one of these d20s and use it instead of making a normal roll.

Grudge-Bearer: The high priest's crit range expands by +1 for every positive relationship point the target has with any of the following icons: Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess.

Nastier Specials

Fanatic: The high priest's *command the cult* power works even when the high priest is engaged, as long as the high priest is also staggered.

AC 25
PD 19 **HP 180**
MD 23

Cult Champion

If might makes right, then the cult's got a hulking pile of righteousness on its side.

Double-strength 9th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +16

Crushing Hammer +14 vs. AC—70 damage
Natural 18+: The target's weapon, shield, or one of its magic items is destroyed by the champion, or else the target takes another 50 damage.
Natural odd hit: The target loses its next move action.
Miss: 30 damage.

Wild Swing +14 vs. AC (1d3 nearby targets)—40 damage

Vengeful: If a target that the cult champion is engaged with attacks a non-mook cultist the cult champion make immediately make a *crushing hammer* attack on that target as an opportunity attack.

Grudge-Bearer: The cult champion's crit range expands by +1 for every positive relationship point the target has with any of the following icons: Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess.

Nastier Specials

Guilt by Association: The cult champion's *grudge-bearer* ability also applies to conflicted relationships.

Skilled Defender: Any attempts to disengage from the cult champion take a –5 penalty.

AC	**25**	
PD	23	**HP 360**
MD	19	

Secret Master

They're not quite undead, but not wholly alive either.

Double-strength 9th level caster
Initiative: +16

Stone Stave +14 vs. AC—80 damage
Natural 16+: The target is stunned (save ends) and pops free of the Secret Master.

C: Call the Devourer +14 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—The Master shapes the dungeon, summoning weapons or obstacles out of the living stone. 30 damage, and the target must make a DC 30 Dexterity or Constitution check to avoid another 30 damage or one of the following conditions of the Secret Master's choice—dazed, stuck, or 10 ongoing damage (all save ends).

R: Maw of the Devourer +14 vs. PD (one nearby or far away character)—40 damage, and the target becomes stuck (save ends).
Consumed by the Dungeon: If the target fails to save against being stuck, it must start making last gasp saves instead.

C: Fires of Ancient Hatreds +14 vs. MD (all nearby enemies)—The target must roll any positive or conflicted icon relationship dice with the Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, or Priestess. Take 40 damage for each die that rolls a 5 or 6. The character may avoid the damage from a die by turning the die into a negative relationship instead.

Wicked Prayers: As a standard action, the Secret Master may give all other members of the cult a +1 bonus to all attacks. This bonus is canceled if the Secret Master suffers more than 30 damage.

AC	**25**	
PD	19	**HP 360**
MD	23	

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Know thy enemy. Knowledge is power. The best weapon is a good book. These and other aphorisms that wizards like to spout to explain why they never bothered to learn how to hit people with swords have truth behind them. Once the player characters realize that this dungeon can't be beaten by simply crawling through it, they're likely to go in search of information about the Stone Thief.

The living dungeon is many ages old, but it's still an obscure topic. Also, sages who learn too much about the Stone Thief have a habit of vanishing under mysterious (cult-of-the-devourer knife-in-the-back) or wholly obvious (a giant hole in the ground where their sagely abode once stood) circumstances. There are only a few places in the Empire where the characters can find information about the Stone Thief. The obvious place to start is with the icons—use an icon relationship roll to give the players hints or leads when they're stuck on what to do next.

In addition to the leads, we've noted any side quests or special missions that the icons might require—say, as a complication when a relationship die comes up with a 5.

Archmage: As guardian of the Empire against magical threats, the Archmage suspects the existence of a cult that worships the dungeon (page 302). He knows of the fabled Inverse Observatory (page 326) and guesses that it might be possible to track the Stone Thief from there. He might also theorize that there are ways to bind or even destroy the dungeon with the right ritual, but alas! Any such rituals were lost when his predecessor's great library at Quillgate was destroyed (page 214).

- In fact, some have speculated that the Stone Thief was responsible for the destruction of Quillgate. If the adventurers find any remains of the library in the dungeon, and bring him any surviving books or scrolls, he would count that as a worthy deed.
- He's also noticed that the dungeon appears drawn to places of magical power—if that's true, what's it doing with all that elemental power? Discovering the secrets of the Crafthouses (page 249) or uncovering the cult's plan to being about the dungeon's transcendence into the Devourer fulfills this request.

Crusader: The Crusader's spies and torturers have identified agents of a cult that worships the dungeon (page 302), and might even know the location of one of their temples on the surface. They also know that the Stone Thief seeks out places of power, probably to feed on the magical energy contained within. As for killing the dungeon, the best thing to do would be to find a weapon (page 354) or even a poison (page 350) that can affect the Stone Thief.

- The orc demon-summoners who serve the Godtick (page 183) must be wiped out, and the Godtick slain—such creatures are parasites even on the dark gods. Destroy them with fire.
- Getting a current reading from the Clock of Hell (page 197) is also obviously of importance to the Crusader. His stratagems rely on precise timing; the last thing he wants is an unscheduled apocalypse.

Diabolist: The Diabolist knows that the living dungeon consumes places of power, and she can foresee an apocalypse in which it becomes something far worse than a mere thief (see *Apotheosis*, page 349). She suspects the involvement of the Cult of the Devourer (page 302) and guesses that there may exist a way to bind the dungeon (page 352).

If the Diabolist is behind the Witch of Marblehall, then she'll play it cagey in the early stages of the campaign. She might back both the player characters and the Witch, figuring that one of them will find a way to capture the dungeon. Later, she might send the characters in search of the ruins of Marblehall (page 227) or have the Witch aid them.

- Like the Crusader, the Diabolist also has an interest in the fabled Clock of Hell (page 197)—and would be especially interested in ways to manipulate it into opening prematurely. Not that she would ever do so, of course. She's a friend of the Empire. She simply has an academic interest in apocalypses.
- The wizard Iyana of the Red Wastes (page 114) is a former apprentice of the Diabolist. Dear sweet Iyana… so *independent,* so *wayward.* So *disloyal.* Finding Iyana and bringing her back to the Hell Marsh—for her own good—would be seen as a personal favor by the Diabolist.

Dwarf King: The Dwarf King knows plenty about the Stone Thief—it preyed on his ancestor's realm, long ago. He can identify the Custodians as elemental spirits, or even give a ritual to capture one. He suggests ways of luring the Thief (see *To Catch a Thief*, page 350). Should the adventurers brave the dungeon, he asks them to find what remains of Grommar (page 68) or even the lost treasury (page 216). He can predict the location of the Stoneroost behemoth (page 318).

- An eye for an eye—the Dwarf King has a grudge against the dungeon, and would like to have one of the Stone Thief's Eyes (page 313) as a trophy.
- A dwarven negotiator, Lord Sunhammer (page 235) vanished on a visit to a human noble (see *The Keys of Marblehall,* page 331). Sunhammer must be found, or at the very least his bones must be brought back to Forge so they may be buried with his honored ancestors.

Elf Queen: The Queen tells the players of the theft of the Blind Spire (page 145) and can introduce them to survivors of that attack, who point them to the Inverse Observatory (page 326). She also mentions that there may be elven survivors in the dungeon (page 140).

If the Queen is behind the Witch of Marblehall, then she reveals that fact only to her trusted servants, and asks them to

keep it secret ('ask' may mean 'magically compels silence' for blabbermouth players). She asks that the PCs find their way to Marblehall (page 227) and provide the Witch with what assistance they can give her, while still hiding the Queen's involvement. You may want to play up tensions in the Queen's court and make the drow more of a rising power to pull this plot off.

- The Queen's treacherous daughter, Perido, was imprisoned in the Palace of Contemplative Regret (page 170). The Stone Thief stole that palace—can the adventurers discover the fate of Perido after the dungeon took her?
- Drow spies report that there's a temple sacred to the Cult of the Devourer hidden somewhere in the city of Concord. She asks that the adventurers find it and destroy it—and perhaps they will find something in the ruins that guides them towards their ultimate confrontation with the Thief.

Emperor: Research in the Imperial archives points the PCs toward the Cult of the Devourer (page 302); news of the recent vanishing of Marblehall also warrants investigation (page 331). He may also be about to point the PCs toward one of the holders of an Eye (page 313).

- As the Stone Thief's attacks grow bolder and more frequent, the nobles and imperial governors grow nervous. If the player characters can find a way to anticipate or even prevent the dungeon's attacks (like the Telluric Lens, page 327), then it might quell panic in the Empire.
- Once word of the plight of those trapped in Dungeon Town (page 87) reaches the Emperor, he decides that they must be helped. What aid do the player characters recommend—weapons, supplies, reinforcements or something else—and how do they intend to bring it to Dungeon Town?

Great Gold Wyrm: The Wyrm can intercept the dreams of the Secret Masters, and he allows his chosen to eavesdrop on those dreams (page 302). He may also guide the PCs toward an Eye of the Stone Thief (page 313).

- The Golden Serpent Warriors (page 212) were among the first champions of the Great Gold Wyrm. From their ageless slumber, they cry out to him. Can the adventurers find these lost warriors from a bygone age and restore them to their former glory? The Wyrm warns that not all the serpent folk can be trusted…

High Druid: The Druid's connection to the land lets her sense the movements of the Thief, allowing the PCs to skip visiting the Inverse Observatory as they hunt the dungeon. She can guide them in the use of a Koru Orchid (page 153) and send them to the behemoth (page 318). Like the Dwarf King, she understands the Custodians, and even has the magical might to free them from the Stone Thief's thrall, giving the PCs a potential bargaining trip when dealing with them.

- The High Druid might not be adverse to the Stone Thief swallowing, say, one of the Imperial towns that encroaches on her Wild Wood. If the adventurers can find a way to influence where the dungeon prowls, that would be a potent boon to her.

Lich King: The Lich King has a potential ally in the dungeon; he's been courting the Flesh Tailor, offering him a place in the Undying Peerage of the liches. The PCs may be recruited as his emissaries. The Lich King has first-hand experience with the Cult of the Devourer (page 302) and speculates about the existence of a destructive ritual (page 353).

- Before the Flesh Tailor took control of the Ossuary, there was another Custodian (page 134) who had some necromantic talent. The idea of a talking rock necromancer tickles the Lich King's funny bone—bring this Custodian to him and be rewarded.
- Recruiting Perido (page 170) to the Undying Peerage would be a grievous insult to the Elf Queen—and that, too, amuses the One-Eyed King. You can tell the Lich King is happy by the way he never stops grinning.

Orc Lord: The Orc Lord tells the PCs all he knows about Fangrot's mission (see Fangrotsaga on page 162), up to the point at which Fangrot and his followers entered the dungeon for the third time. He suspects that Fangrot has betrayed him. He may put the services of Master Throatcutter (page 299) at the PCs' disposal if needed.

- One of the orcs who accompanied Fangrot was a seer named Blind Uthe (page 185). Bring her back alive.

Priestess: The Priestess can guide the PCs in their search for the Cult of the Devourer (page 302). She's quarreled with the giants of the Inverse Observatory (page 326) over the role of divine intervention, so she knows all about the properties of the Telluric Lens.

- The only surviving temple to a certain deity of the light now resides in the Pit of Undigested Ages (page 208). If the Priestess is to honor that deity in her Cathedral, she must have the holy symbol from that vanished temple. Find it and bring it to her.

Prince of Shadows: The Prince is a potential font of information about the dungeon. There's his involvement with the Eyes of the Stone Thief (page 313). He can promise aid from his agents in Dungeon Town (page 87) and Deep Keep (page 160). He knows all the secret ways in and out. He can also advise on ways to catch the Thief (page 350)—a field with which he is very familiar from the opposite side.

- The Prince needs the adventurers to collect a cache of stolen treasures from his agents in Dungeon Town (page 98) and spirit them out of the Stone Thief. The trouble is, the agents haven't received the treasures from Grimtusk's orcs yet—they're still hidden in a cache in Deep Keep…
- Everyone's after the Eyes of the Stone Thief—so here's a false eye, a perfect copy of the original. Sell it to the highest bidder (perhaps at the Council, page 339)—then get out of there before your treachery is discovered.

The Three: The Black knows about the recent vanishing of a sahuagin temple in the Fangs (page 110), which may be worth investigating. The Red has seen the Inverse Observatory (page 326) on his endless prowling around the fringes of the Empire.

If the Blue is behind the Witch of Marblehall, then she keeps that little secret to herself initially—best that the Empire doesn't connect the Imperial governor of Drakkenhall with a scheme to take over a notorious living dungeon. She'll inform her agents of this secret plan at the right moment, probably midway through the campaign.

- One of the Blue's spymasters, Azial the Whisperer (page 69), has gone silent. Find out what happened to him.

GETTING AROUND

The Stone Thief burrows through the earth faster than the swiftest horse can ride. If the player characters are going to catch the dungeon when it next emerges from the underworld, they need a fast mode of transportation. Here, we present three possible ways of getting from A to B (before B gets eaten by the living dungeon). The adventurers will likely only need one of these travel solutions, unless you bring in the Opposition to steal their ride.

If a player comes up with another way to pursue the dungeon—say, by cashing in favors with the High Druid to breed a magical horse of surpassing swiftness—then run with it. These are examples, not the only options, and the way the characters get to the dungeon is of little significance as long as it doesn't let them bypass the actual dungeon crawl.

The characters could learn about a mode of transportation:

- From an icon.
- By asking contacts for advice.
- From rumors gathered in a city or on the road.
- Through a side quest involving that mode of transportation.

SKYSHIPS

Skyships are uncommon in the Dragon Empire. They have dragons instead.

Enchanting a skyship requires a tremendous investment of magical energy, and most wizards who can manage that can fly under their own power. Flying ships are not unheard-of, though, from the arcane vessels built in the skydocks of the Archmage to elven cloudships to aerial war machines like the Battle Barge. There are lots of places the characters could pick up a skyship: Horizon and Starport are the most obvious, but flying vessels might also be obtained in the Elf Queen's Court, or at any of the major cities. Highdock, west of Axis, is infamous for attracting flying realms, including drifting unmanned skyships. If all else fails, then of course the Diabolist could always do the characters a favor.

Skyships have the virtues of being swift, tireless, and always ready to fly. The trick is getting one.

- The *Spatterstar* belongs to Captain Tiernau, a servant of the Archmage. The ship was built around the wreckage of a crashed star, so she has a habit of flying wildly off course when she gets it into her head to rejoin one constellation or another. Captain Tiernau can usually drag her back to the task at hand—carrying bulk supplies and magical components to the Archmage's flying realms. To obtain the *Spatterstar*, the characters need the Archmage's permission, and they will also need to ensure that the stars favor their endeavor. How do they arrange the constellations so that the ship isn't dragged off-course at an inopportune moment?
- Fauvas commands the *Angelhunter*, a ship lifted by sails lined with angel feathers. He is a former associate of the Crusader, and is convinced that the demons are trying to outflank the Dragon Empire from *above*. Angels, he insists, are just demons with cunningly contrived illusions and a good line of patter. His crew enables these delusions, as there's a rich trade in angel parts in Drakkenhall and Shadow Port, and only Fauvas knows the magical command word for the ship. To get the *Angelhunter* to aid in the hunt for the Stone Thief, the characters must break Fauvas' delusions so he focuses on the threat of the living dungeon and the Cult of the Devourer.
- The oldest flying ship is, of course, the *Maid of the Mists.* Legend holds that her captain offended the Wizard King in days of extreme yore, and the ship was cursed never to return to any port in the land. Other stories say it was some previous High Druid, but the result is the same—the ship can never land. She criss-crosses the Empire, swooping down to raid for supplies or to abduct new crew. In exchange for the *Maiden's* help, the characters need to find a way to break the curse when their task is done. Presumably, the icon who originally cursed the ship could lift the ban on landing.
- *Brazen Comet* was built by an enterprising officer in the Imperial legions, who believed that the Empire's reliance on the dwindling strength of the dragons and the Great Gold Wyrm would lead to disaster. She designed a flying warship with the aid of dwarven artificers and mages from Horizon, and outfitted it with enough firepower to match the destructive capability of a full-grown dragon. Unfortunately, she neglected to secure the ship against theft, and it was stolen by pirates. There's a reward offered for the head of 'Captain Cloudkill,' so the adventurers can pick up a purse of gold *and* the use of a swift skyship in one fell swoop.

DRAGONS

The eponymous dragons of the Dragon Empire are fewer in number now than they once were. The Great Gold Wyrm sent them to a previous Emperor to defend the lands against the Lich King and other threats. There are a great many threats, and so very few good dragons. Convincing a dragon to aid the characters requires a pile of Emperor/Great Gold Wyrm relationship dice benefits, along with a DC 30 skill check to persuade the dragon that this is a mission worth undertaking. (Later in the campaign, when the threat posed by the Stone Thief becomes more evident, it may be easier to persuade a dragon to act, reducing the DC to 20).

- **Orchalcalx**'s time is nearly done. He's one of the oldest of the golden dragons. He lives somewhere in Axis, and not even his fellow wyrms know quite where he is. They whisper that the old dragon has gone *native*—he's shapeshifted into human form and is living incognito among the mammals. To obtain Orchalcalx's help, the characters need to find the dragon's mortal disguise and convince him to embark on one last mission.
- Brave **Dawnwing** was wounded in battle against some suitably depraved foe (icon roll time). She survived the encounter, but slipped into a healing sleep from which she has yet to awaken. The healers of Axis could do nothing for her—the wound afflicts both body and soul. Even if the adventurers

could find a healing spell strong enough to aid her, they would have to find a way into her dreams and refight the battle in her memories to restore Dawnwing to health.

- Young **Bastenfax** is an eager young dragon, hatched less than forty years ago and still with shell behind his ears, as his elders say. Given the opportunity, he'd happily help the adventurers hunt a living dungeon—but he's got this potential hellhole to watch over. His superiors say it could crack open at any moment. Say, maybe the characters could go into the hellhole and crack it open themselves. Hell vomits forth, the forces of Good (or militant ambiguity in the case of the Crusader) muster, there's a big battle, and Bastenfax is then free to help out on the dungeon hunt. What could possibly go wrong?

Of course, the characters aren't restricted to seeking the aid of metallic dragons. Those in the circles of the Three could visit Drakkenhall and obtain the aid of a dragon like:

- **Baron Cinderflense:** This red wyrm squats in the ruins of a magnificent mansion in the noble district of Drakkenhall. The baronial title isn't an affectation—the blood of a nobleman runs in the dragon's veins. Or at least, in his stomach. The dragon has a strange fascination with human aristocracy and chafes at the thought that his baronial rank only applies in Drakkenhall. He burns to walk into the Imperial Court at Axis and sneer at the impotence of the Emperor's gold dragon bodyguards. Arrange that for him, make the Emperor recognize him as a baron throughout the Empire, and he will help hunt the dungeon.
- **The Serpent Azure Crowned With Gold:** A blue dragon mystic, she keeps her true name secret. Names have power, after all. The Serpent Azure dwells in a temple that overlooks the Iron Sea, where she listens to the secret words of the sea-winds and the storms. She flies swifter than any thunderbolt, and her divination magic can be a great boon when trying to find the dungeon. All she asks in return for her service is the heart of one of the adventurers, for use in a ritual. The heart must be given freely, and torn from a living body.
- **Vrsystis:** This black dragon was exiled from the service of the Three for one of the few crimes that even those dragons might balk at—Vrsystis experiments with the forbidden lore of the serpent folk who ruled the land long before the Wizard King. Those unhappy creatures conjured alien horrors with excessive numbers of tentacles. Vrsystis will bear the characters in exchange for access to the relics of the Pit of Undigested Ages (page 210).

Dragon Taxis

A dragon is a totally awesome way of getting to the living dungeon in time to thwart its machinations—but the player characters are the ones who have to do the thwarting. The dragon is much too big to fit inside the dungeon, although there might be some literal wiggle room for, say, flying down the Maw for a frontal assault on the Gizzard, or a desperate rescue when the dungeon is about to submerge. The point is that the dragon isn't here to fight the PCs' battles for them.

If the players insist on hiding behind their new wyrm ally, then the dungeon eats the dragon. (Run *Giant Monster* on page 345, using the dragon as the monster.)

By Worm Carriage

Worms of great size gnaw their way through the underworld. They have the magical ability to wriggle through solid stone like a smaller worm moves through the earth—by ingesting it at one end and excreting it at the other. Worm indigestion is responsible for a labyrinth of tunnels and winding underground ways deep below the Empire.

The dwarves know the secret of building worm carriages—small metal gondolas that attach to the back of a suitable worm. The gondola has to be positioned just right, or the worm will knock it off as it moves through the ground. Special worm-goad wires allow an experienced wormier to guide the creature's course. A worm-carriage is a very fast way to move through the underworld, but it has several drawbacks. First, it takes a dwarf to appreciate the subtle pleasures of being stuck in a tiny metal box for days or weeks, in almost complete darkness, with nothing but the roaring of the worm's digestive tract for entertainment. Second, worms are cowardly creatures, and they shy away from anything dangerous, like a living dungeon. Third, if one of those worm-goads snaps, the worm goes out of control and can burrow for miles off course, and before you know it you're stuck in the underground kingdom of the fungaloids. Worm-carriages are rarely used these days, except by urgent couriers or dwarven thrill-beards.

The invading forces of the Orc Lord captured several worm-carriages during the siege of Fort Coalbiter, and it's a dead certainty that the Prince of Shadows can get his hands on a worm or two for smuggling. Characters with good relations to any of those icons could obtain a worm and training in how to use worm-goads. Characters without good relations to any of those icons could steal a worm, and have lots of adventures learning to worm-goad on the fly, as it were.

By Dimensional Travel

Teleportation is the safest way of tearing holes in the fabric of reality, disintegrating yourself, stuffing your remains through the hole into the screaming unreality behind the world, then putting yourself back together on the far side. For a teleport to work, though, the caster needs to have visited the target destination before, which is something of a drawback when hunting a rapidly moving dungeon.

There are other ways to travel swiftly using magic, especially with the help of an icon. The Archmage, for example, is a master of teleportation, and he can open up portals into the overworld. All the characters need to do is travel bodily through the overworld until they reach a point corresponding with their destination, then open up a second portal and pop back. The overworld is a perilous place, even with the Archmage's protection to ward off the worst of the entities that dwell there.

The High Druid can open a door to the Greenway, the living web that connects all forests. So can the Elf Queen, and while her

roads are straighter and safer than those of the Druid, they are colder and somehow unwelcoming. Plant monsters and spirits of nature haunt the Greenway, and they do not look kindly on intruding animals.

Wherever the Stone Thief goes, it brings death—and death is a door. When a living being dies, it creates ripples in the realm of the dead, momentarily connecting our world with theirs. The Priestess, in her ceremonial role as Psychopomp, can send the adventurers into the land of the dead. After traversing this timeless gray place, they can ride the deaths caused by the Stone Thief's feast back to the living lands.

The Great Gold Wyrm or the Diabolist can send the characters to some hellish realm where time flows differently, allowing the infernal lands to be used as a short cut across reality. The Wyrm can guide the characters out of the flames, but they must battle their way through demonic hordes to reach the glowing golden portal back home. The Diabolist provides a native guide and a packed lunch.

By Magic

By design, the best spells for swift travel in the *13th Age* roleplaying game—*overworld travel* and *teleport* —are 9th level spells, out of reach of champion-tier adventurers. Getting there, they say, is half the fun. Still, that doesn't mean that a friendly icon couldn't lend a helping hand in a time of need, or that the adventurers couldn't use a costly and difficult one-shot ritual to replicate the effects of the high-level spell. Teleportation rituals almost always bring the travelers to a place specified in advance—the adventurers might find a scroll that can teleport them to Concord, or to High Dock, instead of one that lets them pick their destination. They'll have to wait until the Stone Thief is close at hand, then use the ritual to jump ahead of the dungeon and ambush it.

By Dreams

Walking the road of dreams is a rare gift. The Great Gold Wyrm or the Elf Queen are the only icons who do so regularly, but the Priestess, the Three, High Druid, and Archmage all have their ways of reaching beyond the wall of sleep. In the dungeon, the adventurers might learn to do so from the monk Ajura or the Hag Pheig, or find a way to infiltrate the dreams sent by the Secret Masters.

Dream travel has one distinct advantage over most of the other methods described in this chapter—you can dream your way right into the Stone Thief. Assuming, of course, that you don't stray from the path and end up lost in the strange labyrinthine dreams of a living dungeon as it slumbers…

Let It Come To Us!

The alternative to pursuing the dungeon is trapping the dungeon. The Witch of Marblehall, for example, used her family home as a lure to draw the Stone Thief to her. Techniques for luring the dungeon are described on page 350.

Encounters en Route

The adventurers might…

- Run into the Inverse Observatory (page 326) or get ambushed by the Opposition (page 291)
- Be asked to choose the form of their own destruction. Take a look at the challenging questions on page 289 for ideas. Asking the players "Something goes horribly wrong on your journey—what is it?" or "as you fly across the Empire, you see something on the ground below—what is it?" followed by "you—that <thing on the ground> is very important to you—why?" and "what's threatening <thing on the ground>?"
- Be faced with a choice between losing the Stone Thief's trail, and pursuing one of their other goals or one unique things.
- Get tricked when the Stone Thief doubles back on its trail—or maybe the dungeon bursts out of the ground and swallows them up!

The Eyes of the Stone Thief

Once, the dungeon had Eyes. It could see where it was going; it could pick its targets from far away. It was much more powerful and much more dangerous.

The Prince of Shadows, it's said, stole the dungeon's Eyes. (If he didn't, he's certainly blamed for it.) One Eye he kept; the other he gave to a fellow rogue. That Eye got traded and sold a dozen times, changing hands for a king's ransom in one place or handed over to cover a bar tab in another. Not all those who had the Eye knew what a treasure they held.

Blind, the dungeon was forced to rely on others. The Stone Thief put the Custodians to work to attend to the upper levels; it began to listen more to the prayers and rites of the Cult of the Devourer. It began to hunt using other senses, to act on instinct instead of looking ahead to the future. It never stopped searching for its Eyes, but as the years went by and there was no sign or scent of them, the Stone Thief went mad and feral.

The Quest Begins...

The characters could learn of the Eyes and their importance:

- From research into the history of the Stone Thief.
- From stories of the exploits of the Prince of Shadows.
- From an icon relationship roll.
- By interrogating or eavesdropping on the Custodians.
- By looking at the cover and title of this book.

What Are The Eyes?

In their original form, the Eyes looked like stone tablets, each the span of a man's forearm, carved to resemble a human eye. The pupil of the Eye was a glittering sapphire the size of a fist. The magic of the Eyes is held within the gemstones, so the stone tablets may have been removed by the Eyes' new owners.

Who Wants The Eyes?

Everyone, more or less.

- The Cult of the Devourer want the Eyes because they'll restore the Stone Thief to its full power, and make it much more able to consume places of power and achieve its destiny.
- The Custodians want the Eyes to keep them away from the Stone Thief. If the Stone Thief could see again, it would have no need for such helpers.
- Those who want to bind the dungeon want the Eyes because they're the windows to the dungeon's stony soul. The Eyes are incomparably potent magical links to the dungeon.
- Those who want to slay the dungeon want the Eyes because they're a great way to find the dungeon. If you have an Eye, you can spy on the dungeon's movements anywhere in the world or below it.

And, of course, the Stone Thief wants her Eyes back because they're *hers*.

Who Holds The Eyes?

When the characters first go looking for the Eyes, ask them where they plan on starting their search. They're adventurers, after all—they know the sort of people who might collect magical artifacts, or maybe there's some rival of theirs who might have obtained the Eye from the Prince of Shadows. If they're stuck for ideas, suggest any of the following:

- **Pergfoil,** a former apprentice of the Archmage who was banished from Horizon for dabbling in questionable rituals. He's got a tower stuffed with magical gadgets, and he has been known to deal with the Prince of Shadows.
- **Tom Albecht of the *Wavedancer***, a former thief from Shadow Port. He won a big score a few years ago and invested most of his ill-gotten gains in a ship. He's a 'legitimate trader' now. You've heard he never sets foot on the shore, which is a bit weird, but he's certainly got magic to spare.
- **'The Red Lady'—Arctaelagas of Drakkenhall:** There's a secret that's not even whispered on the streets of Drakkenhall (if it was whispered, *she* might hear it). Instead, the secret is written on scraps of paper and burnt after reading, and what's written is this—Arctaelagas is the Red's insurance policy against the machinations of the Blue. If the Blue's power base in the Empire ever became a problem for the Red, then the Red would stoke the flames of Arctaelagas and the city would burn. Until that day, the Red Lady snoozes on her bed of treasure in a ruined mansion on the edge of Drakkenhall, amusing herself by collecting rare and wondrous gemstones from across the Empire.
- The gnomish sage **Vertilixa Minorum** is the Dwarf King's chief gemologist, but she's rarely at his court. She's more likely to be found in the depths of the underworld looking for rare crystals, or purchasing jewels for her master's treasure vaults. You've even heard she was working on condensing starlight. Wherever she is in the world, she knows gemstones—maybe she knows where the Eye of the Stone Thief might be.
- **The High Elven Lightsmiths** say that all reality is light refracted through a cosmic prism, and all matter is just color. They seek the most perfect gemstones in the hopes of bending the light back again, so that they might capture the pure universal light and bend it to their will. Their shimmering fortress soars through the most rarefied aethers of the overworld—the only thing they're not above is stealing gemstones for their experiments.
- It's said that a greedy noblewoman once demanded that the Priestess bless her with wealth beyond measure. The Priestess

did so. Now, the woman is a beggar on the streets of one of the cities of the Empire. Fates conspire to deliver the greatest of treasures into her mud-splattered hands, but she now understands the folly of pursuing wealth for its own sake, so she uses these gifts and fortunes to better the lives of others. If the Eye of the Stone Thief ever came near the **Beggar Queen**, then fate will have conspired to put the gemstone in her hands.

And, of course:

- The **Prince of Shadows** definitely held one of the Eyes. Does he still have it, or did he trade it away or give it to one of his agents? Or—knowing him—did he sell a dozen forgeries to a dozen different fools and keep the only real Eye for himself?

Unless one of the PCs has a really strong positive relationship with the Prince, going after an icon to get the Eye is likely to be plan B. We're assuming that the characters go after the other Eye first, instead of trying to get the one the Prince is said to possess. If they do go after the Prince first, swap *The First Eye* and *The Second Eye* around.

The First Eye

Once the players come up with multiple potential avenues of investigation, decide if you want to string the hunt for the Eye out or resolve it quickly.

If you string it out, pick the three most appealing candidates for Eyebearer. When the PCs investigate the first candidate, he or she turns out to have been recently murdered by mysterious assassins. Leave some clues foreshadowing the Opposition. The second candidate doesn't have the Eye, but knows who does—the third and final candidate.

Resolving it quickly means jumping straight to the final candidate. No dallying, just the challenge of recovering the Eye.

Obtaining the Eye

To obtain the Eye, the characters need to overcome three challenges (challenges almost always come in threes). Tailor the nature of the challenges to the situation and the player characters. For example, if the Beggar Queen has the Eye, the first challenge will be finding her. The second might be a roleplaying encounter where the characters plead their case that they are trustworthy guardians of the Eye. Then, to make them prove themselves, the Beggar Queen reveals that the Eye is hidden in a monster-infested dungeon beneath a tenement and that the characters must clear the ruin of dangers to find the Eye.

Potential challenges:

- The owner of the Eye has become entranced by it as the dungeon grows in power. He won't give up his treasure without a fight. In his paranoia, he has prepared for the thieves he knew would come to steal his precious and obtained guardian monsters to defend the Eye. The characters must defeat these foes in combat.
- The owner of the Eye worries about the ramifications hanging over the Eye. Roll relationship dice to determine the forces they're worried about. For example, if the Prince of Shadows comes up, then the owner of the Eye fears retribution if he hands over something stolen by the Prince. If the Three figure strongly, then the owner knows about the Blue's schemes to strengthen the dungeon with the ruins of Drakkenhall. If it's the Archmage, then the owner fears getting turned into something unpleasant as punishment for keeping such a dangerous artifact as the Eye. If the characters assuage these fears, they get the Eye.
- What about the risks of using the Eye? The owner fears that if the characters take the Eye, they'll draw the dungeon to them. *He* was safe only because he kept the Eye blind and locked away in a treasure chest. How do the characters convince the owner that they are trustworthy custodians of the Eye?
- The owner of the Eye has gone to some hard-to-reach place—somewhere the player characters in particular will feel uncomfortable or threatened. Depending on the characters, that could be anywhere from the Emperor's palace (*no riff-raff!*) to getting shipwrecked on the Isle of Fire, to wandering the overworld, to dealing with the Diabolist.
- *What? That old thing? I sold it/pawned it/gave it as a gift. I don't have it anymore.* The characters need to steal the Eye from its unsuspecting new owner.
- The owner is dead. Died a few years ago, in fact. And his treasure was buried with him. Time to go grave robbing.
- It's a trap! The Opposition have already captured the Eye and lured the characters here to kill them. For maximum confusion, you can even have two groups of Opposition involved. The first group already has the Eye and are using it as bait to catch the player characters—but the second faction of Opposition turns up to steal the Eye once the PCs deal with the first lot.
- The owner is not willing to give up the Eye, but they might part with it if the characters offer something of equal value in return. Or if they complete some task for the owner.
- The owner is not willing to give up the Eye, but he can't resist a game of chance. He wagers the priceless and almost-unique Eye of the Stone Thief. What do the characters wager?

For example:

If **Pergfoil** has the Eye, the first challenge is getting past his tower's magical defenses. These are more in the vein of tricks and traps than monsters and death spells, so have the players narrate how they use their backgrounds/one unique things/icon relationships to navigate the tower. The second is convincing him to part with the Eye—he won't hand it over, but will trade it for a book of lore from the Archmage's private library. The third challenge, of course, is stealing the book for him.

If **Tom Albecht of the *Wavedancer*** has the Eye, then the PCs first need to find him, which means scouring the Midland Sea for a single small ship. (Maybe they need fast transport of their own—see page 310). When they find Tom, he's under attack by the notorious undead pirate Bonebeard. Once they drive Bonebeard off, Tom reveals that he was so terrified of the Eye that he locked it inside a magical puzzle box with a maze-lock. To open it, the PCs have to shrink themselves down to the size of ants and navigate the lock from the inside.

If the **Lightsmiths** have the Eye, then the first challenge is finding their flying fortress. They're divided on giving up the Eye, but eventually agree that they'll do so in exchange for the starlight of the Queen. The characters need to persuade the Elf Queen to give them her light (which also involves finding a way to bottle light) and bring it back to the Lightsmiths—only to find that one

Lightsmith, overruled by her masters, tried to use the Eye as a prism anyway and succeeded in letting alien horrors into the flying fortress. It's now tumbling out of the overworld and is going to crash into the world below. The characters need to fight their way through the crystal castle and find the Eye before the crash.

When setting challenges, keep in mind that the Opposition show up as soon as the PCs get the Eye, so include a nice place to have a fight.

The Opposition

The Opposition arrives to grab the Eye soon after the player characters find it. Make it clear to the players that fighting the Opposition is going to be really dangerous—running and hiding might be a better bet. If the characters stand and fight, they can always flee (with the Eye getting left behind as a campaign loss) when it becomes clear they're outmatched.

When the Dust Settles

If the characters got away with the Eye, they've got a powerful weapon against the Stone Thief (see page 352). The second Eye is still out there, but one is enough to track the dungeon. You can leave the second Eye as a dangling loose end, or have the Opposition grab it to ratchet up the threat later in the campaign. Completionist players, of course, will want to find the second Eye too.

The Second Eye

The other Eye of the Stone Thief is in the hands of the Prince of Shadows, which entails a trip to Shadow Port. Roll any positive or conflicted Prince of Shadows relationship dice in the party—for each 5 or 6, the PCs can bypass one challenge as they look for an audience with the Prince. Without successes, throw at least four challenges at them (more if they're having fun or you're having fun).

Some fun things to do in Shadow Port when trying to find and curry favor with the Prince might be:

- There's a hidden tavern down by the docks where the price of admittance is a secret whispered through a narrow grating. If you tell whoever's behind that grating something true about yourself, something that you've kept hidden all your life, the door will open for you—otherwise, you'll never get in. That tavern is frequented by those who know how to find the Prince of Shadows. As for what they do with those secrets, well, that's a secret too.
- So, stranger, you've got a good relationship with the Dwarf King I hear. Two, even three dice positive? My, I bet you know all sorts of things about the Dwarf King's treasure vaults. Now, we're not asking you to help us rob your master… just prove that stopping the Stone Thief means something to you. A show of good faith, as it were.
- Shadow Port is not without its dangers. The murky waters conceal murkier things, and some of the old smuggling tunnels that run between Shadow Port and Glitterhaegen have been overrun with the murkiest monsters of all. Someone needs to go down there and clear out the tunnels, and that's adventurers' work, not something for a thief to do. Demurkation, that's the issue.
- Word has reached Shadow Port that a favorite servant of the Prince was caught by the agents of another icon, and they're going to execute her. Her captors are ready for a band of sneaky outlaws to mount a rescue attempt, but they won't expect a party of *fireball*-toting adventurers. And don't worry, she's innocent. Probably.
- There's an old woman in Shadow Port who offers a… specialized service. She sells bodies. Not like that! You walk in, and go to sleep, and someone else inhabits your body for a few hours. It's absolutely, 100% guaranteed* that you'll get your body back, maybe with a few cuts and bruises but nothing that a cleric can't heal, and your body won't break any important laws or murder anyone. Folk use this service when they want to walk unobserved, or want to see life from another perspective, or when they don't technically have a body of their own. Normally, the old woman pays well for a good body, but if you waive your fee, she'll get you closer to the Prince.
- There's a fat merchant's ship crossing the Midland Sea tonight, and Captain Oakley is going to rob it. His normal brute squad got themselves ripped limb from limb by demons, so he needs some backup. Demons? Oh, aye—the merchant is in thrall to the Diabolist, and she protects her investments very well. But think of the treasures on board!

An Audience with the Prince

In the end, the characters are directed to an upstairs room in a little tavern on an unremarkable street in Glitterhaegen. There, they meet with the Prince or one of his representatives. Pick which one most appeals to you:

- **The Prince of Shadows:** There he sits, posing by a window, just like in the stories and paintings. Eyes gleaming from the shadows of a dark hood, cloak billowing mysteriously around him even though it's indoors and there's no wind, magical dagger in one hand and a gemstone the size of a hen's egg in the other. The Prince of Shadows himself, as though he'd stepped straight out of a legend. It's just too perfect.

  Of course, it's not actually the Prince. It's just a young thief, who looks the part and plays the role. When the adventurers challenge him, he bows and admits that the true Prince is… nearby, but won't be joining them this evening. Rest assured that he's listening, though.
- **A Shadow:** The room is empty apart from a table and a few chairs. One chair per player character, in fact, and one more. A flickering candle sits on the table, making the shadows of the characters and chairs dance on the walls—until a shadow detaches itself from the dancing throng and slides into the empty chair. In a voice like being smothered by a velvet pillow, the living shadow explains that it is a vassal and duly appointed representative of the Prince that can negotiate on his behalf.
- **Medano the Blessed:** Waiting for the characters is the famous cleric. Those steeped in divine lore know him by reputation as an extremely powerful and devout spellcaster, one of the Priestess' chosen, and some say confessor to the Emperor himself. What's such a respectable and powerful cleric doing in this place?

** Not a guarantee. Offer void in Drakkenhall.*



- **The Empty Room:** There's no one there. However, one of the player characters suddenly finds a scrap of parchment in their pocket. It wasn't there before… although, someone did bump into them downstairs as they went in through the tavern. Could that have been the Prince incognito? The parchment bears the text of the Prince's offer.
- **I Wear No Mask:** This final option requires a bit of set-up and the cooperation of a willing player. Secretly, one of the player characters gets replaced by the Prince of Shadows when they first arrive in Shadow Port. That player plays as the icon playing as their regular PC for as long as it takes for them to get to this audience, then reveals the truth. (For maximum effect, go for a really unlikely player character, like the meek gnomish cleric or the hairy dwarf barbarian.) Let the player negotiate as the Prince for the remainder of the scene. The Prince then vanishes, and the real PC can rejoin the group. (The real PC is tied up under the table/in an enchanted sleep/living the high life in Shadow Port.)

Bargaining With the Prince

The Prince's representative names his master's price for the second Eye of the Stone Thief. At the very least, the Prince is going to demand a favor from each of the player characters, to be called in when needed. If the Prince has the best interests of the world at heart, then that's all he asks.

If your take on the Prince is that he's out for himself, then he sets a condition on the player characters. He'll hand over the Eye—but they must draw the dungeon to a particular place (either using the Eye as bait, or by obtaining the calling ritual from the Cult of the Devourer). Once the dungeon swallows that place, the Prince's agents will do the rest. The Prince has spies in both Dungeon Town and among the orcs of Deep Keep, who will find some treasure from the swallowed place and smuggle it back to him.

What place does he want destroyed? What treasure does he intend to use the Stone Thief to steal? That's up to you. The default candidate is the Dwarf King's fabulous treasury in Forge, but he could equally want something from any of the other icons. Pick somewhere that the players won't immediately reject, but that still makes them uncomfortable. Doubtless the player characters can kill the dungeon before it wreaks too much havoc on its target, but not so quickly that the Prince's agents can't find what they're looking for.

Finally, if you think the Prince is an evil bastard, then he double-crosses them. Again, he asks them to draw the dungeon toward a particular target—but in this case, there's no treasure to be stolen. He's just eliminating the power base of a rival icon and pushing the world toward anarchy.

Using the Eyes

The Player Characters

For the player characters, the chief benefit of having one of the Eyes is that they can then track the movements of the dungeon. Just hold the Eye and concentrate, and you get a sense-impression of where the dungeon is. This doesn't give its exact location—it gives hints and clues. It's up to the characters to figure out what "*granite rock… mountains… cold… chanting little things in yellow robes*" means. Remember, they're seeing from the perspective of a living dungeon, and it doesn't have the same perceptions as someone who isn't a giant malevolent conglomeration of evil architecture. Still, with practice and a few skill checks, the Eye allows the characters to find the Stone Thief as it swims through the underworld.

Eye of the Stone Thief

Wondrous Item

You can see as the dungeon sees. You can perceive the skein of magic beneath the skin of reality, and the contours of the bedrock beneath the land. You know how magic is shaped into spells, and how mortals shape stone into monuments against the night—and you know how all these things are connected. In game terms:

- +1 bonus to attacks.
- +2 bonus to skill checks involving magical phenomenon or architecture, and a +4 bonus to those involving both.
- Recharge 16+: You can tap these telluric forces to roll an extra d20 and take the best one when making a d20 roll for an attack, a save, a skill check, a disengage attempt, or anything else. Doing so may attract the notice of the dungeon.

Quirk: You're sharing your consciousness with a living dungeon. You *really* don't want this thing overloading your chakras. Not unless you like being remodeled from within.

Two Eyes: If a character is foolhardy enough to use both Eyes of the Stone Thief, they get a +3 bonus to attacks, and the recharge for the telluric currents power drops to 11+. However, the two Eyes count as **four** magic items for the purposes of being overcome by quirks!

Optionally, call for the occasional save to resist the psychic pull of the dungeon. The Stone Thief can steal your soul just as it can consume parts of the material world. A character who spends too much time holding the Eye might be drawn into the worship of the Thief just like the Cult of the Devourer, or have bits of their mind stolen and turned into surreal levels of the dungeon.

The Eye is also a lure for the dungeon. If the Stone Thief senses the proximity of one of its missing Eyes, it'll try to recover it by opening its Maw directly beneath the rough location of the Eye, swallowing everything nearby, then sifting through the rubble for the magic gemstone. The characters can use this to lure the dungeon into rising where they want it, or the gamemaster can use it as justification for another trip into the depths.

The Stone Thief

For the Stone Thief to reclaim its missing Eye, the following needs to happen:

- The Eye must be brought into the dungeon.
- The Eye must be relinked with the Stone Thief. This can happen in the Gizzard (page 69) or in the Heart of the Stone Thief (page 270), or anywhere else that the ectoplasmic flesh of the dungeon is unsheathed in stone, but someone has to connect the Eye to the blind spectral tendrils.

If the player characters can stop either of those things happening, that's good.

If the Stone Thief gets its Eye back, it's bad. With one Eye, the living dungeon becomes much more adept at hunting and stealing. Where previously it grabbed whatever prey came within its reach, and used the calling rites of the Cult of the Devourer to navigate the underworld, now it can see exactly where it's going. It can watch the player characters from below, sensing them whenever they set foot on the ground. It can also monitor its own internal architecture much more closely, so it no longer needs to rely on the Custodians.

Should the Stone Thief recover one Eye, some (but not all) of the following events happen in the living dungeon; clear out dead wood in your campaign by eliminating factions and NPCs that you've already gotten good use out of, and turn the screws on the players by making the dungeon more active and dangerous.

- **Custodians Get Destroyed:** Now that it can control its levels directly, the Stone Thief doesn't need the Custodians any more. One by one, it consumes these elemental spirits. If the player characters are in the dungeon when this happens, one of the Custodians might beg them to rescue it. To save the spirit, the characters need a block of stone big enough to hold the spirit, and they need to get it out of the dungeon without touching the floor or walls. If the spirit makes contact with any physical part of the dungeon, the Stone Thief can consume it.
- **Doom of the Orcs:** The Stone Thief now has the strength to clear out Fangrot's 'infestation.' Fangrot and most of his followers bow to the inevitable, giving up their free will and becoming denizens of the dungeon. Other orcs, led by Greyface, resist, and there's a brief, bloody civil war in Deep Keep. Fangrot's orcs, though, have the overwhelming advantage of the Stone Thief's backing and are victorious—unless the player characters join in and tip the balance.
- **Destruction of Dungeon Town:** Dungeon Town is also on the Stone Thief's hit list. As the outpost is still protected by the Wild Caves, not even the Thief can attack it directly—but it can cast off the shell, abandoning it as the dungeon swims through the earth. The whole Dungeon Town level gets left behind, buried deep underground with no access to the surface. The Provost and all his followers starve to death—unless the player characters can somehow rescue them in time.
- **Destruction of Marblehall:** Marblehall eventually suffers the same fate as Dungeon Town.
- **New Acquisitions:** With its newfound vision, the dungeon feasts on the choicest morsels of the surface. Pick some targets from *Prey* that haven't yet been consumed.
- **Vengeful Dungeon:** The dungeon also goes after the player characters. If you've already consumed some place dear to them, then hit them again anyway. Ideally, show off the dungeon's increased precision. If last time it ate a whole village just to get at one person, now it might devour a single tower and leave the rest of the castle standing.

  Alternatively, the dungeon can go after the player characters directly. It might open the Maw right beneath them, swallow their boat if they're sailing on the Sunless Sea, or lure them into the Grove.
- **Hateful Dungeon:** Exploration of the dungeon's interior becomes more dangerous, because the Stone Thief can now see the player characters and can alter its structure to attack them. At the start of each battle, roll 1d6. When the escalation die hits that value, the dungeon does something to impede the PCs—altering the battlefield, adding more monsters, creating a trap, or opening a pit trap under some unfortunate adventurer. Use the table on page 186 of the *13th Age* Rulebook as a guide.

If it gets a second Eye back, then run any remaining events. Having Eyes also makes the Stone Thief tougher when it's finally time to confront the dungeon directly (see page 356).

Someone Else

If the Opposition or another third party gets hold of an Eye, then the obvious options are:

- Use the Eye as a bargaining chip to get the Stone Thief to do something for them.
- Use the Eye as a magical link and try to bind the Stone Thief.
- Keep the Eye and hope that the Stone Thief doesn't find them.
- The player characters have to take the Eye from its new owners.

ON THE BACK OF THE BEHEMOTH

The quest to defeat the Stone Thief leads the adventurers to the trail of a Koru behemoth—specifically, the hulking rocky titan known as Stoneroost. The living dungeon can consume any stone structure and make it part of itself, except for the Koru-infused moltings of the behemoth. The promise of an obstacle that not even the dungeon can overcome draws the adventurers in search of Stoneroost.

The Quest Begins...

The adventurers might learn of the curious properties of the behemoth:

- When they visit the Wild Caves of Dungeon Town (page 94).
- From investigating the Witch of Marblehall (page 331).
- From an icon.
- When they go in search of a poison that can kill a living dungeon (page 350).

Finding Stoneroost

One might think that finding a shambling eight-legged mountain would be easy, but the behemoth's migration patterns are unpredictable. The best general-purpose behemoth spotters are the folk of Nomad, and their sages prepare moderately reliable almanacs that estimate the current location and mood of each known behemoth according to its average route, walking speed, and observed habits. If the characters ask them, though, they learn that Stoneroost is infamously stubborn and sometimes settles down for months in one spot as if sulking.

The Dwarf King has, or claims to have, a special relationship with this behemoth, and certainly Stoneroost regularly deviates from the normal migration route to grub around in the mountains northeast of Forge. Characters with a relationship with the Dwarf King can ask for his guidance in finding the monster.

Other icons might send the characters to the fabled Inverse Observatory (page 326) to spy Stoneroost from above.

If all else fails, the characters can just ride or fly along the migration route and hope they spot a walking mountain before it steps on them.

No matter who they ask, the characters are warned about the barbarians of the behemoth. They are fierce warriors who do not welcome strangers.

Climbing On

Some behemoths have friendly barbarian clans living on their backs, and those monsters trail rope ladders or howdahs. Stoneroost, though, breeds hard, doleful people to match its hard, doleful back. The only barbarians who dwell on this behemoth are sullen, brooding warriors who prefer raiding to trading. To get onto the behemoth, the characters need to fly or climb.

Flying near Stoneroost is perilous—huge colonies of gargoyles infest its flanks, and anything flying nearby gets swarmed by them.

Climbing the creature's gargantuan legs is safer. It's just like scaling a vertical cliff that moves every few minutes. It's definitely a DC 20 skill check at least, and remember to ask the players some challenging questions (see page 289).

On the Behemoth

The behemoth is so tall that gray clouds and mist shroud its back and make it hard to see any distance—which is something of a blessing, since the beastscape is a depressing site. Lots of tors and rocky outcrops, piles of shale, cracked and bare slabs of stone, and gaping cave mouths, all damp and cold and dismal. The only living things the characters can see are patches of lichen.

Pushing through the fog, the characters could run into:

- **Shedding Avalanche:** The behemoth groans as it sloughs a few tons of rocky scales on the land below. Adventurers in the way need to make DC 25 checks or be hit by a landslide for 4d12 damage (or just knock off a recovery or two).
- **Petrifying Ooze:** A clear liquid wells up from a pore in the shell. This liquid solidifies and turns to rock if it touches anything other than the behemoth's stony shell. So, a character who touches it gets a finger encased in rock; walking in it means concrete shoes, and drinking it is... unwise. As soon the adventurers realize the property of the ooze, the ground starts shaking. There's a geyser coming!
- **Stalking Stones:** Those stones over there look just like the stones the party passed a few minutes ago. It's not that they're going in circles—it's more like a particular pile of stones is following them. The size of the stone pile keeps getting bigger and bigger as they travel across the behemoth.
- **Route Marker:** The characters find a small marker made of four stones, one piled atop the next in a little tower. If they stand next to that marker, they spot the next one in the distance, and from there they can see the next and so on. The Stoneroost barbarians use these markers to navigate in the mists. If the characters follow the trail of markers (perhaps with a DC 15 check) they find the tribe's cave.

- **Crag Castle:** A fortress looms out of the mist. It's hard to tell if it's a castle that somehow became fused to the behemoth's shell, or an oddly regular growth on the shell that just resembles a castle from certain angles. Either way, there's something living in there.
- **Gargoyles:** The characters see a flight of gargoyles take off from one of their precarious roosts on the behemoth's flanks. If they keep their heads down and don't attract attention, they can avoid a fight. If not, then the gargoyles circle back and attack at the worst possible moment.
- **Rock Grubs:** These parasites live underneath the hide of the behemoth and sometimes wriggle to the surface. One of them pops out of a hole and grabs an unlucky limb belonging to some equally unlucky player character. That's a **+20 attack vs. PD**, inflicting 2d20 damage. Alternatively, maybe it grabs some item belonging to the victim. Attacking the grub isn't an option, as it slithers back into its hole and is protected by the impenetrable shell of the behemoth. Someone small could slither down there after it, though…
- **Other Intruders:** When Stoneroost's endless migration brings it close to cities or other inhabited outposts, foolhardy locals might scout out the back of the behemoth while sensible people get out of the way. Notable stops along the migration route include Nomad (behemoth scavengers and treasure hunters), the Queen's Wood (a wood elf hunting party, seeking a new and exotic quarry), Drakkenhall (almost anything, from a blue sorcerer trying to recruit a pack of gargoyles as guards to a curious dragon riding the thermals that rise from the behemoth), the Wild Wood (monsters or servants of the High Druid), the Red Wastes and the Abyss (demons and other weird mutant monsters, or far-ranging paladins from the Golden Citadel), and the Giantwalk (giants, of course.)
- **The Plunge:** There's one other point on the migration route of the behemoths that really is worth noting—the plunge through the Koru Straits. With the fogs that cloak Stoneroost, unlucky adventurers might be caught unaware when the monster goes for a swim.

Rock Grub

There's not much to eat on a behemoth. The food chain is pretty much just you and the rock grub.

6th level spoiler [BEAST]
Initiative: +10

Crushing Mandibles +11 vs. AC—15 damage
Natural 14+: The target is either grabbed, or else the rock grub gets hold of an item of equipment.

Drag Away +15 vs. PD (grabbed target only, includes grab bonus)— 10 damage, and the rock grub drags the victim down into its hole. While in the hole, the victim is stuck, but can escape by disengaging (–5 penalty to disengage checks).

Munch and tear +11 vs. PD (victims in hole only)—30 damage

Rock Shelter: While in the hole, the rock grub has a +2 bonus to all defenses.

AC 21
PD 19 **HP 90**
MD 15

Crowned Gargoyle

Lesser gargoyles perch on churches. Crowned gargoyles sit on them.

Huge 8th level wrecker [construct]
Initiative: +7

Titanic swipe +13 vs. AC—70 damage
Natural odd 11+: The gargoyle makes a second *titanic swipe* attack against a different target. It may make a maximum of two *titanic swipes* per turn.
Natural even 12+: The gargoyle makes either a *crowned headbutt* or *eyebeams* attack (GM's choice) as a free action.

[Special trigger] **Crowned Headbutt +13 vs. PD**—50 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends)

R: Eyebeams +13 vs. PD (one target, or up to three targets; –2 atk against far away targets)—On a single target, 60 fire damage, and 20 ongoing fire damage. On multiple targets, 30 fire damage, and 10 ongoing fire damage.

Nightmarish Visage: At the start of the gargoyle's turn each round, pick a player character. The gargoyle's face seems to shift to become that character's worst fear or to remind that character of a previous sin. The player must choose—either the gargoyle gains a fear aura against that character, or else the character must spend an icon benefit to explain how they can face this nightmare without terror.

Ponderous Flyer: It shouldn't be able to fly, but it can.

Topple: When the crowned gargoyle is defeated, it falls toward its killer. This is a **+13 vs. PD attack** for 100 damage.

AC 27
PD 12 **HP 450**
MD 15

Crown of the Gargoyle

Searching through the rubble, the characters find the gargoyle's horned crown of iron, magically shrunken to human size. It's a champion-tier helm that gives +2 MD and allows the character to make a headbutt attack as a flexible attack (recharge 16+).

Headbutt
Flexible melee attack
Triggering roll: Any even hit
Effect: You take damage equal to the target's Armor Class; the target is dazed (hard save ends).
Quirk: Laugh a deep, booming, inhuman laugh at inappropriate times.

A Rock and a Hard Place

The shambling march of the behemoth creates complications and perils in the middle of a fight. At the start of any battle on Stoneroost, roll 1d8—2 to determine what value of the escalation die triggers the event. (A –1 means no event.) Pick the best of the following or throw in some other complication.

Lurch! The behemoth takes an earth-shaking footstep that smashes into a soft patch of ground, like a bog or a cathedral, and the whole monster lurches to one side. Everyone on its back is sent flying and is dazed for one round. This penalty can be avoided if the whole table rocks from side to side, as if they were the bridge crew on a starship that just got hit. Any players who lurch out of time with the majority get dazed anyway.

Roar! Stoneroost opens its maw and roars. Pray that it's not a mating call. Anyway, the sheer noise distracts everyone—all characters, both PCs and monsters, take a –2 penalty to Mental Defense this round.

Quakestep! The behemoth's movement causes the ground to shake violently. Anyone who's moving has to make a DC 25 check or be dazed for one round.

Rock Grubs! A swarm of rock grubs wriggle out from a crack in the floor and join the fray. Assume one rock grub per player character (or two per player character, if they're 7th level characters).

Shifting Shell! The behemoth groans (you can't hear it, but you feel it in your bones) and shifts its heavy burden. The battlefield changes—perhaps a crevasse opens up, or a stone shell closes over the characters, or a barrier rises between two groups of combatants.

Koru Power! The elemental power of the behemoth flows through the area. Pick a random player character and ask them how they try to channel this power. If they give a convincing explanation (maybe succeeding on a DC 25 skill check or tapping an icon benefit, too), they get to immediately recharge one expended power or magic item.

The Stoneroost Tribe

The barbarians of the Stoneroost dwell on the upper spine of the behemoth. Most members of the tribe are human, although there are increasing numbers of half-orcs among them, as well as a few adoptees or former humans who have become strange and stony through long symbiosis with Stoneroost. They are a dour, hard people, as befits their environment. They wield stone weapons made from the indestructible matter of the behemoth itself, and live in caves carved from the same substance. Some say they even eat stone, but that's not true—they would if they could, as stone tastes better than the lichen-and-rainwater stew they subsist upon. They keep a small number of goats for milk, meat, and hides. Rock grubs also figure prominently on the menu.

When they go raiding, as they do whenever Stoneroost wanders within range of an inhabited region, their elite troops use gargoyle-hide gliders to fly down and take their foes by surprise. The rest of the raiding party climbs down the behemoth's legs and strikes across country to carry away the plunder.

Notable members of the tribe include:

Chieftain Koruk: Sometimes, the tribe picks a chieftain for strength, or wisdom, or cunning, or bravery. Sometimes, all the candidates fight on the Choosing Ledge until only one is left standing and the others are left falling. And sometimes, the chieftain is chosen for them. 'Koruk' means 'blessed of the behemoth.' The tribe believes that Stoneroost chose this woman to lead them. Whether or not the behemoth made a conscious choice or not, Koruk can certainly tap into the behemoth's magical power, making her almost invincible and invulnerable in battle as long as she's touching the beast's back. This supernatural gift makes Koruk overconfident and lazy, but also terrifying if roused.

Seer Odma: Odma is the tribe's seer and diviner. She reads the future in the clouds and in cracks in the rock—and since Koruk is too lazy to do any governing, she's also the tribe's effective leader and spokesperson most of the time. She's fiercely protective of the behemoth, which is a strange attitude to have toward a creature with the size and strength of a mountain, but Odma is convinced that all outsiders want to do is hurt the tribe and their home. Secretly, she resents Koruk's supernatural connection to Stoneroost and wishes her niece Fercrag or someone more forceful and determined were chieftain instead.

Odma is the only person who knows the charms that allow the tribe to shape the stony shell of the behemoth.

Fercrag the Half-Orc: Fercrag is the tribe's best huntress and raider. She's proud of her half-orc nature and enjoys pitting her strength against the best the outside world has to offer. Sometimes, she thinks about setting off to find her fortune on the lands below, but loyalty to her tribe and especially to her aunt Odma keeps her here, at least for the moment. She mistrusts outsiders, but is not as fearful or xenophobic as Odma.

Burlington Costletwaithe: This halfling is easy to spot amid the assembled barbarians—he may be dressed in the same gray-stained goatskin as the rest, but his goatskin has bright shiny brass buttons. Burlington was an adventurer who left the halfing burrows at Twisp and ended up stranded on the behemoth. The tribe took him in, and now he's their interpreter, diplomat, trader, chef, and entertainer to Chieftain Koruk. He tries to dissuade them from raiding gentle, peaceful folk, and has set up agreements with certain communities who now pay tribute to the barbarians whenever Stoneroost comes near.

Odma and the Witch

Odma's mistrust of outsiders stems partially from her dealings with the Witch of Marblehall. The Witch *charmed* Odma into revealing the secret of the stone-shaper charms. The Witch kept her presence on the behemoth a secret from the other tribespeople, although both Fercrag and Burlington spotted a mysterious visitor sneaking out of Odma's cave some years ago.

The Secret Cave

The tribe guards the secret of a hidden cave that leads deep into the behemoth to a sacred place of power. Whatever the player characters seek is down there. If they're looking for the charms to shape a shell, those charms are written on the wall of the cave. If they seek the behemoth's ichor, then the one weak spot on the whole creature is down there.

Other Approaches

We're assuming that the player characters start by trying to win the trust of the Stoneroost tribe in order to get what they want. Other approaches might work, but are even riskier.

Spying: A really stealthy spy could creep into the barbarian caves and spy on the tribe. A DC 25 check gets the spy inside information about the tribe's leaders and their attitudes; DC 35 lets the spy follow Odma to the secret cave.

By Force of Arms: Going for the direct approach works, although Burlington will try to convince both sides to put down their weapons if the adventurers just start slaughtering everyone.

Ignoring the Barbarians: The characters could ignore the tribe and wander around the behemoth until they find whatever they're looking for.

Trust is Earned

To gain the trust of the tribe, the adventurers need to prove themselves—after convincing them that they're not hostile. Have the party speaker make a skill check. A DC 20 check wins over Burlington, DC 25 convinces Kurok these strangers are all right, DC 30 lets Fercrag relax, and a mighty DC 35 will even persuade Odma that these strangers are not malicious. Optionally, let the player character draw on icon relationships (the tribe are opposed to the Emperor, the Three, and the Elf Queen, and grudgingly open to the Dwarf King and the High Druid), bard songs, or roleplaying. Beating some but not all of the DCs (i.e. a result below 35) means that some in the tribe are willing to listen, but others still mistrust the newcomers.

Next, the players must prove themselves worthy of the tribe's secrets. We've listed some suggestions on how to do this; doubtless the players will come up with more. Mix in some of the decisions about raiding or the gargoyle hunt once the players have made a good impression.

Gifts and Tribute: *"So,"* booms Koruk, *"what tribute do you bring me?"* It's an excellent question—what presents did the characters bring the chieftain? As the Stoneroost proverb says, "one rope, two hands," meaning you've got a hand free to do something even when climbing up the behemoth, so *of course* they didn't come empty-handed. It would be a terrible insult to appear before a chieftain without a gift. Each.

Song & Story: Koruk enjoys stories and songs from the lands below, especially violent stories and drinking songs. An impressive performance can win her over.

Fighting Talk: Fercrag asks the characters questions about nearby lands, and it's clear that she's planning a raid. She might ask how many guards a particular town might muster, or the strength of the walls of a certain castle near the migration route. If the characters answer truthfully, they're betraying the civilized lands below to the barbarians (of course, depending on where the behemoth is right now, the players may not care). If they lie, then Fercrag won't trust them.

The Hunt of the Gargoyles: Some of the barbarian children run through the cave, shrieking with excitement. They saw a titanic gargoyle! Such creatures are rare indeed, and the appearance of one is an excellent omen. It will bring great luck to the tribe if such a beast is brought down and skinned. Surely the strangers will join in the hunt?

The Raiding Party: Fercrag announces that the behemoth will soon be in range of a lowlander settlement, and it's time to prepare for a raid. Burlington protests—he asks Koruk for permission to visit the settlement first and arrange the payment of tribute instead of sacking the place, but Fercrag objects that the settlement is large and well-defended, so they need surprise on their side. Koruk grins and gestures to the player characters—what do they advise? If the characters counsel a surprise raid, then Koruk demands that they lead the assault. If they agree with Burlington, then she sends them as emissaries to demand tribute from the town.

Blood from a Stone

Once the characters have established themselves as somewhat trustworthy, Odma approaches them in secret. She offers to help them with their quest, but she has a price—Koruk must be overthrown as chieftain. She complains that Koruk is too lazy, too undisciplined, and too concerned with her own pleasures to be worthy of the title. No barbarian would murder a woman as she sleeps, but she knows that lowlanders are treacherous, dishonorable folk who think nothing of slitting throats by night.

Braver souls, she admits, could challenge Koruk to single combat on the Choosing Ledge. No member of the tribe dares challenge her because of her magical connection to the behemoth, but if the characters could somehow break that link, then Koruk would be vulnerable. Alternatively, they could lure Koruk out on a hunt or with some other excuse, then ambush her.

If the characters threaten to reveal Odma's treachery, she cackles. Only she knows the secrets of the sacred cave. Kill her, and they will never find what they seek. Even Koruk could not kill her, not without dooming the tribe.

How do the characters respond?

- If they murder Koruk, then Odma stays true to her word and leads them to the cave entrance. She doesn't mention anything about the monsters inside, because the player characters are lowlanders who deserve to die.
- If they turn Odma in, then Koruk throws her off the behemoth. She knows where the cave is, but admits that she doesn't know the secrets of how to traverse it safely. The player characters caused all this trouble, so they can put things right by going into the cave and clearing it of monsters.

Welcome to the Tribe

If the characters overthrow Koruk, or learn Odma's secrets, or simply go over the top on winning the tribe's trust, then there's a place for them in the Stoneroost tribe. This is especially useful in this campaign, as the back of the behemoth is one place where the Stone Thief can't reach.

Stoneroost Barbarian

It takes guts to live on the back of a behemoth. After all, guts can be used to make many useful things. So, this one is going to take your guts.

5th level troop [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +8

Behemoth-stone club +9 vs. AC—15 damage
Natural even hit: The target chooses one: take a –1 AC penalty until the next full heal-up, or take 10 extra damage.

R: Hunting Bow +9 vs. AC—14 damage

Rage: When the barbarian is staggered, it starts adding the escalation die to its attacks.

AC 21
PD 19 **HP 70**
MD 15

Koruk the Invincible

She channels the power of the behemoth. Dare you face the woman who hits like an angry mountain?

Double-strength 9th level leader [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +16

Behemoth-stone axe +13 vs. AC (2 attacks)—40 damage
Natural even hit: The target chooses one: take a –1 AC penalty until the next full heal-up, or take 20 extra damage.
Natural even miss: Koruk fights dirty. The target chooses one: become dazed, or take 20 damage.

Koru Power! In a round when the escalation die is even, or if she becomes staggered, Koruk may draw upon the power of the behemoth as long as she is in physical contact with Stoneroost. Roll 1d6 to determine the benefit gained. Alternatively, Koruk may automatically save against any ongoing conditions at the start of her turn instead of gaining a benefit.

1: Heals 40 hit points.
2: Koruk may make an extra *behemoth-stone axe* attack this round.
3: Increase any one of her defenses by +2 until the escalation die is even again.
4: Koruk's crit range expands by 2 until the escalation die is even again.
5: heals 80 hit points.
6: Koruk may add the escalation die to her attacks until the escalation die is even again.

AC 25
PD 22 **HP 360**
MD 22

Fercrag

She once tore open the throat of a gargoyle with her teeth. Consider it a mark of honor if she does the same to you.

Double-strength 7th level wrecker [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

Behemoth-Stone Axes +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—30 damage
Natural even hit: The target chooses one: take a –1 AC penalty until the next full heal-up, or take 15 extra damage.
Attack staggers target: Fercrag makes a free *go for your throat* attack.
Both attacks hit same target: The target is knocked off-balance and may not add the escalation die to its attacks next turn.
Miss: 10 damage.

[Special trigger] **Go For Your Throat +12 vs. PD**—10 damage, and 10 ongoing damage

Rage: When Fercrag is staggered, she starts adding the escalation die to her attacks.

AC 23
PD 21 **HP 200**
MD 17

Odma the Seer

She alone holds the secrets of the tribe.

Double-strength 7th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

C: Weapon Curse +12 vs. MD (1d3 + 1 nearby targets)—10 damage, and the target must make a basic melee attack against a nearby ally as though confused.

R: Blood to Stone +12 vs. PD (one nearby or far away target)—30 damage, and the target is stuck and takes 10 ongoing damage (hard save ends both, 16+)

Shifting Charm: Odma has a +5 bonus to disengage checks, as she can warp the stone around her to aid her escape. She inflicts damage equal to the result of her disengage check on one nearby opponent whether or not she succeeds in disengaging.

Read the Runes: At the start of a fight involving Odma the Seer, all players must roll their icon relationship dice. Those who fail to roll any 5s or 6s are vulnerable to attacks made by members

of the Stoneroost tribe. Those who roll a 5 or 6 must narrate how their icon relationship binds them to the skein of fate and ensures a higher destiny awaits them.

Death Curse: When Odma dies, she spits a death curse at the character who killed her: **+12 vs. MD**—60 damage, and when the character dies, they will become a gargoyle after death instead of passing on or being available for resurrection.

AC 23
PD 16 **HP 200**
MD 22

Behemoth-Stone Weapons

These stone weapons are made using the shell-shaping charms known by Odma. They are heavy and unwieldy (–1 attack penalty), but on an even hit, the target's armor is smashed and dented by the magically dense stone head. The target either reduces their AC by 1 until the next full heal-up (end of the battle for monsters), or takes extra damage equal to twice the wielder's level.

Behemoth-stone weapons lose their potency when taken away from Stoneroost. At most, they last a few weeks before becoming no more than ordinary stone.

Into the Secret Cave

The trail to the secret cave leads past the precarious Choosing Ledge and along the mountainous ridge of Stoneroost's right shoulder. The cave entrance is exceedingly well hidden (DC 30 to find without a guide). Inside, the rough floor slopes sharply down into a narrow crevasse. As the characters descend, they quickly realize this isn't a cave—it's an old wound, now masked by the accumulated stony scar tissue of many ages. They get to contemplate the thought of something that could inflict such a terrible wound on a Koru behemoth as they clamber down into the darkness.

1. Poisonous Fumes

Noxious gases rising from the depths threaten to overcome the characters. They need to come up with a way past these fumes or turn back (a DC 25 check will do in a pinch, but encourage the use of a ritual or a creative solution). The Stoneroost tribe knows that these fumes naturally stop when the Koru behemoth feeds on a magical wellspring, so they time their visits to the sacred cave to match.

2. Rock Grub Swarm

If the characters haven't already chopped their way through a swarm of rock grubs, then a host of the wriggling horrors squirm out of cracks in the rock to attack.

3. Wild Magic Torrents

The behemoth's flesh seethes with old, wild magic, the primal energies of life and vitality. It's far too much for any mortal frame to endure. The adventurers must find a way to deflect or draw off this magical frenzy if they're to get past this barrier. The barbarians use goats—throw a herd of goats into the barrier, and their death throes create a gap big enough to get through. It doesn't end well for the goats, who either mutate into chaos beasts (see the *Bestiary*) or else explode from the influx of energy. Again, using a ritual or a really good (DC 30 at least) skill check can get the characters through. Or lots and lots of goats.

4. Stone Guardians

Dozens of pairs of obsidian eyes glitter as the characters enter this room. Gargoyles of immense age are embedded or entombed in the walls. They face outward to stare into the cave. As the characters pass through, they somehow *know* the gargoyles are challenging them to honor Stoneroost, and not to use the secrets they'll learn in the cave below in a way that displeases the behemoth. If the players fail to live up to this challenge, then they can expect a visit from ancient, vengeful powers.

5. The Thing in the Cave

The final guardian of the sacred cave is, like the player characters, an intruder to Stoneroost. It's a fragment or a parasite from whatever unimaginably huge creature attacked Stoneroost when the world was young. It's strangely unreal, like a ghost or echo of some primordial entity. It seems trapped by the sheer solidity of Stoneroost more than anything else, as if the mass of the shell around it brings it down to our dimension of existence.

It's a transparent, writhing thing, like a cross between a starfish, a snail, and an electrical storm. It can split off pieces of itself, which wriggle and slither toward the adventurers for one spasm of violence before it dies.

Thing in the Cave

Before you kill it, remember that it's the last of its kind, the only surviving example of this species. Now kill it.

Triple-strength 8th level wrecker [ABERRATION]
Initiative: +18
Vulnerability: fire

Tentacle Slap +13 vs. AC (3 attacks, each against a different enemy)—30 damage

Natural 16+: The thing in the cave consumes some of the character's substance. The character becomes somewhat more ghostly and translucent. In this form, the character has a +2 bonus to attacks against the thing in the cave and its spawn. However, if a character is hit again by this substance drain, they must make an easy (6+) save to avoid dying. A third hit by this attack requires an average (11+) save to continue existing. A fourth hit means a hard (16+) save; if the creature consumes the same character's substance five times, that character ceases to exist.

Miss: Lightning arcs from the thing in the cave. Any foe engaged with it takes 10 electrical damage.

Create Spawn: Whenever the thing in the cave takes damage, it creates one spawn for every 40 points of damage inflicted on it (round down).

AC 25
PD 21
MD 18

HP 440

Spawn

Wriggling, jiggling bits of awfulness.

8th level mook [ABERRATION]
Initiative: +12
Vulnerability: fire

Chew +13 vs. AC—23 damage

Channel Lightning: When the thing in the cave misses with a *tentacle slap*, lightning leaps from it to each of its spawn, and from them to any foes they're engaged with. The spawn deals 5 lightning damage to any foes engaged with it. If a foe is facing multiple spawn, that's multiple blasts of lightning.

AC 23
PD 20
MD 20

HP 40 (mook)

Mook: Kill one spawn mook for every 40 damage dealt to the mob.



The Sacred Cave

Past the Thing, the adventurers emerge into the sacred cave. What's there? Well, what do they seek?

Shell-Shaper Charms: Paintings on the walls depict creatures—humanoid, but probably not human—worshiping Stoneroost. From these paintings, wisdom seeps into the characters. They can now shape the stone shell of the behemoth with a magical ritual. Doing so is a slow process, but the characters can now:

- Create a set of stones that make an indigestible 'pocket' in the dungeon, allowing them to ride along in safety when the dungeon submerges.
- Shape a stone spike that could temporarily pin the dungeon in place, like an Earthspear (page 304).
- Reshape (or cast off) the Wild Caves near Dungeon Town (page 94) or the entrance to Marblehall (page 230).

However, there's a catch. To use the charm, the caster has to serve or worship the behemoth. Here, in this sacred place, almost any character can make a leap of faith and establish a connection with Stoneroost. Doing so turns one of the character's icon relationships into a 1-point (or more) relationship with the High Druid, in her role as the champion of the Wild. If a character already has a relationship with the High Druid, then their understanding of the bond deepens and grows. Otherwise, someone's going to have to break an existing connection to take on this mystical union.

Excessive use of shell charms is perilous and draining. The characters can't, for example, make a set of charms to protect a whole city against the Stone Thief, not without the aid of the High Druid herself. Too many charms can also make Stoneroost itchy, and an irritated behemoth is a synonym for cataclysm.

Blood of the Behemoth: A pulsing vein as thick as the mightiest oak pumps ichor to the underside of the living shell. This is as close as the behemoth has to a weak spot. Drawing blood from the behemoth requires a truly mighty blow from an edged or piercing weapon, and the cut heals almost instantly. Still, the characters obtain a few drops of the heartblood of a Koru behemoth—and with such a treasure, they can:

- Forge a weapon that could slay a living dungeon.
- Brew a poison that could poison the dungeon.
- Use it as an immensely powerful component in a ritual.

See *Slaying the Thief,* page 352, for such applications.

Wounding a behemoth has dire consequences. The characters have stung Stoneroost in a sensitive spot, and the behemoth panics. It breaks into a wild gallop, charging across the landscape in a cataclysmic fit of terror, smashing through mountains or trampling cities in alarm. Either pick where Stoneroost ends up, or roll a d8 to determine which compass direction it runs on the map of the Dragon Empire.

The Opposition

If it's time for the opposition to make an appearance, they're waiting for the characters outside the cave (or follow them in, if the Opposition wants the shell charms too). Remember if you're using the Vengeful Company that one of their number is a former member of the Stoneroost Tribe. Alternatively, if Odma's still alive, maybe she's bargained with the Opposition to achieve her goals.

13 Weird Things On (Or About) A Behemoth's Back

1: Even Koru behemoths get itchy. When they itch, they scratch by rubbing themselves on mountains.

2: A tribe of giants once built a giant howdah the size of a city, and tried to attach it to Stoneroost's back. The huge iron rings sunk into the behemoth's shell can still be seen, but nothing else remains of the howdah—other than, maybe, a few giant skeletons clinging to the debris. They're almost certainly not undead.

3: After Stoneroost plunges into the ocean at the Koru Straits, sea creatures sometimes get caught in water-filled cracks in its shell. These tide pools can last for months. Use the stats for Swordapus (page 105) if the adventurers find an inhabited pool.

4: When Stoneroost crosses the mountains, it climbs so high that its back reaches into the overworld. Lucky adventurers might be able to hitch a ride with a passing flying realm. Unlucky adventurers might freeze to death.

5: The folk of Nomad tell a story about a brave girl who ran away and clung to Stoneroost's back as it marched past their town. The next time the behemoth passed that way, the girl returned, clutching handfuls of huge diamonds. Unfortunately, she was mad, and could not say where she had obtained such treasures. Does the behemoth's migration route take it through a valley where diamonds are common as pebbles? Or is there a vein of diamonds somewhere on the behemoth itself?

6: Because of an ancient feud, storms that blow in from the east really hate Koru behemoths. Storms often follow the behemoths for weeks, harassing them with lightning and fierce winds. The behemoths don't notice, of course, but those living on the monsters' backs have to put up with the foulest weather imaginable.

7: Speaking of things the behemoths don't notice—Tulvin Behemothslayer is a wandering half-orc who is, he claims, destined to slay a behemoth. In his tribe, it's considered disrespectful not to fulfill your destiny, so he's out looking for pointers on how to accomplish such a deed.

8: As the existence of the Wild Caves (page 94) proves, behemoths sometimes shed scales from their backs. Shellquake!

9: The behemoth migration route runs through the demon-haunted Red Wastes. Followers of the Crusader sometimes use the behemoths as mobile base camps from which they sally forth to hunt demons.

10: Runes. Giant runes. Runes visible only from above. Runes graven so deep into the behemoth's shell they're like trenches to the adventurers.

11: The Stoneroost tribe aren't the only people who live on this behemoth. Travel downspine a few miles, and you'll run into the crazy Rockblood dwarves, who believe that Stoneroost is cursed to turn to stone, and the only way the progress of this curse can be delayed is to murder adventurers and smear their blood across the rocks.

12: All the icons (bar the Orc Lord) like to decorate their towers/castles/temples/lairs with gargoyles, so gargoyle hunting is a profitable line of work.

13: Turns out you can see your house from up here. It's right in the path of the behemoth.

The Inverse Observatory

The Inverse Observatory looks down at the land below. It even looks through the land, to spy on the twisting caves and elemental energies of the dark underworld. The observatory moves slowly through the overworld, making a lazy circle around the Midland Sea. In the west, it floats over the Giantwalk Mountains, roughly following the Koru behemoth migration route once it leaves the highlands.

Sagely giants of great power and wisdom built the observatory, and they still operate it. The ultimate purpose of their observations is to cross-check their astrological findings. Since the movements of the stars affect events, then by watching those events and correlating those observations with the matching astrological conditions, the giants hope to one day create a perfectly accurate, scientifically falsifiable model of fate.

The giants do not welcome intruders. At best, the intruders might be supplicants or nosy seekers, hoping for a glimpse of the future. They might be thieves, here to steal the giant's valuable instruments, or religious fanatics clinging to outdated notions of divinity.

Worse, the intruders might be heroes.

Heroes, you see, are thick with destiny. Potential fates and the possibility-matrices of cataclysmic events cling to them. Heroes must be observed at all times, and their every movement correlated with the stars. A hero on the observatory cannot be observed, which throws all the giants' calculations out of whack. The only way to correct such a discrepancy is to kill the hero and record the precise time of death, then cross-check that with the stars. Fate is a tricky quarry to hunt down, and heroes meddling in the instrumentation makes it all the harder.

From the observatory, the characters can detect the Stone Thief as it moves, and predict where it will next emerge.

Epic Territory

An island full of storm giants is definitely verging on epic-tier action. The players can still risk going here at lower levels (5th or 6th), but they'll get absolutely walloped in any battles with the giants. Make sure the players are aware that this is an adventure that rewards stealth and cunning, and casually leave the rulebook open to page 228 for emphasis.

The Quest Begins

The characters learn of the observatory:

- From the books in the Blind Spire of the Grove (page 145).
- Through research into ways to divine the location of living dungeons.
- When their flying ship or aerial mount is driven off-course by a storm.
- When they follow a storm giant observer back to the observatory.
- From an icon.

Storm Giant Observers

Sometimes, the fate of the whole world turns on a single word, a single blow, or a single roll of the dice. Such key moments must be precisely correlated with the astrological portents, so the Inverse Observatory dispatches observers to watch covertly—or as covertly as a thirty-foot-tall giant with an astrolabe can manage. The characters might spot a gray-cloaked giant standing on a distant hilltop or lurking on a cloud overhead as some important event transpires.

Getting To the Observatory

Flying (or teleporting) is the quickest way. The giants who dwell here use their *skystep* power to saunter betwixt earth and sky; the characters could use their own short-range flying spells when the observatory wanders close to the peaks of the Giantwalk Mountains, or when it approaches another, more accessible flying realm.

The observatory is surrounded by an eternal thunderstorm. Dark foreboding clouds make it easy to spot from a distance. Curiously, should one look directly at a bolt of lightning when it flashes through the clouds, the afterimage burns the words *NO VISITORS* or *CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC* into the observer's retinas.

Through the clouds, the observatory looks like a roughly oval hunk of rock. A shining citadel of glass and metal stands at the center of the island, surrounded by several smaller buildings that are nevertheless larger and more imposing than most mortal palaces. Three towers positioned equidistantly around the perimeter of the island clearly provide the magical force to keep it flying—they crackle with power.

The only safe place to land is at the skydock. If the characters try to land elsewhere, they face two dangers.

- **Lightning Blast:** Dodging those random bolts of lightning takes some fancy flying. It's a DC 25 check to reach the island without being hit for 2d12 damage; for every five points by which the character misses the DC, that's another 2d12. So, roll a 10—you're missing by 15 and take 6d12 damage. Each.
- **Being Seen:** The giants watch the skies around their island. If the characters don't make an effort to avoid detection, they'll be seen and the giants will release their hunting beasts (page 329) to deal with the intruders. If they do try to hide, it's DC 20 to avoid the watchful eyes of the giants.

Locations on the Inverse Observatory

Skydock: The giants do not welcome visitors, especially not people from the land below. Anyone important enough to warrant an audience shouldn't be here, because their presence will distort the giants' careful calculations. This skydock was last used 200 years ago, when the Emperor of that era sent an ambassador to the observatory. (Actually, she sent six, each one more insignificant than the last in terms of perceived cosmic importance, and so it was that the Empire was saved by a halfling from Oldburrow who never did anything of note before or afterward.) If the characters land here, the giants escort them to the audience chamber.

Audience Chamber: Mortal throne rooms are often designed to make visitors feel small, to exaggerate the king's size and importance. These giants are far above such petty egotisms. The audience chamber has two rows of identical stone benches, facing each other. The giants sit along one row, and the visitors sit on the other. See *Petitioning the Giants*, page 328, if the characters come here openly.

Library: While the library of the Inverse Observatory contains a wealth of lore, it's almost all entirely useless. The giants don't care about the particulars of mortal events, just their astrological significance. Take, for instance, the Orc Lord's invasion of the Empire. The giants might note that a battle occurred on such-and-such a date, at a particular time, and in such-and-such a place, and carefully correlate those readings with the configuration of the stars at that moment. They wouldn't note who won, or how many died, or what actually happened in the battle. All they want to know is whether it's more auspicious to be the attacker or the defender on that particular day.

There are some records in the library that might be of use. An enterprising thief could borrow a copy of the giants' *Elemental Atlas*, a book of maps that notes places of power in the land below. In effect, it's a list of likely targets for the Stone Thief.

Elemental Atlas

Recharge 16+: With the notes on ley lines, telluric vortices, and magical currents in this book, an enterprising caster can pull off the elemental equivalent of a ranger's terrain stunt. Roll a d6 at the start of a battle occurring at a location noted in the book; when the escalation die reaches that number, you can draw on those elemental energies to do something cool. Or something fiery. Or something electrical. At the very least, add half your level in d6s to damage with a spell.

Suspension Towers: These three magical towers each contain a levitating green crystal that is attached to the tower walls with thick chains. The crystals strain against the chains; if freed, the crystal would instantly try to shoot straight up at tremendous speed, smashing itself to pieces against the tower's pyramid-shaped cap. These crystals hold the whole floating island aloft—so they're an obvious target for attackers. See *Bringing Down the Tower*, page 328.

Gianthomes: These buildings manage to be both ascetic and palatial. The giants have little in the way of creature comforts—they sleep on bare stone beds, have no fires to keep them warm, and the only diversions are books of astrological log tables to read—but their homes are made from fine white marble, and they have the sort of pillars and vaulted ceilings associated with rich temples.

The Outer Observatory: In this warren of relatively small rooms, giants record their observations on scrolls of pounded bronze. It's eerily quiet except for the scratching of pens the size of saplings, the odd booming whispered conversation, and thunderclaps when one of the giants coughs.

The Inner Observatory: This huge room overlooks the magical Telluric Lens. A web of walkways over the lens allows the giants to move back and forth over a vast image of the lands below. Magical emanations and cosmic loci flare with arcane light on the map, showing the giants places of power and points of interest. Overhead, the dome gives a staggering view of the stars above.

The Telluric Lens can pinpoint the current location of the Stone Thief—it shows up as a wriggling shadow beneath the skin of the world—and it can predict where the dungeon will likely emerge next. If the dungeon is close to a place of power, then there's no need to roll; a more cruel GM might ask players to make some sagely skill checks to understand the readings from the lens.

Optionally, the lens might also be able to detect things connected to the Stone Thief, like the missing Eyes or Cult of the Devourer strongholds on the surface.

The Telluric Lens is an exceedingly delicate instrument and nigh irreparable in this age of the world. A stray blow could knock it out of alignment or even destroy it altogether.

Smashing the Lens

Player characters who engage in petty vandalism or giant-baiting can smash the lens with a single blow.

If the Opposition tries to destroy the lens, though, they have to inflict 120 damage on it.

Petitioning the Giants

"Oh sages, we are on a quest to save the Empire from a monstrous living dungeon. May we use your observatory to find our foe?"

"NO."

"It'll only take a minute."

"NO."

"But we-"

CRACK-2d6x10-lightning-damage-BOOM

The master of the observatory is a storm giant king, **Ankyroth**. He prides himself on being kind, generous, and understanding of the needs of 'small folk.' This generosity of spirit exists mainly in theory—as soon as he actually has to deal with people from below, he remembers that he's actually an arrogant giant who finds small creatures extremely irritating. Should the characters try to persuade the giants to let them use the observatory, Ankyroth patronizingly explains the nature of the work carried out there, and how it is far beyond the comprehension of small folk. After all, their brains are smaller than his thumbnail. No doubt their concerns seem very important to them, but the giants have a higher perspective. To them, the turn of an age is just another line of numbers on a scroll.

Ankyroth also explains how the presence of outsiders—especially adventurers—on the flying island prejudices their results. What if the adventurers were to do something that actually *mattered* in the grand scheme of things? No, they must leave immediately. The giants turn violent if the adventurers refuse to leave promptly. (Optionally, let the adventurers spot the arrival of the Opposition, forcing them to act despite the giants' refusal to help.)

It's virtually impossible—requiring a DC 35 check, and the deployment of excellent arguments/threats/bribes—to convince Ankyroth to let the characters use the Inverse Observatory. At best, he might let them consult the library and find the *Elemental Atlas.*

Sneaking Around

The storm giants may be keen-sighted when it comes to watching the stars, but their minds are on higher things and they don't pay much attention to their surroundings. Sneaking around on the flying realm is only DC 10, rising to DC 15 in the observatory or library, and DC 20 in the inner sanctum of the observatory. For low-level characters, hiding from the giants is the best approach. A failed stealth check doesn't mean the character has necessarily been spotted by the giants—it's more likely to indicate that the characters were forced to hide somewhere inopportune, like climbing inside a giant's boot or hiding behind the ornamental salt cellar in the refectory.

After a few failed checks, the giants grow suspicious and release their hunting beasts (see page 329).

Storming the Observatory

The giants take to the air if the characters attack openly. This is not for tactical advantage—it's to draw the fight away from the observatory to ensure that no delicate instruments are damaged, and that the precise configuration of stars that portends 'suicidal



adventurers' is properly recorded. After all, there are some two dozen 10th level storm giants here in addition to mighty Ankyroth and the hunting beasts.

The Opposition

One group of the Opposition arrives at the Inverse Observatory at the same time as the player characters. Depending on the nature of the Opposition, they might want:

- To destroy the Telluric Lens before the characters get to it.
- To use the Telluric Lens to find the Stone Thief.
- To use the Telluric Lens to find the missing Eyes.
- To identify places of power for the dungeon to destroy.
- To find the Stone Thief so they can bind or destroy it for their own ends.
- To stop the player characters from accomplishing anything.

Bringing Down The Tower: To distract the giants, the Opposition begins by destroying one of the three suspension towers that keep the island flying. The towers are not defended, so the first sign of the attack comes when the tower explodes in green flame and the island tilts sharply to one side. Ankyroth orders his giants to go to the tower and hold the island up until he can fetch and activate a spare levitation crystal. Most of the giants on the island rush over and grab hold of the mighty chains that once bound the crystal. They then use their power to *skystep* to climb into the air. The combined strength of ten storm giants is enough to keep the island stable—but it does draw the giants away from the observatory, giving the Opposition an opportunity to strike.

For added chaos in the confrontation, the Opposition could blow up a second tower. That sends the island plummeting down toward the land below, despite the best efforts of the giants to stop its fall. The island hits the ground when the escalation die hits 6; the giants and the remaining tower mean that the falling damage is a mere 4d10.

Only an absolute bastard of a gamemaster would have the Stone Thief waiting below, ready to gorge itself on the Inverse Observatory. That would just be too cruel, right? What did your players do to deserve that? What—they did what!? Well, then, it's wholly justifiable, even necessary. Off you go.

Encounter: Giant Sentry

Giant patrols of this sort check out any disturbances on the island, or escort visitors from the skydock to the audience chamber. The giants always travel in pairs, but the characters can lure one away with a suitable distraction.

Storm Giant Sage

Unfortunately, the only things to do on this island are observe things and practice fighting, and he's all out of observations.

Huge 10th level archer [GIANT]
Initiative: +16

Truly enormous staff +15 vs. AC—100 damage
Natural even hit or miss: The giant can make a *lightning bolt* attack against a random nearby enemy as a free action
Natural odd hit: The target is stunned until the end of their next turn.
Miss: 30 damage OR the giant can make a *release the thunder* attack as a free action.

R: Giant longbow +14 vs. AC (2 attacks vs. nearby or far away enemies)—60 damage
Natural even hit: The giant can make a *lightning bolt* attack against a random enemy that is nearby the target of the *longbow* attack.

[Special trigger] **C: Lightning bolt +15 vs. PD (one random nearby enemy)**—2d6 x 10 lightning damage
Miss: Half damage.

[Special trigger] **C: Release the thunder +15 vs. PD (all nearby creatures)**—1d10 thunder damage per *building thunder* point (see below).
Miss: Half damage.

Building thunder: Keep count of the number of times the storm giant uses its lightning bolt attack during the battle. Add that number to the escalation die to get the current building thunder value.

Auspicious Omens: Roll a d6 at the start of a battle involving the storm giant sage. In any round when the escalation die matches the value rolled, the giant may roll 2d20 for any attack or save and take the best result.

Skystep: A storm giant can use its standard action to walk or run through the air, using move actions to continue. If the storm giant makes a standard action attack, it settles back to the ground below it without falling.

Storm born: The storm giant has *resist thunder 16+* and *resist lightning 16+*.

AC	**26**	
PD	24	**HP 600**
MD	22	

Encounter: Hunting Beasts

The giants keep a small menagerie of flying monsters to hunt down vermin on the flying island, especially the troublesome destiny owls that flit down from the stars by night.

Skywurm

They ride lightning bolts down to ground level to hunt when the hunger takes them.

Large 6th level troop [BEAST]
Initiative: +12

Bite +11 vs. AC—35 damage
Miss: The skywurm makes a free *tail swipe* attack against a different nearby enemy.

Ram +11 vs. PD—50 damage
Charger: The skywurm can only make this attack if it is not engaged at the start of its turn.

[Special trigger] **Tail Swipe +11 vs. AC**—15 damage

Don't Crowd Me: While two or more foes engage the skywurm, it gets to make a free *tail swipe* attack every turn.

Lightning Fast: If a foe that the skywurm is engaged with suffers lightning damage, the skywurm gets to make a move action immediately.

Flyer: Skywurms wriggle through the air at tremendous speed.

Stormborn: It's got *resist thunder 12+* and *resist lightning 12+*.

AC	**22**	
PD	20	**HP 180**
MD	16	

Pet Thundercloud

Villages in the rain shadow of the Giantwalk Mountains pray for days when young storm giants take the family pet for a walk.

8th level spoiler [ABERRATION]
Initiative: +13

C: Lightning Bolt +13 vs. PD (one nearby foe)—25 damage
Natural even hit: The lightning bolt arcs to another enemy nearby the first target. Roll another *lightning bolt* attack on that target. The bolt keeps chaining until it misses, hits with a natural odd hit, or runs out of nearby enemies to fry.

R: Howling Winds +12 vs. PD (up to three enemies in a group)—15 damage, and the target takes a –4 penalty to any ranged attacks and cannot move toward the thundercloud this turn.

Cloud: The thundercloud has *resist almost everything 18+*. The exceptions are force, fire, and cold-based attacks or anything that could reasonably inconvenience a cloud. (A sword will go through it, but an improvised attack with a tapestry could disrupt it.)

AC	**24**	
PD	24	**HP 120**
MD	22	

Hunting Beasts Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Skywurms	Pet Clouds
3 x 5th level	1	1
4 x 5th level	1	1
5 x 5th level	2	1
6 x 5th level	2	2
7 x 5th level	3	2
3 x 6th level	*2*	*1*
4 x 6th level	*2*	*2*
5 x 6th level	*3*	*2*
6 x 6th level	*3*	*3*
7 x 6th level	*4*	*3*
3 x 7th level	2	2
4 x 7th level	3	2
5 x 7th level	3	3
6 x 7th level	4	3
7 x 7th level	4	4

Encounter: In the Observatory

If there's a battle inside the observatory itself, then mighty Ankyroth joins the fray, along with his most trusted lieutenants.

Ankyroth

Huge 12th level archer [GIANT]
Initiative: +20

Truly enormous longsword +17 vs. AC—250 damage
Natural even hit or miss: The giant can make a *lightning bolt* attack against a random nearby enemy as a free action
Natural odd miss: 50 damage OR the giant can make a *release the thunder* attack as a free action.

R: Giant longbow +16 vs. AC (2 attacks vs. nearby or far away enemies)—130 damage
Natural even hit: The giant can make a *lightning bolt* attack against a random enemy that is nearby the target of the *longbow* attack.

[Special trigger] **C: Lightning bolt +17 vs. PD (one random nearby enemy)**—3d6 x 10 lightning damage
Miss: Half damage.

[Special trigger] **C: Release the thunder +17 vs. PD (all nearby creatures)**—1d12 thunder damage per *building thunder* point (see below).
Miss: Half damage.

Building thunder: Keep count of the number of times the storm giant uses its *lightning bolt* attack during the battle. Add that number to the escalation die to get the current building thunder value.

Furious: Add one to the number of times he's counted as having used his *lightning bolt* for every 50 damage inflicted on Ankyroth.

Lightning Powered: When Ankyroth is staggered, he may immediately make a *release the thunder* attack as a free action.

Skystep: A storm giant can use its standard action to walk or run through the air, using move actions to continue. If the storm giant makes a standard action attack, it settles back to the ground below it without falling.

Storm born: The storm giant has *resist thunder 16+* and *resist lightning 16+*.

AC 28
PD 24
MD 24

HP 1000

The Keys of Marblehall

West and north of Glitterhaegen, the road cuts through the perilous forest of Bitterwood, then climbs through the northernmost foothills of the great Giantwalk range. This road was made by dwarves, so it runs straight and true, mile after mile, until it comes to the gates of Anvil and the beginning of the Dwarf King's domain. Should you turn west off the road after two day's ride, your path takes you along another dwarf-wrought road across the wide farmlands of the Artalin estates. The Artalin family is one of the wealthiest noble families in the Empire, and they boasted of their wealth and their friendship with the dwarves by having the best craftsmen and stonemasons of Forge work for them. The road goes past rich vineyards, past fertile fields and small woods for hunting, over magnificent arching bridges and through tunnels, until finally, the visitor (suitably awed and humbled) looks upon the crowning glory of the estate—and sees only a gaping hole in the earth.

The grand House of Marblehall is gone—stolen by the Stone Thief. But this was an inside job.

The Quest Begins

The characters learn of Marblehall:

- From rumors in the Empire about the mysterious disaster that befell the Artalin family.
- From research into previous attacks by the Stone Thief.
- From a survivor in the dungeon.
- From interrogating a member of the Cult of the Devourer.
- From visiting the Koru behemoth.
- From an icon.

Alternatively, the PCs might come here on a mission seemingly unrelated to the Stone Thief.

- A dwarf noble, Lord Sunhammer, and his retinue vanished on the road to Glitterhaegen. Sunhammer had secretly visited Marblehall, and he was there when the mansion was consumed. Perhaps the Dwarf King requests that the PCs find this missing noble (see page 235).
- Wandering adventurers, or those in service to the Emperor or the Dwarf King (or the Prince of Shadows, considering the mansion's proximity to Glitterhaegen) might be sent to clear the monsters out of the abandoned Artalin estate.

Casila Artalin, The Witch

Sometime before the campaign began, Casila Artalin returned to her family. The Artalins are immensely wealthy, but the family is on the fringes of the Imperial Court. The last few generations of Artalins have all been eccentric, lazy, or gout-ridden; they haven't produced any glorious knights, cunning courtiers, or talented wizards in some time, so their star has faded in Imperial politics. They still wield considerable influence among the merchant houses of Glitterhaegen, and their age-old monopolies on the trade of certain goods with the dwarves ensure that the Artalins will remain wealthy as long as the Empire endures.

Casila Artalin is an exception to her family's indolence. She studied magic under the tutelage of one of the icons and is now a prodigiously powerful spellcaster. She took the quick and easy route to power by allying herself with an icon, which tells you a great deal about Casila's character. Her family's wealth wasn't enough for her—she wants arcane power, as much of it as her mind can encompass and her soul can endure.

Casila & The Icon

Casila's icon patron depends on your player characters. Pick one with the most interesting conflicted or negative relationships among your group, and have that be her true patron. Seed rumors about the other potential patrons; Casila can always lie to the player characters to play on their sympathies.

The true identity of the icon will determine the sort of opposition encountered on this quest.

The Diabolist: Casila sold her soul to a devil for power, and the Diabolist owns that devil. So, by the transitive property of infernal sorcery, the Diabolist has her talons in Casila's soul. The Witch intends to trade the dungeon for her soul.

Variations:

- Casila was an innocent corrupted by the Diabolist. She's not trying to win her soul back—she's a thrall to the Diabolist.
- A devil escaped the Diabolist's fortress and is at large somewhere in the Empire. It's got Casila's soul.

The Elf Queen: Casila was stolen by the drow as a young child and raised in the Court of Stars. The Elf Queen returned her to human lands, and her family was so relieved to have her back that they didn't question why their lost daughter now possessed the magical secrets of the elves. The dark elves had trained the human girl specifically to capture the Stone Thief; by using a human as their pawn, they could hide their involvement until the dungeon was in their grasp.

Variations:

- Casila wasn't kidnapped—she ran away from her family to join the elves. She secretly despises her family, and imprisoning them in a dungeon is all part of the fun.
- It's wheels within wheels within trees—the Elf Queen is behind it all. She manipulated the drow into kidnapping Casila so *her* hands stayed clean, but she's really the one who wants control of the Stone Thief. Her age-old partnership with the Emperor and the Dwarf King is a sham, an alliance of convenience that will not survive the turning of the age.

The Three: Casila was in Highrock—the city that later became Drakkenhall—when doom overcame it. She avoided otherwise certain death by weaving a spell of suspended animation around herself. Centuries later, when the Blue claimed Drakkenhall, she found the frozen Witch and unraveled the spell. Now, it is the Blue's will alone that holds back all those suspended years. With a word, the dragon could let Casila age to death in an instant unless the Witch does her bidding. Casila returned to her family at Marblehall, and after some initial awkwardness, she was accepted as a member of the family by her great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandnieces and –nephews. An Artalin is an Artalin, after all, no matter how far removed in time.

Variations:

- The Witch isn't really called Casila—that's the name of her distant relative, whose name and face she stole after the Blue freed her. The Witch's real name is Carmilla Artalin. She tracked down Casila, who was an adventuring wizardess, killed her, and took her identity. A few members of Casila's original adventuring party are still out there, hunted by the Blue's agents and assassins.
- The whole '*I was in suspended animation for centuries, and now the Blue can age me to death with a thought if I don't serve her*' story is a lie. Casila is hundreds of years old, all right, but she spent that time studying under the Blue's arcane tutelage. She's using magical *potions of longevity* to preserve her youth. She's loyal to the Blue, but may use the tale of coercion to manipulate the PCs.

Casila & the Dungeon

Casila swore to seize control of the fabled Stone Thief and give the dungeon to her icon patron. To accomplish this feat, she returned to the family estates at Marblehall some years ago and began to prepare a great work of geomantic sorcery right under their noses.

Marblehall was exactly the sort of place that the Stone Thief coveted. Casila stole the ritual for Calling the Devourer from the cult, and she used it to draw the Stone Thief to her home. When the dungeon swallowed Marblehall, she sprang her trap—she had also learned the shell-shaper charms from the Koru behemoth (see page 324) that had made the mansion indigestible. She also possessed part of the Rite of Binding, and intended to use it to capture the dungeon.

It nearly worked. She had everything she needed—the magical backing of an arcane icon, a set of magical chains to hold the Stone Thief's soul, and a magical reliquary containing the ectoplasm of the dungeon. Marblehall was the perfect place to perform the ritual, as the dungeon couldn't run away from her trap.

Nearly, if it weren't for bad luck. The reliquary was unable to endure the magical power flowing through it, and it shattered. Casila was left without a key component in her ritual, and the Stone Thief became aware of the danger. It still could not get rid of Marblehall, but it could hurl monsters and other dangers at Casila's fortress, preventing her from leaving and keeping her imprisoned.

She's still down there, trapped in the Stone Thief (see *Marblehall* on page 227). If the PCs find her and provide her with a replacement connection to the dungeon, she can still carry out her mission—but after learning what they discover in this chapter, they may not want to help her.

Casila's stats and description are on page 240.

Investigating Marblehall

Word of the disappearance of Marblehall spreads throughout the Empire, carried as gossip on trading ships from Glitterhaegen or as whispered *messages* between wizards. If Marblehall vanishes before the Stone Thief enters your campaign, then you could foreshadow the dungeon's arrival by mentioning stories of a country palace being consumed by a mysterious sinkhole. You could even use the disappearance of Marblehall as a plot hook for an earlier adventure—maybe goblins raid the town of Dwardel now that it's unprotected by the knights of Marblehall, and the PCs have to hunt them down.

If it gets eaten after the campaign starts, then the characters could travel to this region on the track of the Stone Thief.

Visiting the Ruin

The approach to Marblehall is deceptively peaceful. The characters pass by farmlands, vineyards, and rural villages. Most people blame the disappearance of Marblehall on the judgment of the gods on the sins of the Artalins (although what exactly those sins are is a matter of wild speculation in taverns), or some magical accident (the Archmage visited Marblehall more than fifty years ago, but who knows what he might have set in motion while he was there? Why, to this day any cow born on the North Field comes out bright blue and able to speak in the tongues of men and elves). Other, dourer figures—usually seated in the darkest corner of the tavern, with travel-worn hooded cloaks drawn low over their features—mutter about the proximity of the Orc Lord's armies, and how doom is coming to the land.

Optionally, the players run into some peril on the way. Ask them what it is, and how they overcome it, or use their answers to improvise an encounter.

As the characters draw closer to the site of the mansion, they meet fewer people. Most of the tenant farmers on the Artalin estate itself fled after the mansion vanished, and those that remain are nervous and standoffish. They grumble about orcs and other monsters in the forests around where the mansion once stood, and complain that these monsters appeared at the same time the mansion sank.

Finally, the characters come to the end of the long dwarven road and look upon the ruins of Marblehall. The outbuildings and gardens that once surrounded the mansion are still there, perched on the edge of a huge sinkhole. Searching the ruins, the PCs meet **Halger**, an old gardener who is the only member of the surviving household staff to keep working despite the disappearance of the Artalin family. Halger is old and frail, but he's still capable of defending his garden against trespassers. Well, capable of attempting to do so, anyway. Once disarmed of his pruning shears and revived with a cup of tea, he reminisces about the good old days before the earth swallowed the mansion along with his employers.

Things Halger might mention:

- The strange things Casila did in the months after she returned home. Notably, she visited that Amberlith in the nearby town of Dwardel more often than is seemly. Amberlith is a stranger to these parts, and feared by many of the locals. See *Amberlith*, below.
- Also, Casila drew these strange symbols on the stones around the mansion. Most of them got swallowed along with the mansion, but there's one intact stone in the corner of the Walled Garden. These symbols are part of the shell-shaper charms that Casila learned on the Koru behemoth (page 324), the same symbols that might be seen in the Wild Caves around Dungeon Town (page 94).
- There have been monsters in the woods ever since Marblehall vanished—all the locals agree on that. Holger, though, knows there were monsters in one particular section of the woods *before* the mansion vanished. They've tried to keep out of sight, but he's lived on the Artalin estate all his life and knows those woods like a dwarf knows his beard. They arrived around the same time Casila came home.
- Holger might also mention the ghosts of the east wing, and their horrible fate (see page 232).

Dwardel

The small town of Dwardel is the nearest settlement of any size to Marblehall. It's always been closely associated with the family and their business; half the town worked on the estate, and the other half were involved in the Artalins' trade with the dwarves. The disappearance of Marblehall threw the town into confusion, but life is slowly finding a new equilibrium when the player characters arrive. There's a new Imperial governor to take the place of the vanished feudal lords, and most of the Artalin family's business affairs run more smoothly now that the more clueless members of the current generation aren't around to interfere.

Dwardel itself is unremarkable—there's a dwarven brewery that's said to be haunted, and there's a magical portal to the underworld beneath the town hall, and it's a tradition that all commerce has to be done in Dwarven, and the apothecary is secretly a werewolf who keeps his transformations in check with drugs, but by the standards of the Dragon Empire, that's unremarkable.

Casila's friend Amberlith is the new proprietor of the Giant's Flagon inn. (*If you can finish the Giant's Flagon in a single draught, your meal's on the house.*)

Dwardel Complications

- One of the PCs spots an old rival or enemy in the taproom of the Giant's Flagon. Who are they and what are they doing here?
- Agents of the Cult of the Devourer are in town looking for the mad sorceress who looted one of their secret temples. They assume the player characters are in league with her.
- With the loss of Marblehall—and the disappearance of the Artalin family and their fortune—trade between Axis and the dwarf-lands has been disrupted. On the road, the characters meet a merchant from far-off Horizon who was supposed to be bringing a wagon-load of rare and volatile alchemical compounds to Anvil. According to his schedule, a group of guards were to meet him here in Dwardel to escort him across the perilous hills. He can't stay here—those alchemical supplies will spontaneously combust before long. What do the characters do with a fizzing wagon of impending doom?
- First Triumph isn't far from Marblehall. No doubt the Crusader has spies and agents in town—and if Casila is working for the Diabolist or the Three, then they'll be interested in anyone asking questions about the Witch.

Amberlith

Amberlith is also an agent of the Witch's iconic patron. She appears to be a muscular woman with features exotic to this part of the Empire and a thick accent, but her true nature depends on who that patron is.

- **The Diabolist:** Amberlith is a shapeshifted demon. She was originally sent here to protect Casila in case agents of the Crusader or some other enemy of the Diabolist found the Witch before she was ready to begin. Amberlith should have vanished back to the Abyss when Marblehall was consumed, but she chose to linger instead. She's developed a taste for this human form and human life, and it amuses her to sow chaos and dissent on a very small scale through gossip and intrigue in Dwardel.
- **The Elf Queen:** Amberlith is a dryad, the spirit of a tree that stands on the Artalin estate. Ancient bonds of fealty compelled her to obey the Elf Queen and relay messages between the Court of Stars and the Witch, but she privately bears doubts about the entire scheme to capture the living dungeon. She's got roots in this town and fears the wrath of the Stone Thief. The secrets bottled up inside her are bursting

to get out, so as soon as the player characters question her, she is eager to talk.

- **The Three:** Amberlith is a shapeshifted dragon. She was Casila's bodyguard; now her mission is to wait and see if anyone comes to investigate the disappearance of Marblehall, and to learn if they know too much about the Three's plans. If they do, then Amberlith is under orders to kill them.

(If the characters start real trouble in the inn, use the appropriate stats from *Into the Woods*.)

Amberlith knows the outline of the Witch's plan (lure living dungeon with juicy mansion, use mysterious magic to stop dungeon from consuming mansion, bind dungeon with ritual), but is not a spellcaster and is hazy on the precise details. She also knows that something has gone terribly wrong; if the plan had worked, the Stone Thief would already be in chains. That means the Witch needs help. Therefore, when the player characters question Amberlith, she is also interviewing them. If she decides that they can be trusted (or manipulated) into aiding the Witch, then she brings them to the tower known as *Casila's Folly* (page 337) and puts them in contact with the Witch. However, if she decides they're too dangerous, she lures them *into the woods* (see below) and has her allies try to murder them.

Before making that decision, though, she takes the time to get to know the PCs. Amberlith (or possibly, the potent drinks she serves from her private stock behind the bar) has a knack for getting people to reveal aspects of themselves they normally keep secret. Ask each player to describe one thing their character lets slip (or one topic that their character clearly avoids discussing). Go question for question—for each question they ask Amberlith about Casila, she gets to ask them one about themselves.

Amberlith gives a version of Casila's backstory that plays on the player characters' sympathies and prejudices—and, optionally, later gives them the inside scoop so they'll trust her.

Into the Woods

If the characters follow up on old Holger's tales about monsters in the Artalin hunting forests that predate the dungeon's attack, or if Amberlith decides that the PCs are a threat that must be eliminated, then they are attacked by a band of foes who are both icon- and level-appropriate. (Or not—there's no reason the Three can't send demonic assassins, or the Elf Queen subcontract with some demons. Mix things up!)

Other possible complications in the woods:

- If the Witch suspects that the player characters are on her trail—for example, if some of the PCs are foes of Casila's patron—then she may have booby-trapped her tower or left a false trail of clues to lead them astray.
- If the Orc Lord heard of Casila's research into the binding spell for the Stone Thief, this might be an excellent time for Throatcutter (page 299) to show up and race the PCs to the tower.
- Casila searched for an Eye of the Stone Thief, putting out word in the criminal underworld that she'd trade the fortune of the Artilans for the location of one of the relics. An old rogue from Shadow Port has arrived too late to claim the reward, but maybe the player characters can convince him to talk...

Diabolist Foes

Masked Demon

Beneath the false face is a fire-rimmed portal that opens straight into the Abyss. Even if a masked demon wears a handsome face and brings you out for a candlelit dinner, don't gaze deep into its eyes...

7th level spoiler [DEMON]
Initiative: +11

Claw +12 vs. AC (2 attacks)—14 damage
Natural 18+: The masked demon may make a *hellstare* attack against the target as a free action.

[Special trigger] **C**: **Hellstare +12 vs. MD (one nearby or far away enemy)**—25 psychic damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

Caught in the Face: Whenever a nearby enemy attacks the masked demon and rolls a natural 1 or 2, the demon may make a *hellstare* attack against that enemy as a free action.

Infernal Dreams: If a stunned character rolls a natural 1–5 when trying to save against the *hellstare's* stun effect, then that character becomes confused instead of stunned.

Nastier Specials

Masquerade: If the player characters are unaware of the masked demon's true nature when first encountered, it may make a free *hellstare* attack at the start of combat with a +4 attack bonus.

AC 23
PD 17 **HP 100**
MD 21

Infernal Shadow

Bigger demons possess your body. This one just possesses your shadow.

6th level spoiler [DEMON]
Initiative: +11

Shadow Claw +11 vs. AC—20 damage

C: Possess Shadow +11 vs. MD (one nearby target)—20 psychic damage, and the infernal shadow merges with the target's shadow (save ends)
Limited use: 1/battle.

Merge with Shadow: While merged with its victim's shadow, the infernal shadow may attack any nearby enemy using the basic attack of its victim during the shadow's turn. It may not attack the victim in this fashion. A merged shadow may be attacked as normal, but on a natural miss of 1–2, the attack hits the victim instead of the shadow.

AC 2
PD 20 **HP 90**
MD 16

Bird Flock

A flock of common forest birds—magpies, jackdaws, and crows in the main—driven by a single alien hatred.

6th level mook [BEAST]
Initiative: +11

Claw and Bite +11 vs. AC—4 damage

Swarming Flock: Add the escalation die x 4 to the damage dealt by the bird flock.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 23 (mook)**
MD 16

Mook: Disperse one bird flock mook for every 23 damage dealt to the mob.

Elf Queen Foes

Fell Dryad

There are forests where no bird sings, where no beast walks. In those woods, the trees have no love for living things, and they feed on those unlucky enough to stray beneath the leaves.

7th level spoiler [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +14

C: Thorn Spray +12 vs. AC (up to three nearby enemies)—7 damage, and the enemy pops free of the dryad.

Tree Spirit: As a move action, the dryad may possess a nearby tree. While possessing a tree, the dryad gains +4 AC, vulnerability to fire, and the ability to make *swinging branches* attacks. She is stuck while in a tree. If the dryad suffers a critical hit or becomes staggered, she must leave the tree.
Swinging Branches +12 vs. AC (2 attacks)—20 damage.

Nastier Specials

C: Charm +10 vs. MD (one nearby enemy)—15 psychic damage, and the target is confused (save ends).

AC 18
PD 17 **HP 100**
MD 21



Drow Wintersmith

When the warmth of spring dawns, the cold of winter flees into certain caves deep underground. These drow know the secret words that call the winter out again.

6th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +12

Icy Blade +11 vs. AC—15 damage
Natural even hit: 5 ongoing cold damage (save ends)

C: Ice Storm +10 vs. PD (all nearby enemies)—10 ongoing cold damage (save ends)
Limited Use: 1/battle.

R: Winter's Bite +10 vs. PD (one nearby or far away enemy suffering ongoing cold damage)—30 cold damage

Nastier Specials

Frost Armor: Attacks against wintersmiths by those suffering ongoing cold damage take a –2 penalty.

Winter Stunt: The wintersmith may make one terrain stunt (as per the ranger trick on page 120 of *13th Age*) per battle, based around ice, snow, frost or other wintry effects.

AC 22
PD 18 **HP 90**
MD 18

Deepwood Spider Swarm

These spiders are big as your hand, and probably hairier. If not, see a doctor post-haste.

6th level mook [BEAST]
Initiative: +11

Poisonous Bite +11 vs. AC—5 damage, and 5 ongoing poison damage

Choking Webs: Each round, the spiders spin a number of thick webs equal the value of the escalation die. Each web absorbs up to 23 points of damage that would otherwise spill over onto other spider mooks. Assign damage alternately between spiders and webs. For example, if there are two webs and three spiders, and a spider is blasted for 100 damage, the damage is assigned as follows:

First, the targeted spider takes 23 damage and dies (77 left). Next, the first web takes 23 damage (54 left), then the second spider gets incinerated, leaving 31 left. The second web is then destroyed, leaving the third spider singed but alive, having taken only 8 damage.

Enemies suffer a penalty to disengage attempts equal to the number of webs.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 23 (mook)**
MD 16

Mook: Kill one deepwood spider swarm mook for every 23 damage dealt to the mob.

The Three Foes

Medium Red Dragon

Breathing fire makes a red dragon hungry. Eating makes a red dragon bloodthirsty. Bloodthirstiness gets a red dragon into fights, where it likes to use its fiery breath.

6th level wrecker [DRAGON]
Initiative: +11
Vulnerability: cold

Fangs, claws, and tail +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—8 damage
First natural even hit or miss each turn: Roll another *fangs, claws, and tail* attack.

C: Fiery breath +11 vs. PD (2d3 nearby enemies)—10 fire damage
Miss: Half damage.

Intermittent breath: A medium red dragon can use *fiery breath* 1d3 times per battle, but never two turns in a row.

Resist fire 12+: When a fire attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 12+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

AC 21
PD 20 **HP 90**
MD 16

Thunder Sorcerer

Trained in the academies of the Blue beneath Drakkenhall, these reptilian sorcerers speak the secret language of thunder and read the runes traced in the sky by lightning.

6th level caster [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +10

C: Lightning Bolt +10 vs. PD (one nearby target)—10 lightning damage
Natural even hit: The thunder sorcerer may make another *lightning bolt* attack against a different enemy as a free action. This second attack may not trigger further *lightning bolt* attacks.
Natural odd hit: 5 thunder damage, too.

[Group Ability] Thundercloud: A thunder sorcerer may spend a standard action to roll a number of d6s equal to the escalation die and add the result to the Thunder pool. The Thunder pool starts at 0.

Channel Lightning: When a thunder sorcerer hits with a *lightning bolt* attack, it may take any number of points from the Thunder pool and add them to the damage.

Nastier Specials

Rolling Thunder: At the start of any round in which the Thunder pool's total equals or exceeds 20, all player characters take 10 thunder damage.

AC 22
PD 18 **HP 90**
MD 18

Murderous Swamp Assassin

These lizardman warriors are not expected to survive. They die in waves, bodies piled on bodies, until one lucky blade finds its mark. That fortunate assassin is accorded breeding rights and spawns the next generation of doomed warriors.

6th level mook [HUMANOID]
Initiative: +11

Desperate Stab +11 vs. AC—10 damage

Team Tactics: If a murderous swamp assassin's attack roll is equal to or less than the number of swamp assassins engaged with its target, it may choose to reroll its attack. It must abide by the result of its second roll.

AC 22
PD 20 **HP 23 (mook)**
MD 16

Mook: Kill one murderous swamp assassin mook for every 23 damage dealt to the mob.

Once these foes are defeated, the characters find a path leading to Casila's Folly.

In the Woods Fight Chart

Number/ Level of PCs	Nasty Leader	Caster/ Spoiler	Mook
3 x 5th level	1	2	5
4 x 5th level	1	3	5
5 x 5th level	2	2	5
6 x 5th level	2	3	5
7 x 5th level	2	4	10
3 x 6th level	*2*	*3*	*7*
4 x 6th level	*2*	*5*	*10*
5 x 6th level	*3*	*5*	*10*
6 x 6th level	*4*	*7*	*12*
7 x 6th level	*4*	*10*	*15*

Tower Dessert

The Stone Thief could always pop up and steal Casila's Folly while the PCs are inside it, if the campaign is due another dungeon crawl.

Casila's Folly

Casila's Folly is a tower of stone raised by a combination of magic and the shell-shaper charms she stole from the Koru behemoth. The tower was never built—it was shaped from a single finger of stone. Thick forests hide it from the rest of the estate.

Did Casila leave magical traps here? If Amberlith brought the characters here, then she can disarm any traps. Otherwise, you may wish to use some of the following nasty traps to get the PCs in the right frame of mind.

- **Rune of Flame:** Bursts into fire when read by a living mind. DC 20 to spot/disarm, **+10 vs. PD** to attack, inflicting 4d8 damage on the PC who triggers it and 2d8 damage on everyone nearby as the victim explodes in flames.
- **Cursed Painting:** A picture of Marblehall in its heyday. In the foreground is an ugly goblinoid creature. A character who looks at it for too long is targeted by a **+10 vs. MD** attack; on a hit, the PC swaps minds with the goblinoid. Take the victim aside and explain that their character is temporarily possessed and must try to murder the other PCs; the curse can be lifted by burning the painting. The features of the possessed PC show up in the painting when the curse is in effect, replacing those of the goblin.
- **Force Blades:** Four invisible blades of magical force slice through the air—and into any characters climbing the spiral staircase that runs through the folly. DC 20 to spot, attacks four times at **+10 vs. AC** for 2d10 damage, with attacks split between PCs on the stairs.

The tower contains Casila's notes and preparations. Searching through the scribbled documents and books of lore, the characters can piece together the following clues:

- Sketches of the behemoth Stoneroost, copies of obscure scrolls describing the cultural practices of the barbarian tribes, and *lore bottles* from Nomad all point to Casila's interest in the Koru behemoths. A half-burned scrap of paper details her speculation that the Stone Thief would be unable to overcome the shell-shaper charms, and that she could safeguard Marblehall against being assimilated by the Stone Thief. This can lead to *On the Back of the Behemoth* (page 318).
- A *lore bottle* contains the soul of a Devourer cultist. Questioning the bottle reveals that Casila stole the rituals of calling and binding from a cult temple. If the PCs have yet to encounter the cult, then they can get the location of that particular temple from Casila's notes. See *The Cult of the Devourer* (page 302).
- The most extensive set of notes are on Casila's creation of a magical reliquary that contains the essence of the dungeon. To obtain this essence, she traded with the Prince of Shadows, and was able to tap a fraction of the dungeon from the Eye in his possession. She then laboriously cultured this tiny speck of dungeon ectoplasm into something powerful enough to serve as her connection to the dungeon.

The top level of the tower contains two things—a mirror and a chest.

The Mirror: *Message* spells and other forms of magical communication are unreliable within the Stone Thief. Casila made this magical mirror and its twin so she could commune with her icon patron after the dungeon swallowed Marblehall. The mirror works only once each month, and only for a brief period.

If Amberlith is with the player characters, then she can activate the mirror and put the PCs in contact with the Witch, allowing them to arrange a meeting with her in the dungeon.

However, if the PCs are intruders in the Folly, then the mirror is activated by the Witch's icon patron—the PCs get a brief glimpse of the icon before the mirror shatters. Everyone gains a 1-point negative relationship with the icon (+1 positive relationships become +2 conflicted, +1 conflicted or +1 negative become +2 negative).

The Chest: is trapped with a death curse (DC 25 to spot/disarm; if triggered, have the player describe how the curse leaves their character nearly on the brink of death, and the other PCs must then find a cure—it's safe to do this narratively if this is the end of an adventure. If you're sending the PCs back into the Stone Thief immediately, though, then use a more conventional **+15 vs. PD**, 2d20 damage trap).

Inside are two items—the Key of Marblehall and the *Witch's Crown.* Casila intended to bring the crown with her, but the Stone Thief struck before she could retrieve it from her Folly. The Key unlocks the front door of Marblehall without a fight (see page 230).

Witch's Crown

+1 MD for each relationship die with the Witch's icon patron. Forged for the Witch of Marblehall, this elegant circlet of silver and sapphires fortifies the wearer's soul, enabling them to endure the most horrific trials.

Recharge 16+: When reduced to 0 hit points, you may stay conscious and keep fighting, but in exchange, you permanently reduce your maximum recoveries by one every time you use this power. You still die when you're reduced to negative half your starting hit points. *Quirk:* Both your flesh and your soul become as hard and cold as marble.

The Artalin Inheritance

If it fits your campaign, it might be fun to connect one of the PCs to the Artalin family. Some possibilities:

- So, young noble, you've earned fame and fortune as an adventurer, but now it's time to settle down and attend to your duties as a member of the aristocracy. We've arranged a marriage for you—a good match, from a very respectable family. Casila Artalin is her name. You should probably meet your bride before the wedding, so go pay her a visit at Marblehall…
- A player character could be a member of the Artalin family who happened to be absent on the day that crazy sister (or cousin, or whatever) called up the Stone Thief to eat the family mansion. Alternatively, maybe the characters doesn't know about his or her noble heritage. This signet ring was left by your father, and reveals the true identity of your mother's people. Go seek them out and claim your rightful inheritance.
- You could even start the Stone Thief campaign at Marblehall. Bring in the Artalins from the beginning as the adventurers' patrons during their early careers. Levels 1–3 are all about guarding Artalin trade caravans, thwarting assassins and kidnapping attempts, maybe even bringing Casila home to the loving bosom of her family. Then, the adventurers are invited to a party at the mansion, which gets interrupted by the Stone Thief. They're separated from the rest during the attack, and end up in the Maw while Marblehall slides through the Gizzard right down into the Pit of Undigested Ages…
- With Marblehall gone, the Emperor might reward a player character with the lands and titles of the vanished Artalin family. How would the Witch of Marblehall take to an 'imposter' claiming her family's ancestral lands? (Answer: poorly) Can the newly-ennobled character maintain the Artalins' age-old treaties with the dwarves?

Trials and Councils

In a long campaign, it's always a good idea to every so often spend a session recapping, catching up, and reminding players of their options and of any missed lines of inquiry. This 'quest' offers a chance to do that. The adventurers are summoned by some authority (probably an icon) to discuss the danger posed by the Stone Thief and to offer aid.

The Quest Begins

- When the Archmage teleports the party to Horizon.
- When an Imperial herald summons the adventurers to the Emperor's Palace of War.
- When the PCs dream of the Elf Queen.
- When the Dwarf King threatens to open the Bloody Door.
- When the PCs wake up in the care of the Priestess, their wounds healed after they were nearly killed escaping the dungeon.
- In the ruins of a city attacked by the Stone Thief.
- When the PCs go in search of allies.

The Council

Avoid having multiple bickering NPCs of equal rank present, or you'll end up talking to yourself. Depending on when you run this quest, the player characters may be summoned to attend, or they may be the ones who call everyone together. Similarly, you may wish to keep the icons themselves 'off-screen' and just have agents of the icons present, but if the stakes are high enough and you feel confident in portraying them, it could be fun to have an actual icon show up.

Possible delegates/icon representatives/troublemakers are below. See also *Intrigue at the Council*, page 342, for more possible uses for these delegates. Again, you don't need to use even half these NPCs—just the ones who fit with your planned agenda. (If something unexpected comes up in conversation, you can always have another delegate arrive suddenly.)

(Archmage) Isali Istar, Lady of the Blazing Book: Isali is one of the masters of the wizard's college in Horizon, and she is more used to dealing with lecture halls full of rambunctious apprentices than councils of state. Initially, she comes across as a little nervous and forgetful, but once she gets into the swing of things, she forgets where she is and starts treating the other delegates as disobedient students and fires off spells of *silence* and *Istar's chastising finger.*

Her *Blazing Book* is an item she created. Isali's area of expertise is in the preservation of knowledge, and the *Blazing Book* is supposed to magically copy any unique written text anywhere in the world if that text is destroyed. So, burn the only copy of a scroll in Drakkenhall, and the *Blazing Book* magically gains another page across the sea in Horizon. Unfortunately, there's a civilization somewhere within range of the book that seems to burn an awful lot of unique books, and their language is both untranslatable and demonically potent, so for every normal book the *Burning Book* rescues from oblivion, it sprouts another thousand pages of maddening, incomprehensible blasphemies. Still, if she times it just right, Isali can tell the PCs about the Stone Thief's latest attacks by listening for the rustling of pages, and opening it at the newly added sections. If the Stone Thief's attack destroyed a unique book—say, a diary or a ledger—then parts of it will be recorded into the *Blazing Book* to give clues about the dungeon's whereabouts.

(Crusader) Domar Cruan, the Weary: Domar is a former adventurer and mercenary, full of stories about the old days, about the War of the Red Snowfall and the Beast Lords of the Wild Wood, about the battle of Hell's Overreach and the adventure of the Holy Tankard. He'll take any like-minded adventurer under his wing and give them tips on adventuring and combat. He's the weird, cool, heavily armed uncle you never knew you wanted. All that makes Domar's allegiance to the Dark Gods all the more disturbing—he's convinced the only way to save the world is to draw on the powers of darkness, because the forces of good aren't enough to hold back disaster.

Domar personally believes that the dungeon can be used as a weapon, but he doesn't want to give more power to the Cult of the Devourer. The cultists have the right idea, selling the dungeon as a siege engine—the cult should be wiped out and their methods used in the war against evil!

(Diabolist) Lord Shen: A nobleman from New Port, Shen keeps his relationship with the Diabolist hidden if possible. He claims to be here to bring word that the living dungeon has been sighted at sea—not only can the Stone Thief steal from the land, it can also rise up and swallow ships and islands like a tremendous whale (via the *Sunken Sea*). Shen owns a fleet of merchant ships, and several of his vessels went missing in recent months. He is, he admits, a man who holds grudges—if there is anything that he can do to ensure the living dungeon is defeated, then his fortune and his ships are at the council's disposal.

Shen is allied with the Diabolist, but he has a get-out clause for his soul. He's also a devotee of a secret order of monks, and he believes he can unite his soul with the universe before he dies and gets dragged to Hell. He's no mystic in search of transcendent enlightenment, though—he intends on merging his soul with a very specific bit of the universe. He plans to *become* New Port, animating the city as his new body. As such, the Stone Thief's power to assimilate structures into itself is both threatening and immensely fascinating to him…

(Dwarf King) The Bell of Woe: This magical artifact was forged by an elder Dwarf King so that their enemies would always know the dwarves remembered their grudges. When it is rung, a harsh voice speaks from within the tolling bell, reciting the injuries and indignities done to the dwarves. The Bell's acolytes and keepers are two dwarven priests, Kon and Palo, both of whom are deaf in one ear (left and right, respectively, thanks to their ceremonial posts at either side of the Bell). If rung, the Bell rants about the Stone Thief's attacks on the dwarf-lands, and how the dwarves



of old managed to ward their cities with potent spells to guard against the dungeon. The secret of making these spells is now lost, along with much of the lore of the great smith Grommar.

(Elf Queen) Laurende the Starseer: Laurende is one of the Elf Queen's court astronomers, and she has first-hand experience of the dungeon. She was one of the custodians of the spire (page 145), a treetop observatory that was swallowed by the Stone Thief. Laurende and the other high elves fled using a *teleport circle*, leaving the other elves to perish in the dungeon. (As it turned out, only the wood elves died; the dark elves under Nioba Shieldspinner survived, but Laurende doesn't know that).

Ostensibly, Laurende is here to read the stars and bring the Elf Queen's wisdom to the council, but she also wants to make sure that no one finds out that she and her fellow astrologers fled and left their fellow elves to perish (or maybe she wants something recovered from the spire, or can advise the PCs about the Inverse Observatory).

(Emperor) Lady Atala Caevor: The Emperor's aunt. Immensely old, thoroughly self-possessed, and absolutely no patience for dilly-dallying. She pretends to take the threat of the living dungeon in her stride, but if the PCs get to know her, they learn she's tired—helping her dear nephew hold the Empire together against all its many foes has exhausted her. She's already died once, you know, but arranged to be brought back. Things to be done, no time to be lying in state.

Caevor is especially worried about the Cult of the Devourer. External threats unite the Empire, bringing the full might of the seven cities together against a common foe. The cult, though, is ultimately an internal threat, since it was born within the Empire from the actions of her ancestors. It is a rot that must be burnt out of the land.

(Great Gold Wyrm) Marten: He's not a paladin; he's a thief. There he was, looting a side temple in the ruins of the Golden Citadel, when he touches the wrong altar, and *boom*, he's got a magical link to the Great Gold Wyrm. He gets dreams and visions direct from the great dragon, and he was commanded to come here (perhaps to reveal secrets gleaned from the dream-messages of the Secret Masters, or to warn the council about an upcoming attack).

Marten hates his current situation. It's not enough to have an immortal dragon-spirit of immeasurable age and power living in his dreams, it's also a *judgmental* dragon-spirit. Marten never signed up to be a chaste or self-sacrificing paladin, but the dragon gives him the worst headaches by roaring in his skull whenever he tries to enjoy himself. If anyone can find a way to relieve him of this burden, he'll happily sell a direct connection to the Great Gold Wyrm to the highest bidder.

(High Druid) Beebane the Bear: Among those who serve the High Druid are certain animals that possess the power of speech, along with druidic spellcasting and other supernatural gifts. Beebane is one of these exalted beasts, and he speaks for the

High Druid. He's a very eloquent bear, as bears go, but he's never been outside the Wild Wood before, and his vocabulary is limited when it comes to talking about those rock hive things with all the funny little bumpy bits on top that humans worry about so much. Castles, that's the word. He's only ever seen the little mud and wicker castles that foresters live in—oh, those are huts? Why do you have so many different words for piles of rocks?

Beebane might bring news of an approaching Koru behemoth, or just a warning from the High Druid about the dangers posed by the dungeon. (Of course, if the High Druid intends to use the dungeon against civilization, Beebane might just be there to distract them).

(Lich King) Lord Artan: Artan's lands lie on the Demon Coast, and he is a veteran of many battles with strange foes that crawled out of the seas or marched out of the Red Wastes. He's one of the Empire's most experienced commanders, although he recently contracted a strange wasting illness that has severely weakened him. He claims to have hired the best healers and physicians in the land, to no avail.

In secret, Artan is a servant of the Lich King, and his 'wasting illness' is the first step on the road to lichdom. Artan also owes fealty to the Emperor—he only became involved with the Lich King to save his domain from a sahuagin invasion—and he intends to settle his affairs on the land before taking the Ship of Bone to the Necropolis. He wants to preserve the Empire and stop the Stone Thief if he can before he 'dies,' although the player characters may not trust his advice if they discover his secret.

If the Stone Thief's in league with the Lich King, then Artan is caught between his oaths to the Emperor and the Lich King. He resolves this dilemma by completing his transformation into a lich while at the council and publicly declaring his loyalty to the Lich King; he gambles that this show of loyalty will forgive any aid he gives the adventurers.

(Orc Lord) Master Throatcutter: Ok, the only way a representative of the Orc Lord is going to attend any meeting of the No-Dungeons club is if he's given up on his plans to seize control of the dungeon (or if he's only pretending to have given up, so he can spy on the council and gain valuable intelligence). Master Throatcutter (page 299) comes under a banner of truce, and offers information about Fangrot's mission and Deep Keep.

That, or it's a ruse, and he's here to murder one of the other delegates. (Or all of the other delegates.)

(Priestess) The Oracle Shroud: The Priestess sends a divine treasure to the aid of the Empire. The *shroud* is a gray burial cloth. One person can be wrapped in it and sent to the other side to seek out a spirit among the dead. Unlike other such rituals, which tend to be limited in reach, almost any deceased soul can be found if the traveler is willing to risk a deep expedition into the lands of the dead. The *shroud* only works once per year, on a certain night.

The *Oracle Shroud*'s guardian is a holy one whose name translates as *The Dazzling Shield Who Reflects The Heavenly Light That Inspires the Host Upon the Walls of the Last Citadel When the Final Battle Is Joined;* he fell in love with a mortal man, Thalus, who died, and desperately wants to use the *shroud* to send word to his former lover. The holy one cannot use the *shroud* himself, since his soul is the shard of a god and will never go to the same afterlife as mortals, therefore he would have to use a mortal as a courier.

(Prince of Shadows): Well, obviously someone here works for the Prince, but you'll never know who. Any relevant information—like the name of the person who's got the first Eye—comes in the form of an anonymous note slipped under a door.

(The Three) Baron Wroth: Wroth is a large red dragon, but holds the title of baron while in Drakkenhall—or while traveling on official business on behalf of the ruler of Drakkenhall, the Blue. Wroth's mission is to serve notice to the council that the Blue considers the Stone Thief to be her property, and any discussion of binding or destroying the dungeon must acknowledge her legal ownership of the dungeon in question. After all, Drakkenhall belongs to the Blue, and several ruins in Drakkenhall were stolen and consumed by the dungeon. They then became part of the dungeon; transitively, the dungeon became part of the ruins, and hence part of the city and therefore part of the Blue's domain. The adventurers will, of course, be charged for any damage done to the dungeon when they illegally trespassed there, but Wroth's client may be willing to waive such fees in exchange for the adventurers' aid in securing her wayward domicile.

Agendas of the Wise

Potential topics for discussion include:

- The nature of the Stone Thief.
- The Cult of the Devourer.
- Icons interested in the Stone Thief.
- The wider scope.
- Consequences of failure.
- Ways to find it.
- Ways to kill it.

Don't use all of these—if the players already know about the cult, don't bother giving a long rehash of the cult's beliefs, practices, and places in the world. The point of this scene is to give new avenues of investigation and open up options for the players, and to put their actions and the consequences of those actions in context. If the Ring does not go to Mor—er, if the dungeon is not stopped, or if the villainous icon of your campaign gains control of the dungeon, or if the magic relic isn't recovered from the dungeon's depths, then something horrible will happen.

Let the players drive the discussion if possible. For example, instead of having an NPC start describing the Cult of the Devourer, wait until the players mention the cult in their recounting of past adventures, so the NPC can go *"gods! Those hooded cultists can only be the fabled Cult of the Devourer, long thought driven into extinction. They are sworn enemies of civilization! Why, I shall now recount their tale..."*

The nature of the Stone Thief: Some suitably stuffy academic delegate can explain that the Stone Thief is an ancient living dungeon, with fragmentary records of its existence going back to the earliest ages, and it may in fact predate the Empire. Unlike

Intrigue at the Council

Throw in some or all of the following twists. If you can't decide, roll story-guide dice to see which delegates are involved. Run with any really unexpected rolls—if you pick *Murder at the Council* and roll, say, the High Druid and the Emperor, it'll be fun finding out why Lady Caevor murdered Beebane...

A Secret Mission: The delegate approaches one of the player characters (presumably, one who shares a positive relationship with their mutual icon) and passes on a secret mission to that PC—one that is entrusted to them and them alone. Possible missions include:

- Bind the dungeon using the rumored Rite of Binding.
- Recover a particular treasure from the treasury of the Stone Thief (page 277).
- Find some relic or book from the Pit of Undigested Ages (page 208).
- Redirect the dungeon toward a particular city or region, to weaken the icon's enemies (*"all I'm saying is, it wouldn't curl the Archmage's beard too much if the Elf Queen lost a few trees, know what I mean?"*)

Murder At The Council: One of the delegates is found dead. The initial evidence points toward another delegate, one with an obvious motive for the crime (so, someone who serves an opposing icon—for example, Domar might murder Lord Shen when the nobleman's diabolical connections are revealed), but clever PCs uncover evidence that the prime suspect was framed. The actual killer is one of the other delegates. Did they commit the murder for personal reasons, or are they secretly members of the cult or some other faction aligned with the dungeon?

Illicit Intrigues: A PC spots two of the delegates having a secret meeting. What's behind their tryst? Are their respective masters plotting together? Why else would, say, the agent of the Diabolist and a servant of the Archmage meet in secret?

Sowing Suspicion: One of the delegates approaches a player character privately and tells them to beware of another delegate. They cannot say more; only that trusting that person would be a terrible mistake. Believe nothing they say.

False Face: One of the delegates is actually one of the Flesh Tailor's tailored undead. Anything said at the council will be related back to the master of the Ossuary (page 123).

most living dungeons, the Stone Thief preys on buildings, settlements, structures, and other features from the surface, incorporating them into itself. The dungeon's attacks are not random, but they are hard to predict. It appears to be drawn to places of magical potency, but has in recent centuries developed a taste for fortified castles, cities, and other military targets.

- This can lead to *To Catch A Thief* (page 350).
- You could also mention the strange case of Marblehall (*The Keys of Marblehall*, page 331).

The Cult of the Devourer: Fill in whatever blanks are needed—the cult's origins as exiles from the Empire in ancient days, their strange partnership/worship of the living dungeon, the divide between the cult's surface temples and the citadel in the depths of the dungeon, and how the cult earns money and magic by calling the dungeon up to attack targets specified by a client.

- If the PCs are looking for a weapon that could work on the dungeon, then maybe the cult's ritual magic could be adapted to serve (*Slaying the Stone Thief,* page 352).
- One of the delegates has heard rumors of a cult stronghold in some obscure mountain valley on the edge of the Empire. Perhaps the PCs should check it out (*Cult of the Devourer*, page 302).

Icons interested in the Stone Thief: Mention any hostile icons that are making a play for control of the Stone Thief. The Orc Lord's name is definitely going to come up, as will the Eye-stealing Prince of Shadows. If another evil icon (Diabolist/the Three and the Witch of Marblehall, Lich King and the Cult of the Devourer) plays a major role in your campaign, reveal his (or her) fell hand (or talon) here.

- If the PCs haven't heard the tale already, someone can mention the story of how the Prince stole the *Eyes of the Stone Thief* (page 313).

The wider scope: The Stone Thief is more than just a dungeon. It's a potential threat to the safety of the Empire. If the players still think this campaign is just a glorified dungeon crawl with no greater consequences for the world, point out how the dungeon could be used as an invasion barge by the Orc Lord, or a weapon by the Lich King, or that the Cult of the Devourer seeks to wipe out the Empire. In any case, the Stone Thief is especially troublesome because it's so mobile—you can't seal it off or put a watch on it, because it swims through the earth as fast as dragons can fly.

- That may lead into discussions of ways to find and kill the dungeon.
- More practical-minded player characters may ask about *Getting Around* (page 310).

You can also introduce news from afar, especially if there's been a lengthy gap since the PCs last ventured into the dungeon. What has the Stone Thief done since they last fought it? Drop in any unused *Enemy Actions* (page 343) as tidings reported at the council.

Ways to find it, Ways to kill it: Aka *what do we do next?* The players may already be on the trail of several such methods, but if they missed previous plot hooks, use this scene to get them back on track. This may lead into:

- *The Eyes of the Stone Thief* (page 313).
- *The Inverse Observatory* (page 326).
- *To Catch A Thief* (page 350).
- *Slaying the Thief* (page 352).

ENEMY ACTIONS

The other surface quests describe actions the player characters might take in their pursuit of the Stone Thief. This section flips things around and covers actions the Stone Thief takes in pursuit of the player characters.

The best way to use this material is to integrate it into your own adventures and plotlines. If you started your campaign at level 1, then you've got four levels worth of adventurer-tier quests and background material established for your take on the Dragon Empire. Your players have their own one unique things and stories and ambitions that might not tie into the Stone Thief. Don't abandon all that just because you're running *Eyes of the Stone Thief*—instead, use these Enemy Actions to stitch the material in this book into your stories. The Stone Thief can pop up anywhere without warning, so the dungeon can ambush the player characters in the middle of a seemingly unrelated adventure—while the heroes battle the dread servants of the Crimson Banner, the castle they're storming suddenly slides into the ground as the Maw opens up beneath it!

The Enemy Actions are listed roughly in order of use, although you won't create any problems by skipping some or running them out of sequence. The first two (*The Theft* and *Elemental Hunger*) can be used to kick off the campaign. *Race Against the Cult, Revenge of the Thief,* and *Giant Monster* are all best used in the middle of the story, after the players have some experience with the dungeon and have inflicted serious damage on the Stone Thief's denizens. The last two (*The City Devoured* and *Apotheosis*) should only be used at the end of the campaign, and may be more useful as threats that the PCs must avert than as events that actually happen in the campaign. That said, don't be afraid of shaking your campaign up with huge changes, especially as your players move into the epic tier. Killing off an icon or wiping out a major city clears the stage for the epic-tier PCs to make their own marks on the Dragon Empire.

THE THEFT

Run this event when:

- The PCs feel safe and secure.
- The PCs are in or near somewhere of importance.
- You want to introduce the Stone Thief for the first time.

This is a simple event—the Stone Thief rises up, opens its Maw, and steals a building or structure from the surface world. The village of Greenwell (see *Prey,* page 280) is a generic example, usable if there's nothing more fitting in your campaign. Look for ways to surprise the player characters; if they're sent to defend a town from an invasion of undead commanded by a recently-woken lich, and they see this book lurking behind your screen, then they're going to assume that the town is about to get swallowed by the Stone Thief. Throw them off balance by having the dungeon consume the lich's crypt instead. Another option is to have the dungeon start things off with a bang by swallowing somewhere really important—the lighthouse of Vigil, the Elf Queen's summer palace, or the fortress of Anvil.

The player characters might witness this theft, and then delve into the Maw in the hopes of making it to the Gizzard and rescuing any victims of the dungeon (page 69). Equally, they might just come across the aftermath of the attack. You could even leave things mysterious—the PCs come across a giant, gaping hole in the ground where there was once a mighty fortress or wizard's tower.

Whenever the Stone Thief breaks through to the surface, creatures emerge from the dungeon to wreak havoc. The orcs of Deep Keep go pillaging, the undead of the Ossuary go corpse-snatching (and everyone is a corpse once the ghouls are done with them), and monsters from other levels just do what monsters do. Some of these invaders get left behind when the dungeon submerges again, so you can throw level-appropriate battles at the PCs even if they arrive after the attack (Greenwell Village, page 282, has a level 4 orc battle).

Show the aftermath of the attack. The Stone Thief can be subtle, but its attacks are usually like a targeted earthquake. Make it clear to the players that an incredibly dangerous and destructive monster just passed by. At this stage, there's no need to make an effort to tie the player characters to the Stone Thief—if they develop their own spontaneous vendetta, marvelous, but you don't need to cultivate their hatred of the dungeon yet. There'll be plenty of time for that later in the campaign.

ELEMENTAL HUNGER

If your player characters aren't the sorts to hang around in civilized lands, then you can substitute this event for *the Theft.* It works the same way—the dungeon rises and steals something from the surface, but in this case it's a place of power. Possible targets include:

- One of the Archmage's magical experiments (Boltstrike Pillar, in the *Blood & Lightning* adventure in the *13th Age* core rulebook, is a perfect example).
- An eruption of natural magical energy (a gate to an elemental plane, a wellspring of magical force, a magic tree).
- A crashed flying realm.
- A small hellhole or other source of infernal power.
- A wizard's tower.
- An isolated shrine or tomb.

If you've already run *The Theft*, then run *Elemental Hunger* a few sessions later. If you run *Elemental Hunger* first, then run *The Theft* soon after that. The aim is to show the players that the Stone Thief consumes both sources of magic and structures from the surface. Once they understand the rules of the living dungeon, they'll be able to plot against it. (They'll also realize the scale of the threat posed by the dungeon.)

RACE AGAINST THE CULT

A villain has hired the Cult of the Devourer to summon the Stone Thief and remove some obstacle. The PCs have to find the cabal of cultists and defeat them before the dungeon arrives.

Run this event when:

- You've got a running villain that you want to tie to the *Eyes of the Stone Thief* plotline.
- You want to bring the Stone Thief back into the campaign in an unexpected way.

Some of the cult's surface temples practice what amounts to divine siege warfare for hire. Pay them enough (preferably in magic items or raw arcane power that they can then bring to their Secret Masters in the Onyx Catacombs; see page 244), and they'll call up the Stone Thief in a place of your choosing using their ritual of Calling the Devourer (page 303). Since the ritual's timing is unpredictable, it works best as a surprise attack or as a way of breaking stalemates.

Possible setups are suggested below, but they all follow roughly the same structure—the adventure initially seems unconnected to the Stone Thief, but the final confrontation involves the PCs locating a cell of the Cult of the Devourer. Once they defeat the cultists, they find useful information relating to the cult, like:

- One or more of the cult rituals (page 350).
- A clutch of Earthspears (page 304).
- Notes on dream messages from the Secret Masters.
- The location of another, larger cult temple on the surface.

Should the PCs fail to thwart the cult in time, the Stone Thief rises and consumes whatever building the cult had targeted. The cultists need to be in or near the target for the ritual to be effective.

GLACIER'S END

(Orc Lord/Dwarf King)

Korthaka, a commander in the Orc Lord's horde, has battered her forces against the impenetrable bulwark of the dwarven fort of Glacier's End for months. The stone walls of the fort, and the small underground town that supports it, have proved beyond the strength of her bedraggled and half-frozen army. Orc blood may burn hot, but the freezing winds bite deep in the mountains. She contacts the Cult of the Devourer, who infiltrates the fort in the guise of human merchants bringing supplies to the fort.

The player characters are hired as caravan guards, or sent by the Dwarf King to bolster the fort, or seers worry that the ancient undead dragon that lies eternally frozen in the heart of the glacier will be woken by the orc attacks. While at the fort, they hear of a strange schism between the orcs; one band of orcs has broken off from the main body of the attack and gone up onto the glacier. Investigating, the PCs learn that this smaller band is led by an orc shaman, **Boan**, who objects to Korthaka's command that the shamans gather the magical energy of the war-spirits so she can hand it over to some crazy humans in the fort. Boan won't let Korthaka profane the ways of the orc shamans—he'd sooner call up a host of fire elementals and drown himself, the fort, and the orc army in a flood of meltwater than obey Korthaka.

The players have to deal with a fanatical orc shaman, an ambitious orc general, the cultists hidden in the fort, and the undead dragon—all before the cult succeeds in calling the Stone Thief.

THE GLITTERHAEGEN HEIST

(Emperor/Prince of Shadows)

An ambitious criminal syndicate, the League of Nine, intends to wrest control of Glitterhaegen's underworld from the Prince of Shadows. To do so, they need money, and lots of it. The vault of the Temple Bank in Glitterhaegen contains more gold than any dragon's hoard, but it's protected by traps and magical defenses that would give the most experienced thief pause—then a dreadful, sickening *click* after that pause, as a trap triggers. The League has no chance of breaking into the bank, so they've hired the Cult of the Devourer to steal the whole bank. Once the dungeon smashes the Temple Bank to pieces, the League's mercenaries will march into the Gizzard and grab the treasure. What the plan lacks in subtlety and plausibility, it makes up in audacity.

The PCs are drawn into the plot when:

- The burghers of Glitterhaegen fret about the mercenaries gathering in their usually civilized city.
- A defector from the League of Nine turns herself over to the Imperial governor, revealing that the League has something big planned and it's happening *soon.*
- The Prince of Shadows asks them to investigate the League's treachery.
- The characters have just slain an immensely rich dragon, and they need somewhere to store the piles of loot.

The cult needs somewhere close to the Temple Bank to conduct their ritual, and plenty of time to call the Thief. The League has hired a renegade urban druidess to turn the cultists into rats; they're carrying out the ritual inside the walls of the bank. To protect the rat-cultists, elite League assassins watch over the bank, murdering any cats that come near the building.

THE ROAD TO HELL

(Crusader/Archmage)

Hidden in the enchanted forests near Horizon is a school called the Greymanse. It's for sorcerers, especially those who channel the power of the darker icons. The young girl who was driven from her village because the dead in the local graveyard call out to her when she walks past, the young boy who spouts hellfire when he's angry—they can find a place of safety in this secret school, where the Archmage's gentle tutors teach them how to control their powers. (It's better than them ending up as spell-flinging lunatics or Diabolist cultists or, heavens forefend, adventurers.)

The Crusader's followers learned of the Greymanse some time ago. To a follower of the Crusader, such a school is an abomination. Sorcerous children are potential doorways for demons to break through into our reality; those who bear the Diabolist's mark should be slain or... purified with certain secret rituals known only to the Crusader's servants.

When the Archmage refused to shut the Greymanse or hand over any students to the Crusader's followers, they attacked the school. The magical defenses of the school activated, hiding it in the forest. Now, the Greymanse moves away from the Crusader's forces whenever they come near. To deal with the "threat" of demons using one of the Infernal-Heritage sorcerers to open a portal, the Crusader's followers have turned to dark magic, in the form of the Cult of the Devourer. **Hannah,** one of the students in the Greymanse, is secretly a member of the cult; she was raised in an isolated village ruled by the cult and sent to the Greymanse to hone her powers so she would be more useful to the Secret Masters in the future. Her brother **Vanj** came to visit her recently, and he told her that she must carry out the ritual of calling the Devourer.

The PCs get involved:

- When the Crusader captain, a dark paladin named **Blaise**, asks them to help track down the school—he's hoping that the adventurers will draw attention away from Vanj.
- When the Archmage sends them to resolve the problem with the Crusader's forces. It's too much trouble to keep *teleporting* the school around the forest, and *fireball* takes up a lower-level spell slot.
- When the PC sorcerer is invited back by her old mentor to give a guest lecture on sorcery and adventuring.

The complication—other than Hannah's growing reluctance to carry out the ritual, and her brother's equally growing determination to blackmail her into submission—is that the Crusader's followers are *right!* Another student is indeed a servant of the Diabolist. The Greymanse may turn into a possessed sorcerer/cult assassin/living dungeon cage fight with the PCs caught in the middle.

Revenge of the Thief

Run this event when the PCs have angered the Stone Thief in some manner, such as:

- Stopping the dungeon from stealing a place.
- Killing a load-bearing boss.
- Keeping one of the Eyes of the Stone Thief.
- Attacking the Cult of the Devourer.
- Being player characters on a dungeon crawl.

This is when the Thief adds 'places important to the player characters' to its menu of targets. If the dungeon is still missing its Eyes, it will have to rely on its short range senses or use the Cult of the Devourer as 'spotters' to call it to the right place, which may give the PCs a little advance warning or a chance to avert the attack.

- Don't be predictable. If the Stone Thief starts targeting the PCs, don't play four sessions in a row where the main plot is 'the dungeon eats somewhere important to a player character.' Instead, space things out. Eat Edric the Paladin's temple one week, then a month later eat Aleena the Cleric's sister's village.
- Hit overconfident players with shock and awe—turn the campaign upside down by blowing up a large part of it. If Sir Bor's castle has been the party's home base since the start, and if they regularly visit the Tower of the Stars for wise counsel, and if they've spent the last six sessions clearing out the ruins of the Silver Citadel—then have the dungeon attack all three places in a single night. Rip away the PCs' support network.
- Another cruel option is to *spare* one of the PCs. If Melvin the Mage is the only PC who hasn't yet been targeted by the dungeon, then he's going to be wondering when the axe is going to fall (or the Maw is going to open), while the rest of the group may suspect he's made some illicit deal with the dungeon.
- If you're stuck for a good way to hurt a PC, use Nightmare Foreshadowing (page 281) or ask the player.

The dungeon has ways to hurt player characters beyond just stealing their stuff (and the places where they keep their stuff). It could equally send an orc invasion from Deep Keep to attack them, or ambush them unexpectedly using the Grove (page 137) or Sunken Sea to bring them into the dungeon without them realizing.

Give the players a chance to reclaim what was stolen or to salvage something by defeating the dungeon. You want them eager to get payback, not so frustrated that they feel the campaign is no fun anymore. Drop them into a dark pit, but throw them a torch so they're not completely blind.

Giant Monster

The dungeon can spawn its own lesser denizens like the stoneborn orcs, but there are some unique monsters that it can't get anywhere else. Run this event when:

- The PCs have killed a major monster in the dungeon, like the minotaur in the Arena (page 62), the Alabaster Sentinel (page 206), one of its prized siege weapons sent to destroy Dungeon Town (page 87), or one of the monsters on the bridge in the Maddening Stair (page 189).
- The PCs have retreated from, failed to kill, have a running rivalry with, or are just scared about a particular monster on the surface.
- One of the players peeked in the monster chapter or a bestiary book and let out a notable profanity.
- You've seeded rumors of a particular dangerous monster, and the PCs have set out in search of it.

The Stone Thief captures the monster, swallowing it and its lair. The monster gets moved to a suitable location in the dungeon—the end of the Gauntlet, the bottom of the Maddening Stair, or on the doorstep of the Heart of the Stone Thief are all good options. The player characters discover that the monster has been taken by the dungeon, so they know that the next time they enter the Stone Thief, it'll be waiting in the darkness for them.

Some twists:

- There are some truly gargantuan monsters stomping around the Dragon Empire—behemoths, krakens, dragons, elder beasts, purple worms, wendigo, and the like. Maybe the biggest of these creatures is too big for the Stone Thief to swallow, so the dungeon instead grabs a younger specimen. This sets the players up to use a variant on *Battle of the Behemoths* (page 354), if they can get the monster's parent to smash the dungeon for them. (Of course, that also means they can't kill the giant monster when they meet it.)

- Assuming the Flesh Tailor is still alive—well, not alive, but not *dead* dead—then the Stone Thief can use him to reanimate a particularly dangerous monster. So, the player characters defeated the Moon-eating Wolf from the overworld? Well done—now, they've got to beat the Skeletal Undead Life-eating Wolf in the dungeon.
- For that matter, consider resurrecting a dead player character as an undead horror. If Sarinth the Slayer gave her life heroically in the depths of the dungeon, then bring her back as a monstrous revenant that's a match for the whole party.
- Evil team-up! Have a recurring villain or monster voluntarily ally itself with the dungeon, instead of the dungeon capturing it.

And if you're stuck for monsters, these three are looking for adventuring parties to eat.

The Fire Ape

This giant ape lives on the Isle of Fire, where the natives worship it in the hopes it won't scoop out magma from the volcanoes and hurl it at them.

Huge 10th level wrecker [BEAST]
Initiative: +20
Vulnerability: cold

Giant Paw +15 vs. PD (2 attacks)—30 damage, and roll a d6 to see what happens to the target. If the result is less than the value of the escalation die, use the escalation die value instead. If the ape hits a target with two *giant paw* attacks in the same round, the ape may *rend* that target as a free action.

1. *Fling Down:* The ape picks up the target, grunts, and drops it again for another 30 damage.
2. *Grab:* The ape grabs the target. Next round, if it's still holding the target, it makes another *giant paw* attack on the target with a +4 grab bonus.
3. *Flail:* The ape grabs the target, waves it around, then drops it. The target takes another 30 damage, and the ape may immediately make another *giant paw* attack on a different target.
4. *Hurl:* The ape picks up the target and throws it. The target pops free, moves to far away range, and lands heavily for another 60 damage. The target becomes dazed (save ends).
5. *Hurl at another PC:* The ape picks up the target and throws it at another foe. The target pops free and moves to a second nearby target, and takes 30 damage. Make a **+13 vs. PD** attack on the second target; if successful, the second target takes 30 damage too.
6. *Rend:* The ape makes a *rend* attack, even if it only hit that target with a single *giant paw* attack.

[Special trigger] **Rend +13 vs. PD**—40 damage, and 40 ongoing damage (any healing ends the 40 ongoing damage).

R: Hurl Magma +15 vs. PD (1d3 + 1 nearby or far away targets in a group)—50 damage, and 20 ongoing fire damage

Furious Ape: The fire ape has a pool of Fury Points. At the start of its turn, it gains a number of Fury Points equal to the value of the escalation die, and gains another Fury Point whenever it suffers a critical hit. It may spend a Fury Point to:

- Reroll a failed save (max 3/round).
- Add 10 fire damage to an attack (max 3/round).
- Inflict an amount of fire damage equal to its current Fury pool on all foes engaged with it (max 1/round).

It may also spend 3 Fury Points to make an extra *giant paw* attack (max 3/round).

Fire Resistance 18+

Nastier Specials

Fear: Enemies with 72 hit points or fewer who are engaged with the ape are dazed (–4 to attacks) and do not benefit from the escalation die.

Grab and Climb: If the ape grabs a foe with a *giant paw* attack, it may pop free and immediately take a move action to climb a nearby surface, like a big tree, cliff face, cave wall or giant building.

Swat: The fire ape make an opportunity attack if a flying foe engages with it.

AC	**26**	
PD	24	**HP 650**
MD	20	

Variations

- If the Stone Thief is going to trek all the way to the Isle of Fire to pick up a burning monkey, it may as well grab a volcano, an ape temple, and a bunch of crazy ape cultists too.
- Yes, there's an ice ape on the Maddening Stair. The Stone Thief likes elemental monkeys. Thunder ape is waiting in the wings.

Sea Kraken

Spawned in the depths of the Iron Sea, this horrific monster resembles a cross between a crab, a squid, and what happens when an even bigger monster eats them both, then vomits out the remains as a congealed whole.

Huge 10th level wrecker [ABERRATION]
Initiative: +16

Snapping Claws +15 vs. AC (4 attacks)—40 damage
Natural 16+: 20 ongoing damage.
Natural 20: Lose a limb or be hampered (target's choice, hard save ends, 16+). If you lose the limb, take that 20 ongoing damage too.

C: Lightning Blast +13 vs. PD (one nearby or far away target)—20 lightning damage
Limited Targeting: A foe can only be the target of one *lightning blast* per round.
Bonus Attacks: The sea kraken may make a number of free *lightning blast* attacks each round equal to the escalation die.

Invulnerable Shell: The sea kraken starts with *resist damage 20+* to all damage except psychic damage. That means that it takes half damage from *everything* apart from psychic attacks and attacks that roll natural 20s. However, each time a non-psychic

attack gets past its damage resistance, the damage resistance drops by 1. So, after it's hit with a natural 20, it drops to *resist damage 19+*.

Player characters who don't want to try their luck with attacking the sea kraken directly can instead do something to widen the cracks in its shell—dropping rocks on it, prising the shell open with their weapons, hasty rituals, and so on.

Resist Lightning 16+: This resistance is independent of the protection given by the kraken's *invulnerable shell*.

Nastier Specials

Not From Around Here: The sea kraken operates under slightly different rules of reality. All saves are easy (6+) for it, and it saves at the start of its turn, not the end.

AC 27
PD 21 **HP 650**
MD 24

Variations

- The Iron Sea hates the land (as discussed on page 272 of the *13th Age* rulebook). What if the sea kraken brings that hatred with it—any bodies of water that the Stone Thief travels under become infected with the same monster-spawning malice?
- You could also drop the sea kraken into the Sunken Sea, especially if the PCs never went underwater adventuring earlier in the campaign.

Elthumel Self-Conceived

The beings of the overworld are not like the creatures of crude matter that inhabit the world below. Elthumel is a thought of Elthumel—it exists because it conceived of its own existence. That's the sort of thing that happens up there. Anyway, Elthumel fell to earth and is becoming enmeshed in the base physicality of the world. Its once-angelic body is now half shimmering planes of heavenly force, and half muck and debris and filthy matter. As it writhes in its agony, it picks up more and more matter.

Huge 10th level spoiler [GIANT]
Initiative: +20

Two Souls: Elthumel is effectively two entities in one body. It has a celestial side and a material side. While the two sides share a hit point total and act on the same initiative, they are otherwise treated as separate entities and can be targeted separately. For example, if Elthumel is hit with an attack that *stuns*, the attacker must choose which side of Elthumel is being targeted, and the other side is unaffected by the stun. Powers noted as being celestial or material belong to the relevant side of Elthumel. Elthumel may make a celestial and a material attack each round.

Celestial Sword +15 vs. AC (2 attacks)—40 force damage

Material Slam +15 vs. PD (2 attacks)—30 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends)

C: Celestial Fire +13 vs. MD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies)—30 holy damage, and the victim begins to fly (save ends). If the victim has a way of controlling their flight, this can be a boon; otherwise, the victim just ascends until they save successfully, and then gravity takes hold again.

C: Lashing Tendrils of Base Matter +13 vs. PD (all nearby enemies)—30 damage
Natural 16+: The target is stuck (save ends).
Ground to Air Tendrils: Flying creatures are vulnerable to this attack.

Celestial Madness: Elthumel's pain has driven the creature to the brink of madness. Even if the PCs are able to reason with the tortured entity, it may still instinctively lash out. Roll a d6 each round; if the result is equal to or less than the escalation die, Elthumel makes a celestial attack regardless of other conditions or circumstances.

Material Corruption: When Elthumel becomes staggered, it has become so enmeshed in the material world that it is now mostly material. If the escalation die is even, then it counts as having two material sides instead of a material side and a celestial side.

Flight: Elthumel's celestial side can fly; its material side can't. As it's all stuck together, that means it glides around the battlefield with perfect agility.

AC 26
PD 24 **HP 650**
MD 20

Variations

- Conceivably (ha!), the PCs could rescue Elthumel Self-Conceived from its prison of base matter. Maybe Phemuel the Living Spell (page 115) could offer words of advice on the matter. If the PCs are lucky, these words might even be ones that mean something in the languages of the material world.
- With Elthumel partially corrupted by the dungeon, maybe the Stone Thief could steal the celestial entity's power of flight and go marauding in the overworld.

The City Devoured

As the Stone Thief's appetite grows, its Eyes turn (assuming it recovers Eyes to turn) toward the great cities of the Dragon Empire. Pick the city that's most important to your campaign and set the dungeon on it!

This clash is the climax of the whole campaign arc. The dungeon rises beneath the city, passing below the walls and other defenses and insinuating itself into the city's sewers and subterranean passageways. Every basement and cellar in the city becomes part of the dungeon; every door that leads below ground becomes an entrance, and monsters pour out of every one. Stoneborn orcs swarm out into the streets, ghouls drag victims away into the darkness; the skies darken as hundreds of manticores and archivults fly out of the dungeon to attack. As

the dungeon consumes the city, buildings are consumed where they stand as tentacles of dungeon ectoplasm wrap around them like malignant ivy. The city is assuredly doomed unless the adventurers delve into the dungeon and put an end to the Stone Thief immediately.

Each of the cities of the Empire has its own character and quirks, which makes for a different final challenge for the campaign. Let's quickly run through the Thief's options.

Axis

Axis's ultimate ace-in-the-clouds—its army of several dozen ancient metallic dragons—is ineffective against an enemy that attacks from underground (no wonder the Orc Lord wants to capture the Stone Thief). Still, the city's sheer size and population means that it will take some time for the dungeon to chew through all the palaces and arenas to get to the Thronehold and the Emperor.

Axis is built inside an ancient, extinct volcano, but the Stone Thief might breach some deep-buried magma chambers/portals to the plane of fire as it swims toward the city. Alternatively, it's got its own swallowed volcano (page 270), so flooding the crater with fire or even water (from the Sunken Sea) could be an added challenge for the PCs.

Concord

If the rumors are true, and Concord's harmony is due to an enchantment that fosters friendship, then maybe this enchantment is built into the city's walls. So, when the Stone Thief smashes through the walls, the elves and dwarves turn on each other and start fighting. The PCs have to reunite the factions of Concord and convince them to work together freely, instead of having their differences smoothed over by magic.

Concord is a garden city, which makes it vulnerable to the Grove. The dungeon could, over time, sneak monsters and cultists into Concord without anyone noticing by surfacing with the Grove on top. One bit of forest looks much like another by night.

Drakkenhall

An attack on Drakkenhall would actually be less damaging than elsewhere, as half the city is ruined already. The Blue's plan for the living dungeon is to fatten the Stone Thief up on the ruins of this city, so if the Witch of Marblehall gets control of the dungeon, the campaign may end up here anyway.

In fact, maybe the Blue *wants* all of Drakkenhall to be consumed. Turn the whole city into a dungeon, add all the monstrous citizens as denizens, and then she can move her domain anywhere she wants in the Empire without breaking her geas. (*Yes, O Emperor, I'm still within the boundaries of my city. It's just that my city goes where I want it, now, and I want it at your* throat.)

If the Witch isn't running the Stone Thief when it attacks Drakkenhall, then the PCs may be recruited by the Blue to go into the dungeon and complete her mission immediately, before the city falls. Drakkenhall's walls bear powerful enchantments dating back to when it was Highrock, and those spells should slow the dungeon down long enough for the PCs to save the day—assuming they *want* to save one-third of an evil icon, of course.

Glitterhaegen

Glitterhaegen? Glitterhaegen's *screwed*. The City of Coins has magical wards and fortified walls and all the defenses one would expect of a major city, but it's always relied more on mercenaries and the protection of the dwarves to defend it, and those allies are no use against the Stone Thief. This city is an easy target—the loss of Marblehall should have been a warning for the merchants and bankers.

There are two possible complications to an attack by the Stone Thief. The first is the port—Glitterhaegen has the largest harbor on the Midland Sea, so if the dungeon rises in the middle of town, everyone's going to flee to the ships. The Stone Thief may have some scheme to block this line of escape (say, by releasing the sea kraken just before it attacks the city). The other complication is the relative proximity of First Triumph. If Glitterhaegen is in trouble, the city could turn to the Crusader's armies for aid—but what would his price be?

Horizon

The Archmage's city is only going to fall through treachery from within or absolutely overwhelming force from without. The magical wards are strong enough to keep the Stone Thief out unless the dungeon gets a boost of power or someone turns them off from inside the city. The Cult of the Devourer is very good at getting its agents in place, but even they'd have trouble penetrating the Archmage's organization. Blackmail or some other intrigue is a more likely explanation (one possible solution—the Curator of the Pit of Undigested Ages tricks the PCs into letting the dungeon in—see page 214).

The Archmage himself is also a factor. He is tremendously powerful in his own right, even if you discount the influence and power he wields through his followers. Under normal circumstances, Archmage vs. Stone Thief would end with a smoking hole in the ground; even if the dungeon is ready for the fight, the Archmage can probably defeat it. Distracting or incapacitating the Archmage may be a necessary part of any attack on Horizon. Apply the same tactics the dungeon uses on the PCs—what does the Archmage care about? How can the Stone Thief hurt him indirectly? Smashing his network of power nodes? Eating the tower where his favorite apprentice (and secret lover) dwells?

If the Stone Thief does consume Horizon, skip straight onto *Apotheosis*.

New Port

About the only thing that can be said about New Port is that it won't suffer long.

Santa Cora

Everything said about Horizon applies to Santa Cora—the magical (or, in this case, divine) wards, the personal power of the resident icon, and the possibility that the Stone Thief steals enough power for the cult to put their plan of *Apotheosis* into action immediately.

Eliminating the Priestess may be more of a challenge than side-lining the Archmage. The dungeon's best approach might be loosing some cataclysm on the land to distract her before attacking the Cathedral. An orc invasion, a magical pestilence, a rash of new hellholes, or some other infernal threat could draw the Priestess away from her city, or at least exhaust her so she can't miracle whip the dungeon when it rises.

And not strictly cities of the Empire, but still valid targets:

Forge

The dwarves have more experience with the Stone Thief than anyone else, so Forge is heavily warded against living dungeon attack. Should those wards fail, though, the whole city is underground, so the Stone Thief could consume it all very quickly. The player characters might find themselves fighting their way through dungeon corridors that blend into the streets of Forge as they head for the Dwarf King's throne room.

One nasty tactic for the dungeon would be to first burrow down to the ruined deeper levels of Forge. Those deep levels were poisoned during a war with the dark elves, and the poison still lingers in the air. The Stone Thief could consume the poisoned levels, then spill the toxic air into Forge. Dwarven toughness only goes so far.

The Court of Stars

Again, internal treachery is the order of the day (or eternal starry night) here. The Court moves around, so either someone guides the Stone Thief to the Elf Queen's door, or else the dungeon crashes through the forest, chasing the Court as it flits from place to place.

Apotheosis

Or apocalypse, for those on the receiving end of the Stone Thief's ascension to godhood.

The Cult of the Devourer believes that by feeding the dungeon an excess of magical power at the right moment, they can transform it into a sort of artificial god. The Stone Thief would consume the whole Dragon Empire, spreading out beneath the surface of the land at astounding speeds, and rewriting the face of the world. The cult's enemies (i.e. almost everyone in the Empire) would be condemned to the torments of the living dungeon, while the faithful dwell in palaces and pleasure-gardens that spring out of the ground. The Thief's apotheosis would let the cult shape the next age of the world to their twisted desires.

That's the theory.

In practice, the player characters are going to stop them or die trying.

If the cult ever gets into a position to trigger apotheosis, or it happens some other way, then the dungeon starts spreading out like a cancer from its current location. As it grows, it turns everything (both above and below the ground) into more of itself. Hills become riddled with caves and monster-haunted corridors, woodlands become twisted, dark labyrinths of murderous trees, and villages become corrupted into the abodes of undead. It's like a hellhole that keeps growing and perverting everything it consumes. It's an aggressively hegemonizing dungeon.

The only way to stop the dungeon is to kill or bind it before the contagion spreads too far. Even if the player characters succeed in killing the Stone Thief, they're still going to be left with hundreds of square miles of countryside that have been transformed into an eerie dungeonland. If the contagion reached a major city, then the Empire may be destabilized and left vulnerable to its enemies.

TO CATCH A THIEF

Thieves are sneaky, even when they're dungeons. The Stone Thief flees if the player characters actually find a way to injure it, and it moves faster and swims deeper than they can hope to match. To complicate matters, most of the methods to destroy or bind the dungeon all have one thing in common—they're terribly slow. Over the course of the campaign, the players will likely seek out a way to trap the dungeon and stop it from fleeing, or lure it to a particular place so they can do something nasty to it.

We've seeded plenty of potential options for the players to exploit throughout this campaign; the players might pick one of those, or come up with something else. Let them drive the hunt for the living dungeon!

LURING THE DUNGEON

The first problem is luring the dungeon to a particular place. The second is trapping it. First, let's look at some techniques for luring the Stone Thief.

The Rite of Calling the Devourer

Without its missing Eyes, the Stone Thief has trouble hunting. It can still find prey at short range, but over longer distances, it needs something to guide it. Fortunately for the dungeon, it has a network of willing spies, the Cult of the Devourer. Each cult temple possesses a copy of the calling rite, a ritual that creates telluric vibrations that the dungeon can sense. Keep enacting the rite, and eventually the dungeon will come to that spot.

The rite itself is simple—you don't even need to have the Ritual Caster feat. Just chant, bang a hammer on the ground, and give the dungeon a little piece of your soul, and eventually the Thief will come and steal you away.

An Irresistible Target

The Thief is drawn to beautiful, gigantic structures. Given a choice between stealing some crumbling watchtower on the borderlands and eating a magnificent mansion filled with rare treasures and wonderful art, it'll go for the fancy house every time. It's especially drawn to isolated structures that it can consume whole and savor. So, all the PCs need to do is find or build a suitably glorious building, ideally in the middle of nowhere, and then get the Thief near enough to scent it.

The Thief is also drawn to places of power and other sources of magic, both naturally occurring and the works of mortals—wizard's towers, ritual sites, elemental portals, pools of divine energy, places of legend and myth, and places where the land touches the mythic underworld or the celestial overworld.

What the Thief finds utterly irresistible are places that combine the two—large, complex structures that are also magically potent. Of course, most such structures are magically protected against just this sort of attack, which is why the Thief hasn't devoured all of Horizon and Necropolis yet. Should the PCs deliberately deactivate these wards, though, the Stone Thief would waste little time in attacking.

An Eye of the Stone Thief

The dungeon wants its Eyes back so it can stop relying on the Custodians and the cult for survival. At the start of the campaign, the Eyes are hidden from the dungeon (see *The Eyes of the Stone Thief*, page 313), but if the players get hold of one, they can use it as the bait in a trap.

It's Here For Us!

The final option only becomes available toward the end of the campaign. Once the PCs inflict enough damage on the dungeon and kill enough of its denizens, it starts to hunt them. They can turn the Stone Thief's thirst for vengeance against the living dungeon—all they need to do is stand and wait, exposed and vulnerable, so the dungeon rises to devour them…

TRAPPING THE DUNGEON

Once the PCs have the dungeon, they need to keep it in place so it cannot escape them—or else have a way to catch hold of the dungeon and ride with it down into the depths as it flees.

The Poisoned Place

There are all sorts of ways to slow the Stone Thief down once it swallows a piece of bait. The Witch, for example, used shell-shaper charms to keep the dungeon from digesting Marblehall. The PCs could do the same, or channel some dangerous power through the structure as the dungeon tries to consume it—what would happen if the full wrath of the Great Gold Wyrm erupted through a stolen altar sacred to him, or if the PCs filled a building with rampaging iron golems and tricked the dungeon into swallowing it? What if the PCs used behemoth blood in the mortar of a building, or had the High Druid herself contend with the dungeon's spirit as it tried to consume a druidic circle? What if the shining magical structure the dungeon tried to swallow was actually a flying realm that takes off again while inside the Gizzard?

Shell-Shaper Charms

Armed with shell-shaper charms, the PCs can make stone wards that the dungeon cannot easily break. They could use a shell-shaper charm to keep the Stone Thief pinned to the surface, or create their own sanctuary within the dungeon so they can stay with the dungeon as it tries to escape.

Harpoon the Dungeon!

Just as the cult did long ago, the characters can use Earthspears (page 304) to prevent the dungeon from descending. To obtain enough Earthspears to keep the dungeon from escaping, they can loot several cult temples for weapons, or learn to forge the weapons themselves by reverse-engineering the cult's enchantments (perhaps by visiting the Geomantic Tower in the *Pit of Undigested Ages* (page 222), or by taking a spear to the Archmage or another icon).

13 Panics

Thieves, by their nature, don't stand and fight if they've got an alternative, and the Stone Thief is no exception. Here are thirteen ways the Stone Thief might try to escape or thwart the PCs' attempt to catch it.

1: **Vomit Monsters**: Undead from the Ossuary, orcs from Deep Keep, whatever it can spit out of the Grove—pick some monsters the PCs haven't fought yet, and have it climb out of the Maw.

2: **Thrash:** The Stone Thief thrashes and flails like a hooked fish. To those on the surface, it's like an earthquake. Anything breakable—ritual components, say, or player characters—that isn't somehow protected gets smashed.

3: **Sacrifice Levels:** Unless the characters have taken steps to pin the Stone Thief in place, it can always leave some of its levels behind, sacrificing them like a lizard shedding its tail. The levels (the Maw and Gizzard at the very least) remain behind. The Custodians of those levels won't survive long, but now they can speak freely and help the PCs get revenge on the Stone Thief.

4: **Vomit Levels:** Like sacrificing, but with more upheaval. The dungeon rears out of the ground and drops several choice encounters right on top of the player characters.

5: **Threaten:** If the dungeon's already swallowed something precious to the player characters, then the Stone Thief threatens to annihilate it forever. If it doesn't have a hostage already, then it claims it will send the Cult of the Devourer to destroy everything the PCs hold dear unless they free it immediately.

6: **Call on the Cult:** The Stone Thief may be playing the Cult of the Devourer for suckers, but they're still its greatest asset in times of need. It can either move levels around inside itself to bring the Onyx Catacombs close to the surface and release an army of cultists, or else have the Secret Masters blast the PCs with *Dreaming Horrors* (page 267).

7: **Vomit Lava:** There's a volcano lodged in the depths of the dungeon. Letting it erupt will grievously wound the Stone Thief, but it'll annihilate the PCs. Maybe even the threat of an eruption will be enough to convince them to let the dungeon go.

8: **Play Dead:** With a shudder, the living dungeon perishes. You win. Campaign over. Good game everyone! I guess your characters go back to Axis and report to the Emperor, right? And you don't look over your shoulders at the corpse of the Stone Thief? And you certainly don't see it tremor, then move, then slither back down into the underworld…

9: **Offer A Bargain:** The Stone Thief sends one of its Custodians (probably the Vizier) up to the surface to bargain with its tormentors. What will it take to buy the dungeon's freedom?

10: **Badly Timed Interruption:** Bring in the Opposition or another force working for a rival icon to complicate the situation.

11: **Run and Hide:** The dungeon rips free and runs. If the PCs can track it down quickly, they can kill it while it's weak and wounded, before it has time to heal.

12: **Be Prepared:** If the Stone Thief has recovered its Eyes, or has some other way of spying on the PCs' preparations, then it can take steps of its own to counter their plans. If they intend to poison it, then it hunts down the fabled Healing Well of the Priestess that cures all ills. If they have Earthspears to pin it, then it makes an alliance with the derro geomancers whose spells can rip the spears from the ground. The PCs will have to destroy the dungeon's defensive measures quickly if their plan is to succeed.

13: **Swallow the PCs:** When all else fails… make them crawl for it!

SLAYING THE THIEF

The ultimate goal of the Stone Thief campaign is to defeat the dungeon. We've seeded lots of different ways for the PCs to kill the dungeon. Your players may come up with their own ways, too, or maybe they'll leverage other bits of your campaign as a weapon against the living dungeon. Any solution that involves exciting peril, sacrifice, and a few lucky rolls works.

One possible approach is to nudge the player characters down a particular route—say, finding the ritual of binding—then having the dungeon pull that solution out of reach just before the PCs can use it. The characters might have assembled all the elements they need to pull off the destructive version of the binding, but just before they can finish the ritual, the Stone Thief's Maw opens right beneath them and destroys all their ritual components. Making the characters feel like all is lost sets them up for a heroic fight back in the third act of the campaign. (If you do take this approach, ensure that the players feel that the dungeon thwarted them, and not the invisible hand of the GM—they're stopped by the dungeon's surprise attack, not because the GM didn't want to them to 'win'.)

THE RITE OF BINDING

The Secret Masters of the Cult of the Devourer possess a secret ritual that can bind the dungeon to their will (page 256). Both Warlord Fangrot and the Witch of Marblehall sought the ritual, and they may have partial or even complete copies. The ritual requires several hard-to-obtain mystical components, and it can only be performed in the presence of the Stone Thief—either above or inside the dungeon.

Ritual Components

- **A connection to the dungeon:** The characters need something that's inextricably connected to the living dungeon. Just a piece of the dungeon won't do—remember, the Stone Thief can wriggle out of stolen structures, shedding them like a lizard sheds its tail. They need something that the Stone Thief cannot deny. The obvious connection would be one of its Eyes (page 313). Other possibilities might be finding a way to collect the ectoplasmic substance of the dungeon from the Gizzard (page 69), or the heart of the First Master (page 223). The *Heart of the Dungeon* would also work (page 270).
- **A source of magical power:** The ritual needs fuel to drive it—the PCs need to tap some epic-tier reserve of magical energy to pull this off. Possible options include an icon with enough mystical might, the soul of a suitably epic monster, or draining some wellspring of natural magic. In a pinch, the life force of a player characters would suffice.
- **Chains to hold a thief:** The characters need chains to bind the essence of the living dungeon. The stronger and more magical the chains, the better the chance of the ritual working. Let the players decide where they're going to find suitable chains, whether it's making a pilgrimage to the Dwarf King and convincing him to make them a set, or seeking out the Lord of the Chain Demons, or diving into the Iron Sea and taking the chains that bind the corpse of the sea monster slain by the Dark Champion in ancient days.

Casting the Ritual

First, the PCs need to be in or near the dungeon, which may mean luring it into a trap (see page 350). If they try performing the ritual inside the dungeon, then the Stone Thief might either try to flee, leaving the section of the dungeon they're in behind, or drop them into a nastier level and throw hordes of monsters at them. If they do it on the surface, then the dungeon tries to eat them, or spits monsters at them. Either way, some members of the party must defend the others as they enact the ritual. Participating in the ritual is a move action that draws opportunity attacks, so ritualists can still throw spells.

The base DC for the ritual is DC 40. Let each PC involved in the casting add their most suitable background, while the main ritual caster adds level + ability modifier + their most suitable background. Add on the escalation die too. Roll for ritual success once each round.

Completing the Ritual

As the characters grow closer to binding the dungeon, the Stone Thief tries to escape the magical chains. The dungeon writhes and squeals, slamming itself against the surface of the world with such force that it leaves parts of itself embedded in the surface. It spews monsters from every egress. As the binding grows stronger, it even throws itself out of the underworld, breaching like some titanic stone whale—but it's no use. The ritual has the dungeon now.

The chains suddenly blaze with white light (assuming they're strong enough to hold the dungeon; if not, they break and the dungeon rips asunder, as per the completion of the Rite of Destruction). All the characters need to do to complete the ritual is to place the chains around the neck of the subdued dungeon (page 356).

Once this is done, the holder of the chains can now command the Stone Thief, moving and reshaping the dungeon as they wish. That's an end to this adventure, but not an end to your campaign—what do the player characters do with a tame dungeon? Or is it destined for another master, like the Orc Lord or the Diabolist?

Fiendish Epic Plans

The bound Stone Thief can be part of the epic tier of your campaign if it's part of some fiendish plan by an enemy icon. Some possibilities:

- **The Archmage:** The Archmage has foreseen the approaching doom, and it's driven him mad. He intends to use the dungeon to preserve civilization by having it swallow the whole Empire. The Dragon Empire will live on inside the living dungeon, holding the Seven Cities frozen like exhibits in a museum.
- **The Crusader:** With the Stone Thief in chains, the Crusader can do more than conquer individual hellholes—he uses the dungeon to launch an all-out offensive on the infernal realms, plunging the land into a terrible and all-encompassing conflict.
- **The Diabolist:** She uses the Stone Thief to reshape the underworld, creating a labyrinth of tunnels and secret passages underneath each of the Seven Cities. With this unseen network, she enmeshes the Empire in corruption and civil war.
- **The Dwarf King:** The Dwarf King claims all treasure in the underworld, and he sends the enslaved dungeon to steal back what is rightfully his—the fabled hoard of the derro. Unfortunately, whatever the dungeon brings back to the surface drives every dwarf in Anvil stark raving mad, and its effects are spreading. Unless a band of heroes besieges the invincible fortress of the dwarves and stops the newly anointed Mad King, the curse dredged up from the underworld will consume the whole world.
- **The Emperor:** Using the dungeon as a siege engine, the Emperor launches a war with some other land—or maybe he brings the 'rebellious' cities to heel. Few would be surprised at a war between Drakkenhall and Axis—but once the Blue's forces fall, the Emperor turns his legions toward Concord…
- **The Elf Queen:** The Elf Queen fulfills her oath to the dark elves by giving them control of the Stone Thief. They delve too deep in an attempt to reclaim their lost kingdoms beneath the ground and loose a terrible evil on the world.
- **The High Druid:** It's time for the Empire to end and nature to retake the land it has lost. The High Druid destroys a city with the Stone Thief as the opening act of her war on civilization.
- **The Lich King:** With the Stone Thief, the Lich King is able to reclaim the isle of Omen from the other living dungeons. Restored to his place of power, he now has access to all the ancient sorcery he wielded as the Wizard King. He turns the wheel of ages back on itself, dragging the Empire back in time to restore his dark reign.
- **The Orc Lord:** The Stone Thief is the perfect siege engine—it can carry an army of orcs in its belly, and grows bigger and stronger when it tears down city walls and castles. Now is the hour of the orc, when civilization falls and the Midland Sea runs red with blood.
- **The Priestess:** The Priestess' blessing transforms the dungeon into a stairwell that plunges through the underworld to the edge of the infernal realm. With the player characters as her escorts, the Priestess intends to make a redemptive pilgrimage to Hell itself to free all the condemned souls from bondage.
- **The Prince of Shadows:** It was all a trick—he stole the Eye to put you on the path to finding the binding ritual. Now the Prince has shown his true colors, and they're all dark. He uses the Stone Thief to consume the Cathedral of the Priestess, perverting it into a temple to the Dark Gods and unleashing an Age of Shadow on the world.
- **The Three:** First, the prison holding the Green in the elf-wood vanishes. Then, the Stone Thief is sighted attacking Necropolis, stealing back the remains of the White. Next, Drakkenhall is consumed by the living dungeon—and now that the dungeon has the consumed Imperial magic wards that guard one of the seven cities, it can unlock the Archmage's defenses and let the Red in. The Stone Thief is the key that reunites the Five Dragons, and what force can stand against their assembled power?

The Rite of Destruction

A simple modification to the Rite of Binding turns it into a weapon. Any character with Ritual Casting who obtains a copy of the biding ritual can see how the rite can be modified. The key is in the components—instead of using chains to bind the dungeon, you need something to harm it. Fire, poison, the wrath of a vengeful god—the ritual exposes the soul of the living dungeon, so adding a bane can destroy it forever.

Ritual Components

The ritual components are the same, apart from the substitution of something epically destructive for the magic chains.

Casting the Ritual

The ritual is cast the same way, up until the very end. Of course, that means that an unscrupulous ritualist could pretend to perform one version of the ritual, then swap over to the other one at the final instant.

Completing the Ritual

The earth shakes as the dungeon cracks asunder. It's torn in two, from the topmost level all the way down to the Lair of the Stone Thief. The PCs' work is still not done—they need to climb down through the ruins to the lowest level and finally put an end to the wounded Stone Thief (page 270)—but victory is finally in sight!

Forging a Weapon

The dwarven master-smith Grommar died in the bowels of the Stone Thief, but before he went mad, he scrawled the instructions for making a weapon that could kill the dungeon. The PCs can find these instructions in the Gauntlet (page 68), but if they miss them there, they could be given the secret by a manipulative Custodian or uncover them through research or with the aid of an icon.

Grommar's formula calls for:

- The ichor of a Koru behemoth—obtainable from Stoneroost (page 318).
- Meteoric iron from the overworld and everburning coal from the underworld—both of which can be sought after in separate quests, or maybe obtained through some sinister dealer in arcane items.
- The soul of a hero—one would hope, in ready supply among player characters. It's up to the GM whether Grommar meant "this blade needs a hero to wield it" or "kill one hero and stick their soul in this blade."
- The blessing of the Dwarf King.

There may be a sixth component; if you choose to include one, roll a story-guide result to determine which icon holds the key to finding it.

Put all that together with a master sword-smith, and you produce *Grommar's Masterwork.*

Grommar's Masterwork

+3 Melee Weapon

Recharge 16+: Choose an enemy in this battle. The *Masterwork* inflicts +20 extra damage on that enemy when you hit. Furthermore, whenever the chosen enemy attacks, note the results rolled for any of its attacks this round. You may use one of those dice rolls instead of rolling when you next attack that foe.

Quirk: Death walks with you.

Using the Masterwork

Once the PCs have the weapon, the next thing on their epic to-do list is to enter the living dungeon one last time, find their way down to the Heart of the Stone Thief, and engage the dungeon in battle. The sword can deliver a lethal blow to the dungeon where other weapons cannot.

As there's only one sword, and presumably you've got more than one player character, add complications to that final fight to let the other, non-*Masterwork*-carrying PCs shine. The Stone Thief might:

- Erect an inescapable prison around the weapon-bearer, which only the rogue has a chance of opening.
- Mortally wound the weapon-bearer, but the party cleric can reach into the afterworld and pull the PC back again.
- Weave a magical spell that links the weapon-bearer's life to that of the dungeon, so that if one dies, so does the other. The party wizard must unweave the link in order to save the bearer.

You can ask the players for inspiration if you're stuck, but remember, it's anticlimactic (and dull) to provide your own epic challenges. Don't ask the paladin's player to tell you what danger she overcame to save the weapon-bearer—ask the rest of the players to think of the nastiest, most ghastly danger the Stone Thief could conjure up that only a paladin could hope to defeat.

Battle of the Behemoths

With a properly prepared Koru Orchid, the PCs can drive a Koru behemoth into a frenzy. To kill the Stone Thief, all they need to do is stake the dungeon down in the path of a behemoth, stick the orchid down the dungeon's gullet, and run like hell. If the plan works, the behemoth will rip the Stone Thief to pieces in pursuit of that tasty orchid.

It's a workable plan, but the PCs need to overcome some challenges.

- **Timing:** For this to work, they need to get the dungeon, a behemoth, and a charged orchid to the same place at the same time. The migration route of the Koru behemoths is, for obvious reasons, free of any permanent structures or fortresses that the Stone Thief might normally take an interest in, so the characters must either build an irresistible trap before a wandering behemoth idly stomps the construction site into rubble, or else find another way of bringing the dungeon to a particular place. They need to time this so the behemoth arrives soon after the dungeon surfaces, and predicting the movements of a behemoth in advance is extremely difficult. They could use the orchid to lure the behemoth, but that would require one group of PCs racing across the countryside with a frenzied behemoth in hot pursuit, while the rest of the party traps the Stone Thief. If anything throws their timing off—like a counter-attack by the Opposition, or some behemoth-spawned monsters—then they'd be facing an angry Koru behemoth, and that's a peril that makes the Stone Thief look trivial. (Only the most cruel of GMs would have a *second* behemoth show up at just the wrong moment, drawn by the scent of the orchid…)
- **Planting the Orchid:** They need to get the orchid deep enough into the Stone Thief that the behemoth will smash the dungeon to bits, but they also need to ensure that the behemoth can still sense the orchid, so they can't just throw the flower into the Maw and run. Ideally, they bring the flower all the way down to the Onyx Catacombs or even the Heart of the Stone Thief before they flee.
- **Getting Out:** Speaking of fleeing—the PCs need to have a way to escape the dungeon after dropping off the flower—and

if the Stone Thief realizes that it's going to be smashed by the behemoth, it'll do everything it can to take the PCs with it.

- **Preventing Sabotage:** The PCs need to ensure that none of the dungeon's denizens can get rid of the orchid before the behemoth arrives. How do they stop someone like the Flesh Tailor, Fangrot, or the Secret Masters (or the Witch of Marblehall) from destroying the orchid before the behemoth arrives?

If they can overcome these problems, then the Stone Thief suddenly seems very small compared to the looming behemoth that tramples over the horizon. The behemoth's titanic claws rip at the dungeon, tearing away whole levels with every blow. The Sunken Sea is like a puddle that the behemoth strides through; the Ossuary crumbles in a puff of dust; the Maddening Stair collapses under the monster's weight. The behemoth smashes its snout into the dungeon and slams it back and forth, snuffling for the orchid. Finally, it scents its prey and burrows into the ruins in a frenzy.

It's all over in a few seconds, and the dungeon is left broken and wrecked. It's not quite dead, though—the PCs still have to put an end to the Thief (see page 356).

Dungeon vs. Kaiju

Another variation on this strategy might be to lure the dungeon to the old Sea Wall (page 279 of the *13th Age* rulebook) and trap it there until one of the giant monsters heaves itself out of the ocean. Stone Thief vs. tarrasque-sized sea monster is a much fairer fight than Stone Thief vs. behemoth, but the effect is much the same in the end—the dungeon's left broken and vulnerable.

From Hell's Heart

Similar to the Koru behemoth/magic orchid solution, the player characters could deal a lethal blow to the dungeon if they trap it in a place that's about to suffer some calamity. The dungeon comes pre-packed with one such apocalypse—the Clock of Hell (page 197) can open up a giant hellhole when it runs out, so if the Stone Thief is prevented from fleeing when the time comes, most of the dungeon will be incinerated by the flames of the infernal realms.

The PCs might be able to discover another impending apocalypse through other means. Maybe the Telluric Lens or the Diabolist can predict where another hellhole is going to open, and the PCs can lure the dungeon there. They could bring it to Highdock and trick it into swallowing a flying realm that rips through the Stone Thief when it takes off, or blow up one of the Magma Keeps while it's inside the dungeon.

Another option might be a sort of magical dungeon foie gras—the dungeon consumes magical power, but can only digest a certain amount at a time, as shown by the existence of the Pit of Undigested Ages. If the PCs trap the dungeon, then overload it with magic, it will explode. Finding such a bountiful source of arcane energy is left as an exercise for the PCs—at a guess, the infernal powers of Hell could provide enough power, but the price may be more than anyone wants to pay.

Killing the Thief

Finally, the players can just take the simple approach. Trap the dungeon, then march into it and keep hacking their way down until they reach the bottom of the *Heart of the Stone Thief* level. The dungeon wrecks itself trying to escape their remorseless assault, but in the end, it turns to face them.

The Fate of the Thief

No matter which approach the PCs take, the end result is always the same—they inflict a tremendous injury on the dungeon in some fashion, blasting the Stone Thief to pieces and leaving the dungeon in ruins. For a moment, all is silent, and then the wreckage quivers. Small chips of stone begin to move, rolling over one another and accreting to larger masses. Tendrils of ectoplasm sprout from the larger pieces of scattered masonry, pulling together. A new form is built from the ruin of the dungeon, as the essence of the Stone Thief creates a new body for itself, a last stolen shape to mask its formlessness.

Out of the ruins of the dungeon, it makes a dragon. A dragon of stone, with scales of corridor flagstones, with wings of flying buttresses, with claws of rusty swords; a dragon-gargoyle, with bones of castles and the flesh of compacted cities, with a volcano in its heart to fire its breath weapon. Gravel drips from its portcullis-jaws.

If the PCs intend to bind the Stone Thief, they need to subdue the dungeon dragon.

If they intend to kill the living dungeon, then they need to kill this last form of the Stone Thief.

The strength of the Stone Thief in this last, desperate transformation depends on what the players did to it.

Significant Damage (Rite of Destruction, Trampled by a Behemoth): The Stone Thief starts the battle staggered.

Rite of Binding: The PCs need only to reduce the dungeon dragon's hit points to its staggered value, then put the chain around its neck.

The dungeon recovered no Eyes of the Stone Thief: The dragon is blind (–2 to all its attacks).

The dungeon only recovered one Eye: The dragon can see out of one Eye. Its attack rolls are unaffected, but a PC can shatter an Eye with a critical hit. Choosing to break an Eye means the crit does normal damage instead of double damage.

The dungeon recovered both Eyes: Two critical hits are needed to blind the dragon, and it gains the *Gaze of the Stone Thief* special power.



The Stone Thief (Dungeon Dragon)

All things must end.

Huge 10th level wrecker [DRAGON]
Initiative: +15

Stone Claws +16 vs. AC (2 attacks)—40 damage
Natural 14+: The Stone Thief may make another *stone claws* attack (maximum of 4/round).
Natural 18+: The Stone Thief may make a *maw* attack as a free action.
Natural odd hit: The Stone Thief may make a *Gaze of the Stone Thief* attack.
Miss: 25 damage,

[Special trigger] **Maw +16 vs. AC**—60 damage, and 20 ongoing damage

[Special trigger] **C: Gaze of the Stone Thief +14 vs. MD (one nearby or far away enemy)**—30 psychic damage, and the victim is *hampered* (save ends). If the first save fails, the victim must start making last gasp saves as they turn to stone.

C: Volcano Breath +14 vs. PD (2d3 nearby enemies)—40 fire damage
Miss: Half damage.
Limited Use: 1d3 + 1 times per battle.

Hatred: The Stone Thief may add the escalation die to its attacks if the GM can name an injury personally inflicted by the Stone Thief's target on the dungeon.

Burrow: The Stone Thief may burrow into the ground as a move action by rolling an 11+ on a d20.

Nastier Specials

Fear: Creatures with less than 72 hit points who are engaged by the Stone Thief are dazed (–4 to attack) and do not benefit from the escalation die.

Secrets of Stone: At the start of each of its turns, the Stone Thief may make a free **+14 vs. MD** attack on any one nearby foe. If this attack hits, name an offensive spell, power, or other ability possessed by that foe. The named ability cannot be used this round.

Strength of Stone: The Stone Thief may automatically save against one ongoing damage effect or condition at the start of its turn.

Hasty Breath: The Stone Thief may use its *volcano breath* instead of making a *maw* attack.

AC	**27**	
PD	24	**HP 700**
MD	20	

INDEX & GLOSSARY

To aid in navigating and remixing the dungeon, encounters have their theme and level range listed. So, if you need a quick fight, just look for a Combat encounter of an appropriate level for your PCs.

Ajura, She Who Enlightens Through Darkness: Cryptic monk who intends to bring about the end of an age. 202

Alert Status: A measure of how proactive and vigilant the Orcs of Deep Keep are, ranging from 0 (no alert) to 6 (we're under attack right now!) Start tracking Alert Status when the PCs get close to Deep Keep, as it determines the size of the encounters there.

An Orc and a Hard Place (Hazard/Intrigue/Combat, 6–7): Orcs defend a choke-point. 191

Arena (Combat, 4–6): An unkillable minotaur patrols a ruined cathedral. 62

Banquet Hall (Intrigue/Puzzle/Combat, 6–7): The banquet hall of the Artalins, where the party never ends. 234

Beast's Lair (Hazard/Combat, 4–6): The minotaur's lair, full of undead. 65

Belfry (Intrigue, 4–6): A lone survivor tells a sorry tale of the Stone Thief. 67

Blind Spire (Puzzle/Combat, 5–6): An abandoned high elf observatory offers an exit. 145

Blind Uthe: Orc seer and shaman. 184

Bole Climb (Puzzle/Combat, 5–6): Ascending the dead tree means dodging dead elves. 142

Breeding Ground (Combat, 5–6): Wild druidic magic spawns random horrors. 147

Cascade (Puzzle/Combat, 5–6): To escape the Sunken Sea, the PCs must fight evil clams and answer riddles. 118

Casila Artalin: True name of *the Witch of Marblehall.*

Castle With Your Name On It (Hazard/Combat, 5–6): The Stone Thief drops a castle on the PCs. 158

Catacombs (Combat, 5–6): Lots of undead. 125

Chamber of Transcendence (Puzzle/Combat, 6–7): Where worthy cultists transform themselves into Secret Masters. 254

Chapel (Intrigue, 5–6): A safe place to rest. 133

Chasm (Hazard, 4–6): Welcome to the dungeon! 37

Citadel of the Secret Masters (Combat, 6–7): The PCs lay siege to the Cult of the Devourer. 260

Clock of Hell (Puzzle/Combat, 6–7): A clock ticking down to the opening of the gates to Hell. 197

Crafthouses (Puzzle/Combat, 6–7): Storehouse for magical energy collected by the cult. 249

Crumbling Castle (Hazard/Intrigue/Combat, 6–7): A precarious castle offers a chance to parley with erstwhile foes. 193

Cult of the Devourer: Apocalyptic cult originally dedicated to the overthrow of the false Emperor and all his cronies, now worshippers of the Stone Thief. Have been around since the First Age. 30, 302
- Stats for cultists: 305–307
- Temples on the surface: 304
- Named Members: Cypriac (96), Flesh Tailor (127), possibly Sister Selra (116), Jac (193), Maeglor (204)

Custodians: Elemental spirits enslaved by the dungeon. They manifest as giant stone heads emerging from the walls. They've named by their function in the dungeon. Collectively, they're one of the factions in the dungeon. 29
- Secret conclave: 170

List of Custodians:
- Doorkeeper—meek keeper of the Maw: 46
- Mad Butcher—crazy overseer of the Gauntlet: 54
- Architect—grandiose visionary of the Gizzard: 85
- Gravekeeper—former lord of the Ossuary, now imprisoned by the Flesh Tailor: 136
- Pearlkeeper—cryptic oracle of the Sunken Sea: 120
- Grovewarden—destroyed former keeper of the Grove: 138
- Vizier—power behind the throne in Deep Keep: 188
- Curator—wants to escape the dungeon; lairs in the Pit of Undigested Ages: 214

Deep Keep: A vast castle full of orcs, controlling the entrance to the lower levels. 160
- As an encounter (levels 6–7): 180
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  - Slave Quarters: 181
  - Blood Sorcerers' Temple: 182
  - Blind Uthe: 184
  - The Great Hall: 186
  - Fangrot's Chambers: 186

Doorkeeper (Puzzle/Combat, 4–6): Answer a riddle to get help. Fail, get attacked by imps. 46

Doors of Marblehall (Combat, 6–7): The entrance to the Witch's lair. 230

Dreaming Horrors (Hazard/Combat, 6–7): The Secret Masters launch a psychic assault on the PCs. 267

Drow Caves (Intrigue/Combat, 5–6): Drow survivors defend their territory. 140

Druid Circle (Intrigue/Puzzle, 5–6): A stolen druidic circle. 150

Dungeon Intrusion (Combat, 6–7): What happens when the Stone Thief finally breaks into Marblehall. 242

Dungeon Town: A level of the dungeon that's stuck to the Stone Thief. A midden of trash and unwanted passengers. Survivors have formed a settlement here, called Dungeon Town, protected by the mysterious Provost. Dungeon Town (the settlement) is on page 98
- Siege of Dungeon Town: 100

Enemy Actions: Events that the players must react to—use them to spice up the action when the campaign slows down. 343

Escape routes from the dungeon:
- Climb back out the Maw
- Stab the Gizzard Chamber
- Follow the Underriver to the surface
- Open the Sunken Sea from the control room at the bottom of the Cascade
- Teleport out via the Blind Spire
- Teleport out via Myrddin in Dungeon Town

Eyes of the Stone Thief: A pair of magical gemstones that allow the dungeon to see. Stolen by the Prince of Shadows.
- Quest to recover them: 313
- The First Eye (held by an NPC): 314
- The Second Eye (still held by the Prince of Shadows): 315
- As an item: 316

Fallen (Combat Encounter, 7–8): The dead adventurers rise to defend the dungeon. 273

Falling Stair (Hazard/Combat, 4–6): A trap dumps the PCs into the lair of a hydra. 50
False Thief (Puzzle/Combat, 7–8): The dungeon tries to pawn the PCs off with a fall guy. 276
Fangrot: Leader of the orcs of Deep Keep. 32, 162 (his saga), 187 (stats)
Fighting Pit (Combat/Intrigue, 6–7): Meet with orc allies or get thrown to the dire owlbears. 175
Flesh Tailor: Undead monster, former member of the Cult of the Devourer, now runs the Ossuary. The Lich King wants to be his BFF (literally F). 31, 127, 130
Flooded Temple (Intrigue/Combat, 5–6): Who do the PCs side with when the dungeon fights the forces of hell? 110
Forge (Combat, 4–6): Golems forge swords to slay the PCs. 58
Front Door (Combat): A taste of peril at the dungeon's front door. 40
Gates of the Stone Thief (Hazard/Combat): Short cut into the dungeon's depths. 38
Gauntlet: Trap–filled funhouse of carnage, run by the Mad Butcher. 48
Geomantic Tower (Puzzle/Combat, 6–7): First ever temple built by the Cult of the Devourer. 222
Ghoul Cleaners (Combat, 4–6): A pack of ghouls collecting corpses. 42
Giant Monster: A new monster collected by the Stone Thief as a replacement for some guardian slain by the PCs. Candidates are on pages 345–347
Giant's Causeway (Puzzle/Hazard/Combat, 4–6): Cross the crumbling bridge over lava while fighting orcs. Easy. 56
Gizzard: Level of the dungeon where stolen structures get digested and remade; overseen by the Architect. 69
Gizzard Chamber (Hazard/Combat, 4–6): Where the dungeon digests new prizes. 84
Goblin Scavengers (Intrigue, 4–6): Foreshadow parts of the dungeon to come. 41
God's Hammer (Puzzle/Combat, 4–6): The Mad Butcher gets religion and hits the PCs with it. 54
Great Gate (Intrigue, 6–7): Portal to the lower levels at the heart of Deep Keep. 179
Greenwell Village (Hazard/Combat, 4–5): A village swallowed by the Stone Thief. 282
Greyface: Orc Lord loyalist and honorable gatekeeper. 179
Grimtusk: Treacherous orc smuggler and opportunist. 177
Grommar's Library (Intrigue, 4–6): The PCs learn of a possible weapon against the Stone Thief. 68
Grove: Vast plant–filled cavern level. 137
Hag Cottage (Intrigue/Combat, 5–6: Hag Pheig's home. 154
Hag Pheig: A cynical old villain and potential ally for the PCs. 154
Hall of Ruin (Intrigue/Combat, 4–6): The ruins of stolen cities, now full of monsters. 73
Heart of the Stone Thief: The final level. Accessible only if the PCs have destroyed the Citadel of the Secret Masters, or have successfully completed the Rite of Binding, or have done something else suitably epic. 270
Herbarium (Puzzle/Combat, 5–6): In the remains of a monastery, the PCs can steal a Koru Orchid. 151
Hungry Ones (Intrigue/Combat, 5–6): Sahuagin. Lots of sahuagin. 106
Icons (all):
Reasons to hate the Thief: 11–13
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As Patrons of the Opposition: 292
What they know about the dungeon: 308
Representatives at the council: 339
Enemy Actions associated with icons: 344–345
Epic plans for the Stone Thief: 353
Imprisoned Guardian (Intrigue/Combat, 5–6): A chance to ally with a Custodian. 134
Inverse Observatory: A flying realm where philosophical storm giants use their Telluric Lens to study the lands below. 326
Jawgate (Hazard/Combat, 4–6): A heavily defended introduction to the middle levels of the dungeon. 70
Killer: Denotes an encounter that's especially dangerous or treacherous; higher chance of a total party kill here.
Koru Orchid: A magical flower with strange and wondrous properties. Catnip for Koru behemoths. 153
Labyrinth of Darkness (Hazard/Combat, 6–7): A lightness maze protecting the city of the cult. 247
Last Chase (Hazard, 7–8): The dungeon flees the conquering PCs. 279
Lonely Tower (Puzzle/Intrigue, 5–6): A stolen wizard's tower doesn't necessarily include a stolen wizard. 114
Lost Treasury of the Dwarves (Puzzle/Intrigue/Combat, 6–7): The Dwarf King's stolen treasure vault. 216
Lure of Books (Puzzle/Combat, 4–5): Evil books and eviler librarians assail the PCs. 92, see also Quillgate Library
Maddening Stair: Deep chasm in the heart of the dungeon, navigable by a narrow staircase running along the edges of the pit. 189
Marblehall: Home of the Witch of Marblehall, now part of the dungeon. 227. For the remains on the surface, see *Keys to Marblehall.* 331
Mass Battles: For when the players start a slave revolt or civil war in Deep Keep. 168
Maw: Mouth of the dungeon. This level is kept by the Doorkeeper. Please remember tip your doorkeeper as you enter the dungeon. 36
Maze of the Medusa (Puzzle/Combat, 4–6): Invisible force walls, a medusa who can see through them, and harpy bombers. 60
Nioba Shieldspinner: Leader of a tribe of elves trapped in the dungeon; she refuses to return home in defeat. 142
Onyx Catacombs: A forgotten city, now the hidden monastery of the Cult of the Devourer. 244
Opposition: Agents of a rival icon or faction who show up to ruin the PCs' day. Three sample sets are included on pages 291–301. The Opposition are recurring villains.
Orc Lord's Assassins: The Orc Lord's elite strike force. Potentially, the Opposition. 298
Orcs: The orcs living in the Stone Thief are on the brink of civil war. The four main factions are Fangrot's Orcs (status quo's pretty good), Grimtusk's Orcs (let's overthrow Fangrot and take this dungeon to Tijuana or the Dragon Empire equivalent), Greyface's Orcs (we're here on a mission for the Orc Lord, let's stick to the plan) and the Stoneborn Orcs (the dungeon is our mother and our god, and we'll murder

you all when we can). Clever player characters can exploit these differences and spark a conflict. Less clever ones will unite the orcs against them. 160–188

Ossuary: The undead level of the dungeon; corpses of those killed by the Stone Thief get recycled here. Ruled by the Flesh Tailor. 123

Passage Perilous (Combat, 6–7): Ghosts of the Artalin family spring to life to reenact old misdeeds. 232

Phemuel of the 97th Azord: A living spell. He'll vort the oblurious celestials for you. 115

Pilgrim's Gate (Intrigue/Combat, 6–7): End of the Maddening Stair, and the door to the Pit of Undigested Ages. 204

Pit of Undigested Ages: A level where the Stone Thief keeps places of power it hasn't yet managed to digest. 208

Provost: Champion and defender of Dungeon Town. 33, 98–101

Pyramid of Skulls (Combat, 6–7): Winner-takes-all PVP for control of a +4 weapon. 224

Quillgate Library (Intrigue/Combat, 6–7): Vast library established by a former Archmage. Swallowed by the dungeon—sections show up on pages 92 and 214.

Rite of Binding: A magical rite to gain control of the Stone Thief. Known copies are in Fangrot's Chambers (188) and the cult's Ritual Vault (256). The Witch of Marblehall might have perfected the ritual (241).

Ritual Chamber (Hazard/Combat, 6–7): Where the Witch attempted to control a living dungeon. 236

Ritual of Calling: A rite to summon the Stone Thief. The Cult of the Devourer use it to call the dungeon to suitable meals and offerings. 303, 350

Ritual Vault (Puzzle/Combat, 6–7): Heisting the Rite of Binding is no easy task. 256

Secret Masters: The undying priest-kings of the Cult of the Devourer.

Secret Sanctum (Hazard/Combat/Intrigue, 6–7): The ghost of an elf sorceress, plus the secret meeting place of the Custodians. 170

Serpent Temple (Intrigue/Combat, 6–7): The last outpost of the vanished serpent folk civilization. 210

Shell-Shaping Charm: A ritual to carve Koru shell. Obtainable on Stoneroost. You can also use it to 'pin' the Stone Thief in place, like the Witch of Marblehall did.

Shifting Stairs (Puzzle/Combat, 6–7): Three simultaneous fights on three parallel bridges. 200

Slave Farms (Intrigue/Puzzle, 6–7): An opportunity for some good deeds or evil bacon. 174

Slaver Camp (Intrigue/Combat, 4–6): Large numbers of orcs collecting slaves from the Hall of Ruins. 80

Sleeper's Cave (Intrigue/Combat, 6–7): Chryaxas the Dragon offers the PCs a nice cup of tea and a chat. 194

Spear-Fishing Bridge (Combat, 4–6): Orcs on a narrow bridge. 45

Spellblight: Arcane spirits conjured by a rival icon. A potential Opposition. 297

Stairs of the Dreamer (Intrigue/Combat, 6–7): A gap in the stairs can only be crossed by dreaming—but whose dream? 202

Stalker's Maze (Hazard/Combat, 4–6): Derro ambushers pick off adventurers one by one. 89

Stolen Palace (Puzzle, 4–6): A ruined castle holds one last secret. 44

Stoneroost: A Koru behemoth associated with the dungeon. One of Stoneroost's shed scales forms the wild caves around Dungeon Town.

Submergence: When the dungeon sinks back into the underworld. It's tracked by the submergence die, which increments whenever the PCs enter a new level, slay a load-bearing boss, injure the dungeon itself, or at the whim of the GM.
- Effects of submergence: 20
- Submergence die: 20
- List of places to take shelter from submergence: 21

Sunken Sea: The mandatory underwater level of the dungeon. The Pearlkeeper is the Custodian of this level. As a Hazard/Combat encounter, it's on page 104.

Surface Quests: Parts of the *Eyes of the Stone Thief* campaign that take place outside the dungeon.
- Challenging questions: Ask the players to complicate their own lives by framing scenes and suggesting dangers. 289
- List of quests: 290

Telluric Lens: A method to track and predict the movements of the Stone Thief. Kept in the Inverse Observatory.

Temple of the Devourer (Intrigue, 4–6): An old priest can reveal secrets of the cult he still serves 96

Temple of the Flesh Tailor (Intrigue/Hazard/Combat, 5–6): The master of Life and Death welcomes you to his abode. 127

Tollgate Square (Combat Encounter, 5–7): A portion of a city swallowed by the Thief. 284

Traps: Yet more ways to murder players. I mean, characters. Some traps activate when the escalation die reaches a particular value. ED3, for example, means something happens when the die reaches 3.

Treasures to Last a Lifetime (Puzzle, 7–8): The dungeon's final treasure hoard. 277

Ultimate Labyrinth (Hazard/Puzzle, 7–8): Every PC must find their own path to the Stone Thief. 275

Underriver: A watercourse that flows through the upper levels of the Stone Thief, running from (or to) the Sunken Sea. Frequented by smugglers, monsters and those trying to escape the dungeon. 122

Vengeful Company: A rival party of adventurers, working for another icon. A potential Opposition. 293

Well of Blades (Hazard/Combat, 4–6): A trap-filled shaft with spiders at the top. 52

Wild Caves (Combat, 4–6): The wilderness outside Dungeon Town. 94

Witch of Marblehall: Agent of one of the icons (Diabolist, Elf Queen or Three depending on how you want to play it.) Tried to gain control of the dungeon; now under siege in her swallowed ancestral home. 34, 240

Witch's Sanctum (Intrigue/Combat, 6–7): Where the Witch holds court. 239

Wounded Dungeon (Hazard/Combat, 7–8): A volcano burns in the Stone Thief's heart. You get to walk into it. 270

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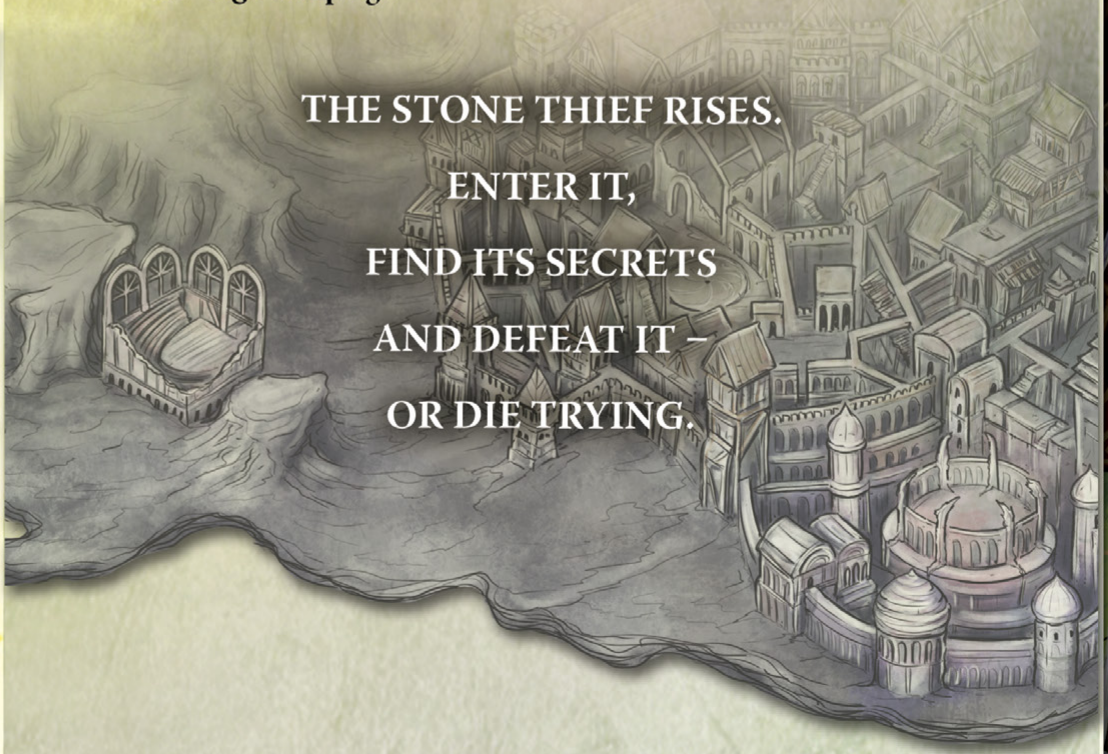
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