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# GM'S MISCELLANY: DUNGEON BACKDROPS II



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# DUNGEON BACKDROPS

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# III

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## USING A DUNGEON BACKDROP

You are a GM, but you are busy. You want to write your own modules, but you just don't have the time. And you don't want to use commercial modules. You want to make your campaign your own. That's where the Dungeon Backdrop line comes in! Each Dungeon Backdrop presents a fully fleshed out and lovingly detailed self-contained dungeon ready for you to use as you see fit. Stock the dungeon with your own monsters (and—perhaps—their treasure), decide their back story and you are good to go.

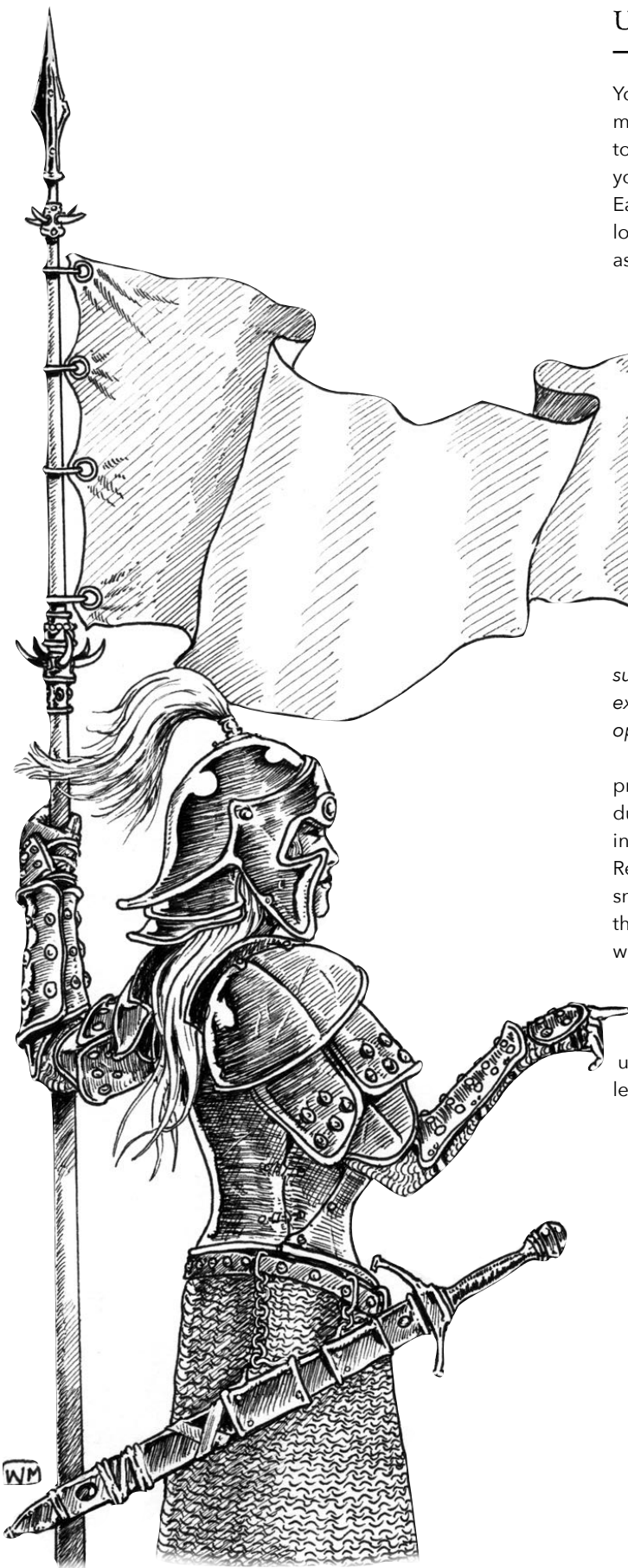
Every Dungeon Backdrop is carefully designed to be easily inserted into almost any fantasy campaign and is compatible with virtually any fantasy roleplaying game.

Dungeon Backdrops: we describe the dungeon, you add the monsters (and the treasure)

*Tweak and modify this Dungeon Backdrop to make it your own. The parts of this supplement describing the actual dungeon itself feature extensive space for you to make notes—adding treasure, opponents and so on.*

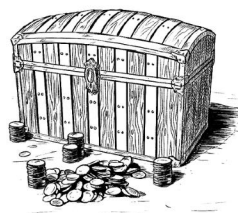
**Location Descriptions:** The various location descriptions provided herein only describe the basic appearance of the dungeon's rooms, chambers and corridors. They do not include descriptions of any monsters lurking therein. Remember when describing the dungeon to your players the snarling orcs (or whatever) are probably more noticeable than the room's features. Also remember, creatures in the dungeon will modify their home to better suit their needs.

**Treasure:** The text only presents the details of minor treasures the characters could discover in the course of their adventure. Most is of little value, but serves to underline the flavour of the dungeon. Remember to add level-appropriate treasure when designing your dungeon.



# HIDDEN REDOUBT — OF — GILAK URSER

Hidden for long years and wreathed in legendry, the Hidden Redoubt of Gilak Urser ever looms large in treasure-seeker's dreams. Variouslly described as a pirate or adventurer in myths and folklore, Gilak Urser is universally thought to have been fabulously wealthy. His hidden lair—and his treasure hoard—has never been found...until now...



## DUNGEON BACKGROUND

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The Hidden Redoubt of Gilak Urser has long lurked at the centre of a web of legends, rumours and folklore. The Hidden Redoubt is said to contain much treasure, but no one has ever boasted about finding and plundering the place; thus, it remains a “site of special interest” to adventurers keen to burnish their own legends and fill their own hoards.

### WHO WAS GILAK URSER?

---

Before using this Dungeon Backdrop, you must decide who Gilak Urser was. Whoever he was, legends of his wealth and success have endured and grown over the years; many adventurers and treasure hunters yet search for clues to the Hidden Redoubt’s location.

Pick the backstory below that best suits your campaign, or design your own.

#### AN ADVENTURER

Gilak Urser was an adventurer who made too many enemies. A powerful force for good, Gilak fought and slew many evil foes in his long and storied career. He slew pirate captains, bandit lords, savage humanoid chieftains, foul necromancers and evil high priests. His success, however, grew too great, and evil’s minions conspired to bring about his doom. Learning of the plot, he fled to a remote place and built his Hidden Redoubt. Gilak was shortly thereafter slain in a cunningly-wrought ambush, and the Hidden Redoubt’s location was lost.

#### A MYSTERIOUS TRAVELLER

Gilak Urser was a mysterious traveller from an impossibly distant land. Some legends say he was an exile, while others describe him as a wandering prince or sage of peerless knowledge. Whatever the truth of the matter, all the legends describe his great wealth. Gilak Urser built the Hidden Redoubt to—depending on which legend you believe—either hide from his enemies or hide his great treasures from those who would take them for their own. Inevitably, Gilak was shortly thereafter slain, and the Hidden Redoubt’s location was lost.

#### A PIRATE

Gilak Urser was a pirate who made too many enemies. As a successful captain, he took many ships and stole much loot. However, he grew paranoid and believed many of his crew were plotting against him. Taking only those he knew were loyal, he built the Hidden Redoubt to protect his treasure. Inevitably, Gilak was shortly thereafter slain, and the Hidden Redoubt’s location was lost.

## THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

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The characters can stumble on the Hidden Redoubt of Gilak Urser by happenstance and decide to explore the locale on a whim. Alternatively, use one of the hooks below to lure the characters to the dungeon:

- **Chased:** The characters are aboard a ship being chased by pirates, marauders or some other enemy. The captain of the characters’ vessel eludes the pursuers by concealing their ship in a hidden cove as dusk falls. As dawn breaks, the rising sun highlights the mouth of an intriguing sea cave piercing the cove’s vertiginous cliffs.
- **Gilak Urser Manifests:** Through a circuitous route, one of the characters is distantly related to the long-dead Gilak Urser. When the character comes within five miles of the Hidden Redoubt, Gilak’s ghost senses their presence and manifests before them. The ghost reveals who they are and the location of his hidden Redoubt.
- **Treasure Map:** The characters find a treasure map that shows the location of the Hidden Redoubt of Gilak Urser. Research leads the characters to discover Gilak Urser’s identity and his legendary wealth. If the characters are not discrete when they investigate the map, rival groups of adventurers might learn of their discovery. Some such groups try to buy the map; others attempt to steal it.

## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

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A character can try to gather information (which may or may not be true based on your setup) about the Hidden Redoubt of Gilak Urser. This takes 1d4 hours and costs 1d4 gp in drinks, bribes and so on. Use this list to determine what the character learns.

1. Gilak Urser was a powerful champion of good. Powerful evil folk banded together to slay him. While they slew him, his treasure—secured in his Hidden Redoubt—was never found. (Potential false rumour).
2. Gilak Urser was a wealthy pirate lord. He was eventually slain by his perfidious crew, but not before he secured his treasure in his Hidden Redoubt. (Potential false rumour).
3. Gilak Urser came from a distant land. Some say he was a prince or a sage; other stories say he was an exiled prince fleeing his enemies. All the stories agree that he was fabulously wealthy and that he built a Hidden Redoubt to protect his hoard. (Potential false rumour).
4. Gilak Urser’s Hidden Redoubt—and the legendary treasure it is said to protect—has never been found.
5. Gilak Urser’s Hidden Redoubt is cursed. No one who has found the place has survived to tell of it. (False rumour).
6. Many folk still seek Gilak Urser’s Hidden Redoubt and his greatest treasure: a magic tapestry that worked like a *crystal ball* to show images of elsewhere.

## THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

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The Hidden Redoubt of Gilak Urser pierces the cliffs of a hidden cove on an isolated and remote stretch of a storm-battered coast. There is no easy way to reach the cove from above. The cliffs are vertiginous, slick and high; characters attempting to climb down risk a potentially fatal fall. Seabirds nest on the cliffs and hunt the surrounding waters for fish.

A sea cave at the base of the cliffs provides access to the Hidden Redoubt. The cave entrance is wide but only about 15 feet high; thus, large boats cannot sail within. Characters must therefore secure several rowboats, craft a raft from driftwood, swim or use magic to reach the redoubt.

## WILDERNESS DRESSING

---

Use this list to add life and detail to the dungeon's surrounds:

1. Clumps of glistening greenish seaweed undulate on the ocean swell. Tiny crabs cling to some of the clumps.
2. Seabirds soar and swoop in the air above. Nearby other birds bob up and down on the ocean swell. The birds in the air suddenly scatter as an osprey swoops down to pluck a fish from the sea.
3. A sea lion swims up alongside the characters' boat. If the characters are in a rowboat or similar craft, it nudges an oar and acts in a playful fashion. It swims away if attacked. This could be nothing more than an inquisitive animal. Alternatively, it could be a druid in animal form, seeing what the characters are up to.
4. Seaweed and barnacles grow voraciously over the cavern wall and show the extent of high tide. They glisten in the party's lights.
5. Sunlight breaks through the clouds to shimmer on a small part of the sea. The shimmering light highlights the gloom shrouding the rest of the locality.
6. Dark clouds, driven by a strong wind, scud across the horizon, bringing heavy rain. The swell near the sea cave increases considerably, making a safe and careful approach much harder.
7. A jagged hunk of rock juts just above the swell. A half-dozen seabirds perch upon the rock. At the characters' approach, the birds cry loudly and take flight.
8. A lone figure stands atop the cliffs overlooking the cove. The person watches the characters for a while before disappearing from sight.
9. A ship under full sail slides across the horizon. It does not approach the characters' vessel, but its crew might note the position of the characters' ship and wonder what they are doing in such a remote spot.
10. A shark's fin cuts through the water a hundred yards from the characters' vessel. Quickly four more fins appear. A shiver of sharks has come to investigate the party's boat. The sharks may be hungry or could just be curious.

## THINGS TO FIND

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Use this list to determine what the characters discover if they search the dungeon's surrounds. Modify the value of items found to suit your campaign.

1. An abandoned rowboat floats in the surf a few dozen yards from shore. The boat's oars lie at the bottom of the boat next to an empty bag and waterskin.
2. Lashed to a shard of a spar, this bloated corpse of a sailor has obviously been in the water for days or weeks.
3. Just above the high tide mark, a small rock shelf holds several mostly burnt candles, a slender pile of stacked stones and a faded scrap of water-damaged parchment.
4. The lid of an old sea chest just emerges from the wet sand of the beach. Unfortunately, the rest of the chest (and all its contents) are missing—as investigating characters quickly discover.
5. A cresting wave sigil has been crudely cut into a section of flat stone. This is a representation of Serat's (neutral greater goddess of the sea, storms and voyages; the Mistress of Storms, the Uncaring) holy symbol.
6. A fragment of ship's hull floats amid the surf. The ship's name—*Hydra*—is still visible, although the black paint has faded from long immersion in salt water.
7. A skeleton lies on the seabed; chains around the unfortunate's legs and arms are, in turn, wrapped around a barnacle-covered sea chest.
8. A smattering of flotsam and jetsam bob in the swell and litter the narrow exposed beaches below the coast's vertiginous cliffs. None is of any value.
9. A sack either floats in the surf or lies tangled amid seaweed at the high tide line. The sack is mostly empty, but a good search reveals a *potion of water breathing* tangled in its folds.
10. The water is clear and flat. As the party enter the cove and approach the sea cave, a character notices the wreck of a ship lying in about ten feet of water below the keel of their vessel. What treasures may lie amid the wreck?

## SETTING NOTE

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This Hidden Redoubt of Gilak Urser is designed for use with the Duchy of Ashlar, the Lonely Coast or even the Picaroon Peninsula settings. However, the dungeon is relatively self-contained and, with minimal effort, can be easily modified to fit almost any campaign world. All you need is a stretch of cliff-fringed coastline. Alternatively, the Hidden Redoubt could pierce the cliffs of a remote island.

Making some minimal changes to some of the wilderness dressing presented on these pages enables you to even place the Hidden Redoubt in a tropical or subtropical setting.

## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

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The dungeon has several notable locations.

1. **The Three Watchers:** Three ship figureheads ward this debris-strewn sandy beach.
2. **Outer Cave:** This natural cave provides a good vantage point over the Three Watchers (location 1).
3. **Inner Cave:** This cave is only accessible from location 2. Unless you design otherwise, it is a dead end.
4. **Guard Chamber:** Here, the Hidden Redoubt's guards once watched over their master's home.
5. **Barracks:** Here dwelt the Hidden Redoubt's guards. Only Gilak Urser's most trusted followers were left to watch over the redoubt.
6. **Treasury of Gilak Urser:** In this chamber, Gilak kept the bulk of his fortune.
7. **Gilak Urser's Chamber:** Herein dwelt Gilak Urser when he was at his Hidden Redoubt. The room contains his fabled *tapestry of farseeing*.
8. **The Well:** Here lies the Hidden Redoubt's only source of freshwater. A cave below could lead to further caverns.
9. **Beach Ward:** The arrow slits here provide an excellent position from which to shoot at intruders. However, only one of the four overlooks the beach in location 1.

## GENERIC DUNGEON FEATURES

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The general condition of the Hidden Redoubt depends on whether it is currently occupied by living residents. If only undead lurk within, describe the dungeon as dirty and dusty; many of its features—furniture, doors and so on—will be in a sorry state.

Many of the dungeon's locations share certain features:

**Illumination:** Darkness.

**Ceilings:** The ceilings are roughly 12 ft. high.

**Stone Walls:** The walls are of dressed stone and are in fair condition. In places, moss and lichens grow on the walls, and water oozes through the mortar. In corridors, torch sconces hang from the walls at 20-foot intervals.

**Flagstone Floor:** The floor's flagstones have started to shift and move under time's remorseless influence, but generally, they do not inhibit movement.

**Wooden Door:** Stout wooden doors ward the Hidden Redoubt's various rooms. Doors open into the room beyond or away from the main entrance to the redoubt if they do not open into a room.

## DUNGEON DRESSING

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Use this list to breathe life and detail into the dungeon:

1. A dark stain on the wall, floor or ceiling shows where water oozes through cracks in the rock. A small puddle lies below the crack.
2. Faint scratches on the wall show where someone has tried—and failed—to leave their mark on the redoubt.

3. The rotting remains of an old sack lie bunched up on the floor in a corner.
4. The heavy tang of salt and the sound of the surf caressing the beach in location 1 fills the air.
5. A fishing net has been neatly folded up and shoved into a large sack.
6. Water oozes through a crack in the ceiling and tracks down a wall. The paving stone beneath the leak—covered by a small puddle—is slightly sunken.
7. A torch sconce hangs drunkenly from its fitting in one wall; it appears someone has tried to pry it loose.
8. One of the paving stones is loose and noticeably shifts when stood on. Sadly, no treasure lies beneath.
9. Cobwebs festoon the ceiling; a few tiny spiders scuttle about within. There are not enough spiders to form a swarm, although one of the creatures might fall onto a character's head as they pass by.
10. Graffiti—the names of several of the redoubt's garrison—are carved into a nearby door. Dates also show when the names were carved.

## THINGS TO FIND

---

Use this list to determine what minor objects or features of interest the party find if they search a dungeon location. Modify the value of items found to suit your campaign.

1. This whalebone has been painstakingly carved into the likeness of a sailing ship. It is exquisite (and fragile).
2. This mouldering pouch holds 3 sp, 4 gp and a small opaque white stone—a pearl worth 50 gp.
3. A platinum coin—covered in dust and grime—lies forgotten in a hollow on the floor.
4. A faded map of the surrounding coastline fills an old water-stained leather scroll case. The map might show hidden coves, secret anchorages, sea caves and so on.
5. A folded-up piece of parchment has been hidden in a torch sconce. The faded writing on it reads, "Beware the Eldritch Tapestry".
6. A carved one-foot length of driftwood has been shaped into the form of a graceful, leaping dolphin. A character making a successful find secret doors roll detects a small hidden compartment in the wood. Sliding back the cover reveals five tightly-packed platinum coins.
7. A scroll case contains a map of the immediate area and shows several other coves and a few small islets. One such locale is circled in different colour ink.
8. This long, thin dagger fills a supple black leather scabbard. Silver thread sewn into a wave-like pattern decorates the scabbard. A thin, matching leather belt is wrapped around the scabbard.
9. Rolled up and shoved in a sack, this deeply cowed voluminous, waterproof sealskin cloak is heavy but perfect for enduring inclement weather.
10. This coil of 100-foot-long rope is light, supple and able to bear twice the weight of a normal rope. It is in excellent condition despite its age.

1 SQUARE = 5 FT.

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## GM NOTES

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**Trap!** *Paranoid characters may think that the three figureheads in location 1 are animate guardians set there to protect the Hidden Redoubt. They could be right.*

**Barred Doors:** *The double doors in location 1 may, or may not, be barred depending on your setup. If they are barred, characters lacking the requisite magic may fail to get into the dungeon.*

## 1: THE THREE WATCHERS

---

Three ship figureheads ward this debris-strewn sandy beach.

*Three ship figureheads jut from this sandy, seaweed-littered beach. A rocky escarpment rises to the south, while to the west, double doors stand atop a single step of dressed stone.*

**Illumination:** Dim light filtering in from outside illuminates the sandy beach.

**Sandy Beach:** The sandy beach rises gently toward the doors to the west. Scattered clumps of seaweed, pieces of driftwood and other odds and ends litter the beach. When the tide is high, the water caresses the stone step before the double doors. The stone steps stand about three-foot above low tide level.

**Figureheads:** Three ship's figureheads stand on the beach watching out to sea. A seaweed skirt grows over the bottom half of each statue.

- **Figurehead A:** This figurehead depicts a winged warrior woman holding a sword aloft above her head. She has a fierce expression on her face.
- **Figurehead B:** Carved to look like a winged snarling demon, this figurehead has long arms that end in hands tipped with curved claws. This figurehead is blackened with age.
- **Figurehead C:** This figurehead is carved into the likeness of a slender sea serpent. The serpent's fang-filled mouth is wide open. Flecks of red and green paint yet cling to the figurehead in a diamond pattern.

**Arrow Slits:** Arrow slits provide excellent cover and allow dim light to filter into the eastern portion of location 9. Human-sized or smaller characters may try to squeeze through an arrow slit. (Note, however, it may be impossible for particularly bulky characters or those wearing armour to squeeze through an arrow slit).

**The Tide:** The map depicts the tide at its lowest extent. At high tide, the sea laps against the raised flagstone step in front of the double doors.

**Stone Step:** This single step of dressed stone is two-foot high. Seaweed and barnacles grow on the front of the step.

**Double Doors:** A sturdy iron-bound set of double doors wards the Hidden Redoubt. The door has a lock, but the salt in the air has corroded it, and it is unusable.

**Escarpment:** A nine-foot-high escarpment leads to location 2. Characters can scale the rocky escarpment with no chance of failure unless they are heavily encumbered or in a high-stress situation (such as combat).



## 2: OUTER CAVE

This natural cave provides a good vantage point over the Three Watchers (location 1).

*This natural cavern curves deeper into the cliff. Another escarpment, around ten feet high, lies ahead.*

Sometimes the occupants of the Hidden Redoubt would come here for peace and quiet or for secret colloquy. The signs of such temporary occupation—old food wrappers, tracks in the dust and so on are evident to all but the least perceptive explorer.

## 3: INNER CAVE

This cave is only accessible from location 2. Unless you design otherwise, it is a dead end.

*The cave continues onwards. To the north, an escarpment of crumbling stone drops into another cave. To the south, yet another escarpment pierces the wall. A higher cavern lies beyond it.*

### 3A: PIRATE'S REST

**Cairn:** A small cairn of piled stone lies in the escarpment's shadow. The cairn holds a single human skeleton. The skeleton lies amid the mouldering remains of their clothes. The characters might find something here; if they search, roll on "Things to Find".

### 3B: UPPER CAVE

**Rubble:** A scattering of rubble covers the cavern floor; such areas count as difficult terrain.

**Cave-In:** A rockfall has blocked the passageway. The cave-in is impassable unless you decide to expand the dungeon. In this instance, magic or extensive manual labour to remove the rubble is required to proceed.

## GM NOTES

**Different Challenges:** Locations 2 and 3 are good locations to place a different kind of encounter to those challenges lurking in the Hidden Redoubt. For example, a harpy or some other solitary predator could lurk in the caves—particularly if only undead or fiendish traps lie within the Hidden Redoubt.

**Expanding the Dungeon:** The cave-in blocking location 3b could lead to a larger cave system. In this instance, if the characters examine the cave-in a faint breeze issuing through the pile of tumbled stone caresses their faces.

## CAVERN FEATURES

Use these notes to describe locations 2 and 3.

**Ceiling:** The ceiling is of natural stone. Its approximate height varies throughout the cave system:

- **Location 2:** The ceiling is 30 ft. high.
- **Location 3:** The ceiling is 20 ft. high.
- **Location 3a:** The ceiling is 30 ft. high.
- **Location 3b:** The ceiling is 10 ft. high.

**Walls:** The cavern walls are of rough natural stone (successful climb walls roll scales).

**Floor:** The cavern floor is of rough uneven stone.

**Escarpment:** Escarpments are between eight and 12-foot high. Characters can scale the rocky escarpment with no chance of failure unless they are heavily encumbered or in a high-stress situation (such as combat).

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## GM NOTES

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**Trap!** The door warding location 6 is a good place for a trap.

### 4: GUARD CHAMBER

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Here the Hidden Redoubt's guards once watched over their master's home.

*A table and four chairs stand in the centre of this chamber. A thick wooden bar leans on the wall near the double doors.*

**Double Doors:** A sturdy double iron-bound door wards the Hidden Redoubt. The door has a lock, but it is rusty and corroded. A sturdy wooden bar leans nearby against the wall.

### 5: BARRACKS

---

Here dwelt the Hidden Redoubt's guards. Only Gilak Urser's most trusted followers were left to watch over the redoubt.

*Five bunkbeds stand about this small chamber. Two chests are shoved under each bottom bunk. Part of the chamber—given the pots, rudimentary chimney leading up to a crack in the ceiling, and so on—seems to have been given over to cooking.*

**Bunk Beds:** Each two-tiered bunkbed is sized for a human-like occupant. Each bed has poor-quality bedding.

**Chests:** The chests under the bunkbeds hold the guard's mundane, personal possessions—spare clothes, boots and so on along with, perhaps, small hidden treasures.

**Kitchen Area:** A small portion of the chamber is a kitchen. A rudimentary beaten iron chimney hangs over a fire pit hacked into the floor. Pots and pans, along with sacks and barrels holding foodstuffs, stand about this small area.

### 6: TREASURY OF GILAK URSER

---

In this chamber, Gilak kept the bulk of his fortune.

*Five iron-bound chests stand about the walls of his otherwise empty chamber.*

**Iron Bound Door:** A tough iron-bound door wards Gilak Urser's treasury. A good lock wards the room. The key may lie in location 7.

**Iron-Bound Sea Chests:** These sea chests are not locked.

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## TAPESTRY OF FARSEEING

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The *tapestry of farseeing* (location 7) functions as a *crystal ball*. The tapestry must be unfurled and hanging on a wall to function. The owner must be looking at the tapestry when speaking the command word—*Neyardrak*—to use its powers. Anyone looking at the tapestry can see the resultant images. The *tapestry of farseeing* is a unique item and could be sentient—or have other powers—if you desire.

The tapestry is heavy and bulky.

## 7: GILAK URSER'S CHAMBER

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Herein dwelt Gilak Urser when he visited his Hidden Redoubt. The room also contains his fabled *tapestry of farseeing*.

*The skeleton of a man wearing mouldering studded leather armour lies next to a bed which stands against the opposite wall. Two chests stand against opposite walls. A plain black tapestry hangs on the wall above the bed.*

**Skeleton:** The skeleton could be the remains of Gilak Urser or someone else entirely. The studded leather armour is of fine quality but needs a good cleaning. A character searching the body finds two keys on a chain around its neck. One key fits the coffer under the bed (see below), while the other fits the lock protecting the door at location 6.

**Bed:** Once-fine pillows, blankets, and sheets cover the bed. A small iron coffer has been shoved under the bed.

**Iron Coffers:** This small iron coffer contains 472 sp, 86 gp and 3 pp.

**Sea Chests:** These sea chests are not locked. They contain mundane items—clothes, boots, a few daggers, a longsword—along with spare bedding and other odds and ends.

**Black Tapestry:** This is Gilak Urser's fabled *tapestry of farseeing*. Refer to the sidebar on the facing page if you decide the tapestry is magical.

## 8: THE WELL

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Here lies the Hidden Redoubt's source of freshwater. A cave below could lead to further caverns.

*A two-foot-high stone wall encircles a hole in this chamber's floor. Several buckets attached to long coils of rope lie nearby.*

**Well:** A two-foot-high stone wall encircles the 30-foot-deep well. A character falling into the well will suffer damage as the water is not deep enough to cushion their fall. The well's rough-hewn walls are easy to climb and descend to a small cavern-filled pool.

The pool is about four-foot-deep and contains freshwater.

## 9: BEACH WARD

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The arrow slits here provide an excellent position from which to shoot at intruders. However, only one of the four overlooks the beach in location 1.

*Arrow slits in the southern wall let a feeble, pale light filter into this long, thin chamber.*

**Stairs:** These hewn stone steps count as difficult terrain.

**Arrow Slits:** Arrow slits provide excellent cover and allow dim light to filter into the eastern portion of location 9. Human-sized or smaller characters may try to squeeze through an arrow slit. (Note, however, it may be impossible for particularly bulky characters or those wearing armour to squeeze through an arrow slit).

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## GM NOTES

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**The Tapestry of Farseeing:** *Gilak Urser's fabled tapestry of farseeing could be a magic item with genuine powers. Alternatively, it could be nothing more than a tapestry about which Gilak spun lies and half-truths designed to confound and distract his enemies.*

**Expanding the Dungeon:** *The pool-filled cavern below the well in location 8 is an excellent place to add additional areas to explore.*

## AFTERMATH

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Although the characters may have explored the Hidden Redoubt, plundered its loot and slain its denizens, the dungeon could still serve a purpose in your campaign.



Some groups may decide to claim the place as their own. After all, the redoubt has stayed hidden for so long that it makes a perfect base of operations to explore the surrounding area.

## RESOLVING ADVENTURE HOOKS

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If you used any of the hooks presented in “The Adventure Begins”, use these notes to resolve the adventure’s aftermath:

**Chased:** Once they have explored the Hidden Redoubt, the characters may still have to deal with their pursuers who could yet be searching for them. Alternatively, their pursuers could have given up and sailed away.

**Gilak Urser Manifests:** Once the characters have explored the Hidden Redoubt, Gilak’s ghost manifests before his relative. In return for his treasures, Gilak demands that his remains be interred in the family plot in his home town. If the characters do not agree to his request, Gilak flies into a rage and attacks them. He sees the betrayal by his relative as especially terrible and focuses his ire on them.

**Treasure Map:** Although the characters have looted the Hidden Redoubt, their treasure map still has value. If they do not decide to use the redoubt as a home base, they can still sell the map. Of course, the buyer will demand proof the map is genuine—this will likely involve the characters having to bring them to redoubt. Honourable buyers will then pay the characters; dishonourable ones may decide to slay the characters to keep the redoubt’s location a secret (and to save themselves some gold).

## FURTHER ADVENTURES

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Whatever his identity (see “Who Was Gilak Urser”), Gilak Urser may have surviving relatives who feel the Hidden Redoubt is theirs by blood right. These relatives may also believe the characters have plundered their birthright and want revenge. Alternatively, they may seek Gilak Urser’s fabled *tapestry of farseeing* and track the characters down to recover it either peacefully or through more forceful methods.

# LOST EYRIE — OF THE — DEMON KING

An otherworldly evil festers in the bowels of the Lost Eyrie of the Demon King. And now that evil has attracted a powerful servant—a servant wreaking death and destruction on the surrounding countryside and villages. The local villagers need adventurers to eradicate this terrible threat, but will the heroes realise that something even worse lurks in the eternal dark of the Lost Eyrie of the Demon King?



## DUNGEON BACKGROUND

A century ago, a pack of ferocious and depraved harpies dwelt in the Lost Eyrie of the Demon King and terrorised the surrounding area. The Eyrie served as a secure lair for the harpies, as most humans could not reach it.

The place was sacred to Pazuzu—the so-called King of Demons and the harpies' master. The Eyrie had another secret, however. Deep in its depths, the harpy sorcerer, Gyrtuskarr, opened a small portal to Pazuzu's Abyssal realm. Gyrtuskarr believed she was descended from her king's own seed and sought to prove herself to her father by expanding the portal from the Abyss to the Material Plane through bloody veneration and sacrifice. Eventually, a group of heroic adventurers slew most of the pack, drove the survivors far away and put an end to Gyrtuskarr's insane plan.

For long years, the Lost Eyrie of the Demon King lay forgotten and abandoned. Set halfway up a sheer cliff, it was a difficult place to reach for those without the ability to fly. The Eyrie's exact location was eventually forgotten, and the place—and its harpy mistresses—gradually faded into lurid and fanciful folklore. The Eyrie lay quiet and abandoned until a new threat claimed it as its own. This new threat—perhaps a young dragon, wyvern or mantichore—has begun to threaten the locality and prey on the peasants eking out a living in the nearby settlements.

## THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

The characters can stumble on the Lost Eyrie of the Demon King by happenstance and decide to explore the locale on a whim. Alternatively, use one of the hooks below to lure the characters to the dungeon:

- **Portentous Dream:** One of the characters—preferably a paladin or good-aligned cleric—begins to have hideous dreams of a most unsettling sort. In them, the dreamer sees a black, feathery darkness oozing from a cave high up on a cliff. As the party pass through the wilderness close to the Lost Eyrie, the character recognises certain distinctive landmarks from their dream that lead them to the Demon King's lost lair.
- **Rampaging Monster:** A ferocious and powerful winged predator is using the Lost Eyrie as a base from which to prey upon the surrounding settlements. The characters discover the aftermath of an attack on a nearby village.

### WHAT CLAIMS THE EYRIE?

This Dungeon Backdrop assumes a flying monster (or two) has claimed the eyrie as its own. The Eyrie's new denizen could be a dragon, wyvern, roc, mantichore or even a small pack of harpies. Modify the descriptions of locations 2 and 3 to better suit whatever dwells within.

The peasants know where the beast lairs, they just can't do anything about it...

- **Tavern Rumour:** The characters are in a tavern when they hear another adventurer, Aapo Kare (LN male human fighter 3), telling of his discovery of a hitherto unknown cave buried high up in a cliff. If the characters get the adventurer drunker, he reveals the cave's location before passing out.

## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A character can try to gather information (which may or may not be true based on your setup) about the Lost Eyrie of the Demon King. This takes 1d4 hours and costs 1d4 gp in drinks, bribes and so on. Use this list to determine what the character learns.

11. A long time ago, adventurers slew a pack of foul, half-bird/half-women who dwelt in a lair piercing a high cliff. The dungeon's location has been long lost.
12. The King of Demons is said to have once dwelt in the Lost Eyrie of the same name.
13. An adventurer reported spying a dragon emerging from a small cave high up on a cliff. (Potentially false rumour depending on your design.)
14. A century ago, a gang of harpies despoiled the countryside before being driven away.
15. No one and nothing lives in the vicinity of the cave...now.
16. Ten years ago, a hunter claimed to have climbed up to a cave high on a cliff. She claimed the cave was some kind of temple, but she did not explore too deeply inside.

## PAZUZU

**Epithets:** King of Demons

**Symbol:** A black feather dripping blood

**Favoured Weapon:** Gutripper (the harpies of Pazuzu's Fury) or longsword (all other worshippers)

**Raiment:** None

**Worshippers:** The harpies of Pazuzu's Fury

**Teachings:** Power is all. Kill in the King's name, and power will be granted to you. Take what you want, and kill or subjugate any who oppose you.

**Holy Text:** None

**Additional Notes:** Pazuzu delights in possessing mortals and corrupting them utterly. Commonly-known legends hold that merely speaking Pazuzu's name is enough to draw the demon lord's attention. Folk speaking his name are in danger of being possessed and forced to do unspeakable things.

**Temples & Shrines:** No temples or shrines dedicated to Pazuzu are known to be extant in civilised lands.

## THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

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The Lost Eyrie of the Demon King pierces a steep cliff about 65 feet above the ground. The cliff is vertiginous, but skilled climbers or a well-equipped party should be able to reach the dungeon without too many problems.

## WILDERNESS DRESSING

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Use this list to add life and detail to the dungeon's surrounds:

1. Splintered and cracked bones lie about this narrow rock shelf. The condition of the bones shows something powerful predated upon them. The skeletal fragments are identifiable as humanoid in origin.
2. A smattering of sickly wildflowers grows across this narrow, sloping ledge.
3. A small cave—barely five-foot wide and ten-foot deep—pierces the cliff. It is dry inside.
4. A bird's nest fills a shallow depression in the cliff. As the characters draw near, two large birds burst from the nest. The nearest character may fall from the cliff if the birds surprise them.
5. Birds wheel and dive in the air. Some of the more aggressive birds—warped by the proximity of the nearby Abyssal gate—may “dive-bomb” climbing characters.
6. Dark clouds scud across the sky as the characters climb toward the Lost Eyrie. It starts to rain heavily as the characters pull themselves inside; when they leave, the cliffs will be slippery and wet.
7. A section of the cliff is unstable; when the first character reaches it, some small rocks fall away, narrowly missing the next climber.
8. Bone-strewn ledges provide easy places to rest once the bones are swept aside.
9. A sapling grows from a narrow ledge; it provides easy handholds and a modicum of concealment.
10. An overhang blocks the character's progress.
4. A large, cracked scale of the appropriate type lies upside down on a rocky ledge.
5. Streaks of dried blood decorate the rock. A character examining the stains realises they were caused by something flying or being carried by a flying creature, to the cave entrance.
6. Birds' nests festoon the cliff's nooks and crannies; some are occupied, while others are abandoned.
7. A backpack—one of its straps torn off—is snagged on an outcrop of rock. The pack is sodden and contains wet clothes and rotten food. A careful search also uncovers a faded, water-stained map of the locality.
8. An outcropping of rock above a small hollow in the cliff has been carved to depict a snarling, demonic face. The carving is an unsettling, hateful thing. (It depicts Pazuzu in all his malign glory.)
9. A bone-strewn ledge seemingly holds nothing but rusting and rotten equipment. A close search, however, reveals 15 gp, 37 sp and a coiled 50-foot-long silk rope stored in a waterproof sack.
10. A path of shallow hand- and footholds lead upwards to the eyrie's entrance.

## THINGS TO FIND

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Use this list to determine what the characters discover if they search the dungeon's surroundings. Modify the value of items found to suit your campaign.

1. A gold ring glimmerings upon the middle finger of this decomposing left hand. Judging by the sharp bone shard at the hand's wrist, it was torn or ripped from the unfortunate's arm.
2. A rope anchored with iron spikes driven into the cliff face leads upwards to location 1. The rope is hanging in a shallow crevice in the rock. It could have been here for some time and may or may not be strong enough to support climbers.
3. Dung covers the ground below the cave entrance. Some of the dung is fresh, indicating that something left it here not too long ago.



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

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The dungeon has several notable locations.

1. **The Climb Perilous:** A vertiginous cliff, and a perilous climb, protect the Lost Eyrie from casual exploration.
2. **Lair of the Eyrie Lord:** Herein did harpies of old worship the demon lord, Pazuzu. A large, winged predator now lairs in this hall.
3. **Altar of the Demon King:** Centuries ago, the harpies eviscerated uncountable sacrifices to venerate the King of Demons on this altar.
4. **Into the Abyssal Depths:** The spiral staircase here descends to a deeper sub-level.
5. **Empty Antechamber:** This empty chamber lies about 20 feet below location 4.
6. **The Abyssal Font:** This chapel was built around a planar portal linking the Prime Material Plane to the Abyss.
7. **The Choked Stair:** This staircase once led to a larger complex; it is now choked with rubble and impassable.

## GENERIC DUNGEON FEATURES

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Many of the dungeon's locations share certain features:

**Illumination:** Darkness.

**Ceilings:** The ceilings are roughly 12 ft. high.

**Stone Walls:** The walls are of dressed stone and are in fair condition. In places, moss and lichens grow on the walls, and water oozes through the mortar.

**Flagstone Floor:** The floor's flagstones have started to shift and move under time's remorseless influence, but generally, they do not inhibit movement.

**Wooden Door:** Doors open into the room or space beyond.



## DUNGEON DRESSING

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Use this list to breathe life and detail into the dungeon:

1. Cracked bones, some with shreds of decomposing flesh, lie about the floor to create an area of difficult terrain.
2. Scratches and gouges on the walls or floor show where the Lost Eyrie's resident sharpened its claws.
3. Water oozes through cracks in the wall or floor to form a small puddle on the floor.
4. Flecks of faded paint yet cling to the wall; what the picture once depicted is impossible to determine.
5. Several chunks of stone have fallen from the wall to create a small irregularly-shaped niche. Below the niche, the rubble forms a patch of difficult terrain.
6. Dust and grime cover the floor; the tracks of the Lost Eyrie's resident are obviously evident.
7. A curtain of dusty cobwebs hangs from the ceiling; the grey cocoons of insects are visible within.
8. A gust of cold air blows into the Lost Eyrie from location 2, creating small dust devils that whirl about the area for a few moments before it subsides. The party's mundane light sources flicker in the sudden breeze.
9. The air is redolent with the stench of death and decay.
10. The frightened calls of the birds nesting on the cliffs reach the characters' ears. What has scared the birds?

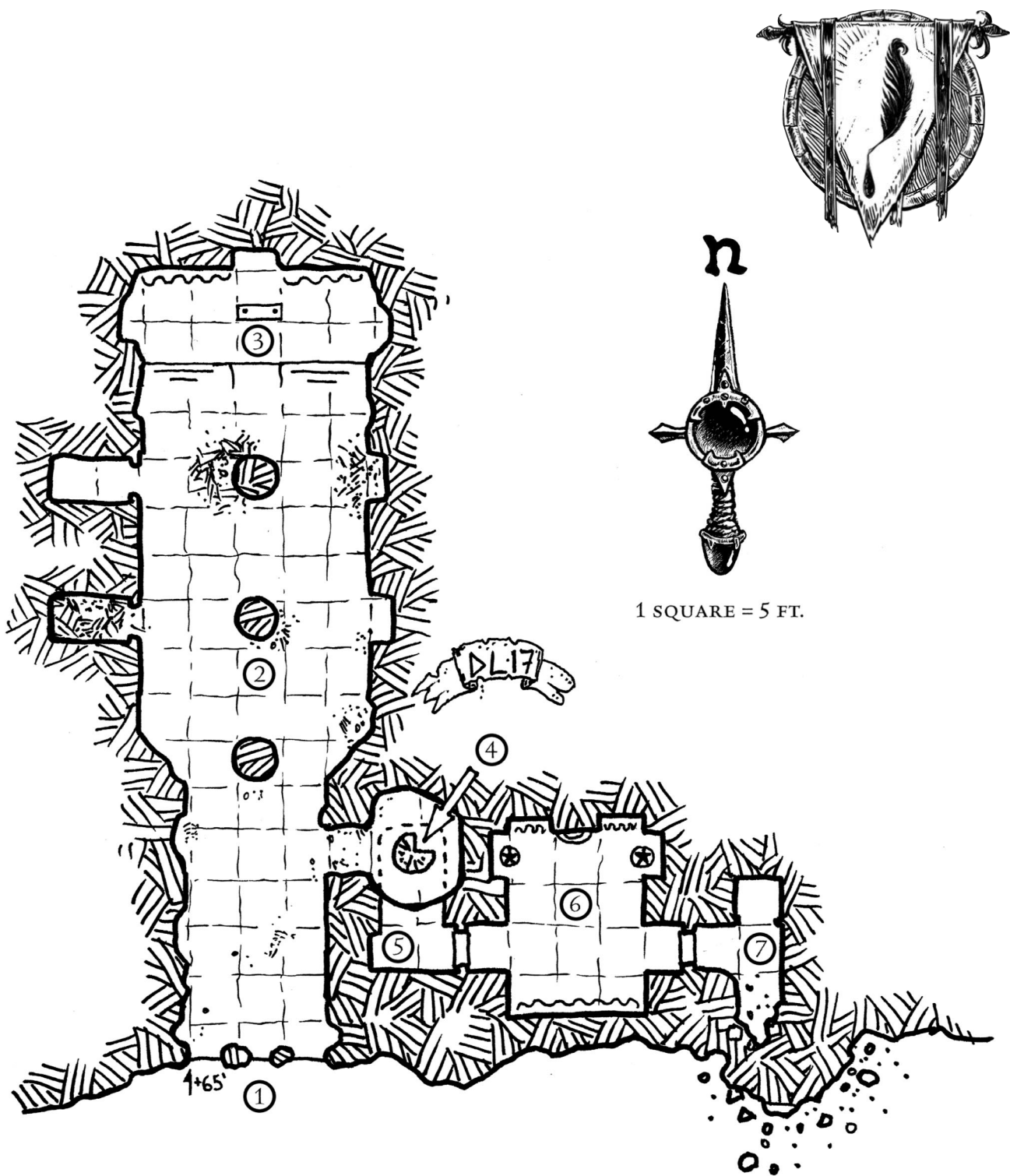
## THINGS TO FIND

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Use this list to determine what minor objects or features of interest the party find if they search a dungeon location. Modify the value of items found to suit your campaign.

1. The rusty remains of an iron unholy symbol wrought in the shape of a curved feather fill a hollow on the floor. The unholy symbol disintegrates if roughly handled.
2. The hanging rod of a tapestry yet clings to a wall, although the tapestry has long since rotten away. Close examination of the filthy rod reveals it is not wrought of iron but pure silver.
3. The outline of a poorly hidden storage niche is visible in a wall high up near the ceiling. The niche may or may not be empty, and it may or may not be trapped.
4. A bent dagger lies on the floor. A thick coating of rust on the blade suggests it has lain here for a long time.
5. Shards of a splintered arrow lie on the floor. The arrow's rusting tip has a faded bloodstain upon it.
6. Four gold coins are caught up in the folds of a damp ripped sack.
7. Soggy shards of wood lie about the floor; they might have once been a small shield.
8. A smashed lantern lies on the floor amid a small oil stain.
9. Graffiti, daubed in dried blood, low down on one wall, spells out in Common, "Beware the font".
10. Wisps of matted brown hair cling to the inside of this plain, dented pot helmet.





Tagged and untagged copies of this map can be downloaded at [ragingswanpress.com](http://ragingswanpress.com)

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## GM NOTES

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**Cliff:** *If the characters are particularly unsubtle the denizens of the dungeon may hear the party approaching as they climb the cliff. Flying creatures have a distinct advantage against climbing foes and this could be the scene of an exciting battle!*

**Treasure Hoard:** *The treasure hoard (which you have designed as appropriate for your campaign) is scattered about location 2. The writeup assumes one or two large creatures (such as dragons, manticores or wyverns) dwell in the dungeon but harpies (or other flying creatures) could just as easily have dumped their communal treasure here.*

## 1: THE CLIMB PERILOUS

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A vertiginous cliff, and a perilous climb, protect the Lost Eyrie from casual exploration.

*A steep, ledge-broken cliff rises well over 100 feet into the air. About halfway up, a wide cave mouth pierces the cliff.*

**Cliff:** The Lost Eyrie pierces the vertiginous cliff about 65 feet above the ground and 70 feet down from the clifftop. Characters can scale the cliff with or use magic to reach location 2.

Characters falling from the cliff suffer 1d6 damage for every 10 feet fallen and land prone.

**Dressing the Cliff:** Refer to "The Surrounding Locality" to add interesting dressing and objects to the characters' climb.

## 2: LAIR OF THE EYRIE-LORD

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Herein did harpies of old worship the demon lord, Pazuzu. A large, winged predator now lairs in this hall.

*Two slender natural stone pillars divide this 15-foot-wide entrance into three roughly equal sections.*

**Illumination:** The illumination in this locale depends on the time of the day. The level of illumination drops one step beyond the first huge pillar.

**Slender Rock Pillars:** Two slender pillars divide the entrance to this locale. Characters in an adjacent square gain partial cover.

**Ceiling:** The arched ceiling is 30-foot-high.

**Huge Carven Pillars:** Three huge circular stone pillars support the lofty ceiling. Each bears a huge carven feather at each of the cardinal directions.

**Treasure Hoard:** If the characters search the hoard, use this list to flesh out the treasure.

1. Broken and splintered bones lie scattered about the floor. They could also be scorched, frozen etc., depending on what dwells in the Lost Eyrie.
2. A wagon wheel leans precariously against a wall; it falls over if touched without care.
3. A ten-foot-long spear is partly buried in the hoard; its haft is made of some kind of incredibly tough but lightweight wood. The spear's tip is exceptionally sharp.
4. Shattered and punctured pieces of bloodstained armour and sundered shields are intermingled with the hoard.
5. A torn, blood-soaked flag bearing the insignia of a rampant lion on a sable background clings to the end of a wooden pole.
6. The shards of various broken gems are intermingled throughout the hoard; a character gathering them up finds 2d6x10 gp worth of gem fragments.
7. The shredded remnant of a magic scroll bears indecipherable writing upon it. The writing is a fragment of a *lightning bolt* spell.
8. A wide rent cuts through this large, dented iron shield.

9. One low soft book of elven artifice—a *boot of elvenkind*—yet holds a decomposing foot; of the other *boot of elvenkind*, there is no sign.
10. A 30-foot length of knotted rope—its ends frayed—lies amid the hoard. The rope is in good condition.
11. The bottom half of a silver statuette depicting a dragon sitting on its haunches is hidden under a dented shield.
12. A black wrought iron candelabra with four slots for candles lies on its side. It is heavy and unwieldy.

### 3: ALTAR OF THE DEMON KING

Centuries ago, the harpies eviscerated uncountable sacrifices to venerate the King of Demons on this altar.

*Huge faded tapestries hang from the north wall of this area. Low, wide steps lead up to a raised dais upon which squats a chunk of flat-topped black rock.*

**Steps:** These wide, low steps ascend to a raised section at the northern end of the chamber. The stairs are difficult terrain.

**Raised Section:** The northern end of the chamber is five-foot higher than the main floor.

**Altar:** Suspicious brown stains mar this chunk of black basaltic rock and the surrounding floor. A secret compartment pierces the north side of the altar. The niche contains:

- A serrated knife of black steel; dried bloodstains cover its wickedly curved blade.
- A single ebon feather about one-foot long. The feather shrugs off all blemishes and stains. It also seems to be impervious to harm.
- An empty glass vial; some kind of brownish residue clings to the inside of the vial. The character removing the vial's stopper catches a faint whiff of corruption.

**Faded Tapestries:** Two faded cobweb-draped tapestries showing a legion of harpies falling on and destroying a human town decorate the northern wall. A feeling of menace and gloom hangs over the tapestries.

Characters can climb a tapestry; however, a tapestry only supports 130 lbs. of weight. Heavier characters rip the tapestry from the wall once they have climbed 10 ft.; such climbers suffer falling damage and land prone.

- **Tapestries in Battle:** A character can pull a tapestry free so it falls into an adjacent square. A character in such a square is caught as if they had been hit by a net, and must free themselves before being able to move out of the square.

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## GM NOTES

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**Ebon Feather:** *The ebon feather found in location 3 could be a holy relic of the Pazuzu faith or could even hail from Pazuzu's own plumage! If you decide on the later, perhaps bringing it into close proximity of the Abyssal Font in location 6 causes the portal therein to expand or summons a demon to the Lost Eyrie.*

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## GM NOTES

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**Demonic Statues:** *The demonic statues in location 6 could easily be animate guardians or part of an elaborate trap involving the Abyssal Font.*

**Planar Connections:** *The Abyssal Font may or may not be a true planar gate as you see fit. Making it a planar portal, increases the stakes of the adventure—what good and true adventurer would leave a portal to the Abyss open? Alternatively, the characters could use the portal to enter the Abyss if they first reduced their physical size. A whole new “world” of adventure awaits them!*

### 4: INTO THE ABYSSAL DEPTHS

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The spiral staircase here descends to a deeper sub-level.

*The top of a spiral staircase pierces the floor of this otherwise small, empty chamber.*

**Spiral Staircase:** A steep, three-foot-wide staircase spirals downwards about 20 feet to the lower level. The stairs are difficult terrain. Combatants on the stairs gain partial cover against attacks originating from lower down the stairs.

The staircase is dusty, and no tracks are obviously evident.

### 5: EMPTY ANTECHAMBER

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This empty chamber lies about 20 feet below location 4.

*An empty, dusty chamber lies at the bottom of the spiral staircase. Faded painted scenes yet cling to the stone walls.*

**Faded Paintings:** Lurid pictures decorate these walls. The scenes are sacred to Pazuzu’s faith, but great age has dimmed their malign glory.

**Northern Painting:** This painting depicts a beautiful brown-haired, brown-eyed woman wearing a nun’s habit. She has a lascivious look on her face.

**Southern Painting:** This painting depicts a nude harpy. She has brown plumage and a haughty, evil look on her face.

- A close examination of both paintings reveals that the woman and the harpy strongly resemble each other—in fact, they could be the same person.

**Eastern and Western Paintings:** A black feather drips blood from its barb.

### 6: THE ABYSSAL FONT

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This chapel was built around a planar portal linking the Prime Material Plane to the Abyss.

*Shadows and gloom gather thickly in this small chamber. To the north, two statues flank twin tapestries and a font filled with some kind of jet-black liquid.*

**Tapestries:** Tapestries decorate the north and south walls. They are in much better condition than the tapestries in location 3. Refer below for descriptions of each tapestry.

Characters can climb a tapestry; however, a tapestry only supports 130 lbs. of weight. Heavier characters rip the tapestry from the wall once they have climbed 10 ft.; such climbers suffer falling damage and land prone.

- **Tapestries in Battle:** A character can pull a tapestry free so it falls into an adjacent square. A character in such a square is caught as if they had been hit by a net, and must free themselves before being able to move out of the square.

**Northern Tapestries:** Each of these ceiling-to-floor length white tapestries has the same symbol emblazoned upon it—a black feather dripping blood.

**Southern Tapestry:** This 15-foot-long tapestry covers the entire south wall. It depicts a bleak, desolate wasteland over which fly flocks of winged beasts. This tapestry depicts Pazuzu's Abyssal realm.

**Statues:** These finely detailed statues depict Pazuzu in all his demonic glory. They were once painted, but time's remorseless onslaught has dulled the once-bright pigments.

**Abyssal Font:** A thick mottled grey, gloopy liquid fills this font of black stone. This liquid—"water" from the Abyss—oozes through a planar gate to fill the font but does not overflow it. The font is large enough for a Small or smaller creature to be submerged in the "water"; those that do are transported to the Abyss.

## 7: THE CHOKED STAIR

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This staircase once led to a larger complex; it is now choked with rubble and impassable.

*A rockfall fills the southern portion of this chamber. Rubble covers the floor.*

**Rubble:** A scattering of rubble covers the floor; such areas count as difficult terrain.

**Cave-In:** A rockfall has blocked the passageway and a spiral staircase. The cave-in is impassable unless you decide to expand the dungeon. In this instance, magic or extensive work to remove the rubble is required to proceed.

**Crushed Skeleton:** A character searching the rubble discovers the skeletal remains of a humanoid buried in the rubble. Alternatively, the characters discover the remains when they remove the rubble to access the staircase

**Expanding the Dungeon:** *The cave-in blocking location 7 could lead to a larger complex either above or below the Lost Eyrie. In this instance, if the characters examine the cave-in a faint breeze issuing through the pile of tumbled stone caresses their faces. Clearing away the rubble reveals a spiral staircase.*

## AFTERMATH

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Use the notes herein to resolve the aftermath of the characters' exploration of the Lost Eyrie.

### RESOLVING ADVENTURE HOOKS

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If you used any of the hooks presented in "The Adventure Begins", use these notes to resolve the adventure's aftermath:

- **Portentous Dreams:** Once the Lost Eyrie has been cleared of obvious threats, the portentous dreams fade away to be replaced by deep, restful and contented sleep. However, if you decide to use the Abyssal Font in location 6 as an impetus for future adventures, the dreams start up once again once it becomes evident the characters will not be returning to the Lost Eyrie.
- **Rampaging Monster:** If the characters slay or drive off the monster lurking in the Lost Eyrie, they can return to the local settlement as heroes. They are feted, a feast is

held in their honour, and news of their prowess and bravery begins to spread.

- **Tavern Rumour:** Eventually, one way or another, Aapo Kare (LN male human fighter 3) realises the characters got him drunk and "stole a march" to the Lost Eyrie. He tracks the characters down and demands compensation; if the characters refuse, Aapo could become a reoccurring foe, although he is unlikely to resort to violence.

### FURTHER ADVENTURES

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Once the characters have completed their initial exploration of the Lost Eyrie, they can move on, or the dungeon can remain the temporary focus of your campaign.

**A New Home:** The characters may decide to transform the Lost Eyrie into a base from which to explore the surrounding wilderness.

**Deconsecrating or Destroying the Abyssal Font:** Good-aligned, or even merely sane, characters will likely be concerned that a minor portal to the Abyss lurks in the Lost Eyrie. Such folk may begin a new quest to gather the knowledge and materials necessary to seal the portal.

**Deeper Tunnels:** If the characters wish to continue their exploration of the complex below the Lost Eyrie, they must first clear the stairs in location 7 of debris (or use magic to bypass the obstruction).



# SHATTERED HALLS — OF THE — UNDYING

For centuries, the adherents of a strange cult have harvested the skulls of learned folk and interred them in the so-called Halls of the Undying Oracles. Thus, their knowledge is safeguarded for future generations. Now an earthquake has severely damaged the Halls. Was it a natural event, divine punishment for the cult's blasphemous works, or is something more sinister going on?



## DUNGEON BACKGROUND

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An extreme sect of Morden the Archmage (see sidebar) believes that a person's most valuable possessions—their knowledge and magic—lie in their mind. They view it as their sacred duty to preserve such knowledge. Thus centuries ago, they established the Halls of the Undying Oracles—a holy repository of knowledge that could live on past death.

The sect's adherents are not necromancers but rather fanatical devotees of knowledge. Members of the sect travel far and wide collecting skulls worthy of interment in the Halls. Other members of the sect travel to the Halls when they have need of the oracles' knowledge and use the *Star Crown of the Dead* to learn that which they need to know.

A month ago, a terrible earthquake struck the area around the Halls, seriously damaging the dungeon complex.

### WAS THE EARTHQUAKE NATURAL?

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Before you run this Dungeon Backdrop, you must decide if the earthquake that shattered the hall was a natural occurrence or if it was the result of some terrible, sinister ritual or plot.

### THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

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The characters can stumble on Shattered Halls of the Undying Oracles by happenstance and decide to explore the locale on a whim. Alternatively, use one of the hooks below to lure the characters to the crypt:

- **A Sign:** A character worshipper of Morden (see sidebar) has a terrible dream while near the Halls of the Undying Oracles. In it, they see skulls in the darkness and feel a sense of overwhelming dread. They experience the terror of the earthquake shaking the Halls. When they awake, they feel a mental tug toward the Halls.
- **Help Me:** The characters encounter Niilo Koira (see "Church of the Archmage" on the facing page) at the ruined Church of the Archmage. The wizard is desperate for adventurers to climb up to the Halls to ascertain the condition of the complex and its honoured dead.
- **In Search of Knowledge:** The characters are in need of some piece of esoteric knowledge to complete their current adventure. The knowledge is beyond them, but one of the heroes recalls a rumour about the Halls of the Undying Oracles. According to rumour, there is no question that the oracles cannot answer. Perhaps the Undying Oracles can help the party?

### WHISPERS & RUMOURS

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A character can use social skills and bribes to gather information about the Shattered Halls of the Undying Oracles. This takes 1d4 hours and costs 1d4 gp. A character gains one additional rumour for every extra 1d4 hours and 1d4 gp they

spend. Use the list below to determine what the character learns.

13. A sect of fanatical wizards established the Halls of the Undying Oracles to preserve important knowledge. They are foul necromancers! (Partially true rumour.)
14. A wizard lairs nearby the halls to watch over the place. He is powerful and unpredictable. (Partially true rumour.)
15. Beware the Wizards of the Halls; they possess knowledge not meant for mortal folk. (False rumour.)
16. The Undying Oracles require great sacrifices and gifts to reveal their knowledge (False rumour.)
17. Strange lights hover in the sky above the hall on certain nights. When the lights are visible, powerful magics are being wrought within.
18. An earthquake recently shook the area around the Halls of the Undying Oracles. The gods are angry at the blasphemies carried out within! (Potentially true.)

## MORDEN

---

N greater god of magic and knowledge

**Epithets:** The Archmage

**Symbol:** Eight small stars of gleaming light arrayed around a large central star.

**Favoured Weapon:** Dagger

**Raiment:** Plain robes embroidered with the eight sigils of magic

**Worshippers:** Wizards and sorcerers along with those that use and manipulate magic

**Teachings:** Magic surrounds and binds the world. The gods used magic to bring forth the world and all in it. Learning the secrets of the world is to learn the truth of the gods.

**Holy Texts:** Worshippers study the universe and everything in it, recording their findings in great tomes of lore. Many such tomes fill the faithful's library. Every spellbook is sacred holding—as it does—Morden's teachings.

**Additional Notes:** Worship of Morden is practically non-existent among the peasant folk. To them, Morden's teachings are an impenetrable mystery replete with strange words, otherworldly rituals and many rumours repeated by scared or drunk commoners—and that's just how his followers like it as it keeps non-believers away.

**Sect of the Undying Oracles:** This radical sect of Mordenites believes that knowledge is the greatest treasure and that it must be preserved at all costs—even in the face of death. They preserve the skulls of learned folk so that they can answer questions even after they enter death's realm.



## THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

The Shattered Halls of the Undying Oracles pierces a vertiginous cliff over 200 feet high. The Halls' entrance is clearly visible and lies roughly halfway up the cliff.

### CHURCH OF THE ARCHMAGE

The Church of the Archmage stands at the base of the cliffs below the entrance to the Halls of the Undying Oracles; it was also badly damaged by the recent earthquake. Its caretaker priest, Niilo Koira, survived the earthquake, but he is physically unable to reach the halls to see how they fared.

- **Niilo Koira** (N old male human wizard 4) despairs at what the earthquake has wrought; **Appearance:** thin with long unkempt white hair and pale skin; wears dirty brown robes; **Personality:** bookish, hopeless with practical matters of the real world, friendly; **Mannerisms:** stutters when stressed and vainly tries to comb out his hair while talking; **Background:** served at the church for decades; **Hook:** See "Help Me" under "The Adventure Begins".

### REACHING THE HALLS

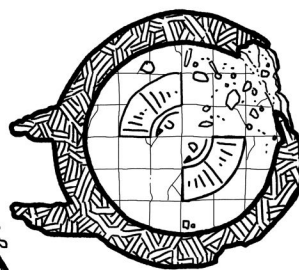
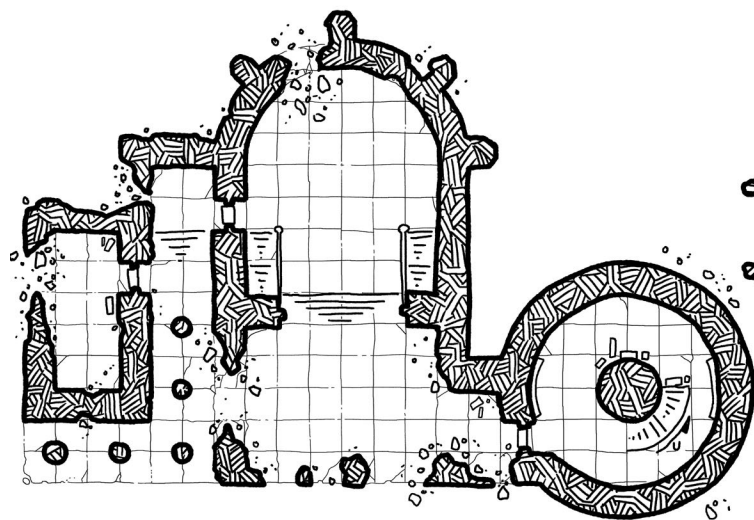
The characters have two basic ways of reaching the Halls without using magic. They can climb up from below or attempt to find a way up to the top of the cliffs so they can abseil down to the Halls' entrance.

- **From Above:** Climbing down is much easier if the characters use ropes. A character searching the locality finds a small gully about a mile away that wends its torturous way up to the top of the cliffs. Characters climbing down from the clifftop without ropes must be careful or fall.
- **From Below:** Characters scaling the cliffs from below must climb up carefully to reach the Halls.

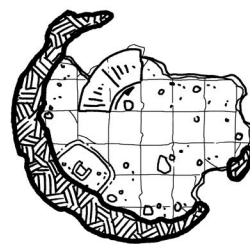
## WILDERNESS DRESSING

Use this list to add life and detail to the dungeon's surrounds:

1. A heap of fallen rocks—large and small—lie at the base of the cliffs below the Halls' entrance. The pile is slightly unstable, and some of the rocks shift and move beneath the characters' feet.
2. A large bird lazily glides in wide circles above the cliffs. (This bird could be nothing more than a bird, or it could be a wizard's familiar or *polymorphed* enemy.)
3. A frayed length of rope emerges from a tumbled pile of boulders. The rope is dusty but in good condition; its other end is wedged somewhere in the pile. (Some characters may think that the body of a climber or two may lie under the stones—and they could be right.)
4. The shattered remnants of a stone door lie at the base of the cliff. Strange runes decorate the shattered door. A character steeped in magical lore examining the runes identifies them as runes dealing with magic, knowledge and death. The character also realises that the runes for undeath and the undead are absent.
5. Part of a statue—perhaps once depicting a robed man—lies amid the rubble fallen from the cliff above.
6. A faint rumbling or grinding sound emanates from inside the cliff; this is a minor aftershock and causes no additional damage.
7. Part of one of the steps carved into the cliff has fallen mostly intact to the ground. Mystic symbols are carved into its riser. A character steeped in magical lore examining the runes identifies them as runes dealing with magic, knowledge and death.
8. A figure—perhaps a robed man—briefly appears at the top of the cliffs before ducking out of sight.
9. Dark clouds scud across the sky and plunge the cliffs and the entrance to the Halls into deep shade.
10. Small rocks and shards of gravel tumble down the cliff to crash at its base.



THE CHURCH OF THE  
ARCHMAGE



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

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The dungeon has several notable locations.

1. **Broken Stair:** Hewn steps once ascended the cliffs to the Halls of the Undying Oracles. The recent earthquake destroyed many of the steps rendering the Halls all but inaccessible without magic or climbing equipment.
2. **The Grand Processional:** Down this passageway processed all those who would seek the wisdom of the Undying Oracles.
3. **Hall of Divination:** This chamber hosts a shrine to the school of divination.
4. **Location Name:** This chamber hosts six shrines—each dedicated to a different school of magic.
5. **Location Name:** Those who wish to consult the Undying Oracles must be garbed in the appropriate vestments and regalia. Herein are found the requisite items.
6. **Hall of Knowledge:** Here in the holy place, those come to consult the Undying Oracles first venerate Morden.
7. **Reliquary of the Ancients:** Here are reverently stored the skulls of the oracles who have passed beyond the powers of the Halls' acolytes.
8. **Cave of the Unknown:** Linked to the Halls by the recent earthquake, this natural cavern plunges ever deeper into the cliff.

## GENERIC DUNGEON FEATURES

---

Although hundreds of years old, the Halls of the Undying Oracles were, until recently, in good condition. The earthquake changed that; now dust and grit are scattered about, effacing the tracks of previous visitors.

Many of the dungeon's locations share certain features:

**Illumination:** Darkness.

**Ceilings:** The ceiling is about 12 feet high through most of the Sundered Halls.

**Walls:** The walls are of dressed stone in fair condition. However, close to the chasm running through locations 1 and 6, parts of the walls have buckled and cracked, making climbing easier.

**Paved Floors:** The floor's flagstones have started to shift and move under time's remorseless influence, but generally, they do not inhibit movement. The recent earthquake compounded this wear and tear; now, patches of buckled and raised flagstones dot the dungeon; such areas are difficult terrain.

**Torch Sconces:** Torches sconces jut from opposite walls every 15 feet or so.

**Stairs:** Stones stairs have one-foot high risers. Treat such areas as difficult terrain.

**Wooden Doors:** Doors open inward to the area they protect. None have locks. Some of the doors have been buckled and damaged by the earthquake, making them harder to force open.

## DUNGEON DRESSING

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Use this list to breathe life and detail into the dungeon:

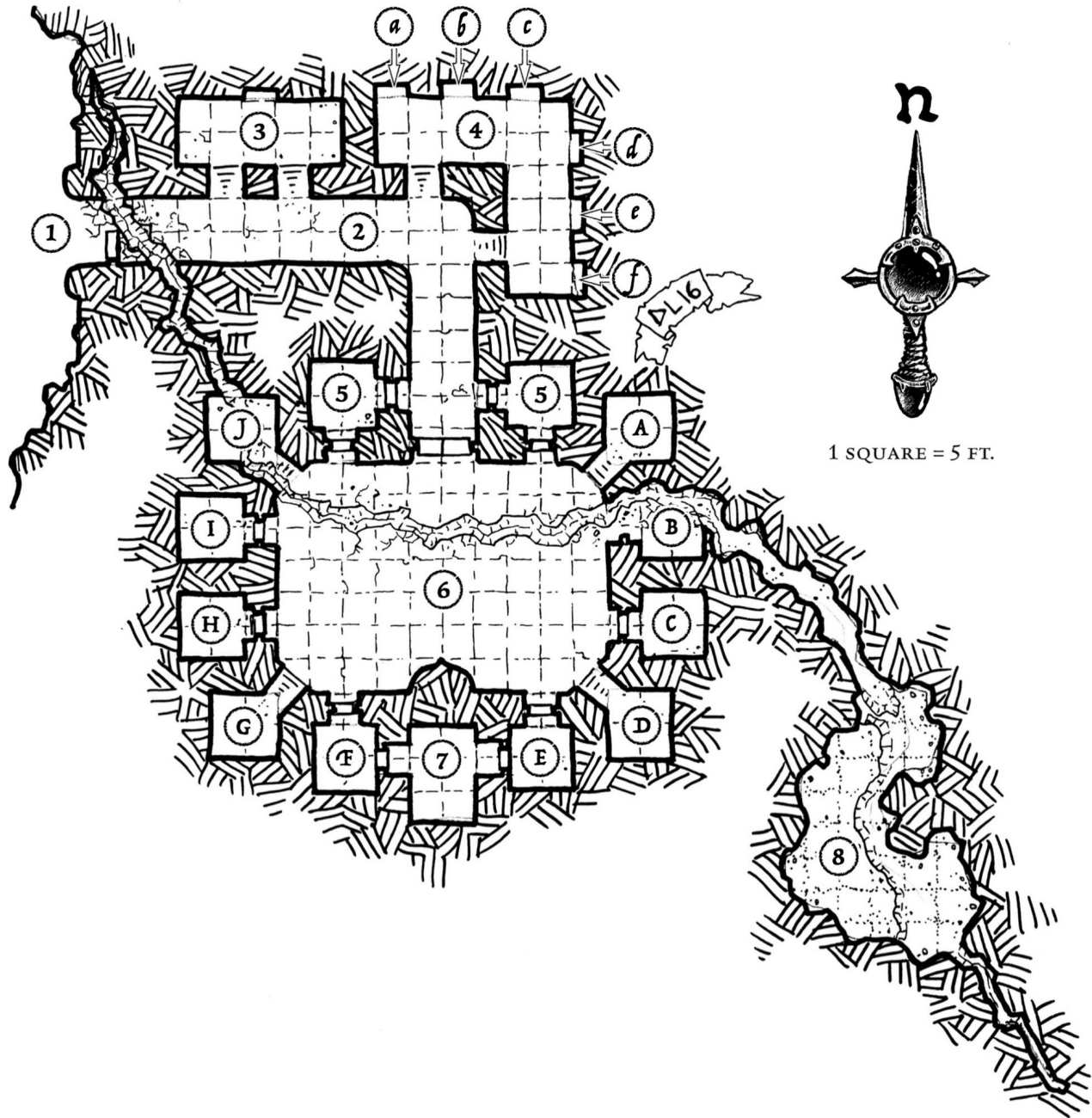
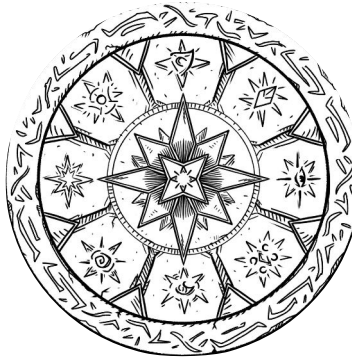
1. Dust, grit and tiny pieces of stone cover the floor above a sagging section of ceiling.
2. A chunk of masonry has fallen from the wall or ceiling, exposing the rock behind. Water has begun to ooze through the hole left by the fallen masonry.
3. Spider webs hang from the ceiling and undulate gently in the breeze entering the complex through location 1.
4. A small pile of rubble covers part of the floor, creating an area of difficult terrain.
5. The ceiling noticeably sags, and grit and masonry dust the floor.
6. Fissures crisscross the floor in a spiderweb-like pattern.
7. The wind whines through the fissure cutting through the dungeon, making it seem like the Halls have a voice of their own.
8. A few bats nest on the ceiling. Light or loud noises cause them to flee.
9. The faint clatter of a rock falling to the floor reaches the characters' ears.
10. A strong gust of wind from outside stirs the grit and dust on the floor into tiny, short-lived dust devils.

## THINGS TO FIND

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Use this list to determine what minor objects or features of interest the party find if they search a dungeon location. Modify the value of items found to suit your campaign.

1. The carving of a large star surrounded by eight other smaller stars decorates the wall.
2. Three old silver coins have been wedged into a gap between two ill-fitting stone blocks.
3. The suggestion of odd tracks in the grit and dust of ages mark the floor. (Whatever you have stocked the dungeon with made these tracks).
4. This torch sconce has been shaken loose from its fixings and lies on the floor by the wall.
5. Graffiti etched into the wall reads, "Glory and honour to the Undying Ones".
6. A small iron holy symbol—eight stars surrounding a larger star—hangs by a leather thong from a torch sconce.
7. A poorly hidden storage niche pierces a wall. It holds flint and steel, along with a dozen or so torches.
8. Covered by dust and grime, a mosaic depicts an oversized skull and a figure kneeling before it.
9. The body of a dead rat lies on the floor. Investigation reveals something stood on and broke its back. It has not been dead long.
10. An old mouldy pouch lies under a slight overhang. It contains 5 gp and a small pearl worth 50 gp.



Tagged and untagged copies of this map can be downloaded at [ragingswanpress.com](http://ragingswanpress.com)

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## GM NOTES

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*If an organised force has taken over the complex, they will likely post a guard at location 2. A guard here possessing ranged weapons could make climbing up to the dungeon significantly more dangerous.*

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## 1: BROKEN STAIR

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Hewn steps once ascended the cliffs to the Halls of the Undying Oracles. The recent earthquake destroyed many of the steps rendering the Halls all but inaccessible without magic or climbing gear.

*A stone door hangs crazily on one hinge—its mate is missing. Beyond the door, a dark corridor riven by a narrow rift running across its floor leads deep into the cliff.*

**Cliff:** The Shattered Hall pierces a rugged cliff of jagged weathered stone.

**Sheltered Porch:** A sheltered porch—the entrance to the original cave out of which the halls were carved—once pierced the cliff. The earthquake destroyed half the porch.

**Sundered Stone Doors:** A set of double doors once protected the Halls of the Undying Oracle from intruders. The recent earthquake shattered the doors; one fell down the cliffs to smash on the ground far below (see #2 “Things to Find” for more details).

- **Eldritch Runes:** Eldritch runes, cut deep into its face, decorate the door. A character steeped in magical lore examining the runes identifies them as runes dealing with magic, knowledge and death. The character also realises that the runes for undeath and the undead are absent.
- **Holy Symbol:** Half of a large symbol—four small stars arrayed around half a large central star—decorates the inner edge of the door. The other half once decorated the other door. This is (half of) Morden’s holy symbol.

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## 2: THE GRAND PROCESSIONAL

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Down this passageway processed all those who would seek the wisdom of the Undying Oracles.

*Faded frescoes depicting wizards casting great spells adorn the walls of the wide passageway.*

**Illumination:** Faint light enters the Processional from location 1. This light drops one step about 15 feet from the entrance.

**Ceiling:** The domed ceiling in this hallway is 15 feet high over the centre of the corridor and ten feet high where the ceiling meets the walls.

**Rift:** A two- to three-foot wide, roughly nine feet deep rift pierces the floor. Scaling the rift’s uneven walls is easy. Rubble fills the bottom of the rift. Treat small or larger characters in the rift as squeezing.

**Frescos:** Now dulled with great age, once bright and vivid frescos adorn the walls. They show wizards of all types crafting mighty magics.

**Torch Sconces:** Set every 15 feet on alternating walls, most of the torches sconces in this corridor hold the burnt-down remnant of a torch.

### 3: HALL OF DIVINATION

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This chamber hosts a shrine to the school of divination.

*A deep shrine-niche pierces the opposite wall. A single glimmering star sigil intertwined with another symbol decorates the niche's back wall.*

**Alcove Shrine:** This chamber hosts a shrine dedicated to the divination school of magic. The shrine is emblazoned with a single star daubed in glimmering silver paint. The pigment is enchanted to resist time's onslaught and remains undimmed. The magical sigil for divination appears under the star.

- **Magic Aura:** The shrine radiates strong divination magic.

**Praying at the Shrine:** A character praying before the divination shrine for one hour gains the effect of an *augury* spell cast by a 10th-level cleric.

### 4: SHRINE OF THE SCHOOLS

---

This chamber hosts six shrines—each dedicated to a different school of magic.

*Deep niches in the wall here each hold a shrine emblazoned with a glimmering star sigil intertwined with another symbol. In each shrine, the second sigil is different to the others.*

**Alcove Shrines** Each alcove is dedicated to a different school of magic. From west to east, the shrines appear in this order: **A:** Abjuration **B:** Conjunction **C:** Enchantment **D:** Evocation **E:** Illusion **F:** Transmutation.

Each shrine is emblazoned with a single star daubed in glimmering silver paint. The pigment is enchanted to resist time's onslaught and remains undimmed. The magical sigil for the relevant school of magic is intertwined with the star.

- **Magic Aura:** Each shrine radiates strong magic of the relevant school.

**Praying at the Shrine:** A character able to cast spells who prays before a shrine for one hour gains a minor magical boon. Such a character casts the next spell of the appropriate school as if they were two levels higher than their current level of ability. A character can only enjoy the benefits of one shrine at a time.

### 5: VESTRY

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Those who wish to consult the Undying Oracles must be garbed in the appropriate vestments and regalia. Herein are found the requisite items.

*Grey robes hang from a row of pegs driven deeply into this room's walls.*

**Robes:** Eight grey robes—each emblazoned with Morden's star symbol on the chest—hang from pegs.

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## GM NOTES

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## 6: HALL OF KNOWLEDGE

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Here in the holy place, those come to consult the Undying Oracles first venerate Morden.

*A large room, its walls pierced by many doors, lies beyond the double doors. A once beautiful mosaic of stars, now badly damaged, dominates the floor. Another shrine stands across from the double doors.*

**Double Doors:** A sturdy iron-bound set of double doors, slightly buckled by the recent earthquake, wards the damaged Hall of Knowledge.

**Ceiling:** The domed ceiling is 30 feet high in the centre of the room and 12 feet high around the room's perimeter.

**Rift:** A two- to three-foot wide, roughly nine feet deep rift pierces the floor. Scaling the rift's uneven walls is easy. Rubble fills the bottom of the rift. Treat small or larger characters in the rift as squeezing.

**Mosaic of Stars:** A badly damaged star mosaic of eight stars set around a central star dominates the floor. The mosaic comprises thousands of small painted flecks of stone.

**Shrine:** A shrine stands opposite the double doors entering the Hall. A glimmering star sigil decorates the wall. In the centre of the sigil, a wall niche holds the *Star Crown of the Dead* (see "Star Crown of the Dead" on the facing page).

**Wooden Doors:** A wooden door wards each of the Hall's Skull Repositories. A brass plaque on each door names the room's "occupant".

**Skull Repositories:** A wall niche in each repository holds the skull of an interred sage or wizard. A plaque on the nearby wall lists each sage's areas of expertise.

### A: MARJAANA TALVIKKI

Marjaana Talvikki (CN female human)

- **Personality:** Friendly, proud, optimist
- **Major Field:** Supernatural and Unusual (specialising in the Astral, Elemental and Ethereal planes and astrology)
- **Minor Fields:** Demi-humans, science

### B: VENTLA PAKKANEN

This skull is broken—destroyed in the earthquake—and not enough remains to work with a *speak with dead* spell.

### C: MERLA SILVERLEAF

Merla Silverleaf (LN female halfling)

- **Personality:** Hostile, opinionated, proud
- **Major Field:** Demi-humankind (specialising in legends and folklore, history and philosophy)
- **Minor Fields:** Supernatural and Unusual

### D: AADAM KUUTAMO

Aadam Kuutamo (LE male human)

- **Personality:** Arrogant, curious, easy-going
- **Major Field:** Flora (specialising in flowers, fungi, grains, grasses and trees)
- **Minor Fields:** Humankind

#### E: SERAFIA IKITIERA

Serafia Ikitiera (LN female human)

- **Personality:** Arrogant, careless, haughty
- **Major Field:** Humankind (specialising in demography and history)
- **Minor Fields:** demi-humankind, humanoids and giantkind

#### F: ARIJOUTSI HIMOTTU

Arijoutsu Himottu (LN male human)

- **Personality:** retiring, altruistic, humble
- **Major Field:** Supernatural and Unusual (specialising in astrology, heraldry, numerology, signs, sigils and the outer planes)
- **Minor Fields:** Demi-humankind

#### H: KAARLE IKITIERA

Kaarle Ikitiera (N male human)

- **Personality:** Antagonistic, prankster, cheerful
- **Major Field:** Science (specialising in chemistry, geography, meteorology and oceanography)
- **Minor Fields:** Giantkind, humankind and humanoids

#### H: FALGAR KILAK

Falgar Kilak (N male dwarf)

- **Personality:** Diplomatic, precise, morose
- **Major Field:** Humanoids and giantkind (specialising in history and languages)
- **Minor Fields:** Demi-humankind and fauna

#### I: MIIKKULA KAUKOVALTA

Miikkula Kaukovalta (LE male human)

- **Personality:** Friendly, malevolent, insensitive
- **Major Field:** Fauna (specialising in arachnids, insects and reptiles)
- **Minor Fields:** Supernatural and Unusual

#### J: KALEVA JUTIKKA

This skull is broken—destroyed in the earthquake—and not enough remains to work with a *speak with dead* spell.

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## GM NOTES

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### STAR CROWN OF THE DEAD

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*This time-worn crown of black iron has an adornment of silvery skulls running around its circlet. Magical runes are incised into the crown's inner surface.*

This ancient holy relic of the Sect of the Undying Oracles enables the wearer to cast *speak with dead* three times per day at the 12th-level of experience.

A character steeped in magical lore examining the runes on the crown's inner band identifies them as runes dealing with magic, knowledge and death. The crown radiates strong necromantic magic.

**Further Adventures:** If you want to expand the challenge of the Sundered Halls location 8 (overleaf) is an excellent place to do so. Simply determine that "The Squeeze" in location 8 eventually leads to a hitherto unknown cave complex.

## 7: RELIQUARY OF THE ANCIENTS

---

Here are reverently stored the skulls of the oracles who have passed beyond the powers of the Halls' acolytes.

*Scores of stone niches piece the north and south walls of this chamber. Most of the niches hold a grinning skull of indeterminate age and origin. Four skulls lie on the floor.*

**Stone Niches:** Each stone niche is about two-foot square and two-foot deep. About three-quarters of the niches hold a grinning skull, and a brass plaque lies in front of each skull.

**The Skulls:** A character investigating the skulls determines that the vast majority are human, although the skulls of several dwarves and elves, along with three very strange skulls that seem to be a blend of human and snake, are also present.

## 8: CAVE OF THE UNKNOWN

---

Linked to the Halls by the recent earthquake, this natural cavern plunges ever deeper into the cliff.

*This natural cavern curves southwards out of sight. To the west, a crumbling escarpment rises upwards to a raised area. There the ceiling is much lower than in the rest of the cavern.*

**Ceiling:** The ceiling is of natural stone.

Over the lower part of the cave, it is between 15 and 20 feet high. Over the escarpment, the ceiling varies between four to eight feet high.

**Walls:** The cavern walls are of rough natural stone.

**Floor:** The cavern floor is of rough, uneven stone.

**Crumbling Escarpment:** The escarpment is between eight and 12 feet high. Characters can easily scale the escarpment if they have two hands free.

**Rubble:** A scattering of rubble covers the cavern floor; such areas count as difficult terrain.

**The Squeeze:** This narrow tunnel slopes gently away to the southeast and is barely two feet wide. Treat small or larger characters in this area as squeezing. The ceiling is between 15 and 20 feet high.

The Squeeze ends in a dead end unless you decide it intersects with another cave complex. See "Further Adventures" for more information.

## AFTERMATH

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Once the characters have explored the Shattered Halls of the Undying Oracles, the dungeon does not have to fade from the campaign. At the very least, the characters have discovered a place wherein they may be able to secure answers to their most esoteric questions.

## RESOLVING ADVENTURE HOOKS

---

If you used any of the hooks presented in "The Adventure Begins", use these notes to resolve the adventure's aftermath:

- **A Sign:** Morden is pleased that his worshipper followed the dream and investigated the Halls of the Undying Oracles. If the worshipper helped clear the Halls of any lurking danger, Morden rewards them. The next time the character studies their spellbook, they discover two new spells of the highest level they can cast therein.
- **Help Me** Niilo Koira is grateful for the characters' help. As thanks, he offers them access to the Halls in the future if they should be beset by some question they cannot answer themselves.
- **In Search of Knowledge:** Clearing the Halls of danger means the characters can speak with the Undying Oracles if they have worked out how to do so. Alternatively, a normal *Speak with Dead* spell suffices.

## FURTHER ADVENTURES

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The Sect of the Undying Oracles claim the Halls, and this will not change after the characters have cleared the place of danger. However, the sect will be grateful to the characters for their aid and will look kindly on any future requests for knowledge or aid from them.

If you have chosen to expand the dungeon via the cave in location 8, the sect may ask the characters to explore the tunnel network beyond to make certain that no threats to the Undying Oracles lurk within. Such a quest could lead to a series of adventures in the depths of the Ebon Realm.





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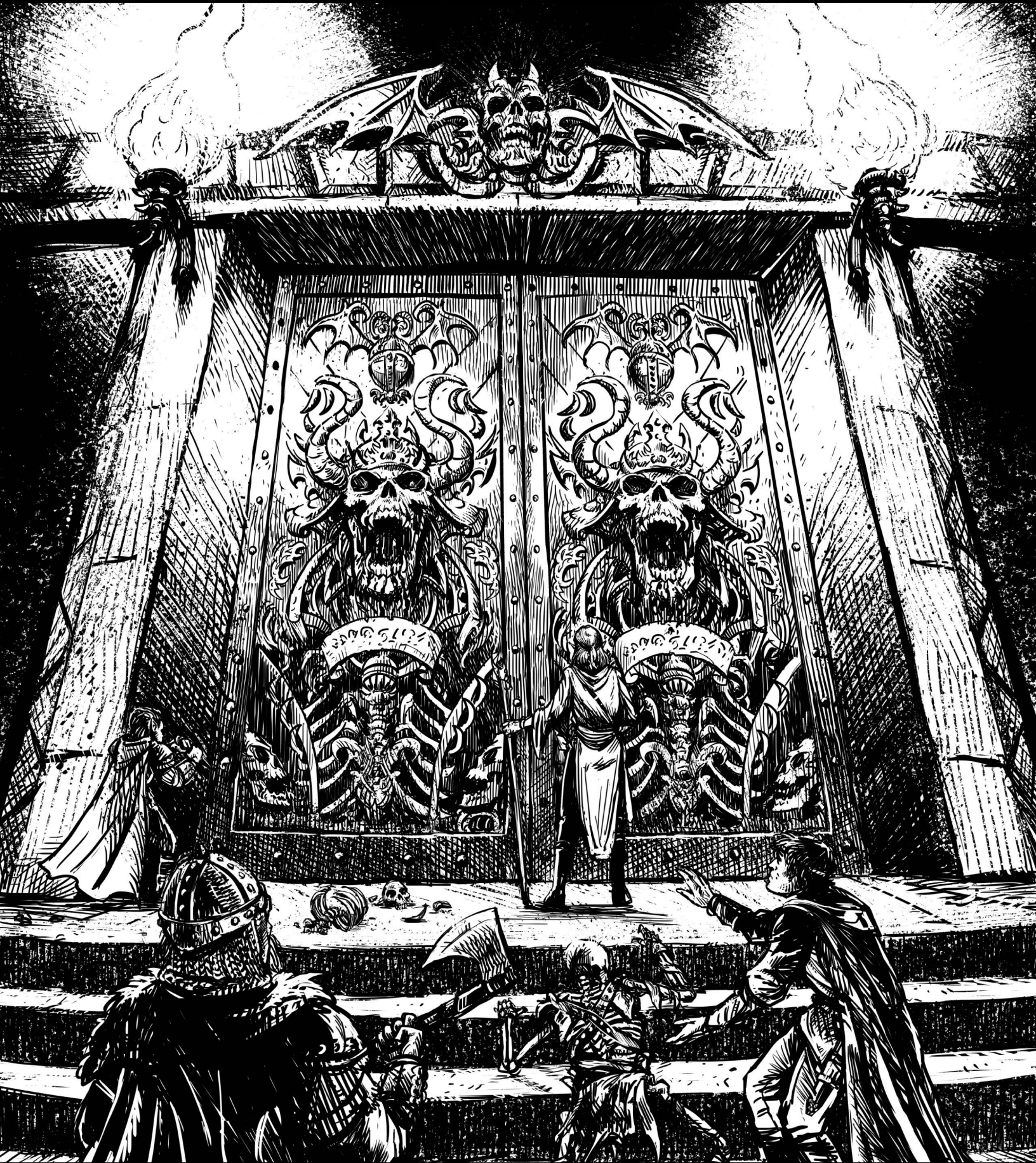
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