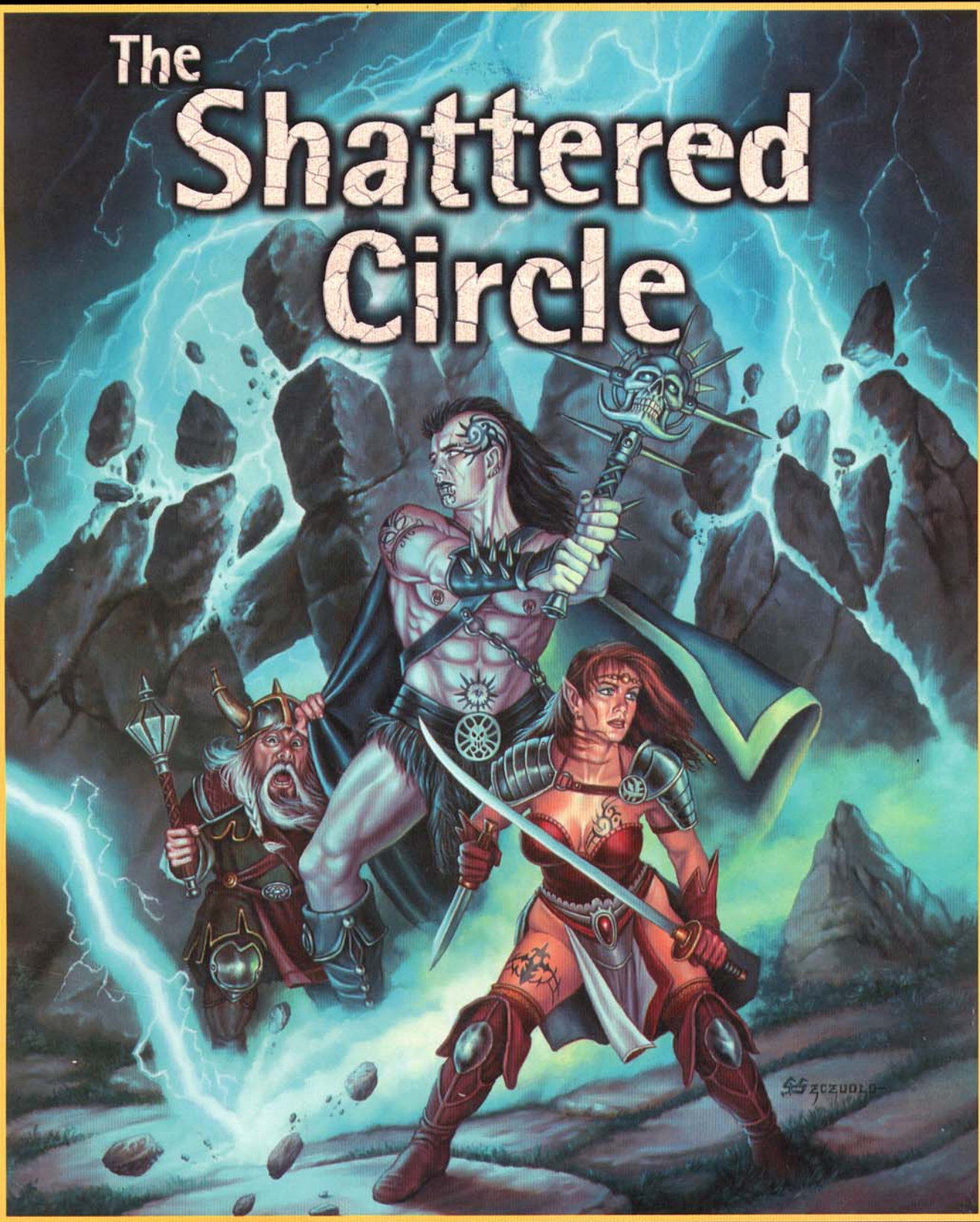




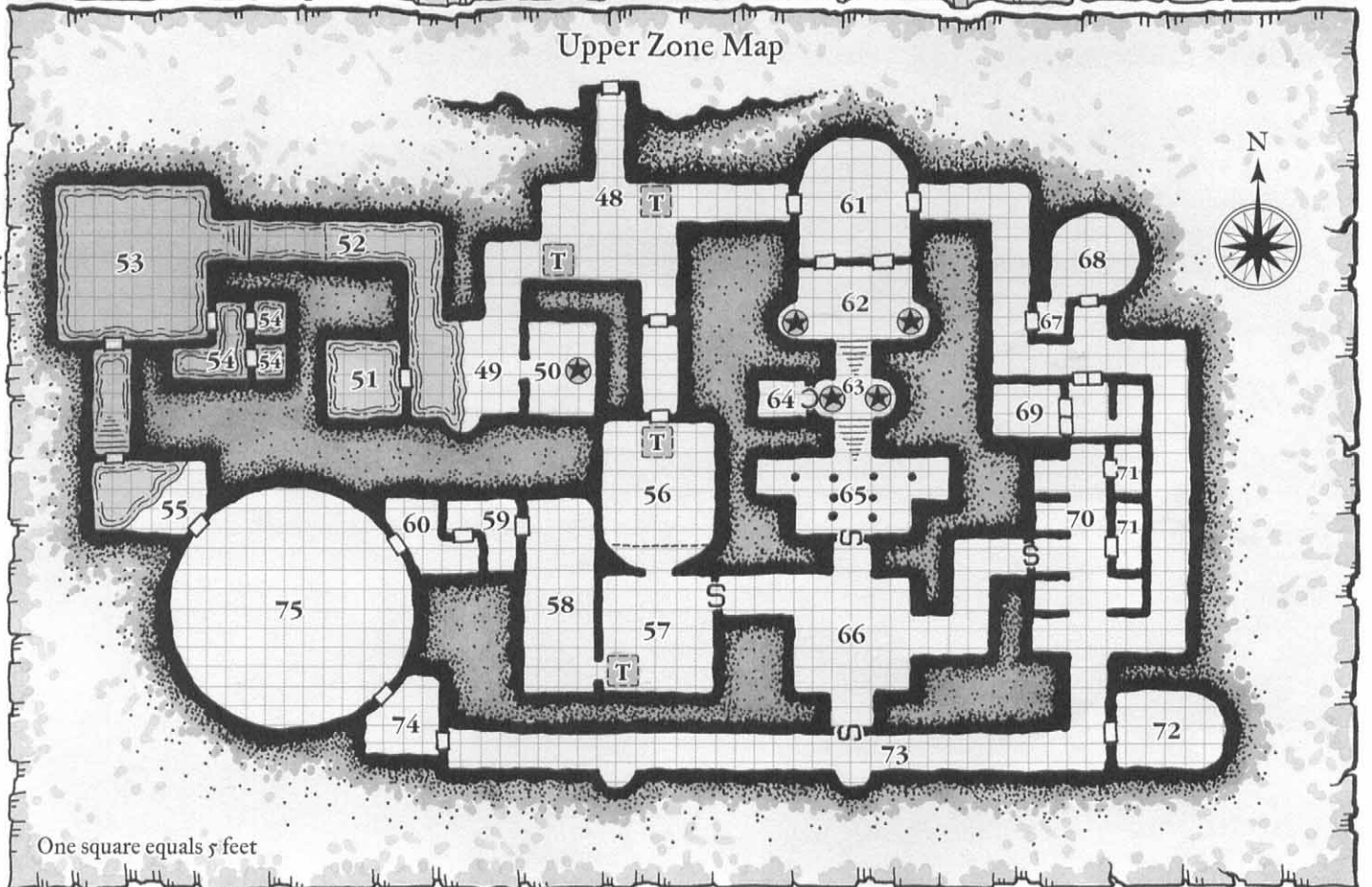
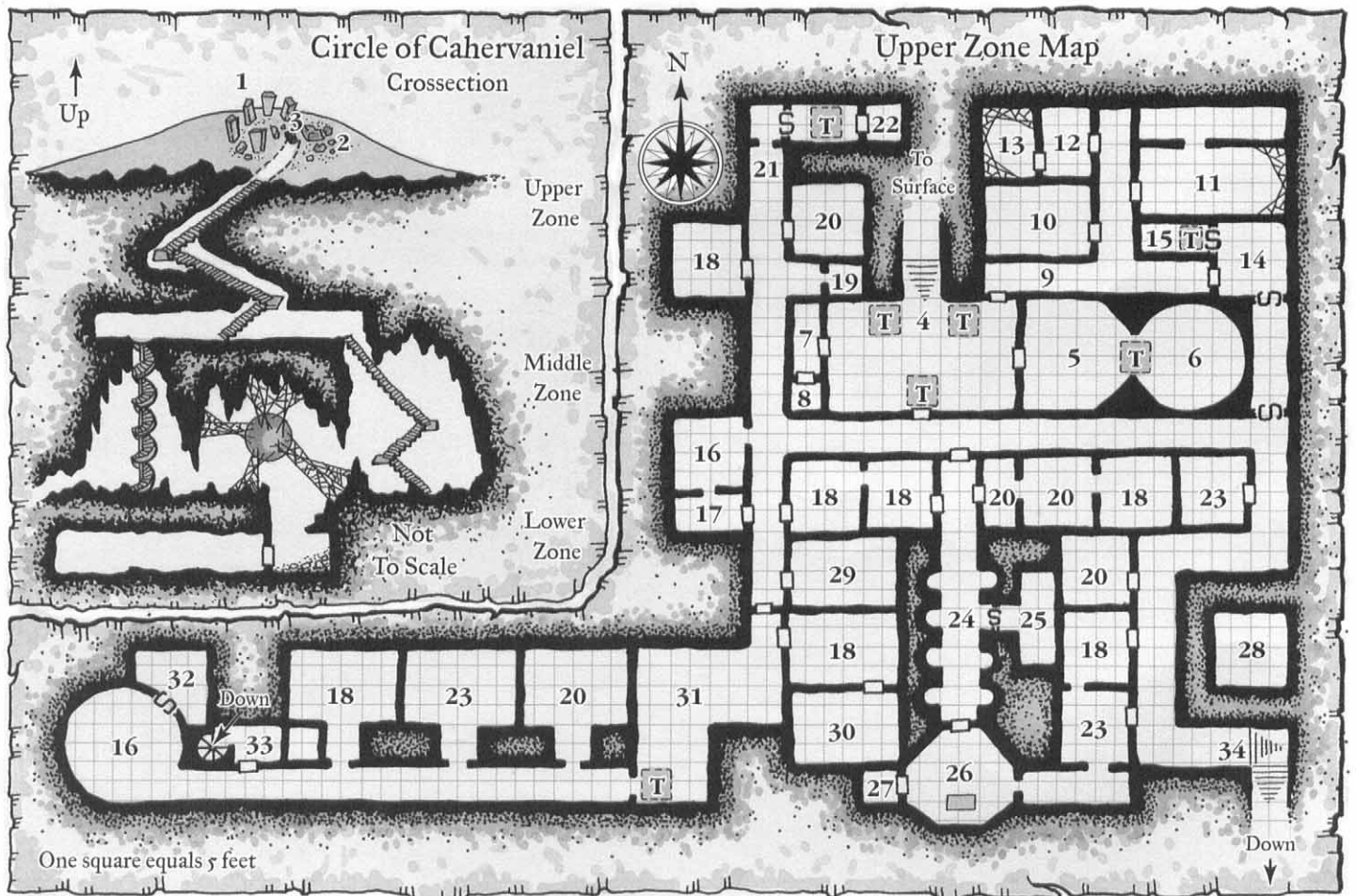
# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons

Adventure

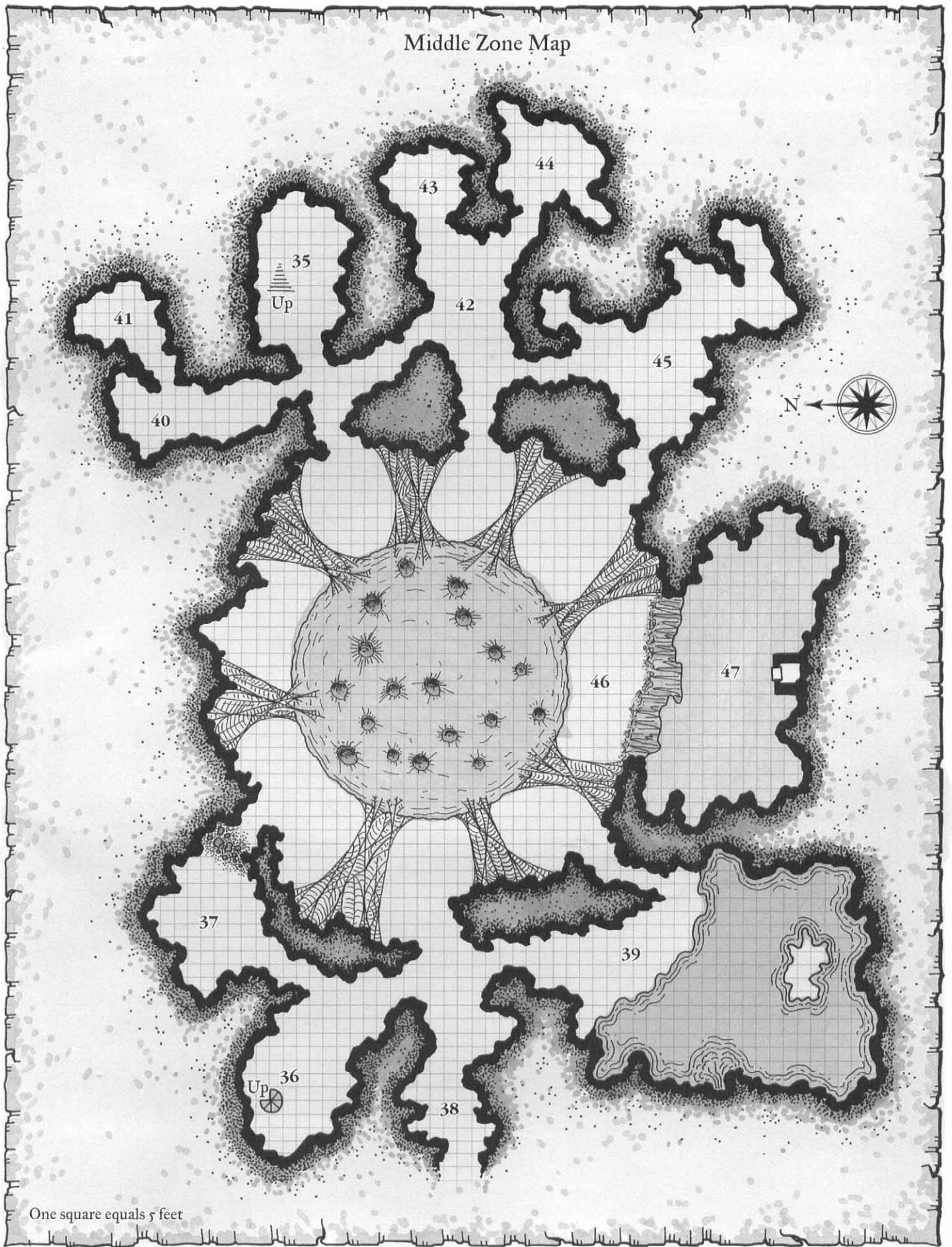
## The Shattered Circle



*Bruce R. Cordell*



# Middle Zone Map



One square equals 5 feet

# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

## The Shattered Circle

Bruce R. Cordell

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### Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
Using This Adventure .....	2
History .....	2
Adventure Summary & Character Hooks .....	2
The Circle of Cahervaniel .....	4
Wandering Monsters .....	4
Shattered Circle Keyed Entries .....	4
Finale .....	31
Conclusions .....	31
New Magical Items	
<i>Foundingstone</i> (Artifact) .....	31
Dragonbone Dagger .....	32
<i>Euphonious</i> .....	32
<i>Icerazor</i> .....	32

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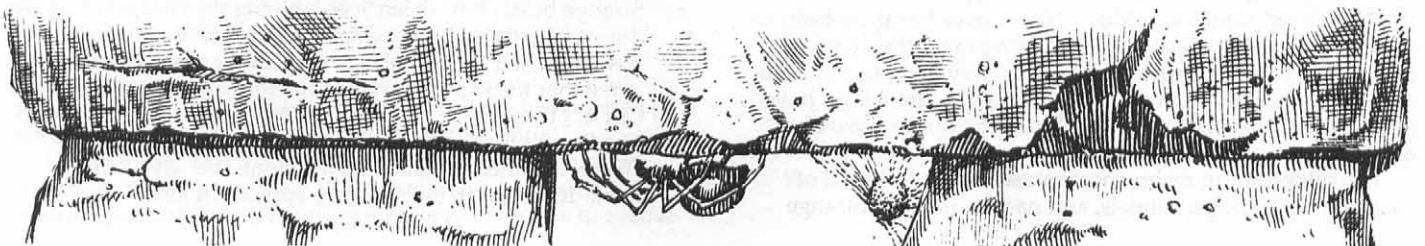
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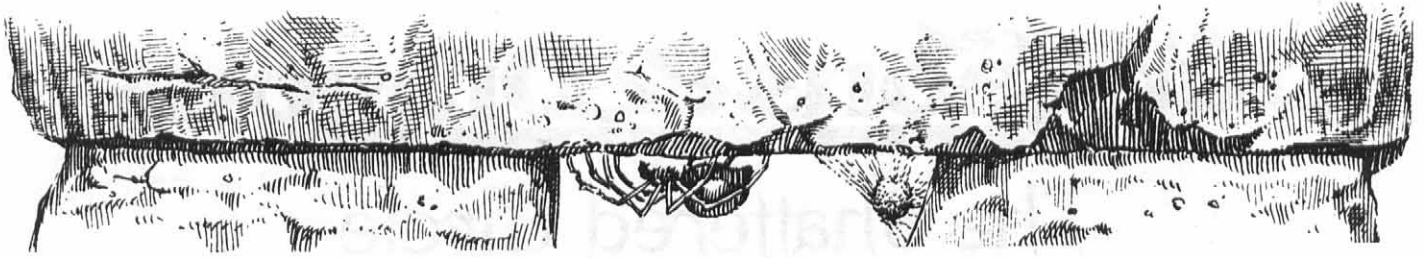
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## Introduction

Mizar threw back his head, and the sound of a siren bled into the whistle of a locomotive mixed with the death-wails of a score of accident victims, and, from someplace, the howling of a wolf on a winter's night, and the baying of hounds upon a trail.  
—Roger Zelazny and Jane Lindskold, *Donnerjack*

## Preface

*The Shattered Circle* is an AD&D® adventure for four to six player characters of 1st to 3rd level—the optimum levels lie in the range of 6–12 (this is the sum of the levels of every player character involved in the adventure). *The Shattered Circle* describes an extensive underground dungeon complex designed specifically for new characters. This adventure serves as an excellent introduction to the AD&D game for inexperienced players with characters who are just beginning their careers as adventurers, but it also provides challenges for seasoned players with new characters.

## Using This Adventure

*The Shattered Circle* describes the standing stones known as the Circle of Cahervaniel and the ancient dungeon complex hidden beneath it. The Dungeon Master (DM), can use this product as a stand-alone adventure, or she can use the dungeon called Cahervaniel just as it is presented in her own campaign by locating the standing stones of the Circle in an otherwise unexplored niche of that world.

Place and character names used in this adventure are not inviolate—the DM should make whatever changes are necessary to drop Cahervaniel into a world of her own creation. If this adventure is used in conjunction with one of TSR's published game worlds, the stone Circle of Cahervaniel can stand on a remote and lonely hill top in any one of TSR's campaign settings.

## History

Civilizations ebb and flow like the tide. When an elder race diminishes and fades, thousands upon thousands of years pass before younger races move into the forgotten region. Of the elders whose grand cities crumbled thousands of years before, few clues remain, save for the occasional dolmen, standing stone, or henge. Such is the case of Cahervaniel.

The Circle of Cahervaniel, so named by early Suloise settlers, is a simple ring of crudely carved (or much eroded) standing stones measuring some 20 yards in diameter. Generations of sheep herders have moved their flocks over the hill and through the circle, sometimes resting in the cool shadows cast by the old stones at midday. Never once has there been any indication that the site was anything more than an innocuous crumbling ruin, just one of many that are so prominent in this part of the world. In all the years that sheep have grazed near the stony fingers of the Circle, things have been quiet, at least on the surface. . . .

The subterranean realm encompasses an underworld of vast caverns, winding tunnels, and narrow fissures. Strange

creatures live and die beneath the surface, many of whom never once venture into daylight during the span of their lifetimes. Some subterranean tunnels wend quite near to the surface. One such tunnel opens into a ruined dungeon complex built during an earlier Age. As chance would have it, this complex lies beneath the innocent-seeming Circle of Cahervaniel.

Twelve years ago a band of underworld refugees, fleeing dark elves and bounty hunters employed by the drow, happened upon the dusty fissure leading "up" into the long abandoned dungeon below the Circle. The refugees were once slaves of the drow, but dark magic warped their humanoid forms, and spiderlike characteristics were given to the slaves against their will. Fearing further devolution, a splinter group of these slaves (called "chitines" due to their deformities) escaped, and has successfully remained hidden in the dungeon complex under Cahervaniel to the present time. Unfortunately, the leader of the chitine slaves, Caullum, recently gained access into previously unexplored levels of their sanctuary. In the Lower Zone, Caullum disturbed the *Foundingstone* (see "New Magical Items," at the end of this adventure). The *Foundingstone*, in its turn, called flesh from nightmare.

## Adventure Summary & Character Hooks

When the *Foundingstone* woke, a dolmen making up the Circle on the surface fell and shattered. A young shepherd (named Kurt Charbonnier) investigated, and he found that the base of the stone hid a crumbling stairway leading down into the cold earth. When the inquisitive shepherd descended into the hole, he discovered that traps built hundreds of years ago still function.

### Getting the Players Characters Involved:

- One of the heroes is related to the missing shepherd (a niece, cousin, or younger brother).
- A reward (for a sum of 100 gp) is posted in nearby villages and cities attempting to lure a hardy rescue team willing to venture into the ancient spaces below the earth. The adventure begins as a simple rescue effort, but it soon grows to one of exploration.
- The party mascot, Lucky, is missing! Finding the dog reveals the entrance to the dungeon.

### Rumors (overheard in the nearby village of Nouakchoff):

- A black unicorn stood in the Circle [True] the night before one of the stones was knocked over by a shepherd. [False]
- Strange noises and warm winds issue from the gap left by the fallen stone. [True]
- Kurt Charbonnier left a "secret message" scrawled in a stone of the Circle before disappearing. [False]
- Strange beasts have been seen stalking the sheep, but so far the shepherds and sheepdogs have driven them off. No one has really had a good look at the strange beasts, but most agree that the sightings have something to do with the Circle. [True]
- The Devil's Step is the name given to the fallen stone [True]. If someone stands on the stone and says Kurt's name 10 times, an evil creature appears! [False]





## The Circle of Cahervaniel

The Circle represents the tip of a great complex hidden below the earth. For an Age and more, the *Foundingstone* lay quiescent, the keystone of a structure whose ancient purpose was forgotten. Now, the *Foundingstone* dreams of creatures long dead, and by the sorcerous power of the stone these dreams are given life once more.

### Wandering Monsters

The adventure area for *The Shattered Circle* takes place in three distinct zones. The zones are designated as Upper, Middle, and Lower, and they represent the subjective depth of a dungeon level below the earth. While the player characters remain in any one of these zones (the zones are described below), the DM should feel free to check periodically for wandering monsters according to the schedule presented within the Table.

### Shattered Circle Keyed Entries

The Circle and the dungeon beneath it are presented in numbered entries hereafter. Each numbered entry is keyed to the map found on the inside front cover of this product. Many of the entries contain shaded text, which can be read or paraphrased to the players, at the DM's option. Furthermore, some of the entries contain an additional section called "Development," where flow-of-play and Nonplayer Character (NPC) or monster tactics, if any, are presented.

*Considered Advice for the DM:* Though this adventure is written for beginning-level players, it is quite challenging and designed to foster level advancement. Adventurers of low level should withdraw from the underground complex occasionally to heal and recover from wounds. If experience point totals are sufficient for the characters to advance one level, it is recommended that the DM allow the characters the opportunity to advance, even though the adventure is not concluded. The DM might even think of this adventure specifically as a gateway to higher levels for the player characters.

#### I. The Circle of Cahervaniel

White shafts of stone thrust up from the earth, decayed and broken. Their circular arrangement at the top of a grassy hill suggests the last oral remnant of some long-rotted giant in the earth. Though some columns are bent, and others lean against their companion stones in the thirty-foot-diameter circle, only one stone has truly fallen over.

The fallen column is partly shattered, and chunks of stone are scattered down the hillside. The unshattered portion has slid down the hillside as well, looking almost like a disembodied step. A dark gap remains in the earth where the stone recently stood, a black cavity in the truest sense of the word.

Cahervaniel Wandering Monster Table, By Zone

U	M	L	Encounters
1	-	-	chitine 1 HD, (1d4+3), room 4
2	-	-	webbirds, (1d4+1), room 29
3	-	-	large spider, (1d3), room 13
4	1	-	axebeaks, (1), room 30
5	2	-	phantom spiders, (1), room 23
6	3	-	drow 2 HD, (1d2), room 37
	4	1	chitine 2 HD, (1d4), room 13
	5	2	raptors, (1d6), room 48
	6	3	meazel, (1), (unique) room 59
		4	ghouls, (1d2), room 61
		5	m. mouthers, (1d10+10), room 56
		6	black unicorn, (unique), room 63

**The Upper Zone (U)** includes the surface above the dungeon in a radius of about one mile centered on the stone Circle of Cahervaniel. The Upper Zone also incorporates the uppermost dungeon level and is presented in keyed entries 1–34.

**The Middle Zone (M)** includes the central layer of the dungeon, described in the keyed entries 35–47.

**The Lower Zone (L)** includes the bottommost level of the dungeon, described in keyed entries 48–75. Dungeon denizens do not distinguish between areas through Zone terminology—it is an artifact of game design.

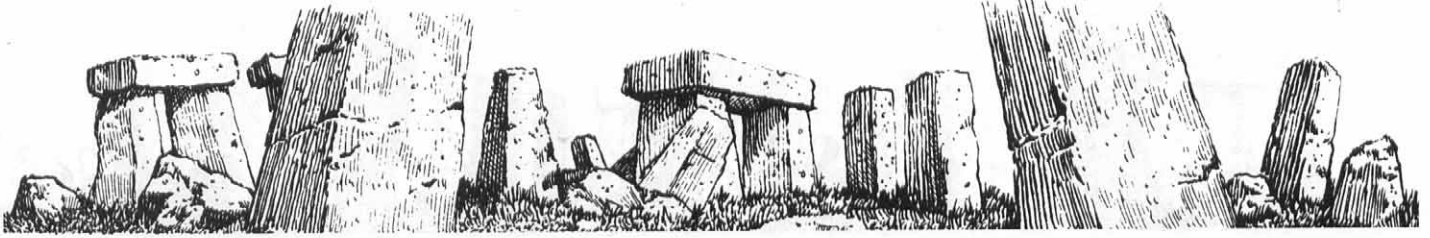
**Using the Table:** Every 4 hours the PCs remain within one of the three zones, the DM should roll a 1d20. If the result of the roll is equal to or between 1–6, an encounter occurs. Any result above 6 indicates that no encounter occurs during the 4-hour period. If an encounter is indicated, keep the number just rolled and matrix it on the banded table above, according to the current location of the player characters. For instance, if the PCs are in **room 5**, they are in the Upper Zone (U), and a roll of 2 indicates an encounter with webbirds. However, if the heroes are in **room 43**, in the Middle Zone (M), a roll of 2 indicates an encounter with phantom spiders.

To conserve space, the statistics for each encounter are not reprinted above, but an entry number appears for each monster type, indicating where a similar creature's statistics can be found elsewhere in the text. The number in parentheses indicates the number of monsters encountered.

Until recently, this hilltop provided tender grazing for sheep and cattle just like other hills and valleys in the area, though the stones often served as convenient landmarks. When one column fell, the situation changed.

Within a 1-mile radius of the circle, grazing is voluntarily curtailed by local shepherds—they fear that unholy influences have begun to seep from the cavity. And they're right—creatures not native to the area have begun to lurk and hunt any who stray too close to the Circle of Cahervaniel (see "Development," below).

**Development:** Wandering monsters appear only during the night; the DM need not check for wandering monsters in the



Upper Zone during daylight. If a wandering monster is encountered after dark, it launches an ambush from behind one of the stones (if possible).

## 2. The Devil's Step

A chunk of white stone has fallen from its position upon the crown of the hill and slid downward some thirty feet. Though the upper portion is completely shattered, the square base forms a rough step about four feet high, five feet wide, and five feet long.

Despite rumors to the contrary, the Devil's Step isn't dangerous in and of itself, nor do arcane rituals unlock dark energies from within this stone.

## 3. The Cavity

A gap measuring five feet on a side remains where an ancient dolmen recently fell. The cavity is utterly dark, however, rounded steps are visible within the gap, plunging into the earth at a steep angle. Cobwebs thick with stone dust, smooth sharp corners, and the smell of earth, moisture, and rot is strong in your nostrils.

These steps descend a total of 100 feet into the earth, only once doubling back upon themselves at a narrow landing. The stairs eventually deposit travelers into **room 4**.

**Development:** Characters attempting to use tracking or similar skills discover that a variety of different creatures have recently moved upon these stairs, disturbing dust and cobwebs. One may very well have been Kurt Charbonnier, but other tracks include creatures with claws and hooves.

## 4. Hall of Mists

A blue haze fills this chamber, making it impossible to see more than a few feet in any direction. The haze smells of strange spice, smoke, and dank copper.

Traps and mechanisms that were rusted and disabled have begun to waken with the energies of the dreaming *Foundingstone*. The blue mist is one manifestation of this effect—it issues from the sculpture framing the door leading to **room 5**. A single mad chitine hides in the mist, ready to attack unsuspecting PCs. The three squares marked on the map with a **T** indicate pit traps.

**Dragon Door:** The chipped sculpture framing the door leading to **room 5** is a foreshortened dragon's head. Inside the stone dragon's gaping maw is the latch to the closed stone door leading to **room 5**. Through the power of the *Foundingstone*, the two hollow nostrils visibly spew the blue mist that curtails vision in this chamber. If stopped up with rags or some other likely material, the blue haze clears within 1 turn. The door itself is locked and opens only with the key found in **room 47** (in the possession of a chitine). Any attempt to pick the lock or magically force the door is unsuccessful and causes

the dragon's nostrils to spew forth green puffs of mist. All PCs within 10 feet of the door must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or take 1d4 points of damage from the vitriolic gas. If the nostrils are stoppered, each attempt to pick the lock has a cumulative 20% chance to blow the stoppering material out, thus forcing all those assembled to make saving throws as just described.

**Chitine In The Mist:** A two-armed (young) chitine named Awa hides in the mist. Chitines are small humanoids who, when fully mature, possess four jointed arms that allow for inhuman movement. Their faces are human, although they have multifaceted eyes and mandibles protruding from their mouths. Long, stringy black hair falls in a tangle from their skulls and grows down their backs like the mane of a horse.

Awa possesses the abilities of a 1st-level Thief, and remains in hiding using his ability to Hide In Shadows (which is enhanced +30% by the mists). If the heroes leave the chamber without encountering Awa (see "Development," below), the chitine sidles up to the last adventurer to leave the room attempting to deliver a backstab with his dragonbone dagger (see "New Magical Items," at the end of this adventure). If possible, he darts back into the mist before the rest of the heroes even realize the nature of the threat.

**Awa (chitine):** AC 6 (web armor & web shield); MV 12, Wb 9; HD 1; hp 5; THAC0 19 (dragonbone dagger); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (dragonbone dagger); SA spin webs, secrete oil; SZ S (4' tall); ML Steady (12); AL LE; XP 60.

S 11, D 13, C 12, I 8, W 7, CH 6.

**Thief abilities (nonstandard):** PP 55, OL 32, DN 50 CW 75, HS 40, MS 40, BS x2.

**Personality (nonstandard):** Insane.

**Special equipment (nonstandard):** Dragonbone dagger.

**Standard equipment:** Hardened web clothing, shield and armor (protects as studded leather + shield).

**Notes:** SA—A chitine can spin sticky spider webbing at the rate of 1 foot/round. The webbing is spun from an orifice in the chitine's stomach. The webbing, in combination with oils secreted from the chitine's body, can be hardened and shaped into a variety of tools, clothing, and traps. A chitine's skin secretes an oil that negates the adhesive effects of their own webbing. Meanwhile, the palms of their hands and soles of their feet are covered in dozens of tiny hooks that allow them to climb textured surfaces with no loss of speed.

**Traps In the Floor:** The three areas on the map tagged with a **T** indicate 10-foot-deep pit traps. The traps are triggered when more than 20 pounds of weight is applied, causing the two sections of the floor to swing down, dropping victims into a pit. Victims have one chance to catch themselves on the edge by making a saving throw vs. paralyzation. Heroes who fail the save fall for 1d2 points of damage. The middle pit is spiked, and heroes who fall into this trap and fail their save suffer puncture wounds from the spikes for an additional 1d4 points of damage. After 3 full turns, the dreamtime power of the *Foundingstone* automatically resets these traps, unless they are physically wedged open.

In addition to metal spikes, the middle pit also holds the remains of Kurt Charbonnier. Unfortunately, the poor shepherd did not make it too far in his explorations before he died. Nothing of informational or physical value can be discovered





by examining the body. If the heroes remove Kurt's body from the dungeon and return him to his family for proper burial, each PC should receive 200 XP as a story award.

**Development:** If Awa the murderous chitine manages to remain in hiding until one or more of the characters stumble into a trap, he quietly moves forward to push remaining heroes into the pit while they help their friends climb out of the trap. If all the characters are in the pit, he stays on the edge and attempts to dislodge any characters who try to climb out of the hole. Climbing PCs who are hit must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation or tumble back into the trap for the appropriate amount of damage.

### 5. Rune Message

The door to this chamber is locked and resists tampering, as detailed under **room 4**. Only the key, in the possession of Garlome in **room 47**, opens this chamber. When the door is opened, read or paraphrase the following text to the players:

A glimmering blue light lines the stone tiles covering this chamber. The chamber is empty, but narrows into a ten-foot-wide aperture to the east, beyond which is darkness. Bold runes are inscribed above this opening.

A message is written in a dead language above the entrance to **room 6**. Characters who have a proficiency in Ancient Languages, a rogue's chance to read languages, or a *comprehend languages* spell or similar magic have the opportunity to decipher the runes: "Let the Respectful Enter Here."

Medium-sized humanoids who crawl or bow while passing between **room 5** and **room 6** avoid the scything iron blade that emerges from the side wall at the 5-foot level. Dwarfs and halflings are generally safe regardless of their positions, while extraordinarily tall humanoids (those 7 feet tall and larger) are still struck even if bowing (although crawling PCs avoid the blade). Those struck by the scything blade must make a saving throw vs. breath weapon or take 1d6+6 points of damage. Those who are killed outright by the blade are decapitated. Once the scything iron blade strikes, it returns to its nearly invisible slot in the wall, retriggering with the next new group or individual who passes between **room 5** and **6** (in either direction).

The blue glow and the energized blade draw their life from the *Foundingstone*.

### 6. Reliquary

If the trap is bypassed, read or paraphrase the following:

A rusted iron tripod is bolted to the floor in the center of a circular, domed chamber. The stone of the chamber appears worn, but the faint suggestion of ancient runes and crude figures is visible. Grasped in the tripod's iron claw is an aquamarine sphere measuring about one foot in diameter. Vapor, like warm breath streaming in the cold air, rolls gently off the sphere but dissipates before reaching the stone floor.

The aquamarine sphere is slightly magical. PCs who place their hands upon it suffer 1 point of damage from its extremely frigid temperature; however, the same PC also hears a mental voice in her mind that says, "*Pyorrhoea*." This is the password that the characters must use in **room 47** to enter into the Lower Zone.

The iron tripod is bolted to the floor, and the aquamarine sphere (perfectly carved of obsidian, with mineral impurities that create the blue-green coloration) is firmly clasped in an iron embrace. Removing the sphere requires a successful Bend Bars roll.

**Development:** If by some feat of strength or magic the obsidian sphere is released, the ice paraelemental bound within it is liberated and returns to its plane of origin. The sphere loses all magical properties in this instance. The paraelemental does not bother the characters (even if attacked); it just fades away across the planes with only this warning: "*Flee this place, if your souls you value.*"

### 7. Abandoned Guard Post

The door to this chamber is locked, although a normal pick locks roll is sufficient to open it. Read or paraphrase the following text to players:

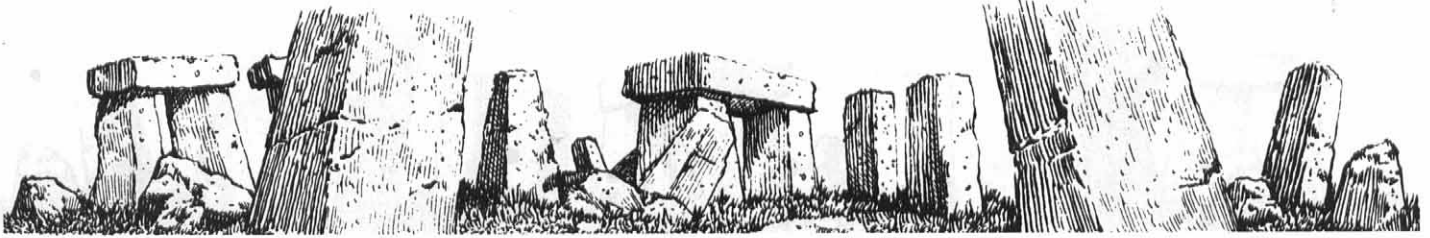
The hinges squeal as the door is pulled open. Within, a tumble of dust and debris cover a toppled stone table and bench. What might be shattered pottery shares the floor with the skeletal remains of several humanoids.

This ancient guard post has not been investigated by the chitine, nor has it more recently been touched by the mad power of the dreaming *Foundingstone*. The bones of the three skeletons in this room are too far gone to accurately judge race, though the remnants found here (bits of rusted weapons, broken shields, etc.) seem to indicate that they may have been guards. Examination alone is insufficient to determine what caused the guards' deaths.

A full search through the debris uncovers a rusted iron key (good for the door leading to this chamber), several yellowed, ivory charms carved to resemble grinning skulls only one-half inch wide, and a total of 13 gold and 36 copper pieces, each bearing words and showing a likeness germane to the ancient civilization that built the stronghold (and so probably unknown to the PCs). All following entries refer to these strange coins as ancient minted gold, silver, and/or copper pieces.

### 8. Weapon Stores

The door to this room is locked and trapped, and unless the trap is successfully detected and removed (or bypassed by pushing a hidden stud), a sharp needle inflicts 1d2 points of damage on the character opening the door (or the character who bungles the attempt to remove the trap). There is a stain upon the needle, but the lethal poison once coating it has evaporated in the Age since living creatures passed through this door. Read or paraphrase the following text if the door is opened:



This ten-foot-square room once held shelves and racks on every wall—though now all the shelves on the eastern and southern walls have collapsed into a tumble of debris and dust on the floor. The racks on the west wall remain intact, and hold several dozen rotted wooden spears with rusted iron tips.

In addition to scores of broken and useless weapons, a thorough search of the room uncovers three long swords, five daggers, one spear, and one two-handed sword that have not rusted to uselessness over time. Though these items are not magical, they are made of superior materials and gain a +2 bonus to saves on the Item Saving Throw table (in the *DUNGEON MASTER*<sup>®</sup> *Guide*) due to their durability. Each weapon bears a carved skull in its pommel or shaft.

### 9. Restricted Hallway

The hallway to the east seems completely blocked by thick strands of pearl-gray webbing.

Divisions exist among the original chitines who fled the drow. Though Caullum proved an able leader, his wakening of the *Foundingstone* and the subsequent appearance of strange creatures and reactivated traps did not sit well with a vocal minority of chitines. Rather than support Caullum, that group of chitines, led by a female called Uelwen (see **room 13**), fled to this section of the Upper Zone and sealed off the passage leading to their temporary dwelling with webs that measure 5 feet in thickness.

Like all unhardened chitine webbing, the webs blocking the passage have been coated with oil (secreted by the chitines themselves) that make the webs resistant to burning (magical fire burns through a 1-foot radius of webbing per spell). The webbing is quite sticky, and contact causes normal items and skin to adhere to the web. Characters and items stuck to the web can pull (or be pulled) free with a successful saving throw vs. paralysis. Those caught *within* the web must make a successful saving throw vs. paralysis for each foot of webbing to be broken through. Carefully applied cutting edges can slice through a 1-foot radius of webbing per round and not become entangled. Attempts to cut any quicker require a successful saving throw vs. paralysis, or the PC and his weapon cling to the web.

**Development:** Two 1-HD chitine guards stand on the east side of the web. If anything breaches the webbing, they attack, while calling for reinforcements from **room 10**. Five 1-HD chitine reinforcements from **room 10** arrive in 3 rounds, and an additional five 1-HD chitines arrive from **room 10** after a total of 6 rounds.

Characters wishing to avoid a fight can call for an armistice via sign language (most chitine speak only drow variants). The assembled chitines refrain from attack until the 2-HD warrior named Vald (who speaks Common) from **room 10** arrives. If the characters agree to drop their weapons, Vald and his warriors escort the heroes to Uelwen in **room 12**, where they can attempt to make an alliance. Of course, if the player characters want a fight or will not meet the chitines demands, a conflict ensues.

**Chitine Guards (2):** AC 6; MV 12, Wb 9; HD 1; hp 6, 3; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (hardened web short swords or hardened web javelins); SA spin webs, secrete oil; SZ S (4' tall); ML Steady (12); AL LE; XP 60.

Notes: See **room 4** for further chitine information.

### 10. Chitine warriors

This chamber normally houses 10 chitine warriors; however, depending on the heroes' actions in **room 9**, this chamber could be completely empty.

This large room is lit with a guttering, pale-green light that flickers from lamps in each corner. The floor of the stone chamber is littered with small bones, shreds of leather, and garbage, though a central ring of stones remains clear, save for ashes of fires past. Ten human-sized web cocoons hang down from the high ceiling, in no particular arrangement, though none hang over the fire pit. A larger cocoon, measuring some ten feet in diameter, hangs from the ceiling near the center of the west wall.

Unless the heroes have already met the chitine warriors in **room 9**, they find a total of 10 battle-hardened chitines in this chamber. If not on alert because of the characters' actions, five are generally arranged around the fire ring (banked embers are protected by a layer of ash) repairing weapons and armor (by application of additional webs and bodily oils to shape and harden the implements). An additional five chitines are resting within the cocoons hanging from the ceiling (unless they've already fought or met the characters in **room 9**).

If any chitines remain here, they attack invaders but hold off aggressions if the PCs made a deal with the chitines in **room 9**. One of the chitines is named Vald, and he is a master of javelin, sword, and many tongues, including Common.

**Vald, Chitine Lieutenant:** AC 4 (Dex bonus); MV 12; HD 2; hp 8; THAC0 17 (Dex bonus for javelin, Str bonus + specialization for sword); #AT 3/2 or 1; Dmg 1d6+3 (specialized in hardened web short sword + Str) or 1d6 (hardened web javelins); SA specialized in short sword (3 attacks/2 rounds); SZ S (4' tall); ML Steady (12); AL LE; XP 95.

S 17, D 16, C 13, I 10, W 10, CH 7 (14 to chitines).

Languages: drow, goblin, common.

Notes: See **room 4** for further chitine information.

**Chitine Guards (9):** AC 6 (web armor & web shield); MV 12, Wb 9; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (hardened web short swords or hardened web javelins); SA spin webs, secrete oil; SZ S (4' tall); ML Steady (12); AL LE; XP 60.

Notes: See **room 4** for further chitine information.

**Web Cocoons:** The 10 smaller web cocoons measure 5 feet in length and 3 feet in diameter. The bottom of each cocoon is 10' above the ground (chitines can crawl on walls and ceilings to reach their cocoons). The cocoons have been treated with oils to render them non-sticky and flame resistant. A slit in the side of each cocoon allows entry into its snug interior, which serves as the personal bed of a chitine warrior. If the PCs



make an effort to search the cocoons, they discover 3d10 silver pieces in each cocoon. Each coin bears an inscription in the drow language ("In Lolth We Trust") and the likeness of a spider on one side and a dark female elf of regal bearing on the other. Each cocoon also has a 20% chance to contain a spare short sword and four javelins crafted of hardened webs. Note that all weapons and armor crafted of chitine webs degrade into uselessness if chitine body oil is not applied to them once per month.

**Large Web Cocoon:** This cocoon shares many of the attributes of the smaller version, save for its larger size, contents, and trapped entrance. The slit that allows entry is trapped with a tension-mounted javelin that, if not detected and successfully removed, automatically strikes the first person to enter the cocoon and inflicts 1d6 points of damage. Once discharged, the trap must be manually reset to function again.

The web cocoon contains extra web-hardened weapons and armor of the chitines, including 10 short swords, 40 javelins, and 10 daggers. Additionally, five web-hardened shields and three sets of web-hardened armor also lie within the chamber.

Players whose characters make a detailed search of the interior of the web can attempt a Find Secret Doors roll. If successful, a subtle lump of webbing is discovered to hide a thin cavity. Within the cavity lies a metallic *shield +1*. Etched upon it is a grinning skull clenching the double-looped sign of eternity in its teeth. Like the weapons discovered in **room 8**, the shield gains a +2 bonus to all save categories on the Item Saving Throw table in the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*. Characters who think to look closely at the weapons from **room 8** are able to see that these tiny skulls also clench the double-looped sign in their small teeth.

## II. Renegade Community Center

The door to this chamber normally hangs open; however, if the player characters have made their way to this point with their swords out, the door is shut and barred from the inside (a successful Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll is necessary to force it open). Read or paraphrase the following text if heroes look in or enter this chamber:

The floor, walls, and ceiling of this chamber are completely cloaked in pearl-gray webbing. Several glass lamps hang by web strands, shedding an appalling green light over the common area of a community of at least twenty spiderlike humanoids. The figures crawl like insects over the floor, walls, and ceiling of the chamber.

There are a total of 24 chitines; however, only four of those are combatants. The rest are too young, too old, too unskilled, and too cowardly to defend themselves in the event of a conflict. Characters who decide to slaughter the noncombatants once the four warriors are killed do not receive any experience points for their efforts, even though chitines are evilly aligned. More to the point, strict DMs may want to assess a penalty of -200 XP on each good-aligned character who participates in such a slaughter.

Those chitines who broke from Caullum to follow Uelwen make the center of their community here. Previously, chitine

hunters would periodically breach the webbing in **room 9** in order to hunt the passageways to the subterranean realm (passageways are described in the Middle Zone). Since the opening to the upper world was created by Caullum's meddling with the *Foundingstone*, the hunters have found it easier to brave the night for untended sheep and wild game above. As such, the bones, hide, and wool of such creatures is a common sight in the chamber, while the haunches of two lambs currently roast on a spit set over a controlled fire in one corner of the chamber.

The open antechamber to the north of this room is similarly webbed and serves as a larder. It currently contains 10 living sheep, several braces of hare hung on a crude rack, and a dead cave lizard (notable due to its 5 feet of length from snout to tail).

**Chitine Combatants (4):** AC 6; MV 12, Wb 9; HD 1; hp 3 (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (hardened web short swords or hardened web javelins); SA spin webs, secrete oil; SZ S (4' tall); ML Steady (12); AL LE; XP 60.

Notes: See **room 4** for further chitine information.

**Chitine Noncombatants (20):** AC 9 (natural AC); MV 9, Wb 6; HD 1-1; hp 1 (average); THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dmg Nil; SA spin webs, secrete oil; SZ S (4' tall); ML Unsteady (5); AL LE; XP 0.

Notes: See **room 4** for further chitine information.

## 12. Deliberation Pod

This chamber contains a single glass lamp set in the center of a low, stone table. The sickly olive light silhouettes several stone benches. If the grooves in the floor are any indication, the benches look as if they have been dragged into this chamber from other areas. A bundle of hide parchment, a bone needle, and a small stoppered clay pot sit upon the table, throwing long shadows on the walls.

This chamber is currently empty. Uelwen utilizes this chamber to talk with her hunters and warriors concerning important matters facing the tiny renegade community. If the characters are escorted here, *sans* weapons, by chitine guards, Uelwen meets the heroes in this chamber. (See **room 13** for details of Uelwen's demeanor and agenda.)

The hide parchment shows a very crude map drawn/gauged by the needle and the ashy ink from the clay pot. The map shows a stone circle atop a hill, some nearby copses of trees and grasslands, and an arrow pointing off the map with fine drow letters written next to it. Translated, the letters read, "small village of humans this way."

## 13. Uelwen's Private Chamber

Characters who arrive unaccompanied by chitine guards, or who have made a lot of noise in **room 12**, find the door to this chamber locked. In fact, a character may hear the lock catch as Uelwen turns the key. A normal pick locks roll opens the door, but does not dispose of the mistress within kindly toward the heroes. Read the following to the players when the door is open:



This room is completely webbed; however, the webbing here is almost translucent, and it faintly glimmers with silver. An elegant human-sized cocoon hangs from the ceiling in the southwest corner of the chamber, while drawers and concavities are deftly woven into the webbing covering the rest of the room.

This is Uelwen's private chamber. The leader of these rogue chitines is willing to parley with the characters if they have been brought to her in the previous chamber, or if they find her here without harming her underlings. If the characters have arrived here with violent intent, Uelwen defends herself quite well (she possesses 2 HD and four arms!), calling upon her two pet spiders (Qod & Qin) and using her egg-sack bombs (see Uelwen's statistics, below).

Besides Uelwen's personal possessions, the room contains hundreds of spider-silk dresses, shirts, breeches, and other fine clothing. Deep in one of the cavities, a spidersilk bag contains 43 drow-minted gold pieces and 2 black sapphires each worth 25 gp.

**Development:** Characters who seek a deal with Uelwen are presented with her agenda: She wants to find a safe haven for her people in the upper world. If the heroes agree to guide Uelwen's chitine community to a remote forest no more than a night's journey from the Circle at some future date (after this adventure is concluded is a good time), Uelwen relates a portion of the background given in the introduction. She does not know the true nature of the dungeon but suspects the previous inhabitants died because of an ancient, implacable evil. She relates that it was Caullum's recent meddling with areas in the Lower Zone that woke this evil again, and strange creatures from bygone days have begun to move in the dungeon corridors. Thus, she led this small group of Chitines as far from Caullum as possible before his machinations brought death for all the escaped chitines. If the characters are particularly civil toward Uelwen, she also agrees to send Vald (see **room 10**) to accompany the characters on their quest into the lower portion of the dungeon. Vald also serves as insurance that the heroes return and help the renegade chitines as promised. If the heroes make a deal with Uelwen rather than fight her, award them a total story XP award double the experience they would have gained in a conflict with her and her two pets.

**Uelwen, Rogue Chitine Leader:** AC 3 (web armor, web shield, and Dex); MV 12, Wb 9; HD 2; hp 16; THAC0 19 (swords), 16 (egg sacs); #AT 3 (short sword) or 2 (javelin); Dmg 1d6 (short sword or javelin); SA spin webs, secrete oil; SZ S (4' tall); ML Steady (12); AL LE; XP 120.

S 14, D 17, C 14, I 15, W 13, CH 8 (16 to chitines).

**Personality:** Will sacrifice anything for her followers.

**Special equipment:** Three egg sacks.

**Standard equipment:** Hardened web clothing, shield and armor (protects as studded leather + shield).

**Notes:** Tactics—Uelwen has three egg sacks that she throws in combat during the same round as two of her other arms make a melee attack. Each egg sac is sticky, and only chitines can effectively throw them. If a successful attack roll is made during combat, the sac sticks to the target. At the beginning of the next round, 100 tiny, white spiders burst forth, crawl over the victim, and bite once before dying. In

total, 1d4+4 points of damage are delivered by all the bites.

SA—See **room 4** for a description of web spinning and oil secretion.

**Qod and Qin, Large Spiders (2):** AC 8; MV 6, Wb 15; HD 1+1; hp 7, 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1 hp + Special (bite); SA spin webs, poison bite; SZ S (2' diameter); ML Unsteady (7); AL N; XP 175.

**Notes:** SA—The large spider's poison is Type A. The onset time is 15 rounds. Victims suffer 15 points of damage, or no damage if a saving throw vs. poison (with a +2 bonus to the roll) is successful.

#### 14. Blasted Area

The rusted iron door to this chamber lies crumpled and off its hinges near the open entry. Inside, the room is blackened and cracked as if some massive explosion occurred long ago. Despite the great heat damage, a strange circle filled with an inscription of blurred and broken runes is partially visible over the entire floor.

The original inhabitants used this chamber as an experimental summoning chamber. Unfortunately, the last experiment apparently got out of hand. Nothing remains in this room to tell inquisitive investigators more.

#### 15. Secret Chamber

This cold stone room is bare of all adornment. A rusted iron chest sits against the far west wall.

As indicated on the map, a pit trap lies just beyond the entrance to this room. The pit trap is in most ways similar to the traps described in **room 4**. A 1-foot-wide lip along both the north and south walls allows careful adventurers to pass the trap without triggering it.

The rusted iron chest served as an emergency supply cache for unsuccessful summonings in the outer chamber (**room 14**). Sorcerers in desperate straits could duck into this chamber, avoid the trap, and open the chest with a key that once hung just outside the chamber on a chain. Sadly, the key is gone, so PCs wishing to open the chest must pick the lock as well as detect and remove the trap. If the chest is opened without first removing the trap, a loud report and the smell of sulfur propels a burst of needle-shrapnel into all creatures in a 10-foot radius of the chest, inflicting 1d6 points of damage (characters who make a successful saving throw vs. death magic dodge the brunt of the trap and suffer only 1 point of damage).

The chest contains three applications of *dust of appearance*, a scroll with a *protection from evil* spell, a *potion of undead control* (ghouls), a *potion of heroism*, and two vials of holy water.

#### 16. Empty Room

Rotting and stained plaster has long ago peeled and flaked away from the walls and the ceiling of this room to reveal rude stone. Broken masonry, statuary, and other oddments are visible beneath the layer of undisturbed dust.



Nothing pertinent to the adventure is found in this chamber.

### 17. History On The Wall

Though much of the plaster that once covered the walls and ceiling of this room has flaked away, a section of yellowing and sagging plaster remains on the southern wall. The damage is almost total; however, a faded design remains visible on the plaster: a skull with the eight-on-its-side symbol of eternity tightly clutched in its teeth.

Besides the design on the wall, nothing of physical note lies in this chamber. On the other hand, the history behind the design is fascinating, and it's possible the characters could discover it by talking with the shade of Pyorrhoea in **room 65** (using the divinatory device located in **room 26** or through other divinatory means the DM provides).

*Another Piece of History:* The sorcerer who constructed this underground complex was called Pyorrhoea. This sorcerer belonged to the root Fey race that predates the multiplication of elven subraces an Age or more past. In his time, few others were better versed in the Language Primeval, the lost language of magic. Pyorrhoea had far-reaching goals that were twisted and evil. In service to these goals, he discovered a singular stone of surpassing power in the heart of a far away mountain. It seemed clear that the stone was not originally part of the mountain, but was somehow deposited there from a realm far removed from familiar spacetimes. Pyorrhoea had the stone removed from the peak and brought to him.

The rough chunk of stone proved resistant to standard rock-working tools; however, a hard-researched phrase in the Language Primeval proved sufficient to shape the stone according to Pyorrhoea's desires. That shape is what still remains depicted on the sagging plaster shard in this room. Calling it the *Foundingstone*, Pyorrhoea interred the stone as the foundation of this complex (in **room 75**). He hoped to ensure his power but actually precipitated his doom and the abandonment of the dungeon so long ago.

### 18. Glowing Webs

There are several rooms keyed to this entry, and the doors to these chambers normally hang open.

This empty chamber would be completely dark but for tattered remnants of luminescent green webs hanging in the corner of the room.

When the group of chitines who now inhabit this dungeon escaped from their drow mistresses, the drow sent several agents and entities after the escapees. One such creature made his lair in this chamber—the webs are a remnant of its past occupation. If any chitines accompany the party, they blanch at the sight of the webs but do not speculate about what could have made them. The webs are actually dangerous to the touch—see **room 23** for more details.

### 19. Free Standing Sculpture

Though slightly eroded and cracked, the sculpture standing in this large alcove is still impressive: a unicorn rears, its head held high. Unfortunately, time and vandalism have apparently robbed the stone unicorn of its horn and its left front leg.

The sculpture does not possess any unusual attributes.

### 20. Barren & Unoccupied

There are several rooms linked to this entry, and none of them provide the adventurers with discoveries.

### 21. Another Sculpture

The sculpture of a rearing unicorn faces the corridor from the depths of a large alcove. Though cracked and somewhat pitted, the statue is essentially intact.

If the horn of this stone unicorn is rotated to the right, the secret door on the east wall opens (nothing else opens the secret door). If the horn is rotated to the left, dark gas streams from the stone unicorn's open mouth. Characters must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or fall into an enchanted slumber. Nothing wakes the sleeper from nightmare-ridden sleep save the passage of 24 hours. Read or paraphrase the following to players whose characters fail their saving throw:

Flashes of purple-green light emanate from a glowing skull-shaped stone set in the wall of a domed chamber. Never-before-seen creatures appear with each flash and move to attack a magnificent white unicorn. The beautiful creature rears, but a strobe of light from the skull pierces its horn, and the unicorn lets out a cry of despair before falling to the ground.

When PCs wake from this dark sleep, they are so unsettled by the experience that they operate at a -1 penalty to all actions for an additional 1d4 hours.

In the hallway beyond the secret door a 10'-deep pit makes passage toward **room 22** hazardous; this trap is similar to the pit traps described in **room 4**.

### 22. Hidden Reserve

Though time has had its way with this small chamber and its contents, it seems that some spell of preservation must be on the wooden casks that line the stone shelves covering this chamber.

A spell of *freshness* still protects the casks of wine in this chamber; however, so much time has passed that most of the wine has turned to vinegar. A determined search through the reserve uncovers 1d3 unsullied 1-gallon wine casks.



The unsullied wine is absolutely incredible. A fragrance like mountain flowers gives way to a palette that is a blend of icy water, manaberries, and the northwind.

The first time a PC imbibes one full goblet of this wine, he is affected as per a *potion of heroism*. Additional wine adds no extra benefit, and in fact, could cancel out the beneficial effect with mere drunkenness. Once the first-time effect fades, additional goblets of the wine, while quite tasty, provide no further beneficial effects.

### 23. Spider, Spider, Burning Bright!

The bone-strewn floor of this chamber is lighted by a net of glowing webs hanging from the ceiling. Although the room is lighted, there is a blot of predatory darkness behind the green mesh.

The webs in this chamber are not tattered like those described in the rooms keyed to **entry 18** because the phantom spider that spun them still tends to their upkeep. In fact, the phantom spider, an unforgiving agent of the drow "bred" from more lethal wraith spiders (Source: *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Annual, Volume II*), still loiters in this chamber and attacks the heroes at the earliest opportunity.

If the heroes manage to defeat the spider, they should leave the phantom webbing alone, as its cold length drains 1d4 hit points in the event of casual contact. Furthermore, living creatures in contact with a strand of webbing must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation or be immobilized for 1d6 rounds, all the while taking 1d4 points of damage per round from the cold. The webs part only to silver or +1 or better weapons, although a successful Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll also breaks a strand (but inflicts damage to the breaker).

**Development:** The spider's phantomlike substance may prove too much for the heroes' means, so retreat might be the only tactic available (although note the phantom spider's weakness to holy water as described in the statistics, below). The phantom spider does not pursue the player characters, unless the characters are accompanied by chitines. In this case, the phantom spider pursues until either it or the chitine are slain. Good PCs who do not abandon chitine associates should earn a suggested 50 XP each as a bonus story award.

**Phantom Spider:** AC 5; MV 18, Wb 18; HD 2+2; hp 10; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bite); SA poison (see below); SD silver or +1 or better weapons to hit, immune to cold-based attacks, *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells; SW holy water, turning (see below); SZ M (4' diameter); ML Champion (15); AL LE; XP 650.

Notes: SA—A successful bite delivers phantom venom that remains active for 1d4+1 rounds in the victim. Each round the venom remains active, the victim must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or temporarily lose 1 point of Constitution. A *slow poison* delays the effects of the venom but does not restore Constitution already lost (but a *neutralize poison* would do the trick). Constitution returns at a rate of 1 point per 24 hours. Victims drained of all Constitution points die and have a 15% chance of rising as phantom spiders.

SW—Holy water thrown at these creatures inflict 2d4 points of damage (as acid) against their phantom bodies. Because of their shadowy nature, phantom spiders are turned as shadows.

### 24. Supported Hall

Several sets of paired alcoves bracket the long corridor ahead. Small pieces of stone rubble spill out on the floor from each cavity, apparently having broken from the sculptures that sit nestled within each space.

The statues within each of the alcoves are larger than human size but depict humanoid figures whose hands are upraised, apparently mimicking the act of holding up the curved ceiling. Time has eroded the figures to the point where most features have been rubbed smooth. A PC who takes the time to study the carvings carefully can make a Wisdom check, by rolling less than or equal to that statistic, in order to recognize what appear to be the suggestions of snakes or tentacles that once covered the figures like fur.

**Development:** As shown on the map, one of the alcoves possesses a secret door. The door is accessed by a switch located on the back of the hulking statue located in the same alcove (the switch itself requires a successful Find Secret Doors roll to access). The switch is trapped with a poison needle; if not successfully detected and removed, the trap injects a poison that inflicts 1d6 points of damage to PCs who fail a saving throw vs. poison. Note that if the *dust of animation* from **room 25** is sprinkled upon any of the statues in this hall, the *animated* statues do not comply with the users' wishes and attack the party instead!

### 25. Sealed Studio

Blocks of stone of all types and sizes squat in this chamber under a patina of undisturbed dust. Some of the blocks are completely square, but many of them show evidence of a sculptor's chisel: Rough heads, arms, faces, and other forms are half-carved into many of the blocks. On the other hand, perhaps the forms are half-freed from imprisoning stone? Besides the unfinished sculptures, a stone workbench sits against the north wall of the chamber. Many stone-working implements are visible upon this bench.

The stone workbench is indeed filled with all manner of stone-workers tools, including chisels of all sizes and head types, hammers, and many patches of rough shark hide. Three small stone drawers apparently hold different grades of polishing sands. Characters who completely pull out the central drawer and look back into the hole see a second drawer pulling.

The hidden drawer is trapped with a scything blade, and if not detected and removed, an over-eager looter must make a saving throw vs. death magic to avoid it. Characters who fail this save lose their hand (and permanently lose 1d2 hit points!). Fast thinking on the part of the lackhand's compatriots will safely tourniquet the hand to stop blood loss (if no tourniquet is applied, the victim of the scythe loses 1 hp to bleeding every round until dead). The hidden drawer contains 56 ancient gold pieces and a clay flask containing two doses of *dust of animation* (when this dust is sprinkled on an inanimate object of less than 14 cubic feet, that object animates as per the 6th-level Priest spell *animate object*).



## 26. Altar of Recollection

The door to this chamber is carved of a single slab of obsidian, and details several faces with open, howling mouths. The doors open normally to reveal the room beyond:

This six-sided chamber is tiled with alternating obsidian and redstone slabs. The ceiling slowly rises to a point twenty feet high, from a height of eight feet at the walls. Directly below the point, a pitted globe hangs, drizzling a wan, faded light. An altar carved of black marble sits directly across from the main entrance, and subtle runes are inscribed upon its smooth surface.

A *continual light* spell still provides some light in the chamber, though it was cast so long ago that the globe upon which it was cast is beginning to disintegrate. Not so the altar, however, which is still partially enchanted. Though it's not clear to whom the altar is dedicated, a successful proficiency check in ancient languages or a *comprehend languages* spell reveals the following message on the altar's top (oriented such that to read the message easily, the reader must be facing the main entrance). Additionally, if the PCs stare at the runes for at least 2 rounds, the runes begin to writhe and tremble until they finally correspond with a language understood by one of the characters. (This effect is caused by the power of the *Foundingstone*.) The runes deliver the following message:

*Who seeks to recall life's past light  
Walks with sufferance to the right.  
Who seeks a test from those bereft  
Walks with reticence to the left.*

**Development:** The "left" referred to in the rhyme above refers to **room 27**. The "right" refers to the long, low alcove to the right. This alcove is open to **room 26**, but its floor appears covered in damp soil to an unknown depth (the true floor of the alcove is 10 feet below the floor of the main room, but loose soil fills it to a level even with the main floor). Furthermore, the ceiling of the alcove is only 3 feet above the cold soil, forcing those of standard height to crawl if they wish to investigate a subtle glow at the alcove's far east end.

The glow comes from the strings of a harp formed of dark-stained wood; it is a *spirit resonator*, and its powers enable communication with those who have died. The harp is called *Euphonious* and is fully described at the end of the adventure under, "New Magical Items."

The damp earth floor hides and covers the harp's current owner—a shriveled and naked zombie that clutches the harp's base in its dead hands. Whoever grasps the harp sees the clutched hand a moment before the zombie's free hand bursts from the earth and reaches for the thief's neck.

**Zombie:** AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (undead claw); SD spell immunities (see below); SW holy water, turning (see below); SZ M (6' tall); ML Fearless (20); AL N; XP 65.

Notes: SD—Zombies are immune to cold-based attacks, *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and other mind-affecting spells.

SW—Zombies can be turned by priests of the appropriate deities, assuming the priest can see the zombie in question (this one remains obscured below loose earth while it attacks). A vial of holy water inflicts 2d4 points of damage to a zombie.

## 27. Watch Your Step

This chamber is filled with the same damp soil that fills the long alcove directly to the east. The faint smell of mildew and earth is faintly detectable.

Prodding the earth with a pole or other long implement from outside the room has no effect, and those PCs with sensitivity to undead or evil are unable to detect either manifestation. Characters who are sensitive to magic or use a *detect magic* spell discover that the damp earth is enchanted.

Heroes who step into the room disappear, along with any objects that are thrown into the room. Everything that disappears in this room appears (via a *teleport* spell) in **room 28**.

**Development:** If characters in **room 28** overcome the test presented there, they appear back in this chamber, at which time they can walk out normally. Heroes who have passed the test offered in **room 28** and returned are not *teleported* back to **room 28** if they enter this chamber again.

## 28. Tests Of The Dead

Read the following text only if the player characters have a light source with them—until a light source is *teleported* in from **room 27**, those who arrive here sit in cold darkness.

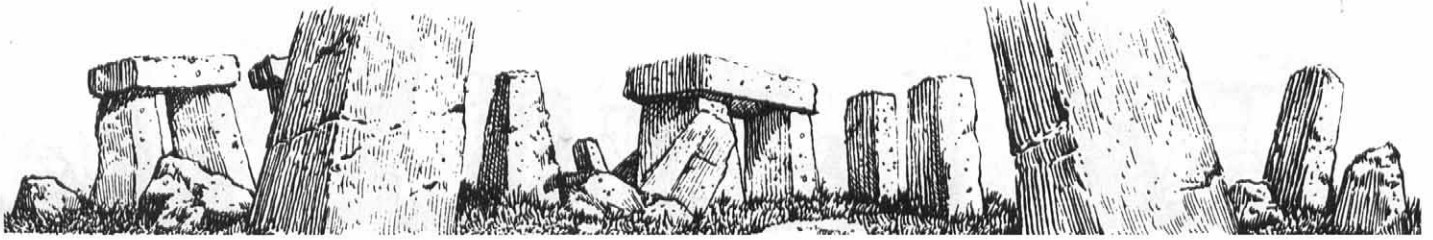
You appear in a twenty-foot by twenty-foot square chamber of stone. The depth of the floor is difficult to determine because of the thick layer of loose soil that covers it. The ceiling here is low and hangs only seven feet above the dark earth. A darkened skull sits in a tiny alcove in the center of the west wall.

This chamber becomes a tomb for those who do not have the harp, *Euphonious*, with them. Without the ability to talk to the spirit associated with the inert skull visible in the alcove, there is no exit from the chamber.

Characters who have followed the rhyme in the proper order from **room 26** and have *Euphonious* with them can attempt to speak with the spirit of the skull. If contacted, the eyes of the skull glow with a greenish sparkle, while the strings of the harp vibrate like a larynx to produce this statement in the harp holder's native language:

*"Your presence here constitutes your agreement to the Tests. Choose your measure: Test by Strife, or Test by Wit?"*

The spirit in the skull is called Norgard, and it was once a confederate of Pyorrhoea until betrayed and forced to become just another element of Pyorrhoea's mad schemes. Recently revitalized by energies streaming from the *Foundingstone* below, Norgard offers two tests; the characters can choose one. Norgard refuses to answer questions, except to



restate his original challenge. If the heroes pass either test, they are *teleported* back to **room 27**. If all of the characters fail either test, they (or their bodies) remain in this chamber forever.

**Test of Wit:** If the heroes choose the Test of Wit, Norgard says, "Answer me this and free you shall be. Think well, for the wrong answer means you remain here with me."

**The Question:** A tormented soul sought to escape the House of Pain but was not privy to the password. The spirit observed a few other souls who managed to escape. When the first soul knocked to be let out, the door-wight hissed "twelve," the soul answered, "six." When the second soul knocked, the door-wight spit, "six," the soul answered, "three." The tormented soul saw a pattern, so it approached the exit and knocked to be let out. The door-wight coughed, "ten," the poor soul answered, "five." It was unable to escape the House of Pain. Why?

**The Answer:** The correct password was, "three" because there are three letters in the word, "ten."

If characters answer the riddle correctly, Norgard sighs while forcing a leather bag to the surface (see bag contents, below). The spirit then *teleports* the PCs back to **room 27**. If they answer incorrectly, Norgard does not talk to the heroes again, despite *Euphionous*. Unless outside intervention occurs, the heroes are in for a long, hungry stay.

**Test of Strife:** If the heroes choose the Test of Strife, Norgard says, "Survive this challenge, and free you shall be. Your deaths will be regarded as failure." Norgard then triggers two zombies (three zombies if the average party level is 2nd, and four zombies if the average party level is 3rd) that lie unmoving 6 feet below the earth to burrow forth and attack the heroes. If any hero survives, a leather bag emerges from the earth like a deflated worm. One round later, all the characters, living and dead, are *teleported* back to **room 27**.

The bag is a *bag of holding*, and it contains 150 gp, 4 sapphires (each worth 25 gp), and a *potion of undead control*.

**Zombies (2-4):** AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 12 (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SD spell immunities; SW holy water, turning; SZ M (6' tall); ML Fearless (20); AL N; XP 65.

Notes: The zombies in this room turn as shadows. See **room 26** for further zombie information.

## 29. Minor Infestation

The door to this chamber is slightly ajar, and it is stuck that way. A successful Open Doors roll closes or opens the door.

This room contains several stone benches and a toppled and broken book shelf, all covered in dust. The four corners of the room contain thick swaths of webbing, measuring at least five feet in diameter. Lying in the center of the room are a few long-rotted humanoid forms.

The chitines brought webbirds (Source: *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM ANNUAL, Volume II*) with them when they fled the drow and now husband them in coops for meat (see **room 45**). Webbirds look like a cross between a bird and an arachnid. Unfortunately, a few webbirds flew the coop and are now

found throughout the dungeon. The 12 webbirds in this room attack any non-chitines who enter.

The dead humanoids were once prospecting derro who wandered up into this level from the Middle Zone, only to become "nurseries" for hatching webbirds: Their bodies are mostly hollow. If the PCs use *Euphionous*, they learn that these derro saw a vast chitine city in the level down from here, but they discovered nothing else about the complex before they died.

A thorough search of the chamber, which involves lifting the fallen bookshelf, reveals a single, undamaged bone scroll-case containing a priest's scroll. The scroll is ancient, but it contains a spell recognizable as *protection from evil*.

**Webbirds (12):** AC 8; MV 3, Fl 18 (B); HD ½; hp 1 (average); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1 (bite); SA immobilizing webs, egg insertion (see below); SW flees open fire (including torches); SZ S (5" long, 1' wingspan); ML Unsteady (7); Int Semi-(2-4); AL N; XP 65.

Notes: SA—A flock of webbirds (minimum of three) attack with 12-foot-long strands of sticky webbing. The victim of an attack must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation or be immobilized for 1d4+4 rounds (creatures with Strength of 18 or higher break free in 1 round). For every three webbirds attacking one victim, the victim's save accrues a -1 penalty. The webs are immune to fire, but any alcoholic beverage dissolves the material in 1 round.

Once a victim is immobilized, 1d3 webbirds land on the victim to feed and lay eggs. Each webbird causes 1 point of damage per round while nibbling and also begins to inject eggs into the victim, a process that takes 3 full rounds to complete. Once injected, the eggs hatch into grubs in 1d4+2 turns and begin feeding voraciously. Each grub inflicts 1 point of damage per round, eventually killing the host. This is a painful process, and the host must make a successful saving throw vs. death magic each round to take any action other than screaming and writhing. The eggs and/or grubs can be killed prior to the victim's death with a *cure disease* spell or a poultice administered following successful herbalism and healing proficiency checks.

## 30. Creatures Out of Time

This door is normally half open as well. Pulling the door completely open brings a tremendous honk of alarm from within that echoes throughout the entire complex! Roll for a wandering monster encounter immediately.

The dust of this chamber is much disturbed. Stone fragments and debris have been crudely formed into a rocky nest in the southwest corner of the chamber.

The two creatures that inhabit this room are not natural underground dwellers, nor did they appear in this dungeon from the surface. They were called out of time by the evil dreams of the *Foundingstone*. Though extinct in the world above, the 7-foot-tall flightless, carnivorous birds that nest in this chamber lived in vast numbers when the *Foundingstone* was first brought to this dungeon. A sage with an interest in paleontology would call one of these predators an axebeak (Source: *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM ANNUAL, Volume II, "Pleistocene animal"*). The axebeaks attack any PCs who disturb





them. Though called from a dream, they are now entirely flesh and very dangerous.

The nest contains two unhatched axebeak eggs (worth 50 gp each to the right sage or exotic animal trainer) and a few shiny trinkets that the axebeaks salvaged from the debris in the chamber when making their nest: a total of 35 gp, 131 sp, four sealed crystal vials each containing a *potion of healing*, and a bone ring (a *ring of animal friendship* with 12 charges).

**Axebeaks (2):** AC 6; MV 18; HD 3; hp 18, 21; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/2d4 (claw/claw/bite); SZ L (7' tall); Int Animal (1); ML Unsteady (7); AL N; XP 120.

### 31. Trapped Corridor

Only the widened hallway suggests anything out of the ordinary, at least until the pit trap in the southwest portion of this area is sprung. This pit trap operates the same as those described in **room 4**, except that a search of the bottom of this one reveals bones, bits of decayed leather armor, and four *arrows +2*.

### 32. Secret Room

The latch that opens this door is trapped with a poison-tipped needle. If the trap is not detected and successfully removed, the victim is stung for 1 point of damage and must make a successful saving throw vs. poison to avoid an additional 1d6 points of damage.

The air here is dry and stale, but strangely cold. Dust coats every surface, including a rough block of some crystalline substance. The dust-covered block stands several feet tall and measures a few feet to a side. A large blot of darkness mars the center of the translucent, dust shrouded object.

The block is made of ice and is magically enchanted to remain frozen. If the dust is wiped away, the blot reveals itself to be a frozen oily mass. Scrutiny reveals bulges and bubbles within the oily blot; however, visual inspection alone is not sufficient to identify the anomaly.

The blot is a frozen gibbering moulder (Source: *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM ANNUAL, Volume I*). When the *Foundingstone* was first brought into the structure, its unchecked powers created and summoned entities from darkest nightmare. At first, these monsters were caught and studied, especially the ones that first appeared (see **room 56**). However, the *Foundingstone's* dream-born monstrosities slowly grew in power, and eventually they overran the complex, killing Pyorrhoea's staff. When the elders were dead, the abominations turned on each other until only a few remained.

Leaving the ice block alone is the safest course. Any attack that damages the ice block (even just chipping off a piece of ice) causes it to melt. If left unaided, it takes 24 hours for the block to melt. Of course, over-curious characters can accelerate this process by chipping and applying heat. When the block is melted, one way or another, all the bubbles and bulges on the block open to reveal either eyes or mouths, as

the ravenously hungry amoeboid creature surges forward to feast, gibbering insanely all the while! The gibbering moulder pursues the PCs throughout the dungeon, but thankfully, it moves slowly.

**Gibbering moulder (1):** AC 1; MV 3; HD 4+3; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 6+; Dmg 1 (x6) (bite (x6)); SA gibbering, spit, bite (see below); SD ground control (see below); SW salt; SZ M (5' tall); ML Elite (13); AL N; XP 975.

Notes: SA—The gibbering babble of this creature forces all first-time hearers to make a successful saving throw vs. spell (once per combat) or else suffer a temporary mental break as follows (roll 1d8): 1—victim wanders aimlessly for 1 round; 2 to 5—victim is stunned motionless for 1 round; 6 to 7—victim attacks nearest living creature for 1 round; 8—victim runs in fear for 2 rounds.

Every 1d4 rounds of combat a moulder spits flaring saliva upon the floor. Onlookers must make a successful saving throw vs. petrification to avoid blindness. Blindness lasts for 1d3 rounds.

Any mouth attack that succeeds by more than 2 indicates attachment to the victim, and it "hits" automatically every round thereafter. When three or more mouths are attached to a single victim, that character is pulled down, unless she makes a successful saving throw vs. death magic each round. The moulder flows over fallen victims and bites with 12 mouths, gaining a +4 bonus on attack rolls against its prone opponent. If a victim reaches 0 hp, she is absorbed into the moulder, giving the creature another mouth and a pair of eyes, as well as 1 extra permanent hp. If the moulder's maximum hp allotment is exceeded (according to its HD), it divides into two separate moulders, each with half the hit points of the original.

SD—A moulder can liquefy earth or stone beneath it in a 5-foot radius, forming quicksand. Liquefaction requires 1 round to turn stone to earth, and ½ round to turn earth to quicksand. Characters in melee range begin to sink into the quicksand at a rate of 1 foot per combat round. Once a character begins sinking, her movement rates drops by 2 for every foot sunk, automatically dropping to 0 when the character is chest deep. A victim can attempt a saving throw vs. paralysis each round to avoid sinking further that round or to get clear altogether; this is only possible if no other actions are taken in the same round (such as attacking or defending). Gibbering moulders automatically flow over characters who have sunk chest deep in liquefied earth.

SW—Moulders can not stand salt. They will not move over a surface that is sprinkled with a thick layer of salt, and they must check morale each time more than a handful of salt is sprinkled upon them. If forced into continuous contact with salt, moulders take 1d4 points of damage per round until dead.

### 33. Spiral Stair Down

This spiral stair is cracked and dusty, although there are signs of recent traffic. Unfortunately, all the recent traffic prevents Rangers from divining a single track through the dust.

The spiral stair descends about 20 feet before breaking into the ceiling of a large cavern (see Middle Zone Map). The spiral stair hugs the edge of the cavern all the way down (some 60 feet). From the steps, flashes of light are briefly visible, and characters can detect snatches of strange music, as well as occasional scents both gruesome and familiar.

The stairs connect down to **room 36** in the Middle Zone.



### 34. Stair Down Wall

This standard stone stair descends some 20 feet toward the east before breaking into the ceiling of a large cavern (see Middle Zone Map). The stair is carved into the side of the cavern, though there is no railing along the side to protect against a fall (approximately a 60-foot drop).

**Development:** The chitines inhabiting this level have posted two guards on a 10-foot-by-10-foot stone shelf about 30 feet above the uppermost switchback (chitines can climb walls like spiders). The normal blaze of a torch does not quite allow adventurers to see the guards above them; however, the two guards can see the party without any trouble at all, and when the characters have reached the first switchback, the chitines launch their javelins. Attacking from above, the chitines gain a +1 bonus to their attack rolls. Against characters attempting to scale the stone wall, the chitines are at an additional +4 to hit (for a total of +5). A normal climb up to the shelf takes 1 full round, but if climbers take any damage from a javelin, they must make a successful saving throw vs. death magic or lose their grip and fall. If a second saving throw vs. death magic is successful, the characters take only 1d6 points of damage as they fall back upon the stairs. If the second saving throw is failed, the climbers miss the stairs and fall all the way to the cavern floor (about 50 feet) for 5d6 points of damage.

The stairs connect down to **room 35** in the Middle Zone.

**Chitine Guards (2):** AC 6; MV 12, Wb 9; HD 2; hp 8, 10; THAC0 19; #AT 3 (short sword) or 2 (javelin); Dmg 1d6 (hardened web short swords or hardened web javelin); SA spin webs, secrete oil; SZ S (4' tall); ML Steady (12); AL LE; XP 120.

**Equipment:** Each guard has a total of 12 javelins, as well as web-hardened armor, shield, and miscellany.

Notes: See **room 4** for further chitine information.

### 35. Stair Up Wall

This cavern's feature of note appears to be the unnatural smoothness of the northern wall, along which a narrow stair ascends. At least one switchback is visible above.

This stair leads to **room 34**; refer to this room for details of the dangers that could assault the PCs as they climb upward.

### 36. Angel's Sfaircase

In an otherwise unremarkable cavern, a spiral staircase carved from the living rock stands as a testament to the skills of ancient stoneworkers. Though connections to the wall are frequent, the overall effect is that of a freestanding work of delicate art, rising up into the darkness.

The spiral stairs connect up to **room 33**. This chamber is empty, save for the corpses of two chitine guards! Apparently some other nasty creature has done them in. In fact, the murderers hide in the connected chamber (**room 37**), planning their next move.

The chitine bodies have already been looted of all valuables, including the distinctive hardened web weapons and armor.

### 37. Hunters In The Dark

The edges and ceiling of this large cavern are lost in darkness, but edging into visibility is a forest of stalagmites, thrusting up from the cavern's floor like a petrified forest.

Two drow bounty hunters on the trail of the renegade chitine have recently discovered the tunnel leading up to this dungeon (**room 38**). Having slain the first two chitine they met back in **room 36**, the dark elves have retreated to this otherwise empty chamber to plan and observe.

The drow are capable warriors, and remain hidden among the stalagmites unless they are surprised by chitines or the player characters. The drow accost the PCs from the shadows, bringing their slender but deadly blades to bear. If the PCs call for parley, the drow call off their attack (at the DM's option) to listen to what the heroes have to say. It may very well be that they resume their deadly attack once they have heard the heroes out!

**Development:** A couple of options are available to cunning and/or diplomatic characters. The heroes may seek a brief alliance with these drow if they agree to help the drow gather more intelligence about the camp. Of course, any chitines who see drow with the PCs rightfully assume that they are in league with the dark elves. The chitine attack both groups indiscriminately in this case. Also, drow are nothing if not evil and treacherous. Any deal with the drow, though seemingly fruitful in the short term, ends in betrayal.

On the other hand, if PCs fight and defeat the drow, and take tokens of their victory with them, they can parley these tokens into signs of safe passage through chitine controlled areas.

**Drow bounty hunters (2):** AC 4; MV 12; HD 2; hp 14 each (average); THAC0 18 (*long sword* +1); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1 (*long sword* +1) or hand crossbow (1d3 + poison); SA (see below); SW (see below); MR 52%; SZ M (5' tall); ML Elite (14); Int High (13-14); AL CE; XP 650.

**Special Drow Equipment:** *Cloak and boots of elvenkind* (only 75% to Hide in Shadows and surprise), *chainmail* +1, *buckler* +1, *long sword* +1, *dagger* +1 (Drow magical items lose all bonuses when brought into sunlight), *dart crossbow* (180' maximum range, poisoned darts render victims unconscious unless a successful saving throw vs. poison with a -4 penalty is made).

Notes: Drow possess 120' infravision and the ability to use *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, and *darkness* once per day.

All Drow can detect the grade or slope of a passage and new tunnel construction (1-5 on d6), sliding/shifting walls or rooms (1-4 on d6), and stonework traps, pits, and deadfalls, as well as their approximate depth underground (1-3 on d6). Drow can also detect secret doors (1 on a d6 in passing or 1-3 on d6 if actively searching). A dark elf can be surprised only on a roll of 1 on a d10.

In bright light (sunlight or *continual light*), Drow operate at a -2 penalty to Dexterity scores, saving throws, and attack rolls, while



those standing in bright light when attacked by Drow gain a +2 bonus to saving throws.

### 38. Deeper

The tunnel gradually grows rougher to the west. It appears that webbing once completely blocked the passage here, but a large gap now allows access. The light of a nauseous green lantern reveals two chitines in the tunnel who are trying to reblock the access with webbing. Beyond the gap, the tunnel descends steeply and begins to fluctuate in width and height.

Unless the PCs go out of their way to get the attention of the chitine repair crew, the creatures do not notice them. If the chitines do become aware of the characters (which automatically happens if the heroes try to pass through the gap), they react violently.

The tunnel connects to the underdeep. It is a natural passage into and out of the dungeon. The chitines used it to gain entrance into the dungeon, and now they use it for their regular hunting and gathering forays into the underdeep, as do other tunnel vermin and monsters found in the dungeon. The underworld areas beyond the tunnel are outside of the scope of this adventure.

**Chitine warriors (2):** AC 6; MV 12, Wb 9; HD 1; hp 5, 7; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (hardened web short swords or hardened web javelins); SA spin webs, secrete oil; SZ S (4' tall); ML Steady (12); AL LE; XP 60.

Notes: See **room 4** for further chitine information.

### 39. Lake Darkshade

The flowstone walls of this mighty cavern descend to meet the edges of a dark and ominous subterranean lake. The odor of fungus and moisture is strong in the air, and the crystalline sound of what can only be rushing water resounds through the chamber, though its origin is lost to the darkness filling the space above the lake to the southwest. Directly to the south, a glimmer of green light twinkles out on the water. A small skiff is tied to a wooden post near the water's edge.

A subterranean river feeds into this cavern in the western wall of this large chamber, creating a 30-foot-long and 10-foot-wide waterfall. Though quite scenic, the waterfall is out of range, unless the PCs move out onto the lake or have an extremely strong light source (or *infravision*).

The chitines from **room 46** use the lake as a water source and for other purposes (see "Development," below). The water is quite shallow in some areas, and in others areas it reaches a depth of several hundred feet. In fact, seepage from the lake has invaded the Lower Zone in a few areas. However, the majority of the Lower Zone has been spared flooding due to the lake's diagonal plunge to the southwest.

Adventurers eager to take a dip discover that the water is inhabited by a large catfish. Anyone swimming in the lake is savagely attacked from below once they have made it about

half way across (assuming the swimmer is making for the island discussed below in, "Development").

**Development:** The island at the southern end of the lake is rough, rocky, and perpetually misted by the nearby waterfall. Because of these discomforts, the chitine use it as a prison for those offenders of public order that are not killed immediately. Once every other day, a small skiff is brought out to the lake, upon which food is brought to prisoners. Currently, only a single prisoner resides on the cold lonely isle: A sneaking deep-gnome thief called Clinker.

Clinker found the dungeon only a week ago and was quite surprised to find it inhabited by chitine. Vaguely aware of the bounty, Clinker made to leave with visions of drow gold dancing before his eyes, but he was captured by the Chitine and put out on this island until the time came to deal with him (in all likelihood, "deal" is a euphemism for death).

Basically, Clinker throws in with the party if they rescue him from the island. He's a sneaky sort, but is loyal to the party who saves him, especially because he's completely terrified of the catfish in the lake, which he superstitiously calls it "Infeirnillo." Clinker carries a metal flask of distilled spirits, which he reverently refers to as "Old Death Whisper." The deep gnome is liable to take a swig from the flask after a challenge is overcome. Clinker offers to share, but cautions, "Only take a sip. A drop too much and you'll go blind in your left eye!" True to his word, the draught, though nipping on the heels of 200 proof, is not a particularly clean distillation, and over consumption could lead to blindness!

**Large Catfish, "Infeirnillo" (1):** AC 7; MV Sw 18; HD 4; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (bite); SZ L (7' long); Int Animal (1); ML Average (9); AL N; XP 1,000.

**Clinker, male deep gnome thief:** AC 2 (armor + natural hide); MV 9; HD 3; hp 12; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA thief abilities (see below), *infravision*, casts *blindness*, *blur*, *change self* and *nondetection* 1/day; MR 20%; SZ S (3 1/2' tall); ML Elite (13); AL NG; XP 420.

S 14, D 14, C 12, I 11, W 10, CH 9.

**Thief abilities:** PP 65, DN 4 CW 75, HS 50, MS 50; backstab (x2 damage).

**Personality:** Boozy, obsessed with knives.

**Standard equipment:** Dagger, leather armor, shield, 123 drow-minted gold pieces.

### 40. Fungus Garden

Bioluminescent fungi coats the walls and ceiling of this natural cavern, illuminating a fungal garden. Underworld lichens, fungi, toadstools, mushrooms, and unclassifiable growths run riot in this chamber. The smells range from pleasant to revolting, and a strange whining and crying seems to emanate from the north.

The chitines tend this fungal garden to supplement their underdeep game and webbird stew. A hero with the herbalism proficiency has an opportunity to find ingredients for salves, poultices, and other herbal remedies here, on a successful herbalism check. The strange noises emanate from the opening leading into **room 41**.



**Development:** There is a 15% chance per 3 hours that a group of 1d4 chitines enter this area on a mushroom-gathering run. Such chitines are likely to react violently to the presence of upworlders in their garden patch. This check (and those like it in subsequent rooms) is made in addition to the standard wandering monster check.

**Chitine mushroom pickers (1d4):** AC 6; MV 12, Wb 9; HD 2; hp 8, 10; THAC0 19; #AT 3 (short sword) or 2 (javelin); Dmg 1d6 (hardened web short swords or hardened web javelin); SA spin webs, secrete oil; SZ S (4' tall); ML Steady (12); AL LE; XP 120.

**Equipment:** Hardened web armor, shield, sword, and one javelin each. A small leather bag contains the lonely stems of the last mushroom run.

Notes: See **room 4** for further chitine information.

#### 41. Fickle Finger of Fate

A rocky protuberance erupts from the earth in the center of this chamber, looking for all the world like a giant's hand clenched tight but for one finger. Like the adjoining chamber, this room is also lit by softly glowing fungus, though the growth here is more restrained. Growing all around the finger are strange fungal puff balls that shiver and shake. The puffballs emit a continuous vegetable wail.

Specially bred shriekers have been introduced to this chamber. Unlike most such fungi, these shriekers constantly emit a low wail; however, if disturbed by nonculinary experts, they emit a piercing shriek of exceptional proportions for 1-3 rounds. The noise is 50% likely to bring a creature from the Wandering Monster table found on page 4.

Even without disturbing the shriekers, there is a 15% chance per 3 hours that chitines intent on gathering or gardening enter this chamber (see **room 40** for details and statistics).

#### 42. Mine Outpost

Several crude hand carts and barrows sit in this chamber. The barrows to the southwest are mostly filled with some pale, crumbling stone, while carts closer to the two eastern offshoot tunnels are empty. Along the south wall, a shelf woven of flexible gray fiber contains several old, rusted, and damaged mining tools—though a few picks here and there appear somewhat serviceable. The body of a large flightless bird lies near the northwest passage, apparently killed by dropped mining picks.

The chitines have a salt tooth, and upon discovery of the two salt domes to the east, they set up a small mining operation. The only mining tools they possess are those that they have secretly traded for from nearby subterranean races.

The body is that of an axebeak. The miners subdued it and then left the area. However, there is a 15% chance per 3 hours that 1d4 chitine miners return to their duties (use the statistics provided in **room 40** for chitine miners).

A close look at the axebeak reveals that it has less feathers

than a bird normally possesses, but more scales. More disturbing, this specimen seems to have small teeth in its mouth.

#### 43. Salt Dome

Veins of white, brittle salt lace this cavern. The rock shows obvious signs of having been worked and mined. In addition to scratches and chips, etchings of runes and crude pictures are gouged into the floor.

The miners are gone for the moment, but they stand a 15% chance per 3 hours of returning. The engravings on the floor may be difficult for unschooled adventurers to decipher. Characters who can read drow recognize the engravings as names (they are chitine names), while those with a proficiency in religion, stonemasonry, or mining recognize the crude pictures of a hulking stone figure to represent Ogmach, an elemental lord of the earth. Apparently the chitine miners superstitiously offer these carvings to placate the lord of stone so that their "theft of salt" from the earth does not anger him.

#### 44. Haunted Salt Dome

This chamber appears almost identical to the previous entry (see boxed text for **room 43**), with one exception:

A thin finger of fresh exploratory mining to the southwest reveals a figure caught in the midst of a salt vein. The figure is humanoid but so mummified that it is impossible to determine its race. The entire surface of its rigid body is encrusted in salt.

With the discovery of the salt mummy, the chitines stopped mining in this area, fearing to wake what the earth had hid for so long. In the absence of the *Foundingstone's* power, the chitines' fear would be groundless, but with otherworldly energy coiling and infusing the dungeon, the millennial salt-encrusted corpse proves dangerous to curious heroes.

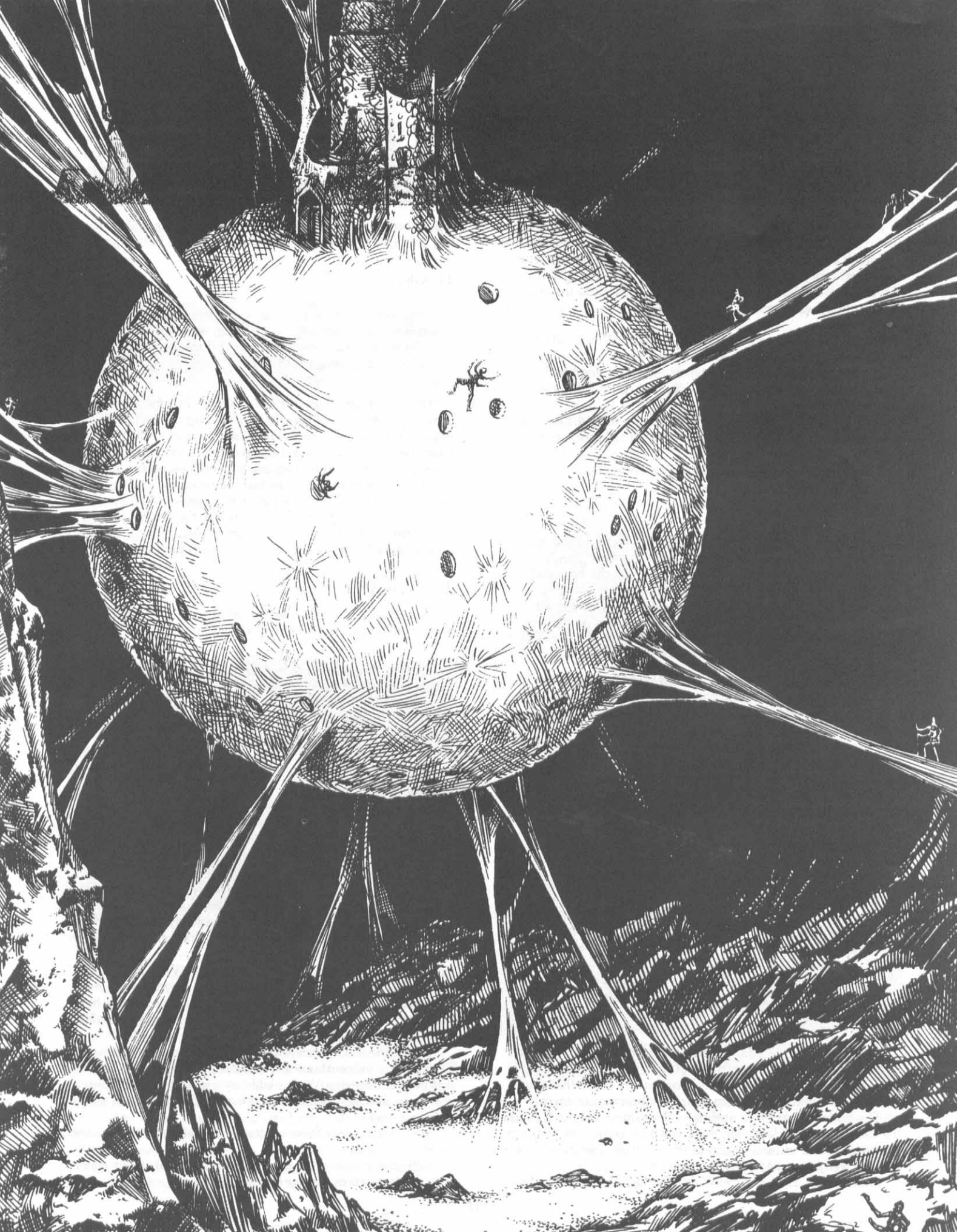
The corpse has recently been pushed over the undead threshold and dramatically opens its eyes and animates if touched; the shuddering crack as it breaks free of the salt vein is a dreadful thing to hear. The salt mummy's attack inflicts direct damage and causes severe dehydration (Source: New).

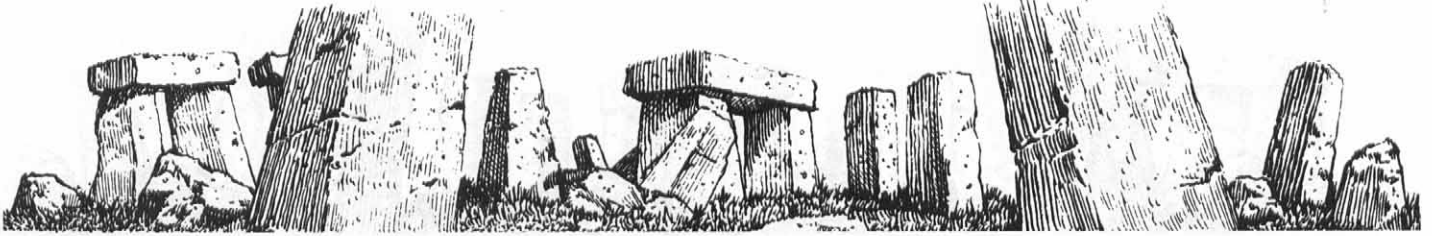
**Salt Mummy:** AC 4 (encrusted salt); MV 6; HD 3+2; hp 23; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (salt crystal claws); SA dehydration (see below); SD spell immunities (see below); SW holy water, turning (see below); SZ M (6' tall); ML Fearless (20); AL N; XP 175.

Notes: SA—Each touch of a salt mummy requires a successful saving throw vs. petrification to avoid dehydration for an additional 1d8 points of damage. Victims killed by a salt mummy completely dehydrate into rigid, salt-encrusted corpses that animate as salt mummies in 3 days.

SD—Immune to cold-based attacks, *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and other mind-affecting spells.

SW—Salt mummies are turned as ghouls. A vial of holy water inflicts 2d4 points of damage to a salt mummy.





#### 45. The Coop

Flowstone and scalloped bedrock give way to intricate formations in this cavern; however, it is the vast roof of interwoven web that first draws the eye—that and the hundreds of tiny forms that crawl over it.

As indicated in **room 29**, the chitines keep webbirds for food, and this is their coop. The half avian, half arachnid creatures that remain in this chamber are generally “domesticated”—at least in the presence of chitines. Non-chitines who linger in this chamber for more than 3 rounds draw the attack of 1d12 “wild” webbirds from among the hundreds that roost above. For every additional 3 rounds spent in this chamber, 1d12 more webbirds wing down to attack.

**Webbirds (1-12):** AC 8; MV 3, Fl 18 (B); HD 1/2; hp 1 (average); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1 (bite); SA immobilizing webs, egg insertion; SW flees open fire; SZ S (5' long, 1' wingspan); ML Unsteady (7); Int Semi (2-4); AL N; XP 65.

Notes: See **room 29** for full details.

#### 46. Hello, City!

The tunnel opens into a truly vast cavern. The sloping side walls sprout cave pearls and gypsum flowers, while the cavern's ceiling is an inverted forest of calcite stalagmites. These features pale in comparison to the grotto's most impressive, artificial feature—a roughly spherical mass of webbing over one hundred feet in diameter that hangs suspended in the center of the cavity by thousands of weblines thicker than cables. The anchoring weblines are secured equally to floor, walls, and ceiling of this immense grotto.

Small web tunnels pierce the sphere over its entire surface, save for the upper curve of the sphere, which appears to be reserved for several low structures and squat towers that protrude from the webbing. Points of green light shine forth from the tower tops, and indeed, from the mouths of many of the web tunnels, providing sufficient light to illuminate the entire cavern.

Like ants on dropped sweetmeat, the entire web mass swarms with four-armed humanoid forms, although those on the upper curve appear to walk normally among the small structures. Real spiders of all sizes are also visible among the humanoids.

To the south of the suspended web city, the refuse-littered floor of the cave drops away into a deep, wide gap.

Unless player characters attempt to draw attention to themselves from their initial vantage point, the denizens of the city above take no immediate notice of the adventurers at the lintel, nor do they take notice of quiet heroes picking along the shadowed, refuse-strewn floor of the cavern. This anonymity is probably the PCs best hope in crossing this cavern without arousing all the chitine inhabitants to melee. If chitine loyal to Uelwen of the Upper Zone accompany the players, they suggest this approach. If the chitine of the Middle Zone see the

player characters in league with chitine of the Upper Zone, they class the characters as enemies.

At its lowest point, the chitine city hangs 20 feet above the floor of the cavern. The anchoring weblines and the city itself are composed of flame-resistant webbing. In the same vein, the weblines that suspend the city are not terribly adherent, so player characters with a mind to do so could climb up into the city proper, although this would certainly attract the attention of the city chitine when the heroes reach the sphere proper.

Unless the PCs attempt to deal with the chitine in a diplomatic manner (see “Development,” below), climbing up into the city, or engaging in a loud conflict on the floor of this cavern, or otherwise gaining the attention of the populace above with the intention of engaging in melee is a bad idea. A total of 200 chitine inhabit the massive web sphere, and of them, 100 chitine are of the 1-HD variety (see **room 4** for further information), while 50 chitine are of the 2-HD variety (see **room 10** for further information). Additionally, 100 large spider pets also live in the city and are available to defend it (see **room 13** for large spider statistics). The rest are noncombatants for one reason or another (see **room 11** for statistics) and do not fight. If a conflict does arise that the PCs cannot diplomatically avert or flee from, 1d10 chitine arrive every round from the city, climbing down weblines or “free belaying” to the ground on personally spun webs.

Some PCs will put themselves into mortal jeopardy despite all the evidence to the contrary. Heroes who do not flee the growing force of chitines (retreating back to the Upper Zone and temporarily out of the dungeon curtails pursuit) can be allowed one last chance to surrender, in which case the characters are tightly trussed in webbing and brought up into a holding pod in the city for an eventual interview with the acting Web-Father in Caullum's absence.

**Development:** The chitines call their city “Habairra,” which translates from the drow as “Freehome of Craft.” If PCs seek to talk with the chitine, they need to prove their friendship by displaying tokens of their sincerity, such as drow trophies (see **room 37**). If the heroes have such trophies, or swear to acquire them in the near future, an armed escort of 20 chitines escorts the heroes to the acting Web-Father, Cyten.

Cyten claims a central tower spike on the surface of Habairra's sphere, in the midst of the market. The tower's interior is lit by an overhanging crystal lamp that spills green light over the richly tapestried walls (woven of web, of course). Cyten always keeps a force of twenty 2-HD chitine warriors with him (Cyten himself is also a 2-HD chitine).

Cyten grants heroes a pardon for invading the chitine realm, even if they have slain chitine before now, if they reaffirm their enmity to drow and agree to scour the chamber for suspected drow presence. If the PCs already have evidence of a successful victory over drow forces, Cyten allows them to go about their business. He gives the PCs a chitine token (a mandible bone carved with drow runes) that proclaims the players under the protection of Caullum and his people (of course, this token has the opposite effect on those chitine loyal to Uelwen in the Upper Zone).

Questions about the nature of the dungeon are answered to the best of Cyten's ability (see the background presented on page 2 of this adventure), but Cyten knows only the history of his own people, not the true nature of the dungeon. Cyten



also tells the heroes that the true leader of the renegade Chitine is Caullum.

Cyten tells the adventurers that Caullum was long interested in the sealed portal at the bottom of Caullum's Pit (**room 47**). Just a short while ago, Caullum somehow managed to penetrate the seal (Cyten does not know how) and has been exploring the ancient region beyond. Finally, the acting leader says that since Caullum has "gone below," strange creatures have appeared in the corridors, and some of them are quite dangerous. At Caullum's express orders, the acting Web-Father has not sent a rescue force after the renegade leader.

If PCs express interest in following Caullum, Cyten does not hinder them; however, he does not offer any aid beyond the token described above.

**Cyten, acting Web-Father:** AC 4 (web armor, web shield, and Dex); MV 12, Wb 9; HD 2; hp 13; THAC0 19 (swords), 16 (egg sacs); #AT 3 (short sword) or 2 (javelin); Dmg 1d6 (hardened web short sword or hardened web javelin); SA spin webs, secrete oil; SZ S (4' tall); ML Steady (12); AL LE; XP 120. S 15, D 16, C 11, I 12, W 10, CH 7 (12 to chitines).

*Personality:* Uncertain, cautious.

*Special equipment:* Five egg sacks.

*Standard equipment:* Hardened web clothing, shield, and armor (protects as studded leather + shield).

Notes: See **room 13** for description of egg sacks. See **room 4** for description of web spinning and oil secretion.

#### 47. Caullum's Pit

A cliff-like scree separates the upper cavern (**room 46**) from this area. The scree is 50 feet deep. Characters proficient in mountaineering or rogues with the Climb Walls ability use their standard ability to descend the scree successfully. All other climbers must attempt Dexterity checks at a -4 penalty. Climbers who fail a check, slide and tumble down the slope, suffering 1d6+1 points of damage. Worse, if any PC is successfully navigating the scree below a PC who fails a check, the resultant small "avalanche" of loose rock accompanying the sliding PC forces the other character(s) to make another check to avoid the same fate.

Read the following boxed text to players whose characters have reached the bottom of the pit:

Eroded blocks of stone protrude from the southern wall of the cavern, forming an exposed hallway leading deeper. The end of the uncovered hall is sealed by a door of black iron. A figure in pale robes kneels before the black door in a position of supplication.

The kneeling figure is Garlome, a chitine who waits for his master's return. Garlome rises to his feet if the characters approach but remains silent until addressed. Garlome wears the key to **room 5** on a web thong around his neck.

The stone blocks protruding from the cavern wall are 5 feet thick, and the iron door is magically warded to open only when the proper password is spoken: "Pyorrhoea" (see **room 6**). If the password is spoken, the door silently swings wide, revealing the hallway leading toward **room 48** of the Lower Zone.

The black iron door cannot be opened by any other means, including a *knock* spell. In fact, characters who attempt to pick locks or use magic to open the door must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or receive 1 point of damage as a bolt of ebony lightning leaps from the defensive door.

**Development:** Garlome knows the common tongue and talks with the heroes. If asked, he explains that he waits for his master to return from beyond the door, and that Caullum learned the necessary arcane Word of Opening in the Upper Zone in a room accessible only by use of the key around Garlome's neck.

Garlome does not share any concern expressed over Caullum's absence. If shown evidence of the horrors that are awakening in the chitine refuge, possibly because of Caullum's actions, Garlome responds by explaining that these perturbations only signal the coming ascendance of the chitine race!

Garlome absolutely refuses to give the key to the party, and he fights viciously to keep it if attacked.

**Garlome:** AC 0 (web armor +2, web shield, & Dex); MV 12, Wb 9; HD 3; hp 21; THAC0 17 (short sword +1); #AT 3; Dmg 1d6+1 (x3) (short sword +1); SA spin webs, secrete oil; SZ S (4' tall); ML Fearless (20); AL LE; XP 175.

S 15, D 18, C 13, I 12, W 7, CH 5 (12 to chitines).

*Personality:* Obsessed, worshipful.

*Special equipment:* Hardened web armor +2, 3 short swords +1 (all chitine magical items decay without monthly application of chitine oil).

*Standard equipment:* Hardened web clothing, shield

SA—See **room 4** for information on web spinning and oil secretion.

#### 48. Welcome To My Nightmare

This large chamber is tiled in pale, red stone; however, a strange radiance swirls across the floor, walls, and ceiling of the chamber like a thin layer of dandelion seeds blowing in the wind. Though the light this radiance provides is very dim, it is sufficient to reveal the forms of several creatures in savage but silent confrontation.

The radiance is a byproduct of the power of the *Foundingstone*. If given the opportunity, the radiance expands into the upper regions of the dungeon, and eventually, to the surface.

At first glance, the creatures appear to be bigger versions of the axebeaks already encountered by the adventurers; however, a few more moments of observation shows them to be completely featherless. Instead, their skin is scaled and horned, their mouths full of daggerlike teeth, their "wings" are small, grasping arms, and their walking legs are massive and tipped by terrible ripping talons. These creatures are an order of magnitude older than the axebeaks of the Upper Zone, and they have been extinct for millions of years. They are deinonychus, or raptors, and they were ripped effortlessly from the time stream by the growing dream strength of the *Foundingstone* (Source: *MONSTROUS MANUAL*™).

Though these creatures have turned upon each other for lack of food, the arrival of the player characters is sufficient



cause for the raptors in this chamber to form a brief alliance; all three turn upon the heroes and attack!

*Traps in the floor:* The two areas on the map tagged with a T indicate 20-foot-deep pit traps. The traps trigger when more than 20 pounds is applied, causing the two sections of the floor to swing down and drop victims into the pit. Victims have one chance to catch themselves on the edge by making a successful saving throw vs. paralysis. Heroes who fail the save fall for 1d2 points of damage. After 3 full turns, the dreamtime power of the *Foundingstone* automatically resets these traps, unless they are physically wedged open.

Every pit on the lower level has a 40% chance to contain a dream-summoned creature. If a creature is indicated, roll on the Wandering Monster table (on page 4) for the Lower Zone, and deposit one creature of the type rolled for here. Unless the DM is feeling particularly cruel, or she wants to challenge a victim, the monster at the bottom of the pit is dead.

**Deinonychus, "raptor" (3):** AC 4; MV 21; HD 4+1; hp 17, 25, 33; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/2d4 (claw/claw/bite); SA jump, rake (see below); SZ L (6' tall, 12' long); Int Animal (1); ML Steady (11); AL N; XP 270.

Notes: SA—The *Deinonychus* attacks with a charging leap, gaining a +2 bonus on its initial attack roll. It has a vertical jump of 10 feet and a horizontal jump of 20 feet.

If the *Deinonychus* faces a large creature, it attempts to jump on top of its opponent. If it hits with both its rear legs, the raptor remains attached, automatically raking each round for a total of 2d6 points of damage and gaining a +4 to each bite attack while attached.

#### 49. Half Drowned

The pale radiance that seeps up from the stone is muted in this chamber; the entire western portion of the stone room is under water. Though the water appears only knee deep, it is still and fetid. The whiff of stagnation only confirms the green sheen on the water's surface.

Seepage from the subterranean lake above (room 39) has half drowned this room, as well as the rooms and hallway to the west. Because of the vile influence of the *Foundingstone*, algae and other agents of eutrophication prosper in the still water. The resultant thick, green strands of lake algae hide the true depth of the water, but at least in this chamber, the water reaches no deeper than 2 feet.

#### 50. Statue

The weak illumination reveals rubble and a black marble statue situated in the center of the east wall. The statue might be humanoid, but it is so eroded that it is difficult to make out what it represents.

Study of the marble statue suggests that it might represent some cross between a centaur and a unicorn. Tracks from what may be webbed or flippers feet are noted by those PCs who make a successful tracking roll.

#### 51. Language Is Liquid

The stone chamber is knee-deep in thick, stagnant water. The damp and rot of the water destroyed the tiles that covered the walls in this chamber, although a few pieces still adhere to the wall here and there. Strange runes are visible on the tiles that are still attached to the wall.

The 5-inch-by-5-inch tiles that once decorated the walls of this chamber each contained a letter in the ancient language used by *Pyorrhoea* (knowledge of ancient languages or appropriate spells may allow the PCs to recognize an odd letter here and there). When assembled on the wall, the tiles spelled out *Pyorrhoea's* mad plans; thankfully, that record was erased by time's uncaring hand.

#### 52. Deeper

As the level of the hallway noticeably slopes down toward the west, the knee-deep water grows higher. In fact, the hallway appears to be completely drowned farther ahead. The faint glow that sparkles along the stones is almost completely extinguished here.

The dotted line on the map shows where the downward sloping passage is completely drowned in water. Five weed-wrapped humanoids, called *draels*, linger within the water near the air/water demarcation point. If the heroes ever manage to get a good look at one, a *drael* has loose, rubbery, and hairless skin. Its hands are webbed and clawed, and its feet end in flippers. A *drael's* head looks like some terrible cross between a human head and a diseased frog. Because of their aquatic nature and chameleon-like flesh, *draels* are 90% undetectable to characters who are specifically looking for threats. The five *draels* wait for characters to fully submerge themselves in the water before savagely attacking.

*A Little Drael History:* *Draels* are an amphibious race of humanoids that do not appear in sages' texts or archeological records (Source: New). In fact, they are creatures drawn purely from the nightmares of the *Foundingstone*, that mixed real prehistoric races with warped memories of things old before the world was shaped. In any event, *draels* are completely passionless and alien. Their minds are not accessible to spells of *ESP* or the like, and their croaking language does not resolve through the filter of *comprehend languages* or *tongues*.

**Draels (5):** AC 9; MV 9, Sw 14, Leap 15; HD 2; hp 10 (average); THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1/1/1d4; (claw/claw/bite); SA -3 penalty to opponents' surprise roll, *cause disease* (see below); SD chameleon skin (see below); SZ M (5' tall); Int Low (6); ML Steady (12); AL NE; XP 270.

Notes: SA—*Drael* claws and teeth are often clotted with rotting meat from past meals. Characters who take any damage from a *drael* in combat must make a successful save vs. death magic or catch a slow wasting disease that drains one point of Strength and one point of Constitution each day. The disease is treatable by one knowledge-





able with healing and herbalism proficiencies (on a successful check). A *cure disease* spell also proves efficacious. Lost Strength and Constitution points return at a rate of 2 per day. Untreated characters die when a statistic reaches zero.

SD—A drael's froggy skin can subtly change hue and texture. In watery environments unmoving drael are 90% undetectable. The moment a drael begins to move, this protection is broken.

**Development:** Refer to the Quick Water Rules below for resolving combat under water.

### 53. Cafeteria

This room is completely underwater. Characters who have no way of surviving underwater can attempt to swim through as quickly as possible.

Faint radiance from the walls provides sufficient light to see by, though the sight is not a pretty one. Scraps of bone, hide, and organic pieces normally found inside the skin float throughout this chamber. Floating near the ceiling of the drowned chamber are three large raptor bodies, half eaten and half rotted.

The drael usually feed in this room, and the raptor bodies are all that remain of a recent feast.

### 54. Nurseries

It's difficult to determine what is mere shadow thrown off from the glowing walls, but it seems clear that there are hundreds of tiny forms flitting back and forth through this chamber, for all the world looking almost like tadpoles.

Though generated purely from malice and prehistoric memories, the drael are fertile, and they are beginning to breed. Each chamber keyed to this entry contains 10d20 tadpoles, which if allowed to grow, become healthy drael in one year. Each room contains the corpse of some long-dead dreamlost creature, of which both the drael and the drael tadpoles depend on for nutrition. The tadpoles are easily dispatched, having no ability to defend themselves.

Each one of these chambers also holds four drael adults that attack heroes on sight. Note that a fight in any one of these rooms draws the drael from all connecting rooms at a rate of 1d4 drael every 3 rounds.

**Draels (4):** AC 9; MV 9, Sw 14, Leap 15; HD 2; hp 10 each (average); THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1/1/1d4; (claw/claw/bite); SA -3 penalty to opponents' surprise roll, *cause disease*; SD chameleon skin; SZ M (5' tall); Int Low (6); ML Steady (12); AL NE; XP 270.

Notes: See **room 52** for further drael information.

### 55. Northwestern Porch

The pale radiance that seeps up from the stone is muted in this chamber; the entire western portion of the stone room is under water. Though the water appears only knee deep, it is still and fetid. The whiff of stagnation only confirms the green sheen on the water's surface.

The southeastern portion of this room ends not in a corner but in a slightly convex plane of stone. Set into the stone is an iron door, carved with all manner of disturbing hieroglyphics. Above the door, three miniature iron skulls are set into the stone, each clenching the symbol of eternity in its iron teeth. A stud emerges from the wall beneath the leftmost skull.

If the stud is depressed, the eyes of the leftmost skull light up with a cool, blue radiance. Simultaneously, the eyes of the leftmost skull in **rooms 60** and **74** also light up. The eyesockets in this and the other two rooms remain lighted for 30 full days after the stud is depressed. If the light goes out, the stud must be pressed again to light the skull. If the eyeholes of the middle and rightmost skull are also lighted (accomplished by depressing the studs in **rooms 60** and **74**, respectively), the door to the chamber beyond can be pushed open. If any other skull is not lit, the door here refuses to budge to human strength, magic, or attempts to pick locks (there is no standard lock).

### 56. Outer Defenses

A pit trap, similar in all ways to the traps described in **room 48**, lies immediately to the south of the northern entrance to this room.

## Quick Water Rules

**Hold breath, prepared:**  $\frac{1}{3}$  Con in rounds.

**Hold breath, encumbered and/or exerting self:**  $\frac{1}{6}$  Con in rounds.

**Hold breath, exerting and unprepared:**  $\frac{1}{12}$  Con in rounds (minimum 1 round).

**Underwater melee:** Only thrusting attacks are effective. PCs are assessed a -4 penalty to initiative and all attacks suffer a -4 penalty to hit. Additionally, *all* weapon specialization effects are nullified. At the DM's discretion, some weapons wielded by land-dwellers inflict reduced damage.

**Underwater missiles:** Thrown weapons are ineffective, crossbows and similar weapons operate at 1/10 normal range.

**Underwater spell casting, verbal components:** It's impossible to properly articulate sounds underwater while *water breathing*; spells or items such as *airy water*, *underwater action*, or *free action* are necessary (casting a spell while holding one's breath is possible, but diminishes the store of air held in the lungs by 1 full round).

**Underwater spell casting, material components:** Many material components are ruined by water; DM's discretion required.



The faint trickle of light in this chamber illuminates strange reddish-green stains upon the walls. More pressing are the dozens of small, amoebic polyps that flagellate and pulsate near the southern exit to this chamber, apparently attempting to cross an erratic zone scattered with white powder. The most disturbing quality of the polyps is the quite humanlike mouth they each possess on their "bellies," and the occasional muttering that issues from these orifices.

Unless PCs take pains to move silently, the polyps, called muttering mouters (Source: Newly derived from the gibbering mouter; see **room 32**), desist their attempts at crossing the whitish barrier (a line of salt) and turn to deal with the intruders, assuming the PCs arrive from the northern entrance.

The line of salt (see dotted line on map) looks very thin in some places, as if perpetual rubbing by pseudopodia has been slowly effective. The creature that laid it down (see **room 59**) had best return soon, or its defense in this room fails, freeing the muttering mouters to advance upon its gauntlet.

Like most of the strangeness encountered below the Circle of Cahervaniel, the muttering mouters are a side effect of the wakening *Foundingstone*. Unlike many of the ancient prehistoric creatures summoned, the muttering mouters obviously hail from a time so far gone that even basic biological characteristics had not yet developed. Of course, that does not explain the humanlike mouth possessed by each.

**Development:** Though the bulk of the muttering mouters attack *en masse*, a few of the mouters secretly attempt to climb into a character's bag, the folds of a robe, the back of a shield, or the top of a pole. Each PC has one chance to gain an unwanted stowaway, based on his or her saving throw vs. the flaring spit that can momentarily blind the heroes (see muttering mouter statistics, below). If the save is successful, that PC avoids infestation. If the saving throw fails, that character now unknowingly carries a muttering mouter.

A stowaway mouter remains hidden and silent until such time as it would be most inconvenient for it to show itself. (For instance, when a PC reaches into his pack for a potion) A more horrific time to appear is when the characters bed down. The PC on watch happens to glance over at her sleeping companions just in time (or not, if a saving throw vs. spell is failed) to see a little mouthing polyp quietly ease its way out of a pack and go for the neck of its carrier. Another possibility: After a suitable period of restraint, an infested PC hears a mutter, curse, or his name spoken at infrequent intervals. It is a muttering mouter cunningly hidden somewhere in the PC's belongings, though the hero must figure this out for himself or eventually face a midnight attack as described above.

**Muttering mouters (24):** AC 10; MV 6; HD 1/2; hp 1 (average); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1 (bite); SA spit (see below); SW salt (see below); SZ S (6" diameter); ML Elite (13); AL NE; XP 35.

Notes: SA—Once per day a mouter spits flaring saliva upon the floor. Onlookers must make a saving throw vs. petrification to avoid blindness. Blindness lasts for 1d3 rounds.

SW—Mouters can not stand salt. They will not move over a surface that is sprinkled with a thick layer of salt, and must check morale each time more than a handful of salt is sprinkled upon them. If forced into continuous contact with salt, mouters take 1d4 points of damage per round until dead.

## 57. Another Trap

This large chamber appears almost empty. Languid pulses of witchlight play beneath the crumbling stone surfaces of the room, illuminating a roughly stitched hide bag that sits unattended in the northwest corner of the room.

The bag is filled with salt, and it was placed here by the occupant of **room 59**, who uses it to deter amoeboid incursions to the north. If the bag is completely dumped out, and the salt crystals sorted, three rough diamonds each worth 35 gp are discovered.

The 10-foot-by-10-foot section of the ceiling immediately above the entrance to **room 58** is trapped. Hachioji, a skilled underdeep trapper, worked long and hard to loosen the stone in the ceiling here. Unless the trap is detected and successfully removed (involving a small trip wire made of hair in the floor and wall), the ceiling comes crashing down on anyone who moves into the area before the entrance causing 2d4 points of damage. Characters who make a successful saving throw vs. petrification react quickly enough to avoid all but 1d2 points of damage.

## 58. Chop Shop

The eerie light from the floor reveals a long chamber apparently used for butchering. One dead skinned raptor hangs from the ceiling on hide thongs near the northern wall of the chamber, and the floor and nearby wall is stained with blood. A fire pit is currently unlit, and a smoking rack laden with choice cuts hangs above it.

Hachioji (see **room 59**) crudely butchers the victims of his frequent hunts in this chamber and then smokes them for later use. Other than crude bone cutting implements and smoked raptor meat (not bad!), nothing of exceptional interest is found here.

## 59. Hachioji's Lair

The pull ring on the door leading to this chamber from **room 58** is trapped with contact poison applied by Hachioji. Though immune to it himself, if a PC comes in contact with the poison, she must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or take 1d6 points of damage as a burning sensation flows up her arm and toward her heart.

Thick layers of mud and less wholesome substances streak the floor, walls, and ceiling of this chamber, substantially reducing the natural light leaking from the stones. In effect, swathes of light are separated by bands of shadow.



Situated squarely within one lighted area is a small bed of moss, a pile of hide bags, and several stone implements. A hide blanket on the bed of moss is distended, suggestively like the form of a sleeping figure.

“Suggestively” is the key phrase from the description above. In fact, the bulge is a ruse concocted from a heap of rolled up hide. Hachioji is also present in the room but using his ability to Hide In Shadows. Hachioji watches PCs who enter the room for just a round or two before moving silently behind a likely target and applying a garrote (see Hachioji’s statistics, below).

A few useful items are scattered among Hachioji’s possessions, including tufts of dried meat, pretty rocks, and mummified trophies of past kills. Useful items include: a clay pot containing three applications of contact poison in a resinous base (PCs must make a successful save vs. poison or take 1d6 points of damage), a pouch of fine grade salt, and three more rough diamonds each worth 10 gp. Hachioji currently wears magical boots described below.

**Development:** Hachioji is a creature of the underdeep. Other races sometimes call them meazels, if they call them anything at all (Source: *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual, Volume III*). It is a vicious, malevolent creature that preys on other subterranean dwellers (if Clinker accompanies the party, he begins to squeal, “Kill it, kill it” upon first sighting the meazel). Hachioji is a 5-foot-tall humanoid with dark green skin blotched with irregular patches of angry red, giving him a leprous appearance. His eyes are jet black and his thick, waxy hair is green. His toes are partially webbed.

Hachioji attempts to kill one character quickly, then flee at his maximum movement rate (using his *boots of speed*). As soon as he is out of sight of the heroes, he uses all of his abilities of hiding and moving silently to stay clear of the party until they are vulnerable again. This means that Hachioji launches guerrilla attacks against the rearmost party member in a marching order, then flees. This also means that he attacks heroes who have bedded down for rest, silently disposing of the PC on watch so that he can pick off the rest of the sleeping characters at his leisure! If the player characters can not eradicate Hachioji before their final encounter with Caullum in **room 75**, the meazel may just make a treacherous rear attack against the party just when they can least afford it, at the DM’s option.

**Hachioji, male meazel:** AC 8; MV 24 (*boots of speed*); HD 4; hp 25; THAC0 17 (13 from behind); #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (claw/claw) or strangulation (see below); SA strangulation, thief’s abilities (see below); SD thief’s abilities; SZ M (5’ tall); ML Steady (12); AL CE; XP 120.

*Thief abilities* (nonstandard): PP 45, OL 37, DN 15, CW 88, HS 70, MS 70, F/RT 35.

*Personality:* Predator.

*Special equipment:* *Boots of speed*.

Notes: SA—Strangulation. If Hachioji approaches from the rear and surprises the victim, a successful attack roll means that the meazel has garrotted the victim, wrapping a crushing cord around the victim’s neck and windpipe. The victim dies in 2 rounds unless the meazel relaxes his grip. Hachioji relaxes his grip only if he is dead or

breaks morale (after being attacked), or if the victim breaks the cord (requiring a successful saving throw vs. death magic).

## 60. Northeastern Porch

The southwestern portion of this room ends in a slightly convex plane of stone, in which is set an iron door. The door features relief sculptures of skulls and several unidentifiable, but disturbing, figures. Above the door, three miniature iron skulls are set into the stone, each clenching the symbol of eternity in its iron teeth. A stud emerges from the wall beneath the central skull.

If the stud is depressed, the eyes of the central skull light up with a cool, blue radiance. Simultaneously, the eyes of the central skull in **rooms 55 and 74** also light up. The eyesockets in this and the other two rooms remain lighted for 30 full days after the stud is depressed. If the light goes out, the stud must be pressed again to light the skull. If the eyeholes of the leftmost and rightmost skull are also lighted (accomplished by depressing the studs in **rooms 55 and 74**, respectively), the door to the chamber beyond can be pushed open. If any other skull is unlighted, the doors here refuse to budge to human strength, magic, or attempts to pick locks (there is no standard lock).

## 61. Ghouls In The Earth

Loose soil covers the floor of this chamber, and steep mounds of earth block most of the walls. Only the ceiling remains completely bare of earth, and the witchlight it provides is only sufficient to create a pervasive dimness. Two stone doors stand in the southern wall, and from around their edges, bright flashes of light glint at irregular intervals.

When the *Foundingstone* first rose to power an Age ago, the bodies buried here transcended death and pulled the flooring down into the earth to free themselves. The creatures are ghouls, and when PCs enter this chamber, two of the ghouls surface in the dirt and attack by clawing with their filthy nails and biting with their fangs.

**Development:** If any character becomes paralyzed by the ghouls’ supernatural touch, the remaining two ghouls in the earth attempt to draw the victim below as a tasty snack. Friends of the victim can grab hold of a sinking companion and delay the victim from being drawn below the earth while a grip is maintained; a successful save vs. death magic actually rips the victim free of the ghoulish grip. If unaided by compatriots above, a character is drawn completely below the soil after 2 full rounds. Though the ghouls apparently have the ability to move through the soil as if it were water, the heroes must dig. Unfortunately, the ghouls below the earth begin feasting immediately, and unless characters have a shovel, it’s unlikely they will dig down the 6 feet they need to reach the level of their companions in the time it takes for a paralyzed character to become ghoulish food.

Attempts to use *Euphonious* on the ghouls automatically fail; do not count the attempted use against the total number of uses allowed per week.



**Ghouls (4):** AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 8 (average); THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6 (claw/claw/bite); SA paralyzation; SD spell immunities (see below); SW *protection from evil*, turning (see below); SZ M (6' tall); ML Fearless (20); AL N; XP 175.

Notes: SA—A ghoul's touch inflicts paralysis upon humans and demihumans (excluding elves), unless a saving throw vs. paralyzation is successful. Paralysis lasts for 1d6+2 rounds. Any human or demihuman (except elves) killed by a ghoul becomes a ghoul in 3 day's time unless the body is *blessed*. Of course, ghoul victims are usually eaten before such a thing could occur.

SD—Ghouls are immune to cold-based attacks, *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and other mind-affecting spells.

SW—Ghouls can be turned by priests of the appropriate deities. A *protection from evil* spell keeps ghouls completely at bay.

## 62. Light And Darkness

Stone debris clutter the floor here. It is difficult to tell exactly what the room contains, because the lighting in the chamber is erratic. Across a thirty-foot gap, two half-crumpled statues of rampant unicorns face each other in the southwestern and southeastern corners of the chamber, half nestled into alcoves. Every few seconds, one of the statues strobes with light, then slowly fades into complete darkness. The overall effect causes shadows to jump and writhe strangely at the behest of the strobe.

The power of the *Foundingstone* to lend luminosity to the stone of the dungeon is concentrated in this room into the two statues described above. When each statue reaches a certain storage capacity, it discharges the energy in a violent strobe of light. The stone itself is not magical *per se*, and nothing tangible is immediately noticeable here. Scrutiny of the statues reveals the last crumbling remains of black lacquer—these statues were apparently painted black at some ancient date, but even that has worn away by time's scouring hand.

If the heroes have a lighted torch, lantern, or magical light source, that source strobes and fades in synchronicity with the strobing statues. As long as a light source remains in this room (and in **room 63**) it continues to be so affected.

**Development:** PCs who look down the flight of stairs to the south see that the descending hallway is also lit by the strobing light (see **room 63**, below).

## 63. I Saw It On The Stairwell

The strobing light lances down the stairwell from above, but even the brightest pulse is too short-lived to provide sufficient light to see farther than ten feet without distortion. Between strobes, true darkness reverberates like the ebony heart of night. Something stands upon the landing, and from light pulse to light pulse it appears that the figure spontaneously shifts form between that of a biped to that of a four-footed beast of midnight black. Before a heartbeat passes, it gives voice to a wail of inhuman proportions like nothing you have ever heard before.

The form on the landing, called Mizar, is a manifestation of the *Foundingstone's* dark power, and it is back from the sleep of a millennium since its last arousal. (For some insight into its haunting, tortured scream, see the opening quote on page 2.) Sadly, the figure is a corruption of what once was good (see **room 64**).

As soon as any hero puts foot to the stairwell, Mizar moves to attack, flipping instantaneously back and forth between a full-fledged black unicorn and a dark centaur with a single unicorn horn on its forehead. Even after it engages in combat, the dark figure continues its instantaneous polar transformations, the details of which are hidden in the darkness that separates each flash of light.

**Development:** The strobing light is very disorienting—all PCs fight at a -1 on all attack rolls. The flickering light also makes it very difficult to notice the door to **room 64**; treat it as a concealed door. If Mizar pursues fleeing PCs outside the area of the strobing lights (this room and **room 62**), it remains locked in whatever configuration it last held, either unicorn or centaur, until it returns to this area.

Mizar fights in deadly earnest and seems to mouth a phrase over and over (while it is in centaur form). A PC can attempt to roll lower than her Intelligence to realize that the creature is mouthing "Help me," over and over again. Despite the contradiction, the dark one fights to the death.

If the dark unicorn is killed, its body dissipates in a flash of black smoke. Unfortunately, the creature usually reappears within 24 hours—see the unicorn's Special Defenses, below (Source: New).

**Mizar, Dark Unicorn/Centaur:** AC 3; MV 24; HD 4+4; hp 20; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (horn); SA *cause light wounds*, charge; SD *teleport*, hard to kill permanently (see below); SZ L (7' tall); ML Fearless (20); AL CE; XP 975.

Notes: SA—*Cause light wounds*. The dark unicorn can trigger this effect once per day in conjunction with his horn attack. If 30' of open ground is available, Mizar charges to attack for 1d8 points of piercing damage.

SD—Mizar can *teleport without error* once per day. Unless the dark unicorn's generative source (in **room 64**) is destroyed, the dark unicorn reappears on the landing in 24 hours, at full health.

## 64. In Memory of Mizar

This cramped space is very cold. Millennial dust is a shroud upon the floor. A small alcove is notched into the center of the west wall. A small statuette stands within the niche, but its identity is obscured by cloying, black fungus.

The fungus is a physical manifestation of the *Foundingstone's* corruption. Before the *Foundingstone* was set in place, the dungeon's keystone was a figurine of a white marble unicorn (PCs may recognize the unicorn from their nightmares in **room 21**). It is a magical figurine, linked with a spirit from a higher plane that was dedicated to the protection of the complex against evil intrusion. The spirit was called Mizar, and its power to protect the complex failed against the nightmare visions of the *Foundingstone*. Mizar is now a tormented spirit of evil.



As long as the fungus-encrusted figurine remains whole, the dark unicorn described in **room 63** remains bound to evil. Not even the beast's death is permanent as long the figurine survives. Characters who attempt to scrape the fungus off the statue quickly determine that the oily rhizomes actually penetrate into the matrix of the figure itself.

**Development:** If the heroes remove the figurine and take it with them, they soon learn to expect Mizar's attack every 24 hours, no matter where their location. Mizar's appearance is heralded 1d4 rounds in advance each time by the light strobe effect described in **room 63**. If the heroes subsequently leave the figurine somewhere, their haunting ends (though it begins in whatever location they leave the figurine).

If the heroes break the statue (now or in the future), they witness a rare thing. The dark unicorn/centaur form of Mizar appears before the heroes, but it is smiling. Though the smile remains fixed, the form and color slowly morph until a unicorn of purest white stands revealed. A delicate voice resounds in the air, saying, "Bless you, children. You have freed Mizar from an epoch of evil. Look upon me as I truly appear. Your deed will not be forgotten. Thank you for the joy you have given me, a gift of no small import." A blinding shaft of light reaches down from above, even through rock, and gently lifts the unicorn away to a higher plane.

Heroes who witness this are so heartened by a feeling of gladness that they enjoy the benefits of a *bless* spell for a full 24 hours (additional casting of *bless* by a PC Priest does not multiply the effect). Furthermore, Mizar may appear some time in the future during the heroes' greatest hour of desperation to offer his supernatural aid (at the DM's option). Note that Mizar's appearance may be many years hence, but his help may be necessary during the final battle with Caullum.

#### 65. Here Fell Pyorrhoea

Evidence of an exceptional blaze of fire or some other more infernal energy coats this chamber as a film of oily ash. Columns of stone are burned and broken, relief sculpture upon the walls and column roots are half-melted, and even though the years lay heavy here, a whiff of brimstone is still apparent. Against the north wall, a half-petrified human skeleton is sprawled, the scratches of its death agonies still etched in the stone wall near its trailing fingers.

Pyorrhoea, though a sorcerer of exceptional talents, released demons too fierce even for his knowledge of the Language Primeval to quell. Here he fell, and here he remains, his bones too saturated with enchantments to rot completely away even after a span of several thousand years.

If any PC studies the scratch marks (which also happen to be upon the surface of the secret door, though finding it requires a separate check), they are revealed as a roughly scrawled message. Heroes with a proficiency in ancient languages or a *comprehend languages* spell can read this: "I'm Sorry. -Pyorrh . . ." The skeleton retains nothing of value.

**Development:** If the heroes have *Euphonious* with them, they can speak with Pyorrhoea's shade (assuming any uses

remain). Though laden with regret, Pyorrhoea answers the heroes' questions (see **rooms 17, 65, and 75** for nuggets of undiluted information available to Pyorrhoea; other bits of history also appear within pages of this adventure, and may also be related by Pyorrhoea's shade, at the DM's discretion). Throughout the heroes' "talk" with the shade, via the humming strings of the blackened harp, discordant tones grow like static, until by interview's end, only atonal chords sound from *Euphonius*. The player characters can make a roll equal to or less than their Wisdom score to hear Pyorrhoea's last words: "I'm sorry."

At the DM's option, this use of *Euphonious* permanently degrades the harp, such that it is no longer useful as a tool for speaking with the dead—although it might still serve as an undead detector, in that it gives forth horrible tones when within 5 feet of an undead presence.

#### 66. Secret Chamber

The only way to gain entry to this room is via a secret door.

Though age cracks and stains the walls of this secret chamber, the small wooden workbench, buckets, and tattered bedroll are obvious signs of more recent habitation. On the other hand, the wood is split and warped by dampness, the barrels are empty, and the sage's tools upon the bench are rusted and rotted.

The contents in this room are new in comparison to the rest of the dungeon—they are only about 85 years old. The table contains several rusted blades useful for cutting paper, a layer of stained vellum fragments, and several whole, though age-stained, sheets of vellum. In addition, a dried pot of binding glue, hardened inks, and a few broken quills are also on the bench. A Wizard or Priest character who makes a roll less than or equal to their Wisdom score believes the leavings to be the leftover remnants of a book binding.

This room is closed off from the rest of the dungeon by secret doors and may provide heroes with a convenient rest stop as well as a means of bypassing some of the dangers wandering the outer halls.

#### 67. Toolroom

Fine pieces of marble, chips of granite, and sandstone dust coat the floor of this chamber. Pale illumination seeps from the walls, silhouetting tool racks situated along the walls. Though rusted and broken, the racks are littered with hammers, chisels, and related implements.

The tools in this chamber are mostly beyond use. These tools were obviously used in the adjacent chamber (**room 68**). Many of the tools appear to be melted. If any time at all is spent studying the damaged tools, the melted portions of the tools are bubbled with what appear to be the impressions of tiny skulls.



## 68. Evil Given Form

Radiance pools upon the domed ceiling here like spectral fluid. The inconstant light is still sufficient to reveal an iron pedestal like a spike thrust up from below. Though absent from the room, *something* was sculpted on this pedestal. A few cast off shards of strangely pale stone and heaps of translucent dust remain from that sculpture. Though the cast offs remain translucent, black verdigris surrounds each discrete shard and pile, staining the surrounding stone of the floor with darkness.

This is where Pyorrhoea crafted the alien chunk of stone into the skull-shaped rock now called the *Foundingstone*. Only rock scraps remain, but those scraps retain evil power.

There are a total of four shards of stone upon the floor, each surrounded by a halo of darkened stone. Each time a shard is touched directly by flesh, a successful save vs. death magic must be made, or the shard accidentally slips in the hand, causing a severe cut for 1 point of damage. Furthermore, if one of the shards is kept in the possession of a character, his dreams are filled with nightmares henceforward.

The dust is similarly cursed. There are a total of three heaps of pale dust sanded from the *Foundingstone*. Each heap acts like *dust of sneezing and choking* if carefully gathered and cast into the face of an enemy. However, like the shards, while the dust remains in the possession of a hero, that PC has nothing but nightmares.

## 69. Locked But Empty

Locked granite double doors bar entrance to this chamber, but the locks are not trapped.

Radiance leaks from the cracks in the floor like blades of pale grass and the ceiling is partially collapsed. Whatever this chamber once contained, it is gone or buried now.

This chamber is simply empty, and the doors lock on the inside *via* an unrusted bolt. Heroes in need of a resting place could do worse than utilize this chamber for such a purpose.

## 70. Defended Territory

If the heroes have been using the strange glow of the walls, floor, and ceiling to light their way, they will have to light their torches in this room and in the rooms keyed to **room 71** (the strange glow does not extend to these rooms).

Stone partitions make up what may have long ago been the walls of prison cells, though only a reddish stain and a few scattered heaps of rust reveal that there may have once been metallic bars here. The sound of snuffling and shuffling is audible from farther back in the darkness.

Raptors are always found in this area, but unlike those found in other parts of the complex, the four fellows here seem most con-

cerned with defending the area, especially the doors leading to the two rooms keyed to **entry 71** (the raptors can open the doors with their small arms and clawed hands). Unlike raptors found in other parts of the complex, the skin of these raptors seems more like that of an amphibian, while their heads and mouths seem somewhat frog-like (the emanations of the *Foundingstone* continue to tamper with reality). In any event, the raptors attack PCs who enter here, but they do not follow characters who flee. However, if one PC falls, one of the raptors snatches up the body and carries it back to one of the rooms keyed to **entry 71** to feed the hatchlings, even if the body is not quite dead yet! The remaining raptors cover the first raptor's retreat.

**Deinonychus, raptor with froggy traits, (4):** AC 4; MV 21; HD 4+1; hp 25 (average); THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/2d4 (claw/claw/bite); SA jump, rake, *cause disease*; SZ L (6' tall, 12' long); Int Animal (1); ML Steady (12); AL N; XP 270.

Notes: See the entry for raptors detailed in **room 48** and the *cause disease* notes entry for drael in **room 52**.

## 71. Hatchlings

A nest made of rubble, bones, dried algae, mud, and other immediately unidentifiable items takes up the northern portion of this narrow room. High pitched chirps, cheeps, and bleats accompany the sound of chewing and tearing. At least a dozen hatchling creatures, which look like a cross between an upright lizard and a frog, feed on unmoving, humanoid forms lying in the nest.

The raptors pulled from far nightmare realms by the power of the *Foundingstone* have begun to multiply, but even from one generation to the next, it is obvious that the line is not stable. The vicious little hatchlings in this chamber feed on dead drael (see **room 52**) and, possibly, a PC who previously fell in the outer chamber.

The nest contains 1d4 unhatched raptor eggs (worth 50 gp each to the right sage or exotic animal trainer) and a few shiny trinkets that the raptors salvaged from the debris in this and surrounding rooms when making their nest. Note that the discovery of each item requires 1 round of sifting through portions of the nest, and an item found in one of the rooms keyed to this entry is *not* found in the other: a total of 78 ancient gp, 264 ancient sp, one sealed iron flask containing three draughts of a *potion of extra healing*, two iron flasks each containing one draught of a *potion of strength*.

**Development:** The hatchlings do not disturb the player characters while they have food (even if the PCs are fighting against an adult raptor). The moment the heroes disturb their feeding (by retrieving a body, for example) or tinker with the nest, the hatchlings swarm the perpetrators.

**Raptor hatchlings with froggy traits, (12):** AC 9; MV 9; HD 1; hp 4 (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (bite); SA jump, *cause disease*; SZ S (1' tall, 2' long); Int Animal (1); ML Steady (12); AL N; XP 65.

Notes: See jump notes entry for raptors detailed in **room 48** and the *cause disease* notes entry for drael in **room 52**.



## 72. Ancient Storage

The stone door to this chamber is locked, and it is trapped with a poison needle. If the trap is not detected and successfully removed, the hero who attempts to open the door must make a saving throw vs. poison. If unsuccessful, the victim takes 1d6 points of damage.

The room beyond the stone door seems less demolished by age than many other rooms in the complex. Though dust is a thick blanket on every surface, hundreds of ewers, barrels, flasks, and tubs sit upon cracked but whole stone shelving.

This chamber served as a storage room for the magical experiments Pyorrhoea performed in **room 75**. The majority of the room's contents have been magically preserved, but time has still had its way with most of what was once stored here.

Inquisitive characters who investigate the contents of each container find many of them empty, however, a few contain some residue, and among these substances, some retain their former virtues (or lack thereof).

**Development:** Each time the characters open a new container, roll on the tables below to determine the container's contents. Roll first on Contents, then on Type if a substance is indicated, and then on Properties only if a Special substance is indicated. If a spice is indicated, just choose a common spice (salt, pepper, cumin, bay leaf, essence of dried spider, etc.). If a dye is indicated, this quality manifests only when mixed with water, at which time the color (chosen by the DM) becomes apparent.

d20	Contents	d4	Type
1-10	Empty	1	Spice
11-14	Smells Funny	2	Dye
15-27	Powder	3	Just Dust/Water
18-20	Liquid	4	Special!

d10	Properties
1	as <i>potion of healing</i>
2	as <i>potion of longevity</i>
3	poison (save or take 1d10 points of damage)
4	as <i>potion of speed</i>
5	as <i>philter of love</i>
6	as <i>oil of impact</i>
7	as <i>potion of polymorph self</i>
9	as <i>philter of stammering and stuttering</i>
10	as <i>elixir of madness</i>

There are a total of 10 Special substances in the room. Once all ten are discovered, further experimentation yields nothing. Each special discovery proves sufficient for 1d4 doses, if applicable.

## 73. Long Approach

This long hallway is empty but for two alcoves along the south wall. Each alcove contains a heavily carved stone urn

stopped with lead. An inscription in a dead language on each reads simply, "Guardians."

If the heroes pass the urns, they come to no harm. If they unstopper the urns, the power of the *Foundingstone* flares and spontaneously generates an undead spirit from the ashes of the long dead being within. The generation takes 3 rounds, and is accompanied by spectral moaning, flashes of green light alternating with utter darkness, and an ever increasing flow of cold air from the mouth of the urn.

**Advice to the DM:** The heroes (especially those at 1st level) should probably run from this encounter during their 3 round grace period. The DM can help foster this idea by describing the generation process in a menacing fashion. As each round passes, the moans continue to grow in volume, the chill intensifies, dread crystallizes, and NPCs, if any, become very agitated. If the heroes run and return at a later date, there is no sign of the wraith or of its urn!

**Development:** Heroes who remain to watch the show witness the generation of a spectral humanoid figure standing some 8 feet tall. The hazy wraith is too indistinct to make out what race it might have been, but by the way it bears down on the closest PC, it is obvious that it is hungry for life on which to feed.

Heroes who break open the urns by smashing them (which also serves to generate the wraith) discover a ring in each urn. One urn contains a *ring of blinking*, while the other contains a *ring of feather falling*.

**Wraith (1):** AC 4; MV 12, FI 24 (B); HD 5+3; hp 23; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (spectral claw); SA energy drain (see below); SD immunities (see below); SW sunlight, holy water, turning (see below); SZ M (6' tall); ML Champion (15); AL LE; XP 2,000.

Notes: SA—In addition to causing damage, a wraith's touch drains 1 level of experience from the victim. If brought to 0 level, the victim is killed and will rise as a wraith under the sway of its slayer in 3d6 days. The victim can make a successful saving throw vs. death magic to avoid the level-draining effect of each touch.

SD—Wraiths are immune to cold-based attacks, poison, paralysis, *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and other mind-affecting spells.

SW—Wraiths can be turned by priests of the appropriate deities. Wraiths cannot attack in sunlight and shun magical light of exceptional intensity (*continual light*). A vial of holy water inflicts 2d4 points of damage to a wraith.

## 74. Southeastern Porch

The northwestern corner of this room is a slightly convex plane of stone. Set into the stone is an iron door, carved with all manner of disturbing hieroglyphics. Three miniature iron skulls are set into the stone above the door, each clenching the symbol of eternity in its iron teeth. A stud emerges from the wall beneath the rightmost skull.

If the stud is depressed, the eyes of the rightmost skull light up with a cool, blue radiance. Simultaneously, the eyes of the rightmost skull in **rooms 55 and 60** also light up. The eye-sockets in this and the other two rooms remain lighted for 30



full days after the stud is depressed. If the light goes out, the stud must be pressed again to light the skull. If the eyeholes of the other middle and leftmost skull are also lighted (accomplished by depressing the studs in rooms 55 and 60, respectively), the door to the chamber beyond can be pushed open. If any other skull is unlighted, the doors here refuse to budge to human strength, magic, or attempts to pick locks (there is no standard lock).

#### 75. Necromanteion

Glowing pulses of virulent light burrow through the mortared stones of a titanic domed chamber, and the phantom glow is far stronger here than in other portions of the complex. A large device stands highlighted in the center room; at first glance it appears to be some sort of reverse orrery. However, many arms and globes of the contraption lie broken and shattered by time's impersonal hand. Of far more concern is the sinister figure clad in black leather standing along the southwestern curve of the chamber, near an ominously carved stone set in the wall.

Show the players the nearby associated illustration. The illustration shows the chitine called Caullum standing next to the *Foundingstone*. Caullum, through constant contact with the *Foundingstone*, has become somewhat enhanced. In fact, he

possesses the powers of a werespider (Source: *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM ANNUAL, Volume III*). Caullum is also completely under the *Foundingstone's* control—he is a Servant of the Stone (see the *Foundingstone's* write-up under “New Magical Items”). Sadly (for the player characters), Caullum also holds a potent ice-grown magical sword called *Icerazor* (see “New Magical Items”). Canny characters have the opportunity (before the nastiness begins) to note that the strange skull-carved stone was recently uncovered from a mound of rock and dirt.

*Reverse Orrery.* This device is ancient, and is the work of Pyorrhoea. In fact, this entire chamber served as Pyorrhoea's laboratory long ago; he called it his Necromanteion. Though it is uncertain exactly what Pyorrhoea hoped to accomplish with his research, it seems clear that the ancient sorcerer somehow hoped to channel the free flowing energies of the *Foundingstone* with his device. Obviously, Pyorrhoea failed, and the device is now only rusted metal, broken glass, and crumbled stone.

*Foundingstone:* Things looked bad when Pyorrhoea was overcome an Age ago. Luckily for the surrounding areas in that ancient epoch, the *Foundingstone's* threat was ended before it was fairly begun by a simple rockslide. The rockslide smothered the stone, forcing it into quiescence until Caullum uncovered it. Additional source material concerning the *Foundingstone* is presented under “Conclusions” and “New Magical Items.”







**Development:** Caullum may take a moment to talk to heroes (the werespider knows common). If the characters have not pieced together the basics of the story from Pyorrhoea's shade (see **room 65**), clues, and various dungeon denizens, this is a good opportunity for Caullum to sneeringly fill them in on the background material presented in the introduction, under **room 17**, the *Foundingstone* write-up itself, and the information presented in this room. Caullum sums it all up by explaining how uncovering the stone brought it back to life. He proclaims himself the Master of the Stone (he is lying—it is the other way around), and his power grows hourly. Of course, Caullum is not going to talk if the adventurers attempt to do him in. He will defend himself, and indeed, launch attacks of his own (see Caullum's statistics, below).

On the other hand, if the heroes seem inclined to continue speaking with him, Caullum suggests that there is more than enough power to go around. He asks curious heroes to step forward and touch the stone for a glimpse of the power that could be theirs! Of course, characters who take Caullum up on this offer must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or become Servants of the Stone. If a character is seduced in this fashion, instruct that player to help Caullum convince the rest of the heroes to touch the stone as well. A particularly gullible party could potentially be completely overcome in this fashion. If Caullum is unable to conquer all the heroes in this fashion, he turns to brute force. Note that any heroes who are now Servants fight on the side of Caullum until a *remove curse* spell is cast upon them.

**Fighting Caullum:** The only way the heroes are going to beat Caullum is to cover the *Foundingstone*; if the heroes do not twig to this idea, perhaps a crafty NPC makes the connection. Because Caullum has forged a link with the stone over the past several weeks, the stone regenerates Caullum's hit points at a rate of 3 points per round, if he takes damage. Even if Caullum falls below 0 hp, the super chitine continues to regenerate until he is back on his feet, although he will wait a round or two and also trigger his transformation into his full spider form. Every round that the *Foundingstone* supplies Caullum with hit points, the stone's eyes pulse red and its stony teeth audibly grind upon the symbol of infinity that is clenched in its mouth.

In addition to supplying Caullum with hit points, the *Foundingstone* also creates or summons random dreamlost creatures to fight the PCs. For every 10 rounds that the conflict lasts, roll on the Wandering Monster table on page 4 (characters get a break if a normal roll for a monster is negative); the indicated creature(s) appears in a burst of purple-green fire near the center of the room and attack the heroes in the following round.

**Reburying the Foundingstone.** When the *Foundingstone* is completely covered in dirt and/or rocks, its influence throughout the entire complex snuffs out. Most immediately, Caullum loses his link with the stone and ceases to regenerate (even if the stone is subsequently uncovered). Any heroes who have been compromised by the stone's power also regain their own will. Additionally, no more creatures out of nightmare appear in this room or in the dungeon at large (though some may remain from earlier summonings).

Basically, it takes 12 full rounds of digging and heaping the nearby dirt and rocks over the *Foundingstone* to completely

bury it. This means that it takes one character 12 full rounds of constant activity (taking no time to attack or defend). Two characters can do the job in 6 full rounds, and three can cover the *Foundingstone* in 4 full rounds. Unfortunately, three characters are the maximum number that can work effectively together. The rest should concentrate on fighting Caullum, who tries to attack PCs bent to the dirt. Summoned dreamlost monsters are 80% likely to attack the heroes, but 20% likely to attempt to topple the growing heap of dirt. Once the stone is completely covered, uncovering it again does not immediately return the *Foundingstone* to its height of power (though if left uncovered, its power begins to grow again).

**Caullum, werespider (1):** AC 4 (natural); MV 12, Wb 18; HD 5+5; hp 35; THAC0 14 (*Icerazor* or bite); #AT 1 or 1; Dmg 1d8+2 (*Icerazor*) or 1d12 + poison (bite while in full spider form); SA transformation, regeneration (see below); SW susceptibility to normal weapons; SZ M (5' tall) or L (8' diameter spider); ML Steady (12); AL NE; XP 2,000.

S 16, D 13, C 13, I 15, W 10, CH 5 (13 to chitines).

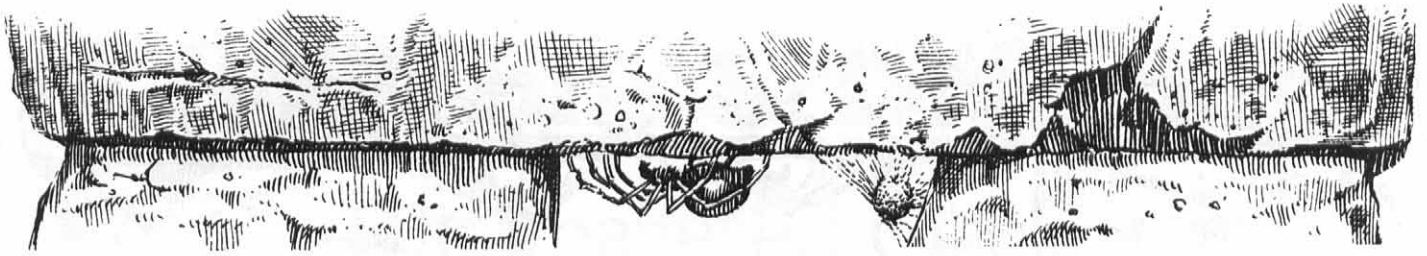
**Personality:** Certain his way is right, Servant of the Stone.

**Special equipment:** *Icerazor* (see "New Magical Items"). In a locked chest (key is lost) hidden in the mound of dirt below the *Foundingstone*: a *staff* +1, a *mace* +1, a *cloak of protection* +1, two *candles of invocation*, 300 ancient minted gold pieces, 600 ancient minted silver pieces, and three rough diamonds each worth 30 gp.

**Notes:** SA—Caullum can transform between a hybrid spider and humanoid form (his natural, chitine body) and the form of an 8-foot venomous spider. He can transform at will, but the change takes 1 full round. The bite of the fully transformed spider inflicts 1d12 points of damage and injects a lethal poison that kills victims who fail a saving throw vs. poison.

SD—If Caullum takes damage while the *Foundingstone* remains uncovered, he regenerates hit points at a rate of 3 per round. He never regenerates more than his maximum hit points (35), but he does recover from negative hit point totals.

SW—Unlike other lycanthropes, Caullum can be hurt by normal weapons, although if allowed to grow in power, this shortcoming eventually disappears.



## Finale

It all comes down to this. Will the heroes' deeds live on in ballads, or do they fail to return ever again into the gods' good light?

## Conclusions

If the heroes bury the *Foundingstone*, its powers fail as suddenly as a torch thrust into water. Though previously summoned monsters and conditioned servants may remain, no more creatures out of madness appear to haunt the complex. All stories of strange lights, monsters, and hauntings around the Circle on the surface come to an end. In the same vein, surviving chitines no longer feel compelled to push upward and out of the dungeon, so their incursions into the world above also come to an end. Canny characters may be able to talk their way back up to the surface by showing the chitines the terrible threat that was averted due to their involvement. While the chitines remain an evil race, they may allow the adventurers to leave the complex freely (at the DM's discretion).

That leaves the troubling question of what is to be done about the *Foundingstone*? The next fool who uncovers it begins the cycle all over again. If there are no heroes at hand, the infestation could conceivably become even worse than the first time (see below). While covering it with dirt alone is sufficient in the short term, far-thinking characters may desire to encase the stone in solid mortar or some other permanently bonding material, if any can be found or concocted. The heroes can also attempt to move the *Foundingstone* from its snug position in the wall for safe keeping. Destroying it immediately is probably out of the question (see the *Foundingstone's* write up), but the heroes can certainly keep the stone with them to curtail future mishaps. The player characters need to be sure to always keep the stone in a box filled with dirt, however, or else the stone again grows in power. Along the same lines, characters should refrain from directly touching the stone (at least until the stone is covered again) or chance falling to its power. Hopefully, the stone never falls into the hands the heroes' enemies.

If the heroes fail to cover the *Foundingstone* (or if they fail to take the ancient stone with them, and some sneak uncovers it after the PCs have left), a few possibilities present themselves.

First, all the chitines within the dungeon eventually come under the power of the stone. Thus, heroes returning after some time find that former chitine alliances (if any) have dissolved, and that possibilities of aid have significantly diminished. Worse, many of the hatchlings and eggs noted in the prior adventure have now hatched, and newer, stronger, and even more gruesome monsters have cropped up. This allows the dungeon to be reused when the characters have achieved additional level advancement, at the DM's option.

It is possible that the unchecked *Foundingstone's* power continues to grow so much that its influence reaches above ground, possibly contaminating a zone many miles in diame-

ter. Horrible creatures summoned from nightmare stalk the zone. It is up to the DM to decide what sort of creatures begin to appear. This sort of influence requires many years to ferment, and may not be suitable for the DM's campaign. It's easy enough to restrict the power of the *Foundingstone* and its Servants to a subterranean setting. Either way, the challenges both above or below ground will be commensurate with the player characters' levels, no matter how many years have passed.

The worst possible scenario (for the characters) is that the unchecked *Foundingstone's* influence grows in every direction until something is done about it. Such a situation has the possibility to threaten all the nations of the DM's campaign world with legions of monstrosities pouring from the wound in the earth once called the Circle of Cahervaniel. Now a return to the Circle becomes less of an option and more of a quest. Hopefully, the brave adventurers are up to putting their lives on the line once more to stem the influence of an artifact that is utterly and completely evil.

## New Magical Items

### *Foundingstone* (Artifact)

**Alignment:** Neutral Evil

**History:** The stone was nameless and ancient; it was made before the world itself was made, and it may survive past the world's final cataclysm. Still, it was a chunk of stone, and was retrieved from a realm far from this one by an ancient sorcerer called Pyorrhoea. The sorcerer called upon great magic to carve the stone into the shape of a grinning skull that grips the symbol of eternity between its stony teeth. After shaping it, Pyorrhoea christened the rock the *Foundingstone*, and made it the keystone of a secret underground necromantic laboratory.

**Powers:**

**Divination.** The passage of years is nothing to the stone. If a hand is laid upon it and a question asked, the *Foundingstone* answers, no matter how far in the past the questioned event occurred. Only the intervention of gods prevents the stone from answering a question; however, the powers of the stone are not for mortals. Though a question may be answered, the stone's payment is the questioner's eternal servitude (see "Dangers," below).

**Summoning.** The *Foundingstone* can call ancient creatures from its stony memory. When first wakened, the stone summons only a few creatures, belonging to ages before man or elf. If left undisturbed for longer periods, the creatures summoned by the *Foundingstone* grow increasingly terrible and alien, originating from a place long-since forgotten by the gods but recalled by the malign, unforgettable power of the Stone. The creatures summoned may do the bidding of those who are also under the stone's power, or they may merely run rampant, creating a place for themselves as best they can in the world of the present.



**Empowerment.** The *Foundingstone*, if incorporated into a structure or underground complex, can empower ancient traps, tricks, and mechanisms that have otherwise fallen into rust and ruin. The *Foundingstone* can also selectively empower Servants of the Stone by regenerating wounded creatures with hit points at a rate of 3 points per round. The regenerative power affects only nine servants simultaneously, and it never functions over distances greater than 1 mile.

**Weaknesses:** It is unclear what force in this realm can destroy the *Foundingstone*, if any. However, the stone has a significant weakness: If completely covered by earth, soil, heavy cloth, leather, or some other encapsulating material or sufficiently snug container, the stone's power immediately grows quiescent. As long as the stone remains covered, its powers are null. The moment the stone is uncovered, however, is the moment that it begins to accrue ancient memories and servants to itself once more.

**Dangers:** Those who touch the stone risk becoming slaves to its powers. Each touch with a bare hand or other limb requires a saving throw vs. spell. Those who successfully save feel their minds slip free of the stone's evil grasp, but those who fail become Servants of the Stone. Until the stone is covered (or until a *remove curse* spell is cast upon the Servant), the victims serve only the desires of the stone. If possible, new Servants attempt to beguile former compatriots to also touch the stone.

### Dragonbone Dagger

XP 500

GP 300

The dragonbone dagger is not a magical creation, but it is finely crafted from the discarded tooth of a venerable dragon. The combination of master craftsmanship and the dagger's origin combine to give the dagger a +1 bonus to attack rolls and a +1 bonus to damage in melee. Additionally, the dagger inflicts 1d6 points of damage per strike, instead of 1d4 as per normal daggers.

### Euphonious

GP Value: 2,000

XP Value: 2,000

This harp was fashioned from the dead branches of a hang man's tree used so often that the laments of those who died hanging from its branches remained audible when the wind was strong. Select branches were magically shaped and fortified to form a harp, and the strings were specially woven from graveyard hair. No matter how well tuned, *Euphonious* always plays discordantly unless some sort of dirge or other tribute to the dead is played upon its strings.

If *Euphonious* is brought to within 5 feet of an area where a sentient being died sometime in the past, it audibly resonates, producing a few light tones (walking across an ancient battlefield could produce a constant trill of faint

music, if the dead are not buried at the standard 6-foot depth). At the characters verbal command "Speak!" a spirit within 5 feet of the harp can be questioned as with a 3rd-level priest spell, *speak with dead*. The spirit communicates through the strings of the harp, and thus its voice is quite lyrical, if alien. Just as with the spell, the spirit questioned can answer only with the knowledge it possessed in life; however, the harp allows its user to communicate with spirits that have been dead for thousands of years (or more, at the DM's option) and automatically translates the spirits language to that of the harp's holder. Furthermore, spirits of exceptional strength can speak at greater length than the *speak with dead* spell normally allows (at the DM's discretion). The holder of *Euphonious* can communicate with the dead three times per week in this fashion.

There is a danger to using *Euphonious* to speak with the dear departed. Because the harp actually imparts some energy to the spirit in question to allow communication, there is a 5% chance per use that the energy wakes a very real undead spirit! Angry to be so rudely pulled into the realm of undeath, the newly formed undead attacks the owner of the harp. Roll a d4 to determine the type of undead formed: 1-shadow, 2-wight, 3-wraith, 4-specter.

### Icerazor

XP 1,000 (variable)

GP 1,000 (variable)

Caullum's sword is called *Icerazor*, and it appears as a long sword formed completely of ice. In fact, the blade is composed of enchanted ice that spontaneously grew from the cast off shard of the archetypal ice blade (which legends call *Frostrazor*). Though not as powerful as *Frostrazor*, *Icerazor* is still mighty.

The ice of the blade continually melts, but it also automatically resublimates from the air to maintain a perfect blade. (For instance, if a shard is broken off in combat, the long sword instantly resublimates to its original form.) Moreover, each time the wielder strikes a foe with a natural 20, a shard automatically breaks off in the wound, causing an additional 1 point of damage per round as a *sword of wounding*, until the ice shard melts in 1d10 rounds. Of course, the main blade itself instantly reforms.

*Icerazor* normally provides a +1 bonus to attack rolls and a +1 bonus to damage in melee, but the power of the blade is magnified according to the power of the wielder. For every 4 levels possessed by the wielder, *Icerazor* gains an additional +1 bonus to attack rolls and +1 bonus to damage. Thus, 1st-4th level wielders swing a +1 blade, 5th-8th level wielders swing a +2 blade, 9th-12th a +3 blade, and so on. A 17th-level wielder swings a +5 blade, but if he drops *Icerazor* and a 3rd-level fighter retrieves the sword, *Icerazor* is only +1 in his hands. Note that any ice shards broken off in wounds inflict additional damage based on the level of the wielder as well—a shard from a +3 blade inflicts 3 points of additional damage in the wound, per round, until it finally melts.

# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

Adventure

## The Shattered Circle

*Bruce R. Cordell*

Jack D. Knight

*“Evil is seeping from the earth!”*

— Old Two Fingers

**F**rom time out of mind, the standing stones known as the Circle of Cahervaniel have stood lonely vigil on a grassy hilltop. Shepherders once moved their flocks over the hill and through the circle, sometimes resting in the cool shadows cast by the ancient stones.

Everything changed when a stone finger fell, revealing a fissure in the earth. Now, dark shadows caress the circle after the sun sets. Creatures out of nightmare dance upon the hillsides at night. Many swear that a unicorn of deepest ebony now hunts all upon two legs who draw near, while stunted creatures scurry in the shadows, abducting sheep from their sheds and drawing them down below ground for food.

After the disappearance of a shepherd, fear grows stronger in neighboring villages. Who will brave the black hollow of the ancient Circle of Cahervaniel? Heroes of stern mettle must descend into the cavity and explore the ancient spaces existing there.

*The Shattered Circle* is a stand-alone adventure in which low-level characters explore an ancient dungeon long hidden below the ground. Accomplished players with new characters will find this adventure fun and challenging, but it can also serve as a beginner's first taste of the AD&D® game.

**For four to six characters of levels 1–3**

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