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Dungeon Crawl Classics #6

Temple of the Dragon Cult

by John Seavey

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 8-10



Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you remember, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

In Temple of the Dragon Cult, the characters are called in to pursue a dragon that the king's army was able to wound but not kill. It seems straightforward enough: The army tracked the dragon to its lair, and the only thing the characters have to do is go in and kill it. But this dragon has a devoted cult of dragonblood followers who worship its every breath. Its lair is their temple – and they'll fight to the death to defend their dragon-god...

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Introduction

"You enter a ten by ten room...and YOU DIE!" All right, so maybe this adventure will be a little easier than that, but we've designed it as an old-school dungeon crawl. The monsters are mean, the rogue needs to go in front checking for traps, and NPC interaction will be taking place at the end of a broadsword. So get out your lucky d20, start thinking in terms of party order, and prepare to deal with both dungeons and dragons.

"Temple of the Dragon Cult" is designed for an adventuring party of four to six players of 8th to 10th level. We recommend at least 40 character levels among the party members. While the players can be of any class, a cleric will help them recover from their battles with greater ease, and a fighter or two will make the final battle that much easier. See the "Scaling Information" section for ways to tailor this adventure to your party's style of play.

Adventure Summary

The player characters have come upon a small army, devastated in the aftermath of a pyrrhic victory against a dragon named Pyraxis which has been tormenting the countryside for decades. The army's commander believes his men have mortally wounded the dragon, but it escaped before they could finish it off. A regiment of soldiers followed it to its lair, but they have not returned. The commander offers the party a quarter of the dragon's hoard if they will go in and finish it off. Unknown to both the commander and the soldiers, the mages and druids of the area believe the dragon to be an agent of the gods, and they will kill to protect it. When the characters get to the dragon's lair, they discover not just a wounded dragon, but an entire cult devoted to its worship.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. **Loc** – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter, listed as level and room number. **Pg** – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. **Type** – this indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). **Encounter** – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in *italics* are classed NPCs. **EL** – the encounter level.

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-2	6	T	Camouflaged pit	5
1-3	6	C	4 ankhegs	7
1-4	7	C	<i>Rama Savitri</i> , Drd5	6
1-5	8	C	Half-dragon minotaur	6
1-6	9	C	<i>Solgem Fleetfoot</i> , Rog6	8
2-1	10	C	Half-dragon troll	8
2-2	11	C	<i>Iborsum Shatter-fist</i> , Ftr7	9
2-3	12	C	<i>Nira Bavisar</i> , Sor7	9
2-4	13	T	4 concealed pits	5
2-5	13	T	Collapsing wall pit trap	3
2-6	14	C	Gibbering mouter	5
2-7	14	C	2 rust monsters	6
3-2	15	C/P	<i>Darsov Erikson</i> , Clr9	9
3-3	17	C	7 orcs 1 dragon-blood orc	6
3-4	18	C	Cloaker	5
3-5	18	C	<i>Gavuhn Donnell</i> , Wiz11	11
3-6	20	C	Roper	12
3-7	20	T	Falling rocks trap	7
4-1	21	C	2 otyughs	8
4-2	22	C	10 goblins 1 dragon-kin goblin	8
4-3	22	T	Greased slope	4
4-4	22	C	1 ogre, 8 kobolds, 4 hobgoblins, 2 gnolls	9
4-5	24	C	Wounded red dragon	11

Scaling Information

This adventure features a wide range of encounter levels. A party in the recommended range of four to six players of 8th to 10th level will have moderate difficulty with most encounters, no trouble at all with some, and an enormous challenge with a few. That is intentional: It goes against their expectations and creates interesting pacing. In some cases, it may even require strategies that incorporate retreats and reforming for a second attack.

The GM should feel free to scale this adventure for parties with more or less than the recommended 40 character levels between all party members. Here are some ideas.

For weaker parties (characters below 8th level or fewer than four players): Remove the illusion at area 1-2; make the pit obvious. Eliminate some of the more challenging encounters. In order of greatest difficulty, you can eliminate encounters 3-6, 2-1, and 2-7 without significantly altering the flow of the adventure; these are creatures that inhabit the caves alongside the dragon and its cult, not members of the cult itself. Reduce the number of ankhegs in area 1-3, orcs in area 3-3, goblins in 4-2, and humanoids in area 4-4. Leave only one otyugh in area 4-1. Reduce the power

of the NPCs (in areas 1-4, 1-6, 2-2, 2-3, and 3-5) by either taking them down a couple of levels or reducing their hp due to wounds from prior encounters with the army. But no matter what you do, you still have the problem of a dragon that can kill everyone in a weak party with a single breath weapon. Reduce Pyraxus' age to young or very young.

For stronger parties (characters of 11th or higher level, or more than six players): Apply the dragon-blood, half-dragon, or dragon-kin templates to more of the creatures in the adventure. Start with the orcs in 3-3 and the goblins in 4-2. You could also expand the ranks of the half-dragon minotaur and troll. Make the NPCs more powerful by adding class levels or removing their weaknesses (such as Gavuhn's sickness and Darsov's insanity). You can always increase the number of monsters in each encounter. Finally, raise Pyraxus' CR by reducing his wounds and giving him more hp, explaining that he's not nearly as wounded as the army believed, but instead wanted to lure them into the traps of his lair.

Getting the Players Involved

Many players love adventure for its own sake; few, however, love it so much that they'll be willing to go into a dragon's lair and fight a wounded, angry red dragon. The commander of the task force knows this, which is why he's been authorized to offer one-quarter of the dragon's hoard to the group of adventurers that brings the dragon's head back out of the caves. Another quarter of the hoard belongs to the nobles who raised the army, and the remaining half is to be distributed to the survivors of the first battle with the dragon. If the players want to haggle, they can, but the soldiers and the nobles will all point out that the PCs will be splitting their pot fewer ways. After all, the only reason this red dragon is manageable at all for characters of this level is that the army has already softened them up...

Character Death

If a character is left to die during an encounter with one of the non-sentient predators, they will be eaten and their belongings left for others to find. If they are left to die after a fight with the goblins or orcs, they will be stripped of their valuables, but won't be killed. But if they're unconscious and lying in a tunnel with no weapons or armor, they don't have great chances for survival anyway...

Characters who are injured may return to the cavern entrance where the army's clerics will treat their injuries. However, the company of soldiers has sustained serious injuries in the initial fight with the dragon, and unless the characters are near death, the clerics may well wait until others have been helped. "May" becomes "will" if the party returns too often, or treats the clerics disrespectfully, or asks for treatment for minor wounds. Use your discretion, but don't let the presence of a friendly cleric turn into free non-stop healing.

Preparation

Unlike most dungeon crawls, this one involves combat against a number of well-developed NPCs, rather than the usual endless hordes of humanoids. It is extremely important that the GM review this module carefully before play, noting the abilities and tactics of each NPC and how to use them in combat. This is the best way to make the NPCs a real challenge for the players.

The maps are also rather challenging, especially for players who don't map carefully. The mountain tunnels circle in on one another, and rise or drop in elevation throughout the adventure. Review the maps before the game. It's up to you how much help you want to give the PCs in order to prevent them from becoming lost.

Treasure

Pyraxus' hoard is a little on the sparse side for a dragon of his age, due to his preying on country farmers instead of richer pickings. However, the cult has aided him in this regard; cultists who have bonded with the dragon have voluntarily contributed any riches they can find to the hoard. (As a side effect, this does mean that very few creatures in the lair other than the dragon have treasure; most of it has gone onto the hoard, either voluntarily or otherwise.)

It's still a pretty impressive hoard, though. It stands at 215 platinum pieces, 6,500 gold pieces, 20,000 silver pieces, and approximately 50,000 coppers, for a total value of 11,150 gp in assorted coinage. (We do mean "assorted" here; the dragon did not organize the hoard into stacks, piles, or anything beyond a big heap in the middle of the room that it slept on. The party will have its work cut out for them organizing it.)

Scattered among the coins are 39 gems, as follows:

- 4 agates, worth 4, 5, 7, and 9 gp
- 2 chunks of polished obsidian, worth 12 gold each
- 4 freshwater pearls, worth 10, 11, 12, and 14 gp
- 4 rose quartz gems, worth 20 gp (x2) and 30 gp (x2)
- 3 pieces of polished amber, 2 of which are worth 50 gp and the third, which is larger and contains a preserved stirge, worth 80 gp
- 3 chalcedony gemstones, worth 40, 60, and 70 gp
- 1 onyx gem, worth 70 gp
- 4 silver pearls of varying sizes, worth 100, 110, 120, and 200 gp in order of size
- A lovely piece of unworked jade, worth 100 gp
- 2 large black pearls, each worth 800 gp
- 1 small emerald, worth 400 gp
- 3 fire opals, worth 400, 600, and 700 gp
- 2 star sapphires, worth 1,000 and 1,300 gp
- 3 pieces of topaz, worth 500, 600, and 700 gp
- 1 star ruby, worth 700 gp
- And the dragon's most recent acquisition, a large blue

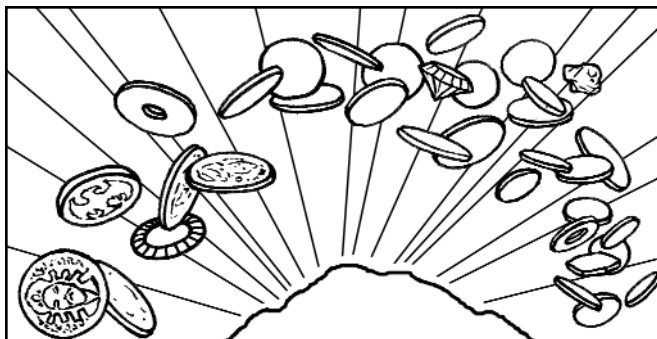
diamond, worth 5,000 gp. The guard commander was specifically commanded to retrieve the diamond, an heirloom of the nobles' family, so he will claim it for their share of the treasure.

The total value of the gems comes to 10,646 gp.

Last, but certainly not least, the hoard also contains a *ring of invisibility*, a *decanter of endless water*, and a *rod of metal and mineral detection* (this was a particular favorite of the dragon, who used it when raiding to snatch up every last coin). These three items alone are worth 39,500 gp, bringing the total value of the hoard to a proverbial king's ransom of 61,146 gp. The PCs get one quarter of the hoard as their share, which still works out to a very impressive 15,000 gold or so. (15,286.5, for the pedantic.) Most good-aligned characters will be more than happy to take their share and no more, but those who don't are in for a surprise. The guard commander, a paladin, can and will use the *zone of truth* spell to ensure that the party hasn't secreted away some of the treasure for themselves before divvying it up. Looting will provoke the ire not just of the commander, but of the whole army.

If this seems like a bit too much treasure to dish out, you do have some ways to make sure that the party doesn't wind up too powerful or too rich. The guard commander won't mention it unless specifically asked, but as far as he, the nobles, and the army are concerned, the PCs go last in picking and choosing. He'll be fair – scrupulously fair, down to the last copper piece – but the fact remains, the nobles pick first, then the warriors who fought and died against the dragon pick second, and the PCs get whatever's left. The players may object to this, so you can allow them a Diplomacy check to see if they can negotiate "earlier pickings" on some of the magic items. If, on the other hand, you'd prefer that they not have too much treasure, then just leave them with a *decanter of endless water* and a *rod of metal and mineral detection* and some change... or, for that matter, with the fifty thousand copper pieces that nobody else wanted. Don't go too hard on them; after all, they did just defeat a draconic cult and kill a wounded dragon. But don't feel the need to be Monty Haul, either.

In addition, Pyraxus' corpse itself is worth a lot of money; the hide is valuable to tanners and armorsmiths, the blood has magical properties, et cetera. Unless one of the PCs brings it up, the army commander probably won't even think about the subject; once the dragon is dead, though, he'll be fair about divvying up the corpse as well as the spoils.



Background Story

Pyraxus

The story begins with Pyraxus, a relatively young dragon (150 years old) who moved into the area some two decades ago and settled into the caverns of a large mountain nearby, ousting the dwarven settlement therein and allowing various humanoids and monsters to infest it. As with most dragons, he settled into a habit of lounging in his lair counting his hoard, then occasionally venturing out to sate his hunger and add to his treasure. The area he claimed as his territory was predominantly rural, so he had few worries from armies and adventurers; however, he also had trouble squeezing any great treasures out of the superstitious locals, which led him to watch the roads of his domain and prey mostly on travelers. Other than a few live-stock thefts, he hasn't actually impaired the lives of the locals all that much. This, though, caused problems of its own...

The Dragon Cult

Different locals had different reactions to Pyraxus' depredations. A few vowed to slay the dragon, then either backed down from their vow or died fighting. Most reacted with stoic indifference; what they couldn't cure, they had to endure. But a cleric named Darsov Erikson, who already worshiped a god of nature, saw the dragon as a sign of divine favor. Sure, Pyraxus sometimes took sheep and cattle for his food. Yes, he did kill people. Perhaps he was terrible and unstoppable. But that was nature in a nutshell. Instead of being a plague on their land, Pyraxus was clearly an avatar of the gods!

Darsov's heresy attracted a few followers over the years, and they moved to the base of the mountain to worship the great beast. A decade ago, they numbered five: Darsov himself; his wife, a druid named Rama Savitri; a flighty elven sorcerer by the name of Nira Bavisar who believed she had a trace of draconic ancestry; a half-orc fighter named Iborsum Shatter-fist who originally fancied himself a dragonslayer before encountering the group; and a halfling thief named Solgem Fleetfoot, who planned to infiltrate the cult as a means of getting at the dragon's treasure, but who wound up believing in their cause. Then a sixth member joined their cause, a pale, sickly mage named Gavuhn Donnell with an interest in transmutation magic and a belief that the cult, and the dragon, could provide a cure for his chronic illness and frailty. His addition transformed the group, both metaphorically and literally, into a powerful instrument of the dragon's will.

Gavuhn, as stated, had an interest in transmutation. Darsov and his wife were both experts with fertility magic. When the three of them pooled their knowledge and skills, they came up with a way of altering their bodies at the genetic level (not that they thought of it that way, or even knew what DNA was – it's all magic to them) to transform themselves, slowly, into children of Pyraxus. They used his

blood, donated out of amusement and interest, to slowly make themselves and much of the native life in the area into part-dragon creatures. There were side effects – Darsov himself went insane when he attempted too drastic a transformation – but over the last few years, they’ve become deadly and powerful servants to Pyraxus. The dragon himself began to believe that with his “army,” he was immune to all harm.

The Army

Pyraxus’ arrogance finally cost him dear, however, when he attacked a royal carriage travelling through his territory. The carriage didn’t contain any of the important nobles – only a cousin to the king, and his family – but it did attract the attention of the nobility. The king decided that even one dragon rampaging through the countryside was one dragon too many, and he and his fellow nobles raised an army to battle the creature.

(If you want, you can begin the adventure here instead of after the battle, and make the PCs part of the king’s army. This offers the PCs a ready-made way into the story, as they’ll already be on the spot when the dragon escapes, but it does mean that you’ll have to handle the battle more carefully. You don’t want the party feeling cheated when the dragon gets away into its lair.)

The army fought the dragon on the plains, in the shadow of the great mountain. Pyraxus ordered the cultists to wait within the caverns, deciding to hold them in reserve should things go bad. His foresight paid off; the archers and javelin-throwers of the king’s army took their toll on him, hitting him in a vulnerable point and nearly shredding one of his wings. He limped back to the caverns, bleeding from a dozen wounds, and ordered the cultists to hold off the army until he could recover. The cultists, in turn, fought using their superior knowledge of the caverns, and slaughtered those troops that have gone in so far. Now, the PCs have arrived.

Player Beginning

After an arduous but not dangerous climb, you finally arrive at the vast mouth of the cavern where the dragon makes its home. Somewhere within, it lies in wait.

Level One: Into The Mountain

Unless otherwise noted, all passages are 10 feet high, 6 feet across, and composed of unworked stone. All doors are made of stone as well, and are considered to be of dwarven construction. All walls and doors, unless otherwise noted, have the following statistics:

Unworked Stone Wall: 5 ft. thick, Hardness 8, 900 hp, Break DC 65, Climb DC 20.

Stone Door: 4 in. thick, Hardness 8, 60 hp, Break DC 28 (both stuck and locked).

Wandering Monsters

When the characters first arrive, the monsters will remain in their current locations, as they are part of an organized defense of the dragon’s lair. Many of the monsters and NPCs can cast *message*, however, and if the characters bypass an encounter, the monsters from that area will begin searching for them. There is a 10% chance each hour that monsters from a bypassed encounter (one in which the characters did not slay the monsters involved) will find the PCs again and attack. This chance increases by 5% if the characters are making lots of noise, and by a further 10% if they are using some sort of obvious light source. (All the inhabitants of the dungeon have darkvision, and most have low-light vision; unless the characters bring in a light source, no room will be lit unless otherwise noted.)

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – The Cavern Entrance:

The vast mouth of the cavern opens before you, but you see no dragon within. Footprints in the dust show where previous adventurers have tried and failed in this quest. Deep within the shadows of the cavern, you can just see a passage leading further into the mountain.

Once the characters have made their way up the mountain, they find themselves at the entrance to a large natural cavern. This entrance is 30 feet high, and more than 50 feet wide at its widest point, although it narrows down to 30 feet wide before opening out into a large, roughly circular area. Near the entrance, on the opposite side from the trail the party uses to climb up, there is a small hidden door (Search DC 15 to locate, opens simply by pushing on right-hand side). Several members of the guard have already found the hidden door, as evidenced by footprints in the dust leading to it; any character with the Track feat can easily find these footprints, leading to a blank patch of wall. Characters who find the hidden door will discover that it conceals a passage leading to a T-junction; one passage leads to area 1-3, and continuing straight ahead leads to area 1-4. On the far end of the circular cavern, a passage can be seen leading deeper into the caves.



Area 1-2 – The Central Shaft (EL 5):

As you begin to cross the cavern floor, it suddenly drops out from under you. You pass directly through the seemingly solid ground to fall to a painful stop at the bottom of a vast vertical tunnel. Clearly, your presence was anticipated...and prepared for.

Any character who actually attempts to cross the central cavern to get to the passage at the far end quickly discovers that the entire central floor is actually a *permanent image* spell, concealing a vast shaft that descends through the entire mountainside (this is how the dragon gets to its lair on the fourth level, normally). The shaft is 50 feet deep; characters who fall the entire distance take 5d6 damage, and must climb back out (Climb DC 20). Any character who interacts with the illusion may make a Willpower save (DC 21) to disbelieve it; for the cautious character, this will mean testing the floor with a stick, throwing a stone, or similar action. For the incautious character, they get the saving throw after they've plummeted through the non-existent floor.

Characters who fall through the illusion and survive see two additional passages; one, which leads directly to the dragon's lair, has been blocked by falling rubble and is impassable (this is the pile of rubble near area 4-5). The other is approximately 12 feet above them and directly below the entrance, and leads to area 3-4. They also find the bodies of three soldiers who attempted to cross the cavern; these soldiers

have on their corpses studded leather armor, a short sword, a light wooden shield, 12 silver pieces and 30 copper pieces each. There is a 35% chance that each shield was wrecked in the fall, and a 15% chance for each short sword.

Characters at the bottom of the pit who have Craft (stonemasonry) or a similar ability can make a DC 15 check in the relevant skill to note that a section of the wall about thirty-five feet up and just to the right of the entrance has been broken and repaired recently, and that the repairs are not very solid. Characters who attempt to climb up or down this section find that the stone is loose, and comes free if pulled. This leads to area 2-5.

Characters who can bypass the pit and reach the passage on the far side (through flight, or by climbing around along the walls, for example) will find a passage that leads down to the second floor. It forks there, with the western fork leading down to areas 3-3 and 3-5, and the eastern fork leading to area 2-1.

Camouflaged Pit Trap: CR 5; magic; location trigger; automatic reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 50 ft. deep (5d6, fall); multiple targets (first targets to enter area); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 17.

Area 1-3 – The Bodies (EL 7):

As you round this corner, you come across a pile of grotesquely mutilated bodies, covered in some sort of disgusting secretion. The army insignia on their clothing is still obvious, even though the bodies have been gnawed and chewed. Something killed these men, and something worse found them afterwards.

The bodies of four soldiers rest in this small, dark cavern. Rama Savitri dispatched these soldiers when they first entered, then left their bodies here after she retreated down the trapped corridor at area 1-4. These men were members of the army that volunteered to head in after Pyraxus; each man has a short sword, studded leather armor, and a light wooden shield, as well as 3d4 silver and 6d6 copper pieces. (Always assuming, of course, that the PCs are willing to loot even the bodies of the "good guys.")

The cavern is also home to several ankhegs that have made their way up from the fertile farmlands and found a comfortable niche in the mountain's ecosystem. They have started gnawing on the soldiers and were just about to feast when the approach of the PCs caused them to hide. They're currently dug halfway into the wall. To see them the PCs must make a Spot check opposed by the ankhegs' Hide check; the ankhegs have no ranks in Hide but receive a +15 circumstance bonus due to the fact that they're almost completely dug into the wall. Any PC who goes in to examine (or loot) the bodies will *definitely* notice the ankhegs without a Spot check because the crawlers will leap out to attack them.

Tactics: As long as possible, the ankhegs fight from within the wall, effectively granting them cover (+4 AC, +2 to Reflex saves, not included in the stats below). If the characters wise up and move beyond their 5 ft. reach, the ankhegs will spit acid then exit the wall to close on their attackers. They see the party as nothing more than fresh meat, and act as part of the natural ecosystem of the caves rather than any sort of deliberate defense. They will flee if the party puts up a strong defense, and will not pursue the party if they run. The dead guards provide them ample food, after all.

Ankhegs (4): Large Magical Beast; CR 3; HD 3d10+12; hp 20, 28, 35, 40; Init +0; Spd 30 ft./burrow 20 ft.; AC 18 (-1 size, +9 natural), touch 9, FF 18; BAB +3; Grp +12; Atk bite +7 melee (2d6+7 plus 1d4 acid); Full Atk bite +7 melee (2d6+7 plus 1d4 acid); SA Improved grab, spit acid; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft.; Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 13, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Hide +0 (+15 when dug into wall), Listen +6, Spot +3; Alertness, Toughness.

SA—Spit Acid (Ex): 30-foot line, once every 6 hours; damage 4d4 acid; Reflex DC 14 half. After spitting cannot deal acid damage for 6 hours.

Area 1-4 – The Corridor of Traps (EL 6):

You continue straight along the passage, only to find a gauntlet of ancient dwarven traps. The former inhabitants of this mine must have been brilliant in their trap-work, but it didn't save them when the dragon decided to inhabit the mine. A shiver runs down your spine as you see the bodies of over a dozen soldiers, each of whom died at the hands of a different, ingenious deathtrap. Their deaths are a testimony to the dangers that lie ahead, but their sacrifice may have saved your lives dozens of times over.

If the characters continue to proceed straight down the passage, they find several more dead bodies, as well as a fine selection of dwarven traps. All sorts of traps are represented here, from spinning blades that slice out of the walls to pressure-plates that launch darts to deadfalls to whatever else you can imagine; this is exactly the sort of thing that Lara Croft has to deal with on a daily basis. All the traps have one thing in common, though: they no longer function. Many had ceased to function through disuse long before the cult arrived, and those that still worked were tripped by the army on its way through the hallway. The result is merely a gruesome tableau, as the party sees corpse after corpse, each one killed in hideous fashion by the results of dwarven ingenuity. (Fifteen guards died in this area; the corpses of these guards have the same possessions as the corpses in area 1-3.)

Approximately halfway down the hallway, there is a secret door; the door itself is exceptionally well concealed, requiring a Spot check (DC 30) to locate it, but the trigger for it is relatively obvious. It's a pressure plate on the floor that's significantly different in color from the stone surrounding it; spotting the pressure plate merely has a DC of 10. The craftsmen who designed the hallway of traps figured, with traditionally dwarven logic, that nobody would step on a pressure plate in a hallway that had been nothing but deathtraps, even if they did suspect it to be something benign. The secret door that the plate opens leads down to area 2-2.

This is the furthest any of the soldiers got in their attempts to track the dragon to its lair; after this point, the PCs find no further corpses. However, that's probably just as well, since after what's about to happen to them, they'd freak if they saw another body.

Development: Once the characters have gotten halfway down the hall (just before they reach the secret door), the bodies of the guards begin to move. At first, they merely twitch slightly, but after a moment or two they begin to flop around, as if the bodies are trying to get back up...

Characters who make a Spot check (DC 12) see the guards' bodies begin to move, and a surprise round immediately begins, during which those players who made their Spot checks may take action. Any attempt to turn, rebuke, destroy, or command undead automatically fails, while any attempt to attack the bodies merely results in several mutilated corpses and a rather disgusting surprise a few seconds earlier than normal. The only measure that has any useful effect is an attempt to burn the bodies, which does damage as normal.

Tactics: At the end of the surprise round, the bodies cease twitching and flopping, as streams of spiders pour out of their mouths and noses. The spider swarm (summoned silently by Rama Savitri, using one of her two third-level spell slots – *summon swarm* plus the Silent Spell metamagic feat) immediately attacks the party, using normal swarm rules.

Rama herself is at the far end of the corridor, standing to the side to be out of sight, concentrating on keeping the swarm active and attacking (as per the spell description). Locating her requires an active Spot check; she receives a +4 bonus to Hide due to the cover afforded her by the curve of the tunnel. She is anything but the typical druid; her dark, foreboding hair only highlights the slitted pupils of her reptilian eyes, and her teeth and claws are long and dragon-like.

If the players get through the swarm and find her, she drops her concentration and prepares for action. If the PCs look vulnerable, she presses her attack with more spells (most likely one of the *summon nature's ally* spells), using her breath weapon if she's desperate or

it looks like she can catch a lot of the party in it. If the characters seem to have passed through unscathed, or if the fight goes badly, she flees down the left-hand fork, using a combination of *obscuring mist* and wild shape (perhaps into a fast-flying eagle) to escape effectively.

Spider Swarm (1): Diminutive Vermin (Swarm); CR 1; HD 2d8; hp 9; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 17 (+4 size, +3 Dex), touch 17, FF 14; BAB +1; Grp –; Atk Swarm (1d6 plus poison); Full Atk Swarm (1d6 plus poison); SA Distraction, poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., swarm traits, tremorsense 30 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 1, Dex 17, Con 10, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Listen +4, Spot +4.

Rama Savitri, human dragon-blood Drd5: Medium Humanoid (Dragon); CR 6; HD 5d8+15; hp 35; Init +1 (Dexterity); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+3 Dex, +2 natural, +3 hide armor), touch 13, FF 5; BAB +3; Grp +6; Atk dagger +6 melee (1d4+3/19-20) or bite +6 melee (1d6+3) or claw +6 melee (1d4+3) or sling +4 ranged (1d4+3); Full Atk 2 claws +6 melee (1d4+3) or dagger +6 melee (1d4+3/19-20) and bite +1 melee (1d6+3) or sling +4 ranged (1d4+3); SA Breath weapon 3d8; SQ Darkvision 50 ft., low-light vision, immunity to sleep and paralysis effects, fire resistance 10, wild empathy, woodland stride, trackless step, resist nature's lure, wild shape 1/day; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Heal +11, Knowledge (nature) +11, Spellcraft +9; Combat Casting, Natural Spell, Silent Spell.

Spells Memorized (5/4/3/2; save DC = 13 + the spell's level): 0—*cure minor wounds* (x2), *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*; 1st—*cure light wounds*, *entangle*, *obscuring mist*, *summon nature's ally I*; 2nd—*flaming sphere*, *heat metal*, *spider climb*; 3rd—*summon swarm* [silent], *quench*.

Equipment: dagger, sling, twenty bullets, hide armor.

SA — *Breath weapon* (Su): 1/day, 15-foot cone of fire, damage 3d8, Reflex save (DC 15) for half.

Cool ways to make this fight interesting:

- The various expended traps can make interesting improvised weapons for either side. Swinging blades that have rusted solid can be broken free of their moorings and used to attack, or a *gust of wind* spell can be used to knock characters back onto them.
- The spider swarm will pursue the characters, but will also attack indiscriminately and hang around for a couple of rounds even after Rama stops concentrating on them. Some PCs might like the idea of giving her a taste of her own medicine.
- Rama takes reduced damage from fire, whereas the party takes full damage. This can make for some

interesting tricks when combined with spells like *flaming sphere*.

- If there are any characters in the party who can animate corpses, there's a good dozen of them lying around that might be interested in getting a little posthumous revenge on the dragon cultists. Such an action couldn't be too evil, could it?
- Any adventurer worth their salt knows to use fire on swarms of insects, since physical attacks accomplish very little. Too bad for the PCs that Rama knows *quench*, right?

After the battle, the characters are faced with three potential paths (and, unless they managed to slay Rama or prevent her from casting spells to obscure her escape, no idea as to which one leads further in). The left-hand path leads down to area 2-1, the center path to area 1-5, and the right to area 1-6.

Area 1-5 – The Early Experiment (EL 6):

As you head down the central passageway, you see scrapes and gouges along the wall. Something barely large enough to fit into this hall passed down here, and from the sound of harsh breathing and the smell, it probably remains here still. Suddenly a horrid-looking reptilian humanoid of some sort charges at you from the shadows!

The center passage heads straight for approximately 30 feet before opening out into a larger cavern. The cavern is clearly inhabited by some large animal; observant players notice even as they head down the passage the scrapes and scratches on the wall that suggest a large animal passed through there. Less observant characters notice, as they enter the cavern, the distinctive odor that comes from an animal's lair, in this case a peculiar mix of reptilian and bovine body odor. Other characters can spot the various animal bones that suggest a meat-eater inhabits the cave; still other characters notice a large reptilian creature, barely recognizable as something that once had a minotaur in its ancestry, charging toward them with a greataxe in hand, a cone of flame bursting from its mouth in an angry bellow. No Spot check is required to detect this.

Development: The minotaur shows little grasp of tactics, closing in with the party as quickly as possible and attacking with its greataxe. It can only breathe fire once per day, and it does so as soon as the party gets within range of its breath weapon; after that, it simply hacks and slashes in a maddened fury. If the players flee, it pursues as long as they remain on level one. It most definitely pursues them if they head down the right-hand passage toward area 1-6; this is a dead end, and the minotaur knows it. If the players manage to badly injure the minotaur, it plays dead until they leave. It does not pursue if left for dead.

Half-Dragon Minotaur (1): Large Dragon (Augmented Monstrous Humanoid); CR 6; HD 6d10+18; hp 51; Init +0; Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 18 (-1 size, +9 natural), touch 9, FF N/A; BAB +6; Grp +14; Atk greataxe +13 melee (3d6+10/x3); Full Atk greataxe +13/+8 melee (3d6+10/x3) and claw +8 melee (1d6+8) or bite +8 melee (1d8+8) or gore +8 melee (1d8+8); SA Powerful charge 4d6+10, breath weapon 6d8; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., natural cunning (can't be caught flat-footed), scent, low-light vision, immunity to sleep and paralysis effects, immunity to fire; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 27, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +3, Listen +7, Search +3, Spot +7; Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Track.

Equipment: Greataxe.

SA – *Breath weapon (Su):* 1/day, 30-foot cone of fire, damage 6d8, Reflex save (DC 16) for half.

Area 1-6 – The Ritual Chamber (EL 8):

You walk down the long and winding passage, your apprehension growing with each passing moment. Every curve seems like the perfect place for an ambush, and the deep gouges on the wall testify to the movement of large and powerful creatures through this hall. At last you come to a large, somber stone door.

This long, winding passage gradually curves around through the mountain and reaches a large stone door. At this point, the GM should remember that if the party bypasses an encounter – say, like with a half-dragon minotaur – that creature could very easily hear or see them and follow them down the corridor, blocking it by virtue of its vast size and forcing them to fight it one at a time in the cramped confines of the hallway. Hypothetically speaking, that is. The door is locked, and the dwarven-constructed lock has a DC of 30 to pick.

Once opened, the passage leads into a large, round chamber. Read or paraphrase the following:

It appears that this was originally a place of worship for the dwarves who inhabited this mountain, but the icons, statues, altars, and other religious paraphernalia have been dragged over to one side of the chamber, leaving space in the center for what looks like some other ritual. A circle has been drawn in some sort of clear fluid that has partially dried, and shelves have been set up on the right side that contain a variety of neatly labeled jars. Each jar contains some sort of dragon bodily fluid, from saliva to blood to phlegm to other things you'd probably just as soon not know about. Several large fragments of dragon eggshell occupy the lower shelves. Other than that, the room appears deserted.

Once the characters have gotten well into the room, however, Solgem Fleetfoot drops down from his hiding



place – wedged just above the door. (Characters can attempt a Spot check, opposed by Solgem's Hide skill, to spot him as they enter or look around.) Solgem is a wiry, scaly, forked-tongue dragon-blood creature, straight out of a horror movie.

Tactics: If the minotaur is on his way down the passage, Solgem will wait until it has entered the room before he reveals himself. (He can hear the minotaur's approach easily. So can the party. The minotaur is not concealing itself.) Either way, however, he will say a single word, too soft for the PCs to catch, then close and lock the door with himself on the outside and the PCs on the inside. The first person to approach the door sees that there is a large mirror hanging from it. This is a *mirror of opposition*; the first three characters to see themselves in the mirror instantly generate exact duplicates of themselves, complete with duplicates of their items. Once defeated, the duplicates and their items disappear. If the minotaur has followed them into the room, it has a chance to spot the mirror as well; if that occurs, the duplicate generated by the mirror attacks the minotaur, not the PCs. Clever players can use this against the creature.

If Solgem is spotted before he can get out of the room, he does not attempt to fight the party unless there's no other option. Given that he's probably outnumbered four to one, he'll surrender if the PCs look like they're willing to show mercy.

Assuming Solgem does manage to get out of the room and lock the PCs in, he's not going to be there when

they finally get out. Instead, he too heads down toward the lower levels, meeting up with the other members of the cult.

Treasure: The various dragon fluids in this room are of great value to an alchemist or wizard. There are 30 glass jars, averaging a weight of 4 lbs. each and a value of 40 gp each. An Appraise or Craft (alchemy) check (DC 12) reveals the jars' value. Transporting them requires the same care required of carrying a potion in a glass vial; any sort of fall or violent impact may shatter the jars. Each jar is about the size of a modern-day mason jar.

The nature of the rituals taking place in this room is not immediately obvious, not even to veteran spellcasters. The existence of the cult's *dragon-kith* spell (see page 28) is not common knowledge.

Solgem Fleetfoot, halfling dragon-blood Rog6: Small Humanoid (Dragon); CR 7; HD 6d6+12; hp 35; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (+3 Dex, +1 size, +2 natural, +2 leather), touch 14, FF 14; BAB +4; Grp +3; Atk rapier +8 melee (1d4+3/18-20); Full Atk rapier +8 melee (1d4+3/18-20) and bite +3 melee (1d4+3) or claw +3 melee (1d3+3); or thrown dagger +8 ranged (1d3+3/19-20); or sling +8 ranged (1d3+3); SA Breath weapon 3d8, sneak attack +3d6; SQ darkvision 50 ft., low-light vision, immunity to sleep and paralysis effects, fire resistance 10, trapfinding, evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +12, Climb +14, Hide

+18, Jump +14, Listen +13, Move Silently +16, Spot +11, Tumble +12; Dodge, Sneaky, Weapon Finesse.

Equipment: Rapier, three daggers, sling, ten bullets, leather armor, caltrops.

SA – *Breath weapon* (Su): 1/day, 15-foot cone of fire, damage 3d8, Reflex save (DC 15) for half.

Cool ways to make this fight interesting:

- Dwarven clerics can probably use the various discarded relics as divine focuses for their spells; not to mention that any dwarven cleric who sees what's been done to the relics of his faith will probably go into a berserker fury on the spot.
- The *mirror of opposition* creates an exact duplicate. This is the chance to use all those sneaky tricks and min/maxed combos that your PCs came up with right back at them.
- The PCs might be able to figure out (through *identify*, *legend lore*, or some other divination magic) how to use the *mirror of opposition* themselves; it's a pretty valuable asset, so long as you're not the one looking into it.
- Solgem can scatter his caltrops behind him as he flees the room. This will give characters that give chase a pretty painful surprise when they get out of the room and start dashing down the hall.
- Solgem does have a breath weapon at his disposal. He might decide to linger near the doorway and do a little damage to the PCs with his ranged weapons before he ducks out.

Level Two: The Cultists Revealed

Unless otherwise noted, all passages are 10 feet high, 6 feet across, and composed of unworked stone. All doors are made of stone as well, and are considered to be of dwarven construction. All walls and doors, unless otherwise noted, have the following statistics:

Unworked Stone Wall: 5 ft. thick, Hardness 8, 900 hp, Break DC 65, Climb DC 20.

Stone Door: 4 in. thick, Hardness 8, 60 hp, Break DC 28 (both stuck and locked).

Wandering Monsters

As on level one, the monsters remain in their current locations, as they are part of an organized defense of the dragon's lair. Many of the monsters and NPCs can cast *message*, however, and if the characters bypass an encounter, the monsters from that area will begin searching for them. There is a 10% chance each hour that monsters from a bypassed encounter (one in which the characters did not slay the monsters involved) will find the PCs again and

attack. This chance increases by 5% if the characters are making lots of noise, and by a further 10% if they are using some sort of obvious light source. (All the inhabitants of the dungeon have darkvision, and most have low-light vision; unless the characters bring in a light source, no room will be lit unless otherwise noted.)

Areas of the Map

Area 2-1 – Not The Lair, But A Lair (EL 8):

As you walk along the passage, you see a small cavern off to the side. Something must inhabit it; you can smell the creature even from outside. But what creature could share a mountain with a dragon – and more importantly, what creature would?

Anyone approaching this cave smells the thick, musky stench of a living creature from a good distance away. If the PCs enter, or even approach the entrance too closely, the half-dragon troll within attacks them violently. Like its minotaur cousin on level one, this troll is

one of the cult's early experiments. Something about the process went wrong, leaving it quite retarded (even more so than usual for a troll). It has little intelligence beyond basic instinctual awareness. It is clearly draconic in origin – it has reptilian wings, horns, and fangs.

Tactics: The troll is regularly fed by the dragon cultists, so it does not attack them. On the other hand, the PCs look suspiciously like the army soldiers that it was recently fed, so it regards them as food...

The troll fights with the basic tactics of a wild animal. It uses its breath weapon as soon as it can and retreats if death looks near.

Half-Dragon Troll (1): Large Dragon (Augmented Giant); CR 5; HD 6d10+42; hp 78; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft.; AC 20 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +9 natural), touch 11, FF 18; BAB +4; Grp +14; Atk claw +13 melee (1d6+10); Full Atk 2 claws +13 melee (1d6+10) and bite +8 melee (1d8+10); SA Breath weapon 6d8, rend 2d6+9; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision, regeneration +5, fire immunity, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 31, Dex 14, Con 25, Int 2, Wis 7, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +7; Alertness, Iron Will, Track.

SA – Rend (Ex): If the troll hits with both claws, it automatically deals an additional 2d6 damage.

SA – Breath weapon (Su): 1/day, 30-foot cone of fire, damage 6d8, Reflex save (DC 20) for half.

Area 2-2 – Floor-To-Ceiling Fighter (EL 9):

The corridor opens up onto a perfectly circular passage that heads deeper into the mountain. The stone is smooth but not slippery, worked by dwarven masons and worn by time. An opening on the right beckons, as does the continuation of the passage. As the passage curves, you see a man waiting for you – if, indeed, he is a man at all. His features are sharp and reptilian, and his skin is covered with rust-colored scales. What traces of his ancestry remain suggest that he has at least some orcish blood in his veins. On seeing you, he places his hand to his mouth briefly, then bellows a challenge at you.

The passage has clearly been worked by experienced stonemasons, and although dry, it looks like it was once used as a waterway. After about twenty feet, a passage opens up to the right; this passage leads down past area 2-7, and to a three-way juncture leading toward 2-4, 2-5, and 2-6. The round passage, however, continues down and follows the curve of the mountain, where Iborsum, the half-orc half-dragon awaits.

As soon as Iborsum sees the party approaching, he ingests the *potion of spider climb* he has, and runs up the wall and along the ceiling toward the PCs. He continues to use the full surface of the tunnel for the entire

duration of the fight, as the potion's effect lasts for almost two full hours. (Gavuhn created the potion for Iborsum to use; treat it as though it were cast by a wizard of 11th level.) Unlike the previous two cultists, Iborsum neither retreats nor surrenders, fighting to the death and pursuing the PCs if they attempt to flee.

Iborsum Shatter-fist, half-orc half-dragon Ftr7: Medium Dragon (Augmented Humanoid); CR 9; HD 7d10+18; hp 58; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 23 (+1 Dex, +8 full plate, +4 natural), touch 11, FF 22; BAB +7; Grp +15; Atk greatsword +16 melee (2d6+10/19-20); Full Atk greatsword +16/+11 melee (2d6+10/19-20) and claw +10 melee (1d4+8) or bite +10 (1d6+8) or thrown dagger +8/+3 ranged (1d4+8/19-20); SA Breath weapon 6d8; SQ darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, immunity to sleep and paralysis effects, immunity to fire; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 26, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Intimidate +6, Jump +14; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).

Equipment: Greatsword, seven daggers, full plate armor, *potion of spider climb*.

SA – Breath weapon (Su): 1/day, 30-foot cone of fire, damage 6d8, Reflex save (DC 15) for half.

Cool ways to make this fight interesting:

- Iborsum can essentially use 360 degrees of the tunnel surface to fight; battling an opponent who's hanging upside-down from the ceiling isn't necessarily any harder, but it's definitely not something even an experienced fighter is used to, and just presents a neat mental image.
- Iborsum is also a half-dragon, due to the rituals of the cult; this gives him a breath weapon in the form of a cone of flame. A cone of flame in the confines of the tunnel becomes a pretty lethal weapon, channeling back up the hall and creating a mad rush to escape the inferno.
- Speaking of fire, Iborsum is immune to it. That does not sound like a big deal, but a torch and some oil can make it into a nasty situation for the PCs. There's nothing quite like fighting someone who can stand in the middle of a blazing inferno totally unscathed.
- Trying to get behind Iborsum to flank him presents some interesting challenges for PCs. Perhaps one of them will wait until he's standing on the ceiling, then make a sliding dive beneath him.
- If one of the PCs has access to *spider climb* as well, then the fight gets even more interesting, as both sides run up and down the walls, floor, and ceiling, seeking to outflank the other.

Area 2-3 – The Underground Lake (EL 9):

The passage rises and falls, continuing along until it opens up into a cavern. Even before you get out into the open area, you can hear the sound of rushing waters; a crack in the ceiling allows in a waterfall of meltwater from the mountain slopes outside. The result is a small pond of fresh water deep underground, but before you can stop to refill your skins, you notice an exotic, reptilian woman standing on the very surface of the water. She smiles dreamily and says over the thundering waters, “Infidels. You threaten the glorious dragon, Pyraxus. Leave now, or you will surely perish.”

After passing the lair in area 2-1 and the entrance onto the central shaft, the tunnel dips down (as reflected by its temporary presence on the level 3 map). During the area where it dips, there is a secret door (Spot DC 30 to locate, opened by a hidden switch on the wall) that leads into area 3-2. Past the secret door, the passage rises back up to a small underground pond fed by a waterfall. At the center of the lake stands Nira Bavisar, who definitely has dragon blood now, even if she did not before.

Tactics: Nira only has one magical item – her ring – but in this situation, it creates quite an advantage for her. The pond drops off to a depth of 20 feet almost immediately and is icy cold; there’s no way to wade across. Unless the party has some way of walking on water themselves, they’ll have to use exclusively ranged weapons to fight Nira, and she’s got an advantage there. She’s got her crossbow, she can breathe fire once, she knows how to cast *magic missile*, *true strike*, and *scorching ray*, plus she has an arsenal of defensive spells.

If Solgem escaped the PCs before, he’ll be waiting for them here. He’ll act as advance warning for Nira, allowing her to cast spells like *shield*, *mage armor*, and *obscuring mist* before the PCs get in there and spot her. At this point, both fight to the death – although Solgem, at the very least, will accept a surrender if it’s offered. He’s a big subscriber to Patton’s philosophy that “it’s not about dying for your dragon, it’s about getting the other guy to die for his dragon...if he had one.”

Development: At this point, if the characters haven’t found either of the two hidden doors along the way, they might wind up thinking they’ve hit a dead end. This might lead them to backtrack and discover one or another of those hidden doors; or, as the GM, you might leave a couple of hints as to where to go from here. First, a Wisdom check might allow the PCs to realize that Nira seemed very intent on defending this seeming “dead end,” keeping to the lake no matter what the characters did, and second, a Spot check (DC 10) could let them notice that despite a continual inflow of water from the waterfall, the water level of the lake never seems to rise. One or the other of those

hints should lead to the natural conclusion; the water is draining out somewhere, and that somewhere is somewhere that the dragon cult doesn’t want the party heading.

Indeed, once the characters expand their investigations under the surface of the lake, they can spot a current that leads to a hole in the basin of the lake (Spot, DC 15 if actively looking underwater, DC 25 otherwise). The current will aid them in swimming through it, and most characters can make it out to area 3-1 within ten rounds. (A character can automatically hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to their Constitution score; after that, they must make a Constitution check every round with a DC of 10 the first round, +1 every subsequent round, to keep holding their breath.) Of course, the PCs don’t *know* how long the underwater passage is, but that’s just what separates the men from the boys, right?

Nira Bavisar, elf half-dragon Sor7: Medium Dragon (Augmented Humanoid); CR 9; HD 7d4-8; hp 16; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+3 Dex, +4 natural), touch 13, FF 14; BAB +3; Grp +6; Atk dagger +6 melee (1d4+3/19-20) or claw +6 melee (1d4+3) or bite +6 melee (1d6+3) or heavy crossbow +6 ranged (1d10/19-20); Full Atk dagger +6 melee (1d4+3/19-20) and claw +1 melee (1d4+3) or bite +1 melee (1d6+3) or heavy crossbow +6 ranged (1d10/19-20); SA Breath weapon 6d8; SQ darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, immunity to sleep and paralysis effects, immunity to fire; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 17, Con 8, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +8, Spellcraft +12; Combat Casting, Dodge, Mobility.

Spells Known (6/8/7/5; save DC = 15 + spell level): 0–*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *flare*, *message*, *read magic*, *ray of frost*, *resistance*; 1st–*obscuring mist*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *true strike*; 2nd–*cat’s grace*, *mirror image*, *scorching ray*; 3rd–*fly*, *haste*.

Equipment: Heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, dagger, *ring of water walking*.

SA – Breath weapon (Su): 1/day, 30-foot cone of fire, damage 6d8, Reflex save (DC 15) for half.

Cool ways to make this fight interesting:

- Depending on what magics the PCs have access to, they have all sorts of interesting strategies open to them in trying to close with Nira. Perhaps they have something that lets them walk across water themselves; maybe they’ll try freezing the lake, and charging toward her. They can always just try swimming, of course (remember armor check penalties for swimming).
- If they do freeze the water, Nira can use her magic or breath weapon to melt it out from under them at an appropriate moment, plunging them into the icy mountain waters.

- It'll at least be worth it to see the looks on your players' faces if they finally manage to get across to Nira through one of the means mentioned above, only to see her cast fly on herself and take to the air.
- Clerics with a twisted sense of humor can bring Nira to heel a bit by using the spell *control water*.
- Remember, if the characters have bypassed some monsters on their way in and are making a lot of noise, they could attract unwanted attention mid-way through the fight.

Area 2-4 – The Oldest Trick (EL 5):

From the looks of things, this was once a thoroughfare that the dwarves used in their efforts to mine out the mountain. No mining equipment remains, though; undoubtedly, the dwarves took it with them when they fled from Pyraxus. Now it's just a quiet, empty passage that leads deeper into the mountain.

This passage is deceptively safe-looking. If the characters proceed with care, checking for traps the whole way, it is relatively safe – the four pits covered with tarpaulins painted to resemble stone can be spotted with a DC 24 Spot check, and there's plenty of space to go around them. But if the PCs are progressing too quickly, or fail the Spot checks, they're in for trouble. Characters progressing at a normal walking pace get a DC 20 Reflex save to avoid falling into the pit; those running or moving recklessly get no save.

Each of the four pits is ten feet deep, and has spikes at the bottom; when a character falls in, 1d4 spikes make an attack against the character with a +10 attack bonus. A successful hit deals 1d4+2 damage; regardless of whether the character hits any of the spikes, he or she still takes 1d6 falling damage. The pits themselves are natural; the cult merely stuck sharpened sticks at the bottom, and covered them with painted tarpaulins.

Once the characters make it past the pits, the passage meets back up with the passage from 2-5 and continues sharply down toward level 3, almost making a U-turn as it does so. From there, it splits into a T-junction leading toward 3-6 on the right, and 3-1 on the left.

Camouflaged Spiked Pit Traps (4): CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 10 ft. deep (1d6, fall); single target (target in adjacent 5-ft. square); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 each); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 19.

Area 2-5 – The Other Option (EL 3):

This passage is narrow, almost scraping your shoulders as you walk through it, and the slow settling of the mountain over the years has made the floor uneven and treacherous. Still, you have



one consolation; if you lose your balance, the tunnel's not wide enough to fall over in.

Note to GMs: No matter how tempting it is, resist the urge to cackle wickedly after reading the above passage out loud. They'll just turn around and go the other way, then.

Walking along this passage without leaning on the left-hand wall requires a Balance check (DC 10); most characters will probably find it easier to brace themselves along the walls and go forward that way. Now, go back and re-read the description of area 1-2. Notice the bit about "a section of the wall...has been broken and repaired recently, and that the repairs are not very solid"? Yeah. The middle section of the wall, from about 15 feet in to about 60 feet in, is wedged in place rather than being solid. If the characters put any pressure on it, it simply falls apart, forcing those adjacent to make a sudden Reflex save (DC 25) to avoid falling into the central shaft. Characters who fall take 3d6 points of damage, and must find some way back up (refer to area 1-2). Once the wall falls apart, characters who still want to use this passage need to make a Balance check (DC 15) to avoid falling into the central shaft.

After the characters traverse the passage, it joins back up with the passage from 2-4, heading down toward level three as described under area 2-4.

Collapsing Wall Pit Trap: CR 3; mechanical; location

trigger; repair reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 30 ft. deep (3d6, fall); multiple targets (characters adjacent to 45-foot stretch of wall); Search DC 20; Disable Device N/A (Balance DC 10 to pass).

Area 2-6 – The Failed Experiment (EL 5):

At the three-way fork, you take the right-hand passage. As you walk down the short tunnel, you hear several voices raised in argument, but the echoes of the tunnel make it impossible to make out the words. Only when the tunnel opens up into a cavern, and you see the hideous shapeless mass therein with its very substance growing and un-growing mouths in a ceaseless stream of maddening babble, do you realize that you came in exactly the wrong direction.

Any characters who take the right-hand fork at the three-way junction find a dead end in more ways than one. The tunnel slopes down slightly, then opens out into a small cavern. In it lies one of Gavuhn and Darsov's initial attempts at fusing the essences of different creatures, which turned into merely an amorphous, gibbering, insane mass of protoplasmic tissue that drinks blood to replenish its own unstable mass. This gibbering mouther waits inside the cavern, and attacks any non-draconic creature that enters.

Tactics: The mouther fights to the death, and pursues any PCs that attempt to flee. In many ways, it would welcome death as a release from its madness and torment, and certainly has no intention of running or hiding. Remember, if the party doesn't enter this corridor, there's still a chance of it hearing them as they head down one of the other passages and pursuing them.

Gibbering Mouther: Medium Aberration; CR 5; HD 4d8+24; hp 42; Init +1; Spd 10 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 19 (+1 Dex, +8 natural), touch 11, FF 18; BAB +3; Grp +3; Atk bite +4 melee (1) or spittle +4 ranged touch (1d4 acid plus blindness); Full Atk 6 bites +4 melee (1) and spittle +4 ranged touch (1d4 acid plus blindness); SA Gibbering, spittle, improved grab, blood drain, engulf, ground manipulation; SQ amorphous, damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 22, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Listen +4, Spot +9, Swim +8; Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse.

SA–Gibbering (Su): Ongoing free action; all creatures in 60-foot spread subject to confusion for 1d2 rounds (Will DC 13 to resist).

SA–Blood Drain (Ex): Successful grapple following bite (with improved grapple ability) drains blood, dealing 1 pt. of Con damage per round; mouth can be ripped off (Strength DC 12) or severed with sunder attempt (2 hp).

SA–Engulf (Ex): Creature grabbed by three or more mouths must make DC 14 Reflex save or fall and be engulfed. Mouther gets 12 bite attacks against

engulfed creature, which cannot attack from within.

SA–Ground Manipulation (Su): At will as a standard action, turn ground to mush, miring (pinning) opponents; 1 round to soften earth or sand, 2 rounds for stone.

SA–Amorphous (Ex): Cannot be flanked; immune to critical hits.

Area 2-7 – In Hiding (EL 6):

As you head down the short passage, you enter a small natural cavern. The patter of spindly legs and a flash of movement alerts you to something approaching, but even as you see the two rust monsters, they back away warily. They sniff at the scent of your weapons and armor, but something – perhaps fear? – keeps them at bay.

This is one of the more pathetic sights to be found in the cavern. In this small, stalagmite-filled cave, two rust monsters have concealed themselves. These are the last two rust monsters in the whole system of caverns; the cult has systematically hunted them down to keep the dragon's hoard safe. When the PCs enter, the starving rust monsters will be attracted by the scent of metal, but wary of a further attack – they've already escaped from several attempts on their lives by the cult, and they're quite skittish.

If there are any druids in the party, don't be surprised if they take pity on the poor creatures and give them something to eat. If they do, the rust monsters continue to follow the party at a distance for the remainder of the adventure, hoping for further scraps. If the party attacks, the rust monsters try to flee (and perhaps snack on the party's weapons on the way). If the party simply leaves them alone, the rust monsters reciprocate; unlike normal rust monsters, these two are simply too terrified to fight.

Rust Monsters (2): Medium Aberration; CR 3; HD 5d8+5; hp 27; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 18 (+3 Dexterity, +5 natural), touch 13, FF 15; BAB +3; Grp +3; Atk antennae touch +3 melee (rust); Full Atk antennae touch +3 melee (rust) and bite -2 melee (1d3); SA Rust; SQ Darkvision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +7; Alertness, Track.

Level Three: Secrets Uncovered

Unless otherwise noted, all passages are 10 feet high, 6 feet across, and composed of unworked stone. All doors are made of stone as well, and are considered to be of dwarven construction. All walls and doors, unless otherwise noted, have the following statistics:

Unworked Stone Wall: 5 ft. thick, Hardness 8, 900 hp, Break DC 65, Climb DC 20.

Stone Door: 4 in. thick, Hardness 8, 60 hp, Break DC 28 (both stuck and locked).

Wandering Monsters

As on previous levels, the monsters remain in their current locations, as they are part of an organized defense of the dragon's lair. Monsters from bypassed encounters may begin searching for the characters. There is a 10% chance each hour that monsters from a bypassed encounter find the PCs again and attack. This chance increases by 5% if the characters are making lots of noise, and by a further 10% if they are using some sort of obvious light source. (All the inhabitants of the dungeon have darkvision, and most have low-light vision; unless the characters bring in a light source, no room will be lit unless otherwise noted.)

Areas of the Map

Area 3-1 – Stream Terminus:

Holding your breath, you dive into the underground lake and swim down into the channel. The swift current quickly propels you through, and just as you feel that you must take a breath, you find yourself washed out into the open air once more. You have penetrated deeper into the heart of the mountain than any before you, but passages to the left and the right suggest that there is more to explore.

If the party swam through the underground stream from area 2-3, they come out here, as the stream intersects a tunnel on the third level. The aperture on the other side of the tunnel is low and wide, and the PCs won't fit through. They have no worries about being washed deeper into the caves. The tunnel heads to area 3-7 on the left, and 3-6 on the right.

Area 3-2 – The Hidden Library (EL 9):

As you walk along the hidden passage, you feel you are approaching something the mysterious defenders of the caverns did not expect you to find. This feeling only increases as you find the massive stone door, and you have to wonder what secrets lie behind it.

Two hidden doors, one from area 3-7 and one from 2-3, both lead to this passage, as does the other pas-

sage from the central shaft (in area 1-2). It's a long passage that curves parallel to the central shaft. Next to the large stone door, at approximately chest height, is a metal box affixed to the wall. Both the door and the box radiate strong abjuration magic, and the door is tougher than normal (hardness 16, 120 hp, break DC of 56). Something on the other side is making noise – moans, muffled conversations, and occasional yells and thumping sounds. The box is open, and it does have a hinged lid; clearly, it can be closed, and a legend inscribed on the door seems to suggest what it's for. Give out players' handout B and read the following:

The inscription on the door is in Common. It reads: "Wiser than Gods, Worse than the Devil, The Rich do not possess me, The Poor cannot be rid of me, if you eat me, you Die! Place me in the box. If I accept your sacrifice, you may enter."

In order to open the door, the box must be closed with nothing inside it. (Nothing is wiser than the gods, nothing is worse than the devil, the rich do not possess nothing, the poor are unable to afford something and thus cannot get rid of nothing, and of course, if you eat nothing, you die.) Objects placed inside the box have no effect on the door, and vanish when the box is closed and re-opened.

Once the door is opened, the party finds within a modest library. Several spellbooks and books on magical theory line the walls, and hunched in the center of the room, trying to sit on a chair that clearly no longer fits it, is Darsov Erikson, the cleric who helped to start all this. (You can show the players the illustration on page 17 as a handout, if you wish.) If Rama the druid escaped the group earlier, they'll find her here; unfortunately, they'll find her dead, and Darsov looking at them with a sheepish expression. That would be the source of the sounds they heard; however, they still hear the sounds even if Darsov is alone in the room. He's insane, after all, and tends to have conversations with himself if there are no other candidates.

Development: At first, Darsov will be relatively lucid, and even chatty. He'll explain much of the back story of the cult (giving some of the information contained in appendix 1), and demonstrate the effects of their transformation using himself as a sort of living handbill. However, at the first point where the characters express any kind of negative response toward the idea of transformation into a draconic creature, or even where such a response could be construed, Darsov begins getting antagonistic. Eventually, no matter what the PCs say or do, he attacks.

If the spellbooks survive the battle, any wizards in the party should be very happy. The spellbooks contain all wizard spells through 6th level, including the new spell

dragon-kith, listed in appendix 3. Keep in mind, though, that's a very big if; Darsov's breath weapon is a cone of fire, and the group is fighting in relatively close quarters. It's very likely that a stray blast will catch the books, and they go up quickly if ignited.

Even if the books do catch on fire, arrange for the characters to recover a journal on Darsov's person that includes the full text of handout A in appendix 1. Give out this handout after the fight.

Tactics: Darsov fights to the death, though his madness causes him to take the fight in some interesting directions. Darsov is completely insane. The endless rituals and experiments he's performed on himself have taken their toll. Although he is a powerful half-dragon cleric, he has moments of dementia where he acts irrationally.

Simulate this in combat as follows. Each round on Darsov's activation, roll a Will save against DC 20. If he fails, he does something crazy. Compare the Will save roll to the following table to determine exactly what happens (or fudge it to make the battle interesting but manageable; see below for more ideas):

Will Save	Behavior
12-13 (fail)	Darsov collapses on the floor and curls into a fetal position. He will awaken immediately if attacked or disturbed, but if not provoked he sleeps for 1d4 rounds.
14-15 (fail)	Darsov casts a healing spell on the nearest opponent, making a touch attack in order to do so.
16-17 (fail)	Darsov swings ferociously – at an opponent who's not there. He acts normally, but either goes after an inanimate object (like the bookshelf) or swings at empty space.
18-19 (fail)	Darsov freezes in place, unsure what to do. He takes no actions this round.
20-23 (pass)	Darsov acts normally but can't concentrate well enough to cast spells.
24+ (pass)	Darsov acts normally and can cast spells as usual.

If Darsov succeeds with this Will save, he can fight normally this round and, if the result is high enough, he can concentrate well enough to cast spells. As a side effect of his condition, Darsov is particularly vulnerable to mind-affecting spells. The duration of any spell causing confusion, insanity, dazedness, hypnosis, or similar effects is doubled when it affects him.

Darsov Erikson, human dragon-kin Clr9: Large Dragon (Augmented Humanoid); CR 9 (9 levels of cleric, 4 for dragon-kin status, -4 for insanity); HD 9d8+52; hp 97; Init +0; Spd 30 ft./flight 60 ft. (average); BAB +6; Grp +15; AC 16 (-1 size, +4 natural armor, +3

hide armor), touch 9, FF 16; Atk heavy mace +11 melee (2d6+5); Full Atk heavy mace +11/+6 melee (2d6+5) and claw +6 melee (1d8+5) or bite +6 melee (2d6+5) or sling +6/+1 ranged (1d6+5); SA Breath weapon 6d8, unnerving presence DC 18; SQ darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, immunity to sleep and paralysis effects, immunity to fire; AL CN; SV Fort +10, Ref +3, Will +11; Str 20, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 20, Wis 21, Cha 19.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +21, Heal +22, Knowledge (arcana) +22, Knowledge (nature) +22, Spellcraft +22; Brew Potion, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Still Spell.

Cleric Domains: Animal and Plant.

Spells (6/6+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/2+1; save DC = 15 + spell level; domain spells marked with *): 0–*create water, cure minor wounds* (x3), *guidance, virtue*; 1st–*deathwatch, divine favor, entangle**, *obscuring mist, sanctuary, shield of faith, summon monster I*; 2nd–*barkskin**, *cure moderate wounds* (x2), *gentle repose, hold person, spiritual weapon*; 3rd–*dispel magic* (x2), *dominate animal**, *searing light, water walk*; 4th–*air walk, cure critical wounds, dismissal, summon nature's ally IV**; 5th–*dragon-kith, flame strike, wall of thorns**.

Equipment: Heavy mace, sling, 20 sling bullets, hide armor.

SA – Breath weapon (Su): 5/day (2d4 rounds between uses), 30-foot cone of fire, damage 6d8, Reflex save (DC 18) for half.

SA – Unnerving Presence (Ex): Any creature within a 30-foot radius that has fewer HD must make a Will save (DC 18). Success means that they are immune to that dragon-kin's unnerving presence for 24 hours. On a failure, those creatures are shaken for 3d6 rounds.

Special: Darsov recently underwent his transformation into a dragon-kin, and it took a toll on his sanity. See above for details.

Cool ways to make this fight interesting:

- Darsov might not be the man he once was, but his god doesn't seem to care; when he's lucid, he still has access to all his clerical spells.
- Darsov is also more dragon than human by now, and can breathe fire several times a day; given that up until this point, the PCs haven't faced any dragon cult members who can use their breath weapon more than once, this should come as a major, and unwelcome, surprise.
- If the books do ignite, they make great projectile weapons for someone who's immune to fire and can throw them without taking damage. Gee, who could that someone be?
- Don't forget, Darsov is very, very insane (which is why he killed his wife). He might suddenly stop mid-fight, and apologize profusely for the entire regrettable incident; he might just as suddenly cower in a corner, screaming "Make the bad men stop!" Try to



time his incidents of madness to keep the PCs from being overwhelmed, but don't make it look like you're timing it. You know, role-play casual.

- As a cleric, Darsov does have access to the spell *raise dead*; it's unlikely that he'd get the chance to cast it in the middle of a fight, but if there's a lull in the fighting (or perhaps before the fighting begins) he could have a sudden fit of remorse and bring his wife back. Or perhaps he does this all the time...

Area 3-3 – Guardians of the Cult (EL 6):

As the passage widens once more, you see several hunched figures. Their greyish-green flesh and distinctive stench betrays them as orcs; some huddle around a small fire, while others grunt and snarl in a circle around a lively game of dice. As you enter, one of them looks up and grabs for his sword, shouting to the others.

Hopefully, any party that went down through area 2-2 defeated Iborsum before going further, because if they just dashed past the half-orc, half-dragon warrior and ran down the hallway, they're in for a rude surprise. As the passage widens out into a cavern, the party sees a gang of orcs, roasting meat on a small, smoky fire and gambling with carved bones. They haven't posted much of a look-out, since they didn't really expect anyone to get past, but unless the PCs sneak past carefully (Move Silently vs. orcs' Listen, and Hide vs. orcs' Spot), the orcs raise the alarm and attack.

Tactics: These orcs do not fight to the death, instead retreating further down the passage to area 3-5, where they have reinforcements. If the PCs flee, they pursue, especially if the PCs flee down toward area 3-5. These are typical orcs, and their favorite kind of fight is a unfair one (in their favor, of course).

The orcs have no treasure of their own. Since their leader became a dragon-blood, he now feels much more sympathetic to the viewpoint of the dragon, so he forced his gang to "donate" to the dragon's hoard.

Orcs (7): Medium Humanoid (Orc); CR 1/2; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+3 studded leather armor), touch 10, FF 13; Atk falchion +4 melee (2d4+4/18-20) or javelin +1 ranged (1d6+3); Full Atk falchion +4 melee (2d4+4/18-20) or javelin +1 ranged (1d6+3); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will -2; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 7, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +1, Spot +1; Alertness.

Equipment: Falchion, javelin, studded leather armor.

Dragon-Blood Orc Leader (1): Medium Dragon (Humanoid, Orc); CR 3; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 studded leather armor, +2 natural), touch 10, FF 15; BAB +1; Grp +4; Atk falchion +7 melee (2d4+7/18-20); Full Atk falchion +7 melee (2d4+7/18-20) and claw +2 melee (1d4+6) or bite +2 melee (1d6+6) or javelin +1 ranged (1d6+6); SA

Breath weapon 3d8; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity, low-light vision, immunity to sleep and paralysis effects, fire resistance 10; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will -2; Str 22, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 7, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +1, Spot +1; Alertness.

Equipment: Falchion, javelin, studded leather armor.

SA – *Breath weapon (Su)*: 1/day, 15-foot cone of fire, damage 3d8, Reflex save (DC 12) for half.

Cool ways to make this fight interesting:

- There's a small, smoky fire nearby, and that's always a recipe for interesting combat tactics. Perhaps the PCs could throw an orc onto the fire, or perhaps the orcs could try forcing the PCs back toward the flame. Don't forget, the leader takes reduced damage from flames.
- We know we said that all NPC interaction would be done at swordpoint – well, technically, convincing the orcs to revolt against their dragon-tainted leader mid-fight would be interacting at swordpoint, right? (It'd also take some amazing Diplomacy rolls, but that's what being heroic is about!)
- It's anyone's guess as to how much the orc leader values the lives of his men; that, combined with the ability to breathe fire, might make for an exciting (and disturbing) sequence in which the heroes and villains alike get caught in "friendly fire" (no pun intended).

Area 3-4 – The Guardian of the Gate (EL 5):

This cavern seems deceptively quiet, just a barren open space with a few small passages leading off of it. But something gives you the feeling you're being watched. You hope you're wrong...

The cult came to an arrangement with the ruthless, cunning cloaker that inhabits this cave, allowing it to keep any treasure it found on intruders so long as it kept them away from the hidden door leading to area 3-7. The cloaker accomplishes this through misdirection, distraction, and violence; since it only has two passages to guard, and one of them is difficult to access, it can focus its whole attention on diverting people away from the hidden door nearby. If the party finds the door from the opposite direction, the cloaker ignores them, unless it feels that it has an easy victory.

Tactics: The secret door (Search DC 25) is opened through pressing a hidden switch on the wall; however, if the PCs get within ten feet of the door, the cloaker uses its moan ability to frighten them away. If any of the party makes their save, it uses its moan abilities more overtly, drawing the attention of the party past the door to the small cavern it uses as its lair. It fights until it seems likely to lose, then uses its shadow shift abilities to cover its own escape; after all, it's only fighting to draw attention to it and away from the secret

door. It does not pursue the PCs unless it seems likely that it can catch them and kill them with a minimum of effort.

The gemstones that form its hoard are hidden under a small pile of debris; finding them requires a Search check (DC 17). If the cloaker manages to kill any characters, it tosses the bodies and any items they might have into the central shaft – except for gemstones, which it keeps for its own unknown reasons.

Cloaker (1): Large Aberration; CR 5; HD 6d8+18; hp 45; Init +7; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 19 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +7 natural), touch 12, FF 16; BAB +4; Grp +13; Atk tail slap +8 melee (1d6+5); Full Atk tail slap +8 melee (1d6+5) and bite +3 melee (1d4+2); SA Moan, engulf; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., shadow shift; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 21, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Listen +13, Move Silently +12, Spot +13; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

Equipment: 1 bloodstone (30 gp value), 1 emerald (500 gp).

SA–*Moan (Ex)*: Can induce one of four effects: unnerve (60-foot spread, -2 to attack and damage, no save; after 6 consecutive rounds DC 15 Will save or enter trance where unable to attack or defend), fear (30-foot spread, DC 15 Will save or panicked for 2 rounds), nausea (30-foot cone, DC 15 Fort save or fall prone and become nauseated for 1d4+1 rounds), or stupor (single target, 30 ft. range, DC 15 Fort save or affected by *hold monster* for 5 rounds).

SA–*Engulf (Ex)*: Attempt grapple without attack of opportunity; if successful, target engulfed: cloaker gets +4 attacks against that target; damage to cloaker split between cloaker and engulfed victim.

SA–*Shadow Shift (Su)*: Three possible ways to manipulate shadows: obscure vision (cloaker gains concealment, 20% miss chance, 1d4 rounds); dancing images (as *mirror image*, CL 6th), or silent image (as *silent image*, DC 15, CL 6th).

Area 3-5 – Confronting the Cult (EL 11):

This passage opens up into a wide, sloping cavern full of natural pillars and deep puddles. The footing is treacherous, but the stalagmites offer numerous chances to support yourself as you walk. In the echoing depths, you hear wings flapping...could this be the end of your quest?

This part of the caves was left unworked by the dwarves who originally inhabited the mountain; huge stalactites and stalagmites have grown together to form natural pillars. Puddles of water make the floor treacherous in spots, and footing is slippery over almost the entire surface (Balance DC 12 or slip if moving faster than a walk). The entire cavern slopes slightly to the east, and the water collects on the eastern side to about a foot in depth.

Tactics: The pillars, stalagmites, and stalactites offer a lot of cover to both the PCs and to any creatures that might also use the caverns to ambush the party. Specifically, they offer a lot of cover to Gavuhn Donnell, the current leader of the cult. Gavuhn is a tall, thin, sickly looking half-dragon with a persistent cough and a tremble to his motions. He positions himself near enough to the entrance that he can catch the party with his breath weapon while they're still gathered together; after that, he follows up with *mirror image* as soon as possible.

Gavuhn fights as long as he can, but he knows he can't last long in a fight, due to his poor health. This is expressed as a low Con and the resulting low hit points. If you think they're low now, you should imagine what he was like before he transformed into a three-quarters dragon – he was on the verge of death when the transformation saved him, and has since degenerated even more in spite of the Constitution benefits of being a half-dragon.

He uses the pillars for cover as much as possible, and fights a defensive battle as he works toward the exit from the cavern to level four. When it looks like he's low on hit points (relatively speaking, of course), he casts *wall of fire* and runs through it (he is immune to fire, remember, which also comes in handy when he's casting those *fireball* spells). The *wall of fire* lasts as long as he concentrates on it, so he might be able to hold the PCs in a stand-off for some time if they can't figure out some way to bring it down. If they do bring it down, he fights to the death. He pursues the PCs if they flee down to the fourth level, but not if they retreat back to area 3-3.

Rubble Showers: The stalactites are not entirely stable, and might come loose; any attack that hits the walls or ceiling has a chance of bringing down a shower of rubble. The chance is a percentage equal to the amount of damage done (so a stray arrow hitting the ceiling for 4 points of damage has a 4 percent chance, but a *fireball* let loose near the roof could easily bring down a hail of stone). In a rubble shower, all characters (including Gavuhn) must make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid being hit by falling rocks (1d6 damage).

Gavuhn Donnell, dragon-kin human Wiz11: Large Dragon (Augmented Humanoid); CR 11 (11 base +4 for dragon-kin template –4 for sickness, expressed as low Constitution); HD 11d8-33; hp 18; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 16 (-1 Dex, -1 size, +6 natural, +2 *ring of protection*), touch 10, FF 16; BAB +5; Grp +16; Atk dagger +12 melee (1d6+7/19-20); Full Atk dagger +12 melee (1d6+7/19-20) and bite +7 melee (2d6+7) or claw +7 melee (1d8+7), or light crossbow +7 ranged (2d6/19-20); SA Breath weapon 6d8, unnerving presence DC 11; SQ darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, immunity to sleep and paralysis effects, immunity to fire; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 24, Dex 8, Con 4, Int 21, Wis 9, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +13, Decipher Script +19, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (local) +19, Knowledge (nature) +19, Spellcraft +21; Combat Casting, Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Magical Aptitude, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Still Spell.

Spells (4/6/5/5/4/3/1, save DC = 15 + spell level): 0–*acid splash, flare, ray of frost, resistance*; 1st–*charm person, mage armor, magic missile* (x4); 2nd–*darkness, invisibility, mirror image, spider climb, web*; 3rd–*fireball* (x2), *haste, lightning bolt, slow*; 4th–*bestow curse, E.'s black tentacles, wall of fire* (x2); 5th–*baleful polymorph; feeblemind, stone shape*; 6th–*chain lightning*. Gavuhn also knows the *dragon-kith* spell, the spell *permanency*, and the spell *permanent image*, which might explain some of the traps the PCs have encountered, though he has not prepared these spells for this battle.

Equipment: Dagger, light crossbow, +2 *ring of protection*.

SA – Breath weapon (Su): 5/day (2d4 rounds between uses), 30-foot cone of fire, damage 6d8, Reflex save (DC 11) for half.

SA – Unnerving Presence (Ex): Any creature within a 30-foot radius that has fewer HD must make a Will save (DC 11). Success means that they are immune to that dragon-kin's unnerving presence for 24 hours. On a failure, those creatures are shaken for 3d6 rounds.

Cool ways to make this fight interesting:

- *Chain lightning* and puddles of water make for a lethal and spectacular display of pyrotechnics. It might be interesting to see the reaction of a mage who's standing in a knee-deep puddle and hears Gavuhn chant the beginning of that spell. Assume that any character who doesn't actively specify he's avoiding puddles has a 50% chance of standing in one.
- Between *feeblemind* and *charm person*, there's a pretty good chance that at least one of the PCs could wind up fighting their own party on behalf of the noble dragon, rarest and most magnificent of beasts. It's so pretty; why do you want to kill it?
- Just a reminder: Gavuhn is one of only four creatures in this entire module that can breathe fire more than once per day, and one of only three that isn't out of his freaking mind, man! The PCs may or may not have bumped into Darsov, and certainly haven't seen Pyraxus or the goblin boss yet, so this little fact could come as a very big shock.
- Wizards usually know many more spells than they can prepare on a given day; feel free to substitute any spell you want of equivalent level for the ones we've given him. Don't do it on the fly, of course; that wouldn't be fair to the PCs, who expect you to play by the rules. But when you give this a read-through, go ahead and switch out these for whatever might



be best against your players...

- Falling rocks aren't just a hazard of the fight; they can wind up being a handy combat tactic. Gavuhn can dislodge them with spells (another good use for *chain lightning*), or by flying up and hitting the ceiling, to send an attack from a direction the party isn't expecting.

Area 3-6 – Wrong Turn (EL 12):

The tunnel opens out into a natural cavern, filled with stalactites and stalagmites. There are no sounds beyond those of dripping water and your own breath, but all the same, you can't shake a sense of foreboding. You hope it's merely paranoia that leads you to believe that you are not alone...

This cavern is of natural shape with no signs of stonemasonry. The cavern has many different stalactites and stalagmites; it also has a roper masquerading as a stalagmite, waiting for the characters to get close so that it can drag them in and eat them whole.

Tactics: The roper positions itself within ten feet of the entrance. If the characters pass it by and explore deeper into the cavern, it lets them past and then slides back to cut off the entrance. If they seem like they're just going to make a cursory examination, it attacks immediately, counting on its strands to keep them from being able to flee. It does fight to the death, mainly because it can't really surrender, play dead, or really escape in any other way. It does not pursue flee-

ing PCs, although it does do everything it can to keep them from escaping. It presumes that another meal will be along soon enough.

If the PCs do defeat the roper, they won't find any items; it generously allowed the cult to take any leftovers for the dragon's hoard, having no interest in treasure. There is, however, a small spring at the back of the cave, marked with the sign of the god worshiped by the dwarves who originally inhabited the cave. If the PCs drink from the spring, they find that it acts as a powerful restorative. Treat each swallow from the spring as a potion of *cure light wounds*. Each character can take up to two draughts per day; any further draughts that day will not work for that character. The water loses its restorative properties after five minutes away from the spring. The cavern itself is a dead end.

Roper (1): Large Magical Beast; CR 12; HD 10d10+30; hp 85; Init +5; Spd 10 ft.; AC 24 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +14 natural), touch 10, FF 23; BAB +10; Grp +18; Atk bite +13 melee (2d6+6) or strand +11 ranged touch (drag); Full Atk bite +13 melee (2d6+6) and 6 strands +11 ranged touch (drag); SA Drag, strands, weakness; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity, low-light vision, resistance to cold 10, spell resistance 30, vulnerability to fire; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +8; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +12, Hide +10 (+18 underground like in this cavern), Listen +13, Spot +13; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (strand).

Equipment: None (the roper's vulnerability to fire means it doesn't interfere with the cult's treasure collecting).

SA–Drag (Ex): Strand drags target closer 10 feet per round; Escape Artist (DC 23) or Strength (DC 19) check to escape; can drag target 10 feet and bite at +4 in same round; can sunder strand (10 hp).

SA–Strand (Ex): 50 ft. range (no range increment).

SA–Weakness (Ex): Targets grabbed by strand; Fort save (DC 18) or 2d8 Str loss.

Area 3-7 – Crushing Defeat (EL 7):

The tunnel widens out into a high cavern, but dozens of stalactites hang down from the ceiling and make it far more cramped than it should be. Stalagmites rise up from the ground, in a few places actually merging with their counterparts on the ceiling, but a wide path of smooth ground marks where generations of dwarves once walked these halls.

This gallery is natural, unworked stone, and either not a part of the dwarven settlement or at least something they left close to its natural state. It has many stalactites and stalagmites, some of which reach three or four feet down from the ceiling (or up from the ground;

remember, stalactites stick “tight” to the ceiling, and stalagmites don’t). As the characters progress down the gallery, they might suspect traps, and they’d most certainly be right. There are three rigged rockfalls along the course of the passage, per the stats below. Characters moving through at faster than a walk have a 25% chance of triggering them, while slow movers or characters that Search have a 75% chance of triggering a trap. Why the difference? Why, in this one case, is caution more dangerous?

The reason is simple – and so is the trap. Over the course of a few months, Gavuhn cast both *invisibility* and *permanency* on several pieces of wood, creating prop beams that are invisible. Then he propped up sections of the ceiling with them and rigged some primitive deadfalls; anyone knocking away the prop would find the ceiling collapsing on them. If the props weren’t invisible, it wouldn’t even be a trap – just somewhat rickety construction work. (This means that characters who can see invisibility won’t have any problems in this room.) But as it is, they could wind up being fatal. Characters moving slowly and checking

every part of the room have a greater chance of bumping into an invisible prop than characters who run straight through.

If the characters knock free some of the props, or if they can see them and are willing to spend the time to remove them safely (by whatever means they imagine), they might find themselves with useful tools. The beams will maintain their invisibility unless someone casts *dispel magic* on them, and you never know when it might be useful to have a stout length of wood that nobody can see. Attacking someone with the beam does not render it visible. At nine feet long and six inches wide, it’s considered a large club (damage 1d8), too large for most PCs to wield effectively as a weapon (-4 unless proficient in oversized weapons) but still potentially useful.

Falling Rocks Trap (3): CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; Atk +10 melee (4d6, falling rocks); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 20.

Level Four: The Dragon’s Lair

Unless otherwise noted, all passages are 10 feet high, 6 feet across, and composed of unworked stone. All doors are made of stone as well, and are considered to be of dwarven construction. All walls and doors, unless otherwise noted, have the following statistics:

Unworked Stone Wall: 5 ft. thick, Hardness 8, 900 hp, Break DC 65, Climb DC 20.

Stone Door: 4 in. thick, Hardness 8, 60 hp, Break DC 28 (both stuck and locked).

Wandering Monsters

As on previous levels, the monsters remain in their current locations, or begin searching for the characters if they have been bypassed and are aware of the characters’ presence.

Areas of the Map

Area 4-1 – The Refuse Heap (EL 8):

As you descend deeper into the mountain, you smell the foul stench long before you see its source. The tunnel opens up to reveal a vast and foul midden spread out before you, filled with the dragon’s horrid table leavings and the scavengers that prey upon them. Two tunnels lead off, and in one you can see something massive and reptilian shift its bulk...

Directly in front of the characters, and making itself quite difficult to ignore, is a pile of bones, rotting meat, and other organic debris; this is where the dragon

throws away the inedible bits of its meals, any offerings to its hoard too biodegradable to be of any use, and whatever else it wants to get rid of. To one side, the party has a clear view of the dragon’s lair itself (area 4-5), and to the other, a passage leads to area 4-4.

Anyone who investigates the refuse pile too closely finds that, like many large piles of compost and garbage, it has attracted otyughs.

Tactics: The otyughs attack anything that gets close to them, but they do not fight to the death or pursue PCs. They have almost no grasp of tactics, merely lashing out at any PC that gets near them...assuming any do. The refuse pile is unpleasant to all five senses. (Well, to sight and smell, at least. It’s unpleasant to the other three as well, but characters are unlikely to try to find that out for themselves.)

Otyughs (2): Large Aberration; CR 4; HD 6d8+9; hp 30, 36; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (-1 size, +8 natural), touch 9, FF 17; BAB +4; Grp +8; Atk tentacle +4 melee (1d6); Full Atk 2 tentacles +4 melee (1d6) and bite -2 melee (1d4); SA Constrict 1d6, disease, improved grab; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +7, Listen +6, Spot +6; Alertness, Toughness, Weapon Focus (tentacle).

SA–Constrict (Ex): Automatic tentacle damage with a grapple check.

SA–Disease (Ex): Filth fever – bite, Fortitude DC 14, incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.

Area 4-2 – The Goblin Outpost (EL 8):

As you approach a three-way fork, you hear the sub-human gruntings of what can only be goblin-kind. Their voices are accompanied by the sound of clattering footsteps and rustling armor. You can only assume that they're coming out to greet you...

This passage leads to a small goblin outpost, home of the last line of defense for the cultists. Taking out a few goblins probably won't be too much of a challenge for an experienced party of adventurers, but they're in for a nasty shock: The goblin leader has been subjected to the *dragon-kith* spell on numerous occasions.

Tactics: The goblins do not fight to the death; they're really only in this because their leader is a dragon cultist, and because he's bigger, meaner, and nastier than they are. However, they're more afraid of him than they are of the PCs, and only surrender or attempt to flee if they believe that the boss won't come after them. The boss fights to the death; he's a little bit overconfident after the power he's gotten from the ritual, and long periods of bossing around the smaller goblins has made him megalomaniacal. (He's already forced them to donate most of their personal possessions to the hoard.) All the goblins pursue fleeing PCs; the goblin impulse to bully the weak and frightened is the most reliable impulse in their nature.

Goblins (10): Small Humanoid (Goblinoid); CR 1/3; HD 1d8+1; hp 5 (x10); Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +2 leather armor, +1 light shield), touch 12, FF 14; BAB +1; Grp -3; Atk/Full Atk morningstar +2 melee (1d6) or javelin +3 ranged (1d4); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Ride +4, Spot +2; Alertness.

Equipment: Morningstar, javelin, leather armor, light shield, 3d4 copper pieces each (all their boss let them keep).

Dragon-Kin Goblin Boss (1): Medium Dragon (Augmented Humanoid) (Goblinoid); CR 4; HD 1d12+3; hp 13; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20 (+1 Dex, +6 natural, +2 leather armor, +1 light shield), touch 11, FF 19; BAB +1; Grp +6; Atk claw +7 melee (1d6+5); Full Atk 2 claws +7 melee (1d6+5) or bite +7 melee (1d8+5) or javelin +3 ranged (1d4+5); SA Breath weapon 6d8, unnerving presence DC 9; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, immunity to sleep and paralysis effects, immunity to fire; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 21, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Ride +4, Spot +2; Alertness.

Equipment: Javelin, leather armor, light shield.

SA – Breath weapon (Su): 5/day (2d4 rounds between uses), 30-foot cone of fire, damage 6d8,

Reflex save (DC 13) for half.

SA – Unnerving Presence (Ex): Any creature within a 30-foot radius that has fewer HD must make a Will save (DC 9). Success means that they are immune to that dragon-kin's unnerving presence for 24 hours. On a failure, those creatures are shaken for 3d6 rounds.

Area 4-3 – The Slippery Slope (EL 4):

This passage slopes downward sharply, and you can see a dim light emanating from its far end. Perhaps it is the glitter of firelight from the dragon's hoard itself...

Note to GMs: Again, this room description only works if you can say it with a straight face. If you can't resist a manic grin and the words, "heh, heh, heh," after the description proper, just don't bother with it...and you probably shouldn't take up poker, either.

Characters who take this path will find it slopes downward – at first gradually, then quite steeply. It's also slippery underfoot, and the stone has been polished to a glass-like sheen. The walls are slippery too...in fact, it feels like someone's greased the entire passage. That's because someone *has* greased the entire passage, which leads outside the mountain to a sheer, hundred-foot drop.

For the first ten feet, the slope is gradual enough that characters only need to make a Balance check (DC 10) to avoid falling; if they proceed past that, the DC increases by 10 for the next ten feet, and then by 10 again for the final ten feet before the edge. Once a character has fallen, they can make a Reflex save (DC 20) to brace themselves against the wall sufficiently to avoid sliding down the slope and out; getting back up the slope requires making Climb checks with a DC equal to the Balance check they had to make to get down.

Anyone who falls all the way out and down the mountain takes 10d6 damage and has to make their way back up the mountain even if they survive. This is definitely a spot where anchoring oneself with a rope is a good idea.

Slippery Slope Trap: CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; DC 10/20/30 Balance check to prevent triggering; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 100 feet deep (10d6, fall); multiple targets (anyone who enters the slope); Search DC automatic (characters sense slope immediately and must make Balance check); Disable Device DC 20 (find a way to brace against walls).

Area 4-4 – The Refugees (EL 9):

As you head down the passageway, numerous signs warn you to turn back. They are crude, barely literate works, but the intent is clear; something does not want you to enter here, and unless drag-

ons have gotten much more subtle over the years, it's something other than the beast itself. The passage ends in a crude barricade of rocks and branches. Behind it, you can see a few small, skittering creatures hissing to each other.

Crude, hand-lettered, barely literate signs tell passers-by to "KEEP OWT!" "GO AWAY!" "WE DONT WANT NUN!" and "BUGER OFF!" At the far end, there's a crude barricade, manned by a few kobolds. When they see the party coming, they'll skitter behind the barricade and start shouting warnings in Undercommon.

This is the home of the few local humanoids that weren't interested in what the cult had to offer. Sure, the dragon-kith ritual offered power, and they were tempted by the idea of having the power of a dragon...but with rare perceptiveness for such creatures, they got creeped out by the way the cult behaved. As a last resort, they allied, barricaded off a cavern, and kept well clear of the cult and its activities. A few skirmishes and a lot of paranoia later, they've gotten to the point where they'll attack anyone who comes down the passage.

The barricade provides cover. It can be smashed like a door (hardness 3, hp 20, break DC 25), jumped (height of 8 ft.), or climbed (Climb DC 8). The southwest passage exiting this room leads to a steep mountain trail that is well concealed by thick underbrush (Search DC 15 to locate the trail or entrance from the mountainside without knowing it's there).

Tactics: As awful as it seems, and as antithetical as it is to the very nature of heroes, this is a place where diplomacy (ick!) might come in handy. The humanoids attack as soon as the party shows up, of course, but if the party can keep a level head (unlikely), calm the situation down (highly unlikely), and talk things over reasonably with the kobolds, ogre, hobgoblins, and gnolls (yeah, right!), they might be able to get them to help the PCs fight the dragon. After all, they're not happy with the cult either, and they'd love to be able to expand their territory over more of the mountain. If they find out that the dragon is wounded, and that this is their best chance of finishing it off, the party is particularly likely to find themselves with some allies when they fight Pyraxus. Of course, they're treacherous allies that'll probably demand a share of the hoard, but then again, once the PCs have cleaned out the cult and killed the dragon, they can always get the army down here to exterminate the vermin, right? (We assume here that you have no gnolls, hobgoblins, kobolds, or ogres in your party. If you do, then our sincerest apologies to these noble humanoids.)

Treasure: The group has a "hoard" of its own, which they strongly believe needs protecting from the dragon and his cult. The cult has already found out what they've got, though, and Pyraxus simply isn't interested. The pile of treasure is at the south end of the cavern.

It consists of 1,400 copper pieces, a dented brass helmet (ceremonial, worth 10 gp), 8 agates (worth 6 gp each), and a broken scepter made of bronze, set with glass stones (completely worthless, but shiny). Even so, the group will fight to defend it, simply because they've convinced themselves that others want to get it away from them. They do not pursue fleeing PCs; instead they congratulate themselves on a successful defense of their home.

Ogre (1): Large Giant; CR 3; HD 4d8+11; hp 29; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +5 natural, +3 hide armor), touch 8, FF 16; BAB +3; Grp +12; Atk/Full Atk greatclub +8 melee (2d8+7) or javelin +1 ranged (1d8+5); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Listen +2, Spot +2; Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatclub).

Equipment: Greatclub, hide armor.

Kobolds (8): Small Humanoid (Reptilian); CR 1/4; HD 1d8; hp 2, 3, 4, 4, 5, 5, 6, 6; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +2 leather), touch 12, FF 14; BAB +1; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk spear +1 melee (1d6-1/x3) or sling +3 ranged (1d3); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2; Alertness.

Equipment: Spear, sling, 10 sling bullets, leather armor.

Hobgoblins (4): Medium Humanoid (Goblinoid); CR 1/2; HD 1d8+2; hp 4, 6, 8, 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather, +1 light shield), touch 11, FF 14; BAB +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk longsword +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20) or javelin +2 ranged (1d6+1); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +2; Alertness.

Equipment: Longsword, javelin, studded leather, light shield.

Gnolls (2): Medium Humanoid (Gnoll); CR 1; HD 2d8+2; hp 11, 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 natural, +2 leather armor, +2 heavy steel shield), touch 10, FF 15; BAB +1; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk battleaxe +3 melee (1d8+2/x3) or shortbow +1 ranged (1d6/x3); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +2, Spot +3; Power Attack.

Equipment: Battleaxe, shortbow, 30 arrows, leather armor, heavy steel shield.



Area 4-5 – The Big Time... (EL 11):

As you walk into the vast cavern, the largest of all the caves you've seen in this mountain, you see everywhere the glitter of coins and gemstones. This, indeed, is the lair that the cultists have been protecting all this time – the lair of Pyraxus, the dragon you have come to slay. All around you, you feel the chill of its terrifying presence, and its massive bulk looms even in the dark mountain depths...

There are three entrances to the dragon's lair. The one that the dragon itself uses, by way of the tunnel in the center of the mountain, has been deliberately collapsed by the dragon itself. Pyraxus isn't worried about anything that can get through the two smaller entrances, but he has considered that the army might try a frontal assault. Also, you never know when another dragon might hear about your weakness, and he'd just as soon keep any large visitors out until he's fully recovered.

Whether the PCs approach from the left or the right, the dragon is keeping a wary eye out for them; as soon as they enter the lair, he attacks.

Tactics: Pyraxus wants to destroy the party quickly, but he's also loathe to use his breath weapon in such confined quarters. He can't be hurt by his own fiery breath, of course, but gold has such a low melting point, and what's the point of living if you can't rest

your head on a pillow of coins? On the other hand, he's also aware that a living dragon can gather more treasure, while a dead dragon's hoard is quickly dispersed.

Any cultists that the PCs haven't defeated yet come quickly as soon as the battle begins; the dragon summons them as soon as he hears the PCs approach by using the *message* spell. Pyraxus has no interest in pursuing the PCs, due to his injuries, and would just as soon not fight to the death if he doesn't have to. There'll be plenty of time to get revenge later; for now, he just wants to nurse his wounds and survive. If he thinks he can negotiate with the PCs, he will. However, he also appreciates that the PCs are unlikely to want to negotiate, and he certainly won't go easy on them in a fight to gain concessions.

Cool ways to make this fight interesting:

- It'd be very surprising if the PCs found all the cultists before finding the dragon's lair; you can time the arrivals of the cultists for maximum drama. Just when they have Pyraxus on the ropes, along comes another bloody cultist...
- Treasure itself could make an interesting weapon. Imagine Pyraxus swatting at the pile of coins with his tail, sending tiny metal projectiles hurtling at the PCs. (Treat as a tail attack with Pyraxus' Dex instead of Str: tail sling +17 ranged (1d4+10).)
- If you want to be mean to your players, rule that Pyraxus' breath weapon fuses gold coins together. With every fire-based attack, 10d10x100 coins are fused into one solid ingot. Multiple flames in the same area could result in existing ingots combining. Remember that 50 coins weigh one pound. Once the dragon's dead, it might be hard to get the treasure out of the caves...
- Don't forget about Pyraxus' frightful presence. This might be what prompts the PCs to go look down some of the unexplored tunnels: "Gee, he's really, um...big. What's down here?"
- It'd mean a bit more excavation for him later, but Pyraxus isn't averse to sending some more rubble down onto the party. By causing 5 points of damage to the 15-foot high ceiling (AC 10, hardness 5), he can send a shower of rubble in a 30 foot-cone in any direction (2d6 damage, Reflex DC 15 for half).
- Don't forget about Pyraxus' Snatch feat. The full details of this feat are described in the MM, but for a quick summary: With a successful bite attack, Pyraxus can snatch up any Small or smaller creature and hold it in his mouth, continuing to cause automatic bite damage each round unless the snatched creature wins a grapple check. Moreover, a creature snatched by a bite gets no Reflex save to avoid Pyraxus' breath weapon. This is a great way

to circumvent the evasion abilities of those halfling rogues...

- All right, it's cheesy, but if Pyraxus and the cult have the PCs on the ropes, there's a small army outside that's been nursing its wounds for a while, and lots of resentful humanoids just a few rooms away. It's a perfect opportunity to turn the last battle into a big showpiece.

Pyraxus (Young Adult Red Dragon): Huge Dragon (Fire); CR 11 (13 base -2 due to injuries); HD 19d12+95; hp 123 (already injured by the army); Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 26 (-2 size, +18 natural), touch 8, FF 26; BAB +19; Grp +37; Atk (any one of Full Attack options); Full Atk bite +28 melee (2d8+10) and 2 claws +23 melee (2d6+10) and 2 wings +22 melee (1d8+10) and tail slap +22 melee (2d6+10) and crush +22 melee (2d8+10); SA Breath weapon (10d10, DC 24), frightful presence (150 ft., DC 17), crush; SQ Damage reduction 5/magic, SR 19, immunity to sleep and paralysis, immunity to fire, vulnerable to cold, blindsense, keen senses, *locate object* 5/day (as per spell); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with bite); AL CE; SV Fort +16, Ref +11, Will +13; Str 31, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +24, Bluff +24, Concentration +27, Diplomacy +24, Intimidate +24, Listen +26, Search +24, Spot +26; Alertness, Blindfight, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Snatch, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claw).

Spells Known (can still cast 4/3/2 on this day (normally 6/7/5 but already used some on the army); save DC 12 + spell level; CL 5th): 0—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *message*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *flare*; 1st—*identify*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*; 2nd—*invisibility*, *see invisibility*.

Equipment: See "Treasure" section on page 3. Pyraxus can use any items in his hoard.

SA—Breath Weapon (Su): Standard action, at will but must wait 1d4 rounds between attempts; 50 ft. cone of fire; 10d10 damage; Reflex DC 24 for half.

SA—Frightful Presence (Ex): On attacks, charges, or flying; radius of 150 ft.; Will DC 17 or become panicked (if 4 HD or less) or shaken (5+ HD); duration 4d6 rounds.

Wrapping Up

After a bloody battle, you manage to defeat the dragon Pyraxus. Upon informing the army commander, you are hailed as heroes. Although you receive your treasure as promised, that is not the real reward. The real reward comes in praise and reputation, for your small band of adventurers has accomplished what an army could not! Congratulations on a difficult job well done!

Bonus Experience

In addition to the experience given out for defeating the various monsters, the GM may hand out additional experience points for accomplishing certain objectives that, while not vital to the adventure, nonetheless helped.

Level 1

Discovering the hidden passage in 1-4 is worth an additional 100 XP to the responsible character. Any cleric who thinks to try in some way to re-consecrate the ritual chamber in 1-6 (or at the very least dispose properly of the discarded religious paraphernalia) gets a 200 XP role-playing bonus. Also, characters who manage to get to either of the two other passages off the hidden shaft in 1-2 without simply falling and then having to climb back up get a 100 XP ingenuity bonus (although they're probably also rewarded with a somewhat easier passage through the caverns).

Level 2

If the PCs manage to figure out that there's an underground stream out of the lake without any prompting, give them a 100 XP bonus. Characters who figure out some way of measuring the length of the stream, or of negating the risk of traversing it, gain a 50 XP ingenuity bonus. Those who just dive right in get a 50 XP bonus for sheer chutzpah — after all, that's near-suicidal bravery there.

Level 3

If the PCs find the hidden library, solve the riddle, and gain access, award them 200 XP each.

Level 4

If the party manages to ally themselves with the humanoids in area 4-4, award them 200 XP for coming up with a clever way to gain assistance. (This might be offset by penalties for bad role-playing...heroes making friends with ogres? Don't let the union hear about that...)

Appendix 1: Player Handouts

Players' Handout A

Experiment One: A complete disaster! The subject performed the ritual we have devised, but upon drinking the blood of the holy beast, he collapsed. I have made him as comfortable as I can, but instead of fusing his own nature with that of the great dragon, his own essence has become unstable – metamorphic. Perhaps it was a mistake to use something so slowly as a goblin. Pyraxus (bless his name) is disappointed, but eager for us to continue. I feel we are on the edge of a breakthrough.

Experiment Five: Success! One of the goblins has achieved sufficient purity of mind to merge with the essence of the holy dragon! It is a magnificent sight to behold...his skin has taken on the hue of our lord and master, and he even has a more regal nobility to his posture. I am eager to begin the transformation myself, to be as one with Pyraxus (bless his name), but the great beast urges further testing of the ritual. Gavuhn agrees. The first experiment is enough to urge me to caution; he has sprouted three extra mouths in the last four days, some dragon, some goblin...some neither.

Experiment Seven: The minotaur (I cannot understand his name, some sort of guttural grunt) has made his first step on the glorious ascent to dragon-kind; he seems eager, not just willing, to continue his transformation. The goblin we have transformed continues the ritual, but as for now, he continues to heed our counsel for patience. For myself, patience is not nearly enough; I underwent the ritual myself for the first time yesterday, with Gavuhn's help. I have seen no physical effects yet, but I eagerly await my ascendance! (Sad to say, little can help our first poor subject now. I can no longer even determine which of the many heads sprouting out of his body was his original one, and his limbs have melted back into the main mass of his body. I fear we will have to put him out of his misery.)

Experiment Ten: The local orc tribe has willingly joined our cause, with their leader beginning his first step on the great journey of life. The ogres, short-sighted fools that they are, claim deception on the part of Pyraxus (bless his name), and have holed up on the opposite side of the mountain with a few other dim-witted creatures. For myself, I cannot transform fast enough. Seeing my beautiful wife, my closest friends, all becoming one with the splendor of the great and holy dragon, it is too amazing. I must transform faster! (Unfortunately, the first subject, the martyr who paved the way for our glorious transformation, cozed free of his restraints and fled into the caves. I fear we may never find him now.)

Experiment ...: too much...too fast, blood of the dragon burns in my veins...beloved wife, I tried too much, too fast, reached for the grand divinity in a single great stretching grasp, it was too far, it burns in my veins it burns in my mind it burns it burns it burns

This pen makes marks on the paper. I can read the marks. They put me in here. It is for my own good. Whenever my mind becomes clouded, I must read these marks. It is ALL for my own good.

Players' Handout B

Wiser than Gods,
Worse than the Devil,
The Rich do not possess me,
The Poor cannot be rid of me.
If you eat me, you Die!
Place me in the box.
If I accept your sacrifice, you may enter.

Appendix 2: The Army

It's unlikely that you'll need to use the army in the game. But just in case, we've provided the following stats for them.

Soldiers, human Ftr3 (30): Medium Human; CR 3; HD 3d10+3; hp 20; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather, +1 light wooden shield), touch 11, FF 14; BAB +3; Grp +5; Atk short sword +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20) or shortbow +4 ranged (1d6/x3); Full Atk short sword +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20) or shortbow +4 ranged (1d6/x3); AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Jump +8, Swim +8; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack.

Equipment: Short sword, studded leather armor, light wooden shield, shortbow, 30 arrows, 3d4 sp, 6d6 cp.

Clerics, human Clr5 (5): Medium Human; CR 5; HD 5d8+5; hp 32; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+5 chainmail), touch 10, FF 15; BAB +3; Grp +3; Atk heavy mace +3 melee (1d8) or sling +3 ranged (1d4); Full Atk heavy mace +3 melee (1d8) or sling +3 ranged (1d4); SQ Spontaneous casting (cure spells), turn undead; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +9, Heal +11; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Extra Turning.

Cleric Domains: Good and Healing.

Spells (5/4+1/3+1/2+1, save DC 13 + spell level, * indicates domain spell): 0—*create water*, *cure minor wounds* (x2), *mending*; 1st—*bless*, *cure light wounds** (x3), *obscuring mist*; 2nd—*aid**, *cure moderate wounds* (x2), *bull's strength*; 3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *magic circle against evil**.

Equipment: Heavy mace, sling, 20 bullets, chainmail, 2d4 gp, 1d4 sp.

Commander, human Pal8: Medium Human; CR 8; HD 8d10+16; hp 67; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20 (+8 full plate armor, +2 heavy steel shield), touch 10, FF 20; BAB +8/+3; Grp +11; Atk masterwork longsword +12 melee (1d8+3/19-20) or composite shortbow +8 ranged (1d6/x3); Full Atk masterwork longsword +12/+7 melee (1d8+3/19-20) or composite shortbow +8/+3 ranged (1d6/x3); SA Smite evil, turn undead (6/day); SQ Detect evil, divine grace, lay on hands (24 hp/day), aura of courage, divine health, special mount, remove disease; AL LG; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +13, Sense Motive +13; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Power Attack.

Spells (2/1; save DC = 12 + spell level): 1st—*bless*, *magic weapon*; 2nd—*zone of truth*.

Equipment: Masterwork longsword, full plate armor, heavy steel shield, composite shortbow, 40 arrows, 3d20 gp.

Appendix 3: Rules for Dragon-Kith and Kin

The dragon cult's fertility magic allowed them to make themselves over into various different mixes of dragon-breed. While you do not need the following rules to run the adventure, we provide them here so that if you wish to re-use elements of this adventure in your campaign, you can make further additions to the dragon cult and its members.

New Spell: Dragon-Kith

Transmutation

Level: Clr 5, Drd 6, Wiz/Sor 6

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Touch

Target: 1 individual

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: See text

This spell can gradually, over repeated castings, imbue other races with the properties of a dragon. It takes the form of a ritual, cast both over the person to be transformed and over a quantity of dragon's blood. The ritual takes one full hour, during which the subject must remain in a circle inscribed in dragon's saliva, holding a segment of shell from a dragon's egg and meditating on the majesty of the dragon who hatched from it. The caster, in turn, moves around the outside of the circle, holding the dragon's blood and chanting. At the end of the ritual, the caster passes the dragon's blood through to the subject, who drinks it all at once.

The effect of the ritual depends on how much dragon's blood the subject drinks. For every ounce ingested, they have a 5% chance of transmuting their body to grow closer to the dragon whose blood they have ingested. This percentage chance is cumulative, meaning that repeated rituals will eventually produce a transformation. The subject may only undergo the ritual once per week, however; further rituals have no effect and temporarily drain the subject of 1 point of Con per extra ritual.

When a transformation occurs, the subject must make a second percentage roll to see if their mind can handle the sudden transformation. This chance is also equal to 5% per ounce ingested at this particular ritual, but is not cumulative. (In other words, it is safer to undergo the ritual several times, drinking a small quantity of blood each time, than it is to try to undergo the entire transformation at once.) Failure means insanity. Subjects cannot be forced to undergo the ritual; they must drink the dragon's blood of their own volition, or the spell automatically fails.

Once the subject makes a successful transformation roll, immediately apply the effects of one of the dragon templates to them, as follows:

- The initial transformation is to one of the dragon-blooded (see "dragon-blood" template, below). If the character already has the dragon-blooded template, the half-dragon template, or the dragon-kin template

(see "dragon-kin" template, below), this initial ritual has no effect. If the character does not have any of the above templates, apply the dragon-blood template to the character.

- The second transformation is to a half-dragon. If the character is already a half-dragon or dragon-kin, it has no effect. If the character has neither of those templates, apply the half-dragon template. Unlike the normal addition of a template, however, the half-dragon template is not cumulative with the effects of the dragon-blood template. Instead, it supercedes the dragon-blood template. Remove the dragon-blood template before applying the half-dragon template.
- The final transformation is to a dragon-kin. If the character has the dragon-kin template already, it has no effect. Otherwise, apply the dragon-kin template to them. As above, unlike the normal addition of a template, however, this supercedes the half-dragon template and removes its effects. The dragon type for the template is always the same as the type of dragon that donated the blood. It is unknown what the effect would be of using the blood of several different types of dragons for different repetitions of the ritual, but it sounds like a very dangerous thing to try.

The spell does have one additional effect, unknown to any of those who have made use of it. The subject's admiration of and affinity with dragons is magnified to an obsession, instilling in them the desire to protect and aid dragons in general and the dragon whose blood they ingested in particular. The subject's alignment also changes one step toward the dragon's with each transformation. Pyraxus expected this effect, which helps to explain why he freely donated blood to the cult for their experiments.

Material Components: Dragon's saliva, a fragment of shell from a dragon's egg (at least the size of a human finger), and dragon's blood (any amount, although larger amounts make the ritual more successful).

Dragon-Blood (Template)

Much like dragons themselves, the half-breed offspring of dragons can breed both with other dragons and with members of their other parent's race. The resultant offspring from a mating between a half-dragon and a member of another race produces a creature that, while noticeably similar to its non-dragon grandparent, nonetheless retains some characteristics of its unusual heritage. This is reflected in its appearance; dragon-blooded creatures usually have reptilian eyes, exaggerated teeth and claws, and a scattering of scales across their bodies. Some even have

wings, although they are vestigial and provide poor maneuverability in flight.

Creating a Dragon-Blood

“Dragon-blood” is an inherited template that can be added to any living, corporeal creature (hereafter referred to as the base creature). A dragon-blooded creature uses all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature is now considered to be a dragon subtype in addition to its current type, and is affected by anything that affects either type. Size is unchanged. Do not recalculate base attack bonus or saves.

Hit Dice: Hit dice remain unchanged.

Speed: A dragon-blooded creature that is Large or larger has wings and can fly at twice its base land speed (maximum 80 ft.) with clumsy maneuverability. A dragon-blood that is Medium or smaller does not have wings.

Armor Class: Natural armor improves by +2.

Attack: A dragon-blooded creature has two claw attacks and a bite attack, and the claws are the primary natural weapon. If the base creature can use weapons, the dragon-blood retains this ability. A dragon-blood fighting without weapons uses a claw when making an attack action. When it has a weapon, it usually uses the weapon instead.

Full Attack: A dragon-blooded creature fighting without weapons uses both claws and its bite when making a full attack. If armed with a weapon, it usually uses the weapon as its primary attack and its bite as a natural secondary attack. If it has a hand free, it uses a claw as an additional natural secondary attack.

Damage: Dragon-blooded creatures have bite and claw attacks. If the base creature does not have these attack forms, use the damage values in the table at the top of the next column. Otherwise, use the greater of these values or the base creature’s damage values, whichever are greater.

Size	Bite Damage	Claw Damage
Fine	1	—
Diminutive	1d2	1
Tiny	1d3	1d2
Small	1d4	1d3
Medium	1d6	1d4
Large	1d8	1d6
Huge	2d6	1d8
Gargantuan	3d6	2d6
Colossal	4d6	3d6

Special Attacks: A dragon-blooded creature retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains a breath weapon based on the dragon variety (see the table below), usable once per day. A dragon-blood’s breath weapon deals 3d8 points of damage. A successful Reflex save (DC 10 + 1/2 dragon-blood’s racial HD + dragon-blood’s Con modifier) reduces damage by half.

Special Qualities: A dragon-blooded creature has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus darkvision out to 50 feet and low-light vision. A dragon-blood has immunity to sleep and paralysis effects, and gains energy resistance 10 from some sources based on its dragon variety, as indicated below.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +5, Con +1, Int +1.

Skills: A dragon-blooded creature gains skill points as a dragon and has skill points equal to (6 + Int modifier) x (HD + 3). Do not include Hit Dice from class levels in this calculation – the dragon-blood gains dragon skill points only for its racial Hit Dice, and gains the normal amount of skill points for its class levels. Treat skills from the base creature’s list as class skills, and other skills as cross-class.

Environment: Same as either the base creature or the dragon variety.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature + 1 (minimum 3).

Alignment: Same as the dragon variety.

Level Adjustment: Same as base creature +2.

Dragon-Blood Special Attacks and Qualities

Dragon Variety	Breath Weapon	Resistance 10 to
Black	30-foot line of acid	Acid
Blue	30-foot line of lightning	Electricity
Green	15-foot cone of corrosive (acid) gas	Acid
Red	15-foot cone of fire	Fire
White	15-foot cone of cold	Cold
Brass	30-foot line of fire	Fire
Bronze	30-foot line of lightning	Electricity
Copper	30-foot line of acid	Acid
Gold	15-foot cone of fire	Fire
Silver	15-foot cone of cold	Cold



Dragon-Kin (Template)

Much like dragons themselves, the half-breed offspring of dragons can breed both with other dragons and with members of their other parent's race. The resultant offspring from a mating between a half-dragon and a dragon produces a creature with a strong kinship to dragon-kind, while still retaining some of the other traits of its mixed ancestry. Physically, dragon-kin almost resemble dragons more than they do the other creature they share ancestry with; they are much larger than others of their kind, frequently possessing wings and the ability to fly. Their features are highly elongated and reptilian, seeming much like a dragon's head was placed onto a body of the creature they share ancestry with. Their eyes are fully reptilian, and their hide is thick and scaly, its color depending on the dragon they share kinship with. They have large, razor-sharp claws and teeth. Their attacks do more damage than a half-dragon's not because of some inherent property of the creature, but due to their increased size. Their very presence is unnerving to many creatures, a reflection again of their increased dragon ancestry.

Creating a Dragon-Kin

"Dragon-kin" is an inherited template that can be added to any living, corporeal creature (hereafter referred to as the base creature). A dragon-kin uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature's base type changes to dragon, and it increases by one size category (to a maximum of Colossal). Do not recalculate base attack bonus or saves.

Hit Dice: Increase base creature's racial HD by two die sizes, to a maximum of d12. Do not increase class HD.

Speed: A dragon-kin that is Large or larger has wings and can fly at twice its base land speed (maximum 150 ft.) with average maneuverability. A dragon-kin that is Medium or smaller does not have wings.

Armor Class: Natural armor improves by +6.

Attack: A dragon-kin has two claw attacks and a bite attack, and the claws are the primary natural weapon. If the base creature can use weapons, the dragon-kin retains this ability. A dragon-kin fighting without weapons uses a claw when making an attack action. When it has a weapon, it usually uses the weapon instead.

Full Attack: A dragon-kin fighting without weapons uses both claws and its bite when making a full attack. If armed with a weapon, it usually uses the weapon as its primary attack and its bite as a natural secondary attack. If it has a hand free, it uses a claw as an additional natural secondary attack.

Damage: Dragon-kin have bite and claw attacks. If the base creature does not have these attack forms, use the damage values in the table that follows. Otherwise, use the values that follow or the base creature's damage values, whichever are greater.

Size	Bite Damage	Claw Damage
Fine	1d2	1
Diminutive	1d3	1d2
Tiny	1d4	1d3
Small	1d6	1d4
Medium	1d8	1d6
Large	2d6	1d8
Huge	3d6	2d6
Gargantuan	4d6	3d6
Colossal	5d6	4d6

Special Attacks: A dragon-kin retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains a breath weapon based on the dragon variety, usable *five* times per day. Once the dragon-kin has used its breath weapon, it cannot use it again for 2d4 rounds. A dragon-kin's breath weapon deals 6d8 points of damage. A successful Reflex save (DC 10 + 1/2 dragon-kin's racial HD + dragon-kin's Con modifier) reduces damage by half.

A dragon-kin's breath weapon is the same variety as a dragon-blood's based on the dragon type, and the dragon-kin's has twice the range of the dragon-blood's. For example, a black dragon-kin can use a 60-foot line of acid, and a silver dragon-kin can use a 30-foot cone of cold.

Unnerving Presence (Ex): Dragon-kin unsettle their opponents, due to their clearly draconic ancestry and greater-than-usual size. Any creature within a 30-foot

radius that has fewer HD than the dragon-kin must make a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 dragon-kin's racial HD + dragon-kin's Cha modifier). Success means that they are immune to that dragon-kin's unnerving presence for 24 hours. On a failure, those creatures are shaken for 3d6 rounds. Dragon-kin cannot unnerve dragons or other creatures with draconic blood.

Special Qualities: A dragon-kin has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus darkvision out to 60 feet and low-light vision. A dragon-kin has immunity to sleep and paralysis effects, and an energy immunity based on its dragon variety. The energy immunity by dragon type is the same as that for dragon-bloods (e.g., black dragon-kin are immune to acid, blue dragon-kin are immune to electricity, and so on).

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +10, Con +4, Int +3, Cha +2.

Skills: A dragon-kin gains skill points as a dragon and has skill points equal to (6 + Int modifier) x (HD + 3). Do not include Hit Dice from class levels in this calculation – the dragon-kin gains dragon skill points only for its racial Hit Dice, and gains the normal amount of skill points for its class levels. Treat skills from the base creature's list as class skills, and other skills as cross-class.

Environment: Same as either the base creature or the dragon variety.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature + 3 (minimum 4).

Alignment: Same as the dragon variety.

Level Adjustment: Same as base creature +4.

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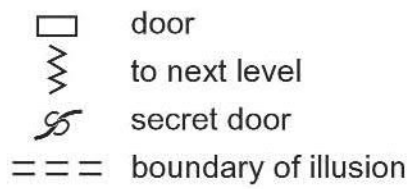
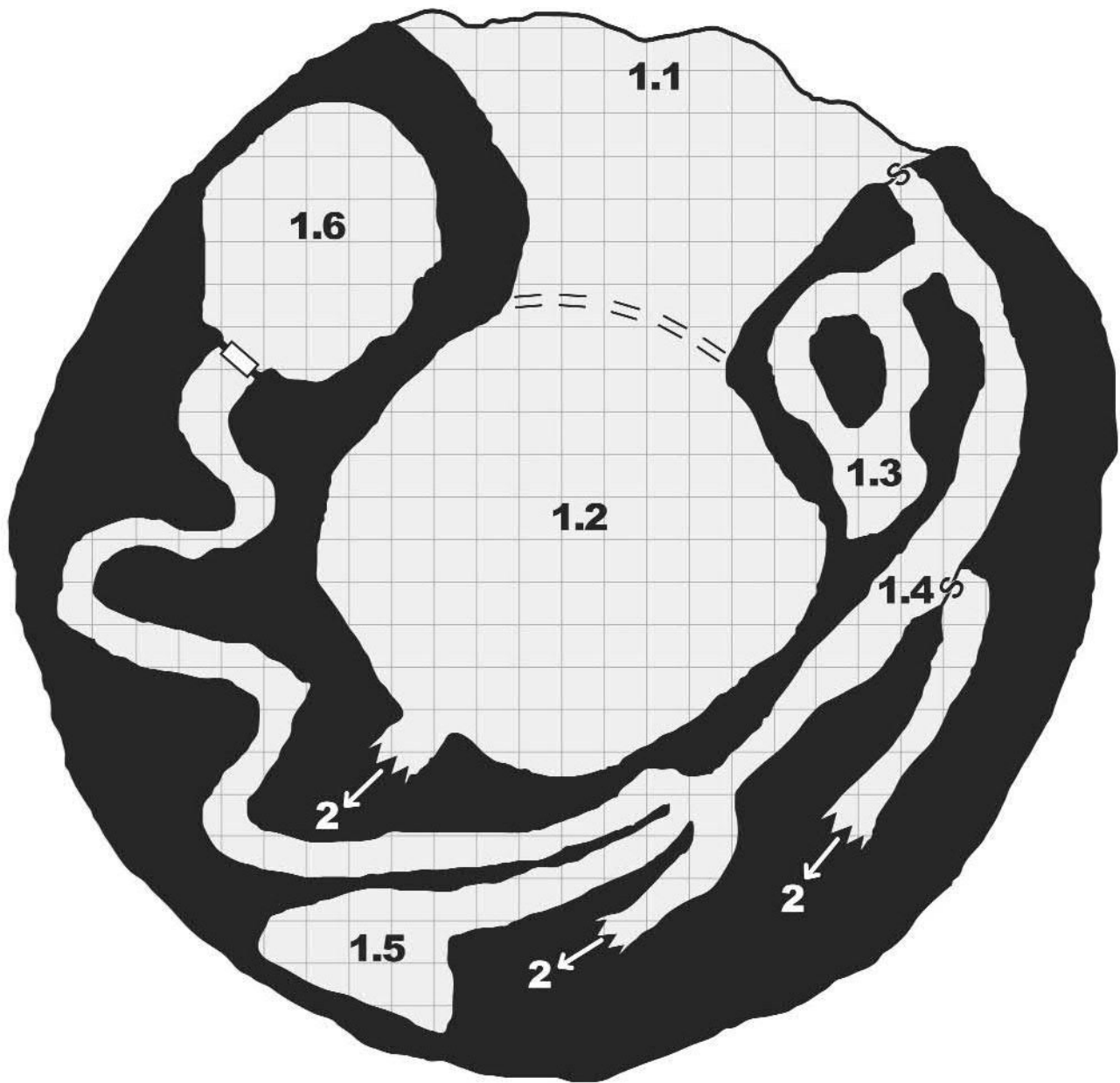
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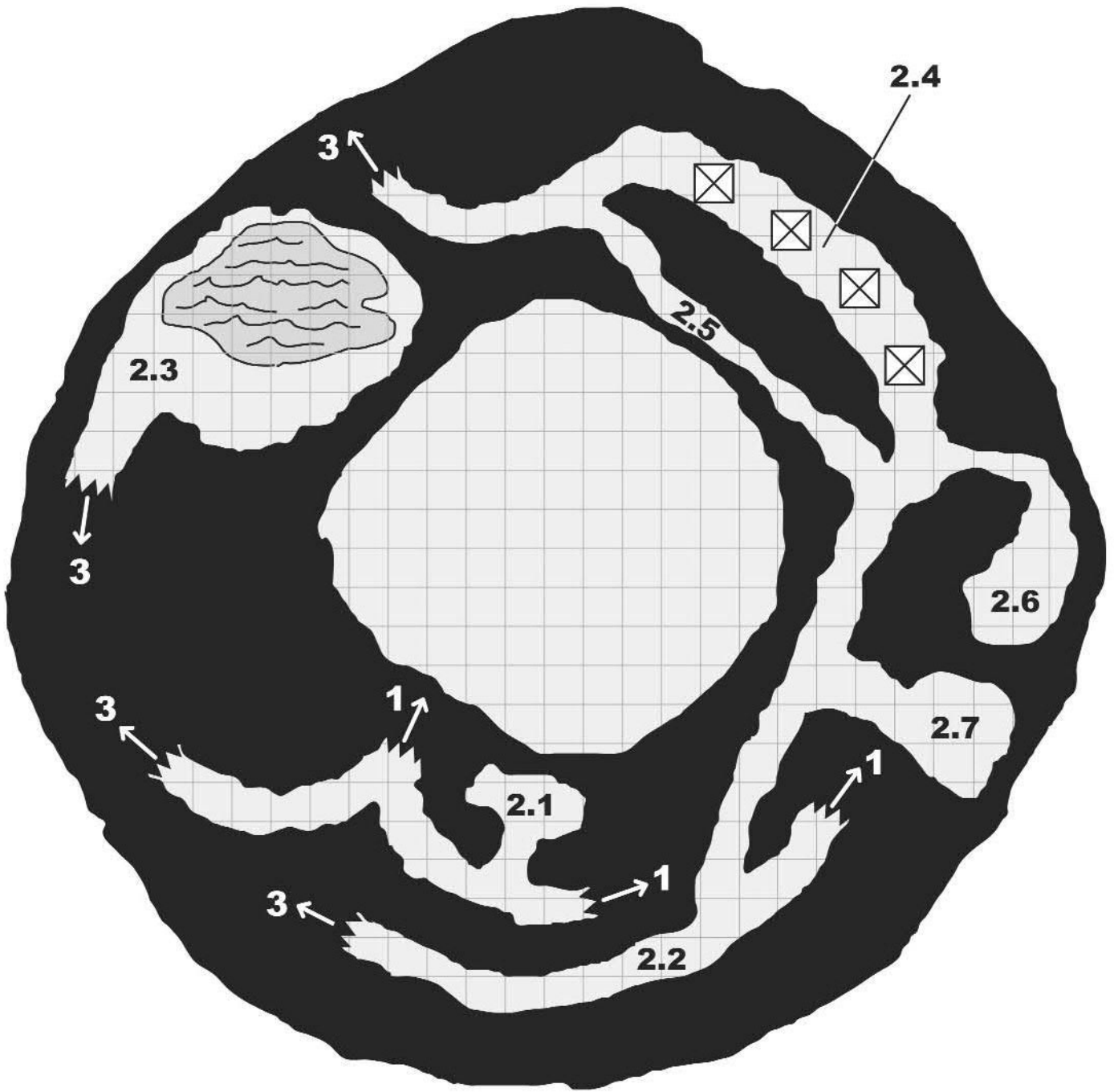
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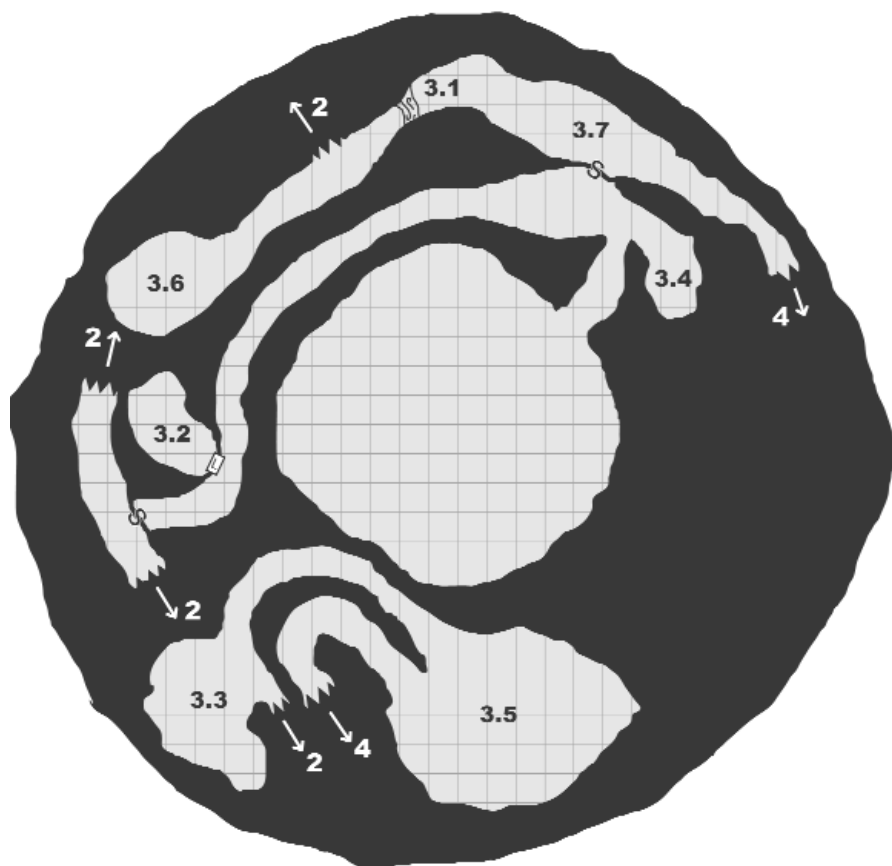


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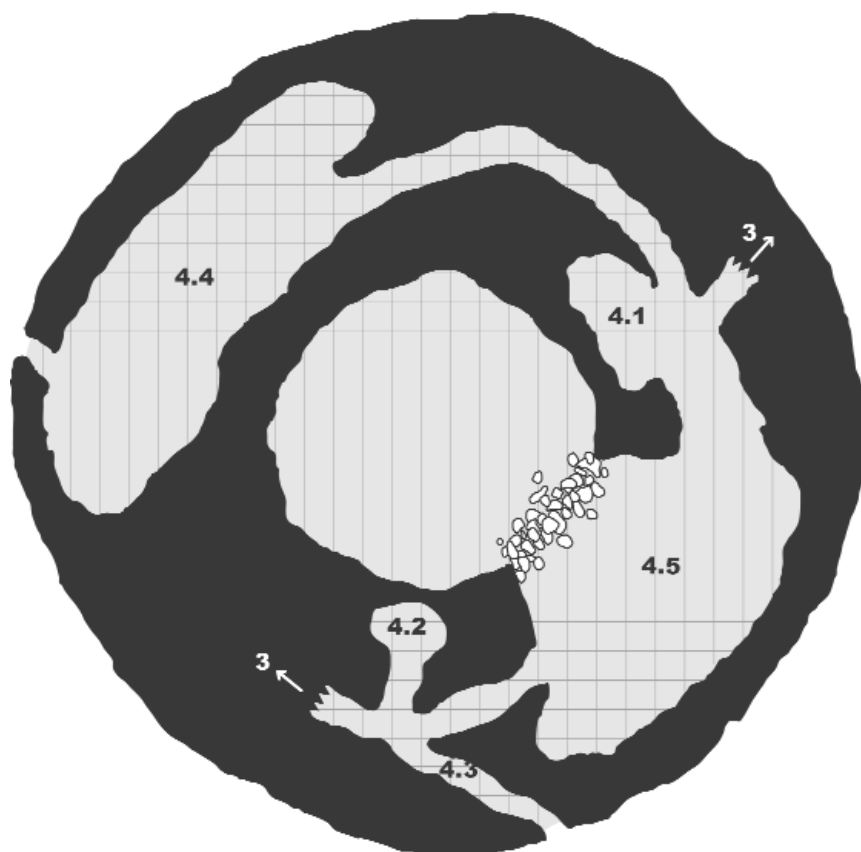
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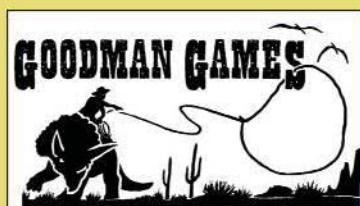
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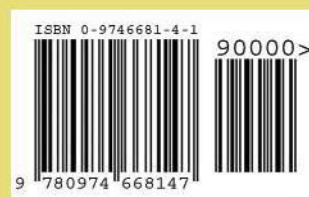


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