

# DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS®

DCC DAY #3  
A LEVEL 1 ADVENTURE  
BY DANIEL J. BISHOP



## CHANTERS IN THE DARK



William McAusland  
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# CHANTERS IN THE DARK

A LEVEL 1 ADVENTURE

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## INTRODUCTION



*Hunters in the Dark* is a Dungeon Crawl Classics adventure designed for a party of 4-8 1st level characters. The characters find themselves trapped within a lost city, whose enslaved inhabitants see the PCs as potential saviors, comrades, or sacrifices. Escape is possible, but only for the daring. A good mix of character types is required for success, and a party without a thief might never see the surface world again.

This adventure makes use of both encounter locations and events. Events are listed in the text at the time they are likely to occur, but the judge may alter their timing to better suit game play. The goal of the adventure as written is to culminate in an exciting escape up a narrow bore hole while being pursued by an enemy well beyond the PCs' abilities to challenge. The players may find a way to avoid this final event; if so, the judge merely needs to determine what the ramifications of *not* sealing off the cavern complex will be.

Finally, while *Sailors on the Starless Sea* is probably the most iconic Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG adventure, the ending leaves two lingering questions: Where does the underground river lead, and how should a new judge handle PCs gaining their initial class levels? This adventure can be used to answer those questions. Note, however, that this is just *an* answer, and not necessarily *the* answer—if you already have answers of your own, keep using them! The judge is always right! Simply ignore the "Leveling Advice" sidebars throughout the adventure.

The author would also like to acknowledge the brilliant work of Harley Stroh, which inspired this adventure, and the support and advice of Michael Curtis, which made it possible.

## BLINDNESS



PCs will probably have to deal with blindness in this adventure, due to darkness, injury, or both. Blinded characters suffer a -4 penalty to initiative rolls, attack and damage rolls, saving throws, and spell checks, and are easy to surprise. In addition, a blind character firing a missile weapon is at -8 to hit and any missed shot has a 50% chance of striking a randomly determined ally. They can only move at half speed. Under duress, or when lacking guidance, they move in a random direction. In addition, foes gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls against blinded creatures.

A cleric attempting to heal blindness must succeed on a *lay on hands* check for 4 dice of healing. This requires a spell check of at least 20 for those of the same alignment, a 22 or better for adjacent alignments, and is impossible for characters of opposed alignment. The Great Fungal Mound in Area 1-8 can also restore sight, albeit more slowly. Finally, a PC could use a pair of *calcinated eyes* from Area 2-4 to replace missing eyeballs, regaining sight almost instantly.

The judge should modify read-aloud text if no PC can see, giving the players only information visible to their characters.

## BACKGROUND



Eons ago, meteoric fragments from a distant world struck Aereth. Two of these fragments hit with enough force to drive deep holes into the crust. One of these fragments carried an alien proto-fungus which, landing in a deep pool, began to grow. It subsisted in the darkness for thousands of years, continuing to flourish, before it was discovered by the magician-priests of the reptilian Yuzz. The Yuzz founded the subterranean city of Quetat in caves over the pool of the growing proto-fungus, which they named *Yul-latet Garz*—in their language, the Corruption Below.

The magician-priests encapsulated part of the very soul of their chosen victims within their eyes, which were then ritually plucked out and sacrificed to the Corruption Below. As the proto-fungus absorbed the souls sacrificed to it, it developed self-awareness, and a form of alien intelligence. Soon enough, it learned to create splinters of itself around the fragmented souls, to create beings which would provide it with continuous worship, and beings which would provide it with endless sacrifices. Quetat was devastated, the Yuzz driven to near-extinction by the Corruption's hunger.

For centuries, Quetat housed only the dead. Explorers sometimes found the city, and sometimes left their mark, but always they fell to the creatures of the Corruption Below. Over the centuries, the many fragmented souls which lent sentience to the alien proto-fungus also drove it insane. Eventually, a large tribe of beastmen, fleeing the Chaos Lords who had created them, found Quetat and settled there. In doing so, they awoke the dead magician-priests of the Yuzz. The un-dead magician-priests worked to make Quetat sustainable, imbuing a splinter of the Corruption with the power to regenerate the body, if not the soul, and limiting the creatures which the Corruption Below created to steal the eyes and souls of the beastmen.

The Corruption Below now seethes with potential once more. The un-dead magician-priests of the Yuzz seek to control its power, potentially reviving the glory of their ages-gone people. This is the cauldron the PCs find themselves in. There is potentially great wealth—and occult power—to be won, but if the PCs linger too long, they may become victims themselves.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

This adventure starts with the PCs travelling down an underground river in some kind of boat. This can be a river which plunges under the surface in a karst region, or it can be a watercourse discovered while exploring below ground. In either case, there are a number of ways that judges can tempt their players into hazarding the river. Some, or all, of the following may be used:

- The beastman shaman Glormug seeks to break her people's bond to the Corruption Below: *You see the spectral vision of a woman, her robes unable to hide her leonine legs and tail. "I beg you to come and deliver our folk," the ghostly woman whispers. "Pity us, for we are victims of a great evil. Great honor, great riches, and arcane might await you in Qu-*

## LEVELING ADVICE

When PCs reach 10 XP, or finish a funnel adventure, they become Level 1. It is easy enough to explain how warriors gain their prowess; they have simply realized their natural ability to harm others. Elves become more elf-like. Similarly, dwarves and halflings simply become more of what they already were. Thief abilities don't stretch credulity; players can easily imagine how dangerous situations might cause a PC to rely more on stealth and luck. Some thief abilities, of course, rely on specialized thieves' tools, which the characters might not have available.

Spellcasters can present a challenge. If the judge wishes to make the quest for magical prowess occur in a more narrative fashion, consider the following possibilities:

A cleric gains their powers from their deity, but this does not necessarily mean that the cleric chooses to serve a god. In a process called *divine election*, the deity may instead choose the cleric to act as their vessel upon the material plane. Note also that a cleric's ability to *turn unholy* specifies the need for a holy symbol.

An elf's magic, more than a human wizard's, is sustained by supernatural patrons. As such, all elves can cast *patron bond*, but whether or not they gain access to their other randomly determined spells before doing so is up to the judge. Remember that *patron bond* takes at least a week to cast, and that the desired patron may have stipulations regarding where it can be cast.

Wizard spells need to be learned, as discussed on pages 314-315 of the DCC RPG rulebook. The judge may choose to waive this, in order to allow the newly-minted wizard greater survivability, but the wizard having to spend time learning spells works very well from a narrative sense.

In any event, when the adventure starts, all characters should have access to their class's hit points, attack bonus or Deed Die, save modifiers, and all class abilities. A wizard or elf is capable of making a normal spell check, even if they have no spells to cast.

*etat, where the river will take you." She points down the river before fading away.*

- The *calcinated eyes* of the Caretaker's victims retain a sliver of their sentience, and call to characters, especially wizards and elves: *You have had the dream again, of eyes in the darkness, with the power to fuel your spells. They call to you from down the river, where they await within a dark temple, to either be recovered or lost forever, depending upon what you do.*
- Gods or patrons demand that the un-dead magician-priests be destroyed: *"Sail the wine-dark river to the lost city of Quetat. There you must destroy the dead magician-priests in their temple before they unleash their Corruption upon the world."*

- The *Eyes of Yuzz* (Area 2-4) can be required for spell knowledge, or as a component for a ritual: *"Seek ye the Eyes of Yuzz, which lie in the ruined city of Quetat, down the River of Darkness. They will provide the vision/power that you seek."*

*Chanters in the Dark* can also be used as a direct continuation of the events in *Sailors on the Starless Sea*. In this case, the ending scene in that adventure leads directly to the start of this one. Regardless of the hook used, eventually the power of the rushing water is so great that the PCs cannot turn back.

## ADVENTURE START

*The underground river rushes on through the darkness, drawing your boat with it in an irresistible current. There is no light save that which you bring yourselves, which reflects off the damp walls and glitters in the water spray as though the river tunnel hurtles you through a galaxy of stars. Ahead you can hear the crash of water on stone, and beyond that the roar of a subterranean falls. The boat sweeps around a bend in the tunnel, and dashes on a hard jut of black rock. You can just make out a beach of rounded pebbles to the left before your lights are doused by the river, and the shards of your vessel are swept sharply to the right, to thunder down what sounds like a deep cataract.*

PCs without infravision are completely blind in the darkness, although they have a good sense of where the beach is. Every PC must succeed on a DC 10 Fort save or take 1d3 points of temporary Stamina damage from battering and water inhalation as they reach the beach. Worse, any PC who fails a Luck check loses any object they might have been holding, or one random object if they were holding nothing. These objects are swept down the cataract; there is a chance that they can be recovered in Area 3-2.

The jutting black rock allows the PCs to reach Area 1-1 without fear of being swept downriver to the cataract. However, should a character decide to try their luck that way, they take 6d6 damage from the pounding waters, and, if they survive, wash up at Area 3-2.

## LEVELING ADVICE: DEALING WITH LIVESTOCK

While having a goat or a chicken may be useful in a funnel, taking a cow with you through a dungeon crawl likely has less appeal. Most animals the PCs have with them are, at this time, extra weight, and can be swept away by the river. The same thing is true of bulky items like sides of beef.

However, sometimes PCs become attached to those animals. In these cases, consider giving the animal an additional Hit Die every time the PC levels; usually 1 die lower on the Dice Chain than the PC's own hit dice. Nothing else about the creature needs to change; this just means that it can survive the adventuring life a little longer!

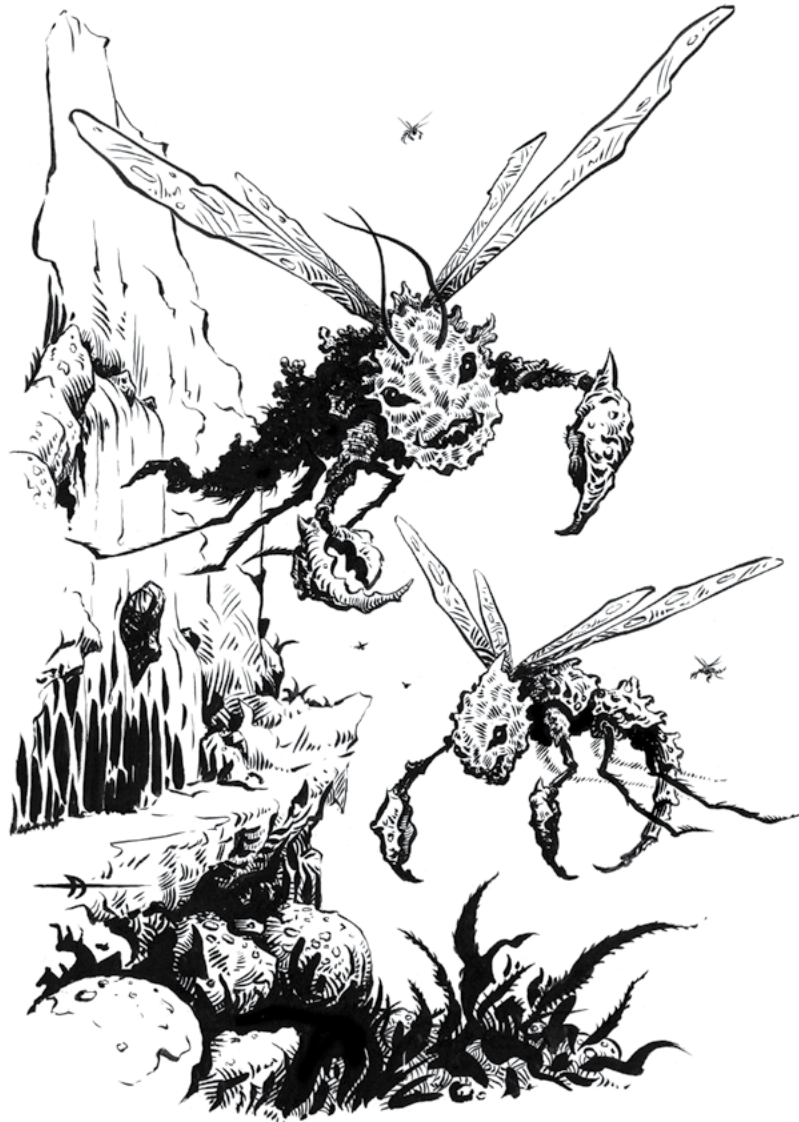


# CHAPTER ONE: THE LOST CITY

**Area 1-1 - The Beach:** *The stones are smooth and hard beneath hands and bodies as you draw yourselves out of the water. The wetness of the stones is barely discernable after being spilled into the dark water, but their slickness is palpable. From what you saw before your boat crashed upon the rock, the beach looked like a large area, and you cannot be sure how far back it goes. You have not even caught your breath before you realize that you are not alone – stones clatter, small hard bodies brush yours, and sharp pincers bite.*

The PCs are attacked by a swarm of subterranean devil crabs. There are hand- and footholds carved into the rock to the south, leading to Area 1-2. Normally, the PCs could escape the crabs by taking this route, or defeat them easily enough by dispersing the swarm. However, only PCs with infravision can see at the moment, making this combat far deadlier than it would otherwise be. Blind PCs feeling the rock can find the route to Area 1-2 with a successful Luck check, while those with infravision can spot the handholds with a DC 10 Intelligence check. Without using the handholds, it is only a DC 5 Strength or Climb Sheer Surfaces check to reach Area 1-2, but characters who cannot see suffer a -4 penalty to these checks.

Because most of the characters cannot see, the judge should play up the feel of the slippery round stones, the scent of wet stone, the thunderous rush of the river. Any successful hit kills at least one crab, which gives off a pungent reek and cries out with almost-human screams.



**Devil Crab Swarm:** Init +2; Atk swarming attack +1 melee (1d3 plus shred); AC 14; HD 6d8; hp 25; MV 20' or swim 20'; Act special; SP attack all targets within 20'×20' space, shred (DC 10 Ref save or 1d3 extra damage), half damage from non-area attacks; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will -2; AL N; Crit M/d12.

Event 1, below, can be used by the judge to rescue a party in duress. This will also serve immediately to establish the beastmen as something other than just another group of adversaries. This is especially important if this adventure is being used to follow up *Sailors on the Starless Sea*, where beastmen were recurrent foes.

**Area 1-2 - Higher Ground:** *Rough handholds carved into the rock allow you to climb the black basalt, away from the stony beach. The ground here is uneven, and the air remains wet with spray as the subterranean river breaks on the rock. A low, narrow passage leads approximately to the east, sloping gently downward away from you.*



## LEVELING ADVICE

If they have not been granted their 1st level spells, judges may wish to allow wizards to learn arcane spells under duress. This occurs in Appendix N literature, where casters are forced to improvise. In this case, the PC still gains random spells that they can attempt to learn as normal, but may also attempt to learn those spells as needed. To do so, the caster must make both an Intelligence check (DC 10 + spell level) and a successful spell check to succeed, and both checks are made at a -1d penalty on the dice chain. Mercurial effects are only determined after the spell is cast.

Three long, flexible spears are lying just inside the tunnel. These have bone tips with backward-pointed hooks, used to catch crabs and bring them up onto the rock. Used as weapons, they inflict only 1d4 damage and require two hands to wield, but can reach the nearer part of the beach from the ledge.

## EVENT 1: ENTER THE BEASTMEN

This event may be used to rescue PCs encountering the devil crabs in Area 1-1. Alternatively, the event may occur as the PCs travel from Area 1-2 to Area 1-3. In either case, these beastmen are not immediately hostile, and will attempt to resolve the encounter peacefully, even if the PCs are initially combative. If one or more beastmen are slain, the remainder surrender.

**Beastmen (6):** Init +1; Atk spear +0 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 3 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1; AL C; Crit III/d6

These beastmen were swept down the river generations ago, and now inhabit the prehuman ruin of Quetat. Although they are sustained by the Great Fungal Mound (Area 1-8), they are aware of the devil crabs on the beach, and use them as a dietary supplement. The crabs subsist on detritus swept down the river; the beastmen use shreds of fungus to draw them out, and then spear them from Area 1-2 using the long spears found there.

Regardless of what happens, their goal will be to bring the PCs to Quetat.

**Area 1-3 – Ruined City of Quetat:** *The tunnel opens onto an awesome sight – an enormous cavern whose ceiling at least a hundred feet above you glitters as though with blue stars. Before you spreads an ancient and crumbling stone city, with narrow lanes twisting among stone buildings toward a central amphitheater. A few shuffling forms are visible on the streets, and fewer lights of any type. You can easily hear the dripping of water on stone, piping conversations carried on the airs of flutes, and distantly, what sounds like the hollow chanting of monks coming from below the very rock.*

The “blue stars” are actually glowworms which descend from the cavern roof on strings of mucus. These, like the crabs and the fungus in Area 1-8, are harvested for food by the beastmen. In the case of the glowworms, beastmen children climb 15' ladders on the edge of the cavern walls in order to reach the lowest-descending of the worms. The “wood” used by the beastmen is all fungal in nature, and is created by treating material taken from the Great Fungal Mound in Area 1-8.

## GLOWWORMS

Thieves may be asked to help collect the glowworms from the cavern walls, a task that requires both climbing and delicacy. The worms contain a sour bile which, while not itself dangerous, needs to be milked out of the creature in a manner similar to extracting venom. The ancient metal tools used for this – relics of a time before the beastmen came to Quetat – can serve as thieves' tools. The would-be worm gatherer must study both quiet and finesse to avoid frightening the creatures into retreat – in essence, this is good practice for thieves' skills. More importantly, the thief who indulges such a request may discover unexpected allies in their time of need.

The closer the characters get to the amphitheater (Area 1-4), the louder the chanting sounds. The beastmen of Quetat are a dying race. Each wears a bone flute on a thong around their neck. Most of their communication is through playing these flutes, and their notes can echo a long way through the caverns. Complex answers are given with musical notes; vocal answers are a gruff one or two words, thankfully in a close enough approximation of the Common tongue to be easily understood. Their names are likewise accompanied by complicated musical trills, although they have familiar names which the PCs will be able to understand. Any PC can learn enough of the language to carry on a rough conversation over the course of a week or two. If one of the PCs happens to be a minstrel, the judge may allow that character to learn the language more quickly (and more completely).

One in five beastmen (regardless of gender or age) are blind – this usually means their eye sockets are nothing more than bloody holes. However, 1 in 3 of these blind beastmen instead appear to have their eyes atrophied into small, withered prune-like objects – these eyes are actually regrowing (see Area 1-8), but this will not be immediately apparent. Blinded beastmen only suffer a -2 penalty to attack rolls and a -10' reduction in speed; they are accustomed to periodic blindness.

Although the beastmen are chaotic, few are evil.

**Beastmen (varies):** Init +1; Atk spear +0 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 3 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1; AL C; Crit III/d6.



## DESCRIBING BEASTMEN

In order to add individuality to beastmen, the judge may roll 1d10 and 1d5, consulting the following table:

1d10	Result (roll 1d5)
1	Head: (1) child-like, (2) microcephalic, (3) hypercephalic, (4) bovine, (5) saurian.
2	Torso: (1) skeletal, (2) mangy, (3) hairless, (4) squat, (5) covered in thick luxurious fur.
3	Arms: (1) short and stumpy, (2) long, with an extra joint, (3) insectile or spider-like, (4) shaven and tattooed, (5) covered in warty knobs and bumps.
4	Hands: (1) clawed, (2) pudgy, (3) 1d10-fingered, (4) crustacean-like pincers, (5) multi-jointed.
5	Legs: (1) kangaroo-like, (2) thick and powerful, (3) lupine, (4) equine, (5) 1d8+1 tentacles.
6	Feet: (1) both left feet, (2) sucker-toes, (3) long and prehensile, (4) cat paws, (5) hands.
7	Tail: (1) prehensile, (2) squirrel-like, (3) stumpy, (4-5) missing due to injury or genetics.
8	Odor: (1) musky, (2) spicy, (3) like a wet dog, (4) like wood smoke, (5) sweaty tang.
9	Manner: (1) obsequious, (2) hostile, (3) indifferent, (4) self-important, (5) actively courting.
10	Overall, beastman is: (1) unusually weak (-2 to attacks and damage), (2) solidly muscled (+2 to attacks and damage), (3) sickly (1d4 hp), (4) nervous, (5) robust (+1d3 HD).

## THE GREAT CYCLE

Although it will not be immediately obvious to the PCs, the un-dead magician-priests of Yuzz have created a cycle of events in Quetat which increases their power, and the power of the Corruption Below:

1. The Caretaker (see Event 4) collects the eyes of beastmen, calcinates them, and leaves them in the Temple of Yuzz (Area 1-7).
2. The un-dead magician-priests use the *calcinated eyes* to fuel their occult powers, or sacrifice them to the Corruption Below.
3. Sacrificed eyes are used by the Corruption Below to generate chanters in the dark (Area 1-4), and the soul energy they deliver fuels the Corruption's growth and awareness. However, without the proper sacrificial rituals, these *calcinated eyes* can be used to slow the Corruption (see Area 2-4 for details).
4. The Great Fungal Mound (Area 1-8) allows victim's eyes

to regrow. Once the new eyes are fully formed, they can be harvested by the Caretaker, and with them a portion of the victim's soul. The Great Fungal Mound is also addictive, and slightly narcotic, making it difficult for the trapped beastmen to escape Quetat...or to even try.

## FACTIONS

There are three main factions among the beastmen. To determine which group any given beastman belongs to, roll 1d6: (1) the Reformers, (2-4) the Rebuilders, (5-6) the Religious.

*Reformers* are led by the shaman Glormug (see Event 3), who appears almost human save her lion-like legs and tail. They seek to change the nature of Quetat, overthrowing the priests of the Temple of Yuzz and the beastmen's dependence on the Great Fungal Mound. Reformers attempt to subsist primarily on devil crabs and glowworms. They see the PCs as potential saviors—outsiders who can destroy the Caretaker and the priests. They know that the priests are evil, but they do not know what they truly are—the un-dead remnants of the Yuzz. They also know that the priests store their collected eyes, and that they are used to empower their magic, but they do not know how. The spirits of the eyes have reached out to Glormug in dreams, begging for release. The Reformers live mostly in the west of the city.

*Rebuilders* despair because their people are dying, and they would like to see new blood renew their folk. To the Rebuilders, the PCs represent potential comrades—new citizens, new mates, new genetic potential. They have no real leaders, and they have no real plans. They encourage the PCs to stay, to give up the hopeless quest to find an escape, to take new mates and add to the gene pool. They live throughout Quetat.

The *Religious*, led by the enormous goat-headed Ordimus, have accepted the teachings of the priests of Yuzz, and believe that divine grace comes through sacrifice. To them, consumption from the Great Fungal Mound is a communion, and delivering their eyes to the Caretaker is a glad sacrifice. The pain of that sacrifice, they say, teaches them humility, although they are the least humble of Quetat's inhabitants. The narcotic properties of the Great Fungal Mound are but an echo of the ecstasy of numbness to be found beyond death. To the Religious, the PCs represent an outside evil, come to tempt their people away from the true path. If they do not embrace the true path, they must be sacrificed before they lead others astray. They live mostly to the south.

There are no set encounters with Ordimus, or his followers, who can be used by the judge as they see fit to increase tension while the PCs explore Quetat. Ordimus is best used as a whispered name; his followers may denounce the PCs, ambush them in narrow passages, or otherwise make life difficult. If the PCs are actually captured and brought before Ordimus, the adventure is probably over. Still, the PCs shape fate and overthrow the status quo in Dungeon Crawl Classics. They may seek Ordimus out themselves, perhaps even devise a brilliant scheme to turn him into an ally! The judge is encouraged to reward audacity; remember, the beastmen—even Ordimus—are victims here.

**Ordimus:** Init +3; Atk spear +2 melee (1d6+2); AC 14; HD 3d10+6; hp 25; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; AL C; Crit III/d8.

The *Priests of Yuzz* make up a fourth faction, which uses the Religious and the Rebuilders to oppose the Reformers. The priests are not beastmen, nor even alive, but they wear the skins of beastmen as disguises, and cover their eyes with thin gauze to hide the bulbous eyes showing through the holes where their beastman-skin's eyes once were (see Chapter Two: The Temple of Yuzz for more details).



## FEATURES OF QUETAT

The city's meandering streets are cluttered with cell-like stone buildings, some of which have fallen into ruin. Much of Quetat lies empty, and beastmen change their domiciles frequently as the mood strikes them. The following information will be useful for PCs exploring the city.

**Cells:** *The streets are lined with crumbling stone buildings which must have been ancient when humanity was in its infancy. The first creators left no sign of who they were, although they must have been close to humankind in size and build. Beastmen live here now, although few of the stone chambers appear to be occupied.*

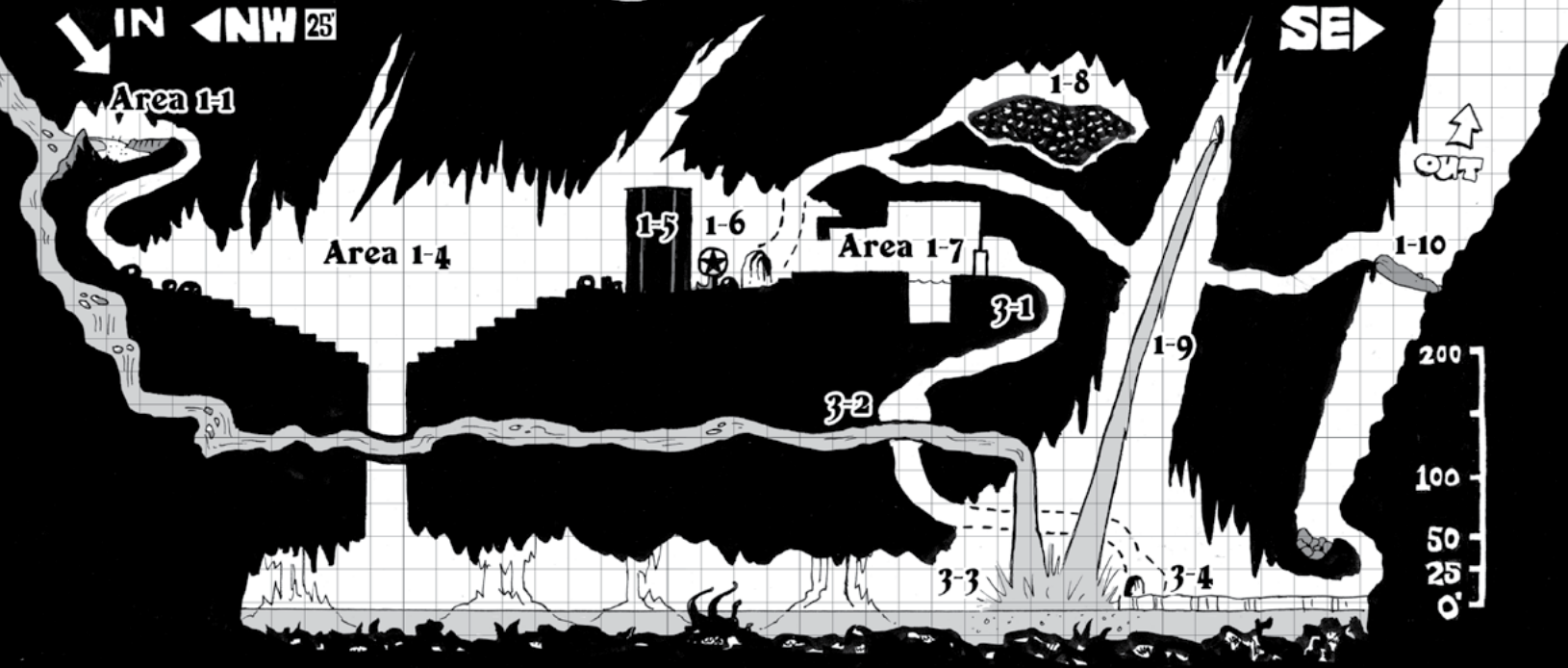
These stone buildings are where the beastmen live. Only 1 in 7 cells are currently occupied, as the beastmen are in decline. Most are single rooms, but 10% may have 1d3 additional rooms. An unoccupied cell contains the following:

### 1d12 Cell contents

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1-3  | Recently occupied, with a 1 in 6 chance of finding a useful item left behind (roll 1d7): (1) spear, (2) 25' of rope, (3) stone cooking pot, (4) 1d4 tallow candles, (5) flint & steel, (6) stone jar of edible fungal paste, (7) bundle of fungal "wood".   |
| 4-5  | Recently occupied, as above. The inhabitant(s) has gone to the Great Fungal Mound and will be gone for 1d7 days more, regenerating their eyes; at the end of this time, 1d3 beastmen return. This may include single parents with children, mated pair (with or without offspring), siblings, friends dwelling together, or whatever else the judge decides.  |
| 6-10 | Deserted.   |
| 11   | Cell is now the lair of a creature that preys upon the beastmen—and the PCs, if it can! (roll 1d3): (1) 1d3 giant fire beetles, (2) a ghoul, (3) a giant lizard. Use the creature statistics from the DCC RPG rulebook.   |
| 12   | Discovery! The PCs stumble across one of the following. Each item can be found only once (roll 1d4): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An ancient Yuzz clay tablet that contains the spell <i>spider climb</i>. Make an Intelligence check when the spell is cast: (5 or lower) suffer a -2d penalty to the spell check, (6-10) suffer a -1d penalty to the spell check, (11-19) the spell check is made normally, (20+) gain a +1d bonus to the spell check. The tablet crumbles when used.</li> <li>2. A well-made longsword lost by some adventurer ages ago. Although not magical, it is so well-balanced as to give a +1 bonus all attack rolls. Unfortunately, it was not well maintained and only does 1d7 damage.</li> <li>3. The dried corpse of a chanter in the dark (see Area 1-4). Reformers will point to it as a sign of the evil done by the priests of Yuzz. Other beastmen will pretend not to see it, Rebuilders turning away in fear and disgust, while the Religious refuse to acknowledge anything that contradicts their beliefs about the priests of Yuzz.</li> <li>4. A tarnished silver ring whose band depicts alternating otters and fish. The wearer gains the ability to breathe water and roll checks to swim using 1d30. However, once a natural "1" is rolled, and each time a "1" is rolled thereafter, the wearer makes swimming checks at a reduced die: 1d24, then 1d20, 1d16, and so on down the dice chain. Once 1d10 is reached, the wearer can no longer breathe water. The ring is cursed; once a character wears it in water it cannot be removed until that character is dead or powerful magic is invoked; a <i>remove curse</i> with a spell check of 34+ is sufficient.</li> </ul> |



# The Lost City of Quetat



## QUESTIONING THE BEASTMEN

Here are some common questions PCs might ask the beastmen and their responses:

Q: *Who are you?*

A: A complicated series of notes on a bone flute, followed by a guttural name. Roll 1d12 twice to generate random beastman names: (1) Gur, (2) Mog, (3) Zurz, (4) Flam, (5) Pukk, (6) Agog, (7) Urm, (8) Shas, (9) Gurf, (10) Zug, (11) Goth, (12) Durd.

Q: *Is there a way out? Or is there a way to the surface?*

A: If asked of a Reformer: *"Only through temple."*

If asked of a Rebuilder, the PCs are led to Area 1-9, with a finger pointed to Area 1-10. *"Death. Better to stay. Live here."*

If asked of a Religious beastman: *"Why would you wish to leave the Path?"* (spoken with narrowed eyes and a growl)

Q: *What are those/this thing?*

A: If asked about a chanter in the dark, only a Reformer will even acknowledge the question. Reformers speak of the Caretaker with loathing, the Religious with fervor, Rebuilders with fear.

Q: *What happened to you?* (Asked of a beastman whose eyes were removed by the Caretaker.)

A: Refusal to answer. The beastman simply ignores the question. If the PCs follow, the beastman will lead them to Area 1-8.

**Area 1-4 – Amphitheater:** *This great amphitheater stretches three hundred feet across, descending down seven rows of seats to a central clearing, in the center of which is a round pit, thirty feet in diameter. From deep within the pit, the sound of almost-monastic chanting rises. This close to the source, there is an inhuman quality to the voices which makes the beastmen of Quetat seem almost human in comparison.*

The shaft in the central clearing descends smoothly for 160', before opening out into Area 3-4. Any disturbance here—including dropping things down the shaft, attempts to descend, or even loud talking—will cause the Corruption Below to dispatch 1d3 chanters in the dark to investigate. After 1d3 rounds, PCs can hear the chanting getting louder as the chanters in the dark fly up the shaft (taking 8 rounds to reach the floor of the amphitheater). PCs can hear the buzz of the chanter's wings after 4 rounds.

**Chanters in the Dark (varies):** Init +0; Atk pincer +2 melee (1d4) or bite +0 melee (1 plus venom); AC 12; HD 1d12; hp 7 each; MV 10' or fly 20'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 60', immune to mind-affecting spells, venom (DC 7 Fort save or 1d3 temporary Personality damage), turning vulnerability (can be turned by lawful or neutral clerics); SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C; Crit M/d6.

Chanters in the dark are halfling-sized fungal creatures, in appearance like insect-winged mushrooms crossed with evil-looking lobsters. The murmurs issuing from hollow fissures in their bodies sound like continual chanting, in a tongue that predates human language. Perhaps all mortal languages are tainted with it, or spring from it, for those within 30' of the creatures automatically understand enough to know that this is their endless paean to the Corruption Below, a vast primordial creature, sentient and evil, an alien slime mold of titanic proportions. A wizard or elf exposed to this chanting can use it as the basis to attempt learning *comprehend languages*.

Only when they are slain does their chanting come to an end.

A chanter's mouthparts exude weak venom that can sap the will of opponents, leaving them docile. The chanters in the dark are not powerful opponents, but there are a lot of them. Every 1d5 rounds, another 1d3 emerge from the shaft until the PCs evacuate the area or have killed all currently present. If the PCs continue to investigate the shaft, this cycle repeats.

**Area 1-5 – Prehuman Library:** *This building is different from the others in the ruined city—larger, and shaped in the form of a tall pentagon. The stone is greenish-gray, and seems to have resisted the ages better. There is no door protecting the dark interior, just a simple stone arch ringed with strange sigils.*

These sigils form a rune of blocking, requiring a DC 18 Will save to pass through the portal. Should the PCs manage to enter, read or paraphrase the following:

*Within, the interior walls are a maze of surfaces carved with minute runes. Even in darkness, these runes are clearly visible, effortlessly drawing the eye towards them, and sometimes appearing to shift when you are not looking directly at them. The walls seem to go upward far beyond the height even this tall building should allow, and stars—or something like them—twinkle in the vast upper distance.*

This library, created by the Yuzz, gives the judge a narrative method of allowing newly-minted wizards and elves to learn their starting spells. The walls can be climbed with a DC 10 Climb Sheer Surfaces check per 30' climbed, and there is no limit to how far a PC can climb (though a roll of 5 or less indicates a fall).

Each week of study in the library allows a DC 15 Intelligence check to gain spell knowledge related to a random wizard spell (level 1d5-2, minimum 1). This doesn't mean that the wizard has learned the spell, merely that they have gained the potential to learn it. The judge is encouraged to examine the tables on pages 315-316 of the DCC RPG rulebook, and consider using the library to lay the seeds of future adventures!

**Area 1-6 – Ancient Shrine:** *Some past traveler has fashioned a makeshift statue of Justicia here: you can make out the crudely formed upright sword of justice etched as though covered with flames and the clear, helmless gaze of Her eternal vigil. Although the shrine seems to be ignored—there is no sign of veneration here, and the dust is thick—it still has an aura of sanctity. At some point long ago, a holy symbol was draped around the statue's neck, and it still appears to be in good condition: a silver disc with the image of a flaming sword worked upon it in gold.*



Although described as being dedicated to Justicia, the shrine can be altered to match the needs of the judge. It is here to provide a holy symbol to the party, as well as provide some narrative scope to describe how a cleric gains their 1st level abilities. Chaotic creatures (including beastmen and the Caretaker) will not come within 30' of the shrine.

## EVENT 2: THE BLOODY AND THE BLIND

*A beastman stumbles down the street, blood streaming down his face from the empty sockets where his eyes once were.*

This event can take place any number of times, and the affected beastman can be of either gender, or of any age. The other beastmen treat this as unremarkable, often refusing to discuss it at all, turning away from anyone who attempts to do so.

## EVENT 3: A REQUEST FOR HELP

*Several beastmen approach you. With gestures, plaintive notes on their bone flutes, and a few low-spoken words, they make it clear that they wish you to accompany them. Their eyes dart in shadows, and even their flutings are softly played, as though they fear discovery.*

This event should happen in the western portion of Quetat, where the Reformers are strongest, if at all possible. Five beastmen have been sent by their shaman, Glormug, to bring the PCs to her, if they can.

**Beastmen (5):** Init +1; Atk spear +0 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 3 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1; AL C; Crit III/d6.

They will lead the PCs to an unremarkable hut, and urge them to enter. If the PCs do so, read or paraphrase the following:

*Within the stone chamber you find a woman seated on a stone – she could be human but for her lion-like legs and tail. She smiles up at you and gestures toward other stones which could serve as crude chairs. “I am Glormug,” she says. “I thank you for coming.”*

Glormug seeks the PCs' aid in destroying the Temple of Yuzz at Area 1-7, although there is little she can offer them in return. Use the following pieces of dialogue as a guide:

- “Yes, I speak your language. Our people were once human, many generations ago, until we were changed by the Lords of Chaos. Our ancestors escaped that bondage, and found this place.”*
- “We traded one form of bondage for another. Here we are slaves to that great mound which sustains us, and in turn our eyes are harvested and used for evil.”*
- “I do not know the true nature of the evil preying upon us, but I feel in my bones that it dwells in the Temple of Yuzz. The eyes that are taken from us dwell there for a time. When I sleep, I can hear them calling out to me.”*
- “Too few in this city believe the Temple is our foe, and too*

## LEVELING ADVICE: THE TRAINING MONTAGE

While it might take the PCs weeks to master their new abilities, for the *players* the transition should be swift. Let them roll for spells, make checks to learn them, or even cast spells with long casting times, like *patron bond* or *find familiar*, but don't make them actually play through the passing days and weeks. Make the rolls, describe what happens, have a brief discussion about what the other PCs are doing, and then jump into the next significant event.

*many believe it is the road to our salvation. You, as outsiders, have a chance to free us from this curse. I have seen it in my dreams. Whether you shall succeed or not, I cannot say, but you must try!”*

- “The only way to escape Quetat with your lives is to pass through the Temple. Do not become enslaved as we are! Help us to gain our freedom, I beg of you!”*
- “We have neither gold nor gems. If there is treasure to be gained, it lies within the Temple. Or beyond it.”*

**Glormug:** Init +1; Atk stone dagger +1 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 3d6+3; hp 16; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP spellcasting (+3 spell check): Spells (1st) *blessing, second sight, word of command*; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +2; AL C; Crit III/d8.

## EVENT 4: THE CARETAKER

*An elephant-sized creature emerges out of the shadows, like a pale spot looming from the darkness. Shaped like a puffball mushroom or a giant egg, it strides swiftly forward on dozens of pairs of legs, each ending in a suckered foot. The only other visible feature is a long flexible proboscis about three inches in diameter. It reaches out toward an unresisting beastman and, one after the other, uses the proboscis to pluck out the unfortunate creature's eyes.*

Beastmen do not resist the Caretaker. They have an almost reverent, worshipful attitude to the Corruption Below and its servants. The PCs may feel differently, especially when they are inevitably targeted by the creature. That will not happen the first time they see it (unless they interfere), but it will happen the next time.

**Caretaker:** Init +3; Atk proboscis +6 melee (1d3 plus pluck eyeball) or ram +4 melee (2d6); AC 16; HD 10d12; hp 60; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 60', pluck eyeball (DC 10 Ref save to avoid); SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +6; AL C; Crit special.

Whenever the Caretaker hits with a proboscis attack, the victim must succeed on a DC 10 Reflex save or lose an eyeball. Characters with one eye take a -2 penalty to melee attack rolls and a -4 penalty to ranged attacks. Characters that lose both eyes are blinded. Any critical hit with a proboscis attack automatically plucks out an eyeball (no save), rather than making a roll on the critical hit chart. The proboscis can

extend to attack characters up to 10' away, and deals only 1 point of damage per eye if a victim does not resist.

If the Caretaker is slain, it will take the Corruption Below 1d7 days to generate a new one.

## EVENT 5: EYE DREAM OF RELEASE

This event occurs any number of times, as a dream or a vision. Characters see a vision of pearlescent eyes, and feel their gaze beseeching them for release.

**Area 1-7 – The Temple of Yuzz:** *Before you stands a structure built into the very rock of the cavern wall. A thirty-foot-wide and thirty-foot-high section of greasy black stone juts from the cave wall. The entrance is surrounded by runes of an unknown, alien language. Something about the sigils is deeply repulsive, as though some deeply buried racial memory recognizes them and rejects what they represent. There is no door – the way is open to all who wish to proceed.*

This is the Temple of Yuzz. Its interior is described in Chapter Two, starting on page 12.

*Comprehend languages* can translate these runes as: “Great is Yullatet Garz; Greater Still Its Masters, the Magician-Priests of Yuzz. Despair, Ye Who Enter Here.”

**Area 1-8 – The Great Fungal Mound:** *Although this cave is large enough to fit a large house within it, it seems cozy in comparison to the cavern housing Quetat. It is filled with a large fungal growth, a great mound of grayish-mauve mold with golden-tipped rhizomes. Dozens of beastmen sprawl upon the fungal mound, some sleeping, some consuming parts of it. They seem to be oblivious to your presence.*

This fungal mound was cultivated by the Yuzz from the material of the Corruption Below itself, and it provides food, healing, a cloth-like substance, and a form of “wood” to the beastman community. Contact with, and consumption of, the Great Fungal Mound allows a PC to heal 1d3 lost attribute points (even from permanent loss or damage, but with the exception of Luck) and 1d6 hit points per day. Lost body parts can also be healed – eyes take 1d3 days, fingers or toes 1d5 days, and whole limbs 2d6 days. Unfortunately, material taken from this cavern does not retain this healing potential.

The Great Fungal Mound is also slightly narcotic and addictive. A character engaged with the Mound is barely aware of anything else even once fully healed. It requires a DC 15 Will save to disengage on one’s own. Even with vigorous aid, a DC 10 Will save is required. The Caretaker will sometimes stalk this chamber, plucking newly-regenerated eyes from beastmen who are not even aware this is happening. Fortunately, material taken from here doesn’t retain this property either.

Once a creature has sampled the Great Fungal Mound, the addictive properties also set in. Unless the character succeeds on a DC 5 Will save, they find themselves craving the Mound. If they do not return to it within 1d3 days, they suffer a -1d penalty to all rolls until they do, or until they have succeeded in three successful Will saves (one per day). Each time a

creature samples the Great Fungal Mound (regardless of how long they do so), the DC for these saves increases by +2.

**Area 1-9 – The Roaring Torrent:** *The cavern forms a great drop here, with a torrential fall coming from somewhere lost in the darkness overhead, crashing down to be lost in the darkness below. A narrow ledge winds around the edge of the abyss, behind the waterfall, and into another passage beyond.*

Beastmen may bring PCs asking about the sun or light to this place. The ceiling here is 200' above the level of the PCs, the ultimate abyss (Area 3-4) is 200' below. Beastmen also throw their dead in this chasm, piping mournfully upon their bone flutes, thus feeding the Corruption Below. The beastmen will wish to follow the same funerary custom with any dead PCs.

Each time the PCs traverse this ledge, there is a 1 in 5 chance that 1d3 chanters in the dark fly up from the abyss below. This takes them 10 rounds, but they remain in the area for 1d6 turns, and are therefore likely to encounter PCs on their return trip.

Any successful attack against creatures on the ledge requires a Reflex save (DC 5 + damage done) or the target is knocked from the ledge. A falling character gains a DC 14 Reflex save to catch themselves. A PC hanging from the ledge must make a Strength check each round (modified by armor): A result of 10 or better allows the PC to regain the ledge. A result of 4 or lower means the PC has lost their grip and falls. Any successful attack against a PC hanging from the ledge requires a DC 15 Fort save to retain their grip; failure indicates a fall. Falling damage is 10d6 (reduced for the water below), and the character drops into the lake at Area 3-4.

**Chanters in the Dark (varies):** Init +0; Atk pincer +2 melee (1d4) or bite +0 melee (1 plus venom); AC 12; HD 1d12; hp 7 each; MV 10' or fly 20'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 60', immune to mind-affecting spells, venom (DC 7 Fort save or 1d3 temporary Personality damage), turning vulnerability (can be turned by lawful or neutral clerics); SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C; Crit M/d6.

**Area 1-10 – The Bridge to Nowhere:** *At the end of the tunnel, there is another shaft, this one reaching upward perhaps five hundred feet or more to the surface world! Although light streams in from above, the passage slants away from you, making the reachable surfaces impossible to navigate. The far wall, some fifty feet away, looks negotiable, with a series of ledges and rough places to grip, as well as offering a slope that would make climbing easier. A huge stone slab forms a makeshift bridge to the far side, but it doesn’t take a dwarf to see how precariously it is balanced. It would take very little pressure to send it crashing down the shaft, certainly less pressure than even a single step! Alien chanting is faint, but audible, from the darkness below. You can just make out a shadow far below that looks like a lower passage – one which might give access to the scalable side. If the huge stone were dislodged, that passage would be lost, trapping you here forever.*

Anyone trying to cross this bridge will inevitably make it fall. As it smashes down the bore hole, it strikes other rocks, which follow it down. When the dust settles, the lower passage is completely cut off; the bottom of the bore hole is



sealed. Anyone on the stone slab when this happens is dead, their bodies buried forever in the rockfall. In all likelihood, the PCs are trapped to live among the beastmen, addicted to the Great Fungal Mound, and sacrificing their eyes periodically to the Caretaker.

Players may have other ideas. *Spider climb*, for instance, might get one or more PCs to the far ledge with a rope, although PCs will need to have more than 50' to both tie it off and span the bore hole. A truly foolhardy PC may attempt to run and jump with a rope, hoping to be able to reach the far wall as the bridge collapses. Doing so requires both a DC 15 Agility check and a DC 20 Strength check. Failing either sends the hapless character crashing to their doom. Characters should have an idea of how difficult such an attempt

would be before trying it—but with the right PC, and perhaps a lucky halfling, it is possible to succeed.

Because of the bore hole's slope, and lack of ready handholds on this side, it would take a thief three Climb Sheer Surfaces checks (DC 25, DC 20, and DC 15 respectively) to get to the more easily climbed area; while unlikely, with a liberal use of Luck, it is not impossible.

Any beastman with the PCs will do their utmost to dissuade them from the attempt, although their reasons will be different based on their faction: to keep the PCs for help against the Temple, to keep the PCs as potential new citizens, or to keep the PCs for sacrifice.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE TEMPLE OF YUZZ

The un-dead magician-priests of Yuzz wear the forms of dead beastmen as disguises—in truth, they are mummified reptile-men with bulbous red eyes. If the PCs are able to prove this to the beastmen, all of Quetat will rise against the Temple.

**Area 2-1 – Entry Hall:** *Beyond the archway is a great hall some thirty feet high, the ceiling held aloft by a line of ebony pillars to the left and right. The walls, ceiling, and floor are all covered with tiles of polished black stone. The hall leads into some larger space beyond, lit by a wavering pale-green radiance. The air smells of spoiled meat and rotting eggs, and it is cold enough in this place to see your breath. Although you can see no creatures, there is a prickling sense of being watched that makes the hairs rise on the back of your necks.*

There is no direct danger here, although the magician-priests become aware of the PCs as soon as they pass the threshold.

**Area 2-2 – Corrupt Pool:** *Moving forward, you see a large space seventy feet square, the fifty-foot-high ceiling supported by four thick black pillars each to the right and left. The source of the pale greenish light is clear—a pool thirty feet wide and forty feet long is set into the floor here, and the water shimmers with eerie light. There is a stone door in the center of the far wall, and two wide stone stairways leading out of the space to either side: upwards to the east and downwards to the west.*

The pool consists of material taken from the Corruption Below in a time long before it had become sentient. The magician-priests can mentally control this material; when the PCs enter the room, the magician-priests use it to form five whipcord-thin reptilian warriors with bulbous eyes, each armed with a serrated-edged club. These appear as the Yuzz did when alive, but they glow with a greenish light, and collapse into foul liquid when reduced to 0 hp.

**False Yuzz Warriors (5):** Init +2; Atk serrated club +4 melee (1d6); AC 14; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 60', death throes (collapse to foul liquid); SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +8; AL C; Crit III/d8.

**Area 2-3 – Meditation Room:** *The steps lead up twenty feet*  
**Page 12**

*to a chamber forty feet across and thirty feet deep. Prayer mats of gold and violet fungal material are arranged on the black tiles of the floor. A cross-legged beastman with almost wolf-like features sits on one of the mats, his eyes covered with a strip of gauze.*

This magician-priest, Kahl the Open Fist, is a master of unarmed combat, able to strike deadly blows even without weapons. Kahl has two action dice; if he desires, he is able to divide them, using one at his initiative count, and the other at the end of the round or when struck in combat. When struck in combat, Kahl can use an action die to block the attack, even if it was a critical hit, avoiding all of its effects. If Kahl is reduced to 0 hp, his body withers inside its beastman skin and turns to ash.

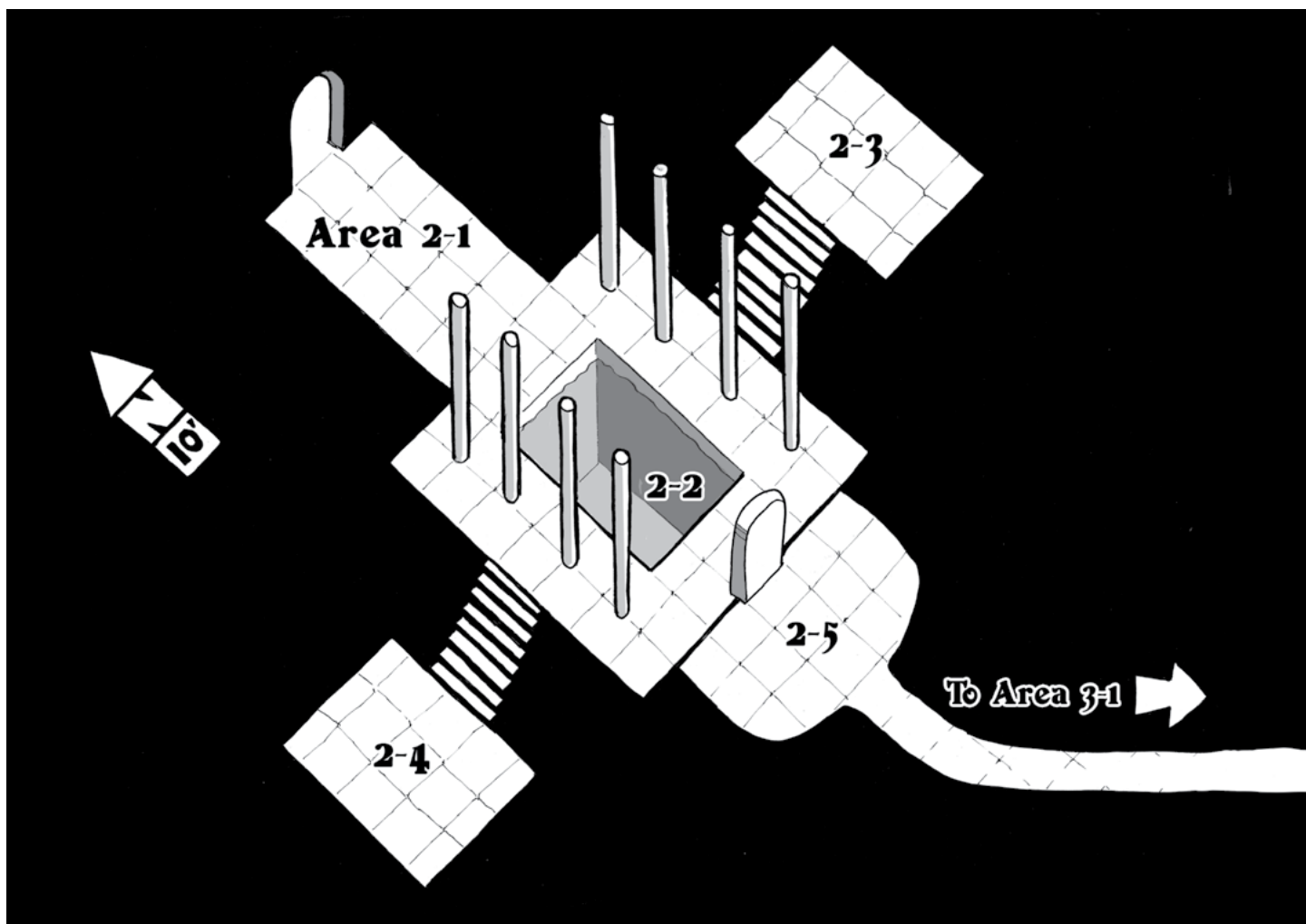
**Kahl the Open Fist:** Init +4; Atk open fist +4 melee (1d5); AC 16; HD 3d12; hp 18; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP infravision 60', split actions, block attack, un-dead traits, death throes (wither to ash); SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +5; AL C; Crit U/d8.

**Area 2-4 – The Eyes of Yuzz:** *The steps lead downward into a forty-foot-wide by thirty-foot-deep chamber. Stone shelves built into the far wall are the dominant feature, and they contain a plethora of pearlescent stones the size of grapes. On an upper shelf, you spy a dozen red gems the size of oranges. Before them stands a beastman holding a stone knife, his eyes bound by a strip of gauze.*

This magician-priest, Hasth the Eye-Taker, paralyzes opponents who fail to make a successful DC 10 Will save on a successful attack. Hasth can use an action die to pluck an eye from a paralyzed creature and consume it, restoring him to full hit points. If Hasth is reduced to 0 hp, his body is consumed by worms, which writhe within his beastman skin.

**Hasth the Eye-Taker:** Init +3; Atk stone dagger +2 melee (1d4 plus paralysis); AC 14; HD 3d12; hp 15; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP infravision 60', paralysis (DC 10 Will save avoids), pluck and consume eyes, un-dead traits, death throes (consumed by worms); SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +5; AL C; Crit U/d8.

The eyes on the shelves are 57 pairs of *calcinated eyes* taken from beastmen, and six pairs of *eyes of Yuzz*, taken from living Yuzz before they perished. *Calcinated eyes* and *eyes of*



Yuzz have the following properties:

1. When examined, they are clearly eyes.
2. In their current form, *calcinated eyes* can be sold as gemstones worth 10 gp each while *eyes of Yuzz* are worth 75 gp each.
3. A pair of *calcinated eyes* from beastmen can be used to replace missing eyes, but both sockets must be empty. It takes 1d3 rounds for them to grow into place. Once in place, they can draw their owner's attention according to their personality (see below), shifting focus or gaze to highlight whatever they wish noticed, or away from whatever they wish to avoid. They also grant 60' infravision.
4. All *calcinated eyes* have personality and volition, and can communicate with anyone they are in direct contact with. *Calcinated eyes* from beastmen make others aware of what they can do; *eyes of Yuzz* hate the PCs, and do not.
5. Wizards and elves can use the *calcinated eyes* of beastmen for spellburn, granting a +1 bonus per pair of eyes consumed by the spell.
6. *Eyes of Yuzz* can be destroyed when casting a spell, giving a +4 bonus to the spell check per eye destroyed, to a maximum bonus of +20.
7. Any pair of *calcinated eyes* thrown into the Corruption Below has a chance of preventing it from acting for 1 round. This is a cumulative 5% per pair of beastman eyes, and 10% per pair of *eyes of Yuzz*.
8. To determine the personality of beastmen eyes, roll 1d14: (1) hedonistic, (2) avaricious, (3) warlike, (4) friendly, (5) shy, (6) jealous, (7) vengeful, (8) materially aesthetic, (9) cowardly, (10) alert, (11) lazy, (12) enthusiastic reader, (13) honest, (14) rude. *Eyes of Yuzz* simply hate the PCs and communicate nothing else.

**Area 2-5 - Thrones of the Magician-Priests:** The door to this chamber is trapped; opening it without first activating a hidden catch causes a stone bludgeon to swing down from the wall above the door. It attacks with a +4 bonus against the person opening the door, and deals 1d4+3 damage on a successful strike. The trap can be found with a DC 15 Find Trap check, and neutralized with a DC 10 Disable Trap check.

Beyond the trapped door is a chamber, some fifty feet wide and thirty feet deep. Five greenish-black stone thrones face you, three of which are occupied by beastmen: two with heads of black sheep flanking an imposing beastman who combines the features of a tiger over the body of an ox. All three have gauze bandages over their eyes. As the door swings open, you hear a voice say, "Go! Even now your sins may be forgiven." Although none of their lips move. You can see a dark passage in the far wall leading downwards.



These are the final three un-dead magician-priests. The goat-headed priests, Kagg and Karg, can each use an action die to create a phantom duplicate of himself. The phantom duplicates reduce the original by 1 hp, and are destroyed by any successful hit, but each gains an action die to make melee attacks. They otherwise use the statistics of the original. Kagg and Karg can each make one duplicate per round. They seek to use this power to delay the PCs while the other magician-priest, Halmurg the Overlord, casts spells from his throne.

**Kagg and Karg:** Init +2; Atk stone dagger +3 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 3d12; hp 15 each; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP infravision 60', duplication, un-dead traits; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +4; AL C; Crit U/d8.

Halmurg casts both wizard and cleric spells, suffering the normal penalties for failure in either case. So long as he remains seated on his throne, he has a +2 bonus to spell checks. Beneath his beastman disguise, Halmurg wears a rune-covered tarnished silver ring that grants a +4 bonus to all saving throws (reflected in his statistics).

**Halmurg the Overlord:** Init +4; Atk stone dagger +1 melee (1d4) or spell; AC 13; HD 3d12; hp 25; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 60', un-dead traits, spellcasting (+3 spell check, +5 on throne): Spells Cleric (1st) *paralysis*, *word of command*, (2nd) *lotus stare*; Spells Wizard (1st) *choking cloud*, *magic missile*; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +12; AL C; Crit U/d8.

The passage on the far side of the room leads to Area 3-1.

## CHAPTER THREE: ESCAPE

**Area 3-1 – Lower Passage:** *This passage slants downward at a slight, but perceptible, slope in serpentine loops. It consists of worked stone, older even than the ruined city of the beastmen, and is unpleasantly greasy to the touch. The faint sounds of alien chanting become audible, and then increasingly louder as you descend.*

**Area 3-2 – Washed Ashore:** *An underground river crosses the passage ahead of you. The roaring torrent you can hear echoing from upstream has widened here to a swift but shallow water passing downstream into darkness. Shards of wood from your boat have been caught on the rocks here, and perhaps more! The passage continues beyond. You can hear chanting from both the downstream tunnel and the way forward through the lower tunnel.*

Anyone who survives the cataract (Area 1-1) washes up here. Significant items, including any that the PCs may have lost in the rushing river at the start of the adventure, may also be found among the stones here; use Luck checks to determine if this is the case. Finally, 3d30 gp can be found scattered throughout the area.

PCs who follow the water course find that it grows narrower, deeper, and faster as they go. Traversing this way requires three Strength checks (DC 5, 10, and 15), with failure indicating that a character is swept off their feet and taken by the current. A DC 13 Reflex save allows the character to catch hold of the wall; failure means that the character drops with the water into Area 3-4, suffering 1d6 damage in the process. The same Strength checks must be made in reverse to return to the river crossing if characters so choose.

**Area 3-3 – The Sentinel:** *Ahead in the darkness, perhaps some fifty feet away, is a glimmering pale form, like a giant green-white puffball mushroom. It stands on dozens of legs, each of which ends with a large, sucker-like pad. You can see what appears to be a ribcage below the leathery fungal exterior, but no other features. This creature is the Sentinel, set here to guard the final passage to the Corruption Below. Like the Caretaker, there is only one Sentinel at a time, and the Corruption Below requires 1d7 days to gestate another.*

**Sentinel:** Init +3; Atk maw +5 melee (1d8 plus restraint) or ram +4 melee (2d6) or fungal tongue +6 ranged (capture and pull); AC 16; HD 10d12; hp 60; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 60', restrain targets, capture and pull 10' with tongue; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +6; AL C; Crit M/d16.

When it attacks, the Sentinel's rib cage opens up like a sharp-fanged maw, with an audible ripping sound and the nauseating odor of rotten meat. Its fungal tongue can attack targets up to 30' away, and on a successful attack, captures the target and pulls it toward the Sentinel. The target can attempt an opposed Strength check vs. +6 to resist being pulled, while a DC 15 Strength check or a successful Mighty Deed can dislodge the tongue's grasp. Otherwise, each round, the victim is dragged 10' closer to the Sentinel, until it is drawn into the Sentinel's maw.

When attacking with its maw, targets not caught by the tongue are allowed a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid being captured. Otherwise, the target is restrained in the maw, which seals behind it. The Sentinel then travels as quickly as it can to Area 3-4, where restrained targets are expelled into the Corruption's lake. It can only make ram attacks so long as it has a target restrained in its maw. Restrained targets are unable to take any action requiring physical movement, although their muffled voices can still be heard.

Unless forced to attack, the Sentinel uses its action die to move once it has restrained a target.

**Area 3-4 – Spawn of Darkness:** *As you travel down the passage, the sulfuric odor of rotting eggs assaults your nostrils. The chanting is louder ahead, growing with the stench of rot as you approach. The passage leads to a ledge overlooking an enormous water-filled cavern, so huge that it must extend under all of the caves above. Fat black flies buzz over the noisome waters, and are consumed by flying fungal insect-crustacean creatures, which unceasingly chant paeans to the glory of some dark and alien thing through spiracles in their bodies – these strange chanters continually emerge from the lake, akin to mosquito larvae reaching their adult form. A rippling green glow appears beneath the black and*

*stinking waters, like foxfire given off by a corpse, and the true extent of the cavern becomes visible. It is vast beyond measure, held aloft by thick columns of limpet-encrusted rock. Blind dark tentacles reach from the water, as though sensing your presence. One wraps around a chanter, and it is gone. Ahead, beyond the ledge, is another passage [and if the PCs have explored Area 1-10:] – surely the one which leads to the climbable face of the bore hole, and thus to freedom!*

As the PCs cross the ledge, the light grows stronger. A babble of alien voices speaking in idiot tongues comes from the water, as the Corruption Below surges upwards. The Corruption Below is a mass of tentacles, blind alien faces – many the size of giants – gibbering in a thousand languages, and ever-shifting flesh. Although it is dark, green-white phosphorescence glimmers around it like an oily sheen. Even worse, wizards and elves can almost hear secrets in its idiot babbling, keys to understanding the laws of the universe and unlocking arcane might. Lawful and neutral clerics know the sounds are blasphemous; chaotic clerics must succeed on a DC 10 Will save or be momentarily entranced.

As the characters pass over the ledge, the Corruption Below makes a blind tentacle attack against the character with the lowest Luck score, and against an entranced cleric. This attack has a +0 bonus, and only does 1d3 damage, but the victim must succeed in an opposed Strength check vs. +8 or be pulled off the ledge and into the lake below. The Corruption Below will make a tentacle attack against any creature in the lake each round. If these attacks hit, the victim cannot make a check to swim until freed by a successful check, and may begin to drown (see below). Successful tentacle attacks prevent a PC from reaching the surface, but a new attack must be made each round, as the tentacles do not maintain their hold. Climbing to the ledge requires a DC 10 Strength or Climb Sheer Surfaces check.

The Corruption Below is as large as the lake itself; there is no power possessed by the PCs that can harm it in any way.

The following rules apply to PCs in the lake:

- Swimming PCs must make a DC 5 Strength check each round to stay afloat. This is modified by armor. A PC can choose to sink but risks drowning.
- Drowning: A submerged PC without an air source can hold their breath for as many rounds as their Stamina score. If they engage in actions while submerged, this duration is halved. Once this time limit expires, the PC begins drowning and must make a DC 10 Fortitude save each round or temporarily lose 1 point of Stamina.
- The save DC increases by 1 each round after the first. A drowning PC can take no actions and must be rescued by another character. When a PC's Stamina reaches 0, they die. If the PC is rescued, the lost Stamina is restored immediately.
- The base speed of all swimming or submerged characters is halved. That rate is further modified by armor.

- Swimming or submerged PCs suffer a -2 modifier to initiative checks.
- Spells may not normally be cast while submerged. Spells may be attempted while treading water, but the caster suffers a -2 penalty to their spell check when doing so.

## EVENT 6: FINAL FLIGHT

*You have reached the side of the bore hole you found earlier, but here the incline favors you! Far above, you can see daylight while a mere two hundred feet above you, you can see the precariously balanced stone which had offered false hope before. It looks like a relatively easy climb, with many ledges where you can pause, but the corruption in the lake below you surges, forcing a portion of its bulk up the shaft behind you – your only hope lies in speed.*

If the PCs reached and explored Area 1-10, they will automatically recognize this as the side of the bore hole where the incline can be scaled; otherwise adjust the text accordingly. This is a complicated event, and it is recommended that judges print or photocopy the Final Flight Tracker on page 17 to keep track of where participants are. This is effectively a running fight up an inclined surface, where it is important to both keep moving and to limit the number of foes attacking. There is no chance of falling when attacked on a ledge, but climbing characters must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 10 + damage taken) if they are hit. Failure means a fall to the next ledge below them. Because the incline decreases velocity, damage is reduced to 1d4 per 10' fallen.

PCs must make Strength or Climb Sheer Surfaces checks to climb the incline, and penalties for armor apply. A character can choose to move less than their allowed move to stop at a ledge if they so desire. A thief can reduce their movement by 10' to increase the movement of another adjacent PC by 10', but must choose to do this before the dice are rolled. A character can forego taking an action to help another with a rope, granting that other PC a +10 bonus to their climb check. The distance moved is otherwise determined by the result of the climb check:

### Climb Check Result Distance Moved

1 or less	Fall to previous ledge
2-5	No movement
6-10	10'
11-15	20'
16+	30'

**Fighting and Ledges:** A character can choose to fight or climb (not both). If not on a ledge, a character can only use a one-handed weapon, and has a -2 penalty to their attack rolls. Characters on a ledge suffer no such penalties.

**Treasures:** The bore hole has been used by surface-dwellers as a place of sacrifice for centuries. As a result, treasures may be found on any ledge between the starting point and the precarious bridge. PCs on a ledge may choose to collect treasures, using an action die, by rolling 1d20 (modified by Luck):



Roll	Result
1 or less	Nothing is found.
2-5	A piece of random equipment (Table 3-4: Equipment, DCC RPG rulebook, p. 73). There is a 75% chance that the item is no longer in usable condition.
6-10	A smattering of 3d6 silver coins.
11-15	5d6 sp and 3d6 gp.
16+	A unique item. Each can only be found once; treat duplicates as 5d6 gp instead. Roll 1d4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A jade baton, shaped like a human femur. Creatures struck by the baton take 1d4 damage, and must succeed on a DC 14 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d3 minutes. On a natural attack roll of "1", the baton shatters into dust, which rushes into the lungs of the wielder (Will DC 14 or be paralyzed for 1d3 turns). On the wielder's death, it may be discovered that their right femur has transformed into a new jade baton.</li> <li>2. A fist-sized moonstone, worth 200 gp.</li> <li>3. <i>Dryad's Woe</i>, a +1 Lawful longsword (Int 4), which can communicate through simple urges. This weapon does an additional +1 damage against fey creatures. Its purposes are to enforce the law and to build monuments to great heroes. Wielders who support these purposes discover that they can detect secret doors within 30' by spending a round in concentration.</li> <li>4. A silver tube (worth 15 gp) bearing an aged cleric scroll of <i>binding</i> and <i>wood wyrding</i>. The scroll uses the reader's normal spell check, and crumbles to dust on any failure. Until that occurs, it may be used any number of times.</li> </ul>

**The Precarious Bridge:** Players will certainly think of many ways to send this crashing down on their enemies below. The question is, will they wait until the entire surviving party has passed this point? The Final Flight Tracker contains the Reflex save DCs to cling to the walls in an attempt to survive the stone's passage; failure on this save means death. In some cases, success can still inflict damage. Characters who take damage while climbing must succeed on a Reflex save to avoid falling, just as through struck in combat, and then must also endure the consequences of being on the new level (i.e., a new Reflex save, with the same consequences for success and failure). DCs are also given for flying creatures; chanters in the dark may survive the destruction!

If the PCs do not trigger the bridge's collapse, the Corruption Below automatically does so when it reaches that level.

**Corruption Below Actions:** At the end of each round, roll 1d3 to determine what the Corruption Below does:

1. Surge: The Corruption Below surges upward (1d4-1)×10' (minimum of 10'). Any creature the Corruption Below comes into contact with is automatically attacked

by a tentacle each round, in addition to any other action the Corruption takes.

2. Grope: The Corruption Below makes 1d8 tentacle attacks with a 20' reach. It only attacks each target once, from the lowest Luck upward until it runs out of attacks. Each attack has a +0 bonus and does 1d3 damage. The victim must succeed on an opposed Strength check vs. +8 or be pulled 10' toward the Corruption, taking 1d4 points of additional damage from abrasion. Any creature in contact with the Corruption is automatically attacked each round, in addition to whatever other action the Corruption takes.
3. Spew: The Corruption Below spews out 1d3 chanters in the dark, which immediately move upward 20', and are able to act in the next round. There is no limit to the number of chanters the Corruption can create.

**Chanters in the Dark (varies):** Init +0; Atk pincer +2 melee (1d4) or bite +0 melee (1 plus venom); AC 12; HD 1d12; hp 7 each; MV 10' or fly 20'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 60', immune to mind-affecting spells, venom (DC 7 Fort save or 1d3 temporary Personality damage), turning vulnerability (can be turned by lawful or neutral clerics); SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C; Crit M/d6.

When the first PC reaches the Precarious Bridge, the Corruption automatically surges 10' upward every round, in addition to its other actions.

**Escape:** Once the echoes of falling stone have died, and any surviving chanters in the dark have been dispatched, there is no reason to continue having the PCs make checks to climb out of the bore hole.

*At long last, you find yourselves once more standing on the surface of the world, under the light of the sun. Although covered in stone dust and grime, you have escaped. You are far from the place where you embarked on the underground river; how far you cannot say. You are unsure even of the direction the water took you. The horrors you discovered below the earth have not been destroyed, but at least they are trapped. For now. Whether they remain trapped for a century, a millennium, or merely a year you cannot say.*

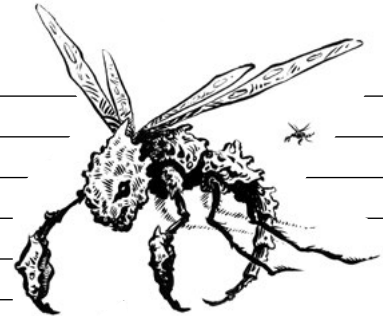
## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs now find themselves in another area of the judge's choosing. Who made sacrifices down the bore hole? Are they still around? If the un-dead magician-priests were destroyed, the Corruption Below may become dormant...or could be developed as a patron if the judge and players so desire. Whatever the judge decides, and wherever the PCs go from here, there will be intrigue, adventure, and excitement – such is life in the worlds of Dungeon Crawl Classics!



# FINAL FLIGHT TRACKER

Depth	Who is Here?	Ledge?	Notes
Surface		Ground	A total of 700' from PC start point.
250'			
240'		Yes	
230'			
220'			
210'		Yes	
200'			The Precarious Bridge. From here upward, no danger if it collapses.
190'			
180'		Yes	Last ledge containing potential treasure. DC 5 Reflex save (DC 10 if flying) to avoid falling bridge; no damage on success.
170'			
160'			
150'		Yes	
140'		Yes	DC 10 Reflex save (DC 15 if flying) to avoid falling bridge; 1d6 damage on success.
130'		Yes	
120'			
110'			
100'		Yes	DC 15 Reflex save (DC 20 if flying) to avoid falling bridge; 2d6 damage on success.
90'			
80'			DC 20 Reflex save (automatic failure if flying) to avoid falling bridge; 3d6 damage on success.
70'			
60'			From here or below, there is no escape if the bridge collapses.
50'			
40'		Yes	
30'			
20'		Yes	
10'			
0'		Yes	PCs start here.
-10'			
-20'			
-30'		Yes	
-40'		Yes	
-50'			
-60'			Corruption Below starts here.



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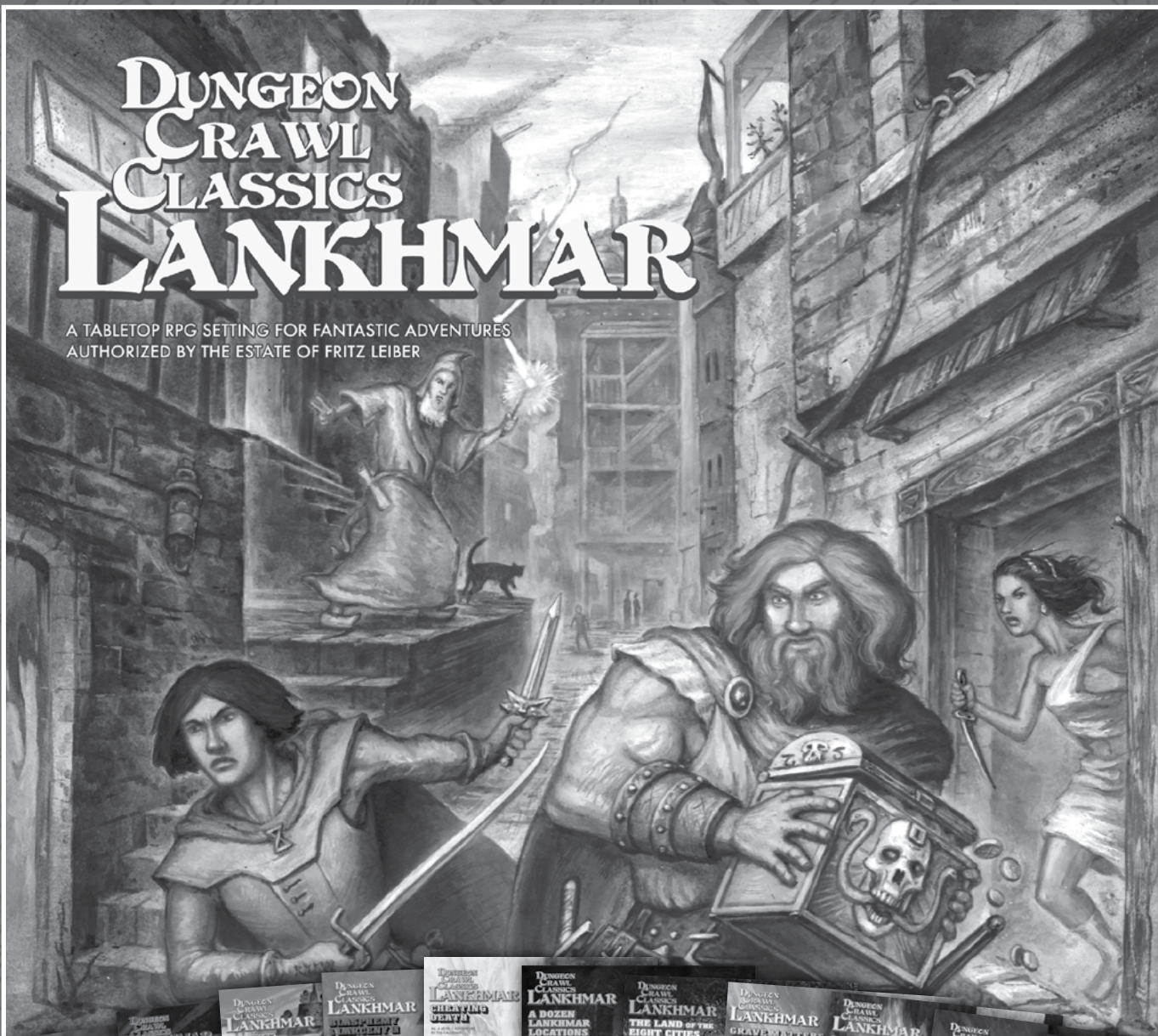
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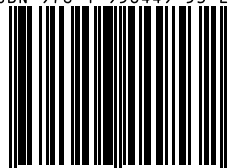
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