

# DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS LANKHMAR

## THE GREATEST THIEVES IN LANKHMAR

A DCC BOXED SET

AUTHORIZED BY THE  
ESTATE OF FRITZ LEIBER



DKZ 2020



# THE GREATEST THIEVES IN



## A LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE

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# INTRODUCTION

Esteemed Judges, Alley Bashers, and Slayers!

Welcome to Lankhmar the Imperishable – the City of the Black Toga, Sevenscore Thousand Smokes, and the latest setting for the DCC RPG tournament!

It is with great reverence that we present the third annual DCC RPG team tourney. Fritz Leiber's literary masterpiece is both frivolous and solemn by turns, but it should never be approached lightly. If we have failed to honor his vision, forgive us, for we are but apprentice night-beggars and cut-throats laboring in the shadow of the master.

However – if, by chance, we have succeeded in palming just a sliver of Leiber's genius, then we hope you will join us at the Silver Eel to raise a cup in celebration. For this is an adventure – and tournament – like no other.

## JUDGE'S NOTE ON TOURNAMENT RULES FORMAT



Damage from non-PC attacks is standardized for the tournament, ensuring that all PCs suffered equally within a given encounter. This number is usually the average of the damage roll, rounding up, and is noted in brackets after the regular damage notation:

**Thieves (4):** Init +1; Atk short sword +0 melee (1d6 [4]) or dagger +1 ranged (1d4 [2]); AC 13; HD 1d8; hp 6 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will -1; AL C.

Similarly, durations are standardized and noted within brackets.

Since this tournament takes place within the city of Lankhmar and uses the DCC Lankhmar rules, fleeting Luck is also used (see the Judge Pack for full details). As PCs complete many of the encounters, they may gain fleeting Luck as an award for satisfying certain conditions. The amount of fleeting Luck awarded is also standardized for tournament play.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND



The Greatest Thieves in Lankhmar was conceived in the early hours of the last day of Gen Con 2018. Ambling down the barren streets, our voices hoarse and our minds weary, Joseph offered the prompt every writer both longs for and dreads: What would we attempt next year?

At the time we hadn't yet completed running *Riders of the Phlogiston*. The 2018 tournament flings PCs across the Goodman multiverse, to do battle and wrestle with puzzles drawn from a hundred worlds. After days of pitting PCs against rabid mutants, Appalachian horrors, and weirdling worms, we yearned for something less gonzo, and perhaps more in the vein of Appendix N Sword & Sorcery.

Lankhmar was the obvious choice. We had been given a chance to play in Leiber's inimitable city, and no property license lasts forever. If we were going to run a game in

## WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

This boxed set comes with everything you need to run an epic adventure over several sessions, whether as a tournament or as part of an ongoing campaign. Tournament dungeon crawls are different from normal DCC RPG modules in that they follow a firm structure: all 3 rounds are timed at 4 hours each; teams are awarded points based on their accomplishments in the adventure; and they can submit their scores online to compete with DCC fans worldwide!

The Player Pack provides 10 pregenerated character sheets and a brief overview of tournament rules, as well as guidelines for using the DCC Lankhmar healing and fleeting Luck rules within a tournament setting. Parties should consist of 5 players. Each player should review the Player Pack and choose one PC (there are a variety of 3rd and 4th-level thieves, warriors, and wizards to choose from; 5 PCs will not be used). Spell grimoires are available at [goodman-games.com/tournaments](http://goodman-games.com/tournaments), or players can use their DCC RPG core books.

The Judge Pack contains all information necessary for judges to run this adventure as a tournament, beginning with recaps of the tournament as run at Gen Con 2019 and DCC Days Online 2020. Judges running tournament games are expected to review the "Judge's Eyes Only" documents that follow, as general standardizations have been made to certain stats and rulings that should be adhered to for all tournament play. This year's pack also explains how the DCC Lankhmar rules for benisons and dooms, healing, and fleeting Luck will work within tournament parameters. Scoring sheets are included, as well as a tutorial for the rooftop map/puzzle that comprises Round 2. Judges will also find an extensive set of player handouts!

Lankhmar, it had to be now. But with a vast city, rife with iconic locations, laid out before us, the next immediate question was, "Where?"

And, like grinning thieves discovering a treasure hoard, the only correct answer was, "All of it."

And so were born the three rounds of *Greatest Thieves*.

The adventure begins deep in the bowels beneath Thieves' House. Bidden by their patron, Ningauble, the PCs are in search of the bejeweled skull of the Guild Master Omphal. Their steps are guided by a strange relic, Ningauble's Bauble, which draws the PCs inexorably into the darkness. Once the skull is procured, that same bauble leads the PCs up through the maze of cellars and sub-basements, and through the heart of the guild hall.

Staggering free of Thieves' House, the PCs emerge into the night air and Round 2 of the tournament. In this second act, the PCs are forced to wrestle with Lankhmar in three dimensions – dashing across high rooftops, down filthy alleyways, through forbidden tenements, and everywhere in between –

all the while pursued by vengeful thieves and deadly Slayers.

And still the bauble beckons them on.

The third and final round of the tournament sees the PCs infiltrating the Rainbow Palace. Slipping under the gaze of the Overlord's guards, the PCs must contend with the sprawling citadel and its strange, decadent delights. Strange puzzles

and terrible foes await, to say nothing of the hordes of guardsmen baying at the PCs' heels.

To date, no tournament party has succeeded in besting Round 3 (to sail away to victory on the Overlord's own private sloop!). Ningauble still waits, biding its time a while longer, ever hoping to crown one party of thieves, sorcerers, and cutthroats the Greatest Thieves in Lankhmar!

## ROUND 1: BENEATH THIEVES' HOUSE



The tournament begins in the twisting, maze-like catacombs beneath Thieves' House. The PCs have been sent at the behest of their patron, Ningauble of the Seven Eyes, to steal the Skull Omphal from the thieves' ossuaries. The round ends with the PCs escaping into the alleys of Lankhmar, with the Thieves' Guild and its allies in heated pursuit.

The PCs are aided in their search—and again in their flight—by a gleaming medallion hung on a silvery chain: **Ningauble's Bauble**. When dangled in the air, the bauble points unerringly in the direction of the Skull Omphal.

Then, once the skull is recovered, the bauble points the direction to the safest means of escaping the catacombs. This is seldom the most direct route, and in many instances the directions might seem counter-intuitive or misleading. However, Ningauble's riddle-magic is unerring: it always points in the direction of least danger, and to deviate from the bauble's course is to court death.

Additionally, the bauble is able to heal PCs' wounds. On its first use, the bauble heals 1d20 hp. On its second use, this power is reduced by -1d to 1d16 hp, then 1d14 hp, and so on down the dice chain. This power is not recovered—as the bauble is burned down, it does not recover during subsequent rounds. In lieu of restoring hit points, the bauble may also be used to restore a single critical injury suffered by a PC. Each use of this type drains the effective power of the bauble as if hit points had been restored. Note that PCs may call upon the power of the bauble even if they are not physically carrying it; however, using the bauble in combat requires the PC to perform no other action that round, even if the PC has more than one action die.

### GENERAL FEATURES

Contrary to expectations, the cellars beneath Thieves' House are not cold and damp, but rather hot and dry. The air is tinged with the sting of foreign spices, and recalls forgotten memories of ancient tombs in the Eastern Lands.

Except where noted, a heavy carpet of dust coats the floors and walls. Dried and abandoned cobwebs float on dead breezes, catching in the PCs' hair and sweaty brows. There is no light save the PCs' own smoky torches and candles.

**Player Start:** *You and your companions kneel in the dusty intersection and carefully unfurl the bauble: a silvery pendant hung from a finely-wrought chain that gleams and dances in the light of your sooty lanterns.*

*A gift from your master, Ningauble, the bauble has guided you beneath the oily streets of this accursed city, through its interminable sewers, and into the very bowels of Thieves' House. It has miraculously healed your wounds during the passage, and always shown you the correct path towards your destination. Somewhere in the gloom is your goal: the Skull Omphal, relic of the most cunning Master Thief to pad the cobbled streets of this accursed city.*

*Now, crouched before a pair of skull-marked doors and a corridor leading on to darkness, you call upon the bauble's powers once more. The pendulum hangs in the dusty air, spinning on its chain. Then, impossibly—as it has a dozen times before—it rises to point into the darkness, down the crumbling steps, deeper into Thieves' House.*

*The Skull Omphal awaits and Ningauble's Bauble draws you onward.*

Ningauble's Bauble is unerringly correct: the Skull Omphal rests but a short distance away. The PCs' goal is nearly within their grasp. All that bars their way is a simple puzzle (area 1-1) and their own foolishness.

The doors to either side are distractions, albeit deadly ones. Each is marked with a skull—one of hammered gold, the other of silver. Both doors sport an intricate brass lock set with three keyholes. Tampering with either of the doors risks death, but so long as the PCs follow the bauble's directions and proceed down the steps, they have nothing to fear.

Despite the southeast door being marked with silver, and the northwest with gold, both are identically trapped. A close inspection of both doors shows that each has attracted an extra-thick blanket of dust (as if coated in oil or bacon grease). Thieves searching either door (DC 10 Find Trap check) readily note that it is trapped and constructed to slide out towards the thief. However, unless the thief is exceedingly alert or cautious (DC 25 Find Trap check or by player description, see below), the thief fails to note that the "grease" is part of a second deadly trap.

When adjudicating this encounter, it is important that the player be explicit on how his or her PC interacts with the door. If possible, have the player stand beside an actual door or wall to demonstrate their actions.

What appears to be grease is instead an improbably-powerful glue distilled from the sap of strange pitcher vines found only in certain temples deep in the jungles of Klesh. Anything touching the door (a staff, dagger, or the thief's hands as they attempt to disable the trap or pick the lock) is im-



# BENEATH THIEVES' HOUSE

## ROUND 1-MAIN MAP





mediately held fast. Objects can only be freed by breaking them—snapping a blade or wrenching off the last foot of a staff. Living body parts can only be freed by cutting them off, inflicting 1d3+2 [4] damage. (If a thief loses the tips of his or her fingers, subsequent skill checks involving manual dexterity suffer a -1d penalty.)

While the sliding mechanism trap for each door can be disabled (DC 10 Disable Trap check), preventing the block from sliding out, there is no way to disable the glue trap. Touching the door, or failing in an attempt to disable the sliding mechanism, triggers the second element: both doors grind out toward the center of the corridor, like great stone pistons. Either door can be triggered by its partner; a single door could be disabled, but then touched, activating the opposite door.

The doors grind slowly together over the course of three rounds. Anything caught between the doors at the end of the third round is crushed flat. Once activated, the doors cannot be halted by physical means (for example, iron spikes or the like—and woe to the champion who attempts to throw his weight at a door to hold it fast), but powerful magics might delay the crushing panels for a round or two. (*A force manipulation* spell check of 24+ delays the walls for 1d3+3 rounds.)

There is nothing to be revealed behind the doors. The intricate locks are facades. Once the doors grind shut, the corridor is entirely blocked off. Any PCs caught behind the doors are out of the tournament and scored as slain.

**Area 1-0 — Paths of Woe:** The maddening, maze-like cellars beneath Thieves' House threaten to confound even the most experienced of delvers. Parties breaking from the bauble's directions risk becoming hopelessly lost in the gloom.

Parties following the bauble's directions will be led, without fail, from area 1-1 to 1-2 to 1-3, and so on. However for those insisting on ignoring the bauble, there is area 1-0:

*As you press on into darkness, Ningauble's Bauble tugs at you and begins to emit a soft keening sound, like the distant sound of metal being torn asunder. The dusty gloom presses in from all sides, as if the Thieves' cellars could swallow you whole.*

Once the PCs pass beyond (or rather, into) area 1-0 there is no need for mapping. The most astute explorers find themselves readily turned around, cross-crossing their own tracks, as hitherto undiscovered passageways, doors, and crawl spaces are revealed. For its part, the bauble ceases to function, leaving the PCs alone in their plight. (If the PCs manage to return from area 1-0, the bauble begins to function again.)

As the PCs proceed into area 1-0, roll 1d4 on the following table. ***This is the party's last chance to turn back without becoming lost.*** If the PCs proceed, roll again to discover what they encounter next, increasing the rolled die by +1d. Continue to increase the die as the PCs proceed. On a roll of 1, the PCs miraculously return back to the initial entrance point (whichever instance of 1-0 that they first entered), but any other roll only sends the PCs deeper into the cellars.

For emphasis: by pointedly ignoring the bauble's directions,

the PCs have exited the tournament. There is no means of escape, save random luck. Characters taking extraordinary measures (marking the floor or walls with chalk or candle wax) may be able to find their way back at the judge's discretion, but are unable to puzzle their way forward through the catacombs.

## LOST IN THE CELLARS

- 1 The PCs miraculously emerge from the cellars, returning to the area 1-0 that they entered from.
- 2 The corridor narrows to a mere 2' in width, then comes to a T-intersection. The PCs can go left or right.
- 3 The passageway descends down a steep, wooden staircase. Every 10' there is an exit to either the right or the left. The base of the stairs ends in a dry cistern.
- 4-5 The passageway opens to a low vault. There are five exits set along the walls.
- 6-8 The passageway ends at a ladder set within a chimney. The PCs can elect to climb up or down.
- 9-11 The passage branches in three directions. By examining the stream of sewage, PCs can discern that one path leads up, and another down, while the third seems roughly level.
- 12-14 The passage descends down a gentle slope and ends in a small crawl space that cuts both left and right.
- 15-18 The narrow passage widens to an ancient roadway that has long been covered over. The cobbled street cuts both left and right.
- 19-23 The passageway ends in a well set with crude, wooden steps. Below, at roughly 10' intervals, small crawlspaces—new passageways—can be seen cut into the wall of the well.
- 24-30 The passage curves to the left, then abruptly ends in a trio of staircases descending to the left, right, and straight ahead.

If the die grows to a d30 and the PCs fail to roll a 1, they are forever lost amid the catacombs and cellars. Read or paraphrase the following:

*The last of your torches flickers and dies. You run your swollen tongue over your cracked and bloodied lips—any water or rum was drunk long ago, and the dry crypts seem to suck the very sweat from your skin.*

*Desperate, you feel your way about the dusty, cobwebbed floor. If only you could find your way back—*

*You freeze. From somewhere in the darkness comes the slithering click of bone on stones. The sounds draw closer. Something dry and warm circles about your ankle, then hauls you violently close. Screams of terror and delight fill the darkness, and then silence.*

Score the PCs as slain.







## THE PROBABILITY OF ESCAPING AREA 1-0

Area 1-0 has specific instructions to judges for simulating becoming lost in the dark, nebulous corridors in the bowels of Thieves' House. Once PCs have ignored the bauble's protestations and proceed into area 1-0, the rolls begin. The judge starts with a d4 but with each progression increases up the dice chain unless a 1 is rolled, which indicates that lost PCs luckily find their way out. If the judge fails to roll a 1 on the d30, then the PCs are forever (as far as the tournament round is concerned) lost. So, given this mechanic, what is the probability that PCs escape area 1-0?

The short answer: 76%. In other words, roughly 3 out of 4 parties will escape.

The long answer: It's clear that the probability to escape on the first roll (a d4) is 1/4. What about the probability to escape by the second roll? We'll apply two rules of probability:

This AND That: multiply probabilities

This OR That: add probabilities

To calculate the probability for escaping on (not by) the second roll, we are requiring that the PCs do not escape on the first roll AND they do escape on the second. The probability to not escape on the first roll is 3/4 (1 - 1/4, the chance of success). The probability to get a 1 on a d5 (the second roll) is 1/5. According to "This AND That" above, we multiply these, so the probability to escape on the second roll is  $3/4 \times 1/5 = 3/20 = 0.15$ .

The probability to escape by the second roll implies that the PCs escape on the first roll OR the second roll. Thus, using the "This OR That" rule, we add the probabilities for escaping on each roll.  $1/4$  (the probability to escape on the first roll) +  $3/20$  (the probability to escape on the second roll) =  $5/20 + 3/20 = 0.4$ .

What's the probability to escape by the third roll (the d6)? It's equal to the probability of escaping on the first roll OR escaping on the second OR escaping on the third:

$$1/4 + (3/4 \times 1/5) + (3/4 \times 4/5 \times 1/6) = 0.5.$$

By the fourth roll?

$$1/4 + (3/4 \times 1/5) + (3/4 \times 4/5 \times 1/6) + (3/4 \times 4/5 \times 5/6 \times 1/7) = 0.57.$$

Following this rationale, the probability to escape area 1-0 (by the d30 roll) is 0.76. If you're a computer programmer and want to calculate this sum, you might write pseudo code that looks like this:

$$\text{roll}(1) = 1/4;$$

$$\text{roll}(2) = 3/4 * 1/5;$$

$$\text{roll}(3) = 3/4 * 4/5 * 1/6;$$

$$\text{roll}(4) = \text{roll}(3) * 5/6 * 1/7;$$

$$\text{roll}(5) = \text{roll}(4) * 6/7 * 1/8;$$

$$\text{roll}(6) = \text{roll}(5) * 7/8 * 1/10;$$

$$\text{roll}(7) = \text{roll}(6) * 9/10 * 1/12;$$

$$\text{roll}(8) = \text{roll}(7) * 11/12 * 1/14;$$

$$\text{roll}(9) = \text{roll}(8) * 13/14 * 1/16;$$

$$\text{roll}(10) = \text{roll}(9) * 15/16 * 1/20;$$

$$\text{roll}(11) = \text{roll}(10) * 19/20 * 1/24;$$

$$\text{roll}(12) = \text{roll}(11) * 23/24 * 1/30;$$

$$\text{Probability} = \text{sum}(\text{roll})$$

**Area 1-1 — Smoke Ghosts & Sentinels:** *This dusty cob-webbed room has a single brown iron door with a strange geometric design of triangles and pips dominating its face, including a message hammered in the metal. Nine skeletal sentinels, each clutching a silver short sword and wearing the rotted garb of an ancient thief, watch the path from the entrance to the door; there are six on one side of the room and three on the opposite. Where each skeleton's heart should be is a floating pulsing sphere of smoky tar; the room is filled with a pungent smoky haze that is fed by the pulsing of each black heart.*

Closer inspection of the door reveals no lock, hinges, etc., although each triangle is a panel which can be depressed.  
**Provide Handout A to the players.**

The goal of the room is to open the door by pressing all of the triangle's panels in the correct order, from low to high. The first time an incorrect triangle is pressed, a smoke ghost forms from a skeleton's "heart" and attacks the PC who made the error. The second time an incorrect triangle is pressed,

two ghosts attack; the third time, three ghosts, etc. PCs may form a protective semi-circle around the guesser; each protector can intercept one ghost (so two protectors intercept the first two ghosts), but surplus ghosts attack the guesser. Each time an error is made, the depressed panels reset, popping back out to their original positions. Players must remember their previous attempts!

The smoke ghosts are immune to non-magical weapons as well as having un-dead traits (see below), which makes them a challenge. However, they are vulnerable to magic ...and silver. Fortunately each of the skeletons is clutching a silver short sword. PCs may try to relieve an inert skeletal sentinel of its weapon by passing a DC 18 Agility check or DC 18 Pick Pocket check (player's choice). If they fail, the skeleton attacks. An attacking skeleton may only be disarmed of its weapon via Mighty Deeds of Arms.

Alternatively, noting the origin of a smoke ghost, PCs may target a skeleton (to get at its smoking heart, or some other



reason, such as preemptively destroying it). If this occurs, the skeleton attacks the violating PC; however, the smoke ghost does not emerge unless someone has incorrectly guessed at the door. Roll initiative! PCs do not get a free peremptory attack (even ranged) on the aware-but-motionless skeletons. Defeating the sentinel extinguishes its heart, destroys the associated ghost, and weakens future smoke ghosts (see stat blocks below). Defeating a ghost in melee does not put it to rest; it can reform on another erroneous attempt to solve the puzzle. The only way to do so is to defeat its associated skeleton, thereby extinguishing the heart. Treat any attacks that specifically target the heart as damage to the skeleton as a whole.

PCs who perform a melee attack on a skeleton are allowed a single Luck check on their first attack (regardless of whether it hits) to hear rattling inside the skeleton's skull. A PC who shatters a defeated skeleton's skull (or an attacking one via a mighty deed) finds an old bone octahedral die inside! This is a major hint, since the door design is the 2D mapping/projection of an 8-sided die. With the die, it should be easy to figure out which panels to depress.

The skeletons are arranged with 6 opposing 3 to help reinforce the puzzlesmith's hint.

Pressing the panels in the correct order opens the door (see area 1-1 map inset for solution). The only other way to bypass

the door is to force it by mundane (DC 22 Strength check) or magical means (such as *knock* with a spell check of 30+). This earns the wrath of all 9 skeletons and their smoke ghosts... but it does solve the puzzle.

**Smoke Ghosts (up to 9):** Init +5; Atk draining touch +4 melee (1d4 [2] Strength damage); AC 14; HD 3d8; hp 10 plus number of intact skeletons (19 hp each if all 9 skeletons remain); MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP smoky corpse (PCs reduced to 0 Strength are vaporized to smoke; recovering the body is impossible), un-dead traits, immune to non-magical weapons (except silver), vulnerable (destroyed if corresponding skeletal sentinel is destroyed), unique crits (see table below); SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +5; AL C.

**Skeletal Sentinels (up to 9):** Init +3; Atk silver short sword +4 melee (1d6+1 [4]) or claw +3 melee (1d4+1 [3]); AC 12; HD 4d8; hp 18 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, half damage from piercing and slashing weapons, skull rattle (Luck check during first melee attack to hear d8 inside), death throes (smoky heart dissipates, destroying associated smoke ghost); SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +4; AL C.

As un-dead, smoke ghosts and skeletal sentinels are immune to critical hits, disease, poison, cold damage, *sleep*, *charm*, and *paralysis* spells, as well as other mental effects.





# CRITICAL HITS FOR SMOKE GHOSTS

Roll 1d4 and subtract victim's Luck modifier

Result	Effect
1 or less	The ghost constricts the victim, who suffers 1d6 [3] hp damage in addition to the Strength drain.
2	The chill of un-death paralyzes the victim, leaving them actionless and helpless for 1d6 [3] rounds.
3	A cloud of smoke envelops the PC's head, causing 1d3 [2] damage at the beginning of each subsequent round for 3 rounds and incurring a -1d penalty to all actions for the duration.
4+	The smoke ghost plunges through the victim's mouth, enters the body, and violently expands, erupting through the pores for 2d8 [9] damage.

**Fleeting Luck:** Each PC is awarded fleeting Luck for the following achievements:

- 5 points for passing the chamber without activating any smoke ghosts.
- 3 points for passing the chamber having activated only 3 or fewer smoke ghosts.
- 1 point for passing the chamber having activated no more than 5 smoke ghosts.

**Area 1-2 — The Doorless Vault:** *You descend a narrow stairwell, the sickly gleam of Ningauble's Bauble guiding your way like the light of some demented moon.*

*The stairs end abruptly, revealing a large chamber beyond. The chamber itself is comprised of polished black stone, its high ceiling lost in shadows cast by the gloom of unnaturally flickering torches set at intervals about the walls. A dry, dead spiciness of a forgotten desert tomb permeates the chamber, its very air humming with a sense of unholy mystery. The floor is carpeted in ancient human remains, bones yellowed and sere under the oppressive march of time. In the center of the chamber rests a short pedestal upon which lies a gem-encrusted skull that gleams eternal as the glittering stars.*

The chamber is the legendary Doorless Vault, a devious prison-vault that houses the Skull Omphal: the enchanted remains of Lankhmar's greatest sorcerer-thief and the PCs' aim.

It is not uncommon that the more prodigious guild sorcerers and master thieves build vaults to protect their remains from covetous treasure hunters, guile cutpurses, and even supernatural beings with dark designs. Offering no portal or lock to bar any visitor, this chamber can easily be entered by simply walking beyond its open threshold. Once within, the cunning design becomes apparent, for the vault resides in another dimension of time and space, and as such offers no means of exit. No door, no stair, no passage leads out of

this prison—only the eternal stone of its solid walls stand in mute testimony to those trapped within. Yet, as it so happens, Omphal wasn't without humor, for he placed within the chamber a stone guardian and riddle that, if answered, allows passage from his prison-tomb.

Should a PC remain upon the stairs, the room beyond appears as normal (companions can be seen within, torch light can be seen flickering upon the walls, etc.). Curiously, no sound can be heard issuing from the room at all (DC 7 Intelligence check to notice). For those within the chamber, all trace of the stairwell has disappeared, a black stone wall now in its place.

Characters who remain upon the stairs are able to witness all that goes on in the chamber beyond, albeit with no sound. These intrepid PCs may even assist those within, as anything that passes beyond the vault's threshold enters the room. This may include items, missile weapons, sound, and even spells. But note: nothing can travel from the prison-vault into the stairwell. Therefore, anything resting upon the threshold of the vault (half in the chamber, half upon the stair) is in essence trapped and can only travel forward into the room.

**Into the Vault:** Once the PCs have entered the chamber and it becomes apparent that the stairway is no longer present, read or paraphrase the following:

*Turning, you realize that all trace of the ancient stair from whence you came has disappeared. Only the eternal stone of the chamber's solid wall stands in its place.*

**Scattered Bones:** Scattered throughout the chamber are the skeletal remains of the guardian's past victims. Closer inspection (DC 8 Intelligence check to spot) reveals many to have been splintered and smashed as if struck by great bashing blows.

**Unnatural Torches:** Ringed with smoky haloes, ten unnatural torches are set about the walls that burn with a poisonous gleam, forever casting all in its unholy light. Should a single torch be removed from its wall sconce, all ten torches are immediately extinguished, throwing the room into complete darkness. PCs who are forced to fight in darkness are considered blinded and suffer a -2 penalty to all attack rolls. Consequently, attacks against a blinded PC gain a +2 bonus. If all torches are returned to their sconces, they will once again burn bright.

**The Guardian Revealed:** Approaching within 10' of the Skull Omphal reveals the vault guardian. Disturbing the skull from the stairwell, such as by firing an arrow or using a spell to dislodge it, does not trigger the guardian; it is activated only if a PC comes within 10' of the skull.

*A voice, listless and horribly dead, calls out from beyond the void. "Dare ye disturb the resting place of Omphal the Cunning, the greatest Master Thief of all Lankhmar? Gaze now upon the four walls of your prison and despair."*

*With the roaring sound of a crumbling iceberg, a portion of the chamber wall detaches itself, revealing a great stone automaton over four times as tall as a man. With great lumbering steps the*



## A THIEF, A WIZARD, AND 25 LIONS WALK INTO A DUNGEON...

My first game of Round 1 was certainly memorable. Running a team tournament is a chaotic affair under normal circumstances, and this year, for the first time we had ten simultaneous tables, requiring a master feat of choreography and last-minute adjustments, all taking place in the carnival atmosphere of Gen Con. Harley, our pit boss, did yeoman's work accounting for the empty chairs and the needs of the judges leading up to the official ringing of the gong.

With mere minutes to spare, my table was one of the last teams seated. A group of four players of mixed DCC experience who, when abruptly summoned to declare their team name, gave themselves the off-the-cuff moniker "Dragon Bait". With precious minutes ticking away, they decided to forgo filling the fifth empty spot at the table and dove into the catacombs underneath the Thieves' Guild with a thief and two warriors, rounded out by a wizard for good measure.

Team Dragon Bait quickly breezed through the first few false encounters, proving themselves able players and correctly intuiting that following the bauble would lead them directly to their objective. However, upon reaching the first puzzle and its menacing tableaux of skeletal warrior-thieves with pulsing smoke-filled hearts, they hesitated at the threshold, unsure if a trap lay for those who would disturb the rest of those entombed within. The wizard quickly came up with an easy solution: sum-

moning an animal to send into the chamber before risking their own lives.

Now, in DCC, it is not unusual for a routine roll to change the dynamic of the table or encounter; after all, a critical hit can fell an impossible-seeming foe in one blow and the right Luck check might be the difference between a rolled-over corpse and a living adventurer, but when the wizard rolled a natural 20 on his spell check, there was the briefest of pauses while the implications sank in around the table. Then, in the spirit of "go for it," the party quickly tossed in all their fleeting Luck to get the highest result: summoning 100 HD of mundane animals under the caster's complete control!

Deciding to call forth an entire pride of lions, I swiftly sketched out stats while the rest of the party leapt in to assist—creating a stat sheet and even giving the lions names—and they proceeded to roll through the rest of Round 1 riding (sometimes literally!) their lion army. Newly rechristened as team Lion Pride, they used the host of fur and talons with surgical precision to search out rooms, trigger traps, and, when needed, power through monsters with brute force.

While team Lion Pride was not able to capitalize on their luck, skill, and wits to reach the next round, it was an example of how fun and dynamic even a single roll of the dice can be, and one of the highlights of the tournament.

*stone guardian lurches towards you, the very ground trembling beneath your feet.*

The stone guardian will attack anyone within the chamber that does not correctly answer its riddle. The riddle is comprised of four lines. With a thunderous voice that echoes throughout the chamber, the guardian will speak the first line of the riddle while attacking. If the riddle is not answered correctly, the guardian will attack the following round while roaring the first and second line of the riddle. This pattern continues until the entire riddle has been recited (4 rounds). With each new line of the riddle revealed, the guardian grows in strength (see below), gaining an additional attack or power. Following the fourth round, the guardian will continue to recite the entire riddle each round while attacking; this continues until the riddle is correctly answered or the guardian is destroyed. Judges should refer to the below timeline and action sequence for the vault guardian's assault.

Finally, for each wrong guess called out by a player, the guardian receives a free bite attack against that player's PC. This effectively interrupts the round; the guardian immediately attacks the PC following the player's failed guess.

For purposes of adjudication, the players are allowed to consult with each other. (Restrict this to only those players whose PCs are inside the chamber—keep in mind that PCs outside the chamber cannot hear the guardian's riddle.) Be-

fore accepting a guess, check with the player to confirm their intention: "Are you shouting that out? Is that your guess?"

**Vault Guardian:** Init always first; Atk special (see timeline below); AC 18; HD 12d10; hp 80; MV 60'; Act 1d20 or 2d20 (see timeline); SP critical threat range 18-20, see invisible, immune to critical hits and mind-affecting spells; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +8; AL N.

The guardian cannot be turned. For purposes of *ray of enfeeblement* and similar spells, it has a Strength of 30. The guardian scores a critical hit on any natural attack roll of 18-20. The target is struck with such force as to send it hurling through the air 3d30' [45'] and crash down for an additional 1d10 [6] points of damage. The victim is considered knocked prone and must spend their next move action to stand.

The guardian's attacks vary by round, as listed below.

### Combat Timeline

- **Round 1:** Atk bite +6 melee (1d10 [6]); Act 1d20. Read the following:

*With a thunderous voice that echoes wildly throughout the chamber, the stone guardian bellows: "I'm often shut, but I'm not a mouth. What am I?" A giant stone mouth opens within the guardian's head, allowing a view of gnashing stone molars the size of mortared blocks.*



- **Round 2:** Atk bite +6 melee (1d10 [6]) and sweeping bash +8 melee (2d8 [9], reach 15'); Act 2d20; SP sweeping bash (strikes multiple targets within 15' range).

*The guardian wildly sweeps its massive tree-sized arms like great stone clubs, striking multiple targets at once. In the same thunderous voice, it bellows: "I'm often shut, but I'm not a mouth. Sometimes I break, but I'm not a heart. What am I?"*

- **Round 3:** Atk bite +6 melee (1d10 [6]) and sweeping bash +8 melee (2d8 [9], reach 15'); Act 2d20; SP sweeping bash (strikes multiple targets within 15' range), half damage from non-magical weapons.

*The guardian continues its roaring riddle: "I'm often shut, but I'm not a mouth. Sometimes I break, but I'm not a heart. When I am pained, I do not feel it. What am I?" With the sound of grating stone, the guardian's body hardens further.*

- **Round 4:** Atk bite +6 melee (1d10 [6]) and sweeping bash +8 melee (2d8 [9], reach 15'); Act 2d20; SP sweeping bash (strikes multiple targets within 15' range), half damage from non-magical weapons, spell rebounding (spells targeting the guardian have no effect and rebound back upon the caster).

*The thunderous voice continues to echo wildly throughout the chamber: "I'm often shut, but I'm not a mouth. Sometimes I break, but I'm not a heart. When I am pained, I do not feel it. When I am stained, I'm not unclean. What am I?" With the*

*lonesome howl of abyssal winds, the guardian begins to radiate a dull smoky aura that envelopes it like a dread shroud.*

- **Round 5+:** The guardian continues its verbal and physical assault with all powers as in Round 4 until destroyed or the riddle is correctly answered.

**Answering the riddle:** Of course, the answer to the riddle is "a window". Once the correct answer is spoken or the guardian defeated, it retreats into the wall from whence it came, and a large stained glass window forms in its place. Beyond the window lies freedom...and the next part of the tournament.

**The Skull Omphal:** The stone guardian does not attack anyone in possession of the Skull Omphal for fear of destroying the very object it was created to protect. Although the guardian will not attack the possessor of the skull, it will also not retreat into the wall until every trespasser in the chamber is dead or the riddle is correctly answered.

**Judge's note:** Should a PC get the crazy idea to cast the skull into the guardian's open maw, the guardian immediately crumbles and the stained glass window appears. To achieve such a feat, a PC must either perform a successful mighty deed or achieve an attack roll of 20+ when throwing the skull. The skull is not damaged in the attempt.

**Fleeting Luck:** Each PC is awarded fleeting Luck as follows:

- 4 points for solving the riddle in round 1.



- 3 points for solving the riddle in round 2.
- 2 points for solving the riddle in round 3.
- 1 point for solving the riddle in round 4 or beyond.
- 2 additional points of fleeting Luck are awarded to the PC who thinks to seize the Skull Omphal during combat.

**Area 1-3 — A Gift from Mog:** *This pentagonal chamber seems like an old storage room with piles of junk and strange bone shapes, though some valuables are among them, including gems that sparkle within the rubbish. Each of the four piles gently slopes up 20' to a door along the wall. All of the piles and floor are covered in spider webs which strangely reflect light sources. Webs also extend up along the sloped walls and the 40'-high ceiling, which holds a glowing green sphere that casts a dim viridian illumination throughout.*

Each of the four junk piles contains a large, deformed, un-dead, gem-eyed skelespider. When either a pile or the ceiling's green orb is disturbed, the 8-legged horrors all burst from their piles and attack the party. Their exits disperse their respective piles, so that PCs must climb the webbing to each exit 20' up the wall (DC 10 Climb Sheer Surfaces check, armor check penalties apply).

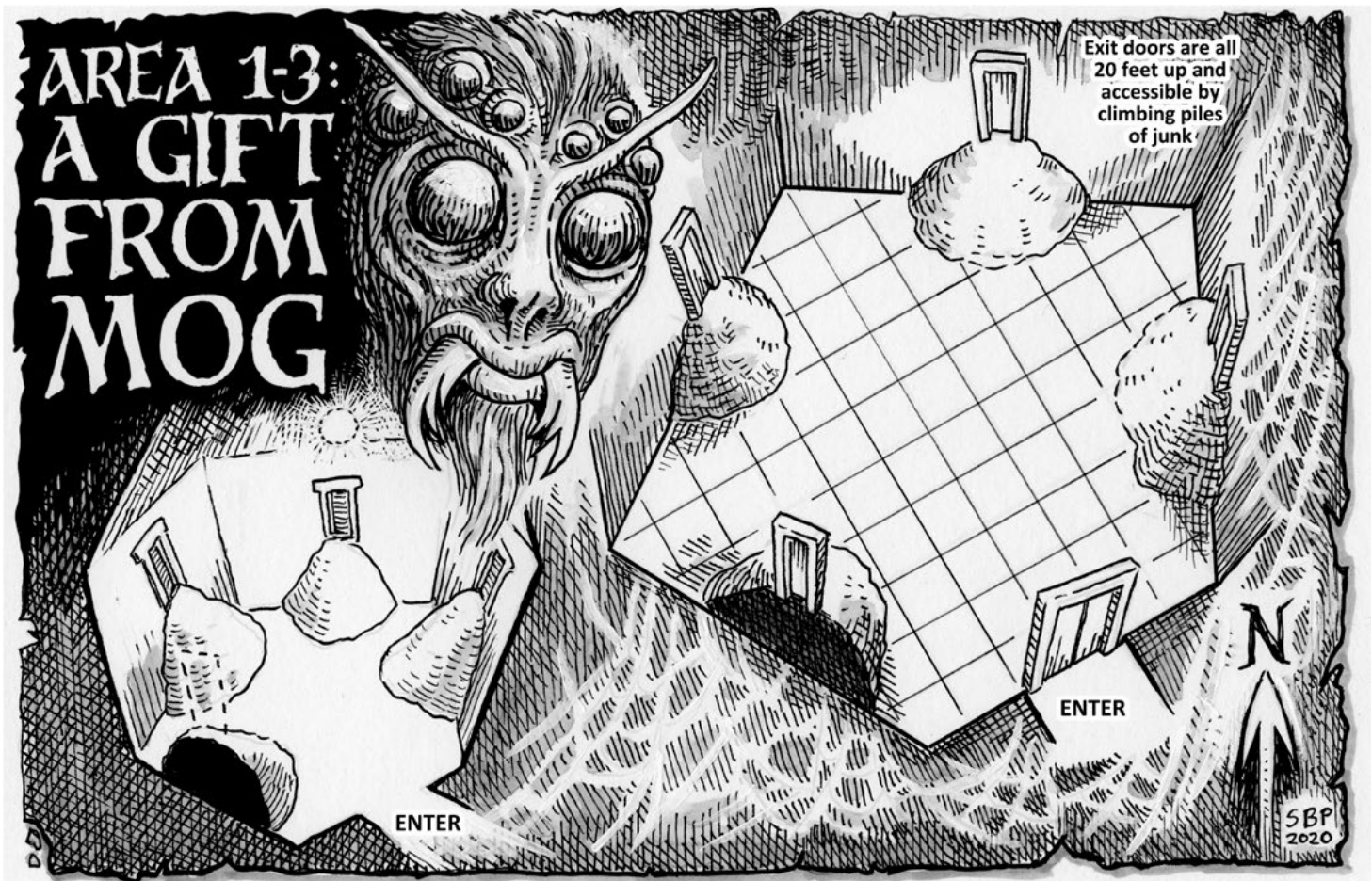
The creatures are fierce combatants with significant defenses bolstered by their un-dead traits. Their ability to electrify webbing is particularly dangerous against web-climbers (see stat block). However, they all have the same vulnerability:

their necrotic essence is linked to the ceiling's glowing green sphere.

The orb is made of a hard alien material that powers the un-dead. Any damage the orb suffers is also transmitted to each skelespider. Moreover, it has the same number of hit points (27) as the toughest beast. Thus, by the time the globe is destroyed, all of the skelespiders will have been destroyed. Although this is the most efficient way to destroy the creatures, it has an associated risk: the mysterious sphere instantaneously mimics any incoming magical attack and directs it at the attacker. A caster who inflicts spell damage upon the artifact takes the same amount of damage from the orb's retaliation (see stats below), although a saving throw is granted if applicable.

If a PC climbs the metallic-webbed walls to reach the ceiling (DC 10 Climb Sheer Surfaces check; armor check penalties apply), they discover that the glowing green sphere is suspended by a hooked chain and eyelet. The orb may easily be removed and takes 1d6 damage per 10' falling damage if released (4d6 if released from the ceiling; let the player roll this damage). If a PC forcibly throws the orb rather than drops it, allow an extra 1d6 of damage. The orb shatters if all skelespiders are destroyed.

PCs searching the room find an ancient, forgotten scroll that offers a clue to a puzzle found in the third and final round of the tournament (give the players **Handout B**).



**Glowing Green Orb:** Init none; Atk none; AC 17; hp 27; MV 0'; SP skele spiders suffer any damage the orb suffers, magical retaliation (instantly mimics any harmful spell back onto the caster for the same amount of damage with the same spell check result), immune to critical hits, immune to mental effects, orb shatters when all skele spiders are destroyed; SV N/A; AL N/A.

**Skele spiders (4):** Init +3; Atk eye-lightning +5 ranged (1d10 [6], targets in metal armor take +2 damage, range 60') or electrify webbing (range 60', special); AC 14; HD 4d8; hp 27, 20, 17, 14; MV 40' or climb 40'; Act 1d20; SP electrify webbing (eye-lightning attack on metallic webbing, all within 15' radius of target must make DC 16 Ref save or suffer 1d6 [4] shock damage; web climbers who take damage must pass a DC 16 Strength check or fall), vulnerable to sphere damage (see above), un-dead traits, half damage from piercing and slashing weapons, immune to lightning/shock damage, unique crits (see table below); SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +4; AL C.

As un-dead, skele spiders are immune to critical hits, disease, poison, cold damage, *sleep*, *charm*, and *paralysis* spells, as well as other mental effects.

## CRITICAL HITS FOR SKELESPIDERS

Roll 1d4 and subtract victim's Luck modifier

Result	Effect
1 or less	PC is webbed with sticky metallic fibers for 1 turn or until removed with a DC 20 Strength check; suffers -1d to all actions and double damage from subsequent electrical/shock attacks.
2	Skele spider breathes a ray of numbness, causing 1d6 [4] damage in addition to eye-lightning.
3	PC is briefly stunned, granting the skele spider an immediate follow-up attack with +1d to hit.
4+	Skele spider leaps in for a necrotic bite, inflicting 2d4 [5] points of temporary Stamina damage, then leaps back to its original position. PCs reduced to 0 Stamina by this attack are killed with no chance to recover the body.

**Exiting area 1-3:** Unlike previous encounters, there are two passageways out of the chamber that can lead to the PCs' destination (area 1-7). It is up to the PCs to choose their preferred passage—the bauble indicates both are equally viable exits.

- **West exit (to area 1-4):** Characters inspecting note the faintest sheen of frost coating the door along with an inscription (see below). The air is cooler here, and an otherworldly chill emanates from beyond the door.
- **North exit (to area 1-5):** The smells of strange herbs and exotic spices are pungent here; wizards and thieves immediately recognize the herbs as key components of in-

terrering (and preserving) the dead.

- **East and Southwest exits:** Both passageways take the PCs to area 1-0. The bauble refuses to guide the PCs in these directions, actively pulling them back to the chamber.
- **Southeast exit:** The PCs' entrance; the bauble refuses to guide the PCs this direction.

**Area 1-4 — Un-dead Mess:** *An unnatural chill radiates from the doorway, in stark contrast to the hot tunnels you and your companions have travelled thus far.*

The door is cold to the touch, and there is a thin coating of frost on the handle and around edges of the surrounding walls and floor. The entrance is barred from the PCs' side, but not trapped. Written on the door in High Lankhmarese, Ilthmarish, and Old Ghoulish is the following text: *Beware those beyond. This is the final resting place of those cursed by the Ice Demon.*

As the door is opened, the PCs are assaulted with a blast of cold air. Although it doesn't affect them physically, the cold is unnerving given the temperatures in the rest of the catacombs. Directly across the octagonal room is another door, presumably an exit to another section of the vault. The exit is also barred from the opposite side. Opening the door requires a DC 22 Strength check (warriors may include their deed die in the check), a successful casting of *knock*, or five minutes of smashing. Creative players may come up with other solutions, but those may take longer than either the brute force or magical approaches above.

Strewn throughout the room are ten human corpses. It is unclear whether the dead were stored here or the living were left here to die. The bodies show few signs of decomposition, but their dry skin is stretched tight over their mostly intact bodies. The bodies are mottled with blue and black patches, showing signs of frostbite. As the PCs enter the room, the ice ghouls start to stir and lurch towards the party, frosty bel-lows emanating from their mouths as they move.

**Ice Ghouls (10):** Init: +1; Atk claw +3 melee (1d3 [2] plus 1d3 [1] cold); AC 12; HD 2d6; hp 7 each; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP un-dead traits, double damage from fire/heat attacks, death throes (absorption, see below); SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

As un-dead, ice ghouls are immune to critical hits, disease, poison, cold damage, *sleep*, *charm*, and *paralysis* spells, as well as other mental effects.

When an ice ghoul is reduced to zero hit points, their remains are absorbed into the stone floor. Any attempts made by the PCs to stop the absorption will fail, as the felled bodies crum-ble to dust on contact. After five ice ghouls are slain, PCs will notice a rumbling emanating from the floor. On the follow-ing round, a great skeletal ice wyrm bursts from the floor and join the fray on its initiative.

The nearly 10'-tall skeletal ice wyrm is constructed of the frost-covered bones of the ice ghouls, with blue flame illu-minating the eyes of its large reptilian skull. The initial attack





of the wyrm will target a random PC, who must make a DC 12 Reflex save as the creature bursts from the ground below him or be knocked prone prior to the attack.

**Skeletal Ice Wyrms:** Init: +4; Atk claw +8 melee (1d8 [4]) or bite +8 melee (1d12 [6]); AC 17; HD 5d12; hp 35 (plus 7 for each additional ice ghoul killed); Act 3d20; SP un-dead traits, breath attack 2/day (10'-wide x 20'-long cone of cold, damage equal to wyrm's current hit points, DC 15 Fort save for half), double damage from fire/heat attacks; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +5; AL C.

As un-dead, the skeletal ice wyrm is immune to critical hits, disease, poison, cold damage, *sleep*, *charm*, and *paralysis* spells, as well as other mental effects. The skeletal ice wyrm does not use its breath attack in the first two rounds of combat as it is still getting its bearings.

If the PCs move directly through the room and kill less than five of the ice ghouls, the wyrm does not materialize. The wyrm has hit points equal to the total hit points of the number of slain ice ghouls (35 initially), so killing the remaining ghouls after the wyrm appears increases its current and total hit points by 7 hit points per ghoul dispatched. Once the wyrm is dead, killing additional ghouls does not respawn the wyrm.

The ice ghouls are unable to follow the party outside the room and erupt into melting icy crystals upon exiting. The ice wyrm will pursue the party, but is greatly weakened, losing 6 hp/round outside the room as its body begins to melt.

**Fleeting Luck:** Each PC is awarded fleeting Luck as follows:

- 2 points for passing the chamber without activating the ice wyrm.

#### **Area 1-5 — Trapped Hallway/Bones of the Guild Masters:**

*Before you stretches a narrow hallway, 5' wide and 10' tall, ancient and unused. Dust and cobwebs cover every inch of the worked stone. The hallway continues beyond your light. The air smells of wet stone and must. 20' to your left, cracked plaster reveals what looks to be a hidden door, set with a rusted chain and padlock.*

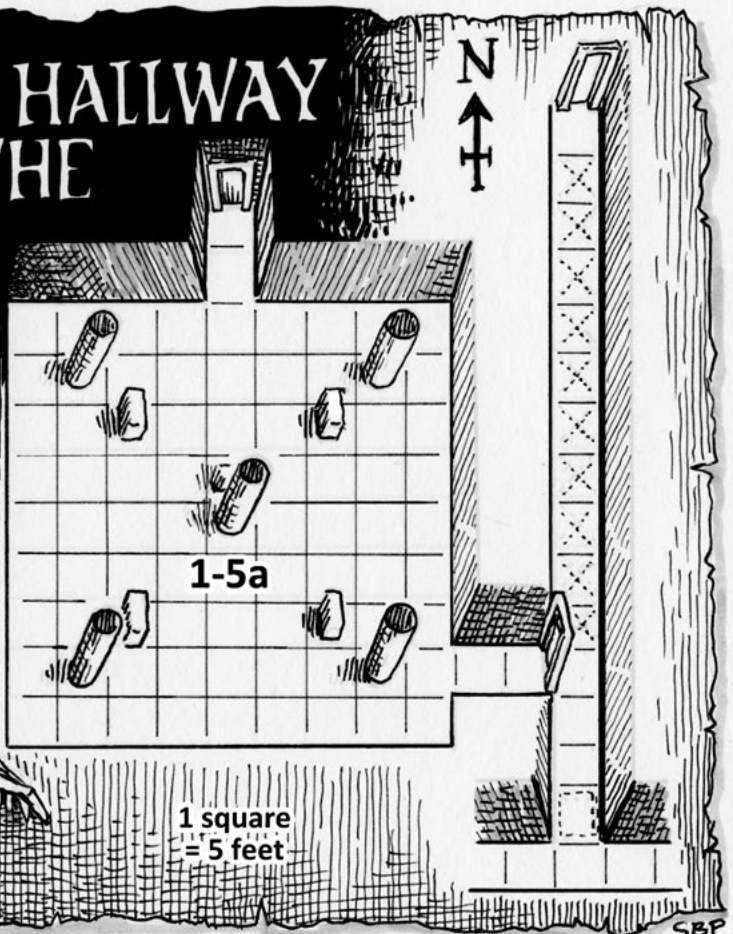
The door was hastily covered by a bad plaster job, which has crumbled and exposed the once-hidden portal. The lock can easily be picked with a DC 10 Pick Lock check, smashed with a successful mighty deed against AC 10, or by inflicting 10 points of damage with a bludgeoning or slashing weapon.

Anyone inspecting the floor for traps or tracks (DC 10 Find Trap or Intelligence check) notices groove marks in the floor starting about 10' into the hall as if something large had been dragged through. If the Find Trap result is 20+, the thief also notices that the stone tile covering the first 5' of the hall is surrounded by a seam and is lower than the rest of the floor by a quarter inch. About 5' into the hall, the stone set in the ceiling has a similar seam that surrounds a 5'-square section.

Any PC stepping onto the depressed tile activates the trap. Once the last person steps off the tile and moves into the hallway, the trap is set off:

*You hear the distant vibration of stone grating against stone, fol-*

# AREA 1-5: TRAPPED HALLWAY AND THE BONES OF THE GUILDMASTERS



lowed by the sounds of rushing water. Before you can react, the hallway in front of you explodes into a swarm of blades whirring and stabbing into the passage, covering nearly every inch of space. SMASH! Behind you, a monolithic stone plummets from the ceiling, filling the hallway and blocking your retreat. It begins to slowly creep toward you, threatening to push you into the blades!

Any PC unlucky enough to be under the stone block as it falls must pass a DC 10 Reflex save (including any penalties for armor) or suffer 2d12 [12] damage as they dive to safety. Any character that is reduced to 0 hit points from failing this save is crushed under the heavy stone with no chance for recovery. If the party is split, any PCs behind the block will have to go through the concealed door to area 1-5a and deal with the challenges in the crypt on their own.

The stone moves forward 5' at the start of each round, pulled by hydraulically-powered hooks that spring from the wall behind the stone. If ignored, the block will eventually push the PCs into the blades, and continue until reaching the end of the passage. The block can be impeded by a successful DC 20 Disable Trap check. This is only a temporary solution, as the block will eventually destroy or shake loose whatever is impeding it, freeing itself in 1d3 [2] rounds. Warriors can attempt to brace themselves against the block by making a DC 20 Strength check and including their deed die. Just like an attack, the deed die needs to show 3+ for this maneuver to be successful, and the PC will need to make a new check every round at the start of their turn to continue bracing the block. Failure means the block begins its movement again on the

following round. **If multiple characters are helping**, take the highest roll, adding all Strength modifiers to the roll. Because this is a feat of derring-do, the deed die still needs to be 3+, regardless of the total Strength check. A stopped block reduces the DC to 10 for a Disable Trap check to temporarily halt it.

The blade trap starts 25' into the hallway and extends an additional 50'. Upon entering the trapped space, and every round thereafter at the start of their turn, PCs are attacked by the whirring blades:

**Trapped Hallway:** Init always first; Atk whirring blades +5 melee (3d6 [9] plus pinning); AC 20; Act 1d20, +1d20 each time an attack misses; SP pinning (victim must make DC 15 Ref save or be pinned with movement reduced by half); SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will N/A; AL N.

The blades' action die starts at 1d20. For every attack that does not hit the target, they gain momentum and the number of action dice goes up by one (2d20 after the first failed attack, 3d20 after the second miss, etc). Once the blades hit, their action die resets to 1d20 until they build up speed again. PCs struck by the blades must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid being pinned (armor check penalties apply). Failing the save reduces their movement by half for the next round as they fight their way free.

The trap can be dealt with several ways:

- Warriors can target the blades with a mighty deed. Each





successful deed destroys 10' of blades. The blades' speed makes it difficult to land a hit (AC 20).

- Thieves may attempt to disable the trap by jamming objects into the mechanism. Each successful DC 20 Disable Trap check will disable 10' of whirling blades.
- Clever PCs can attempt to time the blades before running through. A DC 20 Intelligence check allows a character to move through the blades, anticipating their movement. Blade attacks against that character are made with 1d16.

**Area 1-5a — The Crypts** *The short corridor behind the concealed door opens into a large room, its floors submerged below an inch of still, fetid water. A warm breeze originates from somewhere within, carrying with it an aroma of spices. Five large columns, slick with algae, rise up to support the vaulted ceiling. By each column lies a marble funerary altar; upon each rests a jewel-encrusted skeleton. At the sound of your entry, the skeletons rise to greet you.*

The bones of the guild masters induce a supernatural dread that chills PCs to their core: at the start of the encounter each character must make a DC 10 Will save or see his or her action dice reduced by two steps (e.g., a d20 action die is reduced to a d14). Each PC can attempt the save anew each round; once a character musters the courage, that PC isn't affected by the dread again.

**Bones of the Guild Masters (5):** Init +0; Atk claws +2 (1d3 [2] plus strangulation); AC 10; HD 3d7+3; hp 16 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP strangulation (1d5 [3] temporary Stamina damage, DC 15 Fort save negates, damage ends after escaping chamber), supernatural dread (reduce PCs' action dice by -2d, DC 10 Will save negates), un-dead traits, supernatural vision 60'; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +6; AL N.

As un-dead, the bones of the guild masters are immune to critical hits, disease, poison, cold damage, *sleep*, *charm*, and *paralysis* spells, as well as other mental effects.

The five guild masters mercilessly attack the PCs by strangling their targets. On a successful attack, the strangulation also inflicts 1d5 [3] points of Stamina damage. A PC reduced to 0 Stamina in this way is irrevocably slain. The Stamina damage ends when a PC escapes the encounter. The un-dead horrors will pursue the PCs into the trapped hallway if the way is clear, but they will not pursue into the next room.

The door barring escape from the crypt is made of stone, and is locked, with five keyholes. Each un-dead horror wears a matching stone key on a strip of leather about its neck—a fact that becomes apparent to any PC engaged in melee combat. Picking each lock requires a separate DC 12 Pick Lock check.

**Fleeting Luck:** Each PC is awarded fleeting Luck as follows:

- 1 point for avoiding the crypt (area 1-5a).

**Area 1-6 — The Thieves' Road and the Telekinetic Sponge:** *This cubic room is 40' long with smooth stone walls. An iron door is opposite the entrance. The floor is moist and spongy, although coated with a layer of dust. The room smells like pitch or tar. Hanging high up on the ceiling, six braziers burn with silent blue arcane flames, giving the room a dim cerulean glow and lighting the path*

*from the entrance to the exit.*

**The goal:** Outsmart a giant sponge that makes up the room's floor and get to the unlocked exit door on the other side—while avoiding being crushed, cooked, or both.

The spongy floor is saturated with some type of oil, which is readily apparent once stepped on. However, it is also a fireproof sentient sponge-like creature that telekinetically controls the walls (the oil is a bodily fluid it exudes). For every 5' it feels man-sized pressure progress from the room's entrance to the door, it moves the left and right walls toward the center. So, if someone enters 20' into the room, the walls each move 20' toward the center. Since the room is a 40' cube, everything between the walls is crushed. PCs must find another way. Moving laterally within the room does not cause the sponge to activate the walls.

Note that once the sponge has moved the walls, it will not retract them for 1 hour. If one enters 5' into the room, leaves, then immediately re-enters 5', the walls will have been moved 10' (5' for each entrance).

PCs crushed by the walls are mashed into such a pulp that recovering the body is not possible.

## SOLUTION 1: CLIMBING THE WALLS

The intended route is the "Thieves' Road." Astute PCs notice that the walls closing in are only 30' tall, so there is 10' clearance between the top of the walls and the ceiling. One must climb the very smooth walls (DC 18 Climb Sheer Surfaces check; armor penalties apply) to make it to the top. Those who fail their check fall 20' to the spongy surface take 2d5 [6] points of damage, become soaked in the sponge's oil, and provoke the sponge to tip the braziers (see below).

There are risks, however, even if the climb check is successful. A climber notices that near the top of the wall is a groove extending along its face, 2' down from its edge. A DC 15 Find Trap check reveals that it could guide a blade, but none seems to be present. The top side of the wall has a 1'-wide, 30'-long pressure plate extending from its edge (DC 15 Find Trap check once atop the wall; DC 25 if climbing the wall). As soon as a PC grabs the top edge, a blade extends from the wall's groove near the exit and races toward the PC, who must pass a DC 13 Reflex save (armor check penalty applies) to pull herself to the top before the blade cuts her down. The blade can also cut a rope suspending a PC if the rope's tension presses down the plate or the PC holding the rope braces too close to the edge. The pressure plates cannot be permanently disarmed but can be avoided by clever play. The plate rearms once pressure is released, so if one maintains pressure on a plate after triggering it, it is temporarily disarmed.

Once one surmounts the wall, they can simply walk along the top to the other side of the room and climb back down to the door. Note that the pressure plate stops 10' before the exit.

If the sponge suffers a strong impact (such as from someone falling), it telekinetically tips the braziers on the ceiling, spill-





ing the arcane blue flame onto itself and the PCs, igniting all who are on the floor for 2d6 [7] fire damage. Those who are soaked in the sponge's oil (e.g., from a fall) take an additional 1d6 [4] points of damage. Burning PCs must pass a DC 15 Reflex save each subsequent round or take 1d4 [3] damage. If PCs exit the oily room to extinguish themselves, they may use a d30 for their Reflex save. Burning stops after the first save.

The sponge naturally secretes more oil after 1 round, so burning it away permanently is not an option.

## SOLUTION 2: REDUCING THE PRESSURE

A PC who crawls flat along the floor may not create enough pressure to disturb the sponge. PCs crawling in this fashion may only move 10' per round, regardless of their normal movement rate. At the end of a round's movement, the PC must pass a Luck check (d20 less than or equal to Luck score) in order to not disturb the sponge. If the check is failed, then the sponge compresses the walls 5'. Walking 10' would cause the walls to compress 10', but the sponge appreciates clever play—even if the dice don't!

Of course, spellcasters can make this easier. Magic allows numerous solutions: some type of flight or levitation to get across the room (though the sponge will attempt to counter such magic; see solution 4 below); using *force manipulation* to create a long plate of force that can be walked on, or even a floating platform to levitate PCs across; casting a reversed

*enlarge* spell to shrink PCs to make them weigh less (spell check of 20+ makes a PC light enough); etc.

## SOLUTION 3: ATTACKING THE SPONGE

PCs may somehow discern or guess that the sponge is sentient and try to kill it. In this case, it immediately tips the braziers (if it hasn't already; see above), igniting itself and oil-soaked PCs. It then telekinetically rips the six empty braziers from the ceiling and uses them as flying weapons. During combat, it gradually closes the walls, crushing the PCs on its turn in the 4th round of melee, regardless of the walls' starting position.

*Judge's note:* Once combat begins, PCs may advance further into the room without triggering the wall to close in 5' increments as a result of the sponge reacting to pressure.

## SOLUTION 4: FLIGHT

PCs might attempt to avoid the sponge altogether through flight. However, the telekinetic sponge is...telekinetic. Treat its mental powers as an attempt to counterspell any casters (or their allies) flying through the chamber. This is a simple spell duel: on a successful check (higher than the PC's spell check) the sponge ends the spell, grounding the PCs. On a failed counterspell attempt, the spell functions as intended. There is no chance of phlogiston disturbance, additional damage, or other spell-related hazards.

The sponge determines how many of its action dice (mental

energy) to allot to the counterspell attempt (up to 6d20 if not attacking with any of the braziers in the same round). The sponge can attempt to counterspell each round it has available action dice.

*Example:* Myrr casts *levitate* with a spell check of 19. The sponge hurls a single brazier, using 1d20 action die to attack, and attempts to counterspell with its remaining 5d20 action dice. The sponge rolls a total of 35, besting Myrr and ending the spell. However, as per spell duels, Myrr's spell is not lost—only ended. The following round, Myrr attempts *levitate* once more, burning Luck for a result of 34. The sponge attempts to counter with 3d20 action dice (saving 3d20 to attack with braziers) and rolls a total of 30. Myrr wins the spell duel, and the spell functions as described. However, the following round, the sponge attempts to counter Myrr again, and so on.

Note that countering a spell in this manner does not automatically trigger combat with the sponge, though PCs' subsequent actions could cause the sponge to react as if it is being attacked (as per Solution 3 above).

**Telekinetic Sponge:** Init +3; Atk flying brazier +4 melee (1d6 [4]) or counterspell (special); AC 13; HD 8d12; hp 52; MV 0'; Act 6d20 (one attack per brazier); SP wall crush (on its turn in the 4th round of melee, the sponge crushes all within the room), counterspell (may use a number of action dice to negate spells; see above), unique crits (see table below), immune to fire, uses d30 to save vs. spells; SV Fort +8, Ref -4, Will +8; AL N.

## CRITICAL HITS FOR TELEKINETIC SPONGE

Roll 1d4 and subtract victim's Luck modifier

Result	Effect
1 or less	Brazier strikes PC's head for 1d8 [5] additional damage. PC must pass DC 10 Fort save or fall unconscious for 1d6 [3] rounds.
2	In addition to suffering the brazier's normal damage, the PC must pass a DC 20 Strength check or the sponge telekinetically rips a weapon from the PC's hand and strikes with it for 1d12 [7] damage, then flings the weapon on the top of the wall. If the target has no weapon, the sponge tries to rip a weapon from the nearest PC.
3	In addition to suffering the brazier's normal damage, the PC is telekinetically slammed into the wall for 1d16 [9] damage.
4+	In addition to suffering the brazier's normal damage, the PC is telekinetically lifted to the ceiling and dropped. The PC takes 4d5 [12] damage.

## YOUR TYPICAL TELEKINETIC SPONGE

The DCC rulebook has one of its many nuggets of wisdom on p. 378, where it says, "The less the players are able to predict about the specifics of an encounter...the more exciting the encounters will be." Round 1 contains an "exciting" encounter that includes a creature which killed (or dropped to 0 hp) 44 PCs, more than any other beast in the tournament. The rub? Many of those poor souls didn't know what the creature was they were fighting. It was just your typical telekinetic sponge.

Sponges are fascinating creatures, and even as recently as 1980 there was still controversy as to whether they were creatures! Nonetheless, before the explosion of animal diversity that occurred over 500 million years ago, there were spongelike, jellylike, and worm-like animals. In fact, sponges are a sister group to all other multicellular animals; in other words, they were the first branch off the family tree stemming from all animals' common ancestor.

How do we make something so ubiquitous and benign into something so mysterious and deadly? First, we give it an unexpected ability: telekinesis. Sponges are over 500 million years old—shouldn't they be telekinetic?! Second, we hide it in plain sight. In the tournament, it is the entire floor of a room. Third, we give it a dangerous red herring, such that folks might not suspect it: oil secretion. Since there's oil involved, let's make it resistant to flame. Hmm, where could this be going?

As players enter area 1-6, they notice the floor is spongy and oily, and the walls move toward each other the farther the PCs enter. It's clear the party will be squashed if they progress to the room's center. The common assumption is that it's a mechanic trap rather than a large animal feeling PCs on it and telekinetically moving the walls. Many players assumed that the floor was spongy to contain the oil (dangerous red herring) rather than that the floor was producing the oil. A hint came if players "attacked" the sponge, which most often occurred by an incompetent wall climber falling onto it, compressing it, and getting soaked in oil. In this case, the flaming braziers hanging from the ceiling tipped over (telekinetically flipped by the fire-resistant sponge) to ignite the poor victim, along with anyone else on the "floor". Another means to get the sponge's attention was to try to levitate over it, then the offending caster would note a consciousness countering their spell. Most PCs thought they were fighting some kind of invisible creature manipulating the braziers, or some kind of elaborate mechanomagical trap. While there was an honest-to-goodness, pressure-plate blade trap, that wasn't the thing that killed folks. It was just your typical telekinetic sponge.





**Area 1-7 — Escape!** *The bauble directs you up a narrow wooden staircase that ends before a stained wooden trapdoor. The sound of raucous laughter and smell of roasting meat drift down from above.*

The trap door opens into one of the Thieves' House dining halls. If the PCs peek over the lip of the trapdoor, read or paraphrase the following:

*You peer into a smoky hall, filled with unkempt and dirty men dining at long tables. A mountain of a man in a filthy apron spoons ladlefuls of greasy soup for the blackguards. A trio of skinny youths, their drawn faces marked by pox, follow after him, dragging the heavy cauldron of stew and a basket of moldy bread.*

*Across the hall, against the far wall, you see a narrow window opening out over an alleyway. The bauble tugs you gently towards the open air and freedom!*

The narrow window opens out onto a low-roofed alley behind Thieves' House. All that stands between the party and freedom are a couple dozen thieves.

The hall is loud, chaotic, and poorly lit. Thieves attempting to sneak to the exit receive +1d to their sneak silently checks

(DC 10 to escape out the window). Non-thieves must succeed on Luck checks (roll under) to escape the hall unnoticed. Clever thieves can also make a DC 10 Disguise Self check to go unnoticed by the crowd. A thief can disguise an ally, but suffers -1d on the attempt.

Failing these avenues — or other, cleverer solutions — the PCs are quickly noted by the cook and his underlings. A savvy alley-basher, the cook does not give himself away, instead addressing the PCs directly as if they were fellow thieves, demanding that they carry the soup to the back of the dining hall.

This — of course — is a trap, giving the cook time to subtly alert his fellow rogues. If the PCs acquiesce to the cook's demands, conversation quiets and all the thieves line up around the PCs, as if to fill their bowls. At a signal from the cook, the mob of thieves, rogues, beggars, and blackguards surge against the PCs.

Up to 5 thieves can attack a PC at a time, each receiving +4 to hit the first round. If the PCs expressly close ranks (moving back to back and watching each other's flanks), the number of attackers per PC is reduced to 3 on subsequent rounds.

**Cook:** Init +2; Atk ladle +4 melee (1d3+2 [4]); AC 12; HD 2d8; hp 10; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1; AL C.

**Foundlings (3):** Init +0; Atk knife -1 melee (1d3-1 [1]); AC 13; HD 1d4; hp 2 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -1, Ref +2, Will -2; AL C.

**Thieves (24):** Init +1; Atk short sword +0 melee (1d6 [4]) or dagger +1 ranged (1d4 [2]); AC 13; HD 1d8; hp 6 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will -1; AL C.

Because of the sheer crush of foes, there is no way for the PCs to move past the mob until their morale is temporarily broken (causing the mob to fall back, albeit only for a single round).

The PCs can force a morale check in a number of ways:

- **Mighty Deed of Arms:** Flashing swords and martial skills are sure to give any common Lankhmar pause. A mighty deed (3+) that deals 6 or more hit points of damage is suitably violent enough to call for a morale check. Whether it be decapitation, evisceration, flying limbs, or simple martial mastery – players are encouraged to describe their PCs' deeds before the judge makes the Will save. Increase the morale check DC by +1 for every point on the deed die above 3.
- **Dramatic spells:** Eldritch wizardry is (rightfully) terrifying to the superstitious folk of Lankhmar. Powerful casting (a spell check of 17+) with visible results immediately forces a morale check, regardless of the spell's effect. Increase the morale check DC by +1 for every point of the spell check above 20.
- **They can't kill us all – urk:** Any single attack, spell, or action that deals 10 or more points of damage forces the mob to make a morale check.

**Reminder to judges:** A morale check is made by rolling 1d20 and adding the opponent's Will save. A result of 11 or higher is success – they can keep fighting. On a 10 or less, the check is failed and the mob disperses for a round, permitting the PCs to pass.

Breaking the mob's morale allows those PCs winning initiative to make a break for the open window without fear of withdrawal attacks. PCs who hesitate or stop for their allies, are plunged back into combat the following round. Regardless of how successful they are in escaping the hall, an alarm goes up as the last PC exits into the alley. The PCs have been spotted! As the party dashes into Lankhmar's alleys, Round 2 of the tournament begins!

**Fleeting Luck:** Each PC is awarded fleeting Luck as follows:

- 1 point for escaping without combat.
- 2 point for successfully using a disguise or disguising another.
- 3 points to any PC brazen enough to take a bowl of soup or a crust of bread while disguised.

## CONCLUDING THE ROUND

### ESCAPING THIEVES' HOUSE: GOING FULL FAFHRD

The last encounter for Round 1, area 1-7, requires that the PCs cross a dining hall populated with 24 thieves, their mountainous cook, and his three skinny underlings. Most parties have extremely-depleted resources, if not dead PCs, when they arrive. There are many ways to succeed and most involve a Mouser-like cunning approach. However, team Blueberry Dragons ended up going "Full Fafhrd".

With one man down, they had a warrior, a thief, and two wizards. Their original plan was to have a wizard burst into the room and execute a spellburn-enhanced color spray to incapacitate the diners. Unfortunately, he did not achieve surprise, lost initiative, and was killed by 5 thieves before his turn. The remaining thieves surged down the 5'-wide stairway upon which the rest of the party hid, systematically killing them until reaching the end of the marching order: the warrior Landren and his blade Atlantean.

Landren's player, Jeremy Earl, and I rolled off for roughly 15 minutes of real time as a small crowd gathered to watch this lone warrior hold off a tide of alley bashers. With hits of more than 10 points of damage and well-executed mighty deeds, Landren often challenged the thieves' morale, but was unsuccessful at dispersing the slavering cutthroats...until he had killed his ninth rogue.

Grabbing his fallen thief ally (who made his recover the body Luck check), Landren vaulted over the pile of bodies and burst through dining hall's window, emerging into Round 2 of the tournament.

This was one of the most Leiber-esque moments I witnessed, and was an encounter of such epic proportions that I doubt I'll ever forget it.

*You and your companions vault out the window of Thieves' House and onto the low, shingled rooftop beyond. The stink of the night mists and chill air never felt so good. Behind you, Thieves' House gives a roar as the rogues, beggars, and blackguards collectively realize they have been had.*

*Your celebrations are cut short as you skid to a halt. Ningauble's Bauble, your steadfast guide, limply points through the maze of high stucco walls and off-kilter roofs, towards the Rainbow Palace.*

*A sling stone explodes against the stone wall behind you. With a curse for Ningauble, you and your companions scramble up the ladder to the Thieves' Road high atop the dusky warrens...*





# ROUND 2: SEVENSCORE THOUSAND SMOKE

The second round of the tournament follows the PCs' flight across the rooftops of Lankhmar.

As in the first round, the PCs are aided by **Ningauble's Bauble**. The bauble points unerringly towards the Rainbow Palace, but in the maze of Lankhmar's shanty towns, tenements and ruins, the bauble's directions are less than precise. To make it to the Overlord's Citadel, the PCs (or rather, their players) will need to be quick and clever in equal measure—and not hesitate when violence is called for.

## GENERAL FEATURES

The round takes the PCs across the rooftops, down lost alleys, and even beneath Lankhmar's oily streets. Throughout the rounds the PCs are pursued by mobs of thieves, Slayers, and all manner of ambitious rogues, sellswords, and knaves hoping to make a good name with the Thieves' Guild.

The environs vary widely, but the PCs are moving too quickly to make much use of their surroundings (stealing additional gear or supplies, for instance) except when described in keyed encounters.

**The Slayers:** Any time a party dallies **outside of non-keyed encounters**—especially if they are seeking to mine resources from their surroundings—they risk encountering a group of slayers sent by the Thieves' Guild in pursuit of the PCs. Outside of a keyed encounter, each time the PCs pause a few minutes to search, look for traps, or the like, have the PC with the lowest Luck make a Luck check. Upon failure, these assassins catch up to the party and attack. This mechanic is intended to keep the PCs moving; there isn't time to search cupboards, tear up carpets and thatch mattresses in search of hidden loot, or attempt to concoct traps or the like to slow their pursuers.

The Slayers sent by the guild are implacable, and—for the purposes of the tournament—inexhaustible. Starting with the third round of combat, and every other round after, another 1d3 [2] join the original band in attacking the PCs. Even if the Slayers are defeated, another group finds the PCs if they continue to linger, attacking the PCs if they remain in place.

**Slayers (3):** Init +4; Atk poisoned short sword +6 melee (1d6 [4] plus poison) or poisoned dart +9 ranged (1d3 [2] plus poison); AC 14; HD 3d6; hp 14 each; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP poison (DC 10 Fort save or 1d8 [5] Strength, half [2] on successful save), +4 to thief skills (disguise, move silently, climb, pick locks, hide in shadows); SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +4; AL C.

**Sorcery in the City of the Black Toga:** It is entirely possible that the PCs might attempt to fly (or levitate) over the city, bypassing the round altogether.

However, this sort of dramatic spellcasting would immediately draw the interest of any number of powerful sorcer-

## NOTES ON DESIGNING A TOURNAMENT PUZZLE

One of the more striking facets of this year's tournament was the tile puzzle that formed the entire framework for Round 2. The encounter was initially conceived as a way to help guide the players through the high-tempo flight within Lankhmar's dangerous warrens, which was a core part of this year's setting. The result, while not without logistical challenges, was beautifully realized by the map tiles rendered by Jim Skach and his business partner, Paul Kelley, and was a seeming hit with the players.

Designing puzzles for the tournament is a unique challenge and opportunity. You have to strike the right balance between making it reward the players' critical thinking, while also allowing for teams to brute-force their way through—at a cost.

Like many of my ideas for puzzles, the inspiration for the map tiles came from real life, often from games I play with my kids. Tile placement games, wherein the players create the map as they play by connecting different pathways (such as *Carcassonne* or *Tsuro*), make frequent appearances at our family game nights. In this case, the direct inspiration for the map tile encounter was a game called *Bandido* that I was playing with my 9 and 8 year old, wherein we cooperatively tried to stop a prisoner from escaping by playing a series of cards that connect to form an underground network of tunnels. Other tournament puzzles I have designed have taken inspiration from mathematical games we play that involve different geometric shapes or even-numbered links of chain (an example of which is in the 2017 tournament module, *The Black Heart of Thakulon the Undying*).

I love the intersection of puzzles across genres—and the idea of using games for inspiration has always intrigued me and led some of my design choices. When it works, it can be satisfying both from an artistic standpoint and as an homage, however removed, to create an experience shared between communities and family.

ers, risking the loss of both skull and the bauble—a risk Ningauble refuses to tolerate. While magical flight can be used to deal with specific encounters, attempts to use spells for dramatic flight are immediately (and easily) countered by Ningauble itself.

Similar attempts at eldritch sorcery that would call unwanted attention to the PCs are also undone by Ningauble. Spells may be used to resolve specific encounters, but those with lasting effects are nullified once the encounter ends.



**Player Start:** *You and your companions vault out the window of Thieves' House and onto the low, shingled rooftop beyond. The stink of the night mists and chill air never felt so good. Behind you, Thieves' House gives a roar as the rogues, beggars, and blackguards collectively realize they have been robbed.*

*Your celebrations are cut short as you skid to a halt. Ningauble's Bauble, your steadfast guide, limply points through the maze of high stucco walls and off-kilter roofs, towards Rainbow Palace, but with none of the clear focus it exhibited in the sepulchers beneath Thieves' House. Instead, it listlessly directs you toward a yet-higher roof and a half-broken ladder dangling from above.*

*A sling stone explodes against the stone wall behind you. Whatever reservations the Bauble has, there is no time to dally. With a curse for Ningauble, you and your companions scramble up the ladder to the Thieves' Road atop the dusky warrens.*

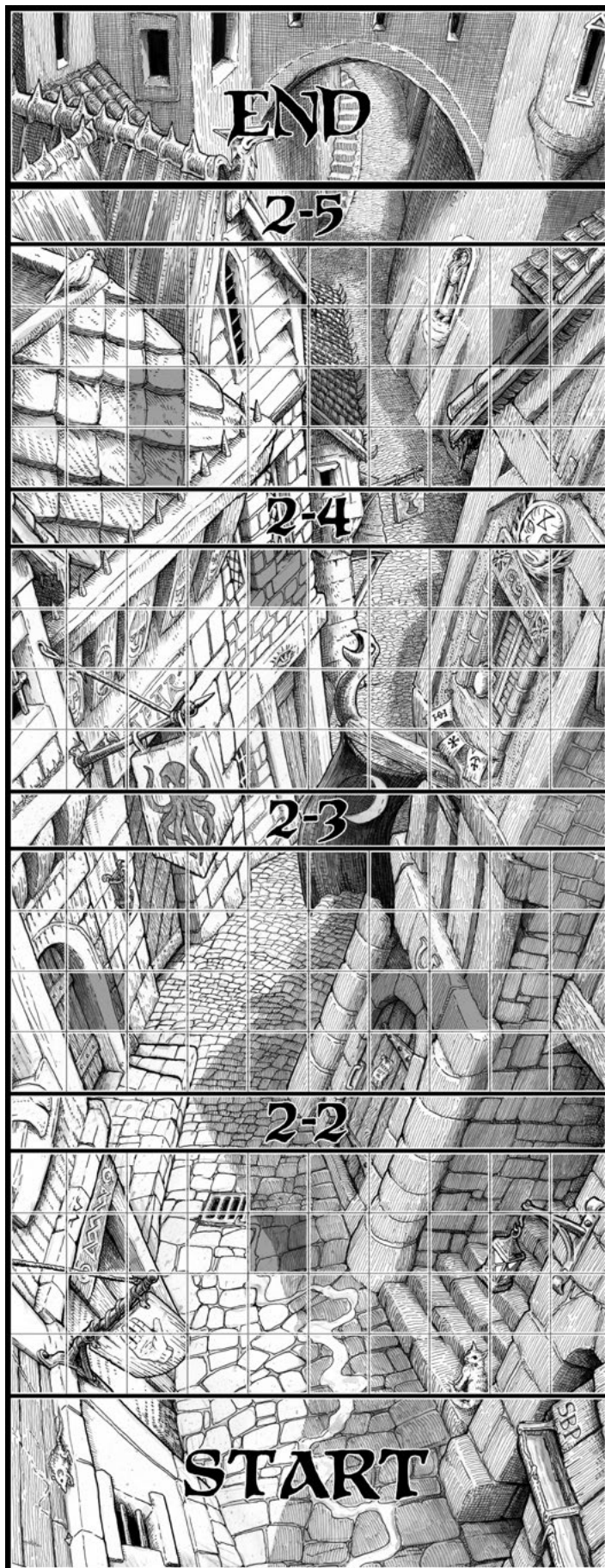
**Area 2-1 — The Rooftop Warrens:** *The warrens are a labyrinthine maze of tenements, confusing double-back lanes, dead-ends, and blind alleys, all watched over by the unscrupulous denizens that reside within. Even the Overlord's agents are reluctant to openly enter its narrow avenues. There is no law in the warrens — only a swift and variable justice that carries as far as the next block.*

The goal of this encounter is simple: reach the Rainbow Palace at the other side. In between, the PCs will have to make a number of choices on the best way to reach the exit. The bauble drives them here, but is of little use guiding them through the tangle of roofs, as there are multiple paths that lead out. The PCs are left to navigate the confusing layout of rooftops, all the while being harassed by the Thieves' Guild and the ruthless denizens of the warrens.

This encounter takes a unique approach to play and frames the entire round. To simulate the pell-mell nature of their flight, the players build the warren rooftops as they go, using map tiles. Each tile represents a small section of the roofs the PCs are following through the warrens. By connecting multiple tiles, the path grows until it eventually connects the start area to the exit in an unbroken line. Along the way, PCs will encounter challenges, or worse—dead ends that force them to backtrack through the mob of thieves in pursuit of the party.

**The Map:** The map for this encounter area consists of a grid of map tiles, 20 wide x 10 high. Each tile is 2 square inches in size. (If using a standard battle mat with 1" squares, a single map tile will cover a 2x2 set of squares, and the total encounter area will take up 40x20 squares). Each column of the encounter area is referred to by number: Column 1 refers to the first set of squares, Column 2 is the second, etc., all the way through the last set of squares in Column 20. Columns 5, 10, 15, and 20 are designated as special zones where the PCs are forced to have a specific encounter—see the section on encounter zones below for more details.

The start area is located on the left side of the map, or Column 0, and the exit area is the opposite side, just after Column 20. Scattered throughout the map are several marked areas that represent impassable locations. These tiles cannot



be entered by rooftop due to an impassable—or instantly deadly—barrier. For example, these might be the walled





manse of a rich merchant bristling with guards armed with crossbows, or a collapsed fane whose roof is nothing more than a forest of charred timbers, or a large open courtyard that must be avoided lest the mob catch up to them (see “The Mob”, below).

**Map tiles:** The map is filled in by drawing and placing map tiles, creating a contiguous path through the warrens. There are a total of 52 map tiles used in the encounter, including 4 encounter tiles. At the start of the encounter, the encounter tiles should be separated from the rest of the map tiles and set aside in a separate stack. The remaining map tiles (including the special encounter tiles; see “Special Tiles”, below) should be shuffled and placed near the map. During the course of the encounter, players will draw tiles from the two stacks and place them on the map. See “To Play” below for details on drawing and placing map tiles.

Each time a new tile is placed, it must connect to the tile the PCs are currently on, and once placed, remains where it is. Players can rotate the tiles as they wish before they place them; however, the only “legal” paths are those that lead to an undiscovered/blank area of the map, or match up to a path on another previously-placed tile. If a tile placement breaks a path, either by connecting to a previous tile that has no corresponding matching path, or by bordering an impassable area on the map, that path is treated as a dead end and cannot be traversed.

With each tile, more of the map is filled in, but the players will sometimes have to make a choice between multiple exit paths to take on the current tile they are on, or whether to backtrack and fight through the mob that follows them. Their goal is to eventually create a continuous path that connects the start to the exit area, allowing them to escape from the round, though it may take teams who plan poorly longer than others.

**To Play:** Starting with Column 1, each time the players choose a path that leads to a blank area of the map, they draw a random tile from the draw stack. When drawing the initial tile, players may choose to place it on any row in Column 1 (representing their initial path into the warrens). **Note: The players must declare the current path they intend to take before they draw and reveal a tile.**

All of the tiles must have a portion of a path connect to the current tile when it is placed on the board; however, some tiles have multiple exits, some have dead ends, and some will curve back on themselves, making the exact path to the exit depend on which tile is selected and how it is placed. When placing a tile, players may rotate it however they wish; however, it must follow the rules for legal placement listed above, and the new tile must connect to the path they have declared to take.

Alternatively, instead of placing the drawn tile, the players may choose to burn a point of Luck (including fleeting Luck) to discard the tile and draw a new one, which must be kept. When burning Luck to draw a new tile, any PC may burn Luck (it does not have to be from the PC of the player who originally drew). Discarded tiles are placed at the bottom of

the draw stack. **Encounter tiles, including special encounters, may not be discarded, and must be placed when they are drawn.**

When drawing and placing a new tile, the judge is free to make up descriptions that fit the context of the round, or may use the following generic descriptions:

- **4-way:** *A dense maze of tenements, inns, and warehouses spread out before you, their closely packed rooftops offering multiple paths across.*
- **3-way:** *The roof is bordered by large buildings on two sides, each standing slightly below the structure you are currently running across. Their pitched roofs can be easily reached.*
- **Straight:** *The outline of a manse looms out of the darkness directly ahead, its dark clay shingles offering the only clear path forward.*
- **Turn:** *The roof angles away, causing you to deviate from a straight path.*
- **Dead end:** *Rushing to the edge of the roof, you see the building is surrounded by empty space with no nearby structures to escape to, forcing you to turn around.*
- **Special OR encounter:** (See encounter text.)

**Judge’s note:** Physical tiles do not need to be used! The tiles can simply be drawn directly on the map if using any type of mat with a square grid. To simulate drawing a new tile, have the players roll a d24 and compare to the following table:

MAP TILE TABLE

Roll d24	Tile Type	Total Available
1-4	Special. Roll 1d8 for location: (1) 2-1a; (2) 2-1b; (3) 2-1c; (4) 2-1d; (5) 2-1e; (6) 2-1f; (7) 2-1g; (8) 2-1h.	8
5-8	Dead end.	8
9-14	Turn. Roll 1d4 for direction: (1-2) left; (3-4) right.	12
15-19	Straight ahead.	10
20-22	3-way. Roll 1d3 for directions: (1) left and straight ahead; (2) straight ahead and right; (3) left and right.	6
23-24	4-way.	4

Each time a tile type is rolled, decrement the total available by one. When the total available reaches 0, that tile type is no longer available and the players should re-roll for a new tile type.

**Encounter Zones:** Encounter zones are fixed areas on the map that force the PCs to enter one of the four designated encounters for the round. When choosing a path that takes them into one of the four encounter zones for the first time (Columns 5, 10, 15, and 20), instead of drawing a tile from

the draw stack, the players draw and place an encounter tile from the encounter stack.

Encounters are fixed locations that the players must encounter in Round 2 of the tournament. The encounter tile is used to indicate that the PCs have reached one of these encounters. Encounters are drawn in order (area 2-2 is the first encounter, followed by area 2-3, etc.). Unlike regular draw tiles, round encounters may not be retreated from in an attempt to bypass them—the PCs must press through.

Once the encounter is resolved, the encounter tile is treated as a 4-way tile, allowing the PCs to use the tiles as part of the path to the exit. If during the course of the round the PCs have to retreat past an encounter zone and re-enter it later, re-entering the zone does not trigger a new encounter; it is instead treated as a regular area of the map subject to the draw rules above.

**Special Tiles:** Special tiles represent mini-encounters available as the PCs flee across the rooftops. Each special encounter is intended to present the PCs with the choice to proceeding with the special encounter, or retreat through the mob to find an alternative path. As they are part of the random tiles that are drawn during the round, not all teams will encounter all of the special tiles. There are 8 special tiles, correlated with encounter areas 2-1a through 2-1h below. Like encounter tiles, once a special encounter is resolved, the paths leading from the special tile can be used by the PCs as if they were a regular map tile based on the available exit paths. (Unlike encounter tiles, which are always treated as 4-way tiles, special tiles have differing numbers of exits.)

**Movement:** Parties moving as quickly as they can across the rooftops buy themselves an extra 1d3 [2] rounds at any point they choose to pause. (Note that due to the vagaries of the rooftop environs, this doesn't stack. A party cannot build up a bank of time. The rooftops are simply too variable.)

However, PCs moving at less than breakneck speed, forgoing this time buffer, have a chance to notice oddities about the various rooftops (s noted in specific encounters and sub-encounters). Judges should prompt the players to share their desired rate of speed, checking in after encounters or special tiles.

**The Mob:** If the PCs are ever forced to return to a tile they have previously been to, either as a result of drawing a dead end or through a deliberate retreat from a special encounter, they must fight their way through the horde of beggars, thieves, and opportunistic cutthroats that are in pursuit of the would-be tomb robbers as word gets around the warrens of the guild's interest in the PCs. This same mob finds the PCs if they ever attempt to leave the bauble's path (deviating from the tournament). For emphasis: the party can turn around, backtrack, and even attempt different paths through and around their challenges, but if ever they break from the bauble's directed path, the mob arrives, unleashing violence upon the PCs.

To determine the strength of the mob encountered, first identify the number of tiles that the PCs must pass through to reach the desired tile by subtracting the value of the column of the tile they are currently on by the column they need to

reach. For example, if the PCs reach a dead end tile in Column 6 and have to go back to Column 4 to reach the first available branch of the path, the strength of the mob is calculated as 6 - 4 = 2. Each tile traversed increases the danger. Use the table below to determine the strength of the opposition. The mob always has a minimum strength of 1.

### MOB STRENGTH TABLE

Tiles Traversed	Mob Encounter
1	<b>Mob:</b> Init +2; Atk improvised weapons +3 melee (1d4+1 [3]); AC 13; HD 4d8; hp 20; MV 30'; Act special; SP attacks all targets within tile, half damage from non-area attacks, overwhelm; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will -6; AL C.
2	<b>Mob:</b> Init +2; Atk improvised weapons +6 melee (1d4+2 [4]); AC 14; HD 6d8; hp 30; MV 30'; Act special; SP attacks all targets within tile, half damage from non-area attacks, overwhelm; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -3; AL C.
3	<b>Mob:</b> Init +2; Atk improvised weapons +9 melee (1d4+3 [5]); AC 15; HD 8d8; hp 40; MV 30'; Act special; SP attacks all targets within tile, half damage from non-area attacks, overwhelm; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.
4+	<b>Mob:</b> Init +2; Atk improvised weapons +12 melee (1d4+4 [6]); AC 16; HD 10d8; hp 50; MV 30'; Act special; SP attacks all targets within tile, half damage from non-area attacks, overwhelm; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +3; AL C.

Each round, the mob can make an attack on all targets within the tile, reflecting the sheer number of opponents it contains. The mob grows in strength based on how many tiles the PCs have to traverse, gaining additional HD and damage. Mobs can also overwhelm individual opponents. Whenever a fumble is rolled when attacking a mob, in addition to rolling on the fumble table, the opponent must make a DC 10 Reflex save (including armor check penalties) in order to not be dragged down by the mob and trampled. Opponents who fail their save are considered prone, and take an additional 1d4 [2] of damage each round, starting with the round they were pulled down until they can make a DC 10 Strength check to stand up.

Tiles with mobs cannot be passed through until the mob is defeated, representing a break of the mob's will and temporarily dispersing it enough to escape. Defeated mobs always reform if the PCs are required to retreat to a new set of tiles in the future.

However, a mob need not be defeated simply through combat. It is far easier to disperse a mob (albeit only for a round) by breaking their morale. The PCs can force a morale check in a number of ways:



- **Mighty Deed of Arms:** Flashing swords and martial skills are sure to give any common Lankhmar pause. A mighty deed (3+) that deals 6 or more hit points of damage is suitably violent enough to call for a morale check. Whether it be decapitation, evisceration, flying limbs, or simple martial mastery—players are encouraged to describe their PCs’ deeds before the judge makes the Will save. Increase the morale check DC by +1 for every point on the deed die above 3.
- **Dramatic spells:** Eldritch wizardry is (rightfully) terrifying to the superstitious folk of Lankhmar. Powerful casting (a spell check of 17+) with visible results immediately forces a morale check, regardless of the spell’s effect. Increase the morale check DC by +1 for every point of the spell check above 20.
- **They can’t kill us all—urk:** Any attack, spell, or action that deals 10 or more points of damage forces the mob to make a morale check.

Note that a mob might be forced to attempt a morale check multiple times in the same round. For the sanity of our judges, the effects of multiple checks do not stack.

**Reminder to judges:** A morale check is made by rolling 1d20 and adding the opponent’s Will save. A result of 11 or higher is success—they can keep fighting. On a 10 or less, the check is failed and the mob disperses for a round, permitting the PCs to pass.

The sole caveat to the rule of morale checks is when the PCs deviate from the tournament path (e.g., descending from the rooftops or otherwise attempting to cut across the city). In the streets, with scores of supporters, the mob’s morale never breaks.

**Scenario-specific rulings:** The following examples address specific questions that may result from tile placement:

- **Drawing a dead end encounter as the first tile:** Treat this as a regular dead end the PCs must retreat from. In this case the strength of the mob is always 1. Once defeated, the PCs may draw and place a new tile in any other empty tile space in Column 1.
- **Drawing a tile that connects to an impassable area:** Treat this as a dead end that cannot be traversed by the PCs, forcing them to use an alternative path or retreat to a previous tile.
- **Falling or descending from a roof:** If, as a result of a special encounter, a PC falls from the roof they are on (or the PCs deliberately attempt to climb down from the roof), in addition to taking any associated falling damage, they also encounter the mob as it gathers in the street below them. Mobs encountered in this manner are treated as strength 1, similar to the PCs retreating a single tile. Unlike a retreat, however, once the mob is defeated the PCs may proceed to use any available exit on the tile they are currently on without having to retreat to a previous tile (it is assumed that they are able to find a means to reascend to the rooftops once the mob is dispersed).

- **Going over the edge of the map:** The top and bottom of the map are considered impassable. Paths that border those areas are treated as incomplete and non-traversable.
- **Running out of tiles:** In the unlikely scenario that the draw pile runs out, continue to have the players select new tiles by rolling on the Map Tile Table above.

Judges can refer to the Judge Pack for a walkthrough of using the tiles in Round 2.

## ALTERNATIVE RULES FOR TILE DRAW:

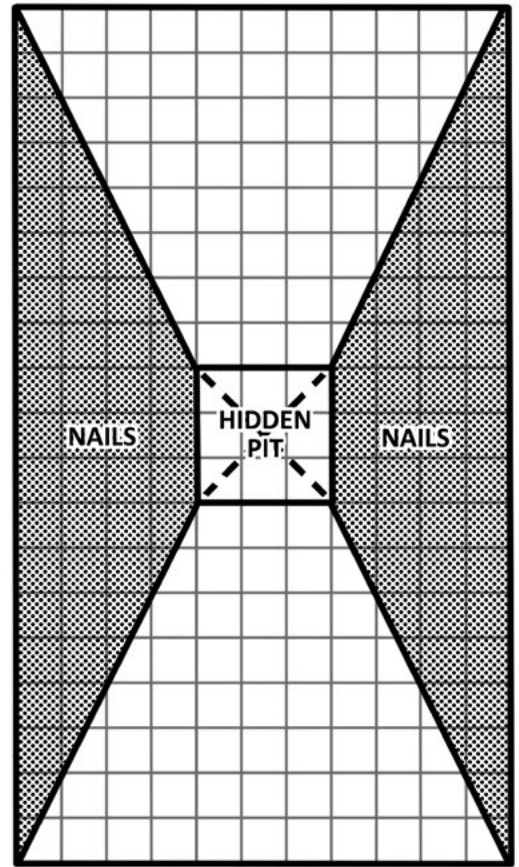
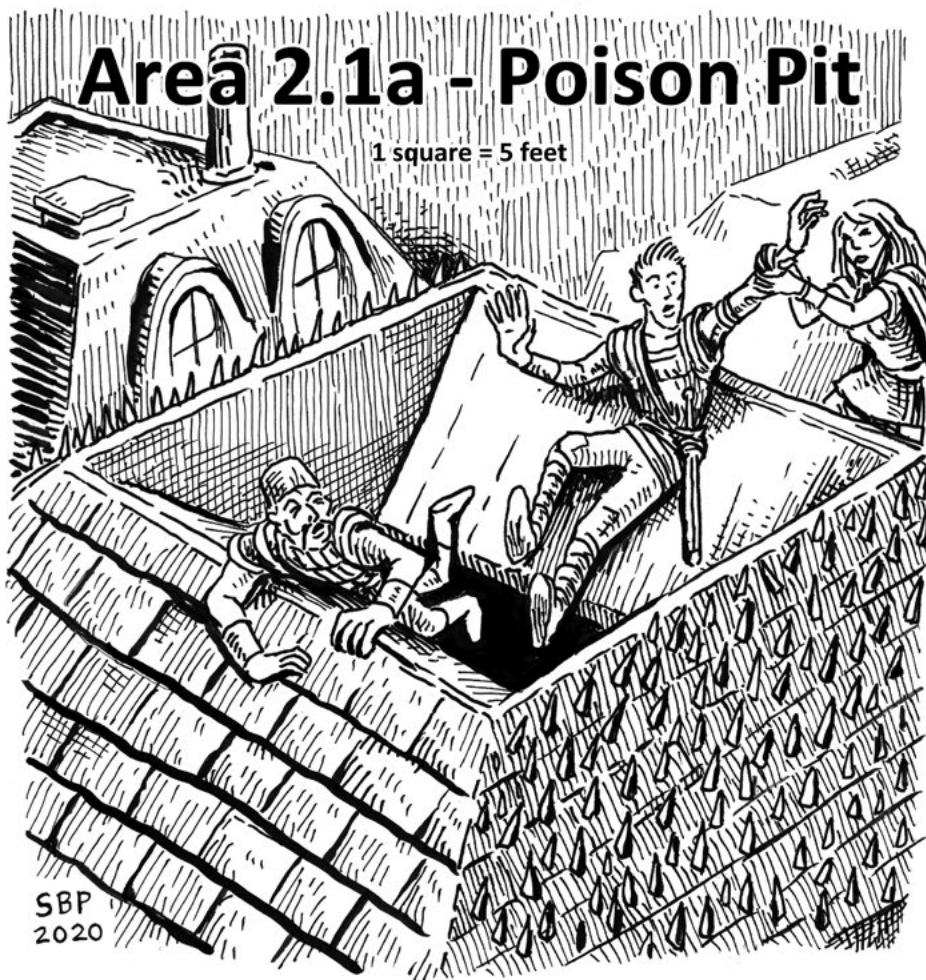
An alternative to drawing (or rolling) for a random tile that potentially gives the players more agency is to treat the d24 tile draw roll like a skill check, allowing PCs to burn Luck when making the roll to achieve a desired result. In this case, the players make a single roll on the Map Tile Table—discarding and re-rolling does not occur—and either accept the results and place the appropriate tile, or they may choose to burn Luck to increase the roll and potentially get a better tile. Luck burned in this fashion can come from any PC, and Luck burned by a thief uses the Luck die to determine the amount of the bonus. Players should not be told which tiles correspond to which rolls on the table; they will need to deduce that through trial and error.

**Area 2-1a — Poison Pit:** *A fine grid of uneven nails protruding point up through the shingles, presumably to ward off avian nuisances, though the extent covered is extreme for such a purpose.*

### Give players Handout C.

**Choosing the nails:** PCs may be suspicious that the nailed regions are corralling them into a dangerous section of the roof...and they’d be right! Players may also be familiar with a “bed of nails” physics demonstration that looks much more dangerous than it is (because densely-packed nails of equal height distribute pressure so that the nails don’t penetrate the skin). Although these particular nails are densely-packed (“a fine grid”), they are not of equal height and can cause damage if traversed too quickly. PCs attempting to cross the nails may approach it in two ways: slow and deliberate, or as fast as possible. PCs that slow to 10’ MV or less do not take any damage; however, even if only a single PC chooses the cautious path, the party must make a Luck check to see if the Slayers sent by the guild catch up to them (see The Slayers, p. 24). PCs moving faster across the nails automatically suffer 1d3 [2] damage, and if the entire party elects to cross as quickly as possible, they do not have to make the pursuit check.

**Avoiding the nails:** The center of the roof’s non-nailed section is a 15’ x 15’ spiked pit trap which drops 10’ into the building’s false attic (constructed by the Thieves’ Guild). A thief may notice the pit’s outline with a DC 15 Find Trap check, but searching takes a full 10-minute turn. Alternatively, she may choose to spend only a round searching—but



must use a d14 for the check. She may disable the pit with a DC 15 Disable Trap check, but this also takes a full 10-minute turn (on a natural 1, the thief triggers the pit and falls in). A PC may expedite disabling to one round by using a d14 on the check, though in this case failure (not just a natural 1) triggers the trap with the thief falling in. As a reminder, each time the PCs spend a turn finding or disabling the pit trap requires a separate Luck check to see if the Slayers catch up to the party.

Unfortunately for the victim, the spikes in the pit are poisoned with the venom of the Kleshite river toad—a neurotoxin which makes the body stiff as if wearing full plate armor (but without the protection). A PC falling into the spiked pit suffers 1d8 [5] damage and must make a DC 18 Fortitude save.

**Kleshite river toad venom:** DC 18 Fortitude save or -10' to movement, d16 fumble die, -8 penalty (Reflex saves, Agility and Strength checks, climbing, stealth, swimming, etc.); no ill effects if save is made. The poison can be magically cured by used of the bauble, but otherwise lasts for the rest of the tournament.

The sides of the pit are relatively easy to climb (DC 7 Climb Sheer Surfaces or Strength check). PCs wishing to jump the pit's 15' span may do so with a DC 18 Strength check, but armor check penalties apply!

Remember: Non-thieves can still attempt to find and disable traps, but they are untrained and use a d10 for their checks

(unless the skills are granted by the Skilled in the Criminal Arts benison).

**Area 2-1b — Glue Basins:** *The shingles on this roof look pristine and recently installed.*

This roof has four glue-filled basins (4' diameter) upon which shingles float, appearing to be part of the roof. A thief may notice the basins' outlines with a DC 15 Find Trap check, but searching takes a full 10-minute turn. She may choose to spend only a round searching but must use a d14 for the check, and then finds only 1d3+Luck modifier basins if successful (minimum of 1). The basins may not be "disarmed" but are easily avoided once discovered. As a reminder, PCs spending a turn to find the glue traps requires a Luck check to see if the Slayers catch up to the party.

Each PC traversing the roof must make a Luck check for each undiscovered basin (thus the lead PC must make up to four Luck checks). A failed Luck check (a d20 roll greater than the PC's Luck score) indicates that the PC has stepped on the floating shingles and is about to sink. PCs slowing to 10' MV or less may make a DC 14 Reflex save to avoid falling into the discovered basin; those moving faster get no saving throw.

Each viscous gluey basin is 4' deep and 4' across. The PC is not harmed by plunging in, but the presence of his body rapidly hardens the glue. He may try to extract himself—or others may try to extract him—but they must act quickly. Up to two people can help extract a victim. All involved roll a d20 for the Strength check and the highest roll is used.



- **First round:** DC 17 Strength check, or leave armor behind.
- **Second round:** DC 20 Strength check, or leave armor behind.
- **Third round:** PC cannot be removed from glue, and is eventually caught by the pursuing Slayers. Treat PC as dead with no chance of recovering the body.

Once a basin is discovered, it is no longer a threat to other PCs.

Remember: Non-thieves can still attempt to find and disable traps, but they are untrained and use a d10 for their checks (unless the skills are granted by the Skilled in the Criminal Arts benison).

**Area 2-1c — Oily Roof:** *There seems to be nothing special about this rooftop, but it offers one more junction at which you may lose your pursuers.*

**Party speed:** “Slow” parties, and those who intentionally pause to stop to inspect the roof, smell oil (the shingles have been oiled and are extremely flammable), but the party must make a check for Slayers. If failed, the Slayers manifest via unseen archers igniting the roof with a flaming missile as the PCs cross. All on the roof take 2d6 [8] points of damage (DC 17 Reflex save for half).

If PCs hasten across without inspecting the roof, then have the PC with the lowest Luck make a Luck check to smell the oil. If PCs think to ignite the roof to bar passage, they suffer no mob encounters the first time they backtrack to this square.

**Area 2-1d — Shingle Beast:** *This roof’s shingles appear to be unnecessarily overlaid in multiple layers.*

#### Give players Handout D.

PCs stopping for one round at the roof’s edge in order to inspect the shingles may make a DC 10 Intelligence check to note that the shingles are not nailed to the roof, yet still seem firmly attached. If the inspecting PC is a wizard (or possesses the Former Wizard’s Pupil benison), they may make a spell check with their respective spell check die for each round of study.

Spell check	Result
1	Corruption; caster opened herself to arcane energies she couldn’t master.
2-11	Nothing.
12-15	Wizard senses that entire roof radiates some kind of magic.
16-19	Above result, plus wizard intuitively senses some kind of sentient enchantment.
20+	Above result, plus detection that the shingles have magically-enhanced flammability.

If a PC traverses the roof more than 5’ from its edge, the shingle beast attacks. Read or paraphrase the following: *The roof expands elastically as if something is trying to push through from*

*underneath—first the head, then the torso, then the torso’s four arms. You now face the upper half of a four-armed giant made of shingles!*

The shingle beast is a dangerous opponent. It is rumored that it was created by a young wizard who became known as the Emerald Enchanter in another corner of the multiverse (but that’s a story for DCC #69). The shingle beast covers the entire roof, and is an amorphous entity of force affixed with hundreds of arcane shingles, which it can manipulate at will. In other words, when the PCs are on the roof, they are already on the beast; the beast is not solely the 4-armed torso which it creates. Thus, attacking PCs can strike the roof where they stand without having to be in melee range of the four-armed deception. The beast moves its “torso” along the roof to hide its true nature.

The shingle beast has the following attacks:

**Shingle fist:** Those unnecessarily in melee range (see above) are struck with one of the four shingled arms. Outside of a critical hit, this is the beast’s most damaging attack.

**Roof reach:** The beast slams an arm into the roof and its fist comes out of the roof wherever it desires, effectively making its melee range the entire roof.

**Shingle-arang:** The beast flings a group of shingles that strike their opponent (who may be fleeing on another roof), and then the shingles return to the beast. Shingles that are restricted from returning lose their magic after 1 turn of separation from the entity.

**Shingle shell:** The beast releases a group of shingles to imprison and immobilize one PC on the roof. The beast spends an action to attack, and the PC must make a DC 16 Reflex save to avoid being captured. Those imprisoned are completely enclosed, cannot see the outside, and are constricted enough that only a DC 18 Strength check is possible to break free—weapon use is impossible. Other PCs can destroy the shell (AC 14, 15 hp), but any excess damage is applied to the prisoner. It costs the beast an action each round to maintain a shell. The beast can form multiple shells if desired.

**Fire trap:** The beast is vulnerable to fire (taking double damage), but PCs should think twice about igniting it (note the “shingles have magically-enhanced flammability” check result above). Since the entire beast is the roof, PCs may inadvertently cook themselves. The entire roof ignites if the beast is attacked with fire; PCs suffer 1d4 [3] fire damage per round while remaining on the roof.

**Shingle Beast:** Init +4; Atk shingle fist +6 melee (1d12 [7]) or roof reach +6 melee (1d6 [4], anywhere on roof) or shingle-arang +6 ranged (1d4 [3], range 100’) or shingle shell (special); AC 16; HD 8d12; hp 49; MV 0’ (but “torso” moves at 15’, see above); Act 3d20; SP shingle shell (costs 1 action, see above), fire trap (see above), unique crits (see table below), takes double damage from fire-based attacks, immune to mind-affecting spells; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +4; AL N.

PCs may choose to flee across the rooftop to escape the shingle beast instead of fighting it, but as the entire roof is the

beast, PCs are always considered to be in melee range of its attacks. Each round a PC runs through without fighting, the shingle beast gets a free roof reach attack. This is in addition to its regular attacks it takes on its turn. Finally, if PCs leave the map tile with the beast still alive, each one gets a shingle-arang in the back as they enter the next tile.

If the shingle beast is destroyed, a shingle made of solid emerald reveals itself. The emerald blazes with viridescent light. The “heart” of the shingle beast, the emerald can—when pressed against a corpse’s chest—restore a single slain PC to life (and to half hp). The emerald is absorbed into the PC’s chest, where it continues to grow brightly. A character revived in this way earns the eternal enmity of Death.

## CRITICAL HITS FOR SHINGLE BEAST

Roll 1d4 and subtract victim’s Luck modifier

Result	Effect
1 or less	The blow dazes the victim; the beast gets an immediate free attack against him!
2	Shingles cover the PC’s weapon, reducing its damage potential to 1d3 until the beast is slain or the PC leaves the roof. If the PC has no weapon, he takes an additional 1d6 [4] damage from the blow.
3	Two arms protrude from the roof, grab the PC’s legs, lift the PC up, and slam him into the roof. The PC takes 2d6 [7] points of additional damage and is prone until the next round.
4+	A giant shingled hand forms and slaps the PC off the roof. The PC takes 3d6 [10] points of additional damage from the blow and the fall.

**Area 2-1e — Launch Pad:** A single arrow is embedded in this roof. A paper note is wrapped around its shaft.

### Give players Handout E.

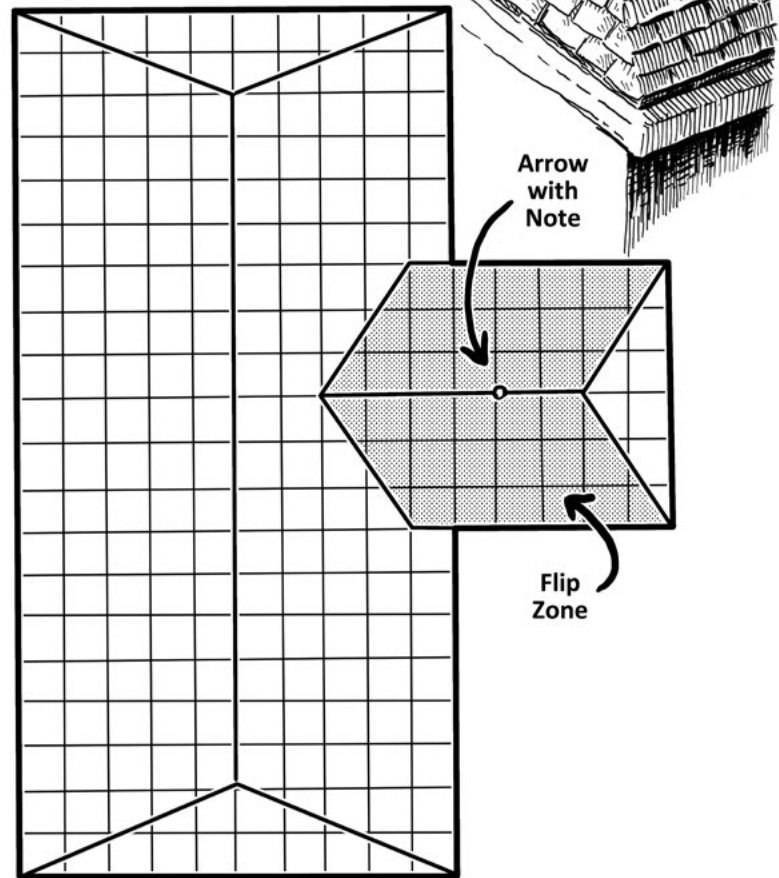
A PC who walks up to the arrow triggers a spring-loaded platform that jettisons the PC into the air, such that he flies off the roof and falls to the ground. The victim takes 3d6 [10] points of damage from the fall. Other PCs can join them on the ground (DC 10 Climb Sheer Surfaces check or take 1d6 [4] falling damage). As a reminder, any PCs that fall or climb off the roof encounter a strength 1 mob (see Mob Encounter Table, p. 28). Once dispersed, the PCs may take the exit path from the tile, and are assumed to have found a means to regain the rooftops.

The platform spans the roof’s entire width, so PCs walking side-by-side could both be jettisoned. It takes at least 50 lbs. to trigger the trap.

A thief may notice the platform’s outline with a DC 15 Find Trap check, but searching takes a full 10-minute turn. She may choose to spend only a round searching, but must use a d14 for the check. She may disable the platform with a DC 15 Disable Trap check, but this also takes a full 10-minute

## 2-1e Judge's Diagram

1 square = 5 feet



turn (on a natural 1, the thief triggers the platform and takes flight). A PC may expedite disabling to 1 round by using a d14 on the check, though in this case failure (not just a natural 1) triggers the trap with the thief soaring and plummeting to the ground. As a reminder, each time the PCs spend a turn finding or disabling the pit trap requires a separate Luck check to see if the Slayers catch up to the party.

Once the trap is sprung, either by triggering it or failing to disable it, the rest of the PCs may safely cross beneath it.

Retrieving the arrow from a safe distance by mundane means (such as a lasso) requires a DC 14 Agility check, with 1 attempt possible per round. Note that removing the arrow does not trigger the platform (which is triggered by 50 lbs. of weight, see above). Of course, once the platform has been sprung the arrow may be extracted trivially.

Characters recovering the note discover it reads simply, “Surprise!”

Remember: Non-thieves can still attempt to find and disable traps, but they are untrained and use a d10 for their checks (unless the skills are granted by the Skilled in the Criminal Arts benison).



**Area 2-1f — Mind the Gap:** *You wind your way between a number of chimneys, their bricks long turned dark but the choking soot hangs in the air. Coming to the edge, the roof abruptly ends at a narrow chasm — a 15' gap between the buildings spanning a dark alley several stories below.*

As they cross one of the many smokehouses that dot the warrens, the PCs are faced with a choice—risk a daunting jump or retreat to face the mob closing in behind them. The gap is challenging, especially for those PCs wearing armor, requiring a DC 18 Strength check to successfully cross; however, clever parties will be sure to come up with means to make the attempt easier. Attempts to rope together party members, construct makeshift bridges, or similar measures grant up to a +4 bonus to the check based on the players' ingenuity.

PCs spending a full turn searching the chimneys discover a removable ladder hooked inside one of the stacks left by a sweep who was recently cleaning debris out of the vents. The ladder allows passage across the gap without making a skill check. Keep in mind that PCs spending time searching or securing their passage risk attacks by the Slayers (see The Slayers, above).

**Area 2-1g — Rooftop Fane:** *In the middle of the roof is an ancient structure made of dark stone — a fane dedicated to some long-forgotten Lankhmarian god. Numerous broken weapons are scattered around the altar: swords broken at the hilt, axes cleaved in twain, and shattered spears. A feeling of unease washes out from the stone, sending chills over your skin and causing the hairs on your neck to rise.*

The fane is that of an unnamed god of Nehwon, now fallen into obscurity. PCs approaching the fane feel a sense of dread emanating from it—the lingering menace of its once-potent ancient deity, and approaching within 10' requires a DC 10 Will save to overcome the unnatural fear. Examining the fane up close reveals an offering bowl, well-stained with blood from a hundred sacrifices.

The fane is easily bypassed by skirting along the edges of the roof around it; however, unless an offering is left, a curse is imparted on the departing PCs. The offering requires a single PC to shed 1d3 [2] hit points' worth of blood into the offering bowl, enough to fill it completely. Once filled, the collected blood quickly disappears, as if the stone itself drinks it in. Multiple PCs may make a blood offering, but only a single offering is required to avoid the god's curse.

If the PCs leave the fane without making an offering, the curse goes into effect, causing the PCs to make a Luck check each time they attack a foe with a weapon. With a failed check, that PC's weapon shatters, inflicting 1d6 [3] points of damage to its owner—a martial offering to the deity in place of blood. The curse lasts until the PC's weapon is broken in this manner, after which it is lifted.

#### **Fleeting Luck:**

- 1 point of fleeting Luck is awarded to any PC who made an offering of blood to the fane.

**Area 2-1h — The Pigeon Keeper:** *Dozens of cages line the rooftop ahead of you, filled with hundreds of cooing pigeons. Upon seeing you, they start to beat their wings in agitation. Next to the most distant cages, a sleeping watchman leans on a long spear, a large brass bell hanging from a nearby pole.*

The watchman is an agent of the Thieves' Guild, previously alerted to the pursuit of the PCs through messages relayed through the pigeons he keeps. If alerted to the PCs' presence, he will raise the alarm by ringing the nearby bell, summoning members of the Thieves' Guild to the area and blocking off the exit paths out of the tile (treat the tile as a dead end if the alarm is raised, forcing the PCs to retreat). The PCs must find a means to sneak past the cages without waking the watchman.

If the PCs approach the cages incautiously, the pigeons' cries rise in volume until they rouse the sleepy watchman, who rings the alarm bell on the following round. There are several approaches the PCs might take to resolve the encounter. Players may think of other solutions, but these are some of the most common:

- **Stealth:** Sneaking past the cages without alerting the birds requires a successful DC 15 Sneak Silently or Agility check from each PC making the attempt (penalties from wearing armor apply). With even a single failure, the birds are roused as per above.
- **Freedom:** PCs may also attempt to release the birds from their cages in hopes of creating a distraction. The cages are secured, requiring a DC 12 Pick Lock or Strength check. At least three cages must be unlocked to create enough of a distraction to draw the watchman's attention away long enough for the PCs to safely pass. Keep in mind that any PC attempting to approach the cages must make a stealth check as per above. Failing to sneak up to the cages or failing any of the three checks causes the birds to become agitated and wake the watchman. While the locks may be forced in a single round, taking time to pick the locks carefully takes a full 10-minute turn. A PC may expedite the process to 1 round by using a d14 on the check. As a reminder, PCs taking the extra time to pick the locks must make a Luck check to see if the Slayers catch up to the party.
- **Dispose of the witness:** PCs may also choose to incapacitate the watchman by attacking him directly. The watchman stands guard next to the furthest cages, 80' distant. Further complicating matters are the numerous haphazardly laid-out cages between the PCs and his post, giving the watchman +4 AC against ranged attacks. If the watchman is injured, but not incapacitated, his first action will be to ring the bell as above before drawing his bow to return fire.

**Guild Watchman:** Init +1; Atk spear +4 melee (1d8+1 [5]) or shortbow +4 ranged (1d6 [3]); AC 14 (18 against missiles); HD 3d8; hp 20; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; AL N.

PCs spending a turn searching the area discover a bottle of white snow-potato brandy (+3 hit die roll bonus restorative, can be used in combat healing) stashed among the watch-

man's belongings. Keep in mind that PCs spending time searching risk attacks by their pursuers (see The Slayers, above).

**Area 2-2 — The Tile Masters:**

Pursued by the ravening mob, you find yourselves at a dead end with a narrow wooden stair leading up. Slamming a gate shut behind you, you race three stories up to a bizarre rooftop vista. The surface of the roof is divided into five rows of 5' squares of different colors: red, orange, green, black, and white. The sides of this man-made cavern are steep 60' brick walls with no windows, the right wall utterly featureless save for two old codgers on a balcony 50' above, the left wall entirely covered with a large net. Across the strange roof's surface, you can see a landing and stairway leading down, with a 3' railing. The old men are sipping brandy, adorned only in nightshirts. "Make your way across quickly," one shouts downward. "But remember: the old rotten wall groans below!" He turns and starts bickering with his friend, pointing and chortling as they place their wagers on your fates.

**Give the players Handout F.**

**Mob arrival:** The gate gives the PCs 10 rounds to cross before the mob breaks through and ascends (7 rounds for the mob to break through the gate, 3 rounds to ascend the stairs). Use the following table to keep track of the mob's progress:

**COUNTDOWN TO MOB**  
(1 box per round)

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**Mob:** Init +0; Atk improvised weapons +4 melee (1d4+2 [4]); AC 14; HD 6d8; hp ∞; MV 30'; Act 1d20 per PC; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will Immune; AL C.

The two decadent merchants quartered nearby, Mendalus and Portho, have created a death trap for unfortunate thieves here, whose fates they can safely observe and enjoy from their balcony.

The roof appears to be covered in solid 5'-square tiles of different colors. Stepping onto a tile reveals the trap hidden under each. There are five different tile colors, as follows:

- **White:** The surfaces of these squares are composed of paper. A PC stepping on this square must make a DC

**AREA 2-2: ROOF SQUARE PUZZLE**  
**JUDGE'S MAP**

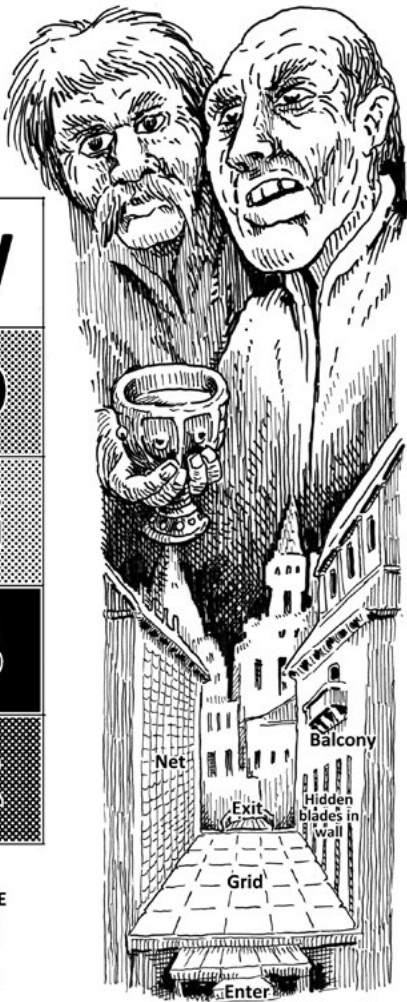
END

O	G	<b>B</b>	R	W
<b>G</b>	B	R	W	O
B	R	<b>W</b>	O	G
<b>R</b>	W	O	G	B
W	<b>O</b>	G	B	R

START

Squares with circles are safe.

O = ORANGE  
G = GREEN  
B = BLACK  
R = RED  
W = WHITE



15 Reflex save to jump to a random adjacent tile or fall through and be instantly killed four stories below when they crash into a jungle of rusty iron spikes, bones, blades and other pointy detritus, with no chance of recovering the body.

- **Black:** These are 3'-deep pitch pits. PCs stepping onto the tile are covered in pitch and stuck fast, requiring a full round and a successful DC 15 Strength check to escape. (Reduce the DC by 5 for each PC aiding the escape.)
- **Red:** These are trapped and explode with fire damage if touched (at all), doing 1d16 [8] points of fire damage and igniting the PC who touched it, incurring an additional 1d3 [2] damage each round until a full round is spent putting them out. PCs covered in pitch as a result of falling into a black tile suffer double damage from the flames.
- **Green:** Anyone stepping on a green square sinks into a mass of predatory foliage and becomes entangled. Pulling free from the vegetation requires a full round; moreover, a DC 15 Reflex save is required or the PC's momentum carries him into an adjacent square.
- **Orange:** This square contains an acid that burns through



boots (or clothes) in one round and inflicts 1d5 [3] points of damage per round to exposed skin. It has no effect on metal and takes 1d3+1 [3] rounds to score wood. PCs whose footwear has been burned away are at a -1d penalty on Agility checks and Reflex saves for the remainder of the encounter.

While the tiles are cleverly disguised, PCs pausing to inspect the squares can potentially discover the nature of each by careful observation, such as by tossing small objects or coins onto the squares, or by using a long weapon or pole to investigate. Investigating a square in this manner requires a full round.

**The Walls:** The 60'-high right wall is heavily greased, though this is not apparent at first sight (DC 20 Intelligence check on an active search). Scaling the wall requires a DC 25 Climb Sheer Surfaces check. With failure, the PC takes falling damage if higher than 10', and drops into the appropriate square depending on their height and location.

On the left wall is a net that can be triggered by Portho and Mendalus if anyone attempts to climb it (DC 15 Climb check). The net drops down and ensnares the entire roof area. Netted climbers take falling damage if higher than 10', and drop into the appropriate square depending on their height and location. Anybody trying to cross the tiles' borders when the net falls will be knocked into the square to their right. (Once the net is down, the roof becomes easier to cross: DC 15 Agility check to step between the squares.)

**The Wagering Merchants:** 50' up on right wall is the balcony from which Mendalus and Portho watch the proceedings. These patrician merchants enjoy watching unfortunates perish and also place wagers on the outcomes. They jeer and hurl insults as they watch, but will not interact with the players in any way unless the issue is forced.

Concealed flush on the right wall are five heavy, 25'-long sharpened blades hinged at the bottom that can be released remotely by Mendalus or Portho whenever they wish—each blade targets a single row, and can be used but once during the encounter. The blades are spaced 5' apart, each set to fall directly into the middle of the tiles.

Each of these heavy blades does 2d12 [12] damage to anyone caught in its path. PCs so targeted must make an immediate choice: attempt a DC 20 Reflex save to dodge, or leap to an adjacent square. Note: Players should not know the Reflex save prior to attempting the save, though they may infer it from failed/successful attempts.

If a rope is fixed to the balcony (by means of grappling hook, ropework, etc.), Mendalus and Portho ignore it at first, but cut it just as the PCs are swinging across. They have a short pike ready for just this purpose. When cutting the rope, they will try to dump a hapless PC down into a white square to certain death. (The PC is allowed a Luck check to land in a different randomly-determined square.)

The PCs might try to charm or otherwise mentally affect Mendalus or Portho. The merchants have high Will saves as befit their stations as successful negotiators. Even if charmed,

their warped minds consider their sole clue to be overly generous and will give no information about which squares are safe. There is no way for them to disarm the traps, but they can be prevented from activating (or directed to trigger) the net and blades.

Missile fire and other ranged attacks will flush the merchants back into the cover of the open door behind them, though they still try to dart out and trigger the traps if the PCs are crossing. Because of their cover, PCs suffer a -2d to attacks made against them.

**Solution:** Mendalus and Portho have given the only clue that matters, in the form of the phrase that they uttered. The first letter of each word after "the" corresponds to the color of the "safe" square in the sequence of the rows. Cackling wildly, the old men repeat the phrase any time a PC suffers from a misstep.

The phrase, "*The old rotten wall groans below!*" indicates that the correct squares to safely cross are:

**1st row:** Orange

**2nd row:** Red

**3rd row:** White

**4th row:** Green

**5th row:** Black

These safe squares look identical to their brethren unless a DC 20 Intelligence check is made to detect a difference from other squares of the same color. Such scrutiny takes a full round. The safe squares are completely safe to traverse on foot; however, a PC standing in a safe square can still be netted or hit by one of the falling blades.

It might be possible to carefully walk on the borders of the squares, but they are narrow and greased—it takes one round and a DC 20 Agility check to do this for each square. Even if successful, they are attacked by a foliage creature when they are bordering a green square (DC 20 Agility check to avoid the whipping green tendrils that erupt to drag them into the green square).

A DC 10 Strength check is required to leap over one square's length. If separated by more than one square's length, including diagonally, a DC 18 Strength check is required. Failure lands them in the interceding square. (Do not forget armor check penalties!)

If the PCs try to string a rope across to the opposite landing, the tightrope walk is a DC 30 Agility check. Of course, a blade will be triggered to sever the rope at the worst possible moment. PCs losing their balance and falling into a square get no Reflex save to avoid falling fully into it, though they are allowed a DC 15 Reflex save to determine which square they want to fall into.

**Endgame:** After ten rounds, the mob reaches the rooftop and rushes headlong into the trap, and though some of the mob fall victim to the various pitfalls, the mob will progress across the board at the rate of one row every two rounds.

**Mendalus & Portho:** Init +5; Atk dagger +2 melee (1d4 [2]) or

crossbow +3 ranged (1d6 [3], range 70') or traps (see above); AC 11; HD 7d4; hp 28 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP none; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +15; AL C.

Fleeting Luck:

- 3 points of fleeting Luck are awarded to the PC who solves Medalus' and Portho's riddle.
- 1 point of fleeting Luck is awarded to each PC who escapes before the mob arrives.

**Area 2-3 — Underpants Alley:** Ningauble's Bauble directs you down a rickety staircase to a low rooftop, and then an easy drop to the alley floor. But the sight in the dimming light gives you pause and reason to curse. Before you is a veritable cat's cradle of washing lines covered in a myriad of wet clothes hanging out to dry. The washing lines are tightly strung between two 40' high buildings that reach upward to choke the evening sky. The majority of the washing lines stretch straight across — bridging the cobblestoned divide — while others slant from top to bottom or zigzag in between. A few are strung 3' off the ground, then 5, then 7, sometimes 9, maybe higher — an almost impenetrable wall of bloomers, bodices, underpants, and long johns!

Gouts of steam slip out from between the dripping clothes, allowing you to glimpse the washer-folk of Lankhmar hard at work, ironing, boiling, and scrubbing mounds of soiled undergarments. The cry goes up behind you, as the pursuing mob is briefly caught in the bottleneck of the ladder behind. Thankfully, Ningauble's Bauble tugs you in the opposite direction, away from their curses and the cudgels, but alas! The only way out is over, under, and hopefully through Underpants Alley.

Give the players Handout G.

**Mob arrival:** The mob arrives 3 rounds after the encounter begins, then proceeds at a rate of 10' per round. If the mob succeeds in reaching the PCs, they attack.

COUNTDOWN TO MOB  
(1 box per round)

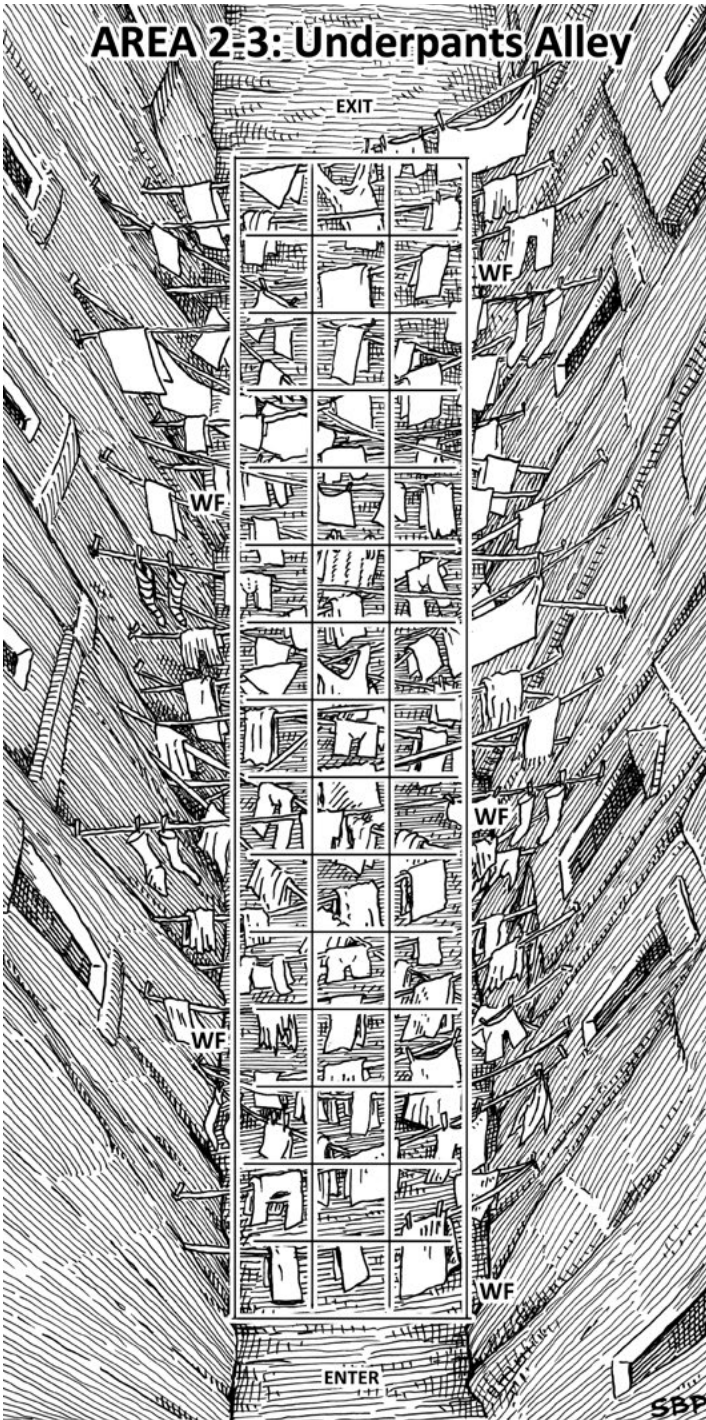
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**Mob:** Init +0; Atk improvised weapons +4 melee (1d4+2 [4]); AC 14; HD 6d8; hp ∞; MV 30'; Act 1d20 per PC; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will Immune; AL C.

**The Laundry Quandary:** The alley is cobbled, slick, and narrow, with four-story buildings on either side. The top of the highest washing lines are approximately 20' off the ground, while the bottom can be mere inches. The washing is wet and clings to the PCs like the tentacles of an amorous octopus, and cannot be burned by fire.

The alley is 60' long and 15' wide. Each PC must pass through six 10' squares to escape the alley — though how this is best accomplished is left up to the party. Following are some of the most common methods, offered as an aid for adjudication:

**Going Over:** The washing lines will sag and wobble under anyone's weight, making climbing them extremely difficult.



A DC 15 Agility or Climb Sheer Surfaces check will allow a nimble PC to scale up and over a series of laundry lines. On a failed check, the PC succeeds in scaling the lines (advancing 10') but falls while trying to sling his or her leg over at the top. Fortunately the lines cushion the fall (1d6 [3] damage) but the PC suffers -1d to all actions and ability checks until the character can spend an action to struggle free of the wet clothing.

**Going Around:** PCs may try to avoid the washlines by using the buildings or scaling the walls. Scaling the walls is a difficult but not impossible task; the plaster walls are slick with condensation and acidic from the lye. Climbers must succeed on a DC 20 Climb Sheer Surfaces check for each 10' they attempt to pass, but also suffer 1d4 [2] damage to their fingers and palms.





In addition, climbing the walls frightens the washerfolk: doors and windows slam closed, and pots of boiling water and lye are dumped on the heads of those climbing toward them. (Atk scalding shower +3 ranged (1d5 [3]); Act 1d24 per PC scaling the wall; ongoing each round the PCs attempt to avoid going down the alley.)

**Going Through:** The washing lines can be cut with edged weapons. While it is nearly impossible to miss, PCs should still make attack rolls, and accidentally strike the nearest ally for regular damage on a fumbled attack. PCs must deal a total of 15 points of damage, or succeed on a mighty deed to proceed 10' down the alley. Up to three PCs may hew the way forward, working side by side.

Bigger, stronger PCs can charge their way through the lines but must succeed on a DC 15 Strength check to proceed 10'. However, on a failed check, the PC fails to clear the path and—adding insult to injury—is covered in wet laundry, suffering -1d to all actions and ability checks until they can spend an action to struggle free.

Agile PCs can attempt a DC 13 Agility check to dive and roll through a gap in the washing, landing on the other side. As above, on a failed check the PC fails to proceed and is covered in wet laundry, suffering -1d to all actions and ability checks until they can spend an action to struggle free. Note that, unlike cutting a swath or bull-rushing the laundry, diving through the strands does not clear the way for one's allies.

**Going Under:** Working in unison, the PCs can try and pull the strands apart, allowing someone to try and squeeze their way through the gaps provided. It requires the party to spend one round separating the strands, and a second round to pass 10'.



**The Washer-folk:** Scores of washer-folk are spread out throughout the alleyway, looking out from the windows and rooftops. They are not violent, but heckle the PCs for ruining all their hard work. A coin or two buys their peace; otherwise, they do their best to harass and slow the PCs' progress. Alternately, if a PC succeeds in an attack against AC 5 (regardless of damage), the terrified washer-folk slam the window shut and retreat, never to harass the party again.

Each time a square marked "WF" is passed, the PC must appease or intimidate the folk, or be targeted with shower of scalding water and lye (Atk scalding shower +3 ranged (1d5 [3]); Act 1d24 per PC within 10').

**Escaping Underpants Alley:** At the end of the alley, the passage narrows to a single stone staircase rising back to the rooftops, and the PCs are once again engaged in the chase.

#### Fleeting Luck:

- 1 point of fleeting Luck is awarded to each PC who successfully escapes the alley without dealing damage to the washer-folk.

**Area 2-4 — A "Quick" Drink at the Blighted Bloom:** *The now ever-present roar of the mob begins to grow louder. The smoke-filled air behind you blazes orange with firelight. Torches...and you are betting that the plan is not to burn you in effigy. Your surroundings become a blur of cobbled streets, treacherous rooftops, and trash-filled alleyways. Without a way to get off the streets, even briefly, you wonder how much longer you can hold your lead.*

*A sliver of light reaches out like a spectral arm, briefly tearing the darkness of the street asunder. The sounds of merrymaking reach your ears as, below, an assembled crowd yells their approval. A party full of toffs seems your best bet. Following the bauble, you duck in through the window, glancing briefly at the sign below as you enter. It reads, "The Blighted Bloom — Madame Rose, Proprietor".*

*Acrid smoke fills the air of the lounge, music and laughter graces your ears. It looks like an easy task to press through the throngs and escape out the back. As the window shuts behind you, the carousing abruptly halts. Looking around, a large room full of Lankhmar's hard cases openly stare at you, likely even more dangerous than your pursuers. The silence begins to fill with ominous murmuring when the crowd parts and an older woman, her face stained with a strawberry birthmark, stands revealed.*

*Raising her arms, she asks, "What do we do with party crashers?" The crowd roars in response, "Make them DRINK!" The faces of the revelers almost dare you to try to get back out the door. The woman shrugs, "All you need to do is have someone out-drink me." She winks and gives a broad smile.*

**Mob arrival:** The PCs can "rest" in the Blighted Bloom as long as needed. The mob—scouring the rooftops and streets—will not find them here.

It should be quite clear to the PCs that the occupants of this room are far more dangerous than the mob behind them (approximately three score individuals, all of whom are obviously **not** average Lankhmarters). Confronting them in combat is almost certain death.



## CONFESSIONS OF A PIT BOSS

For every tournament round, there is one judge that has no table. Or, depending on your point of view, they have all the tables. I'm talking about the pit boss. What does this judge do? Simply put, they try to ensure that each table has a consistent set of rulings with respect to the other tables. With that being said, there's a lot that goes into it. For the first time, I served this role for rounds 2 and 3.

At first I thought my job would be to simply announce the beginning and the end of the round, while keeping time for the interim. About an hour into it, I was thinking, "How have we survived the past years without someone in this role?"

Because we want the best possible experience for the players, the tournament judges and impacted writers are constantly refining the encounters' interpretations up until a final meeting the evening before the round is run. This results in last-minute improvements that sleep-deprived, voice-depleted, dice-slinging judges need to remember. It doesn't always happen as we intend. Consequently, one of the most important jobs of the pit boss is to monitor what's happening at every table during every encounter. If a judge "goes rogue" (perhaps from an instantaneous moment of inspiration), then the pit boss communicates that to the other judges and all the tables adjust. For example, round 2 involves a chase across the rooftops of Lankhmar, but one of the pregens had a *levitate* spell (d'oh!) which, if well-cast, could circumvent the entire round's challenges. We had previously discussed that Ningauble (who provides the PCs with a guiding healing bauble) would squelch the spell because he didn't want attention drawn to the party or his bauble. Even in the City of Sevenscore Thousand Smokes, flying PCs will draw a more than a few stares. However, at the table, a judge felt it made more sense to let the spell go for the encounter, but with Ning squelching it at the encounter's end. If the pit boss hadn't caught this and communicated it to the other judges, then one table would have had an unfair advantage... a soaring lead above the others! A

similar situation came from the *animal summoning* spell. How many polar bears can roam Thieves' House, and what are their stats? Again, the pit boss makes sure all judges know the answer, and no polar bear has better stats than another.

Of course, situations arise that are completely unanticipated. The PCs must survive a drinking contest at the Blighted Bloom. What if the thief crits a handle poison check? In this case, the judge and pit boss decided a +1d bonus to sobriety was in order, and that was communicated to the other tables. Again, consistency is paramount.

Finally, the pit boss must know when to bend RAW (Rules As Written). All DCC acolytes have the rulebook's Admonitions (p. 314) etched in fey blood on a demon's tongue underneath their pillows. One of the most important of these admonitions is, "Fear no rule." Round 3 contains an encounter penned by a sadistic writer called, "The Overlord's Whipping Post." This encounter reduced 76% of the PCs to states of bleeding out and/or death, and signaled the end of the round for most players. The aforementioned post had magically animated shackles and ties that would hold fast a PC while they were attacked. A typical ruling would be that such victims were entangled/helpless and would grant a +1d to their attackers (core rulebook, p. 78). However, the first table to hit this encounter was being annihilated despite the judge not applying this bonus (to be fair, the encounter's text did not call this out specifically). So, as pit boss, I let it slide and did not hand the judge a d24. PCs were dying anyway; who am I to interfere? When the other party hit the room, I made sure that they were given the same leniency. The former party managed to have 1 PC escape the room, while the latter was TPK'd there. You're welcome, players!

The pit boss role proved to be essential to running a fair, consistent tournament for all involved. When you see your pit boss at the tournament, rest assured they have your back (but there may be a dagger involved).

Madame Rose is no fool and knows that if the PCs are delayed too long, there will be damage to her establishment, but also that letting the PCs run roughshod through the place invites more of the same by others. Both scenarios are bad for business. Her solution? A drinking contest. If even one of the PCs can match her, she will let them through; if they cannot, their unconscious forms will be thrown out onto the street to be torn apart by their pursuers. (Treat the PCs as slain for the purposes of the tournament).

Once the party has a chance to collect their wits, she will gesture for a table to be brought forward and two smoking pitchers find their way to the tabletop. A pair of barmaids come forward to pour the shots.

The rules are simple: one character needs to go drink-for-

drink against Madame Rose. If that character fails, another must pick up where their comrade left off. The beverage served to the party is called the *Trip Attack*, named for one of the Bloom's better-known regulars. The beverage is potent, a soporific increasing in potency with each drink. The first serving requires a DC 8 Fort save, and each subsequent drink taken increases the DC by 1. (See the Drink Tracker table, below.) Rose will expect a winner to endure ten shots (at which point she will call a draw). A failed save results in the character going limp and slumping to the ground unconscious amidst hoots of derision. Even when roused, the lingering effects cause PCs to suffer a -1d to all actions for the remainder of the tournament round. Rose will reduce the required number of drinks by one for each subsequent challenger, although at no time will Madame Rose tell the PCs how many drinks they must endure.

So long as she is treated cordially, Madame Rose treats the PCs in kind. Boorish treatment of Madame Rose draws the anger of the crowd, who will deliberately pour the challenging PC a double in the next round.

**Influencing the outcome:** Warriors may choose to add their deed die to their Fortitude save, but on a failed deed (deed result less than 3), increase the DC of the next shot by 2 instead of 1. Thieves may attempt to charm the barmaid pouring their drink with a DC 17 Personality check (they're professionals, after all), reducing the total number of rounds required by 2.

In addition, certain benisons and dooms can influence the contest as follows:

BENISON

Good Reputation in Certain Circles (Whores' Guild)	Reduces the number of rounds for that PC by 3.
Healer	Well-versed in the treatment of over-indulgence, the PC may ignore their first failed Fort save.
Roaring Skald	Skalds using their victory chants may add +1 to the Fort saves of the drinking PC.
Singing Skald	Skalds succeeding a DC 20 Personality check may entertain the crowd to such a level that Madame Rose will immediately call a draw (see Ending the Encounter).
Split Soul Hero	While one of the linked PCs competes, the impact of the wicked brew is split between them. The characters alternate making saves and the DC only increases for each when they "drink".
Survivor	The PC has +2 when making Fort saves during the challenge.
Tough	The PC may re-roll his first failed save of the challenge.

DOOM

Bad Reputation in Certain Circles (City Watch and Policemen)	No one here is a fan of the watch. The barmaids will pour half shots, causing the drink difficulty to raise every other round instead of each round.
Uncivilized	The PC's coarse gulping and belching diminishes the enjoyment of the contest, reducing the number of rounds by 2.

**Cheating:** Madame Rose will, of course, be cheating. Odds always favor the house, after all. It isn't that the Madame is a bad person, but she is much beloved by the locals and has a reputation to maintain. Only Rose and her staff are aware that her pitcher is not filled with the same smoking brew as

that given to the party – but instead a similar-looking brew that she uses to keep her wits as all around her descend into drunkenness. This is not readily apparent and, unless the deception is actively sought, will not be noticed. Characters actively looking for signs of cheating may make a DC 15 Intelligence check. Succeeding, they will note that Madame Rose seems wholly unaffected by her drinks, which is very suspicious. How the PCs react to this is up to them:

Should it be subtly communicated to Madame Rose that she has been caught cheating, she calls an immediate draw (see *Ending the Encounter*) and the PCs gain the Minor Ally (Madame Rose) benison.

However, should someone openly call Madame Rose a cheater, she immediately downs the contents of both pitchers (drawing gasps from the onlookers). She calls for two fresh pitchers and allows the accuser to select the pitcher that they shall drink (even if they were not the current challenger).

Madame Rose grabs the next pitcher and drains it in a single draught. She will visibly wobble...the PC doing the same must make a DC 25 Fort save. With success, the PC out-matches the surprised Madame Rose and gains the Bad Reputation in Certain Circles (Whore's Guild) doom, as well as Minor Foe (Madame Rose). Failure on the save means death, with no chance of recovering the body. If the PC refuses to drink the pitcher, he triggers the wrath of the Bloom patrons and is similarly doomed. The rest of the offending character's friends will be badly beaten, enduring 1d14 [7] points of damage and suffering the loss of their primary weapons prior to being thrown out into a back alleyway.

PCs may attempt to cheat as well, although their options are certainly more limited:

- Attempting to empty a glass without drinking requires either a DC 15 Pick Pocket check or a Luck check, with each subsequent tossed beverage increasing the DC by 1.
- Slyly reducing the potency of the pitcher of drink may also be accomplished via a DC 15 Handle Poison check. The PC gains +5 to their Fort saves for the rest of the contest.
- Spell use will be noticed by one of the several casters present on a failed result, as will any blatant casting. This results in the party being beaten as if they overtly called out Madame Rose's cheating (as above). If the magic is subtle and gives the appearance of the PC winning (such as successfully casting *sleep* on Madame Rose as she drinks), the PCs manage to impress the crowd and win their approval. If Madame Rose is directly targeted, her saves are Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +4.

Finally, the PCs may choose to attempt to flee or fight. If so, their foes show no quarter, though their morale can be broken just as the mob's.

**Patrons of the Blighted Bloom:** Init +2; Atk various weapons +12 melee (1d6+4 [7]); AC 16; HD 10d8; hp 50; MV 30'; Act special; SP attacks all targets within the Blighted Bloom, half damage from non-area attacks; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +6; AL C.



**Ending the Encounter:** The simplest way to overcome the challenge is to succeed in the requisite number of Fort saves (10 or fewer). At that point, Madame Rose will admit that no one has ever outdrank her, but she is willing to call it a draw. As a token of her esteem, she will give each character a shot of the house restorative, Rose's Water, which will take immediate effect when consumed (heals one hit die, no recuperation period or Luck expenditure necessary).

If the PCs somehow manage the appearance of winning either by matching Madame Rose or by ending the match early, they are hailed as conquering heroes. The celebrants present whoop, clap them on the back, and foist several drinks on them (regular ale, thankfully) before escorting them safely

out the back entrance to carry on their escape. PCs gain the Good Reputation in Certain Circles (Slums) benison. Additionally, one of the patrons slips a PC a sheet of folded parchment, whispering, "Ningauble sends its respects." Inscribed on the sheet is player **Handout H**.

**Fleeting Luck:**

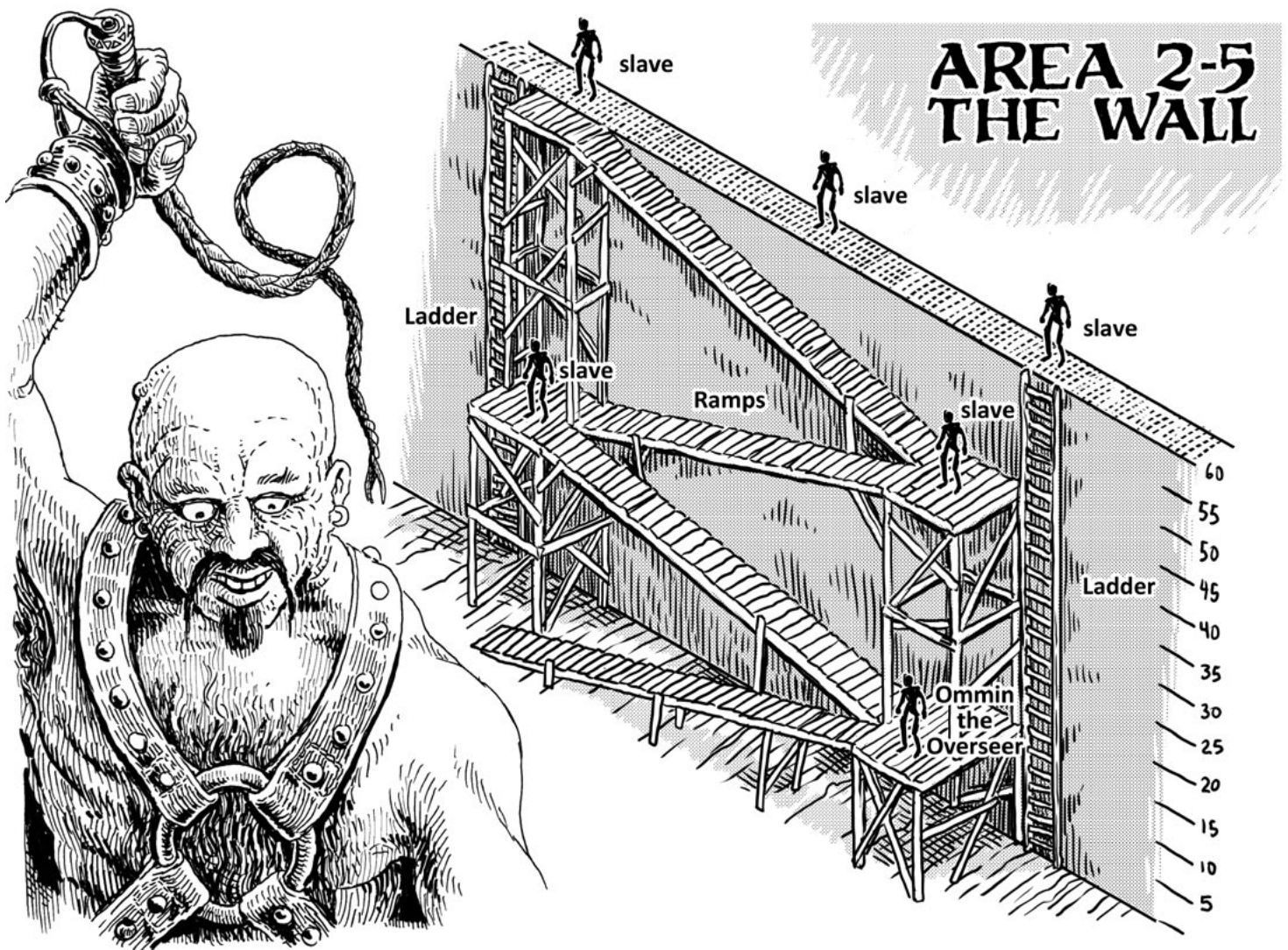
- 1 point of fleeting Luck is awarded to each PC deliberately drinking a double (+2 to the stated DC of the round, and all subsequent rounds).
- 2 points of fleeting Luck are awarded to any PC who catches Madame Rose cheating and ignores it.

**DRINK TRACKER**

Chal- lenger	Round 1 DC 8	Round 2 DC 9	Round 3 DC 10	Round 4 DC 11	Round 5 DC 12	Round 6 DC 13	Round 7 DC 14	Round 8 DC 15	Round 9 DC 16	Round 10 DC 17
#1										
#2										X
#3									X	X
#4								X	X	X
#5							X	X	X	X







**Area 2-5 — The Wall:** The chase continues! Before you stands one of the most enormous walls you've ever seen, an edifice to Lankhmarian hubris, clad in several layers of wooden scaffolding swarming with slaves ending their day's long labor. There are chains and ladders, and barrels of construction material being rolled up diagonal walkways to the top of a wall that's 60' off the ground. Those four ramps zigzag, scarlike, to the top.

Ningauble's Bauble confirms you'll need to get up the scaffolding and over to the other side. A bell rings, and the workers begin to trickle down the scaffolding and off the building site, leaving only a handful behind. Now's your chance! One of them, a mountain of a man, stands atop the scaffold, staring warily down at you.

You've heard of him before: Omin the Overseer. Omin is brutal, short-tempered, and the only thing greater than his cruelty is his strength. He's stripped to the waist, wearing leather trousers and a thick leather belt containing the tools of his trade. Studded harnesses crisscross his hairy chest, as he stands with a red-striped barrel over his head. You'll need to get a move on, as you can hear the ragged footsteps of your pursuers echoing down the twilight-gray alleyways of the city toward you.

**Give the players Handout I.**

**Mob arrival:** The mob locates the PCs in 5 rounds. They are slow to ascend the scaffolding, fully aware that the bottle-

neck eliminates their strength in numbers. Brave individuals ascend the ladders and scaffolds but present little threat to the PCs. So while there are, effectively, a limitless number of foes, they can only attack the PCs singly. If the PCs ascend via multiple means (some taking the ladder, others ascending the ramps), the last PC of each particular chain is attacked. If the PCs stick together, they are only subjected to a single foe, but if each PC tries a different route, each PC is beset by an attacker from below.

**Example:** All the PCs ascend the ramps. Only the PC furthest back in the marching order is attacked, and only by a single foe. Slain members of the mob are replaced the following round.

Their reduced stats are listed here:

**Mob Participant:** Init -1; Atk improvised weapons -1 melee (1d4+1 [3]); AC 13; HD 1d3; hp 2; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will -3; AL C.

## COUNTDOWN TO MOB

(1 box per round)

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This final encounter takes place primarily in the vertical plane, with Ommin the Overseer and his remaining workers doing their best to deter the PCs from scaling the wall. Judges should track PCs' relative height on the ladders and scaffolding as falling is a constant danger.

**Ommin the Overseer:** Init +0; Atk rod +2 melee (1d6+2 [5]) or whip +0 melee (1d3 [2] plus trip); AC 13; HD 3d12+3; hp 23; MV 30'; Act 1d24; SP rolled barrels (see below); SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +8; AL L.

**Ommin's Whip:** On a successful attack, the target must succeed on a DC 5 Ref save or be knocked from the scaffolding, taking 1d6 [3] falling damage per 10'. The crack of the hated whip can also dispel any magical sleep effects placed on the overseer's slaves.

**Slaves (5):** Init +0; Atk hammer +0 melee (1d4+2 [4]) or hurled masonry +3 ranged (1d10 [5] plus special); AC 12; HD 1d12+2; hp 8 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP thrown masonry (targets climbing the scaffolding or ladders must make a DC 10 Fort save or fall); SV Fort +2, Ref -1, Will +0; AL N.

Due to the scaffolding, the angle of attack, and the plethora of hanging chains and ropes, both Ommin and the slaves receive +6 to their AC against ranged attacks from below.

While players are certain to come up with their own clever and unique means of topping the wall, here are the most common routes (along with Ommin's counters):

**Ladders:** There are two wooden ladders nailed to the front of the scaffold that reach all the way to the top of the wall. Characters (as well as Ommin and his slaves) can climb 15' with a single action, or 30' on a double move. The slaves hurl bricks, stones and bits of masonry down on PCs attempting to scale the ladders.

**Ramps:** Characters attempting to scale the wall via the ramps are assaulted by Ommin's massive barrels. He can hurl a single barrel down his current ramp each round.

Ommin has his pick of two sizes of barrel: hogshead (smallish) and tun (huge). The barrels have a variety of contents—water, sand, rocks, tools—that cause them to roll in various ways. The barrels are color-coded, with a thick stripe in the middle, and astute PCs may determine a pattern as they roll toward them.

**Red:** Always rolls straight down the middle, no deviation or bounce.

**Blue:** Always pulls to the roller's left (the PC's right).

**Green:** Always pulls to the roller's right (the PC's left).

**Yellow:** Always bounces, no matter what.

Tun barrels, because of their size, are always marked in Red, and roll straight toward them. Hogshead barrels can be any color, even red.

In order to avoid being struck by a barrel, the player must declare that their character takes one of four moves: sidestep left, sidestep right, duck, or jump.

Judges should ask the PC's choice the instant the barrel is described; PCs simply cannot just "wait and see" or they risk being hit and flung into the void. If a player answers correctly, they may make a DC 8 Ref save, including check penalties, to dodge the barrel and have it roll harmlessly past (and possibly targeting the next PC in line). If the player answers incorrectly, or fails their save, make an attack roll as follows:

**Hogshead Barrel:** Atk 1d20+5 (1d7 [4], DC 7 Fort save or knocked from the scaffolding).

**Tun Barrel:** Atk 1d24+5 (1d16 [8], DC 15 Fort save or knocked from the scaffolding).

The barrels continue to roll down a single ramp until striking a PC or coming to the end of the scaffolding. They do not roll down on to lower levels, and tumble off a ramp as soon as a PC is struck.

*Example:* Four PCs reach the third level. Ommin hurls a barrel. If he misses the first PC in line, the second is targeted, and so on, until the barrel rolls off the end of the scaffold. If the barrel strikes any PC in line, subsequent characters on the same level are safe.

Judge's note: PCs are certain to come up with other means of defeating the incoming barrels. In addition to spells, any successful Mighty Deed of Arms dealt with a melee weapon against AC 10 is sufficient to destroy a barrel or knock it off the scaffolding.

**Scaling the Wall:** Armed with sufficient skills or magic, parties may opt to forgo the challenge of the scaffolding all together. However, PCs on the wall are open to attacks from Ommin and his men, as well as the multitude of archers defending the Rainbow Palace. Each round, each PC atop the wall is targeted by each of the following attacks until all PCs have ascended:

- **Ommin:** Atk thrown stone or tool +5 ranged (1d10 [5] plus DC 10 Fort save or fall).
- **Slave:** Atk thrown stone or tool +3 ranged (1d10 [5] plus DC 10 Fort save or fall).
- **Rainbow Palace Archer (3):** Atk shortbow +1 ranged (1d6 [3] plus DC 5 Fort save or fall).

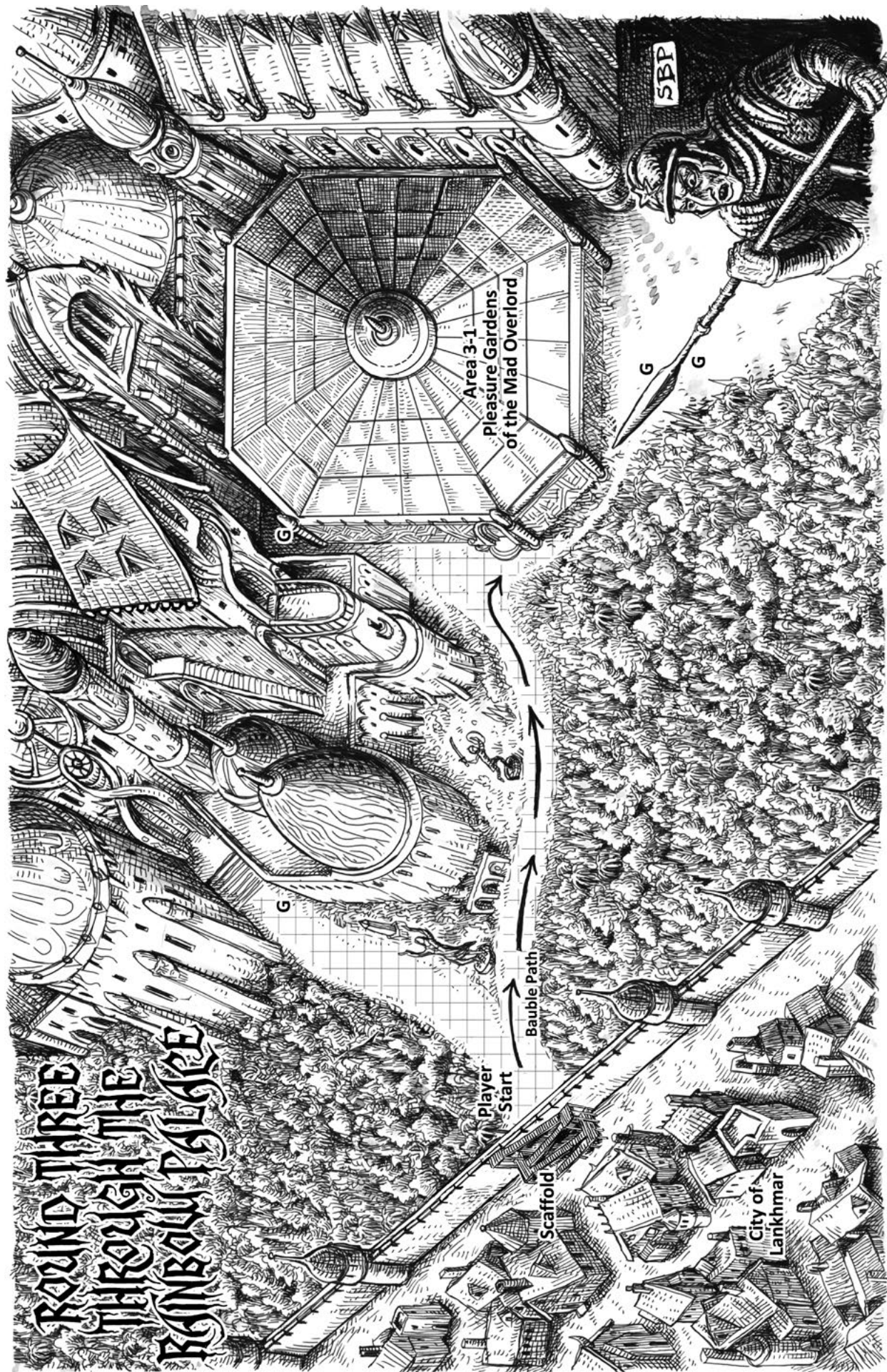
**Fleeing Luck:**

- 1 point of fleeing Luck is awarded to each PC reaching the top of the wall.

**Area 2-5a — Victory:** *You stand proudly atop the wall, the night mists blowing through your hair. Before you rests the City of the Black Toga in all her decadent glory. In the distance, the River Hlal, a shining ribbon of industry and trade, winds its way to sea—and there, directly ahead, lies your destination: the shining Rainbow Palace.*

*The mob below gives a frustrated roar—sure to alert the palace guards and continue this interminable chase. Wiping the sweat from brows and taking one last breath, you and your companions descend into the maze of opulent courtyards.*

*The fabled Rainbow Palace awaits.*





# ROUND 3: THROUGH THE RAINBOW PALACE



he final round of the tournament follows the PCs' flight through the Rainbow Palace of the Overlord and to the black sloop moored outside at the Royal Docks.

As in the previous rounds, the PCs are aided by **Ningable's Bauble**. Having nearly reached its goal, the bauble almost drags the party down the safest route to the sloop. However—as the PCs have learned—"safest" is seldom synonymous with "safe", and deadly challenges await our heroes ere they can flee the City of the Black Toga.

## GENERAL FEATURES

Round 3 spans the breadth of the maze-like palace, but due to the bauble's guidance, the PCs experience but the merest sliver of its wonders. Nonetheless, the parts they view do not fall short of its gilded reputation: the entire palace is a work of art, from lazure walls to vaulted panels of stained glass, to tiny, complex ceramic mosaics set into seemingly forgotten corners. Everywhere the PCs turn they are confronted with an abundance of wealth, art, and beauty—all so commonplace as to be rendered banal.

By the time the PCs reach the palace, night has fallen over the City of Sevenscore Thousand Smokes. But the palace seldom sleeps, save after only the most debauched bacchanalia. Mirrored lanterns have been lit, casting a soft, cool glow over the wooded grounds and down the long, tiled halls. Except where noted, characters have no need of light sources.

**The Guardsmen:** Throughout the round, the PCs are chased by palace guards (seen as "G" on the map). Any time a party dallies in a non-keyed encounter for more than a round or two, the palace guard catches up to them.

As in previous rounds, this mechanic is intended to keep the PCs moving. The soldiers are implacable, and—for the purposes of the tournament—inexhaustible.

These same forces find the PCs if they ever attempt to leave the bauble's path (deviating from the tournament). Unlike Round 2, the PCs have no opportunity to backtrack. Attempts to double back, or work around (or over) obstacles are immediately met by the brute force of the Overlord's men. Nor can the Overlord's troops be dispersed—unlike mobs, they fight to the death.

For each judge's sanity, assume that no more than 3 guards can attack a single PC at a time. The sole exception is flying characters. These poor souls are immediately targeted by no less than 20 crossbow men apiece, each launching black clouds of whistling bolts into the cool air.

**Guardsmen** (∞): Init +0; Atk spear +4 melee (1d6+2 [4]) or crossbow +0 ranged (1d6 [3]); AC 16; HD 2d12; hp 12; MV 30'; Act 3d20 per PC; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will Immune; AL L.

**Player Start:** *You and your companions slip quietly down the wall and into the forested grounds surrounding the Rainbow Palace.*

*Above, the citadel's domes gleam like molten gold in the dying rays of the day. Below, the deepening shadows offer a moment's respite to catch your breath and bind your wounds.*

*Above, on the wall, a cry goes up. The guards have been alerted to your passage! Gritting your teeth, you consult the accursed bauble once again and it draws you deeper into the Overlord's pleasure palace...*

**Area 3-1 — The Pleasure Gardens of the Mad Overlord:** *The bauble brings you face-to-face with a massive set of doors wrought from a king's ransom of hammered gold. Engraved upon the door in High Lankhmarese is a flowery script that reads as follows:*

*"Born of the union of water and sun,  
A wonder of beauty if ever was one.  
A mantel of majesty worn by the sky,  
No one can touch it, but all dreamers try."*

The golden double doors are unlocked, and despite their prodigious size, swing silently inward with even the gentlest push.

The script upon the door is actually a riddle. Its answer ("rainbow") holds the clue to safely traverse the pleasure gardens beyond.

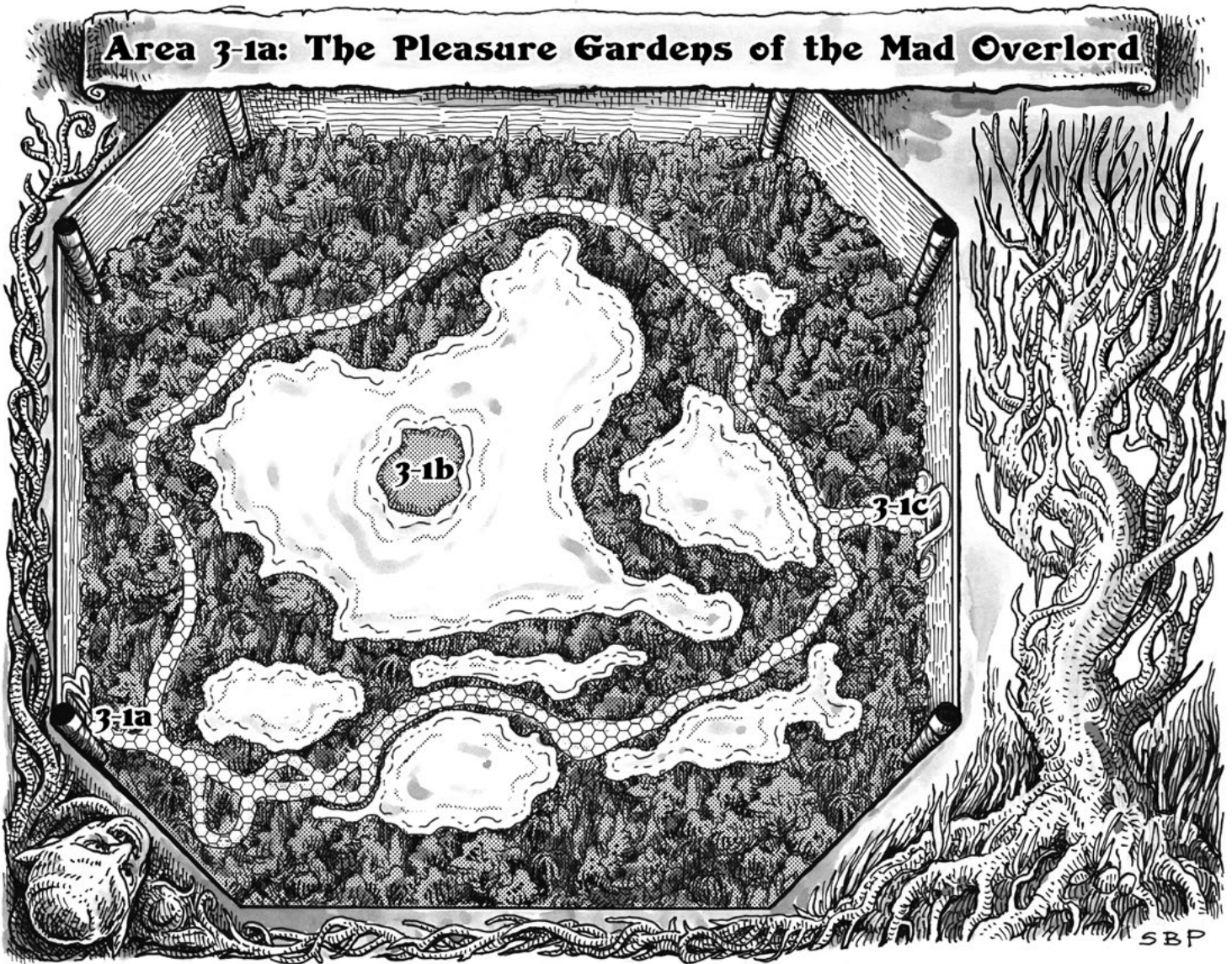
**Area 3-1a — The Pleasure Gardens:** *From the open doorway swells a hazy yellow glow and the strangling humidity of a plague-hot wind. Below a sky of sickly yellow mist stretches a dismal swamp of twisted thorn trees and treacherous pools of dark stagnant water as far as the eye can see. A multi-colored path comprised of brightly-colored orange, violet, blue, red, indigo, green, and yellow tiles cuts through the treacherous green fastness in a random and dizzying pattern.*

Another example of the fantastic monarch's dainty whims and foolish fantasy, this massive swampland is nothing more than a gigantic greenhouse built beneath a colossal crystal dome that serves as a garden of dark delights. Teeming with poisonous plants and savage creatures, it is a nightmare of madness and death. Yet so long as the rainbow path is correctly navigated, anyone may safely traverse the pleasure gardens without fear of reprisal.

**Rainbow Path:** Comprised of multi-colored hexagonal tiles the size of a warrior's shield, each large stone tile bears the starfish emblem of the Overlord in bas-relief. For game purposes, up to two PCs may stand upon a single tile in unison.

To safely navigate the rainbow path and thereby traverse the swamplands, the PCs must step on tiles corresponding with the order of the colors of the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. PCs must travel upon the path by moving continuously from red through violet, then back through to red. This pattern must be repeated for the full length of the trail as follows:

## Area 3-1a: The Pleasure Gardens of the Mad Overlord



R - O - Y - G - B - I - V - I - B - G - Y - O - R - O - Y - G  
- B - I - V ...etc.

Once the PCs identify the correct pattern, they may safely travel to area 3-1c without incident, as the creatures within the garden have learned to stay clear of the dangerous colored path.

Failure to follow the correct pattern while traveling the rainbow path results in different outcomes, dependent upon the color of the tile tread upon. Note that PCs who step onto the path without first declaring the color of tile they wish to tread upon must roll 1d7 to randomly determine the color: (1) red; (2) orange; (3) yellow; (4) green; (5) blue; (6) indigo; (7) violet.

Stepping upon a colored tile out of the above sequence results in the following:

**Red:** Vaporizing of blood. PC's blood begins to vaporize and seep from their pores as a crimson mist, their body slowly collapsing like a punctured bladder. The affected PC suffers 6d6 [21] damage (DC 15 Fort save for half).

**Orange:** Reverse gravity! The PC shoots 1d100' [50'] into the air and then comes crashing back down for 1d6 [4] points of damage per 10' fallen [20] (DC 15 Reflex save for half).

**Yellow:** Spell storm. Stepping upon this colored tile causes a single randomly-determined spell from every spellcaster's grimoire within 100' to automatically misfire.

**Green:** Corrupting sickness. The PC's internal organs begin to fester and swell with pus as they rot from the inside out. The affected PC suffers 4d6 [14] damage (DC 15 Fort save for half).

**Blue:** Lightning surge. A magical surge of electricity bursts forth from the tile into the offending character and then arcs into every living target within 100' for 3d6 [10] points damage (DC 15 Fort save for half, double damage if wearing metal armor).

**Indigo:** Watery grave. The PC's body and lungs begin to fill with stagnant swamp water, as torrents of slime-crusted scum pour forth from every orifice until they are reduced to nothing more than a bloated misshaped cadaver. The affected PC suffers 5d6 [18] points of damage (DC 15 Fort save to half).

**Violet:** Teleportation. Anyone who steps upon this tile out of order is immediately transported to area 3-1b.

**Area 3-1b — Isle of Statues:** *You stand upon a small island, nothing more than a rocky mound covered in waist-high sawgrass that stirs ever slightly in the humid air. The smell of tepid decay rises from the dark, stagnant water that circles the isle. All about you stand stone statues of men and women partially obscured in the tall grass. Each is a masterwork in detail and craftsmanship. Just a short distance off is a raised platform, on which rests a majestic seashell throne that glimmers beneath the sickly yellow haze above.*

Sitting forlorn amidst the scum-crusted waters of the pleasure garden's central pond rests the Isle of Statues: a desolate, rocky mound covered in tall knife-edged sawgrass and dozens of intricate stone statues. The statues depict lifelike men and women, each trapped in their final moments of absolute dread—for upon the isle rests the Overlord's prized pet, a wicked lamia that slithers within the sawgrass silently as the shadow of Death, eager to turn its next victim into another portrait of stone.

Characters teleported to the isle appear at the base of a raised dais amidst a cluster of statues, each with the expression of absolute fear etched upon their stone faces. Upon the raised dais rests an empty bejeweled seashell throne, a decadent viewing place for the Overlord to watch his victims succumb to the dread lamia. Along with a fortune in embedded jewels, a peculiar object rests upon the throne: a delicate silver wand tipped with two crystal starfish positioned end to end. The starfish wand acts as a pair of demented theater glasses; when held to the eyes, they allow the viewer to gaze upon the lamia without being turned to stone themselves.

**Lamia:** Init +4; Atk tail whip +5 melee (1d6+3 [7]); AC 15; HD 7d8; hp 35; MV 50'; Act 1d20; SP petrifying visage (DC 17 Will save or turned to stone); SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +4; AL C.

The lamia appears as a beautiful woman with ivory white skin and full red lips, yet the tall sawgrass obscures her slithering serpent body below. Each round, any who gaze upon the lamia must succeed on a DC 17 Will save or be permanently turned to stone.

The lamia cannot be turned. For purposes of *ray of enfeeblement* and similar spells, it has a Strength score of 18.

Slaying (or otherwise defeating the lamia) causes a rainbow bridge to rise out of the muck. The bridge presents the same threats as the rainbow path, and must be traversed in the same manner.

#### Fleeting Luck:

- 3 points of fleeting Luck are awarded to anyone who successfully uses the Starfish Spectacles.

**Area 3-1c — Three-Gem Lock:** *The rainbow path comes to an end before a massive set of double doors wrought from polished ocean-blue stone. Its smooth surface is stamped with images of the Overlord's pleasure barge in bas-relief. Three large gemstones, each the size of a man's fist, are embedded within the door where a lock should be. One stone is yellow, one is blue, and the other red. Above the glimmering gemstones is a carved message written in High*





Lankhmarese:

*"The key to this door is a type of fruit*

*But the fruit is not a lime.*

*There are no other words that you may speak*

*With which this word can rhyme."*

The doorway serves as the final test within the pleasure garden and leads to the depths of the Overlord's palace beyond. The doorway has no handles or fixtures, and its surface offers no bolt or catch.

To unlock the door, the PCs must first decipher the answer to the riddle ("orange"), then create the color orange on the three-gem lock by pressing both the yellow and red stones simultaneously. Pressing any other stone or combination of stones results in the immediate crystallization of the offender: with a blood-curdling scream of pain, the PC's flesh and bones crystallize into bright orange translucent glass (yet another clue to the riddle's answer) before bursting into countless shards. Note that there is no saving throw for this action—and the result is death, with no chance of recovering the body.

Once the correct combination of gemstones is pressed, the door turns a radiantly orange color and swings open silently.

There are a number of alternate methods that may be employed. If the PCs attempt any of the below options, read or paraphrase the results.

**Climb the crystal dome:** *A curved wall of yellow crystal stretch-*

*es upward and is lost in the haze above. Its smooth surface radiates with an intense heat.*

Comprised of ensorcelled yellow crystal, the great dome encompasses the entire pleasure garden and radiates with powerful heat. Anyone attempting to climb the dome (DC 20 Climb Sheer Surfaces check every 20') finds the task to be both difficult and dangerous. Along with its incredibly smooth surface, the temperature of the crystal intensifies the higher one climbs, dealing a cumulative 1d6 [4] points of heat damage every 20' climbed as follows:

Climbing 20' = 1d6 [4] points of damage;

Climbing 40' = 1d6 [4] + 2d6 [8] points of damage;

Climbing 60' = 1d6 [4] + 2d6 [8] + 3d6 [12] points of damage;

Climbing 80' = 1d6 [4] + 2d6 [8] + 3d6 [12] + 4d6 [16] points of damage; and so forth.

Note that the dome is 200' high.

**Fly over the garden:** *You take flight above the twisted swamp trees and into the sickly yellow mist that encompasses the sky. Struggling to see within the pallid fog, you manage to catch sight of numerous wraithlike shadows and dark filmy wings cutting through the haze, and have the sudden realization that you are not alone.*

PCs who attempt to fly over the garden must venture above the tree line and into the low hanging yellow mist that clouds the sky. Anything that takes flight within the yellow mist is immediately set upon by a ravenous flock of saw-beaked





cadaver birds that prowl the sickly haze above. Cadaver birds are rainbow-hued creatures no larger than pigeons, with slick black wings and long beaks filled with razor sharp teeth. They swarm like a pack of aerial piranha, descending upon their victim in a feeding frenzy. Many an unwitting soul have witnessed their companions venture into the yellow mist—only to have the hazy sky begin to rain blood amid screams of ghastly torment.

**Cadaver Birds (flock):** Init +5; Atk biting swarm +5 melee (3d6 [10]); AC 15; HD 6d8; hp 30; MV 50'; Act 1d20; SP attack all flying PCs, swarm traits, immune to slashing and piercing damage, half damage from bludgeoning weapons; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +2; AL C.

**Travel through the swamp:** *Your path grows more sodden with each step as you struggle through the tangle of slime and mud of elder swamplands. Treacherous vines and creepers snake their way between half-sunken trees, their tortured roots gasping through the tepid decay. You stumble through a poisoned maze, the oppressive odors of lush growth and fetid corruption permeating the air.*

Traversing the swamplands is a deadly foray into a poisoned realm dotted with sinkholes and toxic fauna crawling with giant worms, venomous snakes, and claw-footed swamp spiders. Anyone who ventures off the rainbow path is immediately affected by the narcotic odors of lush growth.

Each round spent within the twisted forest robs its victim of vitality, dealing 1d6 [4] points of temporary Strength damage (DC 15 Fort save for half) and 1d6 [4] points Personality

damage (DC 15 Will save for half). PCs who fall to zero in either ability score are reduced to nothing more than feeble invalids who grope along in the dirt and die. Note that the ability loss is regained normally once the character is no longer within the garden's cruel vegetation.

**Swim a stagnant pond:** *A pool of foul smelling, scum-crusted water stretches off in the distance, its surface half obscured by coiling vapors and oozing mist.*

Attempting to cross a stagnant pond is no easy task—the muddy bog bottom sucks at the PCs' boots, threatening to pull them down deep into the slimy bottom (DC 15 Strength check to avoid). Each round that a PC is stuck in the muck results in 1d4 [3] points of Stamina damage. When a PC's Stamina score reaches zero, they sink and drown beneath the putrid slime. Stamina lost in this manner is recovered once the PC returns to the rainbow path.

**Area 3-2 — The Feathered Fête:** *A vast ballroom spills out before you, occupied by scores of dancers, flitting about like many-hued birds. The male dancers wear elaborate velour vests and blossoming trousers that scintillate and sparkle in the diffuse candle light, while the women wear diaphanous silk gowns that seem to float upon the slightest breeze. Both genders wear elaborate masks of feather and down — the bright plumage of a thousand impossible birds.*

*The cavernous ballroom floor is set with an untold number of rainbow tiles set in a seemingly-random array, which the dancers all respect in their careful, sharp steps.*

*At the far end of the ballroom is a grand stage topped by jerky*

automatons cast like skeletal players of taut flesh and bone. They strike a staccato, discordant tune, an uncanny accompaniment to the dancers' graceful precision. Ningauble's Bauble draws you away from the grand stage towards a small service door, nearly hidden in the far wall.

The ball itself offers little reward or threat to the PCs. The reward—a subtle one—is concealed in a refuse closet adjacent to the great hall.

Unless all the PCs take great pains to avoid notice (either through magic, disguise or other clever means) the dancers immediately freeze, pointedly ignoring the PCs, yet also refusing to continue the dance. (The eerie music plays on.)

All the PCs must do is simply cross the ballroom, picking their way through the maze of dancers (regardless of tiles or music). However, the longer the PCs dally (or the players dither), the greater the risk. On the 5th round after the PCs enter, guardsmen burst into the chamber.

The guard calls out for the PCs' surrender but doesn't halt in their assault, immediately launching volleys of quarrels across the dance floor. Another 1d10 [5] guardsmen arrive each round.

**Guardsmen (15):** Init +0; Atk spear +4 melee (1d6+2 [4]) or crossbow +0 ranged (1d6 [3]); AC 16; HD 2d8; hp 8 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; AL L.

To escape, the PCs must simply pass through the service door, as directed by the bauble. The dancers do nothing to stop (or even acknowledge) the PCs and the guardsmen only appear as noted above. The longer the PCs tarry, the more challenging the encounter becomes.

As the PCs exit, they note a slim coat room: *The narrow closet overflows with strange costumes and masks. It stinks of human sweat, mingled with sickly perfumes and the hot, acrid smell of exotic spices.*

The closet contains discarded gowns, costumes, and masks—all that are worn for a single fête before being cast away. The costumes are festooned with small gemstones, and any single outfit is easily worth 1d6 x 10 gold rilks.

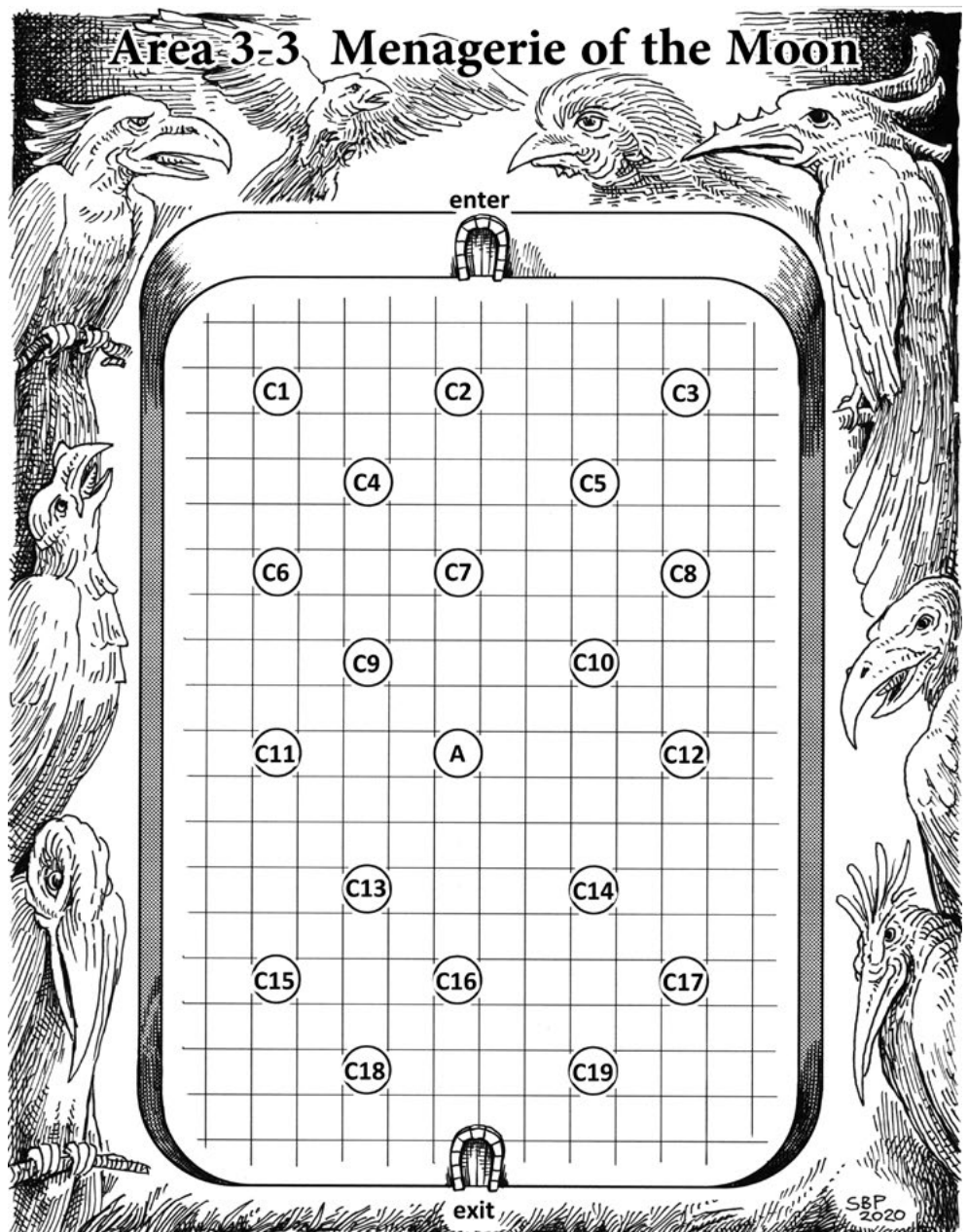
Each PC can find a costume to wear, though the cumbersome garb inflicts a -2d penalty to actions when worn. However, these same costumes accord the PCs no shortage of boons later in the round (see area 3-11 for

more details).

**Area 3-3 — Menagerie of the Moon:** You find yourselves in a richly-decorated domed chamber. A score of large gilded cages—some hanging from thick chains, some on heavy stands—fill the room. Inside the cages are a number of colorful birds of unusual size, each more fantastical than the last. A beautiful fresco covers the ceiling 40' above you, showing exotic scenes of lush foliage. The fresco is divided into 13 sections, each showcasing a different season and background. A single exit door occupies the opposite wall.

At your entrance, the menagerie of strange birds begins to raise a cacophony of cries and caws.

This is one of the Overlord's menageries, devoted to housing his collection of fantastical birds from across the known lands. In the center of the domed ceiling is a small circular portal, easily overlooked as just another part of the decorative fresco unless the players state they are studying the dome in detail. Even from the floor, the 1'-diameter portal appears far too narrow to escape through. The only other ob-





## BIRD DETAILS

Roll d10	Head	Feathers	Special
1	Owl	Blood red	Breathe fire 3/day in a 10' x 30' cone, causing 2d6 [7] damage (DC 15 Ref save for half).
2	Vulture	Spotless white	Poison bite (DC 10 Fort save or additional 1d4 [2] damage).
3	Heron	Deep orange cape	Phase-shifted. Incoming attacks automatically miss 50% of the time.
4	Pheasant	Crown of golden feathers	Half damage from non-magical weapons and fire.
5	Quetzal	Luminescent (5' illumination)	Paralyzing gaze (DC 14 Will save or be paralyzed for 2d6 [7] rounds).
6	Puffin	Variegated pattern of colors	Two heads. Additional bite attack each round.
7	Kingfisher	Iridescent blue and green	Scaled wings. +4 AC.
8	Hoopoe	Oily	Giant. +2 HD, +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls; may grasp man-sized or smaller targets with a successful claw attack.
9	Eagle	Braided into rope-like chains	Blood-sucking. Successful bite drains 1d4 [2] temporary Stamina.
10	Hummingbird	Moss-like patches	Piercing cry 3/day. All living targets within 30' must make a DC 15 Fort save or suffer 1d6 [3] damage.

vious exit is a locked door opposite the entrance. PCs making their way past the cages find no way to open the door – only a strange keyhole shaped like a feather.

On the face of it, the solution appears to be to find the correct feather from amongst all the birds and use it to unlock the door. The task is not easy, however. As it is close to their feeding time, each bird is hungry and extremely aggressive, and will break free and attack if a PC gets within 5' of its cage, making retrieval of the feathers difficult. A PC can attempt to pluck a feather from a bird, requiring either a Mighty Deed of Arms or a PC to spend 1 point of Luck to attempt a called shot when making a regular attack roll. This Luck point provides no bonus to the attack roll; it simply allows them to try to grab the feather.

Complicating matters is that if one bird is freed, the remainder struggle to break out of their cages as they sense that food is near. This results in the release of an additional bird every round until either all of the birds are released, or until all currently released birds have been defeated, temporarily quelling the activity of the remaining caged birds, and giving the party a break if they manage to defeat all the freed birds before the next one breaks out of its confinement.

A PC offering a bird food may make a DC 15 Personality check to calm the creature down. PCs with some type of animal-handling background may treat the check as a trained skill; otherwise, the roll is treated as untrained, requiring the player to roll a d10 for the check. With success, the bird is calmed and no longer attacks the party unless attacked or otherwise harmed (including plucking a feather). Calming a single bird in this manner does not prevent subsequent birds from breaking free of their cages and attacking; a separate Personality check must be made for each.

The birds in the menagerie are all fantastical and unfamil-

iar to even the most well-travelled PC, some of them being singular examples of their species. In addition to the central cage housing the akla (see below), there are 19 cages scattered throughout the chamber, each housing a unique exotic bird. As PCs open or examine a cage, or a bird is freed as a result of forcing the cage open, roll on the table below for the characteristics of the menagerie bird it contains, rolling a d10 for each column (for the purposes of tournament play, the cages contain pre-determined birds – see the map and numbered key that follows). All of the birds except the akla use the same base stat block, modified by any special abilities indicated on the table.

**Menagerie Bird (19):** Init +0; Atk bite +3 melee (2d3 [4]) or claw +4 melee (1d4 [2]) or special; AC 14; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP as type; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

The following stat blocks should be used in tournament play.:

**(Cage 1) Variegated Vulture:** Init +0; Atk bite +3 melee (2d3 [4] plus blood-sucking) or claw +4 melee (1d4 [2]); AC 14; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP blood-sucking (successful bite drains 1d4 [2] temporary Stamina; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 2) Oily Hoopoe:** Init +0; Atk bite +3 melee (2d3 [4]) or claw +4 melee (1d4 [2]); AC 14; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP phase-shifted (incoming attacks automatically miss 50% of the time); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 3) Spotless White Hummingbird:** Init +0; Atk bite +3 melee (2d3 [4]) or claw +4 melee (1d4 [2]) or piercing cry; AC 14; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP piercing cry (up to 3/day, all living targets within 30' must make a DC 15 Fort save or suffer 1d6 [3] damage); SV Fort +3, Ref +2,

Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 4) Luminescent Puffin:** Init +0; Atk claw +4 melee (1d4 [2]) plus poison; AC 14; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP poison (DC 10 Fort save or additional 1d4 [2] damage); 5' illumination; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 5) Golden-Crowned Vulture:** Init +0; Atk bite +3 melee (2d3 [4]) or claw +4 melee (1d4 [2]); AC 14; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP phase-shifted (incoming attacks automatically miss 50% of the time); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 6) Iridescent Blue and Green Owl:** Init +0; Atk bite +3 melee (2d3 [4]) or claw +4 melee (1d4 [2]); AC 14; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP half damage from non-magical weapons and fire; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 7) Rope-Braided Eagle:** Init +0; Atk bite +3 melee (2d3 [4]) or claw +4 melee (1d4 [2]); AC 18; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP scaled wings; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 8) Moss-Patched Puffin:** Init +0; Atk bite +3 melee (2d3 [4]) or claw +4 melee (1d4 [2]) or breathe fire; AC 14; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP breathe fire (up to 3/day, 10' x 30' cone causes 2d6 [7] damage, DC 15 Ref save for half); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 9) Two-Headed Orange-Caped Pheasant:** Init +0; Atk bite +3 melee (2d3 [4]); AC 14; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 2d20; SP two-headed; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 10) Giant Blood-Red Hoopoe:** Init +0; Atk bite +5 melee (2d3+2 [6]) or claw +6 melee (1d4+2 [4]); AC 14; HD 4d8+6; hp 25; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP giant (with successful claw attack, may grasp man-sized or smaller targets); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 11) Moss-Patched Kingfisher:** Init +0; Atk bite +3 melee (2d3 [4]) or claw +4 melee (1d4 [2]) or piercing cry; AC 14; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP piercing cry (up to 3/day, all living targets within 30' must make a DC 15 Fort save or suffer 1d6 [3] damage); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 12) Spotless White Heron:** Init +0; Atk bite +3 melee (2d3 [4]) or claw +4 melee (1d4 [2]); AC 14; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP half damage from non-magical weapons and fire; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 13) Golden-Crowned Owl:** Init +0; Atk bite +3 melee (2d3 [4]) or claw +4 melee (1d4 [2]) or paralyzing gaze; AC 14; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP paralyzing gaze (DC 14 Will save or be paralyzed for 2d6 [7] rounds); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 14) Giant Oily Puffin:** Init +0; Atk bite +5 melee (2d3+2 [6]) or claw +6 melee (1d4+2 [4]); AC 14; HD 4d8+6; hp 25; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP giant (with successful claw attack, may grasp man-sized or smaller targets); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 15) Deep Orange-Caped Kingfisher:** Init +0; Atk bite

+3 melee (2d3 [4]) or claw +4 melee (1d4 [2]); AC 14; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP half damage from non-magical weapons and fire; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 16) Two-Headed Luminescent Heron:** Init +0; Atk bite +3 melee (2d3 [4]); AC 14; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 2d20; SP two-headed, 5' illumination; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 17) Blood-Red Quetzal:** Init +0; Atk claw +4 melee (1d4 [2]) plus poison; AC 14; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP poison (DC 10 Fort save or additional 1d4 [2] damage); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 18) Iridescent Blue and Green Eagle:** Init +0; Atk bite +3 melee (2d3 [4]) or claw +4 melee (1d4 [2]) or breathe fire; AC 14; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP breathe fire (up to 3/day, 10' x 30' cone causes 2d6 [7] damage, DC 15 Ref save for half); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

**(Cage 19) Variegated Pheasant:** Init +0; Atk bite +3 melee (2d3 [4]) or claw +4 melee (1d4 [2]); AC 18; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP scaled; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

No matter how many birds the PCs defeat, none of the feathers will be an exact match to the strange lock. The real key is actually hidden. While all of the cages contain exotic species from across the world, the large cage in the center of the room house an unusual featherless bird. This is an akla, whose plumage is made of moonlight. Under normal conditions it appears as a naked, flightless bird, but once exposed to the moon's rays, it becomes covered with beautiful pale luminescent feathers, one of which can be used to unlock the portal to allow the PCs' escape. Astute characters readily note that the floor of the akla's cage is littered with gemdust (hinting at the bird's unusual appetite of jewels and diamonds — see below).

The akla's cage is positioned such that, on certain nights each lunar month, moonlight can stream in through the circular portal and reveal the akla's hidden plumage. The 13 sections of the fresco is a hint to it not being a solar calendar, but rather based on the asynchronous cycle of the moon's passage. Normally kept locked by the Overlord's master aviarists, the portal can be opened by a PC climbing or making her way to the ceiling with a DC 15 Pick Lock or DC 20 Strength check. Thieves can attempt to scale the sheer walls and pull themselves across the dome hand over hand with a DC 20 Climb Sheer Surfaces check, or PCs can attempt to climb the chains securing one the hanging cages, at possible risk of getting pecked along the way. Treat the event of a PC attempting to climb the chains of any still-caged bird as an attack against a helpless opponent (+1d to the bird's attack).

**Akla (flightless):** Init +4; Atk bite +4 melee (2d4 [5]) and claw +5 melee (1d4 [2]); AC 14 or special; HD 5d8+8; hp 35; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP moonlight resistance, immune to magical sleep and paralysis; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +3; AL C.

Aklas are man-sized, semi-intelligent magical creatures

whose diets consist entirely of gemstones. If offered any type of precious jewel, the caged akla will allow the PCs to approach it unharmed, even to pluck a feather. Aklas are naturally immune to sleep and paralysis, and in their featherless form, are flightless. The heart of an akla is a living opal; PCs investigating the akla's corpse find a beautiful fist-sized black stone worth 500 gold rilks.

An akla's magical nature grants it additional powers when exposed to moonlight. For each phase of the moon it is exposed to (quarter, half, full), the akla gains a cumulative resistance to non-magical weapons (quarter, half, full), and a +2 bonus to AC, attacks, damage rolls, and saves, in addition to its base stats. For example, an akla under a half moon would have +4 to AC, attacks, damage, and saves, and would take only half damage from non-magical weapons. During the tournament, the akla uses the following stat block when exposed to the full moon when the portal is opened:

**Akla (exposed to the full moon):** Init +4; Atk bite +10 melee (2d4+6 [11]) and claw +11 melee (1d4+6 [8]); AC 20; HD 5d8+8; hp 35; MV 30' or fly 60' (in moonlight); Act 2d20; SP moonlight resistance, immune to magical sleep and paralysis, immune to non-magical weapons; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +9; AL C.

While still a challenge, the akla is much easier to defeat in its featherless form. As its feathers are only present under moonlight, clever PCs may attempt to slay the akla and open the portal afterwards. As long as even a part of the akla is exposed to moonlight, a feather may be recovered for use in unlocking the exit portal.

If the PCs fail to realize the nature of the akla or destroy its body before they can recover one of its feathers, they may attempt to open the exit portal by force, requiring either a DC 24 Strength check or *knock* with a spell check result of 30+. Doing so causes any remaining birds to break free from their cages and, in their hunger, give chase to the PCs.

**Fleeting Luck:** Each PC is awarded fleeting Luck as follows:

- 1 point for escaping the room while triggering less than three menagerie birds.
- 1 point for taming the akla with a gemstone.

**Area 3-4 — Hall of Mirrors:** *A brightly-lit hall extends before you, casting a nearly infinite series of reflections. The walls, floors, and ceilings of the hall are covered in gleaming mirrors, so that every gesture and step is repeated a thousandfold down the brilliant corridor.*

The corridor, similar to area 3-2, presents no immediate threat to the PCs, though it may consume no shortage of time. The bauble leads the PCs unerringly to a mirror before area 3-4b. Smashing the mirror reveals the passageway to area 3-5.

**Area 3-4a - Guardsmen Cache:** Characters pausing to search this corner easily note scrapes scored into the mirrored floor. Otherwise, (secretly) make a Luck check against the PCs' lowest remaining Luck score (roll under) for the party to notice the same. The scrapes clearly indicate a door, hidden in the mirrored wall.

Opening the panel reveals a collection of uniforms used to re-outfit soldiers, ensuring that no guardian of the Rainbow Palace should ever be encountered in less than perfect dress uniform.

These same tabards, hauberks, and shields can be used to disguise PCs as palace guards. While the unfitted armor is cumbersome (treat as chainmail, but with a -1d penalty to actions and armor checks), it does offer the PCs excellent disguises when confronted by other guardsmen in area 3-11.

**Area 3-5 — Servants of the Secret Slime:** *This garishly pink room has a 10'-wide door of solid gold with a strange geometric design of pentagons and pips dominating its face, including a message hammered in the metal. Thirteen hairless, loincloth-clad men stand motionless, six on one side of the room and seven on the opposite. Each man's arms hang at his sides, but instead of hands, each wrist leads to a sphere of iridescent red metal. The men's eyes, ears, mouths, and nostrils are sewn tightly shut with gold thread, and each wears a harness of thick silver chains connecting legs, torso, and shoulders. Thirteen pink satin robes hang from hooks on the walls. None of the men appear to be breathing.*

Closer inspection of the door reveals no lock, hinges, etc, although each pentagon is a panel which can be depressed.

**Provide Handout J to the players.**

The party's goal is to open the door by pressing all of the door's panels in the correct order. The first time an incorrect pentagon is pressed, a servant of the slime attacks the PC who made the error. The second time an incorrect pentagon is pressed, two servants attack; the third time, four servants; and the fourth time, the remaining six. PCs may form a protective semi-circle around the "guesser"; each protector can intercept one servant (two protectors intercept the first two servants), but surplus slime servants attack the guesser.

Each time an error is made, the depressed panels reset, popping back out to their original positions. Players must remember their previous attempts!

The servants are inactive unless an error has been made, they've been preemptively attacked, or the exit door has been forced (see below).

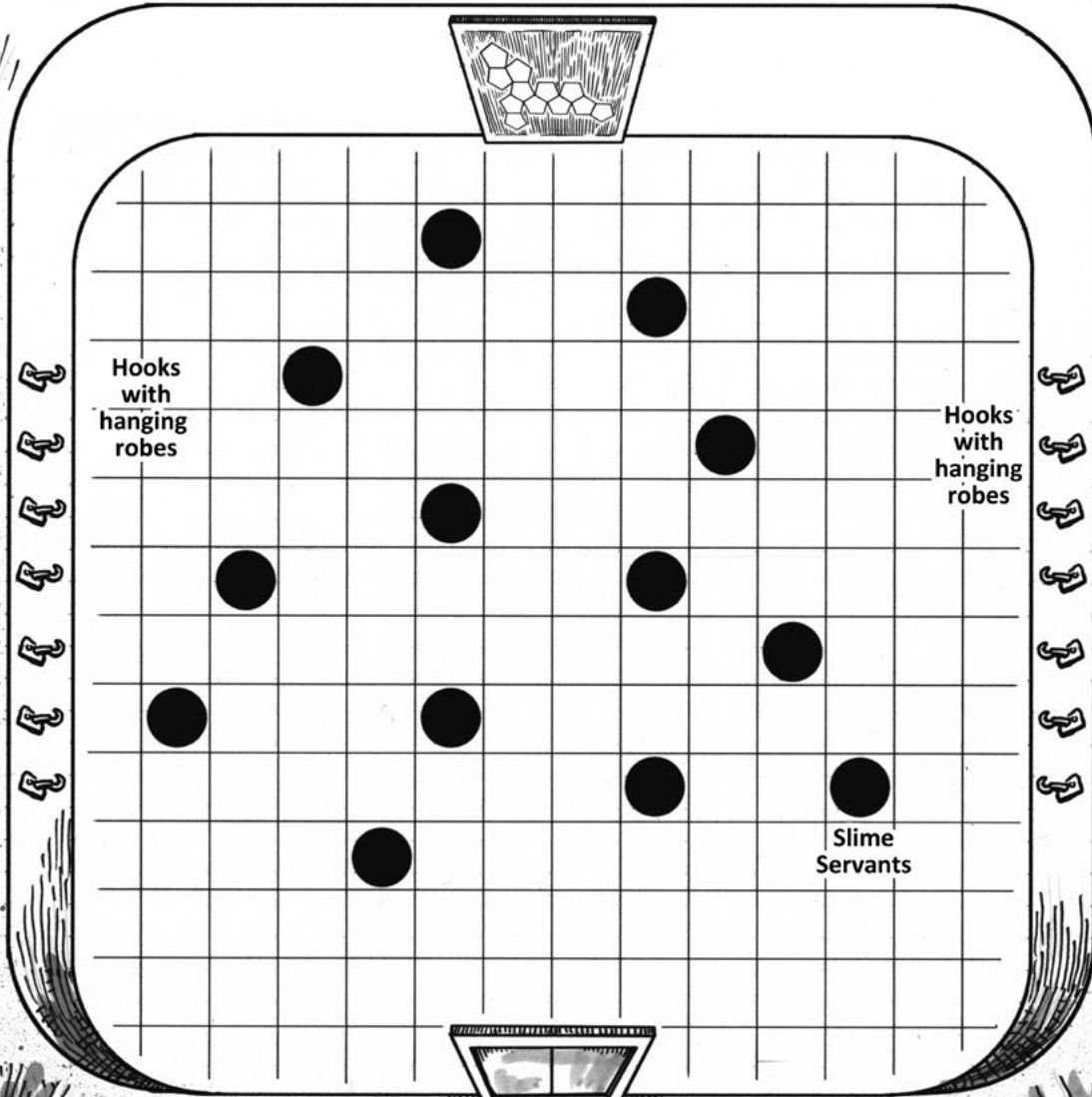
The servants are empty "skin bags" containing sentient slime which controls their bodies. Attacking one with piercing or slashing weapons can puncture the skin and allow slime appendages to burst through and make additional attacks. Blunt weapons are highly recommended! Clever players may opt for "using the flat of the blade" to avoid breaking a servant's skin. Only characters wielding (and trained in) swords, axes, or spears can use the flats, and they suffer a -1d penalty on damage rolls. However, treat the damage as normal damage. It is impossible for a slime to be subdued or knocked unconscious.

The best way to deal with these guardians is to grapple them one at a time and hang them on the hooks in the walls via their harnesses (the robes are "pink herrings"); this effectively neutralizes them without having to deal with prolonged combat. A servant has a base +4 to his opposed roll, with +2 for each slime appendage that has erupted. If multiple



# REF 5. SERVANTS OF THE SECRET ONE

Exit  
Puzzle Door



SBP 2020

PCs simultaneously grapple a servant, then take the highest roll among the participants for the opposed check. This can be done preemptively to inactive servants with no penalty. However, if an inactive servant takes damage from any source, then all 13 attack the party.

The slime servants have a special defense against spells and similar magical attacks. The red metallic spheres attached at each wrist grant limited magical immunity to the entire population (active and inactive). Each sphere contributes +1 to a servant's saving throw vs. magic. If all 13 servants have their spheres attached, then any servant targeted is treated as if his saving throw is 26 (+1 for each sphere; 2 spheres per servant). A save vs. spell is never rolled for the servants. When the spheres grant a save, describe them all as illuminating when the spell is cast (or other magical effect occurs). If players don't get the hint, on the second occurrence grant spellcasting PCs a spell check; any result of 12 or larger informs the PC that the spheres are somehow collectively negating the magic.

A sphere may be severed by inflicting 5 or more points of slashing or piercing damage when targeted. This subtracts 1 from the saving throw total, and negates the melee attack using that sphere, although a slime appendage will burst through (see below). So, if 2 servants have both of their spheres severed, then the population has a 22 for their save vs. magic. The spheres are too hard to be shattered with a melee attack. If a servant is slain, its spheres are rendered inert, lowering the population's save vs. magic by 2.

The door's puzzle is difficult and dangerous to solve by trial and error. Even understanding the hint of opposite sides adding to 13, along with understanding it's a dodecahedron, is not sufficient to solve it without guessing. Thorough PCs will have found two hints to this puzzle in previous encounters (Handouts B and H). These hints, along with the above knowledge, make the puzzle completely solvable with no trial and error. Note that unlike area 1-1 in Round 1, there is no example die for the PCs to find. Players who solved the d8 puzzle will have a much better chance here than those who didn't.

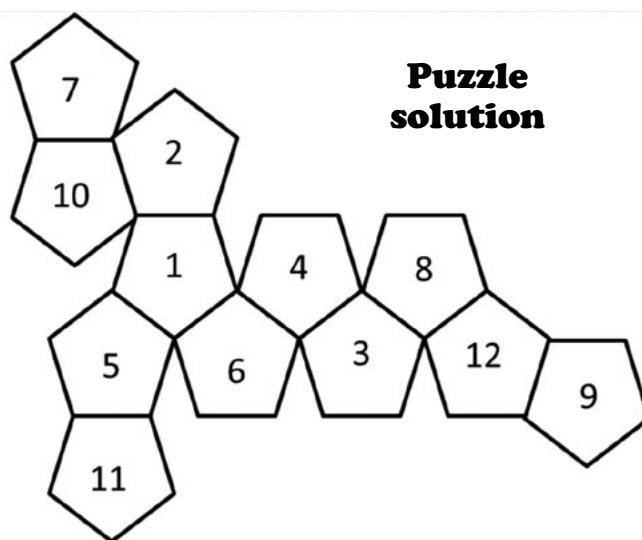
Pressing the panels in the correct order from 1 to 13 opens the door. There is one other way to bypass the door: by force. Forcing the door by mundane (DC 24 Strength check) or magical means (such as *knock* with a spell check of 30+) earns the wrath of the 13 slime servants (unless they're hanging ineffectually on the hooks).

**Slime Servant (up to 13):** Init +3; Atk sphere slam +4 melee (1d6+1 [4]) and slime appendage +6 melee (1d10+1 [6]); AC 11; HD 4d8; hp 20 each; MV 20'; Act 2d20 (spheres) plus up to 2d20 for slime appendages; SP slime appendages (at 5 and 10 points of inflicted piercing or slashing damage, a slime appendage erupts from the torn skin and attacks with an additional d20 action die), anti-magic spheres (no roll for saving throws vs. magic; instead use +1 for every sphere attached to a servant, active or inactive, thus maximum save is 26), death throes (if all inflicted damage has been piercing or slashing, dying slime erupts from body and inflicts 1d8 [4] damage to PC who struck killing blow); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; AL L.

## CRITICAL HITS FOR SLIME SERVANTS

Roll 1d4 and subtract victim's Luck modifier

Result	Effect
1 or less	The servant vomits corrosive slime into the PC's face. PC takes 1d6 [3] points additional damage and must pass DC 14 Fort save or suffer -1d to actions for rest of encounter.
2	A slimy tendril bursts from the servant's chest, strikes for an additional 1d8 [5] points of damage, then retracts back as the servant's skin closes over it.
3	A serpentine slime appendage erupts from the servant's abdomen and wraps around the victim, constricts for 1d12 [7] points of additional damage, then retracts back into the servant.
4+	The servant locks his mouth on the victim's as slime travels mouth-to-mouth into the PC's body to cause internal damage. The PC takes 2d8 [9] damage before the slime retracts.



**Puzzle solution**

**Area 3-6 — Sticks and Rods:** Suddenly an entire section of the floor gives way beneath you, casting you 20' down into a sand-filled pit! At the same instant, a large stone block falls into place above, completely covering the lip of the shaft and sealing you in.

Each PC who falls into the pit takes 2d3 [4] points of damage as they land on the sand below (DC 10 Ref save for half), and PCs carrying mundane sources of light such as a torch or lantern must make a Luck check to not extinguish the torch or shatter his lantern in the fall. PCs using some form of magical flight, such as fly or levitate, are still forced into the pit by the stone block, but do not take damage from the fall.

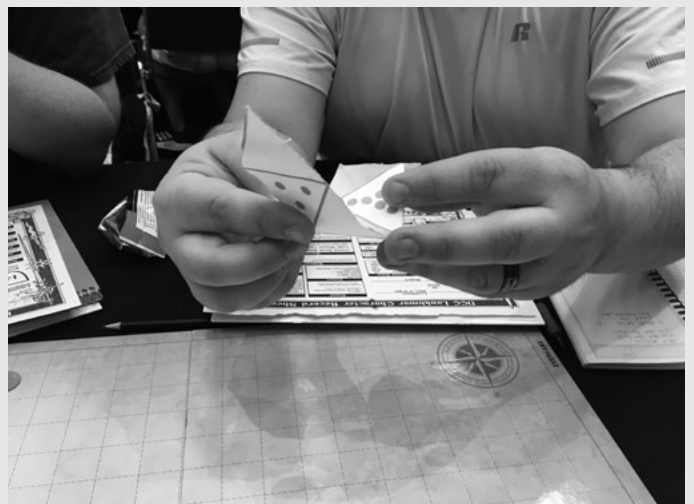
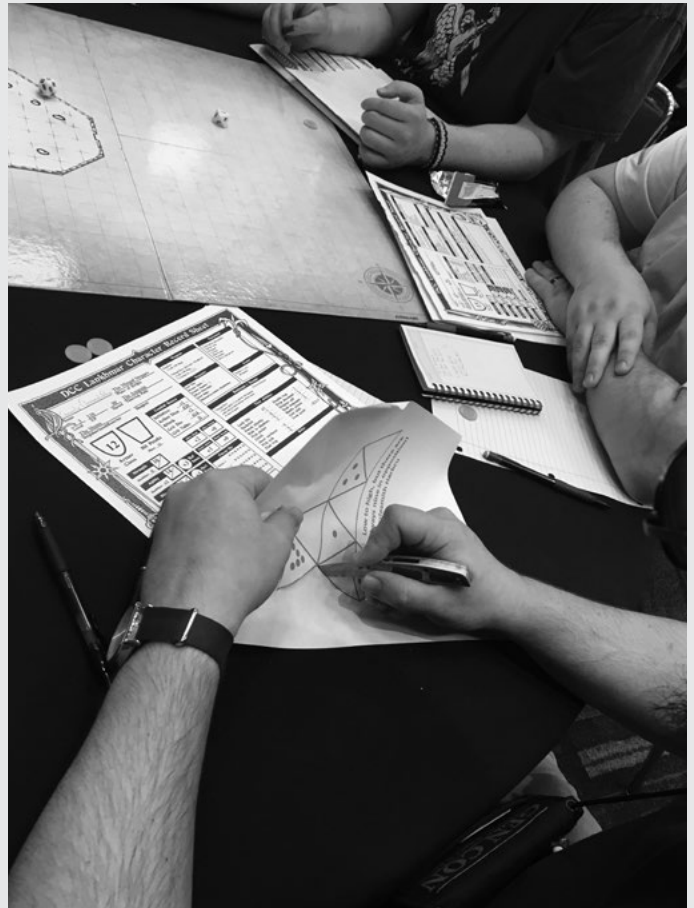
At the start of the encounter, the sand at the bottom of the pit is 5' deep. Industrious PCs can find the stone floor of the pit with several rounds of thorough digging, though removed sand quickly shifts to fill any exposed areas. The pit has no obvious exit; the stone block above completely seals the lip of the shaft and is far too heavy for any group to lift as it weighs several tons.

## THE HARBRU DICE PUZZLES

Unlike previous years, this year's tournament had two puzzles with a linked design goal: a pair of puzzle rooms. As in, "Possibly they were created by the same trap-master ... and if you recall the solution to the original trap ... then perhaps you have a clue on how to solve the second encounter?" How to proceed? The two puzzles had to be similar, increasing in difficulty, and figuring out the first gave an advantage to figuring out the second. We decided on 2-D folding templates of 8-sided and 12-sided dice (areas 1-1 and 3-5).

The Round 1 version can be solved by pure deduction using the hint, "There are always nine in opposition," which alludes to opposite faces summing to 9. (Note that Goodman Games DCC dice made by Impact! Miniatures obey this rule, but not all dice manufacturers follow it.) If a player grabbed the tournament d8 she could figure it out. This puzzle demands a certain style of thinking, but there are other ways (albeit costly) to get through the encounter. Out of 20 parties, 9 figured it out with one try, 6 on the second, and the remaining 5 took longer, with one guessing 8 times. One of the "first try" teams, the Blueberry Dragons, actually took a pocket knife to the handout and folded and numbered it properly! See the photos of Jeremiah Rose doing the cutting and Jeremy Earl doing the folding.

The Round 3 puzzle, based on the d12, was made such that if a party figured out the d8 version it would be easy, but if the party got through area 1-1 without completing the puzzle, then they'd have a more difficult time. This puzzle cannot be solved by deduction alone, unless one has a properly-numbered d12 at the table. Two handouts would be included in Round 1 and Round 2 that, if collected, would enable the puzzle to be solved by deduction if the association to the table's d12 eluded the party. Devious judges who run this on their own can ensure that an improperly-numbered d12 is at the table, so that players don't have an "easy" way out. The top two teams, Oh God! and Sponsored by Mace Hardware, had solved the d8 version, so they immediately grabbed the table's d12 and started numbering. However, even though they both knew how to solve the puzzle, they were still competing because remaining time counts toward scoring. Oh God! solved it faster and made it slightly further in the round than did Sponsored by Mace Hardware. Despite a close finish, Oh God! emerged the tournament's champions.



Assuming they have a source of light, PCs examining the walls discover they are lined with a number of small cracks from which sand continues to trickle into the room, though not at a rate that causes immediate concern. Towards the top of the chamber on one wall are a number of 1"-square holes outlined with a variety of colors, along with an inscription etched into the stone in a petulant script (provide **Handout K** to these players). PCs without sources of light are forced to feel around the walls to discover the holes, and will not know they are painted. The holes in the wall are perfect 1" squares of varying depths from 1' to 10' in one-foot increments based

on their coloration. Only the first few inches of each hole can be seen, making them all appear otherwise identical from the outside. PCs inspecting the holes with a pole or sword can get a sense of the general depth, but must make a Luck check to avoid inadvertently triggering the release of additional sand (see below).

PCs taking time to search through the sandy floor discover ten lengths of colored glass sticks, or rods, of various lengths in increments from 1' to 10', exactly like Cuisenaire rods used for mathematical counting lessons. The rods give off a faint



aura of magic if *detect magic* is cast on them, and PCs holding the ends of two rods next to each other notice that they easily stick together—like magnets—allowing multiple rods to be combined into different lengths.

Finding the rods is easy if the sand has not reached a significant depth, and PCs automatically succeed if the search is conducted before additional sand starts to fill the pit. For each 5' of additional depth of the sand, a PC must make a Luck check to find a rod, so PCs searching in 5'-9' of additional sand need to make a single Luck check; PCs searching in 10'-14' of additional sand need to succeed on two Luck checks; and PCs searching in 15'-20' of additional depth need to succeed on three Luck checks. It takes a PC a full round to search for a rod, and only one rod may be recovered by a PC at a time.

When searching for a rod in the sand, roll on the table below to determine which rod is found by the PC. Complicating matters, two of the solution rods were shattered by the PCs' fall, making filling the holes more challenging than if all the rods were intact:

d10	Rod
1	Brown, 8'
2	Green, 3'
3	Blue, 9'
4	Black, 7'
5	Purple, 4'
6	Orange, 10' (broken)
7	Dark green, 6'
8	White, 1'
9	Red, 2'
10	Yellow, 5' (broken)

PCs comparing the rods to the holes in the wall will notice that they are the same size for fitting into the holes like keys. The solution to the puzzle is to insert the correct number of rods into the holes in the wall, triggering the bottom of the pit to open and releasing both the sand and the PCs into the room below.

To release the floor and free themselves from the pit, the PCs must insert a total length of rods that exactly matches the total number of holes in any combination of depth.

**Example:** At the start of the encounter, there are 30 total open holes. Inserting enough rods into a set of 6', 7', 8', and 9' holes (30' total) with a 2' + 4' rod, the 7' rod, the 8' rod, and the 9' rod, respectively, would successfully unlock the mechanism. This is hinted at by the clue etched next to the holes, whereby multiplying the number of rows and columns of squares totals 30.

**Triggering more sand:** If the total length of inserted rods ever exceeds the total number of open holes, a mechanism is triggered that causes all of the currently inserted rods to be ejected. At the same time, all the holes of the same color matching the square of the last rod inserted begin releasing

sand, closing off the hole and consequently reducing the number of holes that are required for the solution going forward. For each set of holes so activated, the rate of the sand filling the pit increases the amount of sand in the pit cumulatively by 1' per round. So with a single incorrect placement, sand is released at a rate that raises the level of sand 1' per round, with two incorrect placements, sand pours in at a rate of 2' per round, etc. PCs who employ makeshift rods such as tools or weapons must make Luck checks to not trigger an automatic release of additional sand, regardless of the total number of rods that are currently inserted.

Once activated, the sand continues to pour until it reaches the top of the pit. PCs fully trapped in the sand suffocate per the drowning rules, taking 1d6 [3] points of Stamina damage per round and dying when their Stamina reaches 0; lost Stamina is restored immediately if they are removed from the sand. Judges should keep close track of the rate and level of the sand in the room to determine how many rounds it will take to fill the pit completely. PCs may be able to slow down or halt the release of sand, and judges are encouraged to grant additional rounds of relief based on creative actions taken, but given the large number of holes, any such attempts are temporary at best.

When adding the total length of rods together to determine whether the exit is unlocked or additional sand is triggered, include only those holes that are exactly filled by rods equal to the depth of the hole (partially-filled holes, such as a 2' rod inserted into a 5' hole, do not count towards the total until the remaining 3' is filled.) Similarly, excess lengths of rod are not counted, so a 9' rod inserted into a 5' hole does not count towards the total sum. When a rod or combination of rods is inserted that exactly matches the length of the hole, the hole glows with a nimbus of light the same color of the hole, indicating it is activated.

**Example:** The party begins inserting rods into the wall. First they insert the blue rod (9'), then the black rod (7'), then the brown rod (8'), then the green rod (3'), bringing the total length of inserted rods to 27'. The PCs then insert the 6' dark green rod into a dark green hole, bringing the total length of inserted rods to 33' and triggering the sand trap. As soon as they insert the last rod, sand begins pouring out of both the cracks in the wall and all five of the dark green holes, increasing the rate that the room is filled by an additional 1' per round. As there are now only 25 open holes, the total length of rods that must now be inserted is only 25'.

Broken glass rods are shattered into multiple fragments and may not be used to solve the puzzle, though PCs attempting to repair the rod using mending or another similar spell may restore the rod to functional status. Assuming they are not pushed into a hole beyond reach, rods may be removed and reused in additional attempts to solve the puzzle, but the floor mechanism is not triggered unless all the required rods are in place.

Finally, PCs somehow managing to dig through the 5' of sand all the way to the stone floor find a locked trap door that can be opened with a DC 25 Pick Lock or Strength check due to the difficulty of working the mechanism with the weight

 5'  6'  7'  8'  9'  10'

### Judge's Key Area 3-6







**Solution:** 30' of correctly filled holes of any combination.







For example:







$$6' + 7' + 8' + 9' = 30'$$







$$6' + 3' + 4' + 8' + 9' = 30'$$

$$1' + 2' + 3' + 7' + 8' + 9' = 30'$$

 4'  5'  6'  7'  8'  9'

 3'  4'  5'  6'  7'  8'

 2'  3'  4'  5'  6'  7'

 1'  2'  3'  4'  5'  6'

With each incorrect attempt (total length of inserted rods is greater than 30'), sand pours from all the holes of the same color as the last triggered hole, increasing the rate at which the room is filled.

of sand on it. This DC increases by 1 for each additional foot of sand that is in the chamber. (As there is 5' of sand in the room at the encounter start, if the PCs somehow manage to clear out all the sand, the base DC to open is DC 20.)

#### Fleeting Luck:

- 1 point of fleeting Luck is awarded to each PC if they manage to exit the room without triggering the release of any additional sand.

**Area 3-7 — Doorway of the Hates:** *Before you is a grandiose archway, intricately carved with the finest detail your sullen eyes have ever beheld! At its base is a column of rats poised atop one another, each hair magnificently sculpted. Standing upon the rodents, one on either side, are two beggars in tattered hoods holding empty bowls with skeletal hands. Sweeping away from the beggars and closing the arch are malevolent forms of angry and spiteful devils, each casting a horrid gaze in your direction. A set of stained-glass doors, streaked with swirling black and blood-red colors, stand closed within the archway. What appear to be three simple locks form a vertical line between the two glass doors.*

The archway rises an imposing 14', with the double doors within standing 12' high. Laid within each stained-glass door is a manifestation of the Hates. PCs who spend a round studying the stained glass with no distractions and succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence check notice the swirling colors move in the most minute fashion.

Each of the three locks set vertically between the doors are indeed simple, if picked simultaneously (DC 10 Pick Lock checks). However, picking the locks one at a time causes mechanisms within to complicate the next lock in turn, increasing

the second lock difficulty to DC 15 and the third to DC 20.

Attempts to pick the locks are further hindered by the sheer amount of pent-up anger encased within the glass. The thief in question must succeed in a DC 18 Will save or suffer minor auditory or visual illusions. A successful save allows the thief to pick the locks unhampered. A save result of 15-17 results in hearing harsh whispers and curses thrown her way, a haunting harp melody, or damnable crying and screaming of anguish, and the PC must pick the locks with a -1d penalty. A PC with a save lower than 15 begins to hear and witness the archway come alive as the carved devils writhe in chaotic ecstasy, the beggar's bowls fill with blood, or the rats scurry over one another, and thus must pick the locks with a -2d penalty. Only the PC attempting to pick the locks is subject to these illusory effects.

However, doing so—or failing to pick even one lock—will release the Hates within the doorway. The manifestation bubbles out of the broken glass or mishandled keyholes. Read or paraphrase the following:

*Dim, pale tendrils pour out of the door, growing and multiplying with each passing second, coiling about your limbs like soupy serpents from the cold marshes. A growing, wobbling red disc pulsates within the center before becoming hidden in the thick haze that soon surrounds you.*

**Hates Manifestation:** Init always surprises; Atk wispy tendrils +3 melee (special); AC N/A (body) or 25 (eye); HD N/A; hp special; MV 30'; Act 6d20; SP grapple, radiation wave, variable hp (see below); SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +6; AL C.

The Hates manifest as a pale gray mist, instantly attacking anyone within a 30' radius the first round and a 60' radius the second round. Each round, the manifestation can perform the following actions in any combination up to its total action die:

**Grapple:** A wispy tendril emerges to seize the target by the throat, lifting them 1d3x10' [15'] into the air and causing 1d3 [2] temporary Stamina loss per round (DC 15 Strength check to escape). Grappled targets must succeed on a DC 12 Reflex save or drop their weapon.

**Pick up a dropped weapon, torch, etc.:** As an action, the Hates manifestation can pick up a dropped object from the ground.

**Attack with a weapon or object:** As an action, the manifestation can attack with a held object: Atk +3, damage 1d6 [3]. (It cannot use bows, but may manipulate crossbow triggers.)

The Hates manifestation's only weakness is a single, thin, pulsating red eye within the center of its misty frame. The eye is difficult to spot within the fog and moves about erratically, making its AC 25. All other attacks to the Hates' misty form deal no damage, but a single hit to the eye dealing 8 or more damage is enough to sever its cord with the material plane. Any character dealing less than 8 damage must suc-

ceed on a DC 15 Reflex save as the eye flares up, releasing a radiation wave of hellish hatred that deals 1d8 [4] damage and forces the character 1d6x10' [30'] away. Half of the unsuccessful damage dealt by the character is added to the eye's hit points.

*Example:* A thief deals 4 points of damage to the eye, which currently has 8 hit points. This is less than the eye's current hit points, so the eye flares up, releases the wave of radiation, and the eye gains 2 hit points (half of the inflicted damage), forcing the next character attacking the eye to deal 10 or more points of damage in a single attack.

Though the doors are large, they are not nearly as heavy as they seem, and the ancient hinges are still well-greased, allowing entrance to area 3-8.

**Area 3-8 — The Overlord's Whipping Post:** *This circular room sparkles with opalescence. Its floor is mother-of-pearl and its walls are made of countless iridescent sea shells, interwoven occasionally with whips made from various materials. A glassy black cylinder stands 10' tall and 5' in diameter in the room's center and has red leather ties and copper chained shackles along its shaft. The marble ceiling is carved with six faces looking down into the room with closed eyes. There are no exits visible.*

## EVERY LAST BIT OF LUCK

As a judge, my emotions often rise and fall in concert with the players'—cheering every success and sinking with their setbacks. It is this rollercoaster of empathy, particularly in DCC, that makes judging so fun. Deep into the championship round, team Oh God! was faced with a do-or-die situation—one which created a rare moment of gaming that mixed both the sorrow of loss and the joy of overcoming an impossible-seeming situation onto a single palate.

Oh God! began the tournament with only four players, including three brothers and a player from another team that made room to accommodate the smaller team sizes this year, and had made it this far in the tournament through an equal measure of smart play and luck. Now, deep into Round 3, they found themselves battling for their lives against a manifestation of pure Hate. Blocked from escape by a locked doorway, one by one the party was being battered, choked, and squeezed by a nest of misty tendrils that struck them with their own weapons. At the next table, their competition, Sponsored by Mace Hardware, was right on their heels, their every cheer with each new die roll amplifying the tension of trying to gauge how well there were doing, and putting the pressure on Oh God! to survive.

The Hates seemingly had the party's number. The team's wizard rolled failure after failure before being knocked unconscious, while the warrior and one of the thieves struggled to alternatively free themselves from the grasp of the mist and to strike at the only vulnerable part of the Hates manifestation—its eye, barely visible through the

shifting smoke of its nebulous form.

As the rest of the group battled for their lives, the remaining thief made a last-ditch gambit to pick the locks on the door to give the party a chance to escape. Down to a single point of Luck and hindered by a madness spawned by the doorway itself, the door was secured with three locks of increasing difficulty. One by one the locks fell, and a rising sense of hope was felt by everyone at the table. When it came to the third and final lock, the thief made one more roll...the total coming up 19. Without hesitation, the player asked if he could burn his last point of Luck to make the roll a 20.

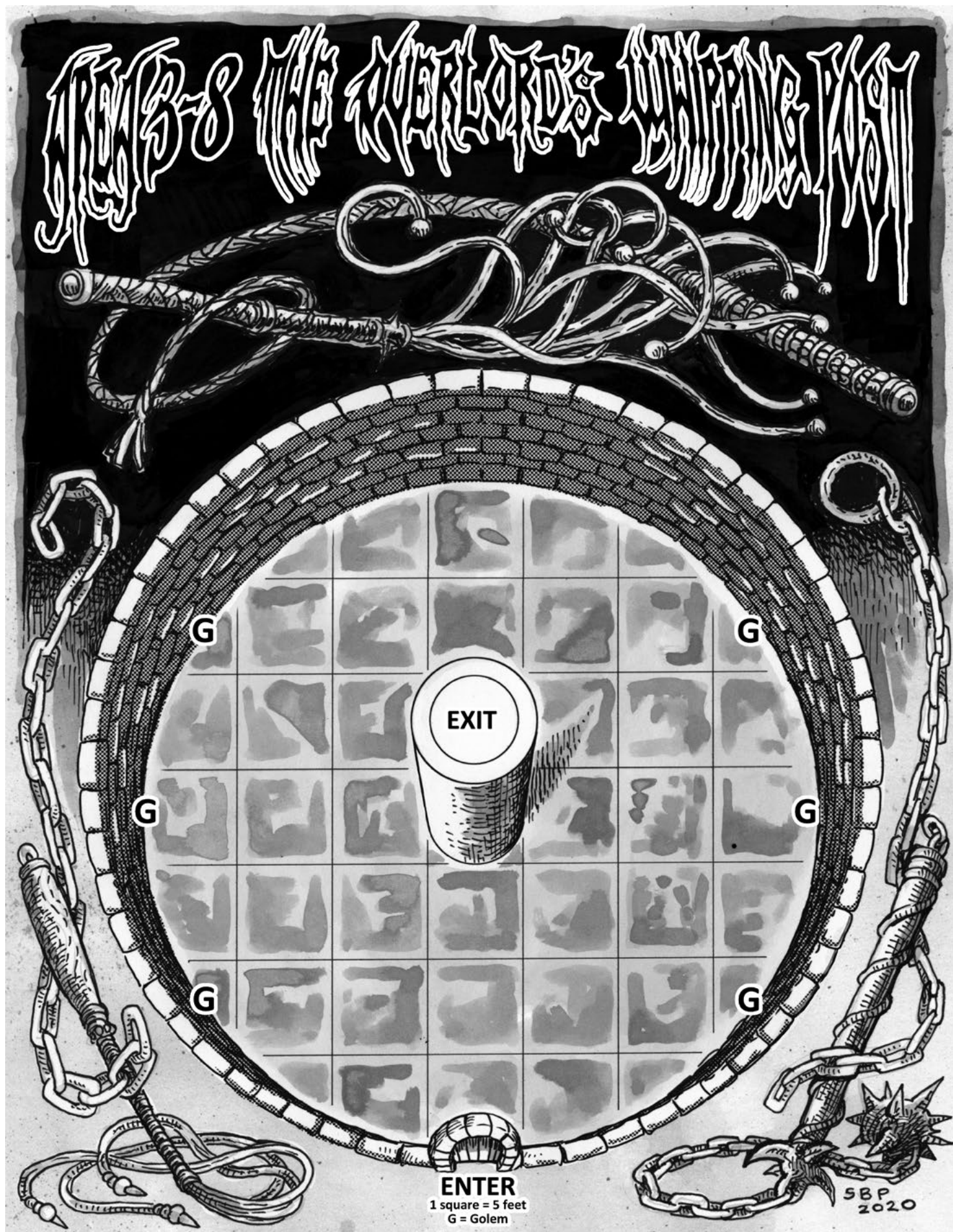
In tournament play, reducing a stat to 0 means that PC is lost, with no chance of recovering the body; judges also do not give out DC targets, meaning the players had no idea whether the single point would even make a difference.

It did.

With that last little bit of Luck, the lock was picked, though not before the thief was felled by an extremely misfortunate (and heretofore undiscovered—refer back to 0 Luck) prick from a deadly poison dart hidden in the mechanism. Yet as the light faded from his eyes, the party rallied and found their escape through his sacrifice.

Eventually team Oh God! would go on to outlast team Sponsored by Mace Hardware, making it one encounter further and with just enough points to crown them as this year's champions.





The exit is a trap door on the top of the black (hollow) cylinder, revealing a ladder leading down to a passage beneath the floor. The door cannot be seen from the floor, but is visible if one climbs the cylinder (DC 10 Climb Sheer Surfaces check). The door must be picked (DC 18 Pick Lock check) or forced (DC 18 Strength check). However, nothing is that simple.

Anyone touching the cylinder must pass a DC 18 Reflex save or be held fast by the magical ties and shackles. A DC 20 Strength check is required to break free; there are enough extra ties and shackles that breaking free doesn't prevent one from being re-caught in subsequent rounds if they continue to remain in contact with the cylinder. Once someone is held by the post, they are in for a whipping! The post can hold up to 3 PCs.

As soon as a PC is held, roll initiative! Read the following:

*Six headless creatures step out of the wall! They're made entirely of shells, and each wields two whips that crackle with arcane energy. Every movement sounds like the crushing of snails.*

The six creatures attack the party, focusing on the poor PC(s) at the post. Other PCs can intercept the golems on a 1:1 basis; so, if there are five PCs with two at the post, then three golems attack the three free PCs and three golems attack the two at the post. The golems have a whip crack attack that propels a PC to the post (to be held), so the number of PCs at the post can be dynamic despite the party's attempts to avoid it.

If anyone thinks to look at the ceiling while the golems are attacking, they note that the six faces' eyes have opened. Blinding a face by attacking its two eyes with missiles or magic renders one golem inert. This is much easier than triumphing "man-to-shell" in melee. Once the golems are defeated, the post is deactivated, and PCs can climb it without peril. Unless all of the ceiling's eyes are blinded, they disconcertingly follow the PCs movements even if their corresponding golems have been destroyed.

*Note:* If a PC tries to extract a whip from the wall, or if a PC uses magic within the room (e.g., *knock* after climbing the cylinder without being held), then the golems activate if they aren't yet defeated. Should a PC gain access to a whip (via disarming, taking one from a defeated golem, etc.), the whip becomes mundane in the hands of a PC and does 1d6 damage, though most PCs suffer -1d to attack rolls due to being untrained (unless a benison or occupation supports previous training).

**Ceiling Eyes (12):** Init none; Atk none; AC 13; hp 4 each; SP destroying a face's two eyes deactivates the corresponding golem, immune to mind-affecting spells, only vulnerable to damage from an aware attacker (immune to unintended area of effect damage); SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +6.

**Headless Shell Golems (6):** Init +3; Atk crackling whip +4 melee (1d8+1 [5], range 20') or whip crack +4 melee (1d3 [2], magically propels victim into whipping post); AC 16; HD 3d8; hp 18, 14, 14, 13, 13, 9; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP wizened whipper (gains +1d to hit victims held by post), linked to

ceiling eyes (see above), unique crits (see below), immune to vision-based and mind-affecting spells; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1; AL N.

## CRITICAL HITS FOR HEADLESS SHELL GOLEMS

Roll 1d4 and subtract victim's Luck modifier

Result	Effect
1 or less	Strike to the eye; victim suffers -1d to all actions for rest of encounter.
2	Whip entangles weapon and flings it to the other end of the room. A PC leaving melee to retrieve the weapon is subject to a parting attack from the golem.
3	Arcane energy transfers from the whip to the victim, doing an additional 1d8 [5] damage.
4+	The whip encircles the victim's neck and tries to break it, inflicting an additional 1d12 [7] points of damage.

**Area 3-9 — The Flames:** *A wave of heat washes over you as you open the door, issuing from a great pit of blues flames in the center of the chamber. The central floor of the room is made up of a regularly-spaced grid of 10'-high circular platforms that surround and extend out from the pit in the middle. Each platform is roughly 2' in diameter. A pair of tall, immobile humanoid shapes can be seen looming in the far shadows through the smoky haze that lingers in the room.*

### Give the players Handout L.

The fire pit in the middle of the room is massive and surrounded by blackened and charred stones. While uncomfortable, the heat and smoke do not pose a threat to the PCs as they move about the chamber. A cursory search reveals that there are no other exits from the room; the only way to proceed is through the fire pit itself.

The blue fire is a magical blaze, and PCs pouring water upon or attempting to douse it with spells quickly discover that it cannot be extinguished — it releases clouds of choking smoke and ash that suffocate the room's occupants (DC 10 Fort save or -1d on all actions for 1 turn). PCs foolish enough to enter the pit unprotected suffer 4d10 [20] points of fire damage each round, and it takes at least three rounds to locate and unlock the mechanism barring the exit at the base of the pit with a DC 25 Pick Lock check. Casting *dispel magic* with a spell check of 30+ will put out the fire, allowing the lockpicking attempt to be made without harm.

The keys to the puzzle are the platforms, which glow with a pale blue light when a living creature climbs atop them. If a total of four platforms located in a straight line are activated at the same time, the fire automatically goes out and the exit opens. They must form a single straight line — either diagonal, horizontal, or vertical — but there may be gaps in the sequence of platforms (in other words, they do not need to be contiguous). However, the path the line makes cannot go through the central fire pit (there cannot be two active plat-



forms on one side of the pit, then two more on the other side of the pit, for it to count as a single straight line). Stepping or climbing off a platform deactivates it, meaning at least four PCs (or their surrogates, see below) will need to stay on the platforms to maintain the correct sequence. Each time a sequence of platforms is activated, beginning with the first, the ferocity of the fire visibly decreases along with the corresponding damage for entering it (-1d for each activated platform). For example, a sequence of two activated platforms would cause the fire to inflict only 2d10 [10] of damage per round.

Complicating the task are the two guardians, living statues of mighty warriors, each of which stands on one of the platforms in the far side of the room. The pit guardians are immobile and immune to attacks from the PCs until a platform is activated. Each time a platform is activated, the guardians come to life and step to the next platform in the direction of the nearest PC. When taking this move, they also attack any PCs standing on a platform that is directly adjacent to their own, so PCs have to be careful to not draw the guardians too close while still creating a line of four active platforms. When moving, the pit guardians only move orthogonally and cannot move to diagonal platforms, but they may attack any platform that is immediately adjacent, even diagonal ones. If faced with a choice between two equally-close PCs, the pit guardian will default to the nearest PC located clockwise

from the fire pit. If guardians are forced to share a platform, they will maneuver around each other to reach a PC.

If a guardian is defeated, it crumbles and instantly reappears with full health on its original starting platform, and moves as per above if additional platforms are activated. The guardians are immune to being knocked off the platforms, and must be defeated in order to reset. Finally, platforms directly adjacent to the guardians cannot be activated, as the guardians act as a 'block' to triggering their effects, and if a guardian moves next to an activated platform, it is automatically deactivated. PCs who draw the guardians too near will have to find a way of moving them or defeating them in order to solve the puzzle. Platforms only activate after a pit guardian has completed its move and any attack(s), after accounting for any platforms that are blocked from activation. (Up to 8 platforms may be nullified by a single guardian.)

Clever parties may realize they can use the pit guardians' programmed movement to complete the puzzle, activating and deactivating platforms to draw the guardians towards a specific direction, allowing a sequence of four platforms to be activated without risk of being attacked.

Parties that reach the room with less than four PCs will be required to come up with creative solutions to activating multiple platforms. PCs may attempt to 'straddle' two platforms, but must make a DC 10 Ref save not to fall off and take 1d6 [3] falling damage, and are at -1d to all actions while so extended. Platforms may only be activated by living creatures, but PCs may deduce that a small quality of blood could be used to temporarily trigger the platforms. For each hit die of blood a PC sheds, a platform can be activated for a single round. Platforms activated in this manner also trigger the pit guardians per above as if a PC was standing on the activated platform. Players may also come up with their own creative solutions to activating the platforms, such as using unconscious allies or guards.

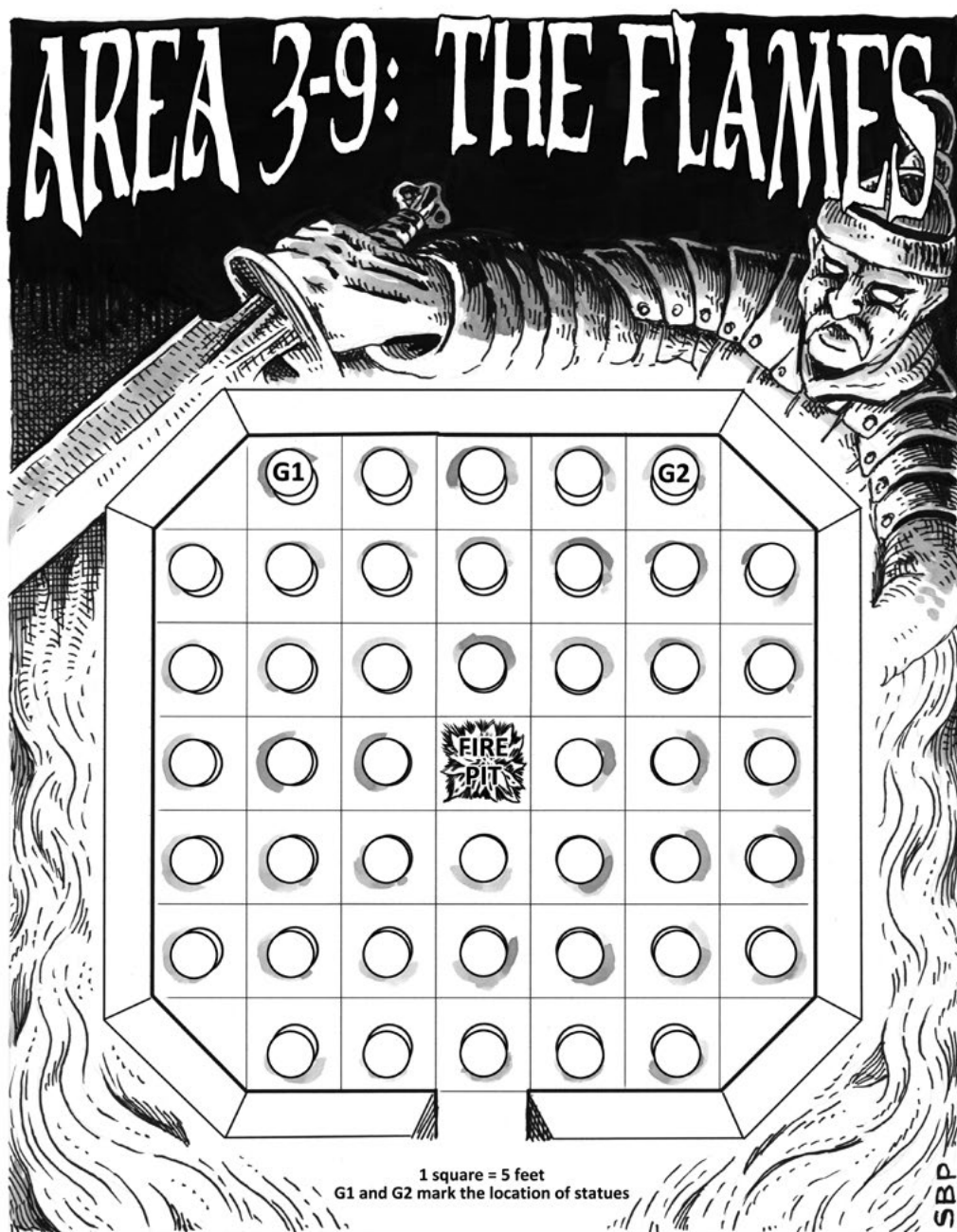
**Pit Guardians (2):** Init +4; Atk sword +6 melee (1d12+6 [12]); AC 20; HD 6d10; hp 35 each; MV special; Act special; SP may only be attacked from platforms, immune to critical and pushback attacks, immune to mental attacks, half damage from non-magical weapons, attack all creatures on adjacent platforms, only move when platforms are activated, revival; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will N/A; AL N.

Pit guardians appear as 7'-tall statues of warriors wielding massive broadswords. They are immune to damage unless attacked by a creature standing on one of the room's platforms. As living statues, they are immune to critical hits and mental attacks, and they take only half damage from non-magical weapons. Pit guardians cannot be knocked off the platform they are standing on, and if reduced to 0 hit points, instantly reappear with full health on their original starting platform.

**Fleeting Luck:** The PCs are awarded fleeting Luck as follows:

- 1 point for each PC escaping the room.
- 3 points for escaping the room without being attacked by a pit guardian.





**Area 3-10 — Tessellations and Combinations:** As the PCs approach the open doorway to this room, it appears as a completely dark space, and no light source carried by the party pierces beyond the threshold. Any attempt to explore the chamber results only in the PC exiting the same way they came in after a few seconds of blind fumbling.

Once every member of the party steps into the room, read the following:

*The large chamber beyond the doorway is suddenly illuminated with an azure glow. Scattered across the floor are a number of statues in various states of decay, each one depicting the bust of a cowed figure mounted on a plinth of different geometric designs: triangles, squares, diamonds, trapezoids, and hexagons, all in a variety of colors. The floor holds a strange glowing mosaic of similar shapes, the source of the blue light, crisscrossed by what appear to be dried trails of slime. Opposite the entrance is an arch of raised stones etched with a series of runes.*

Give the players Handout M.

Immediately after the PCs enter the room, call for initiative rolls. Once the chamber is illuminated, the PCs find themselves organized in a “marching formation” based on their initiative result, regardless of the order they originally entered the room. The judge should not explain this to the players, but astute teams may connect the odd re-alignment with the rune puzzle above the chamber’s only exit (see below).

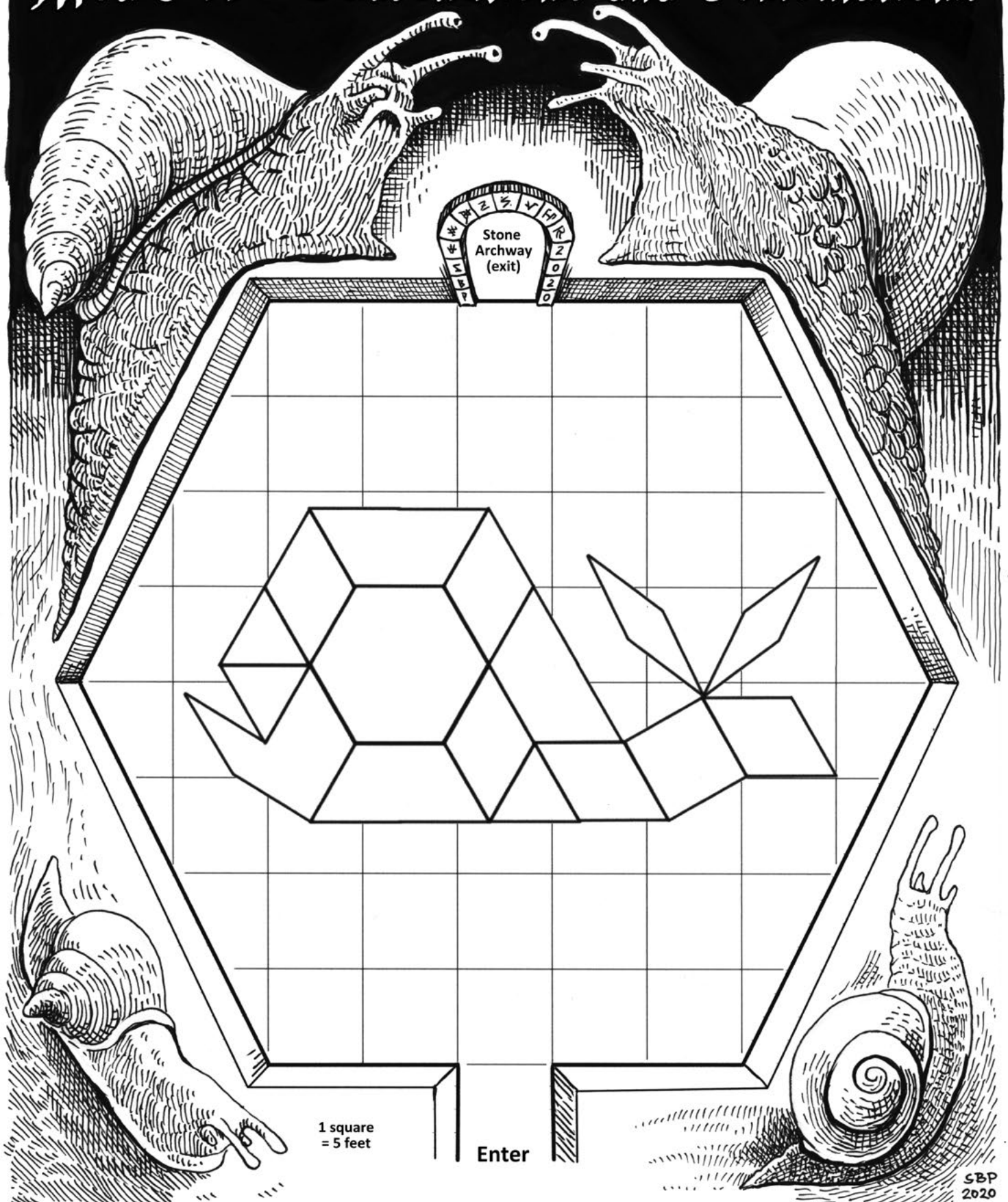
In addition, and even more strangely, PCs find that they now have trouble remembering the names of their companions, and even struggle to recall their own name. This slight amnesia can be discerned by PCs with a DC 15 Intelligence check, but otherwise is just present as a general sense of forgetfulness after entering the chamber.

The floor of this room contains a vast snail mosaic made up of the outlines of various geometric shapes. A number of large, heavy blocks are scattered around the room, several of them split or crumbled. Trails of dried slime cross the floor at different points; with a DC 15 Intelligence check, the PCs can determine that they seem to originate from the crumbled blocks and not the intact statues. Those blocks that are still intact are topped by a hooded figure, like a chess piece, and have a colored geometric base in place of feet similar to the tile shapes on the floor.

The only exit from the room is sealed with seemingly no way to open. An arch of raised stones spans the closed portal, the stones of which are embossed with runes. PCs examining the arch discover that the runes list the first three letters of each of the PC’s names, though this should not be directly pointed out by the judge—allow the players to infer the meaning on their own. The number of names always matches the number of PCs who enter the room, each letter alternating by the order they entered, starting with the bottom leftmost stone and continuing through the last stone at the bottom of the right hand side of the arch. For example, if Yelrah the thief, Cram the cleric, Yrret the wizard, and Mit the warrior enter the room, in that order, the ruins would be represented left to right as follows:

Y C Y M E R R I L A R T

# Area 3-10 – Tessellations and Combinations



# PC TRACKER

PC 1	PC 2	PC 3	PC 4	PC 5	PC 1	PC 2	PC 3	PC 4	PC 5	PC 1	PC 2	PC 3	PC 4	PC 4	PC 5	

Herein the “Y” in the first position, the “E” in the fifth position, and the “L” in the ninth position correspond to the first three letters of Yelrah’s name.

Judges should note the names of the PCs, in the order they entered using the tracker above.

If there are less than five PCs who make it this far in the round, the archway appears with fewer stones, but always based on the number of characters in the party. Simply fill out the tracker until all the PCs are accounted for, leaving the remaining spaces blank.

The key to the room is to organize the remaining intact blocks into the correct pattern, in the correct order, by shifting them between the tiles. While the statues are heavy, characters can easily move them, but once the blocks touch the mosaic they become fixed to the surface and are considered ‘placed’ on whichever tile they contact.

**The solution:** Players must deduce that the statues must be placed on the matching tiles to complete the mosaic of the image. Complicating the puzzle, however, is that in addition to placing the correct blocks that match the correct shape, the blocks must also be placed by specific PCs, in a specific order based on the order of runes etched in the archway, beginning with the first PC whose name is listed, then the second, etc. and repeating until the mosaic is completed. Thus the PC whose first letter of his name is listed first on the archway must be the one to place the first statue, followed by each subsequent PC until all the blocks are placed.

The following intact blocks of the various geometric shapes remain when the PCs first enter the room (**give the players Handout N**):

Green Tri-angles	Orange Squares	Violet Dia-monds	Blue Rhom-bus	Red Trap-ezoid	Yellow Hexa-gons
6	2	3	7	5	1

While there appears to be enough statues to fill out the required pattern, one color is missing: indigo. Astute players will note that the one shape in the mosaic that does not have a match in the initial statues is the irregularly-shaped tail, which corresponds to the missing color. While there is not a single statue that matches the shape of the tail shape, there are several combinations that can create larger shapes when their bases are combined: for example, three triangles form a trapezoid, two trapezoids form a hexagon, etc. PCs can create new shapes in this way by combining the statues simply by pressing the bases to each other. Once combined, the new shape may not be broken apart into its original components. Shapes must be combined prior to placing on the mosaic—otherwise it counts as placing an incorrect shape (see below).

## Judge’s Key Area 3-10



**Example combination** =

The tail shape can be created from a combination of a violet diamond and either two green triangles or one blue rhombus to form the larger shape. However, the only correct combination is to combine the blue and violet pieces, as the additive colors create indigo. Creating a shape from the violet diamonds and green triangles creates the correct shape—but the incorrect color, and counts as an incorrect block if placed on the mosaic.

Incorrectly placing a tile, whether by placing the wrong statue on the wrong tile or by being placed by the wrong PC, causes the last incorrectly-placed block to crumble with an ear-splitting crack and reveal a giant gastropodia that attacks the party. At the same time, all of the previously-placed blocks reappear in their original positions—teams will have to remember the correct placement order! Teams that use up the blocks in this manner will quickly find themselves with a reduced set of options for finding the solution.

**Giant Gastropod:** Init +0; Atk pseudopod +5 melee (2d8+3 [11], range 10') or spit acid +5 ranged (30' x 5' stream, 4d8 [18] to all within, DC 13 Ref save for half); AC 15; HD 6d10; hp 35; MV 20' or climb 20'; Act 2d20; SP spit acid 1/day, half damage from bludgeoning weapons; immune to acid; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +3; AL N.

In addition, with each incorrect placement, one of the letters of the name of the PC who should have placed the block fades and disappears from the exit arch. To determine which letter, count the number of blocks that were placed, including the final block, and, using the name tracker, count an equal number of places and mark off that letter. Thus, using the example above, if Yelrah placed a red statue on a trapezoid with the party’s first placement, and then placed a second red block on a second trapezoid—the correct color, but incorrect PC—the letter etched on the second stone of the





archway, “C” (corresponding to Cram’s first letter – the PC who should have placed the second block) would be erased from the archway as there were two blocks placed in total. Thereafter, the archway would have the following letters:

Y - Y M E R R I L A R T

The next time blocks are placed, the sequence would start again, skipping over any missing letters when counting to determine which letter gets erased next.

Finally, the PC whose letter disappears must make a save to avoid partial transformation into a snail. The first time the PC loses a letter, they must make a DC 15 Will save. Upon failure, one of the PC’s feet transforms into that of a slug, permanently reducing the PC’s movement by -5’. With the second letter, the PC must make a DC 20 Will save or lose a further -15’ movement as both feet are transformed. When all of the letters are gone for a given PC’s name, the named PC is transformed into one of the hooded stone figures and is forever lost (no save). Each transformed PC has a random base in place of his feet, which can potentially be used by the remaining PCs as a solution to the puzzle. Roll 1d7 for type: (1) red trapezoid; (2) orange square; (3) yellow hexagon; (4) green triangle; (5) blue rhombus; (6) indigo large triangle; (7) violet diamond.

#### Fleeting Luck:

- Each PC is awarded 1 point of fleeting Luck for each letter of their name remaining in the archway when they escape.

**Area 3-11 – The Black Sloop:** *The smell of dried seaweed and the sound of rolling waves beckon you further down the steps. The Buble has grown impatient, nearly dragging you down the steps toward the illuminated docks below. Carefully easing down the steps, you spy your goal: the Overlord’s own sloop – as black as any alley cat or the wine-dark seas. From boards to sail to lines – the entire vessel is inked the color of night.*

*A pair of tapers stand to either side of the docks – guide posts for whatever decadent nobles might choose to set sail this evening. And standing watch on either side: ten of the deadliest warriors in the Overlord’s keep.*

All the PCs need to do to carry the day is board the sloop and cast loose its moors. The sloop (aided by Ningable) will do the rest. However, the Overlord’s handpicked honor guard stands in their way.

**Honor Guard (10):** Init +3; Atk longsword +6 melee (1d8 +2 [5]) or crossbow +7 ranged (1d6 [3]); AC 16; HD 5d12; hp 35 each; MV 30’; Act 2d20; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +8; AL L.



The ten soldiers are indeed fearsome opponents. The PCs will recognize them as worthy foes, or even their betters in simple, brutish combat. Confronting all ten at once courts certain death.

However, to clever PCs, opportunities abound. If the PCs are wearing discarded costumes stolen from area 3-2, or the guard uniforms from area 3-4a, they stand an excellent chance of simply walking past the honor guard and onto the sloop. If either disguise is attempted (or a similar ruse), call for a final Luck check with the following modifiers:

- 1d if the character is a thief;
- 2d if the character is wearing the uniform of a guard;
- 3d if the character is wearing a gown or costume from the fete;
- 1d if all the PCs are disguised in one way or another.

(The Luck check is an attempt to roll under, so in this case, reducing the size of the Luck die improves the odds of the PCs making the check.)

Roll in order of the PCs approaching the sloop, or, if the PCs come at once in a single group, start with the PC with the highest Luck and work down. Fleeting Luck may be used to reduce this roll.

If a PC's ruse is detected, the honor guard attacks immediately, doing their best to cut down the rogue that dared to steal the Overlord's private sloop. If other PCs reached the boat first, they are free to fight (achieving surprise the first round) or to free the sloop.

The ship is secured by a total of 3 moorings. If all three are removed (a single action) or cut (AC 5, 5 hp), and if the Skull is onboard, Ninguable's magical wind instantly picks up, quickly ushering the vessel out to sea (whether or not other PCs remain on shore).

Other attempts to slip by the honor guard are nearly assured of failure. The hawk-eyed guards reduce any stealth rolls by -3d. Even magical invisibility comes at a risk (unless it is augmented with some sort of silence), granting the guard Will saves against the original spell check to note the would-be magician.

*For emphasis:* Ninguable cares little about the PCs' survival, only the recovery of the Skull. So long as the Skull makes it on board, and the black sloop is freed from its moorings, the sloop immediately sets sail.

And whatever PCs happen to be aboard are sure to be crowned the Greatest Thieves in Lankhmar!

# CONCLUSION

*The black sloop cuts across the wine-dark seas, driven by some eldritch tide, while the lanterns of the Rainbow Palace recede towards the horizon. The waves roll gently against the boards, as if to reassure you and your comrades that all this is real...that you have triumphed against the Thieves' Guild, the Slayers – and indeed, even the Overlord himself, in your heist.*

*The Skull Omphal, the bejeweled aim of your quest, lifts off the deck. Above the sloop floats a cloud wreathed in black veils: your patron and nemesis, seven-eyed and bulbous-bellied Ningauble.*

*"Better thieves never stalked the City of Sevenscore Thousand Smokes," the wizard declares. "For who is greater than the thief that would steal from thieves?"*

*A great gust of wind rushes over the deck, and in an instant the wizard and the skull both vanish. A passing shower of coins strike the deck, no more than a handful for you and your companions to divide.*

*But yet, these are not even the fabled diamond-in-amber glulditch-es. Rather, each coin is instead a cut diamond – sliced like a boiled egg – with a circle of amber set within the diamond! As you marvel at the impossible coins and wonder aloud what rogue might possibly fence them, you hear a final whisper upon the wind:*

*"A token to commemorate your night. For indeed, there are no greater thieves in all Lankhmar."*



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**From the most famous city in the history of fantasy comes a sword-and-sorcery adventure that only the best gamers will survive! *The Greatest Thieves in Lankhmar* is a Dungeon Crawl Classics adventure that sends characters into the hot cellars beneath Thieves' House, across the sooty rooftops of the City of Sevenscore Thousand Smokes, and on to a mad dash through the palace of the Overlord. This boxed set comes with everything you need to run an epic adventure over several sessions, whether you run it stand-alone or as part of an ongoing campaign.**

**When you open the box, you'll be in the company of legends. *The Greatest Thieves in Lankhmar* was first run as a tournament at Gen Con 2019, where 20 nationally competitive teams competed over four fantastic days and three hard-fought rounds. Characters died alone, lost beneath Thieves' House, as their torches burnt out, one by one. After 44% of tables experienced TPKs, and nearly 6 in 10 PCs were killed, one team survived to win the tournament. How will your players compare?**

