

THE WELL OF SOULS

A LEVEL 0 ADVENTURE



COMPATIBLE WITH

**DCC
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The Well of Souls

A LEVEL 0 ADVENTURE BY CARL BUSSLER

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Written By

Carl Bussler

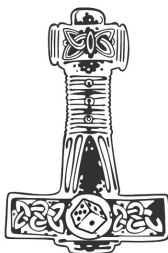
Cartography, Layout and Illustrations By

Carl Bussler

Playtests By

William Barker, Brian Barker, Carl Bussler, Shawn Daly, Bayley Evans, Francis Giovannetti, Steve Giovannetti, Autumn Hardy, Eric Hoffman, Mike Indelicato, Jay Murphy, Asia Pickle, Dale Rigney, Jeanne Shaw, Don Vancleef, Elmer Wells

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Introduction

This adventure is designed for 12 to 16 0-level characters. The adventure can also be enjoyed by a party of 1st-level characters who are aided by hirelings.

You will want to print and give the players the Tablets of Fate. Let them decide who is going to hold them. If at some point in the adventure the tablets are lost, remove the handouts from play.

Legends and Lore

Farid, their guide, has brought many people to this place. He has heard many legends and rumors regarding the Well of Souls. Farid knows not which are true, and which are false.

Farid, guide: Init 0; Atk staff melee (1d6); AC10; HD 1d4, MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0, AL L

The table below is all that Farid has heard of the Well and what may be in store for the characters:

1. Hidden below is the artifact called the Rod of the Crescent Moon, which unlocks the great treasure vault in the ruined city of Zadabad. (T)
2. Drinking from the well will grants ageless life. (F)
3. The Tablets of Fate contain valuable clues to what lies within and how to survive the dangers below. (T)
4. Ashkari is the goddess of the Past Secrets. (T)
5. Ningizzia is the god of Present Truths. (T)
6. Sophet is the god of Future Mysteries (T)
7. Hadrim, the sultan's champion, never returned from the well. His magic shield lies somewhere below. (T)
8. The well is a spawning ground for dangerous rock worms. (F)
9. Those who perish below will forever haunt them. (T)

10. Hazim Al'Khafari (Hazim the Viper) hid the crown of Sultan Amoun in the well after stealing it a generation ago. (F)

Encounter Table

Cave lurkers	C	Area 1
Bat swarm	C	Area 2
Pit Traps	T	Area 2
Skeletons, cursed	C	Area 3
Hall of Sacrifice	P	Area 4
Crushing stone trap	T	Area 4
Cauldrons of Fate	T	Area 5
Teleporting sky	T	Area 6
Animated statue	C	Area 6

The Tablets of Fate

On the reverse of each tablet is an inscription. Ningizzia's inscription reads, *"Let not your sacrifices weigh you down, but open new doors of opportunity."* This is a clue on how to solve the puzzle in the Hall of Sacrifice. On this tablet are the pictures of the god, a heart and a door.

Ashkari's inscription reads, *"Tread softly for you tread on my dreams."* This warns the characters of the pit traps hiding under the bat guano in the Hall of Past Secrets. This tablet shows the bat goddess, a shield, and a watchful eye.

Sophet's tablet inscription reads, *"Look not to the stars for guidance, but in yourselves."* This warns the characters against climbing for the sky in the Starlit Grotto. On this tablet are pictures of the crocodile god, a pyramid and the Rod of the Crescent Moon.

The Entrance

"From the darkness of the well emanates the haunting moans of the deceased plunderers and defilers who risked everything to learn the secrets below. But you have something they did not: The

Tablets of Fate. Through guile and treachery, force and luck, you have jointly acquired these ancient stone tablets, and only with their hieroglyphics dare you hope to circumvent the horrors that lie within the Well of Souls.

You and your guide, Farid, stand around a gaping hole in the floor of a mountain cave. A crude pulley and rope system hangs over the hole, and from it dangles a single wooden bucket.

Will you brave the depths below in search of fame, fortune and liberation from your downtrodden lives?"

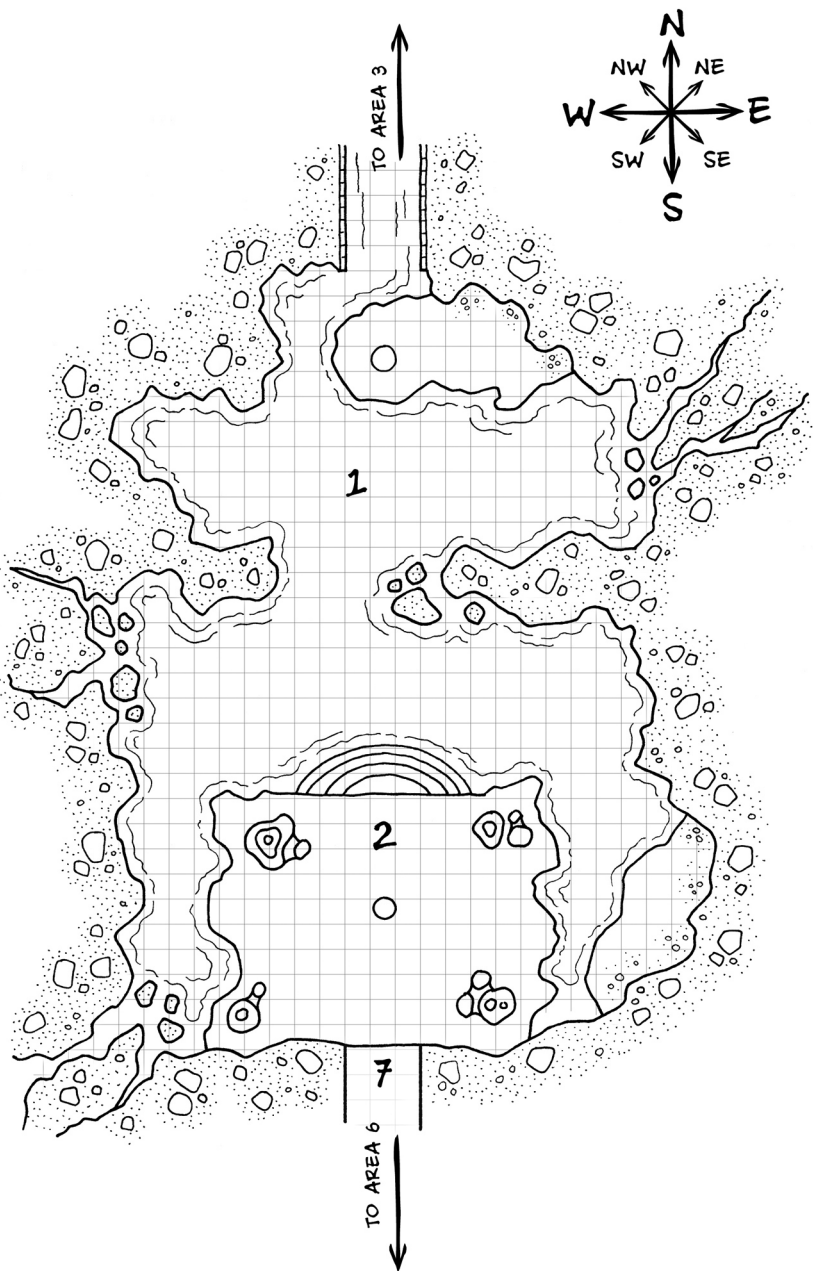
Players can descend the 60' well in two ways:

First, use the bucket, rope and pulley above the well to descend. If more than one player uses the bucket at a time, the rope snaps and both players fall into the water pool below. Falling causes 1d6 damage per 10' fallen. For every damage die that comes up a 6, the victim breaks a bone. For each broken bone, the character permanently loses 1 point of Strength or Agility (player's choice). The affected limb, rib, or vertebrae never heals quite right and affects the character in some fashion from then on. Second, characters can climb the edges of the well (DC 10, Strength or Agility).

The Cavern of Many Eyes (Area 1)

"The constant, steady moaning permeates cavern, as if the cold, wet walls themselves were protesting the weight of the mountain. You stand upon a natural stone landing, upon which is built the opening of a well. Scattered about the ground are ancient coins of various currencies. Three boats are moored here, rocking gently on waves of dark, oily water. To the north, a large man-made tunnel leads into darkness, and to the south lies the opening of yet an even larger cavern. You have the eerie feeling you are being watched."

Any character saying a prayer or offering a sacrifice or gift to any of the gods of fate will receive a +1 luck bonus they may use on any one roll during the adventure.



A total of 36 copper coins can be collected here.

Three flat-bottomed boats, each big enough to seat 6 people, are docked here, each tied to an iron ring on the landing. There are 4 paddles in each boat. Throughout this level, the water is only 3' deep.

The water in the well is cool, clean, and safe to drink, but it does not impart any supernatural benefits. The water in the rest of the dungeon is tainted and will bestow near instant sickness upon any who drink it (terrible stomach pains; 1d3 damage and unable to heal normal damage for one week).

Clinging to the ceiling are dozens of multi-eyed, slimy predators waiting to drop upon the unsuspecting adventurers. They have tiny, yet powerful mouths with dozens of sharp teeth.

It will take the party one round to cross the water into the next cavern, and during this time the lurkers above will drop, attempting to fall upon and bite their victim. If they succeed in connecting, they will automatically do damage each round until removed (Strength check, DC 5). Those that miss fall into the water and will eventually swim and climb back to their roost.

If the players choose to guide their boats around the edges of the cavern, reduce the number of cave lurkers to 3*.

Cave Lurkers (9/3*): Init -2; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3 plus poison); AC 9; HD 1d6; MV walk 10' or swim 40'; Act 1d20; SP poison; SV Fort +0, Ref -2, Will +0); AL N.

Any creature wounded by a cave lurker must make a DC 10 Fort save or suffer the effects of the debilitating poison these creatures release via their bite. The poison causes severe lethargy, inflicting a -4 penalty to Strength and Agility and reduces movement to 10' until cured by natural or magical means.

The Cavern of Secrets (Area 2)

“A 20' foot statue of Ashkari, the Bat Goddess, stands in the center of the room, her wings opened wide and her eyes gazing down as

if welcoming you to her chamber. Hundreds of bats roost in the ceiling above, and the floor is covered in guano. Dangling from the goddess' fanged mouth appears to be a shield."

The bat colony in this room will keep to itself unless the characters are loud. Normal conversation at the ground level won't disturb them, but yelling from up on the statue will send the colony into flight. Also, if the characters trigger a pit trap, or drop something while up on the statue, the colony will attack. The colony will continue attacking until destroyed or until the area once again becomes quiet.

Bat swarm, mundane: Init +4; Atk swarming bite +1 melee (1d3 plus disease); AC 10; HD 2d8; MV fly 40'; Act special; SP bite all targets within 20' x 20' space, half damage from non-area attacks, disease; SV Fort +0, Ref +10, Will -2; AL N.

Hidden in the guano are 4 pit traps surrounding the statue, with a 50% chance of stepping on one. The statue can be climbed easily (DC 5). If a character falls, roll again for a chance to fall onto a pit trap. The shield can easily be removed.

The Phoenix Shield: The wood shield is made from the legendary Phoenix tree. Upon it is engraved the likeness of a flaming bird. If touched by fire, the shield burns but is not harmed. The fire cannot be extinguished by water or lack of air, nor will it ignite combustibles. The bearer may douse the flames with merely a thought. A lit shield emanates the same light as a lantern. When held, the shield offers a +1 bonus to saves against fire attacks. After defending against 3 such attacks, the shield becomes ashes. The ashes can be used to create a potion of fire resistance and have a value of 50gp to a knowledgeable wizard or sage.

Pit Trap: DC 10 to find and disable. Reflex save DC 10 to avoid. Damage is 1d6. DC 15 to climb out unless aided by rope or other help from companions (DC 5). The trap resets in 1 hour.

The pits contain the remains of former adventurers and their gear. Roll 1d12 on the chart below for the contents. If there is an elf present, allow the elf to acquire his mithril armor and sword at this point.

Pit Contents

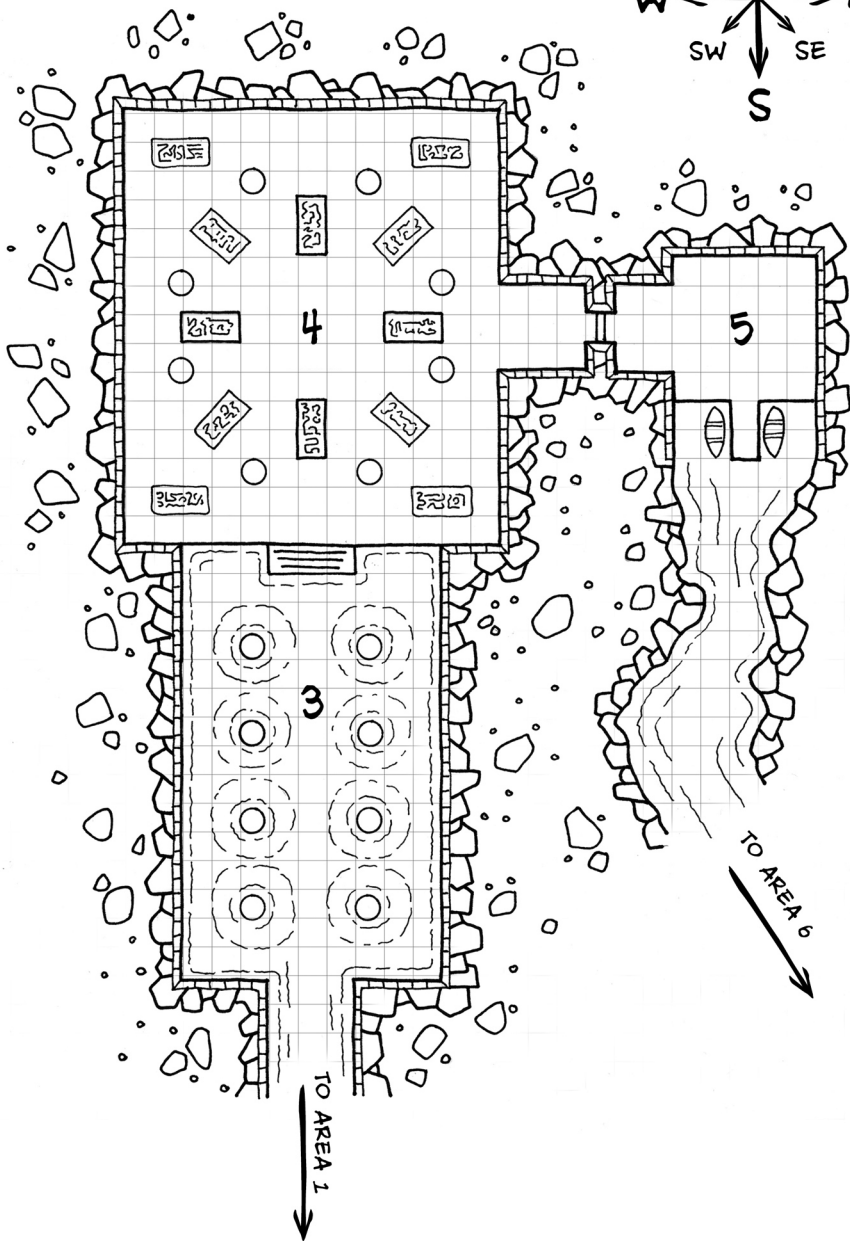
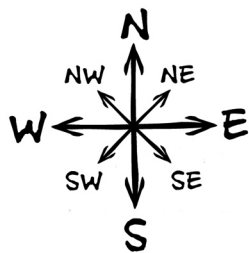
1. Warhammer
2. Hand axe
3. Short sword
4. Spear
5. Steel shield
6. Leather armor
7. Scale mail armor
8. Thief's tools
9. Torch
10. Candle
11. Flint and steel
12. 3 iron spikes and a small hammer

A secret door at the back of the chamber (DC 12 search check, elves get +4 to their roll) leads to Area 7 on the map. There is a single boat there. Natural stone stairs lead down to an iron door and a single iron lever set into the floor. Pulling the lever raises the door and gives access to Area 6. The door will reset in 1 minute.

The Halls of Sacrifice (Areas 3 and 4)

“The walls of this large hall are lined from floor to ceiling with recesses that contain dozens of skeletons, all lying on their backs as if sleeping peacefully. Massive pillars support the ceiling, each engraved with scenes of valiant warriors fighting overwhelming odds, sacrificing themselves for the greater good. At the far end, wide stone steps rise up from the oily water and lead to a larger chamber. As you examine your surroundings, a heavy iron portcullis crashes behind you, sealing your escape.”

The water beneath the portcullis is 10' deep. Players who wish to lift the portcullis, must make a DC 25 Strength check. For each character



assisting, apply a +1 to the roll, to a maximum of +5.

Read this when the characters climb the steps to the next landing...

“Set into the floor of this separate hall are twelve giant stones, each engraved with scenes of common folk: A woman bathing, two men shaking hands, three woman crushing grapes, two men and two women eating, a woman reading to four children, five men bowing before a king, seven women knelt in prayer, and eight men fighting. The other four depict the following: A scene of a man parting the sea, a woman giving birth, a thief picking another man’s pocket, and a nest of rabbits. In the center of the room, also set into the floor is a stone cylinder with numbers on it. It appears to spin freely. The only exit from this room is a large iron door to the east. It has no handle or visible hinges.”

The eight inner stones represent the numbers 1 - 8, while the outer stones represent division, addition, subtraction and multiplication. To open the iron door, the characters must spin the cylinder, then use the stones to create an equation that equals that number. Let the player roll 6d10 and total the results. This is the number they will spin on the cylinder.

When the characters begin interacting with the stones, they will hear movement in the great ossuary, as skeletons animate and climb down. Give the players a turn or two to make preparations.

If the skeletons are defeated or the stones are reset, send a new wave of skeletons (1d3) to join the fray.

Skeletons, cursed (3): Init +0; Atk claw +0 melee (1d3) or by weapon +0 melee; AC 9; HD 1d6; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP undead, half damage from piercing and slashing weapons; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

On any successful attack, there is a 50% chance that it also bestows a curse. Afflicted characters age unnaturally (roll 1d20 for number of years aged, Fort save DC 12 to resist), and spellcasters are befuddled (Will save DC 12 to resist), reducing their spellcasting die. Magical healing will remove the

befuddling, but the aging is permanent and cumulative.

If pressed in the wrong order (multiplication first, or two numbers then addition, etc.), the stones will suddenly retract 10' down into the floor into a small chamber. The walls of this chamber will then close and crush the hapless victim. The trap will then reset, returning the crushed victim to the surface.

Crushing Stone Trap: DC 10 to find, DC 20 to disable. Reflex save DC 10 to avoid. Damage is 1d8.

The weight of at least a halfling is required to activate the stones. Clever players may choose to use the boats or carried gear to set off the stones. If anyone leaves a stone, the cylinder, stones and iron door reset and the process must be repeated.

The Boat Room (Area 5)

“This small room contains two boats which are tied to an iron ring set into the stone floor. Water rushes from a small culvert which passes under the boats and travels out a tunnel to the south. More interesting are the three cauldrons.”

Upon inspecting the cauldrons, read the following:

“The first cauldron contains green, swirling mists and is decorated with scenes of ancient warriors falling in battle. The second contains bubbling hot water and is decorated with scenes of adventurers exploring a ruined temple. The third cauldron contains nothing, and bears no decorations.”

Each cauldron is 3' in diameter and weighs approximately 80lbs. They are all made of bronze. Each cauldron is worth 50gp. They lose their magical abilities if taken outside the Well of Souls.

Anyone attempting to use the first cauldron as a scrying device, puts anything in it, or interacts with it in some way, must make a Will save DC 12 or be assaulted by the spirits of those who died in this dungeon. Those who fail are so frightened they attempt to flee for one hour; if cornered, they will fight only at a -4 attack penalty.

As someone interacts with the second cauldron, the water stops bubbling and becomes perfectly still. The character will see a remote view of themselves. The character may view anywhere in dungeon they have previously visited. If they attempt to view locations yet to be visited, they must make a Will save DC 12 or fall into the cauldron and begin drowning. Unless rescued by a companion, drowning creatures take 1d6 points of Stamina damage per round and die when Stamina reaches 0.

Nothing happens to anyone interacting with the third cauldron.

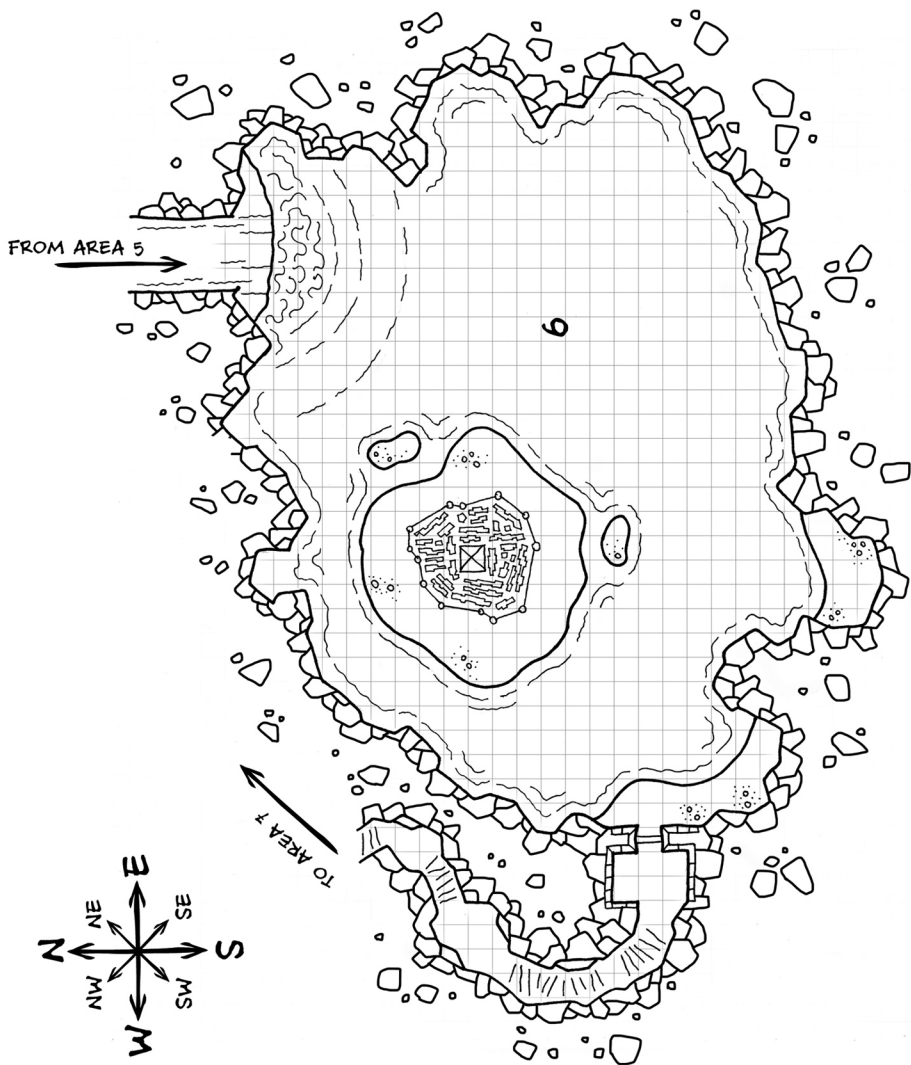
The players can opt to take the boats, or try walking the tunnel. The water is only 3' deep. Either way, after traveling 60', the tunnel takes a sharp decline in angle and the characters will soon be traveling at a rapid pace down a twisting tunnel. Walking characters must make a DC 15 Reflex save to stop from falling. Those in boats may attempt to use spears and staffs to stop their progress. Allow them a Strength check DC 15. If failed, the tunnel will dump them over a waterfall into the grotto. The waterfall is 20' high, and the pool below is 10' deep. The rest of the grotto is at most 1' deep.

Characters who descend the tunnel safely may jump into the pool below without harm. Those who are launched into the grotto suffer 1d4 damage from the fall unless they make a successful Reflex save DC 10.

The Starlit Grotto (Area 6)

“Glowing moss grows on the slick walls and luminescent crabs play in the shallow water. Hundreds of feet above, stars twinkle in the sky, and occasionally a meteor streaks into view, then disappears without a trace. In the center of this large grotto is an island, and on the island is a model of a city, decorated with precious stones. A pyramid rests on a hill in the center of the city, and a silver rod projects from the top of the pyramid. Across the chamber is a beach, and not far from it, set into the wall, is an iron door.”

The sky above is unreachable. Anyone who attempts to climb the walls to reach the sky must make a Fortitude save DC 15 or be teleported to a random plane of existence.



Possible locations include; Hades, The Abyss, Tarterus, 1d100 miles from the current location, 1d100 miles from the current location but 1d100 years in the past, Elysium, Ysgard and Nirvana.

A successful save teleports the climber back to the waters of the grotto.

The scale model is of the ancient and ruined city of Zadabad on the island of Kalmatta. Setting foot on the island activates a guardian crocodile, which is a heavy bronze statue the size of an actual 8' crocodile, which lurks in the water nearby. As its first action, the statue will rear up onto its hind legs and breath a deadly cone of blue fire.

Animated Bronze Statue: Init +0; Atk bite +2; AC 13; HD 1d10; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP breath weapon 1/day: line, 10' long x 5' wide, 1d4 fire damage; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will 0; AL N.

It is possessed by the spirit of a djinn, which will be released upon the statue's destruction. The djinn's name is Urhatta, and she is a tall woman (8') with shimmering blue skin and silver eyes. Static electricity emanates from her being. She will, out of honor and gratitude, answer three questions to the best of her ability. She has intimate knowledge of the defenses in the dungeon, and will reveal them to the characters. She will also offer the spell *invoke patron* to any characters who show promise in the arcane arts.

On the top of the model pyramid is a shiny metal rod that ends in a crescent moon. The Crescent Rod can be removed and will act as a key to open a treasure vault on the island of Kalmatta. The rod is, in actuality, a crescent wrench. If you have one at home, surprise your players by presenting this to them.

The buildings are all decorated with semi-precious stones and gems. Stripping the city bare will yield a haul of 200gp in value.

One the west side of the grotto is an iron door. The door has no visible handles or locks. However, there are four large hex-shaped protrusions which can be loosened using the Crescent Rod. Once all four bolts are removed, the door can be put aside. Winding natural stone stairs lead to a small chamber with a small boat (seats 6). There is a door visible on this side, which leads to Area 7 on the map.

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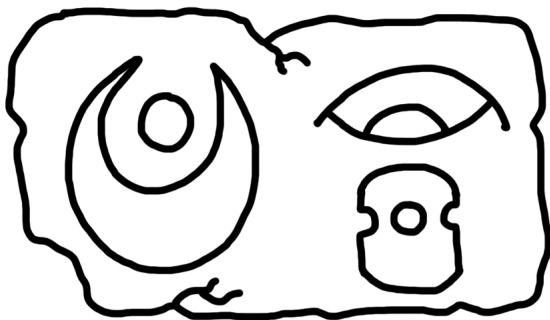
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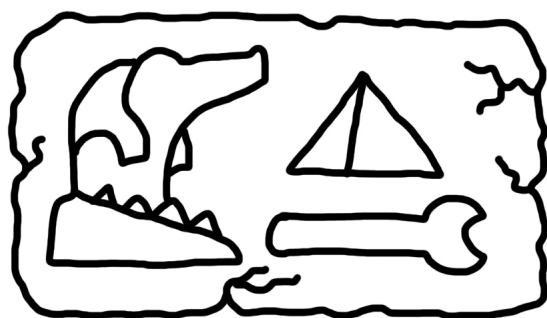
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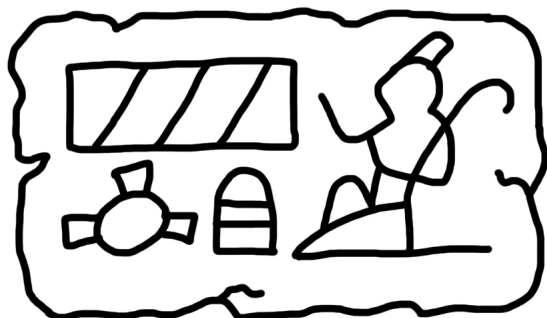
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Tread softly, for you tread on my dreams.



Look not to the stars for guidance, but in yourselves.



Let not your sacrifices weigh you down,
but open new doors of opportunity.



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