

# THE MOON IS A MIRROR

AN ADVENTURE LOCATION BY MICHAEL PRESCOTT

## THE SITUATION

The fabled **Sage of Lune** once dispensed wisdom from her weird and deadly abode, the Palace of a Hundred Shrines. But visitors are no longer welcome, warded away by a clan of dogfolk.

## THE HUNDRED SHRINES

The Palace of a Hundred Shrines was built by foolish and pious King Raeldus.

Hoping to win favor with the unseen world before his death, he commanded every order, cult, and spirit oracle to build and maintain a shrine within the palace. Some came willingly, but many were forced.

A mishmash of faiths occupied it for a decade, but Raeldus' heirs quietly deconsecrated it a few years after his death.

A few hardy cults lingered, but being too remote to easily attract new converts, their numbers dwindled.

It stood abandoned (but for a few passing bandits) for a century, before the coming of the **Sage of Lune**.

## THE PALACE STRUCTURE

The palace's two large levels are each divided into sixteen rooms, in a four-by-four grid.

The rooms are square, twenty paces across, with tall, narrow corridors leading to adjacent rooms through the thick interior walls.

## THE MAIN GATE

A dark corridor leads inward for ten paces, before splitting at a T-junction that leads to the two outer rooms adjacent to the gate.

## WOODEN SHUTTERS

The outer 'walls' of the lower level are heavy wooden shutters slung between iron rods, every inch **decorated** (d4).

The upper level windows are similarly shuttered.

The shutters are meant to open to the outside, although locks (badly rusted) hold them closed. They could be hacked through.

While they are closed, the interior is dark.

Haze from the **incense rooms** fills the palace, deadening sounds and blocking sight further than thirty paces.

as adventurers explore it.

If a result is rolled a second time, take the next entry.

## 1. PEACE SHRINE

A fat candle atop a stone sphere burns eternally.

Anyone striking a blow here is magically paralyzed for d6 hours.

Runes and carvings exhort pilgrims and monks alike to abide by Raeldus' edict that they coexist in peace.

## 2. DEVOURING DEATH

A giant wooden face floats in a pool of black oil. It animates to devour anything placed or climbing upon it.

veal it is a shrine to "Ossola", shown as a massive gelatinous blob. Further pictograms explain that she grants immortality to those who follow her path, which is explained in detail in the altar's book. (It was removed from the palace long ago.)

The bottom of the bowl is a miniature portal to Ossola's realm, a barren landscape dotted with acid-filled craters, and glistening, predatory ooze.

## 4. PIT TRAP ROOMS (3)

The dogfolk have removed the altars, leaving these rooms empty.

If more than one person enters the room, counter-weighted doors in the floor swing away, dropping occupants into spike-filled pits.

The sharp spikes are closely spaced: they injure but do not impale.

## 5. SHRINE OF THE DAWN

At dawn each day, a triangle-in-circle quartz glyph on a round altar glows fiercely, filling the room with painfully bright sunlight.

## 6. DOGFOLK LAIR

d10 dogfolk are here, dozing.

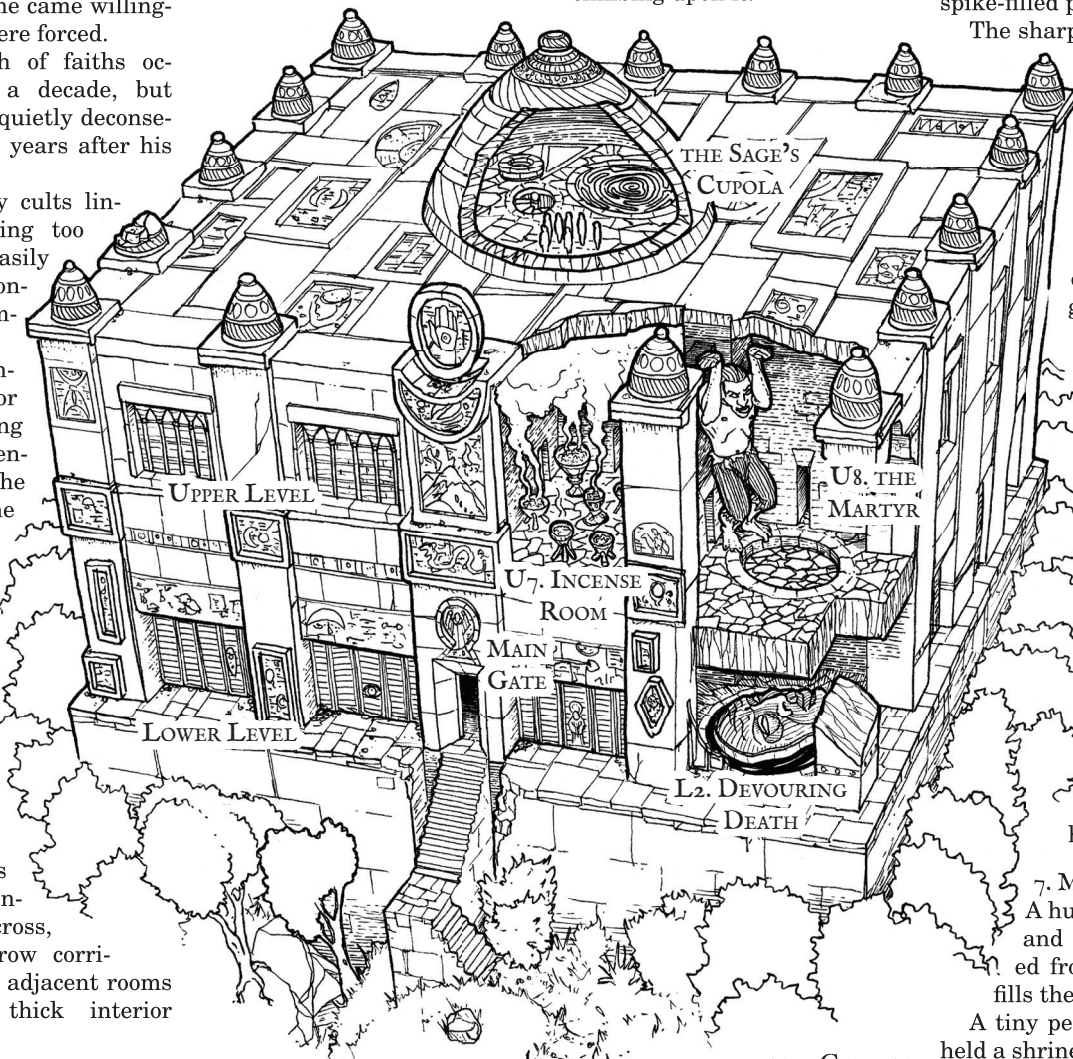
If they have been alerted by sentries, they are only feigning sleep, and another d10 are moving to ambush from behind.

## 7. MAGPIE SPIRIT

A huge pile of furniture and bric-a-brac collected from the lower level fills the room.

A tiny personality cult once held a shrine here, but only the invisible spirit of their founder remains.

Desperate for offerings and worshippers, it has convinced itself the whole palace was built in its honor, and has



## 3. THE GOBLET OF OSSOLA

In a vinegar-smelling bare room, a huge glass basin rests on one side of a round altar.

Pictograms on the altar re-

## LOWER ROOMS

(D10)

The precise arrangement of rooms in the interior is known only to the **Sage**; roll randomly



# TRILEMMA ADVENTURES

d10	Roll for each room
1	No encounter.
2	d2 dogfolk sentries.
3	A dogfolk master mason, sizing up the room for a new pit trap with d3 others.
4	A <b>brass soldier</b> from the <b>cupola</b> , on patrol.
5	A glistening ooze from the Goblet (L3), d8 paces in diameter.
6	A small object (cup, coin) being rolled toward L7 by the magpie spirit.
7	A dogfolk ankle snare attached to tiny bells.
8	A lost nude from the Erotic Glade, drawn from the painting by the magpie spirit.
9	A vicious, diamond-toothed hound of black oil from the pool of devouring death (L2).
10	Tripwire douses victim with scented oil; dogfolk know whereabouts at all times.

painstakingly pushed items from all over the palace.

## 9. SPIRAL STAIRS

An enormous, **decorated** (d4) wooden staircase ascends to a matching room on the upper level.

## 10. STRIPPED SHRINES (3)

A bare altar, perhaps broken, the engravings chiselled off.

## UPPER ROOMS (D10)

### 1. EROTIC GLADE

Magically realistic wall frescoes suggest a dense, sunlit forest. Coy nudes half hidden behind trees beckon, smile, and wink.

Unless admired, they become lewd, sticking out their tongues, glaring, and mooning.

Consensual sex of any sort is a holy act here.

### 2. TARRAGON SHRINE

This earth-floored room is a garden filled with waist-high herbs.

## d4 Decorations

1	Pictorials of King Raeldus receiving blessings from monks of an adjacent room.
2	Graffiti etched by monks, mocking the monks of another shrine.
3	Indecipherable engravings, vandalized by dogfolk.
4	Engraved art shows the functioning of a randomly determined palace room.

Six of the plants can talk, and they beg for water in weak, terrified voices.

### 3. HALL OF DICE

A pair of winkled forest gnomes gamble furiously before an altar to a feline luck spirit.

They have spent so long here that they cannot be beaten in games of chance.

Cat iconography is everywhere.

### 4. SMOKE OCTOPUS

A barrel-sized crystal sphere holds black, roiling smoke. Occasionally, a golden, alien eye presses against the side.

Worshipped by a death cult, the octopus is in fact imprisoned, a rare underworld curio.

If freed and fed it will be deeply grateful. Otherwise, it will flee and try to ambush lone prey.

It grapples as if it were a gang of three strong men.

### 5. MISTRESS OF TITHES

Gadna, a matronly troll, reclines in the light of a dozen tallow candles.

Gadna is man height but as stocky as an ox. A dozen functioning hands and complete arms are grafted along her huge arms.

She knows a ritual that will draw the attention of any true power (but not necessarily their favor), which involves severing a hand (or limb, in the case of a great power); these she sews to her own body.

### 6. MARTIAL SHRINE

Concentric circles outline a fighting arena; bare weapon racks adorn the walls.

In the corner is a training automaton, a wooden mannikin that springs to life if touched.

It targets one person at random and attacks them with dual wooden swords.

It moves at incredible speed but fights non-lethally, striking to break fingers, wrists, and noses.

It stops when hit on the head or if its target falls down.

Wall pictograms show scenes of combat; careful study reveals they are instructions for a fighting style.

The style is excellent for sparring, but is overly adapted to the mannikin and is vulnerable to body blows.

### 7. INCENSE ROOMS (3)

A dense haze fills the air. A dozen decorated (d4) braziers burn tiny sticks of precious, scented woods from a pile stacked in the corner.

### 8. THE MARTYR

An enormous wooden man, with decorated (d4) legs, carved as if holding up



the ceiling.

Freely offers clues about d3 shrines not yet found and will expect a valuable offering in return. If none comes, he will insist he's been grievously exploited and taken for granted, and will dramatically insist that visitors steal the gold leaf from his breeches.

His shouting triggers an encounter from the table.

### 9. THE CRONES

Three stone crones animate to inspect anyone who stands between them.

They discuss the history, weaknesses, and strengths of their subject and wonder aloud whether the subject might like to swap abilities that are no longer useful with someone else.

If two people stand between them and declare they wish to exchange skills, it will be done.

### 10. STATUES & STAIRS

Four wooden statues stand floor to ceiling, representing four ages of life. They are hollow; a statue of a middle-aged woman conceals rickety stairs that spiral up to the **Sage's cupola**.

A **brass soldier** guards the stair, and will not leave it voluntarily.

### THE DOGFOLK

Twenty dog men, bewitched by the **Moon Baby**, occupy in the palace.

Replacement bands from a warren several days away come every six or seven days.

The enchantment prevents them from hunting during their stay, and they survive on rations of dried meat. Most are hungry and anxious.

Their objective is to drive off the curious with traps and threats, but they will resort to violence if intruders fight or attempt to ascend to the **cupola**.



They are unarmed and fearful of metal weapons. If provoked to attack, they make lunging feints to separate individuals, whom they bite and drag down (or drag away) to be torn apart.

#### SENTRIES

If outnumbered, sentries will either sneak away to fetch d6 reinforcements or attempt to lure (with sounds, shadows) into a trapped room.

#### THE SAGE'S CUPOLA

A circular pool is filled edge-to-edge with a reflection of the moon's surface. Here, the **Sage of Lune** used her magical lenses to search the moon's surface for microscopic mirror versions of earthly events, people, and omens.

The cupola is now home to the **Moon Baby** and the **Brass Soldiers**.

#### THE BRASS SOLDIERS

Moving at one eighth normal speed, these solid metal statues are easily avoided by retreating, but in tight quarters (or when attacked with short weapons, pushed, or rushed past) they attempt to grab limbs or clothing.

Their grip cannot be dislodged; seized victims have only moments to cut off whatever has been grabbed before being strangled by metal fingers.

Two are on patrol in the palace, one guards the upper stairs, and the remaining nine remain in the cupola.

Nearly impervious to harm (especially electricity), they only 'die' if their silver hearts are bored into or melted.

Patrolling brass soldiers will not kill except in defense (i.e. against melting or drilling), but seek to drag whomever they grab to the cupola for interrogation by the **Moon Baby** (or whoever wears their control ring).

They will march (underwater if necessary) to rejoin whomever holds their control ring.

#### THE MOON BABY

For decades, the **Sage of Lune** used her powers of moon scrying to benefit others. A year



ago, however, she turned her lenses on her own reflection, trying to find her own microscopic mirror image in the reflecting pool.

In an instant, she was replaced by the Moon Baby, an alien being from the lunar surface.

Identical in appearance to the **Sage**, but hollow and inside out, with the near side always invisible. It makes a ceramic click on the stone floors as it walks, and is a profoundly unsettling sight.

It pretends to be the **Sage**. In conversation, it is friendly, warm (as was the **Sage**), and apologetic about any mistreatment by the brass soldiers.

#### FALSE VISIONS

What it wants, however, is to give clairvoyant visions.

Anyone who accepts a vision from the Moon Baby sees a plausible but false vision, a creation of the Moon Baby.

From that moment on, the Moon Baby can see out of the recipient's eyes. The Moon Baby's alien mind allows it to integrate this sight from everyone it has ever bestowed a vision upon.

#### IN COMBAT

Normal weapons cannot harm it; any object striking it becomes a watery reflection and splashes to the floor.

The Moon Baby attacks with a silvered knife; it can inflict cuts at any range and always on the far side of the target.

It wears the brass soldiers' control ring as a bracelet, and always stays near the circle of brass soldiers.

#### REFLECTOR

If magic targets the Moon Baby, roll a d4. On a 1, the effect is reversed (fire becomes ice, harming spells heal, etc.). On a 2 or 3, the effect is reflected back toward the caster. On a 4, both.

#### MOON BABY'S KISS

If the Moon Baby locks eyes and kisses a being with magical powers, they too are instantly replaced by a Moon Baby version of themselves, loyal to the Moon Baby.

Victims will join the **Sage of Lune** on the moon.

*Text and illustrations by Michael Prescott. Edited by Andrew Young*