

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS VOL. 1



RANDOM ENCOUNTERS MONTHLY MAP COLLECTION

Inspiration and adventure, at your fingertips!

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Content Creator's Thanks

Thank you for your Patreon support. This supplement of all maps released in August, now in high resolution, is offered in sincere appreciation of those pledging at the \$3 tier. Thanks, again, and may this bring your gaming experience to a whole new level! As always, have fun and, GAME ON!



I would also like to thank Mythoard RPG Crate (www.mythoard.com) and Dice Fanatics (www.dicefanatics.com) for their partnership and support! Any new and existing patrons will receive one (1) FREE random set of acrylic polyhedral dice, courtesy of Dice Fanatics. Are you looking for quality rpg loot delivered right to your door? Then visit Mythoard RPG Crate and subscribe today! They now feature one of my amongst their loot! Visit one or tell them Random Encounters

printed high-resolution maps both of these fine websites, and sent you!



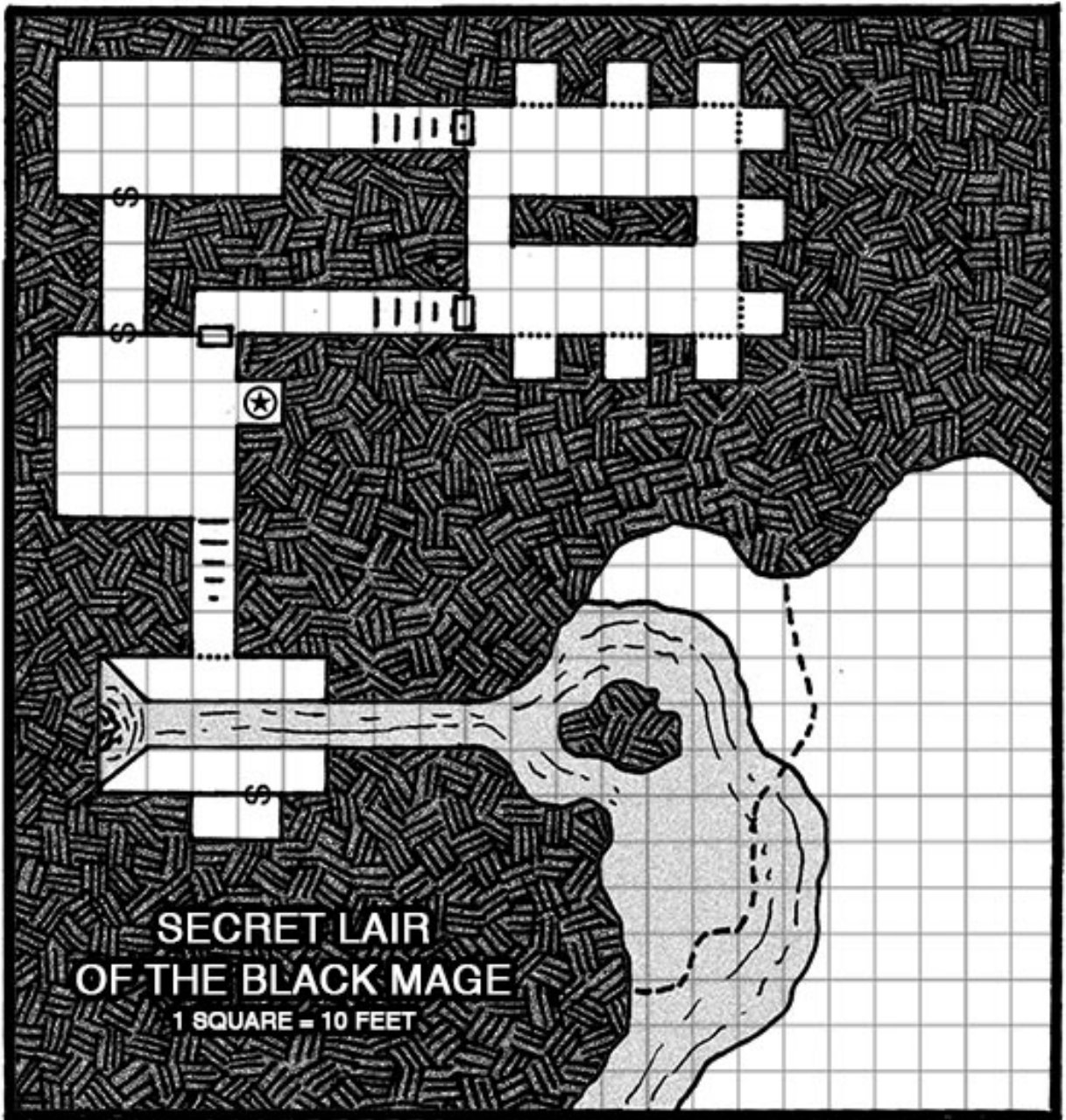
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Secret Lair of the Black Mage

The Black Mage is an aged sage whose power has become legend. Despite ardent and exhaustive searches many an errant knight has undertaken, none have been able to find the Magician's lair. In the meantime, the Mage's infamy has grown.

Men, women, and children have been disappearing from the Village in greater frequency. The local elder has sent out a call for any heroes, both local and foreign, to aid the Village; but heroes are in short supply. Will you take up your sword, spellbook, lock picks, or holy symbol, and brave the Black Hills crawling with the skeletal minions of the Mage? Courageous men and women are needed in order to help rid the world of dark magic and tyranny!

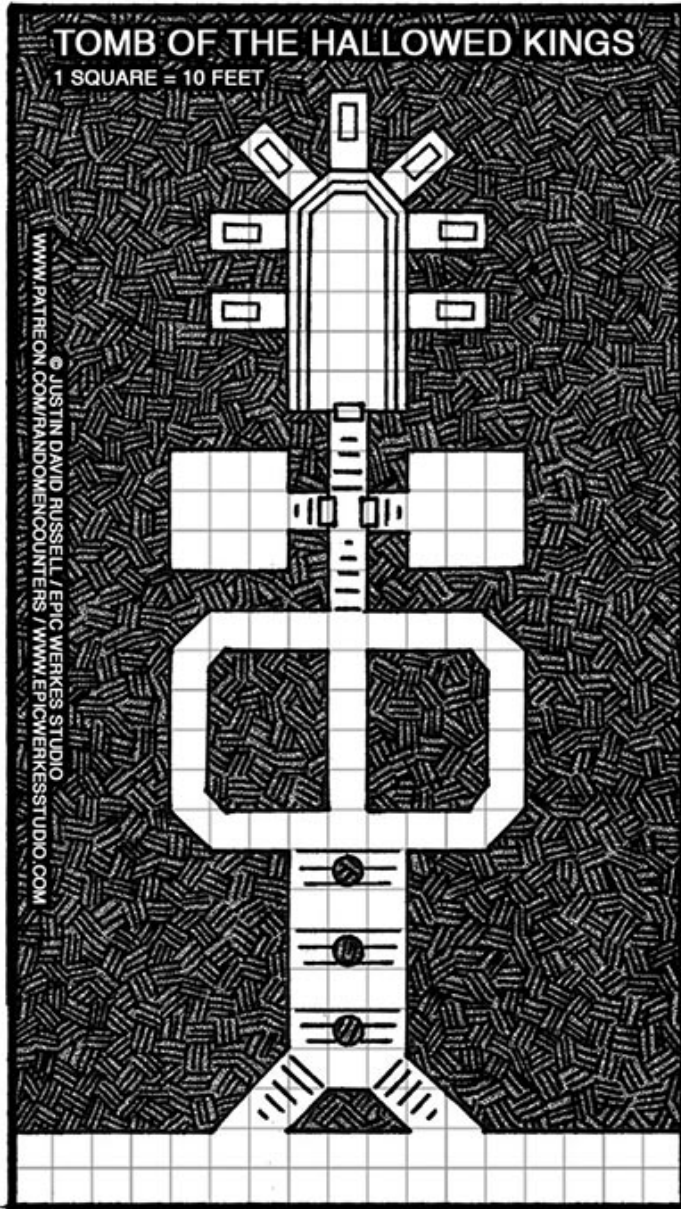


Tomb of the Hallowed Kings

Buried deep in the Necropolis of the Sun in the Golden City, the Tomb of the Hallowed Kings is the most ancient and revered of the city's burial places. Laced with deadly traps and the dust of centuries, the Tomb protects the original Seven Kings of the Sun and their riches from would-be tomb robbers. It is said, however, that in the time of the city's greatest need, the swords of the Seven will again be needed. And as the winds of change blow cold and lonely through the uncertain streets, rumours of war from the northern hordes flock like migrating birds to the taverns and inns and whisper doom around the hearth fires of bone-weary peasants. Who shall brave that deadly tomb in the forgotten halls of the Necropolis, should the need arise? For it may not be long before terror and fire come calling to the massive city gates where yawning watchmen lazily check carts and heads of livestock.

TOMB OF THE HALLOWED KINGS

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



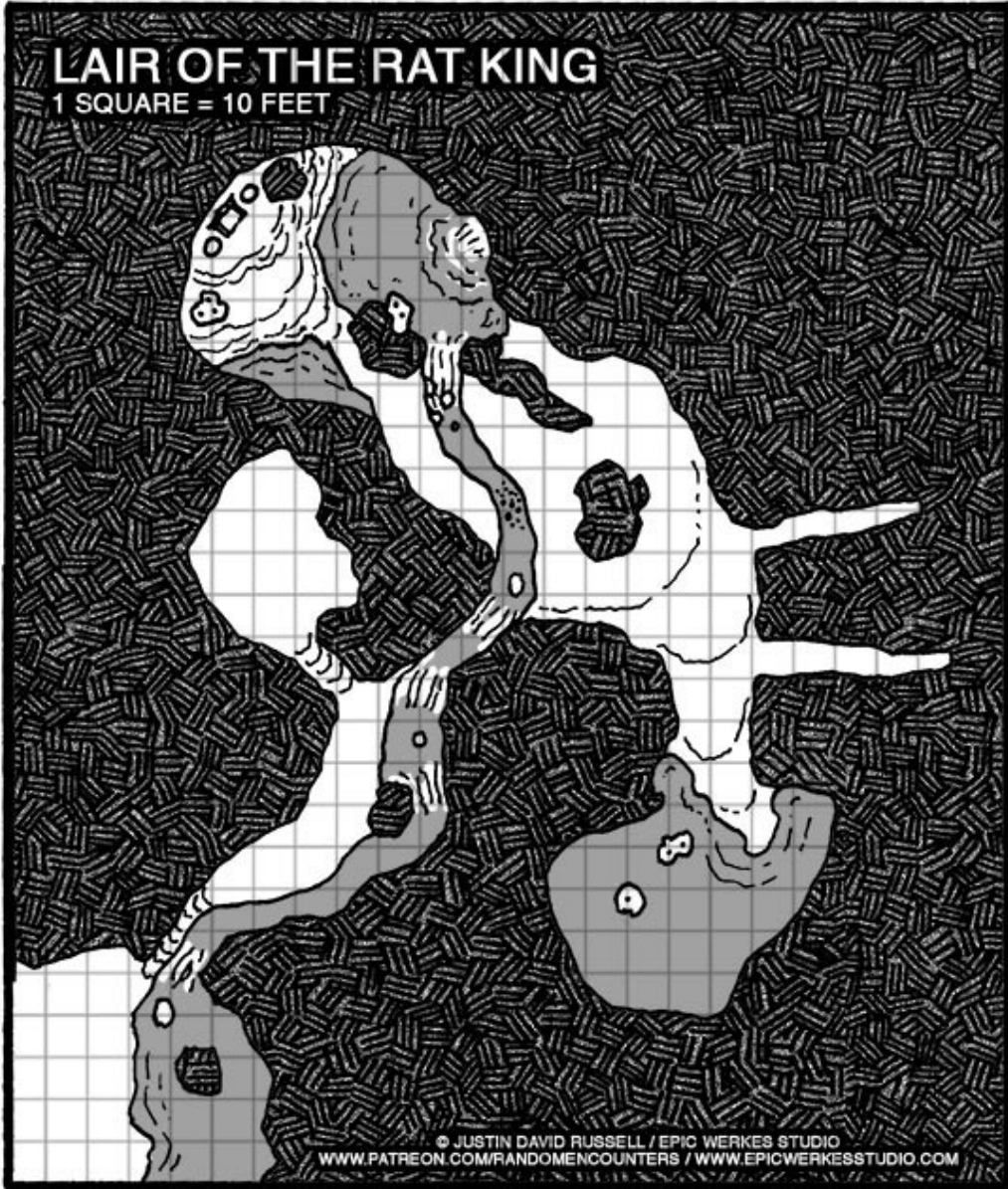
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Lair of the Rat King

The Rat King, Sezzik, rules a small force of goblins, wererats, and human outlaws. From his gilt chair flanked by burning braziers, the rat man orders his flunkies out into the countryside to waylay caravans, lone travelers, and others to feed his men and find labor for the silver mines located in the lair's cave system.

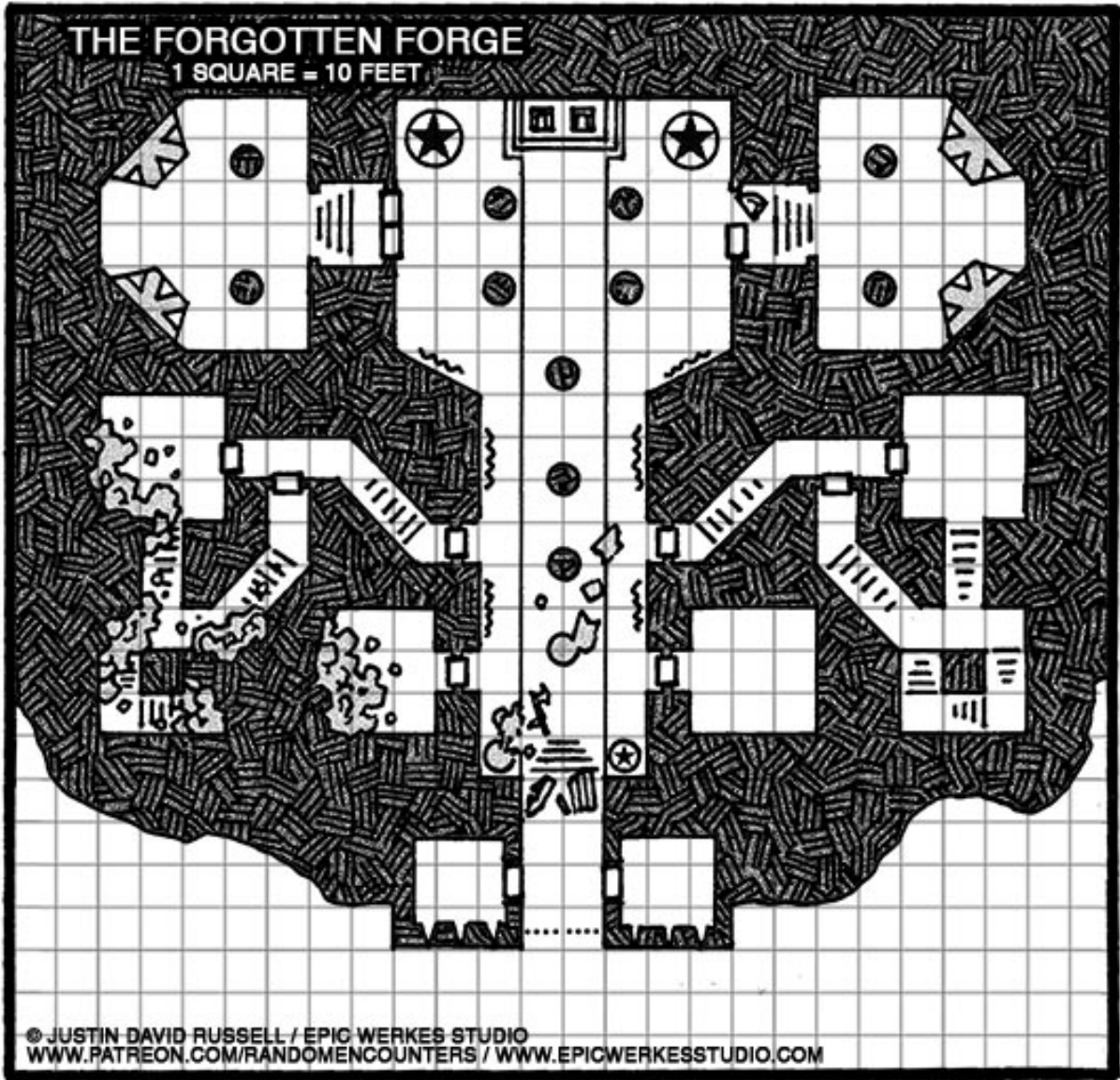
LAIR OF THE RAT KING

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



The Forgotten Forge

You've been wandering mostly aimlessly in the forest for hours. The chill of approaching night and the grumbling of your stomachs from days of rationing food, warn you of your need to find shelter. As if on cue, a squat, ivy-choked gatehouse seems to materialize before your tired eyes. It is built into the stone cliff you've been following for an hour. Its massive, smooth blocks are the work of the hill dwarves, your dwarven companion mutters gruffly. He does not know what this structure is, or why it is here, though he surmises that it might have once been a mine. It appears abandoned. You called out for any guardsmen, but the crickets and the cool breeze sighing in the trees were the only responses to your hail. Seeing the portcullis partially raised, and no sign nor track that anyone or anything has entered or left the place other than a few smaller animals, you decide that the darkened portal might offer a safe place to spend the night. Perhaps it might offer some adventure, as well? But you have no intention of investigating until you have filled your bellies with the last of your rations and had a good night's sleep. Looking around once more, you all squeeze under the sturdy iron portcullis, and vanish into the darkness of the gatehouse...

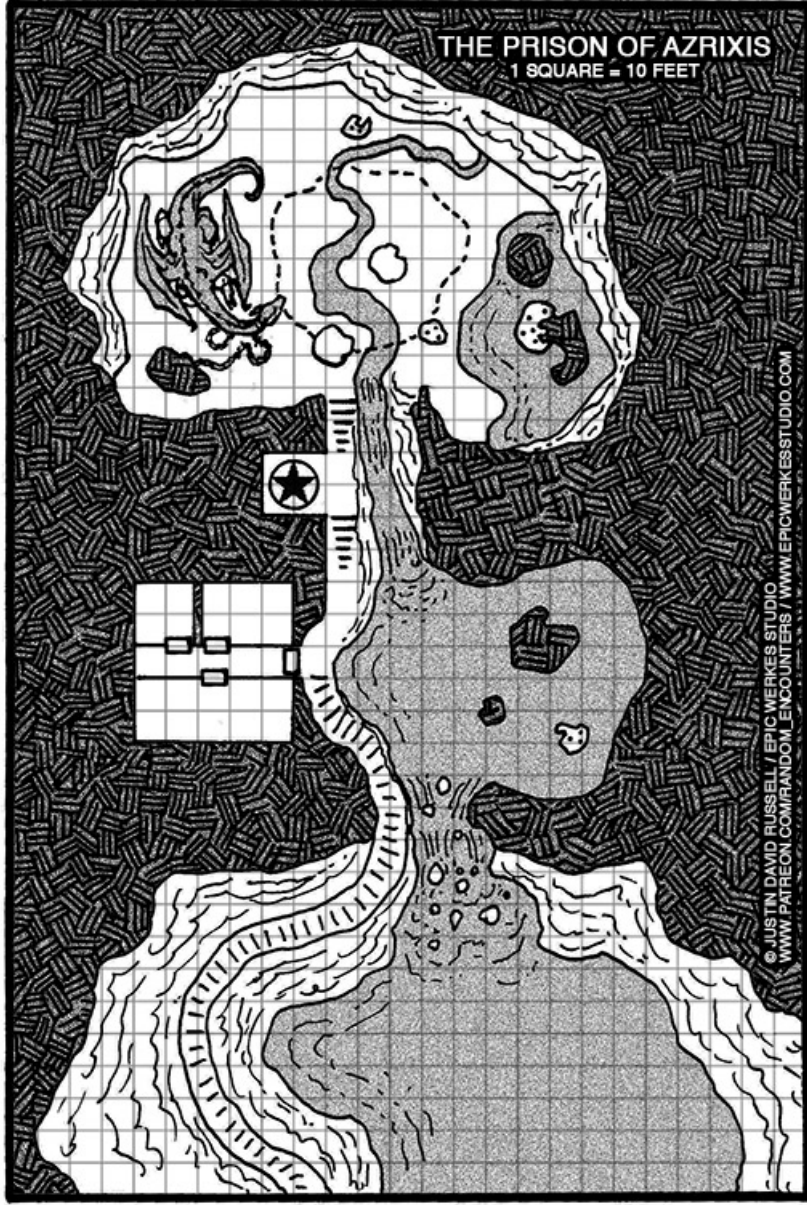


The Prison of Azrixís

Azrixís is an ancient dragon of impressive power. He ravaged the countryside of several lands around his lair, and was responsible for the utter destruction of several kingdoms during his active youth. 500 years ago, he was subdued by a brave and worthy knight who promptly had a magical collar and chain fashioned. The collar was securely fastened around the dragon's neck, the chain bound to a thick pillar in the dragon's once treasure-laden lair. The wealth from the dragon's hoard was returned to its original owners and/or divided between local kingdoms. A shrine to the knight's god was built within the lair, and a winding, treacherous stair carved from the cliff face leading up to it. The knight and several acolytes served as watchmen there for many decades. It is now the duty and custom of that order to send a single knight and several priests to tend to the lair and the imprisoned dragon.

In the years that followed, the cowed dragon was used as a source of wisdom and counsel for any that would brave the hazardous mountain paths to get to him. The collar forbade Azrixís from using his considerable might and destructive magic on any one or any thing, including his surroundings. He slumbers and he stares longingly up at the opening high above his head, musing as he waits in patience for the day when he might free himself, or be freed by anyone he might convince to find the necessary materials to break his chains.

Will characters seek Azrixís the Bound for wisdom, to identify ancient and powerful items, to recall long forgotten details about kingdoms now lost? Or will they seek to free Azrixís? Or stop those that might try?

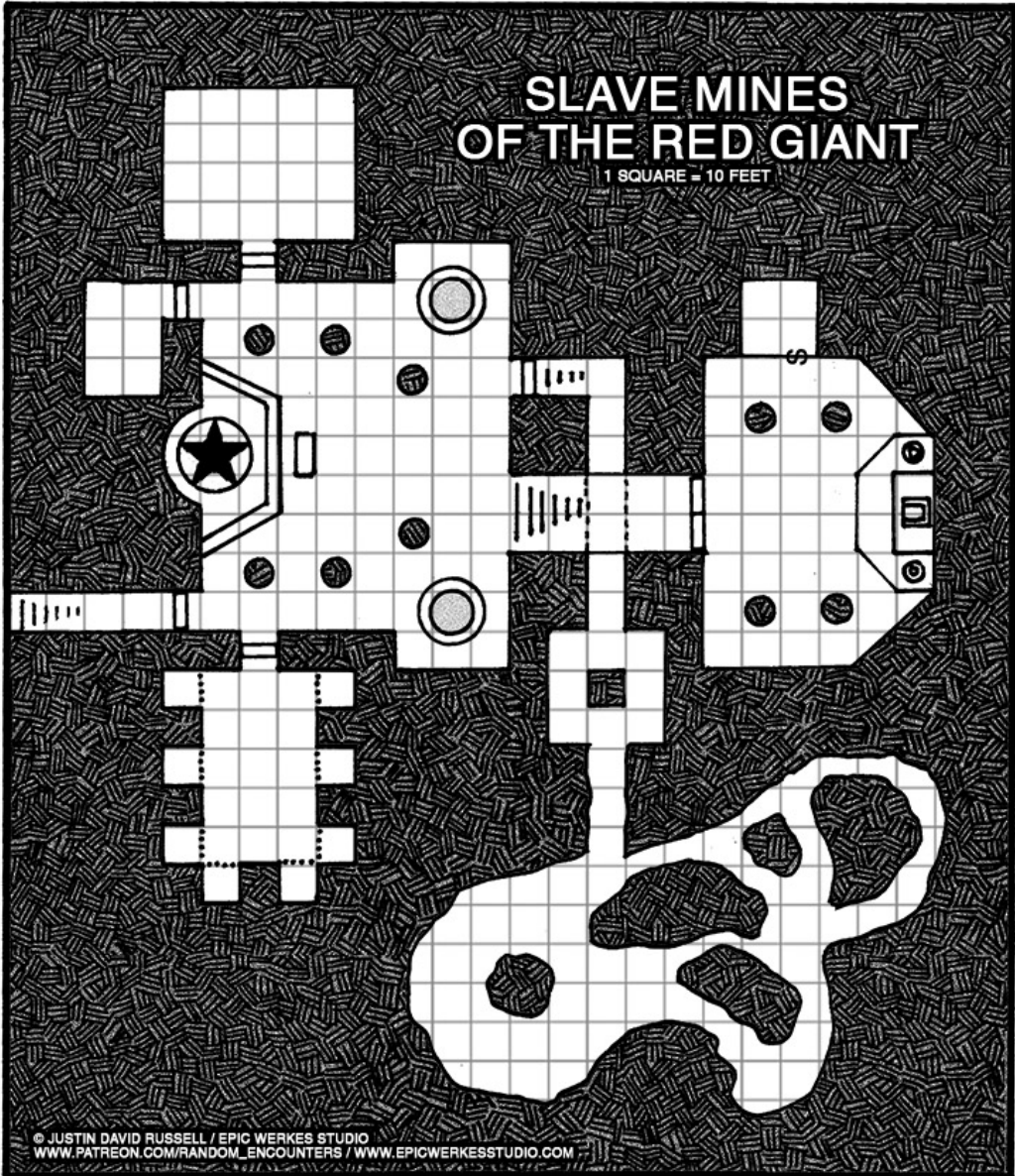


Slave Mines of the Red Giant

A scourge of Man and beast alike is the zealous warlord known as the Red Giant. He is a man of massive proportions and an even more massive appetite. He has always been a bandit, an outlaw fleeing from the local law, preying on the less fortunate, the wealthy, and anyone else that has anything of value the man might covet.

The Red Giant has turned to faith in his middle years. He now zealously leads a cult of bloodthirsty bandits and priests and operates an iron mine using slaves. His underground compound was built using the spoils from countless raids. The main chamber contains a black marble altar, two massive braziers, and a bronze statue of the war god. The Red Giant can usually be seen filling his massive, fur-covered throne, surrounded by slave women and man-servants, consuming large quantities of meat, wine, and exotic delicacies. Though let no man say the bandit king is too fat and too slow to be dangerous. It has been proven on too many occasions that the Red Giant is a capable warrior of surprising mobility and wrath. It is said the war god himself grants such prowess to the man.

Desiring more than just coin and jewels, the Red Giant has allied himself with tribes of monsters from the wilderness around his lair and prepares his priests, bandit followers, and ever-growing army to wash over the southern kingdoms like a bloody tide.



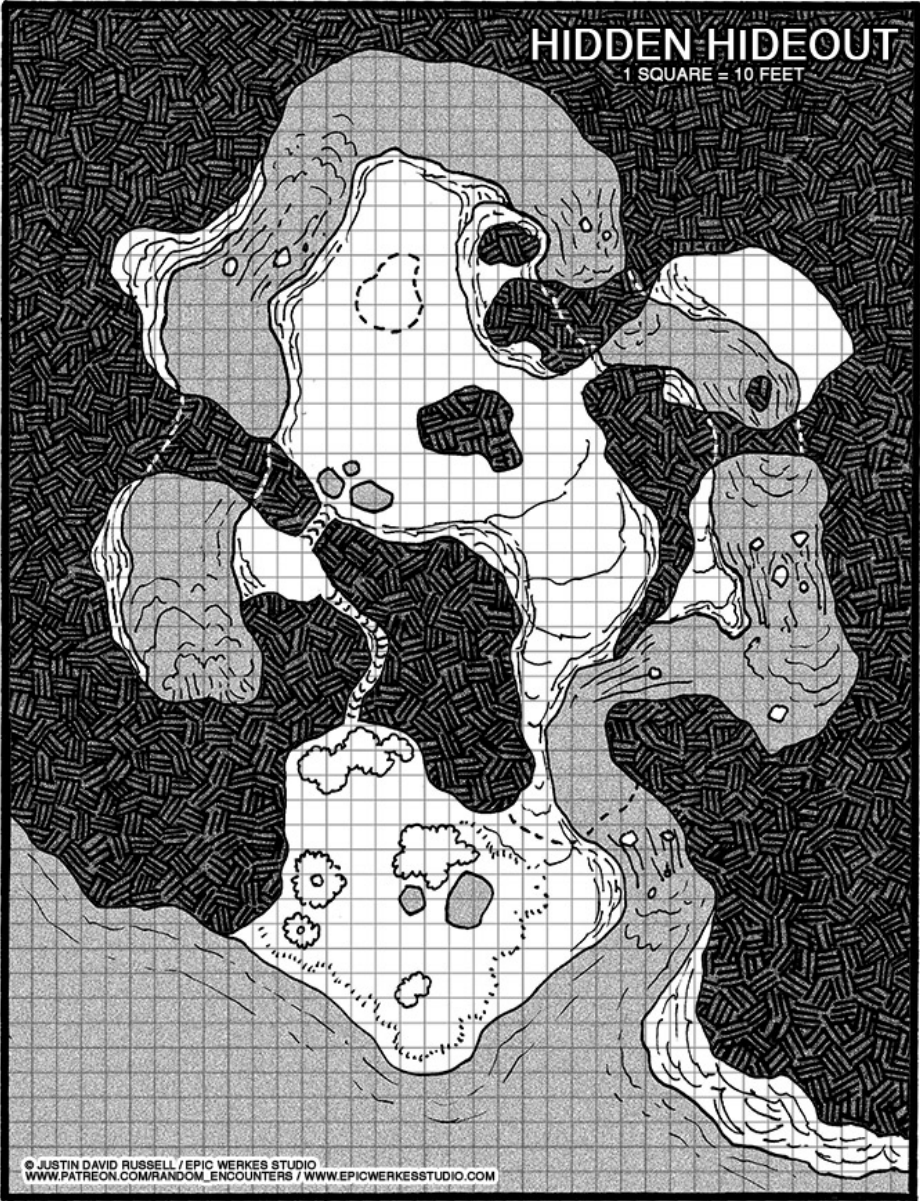
Hidden Hideout

As you progress down the river in your small boat, the steadily increasing thundering sound you have been hearing over the last few minutes reveals its source. You see a natural landing next to a large cave opening against the cliff face to your left. The tall mouth of the cave spews a swift flowing river from its black depths. Covering the landing are sparse grass, a few evergreen trees, scrub brush, and a few large boulders. As you draw nearer, what you first mistook for a stump is revealed to be a mooring post.

After landing, further investigation will reveal a narrow incline to the left of the churning subterranean river. Following it will be dangerous, as the stone is slippery from the river's spray. Caution is required to progress. Astute characters will find a much smaller concealed opening in the cliff face behind some of the tall brush. It is man-made. Rough stairs leading up from this portal provide safer access to the caves and leads to a large waterfall crashing into a wide stream that disappears under a low arch in the north wall. The rapids continue throughout the cave system. Anyone falling in will be swept away and take damage from banging into rocks and being plunged down the cataracts as the underground river narrows in the harder strata and picks up speed before vomiting forth violently from the cave mouth.

This cave system once served a group of bandits as a hideout. What happened to them is anyone's guess, but there are traps and hazards (some long broken and useless, others still active and dangerous) throughout the area, as well as some forgotten goods.

Let me know how you use this map. Sometimes I have only a vague idea what the map could be used for, so I would love to hear what challenges you create for your group.



Castle Kaznar

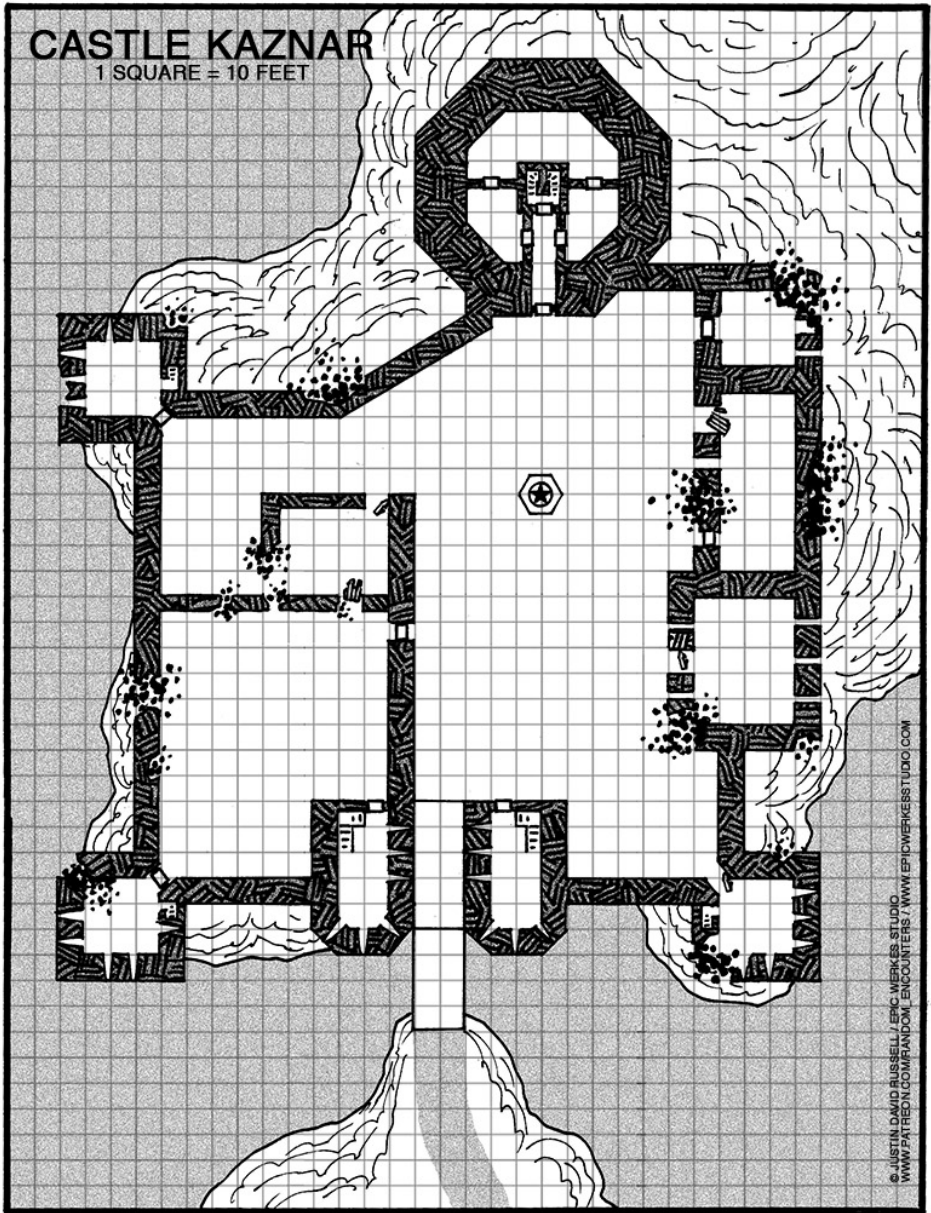
Castle Kaznar is shrouded in mystery. It sits perched on a finger of stone and can only be reached by a decaying drawbridge spanning a short gap between the castle and another precipitous finger of rock. It's black marble, windowless obelisk tower extends like a black finger pointing heavenward. Kaznar was rumored to have been a powerful, eccentric wizard. He was evil, by some accounts. What happened to him is unknown.

The black-robed wizard was not very welcome in the sleepy hamlet in the valley below his tower. When his retainers and messengers stopped visiting the place for goods, no one questioned it. Years passed and no sign of the wizard was seen again. Kaznar's name became synonymous with 'goblin' or 'ghost' to scare children into behaving.

Only recently has anything changed. A sickly mist has seeped out of the castle, leaking down the cliff face to the valley below. The unnatural, green fog has slain anyone touching it, resulting in the residents fleeing the hamlet to other nearby settlements. As far as anyone knows, the mist hasn't gone any further than the valley. But those that enter the area never return...

It is said the crumbling castle surrounding the tower contains living statues that fly at night and prowl the ramparts and courtyard. The marble tower remains unchanged, looming menacingly over the village. Some say the dead walk the hamlet streets, restless, compelled by the mist into unlife.

What will your PCs do? What menace dwells within the tower?



Holy Shrine of the Sisters of War

Long ago, a barbarian army led by three warrior queens washed over the northern lands in an inexorable tide of violence and death. They were defeated after trying to cross the massive Towering Mountains. The Sisters made the trek, but their army was so depleted upon reaching the other side that, despite their ferocity and prowess in battle, they were stopped. They refused to surrender and were slain nearly to a man. Those that remained brought the bodies of the slain sisters back to the northern lands where they became the objects of a cult. A shrine was dedicated to them, built high in the Towering Mountains where no man may easily visit it, and they were deified by their people.

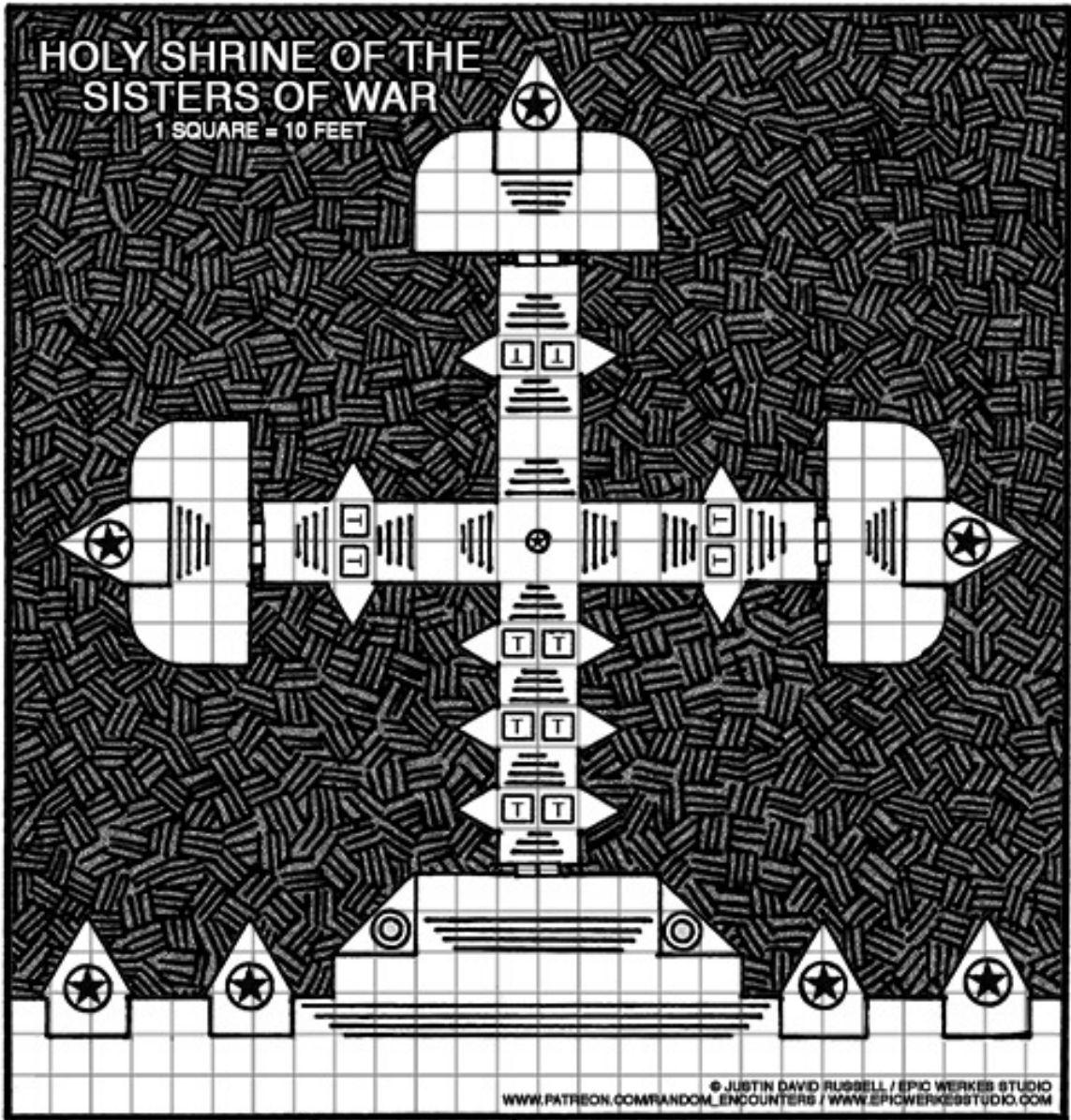
Before the Sisters died, they cursed the kings of the southern lands, promising to return to finish in death what they could not in life. Their cult has been awaiting the day when they might try and wake the women from their slumber. The prophecy states that three young women of the line of the Sisters of War will make the climb up the mountains, survive the deadly traps set to prevent any from desecrating the tombs within, and recover the Sisters' weapons to bring the spirits and blessings of their owners back to the tribes.

The bodies of the Sisters of War were interred under large statues of them. Each likeness was carved in the style of the northern tribes, somewhat crudely, and the Sisters' swords laid on the stone at the statues' feet. The entire Shrine is carved in knots, runes, and stylized human figures representing the armies and deeds of the Sisters during their time. Statues outside depict raven-headed women, for the bird was sacred to the warrior queens.

To enter the tomb, one must light the Flames of War, the braziers flanking the massive, decorative iron doors. The traps therein test the dexterity, mental swiftness, and physical prowess of those that dare enter.

Throughout the years, cult members have made pilgrimages to the site to lay offering at the base of the bronze doors to ensure luck in battle.

Some say the Time of the Sisters is at hand, and three young women have been gathering armies in the north. Will they wake the spirits of their forebears? Will the swords of the Sisters of War bring death and destruction to the lands that were cursed so long ago? Only time will tell. Heralds of the southern kings have begun to call heroes to travel north, to investigate the truth behind the rumours, and stop the three descendants of the warrior queens from reclaiming their birthright.



Lantern Falls

Lantern Falls is an independent mining town sandwiched between the Central Borderlands to the west, the very northwestern edge of the Towering Mountains to the east, the elven woods to the south, and the barbarians and Kingdom of Chaos to the north. It's a sleepy town comprised of hard-working farmers, craftsmen, miners, and fishermen, though there are some merchants and traders that operate within the town walls. A large waterfall thunders down several cataracts to the north of the settlement.

Those few caravans that end up in Lantern Falls arrive in the summer months when the passes and Borderlands are free of harsh weather. The most common traders include merchants from the Valley of Haven in the mountains to the east, or free farmers from the Ancient Hills and lands immediately surrounding the town.

Historically, the town was a simple village comprised only of miners. But as harsh northern weather began taking its toll, marauding barbarians and monsters harried the miners, and passing caravans of merchants and guardsmen wintering with the labourers eventually became farmers, it became clear that more protection was necessary. Walls were slowly built. Mercenaries were paid to watch the town and protect its inhabitants. These soldiers became the town's first men-at-arms. Eventually, one of these men, Durwin, took power, focusing construction and military efforts for the first time for the beleaguered inhabitants.

A traveling cleric of Law settled in the town 100 years afterward, bringing with him spiritual guidance and offering his god's protection to travelers heading east or west.

Soon, Lantern Falls, or Iron Falls, as it was called until 70 years ago, became known as the 'Merchant's Lantern.' It offered those few travelers that made the harrowing journey through the Borderlands or the Towering Mountains a safe haven from the hazardous northern realms. Though trade is still not bustling, commerce is greater now than it has previously been.

Bezzwic Greencloak is the town's most extraordinary feature. He is the Steward's counselor and a wizard of middling power. He lives in a tower near the Keep. Bezzwic is proud, forgetful, and quick to please the Steward with simple cantrips and stories. The wizard is venerable, but not ancient. He is tall, with meaty hands and a wide girth. His greying black hair and beard are wild about his face and protrude from his voluminous green cloak. Bezzwic thoroughly enjoys scaring the town youth with threats of true and awesome power. He does not brook fools, but will bend over backwards for the Steward of Lantern Falls.

Lorden is the Steward of Lantern Falls. He is descended from the mercenaries that were hired to protect the developing town. The man is short, stout, and red-faced. He is a combative fellow that loves being involved in forays into the surrounding hills to deal with any threats that might arise. Lately, though, his wife, the Stewardess Gwendolina, and Lorden's advancing age, have kept the man upon his carved throne much more often than he would like. Lorden is prone to exploding into fits of rage, though such bouts are mostly bluster, as his wife will be quick to point out. Lorden's son, Uthric, is his pride and joy. Tall like his grandfather, fierce like his father, and acting constable for the town.



KEY:

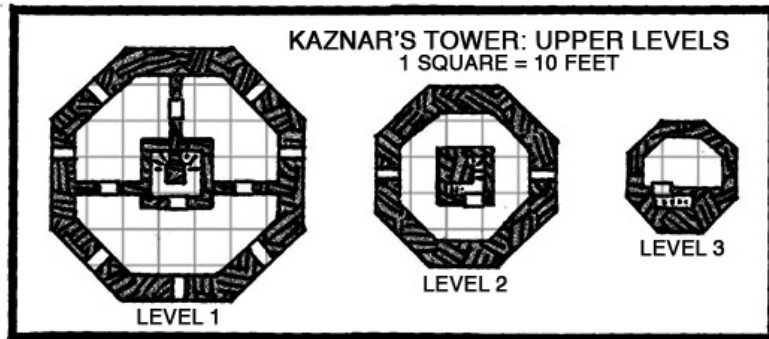
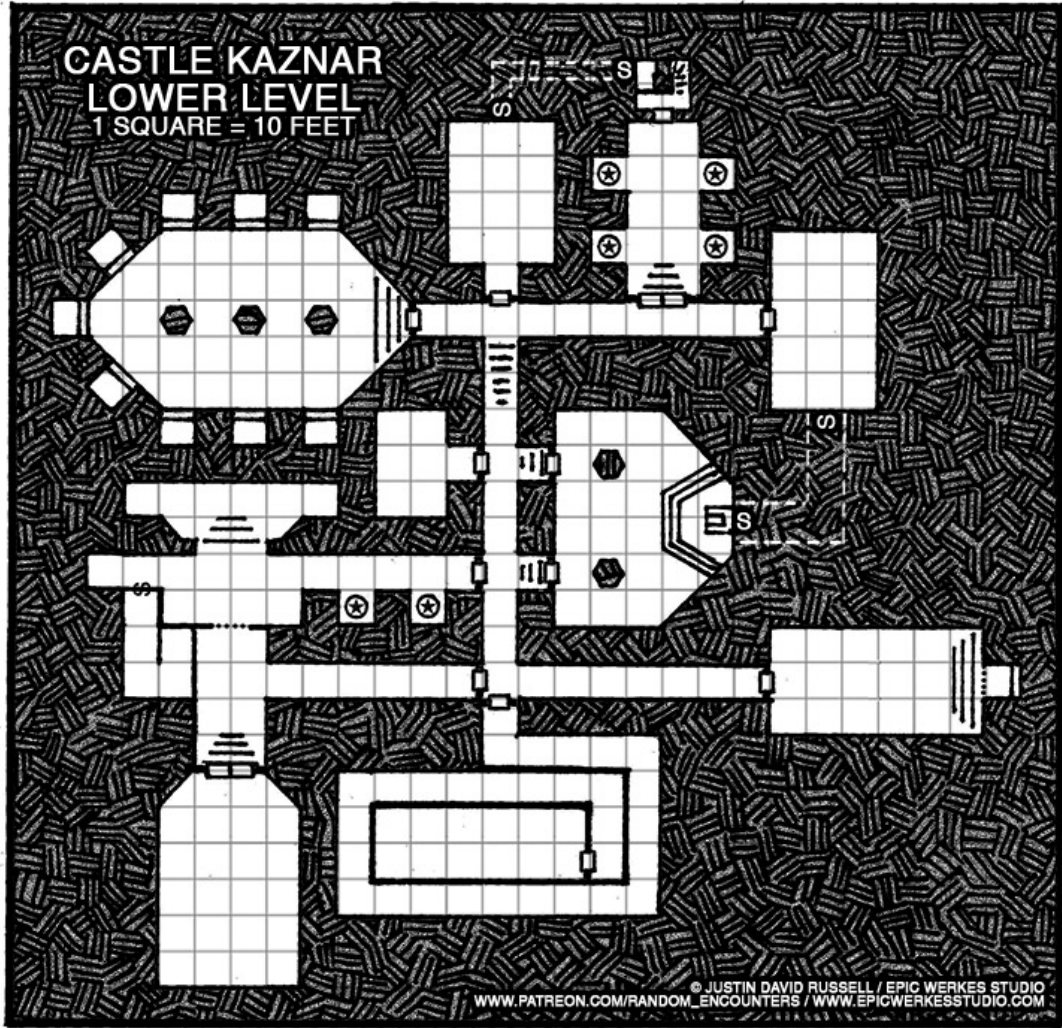
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|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. FISHMONGERS/DOCKS | 6. DELGAR THE TRADER | 11. MARKET SQUARE |
| 2. GRAVEYARD | 7. THOM THE LEATHERWORKER | 12. LORDEN'S KEEP |
| 3. EAST GATE | 8. BELDOR THE BLACKSMITH | 13. BEZZWIC'S TOWER |
| 4. TEMPLE OF LAW | 9. STORN THE ARMOURER | 14. WEST GATE |
| 5. THE LONELY DELVER INN | 10. SLINKER'S TAVERN | 15. TEG THE HORSE TRADER |

Fenic the Pure is the town's priest. He is a stick of a man, with a head that bobs around on his bony shoulders, like a scarecrow with no support, when he gets excited or angered. Many say the priest is a boring, fussy, and fastidious fellow, and they are right. Most of the temple's acolytes and the less pious townsfolk make fun of him for his no-nonsense personality. Despite his conservatism, the man is good of heart, aids the traveling and local poor, and is quick to lend a hand when the moment calls for it, though he might try and control the whole affair. Lorden and Fenric are constantly at odds, though they hold a grudging respect for one another.

Return to Castle Kaznar

Kaznar was a mysterious and (some say) evil wizard. The Dungeon under the castle is rumoured to have many unusual features, such as a room of mirrors, statues that come alive to attack intruders, and a summoning chamber where Kaznar is said to communicate with otherworldly powers and the souls of the dead. Countless treasures are rumoured to be hidden within the wizard's stronghold.

Kaznar's black marble obelisk tower rises out of his castle like some kind of weird crystal. Its several levels are reached by spiraling stairs. Though no windows can be seen from the outside, the inside reveals several one-way openings in the stone that permit the observer to look out without being observed. The top of the tower has no windows, but the ceiling is an exact replica of the night sky that changes in time with the seasons. The roof cannot be seen but seems to go off endlessly into space. Touching the ceiling reveals the night sky is an illusion that hides it. Some say that if Kaznar concentrated hard enough, he could scry on anyone he bent his mind upon, the scene revealing itself in the above him, replacing the sky.

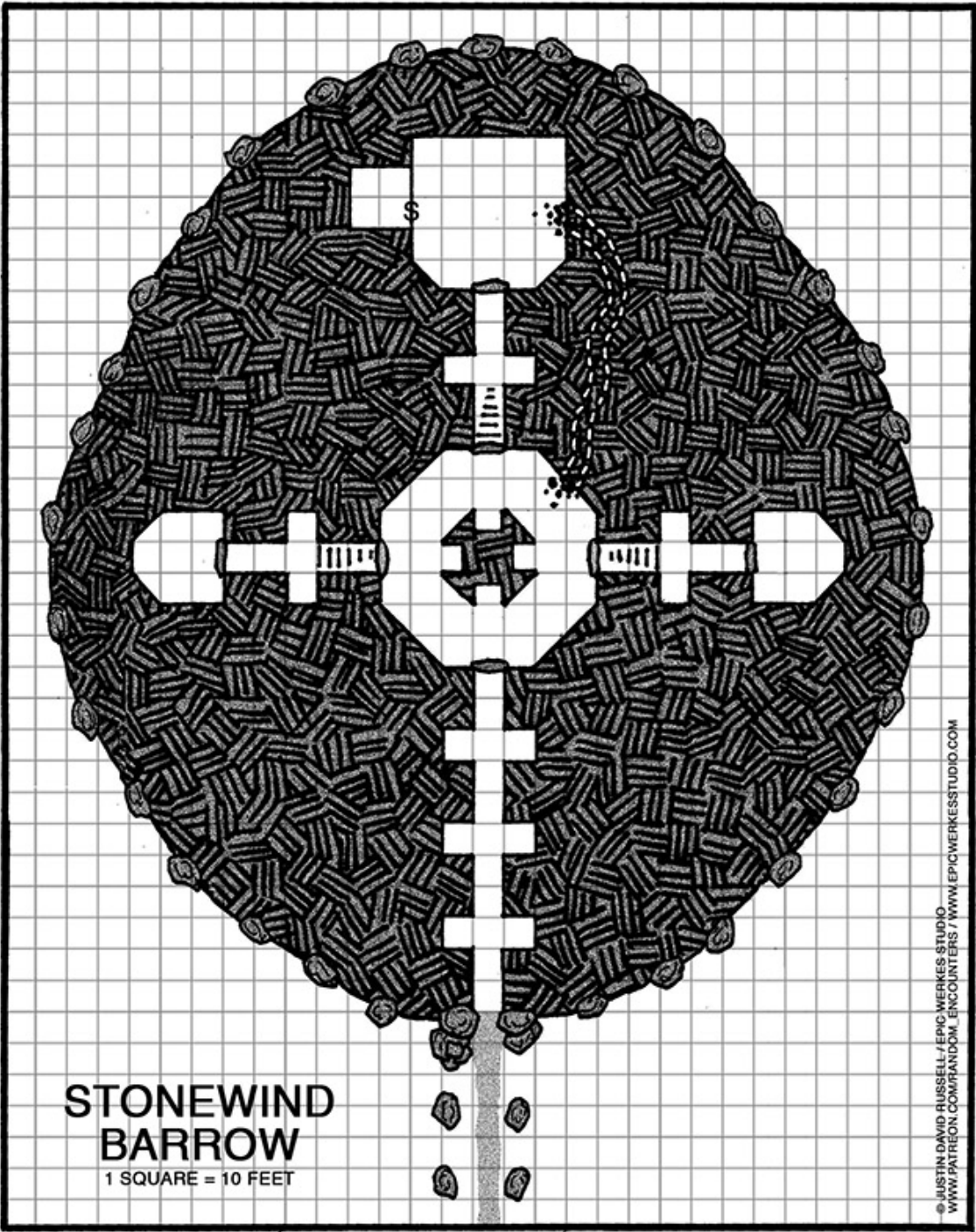


Stonewind Barrow

Deep in the Stonewind Hills is a lonely barrow belonging to a long forgotten nobleman from an ancient time.

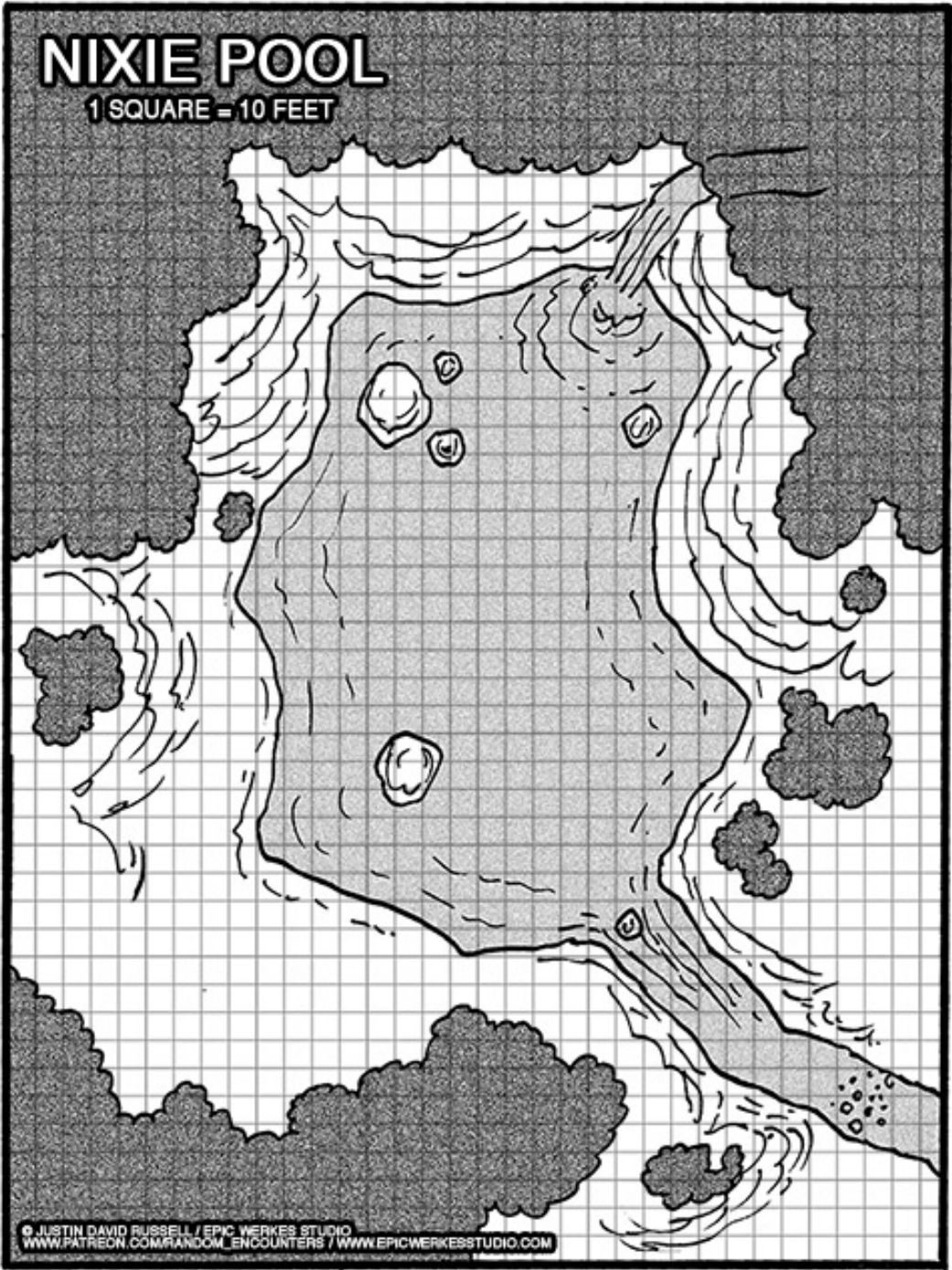
It's growing dark as you pass through the muddy streets of the village. The inclement weather and Autumn chill convince you to stop and rest your weary bones and aching muscles at the small inn just outside of town. You quickly learn of the barrow just beyond the village farms to the north. The people normally do not venture there, more out of superstition and respect than because of any known danger. Lately, however, the local swineherd has reported strange sounds emanating from the large mound of earth. Haunting moans and scratching sounds have been described by the young man. Fear has kept anyone from investigating, but the villagers are growing more and more uncomfortable, and the swineherd won't go near the barrow at all.

Will your PCs investigate the secret of the barrow? Will restless undead soon plague the village, attacking the residents at night, or converge on the party as they try and leave the area? What is causing the dead to stir? Has a local disturbed one of the stones ringing the mound, causing the noble buried within to become vengeful until the massive stone is returned to its proper place?



Nixie Pool

The first half of the day proves to be uneventful as you Wander through the forest on your way to your next destination. About noon, your group catches a cool breeze and on it, the welcome scent of fresh water. You soon hear the chuckling of a stream. Eager to stop to refill your water skins, you follow the echoing sound as best you can, until you come to a brook and an easily passable ford. You trace the tumbling stream up a rocky cleft to a clear pool fed by a tall waterfall. The fall cascades down a high cliff of dark stone. Turning to admire the natural beauty around you, you notice that, to your surprise, a group of beautiful, small women in gossamer tunics regard you all with strange, amused smiles from the bank of the pool to your left. Their voices are hushed and indecipherable over the noise of the water. Never-the-less, a fog of complacency begins to tug at the edges of the minds of the men in the group. Those of you affected fight to resist the fog settling thickly over your thoughts...

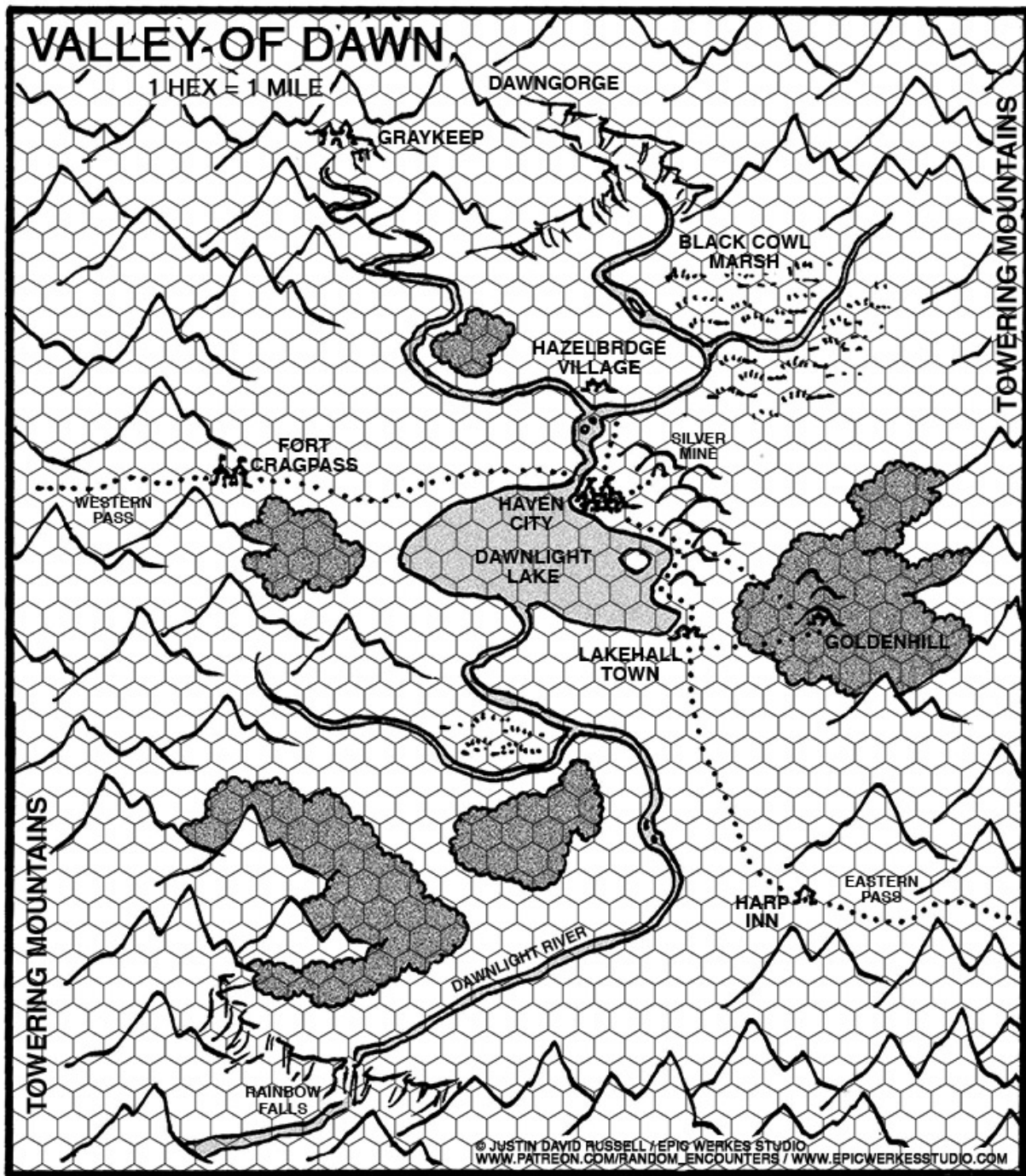


Valley of Dawn

The Valley Kingdom of Haven is located in the Valley of Dawn. It's independent city was built long after a group of elves mysteriously vanished from the area. Relics of the elven people litter the landscape of this fertile valley. All are beautiful works of art that the residents of Haven have grown somewhat used to seeing. A caravan route runs through the valley connecting the Borderlands and the lands North to the Southern Kingdoms.

Haven City was constructed on the bones of an elven settlement, and some of its architecture is delicate and intricately carved, betraying this past. The people that live here are hardworking and generally happy. The summers are mild, the winters long and harsh.

Threats come mostly from the Black Cowl Marsh and the Towering Mountains. Giants and other monsters often raid the predominantly human settlements. There are dwarves living in the north, in Graykeep, and the halffolk of Goldenhill live in the forest to the east. The dwarves trade metal goods for agricultural goods, but the halffolk keep mostly to themselves, preferring to remain isolated from their larger neighbours.



Temple of the Cult of Chaos

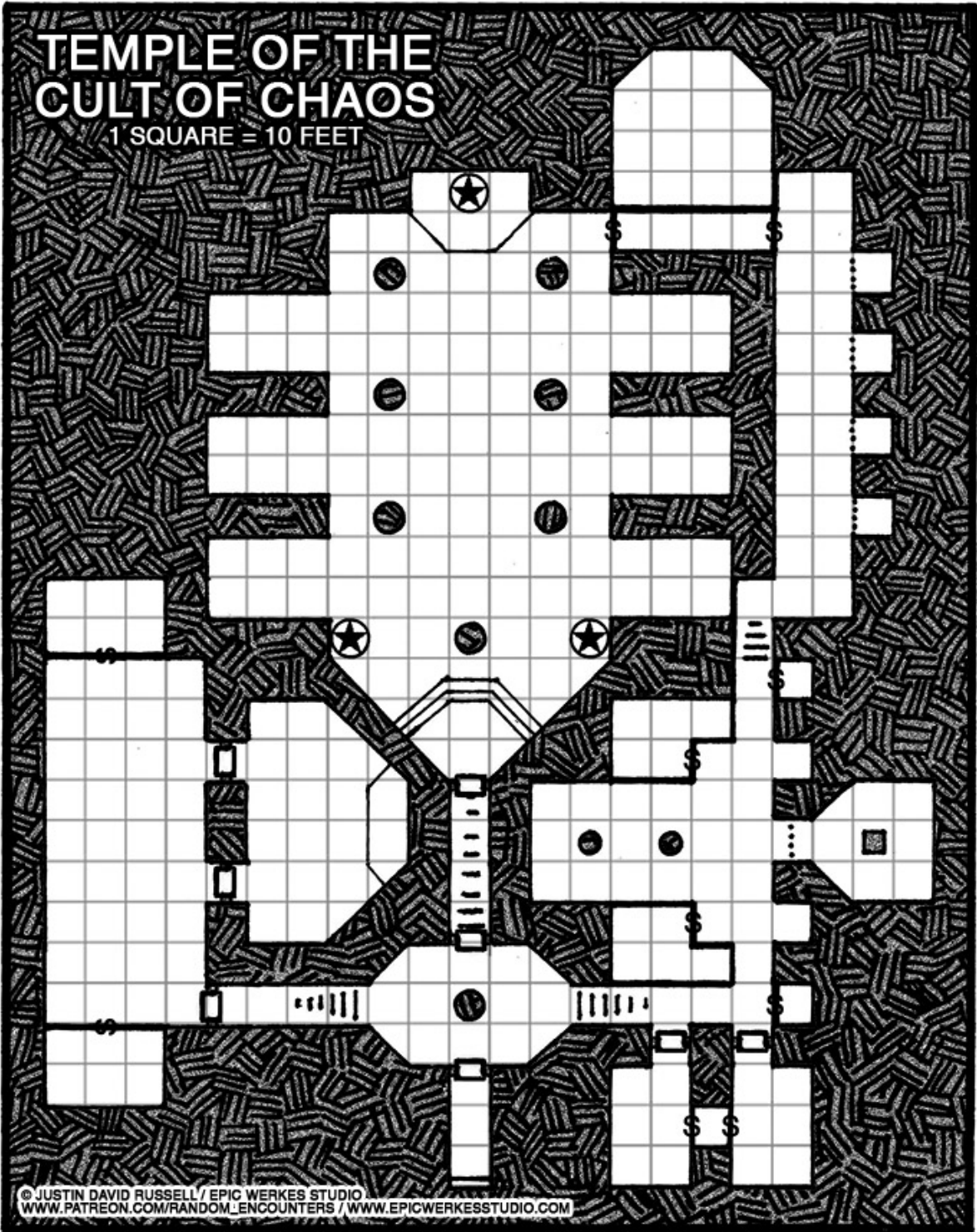
The Temple of Chaos is the secret of Castle Kaznar. The wizard had been communicating with the Cult conspicuously for many years prior to his disappearance. A portcullis in one of the alcoves in the dungeon level gives access to a mirror that teleports individuals to the Temple Level, if the proper magic word is spoken. Otherwise, some other unfortunate fate befalls the hapless character, should he attempt to walk through.

The temple is not underneath the castle, it is in another location, somewhere deep in the Towering Mountains. Kaznar had it built in a cavern system that could be accessed remotely, thus ensuring he would not be disturbed, and his plans would go uninterrupted until their completion. Is Kaznar biding his time? Did the forces of Chaos destroy the wizard after an attempted summoning? Only braving the black marble halls of the Temple will reveal some clue as to the true nature of Kaznar's disappearance.

An elevator and winch in an eastern room blocked by a portcullis lets labourers down into a hole in the floor, granting access deep into the mineral rich mines below...

TEMPLE OF THE CULT OF CHAOS

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



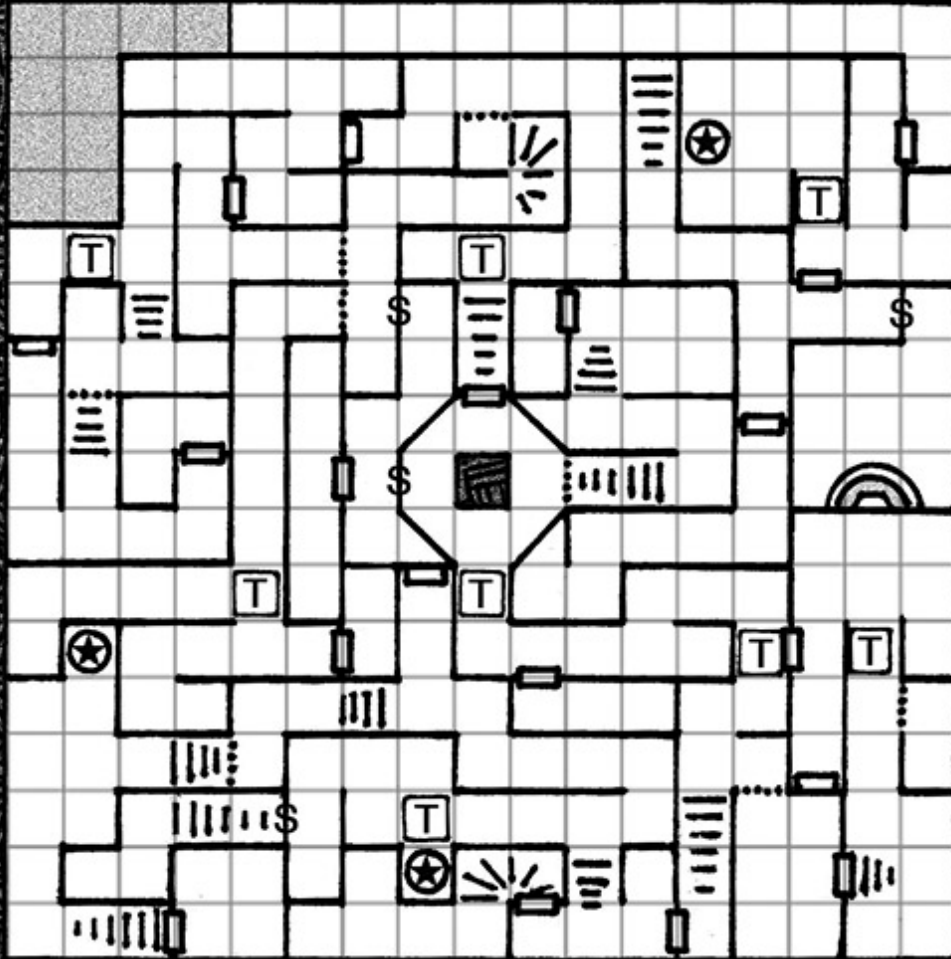
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Maze of Morzarn

The Maze of the Wizard is a dimensional prison that was built by Morzarn, a sadistic magician of great power and influence. He teleports trespassers to this space where he watches them wander the deadly maze that he designed. Statues that speak and come alive, insidious traps, false doors, trick stairways, talking pillars, magic fountains, puzzles, and more, litter this complex. There are monsters and other creatures the wizard keeps in the maze to entertain his 'guests.' Characters start in the centre and must work their way through the puzzles. Characters may win their freedom by solving the riddles Morzarn has prepared.

THE MAZE OF MORZARN

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET

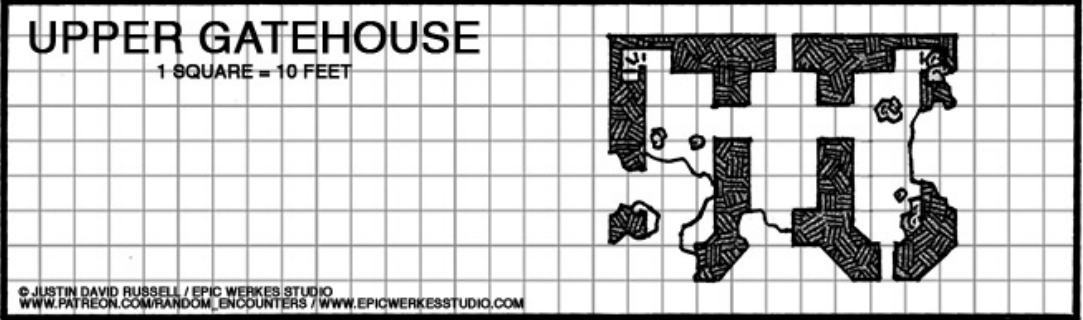
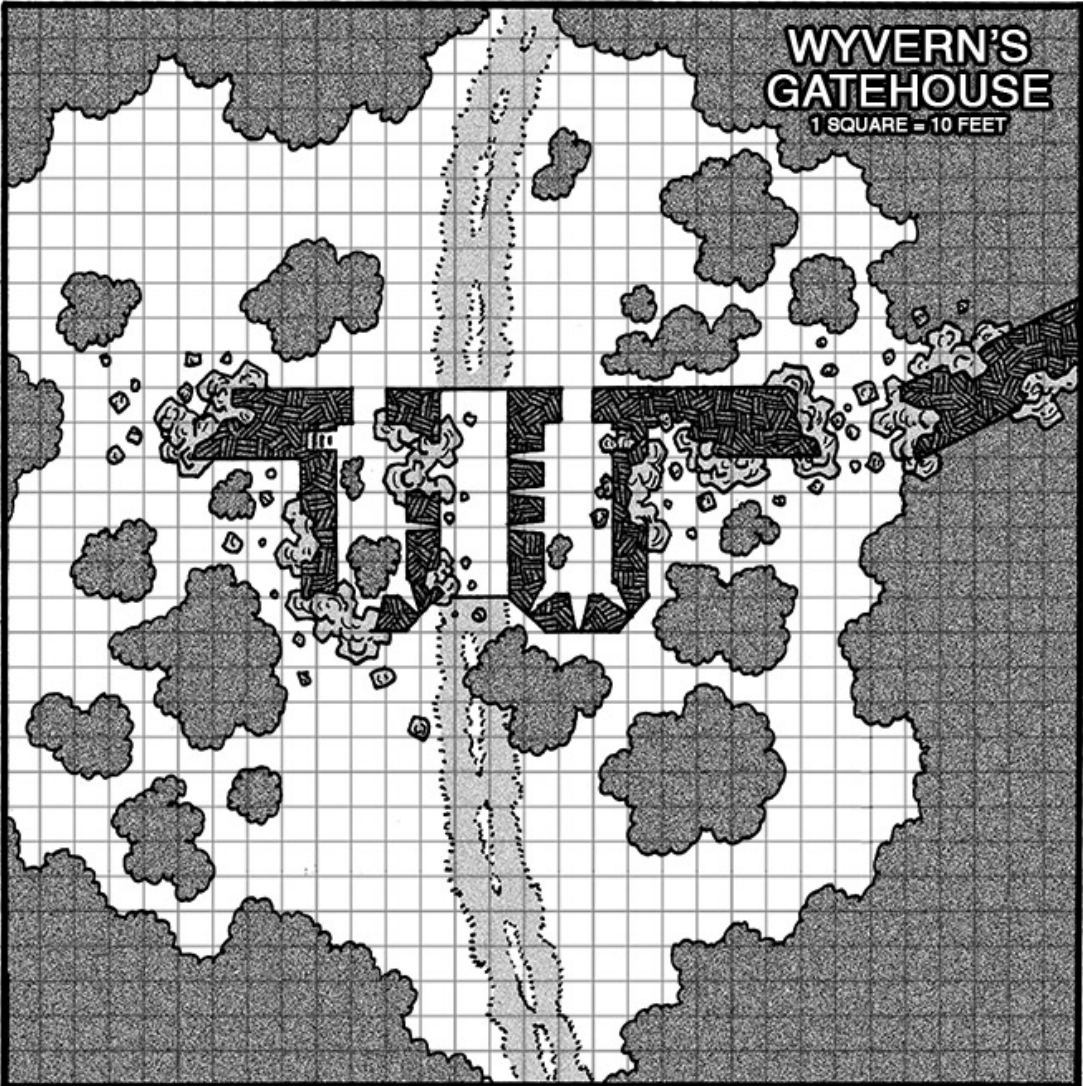


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Wyvern's Gatehouse

There are rumours of a dragon that lives deep in the Graywood forest. Hunters and trappers have disappeared, others have reported seeing a shadow flitting briefly across the sun over the canopy, and some have even said the beast stalked them through the trees. Others have sworn they saw a red, winged creature flying over the forest, but cynics say it must have been a hawk, or an eagle. In any case, villagers have begun giving the thick wood a wide berth.

Named for the large gray wolves that haunt the trackless wilderness, the forest is dangerous enough without a larger, fiercer predator marauding its sylvan halls. In reality, the dragon is a male wyvern that settled the area to begin a lair and look for a mate. The creature has two strong rear legs, two powerful leathern wings, and a whip-like tail with a stinger that it uses, scorpion-like, to disable its prey. The creature has taken up residence in the central hallway of a ruined gatehouse, the only extant structure left of the once proud castle that dominated the region centuries ago. Little remains of the iron portcullis. What's left of it fell forward and now rusts in the overgrown cart track, covered with grass and earth, not even a formidable obstacle that must be dealt with, unless someone attempts to dig it up.



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The Crypts of Jorgo

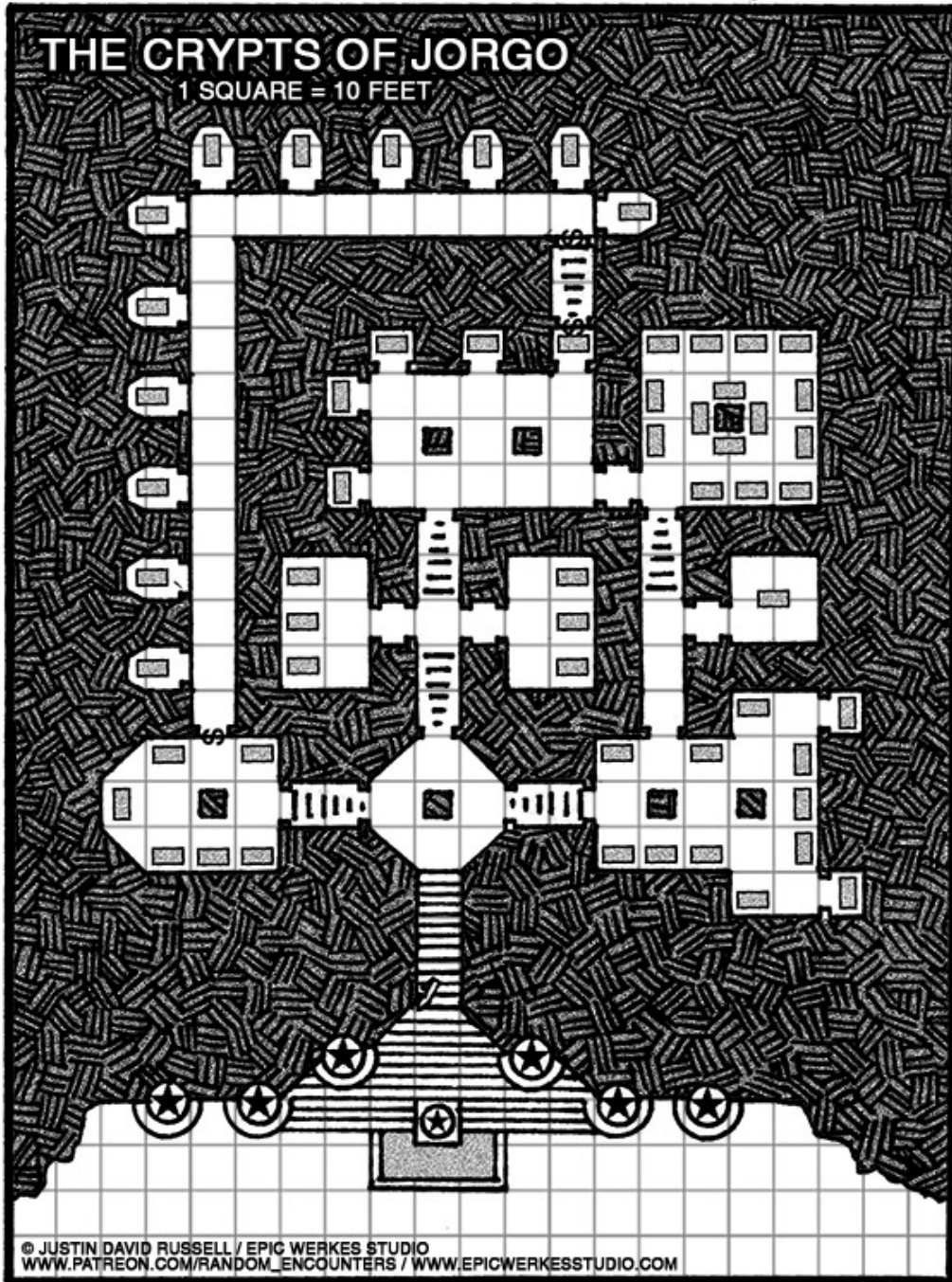
Hidden in a cave in the Mountains of Mourning are the Crypts of Jorgo, resting place of the wizard kings from the days of Jorgo's ancient past, prior to the rise of the Jorgite Empire.

Few dare those dire mountains. Fewer still would brave them for the treasures rumoured to lie in the depths of the crypts. Treasure hunters and explorers have already visited the place, though many have not made it back to report their findings. Those that did return spoke of the walking dead, a protective spirit, and a magical fountain.

The entrance is a wide set of ascending stairs cut from the very rock. Several caryatid pillars carved from the same material as the stairs reach all the way to a pediment that hangs over the entry. Another statue of exquisite craftsmanship depicts a beautiful Jorgite woman pouring water from an ewer into a silvery pool at her feet.

THE CRYPTS OF JORGO

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



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Great Arena of the Rat Men

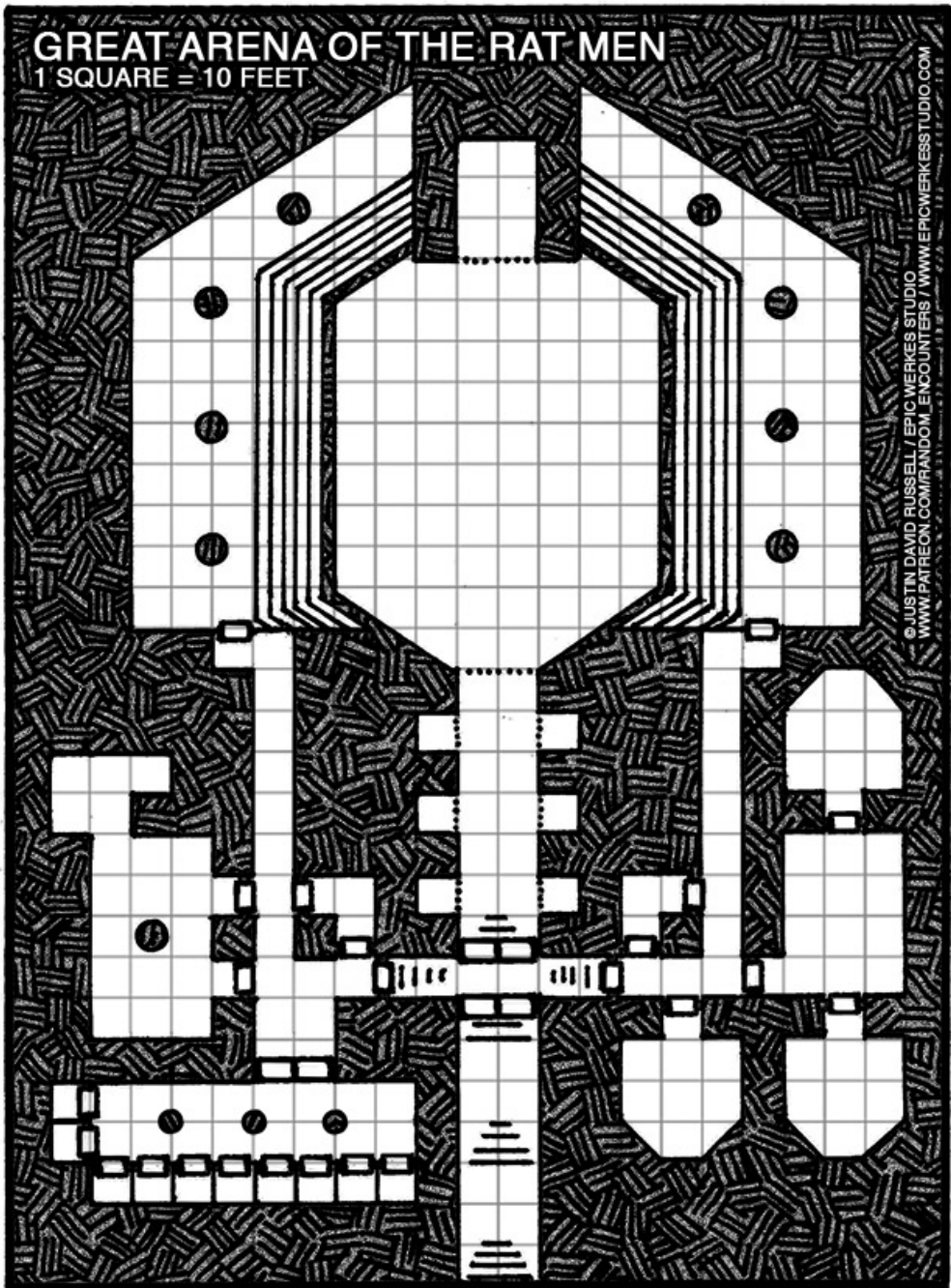
Deep beneath the city sewers, deep beneath the waking, living world, lies the Kingdom of the Rat Men. Able at times to disguise themselves as normal men, these evil creatures usually prepare ambushes to capture their quarry rather than kill it. Afterward, the Rat King sends his prisoners to serve in the city's most notorious gladiatorial event.

The Great Arena is a complex that houses several slaves in small cells until they are ready to do combat with whatever creature or humanoid the Rat King deems appropriate. The slaves are then taken to the holding cells just inside of the entry to the arena.

On the far side of the arena is a large cell usually used to keep fearsome beasts to entertain the masses. Throughout the events, many come to fill the stone steps, and watch hungrily for bloodshed upon the tamped earth at the feet of the combatants.

GREAT ARENA OF THE RAT MEN

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



Lost Tomb of Orpion

Your trek across the valley has been rather uneventful. As you mill over the betrayal of the village elder three days ago, rubbing sore muscles and fresh wounds from the battle during the third watch the night before, you do not feel the initial stirring of the earth beneath your feet. Suddenly, you are nearly knocked from your feet by a lurching heave of the ground beneath you. You hear the dull sound of shifting earth and stone. You have but a moment to act before you join the debris tumbling swiftly into the widening blackness beneath you.

If your PCs make the necessary die rolls, they may be able to avoid the fall into the cave below. Not many stones collapsed. The character(s) simply stepped on a thin layer of limestone and earth. A cavern with a small waterfall feeding a winding stream that flows around the west edge of the cavern to disappear into the earth will be a surprising change of environment for the PCs after having spent the entire day tromping through the heather-choked, goblin-infested hills.

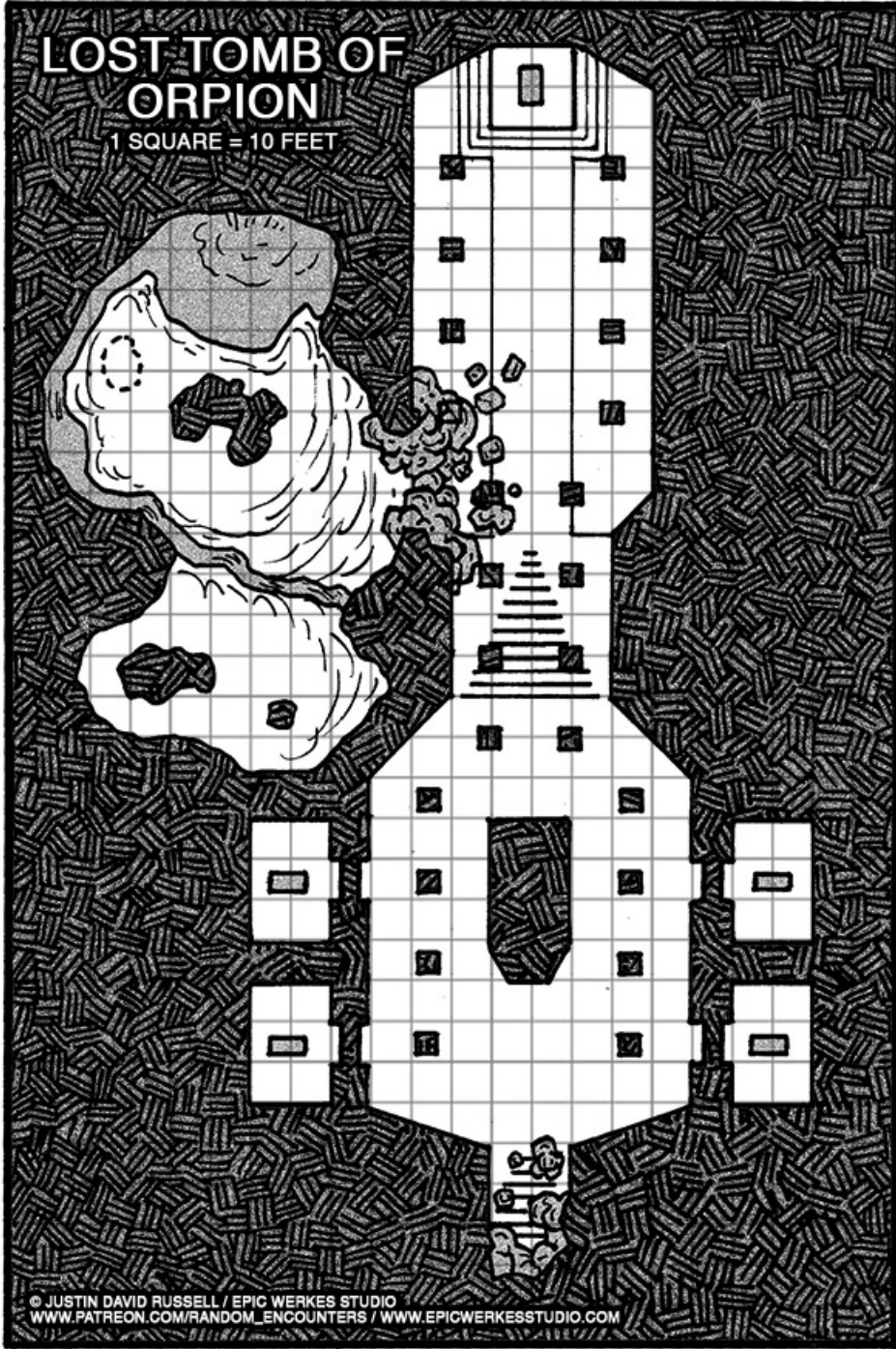
Long ago, the region was the location of an ancient kingdom and its most famous king, the mercenary Orpion. Orpion was said to have been a great force for good. His four companions were also brave and honourable heroes. When he and his henchmen died, his tomb was built into one of the nearby hills. After the ancient kingdom fell, the tomb was lost from memory. At one point, an earthquake buried the entrance to the tomb. It also unsettled the masonry and raw earth separating a small cave system from Orpion's resting place, collapsing the tomb's western wall. PCs will likely discover this and may wish to investigate the long-lost Tomb of Orpion.

Wide, intricately carved stone slabs block immediate entry to the tombs of the four companions. One of the pillars nearest the ruined wall has been destroyed, knocked over by large, falling stones during the earthquake. All of those interred lie upon large, carved biers, arrayed in their best armour and holding their most prized weapons.

Some say that Orpion placed a heavy curse upon his tomb, and anyone that sets foot in it. How true this is remains to be seen...

LOST TOMB OF ORPION

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET

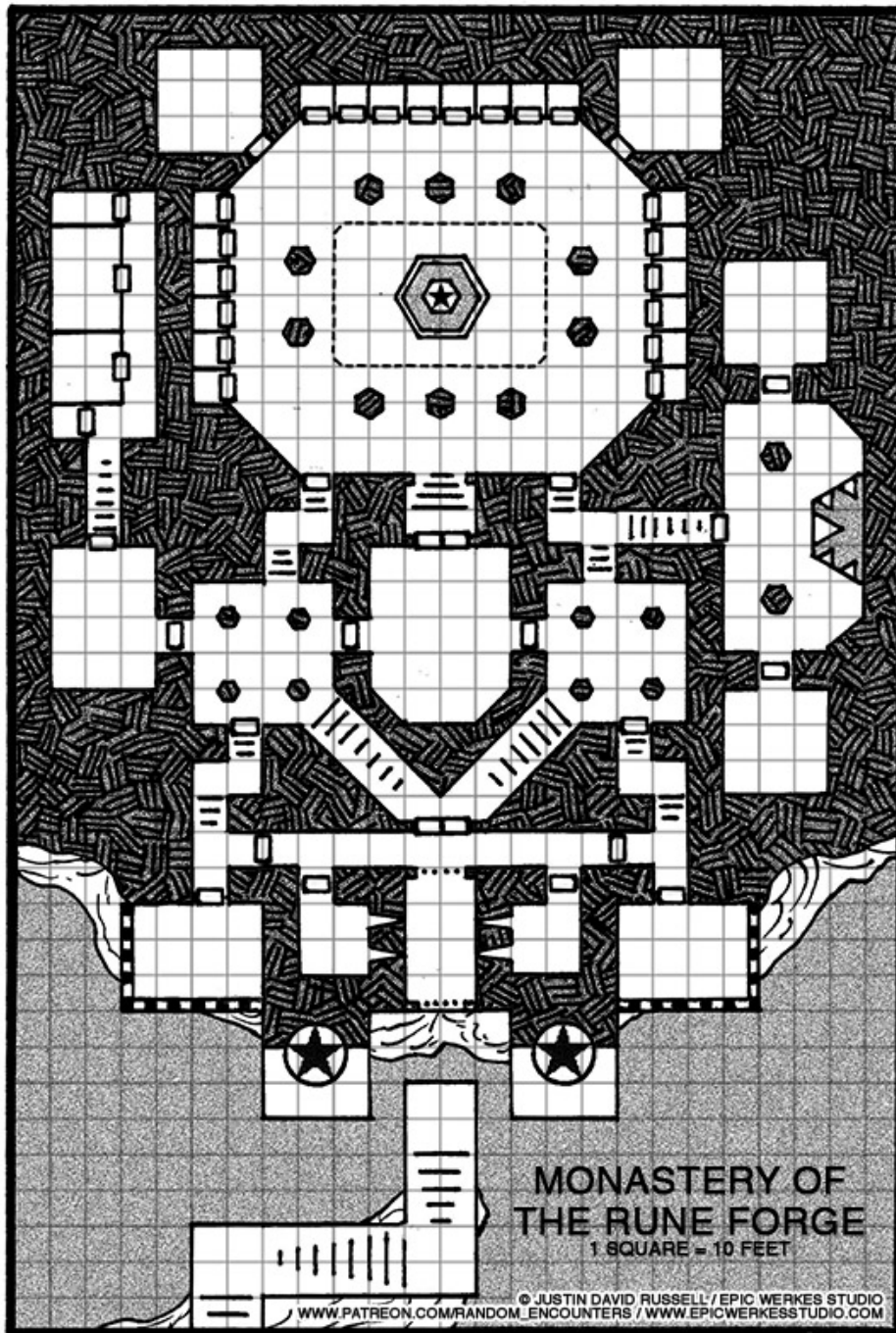


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Monastery of the Rune Forge

Facing a steep-sided mountain valley, perched lonesome and impossible upon the face of a cliff, is the Monastery of the Rune Forge. It is reachable only by ascending a treacherous and winding stone stair that wends its way along the cliffs, at times only a tenuous ribbon of stone arching over deep crevasses. The building is a sacred dwarven structure dedicated to the study and preservation of runic lore, and the deepest, most ancient secrets of Making. No Rune Masters now live, but the reclusive, steadily dwindling order of dwarven ascetics that live there tend the place, steadfastly keeping their vigil and protecting the wisdoms of the God of Making and the Hidden Treasures of the Earth.

At the heart of the monastery is a courtyard of white marble and dark granite, built high and ringed with cells for the priests that live there. Far up, a hole in the stone permits a view of the sky and exposes the courtyard to the elements. A statue and fountain dedicated to the God of Making dominates the centre of the space.



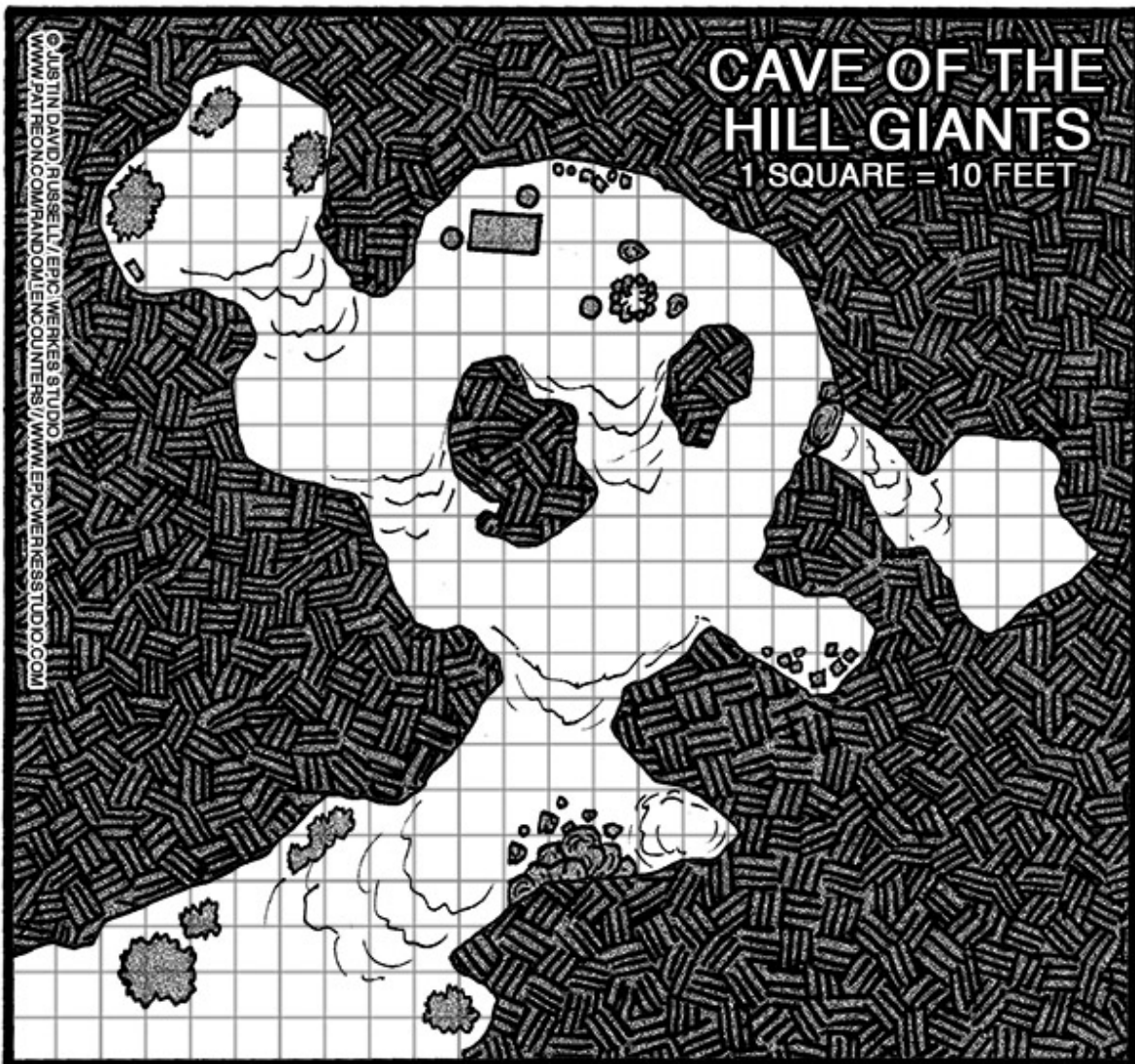
Cave of the Hill Giants

A local merchant has tasked you with finding a shipment of salted meats and other, rarer foodstuffs imported from the exotic southern countries. His caravan of imports, expected to arrive a few days ago, never made it to its destination, and no sign has been seen of anyone accompanying the shipment. Asking around, you discover that some giants have recently been seen in the area. Local farmers reported their sheep and goats vanishing in the night without a trace a few months back. The giants may have a lair in the hills, if they have taken to raiding local farms and passing caravans.

Giants have indeed settled the area. An adult male hill giant and his two daughters arrived just before the spring. They relocated after the mother was slain in a cave-in that buried their first lair. They wasted no time in gathering resources around their new home. It is now mid-summer.

The giants have been careful not to make too much of a stir. They have been living quietly in the foothills, raising their own livestock (originally stolen from local farmers at Wintersend) and killing the odd lone traveler for his wares. The impetuous daughters, however, have recently embarked on a raid that has drawn the attention of a wealthy merchant from the nearest town.

The lair is a simple cave with a few rooms. A collection of boulders gathered at the entrance serve as weapons and construction materials. Behind them is a pit that serves as a place to dump bones and waste. A deeper part of the main cave has a large, crude wood table with a few rough wooden stools around it. A fire pit with a large iron cauldron dangling over it from an iron tripod often contains the meals the giants eat. One side chamber is used as sleeping quarters. Boulders are piled up in front of the entry to another chamber containing livestock. The father grazes the sheep and goats during the day while the daughters slaughter and milk them. A third side chamber acts as a storage room for any goods the giants steal. The father keeps a large chest next to his sleeping palette of furs and straw. It is unlocked and contains any valuables he has collected.

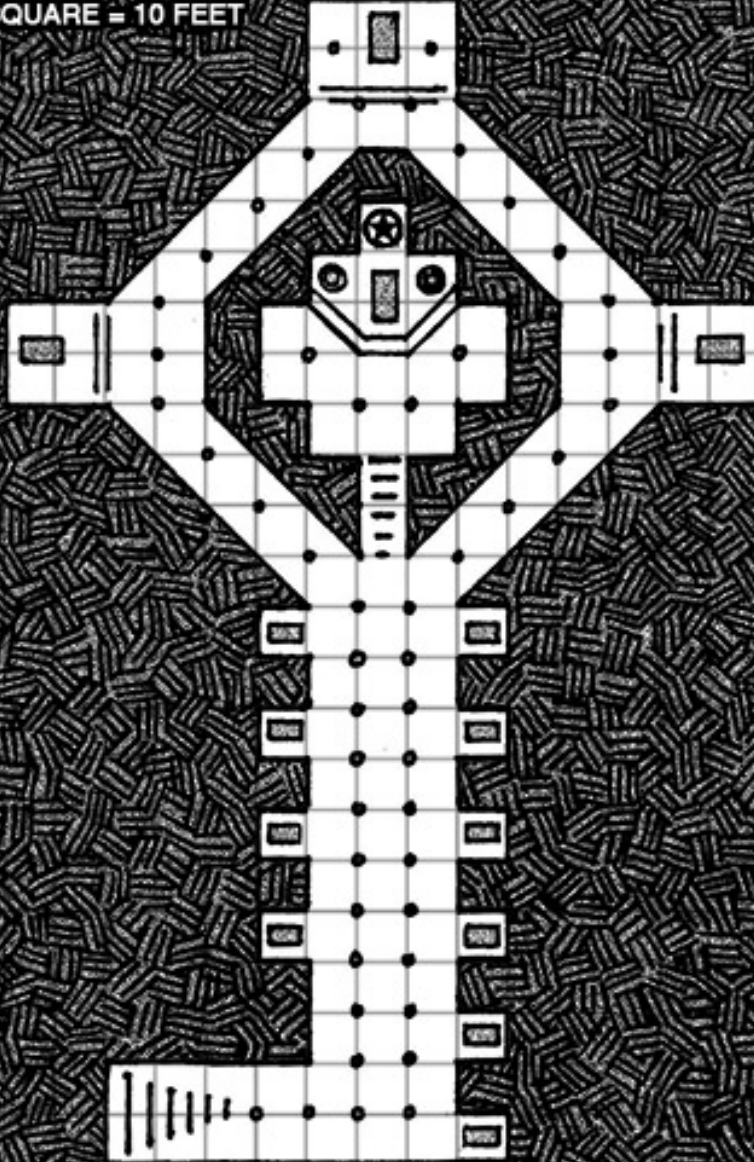


Key Tomb

Designed by the Royal Engineer of the Azaran Kings of the Fifth Dynasty of the City of Mysteries, the Key Tombs are a unique feature of the time period. The larger tombs featuring several sarcophagi from the earliest years litter the Necropolis. Later, the tomb layout decreased in size and became a common feature of lesser nobles as the City of Mystery's power dwindled in the face of the Kingdom of Chaos's increased aggression.

KEY TOMB

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



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Caverns of the Cult of the Minotaur

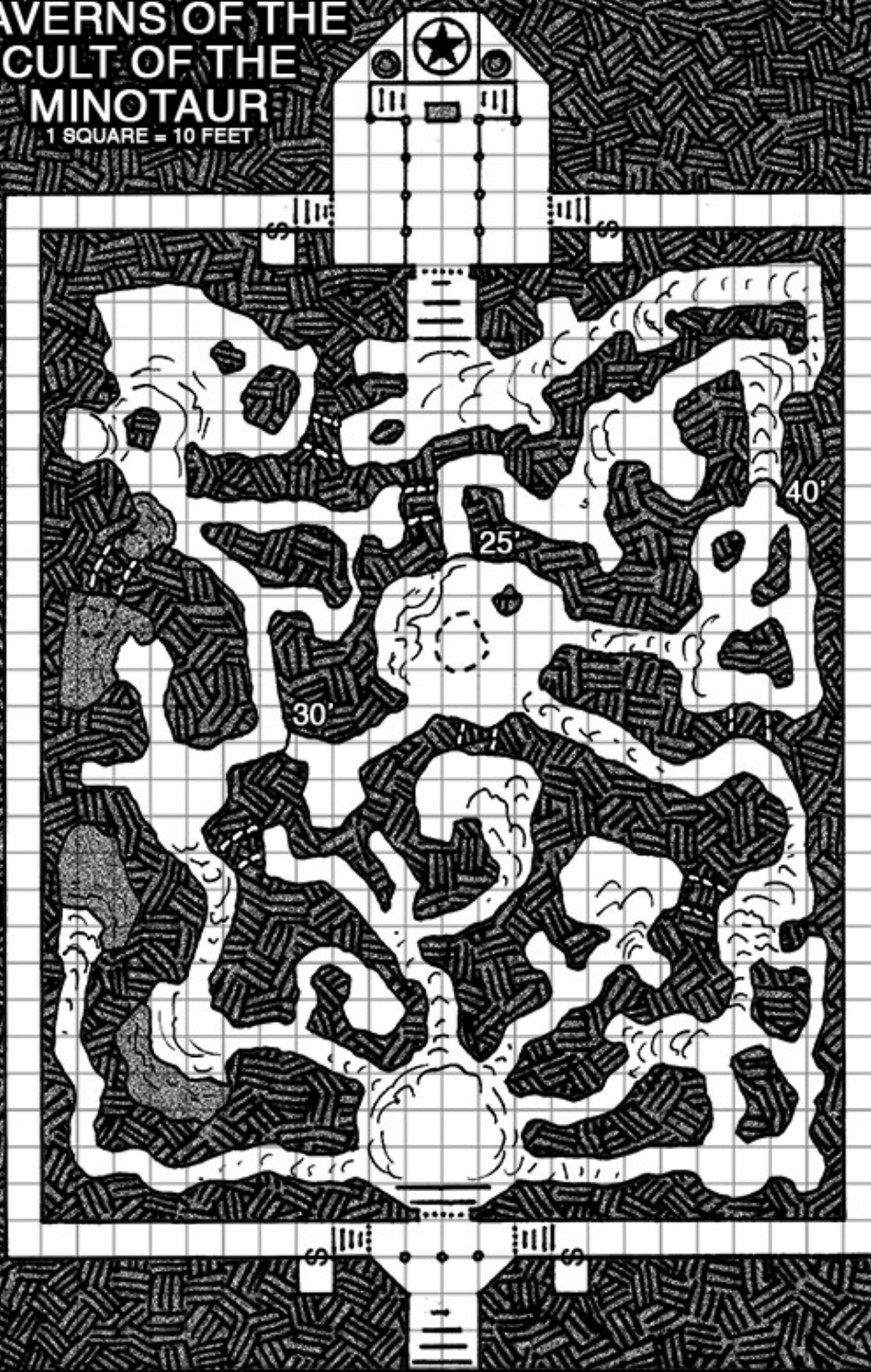
In the forested hills of Mizor, there operates a secret cult dedicated to the Bull God of Chaos and fertility. They abduct local citizens and travelers to sacrifice to their petty deity.

Sacrifices are brought down a wide stair carved into the mouth of a cave. Descent brings one to a complex sealed by portcullises operated by winches found within secret rooms. Red-robed cultists shove their victims into a cavern-maze inhabited by a physical manifestation of the Bull God, the minotaur. If the victim manages to make it to the other side, outsmarting the creature, they are led to an altar where they are sacrificed by the High Priest, an offering of strength and vitality. If the victim slays the minotaur, he is then bound and prayed over in a complicated ritual that metamorphoses him into the next minotaur, a vessel for the Bull God's spirit. If the victim is eaten by the minotaur, then he has served as the sustenance to maintain the voracious creature. The god's power is fed by the fear and adrenaline caused by the minotaur's pursuit of his victims. Secret passages allow the creature to ambush his prey, and clever opponents the opportunity to prove their wit and tactical prowess.

The local lords supply the cult with sacrifices in order to appease the minor god of Chaos. Recently, the newest lord has refused to bow before the servants of the Bull God. It has been rumoured that the cult has kidnapped the local lord's daughter. Heroes have been called to enter the complex and put an end to the cult, once and for all. How will they gain access? An opening in the ceiling of the central-most chamber, the lair of the minotaur, drops 60 feet to the earthen floor. Will they sneak in pretending to be cultists, or potential sacrifices?

CAVERNS OF THE CULT OF THE MINOTAUR

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



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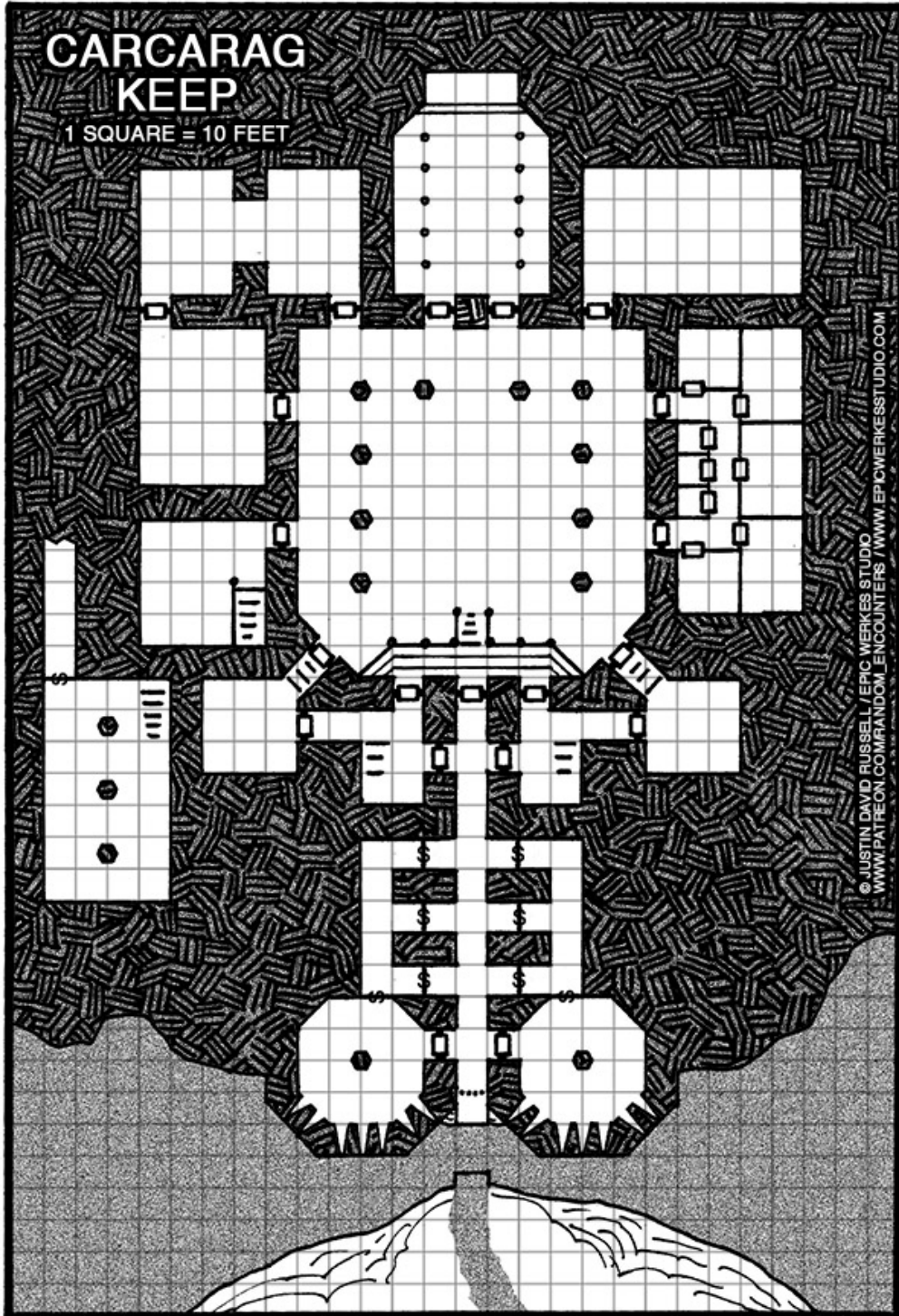
Carcarag Keep

Built by dwarves for the human Count of Blackhold, Carcarag Keep is situated inside a cliff face surrounded on its front side by a swift flowing river. Small islands of stone and grassy earth connected by bridges link the keep to a fishing town on the southern bank. A fortified area by the first bridge contains a guard barracks, stable, and smithy.

Carcarag Keep is nigh impregnable, though there is a postern gate accessed by a secret door in the northwest corner of the undercroft. The worked stone tunnel leads through the cliffs to the high mountain passes to the north.

CARGARAG KEEP

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



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The Green Wizard's Tomb

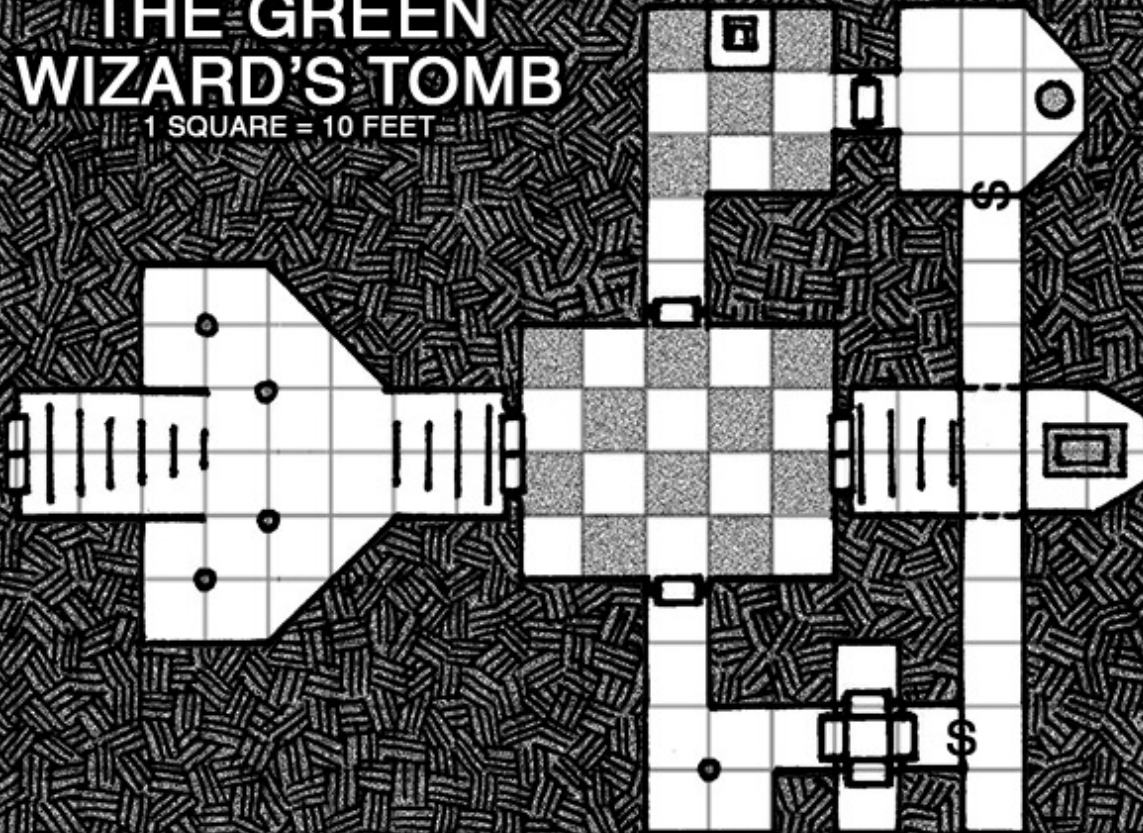
While walking one of the many forgotten footpaths of the Ancient Hills, you stop in a small cirque. One half is bounded by sheer granite rock. After setting up camp, you visit the trickling ribbon of water issuing from the rock face, relieved by the stream's freshness and cool wetness as it passes your parched lips and throat. The hills, though choked with heavy vegetation, were humid and close, a misery to traverse, despite the shade of many trees.

Once sated, you turn and examine your surroundings. Noticing a peculiar curtain of vegetation, you approach curiously but cautiously. Parting the strands of vines you discover something that startles you. A set of brazen double doors of some size stand impassively before you. The pair looms over you, both faces covered with runes and weird reliefs and etchings. Their patinated surfaces are dirty and dark with age. What can this portal be protecting? What secrets lie beyond their weighty, ancient bulk?"

The Green Wizard, Fandrel, was a man of some power. He was known as a recluse, a great seer, and, like many wizards, he guarded his magical secrets jealously. His home, a complex carved from the very bones of the earth, is located in the Ancient Hills. Arcane wards and traps litter Fandrel's home. His conjured servants and apprentice entombed the wizard in a carefully crafted marble sarcophagus and sealed it behind magically protected bronze doors.

THE GREEN WIZARD'S TOMB

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



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Temple of the Weeping Fountain

Entering the last lonely village between the Towering Mountains and the Southern Kingdoms, you notice the people are extremely despondent. Some heavy weight rests upon their stooped shoulders. Half-hearted greetings and sidelong glances confuse you as you make your way through the muddy thoroughfare. It is still midday, but you know that you need to stop for a few nights before braving the northern passes.

Couched at the heart of the village amid a copse of hearty trees is a squat, ramshackle inn, its wood and plaster badly weathered. Weeds have begun forcing the foundation stones apart, creating wide cracks and loosening the rocks. You tread carefully as you mount the three unsteady stone steps leading up to the oaken door.

The light inside the inn seems dimmer than it should be for the light filtering in through the windows. The innkeeper grunts noncommittally as you pass through the entry. The man looks to be in his sixties, but you have a sneaking feeling that he is much younger than he appears, but you're not sure why you think so. 'What has happened here, old man, to make the people of this place act so strangely?'

'Strange, you say? Strange?' A light seems to flicker in his eyes for a moment before a cloud settles back over them. He returns to wiping the counter with his dirty rag. The cloth, you notice, is dry, and the innkeeper stares absently at his mindless work. 'Wouldn't you act strangely, too, if you knew the woman you loved was being held hostage, but you had not the means to save her?' Despite your best efforts, the man says nothing else, only demanding that you keep to your rooms. The inn will be locked after curfew.

The Temple of the Weeping Fountain is a strange and mystical place. Many centuries ago, a wounded mercenary discovered a hidden cavern in the foothills of the Towering Mountains after slaying a fierce dragon that lurked in the nearby lake. The man had rescued a young woman from the clutches of the creature, but had not the strength to lead her to the nearest community. He collapsed in the cave. The woman, unwilling to leave the warrior, begged the gods to save the man. She promised she would pay any price to heal the man.

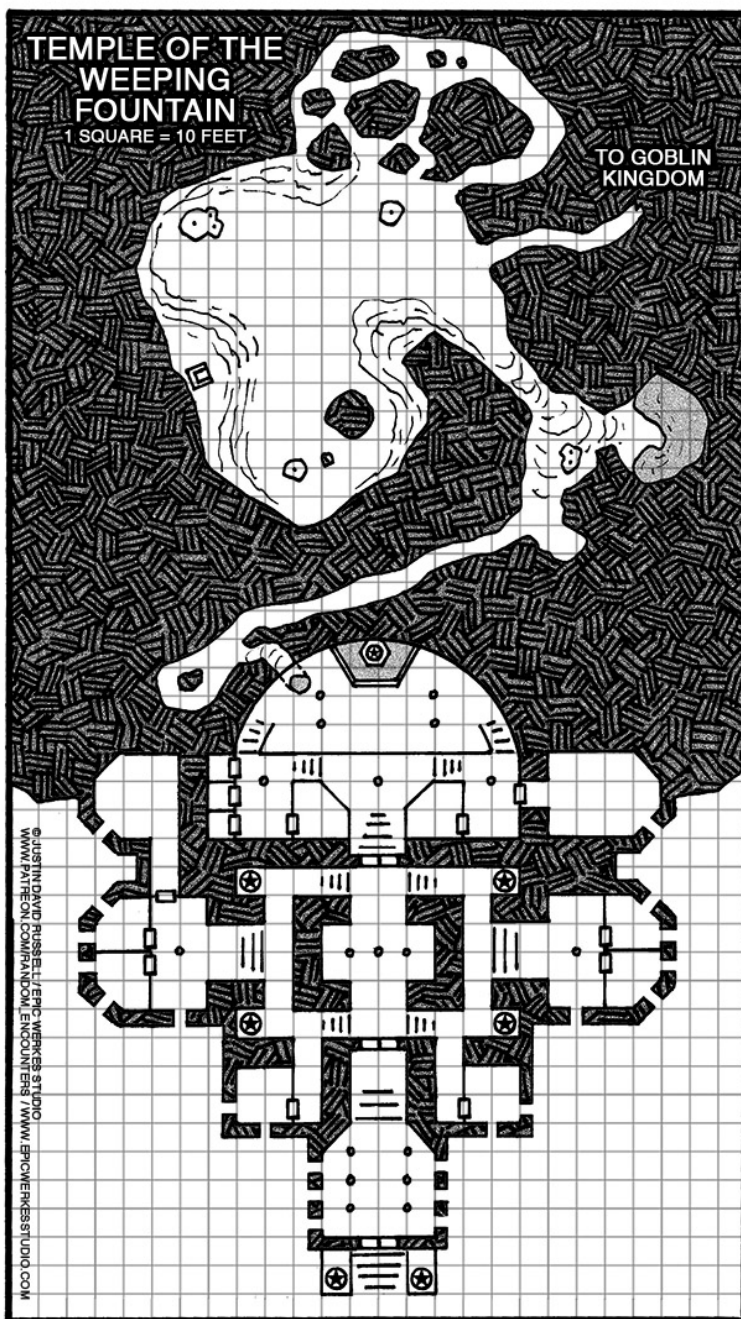
Upon waking, the warrior discovered that a fountain and statue had appeared in the cave overnight. Or perhaps he simply had not noticed it before? He could not find his charge anywhere, but he discovered that his wounds were mysteriously healed.

Looking up, he noticed a startling sight. The luminous, white marble statue standing amidst the fountain pool was a beautiful woman, strikingly similar to the woman he saved from the dragon. Upon her downturned face was a bittersweet smile, her hands resting lightly against her bosom. From her kindly, sorrowful eyes issued a constant trickle of tears.

The warrior went straightway back to the nearest settlement, a small village, and entreated the local lord and his king to allow him to build a temple to the beautiful woman that had saved him. The king granted the man his request, as he had vanquished a troublesome and deadly creature from the lands.

Over the years, the temple's adherents grew. Their order, the Order of the Weeping Fountain, preached healing and caring for those wounded in defense of others.

Recently, the temple has come under new ownership. The Goblin Queen, discovering that her complex of mines had grown close to the temple's Fountain Chamber, decided it was



time to put an end to the goodly priests in the name of Chaos. In a swift night raid, the temple fell with barely a whisper. The goblins have levied harsh taxes against the villagers, threatening the local lord with death, and destruction of the fountain if he sends for any aid. As long as the evil creatures are fed and supplied with provisions and young slaves for their mines, they promise to leave the settlement alone. The lord's steward and the new town guard are evil men that report anything unusual to the Goblin Queen.

Ruin Lands of Zandora

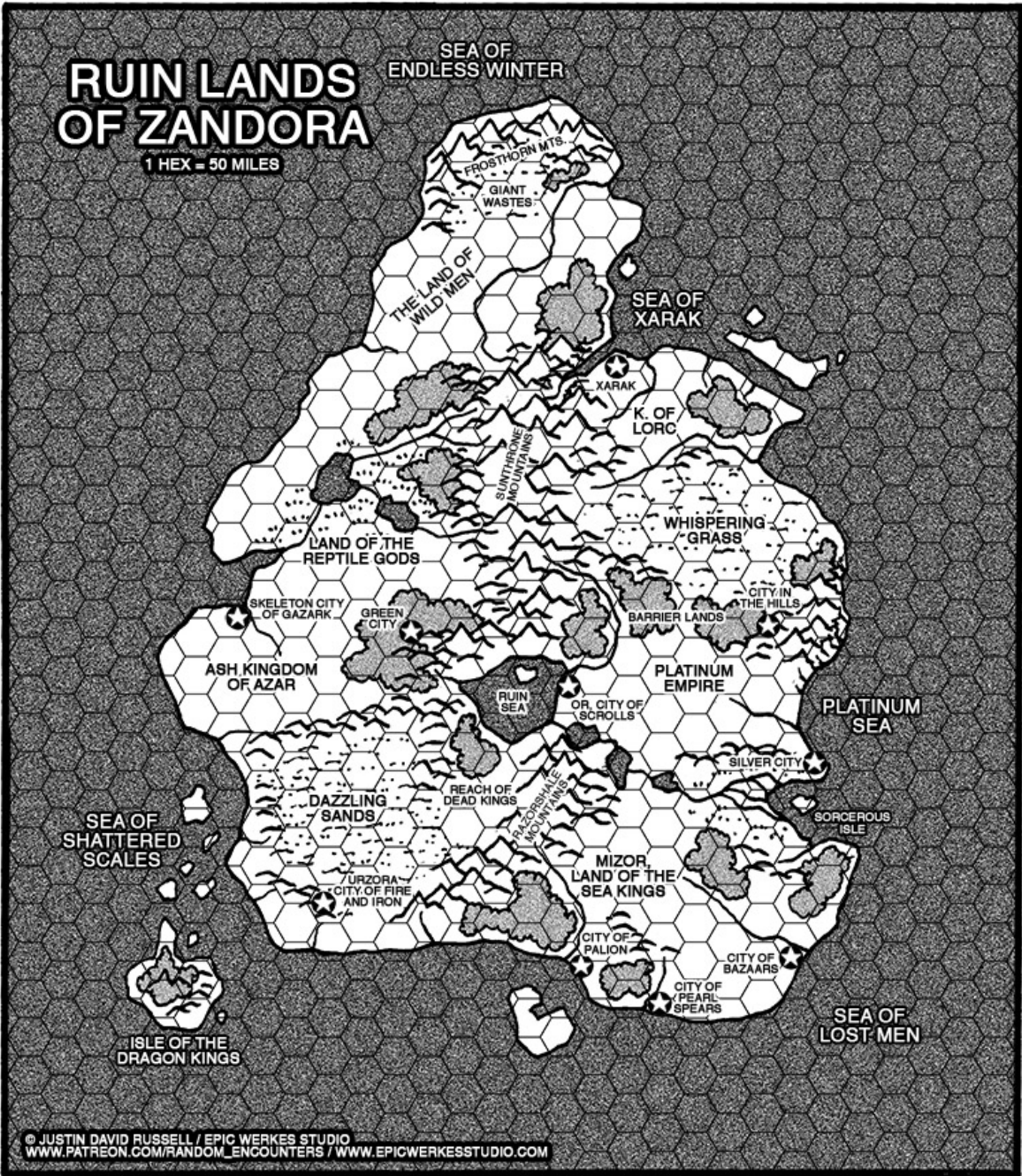
Long, long ago, Zandora was somewhat larger. The wisdoms of ancient sages and kings of Law created peace and prosperity across the length and breadth of the continent. However, there were those that desired to sow Chaos, destroying and laying waste to all that made Zandora great and beautiful. Gods both petty and powerful strove ceaselessly in their desire to promote their ageless agendas, using their mortal servants as pawns in their great Game. Between them all was The Balance, a force of neutrality to keep any side from gaining too much power.

Eventually, the mightiest agents of Chaos, dragons, both winged and flightless, descended upon Zandora. They were summoned by the wizard, Morzek, from their ancient, hidden lairs. The dragons, full of pride and motivations alien to all but the gods, did not wish to serve the mortal whims of the man. Their devastation was wrought mostly out of hate for their Master and a desire to hasten their return to their own lands and private musings.

Morzek was known as the Chaotic, yet also Morzek the Dragon Lord, Morzek the Ruiner, Morzek the Most-Hated. He had a myriad of other names in that age of the world, too many to count.

Eventually, Morzek was defeated. Defeated not by the plot of any man or woman, or an artifact of arcane power. His tower collapsed upon himself and fell into the sea, taking the sorcerer with it, where it, and he, remain buried to this day.

There have been many wars and many legends since that time, as the world recovered from the destruction Morzek made. Dragons call it their Great Shame, for they could not resist the wizard's summons. Men call it the Time of Ruin. The island at the heart of the Sea of Shattered Scales is all that remains of the land Morzek ruled.



Slinker's Tavern

You approach a single-story, squat stone, wood, and plaster structure that is obviously cared for quite well. Its horn-paned windows glow golden and welcoming with the light from within. A sign hanging next to the door is painted with the words, 'Slinker's Tavern.' The thing that strikes you most is that the front door is round and quite large. It is painted a bright yellow and covered in iron studs. There is a bronze ring clenched in a griffon's beak in the centre of the door. The door swings inward easily, jangling a collection of bells hanging over the nearby. A fairly bright common area with four round tables filled with local patrons is revealed. Most exposed wood is carved with sylvan motifs. A crackling hearth warms the room. The oak sides of the fireplace are carved into two tall griffons. Above it, on a wood mantle are silver and bronze objects, including two large candlesticks.

Beaming at you from behind the bar is a short, slightly overweight man with a smile that stretches nearly ear-to-ear. You immediately feel welcome, but you have a strange, nagging feeling that this man is smiling almost too broadly, too eagerly. And should he be that tall? The portly man seems like he should be shorter in relation to the bar. He slaps his small hands on the bar and hops backward, and disappears. He suddenly reappears, and at a considerably shorter height than he had been moments earlier! He is a halfling, you realize, as you regard his carefully-manicured, hairy feet.

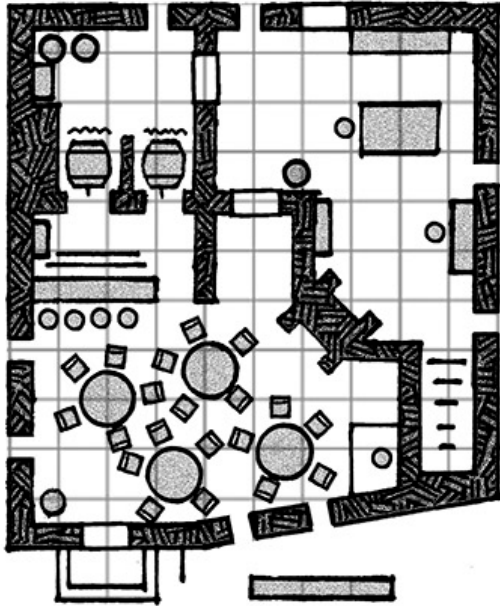
'Welcome, welcome, welcome to Slinker's Tavern! I,' the short man indicates himself, 'am Slinker. You must be parched after the day you have all had. Please, please, take a seat, here!' How did he know about your day? Lucky guess. 'My wife should have some of our famous lamb stew prepared. Good for warming your bones in this horrid weather!' He ushers you all to one table and adds, 'We have a fine minstrel due here later.'

The man rubs his hands together and looks up at your faces as you take your seats. A bustling halfling woman in a blue dress and wimple comes to gather your orders and soon you are consuming a welcome meal of lamb stew. It is spiced with herbs that you cannot identify, but it warms you well and takes the early winter edge off of your chilled body. Strangely, Slinker has remained by your sides, making his way to each of you, asking questions, prodding and prying with an odd insistence that makes you a little uncomfortable. But as much as he asks questions, he also offers a great deal of information, telling you all of local gossip that you likely don't care to hear and will probably forget. Slinker is amiable enough, but his presence is beginning to annoy you. Then he is gone, slipped from your midst as silently as if he had never been there in the first place. Confused, you look about, searching for the little man. Then you see him at the bar, beaming, cleaning the counter vigorously.

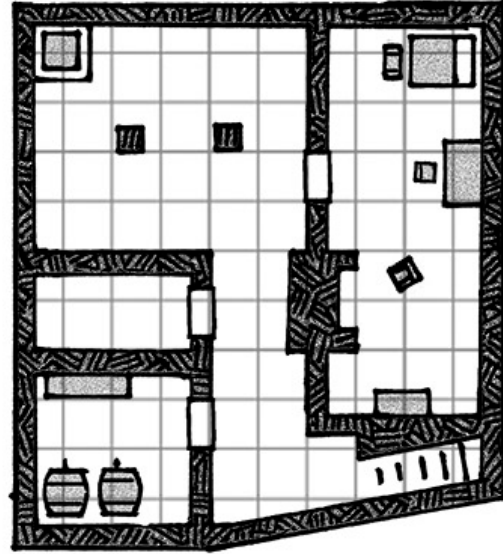
If there is information to be had in Lantern Falls, it can be found in Slinker's Tavern. The halfling makes it his business to know the gossip and rumours in town. He often likes to bother new arrivals with incessant, but kindly, conversation. Often, he is amiable enough that people end up opening up to him and saying more than they intended, which is just what Slinker wants.

SLINKER'S TAVERN

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



GROUND FLOOR



LOWER LEVEL

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The Lonely Delver Inn

You entered Lantern Falls from the East Gate. Local guardsmen in tabards with a glowing lantern embroidered upon their breasts stopped you and a few other travelers at the porter's gate, asking what business you had in town so late in the day. Curfew would be in only an hour or two and all portals would be barred to any travelers. Stating your desire to find lodging and a hot meal, you are directed to the Lonely Delver.

Passing along the thick, dwarf-built walls, you go only a short distance on the dirt road to a well-kept two story building with a stone foundation. A young, pimple-faced groom takes your horses. He smiles as you toss him a silver crown.

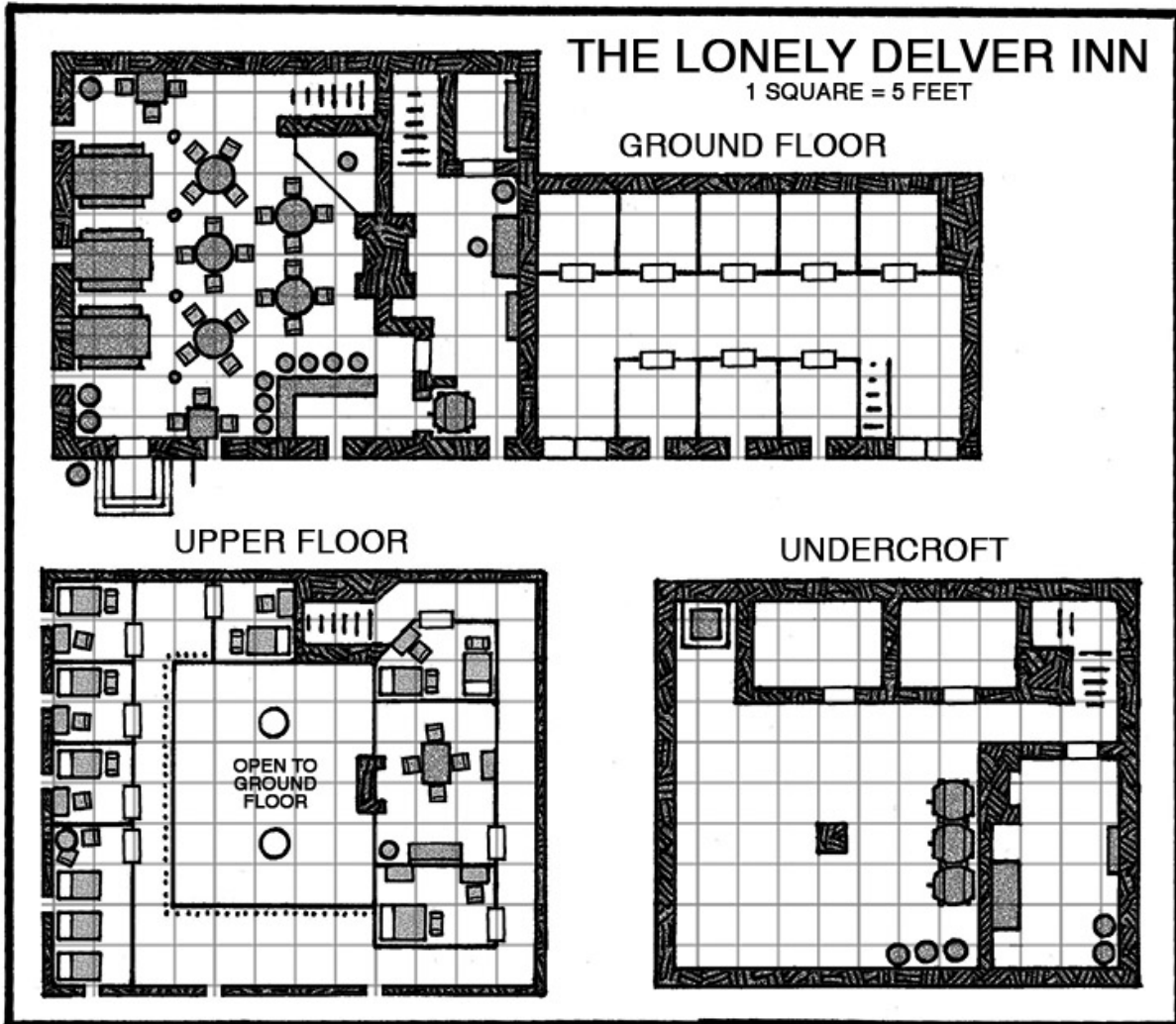
'Quite late for travelin', ain't it, masters and mistresses? My pa will fill yer bellies wif warm food and give you a soft place to lay yer heads fer the night.'

You head to the stepped entry. Woodsmoke and laughter are heavy on the late fall air, mingling with the other smells of the town, both pleasant and otherwise. You spy the creaking sign of the Lonely Delver swaying in the wind above you. It depicts a painting of a dwarf with a pickaxe caught midswing over a lump of stone.

The sounds of carousing, the smell of hearty cooking, and a blanket of warmth swallow you as you head inside...

The Lonely Delver Inn is one of the oldest establishments in Lantern Falls. It's current innkeeper is Forthwind, an argumentative and somewhat harsh man. He brooks no fools. He is tall and gangly, of some age, with grey hair and beard. Like most of his family, Forthwind was a miner for many years before inheriting the building from his father. Forthwind's wife died three decades ago from a wasting disease. His middle-aged daughter, Alianor, her teenage children, Geoff and Mildred, and her husband Robard, a suitable cook as well as the inn's muscle in times when patrons grow restless, will inherit the place after he is gone. Geoff is a groom and Mildred one of the serving girls. Alianor runs the kitchens with her husband.

Miners visiting from the camp to the north are treated exceptionally well by Forthwind, often given discounts on their meals, if not given them for free. The miners fill the common room's tables where they carouse away the aches and pains brought on by backbreaking labour. Many only visit when delivering shipments of ore, though some visit family and friends they have in town.



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Temple of Law

The Temple of Law is another of the buildings that can be found behind the strong walls of Lantern Falls. It is the spiritual centre of the town and a resource for those looking for divine protection along the caravan routes east and west.

Like the rest of the building, the large colonnaded patio before the entrance is built of large blocks of pearly white marble. A pediment filled with divine figures and heroes greets any comers. Past the colonnade is a courtyard dominated by a bronze statue of St. Merek the Erudite. Beyond the statue lay the brazen entry portal consisting of double doors decorated with wisdoms from the Book of Law and reliefs of heroic events from various time periods throughout the history of Law in the world. Flanking the entry doors are white marble statues depicting two aspects of the God of Law, the Old Traveler and the Righteous Warrior.

Inside, one might find the white-robed priests of Law discussing politics and legal matters, various townsfolk meandering through and beyond the columns of the nave, or witness the Elder Priest orating before the Altar of the Sun and a congregation of rapt listeners under the high, domed apse where a massive bronze statue of the God of Law stands backlit by a rainbow of coloured light cascading through stained glass windows. The statue is flanked by large, decorative braziers where incense is ritually burnt. The floor of the lower apse is decorated with a large mosaic of a sun with a face.

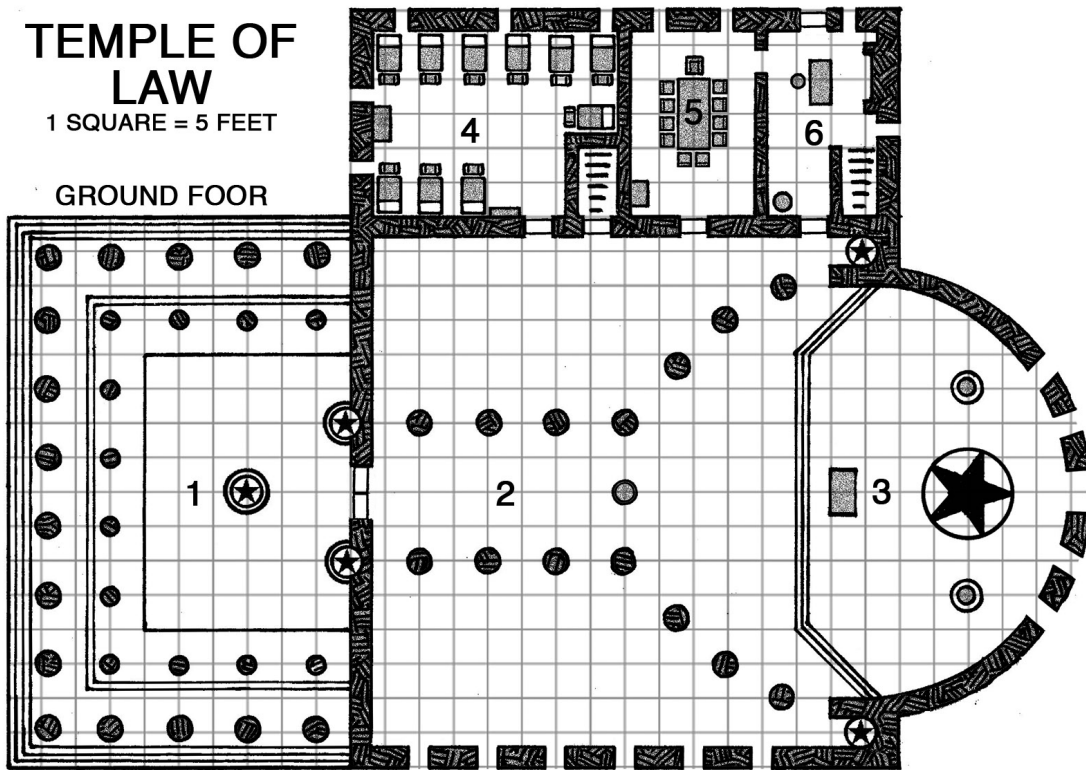
A white marble font of holy water with a mosaic sun at the bottom of the bowl sits at the end of the nave. From the north ambulatory, one finds access to the infirmary, the kitchens, stairs leading up to the priest's rooms, and the refectory where meals are consumed by the priests. Through the kitchens, one can access the undercroft, larders and crypts. A door in the kitchen leads outside to an herb garden. The bright bronze dome and high ceiling of the main temple loom higher than all other buildings in town.

Flanking the apse are shrines to St. Fendrel (patron of weary travelers), and St. Athina (patron of wisdom in battle). Cloaks, boots, and other goods that can aid poor travelers are left at the feet of St. Fendrel for any that need them.

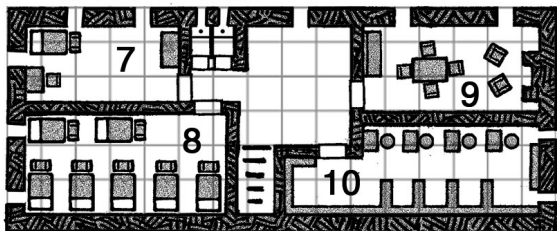
TEMPLE OF LAW

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

GROUND FLOOR



UPPER FLOOR



KEY:

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------|
| 1. COLONADE | 6. KITCHEN |
| 2. NAVE | 7. PRIEST'S CHAMBER |
| 3. APSE | 8. DORMITORY |
| 4. INFIRMARY | 9. PARLOUR |
| 5. REFECTORY | 10. LIBRARY |

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Want help finding inspiration for your next adventure? Are you a busy GM looking for a quick map? Do you want unique locations to spice up your random encounter tables? Then you've come to the right place! Random Encounters provides creative solutions for gamers. It specifically caters to the Old School Renaissance, but the maps and descriptions found in this book can be used for any fantasy role playing system.

Please enjoy this offering. Have fun and, as always, GAME ON!