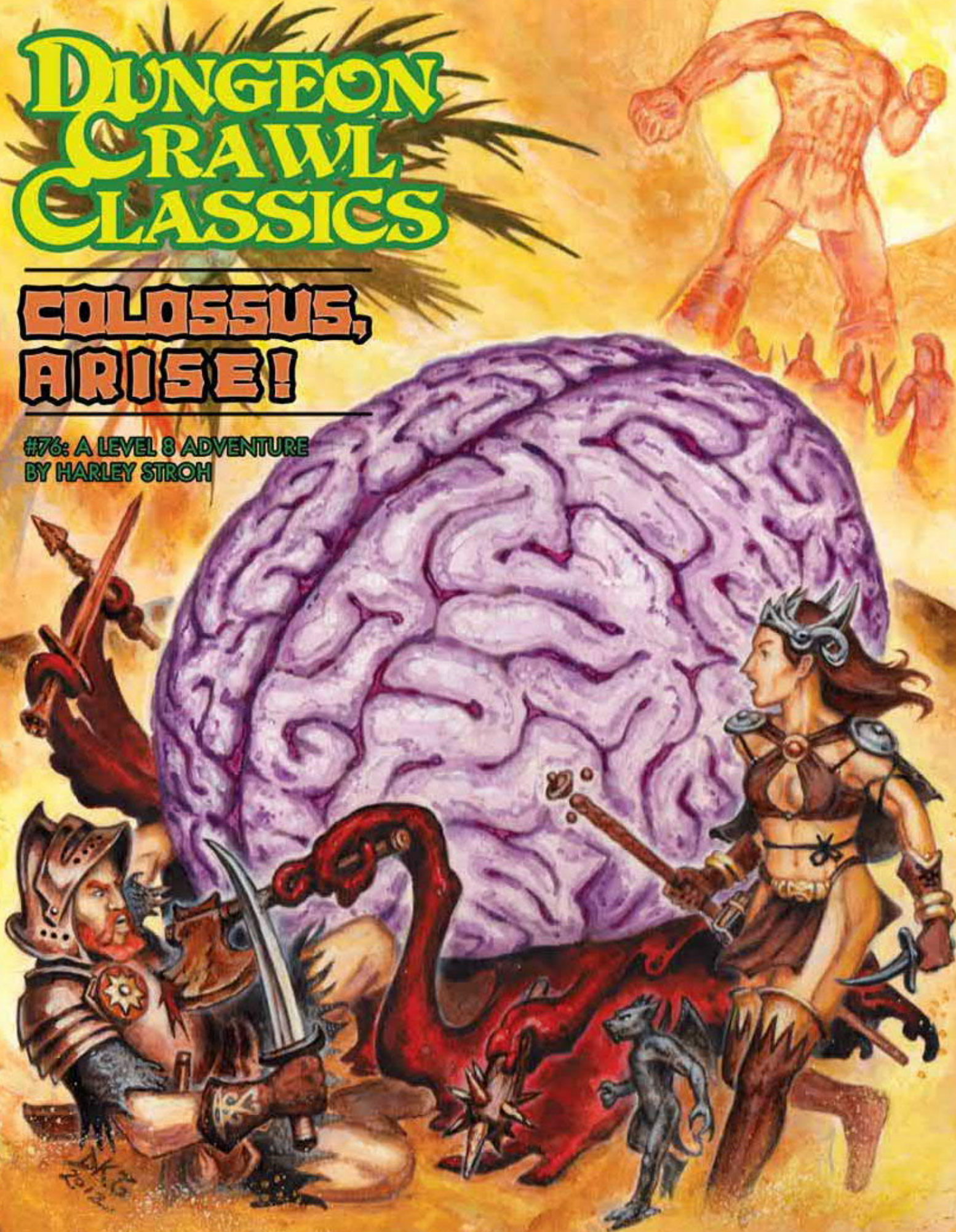
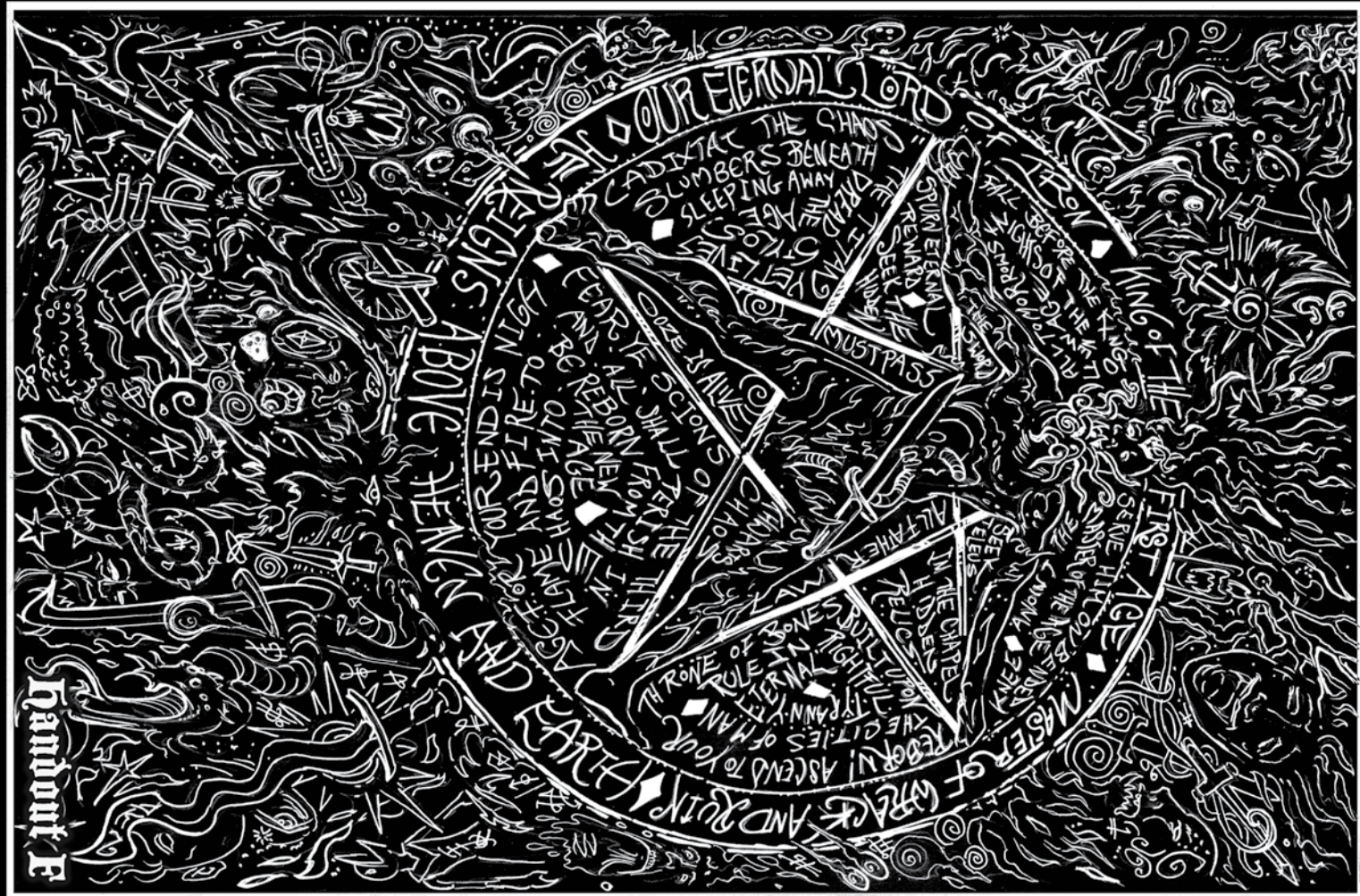
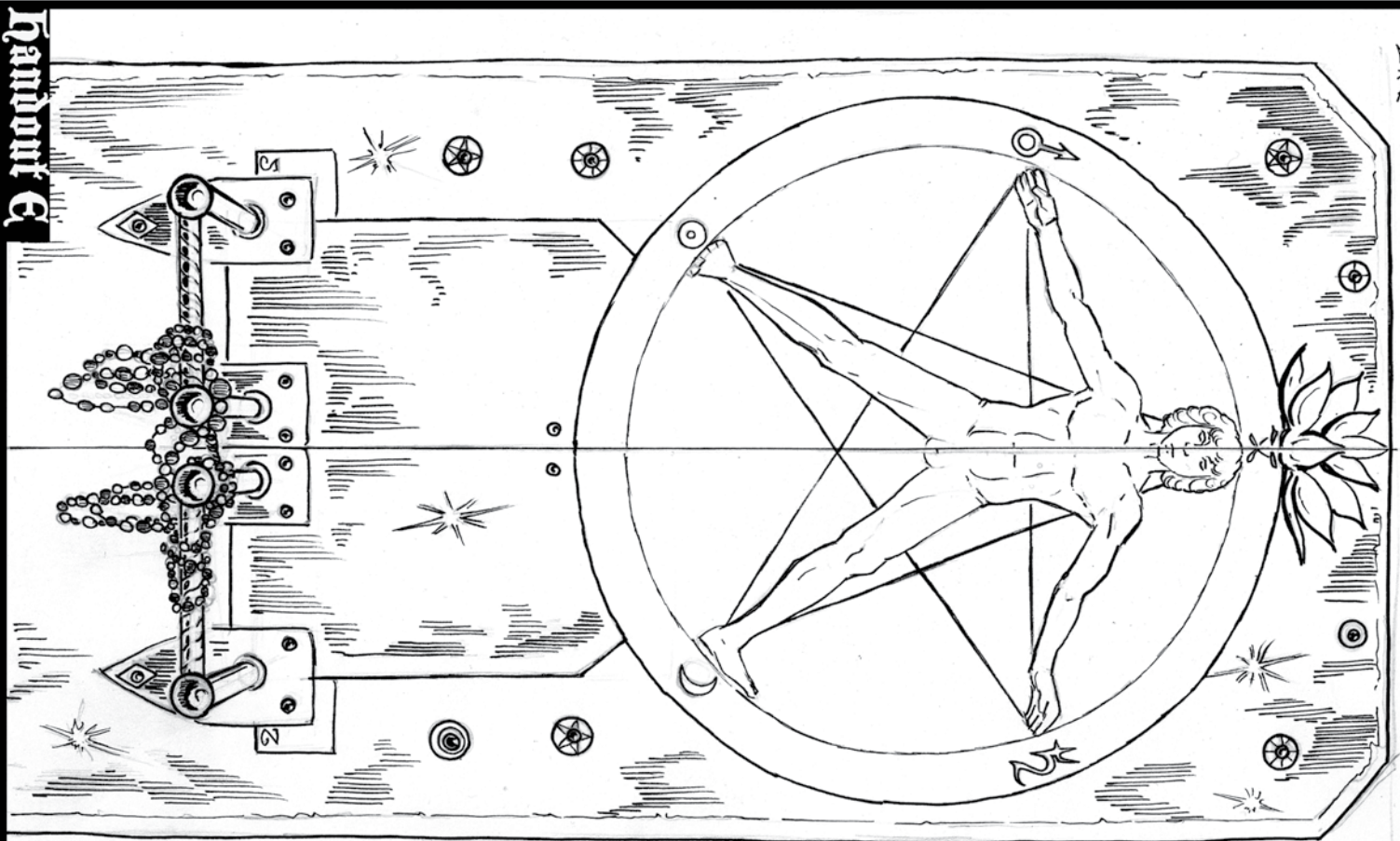


DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

COLOSSUS, ARISE!

#76: A LEVEL 8 ADVENTURE
BY HARLEY STROH





COLOSSUS, ARISE!

A LEVEL 8 ADVENTURE

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INTRODUCTION

Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you remember, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

Lost amid shifting dunes and burning sands, the temple-city of Stylos is a forgotten remnant of a bygone age. Home to the last Atlantean tribes of Ur-Lirea, the city has drowned through the eons: through the icy march of glaciers, the rise and sinking of the seas, and finally, the ascension of man.

But with untold years, even the ageless blooms of the black lotus must wither. Lost Stylos has awakened from its deathless slumber. Roused from their dreaming, the hordes of Stylos threaten to crush the civilized lands beneath their sandaled feet, ushering in a new era: the fourth, and final age of man.

Even more so than most Dungeon Crawl Classics, *Colossus, Arise!* offers PCs many opportunities for a quick and inglorious end. Worse, incautious and rash explorers are likely to drag their fellows to their dooms as well.

This adventure brings the PCs (and their players) back to the start of their careers, where the difference between life and death can hang on a clever decision or the throw of a die. Indeed, the conclusion of the adventure might be utterly unwinnable—only the most thorough explorers, cunning reavers, and blessed knaves can hope to carry the day.

THE CURSE OF CADIXTAT

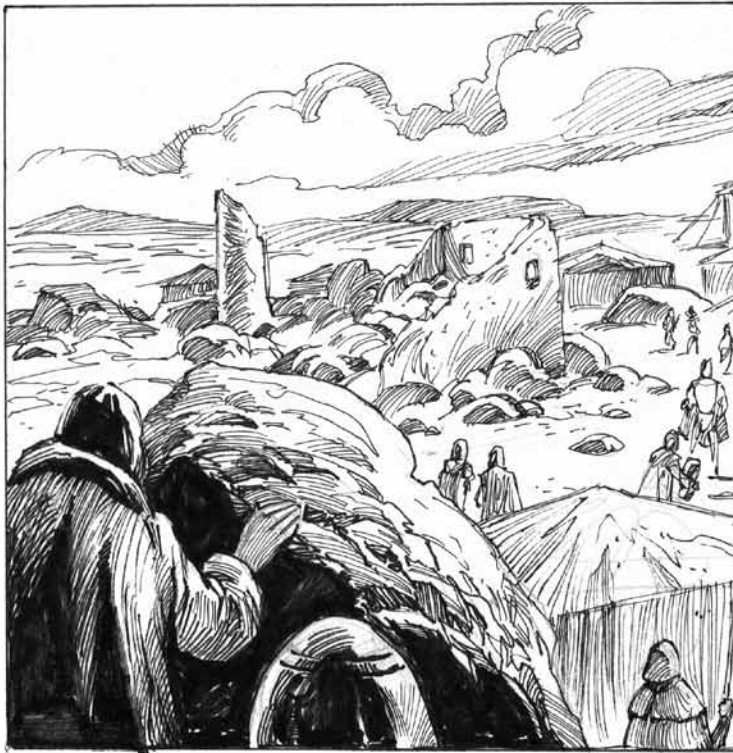
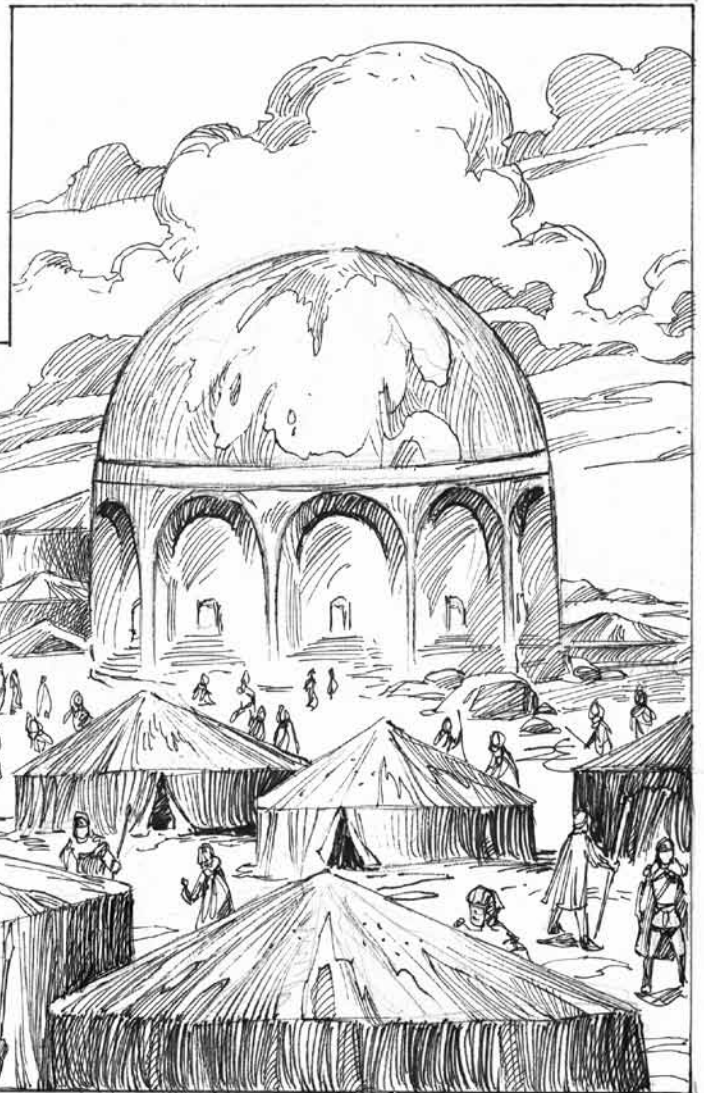
During the course of penning this adventure, the author drew upon many tomes of curious and forgotten lore. Judges are sure to recognize the influence of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa's elemental pentacles, the weird cosmology of Madame Blavatsky, and the Enochian alphabet of John Dee, among others.

Of course, no *real* magic is referenced in this adventure, only inspiration drawn from sundry occult sources.

However, the publisher must also note that while writing and playtesting this adventure, the author was plagued by a failing hard drive, his kitchen caught fire and was later flooded, and his automobile was destroyed in a freak accident.

Therefore, lest the Curse of Cadixtat be passed to you, dear reader, we include the following:

No matter how your players wail, whine, or gnash their teeth, do not, under any circumstances, tip the dice in the PCs' favor. The adventure offers players a true test of cunning and courage. To tip fate in their favor only denies them the challenge, and title, of Adventurer.



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Harken to the tale of the Ages of Man:

Of the first age, when mankind was cast in the likeness of gods and ruled as titans upon the earth. And of how the first age ended in blood when the titans of Law clashed with those sworn to Chaos. Where their blood fell upon the earth, a new, lesser race sprang into existence, giving rise to –

The second age, when men were but a shadow of their former divinity cast upon the wall of creation. Towering like giants, yet blessed with peerless intellect and ageless beauty, the tribes of the second age raised mighty temples in honor of the titans of the past. The second age ended when the waters of the Empyrean ocean drank their shining cities, scattering the tribes of Ur-Lirea, making way for the –

Third, and current age of man, when the divine spark of humanity is obscured by emotions, sullied by vice, and caked with the stinking flesh of the fallen.

But we shall not be the last. Hammering at our door are the harbingers of the fourth and final age, when the skies will run red and the man-beasts shall cast down our filthy cities and purge the earth with the fires of divinity.

- A madman lecturing a rat, in Punjar's Bazaar of the Gods

Hidden amid the cries of doom and heresy that ring through Punjar's marketplace of religions are scraps of truth masquerading as heresies. The ability to discern between the two can often prove the difference between a long life and a quick death at the end of a cultist's dagger.

Whether or not the Four Ages of Man are fact or heresy, this much is known to be true: eons ago a race of titans clashed and tyrannical Teleus cast down Cadixtat, the champion of Chaos. Swaths of chaotic wasteland were left in the titan's wake, giving rise to the southern deserts.

Much later, the sub-continent Lirea sank beneath the waves of the Empyrean Ocean, driving tribes of proto-humans from the cradle of civilization into the world. Some sought solace far to the north, beyond the North Wind, and are now known apocryphally as hyperboreans. One wicked tribe of Ur-Lireans found refuge in the south, where they discovered the remnants of the titans and raised a temple-city in their honor.

But as the waters drank Lirea, so too did burning sands swallow the verdant grasslands of the Ur-Lireans. Placing their faith in the cyclical order of the world, the Ur-Lireans retreated into their temple-city and lay beneath the dripping petals of the black lotus to sleep away the ages.

After untold epochs, the Ur-Lireans awoke to find their once mighty temple-city had fallen into ruin. Of the scores of temples raised in honor of the titans of old, the sole structure remaining was the House of Cadixtat.

UR-LIREANS AND THE SONS OF THE SECOND AGE



hough ageless, Ur-Lireans are not immune to death. Today, only a handful of Ur-Lireans survive and nearly all are priestesses of Cadixtat's cult – the Daughters of Cadixtat. The surviving males serve as shield-warriors, champions, and consorts.

Judges should note that while the Ur-Lireans honor the divinity of the chaos titan, their order is strictly aligned with Law. The Daughters are highly regimented, holding to an unswerving belief in the cyclical order of the universe. Specifically, the Daughters see the destructive violence of the chaos titan as a crucial part of the universal order, the devastating apocalypse that presages rebirth.

Ur-Lireans range from 12 to 16 feet in height. Statuesque, they carry themselves with an air of divine comeliness that belies their size. The remnants of once-disparate tribes, their skin tones range from a deep olive to an unearthly pale that borders on luminescence. They dress in loose-fitting chitons, secured with wide belts, plated in bronze.

The Ur-Lireans act with a palpable distaste for folk of the Third Age, and in their minds rightly so. For as the Ur-Lireans are but shadows of titans, and titans shadows of gods, so, too, are the PCs pale imitations of the physical perfection manifested by the men and women of the Second Age.

Few true Ur-Lireans remain, forcing the Handmaiden and her Daughters of Cadixtat to abduct and “uplift” Third Age men. Not true Ur-Lireans, these are known as Sons of the Second Age. Typical Sons stand roughly 10 feet in height but otherwise resemble extremely fit, attractive humans. Sons are girded in ornately stylized armor and helms in the style of ancient Ur-Lirean warriors. They are typically armed with enormous swords and quivers of massive javelins. (For more information on the creation of Sons, see the entry for Hel-Ooze under area 2-1.)

Sons are unwaveringly loyal, fighting to the death if ordered. For their part, the priestesses are clever in battle, withdrawing as needed, but willingly give up their lives in defense of the Shrine of Cadixtat.

THE FOURTH AGE OF MAN



Deep beneath the over-temple, in the House of Cadixtat, is a cavern filled with large stony forms, cast in the shape of curled humanoids. These are eggs incubating an unborn race of monsters – the Fourth Age of Man.

Ruled by animalistic lusts and violent emotions, the “men” of the Fourth Age will cleanse the world, first slaughtering the people of the Third Age, and finally destroying themselves in a firestorm of violence and rage. Only then, the Sisters reason, when the last trace of impurity has been swept from the face of the world, can the titans of old rise again, taking their rightful place upon the thrones of the earth.



Judges should note that the House of Cadixtat rests atop and conceals the actual corpse of Cadixtat. Worse, the devotions of the Daughters have stirred the once-dead chaos titan.

JUDGE'S NOTE



Areas 2-6 to 2-8 pose a dire challenge to PCs. Distinct challenges in their own right, they can rapidly collapse into a violent conflagration, flaring across whole encounter areas. Prior to running the adventure's conclusion, judges should be sure to review the last few encounters, making it easier to coordinate the moving pieces and players as the PCs make their desperate bid for survival.

The judge should also be aware that the final encounter, "When Day Turns to Night," has the potential to reshape a campaign. This encounter unleashes a 300-foot-tall undead chaos titan to wreak fury upon the land. The judge should consider the implications of this encounter in his ongoing campaign before running this adventure.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Eighth-level PCs are champions and masters without peer, famous (or infamous) by turn. Some might very well rule their own city-state or nation, while others are champions of the people. But the adventurer's brow chafes beneath the weight of a crown, and it isn't long before any PC worth his mettle answers adventure's siren song.

Use the following adventure hooks as inspiration to lure your PCs from the safety of court and the tedium of the throne:

- **Noblesse Oblige:** The lords of the PCs' realm request an audience. Villages and towns are being destroyed overnight in a swath of destruction that is increasing in frequency with every passing moon. The sole survivor of the latest assault is a wizened crone, driven mad by her ordeal. Her fragmented, frightened account tells of an army of beautiful giants, so tall they devoured the moon before turning on her people. At a loss, the lords beg their regents to intercede, answering the threat to their realms.
- **The Statue that Walked:** On mid-summer's eve, a towering form appears outside the city gates. Arrayed like an ancient warrior, with skin like white marble and eyes of fire, the towering form stands motionless atop the hill, waiting. When approached, the giant casts forward two score skulls, strung like beads on a hemp rope. In a halting, ancient dialect the giant declares the end of days has come, and on the new moon the city will be razed, its occupants taken as slaves and sacrifices to the titan of chaos. Before even an hour has passed, a mob of fearful citizens has gathered outside the PCs' holdings, begging the adventurers to take up arms in defense of their people.

- **Dire Portents:** Clerics and wizards bear witness to terrible omens: lightning crashes around the city, striking temple spires; strange stars appear then vanish from the night sky; sacrificial bulls are cut open only to discover pools of black bile in the place of entrails; and the seventh son of a seventh son is born with the mark of Cadixtat. The omens build over the course of three months, culminating with a comet that burns so brightly it can be seen in the light of day. The comet streaks over the horizon, marking the path to Lost Stylos. Wizards and clerics alike awake the next morning with the terrible knowledge that the end of the mankind is at hand.

OF QUESTS AND DIVINE FAVOR



he adventure includes a number of objectives that could serve as goals for questing PCs and for clerics seeking to curry favor with their deities. These can serve as additional adventure hooks or as secondary hooks known only to specific players. See Fritz Leiber's short story *The Price of Pain-Ease* for a fine example of adventurers pitted against one another by patrons questing for the same relic.

Clerics: Cultists and devotees seeking to curry favor with their deities might be directed to cast down the Handmaiden and her apocalyptic cult. Chaos gods will surely revel with the upset of the Lawful Daughters of Cadixtat, and Neutral deities seek to stave off the pending apocalypse. Lawful clerics seeking to allay divine disfavor may be tasked to destroy any (or all!) of Cadixtat's fell artifacts.

Wizards and Elves: There are a number of reasons for patrons to send their demanding pawns into the bowels of Lost Stylos. Patrons certainly covet the Horn of Chaos and the Rod of Cadixtat. A scrap of living flame will prove an apt component for the creation of fire-allied magic items, and a petal or nectar of the black lotus (brewed as a tea) is key to inducing the torpor necessary for high-level divinations. Finally, the Ur-Lirean lead (hidden in area 1-5) is invaluable. Thorough explorers returning with even a bit of lead have the opportunity to make an un-enchanted weapon or armor that dwarfs comprehension.

Warriors & Dwarves: The hardened captains and rogues alike are sure to have heard tale of the legendary Whispblade. Though dismissed by sages and learned scholars as apocryphal, the shadow weapon does exist, even if its form shifts with every new wielder. The champion that takes up Whispblade is sure to become famous or infamous by turn, though possessing the blade might prove his undoing.

Thieves & Halflings: Thieves and their short-legged ilk have never needed much help getting into hot water. The legendary Atlantean treasure of Lost Stylos is sure to quicken any true rogue's pulse. However, in the end, the price may be too much to bear.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Area	Type	Encounter
1-1	P	300 Sons of the Second Age
1-2	C	Master Goat 7 prentices
1-3	C	3 Failed Sons
1-3a	T	Trapped prayer beads
1-5	C/T	2-3 Daughters of Cadixtat Iron portcullis trap Stone block trap Lirean lead trap
2-1A	C	The prophetess 2 shield warriors
2-2	P/T	Four portal puzzle
2-4	T	Chaos trap
2-5	T	Altar traps
2-6	P/C	Army of the Fourth Age
2-7	C	Hel-ooze
2-8	C	The Handmaiden of Cadixtat Chaos champion 6 martyrs Brain of the Titan
Conclusion	C/P	Cadixtat, un-dead chaos titan

PLAYER START



he adventure is nominally set in the Ghetrian Desert, south and east of the city of Punjar. However, apart from shifting sands and dunes, there are no geographical references that prevent the adventure being set in any desert or wasteland.

The predations of the Ur-Lireans have upset the entire region. As a consequence nearly all of the potential random encounters deal with the Atlantean-magic, or the actions of the Ur-Lireans. See Appendix B for a table of random encounters to play against the PCs during their passage to the ruined city of Stylos.



LEVEL ONE: THE TEMPLE-CITY OF STYLOS

As the PCs come within sight of the ruined city, read or paraphrase the following:

Sand dune drifts are piled high where a city wall once stood. All that remains of the once-mighty wall are half-buried stone blocks and the city gates: marble columns carved in the likeness of towering human forms, emerging from the crashing sea.

Beyond the gates and the drifting sand you can see the stone ruins stretching as far as they eye can see, and toward the center of the temple-city, a golden dome, rising above the maze of crumbling walls.

The howling wind picks up, scouring you with stinging dust, as if to drive you and your companions on.

Once a great city raised by the tribes of Ur-Lirea, Stylos has fallen into ruin. Devoured by shifting sands and hammered by howling winds, little remains of its former splendor and opulence.

Of old Stylos, only the House of Cadixtat still stands. The temple rests near the heart of the temple-city; an army of Sons are arrayed in tents in the ruins surrounding the temple. Due to the vastness of the ruins, it is easy to sneak within sight of the camps (area 1-1), without detection.

EXPLORING THE RUINS

Adventurers are free to explore the vast, sandy ruins, but risk alerting the Sons. This is especially true at night. Any exposed light source, be it a torch, cooking fire, or lantern, throws light through the otherwise darkened ruins. At the first sign of intruders, the Sons send 1d14+10 of their number to investigate.

During the day, there is less risk of detection. Incessant winds cover all but the loudest noise, and the PCs' tracks are erased by shifting sands in 1d16 rounds. If, per the judge's adjudication, the PCs take simple precautions to avoid detection, there is little chance of being discovered.

Son of the Second Age: Init +2; Atk sword +10 melee (1d10+6) or javelin +6 missile fire (1d8+6); AC 18; HD 5d12; hp 30; MV 40'; Act 1d24; SP crit on 22-24; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +6; AL L.

If the PCs elect to explore the various ruins as they make their way through Stylos, roll 1d14, modified by the PC with the worst Luck stat, and consult the following tables to determine a ruin's contents. Individual ruins can be as small as a single building or as large as a ruined city block, stretching along the buried causeway.

TABLE A: RUINS

1d14 Result

- 1 **Discovered!** The unlucky PCs are surprised by a troop of 3d5 Sons. The Sons attack first to subdue the intruders, but if more than half their number fall, the Sons fall back, calling for reinforcements. If the alarm is raised, an additional 3d12 Sons arrive in 3 rounds.
- 2-3 **Sons of the Second Age.** The PCs spy a troop of 1d5+3 Sons making its way through the ruins. The PCs haven't been discovered yet, and won't be if they quickly hide themselves.
- 4-8 **Empty ruin.** Rough stone walls, drifting sands and broken tiles are all that remain.
- 9-12 **Hieroglyphics.** The PCs discover a mosaic of colored glass, half-hidden in the sand. Roll 1d4 and share the appropriate handout with the players (1=A, 2=B, etc.). If this result is rolled a second time, select a different handout to share. See handouts A through D.
- 13 **Escaped Slave.** The PCs find an escaped slave hidden amid the ruins. Once a mercenary captain named Folson, the slave is now on the verge of death: blistered by the sun, frozen from the desert's chilly nights, and nearly dehydrated. If given water, the captain recovers and is able to roughly sketch out the temple, its defenses and entrances. If treated with kindness, the slave may join the PCs, and at the judge's discretion the slave can serve as a replacement PC if the adventurers suffer losses. Otherwise, the weakened slave hangs in the background, following instructions but doing little to aid the PCs. If the result is rolled a second time, treat as if the result were 9-12, **Hieroglyphics**, above.
- 14 **Healing Spring.** A trickle of clean, pure water drips from the basin of a shattered fountain. Drinking directly from the fountain heals a PC 1d12 + Luck modifier hit points. On a successful Will save (DC 15), the fountain's water removes any disapproval modifiers suffered by a cleric. The spring's waters lose their potency one hour after being removed from the sacred fountain. If the result is rolled a second time, treat as if the result was 9-12, **Hieroglyphics**, above.
- 15+ **Forgotten Bolt Hole:** The PCs uncover a hidden cellar that survived the fall of the city. Though cramped quarters, the cellar offers a safe place for the PCs to rest undisturbed, with no chance of being discovered by the Sons.

AREAS OF THE MAP

Area 1-1 – War Camps: *A sea of crude, dusty tents is scattered throughout the fallen ruins, propped up against the crumbling walls, anchored by stone blocks, and blackened from the soot of dung fires. Scores – no hundreds – of enormous men, each nearly 10 feet in height, squat among the tent city, hiding from the searing heat of the day.*

The tents seem arrayed around the central, golden dome – a grim army standing between you and the temple.

At any time there are over 300 Sons of the Second Age encamped around the House of Cadixtat. Groups regularly leave and return from slaving raids, but the aggregate number remains roughly the same. Each Son has sworn his life in the defense of the temple and its priestesses.

An outright attack on the camp is an excellent excuse to roll up new 0-level characters. Safely bypassing the war camps will likely require some degree of misdirection or stealth or a very great amount of bloodshed and luck.

- **Distraction:** Ardent in their defense of the temple, the Sons leap at the chance to pursue intruders. The greater the perceived threat the more Sons drawn away from the temple. As a baseline, a good plan coupled with a DC 10 Luck check is sufficient to lure away 1d5x10 Sons. For each successful check increment of 3, or for exceedingly clever plans, add another d5 to the roll. No matter how successful the PCs' ruse, a core group of 20 Sons remains to defend the temple.
- **Disguise:** The distinguishing features of the Sons are their size and the style of their armaments. PCs imitating both are able to slip unnoticed into the camp. Those escorting obvious men of the Third Age (e.g., regular-sized PCs) are expected to take their wards to the slave pens (area 1-2), but are forcibly prevented from entering the holy sanctuary (area 1-3).
- **Stealth:** PCs can attempt to slip through the camps, obscured either by stealth or magic. *Invisible* characters succeed in avoiding detection with a DC 10 Luck check (each invisible PC must make the Luck check). Thieves attempting to sneak and hide their way through the camps must succeed on three DC 17 hide or sneak checks. During the night, the DCs drop to 14.
- **Guile:** Attempts to treat with the Sons and trick them into letting the PCs near the temple are doomed to failure. Sons are clever enough to recognize most ruses and respond in kind, luring the PCs into their midst before setting upon them from all sides.

The Sons attempt to capture the PCs first, bearing them away to the slave pens. If capture seems impossible (or too dangerous) the Sons settle for slaughtering the PCs.

Treasure: The devout Sons of the Second Age have little in the way of loot. Adventurers searching a tent find 1d5 giant-sized weapons (greatswords and javelins) and 1d3 suits of giant-sized Ur-Lirean armor (the equivalent of banded mail), crude bedrolls, and rations.

Sons of the Second Age (300): Init +2; Atk sword +10 melee (1d10+6) or javelin +6 missile fire (1d8+6); AC 18; HD 5d12; hp 30; MV 40'; Act 1d24; SP crit on 22-24; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +6; AL L.

Area 1-2 – Slave Pens: *Crude stockades of loose stone blocks stand against the temple wall. Piercing wails and desperate pleas dance on the wind along with the revolting stench of human excrement. A stone hut sits at the entrance of the stockade in crude imitation of a gatehouse.*

Grim wardens wearing strange, animalistic helms keep watch from atop the stockade walls.

Captives are held within the stockades before being ritually sacrificed in area 1-4. Apart from crude shelters erected from rags and sticks, there is no shelter within the stockades. Similarly, the jailors are not troubled with providing their wards with food or water.

The reason for their neglect is simple and grim: after 1d3 days, captives are marched into the temple, via the rear steps, to be sacrificed.

The stockades are watched over by Master Goat and his seven wards. As the only Sons to be permitted within the temple's inner sanctum, the master and his prentices have symbolically forsaken their imperfect humanity. This spiritual sacrifice is marked by the wardens' animalistic helms. Each iron helm is cast in the semblance of an animal's head. The helms are bolted into the skulls of the wardens and cannot be removed without killing the bearer.

At any time there are five of the slavers watching from atop the walls, while others eat and rest within the gatehouse. The resting wardens are roused 1d3+3 rounds after an alarm is raised.

Master Goat is a towering, hulking form (even among the formidable Sons). Goat fights with a brutally spiked mace in one hand and a barbed cat o' nine tails in the other. On a successful strike with the whip, Goat can either inflict damage per the attack, force his victim to attempt a DC 15 Fortitude save or be disarmed (throwing the weapon 1d20 feet distant), or draw the target towards him (granting +4 to hit on a follow-up attack with the mace).

The prentices fight with fauchard-forks and crude, cleaver-like swords. On an attack roll of a natural 17 or better, the prentices can use the polearms to pin a foe; a trapped target loses all actions and suffers 1d5+1 points of damage on succeeding rounds. To escape a pin, a victim must succeed on a DC 15 Strength or Agility check.

At any time there are 1d24+6 captives caged within the pens. All the slaves are women and children; the men are culled from the captives and "uplifted" in area 1-3. Every day a select number of the captives is marched up the stone steps to area 1-4 to be sacrificed to Cadixtat. The slaves have nothing but the clothes they wear, which have been reduced to rags from their march across the desert. If the PCs have already suffered casualties, the judge can use the captives to introduce new, 5th-level characters to the party,



The Sons use the temple for their unholy rites: affirming their status as Second Sons and uplifting male captives from the Third to Second Age. Though the Sons pursue the PCs into this upper sanctum, they are impure and unworthy of entering the inner temple below (areas 1-5 and beyond). If the PCs escape into the inner temple below, the Sons howl their fury, but their rigid taboos prevent them from chasing the PCs any further.

The stone disc in the center of the temple caps the sacral well, the font of Cadixtat. The disc is some 8 inches thick and 20 feet across; an enormous iron pin is set in the center of the disc connected to a thick iron chain that rises to the ceiling.

A large windlass is set against the wall of the temple. Turning the crank hoists the stone cap into the air, exposing the sacral well.

It is a 75-foot descent to the floor of the font (area 2-1). With the stone cap raised, the second windlass can be used to lower and raise buckets of the sacred ooze from below.

The columns depict idealized men and women, each the very image of human perfection. Each of the five columns seems to reach for the sky, as if rising into divinity. The forms chained between the columns are male captives undergoing the transformation into Second Sons. Each is covered in a black, silken shroud, concealing their tortured, broken forms. Of the five, two have died. The surviving three are twisted giants—deemed Failed Sons—driven insane by their ordeal.

All five are chained by their wrists to the nearest columns, permitting them to move no more than 5 feet in any direction. If the Failed Sons are disturbed, they erupt with howls, attacking anything or anyone within reach. There is a cumulative 5% chance per round that an enraged giant tears free of its bonds. Freed giants attack the nearest living creature, PC, or Son, and fight to the death, seeking only to escape their torment. They fight with an insane frenzy, hammering on their foes with fist and chain.

If a Failed Son succeeds in hitting a target with both its attacks, it grapples the target, crushing it in a powerful bear hug and inflicting an additional 1d5+8 damage. The Failed Son continues to crush its target on subsequent rounds until the victim dies, wins free (DC 20 Strength or Agility check), or the Son is slain.

Failed Sons (3): Init +2; Atk fist +8 melee (1d5+8) or chain +6 melee (1d8+8); AC 10; HD 5d12; hp 45 each; MV 40'; Act 2d16; SP immune to mind-control effects; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +8; AL C.

Area 1-3a - Nave: A pair of short, golden doors is set into the temple walls. The hammered gold leaf depicts a human form inscribed within a pentacle. A blooming lotus hovers above the form, and strange runes mark his limbs.

Twin gold pulls extend from the doors. Tied about the handles is a single string of polished beads strung on a braided cord.

though any such unfortunates are entirely bereft of armor, weapons, or gear.

The stairs at the rear of the stockades rise to a simple door. The stout door is bolted from within and can be destroyed by several minutes of work with a sharp axe or by a DC 20 Strength check.

Master Goat: Init +2; Atk mace +15 melee (1d12+10) or cat o' nine tails +15 melee (1d8+10); AC 18; HD 8d12; hp 59; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +8; AL L.

Prentices Lion, Bear, Stag, Wolf, Hawk, Crow, and Bull: Init +2; Atk sword +10 melee (1d8+6) or fauchard-forks +10 melee (1d12+6); AC 18; HD 5d12; hp 35 each; MV 40'; Act 1d24; SP crit on 22-24; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +6; AL L.

Area 1-3 - Upper Temple: An enormous temple stretches out before you. Tall stone columns support the golden, arching dome. The checkerboard marble floor has been polished to a bright sheen by the tread of thousands of devotees.

Strangely, the temple seems devoid of any altar or shrine. The sole focal point is a raised stone circle set in the center of the temple surrounded by five marble columns carved in the likeness of humans, showered from above by a lotus. Betwixt each column is a sinister form obscured with black shrouds and bound in heavy chains. Wails of agony and the potent stench of stale urine wafts from beneath the shrouds.

Chains and pulleys are anchored atop the columns, running to a pair of windlasses set against the temple wall.

Show players handout E. Priests, sages, and clerics alike immediately recognize the cord as prayer beads.

Thirty-three of the beads are green jade and the other 33 are polished jet. Close inspection reveals that all of the 66 beads are carved with pentagrams.

Only devotees of Cadixtat can safely remove the beads. All others removing the prayer beads are struck by a horrible premonition of death. Show the player (and *only* this player) handout F; silently count up to the PC's Intelligence score, and then take back the handout. The vision strikes the PC regardless of how the beads are removed. Be it by touch, magic, or the flip of a dagger, the PC removing the beads is struck by the vision.

For the remainder of the adventure, the PC is weakened and confused in the presence of Cadixtat's minions, suffering a -4 penalty to Will saves against the same.

Once the beads are removed, the doors are easily opened. Read or paraphrase the following:

The gold-chased portals open to reveal a niche set into the wall. A polished skull rests within, set with strange stones and jewels. The crown of the skull has been removed, and the interior of the cranium plated with hammered gold to make a crude chalice.

The PCs are unlikely to recognize any of the stones or jewels—all are native to lost Lirea and unknown in modern times. As such, the gems are either worthless (to those that are ignorant of their origins) or impossibly valuable. The Second Sons use the sacred chalice to imbibe their unholy draughts; the interior and rim of the chalice are still oily from the last rite.

The doors to the nave are made of carved wood covered in hammered gold. As art objects, they are worth 250 gp each or 1,000 gp for the pair. Small-minded PCs insisting on scraping off the hammered gold manage to collect 50 gp worth of gold leaf.

Area 1-3b – Monastic Cells: *The small cell holds a stone bier topped with a simple worn pillow. Hanging from the ceiling is a clay pot holding a large, wilted lotus.*

These meditation cells were used by the Daughters and their consorts to sleep away the centuries. The biers are 20 feet in length, hinting at the size of the cell's residents. Each of the 12 cells is decorated with a constellation set within the circumscribed man (as 1-3a, above). Sages and magicians versed in the star lore of astrophysics are unable to place any of the constellations. (The constellations include new stars that will appear with the coming of the Fourth Age.) The constellations are formed of gems set into the plaster ceiling. There are 1d7+3 gems per chamber, each unique to Ur-Lirea and of inestimable value.

The lotus flowers are the legendary black lotuses. Though they have long since lost their bloom, the lotuses yet possess a fragment of their enchanting dew.

Any PC consuming the wilted bloom or its brackish dew slips into a magical coma lasting 1d100 years. The PC

doesn't age during the sleep. Mundane actions are incapable of waking the sleeping character, but a cleric's *lay on hands* is sufficient to lift the curse.

Area 1-4 – Sacrificial Cages: *The stairs open into a chamber dominated by a glowing pit topped by an iron cage. The air is thick with the smell of scorched flesh and burnt hair. The walls and ceiling of the chamber are blackened with oily soot.*

This chamber is used by the cult to melt down human sacrifices in arcane fire. Prisoners are marched up from the pens (area 1-2) and into the cage above the pit, where they are burned alive by the fiendish blue flames. The sizzling drippings fall down into the pit, where the fumes serve to fuel the divinations of the cult's prophetess (in area 2-1A).

The iron cage is hot to the touch, burning anyone that touches it without protection (for 1 point of damage per round). If the cage is removed, PCs are able to descend into area 2-1A. Descending down the pit while the flames still burn inflicts 1d8 points of damage per round. The flames can be temporarily mitigated by cold-based spells causing 30 or more "damage" to the pit, permitting one round of safe passage into the level below. For every 15 additional points of cold damage, the PCs are granted an additional round of passage. Note that at its source (in area 2-1A) the flames are too potent to be quelled by such trivial magics.

Area 1-5 – Trapped Causeway: *Torches are set into the walls here, casting long, dancing shadows. A trio of towering warrior-women stands at attention before an arched, decorated portal, their alien polearms held at the ready. A windlass is set against the wall.*

Scouts sent ahead of the main party of adventurers without light will note the presence of light ahead, long before being spotted by the Daughters of Cadixtat.

If the PCs succeed in reaching the causeway without alerting the warrior-priestesses, there is a chance they can overpower all three before the priestesses can trigger the trap, filling the corridor with stone. However, if the PCs fail to achieve surprise, the third priestess triggers the trap immediately and sprints through the portal to the far side. If the priestess escapes, she warns her sisters on level 3.

Once the Daughter triggers the trap, a series of events happens in quick succession. The PCs' ability to counteract or arrest these events depends entirely on their own wit and quick thinking. Note that the trap is driven by a series of mechanical operations and that if the PCs succeed in stopping one operation, it arrests the entire sequence.

Round 1: An iron portcullis drops, inflicting 1d12 damage to anyone in area A. The portcullis can be arrested by a PC succeeding on a DC 20 Strength check.

Round 2: Massive stone blocks fall in areas B and D, instantly slaying any creatures caught within the target zone. Adventurers can dart into area C or beyond area D with a DC 15 Reflex save.

Round 3: A sheet of hammered Ur-Lirean lead drops in

area C. Set with runes, the lead disrupts and prevents all spells cast in an attempt to bypass any of the fallen blocks. (Other spells are unaffected by the lead.) PCs caught in area C can arrest the falling sheet by quick thinking or with a DC 15 Strength check; otherwise, PCs caught beneath the sheet take 1d5 points of damage and 1 point of damage per round thereafter, until the PC is freed or crushed to a slow death.

Combat tactics: Once the trap is triggered, the remaining Daughters embrace their doom. They fight with a wild frenzy (-3 penalty to AC, +2 to hit and damage), hurling themselves into battle, utterly disregarding their own safety.

The Daughters fight with long, strangely hooked polearms unique to Ur-Lirea. On any attack beating the target's AC by 2 or more, the warrior-priestess can elect to disarm the target, casting the weapon 1d24 feet distant, and take a second, free attack at -4 to hit. The polearms are too large to be used by normal-sized PCs. Sufficiently *enlarged* warriors and dwarves have the training suitable to use the polearms to their full advantage.

Treasure: The Ur-Lirean lead—if the PCs can recover it—is nearly priceless. The anti-magical properties are legendary and the dull gray metal is highly coveted by wizards and sages alike. If applied to armor, it grants the wearer +5 to saving throws against spells. If applied to a weapon, the wielder can forgo an action to “attack” any spell cast at him. The wielder must make a successful attack against an AC equal to the caster's spell check total. If the wielder “hits” and inflicts “damage” equal to the spell level, the spell is successfully countered, though not lost by the caster. For obvious reasons, the lead cannot be applied to magical arms or armor without ruining the enchantment.

There is sufficient lead for one suit of armor or three weapons. Either application is an extremely difficult alchemical process, requiring many devious and exotic ingredients worth no less than 25,000 gp.

Daughters of Cadixtat (2): Init +3; Atk polearm +21 melee (4d8+8 plus disarm); AC 18; HD 12d12; hp 81 each; MV 40'; Act 1d24; SP crit on 20-24, disarm (see text above), battle frenzy (-3 to AC, +2 to hit and damage); SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +14; AL L.



LEVEL TWO: IN THE HOUSE OF CADIXTAT



As the PCs draw closer, the sheer spiritual might of the chaos titan begins to work its influence over the party. Attempts to *invoke patron* or to summon *divine aid* suffer -10 penalties to spell checks. Judges should adjudicate the spell results as they see fit, but few deities or patrons are willing to risk the ire of the Lords of Chaos by interfering with one of their greatest champions.

In the Company of the Dead: The threat posed by the reborn chaos titan spans entire worlds. Indeed, the might of Cadixtat threatens to undo reality as the PCs know it, and the threshold between the living and the dead is worn thin where Chaos reigns. Slain heroes cannot help but strain against the shackles of death, in a desperate bid to aid their allies against the roiling seas of elemental chaos.

Prior to beginning the second level, the judge should consult the party's adventure logs, noting each slain henchman and PC of 5th level or greater. This list should include any adventurers or suitable hirelings slain earlier in the adventure.

These powerful souls (and only these souls) possess the will necessary to press through the void, clawing their way back to the earthly realms. However, for all their might, they cannot fully manifest in the mortal realm; at best the ghostly allies can merely warn their former allies of threats and danger. Each such ghost has one, and only one, opportunity to intercede on the PCs' behalf, wailing a warning to the living. The specific timing and message are up to the judge.

The force of will required for manifesting on the material realm is great. If a player has a character that qualifies (a PC or henchmen of 5th level or greater), the judge should take the player aside and allow the dead character to make one final Will save, applying the results to the following table.

Will Result

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 10-11 | The slain character's face appears before the party in the darkness, eyes wide, its mouth agape in a silent scream of horror. |
| 12-14 | An apparition of the character appears, howling with anguish, before vanishing from sight. The ghost can point for just an instant but nothing more. |
| 15-18 | The voice of the slain character whispers three words softly. |
| 19-20 | The character appears before the party, dead eyes filled with anguish, and speaks up to ten words before fading away. |

- 21+ The phantom character appears before the party. It truthfully answers ten yes-or-no questions before being dismissed. The judge should track the questions carefully, as even unintentional questions must be answered by the ghost.

The player should write a note to the judge requesting the time and situation the apparition takes form. Suitable requests might be:

Make my character's ghost manifest ...

... before we encounter the next trap.

... before our next combat.

... if we are missing a hidden passage.

... if we are about to be surprised.

... if we are missing a clue.

The judge is in no way compelled to comply with outlandish requests and is encouraged to punish attempts to game the system.

Area 2-1A – Seat of the Sacral Fire: *The stairway is choked with heat and the overwhelming stench of burnt hair and flesh. Oily soot covers the walls and blackens the ceiling. Atop the stairs you spy a cerulean glow. You can hear hissing, spitting sounds emanating from above.*

The prophetess and a pair of dedicated warriors wait in the chamber. If the PCs have come this far without raising a clamor, and approach with any degree of stealth, they achieve surprise against the trio. Otherwise, the warriors hide on either side of the entrance, prepared to ambush the PCs. Tailor the following to the situation:

The stairs open into a chamber dominated by a roaring column of azure flame. Across from the fire sits a towering woman atop a rough-carved stone throne. The stench of burning flesh and scorched hair belies her calm, as the blast-furnace of heat and oily black smoke billow past her beatific countenance.

A pair of towering warriors in iron masks stands to either side of the throne, massive swords at the ready and shields slung over their shoulders.

The prophetess seems utterly ignorant of the PCs' presence, but her devoted shield-warriors are quick to defend their mistress, either ambushing the PCs if they are alerted to the PCs' approach or moving to defend her if they are surprised.

The warriors fight to the death in the defense of their mistress, hammering at the PCs with their swords and using their shields to buffet the PCs into the flames. On a successful attack totaling +3 or better than the target's AC, a warrior has also struck the victim with his towering shield, pushing the target 10 feet in any direction.

During the battle, the prophetess is lost to the world, enchanted by the blue flames. So long as she isn't attacked, the oracle is lost in her dreams of other times and worlds.

However if the prophetess takes damage from the PCs' actions or is targeted by the PCs, she awakens with a fury: diabolic flames extend from the column, wreathing the prophetess in a blazing aura.

The flames defend the oracle, serving as a shield against melee attacks: any PCs closing to melee range take 1d12 damage from the intense heat and are set alight by the flames.

Additionally, the living flames can leap from the prophetess' limbs, lashing out as fiery whips. The whips can reach targets as far as 25 feet distant, and on a successful attack draw the target 10 feet closer to the prophetess.

Be it by fiery shield, blazing lash, or by being knocked into the flames, once a target is ignited, the living flames surge over him, igniting clothes, hair, and flesh for an additional 1d5 points of damage the first round. The damage die increases each round (1d6 damage the second round, 1d7 the third, 1d8 the fourth, etc.; up to 1d30 points of damage per round) until the flames are extinguished or the PC's charred corpse collapses to the ground. Extinguishing the flames requires extraordinary measures: the flames must either be countered by magic, faith, fleeing out of sight of the prophetess, or by dousing the living flame (see below).

The flames are seated within a wide copper bowl that catches the sacrificial drippings from area 1-4 above. The bubbling, simmering drippings are stirred to create the fumes that inspire the prophetess' visions.

If the PCs avoid arousing the oracle's ire, they can consult her to divine their own fortunes. The prophetess derives her insights from the fumes of burning bodies, and in order to receive a fortune, the PCs must subject a body (living or dead) to the pit's flames. Roll 1d14 + 1d5 for every Hit Die of the sacrifice on the *second sight* spell check table (see the DCC RPG core book, page 267).

The Living Flame: PCs inspecting the source of the flames discover a blackened iron brazier 4 feet in diameter. This fire has been tended since before the ocean drank Lirea. So long as the prophetess focuses her mental powers on the flames, they do not diminish. But for every round she is distracted from her duties, there is a cumulative 5% chance per round the flames go out, plunging the chamber into darkness. If the prophetess returns her full focus to the flames, even for a round, the cumulative chance drops back to 0%.

If the flames are fully extinguished, adventurers discover 1d14 marble-sized embers. The embers flare with an inner heat and light. Each ember provides a non-cumulative +3 to a single saving throw against a cold-based attack or +3 to a single spell check when casting a flame-based spell.

The Prophetess: Init +5; Atk living flame +21 missile fire (3d10 plus ignite target; ignited target takes advancing damage each round: 1d5, 1d6, 1d7, 1d8, 1d10, etc., to 1d30); AC 10; HD 12d12; hp 81; MV 40'; Act 2d24; SP crit on 20-24; SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +14; AL L.

Shield-Warriors: Init +3; Atk sword +22 melee (4d10+10)



THE DEATH OF MING THE BARBER
WHILE CHUCK PLIMPTON CONSIDERS
RETIREMENT

or shield +22 melee (1d10+10 plus buffet target); AC 17; HD 14d12; hp 100 each; MV 40'; Act 2d24; SP shield buffet (push target 10' if beat AC by 3), crit on 20-24; SV Fort +13, Ref +5, Will +10; AL L.

Area 2-1 – Font of the Risen Man: *The massive cavern mirrors the dome of the temple above. The air is cool and wet, providing a welcome relief from the hammering winds and blistering sun.*

A marble basin dominates the cavern floor. Statuary around the basin depicts a human girded in a flowing chiton, towering over three smaller humans. The largest statue must be nearly 30 feet in height, the others one-third the size. The giant-human bears a large spear and appears to be directing the smaller humans up the slope. A stream of clear liquid trickles down the slope, pooling in the basin.

At the peak of the slope you can make out the source of the steam: a white marble tomb set against the cavern wall.

Attentive PCs will note that the “cavern” is not natural or even carved from stone. Rather the walls, floor, and ceiling are all made of bricks, carved and placed to form the illusion of a natural cavern. Removing the bricks only exposes larger bricks. Unbeknownst to the PCs, the entire complex is built atop the corpse of the chaos titan.

The statues depict a titan directing a trio of Ur-Lireans, gesturing as if towards the tomb. The figures loom protectively over the pool set in the center of the basin but pose no threat to the PCs. However, the pooled “waters” are another matter.

The clear, slightly viscous liquid pooling in the basin is the animated cerebral fluid of the titan Cadixtat called hel-ooze. The hel-ooze serves many functions, but here it is used to transform normal men into the Second Sons. The hel-ooze trickles down in a slow stream from the tomb into the basin to be collected and offered to the Sons in the temple above.

Area 2-2 – Ossuary of the Second Age: *The marble tomb is set against the wall of the cavern. Two columns flank the gaping door. Each column is carved to depict a woman, armed with a greatsword. The stream of ooze trickles through the door, out of the tomb, making its way to the basin far below.*

Once the PCs enter the tomb, read or paraphrase the following:

The walls and floor of the tomb are smooth marble, polished by the tread of thousands of feet. Dozens of long white robes hang near the entrance.

A fountain stands against the wall to your left. A stone lotus weeps clear ichor that spills out of the basin, pooling on the floor and slowly trickling out the entrance.

A slim marble pedestal topped by a copper brazier stands against the wall to your right.

Ahead, a set of wide steps descends to four ominous stone portals. Above each portal is a series of ancient runes.

When an Ur-Lirean grows weary of his nigh-endless life, he dons a robe, descends the staircase, and steps through one of the four doors. Doing so, he commends his spirit to the next world and rejoins his ancestors in the land of boundless light.

Or so Ur-Lireans are led to believe. The sinister truth is known only to the Handmaiden: each of the doorways leads to certain doom. The damned souls of the Ur-Lireans are not reborn in light but instead consumed in darkness and used to fuel the rebirth of the chaos titan. There is no right choice for the PCs—all of the doors offer only death.

The Lotus Fountain: The fountain is the source of the hel-ooze trickling down to the basin in area 2-1. The ooze is propelled from below, dripping like thick molasses from the petals of the fell lotus. Apart from the ooze itself (see sidebar, on next page) there is little to interest PCs.

The Copper Brazier: The basin of the brazier is covered in fine black ash and soot. If an object is placed within the brazier, a column of blue flame springs to life, consuming the offering (regardless of intent) in 1d12+2 rounds. The azure flames can burn *any* object, be it stone, metal, wood, or flesh.

If the object is pulled from the flames, they spread with a fury, inflicting 1d5 points of damage the first round. The damage die increases each round (for 1d6 damage the second round, 1d7 the third, 1d8 the fourth, etc.; up to 1d30 points of damage per round) until the flames are extinguished or the object is entirely consumed. Extinguishing the flames requires extraordinary measures: the flames must either be countered by magic, faith, or by fleeing out of the tomb.

An adventurer intentionally sacrificing an object worth 100 gp or more is granted a vision. Show the player (and *only* this player) handout F; silently count up to the PC's Intelligence score, and then take back the handout. The vision can be witnessed as many times as the PCs are willing to make sacrifices, but the cost of the sacrifice increases five-fold each time (500 gp the second time, 2,500 gp the third time, 12,500 gp the fourth time, and so on).

The Four Portals: Each of the four portals is sealed in stone. Above each door is a set of runes. Show players handout G. The first set is phonetic; translated and read together these runes communicate the warning “e•ter•nal re•ward” – Eternal Reward. The second set of runes is pictorial, offering a description or indication of the portal's offering.

All of runes date back to before the waters drank Lirea and are difficult to translate. The best PCs can manage are rough approximations (DC 15 read languages or a successful casting of *read magic*), and a fresh attempt must be attempted for each door. Worse, Ante-Lirean is written opposite of Common, and must be read from *right to left*.

Each portal is activated by the firm, intentional touch of a living creature. Any other touch (pressure by a staff or *invisible servant*, for instance) has no result. The portals can

HEL-OOZE OF CADIXTAT



he dedicated worship of the Daughters has brought the desiccated organs of the slain Cadixtat back from death. The hel-ooze flows in foul, undulating waves from the fractured canopic vessel in area 2-8.

When imbibed by mortals, the hel-ooze works horrific transformations. A PC must make a DC 17 Fortitude save or take 3d14 damage as his bones twist and tear out of his frame. If this first save is failed, the PC must then attempt a DC 10 Will save or be driven utterly mad by pain. Mad PCs fall into a mortal rage, attacking all those around them in an effort to end their own lives.

However, if the second save against madness is successful, the PC undergoes a potent metamorphosis. Over the course of 1d5 hours, the PC grows 1 foot in height per hour, gaining 1 point in Strength and Stamina each hour.

The PC reverts to his original form 4d24 hours after his last sip from the fountain, taking 3d14 points of damage in the process. The reversion can be forestalled by drinking more of the hel-ooze. Note that those that imbibe the hel-ooze are more easily twisted to the will of the Handmaiden.

The hel-ooze serves as a seeing-feeling organ for the chaos titan and its high priestess. Anywhere the PCs encounter the ooze, the priestess is immediately aware of their location and can direct her minions accordingly.

While the hel-ooze appears to be liquid, it possesses powers of locomotion directly related to its proximity to the canopic vessels in area 2-8. Specifically, the ooze behaves less like liquid the closer the PCs press into the heart of the temple, clinging first to the walls and ceiling, later taking the form of a wall, and finally congealing into a gelatinous amoeba-like form in the heart of the temple.

See individual area descriptions for the increasing powers of the ooze as the PCs draw nearer the source.

be inspected by touch without being activated, and each portal can be activated any number of times. Successful attempts to find traps (DC 20) indicate only that the thief has an overwhelming premonition of dread. The portal's powers cannot be disarmed by mundane means.

Portal A – wɔrd; Fury, Willful, Heat. The stone is hot to the touch.

The PC activating the portal must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or be immolated, as the PC and all his possessions are instantly reduced to a pile of ash. PCs succeeding on the save are set alight and hurled from the portal, taking 2d12 points of fire damage.

Portal B – rə; Changing, Yielding, Impulsive. A faint whistling can be heard from behind the door.

The PC activating the portal must make a DC 20 Reflex save or be caught by a gust of wind and pinned against the far wall. The portal slowly breaks into fragments, sending shards of stone whistling towards the PC, inflicting 1d24 points of damage each round for 10 rounds or until the PC is pulled from the driving wind. (On a successful Reflex save, the PC pulls himself from the wind before suffering damage.) When the wind dies down, the stone portal has returned.

Portal C – nəl; Hardened, Silent, Gloomy. The door is cool to the touch.

The PC triggering the portal must attempt a DC 20 Luck check or be instantly turned to stone. On a successful check the PC gains 1d5 Luck points, as the gods smile upon his audacity. (The Luck bonus can only be won once.)

Portal D – ɪtər; Determination, Ceaseless, Calm. The door rumbles softly to the touch.

The PC activating the portal must make a DC 15 Will save or suffer instant desiccation, as all the fluids are drained from his body, reducing him to a dried, mummified corpse. PCs succeeding on the save wrench their bodies free but not before taking 2d16 points of damage.

The Hidden Portal: There is a fifth door hidden in the north wall that is only visible to devotees of Cadixtat. Adventurers that have tasted the hel-ooze can perceive the portal, as can PCs wearing the funerary robes that also made offerings to the flames in the antechamber above. Otherwise, the door is immune to detection by mundane, non-magical means.

However, while immune to detection, the invisible portal is *activated* by the same means as the four trapped portals. Firm, intentional pressure by a living creature is sufficient to open the portal. Even once triggered, the portal isn't visible — adventurers stepping through the portal seem to simply vanish through the stone wall.

Area 2-3 – Overlook: The stone platform extends out into a hazy cavern. Eerie stalactites hang from the ceiling, glistening in the dim light. The floor of the cavern, some 20 feet below, is rough with hundreds of motionless, stony forms, akin to an army of squat, lumpy stalagmites standing in clear pools.

A sickly red globe hangs in the distance, like the light of a dying sun. It shines faintly through the haze, casting long shadows through the dusky cavern.

A narrow stairway is cut into the wall beneath the ledge, descending to the floor of the cavern.

The pale orb drawing the PCs on is the heart of the chaos titan, shining from its pit in area 2-7. The haze in the air is the traces of elemental chaos drifting from area 2-4. The miasma causes the air to taste faintly of copper and sulfur. Otherwise the air is warm and thick, like the heat coming off a decomposing corpse.

Area 2-4 – Dark Hall: *The stone walls, ceiling, and floor have taken on a strange, spongy texture. It is as if the stone itself were beginning to rot out beneath your feet. The air seems thick with ooze, making it painful to breath and causing your companions to hack, cough, and spit out foul globules of bile.*

No matter how powerful the light source or vision, PCs can see only 15 feet down this hall. For all intents, the hall leads into eternal darkness.

Powerful forces of chaos are at work here, poisoning the air and threatening to unmake the very stuff of reality. Corrupted wizards and elves are the first to feel the effects and feel a powerful compulsion to follow the hallway to its terminus. As they proceed down the hall, wizards and elves feel their corruptions fester, grow, and multiply.

Total the caster's minor, major, and greater corruptions (+1/+2/+3 for each corruption, respectively). The total is the caster's Will save DC. The corrupted caster must make two Will saves against the summed DC: the first to avoid hurling himself bodily down the hall; and the second to avoid taking a new greater corruption (which adds +3 to the total DC). The caster must make both saves any time he attempts to travel the hall.

Compelled casters can be physically restrained, but if granted freedom of will and movement, they do their best to move down the hall to area 2-5.

Area 2-5 – Chapel of Elemental Chaos: *The dark hall opens into a great cathedral. The verdigris-veined marble floor gives way to darksome, violet walls that soar high above your heads. The walls sparkle intermittently, as if shooting stars were arcing from the floor towards the infinite ceiling.*

You motion for your companions to halt, your senses on edge.

It is no clever trick of architecture. The walls and floor are actually streaming towards the heavens, disintegrating little by little, showering dying embers upwards into the darkness. The material form is slowly giving way to chaos, inch by flaming inch, crashing and tinkling like a thousand wind chimes caught in a hurricane: the maddening, senseless music of the spheres.

Three enormous stone altars stand against the streaming walls. As tall as a man and polished to a bright sheen, the black altar stones sparkle like the night sky.

The chapel serves as a reliquary for three relics sacred to Cadixtat. The source of the streaming chaos, the relics are sequestered beneath the mighty altars. If the altars are toppled (a herculean feat; DC 25 Strength check) or otherwise displaced, the PCs discover a nook beneath each stone.

The streaming walls are in the process of being converted to raw elemental chaos, and hence are extremely dangerous to mere mortals. Objects placed within the arching stream

are tugged upwards as they quickly melt away, their material forms consumed by the elemental flow. If a PC reaches or steps into the flow, he must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be yanked off his feet and dragged upwards at a rate of 45 feet per round. The PC may attempt the free himself once per round. Each round the PC is caught in the flow he takes 1d24 points of damage as his form melts into streaming chaos. At the end of three rounds, the PC reaches the peak of the chapel and is drawn wholly into the chaos, vanishing from existence. Allies reaching the trapped PC may also attempt one DC 15 Fortitude save per round to free the character.

Note that should a PC succeed in freeing himself after the first round he plummets to the hard floor below, taking the appropriate falling damage (1d6 damage per 10 feet).

The overwhelming chaos presents a dire threat to corrupted wizards and elves. As in area 2-4, total the caster's minor, major, and greater corruptions (+1/+2/+3 for each corruption, respectively). The total is the caster's Will save DC.

While in the chapel, all corrupted casters are weak with nausea and the nearly overwhelming desire to give their mortal shell up to the chaos. Drawn towards the streaming walls, a caster must attempt a Will save every 3 rounds spent in the chamber and when attempting to leave.

On the first failed save the caster begins to mumble madly about chaos, its siren call, and the sweet release of unmaking.

On the second failed save, the PC's eyes turn utterly and irrevocably black, and the PC begins to sing along to the maddening chimes, a tuneless, horrific dirge calling out to beings beyond the void and heralding the end of time.

On the third failed save, the caster goes mad, doing everything in his power to hurl himself into the walls, giving his body and soul up to chaos.

The progressive madness is not permanent, ending 1d24 days after exiting the chapel (or when alleviated by a cleric successfully laying on hands for 4 or more dice), but friends and family will agree that the PC is forever changed in some subtly dark and sinister manner. Mad casters can continue to cast spells and aid in the quest, but players are encouraged to roleplay the wide-eyed, distractible, gibbering madness to the best of their ability.

The Three Altars: The top of each altar is beveled out to form a slight bowl. Within each bowl is an offering that hints at the treasures hidden beneath the massive stone blocks.

North Altar: Atop the altar rest a broken sword, a sundered shield, and fragments of bone. If the altar is tipped over or broken by force (instead of simply being pushed aside) it explodes violently, hurling shards through the chapel (DC 15 Reflex save or 1d16 damage). Any PC taking 14 or more points damage is hurled into the streaming walls, as above, and must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be tugged toward the ceiling.



Beneath the altar rests a shard of gray metal wreathed in curling mists. Roughly the size of a two-handed scimitar, the unassuming shard is nothing less than the infamous Whispblade (see Appendix A).

East Altar: Atop the altar rest two bejeweled signet rings (worth 150 gp each), a cracked skull, and a handful of silver pieces. Any PC taking a ring must succeed on a DC 15 Will save or be utterly and absolutely convinced that his course of action (regardless of the situation) is the right one. If different PCs take the rings, and both fail the save, their plans and ideas are inevitably diametrically opposed, with each believing his own plan is the right one. If need be, the ring-bearers resort to violence to enforce their way.

The curse, such as it is, is easily removed by taking a ring away from the PC. Of course, the character removing the ring now thinks that keeping it in his possession is the safest and best course of action...

Resting beneath the altar, atop a moldering velvet pillow, is the mighty Rod of Cadixtat (see Appendix A).

West Altar: In the bowled out altar-top, PCs discover a lock of hair woven in a tight braid. The hair is impossibly smooth and fine, though it radiates a faint heat.

Hidden beneath the stone is the Horn of Chaos (see Appendix A). Set within the niche, the horn rests atop a mound of writhing inch-long demon larvae. The demons hiss and snarl at the PCs but otherwise pose little threat. (However, if any PC is foolish enough to actually eat one of the larvae, he sprouts a second, demonic head following the next full moon. The consequences of this corruption are left up the judge.)

Area 2-6 – The Fourth Age: *The darkened cavern is littered with hundreds of squat, stony stalagmites, glistening red in the dying light. The short, knobby formations nearly cover the cavern floor, each slick with the ooze that drips from the cavern's high ceiling.*

Astute spelunkers will note that, curiously, there are no stalactites hanging from the cavern ceiling. The "stalagmites" littering the floor are actually hardened stone eggs, formed and incubated by the hel-ooze. Within each egg is a degenerate, squat imitation of a man. With pasty, wrinkled skin, sagging bellies, and oozing eyes, the worm-men are born hating their condition. Filled with envy for those that came before them, the worm-men lust for the destruction of mankind.

But the Fourth Age of Man is not yet at hand. Left undisturbed, the eggs pose little threat to the PCs. However, if hatched from their stony slumber, the worm-men do their best to usher in the mindless violence of the Fourth Age.

Spilled blood stirs the hungry worm-men. If blood falls in the chamber, the nearest egg cracks open and a worm-man crawls free, licking at the crimson drops. Awakened to its purpose, the worm-man attacks the nearest living creature the next round.

This violence awakens the other worm-men in turn. On the third round 3 eggs hatch open, on the fourth round 12, on the fifth round 36 awaken, on the sixth round 108 crack free, until the seventh round, when a total of 484 howling worm-men rage through the chamber in search of blood.

Finally, the eggs can simply be cracked open by curious PCs. The misshapen, embryonic worm-man peers at the PCs in wide-eyed confusion for a round before springing from its egg, ravenous for destruction.

The cycle can be halted only if the PCs succeed in putting down every single of the awakened worm-men in the same round. However, even if only a single worm-man escapes death at the end of a round, the series continues unabated.

Worm-men: The worm-men swarm their targets, bearing them to the ground before rending them to bits. If a worm-man succeeds on its attack, it clings to the PC, reducing his movement by 5 feet per round. On subsequent rounds, the attached worm-man can give up its actions to automatically bite and gnaw at the target for an additional 1d10+3 damage.

A PC can spend an action to shake free a worm-man (DC 10 Strength check). If a PC elects not to move, he can attempt the check an additional time.

If the worm-men reach area 2-7, they take up the piled weapons, increasing their melee damage to 1d8+3 but sacrificing their grappling attacks.

PCs or hirelings slain by the worm-men rise as foul worm-men themselves 1d5 rounds after death.

Hel-Ooze: There is a prodigious amount of hel-ooze pooling on the cavern floor. The ooze responds to the awakening worm-men, receding east and west, like waves drawing back to sea.

At the approach of PCs, the ooze forms itself into a wall, some 15 feet thick, reaching from floor to ceiling, fully blocking either passageway and trapping the PCs within the chamber. Forcing oneself through the ooze is no mean feat, requiring a DC 20 Strength check (warriors may add their Deed dice to the check). On a failed check, the PC is caught by the ooze and hoisted off the floor. If unable to gain a footing, hold, or traction, the PC begins to drown.

While the ooze itself cannot be slain, if it is dealt more than 50 points of damage in a single round (no to-hit roll is needed), it breaks formation, collapsing back into a pool. The ooze can reform in 3 rounds.

Finally, if it appears the PCs will carry the day against the worm-men, the west wall shrinks, transferring its mass to the east wall. As the last worm-man falls, the east wall collapses into a wave of titanic proportions, washing over the PCs and driving them west.

Characters succeeding on a DC 15 Fortitude save keep their footing against the wave. Those failing the save are swept up by the ooze, taking 1d16 damage as they are propelled over the mounds of weapons and stones. Self-propelled,

the wave rolls up the stairs, through area 2-7, finally washing to a stop in area 2-8.

Worm-men (484): Init -1; Atk claw +5 melee (1d4+3) or by weapon; AC 13; HD 1d8+2; hp 8 each; MV 20'; Act 2d20; SP grab (target -5' movement after successful attack), automatically bite caught target for 1d10+3; SV Fort +3, Ref -1, Will +5; AL C.

Area 2-7 – The Third Age: *Rough natural steps give way to cut stone. At the peak of the wide stairs is a towering mound of rusted weapons and twisted armor. Beyond the weird pile of ruined metal is a large arched portal. A dull red orb is set within the arch's keystone, glowing like a dying sun.*

The piled weapons and armor have been collected by the Daughters for the rise of the Army of the Fourth Age. Pitted with rust, battered by violence, and dusty with age, the weapons are worthless to all but the most desperate of explorers. Nearly any sort of mundane weapon or bit of armor can be discovered in the pile. If any worm-men somehow manage to reach this chamber, they take up the weapons, augmenting their melee damage.

The archway towers above the chamber. The glowing orb, representing the setting sun, is in fact a mosaic composed of hundreds of glowing shards—the semi-solid Blood of Teleus, the titan of law that brought mighty Cadixtat low. There are thousands of drops, each roughly the size of a large berry, and each glowing with an inner fire. The merest touch of a drop carries with it the force of the Lords of Law. Chaotic-aligned PCs touching the merest drop of the blood take 1d5 points of damage as their souls are seared by the fearsome tyranny of law.

Weapons smeared in the blood are granted a +1d5 damage bonus against servants of Cadixtat. If the blood is applied to any of the chaos-aligned relics in area 2-5, the results are far more dramatic. A dimensional rift tears through reality, devouring the relic and creatures within 50 feet (no save) and inflicting 1d30 damage to all within 300 feet (DC 15 Fortitude save to avoid).

The Blood of Teleus is a highly powerful force of law. Applied to the flesh, it removes minor corruptions altogether (though chaotic-aligned PCs still take 1d5 points of damage, as above). One corruption can be removed per application.

The blood can also be used to remove major and greater corruptions, though at far greater risk. When the blood is applied to a major corruption, the PC must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save, unaided by Luck of any kind, or take 1d16 damage. If the PC survives the cure, he is granted a DC 20 Will save. On a success, the corruption is removed.

The application for greater corruptions is even more harrowing. Upon application, the PC must succeed on a DC 20 Fortitude save (again, unaided by Luck) or take 1d30 points of damage. If the PC survives the application, he may attempt a DC 20 Will save. On a success, the corruption is removed.

A single mortal shell can sustain only five applications of the blood over the course of a lifetime. Of course, such a hurdle is a fairly small one to accomplished arcane casters.

Area 2-8 – Sepulcher of the First Age: *Three enormous canopic jars dominate this vaulted chamber. Resting atop a wide ledge, the vast jars are easily 30 feet or more in height and topped with clay heads cast in the likenesses of a crow, hyena, and lion. One of the enormous jars has cracked; clear ooze seeps from the crack, dripping down the face of the funerary vessel and pooling on the chamber floor.*

An execution is taking place on the sunken floor beneath the vessels. A towering priestess arrayed in rich robes holds aloft a great sickle sword. Before her kneel six priestesses dressed in white gowns, their necks placed over execution blocks. A final giant form arrayed in stylized bronze armor and bearing a shield and long spear stands watch over the proceedings, eyes glinting darkly beneath his great helm.

The judge must adjust the descriptions if the PCs were washed here from area 2-6. The weapons and armor from area 2-7 will litter the floor, and the Handmaiden and her Daughters will be disarrayed and confused for the first two rounds. The chaos champion, however, is far too accomplished to be caught off guard so easily.

Raising the Chaos Titan: The Handmaiden is sacrificing the six Daughters to great Cadixtat, ushering in the end of the Third Age. The Daughters give up their lives willingly. The Handmaiden is able to slay one martyr with her sickle sword each round, spilling their blood into the pooled ooze. With each slain Daughter, the cracked canopic vessel surges with fluid, until—as the sixth martyr is laid low—the hel-ooze is nearly waist-deep.

If the Handmaiden is restrained or unable to slay the Daughters, the priestesses martyr themselves, charging the party with wild eyes, hurling themselves onto the PCs' blades. Meanwhile, the Handmaiden calls upon the power of Cadixtat, blasting PCs with black rays cast from her staff.

The Chaos Champion: The champion does his best to slow the party, buying the Handmaiden time to sacrifice her Daughters. With his deadly skill and multiple actions, the champion has a host of options in battle. On a successful attack, rolled on a natural 16 or better, the champion can choose to inflict one of these secondary effects on the target:

- Trip the PC, knocking him prone
- Stagger the target PC, knocking him to the bottom of the initiative count for the remainder of the battle
- Knock the target PC into an ally (within 10 feet), inflicting a -3 penalty on the second PC's next action
- Disarm the target PC
- Negate the target PC's Mighty Deed of Arms

Further, the champion can sacrifice his shield to negate a single critical hit (decreasing his AC by 1). Finally, when truly pressed, the champion can sacrifice his long spear to

negate a critical hit, forcing the towering giant to find another weapon or resort to his gauntleted fists.

Enter the Brain: When the last martyr dies, the cracked canopic vessel shatters, spilling the enormous brain of Cadixtat the Chaos Titan onto the temple floor. If the wall of hel-ooze (in area 2-6) hasn't swept into the chamber, it does so now, bearing along the weapons and armor from area 2-7.

The brain is lifted up by a column of the ooze, borne some 20 feet into the air. Meanwhile, the ooze extends a dozen pseudopods, lifting a dozen rusting weapons into the air. Directed by its brain, the ooze launches a whirling cloud of attacks at the PCs.

Once per round the brain can attempt to *dominate* a PC. The character is permitted a DC 15 Will save to resist; PCs that partook of the hel-ooze earlier in the adventure suffer a -3 penalty to the save. A dominated PC obeys the brain's telepathic orders to the best of its ability, turning on friends and allies in an effort to defend its master. Each round, the PC can attempt to shake off the domination anew with a DC 15 Will save. The brain can dominate and direct up to three PCs at once.

For all its ferocity, the brain is readily defeated. The hel-ooze seeps away, lowering the battered and bloodied brain to the temple floor. The PCs have struck a great blow by preventing the intelligent Cadixtat from returning to rule (and ruin) the earth. However, the un-dead chaos titan is far more than a brain. See **When Day Turns to Night** below for the adventure's conclusion.

Handmaiden of Cadixtat: Init +2; Atk sickle-sword +22 melee (4d8+12) or black ray +18 missile fire (2d16, range 450'); AC 20; HD 17d10; hp 117; MV 50'; Act 3d24; SP *levitate* (1/day; self plus 1,000 lbs.; duration 1 hour at speed of 50'), crit on 20-24; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +12; AL L.

Chaos Champion: Init +4; Atk long spear +24 melee (4d12+12) or fist +24 melee (1d12+12) or javelin +12 missile fire (2d8+10, range 300'); AC 24; HD 17d10; hp 107; MV 50'; Act 4d24; SP secondary effects on successful attack of natural 16+ (see above), crit on 20-24; SV Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +10; AL L.

Martyrs (6): Init +3; Atk fist +21 melee (1d8+8); AC 18; HD 10d10; hp 60 each; MV 40'; Act 1d24; SP crit on 20-24; SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +14; AL L.

Titan Brain: Init +0; Atk rusted weapon +10 melee (1d8+3); AC 16; HD 6d12+15; hp 66; MV 20'; Act 12d20; SP dominate; SV Fort +10, Ref+2, Will +12; AL C.



CONCLUSION: WHEN DAY TURNS TO NIGHT



As the last of the temple's defenders falls to the PCs and the giant brain sinks to the ground, an ominous silence falls over the temple. Against all odds, the adventurers have carried the day.

Unfortunately, one last foe remains.

The faith of the Daughters did far more than animate the brain of Cadixtat. It also awakened the headless corpse of a chaos titan. Buried beneath the temple, the un-dead chaos titan arises even as its brain succumbs to the blows of the PCs.

Three rounds after the giant brain is "slain," the ground beneath the temple begins to shake. The PCs are hoisted upwards as the floor lifts into the air. Each PC must attempt a DC 15 Reflex save or take 1d16 damage from falling rubble.

The following round the PCs are lifted into the open air as the corpse of Cadixtat awakens beneath them. The air is choked with dust, no noise can be heard over the crash of stone blocks, and the world shifts and slides, threatening to consume the adventurers.

The headless un-dead chaos titan emerges, shaking free the grime of ages. Towering some 300 feet above the PCs, it is an engine of destruction that truly heralds the end of the world.

The unintelligent un-dead has no allies; any and every creature is a target of its violence. The titan destroys the army of Second Sons just as readily as it attacks PCs. Indeed, should the judge determine the adventurers need a round or two to get their feet underneath them, he can readily demonstrate the titan's fury by destroying entire swaths of the Second Son giants.

The un-dead chaos titan does not so much attack its foes as swat at nuisances. Armor is of no use to the PCs, and even magical defenses are readily overcome by the titan's mass. The titan's offensive rolls are more in keeping with saving throws and critical hits than the mere, trivial attacks of mortals. The titan can make two attacks per round. The judge should roll against the table below or use the table to inspire devious results of his own devising.

1d12 Attack

- 1-4 The titan focuses one of its two attacks on the Second Sons, destroying dozens of soldiers in a single blow.
- 5 The titan hurls a handful of enormous stone blocks, casting them about like dice. The blocks target up to six PCs within a 1,000-foot radius (DC 10 Reflex save to avoid 2d20+10 damage).

- 6 The titan hammers a heel into the ground, crushing any targets beneath its gargantuan foot. Targets beneath the 25-foot heel must make DC 15 Reflex saves to dodge aside or be instantly slain, crushed into the sand.
- 7 The titan kneels, punching a fist into the ground. PCs on the ground within 50 feet of the impact must attempt DC 10 Fortitude saves to maintain their balance, and a billowing dust cloud obscures all sight until the end of the next round. Those failing the save on a natural 1, 2 or 3 slip into a crevasse unearthed by the attack, tumbling some 30 feet into the earth and crashing amid the rocky rubble for 3d6 damage (potentially offering PCs a place to hide until the titan passes).
- 8 The titan swats at a single PC. The PC can attempt a DC 20 Reflex save, to avoid. Failure results in 10d6+20 damage as the PC is hurled 100 feet through the air before smashing into the dunes.
- 9 The titan kicks at a sand dune, blasting a billowing cone of sand towards the PCs. The cone starts as 20 feet wide, extends 300 feet, and is 70 feet wide at its terminus. Those caught within the cone must succeed on DC 15 Fortitude saves or be hurled back, taking 1d24+5 damage from the blasting sand.
- 10 The titan snatches up the nearest PC (DC 20 Reflex save to avoid) and holds the poor creature up, as if for consideration. However the PC struggles, escape is nearly impossible (DC 25 Strength check). For two rounds the titan merely crushes the PC in its grip (3d12 damage per round). If the PC has failed to escape by the third round, the titan hammers the PC down its throat, consuming the poor creature and joining its damned soul with the titan's heart of chaos.
- 11 The titan takes up a towering marble pillar like a club and hammers all about. All targets within 100 feet must make DC 10 Reflex saves or take 1d20 damage. The pillar is destroyed by the end of the round.
- 12 Billowing clouds of dust and sands darken the sun, inciting a lightning storm. Brilliant bolts arc from the roiling skies, striking all around. But while the titan is tall, the hel-ooze making up its body is non-conductive, making the PCs the points of least resistance. Each PC must make a Luck roll; the lowest-rolling PC is struck by lightning for 5d6 damage. If any PC rolls a natural 1, the *two* lowest PCs are struck.

Defeating the Chaos Titan: Even in un-death, the might of Cadixtat approaches that of a demigod. Attempting to defeat the chaos titan using the traditional sword-and-spell tactics to whittle away the titan's nigh-endless supply of hit points is a fool's errand and likely to result in a TPK.

APPENDIX A: NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Whispblade: A shard broken from the chaos titan's own mighty axe, Whispblade has the power to unmake reality, reducing material form to strands of shadow stuff, unraveling foes as if they were naught but tufts of yarn.

When discovered, Whispblade has the form of a curved, two-handed scimitar bereft of any pommel or guard and shrouded in wisps of mist. Upon first touching the blade, the bearer must attempt a DC 15 Will save. On a success, the PC has mastered the chaos blade. Once claimed, the blade instantly shifts to mimic the PC's preferred bladed weapon, ranging in size from a dagger to a two-handed greatsword. The blade inflicts damage according to whatever form its wielder determined.

On a failed save, the PC vanishes from existence, his soul claimed by the Whispblade.

In combat, the blade grants a +3 bonus to hit and damage against lawfully aligned creatures and +5 to hit and damage against creatures native to the planes of law.

On a critical hit with the blade, the target and the wielder must both make contested Will saves. The loser is immediately unmade, unraveling with a bloodcurdling howl, and the winner may immediately take up the blade. For every creature destroyed in this manner, there is a cumulative 1% chance that in the next contest of Wills Whispblade adds its own force of Personality (+3) to the opponent's check—the Whispblade quickly grows bored of one wielder and yearns for new souls to corrupt.

Horn of Chaos: Seemingly carved from a single black ruby, this faceted horn is bound in gold and silver and hung from a knotted cord woven from the hair of succubae. Curiously, the woven cord seems to grow directly from the ruby. The horn (and its bearer) give off a strange, predatory aura. Animals shy away, mothers instinctually clutch at the their children, and shadows seem to deepen and lengthen.

Legends abound of the horn's ability to summon legions of demons. The truth is only revealed when the horn is first sounded. Blown by the lips of a male, the horn transforms back into its true form: a preternaturally attractive succubus. The knotted cord reverts to the succubus' braided hair, the gold and silver chase revert to the golden torc and silver chain binding the demon to her master, and the ruby into the demon's own paired horns.

Released, the succubus offers her legions of hell-spawn, but at a price: for every demon summoned to her aid, the succubus demands one soul in return, sacrificed to the Lords of Chaos. (The judge is free to conjure other devious demands that have an unexpected price with the horn's rise in power. The goal is to lure the PC into doing the Chaos



The PCs are better than that. Long ago, when they were but gongfarmers, rat catchers, and sheep herders, the PCs solved impossible challenges with their cunning and deviousness. The battle with the chaos titan is the opportunity (indeed, necessity!) to reach back into that well once more.

With courage and cunning, the tools to defeat the un-dead chaos titan are already in the PCs' hands, but it is up to the players to realize this. In this challenge, slaying an un-dead demigod is the puzzle. The reward is the PCs' lives.

Following are possible solutions. All are fraught with risk and uncertainty. Hopefully the players will come up with even more creative solutions.

- **Whispblade:** Turning the chaos titan's own blade against him is an elegant, if dangerous solution. The wielder must first achieve a critical hit, a fairly easy task for a high-level warrior or thief. Far more challenging, the wielder must best Cadixtat on a contested Will save or be unmade by his own blade. In the worst of all scenarios, if the PC is destroyed by the blade, Whispblade is taken up by Cadixtat, the blade growing in size to become a 200-foot shimmering sword. Armed with a deadly, arcane sword of mammoth proportions, the chaos titan becomes nigh-unstoppable.
- **Of Chaos and Law:** If any of the three relics of Cadixtat (found in area 2-5) are brought into contact with the Blood of Teleus (found in area 2-7), the opposing forces tear a rift in the universe, consuming all nearby matter. See area 2-7 for the details of this dangerous exercise.
- **The Rod of Cadixtat:** In an act of self-sacrifice, a cleric can use the Rod of Cadixtat to turn the un-dead chaos titan. With a DC 35 Turn Unholy check—nearly impossible unless aided by the rod and a judicious use of Luck—a cleric can utterly destroy Cadixtat. This comes at a price, however, as any use of the fell rod turns the wielder's alignment to chaotic.

Un-dead chaos titan: Init -5; Atk see above; AC 25; HD 20d16+100; hp 299; MV 1,500'; Act 2d12 (see above), otherwise 2d30; SP Immune to normal-sized critical hits; SV Fort +20, Ref +0, Will +25; AL C.

Lords' bidding through his own poor judgment.) Should the PC ever be slow to make good on his oath, the succubus begins to gnaw, draining the bearer's Strength, Stamina, and Personality at the rate of 1 point per day until payment is fulfilled. Once the pledge is fulfilled, the PC begins to heal his lost stat points at the rate of 1 per day.

The horn can be sounded up to seven times by the same bearer. The judge should keep track of the number of sounds and not necessarily alert the player to its importance.

Second Sounding: The bearer summons 1d3 type I demons.

Third Sounding: The bearer summons 1d7 type I demons.

Fourth Sounding: The bearer summons 1d12 type I demons and a single type II demon.

Fifth Sounding: The bearer summons 1d16 type I demons, 1d3 type II demons, and a single type III demon.

Sixth Sounding: The bearer summons 1d24 type I demons, 1d7 type II demons, 1d3 type III demons, and a single type IV demon.

Seventh Sounding: The sounder summons the original succubus. The leering temptress removes her torc and

draws the PC into a black hole of elemental chaos, leaving only the horn in her wake.

With the exception of the succubus, summoned demons remain for a number of rounds equal to the sounder's Personality score + level.

Rod of Cadixtat: Some 3 feet in length, this black marble scepter is chased in silver and decorated with dark jewels. The rod radiates wickedness and chaos to all but the most spiritually insensate. Law-aligned clerics coming within 10 feet of the rod feel powerfully repulsed, as if the rod was clawing for their souls.

Despite its malevolent aura, the rod bestows a dark majesty upon its bearer, granting a +5 bonus to all Personality checks. NPCs of 1 HD or less must succeed on a DC 15 Will save or be *enthralled*. These semi-charmed NPCs will seek to please the bearer to the best of their ability but stop short of endangering their own lives or livelihoods.

The Personality bonus also applies to a cleric's spell checks. However, using the rod to improve spell checks changes the PC's alignment to chaotic. The transformation is not immediate, but takes place 1d3 rounds after the encounter ends. Neutral and lawful clerics lose any and all connection with their gods—all divine abilities are lost.

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APPENDIX B:

DESERT ENCOUNTERS



n their trek to Stylos, there is little that the desert can offer to sufficiently challenge the PCs without requiring its own adventure. However, the judge can use the following table to help establish the backstory, and to reinforce the grim nature of the PCs' foes. The reach of the Ur-Lireans is so great that it has upset the entire region. Every event is driven by the resurgence of the atlanteans, though it is left to the PCs to make this realization.

Once per day, the judge should select an encounter from the following table, or roll 1d7, modified by the cumulative Luck of the party. Judges should alter the timing of the encounter to best suit their game – spurring the action along, stepping up the tempo, or stirring an overconfident group to the real challenge faced ahead. If the same result is rolled twice, treat as “no encounter.”

d7 Result

0 Great Dust Storm: A haboob, towering over a mile in height and stretching to each horizon, descends upon the PCs. Within the swirling dust the PCs can see the spectral tracings of towering giants on the march, with the silhouette of blackened cities in their wake. Once sighted, the storm engulfs the PCs in 1d3x10 minutes. The sun is blotted from the sky; the desert descends into darkness and the shriek of the howling winds eclipses all sounds. Unless the PCs act quickly, they lose track of one another, along with all sense of direction.

If the PCs fail to escape the storm or find shelter, they risk suffocation. For each round spent in the storm, each character must attempt a DC 10 Fort save. On a failed check, the PC takes 1d6 temporary Stamina damage. When a PC's Stamina is reduced to 0, the character dies. The Stamina returns at a rate of 1 point per turn once the storm has passed (1d5x10 minutes after it engulfs the PCs).

Characters reduced to 3 or less Stamina, yet evading death, are struck by a power vision of Stylos, a horde of crawling men of stone, driven before a headless titan.

1 Raiders: The party stumbles upon a scouting party of 15 Sons of the Second Age. The giants are hidden in the dunes on either side of the PCs, launching an ambush as the PCs make their way through the burning sands. Whether or not the ambush achieves surprise is left up to the judge's discernment; special precautions, extraordinary luck, or magical allies can all turn the tables on the lurking titans.

If the Sons achieve surprise, they begin battle by hurling javelins at the party. The second round, 14 of the Sons charge down the dunes to engage the PCs, while the remaining 6 hang back to harry archers and spell casters with additional javelin volleys. The Son's morale breaks when they lose half their numbers. The Sons slay their own wounded rather than let them be captured.

If any of the Sons are taken prisoner, they refuse to divulge directions to – or details of – Stylos. *Charmed* or otherwise ensorcelled Sons suffer no such compunctions, readily revealing all they know.

Sons of the Second Age (20): Init +2; Atk sword +10 melee (1d10+6) or javelin +6 missile fire (1d8+6); AC 18; HD 5d12; hp 30; MV 40'; Act 1d24; SP crit on 22-24; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +6; AL L.



d7 **Result (continued)**

2-4 **No encounter**

5 **Refugees:** The party is discovered by a band of 5d100 refugees, fleeing the wrath of the Sons. The refugees follow in the tracks of scouting parties, and aggressive PCs might mistake them for a war band.

Closer inspection quickly reveals the truth. Bleeding and battered, out of water and nearing exhaustion, the band is near the point of collapse, and will only survive another day or two in the desert.

The band is led by Khitam, a once-proud warrior-queen. She expects the PCs to treat her band with respect, and bristles at poor treatment. Still, knowing that the survival of her band depends on the kindness of strangers, Khitam will suffer indignities in the name of her people. However, any injustice will be returned tenfold, once Khitam and her people reach civilization.

The warrior-queen is defended by a troop of eunuchs. Each will eagerly lay down his own life in defense of Khitam. They revere their queen as a living god, and tolerate cruelties towards Khitam only on her direct order.

Khitam knows, roughly, the way to Stylos, and she and her eunuchs can all report on the terrible giants marching from the damned city. If the safety of her refugees is assured, she is willing to join the party (accompanied by three of her retainers) lending her sword-arm to the PCs' cause. Alternately, if the PCs suffer losses early in the adventure, the Judge can introduce Khitam to reinforce their ranks. However, if the PCs treat the warrior-queen poorly, her arrival may cause more harm than good.

Khitam: Init +5; Atk scimitar +3 melee (dmg 1d8+3) or bow +1 missile fire (1d6); AC 19; HD 5d12; hp 45; MV 20'; Act 1d20+d7 and 1d14+d7; SP crit on 18-20; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +2; AL L.

Shield-Eunuchs (10): Init +2; Atk scimitar +4 melee (1d8+1) or bow +1 missile fire (1d6); AC 18; HD 3d8; hp 18; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +2; AL L.

6 **The Weeping Specter:** A spectral figure of a weeping woman, her rags limned with blue fire, appears atop a dune. If approached, the weeping specter beseeches the PCs with pleading eyes, clutching bloody swaddling in her tight fists. Clerics, medicine women, midwives and their ilk can correctly guess that the ghost is of a woman that lost her child. The specter is unable to speak through the sobs, though a successful casting of *Speak with the Dead* (spell check 24 or better) permits the caster to communicate with the spirit of the dead mother. There is only a finger bone present at the site, but the specter can tap out answers if so instructed. The mother's family was abducted by the Sons. She escaped with her babe, but the heat of the desert proved too great. The specter can draw a rough map of level 1, and answer rudimentary questions about the Sons.

If the PCs attack the specter, it pauses long enough to shriek its horror and rage, before vanishing. Every living creature within 300' automatically takes 1d16 sonic damage and is potentially deafened for 1d4 hours (DC 12 Fort save to resist). Non-PCs (including henchmen, retainers and animals) must succeed on a DC 12 Will save or flee into the desert for 1d4 hours.

If the PCs take pains to bury the finger bone, a stream of cool water springs from the hole. The water soothes all hunger and thirst for 1d3 weeks, and doubles all healing (magical and mundane) for 1d3 days.

The water loses its potency when carried away from the source. The sole exception is a cleric of Lawful alignment and kindly disposition. These noble souls may carry the water in sanctified vials (for instance, in containers intended for of holy water). Doing so preserves the water's qualities for up to ten days.

Weeping Specter: Init +2; Atk Banshee scream (see above); AC 10; HD 2d12; hp 13; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP undead traits, immune to non-magical weapons; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6; AL C.

7+ **Skyfire:** A meteor blazes across the sky, flaring as brightly as the sun, before striking the earth, some 1d5 miles from the PCs. Upon inspection, the PCs discover a blast crater 250 yards across and 50 yards deep. The surrounding sand has melted into rough glass and heat still rolls from the depths.

Characters willing to brave the base of the crater discover a single white lotus bloom, moist with dew. Each day the lotus weeps 1d3 drops of clear, oily resin. When a drop of the resin touches to the ground, time is frozen for all creatures save for beings within 25' of the lotus flower. Free characters may take actions per normal, until time restarts in 1d5 rounds. The star lotus wilts and loses all its powers after 1 week.

If an elf or wizard consumes the flower before the lotus wilts, the character must make a DC 15 Will save or succumb to irreversible madness. However, on a successful check the PC gains an understanding of 1d4 spells of the judge's choosing.

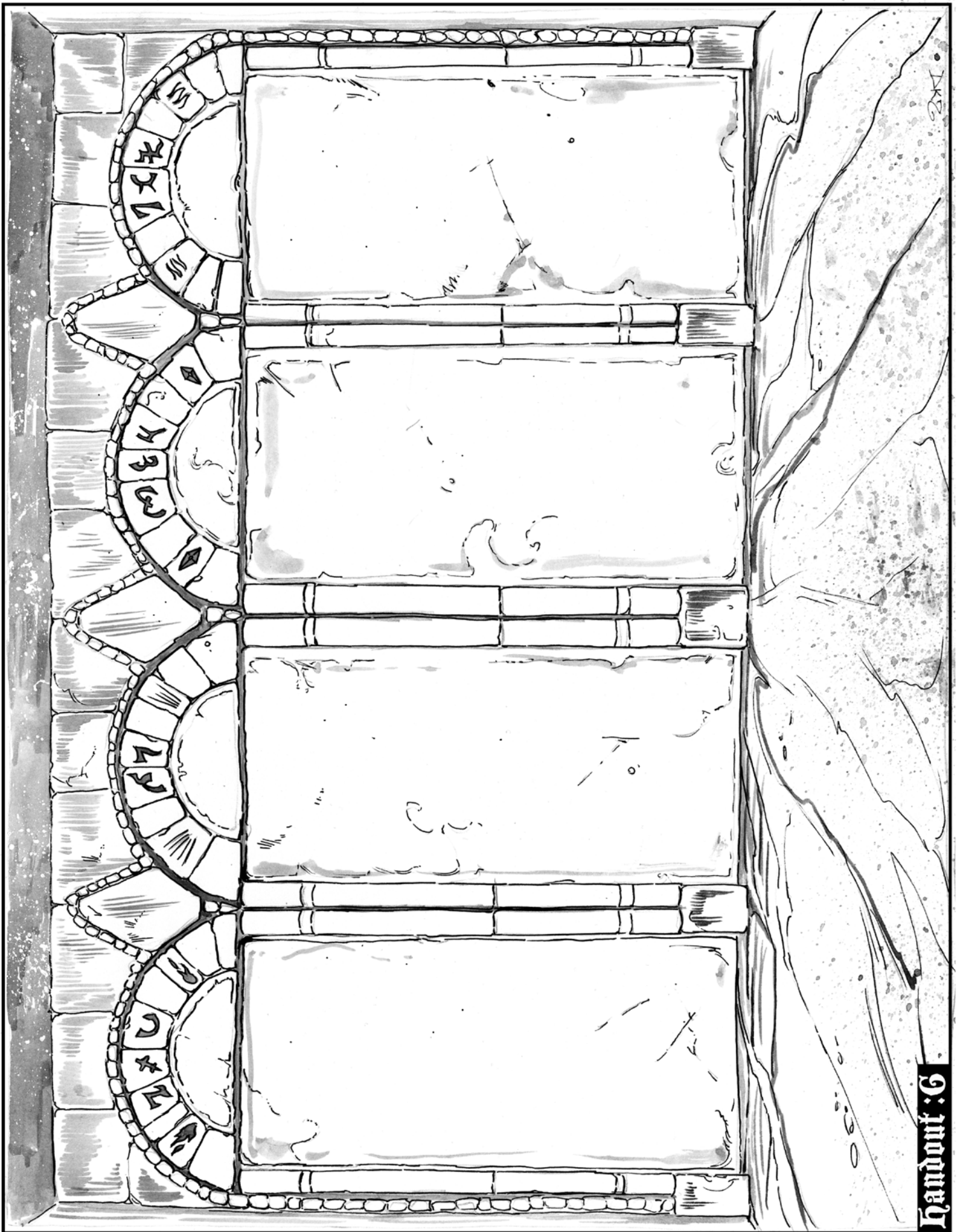
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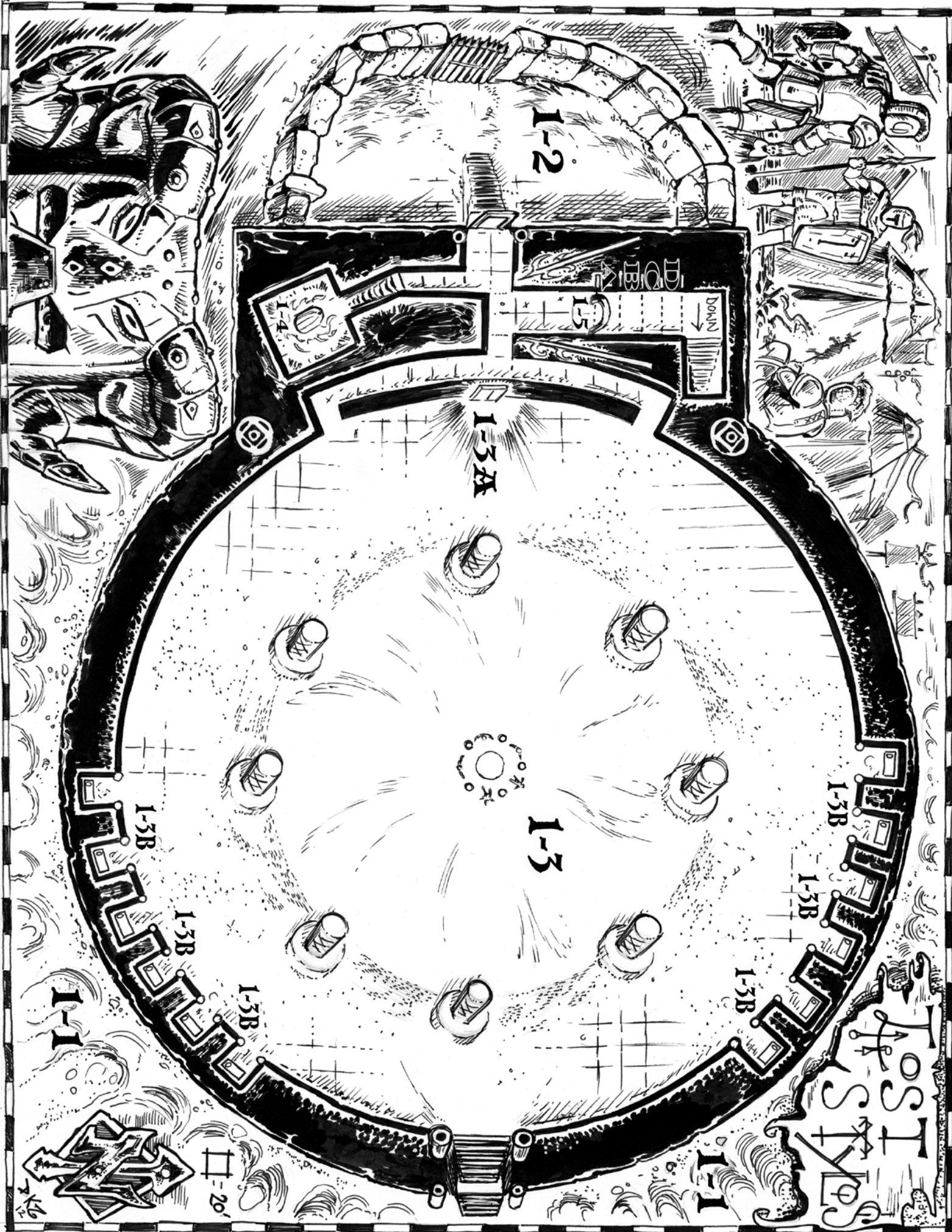
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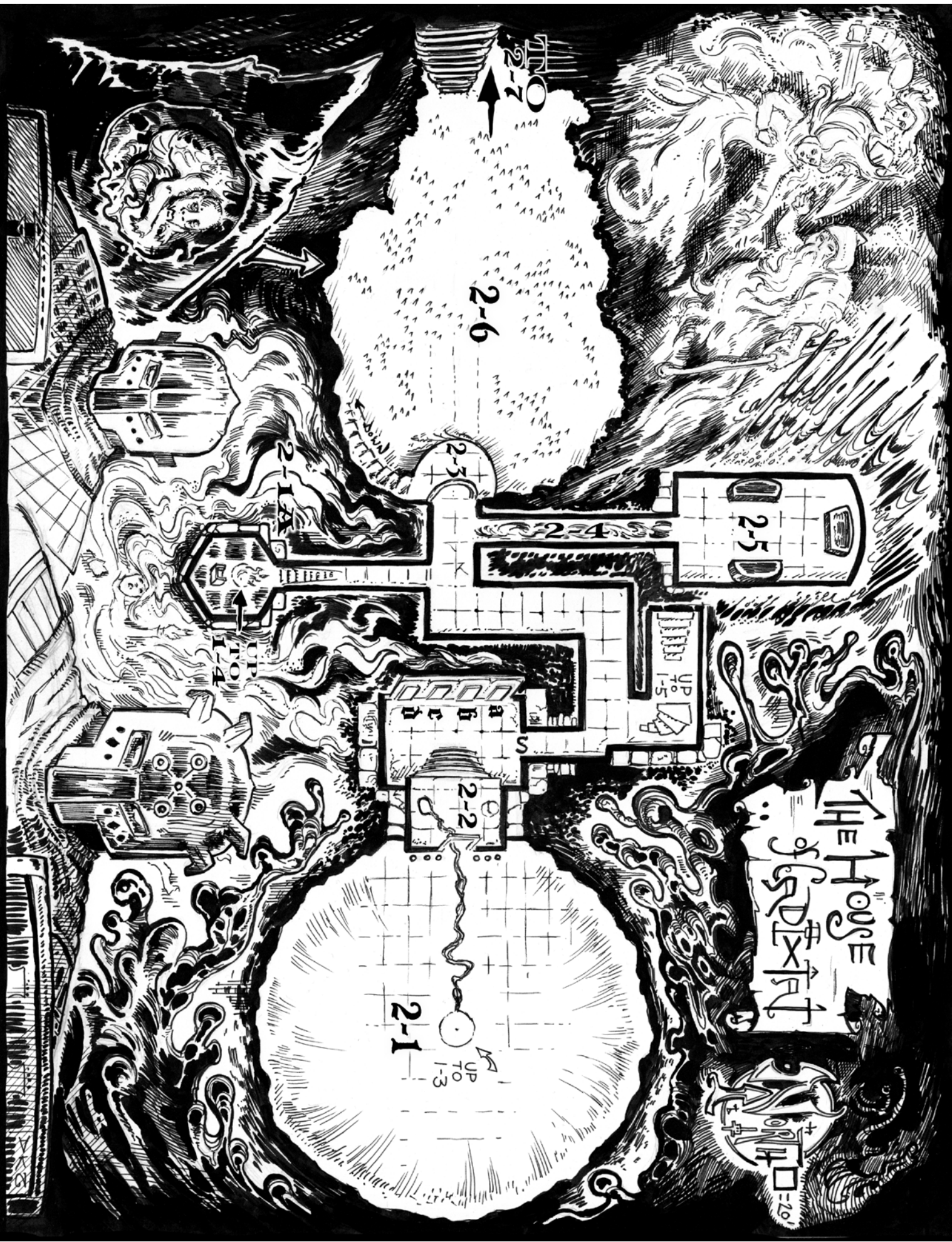
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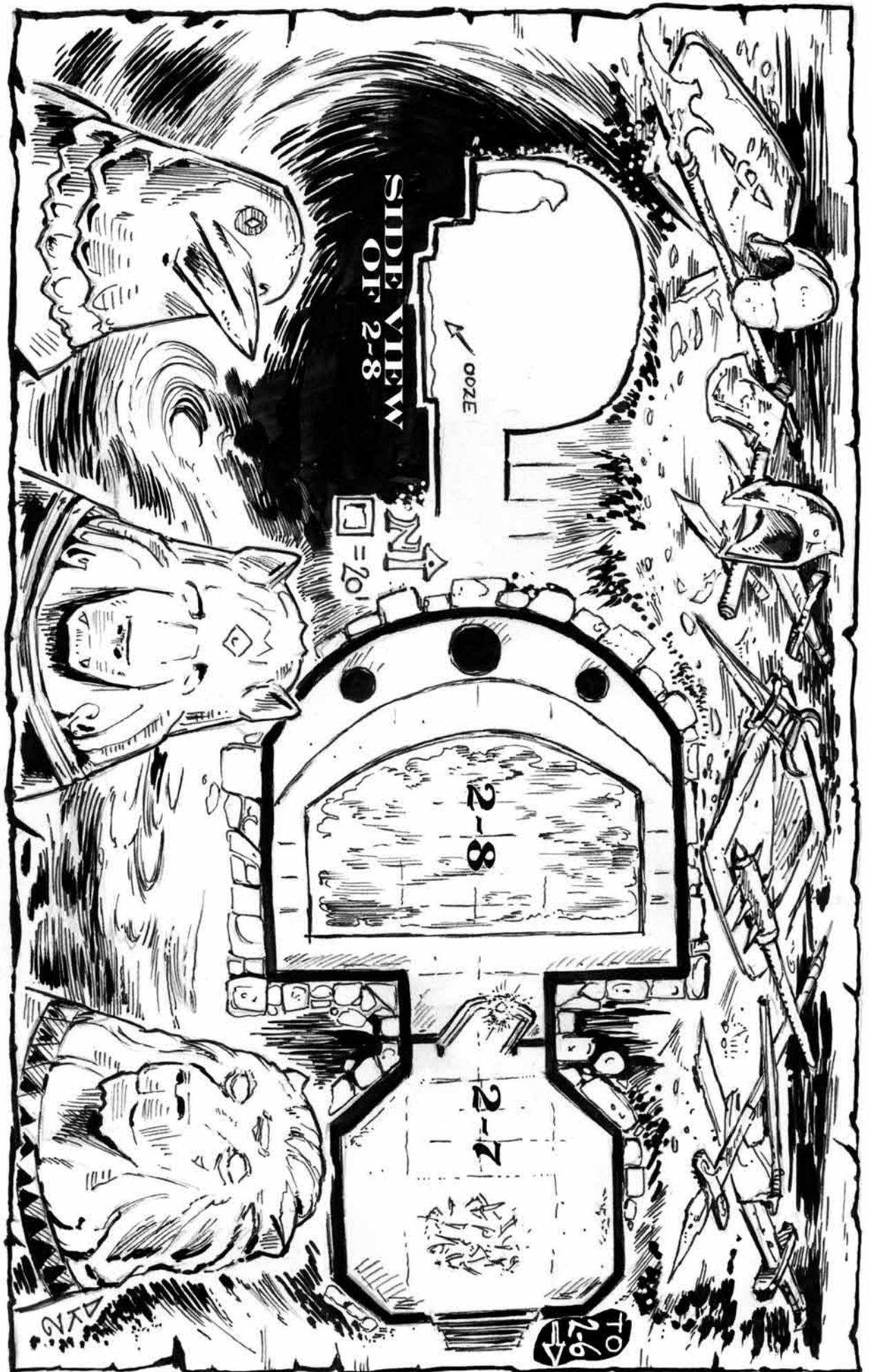
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