

2016 Dodecahedron



Cartographic Review

by Dyson Logos

2016 Dodecahedron Cartographic Review

Writing, Layout, Cartography, Cover Design and all that other stuff
DYSON LOGOS

Welcome back to another collection of maps and descriptions thereof from a full year of blog posts to Dyson's Dodecahedron.

As with the previous Cartographic Review releases, this collection is "curated" in that it does not include every map I drew or published in 2016. In this case, I did not include two megastructure / megadungeon maps.

The first is the Giant's Hall - a set of four maps that compile into one massive structure. The maps of the Giant's Hall were released over 2015 & 2016, and I chose to include them in the 2015 Review.

The second is "My Private Jakalla", a set of under-city maps inspired by M.A.R. Barker's Jakallan Underworld setting. This set of maps is as of yet incomplete, and I will most likely collect them in the 2017 Cartographic Review when it is released.

This Cartographic Review involves significantly more text than the previous editions (with the layout headaches that accompany all that extra wordiness). I've been including more information along with each map I release, often to the point

of practically including a full adventure (minus the appropriate game statistics) to go with each release. This is in part because I feel the need to provide more than just the map somehow because of the massive support I've received in these releases through Patreon, and partly because I've just been feeling extra inspired in the creation process and want to pass some of that along to the people looking at the maps.

Once again, the real heroes in this production are the patrons who support my work through Patreon. Launched in late 2013, the Patreon campaign allows (encourages? begs?) fans and supporters of the Dodecahedron to throw a bit of money my way with each map released. The generosity of these patrons has allowed me the creative space to create at a level I've not had the option to work at before - and I think the quality of my maps and writing show exactly how much of a difference that has made for me.

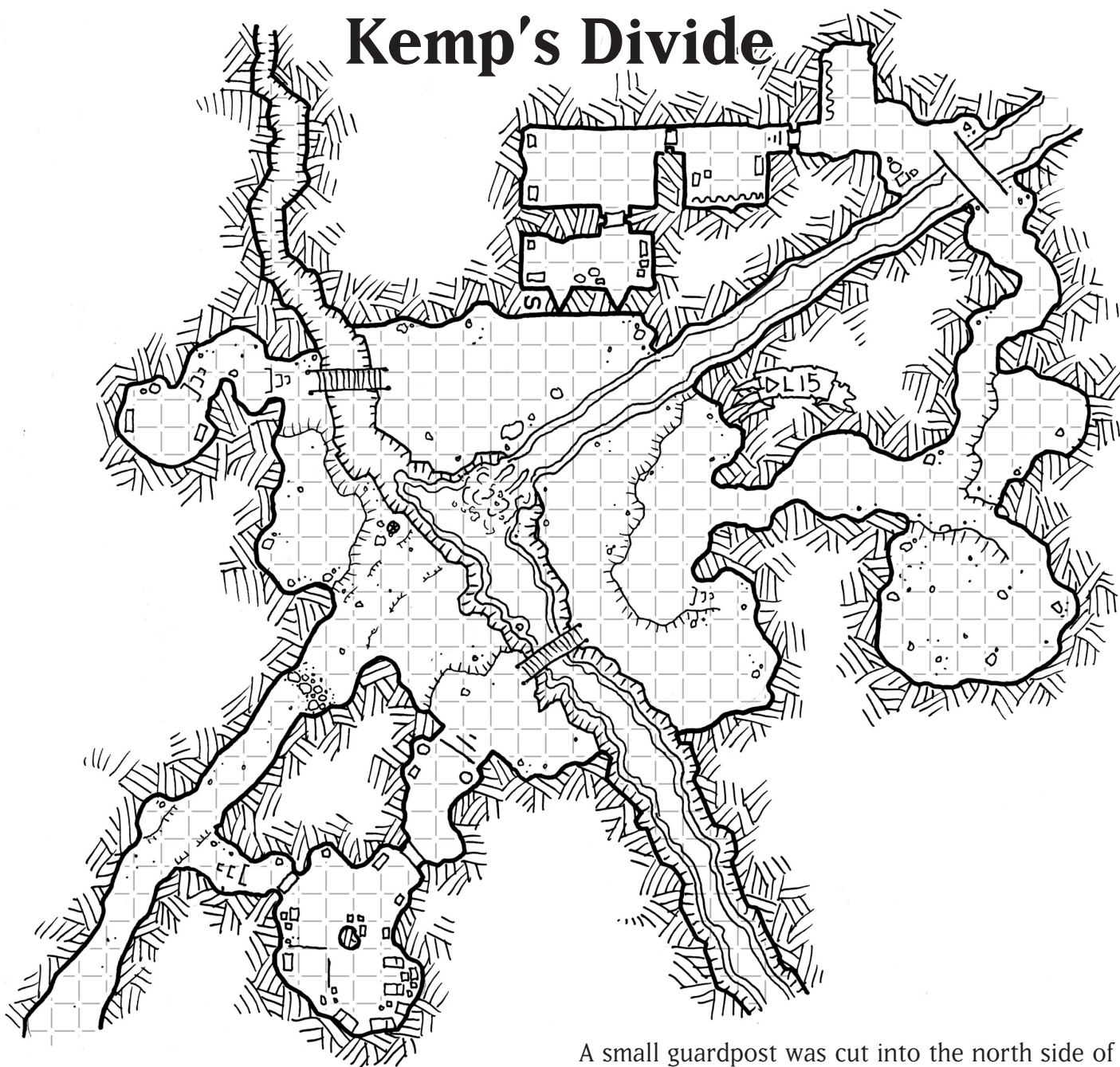
Once again, thank you for supporting me into this new year.

- Dyson Logos

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Kemp's Divide



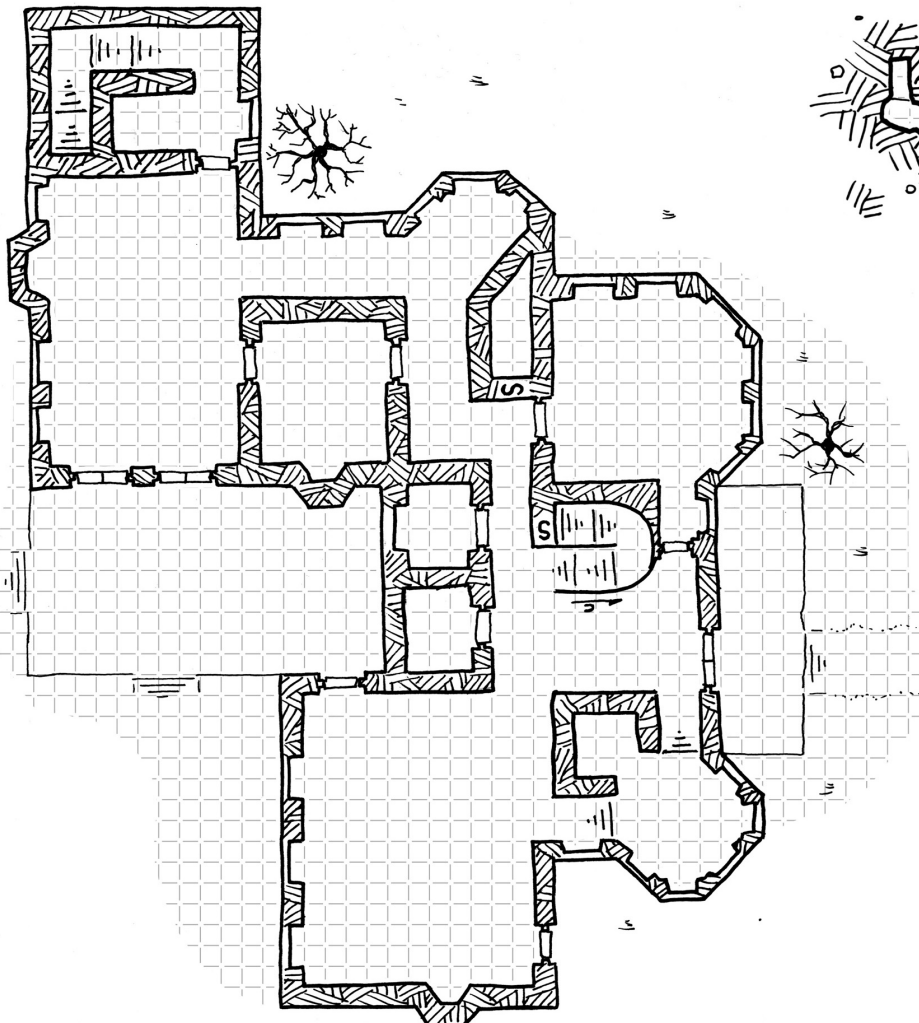
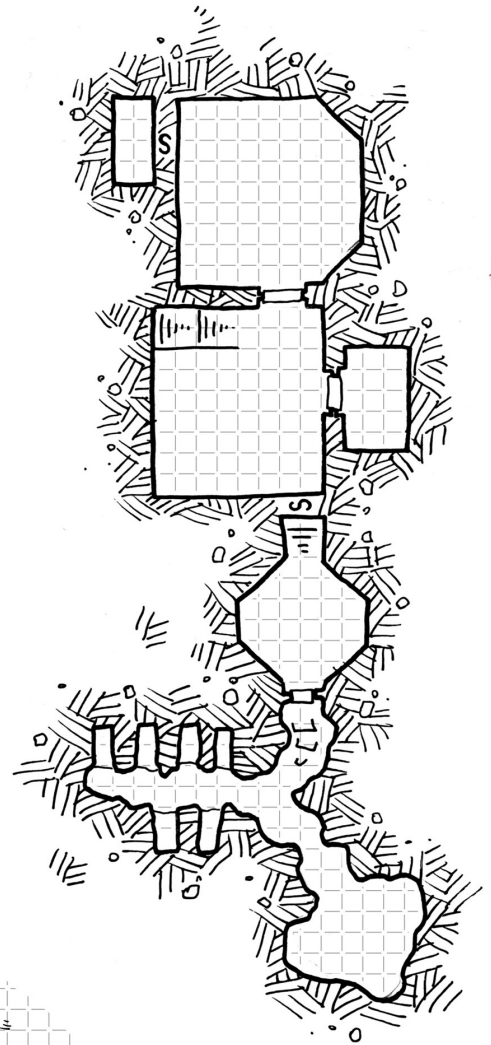
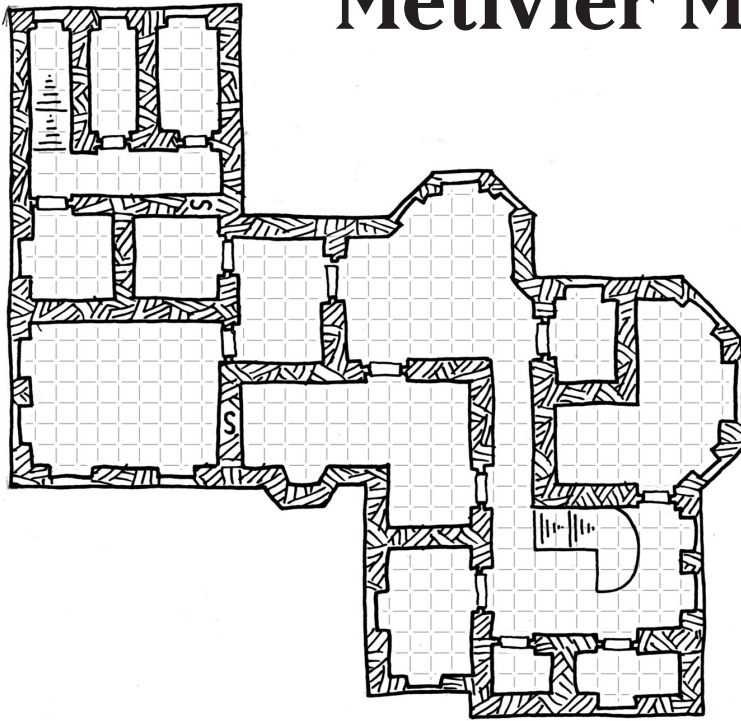
Ages past the settlement had been built along the banks of the small cold river that flowed from the dark holes in the mountain. But several decades ago the lands shook, stones fell from the mountain sides, and the river ceased to flow.

Following the old river bed up into the heart of the mountain one comes to a cave where it is easy to see what happened. This is Kemp's Divide, where a new cleft was torn into the mountain that rerouted the river into the depths below. Before the rending of the mountain, this was a tranquil underground lake fed by the river on one side and overflowing out along the southwest corner. The divide opened up the space and now bridges have been built over the divide to cross it.

A small guardpost was cut into the north side of the cavern when it was still a lake, used to monitor traffic along the slow flowing river. Today it has been matched by a second outpost in the caves to the southwest where a merchant family from the nearby settlement maintains their own guards and business interests, dealing with a select clan of troglodytes who transfer wares from other underworld craftsmen in exchange for foodstuffs and fine woods from the surface realms.

Kemp's Divide makes for a good interface between the surface and underdark communities – a point of contact and trade between small communities and clans who in turn work with larger factions and can lead to the exploration of whichever realm the players are not currently familiar with.

Metivier Manor



A moderate-sized manor house, the secret basement and even more secret crypts below are accessed via the secret door under the main staircase on the ground floor.

The City of Blue



The City of Blue

Ten pillars of pale blue crystal jut straight up from the island that has become the City of Blue in the unimaginatively named Azure Sea (which is actually a massive freshwater lake). The pillars are almost perfectly square, set perfectly vertically to the horizon, and are roughly 400 feet wide (although scholars of the city will be quick to point out that they are precisely 396 feet, 2 inches, accounting for some sections having worn corners and edges). These pillars are of a robins-egg blue stone not found anywhere else in the world and they tower over the lower parts of the island by about 200 feet.

The pillars are the kind of thing that get peoples' attention. Many have traveled to the island to investigate these strange (and ever so slightly magical) stone formations. They appear to run straight down to immeasurable depth, and no amount of mining at the base of any of the pillars has determined a bottom.

Several magical schools and groups of sages have set up operations on the island over the decades, and the City of Blue has become a fairly self-reliant trade hub of its own right in recent years.

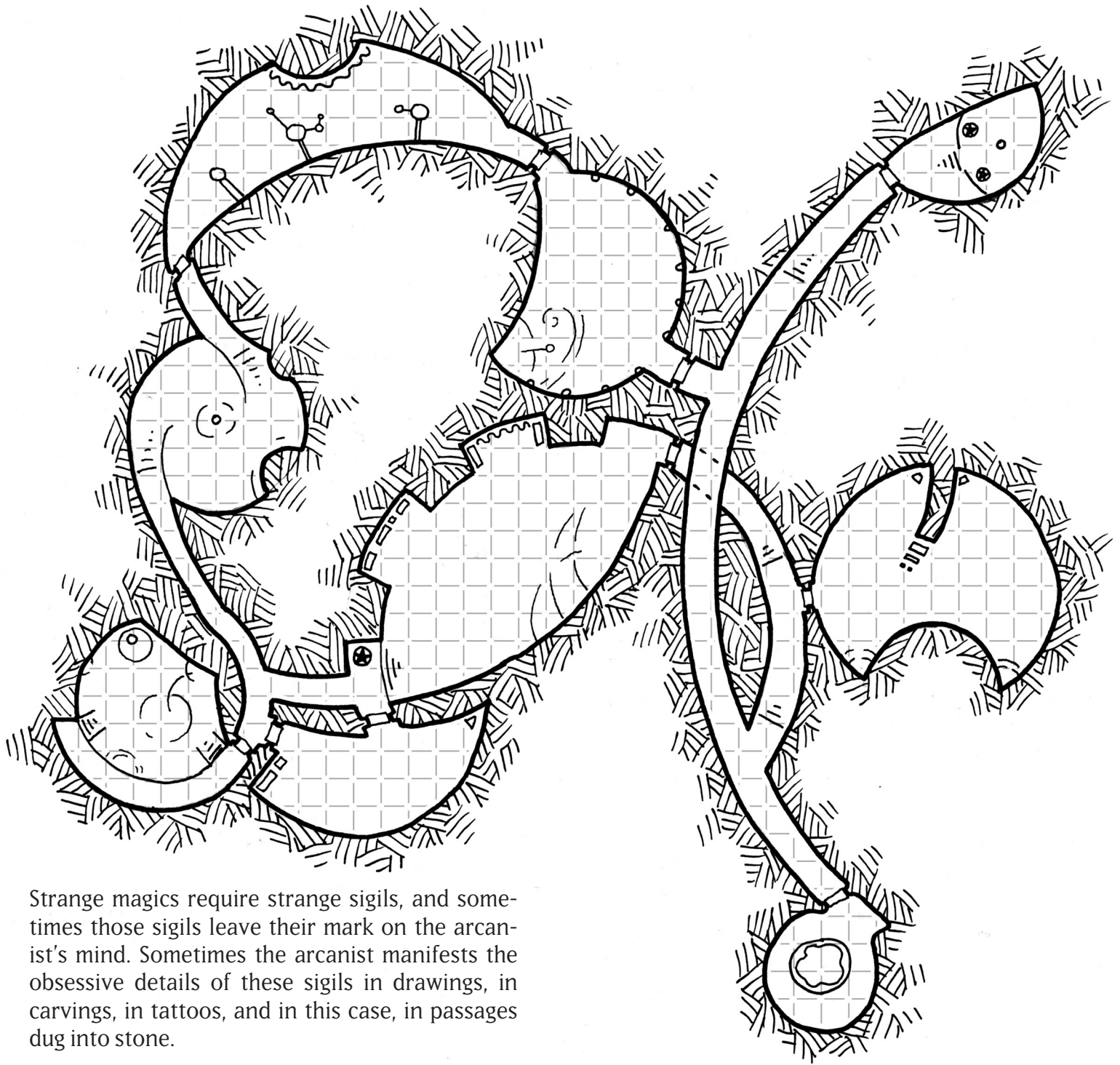
Much of the city infrastructure (and the highest building density) is on the one pillar that is off the island proper. 300 years ago, when the waters in this area were contested between empires, an army of freebooters and mercenaries descended here and took over the island and burned most of the structures, leaving only the small port attached to the lone pillar standing. With the end of the border dispute between the empires, the freebooters were finally removed from the island nine years later and the city has slowly been rebuilt.

One pillar in the middle of town has almost no structures on it to this day (as well as "the Orphan", the pillar furthest to the west which has never had stairs attached to it). This pillar is known as "the Ghost" and during the reign of the mercenaries, those who resisted their orders were left to hang from the edge of the pillar in chains. There are many stories of the images of these dead gentlemen still haunting the blue crystal of this pillar, and few are willing to build here.

While living upon the pillars themselves requires a significant effort in transporting (or magically producing) water, many have claimed that those who do live and study directly on the blue stones age more slowly and enjoy better health than those living in the mud below. As such, the six "bridged pillars" all have a number of structures on them (even the haunted Ghost Pillar) — including a walled off stepped pyramid that houses a religious and secretive research team. In addition there is a full fortress constructed on the seventh central pillar (known as... The Seventh — the residents of the City of Blue tend to be sages and researchers and are notoriously lacking in the capacity for imaginative names) which acts as the centre of government now that the port pillar is so overcrowded with shops and businesses.

At the northeast end of the island is a small fishing village surrounding the Fishers' Pillar with their own docks and piers. Most travelers however arrive via the Port Pillar in the small bay, and then those seeking more information about the pillars themselves (or more affordable accommodations) will grab a small taxi boat from the Port Pillar to the southeast island port.

Froehlich's Circles of Madness



Strange magics require strange sigils, and sometimes those sigils leave their mark on the arcanist's mind. Sometimes the arcanist manifests the obsessive details of these sigils in drawings, in carvings, in tattoos, and in this case, in passages dug into stone.

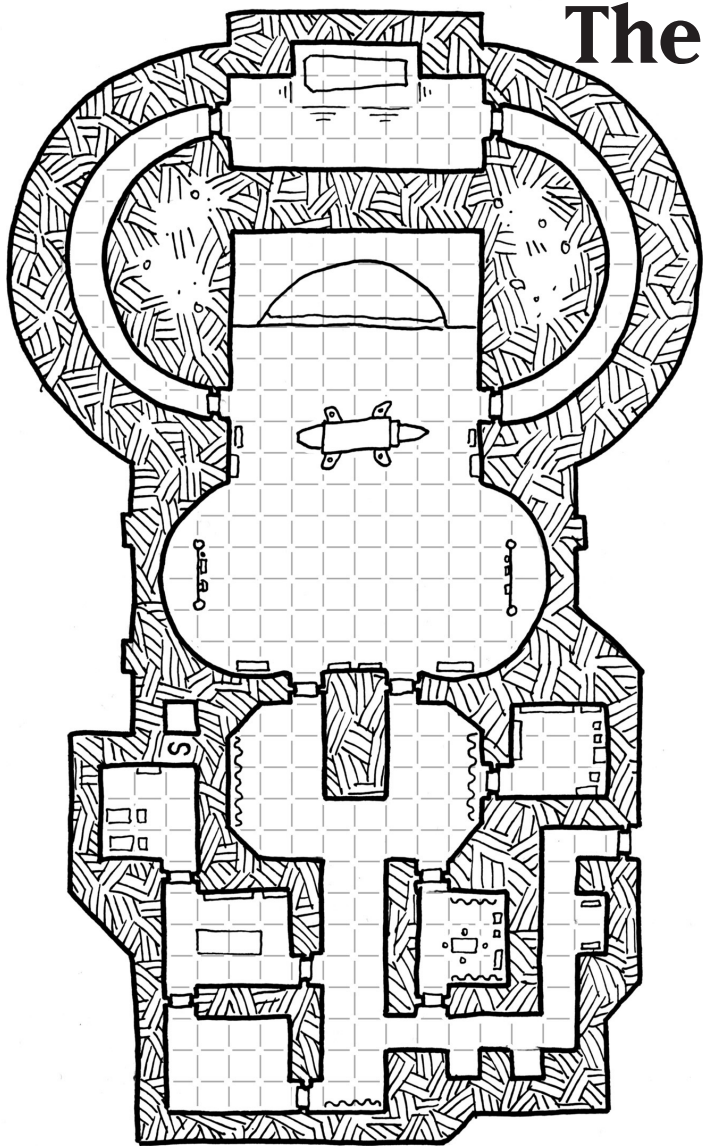
These passages are not level, they are the creations of a mind twisted by magic. They are angled, they climb over themselves, they loop and twist and enter in rooms that are hard to describe to the layman – or to any person who hasn't spent time tortured and torn asunder in the Violet Hells.

Within these chambers and passages, boundaries are thinner and access to the denizens of the Vio-

let Hells is easier – as is their ability to affect this world. The only thing that actually makes sense about this whole construction is that there is no non-magical access to it – no stairs or doors enter these convoluted dungeons. The only way in and out is via teleportation with most arrivals from the world where it is ensconced arriving via the pool of thick teal mucus-like liquid in the southeastern chamber.

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The Smith's Reliquary



The Smith's Reliquary was crafted from heavy blocks of stone banded together with huge bands of steel that wrap around the structure like the hoops on a barrel. These bindings have rusted through the two hundred years this reliquary has stood, discolouring the stone of the building as well as the walkway and the cobbled street that passes along it.

The central chamber within is the reliquary itself, with a massive anvil in the centre of the space, flanked by tools and half-complete weapons and iron hardware of immense size. The back of the chamber is a huge furnace, long cold but for a few coals that are kept burning by the priests, replaced every few hours as they burn out.

Behind the central chamber is the resting place of the Smith. Either a mighty titan of the craft, or

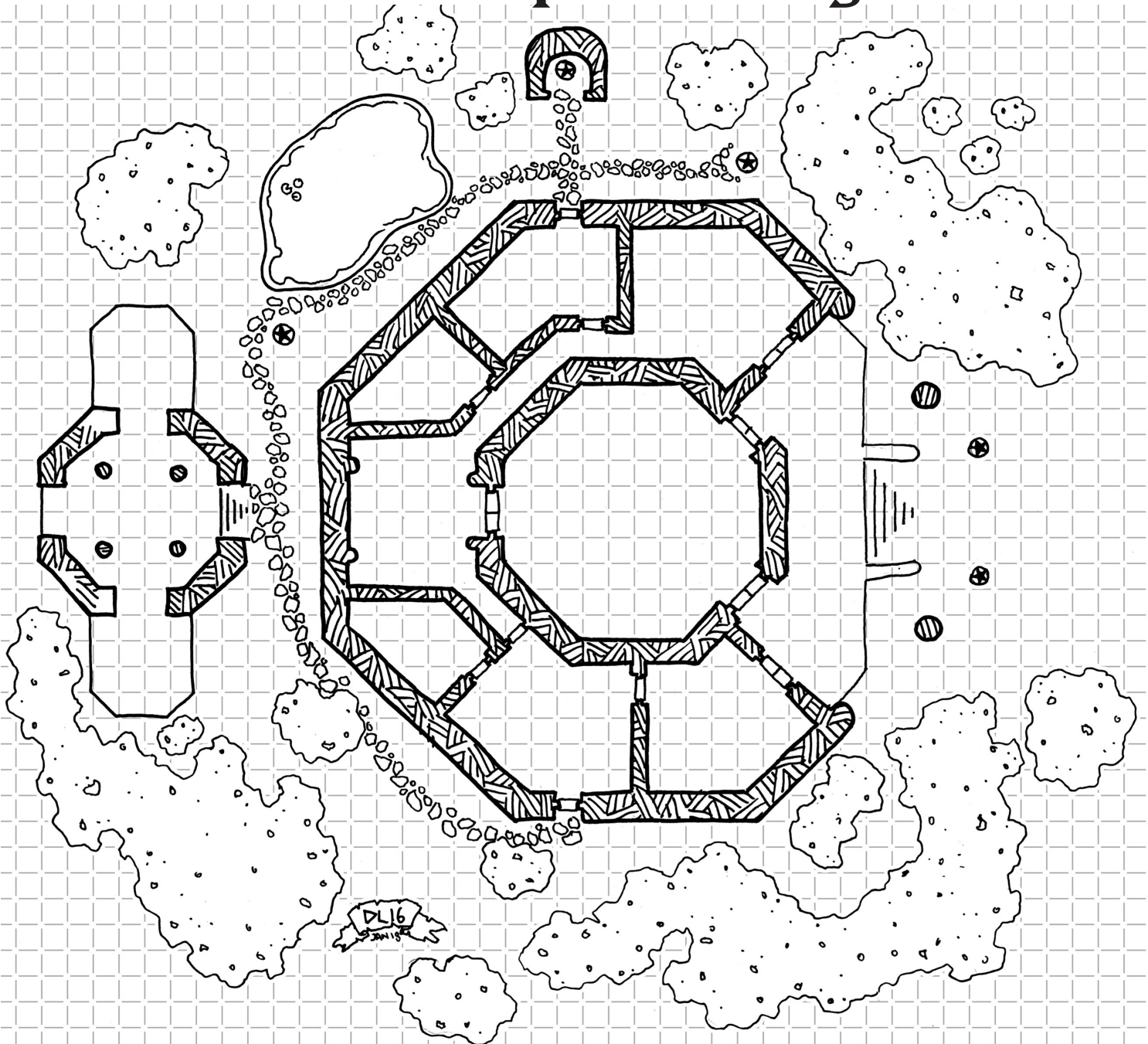


possibly an actual godling struck down somehow. But the sarcophagus is a lie, and within it is but the corpse of a stone giant embalmed and secured against grave robbers.

The true tomb of the Smith is hidden deep beneath this structure. In the priests' chambers on the left side of the map is a small secret door behind which is a secure area containing a key as well as a variety of minor artifacts of the church (the first nail crafted by the Smith, a hammer head that has been shattered from heavy use, leather tongs that held his works, and so on). The key in turn unlocks the secret door hidden beneath the anvil in the main reliquary. But first one has to pull the four massive iron bolts that hold it in place and then slide this hundred-ton piece of steel aside.

Beneath the trap door is a set of stairs leading down to a natural cave with heavy and poisonous sulfuric fumes bubbling up through mud pits. The whole cave is wet and hot and oppressive. At the far side across a small bridge over the mud pits is the actual tomb of the Smith with a shaft of blackest obsidian through his chest – still breathing, but never waking.

The Temple of Chag



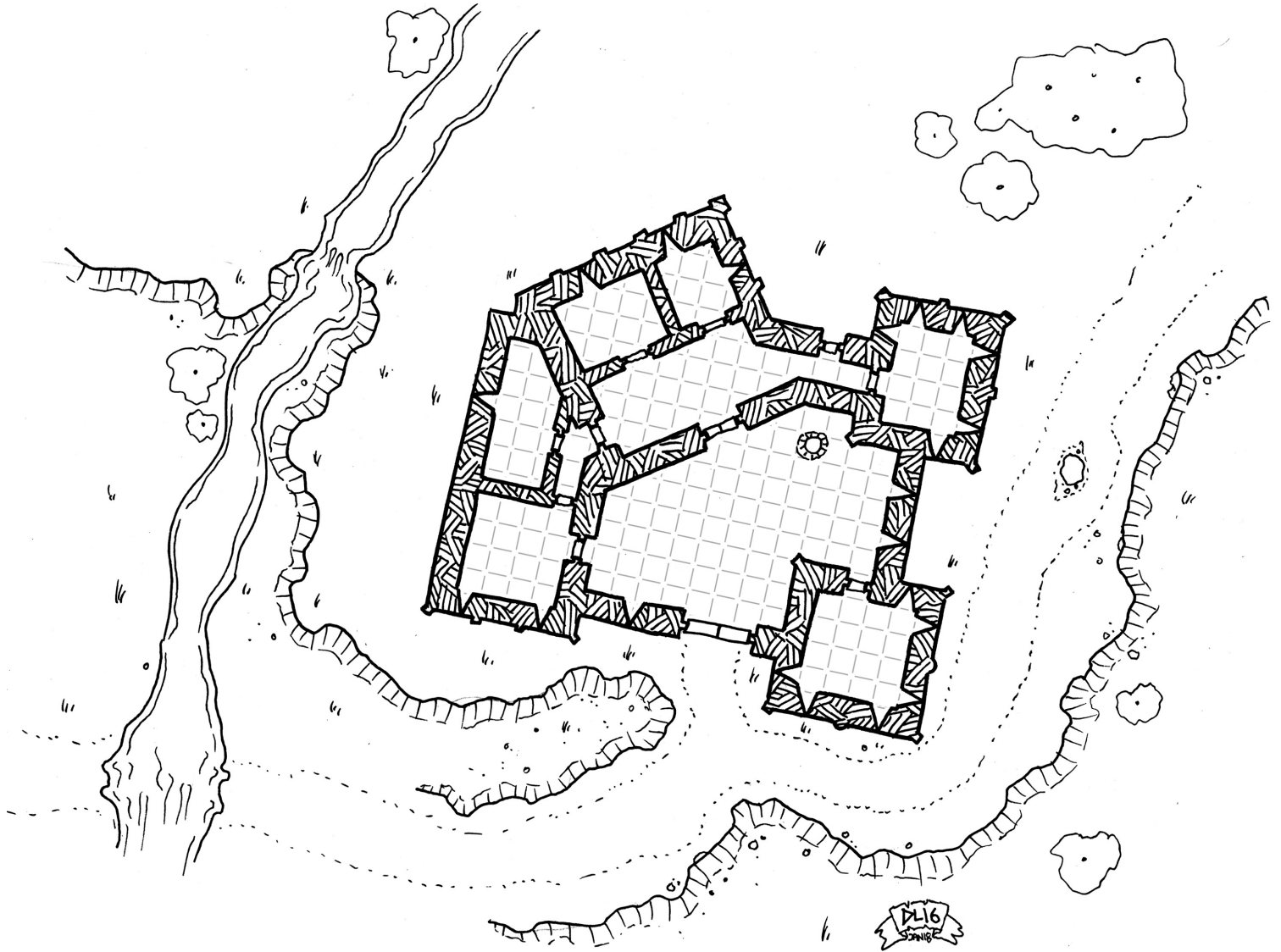
Not all spider gods are the loathsome, jealous and backstabbing Lolth. This is a temple to Chag, a spider god with eight different aspects that are worshiped both separately and as a united whole.

Before the war against the chagmat, the worship of Chag was more visible and the spider-people worked to fit in with society. This structure is an eight-legged temple of Chag set in a lovely garden environment that serves as a quiet retreat from the bustle of the city, with a light lunch being offered to noble adventurers as they sit on the raised balcony attached to the gazebo out back and look

over the reflecting pool towards the small shrine half hidden among the trees.

Most visitors to the temple would only see the entrance stairs and the central domed room where public ceremonies are held. The truly faithful are invited back on rare occasion for more ornate (and longer) ceremonies (that may or may not involve sacrificing young human women) in the chamber immediately beyond the courtyard. Other rooms within the temple are given over to administration, living chambers, and storage of scrolls, codices and artifacts.

The Roadside Fortress



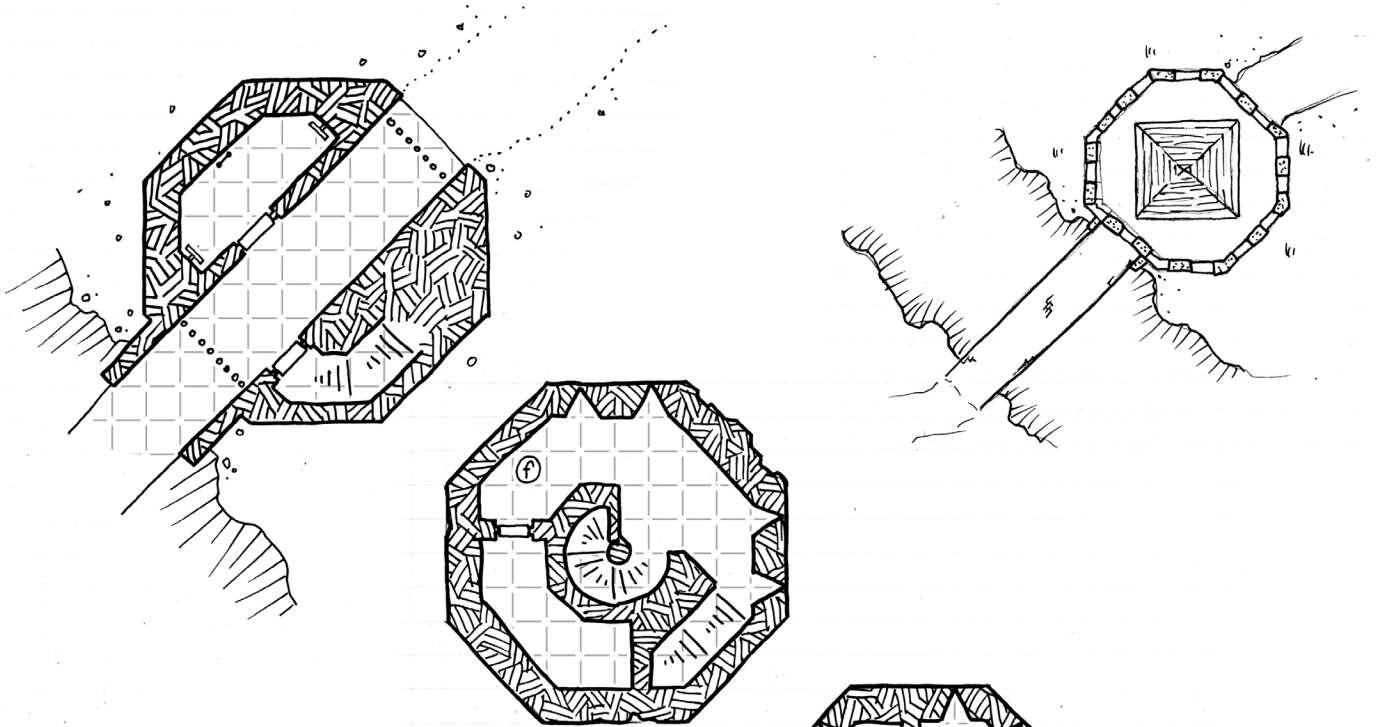
Most borders remain generally undefended, with the occasional watch tower near primary points of interest. But there are always places where it just makes sense to set up a small fortification along major trade routes and roads leading in and out of your domain.

South of The Citadel at Sabre Lake is just such a place. A small escarpment along the main road used by merchants, farmers and the occasional military force provides a decent view of the area while also being able to interdict travel along the road, forcing those who wish to avoid the fortress into long detours through unfavourable terrain.

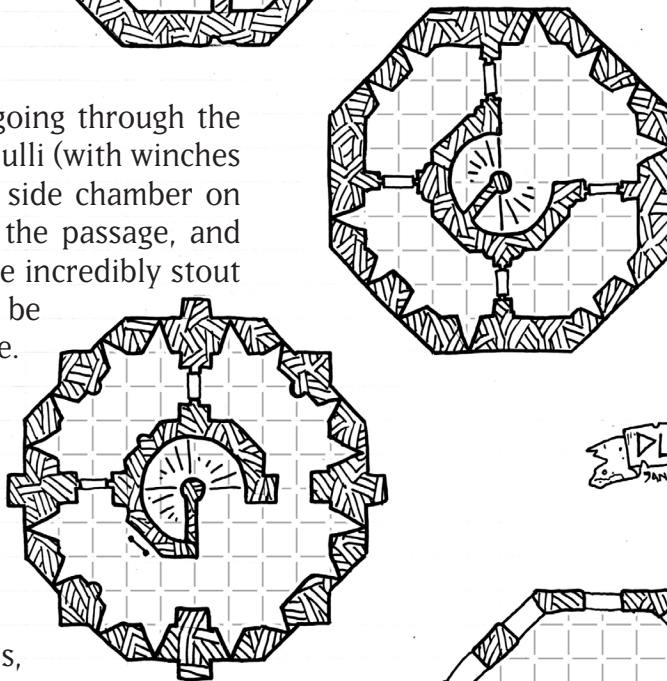
The main gate of the fortification leads into a small courtyard with a well where a few horses are normally kept for patrols and messengers. The two towers on the right side extend a level (15 feet) above the walls of the fortress, as does the tower built into the lower left side of the main structure.

A well defended postern gate leads into the north wall of the fortification and from there into both the main structure and the smallest tower.

The Bridge Tower

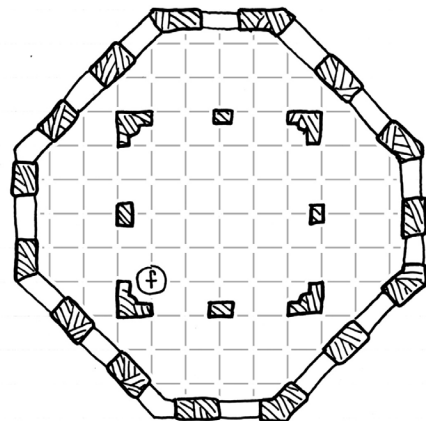


Access to the bridge requires going through the ground floor of the tower. Portculli (with winches controlled from the northwest side chamber on the ground floor) can seal off the passage, and both doors from the passage are incredibly stout reinforced oak with that can be triple-barred from the tower side. Stairs lead up on the southeast side, while the winch room has a ladder leading up to the second level.

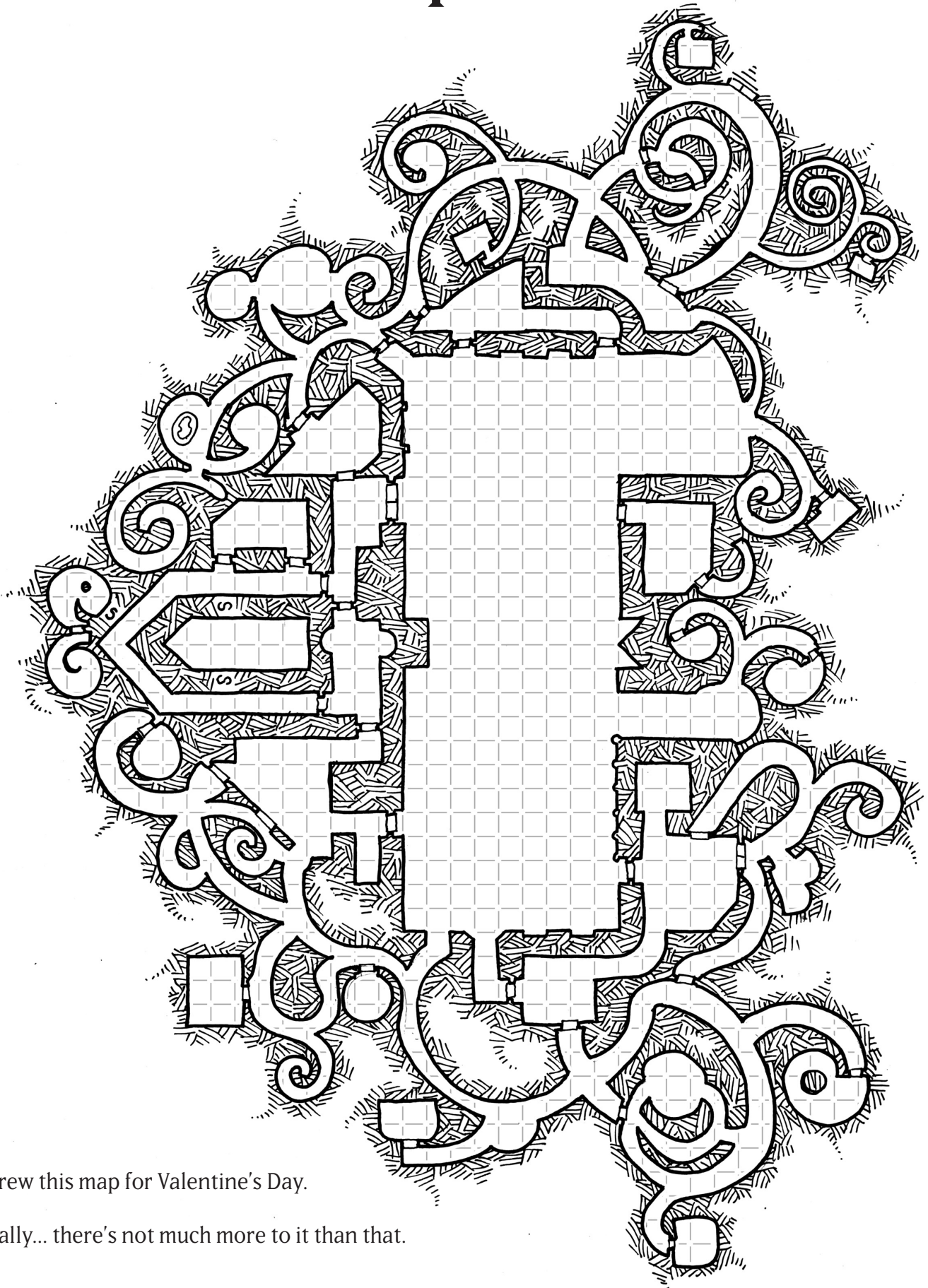


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The second level features a storage room, braziers, barrels of oils, and many many murder holes as well as access to the central stairwell that leads up to the third and fourth levels which contain make-shift offices, living quarters and finally the rooftop open-air structure within the battlements.



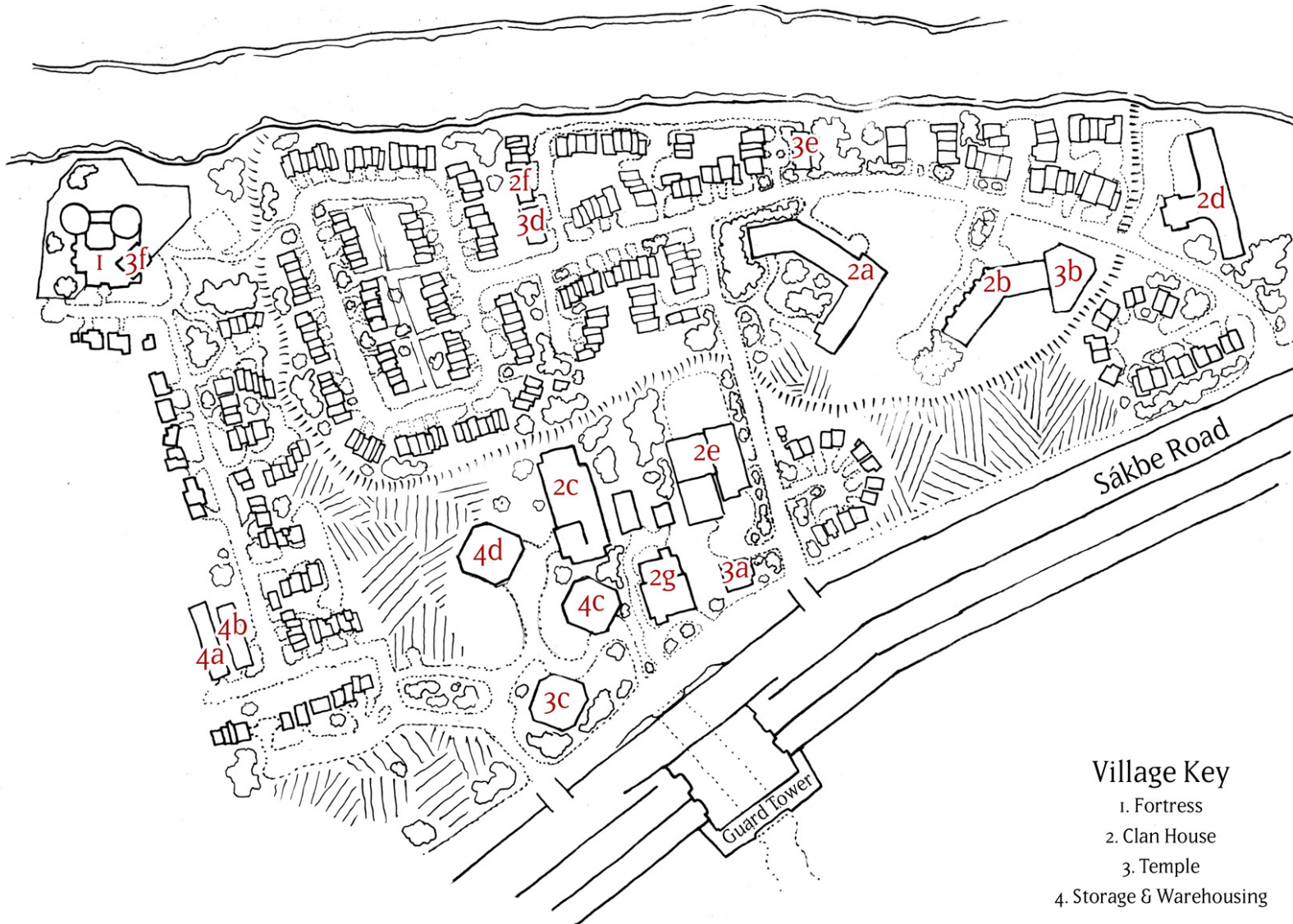
The Temple of Love



I drew this map for Valentine's Day.

Really... there's not much more to it than that.

Gladecrest Village



Village Key

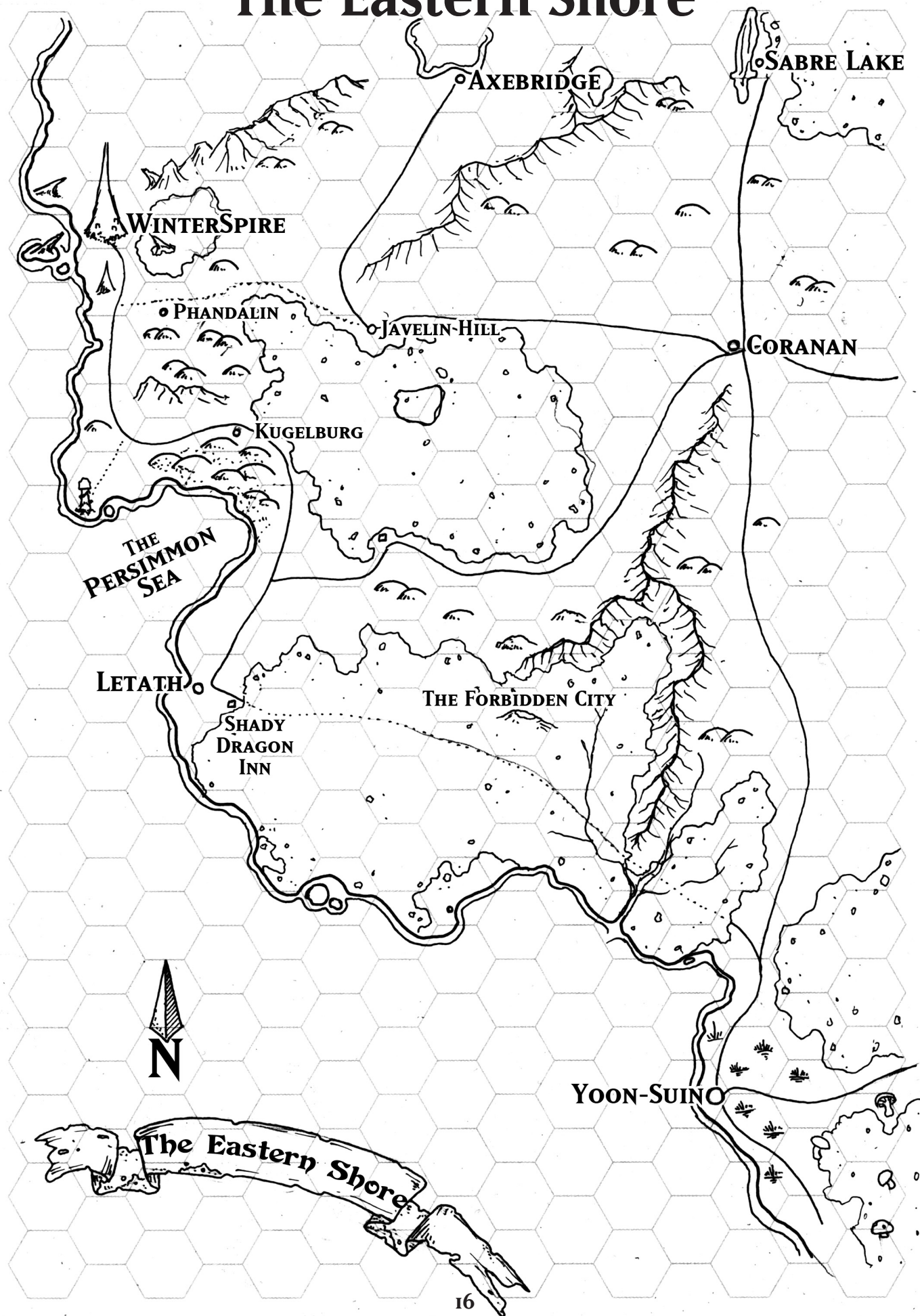
- 1. Fortress
- 2. Clan House
- 3. Temple
- 4. Storage & Warehousing

I've been playing in an awesome Empire of the Petal Throne campaign through 2015 and 2016. So when I started working on a Christmas present for a close friend I looked at his neighbourhood and realized that while the structures looked a bit off for a traditional medieval village, they fit in very well for what I had come to imagine a Tsolyánu village would look like.

In Tsolyánu, family clans are an essential part of the social structure, and most clans maintain a clan house where members live and family business is taken care of. This makes for a setting with much larger buildings than the average western medieval fantasy (at least from my perspective).

Gladecrest Village is one such village situated along the side of a Sákbe road (which serve as a combination of the classic Roman roadways and something similar to the Great Wall – three-tiered roadways with guard towers along the length that span Tsolyánu and much of the lands around.) On the west side of the village is a small fortress along the river bank, while the southeastern stretch of the village is made up of five clanhouses and three storage silos for grains and other foodstuffs. Interspersed between are the typical homes that make up a village, although family and clan connections make it so they are clustered in groups of four to six in general.

The Eastern Shore



Even though I run almost all my D&D games in the same game world, I specifically don't have a world map for the setting, and the regional maps shift and change from campaign to campaign, even if they are using some of the same places.

The map of the Eastern Shore (which is to the East of the Dragon Sea, thus the name despite being the west coast of the continent it is on) was drawn around the half-way mark of our first fifth edition D&D campaign.

For all my love of maps, I'm a firm believer in starting a campaign without a large regional map – instead of definite locations I feel the game is best mapped out by descriptions and ideas, not locked down into locations. In this manner, the game is more open to be expanded during play by incorporating new elements instead of having to adapt new elements to fit the structure that is already there.

Thus, it took a year of playing the campaign before I found myself in the position of needing a map of the region where it was taking place.

The campaign began with the Lost Mine of Phandelver and then moved on to the awesome dream-like OSR adventure “Slumbering Ursine Dunes” which is set on the map by the Persimmon Sea and the settlement of Kugelburg.

The party's next stop was the Forbidden City from the classic 1981 adventure module “Dwellers of the Forbidden City” which required “steaming jungles” to be hidden in which were placed further south from the Dunes.

Finally in the sessions when this was drawn, the party had left the Forbidden City and travelled to the Shady Dragon Inn, the city of Letath, back up to Winterspire, around Coranan and are finally about to visit the Yellow City of the Slug People, Yoon-Suin itself.

It was for this last session of travel that this map finally had to be assembled from the various locations where we had adventured over the last year – something to tie them together a little more concretely than “past the dunes, beyond the steaming jungles, around the Barrier Peaks, and then along the God River to the Yellow City”.

The Ziggurat in the Sands

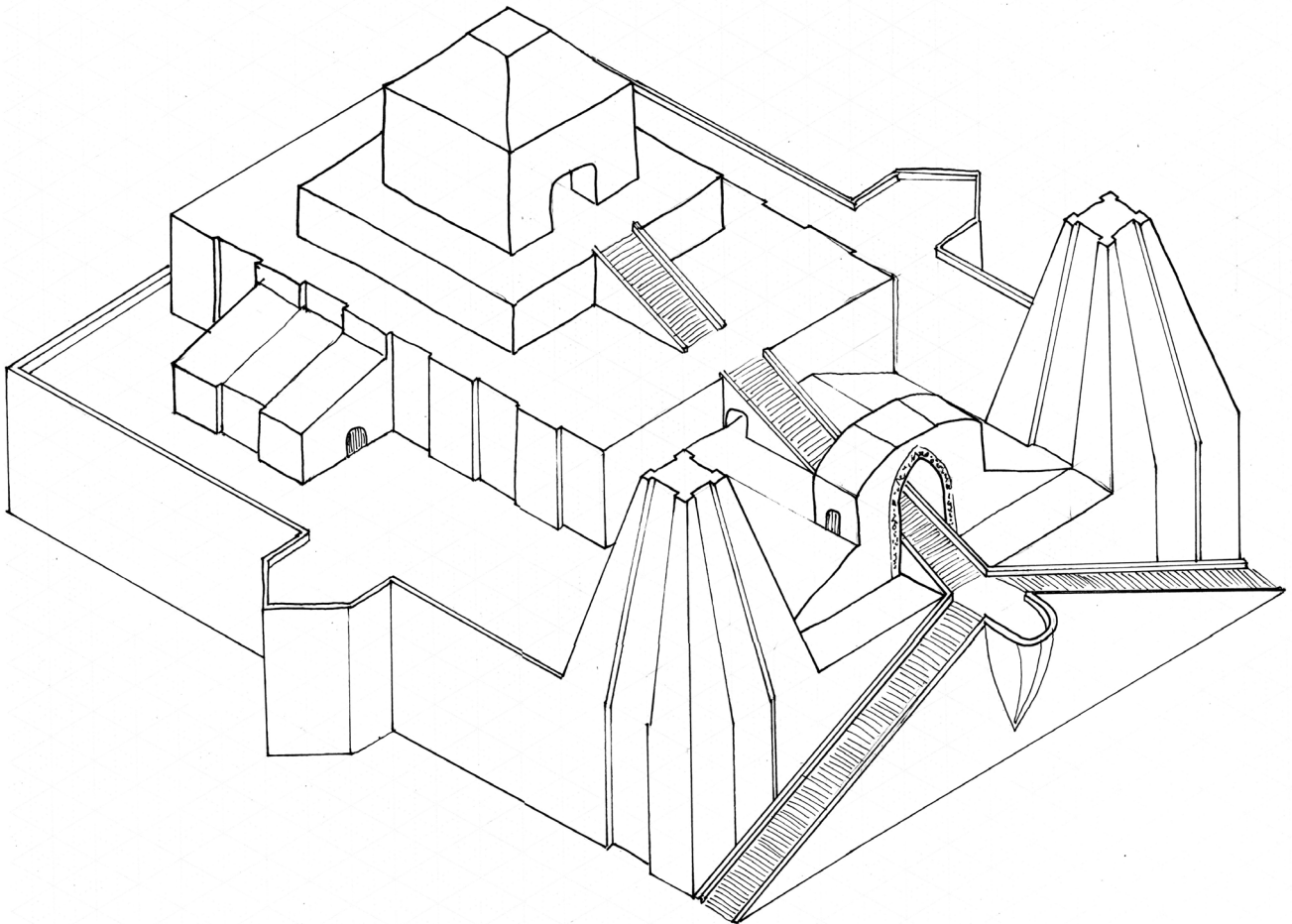
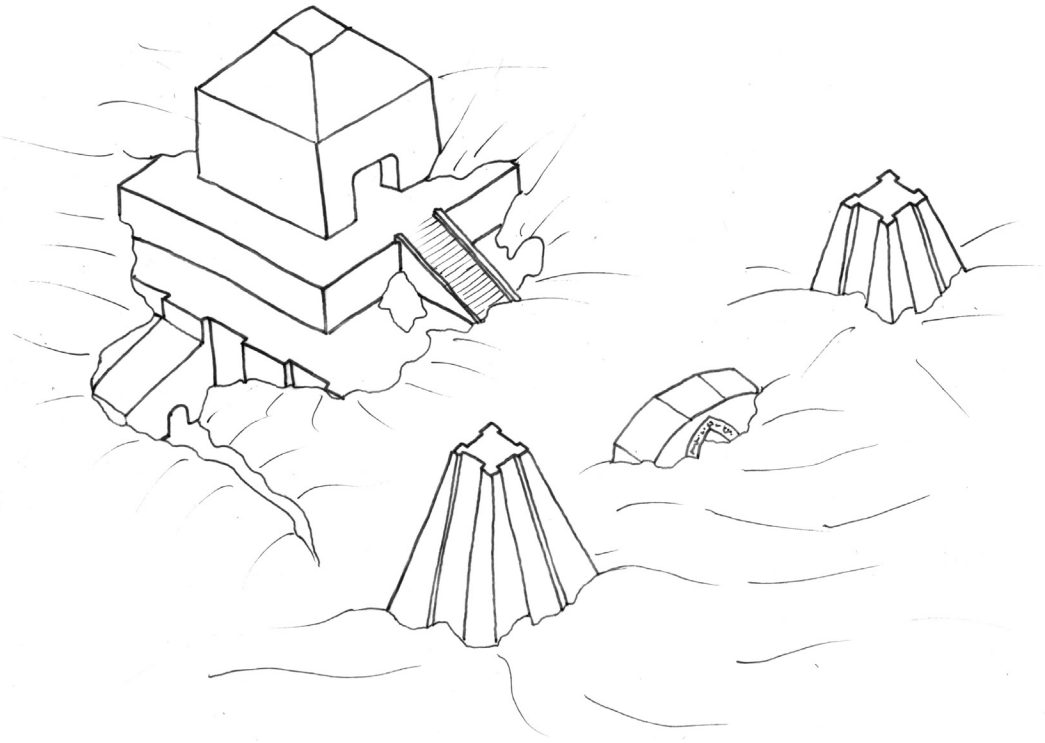
Much of the ziggurat is buried under the desert sands. This is shown on the lower levels with the sand encroachment into the entrance on the far right, as well as the two stairwells built into the archway. These areas are not just sandy, but the rooms indicated are completely full of sand, requiring hours if not days of hard digging to clear.

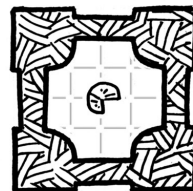
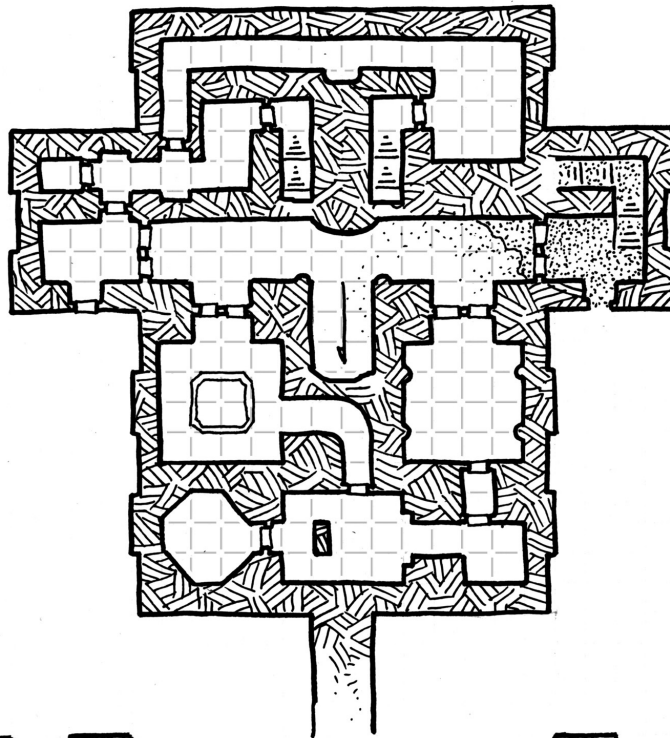
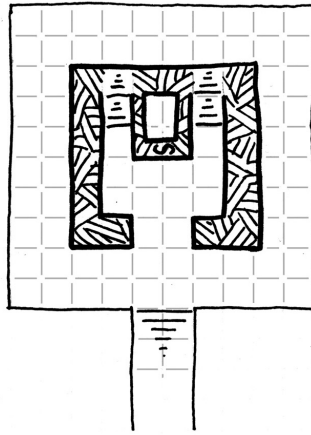
Any such diggings will be further hampered by the fact that all three of these locations on this level contain stairways down into the depths of the ziggurat.

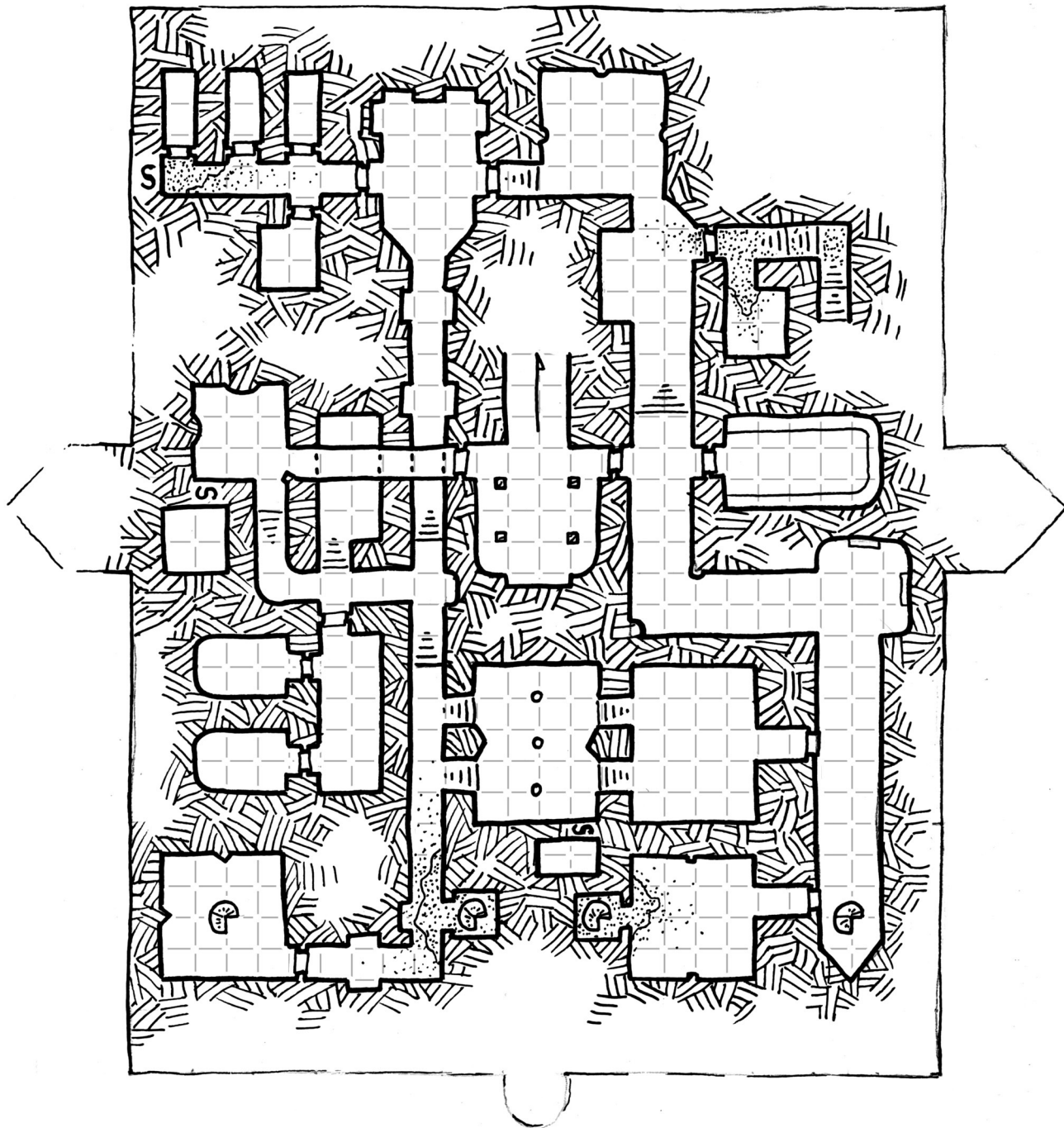
The lowest level of the ziggurat continues to show the sandy encroachment, with sand in a hall and chamber in the southern portion of the map (where the spiral stairs down from the buried archway enter the level), more on the upper right side (where the stairs from the eastern entrance on the middle level has allowed sand to flow down to this level) and again on the upper left side (where a secret exit from the ziggurat has been breached and has in turn sealed off a solitary room behind a pile of heavy sand).

To enter the two spires (that appear on the middle and upper level maps) requires finding the southern stairs on the lowest level. When designing the map, I envisioned the “main boss” to be in the eastern spire, with the western spire containing lost and forgotten traps and treasures. The design allows for a party to actually skip the vast majority of the map if they take the right path – entering in through the doorway on the west side of the middle level (which I would seal with a wizard lock, so the party is rewarded for preparing appropriate magics), down the ramp from the middle level to the lower level, immediately going to the east and then south along the wide passage leading directly to the spire stairs.

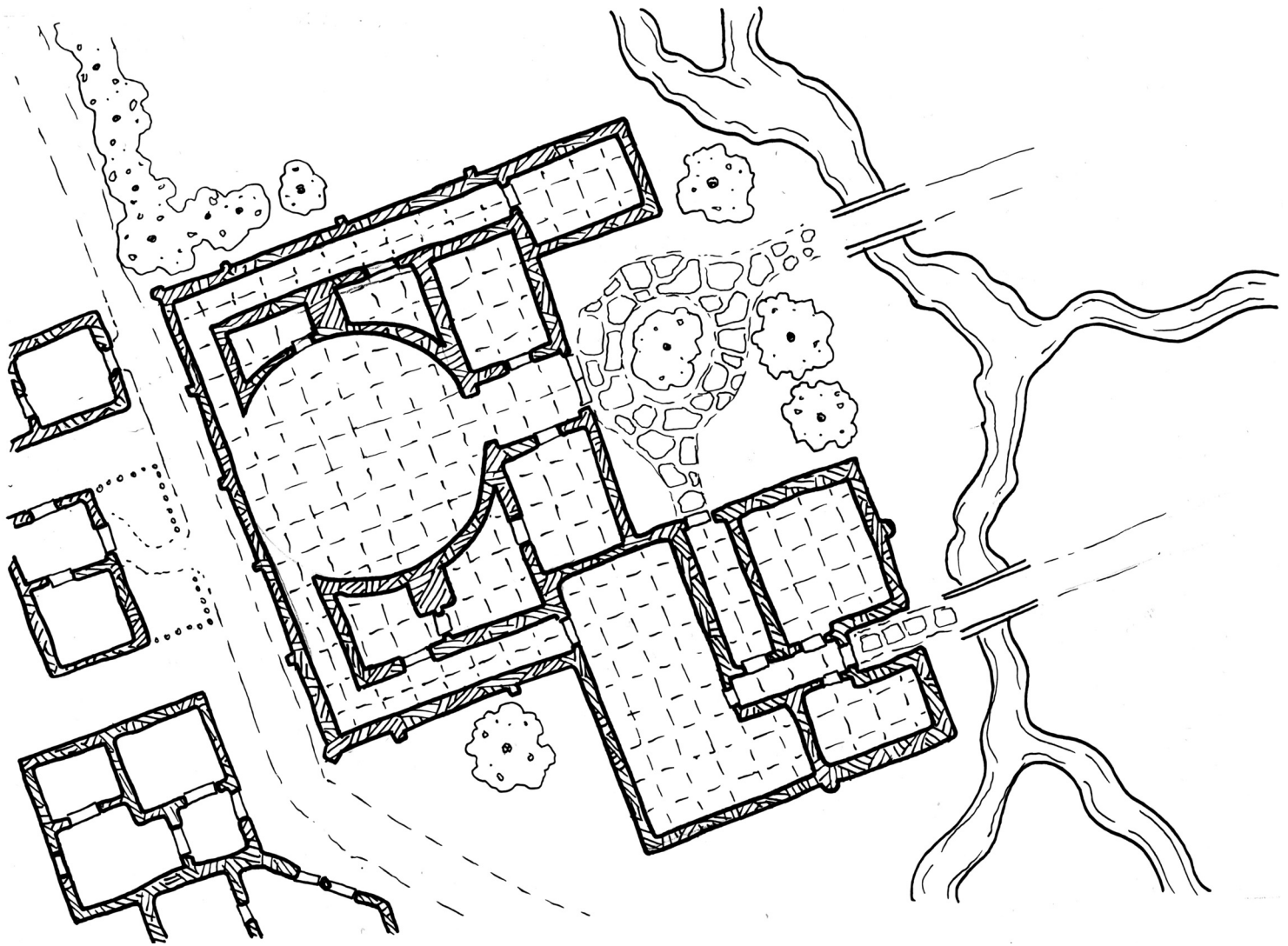
Of course, there are many other routings through the ziggurat, and I'm sure most adventurers will find themselves walking into trouble at any number of turns, dead ends, odd passages, and sandy chambers.







The House of Seven Wines



The house itself is a dark ochre in colour and attempts to make it look like a refined garden home, tucked in among the willow trees, ornamental bridges and carefully manicured lawn all fail to address the fact that it is squat, oddly shaped, and seems to be sinking into the ground slightly towards the northeast corner.

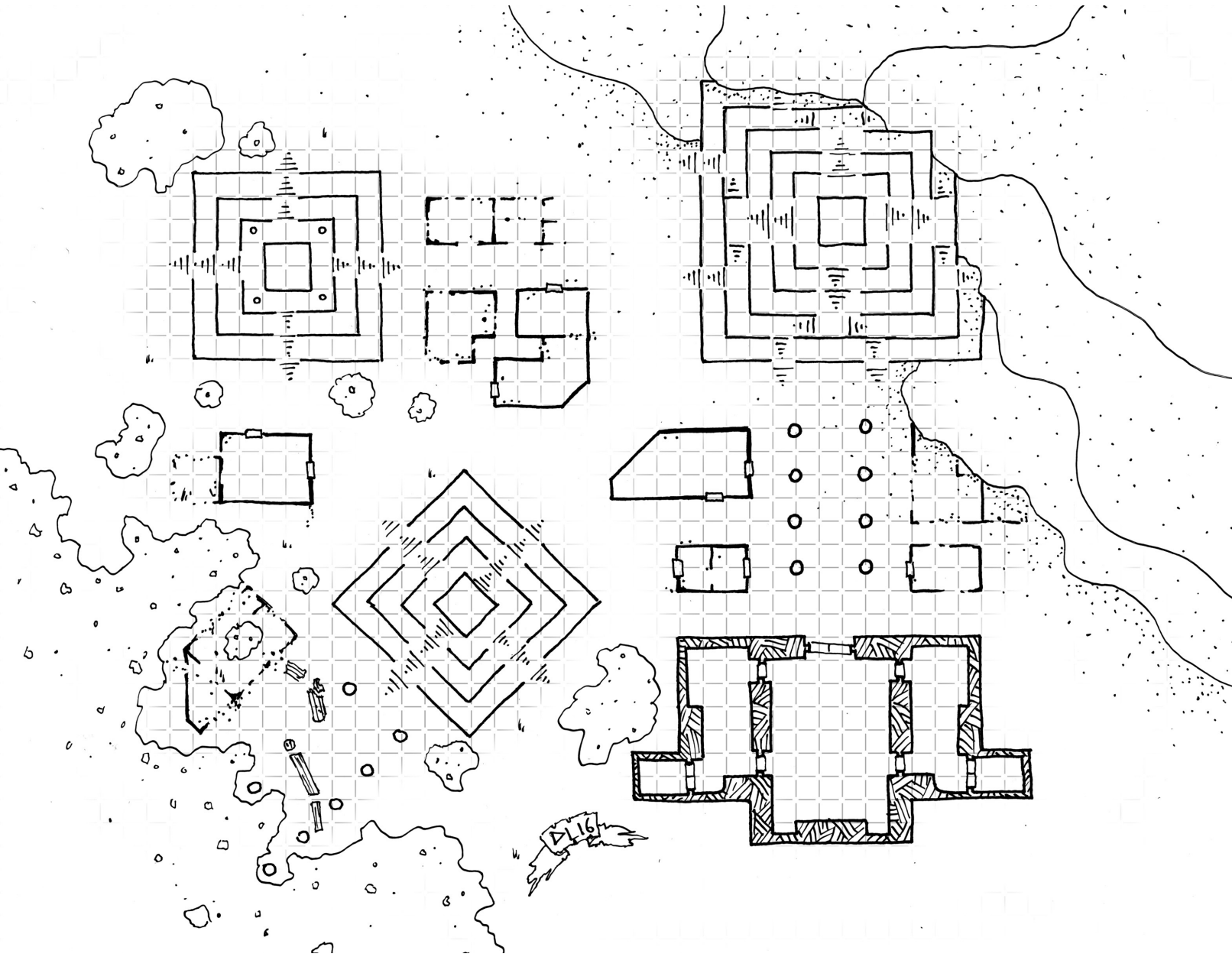
While ostensibly the centre of activities for the Ho Tua clan of slug people, the house is typically busy with the workings of Alo-ke, a young cousin in the clan who has made it his business to maintain fingers in every pie in town – particularly those involving the acquisition and shipment of opium and spices. Alo-ke paces the chambers of the structure wrapped in a heavy gauze of opium smoke as he constantly consumes the local white opium which he finds insightful to his business.

The south wing (containing the kitchen and eat-

ing hall) is also home to Ab hra. This young cripple is well kept by the family as his legs were lost in infancy to a rogue giant cockroach. Where most people in the city would find themselves begging for scraps and coins in his condition, young Ab hra has been kept within the home by the family, protected but pretty much ignored. Since his seventh year Ab hra has shown prophetic ability, with dreams and visions that reach into the future, the past, and to great distances. Lately Alo-ke has taken to eating his breakfasts with Ab hra to listen to his dreams and help figure out their meanings, and the constant exposure to the nootropic white opium seems to be increasing the accuracy, strength, and clarity of his visions.

His latest vision looks out over the Old Town, now in ruins, to a place where ancient slug men of the clan hid something intriguing... And Alo-ke might be able to find a group of people who would be willing to go out to those old ruins...

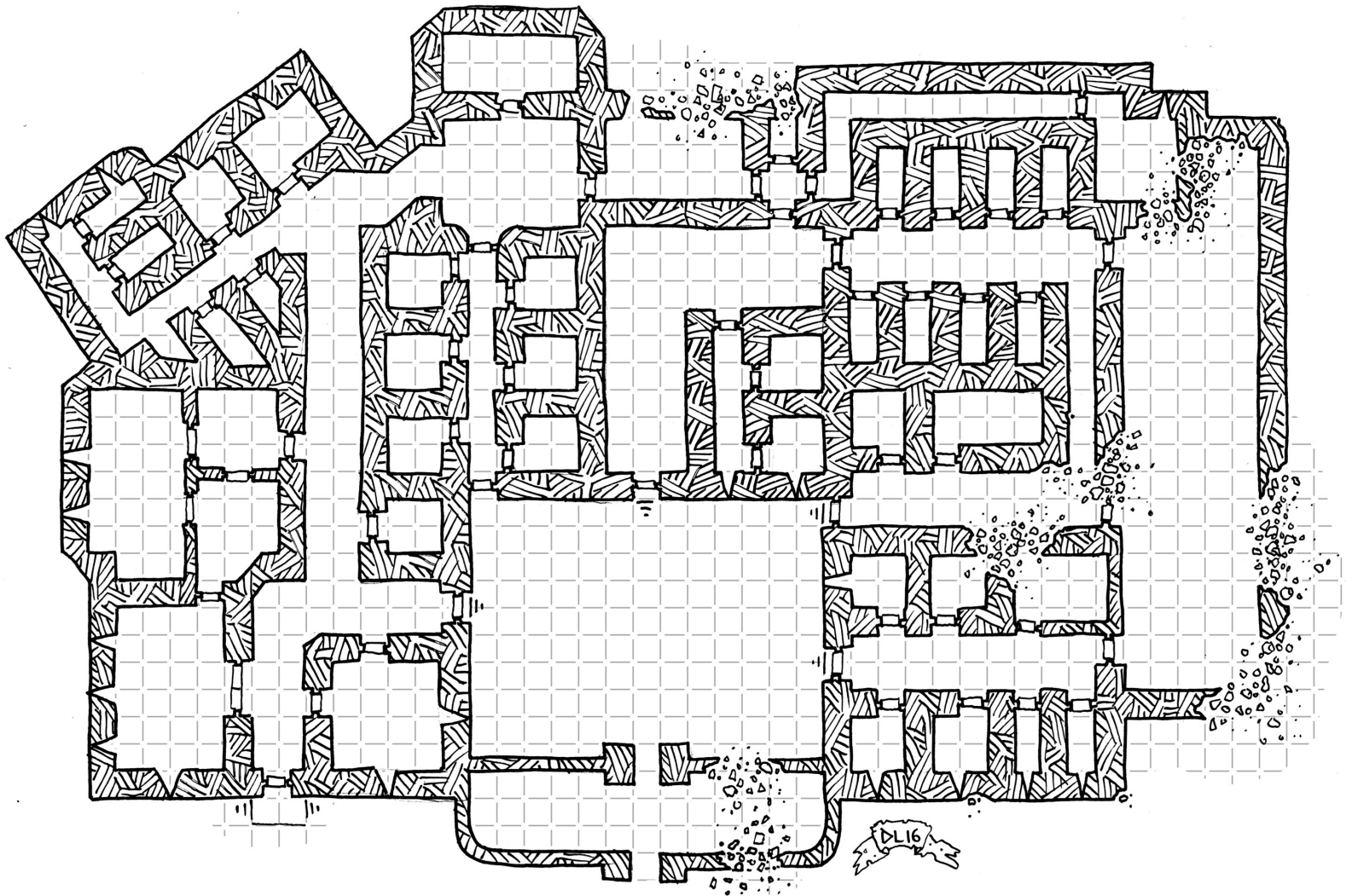
Ruined Pyramid Complex



A massive temple, three ancient pyramids and some old ruins lie in the narrow zone between desert and jungle. A classic scene for any adventure. Sure, jungle / desert interfaces are a pretty fantastic setting to begin with – but all the more reason to explore them as perhaps some magic here is what keeps the jungle alive even as the sands encroach.

The complex in question is always slightly “off” to those who would explore it. The dimensions are not quite symmetrical between the locations of the pyramids and the great temple, and the two lesser pyramids share the same rough dimensions but have different stairs and decorations. Finally, the shifting nature of the desert sands means that finding the ruins is not easy, and they seem to vary in location from visit to visit, with maps that once lead straight to them leading far enough astray that they cannot be sighted...

The Ashen Castle



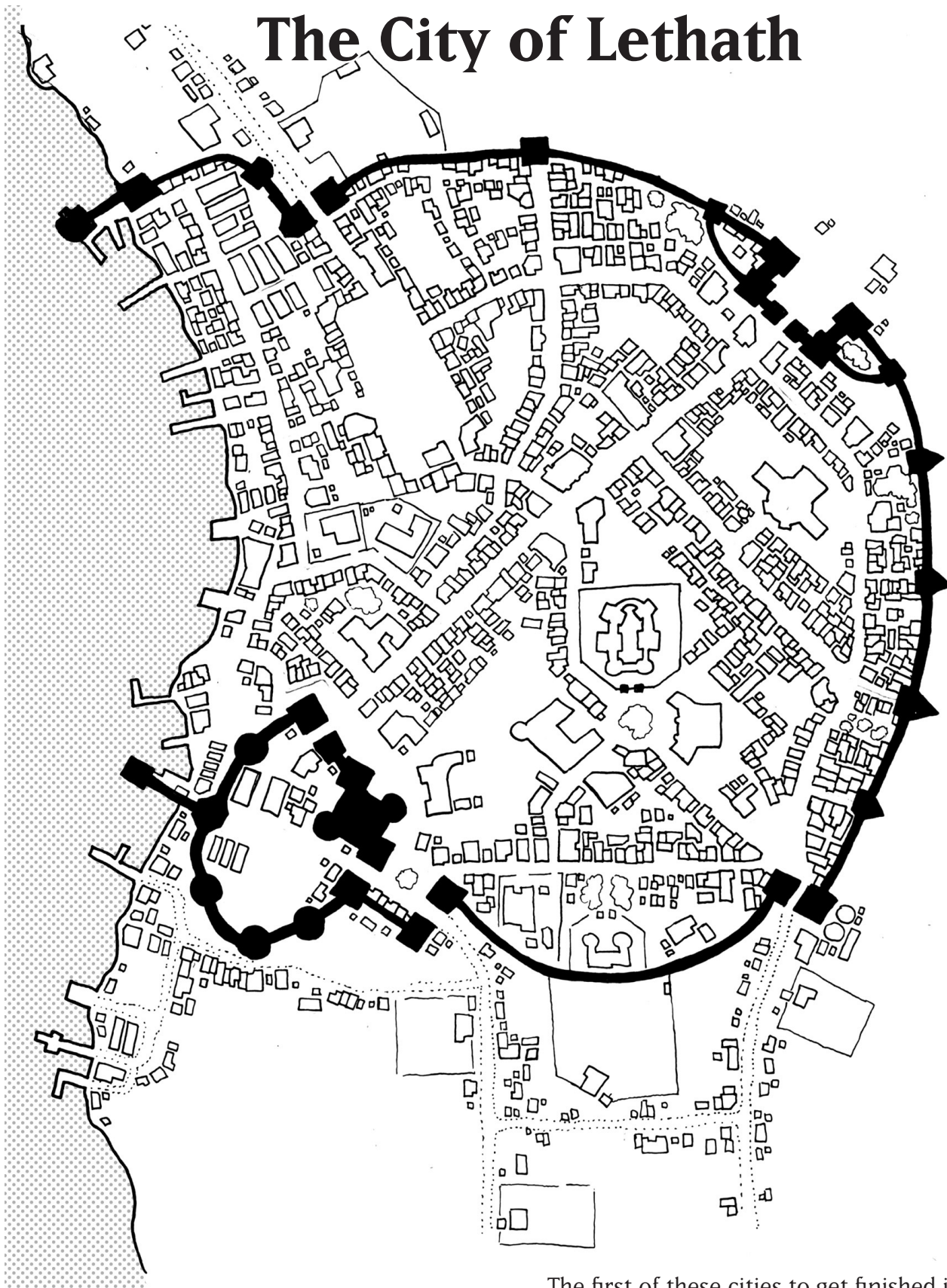
In a run-down end of town is a squat and ugly ruin. The Ashen Castle was once a prison – when the city had more law and order and the means to maintain a prison and prison population. But that was two centuries ago – now prisoners are kept in the dungeons or the pillory, and most crimes that would see someone sent to the Ashen Castle for years now results in either death or exile from the city walls.

Two centuries of wear and tear without maintenance has left portions of the castle (particularly exterior walls and courtyards) collapsing and ruined, with the pale grey stone from whence the prison got its moniker fallen into the streets and into the ruins themselves.

Many of the cells in the prison had no outside light and were perpetually dark – however those with windows were constantly hot in the summer and freezing in the winter.

The prison is broken up into several general areas. To the north of the main courtyard is the administrative wing, with the warden's chambers, the kitchen and the scullery / laundry. To the east of the main courtyard are the larger cells and the day room and a small courtyard with a grate over the top (with the wall now partially collapsed) for prisoners with a tendency to climb their way out. The south wing is made up mostly of much smaller cells, a few larger group cells, and a second courtyard for outdoor activities and work.

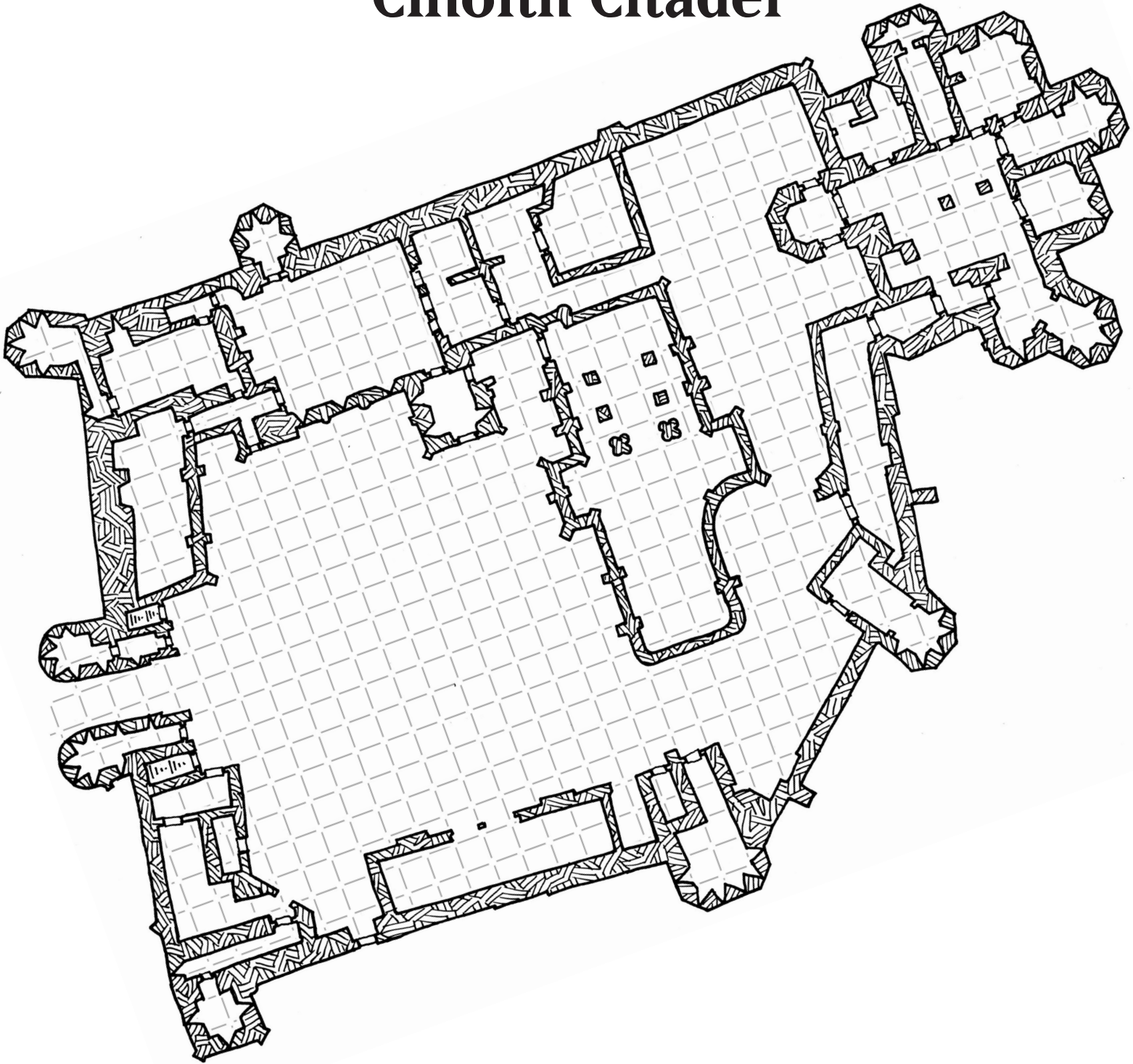
The City of Lethath



In a recent session of my 5e D&D campaign I found myself grabbing cities from other people's products to fill in places in my game world. And of course, that couldn't last. So when I got home I pulled out a pad of paper and worked on replacing these cities.

The first of these cities to get finished is Letath, a small coastal city that the party travelled to and then left within 20 minutes of game play. Basically enough time for me to throw down the map on the table and then fast forward through them negotiating a fair place to teach the young chiefling they were escorting, and then to head north to their true destination of Winterspire.

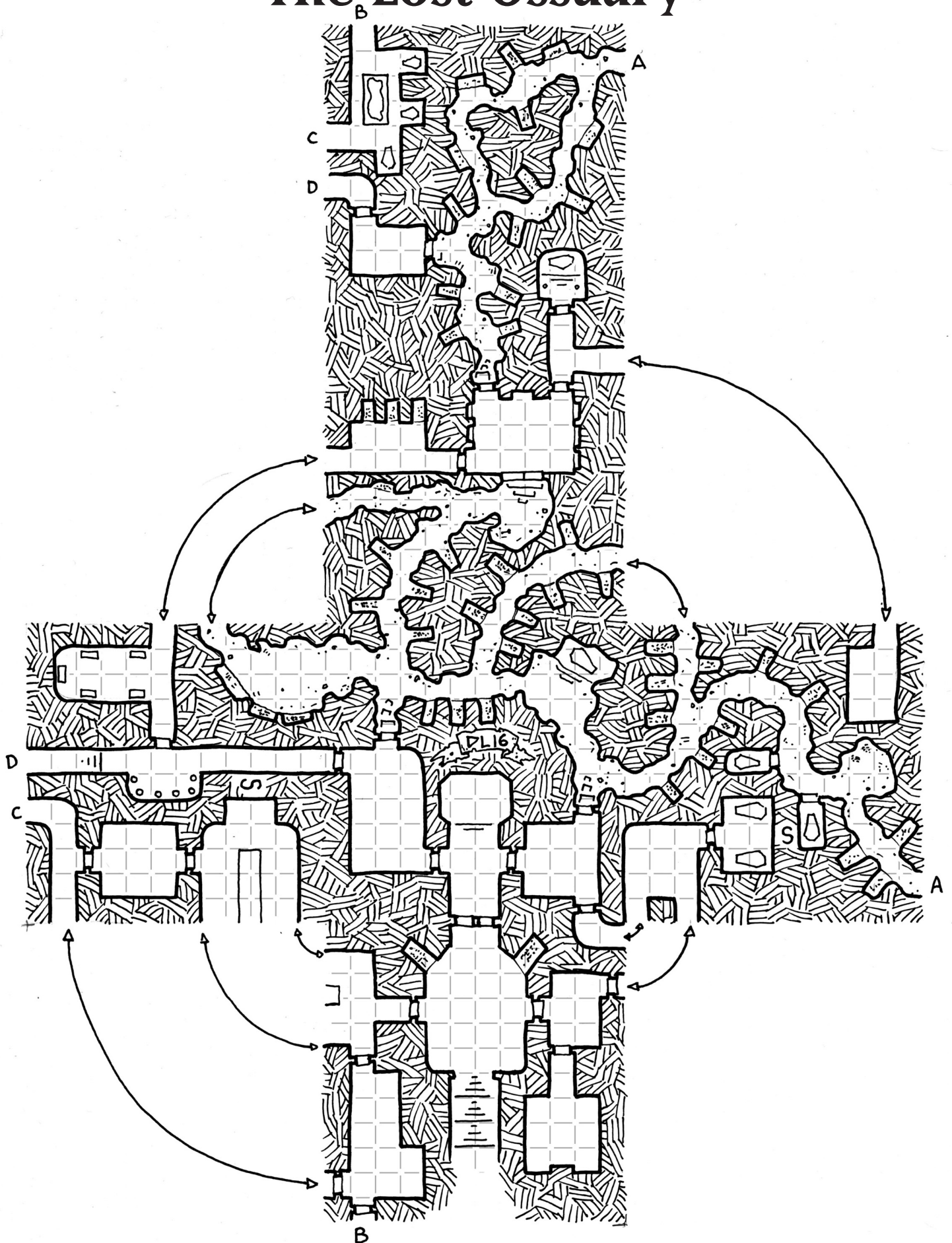
Cinolth Citadel



Cinolth Citadel started as a lone spire on a barren chunk of rock overlooking the Ironflow river as it headed out to sea. To the tower, others were attached and then a hall between them forming the basis of the heart of the citadel. Over decades extended walls were built producing a large bailey that was later split into halves by the construction of a church in the midst by Patriarch Barayin when he was the lord of Cinolth.

The citadel sits on a chunk of generally unprofitable land surrounded by poor farming land, making it unappealing for most nobles. It generally sits quiet and cold, manned by a small garrison at most, a skeleton staff of four to six men and a single priest out of favour with the church at worst.

The Lost Ossuary



The Lost Ossuary is a small dimensional rift beneath the Lobachevsky Church. Cut out of the stone beneath the church as a set of crypts and ossuaries, the Lost Ossuary displays bizarre geometries to those who would try to map it out. Routings through the Ossuary make little sense, with paths connecting with far less than 360 degrees of angle between them, and some secret passages connecting areas that should be hundreds of feet apart.

To confuse matters more, the ossuary has two types of construction – rough hewn crypts and the carefully built ossuaries and tombs. Both areas are completely contiguous, and yet seem to cut each other up at times. In all, the structure is a nightmare for any who would try to map it out.

This is of course because the planar topology of the Ossuary is a cube – however this is never apparent to those within it – the faces do not involve any changes in angles – the floors remain consis-

tent and flat instead of switching by 90 degrees as one walks over the “angle” in the cube.

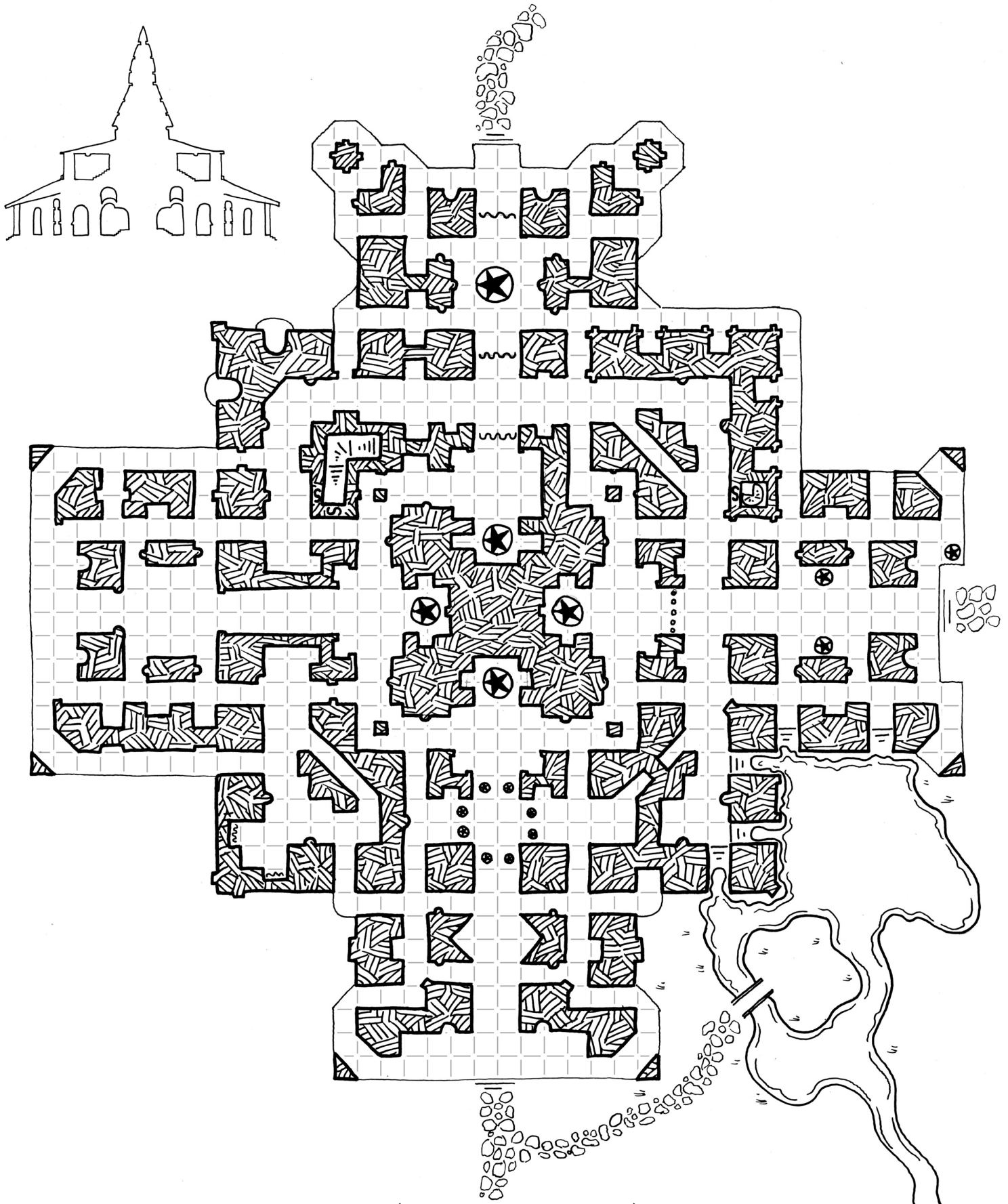
Exploring the cube will probably result in some weird maps. In time, any attempt to map the Ossuary from the inside will result in a map that crosses over itself and comes back from point A to point A with those two locations at wildly different parts of the map.

The Lost Ossuary works not only for classic fantasy gaming, but would be a perfect spot for a bit of adventure in a Call of Cthulhu campaign (non-Euclidean geometry), or for other games that deal in strange places and possible hyper-tech (Numenera, The Strange, or something happening just inside a rift in Rifts).

Once the adventure is over, however, it might be fun to show the party exactly what was causing all the chaos.

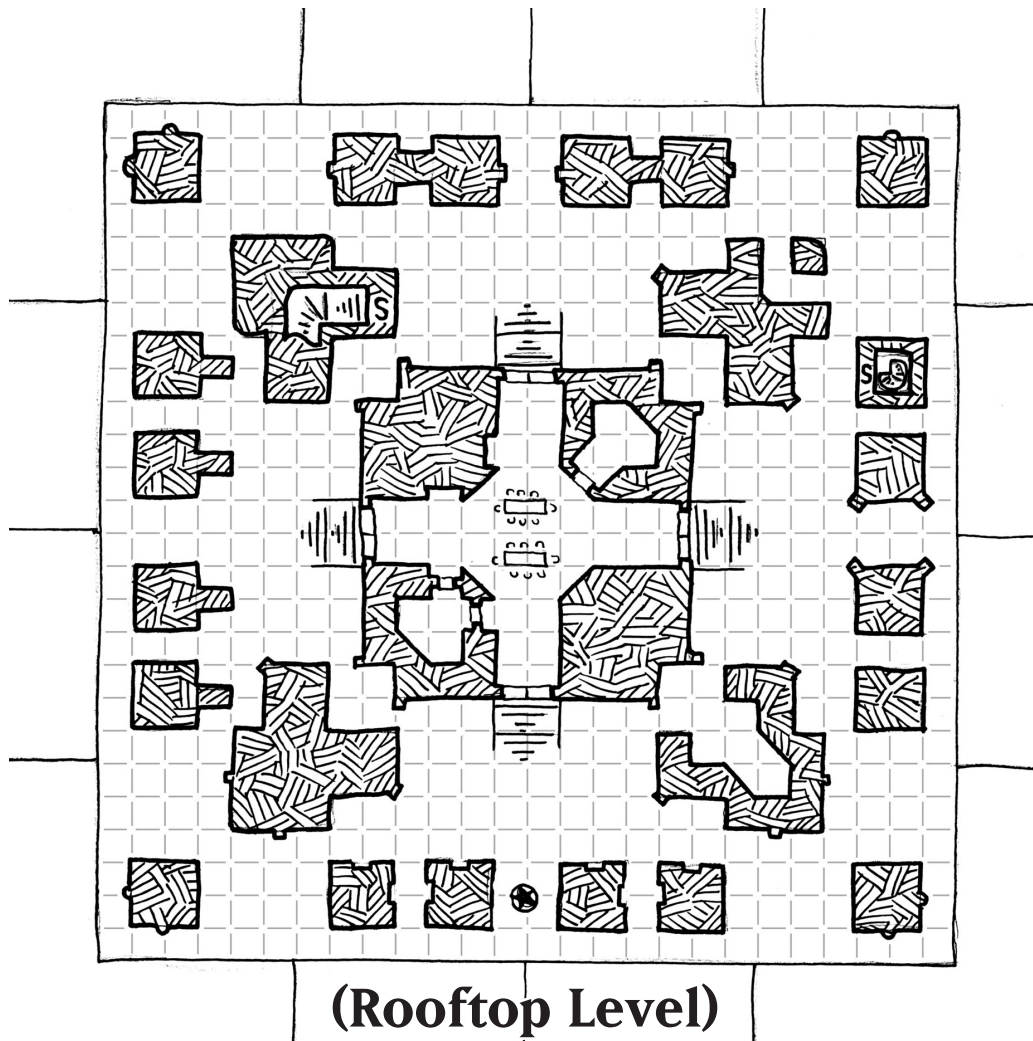


Temple of the Four Gods



(Ground Level)

Temple of the Four Gods



A massive and mostly open stone structure, this temple is dedicated to the four creative forces of the universe and the personas that embody them in this world. The temple itself is nearly symmetrical, but each of the four quadrants has been modified and built up in its own ways to make them feel unique to the aspect in question.

Each quadrant of the temple is dedicated to one aspect of the four creative forces – and while the priesthood is united in the worship of the pantheon and creation as a whole, many of the monks are more... dedicated in their service to one of the sub-aspects presented in the four statues at the centre of the temple. Each aspect has its own rituals, colours, and so on.

The four aspects of creation celebrated by the temple are the aspects of Imagination (represented by the colour yellow), Life (green), Craft (red) and the balance of Law and Chaos (grey).

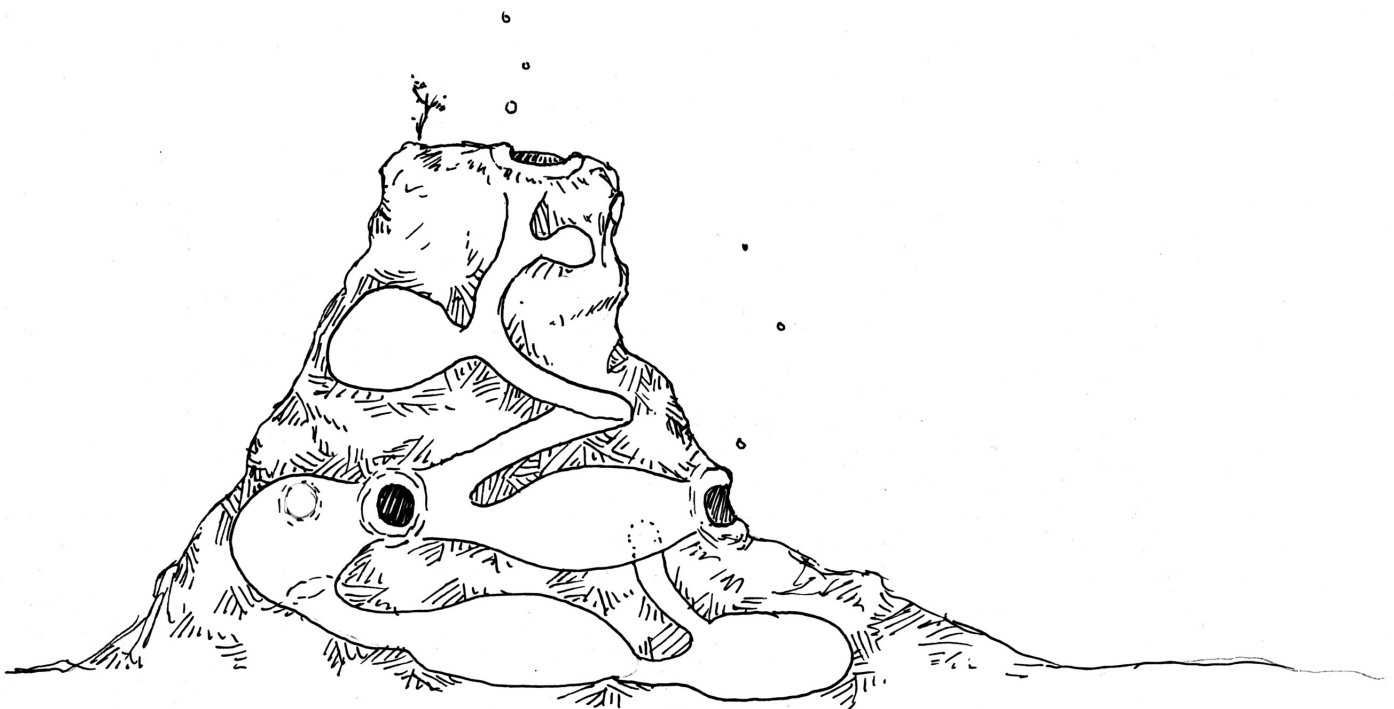
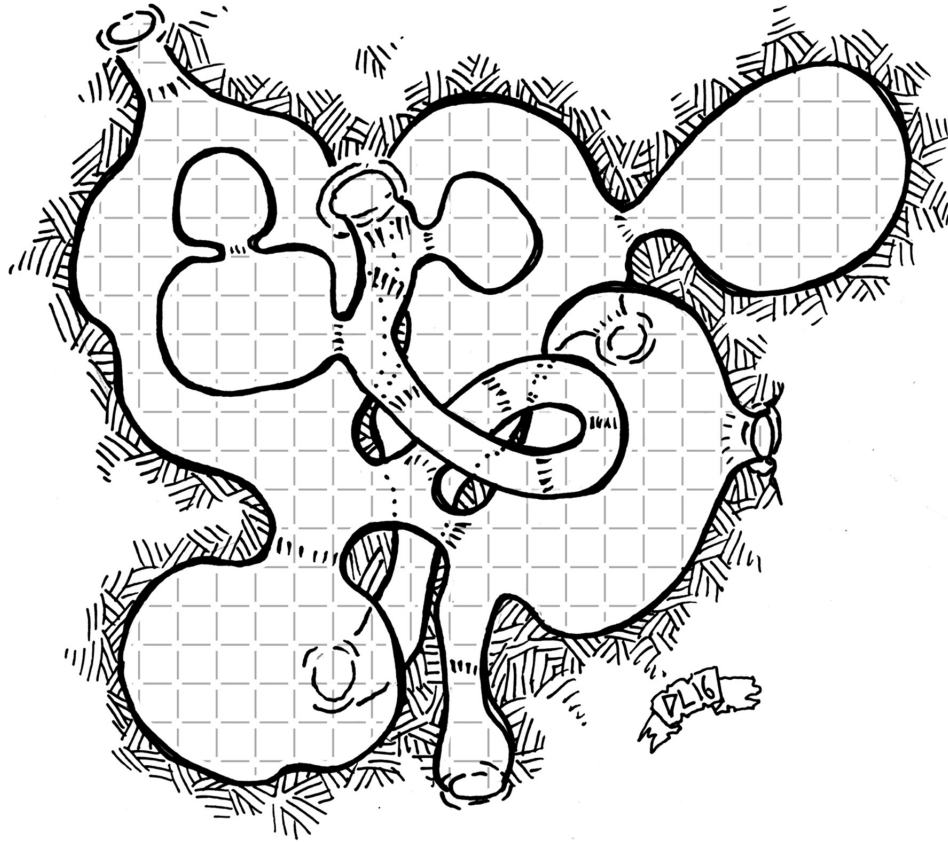
Secreted among the pillars and walls of the main level of the temple are a pair of secret doors leading to stairs to the upper level where the senior priesthood meet every three days in contemplation of the aspects (and to take care of temple business, repairs, construction, consumables, etc).

The temple could also be repurposed in a campaign for a more eastern version of the Temple of Elemental Evil (or an outpost of the same in a more eastern campaign setting).

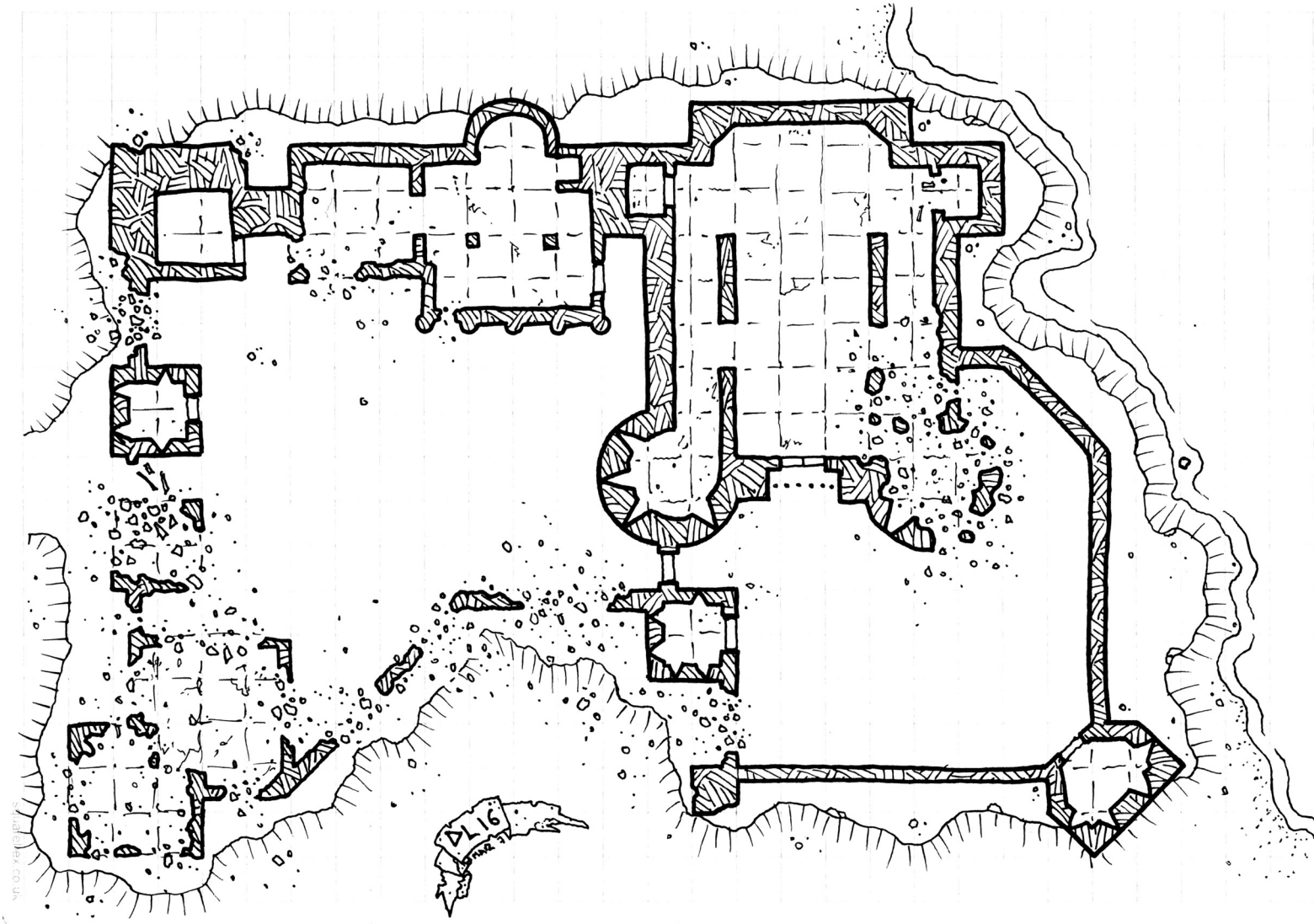
The Sahuagin Mound

I've always found underwater lairs difficult to design and visualize because of the three dimensional aspects of travelling in a buoyant environment.

This sahuagin lair looks somewhat... intestinal... at first glance, but provides a structure that can appear relatively natural at the bottom of the sea, and that provides easy access to the various structures within for the aquatic inhabitants.



Griffinwatch Ruins



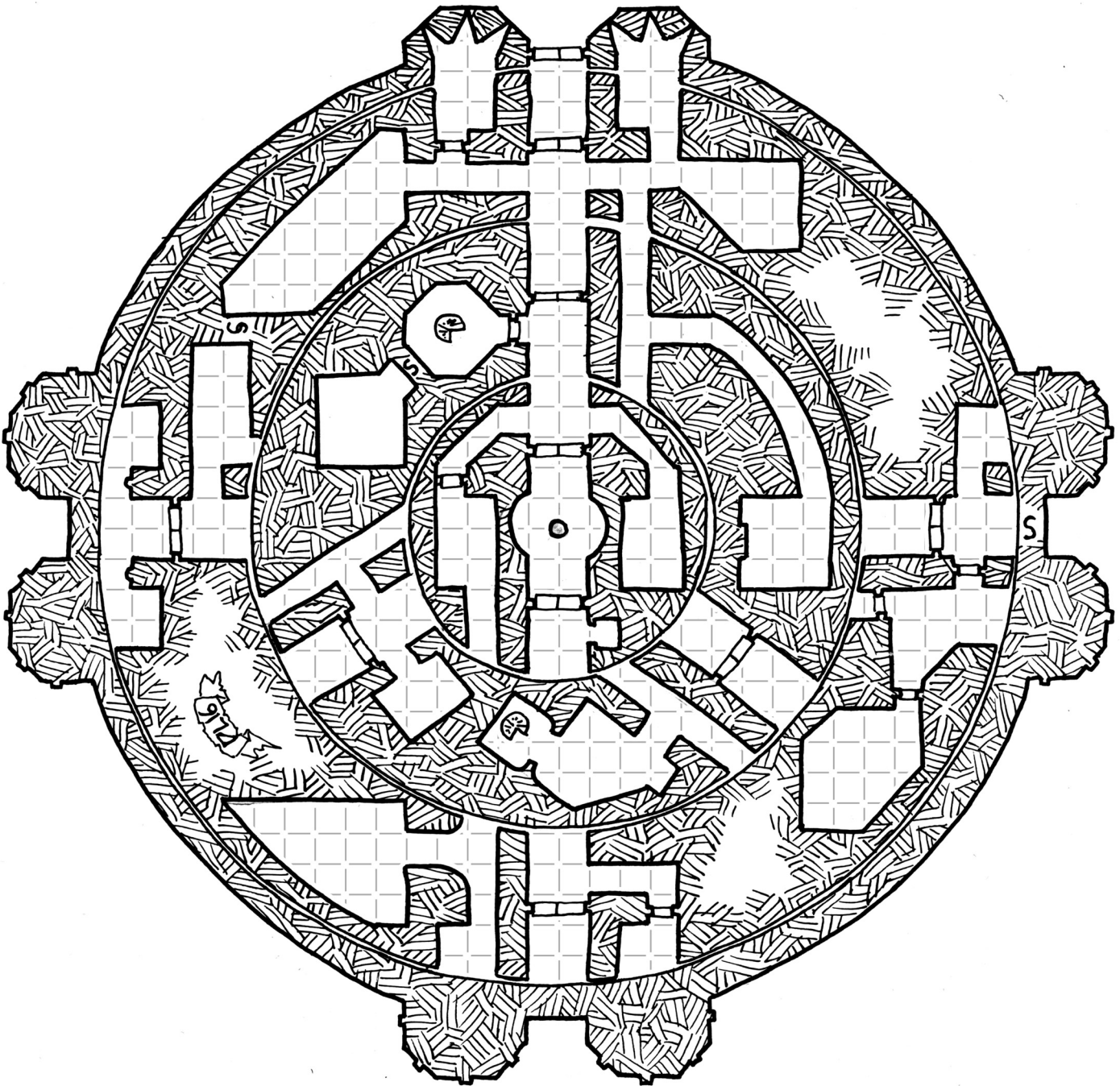
Griffinwatch is an old waterside fortress that was built on a hill that legends say was home to a nest of griffons prior to its construction. Once a watch fort on the border between elven and human lands, Griffinwatch became redundant as the wars pushed back the elven empire and when many fortresses were moved primarily underground to defend against dragon strikes and elvish sorcery.

The fortress was later badly damaged when a team of elven and stone giant mercenaries assaulted it searching for two of the three sapphire rings of Telleen — one in the possession of Lady Brannen

who lived at the fortress at the time, and the other buried with her grandfather Lord Brannen of Korse under one of the watch towers of the structure.

With the borders no longer near Griffinwatch and the war coming to an end, no one deemed it worth the effort to rebuild the fortress and it has sat on the shore of the lake for decades now, slowly being overtaken by vines, weeds, and goats. But goats are easy prey, and now the eponymous griffons have returned and seek out easy prey (especially horses) within miles of the hilltop ruins.

The Turning Tower

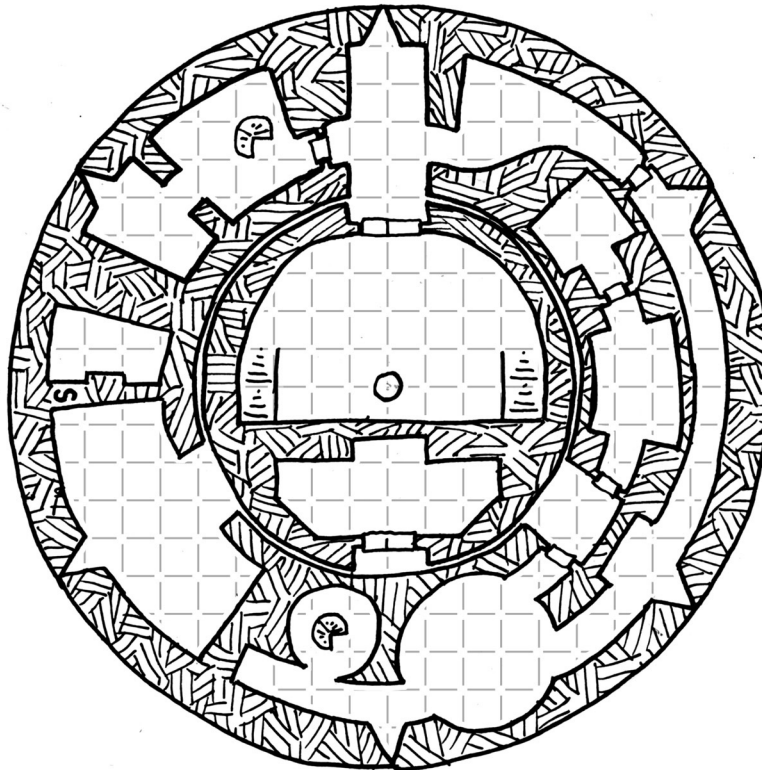
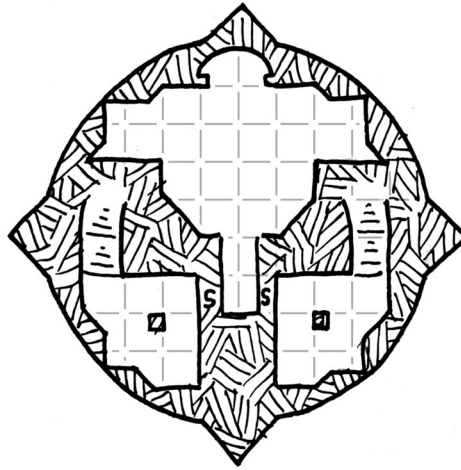


The Turning Tower is a stout three-tiered tower on the Plains of Dross. An ugly black blight upon the landscape, highlighted by brass doors; every hour or three the three rings of the tower rotate to a different configuration, changing the internal structure of the tower. No matter the configuration, however, if one can breach the massive brass front doors of the structure, it leads into a great hall directly to the centre of the structure (through

a number of other brass doors, some of which are trapped, all of which are locked).

From that central point, a set of brass levers allows the tower configuration to be manipulated manually. However, the magics that allow the tower to turn only allows it to be reconfigured at most once per hour – needing a full 60 minutes to recharge the energies required to rotate again.

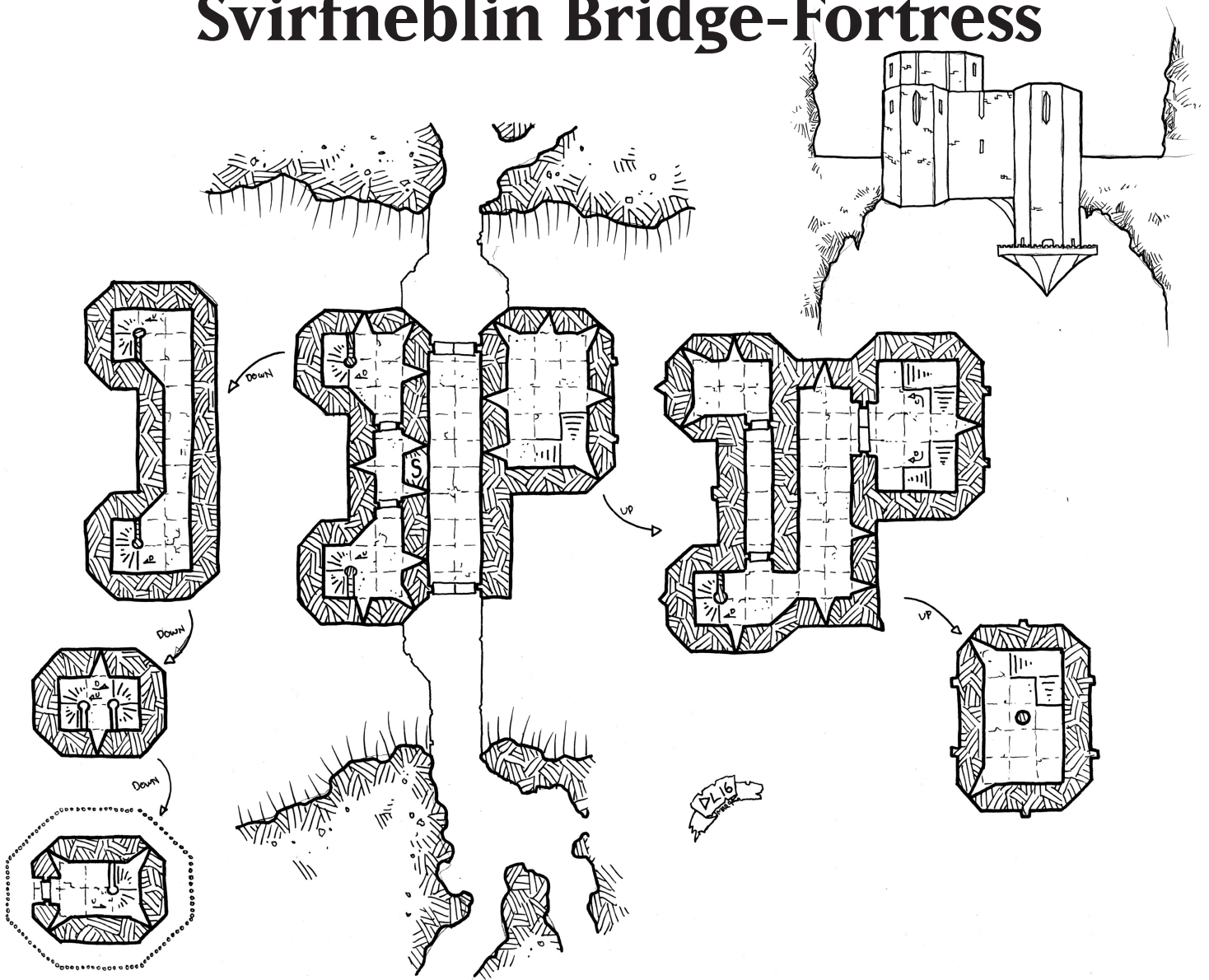
The Turning Tower



Upper levels of the tower are accessible via brass stairs within the middle ring of the structure, and from the second level the top spire of the tower can be reached from the central area. The controls for manipulating the tower configuration repeat again on the second floor of the central tower section, but the time required for a new configuration remains the same (thus allowing for scenarios where groups on the two different levels conflict

over the configuration of the tower – and some configurations prevent inter-accessibility between the levels).

Svirfneblin Bridge-Fortress



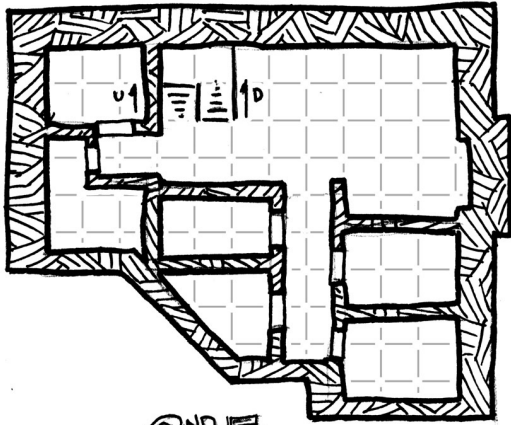
Looking almost like an upside down castle embedded in a bridge, The Velvet Hood was initially a nameless toll fortress along the passages of the underdark. But the fortress was ransacked on two occasions, and it was only on the second that the svirfneblin discovered that whatever had ransacked it had carried off all within, but left behind the tolls (the first time the svirfneblin weren't the first to find the empty fortress, and the toll chests had likely been sacked by opportunists).

They redoubled efforts around the fortress and discovered that whatever was taking their kin and leaving the fortress a quiet doorless hulk was coming from far below. Depending on the story, one or hundreds of foul, pallid beasts flowed up the walls of the chasm that cuts deep into the stone below, tore the fortress open and left with the corpses of the deep gnomes between their teeth.

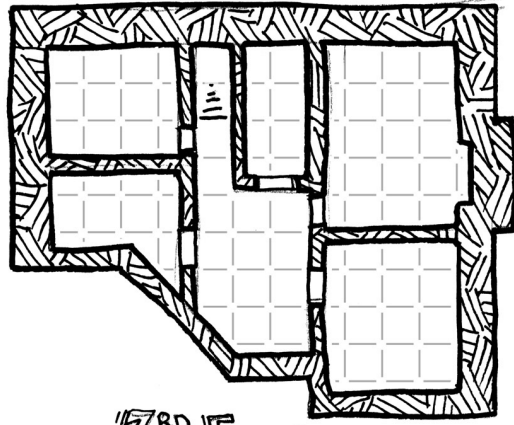
The tales grew into a bogeygnome of the local svirfneblin colonies, and they found themselves unable to abandon the fortress because it linked two colonies and because no one really wanted the chasm to now sit undefended, but recruiting new guards to work the old fortress was nigh impossible. So finally under the cover of brilliant magical lights, the old fortress was converted into the velvet hood by a team of svirfneblin and summoned earth elementals.

The Velvet Hood is still not a favourite assignment for the local gnomes – the fortress is full of murder holes and arrow slits and wind makes strange noises flowing through it. And there is always the fear of the foulness that waits to steal away the gnomes from far below.

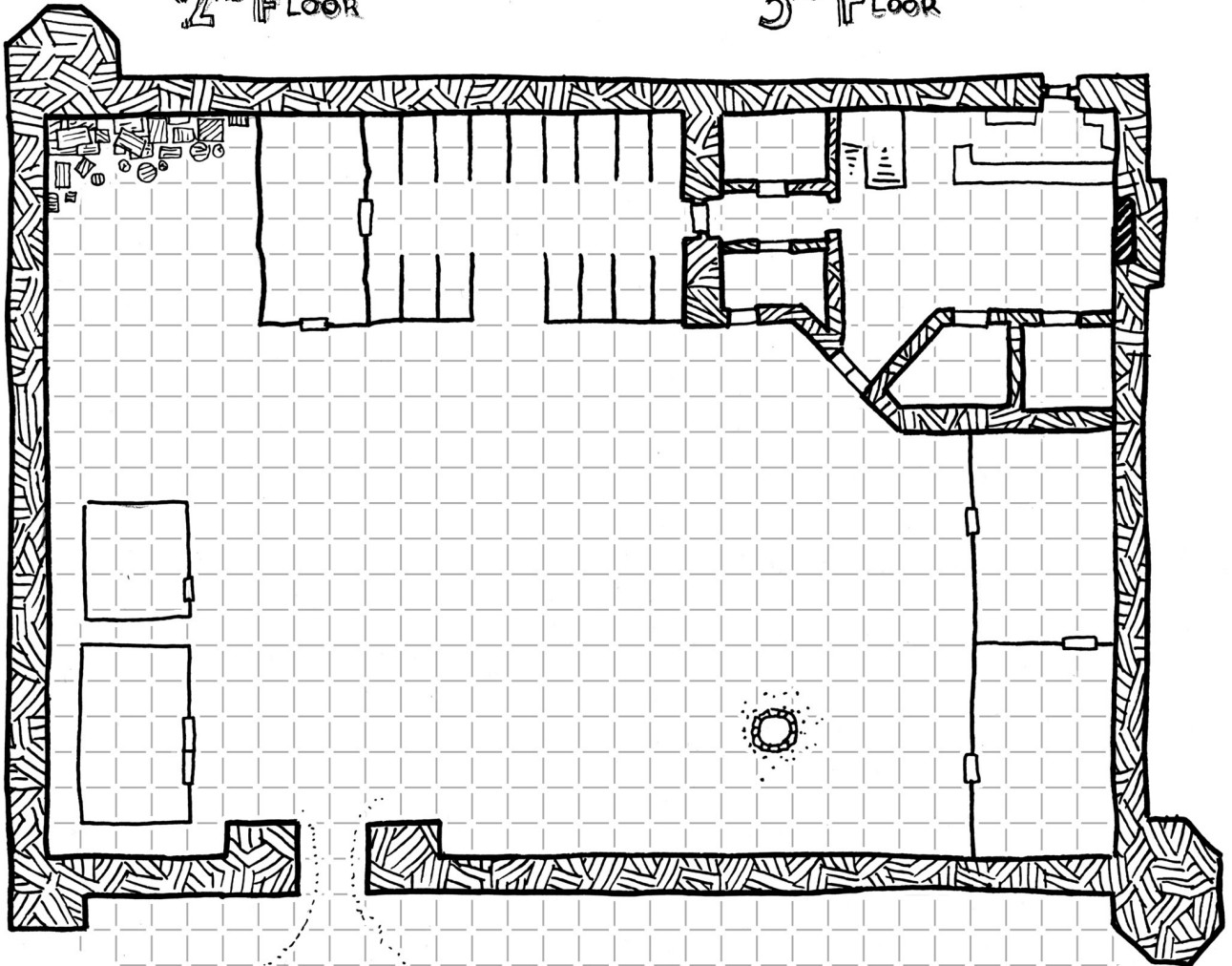
The Caravanserai



2ND FLOOR

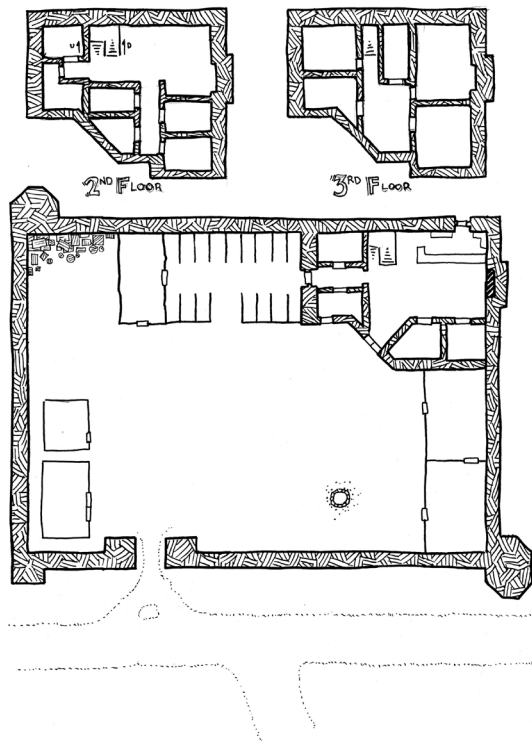


3RD FLOOR

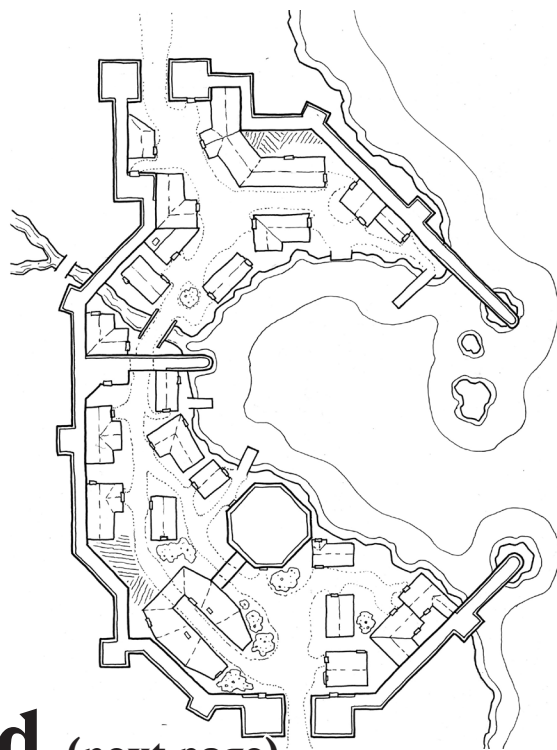


The Caravanserai (previous page)

This is a very simple caravanserai or walled coaching in more in the European tradition than the Eastern styles (I'll probably draw up a more Eastern caravanserai soon – in researching this one I discovered some lovely floor plans for them and they are so much more interesting than this design).



The main structure is a stone three story building that acts as an inn for travelers and merchants. On one side of the inn are barracks for caravaneers, guards and the rest of the lower class people attached to a large caravan. On the other side are stables for horses or camels. Smaller outbuildings provide storage for goods, while the courtyard is usually home to the wagons, carts, and non-perishables or lower-value goods.



Warcton Hold (next page)

Two hundred years ago the foul giant Auruxvor terrorized the lands along the western shore of the Krumpt Basin from his fortified lakeside "manor". Padreth Warcton and a group of mercenaries and adventurers put an end to the giant's reign of terror and with powerful magics they tore his house asunder.

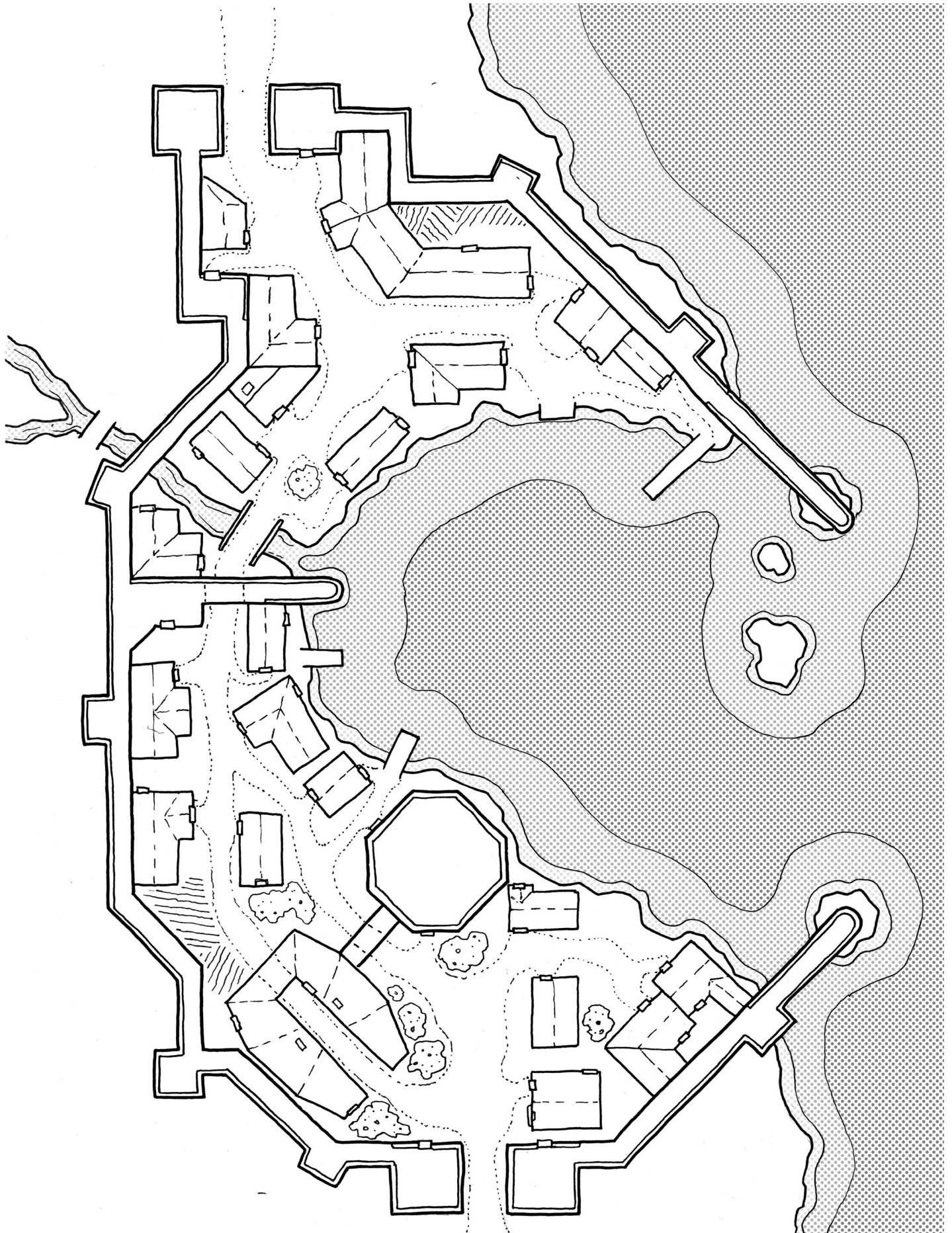
Two of Padreth's acolytes remained at the site of the old manor and assisted the locals in building a few small fortifications from the stony debris left behind. Over a few years the fortifications and homes became the southern portion of Warcton Hold. The walls and tower on the south side of the hold have many massive stones that still bear the markings of the giant Auruxvor as well as the magical violence that ended his time.

The hold continued to grow. The initial farm-

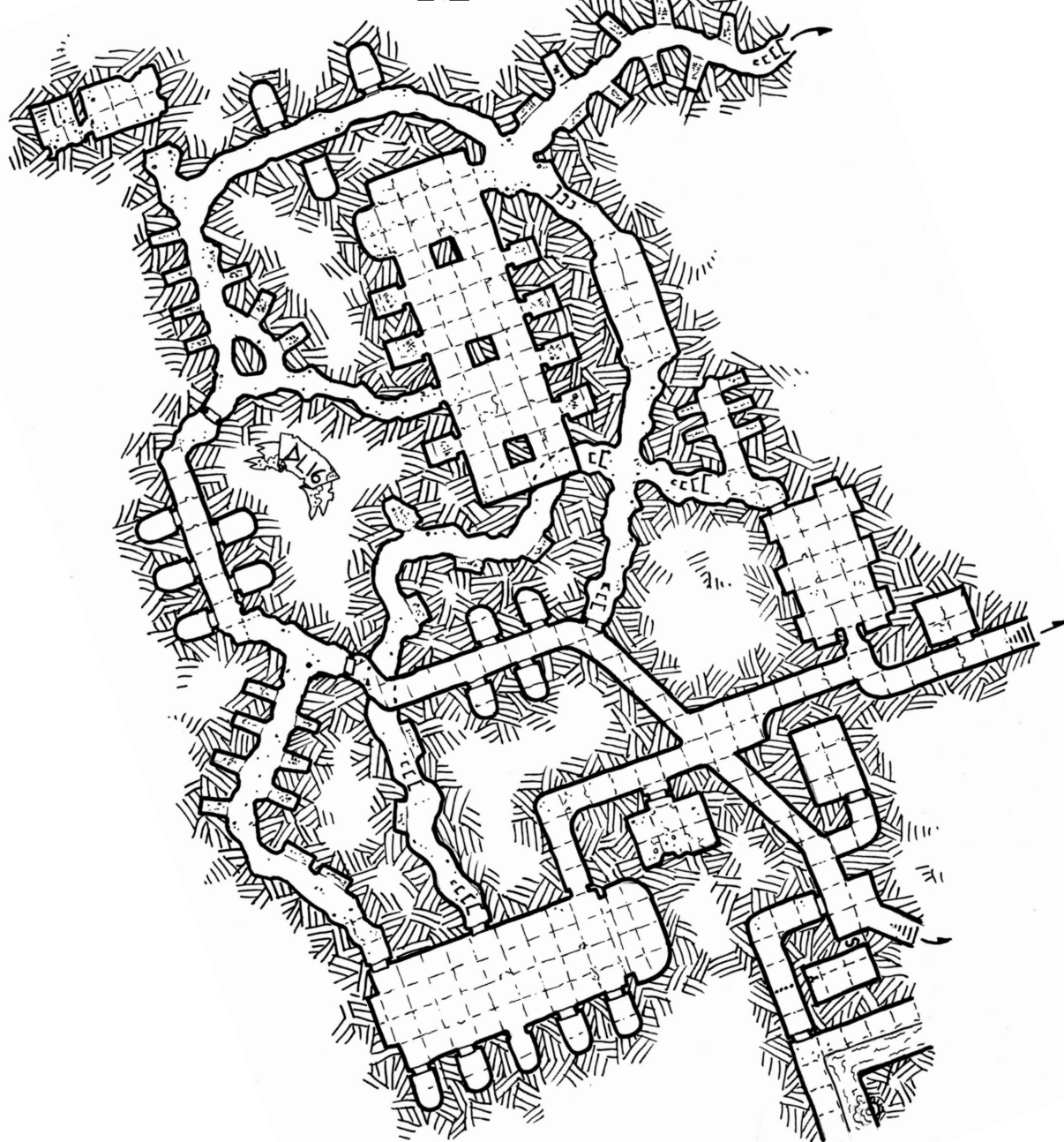
ers who moved to the hold would leave the town walls to work their fields and herd their animals. Over the years the hold became the centre of local activity and farmers from further away would come to town to trade goods and eventually to acquire fish for a change in their diet once a few local families moved from agriculture to fishing in the Krumpt Basin.

Today there are few farmers who live within the hold itself. A few families who maintain very large farms that are then worked by local tenants are now ensconced here, along with two merchant clans, the local fisher families (who have to clean their catch at an island in the Basin to keep the smell out of the hold), a retired adventurer or two, and of course a number of worshipers of the church that originally brought Padreth Warcton and company here.

Warcton Hold



Crypts & Sewers



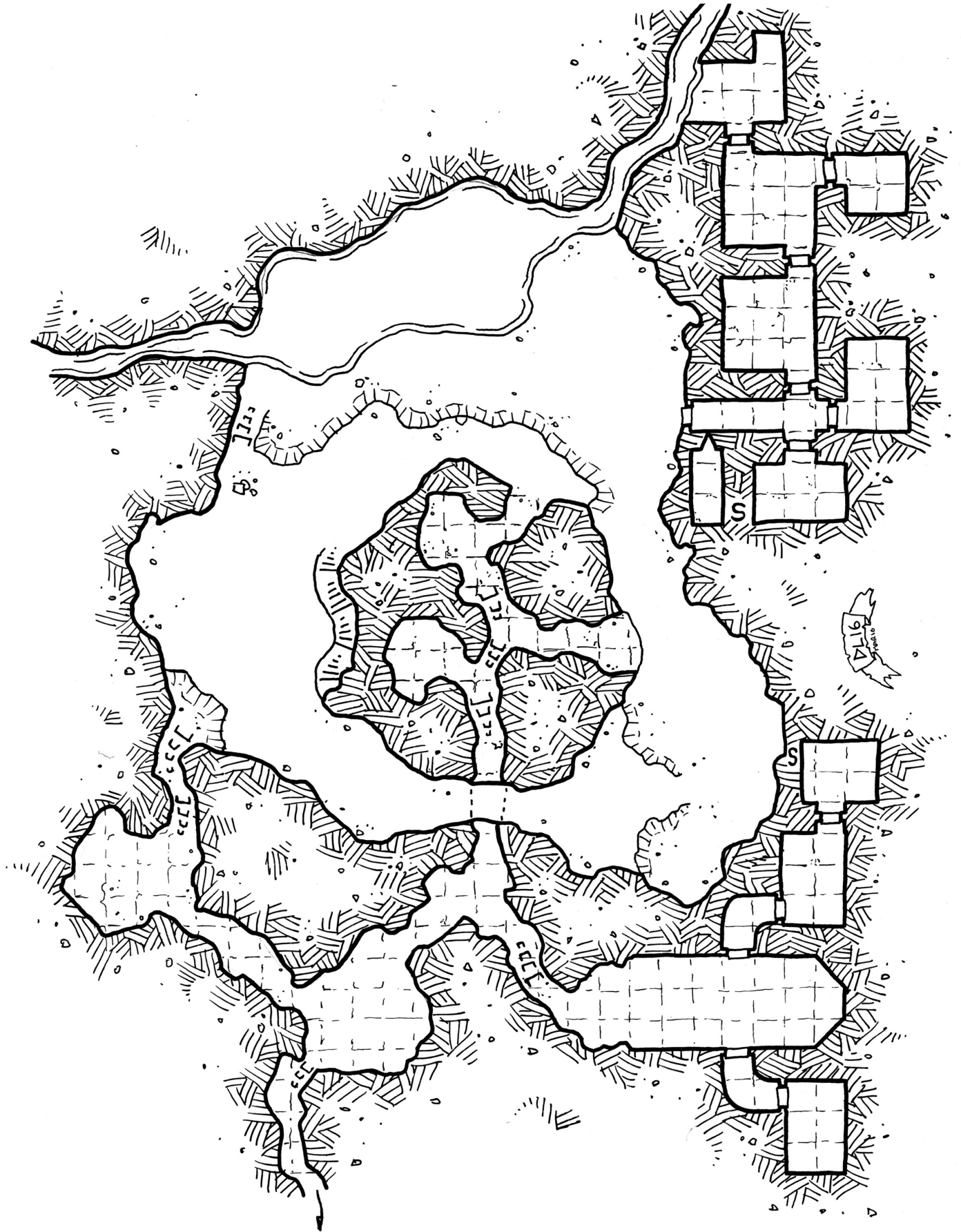
Here we have a set of crypts associated with two different churches. In total there are three entrances to these catacombs from the surface – the upper two both linking directly to churches which use the catacombs to bury their dead, and the upper-right stairwell leading into the rectory of the closer church.

While the left hand set of catacombs is rougher and is used exclusively for the burial of the deceased, the structures in the right-side catacombs are much better maintained and involve a lot of heavy masonry work – implying that the church above uses it for more than just a burial site (in fact, as-

suming that most of the doors are locked, it would appear that they bury very few people down here, having only a few crypts directly attached to their chambers and passages).

The southeastern structure may well be an underground place of worship for the gods under Lankmar or similar creatures / deities / fell beings. This is further supported by the access point between the rectory understructures and the local sewers on the right edge of the map (an access point that is secured by a portcullis that is in turn controlled from a secret room).

the Fevered Caves



the Fevered Caves (previous page)

There are places where foul essences seep out of the depths and into the light of day. While the purifying light is usually enough to destroy the humours and disperse the foul gasses, there are places on the borderlands between the depths and the lands above where the dark miasma remains, dilute but persistent.

There is a field near Gladecrest Village where the cattle is never sent to graze. It's said that those who did gave sour milk and birthed six-legged monstrosities. On that stony hill there is a gap between the rocks surrounded by thistles. Through the gap a set of stairs obviously cut by hand into what was a steep descent along a stone cave wall. Those entering the cave are warned by the town-folk that people who breath the air here find themselves the victims of fierce fevers and hallucinations, and bloody coughing fits that occasionally even lead to death.

The large cave lies beneath the field, fed by an underground stream of unknown provenance and destination, pooling silently in the depths. With the mix of water from the stream and dirt and water washed down from above, the cavern has a mossy floor and in the darker reaches is covered in a thin layer of fungi with a few larger growths in the mix (including a few shriekers and violet fungi).

Near the pool is a small fortified structure dug into the walls where the stream once passed. Worked from the limestone and beautifully adorned by small humanoids of one kind or another (pech? svirneblin? gnomes? perhaps even tainted halflings or a particularly artistic tribe of goblins?) that was then abandoned and is now home to the myconids who found the area abandoned when they came from the depths below.

More interesting to explorers and adventurers is another area obviously dug out and expanded from natural caves. Once a temple and tomb, those with the time and energy could probably clean it up enough to determine who the original inhabitants of this cave were. The main temple is now home to some particularly nasty forms of fungus and light-deprived lichens, mutated and twisted by the foul emanations from the deep. A trio of fungal shambling mounds (treat as normal, except they also pass along disease and pestilence to who would disturb them) grow along the walls and floors of this chamber, sealing off the side passages to a tomb on the west side and the priests' chambers of the original temple on the right.

And beyond the temple, a narrow passage continues down into the limestone, with foul vapours and winds blowing up and out from the depths...

Behemoth Lookout (next page)

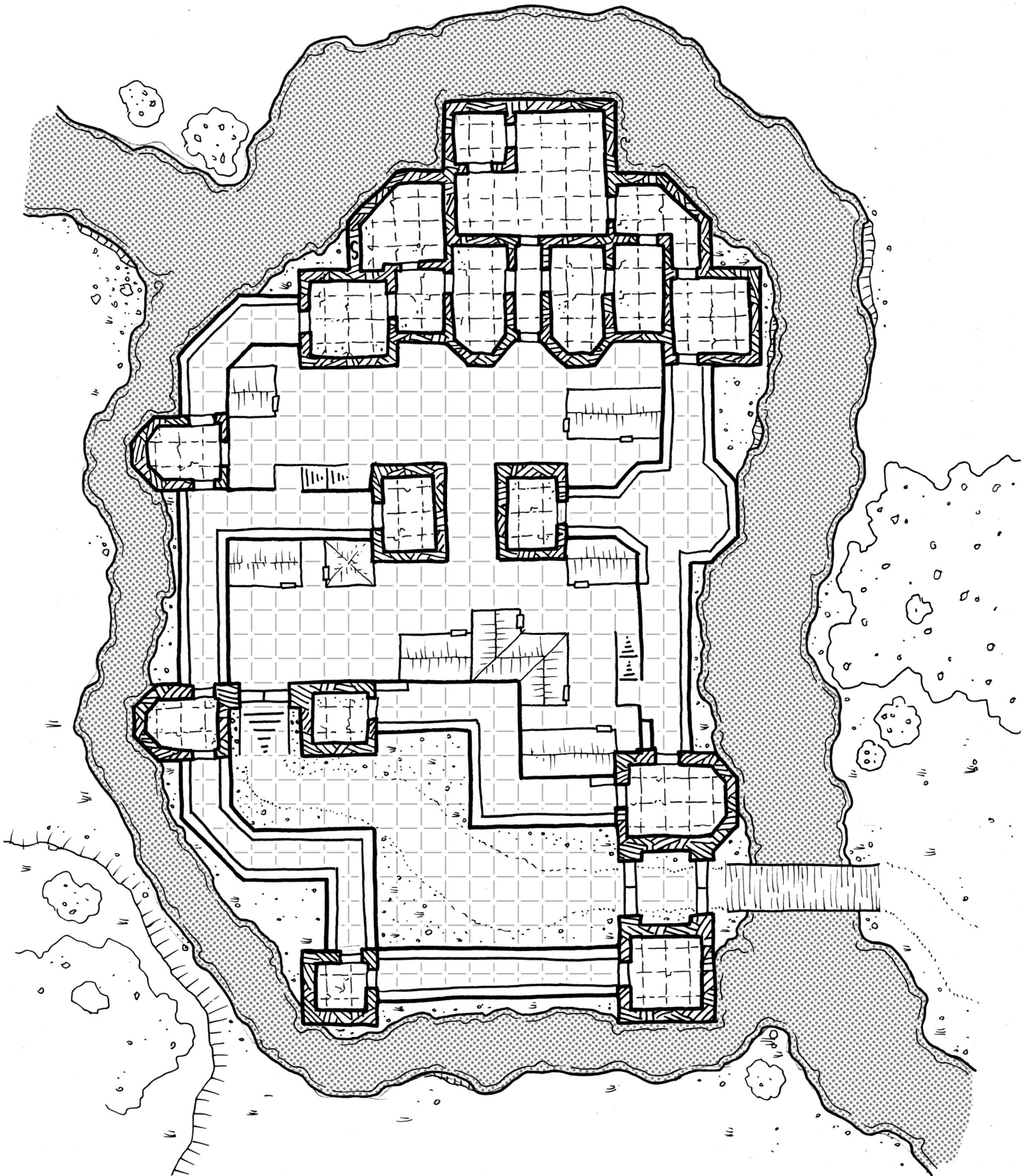
Built in a crook in the red channel (which was then partially diverted around the structure to form a moat for the ensuing moathouse), Behemoth Lookout was constantly assailed by black goblins during its later construction and expansion. Of the assaults on the structure, the best known by locals was the battle which finally gave the moat house its name. The goblins came boiling down from the hills once again, but this time they were accompanied by the most massive and foul goblin.

This rampaging behemoth was a goblin of incredible girth and size easily able to push around the three hill giants that it commanded into the fray. It managed to smash through the gates and was finally killed in the inner bailey of the moathouse – with it's own strength partially to blame as it pulled a tower down upon itself.

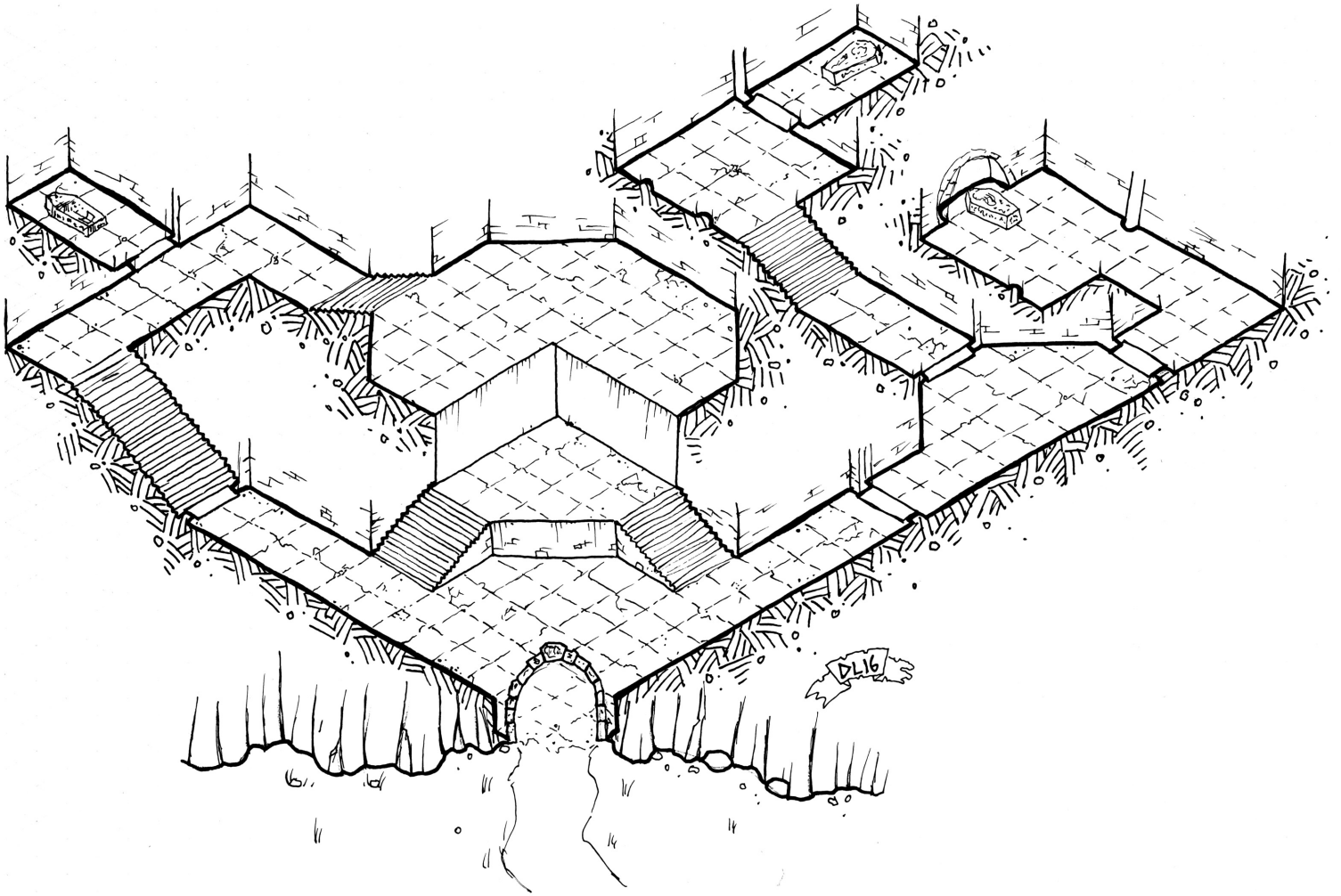
When the battle was over, a significant amount of repairs was required to fix up the structure and the outermost bailey was finally completed as well. The northern of the two towers by the moat bridge is adorned with massive stone grotesques designed to look like the foul face of the behemoth at the top, with the three faces of the slain giants beneath it looking over the red channel as it passes below them.

There have been no organized goblin assaults upon the structure since its completion, but occasional forays are launched from the Behemoth Lookout into the hills seeking goblin lairs and dens to keep the foul creatures under control, or at least underpopulated.

Behemoth Lookout



Durahn's Tomb

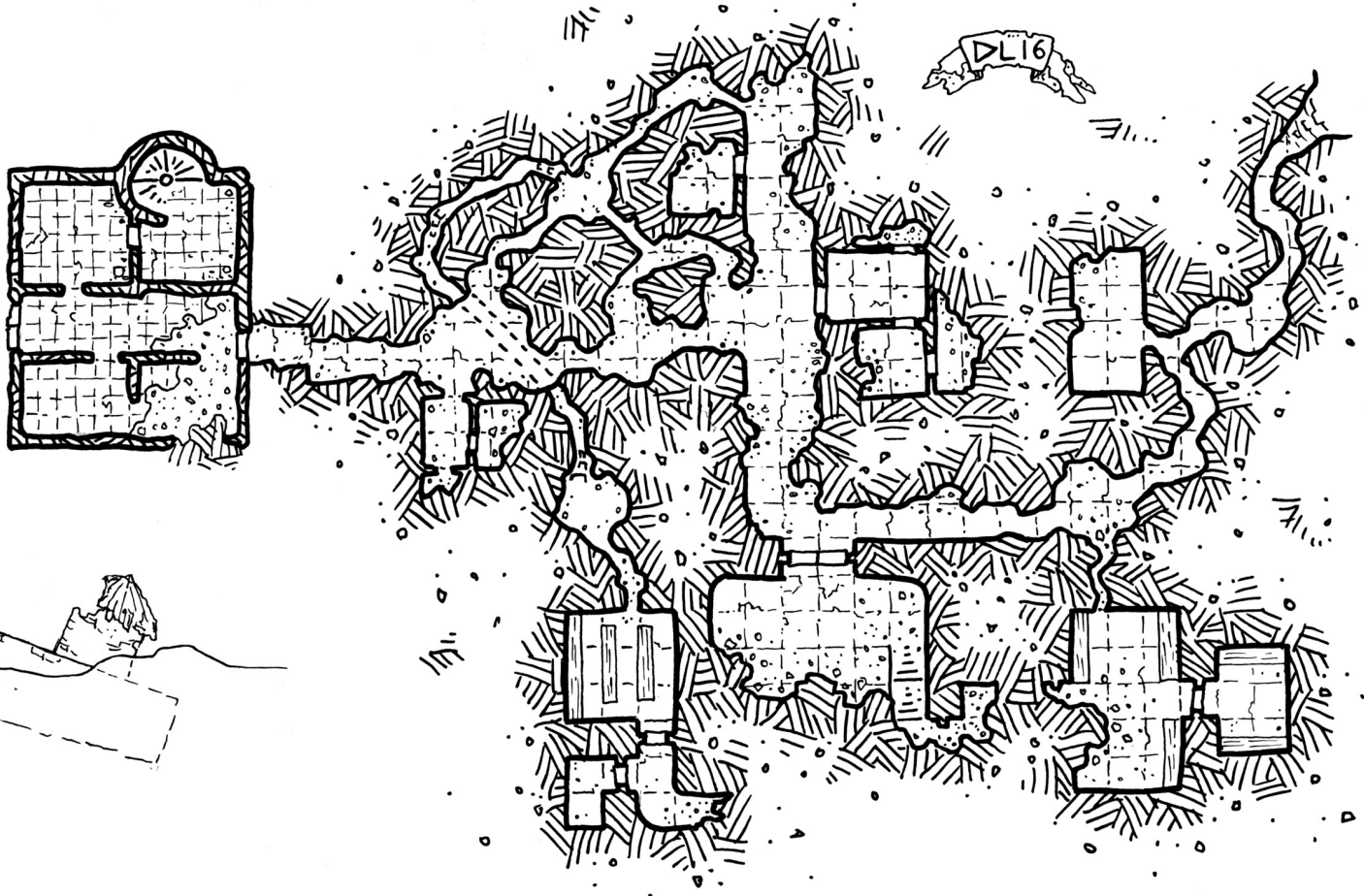


The tomb of the dwarven warlord Dûrahn Oaken-shield is said to still be home to his remains, including the clan signet which is needed by his clan brothers now to prove their provenance in order to reclaim their title.

However the tomb is in an area that hasn't been under dwarven dominion for many an age, and has become the secret headquarters of a small group of bandit raiders of the worst variety. They hide out in the old tomb and have moved the majority of the old mummified corpses (the ones who were not entombed in massive stone sarcophagi) to the lower level of the entrance chamber.

The defilement of the crypts and tombs has awakened the old dwarven war king as a wight, but he remains locked away in his private crypt (on the upper right of the map). His wife's tomb has become the private quarters of the leader of the raiders. He uses her sarcophagus as a table, upon which are his books indicating that he sold the treasures of the tomb to merchants and fences in the nearby city (including the clan signet).

Sunken Ruins

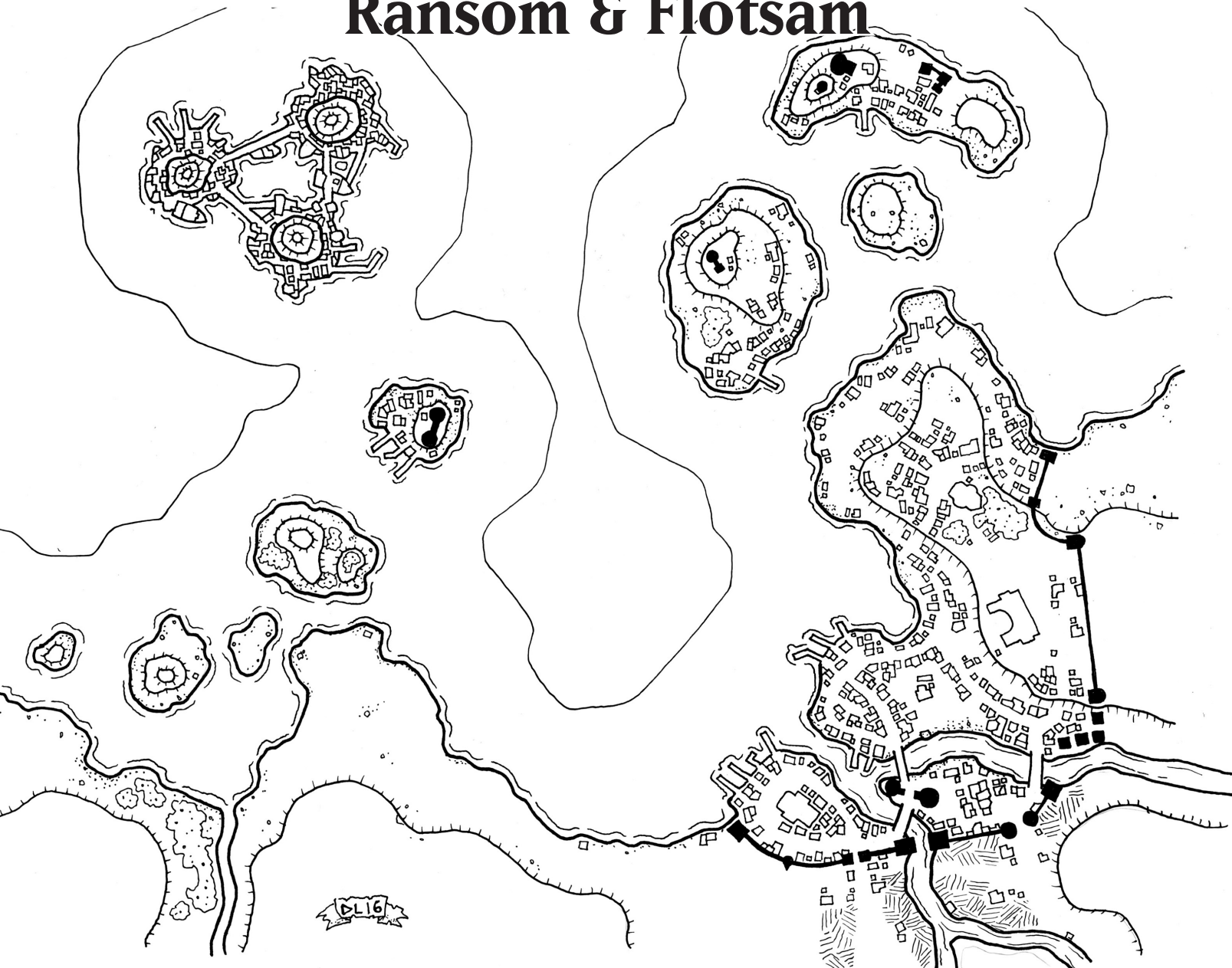


Outside of the Yellow City proper is “the old city” – or more precisely the ruins thereof slowly sinking into the swamp. This particular map explores a building that is partially submerged because the much heavier and larger library behind it has fallen completely below the level of the streets bringing the rear end of this building down with it.

Of course, it is hard to think of a better place to be sent on a quest than an ancient stone library that has sunk into the muck and ruins around it.

The majority of the library has collapsed also, with mud and debris blocking most of the structure, leaving three areas accessible from various underground passages which in turn are connected to an old road that was paved over at some point, leaving some old passages underground where the original road once was (and there are probably old sewers in turn under those old roads, if one were to dig further into the muck and debris).

Ransom & Flotsam



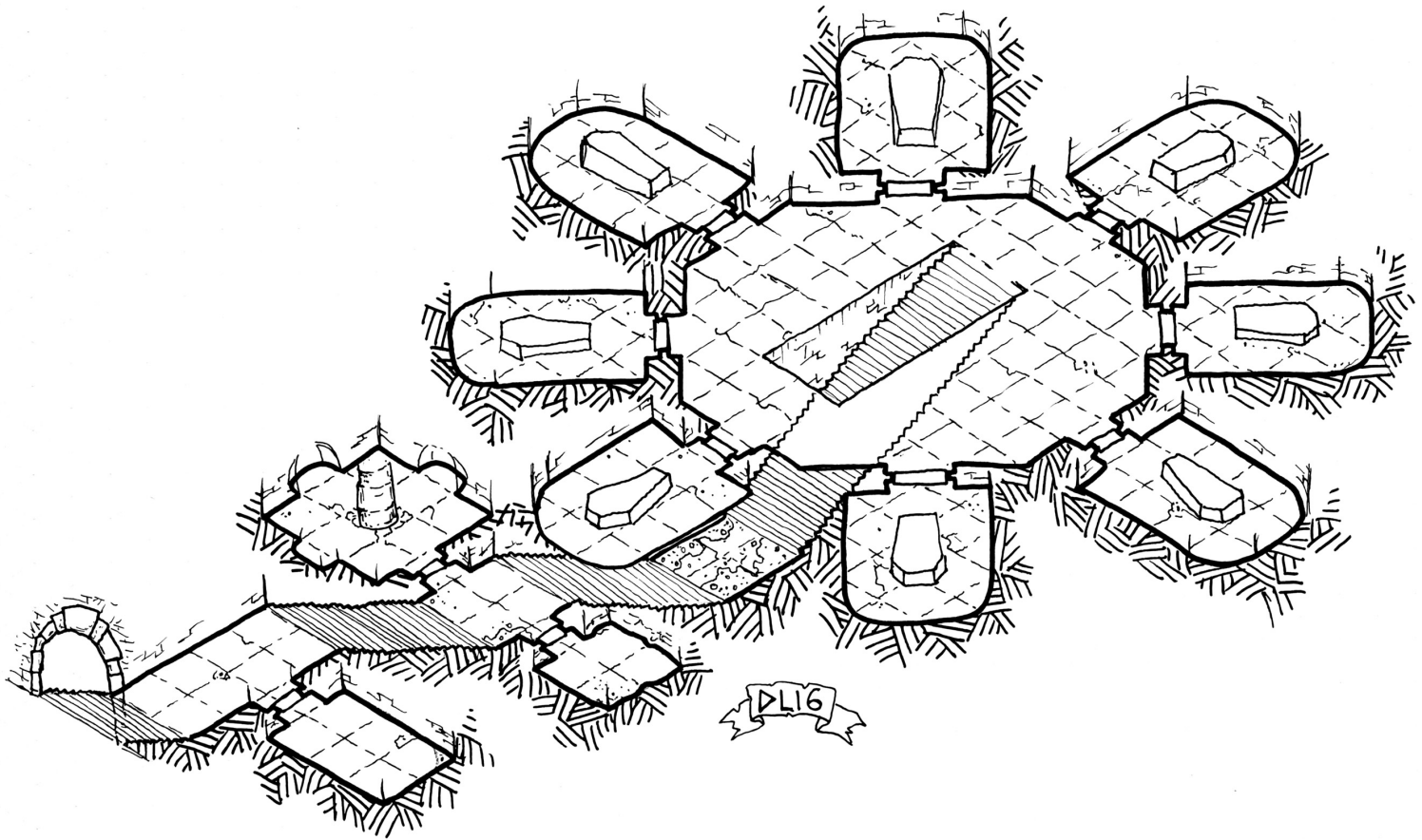
Ransom is just about what you'd expect from a city with that name. It was built by pirates and raiders as a landing and repair site for their ships in unfriendly waters. And with the huge amount of trust exhibited between the various factions involved in criminal oceanic activities, the city spread out quickly onto the various islands and hills around Ransom Bay.

Since its founding, Ransom has settled down quite a bit, but is still known as a pirate city and is home to several notable pirates and privateers and very little "legitimate" commerce. Farmers have settled in around the edges of town to sell crops to the locals and a number of skilled clinkers and other ship builders have been attracted to the city because of the quantity of work required and the abundance of looted coins offered.

The northernmost island in Ransom is home to a self-proclaimed "Pirate King" – noted to be both a particularly potent sorcerer as well as a very successful adventurer more than a traditional pirate. The island is the most fortified in the city, and is home to an odd mix of residents including a pair of hill giants.

The most interesting neighbourhood, however, is Flotsam. Three shining white spires of felsite jut out of the ocean floor in a near perfect equilateral triangle that have in turn become home to a rough structure of old ships and other woodwork and nautical detritus to form the floating neighbourhood. Flotsam is a fairly closed community although there are a few shops on the southernmost spire that attract trade from Ransomites looking for unique treasures recovered from the sea.

The Tomb of Eight

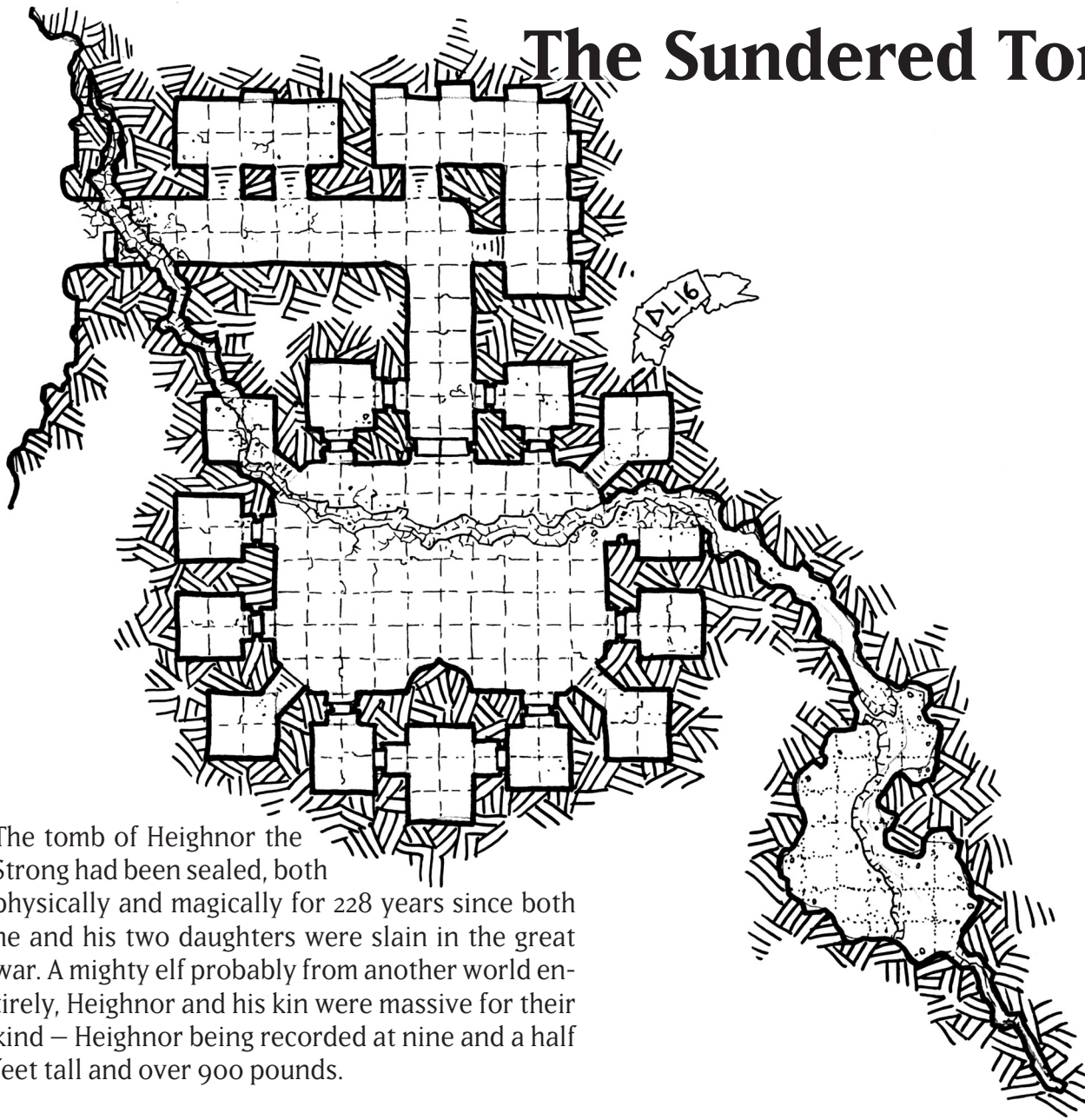


Near the ruins of the ancient wizarding school is a cliff that is home to a clever and hostile clan of hippogriffs. At the base of the cliff, now well concealed by the trees that grew from what were once decorative hedges along the path here, is the entrance to the Tomb of Eight.

The Tomb of Eight was constructed in the last decades of the school, after the great battle that preaged its eventual collapse. In that battle eight of the students died fighting against the besieging forces – the eight most promising students of the school who had taken it upon themselves to defend it when their teachers proved to be insufficient.

Even after defeating the besieging host, the deaths of the top tier of the student body spelled the end for the school. Thus they were entombed here and the school abandoned except for a token caretaker over the next 20 years. Within the next ten years, someone killed the caretaker and systematically tore down the towers of the school, leaving the ruins out in the rocky moors that can be found today – a quiet stone skeleton of what was probably the greatest school of wizardry.

The Sundered Tomb



The tomb of Heighnor the Strong had been sealed, both physically and magically for 228 years since both he and his two daughters were slain in the great war. A mighty elf probably from another world entirely, Heighnor and his kin were massive for their kind – Heighnor being recorded at nine and a half feet tall and over 900 pounds.

Two years ago the tomb's doors were thrown open by an earthquake that cracked the land around it – the same event is recalled in town when looking at Jerome's house, which now stands with the east side a full three feet higher than the west side. Terrified of what might be exposed within the tomb, the local farmers hired a few intrepid folk to examine the structure beyond the shattered doors.

What they reported back was a tomb complex with the final resting chambers still sealed by powerful magics. All three doors to the final chambers were still sealed and the magical seals were still intact. The earthquake and sundering had just breached the front entrance of the complex.

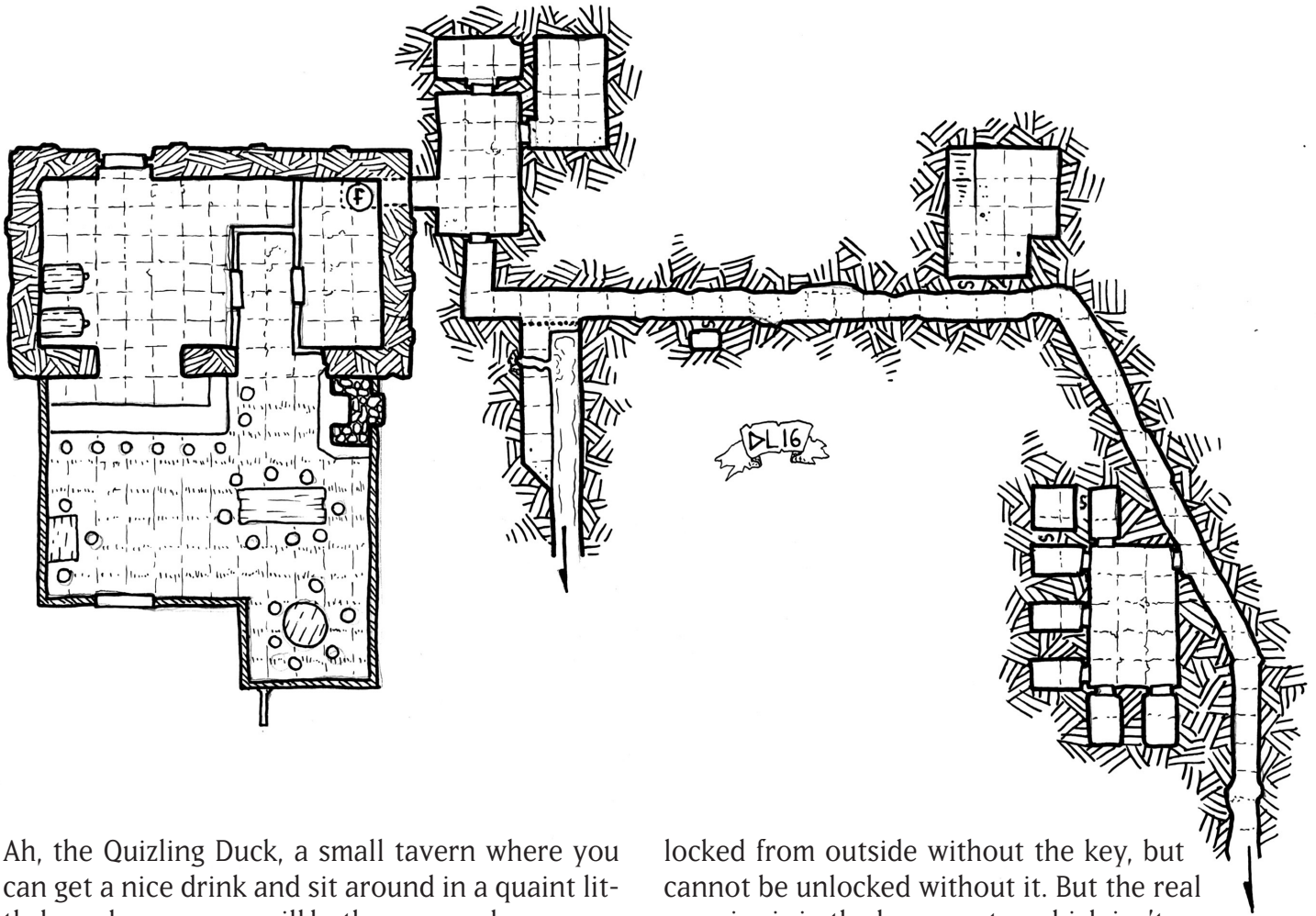
And the town went back to life as usual.

Until the hunter arrived.

A superhumanly strong and incredibly thin white elf-thing slipped into town one night and slaughtered three families, stealing their infant children away into the night. Darrek the herder swears he can hear their cries from within the tomb when nearby, but no one has the temerity to explore the tomb itself to find out.

And so now the townfolk seek you out, needing someone to find out if the seals have been broken and the elves (or whatever is left of them) haunt the lands again.

The Quizling Duck Tavern



Ah, the Quizling Duck, a small tavern where you can get a nice drink and sit around in a quaint little bar where no one will bother you and everyone seems pretty deep into their cups.

It's the kind of place where you don't expect anyone to talk to you, try to entertain you, or even comment on exactly how much of an alcoholic you are. It is, of course, also linked pretty tightly with the local thieves' guild (the Hander's Road Business Association).

The main structure of the tavern is an old stone building that serves as the back area, kitchen, and living space for the proprietor (Terrance Two-Thumbs – the fat and balding man covered in grease who waddles out to serve people beer at all hours of the day and night). The main tavern area is a wooden structure that was attached to the stone building when it stopped being a carpet-vendor's and started serving alcohol.

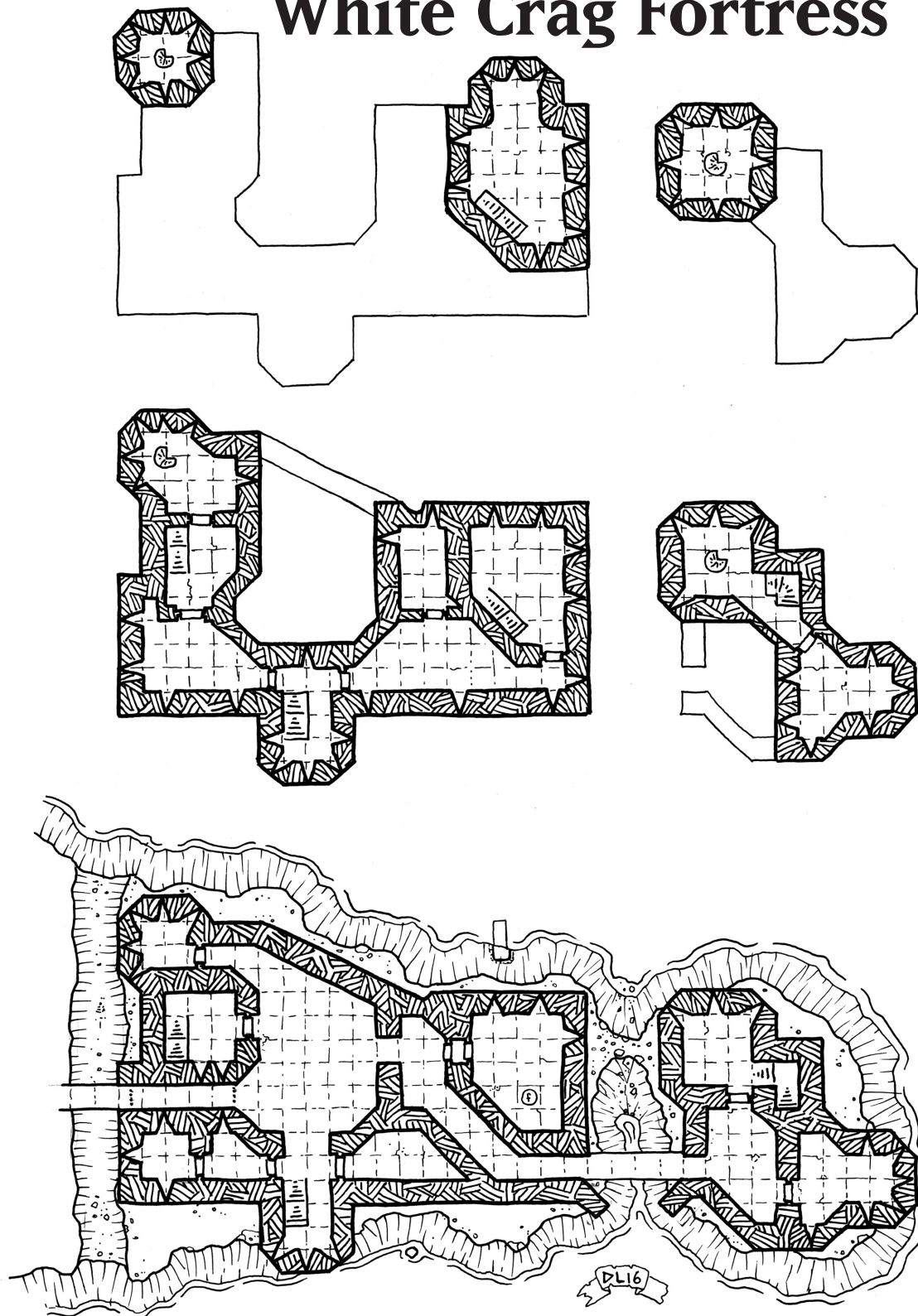
The front door of the building is usually open, and the back door is locked with a trick lock that can be

locked from outside without the key, but cannot be unlocked without it. But the real surprise is in the basement – which isn't even under the building proper (it was once the basement of the adjoining building which has since been demolished and replaced with wooden slum houses).

The southern door in the basement is also locked – but most guild members of the Hander's Road Business Association have a copy of the key. From there you can access a smuggling tunnel that leads down past Hander's Road to the docks, as well as passing past the sewers (although sewer access is restricted by a set of iron bars firmly ensconced in the stonework).

The chamber in the lower right of the map was once meant to be a crypt for the local church, but is now the store room for the Hander's Road Business Association smuggling operations with the various side rooms each being locked as well as the main door (and typically there is a guard or two posted down here if there are valuables in transit).

White Crag Fortress



No more than a generation ago did Hender, Warlord of the Two Realms, build the white fortress at the end of Merman's Bluff. A small and fiercely held chunk of white granite looking over the dark and choppy seas where once the local fisherfolk made deals with the merpeople of the Octopus Kingdom.

The fortress has never fallen, but has changed hands with the winds of politics and the changing fortunes of those who have tried to hold it. The current "castellan" of the fortress is a netherman (half-goblin) who uses it as part of his claim upon the title of Warlord – although none (even those who traded him the fortress) will acknowledge it.

Beneath White Crag

From White Crag Fortress he taxes the local farmers and fishermen lightly, but maintains an army of half-breed mercenaries that earns everyone's distrust.

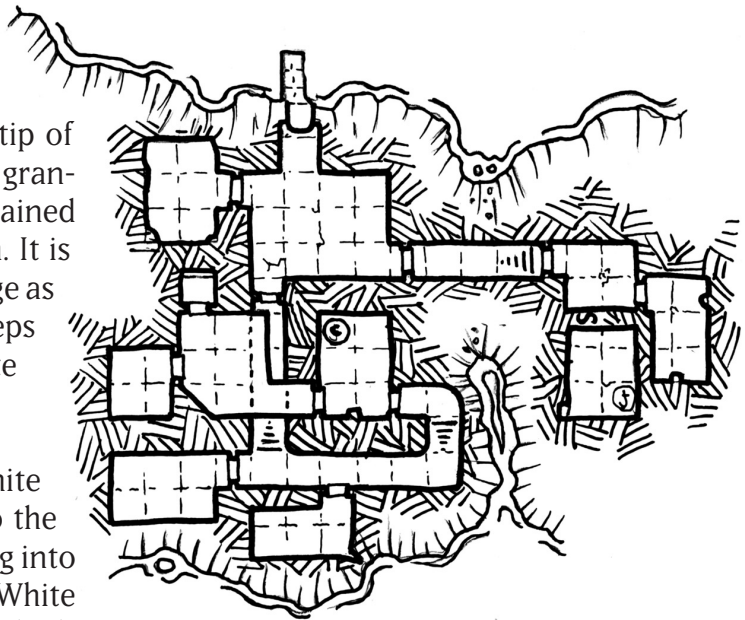
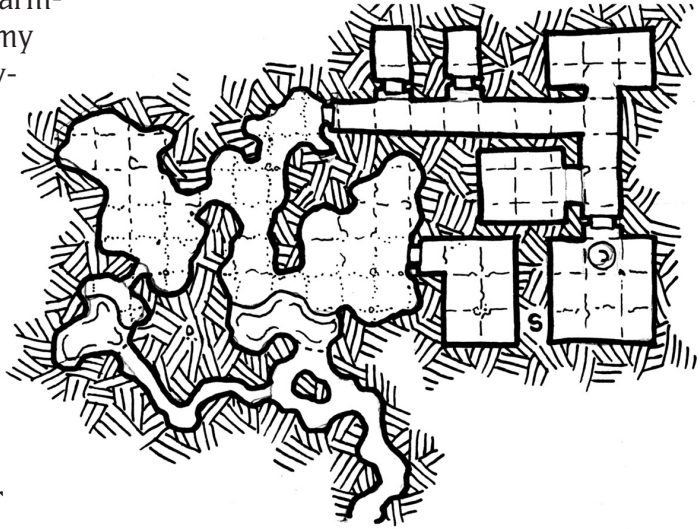
White Crag Fortress is two discrete constructions — the Bailey Fort and the Spire. The Bailey Fort is separated from the mainland by a ditch dug into the spur of stone it is built into, with a permanent wooden bridge across leading into the main gatehouses. The Bailey Fort is a fairly large multi-story affair with a fairly large central courtyard. Should the fortress ever be owned by someone of wealth and means, this courtyard would likely be covered with a wooden structure turning it into another great hall with additional stories above it.

The Spire looks out over the sea from the tip of Merman's Bluff. Still made of the same white granite, it is a cramped construction, restrained by the limited amount of land to work from. It is connected to the Bailey Fort via a stone bridge as well as a small tongue of rocky land that keeps the last part of the bluff from being a complete island.

In the side of Merman's Bluff beneath White Crag Fortress there is a small entrance into the rocky crag with a worked stone wharf leading into the dark choppy waters. This postern gate to White Crag Fortress is intended to be well guarded, although the original door has been removed after it got stuck too often from rusting hinges and lock as well as swollen oak from the constant battering from the sea. In time it should be replaced by a properly oiled and tarred door, but for the time being the gateway remains open.

The main level of the structures wind up under the structures of the Bailey Fort leading eventually to a trap door opening into the fort proper. These structures are used as storage, guard rooms, and an escape route in case of emergency.

There is also a passage that leads up under the Spire, however it lacks an accessway into that



structure (at one point there was such an access point, but a team of mechanical assassins used it to gain access to the spire and it was blocked off afterwards). This section contains a secret chamber that in turn has a trap door down to the lower chambers which are used as a secret dungeon for prisoners as well as an underwater escape route for those with the access and the means to travel underwater.

The tunnel leading underwater from these lowest passages proceeds 130 feet further from Merman's Bluff and into a small cave 20 feet under water.

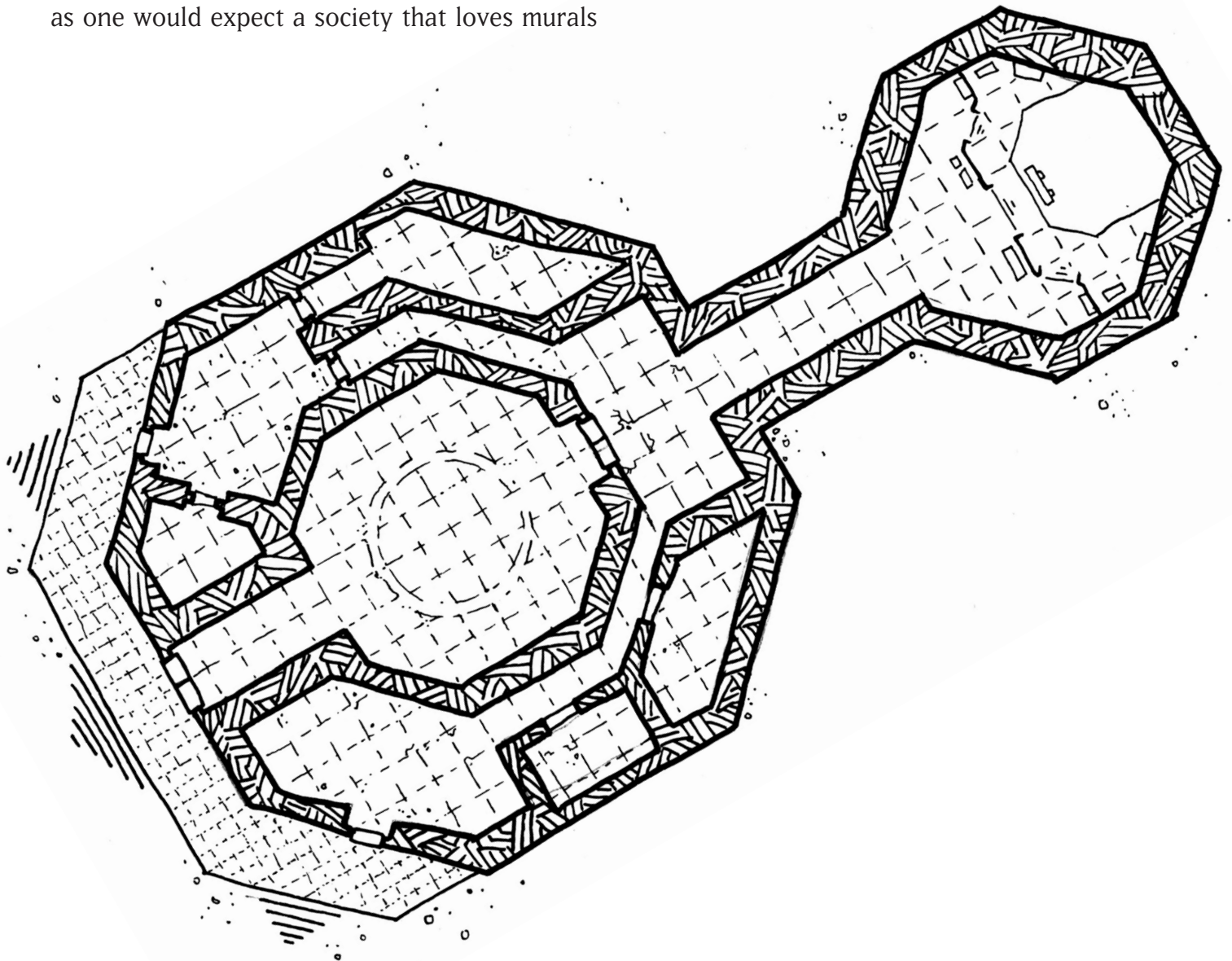
The Octagonal Station

In the Empire of the Petal Throne setting, there is an ancient planetary transit system dug deep underground that links into the underworlds of many major cities and to some places unknown except to those who have ridden within the tube cars that travel this system. As these were built over sixty thousand years ago, many elements of the system have been destroyed or rebuilt in the styles of more current societies.

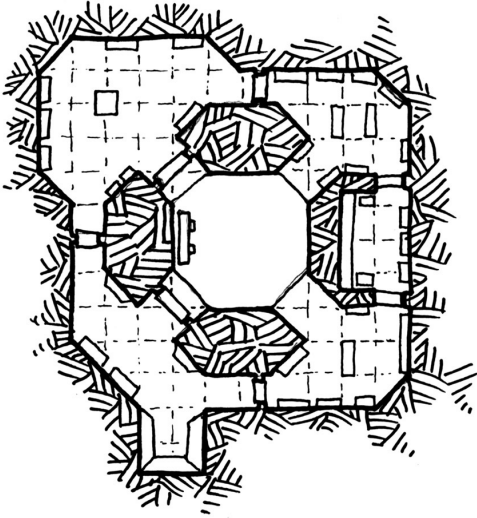
This is the surface access point to such a link into the system. The double-octagon structure was built in stone around the platform at the end of the smaller structure. That platform is an elevator that leads down to a maintenance level and then further to the tube car station itself. The surface structure itself is made of stone and is decorated as one would expect a society that loves murals

and pictographs would decorate an airport or bus terminal — with bas-reliefs and pictographs of people travelling.

Of course, this particular structure was abandoned ages past when the region's economy and ecology collapsed. Sealed into the main chamber is some strange demonic entity, but the side doors have been breached by the elements, leading past the main chamber and into the darker interior structures and finally to the elevator itself. Activating the elevator is a much harder task for a group of medieval technology adventurers, as the whole structure is without power and who knows if the hardware would even work if powered up.

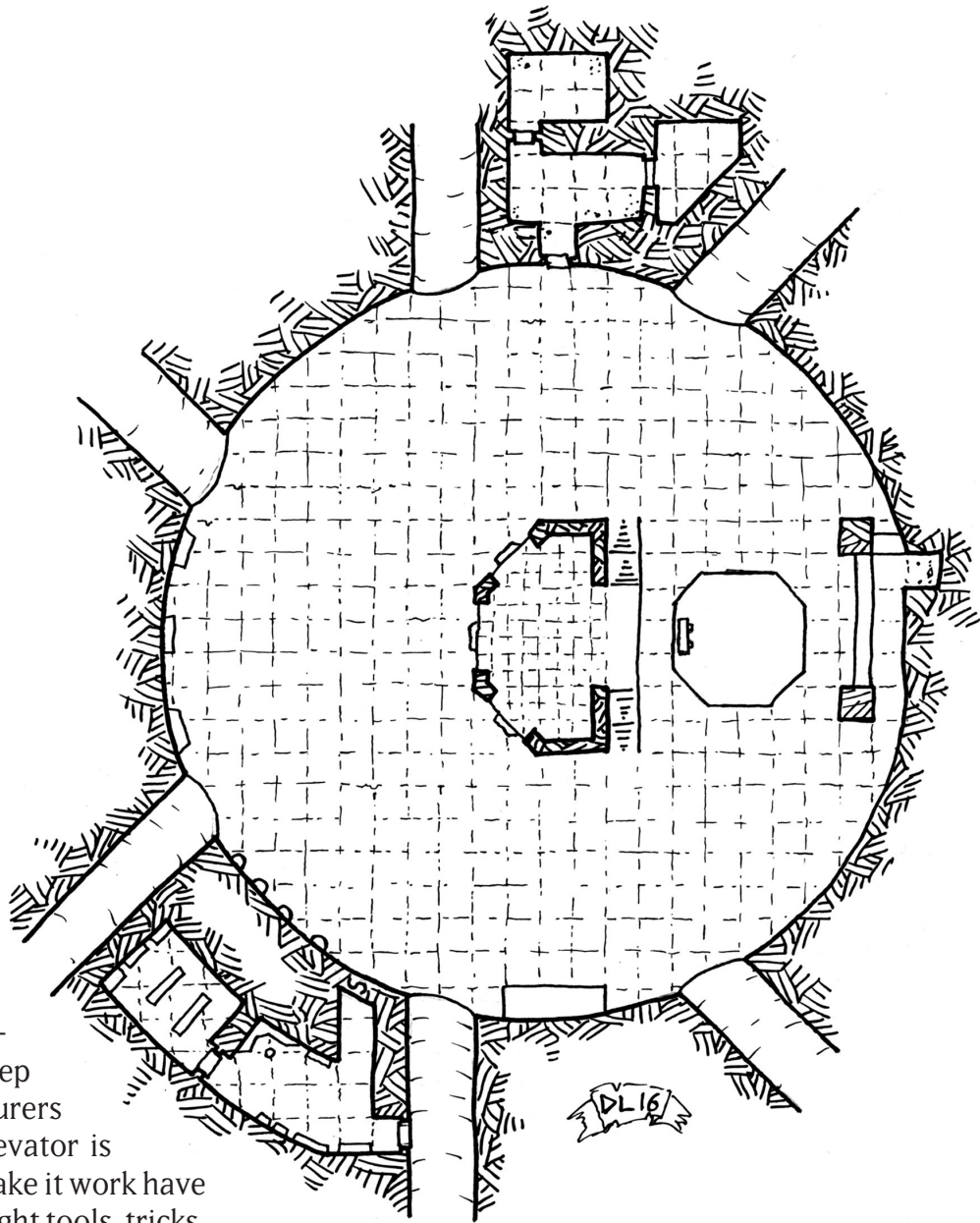


The Tube-Car Station



The Octagonal Station at first feels like an old temple of some kind, but at the back of the structure is an old elevator that goes deep underground. For most adventurers this will mean nothing, as the elevator is ancient and the technologies to make it work have long ago lost power. But with the right tools, tricks, or know-how, a group of explorers might make the platform descend...

Part way down the descent is a small sublevel that the platform will skip if not specifically set to stop there. This structure is a mix of technical, repair, and control facilities for what lies below. While the control panels have no current function, there are many shelves and stockpiles of ancient hardware that were once used to maintain the structure and machineries, some of which might turn out to be useful (and many which are not... like boxes of 60 thousand year old detergent).

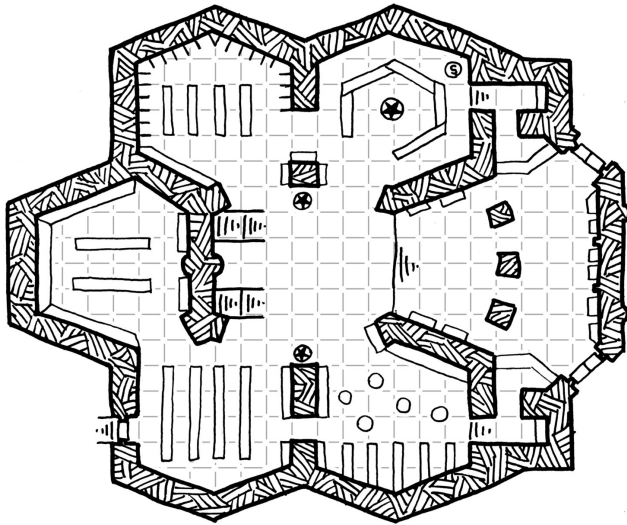


In the depths below is the true purpose of the structure – a large round chamber with six round tunnels leading into it. This is a rare tube car station where multiple tube car lines meet and can change routes in order to travel throughout the underworld of Tekumel. Sure, many of the ancient tunnels have collapsed or been sabotaged, but the network still exists in chunks and sequences, and nodes like this are essential to getting around the areas that were destroyed by disasters both natural and planned.

The Great Library

On the Guilder's Way in the Violet City, the Great Library stands out not because of its massive stonework and height, but in the simplicity of its exterior when compared to the ostentatious structures of the five great guilds of the violet city and the dozens of minor guilds who work hard to make themselves seem as important.

tors in the atrium as well as the central court up the stairs. Over 80 feet across at its widest point, the atrium also has two desks where staff make themselves available to visitors and customers. While anyone can enter the library itself, those unaccompanied by a librarian will not be allowed on the upper levels and will find themselves close-

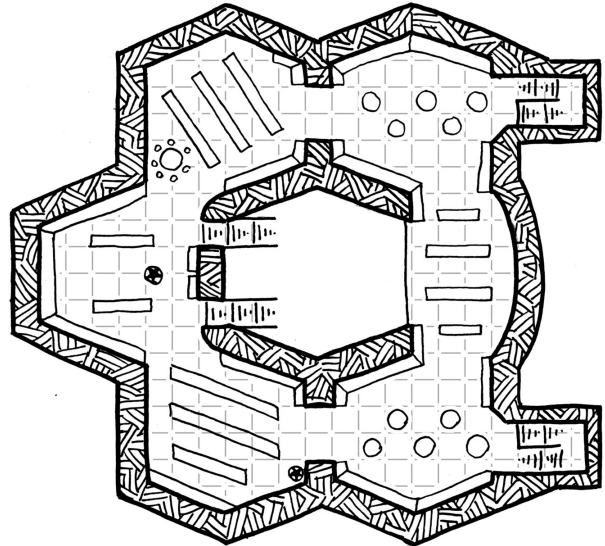


Ground Level

An immense hexagonal structure built from the local stone, the Great Library of the Violet City contains one of the larger collections of written works in a variety of formats to be found in the kingdoms (primarily in codex form, but sections of scrolls, concertina-folded codices, and tablets exist in various wings of the structure).

Heights of the various levels are not listed in the description as that depends on how extensive and extreme you want the library to appear. If ceiling height is 15 feet, then the library will still hold a prodigious number of tomes, but with 35 foot ceilings, then the various shelves suddenly require ladders, and untold counts of ancient tomes and scrolls can fill the shelves dating back ages.

Entrance to the ground floor through the front doors leads to a lower-level atrium with stairs up eight feet into the library proper. The atrium often serves as a gathering place for those who would rather not find themselves in a tavern or public house to meet, and during times of political or social unrest there are often doomsayers and agita-

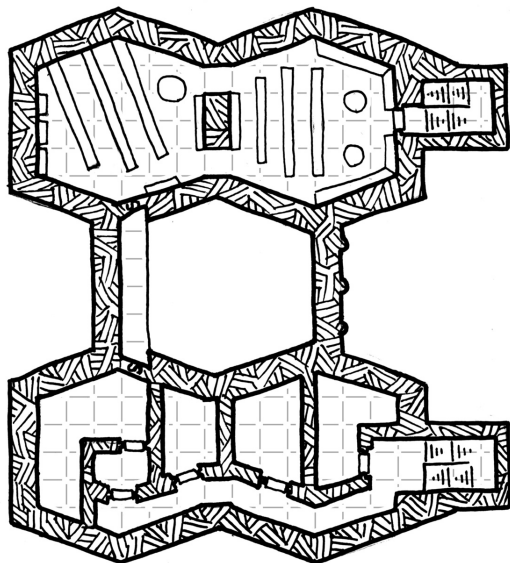


Level 2

ly watched in the main level stacks. The cost to get the assistance of a staff librarian depends on their specialty, with junior librarians who can aim you roughly where you want to go and basically act as a "hall pass" into the building having an hourly fee of 2gp (most of which is kept by the library), specialists in most topics are between 8 and 15gp per hour, and the senior librarians and sages charging between 25 and 100gp.

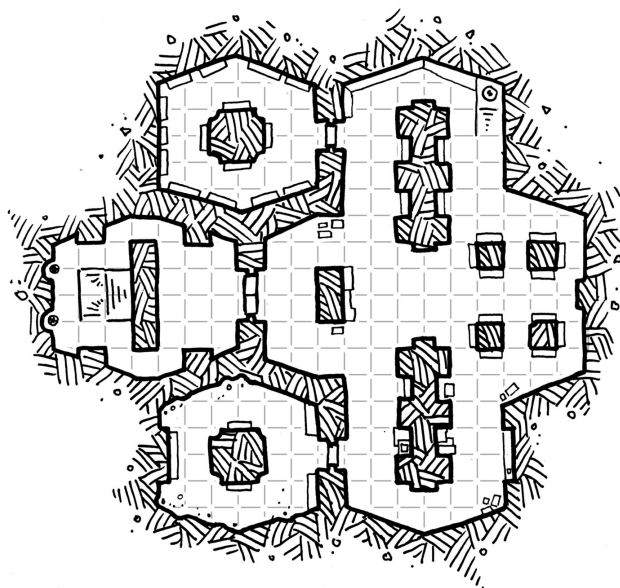
Shelves in this area are stocked with recent works about economics, local religion, laws, guilds, basic history, and so on. The upper right room is an incredibly boring collection of scrolls and tablets of civic law and economics with the statue of the founder of the Violet City watching over from the centre. In the back corner of the chamber is a secret trap door used to get to the basement levels of the library. The lower right room contains a number of tables for those needing to work in groups or needing large surfaces to unroll or unfold the larger works here. The upper left room contains a large number of individual work stations where junior librarians spend years transcribing texts to

new books in their chosen field of study. Some of these stations are usually free for visitors looking for a quiet space to read.



Level 3

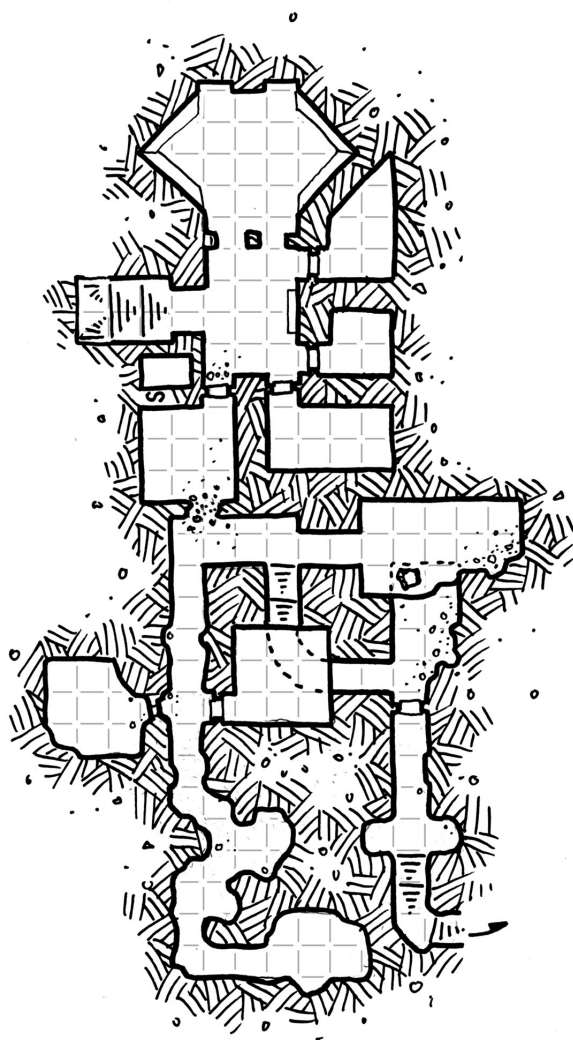
Level two contains more esoteric works, delving into matters philosophical, historical, medicinal, magical and even extra-planar. A few guards (rented from the Securities Guild) are posted at the top and bottom of the stairs leading to this level from the central court to keep riff-raff out, and the whole level is much quieter than the main concourse. The vast majority of what would bring adventurers to the library would be found here – treatises on geography, history, plant lore, earth lore, legends, religions, other planes of existence and how they are said to be reached and so on.



Basement

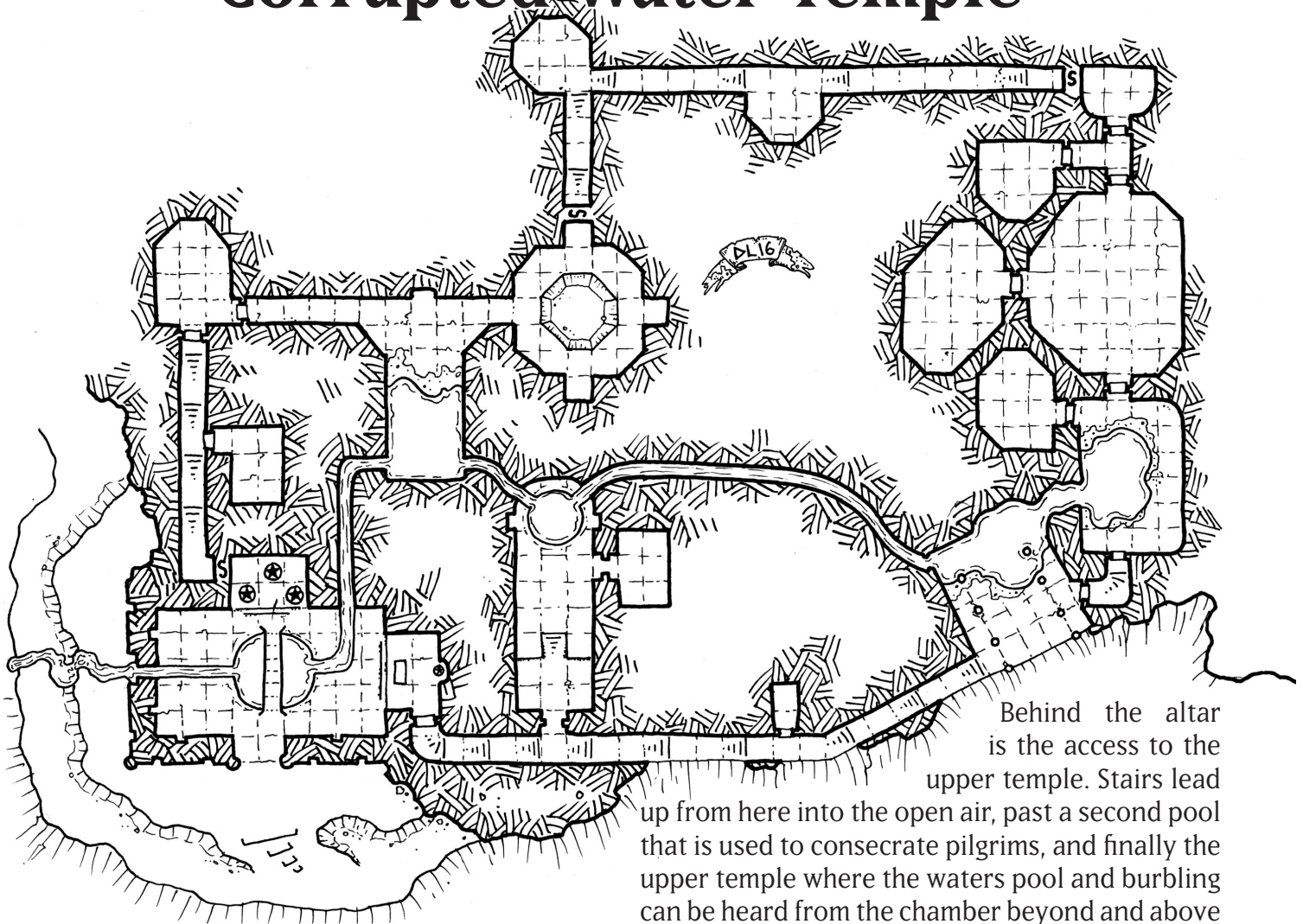
The upper level is divided in half by the central court. On the south side of the structure are the chambers of the senior librarians – priests, sages and wizards of significant age and knowledge. On the north side are the closed stacks containing texts with actual magical formulae, tomes of dark heresies, and books that would be dangerous to read (or even touch in some cases) without proper precautions and appropriate supervision. The doors to the closed stacks are locked and magelocked and only the senior librarians have the keys and permissions to enter and leave.

Connecting the two sides of the upper level is a secret walkway between the senior sage's office and the stacks. Sometimes the sage (and the priest, his old friend) will stand upon the walkway out of sight of the comings and goings below and use magical aids to listen to the conversations taking place on the lower levels of the library.



Sub-Basement

Corrupted Water Temple



Nested in the mountains above the Ironflow River is a temple consecrated to a water goddess – a path leads up to the temple from the west, but from the south face you can see not only the two temple structures cut into the face of the mountain, but also a long section of stairs leading between the lower and upper temples.

The temple is divided into three sections – lower temple, upper temple and the secret temple.

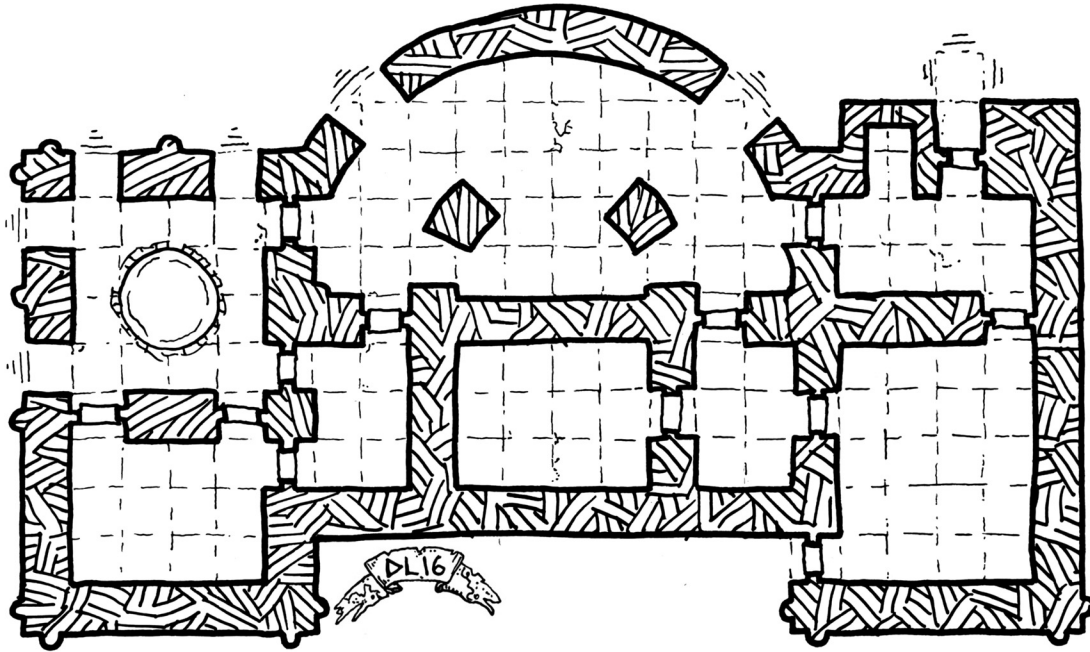
The lower temple is what most people who make the climb into the mountains will see. Statues of three incarnations of the water god look over a reflecting pool that is constantly fed from the upper chambers before overflowing down into a stream that crosses the mountain path to get here. A second elevated niche contains a smaller statue of another sacred figure of the water god as well as an altar for ceremonies.

Behind the altar is the access to the upper temple. Stairs lead up from here into the open air, past a second pool that is used to consecrate pilgrims, and finally the upper temple where the waters pool and burbling can be heard from the chamber beyond and above where the waters originate from a magical spring.

Behind the spring chamber are the main chambers of the temple where acolytes spend their days and nights and the senior priest manages the temple affairs.

Linking the upper and lower temples is the secret temple. Many years ago someone transported a young aboleth to the secret temple where it has lived in the secret pool since. At one point it was the secret tool of the priesthood and the temple, but as it has slowly grown and outlived the people who trapped it here, it has become the power behind the temple, pulling the strings from (quite literally) behind the scenes. The beast is too large to exit the temple except magically now, and while it controls the residents and priests, its mood is ever fouler as it longs to be anywhere but in this 70' by 30' chamber it is trapped within.

The Temple of Red Waters



One of the least imposing of the structures along Temple Hill is the Temple of Red Waters. While a fair sized temple in its own right, at a mere 16 feet tall and slightly over 100 feet across, it seems to be but a small shrine among the sanctuaries of the other priesthoods of the hill.

The temple is dedicated to a god of wine and animal husbandry who's name is all but forgotten aside from the priesthood that works the site. His worship is linked in turn to that of the mountain river god over the nearby Ironflow river (who's much grander temple was posted last week).

The common name for the temple is taken from the wine-coloured pool of water that is maintained in the enclosed portico. The main temple chamber and the pool portico are open to the outside air (making them more popular in the summer and significantly less so in the winter months) and other portions of the temple are kept locked although all temple staff have the single key that unlocks all doors.

The area directly behind the pool portico is where temple records are kept (mostly tracking some local lineages and basic temple accounts), with the smaller chamber off to the side being used to store both the wine appropriate to the worship of a god of wine as well as the red dye used to keep the temple pool the appropriate colour (although the act of dying the pool is only done in the dark of night). Other chambers are used as living quarters and an office for temple business.

But of course, not all is well within the temple – it remains linked to the water temple high on the hills over the Ironflow river, and thus to the corruption being spread from the secret halls within. The temple is also home to a secret treasure moved down from that same temple a generation ago by a priest who saw the growing corruption – a relic of the faith that is currently sitting on a shelf behind the head priest's desk, its provenance unknown.

The Warden's Riverside Hold

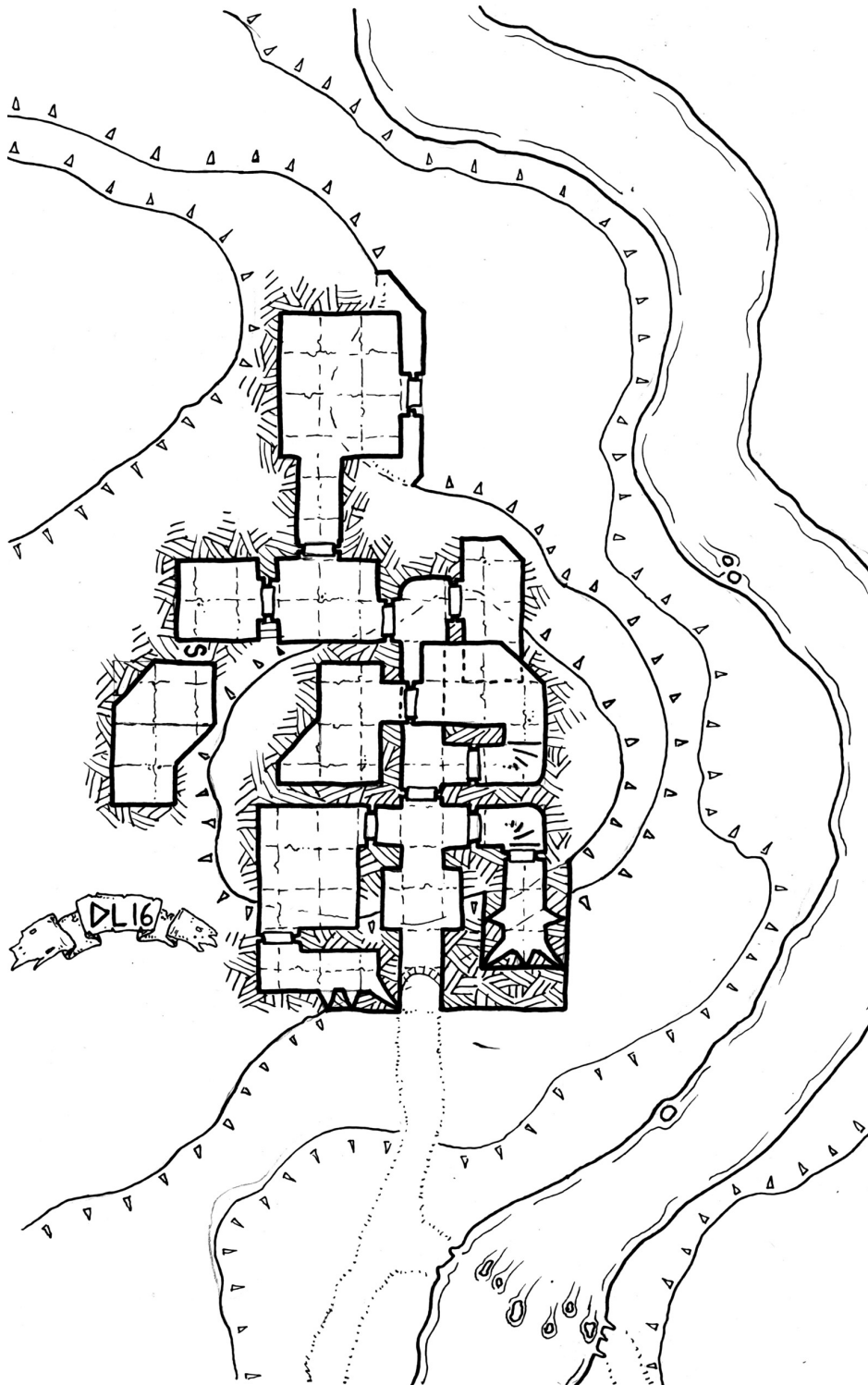
The Warden is a master of the wilderness east of Grant's Town – some would call him a ranger or just a guardian who keeps the humanoids and monstrosities of the wilds from infringing too much on the commerce and lives of more civilized folk.

The Warden's hold is roughly two days on horseback east of Grant's Town; dug into the side of an

unnamed estuary of the Holden River. Not much of the structure is visible initially to those traveling past – the front shows a two-tiered stony structure that has been build into the hillside with some defensive arrow slits by the entrance on one side and above it on the other. From the back a small stone structure is embedded in a curve in the hill with a single door in the middle of the wall.

Because it is the only structure within a few days ride, the Warden designed the hold with the entrance area specifically big enough that people and animals can seek cover within during bad weather even when the Warden is not around – although he keeps all three doors under very secure locks as they lead both into the defensive structures and into the hold proper. The hold itself is a multi-chambered affair over two levels with a secret room hidden off to the side where the Warden keeps odd treasures and critical supplies.

The room is accessed by a secret door that slides into the floor initially exposing a small niche above the secret room that usually has a few hundred gold pieces and some local maps within it. However, a secret catch inside the niche can be held and the secret door lowered even lower into the floor, exposing the 30" tall entrance into the secret chamber beyond.



Lair of the Harpy Sorceresses

A pair of the foulest harpy sorceresses settled into these caves and excavations about 20 years ago. The rocky mesas and shattered stones of the badlands extend for days in every direction – a mix of erosion, heaving land, and the warring of ancient titans creating landscapes of shattered rock, gullies, and canyons.

Not obvious from above or from the entrances to the lair, these caves were also once home to someone who took the time to fix them up and smooth floors out and generally upgrade them from shattered tunnels and crevasses into a functional lair with multiple areas and access points.

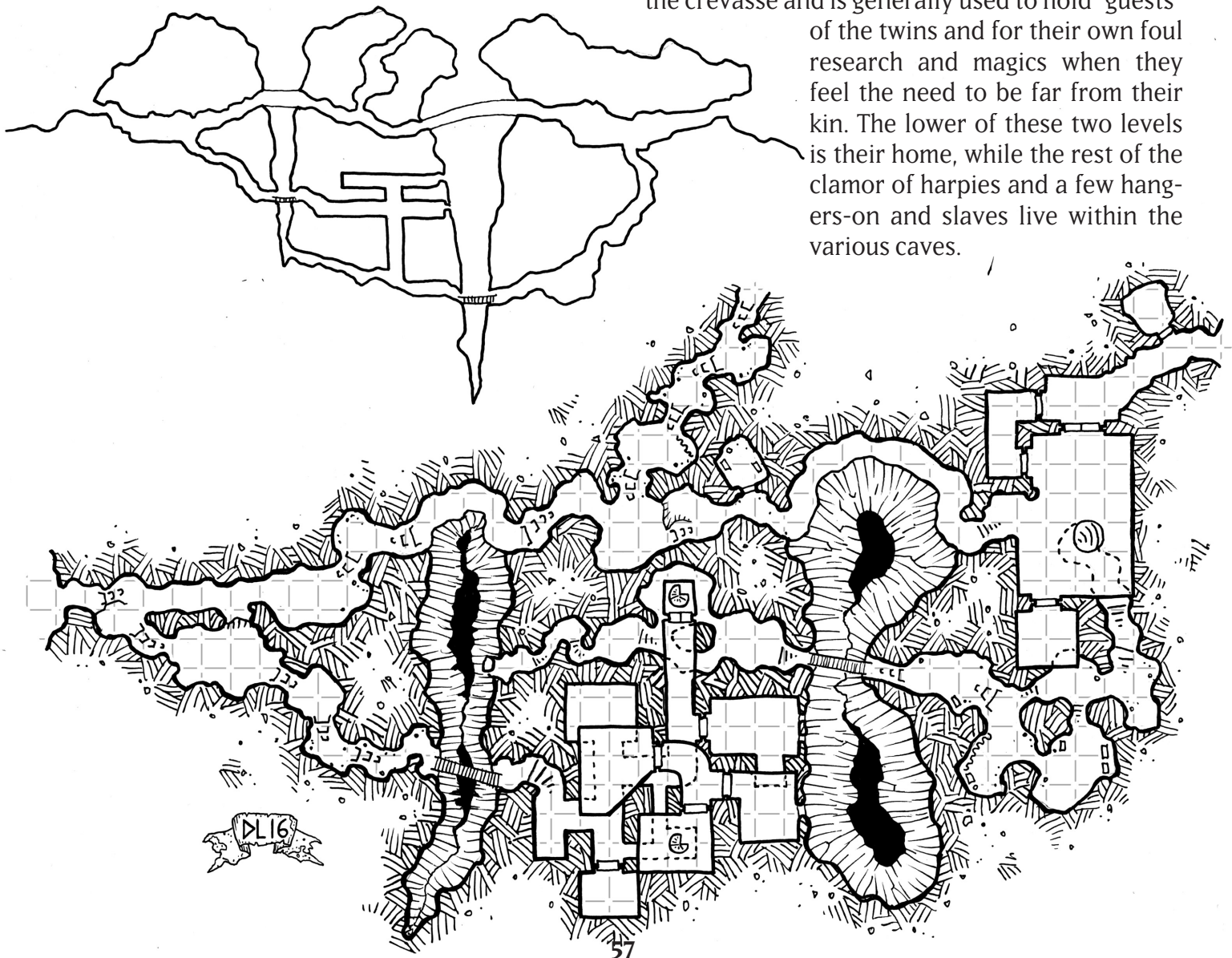
Originally, the Harpies left the structure as they found it, with the old bridges rotted out. But foul magics and the years have taken their toll on the

beastly sorceresses, and they have recently rebuilt the bridges to help support foot traffic in and out of the structure – mostly for transporting provisions and prisoners, but also because both feel their age in their wings and one can barely fly except in the most exigent of circumstances.

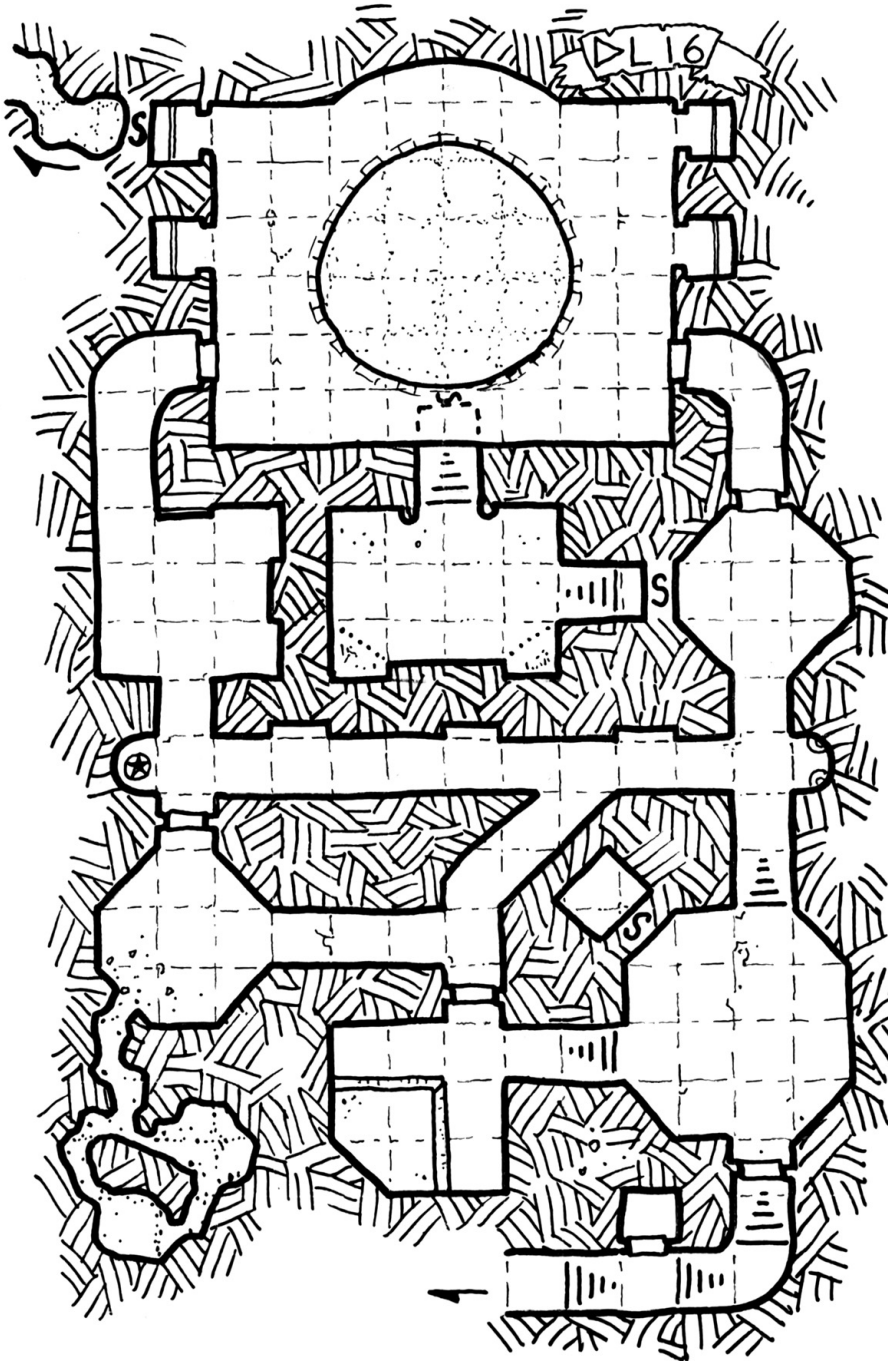
Most of the lair is foul with harpy feathers and excrement and both crevasses sport mounds of bones at their bottoms. A large flock of vultures circle the shattered stone of the lair, attracted to the foul smells and even worse eating habits.

The only sections that are even remotely clean are the two levels in the centre of the lair which are home to the sorceresses proper. The upper level of these two sections is only accessible by stairs and through a small niche window overlooking the crevasse and is generally used to hold “guests”

of the twins and for their own foul research and magics when they feel the need to be far from their kin. The lower of these two levels is their home, while the rest of the clamor of harpies and a few hangers-on and slaves live within the various caves.



The Orcus Pit



The dead stir.

Investigations at the graveyard and nearby give no reason, but the dead refuse to remain where they belong. Guards have been posted, brave souls have spent the night watching for the foul necromancer that is bringing them back... but to no avail.

If anything, the constant paranoia about the graveyard and the local undead makes things easier for the ancient Orcus cult in the city. They gather nightly now in the basement of the Travenis Estate under the guise of a group of concerned citizens who are trying to figure out what to do about the problems – while not condoning the “horrendous and blasphemous” demands of the citizens who want all the dead to be burned instead of buried.

In the depths of the basement of the estate is the Orcus Pit, a massive shallow pit around which they conduct their rites as they drop dead bodies into the pit demanding the powers of the demon prince of the undead.

Evidently the rituals are working.

Because the dead are stirring.

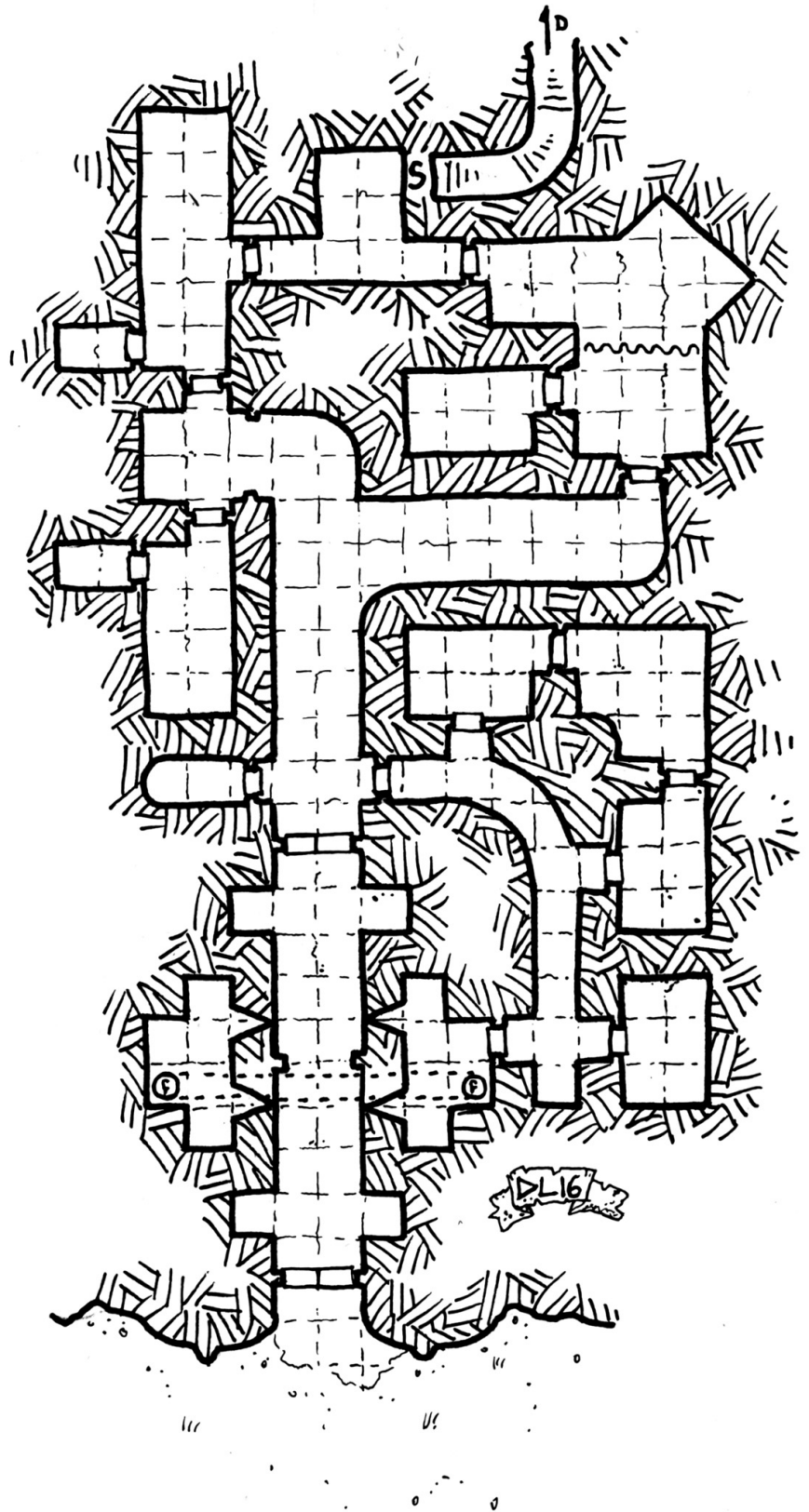
Dugan's Hold

Cut into the old quarry hills east of Javelin Hill are a pair of stone faces that glower sternly at those who come this way. The faces are of the Sorceress of Javelin Hill who's name has been forgotten, and her husband Jethrun Dugan who was the reeve of Javelin Hill. Between the faces are a set of doors, now in poor repair, that lead into Dugan's Hold.

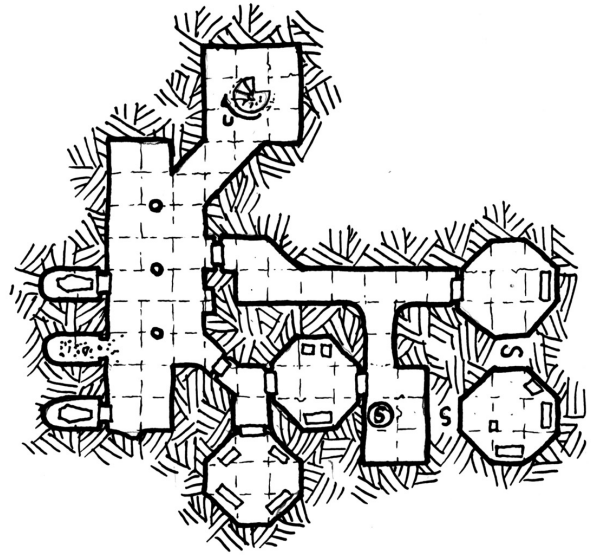
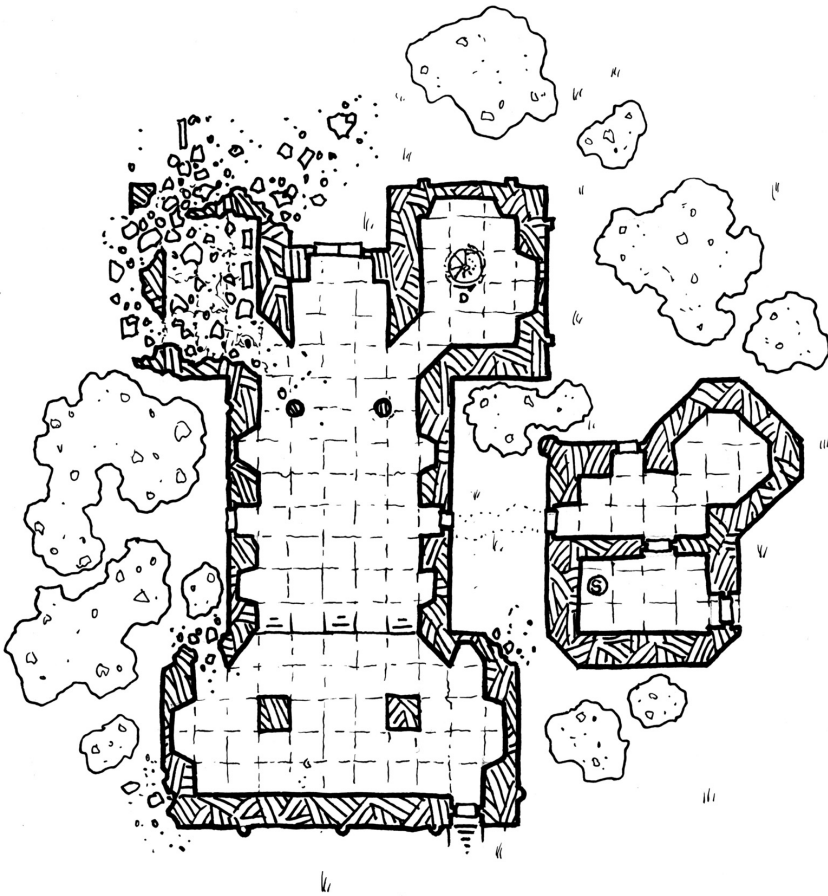
Built a generation later than the faces were carved, Dugan's Hold was a small military command base cut out of the stone of the quarry hills with the magics of the earth temple. It was used as a rallying point for dwarven and human military forces during the great war, and was also home to the birth of the Prince of Aleath while that city was under siege.

The new Duchess of Javelin Hill has interest in both the history and military uses of the hold and has intended to go clean it up for a few years now, but is constantly finding herself overwhelmed with the day to day work of both the priesthood that she is a member of as well as the management of the ever-growing small city on the edge of the economically aggressive Satrapy next door.

Perhaps if other adventurers were nearby, she could send one of her dwarven companions along with them to search the place and clear it for her eventual use.



The Vansho Reliquary



The Paladin Vansho may have been an oathbreaker and fallen from the path of his noble benefactor, but none can claim he wasn't blessed by some entity that gave him the might and motivation to strike down several lords of other worlds in his quest to break free from the bonds of outsiders. After his death, split asunder by a soul-feeding blade wielded by unknown assassins, the Vansho Reliquary was founded on the site where his body refused to be reanimated. Within the reliquary are not only remains of Vansho himself, but other pieces and fetishes left over from some of the potent enemies he had slain prior to his fall.

But there are not that many who remember his exploits beyond him turning his back on the church and priesthood who gave him his paladin status

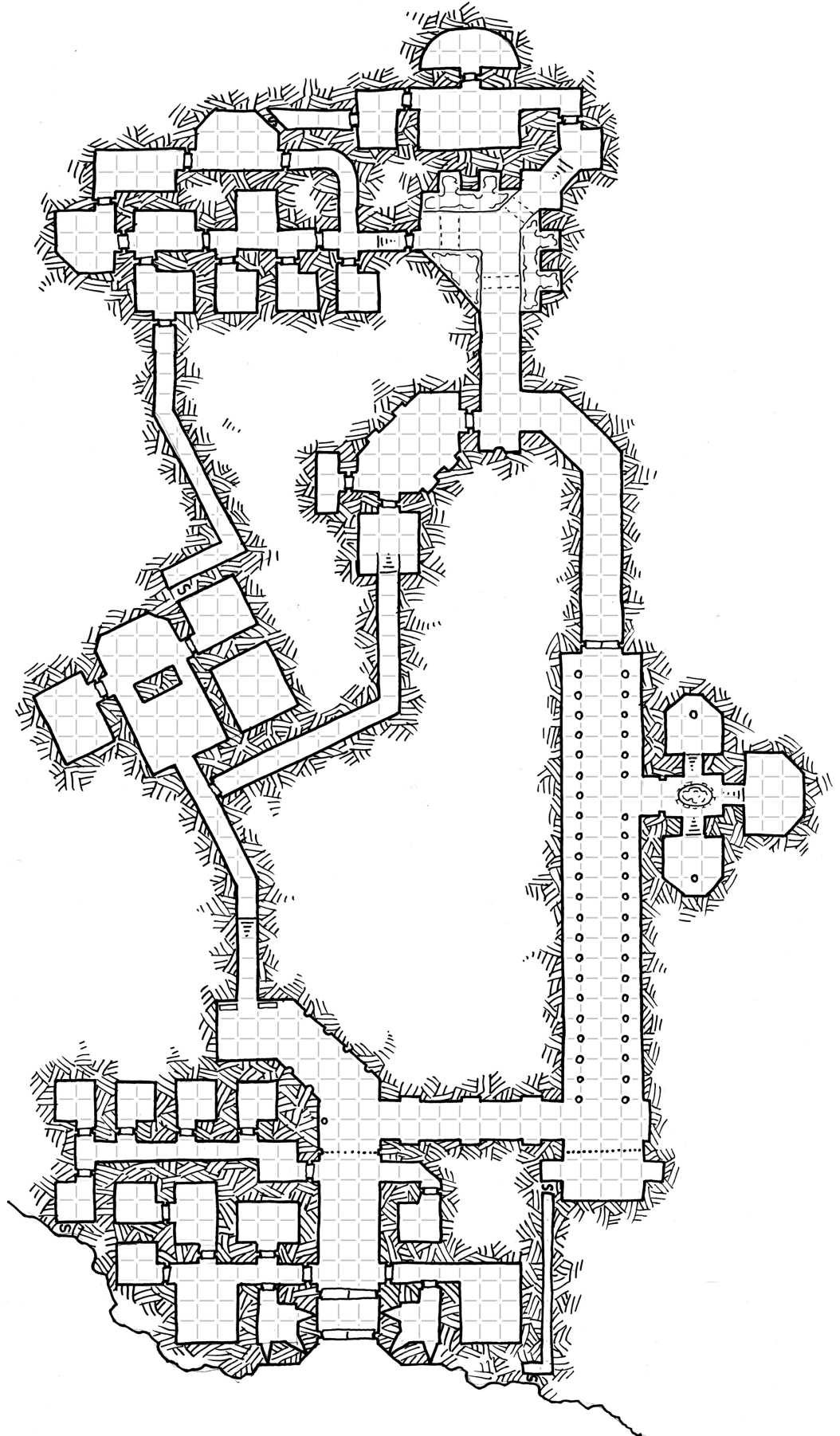
in the first place. The Vansho Reliquary has been slowly declining into ruins for who knows how long. Not exactly hidden away, it has merely fallen from anyone's attention, leaving the caretaker without the funds, the skill, the assistance, and often the will to keep the structure from its eventual collapse.

But of course, there are still relics within the reliquary — pieces and reminders of potent extradimensional beings that some would even call gods, not to mention Vansho's own relics including his sundered armour, helm, and skull. And of the fell power that killed him? It would probably not be amused to see Vansho's legacy returned to the world.

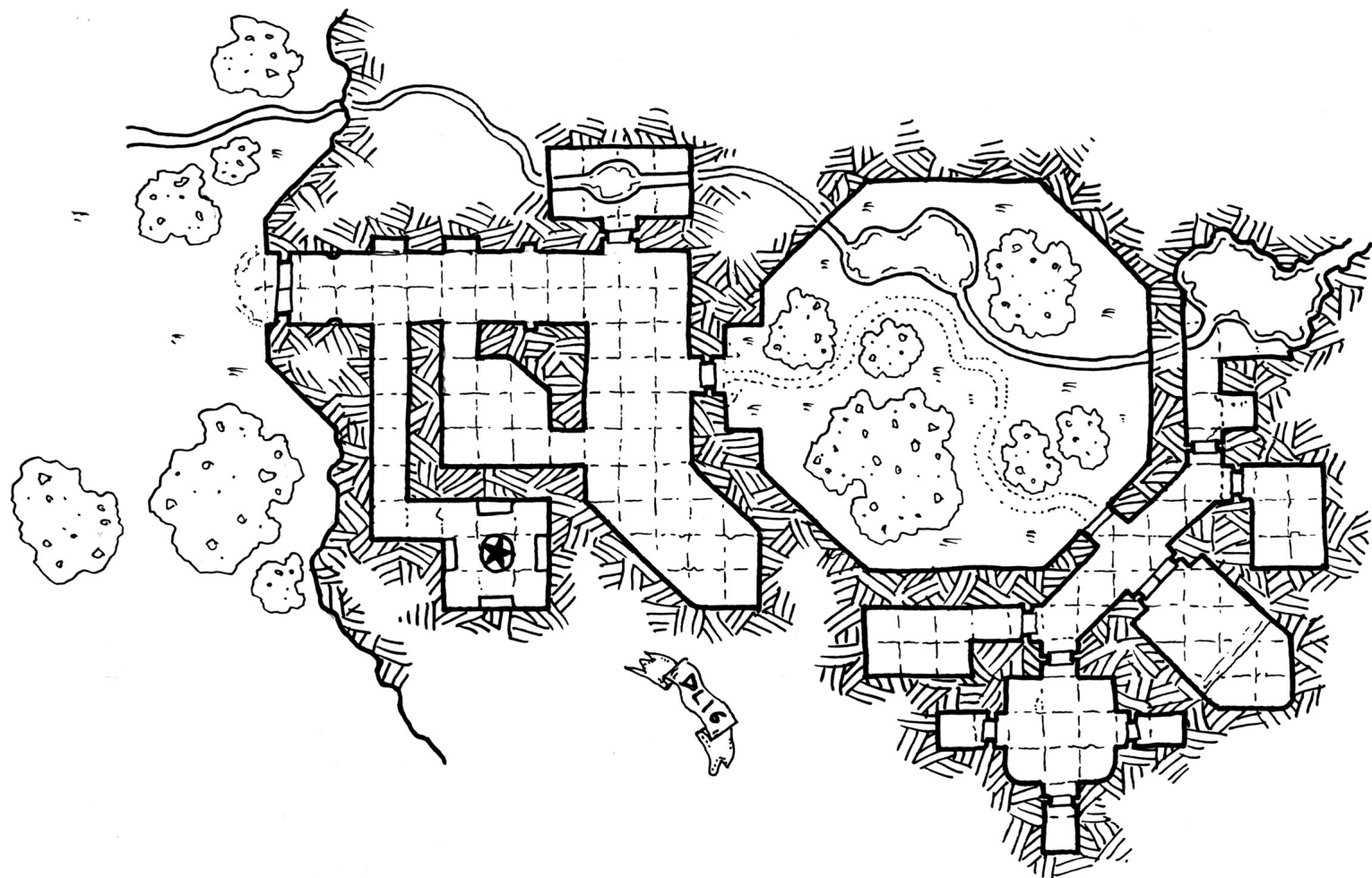
Emberpike Hall

Obscenities have taken over where noble men once battled against the oppression of the Kale empire. Something is said to have entered into Emberpike Hold's water supply, hidden deep within Emberpike Hall, and the once-noble Fellen clan have abandoned their fiefs and the old hold structures outside the hall were put to the torch by parties unknown (although the destruction is commonly attributed to the Fellen clan itself, gone mad due to the contamination from below).

Emberpike Hall was the "foundation" of Emberpike Hold – a set of limestone caves that were expanded and cleaned up to create the existing hall structure, with the backmost caves opening into a massive underground water reservoir. Because the Fellen clan was very security-conscious during the wars, maps of the interior of Emberpike Hall are rarely even close to accurate except for the basic routing from the front doors, through the pillared hall and back to the reservoir chamber – the chambers that spread out from these points are relatively unknown to outsiders except that they exist and can be confusing to explorers.



Under the Dome of the Copper Sun



Twisted things grow under the dome of the copper sun...

Illuminated by the eternal glow of the copper sun embedded in the ceiling of the dome, foul things have taken root. The glade seems healthy and abundant, although the orange lighting makes everything look a little brassy. The trees are healthy, the grass lush, and birds sing – a distinct difference from most underground lairs.

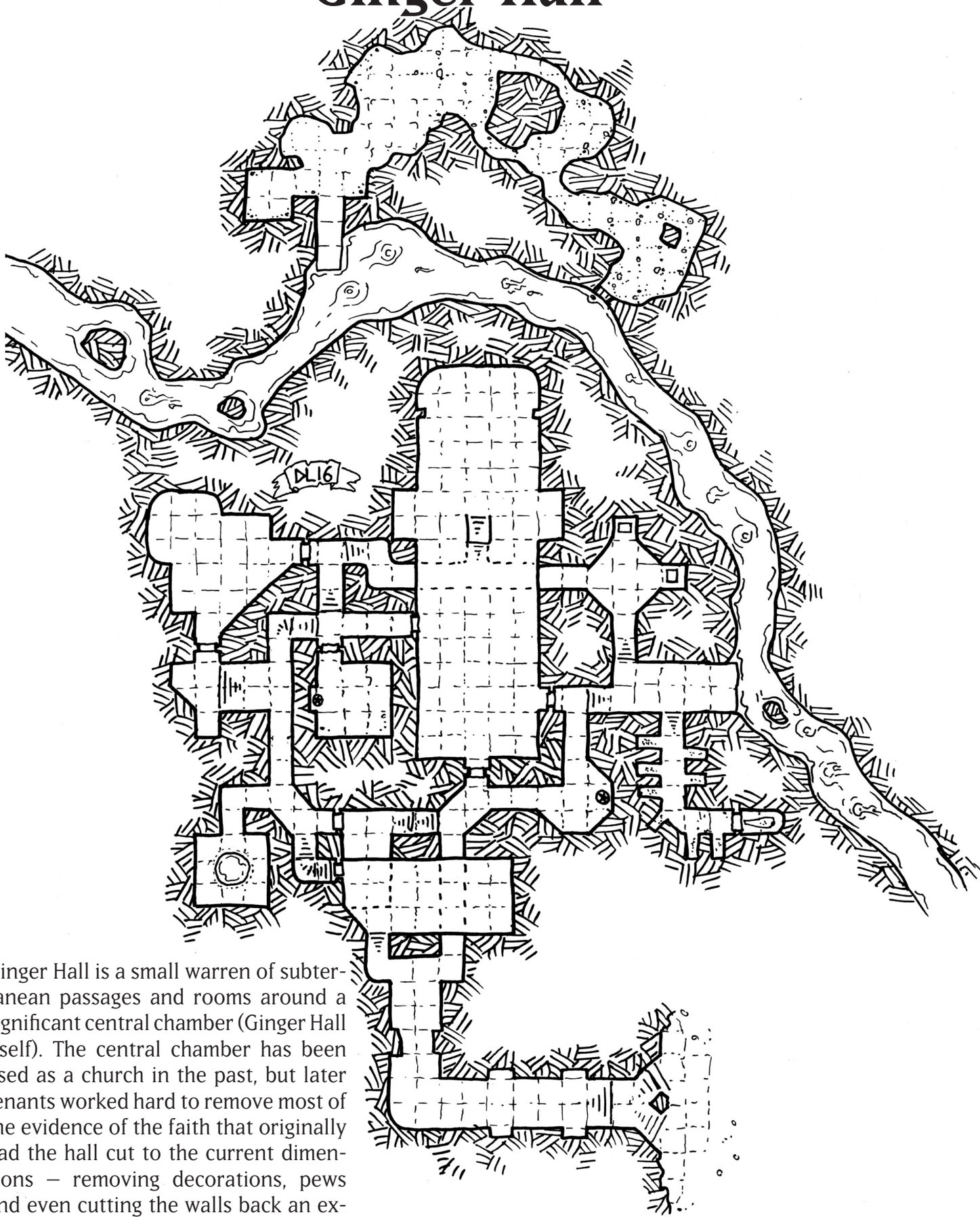
But the only healthy thing under the copper sun is the water that flows through the dome. The large juicy fruit that always seem to be ripe upon the branches of the trees are strongly poisonous and the sap of the trees is a powerful acid. Even the grass, when disturbed, weeps a caustic green fluid that eats through leather and causes gangrene and neuropathy in creatures that come in contact with it.

The birds are mechanisms hatched from the copper sun itself – little copper spies that track the comings and goings of those who visit this serene little hell.

Ubrath of the Copper Sun, the wizard who helped build this structure around the strange artifact that it is named after, can still be found sitting under a tree by the small pond. He has been dead for decades but the copper sun has created a new spine for him that props him up and occasionally has him stand and speak to tell others that he is fine and that they must leave and respect his privacy and studies.

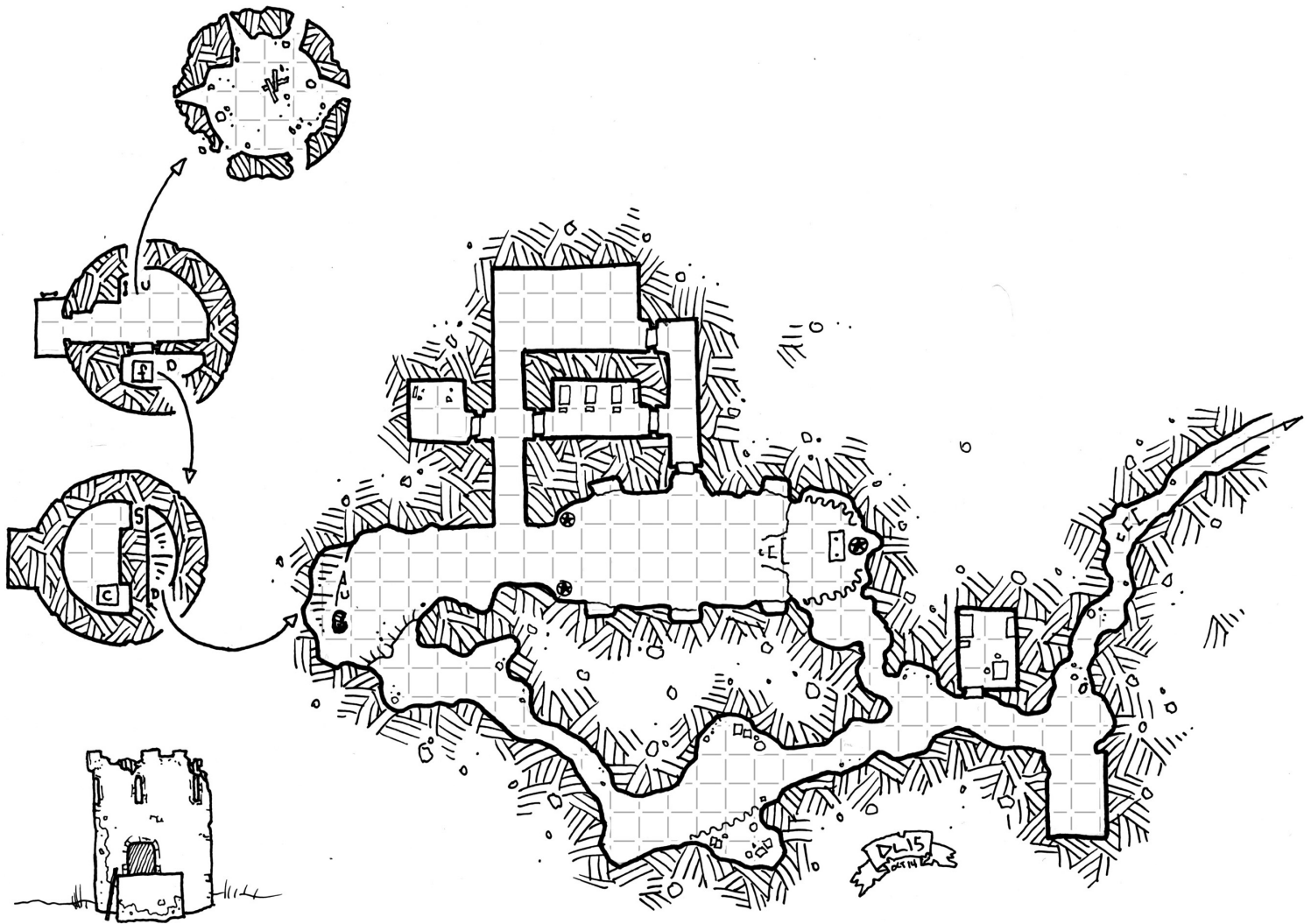
It turns out that the copper sun's mechanisms are quite effective, and Ubrath's corpse still wields much of the magical might he had in life.

Ginger Hall



Ginger Hall is a small warren of subterranean passages and rooms around a significant central chamber (Ginger Hall itself). The central chamber has been used as a church in the past, but later tenants worked hard to remove most of the evidence of the faith that originally had the hall cut to the current dimensions — removing decorations, pews and even cutting the walls back an extra couple of inches to remove religious mosaics and bas-reliefs.

Brenton's Watch



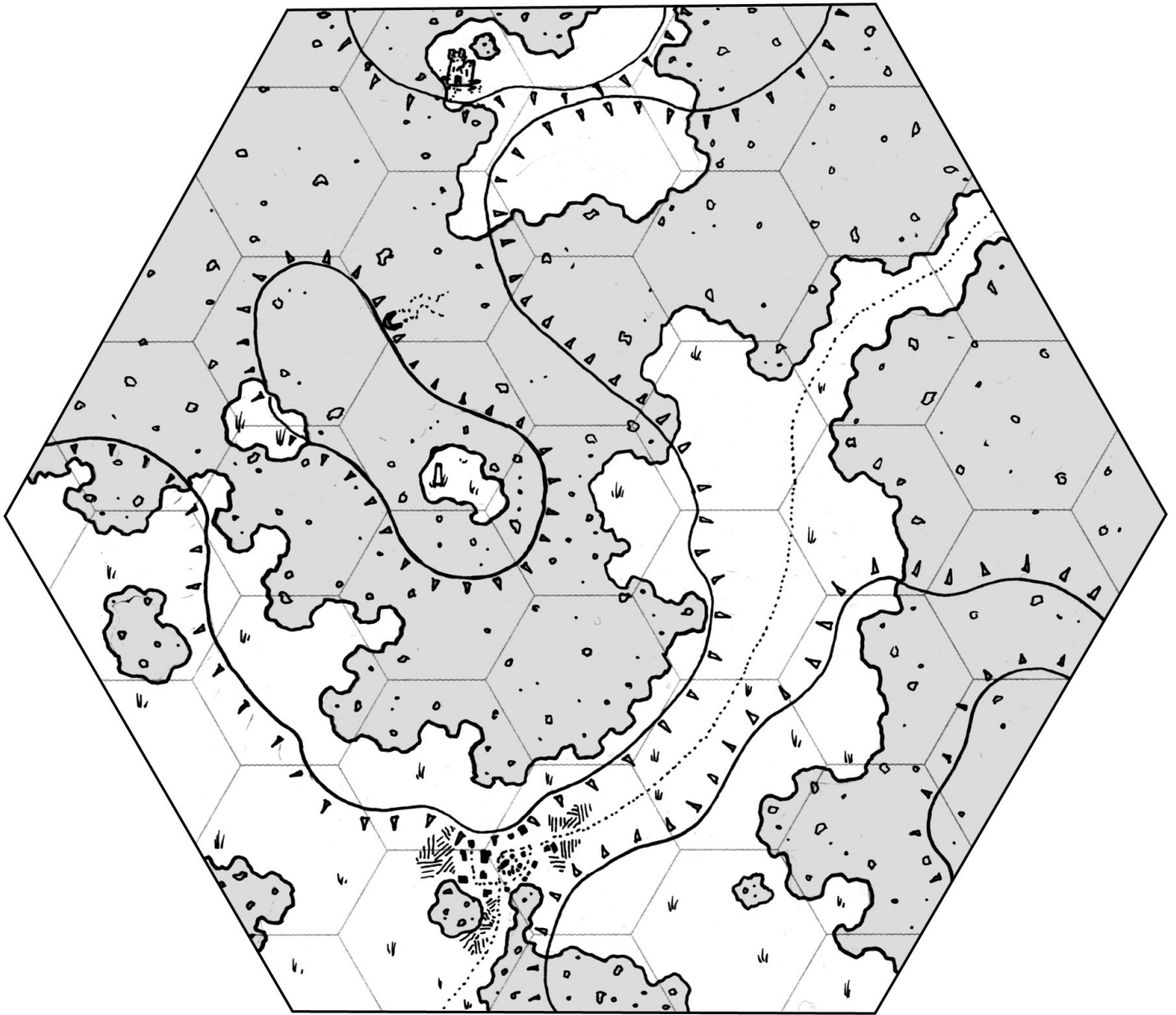
Brenton's Watch is an old watchtower, one of dozens scattered along the borders of the old Andlic Kingdom. Now it is basically an abandoned stump of stone about an hour outside of Treffinor. Far enough away that no one cares, and close enough that people can still get there quietly and without too much preparation.

If you were to explore the grounds nearby you would find an area in the bushes where horses are often tied and at the base of the watchtower are the marks in the sandy soil where the base of a ladder is evidently placed to climb into the tower. The ladder is easily spotted once inside the tower as it lies on the floor of the main level, just past the missing entry door. The tower is quietly

abandoned, slowly working its way back into the ground...

But in the basement of the tower there is a secret door, and behind that door a stairwell that leads down into a natural cave beneath the tower. This cave has been modified in some areas and fully renovated in others to produce a church-like atmosphere as well as support structures for a small cult of Ilhan the Binder. Congregants secretly gather here once a month, entering via the watch-tower. Unknown to most congregants, the leader of the cult travels here herself via a different route the ends at a well-concealed small cave about 400 feet from the tower.

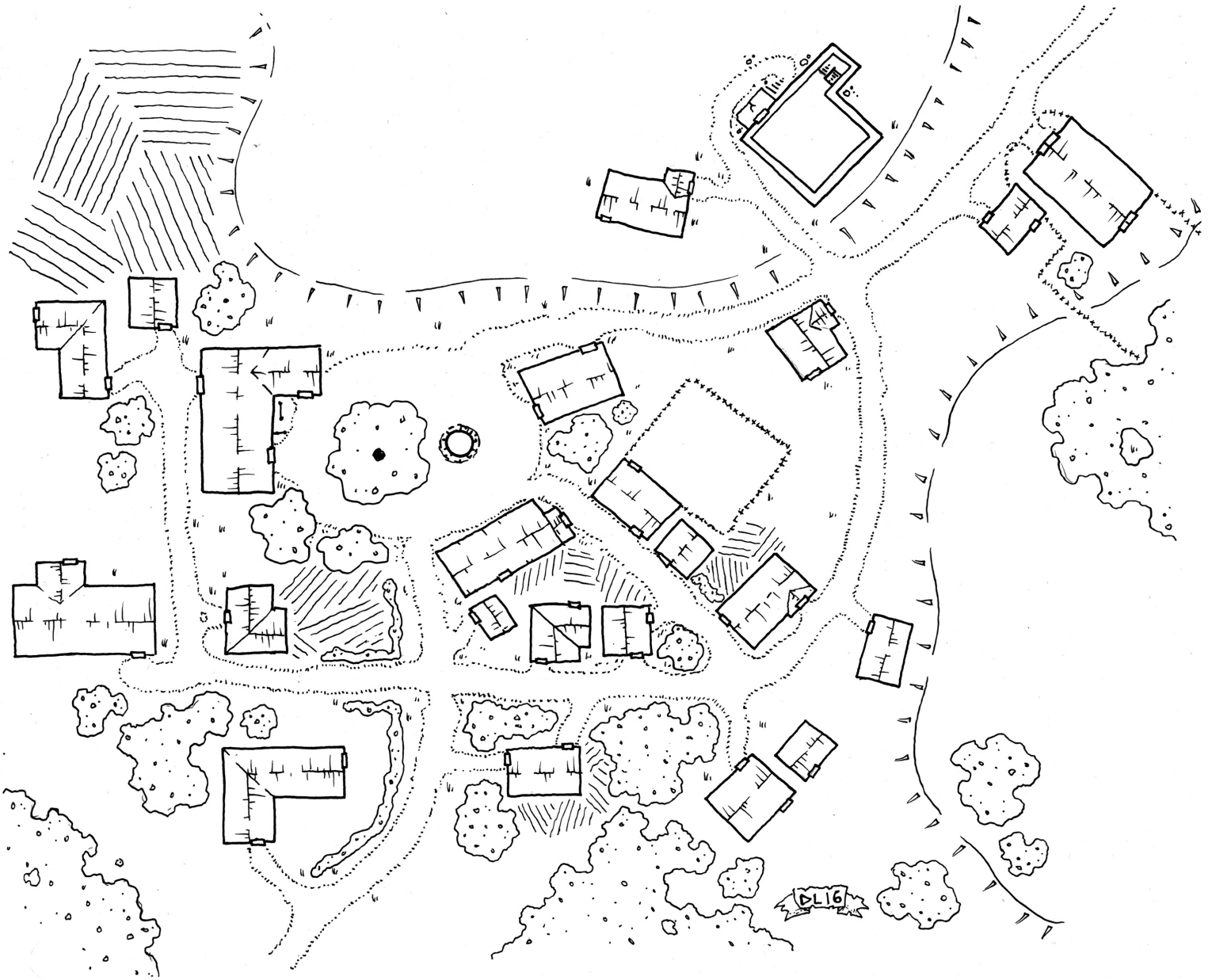
A Hex Most Fowl



On a normal hex map, this would be a single hex with woods and probably a village marker on it (maybe not, depending on the scale you are using, as little old Kith isn't that big of a village). In the closeup we get the hills, the gap in the woods where the road leads to and through Kith in the south, and a few smaller details like a ruined tow-

er in the north, a small cave in the woods a little northwest of centre and a solitary standing stone just sitting there in a clearing on the hilltop. Let's just say that's where the druids used to meet... or maybe it is where the dark goat leaves her young during the autumnal equinox.

The Village of Kith

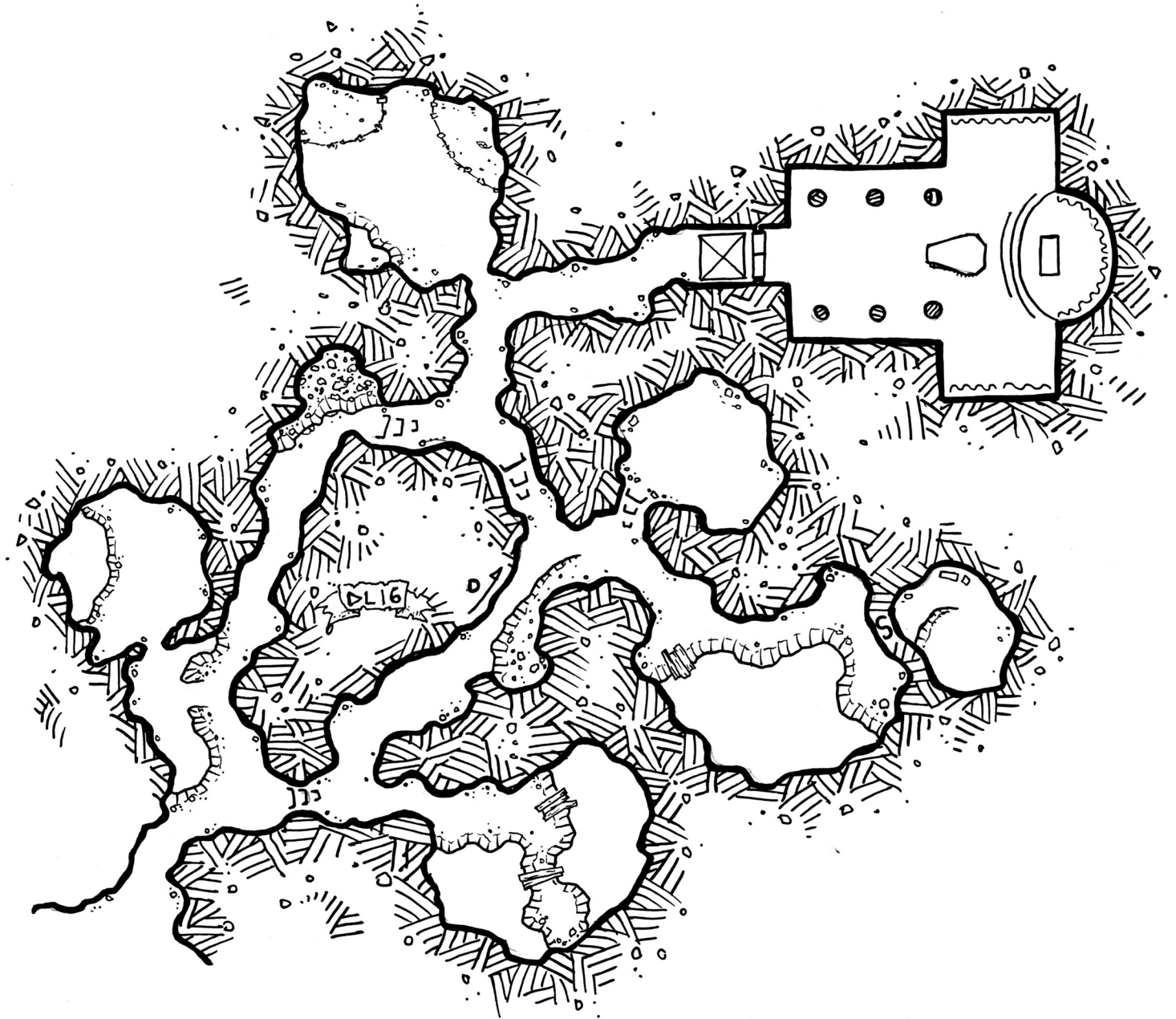


Village maps are eternally useful – they seem to be the standard for beginning adventures, providing a place of refuge, commerce, and intrigue without overloading the players with thousands of NPCs to interact with.

The Village of Kith is exactly that kind of village. A small collection of homes built up along a road that in turn was built along a dry stream bed – which of course means that in exceptionally wet years, the town has to deal with flooding along the roadway pushing the townfolk up onto the higher ground on each side.

The main point of the town is the central court where the town well is dug beside a massive oak tree with the local public house behind it. Besides the inn and the general goods store, there is little to set the town apart from most other farming communities across the land – perhaps the local blacksmith is a bit more steadfast than most, and the carpenter might hide a few secrets among his excellent woodwork... But really, a village is a village, right?

A Hidden Tomb



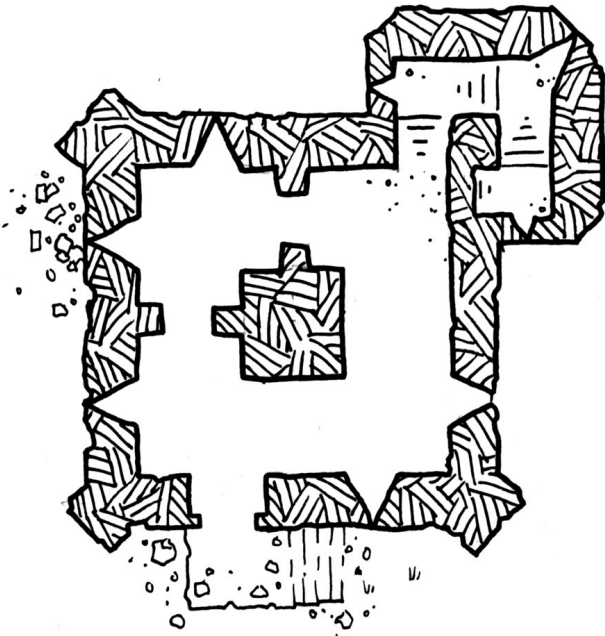
Many celebrated the death of the Warlord of Atun. Many others feared that he would not remain interred for long and sought to destroy and desecrate his remains. Eventually (after a series of adventures involving the theft, bisecting, separating and eventual rejoining of his corpse) those faithful to his vision, aided by those who felt the world was better off just forgetting about him entirely, finally buried him quietly with wards to prevent others from finding the corpse.

Less than two hundred years later, the tomb and even the conquests of the Warlord of Atun have

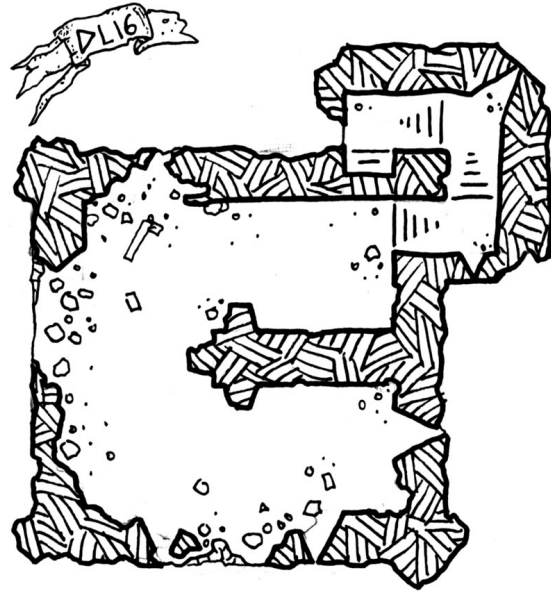
been lost and forgotten. But the caves where the tomb was hidden has been found by others – extra-dimensional invaders who despoil the area and raid the nearby towns. But even they have learned to avoid the finished tomb structure at the back of the caves, for traps and magics make the area unsafe to all.

The rest of the caves, however, have been converted into living areas, a staging and planning room, slave pens, refuse pits and everything you would hope to avoid when dealing with extra-dimensional invaders.

The Ruined Watch Tower

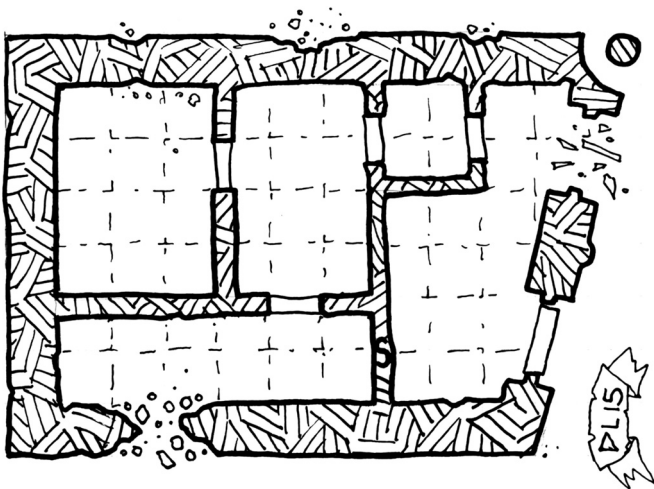


The watch tower hasn't been maintained since it fell in a border skirmish a generation past. Except for the missing door and the debris fallen in from the stairwell, the ground floor is in excellent shape. The second floor not so much — part of the stairwell wall has fallen down, and most of the second floor's walls are collapsing and there is no longer any sign of the old wooden roof structure that blew free in a storm twenty years ago.



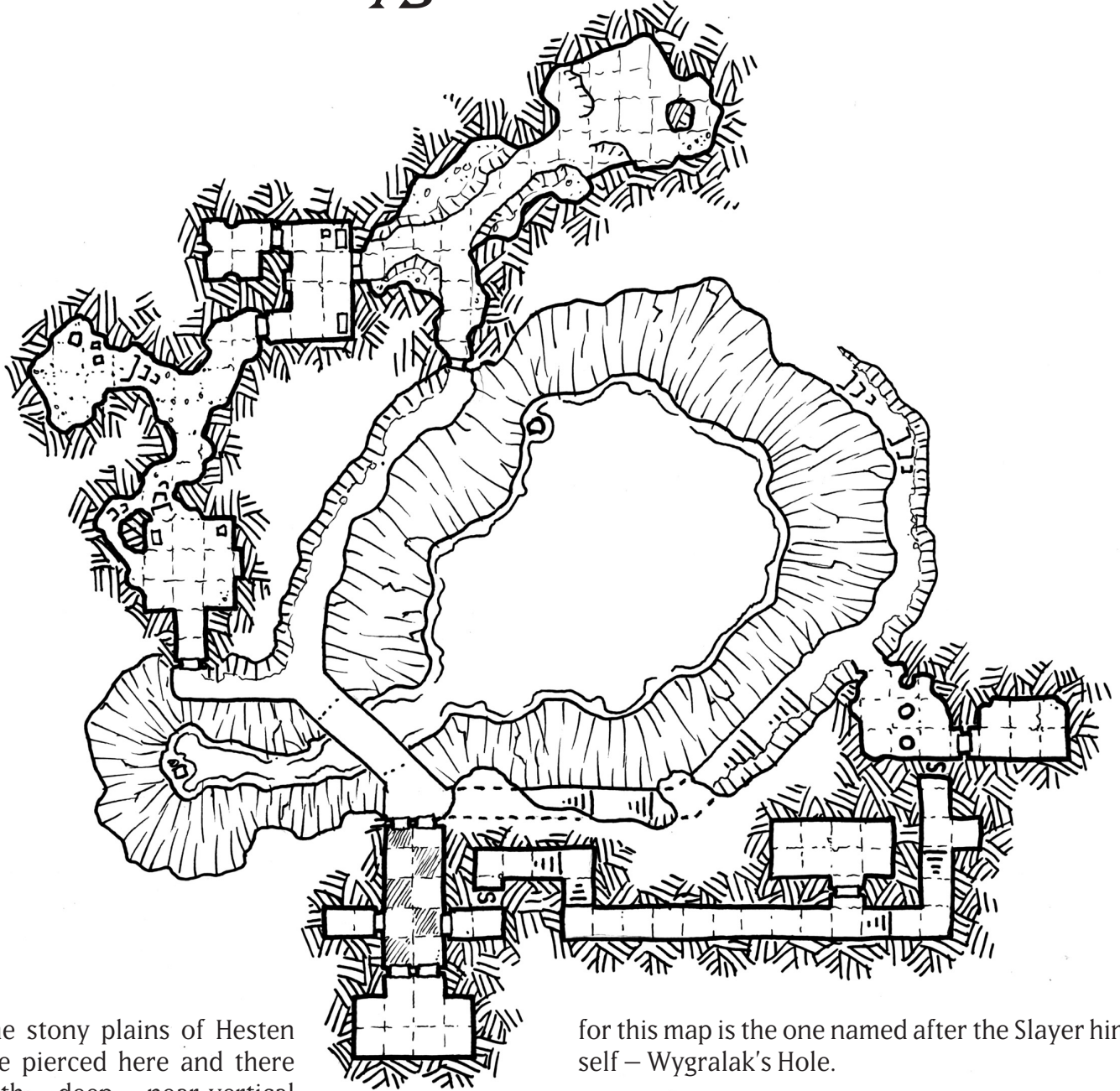
It wouldn't take a lot of work to fix it up to be usable — just sealing off the stairwell and putting a door on the structure would be enough in the short term, and then reworking the upstairs when time permits.

The Forgotten Shrine



Probably a small temple or shrine, the place has been slowly falling apart due to aggressive neglect. One door is missing and one wall in the back of the structure has slid off the foundations and left a large breach allowing the elements to sweep into the room every winter.

Wygralak's Hole



The stony plains of Hesten are pierced here and there with deep near-vertical holes that reach down up to a few hundred feet and are almost all partially filled with stagnant water. Tales of antiquity tell us that these holes were created by drops of acidic blood sprayed from the near-mortal wounding of the godling Askullag when he was struck through the heart by the spear of Wygralak the Slayer. Unfortunately for Wygralak the Slayer, one of these droplets also struck him clear in the centre of his forehead, slaying him and forever tainting and destroying his soul, so foul was the ichor in question.

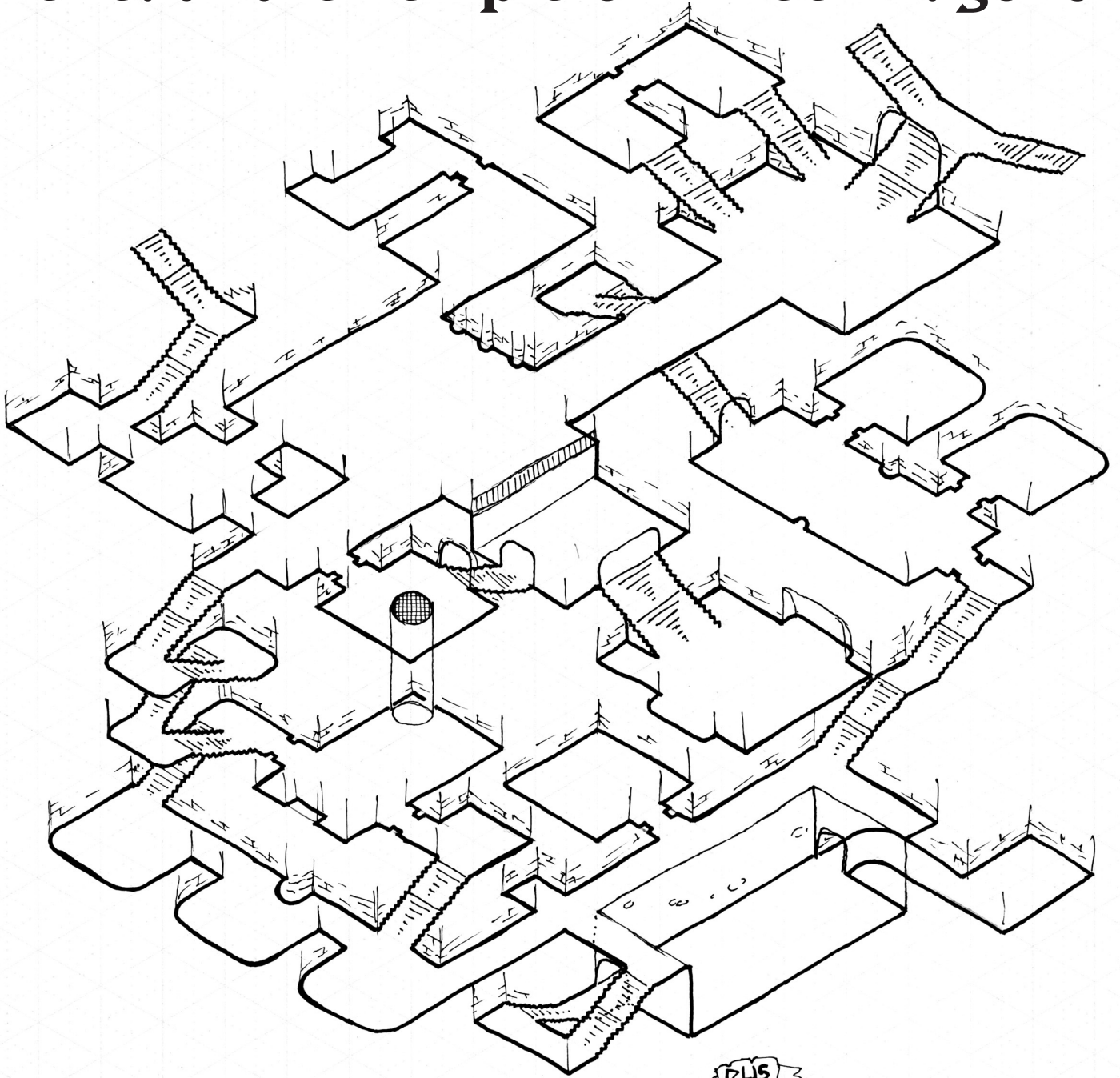
Several of these pits have caves or other underground accesses to them, but the most important

for this map is the one named after the Slayer himself – Wygralak's Hole.

A ramp and stairs have been cut into the walls of the hole leading down into the shade beneath the plains of Hestern, past a cave and a set of doors, and then bridges across the narrow end of the hole to access two more doorways. These caves and doorways lead to interior spaces that are a mix of natural and worked stone, and are said to be home to the head of Wygralak's Spear (or his actual head, depending on the story).

Of course, the caves are trapped and home to sinister magics, further encouraging the tales of the treasures hidden down here.

Beneath the Temple of Three Dragons



We razed the Temple of Three Dragons little over forty years ago. Our villages have been free of the depredations of the fell monks and clerics of the order as well as their three masters or pets since.

And now you come to this place seeking the treasures of the order, actually hoping to find evidence that one or more of the three dragons may have escaped elsewhere with its treasure.

Your explorations are unwelcome, our villages are closed to you. May the remnants of the order feed

your organs to the lizards they would raise into new dragons.

The Temple of Three Dragons is a weather-beaten ruin, not even worth mapping. It was razed so effectively that the stones of the walls have been spread over acres of land.

But enough digging through the treeless plateau where the temple stood will find one or more stairs leading down beneath the ruins to the deep chambers below.

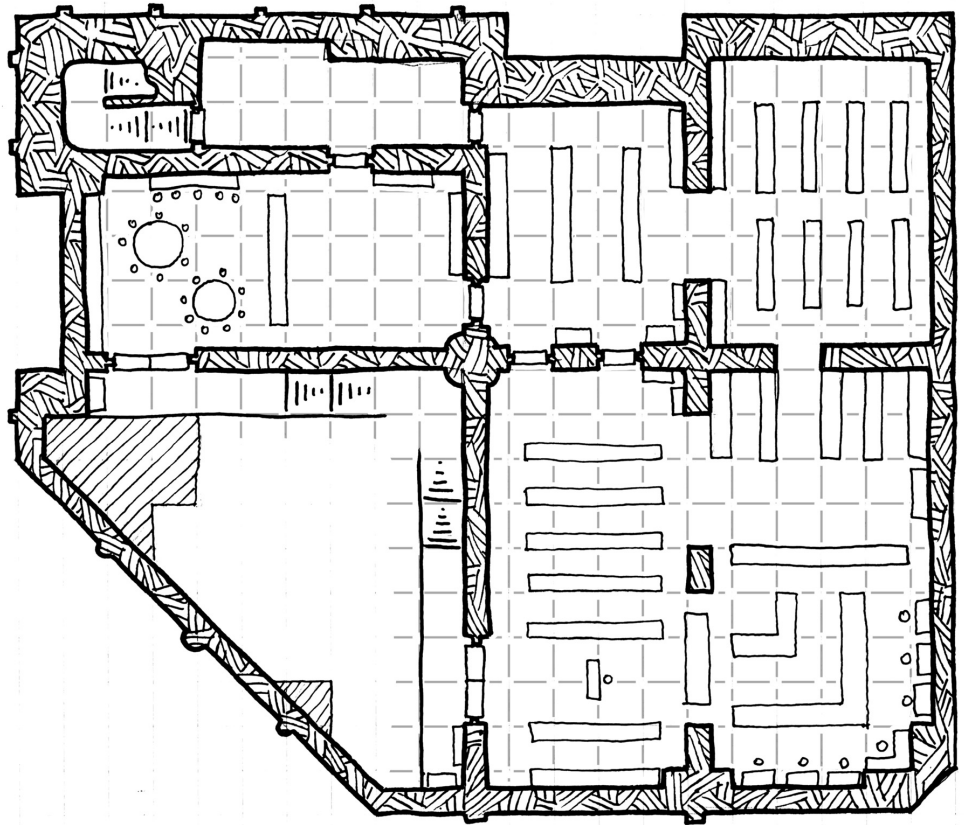
The Library of Coruvun

While the city of Coruvon is best known for its arena and as a staging area for explorations of the Black Mire and the dwarven citadel of Kuln, it is also home to the Grand Library of Coruvon, a 30 foot tall structure of white stone containing the collected works rescued from Kuln during that city's fall.

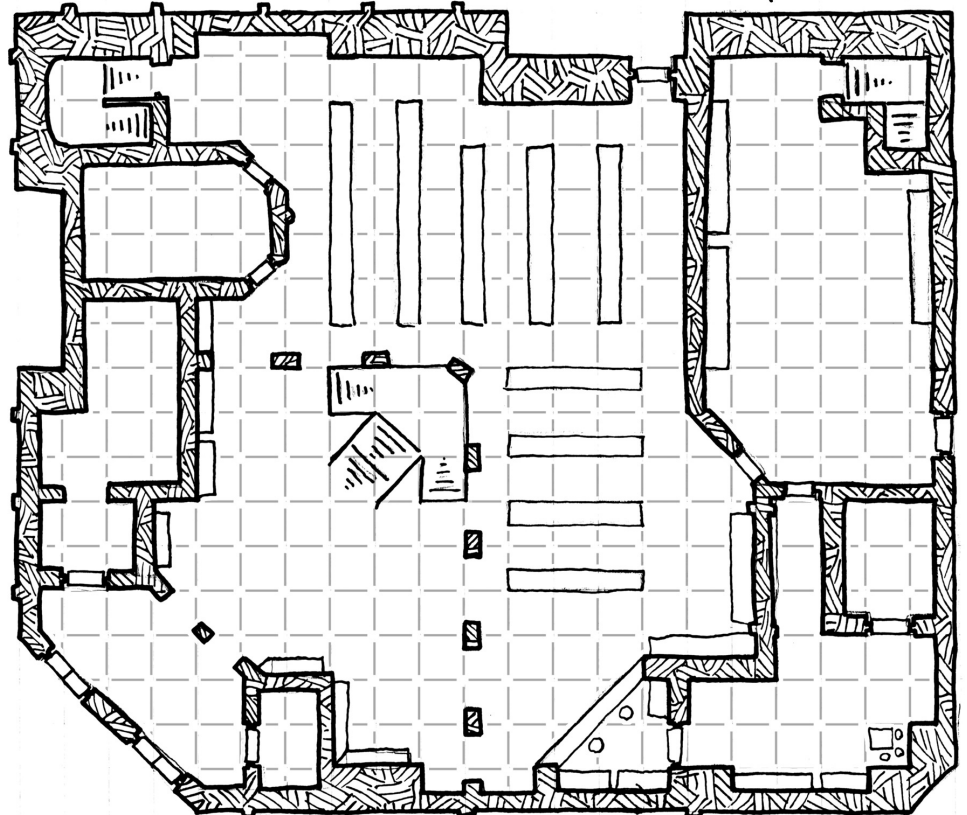
The library is best known for the repositories of dwarven knowledge (and possibly the truenames of several ship-minds of the ancient dwarven earthships), it is also home to a fair collection of pre-war historical documents from a sacked elven city and supposedly even a few artifacts from both the dwarves and elves that are kept under lock and key by human hands.

Of course, like any good structure in a fantasy city, there are stairs leading down from the library into the basements – and eventually to the old structures of the Coruvon plateau and the ruins of the much earlier human settlements here. While the main basement (not included in these maps) is accessible to the staff and even some visitors to the library, the access ways to the extended catacombs are kept locked, magically sealed, and secure.

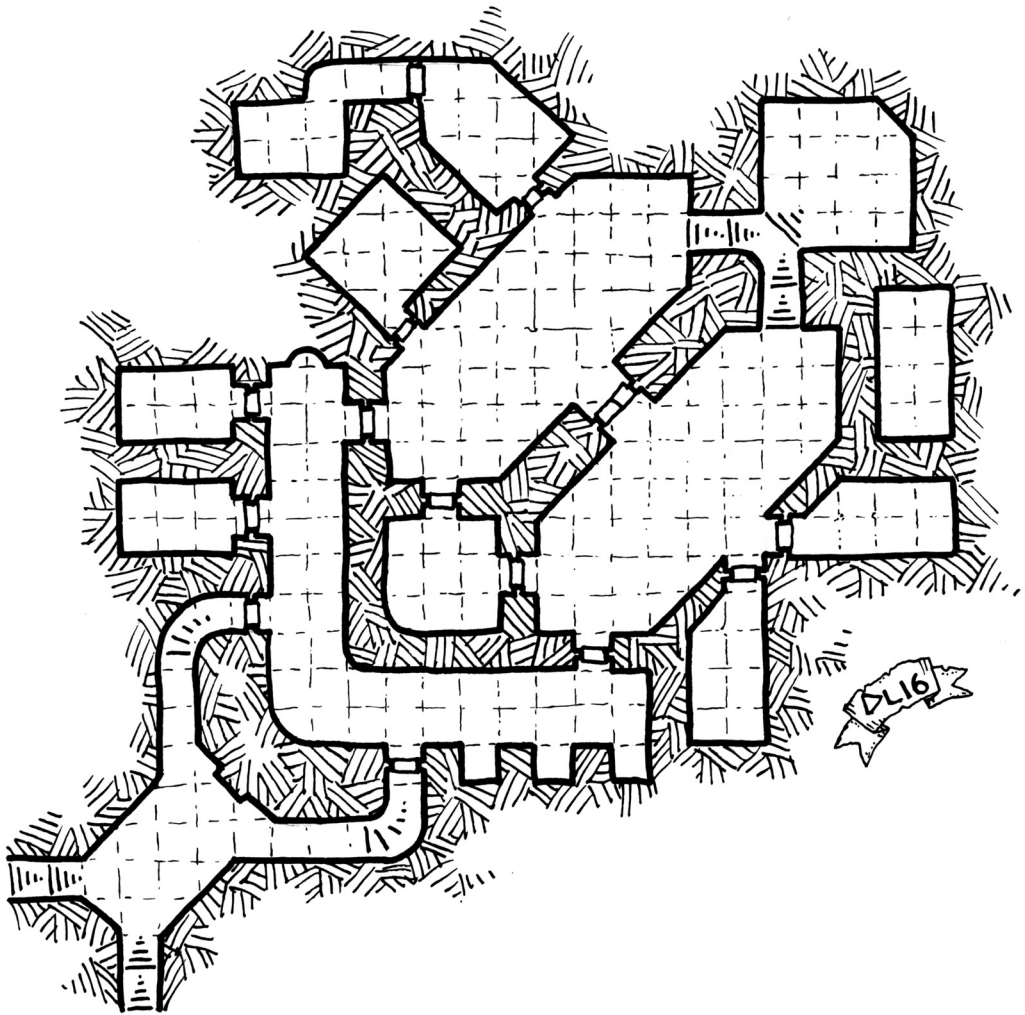
Upper Level



Ground Level



Vault of the Granite Ogre



Deep growls and grinding noises come from these stairs leading down beneath the old watch tower a few leagues down along the shore of Green Shallows Lake. A constant draft brings the smell of stone, earth, and a hint of rot.

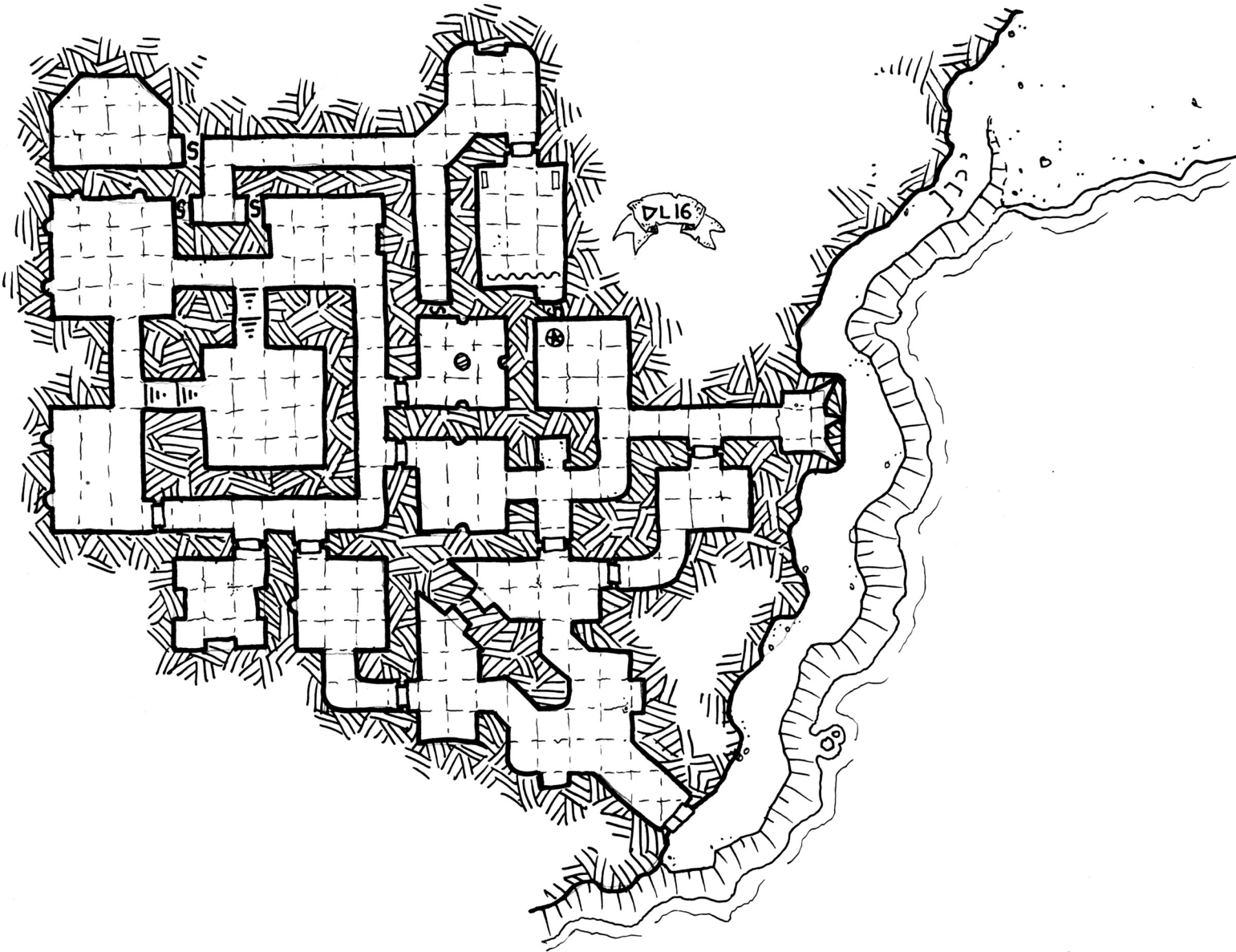
Within the chambers there are uncountable signs of violence – broken and rusted weapons and armour, shattered bones, smashed doors and furniture and statuary. Brown stains show where bleeding bodies were dragged ever deeper into the vault.

The ceilings are tall – twenty feet in most places and even higher in the larger chambers. The stone-

work was probably fine at one point, and the higher areas still show some bas relief carvings and fine work, but the walls are scraped, scratched and pitted. The breeze comes up from the deepest part of the vault, unhindered by the doors – some torn from their hinges, others with large chunks missing from them.

And the granite ogre in the depths sits there, water dripping upon her head, waiting for the next moment of bloodlust and carnage when new fools explore her realm.

Ascent of the Scarlet Queen

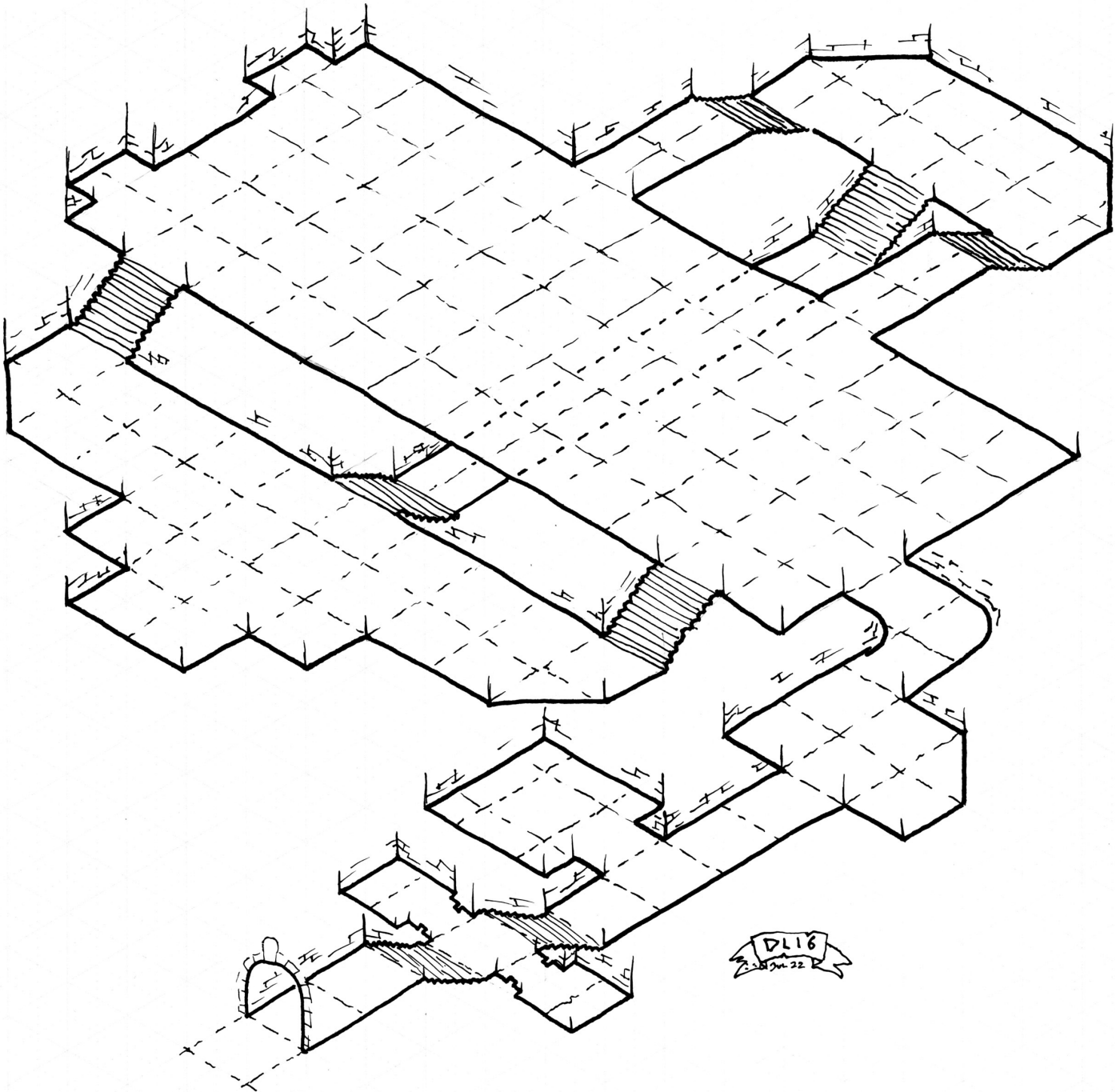


The Ascent of the Scarlet Queen looks out over the west shore of Green Shallows Lake. The red stone cliff face has obviously been roughly worked by ancient hands leaving an ascending path along the face of the cliff, past a set of arrow slits and to a pair of brass doors decorated in the likeness of the Scarlet Queen barring the way forward.

The Scarlet Queen is a repeating motif throughout the areas behind the doors — appearing in various paintings and carvings, and also as a statue in one chamber and a caryatid column with three scarlet knights as buttresses surrounding her in another.

A series of secret passages lead to a small library containing a tapestry that both details the death of the Scarlet Queen and the text of a spell that can bring forth aspects of her power for those who would dare to deal with her spirit. But that chamber is really a fake treasure chamber, and a further secret chamber contains the Scarlet Queen's hat, shoes and bracers as well as a small part of her massed hoards of gold.

Chambers of the Vanished Queen

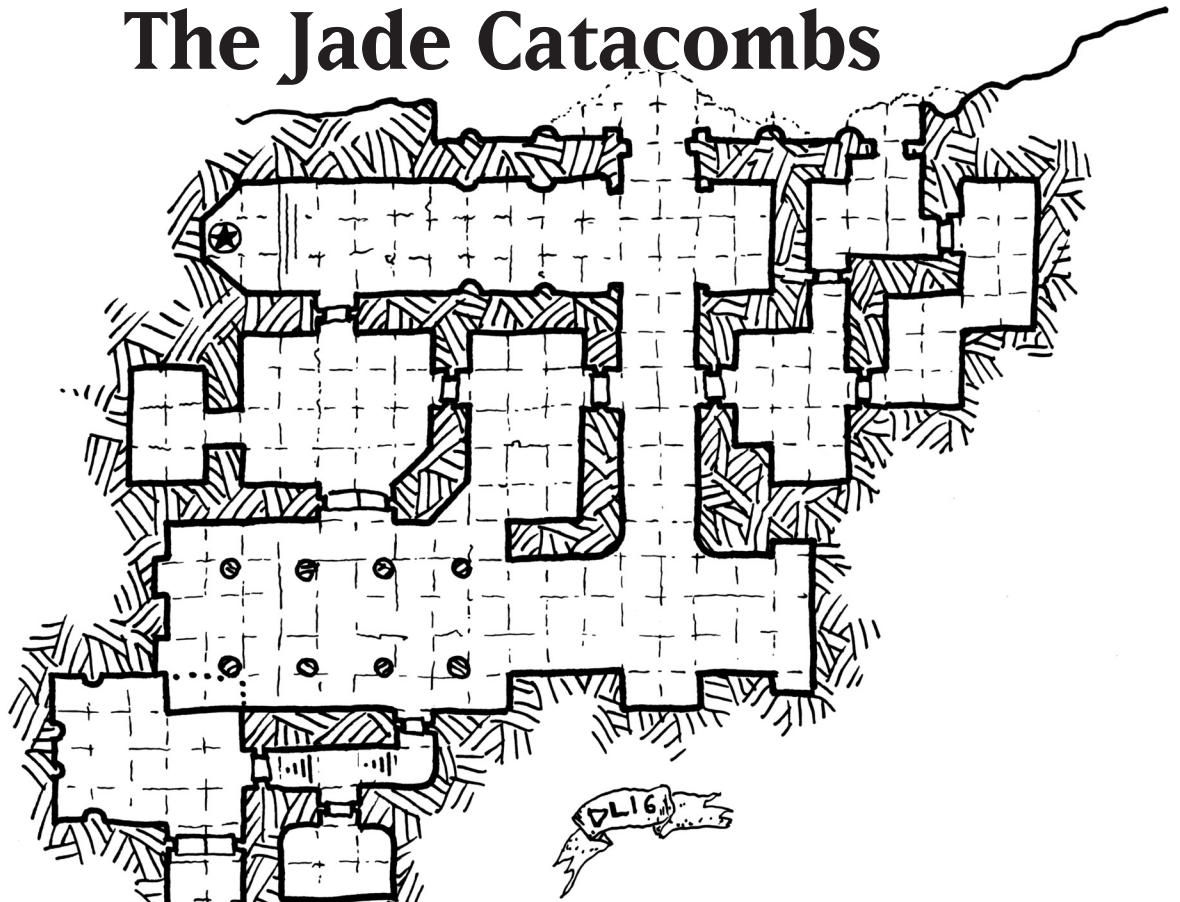


We hadn't seen the Queen of Isthien for seven days and seven nights, and thus we finally braved her ire and broke down the doors to her quarters. They were disorderly and bloodied and the mahogany bookshelf holding her most prized codexes and scrolls was pulled away from the wall exposing a passage down beneath the main chambers of the castle.

What we would find there, beneath the throne room and guards quarters, would mark us forever. Prowling through those rooms was a bloodthirsty creature terrifying in its familiarity.

We had found the vanished queen, and wished we had not.

The Jade Catacombs



Carved from a cliff face of soft matte green stone, the Jade Catacombs are well-known to sages and adventurers, and rightly feared.

The magics of this place have transformed the resident trio of medusas into something ever so slightly different. They are green, semi-translucent, and even their touch is deadly poison. Fortunately they cannot spend much time away from the Jade Catacombs, for the magical energies that transformed them is also required to keep them alive.

Unfortunately, the magics also seem to keep them nourished and alive without food or water – not that it makes them any less hungry or thirsty.

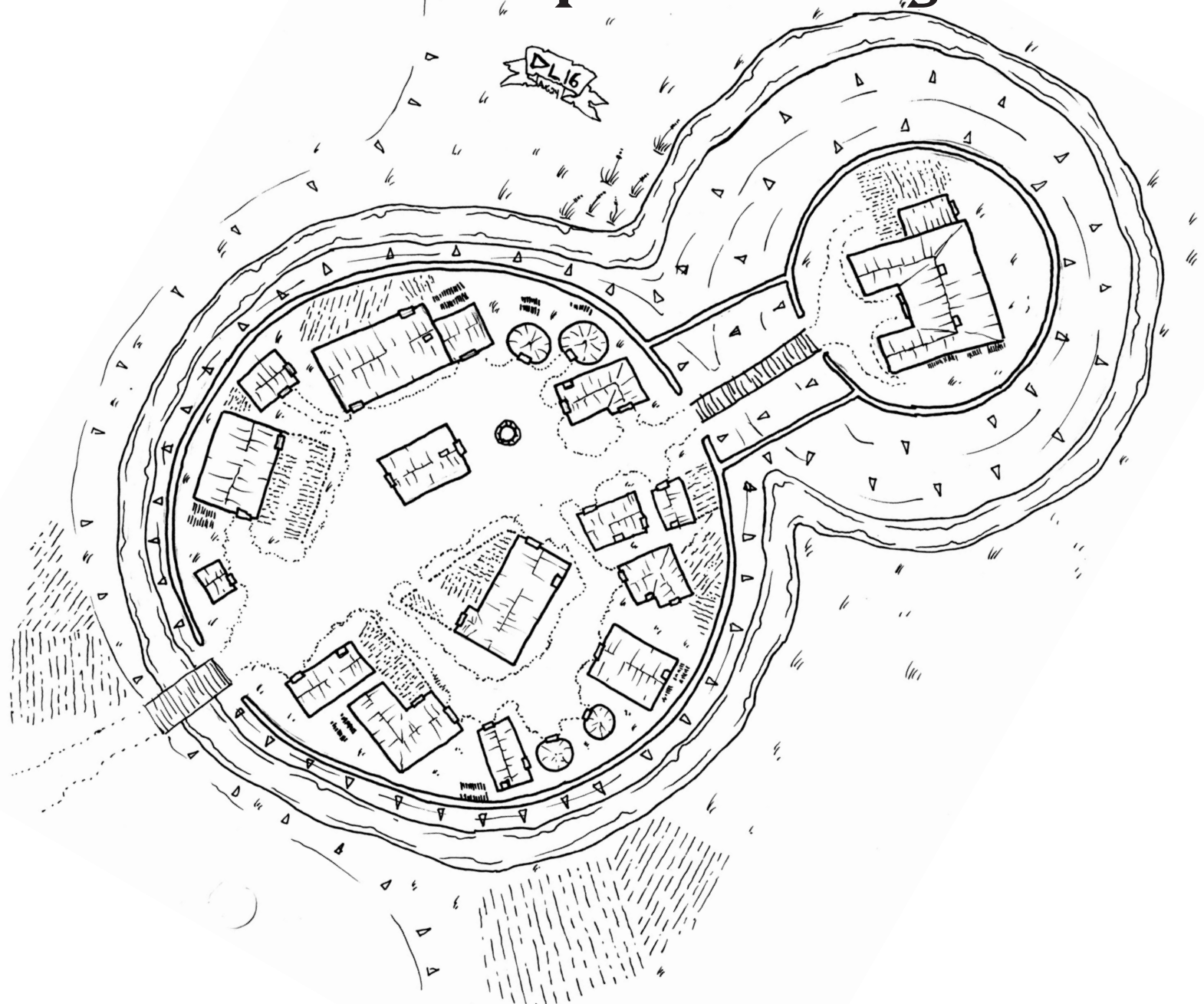
Adventurers have come here for decades, and the ruined and smashed jade statues out in front of the catacombs advertises their fate to newcomers. Most come seeking a small magical statuette that can cure even the most potent of magical poisons and diseases. The jade statues resulting from the glare of the medusas are proof against the nor-

mal stone to flesh spells (and restoration magics). Ancient texts and a few sages know the secrets of adapting the spells to these twisted magics, and a bit of research and well-spent coin will “unlock” these secrets and rituals for a clever party.

And these old rituals are important, as the magic that transformed the medusas is still strong here. Within the first ten minutes of entry observant adventurers will note that clothing begins to flake and stiffen and change in colour, with the tips of hair coming next. Every hour spent within the Jade Catacombs calls for a saving throw (petrification, fortitude, or constitution) to avoid the beginnings of the transformations into jade.

Every failed save improves the victims AC by 1, but decreases charisma and wisdom by a like amount as well as reducing movement rates by 5'. Three failed saves and the victim is transformed entirely into jade and becomes unable to do anything for 72 hours until they regain consciousness as a green and twisted version of themselves with their ability scores returned to normal, AC improved by 2, and a twisted evil alignment (under the DM's control).

Vikhelm's Outpost — Hrangveld



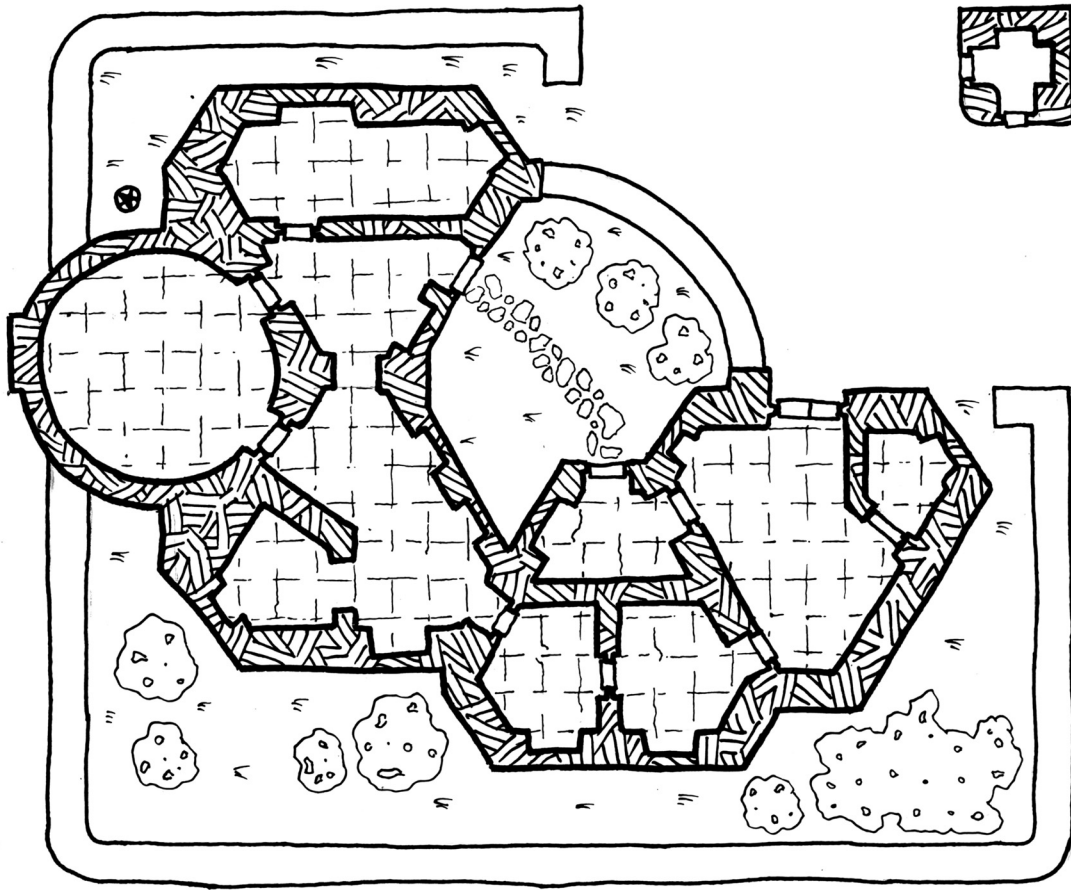
Vikhelm and his kin were not welcomed to the land. Instead they fought for every inch of land they settled, building small fortresses and defensible homes to watch over their farmland and made sure to include gardens within their walls to be able to feed them at least minimally should the farmlands be taken.

The most visible of these fortified villages is Hrangveld, generally known to those who don't live there as Vikhelm's Outpost. A great house sits atop a sheer man-made hill looking down over a small walled village.

The entire village is surrounded by wooden walls and then a muddy shallow moat that was dug out from a swampy spring that bubbles up to the west of the great house. Bridges to the town itself and then up from the town to the great house are made of wood and designed to be easily taken down in times of conflict.

The majority of the farmland is undefended outside the village walls — although if the village grows more prosperous (and less prone to assault by the locals) additional fortified farm buildings will start to spring up to defend those fields as farmers start living outside the walls.

the Strange Mansion of the Dervel Merchants



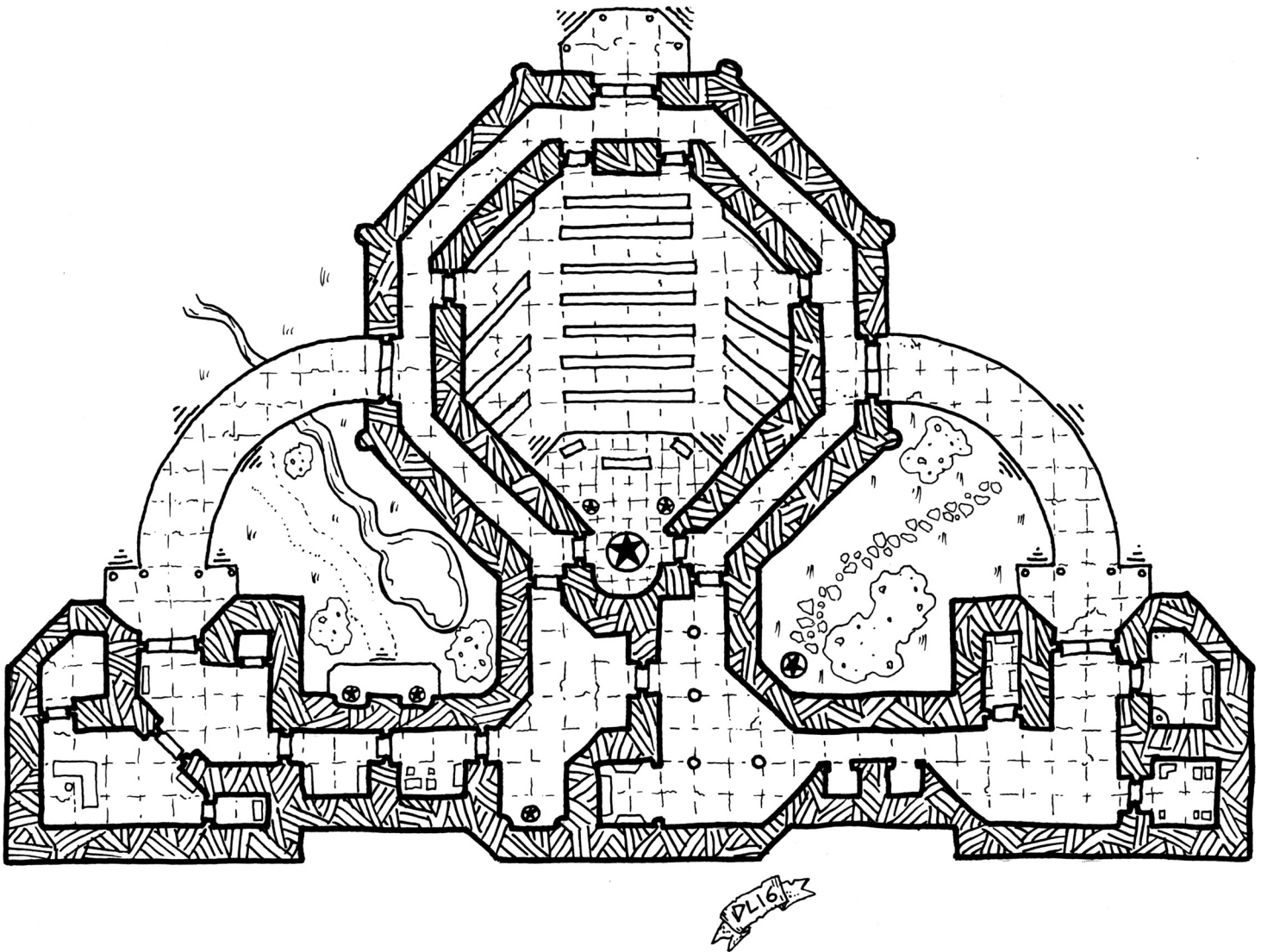
This mansion basically popped into existence overnight in the rapidly upscaling neighbourhood of bluebridge. The Dervel family bought up a number of old properties to make way for their home, tore them down over a few weeks and did some basic landscaping and then late one night Durish Dervel planted four triangular crystals and a single red pearl on the grounds and lead the family in a chant from an ancient scroll.

The next morning this crystalline manor house was on the property and the garden walls were rapidly erected around it by imported dwarven workmen eager to earn enough to equip an expedition to fallen Kuln.

A few other similar structures have been created in recent years in other cities, all associated in some way with Durish Dervel – new homes of old family friends, trading partners, and a sorcerer said to have adventured along with Durish in his youth.

The structure is evidently crystalline, with an unusual pinkish hue. The walls are opaque except where fine pink windows look out over the entranceway or the yards, and seemingly unbreakable. Even the windows are incredibly tough, and repair themselves within a few days when broken as evidenced during the riots in the year of black dust.

Sanctum of the Prophet



While Sarrheia, goddess of the sunrise, is technically the consort to the Lord of Sun, her worship has come to eclipse his within the cities and towns of the Sandmadra Archipelago. In the city of Sandmadra itself is a massive church dedicated to her via the words of her prophet who swam these waters four hundred years ago. Known as the Temple of the Sunrise or more accurately the Sanctum of the Prophet, the church has become central to faith and government of Sandmadra.

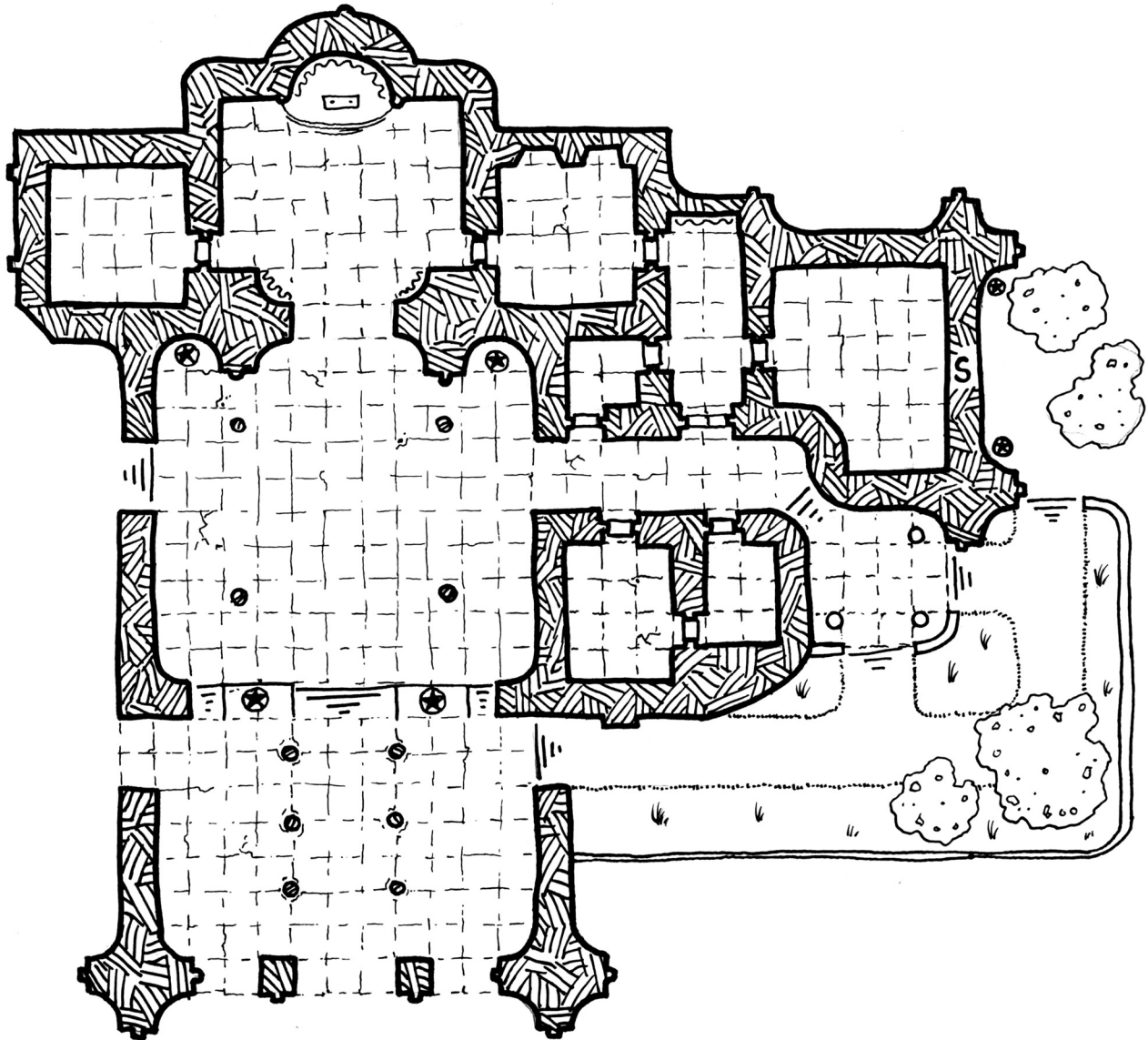
The main service of course is at sunrise, but only the most faithful (read: those who have donated the most money or have the most influence in town) are invited to the sunrise services. Services however continue throughout the day and night with a non-stop droning litany of the texts of the

Prophet and the catechisms of Sarrheia read from the pulpit by a number of priests and priestesses.

The main chamber of the Sanctum has an angled floor, lowering six feet over the length of the room – the the pulpit is at ground level but is well above the front rows of church-goers. Around the Sanctum are a number of statues of the Prophet, Sarrheia, and other saints of the solar faith, as well as a number of sub-shrines for worship, contemplation and of course tithing.

The actual centre of church activity and management is a much less ostentatious stone compound a block away from the Sanctum where the church manages its forces, finances, politics and so on.

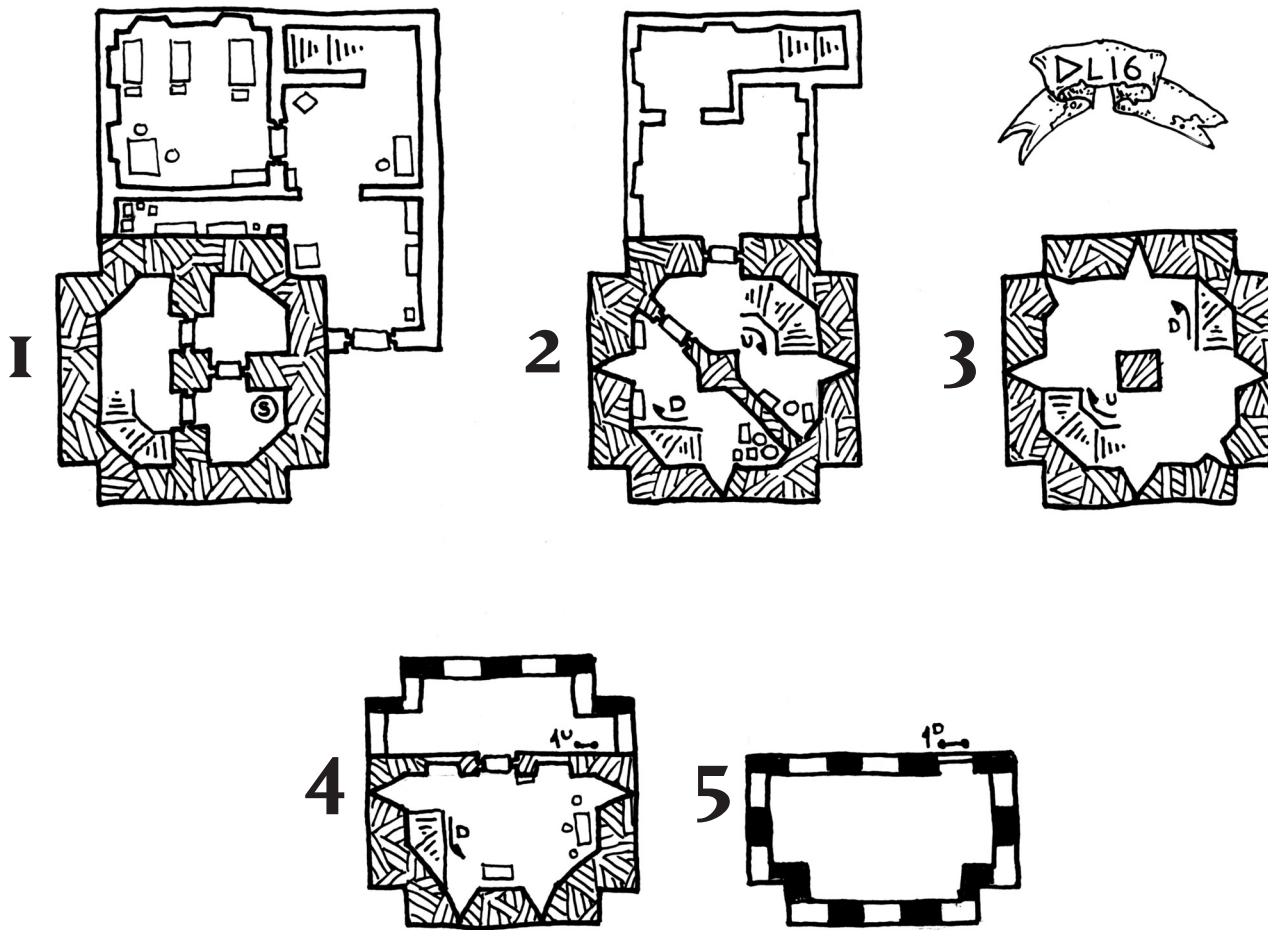
The Sanctuary of Vames



The Sanctuary of Vames is a temple dedicated to the god of war in his manifestation as the peacekeeper — where the threat of violence and the eternal dedication to defense brings peace and prosperity to those who live behind the shield of readiness. Saint Vames is said to have been a paladin of the order who fought in countless wars and then acted as a diplomat and emissary in later years until he was eventually martyred by the elves who quartered him and ate him, but still did not attack the lands the church defended because they saw him hold strong even in his final minutes.

The Sanctuary of Vames is made of dark grey granite with red-brown streaks of rust from the ironworks on the roof as well as the massive decorative iron swords mounted to the exterior walls. Within are statues of both Saint Vames and of the peacekeeper in several guises. Of key note is the reliquary (the 20 x 55 foot “hall” accessed by double doors on the northeast side of the map). The far wall of the reliquary has a tapestry of the martyring of Saint Vames and a display case containing three wickedly curved knives supposedly crafted from the ribs of the slain Saint. These are said to have been the weapons of an elvish assassin made from Vames’ corpse after his consumption and then recovered after the war.

Elijah's Tower



Elijah's Tower sticks out from a small rocky promontory in the marshlands demanding people's attention. It stands out in an area days travel from the nearest civilization not just for being the work of man in a swampy wilderness, but also in colour and because of the beacon often lit on the roof of the structure.

The main tower is made of a glittering white stone that seems out of place in the marshy region, and the two-story structure at its base is a pale grey granite that seems to be either trying to hold the main structure up, or is attached to the base of it like some stony fungus, depending on your point of view (and taste for mushrooms).

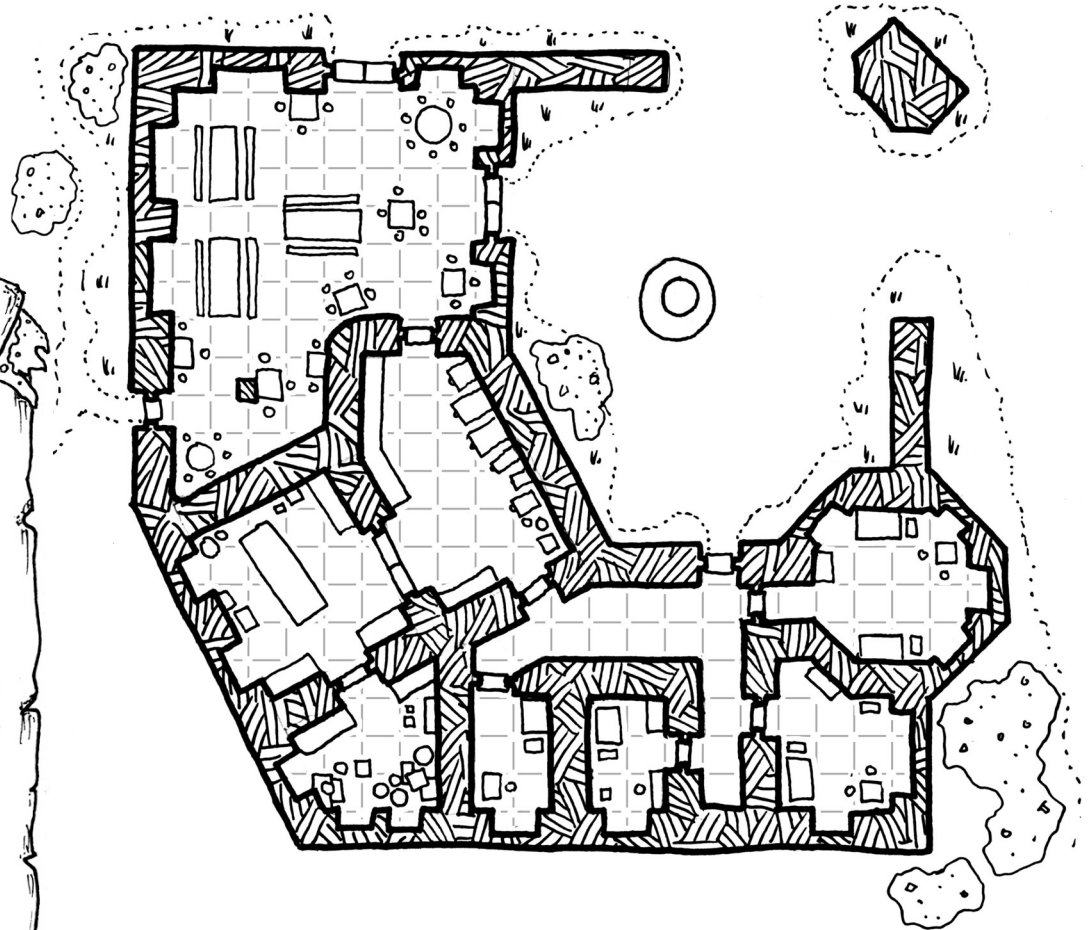
Elijah built the tower some forty years ago to find solitude in order to continue his meditations and

quests for faith. But being so far into the swamp, the tower became the one safe place for others caught out here, and eventually Elijah began having his few acolytes maintain a small magical beacon on the roof of the tower during the darkest nights so that lost travelers would know where to find safety.

A team of dwarves seeking a key to the lost city of Kuln recently returned from the swamps and report that the tower appears to be partially overtaken with ivy and swamp vines... and that the beacon only lit up at midnight for a single hour, and was deep green in colour instead of pure white. It may just be swamp gas and dwarves telling tall tales, but there are others who might like to know more about these reported changes.

The Court of Summer Wines

THE COURT OF SUMMER WINES		
WINES		
LOCAL WHITE	10 SP	
LOCAL RED	10 SP	
BRENTON'S VINES RED	8 SP	
SINDARESH WHITE	12 SP	
MOUSQUET FARMS RED	15 SP	
CORUVON SWAMP AMBER	1 GP	
LETATH ESTATE ROSE	1 GP	
SPRINGHOLLOW PALE RUBY	2 GP	
TENKARS FINE WHITE	3 GP	
HURRENESE DARK RED	4 GP	
HURRENESE 77 RED	7 GP	
GRANITESPIRE FORTIFIED	5 GP	
GRANITESPIRES FINEST	7 GP	
DOLEM GARNET	7 GP	
ALDERBRIDGE FIRE OPAL	10 GP	
NESBITT-HILL WHITE SAPPHIRE	11 GP	
DRINKS		
ALE	2 SP	
GLADECREST FINE ALE	4 SP	
LAGER	3 SP	
ALDERBRIDGE DARK ALE	6 SP	
MEAD	10 SP	
DWARVEN HARD MEAD	1 GP	
FIRE DRAGON MEAD	2 GP	



The Court of Summer Wines is a well-to-do establishment that offers a wide selection of wines imported from near and far as well as a fruits, breads and sweets to be paired with such.

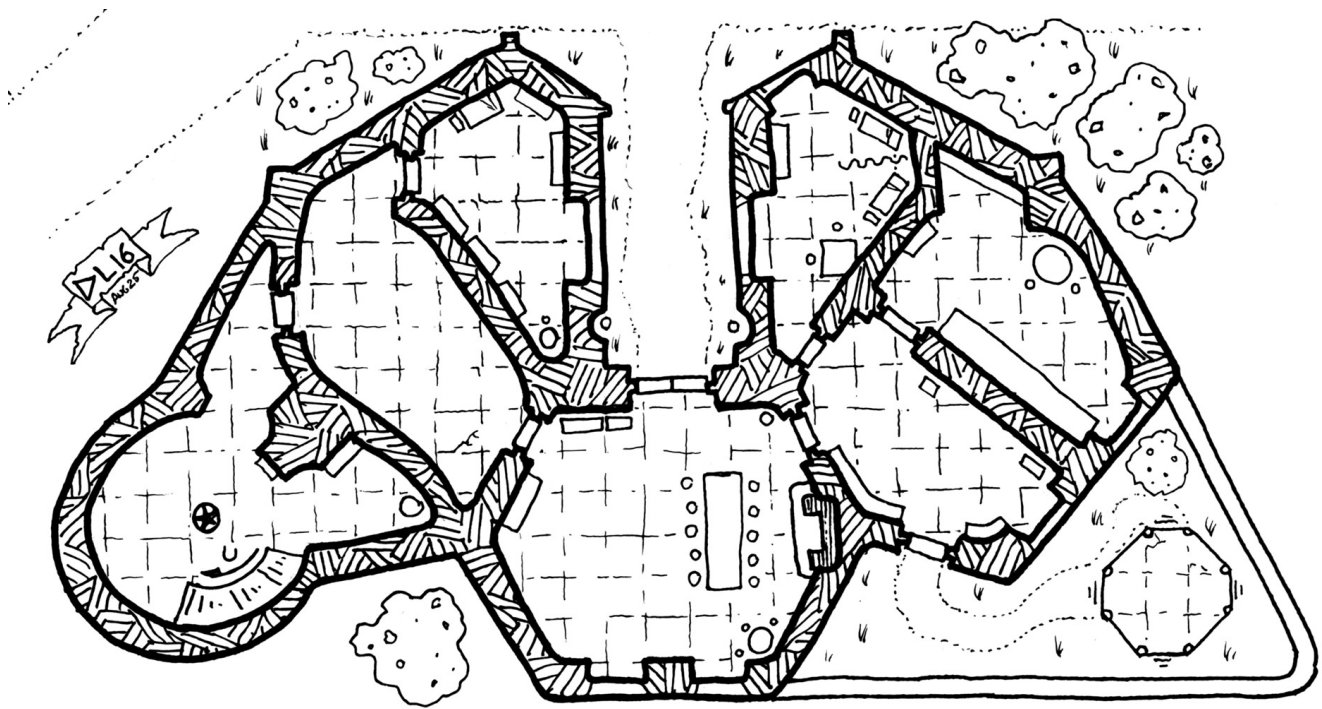
The food menu varies daily based on what is available in town, but Haspar (the owner) works hard to maintain a constant supply for his wine and drinks menu. The venue stopped serving harder liquors and brandies after one too many occasions where people would move on from wine to hard drink late in the night causing any number of brawls, damages and general unruliness.

During the summer, much of the drinking and eating takes place in the courtyard of the structure with the fountain in the centre bubbling away quietly. During the hottest months, canvas coverings

are pulled over much of the courtyard to provide shade from the hot summer sun (because drinking in the sun often results in headaches and stomach aches, the management tries their best to increase sales with nice cool spaces).

Finally, the Court also has a few rooms for rent at most times. Only Haspar Ruggles and his best cook live on site, with the rest of the staff coming in to work every day – leaving a pair of rooms for rent on the east side of the structure. Currently the smaller of the two rooms is rented out to Krivotos, a centaur who was recently reincarnated into the form of a human and who is now trying desperately to fit in with “regular” civilization. He is a great source of information about the eastern forests and the druids therein.

the Mastervale Estate



Bearing obvious similarities to the mansion of the Dervel Merchants in blueridge, the Mastervale Estate is slightly more regular in shape and less alien in material – appearing at first glance to be made of grey stone. The actual material is an unworldly grey crystal that seems utterly smooth to the touch, and yet seems to be easy to grab onto and grip to. Because of this “grippiness” and the whims of the owners the outside of the structure is covered with vines and other green creepers, further enhancing the appearance that the structure is made of some normal stone. The alien construction extends even to the windows which are thinner and translucent but not fully transparent and which are also as hard as the walls.

Assembled using the same strange magics as the Dervel house, this structure was originally the headquarters of the Mastervale Merchant Consortium. However, as the fortunes of that business waned after a series of bad investments and destroyed cargoes, the Mastervale family ended up selling their extended properties and moving into the estate – converting offices and libraries into living areas.

Still considered one of the main merchant families of the city, the Mastervales are a bitter clan who remember their time of greater affluence and prosperity and allow it to blind them to their current wealth and success. They hoard the last of their great treasures and seek to reverse their recent decline – however they have become very risk-averse... Combined with their bitterness and penny-pinching, they are unlikely to climb their way back to the top.

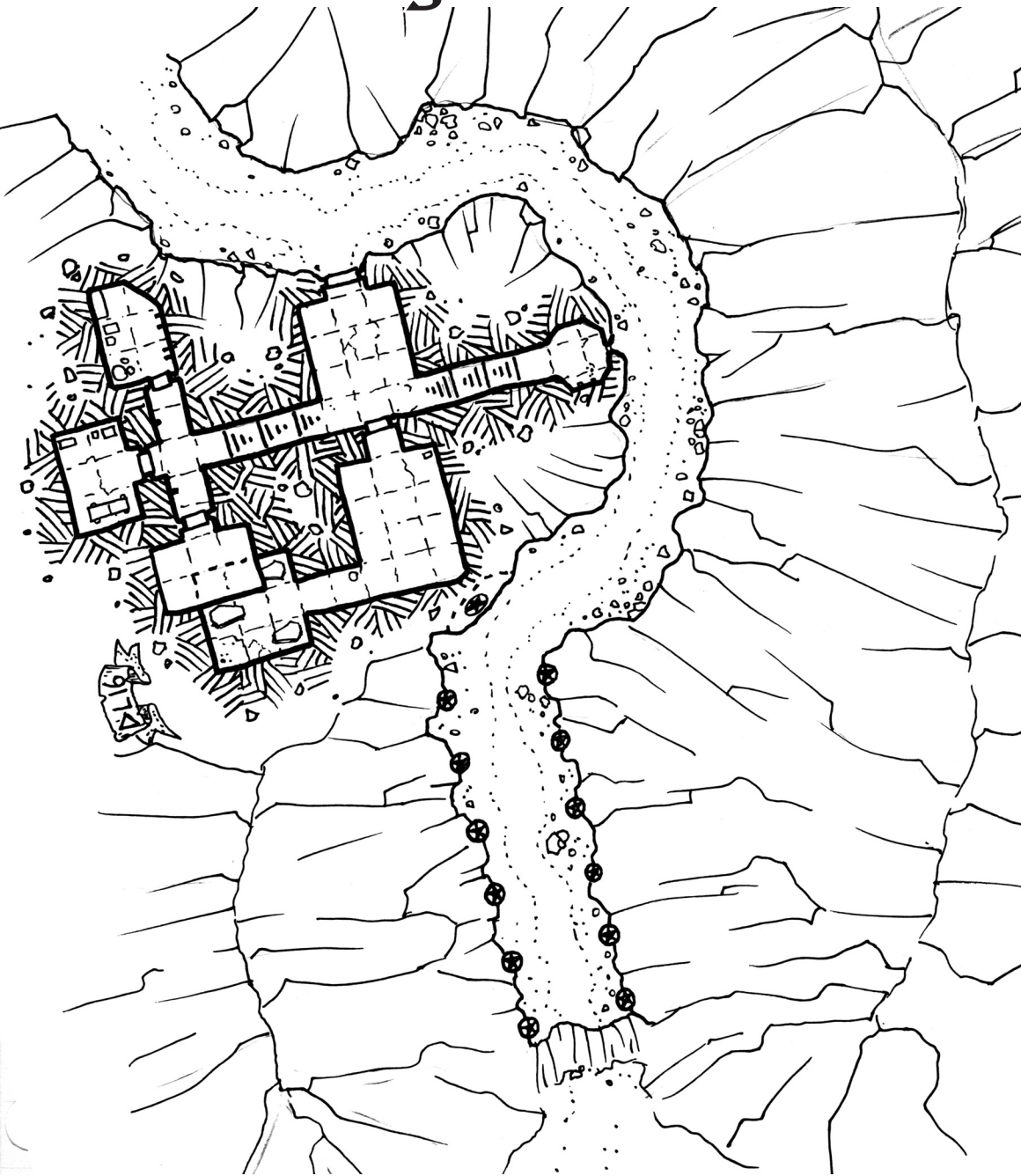
The Mastervale clan can be used as a patron for an adventuring group as they are well-regarded by most in the region and do have the money to afford good work. However, they are cheap and quick to reduce payment for mistakes or unforeseen setbacks. They also may become the target for adventurers seeking to get into the good graces of the thieves’ guild, other merchant families, or those seeking out the remaining treasures of the clan.

The Warking's Vault

In the Barrier Peaks is a small pass no longer accessible from either side – at some point the ends of the pass were lifted up above the local landscape by a hundred feet or more, leaving sheer cliffs and difficult climbs. What has been forgotten is that this was done by the dwarves in their time of grief for their fallen warking.

The eastern end of the pass is decorated by pale stone statues of human warriors on each side, leading to a massive stone statue of a dwarf where the pass turns. These are the honour guard of the warking – caryatid columns and a mighty (if short) stone golem left to defend his resting place.

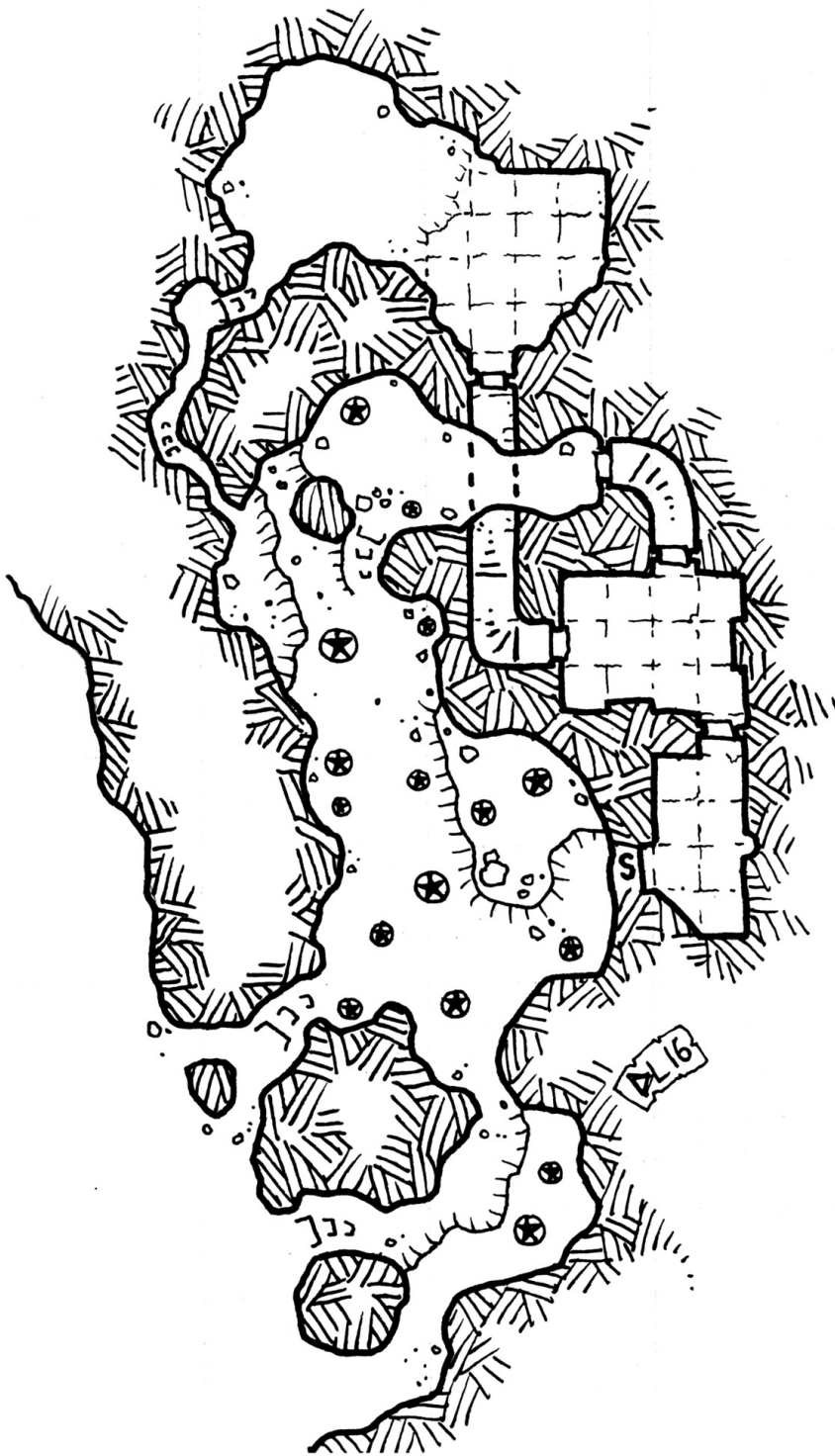
The vault itself has remained sealed since her interment. The main door sealed from within by the craftsmen who then climbed out using a ladder into a narrow chimney in the smallest raised chamber that overlooks the pass, the top of which is also sealed (although not nearly as securely as the front door). The vault itself is fairly small. The entrance hall is decorated with scenes of the dwarven earth-ships breaching into this world and laying siege to burning elven cities. The stairs from this hall lead to the overlook chamber (decorated with representations of the constellations of the dwarven home world) and the preparatory chambers for the warking's interment.



The next hall is decorated in abstract geometric patterns pleasing to dwarven eyes, and niches disguised into the walls are the homes to skulls of dwarves who fell in the same battle that ended the warking's life – and their shadows should the warking be disturbed.

The final chamber contains the crypt of the warking and her two husbands, who of course will rise as undead most foul if disturbed or robbed.

The Statue Gallery



There is a cave with far too many statues within it that some locals whisper about when drunk enough. The local kids will dare each other to climb down into the cavern and touch a statue, with the bravest actually moving past the first few and reaching one in the darker confines of the gallery cavern. The statues are a strange mix – mostly human-sized depictions of heroic-looking sorts in action poses with the occasional animal and peasant in the crowd.

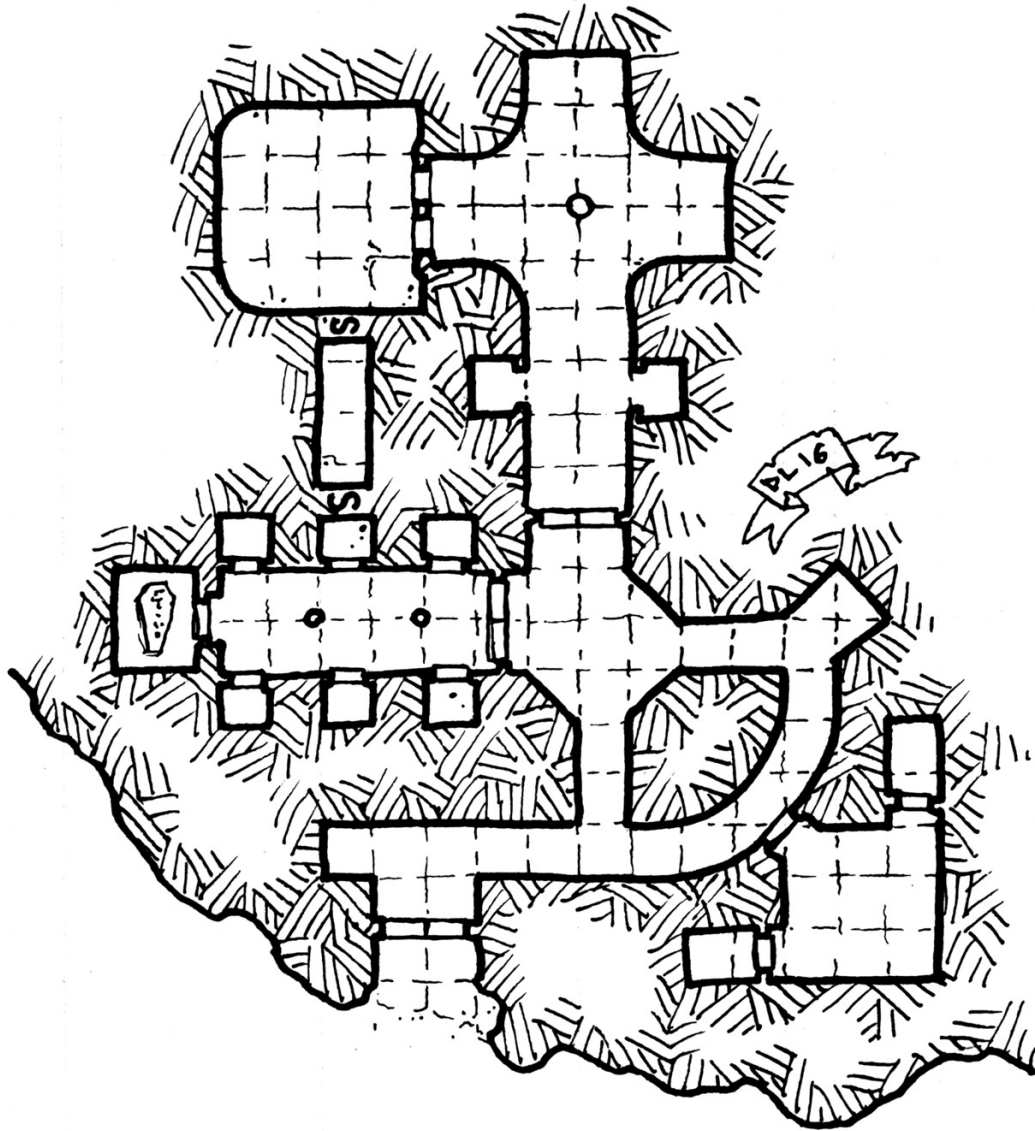
Of course, to adventurers this is the sure sign of a medusa, cockatrice, gorgon or worse. Shields will be polished, mirrors acquired, blindfolds put on, and light spells prepared...

And the undying sorcerer who collected all these fine sculpted pieces over the centuries will be waiting for them. For he is no fool and has no time for the antics of treasure hunters and murder hobos.

I tried to keep this five-room dungeon as non-linear as possible once characters are in the first room. There is a secret door, a tiny little passage (perfect for a shape-shifting villain to escape down, but too big for most adventuring types), and looping designs in order to make it as accessible as possible – if you know your way.

Played right, this is the kind of place where PCs quickly get tired of the villain's hit and run tactics and figure out some way to destroy the whole place from a safe distance. Or nuke it from orbit.

Tarodun's Tomb



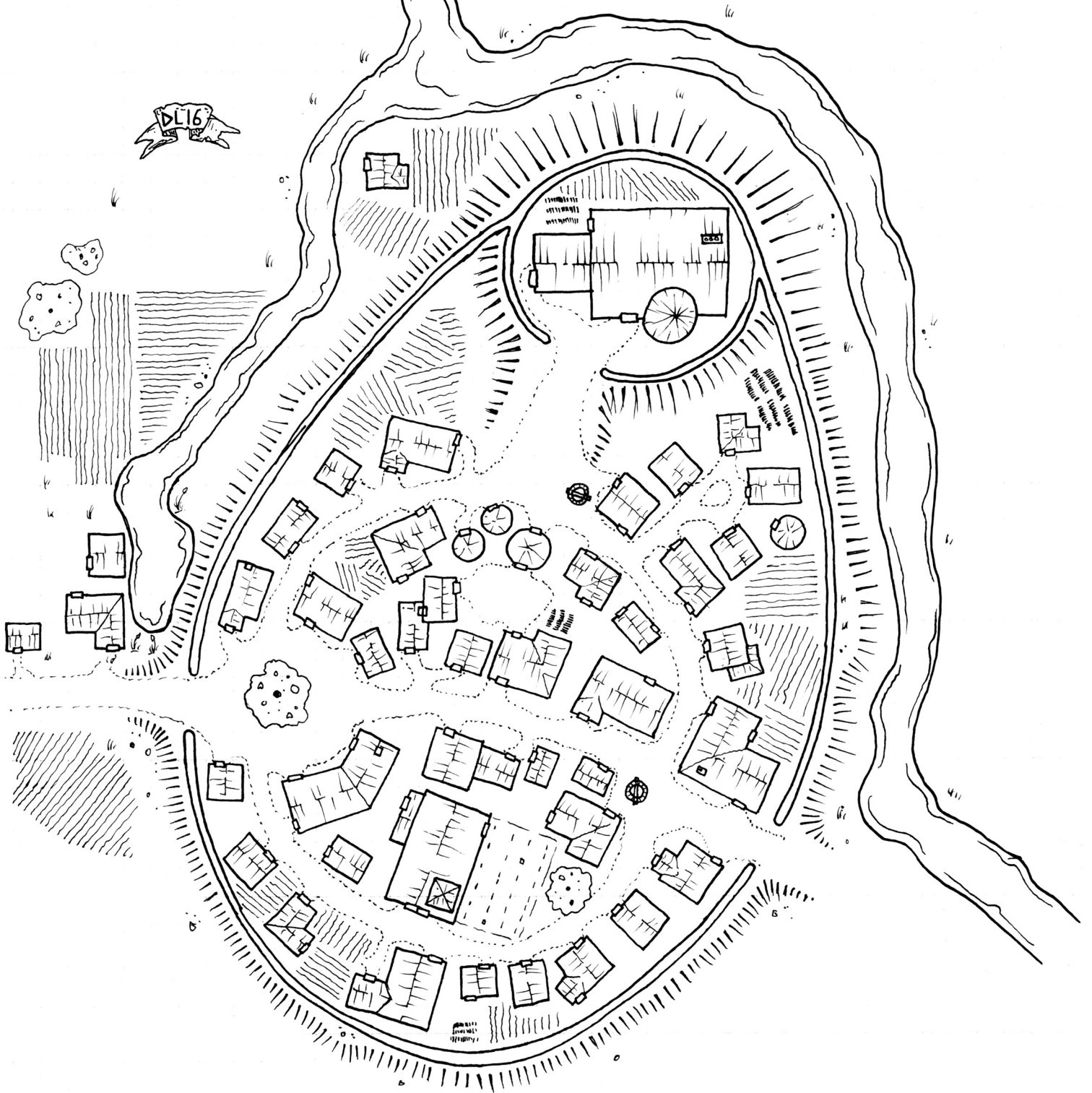
The Knight of Clubs is dead and his eternal soul trapped within Kingslayer, the sword of Silver. His body, minus his left hand, was secreted away by his henchmen and never seen again. Some sages have records from the henchmen's deathbed confessions decades later that the tomb of Tarodun the Preserver was broken into and the body of the Knight of Clubs now resides there. While his hammer Direlock is not with the corpse, it turns out the black-stoned ring he wore on his right hand was the key to unlocking the true potency of the weapon. And of course, that is still with the body.

Tarodun's Tomb is sealed to this day and entering it will definitely anger those who still maintain the entrance and venerate the saint who was buried

here hundreds of years ago. But if the tomb has been defiled with the body of the Knight of Clubs in Tarodun's place, then who knows what sorts of hostile restless spirits now inhabit the old structure.

And of course... the traps. What tomb would be complete without triggers that erect flaming walls, spiritual weapons, guardian constructs and more? All the doors within the structure are trapped in one manner or another, and many are magically locked as well. It would take brave souls, operating in complete secrecy, to manage to recapture the ring from herein without starting up a lynchmob (or dying trying).

Vardisstvy



Vardisstvy (previous page)

Vardisstvy is a small village and great house built up in what used to be the northern gnoll wastes. With the rapid decline of the winter gnoll tribes, the region has become a place where those seeking land and freedoms unavailable in the Satrapy have started setting up homes and villages.

Vardisstvy was one of the first such places and shows its roots as a frontier castle built when gnoll raiders were much more common and came in larger groups. In the original configuration of the town, the town's walls did not connect directly to the great house's, and the river that had been redirected as a moat surrounded the walls. The later replacement of the bridges into town with built up earthen berms cut off the southern portion (where the river didn't flow but just collected into a marshy mess anyways) and in the fifteen years since the old moat land is slowly being converted into fields and tuber gardens.

Vardisstvy sports a number of larger structures that make it central to local governance and a stopping

point for farmers and merchants in the region – a full church, a guildhall belonging to the mercantile and weaver's guilds (who also rent out space to other travelling guildmasters and journeymen), a two-story inn, and a commoner's courthouse separate from the great house on the hill.

The great house is a three-story stone structure with a four-story tower attached. From the structure the local lord looks down on the village and much of the local region.

Of interest to some is the presence of a graveyard within the walls of the village, attached to the church. The local religion believes that being buried outside of the walls of civilization means that the dead will be eternally uncomfortable and sometimes even lost in their afterlives – thus the richest and most well-to-do families manage to get their deceased buried in the small church yard, while farmers and peasants are buried on a nearby hilltop.

The Canal City (next page)

The Lesser Velarb Jungle conceals many things, but most only know of the troglodytes and plethora of giant slugs and snails. The northern reaches of the jungle mix into the extensive swamps of the Black Mire, but as the land becomes drier to the south remains and ruins of networks of old Elsilian Empire canals can be found. While most of the Elsilian ruins have long ago sunk into the swamps and been absorbed by the jungle, two of the cities are still sought by adventurers. The ivory capital of Lukil Pamen is a fabled lost city of the realms, sought by many treasure hunters, but said to be concealed not just by the Lesser Velarb Jungle but by esoteric magics. But some of the ruins of the garden city of Pam Utel still remain.

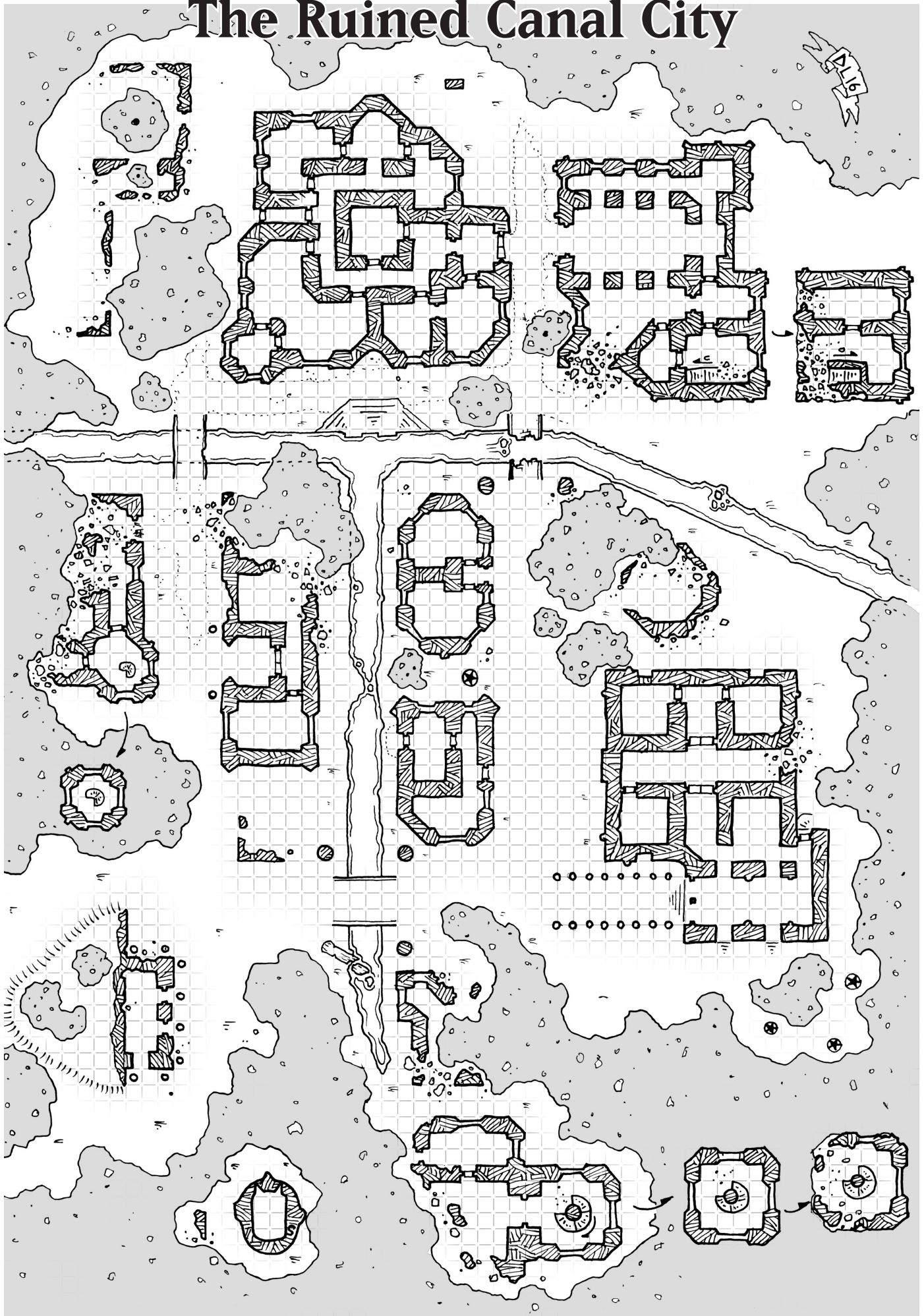
This map is of one of the better surviving neighbourhoods of Pam Utel. Around the area presented in this map are a number of ruined structures and canals in the jungle, none being much more than a couple of half-standing walls and wet ditches with stone banks.

Multiple structures still stand in this neighbourhood and the jungle only partially encroaches upon it. Structures are a mix of old temples and businesses with a few sturdy residential structures along the east-west canal.

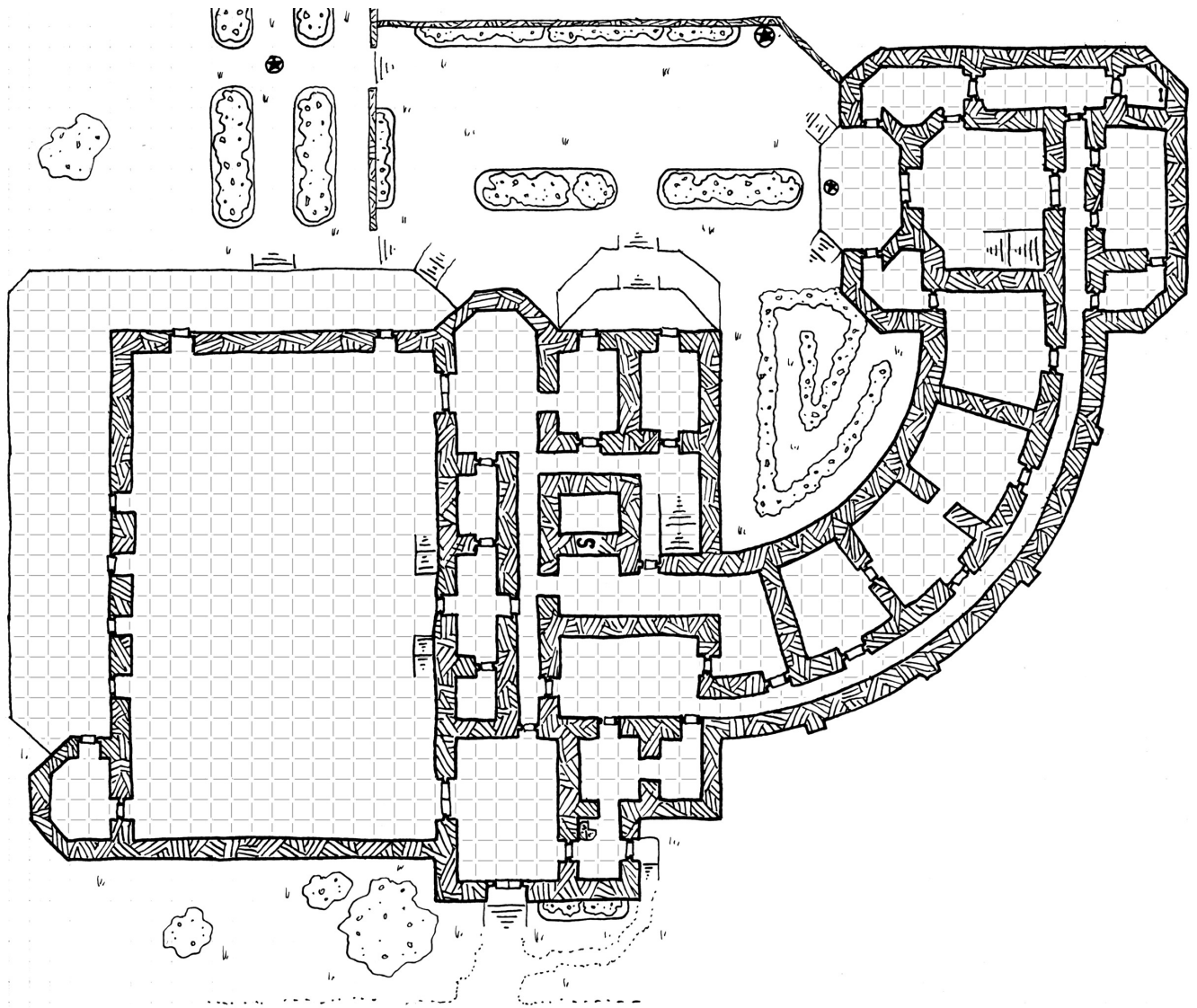
Several of the structures have upper levels that are partially intact (indicated on the map with arrows connecting the upper levels to the lower levels – generally assume there's nothing of interest in the areas on the map beneath these areas), and one interesting structure in the lower right side of the page is a massive sculpture of a human head with hair in a topknot wearing a coronet – this structure has a secret door behind the right ear into the interior of the head.

If there would be any dungeons attached to these structures, they would most likely be beneath this giant head, or accessed through the temple in the upper centre of the map. However, any such dungeons would be mostly water and mud-filled because of the high water table and collapsing canals.

The Ruined Canal City



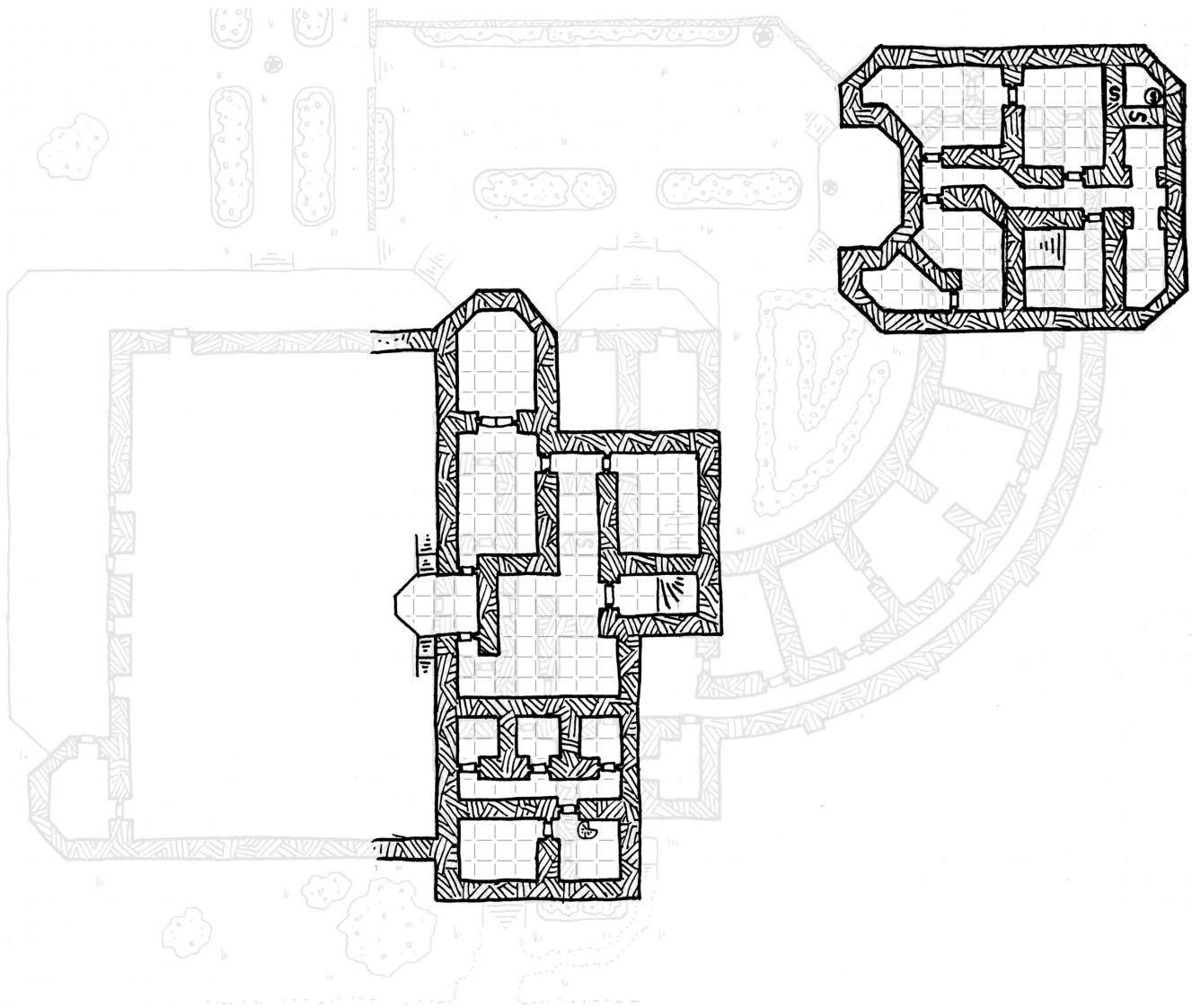
The Krisdithas Estate & Ballroom



The Krisdithas Estate is one of the best-pedigreed upper-class homes in the city. While it has changed hands a few times in its long history, it has always been to rich families with the bluest of bloodlines and long stories of money, corruption, influence and dark secrets. Even a clan of exiled noble dark elves have used the structure for a time. Exactly what is expected of the upper class.

But what's important about the Krisdithas Estate this week is the grand ballroom where the annual Pageant of Sapphires is being hosted. While the Pageant officially circulates through all the grand households of the city, it actually generally occurs at five particular estates and the ballroom of this particular estate remains quiet and desolate through years at a time.

The Krisdithas Estate & Ballroom

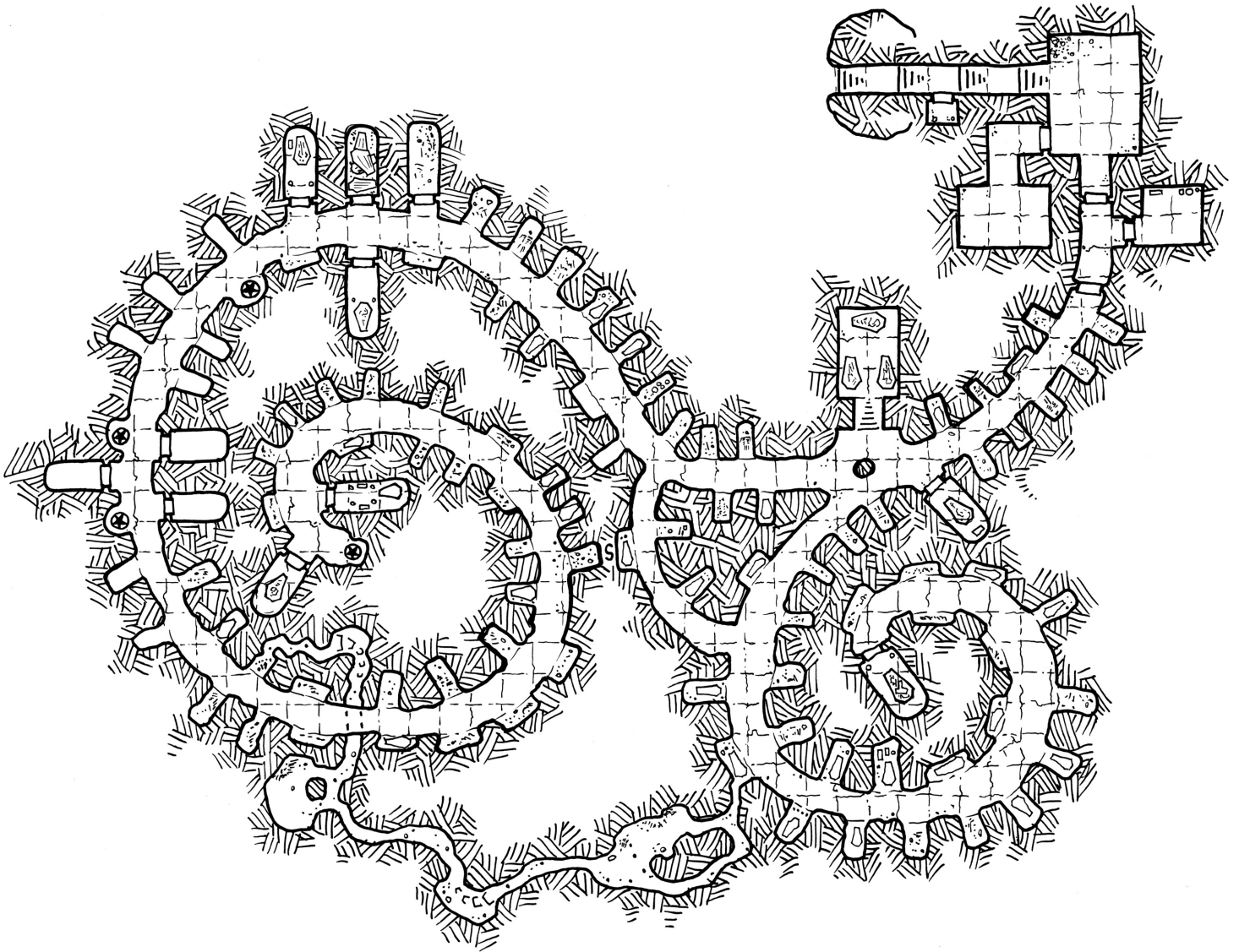


Unless you believe the tales of a lone woman who dances here quietly through the night.

The estate building is a two-level affair divided into two wings connected by a curved hall facing southeast to get the best sun of the day. The structure is anchored by the ballroom at one end (with access from both floors) and the main sleeping area at the other with gardens behind the structure and tucked into the inside of the curved hall.

Of course the structure contains it's share of secrets and intricacies – with a secret room off of the library, and another off the master bedroom with a trapdoor leading down into the summer pantry. The gardens contain a number of statues rumoured to be remains of young nobles turned to stone by creatures most foul, and the flowers in one of the beds are notoriously blood thirsty vampire roses.

The Spiral Crypts



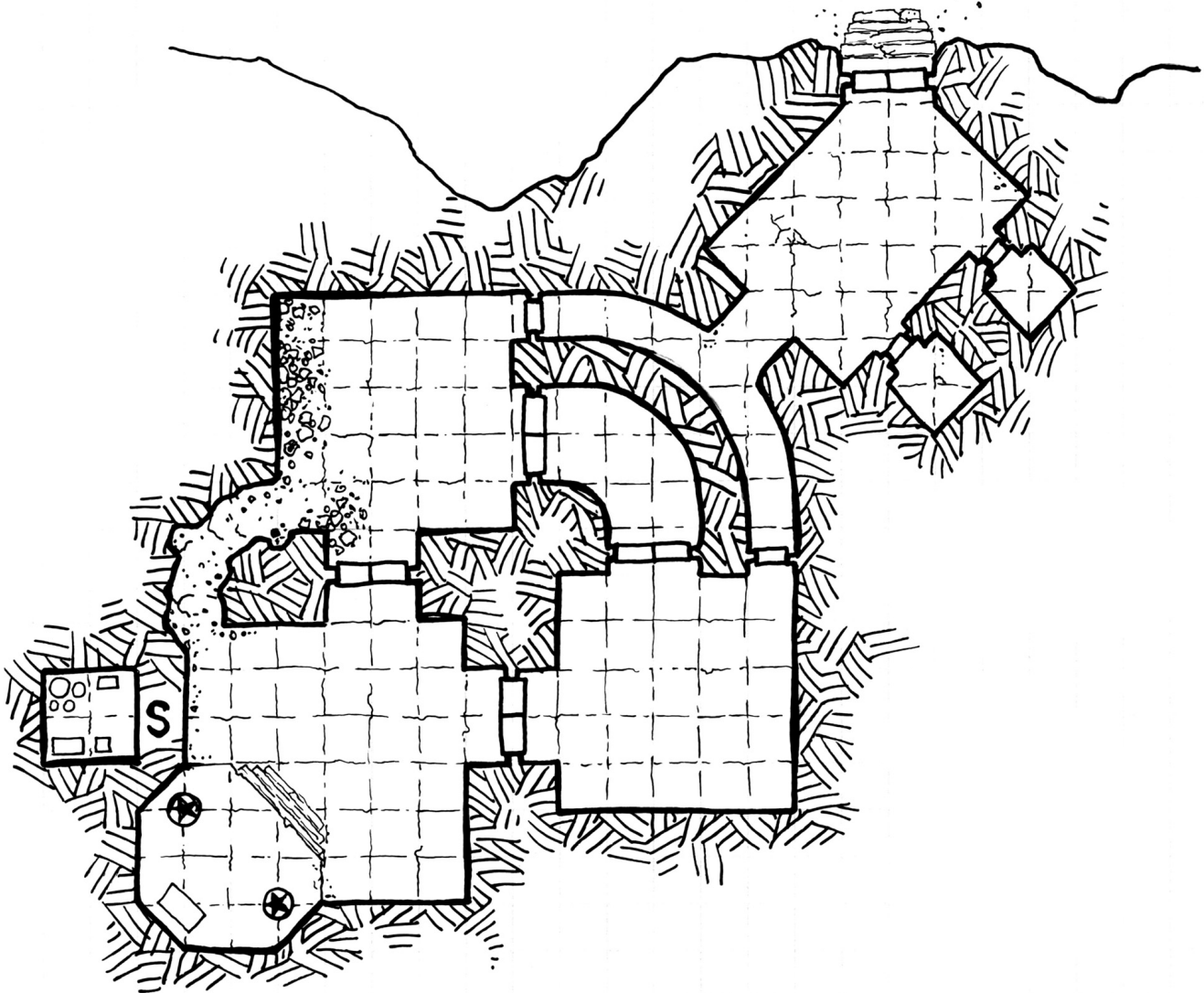
“They” say that the restless dead get confused by corners and curves. Thus they make their crypts into convoluted spirals and in some cases interlocking circles to confuse the restless dead and force them to remain underground, away from the living.

These Spiral Crypts are a medium-sized crypt from a culture that espoused these beliefs before our modern awakened era. The crypts, and many like them, can be found near local villages and mixed in with the necropolis just to the east of the city gates. Other crypts from these earlier inhabitants

are more complex, multi-tiered, spiraling and interlocking designs – far too easy for even the living to get lost in, let alone the brain-addled dead.

The Spiral Crypts haven’t been entirely undisturbed, however. While the restless dead could not escape their new home, some did painfully claw out small caves and byways that they can hide within, hoping against hope that some day the old ways will come back into style, and new bodies will be entombed here for their consumption.

The Voiceless Chambers



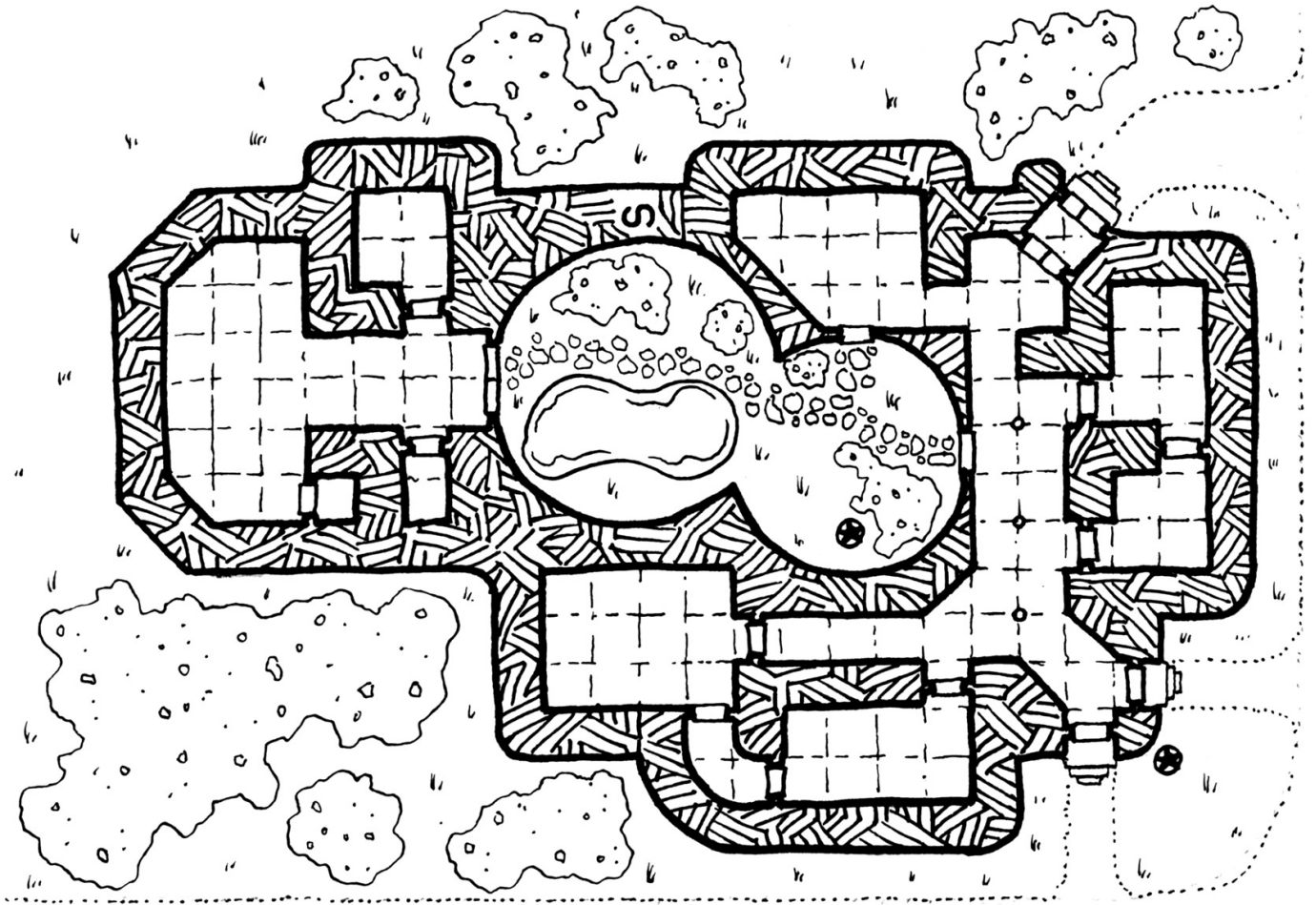
When the Sorceress Queen Nemorlienne finally died, some efforts were made to keep her that way. While her rule was generally good for the state of the nation, those closest to the halls of power found her ways destructive and maniacal and her magically-augmented temper shortened many an advisor's lifespan.

Like the other deceased queens, she was first burned to ashes and then those ashes converted into a gem using dark alchemies. However, unlike those before her, her tomb was sealed completely and magically, and in addition to the usual magical guards and wards over the tomb, the whole place was made magically and perpetually silent so no one could seek her counsel even in death.

But someone has broken the outer seals of the crypt, and it seems that when confronted with the magical portals sealing the final chamber, they pulled out all the stops and got something to dig through the walls instead of trying to breach the warded doors.

But with the knowledge that the tomb has been plundered, some sages seek to speak to Nemorlienne's gem again – and while most who have such an interest are hunting down the tomb robbers who broke in initially, one has found evidence that one final deception was included in the creation of the crypt – the gem on the final resting place was actually a normal gem with a magic aura, and a secret chamber contains the real gem in question.

The Garden Palace



There are borderlands where fortified structures are the norm for those with riches and influence. Where civilization isn't strong, and the law can't be trusted to keep you safe. In these places instead of manor houses and mansions, those who have the means instead build fortifications and bunkers.

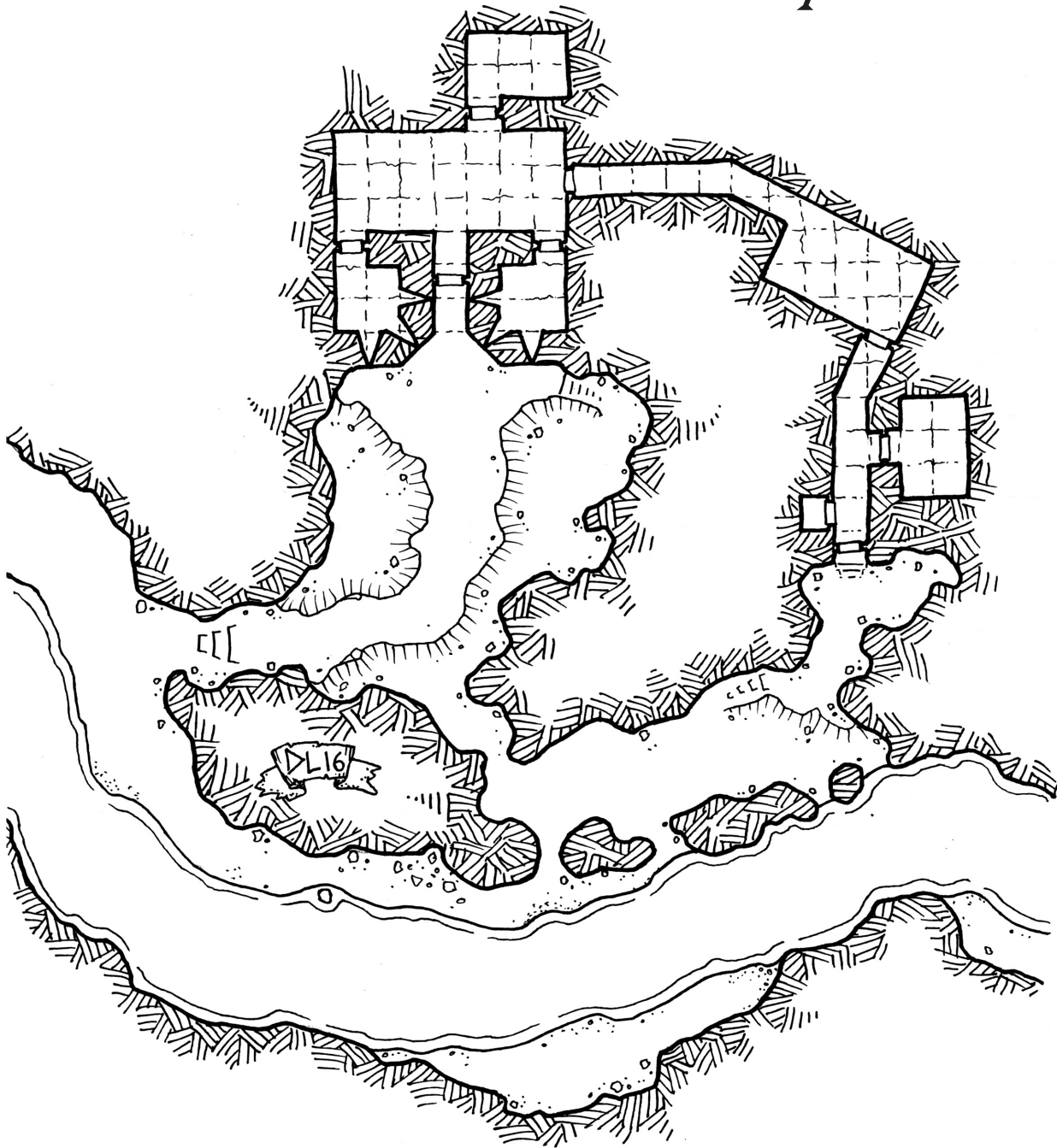
The Garden Palace is such a structure — a squat chunk of black stone with a pair of windowed domes on the roof. The domes let in enough light to maintain a small garden within the structure — providing a place for the songbirds that the owner collects as well as a small pond to relax in while listening to them.

The Garden Palace is currently occupied by the smuggler and trader Morgolant the Blue — a half-elf well known for his laziness and decadence (a masquerade he maintains to keep his opponents and trading partners in the dark as much as pos-

sible, although those close to him usually suspect it is the case because of both his business acuity and his strict control of the smuggling routes in his purview). He conducts most of his business in the chambers beyond the gardens (with more trusted or interesting business sometimes taking place in the garden itself), thus offering him the chance to always show off his prizes to those he deals with.

Both statues, however, long predate Morgolant's occupation of the structure and are very old and worn representations of lean and powerful elves of extra-planar origin (based on their elongated heads and six-fingered hands). Other architectural flourishes such as the bas-reliefs on the columns in the main hall also indicate that this structure (or at least parts of it) is much older than the current resident and probably dates back to the era of the elven empire.

The River Gallery



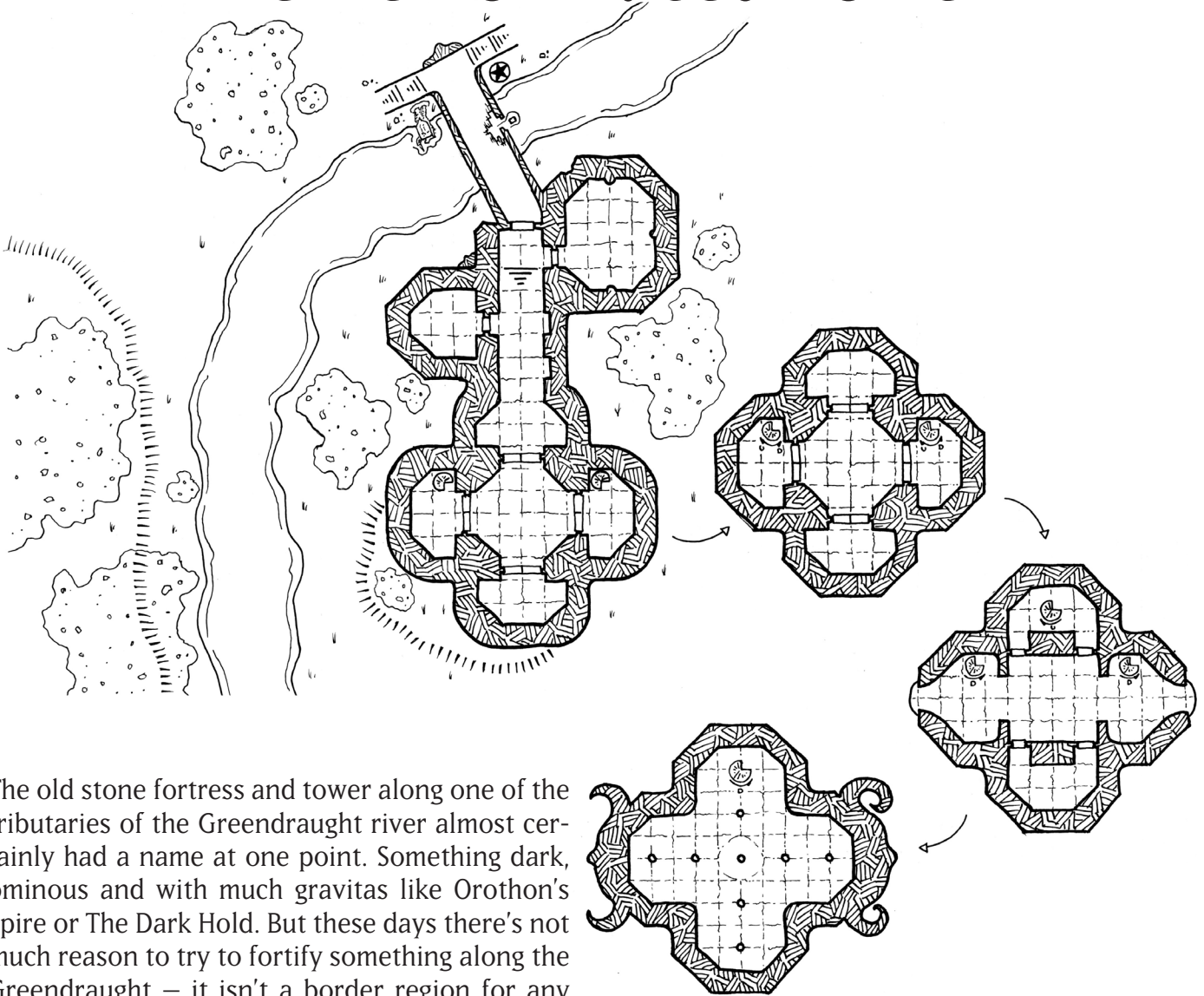
In the mountains of Kuln, the Ironflow river's tributaries form a number of ravines, clefts, and canyons of various sizes. This particular cleft cuts through some sedimentary rock where the river has washed out sections of the softer rocks forming a series of natural galleries that were in time expanded upon by a small clan of miners as their base of operations while mining and panning in the area.

Every member of the clan picked up arms in defense of Kuln when the ogres came. While there are still dwarves in the region, none lay claim to

the titles or lands of the dwarves of Kuln, for that would mean that they would be admitting to abandoning the battle against the ogres where all their kin were slain.

Thus the old river gallery caves and structures lie abandoned, moaning occasionally as breezes flow through them. The stone doors to the deeper structures locked and secured. Small creatures have come and gone through the arrow slits into the defensive structures, but who knows if anything now lives beyond there...

The Demon-Faced Tower



The old stone fortress and tower along one of the tributaries of the Greendraught river almost certainly had a name at one point. Something dark, ominous and with much gravitas like Orothon's Spire or The Dark Hold. But these days there's not much reason to try to fortify something along the Greendraught — it isn't a border region for any major kingdom, nor a tactically important river crossing or any such.

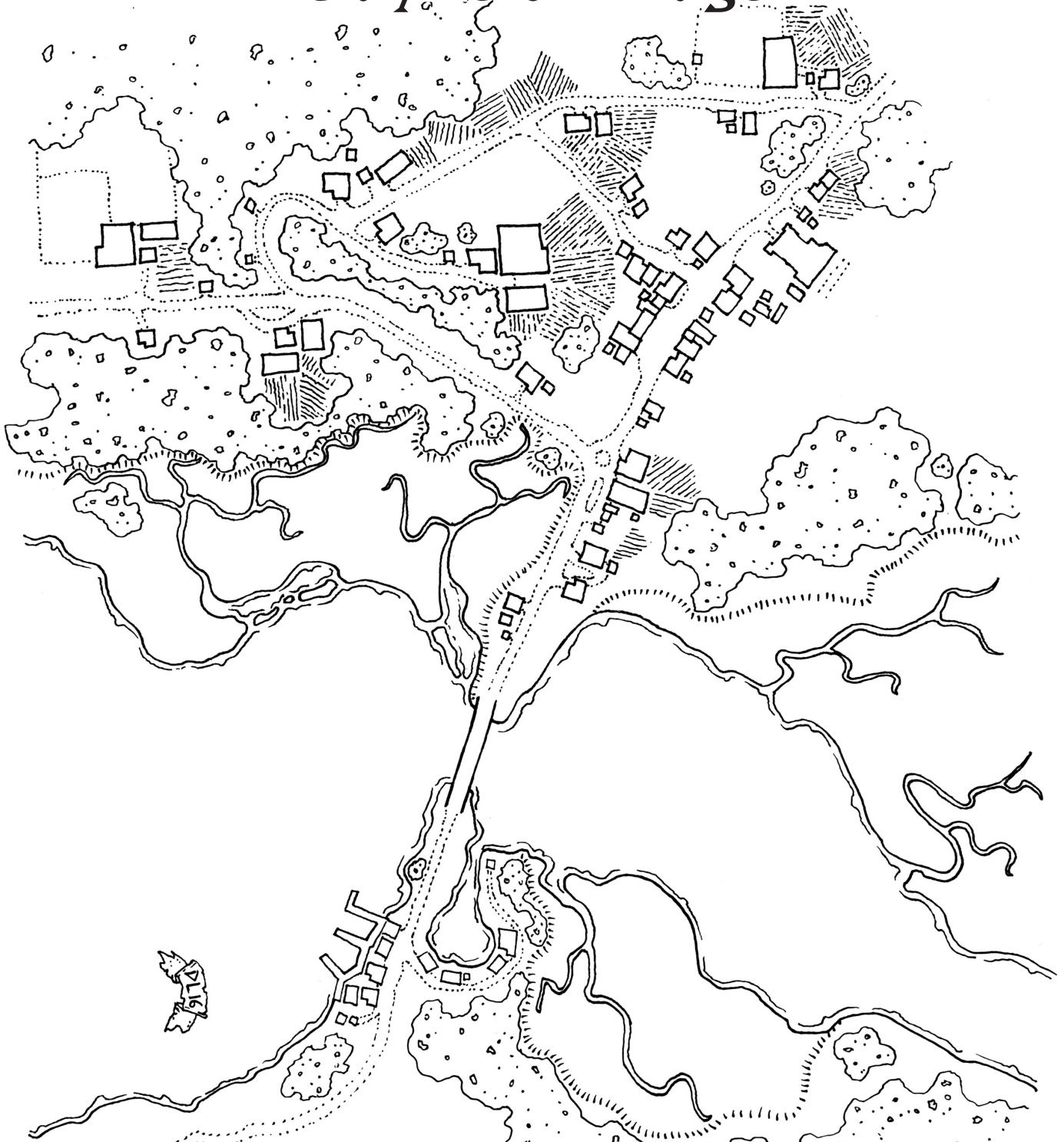
So the old fortress has fallen into disuse, and is known for its obvious architectural flourishes as "The Demon-Faced Tower". Probably because it has two different stone demon faces projecting from the sides of the tower proper, with balconies in their mouths.

The whole structure is in poor repair with moss covering many areas, and the doors are only decent because they've been replaced recently. The problem is of course that it just makes such a perfect headquarters for some evil up-and-coming dark sorcerer or demonologist. Who knows how many have tried launching a career of dark magics from this place over the past century or two.

Thus, it has become the home of an order of druids who ignore the iconography, and instead enjoy the irony of the whole structure being gradually taken over by moss and vines. They also serve to keep would-be dark overlords from setting up base here.

But that doesn't make for an exciting adventure spot, does it? Unless of course one of the failed dark lords who set up shop here a few hundred years ago isn't really dead, and has magic-jarred himself into one of the demon heads instead. Now of course he's taken over the body of the head of the order of druids, and the whole order is slowly slipping into darker and darker practices, blood sacrifices, and are gradually breaking open the gate between worlds...

Clayfield Village

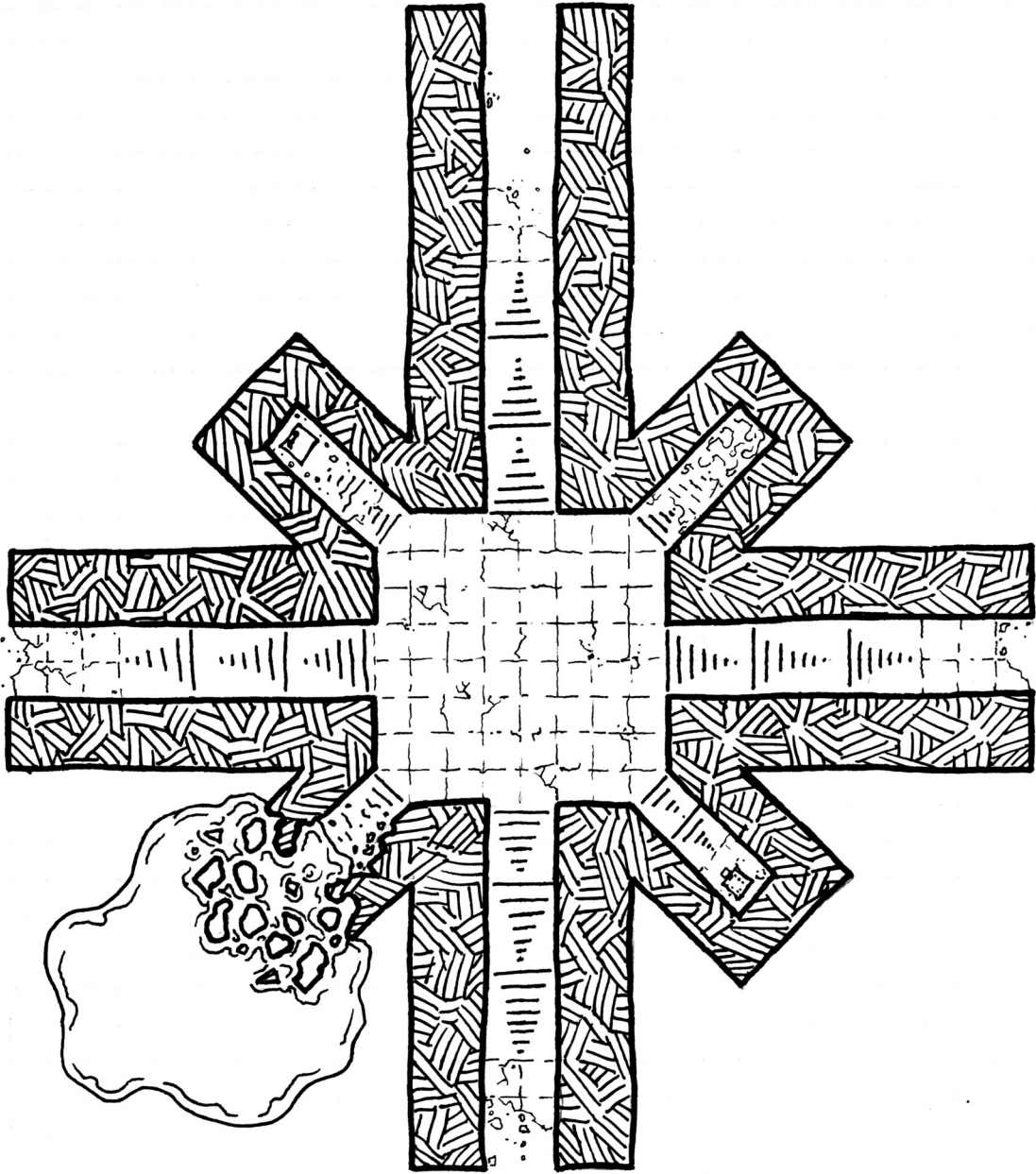


Named for the heavy clay found in the mudflats where the town was established, Clayfield Village is a small outpost of humans and halflings built around a bridge across the outlet of the sluggish Laglach river.

While the local halflings still use the old name for the original halfling farm along this area, Laglin, when talking about the village, almost everyone else calls it Clayfield (unless they are trying to get

in with the more conservative halflings). The yellowish grey clay deposited here by the Laglach is harvested by the locals to manufacture bricks as well as pottery. Lagle Ceramic (as the clay is known when fired and finished) is used for most flasks and household ceramic uses in the region although it is not particularly strong (making it sought after by some who seek easy-to-break containers for alchemist's fire and similar substances).

The Octagonal Temple



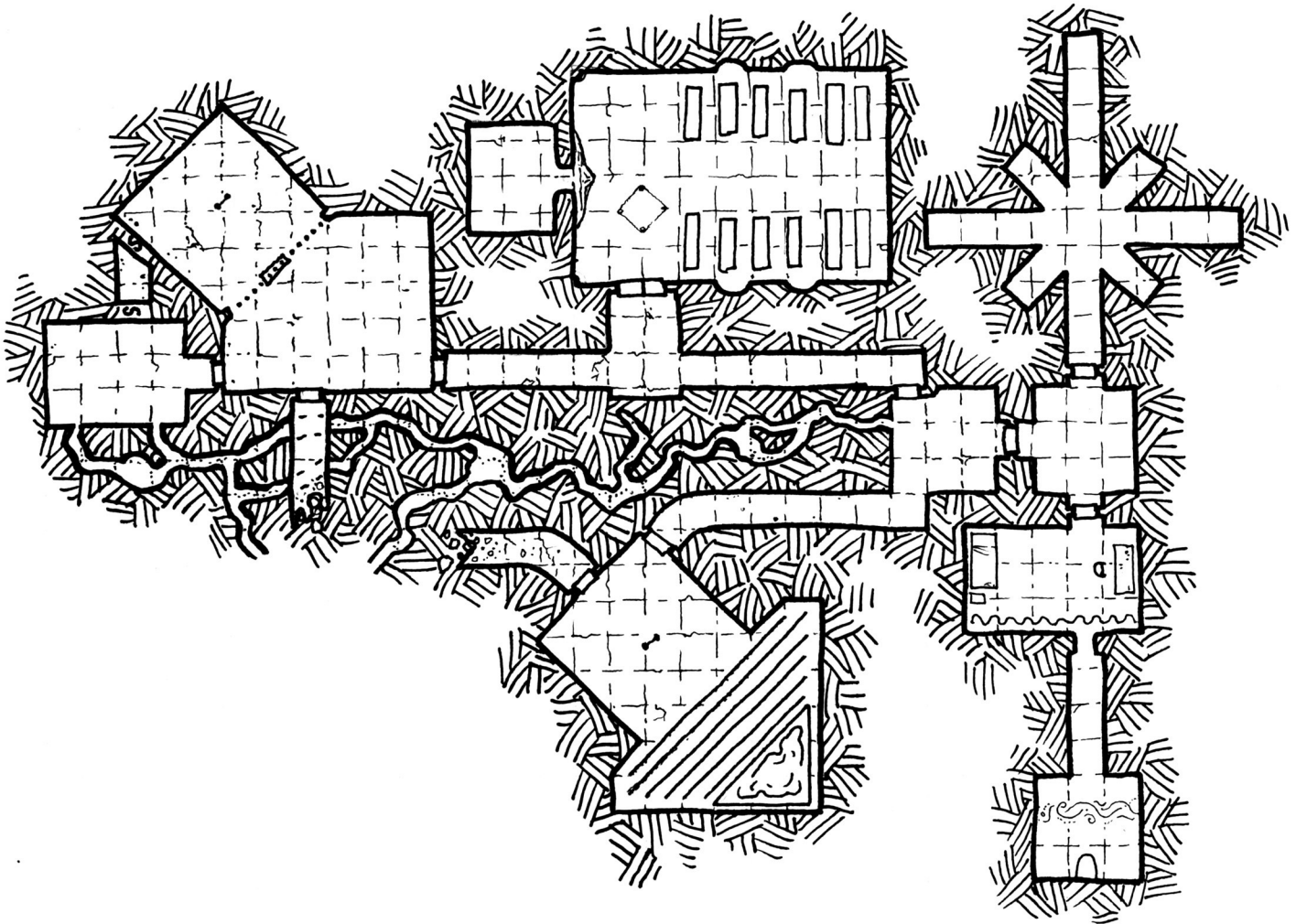
The eight-pointed star has been the symbol of chaos for so long... that in some ironic way it has become the law. And yet chaos champions and sorcerers still build with that symbology in mind, sometimes crafting massive arcane structures that tell all who see them that they are massive, immutable structure dedicated to change and mutability.

No one ever said chaos sorcerers were clever. But it could just be that they have a strong sense of irony.

To add confusion to the issue, the temple may be called “the octagonal temple” but it is eight-pointed, not eight-sided. Chalk it up to self-aware chaos sorcerers again.

And when you can see basically see a chaos symbol from orbit, it doesn’t take too long before some warriors and nobles collect a motley crew of “adventurers” and holy warriors to destroy it. Which appears to be the case with the octagonal temple — where one side has been smashed and is collapsing into a muddy morass of swamp water while the rest of the surface structure remains quiet and seemingly abandoned.

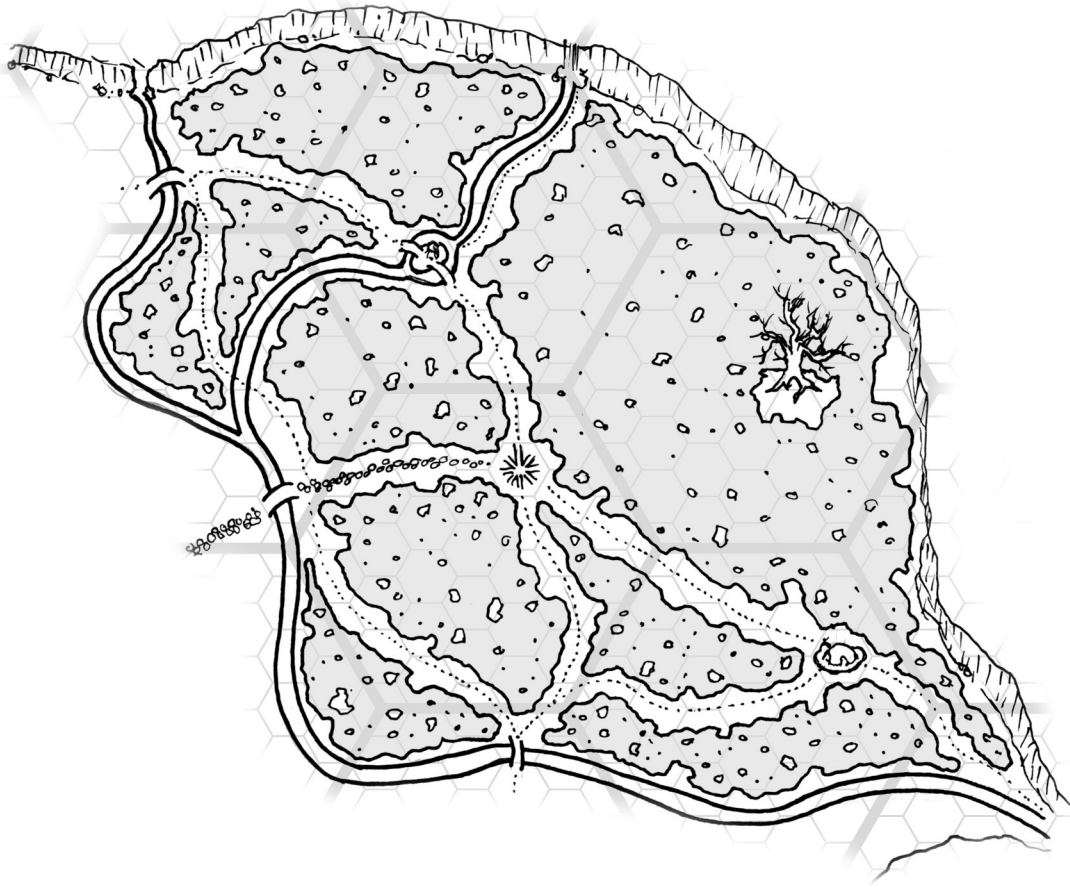
Under the Octagonal Temple



There are four gradual sets of stairs up onto the temple platform 20 feet above the marshy ground of the area, and four more (much steeper) stairs leading back down towards the three remaining portals to the understructures of the temple. Two are trap doors (padlocked and rusted shut) which lead to ladders, and the last is concealed in magical mists and links to an elevator platform that is controlled from the area beneath.

The understructures of the temple are a little less organized. Ladders in the chamber to the upper left and in the stepped chamber with the triangular pool lead up to the rusty trap doors (the upper left on appearing to be a prison of some kind, thus also explaining the padlock). Several passages (and also two of the newer rat holes) once lead to the collapsed area where the ruined section of the temple rests.

The Valley of Burning Orchids



There are many tales about the Valley of Burning Orchids and its name. Most are completely made up and have no real sense to them. The Valley appears on most maps of the continent, far into lands that remain uncivilized and mostly unpopulated to this day. It is in fact named after an Elven Sorceress and not some strange flower that ignites itself on the night of the new moon pining for the return of the sun, or a great war that involved the magical incineration of the fields of prized orchids grown here by the Elven kingdom. It was just a place where one elven sorceress would leave her kin in order to study the pact magics she had made with otherworldly beings.

Of course, centuries of potent magics and extradimensional portals can make any place a little odd, especially a small cliff-enclosed valley where most

people still fear to tread... Who knows if Burning Orchid is still alive (unlikely after these ages), or what strange things she invited into this world?

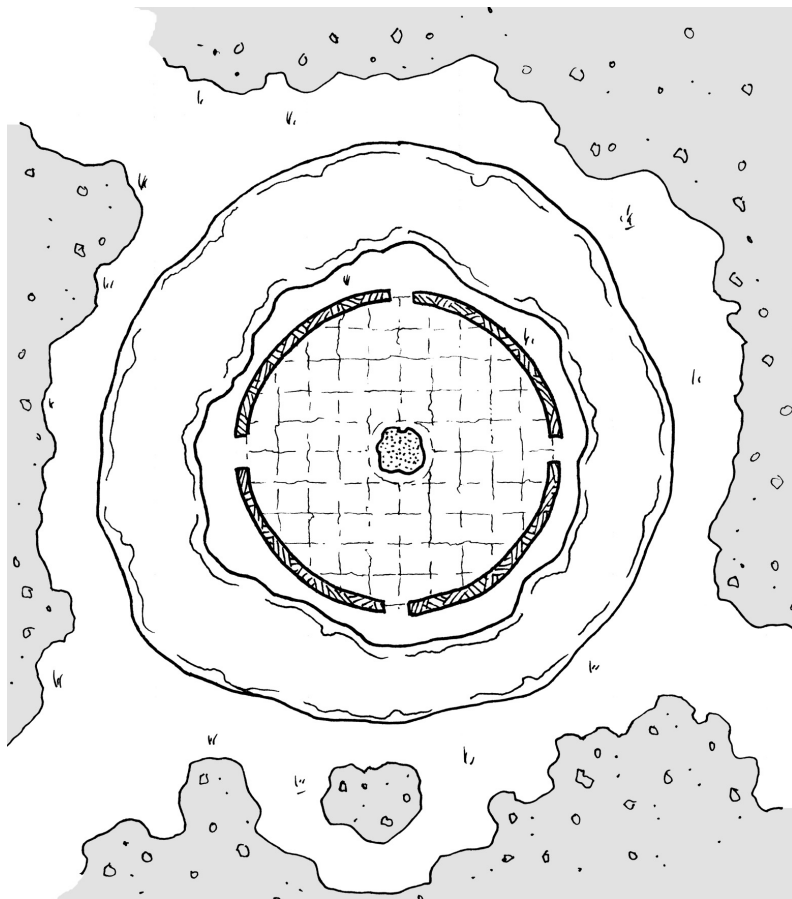
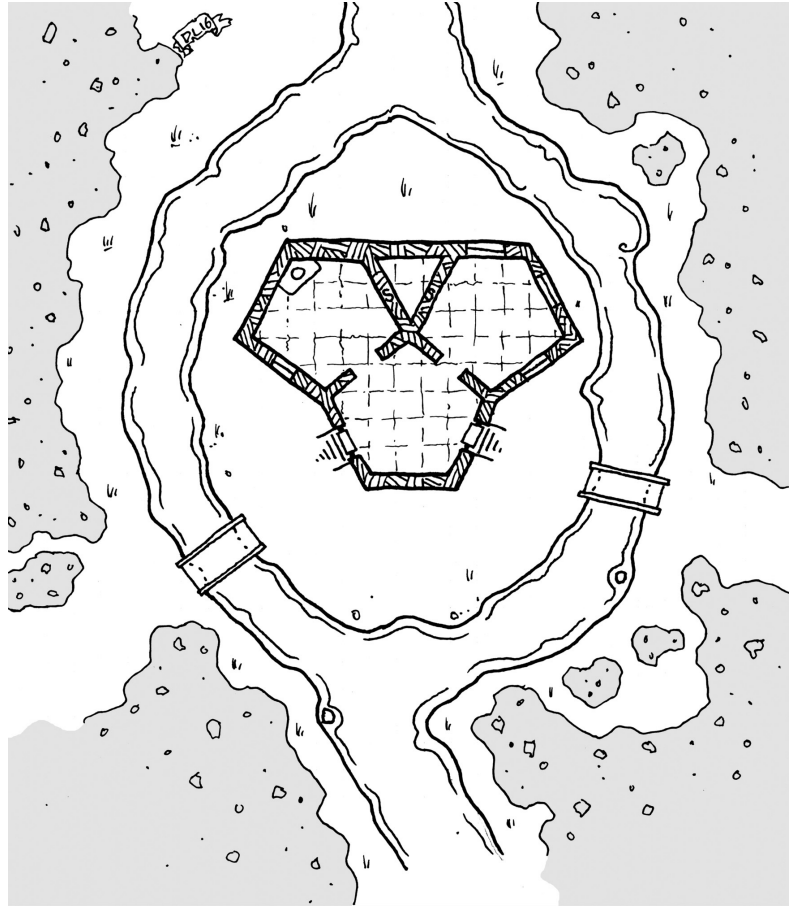
Two structures remain from her time here, and one newer structure was built and then destroyed since the fall of the elven empire. The newer structure is the Octagonal Temple on the preceding pages – built by a chaos cult taking advantage of the rifts Burning Orchid had created between this world and the Eight Violet Hells. But that cult base was smashed out of existence by a band of adventurers some two dozen years ago and the valley has been mostly quiet since.

The other two structures of note sit on their own islands – the Iron House and the Basalt Dome.

The Iron House & Basalt Dome

The Iron House is at an intersection of three paths through the woods of the valley, and there are two iron bridges slowly sinking into the soft earth that cross over the river to the island. The area around here is mostly devoid of wildlife, and the old remains of flayed animals can be found tucked here and there behind trees and in tufts of grass.

Made of three iron pentagons, the house is a dimensional weak point where spells tapping into the magics and powers of the Iron Towers of Ges operate at increased efficiency and potency. Of course, it is also home to several of the “demons” of the Iron Towers, rusty steel outsiders who inflict pain and suffering on those they meet.

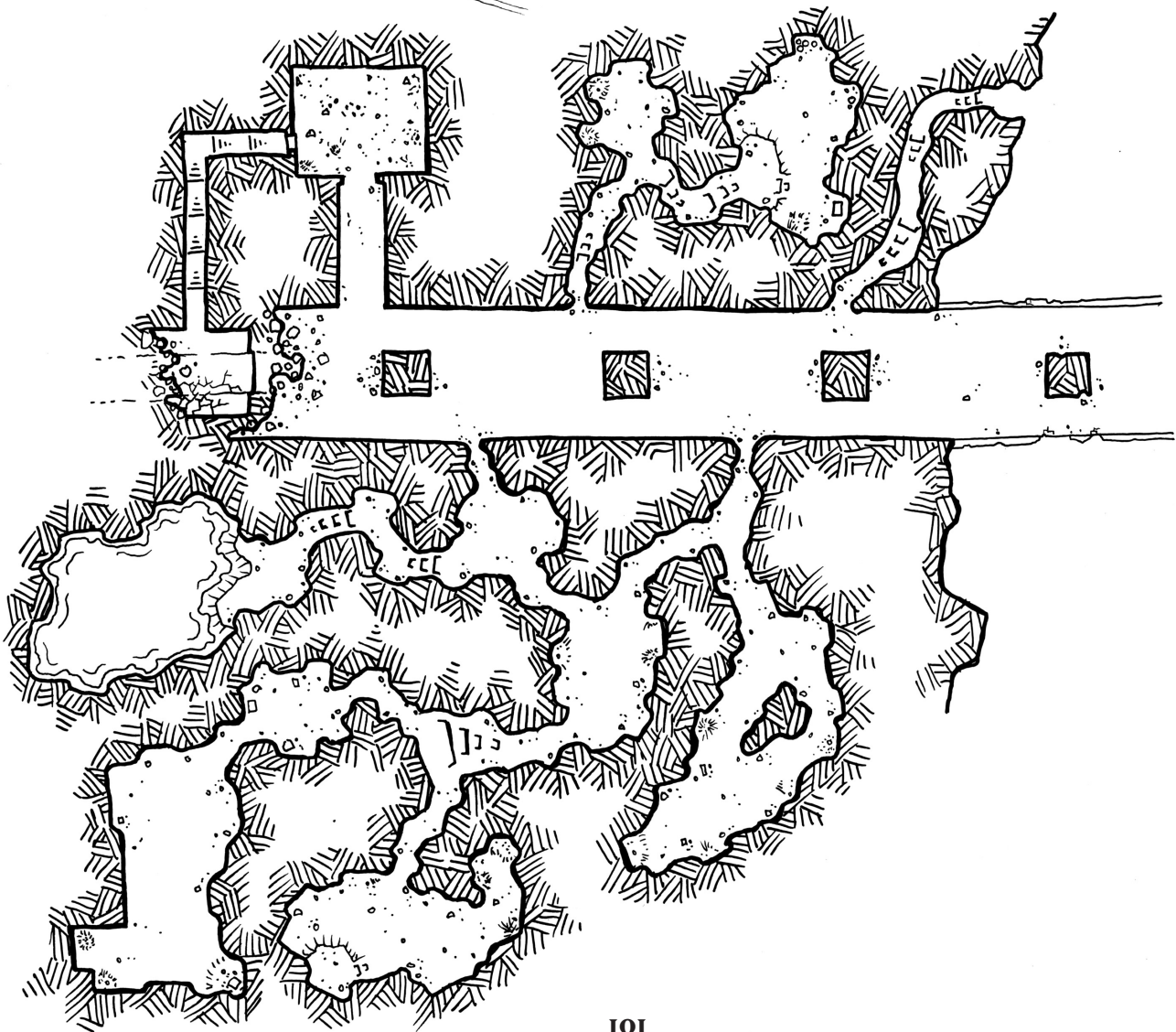
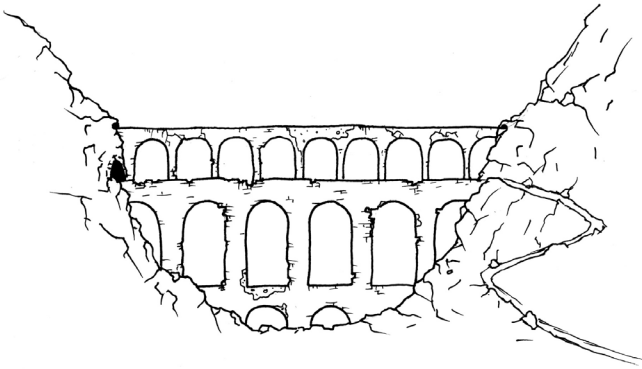


The Basalt Dome is a hemisphere of black volcanic stone with a chunk of meteor mounted on a pedestal in the centre of the floor. The meteor is the last remnants of the heart of a huge demon summoned in the skies over the valley that then burned up as it fell, leaving only this knot of pure anger and hatred behind. Any form of telepathy used within the dome will reveal these powerful emotions and the caster of such spells must make a saving throw to avoid being dominated by the last base urges of this fallen demon lord.

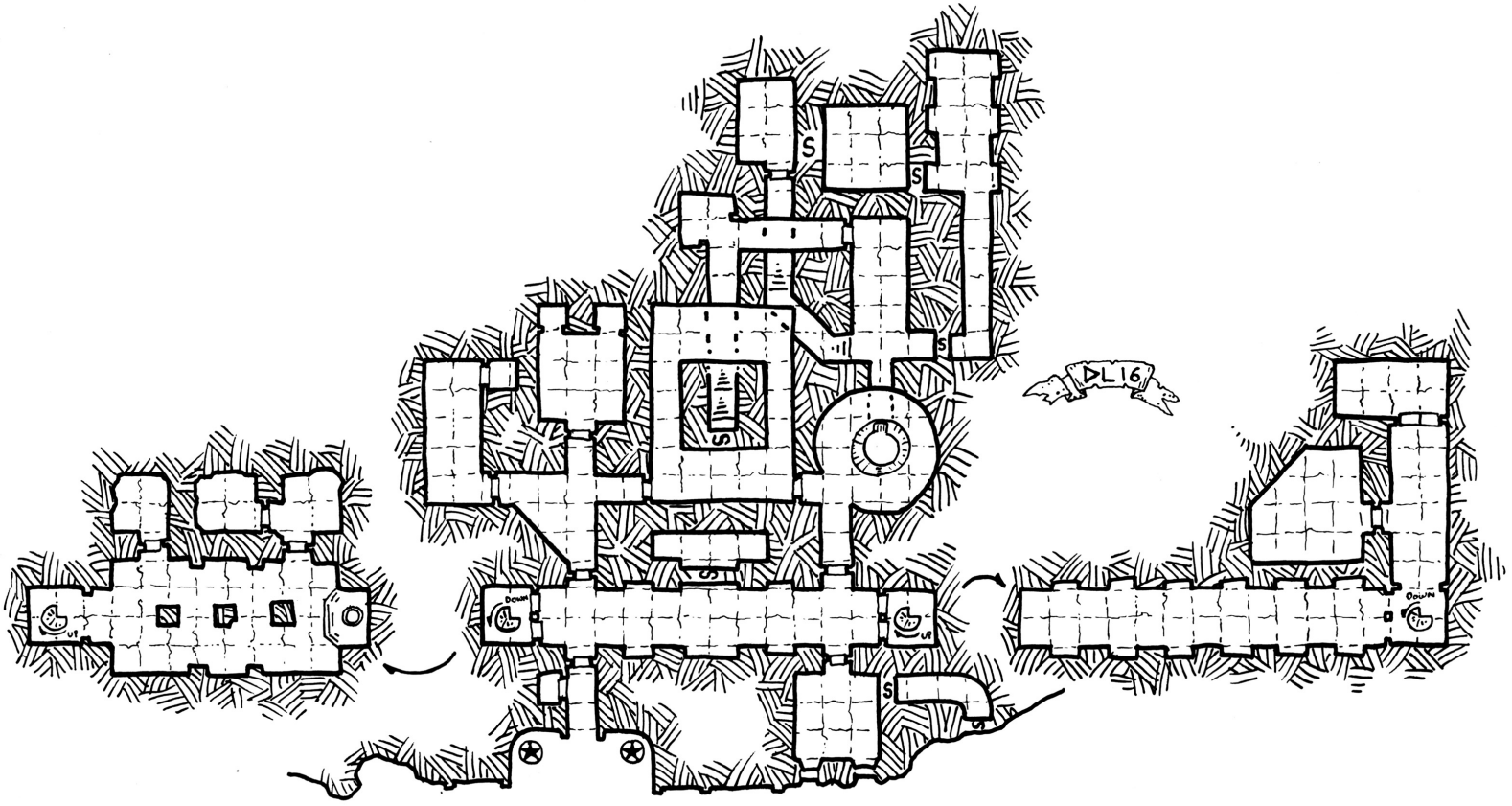
The Old Aqueduct

A two-level construction, the main portion of which was the viaduct which connected a now-collapsed tunnel to a road to town over a now-dry riverbed. It was a distinct sign of civilization as you approached town that travelers would come through this well-maintained tunnel and across the stone brick viaduct with the burbling of water overhead in the elevated and significantly narrower aqueduct which transports water from a clear mountain lake down into the rich part of town.

As always, the one constant of any world is change. During the Galreth incursion 172 years ago, a siege of the city forced the collapse of the tunnel in order to both restrict access to the city as well as to crush the infantry unit using that approach. The river beneath has changed courses, now rerouted into the city proper and reducing the demand for the aqueduct — although the aqueduct's clear glacier water is still appreciated by those in the noble district. And now other creatures have set up residence in the old viaduct tunnel — initially ghouls dragging out corpses from the deadfall and carving small niches and tunnels for themselves, and then later smaller cunning humanoids who have killed off the ghouls and expanded their little niches and caves into full warrens for themselves along with an upper level lookout where they can track the approach of hostile forces along the viaduct.



The Carmine Archives



The northern reaches of the Black Mire were known as Karit Aun to the dwarves of Kuln – the areas where the swamps abutted directly into the foothills of the mountains west of the Ironflow. Karit Aun roughly translates to Stone Waters, but more generally the “Granite Marsh”.

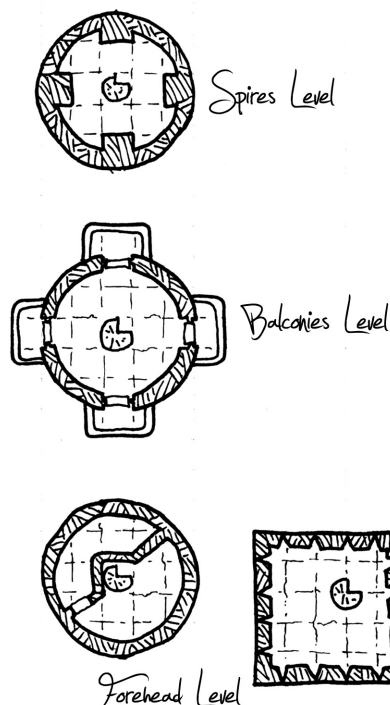
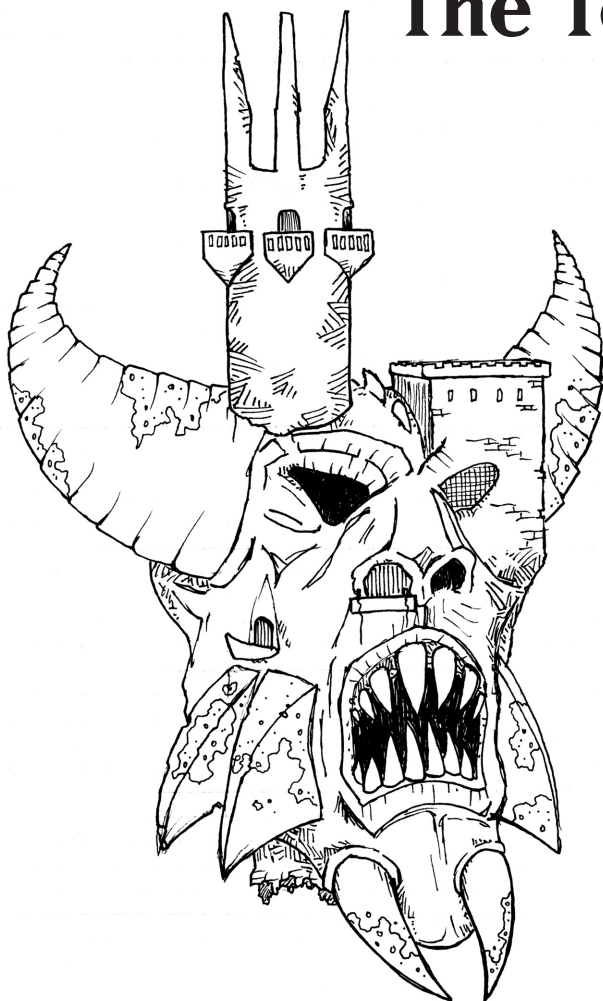
One of the outer structures of the Citadel of Kuln was the Carmine Archives, cut into the red granite foothills of the mountain where outsiders could come and study those parts of dwarven lore opened to their perusal. Like many of the outer structures of the Citadel, the Archives were not directly tied into the massive underground citadel and were reached overland. With the fall of Kuln, the archives were emptied by the archivists and librarians and sent to other dwarven enclaves, with some parts now at the grand library of Coruvon.

Now abandoned by the dwarves, the route to the archives has been reclaimed by the swamp and the facade of the archives themselves is almost

completely covered in vines and moss and other greenery, hiding it from prying eyes. Within the old archives now reside a clan of vegepygmyes who launch midnight raids to harvest tubers and gourds from the jungle while avoiding the lizard-folk and troglodytes of the area. The vegepygmyes remain safe from retaliation because they share their living space with a pack of crimson basilisks attracted to the location by the red stone that enhances their already excellent natural camouflage. The gaze of the crimson basilisk causes creatures to bleed from the eyes, ears, nose and mouth – an effect the vegepygmyes are immune to due to their lack of blood.

But of course, the tales spread that the archivists and librarians didn’t take everything of importance from the Carmine Archives in their rush to depart – and that some potent MacGuffin still remains stashed away in a secret subarchive, waiting for the bravest and strongest adventurers to find and loot.

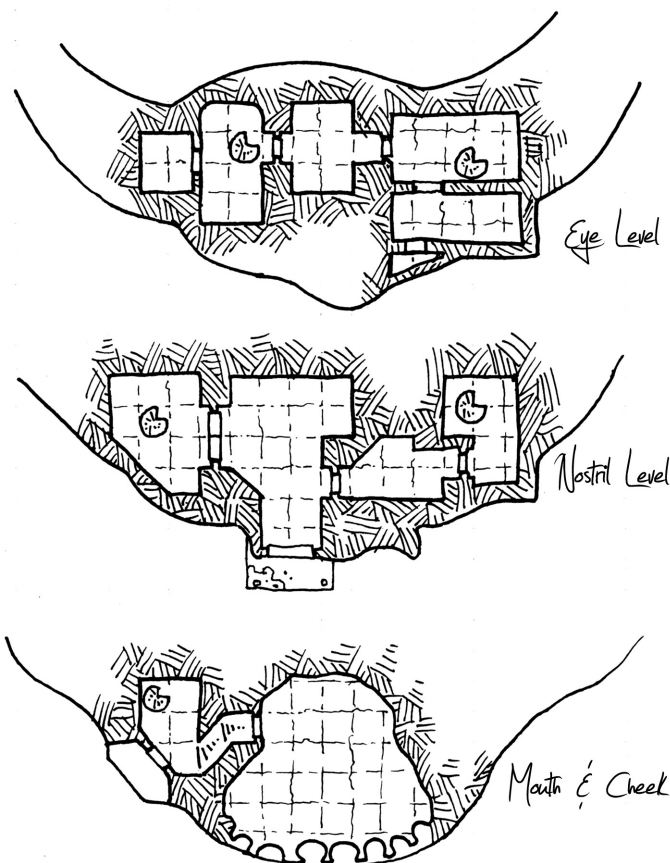
The Tower-Faced Demon



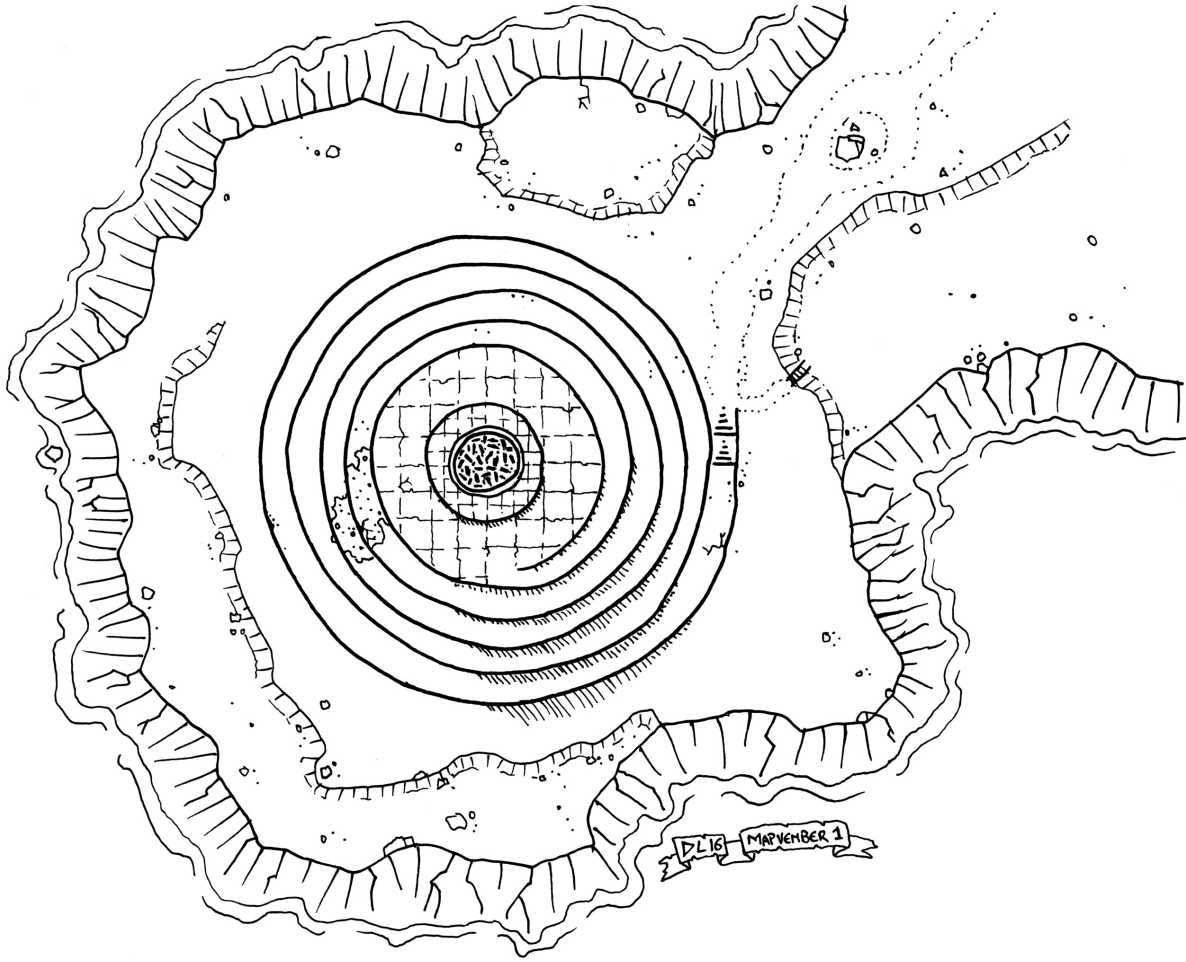
This head fortress floats timelessly 333 feet above the surface of the world, travelling where it is commanded from the spires level of the uppermost tower. It transports a team of violent warlocks and their gnomish strike force, raiding the countryside and seeking untold sources of arcane power that they have become aware of through their dark patrons.

Either way, there are numerous entry points into the head. The mouth is a huge open-air gallery (although the teeth make it difficult to land most flying creatures and craft here), and there are entrances in the right nostril and right cheek, as well as at the tops of the two towers. Thus the inhabitants are always somewhat on edge, expecting attack to come from any side at any time.

They've been known to "accidentally" kill each other when surprised.



the Lodestar of Amaranthine Regrets



Jutting out into Green Shallows Lake is an abutment of grey stone capped with an improbable 320 foot tall spire of yellow stone – the Lodestar of Amaranthine Regrets. Fueled by some otherworldly magics, the top of the spire is lit with a watery flame that seems to bubble up from it with a lambent violet light.

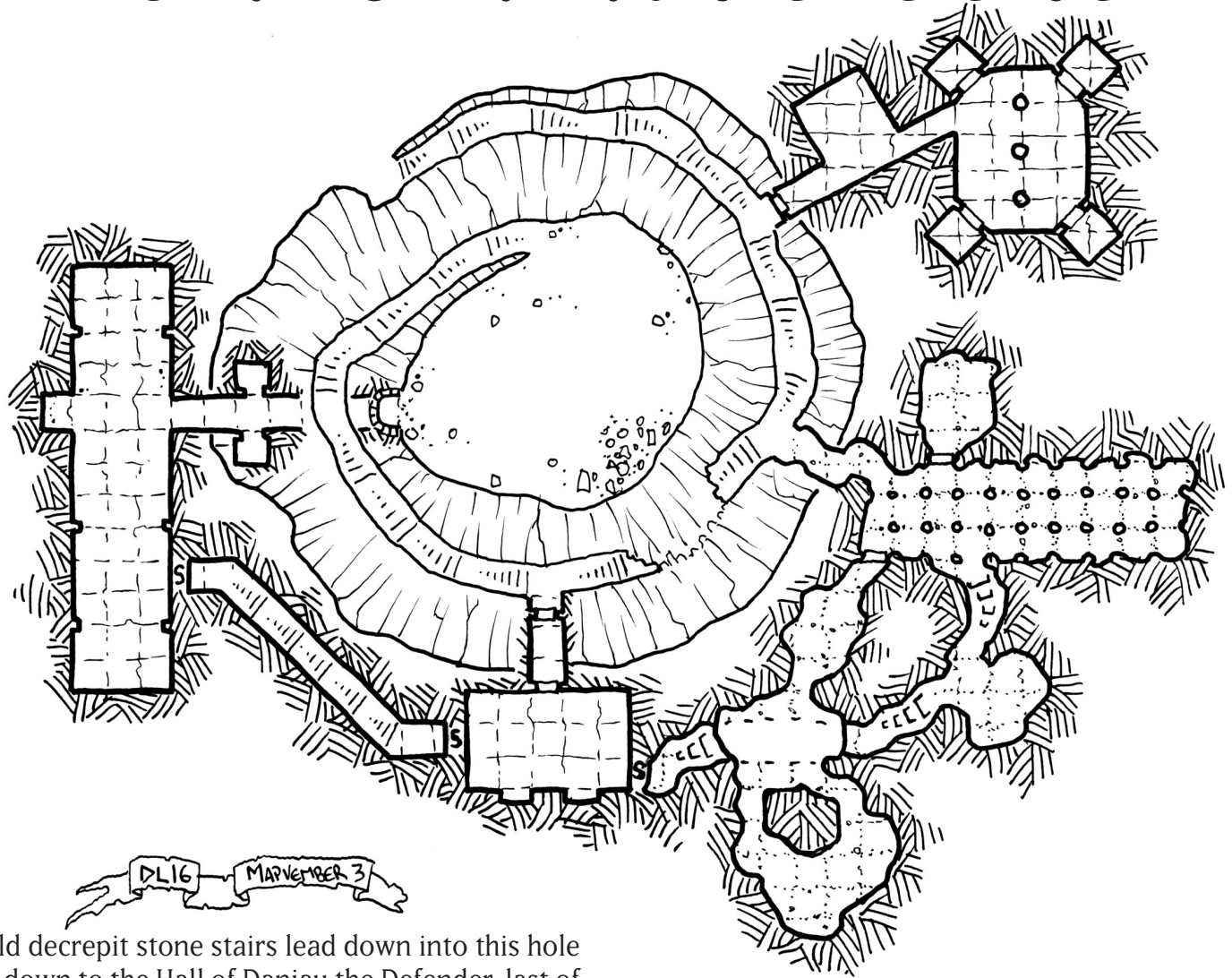
Those who travel to the Violet Beacon are watched surreptitiously by the residents of the nearby village, for over the ages a number of warlocks and enchanters have come here seeking dark magics and to communicate with their otherworldly masters. Those who come here seeking the beacon and who don't speak openly and clearly to the locals are always suspect – and there are those who will keep close tabs even on those who seem to have good reasons to be investigating the spire.

A small group of dwarves from differing clans known as the Marblesong Choir keep exception-

ally close watch on the spire – each traveled to the area over the last hundred years somehow drawn to the spire, yet repulsed by it when they finally caught sight of the strange flame

atop its height. They have gathered in the largest nearby town of Eronwell where they become a key part of the economy (after all, who doesn't want a collection of dwarven craftsmen and retired adventurers scattered throughout their villages?), but at their weekly song meetings they also share information on local travelers and which ones are most suspect... and what to do about them. A number of the Marblesong Choir are not only excellent craftsmen and passable singers, but are also skilled assassins.

The Hall of Daniau the Defender



Old decrepit stone stairs lead down into this hole – down to the Hall of Daniau the Defender, last of the knights of the Order of the Ivory Sentinel.

The first side chamber on the descent is barred by a stone door magically closed awaiting the next member of the Order of the Ivory Sentinel to enter. Within is a small bathing chamber on the left followed by a chamber where knights were expected to change into white robes and anoint themselves with sacred oils before washing their feet again at the bathing chamber before continuing the descent.

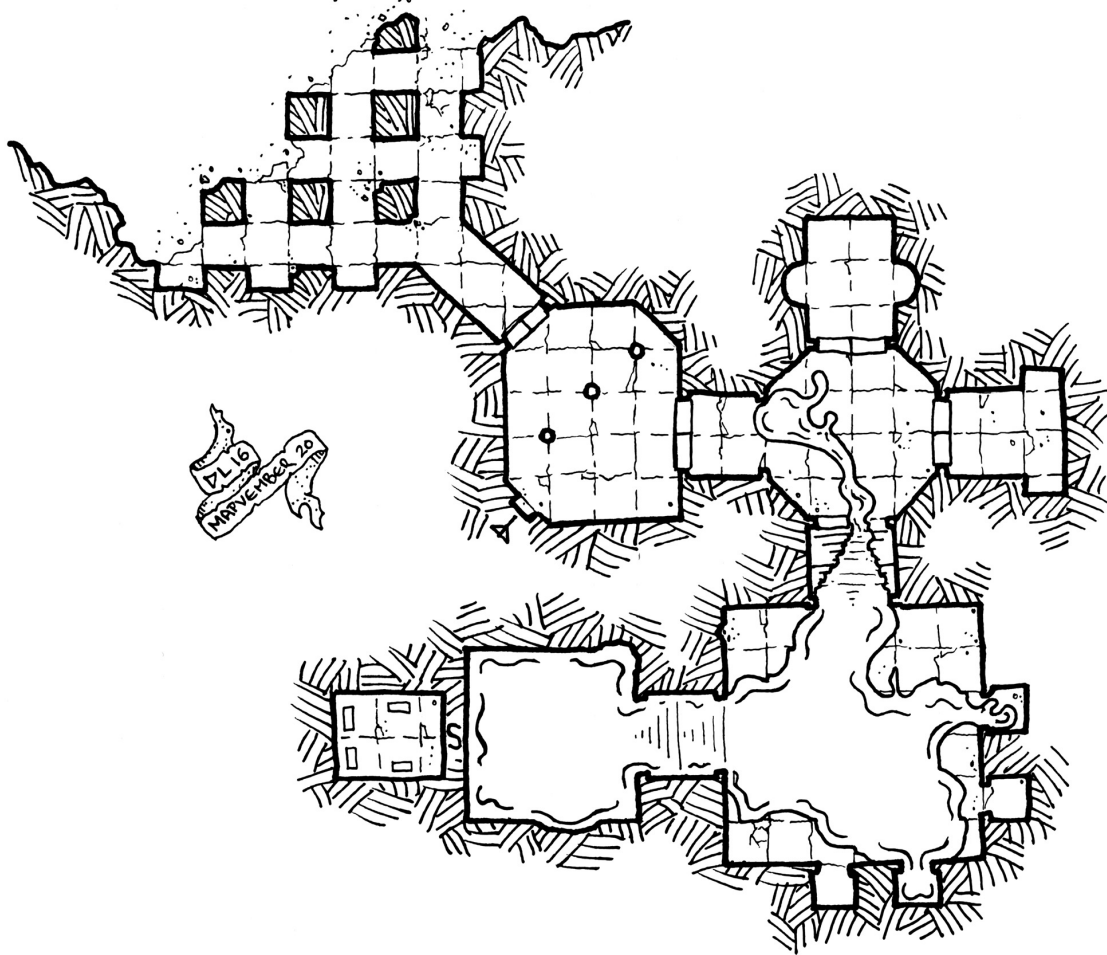
The next chamber would normally be avoided by most coming down this way, but with the collapse of the stairs, the Cavern of 36 Blessings must be traveled through to get further down.

The Cavern of 36 Blessings contains a number of floor to ceiling pillars as well as near-pillars carved

into the wall. Each of these 36 “pillars” is carved with inscriptions describing carnage, excess, murder and bloodshed committed by the Order of the Ivory Sentinel in their zeal to protect their kingdom. Each ends with a prayer that subsequent knights of the order maintain the zeal to perform their duties as well as the knights in these stories.

Below is the chamber of the idols of the shields and then we finally arrive at the Hall of Daniau the Defender – originally known as the Hall of the Ivory Sentinel but remembered for the name of the last of those knights. This level has a very low ceiling because of mud buildup over the years as rains have dragged dirt and soil into the hall from the bottom of the hole. Once a feasting hall where banners of the order hung from the walls, now the banners are eaten and rotted nearly completely away and a few of the rotten tabletops seem to rest on the upper layer of the muddy floor.

Hegruth's Labyrinth



In the valley of the eight spires there was once a massive sandstone labyrinth that separated the various structures here and was part of what made it such a holy site. But in the wars that followed the sundering of the faith, one group of heretics gleefully destroyed as much of the labyrinth as they could – both the natural portions and those worked by centuries of divinely inspired stonemasons.

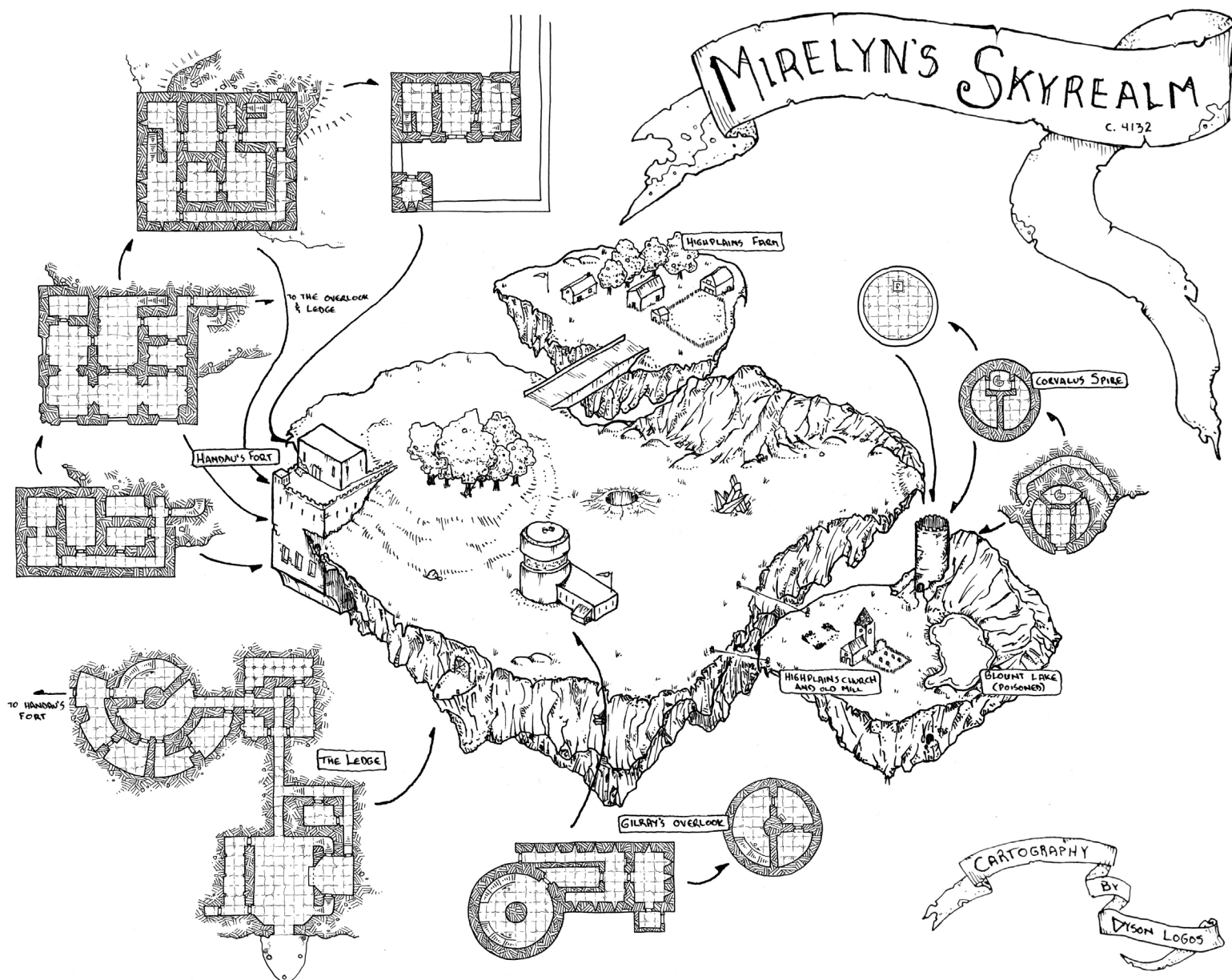
All that is left of the labyrinth are the piles of rubble slowly disappearing into the desert valley and a few traces of it around the last of the eight spires at one end of the valley and at the entrance to Hegruth's Shrine at the other.

The shrine itself was looted in the fighting and then lost. Rediscovered a century later it was looted once more, then the last artifacts of the cult of Hegruth were returned here and sealed away as the cult faded away without a charismatic leader to guide it with visions of the old saint.

Deadly "violet ague" spores were left scattered among the artifacts to deter (and kill) looters. But someone didn't quite cork the decanter of endless water quite right, and the violet ague spores found a place to live and grow... combined with something living within the root of the saint's toenail encased in the same area, the violet ague has survived and mutated and has picked up some sort of malevolent sentience. And it wants out of this tomb but also needs a way to survive the trip through the desert ahead if it does escape.

So it needs a carrier, if you will. Someone it can hollow out and carry itself within to escape. Unfortunately it keeps growing, and a single wandering camel or adventurer won't be enough to get the whole thing out anymore...

And of course, one of Hegruth's artifacts is needed now (likely the holy symbol dagger that incorporates both of his shin bones as well as one of his teeth in the pommel), and sages have found Hegruth's labyrinth on an old map of the region...



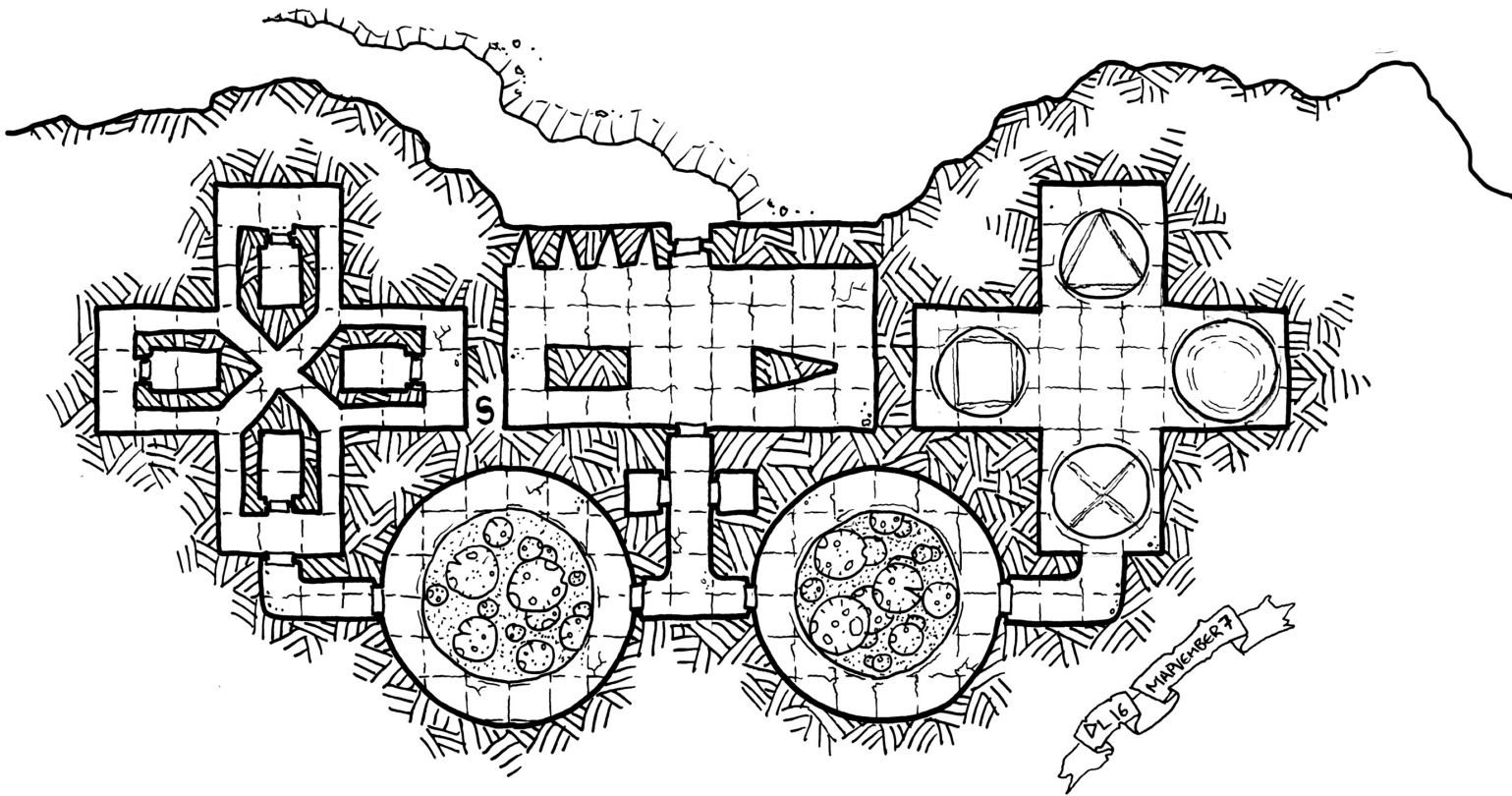
Mirelyn's Skyrealm is also known as the Highplains Community, although that name has mostly been dropped in the last few years. Consisting of three small skyrealms with remarkably flat upper surfaces, the original Highplains settlers linked the three together with bridges to keep them from drifting apart.

The main island was built up by the financiers of the community with a fortress, tower, landing zone and connecting passages between them. These semi-retired adventurers also brought their families with them and established the Highplains farm on one small island, and the church and mill on the second. There used to be a number of additional farm buildings and houses on the main island that have been

removed as the population dwindled. Then everything changed three years ago. In one night the lake was poisoned by unknown means, the guards in the nearby tower killed, the priest of the Highplains church poisoned, and the mill burned down. With the water poisoned, the people of Highplains also destroyed the bridge linking the islands and began importing what water they couldn't collect from rains as well as flour.

Now the Skyrealm is still reeling from the disaster, and would be an optimal set up for a base of operations for rich individuals who seek a headquarters that is relatively difficult to sneak up on. The main need for financial backing isn't to acquire the land, but to continue importing food and water as the islands cannot be self-sufficient at this time.

Control



This tomb on the edge of the desert of the gods is the resting place of four Huecuvas of unusual intelligence for their ilk, as well as a few guardian mites that served them in life and still serve them now.

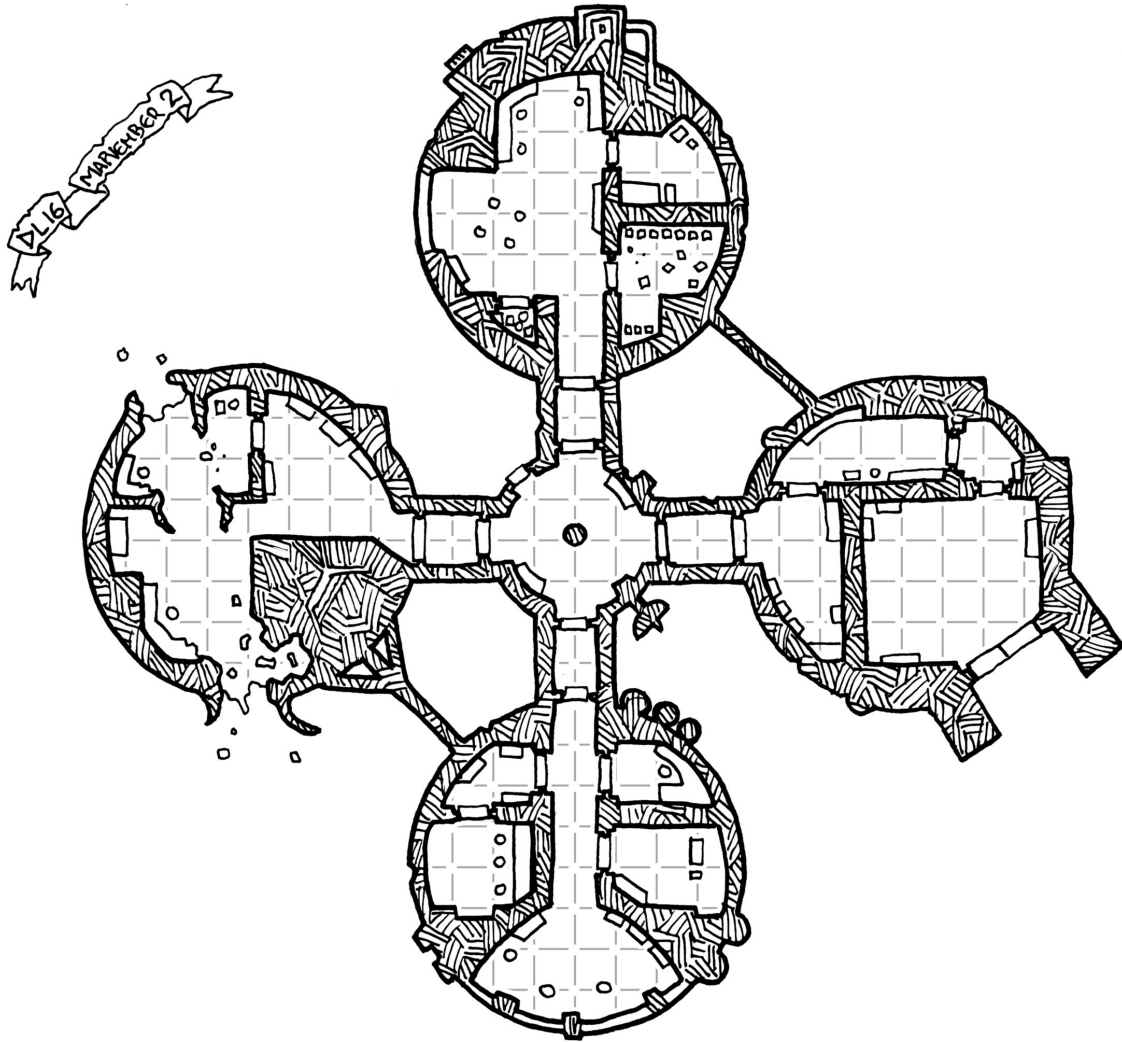
In life the four Huecuvas were warlocks dedicated to four spirit nagas, all children of the same night hag who rode their father (a paladin of great will) relentlessly through the years. While treated as typical huecuvas in most respects, they retain a typical human intelligence in death and still can cast two level 1 and one level 2 spell per day.

The huecuvas are entombed in their private tombs in the leftmost chamber. They generally remain somnolent unless something disturbs the complex or their tombs, although they occasionally wander the complex when awakened by foul dreams and premonitions.

The chamber on the far right of the complex contains four pools each radiating a different colour of energy with swirling currents within the waters tracing out the shapes outlined on the map to those who inspect them closely. The circular rooms have lowered central areas filled with dirt and excrement from the mites (as well as the buried corpses of those mites that have died from the many diseases carried by the huecuvas). These night soil pits are watered occasionally from the magical pools and grow a number of edible mushrooms as well as a few less savoury fungal creatures.

Unlike most mites, the twenty or so living in the complex do not have their usual tiny complexes of secret tunnels and trap doors and thus operate pretty much in the open as caretakers and defenders of the complex – watching for invaders from the small arrow slits looking down onto the approaching path.

LEO Workstation J3N-CAD



In a slowly decaying orbit surrounded by debris is Low Earth Orbit Workstation Juliet 3 November CAD. One of the workstation's four work environments has been blown open to vacuum and failures of various safety systems resulted in extensive damage to the interior of the other compartments and the deaths of many of those stationed on site.

The survivors were loaded aboard two Extra-Station Repair Vehicles that slowly jettied themselves to a nearby workstat consortium. The survivors described a fire tearing through the station and security and safety doors failing to close (or in one survivor's description, reopening once closed). Two of the five survivors were completely catatonic and within the week two had committed suicide (including one of the catatonic survivors who accessed a scalpel while attention was on the oth-

ers). Research in Pod 3 was a classified project by the R&D department of the U-Gth GmbH and the same day that the pod erupted the R&D building in Rostock was one of four buildings pulled down into a massive sinkhole that still hasn't been stabilized and is threatening several major hotels in the resort portion of that city.

A number of organizations including both the ESA and NASA as well as assets from various intelligence organizations definitely want to find out what was going on up there. Which is where the characters come in.

Because really, what kind of horrors could a company that mostly deals in high-end mushroom cultivation out of Germany be up to?