

Dungeon Module S7

The Howling Hills

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AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 10-14



Far to the North, in the upper reaches of the land of dread Luz, lies one of the possible resting places of the ancient evil sorcerer, Acererak. Rumored to lie inside are deadly traps and terrific treasures, but all pales in comparison to the awesome power of the Demi-Lich.

This module is one of a series of adventures created in homage to the deadliest adventure ever created, The Tomb of Horrors! This adventure is not to be taken lightly, for many a character will likely meet their demise within. The author wishes to thank Brian "Glad" Thomas for the amazing cover art, Jason "Jaybird" Braun for the awesome interior art, Allan "Grodog" Grohe for contributing some of the encountered creatures for this module, Joe "Bodanay" Pallai and Ronald "redmond" Redmond for content and editorial assistance.

Included within are background information, the history of Acererak and his tomb, and possible locations for the tomb within the World of Greyhawk campaign setting.

LEGEND OF THE TOMB

Ancient legend tells of the evil sorcerer Acererak, a wicked man who sought to extend his life far beyond that which is normal for men. His desire for immortality eventually led him to lichdom, and for a time, he was content. But as the centuries wore on, so did even his immortal body. And thus passed Acererak from the world, leaving behind his undiscovered lair. Surely great treasures and deadly traps await the foolhardy adventurers that seek them out...

Modern tales have added to the legend and seers have confirmed the truth; Acererak the lich did not perish when his body finally gave out. He managed to pass on into a state known as a demi-lich. Nothing but the skull remains of the wizard. But beware, while little is known about demi-liches, it is thought that Acererak's power has not diminished, but perhaps has merely become something else equally deadly.

Possible Locale of the Tomb:

Despite the knowledge of Acererak's condition, very little is known about the location of his hidden tomb. There are a few possible locations that are suspected as hiding his final resting place.

- 1) The highest hill on the Plains of luz
- 2) An island (unmapped) in the Nyr Dyv
- 3) In the Bright Desert
- 4) At the western border of the Duchy of Geoff
- 5) Somewhere in the Vast Swamp
- 6) On an island beyond the realm of the Sea Barons

Notes for the Dungeon Master

This adventure is an expansion of the classic Tomb of Horrors, famous for the unforgiving doom of countless pc's. In the original, the above location list is provided (and copied here) to provide some hint of where bold adventurers may begin their search for the tomb. One such possible location, which is where this adventure takes place, is on the Plains of luz.

A deadly place in its own right, luz is a most unwelcoming location, ruled, of course, by the thoroughly evil cambion-god luz. Negotiating this hostile land, regardless of the final destination, is only to be undertaken by the hardest of adventurers for within are the many humanoid soldiers that constantly patrol for intruders and sacrifices for their demon-lord. Worse still are the demonic predators that luz has loosed upon the land to prey upon anyone or anything that dare encroach upon his sovereign territory.

As stated above, it is highly advised that only the strongest of parties consider entering deep into luz. A well outfitted and well balanced group consisting of several fighters, clerics, magic users, and thieves is required to successfully navigate the land to locate the tomb.

Start: Having discovered the likely location of the Tomb of Acererak to be in the dread realm of luz, you summoned what little remains of your courage to outfit the party to forge deep into that horrid place. You know that this trek is a gamble, for one mistake and death far worse than any you can imagine awaits you.

Having befriended the Wolf Nomads, you established a base camp at Eru-Tovar, where you learned the ways of the region. Maps gained for very high cost show the likely location of Acererak's tomb to be several leagues into an area known to the locals as the Howling Hills.

The Nomads have informed you of the location of the highest peak (located on the World of Greyhawk map at hex K4-59). No longer under their control, it was avoided at all costs for something evil certainly dwells there. It is thought that even the forces of luz dare not approach for fear of loosing some evil fouler yet than the Old One.

After spending several days contemplating this reality while barge-bound down the river known as Blackwater, you have reached the point where it merges with the Dulsi River – the point from which you must debark and travel on foot North-East into the Howling Hills. Your maps show a rough patrol trail that winds through the hills. Occasionally used by the soldiery of luz, it must be followed nearly 100 miles to the base of the highest peak, at which point, a stealthy search must be conducted to locate the entrance to the tomb.

Note: As with the original Tomb of Horrors, characters that become astral or ethereal in the false Tomb will attract a type I-IV demon 1 in 6, with a check made each round.

Doors: All doors in the complex are large and heavy. They are set with an iron ring and open outwards. It takes a combined strength of 20 to open any of them.

Random Encounter Key in the Howling Hills

This table may be used in lieu of the table in the World of Greyhawk Glossography if you do not have it. There is a 1 in 8 chance for random encounter, check every 4 hours of travel, and once during an 8 hour rest period.

01-12: Bugbears, tribal 6-36
 13-17: Hill Giants, patrol 1-10
 18-25: Gnolls and Flinds, patrol 20-80 / 2-8
 26-37: Goblins and Hobgoblins, tribal 40-160 / 20-80
 38-43: Trolls, tribal 1-12
 44: Soldiery, large raiding force (special)
 45-55: Ogres and Ogre Magi, patrol 2-20 / 1-6
 56-61: Soldiery, standard patrol (special)
 62-72: Orcs, tribal 30-120
 73-80: Norkers, tribal 20-80
 81-93: Clerics and Type II Demons (special)
 94-99: Bulletes 2
 00: Ancient Red Dragon 1 (special)

* Tribal indicates that the creatures encountered are not soldiery of luz, but local tribes of the specified type. They may negotiate if facing an obviously superior force.

* Patrol indicates that the creatures encountered are tribal bands in the employ of luz and empowered to carry out his will. They will not negotiate.

- Soldiery, large raiding force: This is a raiding force of orcs headed towards the lands of the Wolf Nomads to deal them a blow and remind them that luz is in charge around here. They number as follows:

1 Captain (1/2 Orc): F6, AC: 3 (Platemail) HP: 47 wields a **two handed sword +1**
 5 Lieutenants (3 Orcs (F3), 1 Ogre, 1 Stone Giant)
 1 Shaman (Orc) C5/MU3
 35 Orc heavy infantry
 70 Orc light infantry
 20 Orc light crossbowmen

- Soldiery, standard patrol: These troops are on a routine patrol looking for scouts and anything else to harass.

There are the following creatures in the patrol:
 1 Captain (Human) F7, AC: 2 (**Chain +2**, Shield), HP: 58, wields **+2 Horseman's mace** and a Longsword

2 Lieutenants (Human) F3
 5 Sergeants (Human) F1
 25 Heavy Lancers
 25 Mounted Archers

All are mounted on medium war horses

- Clerics and Type II Demons: This group is on the hunt for sacrifices. They are not too particular about whom they sacrifice, but have been instructed to leave official soldiery alone. A party of do-gooding adventurers would suit them nicely. All worship luz. There are the following numbers:

Lead Cleric (Human) C8, AC: -1 (**Plate+2**, **Shield +1**), HP: 48, wields **+2 mace**. DM choose spells
 2 Attendant Clerics (Human) C5
 5 Fighters (Human) F5
 2 Type II Demons

- Ancient Red Dragon: This fearsome beast has been summoned by luz in the hopes that he will join forces with the Old One. He is currently flying south towards Dorakka to hear what the Demi God has to offer. His stats are:

AC: -1, HP: 88, #At: 3, Dam: 1-8/1-8/3-30 or breath. This beast speaks and uses spells (2 of each first through fourth level Magic User spells). He carries no treasure, but an interested DM can certainly create a lair to explore, somewhere to the North-East of the False Tomb...

Key to the False Tomb

1. FALSE ENTRANCE TUNNEL: The tunnel is 20' wide and 20' tall all the way to the two doors 70'in. Cobwebs and moss cover the walls and ceiling in most areas, but a few etchings can be seen on the walls in some spots. Clearing away the moss and webs will reveal an intricate tile mosaic depicting demons sacrificing men and other beasts before a robed skeletal being. If careful cleaning of the detritus on the floors is being done, the party will discover several small 1" diameter holes in the floor from about 1' out from the doors until 8' out. If the doors are opened or disturbed in any way, a large 10' section of the ceiling will drop sealing off the area from there to 10' away (as marked on the map). Anyone standing in the area where the stone wall drops will take 10-100 hp of crushing damage, a save vs. Breath Weapon will halve the damage. Anyone trapped between the wall and the doors will begin to feel the burning drip of acid pouring down from above, dealing 1-8 hp of damage per round. Within 3 rounds the dripping will increase to a rate that outpaces the ability of the holes in the floor to drain it away, and by round 8, the damage dealt will increase to 2-16 hp per round. The acid will cease falling after 12 rounds, though, unless some way is used to get above it, damage will still accrue at 1-8 hp per round for 3 more rounds until it has drained completely away. There is nothing but solid stone behind the doors. Any attempts at digging, magical or otherwise, will fail.

2. FALSE ENTRANCE TUNNEL: This tunnel is similar in design to the first, being 20' wide and 20' tall. It is slightly shorter in length at 50' but no door is apparent. Identical tile mosaics to area 1 adorn the walls, with the exception that several small diamonds can be found if a thorough search of the walls is conducted. There are roughly 100 with a base value of 10gp each. When 50 or more are removed, a large metal portcullis will drop, blocking the entrance. Each hole will produce 1 poisoned dart that will fire straight out dealing 1-3 hp of damage and require a save vs. poison or death. The darts will come from all 100 holes; those with diamonds blocking the path will knock them out and onto the floor. From 1-4 darts may strike any

one character, and a save is required for each dart. There is no other egress from this tunnel.

3. ENTRANCE TO THE FALSE TOMB OF HORRORS:

This is the “true” entrance to the tomb. Upon close inspection is a trail of colored stones in the floor. The trail ends at area 5, the Green Devil Face.

All Pits, except those marked with a “T” (or otherwise noted) are 10’ deep and have 6 poisoned spikes at the bottom. The pits trap mechanisms are engaged when a force of 75lbs or more is applied to the center section. Characters have a 100% chance of falling in. This is modified downward by the character’s dexterity score. PC’s with exceptional dexterity may apply their reaction bonus in addition, while those with exceptionally poor dexterity must add their penalty.

4. **STONE MOSAIC WITH DEMONIC IMAGES:** To the right of the trap door, on the wall, is an intricate mosaic of superb craftsmanship. It displays an orgy of sacrifices similar in nature to the mosaic in area 1. If the mosaic is inspected physically, a small stone tile in the eye of a demon can be pressed inward. This will have the effect of opening the trap door beneath the character(s). Unless specific caution is taken, the character pressing the stone and anyone in the immediate area will plummet 20’ below into area 6, taking 2d6 points of damage in the process.



5. **THE GREEN DEVIL FACE:** Set in the wall before the party is an enormous tile mosaic of a giant Green Devil’s face. Its mouth is open but is pitch black inside. It appears that it is large enough of an opening for a man to

crawl inside. The opening radiates magic as it is cloaked in a permanent darkness. The dark area is completely impervious to any dispelling magic short of a **wish** or **alter reality**. If a PC climbs into the mouth and searches around blindly, they will discover the skeletal remains of a former adventurer. Should they drag the body out, they will discover a **+1 short sword** still in its scabbard around the waist of the skeleton and some moldy, decaying leather armor. The opening is of no danger to anyone.

6. **ROOM OF THE FIRST KEY:** This room contains all manner of vases, jars, and crates heaped in piles and on shelves in every corner and open wall space. In a large floor-standing vase in the South-West corner is a strange, ornate key made of iron. If checked for, it radiates magic. This is the key to unlock great iron door to gain entrance to the Grand Foyer. The key is one of 666 keys inside the vase. A second key also radiates magic, but this one will act as a missile attractor (functioning the same as **shield - 1, missile attractor**). It can only be rid of with a remove curse cast by a 14th level or higher Lawful Good Cleric. If discarded, it mysteriously reappears buried in the bottom of the pack of the first person that touched it.

7. **THE FIRST GUARDIAN:** A large brazier sits in the middle of this room. Freshly placed coals line the pan. When the party approaches to within 10’ of the bowl, the coals burst into flames, casting enough light to dimly illuminate the entire 30’x30’ room. The party will see all sorts of drawings of geometric symbols on the floor, walls, and ceiling. An accomplished Magic User has a 50% chance of recognizing these as runes of protection- for or from what is not yet determinable...

If the party approaches the brazier, to within 5’, Grurgard the **Efreeti** (hp: 61) springs from the bowl and attacks the closest PC, preferably a spell caster first. If reduced to 25% of his hit points, Grurgard will go ethereal and flee; the conditions of his service to Acererak fulfilled. If the party is able to give pursuit in the ethereal plane, remember to check for Demonic response... If the Efreeti is somehow captured, he will grant the party 1 **wish** but will seek to pervert it in any way that he can. If it is carefully worded though, grant the party something reasonable. If he is captured in the ethereal plane, in 3 rounds 2-5 more Efreet will arrive to assist their cousin.

8. **TRAPPED FALSE DOORS:** These doors are all false save for a spear trap. Anyone opening the door will be struck by a shooting missile for 3-18 points of damage and requiring a save vs. poison or die. After the first trap is set off, taking precautions to avoid being in the line of fire will allow the PC opening the door a save vs. Breath Weapon to avoid the spear.

9. ROOM OF THE SECOND KEY: In the center of this room, suspended in a column of reddish light is a cube roughly 6" on all sides. Etched upon each side of the cube is an image; side 1 is an image of the Green Devil Face, side 2 is of a skull set with emeralds for eyes and teeth, side 3 displays a horned demonic visage, side 4 is of a stone head of no particular origin, side 5 appears as a medusa head, and side 6 is an image of an unknown human male.

Scribbled on the far West wall are the following words:

"Look into the grinning face to open the way."

This indicates that when the second key (the cube) is inserted into the great iron door, it should be inserted so that the skull set with emeralds is facing out.

The column of light is roughly 3' in diameter with the cube suspended at about chest level for a human. The light itself is harmless, but anyone reaching into it will feel as if they are being seared by an unholy flame. In addition, it will be like reaching through a mass of goo that will slow the actions of the character reaching in. They will seem to take 1-10 points of damage but when they withdraw their appendage, no apparent harm will have been done. The character will need to make a successful system shock roll each round that they take "damage" or die.

Any attempt to use a non-living substance or item to grab or knock the cube out will be stopped. Only living matter may pass through the light. It will take 5 rounds to reach through the light to grab the cube, but once it is out the light will disappear and all feeling of injury will be gone. If during the reaching in the character is reduced to 0 hit points, the character will actually die, no save.

Finally, no one of lawful good alignment will ever reach into the light. They will be utterly repulsed by the overwhelming sense of evil.

10. TRAP DOOR AND PASSAGE: This trap door is so cleverly hidden in the floor that it is exceptionally difficult to detect. It will never be discovered by a human save through magical means and demi-humans that specialize in such things will only detect it on a 1 in 6 when actively searching. It will further require a combined strength of 36 and some sort of strong metal fulcrum to lift the stone block out of the way far enough to allow the passage of a single individual. Alternatively, spells such as **Transmute Rock to Mud** will allow passage.

Once the trap door is opened, a ladder set in the stone wall will allow descent into the narrow dug out hallway 20' below. The passage is but 2 1/2' wide by 4' high, and is 70' long. It will be necessary for anyone larger than a Halfling to remove their armor to navigate the passage. At

the halfway point, the floor of the passage will become slick. Anyone using a light source will notice a thick, viscous liquid seeping up from the floor all along the length. Begin a count of 1 to 5. At "5" a flaming arrow will shoot from the ceiling into the liquid, which is oil, and ignite the entire passage. There will only be time for 1 PC to escape in either direction without taking damage. All others will take 2-16 hp of damage per round for 4 rounds before the oil is exhausted.

11. THE GASEOUS TRAP: The trap door that is the portal of entry for this room is similar to the one at area **10**. It will require slightly less strength to open due to having a larger surface area to push on. A single person may stand on the ladder in the tunnel and push with their back, in which case a strength of 18/00 or better is needed to push the stone block up and over. Alternatively, 3 people with a combined Strength of 30, standing at the bottom of the 20' ladder well, all working with 15' to 20' long poles may lift the block enough to squeeze someone through. Of course, magic is the most expedient way to pass through, and if the party has such available, things will go a lot smoother for them. It will take at least 1 turn to manually move the door enough to squeeze through. Unfortunately, if **Transmute Rock to Mud** is used on the trap door in this area only (not area **10**), the mud will drop to the bottom of the ladder well and, in 1 round, form a super-charged **Mudman** (hd: 8, hp: 35). In addition to mud hardening, the mud will deliver 1-4 hp of damage on impact. It conforms to its lower hit dice cousins in all other respects.

When they first budge the trap door, a light mist of acidic gas will begin to fill the room. Within 3 rounds the gas will begin filtering down; at first as a flowery smelling mist. After 3 rounds of this gas, it will begin corroding equipment. Nothing will seem out of the ordinary for 2 more rounds at which point item saving throws should start to be made by the DM. Make sure the players hear you rolling dice so they stop and think about what is happening. After the first obvious item fails, it should be pretty clear that a retreat is in order, if not continue rolling for item saving throws until they get the hint.

The good news for the party is that the acidic gas is not harmful to living material. After 1 turn the gas will have filled the tunnel and in 3 turns it will have dissipated. At this point the room is safe to enter...

12. CHAPEL OF WIZARDLY DELIGHTS: When the party enters this room, they will notice immediately how immaculately clean it is. On the West wall, almost directly in front of them is an altar with lit candles glowing on the edges. A small bowl sits in the middle of the altar-top. Two sarcophagi are here, one to the right and one across the room. They are draped with a red cloth emblazoned

with a grinning, white skull. Four statues stand, one in each corner of the room, seemingly guarding the chamber. They appear as powerful mailed warriors and are nearly 10' tall. On the East wall is an alcove filled with a pink mist that swirls almost enchantingly.

If the party approaches the altar, a booming voice calls out from nowhere: "To who is the eternal life most sacred?" The answer? There is no answer. If the party is silent for one round, nothing untoward will immediately befall them in this room. If they answer "Acererak", all four statues animate and attack, as they are **Stone Golems** and programmed to do so upon hearing that trigger word. If they give any other answer, the one answering the question is struck deaf, dumb, and blind by a powerful beam of unknown energy that reaches out from the altar, no save. If someone else provides an answer, the same happens. If a third person answers, that character is teleported instantly to the base of the hill where the true Tomb of Horrors is located – in the Vast Swamp!

The bowl on the altar is empty, but if a potion of healing is poured into it, it will turn to blood and drain away, leaving behind an **Ioun Stone** that doubles the number of 1st level Magic User spells that can be memorized in a given day. It is usable by a Magic User or Ranger.

The stone sarcophagus on the South wall contains the remains of the slave-engineer that designed this False Tomb. He is quite dead and does not animate unless a party member casts **Speak with Dead** or **Animate Dead** upon his desiccated corpse. If this happens, he will slowly sit up and turn towards his new master and relate the following tale:



"Long ago when my old master bid me construct this tomb to fool his enemies; I set about the task diligently. I worked for two decades to design it. Many a slave perished during the construction from falling blocks of

stone and my master ordered me to make them test the traps.

Finally, when the work was done, I watched as my master summoned demons from the Abyss to consume, and carry away to their infernal homes, my workers. At last when I was the last to live, he turned to me and told me that I would be his greatest guardian of this tomb. Fearing for my life, I fled before him, thinking that I knew this place better than he. But I did not count on his cunning and cruel ways.

As I neared the entrance and prepared to flee back home to my family, I saw him. He stood silhouetted against the setting sun, a woman and a child under each arm. My child! My wife! There they stood, the three of them laughing at me with such sinister malice. Never had I known such grief, such pain. I turned, defeated, and returned through the passages to this room where you found me and climbed into this coffin to wait for death to take me. But it did not for a long while. Once inside, I could not raise the strength to push this stone lid off. I panicked and clawed until my fingers bled, until the bone began to show. I tore my skin in horror before, finally, after days of suffering – suffering from the betrayal of my master, my wife, my child – suffering from a fate worse than death I had helped to cause for my workers – I at last expired.

Were it that the tale ended here, I would be content, yet it did not. My spirit has roamed the Astral since that day, barred from taking my rightful place in the afterlife. Now, after all these centuries, you have come, my new master. Will you set me free? Are you the one? Please tell me that you are! All you need to do is leave this place and find my home, 10 leagues south from here. It was a small stone structure near a beautiful pond and a great bronzedwood tree. Buried below the floor is a locket that an artisan crafted for my beloved and I when we wed. Take it to the great Nyr Dyv and find the Lonely Isle. On it lays my old master's resting place. There is a room such as this in that dread tomb. Find the altar and place the locket in the sacrificial bowl and wash it in holy water. This will release my spirit to leave the Astral Plane and be with my God. Will you do this for me? * "

Whether or not the party member agrees to complete this task for the long-dead engineer, the corpse will lie back down and not move or speak again.

*If you wish to continue this adventure as a side trek, there is much potential for tracking down this old stone house as it is deeper into luz territory, and another location for a False Tomb lies on an "Unknown Isle in the Nyr Dyv. Create your own False Tomb and have fun with

this. Hopefully this provides a useful hook for getting your players to keep searching for the real tomb...

If you choose not to continue the adventure in this manner, it would be wise to drop a hint that the answer should be 'no'. A false answer of 'yes' will result in the character being visited by a **Type IV Demon** in the middle of the night at some future point, as the spirit of the engineer will be greatly angered and anguished by yet another betrayal...

The second sarcophagus near the North wall contains the remains of another slave-worker. This slave did not resist or show fear when Acererak summoned his demons. Inspired by his bravery, the **Lich** spared him infernal destruction and transformed him into a **Vampire** and left him here in stasis to defend his tomb eternally.

When the lid is opened, Krusvrik the **Vampire** (hp: 57) will leap out and attack the closest party member. Acererak gave him some charms to protect him from do-gooding clerics. Around the creature's neck is an **Amulet of Proof Against Turning**. This will make any turn attempts at 6 levels below the current level of the turning Cleric. If reduced to 0 hp, Krusvrik will turn gaseous form and flee, through a small vent hole in the floor that leads to the Northern hallway, to area 17 to recover. He will be fully recovered and waiting for the party within 3 turns.

Inside his coffin are a small golden shovel (about 3' in length) worth 3000gp, a **Ring of Protection +2**, and a **Potion of Healing**.

A. The Pink Misty Alcove: This alcove is filled with a pinkish mist that swirls about. There is no way to dissipate the mist. If anyone steps into the mist, they will be teleported to the entrance at area **3** completely nude while their belongings are teleported to area **21**.

13. OPEN PIT SURPRISE: This open pit is 20' across. If a character glances inside the pit, they will notice a large, thick, gooey mass of something at the bottom. This is a mass of 3 **Grey Oozes** (hp: 27 each). They will devour anything that happens to fall into the pit (provided it is something they can devour). But more sinister, once the pc's are across the large pit, another hidden one is but 5' distant. This pit is 20' deep and does not contain poisoned spikes. When a pc (or pc's) falls into the pit, a small stone slides out from the south wall about 10' up and in pours the occupants of the large pit...

The false door at the end of the hall operates as those located at areas **8**.

14. TRAP DOOR AND PASSAGE: Similar to area **10**, this trap door is completely hidden and can never be

discovered by a human excepting through magical means. Demi-humans that specialize in detecting secret doors will detect it only on a 1 in 6 if actively searching. The rough hewn passageway below is similar to the one that connects areas **10** and **11**, except that there is no trap to foil the party's movement.

15. STORAGE ROOM: This room is piled with boxes and crates from floor to ceiling. Mostly food stuffs, all is rotten and useless to the party. Buried in the bottom of a crate in the far North-East corner of the room is a scroll with a diagram of a room without any apparent entrance or exit. If a **Comprehend Languages** spell is cast or a party member can read Old Suloise, they will be able to make out words that translate in Common to "Pit of Despair". This scroll was left accidentally by one of Acererak's slave-engineers that designed the room and lies long forgotten. This scroll combined with the **Wand of Teleport Without Error** from room **20** will lead quick thinkers to realize they have a way to rescue their fellows trapped there. Of course, the wand only works on others so the rescuer will soon become the trapped if precautions are not taken to ensure his method of escape...

16. PILLARED THRONE ROOM: When the party enters this room they will see several pillars in front of them. If they walk the edges of the room they will see sconces with torches set in the wall every 10'. A large dais is directly in the center of the South wall and a large throne sits upon it. A closer inspection will note a bejeweled crown lying on the seat. This crown is made of solid platinum worth 15,000gp and is set with 15 rubies and emeralds alternating around the rim, each valued at 1000gp. The first person that touches the crown will be teleported nude to area **3**, while their belongings are teleported to area **21**. The crown will be safe to handle after that. A **Detect Magic** will determine it is of a magical nature, but will not reveal its power. A **Detect Evil** will determine the hostile intent, though only if actually concentrating on the item as it does not radiate evil per se. An **Augury** will be sufficient to determine its nature, and a **Commune** will give full information about the crown. If it is taken from the False Tomb, the holder will be visited by a **Minor Death**, as described in the **Deck of Many Things** in the *Dungeon Masters Guide* (page 143) within 24 hours of leaving.

The secret door behind the throne can only be detected by magical means. But once detected, will be easy to open (a small block of stone must be pushed in to raise the door).

17. ROOM OF THE THIRD KEY: When the party enters this room they will note a musty, metallic odor and taste in the air. Hanging in the center of the far wall on a peg

above a wooden coffin (the backup coffin for the **Vampire** in area **12**) is a chain with a key attached. It is fairly large, almost comically so, being about 2 feet in length and 3 inches in thickness; decorated in bright colors of the rainbow. Other than a thick layer of dust on the floor, nothing else is notable about this room.

Anyone in metallic armor that approaches within 10' of the key will be on the receiving end of a bolt of lightning that materializes in mid air near the West wall of the room. They will take 6-60 points of damage; a save vs. Breath Weapon will halve it.

The large key on the wall is really a joke. Acererak thought it amusing to make intruders, provided they made it this far, carry around some large and ridiculous item. The real key is inside this fake one. No seam or other apparent manner of opening is immediately discoverable. It will require some form of divine communication to discover the means of opening, such as **Commune**, or 1 hour of thoughtful pondering using **Incense of Meditation**, or a **Necklace of Prayer Beads**. Once contact is made, a polite request will earn the Cleric the answer: **Dispel Evil**, followed by a **Bless** spell will dissolve the bonds of evil around the key, the false shell disintegrating and revealing the true third key – a small round ball with one set of finger grips that appear sized for a human child. This key will unlock the true false tomb of Acererak... Note, only the hand of a human child or someone similarly sized will be able to grip the key properly; be it an actual human child, Halfling, **Polymorphed** being, or "reduced" person. All others will find it too clumsy and small to successfully use.

18. GRAND FOYER: A great iron door approximately 15' tall and 8' wide bars further passage. The door is etched with all manner of runes and words of power. A small cubic indentation about 6" on all sides spans the seam of the door and jamb at about waist height for a human. The second key is required to open this door. Any attempt to open the door without the proper key (or by magical means) will result in A: failure and B: the offender being blasted with a wave of negative energy that will drain 3-30 hp, no save, and 1-4 points of constitution permanently (recoverable only by a **Restoration** or **Wish**).

When the second key is inserted properly (Skull facing out), the door will slowly swing open and reveal a grand staircase that ascends 25' to an equally grand foyer that ends in a pair of ornate wooden double doors. If the cube is inserted improperly, it will disappear; teleported back to the second key room and must be retrieved again (undergoing the same task of reaching through the light...)

The walls and steps are lined with inlays of platinum and studded with gems. If 1 full day is spent digging out the

precious metal and stones, fully 50,000 gpv worth of such things can be extracted, though the total weight of such is about 10,000 gpw. At the East end of the foyer are a set of bronze bound wooden doors. They appear to have no lock and, like all the rest of the standard doors, have an iron ring set on each door that pulls outward.

19. THE SECOND GUARDIAN: When the party opens the double doors to the West, they will see an extremely large blue and silver scaled beast sitting upon a large throne, brooding. It has enormous claws, mouth full of sharp-looking teeth, milky white eyes and long flapping jowls. It has a semi-short tail that ends in a spear-like point.

This beast, a **Cataboligne Demon** (hp: 81), when it sees the party enter, will rise, grin, and wave them forward. Upon standing, the party will see the beast is roughly 15' tall and quite demonic in appearance... It has been waiting centuries for an opportunity to fulfill its oath to Acererak and will fight until dead. Win or lose, it will be free to leave this prison and return to the Abyss.

If the party succeeds in destroying the demon, they will have little stopping them from getting a better look around the room.

This front half is 30' cubed, while the back half, where the throne is located, widens to 50' and has ornate carvings on nearly every surface of the room, including the ceiling and floor. The large throne could seat a giant, and certainly the demon! It is inlaid with ivory and jade, and the whole is worth 25,000gp but weighs over a ton. The ivory and jade can be stripped but will only have a street value of 1000gp and weighing about the same. The ornate carvings and inscriptions depict a battle being overseen by a wizardly sort that happens to be right over where the secret door is to the South. The door cannot be discovered but by magical means, but once accomplished it is opened by depressing the eye of demon carved into the ceiling directly 30' above.

20. TOMB OF ACERERAK?: The secret door that guards this room is of superior quality. It will never be detectable by normal means, although a small spherical indentation in the wall may be noticed on a 1 in 6 chance by a dwarf or elf. The depression in the wall appears to be the same size as the second key. If the second key is inserted into the slot by anyone other than that who can wield it (as described in area **9**), they will be teleported, no save, to area 21.

If the correct sized person utilizes the 3rd key, the secret door will sink into the floor allowing access into the crypt beyond.

When the party enters they will notice immediately piles of treasure of all manners and in quantities unheard of. Gleaming armor and weapons, cloaks, staves, gems, and coins are piled in the North-West corner of the room. In the center of it all is large chest with a skull with emeralds for eyes and teeth perched atop it.

This is all a **Programmed Illusion** that has full audible and physical manifestation. Name level pc's are allowed a save vs. Spells at a -6 to disbelieve, but only if they state they are attempting to deny the illusion.

If the party touches any of the illusory treasure (it will feel real enough) the skull will rise up and turn towards the most powerful character, choosing a Magic User first, Fighter second, Cleric third, and lastly a Thief. It will seemingly disintegrate the character with a beam of reddish light that shoots out from the eyes of the skull. Rather than be disintegrated, the PC will be teleported to area 21 to die a slow starving death. If the treasure or skull is molested again, the process repeats until the party is all teleported. Note that the illusion is not quite as perfect as Acererak thought and each successive "disintegration" will afford the remaining party members a save vs. Spells to disbelieve the illusion.

If anyone is left that disbelieves, the true nature of the room will become apparent. On a stand at the same height as the illusory skull is a wand that points in the direction of the party. It is ensorcelled to cast a **Teleport Without Error** spell on a target. It may be freely taken and has 11 charges remaining. A small tapestry hangs on the wall with the following words stitched onto it:

"Brave adventurers you have passed my tests,
Fought creature and trap to find my lair.
Sadly, here in hiding my soul does not rest,
But your friends do languish in my pit of despair."

21. THE PIT OF DESPAIR: When characters arrive here, they will be in utter pitch black darkness. Infravision and Ultravision will be useless here and unless some manner of illumination is discovered, they will have a very tough time of figuring out the dimensions.

The room is 30' in diameter and 50' tall. It will only seem to be about 35' high as the bottom 15' are covered in the bones and equipment of victims past. Fortunately for them, this is the location of everything that has been teleported from **12A**. The downside is that there is no exit from this chamber and it is 100' down inside the hill.

In addition, the enormous depth of bones piled here has attracted a resident **Bone Devil** (hp: 56). This vicious creature has found itself trapped and unable to leave. It may use all of its powers with one exception; it may not

summon another of its kind due to the powerful enchantments on this room. This nasty will lie in wait at the bottom of the pile. If only one character arrives, it will wait a few rounds to see if anyone else arrives before attacking. If more than one party member is trapped here, it will lie in wait for the most opportune time...

Escape can be achieved by a few methods. Once the **Bone Devil** is defeated, any spell books that were teleported here might be located and provide some mode of escape. For instance, the following spells could allow exit: **Teleport, Word of Recall, Dimension Door** (provided the direction to an open space is known), **Alter Reality, Limited Wish, or Wish**.

Perhaps there is something of use to the PC's in here...

A thorough search, taking many hours, will net the following loot:

- all items from characters teleported nude
- 7 **potions** and 3 **scrolls** determined randomly (or chosen by a forgiving DM)
- **Ring of Shooting Stars, Wand of Illumination** (7 charges remaining), **Boots of Levitation**
- Suit of **Chainmail +3** (Human or ½ Elf)
- Suit of **Studded Leather +3**
- **Shield +2**
- **Longsword +4, Int:14, Ego: 8, NG, Detects Evil in 1" radius, Levitates 1 turn 3/day, speaks Common, Elvish, Goblin**
- **Broadsword -2, Cursed, Int:16, Ego: 14, CN, Detects Lawful in 1" radius, attracts zombies in 1 mile radius, causes slow insanity on wielder (over 1 year period), Speaks Common, Old Suloise, Ogre, Blue Dragon, and Orcish, is Telepathic to wielder.** This sword will try to convince its new owner that it is a powerful magic item...
- **21 Arrows +2**
- **Spear +3**
- 47 gems 10gp base value, 13 pieces of jewelry valued at 17,000gp
- 3,495 pp, 17,666 gp, 1,177 ep, 25,040 sp, 65,120 cp. All loose coins buried in the skeletons.

These items are mixed amongst many items of a mundane nature. Determining magical qualities will require some method to do so, i.e. spell, testing suspect items, etc. The swords will glow a light blue when unsheathed.

Thus ends the False Tomb of Horrors.

New Monsters

Cataboligne (Major Demon)

Frequency: Very Rare (on PMP; Rare in Abyss)
No. Appearing: 1 (1-3 in Abyss)
Armor Class: -2
Move: 18"
Hit Dice: 12+2
% in Lair: 100% (on PMP, usually bound)
Treasure Type: special
No. of Attacks 3 and 1
Damage/Attack: 3-9/3-9/4-16 and 2-12
Special Attacks: On natural 20 hugs for 8-20 (4d4+4)
Special Defenses: +3 or better weapon to hit, see below
Magic Resistance: 65%
Intelligence: Exceptional
Alignment: Chaotic Evil
Size: 15' tall (L)
Psionic Ability: Nil
Level/XP Value: X/16,500+16/hp (x10 if slain permanently in the Abyss)

Description: Cataboligne demons have a huge blue/silver scaled and knobbed body, with huge claws and a mouth full of razor sharp teeth. Upon their heads rest twin horns of bone. Their tail is short and stubby, with a spade-like end. Twin dewlaps hang from their cheeks. The eyes are white with red pupils.

Spell-like powers: illusion generation (as per efreeth), fear (by glance), teleport (no error, 1/day), darkness 30' radius, paralyzation (by gray eye beams, save at -2), magic missile (3/day, 6/cast), charm (person or monster, by voice), telekinesis 4750 gp weight, animate dead, gate (60%; 1 cataboligne 70% or 1-2 skurdra 30% [a man-scorpion demon I wrote up]), detect invisibility, detect magic, suggestion, symbol (hopelessness or fear, 1/day), pyrotechnics.

Blunt weapons inflict 1/2 damage due to the toughness and strength of the cataboligne's exoskeleton; they regenerate 2 hp per round and can reattach lost limbs.

Skurdra (lesser demon)

Frequency: Rare (Uncommon in the Abyss)
No. Appearing: 1-8
Armor Class: 2/-3
Move: 15"
Hit Dice: 8+1
% in Lair: [undetermined]
Treasure Type: [undetermined]

No. of Attacks: 3
Damage/Attack: 3-13/3-13/1-10
Special Attacks: poison sting (save at -3 or die; save indicates wracking pains [as power word: pain] for 2-5 rounds), and see below
Special Defenses: +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to poison
Magic Resistance: 60%
Intelligence: Average
Alignment: Chaotic Evil
Size: L (9' tall, 20' long)
Psionic Ability: Nil
Level/X.P. Value: VIII/5800+12/hp

Description: a man- (or perhaps centaur-) demon, the skurdra have a massive body. The torso is that of a human with small, reddish brown scales which gradually turn darker until the arachnid body is reached, which is black--the shiny, lustrous black of an insect exoskeleton. The eyes are generally yellow with red pupils, and hair is red, brown, auburn, and black. Skurdra possess infravision and ultravision to a 9" range.

Spell-like powers: darkness 2" radius, teleport (no error), cause fear (by gaze, save at -1), detect invisibility, detect magic, invisibility, gate (1/day at 35%, 1-2 skurdra if successful), telekinese 3500 gp weight, speed poison (2/day).

Final Thoughts

The Cataboligne and Skurdra Demons are none other than the creation of Ernest Gary Gyax and were featured in the Gord the Rogue Novels. These incarnations of the creatures were statted out and used by permission from Allan Grohe, the illustrious Grodog to many of you out there.

I have found myself caught up in the Old School Revival and had dreams of glory of starting my own publishing company to produce classic-styled adventures. Alas, I cannot seem to find the time to devote to it and have decided to settle for the occasional freebie for the online Dragonsfoot community at large. If anyone deigns this work to be of high quality and wishes to offer me part time employment (ha ha!), or even wants some assistance on their own projects (free or otherwise) let me know. I do digital maps using GIMP and a little writing/editing, none of which is professional!

I hope you enjoyed this adventure!

Charley M. Phipps

