



STORIES FROM RAVENHOUSE

This one-shot adventure is designed for a fledgling group of heroes from level 1 to 2. It is supposed to teach them the basic rules of their craft. The story is set in a little village named Ravenhouse, which is a typical settlement in the hinterlands. It is located somewhere in the Green Fields, bordering the Cloud Peaks and the Snake Wood. The Green Fields themselves are part of the Sword Coast. But if you want to include the adventure in an ongoing campaign, you can easily use any village or smaller town you already introduced. The triggering event of the adventure is an earthquake, which could happen everywhere at any point in time. With some adjustment it could also serve as an adventure for a party of higher level, mayhap as a prelude to a venture into the Underdark.

The general tone of this adventure should be light-hearted, like a fairy tale or a bedtime story for young children. The random encounters, which are included within this document, are generally tailored for this purpose. But you can make the world feel grittier, if you so desire. The chapter titled 'Encounters and Secrets' should serve as inspiration or a general guideline. It is by no means required or necessary to incorporate these elements into the story. But if you feel that the players are advancing too quickly, or there is still ample time at the end of the session, you can roll on the encounter table.

The adventure comes with three basic maps. This particular document includes detailed maps with markers, to ease the process of planning out the adventure. The map pack, which is supplied with this product, includes clean versions of these maps. You can use these as handouts or battle maps, if you so desire.

If you want to hand out magic items to your players, I recommend perusing through the common magic items detailed in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*. Another source for interesting magical items is *LLedrith's Wagon*, a collection of magical items I released myself.

The most important information: Do not feel yourself beholden to play this story by the book. Many encounters and challenges presented here are merely guidelines or recommendations. The enemy is an intelligent swarm of rats, which can adapt to every situation!

This document also includes an additional adventure, if your players should return to the village. Or you might decide to forgo the adventure about the Cranium Rats and instead give the Kobolds a chance!

NOTE

Text passages written in this box are meant to be read out loud, either word for word or paraphrased.

CHAPTER I: RODENTS OF UNUSUAL SIZE

BACKGROUND

The village of Ravenhouse is plagued by an army of ferocious rats for several weeks now. The food stores are mostly plundered and winter is approaching with fatal certainty. The villagers are overwhelmed by this situation and the first families are beginning to pack up. They want to make their way to nearby towns like Nashkel or Greenest, where they might spend the winter without starving to death.

The whole ordeal began after an earthquake tore open a large chasm in a cave beneath Ravenhouse. This cave was used as a refuge in the past, when raiding parties threatened the village regularly. But the existence of the cave and the location of the secret entrances are now almost completely forgotten. Only the oldest villagers may remember how they were brought there as children. To add insult to injury, the village elder Fidibald died during the earthquake. This threw the village into disarray.

Many unpleasant things reached the surface since the chasm was torn open some weeks ago. Many bizarre creatures now roam this area. Amongst other things, a swarm of **Cranium Rats** ventured into the cave and made its new home nearby. They build a nest in a long abandoned temple of Cyric, which is located deep inside the cave system.

The Cranium Rats subdued the local rats and other vermin, which now serve them as spies and foragers. The rats make their way to the surface through cracks in the earth, which were torn open during the earthquake. They steal cheese and meat to feed the next generation. The motives of the swarm known as 'Renegade Fraction' are anyone's guess. Are they spying for a horde of Mind Flayers? Or are they truly renegade and want to live a simple rats life? Or mayhap they are preparing to grab power for their own kind, to pillage and enslave the surface!

The temple of Cyric, which the rats discovered, was abandoned hastily after Cyric was imprisoned on his home plane by Lathander, Tyr, and Sune. The temple was not reclaimed because most of the former clerics were slain, and scattered across the lands. This happened some centuries ago, so no person alive will know about the existence of this place. It has fallen into disrepair since then. Many rooms and corridors have collapsed and are now buried.

CRANIUM RATS

Cranium Rats are twisted creatures, created by Mind Flayers in the deepest parts of the Underdark. They spy upon the surface world and transfer their gathered knowledge to the Elder Brain. They are easy to distinguish from normal rats. Their skulls are cracked open and a sickly looking brain sticks out from their little heads. One Cranium Rat alone is easy enough to handle. In a swarm, however, their psionic powers accumulate into fatal arcane energy.

ENTER RAVENHOUSE

INTRODUCTION

On your way into the village, you saw from afar one family in the process of leaving crosses your way. Their wagon is packed with furniture and three young children. The children are crying and beg their parents to stay here in the village. You ask them why they abandon their farmstead, and so they tell you about the cruel fate of Ravenhouse. The village is overrun by an army of rats, which steal their food and kill their livestock! All of this began soon after an earthquake hit Ravenhouse. But nobody is sure if these events are connected or just coincidence. At least there was no damage dealt to the village during the earthquake. But it makes no difference. The family cannot afford to stay in the village any longer, as their food stocks are nearly depleted. They recommend you spend the night in the Rusty Coppercoin and then be on your way. The children look at you with sad eyes, while their wagon slowly leaves the village.

PERSONS & POINTS OF INTEREST

TAVERN: RUSTY COPPERCOIN

The Rusty Coppercoin is run by the local landlord Travor Rand and looks pleasant enough from the outside. Next to the entrance a sign says: *Help Wanted!* The tavern itself is not filthy per se, but someone clearly ignored the most important cleaning duty. In every corner of the room stands a bucket. All of them are filled to the brink with dead rats. Travor placed them there as a deterrent, in the hopes that the rats catch the drift and stay clear of his establishment. The landlord is ill-humored and regularly flings a kitchen knife at thieving rats, which dart through the room from time to time. If a merry band of adventurers should ask him about the rats or the sign out front, he will tell them the following:

TRAVOR'S RANT

'I tell you, I am fed up with these rats!', he says, all the while gnawing on a tail which looks suspiciously ratty in nature. 'I had to secure most of my food in iron chests, which is the only way to survive this plague! And I had not had a beer without rat piss since weeks! But this lot does not seem to care!' as he points at a table, currently occupied by three men in leather armor, downing one beer after the other. 'You guys look like you can handle yourselves in a fight! I tell you, if you can do something about these rats I will see that you are compensated in full! In the meantime, you can stay here at a bargain price, but you will have to share your room with some rats I suppose. We also got the finest rat cheek stew in town, you can ask anyone! Well, anyway. Best you start looking at the granary. That is where most of the beasts are. The Mertens' boy has an eye on the granary during the day, can't miss him!'

THE MILITIA

The three men sitting at the table Travor pointed out, make up the local militia. They were pressed into service after everyone else was disqualified due to medical reasons or old age. They spend most of their day in the tavern, patrolling. The townspeople are mostly fed up and are happy if they are out of the way. The leader of the militia is a man named Ardin Bower. His face is bloated from days and nights of heavy drinking. The villagers put up with his antics at first, because he is the only one in town who knows how to handle a sword. He claims to have served in a mercenary group once. He tells brave tales of his time in the 'Band of the Falcon'. But in actuality, he only cleaned the privies and snuck off with the company coffers during a foggy night. He prefers not to dirty his hands and lets his *lieutenants* take care of the *rough stuff*. The militia can be reminded of their duty with a successful Persuasion check (DC 15) or a successful Intimidation check (DC 10).

MYRTE'S HOUSE

Myrte is the oldest inhabitant of Ravenhouse by far, especially since the village elder died a few weeks ago. She lives in a ramshackle building at the edge of town, where she spends the winter of her life. Her abode is filled with memorabilia and strange trinkets. During her younger years, she explored nearby and far-flung ruins and brought back some interesting items from her travels. She will gladly tell anyone who would be incautious enough to ask about her exploits. Myrte can and will tell anyone who asks about the caves beneath Ravenhouse.

The cellar of Myrte's home is currently being ransacked by a rodent of unusual size. The **Enormous Rat** found its way through an old trapdoor into the cellar. The trapdoor connects to a corridor, which leads further down into the cave. The rope which allowed easy descent has long since rotten away, however. The rat also killed Otto the dog!

GRANARY

The granary of the little village is secured by countless traps. Some of them are empty, but most are holding a dead rat. Many more rats are in the process of dying. With a passive Perception of 15 you can hear their screams from a distance. Many rats converge here and with a successful Survival check (DC 10) a skilled adventurer could follow their tracks to some suspicious cracks in the earth.

The entrance of the granary is guarded by a young boy named Wilhelm Merten. He is armed and ready to slay every rat skilled enough to master the maze of traps. Wilhelm is a self-proclaimed adventurer in spe. He is only eleven years old, but already claimed the sword of his late father. He took it upon himself to serve the village, regarding the lazy drinking sods of the militia with disgust. Like his father, they drown their sadness in alcohol, wasting away in the process. Wilhelm might approach the adventurers to offer his assistance. He has a strong sword arm, or so he says and followed some of the rats to some unusual cracks in the earth. This happened after they snuck by him and gorged themselves in the granary. But he will omit this part.

THE CRACKS IN THE EARTH

With a successful Investigation check (DC 10) the adventurers can find a crack which could be widened enough to pass through. Using digging implements this will take 1d4+2 hours. With the help of a rope, one could now descend into the caves. Without investigating first, there is a 10% chance to chose a suitable crack for excavation.

TEMPLE OF CHAUNTEA

Like the rest of the village, the local temple of Chauntea is plagued by rats. No godly intervention or heavenly protection seems to guard against this vermin. The rats spoil healing supplies, destroy precious books and distract the people praying to Chauntea for salvation. If nothing is done, Chauntea might soon forsake the temple. If worst comes to worst, Raxivort might claim it in the end!

The temple is tended to by a Halfling named Reed Briar. As a Cleric of Chauntea, Reed helps everyone in need. Be it people, animals or the land itself. He only recently lost his dear wife to an ugly spider, but this will not break a man like Reed. He wears the symbol of Chauntea proudly, a blooming rose over grain. He is now responsible for running several places in the village. He mans the little temple of Chauntea which serves as hospital, library and the center of worship. And after the death of Fidibald, he was also put in charge of the general goods store.

Reed loves a good drink, which he gladly shares with friendly travelers. Reed is deeply troubled, however. The rats are eating away at the seeds which are needed to raise the crops next year. If someone would be willing to help the village, he would supply these brave souls with some healing salves:

Healing Salve: This salve heals 1d4+4 hitpoints over the course of 10 minutes.

INTERIOR

Every wall in the temple is covered with books. It can be considered a great library for such a small village. The books mostly talk about religious matters and farming techniques. There are also several books concerning the history of Ravenhouse. With a successful Investigation check (DC 5), an interested adventurer can learn about the caves beneath the village.

Two doors lead away from the main hall. One leads to Reeds personal chambers. The other one leads down into the crypts of Ravenhouse. With a successful Investigation check (DC 10) an adventurer can find a hidden passageway, which leads into the caves beneath Ravenhouse.

CHAUNTEA

The Great Mother or the Grain Goddess is a God of agriculture, growth, and home. Clerics of Chauntea likewise tend to books and fields. Destruction is anathema to Chauntea, although you could consider destruction and decay as a part of the cycle of life.

GENERAL GOODS STORE

The general goods store is not manned during the day. But a sign next to the entrance points out, that whoever wants to be served has to ring the bell next to this sign. Some 1d6+2 minutes later, Reed Briar will appear. He will be out of breath, of course. The store mainly trades in farming equipment, but an inventive adventurer might find some use for the offered items.

ADVANCING THE STORY

If the adventurers are stuck or idle around for too long, the following encounters can advance the story:

MOANING MYRTE

At some point after the adventurers settled in, they might witness how Myrte enters the tavern and gives hell to the militia:

'There you are, exactly where I thought you would be!', the old lady screams as she enters the tavern. She makes her way to the table where the militia is having their fifth round of the day. 'Come on now Arden, you lazy bastard. It's time for some real work! One of that ghastly rats rummages through my cellar and helps itself to my last food! It killed Otto, Arden! Did you hear me, you sorry excuse for a man?' The man she addressed as Arden replies with a slur in his voice: *'You only got some months left anyway Myrte. No point in helping you out!'*

With that, the old woman raises her cane and cracks it over Arden's skull. He draws his blade in response, ready to attack!

WILHELM'S REQUEST

Some time after the word made its round, that a band of adventurers have come to the village, Wilhelm will approach them. He will want to help them in their fight against the rats:

'You are these adventurers everyone is talking about, right? I heard you want to help us fight of these darn rats! I could help you with that! At least, I know where they come from. Let me show you!' And with that, he runs off to the fields.

THE CAVES BENEATH

There are several ways to reach the caves below Ravenhouse. The possible entries are marked on the corresponding map called *The Caves beneath Ravenhouse*. Every headline in the following chapter begins with a number, which corresponds to the number of the marker on the map.

A long time has passed since these caves were used as a shelter. But there are still traces of human habitation left. Fireplaces, abandoned campsites, and makeshift defenses have stood the test of time. With a successful Survival check (DC 5), the adventurers can find the traces of countless rats, leading them farther into the cave.

111 A HIDDEN SAFE ROOM

With a passive perception of 15 (-5 with no darkvision or light source) or a successful Investigation check (DC 10) the adventurers can find a hidden lever, which opens a door to a safe room. A possible location is marked on the map. In this room, a satchel containing 4d20+20 gp can be found. Otherwise, there is only debris and spoiled healing supplies.

121 THE UNDERGROUND LAKE

A sizable lake spans from one side of the cave to the other. The in- and outflow are not that strong but may prove perilous to clumsy adventurers. The shortest distance to jump would be 12 feet. This would require a base Strength of 12 to succeed in a long jump. Alternatively, the DC of an Athletics check to make a successful jump across would be 12 as well.

The lake is crystal clear, but the bottom cannot be seen. With a passive Perception of 15 or a corresponding Perception check of DC 15, an adventurer can make out movements farther down. But it cannot be determined what may lurk in those cold depths. If an adventurer should fall into the water or decide to swim, he will be attacked by 1d4 **Quippers**.

131 THE CHASM

The adventurers come across a vast and pitch black injury in the skin of the earth. With a successful History check (DC 5) an adventurer can presume, that this chasm ultimately leads into the Underdark. The place where Drow, Duergar, and other horrors linger. The tracks of the rats lead around this chasm, deeper into the cave. If the adventurers do not care about the noise they make or do not succeed in a Stealth check (DC 10), they are attacked by a **Giant Lizard**. The beast makes its way up the wall of the chasm and tries to take a bite of them.

141 DEEPER INTO THE CAVE SYSTEM

The adventurers can track the rats to a place in the cave where it narrows itself until it is merely a corridor. On the DMs discretion, the journey through the cave system could take mere minutes or several hours. There are various random encounters included which could be included now. The corridor branches very often and the adventurers travel through various larger and smaller caves on their way. Until they ultimately arrive at their destination, the temple of Cyric and origin of the rat incursion.

THE TEMPLE OF CYRIC

CYRIC, THE PRINCE OF LIES

Otherwise also known as the Black Sun, Cyric is a God of deception, trickery, and strife. He is currently trapped in his realm, the Supreme Throne. There is still a following to Cyric however, scattered across Faerûn. One of the most twisted artifacts pertaining to Cyric is the *Cyrinishad*. An unholy tome which renders the reader insane and converts him to a faithful follower of Cyric. The book is bound in midnight black leather and features a living skull on the cover, who protects the book.

111 AMBUSH!

After arriving at the end of the narrow corridor, the adventurers have almost reached their destination. At the location marked on the corresponding map **Abandoned Temple**, a **Rat Swarm** and an **Enormous Rat** are lying in ambush. The DM rolls a Stealth check for the rats and checks if the rats can smell the adventurers before they arrive. Remember that the Enormous Rat has advantage on Perception checks which involve smell. Should the rats fare poorly during the encounter, they will retreat to draw the adventurers into a trap.

After your perilous journey, you spot large pillars in the distance. They frame the entrance to what appears to be an abandoned temple. The wall of this structure is adorned with several large jawless skulls. This does not augur well in your opinion. The traces of the rats lead right into the gigantic entrance. You can hear the cackling of rats in the distance as if they were mocking you!

121 THE ENTRANCE - IT'S A TRAP!

The entrance area to the temple is trapped. If an adventurer should be careless, he will only spot the trap with a general Perception check (DC 17) or with a passive Perception of 17. If he searches for traps, he will find a simple **Bolt Trap** with a successful Investigation check (DC 10). The trigger is placed 10 ft. into the temple. The trap will only trigger if the person weighs more than 50 lb. If the trap is triggered, bolts will shoot out from the walls 10 ft. behind and 10 ft. in front of the trigger. Anyone standing in the affected area takes 1d6+2 piercing damage. On a successful Dexterity check (DC 13) the damage is halved.

131 STORAGE CHAMBER

This room was once used as a storage chamber. All the shelves and cabinets which once stood in this room have almost turned to dust by now. An Investigation check (DC 5) will yield the information, that this degree of decay will happen after roughly 100 - 200 years of disuse. A successful Investigation check (DC 15) will bring a long forgotten magical item to light.

141 ANOTHER TRAP!

This trap can be spotted by a general Perception check (DC 20) or with a passive Perception of 20. If an adventurer searches for traps, he will find a pressure plate after a successful Investigation check (DC 12). The plate can be avoided or disarmed. If the trap should be triggered, two large stone walls will descend on both sides of the small corridor. Anyone standing in the affected area will be trapped. The trap will only trigger if the person weighs more than 50 lb. The trap can easily be reset by small handles, which are placed on both sides. The handles can be found after a successful Investigation check (DC 10), on which the adventurer has advantage. After 1d20+10 minutes the handles can be found regardless of the success of the dice roll.

If all the players should be trapped, they will be approached by **Renegade Fraction**. The swarm will contact them telepathically and offers the bargain detailed later on. If they accept, the swarm will free them.

151 RENEGADE FRACTION

Shortly before the adventurers can set foot into the chamber where Renegade Fraction resides, the swarm will contact them telepathically:

You make your way through one of the many corridors, leading you deeper into the temple. The air is stale and it reeks of rat, dung and worse. From time to time you can see tiny red eyes in the distance. Watching you. Waiting for you to wander ever further into their domain. Without forewarning, you hear a strange voice in your head, as if a dozen voices intermingle and overlay: *'Stop! Do not go any further for now. We are Renegade Fraction. We tested your strength and allowed you to wander deep into our lair. We know why you have come, we know your purpose! You are here to kill us!'* When the voice utters the word **kill**, it grows into a cacophony of sounds, irregular and emotional. But whatever you try, you can not banish this voice from your head: *'But you are too weak to fight us, you will perish if you try! However, we offer you a bargain. The Great Eater stands between us and the nearest exit to the outside. Help us slay the Great Eater and we will leave your swarm alone! Will you accept? Or will you perish here?'* As the voice withdraws from your head, you feel strangely violated. But the connection is not completely severed as of yet. The swarm waits for your reply!

If the adventurers accept, Renegade Fraction will send a **Rat Swarm** or an **Enormous Rat** with them. The rat companion will lead the adventurers to the domain of the **Elder Frog**.

161 FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

This former library looks like a battlefield. An avalanche of tomes and manuscripts is scattered all across the room. Most of the books have almost turned to dust or were destroyed by the rats. But some foliants and grimoires seem to be intact, undamaged by age or abuse. An Investigation check (DC 10) will yield 1d4 random 1st-level scrolls from the Wizard spell list. An Investigation check (DC 20) might bring a magical tome to light.

171 THE ELDER FROG

DINNER TIME

From quite a ways away, there is a strange smell in the air. You can only describe it as primeval. It wakes the memories of your forefathers, which were hunted by large beasts and had to scurry like rats themselves. You slowly approach the lair of the 'Great Eater' and your heart beats faster and faster.

As you lay eyes upon the creature for the first time, a shiver goes down your spine. It is a gigantic Frog, which could swallow you whole. For now, it appears as if it is resting. A peaceful, almost beautiful sight.

Light shines into this cave. It falls through large cracks in the ceiling. Some resilient plants and roots work on expanding these cracks. A small pool of stagnant water reflects the sunlight, letting it dance on the walls in a hundred different colors. However, this peace may soon be disturbed by the sound of battle!

The domain of the **Elder Frog** counts as difficult terrain for anyone except the Elder Frog himself. The rats, which were sent to help the adventurers will support them, but flee when they take too much damage. After the Elder Frog is slain, **Renegade Fraction** will thank the adventurers telepathically and hold true to his word. The adventurers can pass undisturbed if they want to travel back to the village through the temple of Cyric.

AFTERMATH

DEATH OF THE CRANIUM RATS

If the Cranium Rats are dealt with, order will return to the village. Nevertheless, the chasm in the caves under Ravenhouse is a constant threat to peace. Can the village survive if darker things emerge from the depths of the Underdark?

DEATH OF THE ELDER FROG

If the Cranium Rats are left to their own devices, they might build a great empire for ratkind. But there are many challenges awaiting them. The gatekeeper to the caves was disposed of, which could motivate incursions into the cave from other dangerous beings. Like Ravenhouse, the rats are threatened by darker beings who will eventually emerge from the depths.

THE GRATITUDE OF RAVENHOUSE

As is tradition, the village folk will celebrate their heroes appropriately. A humble feast will be organized in their honors and the festivities will continue through the night. The heroes will receive a permanent discount on lodging in the Rusty Coppercoin and services in the temple.

WILHELM'S FATE

After the adventurers return to the village, they are approached by Wilhelm. He looks at them with starry eyes. Wilhelm wants to join the merry band of adventurers to fight evil and rescue other villages from certain doom! If they decide to refuse his request, he will try to follow them stealthily when they leave the village.



CHAPTER II: THE PIED PIPER

BACKGROUND

After peace returned to Ravenhouse, the villagers resupplied their stocks and hunkered down for the winter. The villagers only had a brief period of respite, however. One by one, the children living in the village vanished under mysterious circumstances. At first, the villagers thought the children were snatched by the spiders, which infest the Snake Wood. But then the children began to go missing during the night when they were supposedly safely tucked away in their chambers.

A state of emergency was declared and the newly elected village council assembled. They all met in the tavern, where a heated debate is going on. The village has no funds to hire mercenaries and the former militia proved to be inept. The tensions run high and a little brawl breaks out.

The real root of the problem is a band of **Kobolds**. They began to excavate the partially buried temple of Cyric. Suspecting great riches in the ruins, the Kobolds began to dig greedily. The chief of the Kobolds Krubcek was dissatisfied with the progress and looked for skilled labor elsewhere. Using his *Flute of Domination* he charmed the local children and put them to work. The children are held against their will but are cared for. For the moment at least. But many dangers linger in the forgotten temple of an evil god, and some Kobolds are quite interested in the children. In a culinary sense.

THE FLUTE OF DOMINATION

Krubcek's flute was used to charm many children and Kobolds. It has exactly one charge of the *charm person* spell left. After this charge is expended, the flute will crack and lose its original power. The cracked flute will have the following statistics:

KRUBCEK'S RUIN

Wondrous item (requires attunement)

Once per Day: You can play a magical infused song on this flute. Roll on the Wild Magic Surge table (Players Handbook page 104) to determine the effect.

KOBOLDS

Kobolds are small reptilian creatures, which may or may not descend from actual Dragons. They organize in tight knit tribes and value hard labor. They are not aggressive by nature, only when food supplies run low or they feel cornered will they fight tooth and nail for survival. Otherwise they tend to avoid conflict. There are also Kobolds which coexists with humanoid races, but mostly by steering clear of any trouble. Kobolds known as Urds have leathery wings, which allow them to fly. However, due to some religious differences Urds are not regarded kindly by their tribe members.

THE COUNCIL MEETING

The Rusty Coppercoin is currently occupied by a dozen people. They argue about the right course of action in the face of the current crisis. Once the adventurers enter the tavern, they will witness the following exchange:

A HEATED DISCUSSION

You can already hear from afar, that something is going on in the village tavern. You open the door and the first thing you see is a Halfling, standing on top of a table. He screams from the top of his lungs: *'We need to keep calm and think about a solution instead of blaming one another!'* He barely manages to utter this sentence before a man is thrust against the table the Halfling is standing on. The table falls over, burying the Halfling beneath it. Fists begin flying and the whole tavern is in an uproar.

The adventurers can call the village folk to order. They will manage this with a successful Intimidation check (DC 10) or a successful Persuasion check (DC 15). The brawl will end after ten minutes if the adventurers let it run its course, or fail to calm down the villagers.

They will be approached by Reed Briar afterward, who tells them about the latest events in the village. He excuses himself profusely for the unsightly scene the adventurers had to witness just now. He will ask them if they have seen or noticed anything out of the ordinary on their way? This excerpt could be part of the conversation:

It is quite the tragedy. Seven kids vanished in total. Now there is only one child left. Her name is Mara Lilac and she lives with her father in the middle of the village. Her father is not here of course. He is watching over her at the moment. Yesterday Elm Warring vanished under very mysterious circumstances. His room was locked and barred, but he disappeared nevertheless! We are at a loss, really. The village funds are depleted and not one of the villagers is brave or skilled enough to do something about this! But you look skilled in the ways of combat. I would give what I could if you look into this matter. I could also be your guide around the village if you want to!

If the adventurers agree to help the village, Reed will introduce them to Roland Warring. Roland is currently standing at the counter. He cools his temper with a cup of beer and cries silently. He will gladly accept if the adventurers offer to help him uncover the fate of his son. He will lead them to his humble abode and shows the adventurers the chambers of the boy. A detailed description of the Warrings' home can be found in the following chapter.

PERSONS & POINTS OF INTEREST IN RAVENHOUSE

FURI & ROLAND WARRING

Roland and Furi are the parents of Elm, which is the boy who vanished just yesterday. The parents claim to have been especially careful. They made sure that the chamber was secure. The window was locked and barred from the inside. With a successful Investigation check (DC 5) it becomes clear, that there is no sign of a forceful entry. The window was clearly opened from the inside deliberately. With a successful Survival check (DC 5) the adventurers can make out tracks in front of the window. They can follow the tracks to the edge of the village, where the woods begin. Another Survival check will reveal the following:

DC	Result
5	There are additional tracks of an unknown being. They are not able to follow them.
10	There are additional tracks of a Kobold, which walked with the kid. They are not able to follow them.
15	There are additional tracks of a Kobold, which walked with the kid. They manage to follow the tracks through the forest until they reach a large waterfall.
20	There are additional tracks of an Urd, which walked with the kid. They manage to follow the tracks through the forest until they reach a large waterfall.

If the adventurers tell Roland of their findings, he will arm himself with a scythe and offer his assistance:

Listen, it is a hard life in the hinterlands and every day is a struggle. But we do not take up arms, we are simple folk. Peasants and craftsmen! If trouble brews, we hide. If someone is killed by a giant spider, we shrug it off and carry on. I'm no warrior or soldier. But this is my boy and if you go out there I will accompany you. If you will have me!

MARA & THOMAS LILAC

The father of Mara -Thomas Lilac- watches over her like a hawk. Mara is a half-elf girl of eleven years and the only child which could escape the clutches of the kidnapers. Thomas is very paranoid and will only let the adventurers inside if they are accompanied by Reed or succeed in a Persuasion check (DC 5). If the adventurers speak about their intention to find the missing children, Mara will approach them with tears in her eyes:

Please, you have to help them! They were all lured away a little Dragon. I have seen it myself! I was playing with Wilhelm and Fiona at the edge of the village when we heard someone playing the flute. It happened exactly like in the stories in one of my books! The little Dragon must have put some kind of spell on them. They followed him into the woods! I was begging them to turn around the whole time, but they wouldn't listen to me! The grownups do not believe a word I say, but you believe me, right?

If one of the adventurers is proficient in the Arcana skill and has an Intelligence of at least 16, he will know that Half-Elves are resistant to charm effects. He suspects, that this could be an explanation for this strange occurrence.

Mara will offer the adventurers to show them where Wilhelm and Fiona vanished into the woods. She will even go as far as to offer to play the bait, to lure out the little Dragon. Her father is having none of it though. Only after a successful Persuasion check (DC 10) he will let Mara leave the house. A successful Persuasion check (DC 20) convinces Thomas, that Mara's plan is sound. What could go wrong?

If Mara shows the adventurers the spot where her friends walked into the woods, the adventurers will have a hard time finding tracks after all this time. With a successful Survival check (DC 20) they manage to find the tracks and can follow them to a large waterfall.

THE WOODS

The Snake Woods are a dangerous place. The adventurers will travel between 1 to 8 hours before they reach the waterfall, where the Kobolds build their lair. During this time they could be attacked by monsters. Another option is to roll on the random encounter table, supplied with this document. However, depending on time constraints, it is more favorable to insert an encounter on their way back. In this case, the adventurers might be accompanied by several kids. This would add further tension.

LAIR OF THE KOBOLDS'

There are several ways to reach the lair of the Kobolds'. The adventurers could simply follow the existing tracks. Or they might use a bait to track down the source of the problem. Maybe they even manage to capture Krubcek and force him to lead them to the children? Regardless how they manage to find the lair, eventually they will stand before an imposing waterfall. And behind this waterfall lies the secret entrance to the lair of the Kobolds'.

111 A HIDDEN ENTRANCE

The tracks will lead the adventurers to a hidden entrance behind the waterfall. The entrance is guarded by two **Kobold** sentries. They lower their spears in an aggressive manner and regard the adventurers warily. Krubcek gave to the following order to all Kobolds: If someone should attack the lair, raise the alarm and fall back to the throne room. The Kobolds will have the upper hand when all of them fight together. One of the Kobolds asks what the adventurers are doing so deep inside the forest. Should they attack or say that they come for the children, the Kobolds will make a run for it. Should the Kobolds reach the lair, they will raise the alarm.

KRUBCEK

Krubcek is a winged Kobold, otherwise known as an Urd. He claimed the title of chief after he stole a magical artifact from a traveling wizard. Using the *Flute of Domination* he managed to grab power through machinations and brute force. Krubcek's ultimate goal is to free Kurtulmaic, the god of the Kobolds. He suspects there might be artifacts hidden in the temple of Cyric, which could further his goal.

TRIBE BRIGHTSCALE

In the course of Krubcek's coup d'etat many Kobolds died or fled the tribe. The subsequent occupation of the temple of Cyric also cost some Kobold lives. Now, the tribe is gravely diminished and had to acquire outside help. There is still some discontent among the ranks of the Brightscales. Not only is Krubcek a treacherous Urd, he also endangers the tribe with his unorthodox ideas!

121 A PRISONER - GLIM NURNIG

INTO THE KOBOLDS' DEN

You make your way deeper into the lair of the Kobolds'. You eventually reach a part of the cave which looks like it is inhabited by the Kobolds. You see small tunnels, which were driven into the walls and some construction work. The natural cave makes way to an area which seems like an old building of sorts. The walls are constructed from carved stone but partly buried under rubble. You enter a room which looks a place where the Kobolds feed. There are several kettles, benches, and tables. In one of the corners, you spot a rather large cage. There is someone trapped inside, who looks neither like a Kobold nor a child. The cage is covered with refuse and rotten food. The form in the cage stirs as you draw near, but it does not look like it is conscious.

The being trapped inside the cage is a **Svirfneblin** named Glim Nurnig. He is a Sorcerer and cartographer by trade. He was looking forward to exploring the local area before he was beaten and put into this cage. He hails from a minor Deep Gnome settlement, just north of the Netherese Caverns. He traveled to the surface through the chasm and was captured by the Kobolds soon after. With a successful Medicine check the adventurers can help him in the following ways:

DC

Result

- 5 Glim regains consciousness but can barely move. He can only offer information.
- 10 Glim regains consciousness and can help the adventurers battle against Krubcek. However, his equipment is gone and he has to improvise until he retrieves it.

131 CELLS AND STORAGE

The adventurers can find three large cells in this room. Three kids are currently resting in two of these cells. The third one holds several items. Glim Nurnig will spot his Arcane Focus among those items. He will want to retrieve it under all circumstances. With a successful Dexterity check (DC 10) using Thieves' Tools, the cell doors can be opened. If the adventurers free the children, they will beg them to return them to their parents. The kids can tell the adventurers, that there are four additional children, which need to be rescued. They will find them in the room down the corridor, where the excavation is underway.

141 THE EXCAVATION

If the Kobolds executed Krubcek's plan, the excavation room will be empty. The Kobolds will have taken the children to the throne room. Otherwise, the adventurers will find four children, guarded by two **Kobolds**. One of these children is Wilhelm. He will take a shortsword -or any weapon- from the fallen Kobolds and attempts to join the adventurers.

151 THE THRONE ROOM

The way into the throne room is blocked by a heavy stone door. The Kobolds repurposed the former trap and now use it as a strong defense mechanism, in case of an attack. The small handles, which open the heavy stone doors, are clearly marked.

Krubcek resides in the middle of the room. He sits on a high throne made of stone. It is an ideal position to unfold his wings and fly in case of an attack. He is surrounded by a hand full of Kobolds. But there are more Kobolds waiting in ambush. They hide in many small tunnels which lead into the throne room. They are holding their position, waiting for a sign of their chief to strike. One Kobold stands right next to the door. He is positioned there to lower the stone doors as soon as the intruders step into the room. In case they are very aggressive, he has orders to separate a larger group. In a corner of the room opposite to the entrance, two Kobolds guard the four remaining kids. They are holding weapons to their throats, ready to kill them on Krubcek's orders. When the adventurers enter the throne room, Krubcek will greet them with the following words:

Welcome to my throne room intruders! You must be very brave or stupid to come this far into our home. You are here to collect your little children, yes? I am afraid we still need their help and can't release them. I see this makes you angry, yes? Be careful! If you attack, we will kill these poor little children over there! But I am a great and wise ruler. I make you this offer. You can take three of the children with you. But the villagers have to supply us with food. Tasty food! In exchange, we won't kill the other children. And maybe release them after we have finished our little excavation! Now run along, and relay my words to the villagers!

BELLIGERENT OUTCOME

Should the adventurers start a fight and slay Krubcek, most of the Kobolds will throw away their weapons and run away. The ones who keep on fighting will run away as well as soon as their luck turns and they seem to lose.

PEACEFUL OUTCOME

If the adventurers accept this deal, they will be approached by another Kobold. He will try and talk to them when they enter the common room on their way out. He says his name is Moghos and he tells them the following:

Listen to me, you cannot trust Krubcek. He is a worthless Urd and I spit on his mother's grave. He will betray you and lead our tribe to ruin! If you kill Krubcek I will promise you that the other Kobolds will lay down arms and release the prisoners. They are afraid, you see? Krubcek has terrible magics which turn brother against brother! We want to leave this place. It is worthless! There are no gems to be found here. Not even iron! Just kill him and we will get rid of our common foe!

Both Moghos and Krubcek will stay true to their word if the adventurers manage to fulfill their end of the bargain. However, the villagers will only agree to a deal with Krubcek after a successful Persuasion check (DC 20).

161 KRUBCEK'S CHAMBER

The books the Kobolds uncovered in the former library were brought to Krubcek's chamber and are neatly stacked in one corner of the room. The adventurers will find 2 random 1st-level Wizard scrolls in Krubcek's chamber. He placed them on a small desk and was about to try and decipher them. On a successful Investigation check the adventurers will also uncover the following items:

DC

Result

5 A satchel containing 50 gp.

10 An Amethyst (worth 100 gp), hidden inside some dirty loincloths.

15 A small magical trinket, hidden behind a loose stone.

171 FORTIFICATIONS

The Kobolds build fortifications to fend off any intruder which would attack their lair from the cave entrance. The exit is completely barred. It will take the adventurers 1d4 hours to destroy these defenses, if they feel the need to do so.

AFTERMATH

SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS

If the villagers agree, three of the children will be returned and Krubcek will continue his excavation. Mayhap he will find a great evil and perish in the process?

THE DEATH OF KRUBCEK

If Krubcek is slain, the surviving Kobolds will make Moghos their new chief and leave the area for good. The children will be returned safely and the tribe will make travel preparations.

THE GRATITUDE OF RAVENHOUSE

The adventurers will be treated as great heroes, and celebrated with mead and food. They will be always welcome in the village. If they should decide to settle down there will be a plot of land reserved for them. The local carpenter will erect a humble statue for the heroes, for future generations to remember!

THE WRATH OF RAVENHOUSE

Should the children be lost, the villagers will of course be mad. But this is life in a village in the hinterlands. Life is hard and thankless, and in the end you die. The adventurers will not be shunned, but the reception is understandably cool.

ENCOUNTERS & SECRETS

UNDERGROUND

1d4

Encounter

- 1 The adventurers come across a **Thonot**. He is a Quaggoth who was pressed into service as a Shaman. He caused a catastrophic hunt and had to flee his tribe. He is starving and needs help. He only speaks Undercommon, so communication might prove difficult.
- 2 The adventurers come across a large stone portal. When they try to step through it, the earth rumbles and a **Galeb Duhr** blocks their way. It is guarding a tomb but does not realize his efforts are in vain. The wizard who summoned it was raised from the dead long ago.
- 3 The adventurers find a little farmstead underground, tended to by an old Dwarf named Adrok. He brews an excellent beer with the mushrooms he cultivates. He is a hermit and nearly lost his speech. But he will invite the adventurers inside, to have a taste of his brew.
- 4 The adventurers come across a **Myconid Sprout** which went on a little adventure and can't find its way back to the chasm. A **Duerger Spore Servant** is accompanying the Myconid.

THE TEMPLE OF CYRIC

1d4

Encounter

- 1 Behind a hidden door the adventurers find a very old Elf, wearing a tattered black robe. He sits behind a small desk, writing feverishly. Every page the Elf writes is erased once he finishes it. The Elf is cursed and the spell can only be broken by the *remove curse* spell.
- 2 Behind a hidden door the adventurers find a large cage, holding a chained **Horned Devil**. For his freedom, he offers a Black Pearl, which he produces with his tongue. He hid it in his gullet for a long time. A contract appears in the hand of the adventurer standing nearest to the Devil, or the one who is talking to him. It says the following: The contractor receives a Black Pearl when he frees the Devil. The contractor will not be harmed after he fulfilled his end of the bargain. Furthermore: The contractor can summon the Devil once in a time of need. The price is the soul of the contractor after he dies.
- 3 Behind a hidden door the adventurers find an ornate Bookstand, holding either 'The True Life of Cyric' or the 'Cyrinishad'.
- 4 Behind a hidden door the adventurers find a black altar, dedicated to Cyric. Upon the altar, numerous jawless skulls are arranged into a pyramid. Under these skulls, the adventurers can find a magic item.

DEEP INSIDE THE WOODS

1d4

Encounter

- 1 The way of the adventurers is blocked by a river. The only bridge is guarded by an old **Bridgetroll**, who charges 1/10 of the party funds for safe crossing.
- 2 The adventurers come across the lair of a **Giant Spider**. Aside from the Spider, they find a locket with a picture of Reed Briar. There is also a comatose villager trapped in a web.
- 3 The adventurers come across a rusted **Modron**, which can't move. In his satchel, they can find an oil can. If they repair his rusted joints, he will promise to reward them after he found his way back to Mechanus.
- 4 The adventurers hear festivities in the distance. On a clearing, they find a group of merry people who indulge themselves. They invite the adventurers to celebrate with them. There is a **Satyr**, some **Elves**, **Sprites**, **Pixies** and a **Treant** present. If the adventurers all fail a Wisdom saving throw (DC 15), they spend 1d10 days celebrating.

RANDOM NAMES

MALE VILLAGERS

1d10	Name	Notes
1	Bandrai Ackiss	
2	Rilis Ashard	
3	Garelt Chebald	
4	Virak Onath	
5	Hinranu Wyight	
6	Helmund Orlic	
7	Aerfehrt Walda	
8	Arryn Dene	
9	Elrer Gauwilh	
10	Pholeon Peray	

FEMALE VILLAGERS

1d10	Name	Notes
1	Eryn Sybeth	
2	Leofwe Brytha	
3	Mara Skelley	
4	Brine Bourne	
5	Suse Haucey	
6	Eryn Horne	
7	Hery Barne	
8	Arior Porte	
9	Marget Rove	
10	Elyn Windselw	

KOBOLDS

1d10	Name	Notes
1	Nazeru	
2	Sumesha	
3	Aburnan	
4	Taklak	
5	Sniv	
6	Trev	
7	Amzuurial	
8	Inmus	
9	Amum	
10	Gona	

ENORMOUS RAT

Small beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 15
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	11 (0)	2 (-4)	10 (0)	8 (-1)

Senses pp 10, Darkvision 60 Ft.
Languages None

Traits

Keen Smell. The rat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

RAT SWARM

Medium Swarm Of Tiny Beasts, Unaligned

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 24
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	11 (0)	9 (-1)	2 (-4)	10 (0)	3 (-3)

Senses pp 10, Darkvision 60 Ft.
Languages None
Condition Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned

Traits

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny rat. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain Temporary Hit Points.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. Hit: 7 (2d6) piercing damage, or 3 (1d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

CRANIUM RAT SWARM – RENEGADE FRACTION

Medium Swarm Of Tiny Beasts, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 24
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	11 (0)	7 (-2)	16 (+3)	10 (0)	10 (0)

Senses pp 10, Darkvision 60 Ft.
Languages Telepathy 30 ft.
Condition Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned

Traits

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny rat. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain Temporary Hit Points.

Spellcasting. 3rd Level Spellcaster (DC 13)
1st level (4 slots): *Color Spray*, *Magic Missile*
2nd level (2 slots): *Mirror Image*

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. Hit: 7 (2d6) piercing damage, or 3 (1d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Minor Mind Blast. (Recharge 5-6). The Swarm magically emits psychic energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence saving throw or take 2d6 psychic damage, or half on a successful save. On a critical fail, the victim is stunned until the end of its next turn.

ELDER FROG

Large beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 45
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	13 (+1)	11 (0)	7 (-2)	10 (0)	8 (-1)

Senses pp 12, Darkvision 30 Ft.
Languages None

Amphibious. The frog can breathe air and water.

Standing Leap. The frog's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 2d6 + 1 piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 11). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the frog can't bite another target.

Swallow. The frog makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the frog, and it takes 5 (2d4) acid damage at the start of each of the frog's turns. The frog can have only one target swallowed at a time. If the frog dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

KOBOLD

Small humanoid (kobold), lawful evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 3
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)	7 (-2)	8 (-1)

Senses pp 8, Darkvision 60 Ft.
Languages Common, Draconic

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the kobold has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Pack Tactics. The kobold has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the kobold's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Sling. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

KRUBCEK

Small humanoid (kobold), lawful evil

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 18
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	9 (-1)	10 (0)	9 (-1)

Senses pp 8, Darkvision 60 Ft.
Languages Common, Draconic

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the kobold has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Pack Tactics. The kobold has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the kobold's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Dropped Rock. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, one target directly below the kobold. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

GLIM NURNIG

Small humanoid (gnome), neutral good

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 14

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +3, Cha +4

Senses passive Perception 11, darkvision 120 ft.

Skills Arcana +4, Deception +4, Insight +1, Persuasion +4

Languages Common, Undercommon, Gnomish, Terran

Stone Camouflage. Glim Nurnig has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in rocky terrain.

Gnome Cunning. Glim Nurnig has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

Spellcasting. Glim Nurnig is an 1st-level spellcaster and has some innate abilities. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +3 to hit with spell attacks).

1/day each: *blindness/deafness, blur, disguise self*

Cantrips (at will): *friends, minor illusion, mending, ray of frost, nondetection (self only)*

1st level (3 slots): *expeditious retreat, thunder wave*

Actions

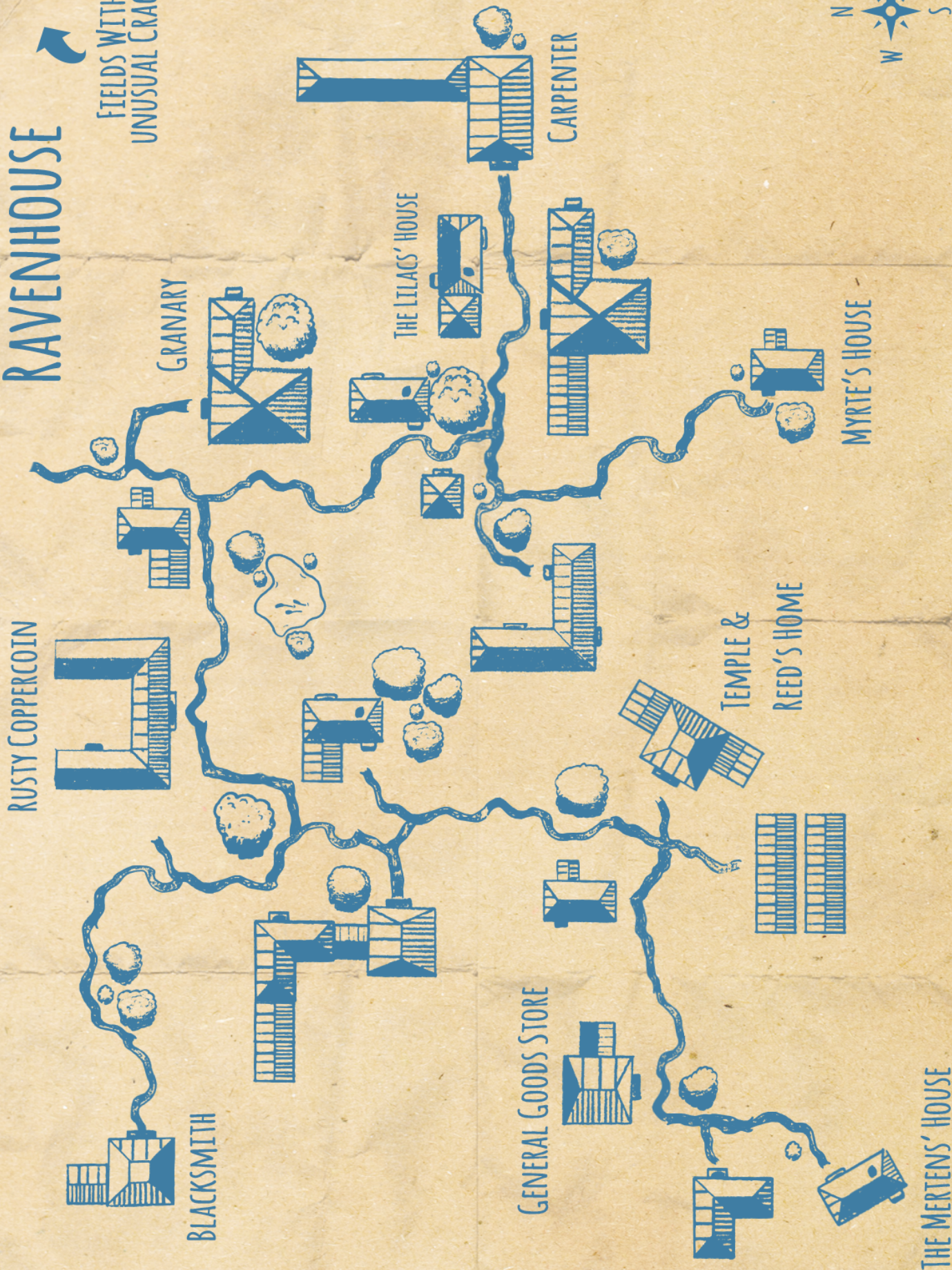
Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 1d4 + 1

Inventory

- Explorers' Pack
- Cartographers' Tools
- 3x Dagger

RAVENHOUSE

↑
FIELDS WITH
UNUSUAL
CRACKS

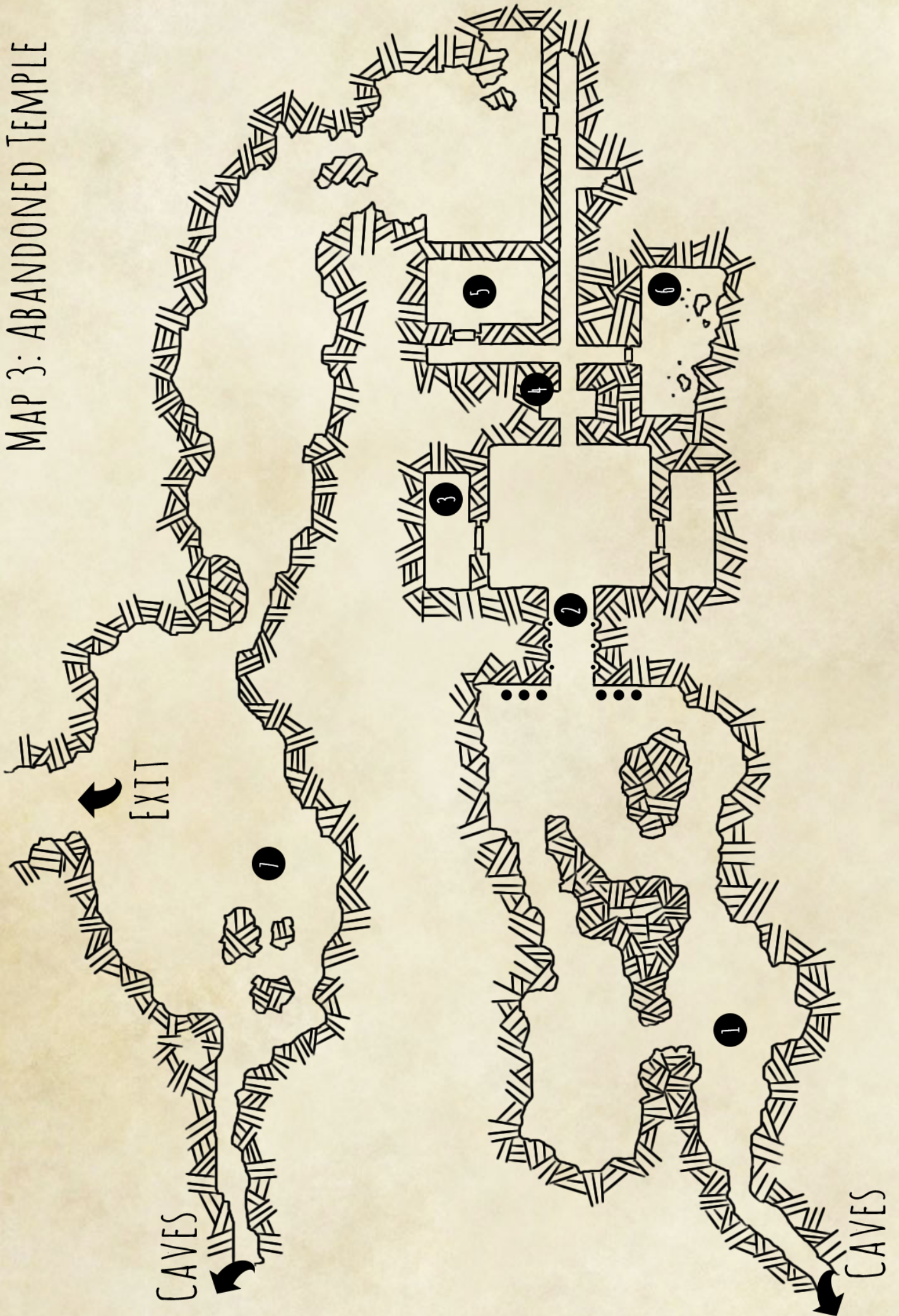


MAP 2: THE CAVES BENETAH RAVENHOUSE

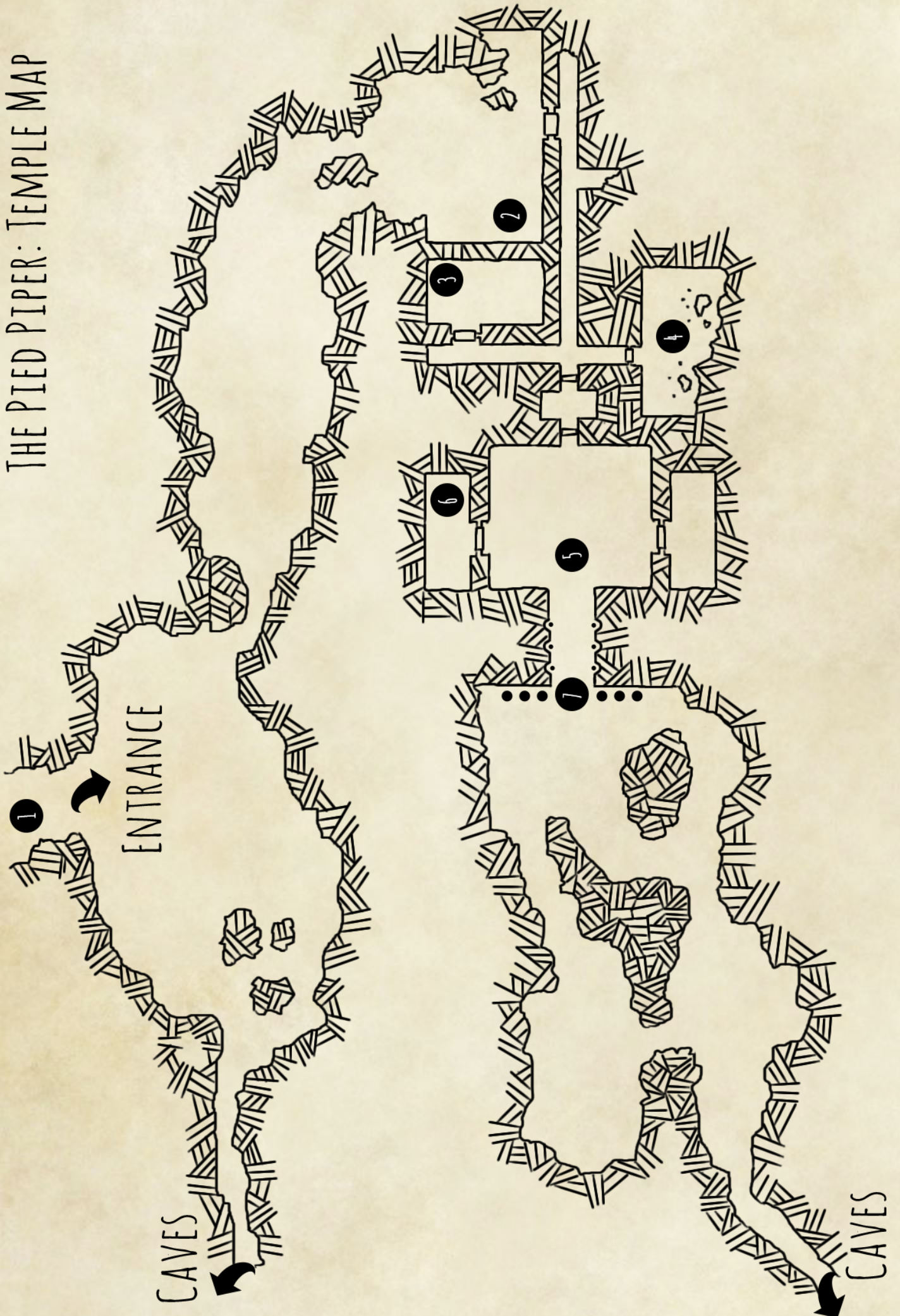
TO THE FIELDS



MAP 3: ABANDONED TEMPLE



THE PIED PIPER: TEMPLE MAP



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RAVENHOUSE



RUSTY COPPERCOIN

RAVENHOUSE

↑
FIELDS WITH UNUSUAL CRACKS

BLACKSMITH

GRANARY

GENERAL GOODS STORE

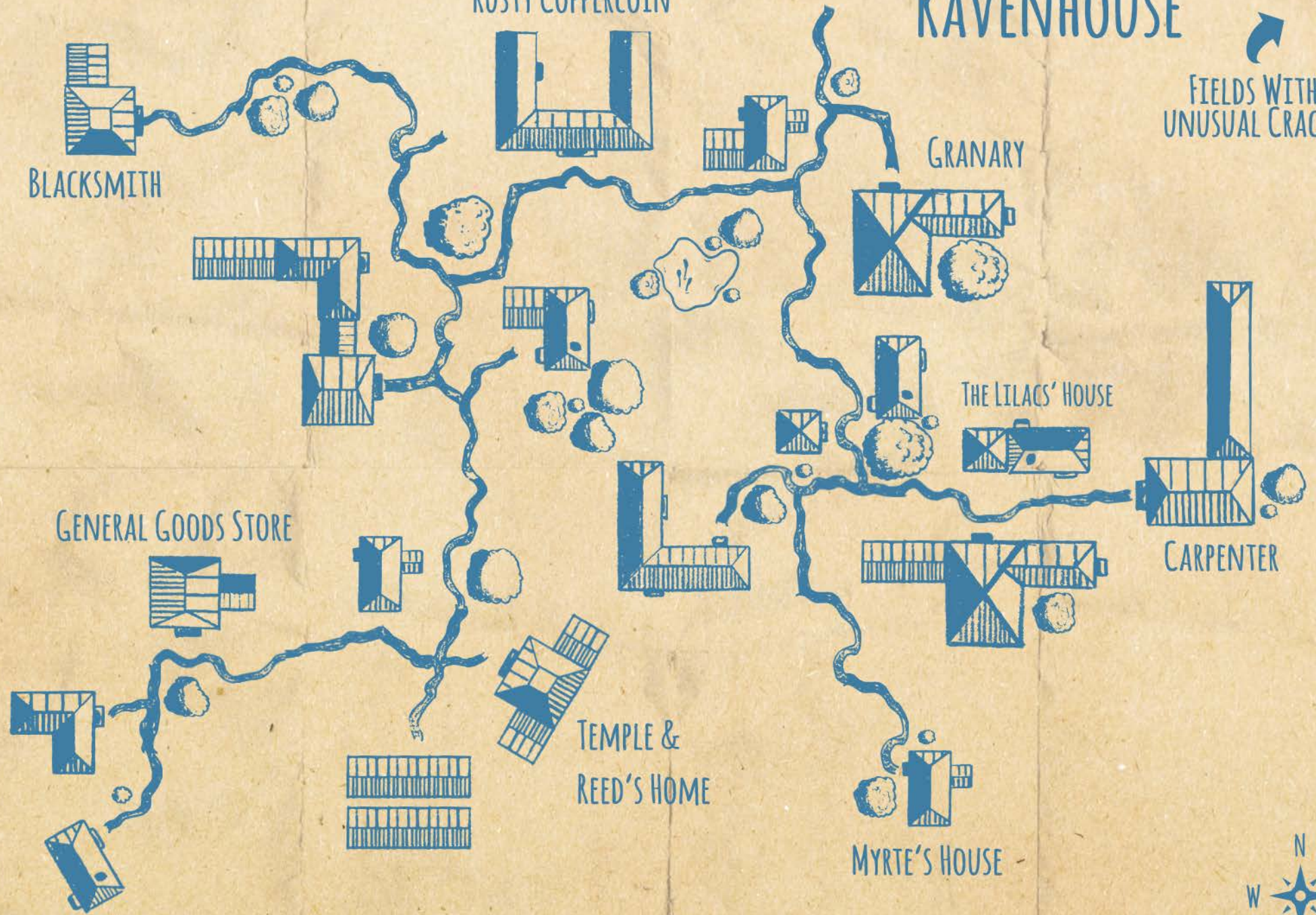
THE LILACS' HOUSE

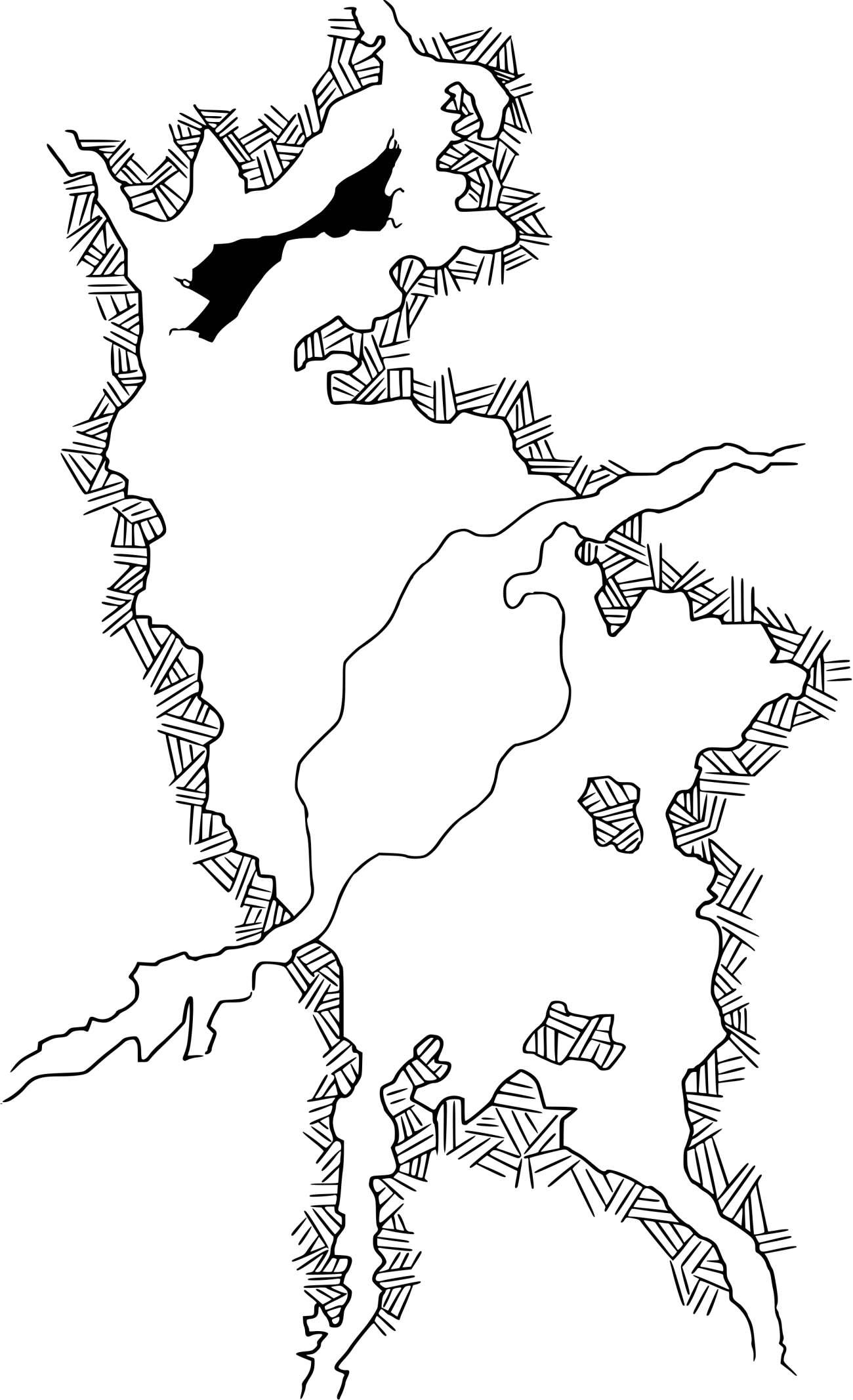
CARPENTER

TEMPLE &
REED'S HOME

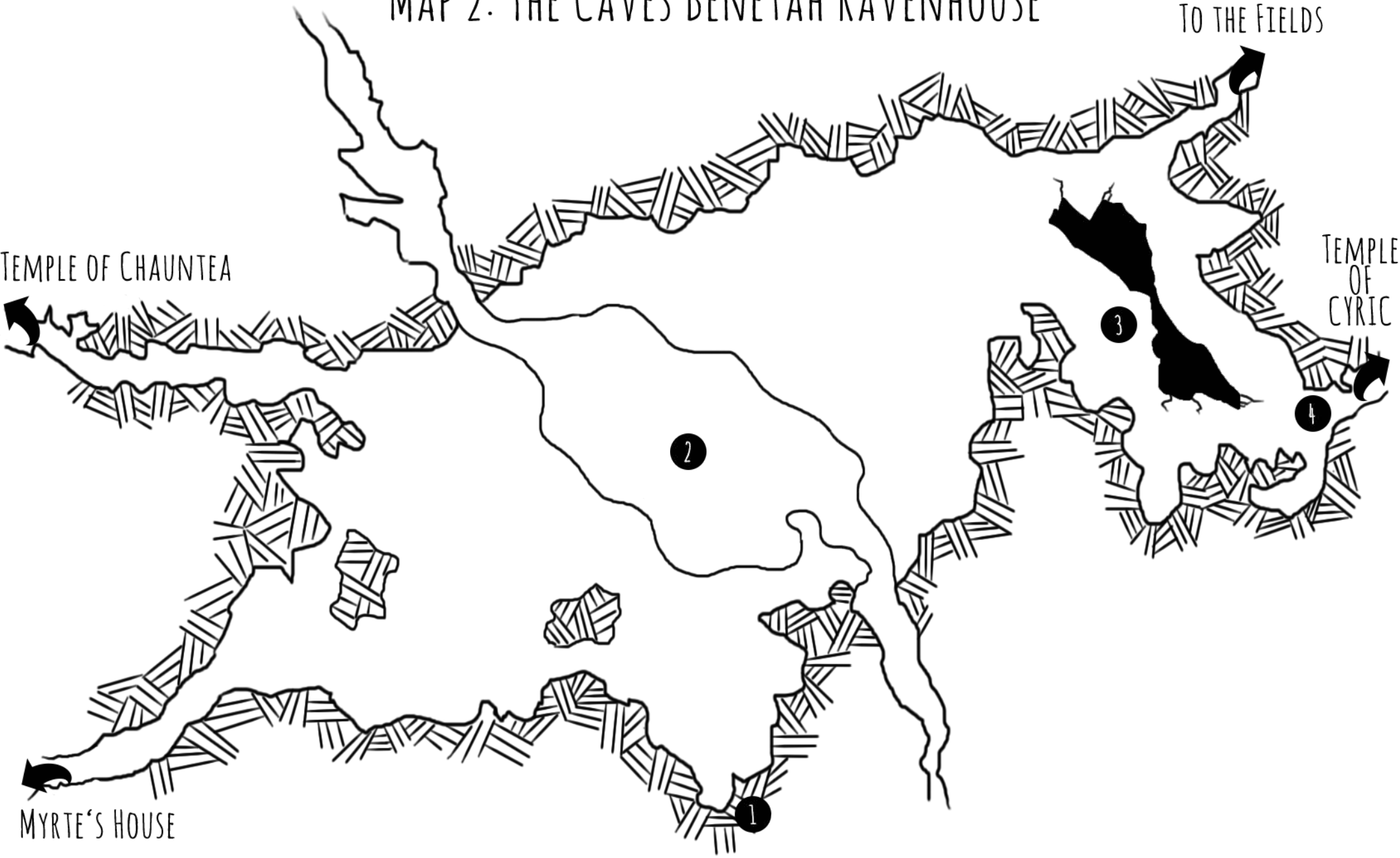
MYRTE'S HOUSE

THE MERTENS' HOUSE





MAP 2: THE CAVES BENETAH RAVENHOUSE

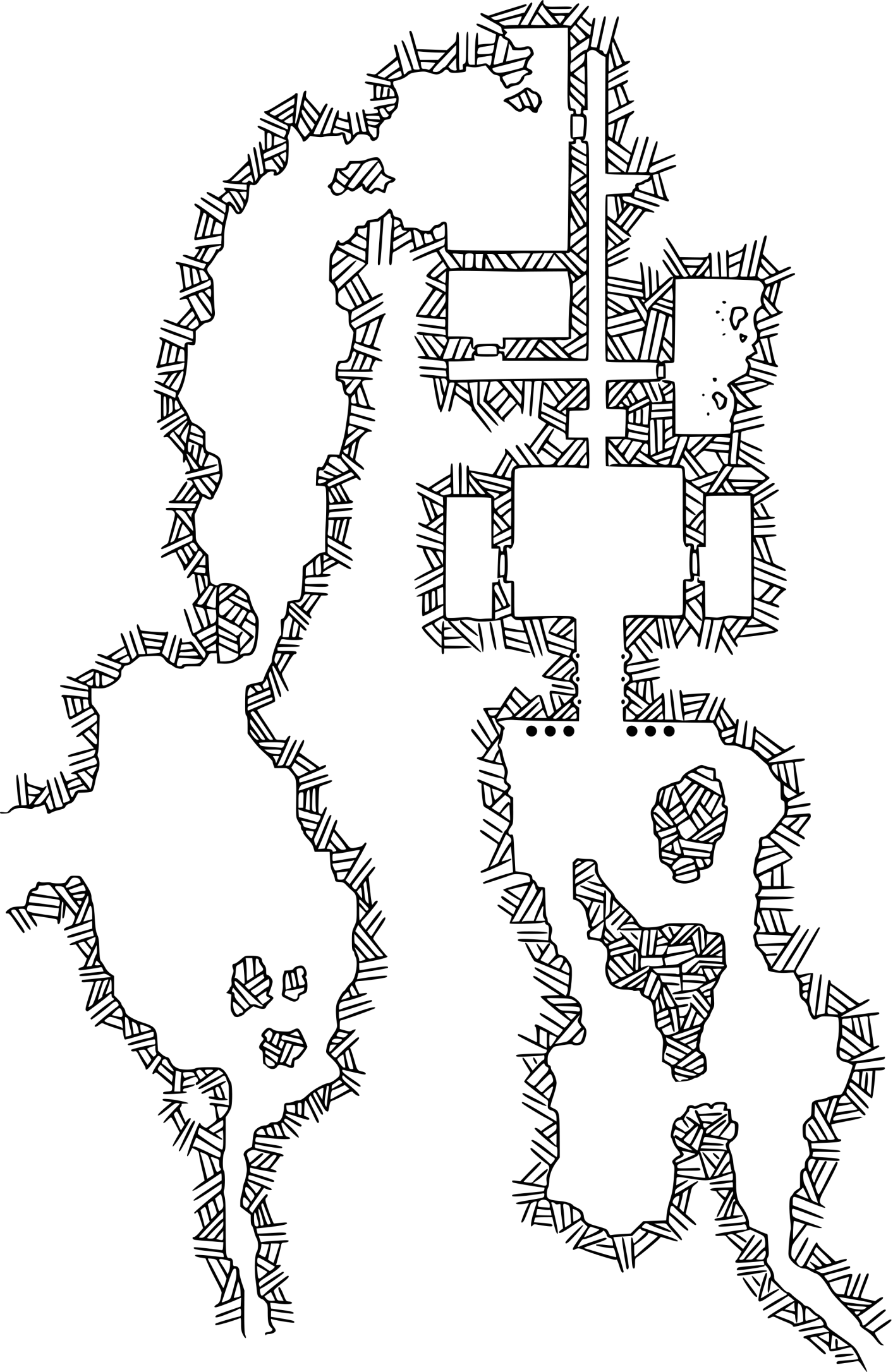


TO THE FIELDS

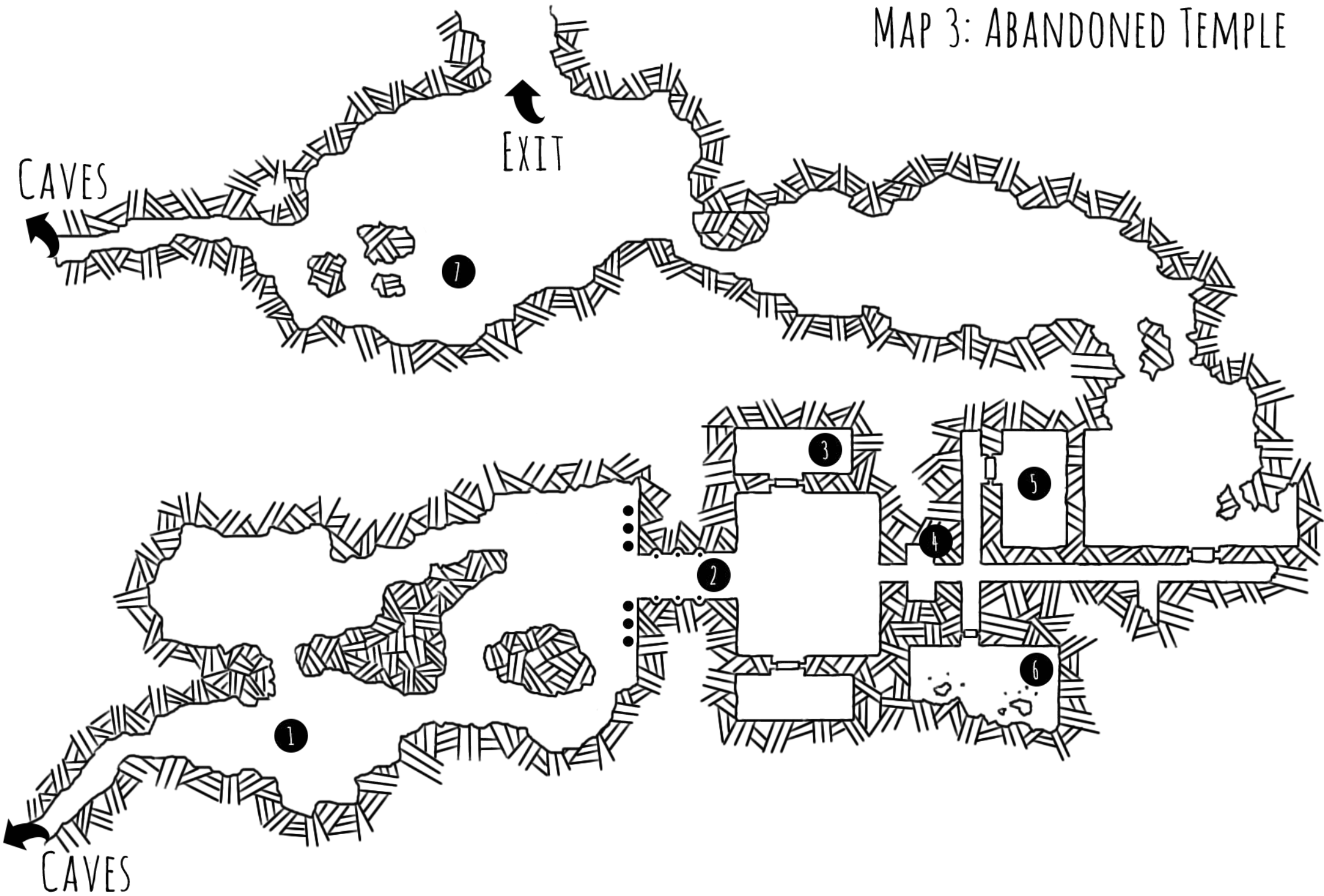
TEMPLE OF CHAUNTEA

TEMPLE OF CYRIC

MYRTE'S HOUSE



MAP 3: ABANDONED TEMPLE



THE PIED PIPER: TEMPLE MAP

