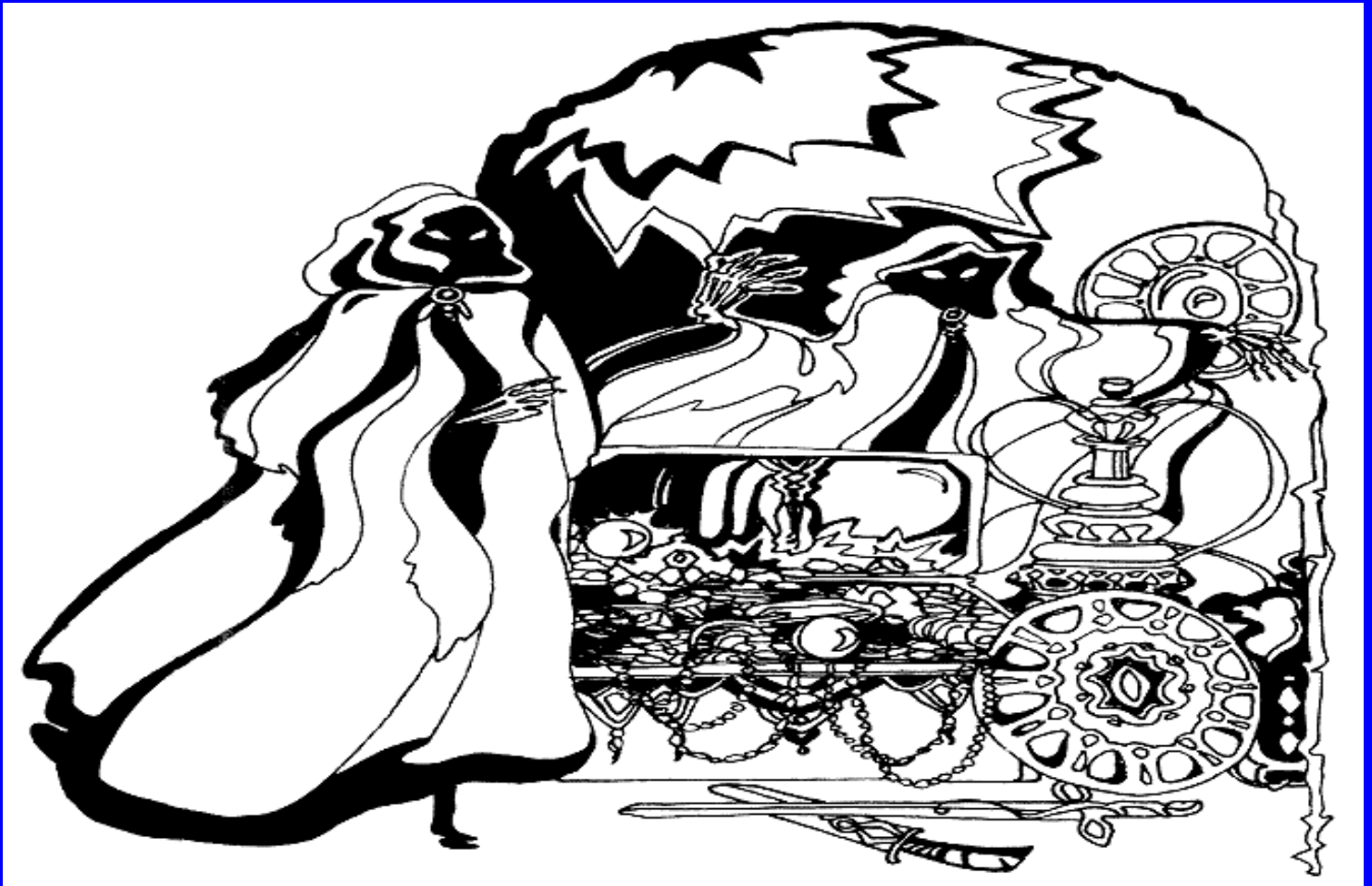


Dungeon Module WGH4 Tombs of the Howling Hills

By William Silvey
AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 4-7



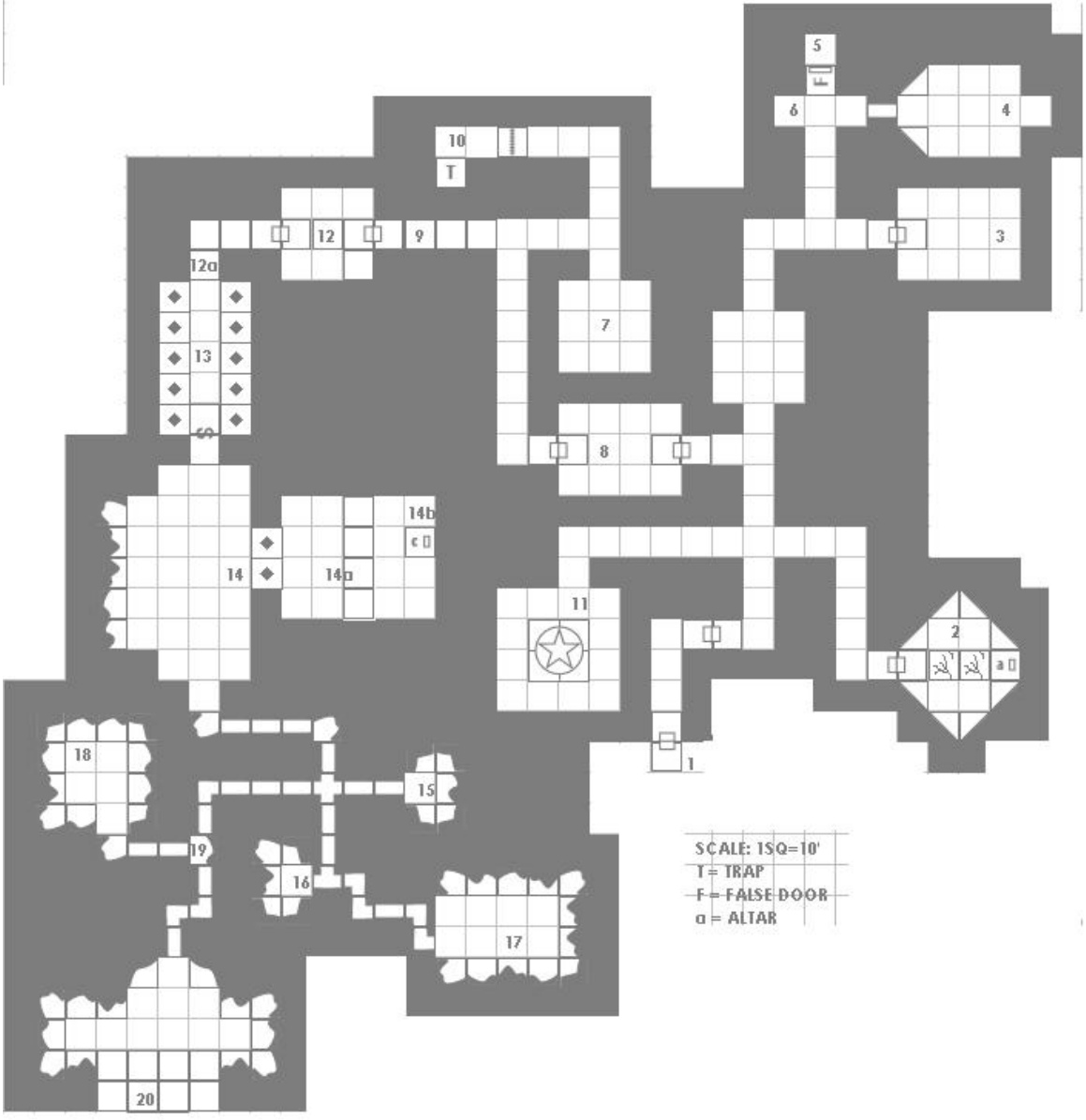
Deeper into the Howling Hills! Your party of adventurers has found that there is more to the invasion of the Wolf Nomads' sacred burial grounds than simple bands of humanoids – the burial chambers themselves are overrun with unspeakable undead beings! But can you overcome the creatures in the Tombs of the Howling Hills, or will you join them in undeath?

This module was originally used as a convention adventure for the HMGS-South RECON '05 convention, and is a continuation of a series of three related convention modules from THE DELVER'S DUNGEON.

This module contains a fully detailed scenario, maps, notes for the Dungeon Master, and full background for integrating it with the other modules. It may be used with WGH3 INTO THE HOWLING HILLS and WGH5 LORDS OF THE HOWLING HILLS or it may be played as a stand-alone adventure scenario. Be sure to look for other exciting ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™ adventure modules from The Delver's Dungeon.

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SCALE: 1SQ=10'
T = TRAP
F = FALSE DOOR
a = ALTAR

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons™

Dungeon Module #WGH4

Tombs of the Howling Hills

Background: For years, luz the Old has warred with the Wolf Nomads to the west of his dark kingdom. Dominion over the northern plains of the Flaness is luz's ultimate goal, and the proud Wolf Nomads stand in his way. A recent campaign by luz against his western neighbors initially went well for the humanoid armies raised by the Old one, but a series of setbacks turned the tide in favor of the Nomad Lord and his people.

Greatly angered by this setback, luz has put in motion new invasion plans, with his eye on finally wiping out the Wolf Nomads in their entirety. To this end, he is slowly building another army of humanoid s in the western Howling Hills – an army to be led by things more terrifying than mere humanoid creatures. To twist the knife, the humanoid troops have built stockades along the roads to Wolf Nomad sacred burial grounds in the windswept peaks of the Howling Hills, in defiance of that nations' claim to right of passage and authority over the region.

The few sorties that have been sent to the Howling Hills to displace luz's forces have all come to naught. Returning survivors have told tales of nigh-impenetrable fortresses, and dark forces being marshaled in the distant peaks of the Hills.

A party of bold adventurers has braved the durance of humanoid forces that block the path leading into the hills and usurped the monsters there and has discovered evidence of further perfidy at the hands of luz's minions! Gathering their strength, they have continued up and inward, seeking to further investigate the disturbances within the hills and put an end to whatever evil emanates from the once-sacred places now under control of dark powers...

Module Background: This module was used at the HGMS-South/LRPG RECON 2005 convention. Although it is a "convention" module, it is one in a campaign series and can be played as such or played as a stand alone adventure or written into a different campaign entirely.

TOMBS OF THE HOWLING HILLS has been designed for a moderately strong party of 5th-8th level of six to eight characters; if a smaller party is present, higher level characters should be played. The party should ideally include at least two fighters, one cleric a thief and a magic-user. If the module is being used stand-alone and the characters generated for the sole purpose of playing this adventure, the Dungeon Master should permit the party a selection of magic items, such as magic weapons and potions. It is recommended that the Dungeon Master read the module from beginning to end at least once to familiarize himself or herself with the contents and events herein. This module can be used as part of the series in conjunction with WGH5 and WGH3, or may be used by itself, or as part of an overall campaign.

START

Play begins with the characters having overcome the forces within the stockade further down the mountain road in WGH3 INTO THE HOWLING HILLS. Part of the items recovered from the monsters there included a map and instructions for the Bugbear lord to receive his pay for levies from a mysterious "high priest" within the "sacred place". This latter location was marked on a crude map that corresponded with maps shown the party by

the sages of the Wolf Nomad Lords. The trail winds up miles from the fortress, and the air grows dry and cold. Eventually the broad road twists and dips into a ravine, and narrows to a notch barely wide enough for a horse and rider to pass. A broken tower juts upward from the ravine wall like an accusing finger, its spire partially broken and collapsed. A few hundred yards down the gully trail, a great arched doorway can be seen, tarnished bronze doors concealing unknown dangers within...

KEY TO THE TOMBS

The tombs themselves are cool and dry; murals and holy writings created in ages past by Wolf Nomad artisans have been obscured and obliterated by someone or something. All is silent within, as if the ghosts of ages past dare not break the stillness...

1. The Haunted Chamber.

The floor here has many cracks within it. The crumbled flagstones actually seem to sag in the middle. At the far apex of the chamber, a metal container sits surrounded by small clay jars. A skeleton dressed in the remains of finery is slumped at in the niche with the vessels...

The skeletal remains are those of a priestess of the Wolf Nomads who came here to attempt to sanctify the place once again for her people. Her retainers were cruelly slain and she was left to die here, mortally wounded. Her holy symbol was taken from her as she lay dying and the force of her anger and willpower has caused her life-force to remain here as a Haunt. She was neutral good and will attempt to possess any character who comes within 60' of the niche. Her desire is to recover her holy symbol and slay those who have invaded the tomb. Monsters do not come here – as she possess and slays those creatures who enter. Those possessed will gain the knowledge that the decanter in the niche contains ten jars worth of holy water which may be poured into the small clay jars. The large decanter is platinum and worth 400g.p.; due to its' bulk, the item effectively "weighs" twice that amount (800 coins). Once "her" holy symbol is brought back to this place and put on the body, the possessed character will recover normally from the possession.

The floor to the room is dangerous – anyone carrying weight exceeding 3000 coins will cause the floor here to collapse (another reason the room is avoided by monsters). Those who fall in the ravine which opens under a 20'x30' section of floor in the middle of the room will suffer 8d6 damage from the fall and must be retrieved via rope or other method as the soft sides of the ravine will continue to crumble inward and provide a poor foothold. A dwarven character will have a normal chance to notice the condition of the floor. Treat it as *trapped* for purposes of determining % chance.

2. Meeting Room

Stout wooden doors are on either end of this 30'x30' chamber; tables, chairs, a few barrels and crates and other unremarkable items are within the room.

This meeting room is used by Zarkan, the evil high priest of luz in charge of the tombs and his black orc minions. If the party simply opens the door and walks in, they will be greeted by 4 black orcs (AC 2, HD4, HP 21 (x2), 23, 17, #AT 2, D1-8/1-8, SA: None, SD: Save at +4 versus spells/wands). The orcs will immediately attack those who enter, as they have no word or schedule of humans or demi-humans due to enter the tombs (other than Zarkan, who is elsewhere). If the party listens at the door they will have a standard chance to overhear the guttural language of orcish within the room, carrying on a loud discussion about the disposition of escaped slave creatures (which are

never mentioned by type or name, beyond "property" or "slaves"). The party has a standard chance to *surprise* if they are thus careful; otherwise normal chances apply. If any of the orcs shouts an alarm, the four black orcs at area #7 below will arrive in two rounds to attack the party from the rear!

3. Chamber of Wraiths

Two stone sarcophagi are here in the middle of this chamber. The floor to this room is dusty, and there are no footprints or other tracks in the dust. An ornate wooden chest sits between the two sarcophagi.

One round after any intruders open the door and come in to this place, two wraiths (5+3 HD, HP 24, 33, AC 4, #AT 1, D1-6, SA: Level Drain, SD: Silver or +1/better weapon to-hit) will rise up from the coffins and attack the party. They are evil spirits (obviously) who were drawn to the tombs when they were defiled by the minions of luz. They will immediately attack the party, seeking to drain them and make them their own. Within the chest are 2500e.p., 2000g.p., a 50g.p. zircon, a 500g.p. malachite, a **potion of levitation** a **cloak of displacement** and a **shield +3**.

4. Chamber of Ghouls

This dirty chamber has an almost overpowering stench to it. Sepulchers line the walls roughly three feet off of the floor. Refuse is strewn about the floor, and the door is nearly wrenched off of the hinges. There are numerous brownish stains on the floor and walls.

Like the wraiths, the ten ghouls (AC 6, HD 2, HP 16 (x3), 14, 12 (x4), 10, 9, #AT 3, D1-3(x2)/1-6, SA: Paralysis, SD: immune to sleep, charm, fear spells) were drawn here by the evil nature of this place and enjoy a steady diet of wayward orc and adventurer, and are occasionally given slaves by the master of this place to placate them. As soon as the party enters, they will burst from the chambers along the walls and leap to the attack. One unoccupied chamber contains a jar with 3000c.p., a scroll of **protection from petrification**, **protection from lycanthropes**, and a magic-user scroll of **burning hands** and **identify**.

5. Oublette of the Wight

There is a hastily bricked-up chamber here. A feeble scratching can be heard from the other side.

A rude shock awaits anyone who opens this chamber – a wight (4+3 HD, HP 36, #AT 1, D1-4 or by weapon type, SA: level drain, SD: Silver or Magic weapon required to hit, immune to sleep, charm, fear, poison) has been imprisoned here by the ghouls and spectres. This creature will show no gratitude for being freed! There is no treasure with it.

6. Collapsed Corridor

Further progress is blocked here as a tumble of stones, timbers and earth chokes the passageway. A skeleton lies among the rubble with a shining sword still clutched in its' bony fingers.

This is a trap created by the orcs – the "shining sword" is a simple steel weapon. If anyone tries to enter the area of rubble to retrieve it, the ceiling here will collapse, instantly killing whomever is within the 10'x10' area which the sword lies in. The trap can be detected by both thief and dwarf...

7. Barracks

Straw pallets, a bunk-type bed and a few chests are on the floor here. A wooden barrel with a door nailed to its' top is being used as a high table – by two of the room's occupants!

Four black orcs (AC2, HD 4, HP 22, 21, 14, 14, #AT 2, D1-8/1-8, SA: None, SD: +4 saving throw versus wands and spells) are here waiting to go on patrol in the hills. They have no treasure and will attack immediately if the room is entered by intruders. They will also go to area #2 if an alarm is raised there.

8. Boss' Chamber

A great huge black orc and two companions – almost as large, sit around a table in the center of this room. As soon as the door is opened, they seize their weapons and move to attack!

This great black orc and his corporals (AC 2, HD 5+5, 4+4 HP 40, 33, 20, #AT 2, D3-11/3-11 or 1-8/1-8 for corporals, SA: None, SD: +4 saving throw versus magic or wands) are here going over daily orders for the rest of the troops. Like the orcs within the other areas of the tombs they are alert for any intruders, and no-one other than the orcs are permitted in this chamber at any rate, hence their immediate move to attack. The great orc sergeant strikes for +3 to hit and damage due to his size and strength. They guard the bulk of the treasure for the orc detachment within the dungeon: 7577cp, 1472gp, 27 gems worth a total of 9358 gp, 16 pieces of jewelry worth 40500 gp - most of this has been looted from graves in the tomb area. Among the jewelry is the amulet sought by the Haunt of area #1. Anyone possessed by the haunt will instinctively sense the holy symbol's presence and fight in a berserk fashion to regain it – treat this as +2 to-hit and damage, but never receiving a dexterity bonus to armor class.

9. Pitch Black

The light seems to fall away from this area of hallway. Your vision cannot penetrate the gloom.

This is the first of two trapped areas. Along the walls in two alcoves opposite one another, great growths of yellow mold (AC 9, HD -, HP -, #AT 1, D1-8, SA: spores – save v. poison or die choking, SD: 50% chance will release spore clouds if touched) line the walls, so following the walls with hands will have a potentially deadly consequence for those groping in the dark! There is nothing otherwise here.

10. Corner Chamber

Beyond the dark alcoves, just around the corner a glow as from a magic item or items can be seen. A few gold coins trail off around the corner.

The gold coins (10g.p.) are genuine; the glow comes from **Nystul's Magic Aura** cast upon a heap of junk around the corner. The corner area itself is trapped – as soon as an incautious adventurer steps around the corner, scything blades will swing out and strike for 1-10 damage. The DM should make a d20 roll. On a roll of 20, a limb is severed from whomever is in the front-left most position (closest to the powerful spring mechanism that swings the blade). The junk around the corner is just that – old scraps of armor, broken weapons and the like.

11. Sanctum of Zarkan

The center of this room is a sunken circle with a pentagram within it. The candles are lit, and an evil keening fills the chamber. Standing opposite the door, a man in rust-and-blood colored robes shouts angrily at you as you enter the chamber: "Fools! You'll ruin everything! I'll destroy you with my demon!"

This is the high priest Zarkan, lieutenant of the Lord of the Howling Hills, master of the Tombs. He is in the process of summoning a demon via a *gate* scroll that he has acquired. The spell is in the final stages, and within a round a vrock (AC 0, HD 8, HP 40, #AT 5, D1-4(x2), 1-8(x2), 1-6, SA: Can divide attacks among 3 targets, cause **darkness** (as the spell) in a 5' radius, **gate** in another type I demon (10%) chance of success, **teleport without error**, **telekinetic** 2000g.p.). Zarkan will order the beast to attack the party; it will do so without hesitation. If it loses more than 75% of its' hit points without slaying the party or driving them away it will seize Zarkan and hurl him into the fray, then attempt to **gate** another Type I demon in to finish the job.

Zarkan's character abilities, spells and possessions are as follows:

Level:9 (Cleric)
HP:36
AL:NE
AC:2(3), MV 9"
STR 13, INT 15, WIS 14, DEX 8, CON 13, CHA 11

Clerical Spells: 6, 4, 3, 2, 1

Spells Memorized: **Command (x2)**, **Cure Light Wounds (x2)**, **Protection from Evil**, **Protection from Good**, **Augury**, **Chant**, **Hold Person (x2)**, **Cause Blindness**, **Cause Disease**, **Dispel Magic**, **Cause Serious Wounds**, **Cure Serious Wounds**, **Flame Strike**

After the demon is summoned, Zarkan will use **Command** to attempt to force the most powerful looking character in the party to "Surrender!" – whereupon the demon will be set upon them. If injured he will employ **cure** spells, strike enemy spellcasters with **flame strike** and so on. Finally, Zarkan has a scroll with **word of recall** on it which he will use to flee to the Lord of the Howling Hill's durance if greatly pressed. If forced into hand-to-hand combat, Zarkan will wield a **mace +2**; his shield is +2 as well.

Within Zarkan's chamber is a locked bronze box containing 100p.p., a potion of **polymorph self**, and a **staff of withering** with two charges remaining. The box is locked and *trapped*, and anyone who tries to open the chest without first disarming the trap will be struck by a scything blade for 1d6 points of damage, and they must then *save v. poison* or die in agony immediately! Zarkan has the key on a thong around his neck.

12. Locked Door

The door here is locked tight. No light emanates from the room beyond and casual listening detects no sound from the other side.

There is a 10' x 10' pit trap on the other side of this door; if it is bashed down carelessly, the lead character(s) will fall in for 3d6 points of damage. There are a dozen spikes at the bottom of the pit which inflict 1d4 points of damage each (roll d12 to determine how many spikes impale the character).

12a. Swinging Trap

This corner is trapped: a bed of 10 spikes will swing out and strike the lead characters for 1 point per spike (roll d10 to determine). Like the pit trap above, it can be detected and avoided.

13. Six Thrones

A pillar lined hall leads south; mummified figures sit on stone chairs between each pillar. There are three on each side of the room. As soon as you open the door, the figures on the thrones rise and begin to stride towards you. Draped in shrouds, they are covered in the funerary trappings of Wolf Nomad nobles.

When the party enters this room – or opens the door to the chamber -- the figures will rise as described. Once within melee distance of the party they will reveal their true nature – these are horrible monster zombies (AC 6, HD 6, HP 36, 34, 32 (x2), 20, 19, #AT 1, D4-16, SA: None, SD: Turn as wraiths due to amulet v. turning worn by each) which will strike at the party with their claws and attempt to slay them. There is no treasure here. However, a secret door on the southern wall leads to a second chamber...

14. Ghastly Chamber

This large hall is mostly empty and the eastern wall is rough and unfinished. A few ancient tools lie on the floor near it. It appears to have been originally designated as some sort of temple. A horrible leering demon face archway leads east. A heap of rags lies near the archway.

The archway is new construction (as is the chamber beyond) and a dwarven character can easily detect this) and the "bundle of rags" is in fact a near-skeletal coffer corpse (AC 6, HD 2, HP 14, #AT 2, D1-6/1-6, SA: Strangles target to death in 6 rounds if both attacks successful, SD: Turn as wight due to amulet worn, must be reduced to -10 HP to be destroyed completely). It has no treasure.

14a. Temple of Evil

Icons of depravity and sin line this chamber. A blood-stained altar sits at the far end, and the coppery stink of the stuff fills your

nostrils when you enter. Twisted demon faces are carved in the stone of the walls and pillars of this place. You feel an oppressive sense of evil here.

Four victims of the wraiths exist here now as "stewards" of the place under command of Zarkan as juju zombies (AC 6, HD 3+12, HP 33, 32, 27, 25, #AT 1, D3-12, SA: Attacks as 6 HD monster, turn as spectre, immune to cold-based spells and **magic missile**, fire does ½ damage, only struck by magic weapons, can climb as a thief (92% chance). There is no treasure here save a bloody silver dagger on the altar. While it is worth 10g.p., it will actually injure good persons who handle it – those of good align who hold the dagger will feel a surge of negative energy and suffer 1-8 points of damage! It can of course be destroyed.

14b. Pile of Sticks and Rags

Another pile of rags lies on the floor here, heaped next to a wooden chest. The chest appears to be unlocked.

This is an apparition (AC0, HD 8, HP 41, #AT 1, D: Special, SA: Victim must *save v. intelligence* on 3d6 or stricken with horror – roll 3d6 v. constitution – less than = flee in fear for 1-4 rounds, equal to or greater than, victim dies, SD: Only hit by magic or silver weapons) that guards the "donations" to the evil temple; the chest contains 2104g.p. The apparition will "monitor" the party with its' ESP ability until they approach the chest, and then spring up and "attack".

15. Wet Chamber

This room is unusually damp; a slick film of water coats the floor, and an occasional drip falls from the ceiling onto the gray stone of the cavern floor.

The damp gray "stone" is, in places, four gray oozes (AC8, HD3+3, HP 24, 21, 20, 15, #AT 1, D2-16, SA: Corrosion, SD: Immune to most spells, lightning/electrical spells do full damage), immune to heat and cold. A large specimen came here and subdivided recently and has been feeding on unwary denizens who wander in to this cavern. There is nothing else here.

16. Ghoul Hideout

Another uncharacteristically damp chamber, this one is covered in stalactites and stalagmites which create a virtual maze through the room. The far exit can barely be seen.

Four ghouls (AC6, HD2, HP 9, 10, 13, 16, #AT 3, D1/3(x2),1-6, SA: Paralysis, SD: immune to charm, fear) have come to this place in search of better prey and have taken to ambushing lone orcs that blunder into the caves. The orcs find it amusing to force slaves and weaklings into the caves at any rate so the ghouls simply add more "sport". There is some treasure here: in a leather bag beneath a scattering of rags and sticks that the ghouls use as a bed. It contains five gems worth 9, 10 (x2), 100 and 750g.p. each. There is nothing else here.

17. Renegade Slave Cavern

The narrow twisting cavern passage expands out in to a large cave; several rat-like humanoids are in the chamber, and in the far corner five kobolds watch the rat-beings warily.

Eight wererats (AC 6, HD 3+1, HP 20 (x2), 14, 22, 23, (x2), 13(x2), #AT 1, SA: Surprise on a 1-4, SD: Silver or magic weapon required to hit) and five kobolds have fled their black orc masters and taken up in this cave. The wererats simply wish to escape and return to lives of banditry, but want the treasure that the Kobolds carry. The kobolds (AC 7 (x2), AC 8(x2), AC5, HD ½ or 1, HP 4(x2), 3(x2), 8, #AT 1, D1-6 (x4), 1-8 (leader), also fled here with the treasure they were carrying to this place as part of the pay for the black orcs stationed here. The kobolds are led by a strong "corporal" type with 1 HD who fights as a 1st level fighter. They are all equipped with crude silver weapons fashioned over the course of the time they have spent here from the coins they carried, thus the wererats are not quite ready to attack yet. The treasure the kobolds carry is 900s.p. and 9 gems of base 50g.p. value each; they have hidden this in their area in their corner of the cave. Two are always on watch and the others sleep lightly. All are awake when the party enters. If the party elects to

attack the wererats, the kobolds will strike the wererats from the rear and avoid attacking the party so long as they are not harmed themselves. The wererats can summon the huge rats from area #20; the beasts will arrive in 3 rounds. If the party leaves the kobolds alone, they will collect their treasure and continue seeking a way out. They will defend themselves otherwise.

18. Rats' Warren

Piles of rotting rags, broken coffins, potsherds, offal and other disgusting items cover the floor of this cave. The smell is nearly overpowering.

The giant rats (AC7, HD ½, HP 4 (x15), 3(x10), 2(x5), #AT 1, D1-4, SA: Disease, SD: None) that live in this trash will attack anyone who enters the cave. Sunken in the muck and mire here is a rotten box containing 2000s.p., a fire-opal worth 100g.p., and a platinum tiara worth 1000g.p. The slime must be dug through with typical chance for contracting a disease before the box can be located.

19. Flooded Junction

Water has filled most of this "T" shaped passageway, making forward progress difficult. It is possible to negotiate the path on the eastern wall of the passage – indeed it appears that someone has been doing just that as iron rungs along the wall seem to form hand-holds. Passage northward is impossible without wading through the dark water, as is passage to the west.

An ochre jelly (AC 8, HD 6, HP 27, #AT 1, D3-12, SA: None, SD: Lightning divides into two half-strength creatures) is at the bottom of the water and will ooze to attack anyone who enters. It will automatically surprise unless the water is probed with a pole or weapon first. Anyone negotiating the ledge on the eastern wall has a 50% chance of slipping in (thieves are immune to this as they have superb climbing skills) and being attacked by the jelly.

20. Stone Place

The twisting cavern passage opens onto a broad ledge. Before you, a stone causeway spans a deep chasm. The wind whips up from below creating an eerie howling noise, the namesake of these hills. A tumble of broken timbers and ropes lies to the left. Across the chasm another landing and an opening can be seen...

The "tumble of broken timbers" is in fact the last (or first) guardian of the Tombs of the Howling Hills: a great golem of bone created by Zarkan to watch over the passage and attack any intruders or escaping slaves is here. Only the black orcs and Zarkan know the magic word which will allow them to pass unmolested. As soon as the party enters the landing, the great construct will pull itself to its' maximum height and attack.

Its statistics are as follows: AC 3, HD 10, HP 58, #AT 2, D1-12/1-12, SD: Missile weapons do a single point of damage, lightning based attacks restore 1 point of damage per die of attack, charm, fear and sleep spells have no effect on the creature. SA: None. Due to its' great size and construction it always strikes last in a round.

THIS CONCLUDES WGH 4 TOMBS OF THE HOWLING HILLS

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Thanks to: Colleen Silvey, Scott Rutter, Beka Lukomski, Eric Lester, John Laughlin, Mark Laughlin



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