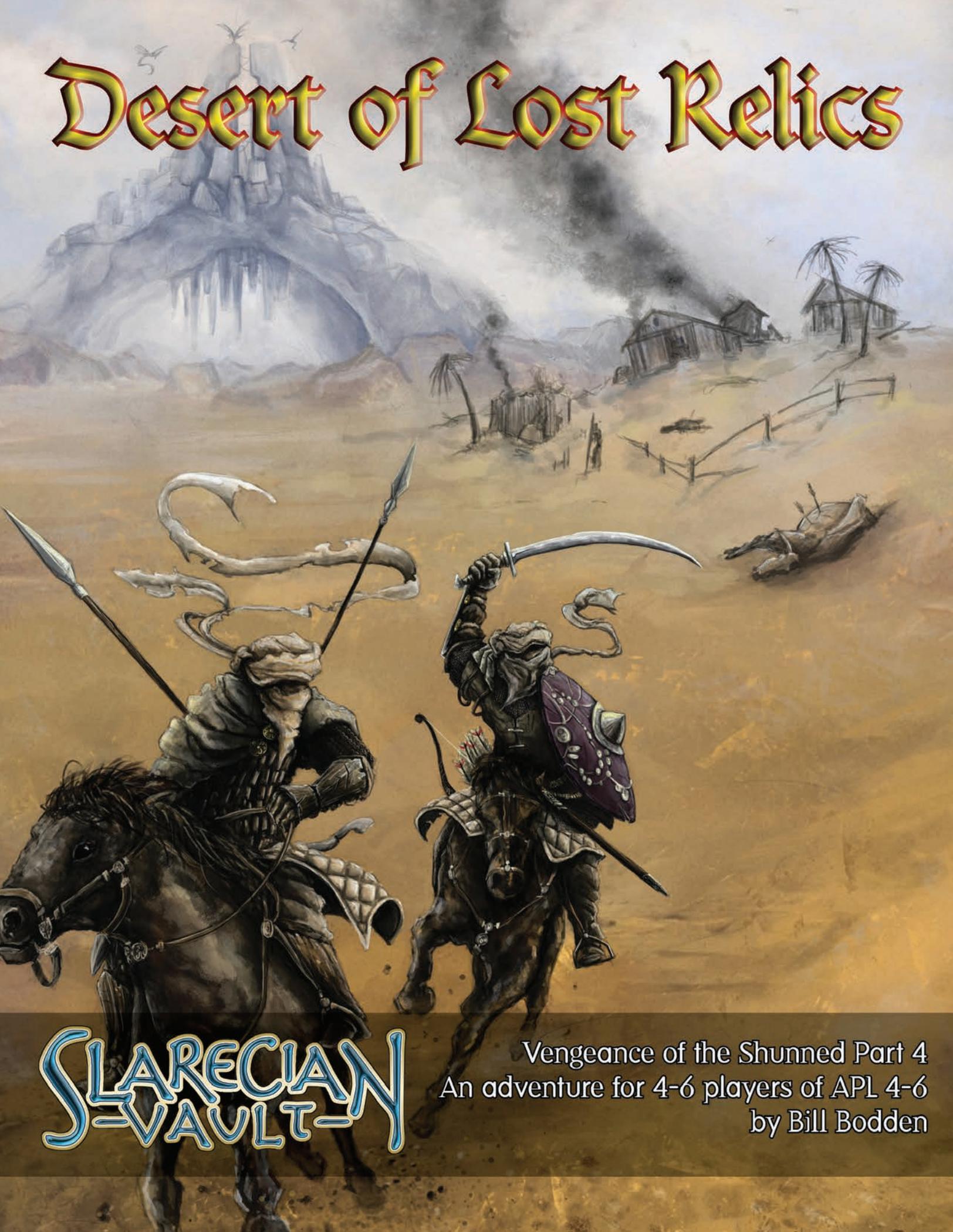


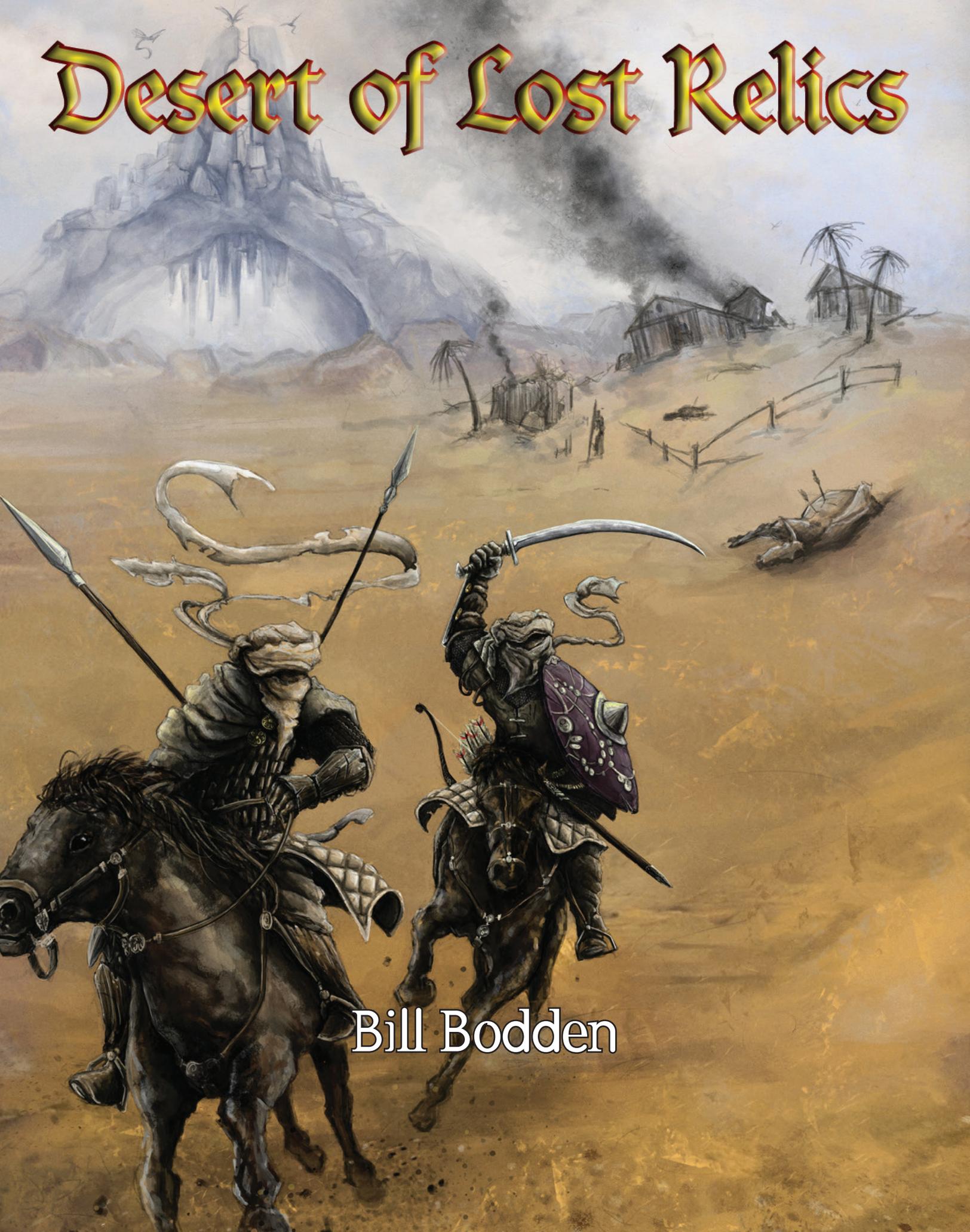
# Desert of Lost Relics



SLARECIAN  
-VAULT-

Vengeance of the Shunned Part 4  
An adventure for 4-6 players of APL 4-6  
by Bill Bodden

# Desert of Lost Relics



Bill Bodden

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**SRD:** the SRD referenced throughout this text can be found for free at [https://media.wizards.com/2016/downloads/DND/SRD-OGP\\_V5.1.pdf](https://media.wizards.com/2016/downloads/DND/SRD-OGP_V5.1.pdf)



## Vengeance of the Shunned Part 4 An adventure for 4-6 players of APL 4-6 by Bill Bodden

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# INTRODUCTION

**D**esert of Lost Relics is an adventure designed for four to six characters of 4th to 6th level, though it can easily be adjusted for larger or smaller groups or groups with an average party level (APL) higher than 6th. It could also, with some thought, be adjusted for a party with a lower APL, though the challenging encounters in this adventure may prove deadly to a 2nd or 3rd level party even with adjustment.

The adventure begins in the city of Shelzar and takes the party on a quest into the Ukrudan Desert.

## SYNOPSIS

The characters have learned of the plan of the Necromancer Maghiel to collect relics and artifacts belonging to the titans and, in performing a necromantic ritual, be elevated to the power of a titan. The characters have decided that, rather than following after the Necromancer, they should try to

jump ahead of her, getting to several of the necessary items first to secure them and thwart the evil scheme. These relics and artifacts are, in and of themselves, extremely dangerous, and valuable to titan cultists as a rallying point to recruit more followers and perhaps even start the Titanswar all over again. Many in Ghelspad would see this prevented and would pay handsomely to have these relics found and secured out of the titan cultists' reach.

The ultimate goal is to get the artifacts to Lokil for safekeeping, and to perhaps learn more about what they are and how to destroy or neutralize them. Lokil is one of the few places the titans couldn't reach; for some reason, though the city surrounding the mountain was razed to the ground, the library and most of the city's inhabitants survived, hidden in the vaults and mines underneath Lokil. A vast treasure-trove of knowledge, many rare and ancient tomes and scrolls may be found in the great library of Lokil.

One of the relics to be found is a large hunk of flesh from one of the titans. This flesh is from the titan Mesos, the Sire of Sorcery. Infused with magic and the fallen titan's essence, this flesh is not only still alive, but seeking to merge with other remnants of the titan. With this and a few other items, Mesos' spirit could be called back and reunited with the remains of his body and favored items. It would take many years for Mesos to return to the power he once wielded, but that's a minor obstacle compared with reforming his body from a few spare parts. Since the power and the life-force of each titan springs not from its worshippers but from Scarn itself, the threat of the titans reforming is an ever-present danger to be guarded against.

Maghiel seeks to subvert this process, draining off the power of Mesos — or any titan's essence — to create a ritual that will transfer a titan's power to herself instead. Keeping these items out of the hands of the Shunned is of paramount importance. The titans' servants will be looking for their former masters' remains as well, and their zeal for this mission is a powerful compulsion that they dare not refuse.

## Rumors

Before starting the adventure, roll 2d6 for each player and give them the rumor(s) they've heard. Printing them out and handing each player a strip of paper works best, though simply telling them works too. It's best to give the information in such a way that only the intended player can hear it: if they choose to share their rumors with each other, so much the better! That makes for more fun roleplaying opportunities!

The adventure begins with the characters, on their desert-capable mounts, preparing to journey into the Ukrudan Desert to seek a lost stronghold said to house one or more items of importance to the defeated titans.

## INVOLVING THE PCS

Maghiel the Shunned has succeeded in collecting several of the relics and artifacts she needs to prepare the ritual of ascension to titanhood but she still requires others. The adventurers hear rumors that artifacts of interest to the Drendali rebel and relating to one of the titans can be found in a lost outpost deep in the Ukrudan Desert. With the help of an overworked and inattentive scribe in the city of Shelzar, the party acquires a map showing the outpost and area around it—all they need do is locate several prominent topographical features of the landscape and the map should lead to the lost outpost. In Shelzar, the party can assemble the provisions needed for an extended expedition into the deep desert, including mounts that can carry heavy loads and move through the desert for long periods without rest.

For details on the city of Shelzar, see the **Scarred Lands Player's Guide** p. 195

The fortress is two weeks travel to the north of Shelzar; everything the characters would need for the trip can be acquired in that fabled city of vice. The most expensive items are likely to be their desert-worthy mounts: dune crawlers are not commonly found outside of deserts and can be difficult to maintain outside of their preferred environment. The cost of one of these durable beasts is 400 gp, though that sum at least includes all the tack and harness anyone would need to secure goods and/or riders to the dune crawler's back. See p.xx for the full stats on dune crawlers.

Once the party has handled their purchases, interactions, and downtime activities in Shelzar, including the acquisition of the map, which you can roleplay or simply narrate, proceed to **Chapter One**.

### 2D6 RUMOR

- 2 The royal family of Shelzar are all vampires.
- 3 The Calastian Hegemony has enslaved a minor titan and intends to use it against their enemies.
- 4 Creatures from another world have secretly invaded Scarn.
- 5 A civil war is brewing between those Asaatthi who wish to assimilate and those who wish to return the rule of the titans to Scarn.
- 6 Titanspawn are being seen more frequently and in places they normally don't inhabit.
- 7 There's a lost city deep in the Ukrudan Desert that overflows with treasure. The beings who lived there vanished overnight just after the Divine War, leaving no one to guard it.
- 8 A powerful necromancer is calling all undead to her. She's building an army with which to conquer all of Ghelspad.
- 9 The Calastian Hegemony is hiring mercenaries. Their need seems urgent...
- 10 Signs and portents suggest that some of the titans may be returning to the world.
- 11 There is a ghost ship that sails the oceans and seas of Scarn endlessly. All who encounter it become part of its crew... forever.
- 12 Roll twice, ignoring further results of 12



# CHAPTER ONE: ACROSS THE UKRUDAN

When the party is ready to begin the adventure, read or paraphrase the following:

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*As you part ways with the caravan, you stare across the endless expanse of desert stretching from horizon to horizon ahead of you. The trade caravan traveling from the port city of Shelzar provided the extra security of more swords and more pairs of eyes to keep a lookout; now, you watch as they head away from you to the east, skirting the edge of the desert and heading to the free city of Lokil, avoiding the hefty tariffs and bribe needing to be paid to travel upriver. Your path lies more to the north and west, you goad your beasts into motion, crossing the still cool sands as the sun rises.*

*In consulting all the maps you could find, the location of the lost stronghold would seem to be closer to the Mounds of Man mountains: the desert ahead of you is not merely sand and dunes: there are rocky outcrops, plateaus, and even a few scattered mountains here and there. There is no sign of water as far as can be seen, but you've brought plenty with you — at least for a while.*

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During the daylight hours, the desert seems bereft of life. Very little moves in the heat of the day, and smart adventurers will do the same — not only to avoid the worst of the heat, but to conserve water as well. Flying creatures are the exception: vultures cover great distances following their noses to carrion, hoping to get there before others.

Griffons cruise over the dunes in search of easy prey, the air passing over their wings providing a breeze to keep them cool.

The days and nights of travel will feature boredom and endless vistas of sand and rock, punctuated by terrifying encounters with roaming monsters, bandits, and stinging sandstorms. The travel portion can be truncated to any degree that suits the needs of the campaign, though it is recommended that players be forced to endure a certain amount of travel scenes and a random encounter or two before finding their way to the lost fortress.

## DESERT ENCOUNTERS

There is a 15% chance of a random encounter (checked twice per day. Roll d%, and on a result of 15 or lower, an encounter occurs) in the Ukrudan Desert during daylight hours. Between sunset and sunrise, the chance increases to 60% (checked once per night).

## THE FORTRESS COMES INTO VIEW

As the party draws near to the fortress, they can see that it features a round curtain wall, and a single, round tower. The gate doors are open: closer inspection reveals there is also a portcullis set into the gate wall, and it too is open. As the characters approach, a tall, snake-like humanoid (**asaatthi witchblade**) comes out of the gate, flanked by two more snake people (**asaatthi blades**). All are armed, and the two in the rear are armored as well, though the one in front seems to only carry a scimitar, which is sheathed. The leader holds up a hand in greeting, and a cautious parley begins.

## UNREDEEMED

These are **Asaatthi**, a race of snake-like beings created by the titan Mormo, the Hag Queen, to fight for her in the Titanswar. After Mormo's defeat, most, freed of her influence, decided to make peace with the other inhabitants of Scarn and try to fit in. These are known as the Redeemed and are the Asaatthi race as described in the Scarred Lands Player's Guide.

The group encountered here are Asaatthi who remained loyal to the titans and seek to continue the Titanswar as a guerrilla campaign while slowly rebuilding their forces. Unredeemed Asaatthi, as they are called by non-titan's cultists, are bitter, vengeful, and seek to destroy or enslave the divine races. They reserve special hatred for any Asaatthi that have gone over to the other side, and will destroy those first, with neither mercy nor hesitation.

D%	ENCOUNTER
01-05	2d4 vultures †
06-09	caravan with 2d4 merchants (commoners †) and 1d6 guards †
10-13	1 giant praying mantis*
14-17	2d6 jackals †
18-25	giant ants*: 3d3+3 workers and 1d4+2 soldiers
26	single set of humanoid tracks leading deeper into the desert. if followed, they end inexplicably after a few miles
27-29	1d3 griffon †
30-33	2d8+2 sutak raiders ‡
34-35	swarm of insects †
36-40	an oasis, with the remains of an old campsite
41-44	4d6 spider-eye goblins
45-48	bandits †: 3d6 plus 1 bandit captain † and 1 druid †
49-50	1 blade beast
51-53	1 dust mephit †
54	1 desert stalker ‡
55-57	2d4 hobgoblins † + 1 hobgoblin captain*
58	1d2+1 wights †
59-61	1d3+1 cyclopes*
62-65	1d3 stone giants †
66	1 phase spider †
67-69	asaatthi witchblade ‡ with 2d3 asaatthi blades ‡
70-71	1 mummy †
72-74	giant spider † nest (2d3)
75-76	1d3 ogres †
77-80	a violent windstorm whips up, driving stinging sand into the eyes of travelers and reducing visibility to almost zero, making travel impossible until it passes. storm lasts 1d4+1 hours.
81-83	1 lamia †
84	2d3 hunter's hounds ‡
85-88	1d4 giant scorpions †
89-91	2d3+2 giant praying mantis
92	1 air elemental †
93	1 arcane devourer ‡
94	1 fire elemental †
95	1 efreet †
96	1d4 lycanthrope, wereboars † - day encounter, human form. at night, beast form
97	1d4x4 dust mephits †
98	1 young brass dragon †
99	1 medusa †
00	1 djinn †

\* see **Appendix: Creatures and NPCs**

† see the **SRD**

‡ see the **Scarred Lands Players Guide Appendix: Titanspawn**



These Asaatthi are setting a trap. If there happen to be any Asaatthi among the party who are Redeemed, these will pretend to be Redeemed Asaatthi until they are ready to spring their trap. They have three humanoid slaves — a dwarf **priest**, a human **spy**, and a manticora **scout** (see the SRD for these stat blocks)— who they use as cannon fodder, driving them into battle while they have four additional asaatthi blades in hiding, prepared to flank the enemy to surround and crush them. For their part, the slaves have grown to hate their masters, and if the odds look favorable, they will turn on these Unredeemed and attack viciously. They know too well that the only thing waiting for them as slaves to the Asaatthi is death, but for now they are biding their time until a solid opportunity for escape presents itself. They will attack without enthusiasm, merely defending themselves and not actually seeking to engage in real fighting with the party. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** or **Wisdom (Perception)** check will make this obvious.

**Treasure.** The Asaatthi carry 40 gp, 600 sp, 6 Art Objects worth 25 gp each, a *fangstooth scimitar +1* that deals an additional 1d4 necrotic damage on a hit is carried by the asaatthi witchblade. One of the asaatthi blades in the initial greeting party wears *slippers of spider climbing* while the other wears *boots of elvenkind*.



# CHAPTER TWO: INTO THE FORTRESS

Once the party enters the fortress, use the maps and information below.

## GROUND LEVEL

This is the ground level of the fortress.

### 1. GATEHOUSE

The gatehouse features a portcullis at the outer archway, and a seat of large, iron-bound oak doors in the inside archway.

### 2. STABLE

The ground level stable was used for the mounts of visitors, and to hold patrol beasts while their riders made their reports or grabbed a quick bite or drink. It has a roof in case of storms. It is empty.

### 3. WELL

This covered well drops down to the underground lake below. A single bucket is here, repaired by the Asaatthi inhabitants, and is attached to a coil of new rope, so 60 feet or more in length.

#### 4. RAMP TO THE LOWER LEVELS

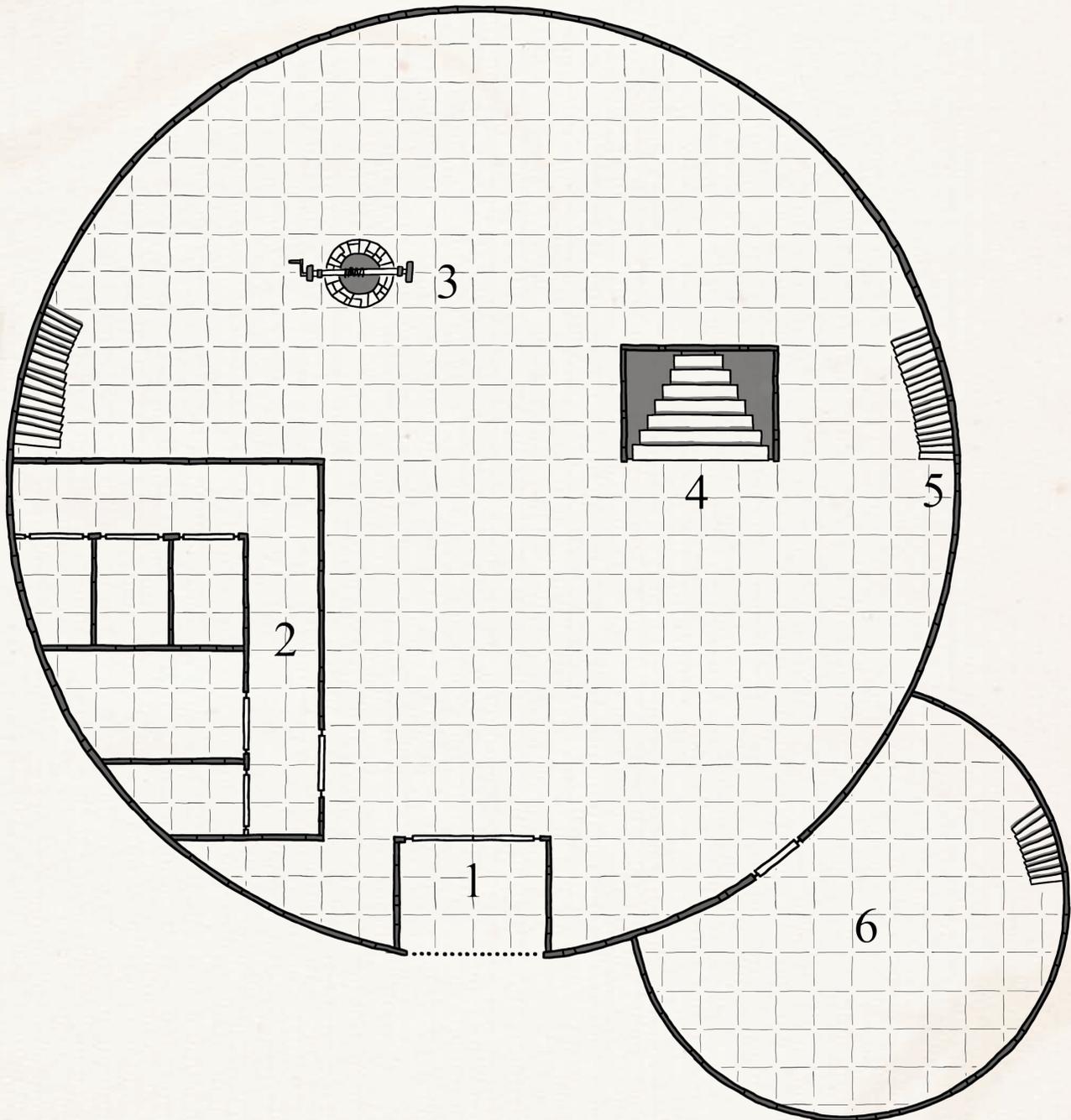
This ramp, wide enough (15 feet wide) to accommodate two riders abreast, and the ramp itself textured and gently sloped to provide secure footing for horses or other mounts to be ridden down to the lower stables. At the bottom of the ramp is a portcullis, and few feet inside of that, large, iron-bound oak doors. The doors and portcullis can be opened from inside.

#### 5. STAIRS TO THE RAMPARTS

These stairs allowed soldiers access to the upper platforms along the walls in case of attack. Archers would be sent up here, and in case the enemy brought ladders, spear-armed soldiers would join them. Except for these ramparts along the walls, the courtyard is open to the sky.

#### 6. WATCHTOWER

The watchtower features its own staircases, and the doors leading into the central courtyard could be barred from the inside if needed.



## THE LOWER LEVELS

The air underground is cooler, and just slightly damp. The floors and walls are of worked stone, carved into blocks or textured to appear so. The floor is gritty from more than a century of sand being tracked through the place.

### Random Encounters

There are any number of large beasts that have found refuge from the heat and scorching sun in the lower levels. The Asaatthi have done a reasonable job cleaning up the place, so there is only a 15% chance every hour of game-time of an encounter taking place. Roll d% once each hour. On a result of 15 or less, roll 1d8 and consult the table below.

D8	ENCOUNTER
1	2d4 giant rats †
2	2d3 giant centipedes†
3	grey ooze †
4	2d4 giant ants (workers)*
5	giant spider †
6	giant scorpion †
7	snake, giant constrictor †
8	snake, poisonous †

\* see **Appendix: Creatures and NPCs**

† see the **SRD**

## FIRST LEVEL

### 1. ENTRY RAMP

This ramp leads to the surface. It is 20 feet wide all the way up and was meant to allow two horses to move up the ramp abreast.

### 2. CHAPEL

The chapel is rather spacious, and includes benches which, though old, have been preserved by the dry air and are still useable, if creaky and splintery.

The altar has been reconsecrated to Mormo, and several smallish statues of her are on the altar and the floor in front of it. From the stains present, it would appear that blood sacrifices were made, though it is impossible to tell what manner of creature was sacrificed here.

Friezes and relief carvings along the walls suggest this chapel was once dedicated to the titans, though many of the carvings have been defaced, most recently those of Denev and Golthaine.

### 3. SECURE ROOM

This room was used as a secure storage area: it can be locked from inside, and also has a large timber with which to bar the door to further secure it. It is currently devoid

of any furnishings save a single silver coin on the floor, forged by dwarves long ago.

### 4. LATRINE

This room was the fortress's latrine, and the smell of recent usage by the Asaatthi is foul and overwhelming. There are more than a dozen seats with holes that drop into a chamber below. On a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** check one can hear sloshing sounds coming from the chamber underneath. There is an **otyugh** (see the **SRD**) in this chamber; it is too far away to reach anyone using the latrine. Instead, it will broadcast wordless telepathic images of being trapped and needing help. The Asaatthi know it lives there, and they made an effort to keep it fed by dumping an occasional body into the pit from the entrance on the second level.

### 5. STABLES

This large room was clearly used as housing for horses. Any hay that remained has long since turned to dust, but the bits of tack and harness still here, though dried out, would be serviceable if given care and attention by a skilled leatherworker.

### 6 & 7. STABLE GUARD ROOM AND SLEEPING QUARTERS

This room provided a place for those on active duty to relax in between patrols. The connected room (7) was where the off-duty horse soldiers would sleep in between guard/patrol shifts. The Asaatthi have used these rooms most, and the scent of reptile lingers here, though not as unpleasantly as in the latrines.

### 8. BARRACKS

This large room, in former times, housed dozens of infantry in bunk beds. The furniture has mostly collapsed from years of neglect, and any mattresses, blankets, or pillows are piles of dust now.

### 9. WELL AND WASH AREA

This small room features an arched gallery around the central well access point. The arches allow buckets to drop from all four sides to speed up the process of washing clothes and soldiers' bodies. Nearly a dozen buckets may be found here, each attached to a 50' length of rope. The buckets are made of leather, and while they leak, they are still adequate to the task of bringing water up. Stone basins are cut into the walls all around the outside of this room, some large enough for a humanoid to sit in to bathe.

### 10. FISSURE AND COLLAPSED TUNNEL

A large fissure here blocks easy access to the rest of the corridor. The fissure is only about ten feet wide, but the

bottom cannot be seen easily. A torch dropped down will bounce out of sight and a slight glow will be visible from beneath, indicating that the drop is neither straight down nor a short fall. The corridor on the other side extends for perhaps 10 or 15 feet before ending in a massive cave-in.

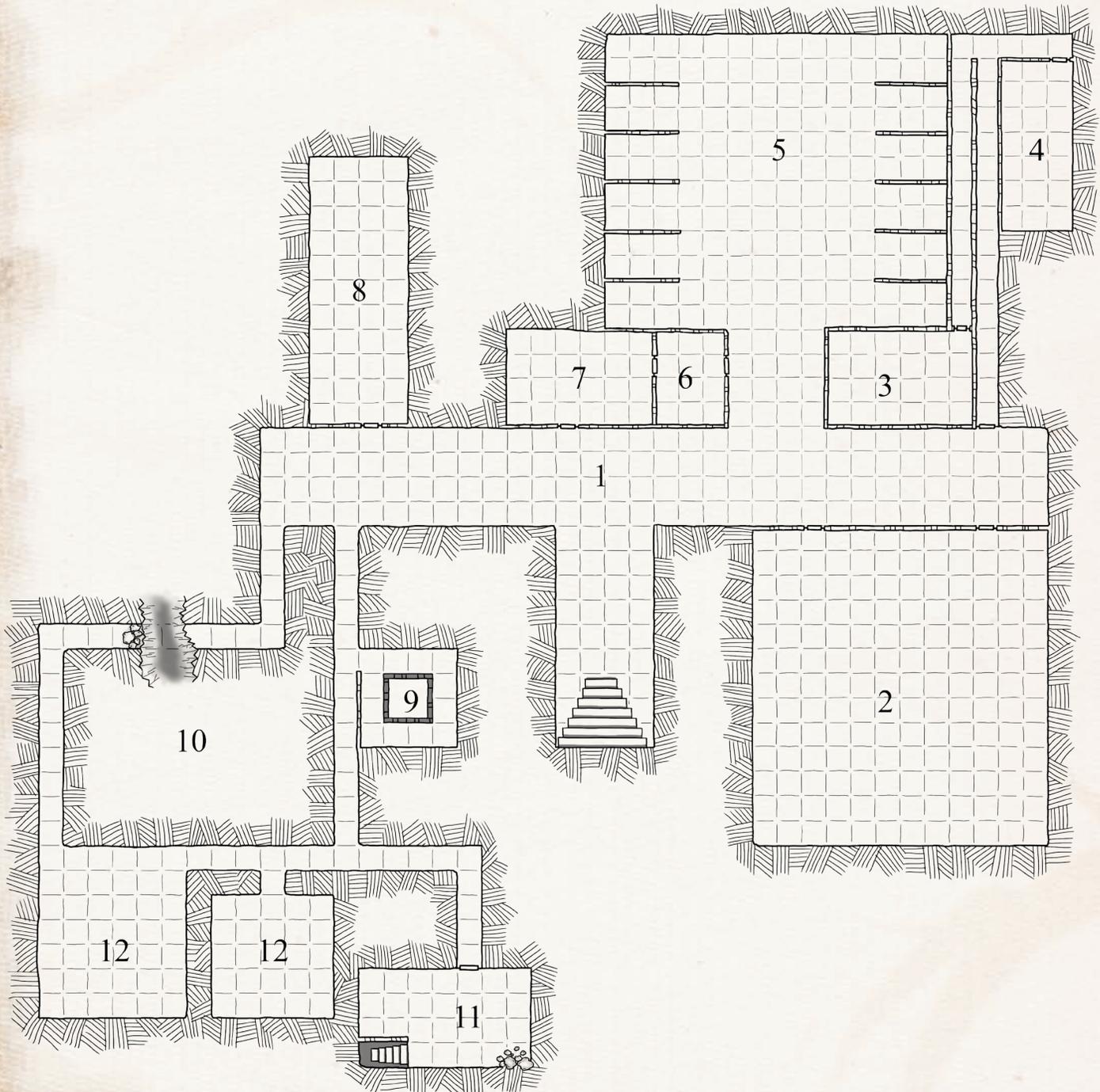
### 11. LOWER LEVEL ACCESS

This room is empty save for two things: A large, barred trap door covering a stairwell, and an uncompleted exit doorway of rubble and unhewn stone.

### 12. KITCHEN AND MESS HALL

Food was prepared and served here to the soldiers once stationed at this fortress. There are numerous cupboards and cabinets for storing less perishable food; more perishable items such as meat and fresh fruit and leafy vegetables were eaten as soon as possible. Food suitable for longer storage (root vegetables and grains) were kept in storage here. There is practically nothing left here; what wasn't eaten by mice, rats, or insects, crumbled to dust long ago.

Inside one of the cupboards is an **ochre jelly**; it will lunge out at anyone opening the cupboards to have a look. For stats on ochre jellies, see the SRD.



## SECOND LEVEL

### 1. ENTRY STAIRCASE

This staircase descends from area 11 on the first level.

### 2. CELLS

These cells were used to hold prisoners, not only in the distant past but also more recently, though they are all empty now. Any remaining prisoners have died and been fed to the ottyugh in area 11 on this level.

### 3. ALCHEMIST'S LABORATORY

A large amount of broken glassware can be found in this room, victims of the seismic disruption that happened here more than a century ago. A large, sealed earthenware crock sits on one of the top shelves. Carved into the lead seal running around the seam between the crock and its lid is a warning in the titan language: "Contained herein is a remnant of one of the titans. Open only with great care." If it is opened, the remnant will attempt to move toward the next nearest piece of the titan from which it was rendered.

Tapping against this crock is what appears to be a small, eyeless, white worm. Closer inspection will reveal the object to be a section of tendon, completely removed from any body yet still alive, and trying to reunite with other parts of itself. If they are allowed to unite, they will merge, the tendon burrowing into the flesh, taking up what appears to be its normal positioning within a body. It will also draw the attention of any remnants of the same titan nearby, which will move in its direction to merge with it in the same way. This process of gradually rejoining the titan and its essence will allow that titan to return to the world.

Next to this crock on the high shelf is a small, locked chest, mostly hidden from view and requiring a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** check at to spot. If any character climbs to the top shelf for a better look at the large crock, this small chest will be immediately visible. The chest contains 48 gp, a ring of earth elemental command, 2 uncut opals (10 gp each) and two potions of healing.

### 4. OFFICE

Barred from the inside, this small room contains the long-dead corpses of an officer and her family. They appear to have killed themselves; a note left on the desk explains that they ran out of food and the complex was overrun with vicious creatures that devoured everything in their path. They killed themselves rather than face those horrors or a slow, painful death by starvation.

The bodies are completely stripped of flesh, though the bones remain. A closer examination will reveal that the surface of the bones is thoroughly burned and pitted, as if by some corrosive substance. (A **black pudding** moved

through here, devouring their flesh after they died.) The lock on the door has can be pocked with a successful **DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools**. Removing the bar from the outside requires a **DC 18 Strength** check.

There is an additional note on the desk which describes finding a blob of flesh in the desert that moved - albeit very slowly - on its own. The note also mentions plans to seal the blob in an earthenware jar (found in area 3 on this level) and that it is a remnant of a titan. It was moving in the direction of the next nearest piece of the same titan's essence. The note at one point reads: "The safest place for the titan relic now is Lokil." It also mentions that a small chest including two *potions of healing* can be found in that same laboratory.

### 5. UNDERGROUND LAKE

This is the source of all fresh water for the complex. A continual flow drips from the ceiling as water filtering through the aquifer keeps the water levels steady. A small outlet has been created thanks to the fissure; a small waterfall has formed, and water currently trickles over it into the crevice below.

### 6. INVASION!

The tunnel wall has collapsed here in several places due to the work done by **giant ants**. Their nest occupies parts of this level, and the fissure caused more than a century ago has given them a new avenue of exploration and conquest. Worker ants move through here to the fissure, capturing bubbles of water in their mandibles to take back to the nest. There are 2d4 **worker ants** moving through here. If attacked, the distress pheromones of the workers will bring 1d2+3 **warrior ants** to protect them on the following melee round.

For stats on **giant ant warriors** and **workers**, see the appendix at the end of this adventure

### 7. ANTS' NEST

Crawling through the ant tunnels is an exercise in insanity. Tunnels worm through the earth in three dimensions, so climbing up or down is just as likely as crawling on the level. These tunnels are large enough for human-sized individuals to crawl through with no real discomfort, but fighting, in the very great likelihood that one should encounter more ants, will be next to impossible.

### 8. UNFINISHED TUNNELS

These tunnels end abruptly, unfinished by man or beast.

### 9. WARLOCK'S CHAMBERS

These were the personal chambers of the fortress's resident warlock, long-since fled or deceased. The room contains

dusty furniture. A dresser contains several robes and other clothing items, and a few (1d6) silver and (2d6) copper coins. A successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals a small, flat stone with a small depression worn into one side among the clothes. If the depression is pressed forcefully with the thumb, it casts the spell *force blast* as if using a 2nd level spell slot. The stone charm has 1d6 charges, and will recharge every day at dawn on a d20 roll of 2-20. On a roll of 1, the object loses all magical properties.

### 10. WARLOCK'S SUMMONING CHAMBER

A warlock apparently worked here in previous times. The floor is covered by a pentagram. Inside the pentagram sits a large boulder. If provoked or spoken to, the boulder will reform itself into a medium **earth elemental** (see the SRD.) This elemental has been trapped here for more than a century. It will be grateful if it is freed, and will offer the one who frees it a token - a small, egg-shaped stone, which when held tightly and spoken to in a phrase in Terran (which the elemental will teach to the recipient), will call it back from the Elemental Plane of Earth, ready to assist it's rescuer. This stone is a single-use object.

### 11. OTYUGH CHAMBER

This chamber is expressly designed to contain the waste and offal of the fortress. A decent-sized **otyugh** has fallen into the pit, and it is trapped. It will try to lure prey to it by sending telepathic images of needing help and being trapped, then will grapple anyone who comes close enough, and bash them to death against the stone walls, consuming them afterwards.

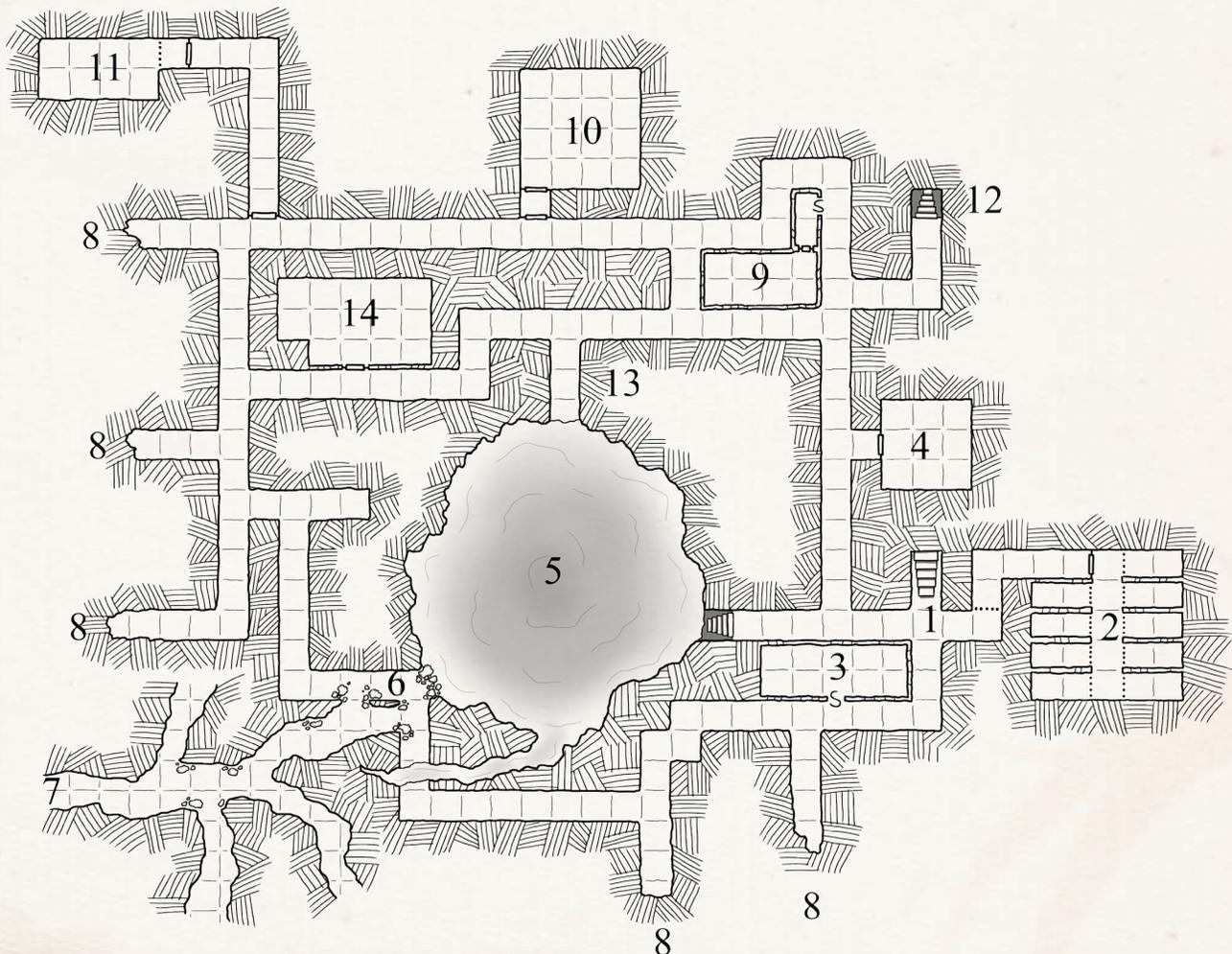
The chamber is entered by a stout oaken door, leading to a portcullis protecting the entrance to the chamber. There is a 15-foot drop from the portcullis to the floor of the pit, though the last 5 feet is filled with waste and offal.

### 12. STAIRS

These stairs lead down to a blank wall. The level below was never completed.

### 13. LAKE CORRIDOR

This corridor provides additional access to the underground lake.



## 14. ARMORY

This hidden room is storage for extra weapons, including those captured during battles. There are many spears and quivers of arrows here, along with a few blades of various types, some shields, and a suit of scale mail and a chain mail hauberk. One blade stands out from the others: it is clean and shiny while the others are dull and show tiny signs of corrosion. This is a dancing sword (see the SRD for details.)

Once the characters leave the fortress, they have another week or more of travel to get to Lokil. The route there is similar to the path taken to get to the fortress, though with more rocky terrain. Caves are plentiful here, providing daytime shelter to rest and get out of the burning sun. Such caves are also a haven for desert creatures for the same reasons.

During the second day out after leaving the fortress, a successful **DC Wisdom (Perception)** check will discover a dust cloud behind the party in the distance but coming nearer. The characters should have plenty of time to climb up onto a nearby escarpment or rocky ridge to hide or prepare an ambush, and once there, they will observe a large group of **zombies** — one of which is a **zombie ogre** (see the SRD for both stat blocks)— heading north. These zombies — 17 in all —have been called by Maghiel and are not interested at all in the characters unless attacked. If left alone, the zombies will continue on their way without stopping or even slowing; since they need neither rest nor food, they will quickly outpace any pursuit by curious characters. This isn't intended to be a combat encounter but should be played up for the ominous nature of it, also tying in with the rumor of a necromancer calling all undead to herself. It helps to set the mood of dark and dangerous plots in motion.

## BRIGHTNESS IN THE DARK

While the characters have bedded down for the night in one of these caves, they will be visited by 1d4+1 **arcane devourers** (see the **Scarred Lands Player's Guide**) These are servants of Mesos, drawn here by His essence emanating from the remnants of His flesh. While any others attack and create a diversion, one will attempt to search for the container with the remnants inside. If any players make a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana), Intelligence (Religion), or Intelligence (History), check, they realize that the arcane devourers are servants of Mesos, suggesting the almost certain likelihood that the contents of the large earthenware jar may contain remains of that titan.

Unless the characters broke the seal, the arcane devourers will not know where the remains of their master are being held. The magical seal radiates magic itself, but blocks the devourers from detecting the remnant inside. If the characters also put the titan's tendon in some sort of container and brought it with them as well, the arcane devourers will immediately find it and leave with that, mistakenly thinking they've located the remnant of Mesos that called to them.

They must search through the various items and containers among the characters' effects looking for it, hoping their compatriots can buy them enough time to find it. Identify is not a perfect choice of spells to use for this purpose, but it's what they have at their disposal, so it may take them more than one try to find what they're looking for, even if they're holding it in their hands.

If the arcane devourers escape with the container and/or the remnant, the players may feel dejected. At least those items didn't fall into the hands of the Shunned.



# CHAPTER THREE: LOKIL

Lokil was a mighty city in former times. Razed by lava fumes called down from the summit of Mount Hederesh by the titan Thulkas during the Titanswar, the city built on the slopes of the mountain was all but destroyed. In doing so, Thulkas and his forces managed to seal the entrances to the vast and timeless library beneath, preserving it almost completely intact. With the city — and the legions of craftspeople and workers who serve the needs of countless wizards, scholars, and researchers engaged in study at the library — gone, the library itself fell into disuse for many years, even after the Titanswar was over.

With the help of the survivors, of skilled craftspeople from among the Kelder Dwarves, and a legion of unskilled labor donated by Hollowfaust, the rubble was cleared, and the vaults of Lokil were reopened. Many of the Kelder Dwarves stayed on as miners, merchants, and tunnel fighters, while what remained of the undead legion was

returned to Hollowfaust with thanks and a pledge to give the necromancers easier access to the library's contents.

A few years ago, miners expanding a chamber discovered a network of tunnels far older than the library. These seemed to be lined with some sort of chitinous material, and it was at that point that things started to go wrong. Creatures from the depths began making their way into the higher levels, killing or devouring guards, librarians, and researchers by the handful. Some of these creatures seemed to come from elsewhere - other worlds or other planes of existence, perhaps. Worse still, many who entered the newly-discovered tunnels and chambers found themselves changed or driven mad by what they saw or learned there.

The Order of the Closed Book is a group of librarians — clerics, monks, paladins, and others — devoted to protecting Lokil against enemies from outside and from within. This Order has taken up the burden of defending the

library against incursions by these otherworldly creatures. Initially, sealing the entrance was enough, but the creatures and their construct servants dug new passages, reconnecting the more ancient, mind-warping tunnels with those of the library in a number of places. Since then, the Order continues to serve as a bulwark against this threat, but they are fighting a losing battle. They secretly appealed for help to a number of similar organizations, including the denizens of the Gleaming Valley and the secretive Obsidian Order.

## ENTERING LOKIL

The line to be admitted to the city is long. Traders are given quicker access than those seeking to plumb the depths of knowledge. Wait times are 3d4 hours, and no business is conducted in the library or by its staff after 6 PM. Those admitted later in the day typically are given an appointment time for the following day and must take rooms or camp overnight. While the city walls and some of the outside buildings have been rebuilt, most of the city is still empty, and it is here many supplicants camp for 1 silver piece per night per tent bribe to the guards while awaiting their turn to visit the archives. There are also two fine inns in the city: the House of Seven Cockroaches, despite its name, is clean and well-maintained, has good food and helpful

staff, and will rent rooms for six gold pieces per week or fraction thereof. Meals are 3sp each and of modest quality. Hedrada's Rest is furnished in a more spartan manner, with uncomfortable furniture and few other comforts. Food here is edible, but not great, though charged at a slightly higher 6 sp per meal. The rate for rooms is the same: six gold pieces per week or fraction of a week.

If an appeal is made to gain entrance by displaying the relic jar, the party will be immediately escorted into the offices of Master of Lore Alliki Nebega (male, LN human), where they will wait 3d8 minutes in an outer chamber for the great man to see them. The Master of Lore will puzzle over the jar, and eventually consulting others including Vadul Noth, (male LG human) Head Librarian and High Luminary of the Order of the Closed Book. Noth will find a warded room in the library in which to store the relic until an armed escort from one of the churches of the gods of Scarn can claim the item and take it someplace safer.

At this point, the characters have fulfilled their roles in trying to thwart this stage of Maghiel's plot. They will be paid 100 gold pieces each for their time and trouble, and be offered a +2 weapon of their choice, or a +1 suit of armor of their choosing.

## RUMORS & INFO IN LOKIL

The party can discover a number of plot threads for the coming campaign while asking questions at the library, researching its archives, or even engaging in idle chatter in the inns. The following rumors and info may be revealed:

Obscure lore holds that fragments of a lesser titan named Keshe might be acquired in the Canyon of Souls.

The ritual Maghiel may be attempting requires an *apple of replenishment* - Grown on a single tree in the Ganjus forest

The *Staff of Zuvys* - held in a shrine built by the Order of Silver, can be found in New Venir.

A fragment of Mesos lies hidden beneath the residence of a hag in the Sorporata Swamp

The Mourning Marshes have seen a swift increase in titanspawn activity.

Cultists who served alongside Maghiel during the Titanswar have begun raiding settlements in the Bleak Savannah. No one knows why.

Some dwarf cleric, named Dain, perhaps? Was hiring adventurers to help with an expedition in the souther Kelders. Sounded dangerous and maybe a little crazy.

A wizard in Hollowfaust exploded, as near as anyone can tell, from Mesos' Bane.

Any other item you might find necessary, exciting, or expedient to include. These can range from magic items to simple trinkets like those found in [Trinkets of Ghelspad](#) by David Stephens at the Slarecian Vault. These can be used to guide the players back on track as they hunt down the items, dovetailing them back into the adventures and sidequests of this campaign.

If you wish to cover the party's overland travel back toward the Kelder Mountains, consider picking up [Encounters in the Calastian Hegemony Volume I](#) & [Volume II](#) by Travis Legge at Slarecian Vault to help fill in the journey.

# APPENDIX: CREATURES AND NPCs

## CYCLOPS

Huge giant, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 105 (10d12 + 40)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	8 (-1)	19 (+4)	5 (-3)	9 (-1)	6 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Giant

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Bad Eyesight.** The cyclops has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks relying on sight as well as on ranged attack checks.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The giant makes two greatclub attacks.

**Greatclub.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

**Rock.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage.



# DUNE CRAWLER

Covered in overlapping chitinous plates, dune crawlers resemble elongated wood lice — also known as pillbugs. The remaining essence left from a fallen titan mutated these creatures into the enormous, carrion-eating desert dwellers they have become. A full-grown Crawler can be up to 20 feet long and be six feet high at the top of its back. They are not temperamental creatures and tend to be easy to handle. Combined with their stamina, they are ideal pack animals for long desert voyages.

Because of their adaptation to desert living, they are commonly used as transportation through arid areas for caravans. A single Dune Crawler can carry two human-sized riders and 500 pounds of cargo without straining. More riders can be added (up to a total of four) by sacrificing the cargo capacity. A Crawler with no riders could carry up to 1,000 pounds of cargo, as long as someone walked or rode alongside to lead the beast.

Dune Crawlers have resistance to slashing damage because of the hard, chitinous plates covering nearly their entire upper body. Their body is segmented, and each segment has a pair of legs - one leg on each side - that propel the Crawler along at a steady rate of 20 feet per round. While not fast, these creatures are highly prized for their endurance, capable of traveling at the same rate for up to twelve hours a day with no ill effects. Their water consumption is minimal: they gain most of the liquid they need from their food. Because they have adapted to a diet of carrion, they are not interested in eating anything freshly killed. If there is a difficulty in using these animals for long-range transport, it is keeping them supplied with rotting meat for the entire journey, though their diet can be supplemented with rotting wood or vegetation for a few days with no ill effects. They typically eat 10 pounds of meat per day. Though they can go without eating for up to two days, they will need to eat enough in one sitting to “catch up” with the food they missed.

Crawlers tend to wiggle down into the sand, with only the tops of their backs exposed, to stay warm during the cold desert nights. When attacked, they thrash the front half of their bodies back and forth, doing 4d6 bludgeoning damage to anyone not able to dodge or move out of the way. Riders on a Crawler defending itself in this way must make a DEX save to hang on and can do nothing else until the beast is dead or no longer being attacked. Riders flung off will take 2d4 bludgeoning damage from hitting the ground.

## DUNE CRAWLER

Large beast, neutral

**Armor Class** 16

**Hit Points** 10d8+30 (75)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	3 (-4)	3 (-4)

**Damage Resistance:** Slashing from non-magical weapons

**Senses:** darkvision (30 ft.)

**Languages:** None

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Keen Smell.** The dune crawler has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

### ACTIONS

**Thrash. Melee Weapon Attack:** +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. **Hit:** 21 (4d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage.



## GIANT ANT - WARRIOR

Medium Beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 16

**Hit Points** 59 (7d10 + 21)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

**Skills** None

**Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

**Languages** --

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The giant ant makes two bite attacks.

**Bite. Melee Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage. Target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or suffer an additional 7 (2d6) poison damage.

## GIANT ANT - WORKER

Medium Beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 14

**Hit Points** 10d10 (50)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)

**Skills** None

**Senses** Passive Perception 10

**Languages** --

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

### Actions

**Bite. Melee Weapon Attack:** +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

# GIANT PRAYING MANTIS

Giant praying mantises are fearsome predators, remaining motionless until their prey is within reach. Their amazing speed and dexterity help them to capture their prey, while their remarkable strength helps hold the prey motionless while they dine on their still-living victim.

Giant Mantises have three attacks: 2 claws and a bite. They will only use their bite attack if both claws have hit, rendering their victim grappled.

Many mantis species are fantastic mimics; they adopt camouflage coloration and body shape to imitate sticks or leaves. Mantises of all sizes are all ambush predators: they hold very still and attack unsuspecting prey. They will eat anything that they can catch and hold, including creatures larger than themselves.

The female of this giant species lays between 10 and 30 eggs in a purse-like sack that hardens as it dries. Giant praying mantis eggs can fetch as much as 10 gold pieces each to collectors and to those who would use them for darker purposes.

## GIANT PRAYING MANTIS

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class:** 14

**Hit Points:** 10d8+30 (average=75)

**Speed:** 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

**Skills:** Acrobatics +3, Stealth +3

**Damage Resistance:** Slashing from normal weapons

**Senses:** dark vision (30 ft.)

**Languages:** None

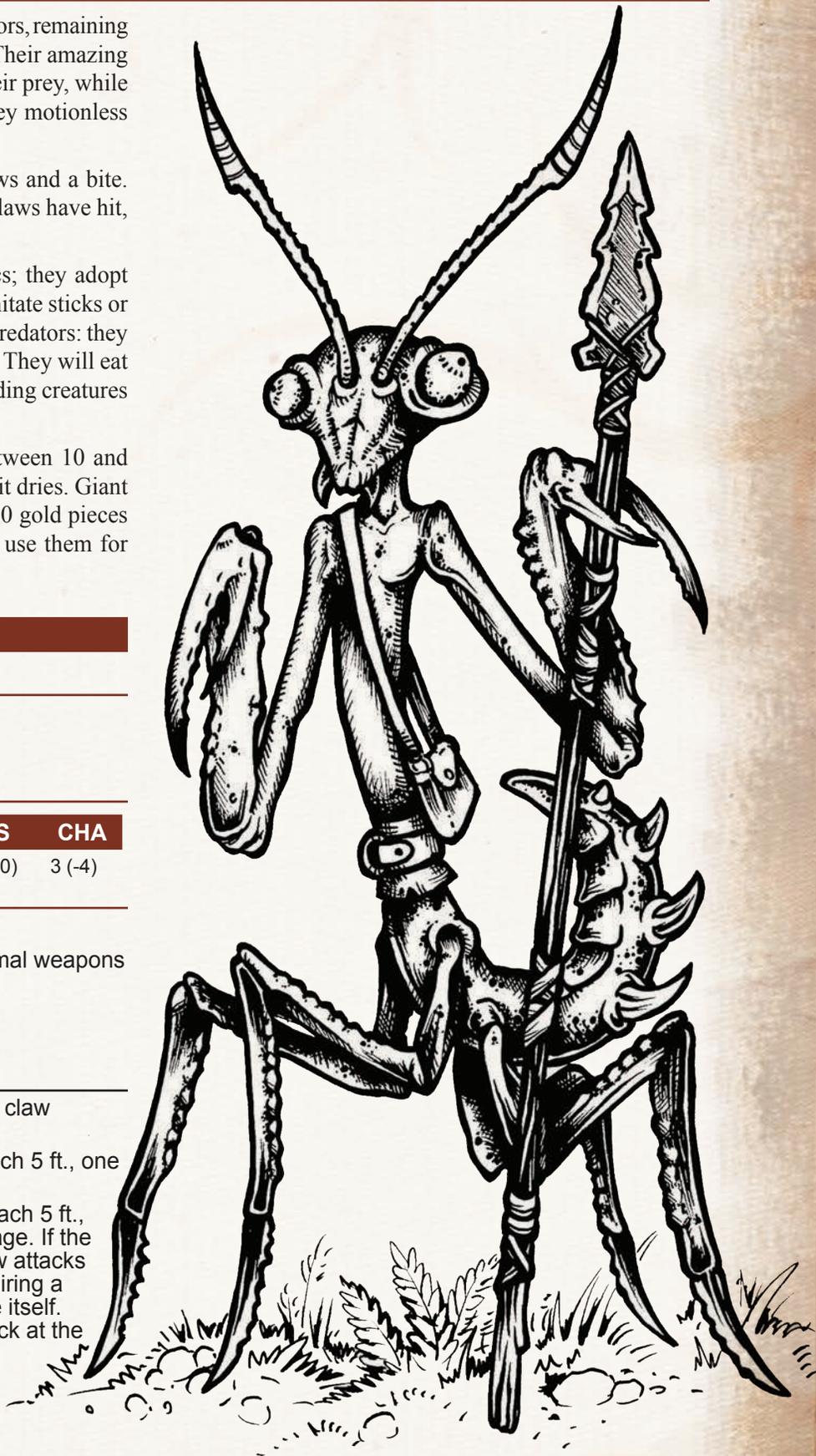
**Challenge:** 3

### Actions

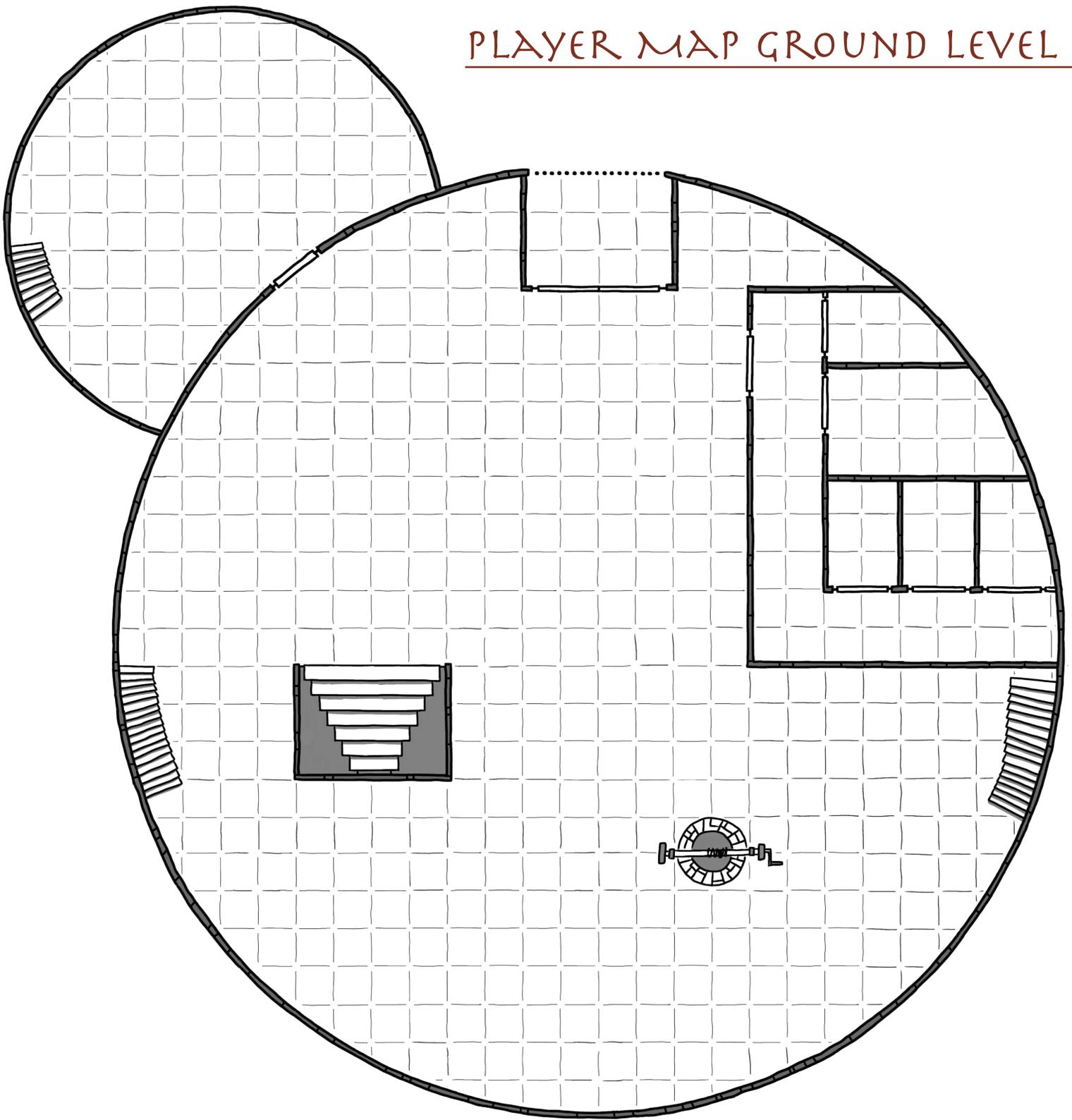
**Multiattack.** The giant mantis makes two claw attacks and a bite attack.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage.

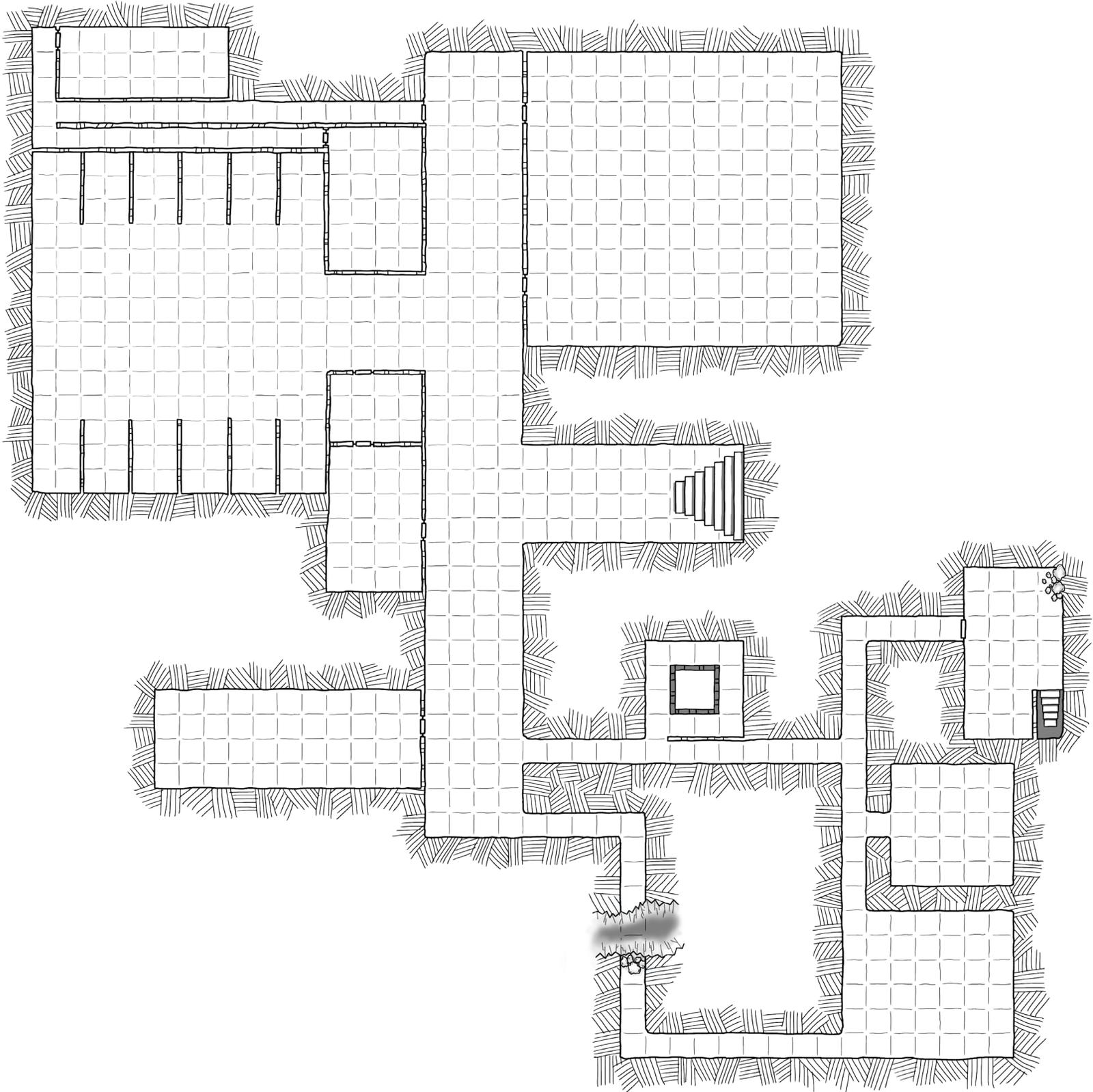
**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage. If the mantis hits a single creature with two claw attacks in one turn, the creature is grappled, requiring a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check to free itself. The grappled creature can make this check at the beginning of each of its turns.



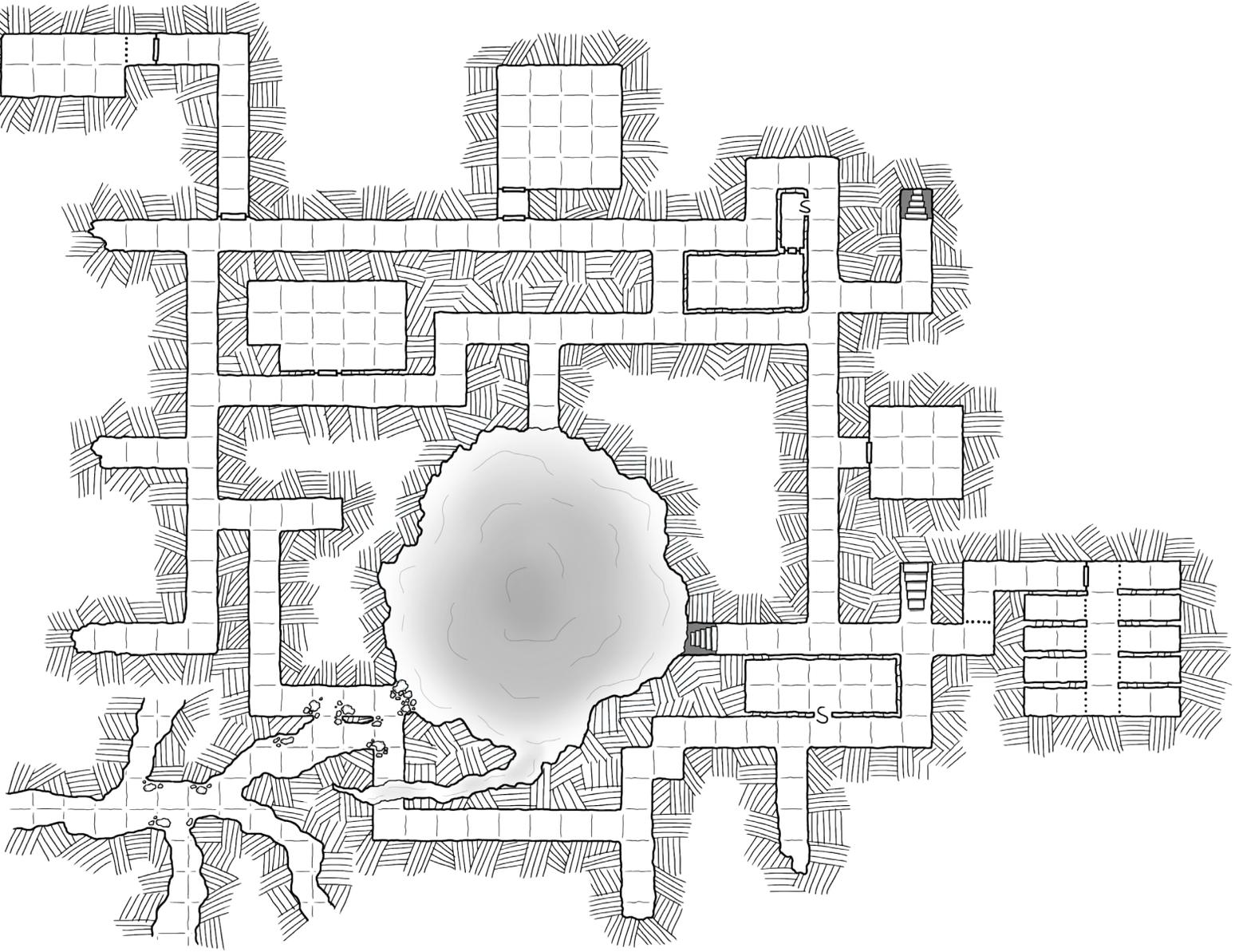
# PLAYER MAP GROUND LEVEL



# PLAYER MAP LEVEL ONE



# PLAYER MAP LEVEL TWO



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