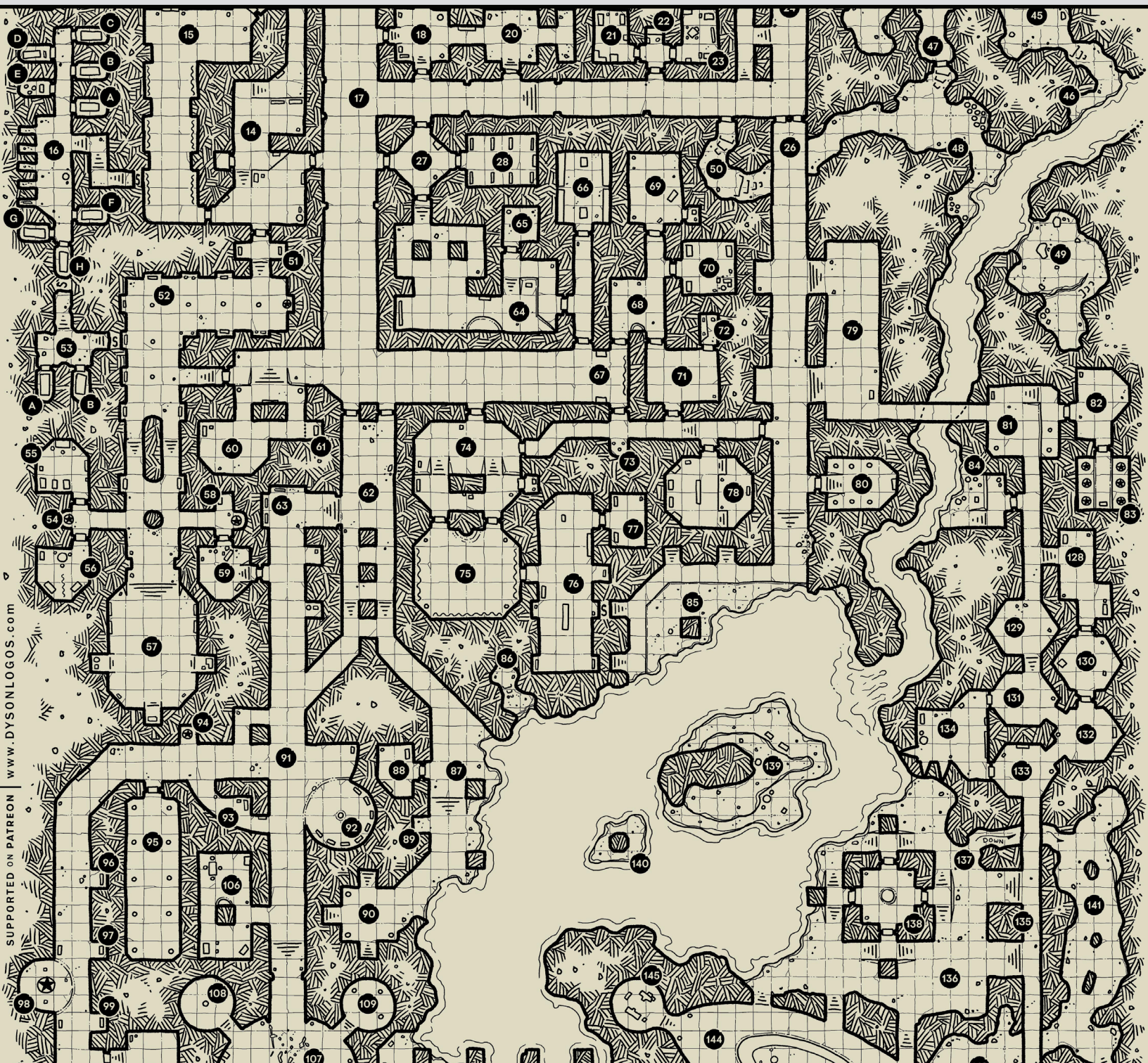




DYSON'S DODECAHEDRON CARTOGRAPHY COLLECTION

January 2024



Gath-Am's Beacon

Deep purple light seems to bubble out of a strange tower in the Grim Highlands, the purple magical glow illuminating the area for 20 miles around with dark magical energies. The structure itself appears to be partially cut from an outcropping of stone some 319 feet tall (and the bubbling purple light "source" projects another hundred feet above it like some surreal lava lamp).

Raised from the stony badlands by the dragon Gath-Am Gerrulya'ak using one of the teeth of their beloved mate as the seed, the beacon glowed with mystical energy for the first week after it was pulled from the earth and then went dark for the last few hundred years. Dark druids of the highlands have been using it in the interim, and have either reactivated it, or just have the luck to be there as Gath-Am returns.

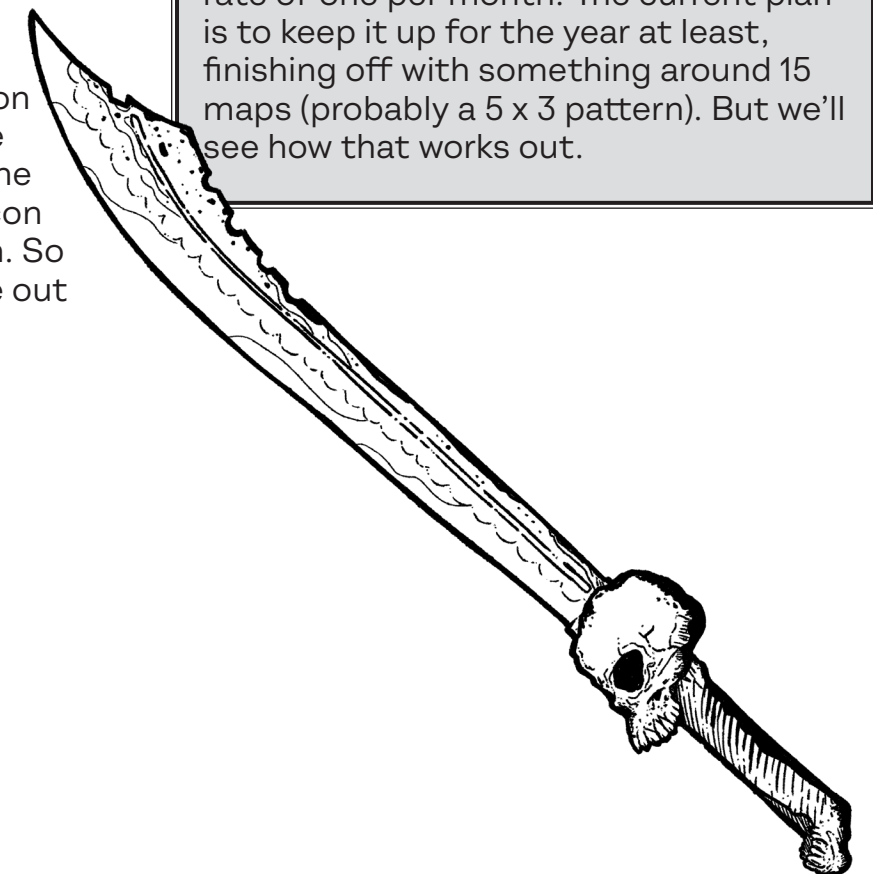
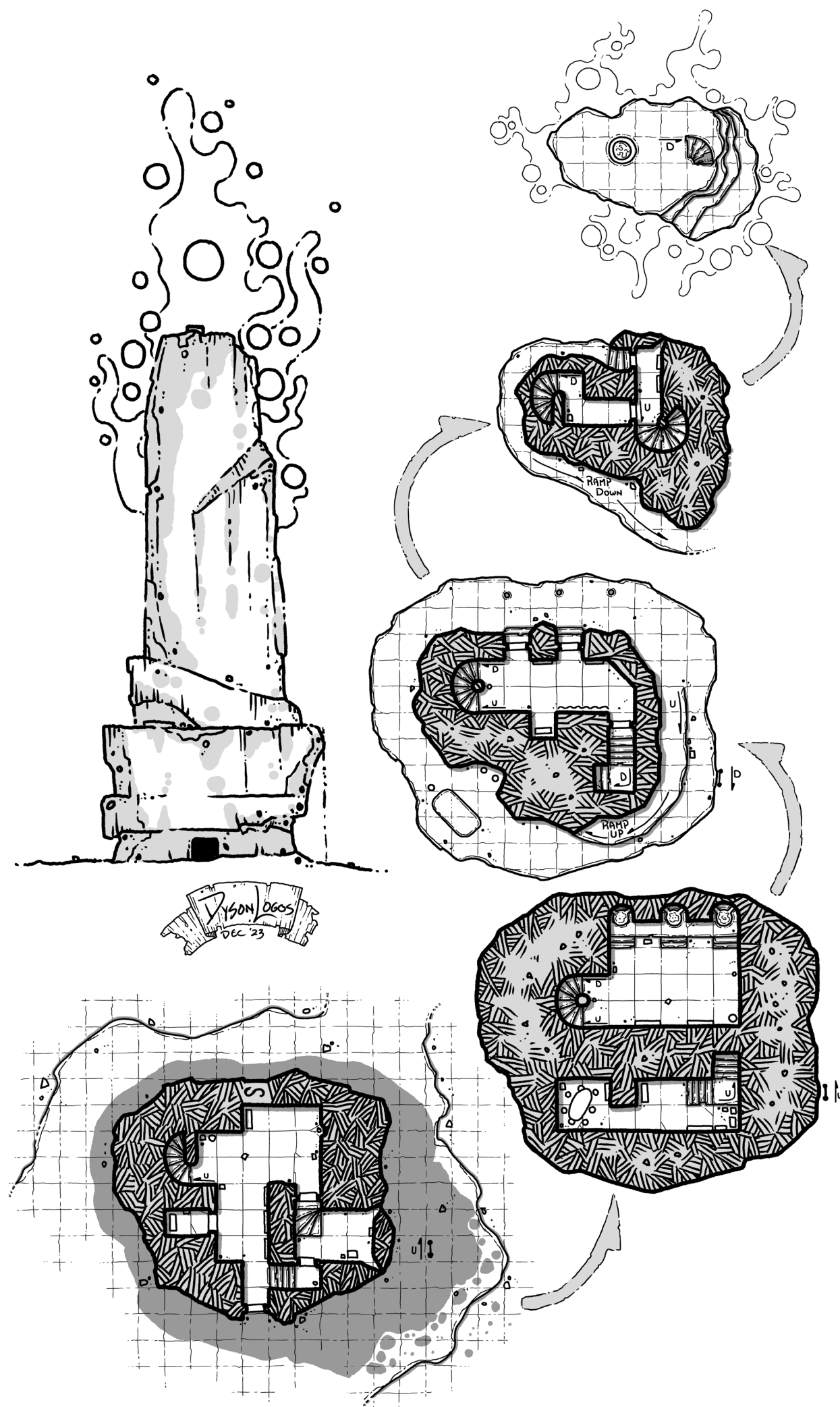
Sages of the City of Copper Bowls agree on one thing about the Beacon - it draws Gath-Am from across the worlds and should it return then none within striking distance of the Beacon will be safe from the dragon's wrath. So someone has to go there and figure out how to dim the purple light.

Our first collection of 2024 is here!

We've got a much more "building-oriented" collection of maps this month than typical. While we open with a weird tower-like thing that resembles some weird wizard's version of a lava lamp, we've got not one but two taverns, a tower, two churches, and a house to explore as well as the latest section of the Scavengers' Deep dungeons and a new hex map.

I'm going to take a bit of space to discuss the Scavengers' Deep project here. Each map of this set is one foot wide by one foot tall at 4 x 10 foot squares per inch - translating into 8 feet x 8 feet at full miniature scale.

Originally, when I envisioned the project, I was thinking of something 6 feet wide by 6 feet long, but this would be 36 maps - or 3 years at the current release rate of one per month. The current plan is to keep it up for the year at least, finishing off with something around 15 maps (probably a 5 x 3 pattern). But we'll see how that works out.



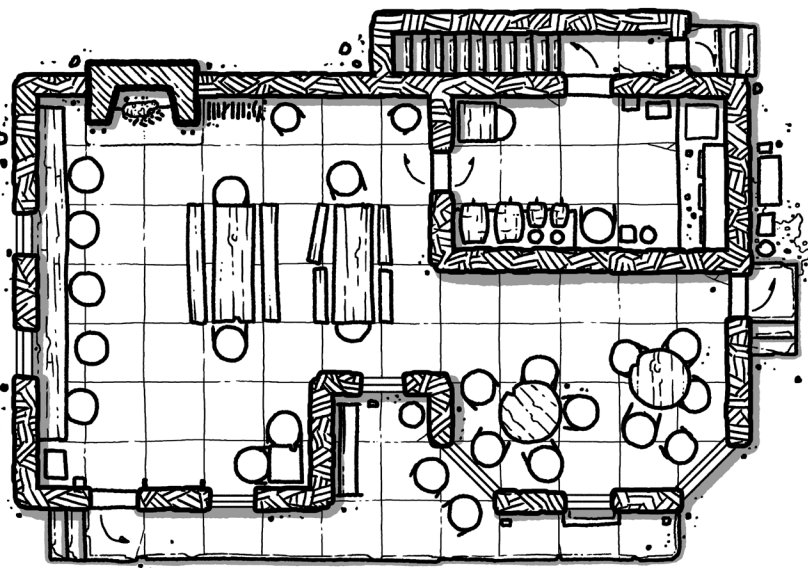
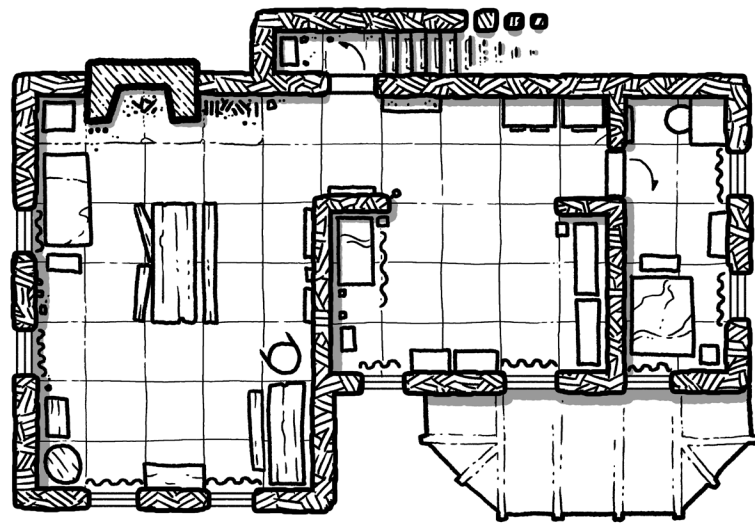
The Strangled Imp Tavern

The Strangled Imp is a dark and cramped space, with wooden beams and a slowly decaying roof that leaks into the owner's apartments above. The air is thick with smoke, sweat, and the smell of ale and rancid meat. The floor is very old stone fieldstone, predating this building by a few centuries. A fireplace dominates the

wall opposite the front door, where a spit of meat slowly roasts – the other walls are adorned with rusty weapons and taxidermied animal heads. The tavern has no “bar” per se, with the staff instead typically found sitting at a table or the chair near the back room – serving drinks and collecting coin as required.

The sign for the tavern is a foot-tall wooden carving of a small demonic cherub-like form, their tail wrapped around their neck and then attached to the wall outside the front door by a large nail. The front of the tavern is a raised stone “porch” with a small bench and a few chairs used in pleasant weather by those who find the tight interior a bit too much. The side door of the tavern leads into the alleyway between the Imp and the leatherworker's next door. The alley is particularly foul as patrons use this space to relieve themselves of all the ale they've consumed – sometimes quite messily.

Upstairs we have the home of the owner – the owner sleeps in the bed on the left, in the main room before the hearth. The back bedroom on the right is for the owner's mother, and the small bed in the side room is used for guests or if the owner has hired someone who needs a place to stay.



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The Lost Watch

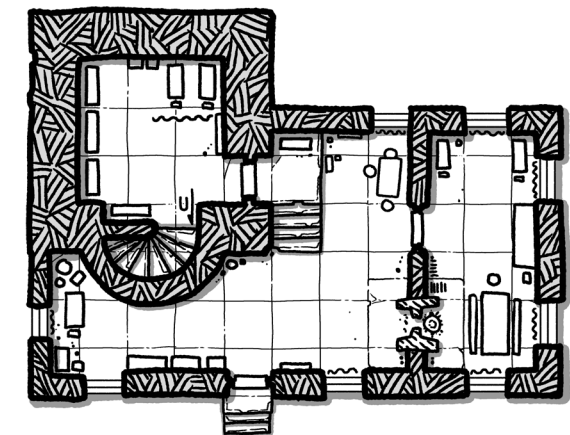
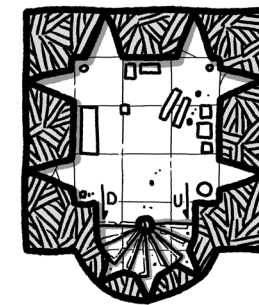
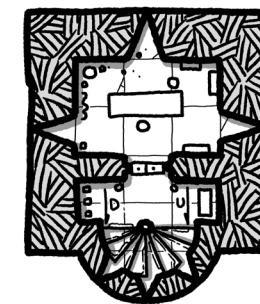
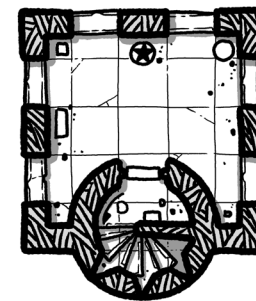
A wee little watch tower once sat in the blue hills, overlooking a hamlet that was slowly dying. Then Zhole, a hundred other minor godlings, and the 77 Gods Trapped Between breached the division between worlds where a minor priest had begged for succour from the predations of the elves. The small hamlet became “The City of the Gods” and the world changed.

Today the Lost Watch is just another odd building within the walls of the city. While the old stone construction makes it obviously one of the pre-war buildings its location makes it unsuitable for its original purpose and the cramped interior makes it awkward for most other uses, so it has become home to a small “guild” of mercenaries. It doesn't offer much housing for guild members passing through, but does have regular meals and serves as a message centre and small home base.

The main room on entering is fairly open, with storage on the far left along with a cot for a guild apprentice. A table with a map of the region is at the back of the room by the stairs into the tower proper. The eastern room serves as kitchen, dining room, and bunks for the two guild members who maintain the tower.

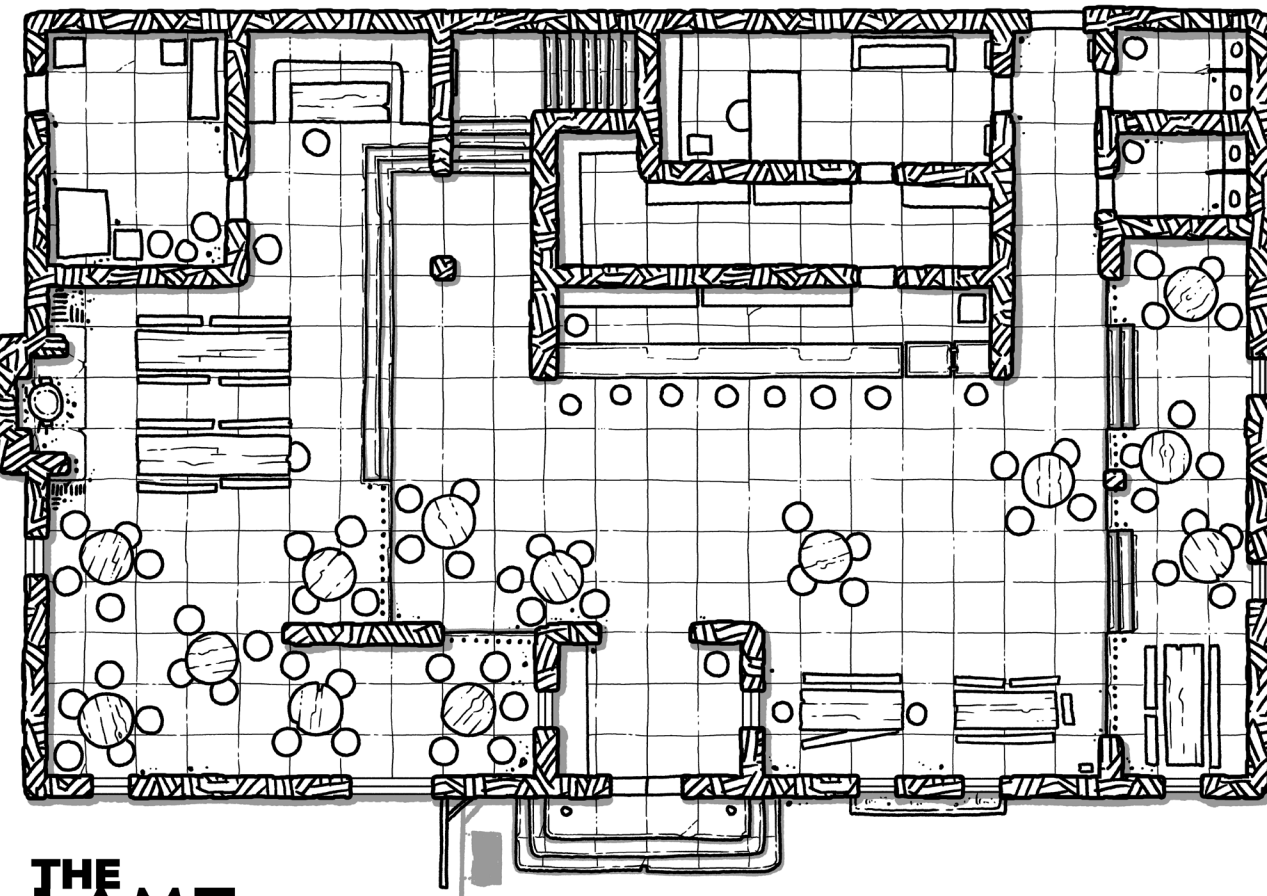
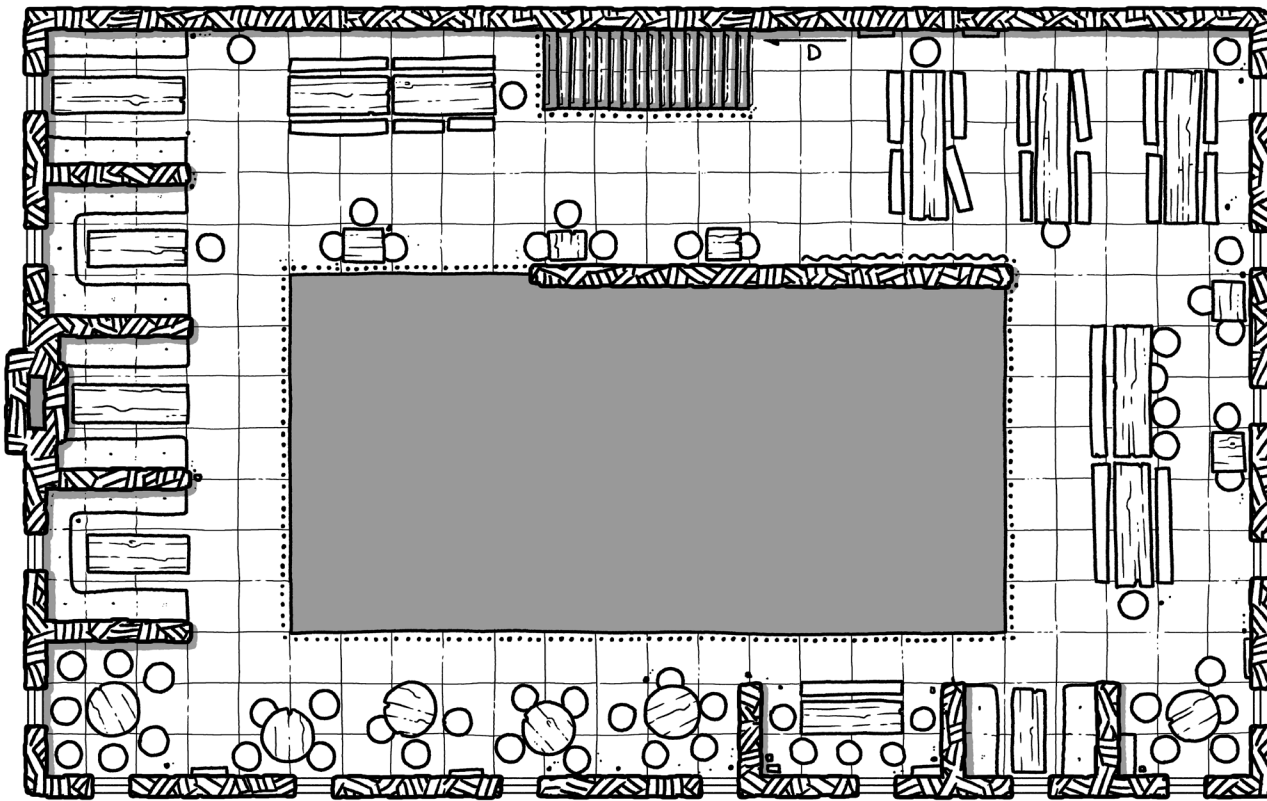
The lowest level of the tower proper has two beds for members passing through, with racks of paperwork regarding guild business (mostly tracking tithes and provisions) taking up most of the walls. The second level of the tower serves as more long term / secure storage, and the locked room on the third floor is used for more sensitive guild business.

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THE LOST WATCH

The Lame Barghest



The Lame Barghest is a drinking establishment of significant size - one of the better places to get a drink while in the City of Blue if you get along with the gangs that provide “law enforcement” in the neighbourhood.

The bar is tended by Joseph the Elder (rough, scarred, likes to talk but quick to judge) during the days and Joseph the Younger (unrelated) (long-haired, vibrant, wears a lot of simple jewelry) in the evenings - but the business is the property of Pakha Vouk (lean, weathered, has few words), an elf who can be found in the crowd here most evenings and many afternoons.

The Barghest serves alcohol primarily, but a pot of thin stew is kept over the fire for those who need warming up or who are unwilling to leave the bar for a meal.

The ground floor is mostly a “party space” - people come here to drink and meet friends

and others into their cups. A few young toughs will typically set up at tables that give a good view of those coming and going and to establish a presence - this is generally ignored by management as long as they keep buying drinks and don't cause trouble with each other (something they've learned not to do on the premises, keeping any real trouble for settling in the alleys and mud).

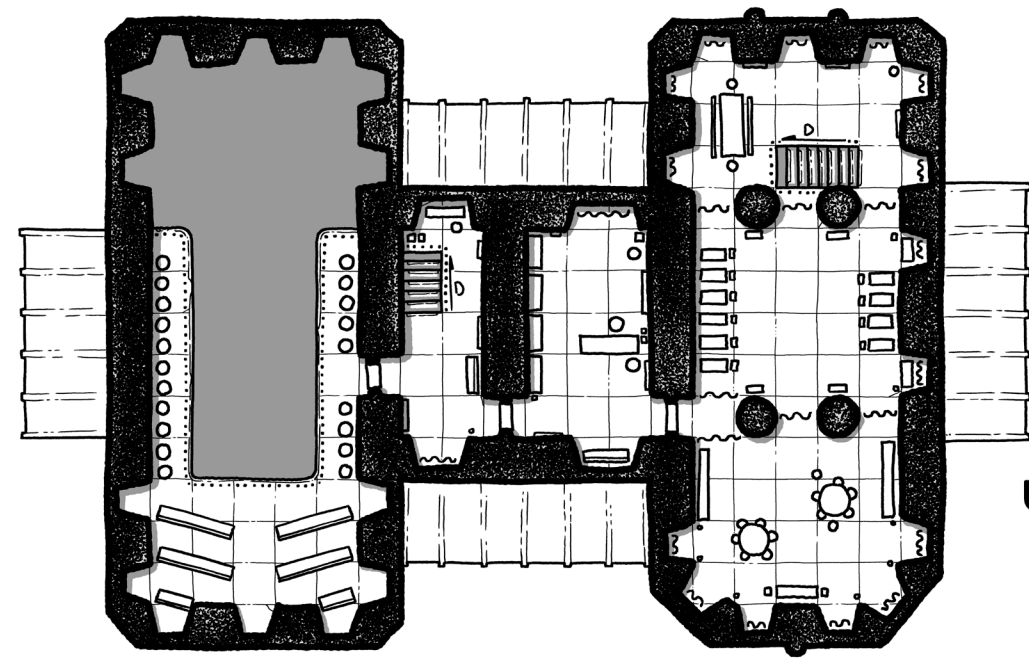
The upper level is quieter, with tables and semi-private booths overlooking the central area of the tavern. This is where a number of “fixers” and middlemen can usually be found - two different “major players” who operate in different markets are often found here, Dusty (young, high pitched, stylish) who arranges for thefts and the subsequent fencing of commercial property, and Brother Jonah (fatherly, slow-talking, dangerous) who operates a “family business” of racketeering, smuggling, and “enforcement”..

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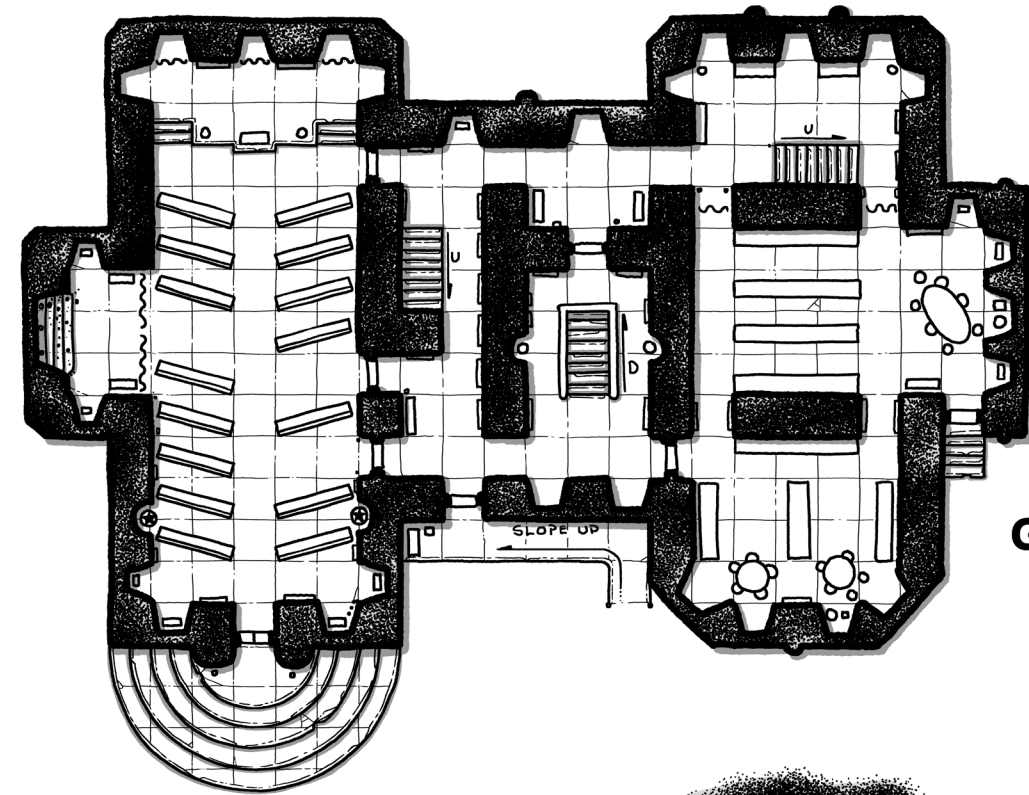
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THE LAME BARGHEST
1 Square = 5 Feet

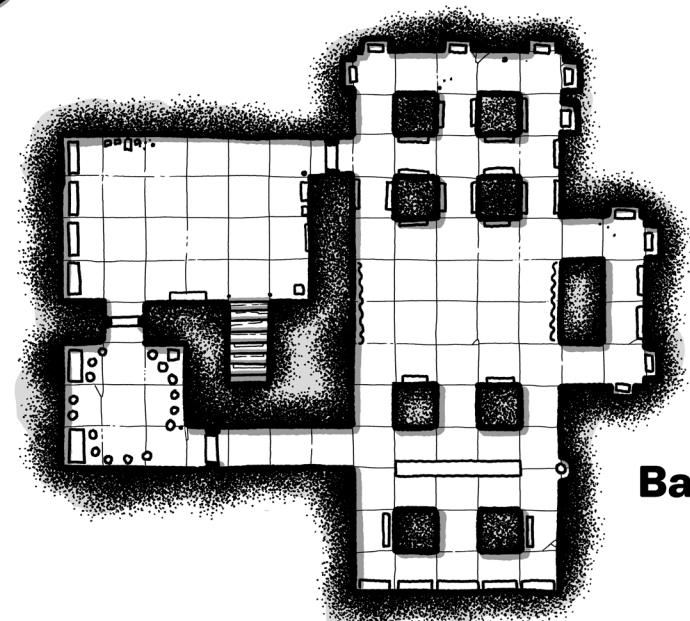
The Sanctuary of Lament



Upper Level



Ground Level



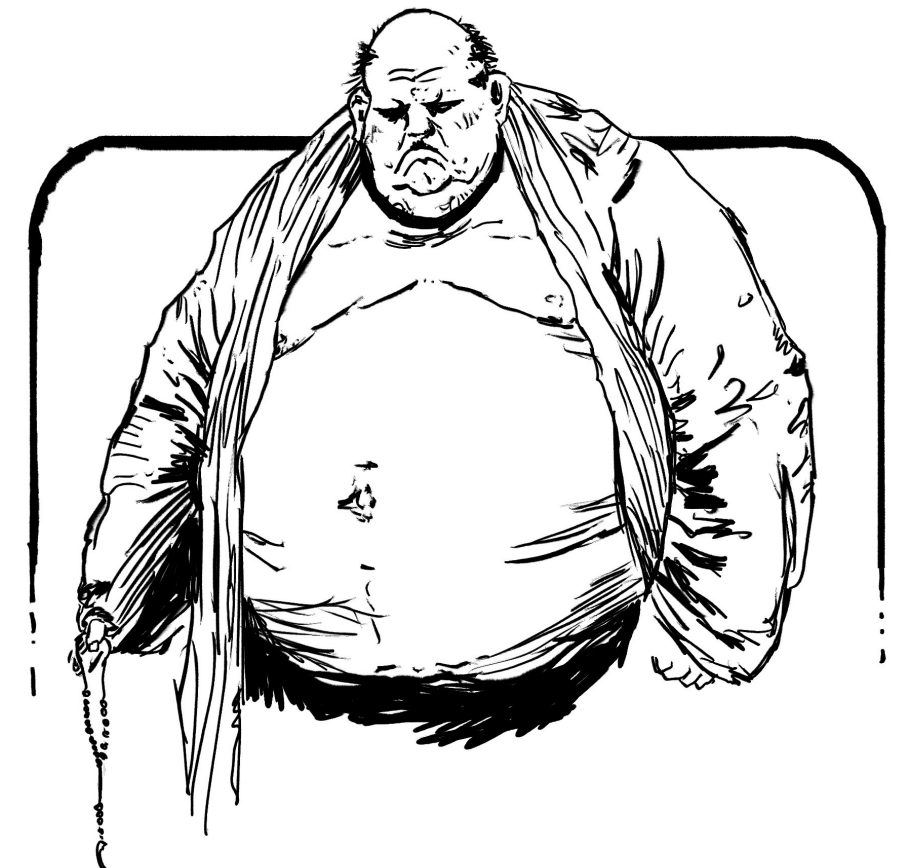
Basement

This is one of the few remaining churches of the Lament of the Silver Lord – said to be the creator and protector of the two pale moons and the stars. The Silver Lord laments for the Sun, his true love denied. The church of the Lament seeks to comfort and honour the Silver Lord through hymns, rituals, and sacrifices of silver in the night.

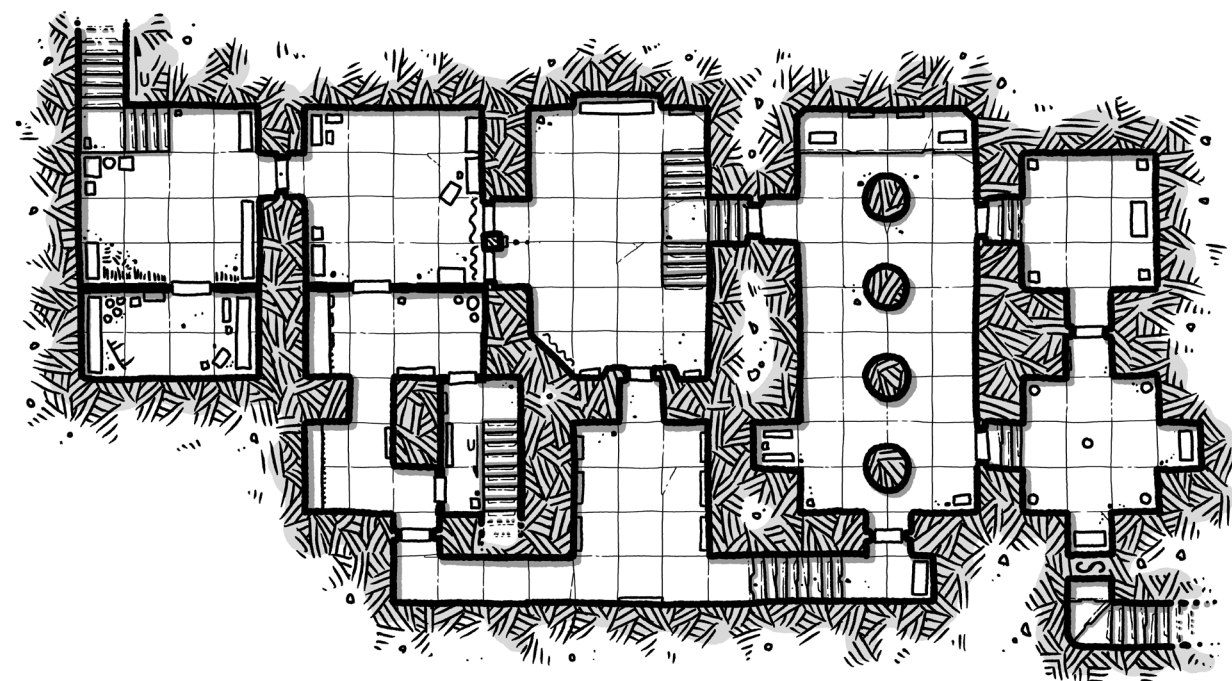
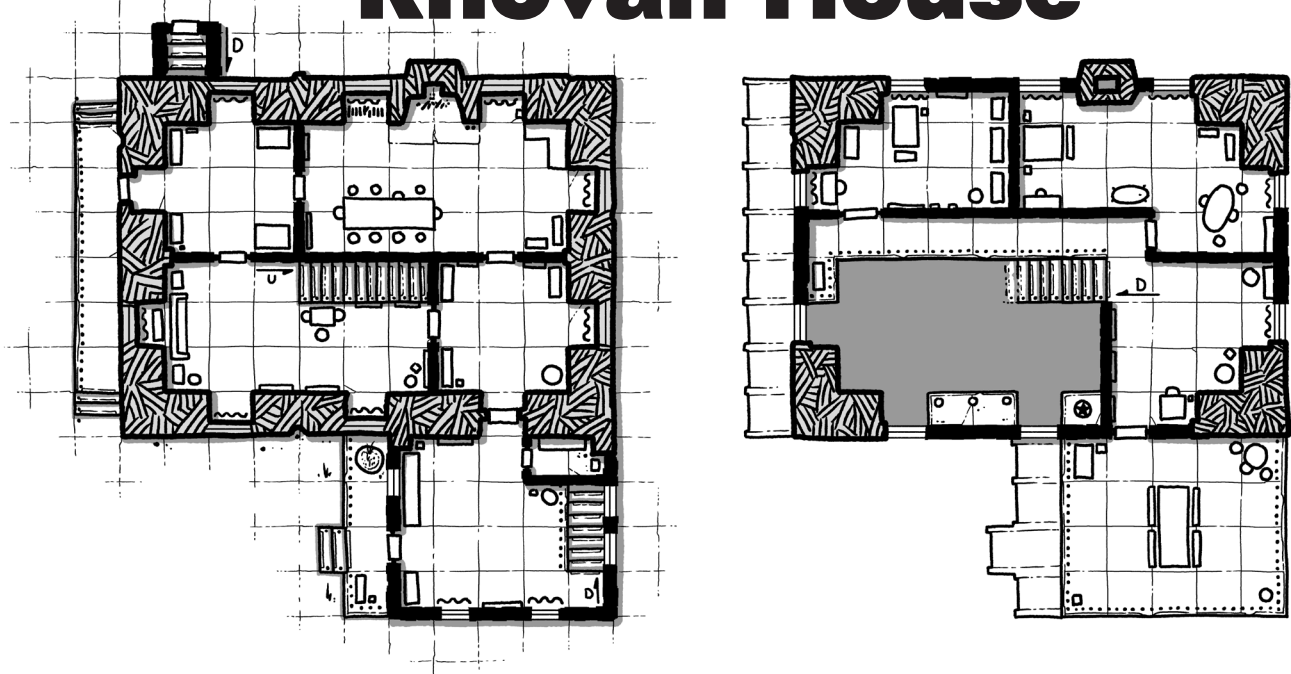
The Lament of the Silver Lord has a hierarchical structure, with the Grand Vision (elderly, down to earth, pleasant but strict) as the leader and the Moon Singers as the clergy. The Grand Vision is claimed to be able to communicate directly with the Silver Lord, and thus guides the Moon Singers and followers with his divine will. The Moon Singers are the ones who perform the ceremonies and rituals, and they are taught the skills and formulae of the lunar magic that flows from the Silver Lord.

The church proper is a two-story structure with a smaller basement. The left side of the structure is the church & temple proper with pews, a small shrine off to the side, and a raised area for the Moon Singers to guide rituals. The grand stairs lead up to this area, but there is also a ramp off to one side for transporting in heavy materials as well as for those of the faith who find the stairs difficult. The right side of the structure is a library on the ground floor, and dormitory above.

Beneath the library is a basement with storage space for records (a lot of historical records of the movements of celestial bodies is kept here), and a pair of large rooms that are used as community spaces for various assemblies of both the faithful and for other groups needing a meeting space.



Rhovan House



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While nothing huge by any stretch, Rhovan House is obviously a well-to-do estate with stone foundations, ground floor, and supports at the corners on the second floor to hold up the slate roof. Off the side of the building is a single-story wooden expansion on a stone floor that now serves as the main access to the building.

Two staircases lead to the basements – one is outside the house on the north side – a door that leads to stairs into the main cellars used for storage of old furniture, preserves, and firewood; and another set of stairs in the entry chamber that leads down

to the extended cellars that include a wine cellar, what appears to once have been a ritual / worship space or two, a smaller private shrine, and a crypt chamber housing the remains of the original owners of the house. The coffin holding Lady Rhovan also hides a secret door leading to deeper passages...

The second floor of the house is accessed via stairs in the cathedral-ceilinged great room – into a sitting room, the master bedroom, and a smaller bedroom & office. The second floor of the entrance add-on is a large patio where you can watch the city's activities below.

A Temple of Qón: Guardian of the Gates of Hell.

(next two pages)

Qón protects the soul against the perils of the hereafter and aids those attacked by the powers of the Dark. This small temple dedicated to the Cohort of Belkhánu provides “escorts” for funerals conducted by the associated temple, guarding against those who would disturb the righteous slumber of the dead (yes, they are looking at YOU, servants and necromancers of Sárku).

Entry to the temple is via a columned courtyard, with the main temple chamber having a tall vaulted ceiling and a balcony overlooking from the east end. At the west side of the chamber are statues of both Qón and Belkhánu in their most common strange, multi-limbed aspects. The east side of the structure is for administrative use, with chambers for documents and for administrative priests to conduct the day-to-day business of the temple.

Upstairs, the south side is where the high priests (administrative & ritual) have their shared dais to conduct their work and research, surrounded by lesser functionaries. The north chamber is for supplicants and for high-ranking attendees to the various rituals who pass through to the balcony on the left.

The basements are accessible via a pair of ramps. Heavy goods that need to be stored or researched below are brought in via the north door which is level with the raised ground behind the temple unlike the other entrances which have stairs to get to them.

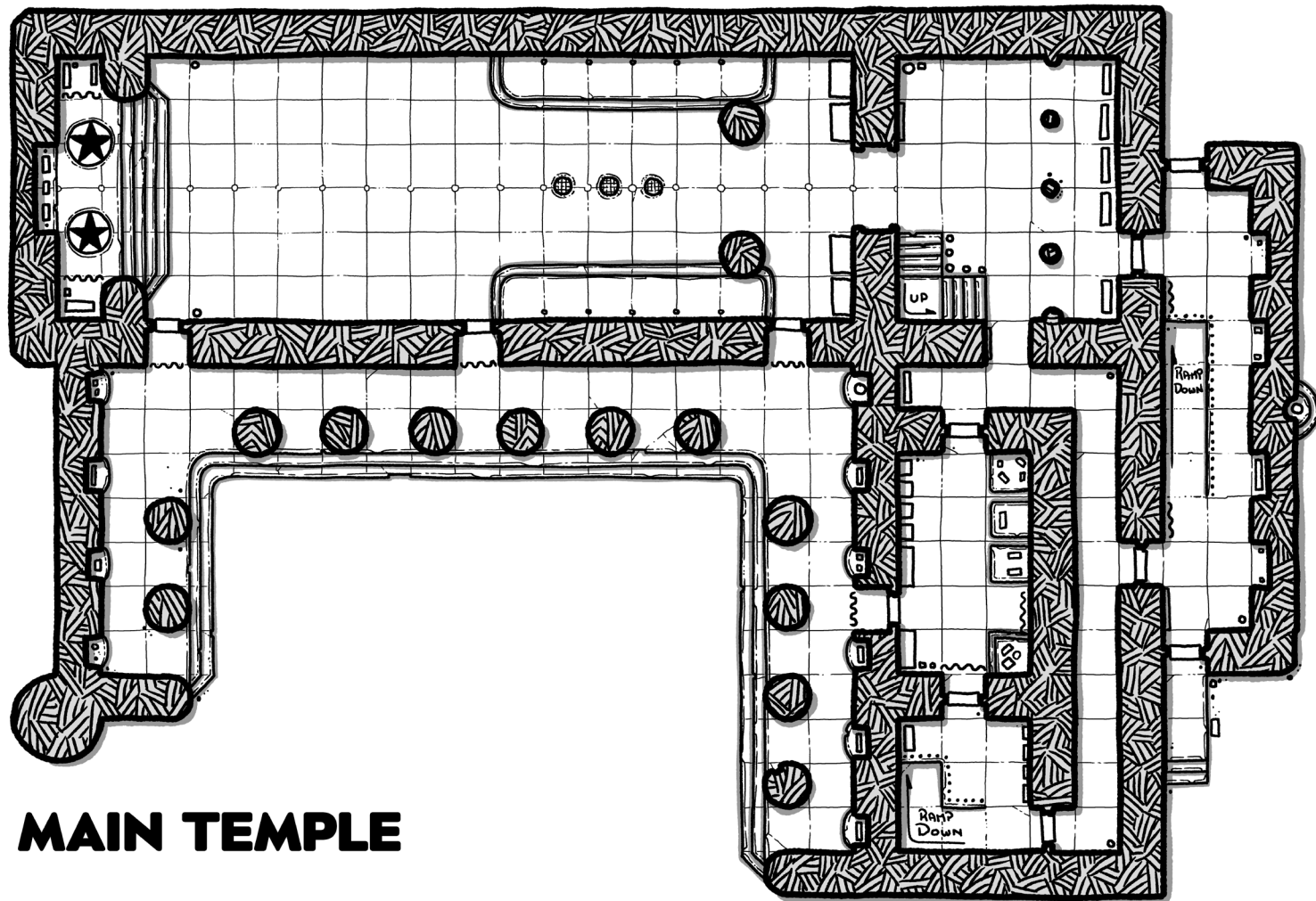
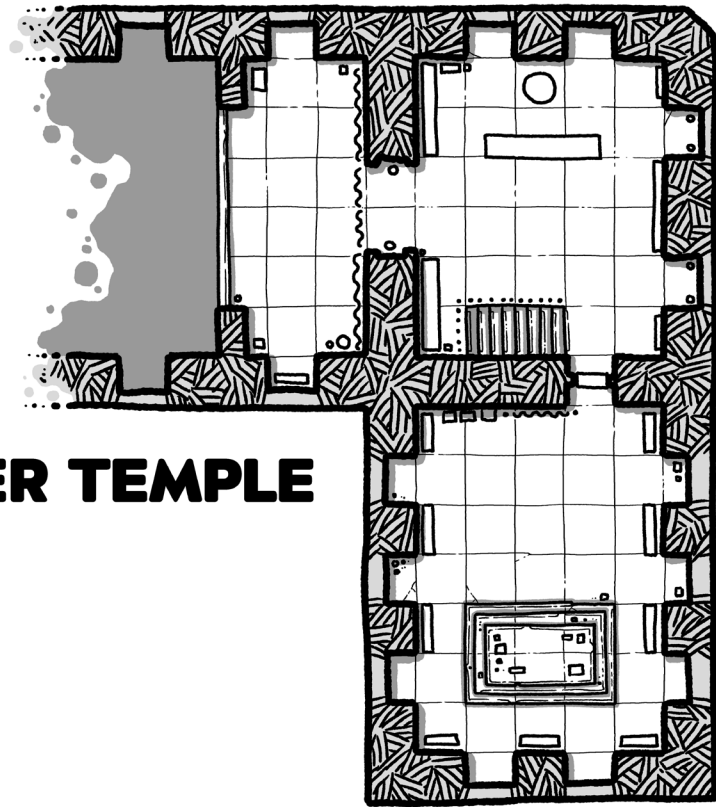
The basements themselves were repurposed from another structure during the last Ditlana (a tradition of tearing down and rebuilding the city in order to make room

for change – especially important for the large temples and clanhouses as they fall in and out of favour). At one time this was the heart of a massive set of smelters & forges before the nearby iron mine was exhausted. This is evidenced by the large ceramic ventilation system that remains down here – at one time temple slaves would spin a series of fans in the main tank (in the upper centre area of the sub-level 1 map) in order to bring in and propel air throughout the complex. The fans and machinery are long gone, but many of the pipes remain and can be accessed from various points (including three small grated entry points in the middle of the floor of the main temple above).

Sub-level 1 can be reached by either of the two ramps from the temple above and contains many archives and a small barracks for lowly temple workers, as well as the central tank for the old ventilation system. Access to the lower level is via stairs on the west side, or a ramp linking to the same chamber as the heavy cargo ramp on the upper level – the chambers attached to these two ramps on the east side are used for storage of heavy goods and supplies.

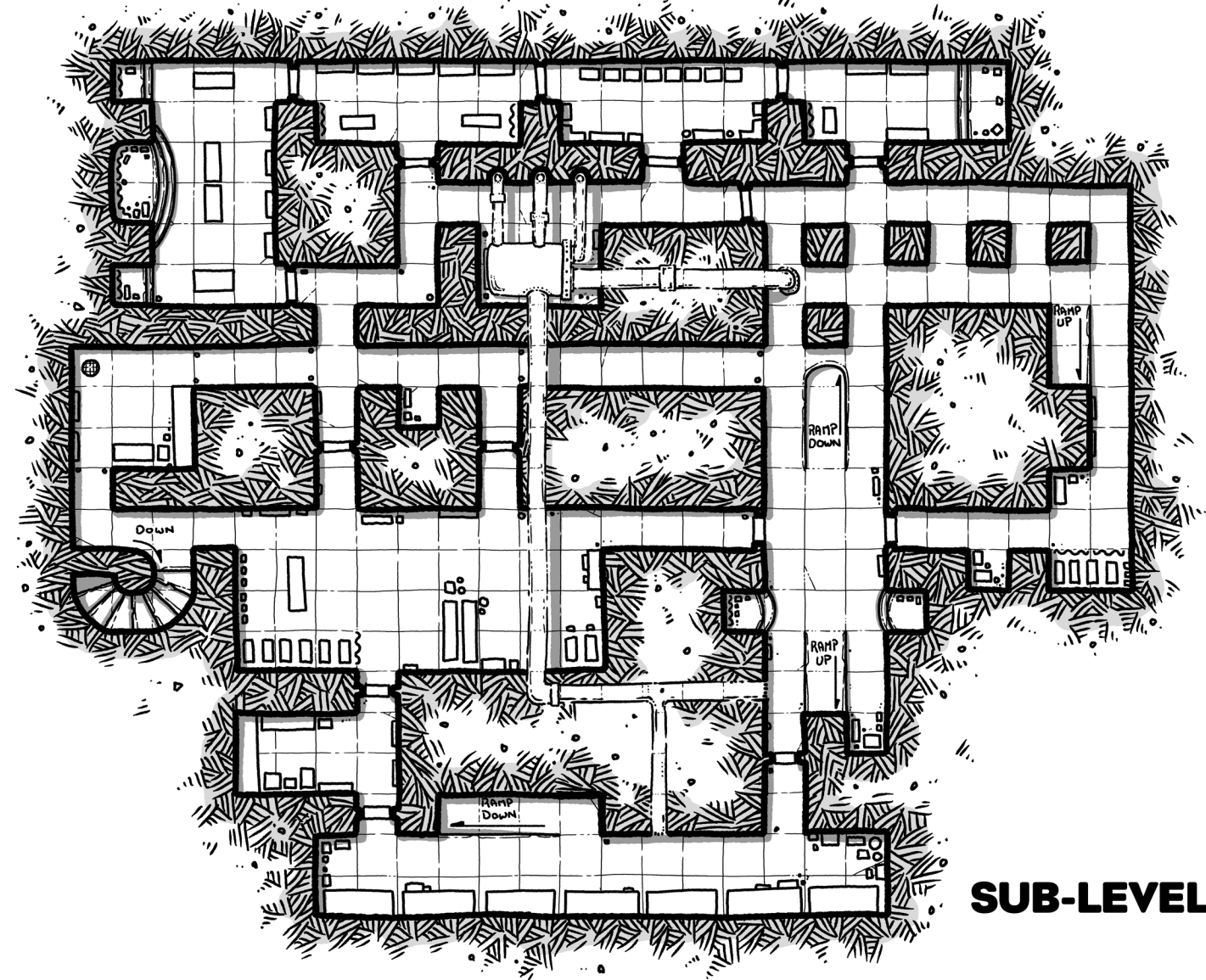
Sub-level 2 is divided into two distinct sections. The east side is accessed via the ramp from above and contains again more shelving and often stores additional goods from the temple of Belkhánu. It is home to the temple's cisterns that collect rain water from the temple roof and the roofs of nearby structures. The west side is accessed via the stairs near the barracks above and provides an accessway into the deeper undercity that is kept locked with a small guard room to raise the alarm should something dangerous attempt to make entry this way.

UPPER TEMPLE

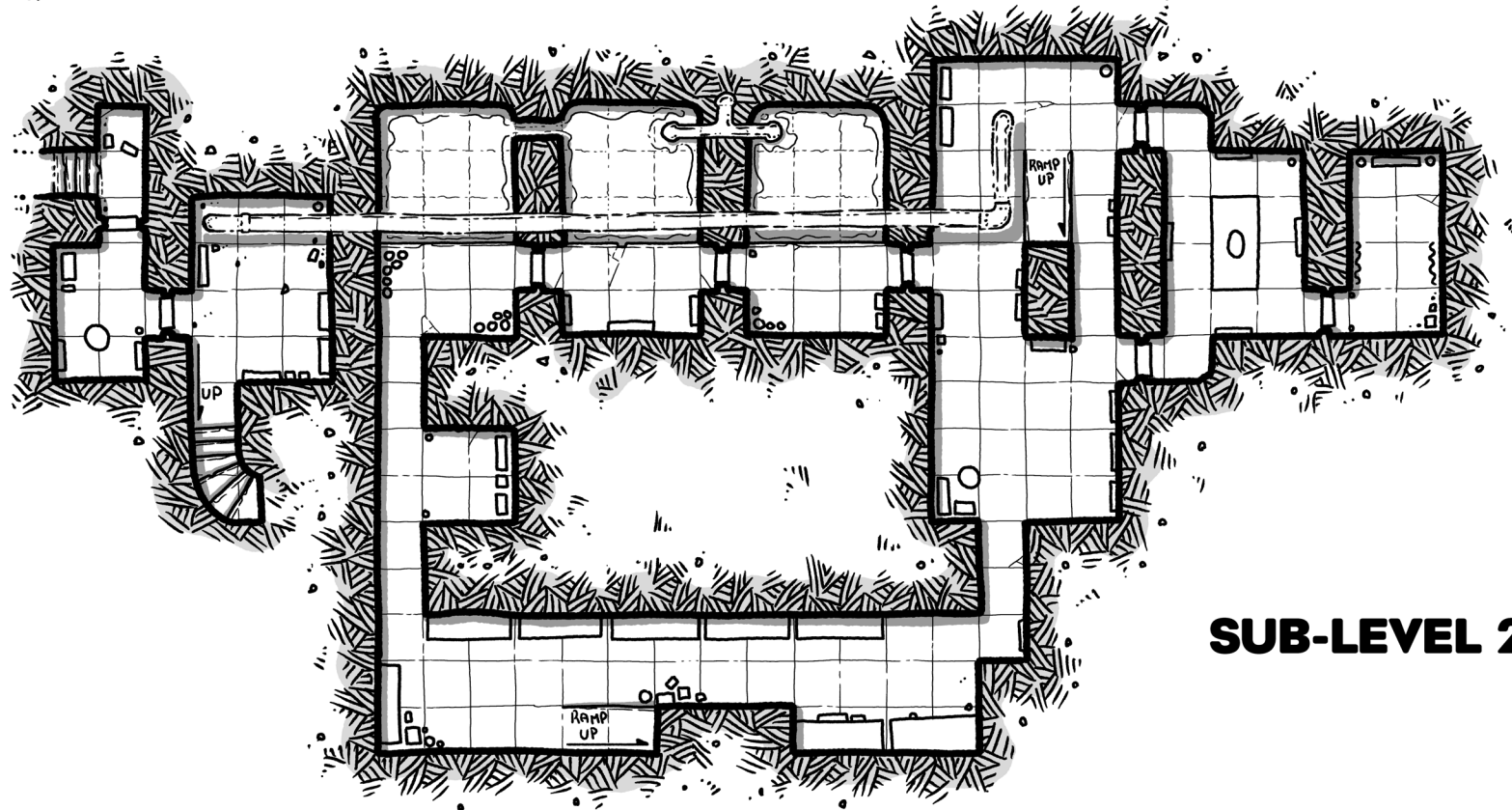


MAIN TEMPLE

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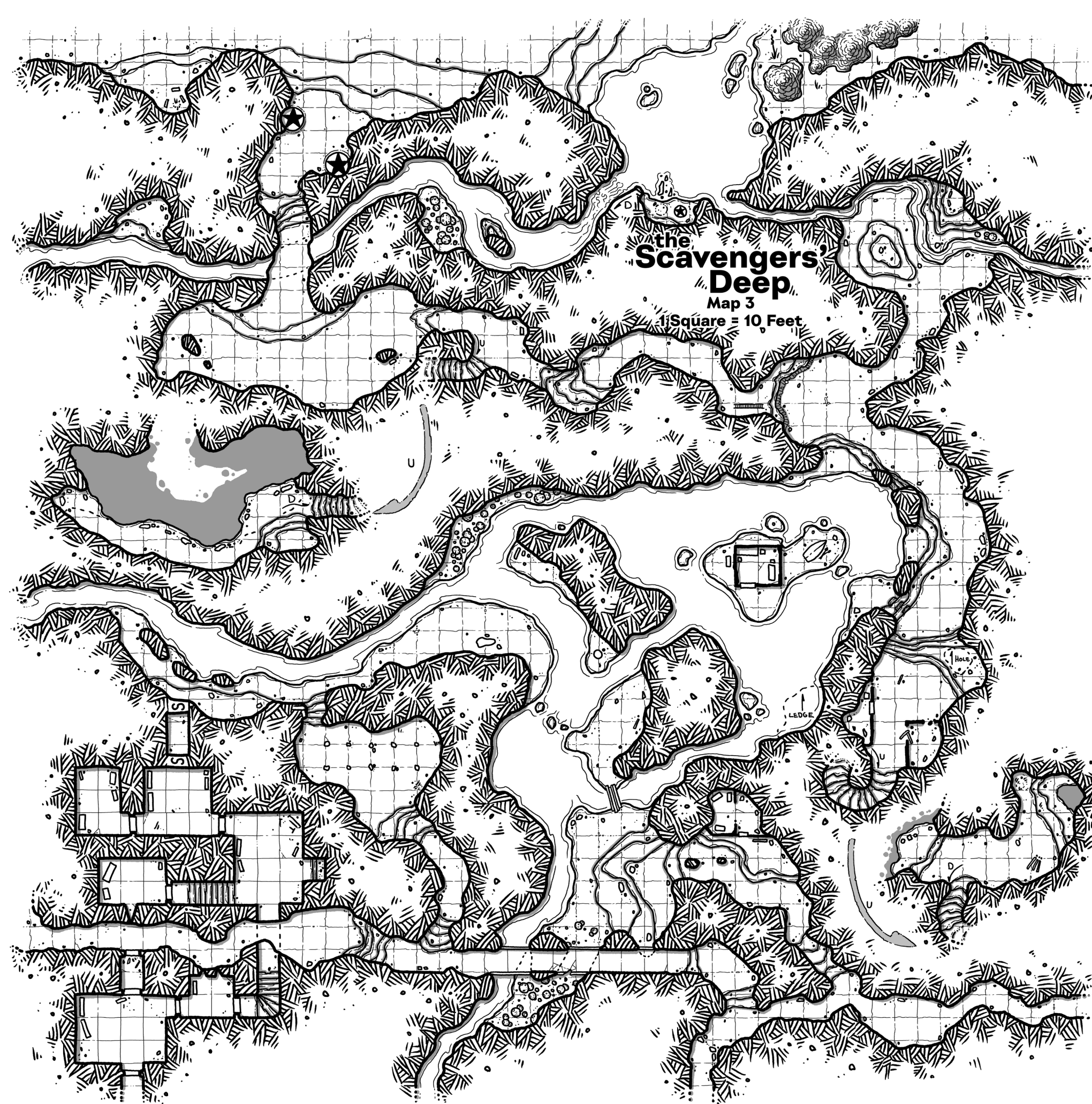


SUB-LEVEL 1



SUB-LEVEL 2

Scavengers' Deep Map 3



The Scavengers' Deep is a reminder of the amount of work that went into underground structures during the great war. Generally, the elves only built underground when hiding their breeding and research facilities, whereas the forces of the kingdoms, assisted by the dwarves, were constantly building underground as the elves were unrelenting and would completely raze any surface defences that they defeated.

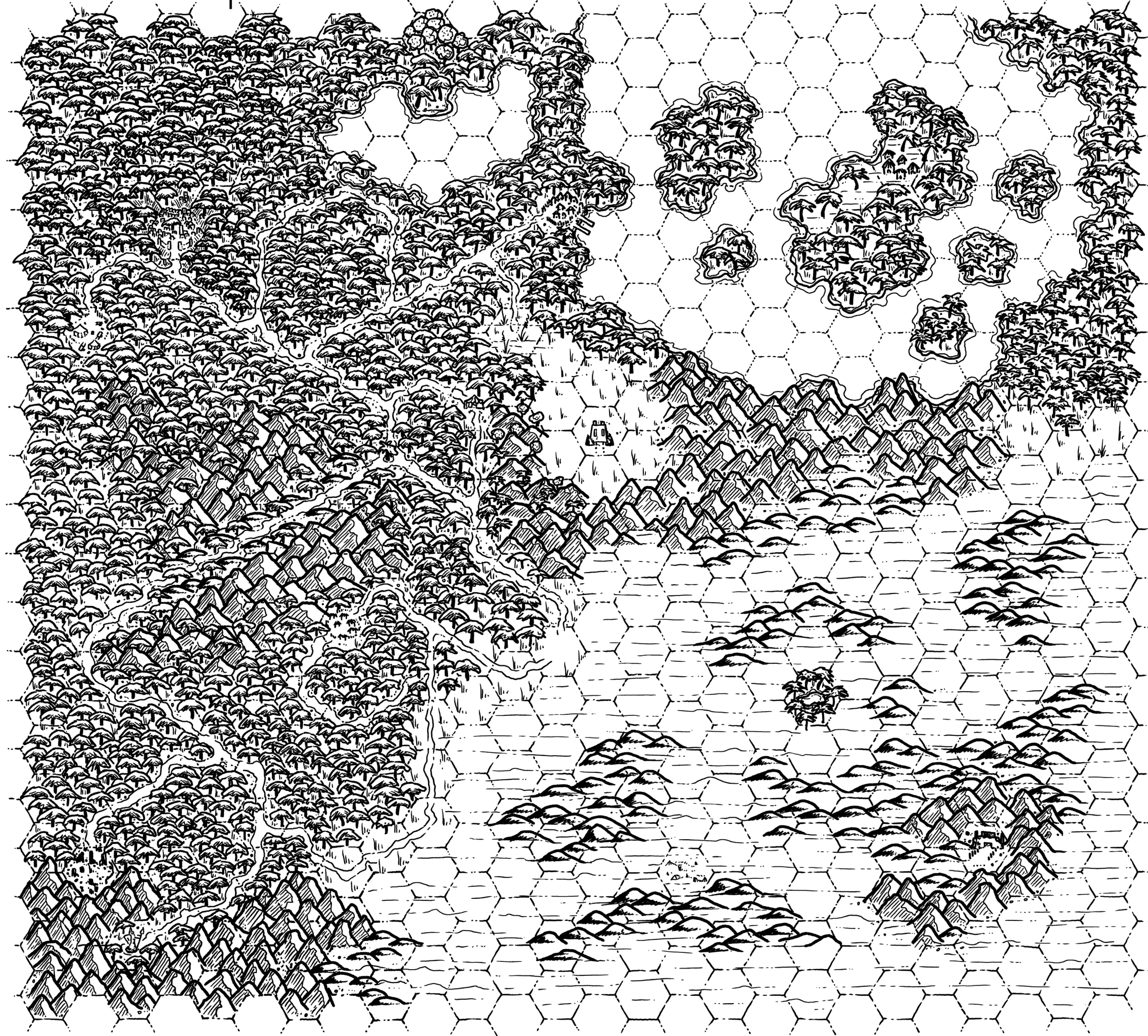
But the structures now known as the Scavengers' Deep are atypical, an elven complex mixing some (ruined) surface structures, natural caves, and significant sprawling underground complexes dedicated to research, training, and breeding their slave races.

This is the third map in the Scavengers' Deep series – sitting just east of Map 1. This map extends along the hill face that the deep is dug into and is notable as one of the Deep's water sources as a large stream fills a pond against the hill here and then flows down into the caves where the water is joined by the small stream in map 1 before looping back into the southern caves in this section. The main access isn't over this steep watery descent, but a cave in the hill to the west of it that is flanked by two massive caryatid columns, a pair of 19 foot tall armoured elves cut out of the stone of the cave walls and seeming to hold up the ceiling.

This part of the Scavengers' Deep only has two sections that are provided as upper level vignettes – galleries above two of the larger caves that are reached by climbing natural stairs up from the caves below. The first overlooks the entrance cave beyond the caryatid columns and provides a vantage point for observing interlopers or likely harrying them with ranged weapons. The second looks over the "lake cave" (with the house on an island in the middle of it) and is accessed from the back of the cave to the east of the lake, beyond a pair of "houses" that have fallen into ruin.

On the southwest side of the map we have a small complex of cut stone chambers with a secret entrance to the river cave, and a door from the tunnel that exits the map to the east, west, and south. This small complex was for guards and elven scientists keeping an eye on the mutant wretches of the experimental slave races that had been abandoned to these caves.

Besides the two north entrances (along the water or through the caryatid columns), access to this map is either by the two flooded passages or the cavern corridor to the east (to map 1), the very narrow stream or narrow cave to the west (to a yet unknown map area), or via the cave, tunnel, or stream to the south leading to map 4.



The Edge of the Desert

This hex map was drawn for David Flor's "The Mosidian Temple" based on an old hex map he sent me to work from. But while we wait for the adventure to be released, let's extrapolate a whole mini setting just based on the map.

The Edge of the Desert, as the name implies, is a liminal area where mountains provide enough climate control to allow for dense jungles that rapidly give way to a dry desert wasteland, with a thin strip of grasslands between.

"The Desert" (it goes by other names too, but to most it is just the desert or the sand) is inhospitable, but was once far more pleasant as the ruins would indicate (with the sandcovered ruins of a city on the left, and a secluded temple hidden in the rocky barrens). A solitary oasis provides a last chance for those lost within the sands, but they have their own significant defenses (see the Golem Oasis from April 2023).

Aside from the oasis, much of the map is a setting for exploration - the only settlements being around the edges of the map (a small city and a nearby trading encampment in the northwest jungles, a village on the largest of the lake islands, and a small humanoid village tucked against the mountains on the edge of the desert). Jungle paths lead to old ruins, a massive unexplained statue, and a temple in a sheltered grassland valley near the lake.

Absolutely screams for weird jungle adventures to discover old ruins and ancient treasures and then trying to put together an expedition with enough people, water, and food in order to find the ruins in the desert and somehow bring home the loot that will be found there.