

# THE DUNGEON OF DARKEST DOOM

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An adventure for 4-6 players of low-to-mid level  
(compatible with many Fantasy Role-playing game systems)

**Quest Type:** Retrieval (Magic Item)

**Number of Players:** 4-6 (4-5 ideal)

**Location:** Deep in the GodsHome Mountains to the North

**Objective:** Retrieve the legendary Soul Trapper magic item from a long-forgotten dungeon!

**Patron's Name:** Eli Muskegon (recently retired Alchemist)

**Rival Patron's Name:** Charles Hansen (Hedge Wizard and Herbalist)

A very rich but aging man (Eli) wants your group to get him this item! He has done research on each of you through his spy network and picked you for your skill set. He is offering a large monetary reward and not caring what else you might loot on your adventure. He wants what is called the Soul Trapper...

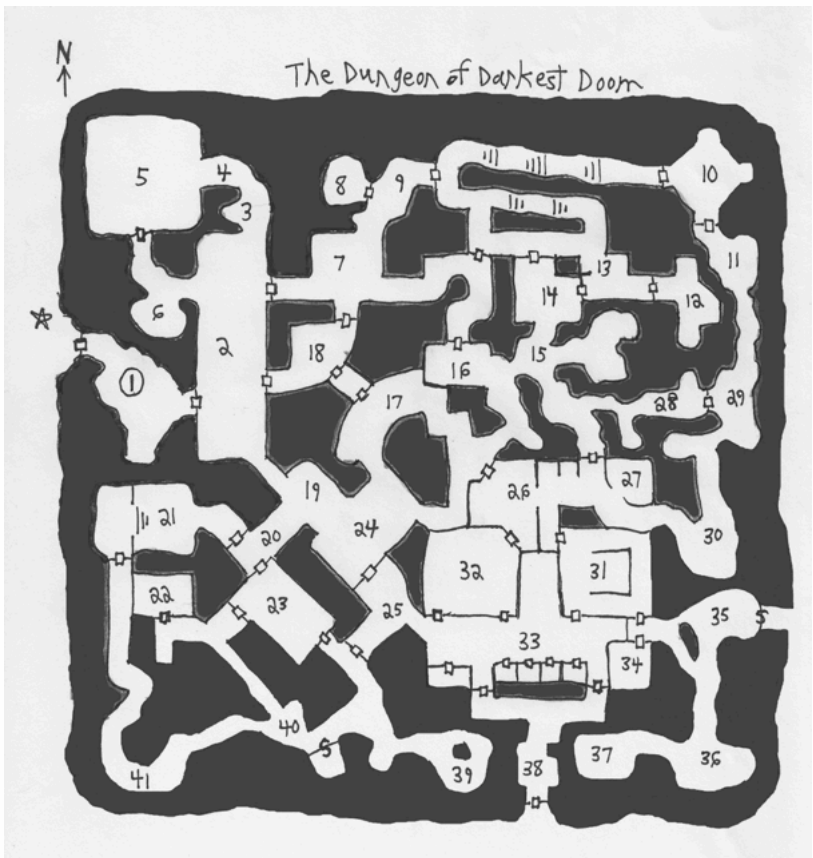
**Soul Trapper** - traps only a willing humanoid inside a very large crystal. The victim's soul is no longer a part of their body. The humanoid must be alive at the time of the transfer ritual. At any time in the future the soul can be retrieved and transferred to a construct or golem body (using a similar transfer ritual). The target body must not have a soul already attached to it. A corpse will not work either.

The soul trapped inside the crystal loses all track of time but does not lose their memory. It is if they are in a deep sleep. A transfer ritual must be performed to put a soul into or out of the Soul Trapper. The ritual takes roughly two hours and something that must be learned. It also requires 500 (of local currency) worth of materials for each ritual. The target body can be a robot, rock golem, clay golem, clockwork gnome, etc. This is transhumanism at its finest.

The target body does not have to be the same size as the trapped soul's original body. A humanoid shape though works best. Soul Trapper can only hold one soul at a time. Attempts to add additional souls just results in a failed ritual. Soul Trapper can only be destroyed by its creator (no one knows who or what that is).

Soul Trapper gives off a shifting magical aura (smells of chaos magic). It is about six feet tall and hovers two feet off of the ground. It can be pushed around by two people. Soul Trapper has ever-changing colors and faintly hums. If one looks very closely one can see small runes carved all over it. Non-magical weapons cannot damage the crystal. Magical weapons and spells can merely scratch the crystal.

**Storyteller Notes:** Rival Patron wants Eli dead and sends his own mercenary team to retrieve the crystal. Both rich men aren't too popular and a little eccentric. The dungeon is not abandoned but full of activity. It is a place that time forgot (or wants to forget).



Map of the Dungeon of Darkest Doom (41 rooms)

**Storyteller/GM Note:** Depending upon how much time you have (or how long you want the adventure to go) you could have the Soul Trapper located in room #10, #30, or #36. The Soul Trapper will always be guarded by the Cult of the Crystal Constructs (# of them equal to the characters +1). The Crystal will be in the center of the room with *Cult of the Crystal Constructs* encircled around it. Whatever room that you don't choose to be the **Soul Trapper** room will have 1d6+2 regular Cultists playing poker at a table. The Cultists will attack the adventuring party on sight. Rooms #10, #30, and #36 will have runes carved on each floor tile, some of them can be pressure plate traps (doing 1d4 points of damage from spikes each trap).

**Cult of the Crystal Construct:** Init +4; Attack Fist Smash +4 melee (1d8) or Grapple +4 (opposed grapple check to break free); AC 17; HD 7d10 (30 hp); MV 60'; Act 1d20; Special powers: immune to Disease, Toxins, Suffocation, Fire; SV: Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +5; AI: C

### **Dungeon Room/Location Descriptions**

**1 - (Foyer/Entrance)** After following a winding tunnel from the surface entrance you come to the first carved out room. Cave art adorns all the walls and floor. It looks like multiple artists over multiple centuries contributed to this room. Bones of different animals are strewn all over the floor as well. **GM Note:** There are no monsters here unless you want to attack them with a giant centipede or something similar. Maybe two Soul Trapper Assassins jumping the party works too.

**2 - (Mausoleum)** This is clearly an enormous mausoleum built to the proportions of giants. Huge niches are set into the walls within which you can discern giant bones. Stern-looking statues of stone giants stand 12-20 feet tall against the walls, and in the center of the room lies a 15-foot-long sarcophagus. **GM Note:** 1d4+1 of the stone statues will animate and attack. These stone golems (use stats for **living statue** found on Page 420 of the DCC Rulebook) are ancient, they possess uncommon intelligence and wisdom.

**3 - (Food Storage)** This area houses crates and barrels full of dry foods. Plenty here to feed an adventuring party for days. Some of the containers have been opened, many have not. A purple raven-like crest has been painted on many of the crates, while a red kraken-like crest has been painted on the barrels.  
**GM Note:** No monsters here, a few regular rats and a cat maybe. The food is edible but bland.

**4 - (Kitchen)** A huge pot of stew hangs from a thick iron tripod over a crackling fire in the center of this chamber. A small hole in the ceiling allows some of the smoke from the fire to escape, but much of it expands across the ceiling and rolls down to fill the room in a dark fog. Other details are difficult to make out, but some creature must be nearby, because it smells like a good soup is cooking.

**GM Note:** There will be a female **ogre** (see Page 422 of the DCC Rulebook) or multiple female **orcs** (see Page 423 of the DCC Rulebook) cooking here. They do not like visitors. They cook for most of the dungeon inhabitants.

**5 - (Dining Hall)** This is clearly where everyone eats, at least the high ranking. A long wooden table made of dark wood is in the center of this room. High back wooden chairs are neatly arranged on either side, with a gem encrusted chair at one end. Strange paintings of battles fought long ago are on two of the walls.

**GM Note:** The fancy chair is worth 2d6x100 gold pieces. The gems in it are rubies, sapphires, and emeralds. The two paintings on the walls are worth 5d6x10 gold pieces each.

**6 - (Tapestry Room)** This room is hung with hundreds of dusty tapestries. All show signs of wear: moth holes, scorch marks, dark stains, and the damage of years of neglect. They hang on all the walls and hang from the ceiling to brush against the floor, blocking your view of the rest of the room. Two **giant centipedes** (see Page 398 of the DCC Rulebook) are on the ceiling and will attack the adventurers.

**GM Note:** There are 2d6 tapestries and they are worth 2d6 gold pieces each.

**7 - (Crafting and Repair Shop)** This area is filled with tables, scraps of leather, hammers, rivets, vials of dyes, and other materials used to create and repair items. It looks like armor and weapons were recently repaired here. A few helmets in various stages of creation are on the tables.

**GM Note:** 1d6 of the helmets are sellable for 1d6x10 money each (wearable by humanoids).

**8 - (Alchemist Lab)** The door creaks open, which somewhat overshadows the sound of bubbling liquid. Before you is a room about which alchemist's dream. Three tables bend beneath a clutter of bottles of liquid and connected glass piping. Several bookshelves stand nearby stuffed to overflowing with a jumble of books, jars, bottles, bags, and boxes. The alchemist who set this all up doesn't seem to be present, but a beaker of green fluid boils over a burner on one of the tables.

**GM Note:** There are healing potions here (1d6) and bottles of poison (possibly a spell scroll or two hidden among the books). The books are about alchemy and astronomy.

**9 - (Fire Room)** You smelled smoke as you enter into this area, and after rounding the corner into this room you see why. Every surface has scorch marks and ash piles on the floor. The room reeks of fire and burnt flesh. Either a great battle happened here, or the room bears some fire danger you cannot see for no flames light the room anymore.

**GM Note:** Flame traps in the ceiling go off every few minutes. There are 1d6 traps attached to the ceiling, and each does 1d4 points of damage (no save). No visible way to disarm them.

**10 - (Soul Trapper Room - see Storyteller/GM Note, above)**

**11 - (Flowstone Room)** You pull open the door and hear the scrape of its opening echo throughout what must be a massive room. Peering inside, you see a large cavern. Stalactites drip down from the ceiling in sharp points while flowstone makes strange shapes on the floor.

**GM Note:** 1d4+1 Soul Trapper **Assassins** (see Page 432 of the DCC Rulebook) will be sneaking in the shadows here.

**12 - (Training Room)** You open the door to what must be a combat training room. Rough fighting circles are scratched into the surface of the floor. Wooden fighting dummies stand waiting for someone to attack them. A few punching bags hang from the ceiling. There's something peculiar about it all though. Every dummy is stocky and each has a bedraggled piece of leather hanging from its head that could be a long mask or a beard.

**GM Note:** There is a 50% chance that 1d6+1 **cultists** (use the stats for an Acolyte on Page 432 of the DCC Rulebook) are training in here.

**13 - (Trash Room)** Broken weapons and pieces of armor are strewn about in this area. Many blood stains on the junk. Looking through the piles of well-loved equipment might turn up something barely useful/functional. The weapons and armor look like items that gladiators would use in an arena.

**GM Note:** There is a 20% chance of a functional melee weapon that the party could use here.

**14 - (Arena)** In the center of this large room lies a large round pit, its edges lined with rusting iron spikes. About 5 feet away from the pit's edge stand several stone semicircular benches. The scent of sweat and blood lingers, which makes the pit's resemblance to a fighting pit or gladiatorial arena even

stronger. The pit appears to be 12-15 feet deep.

**GM Note:**

There is a 50% chance that there is a **minotaur** (see Page 422 of the DCC Rulebook) in here waiting to kill someone.



**15 - (Collapsed Room)** You peer into this room and spot the white orb of a human skull lying on the floor. Suddenly a stone falls from the ceiling and smashes the skull to pieces. An instant later, another stone from the ceiling drops to strike the floor and shatter. You hear a low rumbling and cracking noise. There appears to be a nice amount of gold scattered throughout the room as well.

**GM Note:** The ceiling caves in during the next round, causing massive damage to anyone foolish to stay in the room that long. The gold is Fool's Gold and worth pretty much nothing. Falling ceiling debris causes 2d6 damage while being in the room (saving throws allowed).

**16 - (Tomb)** This room is a tomb. Stone sarcophagi stand in five rows of three, each carved with the visage of a warrior lying in state. In their center, one sarcophagus stands taller than the rest. Held up by six squat pillars, its stone bears the carving of a beautiful woman who seems more asleep than dead. The carving of the warriors is skillful but seems perfunctory compared to the love a sculptor must have lavished upon the lifelike carving of the woman.

**GM Note:** You could have a ghost or vampire attack out of the main sarcophagus. The creature will be mighty but have treasure. A **mummy** (see Page 422 of the DCC Rulebook) encounter here works well too.

**Vampire spawn:** Init +4; Attack Talon/Claw Strike +5 melee (1d6) or Grapple +5 (opposed grapple check to break free) or Drink Blood +5 melee (1d4 Stamina); AC 17; HD 7d10 (30 hp); MV 60'; Act 2d20; Special Powers: Vulnerable to silver weapons, Drink Blood, Hide in Shadows +5, Infravision 90', Sneak Silently +6, Undead; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4; AL C; Crit U/d12.

**17 - (Armory)** Full suits of armor hang on the walls of this curved room. Nice rugs cover the floor. A few tall mirrors here and there. The suits of armor seem made for humanoids both tall and short. Lit torches on the wall light the area fairly well.

**GM Note:** This room contains one suit of plate mail, two suits of chain mail (one for humans and one for halflings), two suits of leather armor, and one nice set of wizard robes (that would count as cloth armor).

**18 - (Forge)** A large forge squats against the northwest corner of this room, and coals glow dimly inside. Before the forge stands a wide block of iron with a heavy-looking hammer lying atop it, no doubt for use in pounding out shapes in hot metal. Other forge tools hang in racks nearby, and a barrel of water and bellows rest on the floor nearby. Bars of iron and copper lay stacked beside the anvil.

**GM Note:** You could have an evil **dwarf** (use the stats for a Bandit Hero on Page 432 of the DCC Rulebook) making something in here when the party enters. He is intelligent but conniving. He will attack the party if he thinks he can win, but he can be bribed with money or gems.

**19 - (Prayer Room)** This room appears to be used for rituals and prayer. Prayer mats, prayer beads, and prayer books are scattered about. A few empty bottles that smell of ale are gathered in one corner.

**GM Note:** There are no monsters here or treasure of any real value. A few candles and incense lying around might be useful to the party. The prayer books are written in Coptic or Elvish.

**20 - (Last Stand Room)** You walk thru the entryway to this room and note that the only other exits are two doors made of wood. One of those doors has a table shoved against it that is warped and swollen. Indeed, the table only barely deserves that description. Its surface is rippled into waves and one leg doesn't even touch the floor. The door shows signs of someone trying to chop through from the other side, but it looks like they gave up.

**GM Note:** No monsters or treasure here. Maybe a corpse or two that have been hacked up.

**21 - (Throne Room)** A stone throne stands on a foot-high circular dais in the center of this cold chamber. The throne and

dais bear the simple adornments of patterns of crossed lines -- a pattern also employed around each door to the room. It all seems astrological in nature. A skeleton (with glowing eyes) sitting on the throne looks at you and attacks!

**Skeletal prince:** Init +2; Attack Claw Strike +3 melee (1d6) or by Weapon +3; AC 13; HD 1d10 (10 hp); MV 30'; Act 1d20; Special Powers: Undead, half damage from piercing and slashing weapons; Infravision 60'; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3; AL C.

**22 - (Larder)** There's a hiss as you open this door, and you smell a sour odor, like something rotten or fermented. Inside you see a small room lined with dusty shelves, crates, and barrels. It looks like someone once used this place as a larder, but it has been a long time since anyone came to retrieve food from it.  
**GM Note:** There are 1d4 **cave crickets** (see Page 398 of the DCC Rulebook) hiding about.

**23 - (Archery)** You open the door to a long room with a high ceiling. Three thick circles of wood rest on wooden stands. You're not certain what they are from this angle. Broken arrowheads litter the floor of this area.  
**GM Note:** If the player characters step in the room to get a better look, they see that each is painted with concentric circles marred by dozens of cuts into its surface. They are targets for archery.

**24 - (Hall of Mirrors)** When looking into this chamber, you're confronted by a thousand reflections of yourself looking back. Mirrored walls set at different angles fill the room. A path seems to wind through the mirrors, although you cannot tell where it leads. It is very quiet here.

**25 - (Glow Room)** A glow escapes this room through its open doorways. The masonry between every stone emanates an unnatural orange radiance. Glancing quickly about the room, you note that each stone bears the carving of someone's name.

**26** - (Hobgoblin Quarters) There are 1d8 **hobgoblin** guards (see Page 417 of the DCC Rulebook) that live here and patrol the surrounding areas. They are fiercely loyal to the Cult and attack any intruders.

**27** - (Public Restrooms) Self-explanatory. It is quite dirty and stinky here.

**28** - (Bat Cave) The air here is cool and damp, carrying the faint scent of minerals and earth. Sounds of chirping and fluttering echoes softly, creating an eerie symphony of whispers. The ground is uneven, with small pools of water reflecting a faint glow coming from the ceiling.

**GM Note:** There are 1d6 Luminescent Bats hanging from the ceiling. These small, bioluminescent bats flit about the cavern, their wings leaving trails of light in the air. They feed on the fungi and small insects that thrive in this area. They are harmless and will not attack. Magical in nature, they are immune to any nonmagical weapon damage.

**29** - (Wall Paintings Room) This chamber of well-laid stones holds a wide bas-relief of a pastoral scene. In it you see a mountain that looks familiar, except there is a castle near it and a small city as well. Is the subject matter from this world or another?

**30** - (Soul Trapper Room - see Storyteller/GM Note, above)

**31** - (Retro Room) There is a 20' tall demonic idol dominating this room of black stone. The potbellied statue is made of red stone, and its grinning face holds what looks to be two large rubies in place of eyes. A fire burns merrily in a wide brazier the idol holds in its lap.

**GM Note:** The fire is magical in nature and burns for 1d6 points of damage while touching it (no save allowed).

**32** - (Water Pillars Room) You open the door to confront a room of odd pillars. Water rushes down from several holes in the ceiling, and each hole is roughly a foot wide. The water pours

in columns that fall through similar holes in the floor, flowing down to some unknown depth. Each of the eight pillars of water drops as much liquid as a stream in winter thaw. The floor is damp and looks slippery. The smell of mold is in the air and the water is murky.

**33- (Zoo/Prison)** A horrendous, overwhelming stench wafts from the room before you. Small cages containing small animals and large insects line the walls. Some of the creatures look sickly and alive but most are clearly dead. Their rotting corpses and the unclean cages no doubt result in the zoo's foul odor. A cat meows weakly from its cage, but the other creatures just silently shrink back into their filthy prisons.

**GM Note:** If freed, the cat will become a familiar/pet.

**34 - (Yoga Room)** This chamber seems divided into three parts. The first has several hooks on the walls from which hang dusty robes. An open curtain separates that space from the next, which has a dry basin set in the floor. Beyond that lies another parted curtain behind which you can see several straw mats in a semicircle pointing toward a statue of a dog-headed man.

**GM Note:** There is a 50% chance that 1d4 Cultists will be in this room doing yoga.

**35 - (Rubble Room)** This chamber was clearly smaller at one time, but something knocked down the wall that separated it from an adjacent room. Looking into that space, you see signs of another wall knocked over. It doesn't appear that anyone made any effort to clean up the rubble, but some paths through see more usage than others. Looks like a mining effort in the works.

**GM Note:** There is a Secret Door on the east side of this area. It leads to a deeper and more dangerous part of the dungeon.

**36 - (Soul Trapper Room - see Storyteller/GM Note, above)** Strangely quiet here. Lots of giant spider webs and eggs with their tops broken open. Bones on the floor and a cool breeze blowing. The hair on the back of your neck rises. You hear

rustling up above on the ceiling. You probably shouldn't be here.

**GM Note:** There are 1d4 *giant spiders* in here that drop down from the ceiling. They will probably have surprise/initiative the first round of combat.

**Giant spider:** Init +6; Atk Bite +5 melee (1d4 +1d4 rounds paralysis) or Web Blast +5 ranged (DC 16 entanglement); AC 13; HD 3d8 (20 hp); MV 20; Act 1d20; Special Powers: stacking entanglement, Infravision 120'; Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0; AL N

**37 - (Slime Room)** This room smells strange, no doubt due to the weird sheets of black slime that drip from cracks in the ceiling and spread across the floor. The slime seeps from the shattered stone of the ceiling at a snail's crawl, forming a mess of dangling walls of gook. As you watch, a bit of the stuff separates and drops to the ground with a wet plop.

**GM Note:** Have green slime monsters (use stats for a **primeval slime** on Page 423 of the DCC Rulebook) attack the party here when they least expect it.

**38 - (Mold Room)** This hall stinks with the wet, pungent scent of mildew. Black and red mold grows in tangled veins across the walls and parts of the floor. Despite the smell, it looks like it might be safe to travel through. A path of stone clean of mold wends its way through the hallway. Wild mushrooms are growing out of the floor in some areas.

**GM Note:** A **shrooman** (see Page 426 of the DCC Rulebook) lives here and will attack immediately.

**39 - (Cave Bear)** This area is obviously an animal den of some sorts. Human bones and fecal matter litter the dirty floor. Straw has been spread out around as well. In the middle sleeps a giant cave bear! It opens up one eye and peers at you with curiosity. Perhaps it is debating on whether or not to eat you all. It appears to be intelligent. Maybe a Druid could talk to it?

**GM Note:** The *cave bear* is mighty but will not immediately attack. It could be bribed with food or treasure.

**Cave Bear:** Init +1; Attack Claw Strike +4 melee (1d6+1) or Grapple +6 (opposed grapple check to break free); AC 17; HD 5d8+5 (25 hp); MV 30'; Act 1d20; Special Powers: Infravision 60'; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +6; AL N

**40 - (Glitter Room)** In here wonderfully shining rocks and stalactites abound. Light reflects and dances in many directions. It makes you all slightly dizzy. You feel happy though. Are those gems on the floor? Shadows dance and play as you move about the area.

**GM Note:** Possibly have a monster that uses illusions or trickery attack the party here. Maybe an evil Gnome Illusionist (use the stats for a **magician** on Page 433 of the DCC Rulebook). The Gnome will know of the Soul Trapper and its power.

**41- (Midnight Tunnel)** Neither light nor dark-vision can penetrate the gloom in this area. An unnatural shade fills it, and the room's farthest reaches are barely visible. Near the room's center, you can just barely perceive a lump about the size of a human lying on the floor.

**GM Note:** It might be a dead body, a pile of rags, or a sleeping monster that can take advantage of the room's darkness. This is a great place to attack the adventurers with powerful undead (e.g., a **shadow**; see Page 425 of the DCC Rulebook). The darkness is magical in nature and seems to just ooze from the ceiling.

If you run this adventure more than once, you might want to change the map using the Random Dungeon Room table below. Or, if you have less time to run the adventure, remove some of the rooms on the map. Note that monsters can roam around and will react to things they hear in adjacent rooms. The Cultists will work together and possibly set additional traps once they know of the party's presence.



Map of the local area with the dungeon entrance being somewhere in the GodsHome Mountains...

### Random Adventure Plots

1. A local wizard needs some spell components.
2. Someone important was captured.
3. A virus breaks out and a cure is needed
4. A powerful relic is unearthed and goes missing.
5. The local Mayor/Duke is found murdered.
6. A map found on a dead body that was robbed.

### Random Forest Encounters

1. Wolves
2. Goblins and/or Orcs
3. Bandits/Thugs
4. Dwarf Wanderer who is cranky but wise
5. Gnome Tinkerer with cool gadgets for sale
6. Giant Spider(s) who are hungry

### Random Male Names

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. Ryle    | 7. Norvin   |
| 2. Erwin   | 8. Safford  |
| 3. Lyndell | 9. Calvert  |
| 4. Marlow  | 10. Zale    |
| 5. Paxton  | 11. Earl    |
| 6. Radnor  | 12. Bromley |

### Random Female Names

- |           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| 1. Edwina | 7. Madison  |
| 2. Valora | 8. Clover   |
| 3. Dahlia | 9. Iris     |
| 4. Paige  | 10. Lillian |
| 5. Melba  | 11. Nelda   |
| 6. Zeta   | 12. Osma    |

### **Random Weapons**

1. Blowgun
2. Short Bow
3. Scimitar
4. Trident
5. Warhammer
6. Sickle
7. Battleaxe
8. Quarterstaff
9. War Pick
10. Halberd
11. Short Sword
12. Long Sword

### **Random Gemstones**

1. Malachite
2. Jade
3. Chrysocola
4. Agate
5. Ruby
6. Emerald
7. Sapphire
8. Citrine
9. Opal
10. Lazurite
11. Pyrite
12. Tiger's-Eye

### **Random Dungeon Rooms**

1. Barracks
2. Prison
3. Treasury
4. Library
5. Forge
6. Magic Fountain
7. Kitchen
8. Armory
9. Alchemist Lab
10. Summon Circle
11. Tomb
12. Sacrificial Altar

### **Random City Buildings**

1. Mayor's House
2. Wizard's Guild
3. Thieves' Guild
4. Plague Doctor
5. Cemetery
6. Temple
7. Bakery
8. Inn
9. Blacksmith
10. Tavern
11. Market
12. Butcher

# THE MOUND OF SORROWS

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## BACKGROUND

The ill-fated Deirdre the Beautiful was once the lover of Naisi, son of Usna. At that time, King Conchubor wielded the magical battleaxe known as the *Sorrows*. Perhaps due to the influence of his weapon, the King grew jealous of the young lovers. In time, King Conchubor's jealousy became his master. He had Naisi murdered, and his remains hidden. The King then took Deirdre for his wife. Now they, and the *Sorrows*, are buried, almost forgotten in a grassy mound amidst a deep wood.

Judges can use this adventure when their players wish to Quest For a magical weapon. There is also a fair bit of treasure, so the mound is a good choice of location when the players uncover a treasure map. The ghost of Deirdre the Beautiful supplies context to motivate the players toward additional adventures, either published or of the judge's devising.

Thieves, dwarves, and clerics are given particular opportunities to shine.

## ENCOUNTER AREAS

**1. Entrance:** The way into the mound is sealed with a heavy block of stone. Breaking in requires picks, mallets, or similar tools, as well as an hour of labor (subtract 10 minutes per point of Strength bonus for the lead worker, and 10 minutes for each of the first two helpers if they do not have penalties to Strength). Without appropriate tools, this work takes 1d5 times as long, and each worker must succeed in a Luck check or sustain 1d3 damage in the process.

*Once the stone block has been removed, you can see a few rough stone steps leading into the barrow. After only five feet or so, the passage turns to the left. The smell of old wet stone is heavy in the melancholy air, and the low ceiling – a mere five feet from the floor – makes the place seem cramped and gloomy.*

Characters over 5' tall must hunch over to travel down the corridor, and have a -2 penalty to attack rolls. Two-handed weapons requiring room to swing (battleaxes, polearms, and two-handed swords) are at a -1d penalty to attack rolls and damage. This condition persists throughout the mound, except in **Area 4**.

**2. Ossuary:** *The corridor goes 5 feet past the turn, entering into a rough stone chamber some 10 feet wide and perhaps 20 feet long. To both the left and the right, niches some 2½ feet wide by 2½ feet high open from the wall, 3 to each side. Even from here you can see the jumbled bones of the dead within, brown from long ages of burial. On the far side of the room, a narrow passage leads forward, and another narrow passage leads eastward.*

These skeletal remains will not animate until characters have gone forward, and then are trying to leave the barrow, or if the PCs are determined to destroy the remains entirely. Only one **crawling skeleton** animates from each niche, for a total of six. These creatures were loyal retainers of King Conchubor, and served as his hounds. When attacking, they remain on all fours (and thus are not affected by the low ceiling), attacking with dog-like teeth. Their bite carries a wasting sickness (Fort DC 15 or lose 1d3 points each of Strength, Agility, and Stamina each day; a new save is allowed each day, and success ends the wasting, but for every 3 points lost to an attribute, 1 is permanent).

**Crawling Skeletons (6):** Init +2; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3 plus wasting sickness); CRIT U/d6; AC 11; HD 2d6; hp 3,3,8,12,5,7; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead, wasting sickness, half damage from piercing and slashing weapons; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C.

**3. False Deirdre:** *After five feet, the passage narrows to a mere three feet, but beyond that you can see a burial space, 5 feet wide and 10 feet deep, where a single skeleton lies on a raised stone. The skeleton wears the tattered remains of a sea-green dress, and you can see jewels twinkling in the light at the skeleton's breast, wrists, and throat.*

Even in death, King Conchubor was jealous of his rivals for Deirdre the Beautiful's affections. Fearing they would despoil her corpse, his servants entombed a comely serving woman here, decked out in finery. Her silver brooch, shaped like a sea eagle with sapphires for eyes, is worth 50 gp, and at each wrist is a gold bracelet studded with rubies, each of which is worth 75 gp. The strand of pearls around her neck are worth 25 gp.

There is a trap here, though, to catch the unwary (Find Traps DC 12, Disable Trap DC 20). Anyone pushing through the passage must make a Luck check or dislodge loose stone in the eastern wall. This, in turn, causes a heavy stone to fall from above (2d6 damage, Reflex DC 10 for half, affecting all characters in the narrow area). Once the stone has fallen, a DC 10 Agility check is required to get through the passage (armor check penalty applies), and the DC increases by +2 for each failure, as more stone falls. Halflings gain a +1d bonus to this check. The passage can be cleared from the south with 1d3 hour's work, but characters in **Area 3** cannot do this, and the hauling needed to remove the stone triggers the un-dead to attack in **Area 2**.

**4. King Conchubor's Tomb:** A stone door blocks the entrance to this tomb, marked with the stylized running stag which King Conchubor used as his sigil. The door can be pushed open easily enough, but if not prevented from closing, there is no easy way to do so from the other side. Characters with proper tools can get through the door as in **Area 1**, but those failing to carry tools with them are in dire straits unless someone was left outside.

*Three rough stone steps lead down into a 10-foot-square burial chamber which, thankfully, is 7 feet high. A once-magnificent wooden casket is on a stone slab along the eastern wall – time and dampness have taken their toll on the carved black wood. A dozen sealed ceramic urns are placed around the stone slab. The mummified wings of three sea eagles adorn the top of the casket. Beneath them, you can see carved the stylized sigil of a running stag.*

Here lie the remains of King Conchubor, who once ruled these forested lands. The lid of his coffin is carved with the sign of the running stag, and cavorting hounds (also stylized) are depicted on the sides of the coffin. The sea eagle wings were intended to convey the King's soul onward beyond the Lands We Know, and are not unusual at all.

Opening the casket without checking for traps (Find Traps DC 15, Disable Trap DC 10) causes a scything bronze blade to threaten the opener (+4 melee, 1d5+1 damage). Within the casket lie the remains of King Conchubor, who stood over 6½ feet in life, wearing chainmail that is no longer serviceable. At his feet is a long and slender locked iron box (Pick Locks DC 5) and laid upon his chest is the *Sorrows* (see sidebar nearby).

Within the metal box are three scrolls:

- 1) A clerical scroll of *food of the gods*, inscribed in the elvish tongue (user must make a spell check using their own die type and modifier). The scroll can be used three times before crumbling into powder;
- 2) A clerical scroll of *animal summoning*, designed and marked for the use of druids. When it is first used, the caster makes a spell check using 1d24. Thereafter, each time it is used, there is a cumulative -1d penalty to the spell check. If an attempt to cast the spell ever fails, the scroll is consumed in a burst of green flame which does 3d6 damage to the user (no save);
- 3) A clerical scroll sealed with wax, in which is stamped the sigil of the archdruid Cathbad, who perished long ago. Three spells as scribed thereupon: *word of command*, *resist cold or heat*, and *holy sanctuary*, and each is cast with a +2 bonus. However, as each spell is cast, the incantation for that spell is replaced with gibberish – which is only apparent when the user tries to cast the spell again!

Of the twelve urns, four are filled with amber beads (1,000 beads worth 1 sp each), four are filled with silver coins (500 each), and three are filled with mead (3 gallons per urn, 5 gp value per gallon).

Opening the final urn (which feels and sounds like it holds coins, although a DC 20 attempt to Find Traps discovers minute runes in the wax seal) releases a curse: All within the chamber must succeed in a DC 10 Will save or be struck blind.

A round later, there is an oppressive sense as if something monstrous was in the room with them - this is an illusion, but hilarity may occur as PCs strike out at each other blindly in the room.

The sense of something monstrous only lasts 1d5 rounds, but the blindness lasts

### ***The Sorrows***

Neutral +2 Battleaxe

**Intelligence:** 10

**Communication:** Empathy (a constant sense of sorrow, from which it gains its name)

**Special Purpose:** Reunite separated lovers

**Curse 1:** Haunted. Once every 1d30 days, the ghost of Deirdre the Beautiful appears to the wielder at night, until Deirdre is interred with her one-time lover, Naisi, son of Usna. Determining where Naisi's remains now lie, and reuniting the lovers, may require several quests.

**Curse 2:** Wielder has a -1d penalty to any save against *charm* or similar effects. When *charmed* or in love, wielder experiences intense pangs of jealousy related to the object of their affection (per judge, but player is encouraged to role-play this!).

**Power:** Critical hits from *the Sorrows* can affect creatures that are normally immune to critical hits.

**Bane:** Fey (Fey inflict only half damage against the wielder if they succeed in a DC 14 Fort save).

**The Ghost of Deidre the Beautiful:** Init +2; Atk incorporeal touch +6 melee (possession); CRIT U/d6; AC 10; HD 2d12; hp 15; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, immune to nonmagical weapons, possession (Will DC 12 resists, a new save is allowed every 1d5 hours); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6; AL C. The ghost uses possessed characters to search for her lost love, Naisi.

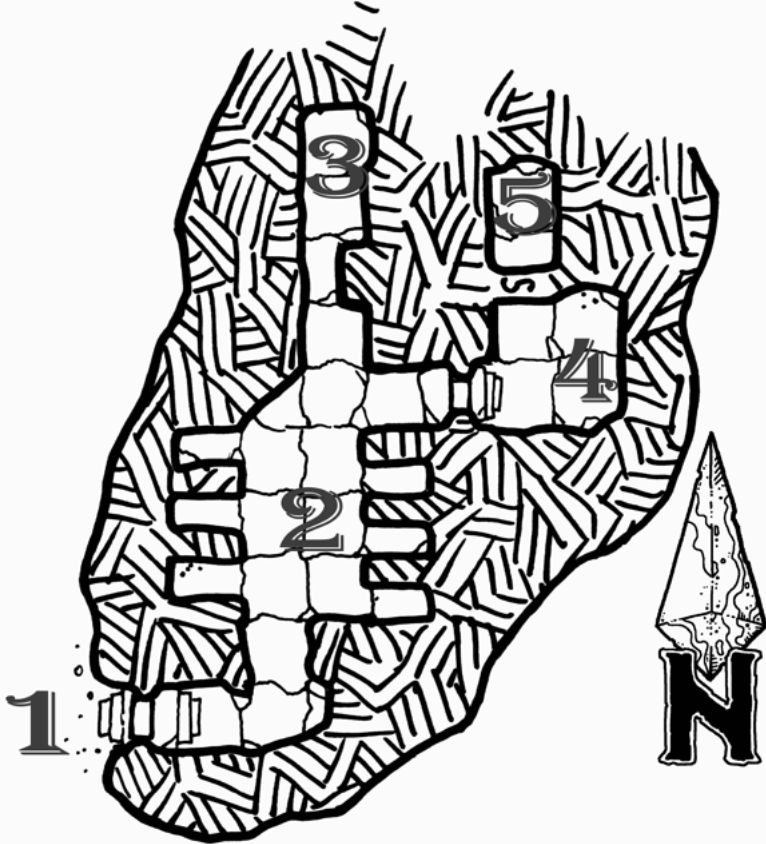
until healed or until the sun touches the faces of the afflicted.

The secret door to **Area 5** is a heavy stone which is held in place by another stone underneath. If the holding stone is removed, the secret door falls into a slot in the floor and cannot be raised again.

**5. True Deidre:** *The stone descends with a resounding crash. Beyond, there is a small chamber, 5 feet wide and 10 feet deep. Within lies a young woman, as beautiful as the day she died, dressed in a sea-green dress. Three sets of mummified sea eagles' wings were placed upon her torso.*

As soon as the body is touched, it collapses into dust and bones, giving off a sweet aroma. The character(s) who touched her gain +1 Luck and heal 1 HD of damage. She is adorned much as was the false Deidre in Area 3, but in all cases her adornments are finer. Her dress, stitched with silver threads, has lasted through the ages and is worth 15 gp. Her silver brooch is worth 75 gp, her two bracelets are worth 125 gp each, and the double strand of pearls she wears is worth 250 gp.

# THE MOUND OF SORROWS



ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET

# **THE OUTCAST, THE CLUTCH, AND THE THING THAT WATCHES**

By Shane Kablooy

Art by Nick Hezell

Cartography by András Baracscai

## **INTRODUCTION**

In a quiet hollow deep beneath the earth, a strange ripple of emotion echoes through the stone—a silent cry for help, felt rather than heard. The source is soon discovered: a clutch of FLUMPHS huddled together in distress, their jellyfish-like bodies pulsing with pale bioluminescence. Through gentle psychic projections, they convey their anguish. Three of their young have gone missing.

The flumphs do not accuse, but they fear. They suspect the involvement of a creature known as a DOERGRE—one of the deep ogres. The name by which they call it: FLARPSNAGGLE.

This is a tale of weird empathy, misunderstood monsters, and the fragile hope of healing in the dark.

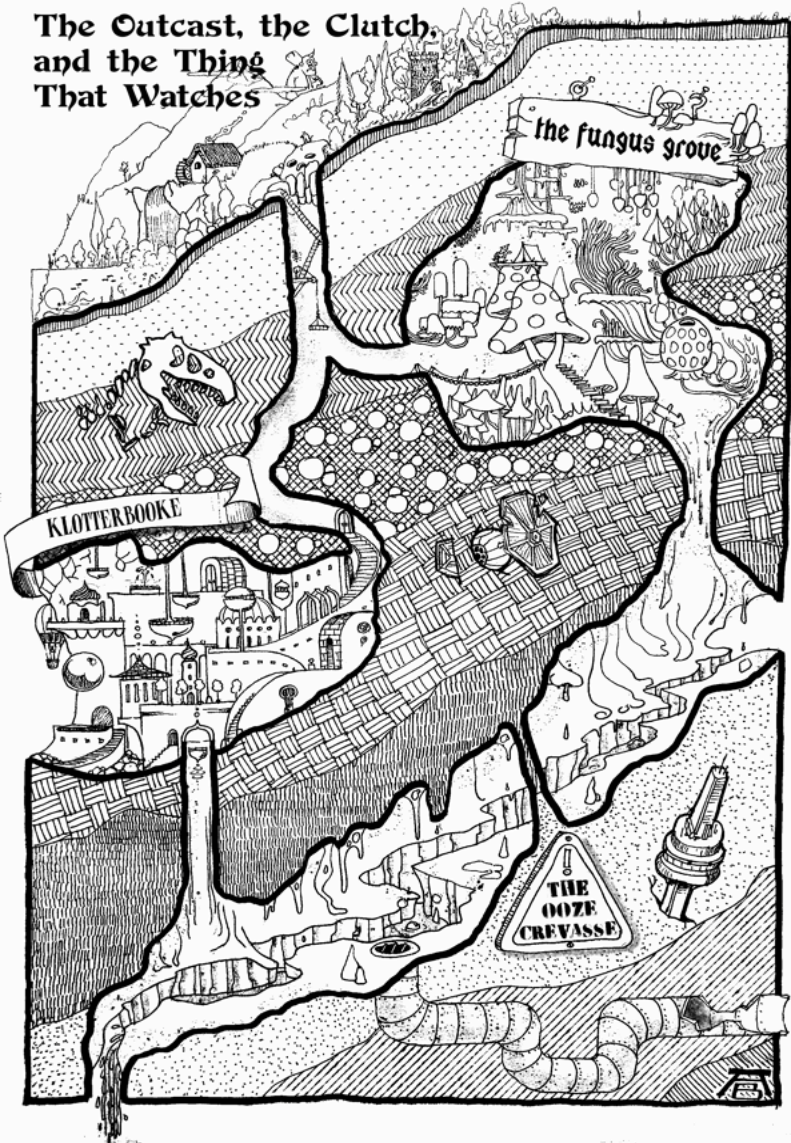
## **THE JOURNEY TO TRUTH**

The players' search for the missing Softspawn (flumphlings leads) them through the strange biomes of the underdeep:

- KLOTTERBOOKE, a reclusive settlement of Svirfneblin (Deep Gnomes), where everything feels both freshly invented and ancient. Its residents are quiet, curious, and socially awkward. They speak in riddled logic and spiral into lecture tangents. One child quietly mentions seeing “a big purple one playing hide and seek with the floaters.”

- A FUNGUS GROVE where colorful spores cloud the air, and travelers must resist hallucinatory confusion (save vs confusion 1d6 rounds).
- A glistening OOZE CREVASSE where the ground pulses underfoot. Something watches from the shadows.

**The Outcast, the Clutch,  
and the Thing  
That Watches**



## THE FUNGUS GROVE

At the edge of the known tunnels, the air thickens with scent—earthy, wet, and sweet, like composted dreams. The stone walls sweat, slick with moss and glowing mycelia. This is no ordinary patch of mushrooms: it is a grove grown wild in time and mind, a place where memory and madness root in equal measure.

Luminescent toadstools tower like umbrellas, and carpets of moss giggle softly underfoot. Pale spore clouds hang in the air like mist, refracting strange colors from unseen light. Breathing here is enough to invite visions.

**Every creature must Save vs Confusion (Will save DC 12) or become affected for 1d6 rounds.**

**Eating the fungi**—whether curious or desperate—invokes a deeper madness. The hallucinations become persistent and reality bends: roll on the table below and note that **effects last 1d16 days**.

*(Failing the save results in one of the effects below for 1d6 rounds)*

1d24	Hallucinogenic Effect
1	You hear your own voice echoing in reverse, narrating your every action in rhyme.
2	Everything turns into melting candy; enemies look like gingerbread folk.
3	The cavern walls breathe slowly, in and out, like lungs.
4	Your hands leave rainbow trails when you move them, and you're fascinated by it.
5	You believe you are three feet to the left of where you actually are (attacks/movement suffer -2 penalty).
6	All flumphs appear as divine angels; you must kneel or whisper confessions.

7	You forget nouns; must describe everything in awkward metaphors.
8	Every time you speak, bubbles float from your mouth and you think you're underwater.
9	The party appears as strangers—you believe they are doppelgangers or imposters.
10	Gravity reverses (for you); you cling to the ceiling in terror (prone unless restrained).
11	Your weapons appear to be snakes whispering insults and secrets.
12	You're convinced the floor is covered in invisible crawling insects.
13	You see a smaller version of yourself running beside you—sometimes arguing.
14	All colors invert; light sources become black holes.
15	You believe one random PC is your long-lost sibling (true or not).
16	You're convinced you've shrunk to the size of a mouse—must act accordingly.
17	You feel a strong compulsion to “walk the path of the spiral” (move in circles each round).
18	You perceive voices from the mushrooms urging you to lie down and "listen to the roots."
19	The ground looks like it's covered in mouths whispering your name.
20	You hallucinate a swarm of glowing birds only you can see; you try to feed or chase them.
21	The most beautiful sound plays from nowhere—you're stunned 1 round in awe.
22	You believe you've been cursed with truth; you blurt secrets uncontrollably for 1d6 rounds.
23	You become convinced you're turning into a mushroom; you stop moving to "photosynthesize."
24	You see everyone—including yourself—as boneless puppets being controlled by glowing threads from the sky (roll 1d3: 1 = frightened, 2 = enraged, 3 = overwhelmed/stunned).

## KLOTTERBOOKE: THE HALF-KNOWN HAMLET

Klotterbooke is a peculiar Svirfneblin village nestled deep underground. Time feels folded here, as though the place exists slightly out of phase with normal reality. Its inhabitants are brilliant, but socially awkward; and the town may serve as a curious (and useful) base of operations for adventurers willing to tolerate its quirks.

### Environmental Effects in Klotterbooke (While Still Hallucinating)

Use this table if any PCs are still under the effects of the fungal hallucinations when they arrive. Klotterbooke *feels* real, but the world itself is... melting slightly.

1d7	Hallucinatory Environment
1	Buildings appear made of soft, breathing coral; they pulse to the rhythm of the PC's heartbeat.
2	The entire village is bathed in one overwhelming color (player's choice), and it changes each round.
3	The sky above the cavern dome is filled with floating doors – some open to starlight, others to eyes.
4	The streets loop infinitely unless walked backward. Gnomes helpfully guide you but in palindromes.
5	Every sound echoes in reverse, and speaking aloud causes a flicker in nearby buildings.
6	A massive crystal hovers silently in the village center, spinning slowly. It's not actually there. But it <i>feels</i> like it is.
7	Gravity seems negotiable. You're not floating, but you're not sure which way is down either.

## **d7: Mundane Klotterbooke Life Encounters (If Hallucinating)**

These contrast starkly with the surreal visuals—entirely normal and awkward interactions with residents while the world looks like a dream.

<b>1d7</b>	<b>Awkward Local Encounters</b>
<b>1</b>	A gnome shyly offers a poorly baked muffin and asks if you want to join his cheese club.
<b>2</b>	A town elder mistakes you for someone else and talks about “the old crystal flood” for far too long.
<b>3</b>	A trio of teens invites you to watch a beetle race behind the tavern. They take it <i>very seriously</i> .
<b>4</b>	A shopkeeper offers you an unlabeled potion as a “thank-you for existing.” It’s just water.
<b>5</b>	A gnome bumps into you, apologizes, and runs off. Moments later, a completely different gnome does the exact same thing.
<b>6</b>	A local is loudly singing a bad ballad about “Flarpsnaggle the Ogre with a Gentle Heart.” No one joins in.
<b>7</b>	You’re invited to participate in a ritual. It turns out to be rock-paper-scissors, but with five extra steps and strange hats.

## d24: Sober Encounters in Klotterbooke (Odd, Quirky & Potentially Useful)

Use this table for grounded PCs who aren't hallucinating – but who still notice the ambient weirdness of a town out of step with the rest of reality. Many entries could hint at Klotterbooke's potential as a base.

1d24	Klotterbooke Encounter
1	A gnome alchemist sells “pocket-hourglass grenades” that explode into 3 seconds of déjà vu.
2	The local library has a floor that changes depending on what subject you're reading about.
3	A baker insists their bread tastes like “safe memories.” They're not wrong.
4	A chalkboard near the square updates with riddles only <i>one person in town</i> can read per day.
5	A blacksmith makes tools that are slightly <i>too perfect</i> – some suspect extraplanar influence.
6	A rotating spire in the middle of town chimes every hour – but no one built it.
7	A gnome claims to know your <i>true level</i> and offers an ominous challenge in a board game.
8	A group of children plays a game predicting what the party will say next – with disturbing accuracy.
9	The tavern serves drinks that show brief visions of other lives you <i>could have lived</i> .
10	One of the flumphlings from earlier now lives here, oddly mature and speaking in riddles.
11	The town has no calendar, yet everyone agrees what day it is – except the PCs.
12	An inn room changes shape every night but is always comfortable. Some guests never leave.
13	A clocktower runs backward, and the locals insist it's “always been that way.”

14	A minor deity occasionally sits on the well's edge but can only be seen in reflections.
15	A gnome teaches defensive spells to chickens. The chickens are <i>not</i> grateful.
16	"The Tunnel That Wasn't There" leads nowhere... unless someone hums the right melody.
17	Every morning, fog briefly takes the shape of dancing flumphs. Only visitors can see it.
18	A weird tree at the village edge drops glowing stones that reveal hidden paths.
19	The blacksmith dreams in riddles and wakes with blueprints to items that don't exist yet.
20	A random door leads to a stairwell with exactly 17 steps. At the top is... another Klotterbooke.
21	A frog in a glass jar recites future weather patterns when fed insects. It's never been wrong.
22	A small shrine is dedicated to "The Traveler Who Fell Through." No one remembers who that was.
23	A gnome researcher offers to "measure your narrative arc." You might gain a +1 Luck.
24	The village square occasionally rewinds 30 seconds—only once per week—and no one talks about it.

## THE OOZE CREVASSE

A narrow rift yawns across the cavern floor, no wider than a stride at its narrowest, but endlessly deep. Slippery stones glisten with a sheen not of water, but something slower... more deliberate. The walls pulse—gently, like the throat of something massive drawing breath far below.

Every step closer feels like a mistake remembered too late.

Long strings of mucosal slime dangle from stalactites like tendrils, swaying though there is no wind. The air is humid and clings with the scent of sour copper and fermented moss.

Footfalls stick for a moment longer than they should. Shadows slither at the edge of vision, never quite there when you turn.

The crevasse itself is filled with viscous, semi-luminous fluid—pale green with occasional bursts of color that ripple outward like thoughts escaping containment. If you stare long enough, it appears to form shapes: faces of loved ones, dripping eyes, a childhood home warped and sagging.

Occasionally, a faint *click* or *wet slurp* echoes across the stone. And always, always, there's the sensation that something is watching—not with eyes, but with attention. Deep, hungry attention.

Something *knows* you're here.

### **Optional Effects / Encounters in the Crevasse:**

1. **The ooze rises just enough to touch a boot.** It retracts, as if sampling.
2. **A random object on a PC begins to drip ooze from within, like it was hidden there all along.**
3. **A shadow across the gap mimics the party's movements, but imperfectly—until it doesn't.**
4. **Something whispers from below in a voice no one recognizes but all understand. It offers a memory in exchange for safety.**
5. **One PC hears their name called gently from beneath. It's their own voice.**
6. **A tendril lashes out (Atk +3, 1d4 acid) and then vanishes into the depths. No sign it was ever there.**

## **THE OGRE FLARPSNAGGLE**

Flarpsnaggle is not like the other Doergres – who are usually shrewd, cruel, and domineering. He is young, slow to speak, and heartbreakingly kind. He was cast out for being “soft,” and in isolation he found companionship with the flumphlings.

When the players find him, he is gently stacking rocks around the children like protective walls and placing hand-sewn mushroom caps on their heads as hats. He calls them “babies” and believes he is keeping them safe – from something awful.

## **THE TWIST: CALLIA, THE WEREFLUMPH**

Callia was once a human adventurer. During a failed expedition, they were separated from their party and critically wounded. A flumph, in a desperate attempt to save them, merged psionically and physically. It worked – but the result was not salvation. It was transformation.

Now something between flumph and human, Callia hides in the shadows, unable to fully grasp their new nature. They are not a monster – but they are unstable, wracked by uncontrollable empathy, fear, and grief. They have been watching the flumphlings from afar, unsure whether to approach – or to disappear forever.

## **CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES**

**FIGHT FLARPSNAGGLE:** The party can attempt to reclaim the flumphlings by force. If they do, Callia may stalk them later, grief turning to rage.

**NEGOTIATE:** The players can reason with Flarpsnaggle, who will gladly surrender the children if convinced it is safe. He may even follow them out of a need for purpose.

**TRUST THE OGRE:** The party may choose to help Flarpsnaggle locate and confront Callia. This encounter can lead to a tragic battle or a chance to reach the broken adventurer’s heart.

## CALLIA, THE WEREFLUMPH

Flickering between phases of matter and identity, Callia reacts to emotion more than logic. With care, the party may reach them through shared memory, kindness, or even music and light. If comforted, Callia might rejoin the flumphs as a guardian or sibling figure. If spurned or attacked, they become something truly dangerous.



## ENDING OPTIONS

- The flumphlings are returned, and Flarpsnaggle is accepted into the clutch as their gentle protector.
- Callia is calmed and joins them, creating a bizarre but beautiful family.
- The party chooses violence, and, while they may win the day, a trail of sorrow follows them to the surface.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Spellcasters receive dream-fragments from a flumphling begging for help.
- Klotterbooke's thinkers detect a psychic anomaly blooming in the deeps.
- A flumphling bonds with a PC and follows them home.

## STAT BLOCKS

**Flarpsnaggle:** Init -1; Atk clumsy fist +6 (1d10+3) or rock toss +3 (1d6, 30' range); AC 12; HD 5d10+10; HP 35; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP: Innocent Intentions - +2 to all CHA-based interactions if approached gently, Misjudged - Will save DC 12 to recognize he means no harm; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +2; AL L (if treated kindly)

**Callia the Wereflumph:** Init +2; Atk tendril lash +4 (1d6, Will save DC 14 or suffer emotional feedback); AC 14; HD 6d6; HP 25; MV 20', hover 20'; Act 2d20; SP: Empathic Feedback Pulse, Flicker Phase, Fractured Identity, Residual Humanity; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6; AL C/N (shattered)

*Empathic Feedback Pulse (1/day):* All in 30' make Will save DC 12 or be stunned for 1 round.

*Flicker Phase:* May become incorporeal for 1 round.

*Fractured Identity:* Can be reached via Presence DC 14 (3 group successes across the encounter).

*Residual Humanity:* Kindness may bring back fragments of self.