Fantasy Game
Adventure

Gary Gygax presents
FANTASY MASTER™

NEW INFINITIES™ PRODUCTIONS, INC.
60-2002

For Mid-to-High
Character Levels

Game Accessory

The Abduction of Good King Despot



By
Will & Schar
Niebling
and
Russ Stambaugh

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Ignax (First Appearance) — see page 9

Additional Material & Development: Don Turnbull (with Gary Gygax), William V. & Michelle L. Niebling
Editing & Layout: Penny Petticord
Cover Art: Gideon
Interior Art: Gideon, Diane Hamil, Steve Sullivan, & Gary Williams
Cartography: Don Turnbull (with grateful thanks to Frank Mentzer) & Steve Sullivan

New Infinities Productions, Inc.
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BY WILL & SCHAR NIEBLING AND RUSS STAMBAUGH

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INTRODUCTION

FANTASY MASTER™ Adventure Kits are designed especially for creative game masters. Each kit may be used with any fantasy role-playing system. Once you have read through the adventure, you can customize it for use with your game in less than thirty minutes.

No game details specific to any one rules system are given; instead, space is provided in each encounter description for you to write in creature statistics appropriate for the game system you intend to use. Monster data are given, but again, this information is not derived from any particular system. Creatures are described relative to the characters used, so it is easy to tailor the adventure precisely to the characters in your own campaign.

FANTASY MASTER Adventure Kits are much less restrictive than standard adventure modules. They are designed to provide ideas and allow creative development of plot and detail, not to force the Game Master and players into routes they do not want to follow. FANTASY MASTER Adventure Kits put *you* in charge of the action, because you design the challenges yourself. Have fun!

PREPARATIONS

First, read through this booklet, starting with "The Adventure" on page 4. Don't worry about assigning monsters to the encounter areas or working out treasure at this time. This first reading is just to acquaint you with the story and let you get the "feel" of the adventure and the main encounter areas.

Treasures are suggested in most of the encounters throughout the adventure. The selection of exact items has been left to you; review the treasures listed in the various encounters and decide whether any more (or less) should be made available. Choose magic items that are in keeping with the balance of your campaign and note your choices in the appropriate monster boxes.

Find out which characters your players plan to bring into this adventure. *Despot* has been designed with experienced characters in mind, but you can adjust the challenges presented for a less experienced party if desired. Write down all pertinent game details about the characters on a separate sheet of paper. This is your Character Summary Sheet. Keep it handy; you will need the data for the section below.

CALCULATIONS

Now perform the following simple calculations:

1. Calculate the average party skill rank (**P Rank**).

Find each character's skill rank in his profession. If a character is ranked in more than one profession, use the highest rank as a basis and add 50% (rounded down) of his rank in each additional profession. Add up the skill ranks of all the characters, then divide the total by the number of characters. Round off the result to the nearest whole number. This value is P Rank; write it on your Character Summary Sheet.

2. Calculate the average party Health (**P Health**).

Add together the Health ratings of all the characters, then divide the result by the number of characters, rounding off to the nearest whole number. This value is P Health; write it on your Character Summary Sheet.

3. Calculate the average party armor value (**P Armor**).

Add together the frontal armor values of all the characters and divide the result by the number of characters, rounding off to the nearest whole number. This value is P Armor; write it on your Character Summary Sheet.

Example: Suppose the party consists of seven characters with Skill Ranks 8, 10, 12, 11, 9, 8/9 and 12. Their Health ratings are: 20, 19, 16, 16, 17, 14, 13, and their frontal armor values are -3, -2, 0, 1, 1, 2 and 6.

P Rank = (8+10+12+11+9+13+12)/7 = 10.71; round off to 11.
P Health = (20+19+16+16+17+14 +13)/7 = 16.43; round off to 16.
P Armor = (-3-2+0+1+1+2+6)/7 = 0.71; round off to 1.

TERMINOLOGY

P Rank: The average party skill rank.

P Health: The amount of damage the average party member can withstand before death.

P Armor: The average party armor value.

Atk (Attack): The percentage of the time the creature should be able to hit a character with P Armor.

Modes: The type of attack and damage inflicted per successful hit, expressed in terms of weapon equivalents.

Res (Resistance): The percentage chance for a creature to be hit by a fighter character of P Rank.

Def (Defense): The type of protection used, and its armor equivalent.

Attack Sequence: The number and type of attacks a creature uses per time unit of combat.

Avoidance Roll: The chance for a character to avoid some or all effects of an attack. The avoidance roll may be replaced by an equivalent game mechanic or ignored entirely for game systems where the concept does not exist.

CHOOSING MONSTERS

Each encounter description includes a monster box for every creature type that appears in that encounter. In most cases the encounter description itself will recommend a particular monster type that fits in with the overall design, but the final decision as to what creature is most appropriate rests with you. In the top half of each monster box are numbers that express the creature's Rank, Health, Attack capability, and Defense as percentages of the party averages. The bottom half of the box has been left blank so that you may write in the name and specific characteristics of the monster you have chosen.

Each monster's Rank and Health are expressed as percentages of P Rank and P Health, respectively. Use the P Rank

and P Health values that you have calculated to derive the Rank and Health of each monster.

The **Atk** value given in the monster box is the percentage chance for that monster to hit P Armor. **Res** is the percentage chance that a warrior character of P Rank can hit the monster. If combat is resolved with percentage dice in your game system, these values can be used without adjustment. Otherwise, simply convert the percentages given to equivalent values based on the type of dice used. (For example, each pip of a 20-sided die equals 5%. A monster with a 60% Atk hits P Armor 12 times out of 20 (60% = 12 x 5%). Therefore, the monster misses on a result of 1-8 and hits on a 9 or better.) If you are using a die that does not convert to an even percentage (such as a twelve-sided die) simply round your results to the nearest whole number.

Special abilities and magical powers used in the adventure are also noted in the monster boxes. Names given for the magical powers indicate only the desired effect, not specific spell names.

Adjusting for Number of Characters: This adventure has been designed for eight player characters. If you plan to use more than eight, adjust each creature's Health by a proportionate amount or, where applicable, increase the number of monsters encountered. (For instance, if there are four monsters in a particular encounter, and you are using ten characters, either increase all the monsters' Health values by 25% or add one more monster.) If fewer than eight characters are to participate, downgrade the monsters' Health scores (or the number of creatures encountered) in a similar manner. (For seven characters, the Health scores or number of monsters should be reduced by 12.5%.) If you choose to adjust the Health, change only that value, not the creatures' Rank, Atk or Res scores.

Though in theory this kind of adjustment could be made to allow for any number of player characters, there are obvious common-sense limitations. It is strongly recommended that no fewer than six, and no more than nine characters take part in this adventure.

Select a monster from your game system whose statistics approximate those recommended by the design. Check to be sure that it is appropriate for the encounter area and the circumstances, adjusting the creature and/or the area if necessary. Write the creature's name in the lower part of the monster box, together with its actual statistics in the game terms you are using. You may also use a creature of your own design, if desired.

In the majority of cases, this will be enough — the design has been tailored to ensure that the "right" monster is available in all popular game systems, and you should have little difficulty in assigning most of the creatures required for the encounters in this way. In rare cases, you may need to make some adjustments to fit in with your plans for the adventure. In particular, the encounter might require that the monster have certain magical powers that are not available to the creature you have selected. In such a case, either choose a more appropriate monster for the encounter (you may have missed something first time around), or provide the requisite magical powers in some other way — for example, by adding an appropriate magical device that the monster can use.

The reverse may also be true — you may have selected a monster that is very appropriate for the circumstances, but you know that the characters cannot handle it. (For example, your creature may have special magical defenses that the characters are not equipped to overcome.) In such a case, either choose a different creature that the characters can handle, or ensure that they can acquire the means to defeat this monster before they do battle with it.

Avoid using creatures that the characters involved cannot handle unless the text of the encounter specifically demands such. Naturally, however, not all the challenges in this adventure are designed to be resolved by direct combat. Characters are expected to use means other than confrontation (including negotiation, good strategy, or simple avoidance) to deal with those opponents that are just too tough for them.

Example: The Giant Scorpion (page 13) is described as follows:

> **Rank**: 90% P Rank
> **Health**: 150% P Health
> **Atk**: 60%
> **Modes**: 2 pincers (longsword) & 1 sting (short sword + poison)
> **Res**: 60%
> **Def**: Shell = chainmail
> **Special**: Poisonous sting; automatic surprise unless subsurface movement is detected

Using the values calculated on the previous page for the sample party, the Giant Scorpion is found to have the following characteristics:

Scorpion Rank: 90% P Rank = 0.9 x 11 = 9.9. (Round up to 10.)
Scorpion Health: 150% P Health = 1.5 x 16 = 24.
Scorpion Atk: The scorpion has a 60% chance to hit P Armor. (On a twenty-sided die, 1-8 misses and 9-20 hits.)
Scorpion Res: A P Rank warrior has a 60% (12 in 20) chance to hit the scorpion. (On a twenty-sided die, 1-8 misses and 9-20 hits.)

Since there are only seven characters in our sample party, the monster's Health is only 7/8 of the calculated value, or 21. If ten characters are used, the scorpion's Health should be 10/8 (or 5/4) of the calculated value, or 30.

You should have little difficulty finding a monster that fits these characteristics in your game system, although this is a tough Giant Scorpion, and you may have to beef up the standard one a bit. Your game system should also give the effects of poison. (If it does not, determine these yourself.)

TREASURE

After you have assigned all the monsters, note in the monster box any adjustments to the treasure listed in the encounter description. Write down the names of any standard magic items from your game system that you intend to place here.

In particular, if the characters will require a particular item to defeat a certain monster, don't forget to place the necessary device among the treasures in an earlier room. If they don't find it, but there is no way of proceeding beyond that "impossible" monster without defeating it, you must ensure that the characters are encouraged to return to that hiding place and find what they missed before. Alternatively (if you really want to make it easy for them), move the location of that item, during play, to some new hiding place that the characters have yet to reach, and hope they don't miss it again!

POSTSCRIPT

These preparations take much longer to describe than they do to execute. In particular, an experienced GM should be able to assign monsters and treasure "by inspection" once the basic system has become familiar. Experienced GMs should also be accustomed to making adjustments to the encounter balance during the course of play, in the interests of making an entertaining, enjoyable, and exciting game, and making the goals achievable — even if "only just."

Note too that once you have made

these preparations for one game, they can be adapted very quickly for use in another — perhaps with a stronger or weaker party of characters, or even another game system.

THE ADVENTURE

Good King Despot has disappeared, and his kingdom is in turmoil. The queen consulted all her sages and wise men to find out what had happened, but to no avail. Distraught, she sent out a call to neighboring kingdoms for magical help. Two weeks later, a foreign wizard named Candelabra arrived to offer his assistance.

After several weeks of research and private consultation with the queen, Candelabra reported that the king had been abducted by an extremely powerful sorcerer named Ignax the Twenty-Seventh (a rank of wizardry skill, not order of descent), and was being held prisoner in the latter's underground complex. When the scenario opens, Candelabra has just convinced the queen to hire a party of brave adventurers, who will penetrate Ignax's lair and rescue the king while Candelabra distracts the evil wizard with ultra-powerful sorcery of his own.

This is all the information the characters are given, but the actual situation is a bit more complex, for the relationship between Candelabra and Ignax is not what it appears to be. Both are extremely powerful sorcerers who have tired of the banal and conventional challenges that they have met and overcome during their careers. The two have a fierce professional and personal rivalry, but each realizes that a direct challenge of the other would certainly result in the death of one or both of them, and each has a profound liking for the preservation of his own skin. Yet, though both of them shirk this ultimate challenge, they do enjoy testing each other's abilities. For some years now, the two have taken turns setting up devious and complex (though not fatal) problems for one another to solve.

The explanation of the adventure is quite simply this — it's Ignax's turn! The entire business — the kidnapping of Despot and the creation of the underground complex wherein he is held — is the manifestation of Ignax's latest challenge to Candelabra.

Despot and his kingdom are therefore mere pawns in a much larger game. Fortunately for the king, the rules of the wizards' game dictate that no harm must ultimately come to those who are unwittingly involved in the plot. Should Candelabra's rescue mission fail, sooner or later Ignax would release Despot and claim a victory over his opponent.

These rules do not, however, offer the same protection for the characters, who are involved in the *solution* to the problem, not the problem itself. One or more character deaths will not cause Ignax (or Candelabra, for that matter) any anguish whatsoever.

NOTES FOR THE GM

This adventure represents a return to the days when action, not in-depth role-playing, was the primary requisite of an exciting game. Dungeons were rather capricious, slightly chaotic places that were often somewhat inconsistent. They had no discernible ecology and no particular purpose other than to provide the setting for an adventure. And they were *fun*!

Don't trouble to look here for an epic saga or for serious role-playing opportunities — you won't find them. The plot of this adventure, the circumstances that bring it about, and the dungeon in which the action takes place — all these are gentle whimsy, not intended to be taken particularly seriously at all.

To be sure, there is some internal logic — even *The Abduction of Good King Despot* is not completely chaotic. It will become obvious when you first read the area descriptions that the dungeon has an astrological theme, with the signs of the zodiac (taken in order starting with Aries) characterizing the main encounter areas. The precious or semi-precious stones traditionally associated with the signs are located in the corresponding rooms. Some of these gems are required to free Despot and complete the adventure successfully; others constitute valuable treasure. (Authorities differ on which stones are associated with which signs; the pairings used here are the ones that best fulfill the requirements of the finale.)

In addition to gemstones, the signs of the zodiac correspond to the four elements of ancient alchemy — earth, air, fire, and water. See the table on page 5 for the stone and element associated with each sign. (Those familiar with astrology will see some other correlations as well in the dungeon design — for instance, the association of the planet Mercury, via the metal mercury, with Gemini in Room 17.)

THE MAP

A map of the entire dungeon is given on the inside cover of this adventure kit. The rooms can be conveniently divided into "sets," each containing one major encounter area and either three or six "dead-ends." The main room in each "set" corresponds to an astrological sign. Whether there are three or six subsidiary rooms in a "set" depends on the number of exits from the previous major encounter area. For example, there are three dead-end rooms in the set with Leo (Room 26) because Cancer (Room 21) has only one exit, whereas there are six subsidiary rooms in the set with Aquarius (Room 58) because there are two exits from Capricorn (Room 50).

The dungeon corridors are color-coded, checkerboard fashion, exactly as the map indicates. Each square measures 10' on a side. The overall color scheme is based on the association of the astrological signs with the four "elements," as follows.

The color of the square immediately in front of the door to each major encounter area corresponds to the element associated with the astrological sign represented therein. For instance, Room 26 (Leo) is grouped with Rooms 23, 24, and 25, which are the dead-ends of that "set." The square immediately outside the entrance to Room 26 is red (because Leo is a fire sign), whereas the squares just outside the doors to Rooms 23, 24, and 25 are blue, green, and white, respectively.

Additionally, whenever the corridor from one major area to the next branches, the square at the intersection is the color of the element associated with the next major area; thus the corridor between Room 21 (Cancer) and Room 26 (Leo) branches at two points, and the squares at both of these intersections are red (again because Leo is a fire sign).

To follow the correct route through the dungeon, the characters will have to deduce that the key lies in astrology. When they figure out the sequence of elements, they should be able to identify the door to the next major encounter area by the color of the square outside. Since they are not given enough information to do this at the beginning of the adventure, they must piece together the answer as they work their way through the dungeon. In their travels, they are certain to find a number of dead ends, most of which are dangerous (though some are actually helpful). It is possible, however, that they may stumble onto the correct route by sheer luck. (The adventure will be more entertaining if you do not allow the players to map, forcing them to rely on their memories.)

TRAPS

Traps have been placed at several locations throughout the dungeon. No particular traps have been specified; instead, a summary of suggested types is

provided below. In each case, select a trap that is appropriate for the dungeon area in question and the state of the characters at the time they reach it. Feel free to add traps of your own to the list.

1. *Pit Traps*: The standard pit trap is 10' deep, with smooth sides. You can vary the depth (for greater or lesser damage from the fall), manner of concealment, slope of the sides, and contents (choose from sand, hard rock, snakes, spikes, water, acid, or poisonous gas).

2. *Missile Traps*: This sort of trap releases weapons from a hidden device when triggered. Variations include the type of weapon (arrows, spears, darts, etc.), number fired per unit time, and coatings on the missiles (flaming oil, poison, other drugs, etc.). The scythe blade is included in this category, as are the juggernaut and the rolling ball.

3. *Gas Traps*: These traps release a harmful substance when triggered. Gases (producing death, nausea, sleep, blinding, weakness, etc.) are the most common materials, but jets of acid, water, or flame, lightning bolts, spears of ice, and so forth can also come through vents.

4. *Structural Traps*: These traps are part of the dungeon structure, and typically crush, confine, or misdirect victims when triggered. Collapsing floors and walls, ceilings that fall or descend gradually, rooms that slide sideways or act as elevators, one-way doors, and doors that fall on the opener are typical examples.

5. *Illusions*: These traps are designed to give the victim a false impression, magically or otherwise. This category includes illusory walls, doors, and floors, as well as actual features, such as a firepit concealed by an illusion of a normal floor.

6. *Teleporters*: These are devices designed to move the victim from one part of the dungeon to another, often without his knowledge.

7. *Specials*: This category includes multi-function traps and those involving more than one step, as well as traps of your own design.

Illustration Booklet

Provided with this kit is a sixteen-page booklet of black & white art. In it you will find a view of each major encounter area (including Rooms 2 and 68). Whenever the characters enter one of these rooms, simply show the players the appropriate illustration. (There are many excellent drawings in this booklet as well; feel free to use these in the same manner, if desired.) Rooms that are illustrated in the art booklet are designated in the text with a number inside a box. This number refers to the page of the art booklet where the corresponding illustration can be found. Creatures occupying these encounter areas have been deliberately left out of the views in some cases, so that they will come as a surprise to the characters.

Note that the view of Room 50 (Capricorn) is deliberately out of place at the rear of the art booklet — it is not the final encounter area, but it is desirable for the players to think it is (see the description of that room, page 24).

START

First, decide on what pretext you will tempt the characters to seek out Despot's kingdom and undertake the adventure. No doubt they will be spun the usual specious yarn of vast treasures guarded by aged and infirm monsters that mean no one any harm.

Once they are assembled, read the Players' Background (located on the back cover of the illustration booklet) aloud, paraphrased as you will. You may wish to photocopy the page and send it to the players before the game, so that they can come fully prepared. Once the characters have had their briefing, assume the roles of Candelabra and the queen as needed to answer any questions they may have and negotiate terms. This is a tricky adventure —you should certainly let them keep any treasure they find (except, of course, the king's personal possessions), plus have Despot bestow upon them a generous monetary reward in keeping with the economic balance of your campaign.

The characters may also wish to augment their magical arsenal prior to setting forth. It is recommended that you make little available in this respect — though they should be able to obtain minor magical items (such as potions with curative powers) for appropriate sums of money. When the characters are ready to depart, turn to the section entitled "Ignax's Dungeon" (page 6) and follow the instructions given under the heading "Departure."

CONDUCTING PLAY

It is worth noting that, despite the grim warnings that Candelabra gives in the Players' Background about upsetting the "magical balance," nothing the party can do will actually achieve this.

Be sure the players keep you informed about the positions of their characters at all times. Start this immediately, and don't allow the players to become sloppy and forgetful in their reports. Request party order frequently and consistently. For best results, use miniature figures.

As usual, boxed text is to be read aloud to the players when their characters are in a position to see what is described therein; all other text is for your eyes only.

Note: Each of the zodiac rooms contains a spherical gem (worth 50,000 gold coins) of the type corresponding to the sign represented. Though only six of the twelve gems in the dungeon are actually required to rescue Despot at the end of the adventure, the players are not to know this until the last moment. Until then, be sure to stress the exceptional quality and rarity of each gem as it is found, so that the characters will not fail to collect each and every one. If you emphasize only those six stones that are needed, this will provide the players with a clue toward solving the problem presented in the final encounter.

Note also that after a certain point (Room 26), the characters cannot retrace their steps to the entrance of the dungeon. Once past that point, they must find one of the teleporters — either the exit in Room 47 or the mosaic in the final encounter area (Room 68).

ZODIAC TABLE

SIGN	STONE	ELEMENT	COLOR
Aries	Diamond	Fire	Red
Taurus	Emerald	Earth	Green
Gemini	Agate	Air	White
Cancer	Pearl	Water	Blue
Leo	Ruby	Fire	Red
Virgo	Sardonyx	Earth	Green
Libra	Opal	Air	White
Scorpio	Topaz	Water	Blue
Sagittarius	Turquoise	Fire	Red
Capricorn	Sapphire	Earth	Green
Aquarius	Amethyst	Air	White
Pisces	Moonstone	Water	Blue

IGNAX'S DUNGEON

Unless otherwise specified, all passageways and rooms in Ignax's dungeon are 20' high. Corridors have rough stone walls and smooth, colored stone floors. Rooms have rough stone walls, floors, and ceilings. Unless otherwise specified, doors are 5' wide and 8' tall, made of heavy wood. All are closed when first seen, and can be opened normally. In many areas, there is no illumination other than that provided by the party. (The exceptions will be obvious.)

DEPARTURE

The morning after the characters arrive at the castle, they are awakened early and led to the throne room, where the courtiers are assembled. Candelabra steps forward to address the party.

"Good friends, you are about to embark on a perilous quest. If you are successful, you will be richly rewarded, and the people will remember your names in song for years to come. If you fail — the approved form of capital punishment here is most unpleasant, and the people will remember your names in song for years to come.

We know that the king is being held in Ignax's dungeon, but we know not where, or by what enchantment. Your task is twofold. First, you must find a way to rescue King Despot. Secondly, you must try to help me in my fight with Ignax. His magic is more powerful than mine, and in the long run I must surely be defeated, though I will occupy him as long as I can. Presumably, somewhere in the stronghold, there is something that can be used effectively against Ignax, and I earnestly hope you find it. I cannot defend you, or distract him, forever, so you must not waste time.

Now gather yourselves together, and I will transport you to your destination. Once there, you will be on your own."

The wizard steps closer and says in a whisper, "Remember — I will save myself before I save you and your quest!" Returning to the queen's side, Candelabra raises his arms. "Good fortune be with you!" he cries. The queen glares fiercely at the courtiers, who applaud nervously.

Without further ado, Candelabra promptly and accurately teleports the party to Area 1 (below).

1. THE PORTAL

The characters arrive at a point just outside the dungeon entrance, at dawn. Candelabra, though not physically present, will open the portal for them, providing appropriate special effects in the process.

It is dawn. You are standing before a boulder-strewn cliff face. Immediately in front of you is a huge boulder that quite dwarfs the others. It appears to have cracked slightly; there is a very narrow cleft at the top, facing you.

Some impulse makes you look over your shoulders. Up in the lightening sky, a shadowy figure races toward you, apparently flying on a witch's broom. It is approximately 500 yards from your position.

Before you have time to react, several things happen almost simultaneously. The sky shimmers, a flash of light surrounds the approaching figure, and a mighty high-pitched wail echoes through the sky. From behind you there is a thunderous crash, then the figure on the broom wheels and flies away at high speed.

Turning, you see that the boulder has been split in two; a huge cleft now runs down its center. Through this you can see a large opening in the cliff face, beyond which stone steps lead down into the darkness.

The figure on the broom was simply an illusion provided by Candelabra to heighten the dramatic effect. The steps lead downward at a 45° angle to a depth of 120', opening out at the foot into the next area.

2. THE BEGGAR 1

This room measures 40' east-west and 20' north-south. Read the following when the characters enter this area:

You have entered this chamber through an archway near the west end of the south wall. There are four doors — two in the wall opposite you (one at each end), and one each in the east and west walls.

A pair of wooden crutches is propped up against the north wall between the doors; beside them is what appears to be a bundle of rags.

The "bundle of rags" is actually a skeleton clad in old and tattered beggar's clothes. It is sitting with its back to the wall; between its legs, which are stretched out into the room, is a wooden begging bowl containing twelve coins and a small gem. The coins are of all types, from copper to platinum. The gem is worth slightly more than the most valuable coin.

This is a simple test of the characters' greed. Any character who takes destructive action against the skeleton (which is quite ordinary, and not remotely undead) or removes anything from the beggar's bowl will trigger a magical voice (apparently emanating from the skeleton) that says: "You churl! Stealing from a beggar!" In addition, any and all such thieves will be afflicted by a curse of limited duration. The offending characters' first strikes in each of their next six combats will be automatic misses, no matter what the circumstances and no matter how inexplicable this may be. (Penalize spellcasters similarly by spell failure.) Returning the stolen items will not remove the curse; it must run its full course once activated.

If, on the other hand, any character puts coins or other valuable items into

the bowl, the magical voice says: "Thank you, good sir. May your strike be ever true." (The message is pre-set, so a female character would still be addressed as "good sir.") That character will gain a 20% bonus on his first combat roll in each of the next six combats he enters. (A spellcaster should receive an appropriate bonus, of similar size, on spell use.) Any character who puts a coin into the bowl will get the bonus, except one who is already guilty of thieving from the bowl or attacking the skeleton.

3. OGRES

Anyone who listens at the door will hear grunting and snuffling inside, and a horrible stench will be obvious as soon as the door is opened. The inhabitants of this room are ogres, dressed in tattered skins and wielding heavy clubs. They will attack intruders on sight.

Rank: 40% P Rank
Health: 45% P Health
Atk: 50%
Mode: 1 club (longsword + 20%)
Res: 65%
Def: Hide = chain mail

5 OGRES

Their treasure consists of a few copper and silver coins, but no gems or magical items. The room is extremely filthy, with no interesting features save its rather odd shape and the small amount of treasure.

4. TRAP

Choose a trap to place here — nothing too deadly, but one that can be extremely well-concealed — to remind the characters that they should be on the lookout for such things. Select one from the list on page 5, or use one of your own.

5. DEAD END

At the end of the corridor is an ordinary-looking dungeon door. All attempts to open it will fail, no matter what means are used, for it is simply set into a blank wall — a dead-end.

However, this "door" is much more than it appears to be. If anyone pauses to listen, a heartbeat will be audible, and if violence is used against the "door," it will bleed.

It might occur to the characters that they have been fortunate enough to stumble upon Despot himself early in their explorations. (If they have already struck the door by the time this idea occurs to them, they might also be a trifle concerned about the repercussions if and when they rescue him.)

But how are they to rescue him, and what happens if it isn't Despot? The answer to the first question is simple — remove the magic. (Though Ignax could have used very powerful magic that the characters could not remove, he decided to make this task easy for them. Therefore, allow any attempt at restoration to succeed.)

And of course it isn't Despot at all. When the magic is removed, there stands before the party a very shapely female magician, Clepsydra by name. (Yes, she has an hourglass figure.) She has no idea how she got here, and claims that her last recollection is of spending a few nights in Despot's kingdom resting between adventures.



The characters may want Clepsydra to join the party, but alas, this is not to be. When she hears the story the characters have to tell, she decides to go and confront Ignax himself and promptly teleports away. The characters may infer that this is the "help against Ignax" that Candelabra mentioned.

6. HEADS — YOU LOSE

This room is inhabited by a huge five-headed reptilian creature, which will attack immediately. Only after the characters have killed it will they be able to examine the room in detail.

The Many-Headed has no treasure, and the room itself is unremarkable except for the northeast corner, where there is a crack approximately 18" wide in the wall.

In the 10'-square room beyond the crack, lying on a heap of straw, is a very large egg, which measures approximately 3' along its main axis and 18" in major diameter. Getting the egg out through the crack without breaking it will be difficult, but let the characters do so if they take sensible precautions.

This is, of course, a Many-Headed egg. The characters cannot know this, but it is nearly ready to hatch into a small, but very hungry baby. If they carry the egg with them, it will hatch in Room 26 (Leo) because of the intense heat there. It should not be difficult for

Rank: 85% P Rank
Health: 75% P Health (per head)
Atk: 70%
Modes: 1 bite (longsword) for each head
Res: 65%
Def: Hide = scale mail
Special: Will not die until all heads are slain.

THE MANY-HEADED



the characters to dispose of a baby Many-Headed, but its appearance might cause some confusion.

7. INSCRIPTION

Carved into the smooth stone floor of the corridor is the following doggerel:

Coins for the poor are worth your while.
Upon your quest the gods will smile,
Rewarding you for coins you spend –
Many blows opponents rend.
But if you have value taken,
You shall find your luck forsaken.

Fortunately for Ignax, his magical skills are considerably more advanced than his poetic ones. This is simply an explanation of what may have happened in Room 2. The inscription is not magic; it has no effect when read aloud.

8. ARIES 2

The overall theme of this room is "war." Characters listening at the door will hear the sounds of battle and martial music from inside, though there is no actual battle in progress. The sounds are magically produced, and emanate from everywhere in the room.

> The door opens to reveal several armed and armored warriors. The sound of raucous, martial music — drums, pipes and horns — intermingles with the noise of battle — the clash of weapons and the screams of the wounded. You have just enough time to see that the walls are covered with tapestries and murals before all of the warriors descend upon you.

There are six warriors led (from the rear) by their lord. All except the leader wear chain mail, and their helms bear stylized ram's horns. Each man wields an ordinary longsword and carries a shield decorated with a ram's horn emblem. Three of them will attack the leading members of the party in the doorway, and the others will reinforce their colleagues when possible.

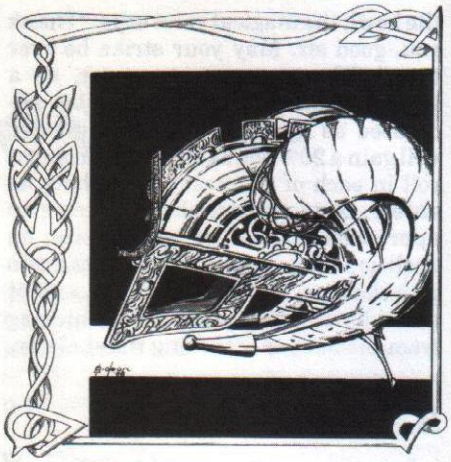
The leader remains at the rear of the group, and is the last to enter melee. He also wields a longsword, but his is enchanted (10% bonus on attacks and damage). He wears plate mail, and his large shield is embossed with a very ornate version of the ram's horn blazon. Two ram's horns decorate his helm, and secreted in the curl of each is a diamond of medium value. Because of a permanent magical protection placed upon the leader by Ignax, magical attacks on him are either ineffective or much reduced in effect (GM's option; as guidance, he could not be put to sleep by a spell, but might take half normal damage from a magical ball of flame, or none at all with a successful avoidance roll).

Rank: 40% P Rank
Health: 50% P Health
Atk: 40%
Modes: Longsword
Res: 55%
Def: Chain mail & shield

6 WARRIORS

Rank: 110% P Rank
Health: 120% P Health
Atk: 70%
Modes: Longsword + 10%
Res: 45%
Def: Plate mail & shield
Special: Protection against magic (see text)

1 LORD



After the combat is over, give the characters a fuller description of the area, including the following:

> No doors are visible save the one by which you entered. Every inch of wall space is covered with a tapestry or a mural on the theme of warfare. In the southwest corner of the room stands a chest about 3' long x 2' wide x 2' high.

The door in the south wall is simply concealed behind a tapestry; it is not a secret door. The chest is locked, but not trapped. It contains 700 gold coins, plus three diamonds worth 1,000 gold coins each. The chest is standing on top of a 6"-diameter hole in the floor, wherein lies a huge spherical diamond wrapped in a piece of cloth. This gem is one of the special treasures.

9. SPIDERS

This chamber is the lair of three huge spiders. Read the following:

> This room is empty and featureless except for a few fine cobwebs near the ceiling.

If the characters leave without entering, there is no problem. If any go inside, the spiders will drop down upon them with a 20% bonus to surprise.

The spiders' lair is a hole in the north wall near the ceiling. There is nothing of value here or in the rest of the room.

Rank: 30% P Rank
Health: 25% P Health
Atk: 25%
Modes: 1 bite (short sword)
Res: 70%
Def: Shell = leather armor + shield.
Special: Poisonous bite

3 HUGE SPIDERS

10. ROLLING ALONG

This room is actually 100' x 20', though the characters will see it as a 20'-square chamber because of a special illusion that Ignax has placed upon it. The room is unlit, except for any light sources the characters bring with them.

The illusionary 20' "room" will appear to move with the characters. As soon as anyone passes the midpoint (north-south) of the 20'-square "room," it will shift 10', such that it will appear that the character is back at the entrance. Any characters less than 10' into the "room" at the time of this shift cannot be seen by the characters ahead, but can be heard. Those left behind see no change in their surroundings except that their companion has vanished. They may rejoin the leading character by moving forward, but the person who triggered the shift cannot move backward through the illusion; it is as though the stone wall were real.

Once the "room" has shifted into its final position at the far end of the chamber, it will begin shifting backward (through the same increments) as soon as the occupant moves to the end wall, then back across the center line. The direction of the shift cannot be changed except at the ends of the large chamber. Therefore, the only way to get back out of the room once the first shift has been triggered is for at least one character to go all the way to the end, then walk back to the entrance.

There are no monsters here, but at the extreme west end of the room is a treasure consisting of curative potions and scrolls with spells of healing.

11. IGNAX (1)

The only thing in this room is a projection of old Ignax, sitting in a comfortable armchair in the 10'-square alcove to the northwest. (See the illustration on page 1.) He bears a strong similarity to the traditional mad professor — hair in disarray, garments that are ill-fitting and ill-matched for color, and a zany look about his eyes (which are looking in different directions). He is constantly on the move — fluttering his hands in the air, darting his head from side to side in a birdlike fashion, and crossing and uncrossing his legs, as though brimful of energy that he cannot dissipate.

When the characters enter, he peers at them through his gold-rimmed spectacles, then begins to talk quickly in sharp bursts of jabbering speech.

"Welcome, friends! So you are the fools whom Candelabra has persuaded to join forces against me. I am Ignax — you are here because of me, and also because you are particularly stupid!

"Well, at least you have overcome the first obstacle, but I see that you are already in rather a sorry state. Obviously my little challenges are too tough for you. As it happens, there is nothing yet to stop you from going back. And that's what I would do, if I were in your shoes," the wizard concludes, glancing quizzically at his socks.

The characters cannot affect the projection, and it will not disappear unless Ignax so desires. Any and all attacks against it are, of course, totally ineffective.

Ignax is completely in control of the image, so he can make it react sensibly to anything the characters say or do. If they wish to converse, Ignax will continue along the same general theme of discouragement — he wants the characters to give up the mission so that he can win his latest competition with Candelabra (though of course he will not explain this ulterior motive). Continue playing on this theme until the characters get restless, so long as what he says reasonably describes the party's actual condition. If Ignax cannot convince the characters to turn back, he will wish them a cordial goodbye, and the projection will slowly disappear.

12. TAURUS 3

This large room is luxuriously furnished. Read the following as soon as the door is opened:

You are immediately struck by the beauty of this room. It is large — approximately 30' from east to west and 100' from north to south. You have entered at the south end of the west wall. A gentle wash of light comes from numerous silver candelabra mounted along the walls at 10' intervals. Hanging between these are draperies, richly woven with threads of gold and silver, depicting pastoral scenes in which nymphs and fauns frolic happily. The floor is covered with a blue plush carpet decorated with lush green vines and pink flowers.

At the far end of the room, a woman clothed in a robe of some shimmering, light green material sits on a throne draped with rich black velvet. Her radiant beauty is immediately apparent, despite the distance between you. Two huge golden creatures, bovine in appearance, stand motionless to either side of her.

The woman is a sorceress who represents the mythological character Europa. Around her neck she wears a large heart-shaped pendant set with a fist-sized spherical emerald.

The bulls are larger than normal creatures of this type. In addition to its standard attacks, each has a breath weapon that will paralyze all opponents within range (avoidance roll applies).

The bulls and the woman will not move or react until attacked, or until the leading character is within 80' of them, whichever happens first. At that time, the animals will charge and the woman will start to cast an attack spell.

Both bulls will use their breath weapons once as they approach, which should immobilize some of the characters. Choose targets for the charge attack from among the paralyzed victims; the bulls hit such characters automatically

unless unaffected characters act quickly to prevent this. (Roll for the attack normally vs. a moving target.) During their charge, the bulls gain so much momentum that, once each has attempted to run down an opponent, it must take a full minute to stop, turn and resume the fight. During that time the bulls are vulnerable to attack and cannot fight back. When the monsters do re-engage, it will be at close quarters, so they can no longer gain the benefits of the charge. The bulls will fight to the death, ruining the beautiful carpet in the process.

Rank: 70% P Rank
Health: 60% P Health
Atk: 35%
Modes: Dagger & magic
Res: 85%
Def: No armor
Special: Magical spells (mostly offensive), plus one teleport

1 SORCERESS

Rank: 80% P Rank
Health: 80% P Health
Atk: 50%
Modes: Gore (longsword + 20%) + breath + charge
Res: 65%
Def: Hide = scale mail
Special: Breath paralyzes victim at 60' range; successful charge stuns victim for 1-4 minutes and inflicts damage (mace x 3)

2 BULLS

The woman will open her attack with a spell whose effect covers a large area (such as a cloud of flame). After that, she will direct attacks at individual targets so as not to hurt her bulls. If she is in real danger, she will teleport away, leaving her silken gown and necklace behind her. This pendant and the spherical emerald mounted in it cannot be destroyed by any means. (This gem is one of the special treasures.)

The candelabra are worth 100 gold coins each, and the draperies will fetch 50 gold coins per set in the markets of a large city. However, either sort of prize will be cumbersome if the characters have no special magical means of carrying bulky treasure. The only other "normal" treasure in the room is a scroll of four curative spells hidden under the throne. (You may wish to include a spell that will reverse the effects of the bulls' breath weapon — i.e. one that removes paralyzation.)

If the characters investigate the throne, they will find that it is quite easy to move. Behind its original position is the exit from this place — a small door, 2' wide and 3' tall, through which the characters may pass one at a time on hands and knees. Apart from its small size, the door is unremarkable.

13. SPY-HOLE

There is a spy-hole here through which the party can observe part of Room 17 (Gemini). Any characters who are specifically searching the walls have a 90% chance to discover the spy-hole; passers-by on that side of the corridor have a 10% chance.

14. HOUNDS

Two Hounds of the North Wind live in this 20' x 40' room. These huge, white dogs look exactly the same — they are a prelude to Gemini. They will attack intruders immediately with their frosty breath weapons, then engage.

Apart from the hounds, the chamber is completely bare. The monsters have no treasure.

15. I AM FOR YOU

A sliding rectangular panel separates this room into two parts — a 20'-square section and a 20' x 30' area beyond that. The panel is made of wood and has a handle mounted on the right side. Initially the sliding panel is closed, but it can be opened and closed easily from either side.

The 20'-square area is bare, unlit, and featureless. The larger area is lit by a warm light emanating from the ceiling 20' above. The walls are divided into 10' panels by decorative half-columns. Full-length plane mirrors hang in several of these wall sections. There are, in fact, as many mirrors as there are characters in the party. Place the mirrors around the room as desired, but do not put one in the wall section directly opposite the sliding panel unless that is absolutely necessary to accommodate the total number of characters. Save for the mirrors, this area is empty.

The mirrors are magical, and each is attuned to a particular member of the party. Assign a specific mirror to each character and note them on your map.

If a character stands directly before the mirror attuned to him and looks into it, the reflection will come to life. This "twin" will step out of the mirror and mingle with the party, hoping to become confused with the original character.

Each such twin has exactly the same physical characteristics, fighting abilities, etc. as the original character. However, the twin can be distinguished from the original by opposite handedness. (For example, if the original character wields a sword in his right hand, his twin will use his left hand.) There are minor physical differences as well, for

Rank: 50% P Rank
Health: 40% P Health
Atk: 40%
Modes: Bite (longsword + 10%) & frost breath
Res: 65%
Def: Hide = scale mail
Special: Breath weapon (fixed cold damage = 40% P Health)

2 HOUNDS

human bodies are never exactly symmetrical. Since the twins are living versions of reflections, their faces and bodies will be the opposite of the original characters'. (For example, a slight scar on the left side of the original character's face will appear on the right side of the twin's face.)

Once a character has such a twin, only one of the two can leave the room. The twins realize this and will try, without being obvious about it, to get through the door into the corridor. Thereafter, the original character is magically imprisoned here until the twin either re-enters the room or dies.

Though at first they will appear to behave as the party members they have replaced, the twins act quite differently in combat. When the time comes for battle, they will refuse to fight or use magic, becoming listless and apathetic. It may take some time for the genuine characters in the party to realize that they have one or more twins in their midst. If they have progressed beyond Room 26 (Leo) by the time they discover this, they will not be able to return until they reach the teleporter in Room 68. However, they can still release their companion by killing the twin, and hopefully their friend will manage to catch up with them.



Note carefully that each twin will claim, just as vehemently and convincingly as the original character, to be the genuine article. If perchance an original gets into the corridor before his twin, the latter will do his best to persuade the other characters that they have "the wrong one" with them.

16. In at the Deep End

The main area of this room (which is unlit unless the characters provide illumination) contains a square, white-tiled pool that measures 20' per side. It is filled to a depth of about 5' with a clear liquid. The 10' x 20' section at the south end of the room is furnished with benches, tall cupboards, coat racks, etc., which have clearly been provided so that bathers may store their clothes.

Characters immersing themselves completely in the liquid will be cured of all wounds and diseases acquired since they entered the dungeon. The liquid also has a rejuvenating effect. Any character who stays in the pool for one hour will be magically reduced in age by one year. This effect is not cumulative for characters — each can only benefit once, no matter how long the immersion — but the party may deduce that this is how the lady representing Europa (Room 12) keeps her youth and radiant beauty.

17. Gemini 4

The entrance to this room is a pair of metal doors, each 5' wide. Characters standing close to the doors will notice a chill in the air, and the metal is quite cold to the touch.

The occupants of this room are wind giants — and twins, naturally enough. Each giant wears a chunk of black agate, hemispherical in shape, on a chain around his neck. While they are alive, the giants emit a dim light, but otherwise the only light in here is that supplied by the party.

> The cold in this huge chamber is quite intense. Just inside the room, two gigantic humanoid figures await you, armed with huge swords. These hulking giants have white hair, which they wear in braids, and flat white eyes. Their faces and ragged clothes are identical. As you watch, they turn to face you, grinning maliciously.

Rank: 120% P Rank
Health: 135% P Health
Atk: 55%
Modes: Huge sword (longsword x 4) or whirlwind
Res: 35%
Def: Skin = enchanted plate mail
Special: Can assume whirlwind form (all within 20' are buffeted for damage equal to longsword x 2 each minute; victim must make a successful avoidance roll to retain weapons in hand); immune to normal and magical cold; take 50% extra damage from fire-based attacks; immune to all non-magical weapons while in whirlwind form

2 Wind Giants

The two giants will advance to engage the characters on sight, then slowly stage a fighting withdrawal into the room, drawing the party along with them. Once the characters are inside, the door will close behind them, and the giants will assume whirlwind form. Characters within range of either whirlwind are picked up and slammed into walls. In addition to the damage inflicted, all such characters must make an avoidance roll each minute or lose any weapons they are holding. The giants can maintain whirlwind form for five minutes before reverting to normal.

Once the giants have done their best to separate the characters from their weapons of choice, they engage in melee again. This time they will fight to the death. (Note that the giants' neckchains and the black hemispheres are totally immune to damage.)

The exit doors are normal-sized, and appear identical to those by which the party entered. When the characters are ready to explore the room further, read the following:

This is a large area, 50' square and 45' high. Directly opposite the entrance is another pair of double doors, apparently identical to those through which you entered. There are two huge beds whose "mattresses" appear to be clouds — one in the southeast corner and one in the southwest. Roughly at the center of the west wall stands a large stone table; both it and the stone chair beside it are sized for the room's former occupants. An identical chair-and-table combination stands roughly in the center of the east wall.

To either side of the double doors in the north wall is a stone dresser with four drawers — again designed for giants.

The black hemispheres cannot be removed from their chains by any normal or magical means save one (see below). Anyone with any skill in evaluation of gems will realize that although the black hemispheres are quite valuable by themselves, the single stone (which presumably was cleft to form these chunks) would have been of very considerable worth indeed.

If the flat faces of the hemispheres are brought within an inch or so of each other, they will mutually draw together and fuse, forming a single, perfectly spherical black agate. (This action will also detach them from the chains.) The agate is one of the special treasures.

In the top drawer of each dresser is a small flask containing an eggcupful of a substance that resembles mercury. The second and third drawers of each dresser contain clothes that are extra-large and extra-malodorous, but otherwise unremarkable. In the bottom drawer of each is a bone tube about 5" long containing a rolled sheet of parchment.

These scrolls are blank at the temperature in this room, but if they are taken out into the corridor, spidery writing will start to appear on them. The words are meaningless while the two pieces are separate, but bringing the long edges of the sheets together causes them to combine into a single parchment. As this happens, the writing becomes legible and comprehensible. In fact, the resulting parchment is an instruction sheet that describes how to combine the two flasks of liquid to form a potion that gives protection in a 20' radius against demons and other similar creatures of the Nether Worlds. So far as this adventure is concerned, this potion will be rather important to the characters when they face the problems that will arise in Room 50 (Capricorn).

18. ARROWS OF FORTUNE

This chamber measures 20' square and apparently contains nothing except a large chest (which is actually an illusion), standing diagonally across the northwest corner. There is no danger as long as no one enters the room — and there is no obvious exit, so a careful party may decide to look elsewhere.

This entire room is nothing more nor less than a complex arrow trap, triggered by pressure on any part of the floor. Each 5'-square section of flooring sets off a separate trap, which fires six arrows out of the wall farthest from that area. Thus, anyone stepping on one of the squares immediately inside the door will trigger six arrows from the far corner. All arrows are aimed at a point 4' above the trigger square.

The traps have an Atk value of 40%, and the arrows do normal damage. Roll one attack for each batch of six arrows; if the attack is successful, roll a six-sided die to determine how many arrows hit. Any that miss have a 40% chance of hitting a nearby character.

There are sixteen such traps in this chamber. If the characters walk across the room at a normal rate, a hail of arrows will seem to erupt from the walls, for the party will probably set off more than one trap before realizing that anything is amiss. Once a particular trap has fired, it is exhausted. Note that the 5'-square trigger mechanisms are not actually marked on the floor or on the map; you may wish to keep a diagram handy so that you can cross off the traps as they are triggered.

19. ON CLOUD NINE

This room is quite cold — in fact, it is the same temperature as Room 17 (Gemini). It is filled with a white mist that obscures vision, but does not inhibit breathing or any of the other senses. The mist is confined to the room and does not drift into the corridor.

In the 10'-square area to the north, concealed by the mist, is a flat cloud, roughly 8' square and 2" thick. It is tethered to the floor in the northwest corner by a gossamer rope, and floats horizontally a few inches from the floor.

If the characters discover the cloud and untether it (which can be done without difficulty once the rope is discovered), they can take it with them. The cloud is a magical transportation device that behaves very much like the traditional magic carpet, obeying simple commands such as "Up," "Stop," "Forward," and so forth. Two characters can ride comfortably on the cloud, though if necessary it can support up to four passengers (in rather uncomfortable proximity). It will obey verbal commands from any character who is actually sitting on it at the time.

This is a valuable magical device. Unfortunately for the characters, as soon as the cloud suffers the heating effect in Room 26 (Leo) it will evaporate (perhaps with severe consequences for anyone riding on it at the time).

20. CLUBHOUSE

The giants in Room 17 (Gemini) have been using this room to store their spare weapons. Currently, it contains four huge clubs, each at least 6' long. These weapons are much too bulky and heavy for the average character to carry, though a single warrior with exceptional strength might be able to wield one in battle (GM's discretion).

21. CANCER 5

A giant scorpion lives in this 40'-square room, but is currently hidden under the sand that covers the floor. Until someone sets off the special effects described on the next page, the only source of illumination is whatever the party provides. Read the following when the characters first look into the room:

The floor of this darkened room is covered entirely with smooth golden sand. Seashells of several varieties are scattered all over its surface, some partially buried.

In the northwest corner is a square pedestal about 15' high that stretches almost halfway along the north and west walls. There is a large and apparently immobile shape atop the pedestal, but no details are discernable.

Continue with the following when the characters move into the room:

The walls of this chamber are decorated with frescoes of moonlit beaches, empty of people and apparently limitless.

A spherical gray object, its surface pitted and cratered, hangs from the center of the ceiling on a fine wire. This ball is about 2' in diameter, and it hangs nearly 10' above the floor. It seems to be rotating slowly.

The globe does nothing but rotate so long as the party remains outside the room. A few seconds after the first party member enters, the sphere will flash brightly, emitting an intense ray of light that automatically strikes one character (selected at random). This individual has been "moonstruck," and must stand around for 1-6 minutes, unable to do anything (including defending against attacks), unless an avoidance roll is successful. (If your game system has no avoidance roll or equivalent mechanic, give each victim a 60% base chance to avoid the effect. This chance may be increased to a maximum of 70%, based on character intelligence.) If the same character is moonstruck a second time while the effects of the previous attack are still in force, simply extend the recovery time appropriately. These flashes will continue to occur once per minute (game time) as long as anyone is in the room, and the sphere will never miss its target.

The globe can be destroyed with any normal weapon (Def = chain mail; Res = 75%; Health = 30% P Health). Alternatively, the effects of the flashing light could be negated by covering the globe with heavy, opaque material, or by conjuring up an area of total magical darkness around the globe.

The giant scorpion will not attack immediately; rather, it will wait until it can detect (via vibrations in the sand) substantial movement on the surface.

Rank: 90% P Rank
Health: 150% P Health
Atk: 60%
Modes: 2 pincers (long-sword) & sting (short sword + poison)
Res: 60%
Def: Shell = chain mail
Special: Poisonous sting; automatic surprise unless sub-surface movement is detected

1 GIANT SCORPION

Thus if there are three characters in the room and two of them are moonstruck, the scorpion will bide its time, but the presence of three or more mobile intruders will prompt it to attack. Unless its sub-sand movement is detected (10% chance per character), it will surprise the party with its first attack, surfacing near the spot where it can sense the most vibrations.

The vague shape on the pedestal is a huge stone statue of a crab. In its front claws is a large spherical pearl. Contrary to what the characters probably expect, the statue will not animate, and the pearl it holds (which is one of the special treasures) can be taken from its claws with ease.

The only exit from this room is a small hole beneath the statue. The characters will be able to see this escape route clearly (assuming they think of looking there), but they will not be able to reach it without first moving the stone crab. (The statue weighs approximately 4,000 pounds — most of that concentrated in the large, central portion.) One character at a time can squeeze through the hole (though it is a tight fit). Beyond it is a narrow crawlspace that leads down to the corridor outside.

The sand on the floor is 20' deep. Below it is a bare stone floor — but no other exit. If the characters start digging, remember that dry sand is very fluid; when heaped, it flows everywhere and defies virtually any attempt to contain it conveniently. Any character trying to dig runs the risk of being buried. (This could prove to be an amusing interlude for the GM.)

22. TRAPPED AGAIN

The trap at this T-junction is a well-concealed pit. It is 10' deep, and has no surprises inside. Allow the characters their normal chances to spot the pit before falling into it.

23. GARGOYLES

In this chamber are two "traditional" gargoyles. When the door is opened, they appear as grotesque stone statues against the west wall of this otherwise bare room. As soon as someone crosses the threshold, the creatures animate and attack.

24. CLEANLINESS

This chamber is brightly lit by some unseen source in the transparent ceiling, which is 20' high. The 40' x 10' area to the west is divided into eight cubicles, each 5' wide. These cubicles are separated by narrow transparent dividing walls, each 10' long. Mounted on the western wall, about 6' above the floor, are several circular nozzles shaped rather like sunflower heads. One of these points into each cubicle. (Try to describe these accurately without giving away the fact that they are shower heads.) Hanging from the ceiling beside each nozzle is a metal chain.

Pulling a chain will, in most cases, activate the adjacent shower head, the effects of which vary from one shower to another. The evidence of these effects can be seen in some (though not all) of the cubicles. (See the individual descriptions below.)

The rest of the room is fitted out with cupboards, benches, coat hooks, etc. — obviously designed so that bathers could hang their clothes out of range of whatever comes out of the shower heads.

The cubicles are numbered from north to south. Individual descriptions are as follows:

Cubicle 1: The nozzle is corroded and discolored. Even a cursory examination clearly indicates that this shower head will not work, and pulling the chain confirms that.

Rank: 50% P Rank
Health: 45% P Health
Atk: 40%
Modes: 2 claws (short sword), 1 bite (long-sword), & 1 or 2 horns (dagger) or 1 barbed tail (dagger + holding)
Res: 60%
Def: Shell = chain mail
Special: Immune to all non-magical weapons; if barbed tail hits, victim is held fast and must engage in grappling melee

2 GARGOYLES

Cubicle 2: Anyone who steps into this cubicle has a 75% chance of slipping on the floor (damage = dagger). This should alert characters to what will emerge from the nozzle if they pull the chain — a fine spray of light oil. Aside from making the floor slippery, however, the oil has no harmful effects.

Cubicle 3: This cubicle is cleaner than the others. Pulling the chain will cause plain water to spray forcefully out of the nozzle.

Cubicle 4: Something has blocked the pipes here, and whatever it is cannot be removed without destroying the plumbing. The chain will break off at the ceiling if pulled. Regardless of what the characters do, nothing will come out of the nozzle.

Cubicle 5: When the chain is pulled, the nozzle sprays a blue liquid that cures all wounds. Any character standing under this shower for two minutes will be restored to full Health, though the liquid will not cure diseases or remove the effects of poison, paralyzation, or the like.

Cubicle 6: The floor in this cubicle is pitted, and the nozzle is discolored. Pulling the chain produces a stream of concentrated acid that will splash throughout the cubicle, inflicting damage (30%-70% of the victim's current Health) on any living creatures it strikes, and destroying any metal or leather items. (At your discretion, you may allow characters thus bathed in acid to cure the damage with the healing liquid in Cubicle 5, and/or to save their equipment if they immediately soak it with the plain water in Cubicle 3.)

Cubicle 7: This shower head is inoperative; the nozzle is blocked with rust.

Cubicle 8: A careful examination of the floor in this cubicle will reveal slight green stains. If the chain is pulled, a slimy green substance spurts out from the nozzle. This is contact poison; if it strikes bare skin, the victim immediately loses 25%-50% Health, and additional damage (equal to longsword) will accrue each minute thereafter until the poison is cleaned off. (The water in Cubicle 3 will suffice for this purpose.)

Treat the party fairly in this area. There is plenty of evidence as to which cubicles are dangerous — if the characters fail to search for the clues, or make poor deductions, let them suffer!

25. IGNAX (2)

This room appears to be a primitive chapel. There is a wooden pulpit at the west end, and a number of chairs (equal, as it happens, to the number of characters in the party) facing it. Some hidden source provides ample light.

Another projection of Ignax stands behind the pulpit. This time, he is dressed in rich priestly vestments, though his manner of speaking (see Room 11) has not changed. Ignax sternly orders the characters to sit down, claiming that he has something very serious to tell them.

Needless to say, the characters cannot affect the projection in any way. If they did not encounter the first projection of Ignax (Room 11), the wizard will introduce himself and establish his credibility before launching into the "sermon" outlined below.

Once the characters are seated, Ignax will "preach" to them. He begins with a detailed account of all the incidents that have occurred so far in the adventure, dwelling particularly on the individual characters' failures and errors. He will point out foolish and careless actions, and point to simple solutions that the party did not perceive. He makes every effort to create a feeling of self-doubt in the characters, and to convince them that they should give up and turn back.

Despite his apparent concern for the party's health, however, Ignax reveals no useful information. He will respond to the characters' questions, but will not offer any details about the way the dungeon is structured, or any hints about how to proceed. To finish, he issues grim warnings about the challenges ahead, and how woefully inadequate the characters are to deal with them. When he has finished his sermon, he admonishes the party to give up, then lets the projection gradually fade away.

26. LEO 6

The entrance to this chamber is one-way, though the characters will not realize this until it is too late. Once all of them have entered, they cannot retrace their steps.

Initially, the only illumination in this room is a shaft of golden light (see below). Read the following when the characters first open the door:

> This is a circular chamber, larger than most of the areas you have already seen. In fact, you cannot yet see its full extent, but the walls are a gold color, apparently made of some ruddy metal.
>
> The room is illuminated by a shaft of golden light, which extends from the top of a cylindrical pedestal to the ceiling. A gray spherical object, about 2' in diameter, hangs on a thin wire from the ceiling, in the center of the golden light. It is almost as if you are looking at a model of a planetary body, for its surface is pitted and irregular. This globe is slowly rotating.
>
> The pedestal is about 4' high and 3' in diameter; it is apparently made of the same metal as the walls. On its flat top lies a fist-sized, spherical red stone that sparkles brightly in the light. Flanking the pedestal are four stone statues of creatures that resemble winged lions with the heads of fierce predatory birds.

The characters will see no more than this until *all* party members have entered. If some characters move into the room while others remain outside the door, those in the lead will encounter an invisible force screen (about 15' beyond the entrance), which prevents them from moving any farther. As soon as all the characters have passed through the door, four events occur simultaneously:

1. The door by which the characters entered disappears.
2. The invisible force screen vanishes, allowing the characters to move freely.
3. The hanging globe begins to emit intense light and heat.
4. A glimmering image of a door appears in the wall on the opposite side of the room. After ten seconds, it disappears, then reappears thirty seconds later 10' to the right of its previous position. This process repeats continuously, so that the door image moves clockwise around the room.

Read the following to the players when this occurs:

> Suddenly, the rotating globe gives forth a blinding flash of light that causes you to turn away and shield your eyes from its intensity. As you do so, you notice that the door through which you entered has now disappeared.
>
> As your eyes adjust to the brilliant light, you can see a flickering image of a door that seems to be

moving around the room. It appears briefly in one section of wall, disappears for a short time, then appears again, about 10' to the right of its previous position. This "door" appears rather vague and insubstantial.

The room is getting hot — very hot.

From this point onward, remind the players regularly that their characters are suffering from the extreme heat. Until the globe is destroyed, the following penalties will apply to all characters:

1. Movement is half normal.
2. All die rolls during combat are penalized by -20%.
3. Every ten minutes (game time), all characters must make an avoidance check; any who fail will pass out from the heat and remain comatose until the temperature returns to normal. (Depending on the circumstances, you may choose to make the avoidance check progressively more difficult. Do not, of course, allow all the characters to succumb, or they will eventually die here. But there is no harm in reducing their number quite considerably by these means.)

The globe can be broken with blows from any normal weapon (Def = chain mail; Res = 75%; Health = 30% P Health). Once it has been destroyed (or taken down, see below), the light and heat cease, though the image of the door continues to move around the room.

The gem on the pedestal is a huge spherical ruby. (This is one of the special treasures.) It can be removed from its resting place easily, but this will cause the stone statues to animate and attack. These creatures are griffons — monsters with the bodies of lions and the beaks, foreclaws, and wings of eagles. If melee is joined before the globe is destroyed, the griffons will not be affected by the heat.

There is no treasure in this room other than the ruby. Greedy characters may remove the globe from its supporting wire and take it with them rather than destroying it, though this will take a lot of effort and ingenuity, for it will remain hot to the touch for several hours. It has no special properties outside the room, but it should bring a good price, for it is made of a rare metal.

The only exit from this chamber is a secret door in the east wall. Once during every circuit, the moving image of the door will coincide with the real exit. If a character grabs at the door handle just when this occurs, the actual door will be revealed and the moving image will disappear. This is the *only* way of finding this secret door!

Note: If the characters have the egg from Room 6 with them, the extreme heat in this room will cause it to hatch after five minutes (game time). The baby Many-Headed is very hungry and will attack immediately. It has Rank and Health values equal to half those of its parent (see page 7); all other statistics are the same.

Also, if the cloud from Room 19 is brought into this chamber, it will evaporate as soon as the temperature begins to rise.

Rank: 70% P Rank
Health: 70% P Health
Atk: 45%
Modes: 2 claws (short sword) and one bite (mace x 2)
Res: 50%
Def: Skin = plate mail

4 GRIFFONS

27. COURTESY IS FREE

The door to this room is held closed by an enchantment. Appropriate magic will open it, but it will also respond to a polite verbal request for entry, regardless of the language used. The exact phrasing is not important, but the request must include the word "please."

Lying on the dusty floor of this otherwise empty room is a tube made of silver, about 2" in diameter and 15" long. It is coated with contact poison — not a deadly toxin, but one that will inflict significant damage (25% P Health, or 10% P Health with a successful avoidance roll). Inside the tube are twelve identical magical scrolls, each inscribed with a spell that will counteract poison.

28. SILENCE PLEASE

This is a small library, gently lit by an unseen source. The walls are lined with bookcases that stretch from floor to ceiling, sagging under the weight of books and scrolls by the thousands.

There is nothing magical here, though if the characters investigate, they will notice that there is a common theme. Most of the books concern nature — plants, trees, flowers etc.

Behind one row of books in the southeast corner is a small metal handle. Pulling it to the left causes a 10' section of bookcase to slide eastward, revealing a 10' x 20' space.

This secret space is another library, but the books and scrolls kept here are magical, and all of them relate to druidic rituals. The magic should be moderately powerful, but don't give the characters anything that they can use in the dungeon. Several of the books and scrolls could be worth up to 500 gold coins apiece if taken outside and sold, but such treasures are too cumbersome to be carried out in any quantity.

29. A CLOSE SHAVE

This room is obviously a carpenter's workplace. A guttering candle on the workbench against the south wall provides feeble illumination.

If the characters improve the lighting conditions, they will see that the workbench is littered with saws, chisels, hammers, nails, pots of varnish, and other woodworking materials. Two rather battered sawhorses stand against the west wall. In one corner is some discarded wooden furniture — actually partially-completed pews for the chapel (Room 30) that did not measure up to the carpenter's standards.

30. VIRGO 7

When the characters first open the door to this room, they will see nothing except the 10' x 50' section at the north end.

The wall to your right is approximately 50' long. It is featureless except for cressets, mounted 8' from the floor and 10' apart, in which torches burn fitfully. The floor is carpeted with a deep-red, luxurious pile. The ceiling is about

25' above you, arching to a height of 30' or so above the central north-south axis of the chamber.

To your left is a wooden screen, ornately decorated with carvings. It is 20' long, and rises to a height of 20' above the floor. Another screen of the same dimensions stands at right angles to the west wall. You can see nothing through the 10' gap between the two screens, but the chamber beyond appears reasonably well lit.

The carvings on the screens depict grotesque human, humanoid and animal faces, with mouths distorted in vicious snarls. All of these are extremely ugly. This entire area radiates a feeling of great evil.

The main part of the room measures 50' east-west x 60' north-south. There are five secret doors in the room — two each in the east and west walls, plus one in the center of the north wall. These doors are absolutely undetectable until they are opened (see text at right). Read the following when the characters look into the main area:

This chamber appears to be a chapel. Mounted at 10' intervals on the east and west walls are cressets bearing torches. Despite these, however, the place is quite gloomy.

A 10'-wide strip of blood-red carpeting extends up the middle of the room, ending at an altar set against the center of the south wall. On either side of the center aisle are wooden pews, each about 15' long. Though these pews are furbished in the typical manner with kneelers, book rests, and a shelf on which hymnals might be stored when not in use, no books are currently visible.

Side aisles, each about 5' wide, run along the east and west walls. Separating the altar from the pews and leaving only a 10' gap in the center are cordons of what might be vines (since they appear to have leaves), hanging from wooden posts set 5' apart. They provide an effective screen, and you cannot see what (if anything) is behind them.

There appears to be something white on the altar, but from this distance you cannot see exactly what it is.

When the characters approach to within 30' of the altar, they will be able to see more.

On the altar lies a woman clad in a filmy white gown. She appears to be sleeping. Beauty and goodness radiate from her — she must be the loveliest lady you have ever seen. You are drawn toward her.

Behind the altar is a huge tapestry that extends from ceiling to floor. The design, picked out in gold thread on black cloth, depicts a tree — a very large and sinister-looking tree. Its defoliated branches are twisted in grotesque shapes, and what appears to be a human face leers out of the thickest part of its trunk, grinning evilly.

The woman on the altar is wearing a large spherical gem — a sardonyx (layered onyx) — on a chain around her neck. This is one of the special treasures.

As soon as anyone attempts to revive the woman or take the gem from around her neck, the four secret doors in the east and west walls open. Through each door come two Aspirants clad in cowled black robes. Each grasps a curiously twisted dagger with both hands, pointing the tip down. They advance toward the altar as a group to attack the party, mumbling a prayer in an obscure tongue as they move.

Any character with linguistic talent can piece together some words of the Aspirants' chant; essentially, it is a sacrificial intonation of extremely evil nature, and makes particular reference to the Great Death Druid.

As soon as the Aspirants engage the characters in melee, several things happen simultaneously. (Unless a character who is not involved in the melee happens to be looking in the right direction, however, it may take a few moments for the party to grasp what is happening.)

The secret door in the center of the north wall opens, and out steps the Great Death Druid. He wears a robe similar to those of the Aspirants, but his is crimson with a gold cowl. In one hand he holds a massive, crescent-shaped weapon of a type unfamiliar to most of the characters.

As soon as the Druid appears, the woman on the altar awakens from her coma and screams, "Help! Save me! It's the Great Death Druid!"

In the common tongue, the Druid bellows, "Darest thou steal my sacrifice? Prepare to die!" He then raises his arms and casts a magical spell. A moment later, a 10' x 10' mass of repulsive, foul insects appears in the center aisle, about 50' from the altar. Flying and crawling, the creatures move forward to engulf the characters. The effects of this attack are twofold. First, the cloud of insects automatically inflicts damage (as short sword) to all characters within it each minute (no attack roll needed). It also prevents the victims from doing anything except trying to escape. While within the cloud, the characters cannot return attacks or use any of their magic.

As soon as the insects appear, the woman sits up on the altar and shrieks, "Behind the tapestry!" If the characters allow the Aspirants to get within 5' of the woman, one of them will kill her with a single blow. If she is caught in the insect cloud, she will die in the first minute, but her last action will be to take the chain from her neck and throw it to the south, where it will hit the tapestry and fall, undamaged, to the floor.

The Great Death Druid continues with additional offensive spells, as needed. After a few minutes of this, the characters should realize that their chief opponent is more than a match for them, grab the woman, open the hidden door behind the tapestry, and leave



quickly, fighting any Aspirants who get in their way. The Great Death Druid and the surviving Aspirants will not follow. If the woman has already died, the characters can still pick up her necklace and stage a fighting withdrawal. If, however, they are stupid enough to do battle with the Great Death Druid, play him unmercifully.

If the characters manage to rescue the woman, she will give up the gem willingly. However, she knows very little about the dungeon and nothing about Ignax or Despot. She does know that there is one room (58) from which one can only escape by jumping into the water and going to the bottom. She can also tell the characters how to make a potion with the liquids in the two flasks from Room 17.

As soon as the woman reaches the next four-way intersection, she vanishes, never to be seen again, leaving her filmy gown (and the necklace, if she still has it) behind.

Rank: 25% P Rank
Health: 20% P Health
Atk: 30%
Modes: Dagger (damage = dagger + 20%)
Res: 70%
Def: Robes = leather armor
Special: Each gains a 20% bonus on all attack rolls due to fanaticism

8 ASPIRANTS

Rank: 200% P Rank
Health: 220% P Health
Atk: 65%
Modes: Magical scimitar (longsword + 30%) & magic
Res: 5%
Def: Magic robe = enchanted plate mail +25%
Special: See invisible; insect obscurement; plus 20-25 additional magical spells (primarily offensive) and 2-5 magical items (mostly defensive)

GREAT DEATH DRUID

31. PRUDENT TROLLS

Two trolls (creatures similar to the mythological Scandinavian goblins) live in this room.

This is a filthy, smelly room, about 20' square, with bare walls and floor. Two trolls emerge from a heap of filth to attack you, obviously taking exception to your presence in their lair.

Rank: 75% P Rank
Health: 70% P Health
Atk: 40%
Modes: 2 claws (club + 20% each) and 1 bite (longsword x 2)
Res: 65%
Def: Hide = scale mail
Special: Regenerates rapidly unless burned; when Health reaches zero, the creature becomes comatose for 1-2 minutes; immune to fire (ring)

2 TROLLS

Like their counterparts of Scandinavian legend, these creatures cannot be permanently killed except by fire.

The characters should find these opponents relatively easy to overcome, but they will encounter a problem when they try to deliver the coup de grace. These trolls are wearing magical rings that render them (or even sundered pieces of their bodies) immune to fire. If desired, you may also give each troll another device that speeds its regeneration, so that it can resume combat one minute after being reduced to zero Health. If you opt for such a device, it should *not* be usable by the characters.

32. 99 BOTTLES

This unlit room is furnished with a wooden table and three wooden chairs. On the table are three bottles and several pewter mugs, containing only the dregs of a ruby-colored liquid. In the corner opposite the door is a short flight of stairs that leads down to a wine cellar.

The walls in the circular area are lined with bottles, racked horizontally. Investigation (which will have to be by taste, since the bottles are labelled in some strange, indecipherable code) will reveal some fine wines that have no abnormal effects (if imbibed in moderation). Other bottles, however, are not so pleasant to sample. Suggested effects include poison, knock-out drops, extremely alcoholic beverages that have immediate and drastic effects on the drinker, some wine that has gone bitter and causes nausea, and so forth.

33. PUT 'N' TAKE

The square portion of this room is bare, unlit, and uninteresting. An open archway leads to a circular area beyond.

On the wall of the circular chamber, diagonally opposite the entrance, is a sign that simply says:

TREASURE HERE!

About 2' below this sign is a small rectangular handle jutting out of the wall. When pulled upward, this opens a sliding panel, behind which are four shelves built into the wall. Various treasures are stacked on these shelves.

Hundreds of sparkling gems are heaped in disarray on the bottom shelf. The second shelf contains coins piled into neat stacks — a fortune in silver, gold, and platinum. Items of jewelry are displayed on the third shelf — bangles, strings of pearls, tiaras, necklaces, etc.

On the top shelf is a rolled-up scroll.

As soon as anything is removed from any of the shelves, a hidden and silent mechanism begins to operate, and the ceiling, initially 20' above the floor, starts to descend. At the same time, a moving panel slides across the entrance to the circular area, closing it off from the square portion of the room. The panel cannot be budged by any means (physical or magical) while the ceiling is moving. Though it is descending slowly, the ceiling will eventually crush the characters below unless they can figure out how to stop it. There are two ways of doing this.

The first way is to ensure that the three lowest shelves hold a greater total value of treasure than they did when the panel was first opened. Since something has already been removed from the shelves to initiate the ceiling's movement in the first place, slightly more than the value extracted must be replaced to stop it. (It is not enough simply to put back what has been taken.) The characters may realize at this point that the sign is an instruction, not a piece of information.

The second way of stopping the ceiling is to read the scroll on the fourth shelf. Any character (spellcaster or not) can use this with no chance of failure. Its effect is to stop time in an area 40' in diameter, centered on the user, for exactly thirty seconds. (This time limit is specified in the text of the scroll.) Living creatures within this area are not affected, but the ceiling will stop. (Quick-thinking characters can also grab a bit of treasure from the shelves before they leave.)

Once the ceiling has stopped its descent, the panel opens again.

34. LIBRA 8

This room measures 70' east-west and 30' north-south.

> You have entered this unlit room in the center of its long north wall. The north-south dimension is approximately 30'. The floor and ceiling are of a beautiful, highly polished marble. The walls are smooth and almost glasslike.
>
> The only feature in the room is a normal alchemist's balance, which hangs on a hook set into the wall directly opposite the door. There appears to be a milky-white, fist-sized stone in each of the pans, which hang horizontal, indicating a perfect balance. There are two other doors in the room — one each in the center of the east and west walls.

The stone in the right pan of the balance (i.e. the one to the west) is a spherical opal (one of the special treasures). The gem in the left pan is a fake — a remarkable imitation that is virtually indistinguishable from the genuine stone, except by someone with skill in gemcutting or jewelry.

The walls and floor of this room are very smooth and slippery. Even a character with particular skill in climbing cannot scale these surfaces.

What the characters will not realize until one of them steps east or west of center is that the entire floor is also a balance, pivoting about a fulcrum that lies along that central north-south axis. Despite the weight of the marble slab that forms the floor, this balance is remarkably sensitive. One virtue of the floor's mass is that, when it is put out of balance, it moves quite slowly on its fulcrum. Therefore, each character has only a 30% chance of sliding down into the cellar when the floor is tilted.

The cellar is larger than the main room, measuring 200' north-south and 250' east-west. The floor, which lies 40' below the floor level of the main room, is covered with a thick layer of leaves, so anyone tumbling down will take no damage from the fall. However, the cellar is the lair of two stegosauri. These large, stupid, aggressive dinosaurs will attack any intruders.

Rank: 180% P Rank
Health: 150% P Health
Atk: 70%
Modes: Tail lash (long-sword x 4)
Res: 50%
Def: Hide = plate mail + shield

2 STEGOSAURI

Once the characters have the opal, they must figure out how to escape from the room. Neither the east nor the west door will open individually — both must be opened simultaneously. To accomplish that, the characters must put an equal amount of weight at each position to balance the floor while they open the doors. Therefore, the group must split up to leave the room by this means.

There is also a crawlway leading out of the cellar. This passage comes out under a loose 10' square of floor in the corridor (which is marked 35 on the map), 20' north of the door to Room 42.

35. EXIT

This is the exit hole from the basement of Room 34 (above).

35A. THE NARROWS

At these locations, the corridor narrows to a mere crack. These points appear to be dead ends at first, but if the characters bring a light source close to the end wall, they will see a narrow crack in the left or right corner (depending on which point they have found).

The crack is only 3" wide. However, if the characters investigate, they will find that the wall to either side of the crack is quite soft (like clay), and can actually be pushed aside. In this way, the characters can widen the crack enough to squeeze through, one at a time. (Of course, the character going through will not be able to see much of the area on the other side of the crack.)

36. MEDUSA!

Here the characters will meet the most famous of Greek mythology's legendary gorgons. Medusa has poisonous snakes for hair, and her very gaze turns the observer into stone.

After all the dreary dungeon rooms encountered thus far, this sumptuous bedroom should be quite a change for the characters.

> Before you is an elegant bedroom, bathed in soft light from some unseen source. At the center of the east wall is a beautiful four-poster bed, hung with lavish lacy draperies that conceal the

occupant from your view. A thick-pile pink carpet covers the floor.

The rest of the bedroom furniture is all done in white lacquer with gold finishings — two bedside tables, a dressing table with a stool, a chest of drawers, a large wardrobe, and a low table with pink cushions spread on the carpet around it. Various knick-knacks are visible — a brass candlestick with a pink candle on each bedside table, an ebony jewelry box atop the chest of drawers, a hand mirror, hairbrush, and comb on the dressing table, and several figurines, apparently jade, on the low table.

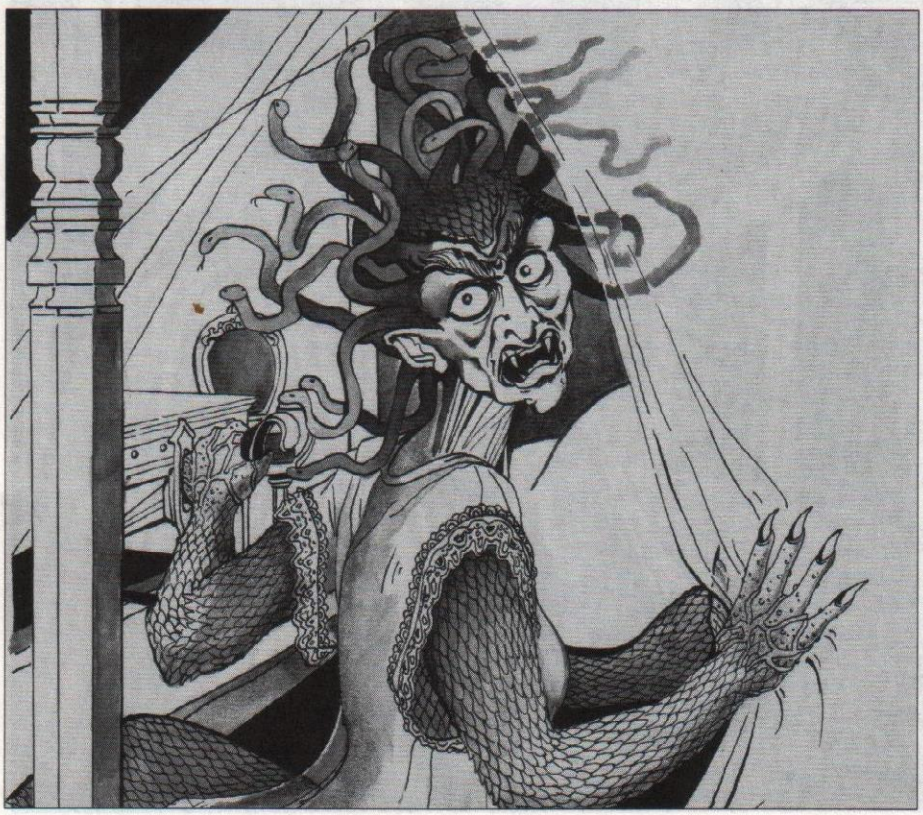
Medusa is, of course, in the bed behind the drapes. There is no particular reason why the characters should suspect a gaze attack, and unless suitable precautions are taken before the curtains are pulled back, the first character to set eyes on Medusa will be turned to stone (no avoidance roll applies).

If a gaze attack is suggested and suitable preparations are made, reward the players for their ingenuity. For instance, a character who uses the hand mirror from the dresser to look behind the drapes has no chance of being stoned. Likewise, a character who deliberately avoids looking at the head of the bed has a 50-70% chance of avoiding the effects of the gaze, depending on the exact circumstances.

The jade figurines on the low table are reasonably valuable. There are seven of them, and each is worth 800-1,200 gold coins.

Rank: 60% P Rank
Health: 45% P Health
Atk: 35%
Modes: 2 claws (dagger) + gaze + asps
Res: 50%
Def: Skin = banded mail + shield
Special: Gaze attack turns victim to stone; asps (hair) attack collectively at close quarters (dagger + poison)

MEDUSA



37. HELP IS AT HAND

This room is almost identical to Room 36 (above). When the characters enter, simply read the same description, changing the position of the bed from east to south and adjusting the other details as required.

The occupant of the bed, however, is quite different. The gentle creature who lives in this room is asleep when the characters arrive. She bears a striking resemblance to the horrid Medusa, though she does not have snakey locks. (She is not related to Medusa; this resemblance is just to sow a bit of confusion.) This lady is actually a benevolent creature with curative powers, which she will bestow liberally upon the characters. She can cure wounds, eliminate the effects of poisons, restore petrified or paralyzed characters to normal, and so forth. Whether or not she can bring dead characters back to life is up to you. If the adventure has gone badly for the party, and the survivors are carting several corpses around the dungeon with them, you may wish to allow this creature to bring at least some of them back to life.

No statistics are suggested for this creature; if the characters are foolish enough to attack her, she will not defend herself, and will be slain by the first blow. If they awaken her, she will notice any wounds or other injuries the characters may have and offer aid. After she has cured them, she will provide them with food, drink, and a safe haven where they can rest for the night. There is no danger in this room, but there are perils aplenty ahead, and you should use this opportunity to ensure that the party is able to cope with them.

Obviously, this setup will be more effective if you can somehow ensure that the characters cannot get into this room until after they have dealt with Room 36. Note also that, once the characters have passed through Room 42, they can no longer get back here (except via the teleporter in Room 68). However, if they wish to return before they pick up the topaz (see page 21), they will have no difficulty, and cures will be liberally dispensed as before.

38. GREEN FINGERS

The creature who resides in Room 37 uses this greenhouse to grow the plants needed for her powerful curing potions. The room is very brightly lit — it is as if the chamber were exposed to the

blinding rays of the equatorial sun, though no single light source can be discerned. It is quite warm in here, but not uncomfortably so, strangely enough.

The room is filled with plant life, lovingly tended and neatly trimmed. Around the perimeter of the chamber are shallow troughs filled with highly efficacious nutrients, into which the younger plants are placed until their root systems have developed. All the plants are healthy and thriving, and although some are twisted and convoluted into curious shapes, there is something extremely restful and relaxing about the whole room.

Any character despoiling this place should be punished — at the very least, such a person should no longer be able to benefit from the ministrations of the lady in Room 37, and you will probably wish to think up some more fitting and hurtful punishment.

39. ALL BROKEN UP

This curiously-shaped room is unlit. Inside are fourteen stone statues, all of which share two factors in common — they are all of adventurers (warriors, spellcasters, etc.), and they are all broken (a leg missing, a badly chipped torso, etc.).

This is where the clean-up crew in the dungeon has placed those victims of Medusa (Room 36) who, because of the breakage that had occurred since their stoning, could not be brought back to normal human form.

Absolutely nothing can be done to assist these lost souls.

40. HISS!

This is nothing more nor less than a roomful of snakes. It is unlit and featureless save for its occupants.

There are literally hundreds of the nasty creatures in here, of all shapes and sizes. You need hardly spend time planning out their characteristics, for only an exceptionally stupid party would do other than slam the door immediately and look elsewhere.

41. IGNAX (3)

This area is built like a theater in the round. The circular stage is raised 2' above the rest of the floor and ringed by lighted candles. Instead of seats, comfortable cushions have been provided for the audience.

As soon as the first character enters the room, another projection of Ignax will appear onstage. This time, he is dressed as a Shakespearean actor, with breeches, feathers in his hat, and a short sword at his belt. In his hand he holds a skull. He welcomes the characters and asks them to sit on the cushions, for he has something important to say.

Since the party probably split to get through Room 34 (Libra), the characters may not all enter this room at once. If this is the case, Ignax will refuse to "give his performance" until everyone is present, claiming that it behooves the entire party to hear what he has to say. If the characters have not encountered any previous projections of Ignax (in Rooms 11 and/or 25, respectively), ensure that he introduces himself properly before launching into his main act. He will answer no questions this time, and as before, nothing the characters can do will affect the projection in any way.

When the party is comfortably seated, Ignax begins a soliloquy. His declamation is properly oratorical and Shakespearean, and his gestures are broad, grand, and sweeping. His manner this time is rather different too. Whereas on previous occasions he has been scathing and critical, he now seems rather sad.

Ignax holds forth the skull in his right hand and addresses it solemnly. "Alas, poor Yorick, what are we to do? These fine, brave adventurers have not heeded my previous warnings, and now they are surely doomed. Despite my efforts to convince them of their folly, they have persisted past the point of no return. Now that they have come this far, they can no longer turn back. I know that you would weep for them if you could, for they now have no choice other than to suffer all the dangers ahead, and they will surely die most horribly. But they only have themselves to blame for this foolishness," the wizard sobs.

Putting the skull down, Ignax becomes pensive for a moment, then turns to face you. "I have considered the whole matter again," he says sincerely. "You have, I must admit, achieved rather more than I had expected, and for this you have my admiration. It would be such a pity," he continues, wiping away a



crocodile tear with his sleeve, "if such a bold (albeit stupid) group were to be forever eliminated." The wizard sweeps his arms majestically in the air, and there is a blinding flash of light. "There! I have created a way out for you. It lies ahead — all that remains is for you to find it."

At this, the projection vanishes. The "way out" to which Ignax referred is the teleporter device in Room 47.

42. SCORPIO 8

This huge, unlit, square room measures 70' per side, and the ceiling is only 10' above the sandy floor. An enormous scorpion lives under the sand, but it will not attack immediately.

This huge square room is bare of adornment. The floor is completely covered with sand, which is heaped into dunes. Various pieces of worthless flotsam lie on the surface, some half-buried.

The sand that covers the floor is actually 40' deep. Those trying to walk across it will sink at least to the ankles, and can move at only half normal speed. In combat, all characters fighting on the sand will suffer a -20% penalty on their attack rolls.

The scorpion hiding under the sand must be the big brother of the one in Room 21. Like its counterpart, it will wait until at least three characters are in the room before it attacks. It will automatically achieve surprise with its first attack unless its sub-surface movement has been detected (10% chance per character).

Rank: 110% P Rank
Health: 165% P Health
Atk: 65%
Modes: 2 pincers (longsword + 20%) and sting (longsword + poison)
Res: 60%
Def: Shell = chain mail
Special: Poisonous sting; automatic surprise unless sub-surface movement is detected

1 ENORMOUS SCORPION

After the adventurers have disposed of the scorpion, they can explore the rest the room. In the southeast corner, half-buried in the sand, is a gigantic oyster containing a large spherical topaz (one of the special treasures). Read the following as soon as the oyster is within range of the party's light sources:

In the southeast corner of the room, the shell of a very large oyster protrudes from the sand. The shell is partly open, revealing a spherical, golden-colored stone.

There does not seem to be any exit from this room save the door by which you entered.

The characters will have no trouble removing the topaz, for the oyster is dead. As soon as they have the gem, however, the door slams shut and the sand begins to move. If some of the characters are still outside the door when the topaz is removed from the oyster, simply delay the special effects until the entire party is in the room. (Sooner or later everyone will be — there's nowhere else to go!) Read the following when this occurs:

Suddenly the sand starts to move under your feet, swirling clockwise about the center of the room. Those of you near the center feel little effect, while those near the walls feel the sting of sand blowing past you, picking up speed as it goes.

There is nothing the party can do to stop the sand. It will simply move faster and faster until it is spinning around the room like a whirlwind, knocking the characters off their feet and carrying them along. Build this up to a climax and try to scare the players. (You might wish to have them make avoidance checks to see whether their characters can hold onto their equipment, but under no circumstances should they lose the topaz or anything else that is important, for they will not be able to return here easily.) After a few minutes of this, announce to the players that their characters find themselves in a sandy heap at the end of a corridor. (They have been deposited at point 42A.)

If the characters start to dig through the sand before taking the topaz, handle the situation according to the guidelines given for Room 21.

43. AMAZING!

Be sure that you fully understand the operation of this room before the characters enter. This area is designed to make the players think, and you must keep careful track of where everyone is at any given time; otherwise you will become as lost as the characters!

Interior walls subdivide the chamber into 10'-square rooms. Each has a one-way door in every wall. Doors in the north and south walls open to the south; those in east and west walls open to the west. Thus, though each room apparently has four doors, the characters can only leave through those in the south or west walls. The other two doors (in the north and east walls) cannot be opened from inside the room by any means whatsoever.

The exterior doors of the main chamber have a wrap-around teleport feature. Characters attempting to leave the maze through a southbound door will find themselves in the northernmost interior room along that same north-south axis. Anyone attempting to move west out of the main area will reappear in the easternmost room along the same east-west axis. The only exception to this is that anyone moving south out of Area C will end up in the corridor outside Room 43, rather than in Area A.

For example, suppose a character enters Room 43 from the corridor and moves south. The door behind him (back into the main corridor) cannot be opened from this side. He passes through Area A, ignores the door in its west wall, and leaves by the door in the south wall, entering Area C. Again, the door behind him (back into area A) cannot be opened from this side. He again ignores the door in the west wall of Area C and leaves by the south door. Now he is back in the corridor again, outside the door to Room 43.

Now suppose another character follows the first through Area A to Area C, but leaves by the west door, entering Area D. The door behind him (back to Area C) cannot be opened from this side. He moves west into Area E, and again leaves by the west door, entering Area C

through the door in its east wall (which cannot be opened from this side).

The characters will have to find a way out of this place. Whatever route they take, they must make the last move by going south out of Area C, since this is the only way to get into the corridor.

Note that all these small rooms except Area M appear identical. In this chamber are two valuable treasures — one for warriors and one for spellcasters. The former item should be a weapon more powerful than the best the party has at the moment (a sword with a better bonus than the best sword possessed, for instance). The other item should be a magical book of spells that will prove to be very valuable when the characters eventually leave the dungeon, but which cannot be used within it. (Perhaps the best way to arrange this is to have the book contain spells that none of the characters can actually use until they advance further in their professions.)

44. SNAKES ALIVE?

This room is featureless except for a chest in the middle of the floor. It is not locked, but opening the lid sets off a gas trap in the first 20' of corridor immediately outside the room (standard chances for trap detection).

If the trap is triggered, a hissing sound will become audible as the invisible gas comes out of small holes in the walls. The gas is poisonous, but not fatal — victims take damage (10% P Health) each minute they stay within the area covered by the gas cloud.

The chest is filled with treasure — 6,000 gold coins, five gems (worth 1,000 gold coins each) four pieces of jewelry (worth 2,500, 1,300, 920, and 460 gold coins), a scroll, and one or two helpful magical devices (GM's choice).

45. THE GNAX GALLERY

This room is brightly lit by candles burning in sconces, which have been placed at 10' intervals around the walls. An interior wall forms a rectangular spiral to the center of the room. On the outside walls, at 10' intervals, hang several full-length portraits. A small plaque atop each identifies the person represented.

This gallery is a record of the Gnax family to date. The first portrait (according to its plaque) depicts Agnax, the second Bignax, the third Cygnax, and so forth, through Dognax, Eggnax, Fagnax and Gygnax, to end at Hognax (the eighth portrait).

Where the ninth and successive p traits should be hang empty frames, a the plaques above them are blank. T twenty-sixth empty frame is adjacent a U-shaped central area equipped w floor-to-ceiling shelves, on which a rolled-up blank canvases, brushes, va ous oil paints in jars, and other artis paraphernalia. Each paint pot is label "Dorian Gray Paint Corp.," and the co is identified beneath the brand. Desp the unsettling name, treat these pain as quite ordinary for the purposes of th scenario. Those with the power to dete magical auras will note a faint dweom on the containers, but this can be e plained away on the grounds that th have only been handled by magician Since Ignax stole these paints fro Candelabra, explaining the true prope ties of these powerful items would inappropriate here. But interest gamers are invited to send a se addressed, stamped envelope to New I finities Productions, Inc., attn: Doria Gray. (See the contents page for th address.)

If the players ask for details abo the portraits, show them the illustr tion below. (Note that this does n depict the placement of the paintin accurately.) All of the men depicted he bear some resemblance to Ignax, and a of them are wall-eyed, for this trait ru in the family.



46. SAGITTARIUS 9

In this room, three centaurs armed with longbows guard a statue of Jupiter. They will not attack immediately.

This room is lit by torches burning in cressets around the walls. In the northwest corner, three centaur archers are guarding a large statue of Jupiter seated on a throne. Something sparkles in the statue's left hand. The three guardians do not speak, but point their arrows at your hearts.

Rank: 60% P Rank
Health: 55% P Health
Atk: 55%
Modes: 6 arrows
Res: 50%
Def: Barding = banded mail + shield
Special: Fire 6 arrows per minute

3 CENTAURS

The centaurs will begin firing as soon as the characters step through the door. They will break off the attack briefly if their visitors indicate a desire to parley, but they know nothing useful about the dungeon, and will accept no terms other than the characters' immediate departure. (The characters can easily avoid combat by leaving this room through the door in the east wall, but they will notice the gem that the statue holds; see below.) The centaurs will not allow the party to approach them.

The statue depicts Jupiter in the traditional manner — stern and magisterial, with long flowing hair and a full bushy beard. His arms are outstretched, palms up, as though offering what he holds to the characters. In his right hand is a magic staff (GM's choice as to effects). In his left hand is a large spherical turquoise (one of the special treasures). Both of these items can be removed easily.

Except for the statue and its guardians, this room is featureless.

47. TOO DARN HOT

The door to this room radiates so much heat that it is detectable from a distance of 20'. Two salamanders (legendary fire creatures) live in this 30'-square room, though they are not visible at first glance.

You are greeted by a blast of heat that takes your breath away. To the right of the door is the foot of a stone ramp that hugs the wall. As best you can tell, this ramp spirals inward to the center of the room, where the floor is at a height of approximately 10' above your present position.

The source of the heat is obvious — as you watch, a sheet of flame erupts from somewhere in the center of the room, licking the blackened ceiling, 20' above, before it subsides.

The stone ramp spirals around the room at a slight incline. It takes up all the available space outside of the firepit in the center. The edge of the pit is level with the surrounding floor area (i.e. 10' above the characters' position). Flames flicker within the pit, and occasional gouts of flame shoot upward.

The salamanders are currently in the firepit. They will only attack characters who stand on the edge of the pit, ignoring anyone who merely ascends the ramp to get a better view.

Unless the characters have some sort of protection against the heat, they will suffer a -40% penalty on all attack rolls in this room. (Note that the heat from the firepit is too intense to be overcome by magical cold.) In addition, any of their items that are vulnerable to fire have a 10% chance per minute of breaking unless they are magically protected. For example, the liquid inside a potion flask might boil and shatter the container (GM's discretion).

On the south side of the room are the entrances to two 10'-square areas. The one to the west is concealed by an illusionary wall (shown as a dotted line on the map) across the open entryway. Characters with metal on or about their persons cannot enter this area; they are magically repelled. Those who are not carrying any metal may walk through

Rank: 50% P Rank
Health: 40% P Health
Atk: 40%
Modes: 1 weapon
Res: 60%
Def: Skin = chain mail
Special: Immune to heat and fire-based attacks

2 SALAMANDERS

the illusion with no difficulty.

The floor of this little chamber is approximately 6' below the level of the ramp. On the floor in the center of the room is a pottery flask containing about half a pint of some amber liquid. This potion makes the imbiber immune to damage from fire. There is enough in the bottle for eight drafts.

The other 10'-square room, off the southeast corner of the main area, is partially visible through a crack in the wall, right in the corner. This opening is clearly visible to any character looking in the right direction, assuming an adequate light source. Like the walls to either side of the cracks in Area 35A, those in this corner are somewhat flexible, and the sides can be "pulled open" enough to permit the passage of an unarmored character.

The floor here is nearly 8' lower than the level of the ramp at that point. This area is actually an elevator combined with a teleportation device. On the north wall, where it cannot be seen by anyone outside the room, is a notice written in Ignax's hand, which by now should seem familiar to the characters. It reads:

Discretion is the better part of valor,
So they say.
The wounded, not the dead, will
Win the day.
So here's the last escape route
On your way.
You can still retire with honor —
Press Button A.

Ignax still can't write poetry.

Below the notice is a button, which is

conspicuously labeled "A." When it is pressed, everyone in the room will be teleported into the queen's bedchamber at Despot's castle. Those still outside are not affected. You may allow this device to work any number of times or, if you are feeling particularly cruel, only once.

This is a genuine escape route for the characters, and they might be wise to take it if they are badly hurt. If they do use it, they will of course be dismissed by the queen and her court with contempt, but at least they will still be alive, and they can keep any of the treasures that they have already accumulated.

48 & 49. RECIPROCITY

Though these rooms are not precisely the same size and shape, the same general description will suffice for both. Each is a bare room, featureless except for a rectangular metal handle set into one of the walls, 6" above the floor. (The handle is at the western end of the south wall in Room 48, and the western end of the north wall in 49). The ceilings are 20' high. The panels closing off the secret room from these two main areas cannot be detected, let alone opened, except by the means described hereafter.

Pulling either handle has no effect; each is meant to turn clockwise in the plane of the wall rather than pulling away from it. Turning either handle takes considerable physical prowess — even a strong character will have some difficulty. When the handle in either room has been turned 180°, the sliding stone panel in the *other* chamber will open, revealing the secret room that connects the two. This will produce a far-off sound of stone rubbing and grating against stone, audible to anyone in the original room or in the corridor just outside it. This sound is remote and baffled enough that the actual source cannot be determined; the characters can only discover the effect by splitting up to observe the panel in the other room when one handle is turned. Note that each handle is spring-loaded; if not firmly held in the "turned" position, both it and the panel it controls will slide back into their original positions.

The secret room contains 1,500 gold coins, six pieces of jewelry (worth 1,000 gold coins each), and two or three magic items of relatively low power (GM's choice, but one or more of these should be curative magic).

50. CAPRICORN 13

This is a false ending to the adventure. Ignax has designed this area very carefully to delude the characters into believing that they can go no farther, and that they have indeed found poor old Despot. Though most players should realize that there are still at least two main rooms to be explored after this one, play this encounter as though it were in fact the last.

The tiny triangular foyer is a very tight squeeze, and only one character at a time can pass through it. This small room is unlit save for any lights the characters have brought with them, and the walls, floor, and ceiling are bare. However, the inner door (leading into the main area) is highly-polished and carefully carved. It has a large doorknob in the center.

When the party's advance scout opens the door into the main area, ask whether that character intends to pass the information to the others immediately. If so, describe the room to the whole group; otherwise, talk privately to that player. Note that some of the information in the following boxed section may not be apparent until the characters move into the room, and tailor the description accordingly.

> This is a truly magnificent chamber. It is built in the shape of an isosceles triangle, and you have entered very close to the vertex between the two equal sides — this corner being immediately to your right, behind the now-open door.
>
> The equal sides of the room are about 120' long, and the base is approximately 80'. The floor is covered with highly polished obsidian tiles cut in 1' squares. A deep red carpet, 10' wide, runs down the center of the triangular room; it is edged with intricate designs picked out in gold and silver thread.
>
> Beautifully crafted gold sconces are mounted 6' from the floor at 10' intervals along both side walls. Each sconce holds three deep red candles, which are burning brightly.
>
> The walls are decorated with exquisitely crafted murals. Some of these depict battle scenes in which a brave king leads his army into combat against unholy creatures; others show the same king benignly ruling his subjects. The face in these paintings matches the description given to you by the queen; it would appear that the murals depict King Despot's life and rulership!

> The ceiling is slightly arched, rising 30' above the floor at the sides and curving gently up to a height of 40' along the central axis of the chamber. Hanging from the ceiling in the middle of the room is a massive and highly ornamental chandelier, made of cut glass and tiny polished mirrors. Its lower tip is about 30' above the floor. The chandelier is rotating very slowly, producing a pleasant and soothing tinkling sound. It has no candles.
>
> At the far end of the room is a 10' x 4' altar on a raised platform that measures about 20' x 14'. Three obsidian-tiled steps, each 1' high, lead up to the platform from at least three sides. On top of the altar is an ornately carved ebony sarcophagus. At each corner of the platform stands a 6'-tall temple brazier. Smoke curls lazily up from each — probably burning incense, judging from the sweet smell of the place.
>
> Behind the altar, standing 20' apart, are two massive white marble columns that reach to the ceiling. Each is fully 10' across. Between these pillars is a rectangular space of absolute darkness — a darkness so profound and impenetrable that it provokes a feeling of dread in you. Shiny black curtains hang from ceiling to floor on either side of this dark area. On the floor are two large chests (one just in front of each curtain) that look as though they are made of silver. You cannot see whether the curtains conceal the far wall, or whether there is more space beyond them.
>
> The rest of the room is furnished with chairs and divans — all of carved wood with red plush pads. Several marble tables have been placed near the divans; these are set with silver bowls containing fruits and nuts and crystal goblets filled with red liquid.

Nothing will happen in this roo until the characters open the sarcoph gus. They may loot the chamber, eat t food, and amuse themselves as desir without repercussions. See below f notes on the mundane items in the roo

FURNISHINGS & FOOD

The fruits and nuts are edible a pleasant-tasting, and the wine in t

goblets is very palatable.

Each of the eighteen gold candle sconces is worth 1,000 gold coins; these can be removed from the walls quite easily, but will be awkward to carry. The silver bowls are worth 350 gold coins each, and the crystal goblets (which are surprisingly sturdy) are each worth 200 gold coins. There are twenty bowls and fourteen goblets.

Really determined and greedy characters may try to take down the chandelier for treasure, but their efforts will be in vain — it breaks into thousands of worthless fragments at a touch.

The chests are made of solid silver. Even when they are empty, two characters of average strength are needed to carry each of them. The chests alone are worth 20,000 gold coins each. They are neither locked nor trapped, and each contains 5,000 gold coins, 1,000 platinum coins, and ten pieces of jewelry (each worth 1,000-5,000 gold coins). Both chests have false bottoms that conceal magic items. (Choose a relatively weak item for one chest and a powerful, baneful item for the other.)

The doors shown on the map at each end of the base wall will appear when the sarcophagus is opened; they do not exist until then. The characters will not be able to see into the 20' x 10' dark space beween the pillars by any means. Any character foolish enough to venture into that space is carried to the nether reaches of Hell, never to be seen again. The dark space radiates an overwhelming aura of evil, which can be detected by any character with the innate or magical means to do so. There is no evil anywhere else in the room.

THE ALTAR

The sarcophagus is firmly fixed to the altar, which is in turn fixed to the platform; neither can be moved by any means. Carved into the top of the huge coffin is a likeness of King Despot.

The sarcophagus is locked. A careful study of the carvings on the side nearest the carpet will reveal a tiny keyhole. The key is stuck (with some simple resin adhesive) to the other side of the door through which the characters entered. Of course, this is not the only means of opening the sarcophagus; any character who has the appropriate skills may try to pick the lock (standard chances).

As soon as the lid of the sarcophagus is lifted, the following events happen simultaneously:

1. Two doors appear in the base wall. (The characters may not notice this, since the doors are hidden by the curtains.)

2. The door near the apex (through which the party entered) vanishes and is replaced by a blank wall.

The doors in the base wall cannot be opened by any means until the characters have fulfilled certain requirements (see below).

> You have found him! There lies King Despot — apparently asleep, for you can see his chest move gently as he breathes. He is clad in his royal robes and holds a golden scepter in his right hand. On his head is the crown of state.

Of course, this isn't the king at all, but a near-perfect magical facsimile. Give each character a 10% chance to recognize the deception, and allow a 5% bonus for any character with above-average mental prowess. The false king cannot be awakened, and sooner or later the characters will realize that they have been duped — if for no other reason than that there is, at present, no way out of this place, with or without Despot.

The sarcophagus has a false bottom, which the characters will find automatically if they search. Removing it reveals a cavity that contains only one item — a large, spherical sapphire. (This is one of the special treasures.)

Removing the sapphire causes several things to happen simultaneously:

1. The doors in the base wall can now be opened normally (though this is not obvious, since they are closed at present).

2. The braziers flare up, emitting immense clouds of nasty-smelling vapor.

3. The chandelier's rotation speeds up, and the pleasant tinkling sound rapidly becomes a shrill, high-pitched wail.

4. From the dark space there comes a fiendish bellow, which rises to a wild crescendo during the next fifteen seconds. During this time, the characters are immobilized with fear (no avoidance roll) and can take no action.

After this — well, you can have fun with this one, for out of the dark space comes the legendary Orcus himself — and boy, is he mad! Orcus is a hideous, goat-horned demon who represents the ultimate in evil. No statistics are given for him; as far as this adventure is concerned, he is absolutely invincible. He has access to almost all baneful magic.

The characters may, of course, stay and fight Orcus if they feel particularly masochistic. If they choose to do so, have no mercy — slay the idiots one by one until eventually the message dawns that they should be moving along. If the characters have made a potion from the mercurylike substances in Room 17, they may use it to gain a temporary respite, for it will repel any demon (even an extremely powerful one) for ten minutes or so. At the end of that time, however, the effects of the potion will wear off, and that will be the end of that.

What the characters should do, of course, is get away immediately, using the potion to protect them as they flee. Although they probably don't know that the doors in the "base" wall can be opened now, there's nowhere else to go. Scare them as much as possible as they depart — this is the last chance to do so until they reach the final encounter.

As the characters pass through one or both of the small triangular foyers to reach the corridor, they will find a 2' carved platinum statuette of Orcus lying on the floor (one in each foyer). Each is worth at least 50,000 gold coins.

51. TAXES DUE

This room is absolutely bare, save for its occupant. The ceiling is 18' above the floor.

Every game system contains (or should contain) monsters and/or devices whose sole purpose is to rob careless or unfortunate adventurers of precious possessions. There is such a creature (or trap) in this room. (If your game system does not have such things, perhaps now is the time to create some.)

Most such monsters are weaklings that don't put up much of a fight in melee, so no statistics are given. Simply place one of your favorite annoyances here. For example, you might use a creature that ruins armor or weapons, one that nullifies magic, or perhaps a monster that can think of nothing better than to enjoy a good square meal of precious metals, or even gems. (Under no circumstances, however, should you allow any of the special treasures to be destroyed.)

Alternatively, you could use a trap that releases a gas or acid capable of destroying backpacks, belts, and so forth. (After at least one character has suffered such losses, ask the players to declare exactly how their characters are managing to carry all their equipment, treasures, etc., along with their weapons in hand. They may very well have to leave something valuable behind.)

52. FIFTY-TWO

There is an inscription on the door of this room, but the characters will not be able to see it clearly without a light source, for the corridor is very dark. The message is written in a tongue comprehensible to anyone. It reads:

This Is The Legendary Room 52

Inside, the number 52 is inscribed on every inch of the stone walls and floor, in no particular pattern. The ceiling is 15' high and devoid of decoration. At the extreme north end of the room is a table; on it are ordinary playing cards.

Several of these cards have been stuck onto the north wall. They are arranged in four rows, as follows:

	♥7	♠2	
♥2	♥A	♥3	♥J
	♥9	♠A	
♠6	♠7	♥5	♠3

The rest of the cards from this same deck are on the table, placed as follows. On the near (south) side of the table are two stacks (thirteen cards each), face down. These are the complete suits of clubs and diamonds, arranged in ascending numerical order (ace low). The hearts and spades not used in the message (fourteen in all) are scattered randomly all over the far (north) side of the table.

The clue to solving this riddle is the number 52, which is not only the number of cards in a deck, but also twice the number of letters in the alphabet. The clubs and diamonds have been removed from play, so the hearts and spades (in that order, starting from the ace), represent the letters of the alphabet.

The message thus translates as, "Go Back In Step" — which, even if taken literally, means absolutely nothing. You may, however, wish to reward the character who first solves this rather ordinary problem with a temporary bonus to attack rolls in combat. (This might lead to some fun with characters walking backwards out of the room — perhaps even into the force wall at 54, below.)

53. MORE TAXES

Except for its shape, this chamber is the same as Room 51.

54. FORCE WALL

These points lie about 30' away from whichever door into Room 58 the party is approaching. The traps here are absolutely undetectable by any means, magical or otherwise. Once the characters have passed either of these points, a magical force wall springs up behind them and literally pushes them into Room 58.

There is nothing the characters can do to negate this effect or prevent themselves from being forced into the next major room. (By all means allow the party to attempt various ways of escaping from the force wall, but don't allow any of them to succeed.)

55 & 56. TAXES AGAIN

Except for the shapes, these rooms are the same as Room 51.

57. BASIL

This curious serpentine room is 20' high. It is filled with plants, which apparently grow straight out of the floor. There are bushes, small trees, vines, and other creepers in profusion. It is not impossible to penetrate this stuff, but difficult enough, particularly considering the fact that if anything (a branch, a portion of creeper, etc.) is cut away, it regrows in a matter of seconds.

This is the lair of Basil the Vulaconda, who is waiting at the north end of the room, entwined in a small tree. Once the characters have penetrated that

Rank: 150% P Rank
Health: 145% P Health
Atk: 55%
Modes: Coil (longsword x 3) or magic
Res: 30%
Def: Skin = chain mail
Special: Control plants

1 VULACONDA



area, they cannot fail to see Basil (o them). He wears a rather doleful comical expression on his face, so t probably will not identify him imm ately as an enemy.

The vulaconda is a strange creat with the body of a snake and the hea a vulture. He can command the pla and at his order they will entangle, t choke, crush, or asphyxiate the cha ters before they have a chance to Basil any harm.

Basil used to be a favorite pet faithful servant of Ignax, but his ma has ignored him lately, so he is feel very disenchanted. He knows all ab the dungeon and the purpose Ig wants it to serve, but to spite his mas he has decided to give some indirect h to Candelabra's hirelings.

The vulaconda can communic orally with the characters in any ton they choose — indeed, he is quite tal tive if given the slightest encoura ment. He will introduce himself polit as "Pasil" (due to a speech impedime Thereafter, the line of the conversat may vary depending upon the circu stances, but play Basil according to following three "rules" of behavior:

1. He is disconcerted about fact that the characters are dress and repeatedly asks them to disro A refusal will not make him unco erative, but he will reiterate the quest from time to time.

2. He will be most offended anyone calls him "Pasil," for he highly embarrassed about his spe impediment. Again, this won't s him from communicating with t party, but he will certainly ignore offending character from that ti forward.

3. Every so often, he will offer t characters an apple from a spec tree (just behind the one he is occu ing). Though these are bright colored, luscious-looking fruits, th are nauseating to the taste. Ba however, will be most offended if t

characters fail to finish any apples that they have begun to eat.

Any character who offends Basil too severely will be grasped by the creepers, physically hauled out of the room, and dumped in the corridor outside. This expulsion cannot be resisted, regardless of the offending character's strength or abilities, and the victim will be blocked from returning to the room thereafter.

Basil will be pleased with any characters who have flattered him, called him "Basil" when addressing him by name, and either finished an apple without wincing or found a very convincing excuse for not trying one in the first place. (Particularly determined characters will also be naked.) Basil will thank any such visitors for the interesting and enjoyable conversation, then give them each a pear (from a third tree, as yet unnoticed by the party). Any character who eats a pear (which is quite pleasant to the taste) will gain a temporary bonus to either a physical characteristic or attack rolls in combat. (A spellcaster might even receive a bonus spell and/or improved casting ability.)

58. AQUARIUS 10

The party will be forced through one or both of the entry doors into this chamber. (See 54 for details.) As soon as all the characters are inside, both of the entry doors close, immediately becoming like all the other doors in the room — false! Read the following after the entire party is inside:

> You have been forced into a square chamber that measures approximately 40' per side. The ceiling is about 25' above the floor. The door has closed behind you.
>
> This room is brightly lit from a source you cannot discern. The light reflects off the smooth white marble of the walls and floor, and the glare makes it quite uncomfortable for you to look at the same spot longer than a few seconds.
>
> Set into each 10' section of wall is a 5'-wide white marble door, just like the one by which you entered. The floor and the upper walls are finished in 1'-square, multicolored marble tiles, which form quite an attractive mosaic. The ceiling is plain, white marble.
>
> Centrally placed in the room is a square pool, approximately 20' per side, filled with what appears to be water. There is a low, white marble wall around the edge of the pool, and atop this wall stand sixteen identical white marble statues of an adolescent youth clad in white robes. Each statue holds a white marble urn, as though about to pour its contents into the pool.
>
> As you watch, a clear liquid begins to flow into the pool from one of the urns.

The water in the pool is actually 13' deep, though it appears only 10' deep due to refraction. Initially, the water level of the pool is about 2' below the edge of the retaining wall, and it does not rise perceptibly when the initial urn starts to pour. (It makes no difference which urn is activated first.)

There are sixteen perfectly normal-looking doors in this room (four per wall), but none of them lead anywhere. (You can vary this effect from one door to another if you wish; some might open onto blank walls, others may reveal an infinite succession of doors, and still others might not open at all.)

Each time any door is touched, however, another urn (randomly selected) starts to pour. (There is no logic to the sequence of activation, though you may work out a pattern if you wish.)

After one urn has been pouring for ten minutes (or two for five minutes, etc.), the water level in the pool will have risen to a point just below the edge of the retaining wall. When it starts to overflow, accelerate the rate at which the water rises so that the room will be filled quite quickly (in approximately ten minutes). Do not give the characters much time to consider their situation.

The only exit from this room is underwater. At the bottom of the pool is a drain plug that blends so well with its surroundings that it cannot be seen from above the surface. This stopper is 3' square and has four hand-holds. Any character trying to pull it out will find it very difficult to grasp, however, for a very large spherical amethyst (one of the special treasures) has been wedged between the hand-holds and the plug itself. Once the stone has been freed, the stopper can easily be removed by two characters pulling simultaneously. (It cannot, however, be budged by a single character, regardless of strength.)

The water does not flow down after the plug is pulled, as would be expected, for it is magically held in place. Below the plug-hole is a passageway, 3' square in cross-section, which the characters can easily traverse on their hands and knees. They will eventually emerge into the corridor at point 59.

The act of pulling the plug stops the water from rising farther; any characters who remain in the room after that will see that the water level declines slowly until its original level is restored.

59. EXIT

This is the point at which the 3'-square passage from Room 58 joins the main corridor. As soon as all the characters have emerged safely into the hallway, the hole disappears.

60, 61 & 62. TRAPS!

Devise three traps for these places, using the trap categories on page 5 as guidelines. Note that the characters cannot see the one-way door in the north wall of Room 60 from inside the room. There is no treasure in any of these areas.

63. PISCES 11

This room is entirely filled with water, which is magically held in place. Two giant sharks dwell herein, but they are hidden when the party arrives. When the door is opened, the characters will see a wall of water that simply stays put, rather than gushing out, as would be expected.

> The door opens toward you, revealing a wall of water. The area is faintly illuminated, though you cannot discern any light source. Looking through the water, you can discern walls about 10' away from you to either side. The ceiling is perhaps 20' above the floor. The view is as though you were looking into a large undersea area through a transparent window, but in this case there is no window — just a wall of water before you.

In fact, the ceiling is 30' high, and it is from there that the magically produced illumination comes. The room is actually 30' wide at the southern end, and the door is in the center of the south wall.

Because of refraction, distances underwater are usually underestimated by those unaccustomed to such an environment; consequently, the characters suffer a 10% penalty on attack rolls while underwater. Movement rates for

average characters are reduced to 1/4 normal under these conditions, but allow any character who is particularly dexterous to move at 1/2 normal speed. Characters who can obtain appropriate magical assistance may be able to move at full normal rate.

The doorway is a magical device with two separate functions. First, it holds the water in the room without allowing it to spill out into the corridor. Secondly, anyone who steps through it is magically enabled to breathe underwater, quite normally and without effort. If, however, characters who are already under the effect of such a spell try to enter, the doorway will negate the magic, and the characters will have to return to the corridor, coughing and spluttering.

Read the following when the characters enter the room:

> The walls, floor and ceiling are of light blue marble, decorated with murals depicting sprites, nymphs, fish, and other marine creatures. You feel at ease in these calm, placid surroundings.

As the characters move into the room, more details will become visible.

> As you move north, you can see that the room is T-shaped, rather than rectangular. The southern portion (or the upright) is about 50' long; the "topstroke" of the T is perhaps 50' north-south and 75' east-west.
>
> In the northeast arm of the T are two large, shadowy shapes that look very much like huge sharks. They are moving lazily to and fro in the water, with no apparent intention of attacking.
>
> In the center of the north wall is a large bas-relief. It depicts an aged man seated on a throne, wearing a crown and robes. He holds a trident vertically in his right hand, and his left arm is held out at shoulder height, as though pointing to the east. The bas-relief also includes some mermaids swimming languorously around their king.
>
> The most unusual thing in sight, however, is what appears to be a large air bubble, perhaps 2' in diameter, floating about 5' above the floor immediately in front of the bas-relief.

The bubble itself is made of a delicate transparent material, like thin glass. It contains a very large, spherical moonstone, though the characters will not be able to determine this until they are quite close. (This stone is one of the special treasures.) Breaking the bubble is simple — a sharp blow with any weapon will do the trick — but this will cause the sharks to attack. (A sensible party will remove the bubble, intact, from the room and extract the gem later.)

Otherwise, the giant sharks will continue to move lazily to and fro, clearly not requiring much water-flow over their gills, and will not attack unless disturbed. (Note, however, any attempt by the characters to leave the room through the door in the northeast section will certainly disturb them.)

Rank: 55% P Rank
Health: 65% P Health
Atk: 45%
Modes: Bite (long sword x 4)
Res: 50%
Def: Skin = plate mail

2 GIANT SHARKS

Tell the players about the two exit doors, one in each arm of the T, when the characters are in a position to see them.

The western exit is a magical portal like the entrance door; it holds the water in the room and also negates the water-breathing ability that was conferred on the characters as they passed through the entrance. This door is the optimum choice. (The fact that King Neptune is pointing in the other direction simply confirms his perversity.)

The eastern exit also magically contains the water, but does not negate the water-breathing. Since the corridor beyond it is filled with air, characters will not be able to breathe properly there. For every 20' of corridor traveled in that direction, each character must make a successful avoidance roll or pass out due to lack of oxygen. You may wish to make these avoidance checks gressively more difficult.

Even if the characters mana overcome their breathing prob they will not get anywhere in this tion, for the corridor is endless. If insist on pressing forward, simpl scribe the passageway as featur and allow the characters to go on merry way until it occurs to them they have gone astray. They can back into Room 63 with no difficul

64. AQUARIA

This room consists of a main measuring 20' east-west by 30' n south, plus four subsidiary 10'-sq areas. The main room is bare and interesting, but in each of the sm chambers there is a large glass fisht 8' square by 4' deep.

Each tank is filled with what l like water, and has small rocks, we and sand on the bottom. Illuminati provided by magical light sources v in and above each tank; these are s cient to illuminate the tanks th selves, but not the central section o room. Each tank contains a handfu small gems scattered on the sand, all but one has an occupant. (See individual descriptions below.)

Tank A (northeast): Swimm lazily in this tank is a single gol colored fish about 12" long. Thi Fred the Talking Fish, an interes creature whom the characters r encounter in another Candelal Ignax adventure. As soon as he s the party, Fred will rise to the surf and say, "Aha! I've won the bet! W till I tell Ignax! He never thought would get this far!" Then F promptly vanishes (teleported to v knows where).

Tank B (northwest): This ta is empty of fish. The gems can gathered without difficulty.

Tank C (southwest): This ta also appears empty, but it actua contains more than one hundred visible piranha fish. Any charac who puts a hand (or, improbably, a other portion of his anatomy) into water will suffer damage equal 50% P Health for every minute th the piranha have a target to attac

Tank D (southeast): This ta contains six small gold fish, ea about 3" long. These creatures ac ally have scales made of gold leaf, a each fish is worth 150 gold coins.

These fish are extremely proli — any two of them can produce o baby fish in just eight days. Takin

fish out of the water will kill it, but its corpse still retains the full value.

65. SIMPLICITY ITSELF

This is a plain, ordinary, 20'-square room. The only unusual thing about it is the presence of a door in the west end of the south wall. This is the first time in the dungeon that a subsidiary room has contained a second door, and hopefully this will encourage the characters to investigate.

This second door is one-way — it cannot even be seen from its south side, let alone opened. If the characters do open it, the corridor revealed (identified as 65A on the map) appears to extend past the range of the party's light source(s). At the extreme end of the characters' vision is a faint flickering light.

This corridor is illusory; the actual passageway is 20' long. It ends in a second one-way door that is identical to the first, except that there are dozens of very tiny diamonds embedded in its north surface. These diamond chips are of little value, even if the characters take the trouble to remove them.

When any characters who have entered the corridor pass through the second one-way door (as sooner or later they must), they find themselves in Room 60, where they may well have been before. The only way they can get back to Room 65 is by passing through Room 63 again. If the sharks there are still alive, they will attack on sight.

66. GOLD!

This 20'-square room is a joy for any adventurer to behold. It is piled high with gold ingots, mounds of gold coins, gold chalices, gold chains, gold statuettes, and so forth. Everything in sight is gold! (You can even make the floor, walls, and ceiling gold too, if you don't think that would be overdoing it.) Alas, however, this is all an illusion. The room is actually empty.

67. IGNAX (FINAL)

As the leading characters round the final corner, they see Ignax's projection in the short corridor running north to Room 68. This time, Ignax is dressed like a king. He is sitting regally on a throne, with a huge black panther lying at his feet. The projection blocks the characters' view of the black square and the double doors to Room 68, so they will not be able to see these until it has disappeared.



As usual, nothing the characters can do will affect the projection in any way. If this is the first time the characters have encountered Ignax, be sure that he introduces himself before launching into the speech below.

On this occasion, Ignax's message has changed once again. Now he is full of admiration for the characters — they have beaten his challenges, overcome all the difficulties, and been brave enough to continue their mission, ignoring the escape route in Room 47.

> "Well, my bold young friends," says the wizard with a smile, "I can see that it's all over. I must graciously acknowledge complete defeat. You have won, you see. I knew that you were brave, but I had no idea that you were so resourceful. Not many adventurers can outwit a wily old wizard. You have overcome everything that I put in your path, and when I offered you an escape route, you refused it, boldly continuing with your quest. For this, you have my greatest admiration. The next time I myself require the services of adventurers, I shall be sure to offer the job to you first."

Ignax waxes eloquently on th theme for a few minutes. Make this convincing as you possibly can, th continue with the following:

> "Now that you have come to the end of your journey and defeated me in this battle of wits, the rules of this little game require that I tell you the secret. The truth is that Despot has not been captured at all. He is being held in a magical prison in his own castle — in fact, he has been right under the queen's bed all this time!
>
> "All you have to do is return to the castle and look under the bed. You will find him there, apparently asleep." Ignax snaps his fingers, and a short black rod appears at the feet of the nearest character. "Press this device against Despot's forehead," continues the wizard, "and he will be released. I will engineer your transportation back to the castle myself.
>
> "As for you, each and every one of you is worthy of great rewards. By my powers," he continues, waving his arms in the air, "I can promise you a reward great enough to match your achievements. All the gold in my treasure room will be yours."

Ignax is, of course, referring to Roo 66. If the characters have already bee there, they will presumably know tha the gold is an illusion. However, if the accept Ignax's offer to teleport them ou of the dungeon, the illusory gold wi become real, and they can collect it a before he sends them on their way.

In summary, Ignax proposes the fo lowing (with great sincerity):

1. One character takes the rod.
2. The characters can retrieve a the (now real) gold from Room 66.
3. Ignax will teleport them (wit their treasure) out of the dungeon.

If the characters agree to this, Igna will let them take stacks of gold fro Room 66, give them the black rod, the teleport them into the queen's bedroo at Despot's castle. However, they wi

arrive without the gold and without any means of getting back into the dungeon. Needless to say, they won't find Despot — or indeed anything other than dust and the odd garter — under the queen's bed. They will then have to face the queen and Candelabra (who will inform them that the black rod may be excellent for stirring soup, but little else). They will be in real trouble, and the kingdom's particularly nasty form of capital punishment is no more than their just reward. Allow them to escape with their lives if they devise a good plan and you are feeling particularly generous.

What they should do, of course, is refuse Ignax's offer. If they do so, the projection will utter a shriek of obscene rage and vanish, revealing the black square on the floor in front of the door to Room 68.

This 10'-square is not part of the floor at all, but a deep pit, though the casual observer will see it as a black tile. Careful examination (tapping with a pole, etc.) will reveal the true nature of the square, but anyone walking unwarily onto it will fall 20' to the bottom (no avoidance roll allowed). The walls of the pit are as smooth as glass and impossible to climb.

On the north side of the pit is a pair of 5'-wide double doors, which lead to Room 68. The characters must find a way to open these doors without standing directly in front of them, for the pit covers the entire width of the corridor.

68. GRAND FINALE 12

This is the final encounter area and the climax of the adventure. The room is quite large and it contains many interesting features, so be sure to read all the sections that follow before the characters enter. Because this area is so complex, there is no boxed player information; you must describe what the characters can see from wherever they are standing. Note that there is plenty of light in the room, so virtually everything can be seen when the characters first enter, though they may have to get closer to see some objects clearly.

The special treasures that the characters have been collecting throughout the dungeon will come into play in this area. The twelve spherical gems from the zodiac rooms were made available to the characters in the following order: Diamond, Emerald, Agate, Pearl, Ruby, Sardonyx, Opal, Topaz, Turquoise, Sapphire, Amethyst, Moonstone. Only six of these are actually needed to rescue Despot; the characters can keep the rest if they can manage to avoid losing them in this room (see page 32). The characters may by now have forgotten from which room each treasure came, and will probably also have the uncomfortable notion that, unless they remember this detail, things could go badly for them. Actually, this doesn't make any difference, but you may wish to let the players think it does!

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The chamber measures 90' east-west by 120' north-south, and the ceiling is 60' above the floor. The characters enter through the double doors in the center of the south wall, stepping onto a black obsidian platform that measures 30' east-west and 10' north-south. It is raised 10' above the floor, and steps (made of the same material) lead down into the main area from three sides. At each corner of the platform stands a 6'-tall brazier, burning sweet-smelling incense.

The main room is covered wall-to-wall with dark red plush carpeting, except for a black obsidian walkway (10' wide) that begins at the foot of the steps from the platform and runs 45' down the center of the room to the edge of the raised area (see below), then from the north side of this to the raised main altar. At the edges of the carpet to either side of the walkway stand 6'-tall iron candle-holders, set at 5' intervals. A single black candle burns in each.

The whole of the north wall and that part of the south wall not occupied by the double doors is hung floor-to-ceiling with heavy black draperies. The walls themselves are bare stone. The ceiling is plain black stone, dotted with silver spots that resemble stars when seen from a great distance.

THE RAISED AREA

This circular stone dais is 30' in diameter and raised about 1' above the surrounding floor. Its southern boundary is 45' from the foot of the steps, and its northern boundary is 10' from the main altar.

The top of this dais is an extremely beautiful mosaic. The design depicts the twelve signs of the zodiac, picked out in gems and jewels.

The entire dais is actually a teleportation device keyed to the main encounter areas of this dungeon. Any character who stands on the sector representing a particular sign for thirty seconds will be teleported to the square immediately outside the entrance door of the corresponding room. For example, a character standing on the Gemini symbol will



be teleported to the white square outside the entrance to Room 17. Merely walking across a sector will not initiate the teleportation.

If the characters try to pry the gems out of the mosaic, they are likely to set off the teleportation device, for it will take considerably more than thirty seconds to remove even one gem. The characters can acquire a collection of these if they catch on to the time factor (working on one for twenty seconds, then moving to another sector, then returning to the first), or by having another character take over the work for each one that is teleported. This latter method, however, could result in the characters going "round the circuit," so to speak, for many days.

Once the characters have completed their mission, they can get out of the dungeon by teleporting to Aries (thus landing just north of Room 8), then backtracking through the beggar's room (2) to the cliffside entrance. Alternatively, they could teleport to the square outside Room 50, backtrack to Room 47, and use the teleporter therein to escape.

THE MAIN ALTAR

The main altar measures 5' high, 10' east-west, and 5' north-south. It stands on a black stone platform that is raised 5' above the floor. Stone steps lead up to the altar from all four sides. At each corner of the platform stands a brass brazier. The incense being burned in these is particularly foul-smelling — reminiscent of burning flesh.

Hanging over the altar, 30' from the surface of the platform, is a large black sphere that measures 4' in diameter. It does not appear to be suspended in any way; it simply floats in mid-air. This sphere is immovable, impervious to magic, and absolutely indestructible, except by the method described in "Awakening the King" (next page). It contains Despot's life-force.

On the altar lies the ghostly pale body of Good King Despot (the real one this time). He lies on his back, apparently asleep, and is naked except for a loincloth. He cannot be lifted from the altar or otherwise moved by any means, and he is completely impervious to magic in this state.

Lying on the king's body is a two-handed sword in an ornate scabbard encrusted with many small gems. The grip is under his chin, and the tip is near his knees. Along the main axis of the scabbard are six hemispherical indentations, each of which would accommodate any of the special treasures (but do not tell the characters this unless they ask specifically).

TROUGHS & SIDE ALTARS

Two shallow troughs (1' wide and 6" deep) extend the entire north-south length of the room, parallel to the side walls. (One is 20' from the east wall; the other is the same distance from the west). A narrower and shallower trough leads from the base of each sacrificial altar to the corresponding main trough, joining it at right angles.

Whatever it is that has flowed through these troughs (human and/or animal blood from the sacrificial altars, at the very least) has stained them with patches of a deep blood-red color. The inner surfaces are still sticky and moist, presumably from some recent nasty activity.

Between the troughs and the side walls are twelve sacrificial altars, set symmetrically so that their main axes align with the north-south axis of the room. Each altar is made of black stone, and measures 5' high, 3' wide, and 7' long. The upper surfaces of several altars (select four or five at random) are sticky, presumably from the same nasty activity that moistened the troughs.

THE MURALS

Each 20' section of the east and west walls is decorated with a mural. These depict creatures from (or related to) the main encounter areas in the dungeon. Each mural is numbered on the map for easy reference. See the table (below) for specific descriptions.

If any mural is "activated" as described hereafter (see "The Iron Chests," page 32), the creature depicted emerges from the mural (except #11; see description) and attacks the nearest character(s). As soon as it is killed, the monster returns to its mural (taking with it any weapons or other items it carried). If the same mural is then activated a second time, the creature will step forth again, back in full health. The characters may fight the same monster in this manner as many times as they wish. Use the statistics given in the corresponding rooms for each of these monsters, with the following exceptions:

MURALS

Mural	Rm.	Depiction
1	8	Lord
2	12	Bull
3	17	Wind Giant
4	21	Giant Scorpion
5	26	Griffon
6	30	Evil Priest (right)
7	34	Stegosaurus
8	42	Enormous Scorpion
9	46	Two Centaurs
10	50	Special (right)
11	58	Sirens (right)
12	63	Spirit (right)

Mural 6 (Evil High Priest): Use an evil human with Rank and Health approximately equal to P Rank and P Health. The high priest has an Atk value of 55% (at least), and excellent Res (25%) due to his magical plate mail. He is armed with an enchanted mace that has special bonuses vs. good opponents. He also uses magic, and carries two or three offensive spells (GM's choice).

Mural 10: This "mural" is nothing but an area of jet black on the wall. If it is activated, there is a deep rumbling noise, and the mural flashes with lightning. Build up the sound in a rising crescendo (perhaps lasting twenty seconds). At the climax of all the noise and light, a small, very angry goat pops out of the wall and attacks. Despite its obvious desire to inflict mayhem on its opponents, the goat is unable to damage the characters at all and can be killed by a single good blow. Unfortunately for the characters, however, this is a Scapegoat; when it dies, so does one of its opponents, selected at random from those engaged in combat with it (no avoidance roll).

Mural 11 (Sirens): This mural depicts a rocky beach with rolling waves and craggy cliffs in the background, partly shrouded in sea-mist. A number of charming, enticing mermaids adorn the rocks. Activation causes the mermaids (Sirens) to sing a sweet, haunting refrain. Any character within earshot must make an avoidance roll or be drawn irresistably into the mural, where he or she will surely drown (no avoidance roll). There is no chance of recovering the body, but you should allow unaffected characters a reasonable chance of restraining (by physical or magical means) those affected by the singing.

Once a character has entered the mural, the singing stops and any other affected characters who have not yet reached the mural are released from the compulsion. Similarly, the singing will eventually stop once it becomes apparent that affected characters will not reach the mural because of restraint.

Mural 12 (Spirit of Water): This painting depicts a stormy sea, with huge waves and dark clouds lowering above. On activation of this mural, a huge wave of water erupts out of the wall, engulfing everyone in the 20'-square area between the wall and the trough. Each character

hit by the wave will take physical damage equal to 20%-80% of current Health value (no avoidance roll applies, but those who are near the edge of the 20'-square area when the wave strikes will take only 1/2 damage).

The Spirit of Water performs only one attack per activation; after it has struck, the wave simply flows back into the mural.

THE IRON CHESTS

At the foot of the mural in each 20' section of east and west wall, there is a cubical iron chest, measuring 6' per side. These are closed, but are neither locked nor trapped. Inside each is a thick pad of black velvet, in the center of which is a hemispherical indentation exactly the size of the special treasures.

Placing the appropriate gem in such a depression will activate the mural directly above that chest. For instance, placing the opal from Room 34 in the indentation of the chest below Mural 7 will activate that mural, and the stegosaurus will attack. Placing the wrong gem in a depression will have no effect; that is, the opal from Room 34 can activate *only* Mural 7, etc.

AWAKENING THE KING

The *only way* to awaken the king is to place the following stones, in order, in the indentations of the scabbard, starting with its upper end: Diamond, Emerald, Sapphire, Pearl, Opal, Topaz. The initial letters of these stones spell out the king's name.

Sardonyx cannot be substituted for Sapphire, nor Turquoise for Topaz, despite the fact that the initial letters are the same. Only the harder and more valuable stone of each such pair will work. (Obviously, someone as important as Despot must warrant the most precious combination!)

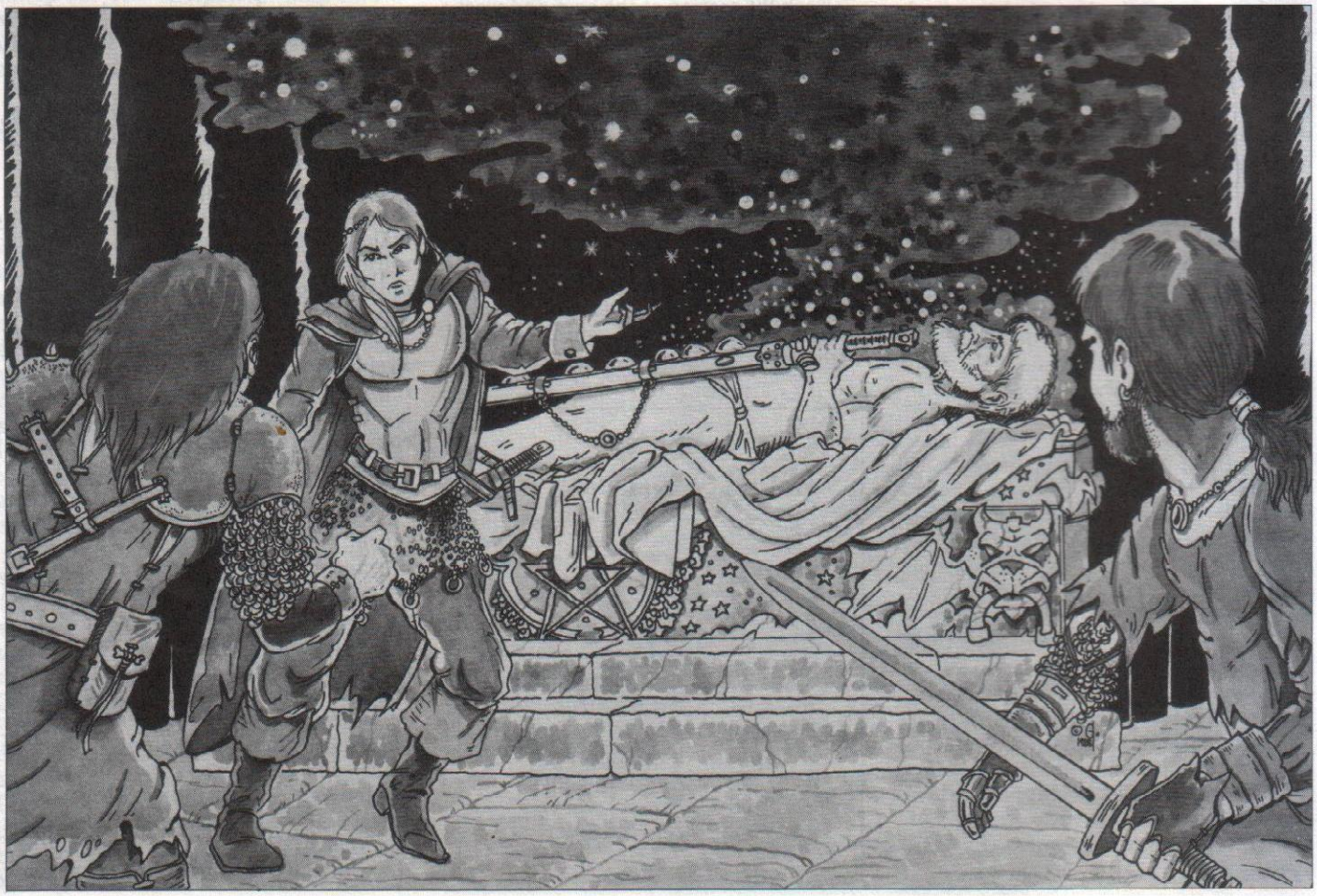
Placing an incorrect stone in an indentation activates the mural corresponding to that stone. Thus, placing the Pearl in any depression other than the fourth will activate Mural 4, causing the giant scorpion to attack. Furthermore, if a gem that is not part of the correct combination is placed in any of these spots, that stone will vaporize as the mural is activated. Thus, particularly thoughtless characters could cause the destruction of the Agate, the Ruby, the Sardonyx, the Turquoise, the Amethyst, and the Moonstone, as well as earning themselves the activation of six murals.

When the correct combination of special treasures is achieved, all six gems will fuse with the scabbard as the black sphere over the king's body bursts with a loud explosion. The king's life-force (appearing as a small, wispy cloud) will be released, and will descend into his body. Despot will awaken immediately, knowing nothing of what has happened to him, but mightily grateful to his rescuers (who may only now realize that they have no idea how to get out of this place).

The six gems cannot be removed from the scabbard. However, any of the special treasures not used (assuming they have not been destroyed by incorrect placement) count as treasure for the party. The sword and scabbard are also valuable, and Despot will award these to the party as well. The sword is magical; assign it 2-4 special powers of your choice.

POSTSCRIPT

All that remains is for the characters to find their way out and restore Good King Despot to the arms of his loving queen — assuming, that is, that Candelabra hasn't gotten there first . . . .



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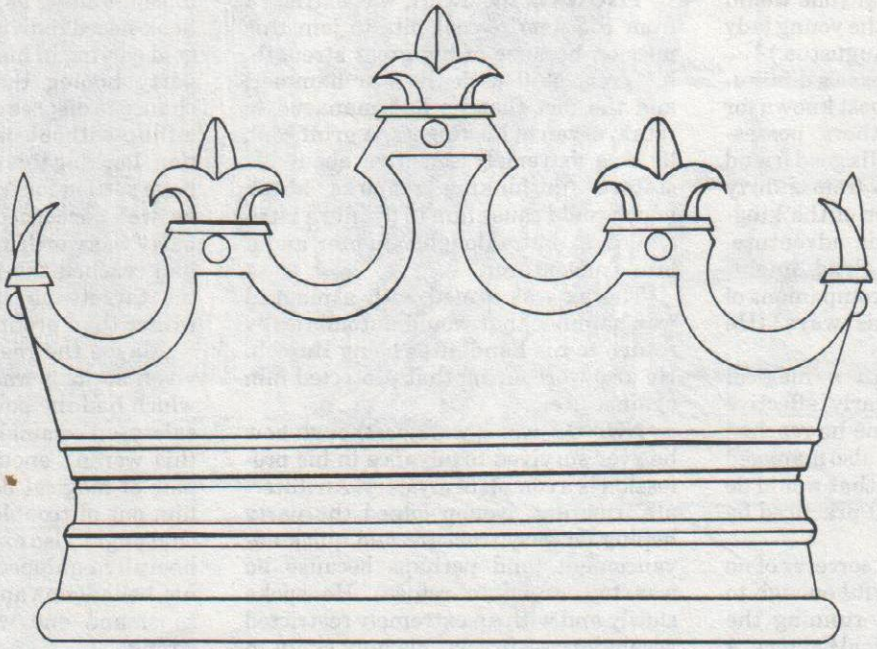

Drawn by:
Gideon
Steve Sullivan
Gary Williams

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THE ORIGINAL CHARACTERS

The following are brief personality sketches of the characters who first rescued King Despot in the original version of this adventure. These historical notes have been provided primarily for the GM's entertainment, though any or all of the entries could be expanded for use by the players, if desired. Although no game data are given, you may assign statistics yourself should you wish to include these "pillars of society" in your own game.

AUGUSTUS was Despot's son — and a bigot. Determined from an early age to seek the One True Way, he soon made a career out of persuading others to do so (with their permission or against their will — he didn't care). For this reason, he was banished to a neighboring kingdom some years before the opening of this adventure. Despite his obnoxious and arrogant manner, however, he was a skilled fighter, particularly strong and agile, with a compelling stare and beady eyes. (If anyone would lead the charge to rescue the young lady in Room 30, it would be Augustus.)

GRUD MUDHOVEL was a diminutive and grubby creature best known for his skill at extracting others' possessions from their pockets. His good friend Caligula dredged him up from a dirty slum in an obscure corner of the kingdom to participate in this adventure. The priest hoped that Grud might, through association with companions of higher thought, mend his ways. (He didn't.)

Grud was armed with a magical sword that was particularly effective against giants. By the time he reached Despot's kingdom, he had also managed to acquire a magical rope that would do a rope trick (like that still practiced by Hindu fakirs).

DEVIOUS REX was a sorcerer of no mean skill. He was powerful enough to assist the party without running the risk of disrupting the magical balance. A quiet, somewhat sinister figure, he was often thought (with good reason) to be less of a team player and more of a selfish go-getter. Devious was also very fond of the ladies.

Amongst his possessions were some magical scrolls that allowed him to fly, plus a few others that allowed him to change petrified characters back into flesh again.

CALIGULA was a powerful patriarch. An urbane and rather pompous individual, he seemed older than his years, but had a kindly disposition. At some time in his past, he had formed a friendship with Grud, and there were many who scratched their heads about this improbable association. However, the fact remained that Grud would never steal from Caligula.

The priest carried two small golden statues of lions that could, on command, be conjured into full-grown live beasts that would fight on his behalf.

THORAX, the dwarf, was extracted from the nearby coal pits to join this mission because of his great strength, his great skill with the war hammer, and the fact that he had managed to retain seven of his fingers. A gruff soul, he was extremely sensitive about his stature (unthinking remarks about which could cause him to fly into a vitriolic rage), but a doughty fighter and a brave adventurer.

Thorax was armed with a magical war hammer that would automatically return to his hand after being thrown. He also wore a ring that protected him against fire.

NONON was a warrior, though how he ever survived to advance in his profession is a complete mystery. An illiterate itinerant, Nonon joined the party hoping for easy treasure and quick advancement (and perhaps because he was too stupid to refuse). He spoke slowly and with an extremely restricted vocabulary — in fact, his only claim to fame in the brain department was that he has learned to spell his own name in both ways — forwards and backwards.

Improbably, Nonon had managed to acquire, over the years, a veritable arsenal of magical items, including an extremely powerful sword.

TINSELWORT was an amiable elf. Though skilled in the magical arts, he was no slouch when it came to fighting either. (Tinselwort was actually the strongest member of this party, and extremely dexterous as well.) Slightly pedantic in manner and irritatingly immaculate in appearance at all times, Tinselwort's preoccupation with his coiffure often generated coarse and ribald remarks (which the elf, blushing, tried his best to ignore).

Tinselwort was particularly skilled at firing the short bow. He usually used magical arrows, for he had amassed an enviable collection of these.

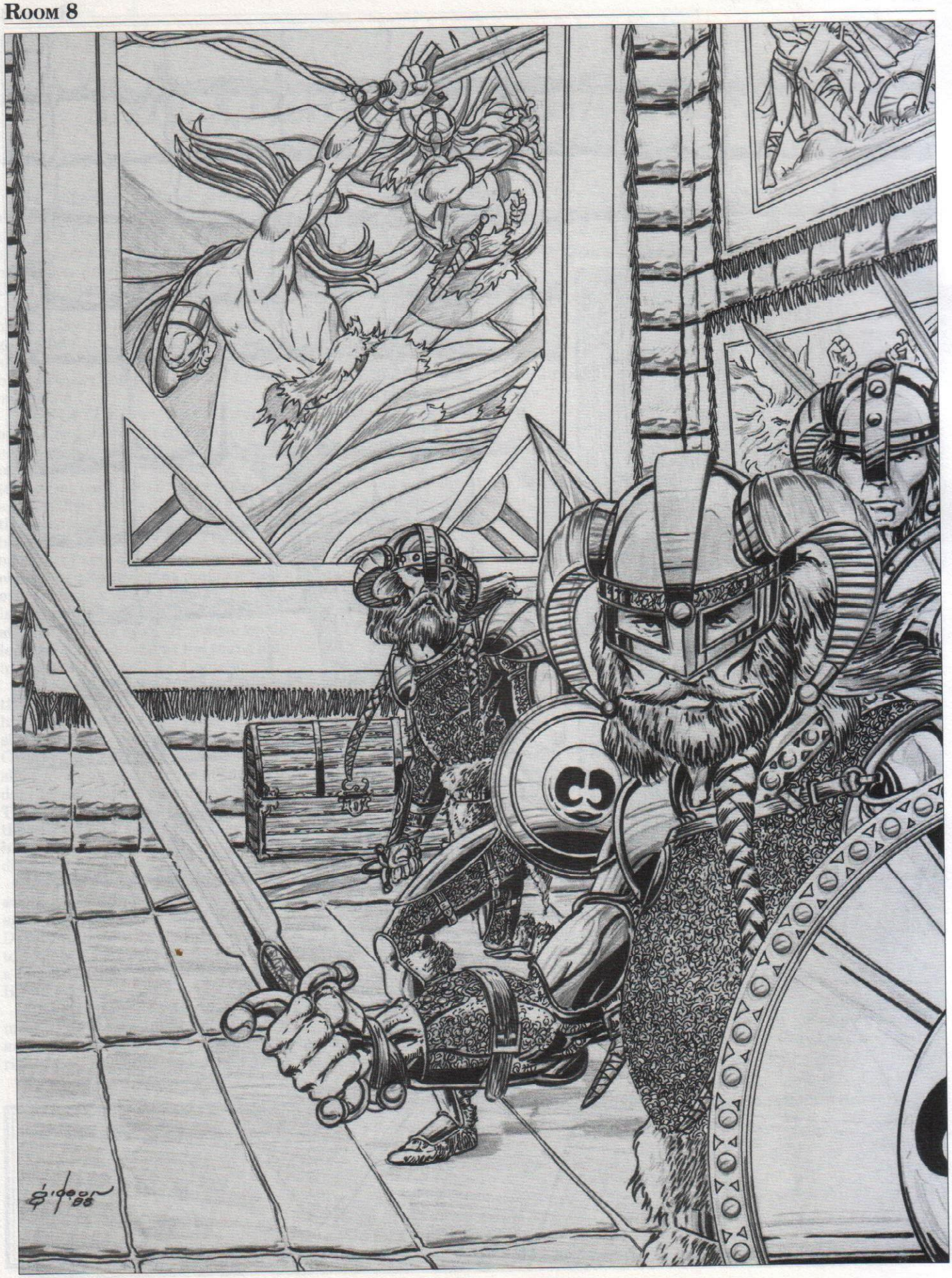
HASSAN was an assassin by trade, masquerading as a fighter. A swarthy, hook-nosed individual sporting a single gold earring in his left ear, he joined the party hoping that he would have a chance to dispose of old Ignax himself — a fillip without parallel for his reputation. Lacking this opportunity, he would have settled for Augustus, but so far as he was concerned, no one else in the party was worth assassinating. (Hassan had reached the point where he chose his targets on the basis of prestige rather than profit.)

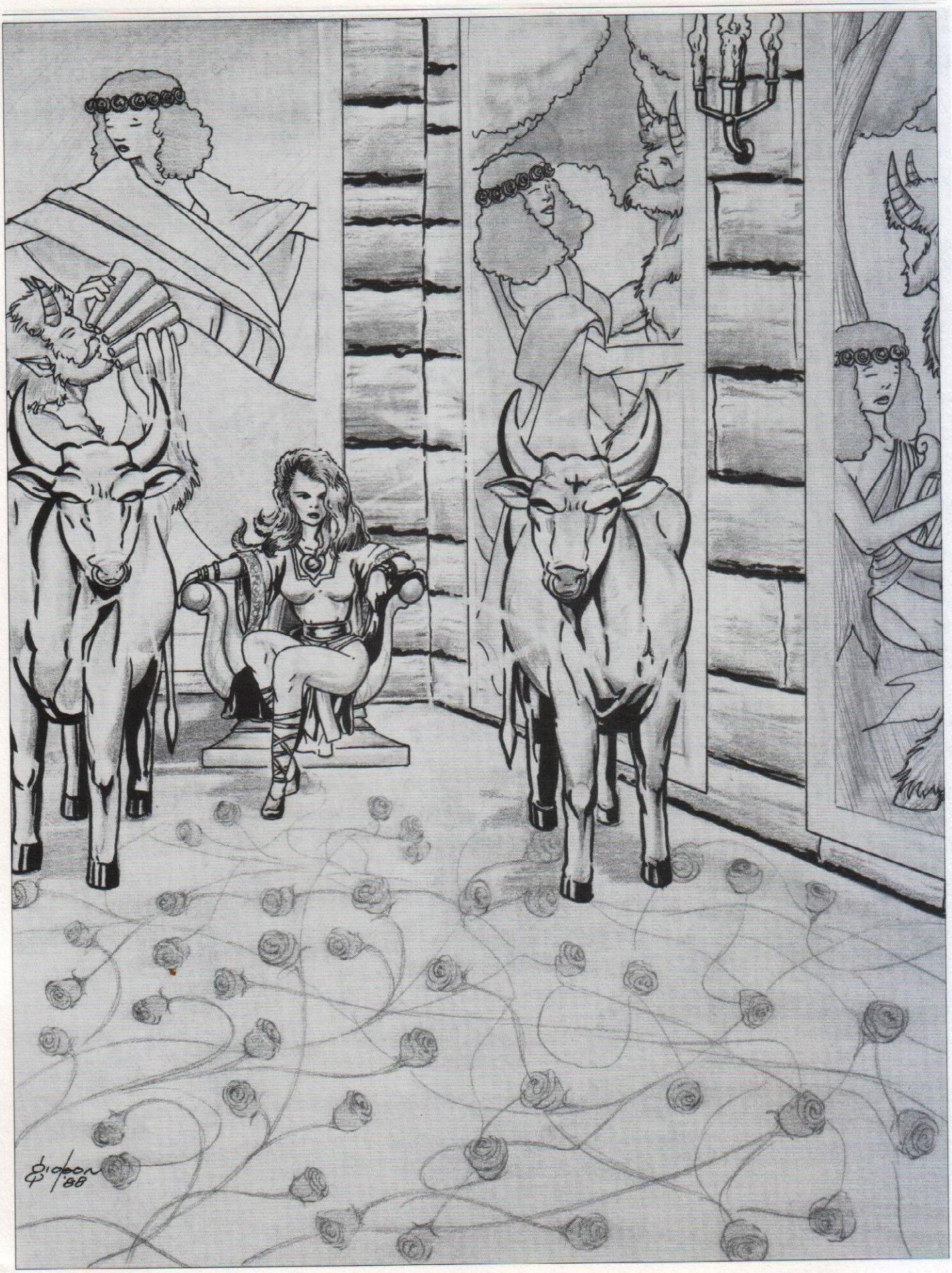
Maybe the reason Hassan had survived so long was his magical sword, which had the power to teleport him to safety, on command, once per day. As if this weren't enough, he also owned a pair of magical boots that could carry him out of trouble at very high speed. One might also expect him to have been liberally equipped with phials of arsenic, belladonna and numerous other poisons, and one would not have been wrong.

P Rank:	Notes
P Health:	
P Armor:	

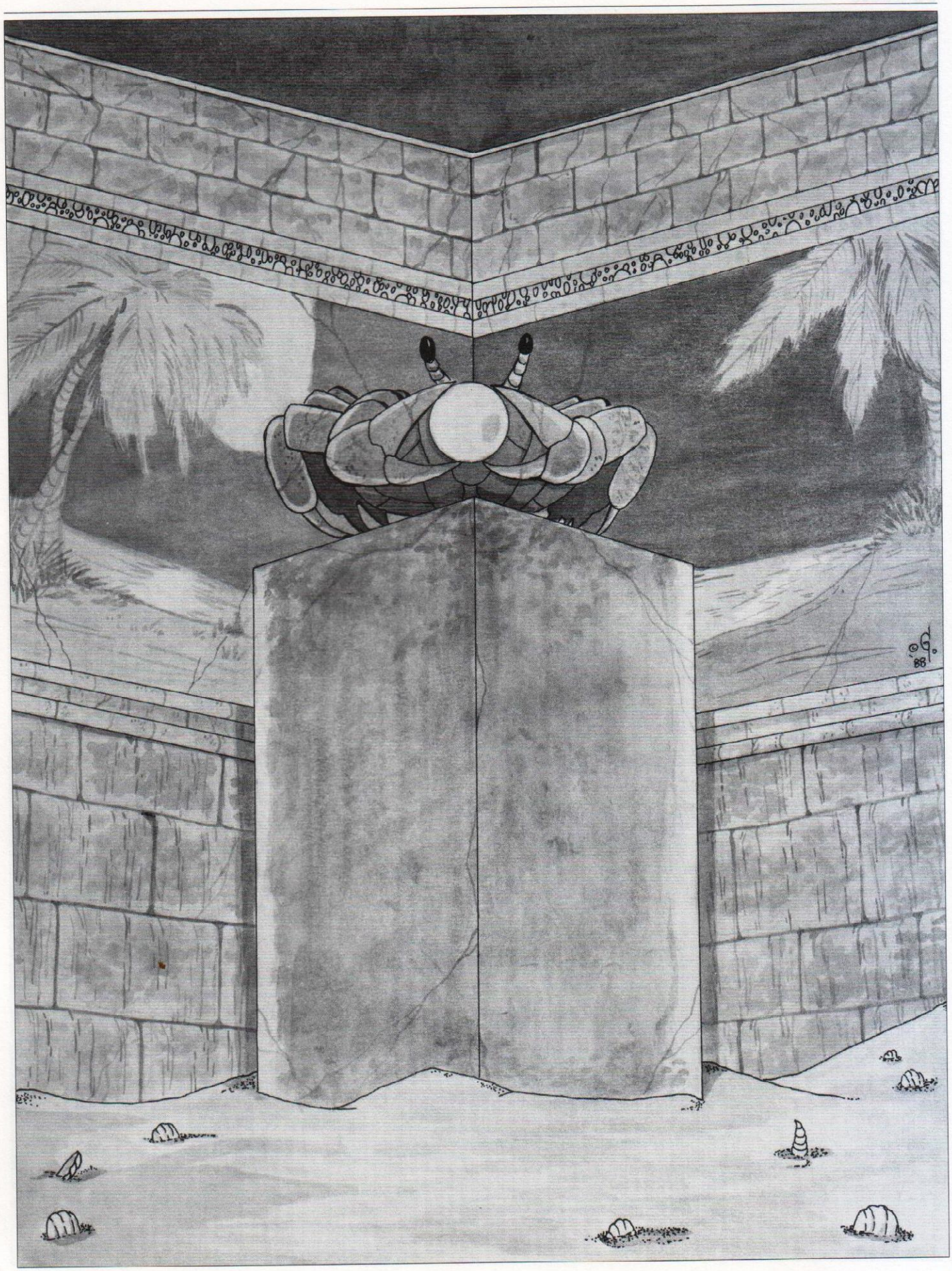


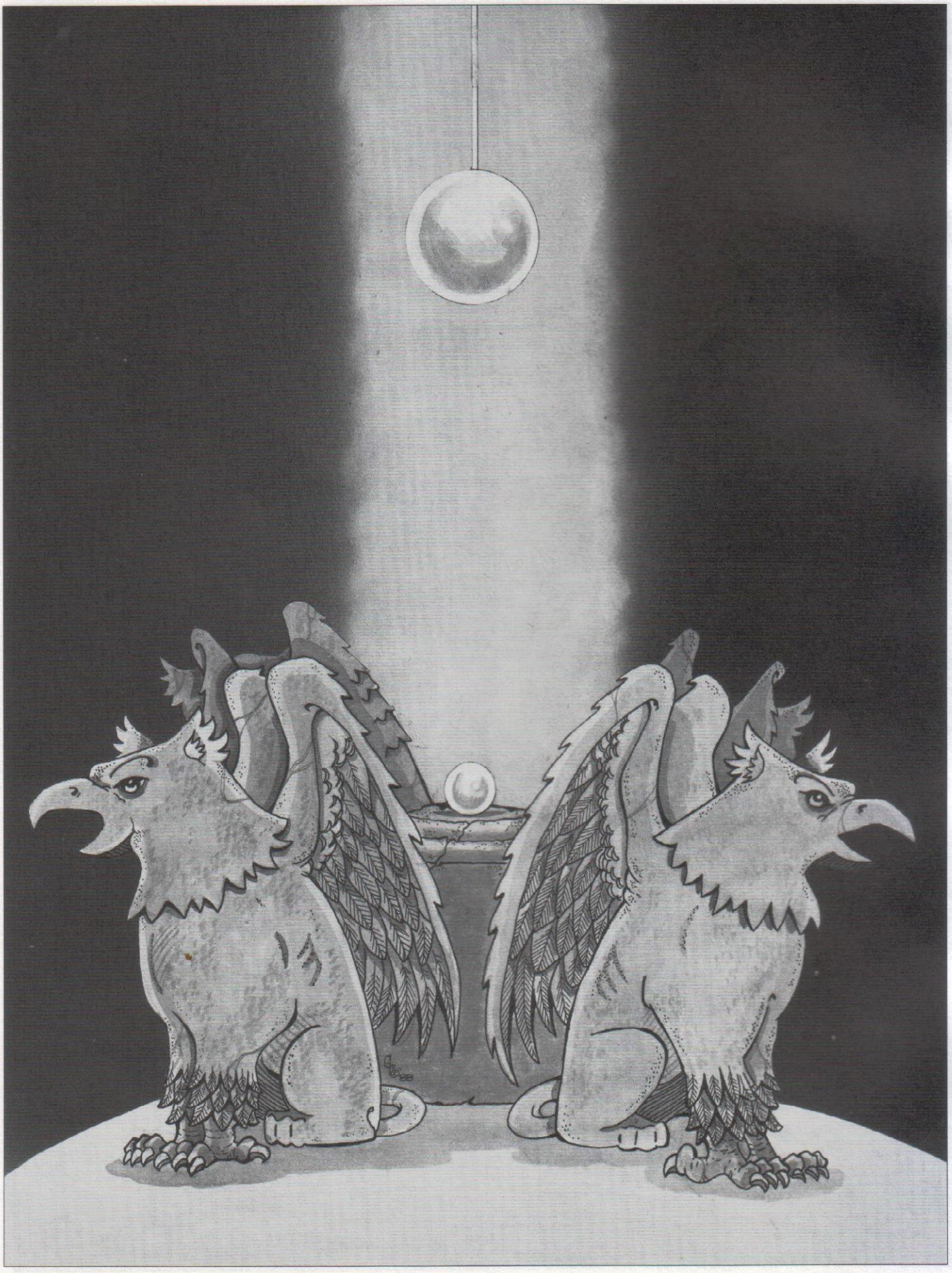
Room 8

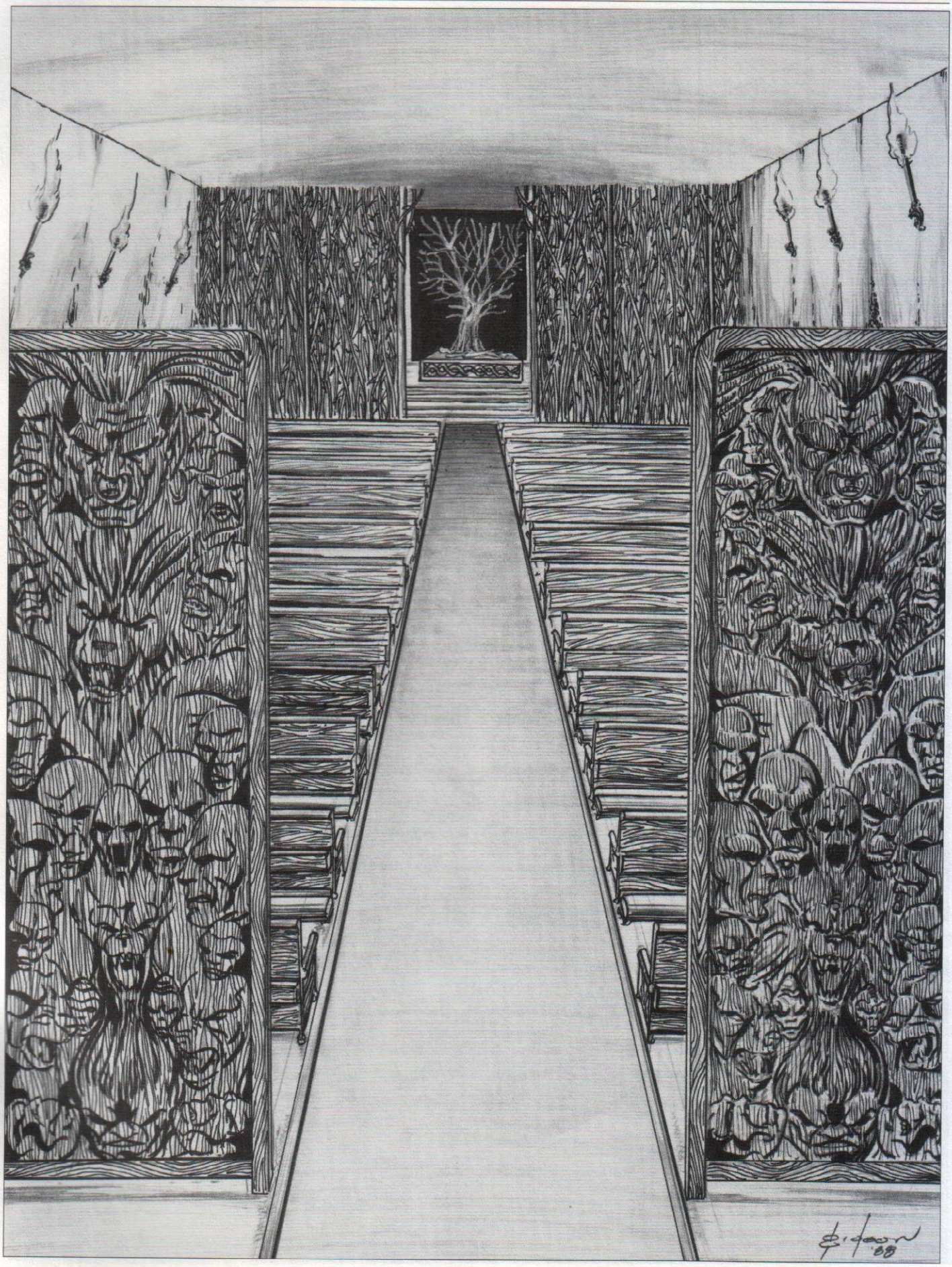


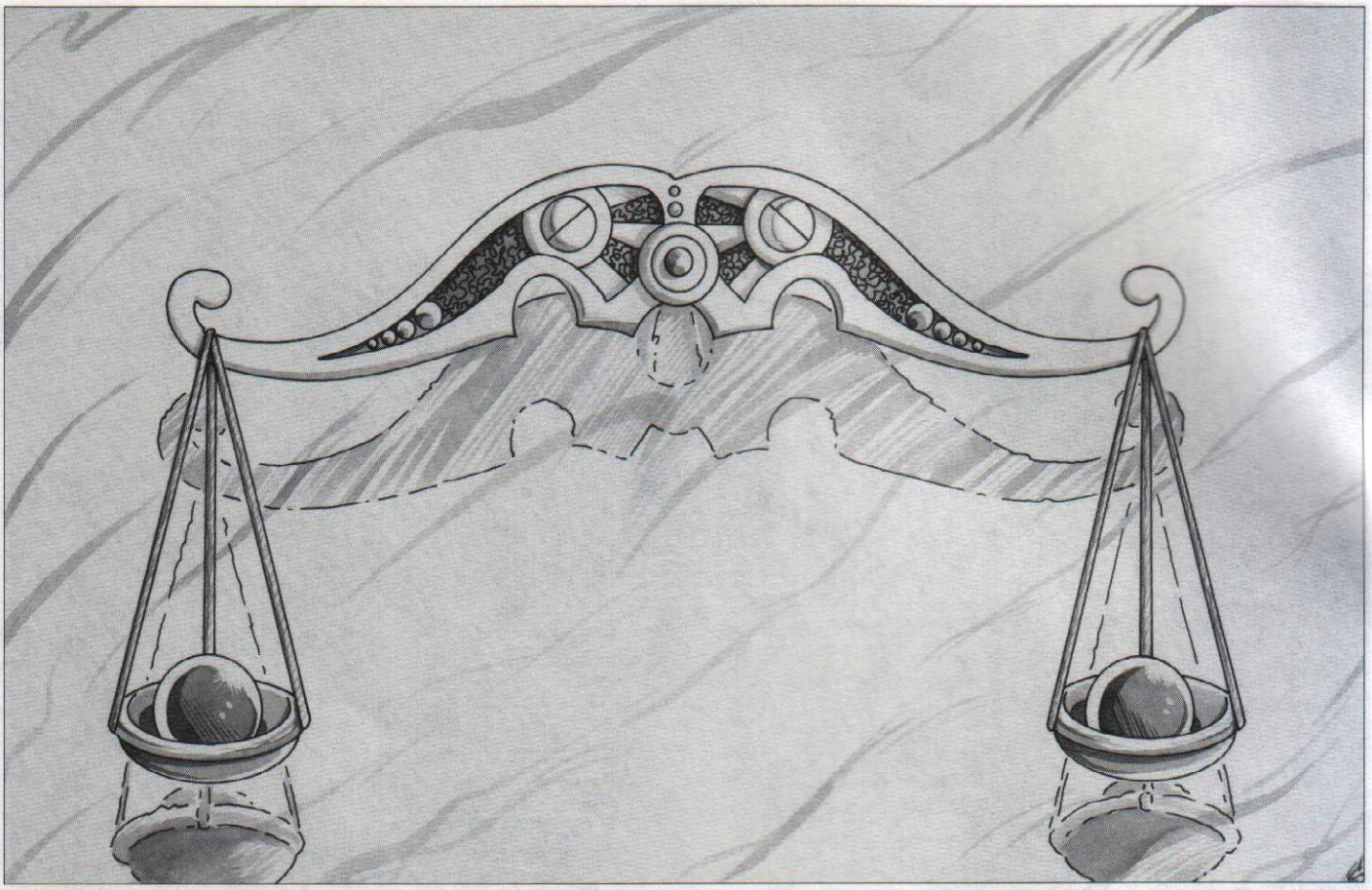

GIDEON
'88

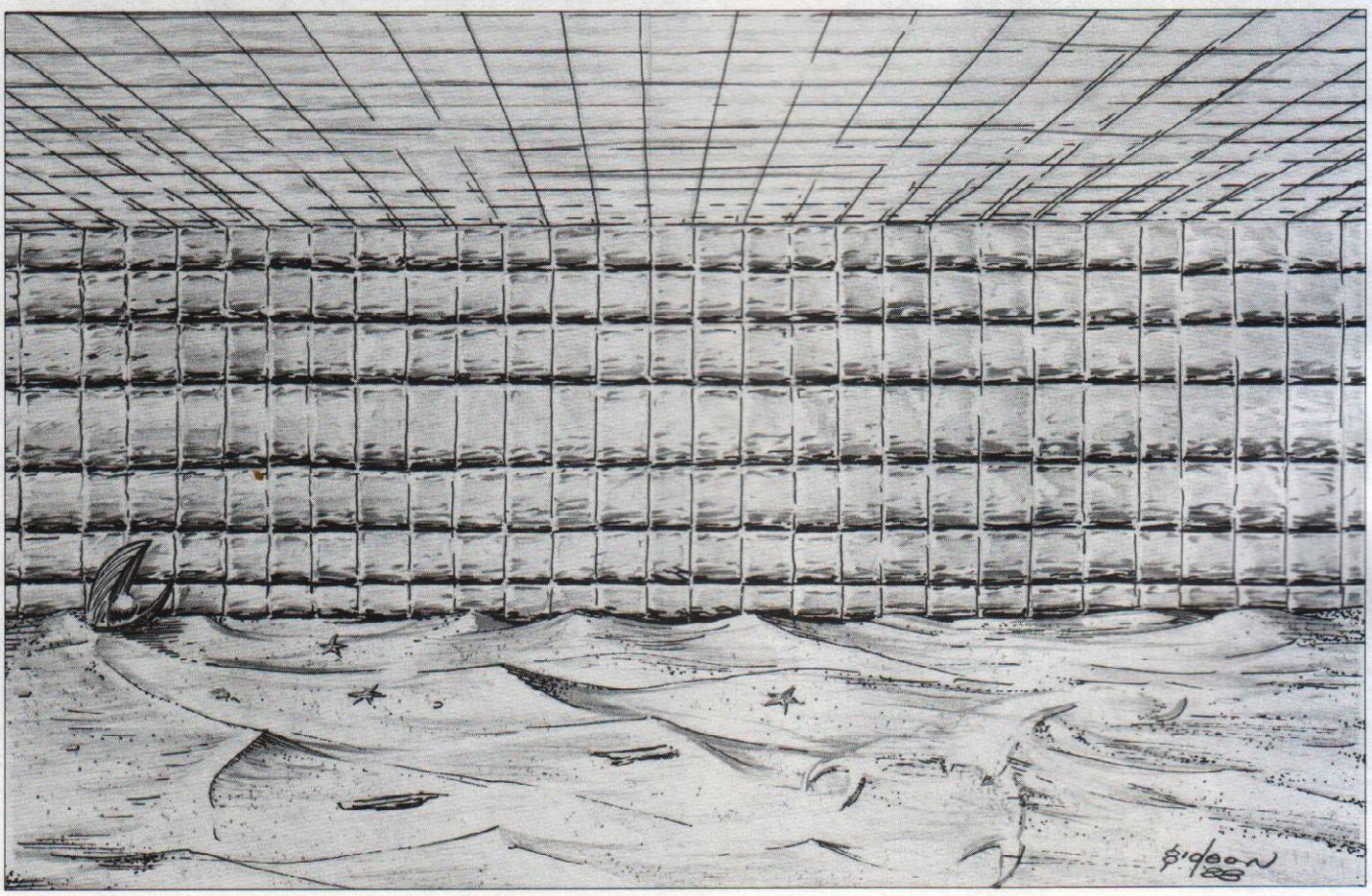


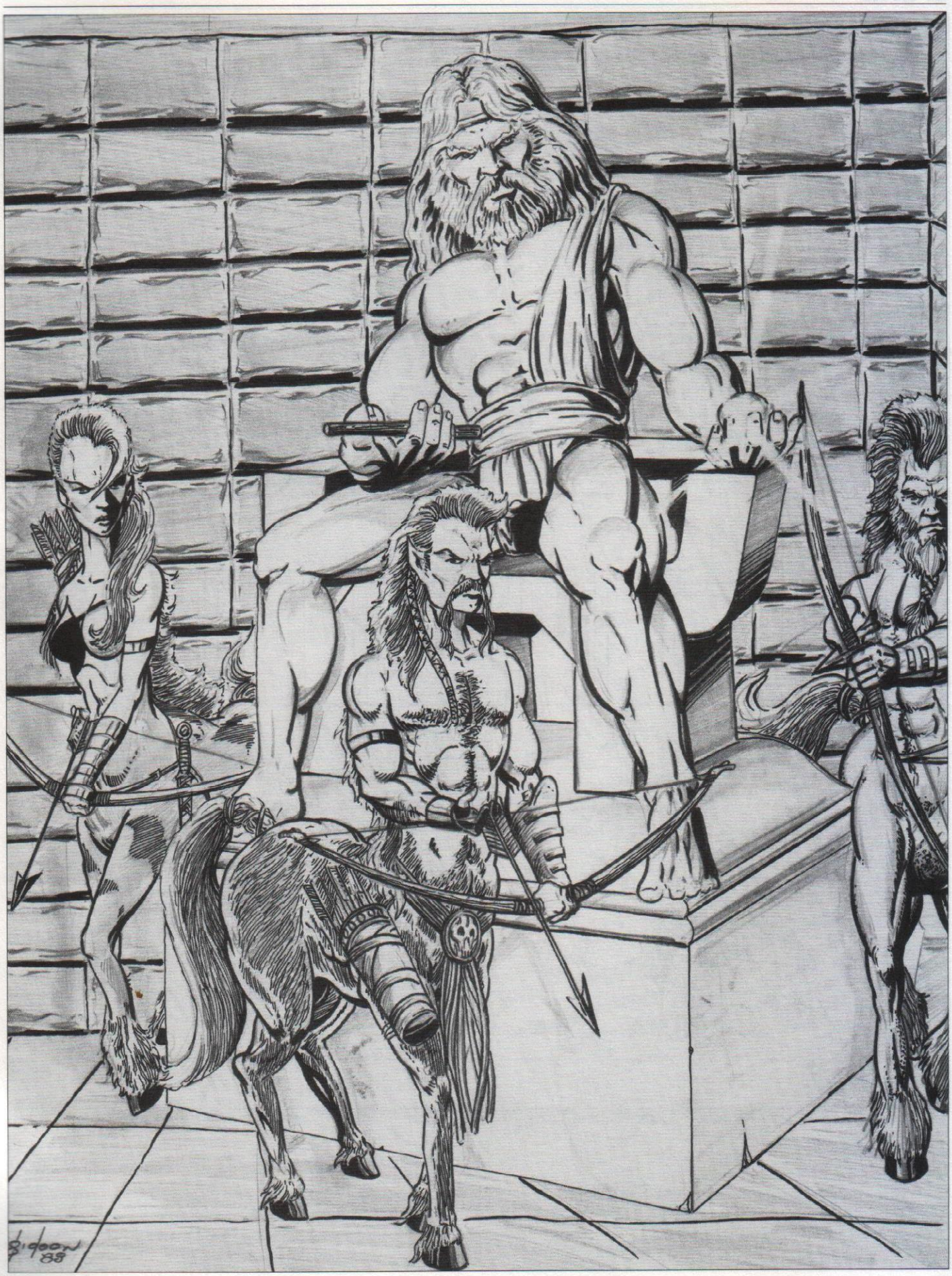


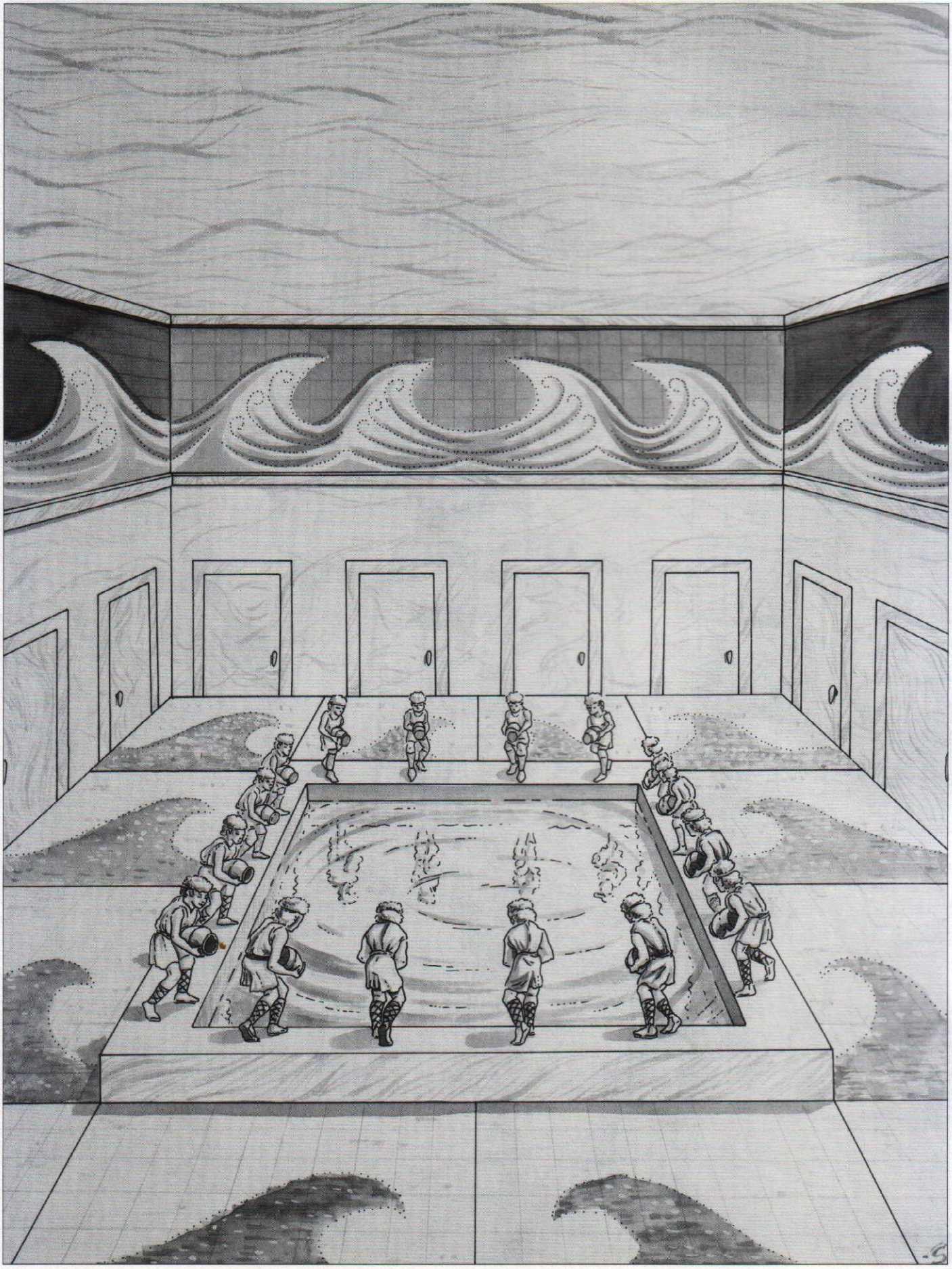


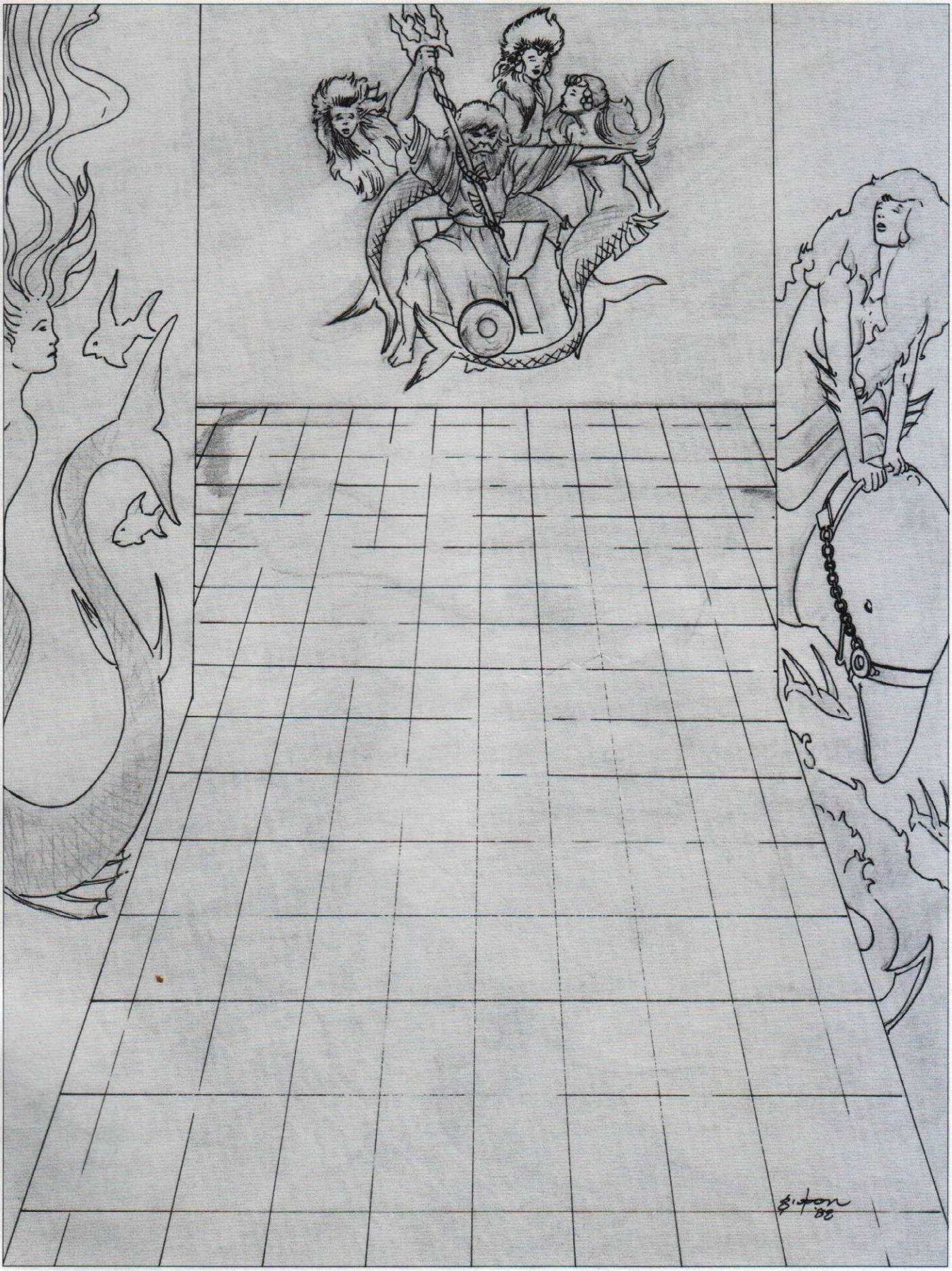


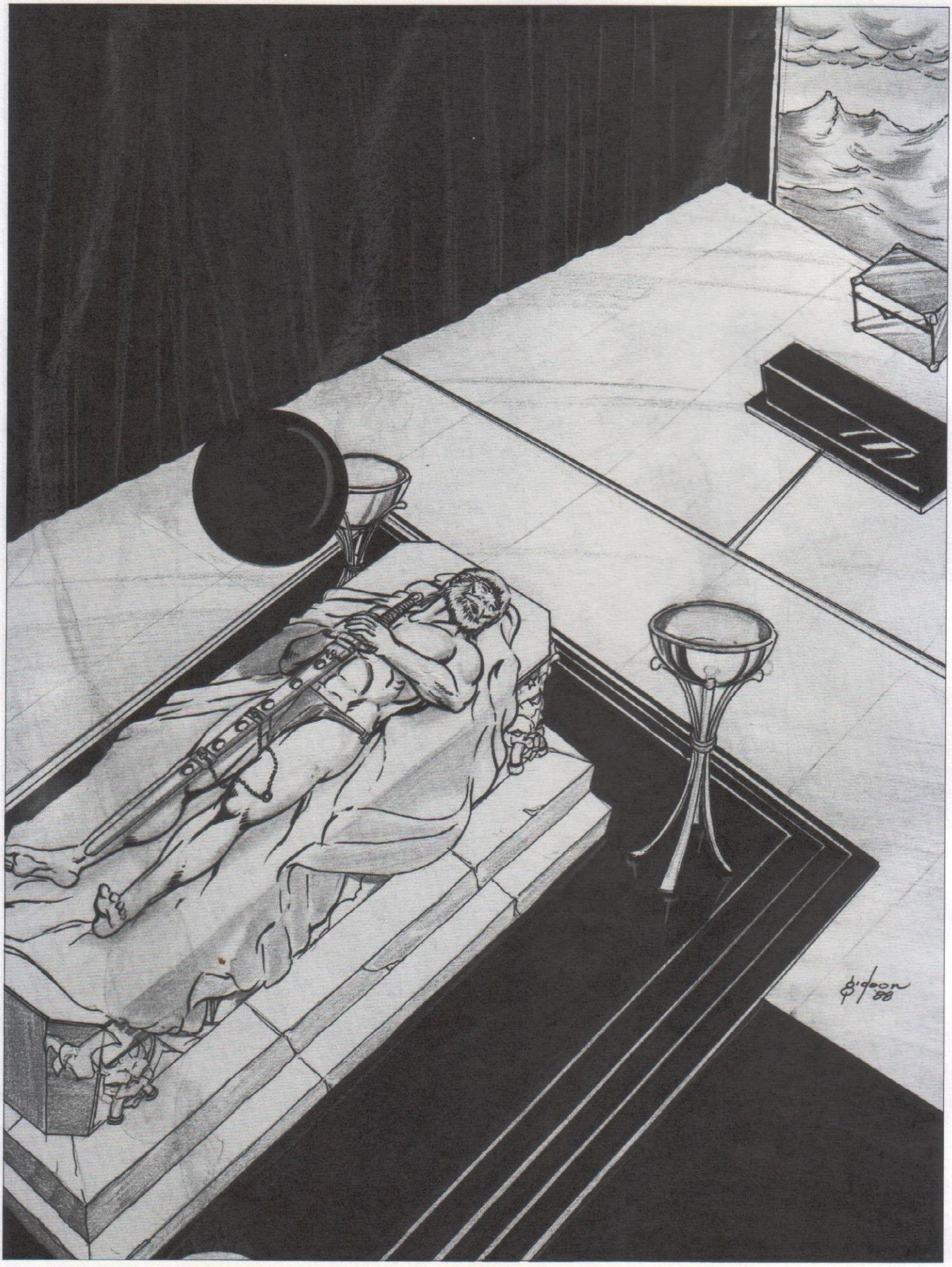


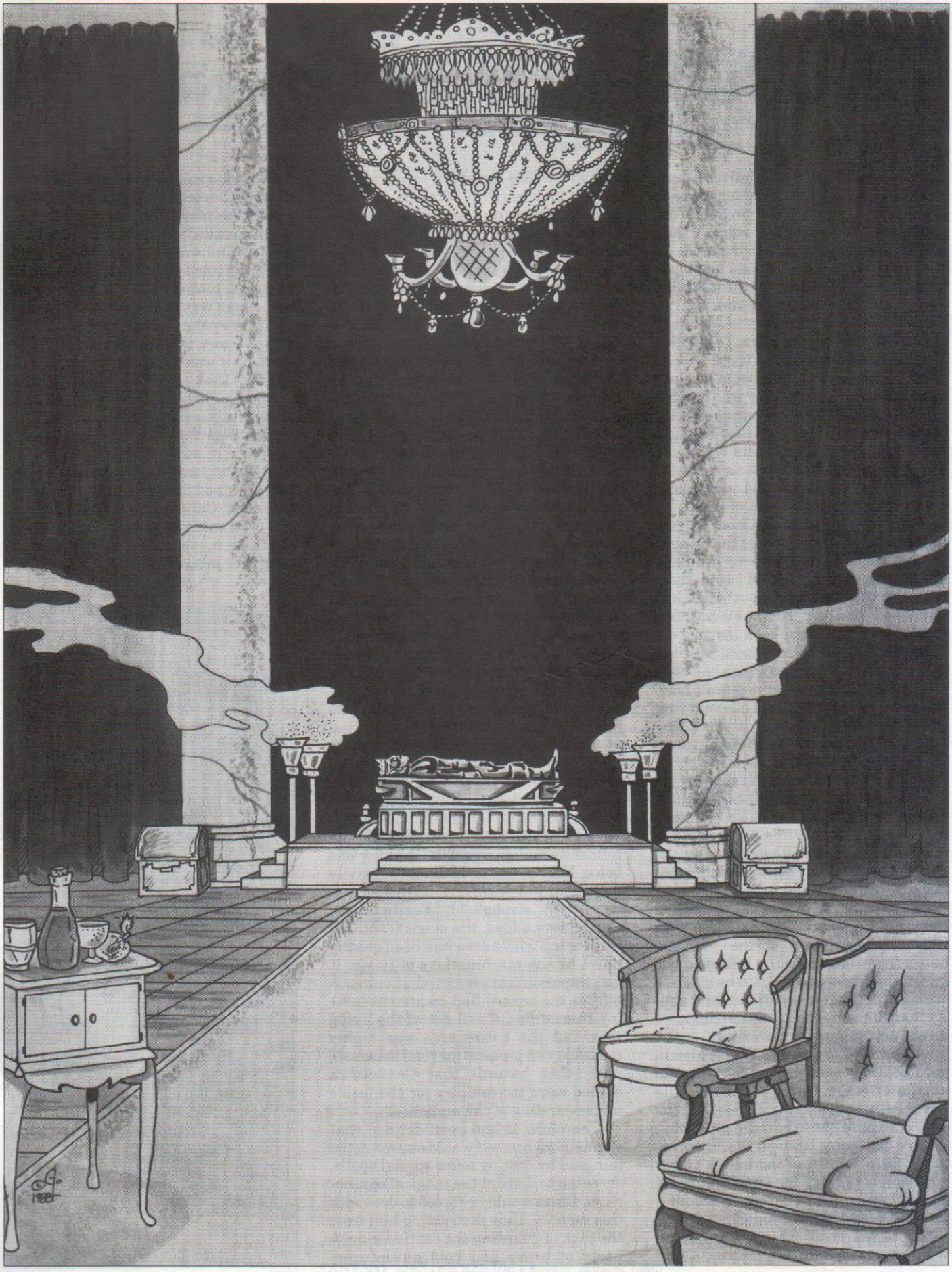

Gideon
'85











PLAYERS' BACKGROUND

In answer to a call for adventurers, you have assembled at the palace of Good King Despot. Upon your arrival, you were each greeted warmly and offered a luxurious private chamber for the night. After a sumptuous meal, you managed to piece together the following story from questioning the courtiers.

On the twenty-first day of March in the twelfth year of his reign, Good King Despot disappeared. No trace of him could be found, and there were no clues as to where he had gone, or who or what had taken him. It was soon generally accepted that extremely powerful magic was afoot. Despot's subjects were sore afraid for their land, beset as it was by all manner of strange and malevolent creatures, even at the best of times.

The queen, being a Good Queen, immediately called together the Council of Soothsayers, Astrologers, Prophets and Sages (SAPS), and charged them with the task of finding out what had happened to their King. Twenty-five heads later, little had been learned except that the king had been spirited away by magical means (which had been pretty obvious in the first place); however, one learned sage did contend that the king was not dead, but was being held captive for some nefarious purpose. On hearing this, the queen chewed her lip for a while (after all, no ransom demands had been received) but eventually decided that this sage should keep his head . . . for the time being.

The Council of Soothsayers, Astrologers, Prophets and Sages having failed her, the queen turned to the Wise Men (those too sensible to promise more than they could deliver). Each of these worthies, having heard of the previous beheadings, emphatically informed the queen that deference should be given to someone of greater experience and ability than himself. The burial parties were already complaining of overwork, so the queen decided to retain the Wise Men in good health in case they might be useful at a later stage. (After all, if the king never returned, she would need all the help she could get to run the kingdom.)

So a call went out to all the adjoining lands for a wizard of incredible power who, for a trifling fee (half the Good King's cache of loot, carefully accumulated through years of judicious exploitation of his loyal subjects), would be willing to rescue the king.

Two weeks later, a surprisingly young and garishly dressed fop appeared, with a great flash of light, in the queen's chamber well nigh to bedtime. The queen promptly dismissed her principal handmaiden with instructions not to return until mid-morning. The night passed without apparent incident, although many in the palace were anxious to know what was happening.

The next day the queen proclaimed the interloper — one Candelabra, by name — Chairman of a Special Investigating Committee for the Finding of Missing Royalty, and Plenipotentiary for Magical Affairs. The fact that there were no other members of this Committee seemed rather strange, but the courtiers had learned through years of experience not to ask stupid questions.

Great flashes of light, as well as moans and sighs, emanated from the queen's private chambers for the next several weeks. On the rare occasions during this period when the queen attended to her duties, she appeared more distracted and considerably more dishevelled than usual. At last, the queen and Candelabra held a joint conference to announce that, after close mutual consultation, they had arrived at a plan. Candelabra — who, despite his odd behavior and preoccupations, seemed to be a very powerful wizard — had discerned that King Despot had been whisked off by Ignax the Twenty-Seventh, an extremely powerful and significantly malign sorcerer. The king was being held prisoner in Ignax's heavily defended, but bizarrely furnished underground stronghold. Furthermore, Candelabra added, the magical equilibrium of the whole area had been greatly upset by the machinations of Ignax. It was impossible to predict what vulnerabilities the wizard had created in carving this edifice of evil out of the living rock, but the entire area was highly unstable and prone to magical backlash, plus other hazards that Candelabra opined were too complex for the feeble understanding of the audience.

Therefore, it had been decided that Candelabra himself would approach the lair, and by casting a few special spells, threaten to disrupt the magical equilibrium. Ignax would be forced to deal with this menace, thus distracting him from the task of guarding the captive king. A party of brave and bold adventurers (whose magical powers were less than those of Candelabra and Ignax, and who would therefore offer no threat to the magical equilibrium) would then enter the lair and work to usurp Ignax while the old dastard wasn't home to assist the reception committee, for it was obvious that Ignax was not Despot's only guard.

Thus spake Candelabra, and such was the awe in which he was held (or perhaps it was the threat of the queen's wrath) that everyone immediately agreed to the plan. Now that a suitable party of adventurers has been found, everyone is certain that the problem will be solved in no time.

A grand leave-taking ceremony has been planned for tomorrow morning. At that time, Candelabra will use his powers to transport you to the dungeon. Until then, you may rest and make whatever preparations you wish.



Map Key

- Normal door
- One-way door
- Water
- Fire
- Foliage

Other symbols - see text

N

START

Area 43:
One-way Doors
(all rooms)

Of the many fantasy role-playing scenarios produced each year, most are barely adequate, some are exciting, and a few prove to be innovative and challenging. *The Abduction of Good King Despot* is, I believe, one of those rare classics – the exception to the mass of dull material offered in bright packages to module-weary game enthusiasts each year.

I first had the happy experience of playing this adventure at a game convention many years ago. Afterwards, I obtained a copy of the scenario and carried it with me whenever I thought there might be an opportunity to GM for a new group.

The Abduction of Good King Despot has been polished, augmented, expanded, and made compatible with all fantasy role-playing game systems. Nothing has been taken from the original creativity of the scenario, and the additions have made the whole more challenging (and deadly) than before. I can say that without fear, because I had a bit of a hand in the re-editing. This is an addition to your gaming that you *must* not miss, and I say that without reservation. Buy this scenario!

Gary Gygax

CAN YOU RESCUE GOOD KING DESPOT?

The good king has been abducted! The kingdom has lost its benign, honest, and charitable ruler (at least that's what he said he was, and the dubious, tax-crippled citizens found it prudent to agree). Despot's good queen cannot be consoled, though she tries very hard to find comfort. At last, the truth emerges: the good king is being held in the magical prison of the arch-fiend Ignax. And a party of brave adventurers will, of course, get the unenviable task of digging him out — perhaps even literally.

Those bold souls who undertake this rescue mission will quickly discover that Ignax's warped mind has created the zaniest dungeon setting they have ever experienced. The characters will encounter weird (though dangerous) monsters, strange traps and devices, brutally cryptic clues, and utterly mystifying situations. Only a group with imagination, intelligence, bravery, and an indomitable sense of humor will be able to restore the king to the arms of his loving wife.

The Abduction of Good King Despot includes a 32-page text booklet, a 16-page booklet of black-and-white illustrations, and a color map of Ignax's wacky dungeon.

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(414) 728-4281

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