

The Bard's Tale: The Destiny Knight

## THE CLUE BOOK

## THE JOURNAL

Aaron squinted, trying to see through the heat waves rippling off the scorched dunes. He lay in the strips of shade provided by a tattered awning attached to an ancient pavilion. Far out on the desert a party of people was approaching, their wavy images alternately crowning the dunes then disappearing out of sight. There was little doubt concerning their destination. Aaron and his Master inhabited the sole tiny patch of green in the midst of the Tangramayne desert. The nearest city, of the same name, was thirty leagues to the north. When his Master was plagued by company, the visitors were usually parched husks of humankind, always overjoyed to discover that the oasis they had stumbled upon had substance, and remained within their desperate grasp instead of dancing upon the rippling heat just beyond their reach. There was one other kind of visitor, and Aaron was convinced that this was the type that now approached.

Customers.

He ducked under the sagging, stiff canvas, and stood for a moment to allow his eyes to adjust to the darkness. It was stuffy in the pavilion, prodigious snoring having propelled his Master's stale breath into every hidden corner. Aaron decided that he would make his stay brief. But before he spoke, he was struck as always by his Master's face, so very different in the repose of sleep than when his Master was awake. Asleep, his Master's face appeared to be that of a man who had not seen more than thirty winters. True, the cultivated grime made it difficult to really be sure, but Aaron was puzzled. When awake, his Master would walk hunched as if carrying the burden of many years. His hands would shake in counterpoint to the trembling of his voice. But the hands were strong, and his Master's words were often sharp enough to pierce sun-hardened camel hide, after having passed the whetstone of his Master's wit. Aaron grimaced, and softly spoke.

"Master. Master."

The man opened one sleep-crusty eyelid, and peered at the young man. "This had better be of catastrophic importance, boy."

Aaron swallowed. "Customers."

The wizard suddenly sat upright. "Paying customers?" he queried. Aaron shrugged. "That qualifies," the wizard said and made a grand sweeping gesture with his right hand. "I suppose I'll let you live. Now, depart!"

Aaron didn't need to be told twice. The Master smiled fondly at his assistant's rapidly retreating back, and as the flap fell closed he murmured, "A good lad. One more good haul and I'll be ready to pass this little business along to him." He threaded his fingers through matted hair and scratched his head contentedly. "I hope these ignorant ruffians have brought plenty of gold!"

Aaron eyed the visitors suspiciously. There were six of them, and the leader was boisterous, rude, and overconfident. His name was Meric, a warrior, outfitted with helm, sword and little else. He introduced the rest of the party. Selinar, a hunter, was in every way nearly identical to Meric. This was explained by shared experiences: violence, harsh living and a common grandfather. Bresian was a hard, gaunt, leather-skinned man whose permanent smile lines were criss-crossed by myriad blade scars. Aaron kept a particularly watchful eye on Arku, a hobbit rogue (*Rogue*, Aaron thought. *call it what you will, a thief is a thief*) clothed in black robes and a peculiar close fitting mask that covered his entire head, with small holes for ears and eyes. There was a threadbare Conjurer named S'imr-li, and a Magician named Gethsah, in even worse condition, whose face remained hidden beneath a grease-stained gray hood. *Putting on airs*, Aaron sniffed silently to himself, *and them having mere apprentice standing*. They held themselves aloof, staring haughtily into the desert. *Envious of my Master's special ability, that's what they are*. Aaron thought. The group needed help in deciding which of two quests to take on, searching for a sheep's skin made of gold, or the rescue and re-forging of something called the "Destiny Wand. The wand seemed to intrigue Aaron's Master. The old wizard discussed his talent, and his price, with the warriors.

"My talent is unique, my lords." "My lords!" Aaron grimaced. *Great heaving gods, is my Master sick, or blind?* The Master continued, oblivious to the embarrassment of his apprentice. "My magic can send you on a journey; a journey of the mind. Tell me what quest you wish to attempt. I will place you in a deep trance, and you will forget that you have come here. In the trance you will live your future, exactly as it will be if you attempt that quest. This will aid you in deciding which course of action you may wish to take in your real lives. Time passes much more quickly in the trance state; many days pass in a single hour. And if you see something in your vision quest that you would not wish to come to pass, choose a different quest and you can avoid it."

"Why a different quest? Why not just change a few things. Enough to ensure a different outcome?" asked the moth-eaten magician.

Aaron raised one eyebrow. The magician threw back the uttered hood to reveal the face of a pretty young woman.

“Ah, my lady,” the Master said, glancing briefly at Aaron. “There comes a time in every trance when, for a brief instant, a brilliant light bursts forth upon you. That is the moment beyond which the final outcome of the vision quest cannot be altered by any action. The chain of events that has been started will be completed in the way you will observe. The interwoven lives of mortals causes this to be true; I have no other explanation. Now, my lords and lady,” Aaron’s Master spoke briskly. “You know my price, to be paid in advance of your vision. Will you take advantage of my talents?”

The group drew away to make a decision, but Aaron knew what the answer would be. He saw it in their eyes. Curiosity alone would make them show their gold.

“Aaron!” the old wizard hissed. Obediently Aaron attended his Master. “Look lad, this time I’m sending you along in the vision. You’ll observe silently, and without being seen. I want you to take this with you,” and he pressed a bound book of fresh, blank vellum pages into Aaron’s hand. “As you concentrate, your thoughts will appear on the pages as you think them. Record everything. If what I fear has come to pass, a great evil has been loosed in this world, and must be stopped. The Destiny Wand must be re-forged, and if this assemblage of gutter swine proves unable to accomplish this quest, then someone else must attempt it. A journal of this vision will prove an invaluable aid to other adventurers. Hide the book lad. Here come the customers.”

Aaron fumbled the book under his robes.

“Well, have you decided?” the Master asked.

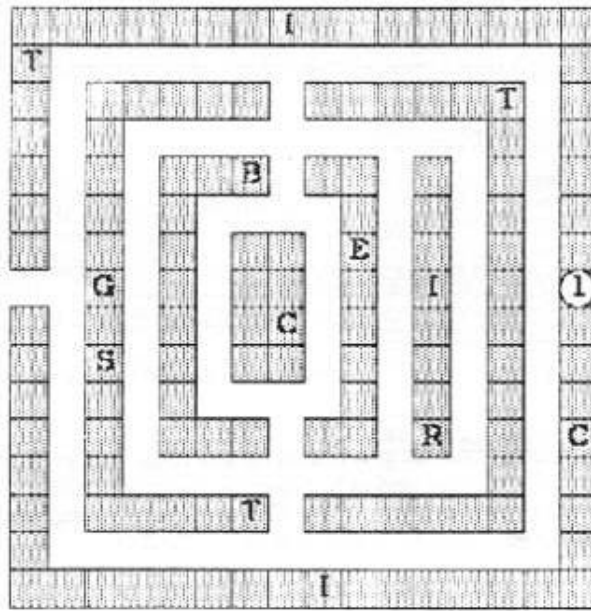
Meric glowered. “Well take yer journey, wizard. But we all find the price too stiff. We offer ye...

“Pity,” Aaron’s Master interrupted. “Come Aaron.” The wizard strode towards the pavilion. “Hold!” The woman magician, Gethsah, stood facing the old wizard, right hand weighing a heavy pouch. Her lips were curved into a grin that held no malice, and her eyes held admiration. “I warned you, Meric. Here, you old pirate!” The pouch bridged the gap between them and disappeared as if by magic beneath the old man’s robes.

“Thank you, my dear.” A secret wink to Aaron, then a wide sweep of his hand to indicate the pavilion.

“Would you please enter?”

Aaron knelt on the worn carpet in the corner. All the adventurers sat in a circle with his Master. The old wizard placed his hand on his chest and began to chant, and as he did so the pavilion became charged with crackling power. One by one the adventurers toppled and lay still. The old man turned his head and regarded his apprentice. Aaron fought against overwhelming weariness, then slumped to the floor.



- ① = Starter Dungeon
- B = Bank
- C = Casino
- E = Energy Emporium
- G = Adventurers' Guild
- I = Inn or Tavern
- R = Review Board
- S = Shoppe
- T = Temple

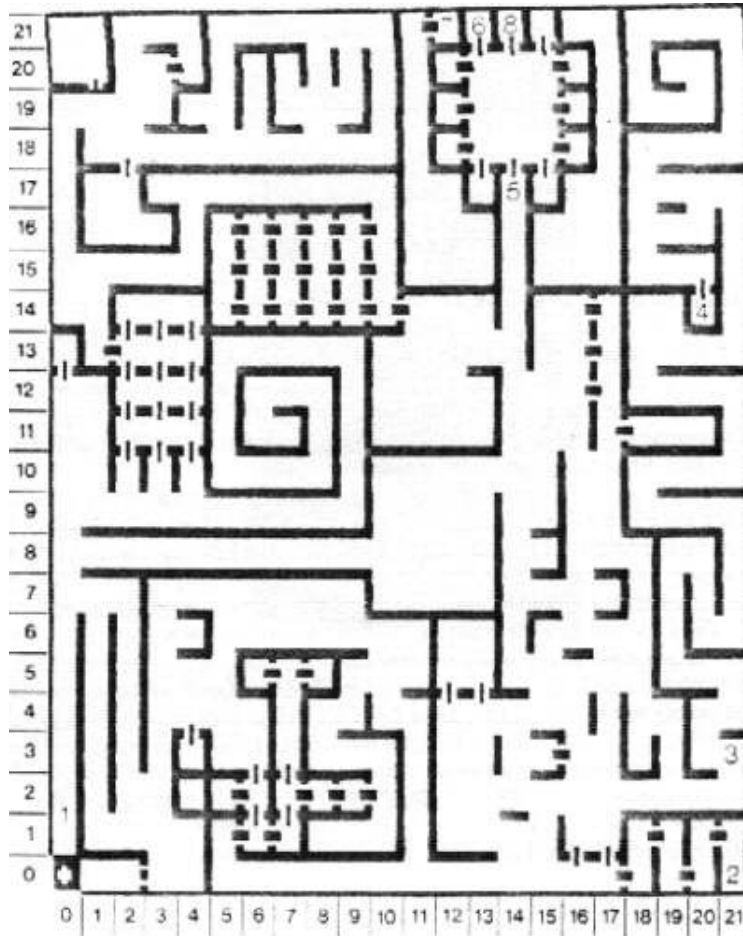
### TANGRAMAYNE

Will this really work? It does! My words appear even as I think them! I'm flying, floating in the air over the motley group that is involved in this trance quest. What's this? A ball of white light has exploded all around *them*. I know what it is! It's the moment beyond which the final outcome of the vision quest cannot be altered. *They* don't know that, though! They're dancing around waving their weapons! Let me see, where are we? We're outside a city...it's Tangramayne! Oh, I haven't been here since....I wonder if the Inns are open? I'd love an icy cold mug of Marduk's Whiskers! I'm invisible! I can't be heard! *I can't order any ale!* And I've lost the party! They can't be far.

It's been several hours now. I discovered that-by concentrating I was able to cause a map of the city to appear on the facing page in the journal. Since no one dares to defy Marduk the Dragon God, all castles and dungeons, fortresses and complexes must be built according to his Law; eighty-eight paces by eighty-eight paces. This knowledge will make it easier to map any complex the party enters. I will divide the maps into sections four paces square; that should be easily understood. I found the group outside a small building on Claymore Street. They are entering the building...and are met inside by a magician who tells them this:

*"I have a noble quest for you, if you'd hear the tale. The story is a tragic one. The daughter of Endor the Mighty, King of all the Land, has been kidnapped by the Dark Lord, whose domain lies just under this chamber. I would rescue her myself, but the Dark Lord has laid a mighty spell upon his domain and I am barred from ever entering. You, however, can make it in. If the Princess is found and brought back to me, I will grant each of you some additional experience points. And, of course, the King will be most pleased. Take care, and be sure to map every inch of the Dark One's lair. I'll be waiting here for you to return."*

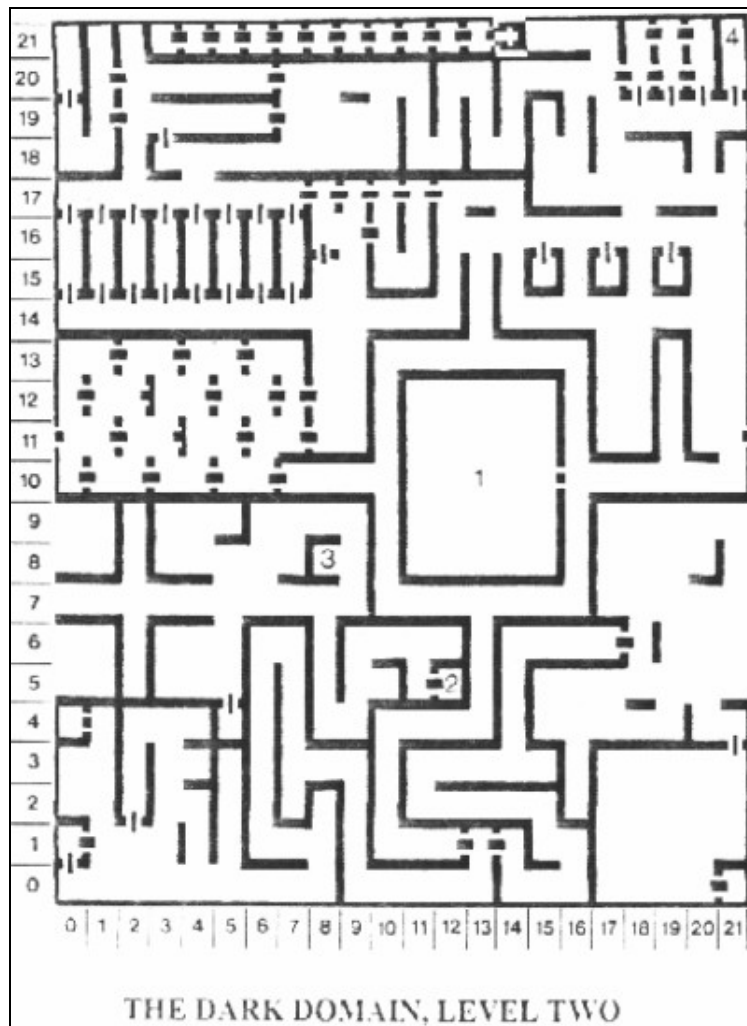
Well I must admit that they have courage. Meric charges forward down the stairs as if a Goddess waited below with open arms to greet him. The others follow, as do I.



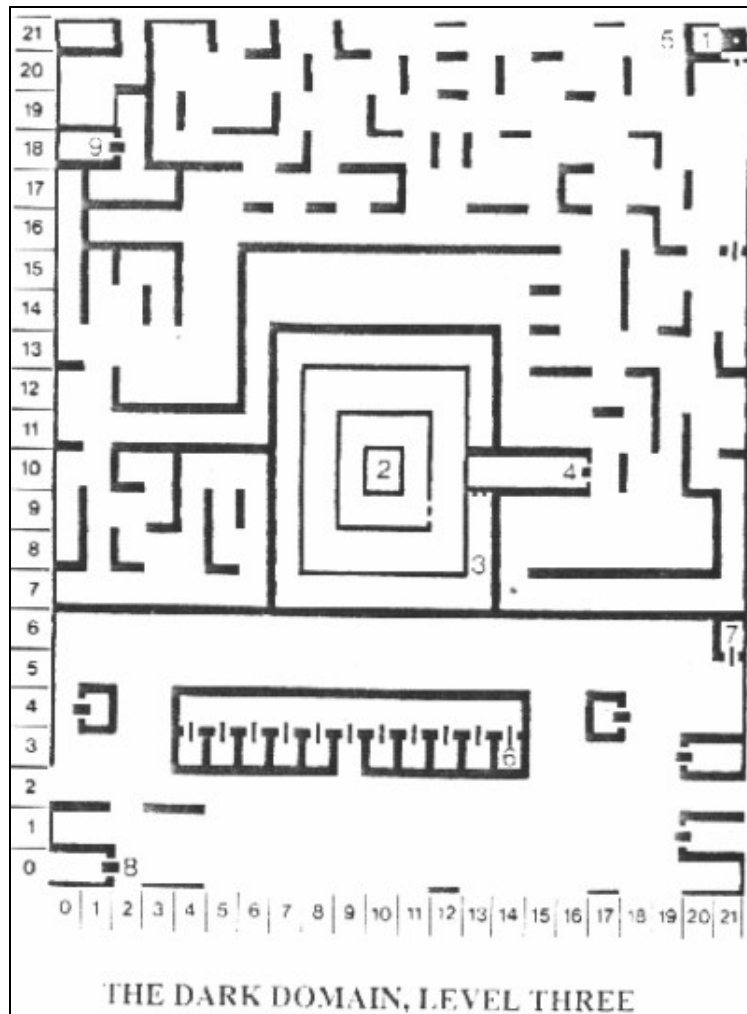
THE DARK DOMAIN, LEVEL ONE

By concentrating, I was able to cause a map of this evil place to appear on the facing page in the journal. When we encounter something of interest, I will number the encounter, both in my words and on the map. If this party does not succeed in re-forging the Destiny Wand, the next group to take on this quest can hardly fail, if armed with my journal! I will not record any battles. The pages in the book are limited, and any adventurer to use this book will surely be familiar with fighting.

1. The party came upon a magic mouth that warned, "*Turn back, adventurers- you are not the first and you won't be the last to attempt to save the Princess.*" Of course the party ignored the foul thing and proceeded forward. 2. In the SE corner of the dungeon was a message, "*Beware the creature that lies in the middle of darkness.*" 3. Nearby, scribbled on the wall, was the faded message, "*The princess lives...*" I hope the content of the message is more current than the message itself! The party continued on, and soon came to a small room. 4. When the party entered this small room, a message appeared: "*In areas unpassable, seek entrance by Phase Door to learn the secret of the double doors*" They continue to explore.... 5. In the NB section the party discovered an area of darkness, where no light spells or torches would work. Beyond that was a room with doors along each wall. 6. In one room Gethsah the magician, remembering the clue about areas unpassable, cast a Phase Door spell. 7. As the party passed through the misty wall, an old man appeared. "*Below you now, thrice count the floors, play the last for the double doors.*" He then vanished. There was nothing else of interest here. 8. When they entered the room directly across from the entrance, they found stairs, leading down. The party descends...



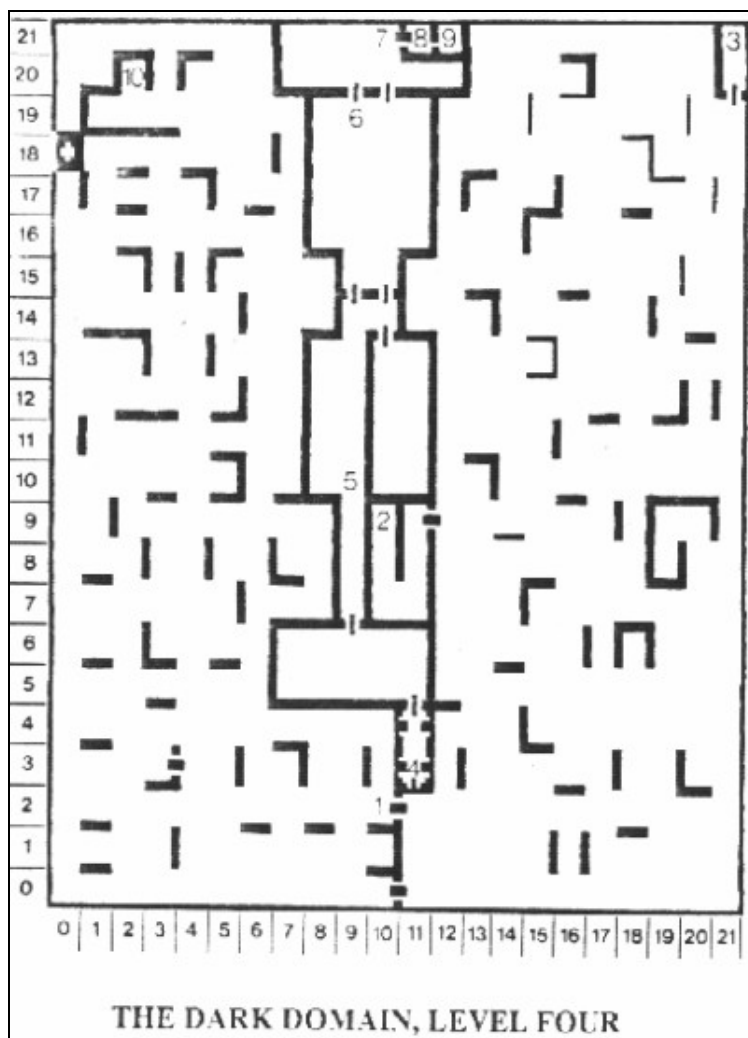
There are many traps here, and beasts that attack the party at every turn. The group has done well, slaying many. 1. The party came upon a large room filled with darkness that could not be pierced by torch or spell. In the center of this room was a dangerous creature that attacked the party. This must be the same creature warned of in the level above. After a fierce battle, the two warriors and the bard managed to kill it. The party is gaining much experience, and will have welcome business with the Review Board if they manage to survive. 2. A large winged creature wanted to join the party here. After some discussion, the group decided to allow it to join them. It seems quite friendly, and looks to be a good fighter. 3. A strange message: *"One level down, Map wall and door. Look toward the corners, And read the four.."* Perhaps the meaning will become clear in the next level down. 4. In the NE corner the party found a portal. S' Imr-li, the Conjuror, cast a levitation spell. The party descends once more...



1. At first, it appeared that the party was in a rectangular room with no way out but the way, in which they entered. But there was a teleport trap here, which Selinar discovered. 2. The party was teleported to another location in the dungeon, into the middle of a large room, three squares long and three squares wide. The mages sensed the presence of traps, and so the party proceeded cautiously, moving straight forward until stopped by a wall. The middle square of the room became magically walled off. The party faced south, and moved again. As they approached the wall, all light was extinguished. The party continued in darkness until reaching the wall, then turned to the east. They moved east until stopped by another wall, and then S'Imr-li cast a light spell. 3. A wall had closed behind the party, and a door was visible. They went through the door. 4. At the end of a short corridor there appeared this message: "*Seek the four cornered letters.*" I am not the only scribe here; Getsah also records faithfully all messages that may prove helpful to the party.

As the party moved north, they encountered a very large area of spell darkness. 5. They continued north until, according to the dimensions of my map on the facing page, they should have been stopped by the confines of the dungeon walls. But they continued north! At first I was shocked, thinking that whoever built this place ignored the Law of Marduk. I was uneasy that my map seemed to have failed. But upon closer inspection of the map, I realized that it was just an aspect of magic to provide an easier way of travelling within the dungeon. One step out of the northern boundary, and steps into the southernmost section of the dungeon. Saves having to go the long way, through the length of the dungeon. The dungeon magically wraps around itself. Wraps around I call this "wraparound" magic.

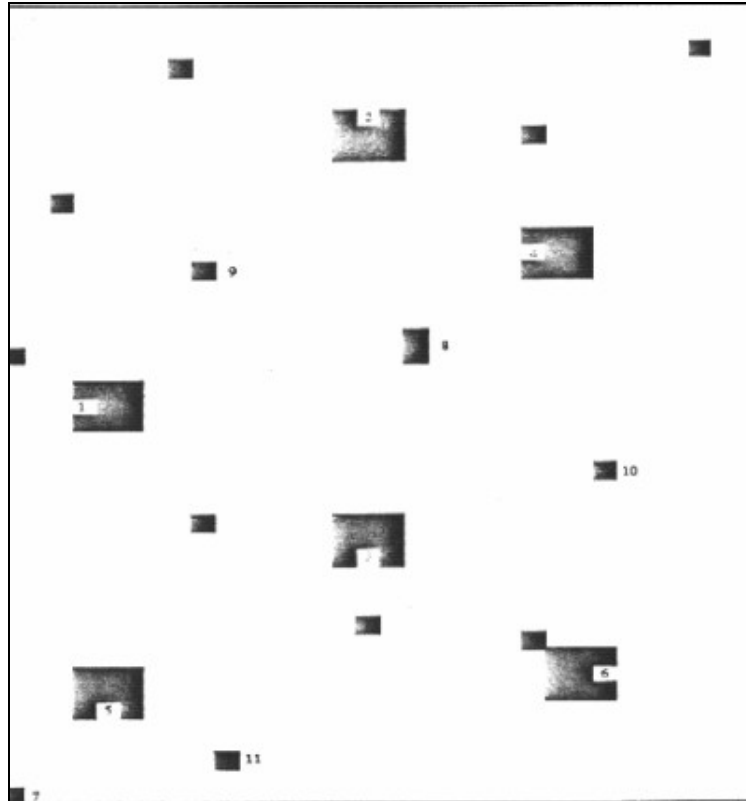
There are traps in this section of the dungeon that drain the energy away from all spells that have been cast, including the songs of Bards. 6. The party encountered some of these, and was presented with a riddle: "Look at the spells of Sorcerous kind, Who's the Master of the Mind?" When Bresian said, "Mangar," the magic mouth told the party that their way was now open, and then it disappeared. The party continued exploring. 7. In a group of spinner traps the party found the following message: "The answer to the double doors lies hidden above." 8. After wandering around the southern section of the dungeon, the party followed a wraparound corridor. 9. This led to a door, beyond which appeared another magic mouth that spoke these words: "Speak the word to pass by." The answer was obvious! But it seemed an eternity to me before Gethsah said "Pass," and descending stairs appeared. It is also obvious to me that these stairs would not have appeared to the party if they had not first solved the riddle MANGAR above. The party marched down the stairs...



Traps! The party has wandered through these deadly corridors and mazes for what seems **to be an** eternity. 1. Finally they discovered a door that promised to lead them into the other main section of the dungeon. But the entire area was blanketed in wizard darkness. Meric has decided to explore the area as thoroughly as possible. "Why else," he asked, "would someone go to the trouble of maintaining a huge spell of this nature unless it was to conceal something important?" 2. They found a door that led to a square of magic regeneration, an important find in these dim halls! But the fighters were disappointed at having found nothing to benefit them directly, and so Meric had the party continued to explore. I thought it was indeed a childish whim, but it is fortunate that his word as leader of the party prevailed. 3. They discovered another teleport square, that brought them to an area of the dungeon inaccessible by any other means (4), and began to explore this new area. 5. Travelling north, they came to the edge of a deep chasm, and their winged companion offered to transport them across. The party proceeded north, avoiding traps and other obstacles, until at last they came to a set of double doors. 6. Bresian remembers a clue found above. He brings his horn to his lips, and plays the Watchwood Melody. The party is then able to pass through the double doors **to find...**

The Dark Lord! 7. In a raging battle, the party defeated the Dark Lord and his minions! The victorious party continued onward. 8. In a small room they found a frightened princess, and in a room beyond that they located a teleport square (9). This **took** them to a location very near the stairs (10). With the princess, they are making their way back out of the dungeons and to the building guarded by the King's wizard.

He was very glad to see them, and of course overjoyed to see the princess. He cast a spell upon them and thanked them for their bravery. When the party made its way to the Review Board and entered, they were gratified by the increases in rank and spell casting ability they received. Although they were sorry to see him go, the winged creature left the group. The party will depart on the morrow for the wilderness.



### THE WILDERNESS

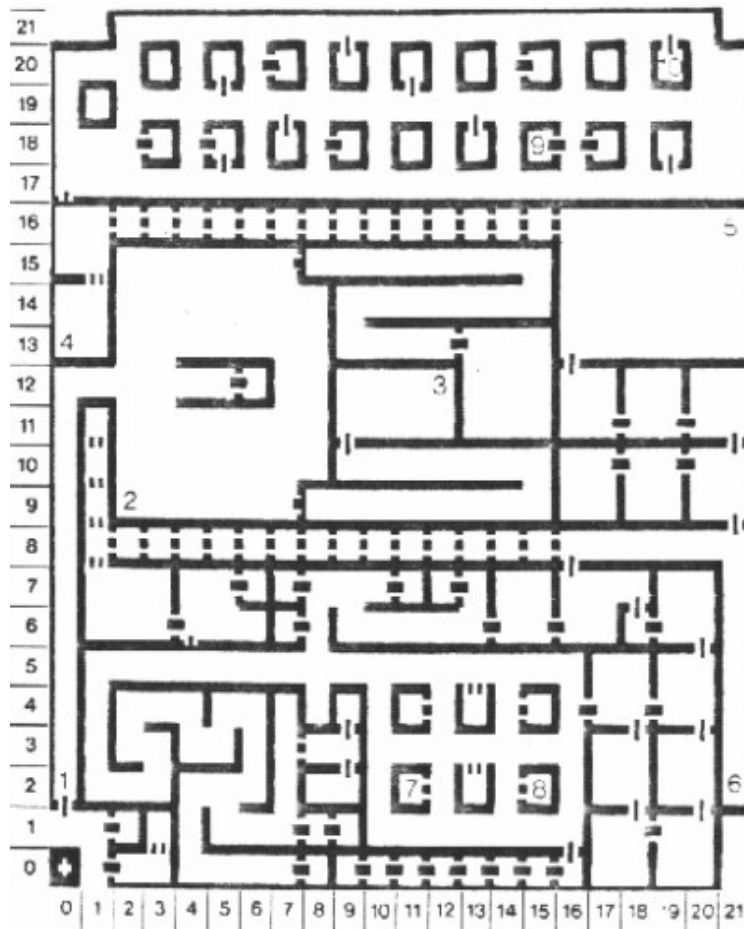
I am again astonished by the incredible spell that makes possible the creation of this magic book. The party slept, and rose at dawn to continue their quest. The instant we passed the gates of Tangramayne, a map of the surrounding wilderness and nearby cities and isolated structures appeared on the page facing my words. I am convinced that I made the correct decision when I decided to become my Master's apprentice!

The party is proceeding through the wilderness, seeking an old man venerated for his wisdom. He is known only as the *Sage*, and lives alone. I can see on the wilderness map many small buildings or huts. One of them will most probably belong to the *Sage*. The party searches...

After locating and identifying the cities of, 1. Tangramayne ('twas not difficult!), 2. Ephesus, 3. Philippi, 4. Colosse, 5. Corinth, and 6. Thessalonica, the party found the Sage (7). In addition to those cities the adventurers have located, other Structures appear to be represented on the wilderness map, including:

8. Fanskar's Castle, 9. The Grey Crypt, 10. Kazdek, and 11. The Temple of Nam.

Meric paid the Sage MUCH gold, and questioned him about the Tombs. The old man replied that the Tombs were to be located in Ephesus, at the city's center. "*Seek the entrance at the Temple of Darkness.*" The party departs for Ephesus...



THE TOMBS, LEVEL ONE

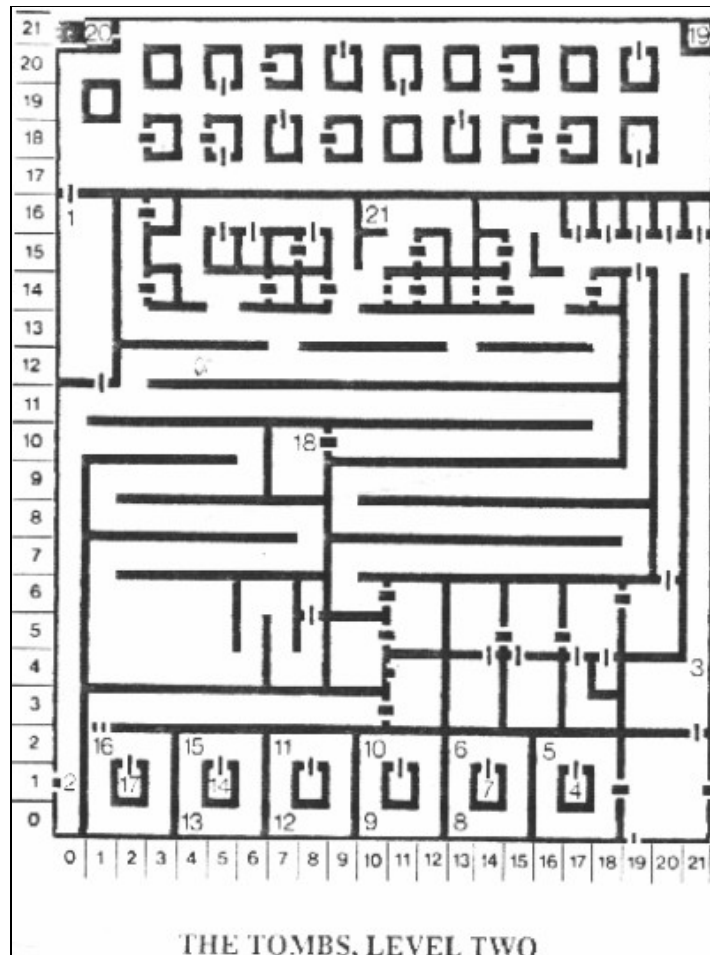
After reaching Ephesus and locating the entrance to The Tombs, the party descends into a realm unfit for the living. 1. Proceeding north down a dank corridor, the party was soon deposited into a large room filled with spinner traps. 2. The party barely kept their bearings by hugging the western and southern walls of the spinner-filled room. After what seemed an eternity, the adventurers came to a door in the southeastern corner of the spinner room, which led them into a long switchback corridor. At the end of the corridor, the party found a door in the northern wall that opened into a larger chamber. Giving the chamber a perfunctory search, S'imr-li detected some sort of teleportation trap in the northeast corner (3). S'imr-li is of the Krphnir, a strange race of desert people endowed with unusual mystic power. He claims to be the last of his people, and from what my master has told me, this could be true. 4. Teleported to a smaller chamber, the party exited through a door in the northeast corner only to enter another chamber approximately the same size. Down a long corridor of doors the party traveled, with Meric grumbling complaints the whole way, until at last they entered a large chamber of darkness (5).

Once again using his strange powers of perception, S'imr-li detected the presence of many traps. He led the party along the wall down the east wall, halfway along the south wall, then led the group out into the center of the chamber and south again to a door in the south western corner. The adventures were overjoyed as they left the room of traps and entered a smaller chamber. S'imr-li received a hearty clap on the back from Arku the hobbit (who received a glowering sneer in return). The party continued east, then south through three more chambers until they emerged at the junction of two corridors. Heading down the southern corridor, the party came to a dead end, but found a poem etched into the wall. 6. *"The snare of death spins right in whole," "As fire-ones feast or the deadman? soul," "Yet savage words can cut the rock," "And feathers split the headman's block."* Gethsah records all of these cryptic messages as faithfully as does my magic journal. She is quite beautiful....

The party returned to the westerly corridor and came upon two doors. After some debate over which way to go, Gethsah finally persuaded Meric to let the party continue west. Down another corridor of doors, with Meric cursing Gethsah the entire journey, until at last they reached the end, and traveled south through two chambers and into another corridor.

The party explored to the east and soon discovered a large chamber that contained six smaller rooms. 7. One of the rooms they did not enter since S'imr-li detected the presence of a teleport trap. 8. The party entered one of the other small rooms. Once inside, a voice whispered, *"After the toxic one, check yourselves for a special thing that appears common."* Not only was the party bewildered as to the source of the whisper, the content of the message remains a mystery.

More exploring. until the mages decide to return to the teleportation room (7). There was no way out save a spell of this nature. and the magic users wanted to conserve their spell energy. 9. The party is teleported to another small room. It was difficult at first to determine that they were in a different location. The party explored the area thoroughly avoiding many traps. 10. One room contained teleportation magic, and the following message: *"Things change unnoticed. and not always for the better."* Suspicious, Gethsah cast a Scry Site spell, and it was revealed that the party had descended a level.



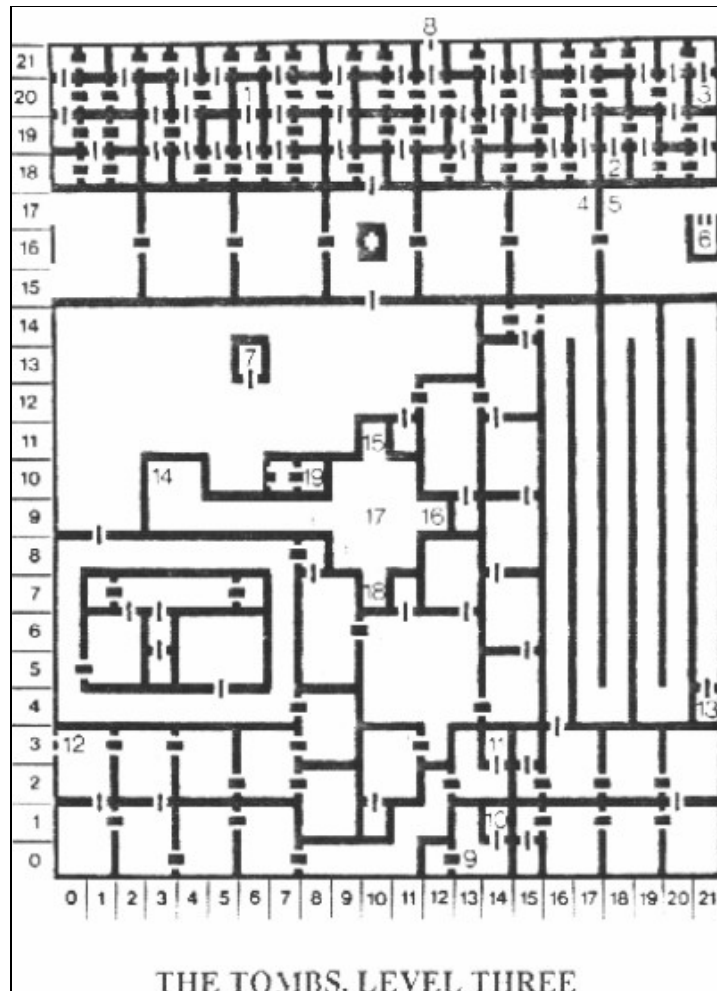
1. A deadly room of traps. And nothing of value within! If it becomes necessary to traverse this area again., I pray that the party has the good sense to utilize their magic! 2. More wraparound magic, then explorations to the north. 3. Here the party found a magic mouth with the message. *"The test of time has laid waste the power of the true wand Only the one can save it, yet at a cost of losing his old self"*. At last a clue about the Destiny Wand! The party is elated, as am I.

Meric decided to explore the area to the south. 4, Here the party discovered a message scratched onto the wall of a small room within a room, *"The great T had at the end of things, to beg, with a kind word."* Hmm. More searching uncover red a teleport (5) that sent the party to another room that contained a smaller room (6). Again. the small room (7) contained a message: *"He was told to burn, and in that paradox knew a multitude of solutions."* 8. Teleport to 9. The room here contained a trap. The party moved on, 10. Teleport to 11. Another trap within the room here. The party moves on. 12. Teleport to 13. Another message on the wall of the small room, 14. *"The great one knew success at all points. Defeat was never etched on his destiny."* 15. Teleport to 16. 17. Another room, another message. *"Trachaem's task was always reversed. This is the paradox."* I hope Gethsah's wisdom can make sense of these cryptic messages:. I am lost in confusion!

Leaving the last room through a door in the north wall, the party explored north through a series of small rooms and winding passages. 18. The party came across an old man who called himself the Keymaster. He wanted to sell the party an item for 50,000 gold pieces! Meric was ready to lease the old man with a sword wound and a memory; but Gethsah overruled him and pooled the company's gold to buy the item. It was a key, and as soon as the money crossed the Keymaster's palm he vanished. Meric was outraged that Gethsah had squandered the party's gold on so insignificant an item. Gethsah tucked the key inside her tunic and said nothing.

The party backtracked through familiar ground to explore the northernmost portion of the dungeon. 19. The party found another scrawled message in a small room. *"The strange mage wants two words: What Trackeam did. an answer to the paradox and what word he said at the end of things."* 20. They' also found a portal leading up. but that is not the direction desired by the party.

21 The **party** has located descending stairs. After a rest, they will continue into the next level of the Tombs...



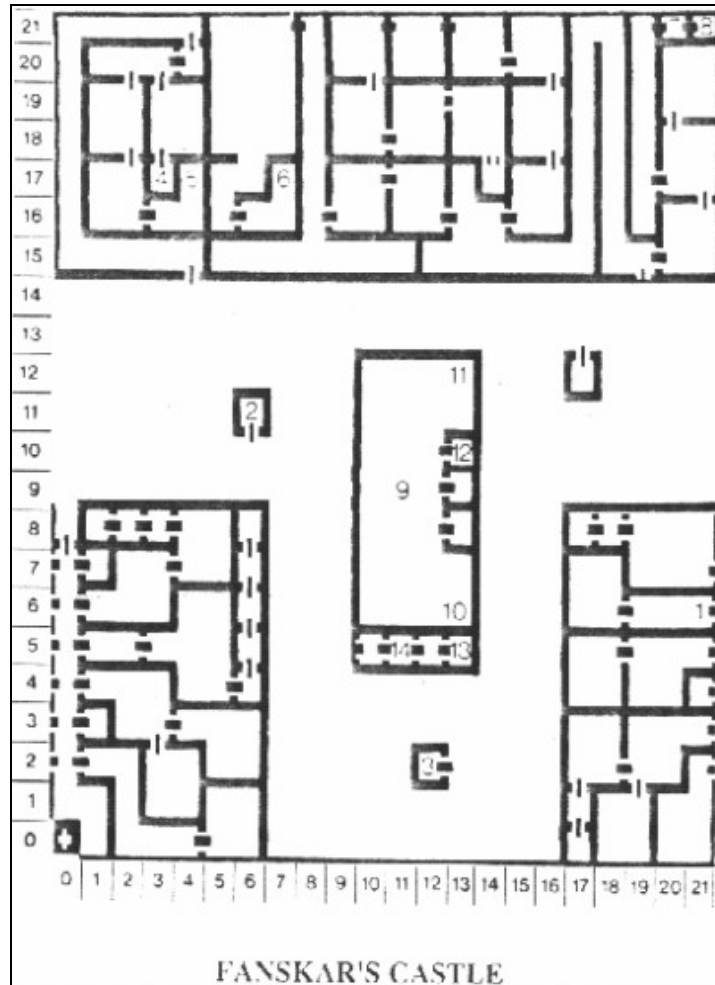
The battles now are truly fierce. Often the party chooses to avoid conflicts. 1 On the wall here were etched the words: *T" Age before all others when the time is short. For the last must be first.* 2. Etched here were the words, *" The won flame in ancient grip. might cause the cloudy one to slip* 3, Another message. *"A party of sick people might escape where the healthy fail. "* How could this be? 4. Teleported to 5. 6. Someone has been busy here. A message on the wall: *"The staff of old, once lost, once sold, Name it to be of purest gold."* I am concerned for the party. Gethsah records these messages, but are they of value? Or are they here to lead adventurers to their deaths? I wish I could be seen and heard! I wish I could be of some aid!

7. A mysterious whisper spoke: *"And the old shall lead the way."* Some of these messages do seem to be related. Perhaps...

Meric has decided to throw a tantrum again, and demanded that the party travel north, back to the maze. "Why else," he shouts, "would anyone bother to build a maze other than to hide something valuable?" He led the unwilling party north, back into the maze after many hours of wandering and dead ends, they found nothing valuable. 8. At last they found a single portal of wraparound magic! Gratefully, the party stepped through. 9. Here they found an old man, wearing a heavy garment of pure gold thread, and performing a dangerous magic trick with fireballs. Even my Master cannot perform this trick as well! He asked the party, "*The name of it is the staff of...*" He waited. Oh Gethsah, can you not see? The clue! Name it to be of purest gold. This must be the one! And the staff. The staff of old! Gethsah...

She did it! "Old," she cried, "old" The old man smiled and said, "*Correct. I will say this then. Go to the sage in the wilderness and ask him of Fanskor. He will charge you a price, but the information will be valuable.*" And the remarkable old man vanished! The magician must wish the party to ask the Sage about Fanskar when they have finished with the Tombs. I will no longer malign scrawled messages on the walls of tombs!

10 Teleported to 11, and proceeded on through numerous chambers until the party discovered another wraparound portal. 12. Through the wraparound portal the party found itself in another series of rooms that led to a number of switchback corridors. At the end of the winding passages, the party came upon another small room. 13. Within the room the party discovered another teleport square, but before using it Gethsah and S'imr li studied Gethsah's notes. After teleporting, (14) a cloudy face appeared and said, "*Your time draws to a close, mortals. Show the answer to me, or perish.*" Bresian the Bard told the others he had heard of this kind of trap, in which no magic would function. If the puzzle was not solved in the amount of time given, all the party would die and their bodies would be magically transported to Tangramayne. Quickly the party explored the area. 15. An old man offered to join the party'. Gethsah insisted he be allowed to join. and even insisted he lead the party's marching order. Meric was furious! 16. Here the party found a pool of foul water, and Bresian insisted everyone drink of it. Gethsah agreed, and said the clues seemed to tell her that the party would soon be encountering a foe who could Only be defeated by those who had drank from the pool. The party drank. 17. The party avoided a spinner trap. and then encountered a toxic giant (18). They were able to best him in battle, and after healing themselves of the poison from the pool, discovered a torch that appeared among the party's gear. Remembering the clues. Gethsah gave the torch to the old man to hold. 14. The party raced back to the place where the cloudy face had appeared. Again it spoke. " *Very impressive.*" it said. "*Your way lies clear for the time being. But my time will come.*" It vanished. 19. The party explored further, and found a section of the broken Destiny Wand! S'imr-li said that the section has magical properties, and can be used to cast the Wizard Wall spell. An elated party made its way' back to Tangramayne!

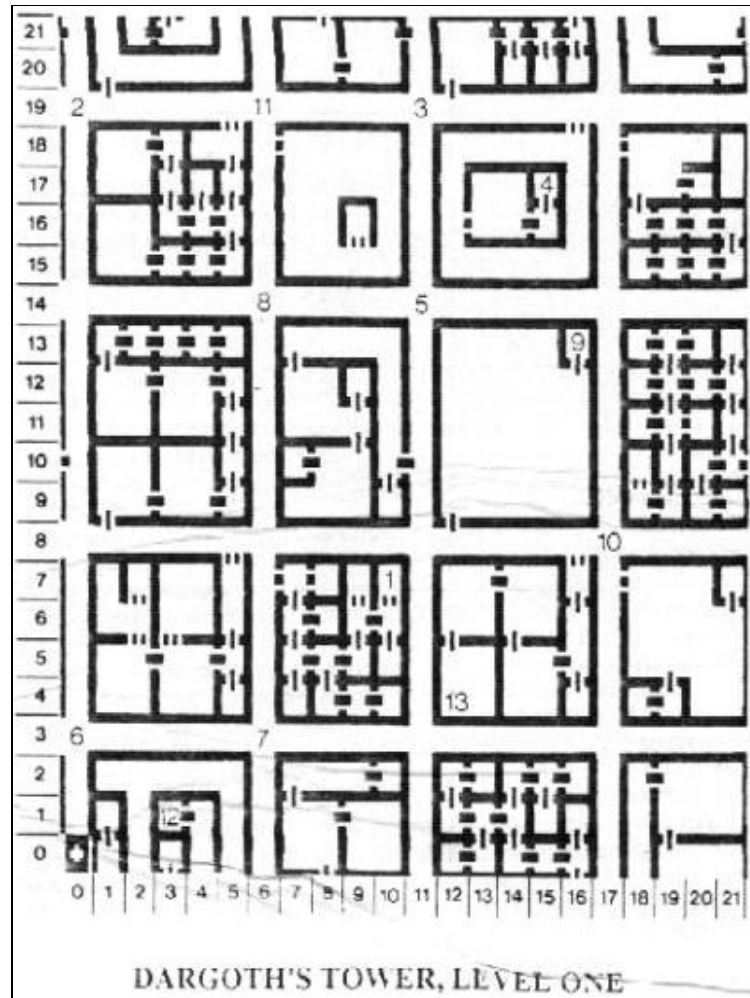


The old man elected to remain in Tangrarnayne. The party departed for the Sage's hut in the wilderness. When questioned (and well paid), the Sage told the party that Fanskar's castle was located in the wilderness (8, wilderness map). The party traveled to the castle, and because Gethsah had the Master Key, they were allowed to enter. Meric seems unwilling to accept Gethsah as the new leader of the party. Perhaps it is true, that to be a good warrior you must also be a barbarian! The party enters Fanskar's Castle...

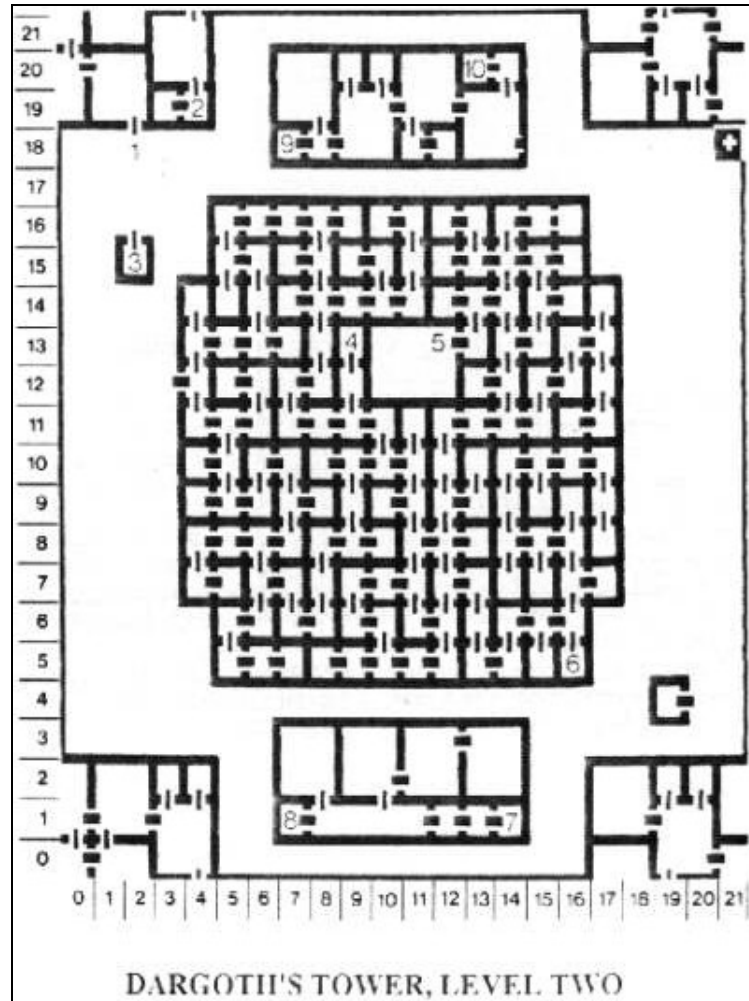
The party has discovered that this castle has much wraparound magic. 1. Following one such magical path, the party came upon the message, "Ask the wise of Dargoth." Gethsah thinks this might be a clue about which to ask the Sage. 2. Here, scrawled on the wall, was another message: "Far right and left is hazardous, when time runs short, yet in the far corners is knowledge." 3. Here the party came upon a magic mouth. "Ponder this," it said. "The white shall lie, and this knowledge reflects your only answer."

4. Deciding to explore north, the party came into a room where a bodiless voice said, "Fanskar guards the death snare with his very life." A subdued and thoughtful party continues. 5. Close by, the party discovered and used a teleport square. 6. They found themselves in an L-shaped room, the door of which led to a larger room that drained the magic users' energy levels before they were able to leave it. 7. A corridor of traps led to a series of rooms, and beyond that the party came upon the great Fanskar himself. He was not pleased to see them, and the party had the most difficult battle of their lives before finally slaying the evil one. 8. In the room beyond Fanskar's was a teleportation square. The party stepped upon it, and were teleported to another location (9). A voice said, "Welcome, mortals, to the second snare. Choose one of three doors, but only one leads to the segment. The other two bring instant death." Another of the deadly timed traps Bresian told about! 10. In one corner of this room was an old man in a white cloak. "The black cloaked one speaks the truth," he said, and vanished. "Ah," said Gethsah, "but the clue said that the white shall lie!" 11. The party raced to the opposite corner, and there an old man in a black cloak told them, "The door on the right leads to safety." The man then vanished. 12. Considering quickly all the clues, the party opened the correct door and were teleported to another location (13). Nearby was the second segment to the Destiny Wand (14). Laying his hands upon the segment, S'imr-li told his companions that the section would protect the party from harm during battle, by

making them more difficult hit. After returning to Tangramayne, the party was awarded many accolades and increase in rank by the Review Board. The magic users are well on their way to becoming Archmages. In the morning the party will travel again to the Sage, and question him about *Dargoth*.



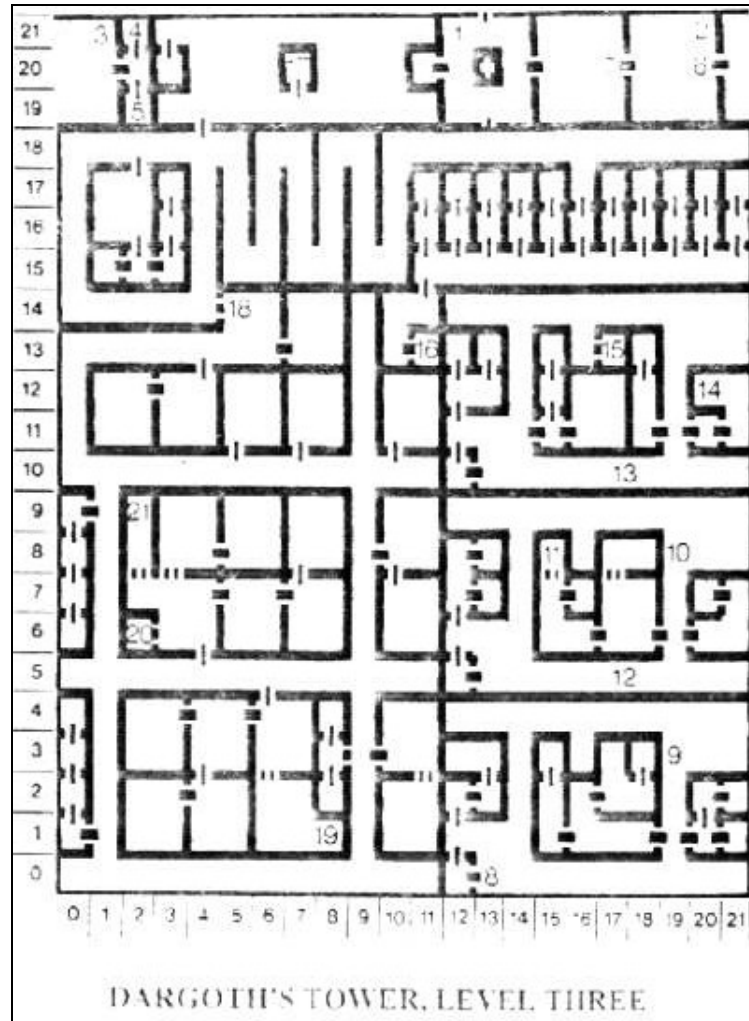
The Sage told the party that the Tower of Dargoth lies in the City of Philippi. The old man's words were grim indeed, and the party approached the Tower *warily*. Once inside, they happened upon many teleport traps. It is difficult for them to map here. 1. The first item of interest they came upon was a bodiless voice, imploring them to "*Seek the Zen Master.*" 2. A teleport took them to another location (3). From here, they were able to locate a small room. 4. There was a magic mouth here that spoke. "*What truly counts is rarely said,*" it told them. "*Ask the wise of the Maze of Dread.*" I believe this to be another clue for the Sage. 5. The party was then teleported to another location (6). From there, they utilized yet another teleportation square (7 to 8). 9. A small room in the midst of a larger room of traps and darkness contained a magic mouth that asked, "*Answer this, foolish ones. Is it better to burn out or fade away?*" It was Arku the Rogue who remembered a part of a clue, how "*he was told to burn*" "Burn," the hobbit blurted. And the answer was correct! 10. The party took a teleport that transported them to an area of wraparound magic (11). 12. They found a message in a small room which read, "*Frequency is the ultimate key.*" 13. A final teleport brought them to stairs, leading up into the next level of the tower...



Darkness! 1. After much blind exploration, the party made its way to a door that led out of the blackness. There was wraparound magic here. 2. The party found a small room, and within a voice said, *“The sword of Zar can only be drawn by one who has faced the battle test.”* 3. In a small, isolated room there was this poem etched upon the wall: *“In darkest calm, He stalks the men, Who seek the wand, And read the ten, His cry is called, But none knows when.”* S’imr-li fell into a sort of trance after reading this poem. Then he told the party that the important part of the poem was the section regarding “reading the ten.” Gethsah listened attentively, and scribbled furiously in her book. The party moved on.

In the middle of this level lies the most hellish of mazes. 4. The party finds a message on a wall that reads, *“The death snare is not on the first three levels of the tower.”* Upon closer inspection, it becomes apparent that this message was written in blood. The blood of what creature, and what became of it?

5. The party found a larger room in the maze, and seven statues within. When they tried to examine the statues, the stone creatures came to life and fought the party! All seven were eventually vanquished. S’imr-li said that the statues were somehow connected with the “battle test,” and perhaps they *were* the battle test itself. S’imr-li’s mystical abilities, inherent only in the Krphnir race, are manifesting in greater strength as the mage gains experience. This will prove invaluable to the party. 6. In another small room, the party found a teleport that rescued them from the monotony of the maze. 7. They were transported to the end of a hall. At the other end, behind a door, was another teleport square (8 to 9). Nearby, the party was able to discover ascending stairs (10). After a brief rest, they will continue their quest...



1. When the party reached the next level, they received the following message: *“Three words of wisdom must be found, or else stay closer to the ground.”* S’imr-li thinks that this is a warning: the party must collect the three words and solve a puzzle, or the next level of the tower will be denied the party. He also told his companions that this level of the tower will present difficulties hitherto not encountered. The spell Phase Door will not function here, and neither can the party teleport *into* this level using the teleportation magic of the mages’. The party was considerably cheered, however, when S’imr4i told them that it was possible to teleport out of the tower!

The party explored east through two chambers. A teleport square transported the party to a room with wraparound magic within (2 to 3). 4. Near this room was a smaller room, and in this room was a spell of magic regeneration. The mages were delighted with this find. 5. Nearby was another small room, and when the party entered a voice told them, *“From the first, take the last, fifth from the second, and eighth from the third.”*

6 to 7. Another teleport square moved the party west, and they continued on until they returned to the stairs where they had entered the level. Searching the north wall the party found a wraparound portal leading north. Stepping through the portal, the party found themselves transferred to another new section (8).

Here they discovered a teleport (9 to 10). 11. In a small room behind a secret door, the party found the following poem: *“The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.”*

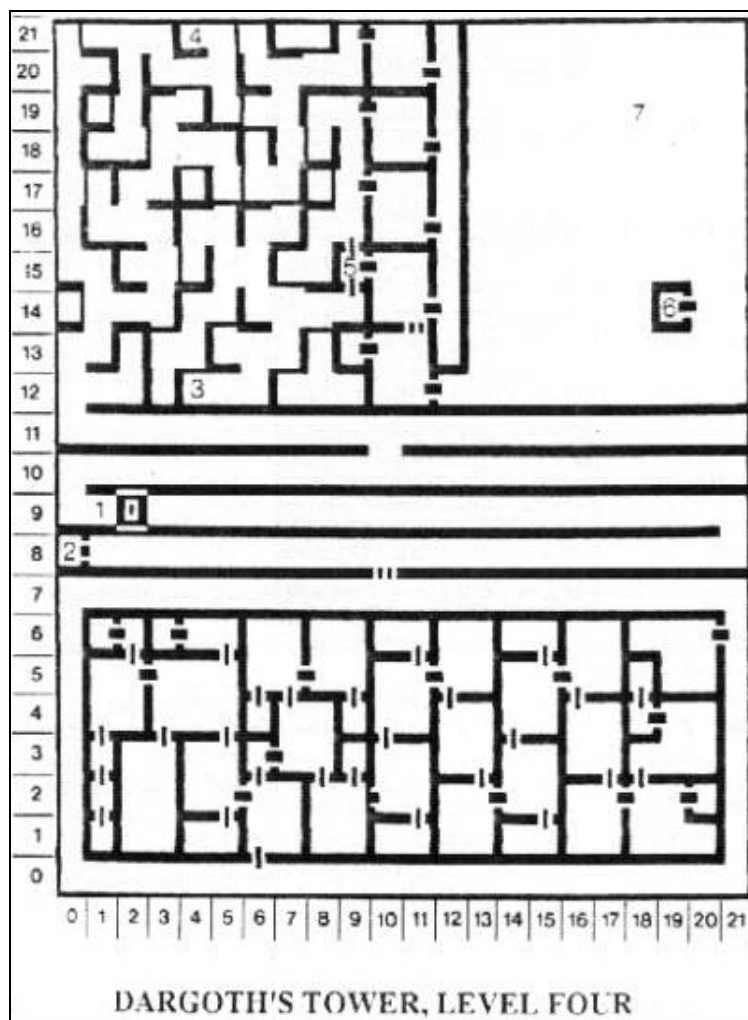
After reading and recording the poem in her own journal, Getsah located another teleport square (12 to 13). 14. Thoroughly exploring the chamber, they found another message in an alcove in a smaller room: *“The first says dwell, the second hell, the third of wisdom it would tell.”* The only way out of this section was a teleport square (15 to 16)

Making their way north through a maze of doors, dead-end corridors, and switchback passages, the party entered a large dark chamber. At the center of the chamber they found a small room. 17. In the isolated room was this message: *'The sorrows of hell compassed me about, the snares of death prevented me.'*

18. The party travelled south, pondering this new riddle, and encountered a magic mouth on a wall that only added to their quandary'. *"In the lands within, and the traps between, what was secret once — now cannot be seen!"* 19. The party moved south, and discovered this message in a southern alcove of a large room: *"For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the earth."*

Moving north again, the party entered another large chamber made up of smaller rooms. 20. In a small room they discovered a magic mouth that spoke to them. *"Speak the three, in sequence."* And Gethsah has solved the riddle. Following the clues, she arranged the poems into the proper sequence and proudly gave the answer: Earth, Compassed. Fountain. Simr-li tells the group that giving the proper answer will gain the party access to the next level.

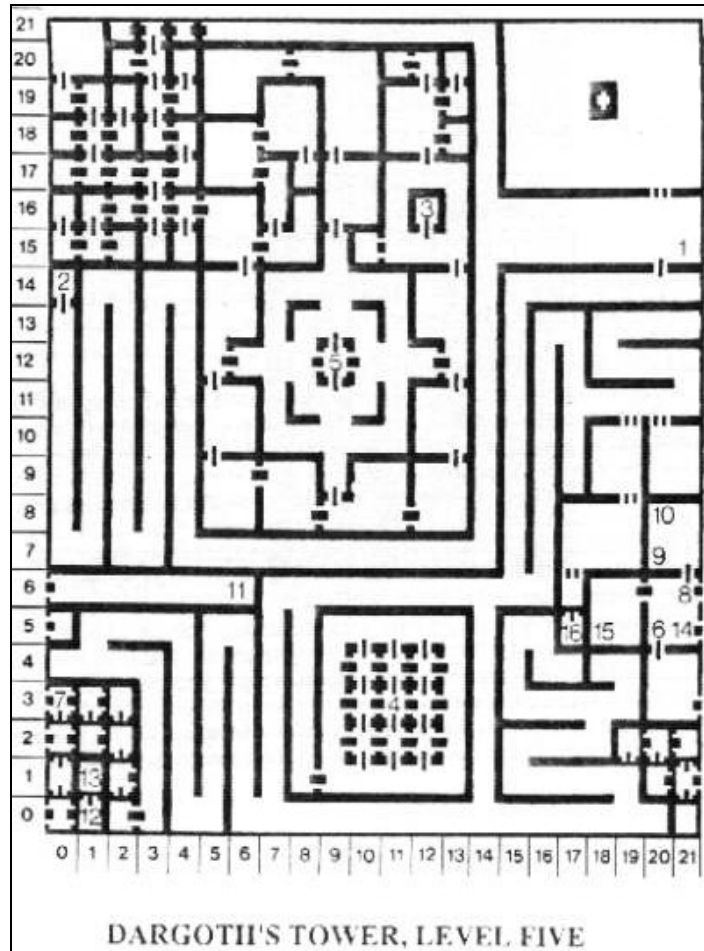
More exploration leads to their reward. 21. A portal, leading skyward...



1. When the party ascended, they discovered this message at the head of the stairs: *"Not everything has two sides. Take care friends."* Bresian has heard tales of one-way walls in castles and towers such as this. He thinks that perhaps this is what the warning is about. The party advances with caution.

2. At the end of a long corridor, the party found a message on the wall. *“And this, the first, it quencheth thirst.”* It appears to be a riddle. The party moved north, and came upon a maze. Bresian’s guess has proved correct; the maze contains many one-way walls, making progress difficult. 3. Within the maze the party found a second riddle: *“And number two is never true.”* 4. A third: *“To give him four, he’ll not be poor.”* 5. And a fourth: *“For three, you see, cannot be free.”* Getsah called a halt to the company’s exploring, and asked them all to help with the riddles. She thinks that the answers to the riddles will be vital to the success of the quest. Getsah told the party that the answers will soon have to be given, in the proper sequence, and that it was important that they be prepared. The sequence won’t be difficult, since it appears to be given in the riddles! The party decided on the following answers: Number one, water. Number two, lie. Number three, slave. Number four, gold. Meric scoffs at the foolish magic users, and the party moves on.

6. In an isolated room surrounded by a large area of darkness, spinner traps and other treacheries, the party found a magic mouth that said, *“First five here, next five above. The fifth, of course, cannot be love.”* Getsah whooped, and told the others the meaning of the message. The fifth riddle was contained in this message, and the answer was hate. On the level above they would find five like riddles. The solutions would probably be part of a timed puzzle, most likely to be found on the next level. 7. Her enthusiasm charged the party (even Meric was impressed), and it took them only a short time to discover the stairs to the next level...



The party ascends into darkness. S'imr-li is certain that there is a damper on teleportation spells into this level, and on Phase Door spells throughout this level. Again, the fact that the party will still be able to teleport out provides some reassurance.

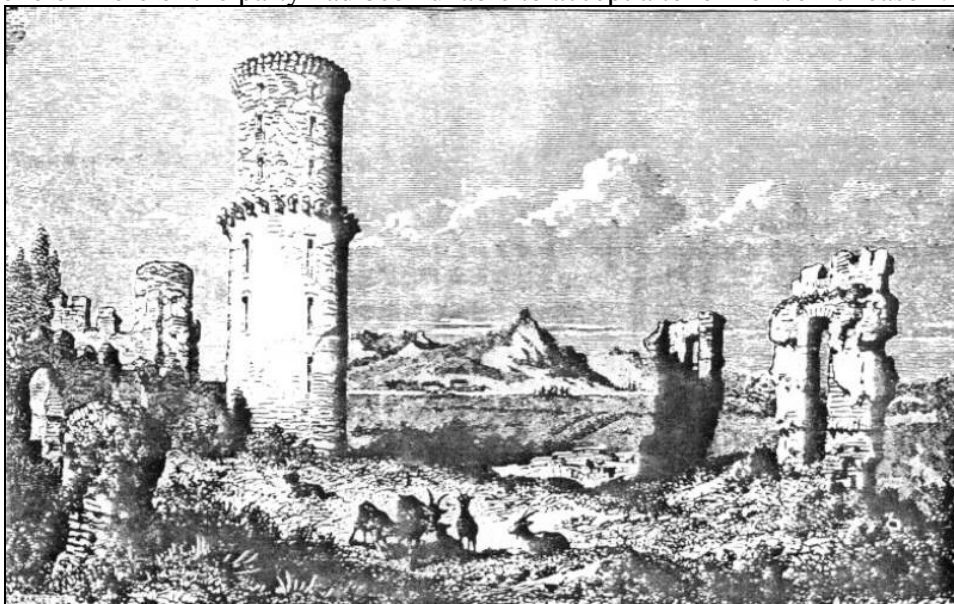
1. The first riddle. *"Number nine likes his favorite wine."* Even without Bresian's sly chuckle, the party would have had no trouble in guessing the answer; *bard*. 2. At the end of a series of long switchback corridors, the party found a second riddle. *"Six we know will try to crow."* Selinar and Meric revealed their background as farmer peasants when they said, or crowed, the answer *"rooster"* in unison. 3. The party made its way through a maze of doors, and discovered a small isolated room. Within the room was another riddle. *"For seven and eight reverse tiny and late,"* it said. After some discussion, the party decided that *large* and *early* were the answers.

4. While exploring the southern section of this level, the party found the final riddle in the middle of another maze of doors. It read, *"The last, you see, is number ten; they cannot be called manly men."* The party discussed many possibilities, and finally decided on the answer, *women*.

5. S'imr-li, in a trance state of mystic vision, led the party north, back through the maze and into a new section of the tower. When they entered a small room at the center of the section a voice told the party to *"Speak the ten in sequence and find the death square."* The party was then transported to another location (6), and here they encountered another voice. *"Welcome, foolish mortals,"* it said. *"Time runs short, so be swift."* Getsah, with shaking voice, spoke the answers to the ten riddles. Nothing happened, and so the party assumed they had answered correctly. While exploring south, they came across wraparound magic that led them to a room (7) in which a bodiless voice could be heard laughing. 8. Nearby, a mage appeared to the party, and said, *"The room maze leads to salvation."* He then vanished. 9. Here, a mysterious voice told the party that *"Without pain can come no success."* 10. A little farther, and the same voice said, *"Words of wisdom are of great value. Hearing them three, or even five times can truly give them worth."*

The party reached a dead end, and backtracked. 8. They opened the door that lead east. 11. At the end of a long corridor they received this message: *"The secret is hidden in the dreamspell."* Suddenly, S'imr-li shouted, "A timed puzzle- quickly!" He led the way to the other end of the tunnel and through the door (8), then right back through the door and back to the tunnel's end (11). The party received another message: *"The snare of death can be beaten by the mage."* The party, at S'imr-li's insistence, repeated this race four more times, and received the following messages: *"Turn right at the joke, then right, then ahead, then left twice, -ahead twice, right and left."* *"Drop all your items, or you are lost."* *"Cry Havok, and let slip the dogs of war."* *"Kill off all your spellcasters, and you'll be saved."* S'imr-li told the party that in his mystical opinion, all the messages were at least partially' valid, save the ones concerning mages and spellcasters. He suggested they follow the directions in the "joke" message. The place to start, he said, was the room with the laughing voice (7).

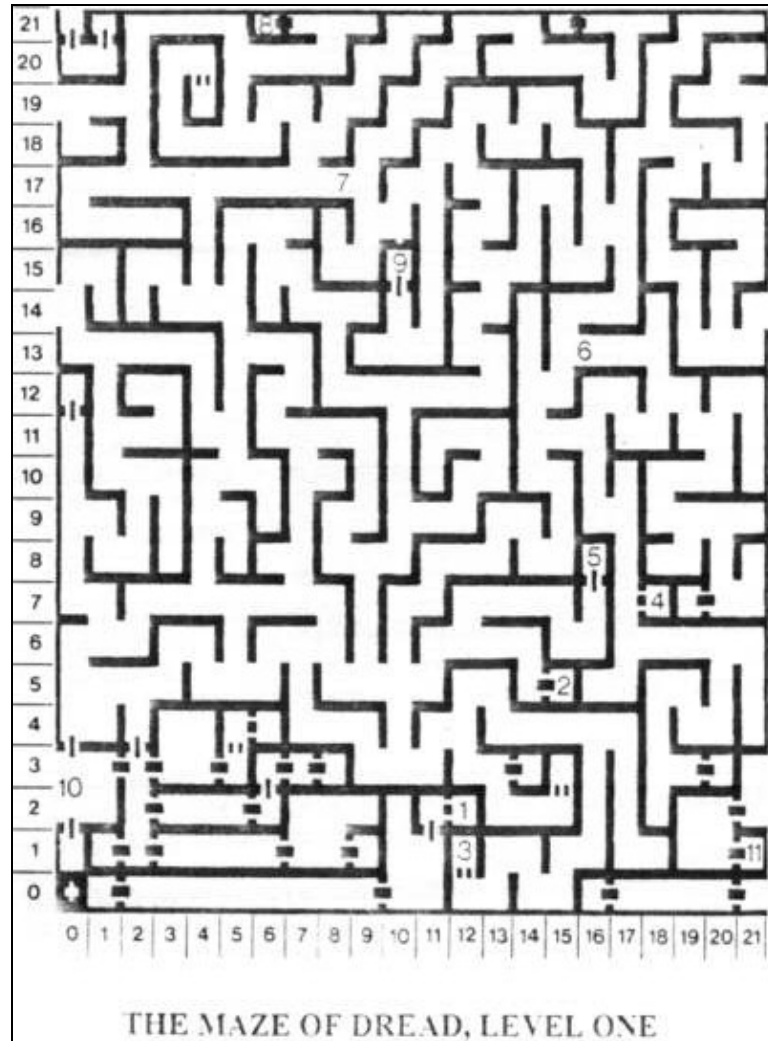
12. This led the party to a statue that came to life the moment they entered the room. *"Give me your battle cry or die!"* it shrieked. Remembering the six clues, Selinar shouted "Havok!" The statue lost its ferocious aspect, gave each member of the party a large metal token, and returned to statue form. Upon inspection, the party found that each of the tokens was a dagger. Arku grumbled at having to' carry another weapon when he already had a dagger of his own, but Gethsah spoke sharply to him, saying they were all lucky to have extra space in their packs for the tokens. They were probably very important, she told him, and who knows what would befall them if one or more of the party had been unable to accept a token for some reason?



13 to 14. In this room was a teleport square, that transported the party to another location. After identifying their location, the party proceeded through the door to the west wall. 15. A voice proclaimed, *"Look at the wall!"* A door appeared on the west wall. 16. Cautiously the party entered, and found another segment to the Destiny Wand! *"Thou hast bested me again, oh meagre ones,"* said a now-familiar and grating voice. *"But! await thy coming. shouldst thou live that long."* "Meagre indeed!" -hissed Gethsah, and Bresian chuckled. This segment of the wand is endowed with the magical spell Wizard War. The party teleported out of the Tower of Dargoth.

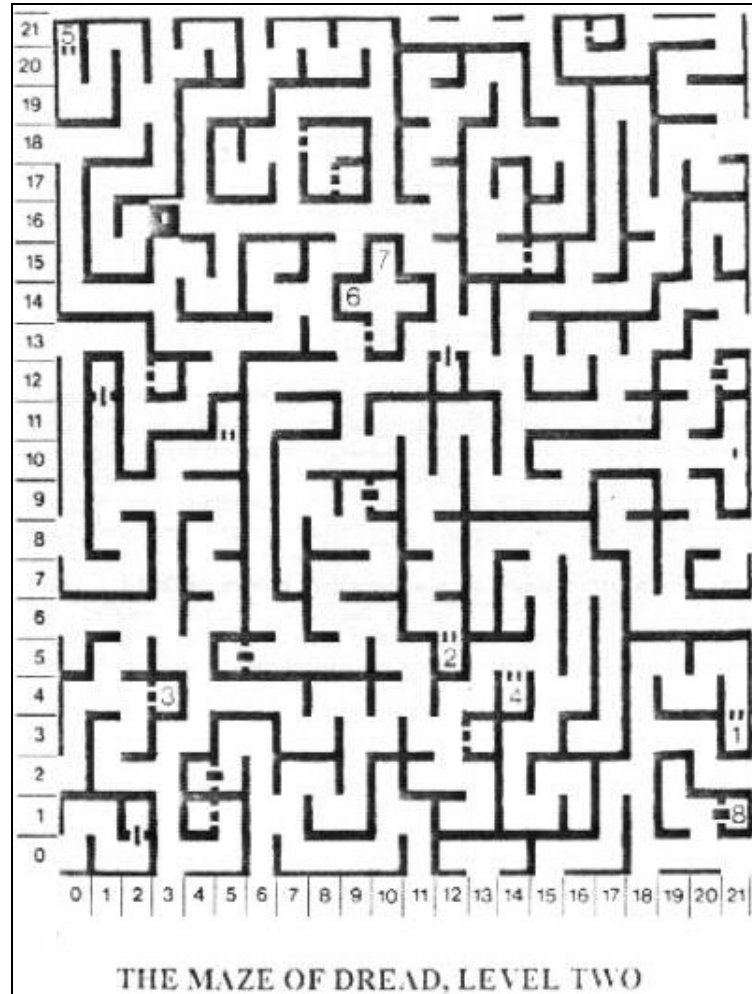
After visiting the Review Board in Philippi, the party headed for the nearest Inn to allow Bresian to indulge in the Bardic Pastime. The rest of the party (save Meric, who was snoring loudly beneath the table) reviewed Gethsah's notes, and decided that the next step in the quest was another visit to the Sage, to inquire after the Maze of Dread. However, Bresian was in no condition to journey; the next step of the quest would have to wait until morning.

The Sage, though unable to help soothe Bresian's aching head (and Meric's ego), did tell the party to seek the Maze of Dread in Thessalonica. He also told them that the Maze was reputed to be the home of the Graphnar Fist, an elite and very large group of deadly mercenaries who killed for pleasure. When Arku blanched and began to ask the Sage for information regarding a sheep's fleece made of gold, the rogue received a sharp jab in the ribs from Meric, who then grabbed a double handful of the thief's tunic and propelled him out the door. The Sage's low laughter followed them. Once outside, Selinar and Bresian held back the would-be opponents, and after tempers cooled, the party set out for Thessalonica.



Feelings of, appropriately enough, *dread*, accompanied the party into this dank and sinister maze. 1. In a small room the party discovered a square of magic regeneration. 2,3,4,5. In these rooms were the following messages written on the wall: “*As yellow as the great one’s bellow,*” “*Not white while you can stand and fight,*” “*As black as coal foot’s longest track,*” “*Try green, the one who lies unseen.*”

The maze grows tiresome. 6 to 7. A teleport square transported the party to another location. 8,9. More rooms, more messages: “*’Twas blue, the one that never knew,*” and “*Yes brown, as was the mighty crown.*” While exploring to the southwest, the party came upon wraparound magic (10), and nearby was a mysterious room (11). On the wall within the room were three buttons marked 1, 2, and 3. Arku detected no traps. When he pressed the button marked “1,” nothing happened. But when number “2” was pressed, the room shuddered and started to sink! It was too late to escape, and the party waited in breath-held silence. The room finally groaned to a stop. The party was then able to exit the room, and found themselves on level two of the maze!



1. Behind a secret door, the party discovered a small room. When they entered, a bodiless voice told them to “Ask him of Oscon, he who knows many things.” Gethsah recorded this message on a page headed, “Questions for the Sage.”

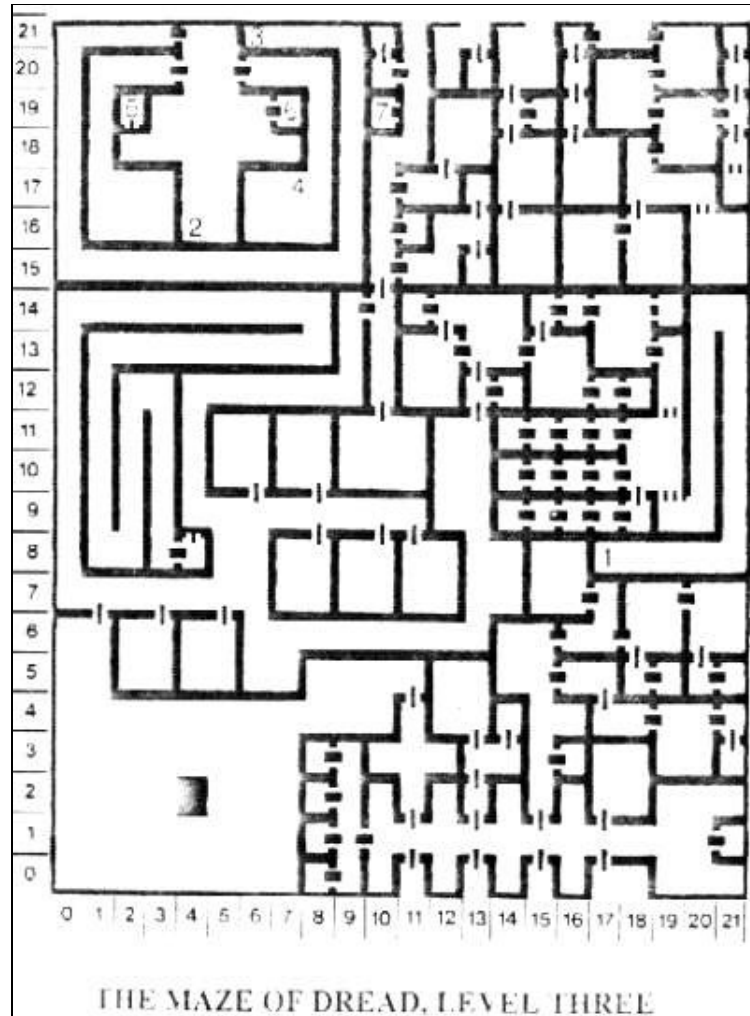
More small rooms, with writing scrawled upon the walls: 2. “Seek the Zen Master, friends!” 3. (Written in blood!) “The riddler seeks a word, but he’ll only understand it backward.” Gethsah has agonized over the possible answer to the riddle, but found no solution; indeed, has found no riddle. She casts frantically over her notes but has found nothing. The only thing of which she is certain is that the answer, if it is ever given, must be given backward. 4. (Behind a secret door) “Time is short on the snare...take care!”

At long last, a small clue regarding the Lord of the Graphnar. 5. “The Graphnar Lord is magic-proof” Not very encouraging! I would rather rely on the magical skills of S’imr-li and Gethsah than the fighting skills of Meric!

6. In this unusually shaped room the party discovers another clue: “The riddler’s clues lie hidden on the entry level.” Gethsah is elated! Now she knows that the messages found above are clues to the solution of a riddle to be encountered here, not the riddle itself.

7. The riddle came sooner than expected. When the party entered a large alcove, a man appeared from a puff of smoke. “Blue, red, green, brown, black, white, yellow,” he said. “Colors cast in the artist’s pot, name the false while canst be caught.” The time Gethsah had spent poring over the clues were not spent in vain. The only color not mentioned in the riddle was red. “Re...” she began, and caught herself. “Der,” she corrected, saying the answer backwards as was required. A marvelous artifact appeared, a *Sword of Zar* which Meric scooped up with a look of glee. S’imr-li fell into a light trance and told Meric that the sword was only available to them because they had passed the “battletest,” the fighting of the seven statues that came to life as they were examined in level two of Dargoth’s Tower.

8. The party returned to the sinking room, and Arku pushed the button marked, “3.” The *room* descends...



The creatures here are unparalleled in their ferocity. The party fled from all encounters, and with no loss of pride. It is foolish to fight against creatures whose natures are unknown to you, who may steal, the very soul from any adventurer daring to cross them. Many parchments were posted here, warning intruders of the mighty Graphnar. The party proceeded with great stealth, avoiding the patrolling troops, and attempting to avoid the abundant and vicious traps.

1. Traps, archers, and spinners, and finally the party came to a teleportation square that transported them into another section of the Maze (2). Here, a bodiless voice spoke to the party. *“Greetings again, ye potential corpses! Even as you listen to me your time grows short”* As the party stood, undecided as to what action to take, S’imr-li’s eyes grew dim as he entered the trance state of his people. Then his head snapped up and he strode forward with great decision. 3. Come, he said, and the party followed him Out a door and into a dead end corridor. A man appeared before them, saying *“I am the Master alchemist. Take my gift, and leave me be,”* S’imr-li took the offered vial and the alchemist disappeared. Meric demanded to know the contents of the vial. *“Keep silent,”* S’imr-li muttered as he reached the end of the corridor and whirled about or I’ll make you drink it!” Meric’s face turned bright red and his clenched knuckles white, but he held his tongue. S’imr-li pushed back through the party, back the way they came, and then through a door into an area of darkness (4). A voice spoke. *“Say to me the value of rote actions.”* But the mage paid scant attention, and retraced his footsteps once more, back to the dead end corridor. The fighters began to lag, and grumble. Getsah cried, *“It’s a timed puzzle, follow him, you fools!”* The pace increased as the party charged back and forth a total of ten times. 5. Then S’imr-li stormed into a small room, and stood with arms outstretched to receive these words:

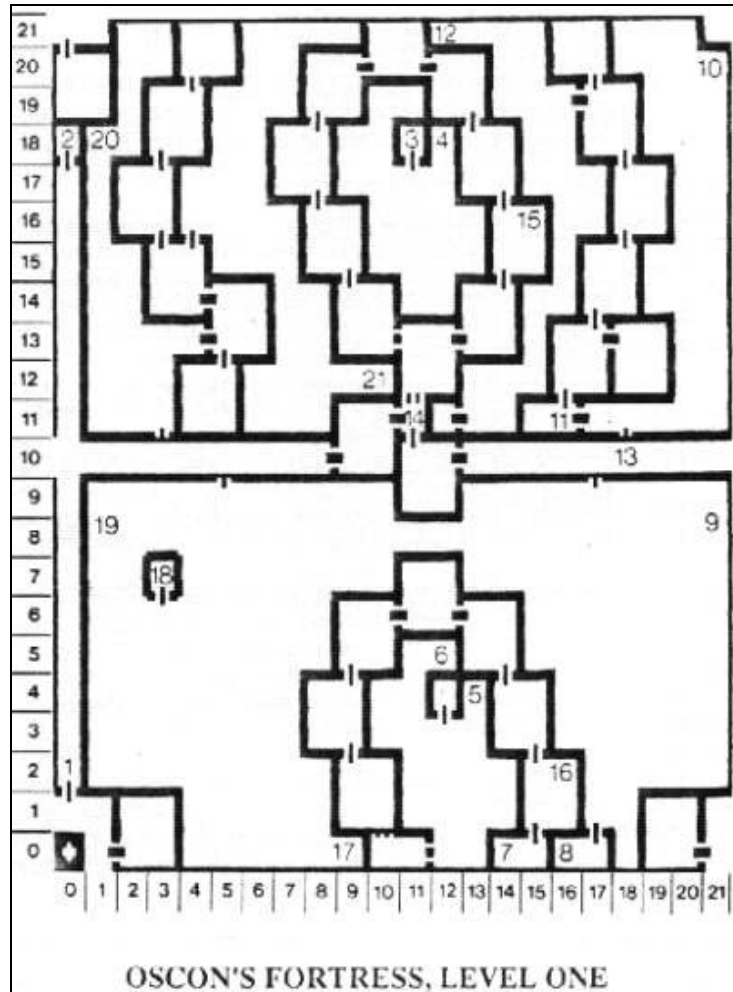
*‘Though seeming of little value, repetitiveness is definitely endurable.’* S’imr-li’s back was to the party; they could not see his slow smile, nor could they hear this barest of whispers pass his bearded lips. “You play’ games, Evil One,” he said, “but you will best us not!” 4. Quickly he left the room, and returned to the area of darkness. And when asked again the value of rote actions, the mage grinned and replied, “endurable.” 6. Leisurely he led the way to another small room, and the party entered. 7. They were transported to yet another room, where the familiar grating voice spoke. “Once again thou hast defeated my snare! And yet, you see you’re but halfway there! Proceed, small ones, and meet my dare...”

And here appeared a segment of the Destiny’ Wand, which S’imr-li said will cast the Wind Mage spell.

The party found lodging for the night in Thessalonica, and Bresian spent the night proving that the fabled capacities of Bards are rooted in fact! The Review Board granted increases in rank to every member of the party, and elevated Simr-li to the rank of Archmage. Gethsah is not far behind him, and will achieve the same rank soon.

On the morrow, the party will seek the Sage...

The tributes required by the old man are increasing greatly. The Sage seems to enjoy hearing accounts of the company’s quest. Bresian tells a good tale! And yet he pays Bresian nothing for his stories; the gold flows in but a single direction, here! When asked of Oscon, the old man told the party to seek his fortress in Corinth, but to enter they must first acquire an “item of Kazdek.” More gold, and the Sage informed the party to seek Kazdek in the wilderness between Thessalonica and Colosse, with the word of his name.



Kazdek was easily found, and easily dealt with. He was more than willing to give the party the item they required, and wished them well. In Corinth, a peasant, friendly at first and then terrified when he learned the party's destination, directed them to the Fortress of Oscon. A feeling of great uneasiness pervades the party.

1. The party is greeted with this message: *"The fortress of Oscon challenges all who brave its chambers. But its tripwires are treacherous; if you should hit one, and the message TRIP WIRE! appears...you have but scant moments to continue through the passage you are in, or you will die. Turning back at that point will insure your deaths; you must head forward. Good luck!"*

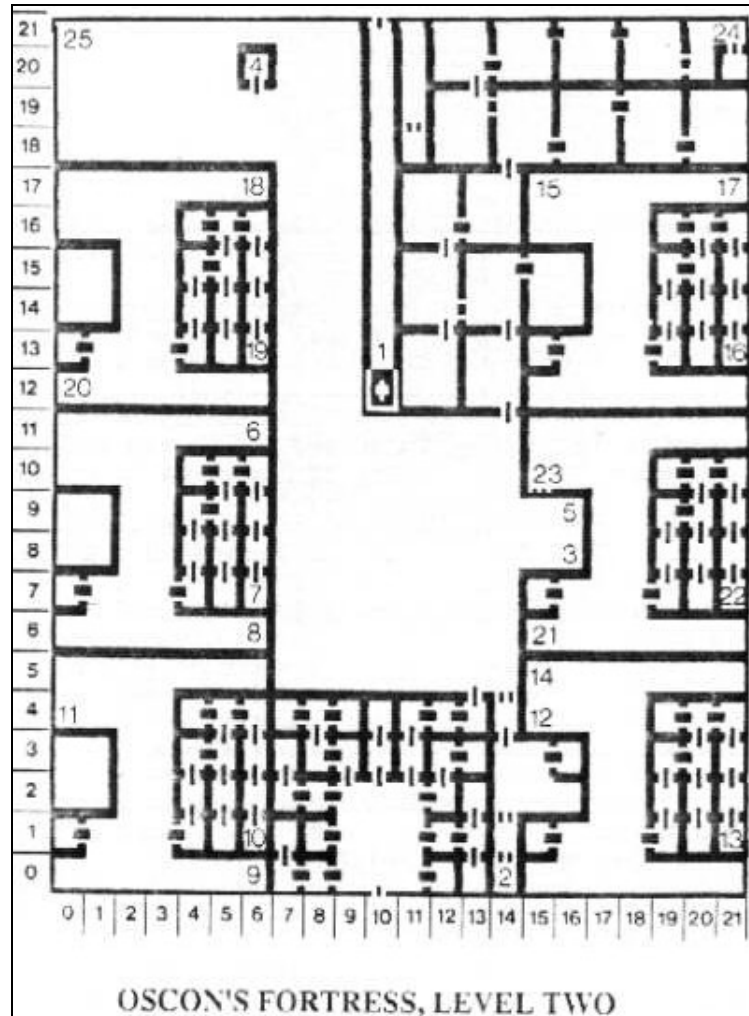
"Good luck?" Fancy old Oscon wishing his intruders good luck! Traps are abundant in Oscon's Fortress; the party has suffered injuries. Creatures too hideous to name or describe attack at every turn. It is fortunate the party is fleet, and even the portly Bresian moves with great speed when chased by these creatures!

2 to 3. At the end of a long corridor, the party found a teleportation square. They were transported to another small room in a different location on this level. On the wall they found the following poem: *"In caverns deep, In pits of fire, The agron creep, And do conspire."* Getsah recorded it, and the party moved on. In an alcove-like area nearby, the party came across another teleport (4 to 5). The area to which they were transported is nearly identical to the one they left. 6. They discovered another poem here. *"Sword of silence, Axe of hate, Death arrow's path, Is always straight."* Through a door, and a series of rooms, and the party discovered another teleport (7), which transported them to a rectangular room (8). Outside the room was a large dark area riddled with traps. The party was glad to leave this area via teleport (9), but the destination (10) was another area of wizard darkness. 11. The discovery of a door carried a hope of light, and indeed there was a brief respite from darkness here. But the party soon realized that the only way out of this area was through still more darkness. 12. They were barely able to make out the poem on a west wall. *"Of battles fought, In the land of Krill, Sing bards without, a ghostly will."* There seemed to be no way Out of the darkness, but when the party backtracked they discovered a door they had bypassed (13). Light!

14. A magic mouth spoke, saying "*Seek the Zen Master, whose might was caught by Zanta's men.*" 15. Further on, the party located a teleport, another whose destination (16) could not be distinguished from its point of departure. From her map, Gethsah determined the existence of a large area that the party has not been able to re-enter, due to a number of one-way doors and teleports. Finally the party rediscovered the teleport that gave them access back into the section (7 to 8).

The party hugged the dungeon wall in an attempt to maintain their bearings in the trap-filled wizard darkness. 17. In an isolated corner, surrounded by traps, a voice whispered to the party, "The Zen Master cometh." Who is the *Zen Master*?

The purpose of the poems is revealed. 18. In a small room, a magic mouth demanded that the party complete a fourth poem. "*Pits of...*" "Fire," said Gethsah. "*Land of*" "Krill." "*Sword of...*" "Silence," she said. And the magic mouth finished the poem. "*And the word is still.*" The mouth disappeared. S'imr-li thinks the successful completion of this poem will allow us to ascend to the next level. After taking another teleport (19 to 20) the party sees that again the mage is correct when they come upon ascending stairs (21)..



1. A long corridor and a tripwire trap! The party barely makes it through.

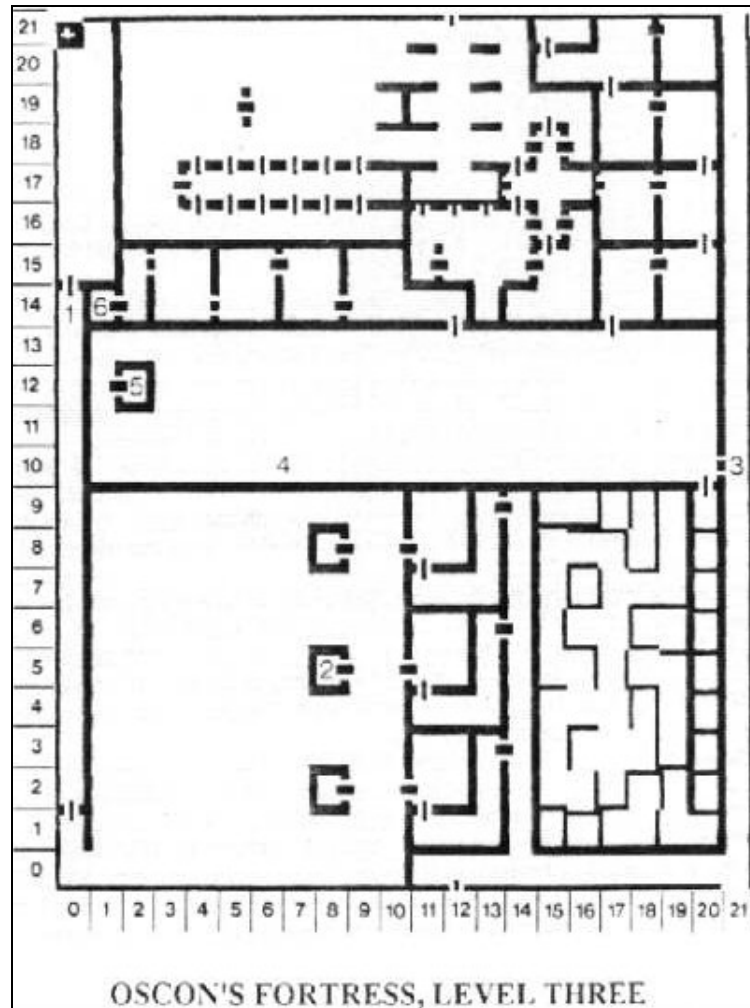
It is a strange sensation, being able to feel, see, hear and smell, and yet not be able to make any impact on my surroundings. There is the stench of dragon sulphur here; it is faint, but I am familiar with the odor. There is no one in the party who has encountered it before, or I am certain they would have told the others. Would that I could warn Gethsah of the danger!

The party passed through Oscon's Mirror Room, and through a maze of doors. 2. Then this message was discovered: *"Only four men can solve the snare above."* S'imr-li is certain of the meaning of this. Two of the party will have to remain outside the fortress when the timed puzzle is encountered. Gethsah protested strongly when her name was chosen, along with that of Arku, to be the ones left behind before the party enters the snare. Bresian reminded her that the message did say four *men*, and even if S'imr-li thought otherwise, it might make a difference if a woman was present. She agreed, reluctantly.

3. Here, a voice whispered to the party *"Bond them into the last one's name!"* 4. While exploring to the north, a magic mouth told the party this: *"To leave and rise, then seek 6 lies first the three west, then the three east, from north to south, to be released."* They moved south once again, discovered a teleport and stepped through (5 to 6). 7. Through a maze of doors, and at the end the party discovered a letter, "E", written on the wall. S'imr-li predicted that this is the first of six, and they must all be found and arranged according to the instructions given by the magic mouth. The party found and used another teleport (8 to 9). 10. In this area the party found another letter, "R", and another teleport (11 to 12). 13. Another letter, "K", another teleport (14 to 15). 16. Letter "V", teleport (17 to 18). 19. Letter "D", teleport (20 to 21). 22. Letter "A", and...no teleport! If the six letters are arranged according to the clue found earlier, the resulting word is "Dervak." Of course Gethsah is quick to see this as well. The party continues to explore. 23. The adventurers found a one-way door and continue northward.

24. In the northeast corner of this level, the party suddenly halted as an old man appeared before them. "Give me the name of the last destroyer," he demanded. "Dervak?" ventured Gethsah. And then doubt no longer remained, for the party was confronted with Dervak the Destroyer, who lived up to his name before falling to the swords of the party. Arku has been killed. Gethsah, with the aid of levitation and teleportation spells, is taking his body to a temple of healing, to see if aught can be done for him. She will seek out the Review Board, and then will await the party's return in the Tavern in Corinth. I will miss her.

25. The remaining members of the party discovered ascending stairs to the northwest...

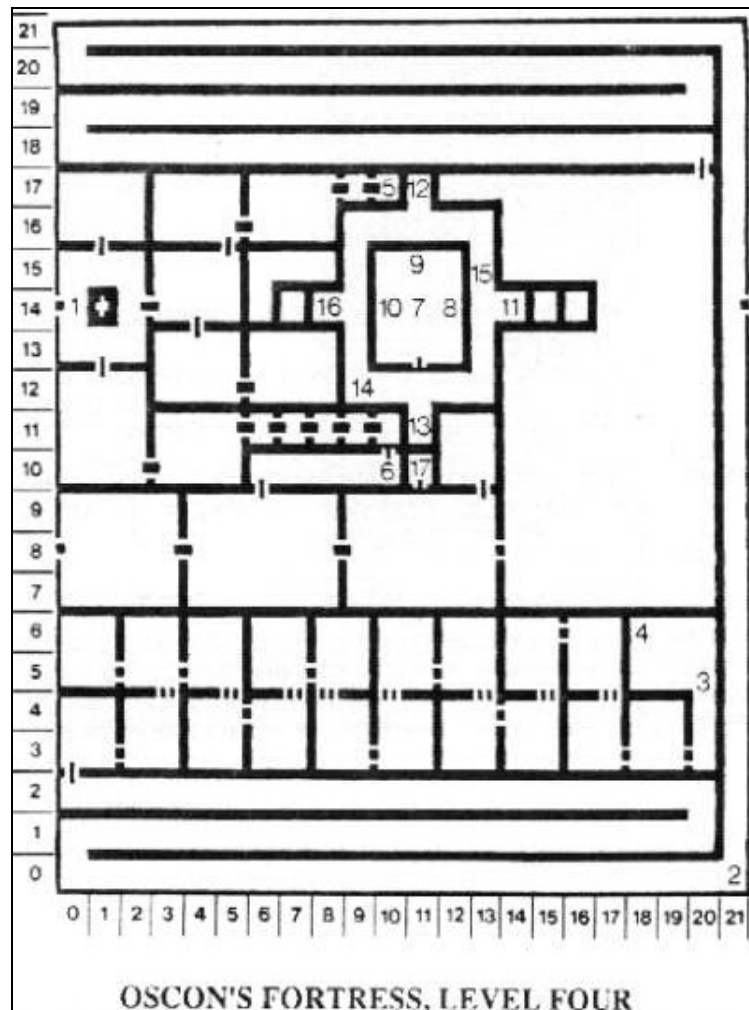


1. Tripwire! Oscon has a strange way of greeting guests who visit his domain! S'imr-li fell into a trance the moment the party passed into safety. He informed the party that he has received a vision, knows where the party must go. Meric grumbled, but followed the him. Indeed, he had little choice, for Selinar and Bresian have faith in the visions of S'imr-li. It is always wise to trust an Archmage!

2. First a deadly tripwire, and now a room of spinner traps! The party entered a room here, and found this message written upon the wall: "Say the word to ascend." "I knew that," hissed S'imr-li. "Wasted time. wasted time!"

My Master says that quite often. The party continued exploring through various rooms until they came to a long north to south corridor. 3. In the middle of the corridor, Arku discovered a secret door. The party went through the door and found themselves in a vast, lightless room.

4. In the midst of darkness, a voice told the party that *‘The Zen Master needs no introduction.’* Perhaps not, though I for one am becoming *very* eager to meet him! 5. Nearby, in a small room, a magic mouth spoke to the party. *‘Say it to ascend,’* it said. And the mage stepped forward. *‘Still,’* he said, *‘the word is still’*. The word that finished the poem on level one. 6. Simr-li then led the party to ascending stairs..

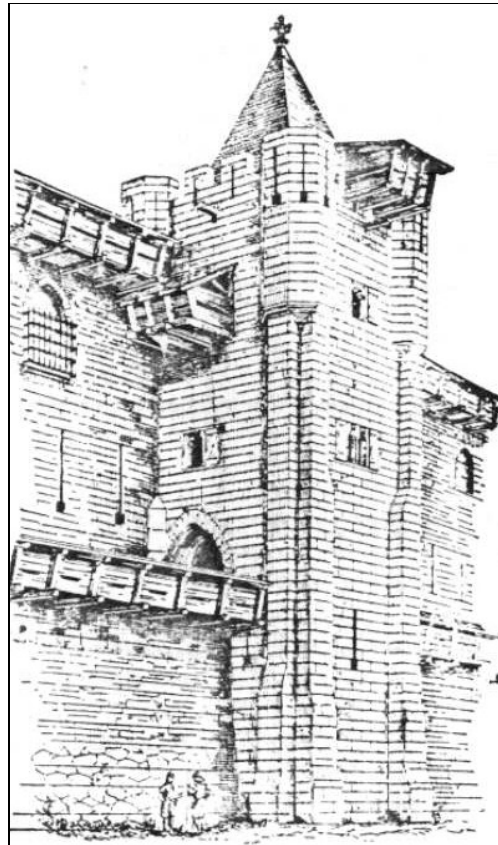


1. Wraparound magic, and a long corridor leading south. 2. At the end of the corridor, the party discovered a message on the wall: *‘Mages beware; Oscon allows none to glory S’imr-li snorted, and Bresian, who in Gethsah’s absence has taken over the duties of scribe, did not deign to copy the message. A long switchback corridor drained spell energy from S’imr-li, and the the party endured room after room of swirling smoke and anti-magic spells.* 3. Through the door and a series of chambers, and they found themselves face to face with their host, Oscon himself! He seemed as startled to see them as they’ were to encounter him, but then an evil smile lit his face and he shouted a challenge. Swords clashed, and the battle raged. Up and down the corridor, and in and out of the room to the north they fought, until Selinar struck one mighty’ blow, cleaving helm and skull of the enemy. As they rested, S’imr-li approached the body and nudged it with his foot. *‘What has thou to say of glory, now?’* he asked softly. The others were silent.

4. Bresian, exploring Oscon’s room, discovered a note tacked to the wall. *‘To wrap, to cut, and even smash, I think you’ll find this snare a bash.’* *‘Does this not remind you of the children’s game, paper, scissor, rock?’* Oscon had the mind of a child!” the Bard exclaimed. Selinar looked up from binding his brother’s wounds. *‘He fought-not like a child,’* the warrior said. *‘We must continue-to be on our guard.’* The party moved on.

5. A message on a wall stated: *‘Ask the wise of the grey crypt.’* If the party leaves the fortress alive, they will know what question to put to the Sage. During their explorations, the party came upon and made use of a teleport, and emerged into another timed puzzle (6 to 7)!

"Once again I greet you, oh ye soon to die," a voice said. "You are within the death snare, and must seek the solution before you are totally lost..." Quickly the party explored the room, and a voice conveyed the following clues: 8. "Name the three, east, south, and west, to gain exit when needed." 9. "Hear from he who knoweth best, east has always bested west." 10. "Exit, turn right, walk two, turn left, walk two, turn to see scissor." "We must follow those instructions!" S'imr-li cried, and led the way. 11. The instructions led them to an alcove, and within was a statue. "Scissor?" the mage queried, and the statue came to life! The party readied for battle, but the statue simply joined their ranks. 12. The mage left the alcove, headed north, found and entered a second alcove. A magic mouth spoke. "Not yet, mortals," it said. "Until the three of paradox fill the top of your ranks, ye must not return." The party found itself teleported into the room of voices (7). "Haste, if you value your lives!" shouted S'imr-li. He flung open the door and went straight across the corridor to the third alcove (13), occupied by another statue. The Archmage skidded to a halt. "If east has always bested west," he muttered, "this statue must be... rock!" And the statue came alive and joined the party, just as the first had done. The mage led the party out of the alcove and to the left, and into a teleport (14 to 15). It took the party's precious moments to regain their bearings. 16. The final alcove was located, and since little wit was needed to determine the name of the third statue, Meric performed the task. "Paper," he said, and the statue assumed its place among the others.

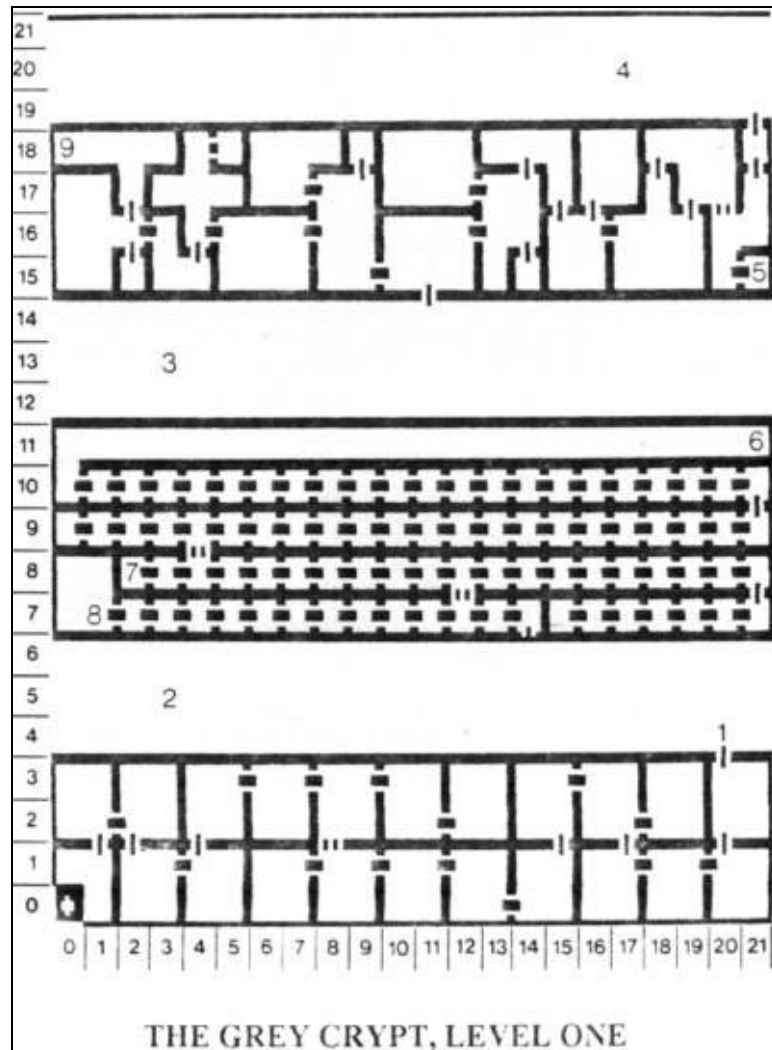


12. The mage then led the way back to the alcove from which the magic mouth had spoken, but before entering, rearranged the marching order of the party. Rock statue was first, then Paper, then Scissor, with the rest of the party ranging behind. They entered, and again the magic mouth addressed them. "That which flame can defeat can win over the one which leads to life. Your travels converge on this or death." "Rock," S'imr-li muttered. "It is rock, but where...Ah!" 13. The Archmage leaped past the party, who followed him as he raced back to the alcove from which the Rock statue had come. 17. A door had magically appeared in the back of the alcove, and the mage pushed it open and entered the room beyond.

On a table in the center of the room-rested a segment of the Destiny Wand. "Ah," S'imr-li breathed as he lifted the segment, "the power of the Batchspell!"

The party left their statue companions, and teleported out of the Fortress of Oscon. Gethsah and Arku (for the rogue had been resurrected by the temple priests) rejoined the party, and on the morrow they will seek the Sage, to question him about the Grey Crypt.

The Sage was of little help, and would only state that no person has ever left the Crypt alive, and that no magic would function within. The party searched the wilderness, and located the Grey Crypt between Tangramayne and Ephesus.



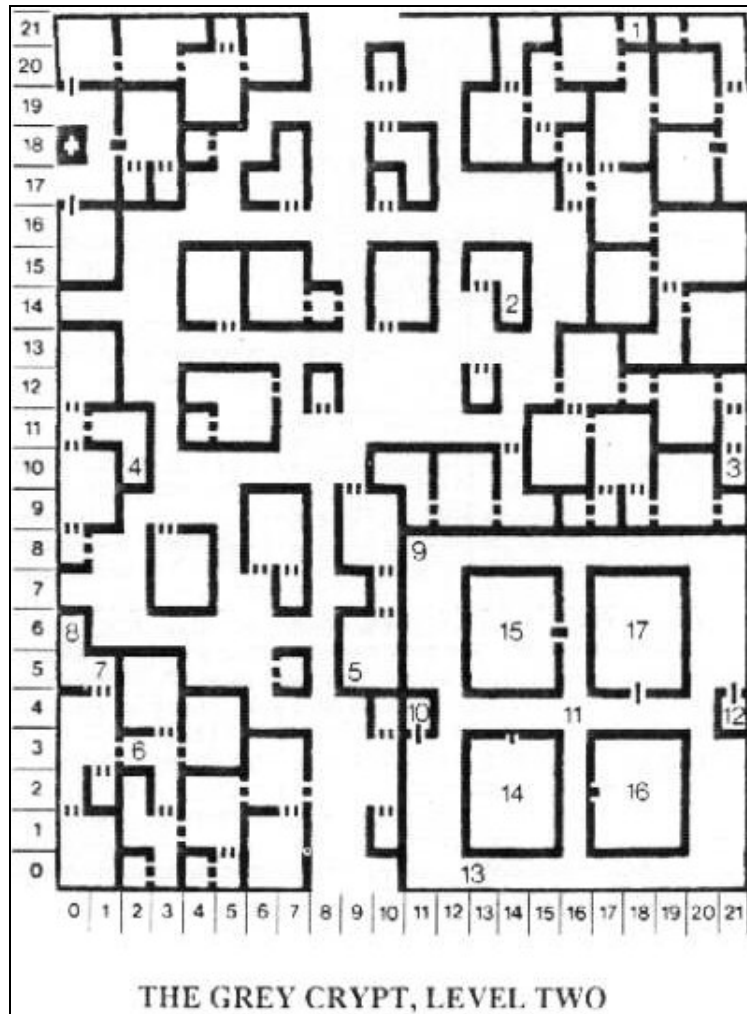
No magic functioned here save for the spell Scry Site, a fact that had the two archmages worried. There would be no magical healing for the party, or teleporting out of the crypt. The party had decided to try to avoid encounters with hostile creatures; indeed, with *any* creature.

After passing through a series of rooms, the party exited into darkness. 1. A magic mouth on the wall spoke. *"Hear this, mortals: the sphynx asked a riddle with two answers, one which allows release, and one which brings you closer to the snare."* As soon as the party received this message, S'imr-li's eyes became unfocused in trance. "The entrance stairs have been cut off," he said. "Retreat is denied us." A subdued party moved forward.

In the midst of darkness, a teleport was discovered and taken (2 to 3) into more darkness. The party discovered a doorway in the north wall, and passed through, leaving the wizard darkness. After exploring a few rooms to the east they encountered more darkness, wherein lay deadly traps and dangerous creatures. Two of those creatures are worth mention here, as monsters to be given wide berth: a wizard creature known as the *Wise One*, and an animate weapon known as the *Death Sword*. 4. Here the party encountered a bodiless voice that told them, *"In the days of wisdom's early reign, past years of fire, wrath and pain, a passage down you've yet to gain."* Gethsah believes that this means there will be some sort of test or puzzle the party must face before the next level will be open to them. The party moved south, and utilized a teleport (5 to 6). Here the party traversed many switchback corridors, with a door every four paces. 7. They came upon this message:

*"Ask the wise of the Destiny Stone."* The Sage will have more gold coming his way, if the party survives! Nearby was a door and a pile of bleached bones. Behind the door was a huge sphynx (8)!

*"Two answers here! will accept; each is a creature of the crypt. Name it!"* After a brief trance, and a whispered conference, the two archmages decided that one answer would cause the entrance stairs to re-appear, and the other would allow access to descending stairs somewhere to the north. The only two creatures of the crypt whose names were familiar to the archmages were the two I have recorded. Gethsah cleared her throat and said, "Wize One." The Sphinx vanished, and the party returned to the northern section of the crypt via teleport (3 to 4). 9. And here they found descending stairs...



More wraparound magic. I would like to learn how these spells are accomplished; perhaps my Master knows. 1. The party discovered this message etched upon the wall: *"Be not bereft, first try lower left."* 2. As they explored this L-shaped room, a voice whispered, *"Past the tomb lies the true snare."* 3. Written on the wall: *"The snare is a calculated sequence; learn it quickly or perish!"* 4. As the party entered this alcove, a voice said to them that *"A central annoyance is fixable."* 5. On a wall in a room, the party discovered this message, written in blood: *"Wherein wisdom lies, as the clock ticks, doorways to success can be uncovered."* S'imr-li stated his conviction that the party will encounter a puzzle that must be solved by moving in the same direction as that of the hands of a clock. Gethsah scribes busily.

6. The party moved through several connecting rooms, and found a sign attached to a door. *"The tomb of the Vampire Dragon,"* it said. *"Adventurers Beware!!!"* Gethsah reminded the reluctant adventurers of the clue above, telling them that the snare would be found past the tomb. The party opened the door, and entered.

7. The party encountered, and fought, the Vampire Dragon. Bested the foul thing without the aid of spells, and received no serious hurt. Meric put aside his cowardly habit of using for a shield his brother's sword arm, and rained furious blows upon the writhing monster. In an alcove just beyond the battle area, the party discovered a teleport (8 to 9), that transported them into a timed puzzle. A voice greeted them. *"Prepare for your death, oh*

*mortal fools. The sixth snare will beat you. and few are those who have ever solved its twisted pattern* 10. In a small room, a mage in a blue robe appeared before the party. “A sequence lost must now be found,” he said. “With that I think I’ll see you ‘round!” He vanished. S’imr-li, his eyes focused on something unseen, said “Doors have opened, and doors have closed. Come.” The mage led the party east, past a spinner trap (11), and into another small room. 12. Another mage, dressed in gray robes, appeared to the party and said, “The game you thrice must commit, and now I’ll see you in a bit!” He vanished. “Again doors have opened, and doors have closed,” S’imr-li said. His trance state deepened perceptibly, and suddenly he looked up and smiled. “I know what we must do!” And the mage led the way...

13. Here the party found and triggered the mechanism to disarm the spinner trap in the center of the snare. § 14. Remembering the clue about *lower left*, S’imr-li led the party to this room first. He then raced to the room occupied by the blue-robed mage (10), and then into another room (157). Back to the room of the grey-robed mage (12), and into yet another room (16). Again to the room of the blue-robed mage (10), and into the fourth room (17). And then, the obsessed Archmage began the sequence all over again, starting with the actions described after the mystical sign §. When the entire sequence had been completed a total of three times, and the party stood in the last room wiping the sweat from under their helms, a familiar voi~ spoke. “Your skill is surprising, if not incredible, and yet the greatest snare lies ahead, and after that... me.”

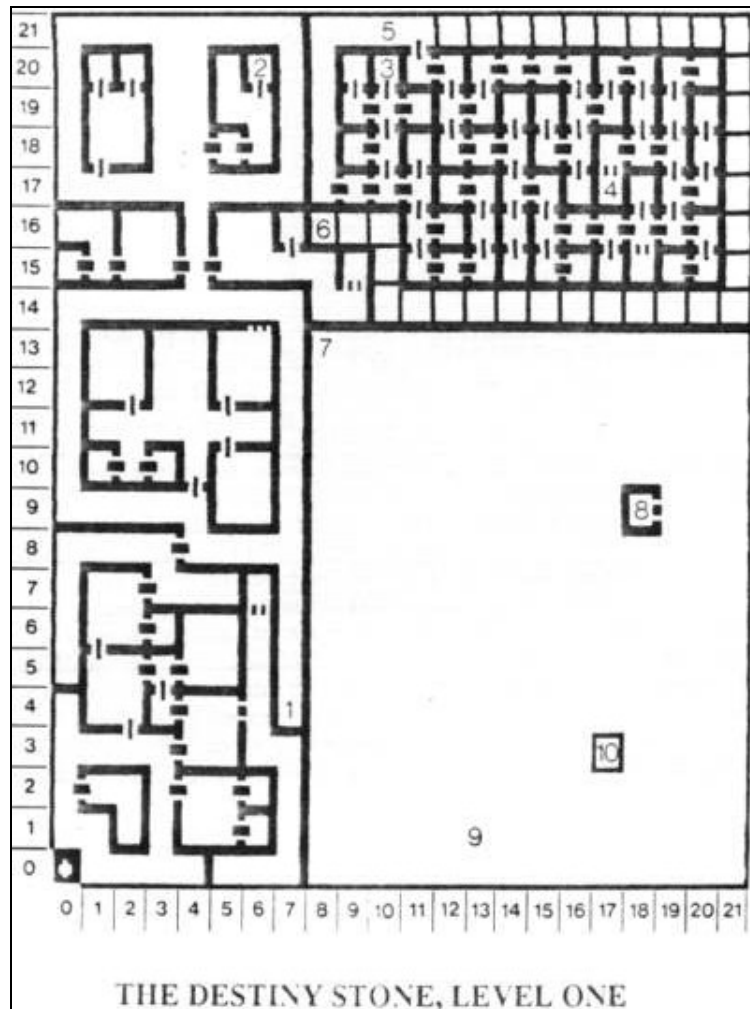
And to the party appeared the sixth segment of the Destiny Wand. Getsah retrieved it, and felt its power, the Heal All spell. The party was teleported to the stairs leading out of the crypt.



### THE SAGE

The Sage, when questioned about the Destiny Stone, delivered a cryptic message and poem. “A rock it is, in fact. yet much more. Ponder this, my friends: Never find and never fool, the last one drinks the poison pool, the first one reads the ancient tome, the third one breaks the double dome.” The party filed out of the hut. S’imr-li paused at the door. He hefted a double-stitched leather sack containing all of his gold, and threw it to the floor at the old man’s feet. “Tell me what you know of Lagoth,” he said. “Lagoth Zanta.”

The Sage's eyes narrowed and blazed as he regarded S'imr-li. I could not help but wonder what personal evil the old man had experienced at the hands of the evil Archmage Zanta. The terrible fury invoked by the mere mention of the name... The Sage spoke. *'An evil genius is Lagoth. else he'd not have posed the threat to the Land that he has. Yet, an enemy to be respected. I think. His whereabouts are unknown, but I'd not be surprised to find him near.'* S'imr-li nodded once, turned, and joined the party. He told them of the Sage's words, and showed them a piece of parchment that he had kept hidden within the folds of this robe. Written upon it were seven lines in a fine, bold hand, seven lines, or sets of...arrows! Arrows pointing in different directions. "My Master gave one of these parchments to each of his apprentices, said S'imr-li. Some, farther along in their studies than I, received an entire tome, filled with information about our kingdom, Lagoth, spell casting, and many other subjects. I regret that I am not in possession of one of the books, but I am certain that this parchment will help us when we find the Destiny Stone." The party speculated as to its location. There is only one city the party has not thoroughly explored. In Colosse they will seek the Destiny Stone...



The party reached their destination. No one in Colosse was willing to speak to the party, once it became known what it was the adventurers sought They entered the Destiny Stone warily, and proceeded with great caution.

1. At the end of this corridor, a voice whispered, *"Hear the sphere, speak the truth, the plan is near, though quite uncouth."* 2 to 3. A teleportation square transported the party into a maze of doors. Within the maze, the party discovered the following message written on the wall (4): *"Seek the Narn Temple. He who approaches the altar may restore that which was broken."* Perhaps even the Destiny Wand!

5. The party escaped the maze, and came upon a bodiless voice, warning them that *"It's a one way road to the final snare. Continue at your own risk."* The party agreed that the only choice was to continue. Deciding to move east, the adventurer's discovered that, one way walls have sealed off the party's retreat. A final wall appeared behind them, and they are confronted by a mage, tossing a fiery sphere (6). *"Okay, scumbags,"* he growled. *"Tell me what the plan is. or you're going nowhere."* "Near," said Getsah, consulting her notes. The party was immediately teleported to a huge silent room, filled with smoke, and traps (7). The party





Gethsah and S'imr-li exchanged glances, and then Gethsah spoke. "Zen Master?" she tried again. A Zen Master appeared, and joined the party! In deference to his great wisdom (and I think his excellent fighting abilities!) he was asked to lead the party.

The party located a teleport (9 to 10) that brought them out of the darkness. 11. A magic mouth spoke to the party. "*The ancient scribe had said it all: name to where went evil's call.*" "The dark one called into the gale muttered S'imr-li. "Gale?" A beautiful ring appeared as he spoke the word gale, and Bresian, remembering the clue about the ring, gave it to the Zen Master.

12. As the party entered this area, S'imr-li stopped. "This is where it begins," he said. "My map of arrows fits *here*. Come." Following the arrows, the Archmage quickly directed the party through an intricate maze that led to a teleportation square. The party was transported (13 to 3). S'imr-li guided the party back to the dead end corridor (4). This time, there *was* something there; a teleport that sent the party to another location, and another clue (14). "*He's but a corpse without a past, until you call his name...Arkast.*" The party discovered and took a teleport (15 to 6). S'imr-li directed the party back to the magic mouth in the north (6). Now, armed with the knowledge they had gained, they were able to answer correctly; "Storm Fists." Giving the correct answer activated a teleport which brought them near the beginning of the arrow maze (17). "We have no time to lose," shouted S'imr-li, running to the entrance of the maze. Following the second set of arrows, he again directed the party through to the teleport, and to the magic mouth to answer *Storm Fists*. Back and forth, a total of seven times, each time using the next set of arrows. The last time through the maze, the teleport sent them to a different location (18). A magic mouth challenged the party. "*The one of whom is great in fame, restore to him his proper name.*" "Arkast!" the party cried in unison. A door appeared on the north wall. The party entered a small room (19), and were greeted by the familiar rasping voice. "*Curses, I'll see you soon foolish ones. Seek me at the hut of the Sage and meet your doom!!*"

The final segment of the Destiny Wand appeared before them, its power that of the Brothers Kringle spell. As they retrieved it they were teleported back to the entrance of the Destiny Stone. I am concerned. If the evil Lagoth Zanta is to meet the party at the Sage's hut, then what will become of the old man?

The adventurers began their journey to the Temple of Narn, to see to the re-forging of the Destiny Wand.



### LAGOTH ZANTA

At the Temple of Narn, the party was treated with the deference and respect usually accorded only to royalty. The Destiny Wand was re-forged, the process adding a final spell to its power, Dragon Breath. Also with the re-forging came the creation of a new Destiny Knight Meric thought himself the only one fit for the honor, and he was dismayed to learn that the Destiny Knight must be an Archmage! S'imr-Ii received the honor and the burden of becoming the Destiny Knight And now a grim and determined party' seeks the evil Archmage.

Now, at the end of the most violent and bloody battle the world has ever known, the evil Archmage lies dead. The Sage...and the Evil One who taunted the party throughout their quest, are one and the same. I cannot bear to think of it, nor can I set it down in words used by men. The enormity of the betrayal will be remembered until the destruction at the end of all things.

The party survives. Arku and Selinar will fully recover from their injuries. Getsah and S'imr-Ii were badly burned by wizard *fire*. Meric — he is untouched. Even his own brother despises him for his cowardice, and I am enraged at the liberties he takes with Getsah while she is unconscious and unable to defend herself. The party returned to Tangramayne. The quest trance will soon disintegrate, and the adventurers will return to a waking state. Meric has left the Inn, and is walking toward the Temple where Getsah was taken. A man is stepping out of the shadows to challenge him. A wizard, to judge by his clothes. Odd that I cannot see his face. Meric laughs, draws his sword...

And dies. Even could all the pieces be collected, the Healers could do naught to save him. So that is the Irreversible outcome of the quest. The buildings seem to be melting...



## THE DREAM JOURNAL

Aaron rubbed his eyes and blinked at his Master. He was lying in the shade of the awning outside the pavilion. The old man regarded him curiously.

“Well, boy’, what do you think of trance quests?”

Aaron glanced into the pavilion, at the adventurers sprawled on the ancient rugs.

“They’re still asleep,” said the old wizard. “I wanted to talk to you first. Where is the journal?” His Master held out a hand for the book.

Aaron reluctantly passed it into his Master’s hand. “I would rather send others on the quests, Master, than go myself.” He watched his Master skim through the book, and read through the last few pages. A slow smile lit the old man’s face. When he lifted his head from the journal he grinned at Aaron.

“Aren’t you curious about the mage who killed Meric?”

Aaron grimaced. “I know all I need to. He is very powerful, and he has excellent judgement.” His Master continued to grin at him. “No.” Aaron frowned. “No. You couldn’t. ..why’... why would you kill Meric?” The wizard shrugged, “No reason, boy. That’s why I didn’t. Won’t.” The grin broadened.

“Me?” Aaron’s mouth hung open. “I did...uh, will? For Getsah?”

His Master nodded. “Except that now you won’t. When the customers wake up, they’re going to be ..*dissatisfied* with their leader’s performance. It is unlikely that Meric will be asked to partake of any further adventures,” the Master chuckled. “I think the team will split up. I think Getsah is going to need a companion — a place to stay’.” He glanced at the sleeping people, who were beginning to stir. “Besides, it’ll be pretty lonely out here by yourself. I’m taking your journal to Tangramayne. We have to make sure a lot of people see it. No way of knowing how long I’ll be there.”

Aaron was staring into the desert, trying to swallow the lump in his throat. A gentle hand fell on his shoulder. “You’re an apprentice no longer, lad. The business is yours.” Aaron reached up to grip his Master’s hand...and it was gone. So was his Master.

Aaron stood alone for a moment outside the pavilion. And then went inside so he would be there when Getsah awoke.

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