

DUNGEONMORPH DESIGNS PREVIEW

HOW TO USE THESE DUNGEONMORPH DESIGNS

A map is a great start for an adventure. Before it is ready to host adventurers, a setting needs dangers, rewards, challenges, and obstacles. Dungeonmorph Designs help with this stocking task, describing different ways to use each Dungeonmorph based on themes, offering some general ideas for why the space was constructed and how it might be used now.

Dungeonmorph Delves can supply guidance for adding foes, traps, and treasure, in addition to the descriptions included here. If using the Dungeonmorph Designs with the Dungeonmorph Delves, the area descriptions replace the “features” generation process, but you can fall back on the “features” generator if a particular description isn’t working for you.

Content

Each Dungeonmorph description has a section for each significant area or overall element of interest. Each section has three themed entries (described below) and three generic entries. You can go with a theme to keep a consistent interpretation throughout, or you can mix and match to bring in ideas you like. This can be done ahead of time, or during play.

Features. Descriptions focus on distinctive features in the space, rather than treasures or foes. Treasure and foes can be layered on top of these descriptions.

Inspirational. These descriptions are aimed to inspire, not to limit. If they give you another idea that you like better, go with that. Adjust, merge, and refocus to suit your taste.

Use Your Discretion. Some of these descriptions include information that the characters would not take in at a glance. They might need to take a closer look, or interact with something, before you describe the result. These descriptions are not “boxed text” to read aloud, but they give you information you can interpret as you describe what the characters see. As with most solo/co-op games, in some cases a player may learn more than their character would know. In these situations, be honest with yourself.

Anchors and Aprons. You need not use every description in every Dungeonmorph. You can anchor an area’s concept in one Dungeonmorph, and add an apron of Dungeonmorphs around it that support it rather than bringing in new functions based on their descriptions.

Notation. Each Dungeonmorph can be divided up into a grid with 9 boxes. The text will refer to a box to give the approximate location of the room in the description. The Dungeonmorph maps reproduced here remind you of the grid by placing numbers just off the map.



Themes

Each Dungeonmorph description features several areas on the design. The notable points have six different possible themed uses.

If you want to use one of the themes, check the theme’s number in the list of descriptions. For example, all of the number 2 options will work with the Oubliette City of Tormentation.

Of course you can repurpose other theme options if you like their ideas, or use your own. The themes are provided so you can have both a diverse selection of thematic descriptions, and also a level of consistency in the ideas presented.

Here is a summary of the themes. Each theme motivates some unique features, and sets expectations for the sort of thing players may encounter in areas like this.

Dynastic. (The Dynastic Necropolis) Imperial rulers and their families were safely interred in an exclusive necropolis. Now that the empire has fallen, its rulers are stirring. This theme is the most stereotypical necropolis, with some inhabitants waking while others sleep on.

Oubliette. (The Oubliette City of Tormentation) When rulers in this area sentenced prisoners to endure punishment, they sometimes turned the prisoners over to an Order of priests who could subject the convicts to torment in this life and in the next. Centuries later, the prison is falling apart and prisoners are getting out. This theme has the most horrific and funhouse options, many little stories of punishment strung together.

Collector. (The Collector’s Fortress) A powerful Necromancer gathered corpses and lore for centuries until she was slain. Her Inner Circle squabble over the lore and wealth left behind in her fortress. This theme is organized around a slain Necromancer, but has her allies and side projects gathered together to allow plenty of oddity and variation.

Here are longer descriptions of the three themes.

The Dynastic Necropolis

The Empire is ancient, and many dynastic families have ruled over its territories. Power attracts enemies, so protecting the peace and wealth of the dead was critical for these rulers and their families. Mythologizing Imperial leadership, in life and in death, was central to the honor and respect of Imperial rule. Priests conducted rituals to bind them to the fate of the Empire, consolidating their legitimacy.

The Dynastic Necropolis is a city of the dead, built in an inaccessible valley near the Capitol and walled off so only the priests and ruling families could enter. The necropolis showcases the grandeur of the rulers, built into the walls and beneath the floor of the valley. No expense was spared to create artwork, flowing water features, and treasure houses to honor the fallen leaders and their kin.

A century after the Imperial Capitol was sacked and its power broken, there are stirrings in the tomb grounds of the necropolis. Rulers bound by fate to master the Empire’s territories are slowly dragged out of peaceful rest, unlife seeping into them along with an unquenchable need to reclaim their birthright. The priests that once maintained the necropolis are slain or scattered, the forces that sacked the Imperial City were driven out of the ruins, and no power remains to check the gathering threat of the dead.

What can you expect to find here?

Wealth. Each emperor had to claim legitimacy, and one way to do that was to honor the previous emperor to show an unbroken line of authority. Rulers lavished treasure and decorations on the tombs of previous rulers and the tombs of their own families. Memorial statues, religious art, and symbolic objects were often enchanted. Each family had areas that the privileged could visit to pay their respects (and to arrange trysts for espionage or romance away from prying eyes.) As the Empire's fortunes fell, these areas were restricted, and eventually sealed off altogether so rulers could only visit newly constructed areas. Even when the city's Guardians were slain or chased off, the remaining traps and dangers discouraged thieves. Much of the wealth remains, and some of it is legendary, stolen from all corners of Imperial conquest.

Monsters. Some of the enchantments laid into the necropolis involved summoned creatures, or conjured up creatures as part of a trap. Over time, some of these monsters escaped to roam free, and others remain in their spaces as defenders. Other creatures have filtered in over the mountains, or up from below where construction breached deep passages.

Guardians. The priests that maintained the necropolis mixed cosmic power and enchantments to empower the tombs to defend themselves. They favored animating statues who would slay any who did not know the correct prayers. They also built riddles with religious or dynastic trivia into traps on doors and treasures. Unwilling to trust craftsmen, they made constructs that could magically repair and reset the necropolis. A few of the priests survived by retreating into the necropolis, among the wealth and secrets of another age.

The Oubliette City of Tormentation

A fanatical religious order dedicated to punishment and dark justice provided a service to rulers of different nations and peoples. Rulers could condemn prisoners to the Order, sending them away to endure creative torment and incarceration. Depending on the sentencing, some prisoners were sentenced to live out their years in suffering, then find release. Others were condemned to serve beyond death, or be tormented long after their mortal expiration. Ledgers held these sentences; how many centuries shall this transgressor's punishment last?

The fortress expanded over centuries. The Oubliette City required additional prison blocks, as well as space for support staff, supplies, monsters to incorporate into punishments, research facilities, and elaborate torture areas. Over time, the Order waned, and now the arguably insane remnants are no longer able to maintain the vast prison. Some inmates and creatures have broken out, others have broken in; some areas have begun to develop into little fiefdoms, others lay empty.

This degradation has gone on for centuries by now, so some areas have been out of use for decades, sealed up or broken open. Other wards and protections are deteriorating now. The dynasties, cultures, and governments that once worked with these mad jailors have all changed through time.

What can you expect to find here?

Wealth. Rulers paid vast sums of gold and contributed rare magical treasures in payment for punishing their convicts. Not only was some of this wealth stockpiled, it also empowered the Order to make extravagant purchases. Much of this wealth remains in the decaying Oubliette City.

Undead. Some punishments were to linger long past death. As the Order breaks down, sentences that were only to last for a few centuries may go long, and wards that were to be maintained break down. Prisoners condemned to undeath can break free after long and exotic torments. Many are insane, or their minds are burned out altogether, but undeath can be contagious. Some of the escaped prisoners are distressingly lucid and capable of organizing a new warband to take

and hold territory, and seek revenge against the living or their undead rivals.

Monsters. Rare and deadly creatures were brought in to torture prisoners with their phobias, to prolong the suffering of the undead, or to show off the Order's power. Some of these monsters are still going about their work, others have died and been reanimated, and more than a few escaped to roam and lair in the crypts unchecked. Outer defenses have also broken down, and some creatures have intruded from the outside world.

The Order. The religious Order dedicated to dark justice and punishment received holy power to inflict on their charges, and they attracted other spellcasters and zealots. Now the Order is a diminished presence, increasingly insular and insane, but there are areas that are still under their control. They continue to assure the punishments of those condemned to them, as best they can. Intruders blaspheme against their righteous work, and must be punished for their boldness.

The Collector's Fortress

Long ago, the Necromancer got her start as an executioner. Her fee included the corpses, and she was famous for killing the condemned with a variety of methods in accordance with their sentencing. She gained a reputation as the Collector, paying for corpses and lore with antidotes to poisons, protection from rising as undead, punishment of enemies, assassination, interrogation of the slain, and battlefield cleanup.

Her Inner Circle was formed from apprentices, wizards, and cults as her power grew through the centuries. She gradually transitioned into undeath, and she built a fortress that expanded to house her workshops and labs and showcases for exotic corpses. Inevitably, a coalition of anti-undead churches and rulers successfully mounted a campaign against her, slaying her and most of her Inner Circle before being driven out. Satisfied that her power was broken, the coalition left the Inner Circle in the ruins.

The fortress was much deeper than the invaders suspected. Some surviving members of the Inner Circle retreated into the depths of the fortress to build up their factions as they skirmished with each other over the treasures left behind by the Necromancer. Some of the most faithful continue to search for a way to revive the Necromancer herself.

What can you expect to find here?

Wealth. The Necromancer and her Inner Circle gathered exotic and enchanted wealth in exchange for their services and their secrets. They plundered when it suited them, and traded for what they couldn't take. Their wealth has not only coins, gems, precious metals, and enchantments, but also secrets and lore. Rare cures, antidotes, prophecies of the dead, and components stolen from other worlds are common through the treasure houses and laboratory crypts.

Monsters. The Inner Circle competed for prestige by showing off exotic pets gathered from this world and others. Their experiments required subjects, and many of the wizards and priests had a shaky grip on sanity. There was no good reason to create some of the monsters that came out of their experiments. A tradition of "living taxidermy" inspired the Inner Circle to make most of their prizes undead, to cut down on feeding and maintenance work. Some of the portals to other worlds have cracked open, and creatures have come through. Others have escaped their exhibition areas, or still wait in them. Some breeding populations got out and filtered through the Fortress.

The Inner Circle. The dangerous corners of the Collector's Fortress have more resources, lore, and protection than many independent operations. Survivors of the Inner Circle make temporary alliances and struggle to consolidate power and expand through the Fortress Underground. Some hire outsiders to bolster their positions. Any who attack them risk being added to the collection.

RANDOM TABLES SUPPORT STOCKING

The Dungeonmorph Designs book will have a number of tables in the back to help round out the adventuring environment, either in advance or during play. Here are some examples.

If a description suggests a tomb is crusted with jewels, the adventurers might stop to pry some loose. You could refer to "Inlaid Decorations."

Inlaid Decorations: There are treasures to retrieve, and each one takes 10 minutes to extract (or 1 minute for half value.) These treasures are a combination of artwork, gems and precious metals that are set into the environment and must be pried loose.

Light: 2d6 treasures worth 1d6 x 10 gp each.

Medium: 2d6 treasures worth 1d6 x 50 gp each.

Ornate: 2d6 treasures worth 1d6 x 100 gp each.

Fabulous: 2d6 treasures worth 1d6 x 1,000 gp each.

Maybe there is a treasury, or a display of weapons, and the adventurers have lots of questions about what's there. Check "Arms and Armor" to see what's there.

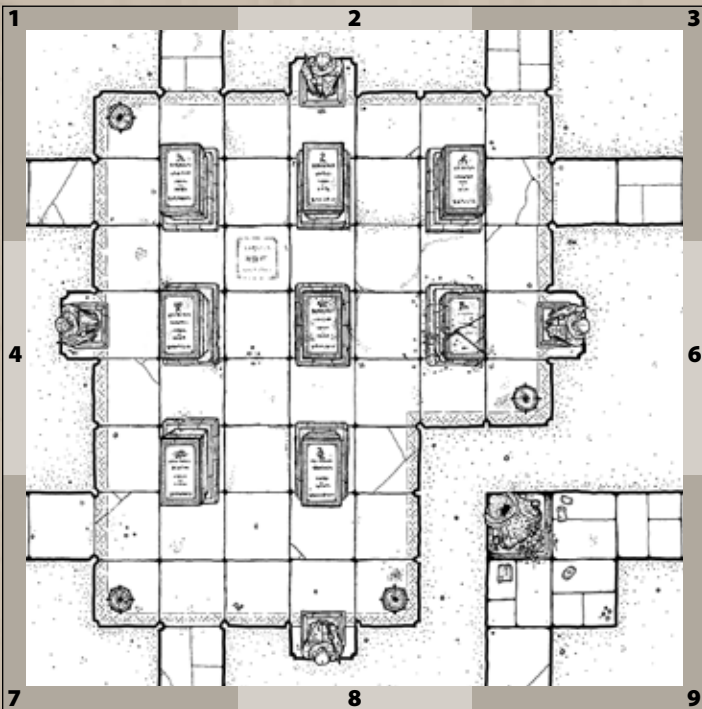
Arms and Armor: Displays or defenders have well crafted arms and armor, inlaid with precious metals and studded with jewels. If the number is not explicit in the room description or the number of foes, use 2d6.

Fancy: 1d6 x 50 gp each. Each has a 5% chance of enchantment.

Exquisite: 1d6 x 100 gp each. Each has a 15% chance of enchantment.

Fabulous: 1d6 x 500 gp each. Each has a 25% chance of enchantment.





Encounter Concept

Guardians watch over special tombs.

Central Chamber Tombs

Dynastic. *The Spinster Daughters of Munn.* A king had eight daughters. He could not bear to share them. They lived and died in isolation, tended by servants and their doting father. Each one mastered a craft, and a diamond studded emblem of the craft (500 gp each) rests on the tomb. *Needlework (hoop, needles, thread), spinning (miniature wheel), painting (golden brushes and paints), song (hammered gold scroll with sheet music), dance (slippers and streamers), poetry (book), archery (bow and arrow), butchery (cleaver).* Attempts to remove these treasures are foiled as the treasures cannot pass out of the room; they stop as though pressed against a wall.

Oubliette. The *Traitor Jury* condemned *Prince Yalleth* to be executed for treason when he was 3 years old, because he was heir to the throne (before his father was overthrown). The child was drowned. When his family regained power, they tracked down the jurors and condemned them to 600 years of painful regret, sealing them up alive in punishment capsules. The lids are translucent, so visitors may see the writhing torment of the dessicated jurors as they suffer, endlessly drowning but undying. Each capsule is locked by a diamond (100 gp) that is firmly fixed in place on the lid.

Collector. This room is bathed in a dim glow, and those who stay more than a few minutes feel random needling sensations. Each stone box is decorated with a stylized picture of 1/8th of a woman. The Necromancer gathered the remains of *Buraxia, the Demigoddess of Impalement.* Buraxia was slain by the *Mourners*, a sect of outsiders dedicated to godslaying. Her corpse was torn into eight pieces, and

each piece was disintegrated to dust and sealed in an enchanted urn. The room's glow is made by the inexorable pull of her body's dust trying to reform. The urns are encased in the stone of the tombs; the stone must be broken to get to them.

1-2. Krenn the Slippery. A legendary thief in life, *Krenn* willed his ill-gotten fortune to allied wizards (but required them to enchant his tomb). His body and treasures are sometimes in any given tomb. Opening a tomb, roll 1d6: 1-2, phantom backstab. 3-4, phantom jump scare (inflicts damage from magical terror). 5, a random treasure, or gems worth 1d6 x 200. 6, his actual corpse (but no treasure.)

3-4. The Spider Tomb. Each tomb is a black statue of a rampant wolf spider, with eight glittering emerald eyes worth 1d6 x 50 gp each. The walls are carved like symbolic silk tunnels. A wicked huntsman, *Delvia*, had a pack of giant wolf spiders, his favorite hunting companions. Every hour spent carrying an eye gem, there is a 1 in 6 chance of summoning a shadowy spectral wolf spider that will do its best to poison the carrier (and anyone who gets in the way) with ghost fever venom. Roll for each gem.

5-6. Shrine of the Volcano Priests. The tombs hold high priests of *Sieverail the Eruptor*, a volcano demigod. The lids are inlaid with ruby "lava trails" from a diamond in the caldera. A minute's work frees gems worth 1d6 x 10 gp, or the diamond worth 200 gp. If a diamond is removed, the room shakes for 1 round as the transformation begins, then the floor is literally lava until the gem is returned (in this room only.)

Statues (2, 4, 6, 8, 9)

Dynastic. The proud king's statue is in 2. Images of his wives are in 4, 6, and 8. The statues are marble and gold. The only way to remove the treasures is to chip through the statues and remove the diamond heart (worth 200 gp). The king's heart blocks exits in 1, the queen in 4 blocks 3, 6 blocks 7. Removing the heart from 8 cracks the walls and triggers the room's collapse in 2d6 rounds.

Oubliette. The statue in 2 depicts *King Yalleth* holding a scroll that explains who is drowning and why. The statue in 8 depicts Prince Yalleth as a serene toddler at peace. The statues in 4 and 6 depict hooded angels of vengeance with mighty swords.

Collector. The four statues in the chamber depict armored *Mourner* godslayers. If someone tries to break open a box, they boom "Leave it be!" If urns are retrieved, a statue animates to destroy the intruders when the second, fourth, sixth, and eighth urns are freed.

1-2. Champions. Statues of armored figures, imposing and heavily armed.

3-4. Angels. Statues of otherworldly guardians who take the dead to their reward.

5-6. The Defeated. Statues of wretches begging for mercy or relief.

Alternate Ideas

The sarcophagi sitting on stone slabs are instead graves set into the floor. This allows the room to be used as a worship area, perhaps with an altar and benches added.



Encounter Concept

An important resting place is protected by decorative features.

Central Chamber (4-5)

Dynastic. The door is a gem-studded depiction of the entry to the necropolis; press the gems over the doorways in order to unlock it. The Architect of the tomb is in the sarcophagus. Premium gold-leaf copies of his designs are in the alcove, showing all the areas he personally designed, complete with traps and secrets—in code.

Oubliette. The door is magically sealed to only open if the intruder sincerely offers a prayer to the Order's god. A powerful priest of the Order retreats here to rest. Her armored bed is warded against physical and incorporeal attacks, and it prolongs her life by putting her in stasis when she enters. Her holy book and ritual weapons are in the alcove.

Collector. The door is mirrored on both sides. The medusa in the sarcophagus was petrified by her own stare in the mirrored interior lid. Her poisoned weapons are in the alcove, along with an ornate scroll with her name, the map to where she was captured, and a brief story about her defeat.

1-2. Confessional. A shuttered booth stands in the center of the room. The priest is interred below the bench inside. The alcove is for remembrance candles.

3-4. Elevator. A cabinet in the center of the room has shiny buttons inside to go up or down.

5-6. Transporter. The alcove has a complicated panel with dials and runes and indicators, and a big switch. When the dials are configured, and the switch pulled, whatever is in the booth in the center of the room is transported magically to another site. Pulling the green lever draws whatever is in the booth at the other location back to this one.

Statues (3, 6, 8)

Dynastic. The Architect designed tombs for three emperors, and each one is represented in life-size marble accompanied by a golden plaque with a short thank-you note.

Oubliette. The statues represent angels of justice: seeker (with a staff), convictor (with weighing scales), and punishment (with a net and a club). Those who attempt to pass them without speaking their names aloud are jolted with a righteous shock. Speaking the seeker's name also unlocks the secret door, from either side.

Collector. Petrified in the medusa's lair, these statues were transported here because they were her most interesting victims: a winged draconic warrior, an undead warlord, and a mole-man.

1-2. Access. The statues depict guardian spirits from elven lore. They have flowing script on them that glitters faintly when elven is spoken. The ancient prayer "Defend me!" in elven activates them to lurch into the hallway, blocking access. The prayer "Release me" activates them to return to their alcoves. The statue in 3 opens or closes the secret passage.

3-4. Fifty-Fifty. The statues depict servants of the trickster god. Each has a gem set in its chest, bound with iron and stone. A socket in the torso is big enough to fit a hand and wrist, halfway up a human forearm. There is a handle inside that can be gripped, and twisted. Randomize the outcome on the resetting trap; twist one direction, the gem is released. Twist the other, and blades snap through the forearm, severing the hand and dropping it through a disposal chute. The statue in 3 has no gem and no blades; twisting either way opens the secret passage.

5-6. Whispers. The statues are enchanted so their faces whisper "You are not forgiven" over and over.

Fountain (9)

Dynastic. Coins gleam in the magically lit fountain basin. The Architect's water elemental lives here; if tossed a coin it is friendly and wants petting. If not, it attacks light sources.

Oubliette. Undead cannot approach within 30 feet of the fountain unless it is defiled.

Collector. Faintly glowing, the green gel is a magically replenishing unguent of de-petrification. Its magic fades 30 seconds after it leaves the basin.

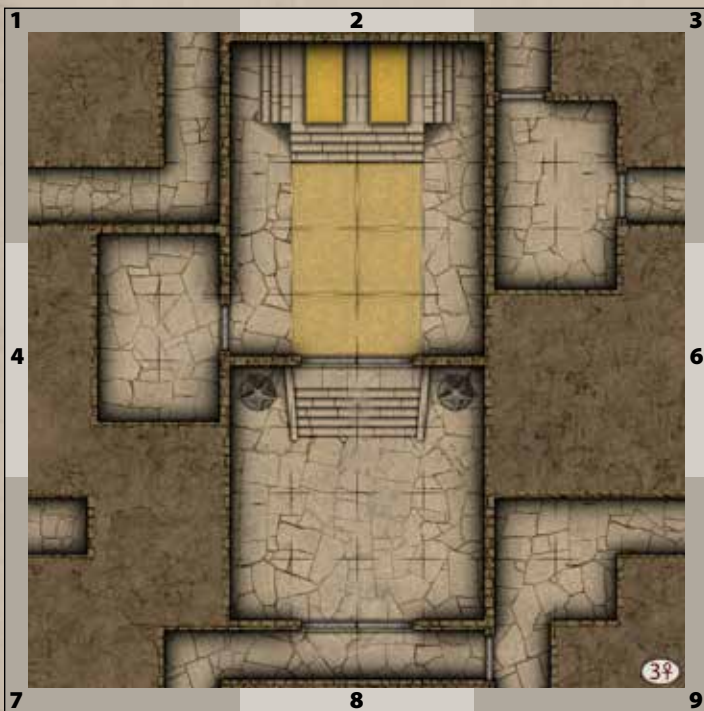
1-2. The Traitor Blade. The Traitor Blade is enchanted to return to its master. It is trapped in the fountain, surrounded by a rune barrier that keeps undead out of the fountain room. If pulled out of the fountain, it will teleport away.

3-4. Ever-Flowing Water. The inscription around the base reads "Praise the God King!" over and over. A magical ever-flowing bottle fuels the fountain, and remains magical even if removed. However, those drinking without first praising the God King find the water poisonous.

5-6. Cleansing Waters. Water from the fountain counts as a minor healing effect, in this room. If it leaves the room, the water turns into a laxative.

Alternate Ideas

Remove the coffin and add simple furniture to make this design into "quarters" for a valuable prisoner. The statues may be automated guardians or could be replaced with real guards.



Encounter Concept

This lavishly decorated resting place has high security.

The Approach (8, 9)

Dynastic. The *Conquering Brothers, Kylis* and *Von*, have their names carved over a list of defeated opponents.

Oubliette. A wall frieze shows two crystals immersed in flaming ash, with the caption "Judgment."

Collector. The bone door is marked with the Necromancer's "keep out" sigil.

1-2. Blast Door. Attempting to open the door in 8 without the key triggers a magical blast from the door in 9, every other round until the hallway is clear. Opening the door in 9 from the other side temporarily suspends this security.

3-4. Airlock. The doors in 8 cannot be open at the same time as the doors in 5. When the doors in 8 are open, they block the hallway off. Once the doors in 8 close with someone inside the antechamber, they do not open again until the command word is spoken. (The command word is carved on the wall in 4.)

5-6. Sliders. The double doors in 8 are black metal and obsidian, locked with a sliding puzzle of 8 tiles in 9 spaces. The puzzle resets every 6 rounds; can they solve it fast enough to open the door?

The Antechamber Chamber (8, 5)

Dynastic. Marble doors swing on counterweighted hinges. The *Conquering Brothers* are depicted by huge magically lit marble statues. A map of the expanded empire covers the floor, with gems for cities.

Oubliette. Blackened metal doors open to a pulsing red chamber featuring two huge amber statues: the grieving king and queen cover their faces. Stairs lead up to brass doors, hot to the touch, without locks.

Collector. The chamber is painted with vistas of a town's central square. Stairs lead to a "shop entrance". The statues are granite trees.

1-2. The Host. The double doors in 8 and 5 automatically glide open for the living, but will not open if undead are near. The columns are covered with carved faces of supporters whose funds helped

build this place. Every flagstone of the floor and walls bears the name of a donor.

3-4. Pivots. The statues flanking the stairs depict a reaper with a rake and a reaper with a wide shovel. Meddling unsuccessfully with the locks on the doors at the top of the stairs triggers the statue on that side to pivot, either impaling or flattening those in front of the door who do not dodge, and obstructing the doorway. The statues reset once an hour.

5-6. Understairs. Touching the double doors at the top of the stairs triggers a trap that screams an alarm. The doors cannot open. However, there is a small door on the 4 side of the staircase that leads under them to a secret trapdoor opening into the central chamber.

The Central Chamber (2, 5)

Dynastic. Both Brothers have a magical breastplate and spear entombed with them.

Side Chamber (4) Racks of spears and breastplates can equip 200 soldiers. Stone chests hold 20,000 gp.

Oubliette. The smoky hall is knee deep in ashes. A thousand convicts were magically cremated here. Every hour, some re-form as clumsy ash wraiths, realize what is happening, and burn again. The *Usurper* and his *Queen* are encased in blocks of crystal, watching their followers die forever. Those present during the show are grappled by burning undead.

Side Chamber (4) Mounted scrolls show the names of *Eyevis the Usurper* and his followers, and details of their convictions. Reading the postscript on the judgment scroll will drain the burning magic and melt the crystals, releasing the Usurper and his Queen.

Collector. Black curtains obscure the steps to the obsidian sarcophagi. One box is marked "*Mother*"; the other "*Father*". The corpses inside cannot be animated. The room is lined with shelves: genealogies, regional histories, local art and writing, and samples of craftsmanship, centered on one ancient backwater town.

Side Chamber (4) Floor-to-ceiling shelves display 216 labeled skulls. In the center of the room is a plinth with necromatic sigils. Placing a skull on the plinth summons an echo of the skull's ghost. Each has knowledge about the town or area.

1-2. Couples Caskets. Two monarch spouses are in stone boxes that are inlaid with gold and jewels. The walls and ceiling are draped in silk (hiding the door to the side chamber.)

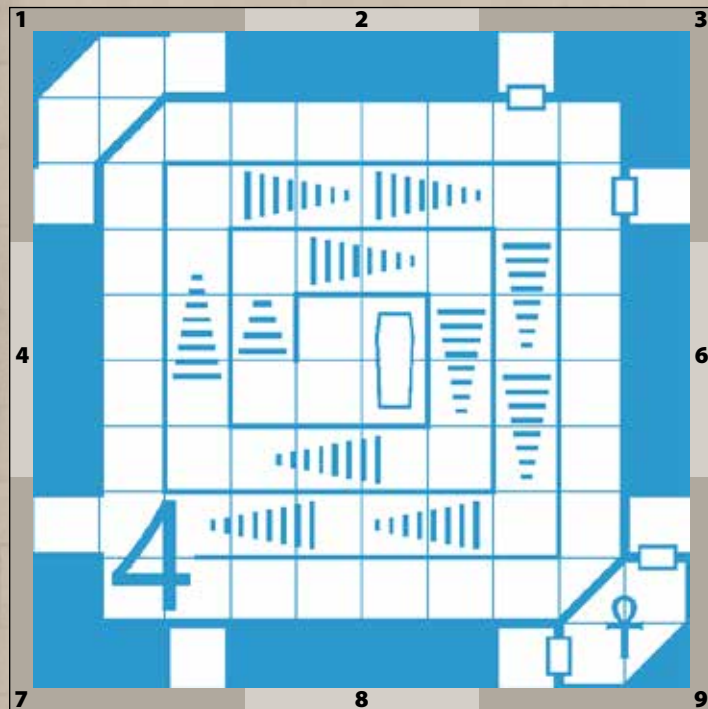
Side Chamber (4) A display features two crowns and two scepters. If someone carrying a crown or scepter steps into a metal circle on the floor, they teleport to the chamber in 3.

3-4. Unceasing Miracles. The bones of two holy clerics are embedded in the wall overlooking the empty caskets made of white marble. Once a week, someone placed in one of the marble boxes is cured of a disease, maiming, or recent death. The side chamber is a library chronicling the deeds of *Misara* and *Kulun* in service of their god.

5-6. No Exit. The room is dark, hot, and oppressive with the sound of something huge panting. The lids on the stone boxes tremble, and the sound of scratching can be heard from the other side. If opened, the boxes reveal a magical chute dropping out of this world to a sea of flame and torment.

Alternate Ideas

This layout makes for an excellent throne room or audience chamber when throne(s) replace the coffins.



Encounter Concept

A tomb is elevated in a massive hall, but it is not easy to reach.

The Ascent (5)

Dynastic. Random stairs are magically trapped; if trodden upon, all the steps snap into ramp formation, nearly frictionless. The triggers reset to connect to different stairs every 90 minutes, so marking trapped stairs has to be fast.

Oublette. *Gerik, the Ascending Prince*, is a ghost desperately trying to reach *Alliara the Reposing Princess*, entombed in the pinnacle. As the ghost races up the stairs, phantom hands with icy talons stretch out of the walls and push him off. Living characters ascending the stairs are hit with numbing attacks, slowing them until they retreat, or die. Corpses fall to dust.

Collector. At 40 feet up (second landing), the stairs get into a toxic mist. A swarm of imp-like parasites lair on the ceiling. They make the stairs sticky, and when people get stuck the imps try to sting them.

1-2. Swimming. The stairs have a boundary wall so they form a slippery trough for water flowing down from the top. The water is filled with small biting fish that swarm the calves and ankles of intruders, doubling their damage once blood is in the water. Trying to balance on the angled wall is difficult. From the bottom, the water is drained into a pump sending it back up to the top and adding flecks of magical fish food.

3-4. Climbing Prayer. An ancient prayer of supplication is carved into the wall by the stairs, and if you say the prayer aloud as you climb the letters glow. There is no danger or reward for this.

5-6. Lifespan. Every landing has a phantom image of the entombed royalty, at that decade (10-80). If offered respect, each phantom will whisper a letter to a visitor, spelling out *Ankelama* (the name of his spouse). That password, spoken above the sarcophagus at the top, opens a slot to reveal an enchanted gem.

The Pinnacle (5)

Dynastic. *Tenrow the Mountain King* insisted on a crystal dome of permanent scrying so he could see out of the highest spire of his castle, even in death. An inscription notes that he may gaze upon his lands for all time. When he awoke as incorporeal undead, he escaped through the ancient scry to haunt his ancestral castle. He left behind his crown and Earthshaker hammer.

Oublette. If the *Ascending Prince* reaches the top, his essence joins the *Reposing Princess*—for a second. Then he becomes the *Reposing Prince*, and she becomes the *Ascending Princess*. A plinth holds the gold-plated sentencing book and a magically locked box of gems. Their torment was supposed to end over 7 decades ago. If a member of the Order turns a key in a plinth, they will be released, and the box of gems will open as payment owed the Order.

Collector. The cracked tomb holds the body of a demon prince. The corpse leaks mist. His chest has a hole in the world that the imps crawled through from the other side. The corpse grips a necklace; its bearer can summon and command one imp at will (in exchange for the occasional nip of blood). A scroll, a diorama, and pages from the *Necromancer's* journal describe the *Lord of Rustles*, a demon prince. The *Necromancer* slew him and kept his remains as a trophy.

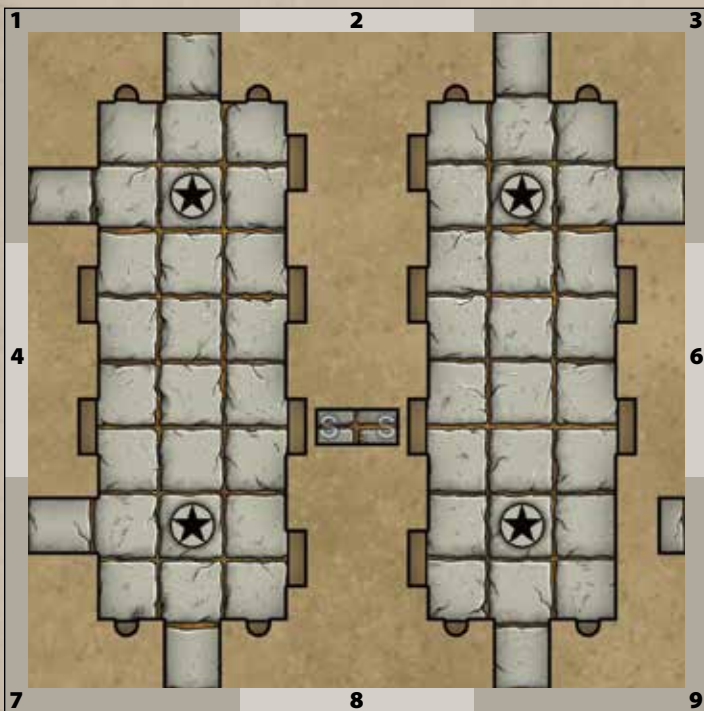
1-2. Above the Clouds. A magical smoking brazier is built into the tomb of the seer, *Lady Sheverin*. The sides are black with old crust-ed blood. Pouring living blood into the brazier triggers a cloud that pours out, obscuring the room, and through the cloud you can scry anywhere you've been, for a few minutes.

3-4. Last Line of Defense. Inside the sarcophagus, the bones of a saint have been embedded in the stone as part of a ritual, the final touch on this pyramid built to seal a gate to another world.

5-6. The Architect. The dwarf who built this magnificent place is interred here, and the sarcophagus is etched in a detailed rendering of the schematics of the area. The box will not open. If shattered, the corpse of *Lord Mukara* the architect is revealed, as well as his masterwork armor and his maul of severance.

Alternate Ideas

- An altar can be placed atop the pyramid. This especially holy (or unholy) location may allow contact with a deity or otherworldly power.
- What is inside the pyramid?



Encounter Concept

Two areas are secretly connected. This connection may be needed as a “back door” past guardians, or an access point to a previously inaccessible area.

Statues (1, 3, 7, 9)

Dynastic. Statues 1 and 3 depict champions for nearby heir siblings (*Prince Ryvoldin* and *Princess Kestemel*). The champions have glowing yellow stones set in their foreheads. Statues 7 and 9 depict spymasters, their flared stone cloaks obscuring the paths out behind them. If the stone is removed from a champion, the spymaster statue in that room slides back to block both exits (in 7 or 9). If the stone is replaced, the spymaster statue slides out of the way once more.

Oubliette. Each statue is a magical column carved of otherworldly ivory and powered by runes. In each chamber, an undead prisoner is suspended in agony between the columns. The two chambers are for lovers (*Esamatte* and *Dornel*), punished for their indiscretion by an eternity of being held apart while feeling the other’s pain. Both prisoners have a magical black gem necklace.

Collector. Each statue is a massive suit of armor emitting an uneven clicking sound. Inside is an animated skeleton, still suffering, since the suit is also filled with ravenous beetles gnawing the bones. Opening

the helm faceplate releases a gush of beetle specimens as vents in all the armor joints snap open.

1-2. Neighbors. Each statue depicts a representative of a nation bordering the king interred in the tomb. The statues are mounted on a windlass base so they can be rotated. 1. Elf, 3. Dwarf, 7. Horse Nomad, 9. Wizard King. If the statues are correctly aligned, the secret door opens, and so does an impassable door nearby.

3-4. Chalice. Each statue is a cauldron-sized stone cup, breathing mist up from its empty interior. There is a socket for a square gem on each cup’s rim. When all the gems are in place (on one side, if the other side is inaccessible, or both sides if they can be reached), the secret door opens. The socket plate is inlaid with colored metal to indicate the color of the gem that will fit: 1. Green, 2. Red, 3. Yellow, 4. Blue. The gems are probably elsewhere, but nearby.

5-6. Firetrap. The statues are shaped like dragons. If someone interferes with a nearby alcove, a statue rapidly pivots and squirts out a jet of flame in that direction.

Alcoves

Dynastic. Mosaics of the siblings and their champions. The spymaster alcoves conceal the hidden door.

Oubliette. The alcoves display the names of the victims, the condemnation from the court, pictures of them in life, and their signed refusal to give up their forbidden love.

Collector. A portrait of the beetles with anatomical study, description of their usefulness in stripping bones, brief travelog of how they were acquired, and dedication to a member of the Inner Circle tasked with their care.

1-2. Courtiers. The alcoves have stylized, abstract portraits of important court figures; the queen, prince, princess, high priest, and so on. Alcoves on the narrow ends have scrolls with lists of distinguished individuals represented by the statue.

3-4. Sun-dappled. The alcoves are studded with colored crystals in murals showing the sun shining through leaves, through water, through mist, and through snow. Alcoves on the narrow ends project light that glitters in the crystals.

5-6. Judgment Mirrors. Silvery mirrors framed in iron and bone dimly reflect those before them. Instead of showing the person standing there, they show a ghostly image of one of the person’s victims. Alcoves on the narrow ends have shrines to gods who will hear pleas for forgiveness.

Alternate Ideas

These two large rooms make for great entertainment halls. Each can be decked out for separate parties, or the secret corridor connecting the two can be left open. One room can be a banquet hall and the other a dance floor.



Encounter Concept

Disconnected areas are accessible from different points.

Hall of Tombs (1, 5, 9)

Dynastic. *Emperor Taslayne* entombed his potential successors to wait in line for the throne forever. The exit on 6 depicts the destination, his throne, and each tomb is engraved with the name of an heir.

Oubliette. The opposite wall tells the story: *King Delekant's* treasure caravan was robbed by bandits. Investigators "discovered" the caravan's masters were accomplices. They were sentenced to lie in open stone boxes, half-merged with stone, while a line of finger-sized golden ants brings them tiny bits of life force to keep them undying and suffering. Most prisoners are insane.

Collector. The "*Elf Collection*" features elf variants: sun, winged, dark, deep, gray, moon, and snow. Each box is labeled and has an enchanted gem (300 gp) on the lid. Warm the gem with body heat, and the bust of the elf inside flickers above the tomb and will answer one question about their people. (Pictorial instructions on the opposite wall.)

1-2. Grabber Boxes. They look like fancy coffins. If an intruder approaches, a box will pounce to grapple and yank the victim inside with sticky tendrils. The coffin then retracts, stoic, to digest for 1d6 hours. Breaking them open from the outside is like smashing stone. From the inside, escape is extremely difficult.

3-4. Shadowy Henchmen. Each coffin has a stand, and 1d6 stands still have a black gauntlet mounted on them. Wearing the gauntlet and smudging it with your blood summons a partially substantial henchman who can fight with shadow weapons or carry one item. After an hour, or if slain, the henchman evaporates and must rest for an hour before reforming. The henchman can be summoned until the remains are unsealed or the gauntlet broken.

5-6. Storage Locker. Each box depicts a famed quartermaster entombed below. A key juts out of 1d6 boxes. If someone puts things in a box, locks it, and takes the key, the spirit of the quartermaster will defend their supplies. If someone tampers with the box; the ghost manifests and lists inventory as a magical sleep-in-

ducing effect. Those left asleep crumble to dust, their possessions added to the box.

Hall of Alcoves (4, 8)

Dynastic. Each alcove has an ever-burning lamp built into it (extinguished if broken.) The walls between them depict defeated threats to *Emperor Taslayne's* rule: difficult birth, kidnapping as a child, famine, hydra infestation, violent coup attempt by nobles, peasant rebellion, and near-fatal poisoning.

Oubliette. *King Delekant* paid for this punishment with a selection of the recovered treasure, displayed here. The end walls each display a jeweled chain. There is a flaming longsword, a wizard's staff, a set of three daggers, a selection of gems, and a gleaming mask.

Collector. Each wall is etched with lore and anatomical diagrams for the elf subraces in the Hall of Tombs.

1-2. Kingdom Landscapes. The long wall has a mural of the seasons and landscapes of the kingdom painted on it. The opposite walls depict landmarks.

3-4. Portraits. The long wall has a family tree. The opposite walls have life-size paintings of their most famous members.

5-6. Dormant Portals. Rune-chased reflective surfaces have alcoves with 4 gem sockets to the side. Putting in combinations of enchanted gems may open portals to many places.

Tomb Chamber (7)

Dynastic. *Emperor Taslayne* is entombed here. The niche depicts a vista overlooking his throne room, faintly glowing. The tapestry has his family tree, including some offspring he did not acknowledge. The gold thread and expensive brocade make it a valuable work of art, but it is priceless to the right buyer.

Oubliette. *The Fox of Corwalk* is locked in the open box, crying out and mad with pain. A magical anthill is installed in the base of the box. Finger-length golden ants snip bits of his ever-regrowing life force and carry it to the Hall of Tombs. The tapestry depicts his crime, corrupting the caravan masters and stealing *King Delekant's* treasure. Removing the tapestry from the wall breaks the curse, and all the golden ants become lifeless (5 gp each.) The Fox and the caravan masters are released from torment, dead.

Collector. *The Sage of Lontree* is entombed in an alcove. The front of the tomb has three diamonds (400 gp each). If warmed by body heat, a gem activates a flickering image of the sage, who will answer one question about elves. Each gem works once an hour. Removing one breaks the enchantment for the whole setup. The tapestry depicts interlinked and offshoot elven cultures in this world and others.

1-2. The Lonely Prince. The prince was entombed alone. The tapestry is an unflattering depiction of a spoiled boy. A haunted golden ball sits on the lid; if removed, the carrier will be pestered by the ghost until it is returned.

3-4. The Wandering Queen. *Queen Yepala* often traveled among her people in disguise; she is not in her royal tomb. This casket is shaped like a vardo, and the alcove is painted like a woodland campsite. The tapestry is a map of her kingdom. The room smells faintly of woodsmoke.

5-6. The Mourning Door. The tapestry is a stylized map of the area. The priest's tomb is empty; a secret pedal along the side shifts the lid to either serve as a ladder up or to reveal stairs down.

Alternate Ideas

Each hall serves as a trophy case, showing off the spoils of a conquest. The separate room serves as the caretaker's quarters if a bed replaces the coffin.