

Cliffhangers Adventures

Kingdom of the Blind

By Jeff Quick



Episode One: Noise and Motion

Kingdom of the Blind is a short adventure for four 8th-level characters. The adventure is set in a minor duchy that is fairly removed from the ruler of the land. As a result, trouble can brew in the land and the king would not know immediately.

Adventure Background

About three years ago, a medusa, Zhanna Serpentlock, began systematically turning every person in Duke Jellhyn Fedorel's (N male human Ari5) duchy to stone. After losing many peasants to the medusa, Jellhyn attempted to placate her. He offered her his second son, Dephyl, for a husband. Duke Jellhyn and his family had always been rather tense and uncomfortable around Dephyl anyway due to the fact that Dephyl had lost an eye in a freak magical explosion as a boy. Zhanna accepted the marriage, and though Dephyl didn't really care for his family due to how they treated him, he was also less than happy with the arrangement.

A year ago, Zhanna appeared at Fedorel's citadel again. She claimed that Dephyl had been untrue and that she had turned him to stone for his adultery. Throwing Dephyl's stone head down in the courtyard of the citadel, she swore vengeance on all Fedorels for his betrayal. Duke Fedorel and his household fled the citadel. Rather than give chase, Zhanna took up residence there and began ruling the duchy as the sole remaining Fedorel family member. Jellhyn and his family have lived in exile for a year.

This is what the PCs can learn, but more is going on. As it turns out, Dephyl is alive and quite happy with his marriage. Zhanna is not repulsed by his disfigurement as his family was, and Dephyl's missing eye is something of an asset in the relationship since it lessens his chance of being accidentally petrified by his wife. In the two years of his marriage, he has grown up and gained ambition -- he wants to rule. As a second son (pawned off on a monster), he would never have received the chance. Now, with Zhanna's help, he can rule.

However, Dephyl doesn't have the stomach for killing his father and brother. Instead, he and Zhanna plotted to take over the duchy by frightening everyone away. Zhanna carved a stone bust of Dephyl and used it to frighten off the rest of his family. Now Dephyl and Zhanna live happily in the citadel and rule the duchy together, though Dephyl's existence among the living is a secret.

Adventure Synopsis

Cliffhanger Features

Player characters find that the citadel is lit by torches every 5 feet unless otherwise specified. Also, all doors have the following statistics unless the area description says differently:

Strong Wooden Doors: 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; AC 5; Break DC 25.

The PCs enter a kingdom ruled by a medusa and her spouse. They find grimlocks, animated constructs, fungi, statues, and more on their way through the citadel to where the medusa lives. They may uncover the fact that the medusa is also a skilled sculptor, which may make returning the statues to life after dealing with the medusa a bit interesting.

Maps

Use the Githyanki citadel map ([Map 1](#), [Map 2](#)). Only the first, second, and third floors are used in this adventure. The third floor does not have a stairwell in the center, and the second floor doesn't have a southern staircase. Ambitious DMs can use more of the citadel map and add encounters to expand the adventure, of course. Alternatively, the adventure is designed loosely enough that DMs can easily swap in a small keep or citadel of their own. This adventure uses only the areas mentioned. Other parts of the citadel contain stone statues or disused furniture.

Character Hooks

- After a year, the duke has scraped together some money and made some discreet inquiries about competent problem solvers who can remove a medusa.
- The king's treasurer has noticed that the Duchy of Fedorel failed to pay tribute last year. The treasurer will no doubt want to hire some collectors to investigate and make sure that the tribute gets paid.
- Almost every resident of the duchy has had at least one family member turned to stone in the last three years. The victims could be distant relations of a PC, or a group of peasants could band together in an attempt to find help.

Encounter 1 (EL 8)

The adventure begins as the PCs approach the citadel. If they scout or watch the citadel for 24 hours before entering, they see four or five grimlocks emerge at night to go foraging. The grimlocks never venture more than a mile from the citadel, and only five or fewer leave at once. If they watch closely, the PCs can see that the grimlocks work in shifts, so they can discover that more than five grimlocks live in the citadel.

All the windows in the citadel are little more than arrow slits. The only entrance to creatures of Small or larger size is through the front doorway. The front door itself is gone. In its place, a loose pile of stone statues blocks the doorway. The statues appear to be of human peasants, and they have either surprised or frightened looks on their faces. Some seem to be in the posture of working with a tool.

About two dozen stone figures make up this "door." The barrier is heavy, but not solid. Player characters can gain access by moving the statues (each statue weighs roughly 800 pounds), wriggling through the space between statues (Escape Artist check DC 15), or sliding through via magic such as in ethereal or gaseous form.

Zhanna's grimlocks tore the doors off the hinges when they broke into the citadel a year ago. Rather than replace it, Zhanna decided to stack the stone bodies of her victims in the doorway as a makeshift wall. The grimlocks move the statues to get in and out.

Anyone attempting to get through the pile of statues must make a Move Silently check (DC 20), because Zhanna's grimlocks are still around. They live in the various rooms on the first floor -- two in each wing. If they

hear anyone disturbing the statues at the front door, they come out to investigate. Thanks to their scent ability, they also come out the moment a PC comes within 30 feet of their rooms. When they appear, they rush to attack.

Grimlocks (10): hp 11; see *Monster Manual* page 114.

Once they pass the door, the PCs come into the main hall. The ceiling is 20 feet high, and the east and west circular rooms have open galleries 20 feet above. The ground floor contains several features besides lurking grimlocks. The eight pillars in the room have been carved into various shapes. Starting at the northernmost pillar and going around clockwise, their shapes are a thick vine, a cascade of hands, an earth elemental, a purple worm, a caryatid of a human woman, an enormous mace, a lightning bolt, and a tower of dwarves standing on each other's shoulders.

Five stone statues block each of the eastern staircases. They are not piled like at the front door, but they were placed standing on the stairs and clamped down in such a way that anyone larger than Tiny size cannot walk up. Most statues are human, but some also appear to be elves and halflings.

Any PC with stonecunning or a Craft or Profession skill relating to stonework can make an appropriate skill check (Spot in the case of stonecunning) to notice that some statues are different than others. On a successful check result, the PC notices that the elves in the room appear to have been carved -- especially their faces. If the skill used is Craft (sculpting), the PC can tell that these elves have been chiseled down from human figures to resemble elves.

Cliffhanger

The PCs can freely move around the ground floor once they dispatch all the grimlocks. To get to the second floor, the PCs must move the statues blocking the eastern staircases (requiring five DC 20 Strength checks), take the western stairs, or use another means of ascending (such as the *fly* spell). When they attempt to walk up either of the western set of stairs, the stairs begin to buckle and thrash. The stairs are animated objects, and the PCs have set them off!

Cliffhangers Adventures

Kingdom of the Blind

By Jeff Quick



Episode Two: Stairdown

Kingdom of the Blind is a short adventure for four 8th-level characters. The adventure is set in a minor duchy that is fairly removed from the ruler of the land. As a result, trouble can brew in the land and the king would not know immediately.

Adventure Background

The PCs had just entered the citadel in the last episode. Are they now dealing with hauling statues or fighting angry staircases in their efforts to get to the second floor?

Encounter 2 (EL 7)

If the PCs tried to use the western staircases, they have just set off the staircase by walking on it. The stone spiral staircase pulls away from the wall, thrashing all the while, and it coils like a snake to strike. The staircase tries to throw off anyone standing on it. Player characters who want to remain on the stairs must oppose the staircase's Strength check with their own Strength check, or make a Balance check (DC 15).

Animated Staircase: CR 7; Gargantuan construct; HD 16d10; hp 90; Init -2; Spd 10 ft.; AC 12, touch 4, flat-footed 12; Atk +15 melee (2d8+10, slam); Face/Reach 20 ft. x 40 ft./10 ft.; SQ construct traits, hardness; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 24, Dex 6, Con --, Int --, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Construct Traits: The animated staircase is immune to mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects), and to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromantic effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. It cannot heal damage, but it is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. It is not at risk of death from massive damage, but it is destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less. It cannot be raised or resurrected. An animated staircase has darkvision 60 ft.

Hardness (Ex): An animated staircase has a hardness of 8. Subtract 8 hit points from the damage it takes from each attack.

Note that both western staircases react this way, though only when walked upon. Getting up to the second floor

requires magic or ingenuity on the PCs' part. After defeating a staircase, the simplest way is to climb the stone walls to reach the second floor. Climbing the walls requires a Climb check (DC 15). Other ways to reach the second floor include prying up the statues on the eastern staircases, or flying or climbing up to the gallery on the second floor and lowering a rope down for the others to ascend.

The second floor of the citadel contains several stone sculptures in varying conditions. Tall candelabras covered in wax with little stubs of candles stand near one sculpture. The statues are not medusa victims; they are artist's sculptures in progress, and all stand in poses of fear or look as if they are attempting to escape. The ones with faces look terrified.

Encounter 3 (EL 1)

The circular room to the north is dark. It contains half a dozen potted fungi, and purple fungus coats all the walls. In contrast, a thick, multi-hued fungus swathes the stairs in this room. The potted fungi are shriekers. This room contains no real threat, though a trap door at the top of the stairs is closed and locked (Open Lock check DC 25) from the other side. Bashing through requires a Strength check (DC 25). Unless a PC is flying or has ensured solid footing (at DM's discretion), each attempt to bash open the trap door also forces every character involved to make a Balance check (DC 20) or slip and fall down the fungus-covered stairs.



Shriekers (5): hp 11; see *Monster Manual*, page 93.

To the south of the circular room with the stairs is a semicircular room. From outside it, the PCs can see a desk, two chairs, and a bookcase filled with books. Two statues of orc barbarians flank the doorway of the room.

Encounter 4 (EL 4)

The area between the orc statues contains a *glyph of warding* trap. It triggers when anyone not of lawful evil alignment passes through the area.

Glyph of Warding (Blast): CR 4; spell; location trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], 5th-level cleric, Reflex save [DC 14] half damage, 2d8 fire); multiple targets (all targets within 5 feet); Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28). *Cost:* 350 gp to hire NPC spellcaster.

Cliffhanger

Once inside the office, the PCs discover that not everything they learned from Duke Fedorel is as it seems. On the desk, anyone who looks can find a letter ([download](#) 54k .jpg) dated with yesterday's date. It says the following:

Gremminu,

Please reference our earlier order for another delivery of granite blocks. Zhanna's art is coming along splendidly; sometimes she carves long into the night, far after I've gone to bed. The terror she puts into the faces of her sculptures is a thing of beauty. We will arrange for payment as last time. We wish you well in your endless toil.

Sincerely,

Dephyl

© 2002 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All rights reserved.

Cliffhangers Adventures

Kingdom of the Blind

By Jeff Quick



Episode Three: Don't Look Now ...

Kingdom of the Blind is a short adventure for four 8th-level characters. The adventure is set in a minor duchy that is fairly removed from the ruler of the land. As a result, trouble can brew in the land and the king would not know immediately.

Adventure Background

The PCs have just learned that Dephyl is alive and well and ordering blocks of granite. Meanwhile, Zhanna and Dephyl are on the third floor. If the PCs encountered the animated staircases on the first floor, the shriekers on the second floor, or triggered the trap outside Dephyl's study, the couple knows someone unwelcome is downstairs and moving up. They begin to prepare for their arrival.

Encounter 5 (EL 6)

In addition to grimlocks and shriekers, Zhanna has brought some of her other Underdark favorites to live in Fedorel Citadel. The commotion from the second floor (especially if either the shriekers or the fire trap triggered) has alerted Zhanna and Dephyl to the intrusion. In response, they open the trap door at the top of the stairs in the fungus room and release their pet phantom fungi down into the fungus room.

Phantom Fungi (3): hp 13, 15, 18; see *Monster Manual* page 149.

Tactics: The phantom fungi lope down the fungus-covered stairs. The motion of the phantom fungi sets off the shriekers, so the PCs have some warning, though they might not understand what's coming. The phantom fungi immediately begin searching for food when they leave the fungus room. They do not attempt to use their Move Silently skills until one or more of them have located the party members. Then they slow down and begin to stalk their prey.

If the PCs have already started upstairs on the southern staircase, the fungi wait until they have reached the top before coming up after them. Their instincts tell them to wait until prey is in the open so that they can use their invisibility to hunt better.

This tactic might mean that the phantom fungi do not attack the PCs until they are upstairs in the next episode. If this happens, Zhanna and Dephyl do not reveal themselves until the phantom fungi have worn the PCs down or have been defeated. If the phantom fungi can do the work for them, they won't have to get their hands dirty.

Cliffhanger

At the top of the stairs, the PCs see the shadow of a woman's body with snakes for hair. After looking for a few seconds though, they probably notice that the snakes aren't moving. Once they reach the top of the stairs, they see the body of a medusa -- turned to stone! Or is it?

© 2002 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All rights reserved.

Cliffhangers Adventures

Kingdom of the Blind

By Jeff Quick



Episode Four: Snakes Alive!

Kingdom of the Blind is a short adventure for four 8th-level characters. The adventure is set in a minor duchy that is fairly removed from the ruler of the land. As a result, trouble can brew in the land and the king would not know immediately.

Adventure Background

The PCs faced all manner of fungus last time. Perhaps with a little more investigation, they'll discover what's really going on with Zhanna and Dephyl.

The Third Floor

On the third floor, the PCs find the main room filled with stone statues. These statues display more variety than the ones on the first floor, and few look like carvings. They are almost all petrified creatures trapped by a medusa's gaze. The medusa statue is a self-portrait of Zhanna, and she placed it here to ward off intruders.

Many different kinds of creatures stand about the room in rows, and each stands about 10 feet apart from its neighbors. All statues are humanoid, but otherwise they are very different from one another. In addition to the normal array of humans, dwarves, elves, halflings, and gnomes, the room contains drow, orcs, goblins, and a half dozen other races -- many from the Underdark.

With a successful Intelligence check (DC 20), PCs notice a pattern to the order of the statues. The north half of the room contains martial statues in combat poses. The south half of the room contains spellcasting statues or figures in nonmartial poses. The west half of the room is made of surface creatures, while the east half of the room is Underdark dwellers.

Encounter 6 (EL 11)

Zhanna and Dephyl have a defense contingency plan because Dephyl figured his father would attempt to reclaim the citadel some day. As time permits and once they know that the PCs are in the citadel, Dephyl casts the following spells: First, Dephyl casts *fly* on both himself and Zhanna. Then he casts *shield* and *mage armor* on himself and *mage armor* on Zhanna. Finally, he casts *bull's strength* and *cat's grace* on Zhanna, and *cat's grace* on himself. Then they move to positions.

Dephyl begins in the doorway to the west room with his *wand of magic missiles* in one hand and *potion of invisibility* in the other. He has three-quarters cover as he fires around the corner into the room. Zhanna begins

within the bedchamber, just inside the west door.

When Dephyl can see the first PC, he fires his wand in an attempt to draw the target toward him. Once anyone begins moving toward his location, he pulls back, drinks his potion, and flies up and out of the room so that Zhanna can sneak attack with her bow or move out and use her gaze attack.

Throughout the battle, Zhanna tries to stay centrally located while Dephyl flies around the outer edges firing his wand. Any time Dephyl does not know where Zhanna is, he stops and covers his good eye with his eye patch. This blinds him, but it also keeps him from accidentally falling victim to her gaze.

Throughout the battle, Zhanna continually makes comments about what statues she can see. For instance, she might say to the PCs, "I see you, hiding behind the statue of the raging barbarian!" or, "Do not think to topple the derro in hopes of distracting me!"

This is not melodrama. Since the room is arranged in quadrants, this is how she tells Dephyl where she is looking during battle to let him know if he's safe or not. If she mentions a statue that is in a different part of the room than he is in, he lifts his eye patch and fires his wand at available targets.

If the PCs catch up to Dephyl or attempt to take him hostage, Zhanna stops combat and negotiates his release. Though both are thoroughly evil, and they love one another and would prefer to leave the citadel than be separated. If the PCs get the upper hand, they promise to leave rather than risk being killed. If the PCs kill either Zhanna or Dephyl, the other flees the citadel.

Dephyl Fedorel: Male human Ari2/Sor6; CR 8; Medium-size humanoid; HD 2d8+2 plus 6d4+6; hp 35; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Atk +4 melee (1d4-1/19-20, masterwork dagger); AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +10; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Diplomacy +10, Handle Animal +8, Innuendo +7, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Listen +4, Ride (horse) +2, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +11, Spot +9; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/6/4; base DC 13 + spell level): 0 -- *detect magic, flare, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, read magic*; 1st -- *comprehend languages, mage armor, magic missile, shield*; 2nd -- *bull's strength, cat's grace*; 3rd -- *fly*.

Possessions: *eye patch of see invisibility, potion of invisibility, wand of magic missile* (5th-level caster), masterwork dagger, clothes.

Dephyl wears his eye patch over his good eye when he's with Zhanna and accepts temporary blindness. When he's not using it to block his vision, it allows him to see invisible creatures and things as the *see invisibility* spell.

Eye Patch of See Invisibility: The *eye patch of see invisibility* enables its wearer to see as the *see invisible* spell whenever the patch is worn. It obstructs normal vision, however. Moving the eye patch is a move equivalent action.

Caster Level: 3rd; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *see invisibility*; Market Price: 16,800, Weight: --.

Zhanna Serpentlock: Female medusa Rog3; CR 10; Medium-size monstrous humanoid; HD 6d8+6 plus 3d6+3; hp 49; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Atk +8/+3 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger) and +6 melee (1d4 plus poison, snakes); or +12/+7 ranged (1d6+1/x3, +1 *shortbow*); SA petrifying gaze, poison, sneak attack +2d6; SQ darkvision 60 ft., evasion, traps, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +11, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +4, Balance +5, Bluff +11, Craft (sculpting) +4, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +11, Hide +6, Innuendo +4, Intimidate +4, Jump +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +12, Tumble +8, Use Magic Device +4; Alertness, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Finesse (snakes).

Petrifying Gaze (Su): Zhanna's gaze can turn an opponent within 30 feet to stone permanently (Fortitude save DC 15).

Poison (Ex): Zhanna can deliver an injury poison (Fortitude save DC 14) on a successful hit with her snakes. The initial damage is 1d6 Strength, and the secondary damage is 2d6 Strength.

Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Zhanna takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

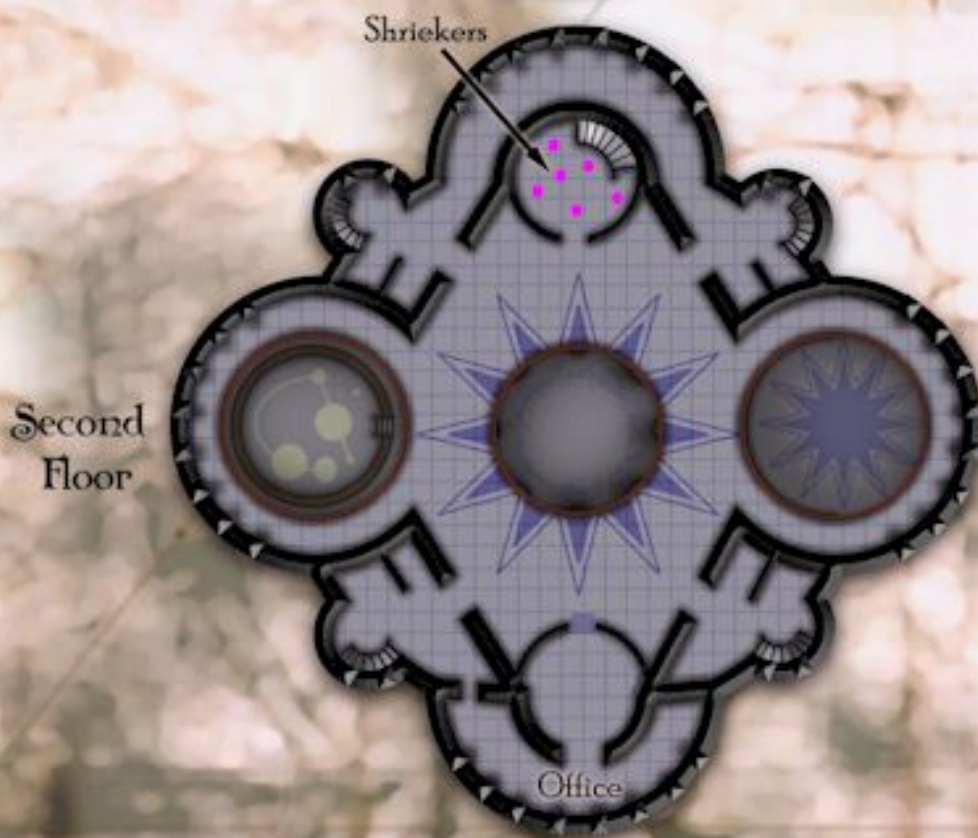
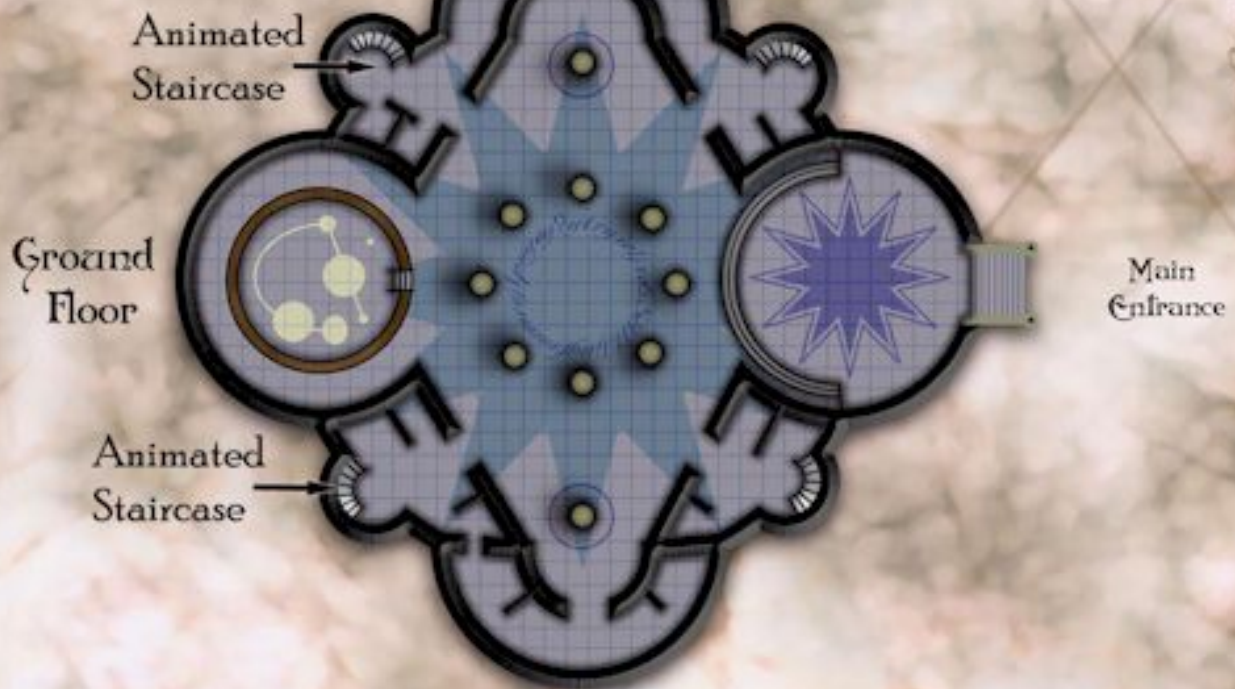
Possessions: +1 *shortbow*, 20 arrows, 200 gp worth of jewelry, colorful sarong.

In addition to Zhanna's jewelry, the trunks and dressers in their bedchamber hold 1,120 gp, a set of moonstone and sapphire jewelry (a matching necklace and two earrings worth 1,500 gp), fine silk cloth (100 gp), a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, a flask of *sovereign glue*, and 4 vials of *oil of slipperiness*.

Continuing the Adventure

If either Dephyl or Zhanna gets away, the PCs have earned a lifelong enemy. Jellhyn Fedorel is shocked and amazed that his son is still alive, though he hardly mourns him and seems secretly relieved that he doesn't have to concern himself with his son any more. The PCs might also want to find out where the pair was getting all the blocks of granite and the identity of the mysterious Gremminu. Finally, one of the petrified statues might be of someone Jellhyn recognizes as someone important. If the PCs can turn this individual back to flesh, or at least cart the body to the individual's friends, they would probably express their thanks with gold.

Gilhyanki Citadel Floor Sections



5 feet
10 feet
Scale

Githyanki Citadel Floor Sections

gm2R 8

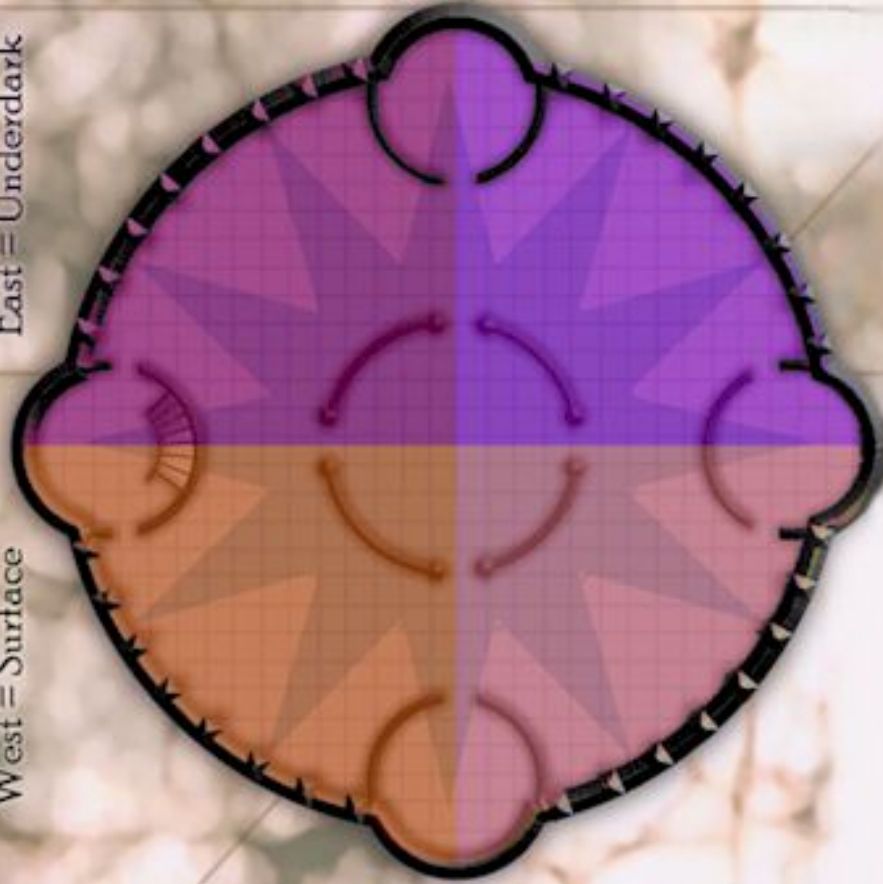
East = Underdark

West = Surface

))) (((

Third
Floor

North = Martial
South = Spellcaster



5 feet
10 feet
Scale

gm2R 95

Gremminu,

Please reference our earlier order for another delivery of granite blocks. Zhanna's art is coming along splendidly; sometimes she carves long into the night, far after I've gone to bed. The terror she puts into the faces of her sculptures is a thing of beauty. We will arrange for payment as last time. We wish you well in your endless toil.

Sincerely,

Dephyl

Based on the original **Dungeons & Dragons®** game by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and on the new edition of the **Dungeons & Dragons** game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison. **D&D**, **Dungeons & Dragons**, and **Forgotten Realms** are registered trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All Wizards characters, character names, and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. This material is protected under the laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction of or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. This product is a work of fiction. Any similarity to actual people, organizations, places, or events is purely coincidental. This Wizards of the Coast game product contains no Open Game Content. No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without written permission. To learn more about the Open Gaming License and the d20 System License, please visit www.wizards.com/d20. ©2001 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All rights reserved. Made in the U.S.A.

Visit our website at www.wizards.com/dnd