

## Dendorlig Hall

### The Partly-Explored Hall

Beyond the Village area, the Gnomes have investigated only a small part of the remaining Hall complex as yet, comprising areas 50-66, 93-110 and 143-146 inclusive. None of the marked blue-S secret doors in these areas have been located at present. There are indications that another chamber or passageway may lie a short distance outside the northwestern walls of Cells 48 & 49, although no means to access this, if it exists, has been discovered till now. The following descriptions cover these relocated areas in their numerical sequences. The "missing" numbered areas are detailed later as part of the unexplored Hall. Unless noted, ceiling heights in all these places are around 6 to 7 ft (1.8 to 2.1 m), with 5 ft high (1.5 m) doorways and entrances.

**50) Forest Battle Chamber:** Once through the card-key sliding door at the northwest end of Defended Passageway 38, a new passage opens up running parallel to Passageway 38. To the right, it runs southeast, then turns northeast to Chamber 51. To the left, it continues for a short distance before opening out into this large, square-plan Chamber, through an arched, 6 ft high (1.8 m) entrance. It has a second, identical, open accessway on the wall directly opposite, which turns right and forms a T-junction with another passage that leads to areas 54 and 93. The ceiling in here is roughly 20 ft high (6 m) in its centre, with graceful arches curving up to this point from the room's corners, and midway between them, from all sides. The walls are bas-relief carved into very natural-seeming, actual-size, deciduous tree trunks, their branches in full leaf stretching up and across the whole ceiling, although not solidly, or especially densely in places. The trees are a mixture of temperate woodland types, quite unlike the more typical tropical evergreens found immediately beyond the Hall outside, and include (for those with sufficient knowledge) recognisable oak, beech, birch, ash and elm trees. A pair of oak trunks flank both entryways, with their lower branches helping form and disguise the curved archway-tops of the entrances. Although worn and faded in places, the entire chamber is painted in naturalistic early summer colours. The sky beyond and between the ceiling leaves and branches is painted dark blue, and over the lower western part is a slightly curving line of four bright coloured circles, seemingly representing bright stars, whose right-hand end points towards the waxing crescent White Moon, roughly halfway between new and first quarter. This curving line of stars is more or less parallel to the horizon, if imagined as the line joining walls to ceiling in here. The star closest to the Moon is painted yellow, followed by an orange star-disc roughly twice as far from the first star, as that first star is from the Moon. The third star is a similar distance to this from the second, and is purple in colour, with the fourth star about as far from the third as the Moon is from the first. The fourth star is a slightly paler lavender colour. To the right of the middle two stars (higher in the sky) are two more painted circles, around the same distance apart as are the third and fourth stars, although that disc closer to the second, orange, star is blue, while that nearer the third star is orange. Anyone with sufficient knowledge could realise that this would be similar to the evening sky view, not long after sunset, close to the midwinter solstice for the southern hemisphere, as seen from somewhere at a similar latitude to Dendorlig Hall, despite the trees being wholly anomalous for such a location. [Those wishing for more precision and information on the star-positions should see the Nibirum Star Maps elsewhere in the Atlas. For reference, the stars involved here are all 1st magnitude, and are labelled on the colour-star versions of the Maps as numbers 11, 10, 9, 8, 13 & 12 respectively, in the sequence as described above. The Dendorlig Hall area is at approximately latitude 32° South.] Inside the quadrilateral formed by the second, third, fifth and sixth stars, is the head of a red-painted comet, which has a long tail, passing between the fifth and sixth stars, then curving further upwards in a sweep across much of the central sky view, where the branches and leaves allow. It is quite the most dominant sky-feature, and would have been clearly perceived as a mighty portent, if real. Completing the early-nocturnal forest glade appearance, much of the floor away from the room's centre, has also been lightly bas-relief carved with typical temperate woodland early summer plants, some fallen leaves and twigs, again painted in a comparably realistic manner to the rest of the Chamber. A central circle, about 15 ft in diameter (4.5 m), has a different bas-relief carving, prepared as if the woodland floor had been cleared-off to show it. In this circle is a carving of a huge, scaly, serpent-bodied, draconic creature, with seven necks and heads, locked in combat with a similarly scaly draconic beast with eight legs, a long snaking tail, and a single head, from whose open maw a lightning bolt streaks. These creatures too are painted, the multi-headed hydra in greens and yellows, although one of its heads, the largest, is red, with the eight-legged beithir done in blues and greys. They are placed so as to seem upright for a viewer approaching from the southeastern passageway. Above them, as seen from this direction, and looking left to right, is a crescent Moon, six stars in the same colours as those in the ceiling sky painting, but here in a single curving line towards the central, cleared, circle's circumference, and a red painted comet. There are hard to find secret floor panels under the head of the beithir, and the largest, red, head of the hydra. Each conceals a floor cavity containing a black iron chest with foliate and floral designs all over it. Each is locked. Attempting to open either without the correct key (to be found in Chamber 51) causes the black metal designs to come to life, sprouting strong, sharp thorns and spiky-edged leaves, which wrap and tangle around the attempted opener, restraining and trapping them, while also causing potentially severe damage, even forcing their way through plate armour ultimately. The metal vines can be damaged only by magic, something which is liable to cause additional damage to the trapped person without extreme care. Plant control magics are effective in stopping the growth and motion of the vines, and reversing them if repeated, although another attempt to open the chest without the proper key starts the whole process once more. Once opened, the chest below the head of the beithir contains a leather-wrapped ivory sculpture, about 3 ft long (1 m), of a beithir, exquisitely carved, set with two large, white pearls for its eyes, and with a lapis lazuli inlay of a lightning bolt, running from its open mouth down the length of its body (its neck is turned so the head points towards its tail). Beside this object is a silver flask containing a magical potion that gives one drinker temporarily the strength and lightning resistance of a beithir. Beneath both of these is a strongly magical mail armour hauberk, complete with attached coif and mittens, made to fit someone Gnome-sized, and of an unusually lightweight blue-grey metal. Beneath this again is a layer of solid gold ingots. The chest is lined with soft, padded, blue velvet. In the other chest, from below the red head of the hydra, and padded with soft scarlet velvet, is a 3 ft long (1 m) ivory sculpture of a seven-headed, serpent-bodied, hydra. The eyes in six of the heads are fitted with cut gemstones. Two heads have amethyst eyes, another has star sapphires, two more have jacinths, and the sixth has topazes. These colours match those of the six bright ceiling-sky-painted stars. The seventh head is sculpted from a single, huge, ruby gem, yet it somehow flows directly into the ivory body with no join line. It has faceted gemstone star ruby eyes, which again seem, incredibly, not to be separate from the rest of the ruby head. It is carefully wrapped in soft leather. A scroll beside this model contains the tale of the great conflict shown by the central floor design, couched in ambiguously mythological terms, which might suggest this was all a record of a great red comet, possibly one with multiple heads, that collided with the White Moon (portrayed as the Nibirum-defending beithir). The language is in an extremely ancient form of Gnostic, written in characters of a similarly archaic origin.

**51) Octagonal Chamber:** This Chamber has its closed sides oriented in the cardinal directions, while the four intervening walls each have an open passageway leading into it. One of these approaches from the southwest in a dogleg out of Chamber 50, with a similar dogleg passage proceeding northeast to area 55 and beyond. To the northwest is area 54 along a short stretch of passageway, while to the southeast, the passage narrows sharply a little way out of this Chamber, into Chamber 52. This room feels unusually cold. Characters may see their breath condensing in the air when passing through, or lingering, here. There are scratches and claw marks on the ceiling above the southwestern entryway from Chamber 50. The stonework elsewhere is plain and unmarked by anything unusual, however. One smaller stone in both the east and west walls hides a small recess in which is a key. That in the east wall is of silver, has a crescent White Moon shape as its handle, and will open the hidden beithir chest in Chamber 50. The west wall's key is carved from a single ruby, has the form of a comet, with the head as its handle, and will open the hydra chest in Chamber 50. Searching this Chamber will cause the ghostly figure of a humanoid-headed serpent to manifest with a warning hiss. Persisting will cause the ghostly figure of an apparently long dead, robed and hooded Gnome to appear as well. Once one or both secret compartments have been found, both figures can manifest as more solid, undead creatures, a naga and a wight. Depending on the party's size and attitude - the presence of one or more Gnomes from the Dendorlig region will help - up to four of each creature may appear in both ghostly and physical form.

They are trapped in this Chamber and cannot leave it, with the task of guarding the keys and preventing their removal from this room, unless a Dendorlig Gnome is here bearing the Crown of the Mountain King (an object mentioned in old tales hereabouts, indicating it to have been lost long ago; see area 61, however). They know it to be not far away, although their ideas of distance are extremely vague and distorted. Both types of creature can converse, albeit only in a very archaic dialect form of Dendorlig Gnomish.

**52) Treble Chamber:** A group of three small chambers aligned along a northeast-southwest axis at the southeastern end of a short passageway out of Chamber 51. The passage enters into the central room of the three, the other two linked to it by short, narrow passages. The middle room is 6 ft high (1.8 m), but the adjoining narrow passages and rooms are only 5 ft (1.5 m). At the northeastern end of the northeast chamber is a 4 ft high (1.2 m) door to Room 53. On the northwest wall of the southwestern small chamber is a surprisingly intact, and impressive, mounted moose head, whose size, because of its antler-spread, is too large to fit through the connecting passageway. Moreover, the moose is not a native creature to these parts.

**53) Square End Room:** Beyond the closed 4 ft (1.2 m) door from the northeast end of Treble Chamber 52, is this larger, rectangular room, with its longer axis lying northeast-southwest. It has a 7 ft high (2.1 m) ceiling, a very odd contrast to the 4 ft high doorway leading in. There are some fragments of a broken metal cauldron by the southeastern wall (part of its handle, rim and one side only). On the ceiling and upper walls, extending from the east corner almost one-third of the way to the centre of the room, are reddish stains that look a little like dried blood, although they are in fact patches of a harmless red mould. The air here is rather stale.

**54) Ogre's End:** At the northwestern end of the short northwest passage out of Chamber 51, this is an almost square chamber with an 8 ft high (2.4 m) ceiling, from which another passageway opens in its southwestern wall, leading to areas 50 and 93. On the floor towards the middle of the northwestern wall lie the skeletal remains of an Ogre, whose arm and leg bones are still partly fastened to the wall by roughly hammered-in bronze manacles. The working of the bronze looks like subterranean Goblin style, for those familiar with such things, so is crude, yet efficient. Most of the other bones lie in a pile on the floor, and some show signs of injuries, including some that could suggest torture. In the north corner is a padded oak chair of Gnome style, somewhat battered, with an old brass mug lying on the seat. A maple-wood armour rack stands by the northwestern wall too. On it is a suit of orange leather armour, a badly-rusted mail corselet in need of repair, and a dented circular wooden shield, which too has seen better days. The leather armour is made from unicorn hide, should anyone with knowledge or abilities enough investigate it, and all the items are of common Goblin or Gnome sizes.

**55) Chamber of the Wisps:** Along the dogleg passage northeast from Chamber 51 are two 5 ft high (1.5 m) doors, one at its northeast end (which leads into a northwest-southeast-aligned fresh passage with two more doors off it, to areas 57 and 62), the other on the northwest wall before that, which leads here. This is a squarish room, with a passage-like extension from its northeast corner towards the northeast, that ends in another 5 ft high door. An unusually well-concealed secret door on the southeast wall towards the far end of this extension gives access to Hidden Chamber 56. A faint scuttling sound can be heard on entering the room, although its source cannot be identified. In the east corner of the squarer part of the chamber are the broken remains of a padded oak chair in a heap (similar in style to the intact chair in area 54). Only one padded arm of the chair has survived here, and lies below the rest of this debris. Careful investigation though will show this to be an illusion (the intact chair had no such padded arms, which may be a further clue), as the chair arm is really a magically-concealed, small, locked birchwood chest, containing a small, blue cloth, drawstring bag, in which is a small number of old coins of various worth, two cut green gemstones (peridots), and a yellow-ribbon-tied scroll containing a druidical animal communication spell. Investigating the Chamber or the chair rubble will attract the attention of up to three will o'wisps, who may be simply curious, or might attack. One each is blue, green and yellow. If seriously threatened, they will simply retreat through a convenient wall, ceiling or floor, ultimately into Hidden Chamber 56, if it has still to be found, or elsewhere if it has been. Should the GM require, a party of up to eight Goblins could be encountered here, one of whom is a necromantic shaman, coming to question the bones of the Ogre they believe to be somewhere in the vicinity (in area 54, though they haven't found it yet). Should a greater threat be needed, they could be Hobgoblins instead, on the same errand. In either case, they have had a long, weary journey, ultimately from the depths of the Darklands (see the separate Atlas map for this) to get this far, entering the Hall complex up the chasm between areas 160 and 168.

**56) Hidden Chamber:** The secret door from Chamber 55 into here is remarkably hard to find from the Chamber 55 side. Once located, opened and accessed, the rectangular Chamber revealed is irritatingly quiet and empty (unless any of the will o'wisps from Chamber 55 retreated here to recuperate). It seems no one else could recall where its door was either!

**57) Chamber of the Mirror:** Reached by following passageways northeast from Chamber 51 through a couple of doors, this is a squarish room with an angled south wall. A 5 ft high (1.5 m) arched opening leads southeast into area 58. Propped against the southwestern wall is a 4 ft tall (1.2 m), upright rectangular, thin sheet of iron, which was once silvered as a mirror on its roomward face, although the silvering is now very worn and pitted-away. Enough is left to still cast odd reflections of any light here, or to make any movement seem startling.

**58) Angled Corner:** This room seems little more than an expanded passageway in form, creating a right-angle accessway between Chamber 57 and areas 59, 60, 64, and beyond. Most of its walls conform to the typical non-cardinal rectilinear pattern of the Hall, though it has angled north and east walls forming something like a funnel shape towards the northeast exit, a similar 5 ft high (1.5 m) archway to the entrance from Chamber 57. The ceiling here is also 5 ft throughout. On the floor by the eastern wall is a bent, thin, sheet of iron, originally of a similar shape and size to that in Chamber 57. In this instance though, it has been partly folded-over on itself. It too was once silvered as a mirror (on what is now its inner side), with a reflective surface in still poorer condition than that in 57. There are some moss patches on this wall, and beneath the mirror is a nest of some half-dozen large centipedes. The centipedes are not a serious threat to most healthy humanoids, although they do have a mildly poisonous bite.

**59) Little Shrine:** Off the southeastern side of the northeast passage out of area 58, where the passage turns a corner to the northwest, is this tiny, rectangular chamber, accessed through a 4 ft high (1.2 m) open, narrow archway. The room is elongated on its northeast-southwest axis, and has a 7 ft high (2.1 m) barrel-vaulted ceiling. A second 4 ft narrow archway on the adjacent northeastern passage wall leads to chamber 60 at the same corner, after which the passage continues on to area 64. The long southeastern wall in here has a magnificent mural painting of a Gnome army led by a heroic, armoured, figure in the act of defeating a great, spectral, much taller, kingly creature at the head of an undead army, in a mountainous setting that looks like Mount Dendorlig. A caption in old Gnomish characters identifies the hero as "Ancelyndy the Conqueror", while surviving tales tell of such a hero having defeated various enemies in and around the Mount Dendorlig region, including a force of undead believed to have been raised in the Haunted Barrows east of the mountains, long, long ago. Not obvious, as set above the painting, where the wall meets the start of the barrel-vaulting ceiling arch, a narrow stone shelf runs the length of the room. On top of it is a well-made brass scroll tube with oak end-caps, which has three pieces of pink, gem-class coral evenly spaced along one side of the tube. One has been cut in the form of a rayed Sun disc, another is in a White Moon crescent shape (the convex side facing the end of the tube), while the central piece is in the shape of a seven-pointed star. The tube is empty. Also along the shelf are three pieces of gem-quality amber, each containing a beautifully-preserved insect - a colourful dragonfly, a shimmering silvery moth, and a large wasp with alternating abdominal bands of orange, dark blue and mid green. Somewhat incongruously, there is a ball of fine, brown string (43 ft long, 13.1 m, should anyone care to check), a small glass bottle containing a bright green powder (leprechaun spice), and six,

small, unworked, gold nuggets. On the floor in front of the painting, is an old Gnomish wooden holy symbol and a wooden club, placed in a “V”-shape, with a small bronze pail nearest the wall between them, towards the open end of the “V”. There is a well-concealed small cupboard with a stone-door in the lower part of the painting (Gnome stone-workers gain a bonus to spot this, as it follows a classical design). A mahogany trunk inside holds an impressive, floral-decorated, gold jug, a set of ten wool shirts, elegantly made and Gnome-sized, and a finely-crafted musical horn. Should any of the objects in here be disturbed or removed and not replaced, a wraith will manifest and pursue until the items are returned, or it is destroyed. If the latter happens, however, it will reform at full strength again and continue its pursuit at the next full White Moon. It always knows where the items are, and can reappear in their immediate vicinity when it chooses after reforming.

**60) Little Cloakroom:** At the northeast end of the passage out of area 58 is a 4 ft (1.2 m) high arched opening into this room, a small, not-quite-square, 5 ft high (1.5 m) place. It has a tall cedarwood cupboard by the southeast wall, and 10 brass coat hooks fitted to the northwest wall in a horizontal line, about 3 ft (1 m) from the floor. Much of the northeastern wall is covered with substantial patches of stinging lichen, an unpleasant wall-clinging growth, touching which causes a persistently painful, mildly poisonous, rash on exposed skin, which is almost certainly why the Gnome explorers from Dendorlig Hall Village have so far failed to detect the secret door into Hidden Chamber 61 also on this wall. The doors to the cedarwood cupboard are relief carved into the form of a multilegged, scaly, draconic beast, twisting about a rocky pathway, and which those familiar may recognise as a type of basilisk. While not locked, the cupboard doors are trapped, and unless disarmed first, by pressing a concealed switch behind the decorated board that projects a short way above the true top of the cabinet, each time they are opened, there is a brilliant flash of light that affects everyone in the room, dazzling them so as to be temporarily blinded for up to ten minutes. In the cupboard are three shelves. On the top one is an elegant, white ceramic perfume decanter, and on the middle shelf is a leather-covered wooden box containing velvet-lined compartments, each with a piece of finely-crafted silverware in it, totalling 6 forks, 7 spoons and 9 knives. The lowest shelf is apparently empty, but this is an illusion, as the shelf and the space below are actually a concealed, locked, iron strongbox, holding a selection of old Gnome coins, a single jasper gem, and a folded old brown cloak. This is Bearhome’s Cloak, which gives its wearer the ability to fly like an eagle for 10 minutes once a day, when its controlling magic word is uttered (finding the word requires a detailed magical examination of the cloak).

**61) Hidden Chambers:** Beyond the stinging lichen covered secret door in Little Cloakroom 60 (which lichen will largely need clearing away to find and open) are these two Hidden Chambers, the first a large, rectangular room with a 6 ft high (1.8 m) ceiling, the second a smaller, square room with a 5 ft ceiling (1.5 m). The two are separated by a short, 5 ft high, arched passageway. The rectangular Chamber has its long axis aligned northwest-southeast. There are some minor cracks in the stonework of its northwestern wall, and a rosewood stool near the north corner. On the middle of the southeastern wall hangs a small, oval, wood-framed, iron mirror, whose silvering is surprisingly intact. In the small square chamber is an iron tub in the eastern corner, with a lid fastened over its top. Inside the tub is a golden circlet set with three cut diamonds along its raised front edge, which edge has the form of a triple mountain peak. It has a magical aura, but possesses no definable magical properties, and is Gnome-sized. Sufficiently knowledgeable local Gnomes with historical interests, would recognise it as the Crown of the Mountain King, thought to have been lost long ago (see Chamber 51).

**62) Broken Armoury:** Accessible by doors from Chamber 55 and the passage between areas 55 and 57, this is a long, rectangular chamber, with an angled extension to the northeast at its northwestern end. Another door leads from it southeast to Chamber 63. A maple-wood weapon rack hangs on the north wall in the angled area, on which are placed an iron short sword with a leather hilt (although much of this leather has worn away, and the blade is badly rusted), a light foot mace with a broken haft, a metal-shod wooden battle-staff with several bad cuts along it, two of which are deep enough to make it unusable as a weapon, and a broadsword whose blade has been snapped-off about one-third of the way along its length, and which longer part is missing. All are Gnome-sized weapons.

**63) Arena Entry Chamber:** A square chamber accessed from area 62 by a doorway in its northwest wall. An open passageway continues northwest out of here on the same wall, around a corner to a door into the Arena (66). The ceiling here is squared-off, and 8 ft (2.4 m) high. There is a mouldy, long, black-upholstered, Gnome-sized, couch by the southeastern wall, with nine iron clothes-hooks set into the wall in a horizontal line about two feet (0.6 m) above it. A high, rosewood stool is by the southwest wall. A broken clay jug’s fragments lie beneath the couch, next to an empty blue canvas sack. A very worn wall painting on the northeastern wall shows a tiger with some slightly humanoid characteristics (especially its eyes), prowling right to left (towards the open passage) through a jungle setting that looks somewhat like the nearby Dendorlig countryside. Much of the painting is very damaged, however.

**64) Arena Gallery:** A long room, and quite narrow, its long axis aligned northeast-southwest, reached by a door at the top of some ascending stairs in a slightly dogleg part of the passage out of area 58, after it has passed the corner beside chambers 59 & 60. Its long, northwestern wall is composed of intact, large, panes of clear glass in wooden frames set in a gently curving arc over, and looking down into, the Arena (66), which are the same height as this room in total. Using suitable illumination, a similar window with a gallery room behind that glass, can be seen towards the top of the Arena’s wall opposite (110). The Arena’s ceiling has a series of regular, large, pale blue rectangles set all across it, panels which once provided magical illumination for the whole area. That ceiling lies about 10 ft (3 m) above the 7 ft ceiling (2.1 m) in this room, while the Arena’s floor is roughly 30 ft (9 m) below this Gallery’s floor level. There are signs there were once metal fixtures attached to the floor here, in lines towards the window side (possibly for seating), though now suggested only by numerous rusty holes and scrape marks there, and in places there seem to have been narrow, possibly wooden, panels fitted to the floor and/or walls. There is no more substantial surviving debris from any of these presumed features, however. The window glass is impressively robust, along with the wooden frames supporting it, though neither is indestructible. Towards the far end of the southeast wall from the entrance is another door, leading to area 65. On that door is a sign in Gnomish which reads “Toilets”.

**65) Toilets:** Down a slightly dogleg staircase from Gallery 64 is a 5 ft high (1.5 m) open, square-topped archway at the end of the short passage by the foot of the stairs. Through the archway is a rectangular room, elongated southwest-northeast, which contains a series of plain, wood-panelled cubicles containing toilets, all along its southeastern wall, with a series of sinks along the northwest one to either side of the entrance. None of these currently function, for all they are typical of the Gnome plumbing features found in the Hall more generally. There are indications some form of panelling was once attached to the wall above the sinks as well, although that has long gone. Balled-up in one of the toilet cubicles is an expensive, knitted hemp dress, dyed a rich shade of purple.

**66) Arena:** One of the largest chambers in the entire complex, this is a very elongated octagonal area, stretched along its northeast-southwest axis. From floor to ceiling, its height is approximately 50 ft (15 m). The ceiling has numerous large, pale blue, rectangles set in a regular pattern all over it, elongated in the same direction as the Arena. These once provided magical light to the whole area. They do not currently function. Around 30 ft above the floor (9 m), a long series of glass windows about 7 ft high (2.1 m) are set in a gently convex curve, looking out over and into the Arena from Galleries 64 and 110 on the central southeastern and northwestern parts of the walls respectively. Neither Gallery can be accessed from the Arena. Outside the top of the south end of the northwest Gallery window (110) is an iron bell, suspended high above the Arena too. Four doors lead into the Arena, all towards the longer ends, a little before the walls angle in to the shorter northeast and southwest walls. That from the passage out of Chamber 63 is of typical 5 ft height (1.5 m), as is that opposite, which leads to passages connecting with areas 93 to 97. The other two doorways are larger, at about 7 ft tall (2.1 m), and are broader as well. That on the southeast wall leads to area 67, that on the northwestern wall to area 68. The Arena walls and floor are plain, regular stonework blocks, without any other markings. Attached to the

middle of the southwestern wall is an empty maple-wood weapons rack. For all it is not obvious, the Arena's floor can - or once could - be changed in appearance quite dramatically, with both mechanically- and magically-controlled features, including raising and lowering parts of it, creating angled slopes in some areas, or pits, spikes and the like, while the doorways can/could be completely sealed with walls raised out of the floor, making the whole lower part watertight so it could be flooded. The temperature in the whole area could be raised or lowered too. The controls for all this are in Gallery 110. All manner of events of an athletic or combative nature were once held here, with spectators in the two Galleries. In its current state, several floor flagstones have been shifted out of position (pushed up in some cases) about halfway north of the Arena's centre and the larger door on its northwestern wall, with some stone and earth debris scattered around. There is access to one of the underfloor pit shafts here, where a group of dwarf giant boring beetles sometimes congregate and nest. These beetles are about half the size of the more typical giants of their kind, thus are about 4 ft long (1.2 m). If any are here, there can be up to eight at a time. Their tunnels out of the pit are usually in a state of semi-collapse, so could not be used safely by other creatures. Among the debris by the pit opening are scattered three pink pearls, three alexandrite gems, a small silver brush and a small silver comb. The brush and comb are Gnome-sized.

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**93) Spider Room:** Following the 7 ft high (2.1 m) passage northwest from the Forest Battle Chamber (50), or that southwest out of Ogre's End (54) which joins it, the passage broadens as it curves around to the northeast, ending in a 5 ft high (1.5 m) door into this squarish room. Another similar door is on the wall directly opposite this entrance, with a broad opening directly into another 7 ft high, long passage, heading northwest, on the wall between. This long passage has many dead-end alcoves, several doors and openings along it, as it winds its way among most of the remaining parts of Dendorlig Hall cursorily explored so far. None of the secret doors along it have been found yet. Meanwhile, in this room, there is a damaged wooden bench, Gnome-sized, towards the northeast wall's eastern corner. This is partly hidden behind spider webs all across this corner, and which extend from there over much of the southeastern half of the chamber's floor, walls and ceiling. Up to eight huge spiders may be encountered here; they have an unpleasantly poisonous bite that affects most humanoids. A discarded orange leather backpack, still holding a small number of gold, silver and copper coins of local, though not recent, Human manufacture, is concealed both by the webs and the bench.

**94) Manticore Room:** Beyond the door on the northeast wall of Room 93 is a 7 ft high (2.1 m), arch-vaulted passageway, with similar doors off it to areas 66 and 94-97 inclusive. This room is behind the first door on the right-hand wall when heading northeast, an 8 ft high (2.4 m), rectangular chamber, set with its long axis parallel to the passage. Across its longest wall, to the southeast, is a painted bas-relief sculpture in profile of a huge, classical (that is, ancient-Earth Persian) manticore, with a male Human head, mouth wide open to display its three rows of sharp teeth, a muscular lion's body striding towards the left as viewed (northeast), and a high-arching scorpion's tail, with its stinger highest above the lion's back, around 7 ft above the floor. The creature is set against a typical local, near-tropical, landscape. The room is otherwise empty. The tail-sting can be depressed into the wall slightly, which releases a hidden panel in the wall between the lion's legs, under its belly, down to floor level. Inside is a locked, oak, rectangular trunk, rather like a footlocker in shape. Starting to slide the trunk out of its hiding place without first pressing the concealed panel between the manticore's jaws, activates a trap which instantly teleports anyone touching the trunk onto the floor in the middle of the Arena (66). However, this transfers only the person or people involved. All their clothing and other worn or carried gear falls to the floor here in a heap, so they arrive in the Arena completely naked. In the trunk are over 300 silver coins, all of old Gnome type, an exceptionally fine, large, golden goblet, set with four large gemstones, placed equidistantly around the outer midline of its bowl, a diamond, a ruby, an emerald and a sapphire, along with three more gem-class white opals set as an equilateral triangle in its base, and a very well-crafted silver belt, Gnome-sized, with chased designs of intertwining serpents and scorpions all over it.

**95) Web Chamber:** An 8 ft high, rectangular room lies beyond the door at the passage-turning from northeast to northwest out of Room 93, almost as if it continues the passage, as other than its extra height, it has similar dimensions and direction. There is a faint scent of spoiled fruit and vegetables mixed with rancid milk here when the door is first opened. There are many scratches and claw-marks in the middle of the ceiling, and a few more in the floor directly below, although all these are hard to see, as much of the Chamber is heavily festooned with spiderwebs. To the left of the door inside, on the southwest wall, is a walnut cabinet. In the cabinet are some shelves, on one of which are two star rubies, two bloodstones and a leather pouch with a few old Gnomish silver and copper coins in it. A phase spider uses this room as its home lair, although it likes to go phase-travelling to hunt, so is often absent for days at a time.

**96) Arena Preparation Room:** Once used to store mobile items for use in the Arena (66), together with the passage that lies through the round-arched opening in its southwestern wall, that runs around the outside of this room to the Prop Workshop (98), this large, square chamber has a 10 ft (3 m) ceiling, and is accessed by the door on the southwest wall of the passage between Rooms 93 and 97, after its turning. There is a vague smell of rotten onions and eggs in here. A line of tall, walnut cabinets stands along the northwestern wall down to the west corner, all of which are empty. In the north corner is a locked walnut casket, which is again empty. An open-topped steel tub stands on the floor by the southeast wall, a little way inside the door.

**97) Arena Store Room:** Originally used for similar storage purposes to Room 96, this one has a 9 ft high (2.7 m) ceiling, and is accessed by the door at the northwest end of the dogleg passage out of Room 93. By its western corner along the northwest wall is a Gnome-sized torture rack with dried bloodstains on it. The adjoining southwest wall has a lot of cobwebs over it. Things are not though quite as they seem. The rack is a non-functional stage prop, and the "dried blood" is really just paint. The mass of cobwebs are latex-string fake ones as well. Underneath them all is a metal device like a combined rotary fan and handgun that spun them. It developed a fault during its long storage here, and self-generated the webs until its latex supply ran out. Hidden under the webbing too are four rounded, black stones, ideal for use as sling ammunition, and a finely-made, quite valuable, electrum chain, of a size and type suitable for use as a necklace, or from which to suspend a pendant, for example.

**98) Arena Props Workshop:** At the end of the passage out of Room 96 that winds around two sides of it, this is the last of the group of related and connected rooms accessed through Room 93 and the Arena (66). It has a 9 ft high (2.7 m) ceiling, is square in plan, and is entered through an 8 ft high (2.4 m) open, rounded archway in its southwest wall. By the northwest wall is an oak armour rack, a stone workbench with a badly cracked surface is attached to part of the southeast wall, and a large ceramic sink with a maple-wood surround is attached to the northwest wall, towards the north corner. There is currently no piped water running to it. A circular magical lamp-holder with no lamp, is suspended by a chain two feet (0.6 m) from the ceiling in the room's centre. Below this is a weaving loom. The chamber was once used as a workshop for making and repairing items used in Arena displays and activities, although the lack of a forge shows it was not used for major weapon and armour work.

**99) Wardrobe Room:** A large, 8 ft (2.4 m) high chamber off the winding, 7 ft (2.1 m) high passageway which links all the rooms nearby. Sounds echo quite alarmingly loudly in here. There is just one entrance and exit, an opening in the northeast wall, opposite which, against the middle of the southwest wall, is a huge, elaborately relief-sculpted, double door, maple-wood wardrobe. Scenic panels over its front suggest a connected, pictorial narrative, involving a group of four Gnomes, and the rescue of a land from a terrible, possibly magically-induced, winter. The tale involves a great, central, battle scene right across the width of the middle of the wardrobe, between forces of creatures and monsters on both sides that seem to represent aspects of temperate autumn-winter (such as emaciated creatures, undead or ghostly ones, and leafless walking trees, led by a tall, thin, spiky humanoid who apparently embodies the icy magics and power

of the winter) and spring-summer (including walking leafy trees, well-fed, lively creatures, some of which seem to represent the procreative forces, such as satyrs, all led by the four Gnomes, as warrior-mages). Other scenes suggest the recruiting of followers by both sides, and the fact these are placed both above and below the central battle scene could suggest the cyclical, repeating, procession of seasonal time through the year, as seen in the temperate lands, at least. The wardrobe is empty, and although there is an oily scent in the air of this chamber, it contains nothing more.

**100 Room of the Black Bag:** A rectangular chamber, elongated northwest-southeast, 8 ft (2.4 m) high, accessed from the passage outside by an open, round-topped, archway 5 ft tall (1.5 m) in its northwest wall. Just inside the archway on the right-hand (southwestern) wall, is an iron chain suspended from a wall hook, about 2 ft (0.6 m) long. To the archway's left, on the northwest wall, is a rusty iron shelf about 3 ft long (1 m) and a similar distance above the floor. In the south corner, an empty, black cloth satchel hangs from another hook fixed to a bracket spanning the angle between the southwest and southeast walls. Again, the hook is roughly 3 ft from the floor.

**101 Throne Room:** A square room, 7 ft high inside (2.1 m) with a 5 ft (1.5 m) door from the winding passage in its southeast wall. In the middle of the northwestern wall is a once-ornate, though now crumbling, yellow sandstone throne. A short way inside the door along the northeastern wall is a half-barrel of rosewood that has been made into a chair, using staves from its missing other half for a backrest. It is Gnome-sized. Elsewhere, and quite scattered about the room are: a metal knife; 18 small groups of twigs and sticks, all tied into various simple shapes with twine, some of which look vaguely humanoid, others like individual Gnome runes; a small brass shovel; an iron pot with one side bent-in so badly as to make it unusable as a utensil; a small leather pouch containing a quantity of powdered silver; a metal hammer head designed for fine work; and three short sticks of white chalk.

**102 Snake Room:** Another square chamber, this time one that backs onto the Throne Room (101), without having any access to or from it. This Room shares the same dimensions as the Throne Room, including to its door from the passageway to the northwest beyond. A little way inside the door, towards the north corner, is an empty wooden keg, and there are patches of an unidentifiable dark mould growing on the ceiling and part of the upper walls across the northwestern third of the Room. Elsewhere, there is a bent-handled spoon, the end of which has a moulded, forward-facing, canine face with Human ears, bulging eyes and an open mouth as if snarling; four rounded stones of a size, shape and weight suitable for use with a sling; and the skull of a Hobgoblin. The feature most likely to catch the attention of visitors, however, is a rather hungry giant cobra! If the cobra can be avoided, a concealed floor panel in the southern quarter may be found. In the space below it is a leather pouch containing some very ancient Human coins made from electrum, silver and copper, all of which are in remarkably fine condition; two clasps, one made of electrum, the other of gold, both of which have an identical snake-headed form; and a plain, yet still substantial, gold bracelet. So long as the brass altar remains in Room 103, if it is killed, a fresh giant cobra appears in here at the next sunset (see 103 for more details).

**103 Evil Demon Room:** The door to this chamber lies directly opposite that to Room 102, on the same part of the winding passageway. The Gnome runes for "DANGER" have been very recently, and clearly, carved into the wooden door. Inside, the Room is similar in size and shape to others in this part of the Hall, with a 7 ft high (2.1 m) ceiling, albeit it is slightly less square in plan than some, such as Rooms 101 and 102, nearby. There is a low stone bench by the middle of the northwestern wall, on which has been placed an upright, rectangular-block, brass altar, 3 ft high, 1.5 ft wide and 1 ft deep (0.9 m, by 0.45 m, by 0.3 m). It has various bas-relief sculptings over its surface, of which there is one very striking, dominant, central figure, along with a number of less well-defined, smaller objects and creatures. The larger, more identifiable other sculpted features include a standing donkey in what looks like a reed river boat, with a high prow and stern, both seen in profile. The boat's prow has an unidentifiable animal figurehead on it. The donkey is portrayed as if steering the vessel with a single, large steering oar beside it, the oar near the stern, while the donkey faces the prow (how the oar is held by the donkey is not obvious). Both these are in the lower centre of the altar's front. Kneeling on the back of the donkey, also facing the same way as it, although with the upper torso twisted to a more face-on view, is the dominant figure, a hairy humanoid with two naked, female Human-like breasts, a lioness' head with long, erect donkey ears, long, claw-like fingers, and feet like the talons of a great raptor. She holds a serpent in each hand, one to either side of her torso, and two smaller, seated, creatures, perhaps a piglet and a puppy, are placed one to either side of the figure's chest. Those sufficiently knowledgeable - the topic is quite obscure and very ancient, however - may recognise this to be an evil, disease-bringing deity, known by various names, of which "Masha" or "Mashtar" are more likely to be known by someone from Malajuri. The altar radiates an odd, weakly magical, and faintly evil, aura for those able to detect such things. Touching it inflicts a curse on anyone doing so, causing them to walk with an irregularly crooked gait for about seven days. Remaining in the Room, examining it or the altar for more than a few minutes, activates a magical trap associated with the altar. A blinding flash of light emanates from it, with a frighteningly loud rumble of thunder. Those unprotected are blinded, and possibly deafened, for up to five minutes. Against the wall below the stone bench, and not easy to spot, is a small, leather, box-like pouch. In it are a number of coin-sized discs of electrum, silver and copper, each bearing the likeness of the kneeling female figure on both sides. While valuable as metal, they do not appear to be coins. Removing and not replacing any of these activates another magical trap. The Room door slams shut, and a series of spiked, snakeskin strips, with the toughness of iron, appear in a portcullis-like fashion all over the inward side of the door, fastening it to the doorframe. The door cannot be opened while these strips are in-place (the door simply will not open from either side), and the spikes are really venomous snake fangs, thus removing this net-like seal carries the risk of becoming poisoned. Behind the pouch below the bench is a hidden wall panel, which conceals an iron chest bearing again the likeness of the kneeling female figure, placed on a metal disc larger than the pouch's "coins", and not locked. The first person to open this activates yet another magical trap. Leaving all their clothing and carried or worn gear behind in a heap here, they are instantly teleported naked into the centre of Snake Room 102. This disarms the trap until the chest's lid is closed again, which immediately resets it. Inside the chest are a small number of old electrum coins from various places and times, ten copper spear tips in the form of snake heads, a silver goblet chased with scenes very like those on the altar, and an oak staff with an amethyst at the top. The staff radiates a magical aura, and is the Enchanted Staff of Krothu. If used to strike an opponent, it causes magical damage, which appears as an inflamed lesion on the part struck (even through any armour). This uses one of its magical charges. By invoking more of its magical energy (2 charges), along with this damage, the creature struck ages ten years instantly. Its most powerful strike causes its usual damage, and the affected limb withers to become uselessly weak (3 charges). The Staff currently contains 20 charges. The altar is extremely dangerous, albeit less so here than it might be elsewhere, as its powers are mostly dormant in its present isolation. Unfortunately, over time, it attracts inimical, intelligent humanoids who would wish to remove it from here. Once outside in the open air, every place it stays for more than a day or two, diseases start to appear among the local populace, especially including humanoids, though also eventually domesticated animals as well. Those worshipping at the altar, or moving it from place to place become similarly afflicted, albeit if by choice, they will regard this as a blessing from the goddess, even though many will die as a result. A chosen few remain healthy and unaffected, becoming instead carriers of disease that they can spread still further from the altar. Investigation will suggest the only way to destroy the altar would be depositing it in molten magma, perhaps somewhere such as the Mount Imengo Naga volcano on the other side of Malajuri, some 1,200 miles (1,900 kilometres) away from Dendorlig Hall. It is possible to protect against the ill-effects of the altar (which would also prevent any of the traps in here from activating), by bearing openly, or presenting, a figurine of the dog-headed figure found on the handle of the bent spoon in Room 102. This creature is called Pazu, and in full form has a slim, naked, male Human body covered in scales, with feathered wings like a bird, raptor feet, clawed hands, a tail with a scorpion's sting at its tip, and a dog-like face with large, bulging eyes, Human ears and a snarling, open, mouth. [For those interested, Masha and Pazu are based on the real-world ancient Mesopotamian inimical deity-demon Lamashtu, and her sometime demonic accompanist, commonly viewed as defensive against her disease-bringing, Pazuzu, both from the first millennium BCE.]

**104) Shield Room:** A small, 7 ft high (2.1 m) room at the northwest end of a long, straight passageway among the winding passages in this area, accessed by a single door on its southeastern wall. On the northwest wall facing the door is hung a brass kite shield of Gnome size. Its face is weathered and worn, although it still shows traces of having once been painted with a chequerboard pattern of red and white squares.

**105) Old Storeroom:** An 8 ft high (2.4 m) rectangular chamber, elongated southwest-northeast, with the door opposite a junction among the winding passages in its southwest wall. A second door, also 5 ft high (1.5 m), leads on into Chamber 106 through the middle of the northwest wall. To the left (southwest) of this second doorway is a mahogany weapon rack that holds a heavy war hammer with a cracked metal head (one blow and it will break, falling off its haft), a rusty, blunted, battle-axe, and an equally rusty broadsword, all of Gnome proportions. Along the same wall to the right (northeast) of the doorframe are a lot of scratches and claw-marks, up to about 3 ft from the floor (1 m). A fairly badly-folded pile of canvas in the eastern corner will turn out to be a sheet of roughly 12 square feet in area (0.9 square metres) once opened out. It is surprisingly intact, and seems never to have been used for anything. Underneath this untidy pile is a vial of insect repellent, and a rusty iron cooking pan.

**106) Midway Chamber:** Through the northwestern door from Storeroom 105, this is a large, rectangular area, elongated southeast-northwest, with a 9 ft ceiling (2.7 m). A second doorway in its northeastern wall leads on to Room 107. It is strikingly unusual in that instead of being faced with local stone blocks, or planed-off native stone, the walls, floor and ceiling are faced with fired-clay red bricks, each mortared-in and about the size and shape of a modern house-brick. There is a faint scent of old rotten fruit and oatmeal about the place. The Chamber is though devoid of furnishings, except for a small rosewood cupboard hanging on the northwest wall, near the northern corner. It is empty.

**107) Fireplace Room:** Once through the northwestern door from Chamber 106, this room proves to be rectangular too, elongated on the same axis, although it is narrower, and its ceiling is lower, at only 7 ft (2.1 m), while the solid surfaces have the usual block-stonework facing, rather than Chamber 106's red bricks. There are four more doors inside the room, two on the narrow southeast wall, one on the facing northwest one, with the fourth on the northeast wall. Both the latter are towards the room's northern corner. Three are of the usual 5 ft high (1.5 m) wooden construction, but that in the northwestern wall has two doors, each 5ft wide and high, made of blackened metal. They also are each hinged in their middles, so as to fold-up concertina fashion, to lie almost flush with the walls of the area beyond, once fully opened. The small room with the angled tip beyond these is not actually a room at all, but a huge fireplace, which for all its awkward placement in relation to the room outside, could warm a significant part of that main room's northern quarter, if a large enough fire was burning, and the doors were folded open. There are two stone bench seats in here, one each on the left and right walls, so with a smaller fire, it would be possible to be warm and secluded here, even without shutting the metal doors. The doors are moulded in low-relief, with a scene across both that shows gigantic spider-like beasts in a jungle setting. Inside this area too are a large cooking pot and its supporting trivet, albeit one leg of the trivet has broken, and the pot has a hole in its base where it has fallen and struck the floor. The fireplace has obviously been used in the distant past, from the reddening of the stone, if not for a great many years. The triangular room extension at the back of the fireplace symbol shows the location of the flue above the fireplace, and which, if it can be traced, can be found to arrive at the outside surface in a similarly concealed manner to all the others used by the Gnomes. It is currently blocked partway up, and would need cleaning thoroughly before the fireplace could be fully used again. The northeastern wall's door opens into a 7 ft high passage to area 160. The pair of doors on the southeastern wall each lead into a similarly-sized, small, square room, resembling a walk-in closet, with 7 ft high ceilings like the main room. Six, quite deep, wooden shelves are attached to the back wall of the northeastern room, towards the back of the highest of which is a small, white canvas pouch containing numerous ancient Gnome gold and silver coins, and a well-made silver buckle, decorated with floral patterns and tiny gemstone highlights. The southeastern "closet" appears completely empty, although it does contain an invisible oak chest that holds several thousand ancient Gnome electrum coins. Back in the main room, towards the east corner of the northeast wall is a Gnome-sized heater shield, painted red, which is badly battle-dented, and would be unusable as armour. In the centre of the floor, towards the "closets" end of the Room, is a small iron wood-carving knife and a scatter of small, broken, fresh eggshell pieces from a total of what would have been six eggs originally.

**108) Arena Staff Room:** Towards the southeastern end of one of the longer, straight, parts of the array of winding passages in this part of the Hall, the 7 ft high (2.1 m) passage approaches a sharp corner, followed by a semi-circular spiral stair up to Room 109. Before the right-angle corner on the lower level, the door to this room is on the left-hand (northeast) passage wall. The room has an 8 ft ceiling (2.4 m), and no other exits. Although there are signs that fitments were once in this room, on both walls and the floor, everything seems to have been removed from here long ago, and there is nothing significant left. There is an odd, faint smell like fresh orange peel.

**109) Arena Controller's Office:** A short, straight passage at the top of the semi-circular spiral staircase leads directly northeast to the 5 ft high door (1.5 m) to this square, 7 ft high (2.1 m), room, which once housed the preparation area for planning and setting-out the various Arena layouts, separated from a smaller area in the south corner, where the door in, and another out to the Arena Control Gallery (110) on the southeast wall, lie, the separation apparently achieved by low (Gnome-sized) wooden counters. This would have allowed spectators to pass through to the Gallery without disturbing the rest of this chamber. Again, as with Arena Staff Room 108, aside from signs that such fitments were here long before, on both walls and floor, this area too is now quite empty.

**110) Arena Control Gallery:** This chamber is a mirror image in shape, size and character to that visible through the windows all along its southeastern wall (Gallery 64), including the missing seats and wall fitments. The 5 ft high door (1.5 m) on this room's northwest wall nearest its north corner though, has no label on saying where it goes. In fact, it leads to some stairs down, followed by a more or less natural cave passageway that averages 8 ft in height (2.4 m), before turning a corner to the northeast and straightening-up into a more typical 7 ft high (2.1 m), regularly-cut and stone-block-faced passage, with more passages and doors beyond, including to areas 160 and 166 nearby. There are different features in this room beyond that, however. A metal mirror is propped-up against the southwest wall, and a large rosewood cupboard that stretches from floor to ceiling (thus about 7 ft tall) is attached to the centre of the northwest wall. In the south corner is a 3 ft (1 m) length of rusty iron chain hanging by the wall, which passes through the glass-panelled wall by a small hole, and then attaches to the swing-pull of an iron bell that hangs outside the room, high above the Arena floor (66). The bell will ring when the chain is pulled, though it is a little stiff at first. There are large dried bloodstains on the northeast wall and floor, suggestive of a fight having taken place at some not-too distant time. Inside the rosewood cupboard are the magical-mechanical controls for adjusting the appearance and state of the Arena, creating or removing obstacles, pits, flooding or emptying it, and so forth (see the Arena notes for some further ideas on what can be done here). Not all the control labels are legible, and some that still are use archaic terms, or inexplicable symbols, which will be unfamiliar to a more modern viewer. Many of the controls seem not to work currently, while others seem not to do what their labels might suggest. Trying-out the controls can have unexpected consequences. GMs may wish to use one of the following half-dozen basic example options, or devise their own events instead: 1) A pit opens in the Arena floor, up to 1D100 ft deep and 1D20 x 2 ft across in size; 2) Walls seal-up all four of the Arena's exits, rising out of the floor (or sink back into the floor if they have already been raised); 3) The Arena's temperature raises or lowers by 10 degrees C per minute until it becomes deadly, unless deactivated; 4) A circuit-breaker in the control panel is tripped, causing one or more large levers to flick violently up or down without warning, potentially causing serious injury to whoever was at the panel; 5) A floor panel opens in the Arena floor, revealing an oak chest that holds an electrum arm-ring decorated with intertwining, serpent-necked big cats, a leather satchel containing 52 gold-coin-like small discs, each with an ouroboros design around its observe edge, and a lightly-domed, circular, piece of amber in its centre, with a roaring lion face on the reverse, and a brown leather sack containing 13 silver ingots; 6) Part of the control panel front falls off, revealing some of the mechanisms inside, which includes two, foot-long (0.3

m), brush-like objects made of silver, which are in contact with a central rod between them, made of a single, dark green, alexandrite gemstone crystal, slightly longer than the brushes, and about an inch (2.5 centimetres) in diameter. At each end of the rod is a large, pink pearl, connected to the rod by a gold ring. While these items alone represent fabulous wealth, removing this part of the mechanism causes a major malfunction - two of the above deleterious effects happen, and cannot be reversed until the removed items are replaced.

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**143) The Stone Garden:** Off the northwestern side of the winding passages connecting areas 93-109, and approached down a set of steps with an 8 ft high ceiling (2.4 m), this is a long, rectangular area with rounded corners, elongated northwest-southeast, with a ceiling around 20 ft high (6 m). The walls are relief-sculpted with foliage and tree-trunks that extend up as branches right over the ceiling, forming natural arches over the open accessway in the southeastern wall, and around the doorways out to the northwest and northeast. Both these doors have the typical 5 ft height (1.5 m) of many others in the complex, but here, they too are made from bas-relief-sculpted stone to look like foliate latticework trellises - sufficiently different to the walls to highlight they are in fact doors. The floor is covered with a pale grey gravel, except for the central raised area, which is a solid stone platform whose top is about 3 ft (1 m) above the general gravel level, with short sets of stone steps rising above the gravel to its top. At each end of the raised area is a huge statue of a tree, with a humanoid form emerging from it on the side facing into the long axis of the platform. That to the southeast end is male, that to the northwest female. The upper parts of these two statues separate into leafy branches which continue on into the ceiling decoration, in a remarkably lifelike manner. All the stonework here is a similarly pale grey to the gravel. The vegetation forms seem not to represent real, identifiable plants, and the nature of the stone too is somewhat mysterious. There is an air of peaceful calm about the entire area. Buried among the gravel are: An iron dinnerplate with a crest on its rim, although the emblem - a standing horse - is not recognisably local; Half-a-dozen wine-bottle corks; An iron bracket once used to attach a shelf to a wall; A broken-off piece of foliate-decorated mahogany, perhaps from a cabinet; A large, brown feather; Two small pieces of floral-sculpted, gem-quality, jade (in two different places); An exceptionally well-crafted gold coronet, with snowflake designs chased into its front surface; A tan-coloured canvas knapsack (empty); and A handful of old Gnome gold and silver coins (again, each one to be found in a different place). Moving about on the gravel, or searching amongst it, will arouse a semi-dormant, living yellow ooze, which is attracted to body heat, and which anaesthetizes and dissolves as food any bare skin it comes into contact with. Having buried itself below the gravel to hibernate until woken thus, and until starting to attack, it is quite undetectable, as it is able to flow around the gravel without disturbing it. Sluggish at first, heat up to and including magical fire gives it extra strength and energy, although it can be harmed by normal weapons. Such physical attacks are liable to splash parts of it everywhere, however, and it can slowly reform if scattered like this. Cold makes it become dormant, and severe cold will kill it.

**144) Chamber of Contemplation:** Through the northwestern door from the Stone Garden (143), this is an 8 ft high (2.4 m), squarish room, with two angled walls opening out from the doorway into the rest of this area. The stone door from 143 has a similarly carved, low-relief, foliate trellis design across its inner side as its outer, and the walls and ceiling here are also sculpted with foliate, tree-trunk and branch forms like those in 143 as well. There are low (Gnome-height) stone benches near all the walls away from the doorway, with a circular, open-centred, ring-bench in the middle of the floor, all of which have more low-relief, naturalistic foliate designs across them. The floor is of plain stonework paving slabs, and all the stone is of the unusual grey type seen in 143. This is a comparably calm area to the Garden, albeit here without the threat of sudden death from a dormant yellow ooze creature. Underneath part of the central ring-bench is an empty, invisible, iron casket.

**145) Bird Room:** This rectangular room is beyond the northeastern stone doorway from the Garden (143). It has a 9 ft high ceiling (2.7 m), and is elongated southeast-northwest. Another stone door on its southeastern wall leads to a flight of steps up, and a passageway to the Oasis Room (146). The stonework here of doors, walls, floor and ceiling is similar to that in Chamber 144, with foliate designs carved over all except the plain floor. In addition, many species of tropical birds have been added into the foliage, again naturalistically, if not always altogether obviously. Many are recognisable local types, others less so, and some are of kinds known modernly to be extinct. The extra bird decorations feature on both doorways and ceiling here, as well as the walls, with some birds over the ceiling portrayed as if in flight. In the middle of the room is a huge, rounded, dome-topped, metal-rod cage, almost tall enough to reach the ceiling, and approximately 10 ft in diameter (3 m). The bases of the metal rods have been solidly fitted into the floor, and inside it are posts and perches of wood. On the side furthest from the door from the Garden is a locked mesh door into the cage, of a size that even a Gnome would need to stoop to pass through. This looks to have been an aviary at some earlier epoch.

**146) Oasis Room:** An 8 ft high (2.4 m), "L"-shaped passageway leads southeast up a flight of stone steps, then turns northeast at their top, to reach this Room from the Bird Room (145). The passage and steps are made of the same grey stone, and with the same low-relief, foliate, tree and branch carvings as found in all the areas from the Stone Garden (143) to this point. The outer side of the stone door from 145 has trees and birds on it, and although the usual dense tree and foliage cover designs persists to the top of the stairs, the passage decoration after that changes to a more open, savanna style landscape, with fewer trees and more tall grasses and lower shrubs. Towards the northeast end of the passage, this decoration shifts still further towards a drier ecosystem, closer to a true, nearly vegetation-free, desert. The outer side of the 5 ft (1.5 m) stone doorway into this Room, has a solitary date-palm tree on it, alongside its open, desert landscape. Inside, the door, wall and ceiling decoration is like that of a desert oasis - an open desert landscape with nearby scattered date-palms. There are eight, irregularly shaped, Gnome-sized, stone benches in here, forming a rough circle midway between the walls and the middle of the chamber, each one shaped like a differently-formed, gently-curving, curlicue, or perhaps like undulating, small sand dunes, or even individual flames within a fire. The ceiling here is 9 ft high (2.7 m), and the floor is of plain, flat flagstones.