

# WESTERNOS' DEEP

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*Invoke dark ritual or banish a baleful deity in this adventure  
for the world's greatest roleplaying game.*



# WESTERNOS' DEEP

*There is still the odd tome in here that might describe an occult location like that which you are describing, though I'm afraid you'll be required to obtain written permission from one of the archivers in order to access it. Information on locations of that nature, even ones as old as the Deep, are kept rather close to the chest here.*

—Stranavere, Tarslemoor Clerk

## INTRODUCTION

The faded tapestries ripple in the currents of new air as the deafening sound of grating stone is accompanied by another downpour of sand. Torches of violet flame flutter about of their own accord in the hallways beyond while ropes coil down from the open entrance above. Adventurers hesitantly scale the ropes and adjust their eyes to the darkness, feet settling into the miniature sand dunes their entrance contributed to. The passage to the Deep has been opened, new explorers have arrived to pay homage to the forgotten god of death, and Westernos welcomes them.

## RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

*Westernos' Deep* is a dungeon location and mini adventure divided into two distinct sections: the first section, the Chambers of Ascension, is for a party of 4-5 characters of 4th level. The second section, the Tomb of Deadly Rites, is for a party of 4-5 characters of 8th level. The section *Running a Deadlier Deep* later on will detail suggested means of increasing the challenge of the location if desired.

This book is meant for you, the Dungeon Master, alone. You should read the entire location's text before attempting to run it. It assumes that you have the fifth edition *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*.

The *Monster Manual* contains stat blocks for most of the monsters and nonplayer characters (NPCs) found in this adventure. Descriptions and stat blocks for new monsters are provided in the appendix. When a creature's name appears in **bold type**, that's a visual cue pointing you to the creature's stat block in the *Monster Manual*. If the

stat block is in the appendix, the location's text tells you so.

Spells and nonmagical equipment mentioned in the adventure are described in the *Player's Handbook*. Magic items are described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* chapter 7, unless the location's text directs you to an item's description in the appendix.

## BACKGROUND

Long before any of the modern-day caravans sailed through the dunes or the veiled bandits began constructing their guild of sand, a funerary god of death dwelt at the heart of the desert. Uncharted and unknown, the god's dwelling place was hidden from the public eye, only accessed by the invited and those unlucky enough to stumble upon it by accident.

Westernos was a deity by which it was easy to grow a deeply devoted cult following. Isolated in the middle of an unforgiving desert and below ground, removing oneself from the ongoings of the priesthood was an enormous physical challenge, even when ignoring the psychological hurdles. Westernos' followers led what may have looked like ordinary lives at times: they followed rituals, respected their dead, prayed to their god, and even raised families. There was a clear hierarchy to the priesthood that incentivized discipline and faithfulness, eventually culminating in the opportunity to participate in the trial of ascension: a direct means of becoming as close to Westernos as possible.

The few faithful that reached that pinnacle however were met with calculated betrayal. Westernos, a funerary deity, was in fact dead himself, his physical form dismembered and entombed in a lair deep below the chambers his priesthood dwelt in. This was known to Westernos' followers; after all the god of death must in fact be dead himself, shrouded in at least as much ritual as he lorded over above. What was not known to his followers was that in the centuries of Westernos' burial below the Deep he would grow bitter of his predicament, no longer satisfied with the tiny kingdom that worshipped him.

At a point unknown in the following's history, the trial of ascension stopped being a sacred rite

which bestowed new wisdom and powers, but instead became Westernos' opportunity to use the bodies of his most faithful servants as his own. Westernos' spirit was closest to them in the chamber of ascension and he used that adjacency to render their soul from their body. After ferrying the soul to his realm of the dead, Westernos was free to use the acolyte's corpse as a shell, infusing a portion of his own essence into it and granting it some form of life once more.

These watchers of Westernos acted like tendrils, sneaking out into the world beyond and momentarily sating Westernos' lust for more. They were also what started to rot the priesthood from the inside out. The first few 'ascended' used by Westernos in this way did not set off the alarms they should have, the followers believing the newfound wisdom bestowed upon them had simply shifted their perspective and therefore their personality. It wasn't until Westernos had been using the ascension trial in this way for many years that a growing suspicion amongst the priesthood blossomed into outright terror.

The last acolyte to undergo the trial of ascension underwent a gruesome transformation, Westernos somehow mishandling his possession of them. The other priests, having used this latest acolyte as bait of a sort to test their growing concern against, were greeted not by the human that had entered the chamber, but by some ghastly, otherworldly creature. Their hands had become gnarled and extended, their fingers reaching unnatural lengths. The bottom of their robes seemed to be perpetually aflame and worst of all, where their head had once sat instead floated a pyramid, its single eye unblinking.

The remaining priests, acolytes, and followers of Westernos fled from the Deep, terrified of what the god of death may bring upon them now that his secret was known. Into the desert they ran, leaving behind their home and the lives they'd thought they were building. Over the years, the sands buried and unburied the entrance to the Deep, its location remaining unmapped. And in his abandonment and anger, Westernos' spirit grew stronger and more willful, constantly pressing against the boundaries that contained him within the Deep.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

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As adventurers first gain entrance to the Deep and into the Chambers of Ascension, much of their early path should not be met with especially difficult resistance. Instead their exploration should be colored by the foreboding abandonment of the Deep by its once thriving cult. When adventurers manage to puncture into the deepest part of the chambers that sense of foreboding must contend with their conflict with Westernos' Watcher and the obvious ground Westernos has gained in freeing himself from the prison even further below.

Depending on which adventure hook you choose from the following section, adventurers may feel significantly motivated to descend onwards into the Tomb of Deadly Rites. They may wish to reestablish the seals imprisoning Westernos, perform a ritual of revival upon their fallen comrade, or simply must search deeper for an artifact lost long ago.

In any case, adventurers that descend into the Tomb of Deadly Rites will be forced to contend with challenges that will prove difficult for them, even if they do ultimately make the choice to leave before their task is accomplished.

However, those courageous enough to remain will uncover new mysteries, discover fresh resources, and face off against the powers of a funerary deity of death. Should any of the adventurers manage to remain afterwards they will find themselves blessed with boon, magic, and treasure they almost certainly could not have foreseen or imagined. Hopefully that will be enough to help shoulder the burden of their slain party members.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

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Whether you wish to motivate the adventurers through friendship, moral responsibility, or financial gain, there are a number of different ways to get the adventurers to explore the Deep. Three such ways are described in the following sections; use whichever one you favor.

### THE FALLEN COMRADE

One of the adventurers' party members or friends was slain in recent combat and the adventurers are in need of a means of revival. Whether through barroom rumors or studies in academia the adventurers may stumble upon or have heard already of Westernos and his priest's proclivity for raising the dead. The adventurers decide to head out in search for the entrance to the Deep as a means of reviving their fallen comrade.

### CONTAIN A GREAT EVIL

Westernos' spirit still remains trapped in the furthest depths of the Deep, but the abandonment of his tomb's maintenance has allowed his will to strengthen over the years. This emerging will has resulted in the awakening of other, once dormant servants whom your party has encountered, or alternatively has corrupted priesthoods within the more settled areas of the desert. In either case, adventurers have encountered a physical manifestation of Westernos' growing strength in their world and have tracked down the Deep as its source. The adventurers now travel to the Deep's entrance in order to quell this corrupting influence.

### A LOST TREASURE

Throughout its history, followers of Westernos had a great many ways of acquiring favor in his eyes. Foremost among these was offering items of value or power to the pyre. These items were frequently stolen or killed for as often as they were freely given. The adventurers, in search of an artifact of your own design, have recently been led to believe that item is now found within the Deep. They now seek its entrance in order to plunder its depths and emerge again, the long lost treasure in tow.

## RUNNING A DEADLIER DEEP

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The layout of Westernos' Deep is broken up into two major sections: the first level, the Chambers of Ascension, is of relatively lighter challenge and designed for a party of four level 4 characters. The second level, the Tomb of Deadly Rites, is much more difficult and designed for a party of four level 8 characters. If however you'd like to increase the difficulty of either section, the following methods may be used to provide further challenge to your adventurers.

### RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

There are a number of monsters already dwelling in specific areas within the Deep, however about half of the chambers may not contain an immediate physical threat to the adventurers. If you'd like to increase the likelihood of them encountering combative enemies, simply roll on the table below every time the party enters a new area for the first time and again for every 15 minutes they spend there.

#### Encounters of The Deep

<b>1d10</b>	<b>Encounter</b>
1-4	<b>1d4 mimics</b>
5-7	<b>1d4+2 ankhegs</b>
8-9	<b>1d6+1 mummies</b>
10	<b>1 umber hulk</b>

**Mimics.** The mimics are accustomed to taking the form of ornate, elegantly carved sarcophagi in order to lure in potential tomb robbers. The mimics will allow adventurers to get as close as direct contact with their forms in order for them to become stuck, then spring their surprise attack.

**Ankhegs.** A small contingent of ankhegs has diverted from the main cluster and burrowed up through the ground somewhere within the Deep. The ankhegs are hungry and in search of fresh meat, immediately attacking if they encounter the adventurers.

**Mummies.** A few of the last bodies embalmed within the Deep have been animated by the mere presence of Westernos' will emerging from his prison. The mummies interpret any adventurers as a trespasser on hallowed ground and will immediately attack.

**Umbur Hulk.** An umber hulk's dwellings have recently been burrowed through by a cluster of ankhegs and it is in furious pursuit of its transgressors. If the umber hulk encounters the adventurers it assumes they had a role in the destruction and attacks in its fury.

## OPPRESSION OF THE DEEP

The emergence of Westernos' spirit forcibly struggling for freedom from his prison below emanates an oppressive aura throughout the areas of the Deep. If you'd like your adventurers to feel the existential weight of Westernos' emergence as they explore the Deep then you may apply the following effect as soon as they enter.

### Oppression of The Deep

Adventurers with less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of their maximum hit points will automatically take an additional 5 points of necrotic damage every hour they spend in the Deep and are pulled closer to death. This effect persists through attempts to rest, negating the normal benefits of doing so, and can only be alleviated through magical healing bringing their hit points to above  $\frac{1}{4}$  maximum. Additionally, all death saving throws made within the Deep are rolled with disadvantage.

## BOLSTERED GUARDIANS

On the second level of the Deep adventurers must face off against a number of guardian creatures that remain to ensure Westernos' imprisonment within the Tomb of Deadly Rites. All together these guardians are challenging enough on their own, but should you wish to make them especially so for your adventurers you may consult their bolstered stat blocks in the appendix.



# PASSAGE TO THE DEEP

Gaining access to the Deep is in and of itself a difficult task. The Deep Passing (the only means of entering the Deep from the surface) is a forty-foot-wide stone door set into the compact earth beneath the sand. Assuming the Passing is even visible and not buried in sand at the time, its location is not known on the vast majority of available maps and is found deep within the heart of an unforgiving desert.

## ENTERING THE DEEP

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Once adventurers are able to discern the location of the Passage and arrive there safely, they must then actually cause the door of the Passage to open to them, granting access to the Deep below. Like other elements of this adventure, how exactly adventurers do that is at the discretion of the Dungeon Master depending on how they wish to integrate this story into their own campaign.

**Slain Creatures.** In this scenario, adventurers have had to defeat enemies prior to their arrival to the Passage. After each of the four enemies is defeated, their corresponding brazier is magically lit here. These enemies could be genuine monsters that Westernos' has brought into his fellowship in the past or perhaps instead humanoid acolytes that remain loyal to Westernos, enacting his will throughout the province though not returning to the Deep. Defeating all four enemies lights all four of the braziers surrounding the door.

**Gathered Artifacts.** In this scenario, adventurers have had to obtain artifacts relevant to the historical following of Westernos. These items could be holy relics used or worn by acolytes, remains of his most devoted followers, a text that reveals more than Westernos would prefer, or any combination thereof. These artifacts are placed in small cavities found within each of the braziers causing them to alight. Returning all four artifacts here lights all four of the braziers surrounding the door of the Passage.

**Spilt Blood.** In this scenario, adventurers will evoke themes and mechanics also found later on in the adventure. adventurers add blood to the empty braziers, causing them to alight as they do so. The conditions for this blood could be as loose or as tight as you'd like for them to be. For example, you could require this to be fresh blood drawn at the site of the brazier or alternatively it may need to be blood taken from the recently deceased.

Each of the options listed here are based upon the lighting of the four braziers surrounding the door of the Passage. Regardless of how you wish adventurers to accomplish this, the door will only open when the braziers are lit and if an adventurer approaches the door and speaks the following words,

“The eye that sees all will bind all wounds and guide all that have fallen. The flames curl, but they do not burn. The blood runs, but the stone moves. Let the pyre's light grant way to the Deep once more.”

This phrase is written in Deep Speech around the eye of the torch carved into the door of the Passage, can be found scribbled into obscure texts adventurers may have discovered about the Deep, or otherwise deciphered through means more applicable to your party.

## SURPRISE ATTACK

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Regardless of how you choose to allow your adventurers to gain access to the Deep, it is here that you have the perfect opportunity to spring a surprise attack.

This attack could be undertaken by a competing band of marauders, eager to plunder the riches they suspect dwell in the Deep before the adventurers can. Alternatively, this could be an attack performed by a set of spontaneously summoned **Air Elementals**, whipping sand about and representing the desert's displeasure at passage to this distasteful location being open once again.

Regardless of what you decide to ambush your adventurers with here, the intent should be to heighten the sense of drama related to the opening of the Passage. A fight that goes poorly has the advantage of driving adventurers down into the open door and chamber beyond.

# CHAMBERS OF ASCENSION

The Chambers of Ascension are made up of the areas of the Deep that were occupied by Westernos' acolytes during the following's peak. Areas 1-7 were the primary chambers used by the following in the day-to-day events of teaching, worshipping, preparing the dead, and living beneath the sand.

Areas 9-12 are made up of hallowed ritual chambers, used only by elevated acolytes and those followers seeking ascension. It is within the deepest chamber (where ascension was once granted to the most devoted acolytes) that Westernos' influence has now broken through from below in the wake of the following's abandonment.

## GENERAL FEATURES

The chambers consist of solidly-constructed sandstone walls and floors and the ceilings are 15 feet high unless otherwise indicated. The only door is a secret one connecting Area 7 and Area 11 and is indicated with an "S" on the Chambers of Ascension map.

**Light.** All areas of the chamber are in complete darkness unless otherwise indicated. The primary exception to this being the **Truesight Torches** (see appendix) that scout through Areas 1-7. Whenever adventurers enter a new chamber or spend more than fifteen minutes in a single area roll a D20. On a roll of 16 or higher a torch is found in the chamber (if entering a new area) or otherwise approaches the chamber from a random entryway. The light from the torches emits bright light in a 20 foot radius and dim light for another 20 feet beyond that. If adventurers are noticed by a **Truesight Torch** the torch will immediately notify the **Westernos Watcher** (see appendix) using their telepathic connection.

**Sand.** Large mounds of sand have begun to pile up in heavily trafficked areas of the chambers, particularly in areas 1, 3, and 6. This is in part due to the opening of the main passage as well as movement from the memphits in area 6. As adventurers move about the chambers the more perceptive among them should notice these 'sand tracks' as well as the sand they're leaving behind.

## 1 - ENTRY CHAMBER

Enormous, fading tapestries hang from each of the three walls of this forty-foot-wide circular chamber, their torn edges grazing small hills of sand along the floor. Though difficult to discern through the muted images and tears in the fabric, these tapestries seem to portray various stages in a funerary ritual. You see several of the dead as their bodies are prepared for burial, the process's sequence broken up by the wear of time on the tapestries. At the southern end of the chamber you can clearly see what appears to be a large, floating eye wreathed in flame and watching over the depicted rituals. Ten-foot-wide hallways towards the North, East, and West all lead into darkness, though a faint violet glow can be seen in the depths of the northern hallway.

The tapestries originally detailed the embalming process as well as several other basic funerary rituals used by followers of Westernos, though it is now impossible to logically piece them together. The violet glow to the north emanates from the Pyre of Offering in Area 4.

## 2 - HALL OF EMBALMING

A dozen stone coffins fill the western side of this forty-foot-wide square chamber. Stone shelves stand along the eastern side of the chamber, rising to the ceiling and appear to be mostly empty. In the southeastern corner of the chamber sits a strange, circular stone fixture, somewhat resembling a fountain. A spout sits at the top of the structure and leads to four separate trench-shaped rows that all appear to be intended to spill into the basin below. Two hallways lead to the north and northeast while a larger opening leads to south.

The stone shelves are covered in dust, sand, and a few fleeting scraps of brittle parchment. A few stone spell scrolls dot the shelves as well, though their contents have met a similar fate. The 'fountain-like' structure was in fact a device used to assist in the development of the very particular embalming solution used in this chamber.

Each of the twelve stone coffins contain the remains of a Westerno's Watcher, in every case a sand-blasted skeleton. Each time a coffin is opened, roll a d12. On a roll of 10 or higher a **wraith** emerges, the spirit of the dead Watcher,

corrupted and angered by the imprisonment of Westernos below.

### 3 - ACOLYTE QUARTERS

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Mounds of sand are punctured with broken stone and other debris littered about this forty-foot-wide square chamber. Though most of it is worn down by sand and time, small pieces are recognizable as pieces of furniture. The wooden sets combined with the pallor scraps of fabric give you the impression that this was at one point some kind of living area. Two hallways lead to the north and northwest while a larger opening leads to south.

This room is where the acolytes of Westernos spent most of their downtime. Since the cult's disbandment time, sand, and the various creatures that now inhabit the chambers have taken to dismantling the various furniture once found here. Adventurers that make any loud noises in here reveal themselves to the **Dust Mephits** in area 6 who will then wait in ambush.

### 4 - PYRE OF OFFERING

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Hot, violet flames curl out from a 10-foot-wide circular stone brazier sitting in the middle of this 20-foot-wide and 30-foot-long rectangular chamber. The flames resemble those of the braziers aboveground and looking into them they do not appear to be sustained by any physical material. Hallways lead away towards the southeast, south, and southwest while an opening to the north leads into a larger chamber beyond.

This pyre was a staple of worship for acolytes of Westernos and the magical energy that sustains its flames clearly lives on. During the cult's prime, items were placed into the brazier as an offering to Westernos. These items would then burn to ashes while the acolytes worshipped.

In reality, while the flames are real the sacrificing of items is not. Any non living objects placed in here will be under the illusion that they are burning to ashes (even magical items) while instead they are magically transported to the Offering Pool in area 15. This deceit was conceived of in order to acquire valuables necessary for funerary rituals.

### 5 - SOUTHWESTERN WELL

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A yellowish viscous substance coats much of the 10-foot-wide circular rim of a well that sits in the middle of this 20-foot-wide circular chamber. A faint scent of decay emanates from the well. Hallways lead away from this chamber to the south and east.

This well, used in the past to collect water for the acolytes, has long since dried up and has become the home for an **Ochre Jelly**. Descending the 30-foot-deep well will lead adventurers to the hidden passage described further in area 8 alongside the ochre jelly.

### 6 - SOUTHEASTERN WELL

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The stone lip of a 10-foot-wide circular well sits in the middle of this 20-foot-wide circular chamber that is otherwise almost completely covered in sand. A small trail of stone can still be seen through the sand connecting two hallways in the western and southern walls of the chamber.

A small swarm of five **Dust Mephits** dwell in this area, attracted to the abundant sand and their fascination with death. If previously notified of the adventurers' presence the mephits will hide and attempt to ambush the adventurers. Otherwise if adventurers are approaching undetected it is not difficult to notice the mephits bickering amongst themselves and hurling sand at one another. Piles of sand fill up 20 feet of the 30-foot-deep well.

### 7 - HALL OF SERVITUDE

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Three alcoves each house a different statue in the northern wall of this 50-foot-wide and 20-foot-long rectangular chamber. The westernmost statue is of a cultist with a face hidden by robes and clutching a shield and spear. The central statue is of an armored warlord, standing regally with their blade. The easternmost statue is of a winged human figure, weapon in hand and mid-flight. Three hallways lead away from this chamber to the west, south, and east.



Beneath the central statue of the warlord is a stone plaque with words carved into it. If the adventurers approach it, read:

The stone plaque at the statue's feet is carved into with the following inscription, "*I am the inevitable obstacle. Some may hide and some may cheat, but in time we shall always meet.*"

This chamber was known as the Hall of Servitude by the cultists that once dwelled here. The statues depict three individuals within the cult's history who were thought of as exemplifying the idea of servitude to Westernos and consequently are immortalized here. This was commonly thought of as a holy area to be used for meditation and prayer for Westernos' followers.

The Hall of Servitude served a second, lesser-known purpose however: allowing passage at the appropriate times to the trials of life and ascension. If a creature speaks aloud the correct response to the Warlord's query (*death*), the floor in front of the statue descends slightly, creating a ramp to the hallway leading to area 11.

## 8 - HIDDEN PASSAGE

The walls of this 5-foot-wide, 40-foot-long, and 5-foot-tall tunnel are rank with an acrid scent. The stones are slightly sticky to the touch and seem to have a yellowish glaze to their appearance. A very dim column of light can be seen descending from above at the end of the tunnel.

This hidden passage connects areas 5 and 10. It is frequently inhabited and used by an ochre jelly to move from one area to another within the chambers. The ochre jelly is intelligent enough not to approach a group of adventurers outright, but will instead wait for an opportunity to catch one of them unawares if it becomes alerted to their presence.

**Swinging Blade.** A curved, sharpened blade is set into the wall halfway along the tunnel and is activated by a hidden pressure plate. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check spots the pressure plate, as well as the slight gap in the stonework through which the blade swings. The trap activates when more than 30 pounds of weight is placed on the pressure plate, releasing the blade from the wall where it swings a single

time and locks into the opposite wall. The creature that activates the trap must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

If the ochre jelly lures the adventurers down into this tunnel or if they find it of their own accord, the ochre jelly will use this trap to its advantage, knowing full well of its existence. The ochre jelly can intentionally activate the trap on its own and thereby take advantage of its **Split** reaction while taking no damage.

## 9 - NORTHEASTERN WELL

A 10-foot-wide well sits in the middle of this 20-foot-wide circular chamber. The well clearly has not held any substances in recent years, but the pungent scent of death can be smelled by anyone that comes near it. A hallway leads away from this chamber to the west.

The well in this chamber was never used to store water, but instead as a collecting area for human byproducts rendered during the many dark rituals performed in the Trial of Life. Any adventurers that descend the well can observe streaks of blood along its inner walls as well as a pile of human bones starting 20 feet below the floor.

## 10 - NORTHWESTERN WELL

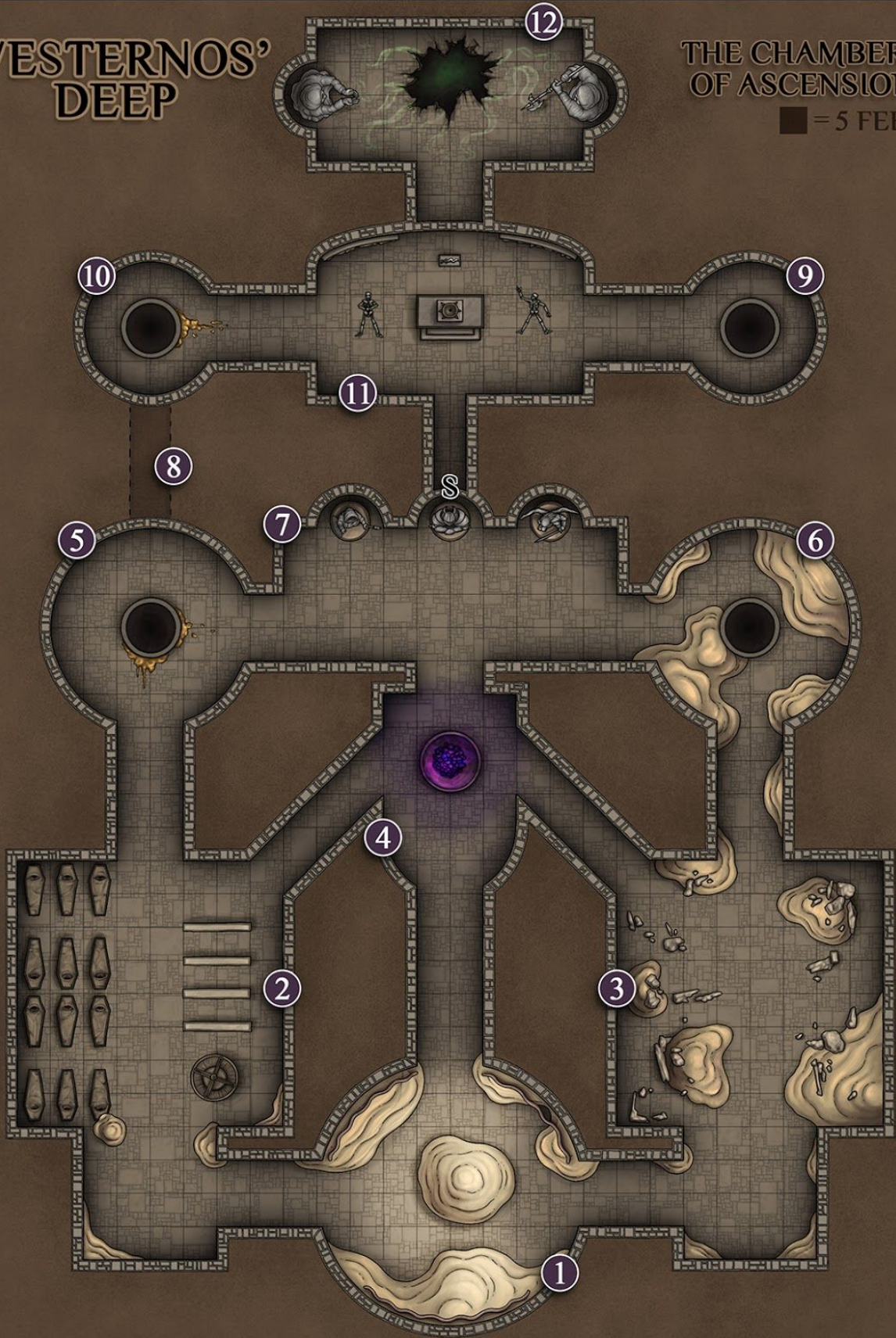
A yellowish viscous substance coats much of the 10-foot-wide circular rim of a well that sits in the middle of this 20-foot-wide circular chamber. A faint scent of decay emanates from the well. A hallway leads away from this chamber to the east.

This dried up well is now inhabited by an **Ochre Jelly**. Descending the 30-foot-deep well will lead adventurers to the hidden passage described further in area 8 alongside the ochre jelly.

# WESTERNOS' DEEP

# THE CHAMBERS OF ASCENSION

■ = 5 FEET





## 11 - TRIAL OF LIFE

This 40-foot-wide and 25-foot-long rectangular chamber features two smooth, stone slabs set onto its curved northern wall. The slabs are blank and devoid of any kind of imagery or writing. A low stone pillar sits between each of the slabs with a kris dagger resting upon it and a similar looking altar lies in the middle of the chamber with some kind of ornamental bowl affixed to its surface. The bones of two human skeletons are embedded into the floor of the chamber: the western skeleton appears to be clutching its stomach while the eastern skeleton is gesturing towards the pillar where the dagger sits. Three Truesight Torches can be seen fluttering about the upper reaches of the chamber, occasionally resting in empty sconces along the walls. Three hallways lead away from this chamber to the west, south, and east.

This chamber is where the ceremonial *Trial of Life* would be performed by the elite acolytes of Westernos hoping for ascension. On its face, the aim of the trial may seem fairly clear: using the kris dagger a creature must contribute fresh blood to the basin resting upon the central altar.

However there is more to this ritual than immediately meets the eye. When granted truesight through the acquisition of one of the nearby torches, further instruction is revealed upon the faces of the two stone slabs. On both faces are glyphs depicting a humanoid using the dagger on themselves, using this blood to write on the altar, and depositing blood into the basin. Beneath these instructions each slab features a large symbol taking up the majority of the surface. On the western slab is a glyph from the beginning of the deep speech script and on the eastern slab is a glyph from the end of the deep speech script. Together both of these glyphs represent the beginning and the end; life and death.

If fresh blood is used to draw each of these corresponding symbols on either side of the basin and finally deposited into the basin itself, the wall on the northern end of the chamber between the stone slabs opens, allowing passage to area 12.

## 12 - TRIAL OF ASCENSION

This 40-foot-wide and 20-foot-long rectangular chamber features two large statues of cultists set into alcoves on either side. The western statue has its hands together in prayer while the eastern statue is readying to strike with a halberd. There is a 10-foot-wide chasm towards the northern end of the chamber from which several green, spectral tendrils writhe about. A few of these tendrils are acting as a platform above the chasm for a strange-looking robed figure whose head appears to be a stone pyramid. A warm, rosy light casts an eerie glow from inside of the figure's robes as it turns its head at your approach, its single eye slowly blinking at you.

This chamber is where only the worthy would hope to be chosen for ascension by Westernos. If the histories can be believed, one of the high priests of Westernos would perform a final rite over the acolytes and the spirit of Westernos would "infuse" the most worthy. In actuality, Westernos takes hold of the physical form of the acolyte, ripping their soul from their body to be sent to the plane of the dead and using the acolyte as a vessel.

In the long abandonment since such a ritual was performed however, Westernos has grown impatient and the manifestation of his will has grown stronger, eventually breaking through from below and resulting in the chasm in this chamber. The tendrils of westernos spill outwards, seeking freedom from his imprisonment. At the moment, they assist the last remaining **Westernos Watcher** (see appendix) by lifting the watcher into the air and away from enemies.

The watcher itself is almost certainly aware of the adventurer's existence within the chambers due to the informative nature of the **truesight torches** (see appendix). As the last watcher it is effectively the most direct avatar of Westernos available within the chambers and therefore will listen to the adventurers in order to collect information, but ultimately has no intention of allowing them to leave or progress onwards.

**Combat with the Watcher.** The watcher should begin combat with the spell *Death Ward* having already been cast on itself once the adventurers' approach became obvious. Additionally, the tendrils of Westernos provide a platform for the watcher above the chasm and 10 feet above the floor, well out of range of melee. The tendrils do not form solid material for any other creature trying to leap to the watcher's position.

In most cases, the watcher will initiate combat by casting the spell *Spiritual Weapon*, taking the form of a narrow, flaming sword. It will then follow up in the same turn with the cantrips *Toll the Dead* or *Sacred Flame* depending on how much information it already has on the adventurers it is fighting. The spell *blight* can be used to target creatures that seem particularly weak to the watcher and as the fight drags on the watcher's use of its legendary action: *hasten passing* will make things all the more dire for the adventurers.

In the event that one or more of the adventurers attempt to gain melee access in spite of the watcher's spectral platform the watcher may choose to cast the spell *Antilife Shell*. Similarly if a ranged adventurer seems especially problematic the watcher may choose to debilitate them through the use of the spell *Blindness/Deafness*.

## TREASURE

If the watcher is defeated in combat its form bursts into furious, violet flames, leaving a pile of smoldering ash in its wake. The only object left undamaged by this is the *withering repository* (see appendix), a powerful necromantic amulet worn by the watcher. If the watcher is defeated while still suspended above the chasm the repository will plummet down to area 13 unless otherwise caught beforehand by an adjacent creature.