

THE TREASURE VAULT OF KASIL

The Treasure Vault of Kasil is designed for a party of four 3rd-level characters. Regardless of level, all parties should find the treasure vault challenging as it will take careful thought to successfully complete the adventure. Attempts in using sheer force will only result in failure. Because of the lethal nature of the traps involved, mortality rates among less cautious groups may be very high.

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ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Long ago, an ancient halfling family ruled the Kingdom of Grenthorn. The family prospered for decades, but in the end, could not survive the unceasing wars with neighboring countries. Finally, the kingdom was toppled and memory of it faded into the history books. Even the buildings have eroded away through the many years, and all that is left are ruins. During the Age of the Sorcerer-Kings, the city-states rose; the land that was once Grenthorn vanished.

It has long been rumored that most of the royal treasures of the Kasil family were kept in a special vault in their palace, which rested atop what-is-now-called Mount Ranthor in the Altaruk Mountains. There is nothing left of the palace except for a few crumbling walls, but the treasure vault remains. Many have attempted to retrieve the treasure, but no one has ever succeeded. Many adventurers have simply left in frustration; some have died. All attempts to enter the vault by magical means have failed. Supposedly, there are keys which allow easy access to the vault, but these were lost long ago with the royal family's demise.

Mount Ranthor is in a desolate area, free of humanoids and giants, and any who are willing to make the long, tiring climb to its summit find the vault and deserted ruins. However, the vault itself is said to be inhabited by strange guardians, for lights can be seen glowing on top of the vault at night. There have even been stories about the four statues that rest atop the vault attacking any who attempt to enter.

It is said that the Kasil family was so confident of the security of their vault that they invited thieves to attempt to enter it. The family has long since died, but the challenge lives on.

FOR THE DUNGEON MASTER

The Kasil family did make the challenge, but no one ever profited from it. The vault's traps are not impossible to overcome, but it will take determination, careful thought, and teamwork.

The adventurers should be able to learn additional information about the vault from the few survivors around Altaruk who attempted to enter it. None of this information should be very specific, and none of it should give any information about the traps. It should be only descriptive information about the appearance of the outside vault; assume that anyone who came close enough to see a trap operate didn't live to tell about it. Interestingly, adventurers who previously went to the vault have followed another rumor that those who leave the vault as they found it shall not be cursed. This rumor, though untrue, has caused previous (and unsuccessful) groups to move all items back into their original resting places. Even the more pragmatic and less superstitious adventurers preferred not to make the going easy for those who followed them.

The area around Mount Ranthor is sparsely inhabited, but there is a small village at its base where the adventurers can rest, purchase basic supplies, and possibly find a guide. The climb up the mountain is along an abandoned trail which is strewn with falling rocks. Encounters should be checked three times within the day's travel. On a roll of 20, there is a chance of an encounter on a 19 or higher. If the adventurers leave the village at dawn and travel all day, they should reach the vault just before dusk.

Most of the people in the surrounding area realize that there are large sums of treasure in the vault. If the characters appear to have a chance of getting inside, they will most likely attract all sorts of bandits, thieves, and charlatans who will attempt to take the treasure from them after they have retrieved it from the vault.

THE PLATFORM

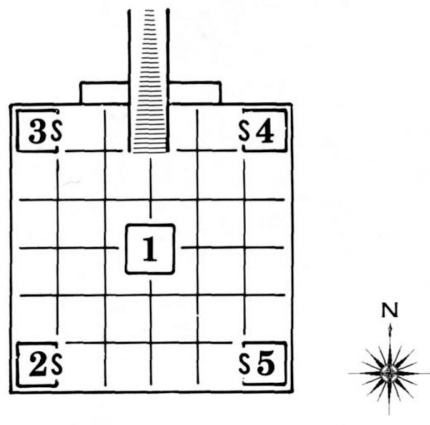
Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

You arrive at the vault as the crimson sun sinks below the horizon, turning the sky a brilliant shade of green. A cool breeze blows as the night sets in. In the midst of the toppled stone walls and crumbling buildings is a 15-foot high stone platform about 60-feet squared. Black ash surrounds the platform; a sign that powerful defilers have used magic in the area. A set of stone stairs rises to the top of the platform. Gracing the center of the platform, one at each corner, statues of winged humanoids stand on high stone pedestals.

If the characters wait until after the sun has set, they see that the platform is lit by a faint green light which comes from the statues. This light is magical and goes away at dawn. After sunset, encounters occur on a roll of 17 or higher if the party is within 225 feet of the vault, as the light attracts night predators.

Once the characters climb the stairs (or use other means to reach the top of the platform), read the description that follows:

THE PLATFORM



As you reach the top of the platform, you see that its surface is partially covered by black sand. In the center is a 10-foot by 10-foot block of granite 3-feet high. It has many inscriptions on its side, and its top appears to be flat. The pedestals at the corners of the platform are also made of granite and are 10-foot squares, each 9-feet high. Upon each pedestal is a stone gargoyle of a rather large size, peering down toward the block in the center of the platform. The eyes of the gargoyles are green stones. Three of the gargoyles are each missing one eye.

The gargoyles radiate magic from their emerald eyes (worth 50 gp each), which emit the greenish light during the night. The light has an effect on all who stand in it for longer than one hour. After that period of time, a creature within 10 feet of the statue must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature falls asleep until the sun rises and cannot be awakened other than by use of either a *remove curse* or *dispel magic* spell. This is another reason why nighttime predators are attracted to the vault, for they often find vulnerable prey here.

Removing the emerald eyes is not difficult, but anyone who does so must also make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature becomes very drowsy for the next 24 hours, at the end of which time the character must make another saving throw. Such saving throws occur every 24 hours while the creature is in possession of the gem. While drowsy, the character has disadvantage on all ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws. Nothing short of a *wish* spell can prevent this effect. Since the drowsiness takes 1 hour to manifest, it may not necessarily be attributed to the gem. The effects are negated if the gem is returned to its empty eye socket.

The entire vault and platform are protected by ancient, elaborate magical spells. Attempts at breaking through the walls always fail. The magic prevents spells like *passwall*, *stone shape*, *earthquake*, *disintegrate*, and even a destructive *wish* spell. In addition, the protective spells also prevent magical entry by such means as teleport, dimension door, or wish spells.

1 - FALSE ENTRANCE

A 10-foot x 10-foot area on the platform to the south of the granite block has been worn smooth. The inscriptions completely encircle the block but cannot be read. The top of the block has been cut smooth.

The inscriptions are magical; they require a *detect magic* spell followed by a DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check in order to be deciphered: "The entrance to the vault is beneath this block." The block moves to the south if it is pushed with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

When the characters have moved the granite block, read the following:

Now that the granite block has been moved, you see that there is a stone plate, 9-feet on each side, that lies beneath it. The square is level with the platform, and at its center is a small silver handle that appears to have been designed to twist.

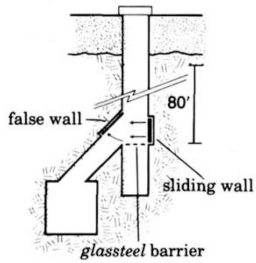
The handle twists easily, and when this is done the plate slowly slides to the east.

As the stone plate slides out of the way, musty-smelling air rises and you see a very deep pit lit by a faint flickering light, at the bottom of which lies a vast amount of treasure. There are piles of coins, gems, jewelry, weapons, and armor. However, the walls of the pit are lined with thousands of small, razor-sharp blades which seem to have a liquid dripping from them. It looks like a very difficult journey down the shaft.

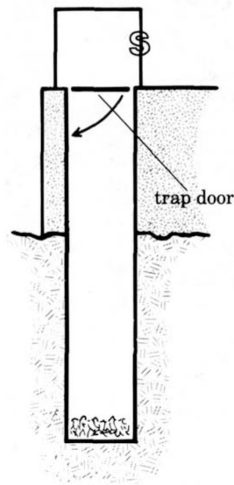
The treasure at the bottom of the pit is illusory. However, this will not be evident to the adventurers even if they reach the bottom of the shaft because of the design of the pit. The shaft is a total of 120-feet deep, but 100-feet down is a permanent *wall of force*. The "treasure" in the bottom of the pit has been cast as a permanent *major illusion*, giving the appearance of a large room filled with treasure and lit by flickering torchlight. Anything dropped down the shaft stops at the 100-foot level, leaving the illusion intact. If the *wall of force* is destroyed and a successful *dispel magic* spell is cast, the illusion is negated; it cannot be dispelled otherwise. No smoke or the smell of smoke from the torches drifts up the shaft, and any character recognizing this should be wary of the area.

Descending the walls of the pit is made nearly impossible by the small blades. anyone who tries takes 5 (1d10) damage per 10-feet they move through the blades. The liquid, secreted from the walls of the shaft, is activated when the granite block above is moved. It continued to drip until the block is back in place. The liquid evaporates after one hour, and there is enough liquid for 12 hours of slow gripping. If a creature descending the shaft is cut by the blades, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 hour. If the character is lowered over the edge on a rope, the blades automatically cut the rope and the character falls to the *wall of force*, taking 1d6 damage per 10 feet they fall. The bottom 10-foot section of the shaft is free of the blades.

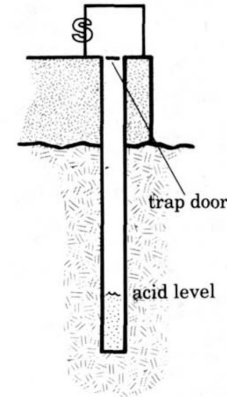
AREA 1



AREA 3



AREA 4



If over 100 lbs. of weight comes to rest on the *wall of force*, a trap springs into motion. In one segment, a tightly coiled spring lodged behind the bottom 10-feet of the east wall releases tension, causing the wall to move. This rapid action sweeps everything on the barrier through the west wall, which is a false wall hinged at the top. A successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the secret door. Anyone caught in this trap slides down a 20-foot slide into a 20-foot-square room with many 2-foot long spikes set into it. The complete process delivers 14 (4d6) piercing damage. The room is filled with the bones and decaying gear of previous adventurers. It is this thick layer of the debris that cushions falling creatures from the spikes and the damage they would normally cause.

Climbing the walls and slide is possible, but any attempts to pull the false wall open from the inside creates a good chance of falling. A successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check following by a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check indicates the opening of the door and passage into the pit. Failure of either of the rolls indicates the character has fallen again, taking only 7 (2d6) piercing damage this time.

The spring trap takes 2 rounds to reset itself, after which the trap can be reactivated as before. The spring trap can be bypassed through a number of creative means. Since it takes 2 rounds to reset, it could be deactivated by something blocking the return to its original position. In addition, anyone who weighs less than 100 lbs. can easily avoid activating the trap.

The stone plate above closes automatically, as does the granite block, after remaining open for 3 hours.

2 - EMPTY PEDESTAL

The secret door to the room within the southwest pedestal can be found in the east face of the pedestal. To open it, a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check is required. The door stays open for 3 rounds and then closes automatically. Anyone inside the pedestal is then effectively trapped, as the door cannot be opened from the inside. Of course, characters outside the pedestal can still open the door as indicated above.

When the door opens you see that the inside of the pedestal is empty except for a pile of old bones and rubbish in the southwest corner. There appears to be an inscription carved into the west wall.

The bones and rubbish are the remains of an adventurer who didn't have anyone outside to reopen the door for her. This trap has been sprung recently, as the body is still partially rotting and the gear is in fair condition. There is a steel dagger, a pouch containing three tiger eyes (worth 1 sp each), 2 cp, and a *charlatan's die* still on the body. The door has been chipped away on the inside, apparently in a futile effort to escape.

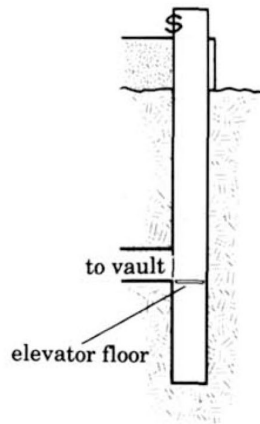
The inscription on the wall has been partially chipped away but still reads (in Old Common): "Foolhardy thief! You'll need to be much smarter to survive our vault."

3 - FALSE FLOOR

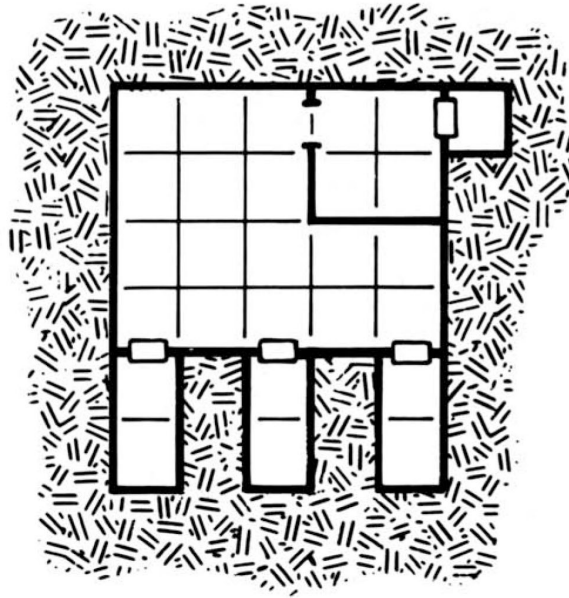
The secret door in the east face of the northwest pedestal can be found with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. It is locked with a normal mechanical lock. Once the door is opened, a spray of flaming oil jets forth from the gargoyle's mouth above in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed saving throw, a creature takes 10 (3d6) fire damage and catches fire. Until someone takes an action to douse the fire, the creature takes 3 (1d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns. On a successful saving throw, the creature takes half as much fire damage and doesn't catch fire.

After opening the door, you see that the inside of the pedestal is empty. An easily recognizable tile mosaic of the gargoyle above spitting flames decorates the opposite wall.

AREA 5



THE VAULT



1 square = 5'

The inside of the pedestal is empty, but the floor is actually a trapdoor that opens to a deep pit. If more than 110 lbs. rests on the floor, the trapdoor swings open, dumping the entire contents of the room down a 40-foot deep pit. A creature takes 1d6 damage for every 10 feet that they fall. The trapdoor then closes, resetting itself. At the bottom of the pit are nine skeletons and two decomposed bodies from which some treasure can be salvaged. Among the rotting backpacks, smashed vials, broken spears, dry-rotting armor, and broken obsidian blades are 1 gp, 23 sp, and 183 cp, plus a peridot worth 5 gp, a statuette of a rot grub worth 65 sp, and steel shield.

4 - ACID PIT

The secret door in the west face of the northeast pedestal appears to be an illusory wall (as the *major image* spell). A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a creature to disbelieve the illusion.

When the door is opened, read:

Through the opening in the wall, you can see that the pedestal is empty. In the center of the floor, a 5-foot by 5-foot opening leads to a pit which seems very deep. Slimy handholds descend along the western wall of the pit, but it is too dark to see the bottom.

The pit is 50-feet deep. The handholds line the wall to the very bottom of the pit and are quite sturdy (the slime has no effect on grip, as it is easily wiped away). The bottom 10-feet of the pit is filled with an odorless acid that appears to be water. This acid is fairly weak and does no damage unless in contact with the skin for longer than 4 rounds, after which it begins to cause 2 (1d4) acid damage at the start of each of the creature's turns.

Any nonmagical items exposed to the acid for longer than 4 rounds begin to dissolve. Nonmagical armor worn by the target is partly dissolved and takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

The floor of the pit has a 3-foot by 3-foot stone plate embedded in it. This false door cannot be moved and is not affected by the acid.

The acid is the home of a crystal ooze (use the **psychic gray ooze** stat block, except that it is invisible in water) which is immune to the acid and mostly invisible as well. It lives on creatures that stray into the pit. Any remains from past victims have been consumed by acid.

5 - VAULT ENTRANCE

This secret door can be found in the west face of the southeast pedestal. Four keyholes surround a small knob indented in the stone, obviously a handhold to pull the door open. The keys have been lost long ago (see "Concluding the Adventure"), but they are not needed to open the door. The keys deactivate all of the traps in this section.

Once the door is pulled open, you see that the pedestal is hollow and there is no floor. The room is lit by a circle of light attached to the ceiling of the pedestal. The pit before you appears to be about 70-feet deep. A strong wind enters the pedestal through the doorway from above your heads and swirls into the pit. The wall in front of you is adorned with stone heads of various monsters, many of which you don't recognize. There are 12 heads in all.

The circle of light is the result of a permanent *light* spell cast on the ceiling. Under normal operation using all four keys, the floor of the pit would have risen to the door level, stayed for 2 turns, and then slowly descended. This elevator allowed easy transport of treasure into and out of the vault. However, when the keys are not used, the floor remains at the 70-foot level of the pit. The strong wind is the equivalent of a *gust of wind* and does not allow stable flight or *levitation* within the pit. The wind originates from the mouth of the gargoyle above. It is activated when the door is opened without the use of the keys and deactivated when the door is closed.

Seventy feet below the entrance, in the western wall, is a locked wooden door. Seeing the door from the top of the pit requires a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. The door opens upward by pulling it from an inlaid handhold in its base.

The elevator floor has many pressure plates that will be hit whenever anyone walks on it, activating a trap. Once this trap is set off, the floor rises one foot, blocking the door from being opened, and gas issues forth from small holes in the wall, filling the shaft for 30-feet above the level of the floor. The gas dissipates in 1 hour if the wind is allowed to continue swirling into the pit; otherwise, it takes 10 hours to dissipate. Any characters whose skin is in contact with the gas must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a successful saving throw, a creature is poisoned for 1 minute. On a failed saving throw, the creature magically begins to turn to stone and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends and the creature is poisoned for 1 minute. On a failure, the creature is petrified until freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

Once 2 rounds have passed after the gas is triggered, the floor lowers 1-foot and tilts to the east at a 75-degree angle, dumping all upon it into a 20-foot-deep pit below. A creature can make a successful DC 13 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (the creature's choice) to avoid falling. Otherwise, each creature that falls takes 7 (2d6) falling damage. The floor then returns to its original horizontal position. The pit below is filled with shattered stones bodies and one dead body. There is nothing of value here.

If any characters manage to avoid the trap, a second is waiting. If the lock on the wooden door is successfully picked (DC 15 Dexterity check using proficiency with thieves' tools), a powerful electrical shock is given. The character picking the lock must make a successful DC 13 Constitution saving throw, or become paralyzed for 1 hour. In addition, the pressure plate is once again tripped. The door relocks and resets its charge in 10 minutes.

THE VAULT

Once the adventurers have made it through the door, read:

You have entered a dank-smelling room, 20-feet-squared and 10-feet high. This must be the true vault of the Kasils. Has someone already emptied it of treasure? Apparently so, as there is nothing in the chamber in which you now stand.

In fact, the adventurers are in the antechamber of the vault. A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals four keyholes in the wall by the door.

They are in the same pattern as those at the entrance to the vault (area 5), and the same keys could also be used here to deactivate the final traps. The first of these traps were activated when the door to the vault was opened at that time, a wall of stone closed off the archway to the actual vault. Unlike the rest of the walls in the vault and platform, this wall can be destroyed in the usual ways. Otherwise, noticing that the wall is different requires a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A character with proficiency in Arcana makes this check with advantage.

Beyond the archway is the vault proper, with three locked steel doors on the southern wall. Behind each door is a small room (10 feet by 20 feet) with shelves holding various treasures.

The western room contains coins, loose, bagged, and in chests. In all there are 25,309 cp, 20,562 sp, 11,589 ep, 12,340 gp, and 2,206 pp. As each character enters the room, he or she becomes immediately inflicted with one type of long-term madness (see Chapter 8 of the *DMG*). While in the room, there is no cure for the madness. Furthermore, for every round the character stays in the room, there is a 1% cumulative chance that the madness will become permanent. This madness is otherwise dispelled upon exiting this cursed room. No saving throws are allowed.

The middle room glistens with gems and jewelry. There are two remarkable pieces of jewelry here: a platinum scepter set with three large emeralds (worth 230 gp total), and a platinum and gold necklace set with diamonds (worth 105 gp total). The rest of the jewelry is composed of 100 small pieces worth a total of 195 gp. The 300 gems are small, semiprecious stones worth a total of 260 gp. If the platinum scepter is removed from its shelf, a trap causes the ceiling blocks and walls to come crashing down, crushing all within the room as well as any remaining treasure. All creatures within die. Recovering a crushed body is almost impossible.

The eastern room contains miscellaneous items. There are: potions of invisibility and water breathing; a vial of oil of acid resistance; a scroll containing the spells magic missile, fireball, wall of force, and lightning bolt; a rod of pact keeper; a wand of wonder (7 charges); a wand of magic missiles (4 charges); a bag of tricks; a suit of chain mail +2; a +1 greatsword; a deck of illusions; a ring of jumping; a box filled with dust of disappearance; and a gem of seeing.

At the center of the floor of this room, a 7-foot by 7-foot trapdoor swings open when more than 75 lbs. is placed on it. All caught in this trap fall into a 25-foot deep pit that holds a thin layer of clear blue liquid that instantly freezes to solid ice all that it touches. Frozen characters and items melt at the same rate as normal ice until that are completely liquefied or a *dispel magic* spell is cast versus a 6th-level spell.

Furthermore, each of the treasures is guarded with one random color of the spell prismatic sphere (as the *prismatic spray* spell). These miniature spheres (they are just big enough to surround a particular item) can be seen and negated with a *dispel magic* spell.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The adventurers may not succeed in entering the vault on the first try. The vault can become an ongoing challenge to which the party returns from time to time. It is obvious that the entrance to the vault would be easy if one were to possess the keys.