

DCC: World of Iriolis

Our Group

Player	Character	Description	Class
Bruce	Gallfred Weasel	Guild Beggar	Thief
Chris	Old Man Fish	Locksmith	Ranger
Ernest	Hemp	Weaver	Warrior
Matt	Mordecai	Gravedigger	Wizard
Patrick	Podrick	Squire	Warrior
Tim	Ned Wimbley	Beekeeper	Wizard

Tim is off visiting his Mom in the hospital. *Chris* has been stricken with the plague (actually, probably just the flu – but that’s still plenty miserable). Hopefully the rest of us are okay...

Ernest observes that it’s a bit much to hope that *any* of us are truly okay. *Patrick* proclaims his lifelong devotion to late-stage capitalism, thereby confirming that he is absolutely not okay. Nobody has thought that *Bruce* is okay for years. *Paul* stands as a lone voice defending his own personal sanity and integrity.

Matt calls in a little while later to report that he is still evaluating whether or not he can still use his hands. Also, he has only three hit points. THREE!

A Brief Disagreement

Hemp is very much in favor of venturing around the other chambers on the early part of the Pit. *Gallfred Weasel* is not at all in favor of this, because he is the one who would need to cross over the missing section of the stairway down. But then *Podrick* and *Mordecai* outvote him.

But in the near term, none of this discussion means anything because the characters are all in the crawl spaces behind the second altar chamber. They cannot enter the chamber from the crawl space, because they can’t move the altar from the inside of the crawl space. And there are eight black stone spheres on the altar, just like there were on the altar in the *first* altar chamber – and most of the characters have looked at them and come up with nothing because they’re all ignorant.

The characters make their way back to the first altar chamber for another attempt with the black stones. *Mordecai* looks at them. He dismisses them as nonmagical, but suspects there is a reason for them to be where they are. Maybe something needs to manifest into them? They might be vessels for something otherworldly. *Podrick* picks one up and flings it to the ground. It breaks and turns out to be just a rock. *Hemp* decides that broken stone spheres are better than intact stone spheres. He breaks the rest in the first altar area.

Podrick and *Hemp* resolve to kill the tentacle mass in the second altar area. They open the door, are not even a little surprised by the octomass, and dispatch it out of hand. They go into the altar room, dispose

of the foul-smelling incense, stash the incense burner (worth 10 gp), and push the altar aside so the characters have access to the crawlways behind it.

Everyone except Gallfred notices that there is *another* cave entrance underneath the walkway. They also notice that there are a lot of tentacles going in and out of the opening, enough that anyone trying to traverse it would have a 1-in-6 chance of getting grabbed by a tentacle.

The characters continue down, until the stairs are nothing but worn stubs. There is a 15' gap to the next landing. There is also a pitted greenish metal gong mounted on the edge landing. Pressed by the others, Gallfred Weasel tries climbing over to the landing. He *almost* falls when a fragment of stair gives way, but is luckily able to use his grappling hook to latch onto the wall of the Pit and pull himself across.

Gallfred secures the rope so the others can get across, then examines the door. He finds no traps, so he opens the door to reveal a rocky passageway sloping down at a steep angle. A faint moan drifts up from the darkness. He steps out of the way to let the others lead the way to certain death.

The Tentacle-Cultist Hatcheries

The characters examine the passageway. There are bricked-up entries to either side, and the moaning comes from behind the bricks. Mordecai sees how Podrick is looking at the bricks and volunteers, "I have a shovel!" Both of them are convinced that there must be great treasure behind the bricks.

Podrick starts chipping at the mortar. A weak voice from behind calls out, "No! Why! I'm not done!"

"Not done with what?"

There is no answer.

Podrick removes a brick and shines a torch inside. He sees a small, shallow cave. Inside, there is a gray-robed cultist weak from hunger and thirst. The cultist rushes at the gap with a dagger! Hemp shoots him down. And Podrick stabs the tentacle mass that emerges from his body.

There are three more chambers. The second includes a man dressed like a peasant, apparently studying a scroll of dull gray leather. In the darkness. He cries out, "Who are you?"

"Have you become the god yet?"

"I am studying the scroll!"

"Perhaps you don't have the right scroll. Please hand it out so we can check it."

The would-be cultist is not pleased, "Are you threatening my initiation into the cult? Get out of here? I have to memorize these chants!"

Hemp shoots him.

There are no tentacles, because he wasn't quite ready yet. Fortunately, this now means that there is a body for Mordecai to work his magic on. Plus, there's the scroll! Mordecai finds that it is a treatise on tentacle-controlling magic. Mordecai thinks that after an hour of study he might be able to control the tentacles of the pit beast.

As a safety measure, Hemp and Podrick carefully dismount the gong. There will be no general alarm if they can help it. Then they open up the next chamber – and are rewarded by tentacles! Podrick chops them to pieces. Oddly, there's no human host left behind. Hemp speculates, "I guess it was bored. I wonder how they get the lone tentacle masses to follow orders."

There is pained moaning coming from the last chamber. Podrick opens it up. There is a guy inside, dressed like a priest of *Jopha the Healer*. He croaks out, "Who are you? You don't look like those damned cultists!"

Hemp assures him, "We're here to free people and murder cultists. But before we let you free, what's up with the moaning?"

"I was just bemoaning my status in the world." He assures the others that he hasn't yet been implanted with anything. He believes the process involves drinking a potion of some kind. And he asks for some water, which the characters provide.

The priest drinks and eats from the characters' supplies. He introduces himself as *Berrenon Redstream*, a 32-year-old human cleric with black hair, red eyes, and smooth white skin. He stands only 5' 3", so he's pretty stout. And he has an oblong face that Podrick quite fancies. Much more important, he's willing to try and heal Gallfred. Even though he's not very pleased with the way Gallfred's soul is tainted – and he tells Gallfred as much.

Hemp points out, "We tell him that all the time, father."

"I would be happy to take you under my wing and cure you of your sinful ways."

Gallfred answers, "I'm flattered by your offer, maybe even a little bit curious, but I just don't swing that way."

"That curiosity you feel, that's your conscience!"

On the plus side, the characters have a new companion: Berrenon the cleric! And he's very willing to heal Podrick, who is in tight with Jopha's commandments.

An Anchorite Moment

The characters brick themselves into one of the chambers for the hour needed for Mordecai to learn the *control tentacle* spell. It turns out that this spell isn't particularly useful except to casters who have been corrupted by the tentacle monster – but at least Mordecai can cast it using the scroll.

Control Tentacle

The control tentacle spell can be cast by wizard or elf who studies and reads from the writings of the cult of the great pit-beast, or who gains powers by drinking select potions (see area 2-10). When cast as a spell, it can only be cast by reading from a scroll; it cannot be cast via memorization by any creature not corrupted by the great pit-beast. When cast as a spell, it requires a minimum of 1 point of spellburn per casting, and automatically causes corruption as described below (but the caster will not know this until he sees the results). Note that if multiple casters attempt to control the same tentacle (e.g., via control tentacle while also facing the cultists), the highest result wins. The spell functions as follows:

Level: 1

Range: 100'

Duration: Ongoing with concentration

Casting time: 1 round

Save: None

Manifestation: Summons a tentacle if one is within range and also allows control of a tentacle within range. This spell has little value outside of the presence of the great pit-beast. It always causes corruption; roll 1d6 to determine type: (1) caster's skin takes on a grayish pallor, (2) caster's fingers lengthen 1" and the joints loosen, taking on an eel-like appearance; (3) caster's hair thickens and becomes more elastic, and is painful to cut; (4) the whites of the caster's eyes turn a raincloud-gray color, and his pupils and irises vanish completely; (5) the caster grows a ring of small, wriggling tentacles around his belly; (6) one of the caster's limbs, randomly determined, turns into a tentacle, causing a -5' reduction in speed but increasing his reach by 12" or 36" if he extends it fully.

1	Spell fails, but spellburn is still expended and minor corruption automatically happens. Spell can be attempted again.
2-11	Spell fails, but spellburn is still expended. Spell can be attempted again.
12-23	The caster may summon one tentacle to a point within 100'. A long, slender tentacle of the great pit-beast emerges at a directed point. It is hundreds or thousands of feet long, stretching to the bottom of the ravine. Alternately, if a tentacle is already present or summoned, the caster may give a single command to an already-summoned tentacle: move, grab, crush, drop, or carry.
24-31	The caster may summon two tentacles or issue commands to two already-summoned tentacles.
32+	The caster may summon three tentacles or issue commands to three already-summoned tentacles.

The Tentacle Ravine

The characters move down the corridor to find that it ends at a ravine. Tentacles are visible writhing down in the depths. A weird ululating sound trails up to them. They are able to see a drawbridge flush

against the opposite wall. This would seem like an opportunity to use *control tentacle*, but Mordecai is notably unwilling to entertain corruption by the tentacle beast. So as an alternative, Hemp borrows Gallfred's grappling hook and tries using it to grab hold of the chains so Podrick can pull the drawbridge down. He tries three times without success. Then the characters scuttle away back to the tentacle hole.

Descent Through the Tentacle Hole

The characters go back to the spiral descent and the giant tentacle hole. This is quite an experience for Mordecai, who hasn't previously seen it. The others are quite blasé about the experience. They lead Mordecai past the giant tentacle-juicing wheel and then to the room beyond where cultists once practiced fighting and tentacle control and other dark arts. Gallfred sneaks through the area, looking for risks. From the north, he hears people talking and a scraping noise.

Gallfred moves forward without making a sound. He sees two cultists overseeing four peasants collecting up tentacle fragments left behind from when the tentacles in the Pit scrape against the walls of the Pit. Gallfred chooses to avoid attempting to sneak attack a cultist. Instead, he goes back to warn his companions.



Berrenon *blesses* Podrick. He tries to do the same for Hemp, but Jopha looks upon his request with disfavor.

The characters move into position and attack! Gallfred obliterates a cultist with a sling stone, leaving behind a tentacle mass. Hemp skewers the other. Another tentacle mass enters the field. Podrick and Gallfred deal with both of them.

Mordecai casts *invoke patron* and uses it to summon up a giant ant.

It is about this time that Berrenon comes to the front and starts preaching at the peasants. The others think he's overreacting until one of the peasants calls out, "Slay the unbelievers!" Apparently, the peasants totally drank the Kool-Aid. Gallfred takes some subdual damage as they attack with their bare hands.

Podrick finds himself facing a question of honor – how can he fight unarmed foes? He finds an answer: he sheathes his sword and fights one with his bare hands. But he hits a peasant so hard that he inflicts fatal internal bleeding. Hemp the Weaver and Gallfred Weasel have no such compunctions – they fight back with weapons, though it turns out that Hemp is a much more effective swordsman.

The Cultists Have a Friend

The characters have just about dealt with the evil peasants when a giant tentacle beast comes rampaging into the cave. Podrick evades its strikes. Gallfred Weasel surprises even himself by rushing to the attack. His blade bites deep, and the creature recoils in dismay. Apparently, it has no fondness for the dark magic of Gallfred's blade.

Mordecai's summoned ant clatters at the *toan*. The toan reaches out with its tentacles and grapples the ant. The ant is helpless. Hemp the weaver shoots the toan, freeing the ant in the process.

Berrenon is quite upset at the situation, "This is a creature of pure chaos!" He steps up to the toan and bonks it with a cudgel. The toan barely notices. Then Gallfred Weasel strikes deep, and the magic of his blade kills it dead. And about that time, Mordecai's second giant ant shows up.

More Caves

There's another cave beyond. It looks like it would have been very homey for a pit beast. Sadly, pit beasts aren't very much for collecting treasure, so the characters turn around and head south down the tunnel beyond the giant tentacle shaft.

The ants lead the way, right until they find a closed door. Podrick checks it out. Behind the door, he finds a room! It's a barracks room full of triple-decker bunks for cultists. It smells terrible because cultists don't bathe regularly at all. Gallfred isn't concerned about smell, he dons a robe as a disguise. And then, further down the corridor there is another similar room. Between the two barracks there is space for up to 30 cultists. But nothing of value, except for a single *flask of whiskey* that Podrick claims.

The Church of the Owl-Faced God

Beyond the barracks, the characters find a large chamber paneled in wood. At one end there is a 12' statue carved from olive-gray stone of an owl-faced figure with two tentacles in place of wings. There are several straw mats in front of the apparition, and three cultists prostrate upon them.

Hemp shoots a cultist, trying to staple the man to his mat, but he barely misses.

One of Mordecai's ants clatters in and snaps a cultist's head off. As usual, a tentacle mass tears itself out of the man's body.

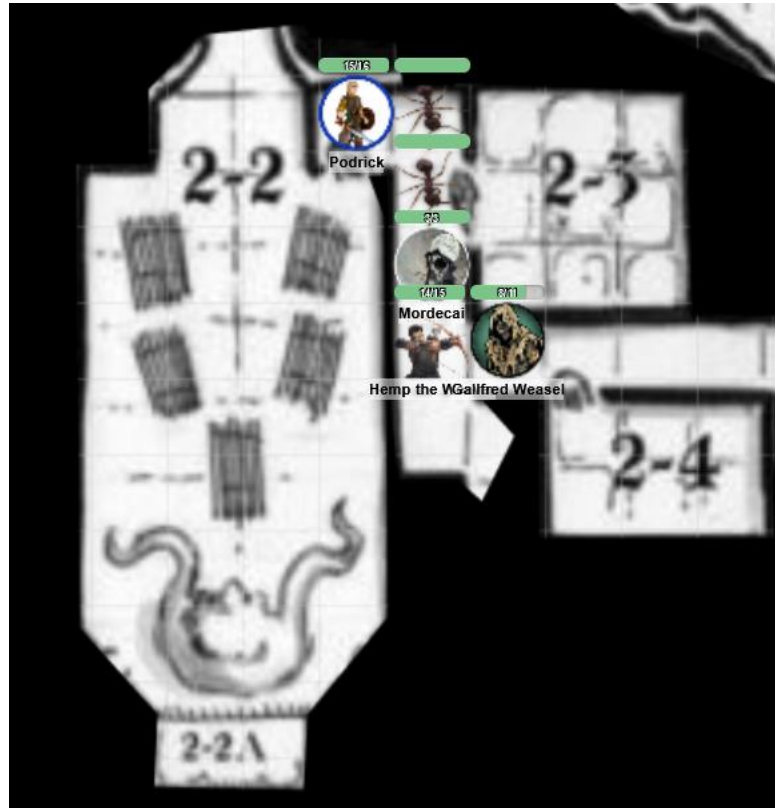
The cultists spring up and flee. One opens a sliding concealed door along the wall. He and his comrade both attempt to make good their escape, but Podrick chases one down and eviscerates both the cultist and the tentacle beast hiding within.

Gallfred Weasel moves in and searches for (portable) treasure. He notices that the suckers on the 12' statue are embedded gems. Also, delightfully, he observes no traps on the statue. He ignores the sounds of Hemp the Weaver running after the surviving cultist.

Hemp finds the cultist in a small bedchamber behind the statue. Mordecai's ants are on his heels and chew the cultist apart. An emergent tentacle mass leaps upon one of the ants and starts to crack its shell. In spite of this, the ants manage to destroy the tentacle mass.

Berrenon is very much in favor of defacing the statue of the owl-god. He commences a long prayer chant of desecration. He *also* wants to take the gems so they can be donated to the poor and the needy. Gallfred gives Berrenon lip service on this goal as he pries gemstones out of the statue. He is deeply annoyed by the fact that Berrenon makes a quick count and announces that there are 32 gemstones, and obviously expects that all of them will be donated to the Temple of Johpa.

- 32 gemstones, worth 10 gp each



There is a perforated grille upon the wall behind the statue's head. Further searching reveals that there is a hidden stairway leading up to a platform – so a priest can speak through the grille and make it sound like the statue is speaking in a doubtless-ominous tone.

Mordecai convinces Berrenon to try healing his summoned ant. Berrenon's attempt draws immediate retribution and disapproval from Jopha. Berrenon waits, "Oh, somehow this innocent ant is a servant of chaos!" He indicates that he must immediately sacrifice. Podrick hands everyone 6 of the gemstones from the statue. Berrenon promptly sets up a fire and burns his share of the gemstones.

The Ranking Cultist's Bedchamber. And Lab.

The bedchamber hidden behind the temple looks like the quarters of a higher-ranking cultist, but the furnishings are fairly mundane. The characters find some clay figurines of humanoid figures, and an ink drawing of a creature with a lot of tentacles. There is a chest that contains some sundries, plus ink and paper in a writing desk. Gallfred convinces the others that paper and ink have no value and takes them all.

Hemp moves the writing desk and discovers a small hole in the wall that leads through to an alchemical lab. The lab is very warm. Strange bottles and containers containing unusual chemicals are stored against the door. There are six vials of viscous red fluid and ten vials of silvery viscous fluid.

Mordecai moves in to investigate. He finds ten piles of gray dust upon a table. As he draws near, they form themselves into humanoid or animal shapes and start to move away from him. The dust figures do not react to the proximity of either red or silver fluids. So Mordecai tries setting one on fire. That turns it into ash that stops moving.

Berrenon is convinced that the potions and dust must all be destroyed, an idea that everyone else pushes back on hard. He calls Gallfred aside and gives him a pep talk on the need to not be corrupted by his companions. Gallfred weaves him an utterly bogus story about his troubled upbringing, which Berrenon swallows wholesale.

The Furnaces

The characters move beyond the alchemical lab. Podrick finds a room that is incredibly hot, dominated by two massive furnaces. Three cultists man the furnaces. Mordecai sends his ants to the attack! The ants chomp at two of them. Gallfred Weasel (who is being more than normally brave) kills the third. The area fills up with hostile tentacle masses. Hemp the Weaver cuts one apart. Podrick flings another into a furnace. The ants play tug-of-war with the last one. Fatal tug-of-war.

The characters look inside the furnaces. They have piles of gray powder inside, apparently the ground tentacle sucker remnants being baked out into a potion ingredient.

Podrick takes a shovel.

Woodshop

Podrick leads the way further into the compound. He finds a gray-robed cultist working in a workshop for woodworking and tailoring. The cultist rushes him with a hammer. Podrick stabs him, then finishes off the tentacle mass.

Hemp the Weaver moves in and claims some sewing and woodworking tools. Podrick takes a couple of bolts of (mostly gray) cloth.

Storeroom

The characters find the cultists' supply cache. It includes:

- 5 daggers
- 12 yards of gray fabric
- 2 yards of crimson fabric
- 4 baskets of tentacle suckers
- A clay jug of flour (probably)
- 3 clay jugs of water
- A flask of wine
- 3 woven mats (rolled)
- 5 1 lb. cubes of moist clay

- 20 feet of chain
- 1 piece of chalk
- 100 feet of woven cord
- A basket of ivory tiles
- A stick of charcoal

Gallfred takes the flask of wine. Hemp the Weaver claims a lot of the rest of it, because such things are surprisingly valuable in a pre-industrial society. And the characters take the flour and some water, because that's easy to turn into a nourishing flatbread.

Gallfred observes, "Most of these cultists have no mouths – they don't have any facial features. How are they eating anything?" There's some thought that the food might be there for the low-ranked members who haven't yet embraced the gift of tentacles.

The Swimming Pool

Podrick leads the way along to another room. It is 25 feet long, dominated by a deep pool of murky brown water. There is a door on the other side. Hemp tries dredging the pool with his recently acquired chain. He learns a couple of things. First, the pool is deceptively deep. Second, the chain is slowly dissolving – the liquid isn't just water. The characters turn around, because there's more to explore to the north of the temple chamber.

The Maze Chamber

The characters find a circular room made from a strange olive-gray stone. The floor is patterned into a maze-like pattern in white and black marble. There are seven exits, each in the shape of an egg, leading off to another chamber.



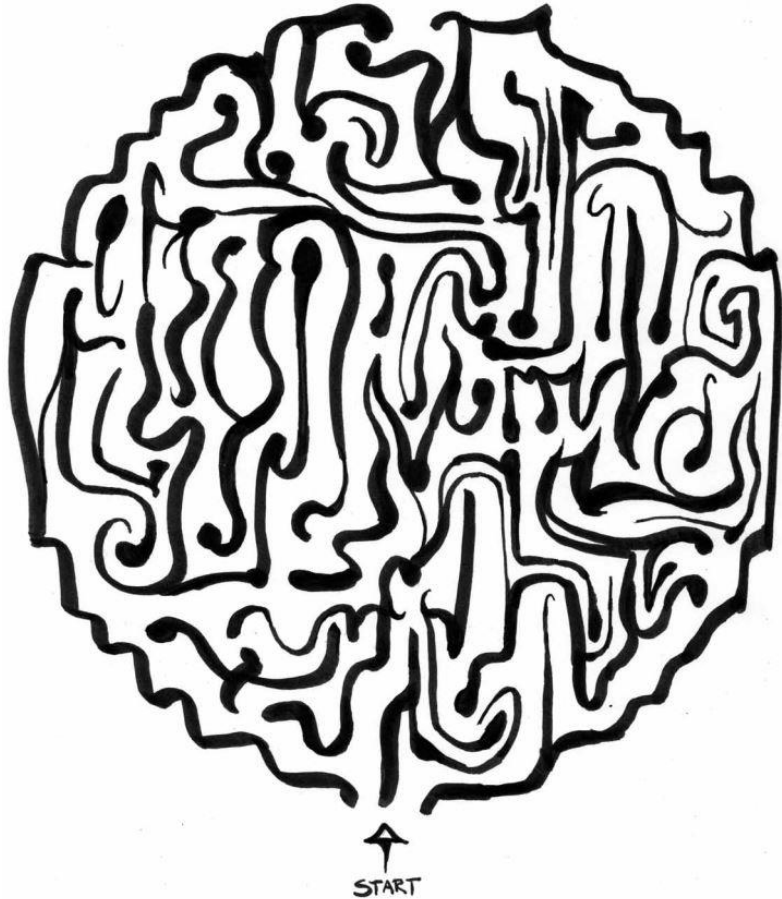
Mordecai sends one of his ants into the chamber. It walks across white marble, and nothing happens. It walks over black marble and suffers a painful entropic shock.

Fortunately, the ant survives.

Mordecai is a big-brained wizard and sets himself to solving the maze. He tells the others that it isn't all that hard. Then he proves it by walking into the maze.

Once Gallfred is satisfied that Mordecai is carrying something of salable value, he follows the wizard into the maze. Podrick and Hemp wait at the entrance. They watch as Mordecai and Gallfred reach the exit and vanish.

Podrick grumbles, "Well, fiddlesticks. I guess we need to solve the maze now. Unless one of you kept notes on the path they followed?"



Loyal Servant of Bubbububils

At the end, those who have solved the maze find themselves in front of two doors of white marble. They pass through, into a room with another maze... a room that turns out to be on the other side of the drawbridge on the level above. And it's very easy to lower it from this side.

The doors on the other side of the upper maze room lead to a sloping pathway lined with urns of clay. Gallfred tells the others, "The flagstones are linked to wall sections that slide out and block the way back. We can go down this hallway but may not be able to come back." He helpfully marks the trapped flagstones with flour so the group can pick their way down to the turn in the hallway.

The corridor widens and the ceiling rises into a bell-shaped chamber, ending in a massive wooden double door. A huge, gurgling frog creature sits in front of the door. Its beady eyes focus upon the characters, and it opens its huge, soft mouth.

Berrenon tells the others, "It's a demon toad! Servant of the underworld lord Bubbububils!"

The toadlike monster moves its mouth, but sounds come into the characters' heads. "What would you demand of Bubbububils?" It is commanded to follow the orders of the cloaked ones, and to exclude all outsiders. It does not know what is behind the wooden door, and wishes only to serve its demonic lord, the Eternal Toad of Swampy Dankness.

The creature is actually quite talkative about its loyalty and dedication to its demon lord.

Gallfred suggests, "Anyone who talks this much about their loyalty is really just looking for an excuse to not be loyal." The demon toad doesn't think much of this idea – it burns Gallfred's mind in retribution.

Podrick asks, "How long have you been here?"

"Four years. As a toad I can hibernate for ages. But as a creature of great mental powers, it is nice to have someone to talk to."

Mordecai does his best to negotiate with the demon toad, maybe by getting his own chaotic patron to intervene with Bubbububils on the demon toad's behalf. The Amphibious Lord. The Egg-Layer. The Toad-Singer. He is hampered by a lack of leverage – there's not much he can offer that the toad needs.

Gallfred observes, "I am very impressed with the capabilities of the cultists. Everything I have seen so far is that they are distinctly bargain-basement. I hadn't thought that they were capable of manifesting a guardian of such impressive might!"

Berrenon whispers in Gallfred's ear: "No Gallfred, you must not praise the powers of Chaos! Their powers are illusionary!" Gallfred rolls his eyes.

The characters conclude that trying to attack the demon toad is a quick way to die. They go back downstairs via the maze.

Maybe the Winding Hallways?

The characters can get to the seven winding hallways that lead out from the maze chamber. Podrick tries looking down one. He observes that the hallway turns and moves in an unpredictable manner. They might be the interior of an array of tentacles. Everyone thinks that there is unlikely to be a percentage in venturing into one. So the characters go to the third floor instead. This takes a half-hour and the two ants evaporate by the time everyone has reached their destination.

The characters explore the third level. They quickly find another maze room, but this time the lines are faint, drawn only in eldritch power. And they are close enough together that it isn't possible to walk them. Hemp and Podrick call Mordecai over to offer an expert opinion.

Mordecai is easily able to detect the lines of power. He thinks that an arcane check and some spellburn would be enough to transport him to any place within the compound (or to the pattern on the second floor if he isn't thinking of a specific destination). He tells the others, "This one isn't complete yet, and it's only usable by a spellcaster. It'll take you to a random place."

The others buy this explanation entirely.

Iron Chest! Plus Three Bedrolls. Plus Cultist

Podrick finds a circular room with three bedrolls and an iron chest. This draws Gallfred Weasel right in, right into the hands of the cultist waiting in ambush. Doh!

A yellow-robed cultist fails to cast *arms of palimdybis*. Then he fails to *summon tentacles*. Then Hemp shoots him, which he doesn't much like. Then Podrick slashes him, which he likes even less. And then Berrenon preaches at him, which he likes least of all.

The cultist's ongoing stream of misfortune ends when Gallfred trips and falls while trying to hit him in the so-called "stabular vein." This amuses him so much that he doesn't even manage to hit Podrick in response.

Finally, Hemp manages to cut him down. And as usual, an octomass explodes from the cultist's fallen body. Podrick has been so used to ending those things that he doesn't even notice killing it. He has been learning from Gallfred, though: he searches the cultist's robes and finds an egg-shaped talisman of gold, which he promptly pockets.

The chest holds:

- fresh robes (yellow),
- food,
- 5 vials of blood,
- several vials of alchemical components, and
- a vial of glittering gold dust

Altar of Horrors

The characters continue on and find a square room. The far end is an altar made from gray-green stone. The other end is blocked by a horrific statue, a writhing mass of carved black tentacles, grouped around several orifices and mouths. Mordecai orders one of his ants to find a path through. This triggers a crescent-shaped blade to fall from above, cutting the ant in half.

Gallfred does his best to disable the trap by finding and halting the pressure plates that trigger it. He tests and gets through successfully. The others follow him.

From close up, it is clear that the altar is carved in designs showing primordial eras of life. There is an egg-shaped hollow in the top of the altar, sized appropriately to fit the gold talisman Podrick found. Podrick tries it, even though Gallfred goes on record that this is a terrible idea.

Everyone vanishes.

Everyone is transported. They find themselves in a round chamber. An empty eggshell sits upon an altar along the wall. A comely maiden is chained to the wall, and a tentacled beast similar to the toan the group already encountered squats in front of her.

Hemp the Weaver slashes at the toan, trying to drive it away from the captive girl. Podrick stabs, hoping to tie the monster's tentacles. Both of them find that it is highly resistant to non-magical attacks. But it ignores both of them in favor of Gallfred, because his LUCK is 1. But contrary to that, he is actually able to evade the thing.

Berrenon *blesses* Podrick, giving him a bonus to all attack rolls. And Mordecai's *summoned* ants show up again, ready to cut through tentacles.

Gallfred strikes and shears through the creature, leaving it near dead. It lashes out at him, slamming him into the wall and almost killing him. Gallfred spits up blood.

Berrenon decides that he would like to *paralyze* the toan. He charges up his weapons with power. Which does nothing in the short term. Especially because the ants finish the creature off a moment later. Huzzah!

The End of the Session

Hemp gains +1 XP for last session, because he killed a 4HD monster in a single heroic strike.

Mordecai gains +1 XP because he solved some puzzles, just like wizards are supposed to do.

All of the characters gain 11 XP. This is enough for Gallfred and Podrick to go up to 2nd level.