

THE CONEY-CLIFF CRYPT



A 30-Minute Dungeon (Developed)

The Coney-Cliff Crypt is a 30-minute Dungeon Challenge, as set out by Tristan Tanner in his Bogeyman Blog. It was designed for 5e D&D by Karl McMichael. Graphics are public domain.

A one-shot adventure for 4-6 adventurers

by KARL McMICHAEL, adapted for FORGE OUT OF CHAOS by FEN ORC

THE CONEY-CLIFF DISAPPEARANCES

Pay me a coin and I'll sing you a
song
Of five youths from the Village who
came to sad wrong
One was a lover and one was a fraud
And one a fine lady who trusted her
sword
One was a dreamer and one was a fool
And not one came home again, no one
at all.

— old song

Background

A Necromancer has enslaved a tribe of Svarts, insisting he can raise the skeleton of a Dragon with human bones and sacrificial ritual. To this end the Svarts have been luring villagers from nearby Dunnerton into nefarious traps then turning them over to the Necromancer. An adventurous gang of local teens has entered the dungeon and (mostly) been killed or captured.

The Hook

Disappearances have been occurring around the old crypt on Coney Cliff overlooking Dunnerton: recently five teenagers from the village went out to investigate but never returned. They are Devonna (gentlewoman), Tad (woodsman), Nedward (scribe), Hedrick (militiaman) and Genelle (rogue). The Elder fears something eldritch and ineffable may be going on. You have been sent to retrieve the disappeared youngsters or bring back their bodies.

Rumours (d8)

1. Fairy gold has been appearing in rabbit holes: those who take it will never be seen again (*misleading*)
2. Wailing can be heard on nights when the wind carries from the north (*true but irrelevant*)
3. The Crypt is a temple of Necros, sanctified by a holy order many decades ago (*false*)
4. The Crypt is the final resting place of the Briar Knights, an oathsworn order (*true*)

5. The vanished teens were forced to investigate by the mayor as punishment for delinquency (*false*)
6. The Elder is in on the disappearances and taking bribes from a group of bandits (*false*)
7. Coney Cliff is a disused cemetery (*true*)
8. Coney Cliff was a popular suicide location for the region (*true but irrelevant*)

Investigating the Disappearances

Research opportunity

The Hook and Rumours provide all the information players need to start the scenario. However, players might want to look further into Coney Cliff and the disappearances by asking questions around Dunnerton.

Dunnerton is a small village of 300, mostly yeoman farmers and local craftsmen. The village maintains a small store, a forge and an inn, the *Drunken Dragon*.

The Village Elder: Kharl Atwater

Ageing chief weighed down by sorrows

Kharl Atwater is a silver-haired ancient, bowed down by his responsibilities. Last year, the village was attacked by a monster, a hideous Cavasha, and his own son was blinded in the defense. The latest disappearances have aged him still further.

Information: At first the disappearances were barely noticed: a few shepherds, some traveling merchants, local vagrants. Then a courting couple went missing and the local teens formed a militia to go out and find them. That was the day before yesterday. The Elder would never have allowed them to go if he had been consulted but of course headstrong teenagers went off without telling anyone. Atwater will offer a reward of 100gp for the return of the teenagers.

The Gentleman: Avon Vannaman

Doting father and his self-possessed wife

The wealthiest man in Dunnerton is the landowner Avon Vannaman. His daughter Devonna is among the missing. His house is full of relatives and neighbours, trying to console the old man. His younger wife Alizonna is feeding the guests and keeping spirits up.

Information: Avon berates himself for agreeing to hire a weapons-trainer for the headstrong Devonna; he wishes he had put all thoughts of adventure out of her head and found her a nice husband instead. His wife Alizonna is more upbeat, confident that her headstrong daughter has the sword skills to survive peril. She will match the Elder's offer of 100gp just for her daughter's safe return. She blames thins on the local woodsman whose son Tad was courting Devonna, despite being beneath her in station, and surely put silly ideas of adventuring into her head.

The Woodsman: Griffin Beek

Retired adventurer

Griffin Beek lives in a cottage in the woods in the lea of Coney Cliff. He is missing an arm after his last adventure went wrong. He has immense pride in his son Tad, who grew up on his father's stories. Now Griffin is drinking himself insensible out of grief for his son.

Information: Tad stole his father's axe to take with him on this reckless adventure up to the Cliff. He was wanting to impress the Vannaman girl, or perhaps the tinker's daughter: he was courting both without the other knowing. Griffin discouraged his son from going up to the Cliff, since in the last few weeks he discovered humanoid tracks of goblin-like creatures around the old Briar Crypt that overlooks the sea. Griffin cannot afford to pay a reward but will offer his supplies: 1d4 Healing Roots and a Jilda Weed.

The Smith: Brundle Jove

Angry Dwarf blacksmith

Brundle maintains the Dunnerton forge, mostly crafting nails, mending ploughs and shoeing horses, but he can repair studded armour and notches to weapons. His lad Hedrick operated the bellows, being more than a little simple. Brundle is angry at himself for Hedrick's disappearance but takes this out on others.

Information: Getting Brundle to open his workshop and speak to guests will be difficult, but he respects the Elder's authority (he and Kharl Atwater are old friends). Any conversation with Brundle will drive him into a rage if there is even the least hint that he was responsible for Hedrick's disappearance or could have done something to prevent it. Hedrick was fascinated by stories of fairy gold up on Coney Cliff, despite his father's strict teaching that any gold you don't have to dig out of the earth is fool's good and worthless. Hedrick got his silly ideas from the Innkeeper's lad, Nedward Snope. If Brundle is impressed by the

PCs, he will offer to work on their weapons, armour and shields before they leave, ensuring they are not notched and are on full APs and SPs.

The Innkeeper: Osmund Snope

Harassed local host

Osmund Snope runs the *Drunken Dragon* and never has a moment to sit down and talk and is keeping himself especially busy to drive out his concerns. If PCs want to talk to him, they will have to assist in chopping wood, rolling barrels, serving drinks or mopping floors and talk while they work.

Information: Snope's son Nedward is a daydreamer more suited to being a clerk than a manual labourer and definitely no sort of adventurer. "*If that soft boy ran away, he'd only fall down a well,*" Osmund pronounces. Instead of honest work, Nedward filled his head with silly fairy tales about the Briar Knights and Dragons. If impressed by the adventurers' industry, Osmund will show them Nedward's room, full of books and papers. A PC with *Read/Write* will see Nedward's notes on the Briar Knights, an order oathsworn to the holy memory of the nature-goddess Shalmar whose symbol was crossed swords wrapped in briars. Nedward was writing a long poem about how they Knights defeated a Dragon that once laired underneath Coney Cliff.

The Tinker: Frozellan Romney

Disreputable pedlar, craftsman and hedge-doctor

The players may be approached by Frozellan Romney: a shabby gentleman in ragged clothes with an unkempt beard. He makes his living selling knick-knacks, carrying out odd-jobs and peddling a range of quack medicines from far-off places. His daughter Genelle is one of the disappeared.

Information: Frozellan will need to speak with PCs in a private place, since he is unwelcome in town, being blamed for the disappearances by several villagers. This is because his wayward daughter, Genelle, often went up to Coney Cliff and recently returned with valuable trinkets she claimed she found in rabbit holes. The disappearances started soon after. Genelle was infatuated with Tad Beek, the woodsman's boy, and seemed to think the fancy jewels would help her compete for his attention against Devonna Vannaman. Frozellan can offer a reward of one of Genelle's baubles: a silver ring (5gp) set with an insignia of crossed swords wrapped in briars. Frozellan has also heard that someone has been disturbing the graves up on Coney Cliff for purposes of dark magic.

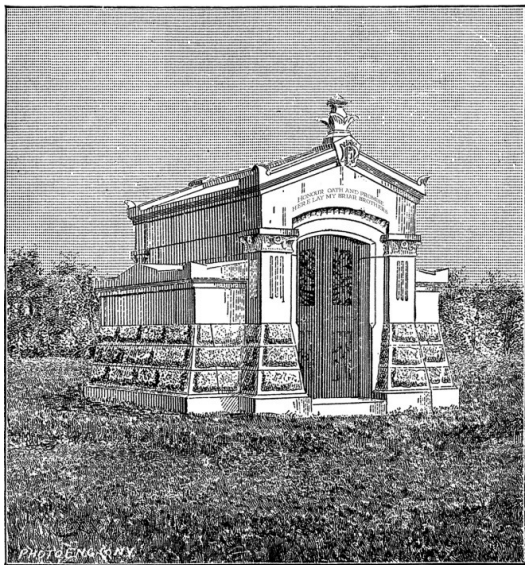
THE CONEY-CLIFF CRYPT

If you go up to Coney-Cliff
Beware the Fairy gold
The Briar Knights their oath do
keep
And guard the Dragon's bones.
— old song

The Cemetery

Coney Cliff is a windy rise well above the sea. As the wind howls in from the sea, faint cries and wails can indeed be heard on the wind. A tumbledown dry stone wall surrounds weather-beaten grave stones and tombs.

A grand-looking crypt entrance stands most prominent: it is ornately carved with rusted iron gates open leading downward. However, the stone doors a few steps down but are stuck fast. Inscribed above the entrance reads: *'Honour, oath and promise, here lie my briar brothers.'*



To the east of the Crypt Entrance lies a well (1); if the party look down inside they will see the flickering of a torch and hear a voice from below asking for help. Dotted around the ground are dozens of rabbit burrows, several of which upon closer inspection contain jewelry, coins or semi-precious baubles (these are traps: see 2).

Treasure in rabbit holes (d10)

1. 1d20 silver coins
2. 1d6 gold coins
3. A silver ring (5 gp, like the one Frozellin Romney offers)
4. A semi-precious gem (10gp)
5. A precious gem (50gp)
6. A glass gem (pretty but worthless)
7. A gold bracelet (10gp, engraved with briars)
8. A silver holy symbol (sword & briars, 10gp)
9. 1d4 gold teeth (2gp each)
10. A gold pendant (etched with "Genelle + Tad")

Down the rabbit hole

Characters reaching into a rabbit hole will have their wrist caught in a noose and the next round will be pulled into the hole and down to the cave below. Large/stocky characters will not fit through the hole but will remain trapped. Trapped characters can only be released if their allies find the underground cave and cut the noose binding them.

1. The Well

5' wide and 30' deep

The Well has only 2' of rope attached to the winch. It descends 30' into water that is 5' deep. Five feet above the water, several bricks have been removed (a secret door) and the larger area around the bottom of the well has been roughly excavated; some buckets and broken tools lie strewn about.

There is a young man trapped down here with a dying torch; **Nedward Snope** is thankful somebody arrived to help him as the rope he climbed down on snapped.

Nedward will attempt to leave, but might be persuaded to help if PCs leverage his insecurity about his father. He has no armour or weapon but carries 5 torches and a tinder box.

Nedward Snope

HP 13, DV1 -1, DV2. -2, AV -1, no weapon, ST 11+, SPD 3. Ned's negative DV and AV are due to penalties from low AWR and DEX.

- Read/Write, History (Briar Knights), Binding, Jeweler 40%

- Carries a tinder box, 1 unused torch and a binding kit

He will tell the PCs a confusing tale of how he came here with his four friends:

"Genelle disappeared before we came down. We tried the crypt door but it's stuck fast, so we came down here when we saw a light. We went down the corridor beyond those bricks, but there was this shrieking thing! Lucky Devonna brought a sword and Tad borrowed a wood axe. They chopped it all up, my ears are still ringing though. They went through the door but there was a skeleton! Hedrick and I ran to get help, but when I got back Hedrick was gone! I'm no warrior, and I'm not brave. I guess dad was right, I'm only good for running and reading."

At area **4**, Nedward might give the party a clue for the door.

Along the corridor is a secret door leading to a tight passage (where Hedrick was abducted); if it is discovered the Kobolds beyond will retreat to room **10**.

At the end of the corridor is a shoddy door, badly hung. In front of the door is a giant purple fungus, hacked apart by Nedward's friends.

2. The Burrows

2-3' wide and 4' high

These small caves are linked by tight corridors. Medium-sized, large or stocky creatures fight at -2 in the tunnels (cumulative, so large & stocky creatures suffer -6); small, slender creatures can fight two abreast but others must travel and fight single file and cannot use shields; no one can use two-handed weapons. Svarts can fight two abreast in the tunnels.

In each of the seven numbered locations are 2 **Svarts** (14 in total), one spear armed, with javelin, knife and sap. They act as teams to capture those who reach for the trinkets in the rabbit holes at dawn and dusk.

Each hole has a snare that one Svart tightens round the victim's wrist as they reach in. They pull together to drag the victim into the crypt. They will bash the victim repeatedly until compliant or unconscious and bind them in room **10**. If this fails, the spearman will finish the job and drag the body to room **10**. If they cannot pull a victim into their cave they will stake the noose to the floor, trapping the victim's arm until it is safe to go outside at night and capture them (they are small enough to exit through the 'rabbit-holes').

Svarts

HP 8, DV1 3, DV2 1 (7AP, 3SP), AV 1, 2d4 spear, 1d6 javelin, 1d3 knife, 1d2 sap, ST 11+, SPD 3. Natural AR1 plus bonus from wooden shield and padded armour.

- Sap has 5% chance of knocking victim unconscious, javelin has AV+2 when thrown
- Knife is envenomed: target Saves vs Poison or loses 1d6 HP at rate of 1HP/minute
- AV+1 if outnumbering, +1 if pursuing

Svart tactics

Their motivation is to protect or misdirect intruders away from room **10**. Each pair of Svarts reacts intelligently but follows this general strategy:

- follow intruders and ambush them when they are busy (e.g. binding wounds or repairing armour) or in peril
- throw javelin, wound with spear or knife, then retreat
- seek other Svarts to gang up
- fake calls for help to lure intruders into ambushes
- self-preserve and stay still or surrender and lure the PCs into a trap (e.g. room **5**)

3. The Tribute Room

15' high

The room is covered in murals (a good amount may be covered by soot) which depict heroic deeds and figures in full plate with bramble motifs battling demons and defeating a giant dragon. There is a staircase that would lead up to the Crypt Entrance but the ceiling has collapsed, making it impossible. On the east wall, several bricks have been removed and bare soil is clearly visible on a successful Search roll: this is the secret door to area **8**.

The door in the north wall is carved with the same phrase in multiple languages: ***'I strive to keep order, to fight chaos and uphold the integrity of the Briar Knights.'***

There are 2 **skeletons** in this room which will rush to close the door in the south wall if they can and attack if not.

Skeletons

HP 11, DV1 5, DV2 4 (3SP), AV 2, 2d4 spear or 1d6 bony fist, ST 16+, SPD 4. Half damage from edged/piercing weapons (rounded down).

In the centre of the room is a 5' wide copper bowl full of pitch.

There are two arrow slits each located 12' above the floor on the east wall. Two **Svarts** fire at any who enter the room with light crossbows for 3

rounds (targeting the least armoured character, including the boy Nedward from area **1**).

Svarts

HP 8, DV1 3, DV2 1 (7AP, 3SP), AV 1, 1d4 light crossbow, 1d3 knife, ST 11+, SPD 3.

Natural AR1 plus bonus from wooden shield and padded armour.

- Crossbow deals 1 damage to armour, rest is actual
- Knife is envenomed: target Saves vs Poison or loses 1d6 HP at rate of 1HP/minute
- AV+1 if outnumbering, +1 if pursuing

During the second round of combat, a Svart from the arrow slit will fire a burning brand into the copper bowl igniting it and causing the room to fill with thick black smoke:

Smoke-filled room

The smoke rises 1' per minute for 9+1d6 minutes. It does not rise above 10' if a door is open. After this, smoke level drops 1' per minute as long as a door is open.

- Characters too short to see above the smoke fight as if blind
- Characters too short to breath above the smoke must save vs Poison every round or take 1d3 actual damage

4. The Hallway of Oath

10' high

There is a door to the east (room **5**) which reads: '**Here we lie.**' Daubed across it in thick red paint is a Svartish script which reads: '**CORPSE STORE. DANGER.**' A Sprite with Read/Write Skill will make sense of 50% of this.

Svart tactics

A Svart group stalking the party may wish to open room **5** and unleash the Zombies if the PCs are looking too healthy.

The door to the east (room **6**) reads '**Here we are remembered.**'

As the players proceed north along the hall, they hear a female voice from up ahead:

"I am to join you Tad, they've come to finish me off."

Around the corner are two figures: a young man slumped against the wall, a woman hunched clutching her thigh with one hand and brandishing a sword with the other. The dead figure is **Tad Beek**, a quarrel is protruding from his chest. The young woman is **Devonna Vannaman**. A dead Svart lies at her feet.

Devonna is in poor shape and laments her foolishness in getting involved with Tad's wild adventure. She will do what the party asks of her but is in no shape to fight.

Devonna Vannaman

HP 2 (normally 14), DV1 0, DV2 0, AV 2, sword for 1d6, ST 9+, SPD 3. Devonna's high AV is due to a bonus from a high DEX; her wound means she will fail after one minute of combat exertion and lose 1HP.

- Read/Write, Melee Combat 1, Parrying 1, Jeweler 42%, Plant ID 32%

The door to the north is heavily carved and inlaid with silver. It depicts a figure in plate armour with an ornate helmet crowned with thorns. It has a banner across both doors. It reads: '**If you are to keep this, you must first give it to me.**'

The answer is oath/word; the specific oath is carved all over the door in room **3** in multiple languages and the correct response is: '**I strive to keep order, to fight chaos and uphold the integrity of the Briar Knights.**' Upon receiving the correct answer, the door will open.

If **Nedward Snope** (from area **1**) is present, he can offer a clue to the riddle:

"It wants your word, some sort of promise."

The door may be picked, but this requires two consecutive successes using Open Locks; if the second test fails, a tiny hammer will fall on the lockpick, breaking it before resetting the lock in the door.

5. Zombie Room

9' high

A room with open and smashed sarcophagi. The room is packed with 8 **zombies**.

Unless the door is closed quickly, the Zombies will spill into the corridor and attack anyone they come across.

Zombies

HP 12, DV1 3, DV2 3, AV 2, 2 fists for 1d4/1d4, ST 16+, SPD 1. Half damage from blunt weapons (rounded down).

Zombie tactics

The zombies are Briar Knights raised by the Necromancer and instructed to attack all living creatures, but intruders in preference to Svarts. If turned they will stumble into room **3** and futilely claw at the rubble blocking the stairwell before shambling back to room **5**.

6. Lumber Room

9' high

This room contains nothing apart from wormwood ridden timbers. Two are long enough to cross the pit in room **7** but one (50% chance it is the one the PCs use) is rotten and will break if any creature that is not slender walks across. A door leads east. It is of poor quality and fitting but it is stuck: 4 structural points. Using strength to break it down results in momentum carrying the PCs into the pit in room **7**.

7. Spiked Pit

9' high

A spike pit covers the west side of the room; there is a 10' drop into spikes covered in excrement and urine. This is also a toilet as well as a trap.

Characters falling into the pit take 1d3 actual damage from the fall (avoided by using the Tumbling Skill) and 1d4 normal damage from the spikes (1 point to armour, the rest is actual). Anyone taking actual damage from the spikes must Save vs Disease: diseased characters cannot benefit from Binding Skill and lose 1HP per hour until they receive healing or die.

Svart tactics

While characters are crossing the pit or falling into it, any pursuing Svarts will take the opportunity to attack.

There is a secret door to room **10** on the north wall. A tight slope leads up to room **9**, climbing 10'. If the Svarts in area **8/9** are still active, the PCs will hear cries of help from room 9 (this is a trap).

8. Secret Ladder Access

6' high

The corridor terminates in a ladder which scales 10' up into area **9**. At the top of the ladder there are two buckets of oil and a pair of torches burning on wall sconces.

Svart tactics

If PCs find the secret door and enter here, the 2 Svarts firing through into room **3** will come here to attack when a PC is at the bottom of the ladder. One will douse the intruder with a bucket of oil, the second will throw a burning torch down after it, setting the oil on fire (inflicting 2d6 actual damage on the first round and 1d6 on the second). Once a PC reaches the top of the ladder, the Svarts will do the bucket trick again on anyone else climbing up. The Kobolds will then summon two of the groups near them to join the fight and send the third to room **10**.

9. Svart Barracks

5' high

The earthen tunnel is full of rags, clothes, miscellaneous bones, boots and whatever the Svarts took from prisoners. On a crude dais in an alcove is an articulated wooden dragon toy surrounded by gems and gold coins. Leaned against it is a **+1 magic warhammer** with etched brambles along the head, a **wand of pyrotechnics** with 5d6 charges and 2 healing roots are also nestled in the pile.

If players entered through area **8**, there will be no fight. If they arrive from the burrows tunnel connected to area **1**, they will encounter the two Svarts guarding the arrow slits unless combat in the burrows has already attracted their attention. There is a caged mastiff by the slope to area **7**. It is starved, blood thirsty and rages wildly when it sees the PCs.

Svart tactics

If the players enter through area **7** (perhaps answering the fake 'cries for help'), the 2 Svarts keeping watch on room **3/8** will drag the caged mastiff over to the slope and lift the door of the crate to release the brute. They will then do the same as in area **8**, using both oil buckets to send a pool of burning oil down the slope. Characters caught on the slope in the burning oil will take 1d6 actual damage every round for 1d4+1 rounds.

Rabid Mastiff

HP 16, DV1 3, DV2 3 (10AP), AV 3, 1d6 bite, ST 15+, SPD 5. The mastiff wears armour.

- Characters bitten must Save vs Disease or go into a rabid frenzy, attacking allies nearby for 1d6 rounds before passing out for an hour.

A young woman is bound tightly in the corner by the cage; her name is **Genelle Romney**. She cries for help and to be cut free. She explains how she saw some fairy gold in a rabbit hole and was pulled underground, beaten and tied.

Genelle Romney

HP 5 (normally 14), DV1 2, DV2 0, AV 2, no weapon, ST 8+, SPD 3. Devonna's high DV1 and AV is due to a bonus from a high AWR and DEX.

- Read/Write, Melee Combat 1, Melee Backstab 1, Play Instrument (Flute), Tumbling, Jeweler 33%, Open Locks 28%, Pick Pockets 31%

Genelle knows the route to room **10** through the burrows and the secret door: she was taken there by the Svarts and witnessed **Hedrick** being murdered but the Necromancer sent her

back to the barracks to 'amuse' his servants. Genelle will agree to aid the party but will run away as soon as the Undead Dragon animates.

10. Necromancer's Lair & Dragon's Grave

25' high

The party disturbs the Necromancer (and any Svarts that fled to this room). There is a gaping 20' wide scar carved through the cliff face; it looks out over a tumultuous sea. Wind whips in through the hole, billowing the robes of a dark Mage.



There is a large skeletal dragon stretched upon a mountain of treasure. The ancient bones and mound of treasure is stained with strange patterns and sigils in deep red. The metallic smell in the air is overpowering as well as the stench of decay. Piled inside the rib cage of the dragon are corpses in varying degrees of decomposition; one is very fresh (this is **Hedrick the Dwarf**, one of the missing teenagers). Along the west wall is a lean-to with a bed roll surrounded by books and scrolls. A fire rages in the centre of the room.

The Necromancer

HP 10, DV1 1, DV2 1 (10AP), AV 0, no weapon, ST 8+, SPD 2.

- Read/Write, Magic (Necromancy) 4
- The only spell he casts is Animate Dragon which uses all his SPTS and stuns him for an hour

Necromancer tactics

The Necromancer will cast his spell to animate the Dragon, then collapse stunned (the HSE of his spell). He will offer no further resistance and can be murdered using the Final Blow Skill. This will not affect the Skeleton Dragon however.

The Necromancer slashes his hand and places it on the forehead of the great skeletal beast.

He says: 'You called me mad!'

The dragon begins to shudder, limbs snapping magnetically into place.

'Untalented!'

The dragon pulls itself upright on its forelegs

'But I've done what you never could!'

The dragon shoots forward on forelimbs; it is lame, dragging the back legs and pelvis uselessly.

The Skeleton Dragon

HP 50, DV1 10, DV2 5, AV 9, bite for 5d6, ST 10+, SPD 1. The creature's lameness means attacks from the flanks are also against DV2.

- Necrotic breath can be used every 5 rounds and living creatures must save vs Poison or die

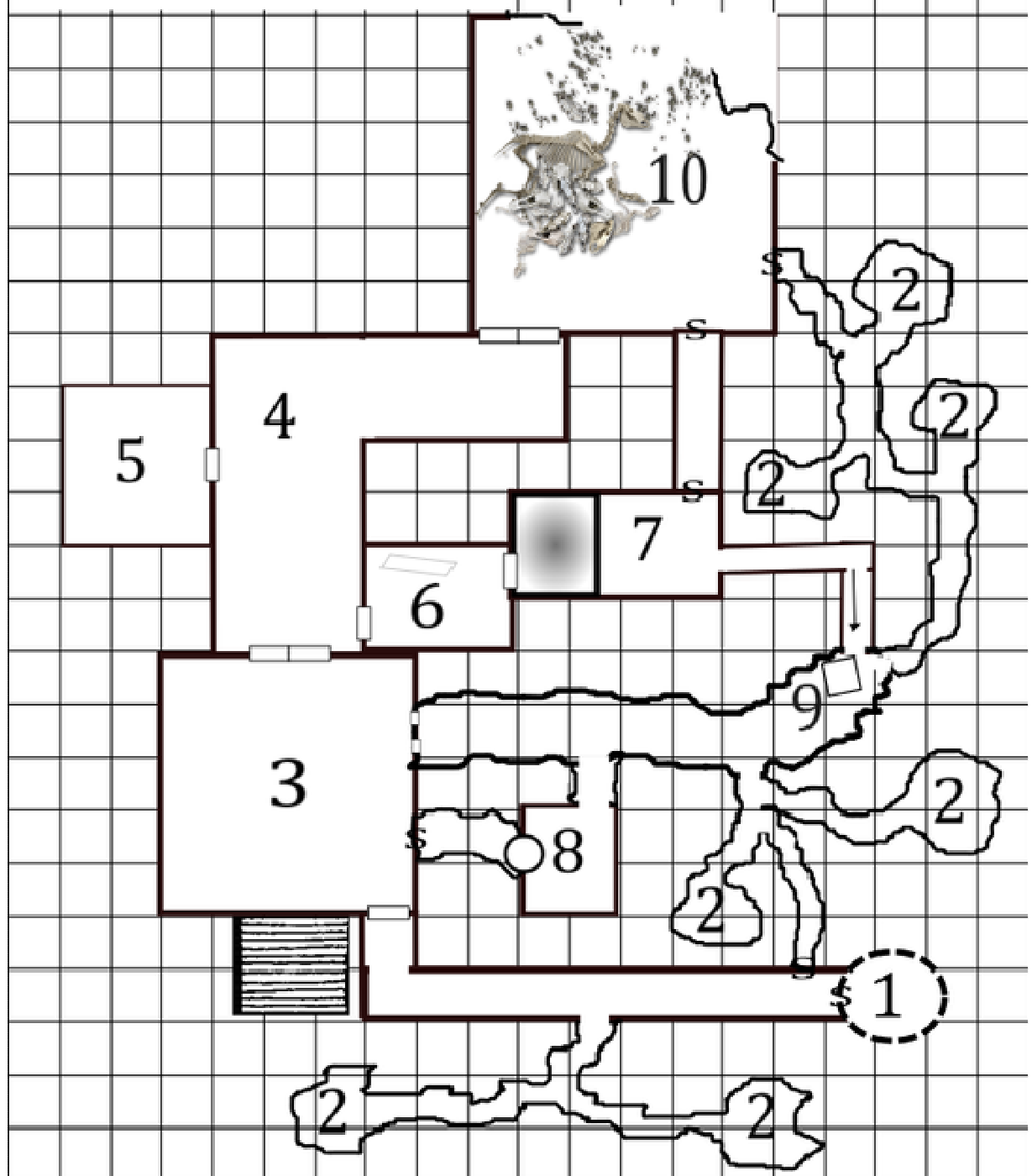
Skeleton Dragon tactics

The undead horror uses its formidable bite for 4 rounds then its necrotic breath on the 5th round. It can project its head into the corridor to the south and use its breath to fill the whole corridor with necrotic gas.

Players would be wise to recall their mission is to rescue the teenagers, not battle an undead dragon. If they flee the Skeleton Dragon will not (at this time) pursue them.

Should the party overcome the Skeleton Dragon, the treasure is left to the Referee's devising.

THE CONEY-CLIFF CRYPT (KARL'S KOBOLODS)



Each square = 5'

FEN ORC COMMENTARY

Karl submitted this scenario in January 2020 as part of a competition on www.fenorc.co.uk to design a 10-room dungeon in half an hour. I promised to convert the winning entry to **Forge: Out of Chaos** and took the opportunity to add some details that Karl would certainly considered too, such as expanding the background of the five lost teenagers.

Karl took his inspiration for this from **Tucker's Kobolds**. Back in 1987, **Roger E. Moore** wrote [a famous editorial for Dragon #127](#) in which he described a dungeon adventure where a tribe of kobolds (the weakest of the D&D humanoid monsters) were deployed so cleverly they posed a significant challenge for even high level (6th-12th) adventurers. "*Sometimes,*" Moore concludes, "*it's the little things—used well—that count.*"

Karl places his 16 Kobolds where they might capture some incurious PCs immediately, by dragging them through fake rabbit holes into underground caves and knocking them unconscious. Once the fight moves into the dungeon, the Kobolds take advantage of cramped, low tunnels where they can gang up on their restricted opponents. The Kobolds make use of traps and advantageous positions to pepper the PCs with arrows, pour burning oil on them, unleash savage dogs on them and retreat from direct melee wherever possible.

The PCs will be badly battered and probably will have lost party members when they arrive at the climactic showdown with the undead dragon, a fight which will finish them off unless they make use of surprise or are sensible enough to flee.

This is a delightfully malevolent dungeon, designed to give the PCs terrible experiences at every turn. Set against this punishing experience are two mutually-reinforcing themes. One is the Crypt's original function, as the resting place of a noble order of nature-themed knights. There are touches of beauty down here, in the bramble-motifs in the Tribute Room, in the dignified oaths and high-minded solution to the riddle on the

doors. This was not always a terrible place, but it has been despoiled and corrupted. The PCs should be inspired to salvage what goodness and hope can be found down here, which leads to the second theme...

The other theme is the rescue of the five teenage wannabe heroes. These characters are like the cast of a Hollywood horror movie who stumbled into a Very Bad Place: Hedrick and Tad are now dead, but the PCs can rescue Nedward, Genelle and Devonna and need to remember that **this is in fact their mission**. If they can bring all three youngsters alive out of the dungeon, they should feel rightly proud of themselves. Confronting the Dragon is pure hubris.

If you referee this scenario, you might feel differently and want the PCs to have a fighting chance against the Dragon. You could rule that, if the Necromancer is assassinated, the skeletal dragon-thing collapses in ruins. This upbeat ending rather detracts from Karl's dramatic intention, but some player-groups prefer to win like heroic fools rather than flee and live like wise tacticians.

Adapting for Forge: Out of Chaos

Forge doesn't have an underpowered goblin-race of antagonists, so I use Cricky Hitchcock's **Svarts** (originally created for D&D in White Dwarf #9): their full details are on <http://www.fenorc.co.uk/monsters.html>.

Forge characters are more resilient than low-level D&D characters: the Binding Skill and Healing Roots both let them regain HP between encounters, their armour absorbs damage and the Field Repair skill lets them restore armour a certain number of times. The Svarts following the PCs should not allow this: if the PCs stop to carry out Binding or Field Repairs, the Svarts should attack with javelins and/or spears then flee again: characters who are hit or who try to attack fail in their Skill attempt and forfeit their resources.