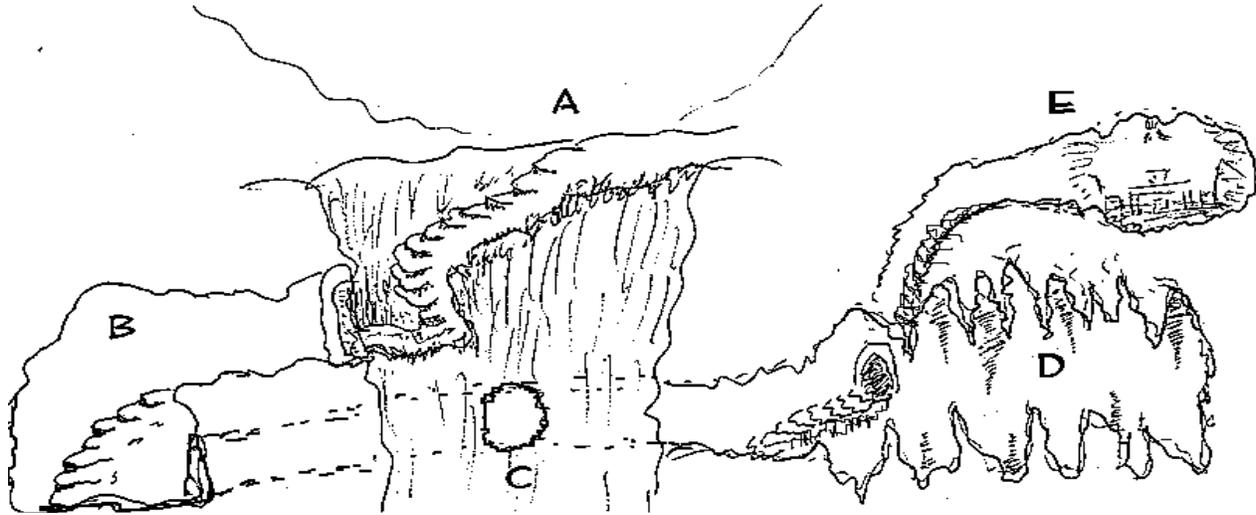


The Pit of the Mad Sage - A one page high level dungeon, by Chris Maler thegreenman.us@gmail.com

The Mad Sage is a legendary figure, one who is mentioned in many a tavern story. Many think he is only a legend, but he has been sought by those seeking knowledge for decades.

In the foothills of the southern Gold Top mountain range, in a narrow valley, there is a curious hole in the ground, called by some a bottomless pit. It is a place of many rumors: one such rumor is that the hole is home to a terrible dragon which ravages the countryside once every fifty years. Another is that the hole is a gate to the underworld, and anyone who approaches is attacked and eaten by infernal creatures. Still another is that the hole is an accursed place where the god of the underworld struck down a powerful necromancer for challenging his authority over the dead. But, indeed, none of these stories holds the truth, as they were all just rumors spread by the Mad Sage himself in order to keep intruders away from his home.



The pit is a sheer-sided hole in the ground, with a diameter of some 50 feet which descends to a depth of 100 feet. The mad sage has placed several permanent illusions over the area to keep intruders out. There is an illusion covering the stairway and entry (A) which makes it invisible, there is another that makes the pit appear bottomless, and still another that covers the area in perpetual mist and fog.

There are several random illusions which are triggered by the approach, within 500 feet, of any intelligent creature:

1. A **very old Green Dragon** appears to lift its head out of the hole and look around before lowering down into the pit again. If the intruders do not leave, it attacks using its breath weapon first to repel the invaders.
2. A **Baalroch** flies up out of the mist, clutching a bugbear in its claws, and then proceeds to devour it before diving back down with a shriek. If the party persists, the **Baalroch** attacks, using whip and sword.
3. A huge belch of fire and smoke erupts from the pit, accompanied by a minor earthquake. If the party persists, the illusory eruption occurs again, continuously sending flames and burning coals over anyone in the vicinity of the pit.
4. A thunderstorm appears in the sky over the pit, sending hundreds of bolts blasting away at the immediate area until the intruders leave. If the intruders persist they will be struck continuously while within the pit or surrounding area.

Once the illusions are bypassed, dispelled, or disbelieved, the true nature of the pit is revealed, showing the following:

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- A. This is a rough-hewn narrow stairway which can be easily traversed by any medium or small creature, if they first overcome the illusions disguising it.
- B. A small, natural 30x30 cavern with descending stairs. This cavern is inhabited by a half-dozen giant poisonous spiders. There is a secret door in the wall under the stairs with a 6' circular opening.
- C. A 6' circular tunnel of rough-hewn stone with a large opening to the pit where the bats from area D enter and exit the caves.
- D. A large 60x50 natural cavern room filled with stalagmites covered in bat guano. This room is occupied by the sage's colony of several score of pet blind bats, which will not attack, but will fly in a cloud at the approach of any person other than the Sage.
- E. At the top of another set of uneven stairs the Sage makes his home in a small 20X30 cavern. Anyone making the journey will be met by the sage. If the intruders have harmed the sage's pet bats in any way, he will fly into rage and attack immediately using his most powerful spells, otherwise he will agree to use his powers and scrying sphere to answer one question or aid them with one spell in exchange for their promise never to reveal the secrets of his home. If they refuse the promise, he will open a Gate to the underworld; summon forth a powerful demon, and then Teleport away.

The Mad Sage Melarkonin
Epic level Human magic user

The mad sage is actually quite sane, but is extremely moody and hates being disturbed, especially by other wizards. He is rather fond of Dwarves and their matter-of-fact attitudes and will be more approachable by a Dwarf than by a member of any other race. He appears as a wild-haired and bearded old man wearing ragged, worn out robes. He carries a Staff of Power and wears a Ring of Protection. In his home are an assortment of treasures including; piles of assorted coins, hundreds of gemstones which have been embedded in the walls to reflect light in interesting patterns, several spell books, and an assortment of arcane scrolls. There is also a crystal scrying sphere, which is an intelligent and highly capricious augury and divination device named Boniface. If addressed with proper reverence and respect for its brilliance, Boniface will answer one question per day, if it feels in the mood to do so.

