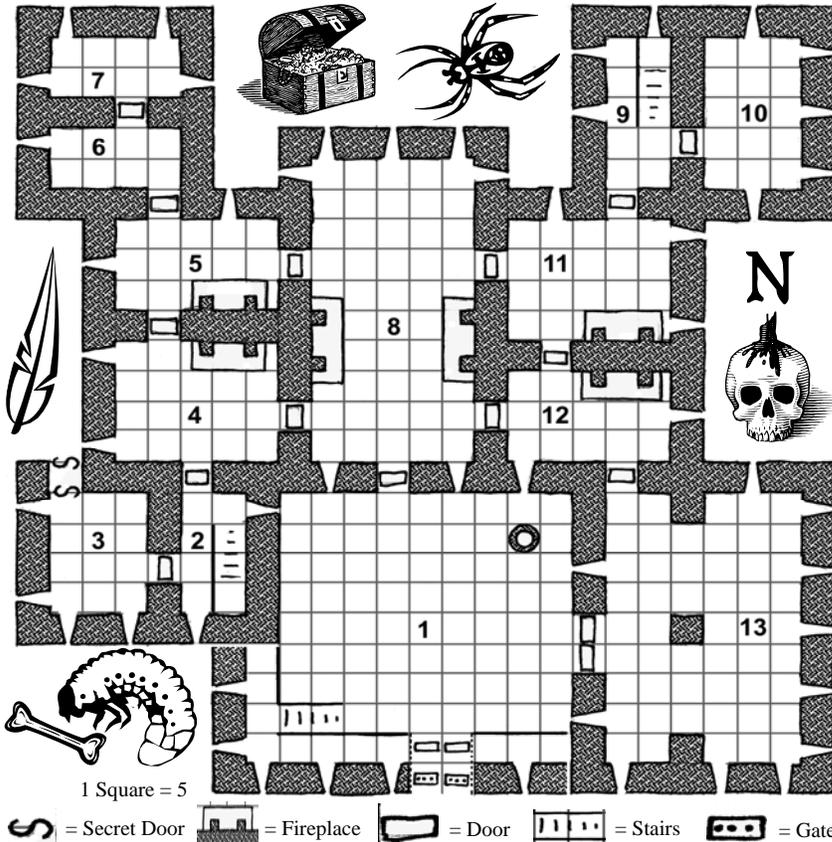


The Horrible Hermitage

—A one page medium level dungeon by S.J. Harris

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Description: This worm-eaten fortress of ragged stone appears to have lost a battle long ago. The upper stores appear to have taken the brunt of siege weapons. A wooden sign proclaims it to be the 'Hermitage of Fesal of the Pillar.'

Background: The despot Scavdreen the Scourge died during the fortress's siege. He is renown for finding the rookery of the Firebirds & returning with one of their glowing feathers. The fortress fell into ruin. Years later a group of hermits inhabited the fortress providing help & aid to travelers. All was well until the evil sorcerer Jando defeated the hermits selling them into slavery. He poses as a hermit while working to resurrect the despot. He does this to find out the location of the Firebirds & their magic. He has the 'Firebird Plume' with him at all times. He uses the hermitage as a front to capture visitors then selling them into slavery to fund his experiments. Jando summoned part of Scavdreen's spirit in the form a giant larva. All Jando needs is to cocoon the Scavdreen's body with the larva. He is just waiting for enough giant spider silk and the blood of a true hero. To test for heroes he has arranged false attack on the hermitage by 10 bugbears. The attack starts and stops with Jando's secret signal.

Lighting: Normal light in area 1 courtyard. Dim light in all other interior areas.

Random Encounters

Roll 1d20 per hour.

1-10: No encounter (add 2 to next roll)

11-12: Sounds of wind whistling outside or water dripping inside.

13-14: Black Bear (polymorphed hermit) and (2) False Hermit (Brigand) patrolling or (1) Sprite Olindee sneaking around

15-16: Moans of spider poisoned prisoners area 13 or ghostly sounds of battle and blood shed from area 1.

17-18: (3) False Hermit (Brigand) or (1) traveler

19: Jando (mid-level wizard) (wearing the 'Cloak of Simpleness')

20: Larva (Giant Leech).

Room Key

- 1. Crumbling Courtyard:** A bell is outside of the gate to summon the gate keeper. This open air courtyard has a few horses tethered to the east wall & well to the north east. A large ballista has been rebuilt by the bored 'hermits'. *Monster:* (4) False Hermit (Brigand) *Hazard:* Stone debris litters the courtyard causing 1/2 move rate & a 25% chance of tripping. *Gate/Doors:* Locked.
- 2. Southern Stairwell:** A rotting tapestry on the wall shows a young black armored knight (Scavdreen) plucking a red and gold feather from a flying red, orange and golden bird. The upper stair is blocked by rubble. *N. Door:* Open.
- 3. Jando's Chamber :** This rich furnished room has a laboratory of sorts on the south wall. Notes on the table describe a terrible plan to resurrect a dark lord using his spirit in larva form, his former body cocooned in spider silk & the blood of a hero. *Monsters:*(1) Jando 25% of time,(4) skeletons (dead hermits). *Treasure:* book titled 'Firebirds a Prophecy Fulfilled', potion of fire resistance, Jando's Spellbook (priceless). *Doors:* North Locked, Trapped: Teleports the intruder to area 13. *Secret Door:* locked, Jando has the key.
- 4. Hermit Quarters:** This room of bunks beds appears more like a barracks then a hermits cell. *Monster:* (1) hermit (Brigand), (1) ape (pet), *Doors:* barred. *Treasure:* Secret niche above fireplace. 64 cp, 30sp,12 gp, ivory/ebony chess set (40gp), Map of the area showing location of bugbear cave & slaver camp.
- 5. Hermit Quarters:** Bunk beds line the walls & two hermits are to be playing darts. *Monster:* (2) hermit (Brigand) *Doors:* barred. *Treasure:* Chest 78cp, 34 sp, 13 gp, (2) ivory handled daggers (24gp each), Braded gold ring (45 gp)
- 6. Armory:** All manner of weapons & armor line the walls. All are of common quality. *Treasure:* (10) Arrows of Slaying ..., (1) fancy leather quiver (100gp) *Doors:* Locked - Flay the hermit (Brigand) wandering about has the key.
- 7. Strongroom:** This is the hermitages treasure room and almost everything is stolen from the hermit's victims. *Monsters:* (1) ghost hermit (helpful) *Doors:* Locked, Jando's has the key. *Trapped:* Those who attempt the bypass the lock or breakdown the door receive a magical curse. Roll 1d6. The victim's ...
1. treasure is confiscated & transported to the strongroom. 2. is branded with 'T' for thief on both hands. 3. forgets the last 24hrs. 4. shadow attacks him/her. 5. weapons animate & attack him/her. 6. speaks only gibberish. *Treasure:* Any (30) items of equipment, 24cp,187sp, 229gp, 2 gems (75gp each), 1 sapphire lake serpent necklace (60gp), potion of healing, deed to the fortress,1 gold statue of Fesal of the Pillar (300gp), barrel of elven wine 50gp.
- 8. Hall:** This hall is well stocked and has a few fellow travelers in it and at least 4 hermits (Brigand) at all times. A 'T' shaped table sits in the north part of

the room behind it is a articulated skeletal bird with ruby eyes. The hermits claim that the firebird is sacred to their order and that is why they venerate it's bones. Jando states - "The firebird flies around giving hope to those who need it and that is what we do." *Monsters:* (1) Firebird skeleton (skeleton) project jet of flame from pair of ruby eyes once per round doing 1d6 damage. (1) Sprite named Olindee a former companion of a traveler killed by the Jando & crew. Olindee has been sneaking around trying to defeat the 'false ones'.

9. Northern Stairwell: A rotting tapestry on the wall shows a peacock like bird with orange, red, and gold plumage. It appears to be missing a feather. *Hazard:* Falling debris will strike all who touch the stairs doing 2d4 damage.

10. Chapel: If asked the hermits claim the room is used for devotions. A spell of antipathy pervades the area around the door. This room has alter with a (spider) silk shrouded skeleton on it. It is not a saints bones but the those of the despot Scavdreen. A curtain bisects the north part of the room. Behind the curtain is the larva munching on a dead maiden. *Monsters:* (1) Larva (Giant Leech), Jando 25% time. *Treasure:* crown gold (230gp).*Doors:* Locked.

11. Guest Chamber: This area has rows of clean bunk beds. 6 travelers (future slaves) are resting here. A large chest is painted with the words 'loan locker' - any traveler may be permanently loaned an item from it. *Monster:* (1) false traveler (brigand) who spies on the travelers. *Doors:* unlocked.

12. Kitchen: This large kitchen well stocked. The cook Maylin knows what is going on but is well paid to keep quite and a little fear helps as well. She will not reveal the 'little secret' unless by force. If she does she will flee for her life.

13. Spider Stable: Webs cling to the walls of this large stable. It is used to house caged prisoners waiting to be delivered into slavery. It is also the prison for Feroneae a talking giant black widow spider. She has a special hatred for Jando who captured her. She will bargain for her freedom but, may betray the heroes and devour them if given the chance. She is leashed with a chain to the ceiling, Jando has the key to the lock. A few of Feroneae's cocooned snacks hand from the ceiling. *Doors:* Locked Jando and Flay have the keys. *Monster:*(1) Giant Black Widow Spider,(10) caged poisoned slaves.

Magical Items

Cloak of Simpleness - Causes the wearer to appear as a simple peasant or hermit. Nothing of the wears true nature magical or otherwise is revealed.

Firebird Plume - It functions as a light source 15 ft radius. It provides a sphere of protection +2 to the wielder & any he/she chooses within the light's radius.

Eyes of the Firebird - This pair of gems are enchanted to produce a jet of flame 20 ft long. They do 1d6 damage and must both be wielded together.