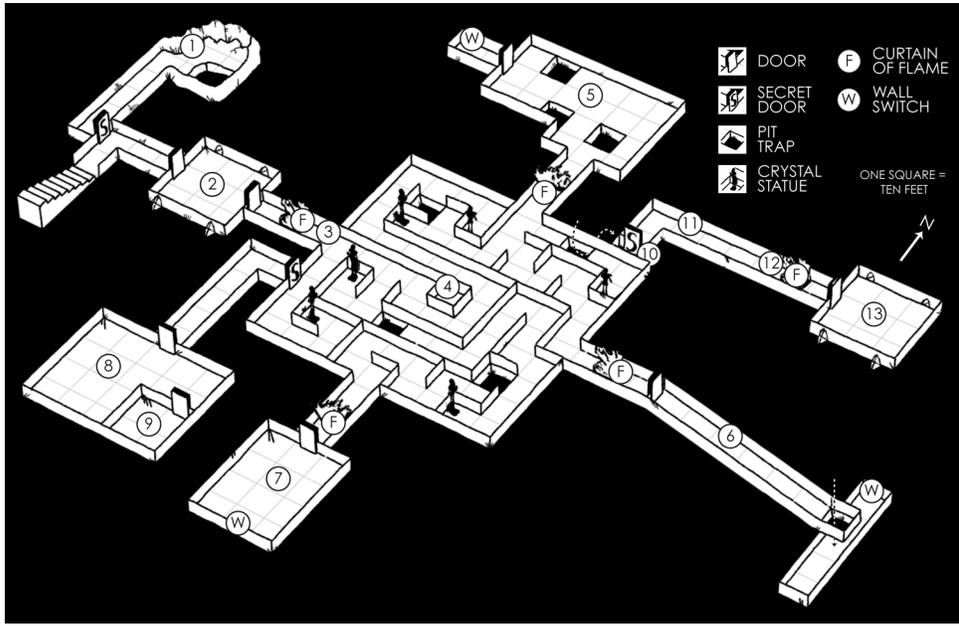


The Vault of Illusion and the Cube of Power

A dungeon of tricks and traps for lower-level characters



BACKGROUND

Long ago, the illusionist Hilduin constructed an underground vault wherein he practiced and honed his magics. Later, he announced that he'd concealed a potent magical device in the vault—the "Cube of Power"—to be claimed by anyone clever enough to retrieve it. Many adventurers entered the vault, but none emerged with the Cube. Will you be the first to bypass the vault's traps and claim the Cube of Power?

WANDERING MONSTERS

- 1) The party's path is blocked by a phantasmal giant spider in an illusory web.
- 2) 3-6 phantasmal kobolds throw javelins & nets; netted characters at ½ movement until "freed."
- 3) A phantasmal leprechaun "steals" treasure and dances away toward a nearby trap.
- 4) A phantasmal young red dragon roars and breathes illusory fire.
- 5) 2-5 glass skeletons approach and attack.
- 6) 1 living shadow sneaks up and attacks.

ROOM KEY

F: A curtain of illusory flame, with a brass wheel set in the wall so that half sticks out on either side of the curtain. Turning it switches the curtain on and off.

W: A large, dramatic wall switch, enchanted to radiate magic and throws sparks when flipped. The switches are a trick and have no real effect.

1: The Custodian's Workshop. An intelligent, spellcasting living statue of black crystal resides here, tasked by Hilduin with repairing broken tricks, traps and guardians. Bored and chatty, it may choose to guide adventurers past traps only to trick them into worse danger later on. A stone plug covers a trash pit containing an ochre jelly. A large sack hidden in a crack in the north wall is full of treasure retrieved from deceased adventurers, including roughly 500sp & 500gp, an elaborately worked gold bracelet (worth 450gp), a *dagger +1*, two clerical scrolls of *cure light wounds* and a greasy orange *potion of diminution*.

2: Warning Chamber. When a living creature enters, a *magic mouth* appears and intones: "Only the most cunning adventurers will claim my Cube of Power. To the rest of you, I offer this choice: flee to safety, or embrace your inevitable doom!" One minute later, the doors close and lock automatically, and 4 glass skeletons emerge from illusion-shrouded niches and attack. Once all skeletons are defeated, both doors open.

3: The Glass Maze. The stone walls of this maze are as clear as glass. They have a peculiar magical property, in that monsters on the far side of a wall are invisible! Living crystal statues stand guard, ready to attack any intruder who comes near—especially those who're helping companions out of the maze's various pits, which are concealed with illusions of solid flooring. The living statues won't leave the maze area but will otherwise pursue intruders relentlessly.

4: The First Fake: A crystal cube, enchanted to radiate magic, rests on a stone pedestal. It can be seen through the glassy walls but is wholly inaccessible.

5: The Rat Room. Phantasmal rats scurry across the floor. Moments after the party enters, three phantasmal rat-men appear from the west door and fire arrows, trying to lure characters into the room's many illusion-shrouded pit traps. The easternmost pit holds the broken-legged skeleton of a now-deceased adventurer, which swings a *cursed sword of berserking +2* at anyone who falls in! It still wears a backpack containing thieves' tools, a few coins and an intricate silver key that unlocks the chest in room 9.

6: The Falling Hall. This appears as a horizontal corridor ending in a wall of spikes. It's actually a greased sloping corridor terminating in a spiked pit, but a permanent illusion disguises the grease, makes the corridor look straight and twists the image of the pit 90 degrees. Thus, a character that steps onto the slope seems to skim across the floor, bounce into the air and slam into a 'wall' of spikes. Three cobwebbed skeletons in corroded armor are impaled on the spikes; their bags hold rotted provisions, a few coins and a tattered map marking the location of Hilduin's vault. A giant spider nests in the southern nook.

7: The Rainbow Room. Shimmering colors and darting shadows writhe across the walls and floor of this room. Characters who fail a saving throw versus magic are hypnotized by the patterns until they're injured or a fellow character shakes them back to their senses. A living shadow lurks amid the colors. A pressure plate in front of the wall switch causes a corrosive green slime to dribble down from the ceiling.

8: Hilduin's Laboratory. The Steward—an intelligent, spellcasting living statue of blue crystal—awaits its master's return here. Though unaggressive, it will fight to protect its master's property and is not easily deceived. Shelves contain books of occult lore and jars of weird reagents, sufficient for an illusionist to perform magical research.

9: Hilduin's Bedchamber. Contains fine furnishings, elegant (albeit mildewed) tapestries and clothing, and a locked chest. Opening it without the key from room 5 unleashes a *phantasmal killer*. The chest contains a pouch of pearls (total value 2000gp), a fizzy blue *potion of invisibility*, and Hilduin's spellbooks.

10: The Fourth Way. This secret door is located at the bottom of the northeastern pit in the Glass Maze.

11: The True Cube. Behind a loose stone in the wall, up near the ceiling, there lies hidden a gold-inlaid ivory coffer (worth 500gp) containing the true Cube, a fist-sized crystal block that generates six distinct illusions—*dancing lights*, *hallucinatory forest*, *invisibility*, *light*, *phantasmal lightning* and *phantasmal serpent*—once each per week. When the box is opened, a *magic mouth* appears inside it and says, "Congratulations! My Cube of Power is now yours. Use it as you will, with the knowledge that your newfound power stems from the generosity of Hilduin, Master of Illusions."

12: Real Fire. If the wheel by this curtain of illusory fire is turned, a ceiling nozzle sprays oil past a striking flint, showering a 10' radius with burning oil.

13: The Second Fake. A crystal cube, enchanted to radiate magic, rests on a marble pedestal. When the cube is touched, the door closes and locks (spike holds on 1 in 6). An illusory spiked ceiling descends over the next two rounds; those who fail a saving throw versus magic fall unconscious. Immediately thereafter, four glass skeletons emerge from illusion-masked niches and attack. The door opens once all skeletons are defeated.