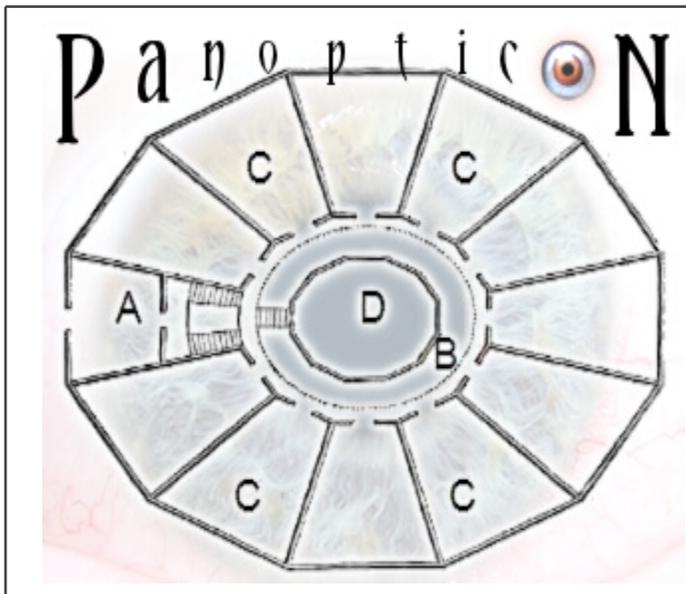


# THE PANOPTICON OF PERIL

A one-page dungeon (2012) by Mike Monaco



- The Panopticon is a prison designed to allow every prisoner to be observed from the central tower. Anyone inside the tower can see into all the sections ("yards") surrounding it. Only the well and the other floors of the tower are "blind spots".
- The walls of the prison are all 40 feet tall and topped by spikes that make them dangerous and slow to top, but they are climbable by someone skilled (or well-equipped and determined)
- The entire complex is 400 feet across
- The yards have openings about 12' across, are 120' long, and are 100' wide at their widest points
- The tower is 40' wide and 80' tall
- The bridge to the tower is 20' long and 10' wide
- The guards are described more fully on my blog here: <http://mikemonaco.wordpress.com/tag/panopticon/>,
- The party might need to rescue a prisoner, or may want to destroy the prison for the common good, or may simply hear about the treasure in the tower.

**A: Entry yard.** This area swarms with eyebats (10) and cyclopskin (40). Patrols of d3 eyebats and d8 cyclopskin leave this area every 2 turns, and patrol clockwise or counterclockwise (alternating). They spend 1-3 rounds at each yard giving cursory to detailed examinations of each. *One does not simply march right into the Panopticon.*

**B: Annular well.** 50' deep and 20' across, with a surrounding ledge 10' wide. Cyclopskin in the patrols from A generally walk the ledge, two abreast; the eyebats will fly freely over the well but will try to keep within 40' of the cyclopskin. The well itself is home to variety of anthropophagic vermin (rats, ghouls, gelatinous cube, even a cyclops, as DM sees fit). A small monetary treasure and possibly several magic items litter the floor, dropped by unlucky adventurers. A secret door at the bottom of the well on the side opposite the bridge leads to a stairway that goes up to the stairs in the tower (D). 20' below the ledge, there are 11 entrances to the sewers beneath the yards; some have no grates.

**C: Ruined yards.** These yards are littered with rubble that provides some cover. Each of these yards houses d6 lurking morlocks. They use nets and ropes to catch and bind victims for later consumption. They will only attack if they have local numerical superiority, but can call on the morlocks in other areas via the sewers, which they access through secret hatches. The morlocks are adept climbers and use these openings, located at regular intervals about 20' down from the ledge, to scurry about the prison. The sewers themselves are 10' circular pipes that slope to the well, littered with bones but otherwise bare. The sewers drain into the annular well.

**Unlabeled yards** hold prisoners, chained to the walls by chains 20' long to allow simple labor and exercise under the supervision of the guards. The prisoners may plead for release, alert the guards out of fear, or stay silent, depending on how they are approached.

**D: The control tower.** The central platform is 80' wide and a tower 40' across is at the center. The tower is five stories tall, each story being about 15' high, and large windows face out in every direction. It is topped by searchlights, one shining on each yard constantly -- a continual light cast inside a mirrored bowl. Each of the first four floors consists of nothing but an open space with a circular stairway in the center that goes up to each level. The ground, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors each have one flying eyeball ("watcher") roosting there. If alerted they will fly to attack - remember the watchers can see all the yards from the tower, but each will be looking in only one direction in any given round. The 4th floor has a table with plans of the tower set on it. Careful inspection reveals a keystone at the base of the stairwell that can be removed, causing the entire tower to collapse in d3 rounds & killing all inside. The top floor houses the warden of the prison, seated on a revolving throne. The warden is Beremy Jentham, a mummified philosopher from the distant past who designed the Panopticon. He wears dapper clothes, and holds a cane. His face looks awake, but slightly glassy; in fact it is wax. A blackish, found object sit between his feet -- it is he badly preserved and dessicated face. He is usually dormant, but awakens if the alarm is triggered. In fact the mummified body cannot move, but the head will animate, float, and fights as an Eye Tyrant. There is a large treasure hoard surrounding the throne.

**The trigger:** Each trigger event adds a 3% cumulative chance of awakening the warden, which will use its eye beams to destroy interlopers. If any flying eyes are left in the tower, they will be alerted too. Once awoken, warden may also ring an alarm bell which will mobilize the cyclopskin and eyebats in area A. At each trigger event, the active PC rolls. The trigger chance maxes out at 90%. Alternatively, one could use a dial to track events so that the trigger is sprung at some set number (say 15 or 20), or a *Jenga* game may be used -- just pull a block or two for each trigger event; toppling the Jenga tower awakens the warden (expect it to topple by the 30th block).

#### Trigger events:

- Moving in a yard being observed by a watcher
- Yelling, arguing, or making other loud noises
- Moving on the ledge, bridge, or the 5th floor of the tower

- Each round of melee
- Moving in a yard occupied by guards
- Other conspicuous activities as determined by the DM

Characters with the ability to move silently, hide in shadows, etc. can avoid movement triggers by moving no more than 1/2 speed. Movement in the sewers and well are not trigger events, but fighting in them is a trigger event.

Swords & Dorkery: <http://mikemonaco.wordpress.com>

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Panopticon map adapted from Jeremy Bentham's 1791 diagram -- Thanks to Scottsz!!!