

Black Monolith From Another Sun: Level 1

Last week, I flew back from LA and while on the flight decided to sketch up some ideas for a hex/point and dungeon map for my Vymrrys campaign setting. Below are some general ideas I had, the first go at a map, and a map key. Within the couple weeks or so I'll probably take another stab at it before moving on to the next level of the dungeon. While not a "megadungeon" - I'm nowhere near skilled enough yet to successfully design something that complex - I'm hoping I can expand this out to at least five levels. You'll notice a lack of access to other levels. Once I've designed those I can begin to add more interconnections.

Vymrrysian scholars have long theorized as to the true nature of the Black Monolith, that totemic object which stabs out from the Infrared Octagonal Hills to the southeast like a knife. While some holdouts still cling to the notion that it was constructed by a long-since-exterminated civilization, most modern academics believe it to have originated from one of the many thousands of suns that dot the night sky. Many an aristocrat has sent scouting or raiding parties to the Monolith, bringing back a variety of alien gems, metals, and the like, assuming they were able to get past the structure's formidable security measures.

Several levels of the monolith have been explored so far, but reports indicate that there are assuredly several more floors above the first 3. In the time between aristocrat-funded treasure-hunting groups, other creatures have themselves moved in, or at least tried to do so. Most recently, a breakaway faction of Zealous Geometers have announced a claim the Monolith, and have begun to set up magical defenses and wards near the only known entrance to the structure. Most hallways are unlit, though some rooms still have flickering or unstable light sources. The whole structure is composed of a dark black and green alloy.

ENCOUNTERS

1-3: 1d4 Zealous Geometers (cultists)

4: 1d4 Purple Sun elves (thieves)

5: 1d4 Serpents of the Legless Star Seekers (fighting men)

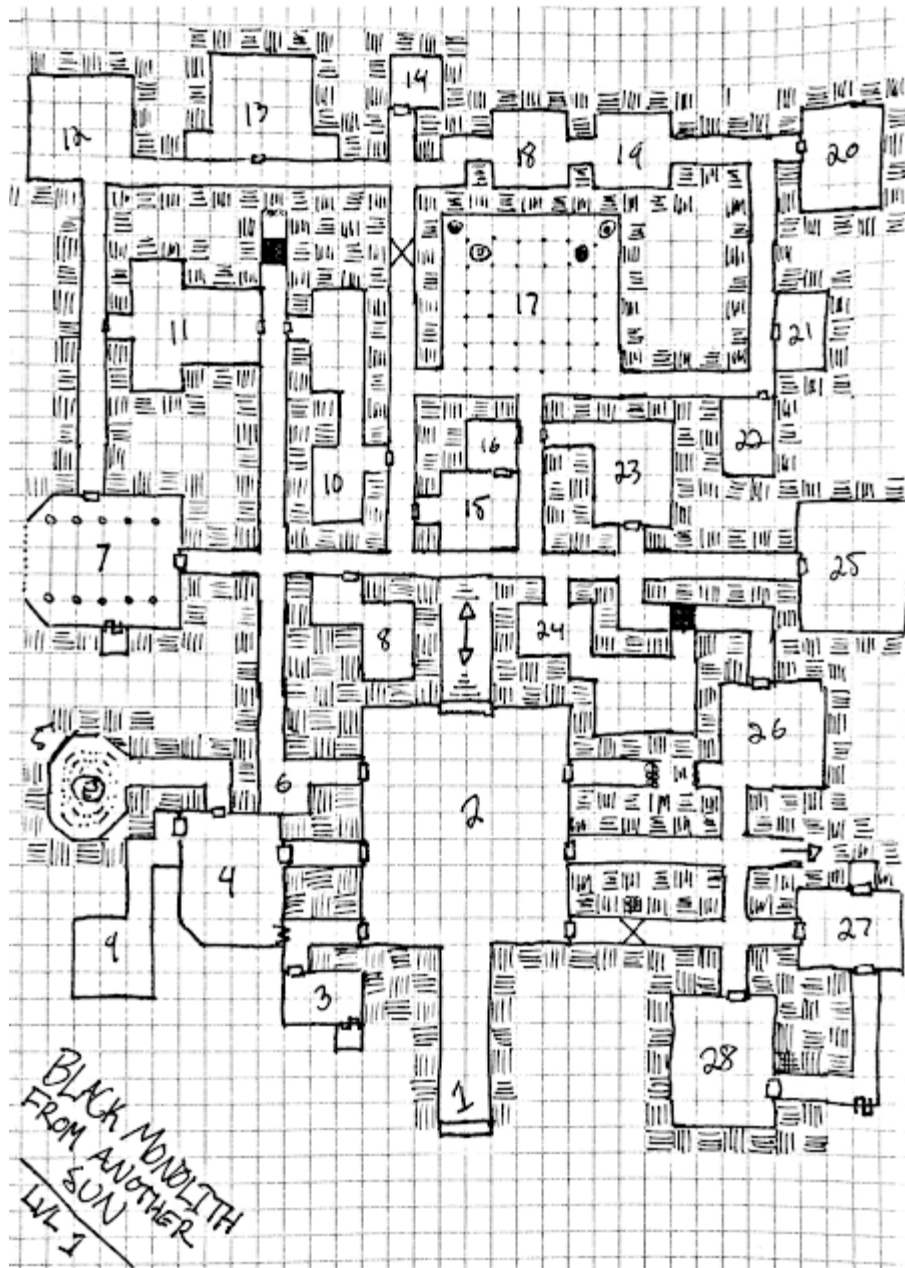
6: Escaped Carnivore Slug from level 2 (3HD, 15 [5] AC, +3 to hit, 1d6 damage, sluglike but can leap from floor to attack)

7: Fast-moving poison cloud from a nearby pipe rupture, run or save against paralysis

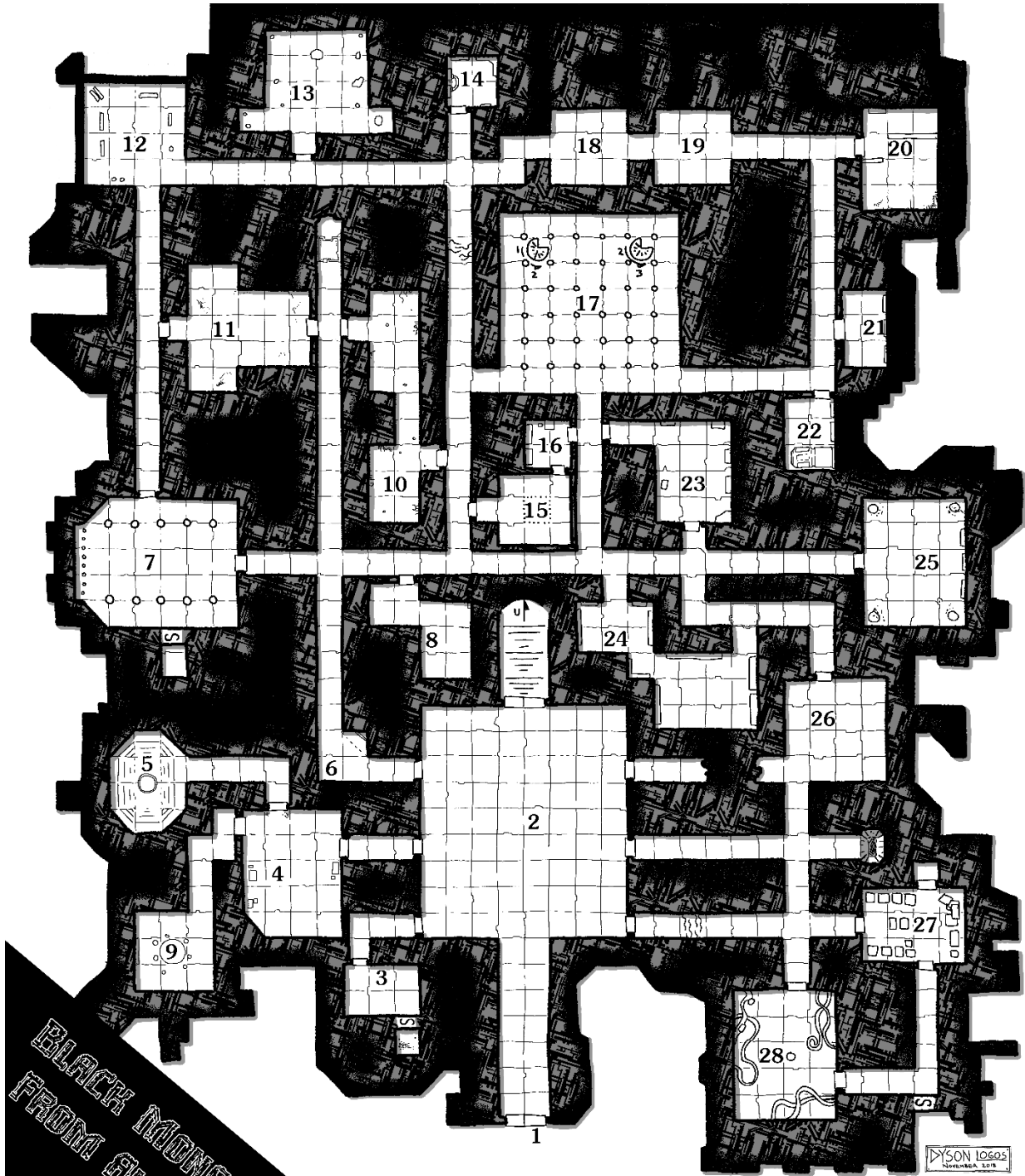
8: 1d6 giant desert spiders from a crack in a nearby wall

9: 1d6 escaped prisoners from Level 2, feral, as commoners

10: 1d3 irradiated mutants from a nearby loose floor hatch, as ghouls



Solid blocks indicate loose floor sections (i.e. pit trap down into mechanical sections of the ship), while Xs indicate dangling electric cables that will shock PCs.



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KEY

1. Entrance to the Monolith. Seamless black door made of the same metallic alloy as the structure. Guarded by 1d4 Zealous Geometers. Closely observant characters will find finger smears in the shape of two triangles about ten feet apart on the surface, indicating two people must trace the outline to open the door. If a Geometer is captured they tell PCs how to get in.
2. Central Hall. Quiet and dimly lit, save for the faint hum of distant mechanical constructs. The air here is still. High up in the ceiling enneagram-shaped shards of metal glow dimly with a phthalocyanous green hue. The <--> indicates a large staircase which ascends to Level 2. Locked behind massive and ornate doors. *Unfortunately, since Level 2 hasn't been designed yet...I haven't made a way to open these.*
3. Empty Room. Room looks like it's been picked clean for quite some time. Secret door leads to hidden alcove containing the intertwined skeletons of long-dead lovers. Note in an alien language. Mechanically unfurling religious icon in the shape of a lotus made of metal (worth 50gp). Weak wall can be smashed into 4.
4. Old barracks room. 1d4 Zealots have turned this old barracks room into a waystation for their group. They may be trying to breach the heavily secured door to 5.
5. Chrome Well. Three steps lead down around the room towards a 5' diameter basin about 3 feet high. A perfectly still chrome liquid* is perfectly level with the surface. The only light emanates from bright orange signs in an alien language ring the walls. If translated the signs read "Use If All Hope Is Lost". The air here smells metallic and feels oppressively heavy. Around the sides of the room are scattered the broken remains of glass and steel containers, though several are still intact.
6. Security Checkpoint. An old security checkpoint, now abandoned. However, tripwire strung diagonally, blocking southwest corner. Strange gun (1d6 exploding damage, 5 laser charges) is visible in sealed case. If tripwire is touched, make save or take 1d6 damage from steel spikes in the floor.
7. Strange Cathedral. Void Guardian** sleeps between the alloy pillars at the far end of the room, in front of an incomprehensible glass and metal icon to That Which Sails the Void***. Secret door leads to what looks to be a still-useful seed-bank. If computer system is toyed with, 1 in 6 chance that seeds are launched into atmosphere. Most of them are alien plant species, but several of them are seeds which will grow into new Void Guardians.
8. Storage Room. An old storage room, picked clean.
9. Meeting Room. A large, round table at the center of the room. 1d4-1 Zealots are meeting here with a Serpent-man representing a faction further along in the dungeon - the Legless Star Seekers.
10. Study Rooms. Two adjacent rooms that at one point were used to study data from the Humming Archives. Powerless mechanical hummingbirds lay dormant around the room, and valuable metals have been ripped from the electronic devices in the walls. If the powerless hummingbirds are brought to the archives 1 in 2 chance of reactivation (worth 200gp if captured and sold powered on).

11. Mess Hall, Skirmish Site. The sight of a recent clash between factions. Several corpses are scattered around the room, as are the signs of magic use. One in two chance that 2 "corpses" are actually still alive but dying slowly. If searched carefully, several packets of sealed rations of an alien food can be found. They are still edible, though will taste strange to PCs.
12. Viewing Port. Walls here are made of a near-unbreakable glass compound through which the expanse of the Infrared Octagonal Hills is viewable. Metal benches dot the room. One of few sources of natural light in the Monolith.
13. Martial Training Room. Plastic and foam dummies of various alien species dot the room, clearly stations for martial training of prior occupants. 1d4 Zealot scholars are in deep thought taking notes on the representations of foreign life. Searches reveal 2 alien swords of black, lightweight alloy, as well as a pair of lightweight flexible Turbo Gloves (bonuses as unarmed attack, but 1 die type higher damage due to pulse propulsion of fists during strike. Also grants 1-point bonus to checks made to grab or catch objects with hands).
14. Power Relay Station. Several lights flicker through strange gems within the casing units of this near non-functional power station. Fiddling with or destroying this relay station to remove the gems (50gp each, 5 total) will permanently shut off all non-natural lighting on Level 1, disregarding 17.
15. Psionic Prison. All surfaces made of white alloy, and otherwise empty aside from the ceiling-mounted cage of black psionic energy. Trapped inside is a telepathic life form made of slow-growing crystal lattice†. Door from the hallway is trapped any attempt to pick the bulky lock mechanism will deliver an electric shock to the PC worth 1d6 damage. Save for half. Can be opened safely with cardkey found on a corpse in 14.
16. Guard Room. Contains information about the crystal life-form in an alien language on a holographic datapad. Door to 15 is trapped any attempt to pick the bulky lock mechanism will deliver an electric shock to the PC worth 1d6 damage. Save for half. Can be opened safely with cardkey found on a corpse in 14.
17. Humming Archives. This seeming library hums with the still-going activity of thousands of mechanical hummingbirds, sucking electric knowledge nectar from the stacks and shuffling it around. Three levels. Spiral stairs lead from 1 -> 2 and from 2 -> 3. Several old skeletons are located on level 3 near a destroyed stack.
18. Chrono-Hall 1. Malfunctioning but still powered graviton generators have created strange time fields in this hall passage and the following. In this section, time moves at roughly 1/4 the speed. Sound is deep and language becomes almost indecipherable, light moves slowly and bends through the air, etc. Spending too much time here will become disorienting upon exit. If more than 2 turns are spent here, PC incurs a -1 penalty to reaction rolls for 1 hour. One can see the flicker of these forces in the air as specs of red energy.
19. Chrono-Hall 2. In this hallway time his sped up by 4, as is one's momentum upon exiting the hall from the East side. PCs that don't make any attempt to move as slowly as possible will rocket out of the time field at quadruple their normal speed, and on a failed save, crash into the nearest wall for the equivalent of 10 feet of falling damage.

20. Shooting Range. Nonfunctional shooting range. Laser burns scar the metal walls. A laser rifle (1d10 exploding damage, 10 charges) sits locked in a case (extremely difficult to open, trapped) along the wall nearest the door. When PCs enter, 3 purple sun thieves are trying to open it. They will try to talk their way out of the situation before fighting. If PC attempts to force the gilded case open, a laser blade will extend like a wire from the case edging and attempt to remove fingers. On a failed save, 1d6 damage and lose 2 fingers.
21. Escape Pod Room 1. Empty save for spots where escape pods used to be. Doors are ringed in bright orange paint.
22. Escape Pod Room 2. Similar to above except one pod remains. Made of similar smooth blackish green metal alloys as the rest of the ship. Glass window at approximately 3/4 the height of the pod. Inside can be seen an inhuman skeleton in some sort of armor. †† Inoperable hatch unless power is restored. Glass can be shattered with a near impossible strength check.
23. Archivist's Quarters. Ancient computing systems sit unpowered around the room, powerless hummingbirds lay scattered about. Now being used by Tetratus (magic user, 4HD, 14 [6] AC) acting leader of the Zealous Geometer's expedition, along with 2 of his underlings (both fighting men, 2HD, 15 [5] AC). He will be immediately hostile if he knows any of his men have been killed. Otherwise, he may attempt to parlay with the party for information.
24. Vertical Gardens. Small radiation sources in the walls and ceiling have kept the plants growing far longer than they should have. Many alien vines and flowers twist around each other from within their gilded housings. Extended exposure to the radiation in this room is toxic to all PCs and NPCs. If the room is visited twice for more than one turn, use a table to determine random mutations for characters.
25. Medical Center. An old and picked over medical center. Vertical pods with shattered glass in corners of rooms. Several healing items can be looted here, though PCs wouldn't recognize them. 1d4 Purple Sun elven thieves are picking through the room on arrival, probably descended from Level 2.
26. Empty Room. What was once here is now gone. What looks to be a metal desk has been stripped of ornamentation, and one body lies in the corner, decaying. --> in the nearby hallway indicates an open well within the ship. If someone jumps or stumbles in and fails a save, 100 feet of falling damage as they plummet through the machinery in the lower levels.
27. Caged Men. Door guarded by 2 serpent-men of the Legless Star Seekers. Pitch black room full of stacked cages, most with skeletons. Upon closer inspection several cages contain 3 captured Geometers. The secret door at the end of the hallway between 27 and 28 provides a secondary entrance to the Monolith. Can only be entered via scaling a cliffside, and if exited without caution, PC takes falling damage from 30 feet without a successful save.
28. Meditation Room. Sealed by an "airlock" style door system, organic metal fixtures weave throughout the room, providing natural places for alien bodies to relax and meditate. Several pairs of soft shoes are present in the lock. A flickering holo-projector sits in the center of the room, the black room intermittently punctuated by the cyanic light. Holo-lenses can be stolen for 200gp each. Sound echoes extremely well here, and creating enough noise will cause pain. PCs not attempting to walk or talk quietly will create noise at ten times the volume. For every PC making noise all PCs in the room take 1d3 damage per turn. Currently empty and still.

*Chrome Liquid. Functions as a one-time use set of flexible, light, plate armor. Used by original inhabitants in case of the ultimate emergency. If touched, liquid will quickly move to cover the entire body including all orifices. Dampens hearing partially and smell completely, but breathing and sight are still possible. Grants a +2 bonus to saves vs any inhaled poison, breath, or similar attacks, nullifies contact poisons and grants +3 AC on top of current AC. However, extended use of the armor is ill advised. Every 30 minutes of wear take 1d4 damage as the chrome anchors itself into the skin. Can be removed on command and will turn into a solid slab of metal once removed. Can only be carried in specified containers.

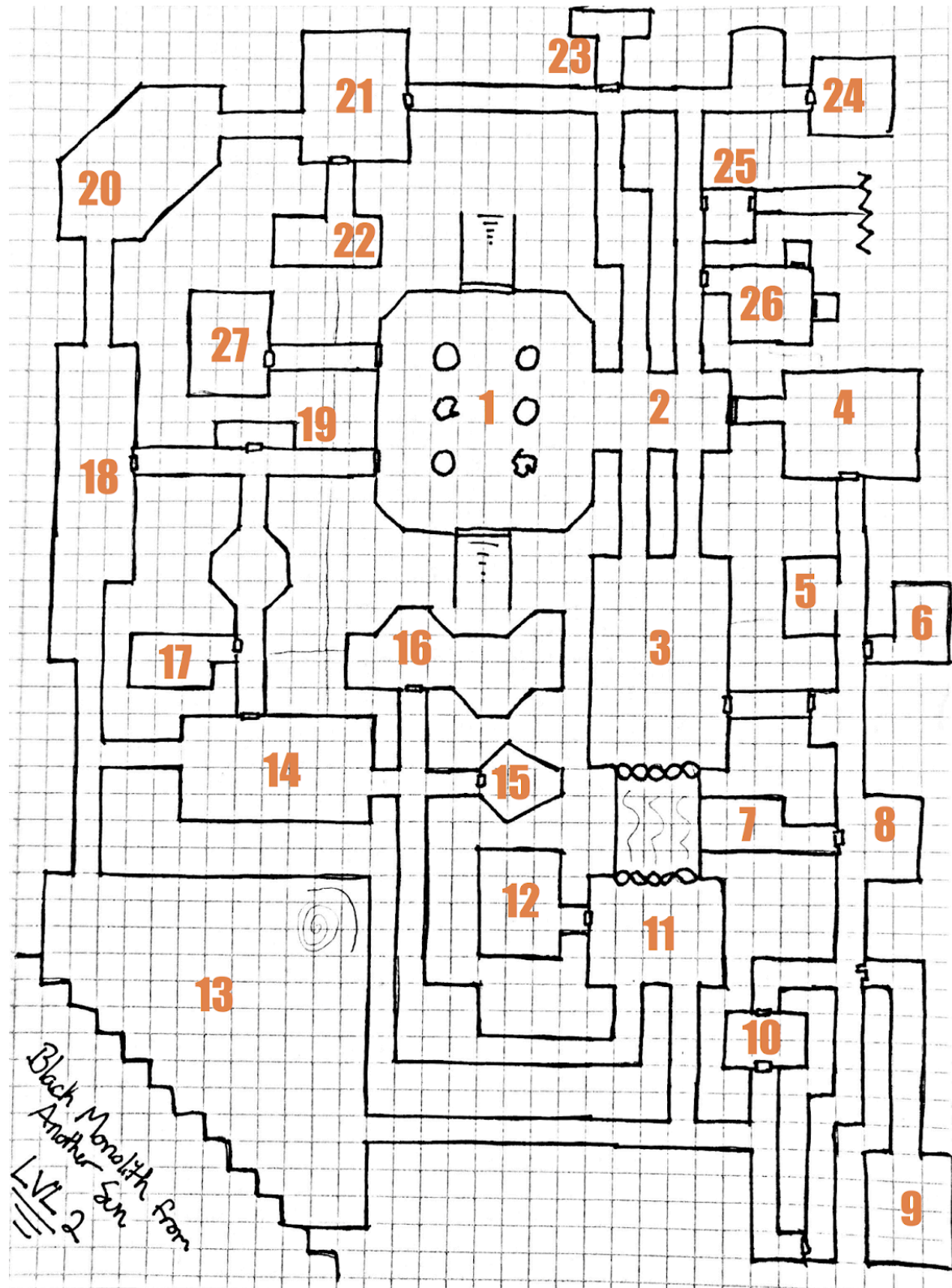
**Void Guardian. 5HD, 16 [4] AC. +3 to hit, 1d6+1 physical attacks, 1d10 psionic attack requires 2 turn recharge, feeds on radiation. 15' tall, slick grey skin the texture of cured leather. Muscular arms and thick legs but no head. Thick prehensile tail. Instead of a head, a blinking metal contraption is set directly into the shoulders, with tubes inserting directly into the back and upper chest. Senses room by vibra-location, giving all PCs a -3 penalty to stealth.

***The Icon of that Which Sails the Void. A glass and alloy structure that seems to mutate without moving. Its ethereal substructure creates a religious totem of indescribable shape and complexity. If meditated before for one day, the PC will be granted brief contact with the deity.

†Slow-growing Crystalline Entity. Has been imprisoned for hundreds of years by the Monolith's original occupants. Nearly insane. Has been subsisting on trace amounts of radiation leakage through the ship. If freed will immediately search out stronger sources of radiation. However, may have information on some of the groups in the Monolith. Not immediately hostile but will go through anything to find more food. 6HD, 11 [9] AC, 1d4 prismatic rays per round, colors as spell prismatic spray.

††Armor from Another Sun. Ornate black and gold armor made of densely woven threads and high-grade ceramic plating. Full suit is AC as plate. Grants damage resistance to missile attacks. Motorized joint assists can absorb half of falling damage.

Black Monolith From Another Sun: Level 2



What follows is Level 2 of the Black Monolith from Another Sun. While I haven't yet done so, I need to go back and fiddle with the Level 1 map to make them slot together a bit nicer.

ENCOUNTERS

- 1-3: 1d4 Zealous Geometers (cultists)
- 4: 1d4 Purple Sun elves (thieves)
- 5: 1d4 Serpents of the Legless Star Seekers (fighting men)
- 6: Escaped Science Experiment from level 3 (4HD, 15 [5] AC, +2 to hit, 1d8 damage with tentacles, 1d3 poison-per-turn attack with fangs), looks like several animals and humans melting together
- 7: Fast-moving poison cloud from a nearby pipe rupture, run or save against paralysis
- 8: 1d6 giant desert spiders from a crack in a nearby wall
- 9: 1d6 escaped prisoners from Level 2, feral, as commoners
- 10: 1d3 irradiated mutants from a nearby loose floor hatch, as ghouls

KEY

1. Urban Projection Hall: Massive hall still partially provided with electricity. Five working circular devices in the floor project a holographic representation of Vymrrys into the air. A portion of the city flickers in and out of form from the six broken projector.
2. Hallway Connector: Several dismembered serpentine corpses litter this room. A pipe hangs from a broken ceiling dripping green ooze onto the floor. A metallic ceiling section has bisected a corpse and sticks jaggedly out of the floor.
3. Experimental Fluidic Time Room a: Large room lined with semi-functional computer terminals and heavy glass barriers. Floors, walls, and ceiling clearly marked with fluorescent orange paint in heavy stripes near the Fluidic Time Barrier.
4. Wargames Room: A large holographic display in the center of the room flickers on and off. What seem to be thousands of dots litter the display in various colors. All are marked with coordinates in an alien language. A group of Geometers (1d4) are using this room to rest, but seem determined to defend the room at all costs.
5. Gravity Control Room: Formerly a control room for the gravity on this floor, it is now in disrepair. A loot cache with alien tech worth 400gp can be found if one manages to dig around in the machinery without losing a limb (make a successful ability or skill check, or save if none are available).
6. Botanical Room: Formerly a small-yet-dense vegetable garden, the room now contains foul-smelling ooze made by the decaying plant matter. Radiation has turned it into a hostile and unintelligent life form [3HD, 1d4 grab attack with slime, save or lose a piece of armor]. If the door is left open, the ooze will seek out radiation sources to continue growing, gaining 1HD per day left alone.
7. Fluidic Time Observation Room: Several (1d6) geometers can be found here observing and taking meticulous notes of the (1d3) Serpents they've locked in the Fluidic Time Chamber†.
8. Rest Space: Once an old rest space, this area has been trapped against intruders (namely Purple Sun elves sneaking around). Metal furniture sits facing the large glass window, all turned away from any PCs in the hallway. If disturbed, small electric batteries adhered to the front sides discharge, electrocuting the offending PCs for 2d6 damage and stunning them for 2 rounds (save for half damage).

9. Hidden Refuge: A Being from Another Sun* lies dormant in a hibernation chamber behind the secret door. Empty food packs and used medical supplies litter the room. If the being is woken they will die within 3 rounds if not provided medical attention and rations. They will be grateful to whoever rescues them, however they will not understand any languages aside from their own.
10. Enclosed Communications Room: Heavy doors seal this cubical room in completely. Painted completely in white with a small orange triangle on the floor. Full power still supplied. By standing still on the spot for 10 minutes, one can access a higher dimension for 5 minutes, and learn 1 true fact about the nature of this place. These 5 minutes will feel like an entire lifetime for the user. A PC not used to the effects of dimensional travel will have to make an appropriate save or lose 1 point of wisdom.
11. Experimental Fluidic Time Room b: Large room lined with semi-functional computer terminals and heavy glass barriers. Floors, walls, and ceiling clearly marked with fluorescent orange paint in heavy stripes near the Fluidic Time Barrier.
12. Experimental Storage Room: Mostly caved-in room that used to house a variety of experimental parts for the Fluidic Time Chamber. 1 round of searching will yield a variety of unique glasses and metals that could be crafted with or sold.
13. Sanctuary of the Most Transformed Being: Massive room encased in especially heavy iron slabs which overlap like scales. The SW corner of the room has been crushed off by the nearby mountain, but most of the sanctuary remains intact. A serene natural environment (trees, flowers, animals, etc.) are replicated in brilliant ruby crystal. NE corner of the room contains a pool of phosphorescent glass containing a captured Most Transformed Being**. Most sound is silenced immediately by the acoustics of the metal scales.
14. Medical Bay: Several (1d6) Purple Sun elves are ransacking medical supplies*** and tools labeled in an alien language.
15. Makeshift Tomb: This old room has been made into a makeshift crypt since the crash. Shimmering black obsidian houses the body of the ship's captain. If the lid is unsealed, the room begins to flood with toxic gas, and is full within 3 rounds. The crypt contains a laser sword (1d8 damage, will set fire to anything flammable), treasure worth 500gp, and a visor that allows the user to see heat signatures through walls twice per day.
16. Organic Robotics Room: The remains of an old organic-robotics laboratory. Mechanized components lay smashed on lab benches while organic matter decays in fungus-filled tanks. 1d4 Star Serpents have locked themselves in the room and are attempting to build a small army to push out the invaders.
17. Caved in Elevator Bay: Sparking electronics dangle where the lifts up to Level 3 used to be. If enough time is devoted to clearing debris, this could potentially be used as a shortcut. Would require several days hard labor.
18. Art Gallery: An old walkthrough art gallery. Mostly dark now. Full of refractive glass sculptures, alien animals trapped in liquids, and several small singularities contained in forcefields.

19. Meditation Room: Formerly a room used for brief meditation sessions, now it's full of decaying corpses. You'd need a strong stomach to want to loot these bodies.
20. Observatory: A second deck observatory providing a view of the desert expanse through dusty glass. If found, a shortcut can be opened here down to Level 1, but will initially be full of live electrical and mechanical components. These can be disabled by accessing room 22.
21. Small Meeting Hall: This small meeting hall has been barricaded from both sides by the furniture in the room. Any retreating enemies will end up here if encountered on the left side of the map. If they are of opposing groups, they will be fighting in the room, with a 50% chance of either group winning, -1 member.
22. Junction Room: Making a successful skill check (i.e. Tinkering) in this room, will allow the PC to disable the electric cables blocking the shortcut in room 20.
23. Drug Storage Room: Still contains a large supply of deep-space stimulants meant to keep ship occupants awake during long on-duty shifts. Consuming a stimulant gives the user a +1 to hit, and heightened awareness to sounds, but each dose carries a 20% chance of addiction. If addicted, more must be consumed each hour or suffer exhaustion penalties.
24. Propagandists' Office: Contains holographic computer terminals displaying alien propaganda. If deciphered, the holograms indicate some sort of war effort between the Beings from Another Sun, and the Star Serpents.
25. Airlock/ Caved in Escape Hatch: A completely sealed airlock deprived of oxygen, leading to a caved in escape tunnel. Preserved corpse inside still carrying 500gp worth of alien gems and green fiberglass armor (+1), resistant to burning.
26. Armory: An old, raided armory. The north-side closet still contains a laser pistol (1d6, exploding damage) in a glass box.
27. Sub-commandant's Chamber: Former office of the Star Serpent Sub-Commandant. All walls, floor, and ceiling are thick glass, allowing PCs to see the still semi-functional internal workings of the ship.

† Massive amounts of power have been diverted to the fluidic time chamber. Between the barriers, time has been liquefied in a vacuum and flows in streams in eddies chaotically. Physical objects trapped in the chamber will age, un-age, die, and be born sporadically. 3rd dimensional consciousness will be ripped apart if contact is made between the brain and a time stream. However, if a PC can make it through the chamber while avoiding consciousness obliteration, they will emerge with +2 to any Ability score, at the cost of a few mutations wherever they've touched a liquid time stream with any other body part.

*Neither Star Serpent nor humanoid creature, the Being most closely resembles a Drow... (see my upcoming post on Drow for further explanation).

**The glass pool initially looks still and empty. Nearby several UV lights are powered off. If power can be restored via the indicated junction, the glass will glow a phosphorescent blue and begin undulating in a fractalized pattern. The undulation will hypnotize any onlookers for 2 rounds if they fail an appropriate save. Un-hypnotized onlookers will notice that a small, glowing, humanoid fetus lies curled up in the undulating blue glass. It will make telepathic contact and probe the intentions of the PCs. If its questions can be satisfied, it will ask to be freed in return for a reward.

***Searching through the medical supplies will yield a random result from the following table unless the PC can pass a hard DC check to make an educated guess as to what they're looking at.

D4

1 - Healing liquid. If applied to wound, it will instantly staunch bleeding and heal for 2d6 HP.

2 - Radioactive slime. If consumed, random mutation from appropriate table.

3 - Liquid bone-fixing agent. Contained in a plastic pouch. If spread over broken limb, will seep into the skin and reset the bone. However, it's a bit expired and it will accidentally add 1 foot of length to the applied limb.

4 - Alien antibodies. If consumed orally, antibodies will immediately begin attacking and modifying the organ systems of the PC. After taking 1d6 damage, genetic modification will be complete. Gain infravision, add 5 to movement speed, but hearing is now dulled.