

Level 5: Banth's Lair and the Wight Catacombs

This level serves as the research laboratory of the evil wizard, Banth. Banth, a transmuter, specializes in alchemical, magical, and surgical mutations. Unlike Rappan Athuk's other denizens, Banth was never aligned with law, but is and always has been chaotic to the core. His dedication to chaos earned the priests' favor. From their temple on **Level 4**, the priests have worked with and protected him, even though he worships not Orcus but another god of death. The priests approve of his work; through various demonic consultations, Orcus has commanded his priests to aid Banth. To this end, Zehn (Orcus's high priest on **Level 4**) has established a guard of zombies and wights to protect Banth. Banth also commands a flesh golem.

One other area of this level may interest PCs: giant bees have built a hive here. After the party slays all the bees, they may discover a quick route to the surface. The map of this level is shown in **Map RA-5**.

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Equivalent Dungeon Level: 9

Entrances: Stairs from **Level 4**; bee tunnel from the surface

Exits: Stairs to **Level 6**; ladder to **Level 14** (see **Area 5-10**)

Wandering Monsters: Check once every 30 minutes on 1d20:

1-3	1d6 wights
4-5	3d6 giant rats
6	Kupra and the flesh golem (see Area 5-6)
7	1d6 Acolytes of Orcus, en route to Level 4
8-20	No encounter

Detections: None.

Shielding: None.

Continuous Effects: Due to this level's proximity to the Chapel of Orcus (**Level 14**), all creatures on this level gain +2 to their Challenge Level for purposes of turning.

Standard Features: Unless otherwise noted, all doors on this level are locked and constructed of iron-reinforced wood.

Wight: HD 3; AC 5 [14]; Atk 1 claw (1hp + level drain); Move 9; Save 14; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Drain 1 level with hit, hit only by magic or silver weapons.

Giant Rat: HD 1d4 hp; AC 7 [12]; Atk 1 bite (1d3); Move 12; Save 18; AL N; CL/XP A/5; Special: 5% are diseased.

Acolyte of Orcus, Male Clr2: HD 2; AC 4 [15]; Atk 1 heavy mace (1d6); Move 9; Save 14 (12 vs. paralysis and poison); AL C; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Cleric spells: 1st—*protection from good*. Gear: Chainmail, shield, heavy mace, 3 vials of unholy water, unholy symbol of Orcus, black robe emblazoned with the symbol of Orcus, a small sack with 4d10 gp.

5-1. Entrance

Stairs from the evil temple on **Level 4** lead into these crypts. It is surprisingly cold here. Frosty breath plumes from each PC's mouth and nostrils. The stairs deposit the party in a large room containing several tombs. Some appear to have been opened and desecrated — others seem intact. A single door on the left wall offers a possible exit. Familiar-looking tunnels suggest that rats dine here.

Two rounds after the PCs enter the room, **5 wights** burst from the crypts — those marked with an "X" — and attack. PCs disguised as Orcus' priests have a 1 in 6 chance of convincing the wights to return to their respective resting places. Due to the level's overall proximity to the Chapel of Orcus (**Level 14**), turning rolls are at -2. These wights have no treasure; the priests of **Level 4** long ago looted the tombs.

Wights (5): HD 3 (16 hp); AC 5 [14]; Atk 1 claw (1hp + level drain); Move 9; Save 14; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Drain 1 level with hit, hit only by magic or silver weapons.

Tactics: The wights gang up on one character at a time; any PC killed by a wight adds to their number and joins the fight on their side. The wights attack clerics and paladins first. They fight until slain (again).

5-2. Empty

Crypts, bones, and useless junk litter all areas marked **5-2**. Referees should spice up each of these rooms with 2d4 randomly rolled items (from **Frog God Games The Tome of Adventure Design**, "**Book Three**, "Dungeon Dressing"). Referees should also roll a wandering monster check each time a PC enters an area labeled "**5-2**"; a 1 to 6 on 1d20 indicates the presence of 1d6 wights.

5-3. The Secret Arcane-locked Door

Alert PCs note a 5 ft. wide metal section of the corridor wall. This door is *wizard locked* (11th level magic-user) but can be bypassed by normal means, providing access to a laboratory area and Banth's lair. The door pivots open along a central axis.

5-4. The Blackened Room

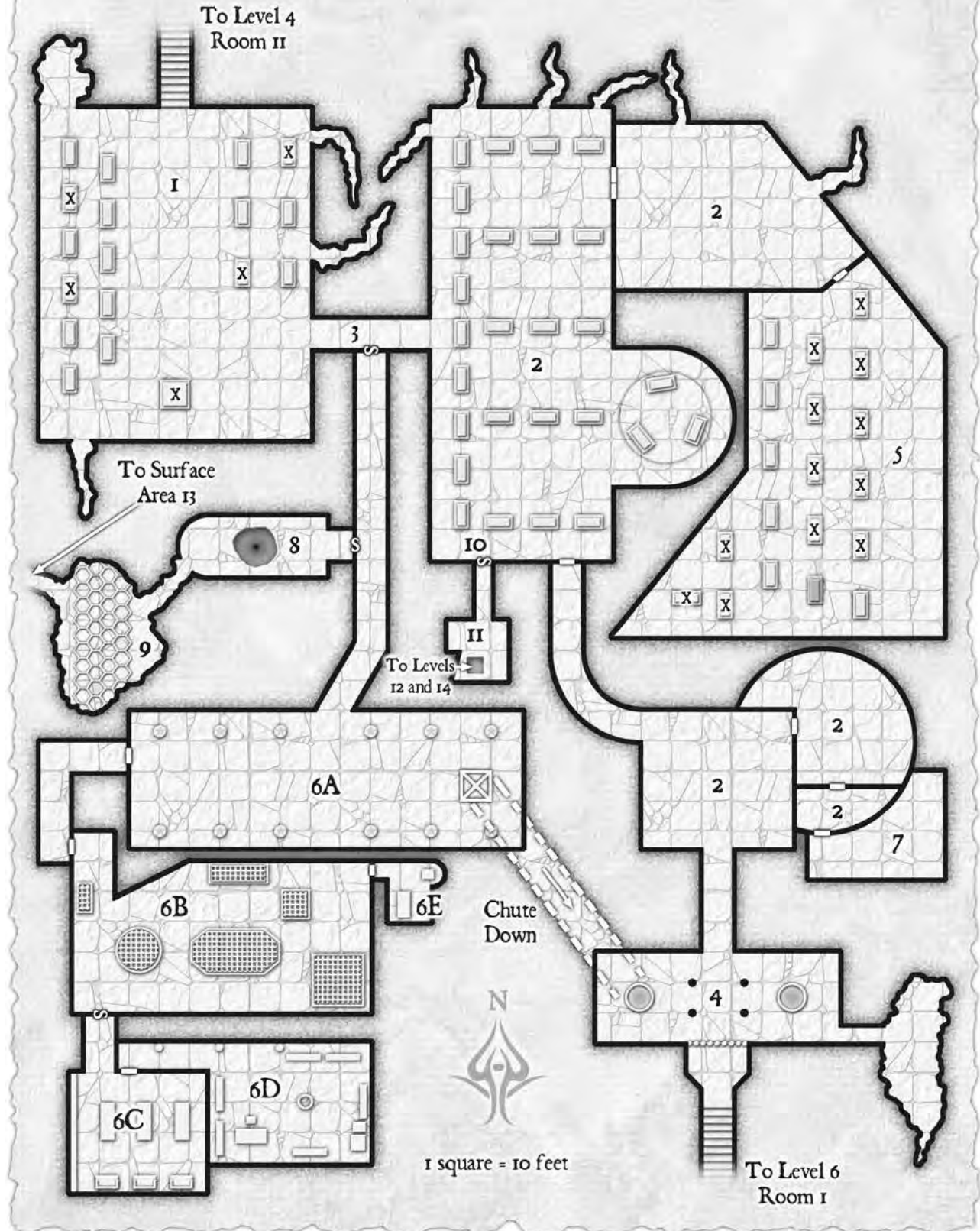
A huge, iron portcullis, flanked on either side by two pairs of black-stained, smooth-stone pillars, bars the path. Before the pillars stand two huge vats, fashioned from blue stone that contain a smoking, smoldering, superheated substance. Waves of heat blur and distort the air above the vats. The soot and smoke emanating from the vats have blackened the walls and ceiling.

This room, seemingly very dangerous, is actually quite harmless — unless the party does something really stupid or someone from **Area 5-6A** is dropped through the pit trap into a vat. Otherwise, there is nothing to fear.

The portcullis marks the entrance to the maze on **Level 6** and can

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be raised as described below. Unlike the soot-stained granite pillars, the vats have been magically constructed to remain very, very hot (over 2,000+ F), and they contain molten rock. Immersion in these vats deals 10d10 points of fire damage per round (no save). Contact with the liquid deals 6d6 points of fire damage per round (save for half damage).

Treasure: Soot on the southwest pillar masks a fine vein of living rock, a magical metal that can be used to construct weapons of +5 enchantment. A PC knowledgeable in magic, mining, metalworking, blacksmithing, or a similar applicable skill can recognize this material. PCs need a +3 or better magic weapon to extract it, ruining the weapon (if below +5 enchantment) in the process. A *stone to flesh* or *rock to mud* spell would more effectively and completely remove it. Additionally, this material has anti-magical qualities. A dagger-sized piece increases magic resistance by 10% when touching a person's body. Larger pieces elevate this magic-nullifying percentage. A shortsword-sized weapon (with a 20% antimagic effect, the equivalent of two daggers) might be fashioned from the living rock present here. A PC can forge this material into a weapon or armor with magical fire and a week's worth by a trained armorer.

5-5. The Greater Wight Lair

The temperature continues to drop as the PCs pass through burial chamber after burial chamber. As they open the final door, they see numerous intact crypts and witness horrid undead crawling from within them.

Twelve of these creatures are **wights** — those crypts marked with an "X" — and one is a **barrow wight** — the solid-shaded crypt — a servant of the demon lord, Orcus, himself. Due to the Chapel of Orcus' proximity (**Level 14**), turning is at -4! These creatures protect Banth and serve the priests on **Level 4**.

Barrow Wight: HD 8 (48 hp); AC 3 [16]; Atk 1 slam (1d4 + level drain); Move 12; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 12/2000; Special: Level drain, insanity gaze.

Wights (12): HD 3 (16 hp); AC 5 [14]; Atk 1 claw (1hp + level drain); Move 9; Save 14; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Drain 1 level with hit, hit only by magic or silver weapons.

Tactics The wights gang up on one character at a time; any PC slain adds to their number and joins the fight on their side. The wights try to attack clerics and paladins first. They fight until slain (again). The barrow wight actually climbs the wall and drops on a victim, but does not join the fight until he sees all of the PCs engaged. He then targets unarmored foes.

Treasure: The barrow wight wears a suit of platemail. In addition, his crypt contains a gold crown worth 5,000 gp, 2,300 sp and a garnet-studded ivory drinking horn worth 500 gp.

5-6. Banth's Laboratory

This area, accessed through the secret door at **Area 5-3**, constitutes the laboratory and living quarters of the evil wizard, **Banth**.

Area 5-6A: A guardroom, populated by zombies that act as an early warning system for the wizard.

Area 5-6B: Banth's victim-storage area, containing cages that house

unfortunate creatures.

Area 5-6C: A vivisection laboratory.

Area 5-6D: Banth's living quarters and private study.

Area 5-6E: The living quarters of Kupra, Banth's not-so-loyal apprentice.

Determine the locations of Banth, Kupra and the flesh golem and their respective activities by rolling 1d10 for each character and consulting the table at the bottom of the page.

Banth, Male Human, Mag11: HP 29; AC 8 [11]; Atk 1 dagger (1d4); Move 12; Save 5 (3 vs. spells); AL C; CL/XP 12/2000; Str 10; Dex 14; Con 16; Int 18; Wis 13; Cha 9; Special: Spells. Gear: Robes, spellbook, journal, daggers (2), darts (5), wand of *polymorph other*. Spells: 1st – *hold portal*, *magic missile* (x2), *shield*; 2nd – *darkness 15-ft. radius*, *detect invisibility*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*; 3rd – *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *gaseous form*, *haste*; 4th – *confusion*, *polymorph other*, *wall of ice*; 5th – *conjunction of elementals*, *hold monster*, *wall of iron*.

Kupra, Female Human, Mag3: HP 9; AC 9 [10]; Atk 1 dagger (1d4); Move 12; Save 13 (11 vs. spells); AL L; CL/XP 3/60; Str 13; Dex 16; Con 15; Int 16; Wis 14; Cha 17; Special: Spells. Gear: Robes, spellbook, daggers (2), silver dagger, pouch with 22 gp. Spells: 1st – *magic missile*, *shield*; 2nd – *invisibility*.

Flesh Golem: HD 10 (45hp); AC 9 [10]; Atk 2 fists (2d8); Move 8; Save 5; AL N; CL/XP 12/2000; Special: Healed by lightning, hit only by magic weapons, slowed by fire and cold, immune to most spells.

Cockatrice (3): HD 5; AC 6 [13]; Atk 1 bite (1d3 + petrification); Move 6 (Fly 18); Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 7/600; Special: bite turns to stone.

Fire Elemental: HD 12 (68 hp); AC 2 [17]; Atk 1 strike (2d6); Move 12; Save 3; AL N; CL/XP 13/2300; Special: Ignite materials.

Tactics for Banth: Unless Banth is surprised (unlikely), he meets the PCs in **Room 5-6A**. But if Banth is asleep when the PCs encounter the zombies, Banth first *conjures* a fire elemental (using the *brazier* in **Room 5-6D**) while dispatching the flesh golem to aid the zombies. He uses his *wall of iron* spell to block **Room 5-6C**'s door until he is properly prepared. Given the opportunity, Banth will throw a confusion spell into **Room 5-6A** or **5-6B**.

Banth attacks using his fire elemental and wand until all PCs are either dead or turned into mice (his favorite *polymorph other* creature). If pressed, he tosses white mice (which are actually polymorphed creatures) into the PCs' midst and casts *dispel magic* (adding three very confused cockatrices and a monk) to the fray. Then he retreats to **Room 5-6D**. He is loath to kill his experimental subjects in **Room 5-6B** and only uses *ice storm* there if desperate.

If Banth is sure he will lose the fight, he retreats to **Room 5-6D**, grabs his spellbooks and journal and changes into *gaseous form*. He follows the PCs to seek revenge later, hiding on **Level 4** in the temple area.

Tactics for Kupra: Because of Banth's horrendous treatment of her, Kupra is a coward. She retreats and hides in **Room 5-6C** (under a table) or in **Room 5-6E** (under her bed), casting *invisibility* on herself. If encountered outside of the lair, Kupra becomes *invisible* and retreats to warn Banth. If Banth is slain or if she is captured, Kupra surrenders and tries to double-talk her way out of trouble. She is not chaotic — a fact

For use with 5-6 A, B, C, D, E

Person	1-2	3-5	6-8	9-10
Banth	Room B, examining animals	Room D, studying	Room C, working	Room D, asleep
Kupra	Making rounds	Room E, studying	Room B, feeding animals	Room E, asleep
Flesh golem	Making rounds	Room B	Room B, carrying food	Room B

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that the monk, Socrates, can support, if he lives. She would make a fine apprentice for an up-and-coming PC magic-user.

Tactics for the Flesh Golem: If the golem enters the fray in room 5-6A, it follows its programming to “throw people into the pit.” If it enters the fray in room 5-6B or is encountered outside of the lair, the golem fights normally, using fewer tactics than even the zombies.

Tactics for the Fire Elemental: It attacks the closest creature, besides Banth, within range.

Tactics for the Cockatrices: Look out! The birds move about randomly, attacking anything within easy reach. Left alone, they retreat into the dungeon, searching for food.

Tactics for Socrates the Monk: Socrates, a monk (Mnk5, Lawful), avoids the birds but joins the PCs to destroy the bad guys. He joins the party afterwards if it is of similar ethos.

Socrates (Human Monk 5): HD 5; AC 5[14]; Atk weaponless damage (1d10); Move 16; Save 11 (+2 vs. paralysis and poison); AL L; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Alertness, Deflect Missiles, Deadly Strike, Thief-type skills, +2 damage with weapons, speak with animals, slow falling 20 ft. mastery of silence, Climb Walls 89%, Delicate Tasks 35%, Hear Sounds 4 in 6, Hide in Shadows 30%, Move Silently 40%, Open Lock 30%.

5-6A. The Entryway

The wizard locked door opens into a large hallway. After the PCs navigate it, they find themselves in a large room, with a door on the far

right wall. Twelve men in plate mail occupy this room and begin to shuffle toward the PCs. These shuffling warriors, armed with halberds, exude a stench of decay.

These “men,” actually **zombies in platemail**, should not present much of a challenge to the PCs and are there only to delay the PCs’ entry into Banth’s inner sanctum.

Note the **pit trap** in the far, eastern section of the room. This trap, leading to a chute, channels thrown or falling PCs into one of the vats detailed in **Area 5-4** above (treat any PCs thusly dropped as “immersed”).

The door to **Area 5-6C** is *wizard locked* (by an 11th level magic-user). The **secret door to Area 5-8** is easy to find; whatever lies beyond emits a loud buzzing noise. Remember that, due to the proximity of the Chapel of Orcus (**Level 14**), turning rolls are at -4.

Zombies in Plate Mail (12): HD 2; AC 3 [16]; Atk 1 weapon (1d10) or strike (1d8); Move 6; Save 16; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Immune to sleep and charm.

Pit Trap (20 feet deep, leads to a chute): Saving throw avoids; 20 ft. deep and fall into molten rock (2d6 plus 10d10 fire per round, fall plus molten rock).

5-6B. Tigers and Monkeys and Rats, Oh My!

This room contains **six cages** that hold Banth’s twisted animal experiments. The first cage, for example, contains two, small, horribly mutated monkeys—each has five arms and wears a sad expression. Four of the remaining cages contain warped crossbreeds of monkeys, rats, wolves, spiders and humans. The resultant creatures are unidentifiable, but



harmless and beyond saving; they will remain caged until they die. After years of torture at Banth's hand, they cower in fear when approached. The central cage, however, holds a **female** smilodon; she is nursing a pair of **newborn cubs**. Neither the mother nor her cubs have yet endured Banth's tampering.

All of the cages are locked. Keys hang on the south wall, near the door. When the cages holding the twisted experiments are opened, the creatures flee and hide. They die within days, even if nursed in some way by the PCs. If freed, the smilodon attacks anyone who approaches her, particularly Banth if in sight. If PCs address her through *Speak with Animals* she becomes a powerful ally against Banth and his minions (she hates Banth, as he dissected and killed her mate). She will aid the PCs and then travel to the surface to freedom. If the PCs aid her in slaying Banth and reaching the surface, she watches over them whenever they are on the surface and near the entrance to the dungeon. In this case, the party never encounters any of the humanoid brigands on the surface, as they all fear the powerful cat.

The door to **Area 5-6D** is wizard locked (11th level magic-user). The other door (to **5-6E**) is unlocked.

Female Smilodon: HD 7 (40 hp); AC 6 [13]; Atk 2 claws (1d4+1), 1 bite (2d6); Move 12 (Swim 6); Save 10; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Rear claws.

5-6C. The Laboratory

Banth furnished his laboratory with numerous tables and shelves, upon which sit horrible instruments of torture, various wizardly tools and a goodly supply of the most common (and many not-so-common) alchemical ingredients. Several humanoid and animal body parts rest on two of the larger tables. On a third table, a strange beast has been sewn together—combining parts of a man with those of a tiger, sporting duck paddle-feet. The creature on the table is dead, the experiment a failure.

Randomly sampling alchemical materials can be very dangerous. A brave imbiber will endure an effect according to the following list (roll d%):

01-12	Deadly poison
13-25	Imbiber goes into deep sleep for 2d100 days (saving throw avoids)
26-35	Imbiber becomes delusional — believes that he is invisible, can fly, etc.
36-50	Imbiber polymorphed into a mouse (saving throw avoids)
51-80	No effect
81-95	Tastes great; the imbiber gains immunity to transmutation spells for 2 hours
96-99	Imbiber is either (1-3) turned to stone or (4-6) weakened (-1d4 Str) for 8 hours
100	Imbiber gains 1 point of natural AC permanently

Treasure: A magic-user or alchemist might pay 10,000 gp for the lab's contents. Removing the lab's contents from the dungeon would require several trips by several people. On one bookshelf, among Banth's journals full of insane ramblings, PCs find a *manual of flesh golem creation*.

5-6D. Banth's Quarters

Banth furnished his bedroom with bookshelves and a desk, in addition to a plain and serviceable bed. Several oil lamps light the room, and a **large brazier** of coals provides heat. The lackluster nature of the furnishings reflects Banth's personality — all work and no play make Banth a dull boy! Banth retreats to this room if losing any battles with PCs, grabs his books and flees. He leaves all other treasure and items behind (including his apprentice, Kupra).

Treasure: Inside the desk are 5,400 gp and 3 potion bottles (*healing*, cursed potion of permanent *polymorph* [imbiber selects the animal but the effect never wears off] and *gaseous form*). The brazier is a *brazier of commanding fire elementals*. The bookshelves contain Banth's spellbooks and his journal. The spellbooks contain all of the spells he has memorized, in addition to three spells each of levels 1 through 5 (to be determined by the Referee). Banth's journal has various treatises on engineering mutations and several very useful pieces of information — namely, seven rumors (from the list provided in the Introduction) and a full discussion of the mithral gates on **Level 9A** of Rappan Athuk. Banth believes (correctly) that the mithral gates demarcate the final resting place of Akbeth. He discovered that she was transformed to stone by a curse of Hecate, but had a magic ring that allowed her to assume the powers of the new form. Banth's journal also mentions the healing properties of the bee's honey, which can be found in **Room 5-9**.

5-6E. Kupra's Quarters

This room, Kupra's bedroom, features only a small desk and a straw bed. When PCs explore this room, Kupra is most likely present, hiding (her stats and tactics are detailed in **Room 5-6**, above). She avoids contact with the party and surrenders if discovered. If a PC kills her, he discovers her spellbook tucked into her robe; it contains only those spells she has memorized. A stuffed toy bear sits on the bed.

5-7. Slimy Stuff

This vacant room's most obvious feature is a pile of corroded metal and bits of bone. Escaping immediate notice is the large colony of **green slime** clinging to the ceiling. It falls on any PC moving more than 5 ft. into the room. Fifteen points of fire or cold damage will totally destroy the colony.

5-8. The Endless Pit

The mouth of a seemingly **bottomless pit** dominates the center of this room. PCs hear a loud buzzing noise from the craggy, uneven west wall, which appears to be made of a thick, waxy, folded, and wrinkled parchment that can be broken through easily. (The wall, bordering **Area 5-9**, is part of the beehive).

Trap: The pit empties into a permanent *plane shift* trap set 100 ft.

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below the rim. The pit itself is only 110 ft. deep, but nothing falling ever hits the bottom because of the *plane shift* effect. Magic has no effect after the 100 ft. mark (this allows about 2 rounds for action). Anyone falling is lost forever on the astral plane. PCs can use their plane travel abilities to rescue fallen comrades. The trap can only be removed with a *wish* spell.

5-9. The Beehive

The paper wall tears apart, revealing a small cavern. The buzzing noise intensifies. PCs survey a giant, honeycomb-shaped honeybee nest clogging the room. Giant worker bees crawl in and out of the hive, busily attending their tasks; they seem uninterested in the PCs. **The bees**, generally non-aggressive, do not attack unless harassed or too much honey is taken (see below). Angry bees do not pursue PCs more than 100 ft. from the hive. Behind the hive, a tunnel leading to the surface emerges about 3 miles from the hilltop dungeon entrance. If PCs burn the hive, all bees lose their flight ability, the queen (deep inside the hive) leaves and the honey is lost.

Giant Bees (24): HD 3; AC 5 [14]; Atk 1 sting (1d4 + poison); Move 9 (Fly 30); Save 14; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Poison inflicts 1d6 points of damage (save negates).

Treasure: These bees make a magical, healing honey. This honey cures 1d8 hit points and can cure poison (as a *neutralize poison* spell) — but only if applied topically. If consumed, the honey tastes delicious but has no curative effects. The honey loses its potency a day after its removal from the hive. Up to 6 doses per day can be collected without disturbing the bees. The bees attack if additional doses are collected. They fight until slain; if more than 6 bees die, the remainder quit making honey and leave the dungeon.

5-10. The Super-Secret Door

PCs can only find **this door** by carefully and methodically probing the walls with their fingers (taking double the normal amount of time to search the area. If successful, the PCs discover a small keyhole in the wall at shoulder height. This entrance is magically hidden. Nothing short of a *wish* spell opens the secret door, unless the PCs obtain the door's key from the high priest on **Level 9**. The corridor beyond leads to **Room 5-11**.

5-11. The Passage to the Chapel of Orcus

An atmosphere of unspeakable evil chokes this area. The stench of death and decay is so thick that it makes the PCs eyes tear. Anyone within 20 ft. gets the sinking feeling that something other than darkness awaits at the foot of the ladder before them.

If the PCs descend the ladder, only those who succeed on a saving throw at -3 overcome the magical *fear* power of the level below. Anyone who fails the save cannot voluntarily descend the ladder but instead cowers in fear, huddled in a corner (they may retry in one week). The ladder leads to **Level 14**. It is not trapped, and no harm befalls anyone that descends it (other than transporting him to one of the most vicious levels of the dungeon).

