

Level 5A: The Prison of Time

A river of lava enters these tunnels from **Level 1B** above, running through this level and then down through **Level 8B**: The Steam Jungle, eventually finding an outlet in **Level 10**: The Lava Pit. Unlike the supernatural, elemental quality of the Lava Pit, the magma flowing through this level is natural molten rock stemming from the mild volcanic activity responsible for shaping many of the caves and caverns of the Rappan Athuk dungeons. The area is shown on **Map RA-5A**.

History

In dimensions far removed from those known to humankind, an ancient race known as the Thelaroï inhabited the Changing City of Ra'ath. These beings resemble humans but are unrelated and alien to them, being sorcerers of great power with influence over time, dimensions, and demons. In eons past there was a fierce contention among two factions of the Thelaroï, the Dark and the Grey. Both sides employed demons and terrible necromancy in the battle for control of Ra'ath, and the Grey Thelaroï were ultimately defeated. The Dark Thelaroï banished their surviving enemies to distant dimensions, binding them into prisons where time was held immobile in an endless stasis.

This level is known as the Prison of Time because it contains a magical dome that holds captive four of the Grey Thelaroï exiled from Ra'ath in the distant past (as time is measured on the Material Plane). The ability of this race to bind and control demons was considered an extreme threat by the priests of Orcus when they discovered this area, and the known entry (from **Level 1A**: The Bastion) was sealed off.

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Equivalent Dungeon Level: 6

Entrances and Exits: Passage upward to **Level 1B**, Lava-river tunnel down to **Level 8B**.

Wandering Monsters: Roll on the table below once per hour

01-10	2d6 Small Fire Crabs
11-20	1d6 Medium Fire Crabs
21-30	Rjodrun (see Area 5A-8)
31-50	Indistinct voices intrude into characters' thoughts
51-00	No encounter

Standard Features: The caverns of this level are all uncomfortably hot, but not enough to cause damage or debilities. All of the lava areas in this level of the dungeon contain strange "firefish" that inhabit the magma. These look and act like normal (red) fish. They are pretty, but poisonous.

Small Fire Crab: HD 1; AC 7 [12]; Atk 2 claws (1d3 + 1d4 fire); Move 6 (Swim 9); Save 17; AL N; CL/XP 1/15; Special: Heat,

immune to fire.

Medium Fire Crab: HD 4; AC 5 [14]; Atk 2 claws (1d6 + 1d6 fire); Move 9 (Swim 12); Save 13; AL N; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Heat, immune to fire.

5A-1. Entrance Tunnel

The passageway leading downward from **Level 1B**: the Abandoned Bastion in **Area 1B-7** is roughly 20 ft. wide at most points, and is formed naturally from the rock. It descends steeply, and in some places stairs have been hacked into the stone where there would otherwise be a steep drop. As the party descends the tunnel, the temperature continues to increase; by the time they arrive on this level, the heat has become mildly uncomfortable.

5A-2. The Flame of Tinorij

A small stone pedestal is built in the middle of the passageway here, its top burning with a strange blue flame. To the south of the pedestal, illuminated in the blue light, stand the statues of two beautiful women, one against each wall. The statues are slender and graceful, but their expressions are stern and serious. The statues are **caryatid columns**, and if anyone comes within ten feet of them, they animate and attack.

Caryatid Columns (2): HD 5 (24 hp); AC 5 [14]; Atk longsword (1d8+1); Move 9; Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 7/600; Special: Immune to magic, half damage from normal weapons, shatter weapons.

Treasure: When the caryatid columns are slain, their stone shatters but their swords remain. These stone weapons are heavy and must be wielded two-handed, but they confer a bonus of +1 to hit in combat. Unfortunately, on a natural "1" on an attack roll, it shatters.

5A-3. Empty Cavern

The ceiling in this area is spotted with patches of an orange mold, but it is not dangerous in any way.

5A-4. Bridge Over Troubled Sands

The floor of this cavern is covered with sand. A very high, arched bridge rises over the sands, joining the north and south entrances of the cave. The top of the bridge reaches to within five feet of the cavern ceiling.

Most of this cavern is filled with hot quicksand, although there is a bridge leading over the pit. The bridge is very steeply arched, rising to a height of thirty feet at the top of the arch, only five feet above the cavern ceiling. Sulfuric gases rise from the quicksand, filling the top of the cavern, and anyone crossing the bridge breathes these gases unless they are deliberately holding their breath. Breathing the gas requires a saving throw or the character becomes dizzy and loses his balance and falls into the quicksand.

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1 square = 10 feet



To
Level 1B

To
Level 8B



Falling into the quicksand is deadly, for it is not only extremely hot but anyone falling into it sinks rapidly into the scorching sand. Each round of contact with the quicksand inflicts 1d6 points of damage in addition to the normal danger of drowning. If a character remains under the surface for 6 full rounds, death by suffocation is automatic even if the heat has not already killed the victim.

5A-5. Strange Stalactites

This is an empty cavern, although a quantity of stalactites have formed on the ceiling. They look extraordinarily blunt and short for stalactites, although an experienced dungeoneer will realize that this is because they are not caused by the normal process of dripping limestone leaving sediment behind, but by magma that must have dripped and cooled in this cavern at some time in the past.

5A-6. Fire Crabs

This cavern is infested with **fire crabs** of varying sizes. They defend their territory aggressively against intruders.

Small Fire Crab: HD 1; AC 7 [12]; Atk 2 claws (1d3 + 1d4 fire); Move 6 (Swim 9); Save 17; AL N; CL/XP 1/15; Special: Heat, immune to fire.

Medium Fire Crab: HD 4; AC 5 [14]; Atk 2 claws (1d6 + 1d6 fire); Move 9 (Swim 12); Save 13; AL N; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Heat, immune to fire.

Tactics: The fire crabs simply charge into combat without regard for life or tactics.

Treasure: There is a small quantity of treasure in the room, left by the fire crabs' victims, and it can be gathered up in 1 turn. However, during this turn there is a 90% chance that 1d4 more fire crabs enter the area. Roll to see if these are of the 1 HD or the 4 HD variety (50-50 chance). The treasure consists of 50 gp, 200 sp, a garnet (25 gp), a crushed tin trumpet (worthless, but inside there is a 250 gp sapphire), a silver necklace (50 gp) and a sapphire (250 gp).

5A-7. Cavern of the Madman's Message

The ceiling of this cavern undulates with the shape of the same strange magma-stalactites as those found in **Room 5**. These are normal and are not dangerous. A skeleton lies on the floor near the eastern wall of the cavern, dressed in moldering rags and holding a broken dagger. An unfortunate soul used it to scratch a message on the wall before he finally died.

The message scratched into the wall reads as follows:

"And so the Thelaroi were divided between those of deep evil and those who remained aloof from the enticements of the demons they summoned as servants. In the ever-changing city of Ra'ath a great battle was fought by magic, with each side employing their demon servitors in vast battalions, and the Grey Thelaroi were vanquished by the Dark Thelaroi. The necromancers and demon-worshippers of Ra'ath banished and imprisoned them in far and strange dimensions, held in durance vile by chains of time itself."

These are the skeletal remains of a prisoner named Otho, who escaped from the goblins after he was taken in a raid, making his way down to this level of the dungeon, but without food or water. He was driven mad by voices in his head (the telepathic communications of the Thelaroi in **Area 18**) and as he drew close to death he tried to record some of what the voices told him.

5A-8. Lair of the Fire Giant

The fire giant **Rjodrun** fishes in the lava flow for the strange firefish that swim in it. If the party gets an opportunity to watch him unawares, they eventually have the chance to see him make his way to **Room 18** (taking a path through **Rooms 7, 9, and 10**) where he lies down at the edge of the lava and dips his hands into it, grabbing firefish directly from the molten rock when they swim close enough to his long grasp. The giant completely ignores the bugs in **Room 9** and the time-echoes in **Room 10**. When Rjodrun goes fishing, he leaves his treasure chest behind but takes his bag with him. If he returns to find that the chest has been tampered with, of course, he begins searching the entire level to find out who has dared to invade his lair.

Rjodrun the Fire Giant: HD 11+3 (59 hp); AC 3 [16]; Atk 1 weapon (5d6); Move 12; Save 4; AL C; CL/XP 12/2000; Special: Hurl boulders, immune to fire.

Treasure: Rjodrun has an iron chest in which he stores treasure and other items, and a bag in which he carries oddments he considers to be more useful. The iron chest is **trapped** with an amazingly obvious gadget: a foot-long spring on the outside of the chest is held back by a latch (connected to the latch that actually opens the chest). The spring is connected to a 3 ft. iron spike. Any idiot can see that unlatching the chest drives the iron spike forward into anyone standing directly in front of the chest. There is nothing more subtle about this trap; it is exactly what it appears to be, and works exactly in the way it appears to work. Opening the chest from the other side, so that the iron spike does not point directly at anyone, is completely safe. The chest contains: three sets of giant-sized clothing, four giant-sized teeth, a stick, 2,037 gp, 3,400 sp, a fake glass diamond (2 gp), a real diamond (1,000 gp) and a human thighbone with large tooth-marks bitten into it.

The giant's bag contains 250 gp, 100 sp, 5 firefish skeletons, four polished pieces of red obsidian (25 gp each), a drinking cup, a large bronze platter, a mummified goblin head, a crumpled piece of gold that was once a candlestick with small gems inlaid into it (500 gp), a small *levitating* rock (does nothing but hang in place, but is still worth 100 gp as a curiosity), a rusted iron belt buckle, a box of 20 agates (10 gp each), and a quantity of giant-sized toenail clippings.

5A-9. Bugs and Bones

The floor of this chamber is scattered with hundreds of fish skeletons of a strange blue-black color. Thousands of tiny bugs feed on the rotting fish scraps left behind; these swarm over anyone entering the room, doing no damage. However, anyone failing a saving throw will be affected by the tiny, itching bites, suffering a penalty of -1 on all attacks and damage for the next 3d6 x 10 minutes.

The bones are those of firefish (see **Area 5A-14**) eaten by Rjodran the fire giant (see **Area 5A-8**).

Treasure: There is an exceedingly small quantity of treasure in this room; even diligent and time-consuming searching only yields 10 gp, 30 sp, and an opal worth 25 gp.

5A-10. Time-Echoes

At first glance, the characters spot strange, intermittent movements in this cavern. It appears that every few seconds a tall, human-like figure materializes and then disappears mid-motion. If the characters watch this for a while, they find that it is not the same individual each time: at least ten different individuals appear to flash into being for a moment and then disappear. One seems to be holding an hourglass, one is holding a complex, glowing staff, and the others hold various different items at different times. This is the cave chamber in which the various magical

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parts of the Prison of Time were constructed before they were finally assembled in **Area 18**. The time-magic employed here has left behind several echoes, momentary blips in the normal progression of time that reveal split-second views of the activity which took place in the room in the distant past when the prison was being built. No useful information is imparted by these images since they are very brief. However, if the characters experiment in the right way, they might be startled to learn that the “images” are not mere hallucinations; the echoes are actual flesh and blood reality that impinges into the chamber through time itself.

5A-II. Empty Cavern

This cavern is empty, but it has one interesting feature; anyone walking across it notices that the floor seems to be warmer in some places than it is in others. This is simply due to different thicknesses of the rock layer over a small magma pool, and poses no dangers or opportunities to the characters.

5A-12. Demon-Statues

This chamber contains several stone demon-statues, all facing the southwest exit, and all showing expressions of horror upon their faces. These are the remnants of demons summoned during a short battle between the priests of Orcus and the guardians of the Theleroi time-prisoners (see **Area 5A-18**). The means by which the demons were turned to stone cannot be determined, for it is beyond the scope of normal magic in this plane of existence. The room is otherwise empty.

5A-13. Empty Cavern

This cavern is nothing but bare, irregular rock.

5A-14. Source of the Fire-River

A stream of magma rolls down the wall in the northwest corner of this cavern from a large crevice above, forming a wide, slow-moving river of molten rock that cuts through the middle of the chamber. At the center of the cavern this river widens into a small lake of fire before continuing its meandering journey southward down the almost undetectable southward slope of the caverns. Apparently some sort of **fish** inhabits the lava; every so often one of them leaps above the surface with a fiery splash. The fish are a reddish-orange in color, and vaguely resemble catfish.

Firefish: HD 3; AC 5 [14]; Atk 1 tail slap (1d3 + 1d4 heat); Move 0 (Swim 40); Save 14; AL N; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Immune to fire, double damage from cold attacks, heat aura (10-ft., 1d4 damage per round).

5A-15. Fire-Crab Mating Cavern

This cavern is empty, although a multitude of fine, curling scratch-marks on the floor and lower walls of the cavern indicates that fire crabs often come here. There is a 1% chance that the characters coincidentally happen to enter this cavern during mating-time, in which case there are 100 of the Small fire crabs and 25 of the Medium fire crabs present, all engaged in mating dances or copulation. They ignore the characters unless they are disturbed, but if the party attacks, they swarm into combat as an inexorable (and probably lethal) tide of claws and carapaces.

5A-16. Fire Lizard

This cavern is the lair of a massive **fire lizard**, distant kin to the true dragons. It is an irascible beast, and pursues any intruders to the death.

Fire Lizard: HD 10+1 (44 hp); AC 2 [17]; Atk 2 claws (1d8) and bite (2d6); Move 12; Save 5; AL N; CL/XP 11/1700; Special: Breath fire, immune to fire, double damage from cold attacks.

Treasure: The fire lizard has accumulated a fair amount of treasure over the years, which it keeps in a neat pile beside a warm depression in the cavern floor where it sleeps. The treasure includes 1,858 gp, 14,732 sp, 110,952 cp, a ruby (500 gp), a jeweled smoking-pipe (300 gp), a *scroll of fireball*, a *scroll of invisibility*, a *potion of healing*, and a *potion of fire resistance*

5A-17. Beach of the Magmoid

This beach, and the lava river to the east of it, is the haunt of a **magmoid**, a spherical creature of pure lava. It generally spends its time swimming in the river, singing to itself in a deep voice; if the characters are approaching the area in complete silence, there is a chance that the singing alerts them to the magmoid's presence. The magmoid becomes intensely annoyed if anyone comes into the area, and it attempts to kill all intruders.

Magmoid: HD 8 (38 hp); AC 2 [17]; Atk 1 flaming slam (2d6); Move 9; Save 8; AL N; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: Melt normal weapons, magma blast (ever 1d4 rounds, 40 ft. range, 2d6 damage, save for half), immune to fire, *sleep* and *poison*.

If the characters are moving along the narrow walkway on the eastern bank of the river, the magmoid rolls up the side of the river behind them, and spit its blast of deadly magma down the entire length of their line. If they are approaching on the wider western bank, it simply waits for its best opportunity to attack them, secure in the knowledge that it is essentially invisible as part of the river's magma flow.

Treasure: The magmoid itself does not keep treasure, but there are two piles of ash on the western beach (once adventurers) each of which has some unburned equipment scattered around. The first ash-pile has a shield beside it that somehow survived the fiery blast (because it's a +1 *shield*), and the second ash-pile has a hat sitting on top of it (this is just one of those complete flukes—the hat is normal).

5A-18. The Prison of Time

This large cavern glows with a hellish red illumination, for it is filled with a lake of molten lava. The tunnel floor ends at the cavern entrance, forming a steep slope down to the bubbling magma. There are several islands of black rock jutting up from the molten lake, and at the far southern end of the cavern the characters can make out the shape of a much more unusual structure. It is a large island of black rock similar to the others, but a silvery dome of some kind has been built on it.

The Island Prison is a dome of silvery light. There is a metal torch burning with a strange purple flame at each of the four quarters of the compass, just outside the dome. Each of the torches has an hourglass-shaped keyhole fashioned into its base. The torches are fixed into the stone and cannot be removed by any ordinary means. The only way to extinguish one of the torches is to turn its key in the keyhole, and since the keys are not located in this plane of existence (or in this time channel), the only way to work one of the keyholes is to pick the lock. A *knock* spell does not suffice for the purpose of extinguishing the flame (since the key would be used to close, rather than to open), but casting the spell causes the keyhole to make a repeated clicking sound for a full hour before it stops.

Inside the dome, four figures are faintly visible. They appear to be human, although they are much taller and thinner than normal. Each wears a flowing robe of some kind, and a tall headdress of glass, feathers, and metal. These are the **Grey Theleroi**, banished from the Changing City of Ra'ath in eons past. When they perceive the adventurers nearby, they immediately begin communicating by *telepathy*, asking the characters to

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free them from the prison. They offer four magic items (one from each of them) in exchange for their freedom: a *longsword* +2/+4 vs. *devils*, a +2 *mace*, a *ring of fire resistance*, and a *bag of holding*. The offer is legitimate; if characters free the Thelaroi from their confinement, they hand over these items and then disappear back to their own plane and time of existence.

If one of the torches is extinguished by picking its lock, the Prison of Time opens.

Before the characters reach the Prison of Time, they are forced to deal with its guardians, **4 time elementals** summoned in ages past by the Dark Thelaroi as a jailer for the exiles.

Time Elementals (4): HD 12; AC 0 [19]; Atk 2 slams (2d6 + cell death); Move Fly 9; Save 3; AL N; CL/XP 20/4400; Special: Cell death, multi-manifestation, foresight, immunity to magic, magic resistance (40%), +1 or better weapon to hit (see *The Tome of Horrors Complete*, "Elemental, Time")

Treasure: The only treasure in the room are the magical items given by the Thelaroi.

5A-19. Exit to 8B

The lava river continues to meander its way down this tunnel, which descends steeply into the depths of Rappan Athuk's lower levels. The tunnel eventually enters **Area 8B-1** in **Level 8B: The Steam Jungle**.