

Level 8A:

The Tomb of the Beacon

This level is a large, primarily vertical cavern, with a few smaller adjoining cavern and tunnel complexes. At its narrowest point it is about 375 ft. in diameter; this increases to over 500 ft. in diameter near the top of the cavern, and about 1,000 ft. in diameter on the cavern floor. From the center of the ceiling to the lake at the bottom, there is a 1,500 ft. drop. This cavern is located in an out-of-the way part of Rappan Athuk, and contains the crypt of a powerful spellcaster. The map of this level is shown in **Map RA-8A**. Detail maps of the upper and lower reaches are depicted in **Map RA-8A Upper** and **Map RA-8A Lower**, and several key detail sections are shown in **Map RA-8 Detail**.

History

Three centuries ago, when Zelkor led his army of light to Rappan Athuk in pursuit of the followers of Orcus, he had a powerful lieutenant at his side, the Praetor Auris Veng. Not only was this cleric/magic-user a formidable spellcaster in his own right, but he controlled an artifact created through a combination of his efforts and divine assistance, called the *Auren Beacon*. This device was of great service in the fight against undead, for it could project sunlight into dark crypts and dungeons, severely weakening or destroying them.

The priests of Orcus decided to set a trap for him. They prepared a shielded crypt in an obscure area of Rappan Athuk, lured him there with the rumor of a powerful undead nemesis, and sealed it off with

magic and a curse that prevented his escape — passing the barrier would deactivate an enchantment laid upon him that was keeping him from dying. He was presumed dead by his allies, and the followers of Orcus, having successfully contained him, left him to die alone.

Some years after being imprisoned, a group of unlikely creatures resembling airborne jellyfish known as flumphs paid Veng a visit. Over time he developed a means of nonverbal communication with them. He also taught their leader the rudiments of tapping into sorcerous power. Though Veng has long since passed away, the flumphs continue to use his tomb as their home.

Five years ago, a gibbering abomination named Xulux took up residence here. At first, Xulux regarded the flumphs as no threat, and boldly tried to seize their lair for his own. After being rendered magically impotent by the *antimagic field*, stunned by a deluge of flumph sprays, and then swarmed, spiked, and injected with acid, he learned to hate and fear them. He tried snacking on them when they left their protected lair, but repeated sniping with a *wand of magic missiles* (see **Area 4** for details) taught him to leave them well enough alone.

About a year ago, a small group of blood orchids moved into some caves behind the waterfall. These strange creatures kept to themselves at first, but as they grew in numbers they became increasingly aggressive, until now they pose a major threat to the flumphs, as they are faster, and have many damaging tentacle attacks the *antimagic field* cannot block. Xulux would normally have scoured these from the cavern, but he hopes that if they destroy the flumphs, he can annihilate the blood orchids and finally gain access to the tomb.

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Equivalent Dungeon Level: 10

Entrances and Exits: Passage to maze sections in **Level 6**; underwater passage to **Level 13A**; tunnel to ceiling of **Level 10A**; shaft to Under Realms.

Wandering Monsters: Check once every two hours on 1d20:

1-3	1d4+2 flumphs, with 30% chance one hunter or one protector
4-5	1d3 blood orchids (see Area 5)
6	Xulux, the gibbering abomination (see Area 6B)
7	1d4 cave fishers
8	1d4 albino cave spiders
9-20	No encounter

Detections: **Areas 8A-3** and **4** cannot be scried, although detection spells work within these Areas.

Shielding: **Areas 8A-3** and **4** are shielded with an *antimagic* effect which blocks magical transport (*teleport*, *ethereal jaunt*, etc.), *scrying*, summoning of creatures, and communications spells (*commune*, *crystal ball use*, etc.). Praying for divine spells still works normally.

Due to the *antimagic* effect, spells cast to destroy, alter, or bypass the stone and runes also fail.

Continuous Effects: There are two *antimagic* wards in **Area 8A-3**; see that Area for details.

The slopes (Area 1): The map of the upper cavern shows contour lines where the ground reaches a certain angle. In the Area with a 30 degree inclination, running and charging characters must make saving throw to avoid slipping and falling.

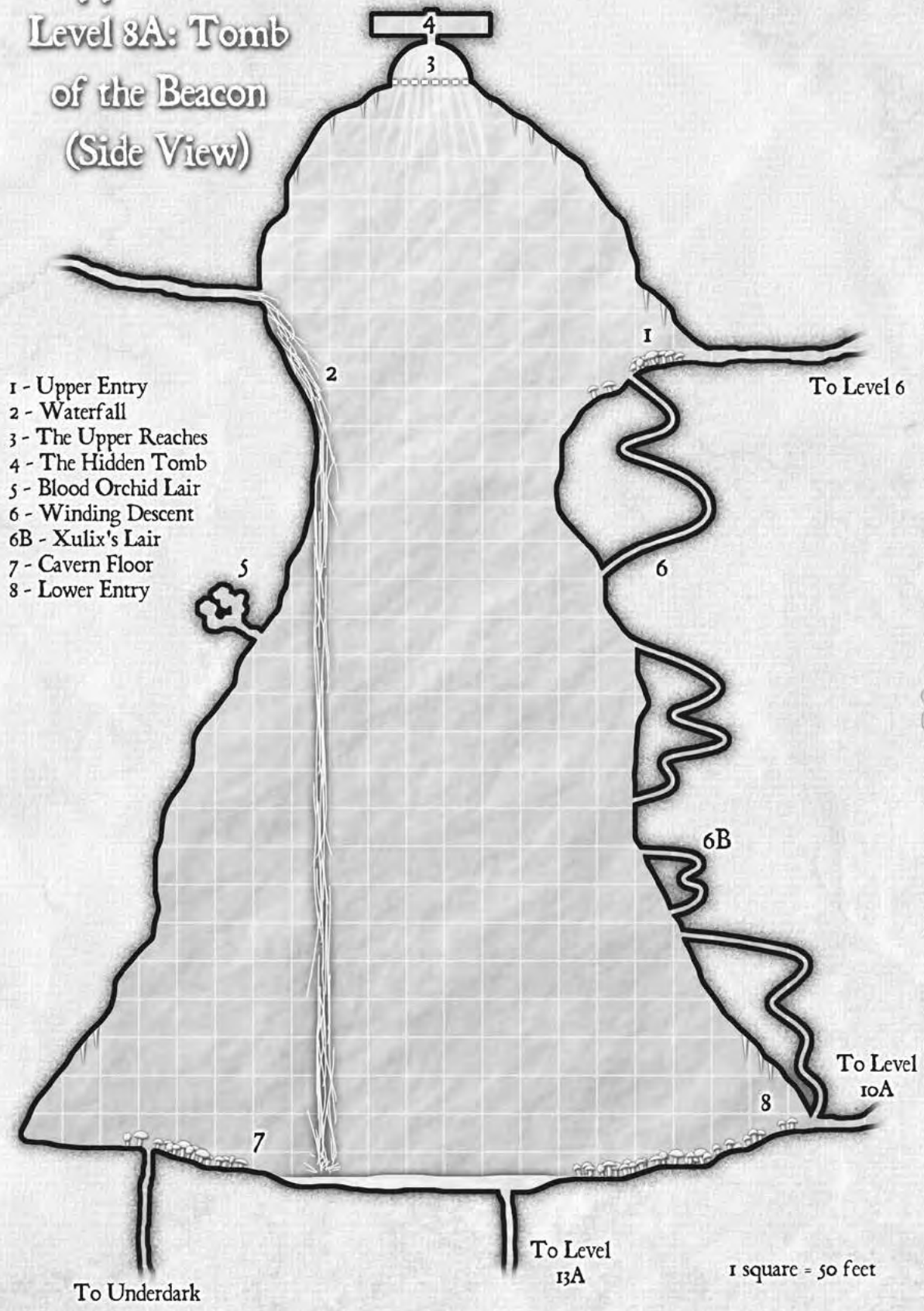
The 45 degree slopes are much more dangerous. Simply moving at normal speeds or performing vigorous activities like melee combat on these provokes a saving throw to avoid falling.

The 60 degree slopes are too steep to walk on, and require a climb walls check to move around. People falling or sliding on these slopes are allowed a final saving throw to catch themselves; otherwise, they go over the edge and into the abyss.

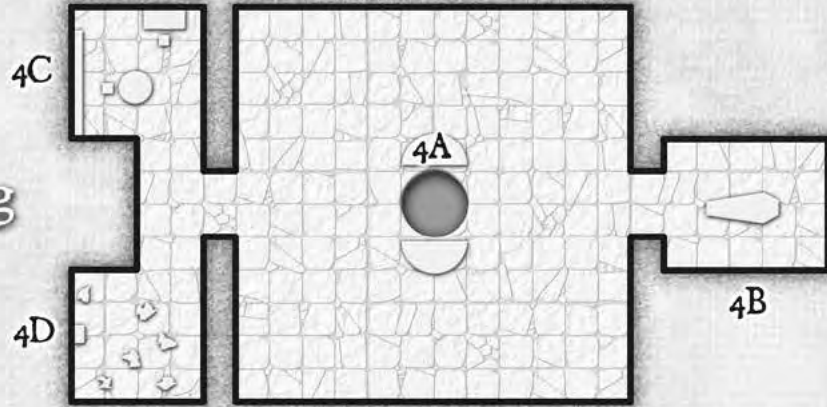
Falling: Anyone who goes over the edge plummets down to the bottom of the cavern 200 ft. below and suffers 20d6 points of damage. This applies even if they fall into the lake, as it is too shallow to cushion a fall.

Rappan Athuk

Level 8A: Tomb of the Beacon (Side View)

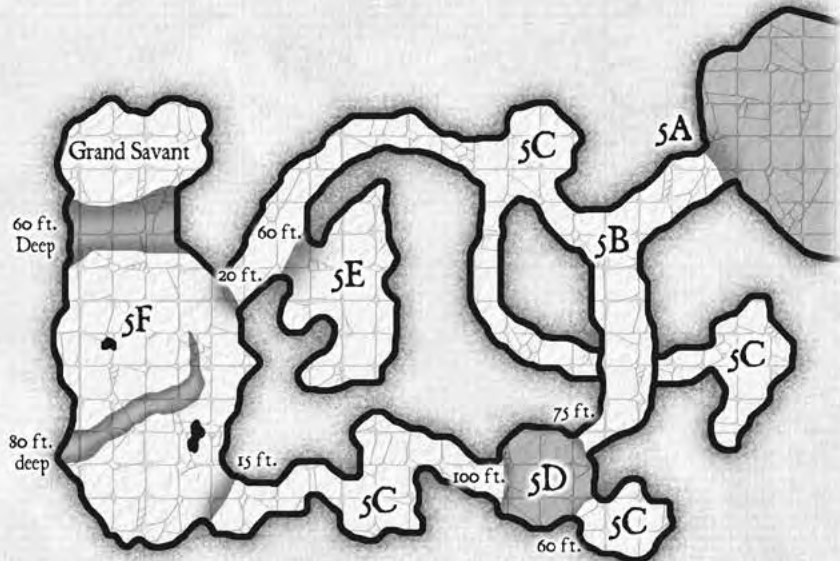


The Tomb of Auris Veng (Area 8A-4)



1 square = 5 feet

Blood Orchid Nest (Area 8A-5)



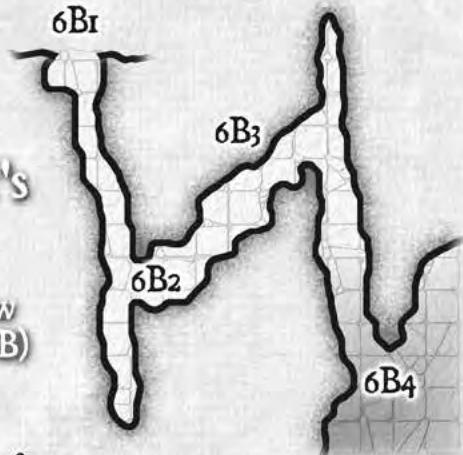
1 square = 10 feet

Rappan Athuk Level 8A: Tomb of the Beacon



Xulux's Lair

(Side View
Area 8A-6B)



1 square = 10 feet

The Inhabitants

The cavern is the home of several groups of beings:

Flumphs: These creatures are the dominant species in the cavern; they nest in the tomb at the top of the cavern (**Area 4**). They are greatly concerned about the blood orchids, and have an uneasy détente with Xulux.

The flumph community numbers 36 standard flumphs, 6 flumph hunters, 5 flumph protectors, a master hunter, and the leader. Any flumphs killed should be subtracted from those totals; common flumphs are replaced at the rate of one per week; it takes six months per hit die to train replacements in the leadership cadre.

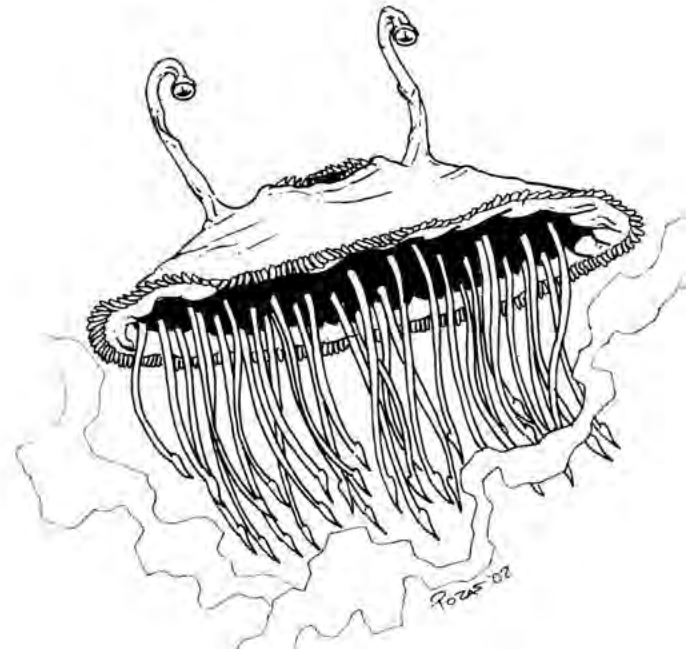
Flumphs (36): HD 2; AC -1 [20]; Atk nauseating spray (sickened) or spikes (1d6 + 1d4 acid per round for 2d4 rounds); Move Fly 9; Save 16; AL L; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Nauseating spray (2/day; 20-ft line, save or sickened for 5 rounds; carries stench for 1d4 hours and affects all within 100 ft. per spray).

Flumph Hunters (6): HD 4; AC -1 [20]; Atk nauseating spray (sickened) or spikes (1d6 + 1d4 acid per round for 2d4 rounds); Move Fly 9; Save 13; AL L; CL/XP 7/600; Special: Nauseating spray (2/day; 20-ft line, save or sickened for 5 rounds; carries stench for 1d4 hours and affects all within 100 ft. per spray), track as 6th level ranger.

Flumph Master Hunter: HD 6 (28 hp); AC -1 [20]; Atk nauseating spray (sickened) or spikes (1d6 + 1d4 acid per round for 2d4 rounds); Move Fly 9; Save 11; AL L; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: Nauseating spray (2/day; 20-ft line, save or sickened for 5 rounds; carries stench for 1d4 hours and affects all within 100 ft. per spray), track as 6th level ranger.

Flumph Protectors (5): HD 4; AC -1 [20]; Atk nauseating spray (sickened) or spikes (1d6 + 1d4 acid per round for 2d4 rounds); Move Fly 9; Save 13; AL L; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Nauseating spray (2/day; 20-ft line, save or sickened for 5 rounds; carries stench for 1d4 hours and affects all within 100 ft. per spray), cast spells as 3rd level magic-user (1st - *magic missile, shield*; 2nd - *mirror image*).

Flumph Leader: HD 8; AC -1 [20]; Atk nauseating spray (sickened) or spikes (1d6 + 1d4 acid per round for 2d4 rounds); Move Fly 9; Save 8; AL L; CL/XP 12/2000; Special: Nauseating spray (2/day; 20-ft line, save or sickened for 5 rounds; carries stench for 1d4 hours and affects all within 100 ft. per spray), cast spells as 6th level magic-user (1st - *charm person, magic missile x2, shield*; 2nd - *mirror image, stinking cloud*; 3rd - *lightning bolt, slow*).



To warn PCs away from the *antimagic field*, they may try physically blocking travelers, pantomiming falling, etc., working in tandem to build their messages. Have fun with this.

If the PCs do manage to establish communication with the flumphs, a representative may be brought before the flumph leader. This person must weigh less than 200 pounds; 10 flumphs then grab a hold of the emissary and carry him or her up through the *antimagic fields* and into **Area 4**, to speak with the flumph leader. Further information on negotiating with the flumph leader are given in the Development section of **Area 4D**.

Blood orchids: A nest of blood orchids has recently appeared in the cavern, and is steadily gaining in power relative to the flumphs. They nest in **Area 5**, behind the waterfall.

The blood orchid nest houses a total of 15 blood orchids, plus 2 savants and a grand savant. All blood orchids killed come from these totals; they are replaced at 1 orchid per month, one savant at three months per caster level, and if the grand savant is killed, a savant evolves into a new one as soon as possible. If the grand savant and all lesser savants are killed, any surviving blood orchids flee back into the Under Realms.

Aamazd the Roper: This cunning roper lives in the upper part of the cavern (**Area 1**), and feeds off vermin, incautious flumphs, and any adventurers who wander into the cavern.

Xulux: This paranoid gibbering abomination nests in an area off the main cave (**Area 6A**). He is quick to attack and difficult to negotiate with, but flees if he takes much damage.

Rats: Numerous regular and giant rats can be found throughout the cavern; they are not included on the wandering monster table because they are so easily found. They leave PCs alone unless cornered or attacked, and so aren't worth any experience points on their own. They feast on the fungus and insects, and are a major source of food for the cavern's intelligent species.

Albino cave spiders: These small but nasty spiders lurk among the toadstools and dine chiefly on rats, but they attack anything living that comes within their reach. The other cave inhabitants are wary of them, and always keep a lookout for them.

Albino Cave Spider: HD 1; AC 2 [17]; Atk 1 bite (1d3 + poison); Move 9 (Climb 6); AL N; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Poison.

Roleplaying the Flumphs

At some point, the party may try communicating with the flumphs. Although they do not speak Common, they do understand it to some degree, as well as a smattering of Goblin and Undercommon. They can gesture and move in response to queries to indicate their understanding (e.g., bobbing up and down for yes, and moving side-to-side for no). The Referee is encouraged to act out this communication with the players. The Protectors and Leader can also communicate by scribing words into sand or a soft surface with their tentacles, but they are unlikely to expose themselves to possible harm unless they feel it necessary, and the PCs have established their good intentions.

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Cave Fishers: These nest in the many crevices and fissures located in the main cavern walls below the waterfall. They attack anything that comes within range.

Cave Fisher: HD 3; AC 3 [16]; Atk 1 filament (special) and 2 claws (1d6); Move 6; AL N; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Filaments (60-ft. range; open doors check to unstick oneself from filament; reels people 10 feet per round)

Fungus: The cavern floor areas sport a large variety of mold, mushrooms, and other fungi. Fully 30% of these are edible and 10% are poisonous. A druid, ranger or underground dweller can determine which are edible.

8A-1. Great Shaft Upper Reaches

Access to the great shaft is difficult to find. The primary means of entry to the great cave is through one of several passages exiting from the mazes located on **Level 6**. The passageway from the mazes leads downward a half mile, until it comes out onto a rock shelf in the upper third of the chasm. About 30 ft. from the entry, the cavern floor starts sloping down into the pit. During the day, light filters from a hole in the ceiling, illuminating the great cavern. Creatures which look something like airborne jellyfish or floating pies with dangling tendrils drift through the air in the distance. Opposite the entry, on the far wall of the cavern several hundred feet away, water gushes from the stone wall, cascades down a steep slope, and then spills over in a waterfall that plummets into unknown depths. Great stalactites, some taller than a house, hang overhead, though none loom near the recessed area from which the light shines.

On the ledge before the entry, many varieties of fungus up to three feet tall grow in large patches, with stalagmites rising from their midst like monoliths.

8A-1A. Roped Pillar

At **1A** stands a 12 ft. tall stalagmite, with a grappling hook-equipped rope wrapped around it. The rope, rotting and frayed but still intact, stretches down the slope from the pillar and over the edge of the pit.

This stalagmite is actually **Aamazd the Roper**. It devoured the people who set the rope, but decided to leave it as a lure for future adventurers. Besides the rare cave explorer, Aamazd also enjoys dining on the occasional foolhardy flumph that drifts close enough for its sticky tendrils to reach. When looking for a meal, he very carefully sets himself to look like an innocuous stalagmite. Identifying Aamazd as being other than a rock pillar thus requires a very careful search!

Aamazd the Roper: HD 11 (51 hp); AC 0 [19]; Atk 1 tentacle (weakness), 1 bite (2d10); Move 3; Save 4; AL C; CL/XP 12/2000; Special: tentacles grab and cause weakness.

Tactics: Aamazd waits until someone comes close to investigate the rope and hook, and then he attacks that person. When their strength has been drained, he releases them and attacks another target. Aamazd understands some Common, and eavesdrops on any conversations he can and adjusts his tactics accordingly. If badly injured, he attempts to negotiate. He can offer them information on the aerial inhabitants of the level; but knows little about the cavern floor.

Treasure: If Aamazd's corpse is cut open, a pair of diamonds can be found lodged in his gullet. One of these is a beautiful specimen worth 2,500 gp, and the other is flawed but still valuable at 1,500 gp.

Development: If the characters manage to kill the roper, the flumphs drifting about the cavern are intrigued, and a few move over to have a closer look at the PCs. See **Area 3** for further details regarding interacting with the flumphs.

8A-1B. Sheltered Alcove

This area is one of the few flat locations on the upper portion of the cavern complex. It is empty of all but a few toadstools and a charred fire ring near the back, the spoor of a past adventuring group. Roll a wandering monster check when the PCs arrive here.

8A-2. The Waterfall

Opposite the main entryway, water pours in from an underground passageway in a torrent (swimming up this is nearly impossible). Upstream, the watery passage goes underground and does not lead anywhere.

Movement within 30 ft. of the waterfall is treacherous, due to the slick, mossy coating on the rocks. Further, the noise of the water muffles sound, so creatures are surprised on a roll of 1-4 on 1d6.

8A-3. The Upper Reaches

Where the central cavern arches overhead, the ceiling is festooned with stalactites. However, at the center of the ceiling there is a 40 ft. diameter circular opening that has obviously been carved from the native stone. Around the inside circumference of this opening, magical runes have been carved into the stone, and they radiate a very faint bluish light.

The opening goes up into a domed area 20 ft. high, and at the center is a 10 ft. diameter hole from which the light that illuminates the cavern shines. Around the inside circumference of this hole as well there are more magical runes with the same appearance as the ones described above. The shaft leads up 20 ft. into **Area 8A-4**.

The rune circles mark the location of a pair of wards that are triggered whenever a magical device or active spell crosses their threshold. Spells that pass over are instantly nullified as if they had hit an *antimagic field*, and creatures with magic items or spells in effect (most notably including *fly* spells) find themselves encased in a blue shimmering aura that acts as an *antimagic field*, and lasts for three rounds. During this time, no magic or supernatural effects function and spellcasting fails. The typical result of this for an adventurer is a sudden drop to the bottom of the cavern, where he suffers 20d6 points damage.

There are always at least **6 common flumphs** floating about in the upper cavern, along with at least a **protector** and **2 hunters**. They are wary of strangers, and seek to avoid combat if possible, retreating into the domed area if threatened.

The flumphs are aware of the effects of the magical rune circles, and warn off any approaching adventurers who do not threaten them; see the sidebar for full statistics and further notes on roleplaying these strange creatures. They only attack directly if attacked themselves, or if they suspect the intruder's intentions are hostile. They also attack anyone trying to enter **Area 4** without their permission.

Tactics: If the flumphs are attacked, they release their spray of nauseating liquid and move away toward the ceiling, beyond the runic circle. There they gather and wait for pursuers. All flumphs save the protector blast anything making it past the ward with their nauseating sprays, and follow this up with flanking attacks. If battle takes place for more than two rounds, two of the flumph protectors from **Area 4** appear and assist with spells (only targeting those who are above the lower barrier). The protectors do not cast any defensive spells before arriving to avoid triggering the upper ward. If reduced to one third of their numbers, they retreat again up through the 10 ft. opening and seal off the entryway (see **Area 4A**).

8A-4. The Hidden Tomb

This area, above the doubly-warded "roof" of the cavern, is where Praetor Auris Veng was trapped. It is now the home of the flumph colony

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in the cavern. The entire area is warded against scrying and *teleportation/transportation* type magics. Also, *summoning* spells and effects do not work here.

8A–4A. The Main Chamber

The 10 ft. diameter shaft goes up 20 ft. and into a large rectangular room. Two walls have passages leading away from the chamber, and the other two are covered with 5 ft. wide niches. On either side of the opening is a pair of semicircular stone slabs on tracks which would cause them to slide down into the opening, sealing it off; a series of small stone wedges easily removable by the flumphs are all that hold it open.

Directly over the entryway shaft, in the ceiling 20 ft. above, there is a 10 ft. wide circular mirror-like object inset five feet into the ceiling, held in place by a trio of ebon claws. During daylight hours, this mirror (half of the *Auren Beacon*) sheds light too intense to be looked at directly, bathing the tomb with warmth. At night, it glows dimly, its light increasing and decreasing with the waxing and waning of the moon.

The claws that hold it in place are composed of an evil-enhanced darkness forged of Orcus's will. So long as even one remains, the mirror cannot be budged. In order to remove the claws, each of the three temples to Orcus in Rappan Athuk must be cleansed, which weakens a corresponding claw, causing it to become brittle and easily shattered.

There are always **12 or more flumphs** in here, some floating about, others resting in the niches. Further, at least **2 protectors** and **2 hunters** are always present.

Tactics: If battle starts, the flumphs attack en masse, with the protectors entering melee only after their spells have been exhausted. They fight to the death to defend their lair. In addition, the **flumph leader** and any flumphs with him join in the battle within 1d3 rounds.

8A–4B. Veng's Tomb

This chamber contains a large stone sarcophagus resting in the center of the room. Chiseled upon the lid of the sarcophagus in antiquated Common is "*Praetor Auris Veng — Here Rests a Pawn of Light.*" The entire tomb is protected with a *hallow* spell.

Opening the sarcophagus exposes the remains of Veng to view, a mummified corpse clad in a +3 *mithral chainmail*, with a +1 *mace (destroys undead)* and wrapped in a *white robe of wizardry*. Upon his brow rests a platinum circlet (500 gp value) inset with a jewel that functions as a *luckstone*.

Those looking upon the remains feel a strong sense of being observed. If anyone touches the body or its equipment, a phantasmal figure appears — the spirit of Auris Veng. It warns the PCs that a powerful curse protects his remains, and the only way to avoid it is to discover the fate of the great adventurer Bofred, rescue him if he is somehow still alive, or return his remains to the surface for a proper burial if not. He tells them who he was if asked, and tells them a bit about the *Auren Beacon*, including how to free it (destroy all three temples to Orcus).

Anyone looting or molesting the body is indeed cursed, losing their sense of sight, hearing, and touch. This curse cannot be removed from the items, but a *remove curse* spell cast by a 19th-level or higher caster rids someone of its influence. Paladins and lawful priests participating in the looting lose their class-granted special abilities until they atone for their misdeeds at a lawful temple.

8A–4C. Veng's study

This room contains a very old wooden desk, along with a pair of wooden chairs and a small table. A bookcase also stands on a wall next to the desk, with several books and scrolls upon it.

During the long years of his imprisonment, Auris Veng spent much time here reading and writing works of philosophy using materials made from

the fungal forest below, brought to him by the flumphs. Besides an old, tattered prayer book and several works on magic, there are a half dozen volumes of philosophy and poetry written by the Praetor which could be sold to collectors for 50 gp each. Careful study of these works over several weeks should give the reader a fair idea of who Auris Veng was, and what happened to him (as detailed in the history section for this adventure).

Also on the shelf is a collection of old scrolls of divine spells that the flumphs cannot use. They are: *silence 15-ft radius*, *dispel magic*, *protection from evil 10-ft radius*, *cure disease*, *cure light wounds*, *commune*, and *finger of death*.

8A–4D. The Flumph Leader's Aerie

This chamber is filled with a rock garden. The floor is buried in a six inch layer of grayish sand, with several interesting-shaped rocks and gleaming crystals thrusting out of it. The sand has abstract patterns traced in it by the flumphs, who find studying such patterns soothing. Against the far wall is an old, ornate-looking chair, with a staff propped against it.

This chamber was once Auris Veng's bedroom, and has since been turned into the private chamber of the flumph leader, who rests upon the wooden chair. The leader also always has an entourage of protectors and common flumphs: the colony's **master hunter**, **2 protectors**, and **4 common flumphs**.

Tactics: In the unlikely event that combat breaks out here, the master hunter and common flumphs swarm the enemies while the protectors and leader stay back and cast protective spells on themselves, followed by offensive spells at any opponents. Any flumphs left in the other areas of this complex come to assist in the battle 1d3 rounds after combat begins. They fight to the death.

Treasure: The staff propped against the chair is Auris Veng's old *staff of healing* with 3 charges remaining. Also resting on the chair seat are several scrolls. The arcane scrolls (*charm person*, *light x2*, *strength*, and *fireball*). The flumphs have no monetary treasure.

Development: If the PCs have managed to enter negotiations with the flumphs, one of them is hauled up and escorted to this chamber. Here the leader can communicate with them by smoothing a patch of sand and writing messages to them in Common.

The flumphs would love to have someone eradicate the blood orchids, and they would also be pleased if the gibbering abomination were taken care of. If one of these threats is dealt with, they reward the party with the *staff of healing*; if both are taken care of, they also give the PCs the scrolls from Veng's study. If the PCs do take care of both threats, and show respect for the flumphs, they are allowed to shelter in their lair when they come through the cavern complex, which could be quite useful for deep delvings in Rappan Athuk! They inform any who ask that Veng's remains are not to be disturbed.

8A–5. The Blood Orchid Nest

Located behind the waterfall is a shaft leading upward into the overhanging cliff face. This location is inaccessible without extensive climbing up a difficult rock wall or some means of flying. A small group of blood orchids settled here a few years back, having fled here after the destruction of their previous lair in the Under Realms. They have been maintaining a low profile until recently, subsisting mostly on cave rats. Now that their numbers have grown to **15 blood orchids**, plus **2 savants** and a **grand savant**, they are getting more aggressive, especially towards the flumphs. Unless something changes the balance of power with the caverns, the orchids clear out the flumphs within six to eight months.

The lair itself is a series of rocky caverns with treacherous floors, and many steep climbs, ledges, and descents. Air is slightly warmer and more humid than the main cavern area, and the air is redolent with the smell of blood, rotting flesh, and compost.

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Note: Although this lair looks extremely dangerous, remember to subtract any blood orchids fought elsewhere from the total encountered here. This significantly decreases the threat level of this area. Furthermore, assume that unless alerted of a possible attack, there are only 2/3 of the regular blood orchids here at any given time.

Blood Orchids (15): HD 7; AC 1 [18]; Atk 6 tentacles (1d4 + poison); Move 3 (Fly 12); Save 9; AL C; CL/XP 11/1700; Special: All-around vision (immune to surprise), immune to sonic effects, resistance to fire, poison (save or fall unconscious), blood drain (if struck by 2 or more tentacles in a single round, save or grappled and lose 1 point of constitution per round to blood drain), telepathic bond with all blood orchids within 100 feet.

Blood Orchid Savants (2): HD 9; AC 1 [18]; Atk 6 tentacles (1d4 + poison); Move 3 (Fly 12); Save 7; AL C; CL/XP 14/2600; Special: All-around vision (immune to surprise), immune to sonic effects, resistance to fire, poison, blood drain, telepathic bond with all blood orchids within 100 feet, cast spells as 4th level magic-user (1st – *magic missile* x2, *protection from good*; 2nd – *phantasmal force*, *stinking cloud*).

Blood Orchid Grand Savant: HD 11; AC 1 [18]; Atk 6 tentacles (1d4 + poison); Move 3 (Fly 12); Save 4; AL C; CL/XP 14/2600; Special: All-around vision (immune to surprise), immune to sonic effects, resistance to fire, poison, blood drain, telepathic bond with all blood orchids within 100 feet, cast spells as 4th level magic-user (1st – *magic missile* x2, *protection from good*, *shield*; 2nd – *ESP*, *phantasmal force*, *stinking cloud*; 3rd – *hold person*, *lightning bolt*; 4th – *monster summoning II*).

8A–5A. Entry

This is a 10 ft. wide, 15 ft. tall cave mouth opening into a passage that slopes up at a 45 degree angle to **Area B**. There is always **1 blood orchid** on lookout here just inside the cave mouth. It drifts down upon any other creatures that enter, hoping to gain surprise.

8A–5B. Intersection

At this point the passage levels off and divides. To the south it continues ascending at a 60 degree inclination, while to the northeast it is level until it passes one of the caverns marked **C**, at which point it rises again at a 60 degree angle. There is a 25% chance **1–2 blood orchids** lurk here. They attack using standard tactics.

8A–5C. Blood orchid nests

The four chambers marked **5C** represent lairs for **3–4 blood orchids** (15 total divided among the four caves). The caves themselves are layered with rotted fungus, soil, and the carcasses of normal and giant rats and the occasional flumph.

Each nest has a 40% chance of being occupied by its tenants, bearing in mind the maximum number of orchids possible for the lair overall. If present, the orchids investigate any unusual activity they sense in nearby passageways, or at the telepathic summons for aid from one of their comrades. They have no treasure.

8A–5D. Vertical shaft

The corridor terminates in a 200 ft. deep shaft. Elevations of passages leading off the shaft are given on the map, relative to the floor of the pit. When PCs reach this point, there is a 30% chance of another encounter with **1–3 blood orchids**. The orchids drop paralyzed victims into the shaft whenever they have the opportunity to do so.

8A–5E. Larder

An 8 ft. wide slanting crack drops 60 ft. into a low (8 ft. high ceiling) cavern cluttered with rubble. Currently **12 starved giant rats** scuttle about in here, ready to provide a snack for an indolent blood orchid. The rats gnaw anything edible that comes within reach.

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

8A–5F. Cave of the Savants

This large cave has several stony pillars, and is nearly bisected in one point by a deep crevasse. To the north, it narrows at a drop-off, then opens into the grand savant's lair. The cavern is also the home of the clan's **2 savants**, who are always here unless out on a specific mission. There are also always 3 or more **common blood orchids** here.

Tactics: The savants and grand savant start casting defensive spells at the first sign of trouble. Once intruders are spotted, they switch to offensive spells. The regular blood orchids hover near the ceiling, and attempt to drop on anyone who approaches the spellcasters. Nonflying PCs who get grappled might get dragged to the 60 ft. deep pit and dropped there, or may be deposited in the grand savant's lair, where they are subjected to 12 tentacle attacks.

Treasure: The treasure for the blood orchid lair is located beneath the mound of half-digested remains underneath it. It consists of: 1,097 pp, 2,430 sp, five gems (tourmalines worth 300 gp each), a dented jeweled scepter worth 500 gp, a large nonmagical adamantine shield, a *+1 mace*, and a cursed *flask of curses* (which identifies as a *decanter of endless water*).

8A–6 The Winding Path

To reach the bottom of the pit without falling or flying, this is the only feasible means of travel, other than simply attempting to climb the walls. This path starts by plunging through solid rock, into a long, winding passage that descends the side of the great cavern. About three quarters of this route is through tunnels, which occasionally have pits opening up to one side or in the center of the passageway (40% of these open back up into the main cavern area).

However, a quarter of the winding path follows ledges on the sides of the cavern walls. These ledges are usually about 10 ft. wide, but because the cliff face overhangs the path, travel along these sections can be hazardous for larger creatures. Small sized creatures can move normally, but man-sized creatures must move at half speed or else prompt a saving throw to avoid falling. Large creatures must crawl at quarter speed, and creatures of larger sizes cannot fit on the ledge. These ledges are often inhabited by normal and giant rats, which generally flee any non-rats that approach; they are also frequently scoured by hungry blood orchids, cave fishers, and the gibbering abomination as well; a wandering monster check should be made each time they have to progress along a series of ledges.

8A–6A. Entry and Upper Caves

On the south side of the upper part of the great cavern, a recess in the wall opens into a pair of passages. One goes into a series of small caves which are uninhabited, and used by the flumphs for mating. There is a 50% chance that a pair of flumphs can be found here at any time, and they are likely to regard any intrusions unfavorably (probably resulting in a barrage of nauseating sprays, and them fleeing). The other opening is the start of the winding path itself; it levels off, then quickly starts to descend.

8A–6B. Xulux's Lair

The paranoid gibbering abomination Xulux has set up a lair about two thirds of the way down the switchbacking trail, in a series of shafts with two points of entry, so he has a direction to flee in. There is a 75% chance that he is cowering in his lair, and if he is, he is asleep 40% of the time.

8A–6B1. Entry Pit

To one side of the main passage a pit opens up, descending into darkness, much like others along the pathway. If Xulux is in his lair and awake, he has a 3 in 6 chance to hear any travelers.

8A–6B2. Nest

About two thirds of the way down the side of the pit there is an opening in one wall, going into an inclined passage. At the base of this passage, in a bowl-shaped depression, **Xulux** makes his lair.

Xulux is a gibbering abomination, a horrifying arcane amalgam of humanoid body parts and internal organs. After narrowly escaping death in his youth at hands of the wizard who created him, Xulux has become exceptionally paranoid, even for a gibbering abomination. This gives him a –2 penalty against Bluff and Intimidation attempts to cow him.

Xulux has been a resident of this cavern for several years. He generally leaves the flumphs alone, and while he could probably deal with the blood orchids without too much trouble, he has been leaving them alone as well, hoping that they clear the flumphs out for him, and then he can wipe them out at his leisure. That would allow him the opportunity to finally investigate the tomb at the top of the cavern, about which he has a burning curiosity.

It is possible for PCs to enter negotiations with Xulux if they can convince him that they are much stronger than he is. In such a case, the gibbering abomination usually talks only until he can escape them. He mentions the presence of the blood orchids, that the flumphs are hiding great treasures, and in general tries to get the PCs more interested in the cavern's other dangerous inhabitants.

Xulux: HD 13 (61 hp); AC –3 [22]; Atk 6 bites (1d8 + save or blood drain); Move 3 (Climb 3); Save 3; AL C; CL/XP 23/5300; Special: Regenerate 3 hp/round, half damage from edged and piercing weapons, immune to pain, backstabs and disease, 50% resistance to electricity, blood drain (1 point of constitution per round), disruptive cacophony (100 ft. range, all within range must save or be unable to cast spells), spells (at will—*confusion*, *dispel magic*, *enfeeblement* (reverse of *strength*), *fear*, *freezing ray* (as *lightning bolt*, but cold damage), *telekinesis* (325 lb. max)), can use two spells per round, deathless (returns to life 1 hour after “killed”).

Tactics: When in his lair, if he hears people on the path above, he slowly moves up until he can spot them. Unless they look overwhelmingly powerful, he ambushes them with his spells. He uses his powers as follows: *confusion*— used against fighter types over spellcasters and ranged attackers; *enfeeblement*—on anyone who poses a physical threat; *fear*—

used against the most threatening enemies or ranged attackers; *freezing ray*—used on magic-users or those who look badly damaged, to finish them off; *telekinesis*—used to yank foes off ledges and hold back melee fighters. He uses his disruptive cacophony against clusters of spellcasters.

When hunting, Xulux likes to use his *telekinesis* to seize prey on ledges and throw them off. Xulux finds that the plummet to the bottom of the cavern nicely “tenderizes” his meals for him. If he does achieve such a kill, he ignores the rest of the group and descends to feast. When in the open, he targets flying enemies before land-bound ones assuming they are of roughly equivalent threat.

Xulux flees if his hit points are reduced to 50% or less. As he goes, he collects his treasure chest and the key.

Treasure: Half buried among the debris of Xulux's nest is a small (1–1/2 ft. x 3/4 ft. x 3/4 ft.) chest made of teak with gold fittings, and bearing a fine lock that is trapped with a poison needle. The chest itself radiates magic if such is detected for. The key for the chest is concealed in a rock crevice 15 ft. upslope behind the nest. Note that breaking the chest open destroys its magic and all items inside.

The chest itself is a variant of a *bag of holding*. Its main compartment can hold up to 80 pounds or 8 cubic ft. of material, and the inside of the lid holds two secret compartments, each of which can hold 2 cubic ft. or 20 pounds of weight. Remember that dire consequences result if it is placed inside another extradimensional space. The overall weight of the chest is 10 pounds, empty or full.

Currently the chest holds in its main compartment 502 gp, and 24 sp, along with an onyx statuette of a dog (nonmagical, worth 500 gp). One of the secret compartments holds three gems (a pair of small rubies worth 250 gp each, and a water opal worth 500 gp), and the other compartment holds a small wooden box (6 inches x 3 inches x 1 inch) closed with a simple latch, which holds six lozenges in its padded interior. When placed in one's mouth, each of these magic pills produces a different potion effect. There are three white lozenges (*cure light wounds*), a black lozenge (*feather fall*), a gray lozenge (*neutralize poison*), and a translucent aqua lozenge (*water breathing*). Xulux got these off of a drow he charmed and later ate some time ago in the Under Realms. They are water soluble, so immersing them in water ruins them.

8A–6B3. Shrieker

Up the slope behind the gibbering abomination's nest, nestled on a flat ledge, is a shrieker that Xulux brought in with telekinesis from the Under Realms, to serve as a warning system in case flying creatures try to approach from the escape shaft. It sounds off as soon as any movement or light comes within ten feet of it.

Shrieker: HD 3; AC 7 [12]; Atk None; Move 1; Save 14; AL N; CL/XP 3/60; Special: Shriek.

8A–6B4. Escape Shaft

On the other side of the shrieker, the sloping passage meets another vertical shaft. This shaft descends 60 ft. before opening out into the main cavern. Xulux uses this as his “front door” when he goes off to hunt, and as a means of escape from intruders approaching from **Area 8A–6B1**.

8A–6C. Exit to Cavern Floor

In the bottom quarter of the winding passage, it moves away from the main cavern and slopes down more steeply to an exit point on the eastern side of **Area 7**. Traversing this sloping passage requires a successful saving throw or the PC falls en route for 1d6 points of buffeting damage.

8A-7. The Cavern Floor

The base of the cavern is home to a teeming population of rats, spiders, and fungi, with a lake at the center.

8A-7A. Lake

This large lake is quite shallow, ranging from one to four feet deep almost everywhere. Wading through it is very difficult because the lake bed is composed of a series of convoluted ridges, spines, holes, and loose mounds of rubble. Those wading move at quarter speed, and still must make a saving throw every minute to avoid slipping and falling. Where the waterfall meets the lake it is about 12 ft. deep, though there is a pile of rubble beneath the falling water itself. The lake is the home of some small fish and crayfish, but no large or dangerous species.

At the bottom of the lake near its center, an underwater shaft drains the lake. This shaft eventually feeds into the river flowing through **Level 13A, Area 13A-13**.

8A-7B. Fungus Forest

A profusion of toadstools up to eight feet tall cover the majority of the cavern floor. Where toadstools aren't present, the ground is carpeted in a variety of molds, intercut with game trails left by the many giant rats who feast on the fungus and insects that live here. Albino cave spiders are a particular threat amid the toadstools, and jump out when prey comes within reach. They surprise on a roll of 1-4 on 1d6. On random encounter checks rolled here, treat rolls of 10-11 as spider encounters. Remember that the normal and giant rats normally flee.

8A-7C. Shaft to the Under Realms

Partially obscured by the fungus at this location is an open pit 12 ft. in diameter. It descends vertically hundreds of feet before winding its way into the Under Realms. It is through this shaft that the blood orchids, gibbering abomination, and flumphs all originally immigrated, and all three groups know of its existence.

8A-7D. Rat Warren

To the north and south, the cavern wall has split in numerous places along natural fault lines, and rats have taken advantages of the many passages now riddling these areas. Because the warrens are naturally formed, their ceiling height ranges from 5 to 15 ft., and width from 5 to 10 ft.

Unlike the rats elsewhere in the cavern, normal and **giant rats** within the rat tunnels attack anyone who invades their home, and experience should be rewarded for them normally. When characters explore these areas, roll for a rat encounter every five minutes on a d20: 1-6 = a pack of ten standard rats; 7-9 = a rat swarm (1d100 rats); 10-15 = 2d4 giant rats, and 16-20 = no encounter. The rats do not have any treasure.

8A-8. Lower Entry

At the eastern end of the cavern floor, not far from where the winding passage is located, a 10 ft. wide passage is nestled among a series of rat tunnels. This passage slopes downward, and eventually comes out in the ceiling of **Level 10A, The Great Cavern**, 80 ft. over the southern portion of the central lake.