

Cliffhangers Adventures

Lorin's Chasm

Episode One: Descent into the Chasm

By Will McDermott

Lorin's Chasm is a short adventure for four 5th-level characters that takes place in the caves beneath a remote monastery devoted to the sun god, Pelor. The monastery sits atop a mountain range and has a large complex of caves beneath, most of which are used as tombs for the priests who have died there over the centuries. The monastery and the adventure can be placed easily on almost any **D&D** world.



Adventure Background

The characters visit a mountain monastery only to discover that the former head priest, Lorin Deanes, and the only other high-ranking priest in the monastery both disappeared ten years earlier in the caves beneath the monastery. Since then, the monastery has fallen on hard times, and most of the elders have died or left under very mysterious circumstances. Only a few low-ranking monks and priests remain, and none have any firsthand information about what happened to Lorin Deanes or the other high-ranking priest. None of the less experienced members of the monastery wish to take on the role of head priest; instead, they wish to find out what happened to Lorin Deanes. Unfortunately, they had taken an oath to follow Lorin's orders, and so they cannot open up the caves and venture in themselves. Will the PCs help the priests and monks by investigating the disappearance of Lorin Deanes?

Character Hooks

There are many reasons the characters could be visiting the monastery or looking for a high-ranking priest. Perhaps they have recently lost a companion and wish to get her resurrected. A patron in a lowland city who needs the services of the monastery's head priest could have sent them to the monastery. One of the characters could be a distant relative of Lorin Deanes and was sent by the family to see why they haven't heard from him in so long. The characters easily could see the monastery in

Cliffhanger Features

The cave that the PCs travel through are mostly natural, though the priests and monks did add their own touches, such as creating recesses within the walls, even within any sarcophagi chambers. Once inside the chasm, the air grows damper and mustier than before, though it still retains enough freshness that the PCs need not worry for their lives. All construction was created from stone, so the dampness has not deteriorated anything but the corpses of the long-dead priests and monks.

Light: When the monastery door closes behind the PCs, they are in pitch darkness until they reach the first sarcophagi chamber. Once they enter the chasm, there is enough light for low-light vision to work.

Ceiling Height: Unless otherwise

the distance during their travels and simply be investigating this remote structure. Once, the characters are in the monastery, the lure of a ten-year-old mystery should quickly draw them into the encounters in the caves.

Preliminary Investigations

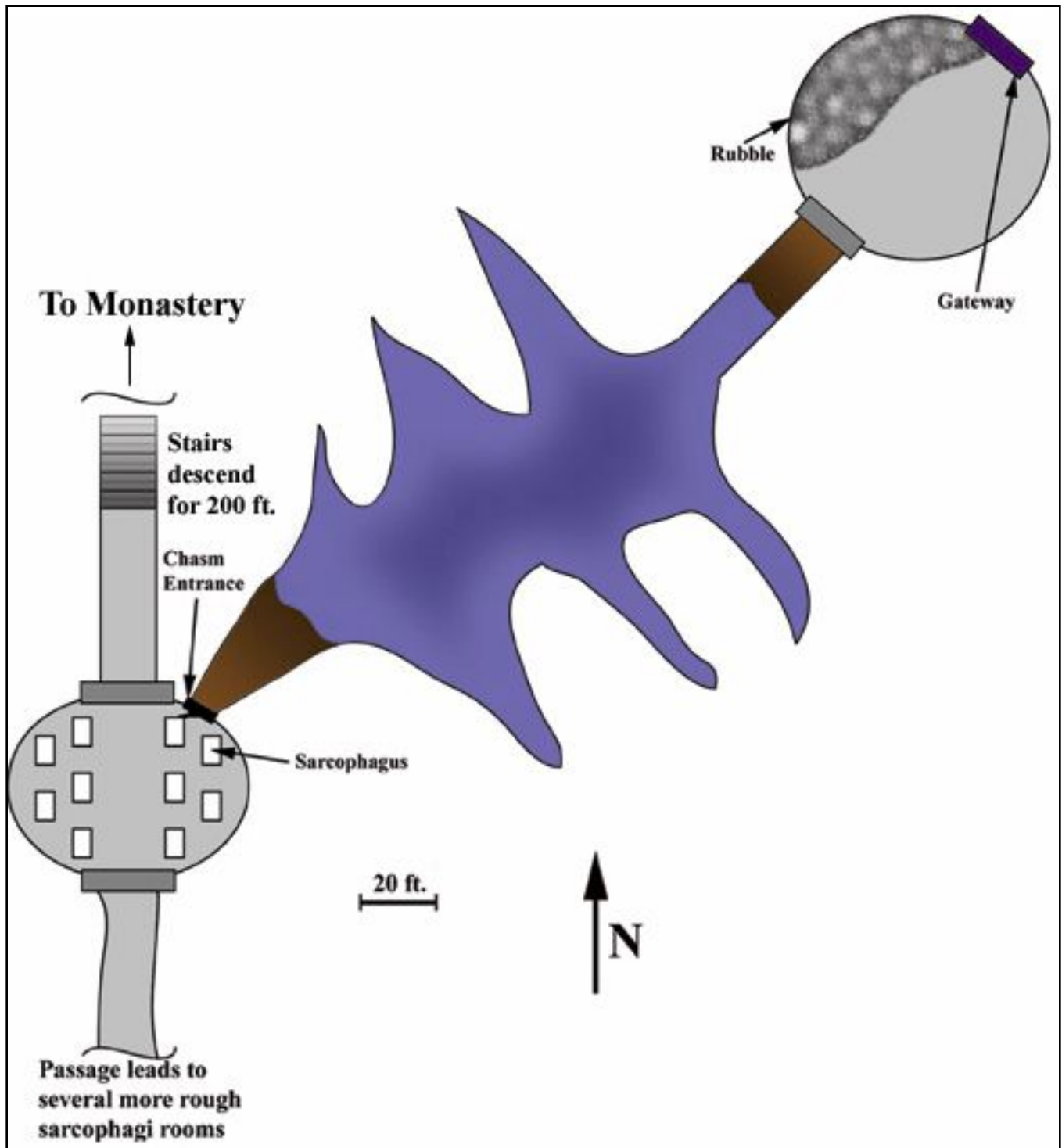
The priests mention that the only clues to what happened are in Lorin's most recent journal in his room. The journal reveals a strange story. It appears that at the time Lorin was the head priest in the mountain monastery, it was home to a large number of priests and monks all dedicated to the worship of Pelor and the light of the sun. The monks had built and maintained the monastery as a shrine to the sun god, while the priests tended to the members of the monastery and performed the daily ceremonies to honor Pelor at dawn, noon, and dusk. The monastery thrived.

However, Lorin had lead the priests in the monastery for many years, and some thought it was time for the old priest to step down and allow one of the younger members to assume leadership of the flock. Lorin's chief rival was a young, rash priest by the name of Arlon Manafae, and Lorin would have stepped down years earlier except he believed Wee Jas, the goddess of death, had corrupted Manafae. It seems Manafae had taken charge of maintaining the burial chambers in the caves beneath the monastery. He often missed the sun ceremonies because he could not be found down in the inky depths of the tombs.

Unfortunately, the PCs can't read any further because the journal ends on the last page, with a reference to another one to follow. If the PCs ask, one of the priests mentions that she thinks Lorin headed on down with a newer journal. That was the last time the monks and clerics saw Lorin. That night, a comet streaked across the sky, causing, some say, an earthquake that rocked the very foundation of the monastery. Most of the monks believe Lorin died in the earthquakes, but they kept the caves closed off and barred as the head cleric had ordered ever since. Now the PCs must decide what they wish to do next.

noted, the ceiling of the caves stands at about 5 feet, which will make some of the taller PCs need to hunch over to walk without bumping their heads.

Doors: There are no doors to speak of in the caves or the chasm.



Descent into the Chasm (EL 5)

When the characters descend the long stone stairway into the caves, they can hear nothing but faint dripping water in the distance. The caves smell dank and musty, and the air stirs only slightly. After about 50 feet of downward descent, the walls along the stairs contain dark recesses veiled in dusty cobwebs. If the PCs look more closely, they discover that the skeletal remains of past priests and monks rest within each recess, covered by their fading burial shrouds. The stairs descend for a total of 200 feet below the monastery's lowest level, which means that the PCs travel for some time. The passage beyond the stairs contain more such recesses and goes on for about 50 feet before it opens into a room filled with rows of

sarcophagi. Read or paraphrase the following text:

Dust broken only by messy splotches rests thickly upon the floor and upon the ten or so sarcophagi within the room, attesting to the unbroken vows kept by the priests and monks above. The room contains another web-enshrouded archway ahead of you, and the ceiling rises up so high that it's lost in heavy darkness. A large crack in the floor spreads out from the sarcophagi to your immediate left and runs underneath the wall of the cave.

Allow PCs to make a Knowledge (nature) or Wilderness Lore check to recognize the splotches as bat guano. Also, a successful Spot check (DC 15) allows them to notice an eerie glow emanating from somewhere below and behind the back wall of the cave via the crack. If they proceed further into the room, the shadow dire bats attack. Please note the special shadow blend ability of the bats should the PCs attempt to light up the ceiling in any manner. The ceiling does lift to a full 100 feet above the PCs.

Shadow Dire Bats (2): CR 3; Large magical beast; HD 4d8+12; hp 30; Init +6; Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 20 (touch 15, flat-footed 14); Atk +5 melee (1d8+4, bite); Face/Reach 10 ft. x 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ Blindsight, cold resistance 9, damage reduction 5/+1, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, shadow blend; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 22, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +2, Listen +11*, Move Silently +17, Spot +11*. *-4 penalty if blindsight is negated.

Blindsight (Ex): A shadow dire bat can "see" by emitting high-frequency sounds, inaudible to most other creatures, that allow them to locate objects and creatures within 120 ft. A silence spell negates this ability and forces the bat to rely on its weak vision, which has a maximum range of 10 feet.

Cold Resistance (Ex): The creature ignores up to (enter value from left) points of cold damage each round.

Low-Light Vision: A shadow dire bat can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar low-light conditions.

Shadow Blend (Su): In any conditions other than full daylight, a shadow dire bat can disappear into the shadows, giving it nine-tenths concealment. Artificial illumination, even a light or continual flame spell, does not negate this ability. A daylight spell, however, will.

Tactics: Once the shadow dire bats see the newcomers, they use shadow blend and move silently toward the PCs to attempt to attack from the concealment of the shadows. They fly faster than normal dire bats and use this speed in strafing attacks, relying on their damage reduction and high armor class to protect them in melee.

The Cliffhanger

Once the characters have dispatched the shadow dire bats, they can investigate the crack. At the wall, the crack appears large enough to allow PCs to climb down into a faintly lit chasm.

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Episode Two: Shadow Boxing

By Will McDermott

Lorin's Chasm is a short adventure for four 5th-level characters that takes place in the caves beneath a remote monastery devoted to the sun god, Pelor. The monastery sits atop a mountain range and has a large complex of caves beneath, most of which are used as tombs for the priests who have died there over the centuries. The monastery and the adventure can be placed easily on almost any **D&D** world.



The Journals of Lorin

After destroying two huge, shadowy bats, the characters have noticed the entrance to a chasm that descends even further down into the mountain beneath the monastery. Just inside the entrance, they have a chance to discover, with a Search check (DC 15) the next journal that Lorin kept. Though it is moldering away into nothingness and several pages are stuck together, the PCs can get the following details.

Lorin had followed Manafae into this same chasm decades earlier. Worried that Manafae might corrupt the entire monastery with his death worship, Lorin decided to expel the cleric from the order. So, Lorin went down into the tombs to confront Manafae and found him lowering himself into a crack in the floor in a secluded corner of the caves. Lorin decided to follow Manafae to determine what he'd been doing in the dark all these months. What he found down below was a large chasm that sloped down into still, scummy water.

Lorin also found a small, circular room at the end of a passage that sloped up from the water at the far end of the chasm. There he found Manafae, a shrine to Wee Jas, and something even more sinister -- a stone gateway. Manafae was in the middle of performing some ritual when Lorin came upon them. The two argued and fought, but Manafae opened the gateway and disappeared before Lorin could defeat him.

Cliffhanger Features

The cave that the PCs travel through are mostly natural, though the priests and monks did add their own touches, such as creating recesses within the walls, even within any sarcophagi chambers. Once inside the chasm, the air grows damper and mustier than before, though it still retains enough freshness that the PCs need not worry for their lives. All construction was created from stone, so the dampness has not deteriorated anything but the corpses of the long-dead priests and monks.

Light: When the monastery door closes behind the PCs, they are in pitch darkness until they reach the first sarcophagi chamber. Once they enter the chasm, there is enough light for low-light vision to work.

Ceiling Height: Unless otherwise

The PCs can easily notice that several pages are missing from the end of the journal.

Shadow Boxing (CR 5)

The bottom of the chasm is 50 feet below the floor of the caves above. The rotting remains of a ladder are leaning against the wall of the chasm. Any character attempting to use the ladder falls 40 feet when the rungs give way, taking 4d6 falling damage.

noted, the ceiling of the caves stands at about 5 feet, which will make some of the taller PCs need to hunch over to walk without bumping their heads.

Doors: There are no doors to speak of in the caves or the chasm.

The first character to reach the bottom of the chasm sees the light the group had noticed earlier floating far in the distance. But before the rest of the characters can make it to the bottom of the chasm so they can investigate further, the shadows near the first character begin to move and the dusk beasts attack from hiding. Read or paraphrase the following passage to your characters:

The shadows coalesce into what appears to be two human-sized, two-headed lizards made entirely of shadow. Their legs trail off into the blackness, but their heads and barbed tails are sharply defined silhouettes.

To join the melee, characters still descending the wall have to continue to the bottom on their initiative or jump from where they are, taking the requisite falling damage.

Dusk Beast: CR 3; Medium-size outsider; HD 8d8+8; hp 44; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 12, flat-footed 13); Atk +10 melee (1d8+2, 2 bites) and +8 melee (1d4+1, tail barb); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft./10 ft.; SQ Outsider traits; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +17, Intuit Direction +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +13, Spot +13; Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Multiattack.

Outsider Traits: Darkvision 60 ft.; cannot be raised or resurrected (though a wish or miracle spell can restore life).

Tactics: After their initial surprise attack, the dusk beasts separate and move off to attack from 10 feet away, extending their shadowy necks and tails to attack with reach and using their Combat Reflexes to get extra attacks of opportunity if the characters try to flank them.

The Cliffhanger

After the battle, the characters might notice that the dancing light they had seen in the distance has disappeared. A successful Listen check (DC 15) allows a character to hear the lapping of water. If a character surpasses DC 20 on a listen check, he or she can determine that the noise is coming from something moving slowly through the water toward the group.

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Cliffhangers Adventures

Lorin's Chasm

Episode Three: Pools of Light

By Will McDermott

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The Journals of Lorin

After the PCs vanquish the dusk beasts from the last encounter, they have a chance to find the missing pages of the journal. These pages are in even worse condition than the journal itself, so several details are left out. The gist of the journal pages relates some of what Lorin did after his unsuccessful confrontation with Manafae.

After the battle, Lorin made his way back up to the tombs, only to find that Manafae had turned many of the dead in the tombs into undead. Lorin had to battle his way back up to the monastery. By the time he reached his quarters, Lorin was exhausted. He had left word with his subordinates to close and bar the access to the tombs until he returned.

Here the information in the journals becomes sketchy due to damage. All the characters can piece together is that Lorin was working on some ritual or magic item that would close the gateway forever.

After five weeks, Lorin emerged with a large pack and his holy symbol. He ordered the tombs to be closed behind him and barred to anyone of the order. He hoped that a certain comet's proximity would help him with the task at hand.

Pools of Light (EL 6)

Cliffhanger Features

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Light: When the monastery door closes behind the PCs, they are in pitch darkness until they reach the first sarcophagi chamber. Once they enter the chasm, there is enough light for low-light vision to work.

Ceiling Height: Unless otherwise

The fight with the dusk beasts has caught the attention of other denizens of the chasm. The light in the distant darkness is gone, but the group hears the sound of something coming toward them out of the still water that fills most of the bottom of the chasm.

Lorin couldn't destroy all of the undead created by Manafae, and six of the evil cleric's skeletons have been surviving in the chasm with the help of the xeg-yi (the floating light the characters saw), which has moved into the stone wall of the chasm and is moving toward the characters, ahead of the skeletons, but invisible within the wall.

noted, the ceiling of the caves stands at about 5 feet, which will make some of the taller PCs need to hunch over to walk without bumping their heads.

Doors: There are no doors to speak of in the caves or the chasm.

The skeletons stop 90 feet out from the edge of the water to draw the group into the water to engage them. Once the characters get at least 30 feet into the water, the xeg-yi comes out of the wall and attacks from behind, which is the signal for the skeletons to charge into melee.

Where the attack occurs, the water is about 3 feet deep, tapering off 1 foot per 10 feet to the water's edge. Characters in 3 feet of water take a -2 penalty on all actions (-1 if they move back to 2-foot depth). The skeletons suffer the same penalty, but the xeg-yi does not.

Here's a quick reminder for fighting underwater ([from the D&D FAQ](#)): If you don't have a swimming speed (or a *freedom of movement* effect), you suffer a -2 penalty to attacks and damage when underwater. Any slashing weapon, blunt weapon, claw attack, or tail attack also inflicts half damage (subtract the 2 points first, then take half of the rest and round down). Remember that a successful hit still inflicts at least 1 point of damage. Even if you have a swimming speed, you inflict half damage with slashing or blunt weapons (but not claws) unless you have a *freedom of movement* effect.

Skeletons (6): hp 9 each; see *Monster Manual* page 165.

Xeg-Yi: CR 5; Medium-size outsider (incorporeal); HD 5d8+5; hp 27; Init +3; Spd fly 20 ft. (good); AC 17 (touch 17, flat-footed 14); Atk +8 melee touch (1d6 and negative energy, 4 incorporeal touches) or +8 ranged touch (1d8, negative energy ray); SA Negative energy lash 5/day, rebuke undead 5/day; SQ Incorporeal subtype, outsider traits; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +4; Str -, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +6, Hide +10, Search +5, Sense Motive +8, Spot +8; Combat Reflexes, Extra Turning.

Negative Energy Lash (Su): A xeg-yi can make a ranged touch attack or hit with an incorporeal touch attack to infuse a target with negative energy. This deals an additional 2d8+5 points of damage to a living target but heals an undead creature by the same amount. A xeg-yi can control its negative energy enough to avoid healing an undead foe (dealing only the base damage).

Rebuke Undead (Su): A xeg-yi can flood a 60-foot-radius area with negative energy, making undead creatures cower in fear. It rebukes undead as a 5th-level cleric, doing so up to five times

per day. It cannot command undead.

Incorporeal Subtype: Can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities; immune to all nonmagical attack forms; 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for force effects, such as magic missiles, and attacks made with ghost touch weapons); can pass through solid objects (but not force effects) at will; attacks ignore natural armor, armor, and shields (though deflection bonuses and force effects work normally); moves silently (cannot be heard with Listen checks unless desired).

Outsider Traits: Darkvision 60 ft.; cannot be raised or resurrected (though a *wish* or *miracle* spell can restore life).

Tactics: The xeg-yi uses surprise to attack and then tries to retreat back into the wall when possible to mount another surprise attack. It also uses its negative energy lash to heal the skeletons if they are not completely destroyed early. (Note: Living with the xeg-yi for ten years has made the skeletons much heartier than average.)

The Cliffhanger

After defeating the xeg-yi and its skeleton minions, the group continues down the chasm. The water levels off at 30 feet deep, and the going is slow and cold. After a short time, the characters begin to hear noises. A successful Listen check (DC 20) discerns the noises of some creature wailing in the distance.

Cliffhangers Adventures

Lorin's Chasm

Episode Four: The Door Swings Open

By Will McDermott

Lorin's Chasm is a short adventure for four 5th-level characters that takes place in the caves beneath a remote monastery devoted to the sun god, Pelor. The monastery sits atop a mountain range and has a large complex of caves beneath, most of which are used as tombs for the priests who have died there over the centuries. The monastery and the adventure can be placed easily on almost any **D&D** world.



Lorin's Ghost

After the battle with the xeg-yi and its skeletons, the characters may need to retreat to the monastery for rest and healing. If they decide to spend a night recuperating after the third episode, the devil described below is already in the chamber when they return, having pushed his way through the rubble. If they press on after the xeg-yi battle, they may never have to face the osyluth.

Assuming they press on, the group comes to a smooth-walled, circular passage at the far end of the chasm that ascends up out of the water at about a 15-degree angle. After 25 feet, the passage has cleared the water and levels out, running an additional 25 feet before opening into a circular, domed chamber, half of which has caved in, leaving a small hill of stone rubble, piled 9 feet high in the back left portion of the room.

Opposite the hallway entrance, an arch is carved into the wall with six, rune-covered, bas-relief stones on the right side leading up to a keystone at the top of the arch that is inlaid with the symbol of Wee Jas. The left side of the arch is mostly covered in rubble. A vertical line, carved into the wall, runs down the middle of the archway from the bottom of the keystone to the floor. A broken amulet is embedded halfway up just to the right side of the vertical line. Read aloud the following when the PCs see the broken amulet:

Cliffhanger Features

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Light: When the monastery door closes behind the PCs, they are in pitch darkness until they reach the first sarcophagi chamber. Once they enter the chasm, there is enough light for low-light vision to work.

Ceiling Height: Unless otherwise

A faint form manifests slowly in front of you, with the symbol of Pelor prominent upon his garb and a faint holy symbol of Pelor clutched in his hands. He looks at you pleadingly and then points to an arm that barely extrudes from the nearby rubble.

noted, the ceiling of the caves stands at about 5 feet, which will make some of the taller PCs need to hunch over to walk without bumping their heads.

Doors: There are no doors to speak of in the caves or the chasm.

If the characters can find some way to speak with the ghost or cast *speak with dead* after finding Lorin's body, they learn that Lorin did come down to seal the gateway. He had crafted a magical amulet that, once placed on the gateway, would seal the door forever. However, when the comet flashed across the sky, the gateway flared open in an explosion of magic just as Lorin was embedding the amulet. The amulet was ripped in half by the force of the explosion and Lorin was tossed to the ground. Half of the amulet stayed in the doorway, holding closed the right half of the gate. However, the left half of the amulet was flung into the wall above the entrance to the hallway, where it remains still.

Lorin, barely conscious on the floor, watched in horror as an army of demons marched toward the half-open gate. Gathering his courage and determination, Lorin caused an earthquake that brought half of the temple down upon the invading demons, the gateway, and himself. Lorin had sealed the gate, but it had cost him his life.

The Door Swings Open (EL 6)

The ghost of Lorin tries to get the characters to uncover his body so he can be laid to rest. He also hopes that they will complete his mission by placing the left half of the amulet in its place in the gateway. However, to do this, the characters have to clear the rubble, making it much easier for larger demons and devils to come through. In addition, Lorin cannot speak, so it may be difficult for the characters to understand what he wishes. A successful Spot check (DC 25) locates the missing half of the amulet without any help from Lorin.

In addition, the runes in the stones on the buried half of the arch still radiate magic and are protected by *glyph of warding* spells set there by Manafae. The gateway can open portals to many other planes of existence if the right combination of stones is pressed. But if a person does not speak the words "Wee Jas" when pressing a runestone, the *glyph* explodes for 5d8 points of damage (acid, cold, fire, electricity, or sonic) or casts the spell *searing light* depending on which stone is pressed. The *glyph of warding* spells on the defunct half of the gateway no longer work.



For every ten minutes the characters are in the chamber, there is a 10% cumulative chance that the gateway flares open. Once open, there is a 5% cumulative chance per round that the osyluth notices the open gateway and send his lemures through to give him time to push through the

rubble (which takes him two rounds of movement).

Osyluth: hp 26 (injured); see *Monster Manual* pages 48-51.

Lemures (2): hp 9; see *Monster Manual* pages 48-51.

Tactics: The osyluth immediately determines the alignment of all the PCs and then *charms* the most evil member of the group, using his innate telepathy to give commands to the character. If he must retreat, the osyluth commands the *charmed* party member to follow him through the gate.

The Cliffhanger

If the osyluth retreats with a character, there could be further adventures in another plane of existence where the group attempts to rescue their fellow adventurer. If the group is successful in sealing the gateway and returning Lorin's body to the monastery, they are rewarded by the monks and clerics, who may also have information about other adventures the group can undertake. Dungeon Masters can create their own treasure lists, or they can give out four aquamarine gems (worth 500 gp each) and four *potions of cure moderate wounds* along with one of the following items: *incandescent blue ioun stone*, *ring of protection +2*, *bag of holding* (bag 3) with 600 gp, or a +2 *longsword*.

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