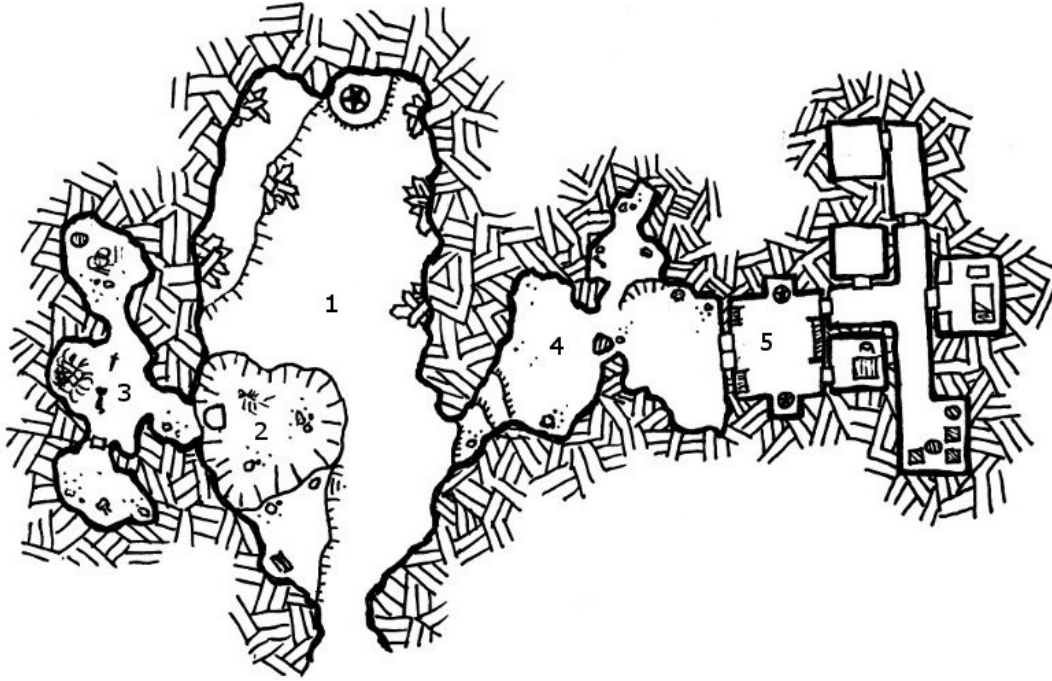


The Cave of Crystals

The PCs find a cave full of valuable crystals that hold a dangerous secret



Hook: A local wizard has found records that allude to a cave full of crystals that can be activated to trap spirits. There is very little other information to be found, other than the cave's general location. The wizard sends the party to retrieve "as many of the crystals as possible," promising payment per crystal. What the wizard ultimately intends to do with the crystals (for good or evil) is up to the DM.

Alternatively, the party could stumble upon the cave in a larger cavern delve. With a successful arcana or dungeoneering check, the party realizes the potential (and potential street value) of the crystals.

Background: A millenia ago, the land was overrun by a cadre of evil spirits. The spirits would possess citizens of the realm, and drive them to commit suicide. The humans had no defense against such an attack. It seemed as though all hope was lost when a wandering shardmind named Kurisha appeared one day in a border town. A race unknown to the humans, she was first regarded with fear until she proposed a solution to their problem. Deep within a nearby cave, she knew of a natural formation of crystals. These were no ordinary crystals - with the proper ritual, the crystals had the power to trap spirits. She also suggested they lure the evil spirits into the cave with the false promise of a child sacrifice. Her plan worked; in a blinding swirl of prismatic light, the entire ethereal army was trapped. Only if a crystal was broken could an evil spirit escape.

Kurisha volunteered to protect the cave, stating that she was at her journey's end, and intended to wander no more. For thousands of years, she has been doing just that, cut off from the outside world and the passage of time. In the past century or so, she has befriended some flumphs, and become a sort of caretaker for their small flock. She does not fully understand these gentle creatures, but does know of their special ability – when one of the evil spirits possesses a flumph, it cannot

escape, even after the flumph is killed. In this way, the flumphs are a better “trapping mechanism” for the evil spirits. However, the flumphs are living creatures, and Kurisha would never consider, even for a moment, allowing them to be used for such a purpose.

General Crystal Mechanics: Breaking or removing a crystal from their formations will release a visible evil spirit. When this happens, there will be one of several effects:

- If a flumph is present, the spirit will enter the flumph, and the flumph will attack the PCs. Regardless of the combat outcome, the spirit is permanently trapped in the flumph's body.
- If no flumph is present, the spirit will attempt to possess the PC who broke the crystal. **Immediate Reaction:** Level + 3 vs. Will, **Hit:** Target is dominated. **Miss:** The spirit leaves the cave. The spirit will direct the PC to make melee basic attacks against the nearest crystal (Defenses 5, HP 15)
- If possible, possess two PCs in this manner – one to attack the other party members, and one to attack the crystals.
- When possessed PCs are dropped to 0 hp, the evil spirits will escape the cave. What happens next is beyond the scope of this mini adventure, and is up to the DM.

Area 1: Crystal Chamber

This is a huge chamber. Large cloudy crystals line the walls, and are clustered jutting up from the floor. A Dungeoneering check (Easy DC) reveals that the crystals should be clear, not cloudy, and therefore caution in breaking or harvesting the crystals is wise. At the far north end of the chamber, there is an ancient looking stone altar covered in cobwebs. To the west is a large 20' deep pit, and to the east is a small tunnel opening. Characters succeeding at a Difficult DC +5 Perception check will notice that there is a Spider Web trap

that stretches in front of the altar. A giant spider lies in wait behind a stalagmite for a character to get stuck in the web. If a character gets stuck in the web, or if a character attacks the web, the spider attacks.

The altar was placed there by the townsfolk to lure the evil spirits into the cave; they had given the false promise of a child sacrifice, and therefore a close inspection reveals that it bears all the markings of an altar made for that purpose (Religion Easy DC).

Special (3): Trap (Spider Web); Combat (Lurker); Item (Crystals that contain trapped evil spirits)

Area 2: The Pit

This pit is the giant spider's feeding area. The PCs will find several carcasses of animals (deer, hawks, dogs) along with some odd looking carcasses (Nature Difficult DC – Flumphs).

There is a human skeleton covered in spider web slumped to one side of a 10' opening that leads to another chamber. Perception Difficult +5 reveals a Spider Web trap covering the entire opening. If a character is stuck in the trap, the combat from Area 3: The Spider's Lair is triggered.

Special: Trap (Spider Web)

Area 3: The Spider's Lair

The spider found in Area 1 has laid egg sacs in this area of the cave, several of which have hatched. There are more carcasses in this chamber that the swarms have been feeding on, as well as some human ones that have magic items.

Special (2): Combat (4 swarms); Treasure (Magic Items)

Area 4: Flumph Stable

The small chamber to the north is where the flock of Flumphs sleeps every night. They have been staying contained in Area 4 ever since the giant spider moved in. If the PCs begin attacking the flumphs, Kurisha will leave her living quarters (Area 5) and implore the PCs to stop.

Special: Optional Combat (9 flumphs)

Area 5: Kurisha's Quarters

The shardmind is currently in her living quarters, unless the PCs attacked the flumphs in Area 4. There are 3 vials of antivenom in the storeroom that Kurisha will offer if the PCs decide to fight the spiders. How Kurisha treats the characters depends upon how they have acted up to this point.

- If the PCs have not yet encountered the spiders, the shardmind will implore the characters to get rid of them, stating that the giant one has caught several flumphs and either eaten them or fed them to its young. She will offer them 3 vials of antivenom.
- **If the PCs have not attacked the flumphs**, she will be friendly, and will be willing to tell the story of how the crystals came to be cloudy.
- **If the PCs have attacked the flumphs**, she will be hostile, and ask them to leave. She try to stop them from breaking crystals, merely stating that they are "useless" and will not work the way the PCs think they will.
- She will talk at length about the flumphs, stating that they are gentle and good creatures that are wiser than they seem, and deserve the protection of all good beings. She refers to them more like friends than pets or animals.
- Difficult DC Insight check reveals that she is hiding something about the flumphs. (*That they trap the spirits*)
- If the PCs attack her, treat her as a minion with average defenses. With her dying breath, she will implore the PCs not to break the crystals, and say that they don't understand what they've done.

Note: Add the following to any spider melee attacks that deal damage, or to the normal melee attack of the monster that you're reskinning. This applies to both the giant spider in Area 1 and the spider swarms in Area 2/3.

Hit: [Normal damage], and the target is infected with Spider Poison (see below)

Spider Web

Lurker

Trap

You run into an invisible barrier that you stick to. The more you struggle, the more trapped you become.

Trap: A nearly invisible giant spider's web stretches from floor to ceiling and wall to wall. (Treat as a wall of contiguous squares)

Perception

◆ Difficult DC +5: The PC notices the Spider Web

Trigger

When a creature enters a trapped square.

Effect

The creature is restrained

Countermeasures

◆ Athletics (Difficult DC +5): As a Standard Action, the PC can attempt to escape from the web. For every failure, the DC is increased by 2.

◆ A character can attack the web:

- **AC and Defenses:** average by level
- **HP:** Med HP by level
- Half damage from ranged attacks
- Vulnerable 5/10/15 (by tier) fire

When it is reduced to 0 hit points, the web is destroyed.

Special

Creatures with the (spider) type are not affected by this trap, and gain a +10 to their Perception check to notice the web.

Spider Poison

The spider injects you with her fast-acting poison. It quickly begins to paralyze you. It's only a matter of time before you will be unable to breathe...

Stage 0: The target recovers from the poison

Stage 1: Initial effect: The target is weakened

Stage 2: The target is stunned

Stage 3: Final Stage: Target is unconscious and suffocating

Check: At the end of each round, the target makes an Endurance check if the poison is at stage 1 or 2.

Special: If the target has any type of poison resistance, they may add twice that resistance to their Endurance check.

Fail a moderate DC: The stage of the poison increases by one
Moderate DC: No change

Hard DC: The stage of the poison decreases by one

Special: The use of Antivenom (Alchemical Item) will set a creature to Stage 0. Consuming Antivenom before injection renders the Spider Poison ineffective. Further, a creature at Stage 3 can only recover from this stage through the use of Antivenom. (*Note that there is Antivenom in Kurisha's quarters*)

Flumph Castigator**Level 2 Soldier**

Small natural magical beast

XP 125

HP 43; **Bloodied** 21**Initiative** +5**AC** 18; **Fortitude** 13; **Reflex** 14; **Will** 14**Perception** +3**Speed** 1, fly 4

Darkvision

Resist 10 acid**Traits****Prone Helplessness**

A flumph spurter that is knocked prone becomes helpless and may take no actions (save ends).

☼ The Stench that Must End • Aura 2

Any non-flumph creature in the aura takes a -2 penalty to attack any creature other than the flumph castigator.

Standard Actions
Ⓜ Underbelly Spikes • At-Will

Attack: +7 vs. AC

Hit: 1d10 + 5 damage.

⚔ Impale from Above • Encounter

Effect: The flumph charges with Underbelly Spikes, ending its movement one square above the target. This attack is a critical hit on a natural attack roll of 17 or higher. If the attack is successful, the target also takes ongoing 5 acid (save ends).

↶ Stinking Mess of Tentacles • Recharge ☼ ☼

Attack: Close Burst 1 (enemies in burst); +5 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 1d8 + 4 acid damage and the target is dazed until the end of the flumph's next turn. No ally of the target may voluntarily end their movement adjacent to the target while it is dazed.

Skills Insight +8

Str 12 (+2)**Dex** 15 (+3)**Wis** 14 (+3)**Con** 13 (+2)**Int** 11 (+1)**Cha** 6 (-1)**Alignment** lawful good

Languages Lawful good version of common

Flumph Plummer **Level 2 Minion Skirmisher**

Small natural magical beast XP 31

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +9**AC** 16; **Fortitude** 14; **Reflex** 15; **Will** 14 **Perception** +2**Speed** 1, fly 4 Darkvision**Resist** 10 acid**Traits****Prone Helplessness**

A flumph spurter that is knocked prone becomes helpless and may take no actions (save ends).

Standard Actions⊕ **Underbelly Spikes • At-Will***Attack:* +7 vs. AC*Hit:* 5 damage.**Impale from Above • Encounter**

Effect: The flumph charges with Underbelly Spikes, ending its movement one square above the target. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks. If the attack is successful, the target also takes ongoing 5 acid (save ends).

Triggered Actions⤴ **Fear of Death (acid) • Encounter**

Trigger: The flumph is hit by an attack that would reduce the flumph to 0 hit points

Target: The creature attacking the flumph

Attack (Immediate Reaction): +5 vs. Reflex

Hit: 5 acid damage. The flumph then dies from fright, making a sad sighing noise.

Skills Stealth +9**Str** 6 (-1) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+2)**Con** 12 (+2) **Int** 12 (+2) **Cha** 6 (-1)**Alignment** lawful good **Languages** Lawful good version of common

Flumph Spurter **Level 3 Controller**Small natural magical beast XP 150**HP** 44; **Bloodied** 22 **Initiative** +7**AC** 17; **Fortitude** 15; **Reflex** 16; **Will** 15 **Perception** +7**Speed** 1, fly 4 Darkvision**Resist** 10 acid**Traits****Prone Helplessness**

A flumph spurter that is knocked prone becomes helpless and may take no actions (save ends).

Standard Actions⊕ **Acidic Tentacles • At-Will***Attack:* +8 vs. AC*Hit:* 1d8 + 6 acid damage and the target is pushed 1.↷ **Repelling Squirt • Encounter***Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex*Hit:* 1d8 + 0 acid damage and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).

Saving throws against this effect are at a -2 penalty. While the target is subject to the ongoing acid, no ally of the target may willingly end their movement within 5 squares of the target.

⊕ **Rancid Spurt • At-Will***Attack:* Ranged 5 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex*Hit:* 1d8 + 0 acid damage and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).**Minor Actions****Second Foul-Smelling Squirt • Encounter**

Effect: The Flumph Spurter chooses one target suffering from ongoing acid damage. All non-flumph creatures within 5 of the target must make a saving throw at -2 or be pushed 3 away from the target.

↷ **Shunning Squirt • Encounter***Attack:* +6 vs. Fortitude

Hit: The target is subject to a disgusting stench (save ends). While subject to the stench the creature cannot be the target of any ally's power.

Skills Stealth +9**Str** 6 (-1) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+2)**Con** 12 (+2) **Int** 12 (+2) **Cha** 10 (+1)**Alignment** lawful good **Languages** Lawful good version of common