

DE1

CLASSIC FANTASY ADVENTURES



Deadly Encounters Module 1

Medusa's Hunger

By Daniel Proctor

Sit down, strap in, grab your ankles, and prepare to kiss your butt goodbye, because **Goblinoid Games** is taking you on a roller coaster ride through a tunnel leading straight to that old-school feel of 80s fantasy gaming. This product is the first in the "Deadly Encounters" (DE) series of **CLASSIC FANTASY ADVENTURES** modules by **Goblinoid Games**. If you like this product, keep an eye out for further products like it in the future. "Medusa's Hunger" is an OSRIC™ compatible adventure for characters of levels 5-7. They take a straight-forward quest but find themselves in the clutches of a medusa and her conniving mate. The adventurers have been invited to dinner, but what's on the menu?

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**OSRIC™
Compatible**

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This product is the first in the "Deadly Encounters" (DE) series of **CLASSIC FANTASY ADVENTURES** modules by **Goblinoid Games**. If you like this product, keep an eye out for further products like it in the future.

The Deadly Encounters series consists of challenging, old-school modules.

"Medusa's Hunger" is an OSRIC compatible adventure for 4-6 player characters of levels 5-7. A well-rounded party, including a thief and a cleric, would be optimal for party success. This module lends itself well to a one-shot game, which can be finished in one gaming session and can be placed as a brief interlude in an ongoing campaign.

The adventure begins in a town called Molenshire, but can be placed in any town in any campaign setting. The starting location should be a reasonable distance from any swamp or marshy terrain, and although this module assumes about a 2 day journey the trip can be lengthened or shortened as needed. The characters should be between quests and preferably low on money.

Adventure Background

The Swamp of Lost Hope houses many an insidious threat. Perhaps none match the wily and conniving ways of two of its inhabitants, Garen and Alestra. It's dinner time for this husband and wife, and swamp rat isn't on the menu today. Today, this pair's choice of sustenance is more substantial. Their fare of choice is human meat.

Alestra is a Greater Medusa, her mate Garen, a rare Medusan (see the Monster Cast section at the end of this scenario). Not many people venture into the expanse of the swamp this couple calls home. This dilemma has forced the two to develop a tactic to lure groups of adventurers into their abode, and from there the table has almost set itself.

Human meat is stored in the form of stone, and Garen uses his *stone to flesh* ability as needed on his mate's victims to provide their meals. After each unfortunate group of travelers has been consumed, Garen sets out again in the guise of a human to hire an adventuring party under false pretenses. He then proceeds to lead this group to his lair and into a plethora of deadly traps, until the group has been whittled down enough for him and Alestra to finish them off. Garen has recently come to the city of Molenshire in hopes of luring a new group of prey to his lair.

Starting the Adventure

Note: only boxed text should be read to the players.

While about in the city, the players should notice posters tacked up in highly visible areas, advertising a quest to recover a stolen merchant wagon. If the players do not seem interested in responding to the posters, have them bump into Garen as he's tacking up a poster in a market or other trafficked area. Hopefully seeing him will peak their interest. This adventure hinges on their acceptance of his quest. Garen will seem gruff but eager to hire a party. Look to the following section for his description.

For the Players

You've noticed during your errands throughout Molenshire that posters have been tacked up in areas of high traffic. In a bold, dark, haphazard scrawl the posters read, "URGENT, hardy swords-for-hire needed to recover a missing merchant wagon. Substantial reward will be paid on recovery. Inquire in room 8 of the Limping Griffin Inn."

The Limping Griffin Inn is of moderate quality, with suitable food and twelve clean rooms. The rooms are on the upper floor, numbered 1-6 on the left and 12-7 on the right. The lower floor consists of a large common room capable of holding 60 customers. There is a kitchen and one bedroom used by the owner.

Garen waits patiently in his room (room 8) for any adventurers to knock. He has concocted quite a story to lure unsuspecting prey.

Just as you begin to knock, the door to room 8 is abruptly jerked open. A large and forceful-appearing human male stands before you. His harsh features and sour countenance immediately set you aback. He is completely hairless. Without a word, he casually looks the party over. Finally, with a thick, unknown accent he states, "I'm Garen, I assume you're here about the poster. Come in."

The room is sparsely furnished. Garen's traveling gear is resting neatly stacked next to the bed near the east wall. On a small table near a window sits a finely crafted longsword. In an abrupt fashion, Garen's loud baritone voice announces, "Wench, ale and mugs for my guests," at a maid passing by in the hall before he shuts the door.

Garen will make some small talk before the ale ar-

rives. He will ask what part of the land the PCs hail from. Garen will claim to be a native of Molenshire, a hired sword himself. His knowledge of the area should satisfy the players to this claim. Once the ale arrives he will offer everyone a mug, taking one for himself as well. He will not act offended if anyone refuses, but he will make mental note of whoever does, so that he can keep in mind who the suspicious members of the party might be. Garen begins:

"Seven days ago a merchant wagon disappeared on the trade route between Oakendale and Molenshire, near the Swamp of Lost Hope. Amongst other precious cargo, this wagon contained several bars of pure platinum," Garen states, looking at each of you intently.

"I was hired by the owner of the platinum bars to track the wagon down and determine what became of it. I found the wagon on the outskirts of the Swamp of Lost Hope, broken and severely burned. I was able to follow a fairly discernable trail of perhaps six horses. After I traveled a considerable distance into the swamp it became obvious that I could no longer brave the dangers that cursed place imposes without outside assistance, that's why you are here. You all look like stout souls, and I can pay you generously. Our mission would be to recover the wagon's goods if possible, but if the danger looks too great we will come back to town and raise a small force and return."

Garen will now address any questions asked. He will tell the PCs that he wants them to accompany him into the swamp in search of the wagon. If asked about Garen's employer's identity, he'll tell the party that he is a wealthy noble from Oakenshire who owns a mining operation in the hills near the town. If pressed for further details regarding the wagon, Garen will tell them that the platinum was intended to be eventually minted into coin in Oakenshire. If asked how this wagon could have been taken so easily, Garen will tell the party that he is unsure, but he knows the wagon was heavily guarded. When asked about compensation, Garen will inform them that in addition to a lump sum of 400 gold pieces each, to be paid at completion of the journey, he has the authority to allow them to keep any goods found, the exception being the platinum bars.

If pressed as to how much the estimated values of the goods are, he quotes them the total of approximately 20,000 gold pieces value for the platinum, and 2,000 gold pieces value for the other goods. He will be quick to note that it is unlikely that all of the goods will be recovered.

Garen is willing to allow the lump payment to be bickered to reach any price the PCs will accept. He has no intention of paying them in the end regardless, so in the end the issue means little to him. He will attempt to appear earnest in his reluctance to raise their final price, however. He can offer up to 200 gold pieces each in advance if the PCs insist, but he simply has no more than this amount of money with him.

After their discussion, if the PCs decide to accept the offer he tells them:

"Urgency is of the utmost importance. Make any arrangements necessary and meet me here within the next two hours. Then we'll depart."

Although Garen will at first protest any delays, in the end he will resign himself to leaving the next morning, and besides, his wife is hungry and waiting at home for him. He reasons that it would take longer to look for more dupes than to wait for these. If the PCs have no horses, Garen is prepared to forward enough gold for the purchase of mounts.

As soon as the PCs are ready, Garen leads them east out of town across grassland in the direction of the Swamp of Lost Hope.

Garen, Medusan: AC 5; Move 90 feet; HD 6 + 3; HP 46; #AT 2; DMG 1d8 + 1 / 1d8 + 1 or with weapon; SD *stone to flesh*, pass through stone, immune to petrification, immune to medusa's poisonous bite and blood, Weakness: *phase door*; INT 12; AL LE; XP 744; Items: *longsword* +3; *cloak of protection* +2; *ring of invisibility*.

The Road East

Garen will lead the party across the grasslands at a comfortable pace for two days. During this time random encounters should be checked once during morning, evening, and middle of the night. A role of 1 on 1d10 indicates an encounter. If an encounter is indicated, roll 1d8 on the table below.

Grasslands Encounter Table

Role 1d8 to determine the encounter type.

- 1-2: **Ogres** (2 + 1-6)
- 3-4: **Giant Snake (poisonous)** 1-3
- 5-6: **Giant Ants** (2-20)
- 7-8: **Giant Boar** (2-8)

During this length of the journey interaction between Garen and the PCs should be encouraged.

He has a false background rehearsed and will claim to have a brother who is a boot maker in Molenshire. He is particularly interested in asking the PCs about past adventures and exploits. He does this to try to gauge the strength of the PCs, as well as any noteworthy items they may be carrying that could be a threat. Garen makes note of those who seem the most capable in the group, and makes plans to arrange their demise ahead of the others.

Into the Swamp

Early in the morning of the third day, Garen leads the party abruptly north. Shortly the barren, grassy land gives way to moist, smelly bog. Short and gnarled trees begin to emerge from the swamp at sparse interludes, and the horses' hooves create dull sucking noises as they enter and exit the muck.

Garen explains that several days ago the horse tracks led in this direction, toward a rock formation much deeper in the swamp and not yet visible.

A random encounter roll should be made soon after entering the swamp. Two checks should be done in the morning, midday, evening, and mid-

dle of the night. A roll of 1 on 1d10 indicates an encounter. Consult the random encounter table below. If any encounters are indicated, Garen will do his best to shy away from combat without making it obvious. If he can do so unnoticed, he will utilize his *ring of invisibility*. Indeed, should any PC be dreadfully wounded at this point, Garen will not hesitate to finish the job if he can do so undetected by others. However, he will under no circumstances take any rash action. He knows his best odds rest in enticing the players into his lair.

Swamp Encounter Table

In the event of an encounter, roll 1d8 and consult the following table:

- 1-2: **Giant leech** (1)
- 3-4: **Huge Spider** (1-12)
- 5-6: **Killer Frogs** (3-18)
- 7-8: **Trolls** (1-4)

By midday Garen indicates a large cropping of rocks far ahead, rising from the swamp like the back of an immense, sludge blanketed tortoise. He announces that the horse trail he followed several days prior seemed to be heading in that direction. Traveling in the muck and debris of the swamp is slow. Dusk approaches quickly on the



mire. It becomes frustratingly clear that your party will not reach the rock formation before nightfall fully sinks upon this desolate scene.

If the PCs decide to press on, the remainder of the journey should take about four hours.

Lair of the Host, or, Honey, we're home!

Garen and Alestra live in a series of passages and fissures within the rock formation, and Garen will say that he suspects the looters of the wagon to be hiding in this area. Garen will allow the PCs up to a full turn to locate the well-concealed entrance. After this time if it has not been located, or if the PCs give up the search, he will feign surprise at locating it himself. He will attempt to remain behind the PCs throughout their exploration of the lair.

Unless otherwise noted, the distance between the floor and ceiling throughout this complex is approximately ten feet. With the exception of areas 8, 9, and 10 all of the floors throughout this complex are covered in a four to six inch layer of mud. Due to the mud on the floor, all trip wires hidden beneath it will be detected at a -20% penalty.



1 Entrance. A shoulder-width cave is nestled behind well-placed foliage. It is only wide enough for single-file movement and is just over 7 feet high. The passageway beyond is at a slight decline; ankle deep mud and swamp debris line the floor. A pit trap has been placed twenty feet within the cave. Thin branches over the pit have been carefully covered with mud and debris. It is ten feet long, as wide as the tunnel, and extends twenty feet into the ground. Various rusty swords and daggers line the bottom. Any PC falling in the trap will take 2d6 points of damage from the fall, as well as 2d8 points of damage from the weapons. Because the sides and top of the pit are lined with mud and swamp mire, any PC trying to climb out must make a Dexterity check at -2 per 10 feet or fall back down for an additional 2d6 points of damage plus 1d6 for each ten feet.

2 Crawl space. At the end of this passage lies a small tunnel large enough for a human sized creature to crawl on hands and knees, if not heavily encumbered. All around the entrance a total of twenty gold

pieces have been scattered as a lure for anyone to investigate inside. Any PC crawling inside will find a small tunnel curving to the south.

3 Mud trap. The tunnel leads into a slightly wider depression in the ground. If a PC crawls into this area he will trigger a trip wire under the mud. A trap door in the ceiling releases stone rubble blocking the tunnel both ten feet behind the depression and fifteen feet into the tunnel entrance, forming two entrapped spaces. These locations are marked with an "X" on the lair map. Any PC caught directly under the rocks suffers 4d6 points of crushing damage. On a failed Dexterity check the PC is pinned under the debris. Both areas immediately begin to violently fill with mud released from the ceiling. Each enclosed space will be completely filled after one round. Those characters trapped in the mud will suffocate in a number of rounds equal to one half of their constitution score. Those pinned under the rocks will suffocate in a number of rounds equal to one third their constitution score, due to the added weight. Because of the awkward conditions, the rocks can be cleared enough to release a pinned or trapped character in the section closest to area two in three to seven rounds. It will take an additional three to seven rounds before the area closest to the depression can be opened.

4 Pit trap. This pit trap is ten feet long and as wide as the tunnel. In all other respects it is identical to the trap in area one.

5 Central cavern. The cavern is approximately thirty feet high in the center. The majority of the floor is covered in knee deep water. Trudging through the sludge is difficult at best. Any PC crossing through the water has a one in six chance every ten feet of stumbling into a muddy depression with a ten-foot diameter and six to ten feet deep. A trapped PC will immediately sink to the bottom if wearing metal armor. All others will sink to the bottom on the subsequent round.

6 Alarm. A trigger is concealed on the east wall of the tunnel. If Garen is with the party he will secretly trigger the alarm, alerting Alestra in area nine of the PC's presence.

- 7 **Green Slime.** Any PC standing within five feet of the opening to this empty cavern causes a four foot wide patch of green slime to drop from the ceiling. A successful attack roll results in the slime landing onto the character. It receives a +2 to hit due to the narrow width of the tunnel.

Green Slime: AC 9; Move 0; HD 2; HP 12; #AT 0; SA turns creature into slime in 1d4 rounds; SD weapons and spells have no effect; Weakness: *cure disease* spell kills slime instantly; Size Small; XP 71

- 8 **Poisoned spikes.** A thin tripwire under the mud releases a five foot wide, ten foot long frame woven of sticks that crashes down from the ceiling. At two-foot intervals, six inches apart, metal spikes have been attached to the mat and recently coated with Alestra's blood. Each PC under the mat must succeed in a dexterity check or be impaled by 1d2 spikes. Each spike inflicts 1d4 points of damage and a saving throw versus poison must be made. Failure indicates death.

- 9 **Medusa Lair.** A locked, ironbound wooden door blocks this room. When the PCs open it read the following:

The room reeks of rotten flesh. Lit candles occupy countless crevices and fissures all throughout the cavern, casting an eerie, surreal feeling to the room. What appears to be a bedding mat comprised of swamp grasses rests near the south wall. A ten-foot long butcher's table sits against the west wall. A large cleaver is stuck in the tabletop, beside what is unmistakably a partially decomposed human arm.

Alestra is watching the door through the wall from area ten, using a *ring of x-ray vision*. She waits until at least two PCs have entered the room before she boldly slithers into area nine, hoping to meet the gazes of a few unlucky souls. She then begins firing arrows poisoned with her own blood. When the PCs come too close to use the bow, she will attempt to get in range for her snake hair to attack.

There is a thin trip wire ten feet into the room that spans from the east wall to the west wall. When tripped, it releases a net weighted with stones, engulfing any PCs in

a fifteen-foot diameter within the doorway. Any character trapped under the net is unable to attack, and any modifiers to AC due to dexterity are ignored. The net can be cut or burned through in 1d4+1 rounds, or slipped out from under in 2d4 rounds.

There are four medusa eggs lightly covered under the bedding near the south wall. Alestra will focus her attention on any PC that finds and molests them. This is her first brood with Garen; she is extremely protective of them. The eggs are due to hatch in two weeks.

Alestra, Greater Medusa: AC 3; Move 120 feet; HD 8; HP 57; #AT 1 + weapon; DMG 1-4; SA petrification, poison; SD poisonous blood; MR 20%; SZ M; INT 12; AL LE; XP 1,884; Items: dagger +1, quiver with 12 arrows,, shortbow +2, ring of x-ray vision.

Meanwhile, if Garen is still with the party, he will become invisible with his *ring of invisibility* and attack the PCs one round after Alestra reveals herself, choosing the most wounded character first.

Garen will fight to the death, providing Alestra still lives. The moment he notices her fall in combat he will be enraged. If he feels he can finish the party off he will stay and fight. Otherwise, he will attempt to flee, invisible, so that he can spend one round concentrating in order to pass through stone. He will then retreat to area



eleven.

- 10 Storage area.** The crumbled stone remains of past victims are piled up against the north wall. A rickety wooden shelf on the east wall contains various rusted and blunt meat-carving instruments. A disorganized pile of clothes and other belongings lies in disarray near the south wall of the room. If the PCs search the pile of belongings they find the following; a sack containing 30 pp, 1600 gp, 110 sp, and 30 gems valued at 500 gp (x2), 100 gp (x7), 50 gp (x11) and 10 gp (x10). Amongst the debris are the following magical items; *chainmail + 2*, *potion of super-heroism*, *potion of diminution*, *potion of water breathing*, *potion of longevity*, *potion of levitation*, and a *scroll of five clerical spells*; *remove fear*, *know alignment*, *dispel magic*, *animate dead*, and *cure serious wounds*. The remainder of the clothes and personal items have no value.
- 11 Garen's retreat.** This small room has no entrances or exits. A small crack in the ceiling leads to the outside, providing some ventilation. Garen will retreat here if he has been defeated.

Concluding the adventure

If Garen and Alestra are successful, some or all of the PCs have little to look forward to. Those killed by any traps will be the first to find their way to the dinner table. Any PCs turned to stone will be broken into chunks to be recovered in the form of meat as needed. If the PCs have managed to survive and defeat the pair, it is obviously clear to them that this entire journey has been a ruse.

If Alestra has been killed and Garen managed to escape, he will be insanely angry. He will attempt to follow the PCs as they leave the lair and plot to kill them, taking whatever measures are necessary. He will use any personal information about the PCs that he has learned through his travel with them to his utmost advantage.

Monster Cast

Most monsters listed here are new to OSRIC, but some have been reproduced here for convenience. Other monsters that could be encountered, including those on the random encounter tables, can be found in other OSRIC or OSRIC-compatible products.

Green Slime

SIZE: Small
MOVE: 0 feet
ARMOR CLASS: 9
HIT DICE: 2d8
ATTACKS: 0
DAMAGE: None
SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE: See below
RARITY: Rare
NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1d6
LAIR PROBABILITY: N/A
TREASURE: None
INTELLIGENCE: Non
ALIGNMENT: Neutral
LEVEL/X.P.: 35 + 3/HP

General description: green slime is actually more closely related to plants than fungus, and although they do not "move," they do grow in all directions. They feed on plants, animals, and minerals, including weapons.

Green slime senses movements through subtle vibrations, and will drop from high places onto victims to feed. The slime feeds so quickly that in only 1d4 melee rounds after contacting an animal's (or PC's!) body the slime will completely digest it, creating more slime in its place. No magical revival is possible for a victim as nothing material of the victim remains. The slime will eat through the equivalent of plate armor in only 3 melee rounds, but does not digest tough organic material like wood as quickly. Green slime digests wood at the rate of 1 inch per hour.

Green slime is impervious to most attacks, but is susceptible to fire and cold, and can be scraped off enough in one round to fend off the worst of its effects. The scraper must be discarded. Green slime is killed instantly by a *cure disease* spell.

MEDUSA, Standard

SIZE: Medium
MOVE: 90 feet
ARMOR CLASS: 5
HIT DICE: 6d8
ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE: 1d4
SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES: None
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard
RARITY: Rare
NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1-3
LAIR PROBABILITY: 50%
TREASURE: 1-6 sp x1,000 (30%), 2-12 gp x1,000 (70%), 1-2 ep x1,000 (25%), 1-4 x 10 gems (50%), 1 magic

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item and 1 potion (60%)

INTELLIGENCE: Very

ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil

LEVEL/X.P.: 400 + 8/HP

General description: But for the hair of writhing snakes, Medusa resemble human-like women. They revel in evil, and if it were not for their deadly gaze they would surely delight in the slow death of victims.

Any beings within 30 feet who meet the eyes of a medusa must make a saving throw versus petrification. This gaze is so powerful that should a medusa meet her own gaze, she will become stone herself. Further, this gaze extends into the ethereal and astral planes. If a medusa cannot meet the gaze of a victim, she will engage the opponent close (within 1 foot) where her snake hair can attack. The snakes' poison is so potent that a victim will only survive with a successful saving throw versus poison.

Medusa generally are forced to mate with other human-like species, especially humans, as male medusa (medusan, see text) are very rare. A medusa will lay 1d6 + 1 eggs about four weeks after a mating. The eggs require little care before hatching 8 months later. Any male unfortunate enough

to mate with a medusa has little chance of survival, for she reveals her true face afterward in order to intentionally petrify her former mate.

Infant medusa resemble human infant females, but for the small green nubs on their scalps. At 3 years of age the snake hair has grown sufficiently to have an effective poisonous bite. Their gaze does not become deadly until puberty. Medusa have a lifespan and growth pattern similar to humans.

Languages: common and medusa

Physical description: From the neck down a medusa is a voluptuous woman, but has a horrible face and snake hair.

MEDUSA, Greater

SIZE: Medium

MOVE: 120 feet

ARMOR CLASS: 3

HIT DICE: 8

ATTACKS: 2 (1 of which is a weapon)

DAMAGE: 1d4

SPECIAL ATTACKS: see below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: see below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 25%

RARITY: Rare

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1

LAIR PROBABILITY: 60%

TREASURE: 1-6 sp x1,000 (30%), 2-12 gp x1,000 (70%), 1-2 ep x1,000 (25%), 1-4 x 10 gems (50%), 1 magic item and 1 potion (60%)

INTELLIGENCE: Very

ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil

LEVEL/X.P.: 1,200 + 12/HP

General description: The greater medusa are a rare form of medusa. About 10% of medusa eggs are greater medusa.

Greater medusa have the bodies of snakes from the waist down, but in other ways resemble common medusa. They have the same petrifying gaze and poisonous snake hair, but the snakes are more venomous. Saving throws against the snake poison are at -1. In addition, greater medusa have poisonous blood that remains poisonous for 1 week after a greater medusa's death. Greater medusa favor the use of bows and arrows, dipped in their own poisonous blood, as weapons.

For all other characteristics consult the listing for the more common medusa.

MEDUSAN

SIZE: Medium

MOVE: 90 feet
ARMOR CLASS: 5
HIT DICE: 6 + 3
ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE: 1d8 + 1 / 1d8 + 1
SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE: None
RARITY: Very rare
NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1
LAIR PROBABILITY: 50%
TREASURE: 1-6 sp x1,000 (30%), 2-12 gp x1,000 (70%), 1-2 ep x1,000 (25%), 1-4 x 10 gems (50%), 1 magic item and 1 potion (60%)
INTELLIGENCE: Very
ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil
LEVEL/X.P.: 400 + 8/HP

General description: Medusan are so physically powerful that their two fist attacks inflict 1d8 + 1 damage. Medusan lack the ability to petrify, but by touch may turn *stone to flesh*. Further, they have the ability to move through stone unhindered but must spend one round in complete concentration for the ability to take effect. This ability is negated if the spell *phase door* is cast on a medusan. If the medusan is within stone at this moment, he is instantly killed.

A medusan paired with a medusa conceives 30% male offspring and 70% female offspring. All offspring are normal humans, with the exception of 2% of the males, who are medusan.

Medusan are extremely protective and jealous mates, who are devoted to one medusa for life. Should the mate of a medusan be killed, he will endlessly seek vengeance against the offenders.

The medusan uses his ability to turn *stone to flesh* on the broken statues created by his mate. In this way the mated pair can use the medusa's victims as meat.

Medusan are immune to petrification. In addition, they are immune to the poison from medusa snake bites and the blood from a greater medusa.

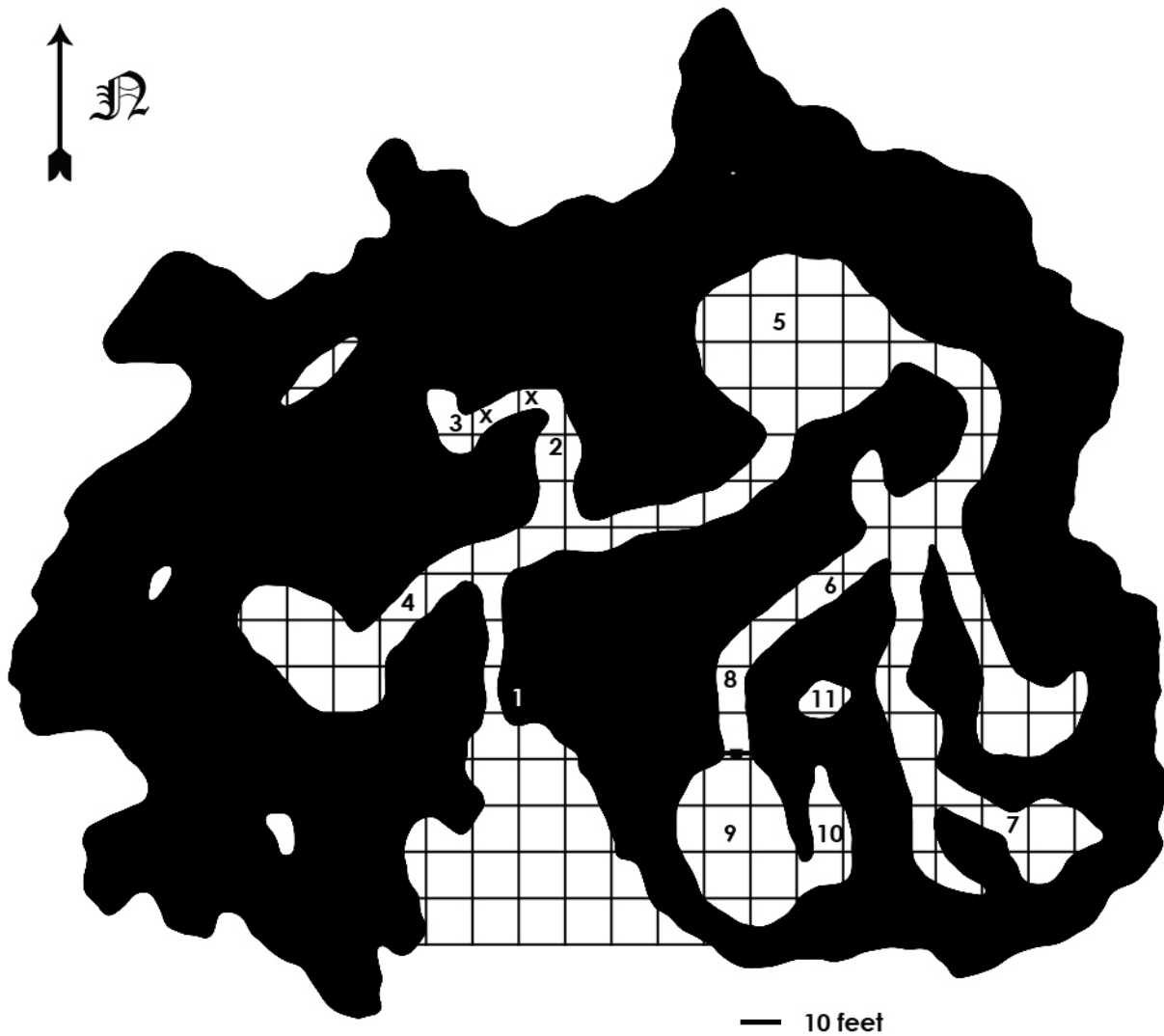
Languages: common and medusa

Physical description: medusan resemble human men, but have absolutely no body hair (and no snake hair). They are muscular, imposing men with incredible physiques.

Credits:
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Some artwork copyright Paul Daly, used with permission.
Some artwork by Maciej Zagorski and The Forge Studios.

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