

DREADED HEARTH-PIPES OF MR. FWIM

A DUNGEON FOR 3-5 CHARACTERS OF 4TH-6TH LEVEL

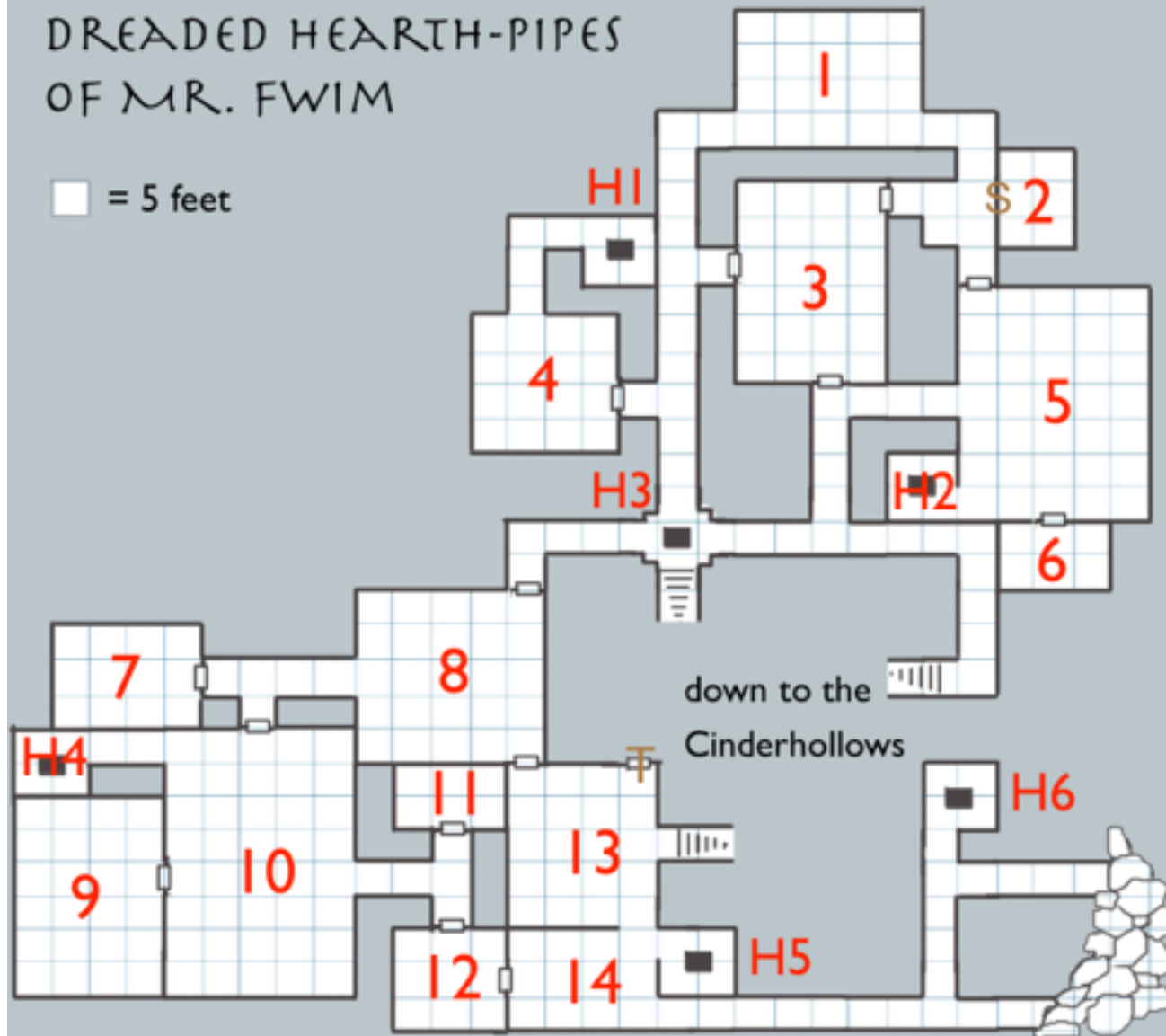
created using the random dungeon tables in the DMG
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DREADED HEARTH-PIPES OF MR. FWIM

□ = 5 feet



- 1 Banquet Hall
- 2 Treasure Vault
- 3 Organ Room
- 4 Giant Dust Mite Stables
- 5 Kitchen
- 6 Pantry (foodstuffs)
- 7 Library
- 8 Guard Room
- 9 Wizard's Study
- 10 Audience Chamber
- 11 Pantry (potions)
- 12 Pantry (reserve liquors)
- 13 Construction Room
- 14 Smoking Room
- H1-H6 Hearth-pipes

BACKSTORY

"I know one who went down to Mr. Fwim.
The ones who go come back paper thin.
Dusty, musty, cotton, and grim.
Oh, don't go down to see Mr. Fwim!"
- children's rhyme

Below an old bard's manor lies a place called the Hearth-pipes. Except it's always the "Dreaded" Hearth-pipes, because no one knows exactly what dwells beneath the manor and over the years stories have grown. See, the manor house has an unusual number of chimneys. Some of these extend from fire places like you'd imagine, but more just keep going down below the manor's foundation. What's stranger still is that these chimneys belch forth ash at odd times of day, even in the summer! Old chimneysweeps who used to work the manor swear they could hear children's voices singing down the chimneys along with organ music. That's where the odd name "hearth-pipes" came from - the chimneysweeps came up with it, and it stuck.

The area beneath the manor was constructed by Percy Bittergills (a CN human wizard) as his personal stronghold. However, Percy underestimated the costs of what he wanted to build, and after the eastern "wing" collapsed, he was forced to sell out building rights for the aboveground to a bard friend of his to make ends meet. Throughout his endeavors Percy Bittergills was aided by a hearth brownie named Mr. Fwim. Despite Mr. Fwim's inestimable cheer and assiduous efforts, Percy Bittergills became more and more curmudgeonly as the years went by. During excavations for

the lower levels, work crews stumbled on a cavernous lair of dust and smoke mephits they quickly called the Cinderhollows. The mischief of the mephits ground work to a halt, but Mr. Fwim stepped in and offered the mephits terms. The creatures came to an understanding, and Percy Bittergills went about his business - sending petty letters to arcane "rivals", collecting rare liquors, researching cantrips, and regaling his familiar with the same stories over and over again. Mephits began to fill the halls, but Percy Bittergills assumed they were working for him. Smoke and ash began to coat the walls, and Percy Bittergills just assumed that the meticulous Mr. Fwim was backlogged on his cleaning.

However, the truth was far more dangerous. The wizard had forgotten his simple agreement to lay out bread in sopping milk or ale for Mr. Fwim. Thus, Mr. Fwim's agreement with the mephits is actually to do in the wizard and take over the "Dreaded" Hearth-pipes. Already several mephits have been appearing above the chimneys of the manor, making mischief, harassing animals, or stealing trinkets. These disturbances may attract the attention of the PCs. With Bittergills out of town on an errand, it is the perfect time for Mr. Fwim and the mephits to make their move!

ADVENTURE HOOKS

PCs might venture into the Dreaded Hearth-pipes to stop the plague of mephits, to investigate strange sounds for the owner of the manor, to rescue local children who were abducted by Mr. Fwim, or as part of a deal with Bittergills to reassert his dominion of the overrun dungeon.

GETTING IN

There are three ways into the Dreaded Hearth-pipes:

- First, there is a teleportation circle in Area 9 (Wizard's Study), though the sigil sequence is closely guarded by Percy Bittergills, a **mage** (CR 6), who is away when the PCs explore the dungeon.
- Second, the caved-in area to the east can be accessed via a ravine near the manor house, though it does require serious squeezing (including doffing bulky armor) for medium-sized creatures to fit.
- Third, any of the chimneys (represented by black squares and marked H1-H6 on the map) can be scaled down with a group DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. If more than half the PCs scaling fail, then they slip and knock down several other PCs, all falling about 30 feet for 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage.

CONDITIONS

Conditions in the Dreaded Hearth-pipes are unpleasant.

Dim light prevails thanks to the magical candles with heatless flame set in alcoves thru Percy Bittergills' magic and the ruddy glow emanating from the Cinderhollows below. Smoke, ash, dust, and cinders fill the air around the hearth-pipes; while in most cases it isn't thick enough to make breathing difficult, it does mean most of the dungeon is lightly obscured. The scale of the place is cozy, about what you'd suspect from a humble wizard's abode, with 5' wide halls of stone and wooden reinforced doors, and ornately detailed gothic arches.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS (1D8)

1. An oil painting portrait of the mage Percy Bittergills in a state of disrepair due to the environment. It is enchanted with a *magic mouth* spell that activates when someone studies the painting for a moment, uttering some pompous pontification about the nature of magic or the woes of being under-appreciated as a mage.
2. A lone **mephit** begins following the party, behaving as if it has accompanied them all along and is a valued and respected member. If the PCs suggest anything to the contrary, the mephit obnoxiously insults the PCs and attempts to annoy them into making a mistake. Conversely, its "help" always ends disastrously.
3. 2d6 **mephits** (of the dust or smoke variety) scour angrily thru old belongings of Bittergills, looking for something.
4. Smoke and cinders grow particularly thick, heavily obscuring this part of the dungeon for the next hour. For every minute exposed, the PCs must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer an exhaustion level. Holding one's breath resists the smoke.
5. A **swarm of insects** (re-skinned as "ashen mites") attacks any living creatures.
6. 1d4 **will-o-wisps** (re-skinned as "cinder wisps") float thru the air, on their way to or from one of the hearth-pipes, attacking any humanoids who get in their way.
7. 1-2 **helmed horrors** with glitchy magic making them total sarcastic smart-asses roam the dungeon.
8. **Mr. Fwim** appears to parlay, harangue, or threaten the PCs, possibly accompanied by 2d6 **mephits**.

MR. FWIM

Mr. Fwim appears as a particularly hairy diminutive man with heavy sideburns, oblong eyes of pure black, enlarged pointed ears, and a thick tangle of an ashen beard.

Mr. Fwim, unseelie hearth brownie

Small fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 27 (6d6+6)

Speed 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills stealth +5

Condition Immunities exhaustion

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses darkvision 60 ft. (can see fine in smoke or fog), passive perception 10

Languages common, elvish, gnomish, halfling, sylvan

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

TRAITS

Cold Iron Weakness. Mr. Fwim becomes visible and can't turn invisible for a round after coming into contact with cold iron.

Fey Camouflage. Mr. Fwim begins combat invisible and remains invisible so long as he doesn't move or attack. After 1 round of motionlessness, he becomes invisible again.

Innate Spellcasting. Mr. Fwim can cast the following spells (spell attack +5, save DC 13) without material components:

At-will: dancing lights, mending, prestidigitation, vicious mockery

1/day: confusion, dimension door, mirror image, protection from evil.

Magic Resistance. Mr. Fwim's saving throws against spells and magic are advantaged.

ACTIONS

Cudgel. *Melee weapon attack.* Attack: +5 hit (counts as a magic weapon), reach 5-ft, one target. Hit: 10 (2d6+3) bludgeoning damage, pushed 5 feet and knocked prone.

Cinder Bolt. *Ranged spell attack.* Attack: +5 hit, range 120 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (2d8) fire damage and a cloud of heavily obscuring smoke surrounds the target within 5 feet. A flammable object not being carried or worn smolders and eventually ignites.

LAIR ACTIONS

At initiative count 20, Mr. Fwim takes one of these lair actions so long as he is within the Dreaded Hearth-pipes:

Game of Drawers. All enemies in the brownie's lair must make a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or shrink down to the size of the brownie (Tiny), their Strength becomes 6, and they are trapped in a chest of drawers, cabinet, or other similar armoire. Opening the stuck drawer requires a DC 12 Strength check. Anyone attempting to do so from outside of the armoire is subject to a free attack from the drawers: +5 to hit, 2d6 bludgeoning damage and knocked prone.

Now I'm here, Now I'm not. Mr. Fwim casts *dimension door* on himself, transporting to any concealed part of his lair, like a broom closet, chest of drawers, or fireplace. Then he becomes invisible until he moves or attacks.

Smoke and Cinders. Mr. Fwim causes smoke and cinders to fill a 20 foot radius area, heavily obscuring everything within. Creatures ending their turn in the aura must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or suffer a level of exhaustion.

Mr. Fwim is obsessed with freeing himself from his contract with Bittergills (which the mage keeps in Area 2), but is so consumed by his own bitterness at being mistreated that he has become a petty curmudgeon just like Bittergills himself.

1. BANQUET HALL

A grandiose table and large ornately carved gilded chairs fill this 20' x 25' room, an ostentatious display better suited to a larger hall. An oil painting of a smiling portly mage in lederhosen hangs on the north wall looking over the table which is strewn with signs of recent feasting; the oil portrait is oddly labeled with the roman numeral LXIV (64). Upon closer inspection many of the food stuffs are either rotting or turning into dust, and there are remnants of pixie wings littered among the chicken bones. Lifting up the rugs reveals the outline of a pit trap beneath the chairs at the heads of the table. Anyone sitting in either of these chairs triggers the **pit trap** door beneath that chair, depositing the victim into a 30-ft pit if they fail a DC 13 Dexterity save, after which the door slides back into place on a spring mechanism.

2. TREASURE VAULT

The secret door leading to Bittergill's treasure vault is masterfully crafted to blend in with the surrounding stone, and can only be noticed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check, and even then there is no discernible way to open it. Casting *detect magic* on the wall reveals all of the stones are marked with roman numerals for 1-600. Characters who decipher the coded message in Bittergill's journal (in Area 9) and the locations it hints at may use that information to deduce the proper order to press stones in order to open the vault: 129, 128, 257, 256, 513, 512.

The treasures stored within the vault include:

- An *eversmoking bottle* that is exceedingly light and likely crafted by mephits given the ribbons wrapped around the stopper with obnoxious Primordial exultations to "the king of smoke and father of ash, lord of mephit kind."
- A *sword of vengeance* forged of seemingly decaying black iron that is warm to the touch, with shades of orange and red glinting off the blade. Though the blade seems to chip and flake constantly, this has no effect on its effectiveness.
- A small locked chest (Dexterity DC 15 unlock) containing 170 gold pieces and 8 assorted gems worth 50 gp each.
- A large chest of well-organized wizard spell components (DM's discretion) and a ledger containing a copy of the contract binding Mr. Fwim to Percy Bittergill's service.

3. ORGAN ROOM

This high-ceilinged 20' x 30' room boasts a magnificent brass pump organ (harmonium) and player complete with a magic pedalboard, though it could use some dusting. The top of the organ player is engraved with the roman numeral LXV (65). Lumps of smoldering coal linger around this room, and if the PCs linger or play the organ, the lumps of coal assemble into a "coal man" (use **galeb duhr**) who speak very broken Common. The "coal man" insists he can play music for the PCs, but if they let him play his chubby awkward fingers create a terrible discordant cacophony. All creatures besides the "coal man" must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw each round or be deafened and take 4 (1d8) thunder damage. The "coal man" doesn't become hostile unless someone insults his playing or forcibly tries to stop him.

4. GIANT DUST MITE STABLES

This 20' square room was formerly used as a vivisection lab by Bittergills. However, Bittergills was in the process of renovating it when the mephits started taking over the dungeon. Since then, the mephits have taken to storing their giant dust mite mounts here, like a stables of sorts. At any given time about 15 giant dust mites (use **giant fire beetles**) can be found here. If one is killed and its illuminating glands removed, they also act as natural filters, cleansing air in a 5-foot space of smoke, ash, and cinder. One of the vivisection tables bears a small brass plaque with the roman numeral XXXII.

5. KITCHEN

This 25' x 35' kitchen is cluttered with dried herbs and large salami hanging from the ceiling. Several alcoves hold food stuffs, most of which appears to have been ransacked. Approaching PCs will hear clattering pots and bursts of flame. A group of 8 **magmin** are getting drunk on sack mead and having fun igniting fires in the ovens and stoves. They are spoiling for a fight after being berated by mephits, though if a PC comes up with a way for them to get back at the mephits they will delay attacking. The leader of the magmin - Gnies - secretly wants to learn how to cook pastries like he saw Bittergills' fat human chef doing, though he won't admit so in front of the other magmin. Terribly hot intermittent **flames burst** from the ovens and stove, making an attack against anyone next to them: Take 1d8 fire damage, DC 13 Dexterity saving throw for half damage.

6. PANTRY (FOODSTUFFS)

This 10' x 15' pantry contained shelves of jarred fruits, pickled vegetables, tubs of lard, and dozens of rations. The sacks of grain and flour have all been torn thru, and more perishable goods appear to have been ransacked and hastily devoured. **Mr. Fwim** may be encountered here, searching for "munchings and crunchings" and cursing the mephits for eating all his favorite food.

7. LIBRARY

Bittergills' library is a cozy 15' x 20' chamber replete with a leather reading chair and footstool, imported rugs that might fetch some coin from a collector, and a magical lantern which ignites with heatless flame on the command word "*igneous*." The shelves are filled with trinkets and knick-knacks among the books: empty vials, bundled calligraphy sets, a box of fine wands, and a tumbler of peat-smoked whiskey. The books cover a wide range of topics, with some of the more colorful titles including:

- *Delving and Demise*: "it takes approximately 15 seconds for your legs to dissolve in acid", by Aeofel Elhromane.
- *Tractatus of Unfathomably Useless Cantrips*: "detect detect magic", "conjure mosquito", "cure hiccups", "salubrious lucubration", "indemnity clause."
- *To Skin or Pluck: Determining the Species Origins of Strigiformes Ursidae*: a thesis by Salmae Noldson.
- *Rope Trick: 1,001 naughty uses for knots*: documenting various uses of the *rope trick* spell by Gurston Hemp.
- *Dangers of Mephit Vivisection*: a tedious and obnoxious interview by the late Ordo von Nifemeye.

- *Self Improvement for Mages: daily affirmations: "they cannot resist my charm spell", "it's the illusion, not what's underneath, that counts", "power word: you're awesome."*

Mr. Fwim may be encountered here, engrossed in reading a scandalous adventure novel or burning what used to be spell scrolls.

8. GUARD ROOM

This gothic-themed 25' square barrel-vaulted room boasts a large iron candelabra flickering with magic candles hanging from the ceiling. Two suits of ornate full plate - actually **helmed horrors** - stand on stone pedestals on either side of the west passage. The north and south doors also have stone pedestals near them, but no suits of armor on them. PCs approaching the room can hear voices bickering about who could kill a mage quicker, but when they enter the room the helmed horrors are inert. These helmed horrors possess 10 Intelligence, speak common, and can think for themselves due to the failing magic Bittergills used to create them. Their personalities are opinionated smart-asses.

9. WIZARD'S STUDY

The door into this musty 20' x 30' room is locked (open DC 15). Within, the room is seemingly untouched by the chaos and grime rampant throughout the rest of the dungeon. A large oak table with legs carved in the likeness of griffons holds a collection of writings that Bittergill had been working on before his departure. Scattered notes written in a crude uneducated hand obsessively demean Bittergill and claim they will find his treasure first. Bittergill's personal

journal rests on the table and is full of insipid details, megalomaniacal presumptions, and petty vindictiveness of a weak mind; thumbing thru the journal, however, reveals that the chapter headings are rather strange and out of order:

III - Wizardly Woes over Pipeweed

II - A Liquor for any Season

V - Audiences with Famous Mages

IV - Vivisection Brainstorms

IX - Spellcraft with a Little Music

VIII - Dining Alone (and I Like It)

A glass cabinet holds a gilded spellbook and four fancy scroll cases. However, as a mean prank Mr. Fwim infested these with **bookworms**. Any character opening the spellbook or scroll cases finds most of the pages entirely eaten thru or crumbling apart. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) is required to notice the small camouflaged bookworms, while a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check is required to correctly identify the danger they pose. Fire or area effect damage kills the bookworms. If an infested spellbook or scrolls is placed nearby a non-infested book, the bookworms swarm the fresh matter, devouring 5 pages per round. They can also eat other organic matter like wood, leather and rope, though this requires longer. If a PC is especially delicate with the spellbook or casts *mending* upon it, they can salvage the following spells: *rope trick* (2nd), *nondetection* (3rd), *slow* (3rd), *Mordenkainen's private sanctum* (4th), *scrying* (5th), *teleportation circle* (5th).

Mr. Fwim may be encountered here, having a bitter conversation with himself, role-playing the part of Bittergills who never respected him as a hearth brownie.

10. AUDIENCE CHAMBER

This grandiose 25' x 40' room is where Bittergills hosts guests, either those who visit in person or who contact him thru the large *magic mirror* covered with a black sheet at one end of the room. The mirror is a one-of-a-kind piece worth upward of 1,000 gp and has the roman numeral XXXIII engraved on the bottom of the frame; it is also enchanted with a specialized abjuration that activates if a creatures says anything into the mirror. When activated, the mirrors opens communication with the absent Percy Bittergills himself via a hand mirror he carries that is mystically bonded to the *magic mirror* - this allows communication like a *sending stone*. No expense was spared in the gilding or ornamentation of the pillars or frescoes, and the southern part of the room is elevated on a dais with a high-backed wooden throne flanked by tall brass candlesticks. While the PCs explore the audience chamber, at a time of the DM's choosing, a booming sorceress' voice echoes: *"Percy Bittergills, you're a mewling excuse for a wizard. I was highly offended during my last visit, and trust you won't keep **this** guest waiting!"* An **invisible stalker** is conjured in the room and attacks.

11. PANTRY (POTIONS)

The shelves of this 10' x 15' pantry are filled with alchemical ingredients, alembics, empty vials, and the following potions: *potion of giant strength (hill giant)*, *potion of mind reading*, *potion of poison*, and a *potion of resistance (acid)*. In addition, an ornately carved granite stone box rests on the floor; anyone opening it releases the **black pudding** trapped inside.

12. PANTRY (RESERVE LIQUORS)

This 15' square room is Bittergills' personal reserve of collected liquors. The shelves hold two dozen bottles of rare herbal liquors ranging in value from 2 gp to 15 gp apiece. On the top shelf is a bottle of Cidonian Almond Apertif with roman numeral XVI stamped on the label.

13. CONSTRUCTION ROOM

This 20' x 25' room was where the heart of the construction was being done to excavate when the workers broke into the Cinderhollows. It houses medieval construction and excavation equipment; there are sufficient materials here to board up all three stairs in the dungeon leading into the Cinderhollows. The mischievous mephits installed a false door on the north wall using gilded reinforcing, wood polish, and magic sigils (they appear vaguely to be abjuration, but a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) reveals they're just nonsense). Anyone opening the door finds a solid wall of stone behind it and triggers a **pit trap** in a 5-ft square in front of the door; they must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or fall 60 feet (6d6) into the Cinderhollows!

14. SMOKING ROOM

This cozy 15' x 20' room serves as Bittergills' smoking room and is filled with cozy leather chairs, spittoons, a tasteless statue of two semi-nude dryads frolicking, and shelves with a variety of pipes, hookahs, and snuff boxes. At the base of the dryads statue is the Roman numeral XVII.
Mr. Fwim may be encountered here, resting in a chair in the shadows, angrily smoking his pipe with a dark glower.

H1-H6. HEARTH-PIPES

These brick chimneys extend both up thru the manor above (eventually emerging at its roof) and down into the Cinderhollows. Each has AC 16; if 27 points of damage are dealt to the bricks, that hearth-pipe crumbles and caves in on itself, preventing the mephits from using that route as an access point to the surface. However, when a hearth-pipe sustains any damage, a **blast of air** roars upward. All creatures in or adjacent to the hearth-pipe must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be pushed back 5 feet and knocked prone, whereas creatures actually in the hearth-pipe are shot up all the way thru the chimney and land on the roof of the manor! In addition, a **fire elemental** appears within the hearth-pipe and attacks. However, as soon as the hearth-pipe is destroyed, so is its guardian fire elemental, leaving behind a red tourmaline gem worth 100 gp.

THE CINDERHOLLOWS

This massive cavern network is filled with caustic smoky air and cinders which readily light dry material afire. **Mephits** (of the dust, magma, and smoke varieties) are positively teaming in the dozens (or even hundreds!) down here, along with **magmin**, "cinder wisps" (use **will-o-wisp** stats), and "ashen wasps" (use **swarm of insects** stats). The Cinderhollows are meant to be an especially inhospitable place with overwhelming opposition. Descending down into them is likely suicide for a party of 4th-6th level, though the DM has free reign to design them however he or she wishes, perhaps establishing a link to the Elemental Plane of Fire.

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