

Key to the Dark Labyrinth

(Cobwebbed Dragon)

The Key to the Dark Labyrinth is an exotic talisman unique to the Lands of Legend. The key's sinister protection banishes any who would strike the owner to a labyrinthine realm of confusing other-dimensional passageways, cursing them to wander lost through a tangle of twisting hallways until they chance upon one of the few silvery portals that will return them to Legend. As one of my players was unfortunate enough to fall foul of the key's curse, I am taking a break from my series inspired by Mortal Combat to instead bring some flavour of my campaign to the pages of the Casket.

Shadows race towards you from every corner of your vision until you are consumed by a disorientating darkness. With a nauseating lurch, your sight returns and you find yourself in an enclosed passageway of rough-hewn grey stone. The ground is hidden by a knee-deep shroud of opaque mist, within which dark shadows dart seemingly at random below the surface before disappearing just as quickly into thick pockets of the obfuscating vapour. Draughts of stale air breathe lazily through the passageway, barely disturbing the surface of the white fog and carrying with them the smell of dust, decay, and foetid earth.

Despite no obvious source of light, you can see clearly the muted monochromatic palette of dreary greys with which this realm is painted – the only colour you can see is that which you have brought with you: dyed into your clothes, the ruddy tone of your skin, and the brown of your trusty axe's haft.

Confused by how you got here or where you are, you cannot learn anything more by staying still and start to move through the labyrinth. You attempt to scratch the wall with your dagger to mark your trail but the walls resist any attempt to mar their rough surface and, despite your efforts to remember your route, the tortuous geometries of this place defy your ability to keep track. As you rove through ever-more-confusing hallways and feel panic begin to well within you, you are suddenly calmed by a memory of a story your uncle once told you as a child.

Your uncle spoke of a nightmare realm beyond the borders of the world. Within this realm, a sprawling labyrinth of impossible dimensions would ensnare unwary explorers until they could find one of the shimmering mirrored portals that would lead them to freedom. Until then, those doomed to wander the maddening corridors of such a place should consider themselves lucky if they only starve to death, for stalking the corridors of this place are the eternal Lords of the Labyrinth, hunting for offerings to bring back to the Court of the Dark Queen at the heart of the maze.

Despite the unsavoury content of your uncle's stories, you always remember them – and him – fondly. You were always comforted by his voice and his presence, however nightmarish his stories may have seemed superficially. His story of this labyrinthine realm reminds you of that cold winter's evening in front of the hearth, bathed in the cosy heat of the flames as the gentle tone of your uncle's words relaxed you. You remember that feeling of being safe and carefree and wonder if that, all those years ago, might not have been the last time you felt that way.

But that feeling of calm quickly fades as the hopelessness of your predicament weighs heavily on your sanity and is replaced by growing angst and desperation that drives you to hurry through the web of immemorable granite hallways in a race to find one of those silvery portals before one of the Lords of the Labyrinth finds you...

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And for anyone that wants to explore the Dark Labyrinth for themselves, the [Pavilion in the Cobwebbed Forest](#) offers a family-friendly labyrinthine experience to visitors [here](#).

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