



# The Shifting Crypt

by Eric Jones



**The Crypt:** The adventurers have come to investigate rumors of a powerful artifact buried with the ancient wizard *Fitchernön the Cunning*. Prying open the door of his mausoleum they find a set of stone stairs that descend roughly 100' below ground. At the foot of the stairs the passage opens into a crypt with eight chambers, thick with dust and clinging cobwebs (arranged according to *map A*). Numerous alcoves are recessed into the walls; each one either frames a thick iron plate or opens to an adjacent chamber. In the center of each chamber stands a single stone sarcophagus, ornately carved with a heavy stone lid that requires the strength of several characters to open. Whenever one is lifted, iron doors slam down upon the open alcoves, closing all connections between rooms. There is then the sound of stone grinding on iron rails for roughly a minute, as the outer seven chambers of the crypt shift clockwise, to the next sequence shown on the map. When the shift is complete the iron doors lift where there is now a connection between rooms, but remain closed in the alcoves that now connect to nothing. Thus if the party is in room 1 of *map A* and they open the sarcophagus there they will remain in room 1 as the crypt arranges itself according to *map B*. If they then move to a connecting chamber (room 2 for instance) and open the sarcophagus there the dungeon will arrange itself according to *map C*, and so on. The iron doors are nearly impossible to lift, and the walls have been reinforced and warded against most magic. If one or more characters ends up in an arrangement of rooms with all open sarcophagi and no exits they are effectively trapped, doomed to starve to death, as the sinister architect of the crypt intended. If *map H* is reached, and one final sarcophagus is opened, the crypt returns to the configuration of *map A*; all the sarcophagi slam shut of their own accord and the dungeon resets.

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**Keeping track:** A simple means for the referee to keep track of the party when the chambers shift is to mark their location(s) on the next map in the sequence. For instance, if the adventurers are in room 1 on *map A* and cause the rooms to shift, mark their location in room 1 on *map B*. Whenever a sarcophagus is opened cross out the corresponding room number on all of the remaining maps as the sarcophagus in that room can no longer trigger a shift until the whole dungeon resets.

## Map Key:

1. This is the first chamber at the foot of the stairs. The sarcophagus here is empty. Numerous footprints crisscross the dusty floor.
2. The floor here is littered with bones and other refuse. An undead thing lies in wait for foolhardy adventurers to open its sarcophagus. As with all the denizens of the crypt, the referee should select an undead monster that presents an adequate challenge for the party.
3. A few old, dry bones are scattered about the floor. As with room 2 an undead thing lies in wait in the sarcophagus. However, this creature will not wait for adventurers to open the lid but will spring out and attack immediately, triggering a shift of rooms.
4. The sarcophagus in this chamber contains a booby trapped skeleton. Even the slightest jostle causes a release of deadly poison gas.
5. This chamber and its sarcophagus hold nothing but cobwebs.
6. A handful of ambulatory undead stand in this chamber, ready to attack adventurers on sight. The sarcophagus here contains only rags.
7. This is the burial chamber of *Fitchernön the Cunning*. The air is stale as this is the least visited of the eight chambers. There are no footprints in the thick dust, no litter of bones. Prying open the sarcophagus one finds an undisturbed skeleton in faded robes, clutching a delicate egg decorated with tiny jewels and filigree. *Fitchernön's Egg* radiates powerful magic. When one holds it in their hand they are impervious to all forms of fire, even that of the lower planes.
8. This center chamber noticeably does not move when the others shift. The sarcophagus here is empty.

