



Dungeon Design Contest for use with Shadowdark

Design a Dungeon, Get Published, and Be Played at Gen Con!

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Have you ever wanted your Shadowdark dungeon to be published *and* played by the public at **Gen Con**? This is your chance! Everyone who backs a **physical tier** of the [Roll For Combat Three New Battlezoo Secret Tomes for Shadowdark Kickstarter](https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/rollforcombat/expand-your-shadowdark-games-with-three-new-secret-tomes) (starting at \$59 or higher) is eligible to enter the **Dungeon Design Contest for Shadowdark** and submit up to **three one-page dungeons**.

How to Enter

- **Who Can Enter:** All backers at the **\$59 physical tier or higher** of the **Roll For Combat Three New Battlezoo Secret Tomes for Shadowdark** Kickstarter found at <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/rollforcombat/expand-your-shadowdark-games-with-three-new-secret-tomes>
- **When Can You Enter:** The official submission page will be sent to all Kickstarter backers approximately two weeks after the Kickstarter ends.
- **What to Submit:** Up to **three one-page dungeons** (one for each Battlezoo Secret Tome).
- **Submission Period:** Starts **September 10, 2025**, and will remain open for **6–8 weeks**. (The exact deadline will be announced.)

Dungeon Design Rules

- **Dungeon Format**
 - Each submission must fit on **one double-sided page** and follow the character limits and word count limits as outlined below.
 - You **must use one of the pre-approved dungeon layouts provided**. There are 20 unique map designs in total, and all can be found later in this document.
 - The dungeon should follow the standard structure and style of a typical **1-page, double-sided Shadowdark dungeon** (see a great example by Kelsey here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7pCRyEuZQA>).

- **Party Guidelines**
 - Each dungeon should be designed for a **party of four level 1 characters** using **standard Shadowdark rules**.
- **Monster Requirements**
 - Each dungeon must use monsters from **two sources only**:
 - A minimum of **50% of monsters featured in your dungeon must be from one of the Battlezoo Secret Tomes for Shadowdark**.
 - Additional monsters must come from the **Shadowdark RPG Core Rules**.
 - Monsters from multiple Battlezoo Secret Tomes books cannot be used in the same dungeon (**you cannot mix monsters** from multiple Battlezoo books in a single dungeon).
 - **After the Battlezoo Secret Tomes Kickstarter ends, each backer will receive a full list of low-level monsters from the Battlezoo Secret Tomes Kickstarter.** We will provide monsters from all three books, and the monsters will be level-appropriate for this contest. We realize it will be difficult to complete your entry before the Kickstarter ends, but we will provide extra time for people to finalize their entries and add in the appropriate Battlezoo monsters.
- **Dungeon Theme**
 - Each dungeon must reflect the **theme** of the appropriate Battlezoo book.
 - You can submit up to **one dungeon per book**, for a total of three entries per backer.
- **Submission Info**
 - You'll indicate which Battlezoo book your dungeon is for when submitting.
 - The submission link will be sent to all eligible backers on **September 10, 2025**, via email to the same email used to back the Kickstarter.
- **General FAQ Questions**
 - **Who is eligible to enter the contest?**
 - Because we are trying to discover new talent, anybody who has been published in the RPG industry in a significant way is not eligible to enter. If you have been employed full-time as a designer for a game company, you are not eligible. If you have received cover credit as an author of a hardcover print RPG book, you are not eligible. If you have a design credit in three or more hardcover products, you are not eligible.
 - **What criteria will be used to judge the entries?**
 - Entries are judged and voted on four categories: **concept**, **mechanics**, **threat balance**, and **writing style**. The **concept** category encompasses creativity, adherence to the book's theme, and overall coolness. The **mechanics** category covers selection and design of special abilities, and adherence to the Shadowdark rules. The **threat balance** category determines whether your monster is appropriately balanced for a 1st level party. Finally, the **writing style**

category scores your overall writing, including readability and appropriate use of grammar. Entries will be presented to the voters and judges anonymously, so do not put your name or any other personally identifying information in your entry.

- **Is there an age requirement to enter?**
 - Yes, you must be at least 18 years old to enter; otherwise, you must submit written parental consent. Full details will be provided on this during the time of the contest.
- **Can I enter if I live outside the United States?**
 - Yes, the contest is open to all, but all submissions must be in English.
- **Do I give up any rights to my work to enter the Dungeon Design Contest?**
 - If you win and your entry gets published by Roll For Combat, we retain all rights to your entry and can adjust it as necessary for final publication. However, if you don't win or get published by Roll For Combat, your entry remains the property of the contestant.

Judging & Winner Selection

- Once submissions close, each dungeon will be reviewed by **Roll For Combat** and special guest TTRPG designers.
- **Winning dungeons will be published and played live at Gen Con 2026!**

What Do You Win?

Glad you asked—because the prizes are *epic*.

- **Official Publication:** Your dungeon will be included as one of the **official Battlezoo dungeons** in the **Kickstarter Dungeon Pack**.
- **One Winner Per Book:** There will be **three total winners**—one for each Battlezoo Secret Tome book: *Monster Hunt*, *Strange and Unusual*, and *Elemental Storm*
- **Your Name in Print:** Your name and winner title will be **clearly credited** on your dungeon for the entire community to see and admire.
- **Cash Prize:** Each winning dungeon earns a **\$500 cash prize**.
- **Gen Con Spotlight:** Your dungeon will be **run live by Roll For Combat at Gen Con 2026**, played by fans, adventurers, and curious fools alike!

How Do I Submit My Dungeon?

Once the contest submission opens, you will have the opportunity to submit your dungeon design. The submission will consist of a form for you to fill out outlining your dungeon design. The following sections will be required for your submission using the example dungeon design below.

Haunted Conservatoire

Both dulcet tones and hair-raising screeches echo through dusty stone halls.

A **spectral conductor** recruited dangerous creatures to her motley band of performers and took over an abandoned music school. Explorers might find **lost masterpieces**, if they can escape both recruitment and dismemberment.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d4	Details
1	1d6 agitated crystal chimlings flee discordant sounds
2	1d4 curious quantum hummers explore the space
3	1 harpy singing a song, plus 1d4 entranced thieves
4	The beat hopper and 4 wripiers from Area 5 appear

Maestro's Folio A magical compendium of masterpieces. Wielder gains perfect pitch and they speak in song. Wielder gains ADV on checks to incite specific emotions or to influence a creature's attitude.

Title

Subtitle

Overview

Random Encounters

Reward

Dungeon Map
(to be provided)

Book Being Used

Battlezoo Adventures: Elemental Storm
5th-Level
©2025, Skyscraper Studios, Inc.
By: Linda Zayas-Palmer

- **Book Being Used:** You will have to select which of the three Battlezoo Secret Tomes you have designed your dungeon to utilize. You can submit one dungeon per Battlezoo Secret Tome.
- **Title:** Name of your dungeon, no more than 25 characters in length.
- **Subtitle:** A brief subtitle describing your dungeon's theme, no more than 100 characters in length.
- **Overview:** A short summary of your dungeon's premise, no more than 250 characters in length.
- **Random Encounters:** A list of 4 possible encounters (must be based on a 1d4 die roll). Each listed encounter must be 50 characters or fewer (so a total of 200 characters for 4 encounters).
- **Reward:** Describe what the players gain or face at the end of the dungeon. This is often either a unique magic item, treasure, magical encounter, or boss monster. Can be no more than 250 characters in length.

- **Dungeon Map:** We have provided a list of 20 premade maps. You must select from these premade maps when entering the contest; you can't provide your own map. Each map is shown both with and without numbers for each room. When designing your dungeon, you do NOT need to use every numbered room; rather, these are simply for you to depict which rooms to be described in the adventure outline. For example, you might list this in your entry, where you only list the rooms that you're depicting in your dungeon. The order of the rooms doesn't matter as we'll reorder the numbers in the final product so that they are sequential and uninhabited rooms are left unnumbered.

Using Map 02

1. Bloody Entryway. Blood trails lead through the open doorways to the northeast (old trail) and southeast (still fresh). **2 argentaurems** stand guard. Confounded by necromancy, they obey the archmage and repel intruders with the same zeal they once followed the temple's deity. If slain, their heavy metallic bodies are worth 150 gp each.

2. Desecrated Altar. The **altar** at the room's center bears a large **statue** of the temple's original deity. The statue is broken in half and smeared with old blood and viscera. If the PCs restore the altar, they receive a blessing of *cleansing weapon* for the next hour. Other nearby rooms are ransacked prayer chambers.

9. Bloody Alter. The **empty altar** has been repurposed into preparation tables for necromantic rituals, now strewn with gore. The revolting mess hides potion ingredients (50 gp). Faint light seeps out from Area 14. A **nightmare shade** guards the room from inside the walls. If combat starts, the **shadowthief** from Area 10 joins.

You can find images of all the dungeon designs later in this document.

- **Room Descriptions:** You will submit the room descriptions in a single text block and must consist of 8-13 rooms. The total text block must be between 500-600 words in length.
- **Extra Notes:** You will also have the opportunity to provide us with extra notes about your dungeon design. For example, you can note where there should be traps, secret doors, extra treasure, or other items indicated on the map. These notes are intended for the judges to know where additional elements should be added to the map design.
- **Monster Usage:** We expect you to add monsters to your dungeon, and when you do, you must use the following guidelines:

- No less than half of the encounters must be monsters found in a Battlezoo Secret Tomes book. For example, if a dungeon consists of 5 skeletons (from the original Shadowdark rules), 1 nightmare shade and 2 argentarems (both from the Battlezoo Secret Tomes) that would fulfill the requirement as two of the encounters were from the Battlezoo Secret Tomes, even though there were more monsters encountered in the single skeleton encounter.
- After the Kickstarter is over and pledges have been charged, we will be providing a full list of monsters that you can use from each book that are appropriate for a level 1 party of 4 characters.
- The remaining monsters must be from the original Shadowdark rules. They can't be from a Cursed Scroll or any other official or non-official Shadowdark supplements—only monsters from the original Shadowdark rules.

- **Magic items, treasure, spells, etc.:** Any other items added to your room descriptions must also be from the original Shadowdark rules and can't be from a Cursed Scroll or any other official or non-official Shadowdark supplement. You can add your own magic items to the dungeon, of course (such as the listed **Reward**), but these must be added to the dungeon text and can't refer to an outside sourcebook.

1. Entryway. Remnants of wooden furniture litter the floor. Decorative limestone **pillars** case the room in choking dust if broken. In the northwest room, **2 neotris** continually morph their forms attempting to make music-producing organs.

2. Waiting Room. On the west wall is a 10' tall **magical tapestry** of an idyllic Fey landscape. Figures in the tapestry move and dance in a hypnotic pattern. Viewers of the tapestry must roll DC 12 WIS to avoid being entranced and drawn forward into the tapestry, which gradually incorporates them unless they are cut out in time.

3. Black Box Theater. This square, black-painted room features a 10' tall black velvet curtain on the back wall. In the center of the room, **3 ahvalaks** dance to music both real and imagined, and they insist the PCs join them. **Thorny vines** are strewn across the floor, acting as caltrops if stepped on. There's a secret door in the west wall leading to Area 4.

4. Score Room. This secret backstage room contains overlaid and rotting shelves filled with musical scores, including a **maestro's folio**. The shelves might collapse when it is taken, DC 15 DEX to avoid (2d6 damage).

5. Drawing Room. The plush couches and benches that once adorned this drawing room are now tattered and timeworn. A **beat hopper** is doing his best to conduct **4 wriplies** in song who would rather cause pranks and mischief than sing. The wriplies carry an assortment of stolen knickknacks and jewelry worth a total of 130 gp.

6. Instrument Storage. Among the instruments of varying quality is a masterfully engraved harp (60 gp). A faulty **animated orchestra** plays off-key in the room's center and attacks any who approach. **4 whittler's serpents** slither out from instrument cases to join the orchestra.

7. Warped Practice Room. The 10' tall **tapestry** on the wall has melted and warped into a nightmarish landscape, due to incessant and blasphemous squelching and screeching of the **3 gibbering moutthers** that lair here. Viewers of the tapestry must roll DC 12 CHA to avoid being terrified into fleeing.

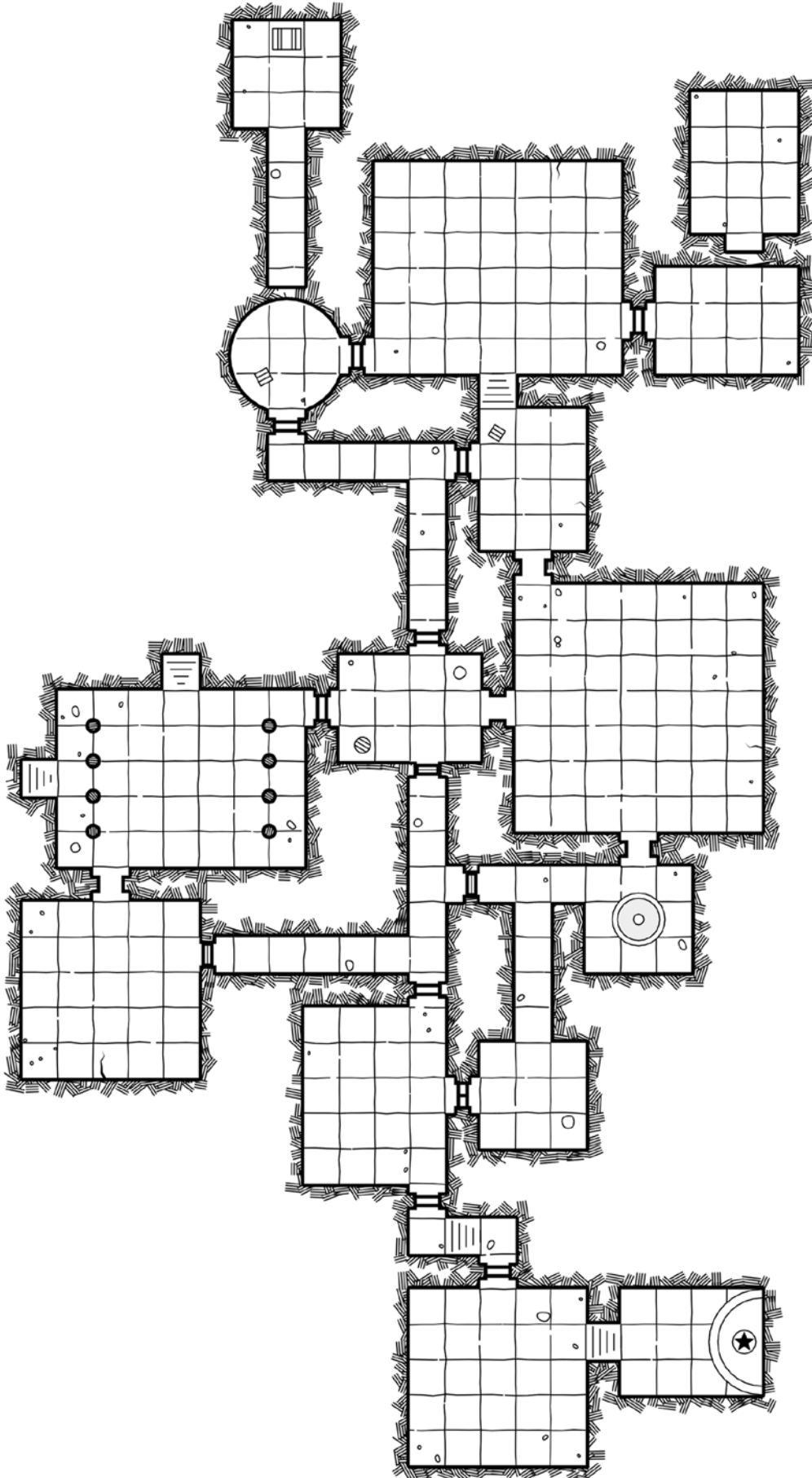
8. Office. Most of the school's intact furniture has been moved to this office, which still contains old student records. To avoid being subjected to the view of the gibbering moutthers in Area 7, the kunthalaka in Area 9 put up a makeshift **curtain** over the east hall. Unless moving quietly, the sound of the PCs' approach caused the kunthalaka to **lock** the south door and activate a **music-based puzzle trap** on it (PCs form a chord with the hum door's hum or 2d6 damage when attempting to open).

9. Atrium. The **fountain** in the center of the room seems to produce clear fresh water, but the liquid dulls the judgment and perception of drinkers (DC 15 CON or DIS on WIS checks until healed). A crafty **kunthalaka** in the guise of a human majordomo writes new music here while plotting the ruin of the resident musicians. He has a **scroll of illusion**.

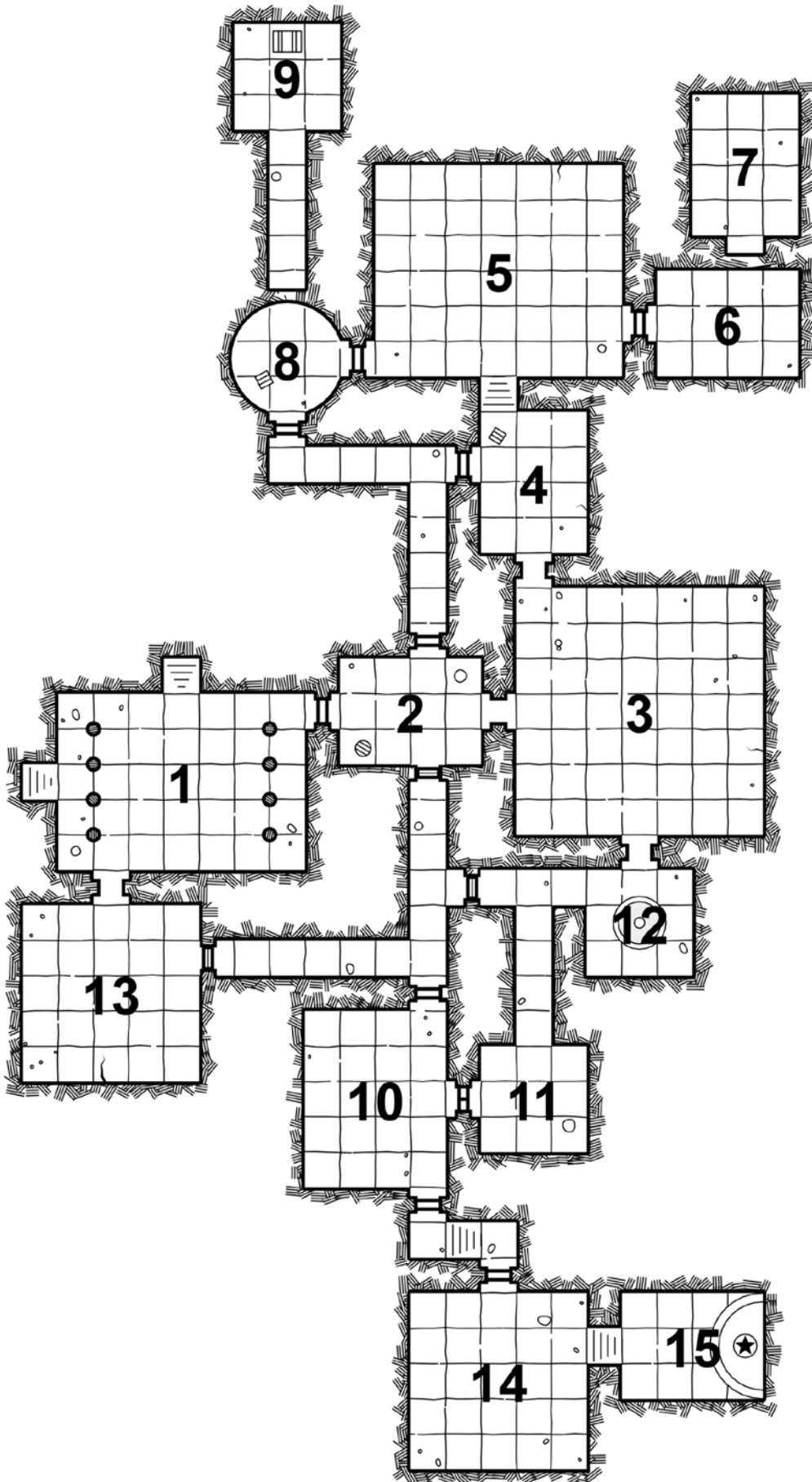
10. VIP Performance Hall. The **spectral conductor**, Aria, invites a PC to sit in the central audience chair for a surround-sound experience and attempts to recruit the PCs. She is joined by a tempestuous vernal, who has been enjoying learning from the conductor's inspiring advice (at least for now!). The vernal's electric guitar is a wand of **lightning bolt**.

Room Descriptions

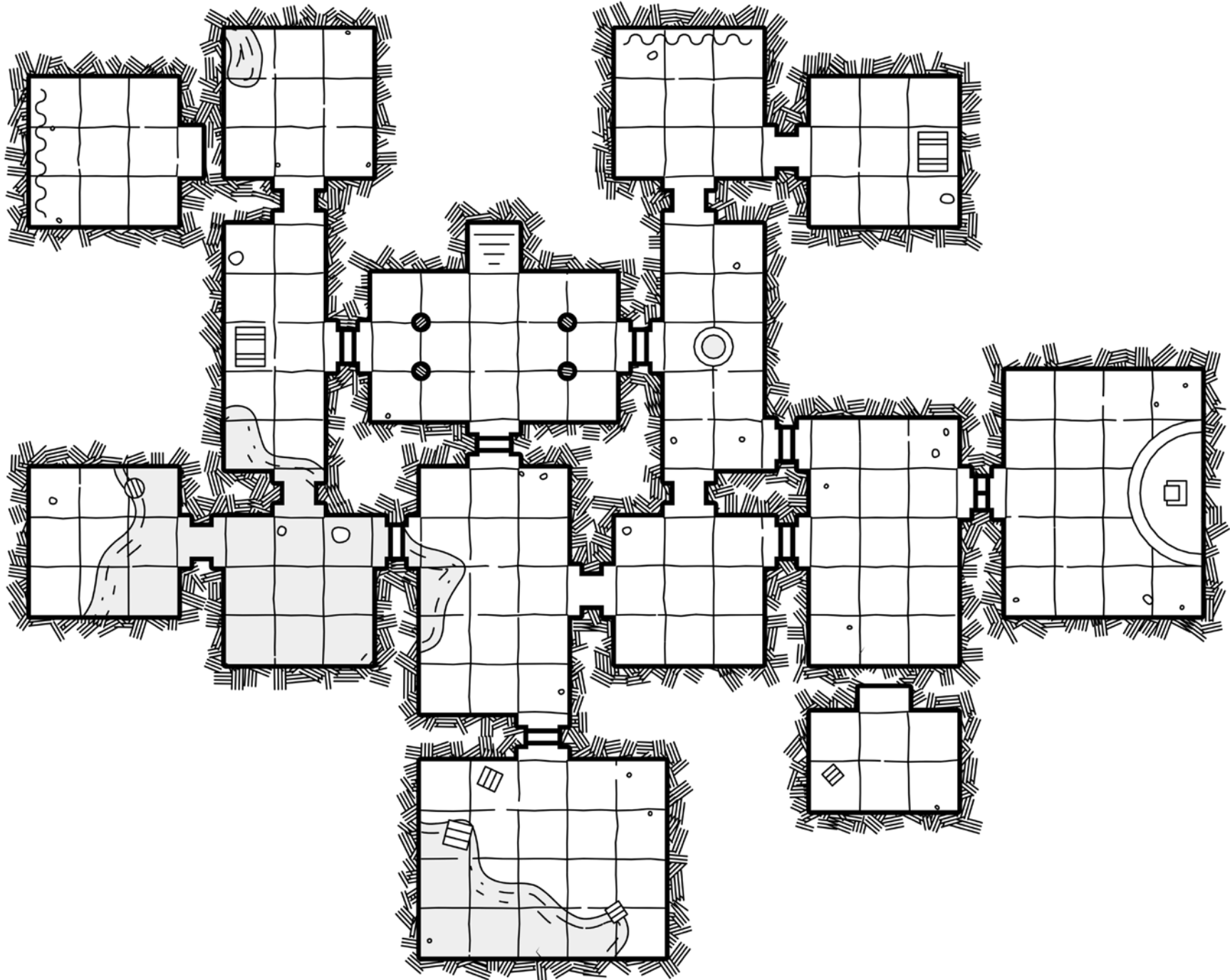
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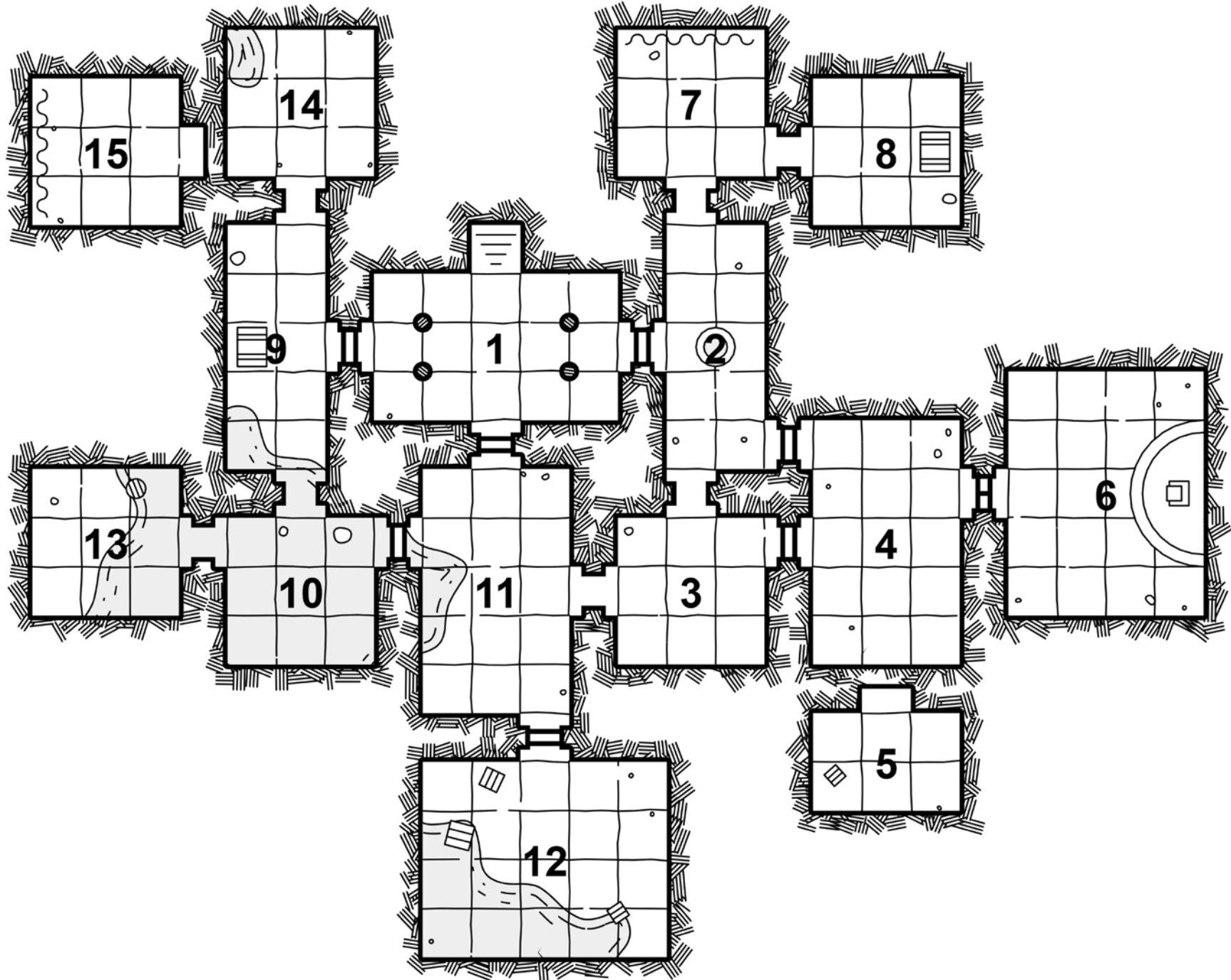
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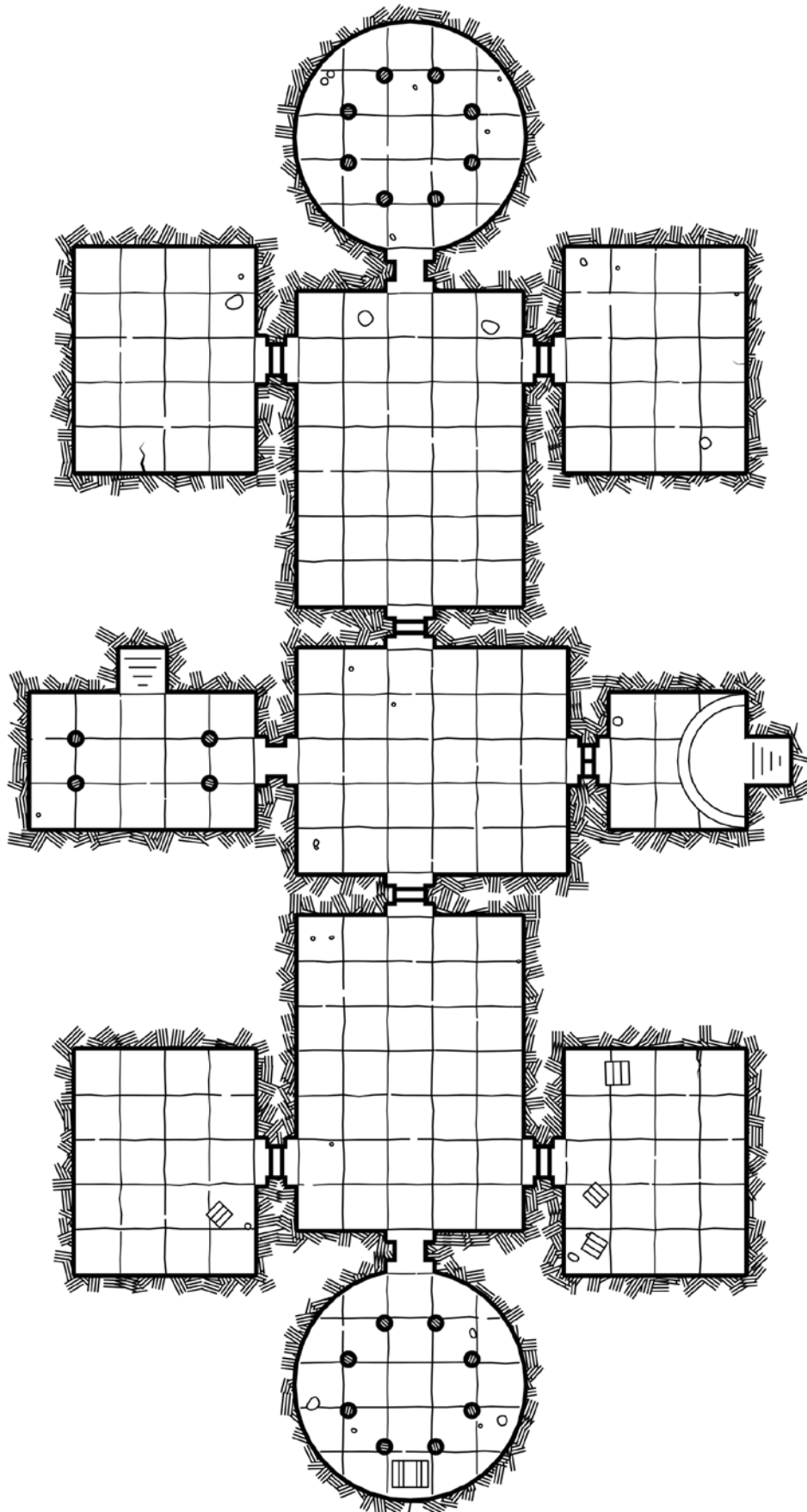
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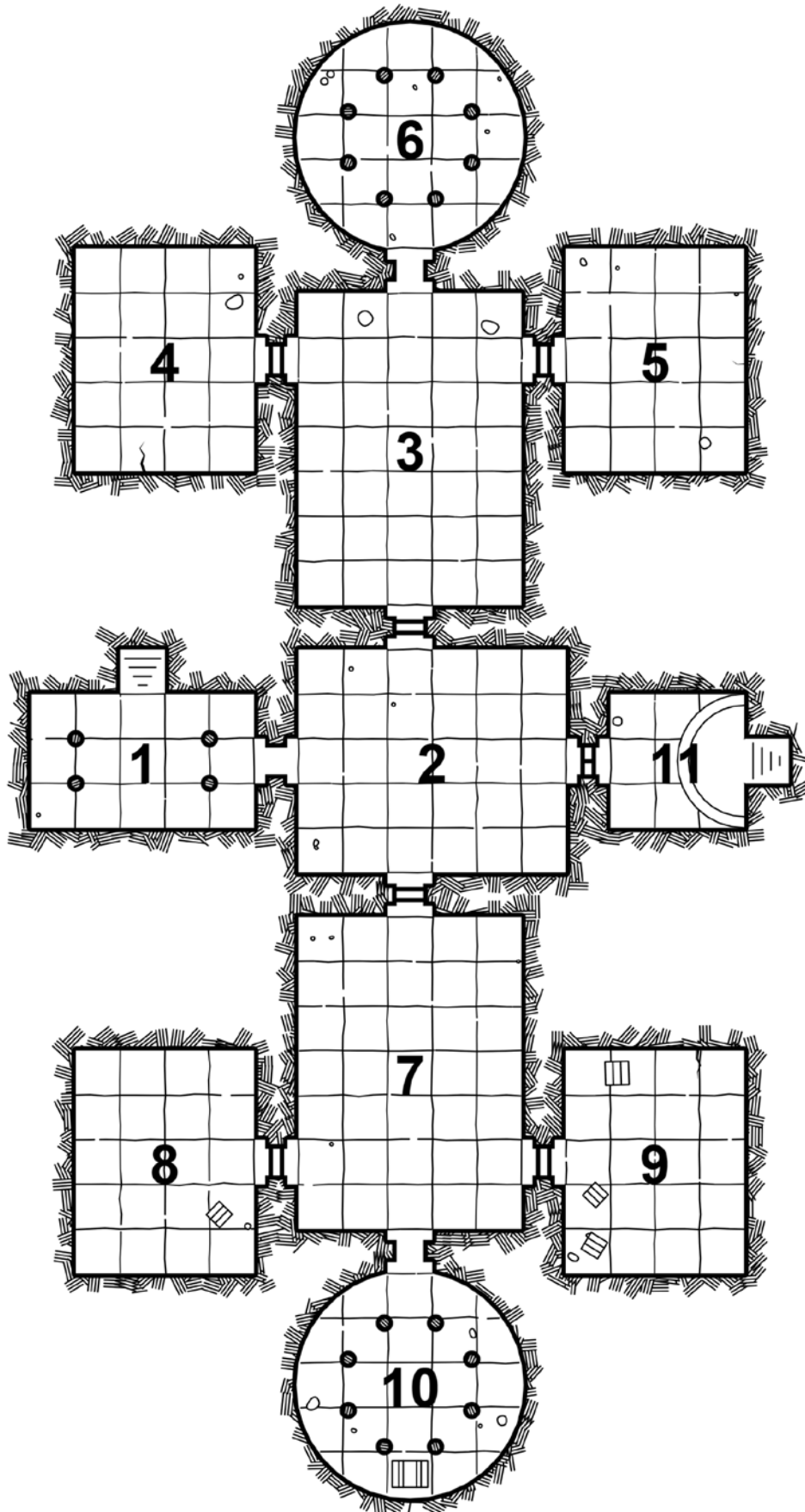
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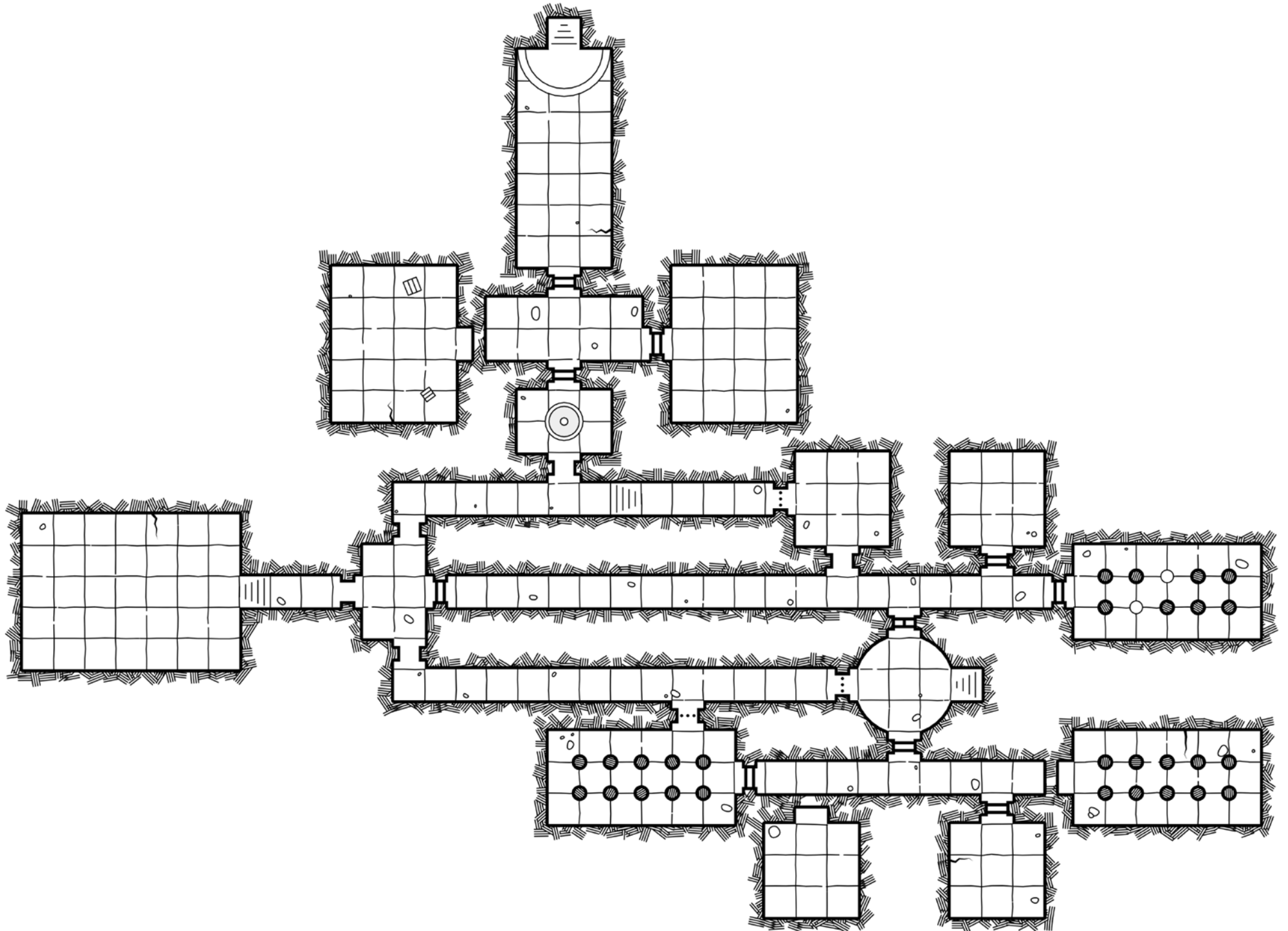
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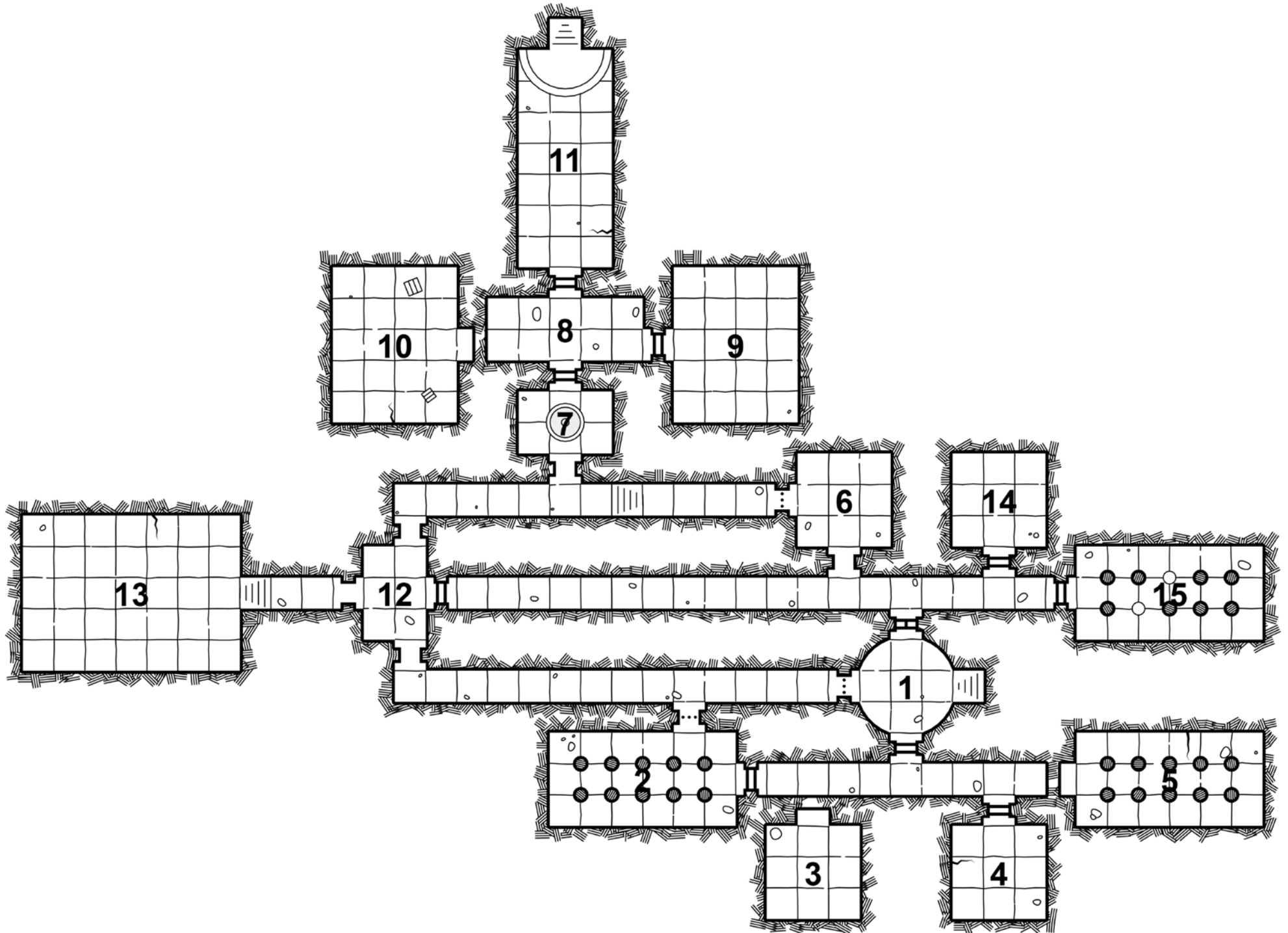
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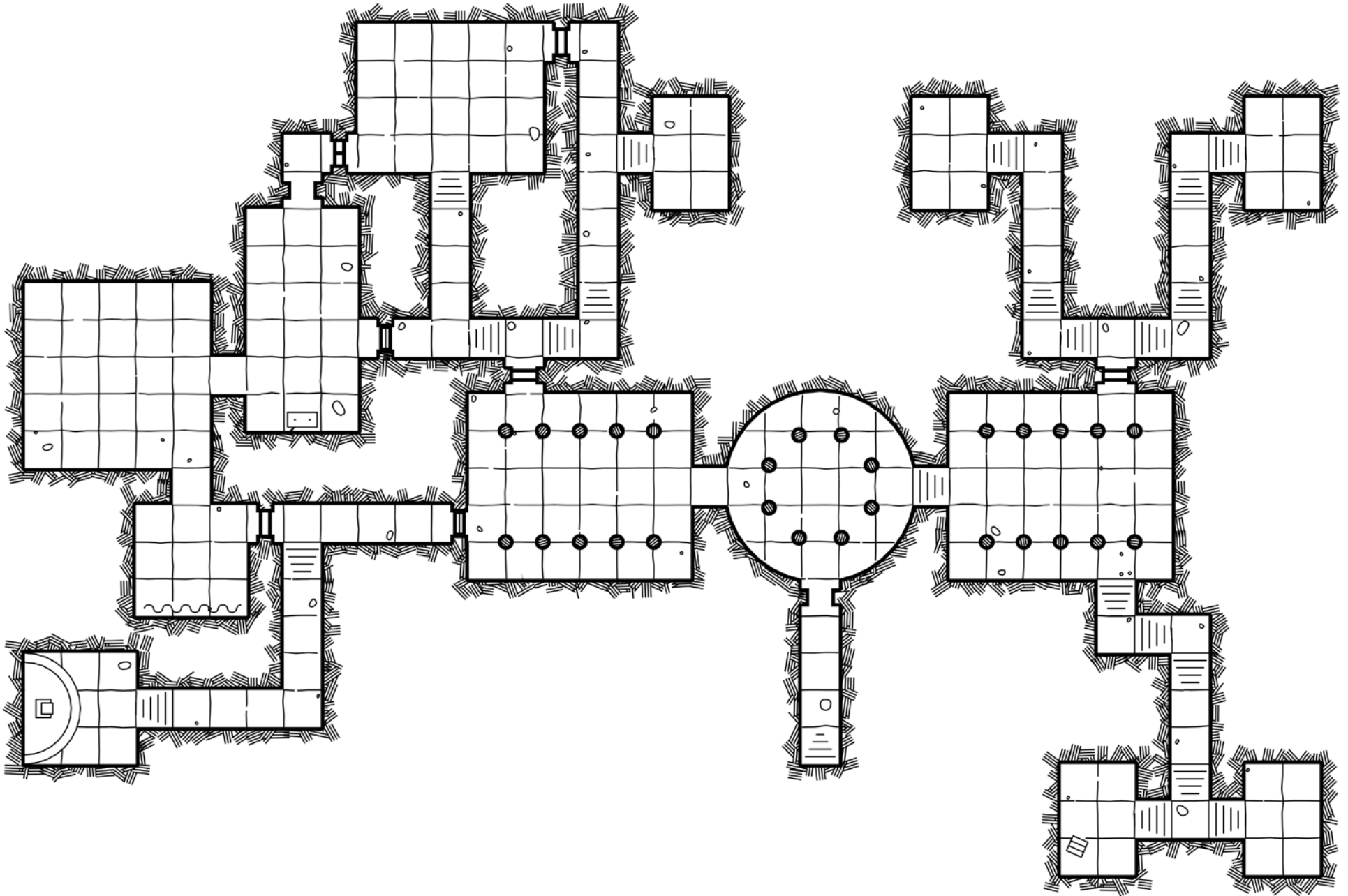
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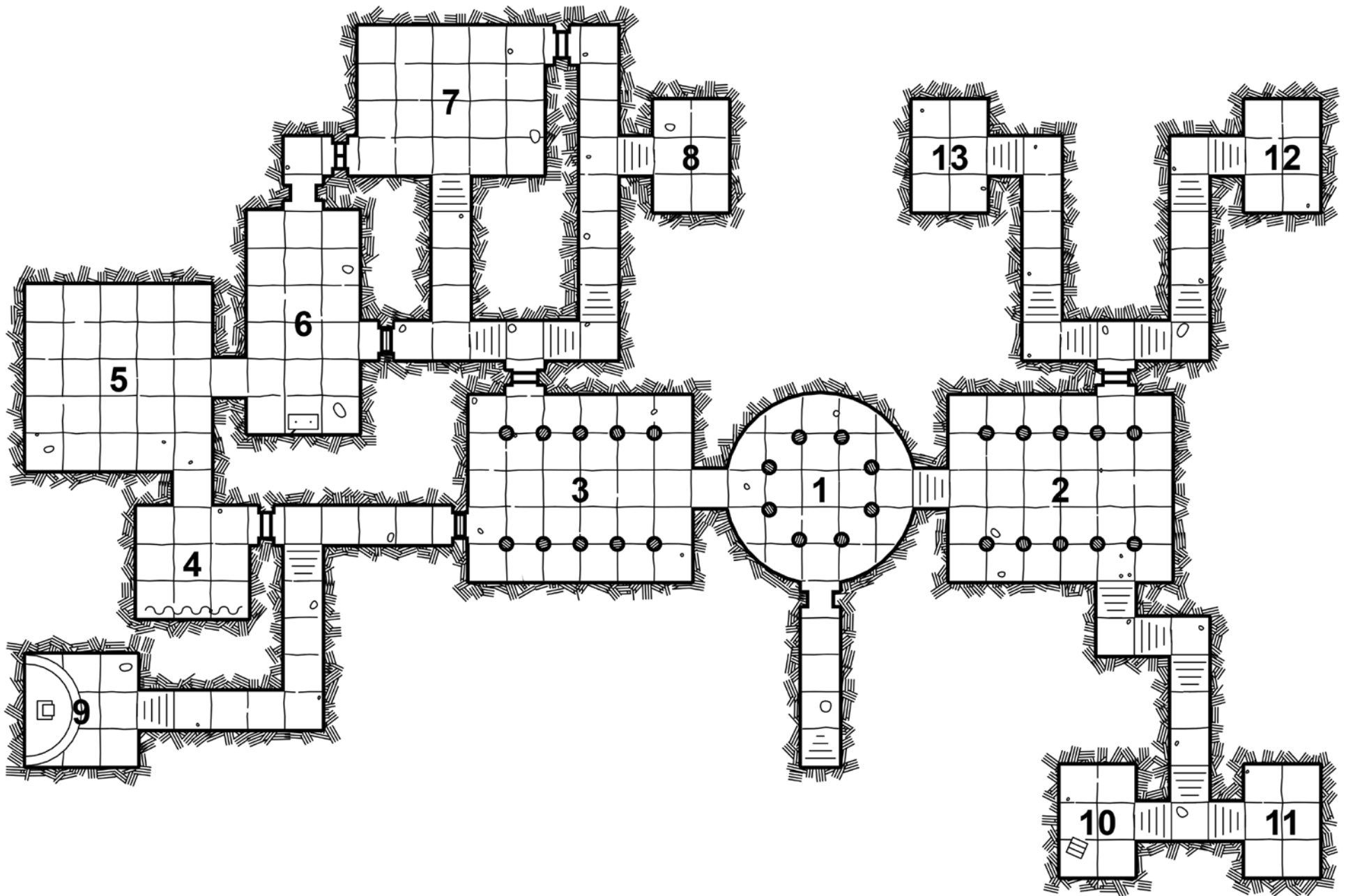
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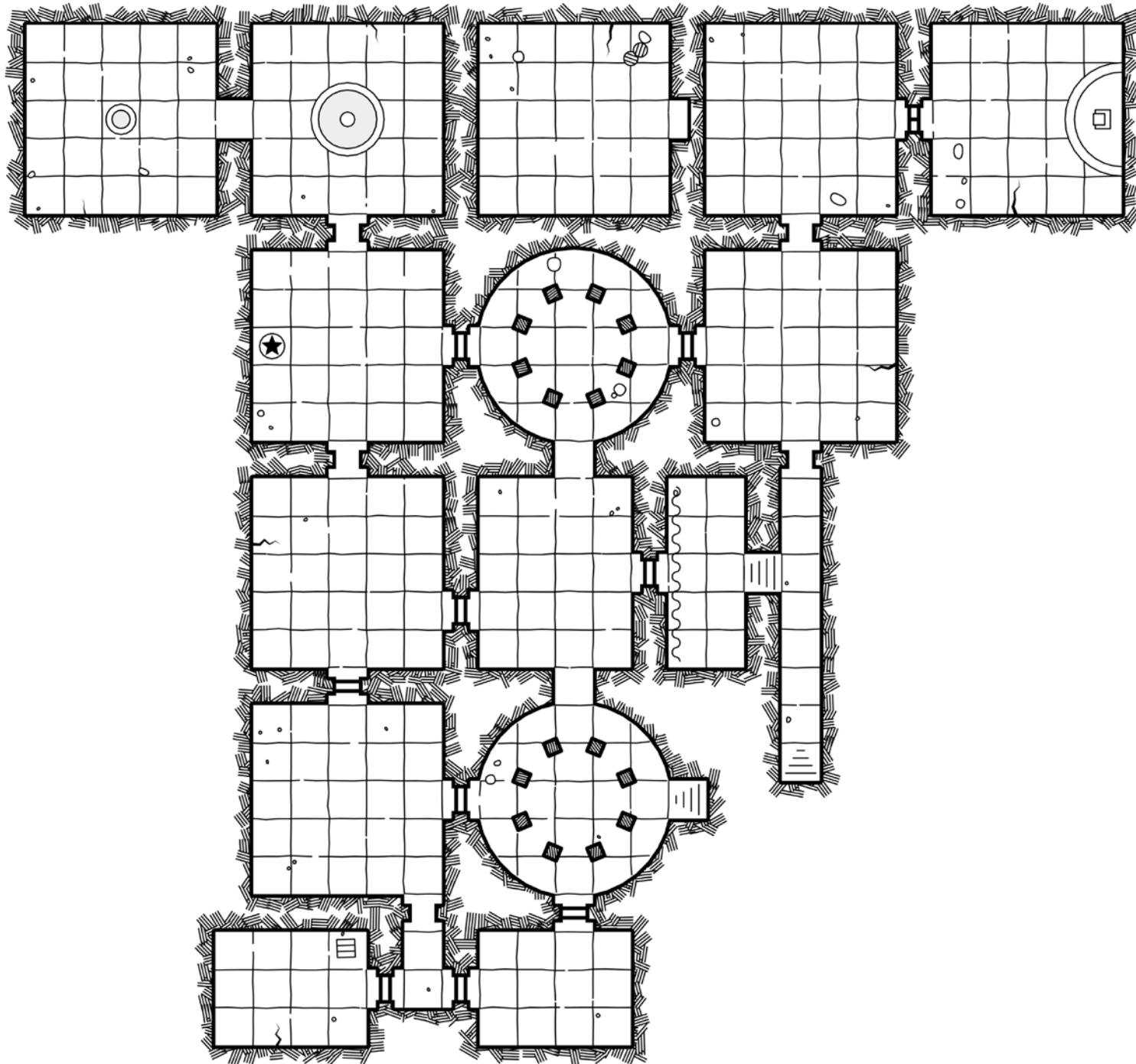
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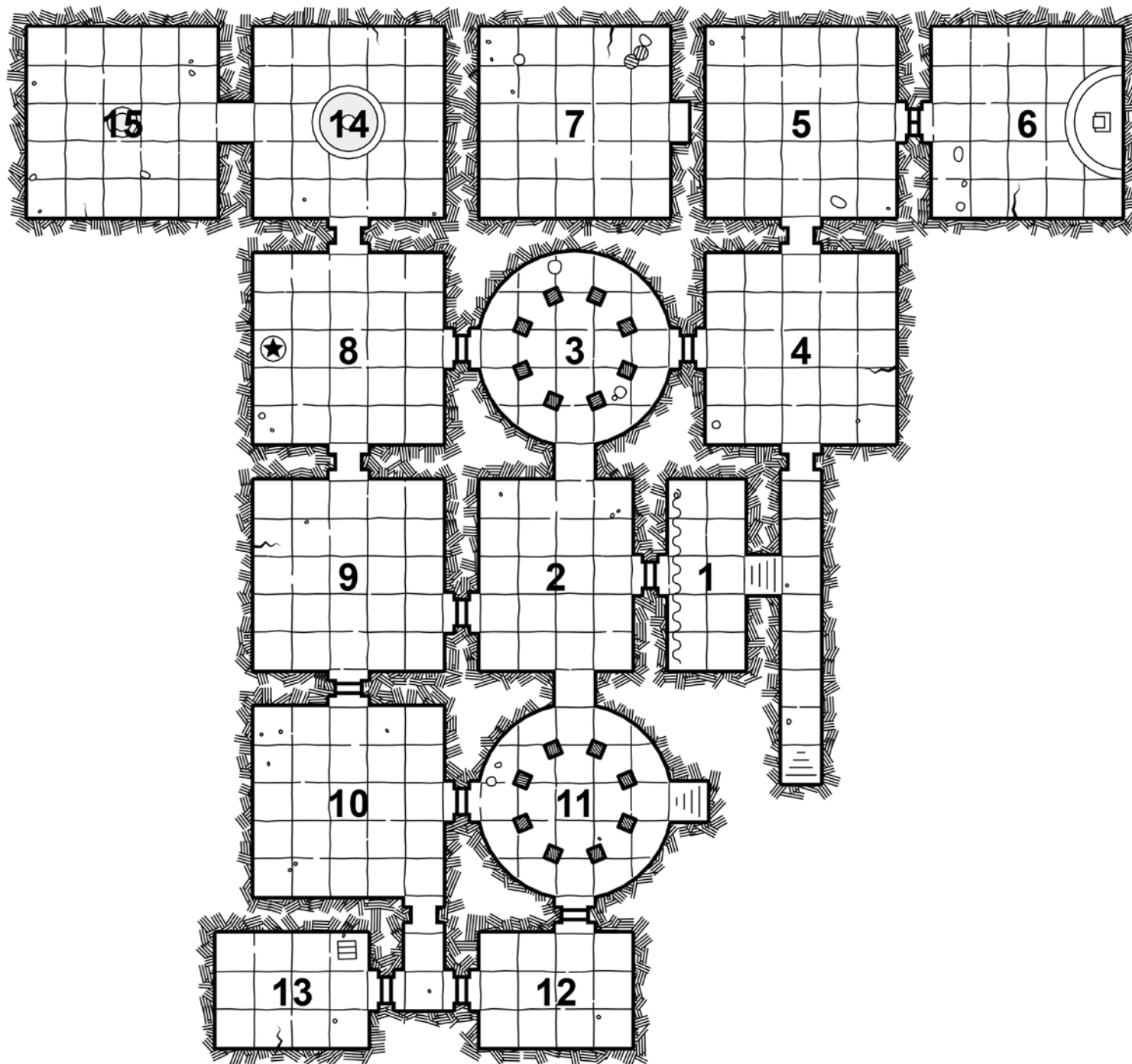
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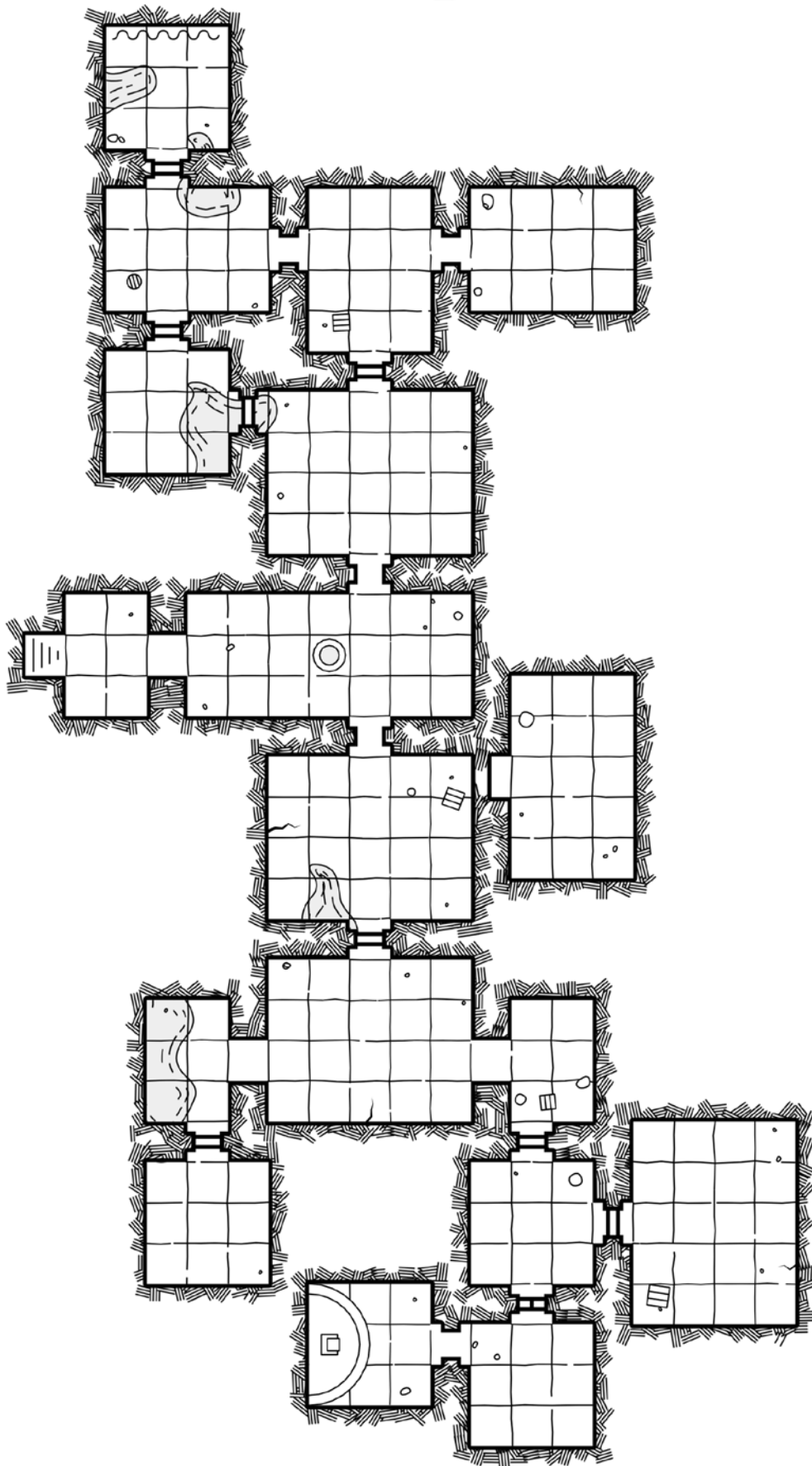
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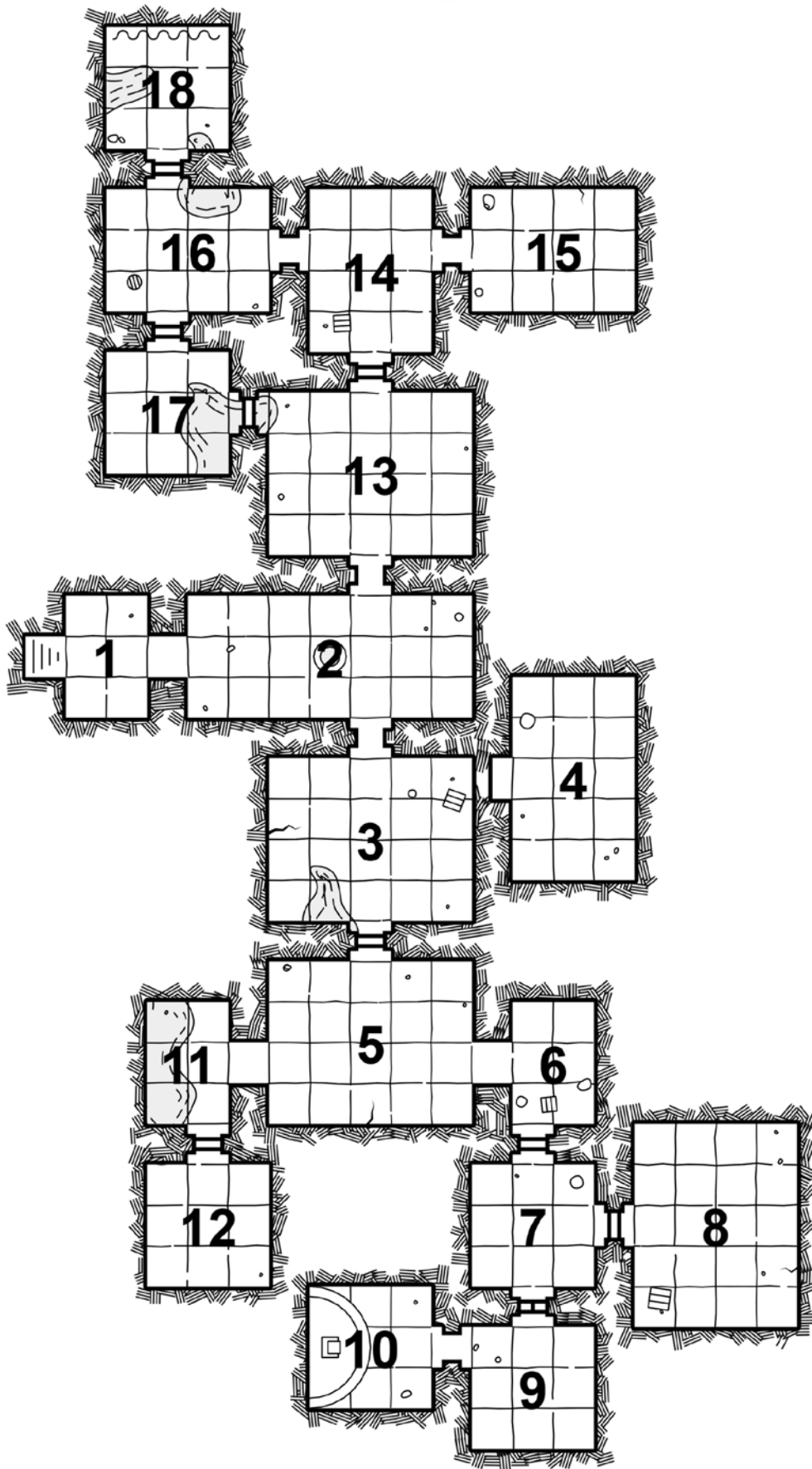
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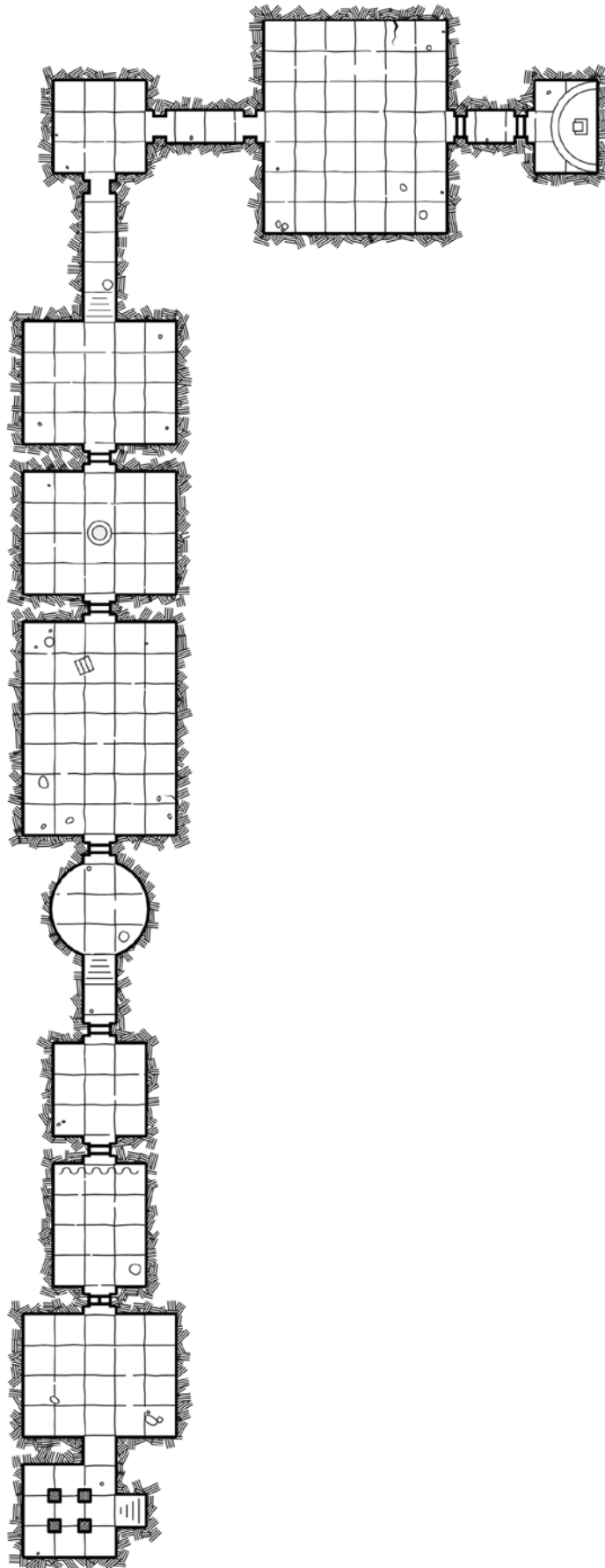
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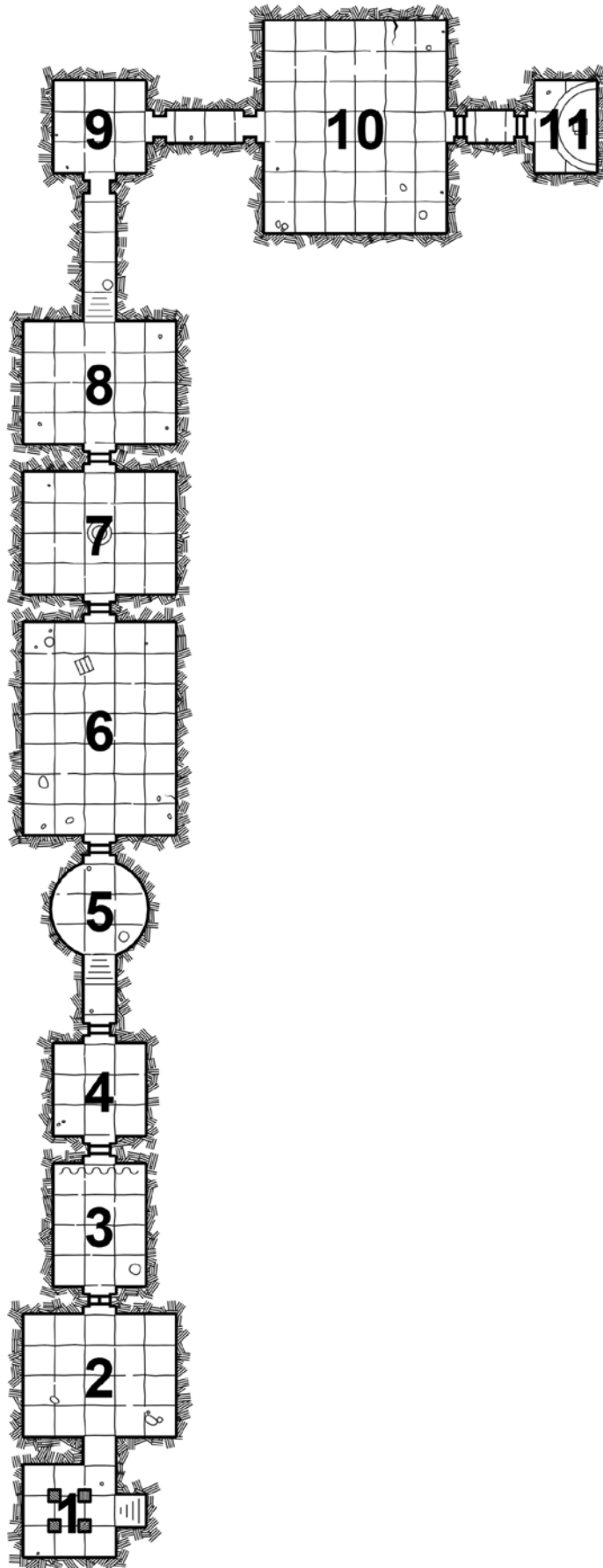
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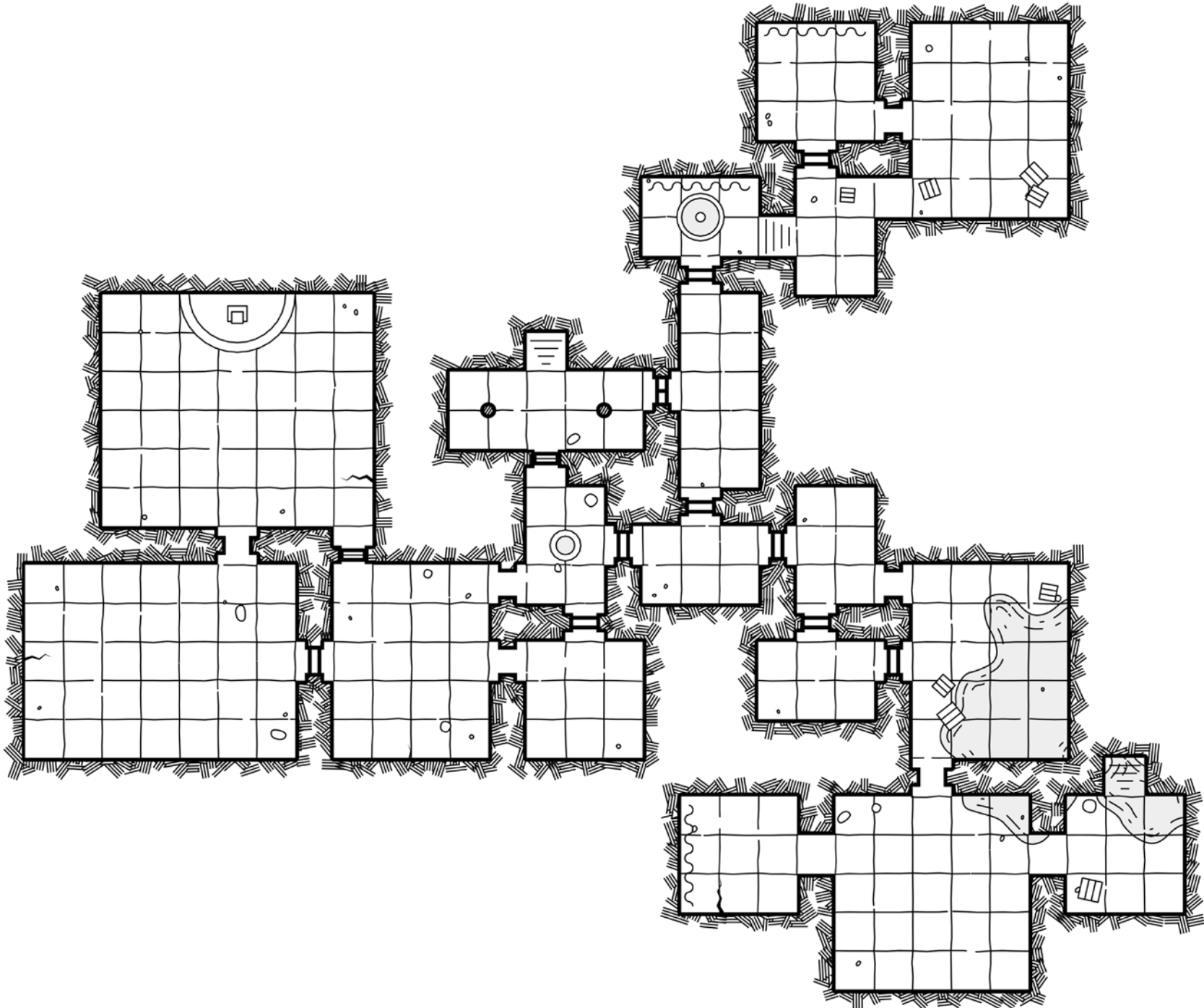
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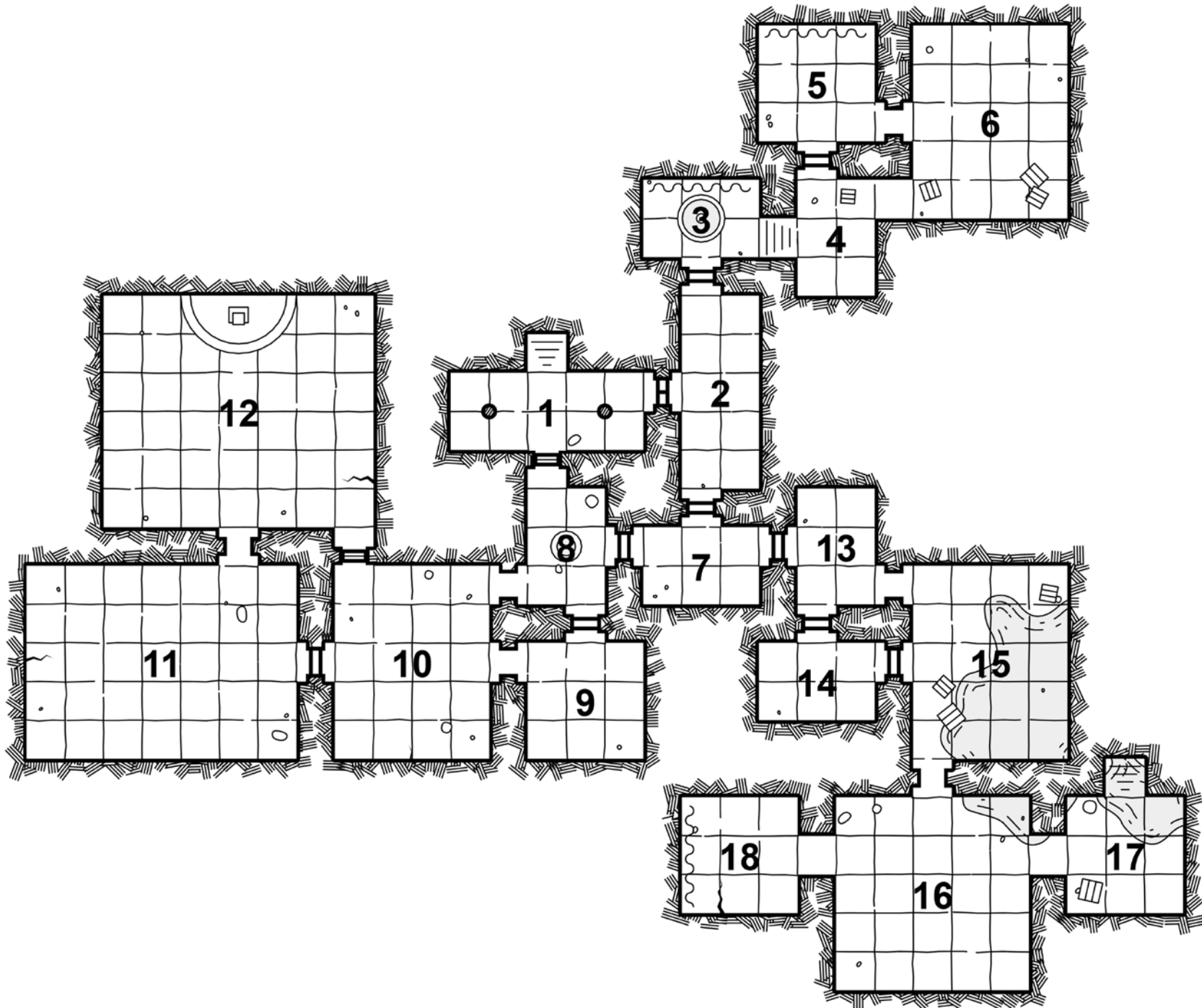
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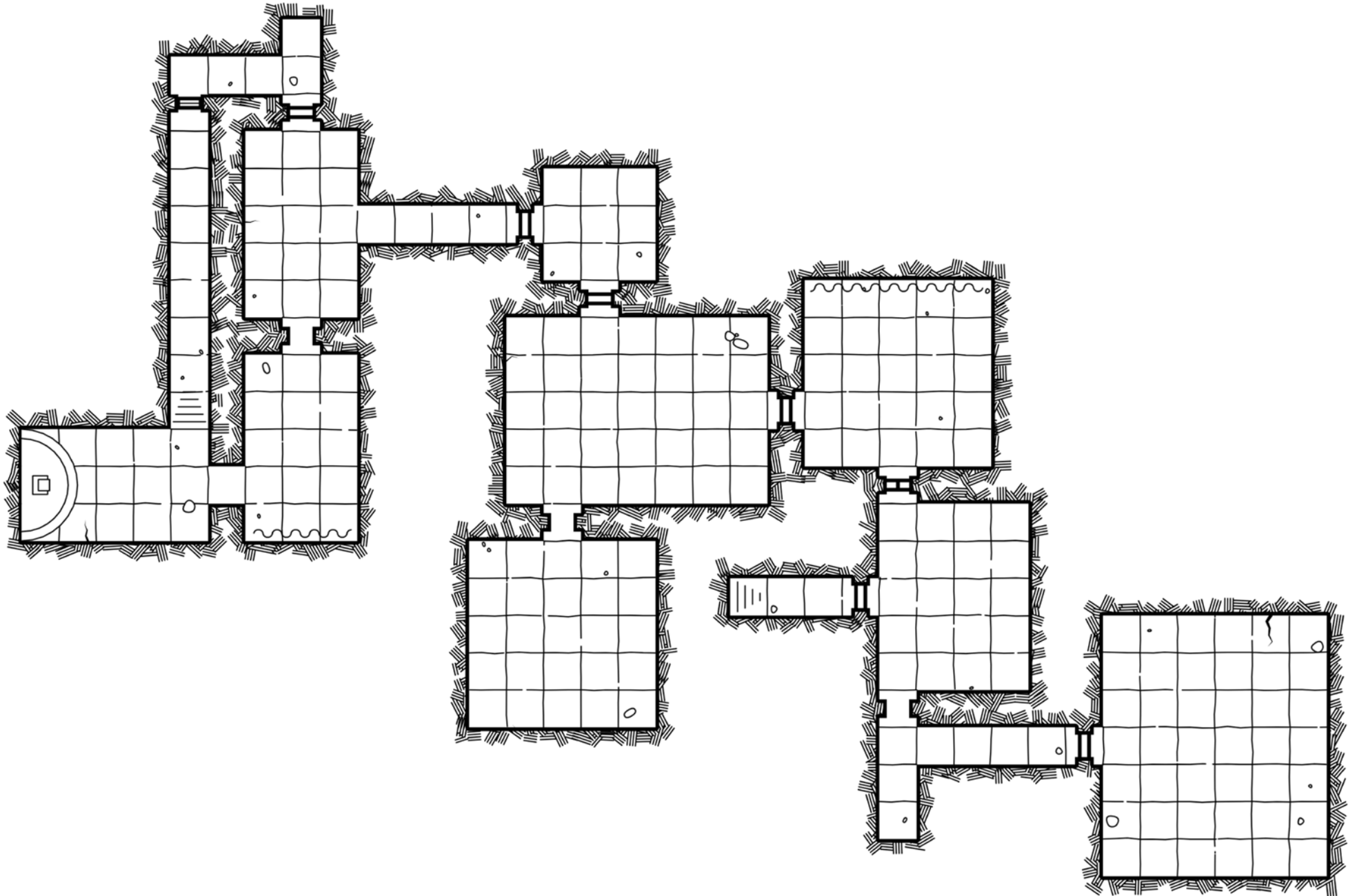
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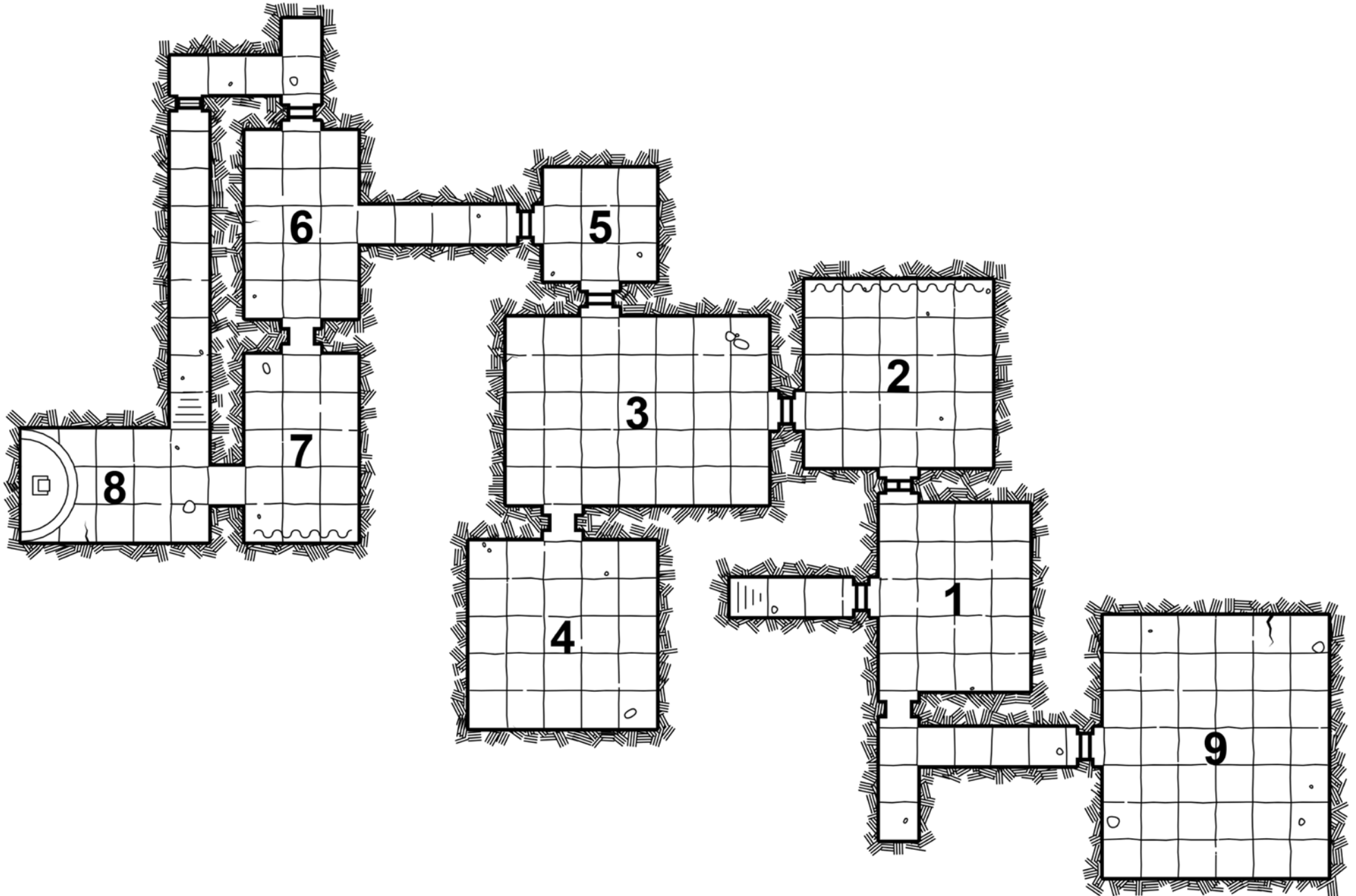
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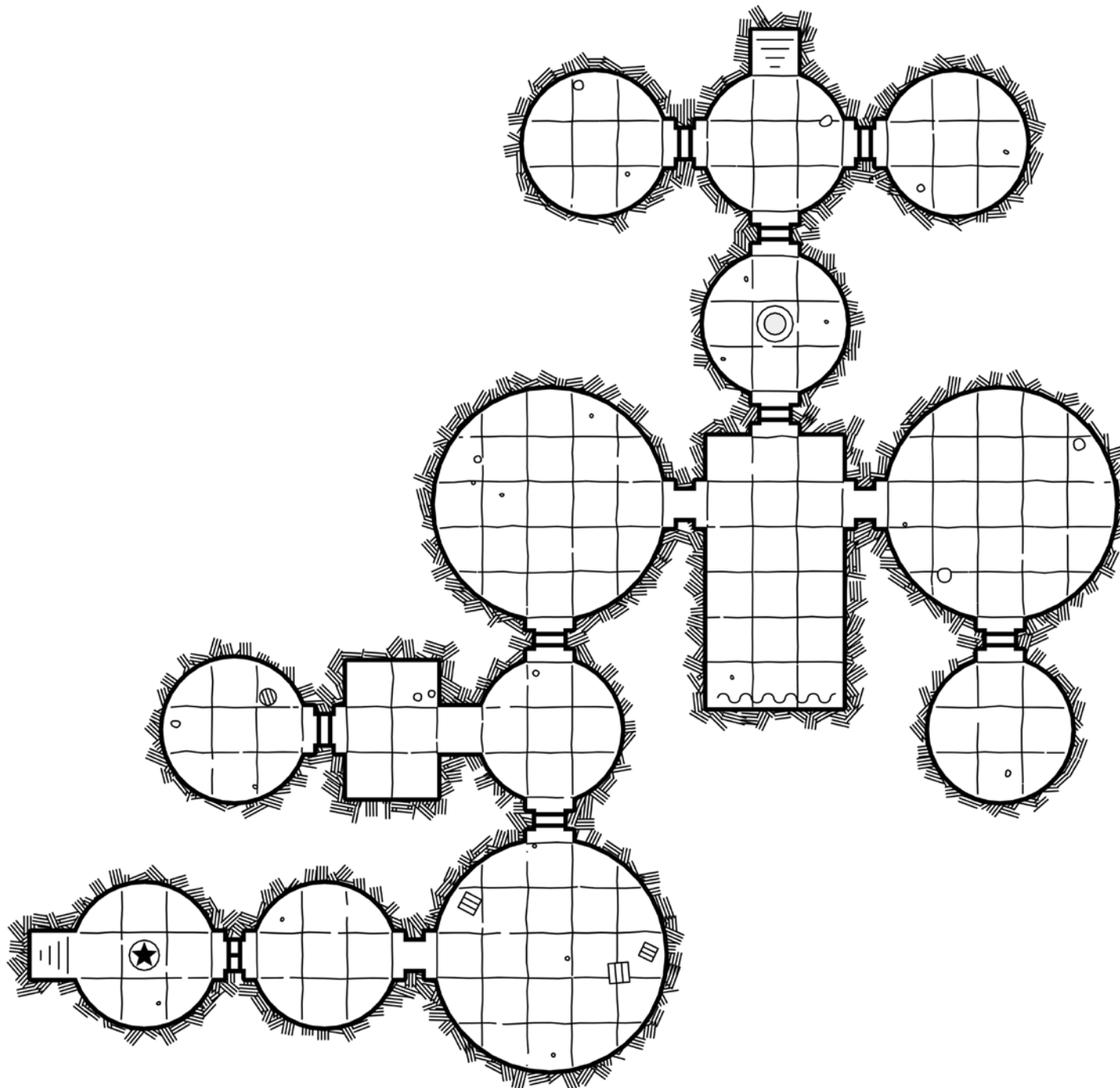
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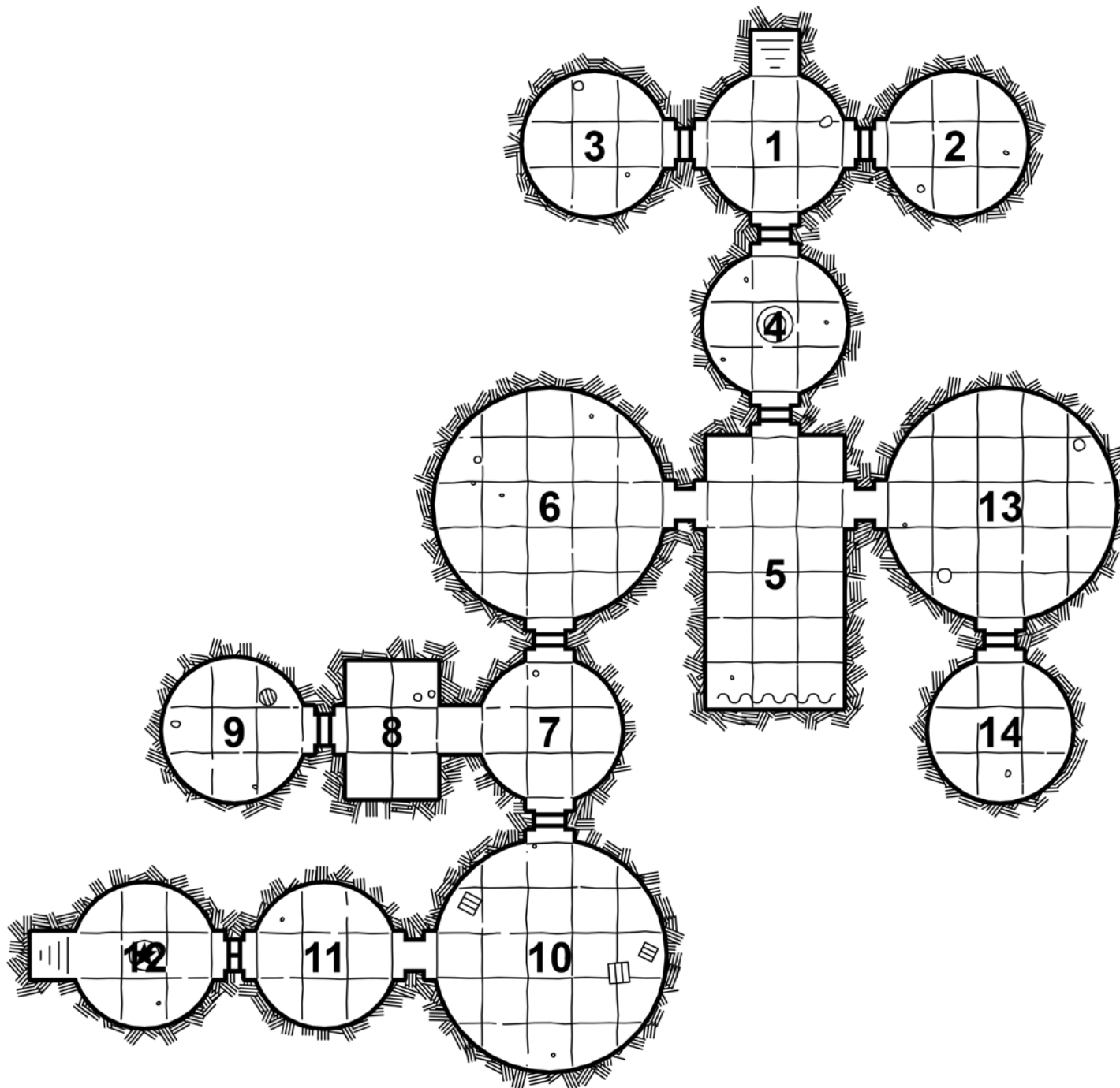
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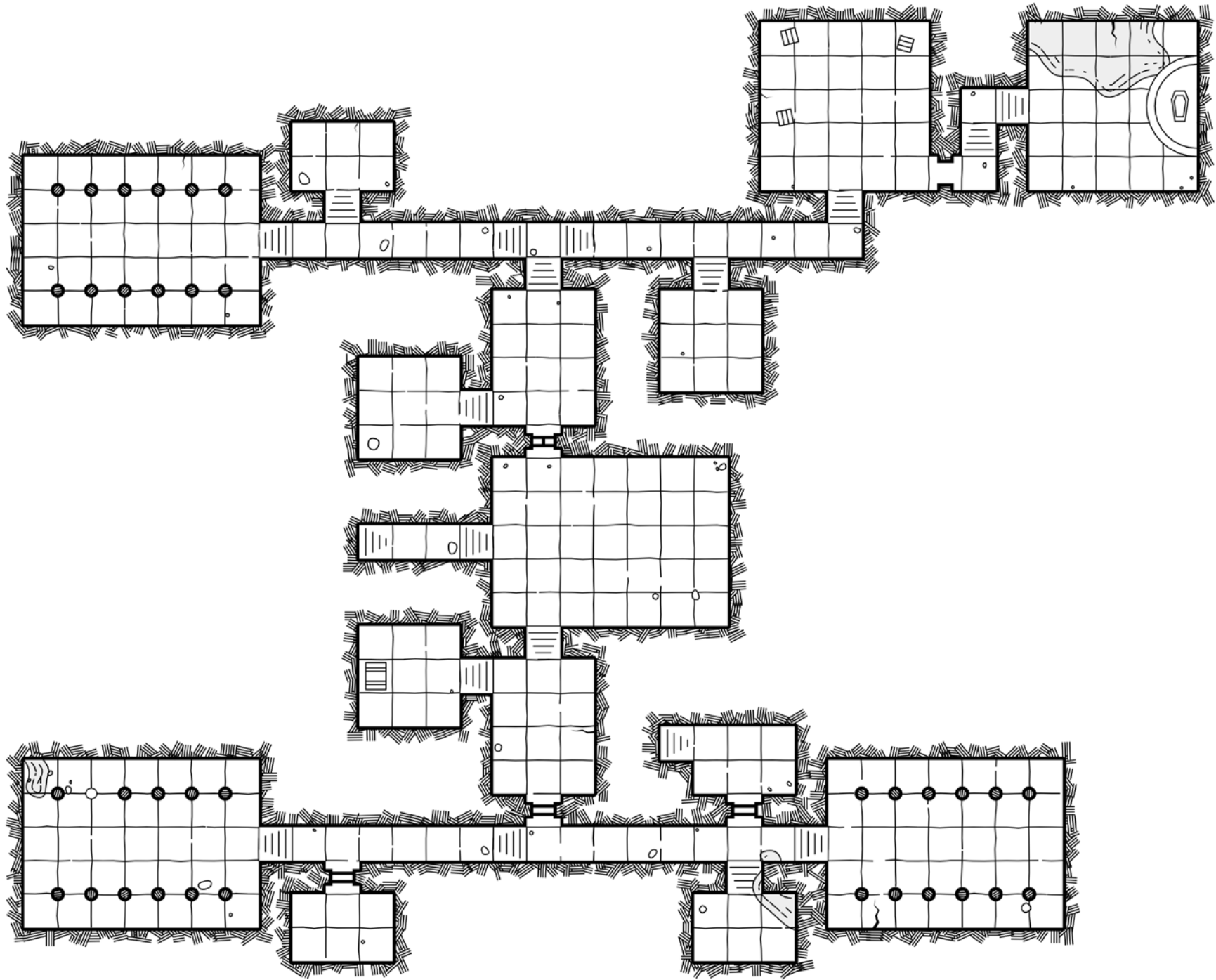
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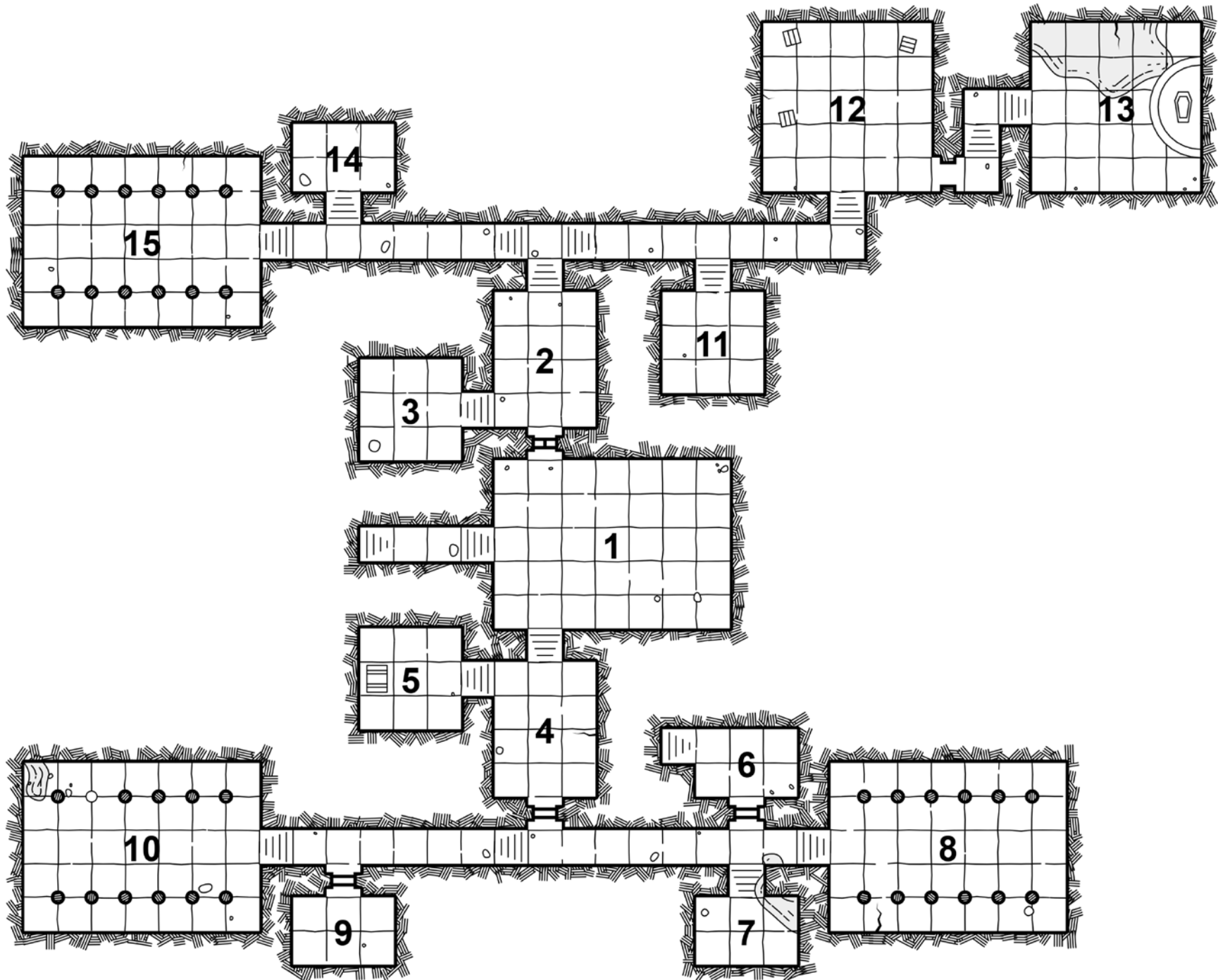
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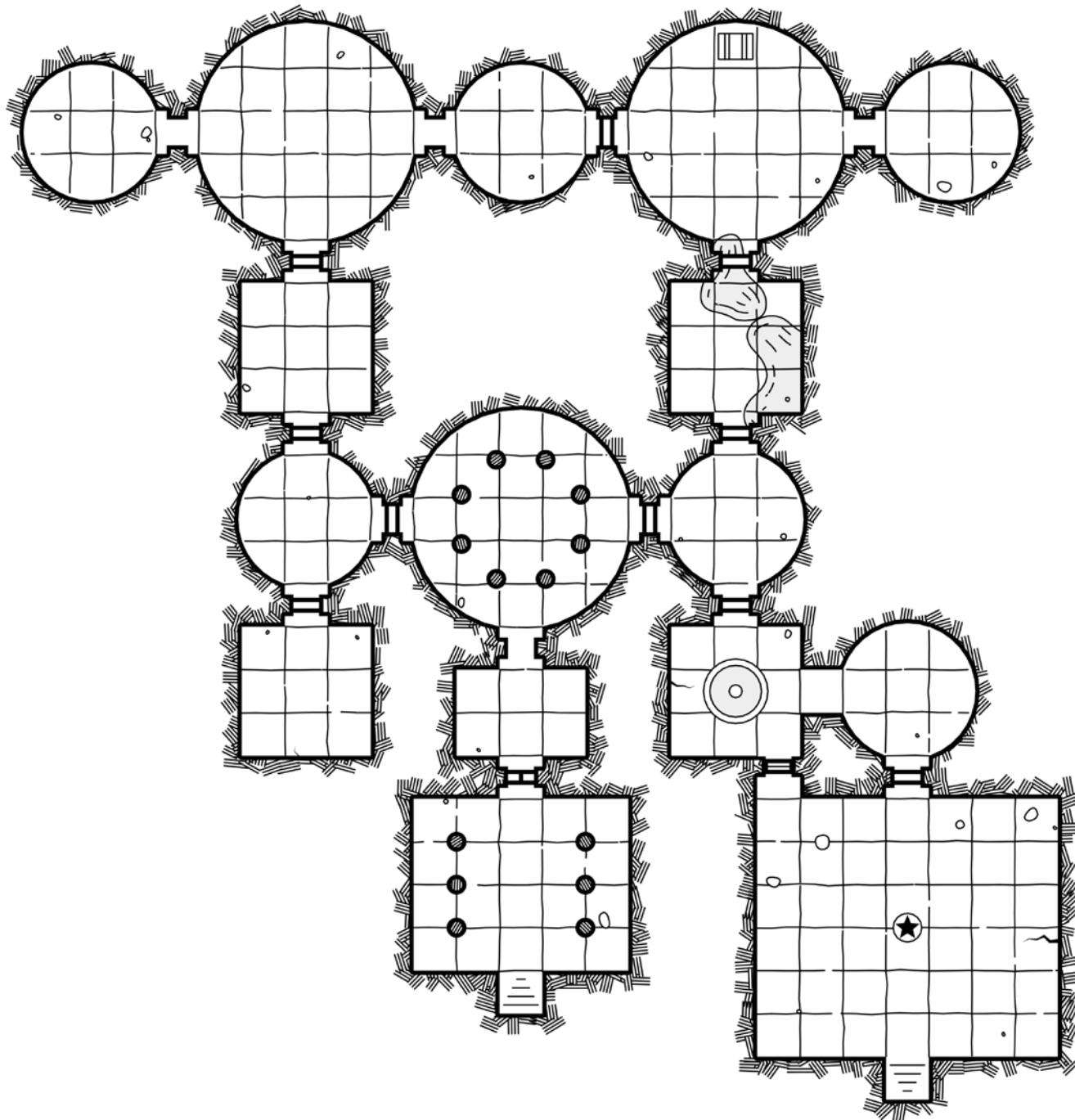
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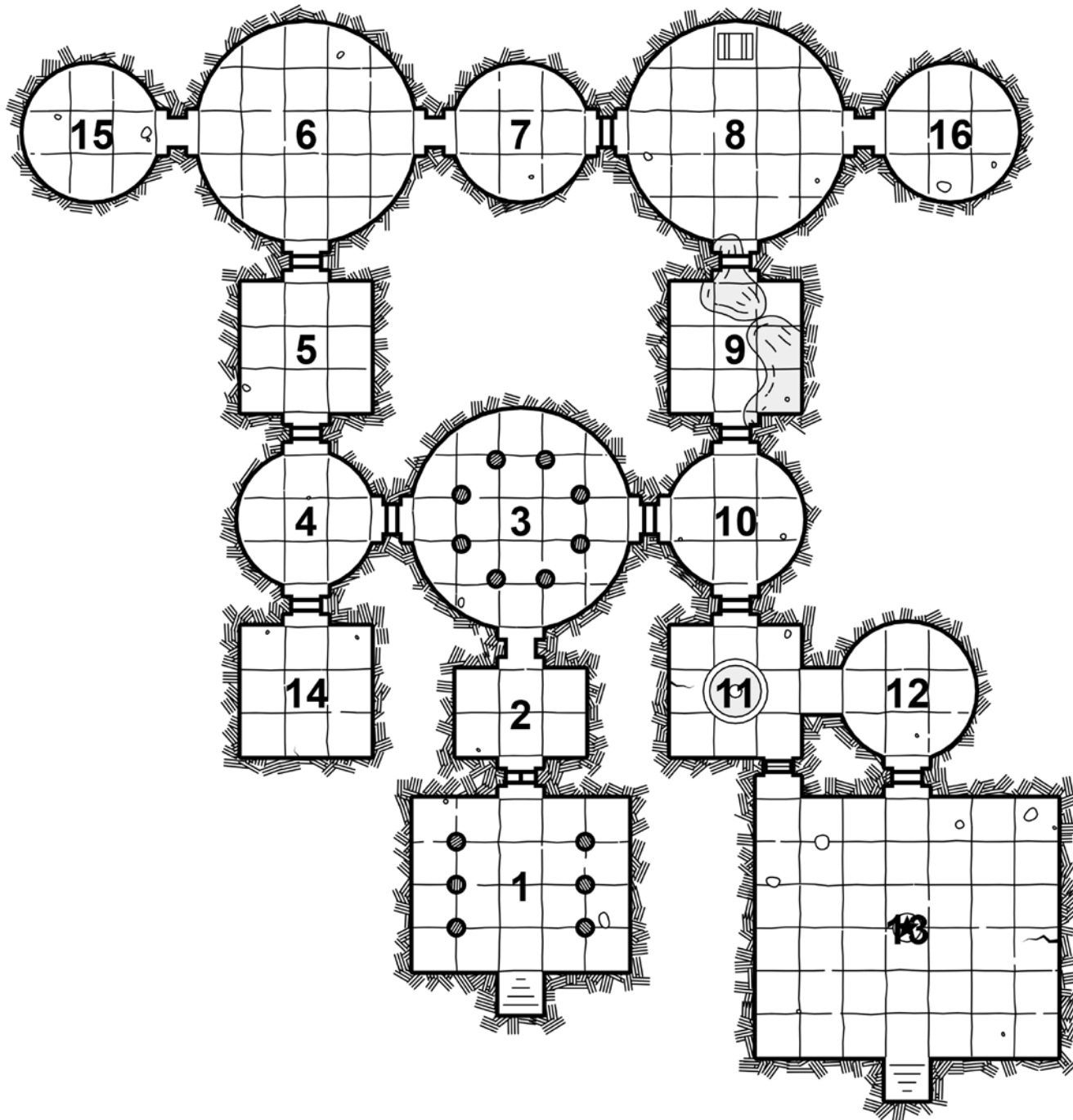
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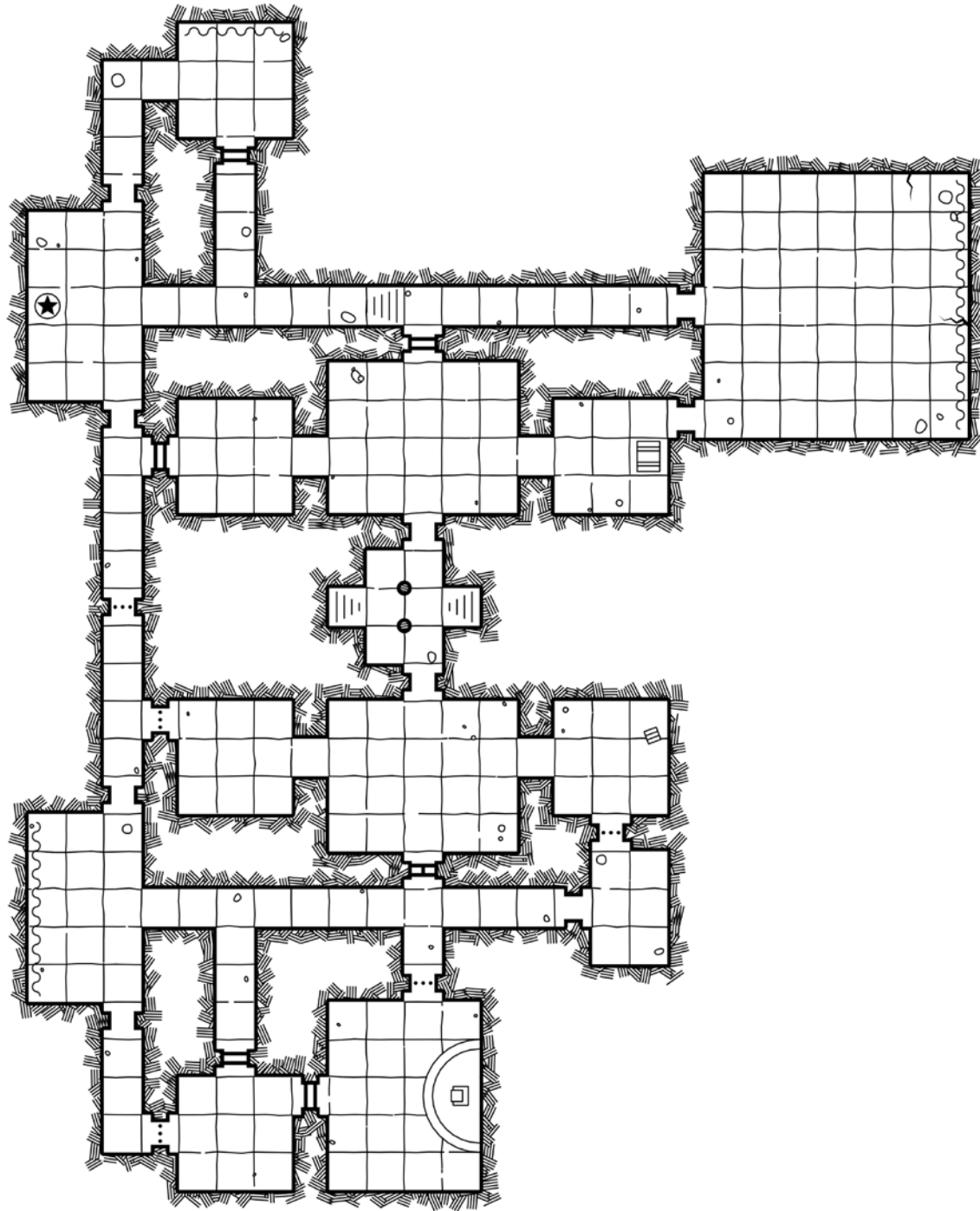
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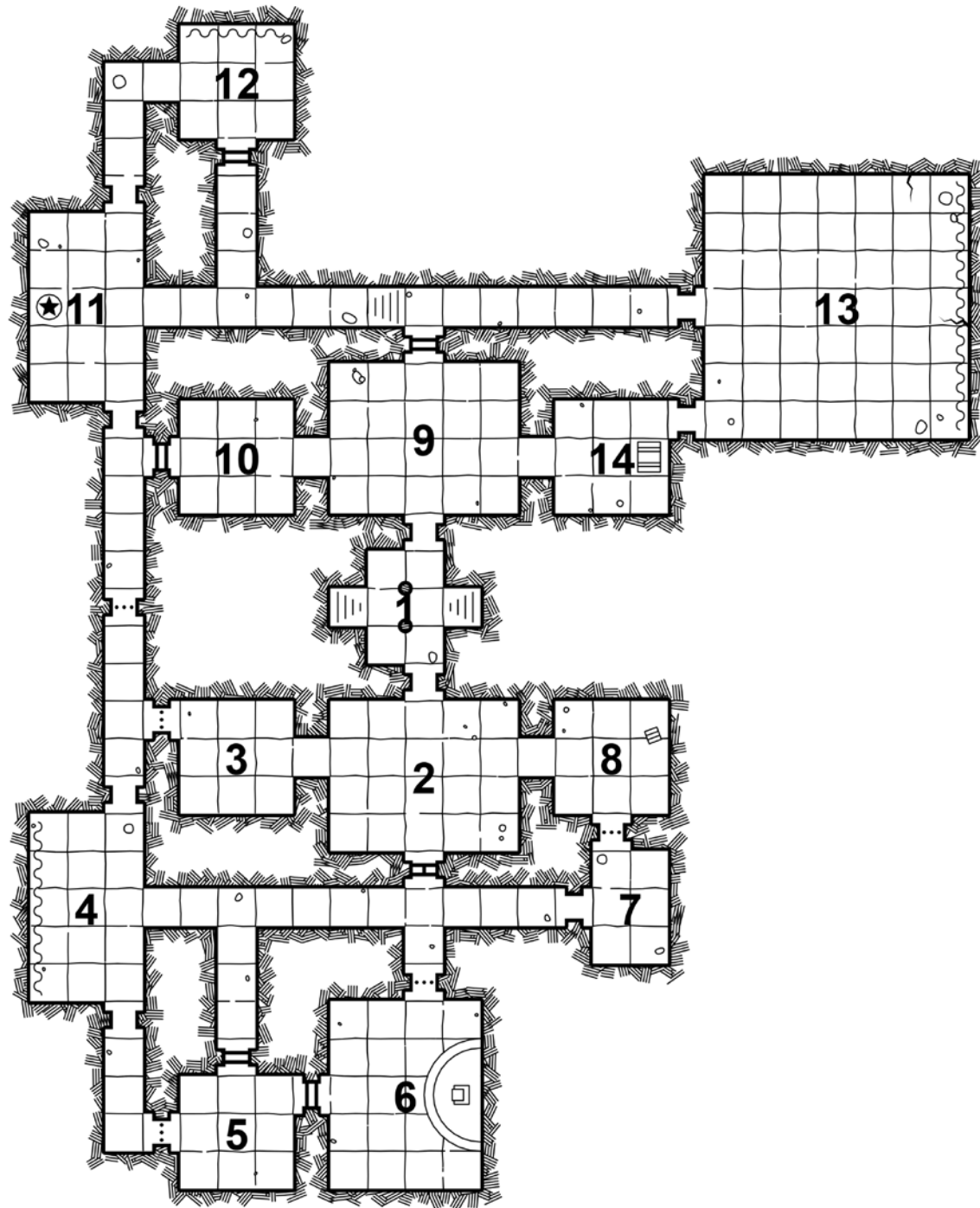
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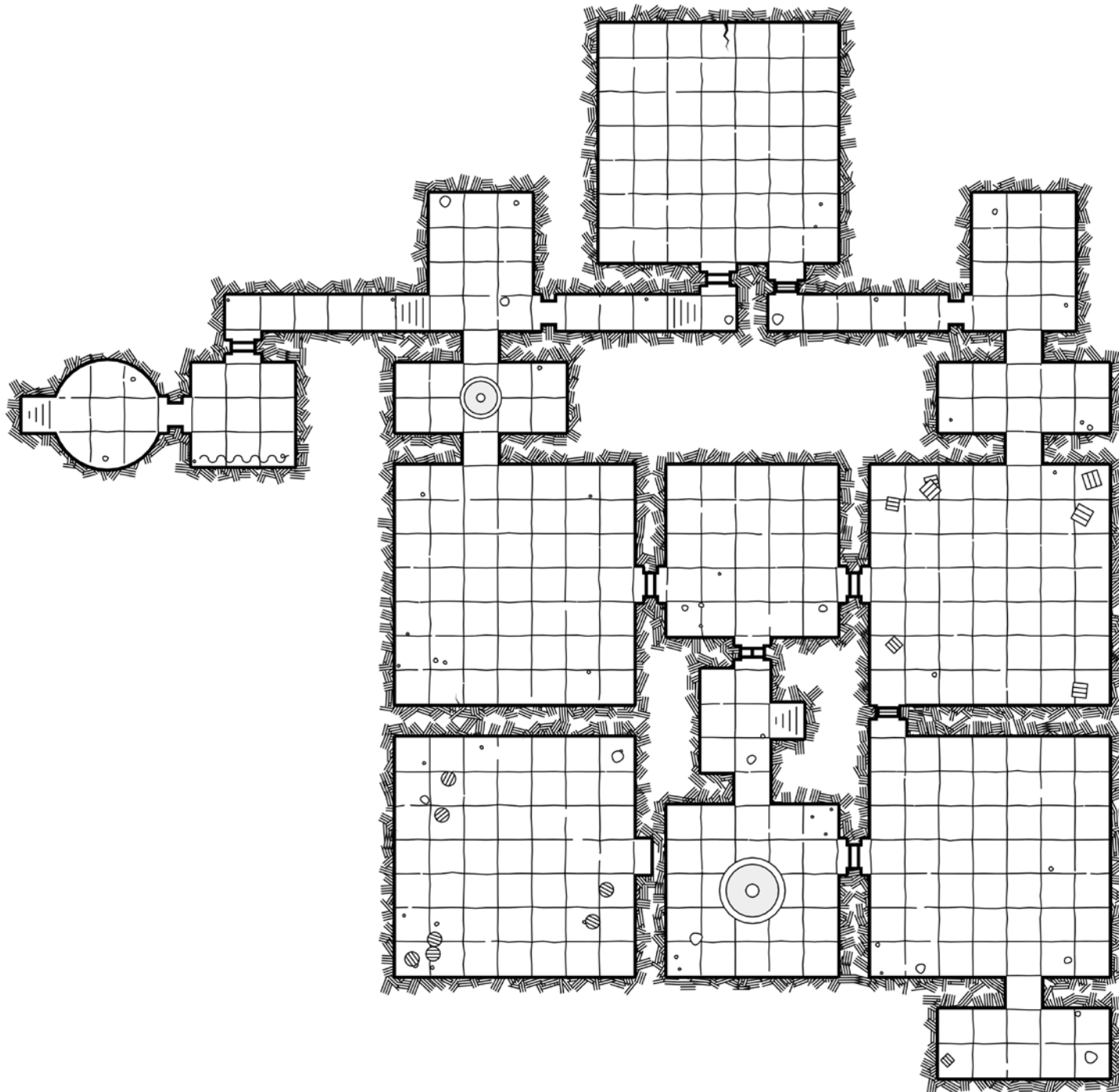
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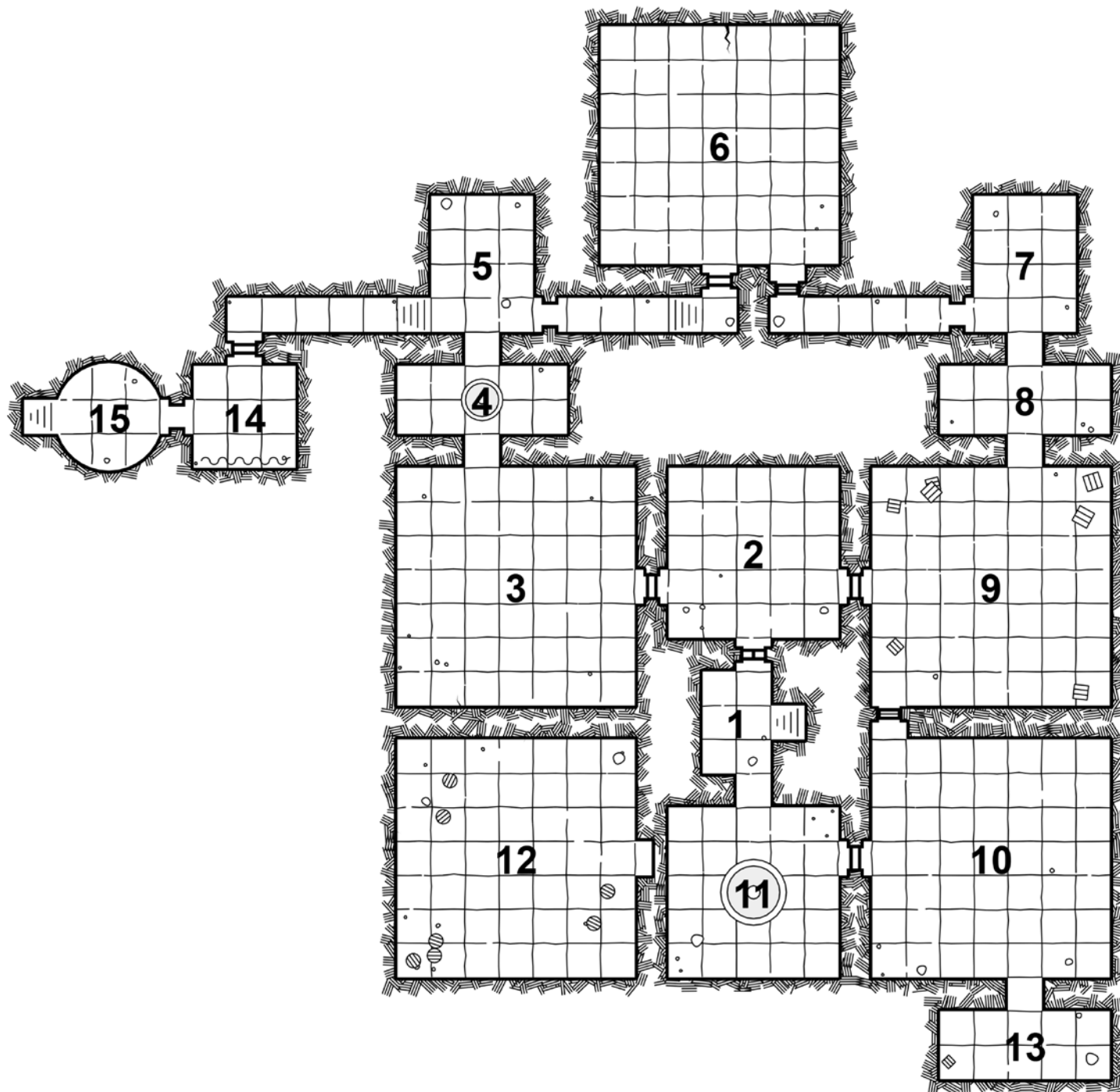
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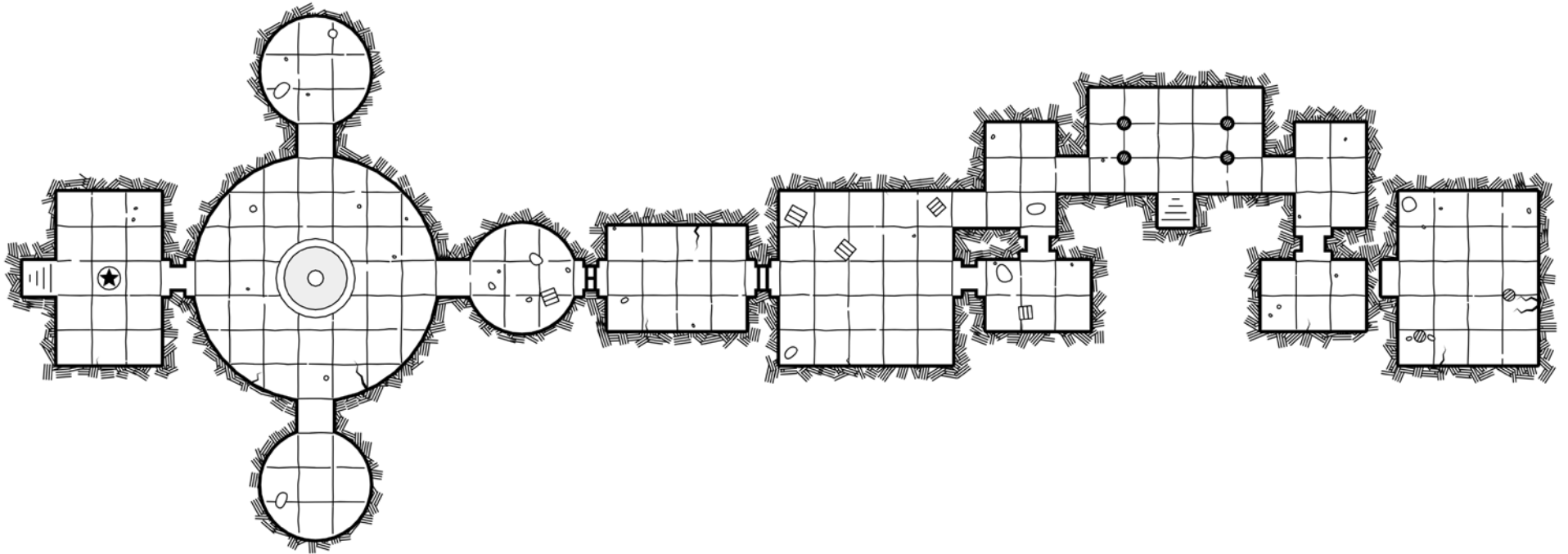
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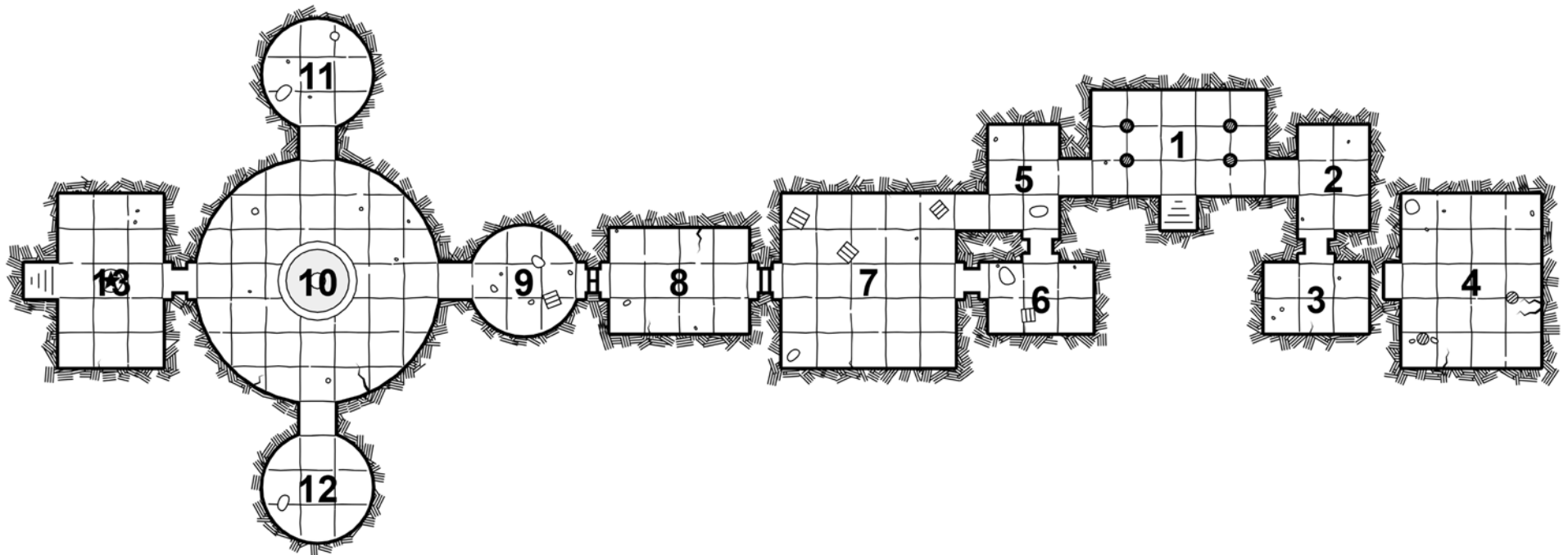
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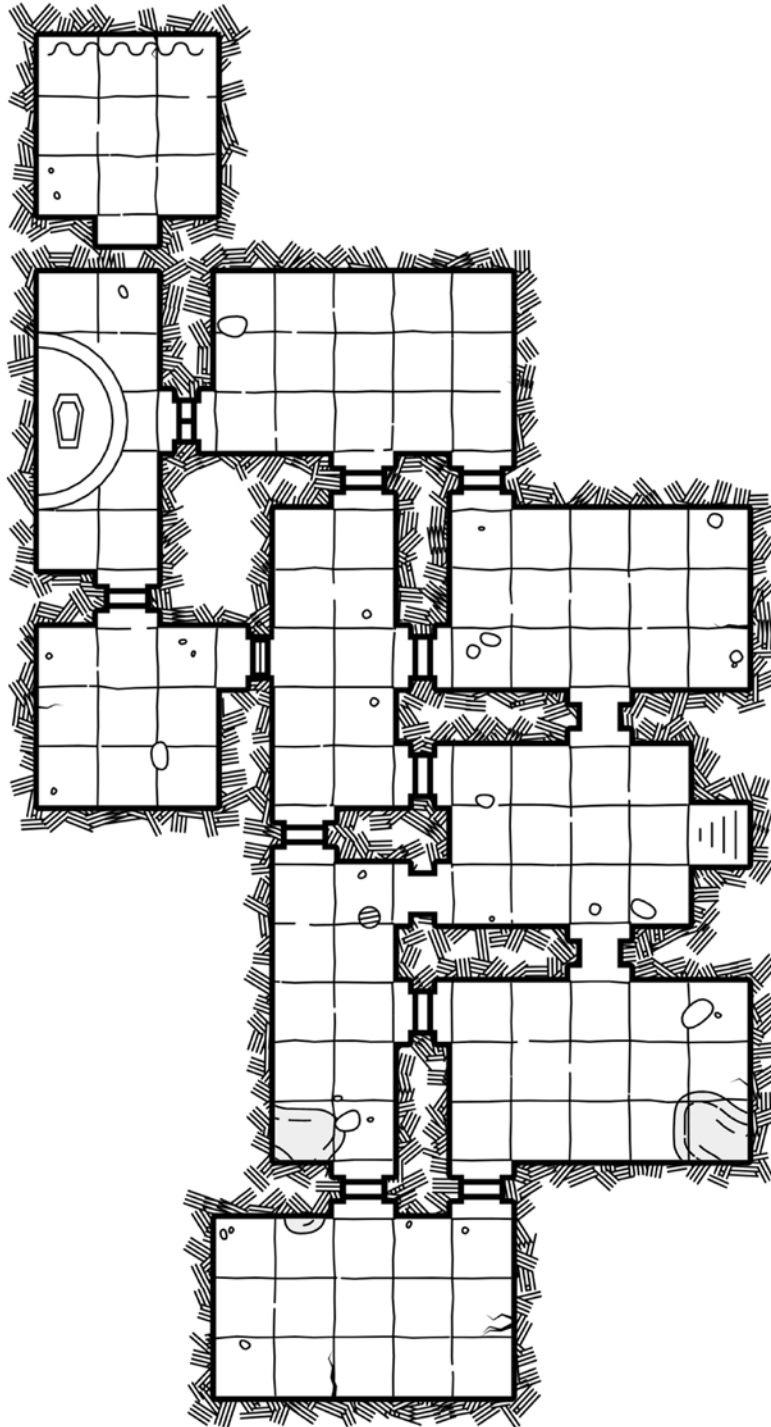
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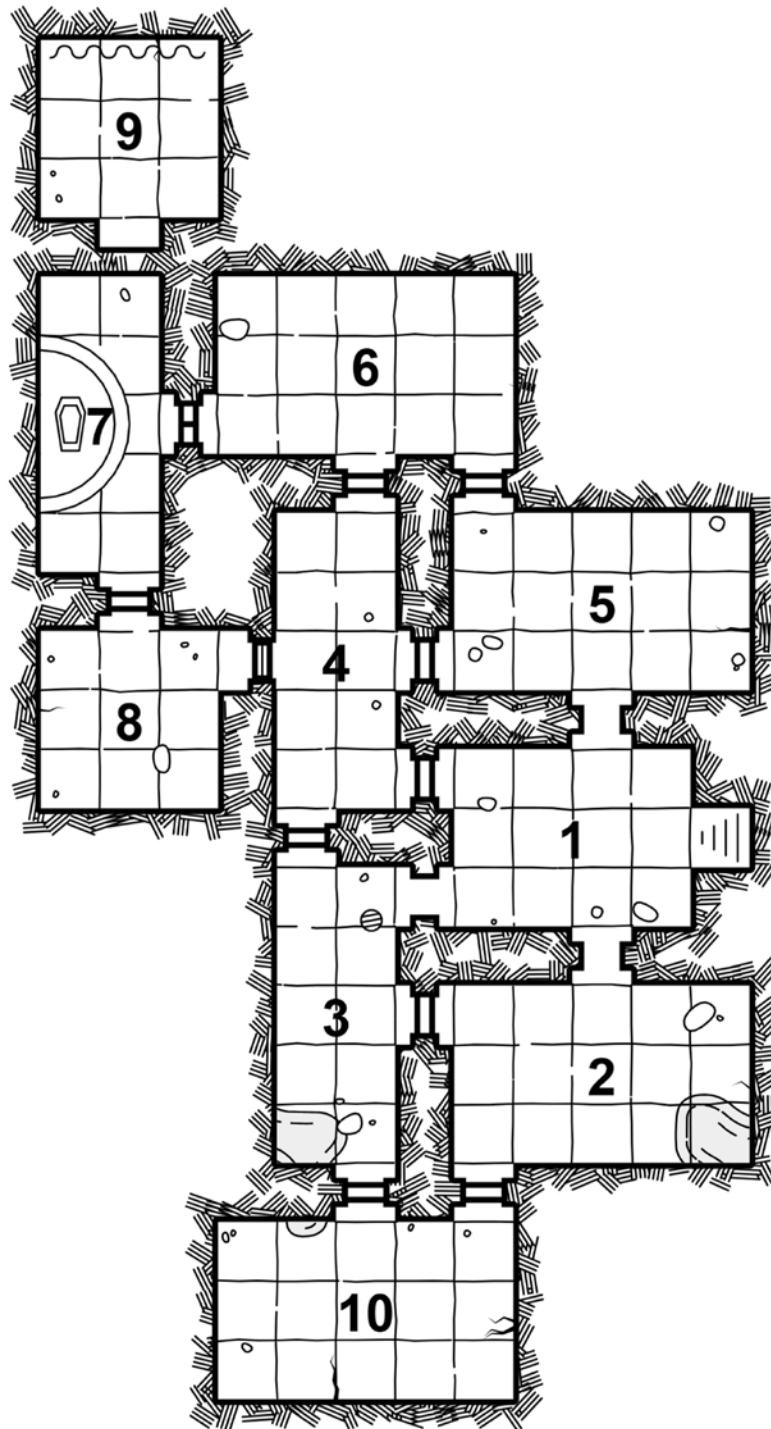
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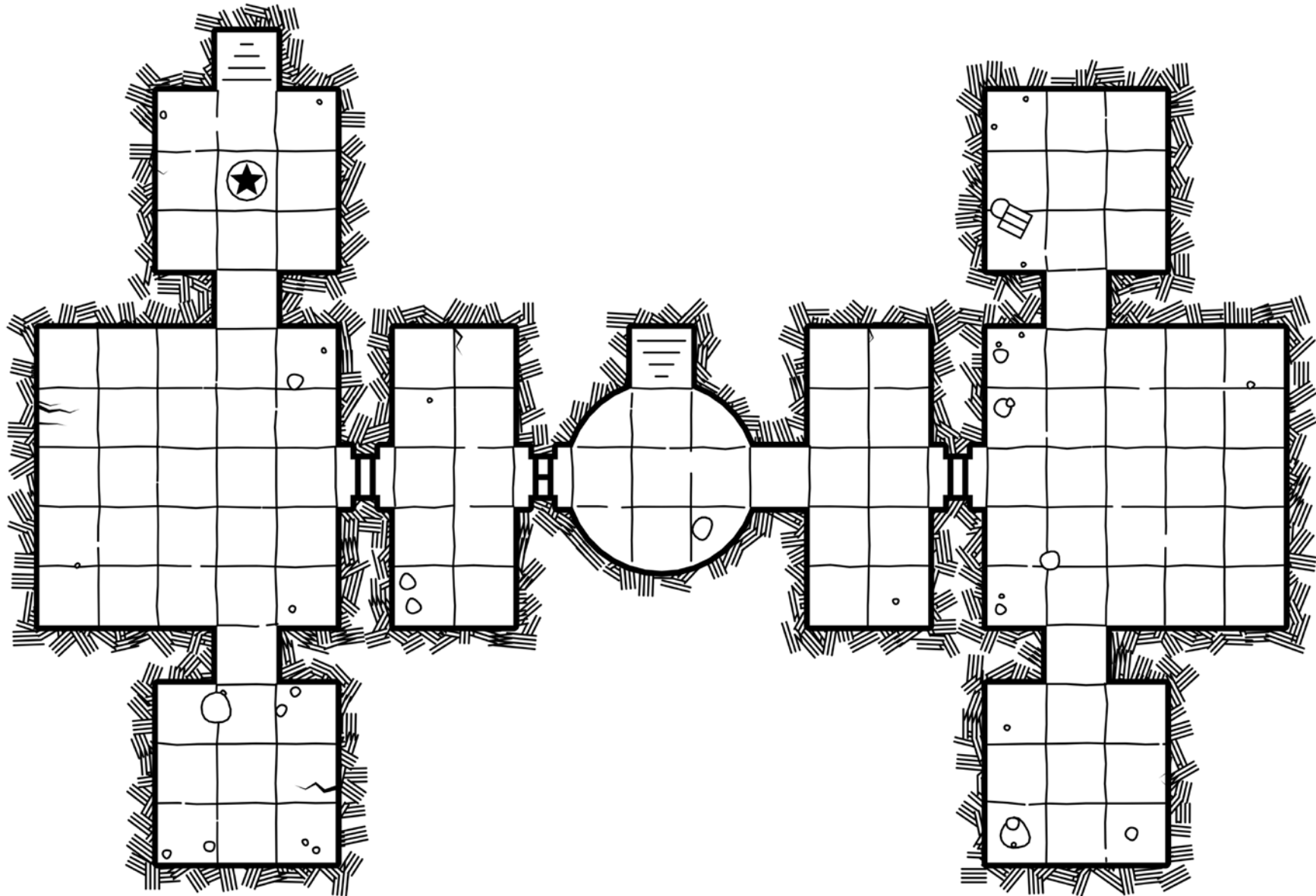
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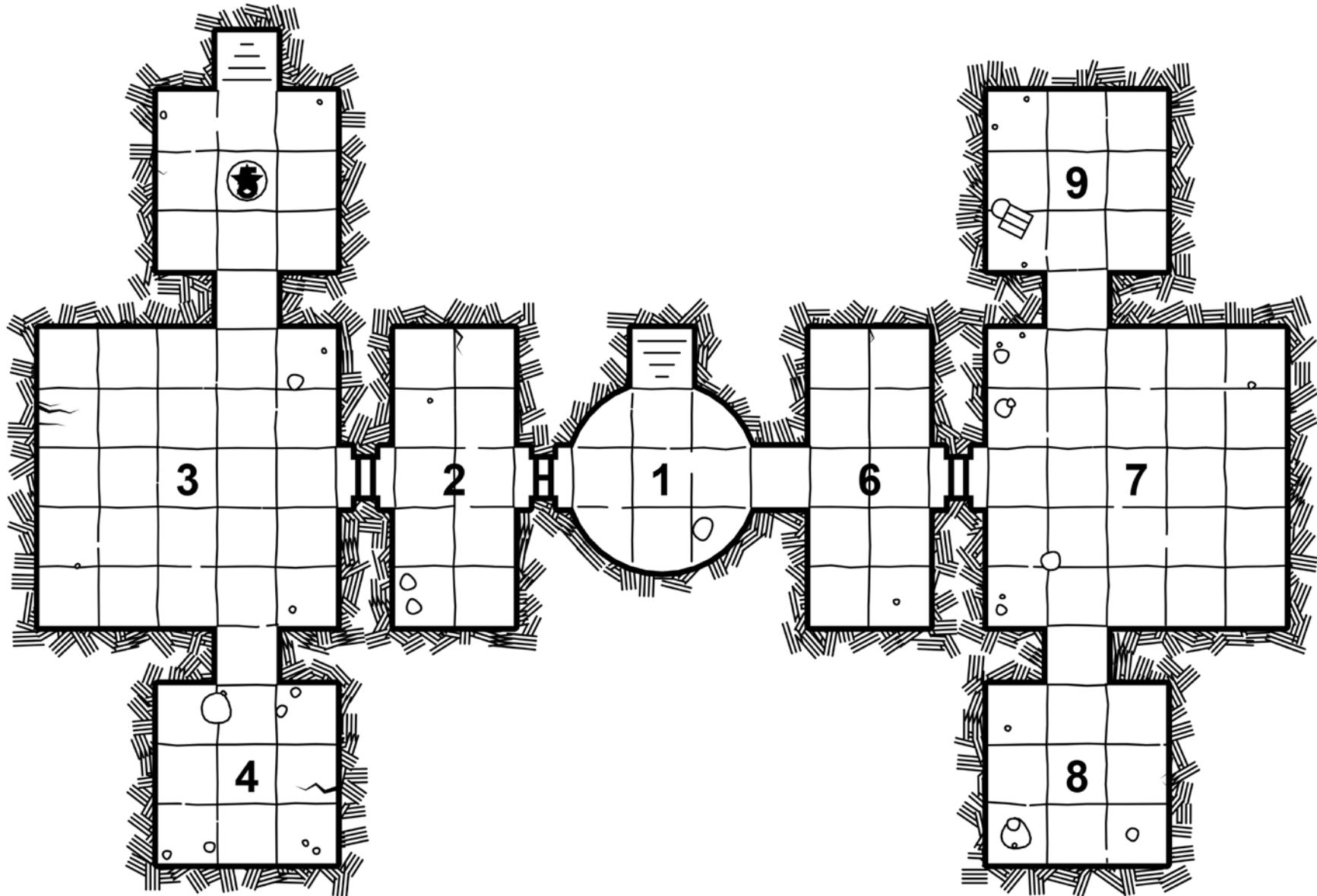
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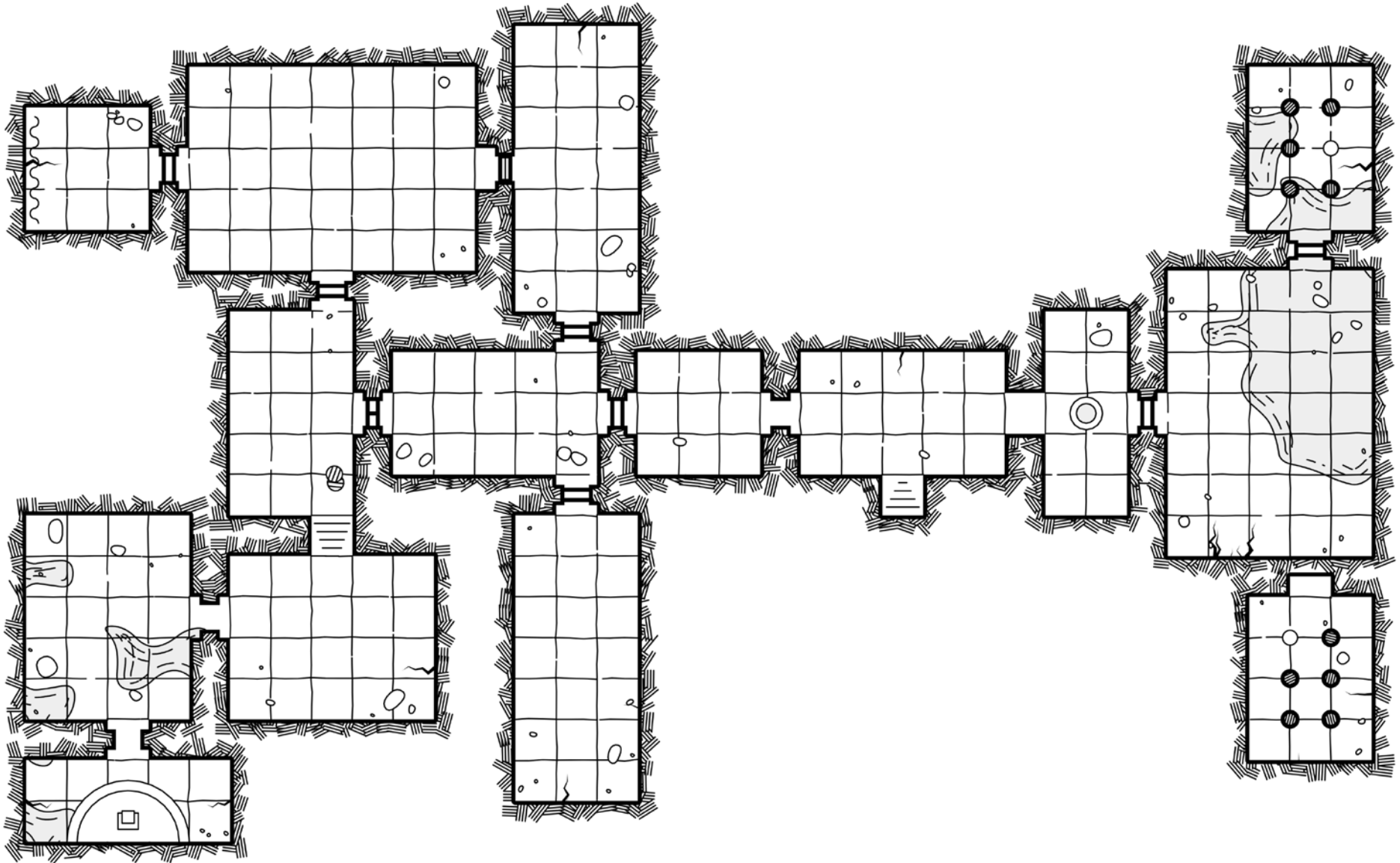
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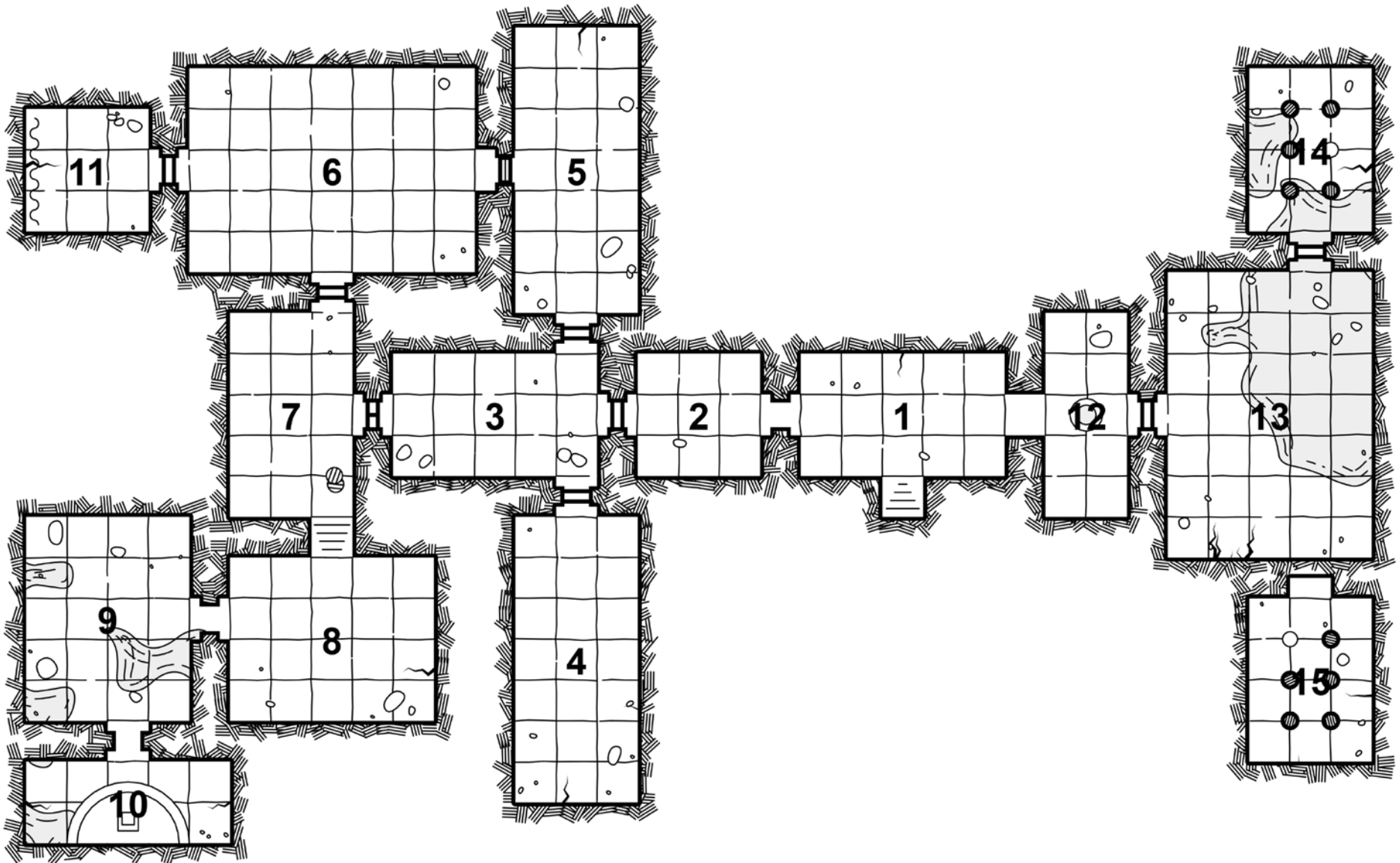
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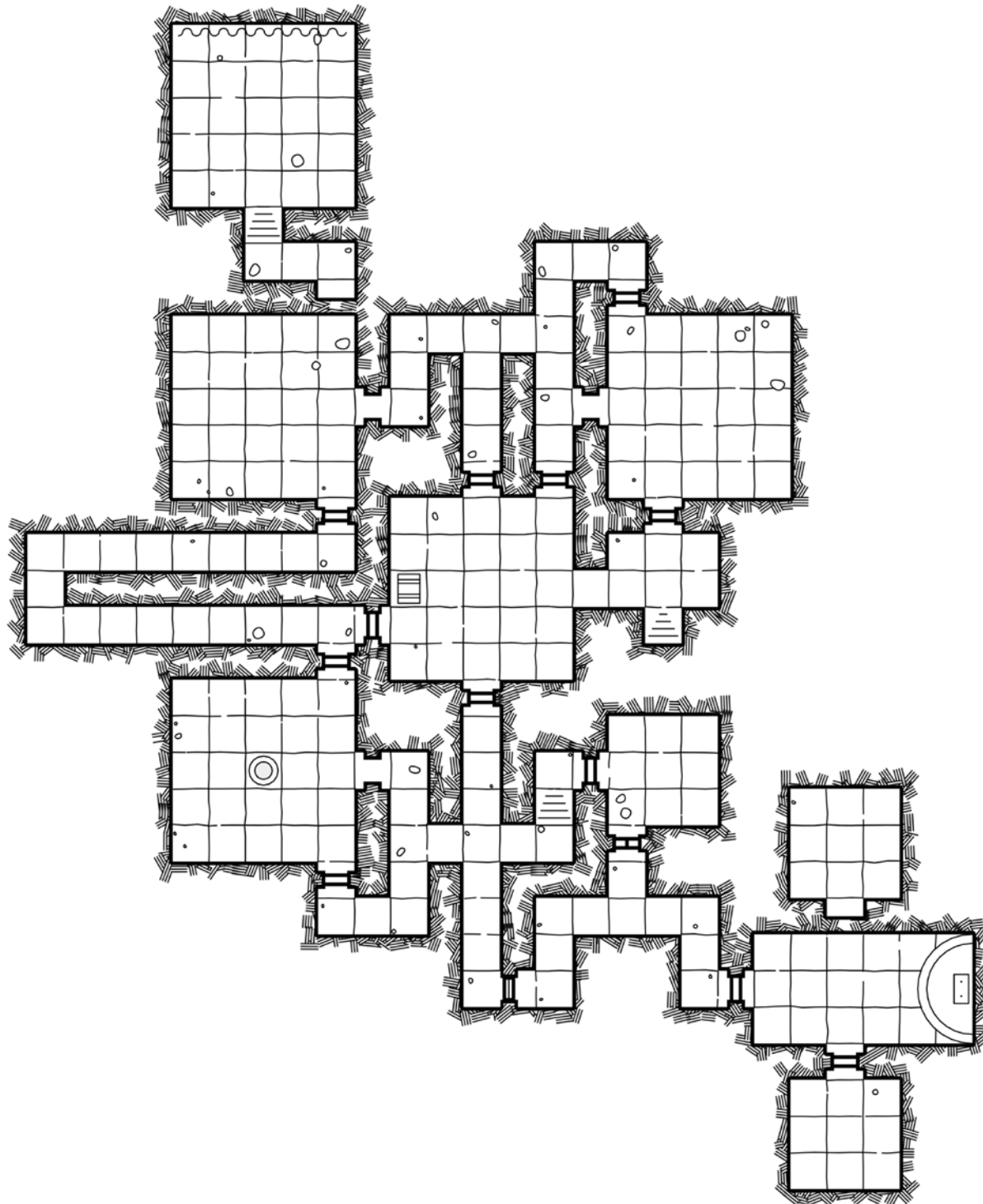
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Map 19



Map 20



Map 20

