

Out In The Cornfield

A ONE ROUND LIVING CITY ADVENTURE

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This is a standard RPGA Network tournament. A four-hour time block has been set aside for this event. Begin by passing out the player characters; pass them out based on class only, not revealing gender or race. Instruct the players to leave the character sheets face down until you have read the introduction. Then, tell them to study their character sheets, select spells, and notify you when they are ready to begin the adventure.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a nametag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character. The actual playing time will be about three hours. Make sure you use the last 20 to 30 minutes of the event time block to have the players summarize their characters for each other and vote. You should be completely done with the event and all scoring by 15 minutes before the end of the time slot.

The standard RPGA Network voting procedures will be used. Make sure you have finished voting before you collect the players' voting sheets. This way their votes and comments will not influence you. The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment, weapons and spells their characters have listed.

All attack and armor class statistics have been adjusted - if a player finds an error or wants to change things, refuse, and go with what is on the sheet, even if it is wrong. This is the only way to ensure that all players get an equal chance between tournament rounds. If you or a player does discover an error, please report it to RPGA HQ so that it can be corrected.

A note about the text: Some of the text in this module is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in *bold italics*. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

DM's Introduction

"Out in the Cornfield" takes place far out of Ravens Bluff, in the small town of Suiter's Hill. When the adventurers arrive, most of the townsfolk will be under the evil influence of an ultroloth, who is setting about conditions to free itself from a magical prison. In running this adventure, there are two themes to consider.

Firstly, the setting is a small, rustic town. In comparison, Ravens Bluff is a cosmopolitan and sophisticated metropolis. The townsfolk view strangers with suspicion and distrust, especially demihumans. Even friendly folk will acknowledge demihumans as

freaks. In addition, remember to check the encounter reactions, modified by a -1 penalty for being foreigners and -2 for being a demihuman. So even the gorgeous half-elven 18 charisma Sunite has only a +4 reaction adjustment modifier, while the hideous dwarven 6 charisma warrior has a total of -5. Yes, this really punishes low charisma characters, but such characters regularly reap the benefits of min/max-ing with their other stats.

Secondly, the entire town and the fields around it are in a fiendish "Reality Wrinkle". In essence, the ultroloth, "Eyes of Fire", is virtually omniscient and omnipresent, but NOT omnipotent, within this wrinkle. As a result, the PCs should feel a presence watching them, a sense of wrongness in the air, and a foreboding of evil behind the simple facade of the town.

Moreover, the ultroloth is capable of using a few of its powers at a distance, such as *animate object* and *solid fog*, but, with the exception of the designated encounters, these will only have dramatic effect, such as slamming doors behind the PCs or obscuring vision. The range for these effects is 500 yards, which should encompass most of the town, although some places may be beyond its influence. The places effected will be determined by the ultroloth's location.

Remember, every time the ultroloth acts, it will be accompanied by a signature effect, such as the faint sound of a rattle or the rustling of wings. These sounds do not come from anything physical or from a special direction, but manifest as a by-product of the strange combination of magics in effect. They have no real game effect but to occasionally warn the PCs.

These themes, alienation and powerlessness, are not standard in Living City events. This event should be played for maximum creepiness and challenge. Surviving and defeating the ultroloth's plans should be a memorable and major event for the players.

Adventure Background

The Maztican continent has, for most of its history, been undisturbed by lower planar entities, seeking to use native populations to further goals concerning the ancient Blood War between the tanar'ri and baatezu. Of course, there are exceptions. Centuries ago, a powerful ultroloth accidentally arrived in Maztica. Aware that it had stumbled across unexploited territory, the fiend began appraising the land.

In short order, it discovered that the natives used a bizarre pseudo-magic, called *pluma* or *hishna*. It realized that this was a unique, although tediously subtle, magical expression. If the secrets of this magic could be plumbed, the fiend could sell them to both sides of the Blood War, making a huge profit.

Unfortunately, the natives weren't overly cooperative, and the subtlety of their magic was by no means a weakness.

Centuries passed, as the ultraloth languished in a beautiful obsidian prison. Ironically, the fiend became well versed in Maztican magic by way of observation. Helpless, it waited until its captors were finally defeated and destroyed. The temple was looted and vandalized. The foreigners (i.e.: The Golden Legion from the Sword Coast, including priests of Helm,) took every treasure they could, including its beautiful prison.

Out of the temple, the ultraloth felt its powers gradually revive. It couldn't yet break free of its cage, but it developed some ability to influence the world. On a long voyage across the sea, back to the home continent of these foreigners, it made its move. Unfortunately, one of the mortals was a powerful priest of the god Helm, who thwarted its plans.

Unable to banish the fiend and unwilling to destroy its prison, the priest brought the fiend to a temple, far off in the Vast. Years passed, as the ultraloth languished in a new temple, wondering how many centuries it would have to wait this time around.

It didn't have to wait long. Two months ago, a group of bandits fought the priests guarding its prison, along with a fortune in Maztican treasure. The priests lost and events have been set in motion to finally free the fiend from its centuries long captivity.

Player's Introduction

It started on a bright autumn day. You all were going about your business, when a message boy came knocking at your door. He had a worn envelope, which was curiously addressed to "Adventurer of Ravins Bluffs". Your actual name was written underneath in a different script and ink.

Give the players Player Handout #1. The boy has no knowledge of the letter or its sender. He was simply given the letters and a silver piece and asked to deliver them by a dark haired stranger. He will stand around waiting for a tip, giving the characters a gap-toothed smile if he receives a generous one.

Well, with your usual precautions, you get around to opening the message. In crude and large script, the letter reads:

Adventurers of Ravins Bluffs,

The town of Suiter's Hill is in dire need of help. The Baglin Brothers had a big fight with the local clergy of Helm. Lots of dying happened on both sides, but we lost our Sheriff and our Main priest. And, even badder, the temple burnt down to the ground. I can't

be certain, but I think something wrong happened when the temple went aflame. So, come as quick as possible. You can speak to me at the Maize House, which is our local inn and saloon. As for payment, we got heaps of Maize Teakin treasure from the temple, and, since you all be helping us, I'm sure Helm ain't gonna mind.

Signed Jeb Galtin, Novice of Helm and Mayor of Suiter's Hill.

The PCs will have little difficulty finding out where Suiter's Hill is located, three weeks northeast of Ravens Bluff. They are allowed whatever time they need to buy rations and supplies. While equipping for the journey, they will encounter others who have received similar dispatches. Allow the PCs to introduce themselves, choose spells, and decide on what equipment they are bringing with them.

On your long journey, you came across other travelers and adventurers, some of whom appear to have received the same call for help.

Information regarding the particulars of Suiter's Hill is not easily available. Local history (Ravens Bluff) and information gathering are virtually useless. The following information can be gathered if the PCs have:

- strong ties to merchants (i.e.: merchant fame over 10)
- They are involved in farming or agriculture (i.e.: two proficiency slots in agriculture or priests of Chauntea)
- By asking at the temple of Helm or being a priest there-of.

The following information can be gained:

- Suiter's Hill is a small but prosperous town, with vast fields of rare grain.
- The grain is called Maize and originally came from the Maztican continent, but grows wonderfully in the local soil.
- Suiter's Hill is the only place in the Vast where Maize is grown, so the town is growing rich off the profits.
- A priest of Helm, who also brought a great deal of Maztican treasure, originally brought the Maize to Suiter's Hill.
- There is a small temple to Helm in the town, with five priests.

Information on the Baglin Brothers can be obtained by the usual methods either in the city or on the road.

- The Baglins are a family of bandits, from a long line of villainous ancestors.

- The arrival of a powerful priest of Helm in some small town in the boondocks ended the family's generation long tyranny.
- The surviving Baglins wandered around the Vast, and, eventually, headed off towards Ravens Bluff, where they took an active participation in the war against the city.
- Four of them are still alive. The oldest, Zed, is a crazy priest of Talos. The two middle boys, Rhys and Kuzz, are big, dumb fighters. The runt of the family, Slick, is a scrawny mage, who trains bears.

News from the town of Suiter's Hill is completely unavailable. Nobody has been to or from the town for weeks. Of course, it isn't along a major trade route and it is a self-sufficient community. Folk normally don't leave town except after harvesting the maize.

Welcome to Suiter's Hill

In the distance, you can see that Suiter's Hill isn't so much a hill as a slight plateau, but, as it is in the midst of miles of flatland, it stands out like a soaring pillar of stone. The town covers the top of the plateau, which is surrounded by endless acres of tall stalks of grain. As you make your way through these vast fields, you see barns, farmhouses and storehouses, seemingly flooded by the grain.

As you approach the looming hill, the footsteps and voices of the party are echoed by unnerving silence. The road seems walled in by the towering stalks and the soil is a dark, bloody red. Suddenly, the air is filled with a cacophony of screeching and the sky over you goes black.

Roll for surprise. The sky is filled with hundreds of crows that hover for a moment over the party, then fly off to a different part of the cornfield. The crows do not attack the party under any circumstances, but riding horses are startled and non-proficient riders must make a wisdom check at -4 to remain mounted. (Note: trained war-horses will not be startled.)

If the PCs chose to attack the crows, let them. The crows just fly away and even if the PCs kill every last crow of this flock, there are still thousands of them in the cornfield.

If the PCs use any type of alignment detection in the cornfield or in the town, they get a consistent sense of an omnipresent evil. Even other PCs detect as evil, although their ethos is still discernible (i.e.: lawful, neutral, or chaotic). Spells allowing communication with extraplanar entities are worse than useless within this area, as the ultroloth is capable of intercepting these spells and answering as it feels appropriate.

If the PCs decide to check out the town discreetly (i.e.: hide in shadows, *invisibility*, *wizard's eye*, etc.), they find the people going about their regular business. If they check out any place special, adjust the situation as appropriate.

The town is laid out around a central main street. At the end of the street are the burnt out remains of an impressive temple. Folk stare as you ride down the street. They don't seem overly friendly.

To your right is a large building, from which the cheerful clanging of a harpsichord emanates. The sign proclaims it to be the "Maize House Inn".

As you enter the building, the harpsichord player stops and the handful of town folk stare at you. All of them eye you suspiciously.

Ornamenting the walls and tables are elaborate stone, bone, clay and gold sculptures. There are figurines and statues of gold, ceramic masks studded with gems, a huge obsidian stone box decorated with carved images, vast tapestries of woven feather, and a skull made of carved rose quartz. The designs of each are intricate and foreign.

A big, balding man behind a bar counter sets down a polished mug.

"What can I do for you strangers?" he says with a wide smile. "Ain't had visitors for many a month, 'least not friendly ones." His hand resting on the shaft of a heavy crossbow.

The PCs will have to assure the townsfolk of their friendly intent, which will be hard to do if they begin to examine the treasure. Once the townsfolk are pacified, the PCs will probably have questions, which they can ask the bartender, Matthias, or any other patron. The answers will be similar no matter who they ask.

Note that the obsidian 'box' is actually the sarcophagus/prison of the ultroloth that has spread its evil influence over the town (see NPC appendix). The ultroloth will take no action against the PCs or risk drawing attention to itself at this time.

The dimensions of the sarcophagus are 5'x 4'x 3'. The carved images have been worn to the point of being illegible. There are indentations where gold ornamentation has been removed. If the PCs begin taking interest in the box and examining it closely, a disturbance will come from their horses outside, startled again by a small flight of low flying crows...

When asked about the big fight described in the letter, the saloon comes alive and everybody interjects to give his or her and points of view. If this seems strange to the PCs, remind them that such excitement is probably extremely rare in a small town in the middle of nowhere. Most parties will ask questions similar to the following:

Where can we meet Jeb Galtin?

“Ole Jeb, huh? Ain’t seen ’im for over a week now. Bit of a mystery, ain’t it?”

Where did Jeb Galtin go?

“I haven’t a clue as to where ole Jeb is off to. You oughta talk to Cassie. She ain’t too smart, but she might remember if her pa told her where he’s going. Maybe he’s a lookin’ for Slick.”

Who’s Cassie?

“Cassie’s ole Jeb’s daughter. Right pretty girl, if’n you don’t try lookin’ her straight in the eye, that is. Gonna be richer than a queen when she marries. Half the cornfield’s hers, though she don’t get it ’til she’s got a ring an’ husband. Course, she’s waiting for somebody brave, smart and special. Ain’t got the sense Helm gave a horse!”

Who’s Slick?

“Slick’s a scrawny mage, one of the Baglin Brothers. Heck! He’s probably the last one, him and his bear. They up and ran away. Don’t know why. Looks like he could of had all the treasure himself, what with his brothers being dead.”

What happened during the fight?

“Yahoo! That was a fight that you’d tell your grandchildren ’bout! It was a cloudy day, with a dry wind blowing through the cornfield; the kind of wind that makes the grain moan an’ hurts in your bones. We were all goin’ about our business, when a field boy comes runnin’ up and into the temple.”

“The Baglins are coming’, he said. Crazy Zed was in the lead, with Rhys and Kuzz right behind him, and ole Slick bringing up the rear with the bear. They was lookin’ like trouble. Them priests went right out, full in fancy armor, and started drawin’ lines across the main road. Them Baglins saw that and Zed let out a crazed scream and charged. Line after line he crossed, what with fire pouring from the sky an’ magic a flyin’. His horse burnt like a crisp and Crazy Zed just let out a evil laugh. Smoke streamin’ from his beard, he stretched out his hand and yelled out to one of them gods who’s name I ain’t gonna say. And the biggest lightning bolt you ever seen came crashing down through the roof of the temple!”

“The priests turned around to the temple, but Kuzz and his axe chopped right into the sheriffs back, followed by Rhys with his big sword through the gut. Ole High Watcher Neham went hand to hand with Zed, while Slick was castin’ away. The bear grabbed poor Farmer Bob and crushed his bones to mush, fancy armor or not! Well, the fight raged on and on, till another bolt came smashing into the burning temple. With a scream Neham smacked his glowin’

mace right through Zed’s skull, droppin’ him dead as a doornail. Then Slick let this magic arrow go, hittin’ poor Neham right in the face. Well, you ain’t ne’er seen nothin’ like it, but it up and melted his face right off: eyes, tongue, everything. Gruesome way to die, screaming all the way!”

“The street was quiet as a tomb. The Baglins looked around; three of them standing and all the priests dead, ’cepting Jeb, who got scared away by a spell, or so he said. Well, they waited until the fire was all done, then they went in. Slick said they ought to wait a few days, just in case of protections, but there was no stoppin’ the two big boys. They were in there for a long, long time, with the bear waitin’ outside, snarling and growling. Finally, ole Slick came running out, jumped on his horse and took off like nobody’s business. The bear went a following him.”

“Hours passed, and we waited, until Jeb came back. He gathered the town elders and the five of them went into the temple. Strange what they found in there. Big Rhys was found all sliced up at the top of the stairs leading to the vault and Kuzz was stone cold dead at the treasury door. Didn’t seem to be anything missing or out of the ordinary. Strange how Slick went running, ain’t it?”

When did the fight take place?

“The fight happened ’bout seven weeks back.”

What was in the treasury?

“Ole Neham was in Maztica when their heathen rulers were overthrown. He brought back crates of treasure for the glory of Helm. It was kept safe in the treasury and hidden in the vault. After the fight, the elders decided it would be best if all that treasure were kept in here and in the cellar for safe keeping. Looks right nice if’n you ask me.”

What happened to the bodies?

“I suppose the dead were taken off to the cemetery behind the temple. That’s only proper, even for bandits.”

Who are the elders?

“Ole Jeb is the mayor, and a novice of Helm to boot. The others are Zach, the Guiser, Gurney and Red. You can find Zach in his tannery, just follow your nose. Guiser’s down in his shop and Red’s probably at the forge. Gurney won’t be back ’til tonight. He’s off getting some clay.”

Any strange occurrences happen lately?

“I haven’t noticed anything out of the ordinary, ’cept for Jeb being missing.”

Can we see the treasure in the cellar?

“You all seem to be decent folk, but the treasure’s special. We can’t just show our town’s most valued possessions to any passing strangers. I’m sure you understand.”

Where can we speak to Cassie?

“You can find Cassie down at the Galtin farmhouse. It’s off to the north of the main road, down in the fields at the base of the hill. It’s a big one. You can’t miss it.”

Do you have any rooms for rent?

“Heck! We always have rooms for rent, nice ones too. One silver a night, two gold a month. Meals served twice a day and baths are out back.”

Looking around the saloon, a character with appraisal can notice that the strange ornaments are worth thousands of gp in material cost alone, ignoring craftsmanship or rarity. Of course, attempts to steal anything will be quite difficult, seeing as how the townsfolk are keeping their eyes on the PCs (i.e.: Pick Pockets at -40%, failure results in detection).

The harpsichord player, Kline, will take requests, but he isn’t especially good (i.e.: Musical Inst.=11). He is not a bard and doesn’t know anything special beyond what was stated above. The harpsichord is a gnomish invention and appreciating it seems to be an acquired taste.

Detect magic reveals nothing as magical, except for whatever the PCs may be carrying. The background presence of evil disrupts many detection spells. For instance, every statement detects as a lie, and every person as evil or under the influence of an evil enchantment.

When the PCs decide to leave the inn, determine the order in which they are leaving. If they leave as a group, have four PCs make saves vs. Breath Weapon. Failure results in 1 hp damage per tier, as an iron chandelier comes crashing down upon them. If only one PC is targeted, the save is at -3 and damage is 2 hp per tier.

As you make your way out of the door, you hear a strange rattling noise and the flapping of wings. Suddenly, the chandelier above you comes crashing down. The loud ring of iron hangs in the air as you get back to your feet. The townsfolk stare in shock. Matthias rushes to your side.

“You alright? Whew, that was a close call, weren’t it? I ain’t ne’er seen a chandelier come down like that; like it was trying to get you.”

Anyone checking the securing rope will find that it was untied, but a successful Observation Non-Weapon

Proficiency (NWP) check will reveal that nobody was near the securing post to untie it. The townsfolk are shocked by the “accident” and seem somewhat spooked by it. (“Sure does send a chill up your spine, don’t it?”). Nobody seems to have heard the strange sounds preceding the accident.

Temple of the Vigilant

The scorched ruins of the temple stand before you. The stone walls are charred but remain standing, whereas the roof has collapsed into the temple’s interior. The attached rectory appears to have been constructed out of wood, as it has been burnt to the ground. The doorway to the temple stands woefully open and overlooking the abandoned portal is the Unblinking Eye of Helm, carved in stone. As you approach, a boy comes up to you.

“I wouldn’t go in there if I was you all. Watcher Neham was a mean old man. I bet every inch in that building has a magic whammy! Yup! I wouldn’t set foot in there! ‘Course, if you want to, you first got to say ‘Grant me Vigilance’ on the top step. Elsewise, you ain’t gonna get in nohow.”

The PCs may have questions for the boy, Abe, but he really doesn’t know much. If asked about the glyphs, he’ll say that you have to say the passwords to get by them. (“Only person left in town who knows all the passwords is the mayor, Jeb Galtin, but he’s missing.”) He will, on no account, enter the temple. He will, however, relay messages, run favors, and guide the PCs about, especially if they give him something. He will tag around looking at the PCs, but will run away at the first sign of danger. Of course, he returns as soon as the danger passes.

If the PCs use divination magic upon him, he detects as evil, charmed and everything he says is a lie. If the PCs are hostile to him, he cries and runs away.

Finally, the PCs will have to give the password phrase mentioned by Abe, if they wish to enter the temple. If they do not give the password, they cannot enter the temple by any means, including flying through the collapsed roof, breaking through the wall, teleportation or ethereal penetration. This is because the entire sanctified ground is warded by a *forbiddance spell* (P6). Once the phrase is spoken, they can enter freely.

Upon entering the temple, you see the vast damage wrecked by the lightning strikes. The once smoothly polished stone tiles are now cracked and covered with ash and debris. Two huge stone pillars rise up forty feet into empty space. The walls are etched with Helmite liturgy, which has become

blackened by soot. The congregating chamber is filled with burnt timbers, and the few remaining beams, which hang precariously over the hall, threaten to fall at any moment.

Over the scorched sanctuary doors is a stone carving of Helm's eye set in the midst of a sunburst. Edicts of vigilance and readiness radiate out from the sunburst upon ribbons of stone.

Upon entering the temple grounds, the PCs will feel a sense of oppression being lifted from their spirits. The pervasive sense of evil is not present within the temple. Divinations work normally upon the temple grounds, except for scrying attempts into the town or cornfield, which simply just fail. Of course, chaotic characters will not feel comfortable here, but uneasy and tense instead. Any attempt by such characters to rest and/or regain spells will fail, as they simply are unable to relax under the mystic aura of the temple.

The temple is comprised of three main parts. The entry leads to the congregation hall. Flanking the entry hall are two guardrooms, accessible from the congregation hall. Both guardrooms have been wrecked by the lightning strike, but grills overlooking the entry hall and the temple front are evident. A ledge above the guardroom provides access to arrow slots, facing the temple front.

The sanctuary has not been as horribly devastated as the rest of the temple, as it is primarily constructed of stone. The floor is finely polished marble, with alternating slabs of brilliant white and deep black. The northern and southern walls each have three niches, wherein stand life-size marble sculptures of armored men. The southern passage is littered with the remains of one of the sculptures.

The southern passage has no active glyphs or traps. They have already been spent on the Baglins. Upon investigation, it is apparent that the statue has been deliberately smashed and hacked up. Moreover, the limbs of the statue indicate that it was not in the same pose as are the other sculptures. This is because the Baglins had set off a glyph that animated this particular statue. None of the other statues are set to animate nor do they detect as magical. The statues are icons of famous Helmite saints and church patriarchs, but the PCs will probably be suspicious.

The northern passage is not so safe. There are three active *glyphs of warding* along the passage. They are detectable by normal means, such as a thieves Find/Remove Traps ability or a *Find Traps* spell. They are as follows:

Tiers One, Two and Three:

Glyph A: Save vs. spells or the PC is blinded for three hours by a *light* spell.

Glyph B: Save vs. spells or the PC is subject to a *Bestow curse* spell that reduces Strength to three for two hours.

Glyph C: Save vs. spells or the PC is under the effects of a *heat metal* spell.

Tiers Four and Five:

Glyph A: Save vs. spells or the PC is blinded by a *cause blindness* spell, which is permanent until magically cured.

Glyph B: Save vs. spell or the PC is afflicted by a debilitating *cause disease* spell, which reduces the PC's Strength by one point in a turn and causes one additional point loss every hour until reduced to a Strength of two.

Glyph C: Save vs. spell or the PC receives full damage from a *flame strike* spell, while a successful save reduces damage by half.

Of course, if the PCs have either learned the secret passwords or accompany someone who knows them, then the glyphs will be easily avoided. Glyph A is avoided by saying, "Guard always against overconfidence." Glyph B is avoided by saying, "Vigilance never sleeps." Glyph C is avoided by saying, "Be watchful and wary at all times." Upon saying these phrases, the glyphs will be temporarily disarmed. These are the only active wardings left in the temple, although no one is aware of this fact, unless it is revealed through divination magic.

The inner sanctum is a small, 10' x 10' room. An elaborate iron gateway lies bent and twisted at the entry. A wooden altar lies along the western wall. It is bloodstained and planks have been torn up, revealing a hidden staircase leading down. Each step is a dark granite slab with a symbol of the vigilant eye of Helm engraved upon it. The stairway leads down about 15 ft., then turns left.

Continuing down an additional 15 ft, a long vaulted chamber is revealed. The floor is of dark granite slabs, as are the walls and ceiling, creating a cold, heavy presence. The room is well lit by four continual light stones, which are sculpted in the symbol of Helm's watchful eye and are set into the walls.

At the far end of the room is a wrought iron gate, which has been torn free from its hinges and is now lying forlornly on the ground. The room beyond is totally dark.

There are no active traps along the stairway or within the vaults. *Detect magic* reveals only the lights and the darkness of the next room as being magical. Looking for secret doors reveals that many of the granite slabs on the floor are fitted to allow removal at some future point, but to lift them would be difficult and would require a combined strength of 45. Any priest will realize that the stones are removable to allow burial of the clergy within the church crypt (i.e.: the floor). It appears that nobody has yet been buried in here.

The room beyond the broken gate is under the effects of two continual darkness spells. The PCs can easily dispel the darkness by removing the glowing stone from the sculptures. Upon investigation, it appears that they were designed to be easily removable.

After dealing with the darkness, a 20'x 20' vacant room is revealed. The stone shelves and niches are totally empty. One especially large niche bears the inscription, "Guard always to keep this evil imprisoned." Underneath this message is another inscription, but this one is of strange glyphs and symbols. These are the only inscriptions in the room.

Divination magic will reveal that nothing in this room is magical, although the large niche detects as evil. The evil is faint and expectant in nature, but it is equally obvious that this is only a residual trace of a far greater evil, which has been removed from the area. Inspecting the niche reveals that it is 6' deep, 5' wide, and 4' tall. There are scrapes in the niche and on the ground before it, indicating that something large has been removed from within. A successful tracking check at -12 reveals that the scrapes were created about two months ago.

The strange glyphs are Maztican pictographs. Unless somebody has a non-weapon proficiency in Languages, Modern (Nexalan), the PCs will be unable to read them, barring the use of magical means or Jeb's translation. If the PCs cannot read the pictographs, give them Player's Handout #2a. If they can, give them Player's Handout #2b. The pictograph reads:

"On the evil day of 12 Cipactli in the dark year of 12 Baktunob, the Faceless One with Eyes of Fire brought death and flame. Many of Tayik were consumed for the feathers and claws it sought. Bound by the coatl, it hungers still."

There is nothing more in the temple.

The Galtin Farmhouse

Eventually, the PCs will go to the Galtin farmhouse to inquire about Jeb and to speak with Cassie. They can acquire directions from anyone in town. If Abe is still tagging around with them, he will happily lead the PCs to it. It is at the base of the hill, right off the main road.

The Galtin farmhouse is a huge three-storied building with a steep gabled roof. The wooden walls have been painted an especially disturbing shade of red. Beside the house stands an equally impressive barn and grain house.

The wind blows ominously through the maize that surrounds the buildings. Everything is silent but for the dry rustle of leaves.

The PCs may decide to investigate the area before approaching. There really isn't much to discover. Looking into the window, they can see a beautiful, young blonde human woman mending some clothes. She is oblivious to them unless they draw her attention. She is the only person currently in the residence.

The rest of the area looks like it should (i.e.: a large prosperous farm). Tracking reveals that it is a busy location with both people and animals. There's grain in the grain house, chickens in the coop, a few horses in the stables, a couple of cows and a couple of hogs.

If anybody wishes to *speak with animals*, they don't learn very much. All of the animals can feel a badness in the air. Cassie brings food, so they like her. Jeb isn't here, although the hogs will say that he's out there, sniffing at the cornfield. If the PCs try to discuss deep and profound matters with the farm animals, they just stare blankly.

Upon arrival, you knock at the large oak door. A moment passes, then the door swings inward. Behind the door is a beautiful, robust, young blonde woman. She tosses her long, flaxen hair over her right shoulder and takes a long, inquiring look over your group. Her eyes are a brilliant, emerald green, but she seems to have difficulty in aligning them to focus upon you. Finally, her soft downy brows rise in recognition and her rosy lips part to reveal a huge, bright, white smile.

"Gaosh! Furrners! You all must be them 'venturers what Pa sent for! Come on in!"

She turns and leads you through a huge, wood paneled entry hall. She moves cautiously, with her right hand slightly raised before her. Crossing the hall brings you to a large, warm sitting room dominated by a large portrait of two noble looking men with heraldry of the temple of Helm. She beckons towards the abundant seating.

“Have a seat. My name’s Cassie. Pa ain’t here but you can talk to me ’stead! Uh, you want somethin’ to eat or drink?”

Cassie Galtin, hf Pal 1 of Helm: Int Low: AL LG; AC 10 (8 vs. Evil, 0 in full plate w shield); MV 12 (6); hp 14; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (footman’s mace); SA nil; SD protection from evil, Lay on hands (2hp/day), *cure disease* (1/week), *detect evil* at will; Str 15, Dex 8, Con 18, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 17; MR nil; SZ M (5’ 4”); ML 16.

Cassie does not think of herself as a warrior, and doesn’t even seem to know she is a paladin. She just tries to do what is right, and help people in trouble, and follow the teachings of her faith.

The portrait is of the Mayor, Jeb Galtin, and the Highwatcher Neham. Between them in the painting is a large black casket entwined by a golden serpent.

Cassie’s statistics, motivations and abilities are listed in the NPC appendix. The most important points in role-playing her are that she is as friendly and happy as can be, but she’s NEVER seen a demihuman before and has neither the tact nor intelligence to hide her curiosity with racial traits (i.e.: “Them’s the hairiest feet I done ever seen!”, “What happened to your nose?”, “Are all dwarves as stinky as you?” or “Gaosh! You’re so dainty, I can’t tell if’n you’re a girl elf or a boy elf!”). Of course, she’ll apologize if she hurts someone’s feelings.

Secondly, although she is both slow-witted and near-sighted, Cassie is an extremely strong-willed woman who doesn’t cave into demands. If the PCs try to bully her or wantonly insult her, she remind them that this is her father’s house and respect for their host is appreciated. If the PCs persist, she’ll ask them to either leave or sincerely apologize.

Finally, she is curious about the world and strongly encourages the PCs to tell her about their homes and adventures. If pressed, she can talk about maize farming, Helmite dogma, and tales from Maztica, but she would much rather listen to their stories than relating her own. Of course, she will answer any question that the PCs ask to the best of her ability, but if they try to discuss deep and profound matters with her, she just stares blankly.

The PCs may ask questions similar to the following:

Where’s your father?

“Can’t say as I know where Pa is. He up’n left ’round ’bout ten days ago. I didn’t see ’im leave, but when I got up to make our morning meal, he was gone! Not like ’im at all, leaving without so much as a word!”

Have things been strange lately?

“Uh, the animals have been right bothered ever since them bandits came to town. I bet ol’ Slick and his bear must still be lurkin’ about. Or, maybe, it’s them crows. Well, maybe they miss the temple. I sure do. ’Course, they never went inside ’cause they can’t speak.”

Do you know the passwords to enter the temple?

“I know them holy words like I know my own name. I’m a devout Helmite! Yup!”

Was there anything strange about the treasury after the fight?

“Pa said that the two Baglins were killed by the wrath of Helm. That means that the glyphs got ’em. He said that somebody had touched the black stone, an’ broke the gold snake. He was mighty upset ’bout that.”

What was in the niche?

“The black stone was in there! It was a right nasty thing, emanating pure evil. It was from Maztica with all sorts of heathen markings on it. An’ there was this fierce looking gold snake wrapped around it. Ol’ Watcher Neham, bless his soul, used to say it was a magical bind. I don’t know what it was binding though. S’pose them glyphs mean something. Maybe it’s in Pa’s book.”

How did the stone look like?

“The black stone was a strange glossy thing. It was big an’ long an’ tall, like a sar’agus or whatever you call a fancy coffin. It had a golden band ’round it, in the shape of a snake with wings. There it is in that picture of pa.” She squints and points to the portrait. “It looked pure evil!”

Did your father leave any writings that might help us out?

“My pa has a book where he keeps his thoughts an’ prayers. I reckon it might help you all out. Hey! Do any of you all know how to read?”

What is our payment?

“Gaosh! I guess we can give you some of the temple’s treasure. We’ll be needing it to rebuild, but the maize brings us a lot of gold, and I reckon we’ll be making even more this year. What did Pa say?”

What happened to the bodies?

“I can’t rightly say what happened to the bodies of them Baglins, but ol’ Neham and the others ought to be in the church crypt. That’s what they call the basement floor.”

Are there normally so many crows in the maize field?

“Them crows sure are nasty. I ain’t never seen so many crows out there. They act as if they own the field! They’ve been around for nearly two months now, but they don’t seem to be ruining the crop. Maybe they don’t eat maize.”

What do you have to eat?

“Well, I got corn meal, corn bread, corn-on-the-cob, corn pone, corn relish, corn chowder, hominy stew, popped corn, and just ’bout anything you can think of making out of corn. Yup!”

This should cover the most likely questions. She doesn’t really know anything more. If asked to see her father’s book, she’ll get it for them. Give them Players Handout #3, which reads:

“...When we gots down there, the sarkofagus was pulled out. Kuzz Baglin was at the side, stone cold dead! And the gold snake was broke in pieces on the floor. Something was right queer in that room, like a cold mist hanging over us all. It felt pure evil. May Helm guard us!”

“...The others ain’t acting right. Everybody seems distant and unfriendly.”

“...It ain’t in the basement! We can’t find the black stone and its snake! The others don’t seem concerned, but they never saw how ol’ Neham was right fearful with that thing. By Helm’s Watchful Eye, we gots to find it!”

“...Something’s wrong for certain! Them crows are right uncanny and the fields feels like a cage, crowding in from every side. And my scarecrow’s gone missing. Something’s out in the cornfield!”

“...And the bind was broke up in pieces on the floor. Good Neham said that if that evil cus ever got loose, that snake was the only thing in this town potent enough to stop it.”

There are also translations of Maztican pictographs throughout the journal. After some searching, the PCs will be able to find a translation of the inscriptions from the temple.

The book also contains numerous prayers to Helm, observations on weather, grain yields and livestock but nothing else of interest.

If the PCs ask, Cassie will allow them to take rooms in the house. She has errands to run, especially since her father has disappeared, and will be unable to be a proper hostess, but she will do her best to make the PCs comfortable.

Finally, if asked to take them to the temple, she will do so. She knows all the passwords and can answer any question about the temple. She will not tolerate any

disrespectful actions or speech within the temple and will insist that the offenders should remove themselves from holy ground.

Tin Stars

At some point in the scenario, the PCs may ask for some type of legal authority to investigate the situation.

Only a Watcher has the authority to grant this permission, which means that Cassie is the only person available to grant it. Hopefully, the PCs haven’t insulted her or behaved unlawfully. If they ask her for authority at their first encounter, she’ll be hesitant to issue it, although she’ll gladly accompany them on the investigation, thus providing authority by her presence.

As soon as the PCs reveal obvious evidence of unlawful or supernatural activity to her, Cassie will deputize the PCs to the service of Helm. If the PCs have not been deputized by the time Jeb’s body is found, she will then insist on deputizing them.

Regardless of when they are deputized, read the following:

Cassie approaches you with a tiny mahogany box. It is lacquered and ornamented with gold foil, shaped in the symbol of Helm’s Unsleping Eye. She careful places it before you and closes her eyes. Her lips move to a silent prayer, then she stops in quiet meditation. Opening her eyes, she stares above your heads.

“Do you swear, by all you hold dear, to defend the weak, guard the innocent, maintain the welfare of the community, and punish the wicked? Do you swear to guard with your life the community from the forces of turmoil and pain? Do you feel ready to take up the mantle of Deputy Watcher, under the All-Seeing Eye of Helm?”

If the PCs answer in the affirmative:

Cassie again closes her eyes and softly speaks a prayer. Her hands move across the box, which suddenly springs open. She withdraws a small velvet pouch, from which she pulls a handful of simple tin stars.

She solemnly hands one star to each of you. They appear to be badges, with pins fixed upon the back. Each star is etched with a symbol of Helm’s eye, under which the word, “Watcher”, has been engraved.

If the PCs refuse to swear or try to reword the oath, she’ll shrug and put down the box. She’ll ask for a piece of paper and quill. With considerable difficulty, she’ll write a writ of investigation allowing the PCs to investigate throughout the town on her authority. She will not hand out the badges without having the PCs swear the oath.

The badges look really tacky. They have no effect but to notify the town that the PCs are on a sacred task for Helm and that their cooperation is expected. The PCs are the law of the town.

The Cornfield

From the top of Suiter's Hill, it seems as though the fields of maize extend forever, like the sea surrounding an island. Upon entering the fields, your line of sight is reduced to virtually nothing. The scent of maize fills your nose. The most prominent sound is the dry rustle of the wind through the maize leaves. Except for the sky, your whole world seems to have shrunk down to encompass only the cornfield.

The PCs will have a terrible time in the cornfields. The stalks tower over 10' in height and the foliage is abundant in the tightly packed field. Therefore, keep close track of the marching order. Visibility is limited to a 10' radius and movement is reduced by 1/2. So, any PC not within this area cannot be seen by the others and may become separated from the others. Tracking is at a +3 bonus, however, and separated members can be found in such a manner. If there is no way for PCs to find each other or if they don't know that they are separated, roll on the scatter diagram to see in which directions they are going.

Of course, the PCs can always try flying, but they'll be in for a nasty surprise. On the first round in which they are above the field, they'll notice huge flocks of crows taking flight towards them. On round two, countless crows swarm them.

Crows (thousands): Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 1, Fl 36(B); HD 1/4; hp 2; THACO N/A; #AT N/A; Dmg 1hp/tier; SA Swarm attack causes automatic damage each round, spellcasting is impossible once swarmed, 10% chance each round of having an eye pecked out, *stoneskin* spells are immediately lost and ineffective; SD Nil; MR Nil; ML 20 (Never breaks).

The crows continue to attack until the flying PC(s) returns to the ground. When this occurs, the crows scatter, and the fields once again become silent. Of course, if the flying PC has a *protection from evil* spell active, the crows, as conjured creatures, will be unable to physically attack, but they can still limit visibility.

If the PCs search the fields on foot, allow them an opportunity to spread out and, perhaps become separated. A scarecrow that has been animated and empowered by the ultroloth's hishna magic guards the cornfield. It will attack any lone PC first, then go after the physically weakest member of a group. It is being guided by the ultroloth and, therefore, attacks

intelligently. Its head is a large gourd, with carved eyes that glow with infernal flame. It moves silently and without a trace through the stalks. Moreover, it always knows where the PCs are, even if they are invisible or concealed. It will maneuver through the field so that it always has a tactical advantage.

Tier 1

Scarecrow (1): Int Genius; AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5; hp 25; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (Pitchfork); SA Surprises at -2, Gaze attack in addition to any other actions which causes paralyzation on one target for a turn unless a successful save vs. spells is made; SD Immune to cold, mind-affecting magic and type P weapons; Special Weakness Fire causes +1 point of damage per die. A successful *dispel magic* against 15th lvl destroys the scarecrow; MR Nil; SZ M (6'); ML 20 (Never Breaks).

Tier 2

Scarecrow (1): Int Genius; AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5; hp 32; THACO 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 (Pitchfork, STR); SA Surprises at -2, Gaze attack in addition to any other actions which causes paralyzation on one target for a turn unless a successful save vs. spells is made; SD Immune to cold, mind-affecting magic, and type P weapons; Special Weakness Fire causes +1 point of damage per die. A successful *dispel magic* against 15th lvl destroys the scarecrow; MR Nil; SZ M (6'); ML 20 (Never Breaks).

Tier 3

Scarecrow (1): Int Genius; AL NE; AC 2 (DEX 18); MV 15; HD 5; hp 40; THACO 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+3 (Pitchfork, STR); SA Surprises at -3, Gaze attack, in addition to any other actions which causes paralyzation on one target for a turn unless a successful save vs. spells is made; SD Immune to cold, mind-affecting magic and types P and B weapons; Special Weakness Fire causes +1 point of damage per die. A successful *dispel magic* against 15th lvl destroys the scarecrow; MR Nil; SZ M (6'); ML 20 (Never Breaks).

Tier 4

Scarecrow (1): Int Genius; AL NE; AC 2 (DEX 18); MV 15; HD 5; hp 40; THACO 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+6 (Pitchfork, STR); SA Surprises at -3, Gaze attack in addition to any other actions which causes paralyzation on one target for a turn unless a successful save vs. spells is made; SD Immune to cold, mind-affecting magic, and types P and B weapons; Special Weakness Fire causes +1 point of damage per die. A successful *dispel magic* against 15th lvl destroys the scarecrow; MR 10%; SZ M (6'); ML 20 (Never Breaks).

Tier 5

Scarecrow (1): Int Genius; AL NE; AC 2 (DEX 18); MV 18; HD 5; hp 40; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+6 (Pitchfork, STR); SA Surprises at -4, Gaze attack in addition to any other actions which causes paralyzation on one target for a turn unless a successful save vs. spells is made; SD Immune to cold, mind-effecting magic, and types P and B weapons; Special Weakness Fire causes +1 point of damage per die. A successful *dispel magic* against 15th lvl destroys the scarecrow; MR 20%; SZ M (6'); ML 20 (Never Breaks).

Aside from these encounters, the PCs will find nothing out in the cornfield, yet.

The Maize House

Upon returning to the Maize house after visiting the temple of Helm or the Galtin House they will discover that the black stone box is gone. Asking the locals is useless; no one seems to know where it is or when it disappeared.

If the PCs choose to stay at the Maize House, they can each have their own separate rooms. The rooms are clean, large and comfortable, although with little sense for fashion.

The PCs are the only guests in the inn. The owner, Matthias, and his wife and children sleep in the rooms next to the kitchen on the ground floor. The saloon closes at midnight.

If the PCs stay down in the saloon to gather information, they'll be plagued with endless questions about Ravens Bluff and the war. The residents, primarily farmers or farm hands, are especially interested in scandals among the nobility or city officials and great battles. They will not provide any information beyond that which Matthias could. Of course, once they get talking about a subject which is of interest to them, such as the weather or the whiskey still under construction, they'll talk on endlessly.

The door to the basement is behind the saloon counter and in plain sight. It will be virtually impossible to sneak up to it, unlock it and open the door while people are in the area. After all, the space behind the counter is only enough for a couple of people and the barkeep, Matthias, is almost always in it. Of course, it should be no difficulty at all to get inside, if the PCs wait until night, when the saloon closes. The door is locked, but thieves are at a +20% bonus in picking the crude lock. Attempts to break down the door will obviously awaken the owner and his family.

The basement is filled with an astonishing amount of treasure. Statues, pottery, baskets, animal skins, gold, gems and feathered items cover every shelf

and most of the floor. They are all of some strange foreign style and design. A great stone disk marked with arcane symbols dominates the far wall. An angry face is carved in the center, which stares balefully in your direction. An almost palpable sense of evil fills this room.

Attempts to *detect evil* reveal everything as evil. Detecting for magic will reveal an odd, pervasive magic about most of these items, but the school is completely foreign and unrecognizable. The large stone disk is a solar calendar, which can be identified as such by any PC with the Astrology NWP. Give Players Handout #4 to a PC, preferably to a Helmite, but any lawful priest or paladin will do. In this handout, the PC receives a vision of the room being filled with blood and a deep voice can be heard, saying "Tomorrow night. Be alert! Be alert!" and a bloodstain appears on the calendar, in a spot that indicates the next day. Only the PC given the handout experiences this vision.

There is nothing in the room that fits the description of the huge black stone, but there are a few codices, one of which contains a depiction of such an item, along with a faceless creature with eyes of fire. When the PCs open this codex, the basement doors slams shut.

The codex opens to a page depicting a faceless creature with eyes of fire bound by a golden snake. The page facing it depicts Maztican priests sealing the creature into a black sarcophagus, which is bound by the same golden snake. Upon seeing these pictures, the basement door slams shut. You can hear it locking itself.

Suddenly, the harpsichord begins to clang and jangle, as if somebody were pounding upon the keys. Barely noticeable beneath this noise are a subtle rattling and the fluttering of wings.

The PCs had better think quickly, because they have two rounds to hide or get away before Matthias arrives to see what's going on. This town is very lawful, and people don't take kindly to thieves. If the PCs get caught, they get booted out of town. Of course, they can always rest at the Galtin house, but they aren't welcome in Suiter's Hill. If the PCs have not yet investigated the temple or spoke to the elders, they'll have to be sneaky about it, since the townsfolk will toss them out whenever they find them. The other books contain history on the Payit priesthood of the Maztican realms, written in Maztican pictographs. These are the property of the temple and the PCs will be discouraged from taking (stealing) them.

Visiting the Elders: The Golden Snake

During their investigation, the PCs will find out about a magical golden snake, which is the magical bind that keeps the ultraloth imprisoned in the black stone. They will find segments of it at each of the elders' workshops. When a broken section is touched to the proper adjoining segment, a white magical glow appears at the connection. When the glow fades, the segments have magically fused as if they were never broken.

The pieces join as follows: The carpenter's piece is the head. It connects to the potter's piece, which is the winged midsection. This connects to the tanner's piece. Finally, the blacksmith's piece, the tail, finishes the snake.

When the pieces are finally joined read "The Serpent Rejoined."

Visiting the Elders: The Tannery

The stench of tanning acids and curing skins is overwhelming, even at a distance. A high walled fence surrounds the curing area. A bell is set by the doorway, with a wooden sign at the side. The sign reads, "Ring here for Zach." The tannery is silent.

If the PCs ring, nobody answers. If they call out, they receive no reply. Apparently, no one is here. They can enter if they want, but the door is locked. The lock is opened at a +50% due to its poor quality. Nobody is milling around the tannery, for obvious reasons, but attempts to break down the door or climb the fence are somewhat overt. On no account will the PCs be caught, but the DM may wish to scare them by having somebody obliviously stroll on by or have a dog start barking at them while in the middle of breaking in.

If the party is with either Abe or Cassie, they will respond with shock to any attempt to break into the tannery. They are both devout Helmites and are stunned by the PCs' lack of ethics. Abe will just stand back looking at the PCs as if he were expecting Helm to strike the PCs dead for their crimes. Cassie will attempt to stop them. She'll insist on finding a lawful reason for them to enter first and will do her best to keep them from breaking in. She will not fight them and will be disappointed if they force their way past her.

At some point, the PCs will enter the tannery. It smells horrible. There are vats of vile tanning acids and refuse from discarded skins. Searching the workshop will be a repulsive task. Find out which PCs are searching. Ask these PCs to roll a CON check at 1/2.

Those who fail begin to feel nauseated by the fumes and skins, unless they have the Leatherworking NWP. There is no game effect to this nausea, but ask the afflicted PCs what their STR and DEX are just to make them nervous.

Upon searching, they find two things. Firstly, uncovering a vat in the back corner reveals a length of gold, about 2' long. It appears to be a broken section of a statue, perhaps of a snake. It has been submerged beneath a clear, foul-smelling liquid. Anyone reaching in with their hands takes 2 hp of damage from the acid, but scooping it out with one of the many acid prongs in the shop works wonderfully. A more detailed viewing definitely reveals that it is a segment of a gold sculpture of a feathered snake. It detects as magical.

Secondly, under a heap of refuse in a tanning pit, the PCs will find six decaying human bodies. Even worse, they have obviously been skinned. Any nauseous PC viewing this grizzly sight will be overcome by it, rushing out of the tannery and being extremely ill. Any PC with the Diagnostics or Healing NWP may examine the bodies. The wounds reveal that these are the bodies of both the three Helmite priests and the three dead Baglins.

There is no sign of Zach in the tannery. Nothing else can be found here.

Visiting the Elders: The Woodshop

The carpenter's shop is right off the main road upon entering town. The sounds of sawing and hammering can be heard from a distance. A high wooden fence surrounds the woodshop, but a gate stands open. Upon entering, you see a busy workshop, with six muscular carpenters and a stooped old man. The elderly fellow looks up in your direction

"Sorry folks!" he says in a raspy voice. "We got a big job at hand. Come back in three days. I reckon we can help you all then." With that, he motions to the gateway.

The old man is the Guiser. He will approach the PCs in the yard, rather than allowing them to look into the shop. He doesn't want to talk with the PCs and will do his best to convince them to leave. He will not answer any questions about the fight or any strange events, but will be evasive and insist on answering these questions at a later time. It will be obvious that he does not want the PCs to enter the shop.

If a PC does get past him, they will notice that planks of wood are being carved with strange ornamentation. In fact, it looks somewhat Maztican. Even more noticeable is a golden snakehead on a shelf

in the back of the shop. If the PCs attempt to get it or even mention it, the Guiser and his boys attack. If the PCs do not leave immediately, they are attacked.

Guiser (1), hm F2: Int Average; AL LN; AC 10; MV 9; hp 12; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (Adze); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 15.

The Boys (6), hm F1: Int Average; AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; hp 12; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+3 (Hatchet, carving knife, chisel, hammer and STR) or 1d6+3 (plank of wood and STR); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 15.

Tactical Note: They will attempt to use as many dirty tricks as possible. These include the following:

- Falling stacks of wood: If the PCs are anywhere near the lumber stacks, the Boys will attempt to push the wood over on them. The PCs at risk must then make a save vs. Breath Weapon or be caught under the falling wood, taking 1d6 hp damage and being pinned until a successful Bend Bars roll is made.
- Sawdust in the face: the Boys will scoop handfuls of dust into their opponent's face, which requires only a successful hit against AC 6 (unless the PCs are wearing eyewear). The target, once struck, must make a save vs. paralyzation or be blinded and choking for 1d4 rounds.
- Plugs on the floor: the Boys will toss round joinery plugs upon the floor, creating an area in which people may trip. Anyone entering this area must make a successful DEX check or trip. The Boys each have a DEX of 10 and the Guiser has one of 7.
- Doubleteam wrestling: if the Boys have a sufficient tactical advantage, they try to double up on opponents and wrestle. If the defender so wishes they get attacks of opportunity with a weapon at hand, but after they have closed to wrestle only size S weapons may be wielded. If one of the Boys has an opponent held, the other steps back, grabs a plank and starts pounding the opponent into submission.

If Cassie is with the PCs, she'll yell at them to not use weapons. In fact, she'll be yelling her head off trying to stop the fight. If anybody looks like they're in mortal danger, she'll rush to their assistance, regardless of which side of combat it is. After all, the Guiser and his boys are her neighbors! If the PCs kill anybody, she'll be understanding but obviously upset. ("Heroes ain't s'pose to kill simple folk!")

Questioning the Guiser and his boys can provide a few clues. The Boys know nothing, but the Guiser

knows most of the facts. Question may be similar to the following.

Why did you attack us?

"Yer gonna try and stop the ceremony."

What ceremony?

"The ceremony that'll set our master free."

Who's your master?

"Our master comes from Maztica. He has eyes of fire and is shrouded in crow feathers."

When is the ceremony?

"Tomorrow night" or "Tonight." (depending on if the encounter takes place on the first or second day).

What were you carving?

"We was carving the panels for his palace in the maize field."

Where are the other town elders?

"I don't know where the others are, but I reckon they're out in the maize field."

What does the ceremony entail?

"I don't know what we do during the ceremony, but I think we got to bring the master a bride."

Where did you get the golden snakehead?

"The snake was broken when we got down there. I reckon one of the Baglins must of done it, but we each took a piece of it once we had it out of the temple, 'cepting Jeb Galtin. He don't serve the master."

Where is Jeb?

"I don't know where Jeb is."

Where are the bodies?

"I don't know where the bodies are, but Zach was gonna take care of it."

What happened down in the temple cellar?

"We all went down there and found Big Kuzz dead as a doornail. The black coffin was pulled off of its shelf and the snake was broken in four. A voice came into my head, a powerful voice. It filled my head with wisdom and insight and promised me power and happiness. It was the master with eyes of fire. It suggested that we take the treasure out of the temple and that we hide and separate the snake. The master calls it the bind."

Where is the black stone?

“It must be out in the maize field. It has to be at the ceremony, I think.”

While questioning the Guiser, it should become obvious that he is under some type of magical influence. He is simple and honest and doesn't have an evil thought in his head, but he is fanatically loyal to the “master with eyes of fire”. Cassie will suggest locking the Guiser and his boys up in her basement until the situation has been resolved.

There is nothing more to find at the woodshop.

Visiting the Elders: The Smithy

The smithy is right at the edge of the bluffs, overlooking the endless fields of maize. It has an ominous silence and gloom to it. The door to the forge is ajar revealing darkness within. It appears that nobody is home.

Stepping inside, you can see that it is a large and well-appointed smithy. There are workbenches and shelves filled with various implements of the blacksmith's trade. It will take quite a bit of searching to find anything here.

Any PC with the Blacksmithing NWP will notice that the forge hasn't been used for a few days. Cassie, if she is with the party, will express discomfort with the PCs rummaging through the forge. She will not attempt to stop them, but will head outside to sulk.

If the PCs begin searching, they will find the tail segment to the gold snake, but it will take them 5 rounds of searching. On the third round read the following:

A large barrel next to the doorway falls over, spilling nails across the floor. Then a larger sealed barrel, back by the forge, rolls over with a heavy crash and begins rocking by itself. Looking back towards the doorway, you notice the nails shudder, and with a jolt, all stand points upwards creating a carpet of puncturing tips. The huge heavy barrel behind you begins grinding in your direction like a juggernaut.

Tier 1

Slag Barrel (1): Int Non; AL N; AC 5; MV 12; HD 3; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT Variable (see below); Dmg 1d4; SA targets struck must save vs. Paralyzation or be knocked prone, charges with +2 to hit and double damage; SD Immune to type P weapons; MR Nil; SZ S (150 lbs); ML 20 (Never breaks).

Tier 2

Slag Barrel (1): Int Non; AL N; AC 5; MV 12; HD 5; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT Variable (see below); Dmg 1d6; SA targets struck must save vs. Paralyzation or be knocked prone, charges with +2 to hit and double damage; SD Immune to type P weapons; MR Nil; SZ S (200 lb.); ML 20 (Never breaks).

Tier 3

Slag Barrel (1): Int Non; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 7; hp 35; THAC0 13; #AT Variable (see below); Dmg 2d4; SA targets struck must save vs. Paralyzation or be knocked prone, charges with +2 to hit and double damage; SD Immune to type P weapons and weapons weighing under 5 lb.; MR Nil; SZ M (250 lb.); ML 20 (Never breaks).

Tier 4

Slag Barrel (1): Int Non; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 9; hp 45; THAC0 11; #AT Variable (see below); Dmg 2d6; SA targets struck must save vs. Paralyzation or be knocked prone, charges with +2 to hit and double damage; SD Immune to type P weapons and weapons weighing under 5 lb.; MR Nil; SZ M (300 lb.); ML 20 (Never breaks).

Tier 5

Slag Barrel (1): Int Non; AL N; AC 3; MV 12; HD 11; hp 55; THAC0 9; #AT Variable (see below); Dmg 3d4; SA targets struck must save vs. Paralyzation or be knocked prone, charges with +2 to hit and double damage; SD Immune to type P weapons and weapons weighing under 5 lb.; MR Nil; SZ M (350 lb.); ML 20 (Never breaks).

At the beginning of each round in which the barrel is animate, choose a direction in which it will roll. It must roll in a straight path and must wait until the beginning of next round to choose a new direction. Everybody in this path is subject to its attack, hence the variable number of attacks. If five PCs are in the path, the barrel makes an attack on each of them. If the barrel loses initiative, and all the targets scatter out of the path, it can attack no one. Of course, each PC attacked is allowed an opportunity attack when the barrel passes them by, unless they have been knocked prone.

Finally, if none of the PCs are in the forge, the barrel will charge out at the PC closest to the bluff. If the barrel hits, and the PC fails their save and is within 10' of the edge, they both fly over the side, falling to the fields, 65' below. The barrel is destroyed and the unfortunate victim takes 6d6 of falling damage.

While the party is dealing with the barrels, they'll also be troubled by the nails, which form a barrier

around the entryway, similar to caltrops. Of course, the nails move and depending on the tier, they will present a far more difficult terrain than average caltrops.

Firstly, the nails cover a 10' by 15' area in which any movement, even at half speed, requires a save vs. paralyzation for every 5' by 5' area crossed. This save is at -1 per tier. Failure to save results in 1 hp damage and stops movement for the round, as the victims must stop to remove the still animate nail from their feet.

Upon removing the nail, the unfortunate PC must make another save vs. paralyzation at a similar -1 penalty per tier, but without any modification due to DEX. If the PC fails this save, they are hobbled. All movement is at 1/2 and all DEX bonuses involving general agility are negated. This lasts until curative magic is applied specifically to the foot wound. Of course, the barrel ignores the nails.

Visiting the Elders: The Kiln

The potter's shop is on the northern edge of town. A few big, mixing troughs are out in front of the shop filled with thin, red clay slip. The shop door is open and it appears nobody's home. There are a few cloth-covered vats around the workshop and a potter's wheel in the midst of them. An open doorway on the other side of the shop reveals the kindling window for the kiln.

PCs with the Pottery NWP will notice that both the slip troughs and clay vats are slightly dry, indicating a state of neglect. Searching the shop is tiresome and fruitless, as the PCs poke about the vats and buckets finding only clay. The kiln is a different matter.

The kiln is a large walk-in structure. The kindling window is set in the back of the kiln, and there is ample prepared firewood. The floor of the kiln is layered in floor kindling. Moreover, there is a great deal of pottery, stacked for a firing. The pottery is of bizarre design, perhaps Maztican. The pots and bowls are round and gourd-like, sometimes with monstrous faces molded into them.

If the PCs begin searching through the pottery, they will find the winged midsection of a gold snake sculpture. There is nothing else to be found here, but, while they are searching the area, the ultraloth strikes again.

The strange ceramic pottery lines the walls and forms barriers across the floor. The kiln is truly massive. Its thick walls feel heavy and oppressive about you. A strange rattling fills the air, as does the subtle fluttering of wings. Turning to the doorway, a burst of violet flame blinds you as a horrid wave of heat washes over you.

Tier 1

A *produce flame* spell ignites the floor kindling, causing 1d4+1 hp damage each round in which the PCs are in the kiln. Spellcasting is impossible.

Tier 2

The kiln door closes and locks. A *produce flame* spell ignites the floor kindling, causing 1d4+1 hp damage each round in which the PCs are in the kiln. The PCs must break down the door, 18 hp, or find an alternative escape. Spellcasting is impossible.

Tier 3

A *wall of fire* spell blocks the opening and ignites the kindling, causing 1d4+1 hp damage each round in which the PCs are in the kiln. In addition, the Wall of Fire sends forth waves of heat causing an additional 2d4 hp damage each round. Passing through the wall inflicts 2d6+15 hp damage. Spellcasting is impossible.

Tier 4

The kiln door closes and locks. A *wall of fire* spell blocks the opening and ignites the kindling, causing 1d4+1 hp damage each round in which the PCs are in the kiln. In addition, the *wall of fire* sends forth waves of heat causing an additional 2d4 hp damage each round. Passing through the wall inflicts 2d6+15 hp damage. The PCs must break down the door, 18 hp, perhaps while standing in the wall, or find an alternative escape. Spellcasting is impossible.

Tier 5

The kiln door closes and locks. A *wall of fire* spell blocks the opening and ignites the kindling, causing 1d4+1 hp damage each round in which the PCs are in the kiln. In addition, the *wall of fire* sends forth waves of heat causing an additional 2d4 hp damage each round. Passing through the wall inflicts 2d6+15 hp damage. The PCs must break down the door, 35 hp, perhaps while standing in the wall, or find an alternative escape. Finally, the airflow has been reduced due to the flames. After three rounds, a CON check must be made each round. Failure results in unconsciousness. Spellcasting is impossible.

The gold snake is completely unaffected by the heat.

The Serpent Rejoined

When all the pieces are joined, the PC handling the serpent will experience the following:

A strange tingling sensation, like a pulse of energy, flows through the sculpture. It begins to move, its coils undulating and slowly straightening. Then, the magic fades, but the sculpture remains as straight as a spear. Its mouth is open as if to bite. A soft voice within your head speaks.

“I am Xoxitlhuachi. Why am I not ensnaring the one with eyes of fire? Speak quickly for I do not have long to talk.”

This voice will be audible only to the wielder of the serpent. The voice is soft and distant. If the PCs explain the situation, it will tell them the following.

“Be silent as I tell you that which you need to know. I am a quatl from a land far removed from yours. The golden form within your grasp is a fraction of my life essence. Long ago, I was summoned by the weavers of pluma and the shapers of hishna to bind a beast of pure evil, known as ‘Eyes of Fire’.”

“Now, it seems that the fiend walks this world yet again. If you desire to defeat this vile beast, strike it with the head of this form. It has the ability to send it back into the obsidian sarcophagus.”

“The one who wields this form against ‘Eyes of Fire’ need not fear hostile enchantments, for my spirit will keep their minds free of evil influence. Finally, if touched to one who has been beguiled by the Evil One, it shall dispel its influence.”

“Now, I must go. The bridge between worlds grows thin. May goodness and strength be with you.” The voice grows faint and the presence in your mind disappears as the golden serpent tingles with power.

Any other questions or interruptions will get the following response.

“Silence, mortal fool! That which I must tell you is of grave importance. If you haven’t the wisdom to listen, perhaps you ought to pass the golden form to another who does.”

If the party refuses to listen, read the following.

The voice, being again interrupted, grows faint. As the voice vanishes from your mind, you can hear it saying, “Woe onto the world, for fools are its only hope!” All is silent.

If handled for balance, it appears that the snake can be wielded as either a spear or a staff. It is as light and manageable as a dagger (i.e.: Speed Factor of 2). It appears to be a +0 magical weapon. The snake casts *dispel evil* upon touch. Therefore, the wielder is under the constant influence of this spell. This is an important

item for the completion of the adventure. (See: EYES OF FIRE section.)

Catch That There Hog!

This encounter occurs in the morning of the second day in town. One of Cassie’s hogs has escaped its pen and has run into the cornfield. It disappears into the stalks, but leaves an obvious wake. Following its trail, it leads to the dead body of Jeb Galtin, over a week dead. Repeated, deep stab wounds mark his torso.

If the PCs are residing at the Galtin house, read the following:

You hear Cassie yelling out back. It sounds as though she is calling to somebody. Looking out a window, you see her tripping at the edge of the maize field. Apparently, one of her hogs has escaped its pen. She gets up and rushes into the field. A few minutes pass, when a shrill scream of horror pierces the morning’s silence.

If the PCs are elsewhere, Cassie will find the boy, Abe, and send him to get the PCs. Read the following:

You hear someone calling to you. It sounds like a child calling out. There is a sense of urgency in his voice. You look out your doorway and see a young boy coming towards you.

“Hey! Ravins Bluffs folk!” He yells. “Cassie needs you back in the cornfield. She’s up an’ found her pa. He’s dead!”

In either event, the PCs will eventually head down to the cornfield. When they arrive at Cassie’s location, read the following:

Trudging through the maize stalks, you hear the sound of sobbing. Following this sound, you arrive upon a ghastly sight. Cassie is sobbing into her hands and kneeling beside the body of a man, who appears to have been dead for over a week. Deep puncture wounds riddle his torso and scavengers have obviously been at his corpse.

Cassie will identify the body as her father, Jeb Galtin. PCs with the Diagnostics NWP or those who pass a successful Healing NWP will find, upon investigation, that a long, pronged weapon killed the man. The body was repeatedly stabbed, even after death. If the PCs have already encountered the scarecrow, they will recognize the wounds as those caused by a pitchfork. Finally, the body has been dead for around a ten-day. Decay and the scavengers make a more accurate estimate impossible.

Cassie, when she composes herself, will insist that they take her father to the crypt, where clergy are supposed to be buried. She will be upset if the PCs wish to keep the body “to investigate”, but she will relent if given sufficient reason and if the body is at least laid out upon holy ground. Upon taking the body to the crypt, they will discover that the other priests have not been buried here, if they have not already discovered this.

Speak with the Dead

If the party has the means to do so, they may wish to cast *Speak with Dead*. Jeb has been dead for over a week, so only priests of 7th level and higher can speak to him. The Watchers and the Baglins have been dead for a few months, so only priests of 9th level and higher can speak with them. *Raise Dead* is not an option for the skinned bodies, since they have been dead far too long. Raising Jeb is also problematic, as his body has been thoroughly worked upon by scavengers.

The Watchers only know about events prior to their death. If asked about the fight, they will confirm the story that the PCs have already heard. If asked about the black stone, they will say that it contains the trapped spirit of a great creature of evil, which High Watcher Neham brought from Maztica, to ensure that the fiend would not be released. Only Neham can give more information on the stone.

If Neham, who can be identified by the acid scars upon his skull, is questioned about the black stone, he will confirm that it imprisons an evil fiend. It was found in the treasury of a Zaltecan temple along with other items of vile iniquity and savagery. It proved to be indestructible by all available means. Rather than allow it to remain within reach of the Maztican savages who might have unleashed its vile captive against the pious warriors of the Realms, the clergy ordered that it be taken to a temple, far removed from Maztica. Neham was commissioned with its care and was sent with a small band of Watchers and soldiers to guard over it. They took it to a remote temple in the Vast, at Suiter’s Hill.

If asked about the golden snake, Neham will say that it is the magical bind that keeps the fiend from influencing the world. In fact, the snake seems to drain the fiend’s power away. It must be returned to the sarcophagus to keep the fiend from escaping.

If the PCs choose to speak with Jeb, he can confirm everything the Watchers have said. He does not know all the details about the black stone, but that it is from Maztica, it imprisons an evil fiend, and that the golden snake is the magical bind. He can say that people in town have been acting strange, and the other Elders have been reclusive to him. He thinks that the fiend

from the stone must have been released and is now in the maize field. The golden snake must be found and placed upon the black stone.

If the PCs chose to speak with the Baglins, they will discover nothing useful. They didn’t know about the black stone. They don’t know where Slick is. In addition, they will be cryptic and malicious. Finally, they are all entitled to a *save vs. spell*, which is a 10 for each.

Kidnapping

Cassie will not be with the PCs after the body of her father has been put to rest. She isn’t talkative and will express a desire to be left alone. She will not accompany the PCs anywhere, unless they try hard to persuade her and remind her of her duty to Helm to be ever vigilant. In which case, she will keep a stiff upper lip and join them on the investigation.

If the PCs allow her to return to the farmhouse, she will go about her duties and tasks. At some point, the minions of Eyes of Fire will kidnap her. If the PCs put a guard on her, she will be resentful and complain that she’s capable of defending herself. If they still insist on keeping her under watch, they can look forward to a long, tedious day on the farm. If they are lax in their duties as guards read the following:

The air is still and heavy. The clear blue sky has a false, claustrophobic look to it. The occasional screech of a crow pierces the air. You realize that Cassie has been awfully slow in feeding the chickens. You head towards the coop. Rounding the barn, you see a pail of feed spilt across the ground. There is no sign of Cassie.

Searching for tracks reveals signs of a scuffle between Cassie and four booted men. The tracks lead into the cornfield and disappear. Casting *Speak with Animals*, the chickens reveal that Cassie was attacked and taken by men into the cornfield. The chickens can’t identify exactly who took her.

If the PCs are extremely diligent in their watch, Cassie will be annoyed, (“I reckon you’ll be wanting to follow me to the latrine too!”), but she will not try to ditch them. If this is the case, Cassie will not be kidnapped. Of course, the minions of Eyes of Fire will just kidnap another lady from town, perhaps Matthias’ daughter.

Eyes of Fire

Finally, when all the investigation has been completed the PCs should know the following. The black stone

contained the spirit of a lower-planar entity. This spirit was released and has taken control over the minds of the town elders. It has set these elders on some sort of task in preparation for a ceremony. It has control over the town and the cornfield. The gold snake is a magical bind. The PCs may wish to investigate the cornfield, but, try as hard as they might, they find nothing. Then night falls.

At night, the preparations for the ceremony have been completed. The townsfolk who are under the ultroloth's influence have covertly slipped away into the cornfield. The altar has been completed and has been quickly assembled. The bride, perhaps Cassie, has been kidnapped and drugged. The ceremony begins. Read the following to the PCs.

The oppressive silence of the night is broken by the sound of drums and rattles. A chorus of voices begins to chant in a strange and chilling language. You look in the direction from which the music originates and see a huge bonfire, encircled by torches, spring up in the cornfield. It illuminates a strange step-pyramid, which looms over the flames. At the top is a large black stone, upon which you see the sprawled form of a human figure. The stone radiates pure evil. Figures are dancing about and upon the pyramid in ritual movements.

From Suiter's Hill, the PCs are 1,200 yards away. From the Galtin house, they are 960 yards away. From within the cornfield, the judge should use his discretion as to distance, but the first round should *not* allow melee, missiles or spellcasting. Flight and ground travel through the field are unobstructed by the ultroloth. It has more important things on its mind. As the PCs get closer, read the following.

As you approach the pyramid, the tableau becomes apparent. Around the base are assembled various town folk, dancing, chanting, pounding drums and waving torches in an incomprehensible pattern. Various town elders stand upon the third level, holding ceramic vessels of Maztican design. They are dressed in strange garments of black feather.

Atop the pyramid is the evil, pulsating black sarcophagus with a young woman tied down upon it. A man, dressed in horrid leathers, a jaguar cloak and with a headdress of black feathers, turns to face you. It is Matthias, the innkeeper. His eyes burn and swirl, like infernal flames. He raises a spiked obsidian club and yells in a strange tongue.

The townsfolk look your way and move like puppets to engage you. Their actions jerk like automatons and their eyes have a wide horrified look.

The golden couatl begins to glow.

The pyramid is constructed of wood panel hung upon an iron frame. The bottom level is 40'x 40'x 10'. The second level is 30'x 30'x 10'. The third level is 20'x 20'x 10'. The top level is 10'x 10'x 10'. There is a ramp leading from the ground to the top, but it is exceedingly steep and requires a DEX check to ascend at full movement. Failure means that the PC takes a full round to ascend and, while ascending, loses DEX bonuses and is considered to be on unstable ground.

The ultroloth has possessed Matthias' body, but it is not have full control of its powers. That's why it is performing the ceremony, in order to permanently inhabit the woman's body and locking her spirit in its place. It will attack the PCs with full force and great tactical sense as befits a "Lord of the Gray Wastes". It is a supra-genius. Play it as one! This is not the final combat but make the PCs think it is. Give the whole encounter a "wrath of the gods/end of the world" type of feel.

Tier 1

Matthias / Eyes of Fire (1): Int supra-genius (20); AL NE; AC 4 (leather! DEX); MV 12; HD 13+26; hp 29; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (War club); SA Innate abilities (See below); SD Never surprised, Immune to 1st and 2nd level illusions; MR 70%; Size M (6'); ML 20 (Never breaks). Innate abilities: Gaze attack paralyzes one target as per *hold person* spell, *charm person*, *detect invisibility* (always active), *produce flame* [spell effects are cast at 15th level].

Town folk (6): Int average; AL LN (NE-charmed); AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (Torches); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; Size M; ML 20 (Never breaks).

Tier 2

Matthias / Eyes of Fire (1): Int supra-genius (20); AL NE; AC 1 (leather! DEX, Ultroloth quickness of mind); MV 12; HD 13+26; hp 65; THAC0 6; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 (War club, STR); SA Innate abilities (See below); SD Never surprised, Immune to 1st and 2nd level illusions; MR 70%; Size M (6'); ML 20 (Never breaks). Innate abilities: Gaze attack paralyzes one target as per *hold person* spell, *charm person*, *detect invisibility* (always active), *produce flame*, *shout* (1/day) [Spell effects are cast at 15th level].

Town folk (12): Int average; AL LN (NE-charmed); AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (Torches); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; Size M; ML 20 (Never breaks).

Tier 3

Matthias / Eyes of Fire (1): Int supra-genius (20); AL NE; AC -2 (leather, DEX, Ultraloth quickness of mind); MV 15, Fl 15 (C); HD 13+26; hp 91; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+4 (War club, STR); SA Innate abilities (See below); SD Never surprised, Immune to 1st and 2nd level illusions, needs +1 weapon to hit, Immune to acid, fire and poison; MR 70%; Size M (6'); ML 20 (Never breaks). Innate abilities: Gaze attack paralyzes one target as per *hold person* spell, *detect invisibility* (always active), *cause disease*, *charm person*, *fear*, *improved phantasmal force*, *produce flame*, *shout* (1/day), *wall of fire* [Spell effects are cast at 15th level].

Town folk (18): Int average; AL LN (NE-charmed); AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (Torches); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; Size M; ML 20 (Never breaks).

Tier 4

Matthias / Eyes of Fire (1): Int supra-genius (20); AL NE; AC -5 (leather! DEX, Ultraloth quickness of mind); MV 15, Fl 15 (C); HD 13+26; hp 117; THAC0 4; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6+7 (War club, STR); SA Innate abilities (See below); SD Never surprised, Immune to 1st and 2nd level illusions, needs +2 weapon to hit, Immune to acid, fire and poison; MR 70%; Size M (6'); ML 20 (Never breaks). Innate abilities: Gaze attack paralyzes one target as per *hold person* spell, *detect invisibility* (always active), *cause disease*, *charm person*, *color spray*, *fear*, *improved phantasmal force*, *mass suggestion*, *produce flame*, *shout* (1/day), *solid fog*, *symbol* (of stunning, 1/ day), *wall of fire* [spell effects are cast at 15th level].

Town folk (24): Int average; AL LN (NE-charmed); AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (Torches); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; Size M; ML 20 (Never breaks).

Tier 5

Matthias / Eyes of Fire (1): Int supra-genius (20); AL NE; AC -8 (leather! DEX, Ultraloth quickness of mind); MV 15, Fl 15 (C); HD 13+26; hp 130; THAC0 3; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6+10 (War club, STR 21); SA Innate abilities (See below); SD Never surprised, Immune to 1st and 2nd level illusions, needs +3 weapon to hit, Immune to acid, fire and poison; MR 70%; Size M (6'); ML 20 (Never breaks). Innate abilities: Gaze attack paralyzes one target as per *hold person* spell, *detect invisibility* (always active), *airwalk*, *animate dead*, *cause disease*, *charm person*, *color spray*, *fear*, *fire storm* (1/day), *improved phantasmal force*, *mass suggestion*, *produce flame*, *shout* (1/day), *solid fog*,

symbol (any type, 1/day), *wall of fire* [spell effects are cast at 15th level].

Town folk (30): Int average; AL LN (NE-charmed); AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (Torches); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; Size M; ML 20 (Never breaks).

It should be obvious to even the most dull witted of PCs that the townsfolk are charmed and that Matthias has been possessed. As a result, they should strike to subdue. Remember, non-lethal weapon attacks are at -4 to hit, negates specialist benefits (i.e.: #ATs and to hit/damage modifier) and the damage inflicted is only 50%. If unarmed combat is attempted, the PC automatically loses initiative and the defender is at +4 to hit and damage.

The PC holding the golden snake will feel a tingling surge of power coursing through it as they approach the black stone. If brought within 30' of Eyes of Fire, it will glow with an intense white light. If the wielder engages in melee with the snake, it can be wielded as either a staff or spear. Striking a townsfolk with it immediately dispels the charm, as per a *dispel evil* spell.

Striking either Eyes of Fire or the black stone forces him to make a save vs. spells (i.e.: 8 or better). It bypasses the magic resistance. Failure results in his being forced back into the black stone. Moreover, both the townsfolk and Eyes of Fire are at -7 to hit the wielder of the snake.

Needless to say, Eyes of Fire will do his best to stay away from the wielder, but he has a few additional weaknesses. Firstly, he needs the "Bride" for the ceremony, so he will have to keep the PCs from removing her from the pyramid. Secondly, whereas he can fly and avoid the snake, the black stone can't. Additionally, the black stone is AC 10, if the wielder is being meleed, or an automatic hit, if the wielder is unopposed.

If the PCs chose to attack the townsfolk or Eyes of Fire with deadly force, they will probably slaughter them. Matthias' body is infused by the ultraloth's power, but once Eyes of Fire has been beaten out of his host body, Matthias drops dead. Such reckless disregard for life will result in an Infamy point for everyone involved. Moreover, priest, paladins, and rangers will need to seek an *atonement*, being incapable of regaining spells and having special class abilities withheld by their deity until then. An *atonement* costs 50,000 gp, with half the cost in magic items.

When Eyes of Fire is once again imprisoned, whether by using the snake, beating him out of Matthias' body or some other means, the golden snake animates and coils about the sarcophagus in a knotted bind, then become inanimate again. All the ultraloth's

spells and enchantments immediately end. The sense of evil and oppression is no longer present and everything returns to normal.

Upon replacing the golden serpent to its rightful place around the sarcophagus, a tremble seems to shift across its surface. Then a strange ripple of mystic energy pulses across the town and out into the cornfield. As it passes through the grain screeches and shrieks pierce the air, and a great dark cloud of crows is swept up into the sky and away to the west.

Aftermath

After the fight, townsfolk from Suiter's Hill will make their way down to investigate the strange happenings. Depending on how the PCs resolved the conflict, their reactions will be wildly varied. If the PCs defeated Eyes of Fire without harm to its charmed minions, Matthias or the bride, then the heroism and bravery of the PCs will overwhelm the townsfolk. First, they will help the PCs take the black stone back into the temple, then they'll throw the "biggest, darn party this town's e'er seen."

Matthias, who is glad to be himself and alive, insists on giving the PCs the finest items of treasure in the cellar. Cassie will be smitten with the PC with the highest combined WIS, INT and CHA and of either lawful or neutral alignment. The elders will make the PCs honorary sheriffs of Suiter's Hill, allowing them to keep their tin star badges if they so wish.

If the PCs had a slaughterfest, the townsfolk will be less than pleased, as many of them have lost loved ones in this combat. They will insist upon taking the stone back to the temple and returned to its proper place. After that is accomplished, they will tend to the dead.

Of course, the townsfolk will not be hostile to the PCs ("You gotta do what you gotta do, I reckon."), but they want nothing further to do with them. If the PCs wish to leave at this point, the townsfolk will not try to stop them. The most prominent surviving citizen will give them each 500 gp worth of gems and thank them for defeating the fiend that caused such misery.

Should the party wish to destroy the black stone, they will discover that such is simply beyond their means, as the magic is foreign and completely incomprehensible to them. The townsfolk will not allow them to remove the black stone from the temple, as it is property of Helm. Should the PCs take it anyway, the townsfolk can't really stop them, but lawful characters have committed a severe alignment violation.

Showdown

Eyes of Fire is a supra-genius. He had a contingency plan in the case that the ceremony was interrupted. Upon the breaking of the golden snake, he cast a *geas* upon the Baglin mage, Slick. The instructions were that he go forth and gather a band of minions and return on the day after the ceremony was to be completed. If Slick was not greeted by Eyes of Fire in the form of a young woman, than he was to take the black stone away from the town.

Determine what the PCs are doing in the morning, whether they have headaches or are staying in bed late, thereby determining their state of preparation as regards wearing armor or memorizing spells. Any priest or paladin of Helm wakes up early and feels compelled to stand guard at the temple, where they find Cassie in full plate armor also standing vigil. She also felt a need to be vigilant. In any case, if they are in the town or at the Galtin house, read the following:

You hear a young child yelling out for you. Looking to see what is going on, you see Abe rushing towards you. His eyes are wide and his face is flushed. "It's Slick! He's back. And he's brought the Bear!"

The PCs have eight rounds. It takes five rounds to get from the Galtin house to Main Street. If the PCs get there before eight rounds use Judges Aid #2. The PCs see the following:

A foppish looking fellow sits upon a heavy warhorse, stroking his long waxed mustache. Assembled about and before him are various humanoid warriors. Wandering before the group is the fiercest looking bear you've ever seen.

"I've come a-lookin' for the black stone," he announces to the town with a lazy drawl. "We can do this easy, or we can do this hard."

Cassie appears at the temple entry, dressed in full Watcher plate armor, with mace in hand. Quicker than you can blink your eye, a crystal rod and bit of fur appear in Slick's hand and the air smells of ozone.

Unless a PC provides an even more available target, Cassie is going to get a *lightning bolt*. The PCs have already spent this round in movement, so casting, using an innate ability, a magic item, or engaging in melee is impossible. Of course, a PC may wish to increase movement merely to present an alternative target or to try a push Cassie to coverage behind the entryway. This is allowed.

In any case, Cassie is going to survive the *lightning bolt*. If she gets blasted, she makes her save and drops unconscious, fortunately, behind the cover of the

entryway. If somebody pushes her to cover, she makes her save and takes no damage, having 90% coverage. She will on no account expose herself in such a way again, choosing to use the temple for protection ("If he wants that there stone, he can come in and get it!" She says while drawing a line before the sanctuary.) Moreover, she will encourage the group to fight from the safety of the temple. Of course, the PCs will have to give the password before they can enter.

If the PCs get there after eight rounds, Cassie has been dropped and Slick and his humanoid minions have acquired the black stone, which has been placed on a wagon. He aims on riding away, over the PCs' dead bodies if need be. Refer to Judge's Aid #3. Slick's *wizard eye* spell will inform him as to the best tactical response.

Tier 1

Slick, hm W5: AL NE; AC 0, -1, or -2 (DEX, *shield* spell); MV 12; hp 19; THACO 19 or 17 (DEX); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d4; SA Spells; SD Spells; MR Nil; STR 8, DEX 18, CON 15, INT 16, WIS 8, CHR 16; SZ M (5 1/2'); ML 17. Spells: 1st) *enlarge**, *grease*, *shield**, *spook* 2nd) *protection from paralysis**, *strength** 3rd) *lightning bolt*

War-horse, heavy (1): Int animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 4+4; hp 24; THACO 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d3; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L; ML 7.

The Bear (1): Int semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 27; THACO 16; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3+1/1d3+1/1d6+1; SA strength spell, Hugs on a paw hit of 18 or better for 2d4+1 additional points of damage; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M (6'+); ML 10.

Enlarged Hobgoblin (1): Int average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 9; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg (1d6) x 1.5 (Spear, enlarge spell); SA Throws three spears then melees with the last one; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L (9 1/2'); ML 15.

Hobgoblins (2): Int average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 6; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (Short Sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M (6 1/2'); ML 12.

Tier 2

Slick, hm W7: AL NE; AC 0, -1, or -2 (DEX, *shield* spell); MV 12; hp 25; THACO 18 or 16 (DEX); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d4; SA Spells; SD Spells; MR Nil; STR 8, DEX 18, CON 15, INT 16, WIS 8, CHR 16; SZ M (5 1/2'); ML 17. Spells: 1st) *enlarge**, *grease*, *shield**, *spook* 2nd) *protection from paralysis**, *strength**, *Tasha's hideous laughter* 3rd) *lightning bolt*, *protection from norm. missiles** 4th) *wizard eye**

War-horse, heavy (1): Int animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 4+4; hp 24; THACO 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d3; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L; ML 7.

The Bear (1): Int semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 40; THACO 14; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6+1/1d6+1/1d8+1; SA *strength* spell, Hugs on a paw hit of 18 or better for 2d6+1 additional points of damage; SD Fights up to -9 hp; MR Nil; SZ L (9'+); ML 10.

Enlarged Bugbear (1): Int average; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3+1; hp 25; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg (2d4) x 1.7 (Spear, *enlarge* spell); SA Throws three spears then melees with the last one; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L (12'); ML 15.

Hobgoblins (4): Int average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 6; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (Short Sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M (6 1/2'); ML 12.

Tier 3

Slick, hm W9: AL NE; AC -2, -3, or -4 (DEX, *protection from good*, *shield* spell); MV 12; hp 31; THACO 18 or 16 (DEX); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d4; SA Spells; SD Spells; MR Nil; STR 8, DEX 18, CON 15, INT 16, WIS 8, CHR 16; SZ M (5 1/2'); ML 17. Spells: 1st) *enlarge**, *protection from good**, *shield**, *spook* 2nd) *protection from paralysis**, *strength**, *Tasha's hideous laughter* 3rd) *invisibility-10' rad**, *lightning bolt*, *protection from norm. missiles** 4th) *enervation*, *wizard eye** 5th) *chaos*

War-horse, heavy (1): Int animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 4+4; hp 28; THACO 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d3; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L; ML 7.

The Bear, enlarged (1): Int semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 54; THACO 12; #AT 3; Dmg (1d8 X 1.9)+1/(1d8 X 1.9)+1/(1d12 X 1.9)+1; SA Strength spell, Hugs on a paw hit of 18 or better for (2d8 X 1.9)+1 additional points of damage; SD Fights up to -9 hp; MR Nil; SZ H (24'+); ML 10.

Ogre (1): Int low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 33; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6+6 (Long Spear); SA Throws three spears then melees with the last one; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L (9'); ML 15.

Bugbears (3): Int average; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3+1; hp 20; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4+2 (Great clubs, STR); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L (7'); ML 13.

Hobgoblins (5): Int average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (Short Sword); SA Invisibility gives automatic surprise; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M (6 1/2'); ML 12.

Tier 4

Slick, hm W12: AL NE; AC -2, -3, or -4 (DEX, Protection from Good, Shield spell); MV 12; hp 36; THAC0 17 or 15 (DEX); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d4; SA Spells; SD Spells; MR Nil; STR 8, DEX 18, CON 15, INT 16, WIS 8, CHR 16; SZ M (5 1/2'); ML 17. Spells: 1st) *enlarge**, *protection from good**, *shield**, *spook* 2nd) *protection from paralysis**, *Melf's acid arrow*, *strength**, *Tasha's hideous laughter* 3rd) *haste**, *invisibility-10' rad**, *lightning bolt*, *protection from norm. missiles** 4th) *enervation*, *fumble*, *ice storm*, *wizard eye** 5th) *animal growth**, *chaos*, *cone of cold*, *seeming** 6th) *contingency (minor globe of invulnerability)**

War-horse, heavy (1): Int animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 30; HD 4+4; hp 28; THAC0 15; #AT 6; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d3; SA hasted; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L; ML 7.

The Bear, animal growthed (1): Int semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 24; HD 12+12; hp 108; THAC0 7; #AT 6; Dmg (1d8 x 2)/(1d8 x 2)/(1d12 x 2); SA animal growth spell, Hugs on a paw hit of 18 or better for (2d8 x 2) additional points of damage; SD Fights up to -9 hp; MR Nil; SZ H (24'+); ML 10.

Ogre (1): Int low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 18; HD 4+1; hp 33; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2d6+6 (Long Spear); SA hasted, Throws three spears then melees with the last one; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L (9'); ML 15.

Enlarged Bugbear (1): Int average; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3+1; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg (2d4 x 2.2)+3 (Spear, enlarge, strength spell); SA Throws three spears then melees with the last one; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L (12'); ML 15.

Human-seeming Bugbears (2): Int average; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3+1; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4+2 (Great clubs, STR); SA Nil; SD Look like human bandits; MR Nil; SZ L (7') but appears M (6'); ML 13.

Human-seeming Bugbear Skeletons (4): Int non; AL N; MV 24; HD 3; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4/2d4; SA Hasted; SD Look like human bandits, Immune to sleep, charm, hold, fear and cold damage, 1/2 damage from type P and S weapons; MR Nil; SZ L (7') but appear M (6'); ML 20

Hobgoblins (5): Int average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 18; HD 1+1; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6 (Short Sword) or 1d4 (Lt. cross bow); SA hasted, invisibility gives automatic surprise; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M (6 1/2'); ML 12.

Tier 5

Slick, hm W15: AL NE; AC -6, -7, or -8 (DEX, *blur*, *protection from good*, *shield* spell); MV 12; hp 39; THAC0 16 or 14 (DEX); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d4; SA Spells; SD Spells; MR Nil; STR 8, DEX 18, CON 15, INT 16, WIS 8, CHR 16; SZ M (5 1/2'); ML 17. Spells: 1st) *enlarge**, *grease*, *protection good**, *shield**, *spook* 2nd) *blur**, *protection from paralysis**, *Melf's acid arrow*, *strength**, *Tasha's hideous laughter* 3rd) *flame arrow*, *haste**, *invisibility-10' rd**, *lightning bolt*, *protection from norm. missiles** 4th) *enervation*, *fumble*, *ice storm*, *imp. invisibility*, *wizard eye** 5th) *animal growth**, *chaos*, *cone of cold*, *seeming**, *summon shadows* 6th) *contingency (minor globe of invulnerability)**, *eye bite* 7th) *power word-stun*

War-horse, heavy (1): Int animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 30; HD 4+4; hp 36; THAC0 15; #AT 6; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d3; SA hasted; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L; ML 7.

The Bear, animal growthed (1): Int semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 24; HD 12+12; hp 108; THAC0 7; #AT 6; Dmg (1d8 x 2)/(1d8 x 2)/(1d12 x 2); SA animal growth spell, Hugs on a paw hit of 18 or better for (2d8 x 2) additional points of damage; SD Fights up to -9 hp; MR Nil; SZ H (24'+); ML 10.

Ogre (1): Int low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 18; HD 4+1; hp 33; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2d6+6 (Long Spear); SA hasted, Throws three spears then melees with the last one; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L (9'); ML 15.

Invisible Enlarged Bugbear (1): Int average; AL CE; AC 1 (Imp. Invis.); MV 18; HD 3+1; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg (2d4 x 2.5)+4 (Spear, enlarge, strength spell); SA invisibility gives automatic surprise, hasted, Throws three spears then melees with the last one; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ H (18'); ML 15.

Human-seeming Bugbears (2): Int average; AL CE; AC 5; MV 18; HD 3+1; hp 25; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4+2 (Great clubs, STR); SA Nil; SD Look like human bandits; MR Nil; SZ L (7') but appears M (6'); ML 13.

Human-seeming Bugbear Skeletons (4): Int non; AL N; MV 24; HD 3; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4/2d4; SA Hasted; SD Look like human bandits, Immune to sleep, charm, hold, fear and cold damage,

1/2 damage from type P and S weapons; MR Nil; SZ L (7') but appear M (6'); ML 20.

Hobgoblins (5): Int average; AL LE; AC 5: MV 18; HD 1+1; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 4; Dmg 1d6 (Short Sword) or 4 attacks 1d6 (shortbow); SA hasted, invisibility gives automatic surprise; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M (6 1/2'); ML 12.

Spells followed by an asterisk (*) indicate that this spell has been precast. Assume that every precast spell will last for at least a turn of combat. More often than not, they will actually last far longer. One way or another, the fight should be over after a turn.

Slick and his minions will be tactically spaced out. Slick has been preparing for this day for quite a while and knows precisely how the town is laid out. He has been spying upon the group from afar and witnessed their battle with Eyes of Fire. He is well aware of everybody's weaknesses and strengths. He has drilled his minions into an efficient attack force. Play them as such. Invisible minions strike from flanks and rear with surprise. Everybody takes advantage of movement and initiative advantage. Creatures with superior weapon reach will take advantage of this fact.

If the party takes refuge in the temple, they may attack from the arrow slots or entryway with 90% coverage. Of course, since the ledges are still damaged, any successful attack upon a defender will cause them to make a DEX check or fall from the ledge, taking 2d6 hp damage. Slick's force will be reduced, as the warhorse, the Bear, and the skeletons cannot say the password and, therefore, cannot enter. Remember, the PCs must say the password to enter themselves. If they don't remember it, either Cassie will yell it to them or, if she is down, the PCs just can't enter.

Finally, if any PC is dropped to negative hp, a brave villager will rush out to bind wounds and drag the PC out of the combat, but *only* if the PCs did *not* slaughter the charmed townsfolk.

Into the Sunset

With the final battle completed, the PCs will have totally thwarted the ultraloth's schemes. They have kept a great evil from being free and have put to a decisive end to the Baglin's legacy of evil. Unless the PCs wiped out the charmed townsfolk, they will always be regarded as the finest of heroes in Suiter's Hill and can always expect a warm welcome from its residents.

Every PC will receive 500 gp in gems and a selection of the Maztican treasure. In addition, the PCs get some additional loot from the adventure, including Slick's Tomes of Magical Diversity.

[First run at California Writers Con 1998 ONLY] Cassie will be looking for a man to help with the farm and may be quite smitten by one of the PCs, especially if he saved her from the *lightning bolt*. If the PC is so inclined, there's going to be the biggest wedding Suiter's Hill has ever seen. The lucky man gets, in addition to the bride, the biggest maize field outside Maztica. Moreover, if the PC decides to retire in the town, he is unanimously elected town mayor.

[First run at California Writers Con 1998 ONLY] Any priest of Helm may chose to take the Temple of Vigilance as his or her own established place of worship. Seeing as how Suiter's Hill is quickly becoming rich from the maize trade, the temple is going to be quickly rebuilt and tithing will be ample. Upon reaching 8th level, the priest will automatically attract 110 followers. This only goes to priests of Helm.

These two positions are unique, and will be granted to only one player of this event who qualifies and wants them. The method of awarding the positions among those who qualify shall be determined by the staff of California Writers Con.

This Concludes Out in the Cornfield.

Experience Point Summary

Experience is calculated as follows for Living City events.

1. Sum the experience listed below for objectives.
2. Assign discretionary role-playing experience (0-500 points). These should reward accurate character portrayal throughout the adventure, not just how well the PC interacted socially.
3. Finally, multiply the total by the tier according to this chart:

Levels 6-13	Tier 1
Levels 14-25	Tier 2
Levels 26-37	Tier 3
Levels 38-56	Tier 4
Levels 57+	Tier 5

PCs should get the experience points of the tier for which they qualify, regardless of which tier is actually played. For example, if you have a Tier 3 group and you have to bump the combats by one tier to challenge them, they still get the experience points for a Tier 3 group, not for a Tier 4 group.

Info gathering before arriving at Suiter's Hill-	25 xp
Info gathering with the townsfolk-	100 xp
Searching the temple-	75 xp

Piecing the golden snake together-	100 xp
Defeating Eyes of Fire, without killing townsfolk-	200 xp
OR	
Defeating Eyes of Fire and killing townsfolk-	50 xp
Defeating Slick and his minions-	300 xp
Total Experience for Objectives:	800 xp
Roleplaying Experience:	0-500 xp
Total Possible Experience:	1,300 xp
For Tier 2:	2,600 xp
For Tier 3:	3,900 xp
For Tier 4:	5,200 xp
For Tier 5:	6,500 xp

Treasure Summary

If it's not on this list, the PCs cannot keep it. This is a house rule which overrides what they may actually acquire in the scenario.

Slick's Spellbooks

Spell book 1: 1) *enlarge, grease, protection from good, shield, spook*; 2) *blur, protection from paralysis, Melf's acid arrow, strength, Tasha's hideous laughter*; 3) *flame arrow, haste, invisibility-10' rad, lightning bolt, protection from norm. missiles*.

Spell book 2: 4) *enervation, fumble, ice storm, imp. invisibility, minor globe of invulnerability, wizard eye*; 5) *animal growth, chaos, cone of cold, seeming, summon shadows*

Spell book 3: 6) *contingency, guards and wards, eye bit*; 7) *duo-dimension, power word-stun*.

Stone Calendar: This 4' diameter, 200 lb. stone disk is a Maztican Solar Calendar. The use of this disk grants a +2 bonus with the Astrology Non-Weapon Proficiency (NWP). If the PC does not have the Astrology NWP, this stone carving grants no benefits. It has a value of 500 gp for its artistic value alone.

Rose Quartz Skull: This ornate carving of a human skull is worth 2000 gp to a collector. The quartz from which the skull was carved has a phosphorescent quality that emits a strange rippling glow in darkness. This effect is as per the *faerie fire* (P1) spell.

Feather headdress: This leather headband ornamented with brilliant woven feathers of green, blue, and gold, is both beautiful and magical. The six long plumes which hang from the headband are enchanted, plucking one of the feathers and hurling it into the air will summon one

of the following avians for 1 turn, (as per *monster summoning I W3*.) Each feather only works one time.

Roll a d6 to determine the type of creature:

- 2d4 Blood Hawks AC 7; Mv fl 24(b); HD 1+1; THAC0 19; Attks:1d4/1d4/1d6
- 2d4 Wild Eagles AC 7; Mv fl 30 (c); HD 1+3; THAC0 19; Attks: 1d2/1d2/ 1; SA: Claw Dmg x2 in dive.
- 2d4 Large Hawks AC 6; Mv fl 33 (b); HD 1; THAC0 19; Attks: 1d2/1d2/ 1 SA: Claw Dmg x2 in dive.
- 2d4 Owls AC 5; Mv fl 27 (d); HD 1; THAC0 19; Attks: 1d2/1d2/ 1; SA: Night Vision
- 3d4 Ravens AC 6; Mv fl 27 (c); HD 1-1; THAC0 20; Attks: 1d2.
- 1d4 Condors AC 7; Mv fl 24 (d); HD 3+3; THAC0 17; Attks: 1d4+1.

Jaguar Cloak: This is a ceremonial hooded cloak made from the spotted fur of a Maztican hunting cat. It has a savage elegance that would easily bring 3000 gold pieces if sold to a collector or clothier.

Obsidian war club +0, +1 vs fire creatures: This weapon is crafted of volcanic glass and is unaffected by heat and fire. Damage is as per morningstar: 2d4 vs man-sized, 1d6+1 vs large. Creatures of fire include Fire elementals, Efreeti, Salamanders, Azer, Flamelings, Grue Harginn, Flame Gen, and creatures from the elemental plane of fire.

Reed Body Shield: This woven reed shield of Maztican design protects the user as a large shield (i.e. +1 vs melee attacks, +2 vs. missiles.) Its light construction grants it a weight of only 5 lb. This shield saves vs fire as light wood at -1.

First Run Certificates for California Writers Con 1998

- Marriage to Cassie Galtin (including the Galtin Farm) requires semi-retirement. Only one person (not one per table).
- Guardianship of the Temple of Vigilance (available only to a priest of Helm). Character must begin semi-retirement. Only one person (not one per table).

These two positions are only available to one individual each, and will be awarded by a method devised by the staff of California Writers Con 1998.

NPC Roster

Cassie Galtin, hf Pal 1 of Helm: Int Low: AL LG; AC 10 (8 vs Evil, 0 in full plate w shield); MV 12 (6); hp 14; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (footman's mace) SA nil; SD *protection from evil, lay on hands* (2hp / day) *cure disease* (1 / week) *detect evil* at will; Str 15, Dex 8, Con 18, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 17; MR nil; SZ M (5' 4"); ML 16

Weapon proficiencies: footman's mace, footman's flail, knife, pitch fork.

Non-weapon proficiencies: Agriculture = 6, Animal Handling = 13, Cooking = 6, Religion = 14.

Cassie is a simple farmer. Her entire life revolves around the daily farm chores and her devotions to Helm. Although the farm brings in vast amounts of wealth, she and her father have a modest and simple lifestyle. She has no real ambitions or aspirations beyond living a pious, productive life.

In spite of her slow wits, Cassie acts with caution and consideration. She has exceptional intuition and a strong will. She wants to help people in need and will always act selflessly to do so. Of course, she is not a fool. She is patient and polite, but rudeness and disrespect will not be tolerated. She will not go out of her way to assist people of poor moral and ethical upbringing.

Cassie does not think of herself as a warrior, and doesn't even seem to know she is a paladin. She just tries to do what is right, and help people in trouble, and follow the teachings of her faith.

Finally, she is looking for a husband to help her tend the farm. She has a slight distrust of strangers, but she knows that people can be judged only by their actions. If somebody catches her attention, she'll be discreet and proper in making her interests known.

Eyes of Fire (1): Int supra-genius (20); AL NE; AC -8 (leather! DEX, Ultroloth quickness of mind); MV 15, Fl 15 (C); HD 13+26; hp 130; THAC0 3; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6+10 (War club, STR 21); SA Innate abilities (See below); SD Never surprised, Immune to 1st and 2nd level illusions, needs +3 weapon to hit, Immune to acid, fire and poison; MR 70%; Size M (6'); ML 20 (Never breaks).

Innate abilities: Gaze attack paralyzes one target as per *hold person* spell, *detect invisibility* (always active), *airwalk*, *animate dead*, *cause disease*, *charm person*, *color spray*, *fear*, *fire storm* (1/day), *improved phantasmal force*, *mass suggestion*, *shout*, *solid fog*,

symbol (any type, 1/day), *wall of fire* [Spell effects are cast at 15th level].

The ultroloth, known as "Eyes of Fire," came across the peculiar magical expressions of the Maztican continent by accident. The subtle art of pluma and hishna appealed to its yugoloth aesthetic. Rather than share the credit of discovery with treacherous minions, it sought to learn this craft itself. Upon mastering both pluma and hishna magics, it would then sell tidbits of opposing information to both sides of the Blood War, gaining vast power and wealth.

Unfortunately, the subtlety of the magic and its wielders was exceptionally deceptive. The Payit culture was not the band of primitive primes which the ultroloth thought it would be. The great practitioners of both pluma and hishna united to oppose the ultroloth's schemes. They crafted an obsidian sarcophagus, imbued with the weave of both life and death, of good and evil, of being and non-being. They began a great ceremony of binding.

When, finally, "Eyes of Fire" was ensnared in the magical vessel, they called upon the power of a great winged serpent, a couatl, to make the bind eternal. The good couatl gave up a part of its life essence, in the form of a golden couatl, which manifested around the sarcophagus.

The sarcophagus is a magical artifact.

Slick, hm W15: AL NE; AC -6, -7, or -8 (DEX, Blur, Protection from Good, Shield spell); MV 12; hp 39; THAC0 16 or 14 (DEX); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d4; SA Spells; SD Spells; MR Nil; STR 8, DEX 18, CON 15, INT 16, WIS 8, CHR 16; SZ M (5 1/2'); ML 17. Spells: 1st) *enlarge**, *grease*, *protection from good**, *shield**, *spook* 2nd) *blur**, *protection from paralysis**, *Melf's acid arrow*, *strength**, *Tasha's hideous laughter* 3rd) *flame arrow*, *haste**, *invisibility-10' rad**, *lightning bolt*, *protection from norm. missiles** 4th) *enervation*, *fumble*, *ice storm*, *imp. invisibility*, *wizard eye** 5th) *animal growth**, *chaos*, *cone of cold*, *seeming**, *summon shadows* 6th) *contingency (minor globe of invulnerability)**, *eye bite* 7th) *power word-stun*

Player Handout #1

Adventurers of Ravins Blufs,

The town of Suiter's Hill is in dire need of help. The Baglin Brothers had a big fight with the local clergy of Helm. Lots of dying happened on both sides, but we lost our Sheriff and our Main priest. And, even badder, the temple burnt down to the ground. I can't be certain, but I think something wrong happened when the temple went aflame. So, come as quick as possible. You can speak to me at the Maize House, which is our local inn and saloon. As for payment, we got heaps of Maize Teakin treasure from the temple, and, since you all be helping us, I'm sure Helm ain't gonna mind.

***Signed Jeb Galtin,
Novice of Helm
and Mayor of Suiter's Hill.***

Player's Handout 2a



Players Handout 2b (Rough Translation)

“On the evil day of 12 Cipactli in the dark year of 12 Baktunob, the Faceless One with Eyes of Fire brought death and flame. Many of Tayik were consumed for the feathers and claws it sought. Bound by the coatl, it hungers still.”

Player Handout #3

“...When we gots down there, the sarkofagus was pulled out. Kuzz Baglin was at the side, stone cold dead! And the gold snake was broke in pieces on the floor. Something was right queer in that room, like a cold mist hanging over us all. It felt pure evil. May Helm guard us!”

“...The others ain’t acting right. Everybody seems distant and unfriendly.”

“...It ain’t in the basement! We can’t find the black stone and its snake! The others don’t seem concerned, but they never saw how ol’ Neham was right fearful with that thing. By Helm’s Watchful Eye, we gots to find it!”

“...Something’s wrong for certain! Them crows are right uncanny and the fields feels like a cage, crowding in from every side. And my scarecrow’s gone missing. Something’s out in the cornfield!”

“...And the bind was broke up in pieces on the floor. Good Neham said that if that evil cuss ever got loose, that snake was the only thing in this town potent enough to stop it.

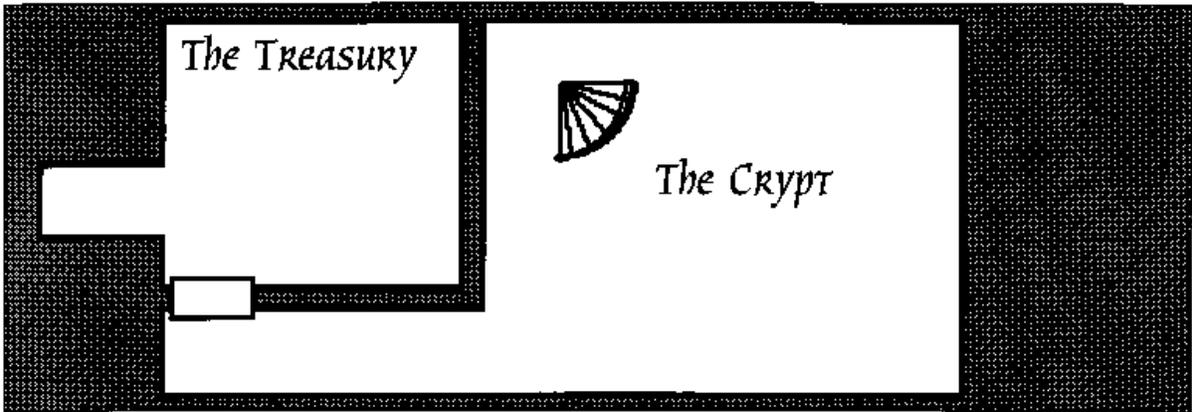
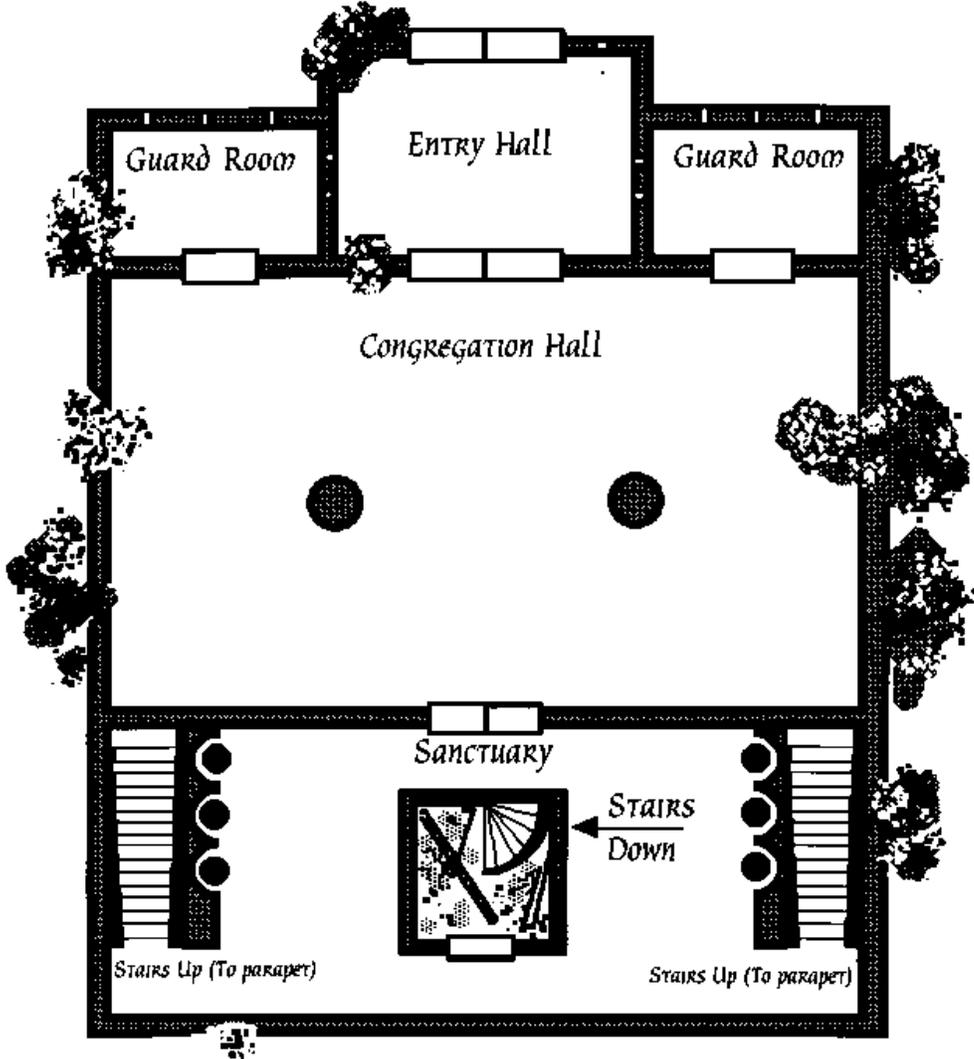
Players Handout #4

As you look at the multi-ringed stone carving, one section draws your attention. In that space, two figures stand to either side of a large block. One of the men is clad in a plumed headdress and loincloth; the other clad in spotted furs. Above the box is a winged serpent that the men appear to be petitioning.

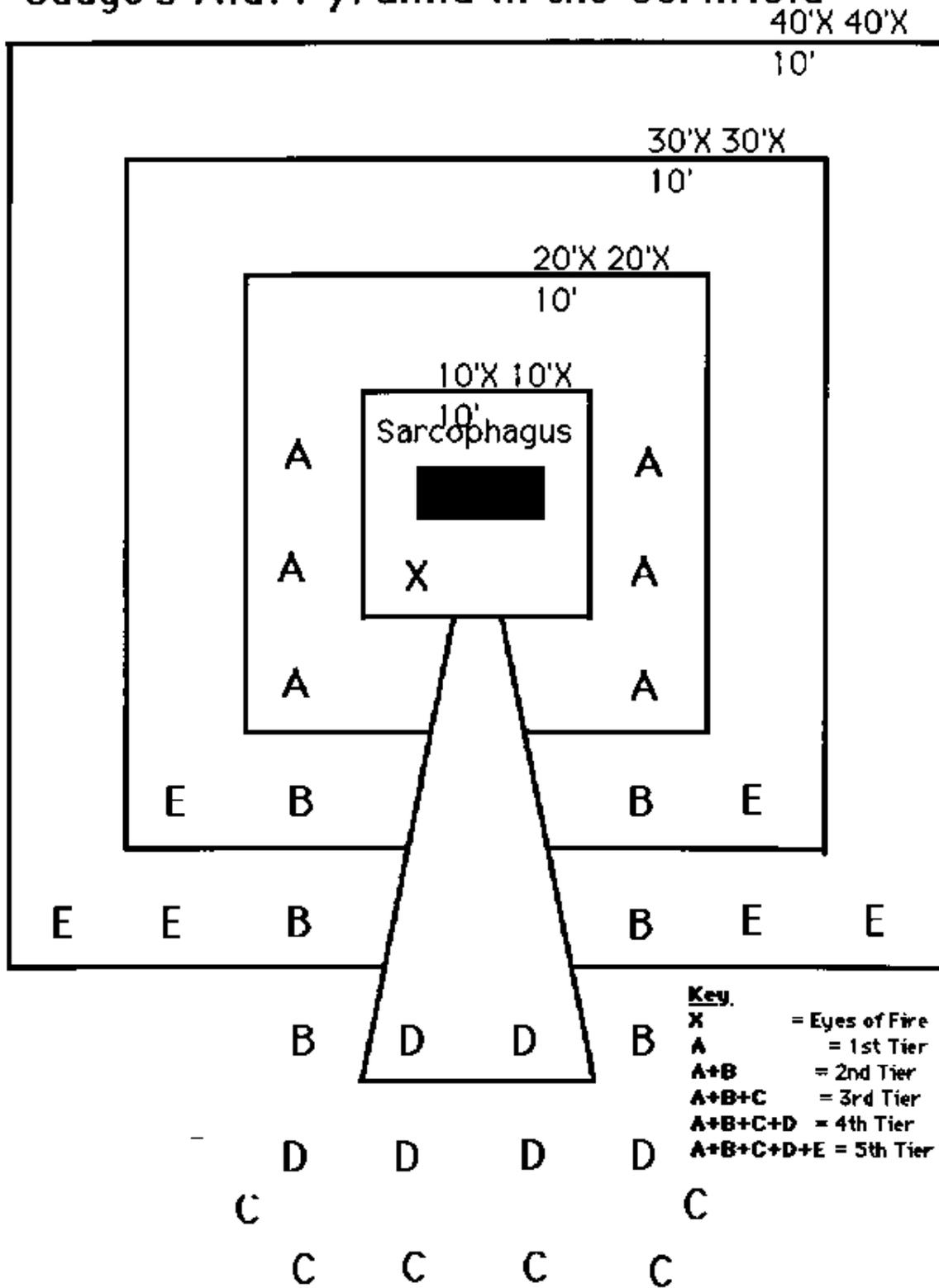
As you watch the image seems to take on a life of its own, and the room you are in begins to fill with blood. A deep voice rings out, "Tomorrow night... Be Alert, Be Alert..."

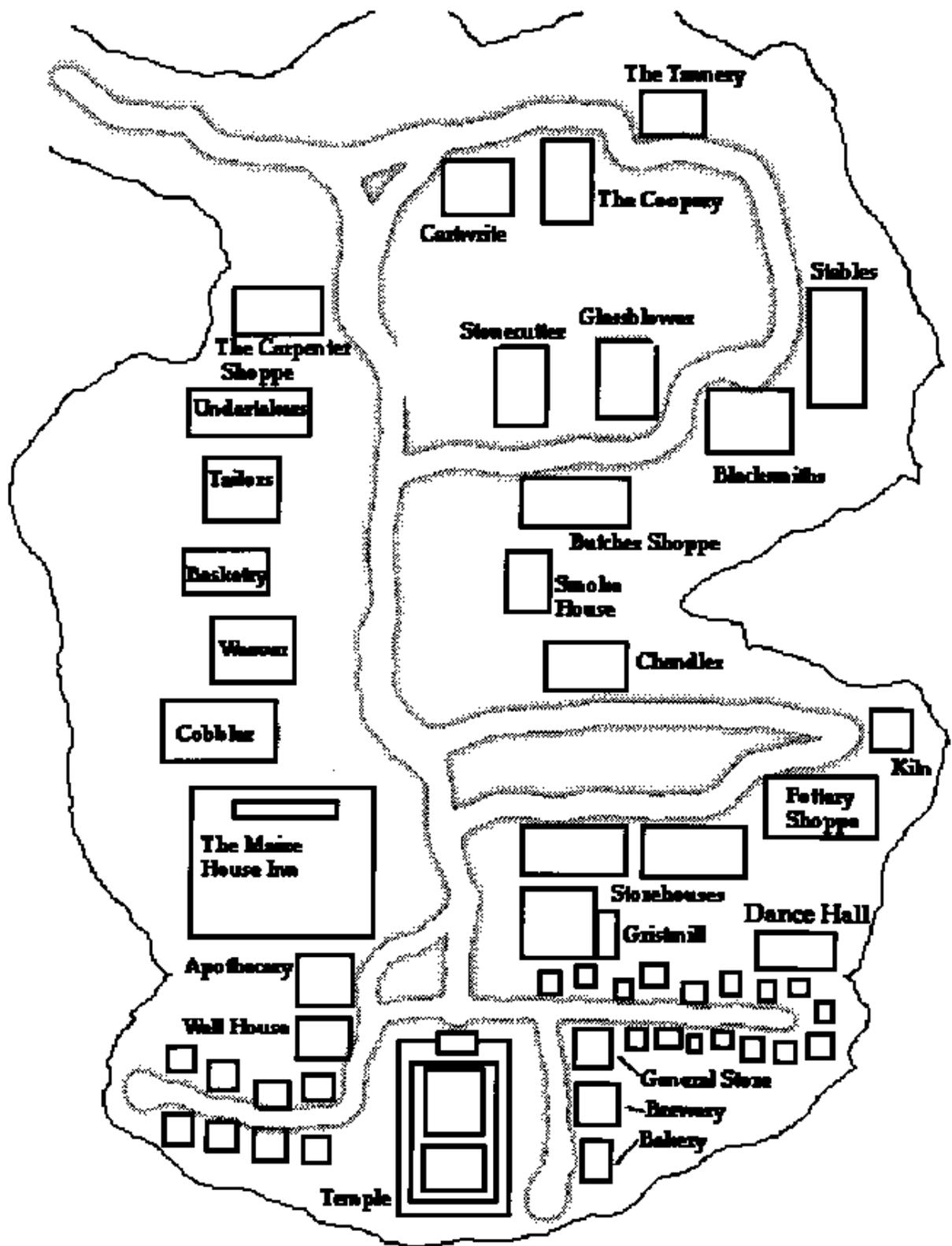
Suddenly you are jolted back to the ordinary room in which you stand, before an ordinary stone carving.

The Temple of the Vigilant



Judge's Aid: Pyramid in the Cornfield





Sutton's Hill