

A sourcebook for

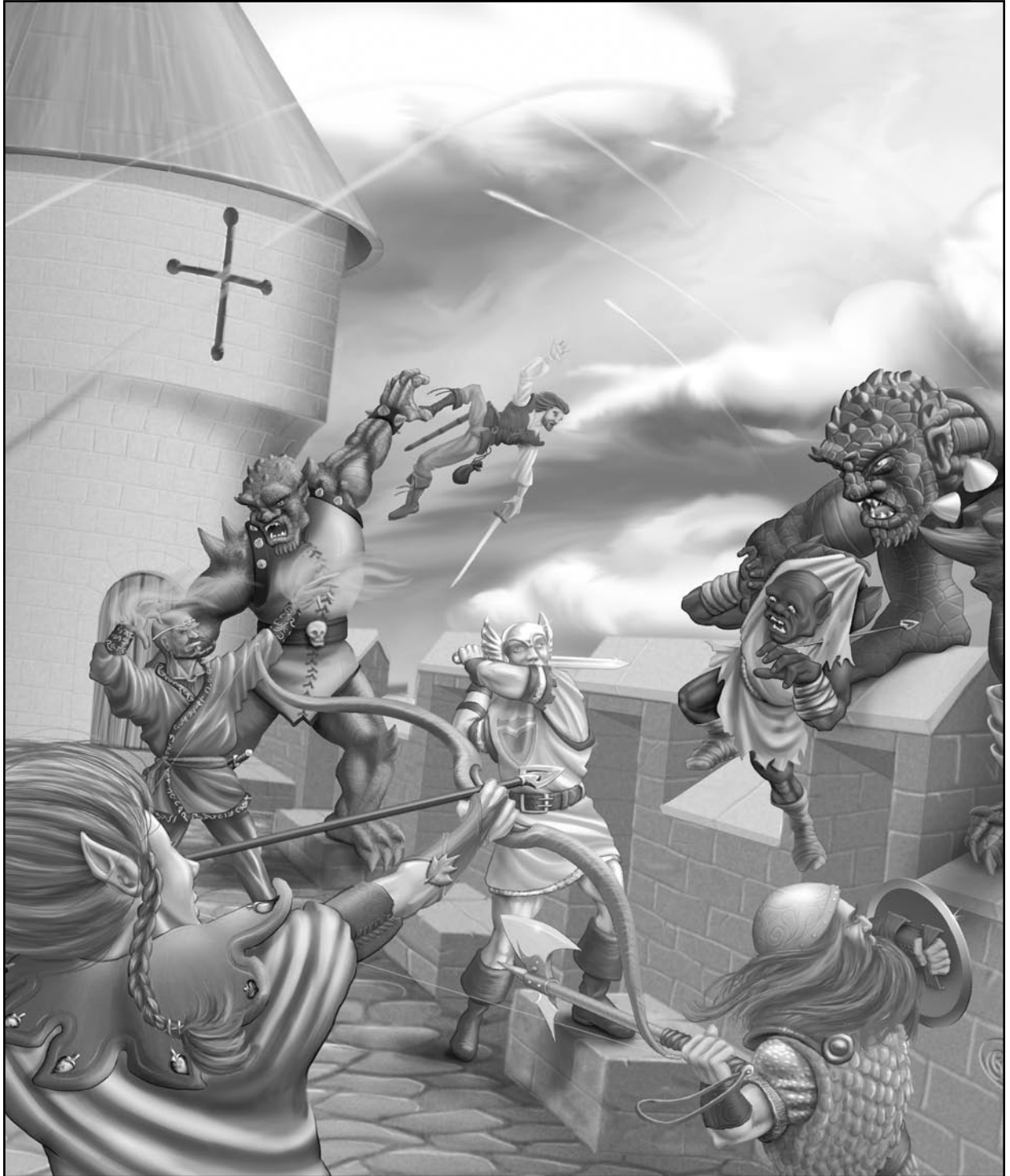


FANTASY HERO BATTLEGROUND



ALLEN THOMAS & JASON WALTERS

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Allen Thomas & Jason Walters



BATTLEGROUND

Fantasy Hero Battlegrounds

A Scenario Book for *Fantasy Hero*

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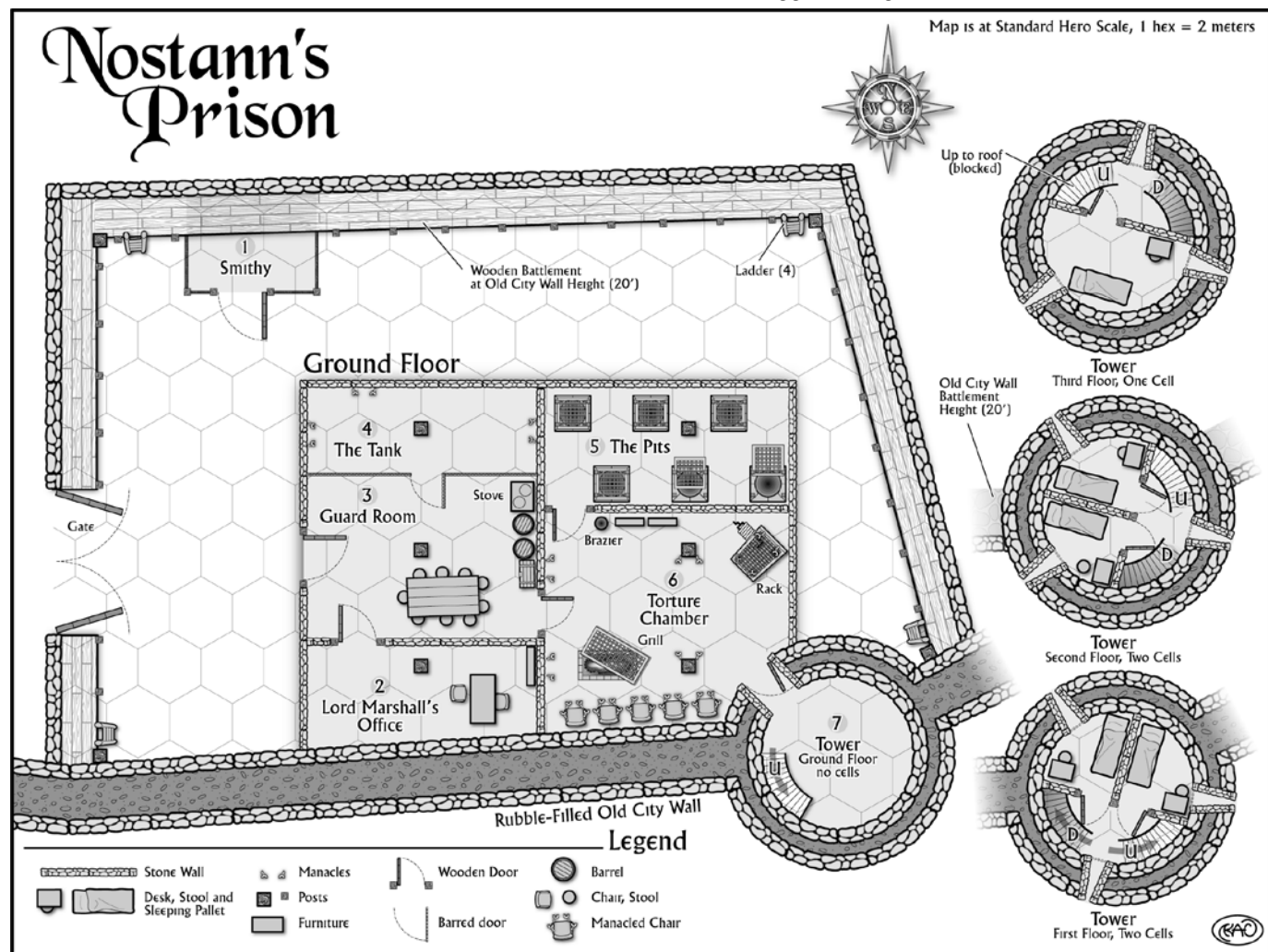
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INTRODUCTION



FLOOR NUMBERS

Throughout *Fantasy Hero Battlegrounds*, floors are numbered the “old-fashioned” way, meaning a building’s first story is the ground floor, the second story is the first floor, and so on.

From the humble abodes of farmers, to the picturesque castles of nobles, to the mysterious and arcane towers of wizards — all these and more are places adventurers come upon during their travels through a Fantasy realm. *Fantasy Hero Battlegrounds* provides you with the maps and descriptions you need to flesh out these locations and more. Additionally, this book contains three scenarios, each centered around a single location.

In Chapter One, *A Night Out Of The Rain*, a storm leads the adventurers to take refuge in a roadside inn, only to discover one of the guests conceals a malevolent purpose. In the early morning hours, the undead rise from the earth to surround the place. If the PCs don’t quickly determine the cause of the evil, the fiendish man will consume his wicked desire and no one — including your PCs — will leave the inn alive.

In Chapter Two, *From Out Of The Depths*, a king hires the adventurers to discover what happened to a man who promised to discover silver in a mountain range. The man, however, was no innocent prospector, but rather the servant of an foul god who sought to unearth an evil long-ago buried deep beneath the earth. When the PCs arrive they discover the way lies open for this evil to return to the world... and it’s up to them to close it.

In Chapter Three, *Eisburk-Beyond-The-Shoals*, the adventurers find themselves besieged with a young lord who had guested them in his castle — an army of Orcs and Goblins has surrounded the castle’s walls! The army’s leader offers no terms of surrender, promising the castle’s inhabitants only death in the name of his father, a god no one has ever heard of. The PCs must fight beside the castle’s defenders and prove their mettle as heroes, or else the castle falls and no one will survive.

Chapter Four contains eight more places you can use as the central location of an adventure of your own devising (and each has some plot seeds to help you with that devising). Or you can use them as places filled with interesting NPCs, each with his own story to tell, that the characters visit during their on-going adventures.

THE BANISHED GOD

The three adventures in *Fantasy Hero Battlegrounds* share a common background element: agents of a god, banished from the world by the other divine powers, seek to obtain pieces of a prophecy necessary to orchestrate the god’s return to the mortal realm. Additionally, each of the locations in Chapter Four has a plot seed you can use to tie the prophecy and god to these locations. You can find out more about the god and this prophecy in the adventures that follow, but the god’s name and precise nature are left vague so you can more easily fit the adventures into your campaign. If you don’t have the time or inclination to come up with a god, use this one:

Rangyren-Krol is the god of unknown regions, both in physical space and what lies inside the human heart. The darkness behind the moon and the irrational desires lurking in the unplumbed depths of man’s depravity are his realm. No good comes from exploring the places Rangyren-Krol rules, only despair, anguish, madness, and finally death. He is the evil unearthed, never vanquished, free again to work its wicked will. He is the abyss from which there is no return, only death alone in the dark. He rules dark secrets better left unknown or undiscovered. He dwells in the deepest parts of a man’s heart, lurking in wait for the questioning of one’s own being that leads only to madness.

Why would any person swear devotion to such a foul deity? For power, of course. And what powers can such a dark god grant his followers? Great ones, powers that make the servants of other gods tremble before their fell might.

Before he was banished from the world, Rangyren-Krol gave his priests the ability to summon the dead and make them serve the living. He gave them the power to draw forth the bestial forces in a man’s soul and subvert his reason. Through the missionaries of his will, the strange and wholly alien Zy’frei, he provided his servants knowledge both forbidden and profane — unnatural powers over nature no man should wield lest hubris and depravity consume him. And these powers only sped the worshiper’s descent into evil until soon he no longer had a will of his own... only a desire to serve his master, Rangyren-Krol.

<chapter> CHAPTER
ONE: A NIGHT OUT
OF THE RAIN

INTRODUCTION



As your heroes come to the end of a long day on the road, storm clouds rush across a clear blue sky, and just before nightfall the PCs find themselves in the midst of a downpour. The rain falls in sheets, the wind blowing hard and chill. Lightning crackles down from the sky, striking a nearby tree and setting it alight. Thunder follows closely after, shaking the earth and causing horses to rear and wildly roll their eyes. This is no night to spend out in the rain.

As the adventurers round a bend in the road, each barely able to make out his companions in the driving rain, they glimpse a warm orange glow up ahead coming from the windows of a roadside inn. The gods of travelers and good fortune have smiled on the heroes — a roof and warm fire is nothing but good luck. And on a night like this, warm food and mulled wine is better luck than any man deserves.

When the adventurers enter the inn, the proprietor and his wife greet them warmly. Looking around the common room, the PCs see they aren't the only ones to come in out of the rain. Friendly salutations and raised mugs welcome them. The sorts of folk usually found in a roadside inn sit around the wooden tables: two merchants, a tinker, an itinerant priest, an out-of-work mercenary, a scholar... and a man with evil intent in his black heart!

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

In *A Night Out Of The Rain*, your PCs find themselves caught in the middle of a thunderstorm while traveling on the road. They come upon an inn — a remote place named Wickshine's Last Inn, which the staff and regular patrons call the Wick — where they can get a warm meal and a room, and sleep out of the rain under a sturdy roof. The proprietors, Goodman Abel Still and his wife Dorothea, are a friendly pair and greet the newcomers with cordial smiles full of good cheer.

Unsurprisingly, the adventurers aren't the only travelers to come out of the rain. Inside the Wick, they meet two jovial merchants, regular patrons of the place; an itinerant priest, a servant of the god of travelers; a curmudgeonly tinker who is another regular at the Wick; a scholar on his way to a large library; and two others: an out-of-work mercenary searching for his next contract, and an older man, who claims to be traveling to retrieve the remains of his only son, but in truth searches for a prophecy of ill omen.

The adventurers sit down for dinner and to warm themselves by the fire. Some of the patrons make small talk; others keep to themselves. The

food is good, the wine warm, and nothing at all seems out of the ordinary. The only thing hard to believe is the PCs' good luck... until early in the morning, the sun still not risen and the patrons long asleep, when a scream pierces the night, followed by the crack and rumble thunder that shakes the inn to its foundation.

The PCs rush down to investigate. They find Goodwife Still huddled by the hearth, claw marks on her forearms and face, threatened by the Wick's two serving lasses and stable boy. Then the children turn on the adventurers, their fingernails grown long and curled into talons, their once ruddy faces now a pallid green. After the PCs have dealt with the possessed children, they discover a new threat: the dead have risen! The heroes glimpse their skeletal remains outside a window when the wind tears free a shutter and lightning illuminates the dark night. Skeletons now surround the inn.

So ends a quiet night out of the rain, with the warm and peaceful confines of the Wickshine shattered by terror. Only the PCs can defend the inn's patrons from the horrors that confront them... but who do the adventurers defend, who can they trust, and who seeks to kill them and the others?

BACKGROUND

Several decades ago Wickshine's Last Inn was called The Wickshine Inn. It stood in the middle of a small town from which the inn took its name. The town of Wickshine was famous for its apple orchards and more famous for its brandy. Wickshine became a destination for merchants and traders, and the town's brandy gained popularity across the land from the lowliest taverns and alehouses to the manor houses of nobles. Then, at the peak of Wickshine's popularity, the bounty of the town's orchards began to diminish. As each spring came, the trees had fewer blossoms, and with the coming of fall the trees had less apples. Foreseeing the end of their good fortune, the inhabitants left town before they became paupers. With each passing year fewer men and women called Wickshine home, and fewer merchants came to the town to spend coin. In the end only the inn, now called Wickshine's Last Inn, stood on the spot. The apple trees still grew around the inn, healthy with green leaves, but the blossoms never returned — they've stood barren of fruit for decades.

But that's not a complete account of the place's history — only a recounting of events from the recent past. Centuries before the town of Wickshine, its once-famous brandy, and its barren apple trees existed, a temple stood on the spot. The

temple was dedicated to a foul god, banished long ago by his immortal peers, and the god's acolytes and priests swore themselves to the task of bringing about his return. The temple spread its influence wide across the land; the god's servants traveled far in their quest to restore him to his rightful place. Because of the temple's baleful influence, the forces of law and justice took notice of it and its machinations. A long struggle began; eventually it broke into open war, and in the end the forces of Good prevailed. They toppled the temple's walls, put the servants of the dark god to the sword, and left the wicked shrine in ruins.

In time, the evil taint of the foul god's temple faded, and people returned to the locale. These simple folk, only looking for a place to call home, were attracted to the location of the fallen temple because of the apple trees. They built their homes, often using the ruined temple's stones, and the small community grew into the town of Wickshine. They named their town after the temple, "wicked shrine" shortened to Wickshine, an ominous name for a community of good-hearted people.

Wishing to dissociate themselves with the ancient evil they had no dealings with, the townsfolk fabricated their own origin for the name of their town. They claimed people named Wickshine for the candles that shone from the windows of homes during the fall, when townsfolk would pick apples until late in the night and then use the candles to help find their way home in the dark.

But gods, even banished ones, are slow to give up their former holdings — what are centuries, or even millennia, to an immortal? The foul god's cult has risen anew, but its members have lost much knowledge over the intervening years. The most important piece of forgotten lore is an ancient prophecy that foretells of the god's return. Priests once recited the prophecy as a litany during dark worship, reading the words from where they were chiseled on a wall of the wicked shine. A fragment of that wall is now a single stone in the Last Inn's chimney, the crudely carved letters filled with soot but the words still legible.

ADVENTURE INFORMATION

A Night Out Of The Rain is a one-game session scenario designed to challenge a group of four to six 150-point PCs, built according to the guidelines on page 28 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook. If the PCs fall outside these guidelines, you should adjust the encounters accordingly.

The scenario works well for most any group of PCs in a Fantasy campaign — few people, regardless of creed or motivation, enjoy sleeping outside in the rain. Once the PCs are inside the Wick, getting them interested in the events should pose little difficulty — most adventurers don't appreciate attempts on their lives by an evil cultist. Of course the personality of the PCs impacts how they interact with

the other guests at the inn, and roleplaying those encounters is half the fun in *A Night Out Of The Rain*.

SEASON AND CLIME

Set in a medieval setting typical to Fantasy roleplaying games, *A Night Out Of The Rain* takes place in a northern clime during the spring. The season, however, isn't vital to the adventure and you can change it to suit the needs of your campaign. Spring is the season mainly because storms are common that time of year and the apple trees are noticeably without blossoms — providing a hint of strangeness to the otherwise cozy confines of the Wickshine. If you set the scenario during the summer or fall, you can use the barren trees to similar effect. The trees are without apples, and you should be sure to mention this to a PC familiar with the wilderness or horticulture, if he takes the time to examine the environs outside the inn and succeeds with an appropriate Skill Roll. If you set the scenario during the winter, there's nothing noticeably unusual about the apple trees (although the thunderstorm would be unseasonable).

To set this scenario in a different clime requires a little more work. You can change the apple trees to those of a different kind of fruit; the story remains much the same, but Wickshine was formerly famous for a different kind of fermented drink (*i.e.*, wine, mead, or something more exotic). Or you can keep the apple trees around the inn, and their very presence becomes another oddity about the Wick, since they are unlikely type of tree for the adventurers to find in their current environs. Or you can simply forgo involving the town of Wickshine in the background entirely — the Wick is simply a roadside inn established along a moderately well-traveled road. It was built long ago with stones taken from the ruined temple. The proprietors believe their family chose the name because of the candles in the windows that welcome travelers to the inn.

OTHER RACES

The NPCs described here are all human, since the nature and disposition of races that are staples of Fantasy RPGs can vary considerably from campaign to campaign. However you can easily change the races of some of the NPCs to suit your campaign, as well as further customize the scenario to your world. The tinker makes a good Gnome or Halfling, as described in *Fantasy Hero*, with very few changes to the character. The mercenary can be a civilized Orc or even a Dwarf, a black sheep among his own kind because of his cowardice. The scholar might be a young Elf who has dedicated the next few centuries of his life to scholarship and research. In short, there are a wide-variety of colorful characters at the Wick when the PCs arrive — you should have little difficulty finding a place for races other than human.

INDEX OF MONSTERS

Here's a list of the monsters the adventurers face in *A Night Out Of The Rain*, as well as the book and page number where those menaces appear.

Ghoul (special)
The HERO System Bestiary, page 121

Shadow
The HERO System Bestiary, page 52

Skeleton
The HERO System Bestiary, page 123

THE WICK IN THE TURAKIAN AGE

If you're using *The Turakian Age*, a *Fantasy Hero* setting published by Hero Games, you should locate the Wick somewhere in the West-erlands. The northern half of Vestria is probably your best choice — perhaps the inn is not far from the Battle-Stone. But it's also suited for various places in the Mhendarian Palatinate, Umbr, Thurgandia, or the like.

WICKSHINE'S LAST INN



This section describe the staff and guests at the inn when the PCs arrive, as well as the inn's physical layout. All of these come into play over the course of the adventure, so it's a good idea to familiarize yourself with this information before beginning *A Night Out Of The Rain*.

THE STAFF

The Wick has a small staff: the two proprietors, Abel and Dorothea Still, and three young orphans. Rarely crowded, the staff has little trouble providing good service to the lodgers. Of course, on the night the adventurers arrive, there are a few more lodgers than normal so everyone is quite busy. And none of the staff — however talented at preparing good meals, keeping a clean inn, and making travelers feel at home — can deal with the evil cultist and his vile magic.

ABEL AND DOROTHEA STILL

Values in parentheses are for Dorothea Still.

10(8)STR 8 DEX 10 CON
8 BODY 12 INT 10 EGO
12 PRE 12 COM
2 PD 2 ED 2 SPD
4 REC 20 END 20 STUN

Abilities: Animal Handler 13- (11-); AK: Surrounding Area 11-; PS: Blacksmith 11- (8-), PS: Brandy Distilling 13-; PS: Innkeeper 15-; PS: Cook 11- (16-); Survival (Temperate/Sub-Tropical) 12-; Trading 15-.

25+ Disadvantages: Age: 40+.

Description: The Still family has owned and operated the Wick since it first opened its doors to travelers nearly two hundred years ago. Abel grew up in the inn and it's the only home he's ever known. Dorothea is the daughter of the last family to leave Wickshine, which departed a little over thirty years ago. Abel proposed to Dorothea on the eve of her family's departure and Dorothea, who had always been fond of the young man, happily accepted.

Abel Still is a tall, stocky man with brown eyes, a large red nose and ears, and tufts of unruly gray hair rimming his bald pate. Dorothea is short and thin with a narrow face and auburn hair shot through with gray. She is rarely seen without an apron worn over her homespun skirts and blouse. Both are in their middle fifties.

The two are a happy couple whose only regret is that they've never had children of their own. The arrival of the orphaned refugees — Usta and Jinny Fingle, and Aved Kidly — has done much to ease their

regrets. The Stills treat all three children like their own, grooming them to one day inherit the Wick.

Secret: Abel and Dorothea Still are open and honest folk, but they do have one secret (although hardly a dark one). Hidden in the inn's cellar, inside an empty keg with a false top, are six bottles of the last brandy distilled from Wickshine apples. If sold the brandy would fetch a high price from the right buyer, but neither of the Stills wants to sell the brandy at any price. Instead they prefer to keep it for themselves, taking a quiet sip of the brandy on nights when the Wick is empty of guests and they feel nostalgic for times long-past.

Abel Still, the last son of one of the founding families of Wickshine, also knows the true story behind the town's name. The story was told to him by his grandmother and he doesn't believe it, so he won't bring the story up on his own — but once someone discovers the stone in the inn's chimney, Abel finds himself believing the truth of that old story and he shares it with the adventurers who saved his life and inn.

USTA AND JINNY FINGLE

5 STR 10 DEX 7 CON
5 BODY 12 INT 8 EGO
8 PRE 12 COM
1 PD 1 ED 2 SPD
3 REC 16 END 15 STUN

Abilities: PS: Innkeeper 11-; PS: Cook 11-; Stealth 11-; Survival (Temperate/Subtropical) 11-.

0+ Disadvantages: Rivalry: Romantic (with sister, for affection of Aved Kidly); Social Limitation: Escaped Slave (Occasionally; Severe).

Description: Usta and Jinny Fingle, two sisters ages twelve and eleven respectively, work in the Wick's common room as serving lasses (they're much too young to be called wenches). They arrived at the inn one night three years ago with Aved Kidly, unaccompanied by adults. They claimed to be refugees from a small village razed by Orcs; they said their parents were killed in the attack. The Stills took the children on to help out around the Wick, and since then the proprietors have adopted the three children as their own.

The two girls are obviously sisters: both have pale skin, blue eyes, and thick blonde hair. Usta, the elder, is more talkative than Jinny, but neither girl says much even if directly addressed. When alone, their favorite topic of conversation is arguing over which of them will marry Aved Kidly when they come of age — an argument that will probably become more and more heated as the two girls grow older.

Secret: The two girls (as well as Aved Kidly) are indeed orphans and refugees from a destroyed village, but they left out part of their story. After their village was destroyed, but before they came to the Wick, they were captured and enslaved. Each has a brand on her shoulderblade that marks her as a former slave. The Stills have noticed the brands, recognizing them for what they are, but have chosen to say nothing about the matter for the time being — they are simply delighted to have children around, and whatever the case in the land the children come from, the Stills find slavery abhorrent.

AVED KIDLY

8 STR	8 DEX	10 CON
8 BODY	10 INT	8 EGO
8 PRE	12 COM	
2 PD	2 ED	1 SPD
4 REC	20 END	20 STUN

Abilities: Animal Handling 11-; PS: Blacksmith 8-; PS: Innkeeper 11-; Riding 11-; Stealth 11-; Survival (Temperate/Subtropical) 8-.

0+ Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Escaped Slave (Occasionally; Severe).

Description: Like Usta and Jinny Fingle, Aved Kidly is a young boy adopted by the Stills and put to work around the Wick. He takes care of the stables, helps with the livestock, and performs basic chores in the kitchen like scrubbing pots and turning the spit. Brown-haired and -eyed, Aved is leery of strangers but quickly warms up to anyone who speaks with him about horses and other animals. The boy is big for his age of twelve years; his outsized hands and feet indicate he will someday be a very big man.

Secret: Like the Fingle sisters, Aved is an escaped slave and bears a brand on his shoulderblade.

THE GUESTS

Several events have conspired to bring many lodgers to the normally quiet Wickshine's Last Inn on the night the adventurers arrive at the roadside inn. The sudden thunderstorm is the obvious reason; the search for a fragment of an ancient prophecy concerning an evil god's return, the not so obvious one. In addition to the adventurers, seven other guests lodge at the Wick.

KURDY DEEL

8 STR	8 DEX	10 CON
8 BODY	12 INT	10 EGO
12 PRE	6 COM	
2 PD	2 ED	2 SPD
4 REC	20 END	20 STUN

Abilities: Animal Handler 12-; AK: Surrounding Area 11-; Navigation 12-; PS: Peddler 14-; PS: Tinker 14-; Survival (Temperate/Sub-Tropical) 12-; Trading 14-; WF: Common Melee Weapons.

25+ Disadvantages: Age: 60+.

Equipment: Mule, dagger.

PRICES AT THE WICK

Below is a price list for the Wick that includes rooms, food, and drink. The Stills happily sell other quotidian goods they have available, like rope or waterskins, for a reasonable price. (They're a soft touch for those with a sad story like down-on-their-luck adventurers and Josiah Two-Coins.)

Rooms (one night)	Price
Room with bunks (4 people)	1 SP
Single with double bed	2 SP
Single with bed	5 SP
Food	Price
Bread	Gratis
Haunch of Lamb	4 CP
Lamb Chop	2 CP
Leek Soup (Bowl)	1 CP
Rabbit	1 CP
Drink	Price
Ale	2 CP
Ale, Dark	4 CP
Mead	1 SP
Red Wine	1 SP
Wickshine Brandy	Must save the Stills' lives

Description: Kurdy Deel is an elderly tinker who travels widely in his business of making crude repairs to metalwork, and buying and selling small household wares such as pots and kettles. He has stopped at the Wick for decades; he stays for a day or two four times a year. A garrulous and curmudgeonly man, he rarely stops complaining even if only talking to himself or his mule (whose name is "Mule"). He wears rough, oft-patched clothing. When in the company of others, he never removes the woolen cap he wears over his gray hair; he keeps the cap's earflaps pulled over his ears and tied tightly under his chin. After many long winter nights on the road, his ears are little more than nubs of scarred flesh because of frostbite, and Kurdy finds their condition embarrassing. Why he goes to such great lengths to hide his ears, yet seems to feel no shame about his green teeth, is the subject of frequent speculation among the Wick's staff.

Secret: Kurdy Deel has no secrets (other than his ears). His life is an open book for anyone to know — at least, anyone who can bear to listen to the old man's complaints long enough to hear his story.

MARTEN L'GENTSIA

10 STR	12 DEX	10 CON
10 BODY	18 INT	12 EGO
15 PRE	16 COM	
2 PD	2 ED	3 SPD
4 REC	20 END	20 STUN

Abilities: Fringe Benefit: Member Of Nobility; Money; Conversation 13-; High Society 11-; Languages (fluent conversation with two others); Literacy (3 Languages); KS: Astronomy 11-; KS: Heraldry 8-; KS: The Noble World 8-; KS: Ornithology 13-; Persuasion 13-; Riding 11-.

25+ Disadvantages: None.

Equipment: Horse.

CUSTOMIZING THE GUESTS TO YOUR CAMPAIGN

To make it easier for you to customize the guests to your campaign, names of persons and places from their back-grounds are omitted. To help you fit the scenario into your world quickly, the most obvious details you can fill in before running the scenario are organized below. All you have to do is supply a proper noun — a loca-tion name and the like. This is also a good place to insert hooks for fur-ther adventures.

Jinny and Usta Fingle, and Aved Kidly: Who were the bandits that razed their village, and who was the person that made them slaves?

Marten L’Gentsia: What library is he traveling to? What noble is Marten’s father?

Eadon Marsh: From what battle did he flee? Was it a battle whose outcome might have far-reaching repercussions for your world or affect the PCs personally?

Ditmore and Exter Shury: Who employs them to smuggle drugs and poisons, and what two cities are they trav-eling between? (See Fur-land Clive, page 104, for one possible answer.)

Description: A scholar traveling from his home to a large library, Marten L’Gentsia came to the Wick for a quick meal before continuing on to his desti-nation, but because of the storm he has decided to stay the night. He has intelligent brown eyes and curly, well-groomed brown hair. By his manner and speech, it’s obvious he’s a member of the upper classes — likely the younger son of minor nobility, judging by his easy familiarity with those of lesser status and lack of an entourage.

Marten wears a white robe with blue trim embroidered with gold herons — expensive, yet not ostentatious, clothing. He tells anyone who asks that he’s traveling to the library to complete his research for a folio he’s writing — his first work, in fact. The subject is an obscure one: the effect of lunar cycles on the sounds made by birds, specifi-cally nocturnal avians, but also a survey of diurnal ones for contrast. He readily acknowledges that the subject seems esoteric and rarified at first glance (and maybe at second glance too), but he’s quick to add that every scholar must start somewhere. Perceptive and quick-witted, Marten noticed the blossomless apple trees and finds their barren state intensely curious. He brings up this subject with anyone who speaks to him for any length of time.

Secret: Marten is a guileless young man who’s exactly who he says he is. The youngest son of a minor count, Marten has no lands or titles of his own, nor does he stand to inherit his father’s estates, but as long as he makes himself reasonably useful to his family he can live comfortably for the rest of his life. He does not bring this up on his own; modest and friendly, he has no wish to “lord” his breeding and status over those of lesser means.

If he survives the night, Marten finds the chimney stone, the tale of a banished deity, and history of Wickshine intriguing — perhaps a good subject for his next book! You can use Marten as an recurring NPC in your campaign to help your PCs discover more about the cult and its fell purpose, if they’re more inclined to exciting adventures than whiling away the hours in libraries. Simply have Marten volunteer to act as their agent in this regard before the PCs depart in the morning — after the life-or-death struggle during the night, Marten can’t help but find the study of birds and their calls something less than compelling, and would rather focus his efforts on more important matters.

EADON MARSH					
15	STR	14	DEX	13	CON
11	BODY	10	INT	8	EGO
8	PRE	12	COM		
4	PD	3	ED	3	SPD
6	REC	26	END	26	STUN

Abilities: +1 HTH; +2 OCV with longsword; Acting 12-; KS: Heraldry 11-; PS: Mercenary 13-; Persuasion 12-; Riding 12-; Stealth 12-; Tactics 11-; WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons.

75+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Coward (Common; Strong); Rivalry: Professional (with other warriors).

Equipment: Longsword, chainmail, 5 gold pieces.

Description: A seemingly hard-bitten man with close-cropped hair gone prematurely gray, Eadon Marsh is a mercenary currently “between employ-ers.” His longsword and dirk, hung from his belt, provide a good clue of his profession; so do the signs on his clothing that he wears chainmail (he’s left his armor in his room, not wanting to wear it while he eats). Eadon has little to say to a man without a sword or enough coin to hire him. When talking with anyone carrying a sword or other weapon, Eadon tells stories of his exploits, engaging in a contest of one-upmanship and attempting to prove he’s the better warrior. However heated the conversation becomes, he always stops just short of challenging his rival to prove his mettle in a duel.

Secret: Though he claims his last employment ended, in truth he fled the field of battle. Eadon puts on a good show of being a fierce warrior, but is actually a coward. He’s made a career of collect-ing his pay on jobs where there is little danger, but when a battle looks grim, or the outcome seems in doubt, he quickly flees.

DITMORE AND EXTER SHURY					
10	STR	10	DEX	10	CON
10	BODY	13	INT	8	EGO
15	PRE	12	COM		
2	PD	2	ED	2	SPD
4	REC	20	END	20	STUN

Abilities: Animal Handler 11-; Bribery 13-; Conver-sation 12-; High Society 13-; Persuasion 13-; Riding 11-; Trading 15-; WF: Blades.

25+ Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Secret (they’re smugglers) (Frequently; Severe).

Equipment: Horse and cart, shortsword.

Description: Brothers who have spent most of their thirty years together scheming how to become wealthy men, Ditmore and Exter Shury are mer-chants who stop at the Wick twice yearly. In recent years they’ve taken to trading in exotic glassware, and to all appearances they’ve done very well in the business. In conversation they speak frequently of the woes they suffered when first starting out, telling the stories with an ironic chuckle and shake of the head or a loud guffaw. Their favorite story: when they first started carting glassware back and forth across the continent, they were traveling a moun-tainous road when a rockslide — a rain of pebbles and small stones, hardly a credible danger to man or beast, but a terrible threat to fragile glass — fell directly on their wagon and destroyed most of their investment, leaving them paupers. Somehow (through their sharply-honed and keen mercantile skills, both Shury brothers are quick to claim), they recovered from that loss and now do quite well.

Red-haired and freckle-faced, the Shury brothers look considerably younger than their

three and a half decades. They dress flamboyantly, wearing whatever extravagant clothing was most popular among the wealthy in the last city they visited — although by the time they reach the Wick their clothing has suffered somewhat from travel. Of the Wick's lodgers, the Shury brothers are the most friendly and jovial, always willing to buy a mug or two for a fellow traveler in exchange for a well-told story.

Secret: The Shury brothers did indeed recover from the catastrophic accident that destroyed their first load of glassware, but their “sharply-honed and keen” mercantile skills had nothing to do with it. They recouped their losses by trading in illegal substances, specifically poisons and drugs. They hide these in the glassware carried on their cart, deep in the midst of the packing straw stuffed into the jars and vases to protect the objects.

Since the end of that first, nerve-wracking journey — the authorities have no love of smugglers, even those down on their luck and merely trying to get up a stake so they can get back on their feet — the Shury brothers have tried hard to get out of the smuggling business. They have, however, failed. Their suppliers and buyers continue to hold their past misdeeds over their head, ensuring that they must continue smuggling or face the consequences of their actions — consequences that are very unpleasant. Ditmore and Exter are basically decent souls who once let their despair (and, to be honest, greed) get the better of them, and they've been living with guilty consciences ever since. They would be exceedingly grateful to anyone who could get them out of their current circumstances.

ILLÉ SORDEN

8 STR	12 DEX	10 CON
10 BODY	15 INT	18 EGO
15 PRE	10 COM	
2 PD	2 ED	3 SPD
4 REC	20 END	20 STUN

Abilities: Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED); Acting 15-; Interrogation 15-; KS: Evil God's Religious Doctrine 14-; Literacy; Stealth 11-; WF: Common Melee Weapons

75+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Devotion To His God (Very Common, Total); Social Limitation: Secret (is a cultist of an evil god) (Occasionally, Minor [character will be shunned and distrusted if discovered])

Equipment: Staff, Censer Of The Ancestors (see below), 3 Demon-Minted Coins (see below), 50 gold pieces, holy talisman

Description: Illé Sorden is a father traveling to retrieve the remains of his son, a soldier killed in a skirmish with bandits. He plans to return the body to his home village so he can inter his son in the family tomb. A laconic man in his late years, Illé has little to say to his fellow lodgers at the Wick; judging by his stark features and hard gray eyes, he seems consumed by grief. He wears plain dark clothes — homespun breeches and tunic dusty and

stained from long travel — and keeps his lean body wrapped in a simple woolen cloak. He has thinning jet-black hair, but rarely doffs his leather hat, with its low crown and a wide brim that casts a shadow over his pinched lips and hollow cheeks.

Secret: Illé Sorden is a servant of the foul god whose temple originally stood here. When the cult fell centuries ago, Sorden's family was one of the few to escape. Through the generations they have carried on the rites and rituals of their god, hoping for a sign of his imminent return, and Illé was the recipient of that sign. Months ago he experienced a vision that revealed the tasks he had to accomplish to ensure the god's revival. He has spent the intervening time working toward those divinely mandated goals: first, locating the Censer Of The Ancestors; second, coming to Wickshine's Last Inn to retrieve the stone. Though he has never met another cultist, Illé knows beyond a shadow of a doubt others of his ilk are at work attempting to accomplish similar goals, and he longs for the day when they gather to re-assemble the prophecy, the cornerstone of the cult's *raison d'être*.

Illé Sorden possesses no magical abilities outside of the magic items he carries — his god has been banished, and thus cannot grant him spells as other gods do to their priests. If you want to increase the difficulty of this adventure, a simple way to do so is to make Illé a necromancer. Add to his character sheet Necromancy 14- and selection of spells (say, 30 to 60 points' worth), from the Necromancy and/or Witchcraft sections of the *Fantasy Hero Grimoire*, as well as any other spells you deem appropriate. (Alternately, if you want him to serve an evil god who's not banished, make him a spell-casting priest.)

Enchanted Items

Illé Sorden must rely on enchanted items to help him in his quest to discover the prophecy. He currently possess two: the Censer Of The Ancestors and three Demon-Minted Coins. He keeps the magic coins on his person in the pouch with his other coins; the Censer he keeps in his pack up in his room.

The Censer Of The Ancestors: The Censer itself is a squat copper cylinder with a domed top that opens on a hinge and closes with a simple latch. The top is perforated, the holes in the shape of the god's sigil (a broken triangle inside a circle) to allow the smoke from burning incense to rise out from the Censer. The Censer hangs from a thin iron chain spotted with rust — no matter what attempt one makes to clean the rust from the chain, it soon re-appears.

The Censer is a plot device, so it has no *HERO System* statistics. It's an artifact dedicated to an evil god, and only followers of that deity can successfully use it. To call on its magic, the follower requires both incense and the Censer. After he lights the incense, undead begin to rise. The type of the undead depends on the user's strength of will as well as the undead's willingness to do the bidding of the summoner. If necessary, you can treat the Censer as a Summon with the *Difficult To Dispel*

TROUBLESHOOTING: TELEPATHY AND DETECTS

Though a talented liar, Illé Sorden lacks magical means of disguising who he is and whom he truly serves, as well as his malevolent intent. If your PCs have spells or powers that allow them to know the thoughts of others, detect truth, read another's soul, or similar “mystery-busting” abilities, you should provide Illé with a way to counter attempts to discover the truth about him. Depending on the specifics of how magic works in your campaign, the following item provides Illé Sorden with the protection he needs to make sure the cause of troubles at the Wick is still somewhat mysterious. The exact effect is left to you — if the PC can read auras, then the Image is an aura appropriate to his cover story; if the PC can read thoughts, then he reads thoughts that indicate Illé's cover story is true. (For ease of play, the Image is defined as affecting the “Magic Group,” meaning any Sense of magical or quasi-magical origin.) The item is simple round mirror of bronze, polished to a high sheen, worn around the cultist's neck.

Mirror Of Obfuscation: Images to Magic Group, -6 to PER Rolls, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½) (56 Active Points); IAF (-½), Independent (-2), Set Effect (only to show target image appropriate to “cover story,” -1). Total cost: 12 points.

DEMON-MINTED COIN

Major Transform 22d6 (human into 366-point Shadow demon), Trigger (command word; +¼) (412 Active Points); IAF (-½), Independent (-2), Limited Target (human who accepts the coin; -½), No Range (-½), 1 Charge which Never Recovers (-4) (total cost: 48 points) **plus**

Major Transform 22d6 (human mind into the mind of a Shadow demon with the Psychological Limitation *Always Obeys Person Who Gave Him The Coin* [Very Common, Total]), BOECV (Mental Defense applies; +1), Works Against EGO, Not BODY (+¼), Trigger (command word; +¼) (825 Active Points); IAF (-½), Independent (-2), Limited Target (human who accepts the coin; -½), No Range (-½), 1 Charge which Never Recovers (-4) (total cost: 97 points) **plus**

Major Transform 22d6 (human spirit into the spirit of a Shadow demon), BOECV (Mental Defense applies; +1), Works Against EGO, Not BODY (+¼), Trigger (command word; +¼) (825 Active Points); IAF (-½), Independent (-2), Limited Target (human who accepts the coin; -½), No Range (-½), 1 Charge which Never Recovers (-4) (total cost: 97 points). Total cost: 242 points.

Advantage — any attempt to Dispel the effect fails and attempts to Suppress the Censer’s magic only meet with marginal success. When the incense is extinguished, the summoned undead immediately return whence they came.

The Censer does not radiate magic, but cultists of the evil god recognize it easily. To the right buyer, the Censer is priceless — but of course, any such buyer is more likely to kill the seller than pay the agreed amount. In addition, many righteous and right-minded parties would be very interested to discover who is selling evil artifacts and are likely to track the seller down.

Demon-Minted Coin: A Demon-Minted Coin looks like a featureless gold coin — but scrape away the gilt, and the coin’s true nature is revealed. One face has the graven image of a horned skull; the other has a motto, written in an ancient script around the edge: “I accept this coin in exchange for my soul rendered unto the infernal.” At the bidding of the giver, the magic of the coin transforms the hapless soul who accepted the coin as payment for some service into a demon (in the case of Illé Sorden’s coins and Eadon Marsh, a shadow).

The coins radiate magic, but ordinary, “neutral” magic (treat this as Images to Detect Magic, -5 to PER Rolls — it’s possible a character whose Detect Magic has Discriminatory and/or Analyze could see through it if he rolls well enough). If the PCs somehow detect that magic and confront Illé Sorden, he lies. He tells them: “As a naive youth, I purchased the coins from a vendor at market who claimed they were talismans of good fortune. Two gold coins for one lucky one, it seems so foolish now. I’ve kept them for all my life just in case, but this journey will cost me dearly and I must spend these coins also. I should have given them to my son — he could have used good fortune far more than I.” Then Illé looks off to the distance mournfully.

JOSIAH TWO-COINS					
8 STR	10 DEX	10 CON			
8 BODY	8 INT	12 EGO			
8 PRE	8 COM				
2 PD	2 ED	2 SPD			
4 REC	20 END	20 STUN			

Abilities: +1 OCV with staff; Acting 11-; Persuasion 11-; Streetwise 11-; Survival (Urban; Temperate/Sub-Tropical) 13-; WF: Staffs.

0+ Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Secret (homeless beggar masquerading as itinerant priest) (Very Common; Moderate).

Equipment: Quarterstaff, “holy” talisman

Description: Probably the most frequent lodger at the Wick, Josiah Two-Coins is a self-proclaimed servant of the god of travelers (or good fortune, or whatever similar god exists in your campaign) and itinerant priest. For a holy man, Josiah rarely speaks of the divine, preferring to discuss the quality of the Wick’s ale, the hardships of the road, and the difficulty of receiving “alms” in these days of “godless iniquity.”

NPCs QUICK REFERENCE

The chart below summarizes the NPCs to help you keep track of them during the adventure, and also includes the location where each one sleeps. The NPCs are listed alphabetically by last name.

Name	Profession	Location
Kurdy Deel	Tinker	Upper Floor, Room C
Jinny Fingle	Serving Lass	Garret
Usta Fingle	Serving Lass	Garret
Aved Kidly	Stable Boy	Garret
Marten L’Gentsia	Scholar	Upper Floor, Room D
Eadon Marsh	Out-of-work mercenary	Upper Floor, Room B
Ditmore Shury	Merchant & purveyor of exotic glassware	Upper Floor, Room D
Exter Shury	Merchant & purveyor of exotic glassware	Upper Floor, Room D
Abel Still	Proprietor	Ground Floor, Area #4
Dorothea Still	Proprietress	Ground Floor, Area #4
Illé Sorden	Bereaved father	Upper Floor, Room A
Josiah Two-Coins	Itinerant priest	Upper Floor, Room C

Josiah wears brown, threadbare robes of burlap tied at the waist with a hempen rope and badly in need of a good cleaning. He rarely goes far without his stout staff of oak, and on a string hung around his neck, he wears a wooden disk with a crudely carved sigil — one that bears little resemblance to the device of any god the PCs know of. Middle-aged and bone skinny, Josiah has brown hair and mismatched eyes — his left eye is blue; his right one, brown. He frequently points to his eyes as proof of his god’s favor.

Secret: Josiah Two-Coins is not, in truth, the servant of any god. He only makes that claim to get free ale and lodging. All in all, his ruse is harmless and the Stills know the truth. Over the years they’ve listened closely to his mumbled blessings of their inn, spoken in the mornings before Josiah departs, and heard his nonsensical words — it wasn’t hard to figure out his true profession. Despite this, they treat Josiah kindly. If pressed about the matter, both Stills are quick to remind whomever they speak with: the god of travelers is also the patron of drunkards, fools, and the penniless... so who’s to say Josiah isn’t a true servant of that deity?

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Wickshine's Last Inn is a large inn with walls of half timber and plaster, built on a foundation of field stones and wooden planking over dug-out areas. The steep-sloped roof has wooden shingles; three stone chimneys jut above the roof's peak.

The surrounding land contains many apple trees, healthy by all appearances except for their lack of blossoms. There are several homes and buildings, but their fallen-in roofs, doors off their hinges, empty windows, and a general state of disrepair makes it clear no one has lived in or used them for many years. Not too distant from the inn — a little less than fifty yards — are two small pens where Abel Still keeps a small flock of sheep and a small herd of pigs. A third pen stands in a state of disuse — the Still's milk-cow died several months ago and they haven't had the opportunity to purchase a second one.

Courtyard

Just outside the entrance of the Wick is the courtyard — an outdoors area separated from the surrounding land by a wall of weather-worn stone

.5" (3.25 feet) high. A wooden gate that closes with a simple iron latch openable from both sides allows entrance through the wall. In the northern part of the courtyard, near the outside wall of the Wick, is a ramp that leads down to the cellar.

1. WELL

The Wick's well, 6" (39 feet) deep, provides a source of near-by freshwater for the Wick. The nearest other source of water, a small stream, is a five-minute walk away. The rim of the well stands a little less than .5" (3.25 feet) high and is made of fieldstone. A simple crank with a hempen rope lowers a wooden bucket to the water. The crank is set atop the well on a rickety wooden frame; it will not bear the weight of a full-grown man. (For purposes of the rules, treat the frame as having STR 5.)

2. CHICKEN COOP

This simple wooden shed with a sloped roof serves as shelter for a rooster and the ten hens the Stills rely on for eggs.

3. STABLE

The Stills keep grain stores and lodger's mounts, as well as Abel's two mules, inside this wooden structure. There are six stalls for animals;

Abel's mules occupy two of the stalls and the rest hold animals for the other lodgers — Kurdy's mule, the Shury brothers' two draft horses, and L'Gentsia's riding horse (thus, the stable is full when the adventurers arrive at the inn). A small forge, anvil, and stock of tools occupy the western portion of the stable; both Abel and Aved can shoe a horse and perform other simple tasks, but neither is an accomplished smith.

A single door in the north provides an entrance; two doors in the west provide the same for mounts. Outside the western doors is the Shury brothers' cart, with a tarp thrown over the back to protect their cargo from the rain.



INN MATERIALS SUMMARY

Below you can find a summary of DEF and BODY for materials around the Wick.

Object	DEF and BODY
Bench	DEF 4, BODY 5
Bed	DEF 3, BODY 5
Chamber Pot	DEF 2, BODY 2
Copper Plate	DEF 2, BODY 1
Door, Inside	DEF 2, BODY 3
Door, Outside	DEF 4, BODY 3
Stoneware Mug	DEF 2, BODY 1
Table	DEF 4, BODY 7
Wall, Inside	DEF 3, BODY 3
Wall, Outside	DEF 5, BODY 5
Window	DEF 1, BODY 1
Wooden Shutters	DEF 3, BODY 2

4. GARDEN

Dorothea Still keeps a garden in the eastern portion of the grounds. Here she grows herbs and seasonings for cooking, as well as a few vegetables like tomatoes and carrots.

Ground Floor

The Wick is a two-story building. The ground floor contains the common room, kitchen, and Stills' living area.

1. COMMON ROOM

A sturdy wooden door leads from the grounds into the common room of the Wick, the heart of the inn (at least as far as the lodgers are concerned). A large stone hearth — blazing with a warm fire on this night — dominates the western hall and provides most of the room's flickering illumination. Long wooden tables with benches fill the room, and each table can comfortably seat six people. A single table to the east serves as the innkeeper's table, where Abel displays his wares — meats he hunted during the day or recently slaughtered, and ales he has on tap — and lodgers can place their orders at the table. In the southeast is a wooden stairway that leads up to the rooms for the lodgers, and in the east, opposite the hearth, is a passage that leads to a door and the kitchen (area #2). The common room has windows in three of its walls — the windows hold leaded glass, a sign of the place's former wealth. They're shuttered against the storm, and when the wind blows especially hard, one can hear the rattle of shutters over the conversation and laughter.

2. KITCHEN

For the Stills and the Wick's staff, the kitchen is the heart of the inn. Here, with the help of the Fingle sisters, Abel and Dorothea prepare the tasty meals regular patrons of the place have come to appreciate. Three doors lead from the place: the one in the west goes to the common room (area #1), the one in the east to the Stills' room (area #2), and the one in the south to the storage room (area #4). In the east wall is a stone hearth with a spit where the Stills cook meat. A stairway in the west leads down to the cellar.

3. STOREROOM

This room is filled with shelves, bins, and racks for grains, meats, and vegetables. Isolated some distance from other communities, the Stills are careful to keep their pantries overflowing with food that will keep, so this room is usually crowded with foodstuffs: sacks of grain, jerked meat, hard cheeses, jars of preserves, sausages hung on the wall, and tuns of pickled meat. A door in the north leads to the kitchen (area #2); a door in the south leads outside onto the grounds.

4. INNKEEPER'S APARTMENT

This room serves as the living area and sleeping quarters for the Stills. It's furnished with a table and three chairs, dressers, and a large bed. Like the other furnishings in the inn, the furniture is simple and rustic but very well crafted — along with the leaded glass in the windows, this is another sign of the place's former prosperity. There's a small hearth in the south wall, and a door in the west leads to the kitchen (area #2).

The bottom drawer of the night stand on the south side of the bed (Dorothea's side) has a false bottom where the Stills hide their wealth (such as it is): 10 gold coins and several pieces of jewelry (heirlooms handed down through the generations worth several hundred gold pieces in total).

5. DISTILLERY

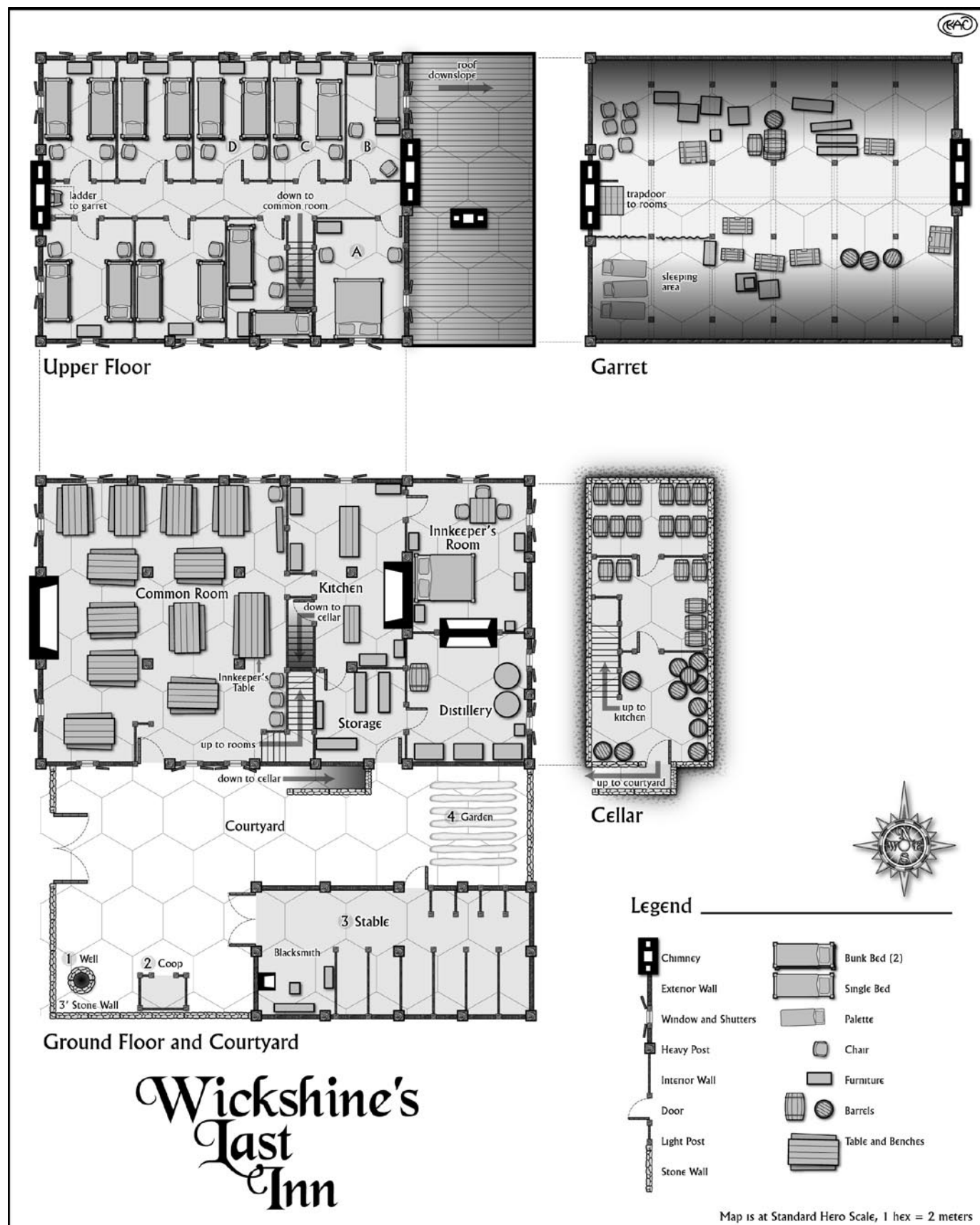
Before the apple trees were barren, the proprietors of the Wickshine used this room to distill the town's famous brandy. In the north is an oversized firepit with a stone hearth, unused for decades. Covered by rough burlap are two copper kettles, and on the tables and shelves are other tools used in distilling, such as a large wooden ladle and a crate holding empty glass bottles. The Stills often consider converting this room to some other use, perhaps brewing ale or other activity useful for the inn, but neither can bring him- or herself to do so. Though the Stills don't consider it likely, both hope that someday the apple trees will again bear fruit.

Upper Floor

This floor, reached by the stair from the common room, has rooms for the Wick's lodgers. All nine rooms open into the single hallway. At the southern end of the hallway is a trapdoor in the ceiling and a ladder leaned against the stone chimney. The ladder and trapdoor lead up to the garret that serves as sleeping quarters for the Fingle sisters and Aved Kidly.

Seven of the rooms hold two bunks — simple wooden pallets, one atop the other on a wooden frame, each pallet with a mattress of corn husks, straw, or whatever similar materials were on hand at the time — for four people. Intended for more wealthy patrons, the other two rooms have only a single bed each, both with mattresses of goose down. One room has a bed large enough for two people; the other, a bed large enough for one person.

Each room has a wooden table with two candles and a chamber pot in the corner. The two



rooms intended for wealthy patrons have bed-warmers, shallow copper bowls with a lid filled burning coals and then slid under the bed. These two rooms also have locks on the door (the other rooms do not and close with a simple latch) — a PC can pick the lock with a successful Lockpicking roll or force the door open with a successful STR Roll at a -4 penalty.

Garret

Just below the roof of the inn is the garret — a single open room filled with old clothing, blankets, children's dolls and toys, furniture, and other unused goods. The Fingle sisters' and Aved Kidly's

sleeping area is in the southwest, sectioned off with blankets hung from the sloped ceiling. Beyond the blankets are three pallets where the children sleep, as well as a dresser for their clothing.

Cellar

The stairs in the kitchen and the ramp outside the inn lead down to the cellar, a dug-out area directly below the kitchen with a dirt floor and walls of unmortared stone. Here the Stills store wine and ale purchased from traveling merchants. They've hidden the last of their Wickshine brandy in an empty barrel in the northeastern corner of the northern-most section.

TIMELINE



This section is a timeline for the action in *A Night Out Of The Rain*, beginning with the thunderstorm and ending with an attack by the spirits the cultist, Illé Sorden, summons to help him find the chimney stone inscribed with a fragment of the prophecy. Before running the adventure, familiarize yourself with the order of the events. Times for when the events begin are provided, but you should change these as you see fit to keep the action moving at a good pace — while the order of events is important, exactly when each happens and the time between one event and the next are less so.

The Guests' Arrival: Even before the PCs arrive on the scene, other guests have come to the Wick. When spirits possess the children and attack the lodgers, the PCs likely realize one of the guests harbors ill intent toward the others (not to mention the PCs themselves!), and they probably have some questions. Here's a list of the order in which the others arrived, as well as some other basic details. Some of these details, like Exter Shury's illness, are red herrings; you should add others as you feel necessary to keep the PCs from discovering the cultist too easily.

The Stills know all of this information; none of it is secret.

- 1) Josiah Two-Coins arrived four days ago. The Stills know from experience Josiah will stay on for several more days, enjoying their charity and hospitality, until wanderlust takes him and he leaves.
- 2) Kurdy Deel arrived yesterday morning and has stayed on to mend some pots and pans for the Stills. He plans to leave tomorrow morning.
- 3) Ditmore and Exter Shury arrived yesterday evening. Soon after arriving Exter became ill, running a fever and suffering night chills. Though he feels better today, the two brothers have decided

to stay on for another day or two to make sure he's all right. If a PC with healing spells or skills examines Exter, he finds that the merchant is indeed ill, though the cause is hard to determine. If the PC seems friendly, or at least approachable, Ditmore confides he is worried about his brother since these attacks of fever are recurrent. The truth of the matter: Exter's guilty conscience about smuggling poisons and drugs has begun to manifest as a physical illness.

- 4) Illé Sorden arrived in the morning and plans to leave on the morrow, early in the morning.
- 5) Eadon Marsh arrived in the afternoon — several hours after Illé and traveling from the opposite direction — and he plans to leave in the morning with his new employer (Illé Sorden) after a good night's sleep.
- 6) Marten L'Gentsia arrived last, having only stopped for a warm meal. Not the most worldly or experienced of travelers, and eager to arrive at his destination, he had left the inn to continue traveling through the night despite the Stills' protests. But before he got far, the storm began and he returned to the Wick.

SUNSET: THUNDER CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON

Just as the sun descends below the horizon, thunder clouds come rushing out of the west. The storm is sudden — until the winds pick up and dark grey clouds appear, nothing indicates a storm is on its way. The thunder clouds stretch from north to south, and as darkness descends, lightning cracks, thunder rumbles, then the rain begins — at first a light drizzle; then falling in sheets, blown by cold winds. Despite the storm's sudden appearance and its fury, there's nothing unnatural about it — it's just a very bad storm, unusual in its intensity but not beyond the pale.

After traveling for a little while — it's slow going in this inclement weather — the adventurers can see up the road lights shining out the windows of the Wickshine's Last Inn.

+1 HOUR:

INSIDE THE COMMON ROOM

When the adventurers enter the courtyard of the inn, Able Still and Aved Kidly are outside, struggling to close the shutters. Able Still has Aved help the adventurers stable their horses, telling them to go on inside and dry out while he and the boy take care of their guests' mounts. Though the mounts of other lodgers take up all the stalls, there's enough room inside the stable for three more horses; any others must be tied up outside in the rain. In the common room, the other lodgers have already finished their meals. They now relax in front of the fire with mugs of ale.

Dorothea Still warmly greets the adventurers when they enter— to all appearances, she's sincerely pleased the adventurers found shelter from the storm — and she insists on keeping the kitchen open long enough to get them whatever meal they would like. (You can find what fare the Stills have to offer the PCs in the box, *Prices At The Wick*, on page 9.)

The Guests

Here's where the guests sit in the common room and who's sitting with whom when the PCs arrive on the scene. Also included is what the guests are talking about; these are only provided as ideas and general topics of conversation, and this is a good place to further customize the adventure to your campaign by including details of world events

TROUBLESHOOTING: WEATHER CONTROL

In dramatic terms, the purpose of the storm is to drive the PCs to the inn and keep them there as the mystery unfolds. If they have access to magic that can alter the weather — such as Cordarion's *Spell Of Weatherworking* from *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire* — they may not feel the need to visit the inn, or to stay there when danger rears its head.

In that case, you may have to alter things to keep the story moving properly. The simplest way to do so is to make the storm magical so that weather-altering spells won't affect it... but that will immediately make the PCs suspicious. A better route might be to appeal to the characters' common sense by pointing out the following facts:

—their ability to control the weather doesn't dry out the roads; traveling is still difficult, especially at night

—a soft bed and a hot meal are better than sleeping outside in the mud

in the guests' conversations. The tables are labeled A - C and marked on the map of the Wick's ground floor located on page 15.

Table A: The Shury brothers and Marten L'Gentsia sit here. Currently the Shury brothers — eyebrows raised in feigned astonishment, chins cupped in their hands, elbows resting on the table, and trying hard to look interested — listen to Marten explain the mating calls of the scarlet-throated thrasher, a bird native to far-southern jungles. When the PCs enter the common room, Ditmore Shury sees an excellent opportunity to change the subject and invites the adventurers to join the three of them,



offering under his breath to buy the nearest PC a mug of ale if he talks about anything but birds.

Table B: Kurdy Deel and Josiah Two-Coins, having known each other for many years, share a table and sit opposite each other, both hunched over their mugs, at the end of the table nearest the fire. When the adventurers walk in, Kurdy shouts for them to shut the door, then mutters complaints about thoughtless, inconsiderate youth. Their conversation generally consists of Kurdy complaining at length while Josiah nods his head in agreement.

Table C: Sitting at this table, Eadon Marsh and Illé Sorden have just completed a business transaction: Eadon has hired on to journey with Illé to retrieve his son's remains and protect the old man from bandits and the like. (Eadon is wholly ignorant of the cultist's true purpose.) The agreed payment is one gold a day, and Illé has already paid five gold coins in advance before the PCs arrive. One of the coins is a Demon-Minted Coin (see page 12). After they conclude their business, Eadon asks questions about his new employer's son — where he was posted, who he was fighting, and other soldierly concerns — while at the same time bragging about his own exploits as a warrior. Illé offers terse answers to the mercenary's questions, letting him talk to his heart's content. Neither man looks kindly on strangers joining them, though neither is outright rude about it.

TROUBLESHOOTING: LOOKING FOR A JOB

After hearing that Eadon Marsh is in Illé Sorden's employ, the PCs might decide to present themselves to the man and offer their own services. If this is the case, you have two choices.

First, Illé hires them and presents two of the PCs with his remaining Demon-Minted Coins... which might prove a serious problem if you don't like creating inter-party conflicts in your games. Later in the night Illé triggers the magic of the coins and the Transformed PCs must now fight their fellow party members. Though it creates an interesting wrinkle in the adventure, most players don't like having their PCs turned into demons — and among some groups, a fight between players' characters might bleed over into a fight among players. If you go this route, you should keep both those potential problems in mind. Also, if the magic of the coins succeeds, the difficulty of the scenario increases dramatically — the unaffected PCs now face three Shadow demons, rather than one, and the party is down two members.

Another option: provide Illé with only one Demon-Minted Coin, the one he gave to Eadon Marsh. He hires the PCs, but has no magical sway over any of them. This option might cause some uncertainty among the PCs — do they accuse or attack the man they recently agreed to protect? — but is of lesser consequence.

Finally, Illé simply declines their services. He claims he has too little coin to hire them, and he feels one warrior is more than enough to protect him.

+4 HOURS:

THE WICK'S STAFF RETIRES

Over the next couple of hours, the lodgers retire to their room. The first to leave is Illé Sorden, who departs the common room less than an hour after the PCs arrive. After he leaves, Eadon Marsh attempts to start a conversation with one (or more) of the warriors among the PCs.

Over the next three hours, the rest retire in the following order: Kurdy Deel (who says he's too old to stay up any later); Eadon Marsh (who says Illé would like to get an early start in the morning, so he needs to get some sleep); Exter Shury (who says he isn't feeling well); and Ditmore Shury and Marten L'Gentsia (who've had too much to drink). The last to leave is Josiah Two-Coins, whom Dorothea has to cajole up to his room — she does the same with any PCs still in the common room.

Room Assignments

Four of the rooms shown on the map for the upper floor of the Wick, located on page 15, are labeled A - D. These are the rooms NPCs occupy, and you should assign the PCs to the others. The NPCs locations are as follows:

Room A: Illé Sorden has taken this room, the largest and most well-appointed, for himself.

Room B: Eadon Marsh stays here — he changed rooms before retiring for the night at his new employer's request, so he would be closer to hand. If one of the PCs has chosen this room before Eadon retires, Eadon attempts to get the room from the PC. Though the discussion grows heated if the PC doesn't accede to Eadon's demand, it stops just short of blows and Eadon then grudgingly takes the room just north of where Illé stays. (This is true as long as the PC is a warrior or has a similar martial occupation, or one of the other party members who does is on hand — if Eadon thinks he can get his way with a little bullying, he does so.)

Room C: Kurdy Deel and Josiah Two-Coins share this room.

Room D: The Shury brothers and Marten L'Gentsia reside here.

+8 HOURS:

ILLÉ SORDEN BEGINS THE RITUAL

After sleeping for several hours, Illé Sorden awakens well before morning and removes the Censer Of The Ancestors from his pack. Inside the Censer he places a block of incense made from the ground-up petals of flowers and the crushed bones of men sacrificed to his evil god. He sets the incense alight and begins to summon the spirits who will guide him to the fragment of the prophecy text that's currently a part of the Wick's chimney. The ritual requires two hours to complete, during which time Illé paces the length of his room, scuffling his feet and swinging the Censer from its rusty iron chain to-and-fro, all the while murmuring in a long-forgotten language words sacred to his evil god.

Unless someone is just outside the cultist's door and/or possesses some sort of enhanced hearing, it's impossible to hear Illé chanting; but as the ritual nears completion, the acrid smell of the burning incense permeates the entire floor. Ask for a PER Roll if a PC is awake at the time, or has the Talent *Lightsleep* or a similar ability. At your discretion, you can ask for a PER Roll at -6 for sleeping PCs lacking such abilities. If the roll succeeds, the PC awakens and notices the smell. Though strange and somewhat off-putting, nothing about the smell hints of imminent danger. With a successful roll using KS: Religious Doctrine (no matter for which god) or a similar Skill, the PC recognizes the smell as that of some kind of incense, a common feature of many rituals.

After the first fifteen minutes of the ritual, it becomes impossible to pinpoint the origin of the smell — it permeates the whole upper floor and garret of the Wick, although it's strongest in the southern part of the upper floor and garret.

Interrupting The Ritual

The PCs might interrupt the ritual at this point. If so, you should keep a few things in mind. First, if a PC doesn't extinguish the incense — meaning make a point of telling you that his character puts out the incense — the ritual continues and the spirits are summoned. The chanting is only religious trappings; it's the incense combined with the Censer that's the true magic.

Second, Illé has hired Eadon Marsh, giving the mercenary the Demon-Minted Coin. If captured and held prisoner, Illé triggers the Transform, changing Eadon Marsh into a demon — and, with the Censer in tow, attempts to make good his escape when the demon attacks.

Finally, Illé does not admit he is the evil servant of a foul god, or laugh manically while threatening the PCs with a baleful doom, or do anything similar. If the adventurers come barging into his room, he explains he is only performing the proper mourning ritual dictated by the customs of his people. Until his son is laid to rest in the family tomb, Illé must perform the ritual each night or else his son's soul will wander the afterlife, lost and forlorn, sure to rise from death as a vengeful spirit. (Have him make a roll with his Acting 15- to convince the PCs of his sincerity, if necessary.)

+10 HOURS:

THE FINGLE SISTERS AND AVED KIDLY POSSESSED

The spirits of three high priests, a triumvirate of evil men who formerly resided in the wicked shrine and led the evil god's cult many centuries ago, pass across the veil between the living and

TROUBLESHOOTING: KEEP THEM GUESSING

One potential difficulty you might encounter with this scenario is this: as soon as the PCs enter the inn, the players start looking for the next adventure. It's only natural they do this. The players are gathered around the gaming table, after all, and likely expect something more than a day-in-the-life scene at a roadside inn, and an inn is often a starting point for a band of PCs' next adventure.

The best way to keep them from looking into Illé Sorden's past too closely is to distract them with the other NPCs. Most of the guests have a hook in their backgrounds that can lead to an adventure: the Shury brother's smuggling woes; Marten's curiosity about the blossom-less apple trees; Josiah's lie about being a priest. In short, play up the other mysteries surrounding the guests, as well as the Wick itself. Until the attack of the possessed children and skeletons later in the night, don't let them focus solely on Illé and his supposed journey to retrieve his son's remains.

Also, whenever the PCs ask Illé a question, he always brings the subject back around to his son's death — an uncomfortable subject even for the most jaded and world-weary adventurers. Hopefully the PCs will find this topic too morose for their tastes.

dead, and arrive at the Wick. Illé bargains away the lives of all the guests at the inn in return for the knowledge of the stone's location. The cultist speaks in a low murmur as he makes his bargain, in the same language as his chant. Whether the PCs recognize this language is left to your discretion — but it's important to keep in mind, the cult is ancient and centuries have passed since it was last widespread and well-known.

The words of the spirits are inaudible; only Illé who performed the ritual can hear them. Once the bargain is struck the spirits, now loosed from their cursed afterlife, possess the bodies of the three children and proceed to the common room to retrieve the stone for Illé.

(If the PCs captured Illé, but neglected to extinguish the incense, any PC on guard hears him muttering under his breath. Though he speaks in the common tongue, his comments seem oblique and senseless, unless the PC succeeds with a KS: Religious Doctrine or similar Skill Roll.)

Soon after, Dorothea Still comes into the common room to begin the day at the Wick. Her first task to throw wood on the fire in the common room's hearth. And that's where she stands when the possessed children come down the stairs. Dorothea screams for all she's worth, and at this point, ask the PCs for PER Rolls. A penalty of -2 is appropriate if a PC over-indulged in ale the previous evening. If the roll is successful, the character awakes.

And then begin with Segment 12 of combat....

THE FIGHT



In *A Night Out Of The Rain* the goal itself is straightforward enough: stop the possessed children and newly risen undead from killing everyone in the inn. The challenge is discovering who's responsible for working this foul magic, and then determining how to stop it. Immediately below you can find three sections: *The Proprietors*, *The Guests*, and *The Villains*. Described in each section are the details about what actions a character takes when the mayhem begins, as well as some general tactics to guide you while you run the combat. For ease of reference the *First Segment 12* boxed text summarizes the actions taken by NPCs in the first Segment 12, as well as the order in which they take those actions.

There are two general points you should consider as you run this part of the adventure.

First, much of this scenario's challenge is the mystery of who's behind the magic and what his goal is. Give your players time to try to figure out this mystery on their own... but keep the action urgent! Until the PCs determine that the Censer Of The Ancestors is the source of the magic, use the skeletons to your advantage, and whenever the action stalls, have more skeletons arrive on the scene.

Second, there are a handful of NPCs present at the Wick and you might find keeping track of all their actions difficult. But you don't have to worry about each and every NPC on each and every one of their Phases. Their abilities are nothing out of the ordinary and certainly not comparable to the PCs' — in other words, only the PCs can save the day in this adventure. But keep the NPCs in mind and use them to your advantage. For example, if the PCs are sitting on their hands, have a skeleton threaten a nearby NPC; if the PCs are at a loss for what to do next, have an NPC make a suggestion. But ultimately the focus of the fight is the PCs versus the villains, so be careful to not neglect your players by spending too much time concerning yourself with the actions of the NPCs.

THE PROPRIETORS

With the children transformed into flesh-hungry ghouls, only Abel and Dorothea Still remain unaffected by Illé Sorden's magic.

Dorothea is in the common room on the first Segment 12. She takes up a stout piece of wood from beside the hearth and prepares to do her best to defend herself.

When Dorothea screams, her husband is in the middle of getting dressed. In a state of dishevel, Abel rushes out of his room, through the kitchen, and into the common room. Though no warrior, he's ready to fight to the death to protect his wife.

THE GUESTS

Two of the guests, Eadon Marsh and Illé Sorden, are considered villains; you can find descriptions of their actions in the following section.

As a general rule of thumb, the other guests obey whatever orders the PCs give them (unless the order is obviously suicidal or similarly hazardous, or simply impossible for them to perform), but don't act on their own initiative. These are simple men, not heroes or experienced adventurers like the PCs, and the horror of the situation is too much for them to cope with on their own.

Kurdy Deel: Though a curmudgeon, Kurdy is a good-hearted man who's very fond of the Stills. Grabbing his dagger, he rushes down to the common room to help them. As he hurries down the stairs, he cries out, "Bandits!" But when confronted by the possessed children (a far cry from the mundane threat he expected), Kurdy freezes with terror.

SUMMARY: FIRST SEGMENT 12

This table organizes the NPCs by order of their DEX, the same order they take their Actions on the first Segment 12 of combat.

DEX 15:

- The possessed children come the rest of the way down the stairs and move into HTH Combat with Dorothea Still.

DEX 14:

- Eadon Marsh leaves his room and bangs on the door of Illé Sorden's room.

DEX 12:

- Marten L'Gentsia continues to snore.

DEX 10:

- Abel Still enters the common room.
- Dorothea Still takes up a piece of wood and swings futilely at one of the possessed children.
- Exter Shury attempts to wake up his brother Ditmore.

DEX 8:

- Josiah Two-Coins continues to snore.
- Kurdy Deel comes down to the common room and is paralyzed with terror at the sight of the possessed children.

END OF THE SEGMENT:

- Illé Sorden lets Eadon Marsh into his room and shuts the door.

Marten L'Gentsia: Having drunk too much good ale, Marten does not wake up when Dorothea screams.

Ditmore and Exter Shury: Exter, his sleep restless because of his illness, awakens. He tries to wake up his brother who, like Marten L'Gentsia, drank too much.

Josiah Two-Coins: Josiah remains asleep, snoring loudly.

THE VILLAINS

Of the guests, you should consider Illé Sorden and Eadon Marsh as adversaries for the PCs. Eadon, even before he's transformed into a demon, attempts to protect Illé. When Eadon's cowardice overwhelms his sense of obligation to his new employer, Illé activates the Demon-Minted Coin to summon a demonic protector for himself.

Eadon Marsh: Rather than rush down to the common room and investigate the scream, Eadon crosses the hall to Illé Sorden's room. He bangs on the door and shouts out, "Illé? Are you all right?" He does this even though no sounds of struggle come from Illé Sorden's room and ignores any PC who points that out to him, gruffly telling the PC his first duty is to his employer.

Illé Sorden: Though he now knows the location of the stone, he dispatched the spirits-*cum*-ghouls to retrieve it. He did not want to risk exposing himself as a cultist to any lodger who might escape from the inn. He currently plans to stay in his room until everyone is dead, only leaving once the possessed children return with the stone and news that the other lodgers are dead. When Eadon bangs on the door, he quickly opens it and lets the mercenary in. Then he commands Eadon to guard the door.

The Possessed Children: The children attack whoever threatens them. Despite the greenish pallor of their skin and the jagged nails grown long and twisted from their fingers, it's obvious from their stature and dress these ghouls were once the children who worked at the Wick. (No PER Roll is even necessary to realize this.)

If the PCs' attacks are especially ruthless or savage, both Abel and Dorothea Still beg the adventurers to spare the children's lives.

If the PCs don't immediately rush to the common room, Dorothea is Knocked Out (or slain, depending on the tone of your campaign). The ghouls then attack Abel and Kurdy and dispatch them just as quickly. If no other threats present themselves, the ghouls return to the chimney, tear free the stone, and proceed upstairs to slay the other guests before delivering the stone to Illé Sorden.

SUBSEQUENT TURNS

The storm raging outside the inn, a life-or-death fight raging inside...

Illé Sorden finds his plans disrupted by intrepid adventurers who have unwittingly stumbled into Wickshine's Last Inn, but all is not yet lost for the evil cultist! The possessed children are not the last of his undead allies as the PCs soon learn when skeletons pull themselves out of the ground and, bones clacking, attempt to enter the inn.

Below is an overview of the actions taken by the villains. The actions of the PCs might cause you to change this quite a bit; treat the overview as a guideline and adjust the actions as you see fit.

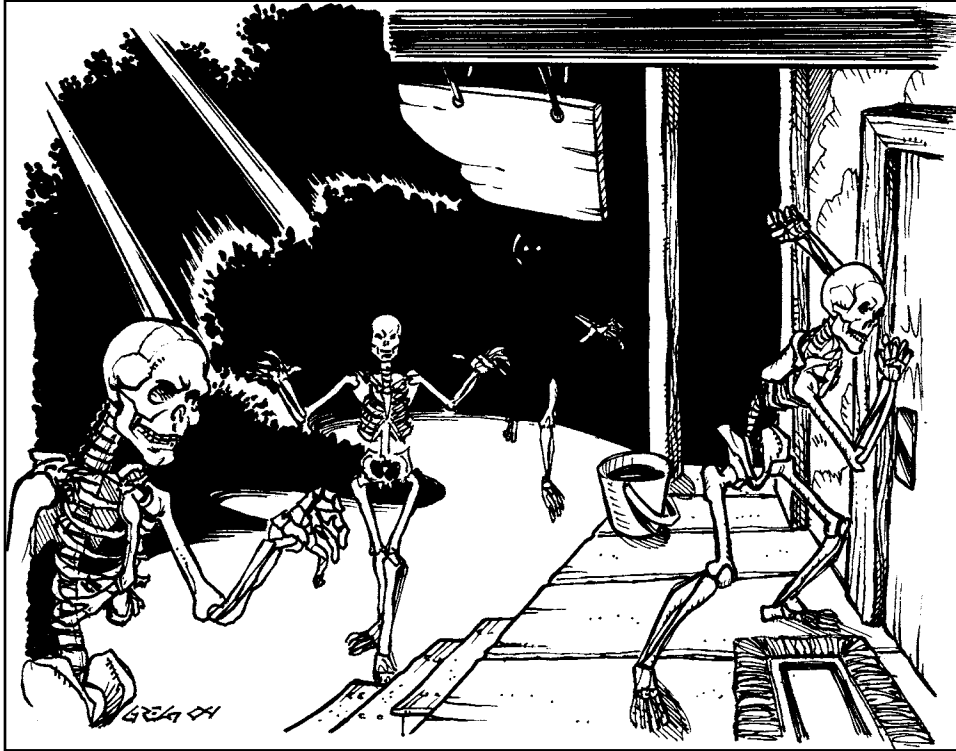
The Ghouls: The possessed children fight until Knocked Out or killed. Barring any extraordinary abilities the PCs possess, the only way to return them to their previous state — in other words, drive the possessing spirits from their bodies — is to extinguish the incense burning in the Censer Of The Ancestors. (If the PCs try to Dispel the magical effect that transformed the children into ghouls, assume it has 100 Active Points.)

If you use the rules on pages 107 and 108 of *Fantasy Hero* for Turning Undead, a priest or paladin PC can either cow or destroy undead with a successful PRE Attack. Cowing the possessed children works as normal; destroying them, however, results in the PC destroying the possessing spirit and freeing the children from its baneful influence.

Illé Sorden And Eadon Marsh: Both men remain upstairs away from the action. If the PCs barge into his room, Illé triggers the Demon-Minted Coin, causing Eadon to transform into a Shadow. Then he orders the summoned Shadow to delay the PCs while he rushes to the chimney in the common room and attempts to get away with the chimney stone inscribed with the prophecy. Otherwise the two simply bide their time until the ghouls and/or the skeletons kill everyone in the Wick.

If the PCs simply knock on the door and warn the two of danger, Eadon answers the door. He only cracks it open, obscuring much of the room from the PCs' view. He says he'll guard the old man here. Eadon is brusque, but no more so than expected for such a tense situation, and he gets prickly if the PCs question his ability to guard Illé. For more details, consult the section below, *Wrapping Up*.

The Skeletons: Sometime after the fight begins — at the most dramatically appropriate moment, in other words — skeletons conjured by Illé arrive at the Wick. They batter at the doors and tear the shutters from the windows, seeking entry. These undead were the acolytes and other lesser servants of the foul god, and when the forces of Good reduced the wicked shrine to rubble, hundreds were buried in a mass grave on the spot. (If, for some reason, you need an exact number of cultists buried on the spot, it was a little less than five hundred.) The spirits of these dead cult members lack the strength of will and personality possessed by the high priests whose spirits transformed the



children into ghouls, so they have arisen in undeath as mindless skeletons — but are no less deadly for their lack of intellect.

Exactly when the skeletons arrive at the Wick is up to you. The site of the wicked shrine, where the skeletons dig themselves free of earth, is some thirty yards to the east of the Wick. Also left to you is the number of skeletons that arrive at the Wick. The skeletons continue to come as long as the incense in the Censer Of The Ancestors continues to burn, but you should have them arrive in small groups, five to ten in number. Hopefully, the horror of the situation — that the skeletons will continue to arrive until they have overrun the Wick — should gradually dawn on the PCs as the number of undead slowly but surely increases past the point where the PCs can successfully defend the inn.

As new groups of skeletons arrive on the scene, be sure to have them attack from different directions — first have them seek entry through a window in the common room, then through a window in the innkeeper's quarters, and so on. This keeps the PCs on their toes and makes sure the players realize their current defensive position is likely untenable without discovering the cause of the attack.

A new group of skeletons arrives on Segment 12 of each Turn. You can increase or decrease the frequency to adjust the difficulty of this adventure... but be sure to not make it too easy. However long it takes for skeletons arrive, eventually the PCs should find that the mindless undead surround the inn.

Buried in a mass grave after being put to the sword, none of the skeletons have any weapons or armor — they do, however, have the Fingerbones Like Claws option, described on page 124 of *The HERO System Bestiary*.

GM ADVICE

Below you can find the answers to likely player questions, as well as the results of some potential PC actions.

Detects: Detect Magic and similar Powers reveal that magic permeates the upper floor and garret of the Wick; to pinpoint the source of that magic requires a successful roll at a -6 penalty because of the incense smoke's widespread influence. The undead are easily detectable as Summoned creatures, called forth by magic of a necromantic nature. The children and Eadon Marsh appear as the victims of a powerful Transformation.

Down To The Cellar: If the PCs decide the best place to defend themselves and the other lodgers is the cellar, keep a couple things in mind. First, the cellar might indeed prove impenetrable for the skeletons. Second, Illé Sorden refuses to retreat to the cellar, and if forced

to go against his will, triggers the Demon-Minted Coin that transforms Eadon Marsh into a Shadow Demon.

If the PCs pursue this plan of action and successfully block off the cellar from the undead, the skeletons continue to try to get in through the night. If Illé Sorden is free to roam, he eventually emerges from his room, collects the chimney stone, and departs — snuffing out the Censer Of The Ancestors once he's safely away, thus dismissing the skeletons. The PCs emerge none the wiser about Illé Sorden's purpose, but they can console themselves that they saved the lodgers.

If you feel this is an anti-climatic ending, ask the PCs for a PER Roll when Illé comes down to the common room, and if successful, the PCs can hear him walking around above them — his steps are subtly different from the skeletons, more sure and steady than the undead's mindless shuffle of clanking bones. This way the PCs gain a clue about his ulterior motives for refusing to retreat to the cellar and have the opportunity to act accordingly. (Alternately, you can go ahead and let him get away, but bring him back as the villain in a later scenario so the PCs have the chance for ultimate victory.)

Going Outside: If a PC goes outside, perhaps to locate the source of the skeletons, it's important to keep in mind that it's nighttime and a thunderstorm rages. These environmental conditions result in a -4 penalty to Sight PER Rolls and -2 to Hearing PER Rolls. Despite these hindrances, the PC easily locates the site of the wicked shine — there's nothing there but barren apple trees, churned earth, and skeletons digging free of the ground. Jagged strokes of lightning light the macabre scene. If the skeletons can perceive the PC, they attack him.

Up In The Garret: Because only the children are possessed, the PCs likely think to investigate the garret. There's only one unusual thing about it though: the stench of the incense is much stronger, although that might simply be because smoke rises.

WRAPPING UP

The fight proceeds, with skeletons continuing to arrive at the inn and attempting to enter through the door and windows, until the PCs extinguish the incense burning in the Censer. When the PCs break down his door (or otherwise try to attack him), Illé triggers the Demon-Minted Coin. Then he attempts to get to the common room, taking the Censer with him if he can. Once down in the common room, he does *not* make directly for the exit — he heads for the chimney, desperate to retrieve the stone before making good his escape. Illé Sorden, so near to his goal, goes to any lengths to get what he came for. No threats from the PCs stop him, and he even goes so far as to plunge his arm past the flames in the hearth if he doesn't have time to put out the fire.

If the PCs don't discover that Illé is the cause of all the trouble, he keeps up his pretense of being a simple bereaved father. Then he contrives to make his way to the common room — perhaps agreeing to help defend the inn from the skeletons. Once there, he attempts to take the stone from the chimney without anyone else noticing. There are several tactics he can take to accomplish this. When the skeletons attack a different area of the inn, Illé volunteers to remain alone in the common room to stay on guard. Or he can cause Eadon Marsh to transform into a Shadow demon, then in the resulting chaos obtain the stone. Whatever the case, Illé is a cunning adversary and his attempts to gain the stone should be as cunning as the situation allows.



LOCATION OF THE STONE

Once the PCs know it's there, the stone with the inscription of the prophecy is easy to find. It's merely a matter of reaching up into the chimney and feeling around. Two feet up, on the west-side of the chimney, the PC feels a stone with words carved on its surface. By some mysterious agency, the stone has come loose of the mortar, and with a little bit of scraping, a hard yank, and a successful STR Roll, the PC can pull the stone out. Unlike the other stones around the Wick, this is not a simple piece of field stone — it's a piece of obsidian, rectangular in shape with chipped corners and about twice the size of a large man's fist. (See page 24 for what it says.)

CONCLUSION



The Censer Of The Ancestors found, the undead returned to death, and Illé Sorden defeated, the adventure concludes. At dawn the storm abates, becoming a light drizzle in the early morning hours.

If Illé survives the fight — and he does not surrender, so taking him alive is difficult — he refuses to answer any questions about the night's events. It requires magical coercion to get him to reveal his allegiance to the evil god and his true purpose at the Wick.

If for some reason the PCs don't learn the location of the stone — maybe they defeat both the ghouls and Illé before either can attempt to retrieve it — the storm grows worse before it dwindles to a drizzle. After the fight thunder shakes the Wick down to its foundations, shaking the stone free of the chimney. The stone falls into the fire in an explosion of sparks.

The survivors of the attack are extremely grateful for their rescue. The Shury brothers offer letters of introduction to their contacts in the cities they visit as merchants (which, of course, might be a double-edged sword considering their illegal

activities). Marten L'Gentsia offers the same with any of his family or other nobility in the place where he is from. As a reward for the PCs' actions, the Stills offer not only their gratitude, assuring them of a place out of the rain whenever they come to the Wick, but also a bottle of Wickshine brandy, without a doubt some of the best liquor the PCs have ever tasted — and worth a pretty penny to a buyer with a cultivated and sophisticated palate.

THE FURTHER ADVENTURES....

Below are some plot seeds you can use for adventures stemming from events in *A Night Out Of The Rain*.

The Mark Of The God: Why were the children at the Wick singled out for possession by the spirits Illé raised? Was it simply because, as youths, it was easier for the undead to subsume their personalities? Or do the brands, which the Stills believe were put there by slavers, have some deeper — and more profane — significance? And if that's true, when the PCs seize the Censer Of The Ancients, do they notice that the perforations in the artifact's top match the brands on the children?

Crushed Petals Of The Orchid: In the morning, at the same time as the adventurers, the Shury brothers make ready to leave. As they begin to hitch their horses to their wagon, they cry out — their goods, the glassware where a shipment of contraband was hidden, is gone. All around the wagon are tracks from skeletons, and with a successful Tracking roll, a PC realizes the tracks lead back to the unholy ground where the skeletons first emerged from the earth. How will the PCs convince the Shury brothers to tell them the truth — that the merchants were smuggling the powder of the Ebon Orchid, a substance known far and wide for its arcane properties? What nefarious purpose did the undead have for this powder? And where did they take it?

The Apple Trees In Bloom: As the adventurers finish their breakfast of porridge, Abel Still bursts into the common room, shouting excitedly that the trees are in bloom again! But have the blossoms returned to the apple trees of Wickshine because an evil has been vanquished... or is it because, by the actions of the cultist, an old evil has awakened?

THE PROPHECY

The prophecy inscribed on the stone is written in an ancient language and might require some scholarly work on the PCs' part to decipher. If you feel your PCs might not be interested in that kind of thing, you can have Marten L'Gentsia take on the task of translating it for them. The prophecy reads:

Lyca d'Rn'grn-krol n'frok,
(The wicked shrine in ruins.)
Ovrin d'ather-shlam,
(A shelter for the road-weary.)
Krachen ix esteny.
(A storm sets the course.)
Lyc'vothan-krol hoeth athen.
(A faithful heart points the way.)
O'skaldy, o'mogrn
(Over fire, beyond the smoke,)
Atreck covern athen.
(The enemy finds the path.)

Ironically enough, the prophecy is a warning to the evil god's followers. It's meaning: beware your actions don't reveal the cult to do-gooders.

**<chapter> CHAPTER
TWO: FROM OUT OF
THE DEPTHS**

INTRODUCTION



Wickshine's Last Inn isn't the only location of an ancient and forgotten temple — the banished god has spent millennia attempting to orchestrate his return to the mortal realm. Across those millennia the deity's cult has risen to prominence, its initiates standing on the brink of returning their malevolent master to the world of men... only to be broken, its members scattered to the four winds and its temples thrown down by the forces of Good.

In *From Out Of The Depths*, the adventurers have the opportunity to explore one of the cult's most ancient sites — a blasphemous place where primitive men came to worship and sacrifice in return for dark favors beyond mortal ken.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

From Out Of The Depths is a classic dungeon adventure, a tried-and-true staple of Fantasy role-playing games in which the adventurers must leave the safety of the surface world and journey into the depths of the earth to confront monsters, solve riddles, disarm traps... and recover the treasure therein as a reward for their courage and quick wits.

The adventure begins when the PCs come upon the site of a massacre in a mountainous region far from the habitations of Men. In a ramshackle camp a group of miners lie dead, their corpses unburied and defiled by carrion eaters. Nearby are the mines where the men once worked to bring up ore in hopes of finding precious metals. But the mines are not empty and the miners' slayers have not departed the area. In the tunnels below are rock serpents, giant snakes summoned to guard the evil place and punish transgressors.

After they've overcome that first challenge, the PCs discover at the bottom of one of the mines an entrance to an ancient place. Once it was a flint mine worked by the ancestors of Men, stunted folk with pale skin and wild black hair called the Pikts who used chipped flint to make their weapons. Those ancient miners dug too deep in their search for flint, like the dead men on the surface above, and made a similar discovery: a place of ancient evil. Despite the thousands of years that have passed since the Pikt terrorized Men and were in turn vanquished, some Pikt survive in an unnatural state of suspended animation and guard the entrance to the evil place.

Once past the initiation chambers — a wicked delight for servants of the foul god, but a dire test for those with good hearts — the adventurers enter the ancient shrine of the Pikts. There they discover that Men aren't the only people to serve

the foul god. The servants of that deity, the instruments through which he has attempted to make his return, have been varied — including creatures not of this world, from the some place elsewhere and elsewhere, and wholly alien to the world the PCs know. In this place, constructs of strange magic still move through the halls, and the five members of that ancient race reside in a state of unnatural slumber awaiting freedom. A freedom the adventurers might unwittingly provide....

BACKGROUND

Currency — silver and gold mined from the earth, refined, pressed flat into sheets, and then minted with the hard blow of a hammer against a coin press, the image of the king in profile graven on the coin's face — is the source of a king's continuing power. With an army a monarch seizes power and enforces his rule, but without coin to pay his soldiers, he soon finds himself a king without a kingdom.

For this reason it's easy to understand why the king listened to Vyl Corruck's plans when the man, unknown in the kingdom previously, requested an audience.

Much of the king's wealth had come from silver mines called the King's Bounty, located in a mountainous region of his kingdom. When the foreman at the King's Bounty reported the range mined of all its silver, the king and his Master of Coin despaired. Generations of kings had relied on those mines for their wealth. What the current monarch would do now was a predicament, so when Vyl Corruck arrived at court and explained his ability to dowse for silver, the king was ready to listen.

Vyl Corruck claimed to have traveled the mountains extensively, using his magical gift as he went, and he was certain there was still silver to be had if one mined in the correct place. For a significant yet reasonable reward — he asked to be made a noble of the kingdom, with rich lands — Vyl promised to lead a team of miners to the location and mine the ore. The king felt he had little to lose. If Vyl's claim were fraudulent, he would fail and be punished; if his claim were true, the price of a small estate seemed niggling compared to the returns from the King's Bounty. He agreed to Vyl's price and dispatched him with a team of twenty miners to the site.

What the king didn't know: Vyl Corruck had no magical ability to detect precious metals, nor was he a rogue seeking to take advantage of a desperate man. Vyl Corruck was a devout servant of a foul god, a banished deity who long ago had a

shrine at the King's Bounty, and in that shrine was a part of the secret necessary to orchestrate the god's return to the world of men. Vyl had no interest in coin and less interest in titles of nobility; his only interest was profane service to his deity.

Weeks have passed since the king last heard from Vyl, and the monarch grows concerned about the man and his plans. In secret he meets with a band of adventurers, men and women who are not fixtures at his court and thus not well known in his kingdom — the king does not wish to reveal the source of his worries to his subject, especially those ambitious and faithless nobles who might plot against him. That the king is so desperate for silver he believed a man could dowse for the precious metal is not something he wants known far and wide. He swears the adventurers to secrecy, agrees to their price, and dispatches them to the King's Bounty to investigate the activities of Vyl Corruck.

ADVENTURE INFORMATION

From Out Of The Depths is a one- or two-game session scenario designed to challenge a group of four to six 150-point PCs, built according to the guidelines on page 28 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook. If the PCs fall outside these guidelines, you should adjust the encounters accordingly.

The adventure assumes the king hires the PCs to investigate the situation. If Vyl Corruck is still there, the king wants the adventurers to question him closely about his progress. He also wants them to observe the work around the mines. Does the work seem slipshod and cursory, or is the man making an honest attempt to dig ore from the earth? What's the disposition of the miners — are they working hard or just marking time?

If Vyl Corruck is not there, the king wants the PCs to track him down and bring him to justice. The king expects them to do more than simply travel to the mine, look around, and come back. He is willing to pay a good coin for good service, and keeping that in mind, you should set the payment as appropriate to the standards of your campaign (using the monetary standards in *Fantasy Hero*, between 75 and 100 gold pieces is appropriate).

If being hired by the king doesn't suit your PCs, there are other ways to get them involved in *From Out Of The Depths*. They can stumble on the corpses of the miners while traveling through the mountains, or one of the miners might be a friend or relative who's gone missing and the PCs have come to find him. If you've run *A Night Out Of The Rain* and the PCs are investigating Illé Sorden and his activities, they might hear word that Vyl Corruck is an associate of Sorden's, then journey to the mines so they can interrogate the man and hopefully learn more about the cult's activities — not to mention put a stop to whatever evil task the cultist has undertaken at the behest of his banished deity.

FROM OUT OF THE DEPTHS IN THE TURAKIAN AGE

If you're using *The Turakian Age*, a *Fantasy Hero* setting published by Hero Games, you should locate this adventure somewhere in the Westerlands. Between the Greyward Mountains, the Thurisian Mountains, and the Snowthorns, you have plenty of mountainous areas to work with. As the least-explored of the three, the Thurisians probably serve your purpose best... but if you placed *A Night Out Of The Rain* nearer one of the other ranges, you can use it instead if you're running these adventures as part of a story arc. (Similarly, you could, if appropriate, substitute Illé Sorden for Vyl Corruck.)

INDEX OF MONSTERS

Below, you can find the monsters the adventurers face in *From Out Of The Depths*, as well as the book and page number where character sheets for those menaces appear.

Giant Snake (Special)
The HERO System Bestiary, page 116

Barbarian (Pikt)
Monsters, Minions, And Marauders, page 120

Bandit (Pikt)
Monsters, Minions, And Marauders, page 119

Metal Golem (Special)
The HERO System Bestiary, page 79

Wraith (Special)
Monsters, Minions, And Marauders, page 112

THE KING'S BOUNTY



The adventure begins when the PCs locate the miners' camp. The king gives them directions to the general area where Vyl planned to mine. True to his word, the cultist did indeed establish his mines there, in a place just beyond the foothills of a range of old and crumbling mountains. As the PCs travel the mountain range they occasionally come across abandoned mines, but the one Vyl Corruck established is far from these others.

Once they arrive at the camp, any PC with PS: Mining knows with a successful roll that the mines are in the wrong place to look for silver by the type of rock — higher up in the mountains one might find it, but not here. The soil is too sandy and the rock formations are all wrong.

Vegetation is sparse in the area. Clumps of tough yellow grass cover the ground, with the occasional scraggly tree reaching fitfully for the sky. The ground rises in narrow plateaus — gently sloped land meets a steep break that horses find impassable (the only way for characters to get up to a higher plateau is a ramp or a successful Climbing roll). The miners constructed earthen ramps so they could cart ore down from the mines, and these ramps allow easy access to the mines.

1. THE MINERS' CAMP

As the PCs near this area, they see a flock of carrion birds — vultures if appropriate to the region, crows otherwise — rise up from the ground, flapping their wings and squawking angrily at the men who have interrupted their meal. Soon after they see the birds take flight, the PCs encounter the first dead miner, the one who ran the farthest before his mysterious attacker killed him.

All in all the adventurers find twenty dead miners (some in the surrounding area, but most in the camp) — a number matching what the king told them. They do not, however, find a body that fits Vyl Corruck's description.

The Camp

The miners set up camp by a shallow stream to the south of the mines so they would have quick access to fresh water. The water here is clear and cold, the stream's bed rocky.

When the PCs arrive, they find that the miners' tents are ripped and shredded; it's obvious some of the men were killed in their sleep. Since the miners have been dead for some time, the PCs have a difficult time determining how long ago they were killed (a successful Embalming roll, or a PER Roll at -3 by someone who's used to seeing dead bodies, tells them it's been at least four or five days). Some of the men were crushed, judging from the broken

bones and smashed internal organs; for others, it's impossible to determine the cause of death due to the advanced state of decay.

Tracking is mostly useless — the tracks of fleeing men obscure those of the attacker (or attackers), and the elements have erased any other evidence. However, a successful Tracking roll tells the PC the miners fled in all directions but north and only six men had the opportunity to flee.

The Rocker

The miners used a rocker to separate the ore from alluvia, mostly gravel and sharp shards of flint. The rocker is a long, wooden slide with a gentle slope. A miner dumps a basket of ore at the top of the slide, and the lighter alluvia gets caught along the rocker's length, while the heavier silver ore travels the rocker's length to its bottom.

When the adventurers arrive, the rocker is broken and lies in pieces along the bank of the stream. Here the PCs also find numerous baskets woven from sticks (used for carrying ore to the rocker), two overturned carts used for hauling ore down from the mines, and the broken tethers for the six mules used to pull the carts. A quick examination of the piles of ore around the area, and a successful PS: Mining or KS: Metallurgy roll, reveals that none of the ore is silver — the majority of it is worthless flint.

What Happened?

The night after the miners broke through to the entrance to the temple, Vyl Corruck snuck away from the camp and broke the seal on the entrance. The seal was magically warded, and once it was broken, its magic summoned rock serpents to the area. (For rules purposes the effect is the same as the Druidry Spell, *Call To The Wilderness Denizens*, on page 39 of *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*.)

Though the gigantic snakes arrived too late to prevent Vyl Corruck from penetrating the depths of the temple and meeting his fate, they did arrive in time to slay the miners. They attacked at night, killing many of the men before they had even awoken, and then took up residence in area #2 described below.

2. THE MINES

At the direction of Vyl Corruck, the miners dug three mines here. Using mining techniques primitive by most standards, the miners dug simple bell pits: a long shaft leading straight down into the ground that debouches into a dug-out open area where the miners work with picks breaking free chunks of ore. Only the shaft marked A leads to the flint mines described in the text below.

The shaft is 2.5" (16 feet) in diameter, its walls braced with wooden planks. Atop each shaft, suspended above the entrance from a wooden frame, is a simple winch mechanism with cranks on either end so two men can work it at the same time. Depending from the winch is a thick hempen rope attached to a woven basket. Miners used the basket to both haul up ore from the bottom of the bell pit and lower miners down to the bottom. Each shaft descends approximately 4" (26 feet) before reaching the pit where the men mined. Thanks to the rough stone and wooden planks, climbing the is easy, requiring either a successful DEX Roll or Climbing roll with a +3 bonus.

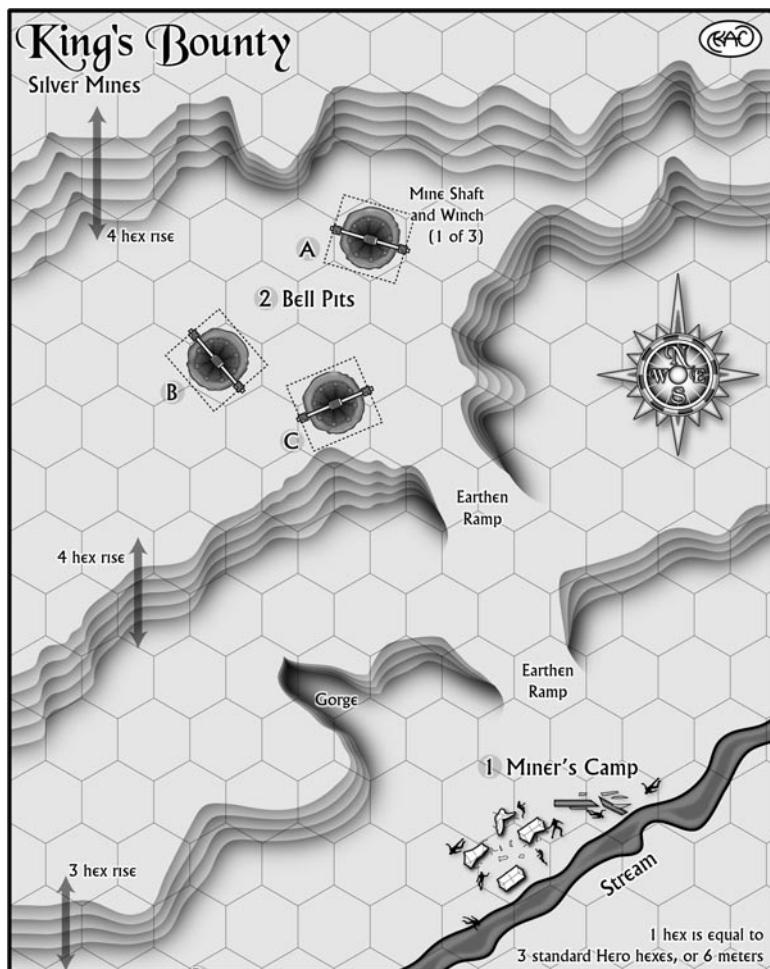
The bottom of the shaft opens up into a roughly circular area, 3" (19.5 feet) at its widest and .5" (3.25 feet) at its narrowest to the north and south. The ceiling of the pit slopes down toward the edges — it's 1" (6.5 feet) at its highest, where the shaft is, and less than .5" (3.25 feet) at its lowest, at the edges furthest from where the shaft is. The walls of the pit are flint.

Though the PCs might have found the *Tracking* Skill less than useful down below at the miner's camp, if a PC successfully uses the Skill here, he finds the spoor of what can only be giant snakes — the killers of the miners, which have since that night taken up residence in the mine shafts....

The Rock Serpents

Rock Serpents are natural — though gigantic — reptiles indigenous to the area. Once the serpents were found throughout the mountain range, living on a diet of goats and mountain lions. Though Men have hunted them to near extinction after decades of mining the range, the snakes still haunt the highest peaks. They have no fear of people, but aren't known to attack them without provocation. They also possess an uncanny means of camouflaging themselves — their skin changing color to blend in with their environment, and when they are motionless, they look like nothing more than an outcropping of eroded stone. (A PC knows all of the above with a successful KS: Flora And Fauna or Survival (Mountains) roll.)

The broken ward at the entrance of the flint mines Summoned the rock serpents. (For more details about the ward, see area #1 in *The Flint Mines* below.) A part of the magic commanded them to attack and kill anyone in the area, and they did so. Though the compulsion is wearing off, a vague imperative to kill trespassers remains lodged in the serpents' bestial minds. Because of that and the readily available source of food (the six mules from the miners' camp), they've taken up residence

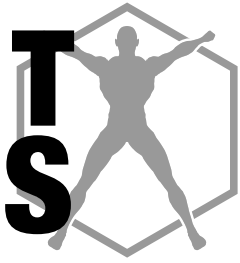


in the mines. They reside at the bottom of the bell pits, their coils curled up around themselves. At 8" (52 feet) long, have no difficulty raising their heads to the top of the shaft.

The exact number of serpents is left to you, but there should be at least one, and no more than three (one for each mine). Because of the magical Summon, they attack any characters they happen upon and continue to attack until slain. For their character sheet, use the Giant Snake on page 116 of *The HERO System Bestiary* and raise their *Concealment* Skill to 16-. If you feel three rock serpents isn't enough to challenge your PCs, use the options described on page 116 of that book to increase the difficulty of the encounter.

Any rock serpent not slain before the PCs enter the flint mines does *not* come after the PCs — the giant snakes cannot fit through the entrance. The rock serpents do, however, wait for the PCs to exit the mine.

THE FLINT MINES



At the bottom of the northernmost mine, marked with an A on the *King's Bounty* map shown on page 29, is the entrance to the flint mines, which with the passing of years became the center of the evil god's worship and hall for the chieftain of the Pikts in those long-ago times.

Background

The flint mines began as a natural cave system. The Pikts mined it extensively, chipping away at the stone with their primitive tools and enlarging the caves as they hauled away the flint. Then, as the Pikts mined far back in the mines, a rock wall fell away in a single sheet, and those ancient miners gazed upon a strange sight: a curved wall of polished steel, a metal wholly alien to them. The creatures who emerged when the wall of metal slid away were just as alien.

The Pikt had discovered a vessel of the Zy'frei, a race of foul beings not from this world. The Zy'frei were the servants of the banished god, and he had dispatched them to start his worship here. After making the difficult journey, the missionaries of the evil god slept for centuries in their vessel, waiting for some intelligent race to discover them. When the Pikts agreed to worship the god, the Zy'frei gave them power beyond that of the other tribes in the area. The flint mines became the center of religious authority as well as the location of the Pikt chieftain's main hall.

Aided by the blasphemous alchemy of the Zy'frei, the Pikts began a reign of terror over their neighbors, but eventually other gods took notice of the Pikts, the Zy'frei, and the intrusion of this new and baleful god. Considering his coming an affront and a threat to the divine status quo, the native deities made the enemies of the Pikts their own tools, as a king would form his subjects into an army. After many battles the servants of the evil god were brought low, the few remaining servants trapped in the flint mines.

The tribal shamans of those other gods set the seal on the flint mines, infusing it with the magic that summoned the rock serpents when Vyl Cor-ruck broke through the portal. Then those ancient tribes left the area, certain the servants of the evil god would die of starvation.

But they were wrong.

The Zy'frei had recourse to the alchemical wonders of their vessel and its Chamber Of Long Sleep; they had slept for centuries before the Pikts awakened them — what were more centuries? As for the Pikts trapped in the place with them, the Zy'frei did not leave their faithful servants to die. They instead turned the entire flint mine into a

chamber similar in purpose to the one on their vessel, though far more primitive. The Pikts slept with their alien masters, awaiting the day when their foul god would awaken them to serve his wicked will.

General Features Of The Mines

Below you can find the general features of the flint mines. Unless otherwise noted, the features below apply throughout the place.

- The ceilings in the flint mine are 1.5" (9.75 feet) high.
- Doorways are 1" (6.5 feet) high and .5" (3.25 feet) wide.
- A thin layer of crystal clear ice coats all areas — floors, walls, and ceiling — of the flint mines. All DEX Rolls and DEX-based Skill Rolls suffer a -3 penalty because of the slippery ice.
- Also because of the ice, Noncombat movement is difficult and requires a DEX Roll each Phase a PC attempts it. Failure means the PC slips and falls.

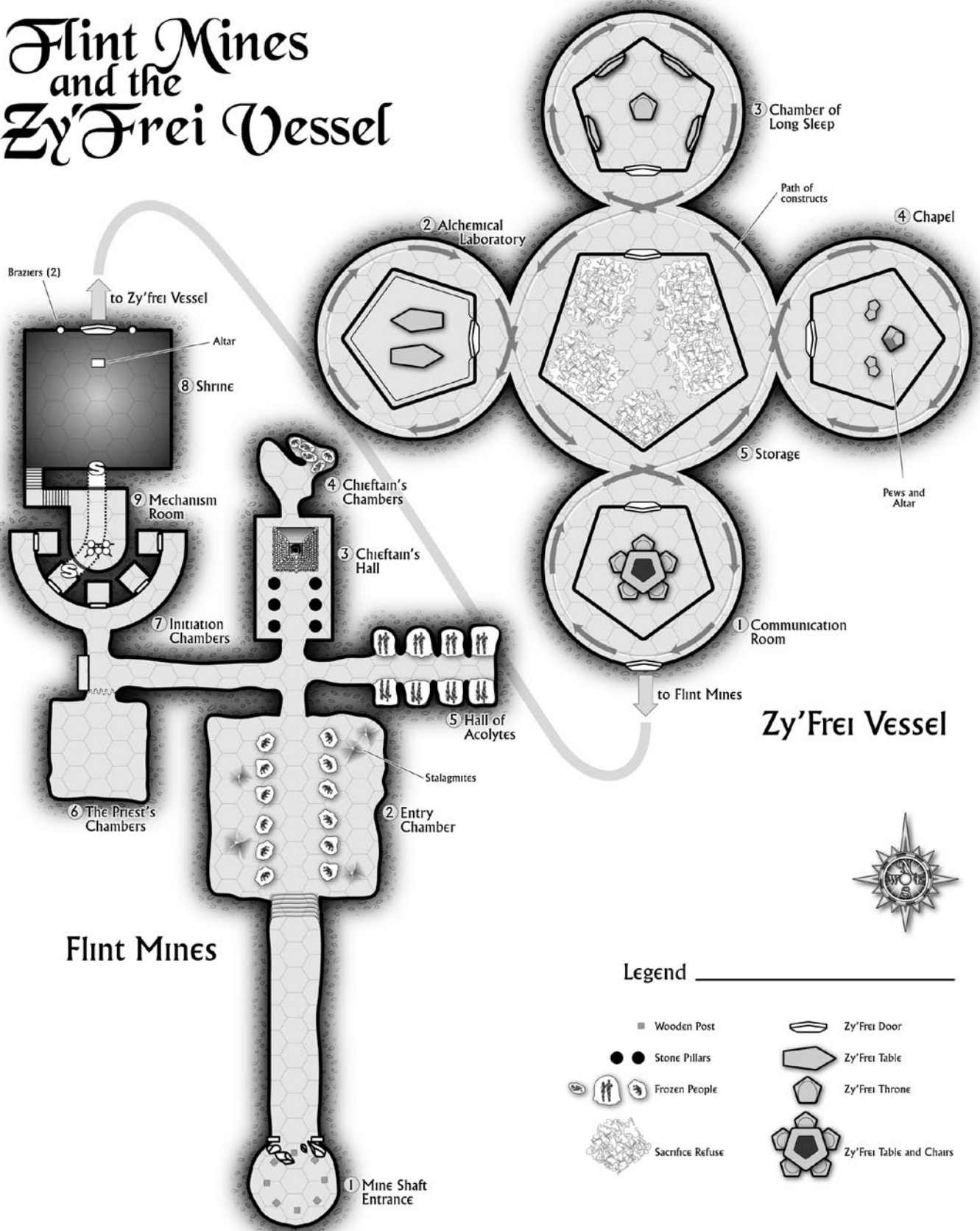
1. THE ENTRANCE

Here the PCs find a broken portal of stone, its stone chunks lying scattered across the floor of the mine, and a discarded sledgehammer and pick axe. The portal is broken into eight large chunks, and on one face of each chunk are graven runes. From out of the entrance blows frigid air, much colder than the temperature on the surface.

If a PC takes a few minutes to examine the runes, has Literacy, and succeeds with a KS: Arcane And Occult Lore roll, he understand the gist of the writing. It simply says evil lies within and those who dare pass beyond the portal will die. What's more interesting is that runes are somewhat strange, subtly different from languages the PC has seen previously — ancient, from a time out of mind, the language of the runes is perhaps the primitive tongue from which contemporary magical writing derives. If the PC succeeds with his Skill Roll by more than 4, he knows the runes are the magical means of summoning the rock serpents to protect the temple, and that breaking the portal activated the summons. The PC knows the seal's magic has great power — if Men hadn't extensively hunted the range, the seal would have summoned a veritable army of the giant snakes.

Immediately beyond the broken portal is a passage leading to the north. Chipped out of flint stone, the passage is 2" (13 feet) wide and 1" (6.5 feet) high, has rough walls. Its uneven, icy floor makes for treacherous footing.

Flint Mines and the Zy'Frei Vessel



2. THE ENTRY CHAMBER

The passage ends at six rough-hew steps — simple slabs of chipped flint with a shallow depression at the middle of each, where countless feet passing by have worn down the stone. The steps lead down into a large, irregularly-shaped chamber. The end of the chamber, as well as its ceiling, are beyond the light of torch or lantern, but the walls to east and west are 3" (19.5 feet) away. The sound of dripping water echoes through the chamber, and the air is noticeably colder here, well below freezing. White wisps of condensation drift and twirl between stalagmites and stair-stepped risers of dark stone.

If the PCs travel at a normal speed through the passage leading here, ask for PER Roll when they stand at the steps leading into the chamber. If successful, the PC notices the steps are coated with ice and likely very slippery. Upon further examination the PC realizes the whole place — at least as far as he can see — is covered with a thin layer of crystal-clear ice.

To make it down the steps without slipping and falling, the PC must succeed with a DEX Roll. (See *The Chieftain's Men* below for what happens if a PC fails his DEX Roll.) If he notices the ice before he descends, he can take his time and gain a +4 bonus to his roll.

At the north end of the chamber, lost in the gloom and not visible from the entrance (unless the PCs have an unnatural source of illumination), is a passage that leads further into the mines. For more details about the place, see *Investigation* below.

Once down the steps, the PCs catch their first glimpse of one of the chieftain's men, who chose to join their headman here in these frigid mines.

The Chieftain's Men

Frozen in solid blocks of ice, standing at guard in an arcane and unnatural state of suspended animation, are twelve of the Pikt chieftain's best warriors. The warriors are clearly visible at the center of the block of the ice. Standing only five feet tall each, the Pikts have stunted and bandy limbs corded with thick muscles. They have wild black hair and beards woven into long braids decorated with human finger-bones, and their faces, chests, and shoulders are painted with blue woad in spiral designs. Each wears a simple loincloth and carries a spear or axe with a blade made of a crude piece of chipped flint; his only armor is a medium shield, dried hide stretched over a frame of wicker.

The PCs can clearly see that the blocks of ice are melting... but only if a PC didn't slip and fall down the stairs.

If a PC slips and falls on the steps leading down into the entrance chamber, the adventurers don't have a chance to examine the Pikt warriors. The PC hits the icy ground with a loud crash. From where he landed, cracks spread through the sheet of ice covering the cave. Suddenly louder cracks, sounding like breaking stone, echo through the chamber as the blocks of ice holding the Pikts shatter, releasing the warriors.

This same event happens at any time when a PC falls in this chamber or starts a large fire (or otherwise creates a source of heat).

For the Pikt warriors, use the character sheet on page 120 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders* for the Barbarian Warrior. Four of the Pikts carry battle axes; the other eight carry javelins. Page 164 and 165 of *Fantasy Hero* provide details for the weapons. For details concerning weapons made from materials other than steel see page 181 — in short, the Damage Classes of the weapons do not change, only the DEF for breaking the weapons and the like. A Pikt warrior's wooden medium shield provides +2 DCV; see page 199 of *Fantasy Hero* for more details.

The Fight: Once free of the ice, the Pikts cannot do anything on Segment 12 — after such a long time, they must free themselves from the ice and get their bearings. On their next Phase, in Segment 4, they shout out guttural, unintelligible war-cries and attack. They attack like wildmen and eschew teamwork for personal combat with the foe.

Communicating with the Pikts is difficult, since they speak no language known to modern man. If the PCs figure out a way to speak with them, the Pikts are willing to parley, but the only action they agree to is an audience with their chieftain in his hall. Once they see their chieftain, the man they swore to guard with their lives, they scream with fury and the PCs had better think — and talk — quickly, or else the Pikts blame them for his demise and attack. The Pikts are evil, completely corrupted by worship of the banished god. They know nothing of honor,



especially toward those not of their tribe, so they're likely to turn on the PCs at some point.

Investigation

Once they've defeated the Pikt warriors, if the PCs take the time to investigate the chamber, they can find two interesting features: one on the walls, the other on the ceiling.

The Walls: The Pikts painted scenes of daily life on the walls of the entrance chamber, and the scenes are clearly visible beyond the thin sheet of ice. The painting is primitive — pigments, primarily orange or white in color, smeared with a finger, and the figures in the scenes are little more than stick men. A quick study reveals the Pikts always showed themselves by painting the figure with blue, the color similar in shade to the woad used to paint their faces. The paintings show scenes like: Pikts hunting antelope with over-sized antlers; elephants that seem to be covered in thick hair; conquered people kneeling before armed Pikts; the Pikts executing their prisoners.

Two scenes, however, stand out from the rest. One scene shows a Pikt seated on a pile of skulls — dabs of white pigment with ash gray hollows for eyes and mouth — while other Pikts bow to him. From the seated Pikt's head radiate yellow squiggly lines. The other scene shows the Pikts bowing down to strangely drawn figures, five in total. The figures' heads — carefully painted, unlike the other figures in the scenes — are ovoid in shape. Each of them holds up their hands and the fingers, again carefully painted, are inhumanly long. The figures stand beside a disc of white pigment, and like the seated Pikt described above, yellow squiggly lines radiate from the disk.

The Ceiling: The ceiling is 6" (39 feet) high. Hidden among the stalactites are the copper pipes that cause the magical coldness in the mines. Centuries of built-up ice cover the pipes, which only protrude two inches from the ceiling, but the places are noticeable with a successful PER Roll because of the lumps of ice placed in a regular, circular pattern on the ceiling.

The pipes, each half an inch (a real inch, not a game inch) in diameter, lead up into a small hollow in the rock located directly above the entry chamber. The hollow contains a liquid with the consistency and appearance of quicksilver. The hollow is incredibly cold, and any PC or object touching the liquid without some sort of magical protection suffers 3d6 Killing Damage, No Normal Defense (defense is a Force Field or immunity to cold) — and if he takes BODY damage, he loses the limb.

The liquid is unknown to this world's alchemy and, in the language of the Zy'frei, is called *friz'yon*. If the PCs can figure out some way of retrieving the liquid it would fetch a very high price from the right buyer. The liquid loses its potency in smaller quantities (halve the Damage Classes each time the quantity is halved) but regains its arcane properties once it is recombined.

Reaching the *friz'yon* hollow is probably impossible for the PCs, unless they have powerful

magic that allows for dramatic physical transformation. The pipes are narrow and wind around before opening up into the hollow that contains the freezing liquid.

3. THE CHIEFTAIN'S HALL

Standing immediately outside this area — which is where the PCs should be after leaving area #2 — the adventurers can hear a low, guttural droning. By its cadence, rhythm, and repeated sounds, it's obviously speech, though the words are unintelligible.

Once they pass through the opening leading into the place, the adventurers find themselves standing in a long, rectangular chamber. Unlike the entry chamber (area #2 above), the floor and walls are smooth, the flint stone chipped and sanded even. To the east and west are pillars, three to each side, and in the northern end of the place stands a flat-topped pyramid. Pressed into three sides of the pyramid, somehow affixed to the stone, are human skulls. At the front of the pyramid are four skulls of long-snouted canines with the sharp teeth of a carnivore. These four animal skulls form a stair that leads to the top of the pyramid and a throne of obsidian, where sits the Pikt chieftain ever-vigilant in a weird form of undeath. From where the PCs stand, 4" (26 feet) away, they can see a dull orange sparkle in the eyes of the chieftain. All the while the droning chant goes on, repeating its guttural syllables over and over, seeming to come from everywhere and nowhere.

The chamber is 5" (32.5 feet) long by 3" (19.5 feet) wide, and its ceiling is 4" (26 feet) high. The pyramid's base is 1.5" (9.75 feet) long by 1.5" wide, stands 2" (13 feet) high, and its flat top is .5" (3.25 feet) long by .5" wide.

Carved from greenish soapstone, the pillars are .5" (3.25 feet) in diameter, extend from floor to ceiling, and are shot-through with tube-like holes that twist through the length and breadth of each pillar.

To the north, behind the throne, is a single passage leading to the Chieftain's chambers (area #4).

The Chieftain

Unlike his warriors, the Pikt chieftain is not frozen in a block of ice. Instead he is long ago dead, and only his skeleton resides upon the obsidian throne. The skeleton radiates warmth for reasons soon apparent to the PCs, and no ice covers him or his throne.

The Pikt chieftain gave up his life so he might stand as an eternal guardian of this place. The Zy'frei used their alchemical skills to craft him into powerful construct.

The construct is DCV 3 and DEF 10, BODY 10. For combat purposes, it has SPD 4 and an effective DEX of 17. (Though some of its powers have OCVs of their own; see the description for more details). It has several abilities at its disposal, and the PCs likely come under attack immediately upon entering the chamber. All of the abilities are integral to the construct; if the "Foci" involved with them are removed, they lose their power.

CHIEFTAIN SUMMARY

Here's a summary of the chieftain's combat abilities to help you run the combat.

DEF 10, BODY 10

DEX 17, DCV 3, SPD 4

Chieftain's Abilities

Detect Minds 17-

Know Faith: Telepathy 7d6; ECV 7

Flame Bolts: RKA 1d6, Penetrating; OCV 6

Poison Gas: RKA 1½d6, NND, Does BODY, Area Of Effect (4" Radius)

Detect Minds: Slender wires of copper protrude from the construct's skull. With these, it can detect minds; it uses this ability to target the PCs.

Detect Minds 17-, Discriminatory, Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees), Sense, Targeting. Total cost: 34 points.

Know Faith: The same wires allow the construct to plumb the depths of one's soul and determine the faith of the target. If it detects a lack of faith for the evil god, it attacks immediately. If it fails, it ignores the target for the time being, but once it has attempted to ascertain the faith of everyone else in the room, it returns to the target. To succeed it requires an EGO + 10 result on the Telepathy dice, unless the character is the priest of a different god; then it only requires an EGO result to succeed. The construct attacks with ECV 7.

Telepathy 7d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (52 Active Points); Only To Determine Faith (-2), Receive Only (-½). Total cost: 15 points.

Flame Bolts: The Zy'frei replaced the chieftain's eyes with rough-hewn, orangeish quartz. Each piece of quartz is hollow and a length of tube — to the adventurers, the tubes look like lengths of intestine, but of a more resilient material — runs from the stone back into the cranial cavity, where it attaches to an orb of crystal. Inside the crystal is a reddish-orange liquid called in the Zy'frei's tongue, *flo'jyston*. This liquid causes the skeleton to radiate enough heat to prevent it from icing up. When the construct attacks, the liquid rushes through the tube into the hollow quartz and bolts of fire lash out at the target. A small amount of liquid is lost with each blast, but the construct likely has enough *flo'jyston* to last the fight. The skull is set on a copper rod that runs through its neck vertebrae; between that and the throne's low back, the construct has a 360-degree field of fire. The construct attacks with OCV 8.

RKA 1d6, Penetrating (+½), 64 Charges (+½). Total cost: 30 points.

Poison Gas: The Zy'frei replaced the chieftain's teeth, both uppers and lowers, with hollow pieces of crystal. Within the crystal, the PC can see swirling, green vapors. When a PC places a foot on the first step leading up to the top of the pyramid, the step tilts down, pressing a lever within the pyramid, and the

skull's mouth snaps closed, the lower jaw's crystal teeth clacking against the upper ones. The teeth then break, releasing a cloud of poisonous cyanide gas 4" in radius. Because of the *Trigger Advantage*, this occurs even if the PCs have reduced the construct to 0 BODY. (Within reason, of course — if the PCs "disintegrated" the construct or otherwise reduced it to little more than ashes, nothing happens.)

RKA 1½d6, No Normal Defense (defense is Life Support [Self-Contained Breathing or appropriate Immunity]; +1), Does BODY (+1), Area Of Effect (4" Radius; +1), Trigger (see description; +¼) (106 Active Points); No Range (-½), 1 Charge (-2). Total cost: 30 points.

Investigation

Below is specific information the PCs can discover by investigating some of the features of the chieftain's hall.

The Chieftain: Once the PCs reduce the construct to 0 BODY, they can examine the chieftain. In addition to the features above, the skeletal remains are spiked to the throne. A long, slender copper spike, driven into the obsidian, passes through each of his wrists to hold his arms to the throne's arms. Spikes are also driven under his collar bone, one to either side of his neck; and these hold his back to the throne.

As the PCs have likely discovered by the time they examine the remains, the skeleton is tougher than any skeleton has a right to be. Zy'frei removed the chieftain's bone marrow, then poured molten lead into the hollowed-out bones. The skull and neck of the chieftain prove the most interesting. Inside the PCs can find the gears, springs, wound wires, and slender rods that provided it with its ability to rotate its head. Inside the cranium the wires protruding from the skull form a tangled mess, which serves as a nest for the globe holding the *flo'jyston*.

The skeleton's alchemical mechanism would prove invaluable to an alchemist... but only if taken intact. Reducing the construct to 0 BODY also destroys the mechanism.

The Pillars: Once a PC moves beside a pillar, he knows these are the source of the chanting — somehow the gentle draft of cold air in the room passes through the pillars making the sound in a way similar to a wind chime or woodwind instrument. A PC with any Skill pertaining to working stone (such as PS: Mason, PS: Stonecarver, or PS: Sculptor) knows the Pikts weren't capable of carving the pillars, nor is the greenish soapstone indigenous to the area. Unless the PC succeeds with a Skill Roll by 8 or better, he knows he, himself, does not possess enough skill to craft the pillars, let alone imbue them with the ability to transform a gentle draft into a chant.

Because the pillars are only .5" wide and have so many passages passing through them, they provide inadequate cover from the chieftain's Flame Bolts (and he can detect the thoughts of anyone hiding behind one). A PC hiding behind one only gains the benefit of being partly Concealed — the

construct suffers a -2 OCV penalty to hit him. The pillars are DEF 6, BODY 20.

The Chant: So long as the pillars are intact and a draft moves through the chamber, the droning chant continues. Spoken in the Piktish tongue, the chant translates to:

*For thy power,
My service.
For thy purpose,
My body.
For eternity,
My soul,
I commend to thee.*

Treasure: As stated previously, human skulls cover the pyramid where the throne stands. The Pikts placed chips of quartz and uncut diamonds in the eye sockets of the skulls. The quartz is worthless, but each of the twenty diamonds is worth 50 gold pieces. Finding the diamonds isn't easy though. A thin coat of glittering ice covers the pyramid, and a PC only notices the gemstones if he studies the pyramid closely and makes a successful Concealment roll. Retrieving the gems takes about 1 Turn per gem.

4. THE CHIEFTAIN'S CHAMBERS

A passage leads north from the chieftain's hall to his former chambers, two joined caves where he and his wives resided. Heaps of pelts cover the floors, and reclined on the piles of animal skins in the far-eastern section are the chieftain's five wives, each frozen in a block of ice like those warriors in the entrance chamber. Also like those warriors, the ice here is slowly melting and small puddles spread across the floor of the place.

Each of the women is approximately four and half feet tall, wears a loincloth, and has her long black hair tied back in thin braids. Bangles hang from their wrists, and necklaces from their necks. Most of this primitive jewelry is little more than teeth strung together with a length of cord, but here and there the PCs catch a glimpse of sparkling green or red — perhaps uncut emeralds and rubies.

The Chieftain's Wives

For a wife's character sheet, use the Bandit on page 119 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*. Her only weapon is a flint dagger. If awakened — which requires a source of great heat or breaking the ice, as with the warriors in the entrance chamber — the women scream for their husband in Piktish and attack. It is sacrilege for any but the husband to visit his wives in their chamber — any such man obviously intends to kidnap the woman — and they're unwilling to parley because of the PCs' effrontery.

Investigation

Outside of the wives, there is little to find here... except some goods that might fetch a high price at market.

Treasure: The wives have some uncut rubies and emeralds among their jewelry: 6 rubies and 4 emeralds, each worth 30 gold pieces. Far more valuable are the pelts. Taken from animals long extinct

in much of the world, the pelts are perfectly preserved under the ice. There are a hundred pounds of pelts with a total value of 1,000 gold pieces — though of course transportation may prove difficult, and the pelts may suffer damage during a battle. (To make it easy on the PCs you can rule that there are 50 pelts each worth 20 gold pieces, and each pelt weighs two pounds.) The PCs can retrieve none of the treasure without awakening the Pikts unless they come up with a clever plan.

5. THE HALL OF ACOLYTES

Here the passage opens up to 3" wide and dead-ends 5" ahead. To the north and south are small alcoves cut into the rock, eight in total. Ice fills each of the alcoves, and frozen inside each alcove are two Pikt acolytes, man and woman, resting serenely upon a thin mat side by side, hands crossed on his or her chest and eyes wide open.

The Acolytes

Since solid ice fills each alcove from top to bottom, falling in this area does not awaken the acolytes. If the PCs go out of their way to free the Pikts here, each has the character sheet of a Bandit and is armed with a flint dagger like the chieftain's wives. They have no treasure. These acolytes were to serve as breeding stock for the awakened Zy'frei, thus returning the faithful and bloody-handed Pikts to the world.

6. THE PRIEST'S CHAMBER

Hung across the entrance to this chamber is a curtain of cords strung with small, smooth stones that conceal the room's interior from those standing outside. Ice coats the entire curtain.

Pushing past the curtain (which makes ice crackle free of the cords) reveals a large, square cavern with a ceiling 3" (19.5 feet) high. At the center of the chamber, suspended almost 1.5" (10 feet) above the floor, is a Pikt. Free of ice, the man is spread-eagled face down toward the floor. His pale skin has a greenish-gray pallor; lines of dark green, looking like veins and arteries despite their unnatural color, wind their way under his skin. From each of his outstretched fingers and toes extends a slender, dull gray wire. The taut wires run from the Pikt's limbs and disappear into small holes drilled into the wall. A single wire emerges from the Pikt's tangle of thick black hair and disappears into the ceiling. As the PCs study the scene, that wire pulls the man's head up and they can see that his eyes are green, filled with the fluid that replaced his blood. He clenches the fingers of his right hand and the curtain strands bend and flex like serpents, entangling whichever PC stands nearest the entrance.

The Priest

Now a construct similar to the chieftain, the priest gave his life to guard the flint mines from unfaithful intruders. The Zy'frei drained his blood and replaced it with a green, viscous liquid — a sort of blasphemous embalming fluid that keeps his skin from rotting and provides him with a profane semblance of life. The wires run behind the walls, each set operating a different mechanism (one for

each hand and foot). Like a puppet on its strings, the wires also allow the priest to move throughout his chamber, even through the air by holding him suspended above the floor. Though he cannot leave the chamber, he has the following Movement Power:

Flight 6", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (9 Active Points); OAF (wires; -1), Can Only Fly In This Room (-2). Total cost: 2 points.

Each set of wires is DEF 4, BODY 5; reducing a set to 0 BODY severs all its wires. (Of course, keep in mind the *Real Weapon* Limitation — a hammer or club is unlikely to sever wires, no matter how expert the hand that wields the weapon.) Once severed the priest can no longer activate the mechanism associated with that set of wires (described below). Severing two sets makes it impossible for the priest to fly in his chamber, but he can still move under his own power.

The priest construct has DEF 8, BODY 8. For combat purposes, he has SPD 4, DCV 6, and an effective DEX of 17 (though some of his powers have OCVs of their own; see the description for more details).

Lodged in the priest's brain — greenish-gray and dripping with the strange embalming fluid — is a crystal globe containing *flo'jyston*, and a tube runs from the crystal globe, through his brain, to a piece of orangish quartz deep in his throat. Below his tangle of hair protrude short copper wires, the same as those jutting from the head of the chieftain.

The priest has Detect Minds, Know Faith, and Flame Bolts (the flame bolts shoot from the priest's mouth) — all of these are described in the description of the chieftain construct on pages 33-34.

Described below are the four mechanisms the priest can activate by pulling on the wires:

The Curtain Strands: Using the wires attached to his right hand, the priest can cause the curtain strands at the entrance of his chamber to wrap around a PC and squeeze. The strands can only Grab people standing within 1" of the doorway. The priest can only use the strands as long as the curtain remains intact; if a PC breaks free of the Grab, he destroys the strands in the process. The Grabbed PC only takes up half the space in the doorway, so other PCs can slip past him (although he does provide the priest with partial Concealment from those attacking from the passage outside). The strands squeeze for 4d6 Normal Damage and attack with OCV 4 — likely gaining a Surprise Bonus the first time they attempt to Grab the target.

Telekinesis (30 STR) (45 Active Points); OAF (wires; -1), Only To Grab And Squeeze (-½), Limited Range (1"; -¼), 1 Charge (-2). Total cost: 9 points.

The Falling Wall: Using the wires attached to his left hand, the priest can cause the west wall right outside his chamber to collapse. Anyone standing in the two hexes immediately outside the doorway takes 8d6 Normal Damage (the PC can Dive For Cover to avoid the damage) as large chunks of flint stone come toppling down on him. The priest can only do this once.

Poison Darts: Along the base of the chamber's four walls are small holes, each placed only inches from those to its left and right. When the priest yanks on the wires attached to his left foot, poison darts shoot from the holes, speeding across the room at ankle level. The darts are an Area Of Effect attack affecting everyone in the room who's standing on the floor. To avoid the attack, a PC can Dive For Cover by leaping upward. The priest can only use this attack 4 times, once for each wall.

*RKA ½d6, Area Of Effect (the room; +1¼), Armor Piercing (+½) (27 Active Points); OAF (wires; -1), No Range (-½), 4 Charges (-1) (total cost: 8 points) **plus** Drain CON 2d6, Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Hour; +1), NND (defense is Life Support [appropriate Immunity]; +1), Area Of Effect (the room; +1) (80 Active Points); OAF (wires; -1), Extra Time (onset time begins 1 Turn after victim hit; -1¼), Gradual Effect (4 Minutes; 1d6/1 Minute; -½), Linked (-½), RKA Must Do BODY (-½), 4 Charges (-1) (total cost: 14 points). Total cost: 22 points.*

Brilliant Burst: Small holes also cover the ceiling of the chamber. When the priest yanks on the wires attached to his right foot, small pieces of quartz fall from the holes. No bigger than pebbles, the rain of quartz causes no physical damage, but as they fall from the ceiling they burst with a blinding flash of light. Because the priest uses Detect Minds to find his targets, the Flash has no effect on him.

Sight Group Flash 6d6, Area Of Effect (the room; +1) (60 Active Points); OAF (wires; -1), 1 Charge which Never Recovers (-2). Total cost: 15 points.

Investigation

There's no furniture or other objects in the chamber, and reaching the mechanisms behind the walls takes a considerable amount of work — the PCs must knock down (or otherwise remove) an entire wall to reveal the system of wires and gears that operate each of the various traps. But on the south wall there's a painting that provides a clue to the PCs about how to reach the vessel of the Zy'frei.

Wall Painting: On the southern wall of the priest's chamber is a wall painting. From east to west, the painting shows the following scenes: a wild spray of multicolored dabs of pigment, each small, round, and either red, green, yellow, or blue; a simple black square; a Pikt kneeling on one side of a small white square, atop of which is red smear of paint, with five figures — like those in the entry chamber (area #2) with overly long fingers held upright and ovoid heads — standing on the other side; the five figures stand in a line, to either side of the leading figure are tear-drop shaped dabs of orange pigment, and bisecting the line of figures is a simple black circle.

The Zy'frei allowed this wall painting to remain as a clue for later servants of the god, whom they hoped would come to awaken them when the god's cult next rose to prominence. In primitive terms the painting describes how to enter their vessel. They used their alchemy to construct the priest and set him to guard the clue from the unfaithful.

7. THE INITIATION CHAMBERS

Opposite the priest's chamber are the initiation chambers. Immediately beyond the entrance, the passage ends in an intersection. Each direction, east and west, curves around to the north before coming to a dead-end. Evenly spaced along the inner side of the passage are five narrow, wooden doors. Painted on each door is the sigil of the dark god, a broken triangle inside a circle. When the adventurers arrive, all of the doors are closed.

Opening a door is simply a matter of pushing on it. Beyond each door is a small alcove. Bolted to the inner side of the doorway is an iron bar, currently in an upright position, and on the opposite side of the doorway is an iron bracket. The iron bar levers down, fitting snugly into the bracket and barring the door. In the far wall of each alcove, below a crystal-clear sheet of ice, are numerous holes, each about half an inch in diameter and in no discernible pattern. After taking a rough count, a PC finds that the wall has between thirty-five and forty-five holes, a different number in each alcove.

PRIEST SUMMARY

Here's a summary of the priest's combat abilities to help you run the combat.

Priest: DEF 8, BODY 8

Wires: DEF 4, BODY 5

Priest is DEX 17, DCV 6, SPD 4

Priest's Abilities

Flight 6"

Detect Minds 17-

Know Faith: Telepathy 7d6; ECV 7

Flame Bolts: RKA 1d6, Penetrating; OCV 6

Curtains (R. Hand): Telekinesis (30 STR), Only To Grab And Squeeze

Falling Wall (L. Hand): 8d6 Normal Damage, Two Hexes Outside The Doorway

Poison Darts (L. Foot): RKA ½d6, Area Of Effect (the room) **plus** Drain CON 2d6, See Description

Brilliant Burst (R. Foot): Sight Group Flash 6d6, Area Of Effect (the room)

Investigation

The PCs have some thinking ahead of them if they are to move onwards. The sections below describe the pertinent features of the initiation chambers.

The Doors: With the exception of the bar used to close it (described above), the doors are unremarkable. Each is DEF 2, BODY 4. The bar is DEF 6, BODY 2. On the inside of the bar (side facing the door) is a small circle of copper set in the iron. On the side of the bracket is a copper bolt that holds it to the wall. When the bar is lowered, the circle of copper is juxtaposed with the copper bolt set in the bracket.

The Holes: Looking into the holes proves fruitless unless a PC has a light source that he can hold near the hole, while at the same time pressing his eye close to the opening. If he does this, he sees a glitter of color — either red, green, yellow, or blue — beyond the thin, crystal-clear ice that covers the opening and fills far back into the hole.

The color comes from a piece of opaque quartz, inserted six inches back.

Activating The Chamber: The Zy'frei did not trust their primitive servants, knowing they served the god only because he provided them power. They used these chambers to reinforce the faith of the Pikts.

When a PC closes the door and lowers the bar, he activates the chamber. It begins with a muted whirring sound, then multicolored lights shine out from the holes in the wall and circle widdershins (counter-clockwise). The PC standing in the alcove finds himself briefly entranced by the lights, as the motley pattern impinges itself on his consciousness and attempts to change him into a follower of the evil god. In his mind's eye the PC can see himself sacrificing humans, both adult and children, on a altar of milky white stone while speaking vile words, the meaning of which is unintelligible, but with evil intent that is perfectly clear.

Major Transform 6d6 (person into person with the Psychological Limitation Faithful To [Evil Deity] [Common, Strong], heals back normally or if character receives a blessing-spell from a priest of another god), BOECV (Power Defense applies; +1), Works Against EGO, Not BODY (+¼), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (337 Active Points); All Or Nothing (-½), No Range (-½), Limited Target (creatures with human intelligence and normal vision; -½), Does Not Work Against Targets With Shielded Eyes (see text; -1). Total cost: 96 points.

The effect works as follows:

- It “attacks” with ECV 6.
- The “attacks” continue so long as the door to the alcove remains closed. It attacks with a SPD 4.
- If the attack succeeds (*i.e.*, the total Transform damage, minus any Power Defense he has, is twice or more the PC’s EGO), the PC gains the Disadvantage, *Psychological Limitation: Faithful To [Evil Deity] (Common, Strong)*. This does *not* mean he becomes a fanatical follower of the god (*i.e.*, he does not go berserk and attack other party members). He simply believes the god’s purpose to be the right one and is happy to discuss the matter in a rational manner. Most importantly, he feels the god’s banish-

ment was unjust — a selfish act perpetrated by petty deities — and willingly works to effect the god’s return. Of course, there might be additional complications if the PC is the devout follower of some other god, or when the PCs enter the Zy’frei vessel described below. The PC can *briefly* overcome the Disadvantage with a successful EGO Roll.

- Closing one’s eyes is not enough to avoid the effect — the colored lights seem to shine through something so thin as eyelids. However, turning one’s back on the wall before the lights begin to circle or wearing a blindfold of thick cloth (or the like) prevents the effect from working.
- The Transform “heals” back normally over time, or instantly if the PC receives a “blessing” from a priest of a different god. (The form this blessing takes depends on your campaign and the role gods take in the world; at the very least it requires a spell, and might take the form of a ritual at your discretion.)

The Secret Door: In the second alcove to the west is the secret door that allows the PCs to move beyond the initiation chambers to the shrine (area #8, described below). One of the holes in the far wall, located in the upper-right corner about nine feet above the floor, does not hold a piece of quartz. At the back of that hole is a metal stud; when pressed, it activates the secret door. With the noise of stone scraping against stone and a gasp of warm air, the wall slides back .5” (3.25 feet), revealing a stairway leading down. The stairs here are not chipped from flint, but rather smooth-edged slabs of obsidian. The stud that activates the door is six inches back and the diameter of the hole is only half an inch, so the PC likely needs a stick or rod to reach that far back.

There are three things about discovering the secret door you should keep in mind:

- The main clue that points to its existence is the wall painting in the priest’s chamber (area #6).
- Without chipping away at the ice that cover the walls, it’s difficult to find the location of the secret door — in other words, a layer of ice obscures the join between the wall that slides back and the other two. (It’s been several days since Vyl Corruck came through here, which is plenty of time for the ice to reform.) Any search for secret doors suffers a -6 penalty, and any successful search does *not* reveal the means of opening the door.
- There are two obvious ways of discovering the secret door mechanism. Examining each of the holes reveals that one of the them lacks a piece of quartz; this a tedious process, but does eventually succeed. Or, if a PC states he watches the lights when the door is closed, he notices light does not shine out of one of the holes as long as he stands in the correct alcove.

If your players seem frustrated with finding the secret room, ask for a Deduction roll (or even just a INT Roll). If successful, tell them one or both



of following: first, the painting in priest's chamber indicates the passage onward is through this area (the dabs of colored pigment are a symbol for the chamber, the black square a symbol for the passage beyond). Second, the ice would make it difficult to find a secret door.

After being open for 5 Turns (1 minute), the door slides closed. The door closes with a STR 15, and there's a hole in the wall along the western side of the stair that opens it, in the same way as the hole in the wall of the alcove.

8. THE SHRINE

From the initiation chambers the obsidian stairs lead down, curving to the north before ending in a rectangular room. Unlike the rest of the flint mines, ice does not cover the place, and the walls, ceiling, and floor are not crudely chipped out of flint stone — they are made of blocks of glossy black obsidian, each join between the blocks perfectly flush and free of mortar. A stone altar stands against the far wall in front of a portal of silver metal with the appearance of polished steel. To either side of the portal are braziers set back in the wall, each residing in an alcove. A corpse lies on his back atop the altar. The corpse is no Pikt — it's a man with white hair, six feet tall, wearing black satin robes embroidered with the sigils of the banished god in silver thread. Both his hands, the fingers stiff with rigor mortis, are wrapped around a dagger plunged into his stomach, and puddle of congealed blood surrounds the base of the altar.

The stairs from area #7 exit in the middle of the southern wall. In the southwest corner of the room — in other words, behind the PCs and to their left when they come into the room — is an open portal and a second stair leading up to area #9, the room holding the mechanism that works the lights in the initiation chamber.

Investigation

Though the walls, ceiling, and floor are featureless, there are a couple of items worthy of the PCs' attention in this room.

The Corpse: The corpse is that of Vyl Corruck. When he arrived in the shrine, he misinterpreted the prophecy inscribed on the altar and sacrificed himself in a vain attempt to fulfill its conditions. He laid himself on the altar, plunged his dagger into his stomach, and died a slow death as his blood ran over the altar, down its sides, and puddled on the floor.

The corpse matches Vyl's description. Under his ceremonial robes he wears simple breeches and tunic. Other than his dagger, the only other possession on his body is a rough map that shows the mountain range and the location of the mines he established, and a pouch with thirty-five silver pieces inside.

Determining that Vyl plunged the dagger into his own stomach is difficult short of some sort of divination. The dagger is steel with a wooden hilt, and not a simple piece flint like those the chieftain's wives wielded.

The Altar: In stark contrast to the obsidian used

throughout the room, the altar is carved from a single piece of milky stone, its surface stained with reddish-brown streamers. It's four feet high, three feet wide, and two feet deep. At each corner, carved from the stone, is a small winged gargoyle squatting on its haunches. The gargoyles' demonic faces wear grotesque expressions, and they hold their arms and claws above their head, as if supporting the altar's rectangular top.

Carved into the altar below Vyl Corruck's corpse are runes of the same "alphabet" as those found on the chimney stone at Wickshine's Last Inn. In the language sacred to the evil god, the runes read:

*Lycren-tha d'Rn'grn-krol cint ravryn,
(His first servants long buried,)
Sc'R'brinjer se'tor d'Rn'grn-krol,
(Those missionaries of his will,)
Kri slafen te kri urkryn.
(Again they sleep and again they wait.)
Skaldy, mogrn, te oty uxen plye,
(Fire, smoke, and steam make the call,)
Lox lenna blut geryn Lycren,
(Where fresh blood the faithful offer,)
D'cron-vert-krol d'Lycrcen-tha.
(For the true words of the first.)*

Vyl Corruck misunderstood the prophecy and believed his blood would open the portal. (Truly a fanatic, he also believed he would not die upon the altar.) In truth, the line concerning fire, smoke, and steam provides a hint about how to open the portal, as described below.

The Portal: The portal is round, 1.5" (9.75 feet) in diameter, and made from a single piece of magically-reinforced steel. The seam between the wall and portal is visible and less than eighth of an inch wide. Moving the portal with brute strength requires achieving at least 15 BODY on a STR Roll, and it has DEF 16, BODY 20. In short, it should prove impossible to open the portal without determining how the braziers work.

If a PC can magically move through the wall or destroy it, you might want to provide it with the following defenses: Power Defense (20 points total), and the Advantages *Affects Desolidified* (+½) and *Cannot Be Escaped With Teleportation* (+¼).

A single character passing through the wall via magical means is not truly problematic. An ability that allows the entire group of PCs to do so is, but only if one or more of your players enjoy problem-solving and the like. If they don't, there's no sense in forcing them to solve the riddle of the prophecy. Simply treat the wall as DEF 16, BODY 20, and allow them to proceed to the Zy'frei vessel via use of magical spells and the like.

The Braziers: The braziers are set in a carved-out portion of the obsidian wall that's shaped like a two-foot-high half-cylinder. Each brazier is a shallow bowl of beaten bronze one foot across and four inches deep at its deepest, its inner surface stained with soot. The brazier fits snugly into a hollow in the obsidian, its lip flush with the stone edge. Though casual use (such as lighting or extin-

NOBODY CAN READ THE PROPHECY

If the PCs cannot read the prophecy, Vyl Corruck carries another piece of paper in addition to the map. On the paper, written in a jittery hand, are the runes inscribed on the altar. Below each rune is a word in the common tongue. The cultist has scratched out some of the words and replaced them with others, sometimes multiple times, but piecing it all together the PCs learn the words of the prophecy.

guishing a fire) doesn't move the braziers, a PC can easily lift the brazier out of the stone. Below each is a small cavity, its sides coated with copper. The bottom three-quarters of the cavity are stained green with verdigris, and a small circular opening at the top, just under the lip of the cavity where the brazier sits, leads back into the wall.

To open the portal, the PCs must fill both cavities with water up to the line revealed by the verdigris on the copper surface, light a fire in both braziers, and then wait ten minutes. During this time the water begins to boil, and the steam escapes through the small opening at the top of the cavity. The steam travels through a tube, where it returns to liquid state in a second cavity. After the ten minutes pass, enough water has gathered in the second cavity to press down a stud that activates the door and the portal rolls back, moving to the east and allowing entrance into the vessel of the Zy'frei. If the PCs perform any of the three steps incorrectly — lighting only one brazier, too little water, lifting the brazier and releasing some of the steam before ten minutes pass — the portal does not open.

9. THE MECHANISM ROOM

Up the obsidian stairway leading from the shrine the PCs find the room that holds the mechanism responsible for the lights in the initiation chambers. The room is semi-circular; in the middle is a column made of copper bands. There are a total five two-foot-wide copper bands, and protruding

from each band is a cylindrical bar. Each bar protrudes in a different direction, one pointing toward a different alcove in the initiation chambers, the location of which is clearly marked by the holes in the curved wall. The bar has four bends, each at a right angle and forming an irregular U-shape; and at the end of the bar is a square box, six inches to a side, which faces the center of the opposite wall. Five sides of the box are made of copper; the side facing the wall holds a lens. Five thick cables of braided copper wire emerge from the ceiling and attach to the top of the column.

The whole mechanism is fragile (DEF 3, BODY 12), and atop it is a panel that lifts open. Inside is a dizzying array of rods and gears, at the center of which is a fist-sized chunk of cobalt blue stone. Cradled in a nest of copper wires, the stone provides the mechanism with its power (though it's powerless if removed from the column). A single copper wire runs from the blue stone to each arm, through the arm, and ends at a clear crystal inside the copper box. When activated the crystal in the box glows brilliantly. The lens focuses a beam of light toward the wall, and each arm rotates the box in a circle, the U-shaped bars allowing them to turn without hitting the other arms. A given arm only rotates when the appropriate door in the initiation chambers is closed (*i.e.*, all five only rotate when the doors to all five alcoves are closed, the bars lowered; if only one alcove is closed, only one arm rotates).

THE ZY'FREI VESSEL



Beyond the portal in the shrine of the Pikts is a wonder of alchemical mechanics and magic — the vessel the Zy'frei used to travel the distance between their world and this one. And here the five Zy'frei who made the passage sleep in eternal slumber, waiting for their chance to bring the worship of their evil god back to this world.

When the Zy'frei first arrived on a one-way trip from their home, the world was in a tumult — volcanoes were erupting and earthquakes shook the continents, until glaciers encroached from the far north and south burying the world beneath miles-thick ice and stifling the fires of magma that raged. The Zy'frei found their ship embedded in obsidian, then covered over with layer upon layer of soil, which over the centuries became the stone found in the flint mines.

The vessel is made of five conjoined spheres of magically-hardened steel — four smaller spheres radiating from a larger sphere at the center. A hallway runs along the circumference of the place. At the center of each sphere is a chamber with five walls which gives the room the shape of a pentagon, and a single door leads into the chamber.

The vessel holds many examples of the Zy'frei's alien magic. Patrolling the halls, making sure everything is in order, are two constructs. In the center sphere is the Chamber Of Long Sleep where the five Zy'frei still reside, and they're protected by the combined essence of their alien psyches, which takes the form of a shadowy apparition with dread powers. And as the PCs soon discover, opening the entrance to the vessel begins the resuscitation of these sleeping servants of evil.

The Hall: A single hall, 1.5" (9.75 feet) high and wide, leads around the vessel and its five chambers (this is marked on the map with grey arrows, which show the path of the guardian constructs described below). Unlike the outside of the vessel, the halls are lined with sheets of copper. The outside wall of the curved passage is perfectly smooth, its surface only marred by the narrow joins between one copper sheet and the next. On the inside wall, low ridges form a maze of lines, and behind these ridges run the wires and tubes that power many of the vessel's functions, including cycling the air and providing heat. On the ceiling a single ridge runs down its middle and every five feet is a chunk of yellow quartz glowing with a soft light and providing illumination. In the floor are two parallel grooves, five feet apart, that run the length of the entire corridor. Each groove is four inches wide and two inches deep. Judging by the state of the copper

floor, the grooves were not a part of its original design — rather the metal was worn away, with some harder metal eroding the copper by passing over it time and time again.

The Doors: Each chamber has a single door of copper. The door opens by sliding up into the ceiling. In the wall to the left and right of the door are two holes, about chest height on a man.

The guardian constructs use the hole on the left to monitor the room's internal condition. To do so, a construct inserts the copper rod protruding from its side into the hole and makes a connection with the circuit of magical energy feeding into the room. Doing this enables the construct to detect any problems with the vessel's functioning, as well as detect if an intruding life force is inside the chamber. If a PC inserts an object other than a copper rod into the hole, there's a crackling noise and the energy sings and blackens the end of the object, setting it alight if it's flammable. If he inserts a copper rod, or somehow inserts his finger, he suffers 1d6 Killing Damage, NND (defense is an ED Force Field), Does BODY.

The hole on the right side of the door is the mechanism that opens the door. Like the secret door in the initiation chamber, a PC can operate the mechanism by pressing a stud six inches back inside the hole. From inside the chamber, a PC can close the door by pressing the stud in a hole on the opposite side of the doorway.

A door is DEF 6, BODY 6. Forcing it open requires achieving at least 10 BODY on a STR Roll.

The Guardian Constructs

The Zy'frei set two Guardian Constructs to patrol their vessel as they slept. The guardians have patrolled so long, trundling along the corridors on their steel wheels, that they've worn grooves into the floor.

A Guardian Construct is a rectangular box of steel and copper plating, five feet wide, three feet long, and three feet "tall" from its bottom to its top. Its bottom sits two feet above the ground on four steel wheels, giving it a total height of five feet.

From the left and right sides of the construct protrude a retractable copper rod used to monitor the condition of the chambers. When the construct comes to a door, it stops and the rod extends into the hole to the left of the door. After determining that nothing out of the ordinary is going on with the room, it retracts the rod and continues on its circuit of the vessel. From the front of the Guardian Construct extend two appendages which look like skeletal arms and hands made of steel with copper wires and springs substituted for muscles, sinew, and

FROM OUT OF SPACE, OR OUTER SPACE?

The origin of the Zy'frei is left intentionally ambiguous — but it has little bearing on the adventure other than serving as a plot element to whet the players' curiosity. Though evidence of their other-worldly origins abounds in *From Out Of The Depths*, and the dungeon holds many examples of their alien alchemy, none of this is enough for the PCs to draw a definite conclusion about the location of the Zy'frei's home — their alchemy, as well as their language, is wholly alien (perhaps even incomprehensible) to human minds. Simply interpreting their carefully drawn navigation charts proves a nigh-insurmountable challenge for the world's most well-versed scholars and wizards, so different is the Zy'frei's understanding and conceptualization of the world and its laws, both arcane and natural.

The question remains: are the Zy'frei astronaut-priests from another world in the same universe, or are they other-dimensional visitors? The answer to this question depends on the nature of your campaign world and is left to your discretion. The answer can lead to further plot seeds involving the Zy'frei and their attempts to convert the PCs' world to the worship of their foul god.

ligaments. The arms are slightly longer than a man's, and its inhumanly long fingers have five "knuckles" instead of the three of a human's hand. At the top corner on either side of the front is a smooth, incandescent blue stone and at the center of the front face is a fist-sized chunk of orangeish quartz.

For the Guardian construct's character sheet, use the Metal Golem on page 79 of *The HERO System Bestiary*. In addition, the Guardian Construct has the Flame Bolt and Know Faith Powers described on page 34 in the chieftain's description.

Weak Spot: A Guardian Construct has a distinct weak spot. On the underside of its carriage is a panel that slides back with a push up and then a hard yank. If a PC gets under the construct, yanks open the panel, and attacks the gears, springs, and bellows behind it, the damage he does bypasses the construct's defenses (including its Damage Reduction). Doing this in combat requires a DEX Roll at -3, then a successful Attack Roll against the Construct's DCV.

The Grooves: To leave the hall, a Guardian Construct must spend 1 Phase levering itself out of the groove. To do this it braces its hands against the floor, pushes up the front half of its carriage, then lowers its front wheels outside the groove, pulling its rear wheels after it. As it levers itself out of the groove, ask the PCs for PER Roll. If successful, the PC spots the access panel.

On Patrol: The two Guardian Constructs patrol the vessel, moving around the hall at exactly the same rate (the arrows on the map indicate their path), and they stand at opposite sides of the place at all times — just as they have throughout the hundreds of years that have passed since the Zy'frei entered the Chamber Of Long Sleep. When the PCs enter the vessel, give them enough time to examine the grooves and speculate on their purpose. Shortly thereafter one of the Guardian Constructs rolls into sight, and if it uses Know Faith successfully, it attacks. When the fight begins, mark the location of the second Guardian Construct and begin keeping track of its movement.

1. COMMUNICATION ROOM

In this room is a pentagonal table and five chairs, one on each side of the table. All of the furniture is made of copper. The table and the seats of the chairs sit higher off the floor than those designed for humans, and the feet of a six foot tall man would dangle over the floor if he were seated. Atop the table is a miniature model of an alien landscape. Jagged, twisted spikes of milky white stone rise from the cratered ground and tower over pyramids and cubes of metal. At the center of the table is a pentagonal-shaped building, and set in its flat roof is a mosaic of black and red crystals in the shape of the evil god's sigil (a broken triangle inside a circle). The spikes stand between one and two feet high; none of the buildings is over six inches tall.

In between the buildings, small statuettes — only fractions of an inch tall, featureless, and rough-hewn from a material like ivory — lay on their backs. Each statuette has a narrow length topped by a narrower but shorter length, giving it the appearance of a slender body topped by a long, narrow head, and the statuette's base is a round disc. As the PCs study the scene, they notice that a total of five statuettes, out of the forty-five on the table, stand upright.

Investigation

The walls of the room are featureless, but the PCs might find the scene atop the table curious.

The Replica: The model atop the table is a recreation in miniature of the temple district in the Zy'frei's home city. The pentagonal building in the center represents the temple. Each of the figures on the table represents a Zy'frei with a position in the temple's hierarchy; the five still standing are those in the Chamber Of Long Sleep. The Zy'frei represented by the fallen statuettes are long dead, even though time passes differently in the Zy'frei home. If a PC stands up one of the figures, it starts to wobble once he removes his fingers and then quickly falls over.

The Zy'frei used the model to communicate with their far-off brethren. By concentrating on his figure, a Zy'frei could project his spirit across the gulfs of night separating this world from his own and flit around his home city like a sort of ghost. By placing the statuette representing himself in contact with another one, the Zy'frei could telepathically communicate with one of his brethren.

Most Men lack the mental facilities to transport their spirit to the home city of the Zy'frei, but if a PC puts his finger to one of the statuettes still standing and concentrates on it, he feels another consciousness impinging on his own. The voice in his mind speaks groggily, its words ringing hollowly in his thoughts. It asks repeatedly, "Who?" — and each time it asks, the word becomes more clear, the question more urgent, until the PC can no longer hear anything else. At that point, the PC only regains his senses when he releases the statuette.

2. ALCHEMICAL LABORATORY

This room holds two long tables, and has shelves stand against its five walls. On both of the tables are a small sharp knife and a saw with long, wicked teeth on its blade. Under the tables are glassware jugs and containers holding thick liquids, green or black in color, as well as a metal box holding gears, rods, and springs (parts likely familiar to the PCs after their encounters with the constructs in the flint mines). Each of the shelves holds numerous scrolls — yellowed parchment rolled tight and held closed with a knotted length of black silk.

The Zy'frei used this room to create constructs like the chieftain and priest in the flint mines, as well as perform numerous experiments on indigenous lifeforms.

Investigation

The containers and their contents are worthless, since the passage of time long ago rendered the liquids they contain inert. However, the scrolls are more interesting.

The Scrolls: On the scrolls are diagrams and notes made in the alien language of the Zy'frei (which is *not* the same as the language sacred to the evil god). Most of the scrolls pertain to a metaphysic beyond the ken of the races of your world. The diagrams show the intersection of three-dimensional geometric shapes — spheres, cubes, and more exotic polygons — with their sides given numeric values and their intersections marked with indecipherable runes. Any PC studying the charts intently, set on deciphering their meaning whether through brute intellect or magical means, must make an EGO Roll. If he fails, he gets a piercing headache and suffers a -2 on PER Rolls and EGO Rolls for the next hour.

Other charts on the shelves show anatomical drawings of various creatures and constructs including Pikts, rock serpents, and Guardian Constructs. Incredibly lifelike and gruesome, the drawings show each layer of flesh, then muscles, then organs, then skeletons, with notes pertaining to the alchemical function of each piece of anatomy written in the margin.

3. THE CHAMBER OF LONG SLEEP

Like the other chambers in the vessel, this room has five walls. Against four of those walls, standing stiffly upright, are the strange creatures depicted in the wall paintings throughout the flint mines.

Each Zy'frei stands nearly nine feet tall. It has a torso similar in size to a man's, but gangly, overly-long arms and legs. Its arms end in hands with fingers easily twice as long as a man's, and like the Guardian Constructs, the fingers have five knuckles. Its skin is waxy with an unnaturally white pallor. They wear no clothing and to all appearances are completely sexless. A Zy'frei's hairless head is oblong with a narrow, pointed chin and tapering forehead. Its mouth is lipless; its nose, two diagonal slits at the center of its face. Its lidless, almond-shaped eyes are solid yellow, lacking both iris and pupil.

Three copper bands — one over the long neck, one over the arms and the narrow hips, and one over the knees — hold each Zy'frei to the wall. A hollow copper cylinder is inserted into each one's torso, just below the breastbone. From out of the tube run five smaller tubes of crystal-clear glass. The glass tubes end in glass containers, one for each tube, standing on a shelf recessed into the wall next to each Zy'frei. Four of the containers hold liquids: sky blue, yellow, brown, and blue-green — and the fifth container holds a whitish-gray vapor. The bottom fourth of each container is empty; visible through the glass is a rod, raised up from the bottom of the container, supporting a disk. Below the recessed shelf, visible through a copper mesh, is a bellows; it pumps rhythmically with a gasp of air as it closes, then opens. As the PCs look on, the bellows raises the rod and disc at the bottom of each of the containers, forcing the substance inside through the glass tubes, where it then disappears into the chests of the motionless Zy'frei.

At the center of the room is the fifth Zy'frei, seated in a chair, his sightless eyes facing the entrance. Similar glass tubes run from his chest to containers located under his chair. These containers, however, are only half full, and the bellows there pumps noticeably faster than the other four.

Directly above the head of the seated Zy'frei, set in the center of the ceiling, is a rough-cut black gemstone roughly the size of a man's head. Five brilliant points of light flit around inside the gemstone. As the PCs look on, the points of light gather behind a single face of the stone on the side nearest them, seeming to buzz with agitation at their intrusion. Then a smoky black substance begins to drift out of through the surface of the stone, draining it of its color, and forms into a shadowy form, similar in shape to the Zy'frei.

Without a word the black shape moves to attack!

TROUBLESHOOTING: “LET’S WAKE ‘EM UP”

When the PCs open the portal, it triggers the awakening of the Zy'frei. If for whatever reason the PCs decide to leave and come back later, or maybe camp in the vessel, or make some other less than wise decision, realistically the Zy'frei should awaken. In this case, you have two options.

First, you can extend the time it takes for the Zy'frei to awaken, and run the encounter in area #3 as written in the description.

Second, you can have the Zy'frei awaken. If so, the first thing they do is secure their vessel against bothersome do-gooders. For their character sheet, use the Wizard on page 125 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, but lower their STR, CON, and BODY by four points (adjusting the Figured Characteristics accordingly). Unattractive and alien to human eyes, they have PRE 25 and COM 6. Finally, provide them with a selection of spells from *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*; spells from Alchemy on pages 6-20 and Necromancy on pages 140-166 are especially appropriate.



The Wraith

The wraith is not of a sort adventurers usually encounter — rather than an evil spirit in a profane state of undeath, it is the commingled psychic essence of five Zy'frei in a weird state of half-life. Any priestly or necromantic powers that normally have an effect on the undead, whether adverse or not, have *no effect* on this wraith; neither do spells or other abilities with Limitations like *Only Works Against Undead*. For all other purposes the wraith is exactly as described on page 112 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders* with the *Undead Mind* option.

The formerly black gemstone, now crystal clear after the PCs enter the chamber and arouse the wraith, normally contains the commingled Zy'frei essences. Once the PCs loose the wraith, breaking the gemstone has no effect on it. The gemstone is DEF 8, BODY 6.

Another tactic the PCs might try is breaking the containers. This also has no effect on the wraith. The containers hold the distilled life-stuff of the Zy'frei, and breaking them condemns the slumbering Zy'frei to a slow death — too slow to have an effect on the wraith in the short term. A portion of each Zy'frei's life-stuff has already returned to its body, enough to keep the wraith active long enough to kill the PCs. Each container is DEF 3, BODY 1 — and when the PCs break one, the wraith screams in rage and immediately attacks that PC.

What does harm the wraith is severing a Zy'frei's head at the neck, smashing its soft skull and crushing its brain, or otherwise instantly killing it. Each time a Zy'frei dies in this manner, the wraith suffers 3 BODY and there is noticeably less shadowy substance to its discorporate form.

Any PC Transformed in the initiation cham-

bers (*The Flint Mines*, area #7) fights to protect the bodies of the Zy'frei. He knows these creatures are the “holy” emissaries of his new-found god.

The wraith only leaves the Chamber Of Long Sleep in one circumstance: if the PCs have destroyed the containers holding the life-stuff of all five Zy'frei. In this case it pursues the PCs as long as it can, its hunger for revenge driving it until the psychic essences of the dying creatures drift into the void, forever gone from the world of Men. (It takes fifteen to twenty minutes for this to happen.) Otherwise it remains in the chamber, guarding the bodies and waiting for the alchemical apparatus to resuscitate the Zy'frei.

If the PCs destroy the wraith without crushing the brains of the Zy'frei, its shadowy substance explodes apart and flows back into the gemstone in the ceiling. At this point, destroying the gemstone releases the black substance, and the PCs can watch as the ebon stuff splits into five parts, a single point of light visible at its middle, and then each part forces itself into the lipless mouth of a Zy'frei.

Investigation

Once the PCs have defeated the wraith, they have plenty of time to investigate the chamber. Even if they don't immediately destroy it, it takes the wraith an hour to regain enough substance to once again leave its abode and attack.

The Gemstone: If broken, the gemstone is worthless. If taken intact, however, it has considerable value. The gemstone is from the Zy'frei's home, called *Ichomen* in their tongue, and unique to this world. The exact amount the PCs get for the gemstone is left to you — its size makes it an oddity valuable to a collector of such things, yet also

makes it useless as a piece for jewelry. You should treat this as a reward for quick thinking on the part of the PCs, since taking the gemstone intact means the PCs defeated the wraith by crushing the brains of the Zy'frei (or similar means), rather than a straightforward application of brute force.

The Containers: With a successful KS: Alchemy roll, a PC knows each container and its contents represents one of the five elements that form the cornerstone of the magical science: the sky blue liquid is air; yellow, fire; brown, earth; blue-green, water; and the grayish-white vapor, spirit. Though the PC understands the basic principle — somehow the vital components of the Zy'frei are removed and distilled, providing them with a form of eternal life (or at least slumber) — the exact process is completely and totally baffling no matter how well the PC succeeds with his Skill Roll.

If a PC dissects a Zy'frei, he finds the tubes each end in a steel needle and the needle is plunged into an organ. Though the organs look different than those of a Man, the PC can identify their basic function a successful Healing roll. The sky blue liquid runs to one of its lungs, the yellow, to the liver; the brown, to the stomach; the blue-green, to the kidney; and the vapor, to the heart.

4. THE CHAPEL

In this room are two pews, each four feet long, facing an altar identical to the one in the shrine (*The Flint Mines*, area #8). Beyond the altar is a lectern, six feet tall and facing toward the pews. Four of the five walls of copper have a demonic face molded in bas relief on their surface. Each demonic face depicts a different individual, though all four are clearly of the same “species.” Each demonic face has a sharp-toothed grin, two slits for a nose, and three narrowed eyes (the third is located in its forehead). From its pointed chin to high, narrow forehead, each face is five feet long.

In this room the Zy'frei paid homage to their evil deity; the demonic faces depict the god's messengers. Four of the five would sit in the pews, while the fifth read the liturgy from the book currently open on the lectern.

Investigation

The only item of interest is the book lying open on the lectern. At this point in *From Out Of The Depths*, the PCs might suspect that the demonic faces are a trap, but the faces do not attack or otherwise threaten them.

The Book: The book on the lectern consists of twenty thin sheets of beaten bronze. Three steel rings run through holes punched in the bronze and bind the sheets together. Engraved into each side of the sheet are words written in the language of the evil god. The words describe the blasphemous rituals used to call the god's attention to his wor-

TROUBLESHOOTING: AFFECTS DESOLIDIFIED

If your PCs possess myriad ways of affecting the Desolidified guardian of the Zy'frei, this final encounter might prove anti-climatic. One way of increasing the difficulty is to provide the wraith with Damage Reduction, either Magic, Physical, or Energy as necessary to challenge your PCs.

shippers, as well as the proper liturgy to speak for his favor — and it's this book the prophecy in the shrine (*The Flint Mines*, area #8) refers to.

With the book a cultist like Vyl Corruick can begin to erode the barriers that guard the world from the malevolent depredations of the foul god. The cultists now attempting to fulfill the prophecy would pay dearly for the book — with it and proper obeisance to its words, a cultist can gain powers from his baleful master currently denied to him because of the god's banishment (*i.e.*, he can learn to cast divine magic spells). Keeping it from these cultists is an act of righteousness, as well as one of self-preservation; only the most debased, short-sighted, or ignorant of souls would consider selling the book. Each sheet in the book is DEF 4, BODY 2, and melting the bronze down is the surest way of destroying the horrific tome.

5. STORAGE

Unlike the other rooms in the vessel, this place holds no furniture. Instead primitive objects, piled in heaps ranging from ankle deep to waist high, lie scattered across the floor. Flint axes and daggers, crudely whittled statuettes, necklaces of polished stones, yellowed bones from animals, and stones with glittering deposits... all of these are thrown haphazardly around the room.

These were the sacrifices the Pikt made long ago to the Zy'frei — those sacrifices made before the Zy'frei taught the Pikts how to make proper sacrifices of men and blood to their new god.

Investigation

Most of the objects are worthless; the stones with glittering deposits are not.

Treasure: The glittering stones are silver ore. There are two hundred pounds of ore, worth a total of 500 gold pieces. Sorting through it all takes a considerable amount of time, carrying it out a considerable amount of effort.

CONCLUSION



Once the adventurers thwart the threat to the world posed by the Zy'frei, *From Out Of The Depths* comes to a conclusion. Now the adventurers can transport the loot taken from the mines to a more hospitable locale so they can enjoy the fruits of their heroism. Additionally, they can go and collect their fee from the king — but since they don't have good news to share, perhaps sending a messenger would be the wiser choice. In addition to their pay, there are several other loose ends to wrap up

The Zy'frei

If the PCs spare the lives of the Zy'frei for some reason, perhaps taking them prisoner, the evil is not put to rest. The Zy'frei do everything in their power to either convert the adventurers to the faith of their evil god, or kill them. The Pikts, on the other hand, simply try to kill the PCs, and if the adventurers spare the lives of those primitive men, they have quite a time trying to subdue the savage and uncooperative barbarians.

The Bronze Book

Any good-hearted PC destroys the book. Any PC who's sort of, kind of good does the same. Any PC Transformed in the initiation chambers considers the book the most holy of relics, a priceless artifact worth sacrificing his life to protect... at least until the effects of the Transform wear off. Any religious authority the PCs consult about the book demands they destroy it immediately. Not all wizardly authorities are quite so morally upright, however, and some of that sort might take it off the PCs' hands, maybe even offering a payment, and always accompanied with the disingenuous claim that the wizard merely wants to add the strange tome to his library — it's just an oddity the wizard would like to have for curiosity's sake, certainly not for any ill intent, and of course he would never try to translate the writing or anything of the sort. Additionally, the cultists eventually learn the PCs have the book — if through no other means, dreams sent by their evil god — and the adventurers are Hunted until they get rid of the book... and likely even afterwards.

THE FURTHER ADVENTURES....

Here are some plot seeds you can use for adventures stemming from the events in *From Out Of The Depths*.

An Unhappy King: Do the adventurers remove the silver ore from the storage chamber in the Zy'frei's vessel, and if so, where do they sell it? If the king who originally hired them to investigate the mines finds out the PCs sold the ore, he assumes the worst — namely, the PCs lied to him, stole the ore that Vyl Corruck and his men mined, and maybe even massacred the men. He sets a bounty on their heads... and if the PCs try to explain what happened, does the king believe stories of primitive men frozen in blocks of ice and an alien race from another world?

A New Employer: After a few mugs of ale, most adventurers can't help but share stories of their exploits and the amazing sights they've witnessed. When stories of the PCs' exploits in the flint mines reach a famous (or maybe infamous) wizard, he hires them to lead an expedition back to the place. He puts them in charge of a group of men, and tells them to salvage everything and anything, bringing it back to his sanctum. As the men do so, a wall falls away and reveals unplumbed depths of the mines. When a construct rumbles forth, belching smoke and shooting fire, will the PCs journey into these uncharted regions to again confront the evil of the Zy'frei and their god?

A Trip Elsewhere... And Elsewhen: When the PCs dispatch the wraith-like guardian of the sleeping Zy'frei, the whole vessel begins to shake. After a crack like lightning, the PCs feel a gut-wrenching sensation and are knocked senseless. When they come to, nothing seems changed... until they exit the vessel. The portal opens on an alien landscape, far removed from the primitive flint mines of the Pikt. Have the PCs inadvertently returned the vessel to the Zy'frei home? And if so, how will they escape?

<chapter> CHAPTER
THREE: EISBURK-
BEYOND-THE-SHOALS

INTRODUCTION



A castle is the next location where the cultists attempt to return their evil god to the world. Eisburk-beyond-the-Shoals stands at a mouth of the Redwater River, where its waters flow into the ocean. When an army of Orcs and Goblins comes out of the north to surround its walls, the adventurers find themselves pressed into service to defend it. But these Orcs and Goblins are no mere barbaric and bloodthirsty rabble. Their war leader is Sünkrag, an Orc both cunning and strong, and Sünkrag's advisor is Fallon Kordru, a fell necromancer recently brought into the service of the banished god.

Here at Eisburk-beyond-the-Shoals, far from other habitations of Men, the adventurers find themselves cornered — water on two sides, Orcs on the other two — with Lord Redwater and his men. Will they persevere against the enemies of Man... or will they make a heroic, and final, stand against the servants of the evil god?

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The adventure begins in the morning, when a hunting party out of Eisburk returns to the castle bearing ill tidings. Orcs and Goblins have ridden out of the wastelands, as they do every generation — but rather than turning east toward more prosperous regions of the kingdom, they are coming toward Eisburk, which they never have before. A small castle, Eisburk guards the mouth of the Redwater River from reavers and their shallow-keeled longships, and serves as a lighthouse to warn oceangoing ships of the dangerous shoals nearby. The castle lacks the garrison to turn back an army of greenskins. Desperate for able-bodied men who can wield a sword or pull a bow, the lord asks the adventurers for their help. That afternoon the army arrives, sets up its camps, and announces that its war-leader, Sünkrag, intends to storm the walls and sacrifice Eisburk's residents to some unknown god Sünkrag claims as his father.

The siege begins the next day just after dawn, when the Orcs and Goblins storm the walls in their hundreds. The lord and his men number a little under eighty soldiers, and the fighting is fierce. On this day, the adventurers have a chance to prove their valor and skill when two Trolls break through the defenders on the walls and gain a foothold on the battlements. Only the PCs stand between the Trolls, their Goblin warriors, and a flood of the evil creatures eager to slaughter Eisburk's defenders.

On the third day, the siege begins again at dawn and continues until the evening. It's a more cautious battle now, but no less life-or-death for all that. Lord Redwater asks the adventurers to meet a

supply ship later that night. The treacherous shoals and currents just beyond the cliffs keep the supply from coming closer to the castle than 200 yards; it sits at anchor several miles north of the castle. The lord asks the PCs to journey out in rowboats to meet the ship and retrieve the sacks of grain and, more importantly, bundles of crossbow bolts it carries. But when the adventurers near the ship, they discover it's on fire... and that a band of Orcs is returning to the shore in rowboats.

Hopefully after salvaging some of the supplies from the burning ship, the adventurers return to Eisburk aware that an infiltrator lurks somewhere within the castle walls. The enemy knew they were meeting the supply ship — even the time of night they would arrive. During the next day, there's a lull in the fighting that provides the PCs with time to discover the infiltrator. But they had better act quickly! Sünkrag plans to use a secret means of entering the castle during the night; and with Orcs inside Eisburk's walls and without, the garrison stands little chance of defending the castle.

If they discover the infiltrator and learn about the secret way into the Eisburk, the PCs have a perfect opportunity to end the siege — and now they're more desperate than ever, since the castle's dead have risen as skeletons to take their place beside the living besiegers. Lord Redwater beseeches the adventurers to stage a raid of their own. During the next day's fighting, he asks the PCs to attack Sünkrag and his advisor, Fallon Kordru. In the end, the battle hinges on this. If the adventurers succeed, the undead assailing Eisburk's wall crumble to dust, and the decimated army of Orcs and Goblins disperses to find easier prey. But if they fail, Eisburk — now lacking the heroes who were integral to its defense — falls and Fallon Kordru retrieves the artifact of his god which brought the Orcs to the castle in the first place.

BACKGROUND

Though built only recently, Eisburk stands on the foundation stones of older castles — the area is of strategic importance, serving as it does to provide advance warning of reavers coming up the Redwater River, as well as being important to maritime commerce because of the light that shines from its highest tower, warning ships of nearby shoals. Across the generations kings have fortified the location when their coffers allowed them to.

The castle that stood here before Eisburk was called Stonegard; Men had abandoned it centuries ago when their kingdom grew too small to support the castle's garrison. Stonegard was an ancient place and took its name not from the rocky promi-

nence it stood upon, but instead from the jet-black cornerstone inside its chapel. The old castle stood empty for many years until an earthquake toppled its wall, reducing it to a rubble-strewn ruin and burying the cornerstone.

Engraved with runes of prophecy in the language sacred to the evil god, that stone was the first set in the earth when the cult rose to the heights of its power on this world and built its grandest temple — a temple later knocked to rubble by the armies of Good. Soaked in the blood of a thousand sacrifices, the cornerstone possessed unholy properties and proved indestructible. The priests and sages of the time felt it such a threat — if for no other reason than the prophecy graven on one of its faces — that they built an entire castle to keep it out of the hands of the evil god's servants.

Enter, centuries later, Fallon Kordru. A necromancer steeped in the dark arts, Kordru had occasionally happened upon references in his dusty tomes of foul magic to an evil unlike any other he had ever heard of. This evil was a god, long-ago banished from the world. For many decades Kordru ignored those references, assuming they were simply to a god he already knew under a different name. But finally the necromancer had a dream in which the deity, ancient to the world but new to Kordru, revealed his blasphemous presence.

After that night, Kordru returned to his tomes and scrolls and pieced together a fragmentary history of the god and his cult. Revealed in this history was the cornerstone's location, the castle now called Eisburk-beyond-the-Shoals. Now Kordru knew what task the god intended for him. But the cornerstone was by all reports unnaturally heavy. The necromancer could not simply sneak into the castle and steal it away; he would have to take the castle by force.

Kordru knew he would never raise an army among Men — they already had enough gods, both Good and Evil, for their purposes. But among the warlike Orcs, this was not the case. A native of the area, Kordru knew of the raids on settled lands the savages staged once a generation. It was only matter of convincing them there was richer plunder at Eisburk.

Kordru traveled into Orcish lands and came upon the gathered tribes of Sünkrag, an ambitious young war-leader who claimed his father was a god — a story that played into Kordru's hands. Kordru described himself as a servant of Sünkrag's father. With his powers over the dead, he impressed the Orcs, claiming his powers were gifts from the god. He proclaimed that the god had sent him to lead Sünkrag to his destiny — a glorious future that awaited on the banks of the Redwater River within the walls of Eisburk.

Though Sünkrag did not fully believe Kordru's story — since he knew the story of his divine ancestry was a fabrication of his own devising — his warriors were far more credulous than their leader. After seeing the effect the story had them, Sünkrag said nothing to dissuade them from believing an emissary had come from his divine father to lead the Orcs to greatness. Gathering his

warriors, Sünkrag marched on Eisburk.

But Kordru is not a man to leave things to chance. Before the Orcs marched, he dispatched an undead servant to infiltrate Eisburk. The servant, Zimlyn, is the ghost of the man Kordru sacrificed when he first made his vows to the banished deity. Zimlyn has resided in Eisburk for over a week; during that time, he's located the cornerstone and discovered a secret means of entering the castle.

The pieces of his plan in place, Kordru now looks ahead to the future when he can help return his master to this world.

ADVENTURE INFORMATION

Eisburk-Beyond-The-Shoals is a multi-game session scenario designed to challenge a group of four to six 150-point PCs, built according to the guidelines on page 28 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook. If the PCs fall outside these guidelines, you should adjust the encounters accordingly.

The adventure assumes the PCs are in the castle when word of the Orc army reaches Lord Redwater. To get them in the castle is a simple matter. There are few other habitations in the surrounding area, and Eisburk offers a warm welcome to travelers since its inhabitants hunger for news from the rest of the world. If you've run *A Night Out Of The Rain* or *From Out Of The Depths* previously, perhaps the PCs learn of some connection between the former castle of Stonegard and the cult dedicated to returning the banished god to the world, and have come to investigate.

Once news of the army reaches Eisburk, the PCs' reasons for staying on at the castle can range from altruistic heroism to simple greed. Lord Redwater offers them a fair sum for their service, and treats them honestly and respectfully. A humble man, Lord Redwater genuinely appreciates the bravery of people willing to stand beside him in such dire straits.

Mass Combat: Throughout much of this adventure, large groups of brave men fight larger groups of bloodthirsty Orcs and Goblins. This is a good time to put the mass combat rules described on pages 200-220 of *Fantasy Hero* to use in your game. The section entitled *Mass Combat At Eisburk* covers doing so in more detail. However, if you chose to avoid the mass combat rules — after all, using them extends the number of game sessions necessary to complete the adventure — the results of each day's battle are described in the timeline (page 64). Using these, you can simply narrate the combat between the forces of Eisburk's defenders and the orcish army to your players.

Whichever you choose, make sure your players understand the desperate circumstances now facing Lord Redwater and his men. Standard siegecraft states, as a rule of thumb, that the besiegers need at least three times the number of defenders to invest a castle. (A PC knows this with a successful Tactics roll.) At Eisburk, there are more than five times as many Orcs and Goblins as there are defenders.

INDEX OF MONSTERS

Here's a list of the monsters the adventurers face in *Eisburk-Beyond-The-Shoals*, as well as the book and page number where character sheets for those menaces appear.

Ghost

The HERO System Bestiary, page 120

Goblin

Monsters, Minions, And Marauders, page 50

Orc

Monsters, Minions, And Marauders, page 77

Skeleton

The HERO System Bestiary, page 123

War Troll

Monsters, Minions, And Marauders, page 106

EISBURK IN THE TURAKIAN AGE

If you're using *The Turakian Age*, a *Fantasy Hero* setting published by Hero Games, the best places to locate the castle are on the coast of the Mhendarian Palatinate or Thurgandia (the name even fits their language, Ilurian). In that case, the enemy comes from the Thurisian Mountains (or possibly the Greywards). However, since those are fairly well-settled lands, explaining the presence of a horde of Orcs and Goblins is tricky. Another option, one with greater plausibility, is to locate Eisburk along the coast of the Bandit Lands or northern Tornathia — not too far from the Hangclaw Mountains, from whence the greenskins come.

EISBURK CASTLE



This section has two parts. The first describes Lord Redwater, his wife, and his chief advisors. The second describes the physical features of the castle from its environs and the Redwater River, to its topmost tower.

Lord Redwater welcomes travelers to Eisburk warmly and is the perfect host (assuming, of course, said travelers are polite and respectful). So do his people, who are always eager for news from the rest of the world. It's likely the PCs spend at least one day telling tales of their recent journeys (again and again) as each person in the castle seeks news of his home or family elsewhere, or else just wants relief from the tedium of his daily routine.

THE LORD, HIS LADY, AND HIS ADVISORS

The Redwaters are only recently ennobled and have ruled Eisburk and its surrounding lands for fifteen short years — the same amount of time the castle has stood completed on the spot. Oeric's father passed away from natural causes three years ago, and since then Oeric has done his best to rule well. The NPCs below, along with PCs themselves, comprise Lord Redwater's war council, and whenever the text refers to that group, these are the ones on the scene.

The crest of the Redwaters is a red line vertically bisecting a white background with a white cross at the center of the red line (in heraldic terminology: argent, a pale gules charged with a cross moline argent), and their banner is white checked with red.

LORD OERIC REDWATER					
15	STR	18	DEX	15	CON
12	BODY	15	INT	12	EGO
20	PRE	15	COM		
4	PD	4	ED	3	SPD
6	REC	34	END	34	STUN

Abilities: +2 HTH; +2 OCV with Longsword, Lance, and War Hammer; Conversation 13-; Interrogation 13-; High Society 8-; KS: Heraldry 11-; Literacy; Oratory 15-; Persuasion 13-; Riding 15-; Tactics 14-; WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Lance

75+ Disadvantages: DNPC: Lady Redwater 14- (Normal; Useful Noncombat Position); Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently; Severe).

Equipment: Longsword, medium metal shield, plate armor.

Description: Lord Oeric Redwater is a young man in his late twenties. Well-muscled and handsome, he stands a little over six feet tall and dresses in well-tailored but functional clothes. He never wears any jewelry but a simple gold wedding band. He has a full head of wavy black hair and has recently grown a beard in an attempt to look older. The well trimmed beard looks out of place on his young face.

Unlike many of his ilk, Lord Redwater was not raised as a noble. The king elevated his father, a high-ranking officer in his army, to the nobility and made him lord of Eisburk when Oeric was in his early teens. (At the same time, the family took the name Redwater.) Oeric is polite and versed in the proper courtesies, but lacks the air of nobility possessed by one born into the ruling class. He's more at ease drilling the warriors in the outer ward and practicing swordplay with Captain Ullerson than presiding over petty disputes among the staff or welcoming visiting nobles. Because of this he has come to rely on his wife, Robyn, in many matters of state, even allowing her to speak in his place. Though he might lack the proper attitude for dealing with emissaries and other functionaries at court, he possesses martial abilities and a skill at leading warriors, both qualities his deceased father imparted to him.

LADY ROBYN REDWATER					
8	STR	12	DEX	10	CON
8	BODY	18	INT	12	EGO
20	PRE	15	COM		
2	PD	2	ED	2	SPD
4	REC	24	END	24	STUN

Abilities: Acting 13-; Bribery 13-; Bureaucratics 15-; Conversation 15-; High Society 15-; KS: Heraldry 17-; Literacy; Oratory 15-; Persuasion 15-; Riding 11-; Tactics 8-.

75+ Disadvantages: DNPC: Lord Redwater 14- (Normal; Useful Noncombat Position); Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently; Severe).

Equipment: None.

Description: Lady Robyn Redwater is a young woman in her early twenties. She is tall and thin with long blonde hair usually worn under a wimple. Her thin lips, narrow nose, and serious brown eyes give her an expression of intelligence, even when she is distracted and paying little attention to the

matter at hand — which, since she got married and came to Eisburk, isn't very often. The youngest daughter of one of the oldest noble families in the kingdom, she is very familiar with both the proper behavior of a noble and the tangled inter-relations between the noble families of the kingdom. Though she cares for her husband deeply, she can often be seen with a disapproving frown, or rolling her eyes at one of his indiscretions. She considers it her steadfast duty to make sure he doesn't embarrass himself too much. This state of affairs is the very reason the king arranged the marriage between the young Oeric Redwater and Robyn two years ago. Though they hadn't met before they were married, Robyn has grown to love her husband and he returns her feelings tenfold. In council, she does not hesitate to speak her mind, and since she rarely offers a less than pertinent and insightful observation, Lord Redwater and his men always listen to what she has to say.

TOLL BETHEL, THE STEWARD

10 STR	10 DEX	12 CON
10 BODY	15 INT	10 EGO
15 PRE	10 COM	
3 PD	3 ED	2 SPD
4 REC	24 END	24 STUN

Abilities: +2 OCV with Shortsword, Dagger, and Crossbow; Bribery 13-; Bureaucratics 15-; High Society 11-; KS: Heraldry 17-; Literacy; Oratory 11-; Persuasion 15-; PS: Steward 15-; Riding 11-; Tactics 13-.

75+ Disadvantages: Age 40+; Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently; Moderate).

Equipment: Shortsword, leather armor.

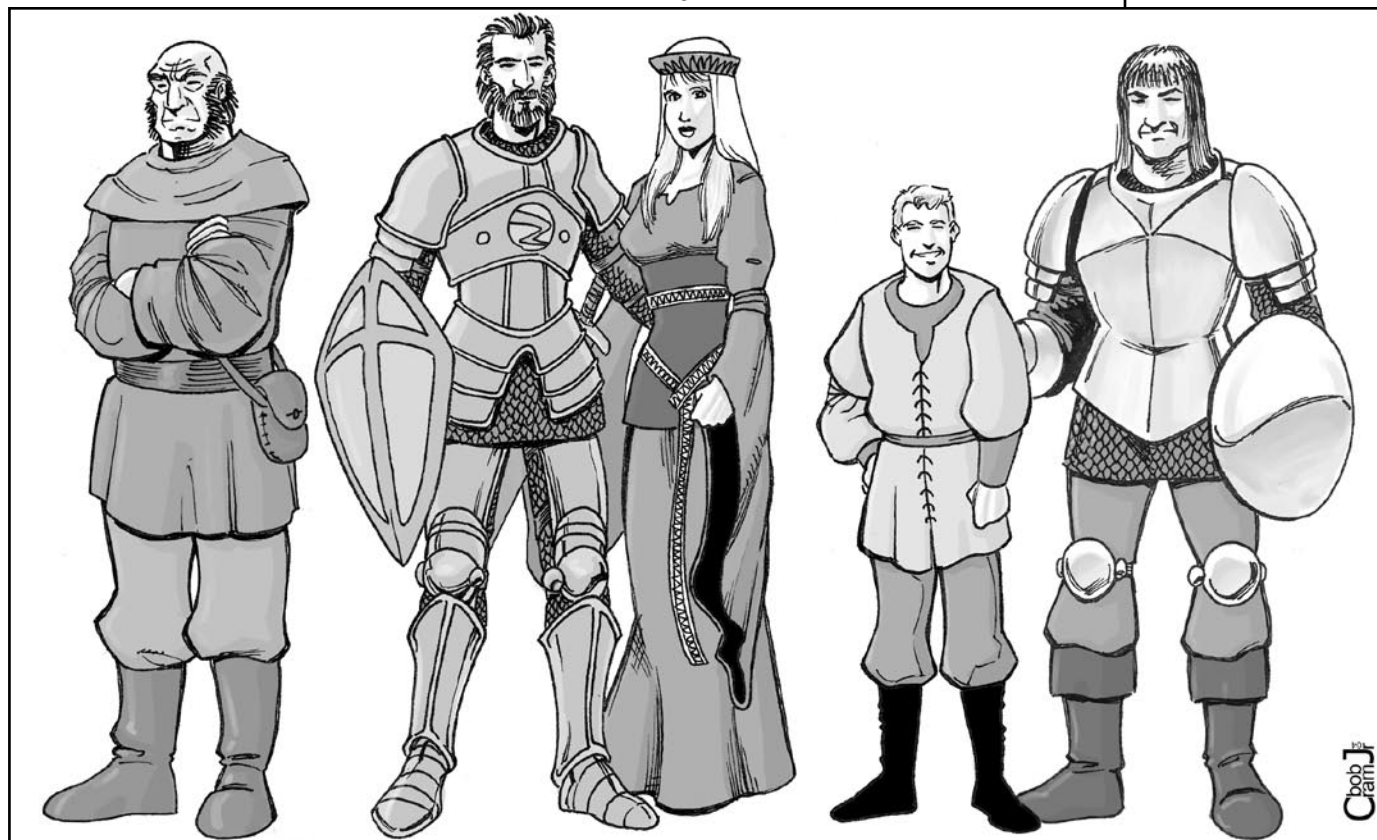
Description: An old man in his late fifties, Toll Bethel is the steward at Eisburk. He began his career as the valet for Oeric's father. When the king gave the first Lord Redwater custodianship of Eisburk, Toll became the steward. He has more the manner of an old soldier than a man in charge of servants and counting the coins in the coffer; he's infamous around Eisburk for his colorful and long-winded curses. He helped raise Oeric Redwater and sometimes forgets his place, chiding the young lord in this way or that, most often over eating properly or correct posture.

Lady Redwater is never quite sure what to make of Toll. On one hand, she respects the history the steward has with the Redwaters, as well as his shrewd mind and careful attention to the minutiae of keeping Eisburk running smoothly. On the other hand, in her mind no servant should ever speak as Toll does to his lord. Her husband either listens carefully to what advice Toll offers (and the steward always prefaces his advice with a story or allusion to Lord Redwater's father), or the lord simply ignores his chiding (which Toll always prefaces by sucking on a tooth or a cluck of his tongue).

CAPTAIN NAR ULLERSON

18 STR	12 DEX	18 CON
12 BODY	13 INT	12 EGO
15 PRE	10 COM	
4 PD	4 ED	3 SPD
6 REC	38 END	38 STUN

Abilities: +1 HTH; +3 OCV with Longsword; Interrogation 13-; KS: Heraldry 15-; Literacy; Oratory 13-; Riding 15-; Tactics 14-; WF: Common Melee



Weapons, Common Missile Weapons.

75+ Disadvantages: DNPC: Lady Redwater 14- (Normal; Useful Noncombat Position); Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently; Severe).

Equipment: Longsword, small metal shield, plate and chain.

Description: New to Eisburk (he arrived only six months ago), Nar Ullerson is the captain of the guard. A stocky man in his middle forties, Captain Ullerson stands a little under 5’10” tall and has lank brown hair cut straight across his forehead and hanging down to his shoulders on the sides and in back.

The king posted the captain to Eisburk because of Lord Redwater’s youth, but made the mistake of telling Ullerson that. Though the deeply-loyal Captain never contradicts Lord Redwater openly, he often frowns and sniffs at the young noble’s commands and frequently takes him aside for private counsel. Despite this, Captain Ullerson is a good-hearted man and brave to a fault — he merely believes too strongly that years equate to wisdom and he feels it’s his duty to provide the young lord with the wisdom he’s gained over the years. He has also become genuinely fond of the lord and his wife over the last six months.

CARNELLUS SORLYN, THE VALET					
8	STR	12	DEX	8	CON
8	BODY	12	INT	10	EGO
10	PRE	15	COM		
2	PD	2	ED	2	SPD
4	REC	20	END	20	STUN

Abilities: Conversation 11-; High Society 8-; KS: Heraldry 11-; Persuasion 11-; PS: Valet 11-; Riding 11-; Stealth 13-.

75+ Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Frequently; Moderate).

Equipment: Longsword.

Description: Carnellus Sorlyn (whom everyone in the castle calls Carnie) serves as Lord Redwater’s valet. A distant cousin to Lady Redwater, Carnie is in his late teens and has only resided in Eisburk for the last year. Blonde-haired and rosy-cheeked, he possesses an unflagging enthusiasm and optimism (though he tries to restrain himself in an effort to appear older and more serious when in the presence of his elders). Well liked by everyone in the castle from the scullery maids to Lord Redwater himself, Carnie could be found anywhere at any-time. Toll Bethel has taken the young boy under his wing and hopes to groom him to take his place as steward of the castle someday. Despite Toll’s incessant prodding, Carnie has put little thought into his future. If a PC shows interest in the young valet, Carnie attaches himself to that PC, asking an unending stream of questions about the world outside Eisburk’s walls and the ins and outs of adventuring.

The Garrison

Seventy-eight warriors, all Men, make up the garrison of Eisburk. All of them are loyal to Lord Redwater, and most of them worship the young lord and his wife — a stranger speaking harsh words about either noble is likely to find himself in a fistfight. They’re also loyal to Captain Ullerson, but when out of his hearing tend to mock the captain, his stodgy ways, and his constant repetition of how a warrior should comport himself, the proper way to hold a sword, and other soldierly concerns known to even the rawest recruits.

Use the Soldier character sheet on page 124 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders* for the average member of the garrison. Each carries a longsword and medium shield and wears brigandine.

In addition to Captain Ullerson, two sergeants oversee the warriors: Sergeant Skimm and Sergeant Brellen. The two sergeants are nearly identical in appearance — short, bald men with weatherworn, leathery skin and grizzled faces that wear a permanent frown — and most people think they’re brothers, if not twins. They neither confirm or deny the truth of this; they admit to having different fathers, but will say nothing about their mother(s). They have the same character sheet as the warriors, but with PRE 15 and a few Skill Rolls a point or two higher.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

An edifice of clean white stone, Eisburk-beyond-the-Shoals is a new castle, completed only fifteen years ago. Observers quickly notices the lack of water stains on the stone and erosion on the battlements so prevalent in older castles.

THE ENVIRONS

Eisburk stands on a rocky promontory overlooking both the ocean and the mouth of the Redwater River. Its south and west walls descend straight down to steep cliffs; the only approaches are from the north (where the gate is) and the east. The surrounding land is rolling grassy plains.

The Cliffs: The cliffs to south and west are steep — thirty feet or more of crumbling rock — and climbing them requires a successful Climbing roll. At the base of each cliff is a narrow strand, only ten feet wide. Without the mightiest of magic to aid it, an army could not besiege Eisburk from these two directions.

The Redwater River: The Redwater River runs south of the castle. The river is forty feet wide at its mouth, narrowing to thirty feet wide over the length of the next hundred yards. At its deepest in the center, the river is twenty feet deep.

THE EXTERIOR

The highest point at Eisburk is the lord’s tower, a 75-foot tall structure on the south side of the castle; the red and white banner flying at its top is visible from a great distance away. The lowest point

is the ramparts at thirty feet above the ground; followed by the northern towers and the keep at forty-five feet. (As a rule of thumb, each floor is fifteen feet above the floor below.)

The Walls: Made of white granite quarried from the surrounding land, the walls stand thirty feet tall with crenelations rising another seven feet. The walls are thick, 2" (13 feet) wide, and made of two layers of stone blocks filled with gravel and rubble in between the layers. They have DEF 6, BODY 13.

The Outer Gate: Fifteen feet high and ten feet wide, the iron-banded wooden gate has DEF 5, BODY 8. Its two sides open inwards and are barred with a thick wooden beam, also banded in iron; it weighs 150 kg and has DEF 5, BODY 4.

Two iron portcullises also guard the entrance to Eisburk. One stands outside the gate, the other at the south end of the passage through the wall. They're raised and lowered individually with a mechanism in the western tower room; during the day both usually stand open. A person working the mechanism has to roll at least 4 BODY on a STR roll to operate it (which means it usually requires at least two soldiers to raise or lower a portcullis). Each portcullis has DEF 8, BODY 7.

Ground Level

Built over the ruins of Stonegard, Eisburk stands on a deep layer of rubble and dirt. Both its inside and outside areas on the ground level have floors of flagstone. (The fact that the inner and outer ward are paved with stone might serve as a clue for the PCs that there is something odd about what lies underneath the castle; normally courtyards aren't paved this way.)

1. OUTER WARD

The outer ward, or courtyard, lies immediately beyond the gate. The castle's inhabitants primarily use it for drilling soldiers. To east and west are barracks (see below), and to the south is a small stable where the lord and lady keep their three mounts. Two stairways, one each in the northeast and northwest, run up along the outside of their respective towers and lead up to the guard rooms (*First Floor*, area C).

A. Barracks

Each barrack is a two-story structure, twenty feet high with walls of both wood and stone, which can house forty men. The walls facing the outer ward are wood. Each level has ten bunks with two pallets. A ladder runs between the floors and up to the flat roof (where soldiers can fall back if they're cut off from the inner ward when enemies take the walls or batter down the outer gate).

B. Store Rooms

This level has several store rooms, primarily used to keep food and the like.

C. Dungeon

Seldom used at Eisburk, the dungeon is a simple circular room accessed by a trapdoor in the

guard room above (*First Floor*, area C). Set in the stone walls are iron rings, four in total with one at each point of the compass.

2. INNER WARD

Just beyond the gates that lead into the keep is the inner ward, an open-air courtyard at the center of the main living area for the castle's staff. From here, two archways lead east and west from the inner ward into the castle proper.

The Inner Gate: The same in appearance and design as the outer gate, only smaller, an inner gate closes off the inner ward and secures the keep if attackers have gotten into the outer ward. The gate and portcullis are five feet wide and ten feet high. The gate is of one piece that opens inward and is DEF 5, BODY 5. The mechanism working the portcullis is just inside the passage leading into the inner ward; a person working the mechanism has to roll at least 2 BODY on a STR roll to operate it. The portcullis is DEF 8, BODY 6.

3. COOKS' CHAMBERS

The two cooks, Laris and Hardle, share this room. Each has a bed — a simple wooden pallet with a straw-stuffed mattress — and a large chest for his clothing and personal affects.

Laris is short and stout; Hardle, tall and thin. When not berating the other servants for this mishap or that, expounding upon how difficult their jobs are, or bemoaning how unappreciated their fine cooking is, they spend much of their time bickering with each other. Despite the incessant (and insulting) bantering, the two men are inseparable.

4. KITCHEN

Used to prepare food for everyone in the castle, the kitchen is large and well-stocked. There are two open hearths against the west wall, and high tables against the rest of the walls where the cooks prepare meals. Despite its size, the kitchen is crowded during mealtimes — not only with the cooks and servants, but also with off-duty members of the garrison coming around looking for second helpings.

5. GREAT HALL

The great hall is the dining and meeting hall for official functions. At most times three tables fill the bulk of the room. One table, the shortest of the three where the lord and lady sit, stands at the far-end of the room, facing the entrance. The other two, at right angles to the lord's table, run the great hall's length and have enough room for forty men. (The warriors of the garrison take turns eating in the great hall — Lord Redwater feels it's important for the men to know their liege as more than just a commander.) Tapestries and banners decorate the walls, with the banner of the Redwaters hanging at the center of the west wall. The ceiling is twenty-five feet high; placed fifteen feet above the floor are windows, narrow slits that provide both sunlight and fresh air. A minstrel's gallery in the east part of the room (*First Floor*, area #1) overlooks the hall.

CASTLE MATERIALS SUMMARY

Below you can find a summary of DEF and BODY for materials around the castle.

Object	DEF and BODY
Bed	DEF 4, BODY 6
Bookshelves	DEF 2, BODY 5
Chair	DEF 3, BODY 4
Door, Inside	DEF 2, BODY 3
Floor, Ground Level (per hex)	DEF 5, BODY 12
Floor, Upper Levels (per hex)	DEF 4, BODY 8
Gate, Outer	DEF 5, BODY 8
Gate, Inner	DEF 5, BODY 5
Portcullis, Outer	DEF 8, BODY 7
Portcullis, Inner	DEF 8, BODY 6
Table	DEF 4, BODY 7
Tapestry	DEF 0, BODY 4
Wall, Inside	DEF 5, BODY 8
Wall, Outisde	DEF 6, BODY 13
Wardrobe	DEF 3, BODY 6

6. THE CHAPEL

Here the lord and lady, as well as any others in the castle, take their devotions to the gods. A small altar stands against the south wall, and thick rugs cover the floor to make it easier on the knees when one kneels. A doorway leads north to the chaplain's quarters.

Below The Chapel

Eisburk's chapel stands directly atop the old chapel of Stonegard — where the cornerstone, now covered in rubble and dirt, stands.

The ghost, Zimlyn, quickly located the cornerstone soon after arriving in Eisburk. He also found a tunnel that leads down into the promontory and ends at an underground grotto fed by a passage out to the ocean. The narrow tunnel leading up to the chapel is a steep stairway cut into the stone. The entrance to the tunnel was hidden by the stone floor of Stonegard's chapel and filled in by workers when they built Eisburk, so nearly fifteen feet of rubble lie between it and the floor of the new chapel — fifteen feet that the Orcs dispatched to the underground grotto excavate so they can gain ingress to Eisburk.

The cornerstone stands in the dead center of the Stonegard chapel. Four feet long, four feet wide, and two feet high, the jet-black stone weighs nearly half a ton — far more than one would expect from its size. Inscribed in the floor (and still legible despite the years) are runes that warn of the cornerstone's evil, promising that if it is ever again set in a foundation, a great evil will arise to again threaten the world. Graven on one of cornerstone's sides, in the ancient language sacred to the banished god, is the prophecy:

*Onga hoeth nshleck tryng,
(Once set in a wall of black,)
Ser blek goreh tryng,
(Now behind walls of white,)
Tonne d'Rn'grn-krol trk ravryn.
(The cornerstone lies buried.)*

*Yre d'Rn'grn-krol kom d'miten-krol,
(The son comes for his birthright,)
Lyca recteren rykel a,
(The sacred place built around it,)
A'barre hutten Lycren-krol.
(Its gates closed to the blessed.)*

If the PCs discover the cornerstone after the Orcs have completed digging their way to the chapel floor, it stands free of rubble and dirt. The sight of unholy thing causes the gorge to rise in the throats of the righteous. The stone is impervious to any damage the PCs attempt to cause it.

7. THE CHAPLAIN'S QUARTERS

These are the former chaplain's quarters. Inside is a simple bed and empty chest.

The Chaplain

The chaplain, Ferosus Tarn, died in his sleep a little over a week ago. Acting on Kordru's instructions, Zimlyn killed him as soon as he (Zimlyn) arrived at Eisburk. The necromancer feared the chaplain's divine powers, with which he could find Zimlyn and return him to the afterlife.

Lord Redwater dispatched the body of Ferosus Tarn to the main temple of his god for a burial befitting a priest several days ago. A replacement chaplain has yet to arrive.

8. PRIVY

This small room holds the privy. It consists of a seat with a two-foot diameter hole; the hole descends into darkness for forty feet. Beyond the hole is a underground grotto, half-full with water at high tide. Characters in the privy who listen carefully (*i.e.*, make a Hearing PER Roll) can hear faint sounds of the ocean below.

Below The Privy

The underground grotto below the privy is a clue to the existence of a secret way into and out of the castle — this is where the tunnel from below the chapel exits. A single passage, always filled with water, leads out from the grotto. It exits underwater near the shoals closest to the shore (these shoals are 3" [about 20 feet] away from shore and under a little more than 2" [about 15 feet] of water). The tunnel is 4.5" (29.25 feet) long.

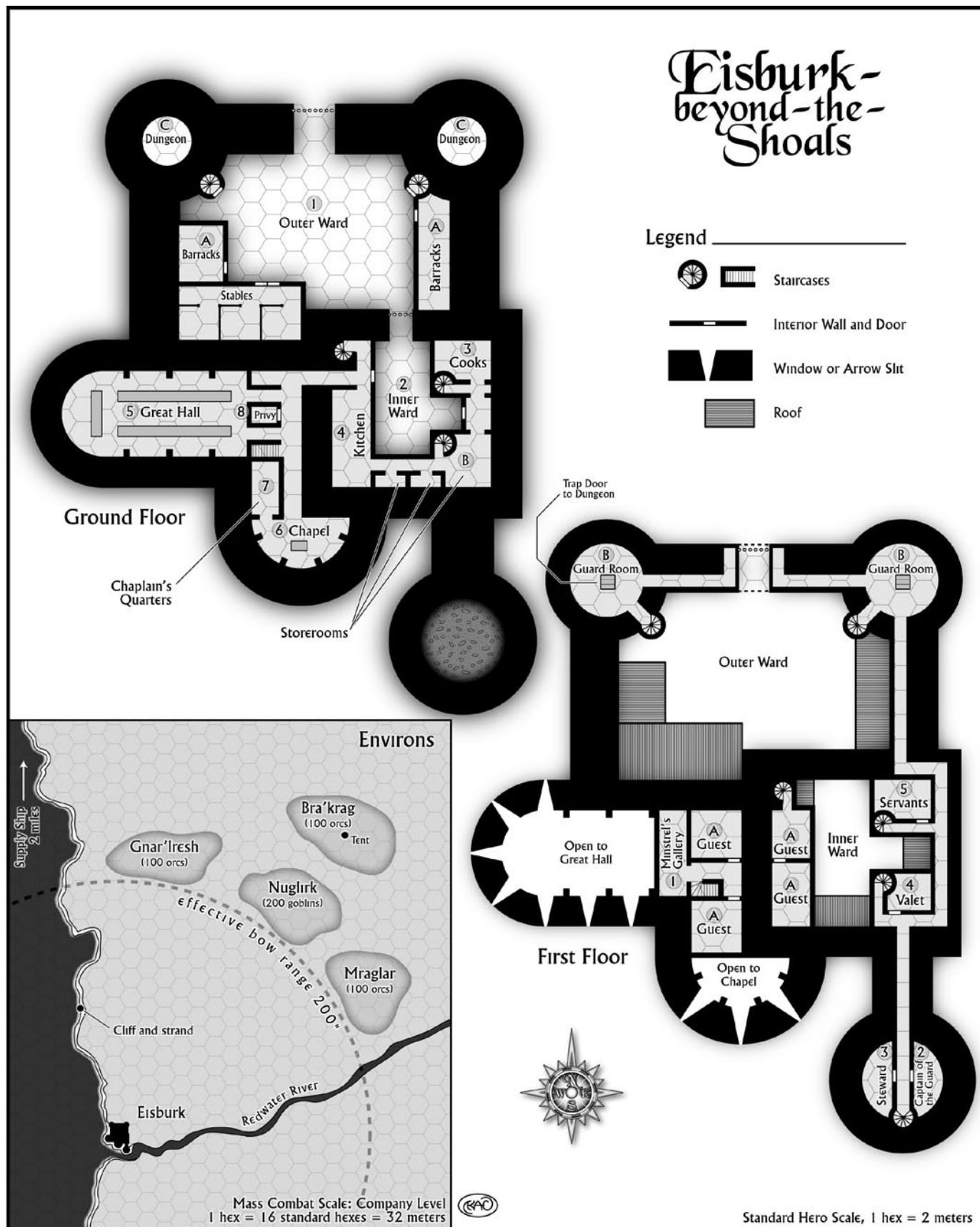
First Floor

1. MINSTREL'S GALLERY

This balcony overlooks the great hall (*Ground Floor*, area #5) and is currently empty of furniture. Though servants dust the room and keep it from falling into a state of disrepair, the gallery is rarely used — minstrels don't often visit Eisburk because of its seclusion.

2. CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

Captain Nar Ullerson keeps his quarters here. The furnishings are spartan: a simple bed, a wooden chest for clothes, a writing table and stool. On the walls hang an assortment of trophies: a long spear taken from an Orc chieftain whose



death led to Ullerson's commission to officer; a pair of out-sized antlers, taken from a beast Captain Ullerson claims stood taller than a man at the shoulder; and the mounted head of a large panther, a man-eater Ullerson killed when it was terrorizing a village where he was stationed for a time.

3. STEWARD'S CHAMBER

Toll Bethel keeps his quarters in this room. The room is devoid of personal affects; Toll owns very little and is not a sentimental man. The bed is plain with a chest at its foot for clothing. The writing table is immaculate with quills, ink, and blotter kept in exactly the same spot day after day.

4. THE VALET'S CHAMBER

Carnie Sorlyn keeps his quarters in this room. Having only recently arrived at Eisburk, he has had little time to accumulate possessions, so the room is mostly bare. Its only furnishing are a bed and chest. Under the bed, wrapped in a threadbare blanket, is an old sword he "borrowed" from the armory. Too embarrassed to ask for training, Carnie practices with it in his room.

5. SERVANTS' CHAMBERS

Three manservants — Eagan, Usheb, and Inton — reside here. The room holds one bunk bed and one single bed, with three chests where the men keep their possessions and clothes. Eagan is the oldest and has a faulty memory (which he often uses as an excuse to shirk his duty). Usheb comes from a wealthy family that fell on hard times when he was young, and feels he's too good for many of the duties the steward assigns him. Inton, a philanthropist, spends most of his time bemoaning the lack of young and willing women at Eisburk.

A. GUEST ROOMS

There are four guest rooms on this floor. Each is similarly furnished: tapestries showing rustic scenes on the walls, a four-poster bed with heavy drapes to keep out the draft, an armoire for clothing with a silver-backed mirror hung on the inside of one of its door, and a small dressing table with a chair.

Though these rooms are intended for visiting nobility — those of lesser status sleep either in the barracks or servant's quarters — Lord Redwater has little respect for such protocols and allows many travelers to stay in these rooms, so long as no other guest takes precedence because of station.

B. GUARD ROOM

These rooms serve as guard posts; two soldiers stand guard here at all times. In the room is a table with two chairs, and a trap door is set in the floor. A ladder that hangs on the wall can be lowered into the dungeon below (*Ground Floor*, area C).

Second Floor

The ramparts of the outer walls are level with this floor of Eisburk.

1. STUDY

Toll Bethel, the steward, uses this room for his administrative duties. A desk and chair stand against the far wall, and on the other side of the desk is a second chair. A single bookshelf holds ledgers and letters concerning the day-to-day activities of the staff and castle. Atop the bookshelves is a small chest with a large lock. Inside are 100 copper pieces, 34 silver pieces, and 3 gold pieces. Toll uses the funds to pay for food and the like. Only Toll and Lord Redwater have keys to the lock. When Toll isn't here, he locks the room.

2. MEETING ROOM

This chamber serves as a meeting room for the lord and his chief advisors, as well as a place for official business between the lord and notable visitors (such as private meetings with emissaries from the king or neighboring nobles). It features a long table with seven chairs (three to either side, and Lord Redwater's at the head). The crest of the Redwaters — painted wood carved in the shape of a shield — hangs on the west wall.

3. DOCUMENT ROOM

This room holds documents pertaining to Eisburk including official titles, royal edicts, and maps of the castle and surrounding lands. It has shelves against two walls and stacked chests against one.

Maps Of Stonegard

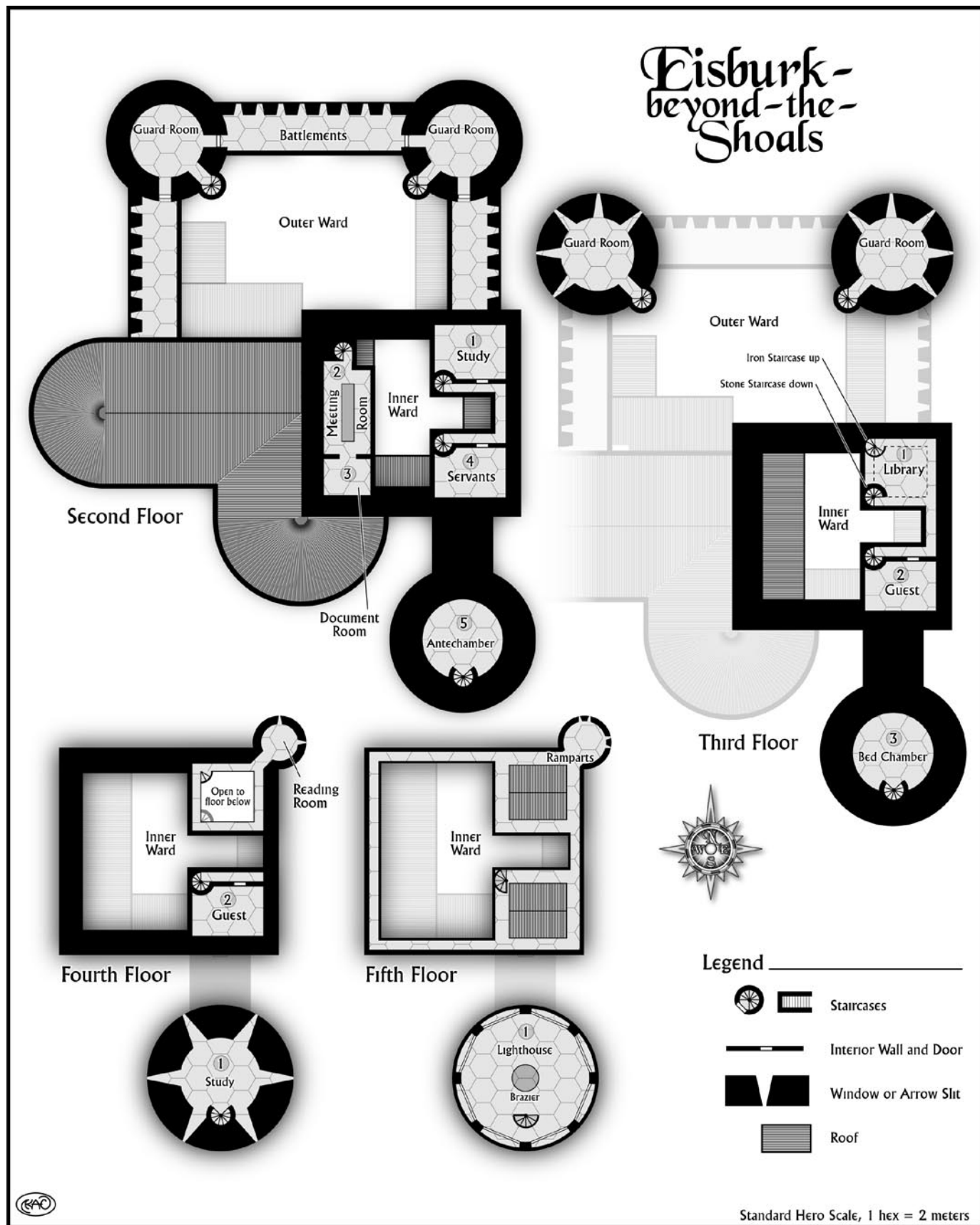
This room also contains similar documents pertaining to Stonegard, the castle upon which Eisburk was built. The late Lord Redwater received these documents from the king, and though he wasn't sure how he'd use them, he kept them around. A chest at the bottom of one of the stacks holds the documents. They include a map showing the Stonegard chapel. On that map, one object — a square blot of black ink placed dead center in the old chapel — is marked with the word, "cornerstone" even though its placement means it obviously isn't the cornerstone for the castle.

The current Lord Redwater knows his father had documents pertaining to the old castle, but doesn't know where he kept them. He assumes the documents are either in this room or in the library on the third floor. (It won't occur to Lord Redwater to look for these documents until *after* the Orcs break through the chapel floor — the PCs must ask about them to locate them sooner.)

4. SERVANTS' QUARTERS

Three chambermaids — Molina, Loretta, and Corly, all in the late forties and early fifties — reside in this room. The room holds one bunk bed and a single bed, and three chests where the women keep their possessions and clothes.

The chambermaids are hardly maids at all; a more proper title for the women would be chambermatrons. Lady Redwater has little time for the



fancies and peccadillos of young women, especially with so many soldiers in residence, and prefers older women for the staff. The three often pass the time talking about their deceased husbands. After many long days discussing the matter, they're convinced they all married the same worthless, shiftless layabout.

5. ANTECHAMBER

This room is part of Lord and Lady Redwater's living quarters. It contains four chairs and two tables; a carpet with a red and white pattern covers the floor. A tapestry showing Eisburk as seen from the ocean hangs on the eastern part of the wall.

Third Floor

1. LIBRARY

Bookshelves that reach from floor to ceiling line the walls of this room. In the center of the room are a large table and four chairs. A circular staircase leads to a mezzanine with more shelves and books. Just off the mezzanine is a small tower room furnished with two chairs, where the windows provide plenty of light to read by during the day.

The bookshelves are relatively bare since Eisburk is a new castle and the Redwaters only recently raised to the nobility. Most of the tomes concern military history and tactics; none pertain to magical matters.

One item of interest to scholars is the late Lord Redwater's collection of maps showing the sites of battles and the disposition of the armies that fought those battles. The collection is quite valuable and well known among military scholars in the kingdom, who sometimes visit Eisburk to consult the maps for their researches.

2. GUEST CHAMBER

This guest room is furnished similarly to those on the floor below: tapestries showing rustic scenes on the walls, a four-poster bed with heavy drapes to keep out the draft, an armoire with a silver-backed mirror hung on the inside of one of its door, and a small dressing table with a chair.

3. LORD'S CHAMBER

This circular room serves as the bedchamber for Lord and Lady Redwater. In the middle of the room is a large, four-poster bed with heavy drapes of red velvet embroidered with white thread. Against one wall, opposite the bed, is a dressing table for Lady Redwater, and there are two large armoires for clothing.

Fourth Floor

1. LORD'S STUDY

In this room is Lord Redwater's private study. A large desk and chair dominates the room; three other chairs stand on the other side of the desk. Near the wall is a single bookshelf, and to its left is a chest where the lord keeps Eisburk's treasury, totaling several hundred gold pieces in various denominations. On the desk, pushed to one corner as far as possible from where Lord Redwater sits, are two large tomes — a tedious history of the noble families in the realm that Lady Redwater insists her husband read at least once.

2. GUEST CHAMBER

Lady Redwater uses this guest chamber for visiting family members. It's furnished similarly to the other guest chambers in Eisburk, but instead of tapestries showing rustic scenes, one shows the ancestral castle of the Sorlyns and another has designs in blue and green thread (the colors of the Sorlyns).

Fifth Floor

The ramparts of the inner keep are level with this floor.

1. LIGHTHOUSE

At the center of this circular room with a peaked ceiling is a large brazier, and in the walls are eight large windows with shutters. At sundown and on foggy days, it is Lord Redwater's responsibility to light the fire here and provide a beacon to ocean-going ships warning of the shoals. Lord Redwater takes his responsibility very seriously, and barring disability or a grievous wound, he lights and maintains the fire himself — he never sends anyone else to perform the task in his place. If he's disabled or slain, the responsibility passes on to Lady Redwater, who treats it just as seriously as her husband.

SÜNKRAG AND HIS ARMY



This section details Sünkrag, Fallon Kordru, and the tribes of Orcs and Goblins outside Eisburk's walls. In keeping with tradition, the warriors of each of the four "units" in the army come from a single tribe, three tribes of Orcs and one tribe of Goblins. In the hierarchy of the tribes, a ranking of importance determined by brute force and violence applies, with the Goblin tribe at the bottom and Sünkrag's own tribe at the top. Although the greenskins are unusually cooperative, there is still a great deal of animosity between the warriors of the various tribes.

SÜNKRAG The Orc War-Leader

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 [2]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
20	CON	20	13-	
16	BODY	12	12-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
7	PD	3		Total: 10 PD (4 rPD)
7	ED	3		Total: 10 ED (4 rED)
4	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	0		
40	END	0		
50	STUN	14		Total Characteristics Cost: 108

Movement: Running: 8"/16"

Cost	Powers	END
10	<i>Fangs:</i> HKA ½d6 (1d6 with STR)	1
8	<i>Claws:</i> HKA ½d6 (1d6 with STR); Reduced Penetration (-¼)	1
1	<i>Orcish Hide:</i> Damage Resistance (1 PD/1 ED)	0
5	<i>Orcish Eyes:</i> Nightvision	0
6	<i>Orcish Senses:</i> +2 PER with all Sense Groups	0
4	<i>Swift:</i> Running +2" (8" total)	1

Perks

2 Fringe Benefit: Lordship: Orcish Chieftain

Talents

6 Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)
6 Lightning Reflexes: +4 DEX to act first with All Actions
3 Lightsleep

Skills

20 +4 HTH
10 +2 DCV
2 +1 OCV with Bows

7 Interrogation 15-
2 Language: Common (fluent conversation)
7 Oratory 15-
3 Stealth 11-
4 Survival (Mountains, Temperate/Subtropical) 12-
5 Tactics 14-
4 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 115

Total Cost: 223

75+ Disadvantages

25 Enraged: in combat (Very Common), go 11-, recover 11-
25 Hunted: Human kingdom 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Geographical Area; Kill)
10 Psychological Limitation: Vengeful (Uncommon, Strong)
88 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 223



EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Damage	STUN	STR	Min	Shots
Bastard							
Sword	0	—	1½d6	0	13	—	
Dagger#	0	—	1d6-1	0	6	—	
Bow, Heavy	0	0	2d6	0	13†	20RC	

Armor

Studded Cuir-Bouilli (DEF 3)

Gear: Tent, bedroll, other campaigning gear

Clothing: Leather and furs

Background/History: The son of Orcs slain by Men, Sünkrag grew to adulthood alone in the wilderness, spurned by other tribes of his kind because of his strange purplish-black skin and green eyes. As he grew older, he gathered other Orcs expelled from their tribes and formed one of his own — a tribe filled with the most brutal of his race, those so violent and bloodthirsty even other Orcs would not accept their presence. Finally this tribe grew large enough to dominate other groups of Orcs, and by the time Fallon Kordru appeared in Sünkrag’s camp, three other tribes had come under Sünkrag’s sway.

Sünkrag is not the Orc’s original name — it’s the name he adopted after he concocted his story of divine heritage. A literal translation of the name is “a god’s bastard cast-off,” although a more meaningful translation is “son of the divine.”

Personality/Motivation: Even before the coming of the necromancer, Sünkrag was arrogantly convinced of his own destiny, though he was unsure what shape that future would take. Cruel, heartless, and belligerent, he personifies all the most brutal qualities of his race, but couples them with an unusual intelligence and cunning.

Sünkrag finds Fallon Kordru impressive. His powers are something worthy of respect, although the Orc has yet to fully accept the necromancer’s god as his own and will not do so until he has some tangible proof of the god’s existence (as well as some tangible profit from his service to the evil deity). Nonetheless, Sünkrag does not brook disrespect from Kordru and frequently reminds the man who commands the army.

Quote: “And when we are done, the blood of Men will run over the stones like rainwater!”

Powers/Tactics: Sünkrag possesses strength to match his size. He wields a bastard sword taken from the former chieftain of the Mraglar tribe (whom he slew). With it in hand he wades into the thick of battle, smashing at the most powerful foe he can find with little regard for his own safety. When he can resist the urge to enter battle, he’s a skilled tactician with a good head for commanding greenskin troops.

Campaign Use: Sünkrag is mainly intended as a powerful combat adversary for the PCs (though if he survives this adventure, he could also become a recurring enemy or a Hunter). If he’s not strong enough to give your best warrior a tough fight, improve his combat abilities and equipment until

he is. If he’s too strong already, trim him down to size by reducing his Characteristics and Combat Skill Levels a bit.

Appearance: At 6’6” tall and over 300 pounds, Sünkrag is huge for an Orc. His skin is purplish-black and his blood-shot eyes are putrid green. Two over-sized tusks jut upward from his sneering mouth. He wears studded cuir-boilli armor patched together from various suits, stained the same purplish-black as his skin. He carries his bastard sword strapped across his back.

FALLON KORDRU

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
8	STR	-2	11-	Lift 75 kg; 1½d6 [1]
10	DEX	0	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
8	CON	-4	11-	
8	BODY	-4	11-	
25	INT	20	14-	PER Roll 14-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
14	COM	2	12-	
3	PD	1		Total: 3 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	1		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
2	SPD	0		Phases: 6, 12
8	REC	8		
30	END	7		
24	STUN	8		Total Characteristics Cost: 62

Movement: Running: 6”/12”

Cost	Spells	END
4	Bailthund’s Ray Of The Wraith (FHG, page 155)	6
6	Create Ghost (FHG, page 140)	16
4	Create Zombie (FHG, page 145, with Many More Zombies option)	11
2	Detect Life (FHG, page 162)	2
7	Fekura’s Spell Of The Undead Form (FHG, page 156)	0
9	History Of Blood (FHG, page 147)	6
2	The Spell Of True Necromancy (FHG, page 162)	4
7	Tharagoth’s Spell Of Skeletal Recruitment (FHG, page 142)	17
4	Thronek’s Aura Of Necromantic Power (FHG, page 151)	
3	Wall Of Bones (FHG, page 160)	4

Talents

5 Magesight

Skills

- 12 +4 with Magic Spells
- 9 +3 with Knowledge Skills
- 5 Acting 13-
- 7 Cryptography 17-; Translation Only (-½)
- 7 Forensic Medicine (Embalming) 17-
- 5 Interrogation 13-
- 17 Necromancy 21-
- 1 Literacy
- 3 Scholar
- 4 1) KS: Arcane And Occult Knowledge 17-
- 2 2) KS: Herbalism 15-

- 4 3) KS: History 17-
- 4 4) KS: Legends And Lore 17-
- 6 5) KS: Necromancy 19-
- 3 6) KS: Religious Doctrine 16-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 142

Total Cost: 204

75+ Disadvantages

- 5 Age: 40+
- 20 Enraged: if thwarted (Common), go 11-, recover 11-
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Devotion To His God (Very Common, Total)
- 5 Social Limitation: Secret (belongs to the evil god's cult) (Occasionally, Minor [character will be shunned and distrusted if discovered])
- 74 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 204

EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Damage	STUN	STR	Min Shots
Quarterstaff 0	—	—	4d6 N	—	10	—
Dagger#	0	—	1d6-1	0	6	—

Armor

None

Gear: Spell components

Clothing: Black wizard's robes

Background/History: Many decades ago, Fallon

Kordru was a simple historian whose obsession with unearthing new knowledge led him to the study of Necromancy. His lack of firm morals let his obsession get the better of him, leading him down dark paths and eventually twisting his soul into its current evil state.

Personality/Motivation: When the banished god came to him, Kordru was a tired, old man whiling away the last days of a long and sordid life filled with petty evils and niggling profanities. His new task has revitalized him and inspired him to undertake far more evil tasks than ever before. Though still physically infirm, Kordru is driven to achieve his goals and has deep stores of endurance to draw upon and fuel his magic.

Kordru views his barbaric allies as new followers for his god at best, and the means to an end at worst. He's slowly but surely gaining a grudging respect for Sünkrag.

Quote: "Some shadows are darker — and more powerful — than others."

Powers/Tactics: More a scholar of profane arts at ease in a dusty library than necromancer at home on the battlefield, Kordru lacks many survival skills (including the ability to use his gnarled staff as an effective weapon, due to his low STR) and possesses a dearth of spells immediately useful for protecting his life in combat. He avoids battle, surrendering quickly if he cannot flee or strike his foe down with a surprise attack.

Campaign Use: Kordru is one of the most powerful of the followers of the evil god, and could easily become an ongoing adversary for the PCs if they don't slay him during this adventure. If he does survive, he will almost certainly start Hunting them... or at least take every opportunity to make trouble for them.

To make Kordru more powerful, beef up his selection of spells (and give him some for combat), provide him with an Endurance Reserve for magic, and improve his Characteristics a little. To weaken him, reduce his Necromancy roll (thus forcing him to rely on taking extra time and other means to gain positive modifiers when casting powerful spells).

Appearance: Kordru is an old man with sagging flesh. His head and face are totally hairless (he even lacks eyebrows) except for three braids of wiry gray hair that hang from his chin to his chest. His sunken eyes are blue; his skin pale and



wormy; and his teeth small and sharp with wide gaps between them that give him a rat-like appearance. He wears plain black robes stained with sacrificial blood and dust.

The Four Tribes

Sünkrag's deployment of the four tribes is shown on the map on page 55. He has placed the Goblin tribe in the middle of the besieging force, holding his own tribe in reserve behind them so the Goblins can't flee the field without first going through his Orcs. He's made it clear that whatever fate the Goblins suffer at the hands of Orcs if they attempt to flee will be much more terrible than dying on the walls of Eisburk.

The tribes have left their women and children behind; Sünkrag intends to send for them once his army has taken the castle. (He has yet to tell his tribes he plans on taking the castle for his own and residing there — he feels his followers will accept such "whiteskin" activity better once he's captured the place.)

Except for Sünkrag and Kordru, the warriors sleep out in the open, without tents or bedrolls. For the sake of simplicity, each tribe of Orcs has 100 warriors and the tribe of Goblins has 200 members. (Feel free to adjust these numbers to suit your campaign.)

THE BRA'KRAG (ORCS)

The members of Bra'Krag tribe, whose name translates to "the brethren of Sünkrag," are Orcs either cast out from other tribes or the survivors of decimated tribes. The renegades and outlaws sit atop the food chain in the Bra'Krag; the refugees from battles lost, considered cowards by their fellows, are at the bottom. Sünkrag leads the tribe. Following the advice of Fallon Kordru, he's trying to mold his warriors into something similar to a religious order dedicated to his "father." (The word *Bra'* has religious connotations; Orcs usually use it to refer to a gathering of shamans.)

Stronger and fiercer than their orcish fellows, the weak long ago winnowed from their ranks, the Orcs of the Bra'Krag tribe have the *Black Orc* option from page 77 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*. Each is armed with a battle axe or great axe, wears oft-patched and mended heavy leather armor (and uses a shield, if he has a battle axe), and carries a medium bow with 20 arrows.

THE GNAR'LRESH (ORCS)

The Gnar'lresh were the last of the tribes to come under Sünkrag's command. Unlike the others, Sünkrag did not simply kill the leader and take control of the tribe. The Gnar'lresh Orcs willingly joined Sünkrag, their chieftain giving up his leadership and turning over his authority to the other Orc. (If the siege of Eisburk succeeds, Sünkrag can expect other tribes to follow the Gnar'lresh's lead.)

In Orcish, Gnar'lresh means "those who leave their enemy without feet" and refers to the Orcs' practice of finding survivors after the battle, chopping off their feet, and letting them live on as

TROUBLESHOOTING: HIGH MAGIC

If your PCs possess a great deal of magical power — for instance, if a PC wizard can launch a fireball over half a mile every twelve seconds or so — Sünkrag's army might not seem much of a challenge.

If this is the case, the simplest ways to balance the scales are the following. First, increase Fallon Kordru's power. Though the necromancer is more a scholar than battlefield wizard, he should have at least fifty more character points than the most powerful PC wizard, and you should spend those fifty points on spells. If necessary, broaden his areas of expertise so that he has the spells he needs to have a chance to counteract the PCs' primary magical tactics.

Second, either provide Kordru with apprentice necromancers or add Orc shamans to the tribes. The primary purpose of these lesser wizards is to blunt the attacks of the PCs, so you should choose their spells appropriately. The advantage of choosing Orc shamans is that it keeps Fallon Kordru's presence under wraps. Page 117 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders* provides a Package Deal you can add to the Character Sheet for Orcs to create a shaman, but you should replace many of the offensive spells with defensive spells from the *Fantasy Hero Grimoire*. In the case of Orc shamans, these are not priests of orcish gods — they are simple hedge wizards who aren't sure what to make of Kordru's god, but have no desire to question Sünkrag, since any such questioning would likely lead to a painful death.

cripples. Each blooded Gnar'lresh wears a necklace of foot bones — most often the bones of two entire feet — taken from the first enemy he left alive and crippled. Rumor among the Orc tribes has it that the Gnar'lresh also chop off the feet of wounded Orcs who have antagonized them in the past, even Orcs of allied tribes, and that the Gnar'lresh never forget a slight (no matter how trivial).

For the Gnar'lresh, use the standard Orc from page 77 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*. They wield battle axes with blades shaped like cleavers and carry medium wooden shields; they also have medium bows and twenty arrows apiece. They wear heavy leather armor. Since they willingly joined Sünkrag, their chieftain, Zarkno the Liver-Eyed, still lives; he serves as Sünkrag's lieutenant. Apply the Chieftain Package Deal on page 116 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders* to a standard Orc for his character sheet.

THE MRAGLAR (ORCS)

The first tribe conquered by Sünkrag, the Mraglar Orcs are a depressing lot even for their primitive kind. The Bra'krag have terrorized and brutalized them for the last two years, and until the subjection of the Nuglirk Goblins seven months ago the other Orcs' bullying was unrelenting. The Mraglar are only beginning to remember they are Orcs, not the pitiful slaves of the Bra'krag, and to recover their orcish aggressiveness and swagger — mostly at the expense of the Goblins. Of all the tribes the Mraglar treat the Goblins the worst; if they catch one in their camp, they torture him

before killing him and sending his corpse back to the Nuglirk tribe. Only a more immediate threat is enough to get a Goblin to enter the Mraglar camp.

Mraglar means “down from the angry mountain” and its exact meaning is lost to time — Orcs do not concern themselves overmuch with such things as tribal history. As far as anyone can recall, there has always been a Mraglar tribe in the wastelands of the north.

For the Mraglar, use the standard Orc from page 77 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*. The Bra'krag long ago stripped the Orcs of the Mraglar of anything remotely valuable or pretty. Each Mraglar wields a shoddy medium spear, wears patchwork soft leather armor, and carries a medium bow with twenty arrows. One of Sünkrag's Orcs — Krallor Three-Teeth, a favorite of the war-leader, but too aggressive, powerhungry, and unpredictable for Sünkrag to trust in battle — acts as their leader. In addition to the Black Orc option, apply the Barbaric Package Deal on page 116 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders* to the standard Orc for his character sheet.

THE NUGLIRK (GOBLINS)

The final tribe besieging Eisburk is the Nuglirk, two hundred Goblins Sünkrag pressed into service and placed in the middle of his battle line to ensure they stay in the fight. An oppressed group of creatures, though no less evil because of that, they sit huddled around their fires at night and jump with fear at even the slightest sound. Not a single Nuglirk believes he will survive the siege, and in their primitive tongue each discusses how he will die on the morrow. During the days when the army storms the walls, while the Orcs bellow warcries, the Goblins of the Nuglirk tribe sob with fear and cry out in terror. Despite their fear, they keep coming — death at the hands of the Orcs would prove far more painful than a quick death at the hands of the warriors of Men. Nuglirk is not the tribe's actual name; it's Orcish for “those who tremble at the sound of crickets.” Sünkrag has forbidden the Goblins from speaking the original name of their tribe under penalty of death.



For a Nuglirk's character sheet, use the one listed on page 50 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*. Each Goblin wields a short spear, wears soft leather armor, and carries a small wooden shield and a light bow with twenty arrows. To make matters worse (at least for the Goblins) Sünkrag has placed two War Trolls in charge of the cowardly warriors. Named Sak and Forch, the Trolls joined with Sünkrag after hearing his army was marching on the lands of Men. They take great delight in ordering wave after wave of Goblins to die against the walls of the castle. Brutal even for Trolls, Sak and Forch prefer to fight with their bare hands so they can better feel the splitting flesh, gushing blood, and breaking bones of their enemies. Despite their preference, they are too smart to go completely unarmed and wield great swords when facing a tough foe. They wear full suits of cuir-boilli armor.

TIMELINE



THE PRESENCE OF THE NECROMANCER

Fallon Kordru attempts to keep his presence hidden for much of the first part of the adventure; he does not leave his tent during the day unless he has to. He feels there are enough Orcs and Goblins to take Eisburk without his help; he knows revealing himself and his magical power makes him a very big target for Eisburk's defenders; and Sünkrag has told him an army of skeletons — especially an army of raised Orcs and Goblins — would be bad for the morale of the living warriors. (Sünkrag also feels that such a display of power from the necromancer would undermine his leadership.) Kordru accedes to Sünkrag's wishes because the necromancer knows he can raise the dead at any time; the more dead Orcs and Goblins there are, the more skeletons he can eventually raise; and ultimately, Kordru cares little about the lives of his allies.

You should keep this in mind when running *Eisburk-Beyond-The-Shoals* and try to keep Kordru's presence a secret. Ideally the players should believe Sünkrag is the servant of the banished god in this part of *Fantasy Hero Battlegrounds* — that way, the eventual revelation of the necromancer's involvement should prove surprising.

Below is a timeline of the action in *Eisburk-Beyond-The-Shoals*. The timeline is organized by days, and you should familiarize yourself with it before running the adventure. The timeline encompasses both the engagements of armies in the siege and the encounters the PCs participate in by themselves — and, of course, the actions of the PCs might require you to adjust the timeline as necessary. The only event that *needs* to happen is that Sünkrag's army lays siege to Eisburk.

This is a fairly free-form adventure, so the PCs have a wide variety of options open to them — a suitable approach, given the wide variety of PCs and abilities available to players in *Fantasy Hero*. When running *Eisburk-Beyond-The-Shoals*, keep in mind Sünkrag's and Kordru's plans to take the castle — regardless of the PCs' actions, they attempt to stick with the plan as much as they can.

THE GHOST

Kordru dispatched a ghost to haunt Eisburk and spy on its defenders. The ghost, Zimlyn, arrived a week before Sünkrag and his army and killed the chaplain. Then he located the cornerstone below the chapel as well as the secret tunnel. All the while he has remained unseen thanks to his Invisibility power.

During the siege Zimlyn spies on the war councils Lord Redwater holds, then reports his findings back to the necromancer. At any time (but especially after meeting the supply ship) the PCs might discover his presence, so you should keep the ghost in mind throughout the action in this section. For the most part he avoids the PCs and instead follows Lord Redwater and Captain Ullerson during their daily business, since these are the men in charge of the castle and its defenders. If the PCs prove particularly adept at thwarting Kordru's plans, the necromancer orders Zimlyn to pay more attention to them... or perhaps to kill them.

Zimlyn has only recently become one of the undead, and unlike his ghostly brethren he is not totally twisted by bitterness and hatred of the living. In fact there's only one living man he hates with typical ghostly spite: Fallon Kordru, who killed him and bound him to service. Zimlyn does all that he can to follow orders from Kordru, for fear of the pain the necromancer can cause him. But he doesn't go out of his way to kill or hurt others (unless explicitly ordered to, as with the chaplain), and interprets his orders as best he can to frustrate or annoy Kordru (but not enough to risk punishment).

If discovered, Zimlyn might help the PCs depending on how they approach him. If they

attack, he simply flees (he should have little problem escaping because of his ghostly powers). If they attempt to parley, he listens to what they have to say. Because of the necromantic spell that binds him, he cannot simply betray his master — but he can answer questions the PCs might have, especially concerning the cornerstone and secret passage. While his answers are oblique and roundabout, they might lead to his master's demise.

To free Zimlyn from Fallon Kordru, the PCs must destroy the talisman that binds the ghost to the necromancer's service. The talisman is a bone ring, whittled from a fragment of Zimlyn's skull, wrapped with strands of Zimlyn's black hair. Kordru wears the ring on the pinky finger of his left hand. Once freed, Zimlyn passes on to whatever afterlife awaits him. Destroying the talisman is one of Zimlyn's conditions in any bargain he might strike with the PCs.

For Zimlyn's character sheet, use the Ghost described on page 120 of *The HERO System Bestiary*, with the Possession option.

Hints Of The Ghost's Haunting

There are several hints that a ghost currently haunts Eisburk, and the PCs might pick up on any or all of them. The phenomena described below are quietly discussed among the servants in the castle. Of course, servants would never tell such silly stories to brave and heroic adventurers like the PCs, unless one of the adventurers makes a point of spending time in the kitchens and being friendly, or they're asked directly. By the time of the siege, the servants believe the ghost of the chaplain haunts Eisburk — the optimistic ones believe he has come to help defend the castle; the pessimistic ones that he's come to warn them of impending doom.

Both Toll and Carnie have heard the stories too. Toll dismisses them as nonsense brought on by fear of dying at the hands of Orcs. Carnie, like the servants, believes the stories, but would never bring them up for fear of seeming foolish.

The hints and indications of haunting are:

- The cats. Eisburk has plenty of mousers haunting its halls, and the servants sometimes notice a cat freezing in mid-step and holding itself perfectly still while seeming to watch *something* make slow progress across the room. Often the feline's wide eyes travel from one wall to the opposite. After the cat has finished tracking the invisible object, it runs out of the room. Of course, anyone who has spent any time with cats knows this isn't entirely unusual behavior for felines, but they do seem to do it more frequently than usual.

- The sound of weeping in the library. Zimlyn was formerly in Kordru's employ as the necromancer's librarian. Though Zimlyn knew his employer was steeped in evil arts and pursued profane knowledge, Kordru never threatened him (in fact, just the opposite, the necromancer paid him well and treated him politely). Zimlyn simply looked the other way, rationalizing that one man's evil was not his worry and that he need only look after his own soul. All of this came to an abrupt end when Kordru swore himself to the service of his new god and sacrificed Zimlyn to consecrate his vows. Sometimes Zimlyn enters the castle's library and weeps for his past life. He always stops and leaves when a servant enters the room to clean and dust, but some have heard him from just outside the door.
- The sound of chains banging on stone coming from inside the chapel. The ghost is not the cause of this, although the servants attribute it to him. Rather the Orcs digging out the secret passage are the cause (This only happens once the Orcs are outside Eisburk's walls, of course.)

The Maps Of Stonegard

Kordru has ordered Zimlyn to make sure no one in the castle discovers the existence of the cornerstone. If the PCs discover the maps (located in the document room described on page 56) that show the location of the cornerstone, and either Captain Ullerson or Lord Redwater is present, Zimlyn is also present. The ghost possesses one of the two NPCs and attempts to set fire to the maps. Since fire illuminates the vast majority of the castle, Zimlyn has little trouble finding a flame — assume it takes him 1 Phase to do so — and he also attempts to make it look like an accident (*i.e.*, “Here, let me shine this candle a little closer so we can... By the gods! I have dropped the candle on the map!”)

DAY ONE: THE ARRIVAL OF SÜNKRAK

Day one begins quietly enough with the adventurers enjoying Lord Redwater's hospitality. Then a hunting party returns with news that shatters the peaceful calm. The men report an army of Orcs and Goblins to the northeast, two hours march away at most. The men spied only briefly and report the army is at least five hundred warriors strong.

Lord Redwater quickly organizes the soldiers at the castle to man the walls, then summons his wife, Captain Ullerson, and Toll Bethel to the meeting room to discuss the coming siege. He does not purposefully exclude the adventurers, and if they volunteer their services (and have made known their experience in these matters), he gladly includes them among his war council.



THE WAR COUNCIL

During the war council, the lord and his men all agree there's no way the garrison can hold the castle against a determined army of that size for longer than a week — if that. The pantries are low, the monthly supply ship scheduled to arrive in mere days, and there is only food enough for two weeks if the men cannot hunt in the surrounding lands. More importantly, the men don't have enough crossbow bolts to attack the besiegers from a distance for very long. And ultimately, Eisburk doesn't have enough soldiers. However...

This is an army of Orcs and Goblins — barbaric rabble — not disciplined men accustomed to siege warfare. Captain Ullerson doubts the greenskins are disciplined enough to take the castle. He states that to his knowledge no Orc tribe has ever laid siege to a castle, and this army likely doesn't even know what it's doing when it comes to siegecraft. The captain is confident his men can hold the walls long enough for the army to lose morale and seek easier prey elsewhere.

Lord Redwater knows it's his duty to hold the castle against the enemy — not simply surrender it at the first sight of trouble. Though he's not as disdainful of the Orcs and Goblins as Captain Ullerson, he thinks his men can hold the walls long enough for the king (or a neighboring noble) to send warriors to relieve Eisburk. He also knows the supply ship is due in the next couple days and hopes he can somehow reach it to obtain more crossbow bolts.

There are three horses in the stables, and Lord Redwater orders Ullerson to choose his best riders and dispatch them to the nearest town or noble for help (leaving seventy-five warriors in the garrison). He orders Toll to take the servants and bring as much water as possible up from the river (Eisburk does *not* have an internal well or water supply,

ATTACKING THE LEADERS

On the last day of the siege, the PCs have a good opportunity to go out and kill the leaders of the army, Sünkrag and Fallon Kordru. But your players — perhaps firm adherents of the maxim, “Chop off the head, and the body dies” — might want to try it before then (particularly if they have powerful magic that can strike from a great distance). Here are some of the problems they must take into account:

—Sünkrag and Kordru spend the nights (and days too) at the center of almost a hundred Orcs who stand guard at all times.

—The tent they reside in is 4” wide by 4” long and made of tanned hide. They sleep at its center, and ten other Bra’krag also reside inside the tent. Furthermore, ten more Orcs stand guard outside the tent — two at each corner and two in front of the entrance — at all hours.

—Sünkrag and Kordru, if awakened before they are slain, don’t simply fight. They know they have an army standing outside the tent and they make a run for it, hoping to rouse their force and bring down several hundred Orcs and Goblins on their would-be assassins.

—As stated previously, you should make sure magic spells protect the two from PC wizardry. While you should

though in a pinch the servants could lower buckets through the privy hole, gather up seawater, then boil it to remove the salt).

If the PCs haven’t already volunteered their services, Lord Redwater states he’s going to ask for their assistance. At the very least he warns them so they can depart the castle before Sünkrag’s army arrives. You should include this last to better illustrate Lord Redwater’s character to the players. Most PCs are, of course, going to help him defend the castle — that’s what makes them adventurers, after all — but Lord Redwater is not a man to force others to help fight his battles.

The war council is short, only fifteen minutes long. At its end the ghost, Zimlyn, departs Eisburk to report that the messengers are leaving.

SÜNKRAK’S PROCLAMATION

The Orc and Goblin army arrives in about two hours, as predicted. Once it settles in, well out of the range of bow fire 200” (1,300 feet) away, a single Orc comes forth from the army. He carries three heads. He tosses the heads on the ground — even from the distance of the walls, it’s clear they’re the heads of the messengers Lord Redwater sent to deliver word of the siege. Speaking haltingly in the common tongue, he makes the following proclamation: “In the name of Sünkrag, we of the Bra’krag, Gnar’lresh, and Mraglar tribes claim this land as our own. You will all be put to the sword, a sacrifice to Sünkrag’s father, the god [name of banished god].” Then, not waiting for a response, the Orc returns to the army.

Un-orcish Behavior

If the PCs are familiar with Orcs there are a few things worth noting about the army that stands outside Eisburk’s walls. A successful Tactics roll tells a PC the following — one piece of information for succeeding with the roll exactly, plus one piece for each point by which the roll is made. (If none of your PCs possess the Skill, you can have Lord Redwater or Captain Ullerson inform them of the following.)

- The Orcs and Goblins organized themselves awfully well for their kind, especially since the proclamation indicates there are at least three different tribes involved.
- There’s a group of Orcs being kept in reserve behind the main battle lines. Orcs normally don’t keep warriors in reserve — they charge in a single bloodthirsty mob.
- The tent at the center of the warriors held in reserve must be the war-leader, Sünkrag. Orcish war-leaders don’t lead from the rear.

Any PC who speaks Orcish can translate the names of the tribes as well as Sünkrag’s own name. Unless the PCs have adventured through *A Night Out Of The Rain* or *From Out Of The Depths*, or one of them is incredibly well-versed in religious matters, they don’t recognize the name of the god. And whatever the case, no one has ever heard of Orcs worshipping that particular god, let alone an Orc sired by that god.

TROUBLESHOOTING: DISCOVERING THE GHOST

If the PCs discover the ghost at this point, you have a couple of options. First, if the PCs let on they have discovered Zimlyn, he takes “evasive” maneuvers before departing. Unless the PCs can follow him through walls, they might not realize he’s a spy for the enemy since they don’t see him depart the castle.

Second, if the PCs slay Zimlyn, Kordru can raise another ghost. Sünkrag gladly sacrifices one of his men to have a spy within the castle.

Finally, you can simply proceed with the adventure without the ghost — Zimlyn has already told Kordru both the location of the cornerstone and secret passage, so the Orcs still attempt to mine under Eisburk’s walls. Furthermore, Kordru can use his Necromancy — specifically The Spell Of True Necromancy — to divine Lord Redwater’s plans and learn about the supply ship. In short, without Zimlyn the enemy isn’t privy to all the ins and outs of the plans the defenders of Eisburk make, but can still determine the basic gist of those plans through other sorcerous means.

Day’s End

The army doesn’t attack on the first day; it spends the time cobbling together scaling ladders from wood and rawhide brought with them on carts drawn by the Goblins.

Lord Redwater sets half the garrison to watch the walls at all times, and the men work in two twelve-hour shifts. Eisburk’s armory only holds forty light crossbows and two hundred bolts. Captain Ullerson issues the crossbows to the men currently manning the walls, along with five bolts for each man and a warning to use the bolts wisely. When the men are relieved, they hand over the crossbows and bolts to the new shift.

In The Enemy Camp

At night, Sünkrag sends twenty Bra’krag Orcs to swim out to the passage that leads under Eisburk and begin mining the secret tunnel underneath the chapel. The Orcs do not return to the camp after arriving in the underwater grotto, but Sünkrag has ordered them to only mine at night, when those inside the castle are asleep. (They can tell time by the tides in the grotto — and thanks to their Night-vision they can see in the dark, so they don’t use torches.) Zimlyn is to act as a messenger between the Orcs below the castle and Sünkrag.

DAY TWO: BESIEGED!

On the second day of the siege, the Orcs and Goblins storm the walls at dawn. With a successful Tactics roll, a PC knows the army would be better off attacking at night, since both Orcs and Goblins can see in the dark. Sünkrag, again showing a cunning not typical to Orcs, is setting up the castle's defenders for when his Orcs break through the chapel floor and his army attacks at night (which takes place on day four if all goes according to plan).

Lord Redwater and Captain Ullerson are awake and on the walls when the army attacks. They quickly call out a warning, summoning the rest of the garrison (and the PCs if need be). They assign the PCs to hold the middle of the line; and each of them anchors an end — Lord Redwater at the northwest corner of the ramparts and Captain Ullerson at the southeast corner.

Three tribes, two orcish and one Goblin, come charging at the wall, siege ladders held over their heads. The Eisburk soldiers fire their crossbows when the enemy is within 10" (65 feet) and though they slay many Orcs and Goblins, they quickly run out of bolts. Then it's a melee as ladders go up and warriors hurry to push them back down, while other Orcs and Goblins fire arrows at any defender who shows his head between the crenelations.

If you aren't using the mass combat rules, you should simply narrate the action, providing the PCs an occasional one-on-one combat or an opportunity to raise morale with a daring deed... until Sak and Forch decide its time to wade into the middle of the fight.

TROLLS ON THE WALLS

Throughout the morning Sak and Forch, the two War Trolls who command the Nuglirk Goblins, stand back from the walls and force their Goblins forward, occasionally picking one up and attempting to toss him over the wall. They cry out with brutish cheers when a Goblin arrow takes an enemy's life, but more often they roar with rage when the defenders push a siege ladder covered with screaming Goblins away from the wall. Then just after noon, the two Trolls decide to take matters in their own hands.

Sak picks up a squirming Goblin, while Forch picks up a siege ladder. The Trolls place the siege ladder against the wall. Forch holds the ladder steady, using his great strength to make sure none of the defenders can push it away. Then Sak, with the Goblin held over his head as a living shield, climbs up the ladder. The Trolls only need two Phases (Forch places the ladder and Sak begins to climb on the same Phase, then finishes the climb on the next Phase) before Sak is on the wall. At that point, Sak guards the ladder while Forch climbs up. Then the two Trolls split up and start killing defenders, allowing their Goblins plenty of time to gain a foothold on the wall behind them. If possible, the PCs should step up to the challenge, kill the War Trolls (or possibly even prevent them from reaching the battle-

ments in the first place), kill the Goblins, and retake that section of wall from the enemy.

The Fight

Ideally the fight begins when Sak stands on the wall, with Forch ready to come up behind, and the PCs respond to the frightened screams of Eisburk's soldiers and rush to the scene. If the PCs have arranged themselves on the walls so that they're nearby when the War Trolls attempt to come up, it begins before that — likely as the War Trolls come near the base of the wall — and in this case, you should use the Goblin archers to provide plenty of cover for the Trolls. (Also, don't forget that a War Troll can Leap 7½" (or 4" upward) because of its STR, so Sak and/or Forch may be able to make it to the battlements after climbing only a short way up a ladder.)

After the first Segment 12, Forch reaches the ramparts on Segment 3. On Segments 4, 8, and 12, two Goblins come over the walls and onto the ramparts until the scaling ladder is pushed away. None of the garrison stands a chance against the War Trolls — assume one Eisburk soldier dies on each of a War Trolls' Phases in which a PC does not engage a Troll in HTH Combat. When fighting the PCs, the Trolls use their great swords, but they're not squeamish about getting their hands dirty. If an opportunity presents itself, a Troll Grabs a PC and throws him down from the ramparts — preferably outside the walls of Eisburk.

Day's End

The siege wears on until sunset. At day's end, the defenders are exhausted. The garrison is out of crossbow bolts. Ten warriors died from Orc and Goblin arrows (plus however many the War Trolls killed) and fifteen more were wounded. On a brighter note, Captain Ullerson estimates the soldiers killed over a hundred of the enemy, leaving just under four hundred in the besieging army — a number that includes the hundred Orc warriors held in reserve. All in all, it looks grim for Eisburk's defenders, but if the supply ship comes tomorrow and the defenders can retrieve the shipment of crossbow bolts as well as get word out about the siege, they still stand a good chance of holding off the enemy. At dinner in the great hall, Lord Redwater toasts the PCs for their heroism against the Trolls.

In The Enemy Camp

Sünkrag is smart, but he's never invested a castle before. He swears that tomorrow Sak and Forch (if they still live) will take a battering ram to the castle's gates, rather than wasting their strength against the walls.

Once the sun is fully down, he dispatches his warriors to retrieve the dead bodies of the fallen Orcs and Goblins, as well as their weapons. They drag the dead away from the walls and build a huge funeral pyre behind the army. They distribute the arrows the dead warriors had and pile the melee

Continued from last page

reward players for clever use of spells and a good plan to get inside the tent — in other words, don't make the task impossible — simply lobbing a fireball at the tent (or other crude use of magic) and thereby slaying the leaders detracts from the drama of the adventure. The task of lifting the siege should be more difficult to accomplish.

—Lord Redwater and Captain Ullerson do not support any such attempt — at least initially, especially since the necromancer has not made any move against the castle (and hopefully the defenders of Eisburk are unaware of his presence). They feel it would be a tactic born of desperation. They'd rather wait to see what happens with the supply ship before attempting such an attack.

weapons beside the funeral pyre.

This is unusual behavior for Orcs, who care little about their dead... especially dead Goblins. At first Eisburk's commanders assume the Orcs and Goblins are looting the bodies, but once the Orcs light the funeral pyre, they aren't sure what to make of it — perhaps it is a sacrifice to this new god the Orc leader claims as his father?

The funeral pyre is Kordru's doing. It's really a bonfire and not a true pyre — he wants clean and unbroken bones he can raise as skeletons later on during the siege if Sünkrag's army needs reinforcements to take Eisburk. (If so, be sure to mention the skeletons' blackened appearance to the players, so they'll realize what was going on.)

DAY THREE: RE-SUPPLY

Day three of the siege begins much the same as the day before, but now the defenders of Eisburk are weary and wounded, and without crossbow bolts to fire at the enemy. The Orcs and Goblins reach the walls unimpeded, suffering far fewer casualties as they seek to attain the ramparts and take the castle.

As night falls Lord Redwater approaches the PCs. He asks them to journey to the supply ship and retrieve the supplies, the ship is delivering (especially the crossbow bolts), as well as get word out about the army besieging the castle. It's an important mission, which is why he wishes the PCs to undertake it. He explains that with the bolts, Eisburk's defenders should have no trouble holding off the Orcs and Goblins until the king can send men to break the siege. Without the crossbow bolts, the defenders have little chance of surviving — twenty men dead during the day's fighting, with only fifty Orcs and Goblins killed, proves the truth of that.

THE SUPPLY SHIP

Lord Redwater spots the signal fire from the supply ship an hour after sunset (it's visible from the top of the tower, not to the besiegers on the ground). To make portage for the supplies easier, the ship lies at anchor two miles up the coast, where the cliffs level out with the surrounding lands. At that location there's a small cove, and here the men of Eisburk keep two rowboats that they use to row out to the ship, usually at anchor a little over fifty yards away; then the men load the supplies into the rowboats, return to shore, and cart the supplies back to the castle. (Normally all of this would take place in the morning after Lord Redwater spots the ship's signal fire.)

Lord Redwater suggests the PCs lower a rope down from the south side of the lower ramparts, climb to the ground, then climb down the cliffs to the narrow strand and make their way north. The cliffs provide good cover from the Orc sentries and run along the coast for almost the entire two miles — and well past where the army camps. He provides the PCs with two travois which they can use to drag the supplies back from the ship. He asks

TROUBLESHOOTING: FOOD SPELLS

One of the plot elements in *Eisburk-Beyond-The-Shoals* is that food's running low and the PCs need to get more supplies from the ship. However, it may be that the PCs have spells or enchanted items that can create food (and/or other supplies). You can deal with this problem in several ways.

First, try to stop it from occurring. If you know you're going to run this adventure, forbid the PCs to buy food-creation spells, deplete their food-creation items of Charges, and the like.

Second, do an end run around the PCs by creating a need in the castle they can't fill. If the PCs can make food, maybe the castle needs water, or crossbow bolts, or the like. Maybe the PC wizards run out of Expendable Foci for spellcasting (make sure you know *exactly* how many "material components" each spellcaster has at the beginning of the adventure; it's situations like this that show why they get a *Focus* Limitation for their spells) and can get more from the supply ship.

Third, let the chips fall where they may. If they don't need to go out to the supply ship, the PCs will just have to find out more about the Orcs and the secret passage on their own... when the Orcs come tunneling up through the chapel, at the very latest.

them to bring back as many crossbow bolts as they possibly can — Toll Bethel recorded that he purchased nearly a thousand.

Zimlyn spies on this conversation and reports it to Kordru.

At The Ship

The PCs make easy progress along the shore to where the supply ship sits at anchor. Even if they're less than sneaky about it, none of the Orcs notice them — all of the pickets have orders to ignore any small groups of men passing that way.

But as they near the location of the rowboats, they see flames dancing out on the waters — exactly where the supply ship was supposed to be.

Ten of the Bra'krag Orcs have traveled to the cove, arriving several minutes ahead of the PCs, then used the rowboats to row out to the ship. They put the crew of thirty men to the sword, set the ship alight, and are now returning to the rowboats.

The PCs are 100" (650 feet) southeast of the ship — so the ship is 50" (325 feet) from the shore, and the PCs are approximately 87" (565 feet) directly south of the cove where the rowboats are kept. The ship requires five minutes before it is entirely aflame, its contents unsalvageable. For every minute (5 Turns) that passes, assume one-fifth of the cargo is destroyed — so 200 crossbow bolts and 4 days' worth of food. It takes two Phases to retrieve a crate of supplies from the burning ship — one Phase to get below decks and retrieve the crate, one more to get above decks and to the rail. For simplicity's sake, an average human (STR 8) can carry one crate (containing 50 bolts or 1 day's worth of food) without too much difficulty.

The Orcs make straight for the shore, 50" (325 feet) away, and travel 6" on each of their Phases

when rowing. There are two rowboats, each carrying five Orcs.

Questioning The Orcs

A group of accomplished adventurers should be able to defeat ten Orcs. If the PCs are quick on their feet, they might think to take at least one alive.

If so, after some successful Interrogation rolls, the prisoner answers whatever questions put to him. He knows quite a bit about Sünkrag and fully believes his leader is the son of a god. He knows very little about the Man who advises Sünkrag except his name is Fallon Kordru, he is a servant of Sünkrag's father, and the god grants him great powers. Most importantly, the prisoner tells the PCs that Sünkrag dispatched him and the other Orcs to burn down the ship only minutes after Lord Redwater asked them to meet the supply ship.

Day's End

Again the enemy collects its dead from the base of the wall and lights a funeral pyre.

Morale around the castle depends on the actions of the PCs. If they return with a great many crossbow bolts, they are hailed once again as heroes of the siege of Eisburk and morale is high around the place. If they didn't, most folk spend their time silently contemplating the death that's sure to come.

Though Captain Ullerson is less than forgiving if the PCs failed, Lord Redwater consoles them. He knows there is some sorcery at work, and that they did all they could given the circumstances. In fact, the young lord takes full responsibility for their failure, since he sent them out on a fool's mission that could have gone much worse — Eisburk might have lost its most valiant defenders, namely the PCs.

In The Enemy Camp

Zimlyn returns with word of the outcome of the journey to the supply ship. Fallon Kordru is gloomy when he hears the PCs returned to the castle. He feels they're more of a threat than the others defenders, and had hoped they would depart Eisburk once the supply ship was destroyed and they realized their cause was hopeless.

If the adventurers retrieved a sizable number of crossbow bolts from the supply ship, Sünkrag waxes wroth at his Orcs' failure. He takes his anger out on Kordru, who advised him to only send enough Orcs to do the job — Sünkrag had wanted to send his whole tribe to the shore. (Kordru had felt the defenders of Eisburk might worry if a hundred Orcs suddenly pulled up stakes and headed northwest.)

DAY FOUR: A LULL

If the PCs failed to retrieve any crossbow bolts at all, the siege continues as it did the day before; again the defenders suffer heavy casualties — fifteen men. By the end of the day, there are only thirty-five warriors standing, few of whom are without wounds. The enemy army includes nearly two hundred and fifty greenskins.

If the PCs retrieved the crossbow bolts, the Orcs and Goblins do *not* attack. Instead a messenger comes forth from the army and makes a second proclamation: "The great Sünkrag has decided you shall all starve to death within these walls, your suffering a tribute to his divine father."

The message is just a ruse and Sünkrag has other plans — he knows if he doesn't take the castle soon, his army will melt away. He plans to attack this very night... once his Orcs working beneath the castle have broken through to the chapel. This is discussed in more detail below in *Night Attack*.

A lull in the siege gives the PCs a chance to investigate. At this point they should realize there's a spy within Eisburk's walls — the attack on the supply ship seems to indicate as much — though they might also believe it's simply Kordru's magic that lets the enemy know of their plans. If the PCs do a good job investigating, they should discover many of Kordru's ongoing plots, specifically: the ghost, Zimlyn; the twenty Orcs digging out a tunnel under the chapel floor; and the location of the cornerstone. And if they don't, Eisburk stands in dire jeopardy when night comes....

NIGHT ATTACK

At midnight the defenders on the wall cry out warnings and the siege begins again. The Orcs and Goblins attack under cover of darkness, seeking to take Eisburk once and for all. Soon after the greenskins charge, twenty Orcs of the Bra'krag tribe break through the floor of the chapel. Zimlyn possesses the leader and leads ten of the Orcs to the winch mechanism to open the portcullis. The other ten Orcs lurk in the shadows in the passage between the inner and outer ward. When they see the portcullis raise up, they rush to the gate and throw open the door, allowing the warriors outside to come rushing into the outer ward.

That's the plan, anyway. The PCs likely attempt to stop it... but if they don't, once the Orcs are in the outer ward with all Eisburk's defenders trapped on the walls and unable to fall back to the inner ward, Sünkrag throws his Bra'krag tribe into the fight and the castle likely falls.

Closing The Gate

If the Orcs open the gates to the enemy, the last chance the PCs have to save the castle is to reach the winch that lowers the portcullis. You can safely assume four Orcs or Goblins make it through on each of their Phases as long as the gate's open. (And don't forget the Orcs and Goblins still attempt to scale the walls, so the defenders are divided between stopping the enemy in the outer ward and

TROUBLESHOOTING: PCs TRAVEL FAST

If the PCs can travel very fast — for instance, if they have a flying carpet or some other means of magical transportation — and there's absolutely no way a group of Orcs can outrace them to the ship, then you have three options.

First, you can allow the PCs to go and return, unharrassed by the Orcs.

Second, you can have them meet the Orcs on the way back from the ship. If you choose this, you should increase the number of Orcs Sünkrag sends to set fire to the supply ship. During the melee with the PCs, the Orcs make destroying the supplies a priority.

Third, you can provide Kordru with magical means of transporting the Orcs to the supply ship and run the encounter as presented in the text.



stopping them from coming over the walls.)

The ten Orcs that originally opened the portcullis, their leader still possessed by Zimlyn, remain in the area guarding the winch.

Night's End

The siege, regardless of the success of the twenty Orcs inside the walls, continues until dawn. At that time, Sünkrag calls back the remainder of his army. Assuming the castle's defenders had plenty of crossbow bolts, less than a hundred Orcs and Goblins remain in the army. Eisburk lost few men during the night — thirty warriors plus the PCs, Lord Redwater, and Captain Ullerson stand ready to defend the castle.

But Fallon Kordru is not ready to surrender....

In The Enemy Camp

Kordru has finally convinced Sünkrag it's time raise the dead and let the fallen warriors fight once again for their war-leader. As day five of the siege begins, Kordru begins the ritual that will raise the charred bones of fallen Orcs and Goblins as skeletons.

DAY FIVE: SALLY FORTH!

Day five of the siege begins when the skeletons of the fallen Orcs and Goblins rise up and attack Eisburk. Four hundred strong, the army of the undead is not only highly resistant to crossbow bolts, but whenever the valiant defenders of Eisburk whittle down their ranks, Kordru again casts his spell to animate the bones and the skeletons rise up to threaten the castle's defenders anew. (The GM should let him do this in the interest of dramatic sense, regardless of the standard limits on Summon.)

Lord Redwater convenes a hasty war council. Everyone agrees the necromancer must be slain. Everyone also agrees the PCs are the only ones who can accomplish the mission.

THE FIGHT

The army is gathered at the camp, their attention focused on the skeletons. 40" (260 feet) behind them stand Fallon Kordru, Sünkrag, and twenty of the Bra'krug Orcs. You should adjust the number of Bra'krug Orcs as you see fit to challenge the party — although there are likely no more than seventy left alive at this point in the adventure.

The most inconspicuous way out of the castle is the secret tunnel leading out into the ocean. The Orcs cannot see PCs simply climbing down the south or west walls, leaving that possibility open as well.

How the PCs reach the leaders of the army without the warriors in the army noticing them is up to them. If they come up with no other plan, Lord Redwater offers to sally forth with his men, make a hard push for the Orcs and Goblins, thus hopefully distracting the leaders. If the PCs take him up on his offer, the gambit works, but the defenders of Eisburk pay a high price for the charge. Who lives and who dies is up to you.

MASS COMBAT AT EISBURK

This section provides an overview of how to use the Mass Combat rules from *Fantasy Hero* in this scenario. How extensively you use these rules is up to you. Before you decide, keep in mind two considerations.

First, how will the players react to mass combat? If none of their characters possess a higher than average PRE Characteristic or the Skills *Tactics* or *Oratory*, chances are the players were not interested in leading units of men into combat when they designed their characters, and may not enjoy the game session.

Second, if you don't use the Mass Combat rules, you can simply narrate the results of each day's combat — a sort of GM fiat that allows the siege to extend to the fifth day as presented in the timeline. Incorporating the Mass Combat rules adds an element of chance to the outcome of each day's fighting, and that might cause you to deviate drastically from the events presented here. For example, if during the first day of the siege Lady Luck turns her back on the players, it might happen that Sünkrag's army slays all the soldiers defending Eisburk and successfully takes the castle. In this case, *Eisburk-Beyond-The-Shoals* becomes an adventure to retake the castle rather than defend it, and you must then change the course of events accordingly, re-working things to allow the PCs the opportunity to prevent Fallon Kordru from seizing and using the cornerstone dedicated to his evil god.

If you decide to use the Mass Combat rules, be sure the re-read pages 200-218 of *Fantasy Hero* prior to the game session, paying close attention to the sections on Prominent Characters.

Before Combat

Battlefield Terrain: The terrain surrounding Eisburk is Clear/Level, so it has no effect on combat and movement.

Size Of Units: The average unit size is 82: 3 units of 25 Eisburk soldiers; 3 units of 100 Orcs; and 1 unit of 200 Goblins. More details about units are given below.

Combat

There are two different sorts of mass combat that occur in this adventure: the siege itself; and when the defenders of Eisburk sally forth to provide the PCs with the distraction they need to attack the enemy

leaders. The sections below, divided by the days of the siege, provide suggestions on how to run the different combats.

In the game, Lord Redwater and Captain Ullerson command two of the units. Rather than control these units yourself, you can have the players take on their roles. This is an especially good idea if one or more of the players' characters are not inclined to this kind of siege warfare and might find themselves with little to do during the parts of the game session involving Mass Combat.

DAYS ONE THROUGH FOUR

The army doesn't necessarily storm the walls on each of these days. Once Sünkrag only has approximately half his army remaining, he pulls back to "starve the defenders out" (*i.e.*, wait for the twenty Orcs below Eisburk to break through the floor of the chapel) and only attacks again on the night of the fourth day.

Though the timeline indicates the siege takes place all day, you should limit this to one mass combat encounter for each day. In other words, the army keeps attacking until the defenders throw it back; then the army retreats, regroups, and prepares to attack again on the morrow.

The defenders are +4 DCV against missile fire from the Orcs and Goblins because of Eisburk's walls.



Scaling The Walls

To successfully scale a wall, attacking units use siege ladders; see page 212 of *Fantasy Hero* for general rules about this. For every Phase a ladder remains in place, ten enemies make it to the top of the wall; on their next Phase they can engage the castle's defenders in HTH Combat. Once enemies have successfully made it to the top of the wall, the commander of the defenders must split his unit — some to engage the enemy, others to push back siege ladders. Assign penalties as you deem appropriate, but a simple means of doing so is this: if the commander assigns half the unit to push back ladders, then the unit suffers a -2 penalty on any rolls involved; if one-fourth the unit, then a -4 penalty; and so on, rounding to the nearest fraction. Of course, this is also a good opportunity for Prominent Characters among the defenders to perform heroic feats.

The siege for the day ends once the defenders have Disrupted all three units and they have failed to rally on Post-Segment 12 (or when you decide Sünkrag has seen enough for one day and sounds the retreat).

Day One

The timeline describes a fight the PCs have with the Trolls when those leaders of the Nuglirk tribe come over the wall. If you use the Mass Combat rules, treat the Trolls as Prominent Characters and use the rules for them in *Fantasy Hero*.

The Night Of Day Four

Unless the PCs discover the infiltrators in advance, on the night of day four Orcs break through the chapel floor and seek to open the outer gates. You should treat the twenty Orcs inside Eisburk as individuals and encourage the PCs to engage these enemies as individuals. If a PC attempts to pull soldiers from the wall to engage the

Orcs, remind him that Eisburk's walls are already inadequately defended, and while defeating the Orcs inside the walls is definitely important, Orcs and Goblins successfully coming over the walls is the same result as allowing the Orcs to open the outer gate.

The attack takes place at night and the enemy has Nightvision. While the walls themselves are lit with torches so HTH Combat proceeds as usual, the defenders suffer penalties for missile fire because of the darkness.

Finally, your use of the Mass Combat rules should depend on the actions of the PCs once the Orcs inside the walls reveal themselves. If all of the PCs leave the wall to deal with the threat of the Orcs, consider ending the Mass Combat and simply narrating the events from there on out — there's no point in continuing it if the players aren't involved in the action.

DAY FIVE

On day five, the defenders of Eisburk sally forth to provide a distraction for the PCs (unless the PCs come up with a different plan). The remaining members of the garrison form up into one unit with Lord Redwater, Captain Ullerson, and any PCs as Prominent Characters. Their goal is to push through the skeletons and attack the Orcs and Goblins held in reserve. The fighting lasts until Sünkrag and Fallon Kordru are dead. (Or the defenders are dead — but surely the adventurers prevent that tragic event from coming to pass!)

Troubleshooting

The sections below addresses some difficulties you might encounter while using the Mass Combat rules in this adventure.

Sünkrag's Army Is Decimated: If Sünkrag's army experiences horrendous losses on the first or second day of the siege, you have a couple choices. First, you can move up the events on the timeline as appropriate. Second, you can have reinforcements arrive.

The Defenders Are Decimated: If the defenders of Eisburk experience horrendous losses early on in the siege, the situation is a little more difficult. First, before the damage is done, keep in mind the PCs are centrally located on the wall — this is for a reason. If one of the units fighting beside theirs begins to take bad casualties, one or more of the PCs can join that unit and bolster its forces as a Prominent Character, heroically throwing back the enemy and turning the tide. Second, if it's too late and the damage is already done, you can use the crew of the supply ship as reinforcements for the men at Eisburk. This requires a little juggling — it means the PCs arrive at the location before the Orcs Sünkrag sent to burn the ship. Furthermore, any more than twenty men returning from the supply ship with the PCs strains the plausibility of the event, and these



are, at best, poorly trained soldiers. A final option is that a knight and his retinue arrives on the scene — perhaps Lady Redwater's hot-headed cousin, Sir Agnar (page 82), has come for a surprise visit — and fortuitously provides some highly-trained reinforcements for the castle.

Too Simple: What's presented here is meant to be simple — a way of both adding an additional wrinkle to the adventure and introducing your players to the Mass Combat rules. If you want to use the rules more extensively, there's plenty of room in the adventure. You can add siege engines

to both Sünkrag's army and the castle, add monsters to Sünkrag's army, and increase the number of enemies and defenders to make the siege much more involved and closer to its historical analogue. You can play up the magic angle by providing both the garrison at Eisburk and Sünkrag's army with practitioners of the Arts Arcane who carry on their own sort of war alongside the battles between the warriors on both sides.

UNITS

THE DEFENDERS OF EISBURK

The Men defending Eisburk divide themselves into three units of 25 soldiers. Lord Redwater commands the one assigned to the northwest, from the outer gate to the northwest tower. Captain Ullerson commands the one assigned to the eastern wall. The PCs command the one assigned to the northeast, from the outer gate to the northeast tower. The Characteristics for each unit are as follows:

Name Of Unit	Size	DMG	RDMG	DEX	OCV	DCV	BODY	INT	EGO	PRE	DEF	SPD	MOVE	Morale Roll
Human Soldiers	25	1d6+1	1d6+1	14	6	7	20	10	10	13	4	3	6"	12-

RDMG: There are only 40 crossbows in Eisburk's armories. Lord Redwater assigns 10 crossbows to each of the units on the northern wall, and 20 to Captain Ullerson's unit on the eastern wall. You should adjust the Unit Modifier accordingly when the unit uses missile weapons — each unit in the north has a +6 modifier, the one in the east has a +8 modifier. Additionally, each soldier with a crossbow only has 5 bolts, so the unit can only fire five times before running out of ammunition.

CV: For simplicity's sake, each soldier is +1 OCV with longswords and +1 OCV with crossbows, so the OCV for HTH and Missile Combat is the same. Furthermore, each unit has +1 with HTH Combat that the unit commander can assign to OCV or DCV when the unit engages in melee.

SÜNKRAG'S ARMY

Four units make up Sünkrag's army: 100 Orcs from each of the three tribes, Bra'krag, Gnar'lresh, and Mraglar; and 200 Goblins from the Nuglirk tribe. The army forms an arc outside Eisburk's walls with the Gnar'lresh in the west, the Mraglar in the south, and the Nuglirk in the middle. The Bra'krag stand in reserve, directly behind the Nuglirk unit.

Name Of Unit	Size	DMG	RDMG	DEX	OCV	DCV	BODY	INT	EGO	PRE	DEF	SPD	MOVE	Morale Roll
Bra'krag Orcs	100	2d6+1	1d6+1	12	4	4	27	8	8	10	3	3	6"	11-
Gnar'lresh Orcs	100	2d6	1d6+1	12	4	6	26	8	8	10	3	3	6"	11-
Mraglar Orcs	100	1½d6	1d6+1	12	4	4	26	8	8	10	2	3	6"	11-
Nuglirk Goblins	200	1d6+1	1d6	10	3	6	23	8	8	10	1	3	4"	11-

The final unit type that comes into play is the undead — the skeletons Kordru raises from the dead Orcs and Goblins to attack Eisburk. The number of skeletons depends on the casualties Sünkrag's army suffers in prior engagements. The below assumes there are at least 300 skeletons; these divide themselves into three units of 100 and each unit takes the place of the Orc or Goblin unit attempting to scale the walls. For ease of reference, each skeleton wields a weapon that does 2d6 Killing Damage, does not carry a shield, and does not wear armor.

Name Of Unit	Size	DMG	RDMG	DEX	OCV	DCV	BODY	INT	EGO	PRE	DEF	SPD	MOVE	Morale Roll
Skeletons	100	2d6	—	12	4	4	23	5	0	13	2	2	6"	12-

DEF: The skeletons have +2 DEF against slashing attacks (like longswords) and +4 DEF against piercing attacks (like crossbow bolts).

Morale Roll: Under normal circumstances, the skeletons cannot fail a morale roll.

CONCLUSION



With Sünkrag and Kordru killed and the army decimated, the siege of Eisburk-beyond-the-Shoals comes to an end. If any of the Orc and Goblin army still live, they flee the field of battle. Eisburk's garrison is decimated, but you should remind the players that if it weren't for the PCs, the castle would have fallen — they're directly responsible for saving the lives of those warriors who still live and preventing a great evil from re-entering the world. (You should also take the number of survivors into account when determining Experience Point awards for the adventure.)

Lord Redwater is eternally grateful to the PC and offers to do anything he can for them in the future. And unlike many exploits adventurers take part in, the siege at Eisburk becomes widely-known throughout the land. As tales of the PCs' deeds spread, they can expect a warm welcome wherever they go in the kingdom, from city alehouses to the manors of nobles. Finally, if word of the cornerstone found below Eisburk becomes public knowledge, those of both Good and Evil intent find the artifact intensely interesting and are likely to have some questions for the PCs.

THE FURTHER ADVENTURES....

Below are some plot seeds you can use for adventures stemming from events in *Eisburk-Beyond-The-Shoals*.

The Sacred Place Built Around It: "Its gates closed to the blessed" is how the prophecy reads. One interpretation seems to indicate that Eisburk, itself, is the "sacred place." But how can this castle be dedicated to the evil god? When strange rumors concerning Lord Redwater reach the adventur-

ers — perverse rumors that tell of the once-noble man descending into depravity — they recall the prophecy. They return to Eisburk where a startling sight greets them, one that almost seems to taunt the heroic effort they once made to defend the place: over the white walls of the Eisburk creeps a black stain. Lord Redwater refuses to open the gates to them, and now the adventurers must find a way past the walls they once fought so dearly to hold against the servants of the god they can only assume Lord Redwater now serves.

Once Killed, Twice Born: Sünkrag claimed to be the son of the god — yet it didn't save him from the adventurers' steel and he died like any other Orc. But when he rises from death, could it be he really is the son of the banished god? When the adventurers find an army of Orcs doggedly pursuing them across the land, could it be that Sünkrag remembers his first death and hungers for revenge... and will he die so easily a second time?

Destruction Of The Cornerstone: During their adventures, the PCs discover a fragment of writing that seems to tell of a means of destroying the cornerstone. Determined to destroy the stone and end its evil threat once and for all, they remove it from below Eisburk and begin their quest. But the cultists have learned of the PCs' plan and do everything in their power to thwart them. Could the PCs have misinterpreted the writing? Could it be they've unwittingly set in motion the events of the prophecy that once fulfilled lead to the banished god's return to the world? Or are they simply risking the cult acquiring the stone while they seek to destroy it?

<chapter> CHAPTER FOUR: FANTASY LOCATIONS

THE ABBEY OF ETERNAL VIGILANCE



THE ABBEY IN AMBRETHEL

If you're using *The Tura-kian Age*, a *Fantasy Hero* setting published by Hero Games, you should locate the Abbey somewhere in the Wester-lands. It would fit well in the highland regions of many realms, including Thurgandia, Umbr, the Mhendarian Palatinate, and Vestria.

PLOT SEEDS

Fadduck Tai lies on his deathbed, and the temp-tation to Necromancy grows ever greater as he nears his death. Only one hope prevents him from succumbing — the discovery that the first high priest at the abbey originally came from a temple, not far off and long ago fallen into ruin. He hires the adventur-ers to journey to the temple and retrieve whatever lies therein. But he warns them — the temple fell to the servants of an evil god, and Evil does not give up its conquests easily. And how long will Fad-duck Tai wait for the PCs to return before he finally gives up this last hope and preforms the necromantic rite that will doom his soul?

The PCs learn that an artifact important to stopping a rising evil lies buried with an ancient high priest in the crypt beneath the main chapel. Perhaps it is this evil the abbey was to stand vigilant against, but how is Fadduck Tai to know for sure? Might not the PCs seek to trick

The gods figure prominently in many *Fan-tasy Hero* campaigns, and one type of place where people gather to devote their lives to the service of the gods is an abbey. Often located far from the hustle and bustle of everyday life so its inhabitants can better dedicate themselves to their devotions free from the distractions of the material world, an abbey is a community unto itself with many of the features of a small village. As such, abbeys frequently become way stations in remote areas — they're places where travelers can sleep under a roof, make minor repairs on their equip-ment, and purchase rations with a small donation.

Abbeys also serve as storehouses of knowl-edge. Since they're isolated, located in places few men would wage war, and are protected by divine providence to boot, the books and scrolls preserved in an abbey's library often survive through the centuries. Adventurers might journey to the abbey seeking lore lost elsewhere in the world — the secrets and commentaries they need to find long-lost treasures, unravel mysterious prophecies, or research a powerful new spell.

The Abbey Of Eternal Vigilance is an abbey that serves all three of these functions. Through its airy halls monks and novices go about their daily devotions. All of their actions — from prayer and worship, to farming and feeding the stock, to clean-ing and cooking — are dedicated to the service of their god. In its library the more scholarly monks scribe copies of old books, preserving the words written on crumbling pages for later generations. Overseeing all these activities, the high priest deliv-ers his benediction to the monks and novices and provides them with the wisdom he's gained over long years of service. And when he is alone, the high priest worries his clasped hands and desper-ately mumbles his incessant prayers beseeching his gods for guidance... for although it's called the Abbey Of Eternal Vigilance, what the place and its holy men were to stand vigilant against was long ago forgotten.

THE MONKS

In addition to the high priest, Fadduk Tai, twenty-three monks and thirty-five novices inhabit the abbey. The monks have taken vows to devote their lives to the service of the gods. The novices are in some ways apprentice monks — they're still learning the devotions and rituals, and have yet to exhibit the soul-deep understanding of the gods required of them before they can take their vows. At any time a novice can return to the outside world, and the monks only force out the most disruptive

of boys. All others are allowed to stay on as novices until the high priest deems them ready to take vows — and in some cases this can mean indefinitely, if a novice never comes to possess the necessary spiri-tual insight. Once the high priest deems him ready, the novice must make a decision about his future: either take his vows, become a monk, and stay on at the abbey; take the vows and journey into the world as an itinerant priest; or not take the vows and leave the abbey to find a future elsewhere.

Monks and novices work side by side to per-form the daily chores, with the monks supervising (although if a novice exhibits superior knowledge or ability, the monks humbly defer to him). Only the monks may perform chores that involve the most sacred places and objects around the abbey, like cleaning and purifying the main chapel or the relics.

Described below are three characters: the high priest Fadduk Tai, and a monk and novice you can use as the PCs' main contact with those two groups.

FADDUK TAI, THE HIGH PRIEST					
7	STR	10	DEX	7	CON
8	BODY	18	INT	18	EGO
20	PRE	12	COM		
1	PD	1	ED	2	SPD
2	REC	14	END	16	STUN

Abilities: *Magic:* 120 points' worth of priestly spells (including Cure Blindness, Cure Illness, Healing-Spell, Divine Hindrance, Holy Light, Sacred Fire, Safe Journey, Shield Of Faith, Shield Of The Spell, Bless Baby, Blessing, Sanctify Area, Sanctify Water [all High Priest's Version] and The Spell Of True Necromancy); *Fringe Benefit:* Religious Rank; Turn Undead; *Cryptography* 18-, Translation Only; Faith 24-; High Society 11-; KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 18-; KS: Religious Doctrine 18-; Literacy; Necromancy 15-; Oratory 15-; Persuasion 15-; PS: Priest 18-; WF: Common Melee Weapons.

75+ Disadvantages: Age: 60+; Psychological Limitation: Devotion To His God (Very Common, Total); Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Occa-sionally, Major)

Description: Fadduk Tai is the latest in a long line of revered high priests in charge of the abbey, and like his predecessors, he alone knows that those at the abbey have forgotten what they swore to stand vigilant against.

Long ago a high priest died unexpectedly (no history reveals that he went insane and took his own life). When he passed away, knowledge of the language used to write and read the scrolls and tomes which recorded the abbey's purpose died



with him (and no spell can reveal what the writing says). Since then each high priest has set himself to the task of unlocking the secrets of that language. Each has failed and Fadduk, an old man nearing the end of his days, is only the latest to do the same.

But Fadduk, growing ever more desperate to succeed, has researched another means of translating the forgotten language. He has secretly studied the arts of Necromancy and knows that he could summon the spirits of the dead to aid him in his task. But that would be blasphemy in the eyes of his god, so Fadduk worries away his final days struggling with this moral dilemma.

Fadduck Tai is a thin man in his late seventies with dark piercing eyes and thinning gray hair. He dresses simply, little different than the monks in the abbey. He has a nagging cough and is frequently short of breath — both signs of his failing health.

BROTHER USTER SIMLY

10 STR	10 DEX	12 CON
12 BODY	15 INT	15 EGO
7 PRE	12 COM	
2 PD	2 ED	2 SPD
4 REC	24 END	24 STUN

Abilities: *Magic:* 40 points worth of priestly spells (including Cure Blindness, Cure Illness, Healing-Spell, Sacred Fire, Safe Journey, Shield Of Faith, Bless Baby, Blessing, Sanctify Area, and Sanctify Water); *Fringe Benefit:* Religious Rank; Turn Undead; *Cryptography* 14-, Translation Only; *Faith* 15-; *KS: Arcane And Occult Lore* 15-; *KS: Religious Doctrine* 15-; *Linguist, Languages* (five; completely fluent); *Literacy* (all languages); *PS: Priest* 12-; *PS: Scribe* 15-.

75+ Disadvantages: *Psychological Limitation:* Devotion To His God (Very Common, Total); *Psychological Limitation:* Fear Of Crowds (Infrequently, Total); *Social Limitation:* Subject To Orders (Occasionally, Major)

Description: Brother Uster is a rotund monk in charge of the library. He supervises the other scribes, and is a poor priest at best. He has a grave fear of speaking in public, is overcome with a terrible stutter when speaking to strangers, and lacks the forceful personality that often helps a priest in his duties with the faithful and not-so faithful. Despite these flaws, Brother Uster is a remarkably talented scribe, and after training at a temple in the city where he never quite fit in, he found the perfect position in the Abbey's library.

Like the other monks, he wears simple brown robes and a gold medallion graven with the sigil of his god. His plump fingers and hands are always stained with ink (plus a black finger smudge on his pale forehead or round cheeks for good measure).

NOVICE TILDEN NYSSONEN

10 STR	10 DEX	12 CON
12 BODY	7 INT	8 EGO
12 PRE	10 COM	
2 PD	2 ED	2 SPD
4 REC	24 END	24 STUN

Abilities: *Animal Handling* (Bovines) 13-; *KS: Religious Doctrine* 8-; *PS: Priest* 12-.

75+ Disadvantages: *Psychological Limitation:* Devotion To His God (Very Common, Total); *Social Limitation:* Subject To Orders (Occasionally, Major)

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him? Perhaps they are even the unintentional agents of Evil, unwittingly caught up in a gambit to desecrate the abbey? The PCs must convince Fadduck that retrieving the artifact — which will profane the holy place — is of the utmost importance. But will this urgent question drive the high priest to practice Necromancy in search of the correct answer?

After years of war the nobility of the kingdom is decimated, and now the king himself is dead. After weeks of studying the bloodlines of the noble families, the archivists emerge from their libraries in the kingdom's capital and announce that Tilden Nyssonen is the rightful heir to the throne. The adventurers are hired to journey to the abbey and bring Novice Tilden back to the kingdom's seat of power for the coronation. But others seek Tilly's life. Not only must the PCs protect him from assassins, they must convince Tilly to leave the abbey and take up the responsibilities of kingship.

ABBEY MATERIALS SUMMARY

Below you can find a summary of DEF and BODY for materials around the abbey.

Object	DEF and BODY
Altar, Main Chapel	DEF 5, BODY 13
Bench	DEF 4, BODY 5
Bed	DEF 3, BODY 5
Door, Inside	DEF 2, BODY 3
Door, Outside	DEF 4, BODY 3
Object d'Art/Relic	DEF 2, BODY 2
Statue	DEF 5, BODY 10
Stone Sarcophagus	DEF 6, BODY 15
Table	DEF 4, BODY 7
Wall, Inside	DEF 3, BODY 3
Wall, Outside	DEF 5, BODY 5
Window	DEF 1, BODY 1

Description: Novice Tilden, called Tilly by those in the abbey, might be the oldest novice to ever reside in the Abbey Of Eternal Vigilance. Now forty years old, he has lived in the abbey since his parents, minor nobility who realized Tilly lacked the ability to inherit their title and lands, sent him there when he was twelve.

Tilly is a kind and gentle soul, but not very bright, entirely lacking in ambition, and possessed of an inability to focus on his studies. He is content to spend the rest of his days at the abbey as a novice — and the high priest and monks are content to let him stay, because he's come to prove valuable in the day-to-day functions at the abbey. Tilly is unofficially in charge of the other novices and is especially good at comforting homesick boys newly arrived at the place. He is also nominally in charge of the herds that graze in the surrounding pastures. He wears the gray robes and wooden disc medalion carved with the sigil of the gods typical to the novices.

THE ABBEY

Constructed primarily of stone with plastered interior walls and a red clay tile roof, the abbey contains living and sleeping quarters for both guests and residents as well as places of worship. To reflect the values of the monks, the chapels and chapterhouse are decorated with ornate stonework, painted frescos, and objects d'art — all of which glorify their gods — whereas the living quarters are plain and spartan.

The Main Chapel

The main chapel is the primary location for religious rituals and ceremonies that involve the whole community, including the two services a day — one at sunrise before breakfast, the other at sunset before dinner — that all monks attend (guests are expected to attend as well). As suits its importance to the monks and their spiritual lifestyle, the main chapel is easily the most grandiose and resplendent of the three areas in the abbey.

Except where otherwise noted, the ceiling of the main chapel is 5" (32.5 feet) high.

1. NARTHEX

The narthex serves as the main entry to the chapel and is open to the outside with a roof overhead 1.5" (10.25 feet) high. Worked limestone decorates the archways, and painted frescos adorn the walls that form its boundaries.

2. NAVE

The nave serves as the central assembly area for those who come to worship the god. Two rows of columns border the area, and beyond the columns are side aisles. Small alcoves line the walls to the north and south; they contain statues of holy men and heroes whose service to the gods is legendary. The triforums (area #5), located above the side aisles, overlook the nave. Large windows high up on the walls provide sunlight throughout the day.

3. TRANSEPT

To north and south of the apse (area #4) are transepts, which provide seating for high-ranking visiting clergy and the monks who help the high priest perform the ritual devotions to the gods. An open doorway hung with a curtain leads from the south transept to a robing chamber (*Main Cloister*, area #1).

4. APSE

At the far end of the main chapel is the apse where the altar stands. Scenes from the legends of the gods adorn the three walls of the apse in bas relief. The square area between the apse, transepts, and nave has a 6" (39 feet) high ceiling.

5. TRIFORUM

Two of these, galleries 1.5" (10 feet) above the floor and overlooking the nave, stand to the north and south of the main chapel. A circular stairway toward the transepts provides access, and the choir most frequently uses the triforum during services. These are also used to seat visitors who do not worship the gods but are too important to ignore entirely, or who express an interest in viewing the rituals and ceremonies.

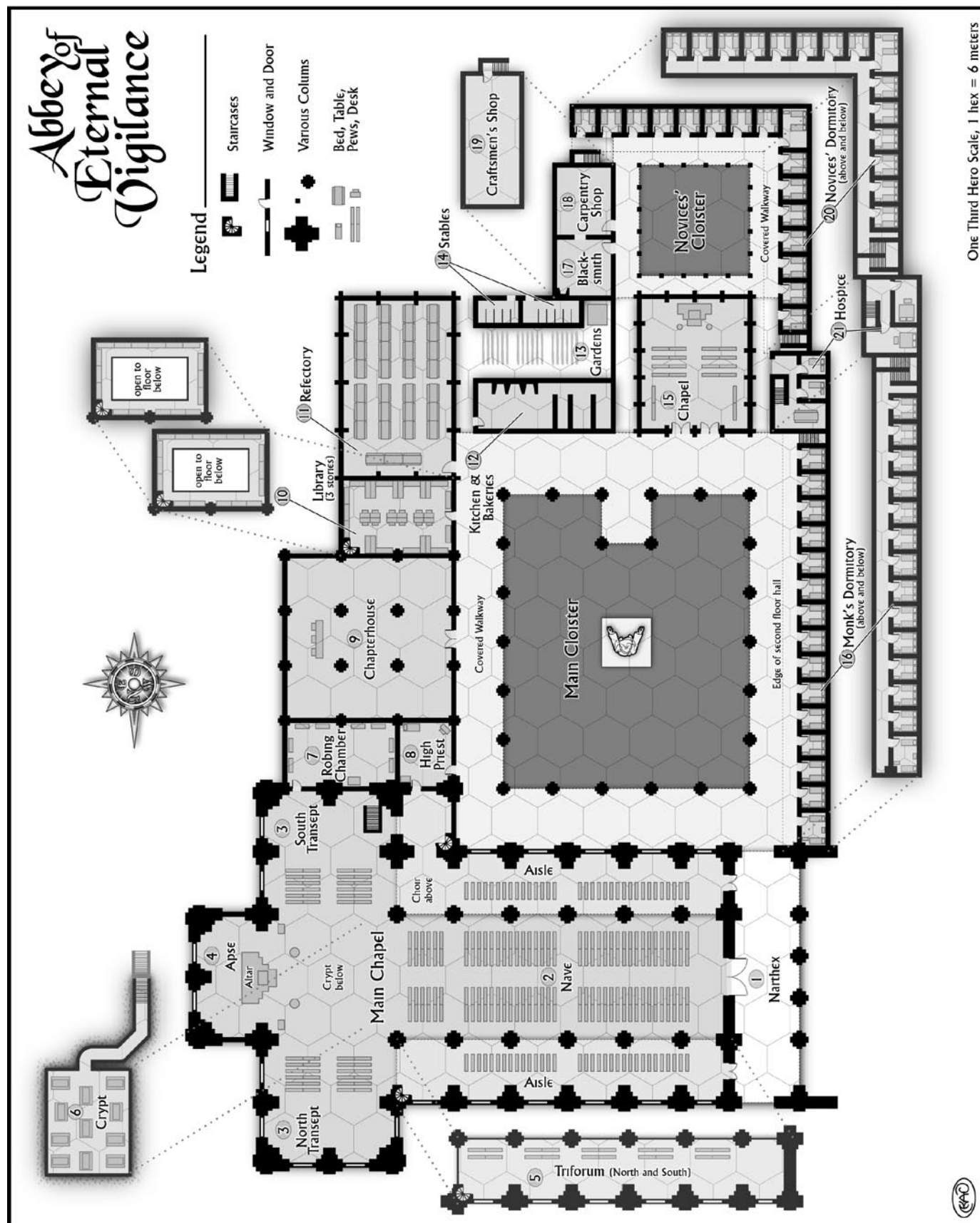
6. CRYPT

The crypt containing the bodies of the high priests lies below the main chapel. It's reached by a stone stairway from the southern transept. Cut from the bedrock, the crypts extend deep into the earth and only the high priest can enter it (although he can grant permission to others to assist him with various tasks).

Books About The Abbey's Purpose

Six volumes lie in a secret niche at the base of the stone sarcophagus where the remains of the first high priest reside. Bound in black leather with spines decorated in yellowed ivory, these books describe the abbey's purpose. They're written in the language Fadduk Tai and his predecessors have forgotten.

The specifics of what the books contain are



THE ABBEY... TEN YEARS LATER

One change you can make to the Abbey Of Eternal Vigilance is to turn its inhabitants evil. In this case, ten years have passed and during that decade Fadduck Tai worked his necromantic magic. In doing so, he brought down the curse of the gods. Now Fadduck Tai is a Specter (see *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, page 109) and the dead high priests in the abbey's crypts have risen as Wights (see *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, page 110). The monks and novices still live, but the undead and the gods' curse have twisted and corrupted them. When strangers arrive, they play the part of simple holy men, but when night falls, they begin their profane rites — any guests at the abbey find themselves a meal for the Wights, a sacrifice for some evil god, or worse.

left to you. If you've used the adventures in the first three chapters of *Fantasy Hero Battlegrounds* and you've decided the Abbey was to remain vigilant against the banished god, then the books describe the other occasions the god attempted to return to the world. They also detail the actions the forces of Good took to prevent the god's return. You should also include fragments of the prophecy (if not the prophecy in its entirety).

Main Cloister

An open quadrangle surrounded by an arcade, the main cloister stands at the middle of the abbey and serves as a sort of crossroads for the place. The monks hold class for the novices here (weather permitting), and centuries of holy men have discussed matters of faith while quietly pacing the covered path around its edge. At the center of the cloister is a shrine of weather-worn limestone dedicated to the founder of the abbey, a hooded man holding his arms open in benediction, whose name is inscribed in some forgotten language known only to the high priest (or so the monks believe).

7. ROBIN CHAMBER

Here the high priest and anyone assisting in the day's ceremonies don the robes appropriate to the service held in the main chapel. Along its southern wall are large wardrobes, and against the east and west walls are chests holding vestments and regalia. All of these are locked; only the high priest has the key.

8. HIGH PRIEST'S RESIDENCE

With doorways to both the main cloister and main chapel, this room is the living quarters for Fadduck Tai, the high priest. Serving as both sleeping quarters and private study, the room holds a modest bed and sturdy writing table with a chair. It is spartanly decorated with only a simple shrine in the northeast corner for private prayer. Below the bed, wrapped in rough burlap, is a single tome — a book on Necromancy entitled *Paths Of The Dead*.

9. CHAPTERHOUSE

The chapterhouse serves as a meeting hall for the residents of the abbey, where the monks and high priest discuss worldly business concerning the place. The only furniture in the room is a narrow table with three chairs. During a meeting the high priest sits in the middle chair while the two monks — one appointed to help adjudicate the discussion; the other to make a written record of its proceedings — sit to his left and right.

10. LIBRARY

The abbey's extensive library fills this room. It's three stories high; the top two stories are mezzanine levels looking out onto the main floor where monks work during the daylight hours scribing copies of the documents and tomes. In the peaked roof are windows with leaded glass that provide ample light for the monks' scribing.

11. REFECTORY

The refectory is a large hall where the abbey's residents take their meals. Long oak tables dominate most of the room, and near the north hall is a single table where the senior monks sit.

12. KITCHEN

The kitchen contains extensive (but simple) cooking facilities. Under the supervision of a monk, the novices take turns cooking the meals for the entire abbey as a part of their duties.

13. GARDEN

This area, enclosed on the three sides, serves as a small garden for growing herbs and spices, as well as a yard for chickens. A chicken coop sits in a small alcove located in the southwest corner of the place.

14. STABLES

These stables are for dairy cattle (who are kept inside at night) and grain storage. If necessary, the abbey can stable visitors' horses here.

15. CHAPEL

This serves as chapel for private rituals and ceremonies too small for the main chapel. A stone altar, similar to the one in the main chapel but smaller and less resplendent, stands against the south wall, and tapestries depicting scenes from the stories of the gods and their worshippers decorate all four walls.

16. MONKS' DORMITORY

The monks reside in these small cells bordering the southern part of the main cloister. The dormitory is two stories high with a total of twenty-nine cells, and each cell contains two simple pallets and chests for storage.

Novices' Cloister

A second quadrangle, smaller than the main cloister, is where the novices' living quarters are, as well as the location for workshops and the like for tasks that must be performed around the abbey.

17. BLACKSMITH'S SHOP

This blacksmith's shop allows the monks and novices to effect minor repairs to metal items, such as mending pots, and to hammer out goods from soft metals like tin or copper. None of the monks is a skilled blacksmith, or able to craft or repair weapons or armor. The room holds an anvil and tools, and a fire pit is dug into the northeast corner.

18. CARPENTRY SHOP

This room holds tools for cabinetmaking, woodcarving, and the like. All manner of saws, hammers, and nails can be found along the east wall; and a large assortment of lumber sits in a pile against the north wall.

19. CRAFTSMEN'S SHOP

This second story room contains tools and materials for the making pottery, sewing fabric,

cobbling sandals, and repairing leather goods. The monks use a simple earthen kiln, located outside the abbey a little ways to the west, for baking roofing tiles and the like.

20. NOVICES' DORMITORY

The novices reside in cells bordering the west and south parts of the novice cloister. Two stories tall, the dormitory holds thirty cells; each has two double bunks and several chests for storage.

21. HOSPICE

Situated between the monks' and novices' dormitory, the hospice serves as a residence for important visitors to the abbey, most often clergy and nobles. The building is two stories. On the bottom story are a dining chamber and servant quarters; on the top, two large bed chambers. (In situations where there isn't enough room in the hospice for all of the guests, visitors reside in empty monk or novice cells.)

THE PROPHECY

The Abbey Of Eternal Vigilance is a good place for the PCs to learn more about the banished god's past activities... if they can help the high priest learn to read the forgotten tongue used to write the books about him. As a clue to the abbey's existence and purpose, as well as the high priest's plight, you can provide the following bit of prophecy to the PCs:

Gr'nful ile d'lyra-krol
(With prideful claims of eternal service,)
 Atreck ongretat kursyn
(The enemies gather, praying)
 Yron ossyu d'ove-krol te se'tor
(But forgetful of devotion and purpose.)
 Emprus Gr'net'ymbol rnt'hatren-krol
(Time without meaning before his power,)
 Yt Rn'grn-krol bryrn croš'enonen
(Only the god works through the centuries,)
 Machyn hieroen-krol vys'atreck
(Weaving a baleful magic against his foes.)



SIR AGNAR'S MANOR



THE MANOR IN AMBRETHEL

If you're using *The Turakian Age*, a *Fantasy Hero* setting published by Hero Games, you should locate the Sir Agnar's manor and fief somewhere in the Westerlands. It would fit well in many realms, including Thurgandia, Umbr, the Mhendarian Palatinate, and Vestria. Since he has a connection to Lady Redwater (from the adventure in Chapter Three), making him a noble of Thurgandia or Szarvasia would put him within visiting distance of her.

PLOT SEEDS

Azny and Tora Lot, seemingly content to serve Sir Agnar, orchestrate a revolt against the knight and take him prisoner. Agnar's liege hires the adventurers to put down the revolt, but when they arrive, not everything is as it seems: the first serfs they fight quickly surrender and begin telling tales of Agnar's madness, stories of oppression quite out of character for the knight. In the face of this new knowledge, do the PCs simply follow their orders and put down the rebellion, or do they search deeper into the matter — and if so, what evil do they discover?

Having heard stories of Sir Agnar's hospitality, the adventurers decide to present themselves at the manor house. But when they arrive, they

In many medieval societies, a noble required royal permission to crenelate, meaning fortify his dwelling with crenelated walls. The reason for this obvious: with crenelated walls to fight from, a noble stood a much better chance of fending off attackers... such as his liege if he rebelled. Thus, kings only granted permission to crenelate to the most trusted families (whom the king felt unlikely to rebel against his rule) or the most powerful families (who left the king no choice but to grant them permission). The privilege was a rare one, a mark of the king's favor and a family's prestige.

Nobles who couldn't obtain permission often dwelt in manor houses rather than castles, which allowed them a certain degree of prestige and security. Sir Agnar Sorlyn, a knight of the realm and member of an esteemed family, lives in one such manor house. His estates are small but prosperous, and require little of his time — which is for the best, since Sir Agnar has little love for the mundane duties of nobility and much prefers hunting his lands or riding off to war. He's also fond of adventurers and known far and wide to welcome them as guests in exchange for a rousing story of their exploits told over mugs of ale.

THE KNIGHT AND HIS MEN

Six people live in the manor house: Sir Agnar, his valet, and four servants. Sir Agnar and his valet often travel, leaving the servants in charge of both the house and his estates.

SIR AGNAR SORLYN					
18 STR	16 DEX	18 CON			
12 BODY	13 INT	10 EGO			
15 PRE	12 COM				
5 PD	5 ED	3 SPD			
7 REC	34 END	30 STUN			

Abilities: Fringe Benefit: Knight; +3 HTH; +2 with Longsword, Lance, and War Hammer; +2 OCV versus Mounted Combat penalties with All Attacks; +2 versus Range Penalties with Longbow; High Society 8-; KS: Heraldry 13-; KS: Knights 13-; Persuasion 13-; Riding 16-; Tactics 14-; WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Lance.

75+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Code Of Chivalry (Common, Total); Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Occasionally, Major)

Description: Sir Agnar is a Sorlyn, though from a minor branch of that large and esteemed family. Despite the estates granted to him for heroics in the last war the kingdom fought, Sir Agnar has

no desire to spend the rest of his days on his land. Whenever word reaches him of a battle or impending war, he saddles his horse and rides out to lend his lance to the cause.

Sir Agnar is fond of adventurers and loves to hear stories of their exploits. He welcomes such fellows to his manor (as long as they are of good and friendly disposition) and looks forward to having feast in his great hall, when he insists his guests regale him with tales of exotic locales and fearsome monsters. Adventurers are unlikely to leave the manor without the warriors among them participating in an impromptu joust, melee, or at the very least an archery contest. Sir Agnar doesn't do this out of a desire to prove he's better than they — he's a gracious loser, if he loses — he merely exults in competition. All in all, Sir Agnar is brash and boisterous, filled with *bonhomie* and a lust for life.

The picture of a dashing knight and flower of chivalry, Sir Agnar stands 6'3" tall and has curly blond hair, piercing blue eyes, and an aquiline nose. He's in his early thirties. His bachelorhood is a matter of some concern among the elders of the Sorlyn family and they never cease to play matchmaker. Sir Agnar claims he'll take a wife when he is done with war and battle — he has no desire to leave behind a widow should the worst come to pass. Of course this is only a part of the story. The other side of it is: Sir Agnar has little desire to grow up and settle down.

The Valet And Other Servants

Halde Gibbs, a young man with brown hair and eyes in his middle twenties, acts as Sir Agnar's valet, squire, trusty companion, and jack-of-all-trades. Quiet and cynical, he provides a good contrast for his lord's outgoing personality, and tempers Sir Agnar's more flamboyant plans with a well-timed criticism or observation.

Several years ago Halde was as eager as his lord to go to battle and on adventures, but lately he's grown loathe to leave the manor. He has met a girl, the third daughter of one of Agnar's serfs, and wishes to leave Sir Agnar's service so he can marry her. Halde knows Sir Agnar has little use for marriage, so he's understandably nervous about making his desire to settle down known. He spends many a sleepless night rehearsing what he'll say to Sir Agnar when the time finally comes to depart his service.

Four other servants reside in the manor. Greta and Maddie, two old women, are the house's cooks and serve the meals. Both are widows with no other family to look after them, and Sir Agnar took them

on to provide them with a livelihood. Grateful to the knight, the women dote on Sir Agnar as if he were their own son. Azny Lot and his wife, Tora, act as groundskeeper and chambermaid. They're in their forties, their own children now adults. Because of Sir Agnar's frequent absences and lack of real interest in day-to-day affairs, the Lots act as the *de facto* leaders of the community (with Greta and Maddie offering plenty of advice).

THE MANOR HOUSE

The manor house stands in the middle of rolling pastures where only a few high-grown trees remain. Built on a foundation of flagstone and rubble, the manor has stone walls for its ground and first floors and half-timber for its second floor. The roof is shingled with slate tiles, and its windows hold leaded glass.

In the immediate area outside the mansion are stables, a barn used to store grain tithed from the peasants, and seasonal dwellings for servants.



Ground Floor

The ground floor lies half in the ground and a stairway from outside leads down to its entrance. This floor is intended for the servants' living quarters and storage; Sir Agnar and his guests rarely visit here.

1. KITCHEN

The manor house's kitchen is large and well equipped, capable of serving the needs of almost ten times as many people as it normally does. To Sir Agnar, a feast with fine food is second only to the joys of battle and the hunt, and he spares no expense when it comes to his kitchens. A stairway here leads up to the antechamber on the first floor (*First Floor*, area #1).

2. WORKROOM

The groundskeeper, Azny Lot, uses this space as his workroom. Here he repairs his tools, cuts planks to size for use in the stables, and the like. Azny also stores the tools of his trade, including rakes and saws, here.

A. Storage

These rooms serve as storage space for the manor. One room, the largest, holds an impressive selection of ales, wines, beers, and other potent potables from the mundane to the exotic — including one of Agnar's prized possessions: a bottle containing three fingers of Wickshine brandy.

B. Servant's Quarters

Both servant's quarters are similarly furnished: a table and chairs for meals, several chests for clothes, and two beds. (Azny and Tora sleep in separate beds, since Azny snores and thrashes in his sleep, and Tora can't abide the smell of mulch.)

First Floor

The first floor is the heart of the manor house and contains the great hall where Sir Agnar holds his feasts, which are well-known for their fine food and ever-flowing supply of ale. A stone stair leads up from the ground to the manor's main entrance which opens into the antechamber.

1. ANTECHAMBER

The antechamber serves many purposes: foyer, waiting room, greeting room, hallway, and sitting room. Usually it's lightly furnished with two benches to either side of the large fireplace and a long table with two chairs against the wall opposite the fireplace. If necessary, servants place other furniture, mainly chairs, in the room. The walls are decorated with trophies Sir Agnar has won in tournaments, mostly weapons and pieces of armor taken from vanquished knights who were unable to ransom it back, and the heads and pelts of beasts

THE PROPHECY

As stated in the description of his chambers, Halde Gibbs has amassed a large collection of nicknacks, and on one of these, a brick of red basalt its rough edges smoothed by time, is inscribed strange characters that Halde thinks are simple, meaningless designs. But in truth the "designs" are letters from the language sacred to the banished god. They spell out a portion of the prophecy. The prophecy here is the same as that inscribed on the cornerstone located below castle Eisburk, described in *Eisburk-Beyond-The-Shoals* on page 54.

You can use this as hook for beginning that adventure. To help the players solve the riddle of the prophecy, be sure to have Sir Agnar mention his cousin and the castle with its gleaming white walls where she resides with her husband, Lord Redwater.

Continued from page 82

discover they aren't the only adventurers in the area and Sir Agnar already plays host to these other travelers. The others are always courteous when Sir Agnar is around, but speak harsh words to the PCs when he's absent. In the morning, the PCs awake to discover they've been robbed. Will they take matters into their own hands, or trust Sir Agnar to see that justice is done — and if not, how will the knight respond when his guests find themselves threatened by the PCs?

While the PCs are staying at the manor house, a rider arrives with a dire message: Eisburk-beyond-the-Shoals — a castle where Sir Agnar's cousin resides with her husband, the Lord Redwater — is under siege and in desperate straits. Sir Agnar makes to depart immediately and asks that the PCs accompany him. What do they find when they finally arrive on the scene? Are they in time to help lift the siege, or have the attackers already overrun the castle's defenders? And if Eisburk has fallen, Sir Agnar does not leave quietly. He swears vengeance and begins to plan his revenge — do the PCs stick around to attempt taking the castle back?

MANOR MATERIALS SUMMARY

Below you can find a summary of DEF and BODY for materials around Sir Agnar's manor.

Object	DEF and BODY
Banner	DEF 0, BODY 3
Bench	DEF 4, BODY 5
Bed	DEF 3, BODY 5
Door, Inside	DEF 2, BODY 3
Door, Outside	DEF 4, BODY 3
Mounted Head	DEF 2, BODY 3
Table	DEF 4, BODY 7
Wall, Inside	DEF 3, BODY 3
Wall, Outside	DEF 5, BODY 5
Window	DEF 1, BODY 1

he has slain while hunting. A large stairway in one corner leads up to Sir Agnar's bedchamber and down to the kitchen. Two wooden doors lead to the great hall.

2. GREAT HALL

The great hall is where Sir Agnar holds his feasts, views entertainments performed by traveling players, and sits in judgment of disputes among the serfs (a very rare occasion in the case of Sir Agnar and his estates). In the middle of the room are three oaken tables arranged in a U-shape before the long fireplace. The ceiling here is 3" (19.5 feet) high; overlooking the room is a minstrel's gallery, reached via a stairway against the south wall. Minstrels are frequent visitors to the manor, since they know Sir Agnar is gracious even toward less-talented members of their profession. Hung from the beams running across the ceiling is a panoply of tattered banners — trophies Sir Agnar has taken from knights he defeated on the battlefield. During feasts Sir Agnar points to a banner and regales his guests with a tale of the battle it came from. On the hall behind the knight's chair — a massive seat of oak worked with a horse motif — hangs a wide banner blazoned with Sir Agnar's crest, a red griffon standing on its hind legs on a white and black background (in heraldic terms: per pale argent and sable, a griffon rampant guardant gules).

3. STUDY

This room serves as Sir Agnar's study. It has a large desk and chair, a second chair on the other side of the desk, a book shelf, and a chest containing important documents such as Sir Agnar's title

to the lands and other royal decrees. The room is noticeably dusty. The only area not covered in dust is a single bookshelf crammed with written accounts of journeys to far-off lands. Though content with his life as a knight, Sir Agnar often wishes he had been born into a less-esteemed family and allowed to become a far-roving adventurer.

4. GUEST ROOM

One of two guest rooms in the manor, this room holds a bed large enough for two people, a chest, and a table with two chairs. The furnishings are well made, but not ostentatious. On the walls hang tapestries depicting martial scenes like battles and jousts.

Second Floor

The second floor, most of its space dominated by the great hall, holds three bedrooms: Sir Agnar's own; his valet's; and a single guest room.

1. SIR AGNAR'S BEDCHAMBER

This large room serves as Sir Agnar's sleeping area, and for its size, the room is relatively bare since it's intended for a husband and wife — and not just a bachelor who cares little about the finer points of style and dress. The four-poster bed is large and hung with heavy curtains to keep out the draft. When he sleeps, Sir Agnar hangs his sword from a hook on one of the bedposts. He keeps his coin chest under the bed. Near the stairs that lead down to the antechamber are two wardrobes: one holds clothing, the other holds knightly vestments for when Sir Agnar rides to battle.

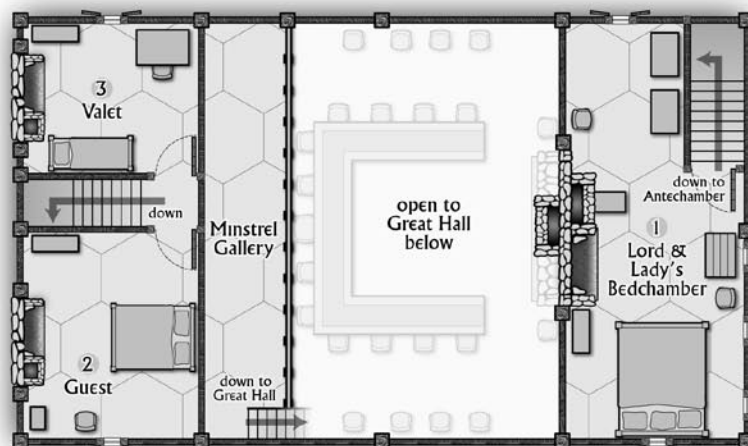
2. GUEST CHAMBER

This chamber is furnished identically to the one on the floor below (*First Floor*, area #4).

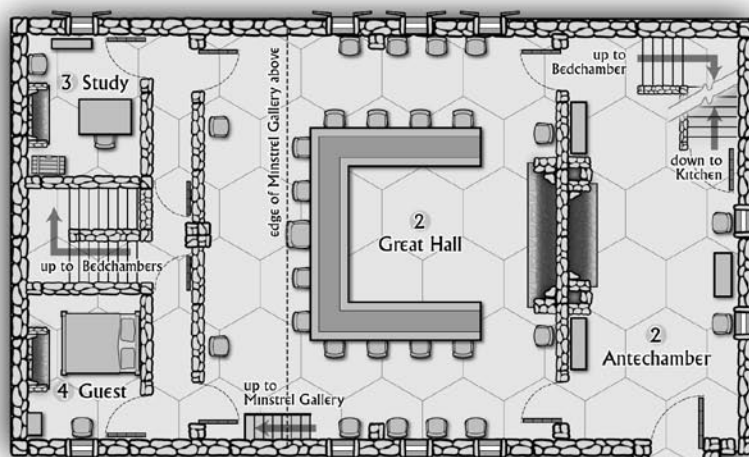
3. THE VALET'S CHAMBER

Halde Gibbs, Sir Agnar's valet, resides in this room. It has a bed large enough for one person, a wardrobe, and a writing table with a chair. While journeying beside Sir Agnar, Halde has accumulated a large collection of nicknacks and gewgaws — small statuettes of foreign gods, stones taken from the ocean shore, and similar items of little monetary value, but which hold fond memories for Halde — and he has haphazardly arranged these around the room.

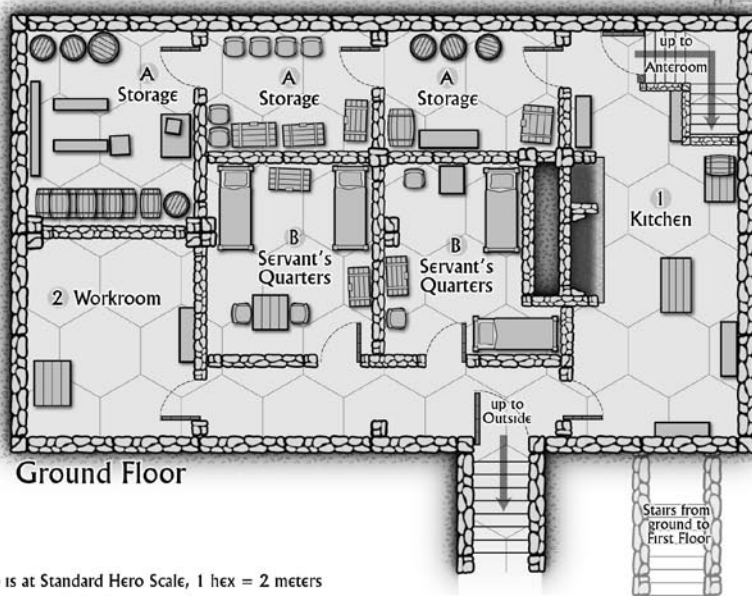
Sir Agnar's Manor



Second Floor



First Floor



Ground Floor

Legend

	Heavy Wall		Chest, Table
	Window and Shutters		Chair
	Heavy Post		Furniture or Boxes
	Light Wall		Barrels
	Door		Single Bed
	Light Post		Double Bed
	Stone Wall		
	Chimney and Flue from floor below		

Map is at Standard Hero Scale, 1 hex = 2 meters

DARMONDRAT'S PALACE



THE BOTTLE IN AMBRETHEL

If you're using *The Turanian Age*, a *Fantasy Hero* setting published by Hero Games, you could locate Darmondrat's bottle wherever you like. It might be in the treasure hoard of a dragon, sitting on some wizard's shelf (or in some king's secret armory), or lying in the weeds by the side of a road.

Charging buffalo. Rampaging hill giants. Infuriated greater dragons. These are unpleasant, short-tempered creatures best avoided under even the most congenial of circumstances. None of them hold a candle, however, to an imprisoned ifrit (see *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, page 52). While not exactly the most pleasant of beings to begin with, these notoriously ill-tempered, demon-like elemental entities really come into their own when confined. A captured ifrit instantly applies every furious fibre in its powerful being to the task of getting free. In fact, it will use its gifted mind to focus the immense magical abilities at its disposal so narrowly upon the project of regaining its liberty that reality itself has been known to warp around places where these monsters are incarcerated.

Darmondrat is a powerful ifrit who normally makes his home in the elemental plane of Fire. For millennia he whiled away his days, amusing himself by bullying lesser entities or eating the occasional wizard who carelessly strayed into his domain. Then one fateful day a maelstrom of spiraling energy opened in the ether above his head. Before he could flee, Darmondrat was compelled by a powerful voice to travel through the vortex. Unable to resist, he entered, only to find himself confined in a magnificently jeweled bottle on the material plane. He then heard a loud human voice exclaim "I always wondered if I could do that!" before the bottle was dropped into a large chest with a resounding, final thump. A lid slammed shut. This was in turn followed by the sound of a key being firmly locked into place. That was centuries ago.

Unbeknownst to the ifrit he had become a victim of the legendary conjurer Vashtori. The seemingly effortless summoning, binding, and imprisonment of Darmondrat were one of Vashtori's greatest (as well as most secret) magical accomplishments, ones which have seldom been rivaled in the recorded history of spellcraft. Unfortunately for the hapless ifrit it was also a bit of a whim; the great conjurer simply wanted to see if capturing an ifrit were possible. He immediately lost interest in the experiment when it proved successful, hiding the bottle away in a chest buried deep in the depths of his mansion's cellar.

But of course nothing that valuable is meant to stay hidden away forever. Vashtori died centuries ago, and his possessions passed to his heirs — most of them former apprentices — and they in turn disposed of them as they saw fit. For whatever reason, no one who owned Darmondrat's Palace ever figured out what the strange-looking bottle really was (or if anyone did, he didn't reveal that

fact). The bottle has since been lost, and could turn up just about anywhere.

INHABITANTS OF THE BOTTLE

The most important inhabitant of the jeweled bottle is, of course, Darmondrat the Ifrit. Within its confines he is — for lack of a better word — a god, able to manipulate space and matter as he sees fit within certain parameters. Fortunately for all concerned, he isn't too terrible a fellow as far as members of his race go. Though Darmondrat is cruel, vain, murderous, domineering, and completely self-serving, he desperately wants to get free from his magical prison. Since all of his motivations are centered around this goal, purely recreational evil isn't a big priority for him at the moment.

The other inhabitants of the jeweled bottle fall into two distinct categories. The first and largest group is comprised phantasmal shades, illusionary constructs brought into existence when the bottle's magic combines with that of its captive. Built out of shadow substance by Sorcery, they are more like automatons than real beings, though some of the older ones can demonstrate a remarkable amount of free will. If you need generic statistics for the human-like phantasm, consult the Human Adversaries section of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*. The second group consists of various summoned creatures Darmondrat has drawn into his prison to share his fate. Some of them would very much like to get free, while others now consider their dungeon to be their home and are correspondingly reluctant to leave.

THE FANTASTIC VESSEL OF VASHTORI

Vashtori didn't summon such a powerful being just to stick him in an old wine bottle. From the outside the Vessel appears to be an exquisitely crafted (but not necessarily magical) blue glass bottle whose surface is studded with dozens of valuable gems. Darmondrat's prison is a sophisticated, one-of-a-kind artifact designed specifically to contain a creature with his level of power.

To work its magic, the Vessel channels the vast majority of its captive's raw magical might into the construction of a "pocket plane" that can be manipulated in various ways to make its prisoner's presumably lengthy stay more comfortable. In Darmondrat's case this has meant the creation of

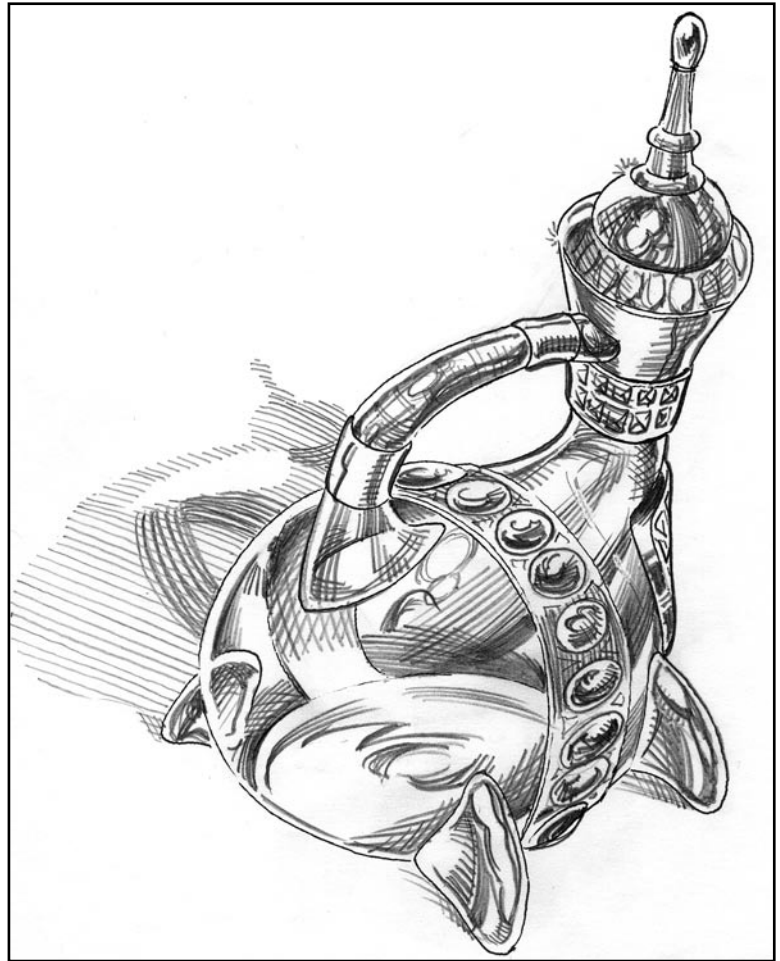
a palace which reminds him of his old home on the plane of Fire. Over the years as he has tried everything within the realm of his considerable powers to escape, Darmondtrat has unlocked some of the secrets of the Vessel. This has enabled him to draw other beings into captivity through various temporary portals opened using magic contained in the Vessel's gemstones. Unfortunately, because of his meddling with the Vessel's basic magic he can no longer simply leave when the stopper is removed from its top. Someone who wants to free him must open a series of nine gates by activating the enchanted power within each type of gemstone embedded in the bottle's surface: aquamarine, topaz, quartz, jasper, opal, jade, alabaster, diamond, and ruby. To further complicate matters, a willing third party, not the ifrit himself or someone he compels, must perform these openings.

Darmondtrat has created nine separate areas within his "palace," each containing a "lever" of some sort which will open its respective gate. This "lever" isn't always a physical switch. Sometimes a small task has to be performed, a foe defeated, or some other action undertaken to unlock the gem's secrets. Darmondtrat doesn't know exactly what the PCs will encounter in each area, since the magic of the Vessel changes and warps his creations even as he dreams them into existence. Additionally, when each "lever" has been "thrown" there's a single Segment in which a gate opens, and people such as the PCs can use that gate to leave the Vessel. A circular pool of tepid light 2" in radius materializes somewhere in the area, glows with a faint luminescence the color of the gem which has just been activated, then vanishes. Persons in that area of the Vessel can find one of these gates on a successful PER Roll at -4. However, a gate should never take a person back where he was when his adventure began. The GM should choose a different plane of existence, a geographically distant location, or another reality to move him to.

Each area within the Vessel is as big as Darmondtrat's imagination can make it — which really isn't all that big, since the ifrit isn't the most creative creature in the world. He tends to take short cuts, relying on tricks such as "reality loops" or placing the adventurers indoors a great deal of the time. For example, if the PCs venture into The Fields of Pleasure, they'll think they've stepped into a vast forest.... until they pass the exact same tree every forty hexes. The obvious defining barriers (such as walls) in each area are impenetrable, since they define the limits of what exists there.

Getting Into The Vessel

It's remarkably easy to get trapped inside the Fantastic Vessel Of Vashtori. Darmondtrat has changed the bottle's magic aura so that it's identical to that of the infinitely more common djinn's lamp (see *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, page 27). Wizards using their Magesight (*Fantasy Hero*, page 106), a Detect Magic-type spell, or making a KS: Occult and Arcane Lore roll to try to learn more about the Vessel before opening it must make their rolls at a -6 to see through the deception — but



even if they make their rolls, all they know is that something's amiss. They will not know exactly what the Vessel is, what type of creature it contains, or that its magic has been subtly warped from within.

If the Vessel's large ruby stopper is removed, all living beings within a three hex radius around it are immediately whisked inside with a terrific sucking noise (after which the stopper re-inserts itself into the bottle's mouth). This action can be repeated an infinite number of times with exactly the same result. The unlucky abductees always find themselves standing together at the edge of the Great Throne Room.

1. THE GREAT THRONE ROOM (AQUAMARINE)

This fantastic circular chamber can appear to be anywhere from seven to seventy hexes in radius depending upon Darmondtrat's whims. The PCs always appear on a solid ruby hex directly in front of the wall separating area #9 (the Theater of Humiliation) from area #2 (the Harem) facing inwards toward the center of the room. Above them the Great Throne Room's blue glass ceiling spirals upward for what appear to be miles until it finally puckers into a funnel-like opening stoppered by glowing ruby plug seemingly the size of the moon. Here and there precious stones the size of castles punctuate this unbelievable skyline like the faces of saints peering down from stained glass windows in some sort of monstrous cathedral. Massive fire-spitting dragons glide upon invisible

IFRIT’S PALACE
MATERIALS SUMMARY

Object	DEF and BODY
Bowl, agate	DEF 4, BODY 6
Book	DEF 3, BODY 1
Bookshelf, wood	DEF 4, BODY 5
Bottle, glass	DEF 2, BODY 1
Desk, wooden	DEF 3, BODY 3
Divan, sexy	DEF 3, BODY 3
Door, heavy wooden	DEF 4, BODY 4
Lantern, bulls-eye	DEF 2, BODY 2
Quartz Sphere	DEF 4, BODY 8
Pillar, granite	DEF 5, BODY 10
Skull	DEF 1, BODY 1
Statue, nymph	DEF 6, BODY 4
Stool, wooden	DEF 3, BODY 3
Table, heavy wooden	DEF 4, BODY 5
Throne, platinum	DEF 5, BODY 7
Tree, small	DEF 4, BODY 5
Wall, stone block	DEF 8, BODY 5

updrafts far above, occasionally stopping to alight upon the surface of one of the gargantuan gems like a fly landing upon the back of a camel. The enormity of space above is so great that any PC looking at it for more than a few moments (executing a deliberate PER Roll, for example) must succeed with a PRE Roll; if he fails, he collapses to the floor holding his hands over his eyes and can do nothing for a full Phase.

Despite its colossal size this chamber is also extremely hot. Any PC wearing armor (or extremely heavy clothing, such as fur robes) must make a successful CON Roll every Post-Segment 12 (or every two minutes out of combat) or suffer 2d6 NND heat damage (the defense is Life Support [Safe Environment: Intense Heat]). Characters not wearing armor, or who take off their armor, don't suffer this problem; they just perspire heavily.

A ten-foot high shelf-like structure made of white marble circumscribes this chamber. It's divided into eight distinctive areas by the placement of gilded marble columns that end in fanciful minarets. Each area seems to contain a room of some sort that's cut off from view by a different colored curtain. A unique, fancifully-curved script is carved into the marble above each of these rooms. Should the PCs be able to read the language of ifrits (perhaps through a spell of comprehension), they can read the script, which names each room. These curtains are actually dimensional barriers, as are the marble walls around them. They are immovable, indestructible, and impenetrable to virtually all Senses (only Clairsentience with the Dimensional modifier, or the like, can perceive through them), unless Darmondtrat allows the PCs to go through them (see below).

The Dais And The Sanctum

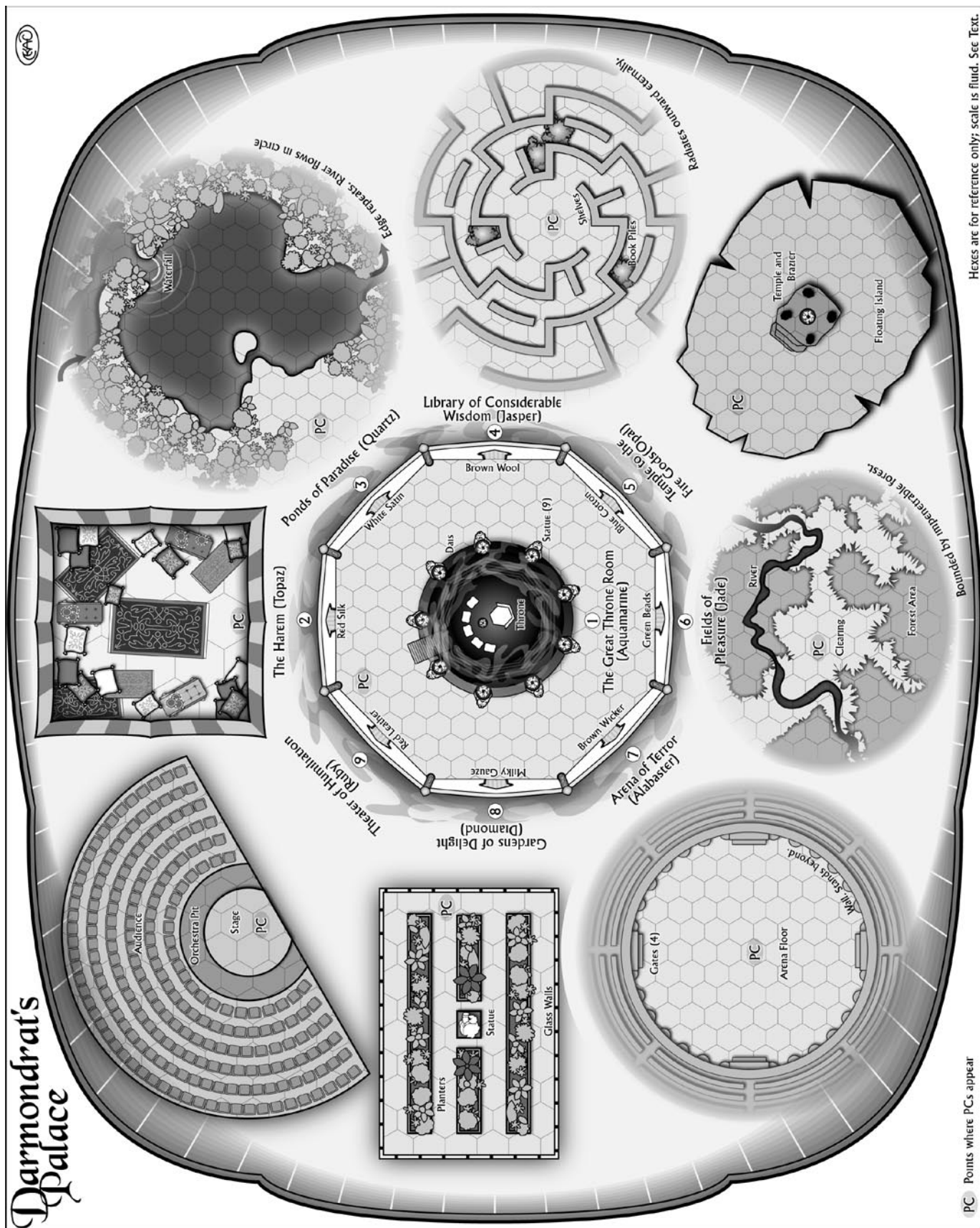
The center of the great throne room contains a raised stone dais made of the blackest onyx. Nine gigantic statues of naked demonic woman clutching bowls of dark roaring flame over their heads are positioned equidistantly around its edge. Each

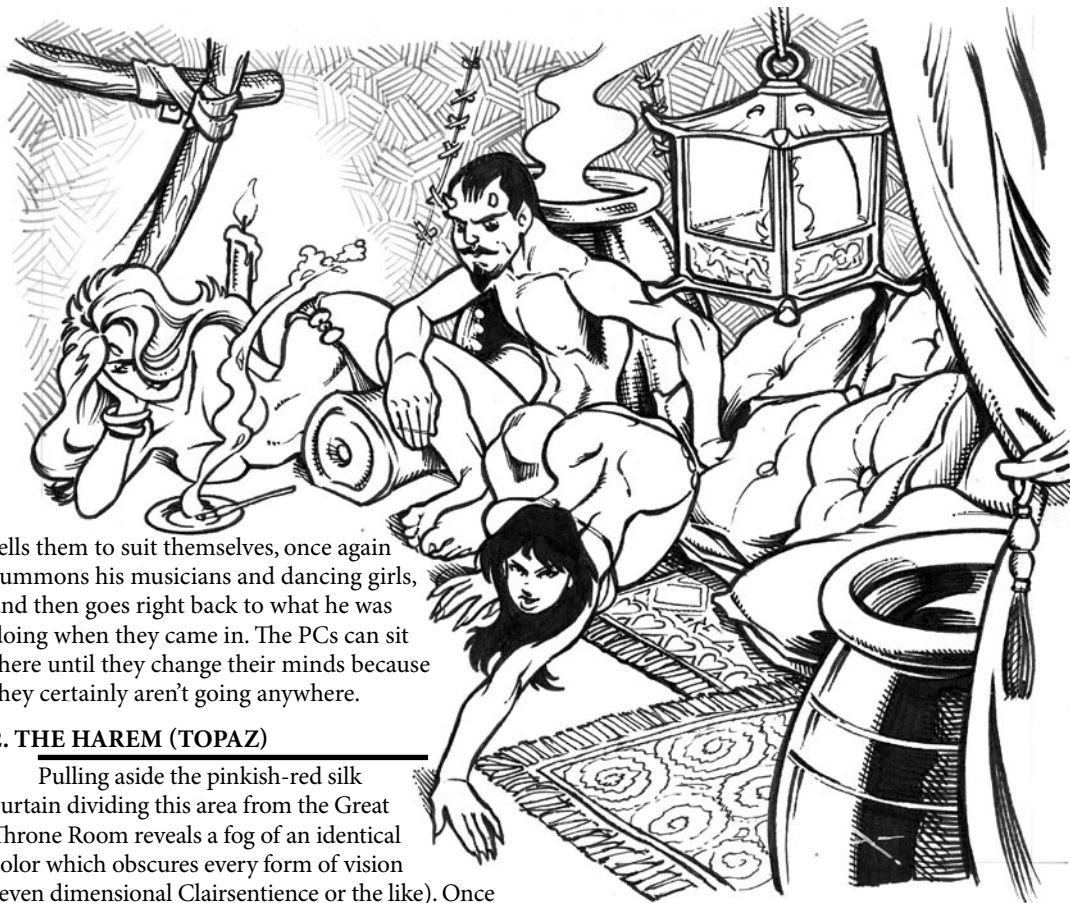
of them seems to have been carved from a different gemstone the size of a redwood tree. A massive row of steps cut directly into the dais's shiny surface faces the direction of the PCs, almost inviting them to walk upwards into the smoky gloom. Should they circumambulate the dais (a process which may take some time depending on how large Darmondtrat wants his throne room to be at this time) or fly over it, their vision remains obscured by the smoke. Only the casting of a spell such as Wizard's Eye (see *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*, page 235) will allow a PC to see through this murk.

If the PCs ascend the stairs, they pass through a noticeable (but not especially unpleasant) scented veil of smoke before entering into the circular inner sanctum where Darmondtrat spends most of his time. He sits upon a mighty throne made of solid platinum and engraved with abstract spiraling patterns in gold, silver, and copper. Three feet in front of him an iron pedestal holds a large, crude bowl cut from a single piece of agate and filled with what appears to be liquid fire. He uses this bowl to cast the ifrit version of Benthara's Spell Of Revelation (*The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*, page 33) with which he views the outside world. Two incredibly beautiful dancing girls with exquisite ornaments in their hair gyrate slowly around him as he peers into the dish. Evil, inhuman-looking musicians play an unfathomable Middle Eastern rhythm to which the alluring women sway their daunting hips. When the PCs enter Darmondtrat looks up as if startled (he isn't) before clapping his hands twice. The music stops, the musicians vanish, and the women walk into the veil of smoke after making suggestive glances toward the adventurers with their exotic eyes. Uttering pleasant words of welcome, he motions for them to sit upon the luxurious-looking cushions which lay scattered around him in a half-circle. The musicians, the throne, and the pillows are all phantasms created by Darmondtrat, but the bowl and the two dancing girls are quite real. These women are actually succubi (see page 53 of *The HERO System Bestiary*).

After the PCs seat themselves (or choose to remain standing), Darmondtrat explains the facts as he knows them to the PCs in a calm, reasonable, and friendly manner. He asks for their help, telling them of his unfair imprisonment, his desire to be free, and the process which will free him. He promises them wealth, magical items, and power in the form of Grant Wish spells (see *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*, page 241) if they agree to help him. He also points out correctly (but misleadingly) that the only way for them to return to the place from which they came is to help him escape. He will not mention the portals to elsewhere that briefly open each time a "lever" is thrown, but he does explain the "lever" concept. Darmondtrat doesn't know the name or motivations of the Vessel's creator.

If the characters accept this quest, Darmondtrat unseals the eight magical curtains to make the areas behind them accessible, changes the ifrit script over each doorway to a language they can read, and then impatiently gestures back toward the steps. Should the PCs refuse he sighs resignedly,





tells them to suit themselves, once again summons his musicians and dancing girls, and then goes right back to what he was doing when they came in. The PCs can sit there until they change their minds because they certainly aren't going anywhere.

2. THE HAREM (TOPAZ)

Pulling aside the pinkish-red silk curtain dividing this area from the Great Throne Room reveals a fog of an identical color which obscures every form of vision (even dimensional Clairsentience or the like). Once all of the PCs have entered this haze and released the curtain behind them, the mist dissipates, revealing the cramped interior of a luxuriously-furnished tent made of the same material as the curtain. A brass lantern decorated with unicorns, satyrs, and nymphs casts a festive light upon a scene of orgiastic merriment taking place below. Scantly clad succubi and incubi equal in number to (and appropriate for) the PCs are lounging upon either divans or engaged in erotic yet controlled dances which take them in tight circles around the center of the tent. They invite the PCs to join them, using their *Seduction Skills* and *Seductive Form* powers to overwhelm the adventurers if they can.

If all of the PCs are ensnared by these tempting demons' sinister ways, their adventures have tragically (yet not unhappily) ended in this very room. If even one of them rejects the succubi's enticing powers, however, all the demons suddenly become angry. They grow long claws from their fingers and attack the PCs. As soon as the tide of battle turns against the demons they retreat back out of the curtain, never to be seen again. The "lever" in the room is the lantern. When it's blown out a pinkish-red gate opens on one wall for an instant, then is gone. The PCs find themselves standing back in the Great Throne Room staring at a blank marble wall where the silk curtain once hung.

3. THE PONDS OF PARADISE (QUARTZ)

Moving aside the pearl-white satin curtain dividing this area from the Great Throne Room reveals a fog of an identical color which obscures every form of vision (even dimensional Clairsentience or the like). Once all of the PCs have entered

it and released the curtain behind them, this mist dissipates, revealing a small tropical lagoon fed by a cascading series of small shallow pools which end in a tiny picturesque waterfall. They're standing on a cool, sandy beach. A full moon shines off the still water which stretches out like a mirrored ocean of glass to one side of them. A jungle filled with mangos, coconut trees, and date palms fills the other side. They can hear soft, nonthreatening animal sounds.

A perfectly shaped ball of quartz the size of a mace's head glints at the PCs from the bottom of the lagoon. It's the "lever" for this area, and when grasped it briefly opens a pearl-white gate on the sandy bottom of the basin next to it. Unfortunately for our adventurers it is guarded by a remarkably determined naiad named Alia (see *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, page 73). Although originally tricked into the Vessel by Darmondtrat through an underwater portal, she has grown extremely fond of her pocket-dimension home and has decided to fight to the death to keep it. She will do everything within her considerable power to keep the PCs from acquiring the quartz sphere at the bottom of her lagoon. If they defeat Alia and grasp the quartz, the PCs find themselves suddenly back in the Great Throne Room staring at a solid wall where the satin curtain once hung. The quartz sphere remains in the possession of the adventurer who first grasped it. It's lovely, though not especially valuable.

4. THE LIBRARY OF CONSIDERABLE WISDOM (JASPER)

When the PCs thrust aside the brown wool curtain dividing this area from the Great Throne

Room, it reveals a fogbank of an identical color which obscures every form of vision (even dimensional Clairsentience or the like). Once all of the PCs have entered it and released the curtain, this mist dissipates, revealing an inexplicably vast library filled with row upon row of books, scrolls, librams, tomes, tablets, and every other sort of conveyance for the written word they can possibly imagine. Yet this library is in considerable disrepair. Its roof has rotted through in several places, allowing pools of stagnant water to form upon the floor. Rats and birds have made elaborate nests from the pages of priceless texts. Books lay scattered everywhere, in many places covering the floor to a depth of two or three feet.

The PCs find themselves standing in a sort of clearing amongst the stacks, with shelving radiating out around them in every direction. A spectral librarian materializes before them, his robes tattered and his eyes tired. He motions to each adventurer in turn before pointing out into the seemingly infinite rows of literature.

“Discover the nature of your imprisonment,” he whispers in a voice like old parchment, then vanishes. This is an opportunity for the PCs to use their Knowledge Skills rather than their combat abilities. Allow each of them to use any vaguely relevant KS, such as *KS: Ancient Literature* or *KS: Arcane And Occult Knowledge*, as Complementary to their basic PER Roll. The first one who makes it (or the one who makes it by the most) finds a copy of a scroll entitled *Vashtori’s Most Vital Victory* which explains the creation, purpose, and use of the Fantastic Vessel Of Vashtori. It says nothing about the temporary gates that open every time a “lever” is successfully pulled, because the levers result from Darmondrat’s tampering with the Vessel’s original nature. Once at least one character reads the scroll, a brown portal winks into being on some shelving behind one of the PCs for a Segment. If they don’t make use of it, they suddenly find themselves standing with scroll in hand back in the Great Throne Room facing a blank stone wall.

If no PC succeeds in making his PER Roll, calmly close your copy of this book, look each player slowly in the eye in turn, and then chuckle evilly before announcing that their characters are trapped for all eternity. Explain to them that they can continue playing the adventure once they’ve created new ones. Once the uproar has died down, give them all another chance to make their PER Rolls (perhaps at a slight penalty this time).

5. THE TEMPLE TO THE FIRE GODS (OPAL)

Moving aside the deep blue cotton curtain dividing this area from the Great Throne Room reveals a wall of identically-colored fog that obscures every form of vision (even dimensional Clairsentience or the like). Once all of the PCs have entered his haze and released the curtain behind them, the mist dissipates, revealing a flat platform of volcanic rock that floats in empty space seemingly with no support. A reddish smoky haze surrounds it on all sides, revealing an infinite ocean of fire in every direction. In the center of the platform

a small, simple temple of granite has been raised. About 4” by 4” in size, it has a low foundation which the PCs can reach by three small steps made of crudely-shaped stone. Four coarse pillars sunk into this foundation at the corners hold up a rough stone roof made from a single slab of solid rock. A great flame burns in a hollowed-out basin in the center of this simple chapel.

The PCs find themselves standing in the middle of one end of this platform. As soon as they move away from that spot, the great flame forms itself into a massive blazing humanoid, lets forth a wild scream, and rushes to the attack. It’s a fire elemental (see page 73 of *The HERO System Bestiary*). Its destruction serves as the “lever” for this area. Upon its demise a deep blue gate opens in the basin for a Segment, then vanishes. The PCs find themselves standing back in the Great Throne Room staring at a marble wall where the cotton curtain once hung.

6. THE FIELDS OF PLEASURE (JADE)

When the PCs pull aside the light green beaded curtain dividing this area from the Great Throne Room, it reveals a fog of an identical color that obscures every form of vision (even dimensional Clairsentience or the like). Once the PCs have entered this haze and released the curtain behind them, the mist dissipates, revealing a pleasant-looking temperate wilderness. It’s early morning and the dew clings to every leaf as a low, cool mist creeps across the forest floor. They find themselves standing in a small, irregularly-shaped glen with their ranged weapons (if any) in their hands. A dozen hunting hounds (see *The HERO System Bestiary*, page 160) stand around them looking anxiously out into the wood. Birds make soft crooning noises in the branches nearby.

There’s a sudden movement at the edge of the clearing just off to one side. As the PCs turn they see a large white stag (see *The HERO System Bestiary*, page 150) standing boldly near the treeline. It bows its horned head as if in salute, then bounds off into the forest with the hunting dogs in hot pursuit. It should be fairly obvious to the PCs that they’re supposed to hunt this fine animal, but you shouldn’t make the hunt easy. The stag should use its SPD 6, its *Concealment* Skill, and partial *Concealment* every chance it gets. You should encourage the adventurers to compensate for this with appropriate Skills such as *Tracking*, *Animal Handler*, and *Survival* as well as Talents like *Beast Speech* and *Combat Archery*. Ideally, tracking the stag through the forest and killing it shouldn’t take more than a few exciting Phases, but it should be a fun encounter for the PCs.

Once the PCs have slain the animal, a light green portal opens briefly next to its body, then vanishes. The PCs find themselves staring at a blank marble wall where the beaded curtain used to be back in the Great Throne Room.

7. THE ARENA OF TERROR (ALABASTER)

When the PCs pull aside the pinkish-brown wicker curtain dividing this area from the Great Throne Room, it reveals a fog of identical color which obscures every form of vision (even dimensional

PLOT SEEDS

After an epic adventure fraught with peril the PCs at last have an opportunity to relax and enjoy the fruits of their labors in the safety of their own keep. An eagerly anticipated portion of this well-earned repose involves the division of magical party treasure, especially the mysterious jeweled bottle which an extremely reliable wizard has told them contains a wish-granting djinn. Of course, things may not be what they seem....

A tear has opened in the very fabric of reality. Qliphothic monsters (see *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, page 86) have been pouring through by the thousands, endangering the very existence of the world as well as everything in it. Only a being with tremendous reality-shaping powers can stop them from wiping out all life. A powerful wizard knows where the PCs can find such a being — right here in this bottle. But can they convince Darmondrat to help them?

A wizard of great lore and power approaches the PCs. He tells them that a thief has stolen a “mystic bottle” from him, and he wants it back... but he’s right in the middle of an important experiment that he can’t leave. He hires them to recover the Vessel, but makes them swear not to open it.

Clairsentience or the like). Once all of the PCs have entered and released the curtain behind them, this mist dissipates revealing a mighty amphitheater constructed from bone-white stones. They find themselves standing in the middle of a sandy circular arena with their melee weapons clenched in their hands. Walls some five hexes in height surround them on all sides, protecting a screaming audience of angry-looking men in white togas from potential harm. There seem to be literally thousands of them seated upon tiers of stone benches which radiate outward from the open area where the adventurers find themselves.

A hot noontime sun beats down upon the PCs’ heads. As they watch, four gates located at equidistant points around the amphitheater’s walls open to allow a number of fierce-looking wild animals to enter onto the arena floor. The number and respective power level of these beasts should reflect that of the PCs (see Chapter Three: Mundane Beasts in *The HERO System Bestiary*). Good choices for gladiatorial creatures include polar bears, cape buffalo, lions, tigers, and elephants. The crowd above will joyously chant the names of whoever or whatever is winning at the moment. Should one of the animals triumph, for example, they will shout “Tiger! Tiger!” The PCs don’t actually have to kill their opponents to win this combat, however. Stunning them or using a Skill such as *Animal Handler* to subdue them also counts as a victory as far as the crowd is concerned.

If the PCs prove victorious, the crowd begins to chant their names in unison. At this point a pool of pinkish-brown light opens at the center of the arena for a single Segment. If they fail to notice or use it, they find themselves facing a blank wall back in The Great Throne Room.

8. THE GARDEN OF DELIGHTS (DIAMOND)

When the PCs thrust aside the milky-translucent gauze curtain dividing this area from the Great Throne Room, it reveals a fog of identical color which obscures every form of vision (even dimensional Clairsentience or the like). Once all of the PCs have entered into this mist and released the curtain behind them, the mist dissipates, revealing a large yet decrepit greenhouse filled with overgrown, untended plant life. Many of the glass panel sections in the roof above are cracked, broken, or missing, allowing lovely tropical songbirds to swoop in and out of the arboretum at will. Half of the PCs find themselves standing on the north side of this rectangular structure, while the other half find themselves on the south side. Three rows of plants run along the area’s length, leaving narrow crowded walkways between them. An eight-foot statue of a comely nymph holding a water pitcher stands in the center of the nursery, water pouring from the pitcher into a small pool below it. There are no doors leading out of the greenhouse.

Four giant carnivorous plants (see *The HERO System Bestiary*, page 198) are hidden amongst the other wildly overgrown plants two hexes from the statue. As soon as the PCs come within range of their tendrils they attack. Assuming the heroes triumph, the “lever” for this area is a single lovely (and quite valuable) diamond inside the statue’s

pitcher. As soon as a PC grasps it, a translucent gate shimmers into existence on the surface of the water in the small pool for a Segment, then vanishes. The PCs find themselves standing back in the Great Throne Room staring at a blank stone wall where the gauze curtain once stood. The diamond, however, remains in the hand of the PC who grasped it.

9. THE THEATER OF HUMILIATION (RUBY)

When the PCs step through the blood-red leather curtain dividing this area from the Great Throne Room, they see an equally blood-red fog that obscures every sort of vision. Once all of the PCs have entered this mist and released the curtain behind them, the mist dissipates, revealing a high-ceilinged wooden theater. They find themselves standing on an “apron” stage surrounded on three sides by expectant-looking spectators in Middle Eastern-looking clothing. The PCs quickly realize they’re weaponless and dressed in outrageous floppy outfits. One holds a skull in his hand, another a dagger. Down below them in an orchestra pit the inhuman musicians from the Great Throne Room frown up at them, instruments in hand.

The purpose of the Theater Of Humiliation is to make the PCs act out some scene from a play for a few moments. Whatever prop their characters might need to do this is available offstage — they need only whisper to have it immediately brought out by a stage hand. The illusionary audience around them should reflect your opinion of how good a job the players do “roleplaying” their scene, either by throwing rotten vegetables at the PCs or cheering them wildly on. Once they have sufficiently amused you, a blood red pool of light opens in the stage floor for a single Segment. If the PCs don’t use it, they find themselves back at in the Great Throne Room staring at a blank wall.

WRAPPING THINGS UP

Upon the completion of their final task the PCs appear back in the Great Throne Room to find Darmondrat, along with his succubi, putting on what can only be described as traveling clothes: hats, cloaks, leather boots. Each one of them carries a suitcase made out of silky fabric. The ifrit’s actions at this point are largely up to you, but they should somehow reflect the quality of the PCs’ actions while captive in the Fantastic Vessel Of Vashtori. He could attack them, reward them, or simply tip his hat before laughing at them. Darmondrat certainly doesn’t feel that he’s under any ethical obligation to keep his word, but he may feel a certain sense of gratitude.

With the conclusion of whatever business exists between the ifrit and the PCs, an ear-splitting POP shakes the Great Throne Room as the ruby stopper is thrown loose from the top of the bottle. This is followed by a hurricane-like sound of rushing wind as the adventurers, Darmondrat, and the succubi are expelled from captivity. They all find themselves standing outside of the Vessel, wherever it may be. The Vessel is now just an ordinary bottle — albeit a valuable one, due to the precious stones attached to it.

THE HAND OF DOOM TAPROOM



Throughout recorded history the humble tavern has gone by many names: alehouse, bar, taproom, roadhouse, barrelhouse, saloon, public house, and brass rail, to name but a few. In many rural towns a tavern is the focal point for society, the place where politics are discussed, friendships cemented, true loves found or lost, and business deals made or fought over. The tavern is a place for beginnings as well as endings, for celebrating as well as lamenting, of belonging, neutrality, and fraternity. But, more importantly, it's the place where *Fantasy Hero* characters go when they want to start a truly epic fistfight — the kind that ends up creating a lot of broken furniture, new Hunteds, and ugly arguments with town watchmen who wear *way* too much plate mail for guys on guard duty.

The Hand Of Doom is a rather infamous taproom located on the main street of Rickter's Vale, a rowdy town of some two thousand individuals which lies near a particularly dangerous mountain range at the northern edge of one of your campaign's frostier kingdoms. The former home of a fabulously wealthy underground dwarven kingdom as well as the current home of several famously ill-tempered dragons, the mountain range attracts hundreds of adventurers, prospectors, big game hunters, and fur trappers annually. Servicing this seasonal influx of questionable characters with uncertain professions — adventurers and prospectors in the spring and summer, hunters and trappers in the fall and winter — provides the town with nearly all of its income (one way or the other). Relations between this burg's somewhat shifty inhabitants and the mountains' downright sinister denizens are quite good; many a tarnished gold coin has made its way from dragon hoard to town merchant to game hunter to carnivorous ogre — then back to the same dragon hoard again all within the space of two months.

THE HAND OF DOOM STAFF

The current nominal owner of the Hand Of Doom is one "Doomed" Edgar Daggerstroke, a former adventurer known as much for his sense of humor as his swordplay. Several years ago Edgar's adventuring company, The Doomed Legion, was drunkenly celebrating a recent successful dungeon crawl when they got into a massive brawl with a band of hobgoblin mercenaries. When the dust cleared, the taproom they'd been fighting in had been reduced nearly to rubble and their foes were nowhere to be found. Forced by the town guard to spend all of their remaining money purchasing the

half-destroyed establishment, Doomed Daggerstroke and his friends decided to give up adventuring in favor of going into the roadhouse business.

Edgar spends most of his time working as the Hand Of Doom's bartender. He's a tall, taciturn fellow with an erudite, rustic wit that's particularly well-suited to Rickter's Vale (where he's inadvertently become a leading citizen). Under his direction the tavern has become unusually successful, due largely to a single innovation: remarkably sturdy furniture. Learning from one of his life's biggest mistakes, Edgar had everything in the Hand Of Doom built to withstand incredible amounts of physical abuse. The Hand Of Doom is, in fact, the only establishment in Rickter's Vale that actively courts the barroom brawling crowd.

Broog McThrifty

Broog McThrifty works as the tavern's bouncer and doorman. Unusually short even by dwarven standards, Broog struggles with a massive Napoleon complex that can only be sated by the daily



PLOT SEEDS

It's been a particularly hard weekend at the tavern. Somehow a fight broke out between a drunken half-giant and a bunch of surly Dwarves which quickly grew to involve the staff, the regulars, and PCs. The result: massive damage to the common room's furniture. As punishment, Daggerstroke has dispatched the PCs down to the dreaded basement level to retrieve new tables, chairs, and stools. Of course the ratlings will be waiting for them....

Justinian has recently figured out what happened to his body after he was murdered: it got tossed down the dry well in the basement! If the PCs would only venture down there and retrieve even a single piece of bone, he can go onto his eternal rest rather than keeping them awake at night.

The PCs are having a fine evening drinking and carrying on when *all* of their Hunteds show up at once for the explicit purpose of killing them, as well as anyone else in the tavern who gets in the way. The staff and regulars rally to the heroes' defense, kicking off an epic bar-room brawl which will be lauded in ballads for generations to come.

administration of beatings to people much larger than himself. A veritable living study in obsessive/compulsive disorder, he has compensated for his tiny stature by learning to walk on specially-designed three foot-long stilts that end in enormous wooden feet with iron toes (HA +1½d6). All of Broog's clothing has been tailored to make him look larger than he really is: his pant legs are three feet too long, the shoulders of his jackets are hugely padded, and he wears a massive fez. The result of all this abnormal tailoring would be completely comical if Broog wasn't so insanely dangerous. His massive hob-toed artificial feet are the only weapon he ever uses or ever needs.

THE HAND OF DOOM STAFF

"DOOMED" EDGAR DAGGERSTROKE

15	STR	11	DEX	18	CON
13	BODY	13	INT	11	EGO
15	PRE	14	COM		
8	PD	6	ED	3	SPD
7	REC	36	END	37	STUN

Abilities: +2 HTH; *Hard Bargainer* (-5 on Trading rolls against him); Evasive; Acting 12-; Bribery 12-; Conversation 12-; Defense Maneuver I-IV; CK: Rickter's Vale 12-; Lockpicking 11-; Oratory 12-; Persuasion 12-; PS: Tavernkeeper 12-; PS: Comedian 12-; Streetwise 12-; Trading 12-; WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

75+ Disadvantages: Hunted: Hobgoblin Adventuring Party 8-; Psychological Limitation: Bossy (Common, Moderate)

BROOG McTHRIFTY

15	STR	17	DEX	18	CON
18	BODY	10	INT	14	EGO
15	PRE	10	COM		
8	PD	8	ED	4	SPD
10	REC	36	END	44	STUN

Abilities: Artificial Legs (HA +1½d6); +6 OCV with Artificial Legs; *Tight-Lipped* (-5 on Conversation rolls against him); Ambidexterity (-2 Off Hand penalty); Bump Of Direction; Crippling Blow; Fearless; CK: Rickter's Vale 11-; *Dwarven Longevity*: Life Support (Longevity: 400 Years); PS: Bouncer 12-; Streetwise 12-; Two-Weapon Fighting (HTH); WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

75+ Disadvantages: Hunted: Hobgoblin Adventuring Party 8-; Physical Limitation: Short; Psychological Limitation: Napoleon Complex

Romandulfo The Magnificent

Romandulfo the Magnificent used to be a war wizard of some renown before he discovered the great love of his life: whisky. Now he and his equally drunken imp familiar (see *The HERO System Bestiary*, page 50) while their days away at the very end of the Hand's polished spruce bar perched atop an enchanted floating barstool that drifts closer to the ceiling as the night goes on. The higher the sodden wizard and his miniature demonic friend get (so to speak), the higher they go (Flight 1"; Levitation (-½), Does Not Work When Sober).

When he's sober enough to enunciate the verbal components of his spells, Romandulfo puts

ROMANDULFO THE MAGNIFICENT

9	STR	13	DEX	9	CON
10	BODY	18	INT	14	EGO
10	PRE	9	COM		
6	PD	8	ED	3	SPD
6	REC	30	END	20	STUN

Abilities: +1 with Magic Skill Rolls; +1 with Spells; Demonic Imp "Familiar" (Contact 16-); Magesight; Conjuraction 13-; Divination 13-; Fire Magic 13-; CK: Rickter's Vale 13-; Literacy; PS: Appraisal 13-; Sorcery 13-; Wizardry 11-; Scholar; 1) KS: Alcohol 13-; 2) KS: Demons and Devils (3 Active Points) 13-; 3) KS: Legends and Lore 13-; 4) KS: Arcane And Occult Knowledge 13-

75+ Disadvantages: Dependence: Alcohol (Incompetence: -1 to Skill Rolls and related rolls per time increment [1 Hour]); Hunted: Hobgoblin Adventuring Party 8-; Unluck: 2d6

Spells: Belzorath's Spell Of Waking Dreams, Ben-thara's Spell Of Revelation, Detect Magic, Detect Treasure, Fireball, The Lesser Wardings, Vashtori's Lesser Infernal Invocation, Wizard's Shield, others as the GM deems necessary and appropriate

COOL-HEARTED CLAUDETT

13	STR	17	DEX	13	CON
12	BODY	13	INT	10	EGO
15	PRE	15	COM		
8	PD	6	ED	3	SPD
8	REC	26	END	31	STUN

Abilities: +2 with All Combat; HA +3d6; *Barmaid Toughness*: Physical Damage Reduction, 25%; *Elven Eyes*: +1 PER with Sight Group; *Elven Longevity*: Life Support (Longevity: 1600 Years); Combat Archery; Lightsleep; *Unfriendly* (-5 on Seduction rolls against her); Breakfall 12-; Mimicry 12-; Paramedics 12-; Persuasion 12-; PS: Barmaid 13-; Sleight Of Hand 12-; Streetwise 12-; WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

75+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Features: Best Looking Woman in Town; Hunted: Hobgoblin Adventuring Party 8-; Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of Tavern Patrons



on a small stage show at night. The show features blurry illusions, minor (random) conjurations, and the odd arbitrary fireball.

Cool-Hearted Claudett

Cool-Hearted Claudett is a half-elven beauty widely renowned for her impervious disdain of, and hatred toward, tavern patrons. Forced by Daggerstroke to wear skimpy, revealing outfits with low-cut tops, the former swordswoman vents her frustration by slamming heavy steel flagons and wooden plates into the heads of customers nightly. As if that isn't bad enough, Claudett also has an extreme aversion to the sort of "wandering hands" that seem to come naturally to drunken adventurers. A typical Saturday night brawl generally begins with a loud feminine shout of anger, followed by an even louder thud! as some loutish warrior finds himself sprawled on his backside clutching a broken, bloody nose. His friends stand up (knocking over their chairs), the bar regulars stand up (knocking over their bar stools), Edgar reaches behind the counter for his tap mallet....

You get the picture.

REGULAR CUSTOMERS

There are half a dozen regular local customers who frequent the Hand Of Doom on a nightly or weekly basis. Devoutly heavy drinkers to a man, they're on excellent personal terms with the staff and can be relied upon to help out in a fight when necessary... or to help start one. These habitue customers include a particularly surly human necromancer named Incolude the Inscrutable, One Tusk (an inebriated orc shaman), the reputedly quite dangerous Nitti (a bounty hunter), Underborough

(a Halfling thief), Thunk the barbarian, and the utterly urbane Lolimar of the Green Forest (who's supposedly a ranger). For quick writeups of these NPCs, use the Human Adversaries section of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*.

THE HAND OF DOOM TAPROOM

Located on a busy thoroughfare with a reasonably good amount of foot traffic, the Hand Of Doom is a small, two-story wooden structure with empty barred windows on its ground floor. Its outside walls are covered in a tan, stucco-like substance that provides the building with extra protection from the elements. The tavern's roof is made of a yellowish brown thatch that has been treated with a fire-retardant substance by the town alchemist. Its heavy oaken front door is removed at dusk (to save on replacement costs) and replaced with a black leather curtain that does a decent job of keeping the cold out. The upper story has wooden shutters that can be barred from the inside. None of the building's windows have glass in them.

A large open hand carved from knotty pine hangs by heavy iron chains from a red wooden beam which juts out of the front of the establishment. A grinning skull has been carved into its palm. It swings back and forth in the mountain winds, making menacing creaking sounds that seem to warn that something vaguely sinister lies within.

CHANGING THE HAND

In the rowdy and somewhat disreputable worlds of *Fantasy Hero* there exist a wide variety of establishments devoted to libation. They range in quality from filthy dives to upperclass wine tasting rooms depending on location, management, quality, and clientele. Despite its forbidding name, the Hand Of Doom Taproom falls squarely in the middle of this spectrum of boozery. It may be plain but it's kept very clean, serves inexpensive but good quality liquor, and has a friendly atmosphere, an attentive if eccentric staff, and a goodly supply of regular, paying customers. While brawling isn't unusual in the Hand's common room, it's generally good-natured fraternal combat fought with fists and blunt objects, not blades or fireballs. In this sort of tavern battle nobody gets permanently injured or is unwillingly dragged into the fray.

With a few changes, however, you can turn the Hand into a very different, far more sinister sort of brass rail. The front door isn't removed nightly because there is no front door. The common room is filthy, littered with rotting chicken bones, offal, and dirt. Dogs run freely (and get underfoot everywhere), blood stains the creaking floorboards, and damage to the walls is not repaired. Monsters regularly emerge from the basement to drink with more ordinary customers or, when the mood strikes them, to kidnap those customers for their own sinister purposes. Fights turn to lethal force almost immediately. The bar

TAVERN MATERIALS SUMMARY

Object	DEF and BODY
Bench, private booth	DEF 4, BODY 8
Bottle, glass	DEF 2, BODY 1
Chair, heavy-reinforced	DEF 5, BODY 4
Crate, small wooden	DEF 4, BODY 4
Door, heavy wooden	DEF 4, BODY 4
Fireplace	DEF 5, BODY 10
Flagon, steel	DEF 4, BODY 3
Heavy wooden wall	DEF 4, BODY 3
Keg	DEF 4, BODY 5
Kettle, large iron	DEF 6, BODY 4
Marble slab (per hex)	DEF 5, BODY 11
Mug, steel	DEF 4, BODY 3
Plank, wooden	DEF 3, BODY 3
Plate, wooden	DEF 4, BODY 3
Sideboard	DEF 3, BODY 3
Stool, wooden	DEF 3, BODY 3
Table, heavy-reinforced	DEF 5, BODY 5
Table, booth	DEF 4, BODY 5
Wattle-and-daub wall	DEF 5, BODY 3

Ground Floor

The first level of the Hand contains the bar, its stools, five tables, a sizable fireplace, private booths, a small stage, and a storage room. A crudely-built but solid-looking stairwell runs along the back of the north wall; it leads up to the second floor.

1. ENTRANCE

The Hand Of Doom's entranceway sticks slightly out into the street, allowing Broog to sit on an impossibly high stool off to one side. Leaning at a jaunty angle with his back pressed against the warm brown walls, he makes snide comments to anyone entering the bar who's over six feet tall.

2. COMMON ROOM

The common room occupies the bulk of the Hand's ground level floor space. It's a large, unadorned area lit by a cheerfully-burning fire in the fireplace along its eastern wall. It contains a full bar area, five small round tables, 26 chairs, and a tiny stage.

The alehouse's fireplace is constructed of kiln-dried bricks fused together with a generous amount of cement. It radiates heat like an open oven, warming the room around it even on the coldest of mountain winter nights. A large metal spit permanently mounted in its center allows Edgar and Claudett to hang sturdy iron pots directly over the open fire or, on special occasions, roast whole animals. At night a hardy vegetable stew containing venison, beef, coney, or wild snow turkey is the common fare, while in the morning thick, sugared gruel made from oats or cracked wheat is prepared for any guests who may have spent the previous evening upstairs.... or possibly on the floor below one of the tables.

Sturdy Furnishings

The common room's five tables are made from entire foot-thick sections of a mighty oak

tree which have been attached to thick legs of maple which have literally been driven into them like enormous pegs. These monstrous articles of furniture weigh a staggering 400 kg each. Not surprisingly, this helps cut down on replacement costs. Equally beefy chairs carved in one piece from individual sections of a hardwood tree are scattered about the room (primarily around the tables or the fireplace). They weigh 200 kg each.

The Stage

A small, semicircular three foot high stage has been built directly into the walls in the southeastern corner of the common room. Lit from behind by a specially-constructed oil lantern which has mirrors mounted to its back to create more light, it's occasionally occupied by those wandering bards and troubadours adventuresome or desperate enough to try to pry coin from the greedy hands of the patrons. Far more often, however, the stage features a brief comedy routine by Doomed Dag-gerstroke quickly followed by a dazzlingly inept display of potentially dangerous wizardry by a whiskey-sodden Romandulfo.

3. THE BAR

The Hand's bar is an L-shaped structure built out of thick slabs of marble joined together by a massive varnished spruce countertop. Edgar keeps it scrupulously clean so he can slide full flagons of ale down its length with little effort. Seven sturdy wooden stools line it; at any given time four out of the six regular barflies are happily planted on them, sucking away at whatever poison they prefer. Romandulfo floats a few feet off the ground on his special stool at the western end of the bar near the stairwell. By ten at night his tiny demonic familiar is generally passed out face down directly on the bar.

Seven full casks of beer sit behind the bar. These are tapped in the traditional manner with a large wooden mallet which doubles as Edgar's weapon of choice during brawls. The four varieties of beer the Hand offers — wheat, stout, ale, and pilsner — are served warm in nearly indestructible steel mugs kept under the counter. Various bottles of exotic (or merely expensive) hard liquor, mead, and wine are kept well out of reach below the sideboard, making them deliberately unhandy in a fight.

At some time in the past, an enterprising owner of the taproom realized he could increase profits by lengthening the bar to its present measurements. Unfortunately, this tucked the opening just under the stairwell. The headroom at this point is slightly more than four feet, and the barroom staff has taken to calling the heavy beam there "The Headsman." Although most of them curse it at least twice a day, Broog makes a great show of demonstrating just how far he has to bend to get under it.

4. STOREROOM

This small room provides storage for the bar. It contains several kegs of stout (the perennial taproom favorite) and other beers, a spare table, a couple crates of hard liquor, and a small wine rack bolted onto the west wall. A ramp just wide enough to roll a keg along slopes downward in a U shape

toward the basement. A sturdy door at the end of the ramp fastens with a sliding bar as well as a heavy lock. The keys hang from a peg on the wall next to a rack which holds a well-oiled Sword Of Sharp Cutting (see *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*, page 137).

5. PRIVATE BOOTHS

These three private seating areas are separated from the hustle and bustle of the common room by heavy sound dampening black leather curtains. The wooden benches attach directly to the pine board floor as well as to the thick wooden walls which separate these small spaces, making them nearly impossible to remove. The rounded wooden tables in the booth are likewise mounted directly to the floor. Each area has room for six human-sized occupants.

This section of the Hand is set aside for private business negotiations, which generally involve the dividing of existing adventuring party's treasure, the selling of that treasure to local merchants, or the negotiation of binding agreements between newly formed parties. If Romandulfo is sober enough (and that's a BIG if), adventurers can hire him to cast Benthara's Spell Of Revelation or Detect Treasure, apply his *Magesight* Talent, or use his PS: Appraise. For reasons of privacy Claudett doesn't service this area, so patrons must retrieve their own drinks and food directly from the bar or fireplace.

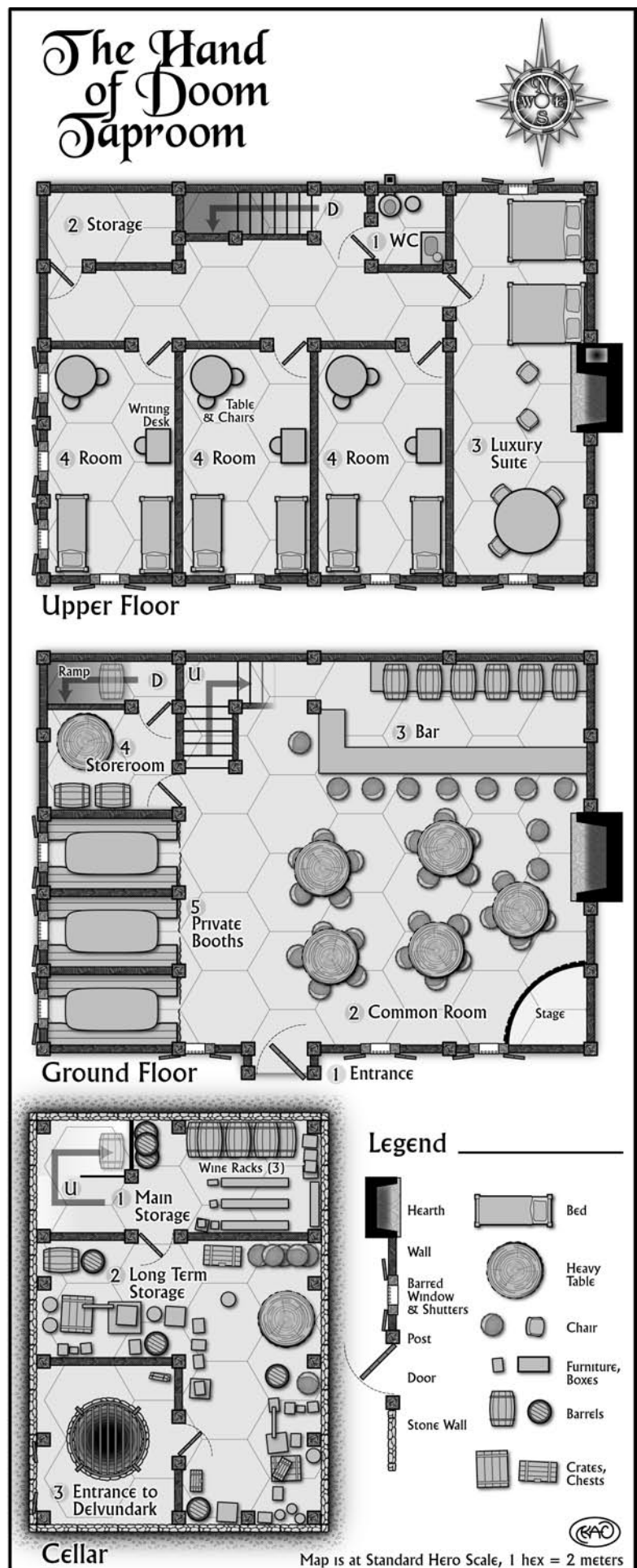
Basement

The basement level of the Hand Of Doom is used for storage of goods.... as well as secrets. Unbeknownst to most of the tavern's patrons a family of two dozen ratlings (see *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, page 90) has taken up residence amongst its boxes, barrels, and crates. With a seemingly never-ending smorgasbord of food and liquor at their disposal they utterly refuse to vacate their new home. Daggerstroke has been waging a private war with them for months now. He's tried everything he could think of to exterminate the annoying little colony of malcontents, even going so far as to have Incolude the Inscrutable cast The Spell Of The Deadly Cloud (*The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*, page 67) in the basement. Up to this point nothing has worked.

1. MAIN STORAGE

This smallish, low-ceilinged room is the main repository for the Hand's daily supplies — casks of ale along the north wall, bottles of wine in racks in the room's center, bottles of liquor on shelves along the other walls, and various forms of salted and dried goods in crates loosely stacked against the eastern wall.

While the ratlings don't actually live in this room, it's their favorite ambush spot. As soon as they hear someone unbolting and unlocking the ramp door, they move into position as quickly as they can, squeezing in between wine bottles, hiding inside boxes, and crouching between beer kegs in eager anticipation. Since they have a hard time tell-



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serves a single variety of flat, watery beer, a vinegary wine, and watered-down booze. The upper level is a louse-infested flophouse.

Similarly, you can convert the Hand into a more upscale establishment with only a few small changes. The common room contains elegant, fragile tables and upholstered chairs. Expensive chandeliers hang from a ceiling covered with mosaics. Evil creatures never emerge from the basement because there is no entrance to Delvundark there (nor any ratlings). Instead, the basement is an elaborate kitchen preparing the best meals available for hundreds of miles around. Fights never occur; one breaks out the city watch responds immediately. The “bar” exclusively serves wine, brandy, and port. The upper level is a hostel worthy of a prince’s visit, stocked with tasteful antiques, silk sheets, and constantly attentive servants.

PRICES AT THE HAND OF DOOM

Below is a price list for the Hand that includes rooms, food, and drink. Edgar will sell other goods, if he has them available, for reasonable prices.

Rooms (one night)	Price
Room with two beds	3 SP
Luxury room	7 SP
Food	Price
Beef	1 SP
Bread	Gratis
Gruel	1 CP
Lamb, one haunch	6 CP
Lamb, chop	4 CP
Pork chop	3 CP
Rabbit	2 CP
Turkey	4 CP
Vegetable Stew (Bowl)	1 CP
Venison	6 CP
Drink	Price
Beer, standard (any variety)	2 CP
Beer, high-quality (any variety)	4 CP
Mead	1 SP
Whiskey	5 SP
Wine	2 SP

ing people apart, the ratlings assume anyone entering the basement is their hated foe Edgar Daggerstroke. Thus, when any roughly human-sized figure comes ambling down the ramp they wait until he’s finally in their midst looking for a bottle of wine or a flask of whiskey before pouncing with an annoying, screeching battle cry of “Death to Daggerstroke!” They wield tiny clubs, miniature knives, and diminutive hatchets in combat.

Edgar goes through this every day — which is why he never goes into the basement without his trusty Sword Of Sharp Cutting.

2. LONG TERM STORAGE

The Hand’s long term storage area is a dumpy, poorly lit L-shaped room with a dirt floor. It’s filled with extra tables, front doors, chairs, wooden plates, mugs, stools, rags, and taps — in short, the supplies one needs to run a tavern. The staff also stores extra straw mattresses, lamp oil, bed sheets, silverware, and nightstands for the bedrooms on the second floor. A crude-looking wooden closet has been built out of thick wooden beams in the southwest corner. It has stout-looking double doors built into its east side which are secured with an unusually large amount of chain, sliding boards, and large locks. (See *Entrance To Delvundark* for the true purpose of the “closet.”)

The barrelhouse’s staff has pretty much ceded this area to the ratlings, only venturing into it after suiting up in their old adventuring gear and gathering together a few of the tavern regulars. Then they charge in like an invading barbarian horde to lay their hands on simple household items. For their part the tiny (but surprisingly tenacious) rodent-men have constructed a fairly comfortable miniature town in this room, industriously building

their own tables out of wooden plates, beds out of broken wine bottles, and whole apartments out of empty wooden crates. They have also turned a used beer cask into a tiny replica of the tavern above them. On a busy Saturday night the merriment below is nearly as chaotic as that above.

3. ENTRANCE TO DELVUNDARK

The former owner of the building which now houses the Hand Of Doom had a little secret which he didn’t bother to share with Doomed Daggerstroke before he coerced him into purchasing it. The ancient dwarven city of Delvundark had an emergency exit which runs right under Rickter’s Vale... and opens through a dry well in the building’s basement! Edgar found this out the hard way when a war party of a dozen Dark Dwarves appeared seemingly out of nowhere one evening, kicking off a barroom battle with staff and locals that was so vicious it’s still mentioned only in hushed whispers.

To prevent this sort of thing from ever occurring again, Daggerstroke built an extremely strong room out of thick boards around the well, then secured its doors with a series of very tough locks that only he has the keys to. He also capped the well with a heavy iron cover that locks directly to latches drilled into the stone. A 30’ long rope ladder hangs on hooks nearby, just in case anyone is daring or foolish enough to want to use this entrance to the terrible unknown.

Second Floor

Although it is probably the loudest, least restful place one could hope to stay in, the Hand has four separate bedrooms available for rent on its second floor. Since the Hand has no attic, its thatched roof is evident everywhere on this level.

1. WATER CLOSET

Fed by a rain-collecting cistern built directly into the roof, this small lavatory serves not only the Hand’s guests but its bar customers as well. It contains a metal sink, a wicker basket filled with fresh oak leaves, and a small stone toilet which empties out of a chute directly into the alley behind the tavern. It has to be cleaned regularly, a task so odorous that it has caused actual spell battles to break out amongst the Hand’s staff.

2. STORAGE AREA

This small room is used to store clean sheets, pillows, and fresh straw, as well as the taproom’s front door when it’s removed for the evening. With the ratlings making things more difficult in the basement, other items such as whisky bottles have been getting stored up here as well.

3. THE LUXURY SUITE

This rectangular room is the Hand’s fanciest accommodation. It contains two queen-sized straw mattress beds made up with white cotton sheets, a full sized table with three chairs, and two high-backed chairs that face a fireplace built into the

west wall. While there are no tapestries or paintings on the wall, tasteful curtains cover the small barred windows on the room's north and south sides. This makes the room luxurious by Vale standards.

The single bad thing that can be said about the luxury suite is that it's haunted by a good-natured (if gabby) spirit named Justinian. A tall, transparent fellow who dresses in a satin robe and smokes a ghostly pipe, Justinian was apparently murdered on this very spot several decades ago. Unable to rest until his body is recovered, he's condemned by the gods to make small talk with tavern patrons who stay in the room until he can move onto the "other side." A historian in his previous life, the ghost has KS: Local History 14- and will be more than happy to answer any questions PCs may have for him within the limits of his abilities.

4. STANDARD BEDROOMS

These three austere rooms are identically furnished with two straw mattress cots, a table, two stools, a crude writing desk, and a chair. While clean they are cold at night, requiring anyone stay-

ing in them to bundle up in the Orc-made quilts which are neatly folded on the beds. These quilts, whose production is a kind of cottage industry for the local Bleeding Stump tribe's women, have some very disturbing images sewn into them.

THE PROPHECY

And what might the Hand Of Doom have to do with a prophecy concerning the return of an ancient and profane evil, a god whose very existence is a threat to the world and all who reside there? Nothing at all.

However the adventurers at the tavern, both the current ones among the patrons and former ones who own the place and work on staff, have plenty of *great* advice to give the PCs if the young whippersnappers bother to ask their elders... and the Dark Dwarves of Delvundark have worshipped many evil gods over the course of their history. Unlike Men, Dwarves are not mercurial and fickle. They have not forgotten a deity they once swore eternal devotion to... nor has he forgotten his former servants.



MORDIE'S SHOP OF PUISSANT POTABLES

THE PROPHECY

While there's no inscription of the prophecy for the adventurers find at Mordie's Shop o' Puissant Potables, Symkil'likmys has had many masters over the centuries, and some of those were servants of the banished god. Although he claims to have trouble keeping track of all the evil Men he served over the years, with the right encouragement — such as threatening to expose his existence to a temple in the city — the PCs can get him to tell all he knows about the god, including how to read the ancient language sacred to that foul deity.

Many adventurers are in it for the coin — they risk life and limb to amass treasure, pure and simple — but what good is coin without someplace to spend it?

In the cities of many Fantasy settings, shops of all sorts fill the streets — from shops that sell mundane items (like thick hempen rope and oil-soaked torches) to those that sell finely-worked swords and ornate armor, to the more exotic and rare like an alchemist's shop. In the latter, adventurers can purchase potions to aid them in their encounters with monsters and the malevolent... but only for a steep price.

Mordie's Shop O' Puissant Potables is just the place for the adventurers to part with their hard-won coin. In this shop, located in a fairly wealthy and respectable neighborhood of a city, all sorts of potions are for sale. Though the shopkeeper and alchemist, Mordie Fimblebut, drives a hard bargain, he offers a reasonable price for his wares "of a remarkable quality and indubitable puissance."

AN INFERNAL PARTNERSHIP

As far as the public knows, Mordie Fimblebut works alone, only calling upon help from young urchins to help him carry purchases from the

market back to his shop. This is, however, far from the truth. Mordie knows nothing of Alchemy. He has a partnership with a demonling, a minor demon from the infernal planes that escaped its last master and now roams free in the world. The Demonling, named Symkil'likmys, creates the potions for sale in the shop.

MORDIE FIMBLEBUT

8 STR	8 DEX	10 CON
10 BODY	15 INT	12 EGO
15 PRE	12 COM	
2 PD	2 ED	2 SPD
4 REC	16 END	16 STUN

Abilities: Acting 17-; Bribery 13-; KS: Alchemical Terms 11-, Literacy; Persuasion 16-; PS: Shopkeeper 14-; Trading 14-.

25+ Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Secret (in league with a demon) (Frequently, Major).

Description: Mordie Fimblebut has traveled the world as a snake-oil salesman and confidence man, selling elixirs of dubious benefit which cure any and all ailments a man might suffer from — constipation to cholera to the crimson-tooth plague. But after decades of such work and having just suffered a beating at the hands of some disappointed customers, Mordie realized he was too old for the business — at his advanced age of fifty, he simply

couldn't run fast enough to out-distance pursuit anymore. Luckily for him, a little bit later he met the demonling Symkil'likmys, and the two formed a partnership that's profited them both for the last decade. Getting up a stake through some less-than-savory ways, they opened an alchemist's shop in the city. Mordie works the front counter, acting the part of absent-minded alchemist, while Symkil'likmys actually makes the potions.

Mordie is a short man with large ears and watery blue eyes. In keeping with his role, he has a long, grey beard, the tips of its wiry hairs singed black from leaning too far forward over the fires in his workshop. He wears a stained apron over simple clothes, and at his waist he carries a wand of burnished beechwood. He's quick to warn suspicious-looking customers that the wand is magical with a threatening wag of his finger. In truth, it's an ordinary stick of carved wood.

Mordie keeps up a good and snappy palaver throughout a transaction, peppering his talk with alchemical and arcane terms.



To those ignorant of Alchemy, he makes a convincing alchemist. On the other hand, a character with any skill in Alchemy realizes, without making a roll, that Mordie doesn't know what he's talking about.

When Mordie isn't trying to drive up the price or convince a potential customer of the value of his wares, he considers his past, dwelling on the deeds of his lost youth. He spends a great deal of time trying to figure out how he ended up in league with a demon. Admittedly, Symkil'likmys seems little like the demons Mordie's mother told frightening stories about, and Mordie has grown kind of fond of his business partner, but still... Mordie finds his current situation a strange one.

SYMKIL'LIKMYS

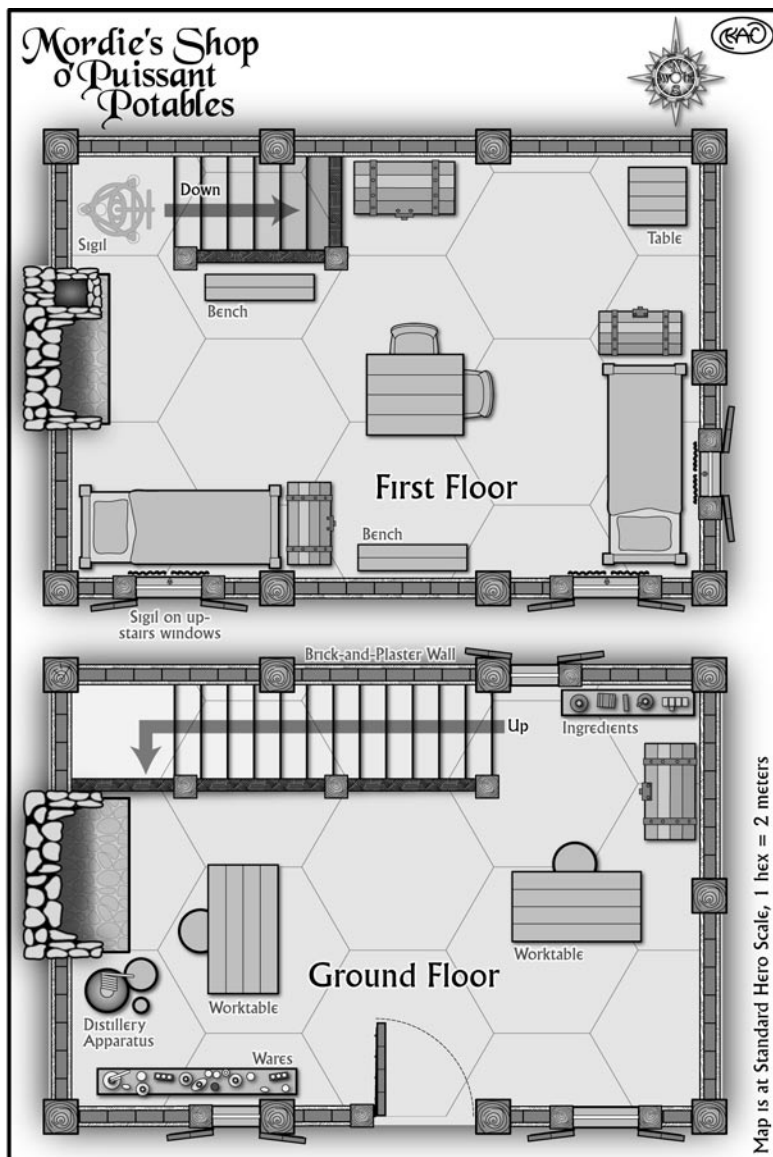
Symkil'likmys has spent most of his immortal existence bound to the service of one wizard or another, and has had quite enough of Men and their incessant demands. When a group of intrepid heroes slew his last master, he escaped, at last free to roam the material world. He wanted two things above all else: to avoid service to another master; and not to return to the infernal realms. It was a struggle for him to rein in his evil nature — the temptation to cause mischief and woe is great — but with discipline, Symkil'likmys has done so, even going so far as to strike up a partnership with a Man.

Over centuries of service, Symkil'likmys picked up much knowledge about the arcane, including no mean ability at Alchemy, and he uses this skill to finance his and Mordie's lifestyle. As hard as it may be to believe, he's perfectly content to reside in the upper floor of the shop and make potions. He rarely ventures outside for fear of discovery (though he's a bit more likely to go out on dark nights, just to prowl around the rooftops and enjoy the air).

Symkil'likmys really enjoys his freedom — so much so that he certainly wouldn't consider tampering with one of the potions sold in the shop. He wouldn't even, hmmm, give a deliberately mis-brewed potion to a customer who's soon to leave the city so that its wicked effects — turning the imbibor into a toad, or sealing his mouth shut, or some other small effect, perhaps — wouldn't be discovered. He'd never, ever, consider such a thing. Never. Not once. Ever.

Although true friendship is impossible for one such as him, Symkil'likmys enjoys Mordie's company more often than not, and has never cheated or threatened him. The demonling admits to himself he lives a strange existence for a creature of the infernal, but he is content with it — it's a far better thing than serving some wizardly master with delusions of grandeur whose rise to power always ends on the blade of an adventurer's sword.

For Symkil'likmys's character sheet, use the description on page 51 of *The HERO System Bestiary*. Raise his INT to 18, and add these Skills: Alchemy 15-, KS: Arcane And Occult Knowledge 15-, KS: Herbalism 15-, and Literacy.



THE ALCHEMIST'S SHOP

Half-wood and plaster over brick, Mordie's is a two-story building. A shingle hung over the door states the shop's name in simple script. Most such signs also have some picture that informs the illiterate of the shop's purpose; Mordie's does not. He feels that anyone who can't read the sign is likely someone who can't afford his wares. The ground floor is the store and workshop; the first floor is living quarters.

GROUND FLOOR

The ground floor holds all the tools of the alchemist's trade. Mordie spends most of his days sitting at the table within sight of the door, often pounding herbs and roots in a mortar and pestle, mixing inert chemicals, or performing some other simple task as directed by Symkil'likmys the night before.

Against the wall behind the table are shelves that hold vials and jars of ingredients — nightshade, hemlock, toadstools, a dead faerie preserved in a greenish liquid, the poison glands of venomous giant bullfrogs, and the like. Nearby is a locked

PLOT SEEDS

Something strange is happening in town: residents of the city, all notorious for their drinking habits, have begun to sprout goat horns from their foreheads, grow fangs and pointed tails, or watch in terror as their tongue grow long and forked. Symkil'likmys knows two things: his Potent Potable potion (a form of "mystic liquor," even stronger than normal liquors) is responsible for the transformations, and no matter how humorous he finds the situation, it isn't his fault. Through Mordie, he hires the PCs to

Continued on page 102

Continued from page 101

investigate the strange occurrences. Will they discover not only the cause for the demonic transformations, but the nature of their true employer? And what will they do when the cityfolk finally realize the Potent Potable is responsible for the changes, and get out the torches and pitchforks?

Word reaches Symkil'likmys that a band of adventurers have stumbled upon the ancient vessel of the Zyfrei, described in *From Out Of The Depths*. The demonling recalls rumors of those strange beings, spoken in whispers by necromancers and foul wizards gone to the grave centuries ago, and he wants the alchemical marvels dismantled and brought to his shop in the city. He sends Mordie out to enlist the PCs in this quest. What will the heroes find in the mines... and perhaps more importantly, what purpose does Symkil'likmys have for the alien magicomachinery?

Mordie has not made many friends over the course of a long career of swindling people. When some strangers in town recognize him, they decide to take justice into their own hands. They abduct the old man and make off for their home, intent on putting him on trial for his crimes. Symkil'likmys is left in the lurch. He approaches the PCs one night to hire them to retrieve Mordie... but will the adventurers stop to listen to what a demonling has to say?

SHOP MATERIALS SUMMARY

Below you can find a summary of DEF and BODY for materials around Mordie's shop.

Object	DEF and BODY
Alchemical Apparatus (per hex)	DEF 1, BODY 4
Bed	DEF 3, BODY 5
Chest	DEF 4, BODY 5
Door, Inside	DEF 2, BODY 3
Door, Outside	DEF 4, BODY 3
Padlock	DEF 4, BODY 3
Stool	DEF 3, BODY 3
Table	DEF 4, BODY 7
Wall, Inside	DEF 3, BODY 3
Wall, Outside	DEF 5, BODY 5
Window	DEF 1, BODY 1
Workbench	DEF 4, BODY 5

chest (-4 penalty to Lockpicking rolls) with other, more valuable alchemical materials — a vial of quicksilver, a pinfeather from a phoenix taken while the creature was consumed in flames but before it was reborn, a couple of femur bones from human corpses, various uncut gemstones, and a thick braid of hair cut from the head of a slumbering mermaid are some of the more prominent.

Against the west wall is a hearth where the alchemist sets things to boil, and in front of it sits a second workbench and stool. Also found here are a small still, water-bath, and sublimator, all set on the floor near the hearth.

Near the entrance is a shelf filled with potions in glass vials and beakers — these are the wares Mordie currently has for sale. You should consult *Fantasy Hero* or *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire* for a variety of potions that might be found here. The price of the potions depends on the nature of, and currency used in, your campaign (for a more thorough discussion of the price of enchanted items see page 276 of *Fantasy Hero*), but for a quick price list in silver pieces, simply add the Active Points and Real Points of a potion, and multiply the sum by 2.

In addition to those standard potions is a special brew, the recipe only Symkil'likmys knows. In the early days of Mordie's shop, many customers misunderstood the name, "Puissant Potables," taking it to mean very potent potables. The demonling, unable to completely suppress his mischievous nature, declared the customer is always right

and concocted a Potent Potable potion indeed — a form of "mystic liquor" stronger than normal liquors. This has attracted more customers, drunkards who need to prove their capacity for strong drink. The Potent Potable costs 1 gold piece per vial. The imbiber must make a successful CON Roll at -9 (characters with the *I Can Drunk Just As Good Fight!* form of Environmental Movement only suffer a -3 penalty). If he fails, he's suddenly falling down drunk and suffers -3 OCV and -3 DCV until he sleeps it off.

FIRST FLOOR

The upstairs serves as living and sleeping quarters for Mordie and Symkil'likmys. Mordie sleeps here at night while Symkil'likmys works downstairs, and vice-versa during the day. The room holds two beds on opposite sides of the room, a table with two chairs at the center, and several chests for clothing. In the chest nearest Mordie's bed, below some old traveling clothes, are samples of the elixirs he used to sell before he met the demonling. The windows have wooden shutters and heavy black curtains. The demonling has painted arcane sigils on the window frames and on the floor at the top of the stair. While no expert in such magics, he hopes the sigils hide him from Divination spells — he knows eventually some infernal prince or the other will wonder what happened to him.

NOT SO PUISSANT POTABLES

In this variation of Mordie's shop, the potions for sale are not magical and no demonling inhabits the first floor. Instead Mordie lives here with his son Lysed, and has continued to sell elixirs of dubious effect — the only potion of unusual effect for sale in the shop is the Potent Potable — what Mordie calls, "the distilled essence of spirits — no, no, not the ghostly kind, the drinking kind."

The populace generally disdains his wares, but Mordie has a few repeat customers who keep him in business. He keeps the authorities from cracking down on his fraudulent doings with a monthly bribe. Mordie also holds seances in which his son takes the role of the summoned spirit and otherwise helps with the signs and portents Mordie calls up. For fear of being burned at the stake, Mordie keeps his "Necromancy" a secret, only performing such services for valued and trusted — as well as gullible — customers.

NOSTANN'S PRISON



With the rise of medieval cities came the use of prisons to hold criminals, including those whose only crime was displeasing their ruler. Formerly a ruler imprisoned criminals in a dungeon or tower that was part of a castle or other fortification. In small communities like villages, criminals were simply driven out to fend for themselves. Both of those solutions were impossible in cities where the population numbered in the thousands.

In a *Fantasy Hero* campaign, a prison can serve a twofold purpose. Adventurers, notorious for their disdain of legitimate authority, might find themselves captured and imprisoned, and thus have to break out. They might also find themselves needing to break *in* to a prison, maybe to question a prisoner or even arrange the escape of a comrade wrongfully imprisoned.

Nostann's Prison, called Honest Man's Inn among criminals and other questionable elements of the city's population, is a keep rendered useless once the city spread beyond its original walls. During a campaign against a thieves' guild that refused to cease preying on foreign merchants (which gave the city a bad name among travelers), the ruler quickly converted the abandoned keep

into a prison. Nostann's has served that purpose ever since.

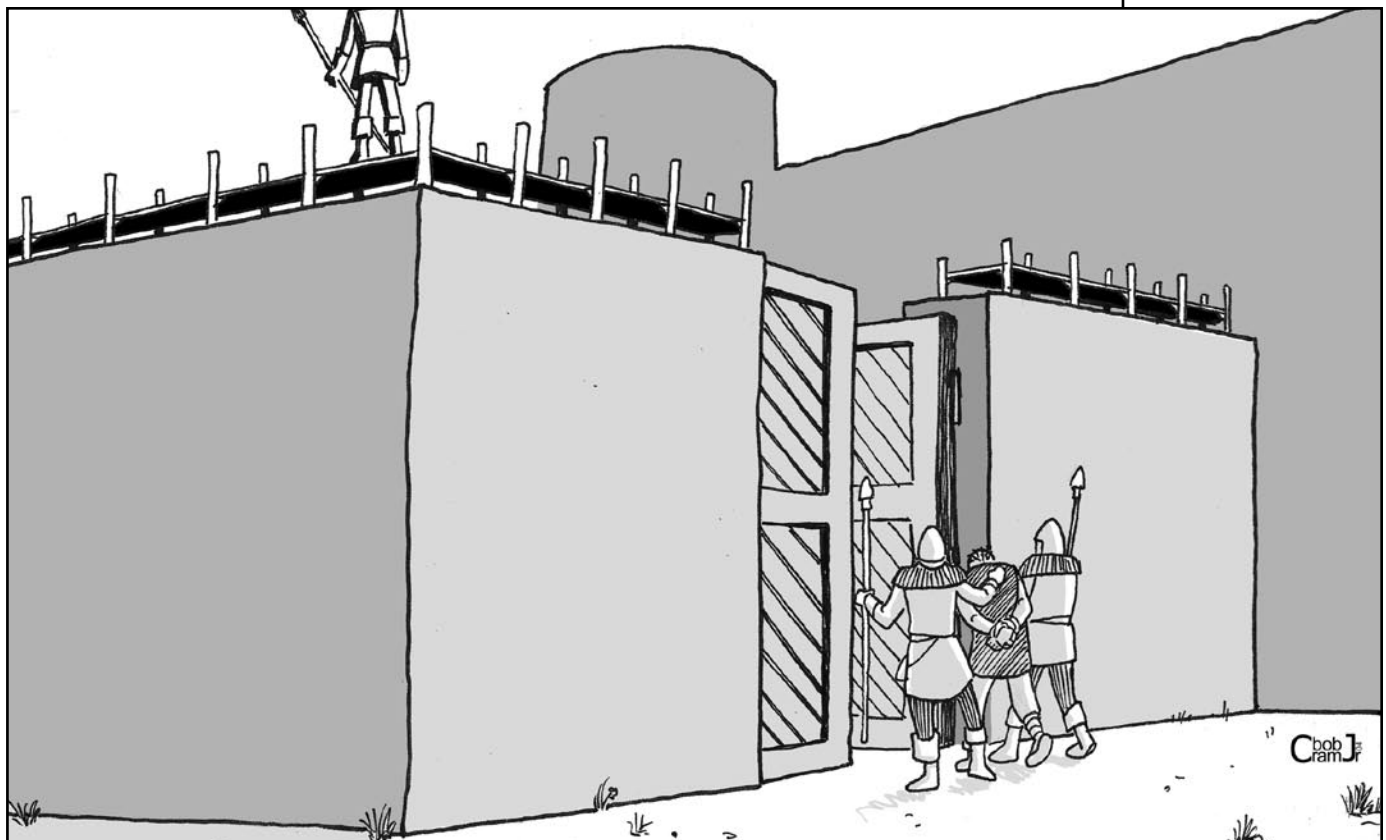
THE LORD MARSHALL AND HIS MEN

The warden of Nostann's Prison is Lord Marshall Jemiah Peake. Although the position holds a high rank among the city's gentry, few people wish to be Lord Marshall of a prison. Lord Peake is one of the most hated and feared men in the city, partly because he has the right to arrest anyone he pleases. Short of a royal decree freeing the prisoner, he can hold a person indefinitely.

LORD JEMIAH PEAKE

15	STR	13	DEX	13	CON
10	BODY	18	INT	15	EGO
20	PRE	10	COM		
4	PD	4	ED	3	SPD
6	REC	28	END	28	STUN

Abilities: Fringe Benefit: Lordship; Money (Well Off); +2 HTH; +3 OCV with Longsword; Bureaucrats 11-; CK: City 15-; Conversation 11-; High



PLOT SEEDS

The obvious use of Nostann's Prison is this: the city guard captures the PCs and imprisons them for a crime they didn't commit. Strangers to the city, they have no references or influence to use to free themselves. They must escape from Nostann's and somehow find the evidence that exonerates them. After they escape, Lord Peake searches diligently for them — for him this is a matter of his honor, and he cannot rest until he is dead or the escaped prisoners are recaptured (or utterly beyond recapture).

Countess Avlyne's family hires the PCs to investigate her allegations that her dead husband was involved with an evil cult. After some investigation the PCs uncover a city-wide conspiracy, but more and more the evidence points to the countess, and not her husband, as the leader of the cult. The PCs know her family hired them to exonerate the women, not condemn her to death. What will they do with what they've learned? Do they simply walk away from the situation entirely, or do they confront the countess herself?

The Shury brothers from *A Night Out Of The Rain* show up in the PCs' inn one morning, a look of desperation on their faces. They've learned that Furland Clive has given up some lesser members of the smuggling ring, including the mules (namely themselves). Will the PCs help these merchants with their problem... or tell them they made their own bed, so now they can lie in it? And when a troop of guards arrives on the brothers' heels and mistakes the PCs for the merchants' confederates, will they have any choice?

Society 13-; Interrogation (Torture) 17-; KS: Heraldry 11-; KS: The Noble World 14-; Paramedics (Healing) 16-; Persuasion 14-; Riding 11-; WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons.

75+ Disadvantages: Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Occasionally, Major).

Description: Lord Peake earned his titles of nobility on the battlefield fighting for his king. Since that day, he's proven himself one of the king's most loyal liegemen — so loyal, in fact, he gave up his idyllic existence in the countryside to come to the city and assume the position of Lord Marshall at Nostann's Prison.

That was nearly twenty years ago, and Lord Peake still hates his position. He hates seeing criminals suffer almost as much as he hates being around the sort of disloyal and depraved men (and sometimes women) who find themselves imprisoned inside Nostann's walls. Despite his hatred for his job, he performs his duties well (certainly better than any of his predecessors, who basically used the position primarily to increase their personal wealth). But Lord Peake sometimes questions — silently, speaking only to himself and not even his wife — whether those the king orders him to take prisoner are truly criminals. Nonetheless, he has served the crown loyally for over three decades, and Lord Peake would only defy his liege if the ruler committed an act of pure and undeniable evil.

In his early fifties, Lord Peake is tall and fit with a strong jaw and hard, blue eyes. A bald man, he keeps a well-trimmed, iron grey beard. He long ago adopted the habit of wearing all black to honor the solemnity of his position, and always wears his longsword at his hip when inside the prison. During the normal course of his duties, he does not wear armor, but he keeps a full suit of chainmail in his office at Nostann's in case he needs it. He maintains a well-appointed mansion in a wealthy district in the city where his wife, Safrina, throws many fetes and soirees in an attempt to lessen the fear other nobles have of Lord Peake.

SERGEANT KREP

Though the Lord Marshall detests the man, Sergeant Krep is Lord Peake's right hand around Nostann's Prison. No one else commands the respect of both guards and prisoners, so Lord Peake has little choice but to treat Sergeant Krep as his second in command. The advantage is that he doesn't have to see the corrupt and venal Sergeant — the two men work twelve-hour shifts and one, but not both, is always present at the prison.

Sergeant Krep is a short, fat man with lank brown hair, numerous missing teeth, ruddy cheeks and nose, and a tendency to get boils on his neck and face. He has what he likes to call a "sweet tooth" for prostitutes and other women, and is open to bribes of the lascivious sort (but, curiously, never a bribe of coin). He even goes so far as to allow people to visit prisoners in the tower if they meet his high prices, a cost only limited by Krep's lustful imagination.

For Sergeant Krep's character sheet, use the City Guard on page 120 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*. He has PRE 15.

The Guards

Guards work at the prison in twelve-hour shifts, 18 guards per shift. They're even more coarse and cruel than their fellows who patrol the city streets — although in many ways guarding prisoners is a plum position, since the guards spend much of their time playing cards in the guard room. But few men are heartless enough to willingly pass their days watching others be tortured or abused.

Two men guard the entrance to the high security cells by standing outside the door. Two more stand guard on the ground floor of the tower. Six men, each armed with a light crossbow, patrol the walls. The eight remaining guards sit in the guard room unless a prisoner is taken to the torture chamber or otherwise requires an escort. The guard changes every three hours throughout a twelve-hour shift.

For the guards' character sheets, use the City Guard on page 120 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*. Each guard carries a shortsword and wears a chainmail shirt.

The Prisoners

The prison usually holds between ten and twenty criminals at any one time. This section describes three prisoners, their dispositions and crimes. You can use to quickly flesh out the "roster" at Nostann's if you want to have more notable NPCs.

Sundy Winebreath

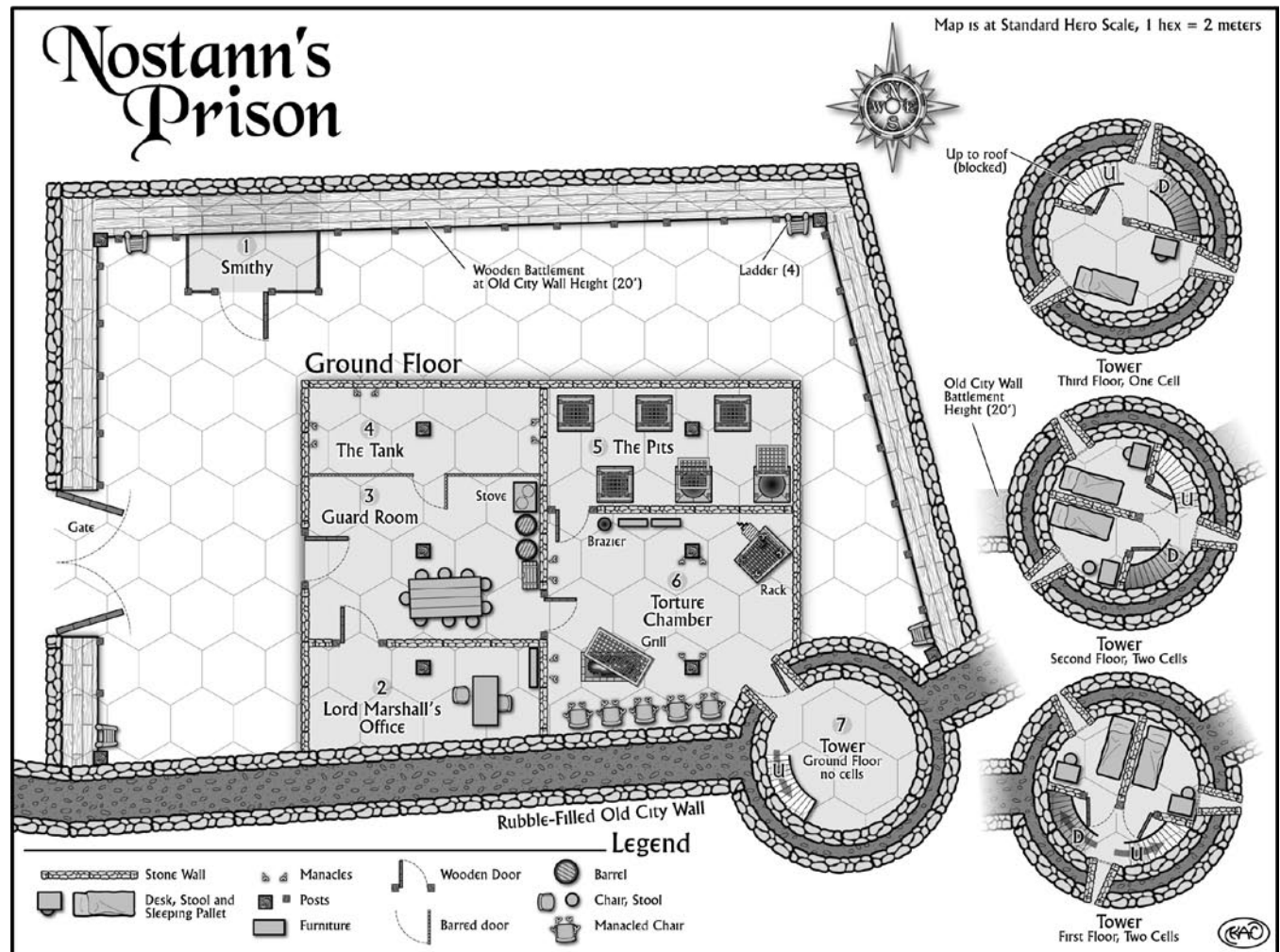
Sundy is almost as much a fixture at Nostann's as the guards themselves. He saves his coppers from fishmongering through the week and gets drunk on wine at the week's end. At that point he inevitably attempts to have his way with a prostitute without paying, and ends up in the tank for the next few days.

Furland Clive

It has recently come to the attention of the ruler that smugglers trafficking in poisons and other illicit goods use his city as a base of operations. Furland Clive is a ringleader of this gang. Lord Peake has locked him in the pits, taking him out only to torture him. Oozing blisters criss-cross Furland's back, and each of the fingertips on his left hand has suffered from thumbscrews. Furland has yet to reveal his network of contacts, protesting that if he reveals them they will do worse than any mundane torturer could, but Lord Peake is confident it's only a matter of time before Furland answers all his questions.

Countess Avlyne Lindsey

Locked away in the tower, the countess stands accused of murdering her husband, Count Taran Lindsey. She admits to the murder, but also details a list of profane acts her husband forced her to



commit in the name of some strange and evil god, and claims the murder was justified. The daughter of an important family, she awaits a final verdict in her case. The ruler finds himself in a politically sensitive position — he cannot permit women to murder their husbands and exonerate them based only on their testimony of events, but he also cannot afford to alienate the countess's family, who in the absence of evidence fully believe their daughter's account. The king is quietly hoping for some concrete evidence of Count Taran's evil-doing to resolve the situation. Meanwhile, the Countess fends off Sergeant Krep's crude advances with strong, well-timed slaps to the face.

THE PRISON

Nostann's Prison is a simple, almost primitive, stonework structure. It consists of a one-story rectangular main building 2.5" (16.25 feet) tall surrounded by four walls. In the southern wall is a tower. A clearing surrounds the prison. Unlike other places in the city where opportunistic builders take advantage of existing walls to save themselves a few coins, no one is allowed to build anything within forty feet of the prison.

The Walls: Three of the walls at Nostann's are 3" (20 feet) high, built of a single layer of stone (DEF 7, BODY 12). Supported by a framework of planks

and rope, a .6" (four-foot) wide wooden walkway runs along the top of these three wall and serves as a battlement. Four long ladders, one placed at each corner of the walls, provide access. One wall, the southern one, was formerly a part of the city wall and stands 6" (40 feet) high. It's made of two layers of stone blocks filled with rubble (DEF 7, BODY 15), and a ladder leads from the west and east walkways to the walkway along top. Simple wooden doors, 2.5" (15 feet) wide, lead through the wall. The doors are DEF 5, BODY 8 and barred from the inside.

1. THE SMITHY

This ramshackle wooden structure stands several yards away from the main building. Inside is a forge, bellows, anvil, and grindstone. Located on a rack against the west wall are spare locks and manacles. A smith does not work here regularly. Instead, when one is needed he comes to the prison from his shop.

2. THE LORD MARSHALL'S OFFICE

Lord Peake uses this room as an office for completing paperwork and meeting with other members of the nobility. A desk and chair stand near the east wall, and behind them is a wooden cabinet where Lord Peake stores his papers. These include a log which lists both the prisoners currently incarcerated and those formerly incarcerated,

MAGIC

Nostann's Prison is not intended to hold magic-using criminals. If magic is common in your campaign, you have a few options.

Most likely the authorities turn criminal sorcerers over to a trusted wizards' guild, temple, or court wizard. Whoever's assigned to guard the criminal neutralizes his powers and abilities.

Alternately, the Lord Marshall might keep any magic-using character in the torture chamber. A criminal spellcaster is either held over the hot coals or tied to the rack — and in either case, kept in excruciating pain which interferes with his ability to cast spells and the like (or the guards could simply break a wizard's hands and jaw so he cannot speak arcane words or make mystical gestures).

A final option: the city guard does not take sorcerers and their ilk prisoner — the guards simply kill the criminal, deeming him too powerful to take any chances with, and judging measures to negate his powers too expensive to bother with.

PRISON MATERIALS SUMMARY

Below you can find a summary of DEF and BODY for materials around the prison.

Object	DEF and BODY
Bars	DEF 5, BODY 5
Chain	DEF 5, BODY 4
Door	DEF 4, BODY 4
Door, Tower	DEF 4, BODY 5
Door, Tower, Bricked	DEF 5, BODY 6
Gate	DEF 5, BODY 8
Manacle	DEF 5, BODY 4
Padlock	DEF 4, BODY 3
Rack	DEF 4, BODY 5
Wooden Plate	DEF 1, BODY 1

with a brief description of their crime, incarceration date, and release date for those released. The records go back several years, and the only prisoners not listed are those in the tower. A rack in the corner holds short swords, light crossbows, and quarrels. The door is wood banded with iron and has a simple lock. Only Lord Peake and Sergeant Krep have keys to the lock.

3. GUARD ROOM

When not attending to other duties, the guards at Nostann's reside here — and regardless of what's going on elsewhere, two guards are always here to watch over the prisoners in the tank (area #4). Inside the room is a rectangular table with nine stools. A small iron stove with a smoke pipe leading up to the ceiling and through the roof, two barrels holding bread and grain, a keg of water, and a chest holding utensils stand against the east wall. The guards use these to prepare meals twice a day for the prisoners. A hook bolted to the south wall near the guards' table holds the key to the single door to the tank. A door in the southeast corner leads to the torture chamber. This door has a small hole, blocked by a thin piece of copper that slides back. When the Lord Marshall tortures a prisoner and wishes the other prisoners to know about it, the guards slide back the copper piece so the prisoners can better hear the screams and moans.

4. THE TANK

This is where the guards lock away petty criminals. Iron bars running from floor to ceiling and placed six inches apart separate this area from the guard room (area #3). Six manacles are bolted to the three stone walls, two on each wall; these are only used if all the cells in the pits (area #5) are full and a prisoner grows unruly. Any manacled prisoner is at the mercy of the prisoners who remain free, and guards care very little about what prisoners do to each other. There are no windows in this area, and the floor is flagstone covered with dirty straw.

5. THE PITS

The pits are high-security cells used to hold dangerous criminals. The six cells are dug into the ground and walled with heavy stone blocks. A shaft

.16" (one foot) in radius and about 1.25" (eight feet) deep leads to each pit, a circular area .5" (3.25 feet) in radius with a .6" (4 foot) high ceiling. Each pit has two sets of manacles with .31" (two foot) long chains that pass through an eyelet bolted into the stone floor. An oaken trapdoor slides over the top of the pit; to hold it closed, a chain run through four brackets evenly spaced around the pit's opening in the stone floor, and locks in place with a large, well-wrought padlock (-4 penalty to Lock-picking rolls). Kept in a pile in one corner of the room is a hempen ladder and rope and bucket. The ladder is for accessing the bottom of the pit; the rope and bucket, for lowering food and water. The door to this room is kept locked; only Lord Peake and Sergeant Krep have keys.

6. TORTURE CHAMBER

The largest room in the prison, the torture chamber is a stark place containing implements for inflicting pain on prisoners. Against the south wall are five wooden chairs. Each chair has manacles attached on the front two legs, the arms, and at neck-level on the high back. They are not bolted to the floor, since Lord Peake often topples one over and drags prisoners around while they're still bound into the chair as an intimidation tactic (this, combined with the general atmosphere of the place and the prisoner being helpless, is often worth +15 for a PRE Attack or +5 for an Interrogation roll).

Set in the floor directly before the chairs is a five-foot-long pit covered with a metal grill. The torturer places hot coals in the pit, then binds the prisoner to the grill. At the foot of the grill is a bellows used to raise the temperature of the coals. Located in the northeast is an upright rack, where a winch is used to dislocate arms from shoulder sockets, and legs from hips. Against the west wall are hooks and chains suspended from the ceiling; and in the corner is a brazier, a wooden rack holding iron pokers, and a cask of salt. Nearby is a second rack that holds thumbscrews, jawbreakers, and knives with blades of varying width and length. Near the center of the room are two square pillars, and on each side of the pillars are manacles — these serve both as whipping-post and as additional locations for securing prisoners (particularly those strong enough to break free of the wooden chairs).

Three doors lead into the torture chamber, none from the outside — one from the guard room (area #3), one from the pits (area #5), and one from the tower (area #7). Each of these doors is kept locked; only Lord Peake and Sergeant Krep have keys.

7. THE TOWER

The tower is where important prisoners (usually from the nobility) are locked away — usually until they emerge again for a meeting with the headsman. The tower is 6" (40 feet) high and integral to the southern wall. It holds five cells on its four floors: two each on the first and second floors; one on the third floor (the ground floor has no cells). A circular stairway runs along the inner wall

of the tower. Once this stair ran up to the top of the tower and allowed access to the old city wall. That has since been bricked up, and the stairway stops on the third floor, ending at a wall of sloppily mortared flagstone.

Inside each cell is a pallet with a mattress of filthy straw and a rickety writing desk with a stool. The door to each cell is thick wood banded with iron, locked with a large and complicated padlock (-6 penalty to Lockpicking rolls), and barred from the outside. The guards use a narrow slot at the bottom of the door to slide in food and water, as well as other goods such as paper and ink if the prisoner is expected to write out a confession of his heinous crimes. Lord Peake has instructed the guards never to reach a hand through the slot; the prisoner is expected to push out the utensils from his meal and he receives no more meals until he does so. A cell has a single arrow slit to allow light; this is covered with fine metal grate so the prisoner cannot throw notes or the like out to the street below.

On occasion in the history of Nostann's Prison, usually because of divinations warning of the dire consequence of slaying the prisoner, a person locked in the tower was sentenced to life imprisonment. In these cases, the door to the cell (most often the one on top) is blocked up with stone except for the small slot for food.

As stated in his description, Sergeant Krep allows individuals to visit those locked away in the tower for an appropriate bribe. He does *not* open the door; he merely allows the individual (and he only allows one person to visit, choosing the physically least intimidating) to speak with the prisoner through the slot in the door. Nor does he provide the visitor and prisoner with any privacy — he watches over the whole exchange, snickering and tittering if the conversation takes a maudlin or sentimental turn.

THE PROPHECY

Not so long ago, a cultist was imprisoned in the pits for crimes of depravity wholly unrelated to his devotion to the banished god. Knowing he would not leave Nostann's Prison alive, he inscribed a portion of the prophecy on the floor of the pit:

Olyss d'lresh te krysh rongre
(A city of flesh and venal pursuits)
Recteren o'keletrn d'Lyceren-krol.
(Built on the bones of the blessed.)
Lirx shleck glomryn skaldren,
(When the midnight sun blazes,)
Blut rotte nshleckver irmynen,
(Blood red in a nighttime sky,)
Lyceren cren Rn'grn-krol,
(The faithful serve the divine,)
Mor nt omegryn dcrenen-krol
(Death no end to their service.)

This fragment of the prophecy was known only to him — it was his family's responsibility to bear it in trust for when the god attempted to make his return. The man was soon executed for his crimes and now this inscription is the only extant record of this portion of the prophecy.

One way to use this is to run an adventure revolving around tracking down the prisoner. The PCs learn of him and his family, and must retrace the events that led to his death. Once they discover his imprisonment in Nostann's, they must find a way to see the pit for themselves. Hopefully their plan does *not* involve being arrested and sentenced to the pit.

The meaning of this part of the prophecy is left to you. If nothing else, the city where Nostann's Prison is located was built over the "bones" of an older city, the residents of which were devoted to the banished god. The city was thrown down by forces of Good, but the cultists' spirits were never laid to rest. A cultist must come to the city and call forth the spirits, who then possess the living and take control of the city.

IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE....

Sometimes a ruler located his prison far from inhabited areas, perhaps on a desolate island or in a wilderness region. This increased the security for the place, since even if a criminal escaped, he found himself in the middle of nowhere without supplies or equipment.

To place Nostann's in such an area, increase the size of the courtyard so it's large enough to hold a two-story barracks with bunks for thirty-seven men (thirty-six guards and Sergeant Krep), a stable for horses, and a shed for supplies. Also increase the height of all the walls to forty feet and add a portcullis (DEF 8, BODY 7) to the gate leading inside. The Lord Marshall resides on the top floor of the tower and is unmarried.

THE RADWELL FARMHOUSE



The vast majority of the inhabitants of any Fantasy setting are rural farmers. Any civilization, even one which regularly employs the mysterious force known as magic, that relies upon low-tech methods to produce its food must dedicate a large portion of its population to the noble pursuit of agriculture. The humble farmhouse is perhaps the single most common structure adventurers see in the campaign world.

The popular conception of the medieval farmer's home is that of an impoverished single room wattle-and-daub hovel filled with starving children and a prematurely aged wife. However, a prudent, hard-working rural family of some standing could instead own a sturdily constructed, comfortable, and spacious dwelling surrounded by prosperous farmland.

The Radwell family lives near an infrequently-traveled road at the edge of one of your campaign's kingdoms, just a few days' travel inside a largely unexplored forest. Third generation settlers, they have thrived in this dangerous environment by constructing a sizable family compound which is defensible, hard to burn, and extremely well provisioned. Adventurers leaving or entering the kingdom via an less well-traveled route might stumble

upon their farmhouse, where they can purchase a night's safety for the price of a good story. Alternately, PCs fleeing bandits or some horror of the deep forest horror might find a defensible position within its walls.

THE RADWELL FAMILY

The Radwell family consists of Dunstan Radwell, his wife Cynwise, their twin sons Josep and Odo, their daughter Hilda, and Dunstan's aging but still active father Obedon. Dunstan is a tall, tanned, good-natured man in his mid-forties. Below his balding brow he sprouts an enormous black handlebar moustache which swoops out from under his hooked nose almost to his eyes — an affectation which would look comical if it weren't attached to such a huge fellow. His large arms are heavily muscled from years of working a plow through the rich, brown earth of his fields.

Dunstan's two teenage sons, Josep and Odo, look little slightly smaller versions of their father — big, strapping fellows with black hair and coarse, friendly features. His wife and 20-year-old daughter, trim raven-haired beauties with waist-length tresses, are comparatively short women. They dress



in flowing dark green skirts topped with olive bodkins offset with hammered copper jewelry. His father Obedon is a thin, leathery 70-year-old man who walks with a limp he picked up fighting in a war in his youth.

The Radwells are a tough but outgoing family who, while content with their lives, are also eager for news of the larger world. Their home is the first outpost of society encountered by many people returning from the wilds. Correspondingly, they are more than happy to allow the occasional visitor to relax

(or convalesce) in the relative safety of their fortified home in exchange for news from lands outside of the isolated clearing in which they live (and perhaps some coins or labor to pay for food and resources consumed). Most of these visitors are merchants returning to the capital city from neighboring kingdoms or grain speculators who have come to bid upon the farm's seasonal bounty. But occasionally the Radwells share their home with an unemployed mercenary or two in exchange for some hard work and rousing tales told at night by the fireplace.

THE RADWELLS

DUNSTAN RADWELL

17 STR 13 DEX 14 CON
13 BODY 10 INT 10 EGO
13 PRE 10 COM
5 PD 4 ED 3 SPD
6 REC 28 END 29 STUN

Abilities: +1 with Crossbows; +1 with HTH Combat; Animal Handler (Bovines, Equines) 12-; KS: Flora and Fauna 12-; AK: The Forest 11-; Persuasion 12-; PS: Farmer 13-; Riding 12-; Survival (Temperate/Subtropical Forests) 11-; WF: Axes, Maces, Hammers, and Picks, Blades, Crossbows, Polearms and Spears

50+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of "Greenskins"

CYNWISE RADWELL

9 STR 14 DEX 12 CON
9 BODY 14 INT 10 EGO
10 PRE 16 COM
4 PD 3 ED 3 SPD
4 REC 24 END 20 STUN

Abilities: +1 with Crossbows; +1 with Spears; KS: Flora and Fauna 8-; AK: The Forest 8-; KS: Woodcraft 8-; PS: Farmer 12-; PS: Cook 13-; Survival (Temperate/Subtropical Forests) 12-; Tactics 12-; WF: Crossbows, Polearms

25+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of "Greenskins"; Social Limitation: Woman In Male Dominated Society

OBEDON RADWELL

14 STR 14 DEX 14 CON
9 BODY 10 INT 10 EGO
10 PRE 10 COM
4 PD 4 ED 3 SPD
6 REC 28 END 23 STUN

Abilities: -3" Running (3" total); KS: Flora and Fauna 12-; AK: The Forest 11-; PS: Farmer 13-; PS: Taxidermist 12-; Riding 12-; Survival (Temperate/Subtropical Forests) 11-; WF: Axes, Maces, Hammers, and Picks, Blades, Crossbows, Polearms and Spears; +1 with Crossbows

25+ Disadvantages: Age (60+); Physical Limitation: Severe Limp (All the Time, Slightly Impairing); Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of "Greenskins"

JOSEP RADWELL

16 STR 14 DEX 14 CON
11 BODY 10 INT 10 EGO
10 PRE 10 COM
4 PD 4 ED 3 SPD
6 REC 28 END 24 STUN

Abilities: +1 with Crossbows; +1 with Hatchet; KS: Flora and Fauna 11-; AK: The Forest 11-; PS: Farmer 13-; PS: Leather Worker 12-; Survival (Temperate/Subtropical Forests) 11-; WF: Common Melee Weapons

25+ Disadvantages: None

ODO RADWELL

16 STR 14 DEX 14 CON
11 BODY 10 INT 10 EGO
10 PRE 10 COM
4 PD 4 ED 3 SPD
6 REC 28 END 24 STUN

Abilities: +1 with Crossbows; +1 with Knife; KS: Flora and Fauna 11-; AK: The Forest 11-; PS: Farmer 13-; PS: Carpentry 12-; Survival (Temperate/Subtropical Forests) 11-; WF: Common Melee Weapons

25+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Nervous Around Women

HILDA RADWELL

9 STR 14 DEX 12 CON
9 BODY 13 INT 10 EGO
10 PRE 16 COM
5 PD 3 ED 3 SPD
4 REC 24 END 20 STUN

Abilities: +1 with Crossbows; +1 with Spears; KS: Flora and Fauna 8-; AK: The Forest 8-; Paramedics 12-; KS: Cooking 8-; PS: Farmer 13-; PS: Seamstress 12-; Survival (Temperate/Subtropical Forests) 12-; WF: Crossbows, Polearms and Spears

25+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Lovelorn; Social Limitation: Woman In Male Dominated Society

PLOT SEEDS

The PCs are traveling through an unexplored forest when they're ambushed by a hunting party of Erqigdlit. Unable to fend off the carnivorous dogmen, they retreat through the wilderness until they reach the isolated Radwell family homestead. Together the adventurers and farmers must fight the wolf-men off or become tomorrow's main course!

A cyclops has been ravaging the boarder area of the kingdom. Amidst much fanfare and acclaim the PCs have been dispatched to kill it. Along the way they stop at an isolated but well-fortified farmhouse to spend a warm peaceful night. Little do the hunters know that their prey is also hunting them....

War ravages the land. Invading armies of Goblins and Ogres have struck deep into the kingdoms of Men, destroying villages and leaving many families in danger of starvation. The nearest supply of food is located in a sequestered farmhouse several days journey into the western wilderness, directly along the path the invaders are taking. Can the PCs sneak past the enemy and return with badly needed supplies before innocent life is lost?

FARMHOUSE MATERIALS SUMMARY

Object	DEF and BODY
Barley Filled Sack	DEF 3, BODY 1
Clay Pot	DEF 1, BODY 1
Chopping Block	DEF 4, BODY 5
Hay Bail	DEF 2, BODY 2
Heavy Crossbow	DEF 4, BODY 6
Heavy Wooden Chair	DEF 4, BODY 5
Loom	DEF 2, BODY 2
Roof Beam	DEF 5, BODY 11
Shelving	DEF 3, BODY 3
Spinning Whetstone	DEF 6, BODY 5
Stuffed Moose Head	DEF 3, BODY 4
Thick Log Walls	DEF 5, BODY 10

DEFENSES

Though they're peaceful folk, the Radwells can defend themselves and their home should the need arise. If they're attacked during the daytime, Dunstan blows his hunting horn before rapidly leading his ox team back toward the farmhouse. Josep and Odo rush to meet intruders with daggers and hatchets (which they wear at all times on their thick leather work belts), while their father and grandfather quickly herd the family livestock into the heavy stone barn. At the same time Cynwise and Hilda ready their home for attack by bolting the shutters, unstopping the murder holes, and loading the household crossbows.

The twins engage trespassers for only as long as it takes to assess their numbers, relative strength, and weaponry before sprinting back using the tall stalks in the barley fields as cover. When they arrive at the .6" (four feet) tall wall which forms a barrier around the farmhouse, they're met by their mother, sister, and a couple of loaded light crossbows. Using the wall as partial Concealment, the four of them fire crossbow bolts at the intruders until they (the intruders) come within 4", at which time they retreat into their homestead and bolt the front door.

Meanwhile, Dunstan and Obedon have retrieved their heavy crossbows, hatchets, and hunting knives before either joining the family in the house or heading to the woods to flank the intruders. In the latter case, they fire at long range from the cover of the trees in an attempt to draw their enemies away from the farm and into the dark forest where they can lead them into a series of prepared ambushes. If the intruders don't pursue the two men into the woods, Dunstan and Obedon double back to their home, entering through the grain silo and then bolting its door. From inside, the entire family continues to fire on their opponents through the windows and stab through the murder holes (see below) with spears.

Dogs

The Radwell twins own a pair of enormous forest mastiffs named Hans and Wolfgang. These dogs are their constant companions, sleeping by the foot of their beds at night and accompanying them into the fields during the day. Although primarily bred for hunting, these clever animals are fierce

fighters if necessary. They won't abandon their young masters' sides even in a fight to the death. For statistics on these admirable animals see *The HERO System Bestiary*, page 160.

THE FARM AND FARMHOUSE

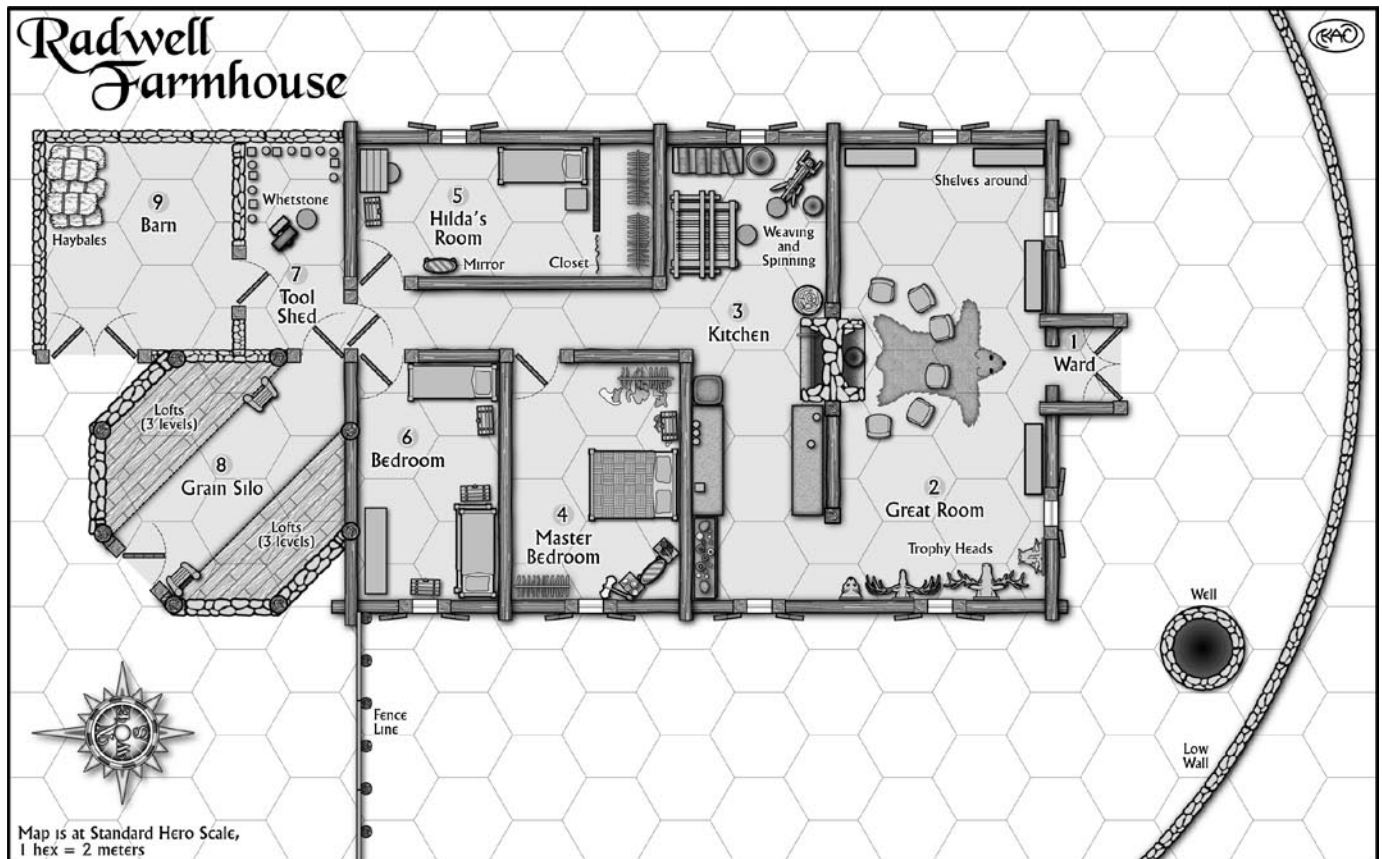
The homestead sits in the middle of 80 acres of rich, productive farmland hard-won from the ancient old growth forest and bramble-filled meadows which surrounds it for miles in every direction. It's a frontier farm on the edge of a frontier province, the final comforting symbol of stability and civilization for those adventuresome souls who make their fortunes by traveling outside of the king's domain. Its inhabitants have a thriving side business selling food to these wayfarers in the form of freshly-baked bread and jerked venison.

Though they're primarily barley farmers, the Radwells also raise two acres of vegetables such as beans, cabbage, sorrel, and leeks. They also keep a milking goat, a dozen sheep, three oxen, and a couple of shaggy horses in a small ten-acre grazing pasture near their house. Over the last half century the family has slowly expanded the farm to include a barn, a toolshed, and a grain silo. These buildings link to the farmhouse via a series of doorways cut into the house's north side. Constructed from the rough granite blocks Obedon pulled from the earth to make his pasture, these new windowless buildings are mortared together with a strong mixture of clay, stags' blood, and barley stalks.

The Radwell family has wisely refrained from using thatch on their buildings, since it's incredibly combustible. The farmhouse and outbuildings are roofed with heavy tongue-and-groove planking which has been sealed with thick maple sap, then covered with a generous layer of living sod. The resulting ceiling is nearly inflammable and well-insulated. In the summer Hilda walks the milking goat up onto the roof via a ladder a few days out of the week to keep the sod from growing out of control.

The Farmhouse

Made of thick oaken logs, the farmhouse was originally constructed by Dunstan's grandfather Ceolwulf about fifty years ago when the family first laid claim to the land. Wisely built to withstand any natural or manmade disaster Ceolwulf could think off, it has endured bandit and Orc attacks, fire, flood, and several wars. Its rough outer walls bear the scars and marks of these encounters: burns from forest fires, dents left by an improvised battering ram, and sword blows cut here and there into the deep rich wood. The house's windows are shuttered with heavy boards that have a distinctive cross formation cut into their surface to allow concealed crossbow fire from within. Murder holes (currently stoppered with wooden plugs) are drilled in various locations to allow the farmhouse's



occupants to stab outside using spears.

Inside, matters are considerably less rustic. The oak logs have been sheered off to provide a reasonably flat surface upon which to mount shelves or hang utensils, rustic but attractive curtains cover the windows, and a roaring fire warms both the great room and the kitchen through twin fireplaces.

1. WARD

This small room is built directly into the front of the farmhouse. Basically a storage area for heavy winter clothing such as coats and boots, its thick, windowless double doors can be securely barred with a heavy plank leaning in the corner. A narrow doorway at its far end allows the home's occupants partial Concealment so they can strike at opponents with spears if the outer doors are breached.

2. GREAT ROOM

The single largest chamber in the house is the Great Room. Along with the kitchen it's the space that the Radwell family spends most of their time in, especially in winter when the rest of the house is particularly cold at night. There's a large dual fireplace on the room's north wall; its other side opens into the kitchen. A half-dozen high-backed wooden chairs face the hearth. A stockpot nestles among the glowing embers, its belly full of greens, carrots, and beets flavored daily with rabbit, squirrel, possum, and on special occasions bits of venison.

The single most striking feature of the Great Room is the floor to ceiling maple shelving which covers its east and south walls. The shelves hold a bizarre assortment of bric-a-brac: copper coins from long-dead kingdoms; broken sword hilts

taken from would-be bandit kings; fossils; Orc tusks; bits of ancient pottery written on crumbling parchment pages; Goblin skulls; and a hundred other tiny curiosities. Over the years the Radwells, young and old alike, have become increasingly fond of their family home, and hoard even the most fragmentary memorabilia of its past in specially constructed cabinets and shelves.

A huge bearskin rug dominates the wooden floor, its gleaming yellow fangs angrily bared toward the ward door. A row of stuffed heads, representing the best hunts in the family's history, stare down from the western wall: moose, buck, panther, and more. Above the fireplace a hand-carved weapon rack holds half a dozen steel-tipped spears whose barbs glimmer in the flickering firelight. Further above, in the homestead's open, gabled roof, a dozen well-maintained crossbows hang on a series of wooden pegs.

3. KITCHEN

Long stone countertops dominate this warm, rectangular room, but their surface is practically invisible beneath a fantastic variety of cooking implements, spice racks, and dried goods. A primitive shelf of stacked boulders and rough pine boards fills the northwest corner. It's filled with jars of sweet preserves, clay pots of pickled vegetables, sacks of onions, and loaves of edible but extremely hard travelers' bread.

A chopping block stands in the southeastern corner with three large meat cleavers buried deep in its surface. Pots, pans, pokers, and spits hang from various hooks attached to the beams above. The drying skins of various small game

THE GILDENEY FAMILY

The Gildeneys are a family of moderately prosperous merchants who live in the capital city of a growing kingdom in your *Fantasy Hero* world. In most respects they're very like their farming counterparts, so a few simple changes quickly transform the rural Radwell farmhouse into the urban Gildeneys' townhouse. The wooden half-log outer walls are replaced with shaped stone ones, the planked roof becomes thatch, with the open beams replaced by an attic for extra storage space, and the outbuildings (barn, grain silo, and toolshed) become a single warehouse building with about 25% more floor space. The Gildeneys, who are a far less sentimental than the Radwells, have a great room which also serves as an office for their family business. It's dominated by a long desk upon which rest a dozen or so thick ledgers the family uses to keep track of its affairs. A series of long wooden bookshelves run along the west, east, and south walls from floor to ceiling, stuffed with the musty records of previous transactions and trading journeys.

The Gildeneys are slightly wealthier than their rural counterparts. They wear flashier clothing, eat less rustic food, and sport more urbane weapons when necessary. They also have appropriately different skills such as Streetwise, KS: The Theater, and PS: Accountant. They specialize in importing whatever is in demand in the kingdom (silk, spices, strange beasts, and so forth) in exchange for staples available there in bulk (grains, timber, and silver ore).

such as rabbit, beaver, and possum hang on racks suspended from the ceiling as well. On a good day their bled carcasses join them from a specially constructed meat hook, which drains into a stone basin built into one of the counters.

A large loom sits next to an equally oversized spinning wheel in the room's eastern section. Each has a comfortable looking stool upholstered with some sort of luxurious white fur. A wooden barrel of freshly fleeced wool stands nearby, while finished bolts of cloth fill a specially-constructed rack.

4. MASTER BEDROOM

Dunstan and Cynwise's bedroom reflects their family's resources and general prosperity. It features a king-sized featherbed with a headboard carved with woodland scenes, clothes hung from pegs (or piled on the floor), and a small vanity table for Cynwise that holds a few bottles and jars of simple cosmetics. Dunstan has a large, well-used axe leaning against the vanity so he can respond quickly if anyone attacks the farmstead at night.

Underneath Dunstan and Cynwise's bed there's a loose floorboard. Finding it requires an unmodified Concealment roll, or a Sight PER Roll at -4; prying it up requires a STR Roll that scores at least 1 BODY. Within lies a leather bag containing the family's modest fortune: 50 or so varied gold, silver, and copper pieces (mostly the latter two).

5. HILDA'S ROOM

As the only unmarried woman in his household Dunstan's daughter Hilda has been given her own private bedroom. It's a rather Spartan place with a few feminine touches. It has a small chicken-feather mattress bed, a small closet holding plain, functional clothing, and a small sewing table. The only remarkable thing about Hilda's room is the full-length mirror mounted to the wall near the door. Purchased by Dunstan during one of his infrequent journeys to the nearest city, it's Hilda's one indulgence.

6. OBEDON, JOSEP, AND ODO'S QUARTERS

The unmarried Radwell men share a single small room. Obedon has a bed to himself (the benefits of seniority), while the two boys sleep in straw mattress bunk beds built into the eastern wall. For a room used by bachelors, it's surprisingly orderly and clean. A wall of cubbyholes on the room's northern side hold the mens' clothes. Three large locked trunks set to one side of the room hold most of their "sundries": bars of soap, whetstones, lucky rabbit's feet, knives, and the odd copper piece or two.

THE PROPHECY

Little history exists for the Radwell family. Unbeknownst to the living members of the family the Radwells were once dedicated to the banished god. Unlike the other cultists in *Fantasy Hero Battlegrounds*, whose families carried on the profane traditions of that god, Ceolwulf abandoned that ancient worship, deciding instead to pursue an honest and honorable life. But a family does not so easily escape its evil past.

As with the other cultists, the Radwell ancestors received a portion of the prophecy. Ceolwulf knew it, though he didn't teach it to his son, Obedon. But the servants of the god have other ways gleaned knowledge from the dead: Necromancy.

When the cultists come to the Radwell home, will the PCs help the family fend off the evil-doers? And will they realize in time the cultists' true goal is to raise Ceolwulf's corpse not only to obtain the fragment of prophecy, but also to bind the faithless man's spirit in eternal service?

7. THE TOOLSHED

Much like the grain silo and barn adjacent to it, this small stone room is a recent addition to the Radwell homestead. Built straight up against the outer northern wall, it connects to the main farmhouse by a thick wooden door which can be bolted from the hallway. A series of straight wooden pegs and forks have been mortared directly into the walls so the family can hang various farm implements — hoes, axes, rakes, shovels, and various other tools — on nearly every surface. A well-used foot-pedaled whetstone sits in the middle of the room along with a three-legged stool.

8. GRAIN SILO

Reaching a full 4" (26 feet) in the air to a tapered, conical roof, the grain silo is the most ambitious construction project ever undertaken by the Radwell family. Several small but thick tree trunks have been sunk directly into the silo's cobblestone foundation to allow a series of well-supported lofts to run vertically along its surface; the Radwells reach the lofts via ladders. In the fall and winter they're stocked with thousands of pounds of barley sacks awaiting sale or consumption. The Radwells can enter the silo either through the toolshed (#7) or through a heavy barred door to the northwest.

9. BARN

More of a defensive structure for the family livestock than anything else, the barn is just large enough to hold all of the homestead's animals when the weather becomes dangerously hostile or enemies threaten. Normally the Radwells use it to store several dozen bales of hay, which they stack against the eastern wall.

THE SPIRE OF THE EASTERN DAWN



Wizards are often strange people. They dress in curious clothing, speak in exotic languages, worship aberrant gods, and generally involve themselves in projects which are either dangerous, disgusting, or some hideous combination of the two. No reasonably intelligent person wants to live near one. The odd smells and periodic explosions emanating from their homes drive down neighborhood property values. They regularly socialize with killers, thieves, religious fanatics, and foreigners. Their experiments have been known to depopulate the locale of cats, stray dogs, and bothersome children. Not surprisingly, many a noisome sorcerer has been forced to hitch up his robe and run for dear life from an angry mob of torch-wielding peasants hell-bent on keeping their village safe from accidentally-summoned lesser demons.

Therefore, what many wizards crave is isolation. A sanctum in the uninhabited wilderness — tall mountains, burning deserts, unexplored islands, deep forests, and the like — can provide this. The problem, of course, is that uninhabited wastelands aren't really all that uninhabited in many Fantasy realms. Ogres, Orcs, Goblins, dragons, bandits, and monsters of various sorts all call the uncharted portions of any *Fantasy Hero* setting home.

So a wizard needs not just isolation, but security. Fortunately, a mage has his magical powers to rely on when it comes to building and protecting his home. With the right spells, he can perch a tower on a mountain peak so steep that even monsters don't tread there, or in some other location that makes his home "defensible" (a pocket dimension, a warren of caverns, or something similar).

Velgaron Greenwalker makes his home in a secluded stone tower deep in the uncharted reaches of a sylvan wilderness. Although it's not that tall as towers go, he has christened it "the Spire of the Eastern Dawn" in the usual spirit of poetic boastfulness so common to mages. He specializes in Druidry, Divination, Alchemy, and Conjunction. A good-natured, scholarly sort of wizard, he spends his days studying the varied creatures of the forest in the hope he can prove the existence of certain underlying mystical principles he believes govern the physical world. All the same, he isn't above making a bit of hard currency now and again. Velgaron accepts visitors from all over the kingdom who come seeking his advice on matters magical. Often they have newly-discovered enchanted items that require identification, need to use his extensive library, or want to be trained in the casting of spells.

INHABITANTS OF THE SPIRE OF THE EASTERN DAWN

Velgaron is in most respects a fairly typical goodly wizard. He's tall, thin, and unspeakably old. He smokes mysterious tobaccos through abstractly carved pipes, wears robes covered in strange symbols, and speaks with animals. His hair cascades down his back in a waterfall of grey locks. Laughter lines spiral out from his twinkling brown eyes to criss-cross his tanned features.

Velgaron likes to spend his days rambling around the Whisperwood Forest, visiting with the various odd and eccentric beings who dwell there. He tells his visitors this is all part of a vital research project into the underlying mysteries of the natural world, but mainly he's out getting drunk with satyrs and brownies.



PLOT SEEDS

The PCs have traveled to the Spire to consult with Velgaron on some matter, but they run into a complication: he isn't there, but two attractive elven princesses are. Desperate to break free of their life of boring study, Isara and Ocelin will say or do pretty much anything to get the PCs to take away them away from the Spire. Wherever they're going, Isara and Ocelin want to go there too. Of course, if they actually do take the girls with them, they'll soon find themselves Hunted by the old wizard, the Forest Lord and his court, and nearly every goodly creature in the Whisperwood.

Velgaron is an old friend of one of the PCs. As a personal favor, he has asked them to stay in the Spire for several weeks and keep an eye on things while he goes to consult with some other wizards. If they accept, hilarity ensues as the PCs try to play parent to his two apprentices, feed mobs of hungry forest creatures, and deal with the pleadings of an annoying air elemental. And who knows what enemy of Velgaron's may try to take advantage of his absence to pilfer his most valuable goods....

The PCs have acquired some sort of magical artifact and need to know more about it. A friendly scholar directs them to the Spire of the Eastern Dawn's library. As travel through the Whisperwood, they stumble upon a strange scene: an elf maiden is being attacked by an armored centaur (he's actually teaching her swordplay). Should the PCs forcefully intervene, both the girl and the centaur inexplicably

Recently Velgaron's pleasant routine of slightly inebriated indolence has been interrupted by the arrival of two teenage apprentices. Daughters of the local Elven-Lord, Pretur Rhodcum, the feisty elven princesses Isara and Ocelin have been thorns in the rural wizard's side since they were unceremoniously dumped on his doorstep two months ago. Unwilling or unable to preform basic housekeeping, they spend their days diligently avoiding their studies and their evenings sneaking out to the forest to cavort with centaurs. Velgaron has little choice but

to try to train them: the Elvenking gave him the tower decades ago with the proviso that he would train the children of nobles in the mysterious ways of magic when they came of age, if they so desired. He simply never expected to live that long.

Ocelin is the more bearable of the two princesses. Shorter, slightly stouter, and considerably less irritating than her sister, she half-heartedly tries to follow the wizard's instructions... but she's easily distracted by her more excitable older sibling. It's Velgaron's opinion that, if she was simply separated

THE WIZARD AND HIS APPRENTICES

VELGARON THE GREENWALKER

13	STR	14	DEX	13	CON
12	BODY	18	INT	14	EGO
18	PRE	12	COM		
8	PD	9	ED	3	SPD
11	REC	40	END	30	STUN

Abilities: Life Support (Longevity: 200 years; Diminished Sleeping: no need to sleep); Reputation: Wise Old Wizard 11-, +1/+1d6; Follower (Sildenafil the homonculus); Contact: Pretur Rhodcum the Elven-Lord 12-; Contact: Brotherhood of the Eternal Emblem 11-; Animal Friendship; Beast Speech; Magesight; Spell Augmentation; +2 with Magic Skill Rolls; +2 with Magic Spells; AK: Whisperwood Forest 13-; Alchemy 14-; Conjuratation 13-; Conversation 13-; Cryptography 13-; Deduction 13-; Divination 13-; Druidry 13-; Earth Magic 13-; Enchantment 14-; Inventor (Spell Research) 13-; CuK: Sylvan Creatures 13-; Literate; PS: Brewer 13-; PS: Librarian 13-; Paramedics 13-; Riding 12-; Survival (Temperate/Subtropical Forests) 13-; Linguist (Languages, all fluent conversation: Centaur, Elven, Satyr); Scholar (has the following KSs, all 13-: Alchemy, Arcane And Occult Knowledge, Conjuratation, Druidry, Elemental Magic, Herbalism, Legends And Lore)

75+ Disadvantages: Age: 60+ years; Dependent NPCs: Princesses Ocelin and Isara 11-; Psychological Limitation: Lazy (Common, Moderate)

Spells*: Animal Companion, Banishment, Barkskin, D'ansif's Spell Of Far Sight, Create Steel Golem, Create Wood Golem, Dragonskin Armor, Hands Of Stone, Healing Potion, Lightning Strike, Potion Of Healing, Potion Of Giant's Strength, Potion Of Longevity, Premonition, The Lesser Wardings, Staff Of Repulsion, Stonyskin Salve, Wand Of Mystic Darts

*This is not a complete list, just a list of Velgaron's favorites. Most spells are bought as Master's Version (*i.e.*, no Skill Roll required).

PRINCESS OCELIN RHODCUM

10	STR	12	DEX	10	CON
10	BODY	12	INT	10	EGO
14	PRE	17	COM		
6	PD	5	ED	2	SPD
6	REC	25	END	24	STUN

Abilities: *Elven Eyes:* +1 PER with Sight Group; *Elven Eyes:* Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group); *Elven Longevity:* Life Support (Longevity: 1,600 Years); Contact: Pretur Rhodcum the Forest Lord 12-; Fringe Benefit: Lordship (elven princess); Lightsleep; +1 with Magic Skill Rolls; +1 with Magic Spells; Alchemy 8-; Conversation 12-; Druidry 8-; Enchantment 8-; AK: Whisperwood Forest 11-; KS: Arcane and Occult Knowledge 8-; CuK: Sylvan Creatures 11-; Language: Centaur (fluent conversation); Literate; Persuasion 12-; Seduction 12-; Survival (Temperate/Subtropical Forests) 11-

75+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Lazy (Common, Moderate)

Spells*: Corwm's Spell of the Stinging Swarm, Potion of Tiny Form, Stoneyskin Salve, Sword of the Double Strike, Taming-Spell, Wand of Healing

*All spells are bought as Apprentice's Version (*i.e.*, they have Side Effects).

PRINCESS ISARA RHODCUM

13	STR	12	DEX	13	CON
12	BODY	12	INT	10	EGO
14	PRE	19	COM		
7	PD	6	ED	3	SPD
8	REC	31	END	30	STUN

Abilities: *Elven Eyes:* +1 PER with Sight Group; *Elven Eyes:* Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group); *Elven Longevity:* Life Support (Longevity: 1,600 Years); Contact: Pretur Rhodcum the Forest Lord 12-; Fringe Benefit: Lordship (elven princess); Lightsleep; AK: Whisperwood Forest 11-; Conversation 13-; Enchantment 8-; CuK: Sylvan Creatures 11-; Language: Centaur (fluent conversation); Literate; Persuasion 13-; Seduction 13-; Survival (Temperate/Subtropical Forests) 11-

75+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Aversion To Nature; Psychological Limitation: Psychological Limitation: Vain

Spells*: Glittergem, Shield Of Swift Defense, Sword Of The Double Strike

*All spells are bought as Apprentice's Version (*i.e.*, they have Side Effects).

from Isara for a few years, he could turn her into a perfectly competent third-rate hedge enchantress.

Isara is an entirely different, far more aggravating matter. It's almost as though the mercurial elven gods have played some sort of practical joke on the old mage, because his other apprentice could not be less Elf-like. She's impatient, greedy, short-tempered, impulsive, unartistic, and devoid of any real magical aptitude. She loathes forests, trees, rabbits, deer, tall grass, and basically anything else rustic. Her greatest desire is to become a rich sword-wielding adventurer who owns an exceptionally large townhouse in the densest urban area she can find.

Needless to say, she doesn't get along with Velgaron.

OTHER INHABITANTS

It isn't entirely accurate to say that the old wizard lived alone before he acquired his elven apprentices. An animal-lover dwelling in an ancient sylvan tower, Velgaron regularly allows cats, song-birds, field mice, ferrets, and stray dogs to live in the Spire (much to the princesses' distress). These animals wander in and out of the Spire as they please, eating whatever they find, and sleeping wherever they like. This would be a sure recipe for a colossal mess if it weren't for Liera, a weak air elemental Velgaron long ago bound to the tower. She cleans floors, washes dishes, picks up clutter, and softly bemoans her fate.

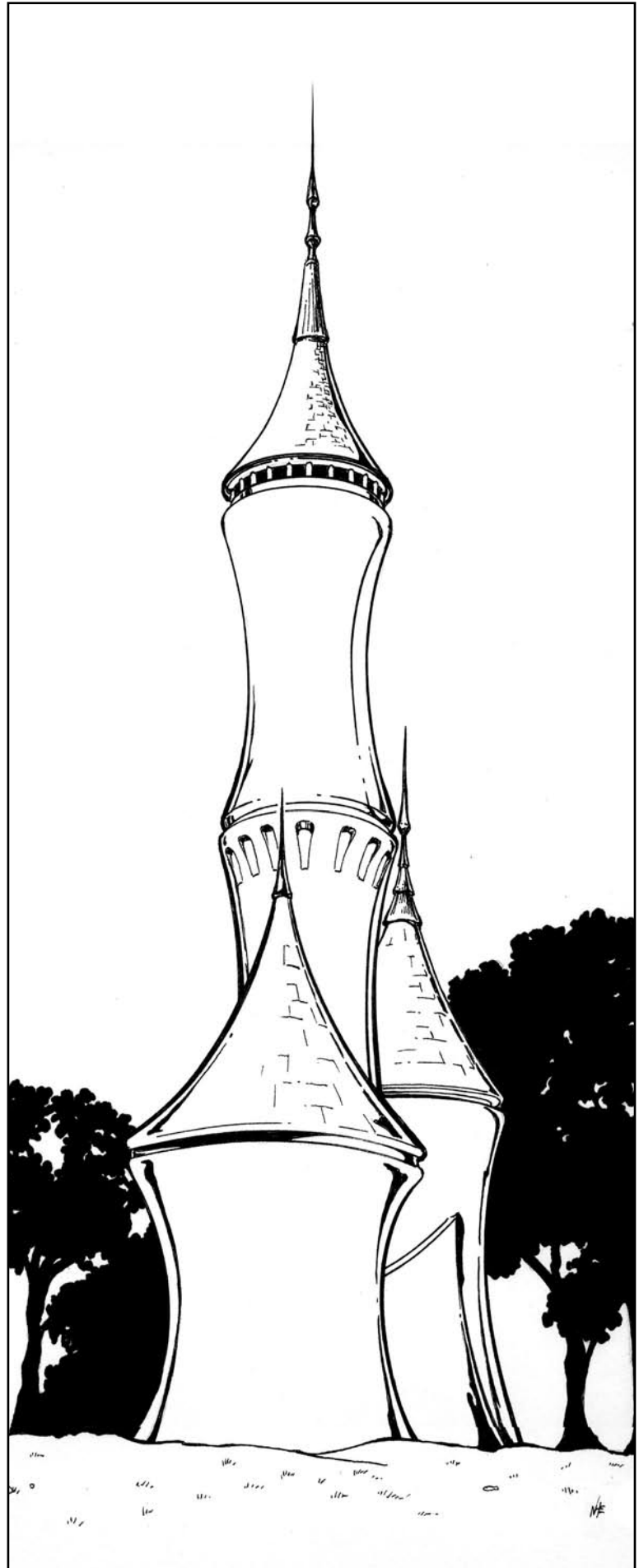
The only other inhabitant of the Spire is Silde-nafil, Velgaron's ubiquitous homonculus servant (see *The HERO System Bestiary*, page 86). Created over half a century ago to assist his master in lab experiments, the little man is ancient by the standards of his kind. Now he spends a majority of his time sleeping in his tiny bed (or wherever else seems soft and comfortable). Silde-nafil cooks small meals for Velgaron, turns the pages of his books for him when he's reading, and sits on his shoulder looking inscrutable.

THE SPIRE OF THE EASTERN DAWN

Built many, many years ago by the ancient Forest Lords of Whisperwood, the Spire of the Eastern Dawn is a peculiar structure. Erected in a small clearing seemingly vacated by the very trees themselves, the Spire is constructed out of moon-white blocks of stone fitted exactly together without the benefit of mortar. The main body of the spire is a central tower some 60 feet tall, flanked by two ten-foot towers on its north and south sides. All three of these buildings are circular and connect to one another via doorways. Each is capped with a conical roof of dark-blue stone which tapers up to a fantastical, spear-like point.

Ground Floor

Mostly surrounded by small vegetable and herb gardens, the ground floor of the Spire has a single wooden door on its eastern wall. A small



turn and flee into the forest together. When the PCs finally arrive at the Spire they find that a small army consisting of an angry wizard, three elven nobles, and a dozen centaurs is waiting for them....

SPIRE MATERIALS SUMMARY

Object	DEF and BODY
Alchemist's Globe	DEF 4, BODY 6
Alembic	DEF 1, BODY 2
Animal, stuffed	DEF 3, BODY 3
Basin, stone, small	DEF 4, BODY 10
Basin, stone, large	DEF 4, BODY 15
Bed, wood-framed	DEF 3, BODY 3
Book	DEF 3, BODY 1
Bookshelf, wood	DEF 4, BODY 5
Bottle, glass	DEF 1, BODY 1
Chair, heavy wooden	DEF 4, BODY 4
Chair, upholstered	DEF 4, BODY 5
Countertop, granite	DEF 5, BODY 11
Crate, small wooden	DEF 4, BODY 4
Desk, wooden	DEF 3, BODY 3
Dollhouse	DEF 2, BODY 3
Door, heavy wooden	DEF 4, BODY 4
Dung Box	DEF 2, BODY 3
Fireplace	DEF 5, BODY 10
Keg	DEF 4, BODY 5
Kettle, small iron	DEF 3, BODY 4
Stairwell, spiral	DEF 6, BODY 12
Stool, wooden	DEF 3, BODY 3
Table, heavy wooden	DEF 4, BODY 5
Table, small wood	DEF 3, BODY 3
Wall, stone block	DEF 8, BODY 5
Window, stained-glass	DEF 2, BODY 2

trough and rail for horses are located just to the left of the doorway; a diminutive spring which burbles merrily out of the ground through a vine-covered sculpture of an elven warrior next to the northern outbuilding feeds the trough (and provides water for the tower).

1. WAITING ROOM

Wizards don't like to be bothered, but they also don't like to turn away those who may bring them information of use or hard coin. Velgaron has furnished this room to entertain guests who have not yet been welcomed to the tower's upper levels. A series of exotic skins act as rugs on the room's smooth riverbed stone floor: bear, boar, stag, and what looks like dragon.

A cheery-looking fireplace sits in the center of the west wall; a PC making a PER Roll will see that it has no actual flue leading upwards, needs no additional fuel, and never gives off more than the appropriate amount of heat. That part of the room contains comfortable chairs and ottomans in front of the fireplace, a rack of bottles of wine, and a chess table with a board in varying shades of forest green with pieces carved to look like sylvan forest creatures.

Above the stout oaken entryway door on the room's east side an elaborate stained-glass window depicts a female elven warrior astride a gryphon driving a long tapered lance into the heart of a venomous-looking basilisk. On the opposing wall above the mantle an equally large window shows a scene from local mythology: an eagle battling an ogre on a starlit night. These windows are precisely positioned so that ample sunlight floods into the

room regardless of the time of day. At night the room is lit by a soft, otherworldly ambiance that seems to come from everywhere simultaneously. There are additional doors on the north and south ends of the room that lead to the small towers.

The southeastern corner of the waiting room contains a freestanding closet (for visitors' coats, cloaks, and such) and a small "guest library" with books and scrolls of general interest. The northeast corner holds various curiosities: a stuffed harpy; a fierce-looking minotaur's head mounted above two crossed weapons so large and barbaric that they may very well have been used by that nearly legendary beast; a collection of local semi-precious stones; and various flags, banners, and pennants from noble elven houses (some now deceased).

A massive cast-iron circular stairwell spirals up from the center of this room to a locked hatchway in the ceiling ten feet overhead. Its rungs have been shaped to resemble dragons, serpents, wyverns, wyrms, and other such fantastic creatures. Grasped in their ferocious jaws are large crystals which reflect the room's light, giving off a soft, white radiance.

The Wood Golem

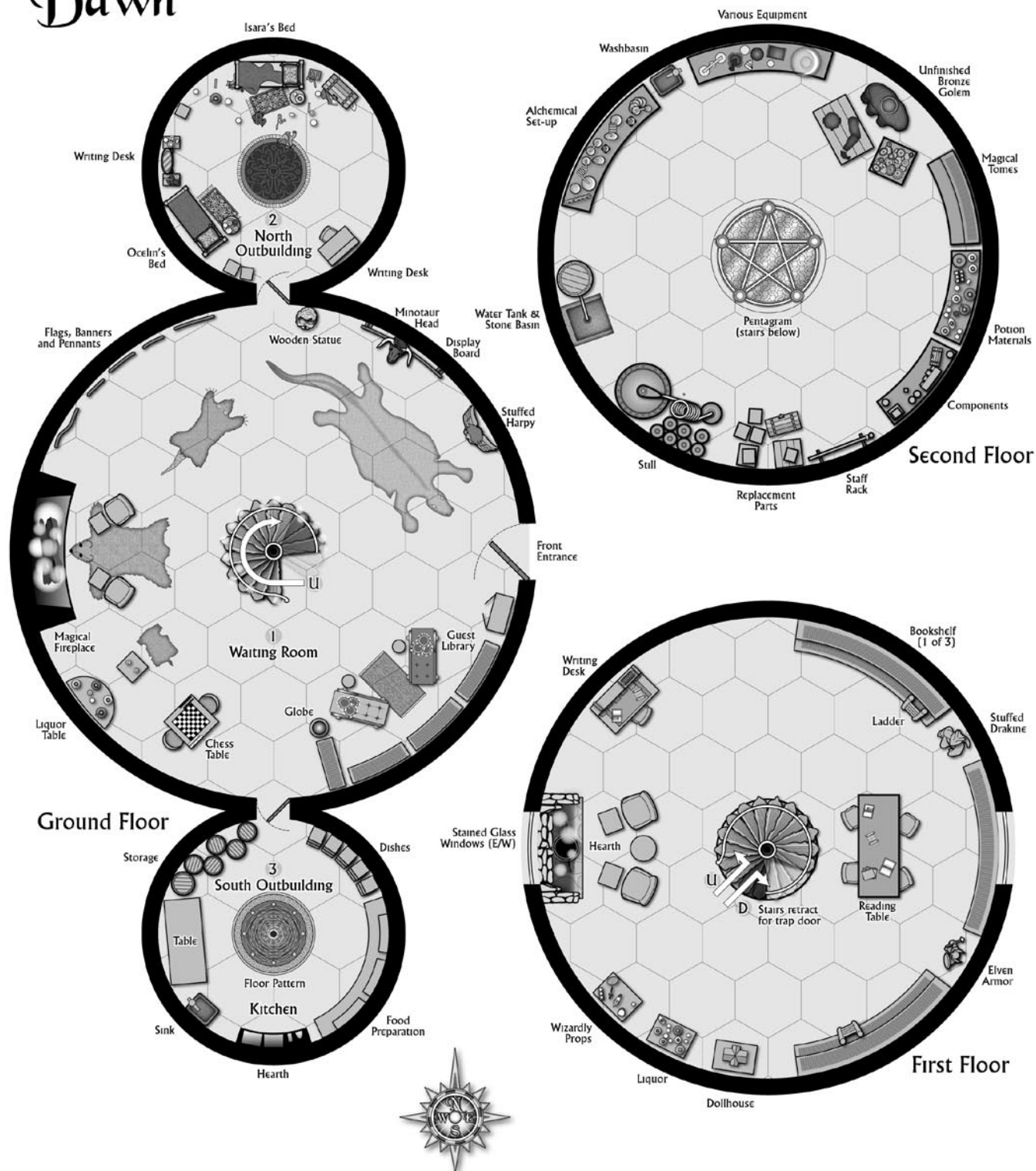
A large wooden statue of an attractive but serious-looking woman with her arms folded stands next to the northern door. This is actually a wood golem (see *The HERO System Bestiary*, page 80) constructed by Velgaron to defend the Spire in his absence, if necessary. She hasn't moved since she was placed there over a decade ago. She only activates if the building or its inhabitants are under attack. For the moment, however, a couple of songbirds have made her their home and are cheerfully building a nest in her hair.

2. NORTH OUTBUILDING

This small circular room serves as the quarters for Velgaron's apprentices. A door on its south side connects it with the waiting room. A series of marvelous crystal blocks mounted on both its east and west walls illuminate the room, while several small circular openings near its conical roof allow songbirds, squirrels, and the odd pixie access to the room.... much to the annoyance of its inhabitants. The princesses have tried repeatedly to block these openings with rags but Liera, the Spire's captive air elemental maid (see *The HERO System Bestiary*, page 70), keeps cleaning them back out again.

The room is furnished haphazardly. Isara's side is a mess, with expensive clothing, jars of cosmetics, daggers, crumpled bits of parchment, and various feminine oddities scattered around. A slim and surprisingly well-oiled Sword Of The Double Strike (*The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*, page 136) is hidden under the bed in a plain-looking wooden case. Ocelin's side is merely messy, with lots of small objects here and there but the clothes folded more-or-less neatly and kept in wooden crates. Her angled writing desk is covered with papers containing earnest if unintelligible scribbles which look suspiciously like homework, plus a few open books.

Spire of the Eastern Dawn



Map is at Standard Hero Scale, 1 hex = 2 meters

VELGARON... THE BLACK!

If there's one kind of NPC that enjoys living in an isolated tower even more than a goodly wizard, it's the sinister necromancer! A bane to living things everywhere, these dark savants perfect their loathsome arts in secrecy far, far away from the prying eyes of decent folk. To transform the sylvan Spire of the Eastern Dawn into a frightening sinkhole of evil, first change its name to the Obelisk of the Oblique. The Obelisk is a forbidding, windowless tower of black, crudely-shaped onyx topped with a roof of reddish slate. Hidden deep in the forbidding Wickwood, it has long served as an entrance-way to the surface world for Dark Elves and other subterranean races who are allies of its owner. Inhabited by the sinister lich Velgaron the Black, its dreadful walls hold untold horrors for any who dare to trespass within.

To complete the transformation from goodly Spire to evil Obelisk, turn Velgaron into a wicked lich as detailed on page 107 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*. His homonculus becomes a demonling (*The HERO System Bestiary*, page 51), the wood golem becomes a flesh golem (*The HERO System Bestiary*, page 78), and Liera the air elemental become very irate indeed. The elven princesses are still elven princesses, only now they're dark elven princesses gifted with all the optional powers as detailed on page 36 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*.

3. SOUTH OUTBUILDING

This circular room is an identical twin of the north outbuilding. It serves as the Spire's kitchen as well as the nominal "home" of Liera the air elemental, who was bound centuries ago to an abstract pattern built into the tiled floor. She whimpers her way invisibly about this room at mealtime, complaining about her imprisonment in a dry whisper to anyone who'll listen and begging them to shatter the pattern on the floor and free her. Light comes in through a glass-paneled skylight built into the very tip of the spire. On warm or dry days Liera opens the skylight to allow various flying animals access to a free meal.

Liera is fanatically neat, and the room reflects her mania for order. A half-dozen barrels filled with millet, barley, salt, wheat, acorns, and dark beer line the northwestern portion of the room, each one with its own specific (and labeled) scoop. A large table stands next to them, with an impressive collection of spotless cooking utensils hanging from pegs along its front. The stone washbasin next to it is fed by a hand pump from the spring outside. A specially-shaped stone hearth along the southern wall has cubbyholes for baking bread, depressions for cooking pots, and spits for hanging meat or teapots.

On the other side of the kitchen fifteen large crates lie stacked in neat rows of three. They contain 300 years' worth of household dishes: fragile elven crystal; hearth baked dwarven clay plates; glassware from faraway lands; steel beer mugs; and more. Liera, who has no grasp of comparative value, uses these quite randomly to serve the household. A long, semicircular preparation counter has been built along the wall next to the crates. Various implements such as graters, strainers, hourglasses, mashers, and grinders are carefully arranged in a series of shelves mounted onto the wall above.

First Floor

Velgaron largely lives on the first floor of the Spire. The room is the same size and dimensions as the one below, with large stained glass windows mounted in precisely the same locations overhead. The east-facing window depicts a tall white-haired wizard banishing an equine war demon, while the west-facing one portrays a red-cloaked elf maiden riding a unicorn under a full moon accompanied by a dog, an owl, and some butterflies. Numerous stuffed birds, small animals, models of ships, abstract clay wind chimes, and toy figurines hang from the rafters.

Three large floor-to-ceiling bookshelves dominate this room (though the middle one's shorter, so as not to block the window). Although not very well organized, this immense private reference library is the repository of the book collections of every spellcaster who has lived in the Spire of the Eastern Dawn, as well as several donated by various elven houses. It contains ancient histories of long forgotten kingdoms, catalogues of strange artifacts, handwritten diaries of famous sorcerers, dictionaries of

demons' names, librams of medicinal herbs, and encyclopedias of monstrous beasts, to name but a few categories. However, the books are so jumbled it requires a PS: Librarian roll to find any single tome.

The alcoves between the bookshelves contain two unusual items: a stuffed, fearsome-looking Drakine wearing some sort of banded mail armor; and an exquisite statue of an elven warrior clutching a highly stylized spear in one hand and a small round shield in the other. A large reading table with chairs has been set to the east of the spiral staircase.

A hearth made of large grey stones occupies the center of the western wall, with a perpetually-percolating pot nestled into the warm embrace of its embers. This kettle is enchanted; on command it produces any warm beverage desired. Velgaron, who no longer sleeps like a normal man, often spends his evening sprawled in the comfortable chairs with a book comfortably nestled in his lap. A bin of long-stemmed clay pipes sits between the two chairs next to a long-legged humidor filled with tobacco.

A writing desk and stool sit against the wall ten feet to the right of the hearth, covered with an array of loose notes, incomplete books, and half-finished scrolls. Several ink pots sit in special holders, as do a dozen or so exotic-looking quills plucked from legendary birds. In a secret compartment under the desk (which someone could find with a Concealment roll at -1, or an appropriate PER Roll at -4), Velgaron has stashed a fully-charged Wand Of Mystic Darts (*The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*, page 132) in case of emergencies. A tiny hammock strung between two wooden pegs at the top of the desk gives Sildenafil a place to rest while his master writes.

Three small wooden tables stand to the left of the fireplace. What appears to be an enclosed dollhouse rests atop the first one. If a PC peeks inside, he sees six rooms with complete furnishings, all the way down to a tiny kitchen, a library filled with actual miniature books, and a dining room. The second table holds a clutter of bottles, jars, and other such containers. These mainly contain various forms of brandy, port, and snuff, but an enterprising character can find a Potion Of Invisibility (*The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*, page 10) hidden amongst them if he uses Magesight, a Detect Magic spell, or the like. The third table has wizardly conversation pieces and nicknacks: skulls with candles in them; exotic-looking lamps; tiny statues; and so on.

Second Floor

Occupying the same dimensions as the rooms below it, the top floor of the Spire houses Velgaron's laboratory. Although it's never been used quite as much as he intended, the lab contains an impressive amount of equipment (much of it left behind by his more serious predecessors). It's windowless, but lit by a massive wrong iron chandelier (obviously crafted by the same artisan who created the tower's stairwell) filled with bright Everburning Candles that never need replacing.

The most striking feature of the room is the large pentagram inlaid with silver, gold, and platinum onto the top of the heavy ironwood trapdoor in the very center of the floor (the one that closes the room off from the stairwell below). The positioning and materials make it almost impossible for anything to accidentally break the pentagram during conjurations.

To the northeast, a massive, half-assembled bronze golem stands next to a crate of glassware and tools, and a metal podium with a thick instruction manual atop it. Two massive granite-topped tables separated by a heavy stone washbasin run along the wall counterclockwise from the golem. They contain all sorts of wizardly and alchemical equipment: dissection trays; scalpels; an alembic; a large mortar and pestle; hourglasses; beakers; bottles; vials; braziers; half-empty bottles; bowls; a dung box; measuring spoons; and more. A massive alchemist's globe (for producing a vacuum) some three feet in diameter sits in its stand next to a hand-operated centrifuge.

Near the second table is a large tank of water and a stone basin almost large enough to bathe in. Next to it stands a large still. Velgaron insists this is all part of a "valuable magical experiment" which will "change the way mortal men look at the world," but really he's just cooking up a batch of corn whiskey for sale to the satyrs of the forest.

Counterclockwise from the still, Velgaron has stacked wooden crates containing replacement parts and supplies for the lab. There's also a hand-carved vertical rack holding several staffs with heads carved to resemble warriors' heads, dragons, maidens, and the like. Most are ordinary, but one, its head carved to look like Velgaron's head, is a Staff Of Repulsion (*The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*, page 131) which is the wizard's primary defense against attacks.

Shelves on the eastern side of the lab hold other useful items: approximately 30 grimoires, tomes of mystical research, scrolls, and the like (some of which may contain spells for his use); a

rack of potions; pigeonholes filled with spell components; and the like. Velgaron is willing to sell potions, and even many of the scrolls and books (which were made by previous residents of the Spire), but he charges a high price.

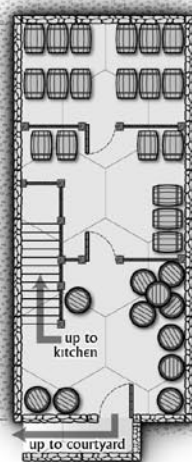
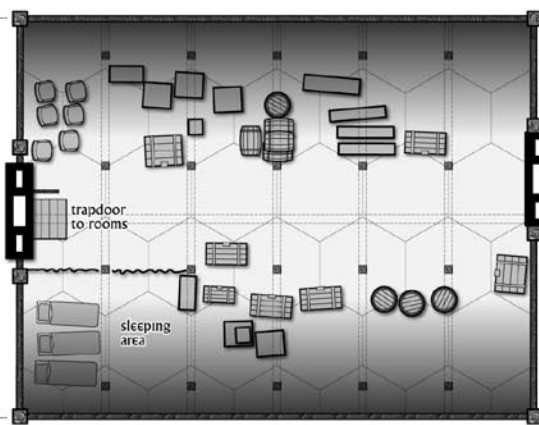
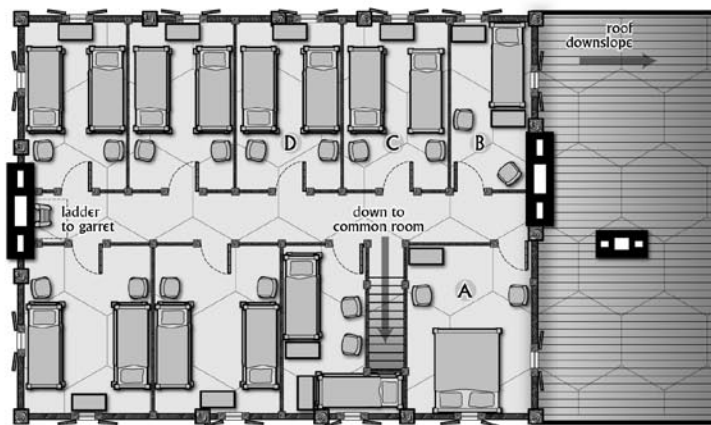
THE PROPHECY

As stated in the text, once the Forest Lords of Whisperwood wielded far greater power than they do today. In the olden days when they stood among the greatest of kings, they went to war against the servants of the banished god.

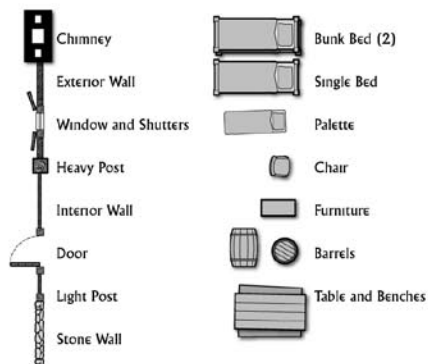
They built The Spire Of The Eastern Dawn to stand vigilant against the foul god's armies, and when the forces of Good cast down the Evil, one of the artifacts found in the god's main temple — the same one that had the cornerstone from *Eisburk-Beyond-The-Shoals* (see page 54) — was held in safekeeping at the Spire. It's a vial of faceted glass, stoppered with blood-red wax pressed with the symbol of the god. Inside the vial is a reddish-black liquid; under torture a priest claimed it was the banished god's blood. Fearful of loosing the blood of the profane deity, the Forest Lords hid the vial away in a hollow stone at the highest point of the Spire. The following lines of the prophecy hint at the discovery of the vial:

Tonne syu, laax vyr ossyu.
(Stone remembers, what man forgets.)
Sart strik shrongu lresh-krol,
(Like a spike that pierces his flesh,)
Glomryn lyther cros'tren,
(The dawn spreads across the east,)
Yrsunin shlecklys te Rn'grn-krol,
(Chasing away darkness and the Lord,)
Blut-krol sunin w'ltonne tryng,
(His blood running down its stone walls,)
Rwlenen n'ravr te yurren omkrym-krol.
(To seep into the earth and hasten his return.)

Once they have discovered the prophecy and know it refers to the Spire, the PCs must convince the wizard to allow them to search his tower for the artifact — exactly the kind of irritation he retreated into seclusion to avoid. And as the other scenarios in *Fantasy Hero Battlegrounds* have shown, the PCs aren't the only ones who know the prophecy....



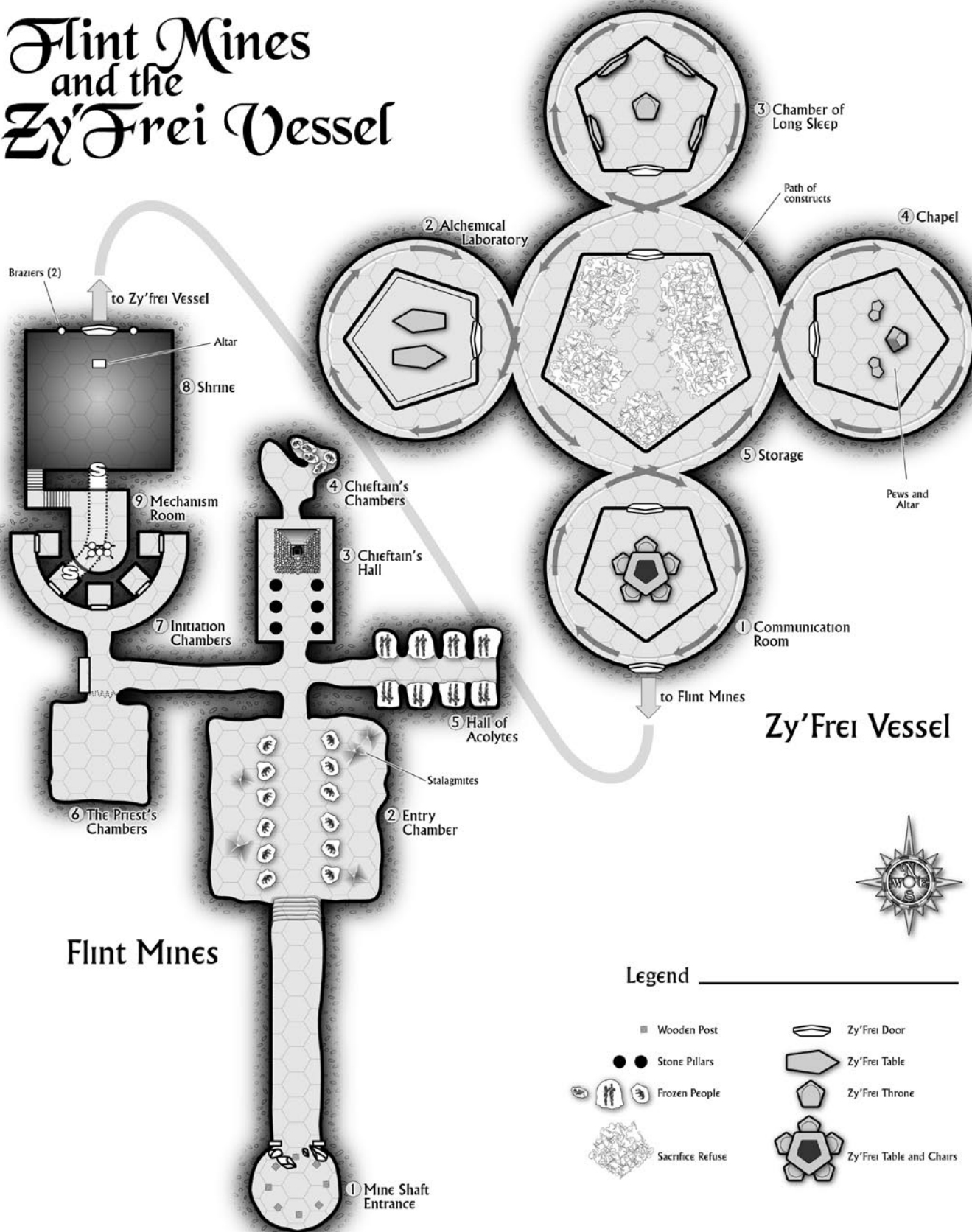
Legend

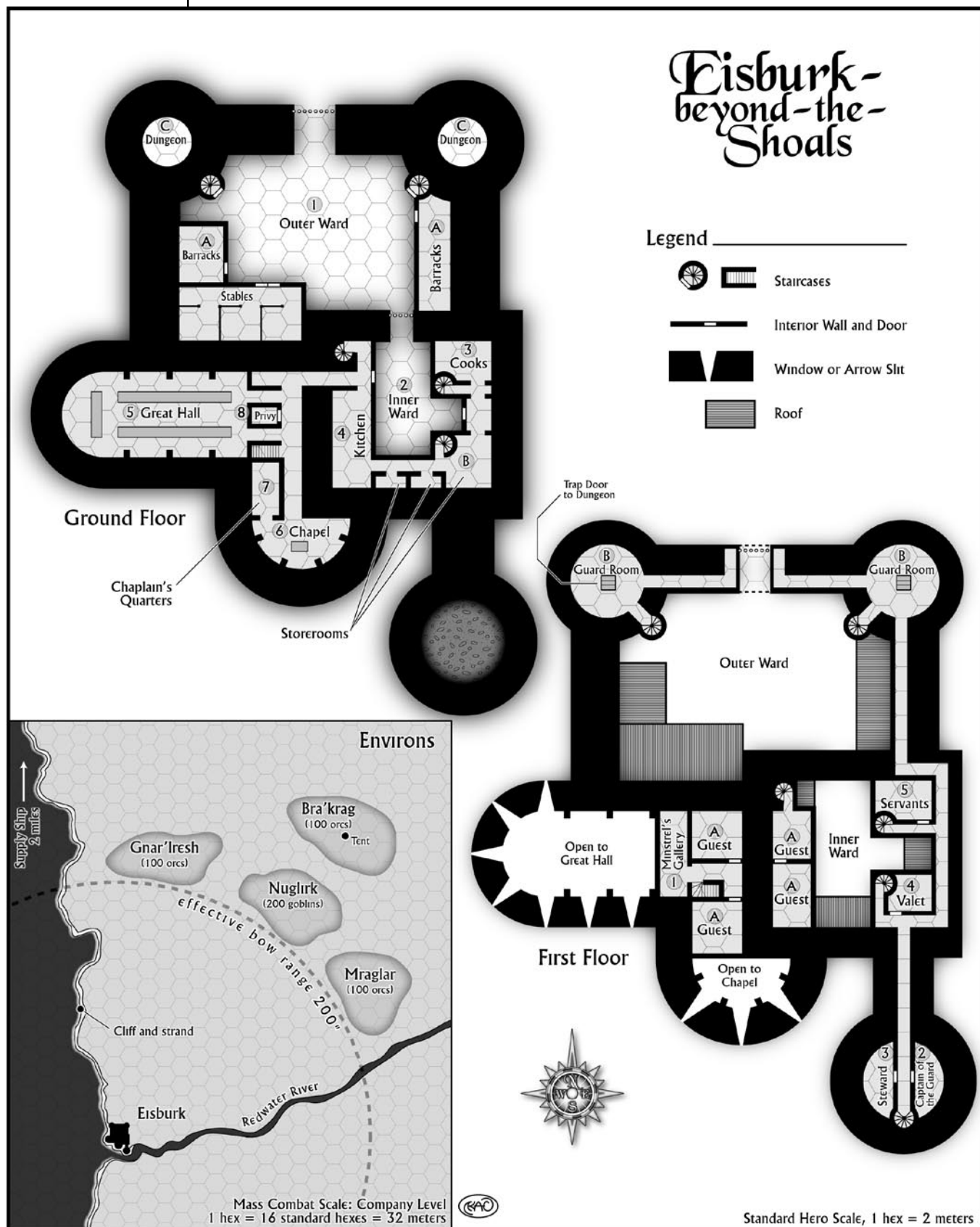


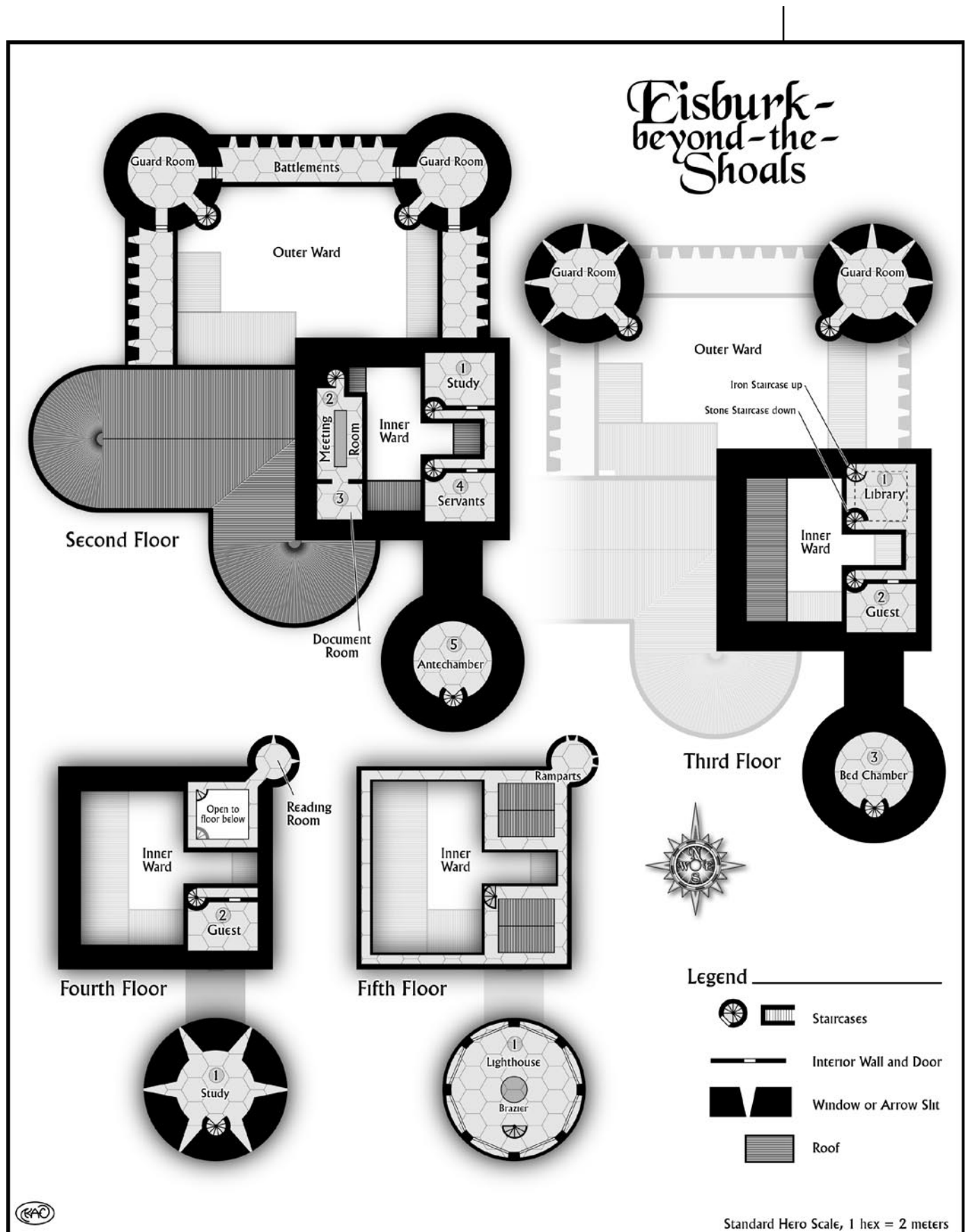
Map is at Standard Hero Scale, 1 hex = 2 meters

Wickshine's Last Inn

Flint Mines and the Zy'Frei Vessel



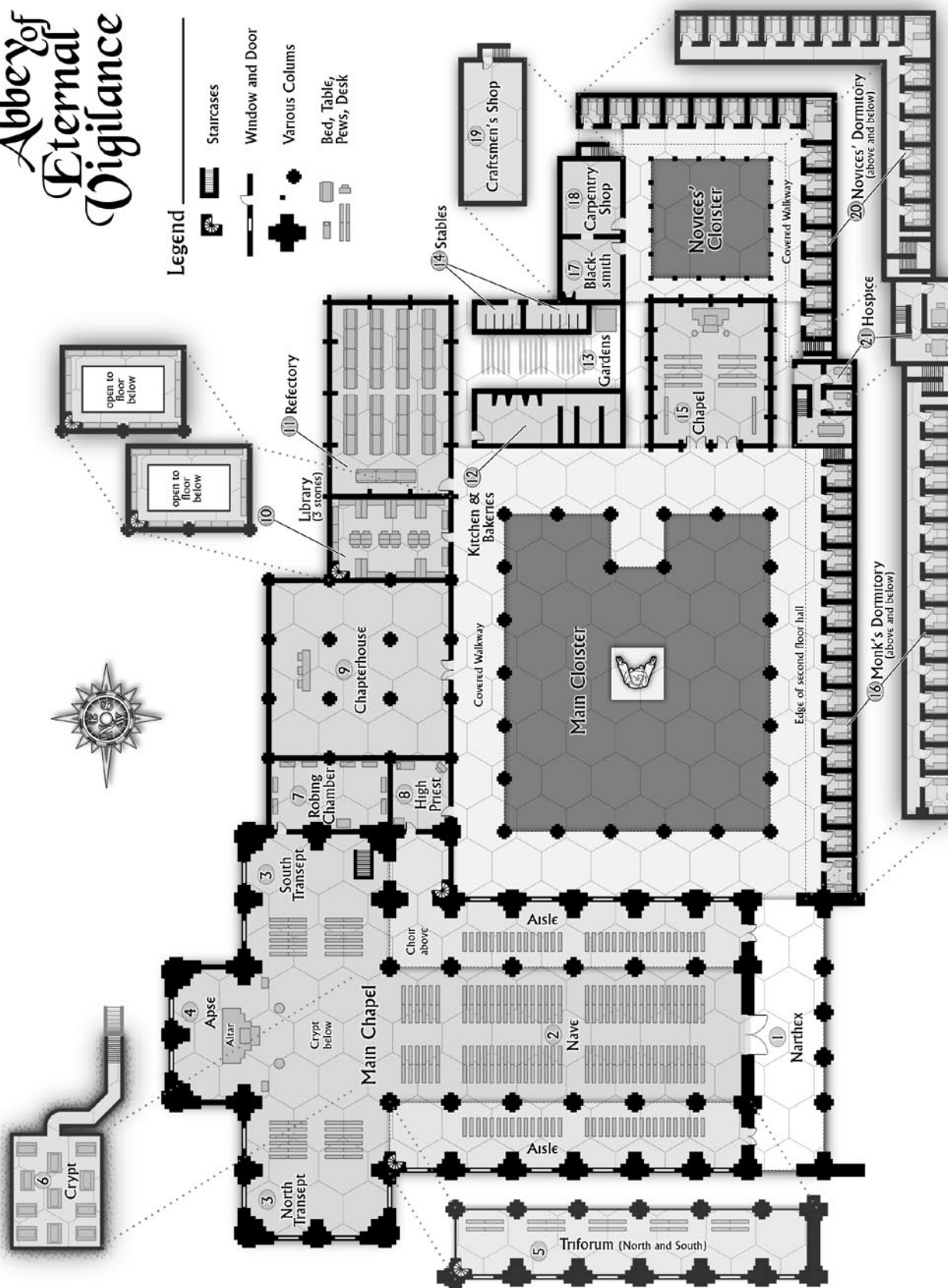




Abbey of Eternal Vigilance



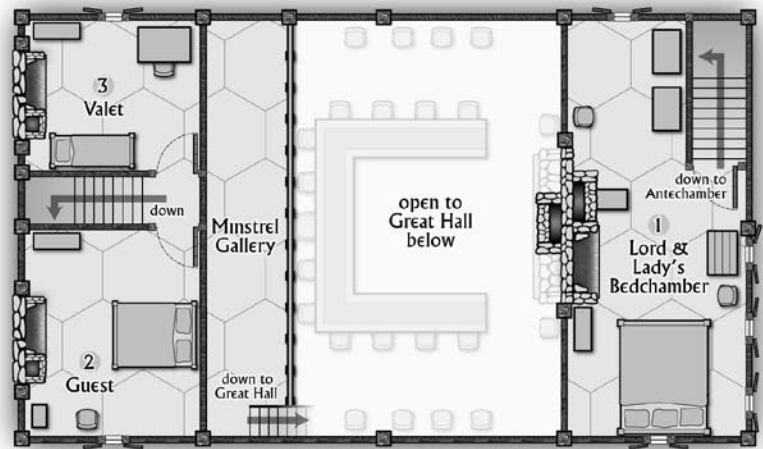
- Legend**
- Staircases
 - Window and Door
 - Various Columns
 - Bed, Table, Pews, Desk



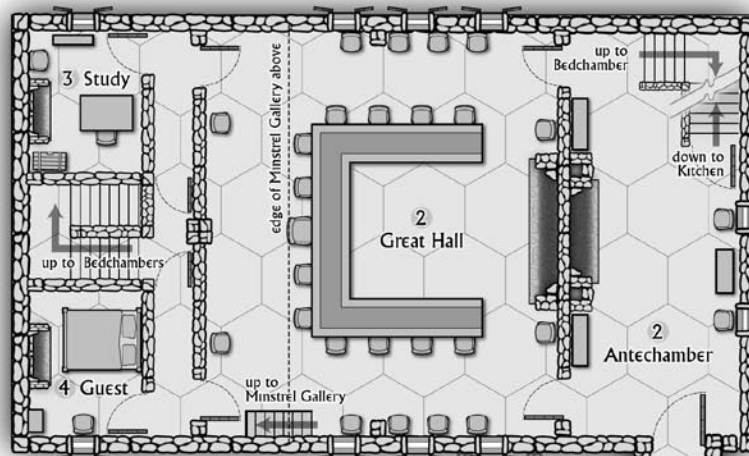
One Third Hero Scale, 1 hex = 6 meters



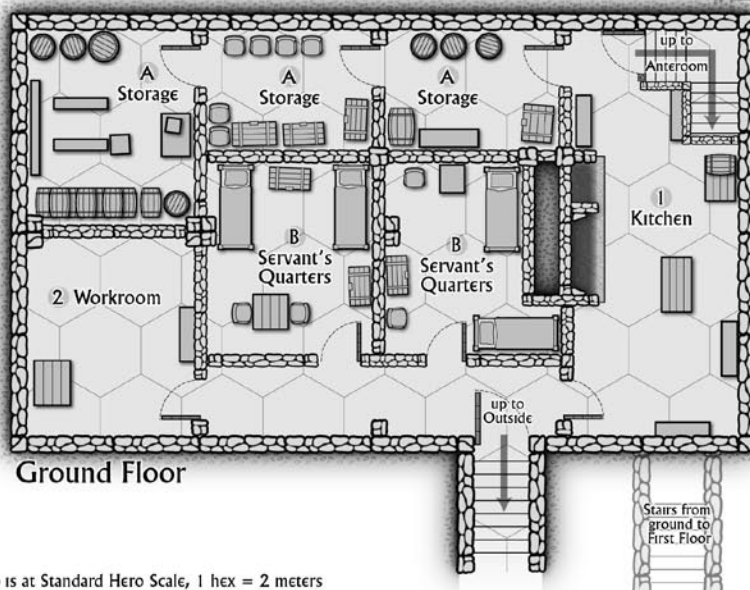
Sir Agnar's Manor



Second Floor



First Floor



Ground Floor

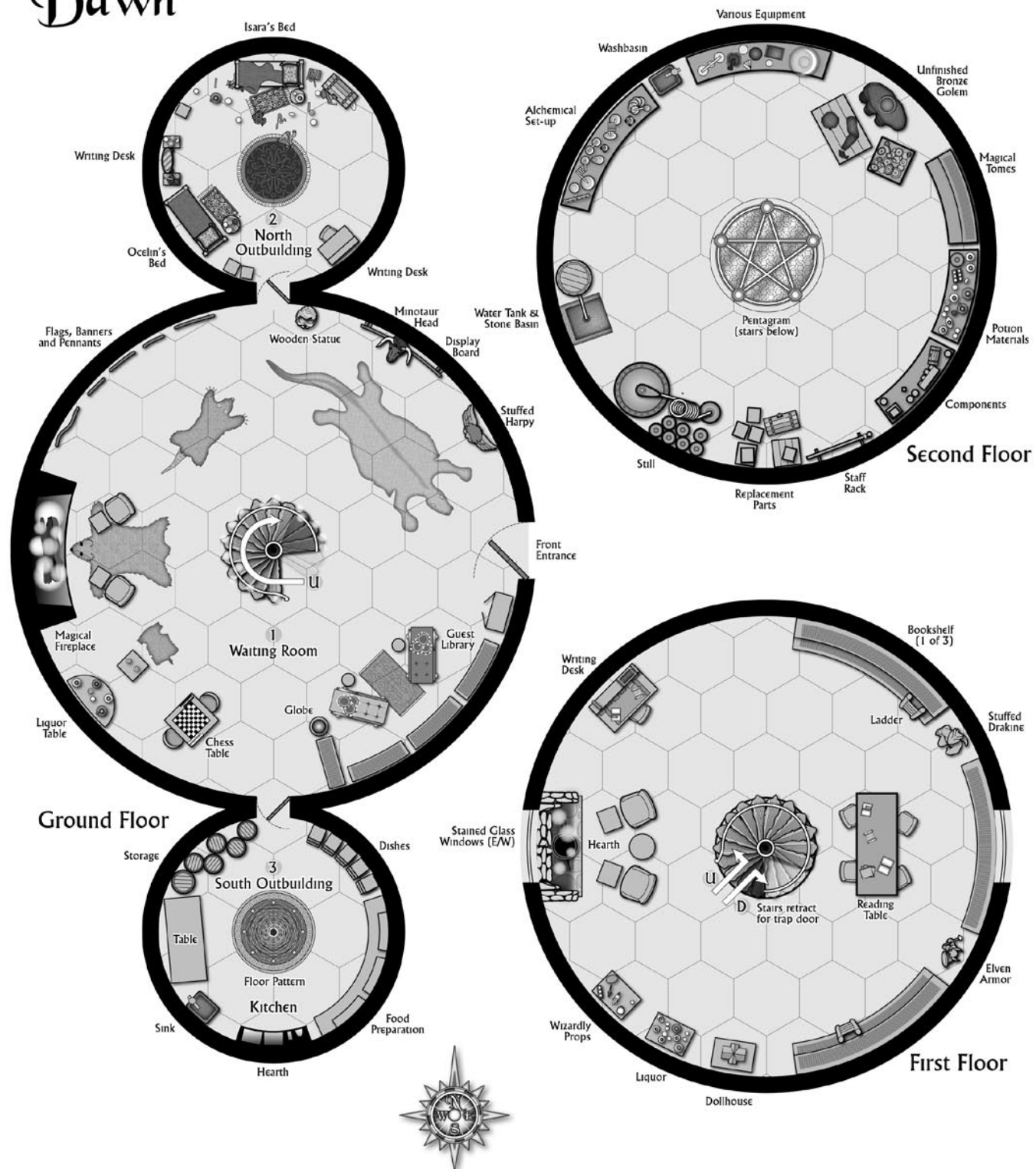


Legend

	Heavy Wall		Chest, Table
	Window and Shutters		Chair
	Heavy Post		Furniture or Boxes
	Light Wall		Barrels
	Door		Single Bed
	Light Post		Double Bed
	Stone Wall		
	Chimney and Flue from floor below		

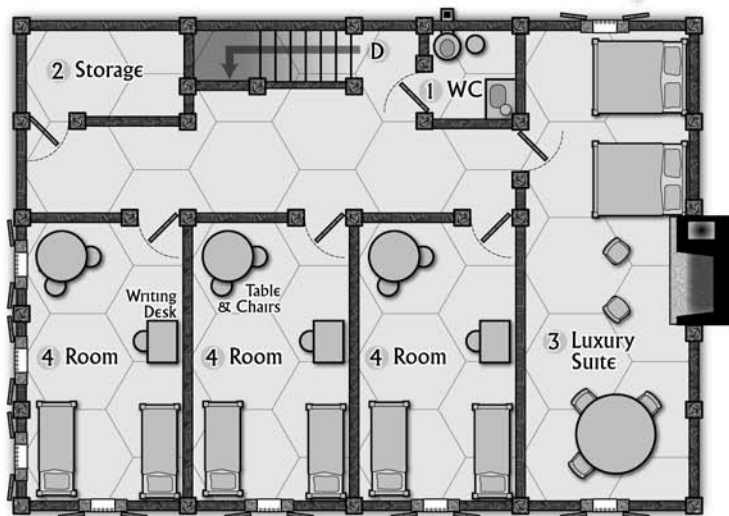
Map is at Standard Hero Scale, 1 hex = 2 meters

Spire of the Eastern Dawn

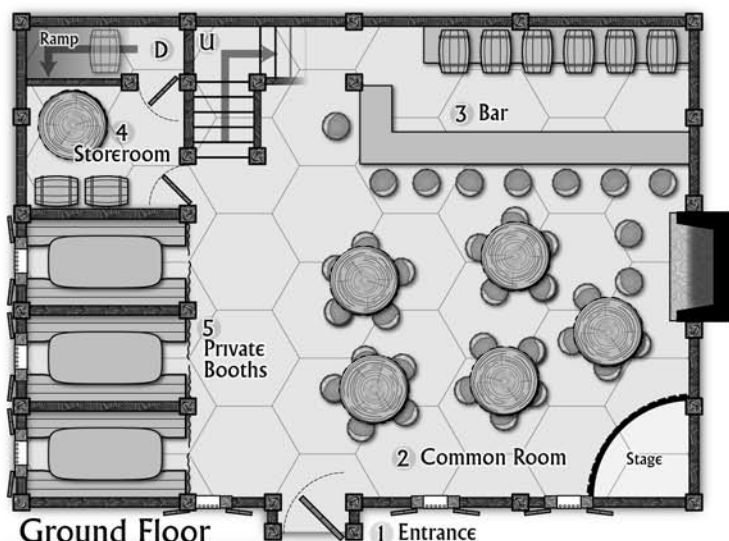


Map is at Standard Hero Scale, 1 hex = 2 meters

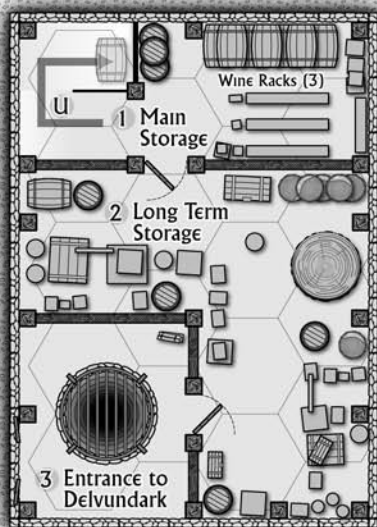
The Hand of Doom Taproom



Upper Floor

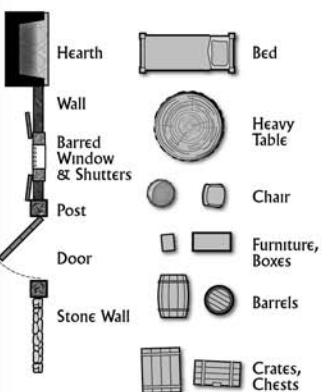


Ground Floor



Cellar

Legend



Map is at Standard Hero Scale, 1 hex = 2 meters



FANTASY ADVENTURE!

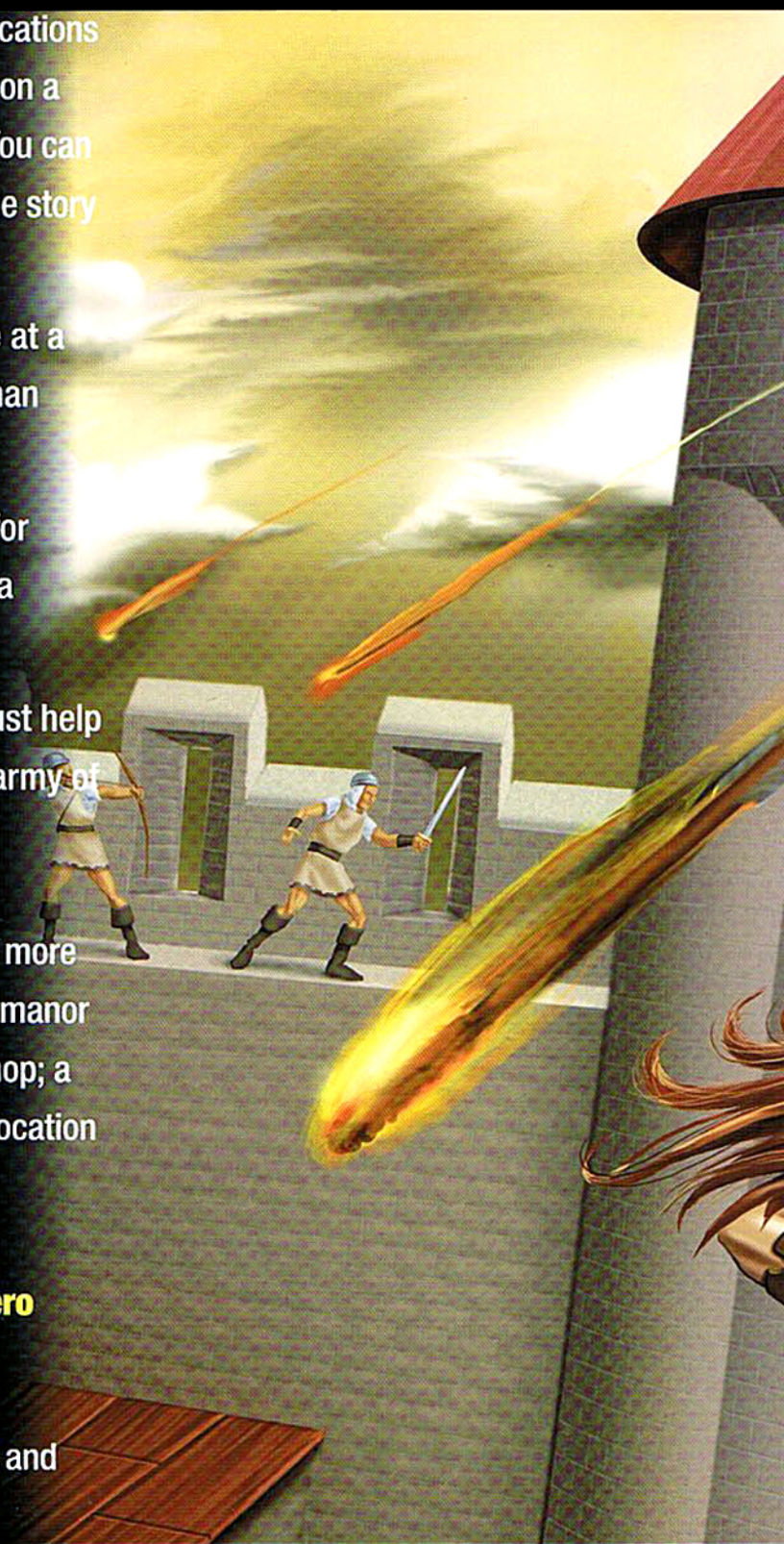
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