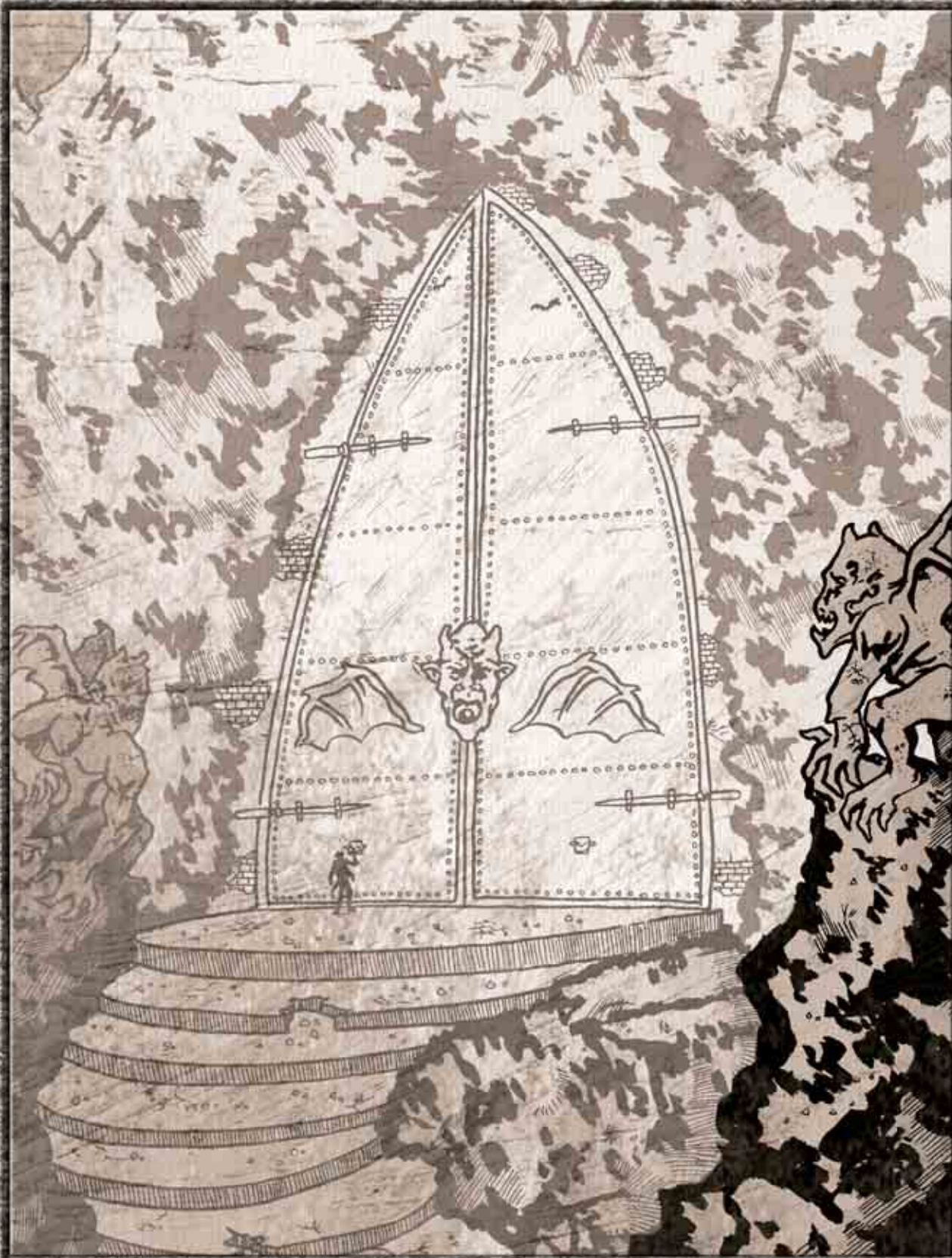


THE HIDDEN CITY



THE HIDDEN CITY

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Well, I'd be fibbing if I said I didn't feel a pang of jealousy every time a new WARMACHINE or HORDES book comes out but truth be told I play those games too. However, the fact remains: the goodly roleplaying folk ain't seen too much action since The Witchfire came out (and was re-released with Fool's Errand!). So, then those salty dogs at the Bass start unleashing fan adventures. Savvy? (If you ain't savvy go to www.buccaneerbass.com NOW!)

And it gets me to thinking 'I could do that... with enough coffee.'

So, this one goes out to all the ladies in the house.

Sorry, wrong intro...

So, this one goes out to all those adventurers who have been spoiling for a fight since Vinter Raelthorne brought those damnable Skorne to Corvis and got a bloodied nose for his trouble.

This one goes out to all those Fraternal Brothers who have been practising their defensive casting and getting their Lightning Bolts down pat.

This is for all the Pistoleers who wanted to go out in a blaze of glory with a smoking iron in each hand and two empty bandoliers.

This is for the Battle Chaplains who wanted some pay back for the good folk of Corvis and the Cathedral getting torched.

This is for all the Nobs, the Squires and scum. The gentry and the common folk.

This is for every pistol packing, greatcoat wearing, +2 mechanikal longsword totin' badass that ever walked Western Immoren.

So get your goggles on, check your ammo and pray to Morrow you make it back.

This is where the Paingivers practise their art.

Where Praetorians march to war.

Where the ground trembles at the passing of a Gladiator.

This is the Iron Kingdoms.

And only you can stop them!

Roleplay like you got a pair.





The Hidden City

Introduction

This adventure is geared towards 4 to 5 characters of 8th-9th level. The adventure can be tailored by reducing the number of Skorne Praetorians and Hestatians in the patrols encountered, giving the party more opportunities to rest and perhaps lending them some 'muscle' such as a Scout.

This adventure was written with the Iron Kingdoms RPG setting in mind. This setting is published by 'Privateer Press' and names such as 'Cygnar', 'Khador' and the 'Skorne' are fully explained in the products they produce.

If you want to know more about Privateer Press' award-winning setting, go to www.privateerpress.com

It is suggested that Player Characters be allowed to 'level up' between Acts. The game is divided into three segments. Should your party suffer a death (or two) feel free to introduce new characters that have been captured by the Skorne and subsequently freed by Harven Dordra and his associates.

Materials

To play this adventure you will need:
Wizards of the Coast Dungeons and Dragons
Players Handbook 3.5
Wizards of the Coast Dungeons and Dragons
Dungeon Masters Guide 3.5
Iron Kingdoms Character Guide
Iron Kingdoms World Guide

Further Reading

Privateer Press' Monsternomicon 3.5 will provide you with more setting information than you'll actually know what to do with. Although Warcasters and Warjacks are only touched on briefly during the adventure, WARMACHINE Prime will be useful to illustrate how powerful these spellcasters and machines are.

Conventions

All statistics for enemies and NPCs can be found in the appendices at the back of the book with the game handouts.

For monster statistics you should pick up the Monster Manual by Wizards of the Coast. Statistics for Skorne Cyclops, Titan Gladiator, Skorne Praetorians and the Ancestral Guardian can be found in No Quarter magazine.

Text that should be read aloud to the players is enclosed in a grey box. This is to help you as GM "paint the scene". Feel free to use this as much or as little as you like.





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Synopsis

This adventure takes place two years after the attack on Corvis by Vinter Raelthorne and his Skorne host. It assumes that the party has played the Witchfire Trilogy and are known to help the Crown when danger arises.

Harven Dordra (Rogue 6), a member of the Cygnaran Intelligence service, has been trying to trace the source of Skorne raiding parties along the eastern border of Cygnar. On his travels he gathered about him other citizens of Cygnar keen to thwart the Skorne:

Jack Raines, (Scout 4)
Darioch Giamati, (Arcane Mechanik 7/ Fighter 1/ Warcaster 1)
Dieter Holdenbrook (Wizard 4/ Scout 1)
Evangeline Toras (Warbard 4)
Mack Sorrel (Cleric 4)

Following trains of human slaves Harven soon tracks down the Skorne to the Rotterhorn Mountain where he finds a large citadel. It seems the Skorne have been here for some time.

Darioch, ever warlike, starts to plan an all-out assault on the citadel but the Skorne send an advance party that neatly disables his light warjack. Unperturbed, the party press on and gain access to the citadel. They find the Paingivers are brainwashing the slaves and turning them into savage fighters. However, the citadel has its own problems: recently a small gang of Ghouls has crept up through the sewers and their infection has begun to spread.

Soon after, Harven's party are soundly defeated. Most are captured or dead and Scout General Rebald waits impatiently for a report on this most dire subject.

Adventure Summary

The characters should be sympathetic to Cygnar first and foremost. Parties of Menoth worshipping adventurers are unlikely to find much to do here. Parties motivated by their purses will be well rewarded, but no money is given up front.

Firstly the party will be asked to travel to Ternon Crag to pick up further orders from Spy Master Sketchley Funt. Then they will be on their way across the inhospitable Bloodstone Marches on the trail of Harven Dordra, a spy who has gone missing in the line of duty.

Upon reaching the Rotterhorn Mountain (Harven's last known destination) the party will have to overcome a selection of traps and Guardians to gain access to the crowded but perfectly ordered Skorne Citadel.

Once inside the citadel, the party will find a city in disarray. A prison break and Ghoul infestation has brought chaos to the Rotterhorn. In the Citadel's depths a wounded and desperately ill Harven Dordra hides out with other prisoners trying to plan a way out.

Should the party feel brave enough, they might decide to venture up the ominous Iron Staircase to the upper levels where the most fiendish Skorne leaders reside.

Then the adventurers will have to be enterprising enough to find a way to get Harven and the escaped prisoners across the Bloodstone Marches and back to Cygnar safely.





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Act I

A Message Arrives

A messenger arrives from Caspia wearing the King's livery; it is clear he has ridden hard to reach you and is still out of breath when he passes over the letter.

At this point you should provide the players with Handout 1 - *Messenger's Summons*. The messenger himself knows very little other than he was woken in the dead of night and told to travel to Corvis as fast as was humanly possible.

Ternon Crag

The party should be urged to move to Ternon Crag as quickly as possible. Get a friend or mentor to lend them horses if they cannot buy their own!

Ternon Crag has changed quite a lot in the last few years: the stockade is heavily pitted and bears the scars of many a siege. The buildings look battered but repaired. Many soldiers keep watch and long rifles can be seen jutting from watchtowers. As you arrive you see the (familiar?) sight of Gunnar Waddock and his train of wagons. Gunnar greets you heartily and offers you a cigar; times have been good to him it seems.

"I hate to say it, me old muckers, but war is good for business. Things didn't work out in Five Fingers so I came here. I've some business to conduct but we should meet for dinner tonight and reminisce."

An Old Acquaintance

Sketchley Funt is a fence, thief, scoundrel and layabout. He was also the highest-ranking member of the Cygnaran Intelligence Service in Corvis. Now he is back in the field and he has a letter for the party. He is currently serving as one of Gunnar Waddock's caravan guards.

That night in the Broken Tusk tavern you share a few flagons and a side of wild boar with Gunnar who is in a particularly good mood.

"Heh, you'll never guess who's signed on with me? Only that rogue from the Corvis waterfront Sketchley Funt. It seems he couldn't make ends meet with his crooked deals and so he's taken up a more honest life. There he is now."

Sketchley Funt:

"Aright Squire? Fancy meeting you lot in a place like this! So, er, buy a reformed thief a drink would ya, the boss won't pay me till I get back to Corvis."

As soon as Gunnar's back is turned Sketch summons you over to the bar where he fishes a letter out of an inside pocket. He winks at you and saunters off.

Sketchley has a letter from Scout General Rebald himself asking them to locate a spy called Harven Dordra. The characters are asked to fulfill the following orders:

- Extract Harven Dordra if alive or retrieve his body if dead.
- Free as many enslaved citizens of Cygnar as possible.
- Report back with the size and disposition of the enemy forces.

At this point you should provide the players with Handout 2 - *Rebald's Mission*.





Sketchley Funt -



The Hidden City

Motivation

If the characters aren't the most loyal citizens in the Kingdom they may need some motivation. Sketch will grudgingly admit they can earn 1000 gp each if they return the spy and get salvage rights on any equipment that isn't owned by the Crown.

Information

If the party asks around they will find out that a group of adventurers much like themselves passed this way about a two weeks ago. They stayed at the Broken Tusk tavern. Most town folk will point the party in the direction of Big Dirk the Ogrun barkeep.

Big Dirk's Information

"Hmmm, now you mention it, dere woz dis group ov adventurerz. Dey bought a lot ov stuff: coal for dere warjack and supplies for a long journey. Dey had a big cart. Dere was a wizard 'oo complained about da beds, a wealthy lookin' priest, a noble lookin' bloke: good at cards 'e woz. Oh, and dey had dis girl who sang a lot. She woz good. They hired a scout, a friend of mine called Jack Raines. Said they needed a guide down to the Rotterhorn. If you find out where they are could you send word to me? Jackie is a good bloke."

If the party try and question the locals many will report seeing a formation of troops and a Warjack travelling south. The troops were undoubtedly Khadoran and looked like they had been on the road a long time. Jessica Stern, a Scout of some experience can tell the party more:

Jessica Stern eyes you warily as you approach. Given her demeanour you guess she isn't the type to suffer fools gladly.

"Yeah, I saw them. They had a heavy Warjack under a tarpulin on a wagon and there was more gear besides. Must have been about twenty troops and a handful of specialists.

Perhaps they're heading south to give the Menites a kicking?"

Elsewhere in the Broken Tusk Alten Ashley can be overheard telling what sounds like a tall tale. He is telling a group of fellow Scouts that he saw a colomn of humans being led across the desert by tall-white skinned creatures with harsh angular features.

Alten Ashley chomps on a cigar and looks uncharacteristically irritated. He clears his throat with a growl and says:

"It was awful. There must have been about fifty people all shackled together. There were about ten of those creatures herding them onwards. Some had spears but a few bore two swords. I dread to think what will happen to those poor souls."

Travelling The Wastes

If the party makes to leave Ternon Crag with inadequate gear (i.e. trail rations, a map, food for horses, etc) have Sketchley have a stern word with them.

"Oi. What you up to? That's the Bloodstone Marches out there, you ought to know better than that. For the love of Morrow, get some gear. I can't afford to throw good adventurers away looking for spies!"

If the party does not have a Scout in their midst they will have a very difficult time ahead of them. Fortune smiles however and Sketchley happens to know an accomplished Scout who is looking for employment. The statistics for Jessica Stern can be found in the appendix with the other NPCs.





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The party must first cross the inhospitable wastes of the Bloodstone Marches. This should prove taxing enough. Run as many random monster encounters as you dare. Survival checks should be made at DC 20 during the day to avoid heat stroke and DC 20 at night to avoid the cold. Don't forget to make checks for the players mounts as well.

As the ramshackle outpost of Ternon Crag recedes from view you are left only with the view ahead: the vast expanse of the Bloodstone Marches. Your horses seem skittish and advance warily over the barren terrain. As if in response to your anxiety the sky turns a lead grey and spots of rain fall sporadically.

Wreckage and Ruin

Three days' journey out from the Rotterhorn the party will see some wreckage and a large group of birds feeding off an equally large corpse. The Intelligence Liasons party ran into a Skorne Warpack here and the light Warjack was destroyed. During the combat a Cyclops was killed along with ten Praetorians. There are signs that someone camped here for a while, perhaps a few days. Wagon tracks lead off toward the Rotterhorn indicating that the Skorne captured the wagon and took it away or the Warcaster kept it. Note: The Cortex is shot, however the 'jack is worth a small fortune in scrap.

Feeding Time

In the distance the intimidating form of Rotterhorn Mountain looms. The mountain does indeed look like it is rotting; huge sections of it seem to be decaying.

Half a mile ahead of you, a large pack of jackals fight over the corpses of something you can't quite see. Even at this distance you can smell the stink of blood carried to you on the dry desert breeze. Your horses stamp their feet nervously as the jackals look up from their meal.

A pack of twelve jackals are feeding on four human corpses, bodies of Corvis' citizens enslaved by the Skorne. They are chained together with cruel manacles. The jackals will attack the party as they approach the mountain. The jackals will only attack until half their number are dead. The half-eaten bodies have little of value except an antique silver ring worth 20 gp.

That Sinking Feeling

Part way through the journey you may like to throw the following encounter at your party. Have the party travel on foot for some reason (perhaps a sand storm has blown up and the horses are skittish).

Patches of quicksand present a deceptively solid appearance (appearing as undergrowth or open land) that may trap careless characters. A character approaching a patch of quicksand at a normal pace is entitled to a DC 8 Survival check to spot the danger before stepping in, but charging or running characters don't have a chance to detect a hidden bog before blundering in. A typical patch of quicksand is 20 feet in diameter; the momentum of a charging or running character carries him or her 1d10 feet into the quicksand.

Effects of Quicksand

When a character blunders into quicksand roll D4+3: this is the number of turns the player has before they are swallowed up. If a player makes a DC 15 Will save or Survival check they may stay perfectly still, delaying the quicksands effect by one round. If a trapped character fails this check he will begin to sink below the surface and then begin to drown.

Characters who attempt to drag themselves out will sink no matter what they do (unless they think of something drastic like teleportation) Victims of quicksand are at the mercy of their rescuers.





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Rescue

Pulling out a character trapped in quicksand can be difficult. A rescuer needs a branch, spear haft, rope, or similar tool that enables him to reach the victim with one end of it. Then he must make a DC 15 Strength check to successfully pull the victim, and the victim must make a DC 10 Strength check to hold onto the branch, pole or rope. If both checks succeed, the victim is pulled 5 feet closer to safety.

With these dangers successfully navigated the party finally draws closer to the Rotterhorn. The tracks lead to the entrance of the City.



The Black Gate

Finally after many days (perhaps weeks) of travel the party make it to the base of the Rotterhorn mountain. At the top of a broad flight of steps carved into the rock are two giant doors. Twisted sculptures stare from either side of the doors. Outside of the doors is a dead Shirehorse, killed by the lightning bolt trap.

After days of trekking across the barren wastes of the Bloodstones Marches you have reached your destination. Covered in sand and dust you long to get back to civilisation but realise your work is just beginning. Ahead of you are two huge curved doors. To get to them you must first climb an impressive set of stone steps. After a moment or two of looking around you notice crude gargoyle-like figures carved out of boulders nearby. At the top of the steps you can see the charred corpse of a four-legged creature.

There is a broad semi-circle that extends outwards (marking off a 15 foot safety zone). Along this line, inscribed in Skorne (Decipher Script DC 32) are the words 'Speak the word of Sanctuary in the mother tongue if you are truly one of the master race.' The front doors to the Rotterhorn Fortress are trapped, unless the command word is spoken ("Sanctuary" in Skorne) from 15 feet away the trap will strike anyone approaching within five feet of the door. The doors themselves are unlocked but made of stone and require a Str check DC 15 to pull open. They have a hardness of 10 and 60 hp.

Lightning Bolt Trap: CR 4; magic device; proximity trigger (alarm); automatic reset; spell effect (lightning bolt, 5th-level wizard, 5d6 electricity, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28. Cost: 7,500 gp, 600 XP.

The Entrance Hall

The entrance hall beyond the doors is empty except for a huge Shirehorse. The hall is lined with four, fifteen-foot tall stone statues. They all have jewelled headdresses worth 600 Gp per set of stones. Removing the stones requires a Dex check (DC 10, bonuses for thieves tools apply). They are in fact Ancestral Guardians but only one has been awakened. The Ancestral Guardian begins the encounter with two souls stored up.

The horse requires a Handle Animal check (DC 16) to change its reaction. It is very nervous as it can sense the Ancestral Guardian. If the party approaches it will rear up and possibly trample them.

The door in the far wall will not open unless the main doors are closed. The inner door is also made of stone and has a hardness of 10 and 45 hp.







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You enter in to the vast entrance chamber and are glad to find that it is empty. You guess the chamber is 40 feet deep and 50 feet wide. Inside, four huge bestial looking statues carved out of black stone and edged in gold hold immense pole arms.

In the centre of the hall is a wagon, nearby a large shire horse has taken refuge in the corner. The horse whickers at you and shivers. There is a very wide double door on the far side.

The Tunnel Cave In . . .

The corridor leading away from the Entrance hall is fifteen feet wide. A recent seismic disturbance (read Warcaster) has caused a cave-in. The PC's must climb the rubble (DC 12) to get over the cave-in. Partially buried in the rubble is the corpse of a stocky man in studded leather armour. This is Jack Raines from Ternon Crag and friend of Big Dirk.

The corridor ahead of you is very wide but pitch black. As you pass into the gloom, your lantern light picks up a huge amount of rock and debris in the corridor. It seems you have a short climb ahead of you. In the darkness the sound of slipping rocks seems awfully loud.

Treasure: Jack Raines carries a Masterwork *Accurate* Military Carbine and has two bandoliers containing 20 rounds. In his rucksack is a further 30 rounds. He has other mundane items including three days' trail rations, flint and steel and a bedroll and blanket.

. . . and The Ghouls!

As the PCs finishing looting the body one of them will feel a wet sensation on his hand/ arm/ neck. When he looks up there are six drooling Ghouls in the rafters of the corridor who jump down to feast on the living flesh!

Banner Gallery

The corridor sweeps up gently, almost undetectably and is around 60 feet long. The flagstones are well laid and fit snugly together. Skorne banners adorn the walls every 20 feet. Half way up the passage is a trap set in the exact middle.

After you have negotiated the cave in and made it across to the other side you see the corridor continues off into the darkness. Held in sconces on the walls are banners with large alien symbols sewn onto them, symbols that are becoming more familiar to you now. At the far end you can see a sliver of light.

Fusillade of Darts: CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +18 ranged (1d4+1, dart); multiple targets (1d8 darts per target in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. area); Search DC 19; Disable Device DC 25. Market Price: 18,000 gp.





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The Guard Chamber

The door to this room is ajar and some light spills forth. The heavy door grates on the ground as you open it and four startled Skorne Hestations spin around and brandish their spears.

This is where the Intelligence Liaison's party met a Skorne patrol. In the combat two Skorne died and rest retreated. The room is 20 feet square and has three ten by ten cells that adjoin the room off to the left hand side.

The room is lit by four smoky torches in sconces. The Skorne casualties have been removed since Harven Dordra's team passed this way.

The party Cleric, Mack Sorrel, was killed during the fighting. The body has started to bloat and has been here few days at least. The body has been hidden under a bed in the last cell.

The body has divine scrolls of *Cure Moderate Wounds*, *Bless* and *Lesser Restoration* all at caster level 5 in a fine scroll case. There is also a platinum symbol of Morrow (worth 1300 gp) and Light Club that detects as magical, it has the name Avenger carved into it (It has a +1 enhancement). The Masterwork full plate armour will need to be repaired (Armour smith DC 20 in a forge) before it can be used again. In a locked chest (DC 25 to Open Lock) in the first cell there is a Healer's kit, a water skin and 7 rubies worth 4D4 x 100 gp.

Treasure: There are four Skorne Hestations standing guard here, they are trying to stop any prisoners escaping from the city. One wears a platinum ring (worth 37 gp) and has a full waterskin. Another has a potion of *Cure Moderate Wounds* and a broken pocket watch (DC 19 Craft: Clockwork and 6 gp worth of parts to repair).

Corridor

This corridor is 50 feet long, 10 feet wide and has a 90-degree turn in it. There is no illumination. There are three falling block traps along the left hand side.

Falling Block Trap: CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +15 melee (6d6); multiple targets (can strike all characters in two adjacent specified squares); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 25. Market Price: 15,000 gp.

This corridor leads to the city proper: the party has now reached Act II.





The Hidden City

Act II

The corridor you are in leads to a huge cavern with a crater-like depression in it. Arranged in concentric circles within the crater are many buildings frequently boasting towers and look out points. In the center of this odd settlement a single column of rock stretches up into the darkness. Floating in the air around the column are huge stone tablets inscribed with the stark and jagged Skorne script. Each of these huge stone banners gives off an eerie green light. In the city itself occasional screams can be heard and the ringing of steel on steel echoes a warning.

A forlorn wailing can be heard from above.

The City Proper

The corridor opens out onto the main part of the Fortress: a hollowed out circular section 350 feet wide. The main area is 40 feet below the corridor and a promenade runs around the perimeter of this depression. Houses are built up against and under the promenade wall and more houses form an inner circle on the opposite side of the circular street. Four stone staircases descend at the compass points. The stairs here (South) have been destroyed and there is a 12 foot drop. In the centre of the circular area is a column fifty foot thick with stairs of wrought iron attached to it.

Surrounding the central column on six sides are 100 foot tall, 30 foot wide sheets of stone. They float 60 feet off the ground in a vertical position like huge banners. The sheets of stone are inscribed with huge swirling runes that are almost impossible to decipher (DC 35). They are ancient arcane Skorne and anyone of Skorne blood who is within 100 ft of them (the whole of the main chamber) is effectively under the effects of the Heroism Spell.

The inscriptions glow with a subdued turquoise light (count as starlight). Each banner has a hardness of 10 and 100 hp.

Random Encounter Table: City Proper

If the party dither around or are hiding out somewhere trying to get some rest then use the following table:

01-10: 1D3+2 Ghouls (the Ghouls will be able to smell them and will creep up as best they can).

11-16: An escaped human (Commoner 1) chances to stumble across the party and begs them to see him to safety.

17-24: Skorne patrol – 1D4+1 Skorne Praetorians led by a Veteran Praetorian.

25-30: A Cyclops is lumbering about, he has lost his handler and is looking for trouble. It is likely he will not even see the party if they don't draw attention to themselves.

31-40: Skorne patrol – 1D4+2 Skorne Hestatians.

41-100: No encounter.

An Endless Supply Of Enemies?

The city only contains a finite number of Skorne and their beasts. Many have been killed during Harven Dordra's initial assault and ensuing prison break and Ghoule infestation. Remaining Skorne should be no more than:

One Skorne Tormentor Paingiver
Five Paingivers
Three Skorne Lieutenants
Three Skorne Wizards
Four Skorne Assassins
Thirty-five Skorne Hestatians
Fifteen Skorne Praetorians
Five Skorne Veteran Praetorians
Twenty Skorne Conditioned Humans
One Titan Gladiator
Three Cyclops





The Hidden City

Southern Quarter: Promenade Stairs

The Promenade stairs have been destroyed halfway down by what looks to have been a cannon shot. The party will need to climb down (DC10, 20 foot drop).

Southern Quarter: Townhouse

A terrible screaming draws your attention. In between screams you can hear feral grunts and growls. The noise seems to be coming from one of the many imposing town houses. The sturdy door has been smashed from its hinges and the lower levels are in disarray.

If the PCs investigate, they find four insistent Ghouls hammering on a door on the second floor. Once the Ghouls are defeated the party may break down the door (Strength check DC 13) or pick the lock (DC 18) In the bedroom is a Skorne woman. She has taken her life rather than be eaten by the Ghouls.

Southern Quarter: Noble's Tower

Opposite the stone staircase up to the promenade you notice the tallest structure in this part of town: a squat-looking sturdy tower with a bronze dome for a roof. Ornate banners hang outside, no doubt proclaiming the family's wealth or status. Light shines from each window, indicating an occupant is still inside or a hasty departure.

This tower is home to one of the less senior wizards of the city. A listen check (DC15) will reveal a fire is lit inside and occasionally a choked sob can be heard. The door is locked (DC 30) and has a hardness of 5 and 20 hp.

The **first floor** is given over to a well appointed kitchen; a female Skorne is here sleeping in a chair. She is armed with a knife.

The **second floor** is a sitting room and has a small table and chairs.

The **third floor** is a study where the Wizard is currently siphoning blood off of a human slave. (The slave dies during combat)

The **fourth floor** is a small bedroom. The Wizard's chest is here.

Treasure: The Skorne Wizard has a scroll of *Cause Fear* (written in Skorne), a potion of *Cure Light Wounds* and a Headband of Intellect (+1 to Intelligence) worth 3000 gp and a bag of seven pearls. These are all locked in a sturdy stone chest with a fine lock (DC 35) that is also trapped.

Ungol Dust Vapor Trap: CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; gas; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. room); never miss; onset delay (2 rounds); poison (ungol dust, DC 15 Fortitude save resists, 1 Cha/1d6 Cha plus 1 Cha drain); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 16. Market Price: 9,000 gp.

Southern Quarter Encounter (Outer)

As the party makes to leave the Wizards tower (or perhaps they are just leaving this area) they encounter a Skorne Lieutenant on his way to visit the Wizard. He has a small bodyguard of two Praetorians.

Treasure: The Skorne Lieutenant has two Longswords +1, a bronze coloured key (Search DC 19), a potion of *Cure Moderate Wounds* and wears a a ring inset with a ruby (*Identify* reveals it is a ring of *Feather Fall*).

Southern Quarter (Inner/ Central Plaza)

Lying on the south side of the plaza is a mountain of flesh bound up in ruined armour. An elephantine beast has collapsed after sustaining hideous wounds, its flesh is seared and burnt. Nearby is a mighty cannon and the flagstones all around are fractured and split.





The Hidden City

Southern Quarter (Inner/ Central Plaza) continued.

The Southern side of the Central Plaza is quiet but a stamping and growling can be heard from the far side of the column. A huge creature lies on its side having suffered massive damage to its head from a Lightning Bolt. This was a Titan Canoneer - hence the damage to the southern steps.

Eastern Quarter: Promenade Stairs

The Promenade stairs are in good repair in this part of the city and unguarded.

Eastern Quarter: Street (Outer)

Eastern Street is quiet. Eerily quiet. All the circular streets are 40 feet wide. A search of the area turns up the slightly decomposed corpse of the Wizard who accompanied the Liaison. The body bears two deep gashes (from blades) and clutches a note in one hand. Give the players Handout 3 - Dieter's Last Note.

Treasure: In addition to the Bracers of Armour (+2) and the Mechanikal Wand of *Magic Missiles* Dieter's corpse has a Signet ring, 30 platinum coins and a master work Orgoth dagger worth 600 gp to a collector. His spell book has spells appropriate for a fifth level Wizard.

East Quarter (Outer): Guard Tower and Pits

A stout looking tower dominates Eastern Street, it has four floors and was clearly a guard point. The door is locked with a large stout padlock (DC 25). Inside the tower is a dead Skorne Praetorian. He has bled to death in a chair and the floor all around him is sticky with congealed blood. Harven Dordra broke in here after his party was captured or killed. He slew the Skorne in his sleep. Characters making a spot check (DC 15) will notice a rope dangling from the parapet. This is the route Harven

Dordra took to gain access to the tower.

In the faint green gloom you make out a stout circular tower with a domed roof. The windows are all heavily barred and lantern light shines from inside yet all is deathly quiet. Outside are three grates set into the street. Awful smells arise from under the roads.

Across the city you hear the occasional yelp or cry of pain. It seems the Skorne are tirelessly rounding up the escaped prisoners.

The **first floor** is an armoury and has three sets of paired Skorne long swords. There are also ten spears and a healing kit.

The **second floor** is a barracks and has six beds and a bucket.

The **third floor** is a look out point and has a roof, there is a grappling hook and rope attached the parapet courtesy of Harven Dordra.

Outside there are three grills set in the ground. If the party shine a light into the pit a twinkling reflection shines back... if only there wasn't a Gibbering Mouter hiding down there.

Treasure: A platinum tiara encrusted with rubies worth 3,300 gps. D10 x 5 silver pieces, D10 x 3 gold pieces.

Eastern Quarter (Inner/ Central Plaza)

The inside of the Eastern Quarter forms part of the Central Plaza. There is no one around at present. A well has been partially knocked down and one of the houses has collapsed slightly. Corpses of human prisoners lie in the street.

The house to the side of the collapsed building has light coming from the upstairs windows. If the party investigates they will find a female Skorne and three infants. If the party is blundering around in plain sight the Assassins in the Northern Quarter may well see them.





The Hidden City

Western Quarter: Promenade Stairs

The Promenade stairs are slick with blood. Nearby a Praetorian sits biting off curses as he dies a slow death, he holds his entrails in with one hand whilst his other still clutches at his longsword.

Humans have passed this way recently and overpowered the lone Praetorian who was on watch. The Skorne does not speak any human languages but if the party find a way to communicate with him they could interrogate him.

With succesful Intimidate or Profession (Torturer) checks the party will learn the following pieces of information.

- The Paingivers are conditioning the human slaves to create a caste of expendable warriors. The Titans and the Cyclops are both examples of the power of conditioning.
- Recently one of the Paingivers dabbled in an art called Mortithergy. An experiment went wrong and subject escaped. It is thought this subject died and became undead and started the Ghoul infestation.
- The pillar of stone is heavily trapped. It leads to the Ancestor's Shrine and the training rooms. The Dakars and Paingivers also have their quarters in this area.
- Another detachment of Skorne is due any day with fresh warbeasts (Sense Motive DC 9 reveals he is lying).

The Praetorian doesn't know much more than this. Unless the PCs stabilize him he will die fairly quickly. Assume he has the Endurance and Die hard feats just to stay concious on minus wounds.

Treasure: The Praetorian has a Masterwork Longsword, an amber pendant (worth 15 Gp) and an ornate platinum ring (worth 40 gp) and four Obsidian Figurines. Each figurine is about two inches tall and worth 10 gp.

Western Quarter: Townhouse

Inside this town house a feral screaming can be heard. If the PCs investigate they find a Skorne female trying to hold her chamber door closed against five insistent Ghouls. She is guarding her two infants. She is armed with a dagger. If the PCs let her live she will begin screaming from her window the moment she thinks she is out of danger.

The party will run into a patrol of Hestatians not long after the alarm is raised.

The sound of screaming is becoming very familiar to you now. The noise seems to be coming from a nearby town houses. The sturdy front door has been smashed from its hinges and the lower level. All around the stench of death is overpowering

Western Quarter: Street (Outer)

Four Skorne Praetorians are escorting twelve manacled humans to the central plaza. All the humans are close to starvation and filthy and ragged.

When the PCs dispose of the Skorne the humans will be very grateful and emotional. Some may even recognize the PCs if they took part in the Witchfire Trilogy. They warn the PCs that the Skorne have lost control of their own city and that a ghoul infection is running rampant. They recently staged a prison break but failed to find a way out of the city.

The sound of clinking chains reaches your ears. Marching sluggishly are a dozen manacled humans led by four stern looking Praetorians. The humans look miserable and famished and you feel a pang of guilt as they are led off into the gloom. Dare you try to rescue them?

Consequences

Having rescued the humans the party will need to stash them somewhere until the city is safer. The humans are all too shocked to be much use and many are wounded.





The Hidden City

Conditioning Centre West Quarter (Outer)

A large secure building stands unlit in this part of the town. Inside can be heard sobbing and the occasional growl. The door is securely locked with two huge padlocks (DC 30). Inside the building is divided into four rooms off a central corridor.

Each room is 15 feet square and has a barred door. Chains attach the captives to the walls. In the center of each area is high table with many torture instruments.

- In **room one** the eight bound humans are all dead. They failed to endure the conditioning meted out by the Paingiver.
- In **room two** a young girl sobs uncontrollably, she is surrounded by dead humans. She is heavily wounded and quite insane. Treat her as affected by a Confusion spell 50% of the time.
- In **room three**, seven of the eight confined humans have turned into ghouls but cannot escape. The players may make Coup de grace attacks quite freely here.
- In **room four** all eight ghouls have broken free of their confinement and eaten the Paingiver. They wait in the shadows for anyone foolish enough to open the door. They will have heard the party enter the building and will get a surprise round unless the PCs *Detect Evil* or *Detect Undead* from outside of the room.

Treasure: The Paingiver had a masterwork whip, a potion of *Cats Grace*, a healers kit and jewellery worth 275 gp. He also had a bronze coloured key (Search DC 19). This key will open all the locked doors in the central column.

The Source of the Problem

As the party make to leave from the Condition Centre, the source of the Ghoul infestation finds them. A Ghast has been hiding on the roof of the building. As the PCs leave he will leap down and attack them. The Ghast has no treasure.

Western Quarter (Inner/ Central Plaza)

Ahead of you stamping its feet bullishly is a monstrous four armed elephantine creature. Huge armoured plates cover its body and massive pitted war gaunlets are tied to its arms with elaborate knots. It seems you have stumbled into the path of a Titan Gladiator. Behind the beast are two Skorne who cruelly whip the Titan into a frenzy.

The Titan and two Paingiver handlers have been left at the Plaza whilst patrols search the ruins for escaped prisoners. They are not expecting the PCs but immediately attack them.





The Hidden City

North Quarter: Town House (Outer)

This hovel has torchlight coming from underneath the door, indicating someone is inside. The characters will notice this no matter how badly they fluff their spot rolls. The door is a strong wooden door (Hardness 8, 20 hp) with an average lock (DC 25).

If the party simply knock on the door a gruff (but human) voice will ask 'Who is it?'

If the party stealthily unlock the door a ragged human armed with a cudgel will jump up in shock. 'Come in, come in!' he says quickly.

The intelligence liaison Harven Dordra has holed up here and is suffering from starvation (-2 Str, -2 Con). He also has the Shakes (-5 Dex) and is generally in a bad way. Four humans are caring for the Liaison. The humans are also in a very bad way; they have found little food in the city since escaping. Harven begs the party to try and gain entrance to the upper levels where he suspects his comrades Darioch Giamati and Evangeline Toras are being tortured. He asks the party if they have encountered a human Wizard.

If any of the party come into physical contact with Darioch they stand a chance of contracting the Shakes (Fort save DC 13, one day incubation).

Harven has little information for the party aside from the facts that he assisted a prison break and at about the same time Ghouls started appearing. He knows the central column leads to the Officer's quarters and suspects the city is being ruled by what the Skorne call a 'Paingiver'.

If the party are wounded or in need of rest Harven will suggest they stay until they are ready to move on. If the party rest each member has a 10% chance of contracting the shakes for every 12 hours they stay.

Harven Dordra looks pale and sickly in the lantern light. He coughs into a filthy rag and shakes fitfully as he pulls a shawl around his shoulders.

"You're welcome to stay but please, whatever you do, take the stairs up to the upper levels. My friends are up there and are no doubt going to pay for all the trouble we've caused."

Northern Quarter: Street (Outer)

Skorne Conditioned Humans: These humans were once proud folk of Corvis but are now feral creatures at the whim of their Skorne masters. There are six of them and they prowl the streets like angry spirits.

A strange hooping noise startles you and scuttling creatures loping about on all fours scramble down the street towards you. With a crawling certainty you realize that the creatures were once human. Strapped to their arms are spiteful looking clawed bracers.

Northern Quarter (Inner/ Central Plaza)

The western side of the Central plaza looks deserted but in fact there are three Skorne assassins keeping watch from the rooftops (Hide check DC 14). They will attract the attention of the Titan on the West side of the Plaza.

All seems peaceful here, nothing moves in the faint green gloom. Perhaps this is a good opportunity to investigate the looming column at the center of this forsaken city. High above you a bridge extends from the column to other parts of the Skorne settlement.

Having defeated the Titan and its handlers the party may attempt to make their way up the column to the upper reaches of the city.





The Hidden City

Act III

The Main Pillar

At the centre of the city a huge column of rock rises in to the darkness. Hammered into the stone is a wrought iron staircase that terminates at a door some forty feet above you. Further up in the hollowed out mountain, perhaps 100 feet, light floods from the edge of a platform and a bridge arcs across to the column. You can just make out a creature pacing about impatiently.

Grand Staircase

A grand staircase leads around a massive pillar of rock fifty feet wide. After climbing 40 feet the staircase stops at a door in the side of the pillar. This occurs five times, the PCs must pass through each of the rooms to reach the next section of the staircase.

The Door to room one is a heavy wooden door (Hardness 5, 20 hp) and is locked (DC 25).

The Bronze Key

If the party have stumbled over a bronze key so far they will be able to get past the many locked doors of the column. If they do not have the key they had better have a good Rogue and a set of thieves' tools with them

The Main Pillar: Room 1

This room is circular and 40 feet wide. The only door that exits the room is on the opposite side. The room is unlit. In the center of the chamber is a trap door that deposits the unwary into the spider's lair.

Wide-Mouth Pit Trap: CR 7; mechanical; location trigger, manual reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 50 ft. deep (5d6, fall); multiple targets (all targets within a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. area); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 25. Market Price: 28,200 gp.

The dark room is circular and features an ornate mosaic on the floor made up of turquoise and black tiles. The plain wooden door on the opposite side of the room is the only exit.

The Spider's Lair

The ceiling of this area is ten feet high. Inhabiting the chamber are two monstrous spiders! There are three entrances from the chamber. The western entrance is blocked with rubble and refuse. The southern entrance leads back outside to a grill set in the ground by the southern promenade staircase. The eastern entrance leads into a sewage out pipe that leads to the pits below the guard tower. If the Gibbering Moulder is still alive here the PCs will be in dire trouble!

Treasure: There are two corpses here; one is a Skorne Praetorian who has an Elite Jade Token, badly damaged Skorne armour, long swords and a potion of *Endurance*. The other body is of a human who wears an intricate leaf shaped cloak clasp of gold inset with emeralds (75 gp). PCs making good search checks (DC 26) will notice a short sword hidden in the webbing. It is in fact a +1 Shortsword that is over a 100 years old manufactured in Khador.

Main Pillar: Room 2

This room is circular and 40 feet wide. The only door that leads from the room is on the opposite side and is locked (DC 25). The room is unlit. There is nothing of note here. If the party decides this might be a good place to rest they stand a 15% chance of being disturbed by a patrol each hour.







The Hidden City

Main Pillar: Room 3

This level comprises of a corridor 10 feet wide and 15 feet long that leads to a door. The door leads into a small chamber, ten feet by ten feet (the trap). The door on the far side is locked (DC 30) and is made of thick stone (Hardness 8, 60 hp). The locked door leads to another 15 foot long corridor that terminates in a door. The door opens out on to another section of the wrought iron staircase that will take the party another 40 feet higher.

Compacting Room: CR 6; mechanical; timed trigger; automatic reset; hidden switch bypass (Search DC 25); walls move together (12d6, crush); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by- 10-ft. room); never miss; onset delay (4 rounds); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 22. Market Price: 25,200 gp.

The trigger is a pressure plate reacts when 350 lbs or more is resting on it. The pressure plate also activates a portcullis trap that traps the players in the ten-foot chamber.

Portcullis Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 melee (3d6); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20. Note: Damage applies only to those underneath the portcullis. Market Price: 1,400 gp.

The Portcullis has a Hardness of 10 and 60 hp.

Main Pillar: Room 4

Four Skorne Praetorians: The Praetorians (Veterans or basic Praetorians, your choice) are returning from patrolling the ruins of the old Skorne settlement. They have located four humans whom they are escorting to the Paingiver in the upper levels. The humans are all shackled. They have stopped in this room for a rest after the many stairs. They will have a sentry by the door listening.

The room itself is circular and is 40 feet wide. Anyone searching the room will find more trap doors in the centre if they beat DC 28. However there is no trap here and the doors refuse to open. The exit to the room is on the opposite side to the entrance.

Treasure: One of the Praetorians has found Darioch Giamati's weapon: a +1 Icy Burst Great Hammer. 1D10 Damage, Critical 20/ x3, Bludgeoning, 10 lb.

The weapon has a trigger at the end of the shaft which activates the enhancement and the Icy Burst effect. The second trigger is further up the shaft and triggers an Icy Ray effect that deals 4D6 points of damage on a successful hit. Icy Burst uses 2 charges per day, +1 Enhancement uses 1 charge per day, Icy Ray uses 1 charge per day. The weapon has a heavy accumulator built into it. This has no charges left when found. The weapon is of Khadoran design and is in fact a prototype. Darioch stole it during his tour of duty in the Thornwood.

There is also a potion of *Cure Critical Wounds*, a Skorne +1 Longsword and finely crafted spyglass.

Main Pillar: Room 5

The pit trap in room five is cunning as it triggers doors in room four so the drop is twice as far. The victim will come to rest in room three. If the victim weighs over 350 lbs he will trigger off the compacting room trap. As before, the door exiting the room is on the opposite side and is locked (DC 25).

Pit Trap: CR 4; mechanical, location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 80 ft. deep (8d6, fall); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20. Market Price: 4,000 gp.





The Hidden City

The Bridge

The door from Room 5 leads onto a 15 foot wide bridge that is 50 feet long. At the end of the bridge a huge Cyclops waits silently on a semi circular platform some 30 feet in diameter. The Cyclops has explicit orders to prevent any non Skorne from crossing the Bridge. The Cyclops will wait until the party are half across the bridge before charging them.

All around is the sound of terrible shrieking. The bridge leads to a smaller complex where the higher-ranking Skorne live and the Paingivers test the humans.

A sturdy stone bridge reaches out in front of you to a broad platform. At the far side of the platform is a large doorway. A Cyclops stands in front of the doorway immobile gripping its huge falchion in both hands.

On either side of the bridge small weirdly carved menhirs of black glassy rock curl and spiral. A bracing wind gusts past you. As the wind rises and falls so do the haunting shrieks you have heard for so long.

A staircase leads from the side of the bridge to the top of the 50 foot wide column. There are two Assassins hiding from the party here. They will not assist the Cyclops, even if the Cyclops is doing well. If the party flees to this area to escape the Cyclops the Assassins will fight.

The Stone Bridge crosses over a chasm 100-feet deep. Below is the Northern Quarter of the city. Large posts on either side of the bridge have strange holes carved into them that cause the passing winds to shriek and howl (Will save DC 17 or suffer -2 Morale penalty). The stone posts have a Hardness of 10 and 40 hp.

Across the bridge and behind the Cyclops are the doors to the Upper Levels. There are also grilles in the walls that serve as windows to the barracks.

Dirty trick: Remember that ring of *Feather Fall* the party found earlier. Did you make a note of who claimed it? Maybe now is the time to Bull's Rush them over the side of the bridge! Have the ring save their life regardless of whether they know the command word or not. Now all they have to do is climb up all of those steps and get past all of those traps... again.

Treasure: The Cyclops has Masterwork plate armour and a Masterwork falchion. This will be mostly useless to anyone in the party unless they are an Ogrun.

Large Masterwork Falchion (450 gp)

Damage: 2D6

Critical: 18-20/ x2

Weight: 20 lb

Type: Slashing

The armour will need a Craft: Armourer or Smith DC 25 with full use of a forge to be of any use.

Top of the Column

On the top of the column two Assassins are waiting for the party to pass by. Once the party have entered into the Barracks the Assassins will make their way down the column and attempt to escape the city. They are not stupid and know when they are outclassed.

The column is 50 feet wide and anyone falling over the edge will plummet 140 feet. Should any of the party succumb to the Dirty Trick listed on page 25 the Assassins will wait until the coast is clear before making their move.

Treasure: Masterwork studded leather armour, Skorne Elite Jade Token, Long Sword and three Obsidian Figurines. Each figurine is about two inches tall and worth 10 gp.





The Hidden City

Upper Level Guard Point

After your battle on the bridge you enter into the next room warily. It is a circular room some 30 feet wide with a high vaulted ceiling. Torches flicker and spit oil as the breeze passes over them. Two tall banners rest in supports against the walls. There are four highly polished wooden benches that have been stained black. Three doors exit the chamber at the West, North and East.

The doorway from the bridge leads to a guard point. The guard point is a circular room thirty feet wide. Through the Eastern door are the barracks where another Cyclops is hastily putting on his armour (once he has heard his comrade fighting off the party).

Treasure: The Cyclops has Masterwork plate armour and a Masterwork falchion. This will be mostly useless to anyone in the party unless they are an Ogrun. In a locked chest (DC 20) is a healers kit.

The Northern door leads the corridor listed below. The Western door leads to a small shrine tended by an Evoker. Although the Skorne have no Gods they do worship their ancestors.

Ancestor Shrine

Through the western door of the Guard Point is a Shrine Room. It is here that the Skorne pay their respects to their ancestors, pray for luck before battle and reflect. Tending the shrine is a Skorne Extoller. He is quite elderly and will not put up a fight. He is equivalent to an evil 2nd level Cleric from the DMG. He will rely on spells to defend himself from the party rather than force of arms.

If questioned the Extoller will tell the party in broken, rasping Caspian that there are three persons of note on this level: The Paingiver Tormentor, a Lieutenant and a Mortitherge (Wizard). If the party ask him about his eye he will tell them that the stone allows him to commune with the spirits of the

dead, specifically those who are now Ancestral Guardians.

If asked about more reinforcements (see the conversation with the wounded Praetorian on the Western promenade staircase) he will shrug and say he knows nothing about any reinforcements.

If the party ask the Extoller about the Ghouls he will explain that one of the Paingivers dabbled in an art called Mortithergy. An experiment went wrong and a subject escaped. It is thought this subject died but became undead and started the Ghoul infestation.

The room is triangular and about 30 feet long. At the center of the room is a triangular table five feet long. All around the chamber are broken swords on stands, dusty banners, ruined armour and any number of cracked amulets, split rings and shattered jewels. Kneeling before the alter a figure in black faded robes is lighting two black candles. His forearms are bound in bandages. As he turns around you can see his right eye has been replaced with an obsidian stone. He seems quite unafraid of you despite the fact you outnumber him.

Treasure: Skorne Elite Jade Token, two Obsidian Figurines and an ornate platinum ring (worth 40 gp) Each figurine is about two inches tall and worth 10 gp.

The obsidian sphere that is set in place of the Extoller's right eye allows the bearer to use the *Commune* spell twice per day. However the bearer must be a Skorne who has had his eye removed. To a collector the Sphere is probably worth around 5,000 gp.

There is also a block of incense in the room. When lit the incense bestows a +1 AC bonus to anyone who spends 5 minutes meditating in front of it. The person must succeed a Concentration check DC 10 for the insight bonus to take effect.





The Hidden City

Corridor

The corridor is 20 feet long and unlit. There are two doors on each side and one at the end. The first door on the left leads to the training room, it is wooden and not locked. The second door on the left leads to the Paingiver's chambers. It has a wooden door that is locked (DC 25). The first door on the right leads to the torture chamber. It is unlocked. The second door on the right leads to the Officers' Quarters. It is unlocked.

Training Chamber

When the party arrives the Paingiver Tormentor is having an argument with his most hated enemy, a Noble Mortitherge. The Paingiver Tormentor is standing on the balcony above the door when the party enters. The Paingiver Tormentor will watch as the party attack the Mortitherge, quietly laughing as they cut him down. When they have dealt with the Mortitherge he leaps down on them and uses his Sneak Attack on the weakest looking character.

Treasure:

Masterwork Studded Leather,
+1 Wounding Claw Bracers: A wounding weapon deals 1 point of Constitution damage from blood loss when it hits a creature. A critical hit does not multiply the Constitution damage. Creatures immune to critical hits (such as plants and constructs) are immune to the Constitution damage dealt by this weapon. (27,000 gp)
Jade Elite Token: +1 to Fort Saves (500 gp)
Potion of *Cure Moderate Wounds*, Tumblers Belt: grants a +2 Competence bonus. (1000 gp)

You are surprised to find a square room here after so many circular ones. The floor is stained with a hundred deep scarlet patches. Lining the walls are racks of weapons, Longswords for the most part. Across the room looking at you with a mixture of surprise and rage is a finely dressed Skorne wearing turquoise robes. He begins to chant something and makes alien gestures.

Paingiver Tormentor's Chambers

The Paingiver Tormentor has a luxurious apartment but there is little of value that is easily transportable. GMs should feel free to introduce their own treasure ideas here.

Bride of Paingiver

For GMs that enjoy giving parties moral dilemmas perhaps now is the time to unleash the Skorne Concubine. She's not evil (per se) but she sure as hell ain't pretty or well adjusted. Will the party kill her, leave her to starve or attempt to 'rescue' her?

Of course if you want to skip the 40 minute alignment argument this creates feel free.

Should the party want to try to interrogate her they will need to speak Skorne as she does not know any human languages. She knows the following things;

- The Tormentor has been distracted recently with tales of a battle group in the desert.
- There has been a terrible accident lately and one of the humans died at the hands of an inexperienced Mortitherge. The human then jolted back to life and escaped after killing and eating the Mortitherge.
- If asked she does not know of any reinforcements on the way.





The Hidden City

Torture Chamber

In the torture chamber are no less than three humans attached to upright metal racks. They are shackled at the ankles, wrists and neck. Two are suffering wounds, one is dead.

Before you even open the door to this room you know what lies beyond will be very bad. You can hear screams and the smell of voided bowels and bladders is heavy in the air.

Standing over them are two Paingivers. They have been too interested in causing harm to hear the chaos and combat in the rooms beyond.

When you open the door to this room two lightly armoured Skorne turn around; both wield spiked whips and brandish wicked looking daggers. Manacled to racks are three humans, two men and woman. One of the men is unconscious and possibly dead, the other man and the woman are bleeding from a number of wounds.

The dead man is heavily muscled and has a military unit tattooed on his right shoulder. A Skill check Knowledge: Military DC 15 reveals he once belonged to the Stormblades: one of Cygnar's elite regiments. His name was Darioch Giamati and he accompanied the Intelligence Liason. Since serving with the Stormblades he has become a Warcaster. Darioch was captured after trying to fight off the Titan single-handed. A suit of strange armour sits on a wooden stand nearby:

Treasure: Regular Warcaster Armor
Masterwork Breastplate 850, Hybrid Socket 450,
Heavy Accumulator 1,000,
Energy field (30 hp) 16,000, Turbine 16,000,
Arcane Focus Chamber 4,000
Total 38,000
The accumulator has two charges left.

The wounded people are Haagen Myers, a heavy set, surly man who worked the waterfront of Corvis unloading ships (Commoner 2).

He has nothing to offer the party but is very grateful to be set free. He'll offer to serve one of the characters for a while but has no money of his own.

The woman is a human Bard (4th level) called Evangeline Toras. She is also an accomplice of Harven Dordra and is very relieved to see the party. She explains that it was Darioch's impetuous attitude that was their undoing.

"He was either completely mad or completely fearless," she'll comment.

Also in the chamber are masterwork Torturers tools that give the user a +2 bonus to Intimidate and cause wounds that automatically stabilise unless the user rolls a natural failure. The tools deal D3 damage per Intimidate attempt (100 gp).

Officers Quarters

Another Skorne Lieutenant awaits in this room. He has recently been woken by two frantic servants. Having suited up he waits behind the door to ambush the first person to enter the room.

The servants will only attack if they have no other choice.

As you open the door to this room you see two female Skorne cowering away from you. They both brandish long curved knives. Each of them hisses at you in their guttural language. The room is about 20 feet square and seems to serve as quarters for someone important. There is a large bed, a sturdy stand and a sword rack as well as a deep intricately embroidered rug.

Treasure: Masterwork Praetorian Plate, Potion of *Cure Moderate Wounds*, two Skorne Longswords +1, Cloak of Charisma (+2) and four Obsidian Figurines. Each figurine is about two inches tall and worth 15 gp.





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Just what are these figurines?

The Skorne do not believe in an after life but they do believe in ancestor worship. Particularly noteworthy individuals may find they have their essence (or soul) entered into an Ancestral Guardian statue. When the statue is carved there are many chips of stone left over. The stone mason's apprentices carve these chips into small figurines. Many Skorne carry these figurines around hoping they bring good luck.

A Skorne may make a Cha test once per day (per figurine) and invoke a *Bless* spell effect if they make a DC of 18. It should be noted the figurines do not detect as magical.

And the Elite Jade Tokens?

The Skorne Elite Jade Tokens are small charms worn around the neck. A piece of jade no larger than a thumb is carved into a spiral or swirling motif and suspended on a leather thong. The Token bestows a +1 Fortitude bonus to the wearer. They are typically worth 500 gp.

About that Hammer

When the party emerge blinking in the daylight with (hopefully) Harven Dordra and a rag tag band of human prisoners they will be in for a shock.

Standing outside is a Khadoran Battlegroup. At least one Warjack and a selection of troops have been hunting down Darioch Giamati since his tour of the Thornwood.

Oily black smoke rises up from a variety of engines. A squad of men in steam armour stand nearby and regular troops mill around camp fires. Hulking over them all is a heavy Warjack. A battle flag has been planted in the ground and clearly displays the symbol of Khador.

An aristocratic looking individual approaches you, his armour is unusual and he clearly holds a high rank.

"Permit me to introduce myself: I am Warcaster Prime Vladimir Nabokov. I believe you may have helped retrieve a Khadoran Prototype. Naturally relations between our two countries will be greatly improved by you returning the weapon to me."

As he says this the Heavy Warjack over his shoulder flexes his fists impatiently. Many of the troops nearby finger their weapons and look cautious.

"Please, I can see you have to escort these civilians back to Cygnar and I do not want to hold you up."

The party should surrender the weapon to Nabakov, they are hopelessly outnumbered and outclassed. If the party are feeling emboldened and are thinking of trying to take on the battle group have them all take Intelligence tests. If this fails then Nabokov will plead with them to give up the prototype. He says he does not want to have to kill people needlessly.

Nabakov sends a Man O' War to retrieve the huge weapon. When the hammer is returned the party will be free to trek back home.





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Adventure Rewards

Recovering Harven Dodra and returning him to Tirnon Crag/ Corvis/ anywhere safe – 3000 Xp
Recovering Darioch Giamti's body – 500 Xp
Recovering Dieter Holdenbrooks body – 500 Xp
Returning the Khadoran Prototype to Vladimir Nabokov - 1000 Xp
Returning the Warcaster Armour to the Academy in Caspia – 500 Xp
Informing Big Dirk of Jack Raines fate – 100 Xp
Returning Jack Raines body to Tirnon Crag – 100 Xp

Fame at last

If Evangeline Toras makes it back to Cygnar she will compose a song about the party's exploits. Within one year the song will be well known and the adventurers all gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks whilst in any major city within Corvis.



Evangeline Toras -





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Appendices

Listings for creatures encountered and Non Player Characters.

Enemies

You can find the full rules for many of these creatures in No Quarter magazine or in the forthcoming Monsternomicon 2:

Ancestral Guardian	Issue 9
Skorne Praetorian Veteran	Issue 6
Skorne Conditioned Titan	Issue 4
Skorne Conditioned Cyclops	Issue 3

Skorne Praetorian

(Medium Sized Humanoid)

Class: 3rd Level Fighter

Hit Dice: 3D10+1D8+3 (25-35 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 18 (+2 Dex, +5 Skorne Plate, +1 Two Weapon Defense) touch 12, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/ +5

Attack: Longsword +6 melee (1D8+2)

Full Attack: x2 Longswords +3 (1D8+2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./ 5 ft.

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills: Intimidate +4, Spot +4, Survival +2

Feats: Improved Bull's Rush, Power Attack, Two Weapon Fighting, Two Weapon

Defense, Weapon Focus (Longsword),

Gear: Two Masterwork Longswords, Masterwork Praetorian Plate

Challenge Rating: 4

Alignment: Neutral

Skorne Hestatian

(Medium Sized Humanoid)

Class: 2nd Level Warrior

Hit Dice: 2D10+1D8+2 (20-25 hp)

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 16 (+1 Dex, +5 Skorne Plate) touch 12, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/ +4

Attack: Spear +4 melee (1D8+2)

Full Attack: Spear +4 (1D8+2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./ 5 ft.

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft.

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills: Intimidate +4, Spot +4

Feats: Improved Bull's Rush, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Spear),

Gear: Spear, Full Plate

Challenge Rating: 2

Alignment: Neutral

Skorne Conditioned Human

(Medium Sized Humanoid)

Hit Dice: D4+D10+1 (14 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 17 (+2 Dex, +5 Skorne Armour) touch 12, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +2

Attack: Claw Bracer +2 (1D4+2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., Lean, Rage 1x/ day

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 5

Feats: Armour Proficiency Heavy, Die Hard, Endurance, Toughness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency: Claw Bracer

Challenge Rating: 3

Alignment: Neutral





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Skorne Praetorian Lieutenant

(Medium Sized Humanoid)

Class: 6th Level Fighter

Hit Dice: 6D10+1D8+12 (55-65 hp)

Initiative: +3 (+3 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 19 (+3 Dex, +5 Skorne Plate, +1 Two Weapon Defense) touch 12, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/ +8

Attack: Longsword +10 melee (1D8+5)

Full Attack: x2 Longswords +8 (1D8+5)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./ 5 ft.

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12

Skills: Intimidate +7, Jump +4, Spot +6, Survival +6

Feats: Improved Bulls Rush, Improved Toughness, Power Attack, Two Weapon Fighting, Two Weapon Defense, Weapon Focus (Longsword), Weapon Specialization (Longsword).

Gear: Masterwork Praetorian Plate, Potion of Cure Moderate Wounds, Skorne Longswords +1, Cloak of Charisma (+2) or a Ring of Feather Fall.

Challenge Rating: 7

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Skorne Mortitherge

(Medium Sized Humanoid)

Class: 6th Level Wizard

Hit Dice: 6D4+1D8 (30 hp)

Initiative: +5

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 12 (16 Mage Armour) touch 12, flat-footed 10

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/ +4

Attack: Dagger +5 melee (1D4+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./ 5 ft.

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft.

Special Abilities Summon Familiar

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +6

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 13

Skills: Concentration +8, Decipher Script +8, Knowledge: Arcane +7, Listen +2, Profession: Soldier +5 Spellcraft +10, Spot +4

Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Maximised Spell Toughness, Scribe Scroll

Gear: Masterwork Dagger, Scrolls of Mage Armour, Lightning Bolt and Stinking Cloud, Familiar: Sand Toad +3 hp, Potion of Cure Moderate Wounds, 50% chance of an Amulet of Health.

Challenge Rating: 7

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Typical Spells Memorised:

0: Prestidigitation, Disrupt Undead (x2), Mage Hand

1st: Mage Armour, Chill Touch, Magic Missile (x2)

2: Blindness, False Life, Invisibility, Web

3: Deep Slumber, Vampiric Touch





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Skorne Paingiver

(Medium Sized Humanoid)

Class: 4th Level Ranger

Hit Dice: 3D10+1D8+3 (25-35 hp)

Initiative: +6

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 18 (+3 Dex, +3 Leather Armour)
touch 13, flat-footed 13

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/ +5

Attack: Spiked Whip +4 melee (1D6+1)

Full Attack: Spiked Whip +4 melee (1D6+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./ 5 ft.

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 13

Skills: Creature Lore +8, Handle Animal +11, Heal +6, Know: Nature +5, Listen +3, Profession: Paingiver +3, Spot +6, Survival +5, Use Rope +6

Feats: Alertness, Favoured Terrain: Desert Improved Initiative, Exotic Weapon Proficiency: Whip, Wild Empathy, Skill Focus: Handle Animal, Track

Gear: Whip, Dagger, Leather Armour

Challenge Rating: 4

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Skorne Tormentor

(Medium Sized Humanoid)

Class: 5th Level Fighter Wizard/ 4th Level Rogue

Hit Dice: 5D10 plus 4D6 +1D8+9 (64 hp)

Initiative: +8

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 17 (+4 Dex, +3 Armour) touch 14, flat-footed 10

Base Attack/Grapple: +8/ +10

Attack: Claw Bracer +14 melee (1D4+5 and 1 Con damage)

Full Attack: Claw Bracer +14/ +9 melee (1D4+5 and 1 Con damage)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./ 5 ft.

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft. Evasion, Uncanny Dodge

Special Abilities: Sneak Attack +2D6

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +6

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 12

Skills: Climb +10, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +11, Jump +12, Bluff +8, Hide +11, Listen +7, Move Silent +10, Profession (Torturer)+9, Spot +8, Tumble +14.

Feats: Armour Proficiency: All, Dodge, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness, Shield Proficiency, Simple and Martial Weapon Proficiency, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (Claw Bracer), Weapon Specialization (Claw Bracer).

Gear: see page 27

Skorne Assassins

(Medium Sized Humanoid)

Class: 1st Level Fighter/ 1st Level Rogue

Hit Dice: 1D10+1D8+1D6+3 (23hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 30 (six squares)

Armor Class: 17 (Studded Leather +3, Dex +4) touch 14, flat-footed 13

Base Attack/ Grapple: +1/ +3

Attack: Longsword +4 Melee (1D8+2)

Special Abilities: Sneak Attack 1D6

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60'

Alignment: Neutral

Saves: Fort +3 Reflex +3 Will +0

Abilities: Str 15 Dex 18 Con 13 Int 12 Wis 10 Cha 8

Skills: Balance +8 Bluff +4 Climb +6 Hide + 8 Jump +6 Listen +4 Move Silent +8 Sense Motive +3 Spot +4 Tumble +8

Feats: Toughness, Weapon Focus (Longsword), Dodge.

Gear: Masterwork Studded Leather Armour, Skorne Elite Jade Token, Long Sword

CR: 3

Alignment: Neutral





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NPC'S

Jessica Stern

Class: Scout 6

Hit Dice: 6D8+6 (39 hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 18 (+4 Dex, +4 armour), touch 14, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+1 & +7

Attack: Rifle +12 ranged (2D8 19-20/ x2)

Full Attack: Caspian Battleblade +8/+3 (2D4+1 20/ x2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./ 5 ft.

Special Attacks:

Special Qualities: Favoured Enemy Humans, Favoured Enemy Skorne, Favoured Terrain Desert

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +3

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 11

Skills: Intimidate +4, Craft (Small Arms) +8, Listen +10, Knowledge (Nature) +5, Profession (Scout) +5, Spot +10, Survival +10

Feats: Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Small Arms), Endurance, Diehard, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Track

Gear: Studded Leather Armour and Greatcoat, Masterwork Caspian Battleblade. Masterwork, Accurate Military Rifle, 30 shots, x3 potions of *Cure Light Wounds*.

Ruck sack, two man tent, trail rations, winter blanket, pot, utensils and flint and steel.

Challenge Rating: 6

Alignment: Neutral

History: Jessica was born in Corvis but tired of the filth and violence. She gathered together the little she had and set out for Ternon Crag. On the long trip there she was won over by the bleak mountains, clean air and restful solitude. She has ventured down to Caspia twice on tours of duty against the Protectorate and has learned a lot.

Sketchley Funt

Class: Rogue 4/ Fighter 1/ Intelligence Liaison 3

Hit Dice: 6D6+1D10 (36 hp)

Initiative: +5

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 16 (+3 Dex, +4 Armour), touch 14, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+7

Attack: Shortsword +11/+5 melee (1D6+2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./ 5 ft.

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +3D6

Special Qualities: Bonus Language, Charming, Cover Identity, DR 5 vs Piercing, Evasion, Feign Skill Expertise*, Expert Impersonation, Uncanny Dodge, Spy Ability (Escape)

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +10, Will +4

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 14

Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +12, Disable Device +10, Disguise +10, Forgery, +8, Gather Information +13, Handle Animal +5, Hide +10, Intimidate +6, Know (Corvis) +7, Know (Underground) +4, Know (Nobility) +5, Know (History) +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +10, Perform (Impersonate) +12, Profession (Scholar) +7, Ride +5, Search +10, Sense Motive +10, Spot +13, Swim +6, Tumble +5, *Wilderness Lore +3

Feats: Alertness, All Armour Proficiencies, Blooded, Education, Martial Weapons, Simple Weapons, Skill Focus (Gather Information), Shield Proficiency, Weapon Focus (Swordsword),

Gear: Masterwork shortsword, Leather armour, armoured greatcoat +1, mechaniks boots, goggles, Ring of Mindshielding.

Challenge Rating: 8

Alignment: Neutral Good

Languages: Cygnaran, Llaese, Khadoran, Idrian

History: Sketchley was born in Caspia to a very working class family. He managed to get a scholarship and excelled in languages. However, he always got into trouble for his impressions of his teachers. After leaving university Sketchley was asked to set himself up as a sleeper agent.





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Harven Dordra

Class: Rogue 6

Hit Dice: 6D6+6 (32 hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 18 (+4 Dex, +4 Armour), touch 14, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/ +3

Attack: Rapier +10 melee (1D6)

Full Attack: Rapier +10 melee (1D6)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./ 5 ft.

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +3D6

Special Qualities: Evasion, Trapfinding, Trap Sense +2, Uncanny Dodge

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +2

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 11

Skills: Appraise +4, Climb +7, Diplomacy +3, Disable Device +13, Gather Information +3, Hide +14, Jump +2, Listen+11, Move Silent +14, Open Lock +14, Search +11, Spot +11, Swim +2, Tumble +5, Use Rope +7

Feats: Alertness, Weapon Finesse (Rapier), Weapon Focus (Rapier), Stealthy

Gear: Masterwork Chainshirt, Masterwork Rapier, Skorne Elite Token, Rucksack, 30ft Silk Rope, Pitons, Climbers Kit, Masterwork thieves tools, Smokestick Tumblers Belt: grants a +2 Competence bonus. (1000 gp).

Challenge Rating: 6

Alignment: Neutral Good

Languages: Cygnaran, Llaese, Khadoran, Idrian

History: Harven grew up in Point Bourne and was surrounded by soldiers from a young age. He worked the trade caravans with his father throughout his childhood and learned many languages on the road. One day, whilst in Corvis he was discovered by the Sketchley Funt and recommended to the Intelligence Service.

Harven is young and very talented, he is fiercely loyal to the king and a little idealistic.

Haagen Dyers

Class: Commoner 2

Hit Dice: 2D4+2 (10 hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 9 (-1 Dex), touch 9, flat-footed 9

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+3

Attack: Rifle +3 melee (20/ x2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./ 5 ft.

Special Attacks:

Special Qualities:

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +3

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 9, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Diplomacy +2, Gather Information +2, Listen +3, Profession (Dockerman) +5, Spot +2, Swim +4

Feats: Improved Unarmed Strike, Trustworthy

Gear: None

Challenge Rating: 1

Alignment: Neutral

History: Haagen was born in Corvis and worked hard for every coin he earned. He was a regular down on the waterfront helping out with the unloading of ships. When the Skorne came everything changed.

Haagen does what he has to do to earn a crust and is always on the lookout for new employment. He is a little too fond of booze for his own good, but is loyal to his friends.



My Lords

Please make your way with the utmost haste to Vernon Crag where I have an agent ready to meet you with a mission of great importance. I have no one else available to ask and this task may well be suited to your groups rarified talents.

Sincerely

Rebald.

My Lords

I must ask you to track down one of the Intelligence Service's newest recruits, an agent called Harren Dordra. Harren was tasked with locating the source of the Skorne attacks and to report back with a disposition of their numbers and troop types. I have not heard from him in over a month. I charge you with the following orders:

Find Harren Dordra and bring him back to Gyznar.

Report back on the size and disposition of any enemy forces you encounter.

Help Harren's team back safely.

Sincerely

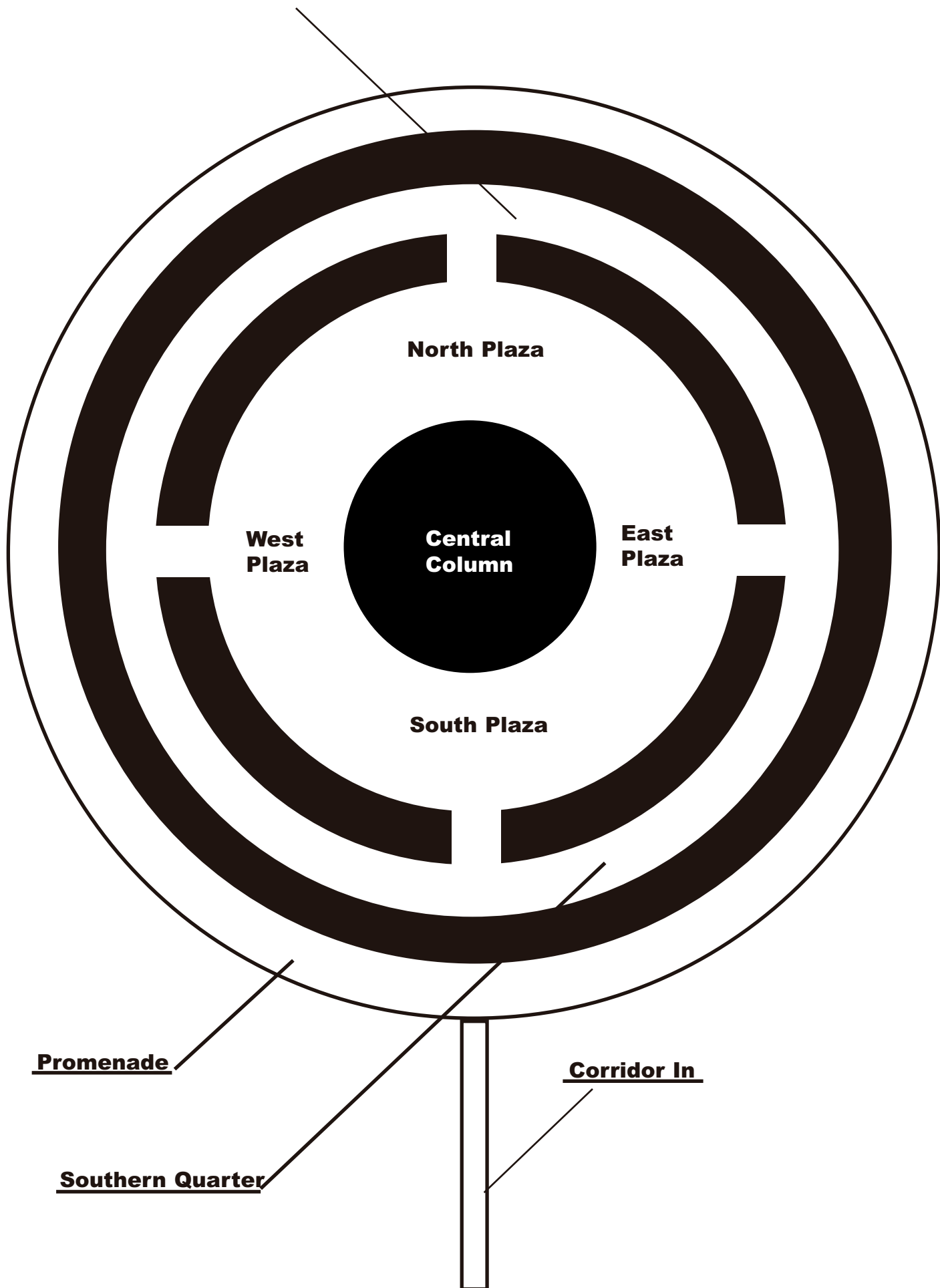
Rebald

If you should find my body and are not a Skorne or one of their wretched minions please read my dying wish with compassion. Return my body to my family in Caspia. My name is Dieter Holdenbrook and my family can be found on Upper Street in the Southern ward of the city. In return for this service I freely give these fine Bracers to those who see me buried in my family vault.

Finally, the wand is a mechanical wand of missiles. You'll need it to get out of here alive, there are seven charges left.

Dieter.

Northern Quarter



Promenade

Corridor In

Southern Quarter