

DRAGON WARRIORS

SLEEPING GODS



A complete campaign in seven adventures
By Dave Morris and Oliver Johnson

DRAGON WARRIORS SLEEPING GODS

In here are described seven adventures that may befall a traveller in the Lands of Legend, with most particular warnings for those who would venture into ruins, explore ancient barrows, or leave their abode after dark. Also here is wise counsel on how to do business with sorcerers, how to return restless spirits such as Spectres and Wights to their graves, how to get ahead with liege-lords, and how to proceed if it becomes rumoured abroad that you have in an accident killed the eldest son of a powerful baron.

By Dave Morris and Oliver Johnson

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DRAGON WARRIORS

SLEEPING

GODS

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For more information on the *Dragon Warriors* game and game-world, its creators, forthcoming products for it, and other exciting games and game-related books, visit the Magnum Opus Press website at <http://www.magnumopuspress.com>

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CHAPTER I

ADVENTURES & CAMPAIGNS

WELCOME TO *SLEEPING GODS*, the first complete campaign book for the *Dragon Warriors* role-playing game. Here you will find seven separate adventure scenarios that can be linked together to form a connected narrative, or ‘campaign’.

Over the course of these seven adventures your player-characters will explore the Lands of Legend and grow to understand how it works: its system of feudalism and nobility, and the notions of duty, honour and loyalty that come with that; as well as the darker edge of its history, traditions and superstitions. They will meet and defeat fearsome foes, gain riches and reputation, and make alliances that they may come to regret. By the end they will be a group whose names are spoken with respect and occasionally dread in the taverns where travellers and adventurers gather. With their experience, and the fruits of their success, they will be ready to step out on a new chapter in their lives.

Locations

All the adventures in this book bar one are set within a specific geographic area: the fief of Baron Aldred within the kingdom of Albion, on the island of Ellesland. This area is described on pages 150–152 of the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook. Ellesland is equivalent to a medieval version of Britain or Europe: the geography is not extreme (no volcanoes or earthquakes), the land is fertile, and the weather is temperate enough to grow apples and cherries but

not oranges or grapes. Summers can be uncomfortably hot and the winters are cold enough to freeze rivers, but droughts and ice-storms are rare.

Although the signs of human civilisation scatter the land, in truth men are still intruders here and the creatures that have lived in these places for longer than memory are keen to remind them of it. Most of the inhuman races have the sense to stay away from places of too much habitation, but travellers, explorers and those who stray from paths are always considered fair game.

You can, of course, move the adventures around if you wish—which brings us to:

Using This Book

There are three ways you can approach the adventures in this book. The first is to play them as a continuation of the story begun in ‘The Darkness Before Dawn’, the sample adventure provided in the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook. That concluded with the player-characters about to escort the disgraced Maxim le Cloche from the village of Maiden’s Vale in the west of Baron Aldred’s fief to the nobleman’s castle—known only as ‘Aldred’s Castle’ or ‘the Baron’s Castle’, for he built it and it has no other name—more than a hundred miles to the east, at the foot of the Hourla Hills.

This introduction gives the campaign a tight structure. The first two adventures in this book will take place along the journey, and when the PCs

arrive at the Baron's castle they should be prepared to accept his patronage and undertake missions for him, doing service for him to earn money, reputation and the nobleman's favour.

Each of the book's adventures has a short description at its start describing how to follow this particular way of playing the game and telling the story. We recommend this method for a new group of players, and perhaps a novice GamesMaster too.

The second way to use *Sleeping Gods*, which is similar to the first, is as a stand-alone campaign. 'The King Under The Forest', the first adventure in the book, makes an ideal introduction to *Dragon Warriors*, its rules, mechanics and world, and you can play on from there.

Although the scenarios in this book form a connected campaign, it is one with a looser structure than other campaigns for *Dragon Warriors* such as *The Elven Crystals*. Each of the adventures in this book can easily be used as a stand-alone scenario, and there is rarely a reason to immediately lead on to the next. You can take advantage of this to use the adventures in *Sleeping Gods* to provide a structure for a larger campaign, and an introduction to the Lands of Legend.

If you decide to do this, these adventures can be used with others of the GM's own devising interspersed between them. This will allow the GM to mould the campaign to his or her own particular style, as well as ensuring that characters are of sufficiently high level to be ready for the next adventure in the series. More importantly, it will allow the players to 'lead' the plot, to some extent—in particular, while working for Baron Aldred, there may be many opportunities for characters to head off on side quests, take up further missions, follow personal goals, or just get in some interesting roleplaying.

Once the players have earned the baron's friendship, they will always be welcome at his castle, even if they do take leaves of absence from his employ to go on their own quests. For 'The One-Eyed God' and 'The Sins of The Fathers' adventures, the party are based at the castle and adventuring within his fief (see the map on page 6).

After the end of Chapter 6: 'Sins of the Fathers' the players should find it is no longer advantageous to work in Baron Aldred's service and are advised to get as far away from his castle as possible. Kurland, and particularly the city of Ferromaine on the coast of the Coraline Sea, seems like a good destination,



and that choice is the spur that begins Chapter 7, 'Mungoda Gold'. Finally, once the party returns from overseas, they will have the chance to make a name for themselves in Chapter 8: 'The Greatest Prize'. If they succeed, a new chapter in their adventuring careers will open up: no longer are they landless vagabonds, but controllers of a strategically important piece of territory—and thus players in the games of power and persuasion played by those who rule over the Lands of Legend.

The third way to use the adventures in the book is simply as that—separate adventures, with no linking plot-strands. The player-characters will be taking odd jobs for different patrons from time to time: they will build up little loyalty towards Baron Aldred and he none for them. This has the advantage that you can relocate the scenarios to wherever you choose in the Lands of Legend or beyond, and if your players do disastrously badly in one adventure then the story-line is not knocked off the rails. You can also run them in any order, though be warned that the adversaries of the later scenarios are considerably tougher than those in the first few.

None of these three systems are fixed in stone. You may be following the first system until the

end of 'Sins of the Fathers', but then decide that to whisk your players to Ferromaine without describing their journey and the misadventures they meet along the way would be a waste of a great opportunity. Alternatively you may start playing the adventures as individual scenarios, and then come up with a very neat way of flowing from one straight into another. The material is in your hands: do with it as you will.

A word to players

As always, we give the customary warning to readers who are going to play through *Sleeping Gods* as characters: you should not read this book until you have finished playing the campaign. Not because it will give you an unfair advantage, but simply because it will spoil your enjoyment of the game. Reading this book before you play the adventures is like turning to the last page of a murder-mystery to learn who did it before you've started the story.

That doesn't hold for GamesMasters, of course, who should read each adventure carefully before they run it.



CHAPTER 2

THE KING UNDER THE FOREST

Introduction

'THE KING UNDER The Forest' is a simple underworld scenario, designed to introduce beginners to the game. It's intended for first-rank characters, and can be used solely with Knights and/or Barbarians if desired, thus enabling new players to rapidly get into the game without spending too long on character generation, swotting up on the rules or learning the details of magic and spells.

Overview of the adventure

The characters find themselves in a small village called Axbridge. While they are delayed here the local priest, Bretwald, enlists their company in an adventure. He claims to know the location of the tomb of Vallandar, once king of this land. The characters must venture into Fenring Forest to reach the tomb where Vallandar and his treasures lie.

GM: Sections of this scenario which may be paraphrased or read out to the players are given in italics. The remaining material, which includes all monster scores and explanatory details, is for your eyes only.

Two alternate introductions are provided here. The first, 'Setting the Scene', is a way to begin the adventure and introduce the setting if you're using it as the start of the campaign. The second, 'After Dawn', can be used if your group has played the scenario 'The Darkness Before Dawn' and are escorting Maxim Le Cloche to Baron Aldred's castle.

I. SETTING THE SCENE

Read this aloud to the players:

You have all recently arrived in the village of Axbridge. Some of you travelled here from the north, through Helfax Wood; some of you came through the Coronach Marshes, along the mysterious raised dyke called Dobby's Walk.

You are strangers here, and you have spent the past few days getting the lie of the land. The villagers tell you that their lord is Baron Aldred, whose castle is many days' ride away. Axbridge is the most westerly village of his fief; travellers pass through fairly regularly, so the villagers are better informed than most. They know that the fiefs of surly Baron Grisaille and Montombre, nicknamed 'the Elfin Earl', lie to the south. They are ruthless lords, said to be no friends of Aldred.

Harvest-time is close, and the villagers are working long hours in the fields. Most of your information comes from Odo, a crippled old man who whiles away the day on a seat under the apple tree on the village green. He claims to have adventured a little in his younger days, and seems pleased to let you stay at his house in return for a florin or two every few days.

GM: Odo has in fact never adventured in his life. The player-characters may suspect this, but Odo does not mind. He just enjoys spinning yarns. The longer they stay at his house, the more fanciful his stories will become. If they relate any of their own adventures to Odo, they will eventually hear them recycled as episodes from his youth!

You have not helped to bring in the harvest, but that doesn't stop you joining in the festivities when, a few days later, the last corn is cut. Cider is drunk and a service performed by the village priest, Bretwald. After the service, as the autumn evening turns to night, the villagers dance merrily in the churchyard.

Bretwald joins you. "Many of these rites are pagan, of course," he says with a wry smile, "but it does no good to tell them that." He rubs his back. "Bringing home the harvest has been hard work for us all. I have a cask of cog wine inside—come, join me for a drink."

Now move on to section III.

II. AFTER DAWN

If you are starting from the end of 'The Darkness Before Dawn' then read this to your players:

The journey from Maiden's Vale to Axbridge, the first stop on the road to Baron Aldred's castle, is not a long one. The storms have cleared away, the sun is out, and the heat of late summer builds as the day goes on. By mid-afternoon you have reached the outlying fields of Axbridge, where the last stands of crops wait to be dry enough to be harvested, and sheaves of cut wheat dot the stubbled ground like diminutive wicker-men, defying evil spirits to approach the village.

Suddenly Maxim Le Cloche, who has entered the bushes beside the road to answer a call of nature, gives a cry: "I am attacked!" You rush over to find him bent double, clutching his buttocks, his breeches around his ankles.

GM: Le Cloche has been bitten on the bottom by an adder, a small poisonous snake native to Ellesland. It has slithered away, but any character who hunts through the grass and rolls under their Perception on d20 will catch a glimpse of its black-and-yellow scales. Anyone examining the bite will be able to tell (roll under Intelligence on d20) that the puncture-marks are small and close together, and will surmise the likely culprit.

Adders are not especially venomous but the characters are too low-level to have any spells to cure the poison. Axbridge is still a mile away, and since Le Cloche can't (or at any rate won't) walk they must carry him. By the time they reach the outskirts of the village Le Cloche is unable to stand and is vomiting, his pulse racing, his skin sallow and moist.

The villagers help you to carry Le Cloche to the meeting-hall—there is no inn in the village—where they cluster round as he is dumped unceremoniously onto a long table. He is delirious and the tops of his legs are swelling up. The local healer, Widow Bealing, is brought at a run: she takes one look at the victim, expertly cuts the bite-mark to let it bleed, and begins mixing a poultice of charcoal and herbs to draw the poison out. "Adder sting. Your friend will be fine by moonrise," she says, "but he'll be in no state to travel for a week, maybe two."

As the villagers disperse back to their work, a man in robes approaches and introduces himself as Bretwald, the priest of Axbridge. He commiserates over Le Cloche's injury, and suggests that you talk to Odo, a crippled man who lives in the village, about a place to stay for the next few nights. "As for the days, you could help everyone bring in the harvest," he says thoughtfully, "or if such peasant work is beneath you, I may be able to occupy your time more fruitfully. Come and see me this evening, once you're settled, and we will talk over some wine."

GM: Odo (see above) is happy to let the characters stay for five florins a week. By nightfall Le Cloche's delirium has passed and he is sleeping; by morning he will be awake but in much pain. Odo is happy to house him too, an involuntary audience for the old man's tales.

In the evening the local farmers open a barrel of cider, an early celebration of the late harvest, and the characters are invited to join in the festivities. As the night becomes chilly, remind them of Bretwald's invitation.

III. THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

In Bretwald's house you can still hear the sounds of revelry outside, but muffled now. The last rays of sunlight are fading and he brings a lamp and places it on the table. He unfurls a parchment—it seems to be a map, and there is something written below it in a script you do not recognize.

"Have you heard of Vallandar?" asks Bretwald. "Rex quondam rexque futurus. He is said to have been king of this land long ago. His reign was just and pious, great warriors bowed to be his vassals. But his evil half-brother Morgrin hated him for his goodness, betrayed him to his enemies, wrought a war in which Vallandar's

kingdom was laid waste. The legends say that Vallandar met Morgrin in the final battle and struck him down with a single blow, but Morgrin had laid a spell upon his sword and it dealt the king a grievous wound as it fell from the traitor's dead hand.

"Mathor, the king's wizard, found his dying lord on the battlefield and took him in his arms, carrying him to a secret crypt that he had built. There he placed Vallandar, with his twelve bravest knights and all the treasures of his kingdom, to await the day when he was needed again to drive injustice from these shores.

"A pretty story, to be sure. I believe there was indeed a powerful warlord called Vallandar—or Valdyne, or Klavayn; accounts differ. This document was given to me by a monk years ago; he could not read the language. I was a friar in Cornumbria in my youth, and I learned a little of this script there. It tells where Vallandar is buried"—he stabs his finger down on the parchment—"in Fenring Forest, three days hence!"

GM: The player-characters might reasonably ask why, if has had this map for several years, Bretwald has not made an expedition before now. In fact he has, and he will freely tell them about it—

"About a year ago I found a suitable band of adventurers—at least, I thought they were suitable. Agnar Wolf-eye and his men turned out to be the most bloodthirsty cutthroats one could hope not to meet? We entered Fenring Forest, and while we were searching for the exact location of the tomb, one of Agnar's ruffians spied an Elf nearby. The damned fool shot it with his crossbow.

"That was the start of our troubles. The next day two of the men took sick, poisoned by bad water from a spring. A man we sent out scouting failed to return. At dawn we awoke to find his severed head set on a pole by the camp fire!

"Most of the men were for turning back then, but Agnar was a mad dog and I—for my sins, I was too proud and greedy to abandon the search. We went deeper into the forest, keeping our scouts closer now. At last one of them called out to us—'Here! I've found it! Here!' We rushed through the trees, and came into the clearing where the colossal stone portal of the tomb stands. But the man who had called out was lashed upside-down to a frame, and Elves stood all around with bows.

"Agnar bellowed crazily and charged them, swinging his axe. A tall faerie lord strode forward, spoke a word. Agnar fell dead in his tracks. Then the Elf-lord came to me, and I held my cross in trembling hands. I looked right into his pale cold eyes. He said, 'You are not

one of them. You did not desire this madness, and we shall spare you our retribution. Go now; take my cloak and the wolves shall let you pass.' Sure enough, he gave me the cloak from his shoulders. I could see a circle of red-eyed wolves about the clearing now. Agnar's men were pleading with me to help them, but I could do nothing. I went to the edge of the clearing, and though the wolves snarled they parted to let me go. I walked at first, then began to run. Behind me, the men began to scream. As God is my witness, they deserved their fate—but I covered my ears as I ran.

"It was bitter to know I had found the tomb and lost it. Then a wily thought came to me. I snagged the Elf-lord's cloak on a briar and began to unravel it as I went. When I reached the forest's edge I had used up all the thread. I went quickly to Saxton and lay in a fever there three days. When I went back, I could not find the thread, though I had marked the tree where I had wound the end of it. Abbot Adrian, whom I later consulted in a circumspect manner, was of the opinion that a fine faerie thread might only show in strong moon-light, for the Elves make garments to keep themselves hidden. I believe him to be a considerable authority in such matters. The first full moon of Michaelmas falls three days from now, so if you wish to join me we shall depart on the morrow."

GM: What Bretwald has told the characters is substantially true. Before setting out, they may wish to make some definite deal as to how the treasure will be shared. Bretwald, for a man who has had years to scheme, has thought very little about this. His own vision is of a treasure so vast that the only limit will be how much each can carry. He also feels that each character should give him one tenth of what they receive from the adventure, because he is the instigator of the entire plan.

Some devious player-characters would attempt to steal poor Bretwald's map. Such thievery would not pay off—it is written in Lughwyd, a language they are unlikely to be able to speak or read, or even recognise.

IV. GETTING THERE

GM: The village of Saxton, which lies very close to where Bretwald hopes to pick up the thread, is three days from Axbridge on foot. You are recommended to give the characters no dangerous encounters en route.

Novice GMs can find an example of how this journey might be handled on pages 9-10 of the *Dragon Warriors Bestiary*. The party should reach Fenring Forest after nightfall. The thread is easily found, tied to a marked tree a mile or so west of the Forest River. It is visible as a glimmering line, like spider silk, shining in the moonlight.

Following the thread, it will take them all night to reach the clearing where Vallandar's tomb is to be found. You could roll to see if they have an encounter during the night; the chance of this is 35% (i.e. a roll of 01-35 on d100). Any encounter at this stage should preferably be with non-fantastic creatures, and relatively light. A small pack of Wolves (say, one per character; see p. 253 of the rulebook or p. 28 of the *Bestiary*) would do fine:

WOLVES

Health Points (use only as many Wolves as there are characters in the party):

First Wolf: 5 HP	Fifth Wolf: 7 HP
Second Wolf: 5 HP	Sixth Wolf: 8 HP
Third Wolf: 6 HP	Seventh Wolf: 9 HP
Fourth Wolf: 6 HP	Eighth Wolf: 10 HP
Reflexes of this pack: 14	

V. THE UNDERWORLD

It is dawn as you enter the clearing Bretwald has told you about. In the side of a grassy bank, entwined with the roots of an old tree, stands a massive door of stone. Tall letters are carved across the face of it. Bretwald picks moss from them with a knife before murmuring, "Here lies Vallandar, who was and will again be King."

GM: It will take several hours to excavate the portal, and the characters should now be very tired. They should take several hours' sleep before going down into the underworld. If they do not, each character takes a temporary 1-point penalty to ATTACK, DEFENCE and EVASION, and halves his Reflexes. It is not advisable to go adventuring when one is worn out!

When they are fully rested, Bretwald will produce a pickaxe and three shovels and set them to work on the portal. With four of them working, it will not take long to get the portal open. If anyone complains, Bretwald comments that it is no harder than working in the fields!

Bretwald is not an adventurer, and he will not fight at any point unless it is to save his life. His

stats are those of any normal human (ATTACK 11, DEFENCE 5, etc). He wears padded armour and carries a shield. He has a flail at his belt and also a knife, though he will not use the latter in combat. His most useful function will be to carry a lantern.

Remember that, except where otherwise stated, the underworld is not illuminated. The characters can see only as far as their lantern-beams.

From this point, sections of the text are numbered. This refers to the numbering on the underworld map. The characters will not necessarily visit the rooms in this numbered order, of course. The first time they visit each location you can read out the description in italics. If they later come back for another look, you will have to alter the description to take account of what they did the first time. (E.g., if they burned the tapestry you would omit it from your description when they came back that way.)

1. Entrance corridor

Finally you pull the huge doors open, to reveal steps leading down into the darkness. You light your lanterns and descend. You find yourselves at the eastern end of a long gothic-arched corridor four metres wide. A faded tapestry hangs along the wall to your left. It depicts a host of warriors locked in gory battle.

GM: The tapestry is magical, but this magic will not show itself until they have advanced further along the corridor (see section 3, below).

2. The map room

GM: Note that the tunnel leading to this room is concealed by the tapestry. The characters will only find it if they say they are looking behind the tapestry (or if they tear it down).

You enter on octagonal room about five metres across. The floor is extraordinary—it seems to be made of smooth polished quartz, and below it you can see a curious design of greens and blues overlaid with a scattering of glowing red symbols. Against the south wall is a heavy oak chest.

GM: The 'design' is actually an accurate map of the entire country, created for Vallandar by his court sorcerer, Mathor. Never having seen such a map, the characters would have little chance of recognizing what it is.

The chest is not locked. However, the moment a character opens it a jet of green vapour issues from the hasp. The character in question must roll under his Reflexes score on d20. If he makes this roll he manages not to breathe any of the vapour in, but if he fails then he will be afflicted with acute paranoia. You should take him to one side and tell him that his comrades are closing in on him with swords drawn! If the player refuses to rise to the bait, his character will shake off the feeling of paranoia and see that the others are not really attacking him at all. If he believes what you have told him, he will fight his own friends for six Combat Rounds before the vapour's effect wears off.

Within the chest are two hundred silver coins and an empty leather bag secured with a cord of twined red hair.

3. Tapestry magic

You are approaching the end of the corridor. Double doors lie ahead—of black wood bound with verdigris-stained copper. There is a smaller door in the north wall, and a passage leading off to the south.

GM: If they did not previously cut down or destroy the tapestry, strange things begin to happen:

Before you reach the doors, a metal portcullis drops down to block your way. A harsh clang makes you turn—another portcullis has fallen across the foot of the stairway. The tapestry flutters, though there is no breeze. Even as you watch, five of the warriors become solid and step into the corridor behind you. They wear strange sculpted armour, still in the faded hue of the tapestry, and their faces are the colour of old cloth. But their wide-bladed shortswords appear all too real.

GM: These are Tapestry Warriors, created beings used by sorcerers as wards (see p. 66 of the *Bestiary*).

TAPESTRY WARRIORS

Rank equivalent: 2nd

ATTACK 14, Shortswords (d8, 3) Armour Factor 4

DEFENCE 5 EVASION 4

MAGICAL DEFENCE 5 Reflexes: all 12

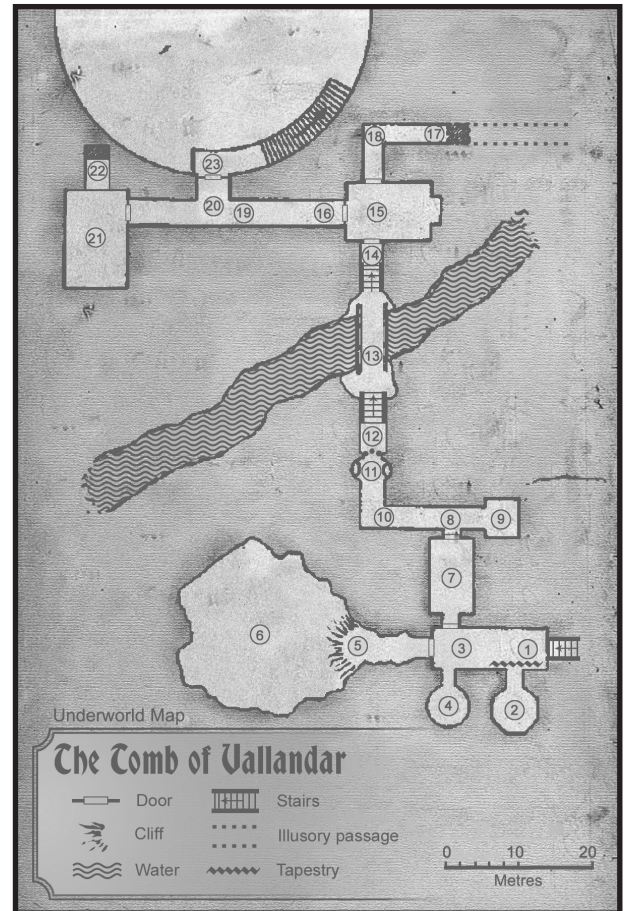
Movement: 10m

Health Points:

First Warrior: 9 HP Fourth Warrior: 10 HP

Second Warrior: 10 HP Fifth Warrior: 10 HP

Third Warrior: 11 HP



The Tapestry Warriors fight soundlessly. If slain, they disappear and return to their places in the tapestry, where they will be seen to have any wounds the characters inflicted on them. If the tapestry is set alight or ripped down, the Warriors will instantly disappear with a ghostly howl.

Once the Warriors are disposed of, the characters will have no difficulty lifting either portcullis to be on their way.

4. A hovering wand

The passage brings you to a small circular chamber with no other exits. The wall is covered with markings that follow some unfathomable geometric principle. A wand hangs in the air in the middle of the chamber. It is rotating about its centre, at a rate of roughly one revolution a second. One end of the wand glows a dull red, the other sparkles with blue-white light. The central section is black and unreflective.

GM: There are two things to consider if anyone tries to seize the wand. First, which hand is he using?

Unless he says otherwise, he must be assumed to have used his sword hand. Second, where is he attempting to grasp the wand; is it the blue-white, the black or the red section? If he does not specify, roll randomly for this.

If the character wishes to grasp a specific section of the wand, refer to his Reflexes score. If he has Reflexes of 14 or more, he succeeds automatically. If his Reflexes score is 13 or below, he must roll less than this score on d20 to grip the wand by the section he specifies. Failure means that he has seized a randomly determined part of the wand.

The red end is burning hot and the blue-white end is icy cold. Holding the wand by either will sear the character's hand—he loses 1 Health Point and, if it is his sword hand, 1 point from ATTACK and DEFENCE for the rest of the adventure.

Once someone has grasped it firmly, the wand stops hovering. It is a *Wand of Fire and Ice*, and the safe area to hold it is the black central section. By mental command, the wielder can cause the red end to emit a blast of heat or the blue end to produce a wave of cold. The character who holds the wand will somehow know this (but his companions won't, unless he chooses to tell them; you should pass him this information on a note).

Both the heat- and cold-effects may be dodged, having a SPEED of 10 (see the rulebook, p. 71). The heat blast will inflict 5d6 HP damage on any creature which fails to evade it; a creature in armour may subtract its Armour Factor from this damage, however. The pulse of coldness inflicts only 4d6 HP damage, but armour (of whatever sort) will reduce the damage taken by only 2 points.

Each use of the wand expends a 'charge'. It has only three charges, so it can be used only three times; there is no obvious way to recharge it. You will have to keep track of how often the character uses it. Once the power of the wand becomes known, Bretwald (if he has not been killed by the Tapestry Warriors) will caution against using it rashly. As it turns out, this is wise counsel indeed—there are points later in the adventure where all may be lost if they no longer have this wand.

5. A steep climb

You walk along a roughly hewn passageway. Soon you see a wall of rock towering ahead of you. A glimmer of golden light filters down from above. Will you climb, or turn back?

GM: The climb has a difficulty factor of 13. This means that any character with Reflexes of at least 13 can make it without difficulty. Other characters must roll d20 and score under their Reflexes to make the climb safely. A character who fails this roll will fall at a randomly determined point in the climb. The distance to the top is 10m, so roll d10 for anyone who fails the roll to see how far he drops. A character who falls may if he wishes (and if he survives!) attempt the climb again.

If one person can get to the top and secure a rope, other characters make the climb at difficulty factor 6.

6. The wizard's cave

GM: You should relate the following only to those who actually make the climb. Any players whose characters remain at the bottom will have to go into another room.

At last you reach the top and haul yourselves up into a vast cavern. Stalactites sparkle in light which seems to come from all around. Your hearts skip a beat as you behold, curled atop an enormous mound of treasure, the long sinuous form of a huge red Dragon! Luckily for you, it is sleeping; wisps of blue smoke curl gently up from its black nostrils. Near it, contained within a red pentacle inscribed on the cavern floor, is a stout old oak tree whose branches reach up to the shadows beyond the magic light.

GM: At this point, take the player whose character has the highest Psychic Talent score to one side—this will almost certainly be one of the magic-using players, if there are such in your group. Tell him/her the following:

Just for a moment, as you reached the top, you fancied you saw a figure: a wild bearded man two metres in height, dressed in ragged furs, holding aloft an ebony staff. But then, when you look again, it is the oak tree you see standing there. It must have been a trick of the light....

GM: The oak is the dormant form of Mathor, Valandar's court sorcerer. He will not awaken until his liege does (see section 23, below). The pentacle prevents anyone or anything from touching the oak; the lines that define it are strongly magical and cannot be erased.



The Dragon opens one lazy eye if the characters approach its treasure. A couple of paces more and a red tongue flickers between its sharp teeth. Then it speaks. (You should portray the Dragon as solemn, droll or jocular, according to the style you favour for your GamesMastering. Bilbo's conversation with Smaug in Tolkien's *The Hobbit* gives a fine account of how a Dragon might speak.)

The Dragon's name is Fengel. It is Mathor's servant, bound by his magic, but out of pride will maintain it is his friend. It will be very flattered if anyone remarks on the magnificence of its treasure. If any character mistakes this hoard for "the treasures of the kingdom", Fengel will correct him haughtily, announcing that those treasures are in the chamber of the dead king, unguarded, and anyone may take them.

This brings the conversation neatly around to the question of whether anyone may take any of this treasure. Fengel is loath to part with even the merest trinket, though he will finally consent to a riddling contest. For each riddle the characters get right they can take a gold coin (larger than their modern crown, and worth about forty-five florins). Once they fail to

answer a riddle, they must go away and leave Fengel to sleep. Typical riddles that Fengel will ask are:

I watched an army gathering supplies
Over miles of countryside,
No homestead did they pillage,
No blade of grass was broken. (Answer: a swarm of bees)

Across the seas
Up to the sky
All through the land
Unseen by eye (Answer: the wind)

As long as six men,
As strong as six men.
One man may carry it,
Six men cannot stand it up. (Answer: a rope)

It eats everything but is always famished
And when it drinks, it dies. (Answer: fire)

Fengel knows the history of each coin in his hoard, and will muse sadly at his bereavement each time the characters take one. If the characters try to snatch up a handful of treasure and run, Fengel will wait until they are at the lip of the cliff and then breathe a jet of flame (SPEED 16, strikes 2-12 characters;

anyone failing to dodge takes 2d6 +12 HP damage, less Armour Factor). If anyone survives that he will let them go. A 'handful' of Fengel's treasure will be worth $10d6 \times 1d20$ florins.

No game-information is provided here for Fengel. A glance at the information on dragons (p. 32 of the *Bestiary*) will show why: thinking of attacking him is like a group of mice planning to attack a tiger—one that can breathe fire and cast spells. If your players say that this is what they want to do then try to dissuade them from bringing the adventure to such a premature end. If they insist on going ahead then by all means play out the combat. It is likely to be short, and Fengel will keep up a sardonic narration as he dispatches them.

7. The north wind's hall

You swing back the heavy door of a long hall. At the north end, your lantern-light falls upon a podium of grey marble carved to resemble a bulbous-cheeked face blowing at you. A silver goblet rests on the podium. Beyond, another door leads deeper into the underworld.

GM: As the characters walk towards the podium a fierce gale springs up and shrieks along the hall, forcing them back. Even by dragging themselves along the wall, the strongest characters can get no further than half-way.

If they hold up the bag from the chest in room 2, the wind will be drawn within and disappear at once. The cord must then be tied to hold the wind inside. If the bag is opened at any later time in this adventure or a subsequent one, the wind will immediately return to this hall by the shortest possible route, bowling over any character in its path and blowing him along for 2–8 metres. This means that if the characters reopen the bag when they get back to Axbridge, for example, anyone standing north-east of the bag (i.e. directly between it and the location of this underworld) will be knocked down.

The silver goblet is worth 60 florins. Its real value to the characters, however, is likely to lie in its usefulness later in the adventure (see 11, below).

8. A choice of ways

You are in a 3m wide corridor running east and west. To the east, the corridor opens out into a room after only a few metres. To the west, you can just make out that the corridor turns to head north after some 15m.

9. The spider's web

You can see that a bronze helmet lies on a wooden table against the far wall of the room. As you step through the archway into the room, your ankles become entangled in a web of fine strong strands.

GM: The Giant Spider (HP 11; see p. 35 of the *Bestiary*) that lives in this room quickly descends on its web to attack its prey. Only the characters in the front row of the battle order will be caught in the web. The other characters cannot attack the Spider because their trapped colleagues are in the way.

If reduced to 3 HP or less, the Spider will scuttle back to its lair above the rafters. If the players defeat it and reach the helmet, give this description:

It is a strange ornate helmet, curiously free of corrosion. The oddest thing about it is that the visor consists of a large flat mirror!

If anyone puts it on:

From the inside, you find that you can see through the mirrored visor. However it is like peering through smoked glass, and you can see objects only as dark silhouettes.

Any character wearing the helmet takes a combat penalty of –1 from ATTACK and –2 from DEFENCE, to represent his impaired vision. The helmet might thus strike the characters as rather useless, but it may prove to be a valuable asset when they come up against the Gorgon (see section 19).

10. A trap

As you approach the bend in the corridor, a flagstone gives slightly under your feet. There is an ominous click. Suddenly a massive gleaming axe-blade swings out of the side wall—

GM: The axe swings across the corridor, so it could strike any or all of the characters at the front of the party. It has a SPEED of 13; match this against each character's EVASION—this is explained on p.71 of the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook.

Each character that it hits will absorb some momentum from the swing, so (from right to left across the front row) the first character is struck with an Armour Bypass Roll of d8 +2 and takes 8 HP damage if it gets past his armour; the second character (if it hits more than one) is struck with an Armour Bypass Roll of d8 +1 and takes 7 HP

damage; the third character is struck a normal axe blow—d8 for Armour Bypass and 6 HP if it gets past his armour.

After one swing, the axe resets itself in the wall. The characters will have to remember to avoid the loose flagstone when they come back this way, or they will trigger the trap again.

11. Barrier of light

The way on is blocked by a flickering barrier of violet light that shimmers in the air between two baroquely carved pillars on either side of the passage. Through the shimmering, you can just barely discern the outlines of the corridor as it continues north.

Just in front of this barrier, set back in alcoves to your left and right, are two fountains. In the western alcove, a chalky grey liquid issues from a snarling stone face and runs down into the ountain beneath. The eastern fountain is filled by a purple liquid that bubbles from a face sculpted in an expression of fear.

GM: The barrier is magical. A character who walks through it is subject to a MAGICAL ATTACK of 18, matched against his MAGICAL DEFENCE (see p.75 of the rulebook). If the attack works, the character will be afflicted with an unreasoning fear. For the rest of the adventure, his ATTACK score is decreased by 1 point and his DEFENCE score increases by 1. Also, any time the party encounter a monster, the character has a 25% chance of being so overwhelmed by his fear that he will merely cower with his hands over his head until the monster has been slain or driven off. (Encourage any player whose character is affected by this barrier to role-play as though he genuinely is frightened.) The effect wears off as soon as the character leaves this underworld.

The grey fluid in the western fountain has a curious effect on anyone who drinks it. The character's flesh will become stony and grey. For the rest of the adventure, until he leaves the underworld, he adds 2 points to his Armour Factor. However, he is slower in this stone-flesh form: his Reflexes and movement rate are halved.

The purple liquid in the eastern fountain has even stranger properties. As long as it remains within the alcove, it is a powerful acid that will dissolve anything except gold and silver. If a character tries to drink directly from the fountain he will be badly burned (1d4 HP damage; if he put his hands in he permanently loses 1 from ATTACK; if his face, he

loses 1d8 Looks). The characters can, however, use the silver goblet from the north wind's hall to scoop up some of the liquid. Once the liquid is removed from the fountain it loses its acidity, so characters can drink it from the goblet without injury. It has the effect of making a character immune to the effect of the magic barrier.

Once a character has drunk the liquid of one of the fountains he can gain no benefit from the other. Each character will have to settle either for immunity to the flickering barrier or for becoming stone-flesh for a while.

These liquids only possess their magical properties in this underworld. Any removed from the underworld will become just stagnant water.

12. Underground river

Passing through the barrier of light, you continue north along the corridor. The sound of a surging underground river echoes from the darkness ahead.

Before long you come to a short flight of steps. At the bottom you see a stone quay beside the rushing black waters. A rickety plank bridge leads across to another quay on the far side. A figure of rose-coloured rock stands between the steps and the bridge. It looks like an uncompleted statue—the upper torso, arms and head are perfectly sculpted, but the lower body is a single lump of unworked stone. With a harsh grating noise it slowly flexes its massive sinews. Its long talons are knives of flint.

GM: Having no legs, the Living Statue cannot move from where it stands on the quay. The characters might try to rush past it, but it will get to strike at two of them as they do so (one with each claw). Characters who are trying to parry as they run past get only half their usual DEFENCE against the monster.

LIVING STATUE

Rank equivalent: 10th

ATTACK 22, Claw (d10 +2, 8)¹

DEFENCE 14

MAGICAL DEFENCE 12

Health Points 30

Armour Factor 7

Movement: 0

EVASION 0

Reflexes: 16

If they try to fight it out with the Living Statue they will probably soon find that most of their blows slide harmlessly off its granite hide. It is quite easily

¹ It is ambidextrous and strikes with both claws, at full ATTACK, every Combat Round.

vanquished, though, if they use the Wand of Fire and Ice. The expansion and contraction due to the use of heat and then cold in quick succession will shatter its stone body into rubble! (Note also that, having no legs, it cannot evade the Wand's blasts.)

If the characters defeat it and think to search amid the broken chunks, they will soon find an enchanted shortsword that had been left in a cavity under its base. A character fighting with this shortsword rolls d8 +1 for Armour Bypass rolls, adds 1 point to both ATTACK and DEFENCE, and inflicts 4 HP damage on an opponent with each successful hit. (Note also that there are some monsters—e.g. Spectres—that can only be harmed by enchanted weapons.)

13. A flimsy bridge

GM: The bridge is very fragile. If any character who has been transformed to stone-flesh (by the grey fluid at 11) steps upon it, he will go right through the planks and plunge into the river. This means death for the character concerned, for he will sink like a stone and drown.

The Wand of Fire and Ice is useful again here. A blast of its frigid cold will freeze a path across the river which even the heaviest of stone-fleshed characters can lumber across in safety.

14. Short passage

You climb a short stairway like the one on the south bank of the river. You are standing in front of a small black door. There is a strong feeling of peace and serenity here.

15. The chapel

You enter a low-ceilinged chamber hung with sombre drapes. A flickering sanctuary lamp burns on an altar stone in an alcove in the east wall. A large crucifix hangs above this. There are double doors in the west wall and another small door, like the one you have entered by, directly opposite you.

GM: A character afflicted by fear (having passed through the magical light at 11) may be cured of this by kneeling in prayer before the altar. There is no way of knowing this in advance, of course; you should not tell them unless someone announces that he is praying. The benefit applies only to one

who prays without thought of gain: a character who suddenly becomes pious when he sees the advantage will stay terrified!

16. Long passage

A narrow passage leads north for a short distance and then turns to the east. Looking along it, you see that the first ten metres or so are not illuminated, but from that point onwards bright red lamps hang from the ceiling. The passage extends as far east as you can see.

17. Nagging doubts?

You continue until you have almost reached the first of the lamps. There is something odd here—the lamps seem to dim slightly as you approach, and become redder.

GM: In fact the lamps have not changed at all—they merely seem dimmer in contrast with the light of the character's lanterns. The passage from this point on does not exist. It, and the red lamps that hang along it, are an illusion cast by Mathor the wizard. If the characters shutter their lanterns, they will see that the red lights shed no light at all westwards (i.e. before the illusion begins)—so a character could bring his face to within inches of the first illusory lamp and yet his companions would be unable to make him out in the darkness.

If the characters do not detect the illusion, and press onwards, the entire corridor from this point will disappear. (Illusions vanish when touched.) The character at the front of the party will suddenly find himself at the end of the passage—about to step into a yawning pit which was previously covered over by the illusion! The character must roll under his Reflexes on d20 to catch hold of the person behind before he falls into the pit. The pit is 10m deep, the fall will do d10 damage to anyone who experiences it (reduced by 2 if they are wearing any kind of armour—see p. 64 of the rulebook), and the climb out has a difficulty factor of 11.

18. Light ahead

Beyond the double doors lies a 3m-wide corridor which leads west. A little over 15m away from where you are standing, it is joined by another corridor leading north. The east-west corridor is gloomy, illuminated only by the murky light of your lanterns. But you can see bright light flooding from the northern branch.

19. A lady in waiting

You walk towards the T-junction. In the bright bar of light thrown across the corridor from the northern branch, you now notice a looming shadow. Someone is waiting just around the next corner. You pause and hold your breath as you study the outline of the shadow. Could it be a robed woman with an elaborate coiffure? A soft, evil hissing reaches your ears...

GM: Presumably few players will miss the hint that a Gorgon is waiting to ambush them. As they step close to the T-junction she will suddenly advance to block their path and stare the foremost character full in the face.

This particular Gorgon was once a renowned sorceress, Elaine, considered to have been partially responsible for the downfall of Vallandar's golden kingdom. She worked for Morgrin, tempting one of Vallandar's knights away from the King so his half-brother could deliver the lethal blow to Vallandar's unguarded flank. The gods have condemned her for her misuse of her beauty, and she now exists purely to spite anyone who might seek to aid Vallandar's cause. She has 10 Health Points.

GORGONS

ATTACK 16, Sword (d8, 4 points); 1-3 Tresses (d4, 1 point and venom)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 10	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 9	Reflexes: 8
Health Points 1d6 +8	Movement: 10m

These creatures have the bodies of beautiful women but the face is that of a hideous crone and the head is a writhing mass of serpentine tresses. Gorgons fight with swords but rarely use shields or armour. In combat, the 'hair' can also attack: 1-3 tresses will strike at the Gorgon's opponent, each with its own ATTACK of 10. These snakey tresses are, of course, venomous and a character wounded by one must roll less than or equal to his Strength on 3d6 or die.

They also have a petrifying gaze with a MAGICAL ATTACK of 19; those who fail are turned to stone (see p. 123 of the rulebook.) If a Gorgon sees its own visage in a mirror, it is itself subject to the petrifying attack. In addition to these other abilities, all Gorgons are 5th-level Sorceresses (see the rulebook, p. 120).

If Bretwald is still with the players after the Gorgon is dealt with, he will turn to them in wonder, telling them the tale of Elaine—which he had assumed to be no more than myth. He is now more certain than ever of the unimaginable wealth that must be around the next corner in Vallandar's tomb.

If the leading character is wearing the bronze helmet from the spider's lair (room 9), the Gorgon will get a nasty surprise as she sees her gaze reflected back at her! On a roll of 2-10 on 2d10 she will turn herself to stone. If not, she will close her eyes and fight blind (i.e. at -4 ATTACK and -8 DEFENCE) rather than risk seeing her own face a second time.

20. At the junction

The northern branch of the corridor, where the Gorgon was lying in wait, extends only a few metres and then ends in stout oak doors bound with iron. The light comes from a glowing crystal globe hanging from the ceiling.

Shining your lanterns west, you discover that the transverse corridor also ends in double doors after another eight or ten metres.

21. A stout coffer

On the other side of the doors lies a dusty room with a mouldering reek in the air. Suddenly a host of grinning Skeletons hurl themselves forward from the shadowy corners of the room.

GM: This encounter is likely to be bothersome rather than fatal. There are seven Skeletons (HP: 4, 2, 2, 3, 4, 3, 7; see the *Bestiary*, p. 83), all armed with swords (d8, 4 points). These Skeletons also have shields, so remember to check each time one is struck to see if the shield stops the blow.

If the characters defeat the Skeletons:

You now notice a huge wooden treasure-chest by the south wall. It is sealed with a gilded padlock bigger than a man's fist. Then you notice something gleaming in the lantern-light: a key, hanging from a chain around one of the Skeletons' necks.

GM: The key unlocks the chest, sure enough. Within they will find a quiver full of arrows, a gold robe-clasp, two stoppered stone jars, a parchment case, a large silver sceptre and an ivory crucifix.

The moment a character touches any of the items, a tremendous force will throw them all back

across the room and the chest will slam shut. No one is hurt, but the chest is now locked again and the key is nowhere to be found. The item that was touched is lying on the floor beside the chest. The chest is too big for them to budge, so this single item is all they will ever get out of it. In detail, the items are:

Six magic arrows	The character who uses one of these adds 1 to his ATTACK, Armour Bypass Roll and the damage inflicted if the arrow hits. In game terminology, each one is a (d6 +1, 5 points) weapon.
Healing Potion	A wounded character who drinks this regains 7 Health Points, up to the limit of his normal HP score.
Elixir Vitae	Poured between the lips of a corpse (who must not have been dead more than a month), this potion will restore him to life! The resurrected character permanently loses 1d3 Health Points and 1 point from each of his characteristics (Strength, Looks, etc.)
A gold clasp	Worth 120 florins.
An ivory crucifix	This is a reliquary containing the ashes of Saint Leon, an indefatigable opponent of evil. The character who wears it gets a bonus of +2 to

ATTACK when fighting Undead, and is unaffected by the *fright attack* of Ghosts and Spectres.

A scroll in a case Only a 4th-rank Sorcerer could understand what is written on this scroll, though any Sorcerer could recite it and thus release the *Shadowbolt* spell it contains.

A silver sceptre Worth 150 florins, and also useful as a mace for smiting Wights.

22. Short walk and long drop

This narrow passage goes north a short distance and ends in a pit. Looking down, you see only stygian darkness which the light of your lamps does nothing to dispel. Iron rungs set in the wall of the pit form a ladder of sorts.

GM: If any of the characters drops a coin down (remember that somebody has to deduct it from their cash reserves!) it takes six heartbeats to reach the bottom.

If any character tries climbing down, you should emphasize to him how eerie and dank the pit seems. He can see almost nothing, and his friends' voices



echo distantly from above. A character gripped by the magical fear-effect (see section 11) could not bring himself to climb down under any circumstances; you should not have to remind the player of this if he is roleplaying properly.

The climb is not at all dangerous, in fact. The bottom is vile and slimy, but if the character does not mind this and searches for a minute or two he will find a dagger. When this is taken up into the light it will be discovered to have five gems encrusted along the hilt. It is worth 400 florins.

23. The high King's hall

You find yourselves on a balcony overlooking a vast circular hall full of shadows. You cannot see the far wall or the soaring roof above. In the centre of the chamber, within a pillar of green light that streams down out of the darkness, waits a tall man on horseback. Both horse and rider wear great plates of decorated armour. Their heads are bowed as though in slumber, and on the man's brow you see a golden crown.

Around Vallandar, twelve mighty swords stand balanced upon their points in a perfect circle.

Off to your right, stone steps sweep down to the floor of the hall. At the foot of the steps, your lanterns pick out the shining surface of a massive gold casket.

Will you go down—?

GM: The Spectre of Morgrin, Vallandar's evil half-brother, lurks in this hall. As the characters descend, this is what they see:

Tatters of deepest shadow flit from the furthest recesses of the hall, clustering and coalescing on the steps in front of you. Two darkly glittering eyes fix upon you as a man-like form takes shape. The sense of abiding malevolence descends like a pall. The figure drifts up towards you. Its body and fluttering robes are murky and indistinct, but you see its white hands and hate-filled visage with a terrible clarity. It reaches back and seems to draw a spectral sword from the empty air.

GM: The characters have two Combat Rounds before Morgrin reaches them, and if any of them have magic arrows they would be wise to loose them off. Morgrin can only be harmed by enchanted weapons; even the Wand of Fire and Ice (if it isn't used up by now) will not hurt him.

Characters already suffering from magically induced fear are now subject to a 1d6 *fright attack*

SPECTRES

Spectres are the non-corporeal undead remnants of strong-willed persons whose lives were twisted by dark hateful passions. Their gliding, translucent forms are often mistaken for Ghosts, but in fact they are far more dangerous. If a Spectre surprises a party of adventurers (4 chances in 6 of this, as the monster is apt to drift straight out of a stone wall!), everyone in the party is subject to a Fright Attack (see the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook, p. 122), but with a Fright Attack strength of 1d6. The Spectre will then close with the party to combat them physically. Its dead white hands are potent with destructive energy. Since the Spectre is itself ethereal, however, it difficult to harm; non-magical weapons do not affect it, and neither do physical spells (like *Dragonbreath* or *Shadowbolt*).

ATTACK 19, Touch (d12, 5)

Armour Factor 0
(immune to non-magical weapons)

DEFENCE 12

MAGICAL DEFENCE 11

Health Points 4d6 +4

Rank-equivalent: 8th

Movement: 12m

EVASION 4

STEALTH 18

PERCEPTION 13
(dark sight)

(roll 1d6, subtract the character's rank, and roll the result or less on 2d10 to kill him—see the rulebook, p. 122). Treat Morgrin as a standard Spectre (HP: 14; Reflexes: 17). Although he appears to be armed with a 'sword', this is in fact a part of his spectral form, and is treated exactly like the touch attack of any other Spectre.

The characters will be in single file on the steps, so this is a bad place to stand and fight. Apart from the magical shortsword (from the Living Statue at 12) and the magical arrows (from the coffer at 21), the only other weapons they could use to fight Morgrin are the swords that stand in a circle around the king. Of course, to get these swords they will have to reach the floor of the hall—possibly by climbing down on a rope while someone tries to keep Morgrin busy.

They do not have to battle Morgrin, of course. They could just flee. If Bretwald is still with them, they will have to drag him kicking and screaming.

He has sought this tomb for so many years that even Morgrin's Spectre will not drive him back now!

Any character who reaches the circle of swords can take one. Having taken one, he will not be able to move any of the others. There is no sign of any support keeping them miraculously balanced on their points—it is more of Mathor's wizardry. Having taken one of the swords, a character leaves behind him the shadow that he cast at the moment he touched the hilt. This shadow will remain unless the character replaces the sword in its position in the circle.

What does this portend? In fact it is a sign that a character who takes one of the swords becomes Vallandar's vassal. When the land has need of him and he arises from his slumber, Vallandar will call upon those who took and wielded these swords. Living or dead, they will come to be his knights. (Unless you favour an apocalyptic theme, this will probably not occur in the lifetime of your campaign.)

The swords are magical in that they inflict full damage on undead monsters such as Spectres. At first they confer no combat bonuses on the character who wields them, but they will gradually acquire enchantment whenever the character performs a truly selfless and honourable deed (in your view, not the player's!). In every adventure that the wielder behaves honourably, the sword gains a magical 'plus', until it is eventually +3, the maximum. (Magical sword rules are covered in full on p. 137 of the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook.)

Moreover, the character who possesses one of these swords will never lose it. Even if apparently gone forever—dropped into a volcano, eaten by a whale, etc.—it will mysteriously return to the character in the space of a few days.

Assuming that Morgrin is somehow disposed of, the characters will doubtless turn their avaricious attention to the gold casket they noticed earlier. This is what they find when they open it:

You lift the heavy lid of the casket, expecting to find wealth that transcends greed. Is this the unimaginable wealth of the realm spoken of in legend? Eagerly you peer inside—

You find a silver crown, a handful of grain, a simple ploughshare, a wooden cross and a leatherbound book.

GM: Bretwald, if he has survived the adventure, will understand. "The treasures of Vallandar's realm!" He groans. "The King, the Land, the People, the Faith and the Law...." He weeps.

If irredeemably mercenary, the characters could take the silver crown. It would fetch about 90 florins. The book of laws is quite a treasure. A gift could be made of it to a monastery, and the characters could expect much goodwill in return.

The gold casket itself is much too heavy to lift, and too solid for the characters to break up. They must be content with what they have already.

It hardly need be added that it is not possible to reach the king himself. Should any character try to do so, the column of blue light will fling him across the hall with a crackling energy blast which inflicts 1d4 HP damage.

VI.

AFTER THE ADVENTURE

You may want to have the party play through leaving the underworld and travelling back to Axbridge, or you may simply cover it in a couple of sentences. On their return, nothing has changed. Le Cloche, if they are escorting him, will be eager to get away from Odo's incessant stories, but not ready to travel for at least another week.

Bretwald, if he lived through it all, returns to his position as priest of Axbridge—a sadder, wiser and somewhat richer man.

Characters who survived should have reaped rich benefits. Award each character 7 experience points, in addition to any points awarded during the game for overcoming monsters. You and your players should now have a thorough grounding in the basic *Dragon Warriors* rules.

Lastly, none of the characters who took part in this adventure will ever be able to find the underworld again. This is part of Mathor's magic, that no man can enter Vallandar's tomb more than once. If not for the treasure they carried out with them, and the first battle-scars they now bear, the characters might think the whole adventure had been but a dream!

CHAPTER 3

A SHADOW ON THE MIST

INTRODUCTION

THIS IS A short scenario, best suited to a party with a high proportion of Sorcerers and Mystics. It is perfect for 2nd-rank characters.

Overview of the adventure

The characters are summoned to the manor house of the village in which they're staying. They meet Sir Beorn, steward of the local lord, who dispatches them on a mission to a strange, shunned, fog-shrouded hollow. This is the abode of an evil Wight, twisted revenant of the high king buried here in ancient times. The characters must enter the mists of the hollow and return with the items Beorn needs.

GM: As before, throughout the scenario sections which may be paraphrased or read out wholesale to the players are in italics. Other sections concern monster statistics, unobvious, or hidden details, and other information; these are for your eyes only.

I. FROM AXBRIDGE

If you are continuing the story straight on from the end of the last adventure, then 'A Shadow On the Mist' begins the morning after the player-characters have returned from their adventure with Bretwald.

Alternatively you may want to set it a few days later and further east—in the world of Legend

distances are approximate, maps are vague indications of where places lie in relation to each other, and travel is usually expressed in terms of how many hours or days it takes to travel somewhere, rather than how far it is. The party has stopped for the night in a village on the road. Whichever one you choose (Igham would suit our purposes), it is larger than Axbridge and has an inn, mostly used by travellers. You should improvise a short scene as the party enters the village: perhaps a child has fallen into the river or a barge has come untethered and is drifting downstream, or the inn kitchen has caught fire, and the player-characters' quick thinking and fast action saves the day. This will be enough to get them an invitation to the manor house for a cup of wine with the bailiff Notker (see below) and his thanks on behalf of Baron Aldred. This may be a good moment to explain the social order, described on the next page, using Notker as your mouthpiece.

Once the party has retired to bed, read the first part of section II out loud to them.

II. THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

It is dawn. As the sun rises over the fields around the village, you are already out on the village green, exercising and practicing your combat drill. You are surprised to see Notker, a short ruddy-cheeked fellow who serves as the lord's bailiff, running along the street towards you.

He stops for a few moments to catch his breath, then calls out, "Come with me to the manor. Sir Beorn, steward to the baron, is here. He wishes to speak with you!"

GM: A brief word about the social order is perhaps appropriate here. The estates of the baron, whose castle lies several days' ride to the east, are widely scattered. He cannot personally supervise them all, so he has a steward to take care of this. Sir Beorn spends much of his time overseeing the various villages of the fief. In his absence, responsibility for the manor house resides with the bailiff, who is himself of peasant stock.

Most of the villagers would be suspicious of adventurers—though they are always ready to feed and shelter anyone who pays good money. The bailiff, Notker, would rarely speak to them; he is an honest and pious man who distrusts those who live by their wits. For the steward, a gruff old Knight and veteran of the Crusades, to summon common adventurers into the manor house is truly remarkable. The players should realize that something of great importance must be in the offing.

Notker ushers you into the long hall of the manor house. The steward, Beorn, waits impatiently. He is a broad-shouldered man with a fierce stern face, and he wastes no time on pleasantries.

"Up in hills by Norham Wood there is a hollow that the locals call Hob's Dell. They believe it to be a magic place, and won't go near it. I need some people who aren't afraid of churls' fireside tales." He hurls a fat bag of coins down onto the table. "A hundred and fifty silver florins. You get fifty now, and the rest after you've done the job. There may be treasure along the way, and you can keep one tenth of any that you find. Interested?"

GM: Beorn is most definitely not a man to haggle. If the characters try to strike a better bargain, he will curtly motion them to leave. If they change their minds then they will find the fee has dropped by thirty florins!

Assuming that they accept, Beorn goes on to explain:

"The baron's tax collector passed through Norham from here two days ago, heading for the castle. He had the taxes of four manors in his saddlebags. A few hours later, his horse limped back into Norham without him. The taxes were missing also, and a fine sword I was sending as a gift for my brother. The horse must have thrown

him up by Norham Wood—perhaps a Goblin frightened it, pah. His neck can be broken for all I care, but I want that sword back. And if the taxes aren't recovered, the peasants will have to pay twice this year. Not a pleasant thought, with winter coming on."

His scowl tells you it is not the peasants' welfare that concerns him.

GM: Much of what Beorn has told them is true, but he has omitted some salient details. As the characters leave, they may begin to see holes in Beorn's story. Why does he assume the tax collector was up near Hob's Dell? Why is he so anxious to recover the lost sword? (Naturally, they are asking for trouble if they make any such doubts known to Beorn!)

The facts. Beorn and two of his men met up with the tax collector (whose name was Harald) a few days ago, in the small village of Hesard's Ford. Beorn gave him the sword and asked him to deliver it into the hand of Beorn's brother when he reached the castle. In fact, the sword itself was of no importance—but concealed within its pommel was a message from Beorn which incriminates him in a plot on the baron's life.

Harald heard Beorn talking with his men, realized what was afoot, and departed at once. They soon discovered his absence and set out in pursuit—Beorn coming west to Axbridge while his men covered the northern road. Harald was indeed heading north, and the men caught up with him just beyond Norham. He fled from the road up into the hills, but his horse threw him at Hob's Dell (see later). His pursuers found the horse, took the taxes in its saddlebags for their pains, and slapped the beast back into Norham. Finding no sign of Harald or the sword, they rode straight here and reported to Beorn.

Beorn is all but certain that the sword is lost within the boundary of the Dell and neither it nor the message will ever be found. He would like to make absolutely certain, but he is not prepared to risk his own skin and his men will certainly not undertake such a mission. Hence he is employing the player-characters to get the sword back.

If they fail to return, then Beorn will seek out other adventurers and offer them the same deal. He is very keen to make sure that the loss of the sword does not become widely known. If his fellow plotters got to hear of it, they might decide he was a careless liability and finish him off along with the baron!

III. GETTING THERE

GM: If they leave Axbridge at once, the characters should reach Norham by noon the following day. They will probably stop overnight at a farm: Farmer Gormand there is an obliging fellow who will let them sleep on his floor for three pennies apiece.

You are advised not to bother with random encounters on the road. This adventure is tough enough!

A day and a half's journey east brings you to Norham. The road is a treacherous muddy track at this time of year, and as you pass the village pond you begin to savour thoughts of a hot bath. Perhaps one of the good people of Norham will take you in. They are stout-hearted folk, proud of their freedom and the living they eke out in this tiny farming community. You have heard that they always help wayfarers out of the kindness of their hearts, and never accept payment.

You must have heard wrong. Three men strolling in from the fields glower at you coldly before disappearing into a wide building of stone and timber.

You make your way inside. The air is smoky from the fire in the middle of the building. A cow has been slaughtered and is slowly roasting over the hearth. There are several people here, and among them you quickly pick out the men you saw outside.

"We cannot welcome vagabonds," declares one, stepping up to you. "These are lean times and we are honest working folk. Toil is the most respected virtue in Norham; idle mendicants are given short shrift."

Everyone in the room has fallen silent. They watch you with sullen expressions.

GM: The man they are talking to is Hyple, the head man of the village. If they are to get welcome here, he is the one they must convince of their honest intentions. An offer of money—some ten silver pieces would suffice—will certainly help. Conversely, if the characters resort to threats they may be able to cow the villagers for a time, but they will never get any co-operation. Such co-operation is vital to the adventure.

If they can befriend Hyple, he takes them over by the fire and tries to answer their questions. If he cannot remember some detail personally, he will yell out the question and someone in the room will pipe up with the answer.

"The tax collector rode through Norham just before dawn a few days' ago, as though Old Nick himself were

right behind. Only a short time later, two men on frothing chargers came pounding through. They must soon have caught up with the first man. Some time later, the tax collector's horse came limping back into the village."

Will the smith ambles over with a mug of ale in his hand and takes up the story: "I caught the poor beast's reins myself. It was stumbling about and rolling its eyes—shivering like it'd been ridden hard all night. Its saddlebags had been slit with a knife, cleaned out but for a few copper pieces."

"The other two men rode back just after that," says Hyple. "They paid none of us any heed, just bantered with one another in the nervous manner of men who've done an evil deed. They glanced at the horse as they rode by, and one of them grinned at the other and patted his saddlebag, but they didn't stop."

GM: If questioned as to what they suppose happened to Harald, Hyple and the others are of one mind:

"There can be no doubt he strayed near Hob's Dell. Either the two men overtook him and butchered him there, or he hid from them in the Dell and Gardener Jack got him. He'll not be seen in this world again."

GM: The characters will surely have a dozen questions on their lips. What and where is the Dell? Who is 'Gardener Jack'? You should paraphrase the villagers' answers from the following folklore:

Hob's Dell is a hollow up in low hills north of Norham Wood. It is enclosed by a fence of sharp iron palings that Saint Ambrosius is said to have put up one Twelfth Night long ago, to keep the evil of the hollow forever trapped inside. The place is permanently shrouded in fog, so that beyond the black railings of the fence one can usually see only a blanket of whiteness. Even on the hottest days of summer the fog maintains its grip on the place—it rolls back from the fence, but is never gone entirely. On such days, the tangled 'garden' within the hollow lies revealed: a clammy, weed-choked place where wisps of sickly white mist move through the long grass like snakes.

'Gardener Jack' is the local name for the monster that lives within the Dell. The villagers speak of him with such conviction that it may be some time before the characters realize that he has not in fact ever been seen by anyone here. There are plenty of stories about how someone's grandfather once caught a glimpse of him at dusk, etc, but no

first-hand testimony. Everyone in the village has their own vivid idea of what Jack is—some say he's a wizened dwarf with a giant's head, others that he's a ragged wolf-jawed serpent, or a hairy ogre with a necklace of skulls. (Who can say where such legends come from? The truth, we shall shortly see, is rather different.)

Lastly, like most folklore, the stories about Gardener Jack are rife with inconsistency. He is said to wander the hills in the guise of a man in white robes, and lure travellers into the mists of the Dell. But the iron fence is believed to keep him trapped within the Dell, so there is a conundrum here. Furthermore, though the villagers refer to Jack as 'evil' and 'a fiend', they clearly have a sort of affection for him. Though they fear him, he has never brought any of them harm; and he is, after all, their own local bugbear!

IV. The ADVENTURE AT HOB'S DELL

You remain in Norham overnight and set out for Hob's Dell early the next morning. One of the village boys takes you into the hills and points you on your way before scurrying back towards Norham. Following the signs he described to you, you pass a lightning-split oak and wend your way beside a gurgling brook, and in about an hour you reach Hob's Dell.

A sea of freezing fog hangs here, filling the air with a damp animal reek. You find a fence of iron railings higher than your heads, sturdy despite its rust. Following this a little way, you see a few gaps where the railings are broken or rusted away, though none large enough for a man to squeeze through.

Soon you arrive at the gate in this fence. Close by you notice a possible clue to the tax collector's fate: a bloodied tatter of cloth hangs from one of the fence's sharp spikes.

The gate is fastened shut with a heavy chain on which hangs a large black crucifix. Beyond the railings you see only the impenetrable blanket of the mist....

The chain on the gate is in fact the single all-important link in the boundary spell that shackles the evil of the Dell. Under a Mystic's *See Enchantment* power it will thus register as strongly magical. Actually, the fence is not entirely whole; there are some points where it has rusted through, despite the magic invoked when it was erected. But as long

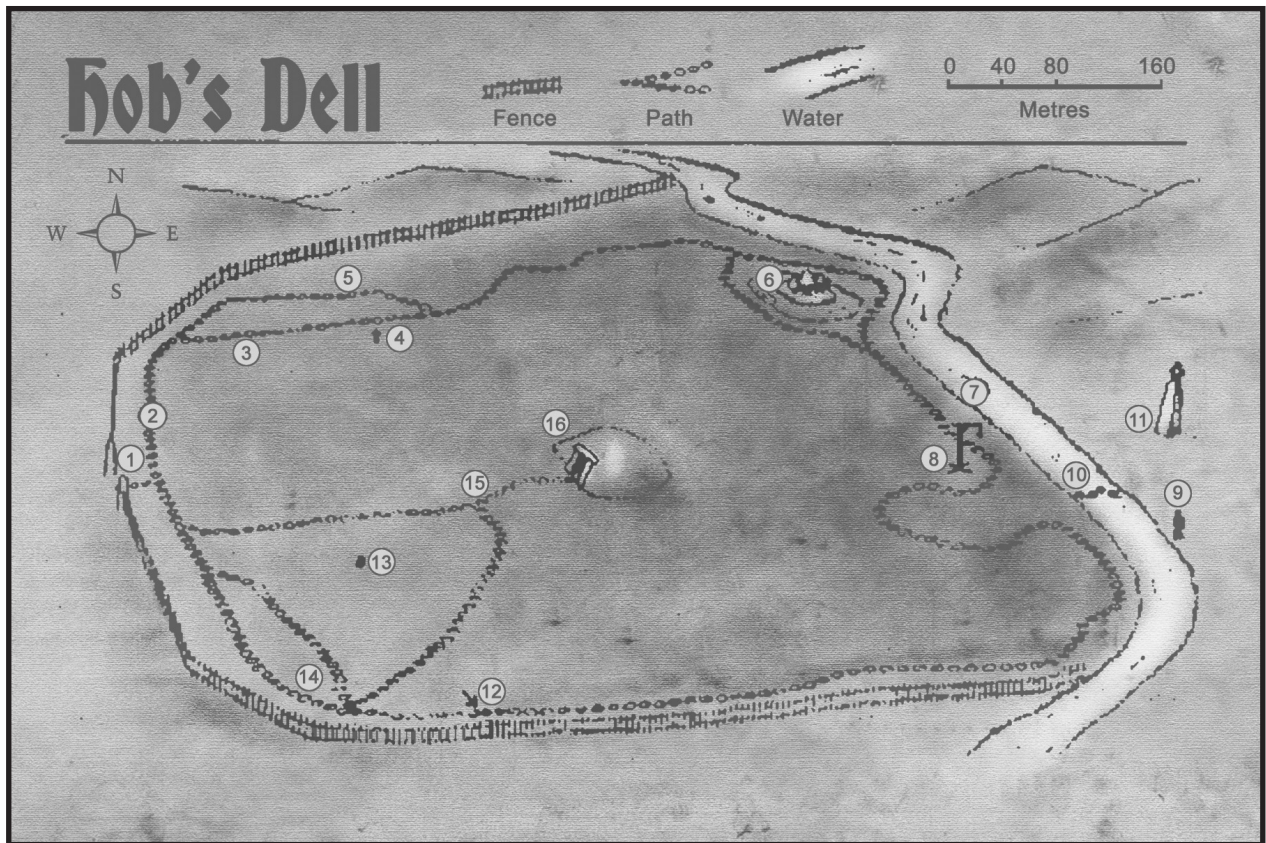
as the chain is not removed, Tuannon (the Wight whose abode this is—see later) is unable to escape from the Dell.

The crucifix is tarnished silver. It is quite large—more than forty centimetres—and could conceivably be wielded in combat, like a club. After a single battle it would be left battered and unusable, of course, so the characters may dismiss the idea of using it as a weapon. Because it is solid silver, it could prove effective against the Wight. Melted down, it would yield silver to the value of some 200 florins. (All this presupposes, of course, that the characters check it out and discover that it is silver. In its tarnished state it looks more like lead.)

Getting into the Dell will not be a problem, even if the characters decide against unfastening the gate. The climb over the fence has a difficulty factor of 6 (or only 5, if another character can provide a leg-up.) This means that any character with a Reflexes score of 6 or higher has no problem scaling it. Others must roll under their Reflexes on 1d20; a failed roll means the character slips (20% chance of impaling himself on the railings—treat this like a dagger blow) and must try again.

General notes about the Dell:

- A. The entire region within the Dell is shrouded in thick fog. The characters' visibility will be no more than 30m—and beyond 10m, objects appear only as shadows on the mist. The Wight's vision is not impeded by this fog.
- B. Characters can move at normal speed on the path. That is, 10m per Combat Round normally, and up to 40m/CR when running. If they stray from the path onto the uneven, muddy terrain of the inner Dell, movement rates are halved. Any character running on the rough has a 20% chance each Round of catching his foot in a hole and falling.
- C. The characters will not get lost if they stick to the path. If they lose sight of the path, there is then a 20% chance each minute (ten Combat Rounds) of getting lost. You should not tell them that they are lost—just let them say where they think they're heading, then secretly roll 1d8 to determine the actual direction. (1 = north, 2 = north-east, 3 = east, etc.)
- D. Locations of particular interest are numbered. This numbering will not necessarily be the order in which the characters come to each location, of course.



1. A monk at peace?

Among the tangled weeds bordering the Dell you see a cracked stone slab. The resemblance to a sarcophagus is unmistakable. Some words are carved into the face of the slab, so badly weathered that you can hardly make them out: QUIESCO MANEO CUSTODIO

Do you want to open it?

Any character who knows the Bacchile language (rulebook, p. 184) will be able to translate the weathered inscription, as follows: "To rest, to wait, to guard."

The task of lifting the lid has a difficulty factor of 35. This means that several characters whose combined Strength totals at least 35 can lift it. Each must deduct 1 Health Point for the exertion.

If they open it, they can see immediately that it is indeed a sarcophagus. Little remains of the occupant now: just a clutch of mouldered bones. They have no way of knowing that these are the mortal remains of the saintly Ambrosius (see later). He fell ill as work on the fence was nearing completion. His last instruction to his followers was to inter him here, so that his spirit might keep watch and see that Tuannon Dur never escaped his imprisonment.

If any of the players express the opinion that this is the grave of a good or holy person, take them aside for a moment. Tell them that they feel in their hearts that they are truly gazing upon the bones of a saint. (Whether or not they wish to pass on this revelation to the others is up to them.)

If any of the player-characters who receive this revelation are Knights, remind them that it is the custom for Knights in this medieval world to keep saintly relics. The tooth or finger-bone of a saint, stored within the pommel of the Knight's sword, is highly prized for the luck it brings its owner. Any character who takes a relic of Ambrosius now and stores it in the pommel of his sword will get a +1 bonus to both DEFENCE and MAGICAL DEFENCE whenever he is under attack from undead beings, not just in this adventure but in the future too.

2. A Trail of Blood

A rust-coloured smear lies across the stones of the path. It is level with the blood-soaked scrap of cloth you noticed on the fence. It seems that the tax collector—if it was he—was badly wounded and crawled across the path into the interior of the Dell.

The player-characters will never learn exactly what happened to Harald, but the true facts are these. Harald saw that Beorn's men were gaming on him. A Knight of considerable prowess, he felt that he might stand his ground and defeat them both. Ordinarily he would have done so, but not with his lord's life in the balance. At all costs he had to reach the castle, so he turned off the road just beyond Norham and tried to shake off his pursuers in the wooded hills.

He found a misty nook by the mysterious iron fence of Hob's Dell. Behind and below, his pursuers' angry curses drifted through the pre-dawn. He had lost them. Suddenly a figure stepped out of the fog right in front of him: a druid with a look of wild madness in his eyes. Harald's horse, sensing evil magic, reared back in terror. Harald himself was thrown back over the fence into Hob's Dell, gashing his arm to the bone on a sharp paling and landing heavily on his back. The two men had heard the horse's terrified whinney and were drawing near. With a broken collarbone and terrible wound, Harald could not hope to stand against them; he could not even climb the fence out of the Dell. Enraged at his helplessness, he crawled painfully away from the fence, into the thick enshrouding fog....

3. The Restless Dead

You are walking on a firm path of sharp flints, but the ground to either side is a coarse heath of puddles and snagged roots. Suddenly a patch of earth beside the path shudders. The turf splits and soil is pushed back as a ghastly livid-hued figure rises from its shallow grave. It watches you for a moment with empty, unblinking eyes. Then it hefts its spear and lurches towards you.

This was a traveller who wandered too near to Hob's Dell. It is now one of several Zombies that Tuannon has planted at points around his 'garden'.

FIRST ZOMBIE

ATTACK 10, Spear (2d4 +1, 5)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 4	EVASION 1
MAGICAL DEFENCE 1	Reflexes 3
Health Points 15	Movement: 5m

The characters could easily escape from the Zombie. If they do, you will have to keep track of its position; it will shuffle along after them and return to its grave after completing one circuit of the Dell. All the other Zombies in the scenario behave like

this, so if the player-characters make a habit of running away they could end up with quite a band of the monsters out looking for them.

Remember to note down any Zombies that the characters 'kill'. If they later enter the barrow, the Wight will summon any surviving Zombies to protect him.

4. A Burnished Blade

(This is visible only from the southern branch of the path)

A naked sword lies in the moist grass just off the path. Its blade points away from you, untarnished; its hilt is wound with gold wire. The undergrowth where it lies seems somehow wholesome—the weeds and sickly fungi of the rest of the Dell shun this sword.

It is a +1 enchanted sword. It is incidentally pointing in the direction of the sun-dial (see 13).

5. Another Zombie

In a shower of pebbles and earth, a grisly Zombie pushes its way up from the ground just behind you. Your footsteps have roused it from its dreamless sleep. It swings its mould-clumped axe at the rear-most character in the party.

Since this Zombie is attacking from behind, give it a 3 in 6 chance of surprising the characters.

SECOND ZOMBIE

ATTACK 10, Axe (d8 +1, 7)	Armour Factor 1
DEFENCE 4	EVASION 1
MAGICAL DEFENCE 1	Reflexes 6
Health Points 17	Movement: 5m

6. An Eerie Isle

A foul stench reaches your nostrils. A few metres further on, you discover its source—the mists part to reveal a slime-covered stagnant pond. In the middle of the pond you can see a small island where trees grow in twisted forms and trail their roots in the mucky water. Suddenly a flight of huge bats pour from the gnarled branches and soar towards you like phantoms through the mist.

These are ordinary Bats. Any character bitten by one has a small chance (01–05 on d100) of contract-

ing a degenerative illness that will cause him to lose 1–4 Reflexes points permanently, unless he receives a *Cure Disease* spell within one month.

BATS

ATTACK 11, Bite (d3, 1 point)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 9	EVASION 6
Health Points:	MAGICAL DEFENCE 2
First Bat 1 HP	Seventh Bat 1 HP
Second Bat 1 HP	Eighth Bat 1 HP
Third Bat 1 HP	Ninth Bat 1 HP
Fourth Bat 1 HP	Tenth Bat 1 HP
Fifth Bat 1 HP	Eleventh Bat 1 HP
Sixth Bat 1 HP	Twelfth Bat 1 HP

7. The River

A river flows down from the north. Presumably it leads into Norham Wood and eventually joins the Hern River some miles to the east. A few thin tendrils of mist drift above the rushing water; the far bank seems clear.

This river forms part of Ambrosius' boundary spell, which is why the fog comes to such an abrupt end here.

8. A Grisly Find

A high pole looms out of the mist. From its cross-bar hangs a stark corpse, swinging in chains and shackles. He wears the livery of the baron, torn at the shoulder to reveal a gaping blood-caked wound. There is no other mark of injury on him. One arm is twisted up behind him, its white fingers still clamped around a fine sword he had slung on his back. It seems he died before he had time to draw it. You find it strange that he did not reach for the other sword he wears—scabbarded at his belt, it would have been more accessible.

This is, of course, Harald the tax collector. He encountered the Wight (see later) and could do nothing to defend himself from its enervating grip. After draining Harald of his strength, the Wight hung him on the gibbet to die, intending later to transform him into a Zombie. Alone, wracked with pain and knowing that his last hours were upon him, Harald mustered all his will and forced his numb fingers to close on the swordhilt. Thus, even in death, he may reveal Beorn's treachery.

The hilt of the sword can be unscrewed. Within is a small parchment that reads: "Alcuin—The old wolf's days are numbered! Grisaille and Montom-

bre are with us. I shall be visiting Ulric. Ensure the castle is guarded by our own men on the day of the hunt. Your brother, Beorn." This concerns the murder of the baron, planned for two weeks hence. If it came to light, this document would be enough to put Beorn's head on the chopping-block, along with his co-conspirators.

Harald's money-pouch contains only 20 silver florins.

9. An Elfin Maid

You are hailed from the far bank of the river. A slender girl all in green stands there, a bow on her back and an elegant sword at her thigh. Her fine features and pointed ears mark her clearly as an Elf.

"Do you know that you wander in Tuannon's garden?" she calls out. "I would not recommend it. He is apt to sow your bodies in the cold ground."

The Elf is Taliriana, a 2nd-rank Sorceress. She knows a little of the history of the Dell (see later), and may relate some of this to the player-characters.

Taliriana, while not truly malicious, has a heartless sense of humour. She will try to entice the characters to walk north along the bank and cross the river via the stepping stones (see 10).

10. Stones across the Water

Seven large flat stepping stones lead across the river. Beyond, high up on the far bank, stands a stone cross atop a tall column.

Roll d100. On a roll of 01–10 the characters will notice something strange about the stones—they do not throw up spray from the flowing river, the swirls of mist do not eddy around them, etc. This is because they are *Images* cast by Taliriana (see 9).

If anyone tries to cross, the stepping stone will vanish as soon as he lands on it and he will plunge into the river. He must roll under his Reflexes score on 1d20 to scramble back to the bank. A character who is not wearing any armour gets four attempts at this before the current buffets him under; a character in leather armour gets two attempts; a character wearing ring mail, chainmail or plate gets one roll and then, if he is not out, gets swept under.

Once submerged, the character may still struggle desperately to get to the bank. If unarmoured, he

must roll under his Reflexes on 1d20; if in leather, he must make the roll on 3d20; if in heavier armour, the required roll is made on 6d20! Once submerged, the character can survive for a number of Combat Rounds equal to his Strength. He may wish to get out of his armour; this takes ten Combat Rounds—and means, of course, that the character loses his armour at the bottom of the river.

While all this is going on, Taliriana's musical laughter will ring out as she disappears among the trees across the river.

11. Stone Cross

This monument reinforces the boundary spell along the entire river bank. Even if the fence warding is breached (by the removal of the silver chain), the Wight will not be able to ford the river.

12. A Rusting Glaive

An iron-shod halberd lies on the ground some distance from the path. Tendrils of dead ivy are wound about it, and it is pock-marked with rust.

A curse has been laid on this abominable weapon. Any character who lifts it from the ground is assailed by the curse with a MAGICAL ATTACK of 20. The effect of the curse is to cause the character to dissolve into the pall of fog covering Hob's Dell. This curse is repeated every round until the character drops the halberd.

The blade of the halberd is pointing directly away from the sundial at 13.

13. A Sundial

You approach a curious stone plinth. Pulling away the net of ivy that covers it, you discover that it is an ancient sundial. Under a green film of lichen, the carved numerals glint with inlaid gold. The gnomon is of bronze; the end of it was possibly sculpted to represent an animal's head, but it is so badly corroded that you cannot tell what animal this was.

If the lichen is scraped off the dial, a faint inscription is revealed: DECUS ET TUTAMEN. A character who knows the Bacchile language (see the languages section of the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook, p. 184) will readily translate this as "An Ornament and a Safeguard".

The gnomon can be removed from the dial. A small cavity lies beneath, in which rests a jewel: a sparkling yellow gem encircled by a band of gold. Cryptic words are engraved upon this: "Sunlight, banish. Sky-jewel, sear."

Make sure you know who is holding this jewel at all times. If the character with the jewel recites the inscription on it, one of two things happens:

Daytime—The mist rolls back to a distance of 20m from the jewel. Sunlight streams down. If the Wight is nearby when this happens, he will flee back to his barrow in terror.

Nighttime (or within the barrow)—The jewel bursts into a brilliant flare of light. Any undead within 20m will be stunned (unable to attack or defend) for 1–6 Combat Rounds.

The magic of the jewel works only once, and then it crumbles into fine ash. It was left by Ambrosius, and its powers do not function outside the Dell.

The carved numerals of the dial are inlaid with gold, but not deeply. By chiselling assiduously with a knife, a character might get ten florins' worth.

14. Yet Another Zombie

You are approaching a point where four paths come together. A pebble rolls across the path ahead of you. A twitching hand, covered with bloodless sores, emerges from the ground. Before you can react, a snaggle-toothed Zombie has risen up to attack you.

This Zombie is another of those (see 3 and 5) that the Wight of Hob's Dell uses as his sentries.

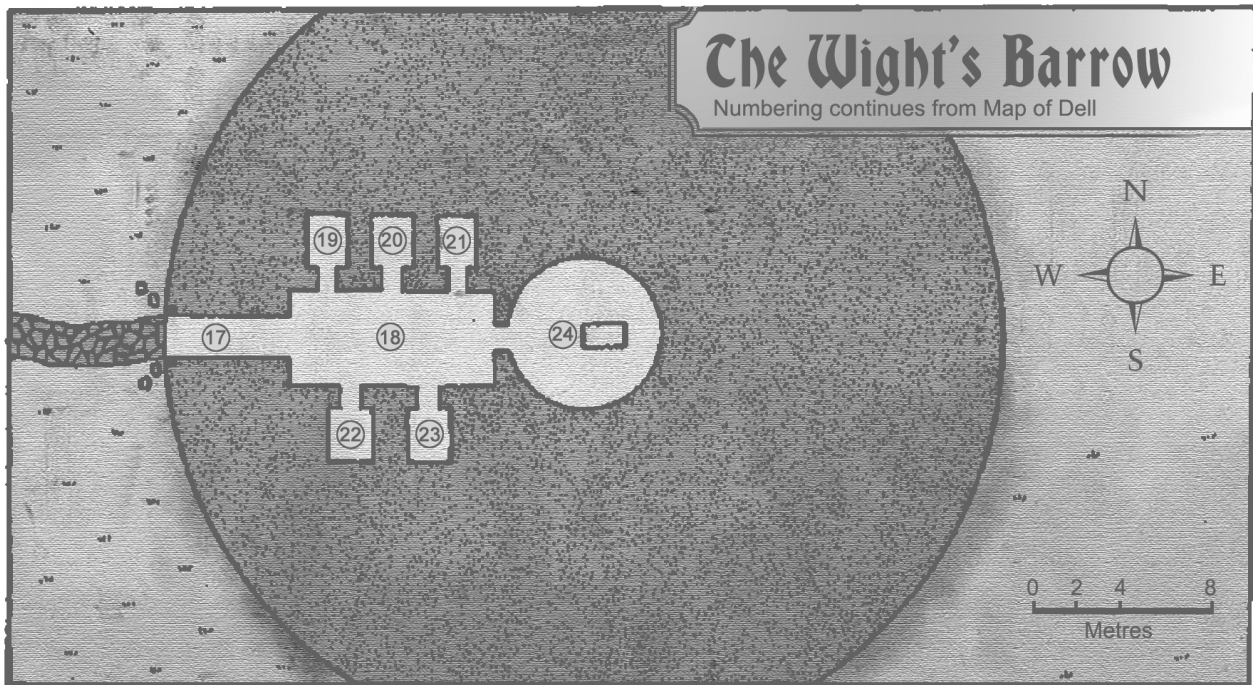
THIRD ZOMBIE

ATTACK 10, Morning Star (d6 +1, 6)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 4	EVASION 1
MAGICAL DEFENCE 1	Reflexes 2
Health Points 17	Movement: 5m

15. The Last Zombie

Two paths join into one leading east. Evil is strong in the very air here. You shudder at a horrible moan that seems to come from out of the ground nearby. You turn to behold a hulking Zombie clawing out of its grave. It wears a few scraps of rusting armour and wields a massive halberd.

Tuannon has kept the most powerful of the Zombies to guard the approach to his barrow.

**FOURTH ZOMBIE**

ATTACK 10, Halberd (d10 +1, 6)	Armour Factor 2
DEFENCE 4	EVASION 1
MAGICAL DEFENCE 1	Reflexes 2
Health Points 24	Movement: 5m

16. The Wight's Barrow

A large tumulus, surely one of the burial mounds of ages past, lies ahead of you. In its steep, grass-clad sides, roughly hewn slabs of rock frame the entrance tunnel. It seems like a gaping black mouth, seeping noxious vapours into the air of the Dell.

Five blue-stained skulls have been placed nearby—one atop the entrance and two to either side. As you draw near, their jaws open and they begin to chatter and shriek!

The skulls are those of Tuannon's five thanes who elected to remain here with their king's body (see below). Their terrible clamouring alerts him that intruders are close at hand, and he will begin to make his way here from the burial chamber. (Exception: if the characters broke Ambrosius' boundary spell, Tuannon would have sensed this at once. In this case he will be already waiting for them.) The characters will be able to hear the skulls' shrieking even within the barrow, and it will cease only when Tuannon is dead—or when they are.

Who is, or was, Tuannon? The player-characters may never learn the story, unless Taliriana told them

part of it. You might like to have some of the rest related to them by a non-player-character in a subsequent adventure.

Interlude: The history of Hob's Dell

They call him 'Gardener Jack' now, a bugbear that the women of Norham use to frighten their disobedient children. But he was a king in this land a thousand years ago—the grim Tuannon Dur, warlord of five thousand men. When the legions came, Tuannon put on woad and led his army in one bloody battle after another. He piled the skulls of slain legionnaires high at the foot of his throne. Finally the crack VIth legion came against him, with the legendary Flavius Venturo at its head. His army was outmanoeuvred and broken, but Tuannon himself escaped with his druids and a handful of veterans, and carried on the unrelenting 'guerilla war' against the invaders for many years.

When Tuannon finally died, his druids and loyal warriors carried him up to a secluded hollow in the wooded hills and laid his body to rest in a secret barrow. Five of the men, grown old with their king, chose to remain there with him.

Tuannon had died, but some part of him would not lie buried while outsiders dwelt in the land of his birth. Perhaps mystical forces worked upon him, perhaps it was only his implacable warrior ways that could not allow him to rest—by whatever reason, he arose from his barrow as a Wight and haunted



the region thereabouts for many years. Even after the legions had departed, recalled to defend their crumbling empire, there were other invaders from other lands. Travellers learned to shun the vicinity of Norham Wood, and many fireside tales were whispered of the bleak-visaged Wight that roamed the misty hills.

Four hundred years ago, a holy man was lodging at the village now called Hesard's Ford and heard these tales. Ambrosius determined to put an end to the evil. Calling his followers together, he took them up into the hills. The fog, it is said, drew back from the hills and the Wight hid in his barrow like an old wolf in its den. Wise Ambrosius knew he could never drive out Tuannon's presence entirely, for the Wight was one with the mists and stones of the land. Instead, he pent in the evil with an iron fence, and set a holy seal upon the gate.

Since that day, the Wight has chafed at his imprisonment. He yearns for vengeance on all living things. He cannot leave the Dell, but he can cast his spells a little way beyond it. (It was his *Mirage* that scared Harald's steed.) Norham Wood has remained a place of ill repute.

17. Entrance Tunnel

The interior of the barrow is unlit and thick with mist. Even with lanterns and/or torches are lit, the characters will be able to see no further than 5m.

18. The Long Chamber

Though it is possible the characters will have already run into Tuannon (if they removed the chain from the gate—see 16), they are most likely to encounter him here.

He seems to glide forward, a tall figure against the mist. A large silver clasp bearing a horned, pagan symbol fastens his heavy red cloak at the shoulder. He is thin and grey, with eyes like ice. On his dead brow he wears a crown of holly.

TUANNON DUR, THE WIGHT OF HOB'S DELL

ATTACK 17, Two-handed sword (d10, 5), Javelin (d6, 4)	Armour Factor 0 (but with partial immunity to non-magical weapons)
DEFENCE 10	EVASION 3
MAGICAL ATTACK 20	Health Points 20
MAGICAL DEFENCE 10	

The Wight has the powers of a 5th-rank Mystic, and also four special spells that he is able to use once each day: *Apparitions*, *Mephitic Breath*, *Portal* and *Raise Fog*. See p. 85 of the *Bestiary* for full details of these spells.

His weaponry consists of his sword and two javelins. If the characters flee from him, he will pursue them to the edge of the Dell—and beyond, if they broke the boundary spell.

Slaying Tuannon in this form will not get rid of him forever. Eventually, within weeks or months, he will return as a Ghost. Years later he will have become a Wraith. This has no direct bearing on the characters—they will be long gone by then—but is the reason why it is best never to break the boundary spell. As long as there are invaders in his homeland, Tuannon will remain.

19–23. Side Chambers

A headless skeleton lies on a large shield in each of these rooms. These are the five thanes whose skulls stand watch outside the barrow.

They will not rise up to attack the characters. These are skeletons of the properly dead and inactive variety.

24. Main Burial Chamber

Behind the long stone slab on which his body was laid to rest are strewn Tuannon's mortuary treasures:

Item	Worth
an electrum torc	250 florins
two silver wristbands	35 florins each
a gold ring	30 florins
an emerald set in a copper diadem	170 florins

Besides this, there was the silver clasp on his cloak that has a value of some 30 florins.

V. WRAPPING UP

Weary after your adventure, you begin to trudge down towards Norham. After a short distance you hear voices ahead. Peering around a tree, you see Beorn and two other men waiting in the lane.

The characters must think fast. The easiest and safest course is to hand Beorn the sword he wants (if they have it). He will destroy the document, pay

them the remainder of their fee, and that will be the end of the matter.

If they try to turn the tables on Beorn, they must be more careful. Any attempt to hide the document and then blackmail him will probably result in a lingering death. Beorn's reasoning is that if they are dead they cannot testify against him, and any testimony is worth less if they cannot produce the document.

In the event of a fight here in the lane, the two henchmen will fight on foot. Beorn, having a warhorse, will fight from the saddle—at the same time characters are *mêlée*ing him, his horse will be able to kick and bite them.

FIRST HENCHMAN

1st-rank Knight	
ATTACK 13	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 7	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	Health Points 11

SECOND HENCHMAN

1st-rank Knight	
ATTACK 13	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 7	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	Health Points 10

BEORN

3rd-rank Knight	
ATTACK 15	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 9	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 5	Health Points 14

All three are armed with sword and shield, and wear chainmail armour.

BEORN'S WARHORSE

ATTACK 17, Kick (d8, 6)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 4	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	Health Points 20

If the characters evade them, Beorn and his men will ride on to Karickbridge and lie in wait there. The characters, anticipating such a strategy, could leave the road and travel cross-country. They would then have to pass either through the marshes around Fenring Forest or the menacing Jewelspider Wood. By the time they reach the castle, Beorn and his henchmen will have returned. The characters will need some ingenious plan to reach the baron and place the incriminating document into his hands.

To summarize: the characters may hand the document to Beorn, in which case they get their remaining 100 florins and have to relinquish 90%

of any treasure they brought out of the Dell. Or they can somehow get the document to the baron. This entails great perils but they should be richly rewarded—at least 100 florins each, and the opportunity to become his retainers if they wish.

Suggested experience awards: 5 experience points per character for completing the adventure in Hob's Dell, plus any appropriate experience for defeating opponents. If they discover the document in the sword and successfully get it to the baron, each character should get an additional 3 experience points.

VI. CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

Much depends on whether the player-characters uncovered Beorn's plot—see below and the start of the next chapter for that. Meanwhile, the party are likely to return to Axbridge, retrieve the mostly-recovered Le Cloche, and make for Castle Aldred.

(They may not do this. They may decide to ride straight for the castle, possibly in a race against Beorn and his henchmen. Or they may split up, some going back to Axbridge and some on to the castle. Or they may do something else. If this is your first time as GamesMaster, do not panic when your players do something you weren't expecting and for which you have no materials prepared. Don't be afraid to make stuff up as you go along. In the worst case, throw a delay at them—a bandit ambush; a forest fire; a mysterious light in the woods leading to the cottage of an enigmatic hermit; stopping one evening at an abbey where a monk is murdered that night—to give you a chance to work out where to take the plot next. But we will work on the assumption that the characters will eventually end up at Castle Aldred.)

If they have brought Le Cloche with them they will be led into Baron Aldred's presence while he sits with one of his advisors. He will peruse the letter they have brought (or, if they have lost it, will ask why they are before him), and after a short while will stop them—"Hold. This is a family matter, between relatives. I hear family matters on Thursday mornings. Guards, take this Le Cloche to a holding cell in the dungeon." (On Thursday Le Cloche will be released with a warning, and the player-characters will have gained a vengeful enemy in him.)

If they have brought evidence that Sir Beorn was

plotting his assassination, the baron will demand that the room be cleared, and will listen intently to all they have to say, asking short, perceptive questions. It is clear that he does not want to believe these ugly facts about a retainer he has trusted for years. You will need to play out this encounter depending on whether Beorn is still alive, whether the party have brought him with them, or whether he and his henchmen are dead.

If the PCs make a complete mess of this meeting then don't be afraid to have Baron Aldred disbelieve their evidence and throw them out—they must seek employment elsewhere, and you will have to rejig parts of the adventures that follow. Otherwise Beorn's name is blackened, a warrant issued for his arrest if he is still alive, and his wife and children evicted from their cottage in the castle grounds.

Then proceed to the next section.

Patronage

Assuming that things go smoothly, either concerning Le Cloche or Sir Beorn, Baron Aldred will turn to the party. "As for you, you have done well and Sir Olvar is clearly impressed by your abilities. These are hard times, there are many who seek my patronage, but I have a constant need for people who acquit themselves well in the service of others. Do you have somewhere to stay, or somewhere to be? If not then take quarters in the garrison—report to the sergeant-at-arms Sir Frazer, tell him what I said—and we will find employment for your talents."

If they accept, the player-characters will receive board and lodging as well as a small salary (ten florins a week) for as long as they remain in Baron Aldred's service. You may want to give them some short missions to add more experience: hunting down a troop of bandits who are waylaying trade-caravans on the western road, perhaps, or escorting a visiting nobleman to the coast at Clyster or Brymstone, or if he is still at large then bringing Sir Beorn to justice. The next adventure does not take place until midwinter, by which time the PCs should have earned enough of the baron's respect, or enough from Sir Frazer at least, to be taken as guards on a long journey.

Be clear: they are not the baron's friends; they are still very low on the castle hierarchy and he may not even know their names. But Baron Aldred is that rare nobleman who respects ability more than title, prestige or breeding, and it is only for that reason the PCs have progressed so far.

CHAPTER 4

HUNTER'S

MOON

(Co-written with Robert Dale)

Introduction

THIS IS AN adventure which can be run as a follow-up to 'A Shadow On the Mist', set a few months later. It works well for 3rd-rank characters.

Overview of the adventure

The characters are travelling north with the baron when his ship is forced to shelter in a cove to effect repairs. A ruined citadel stands nearby, and the characters are sent to ensure no dangers reside there which might threaten the baron and his retinue.

I. BACKGROUND

This adventure is designed to follow 'A Shadow On The Mist' as part of an ongoing campaign. It can be made to dovetail with the earlier adventure in one of two ways:

- i. If the party uncovered Beorn's treachery and revealed it to the baron, they will be rewarded. After a few months the baron invites them to join his retinue on a trip to Port Beltayn, and is considering bestowing the honour of being his permanent retainers if they perform well.
- ii. If Beorn's plot was not revealed, both he and the baron will still be alive. In this case, it is Beorn who has brought the player-characters along on the journey. Somehow he hopes to sabotage the mission—perhaps even slay the baron, if the

opportunity presents itself. He will either try to bring the player-characters into the conspiracy or else engineer events so that they take the blame for anything that goes awry.

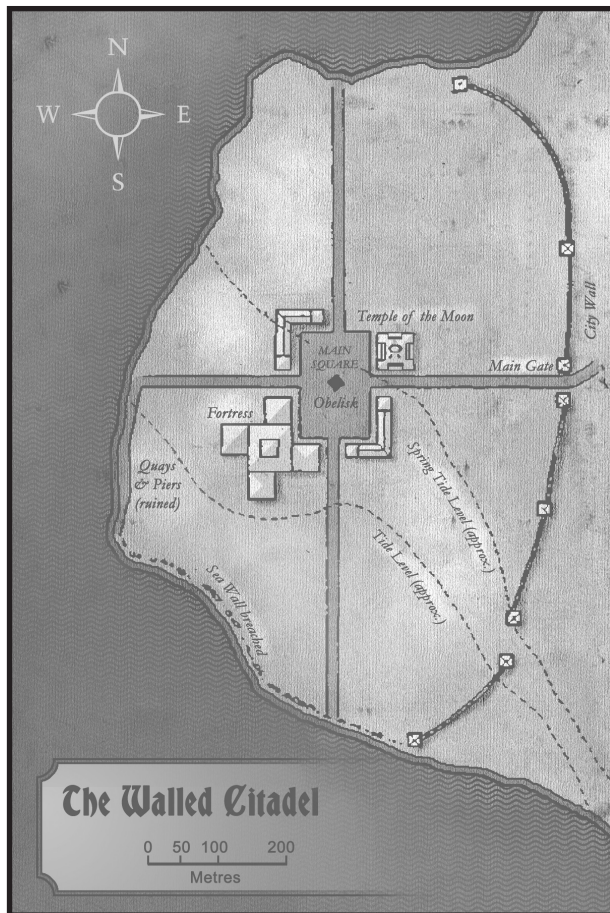
III. THE BEGINNING

None but the bravest or most desperate of men would risk a passage north to Port Beltayn in mid-winter. Storms make the rocky islands of the White Coast still more dangerous than usual, and there is no truly secure anchorage between Clyster—where you embarked—and Beltayn. Yet you find yourselves in the retinue of Baron Aldred, riding out a snarling gale off Cape Caiegon at a time when you would much prefer to be feasting in his Great Hall and celebrating the turn of the year.

This is a mission of crucial importance to the baron. Duke Carnasse, with whom he hopes to strike an alliance against his foes to the south, is wintering in Beltayn. Thus, though the journey is perilous, it must be made.

Eventually the storm abates, but the Linden has lost her mast and is taking on water. The crew man the oars and take her in to shore. Baron Aldred consults with the captain. They look towards a line of fir trees along the coast, obviously intending to beach nearby and gather timber to rig a juremast for the last leg to Port Beltayn.

As the Linden finds a sheltered bay, you are startled to sight a ruined citadel, half flooded by the tide, along the coast. As the ship makes shore, the baron calls you to his side.



"There may be brigands or goblins in yonder citadel," he says. "We would not wish to be ambushed while making our repairs. Investigate the citadel. Slay whatever dangerous creatures lurk there, but return and report to me if you encounter men or overwhelming force. Salvage anything of value."

Thus, hearts high with the thought of gold and adventure and the hope of your lord's bounty, you set out.

III. The Citadel

An hour's brisk march through the dense snow-clad woodland brings you to the walls of the ancient citadel. Built of monolithic blocks of limestone, the place is of a strange architecture you find utterly alien.

Stepping between the broken timbers of the gate, your awe and fear grow ever stronger. This is truly a place of death. Strewn about the entrance and across the plaza are countless mouldered bones, rusting weapons and armour. In the shadow of the arch sits an old man clad in rags. His thin hair waves in the icy breeze, his blind eyes stare out beyond you, across the forested land.

GM: As the characters approach, the old man will inform them that he keeps the gate of this citadel of Karvala until the return of its lord. If questioned further, he will tell the following tale:

"Centuries ago, Lord Karvala and his ninety sons were driven by evil sorcery from their homeland, and a geas placed upon them that they wander the waste until they could raise a hall not on the earth nor in the sea, not in fire nor in air. After years of journeying, Lord Karvala saw a child building a castle of sand on this strand and, thanking the great gods for their sign, built his hall on land that was neither of the earth nor of the sea. At the last he surrounded the hall with a high wall to keep back the sea. Here he dwelt with his sons, and the sons of his sons.

"From across the sea there came a new people, with new laws and new gods. Karvala took himself to his tower and shut himself within, saying that he must ponder how to punish these sea-pests. But the invaders bewitched him so that he fell into a deep sleep and could not aid his people. And they set wards about his tower, and locks of magic upon its doors, and slew his people so that none might free him. Then they ruled this land many scores of years.

"But the gods were enraged that the one they had chosen to rule should be thus set aside. They sent fire and plague and earthquake to trouble the citadel, until the mighty walls that Karvala had built fell at last, and the sea and the goblins swept in. Still Karvala did not wake, and in honour of him it was decreed that none should dwell in his citadel till he comes again to choose those most worthy."

The old man will not try to stop the characters entering the citadel. If they reach for their weapons or threaten him, he will disappear. They will then see, some distance off, a black dog leaping through the ruins away from them.

If they pass without causing him to vanish, he has one thing more to say: "Begone. This is a cursed place. Death lies in wait here for those who love not Karvala."

Passing the gate into the citadel, you walk into a long processional avenue lined with the broken ruins of mighty buildings. Rubble partially blocks the wide carriageway, and there are signs of widespread burning. More bones are scattered in the wreckage, but these may or may not be human.

The citadel is full of shadows in the weak winter sunlight, and high clouds threaten more snow. The

wind makes a constant keening as it rushes between the fallen columns. A large seagull flaps away, alarmed by your approach. Your unease builds as you near the main square.

A black obelisk twelve paces broad at the base dominates the square. Its surface is covered with geometrical patterns, entwined glyphs, and a script whose like you have never seen. The air is tense with the watchful calm that presages danger. If this obelisk is the tower of Karvala to which the gatekeeper referred, you can find no sign of any doorway.

About the square stand more buildings ravaged by fire and decay, all of the same monolithic construction. Two structures strike you as especially interesting. The first is a small hexagonal edifice with a domed roof, set atop a large square plinth. The other is a fortress with four massive square towers.

Your eyes catch a movement. Someone was standing at a high window of the fortress, and ducked back as you looked up!

IV. THE FORTRESS

The wreckage of wide wooden gates block the entrance to the fortress. Clambering through the broken timber, you come into a courtyard surrounded by scorched walls and choked with battered masonry upon which may be seen long fronds of dried seaweed. A few stagnant pools add to the air of desolation.

The block surrounding the courtyard is reduced to a gutted shell, but the four towers are marginally more intact. You approach the entrance to the northernmost tower, where you saw signs of life. Or thought you did.

The entrance tunnel is low, and the stairwell of the tower damp—and dark, despite gaping holes in the walls and roof. A decayed staircase sweeps up to the first floor balcony. A woman in a white gown stands there watching you.

GM: The woman is in fact a Spectre, though the translucence of her form is not apparent in the semi-darkness. She says nothing, and if the characters call up to her she merely turns and moves away. Her intention is to lure them onto the stairs, which are unsafe and will collapse under their weight. When this happens, the characters on the stairs will plummet 1–6 metres. The Spectre will then scream horribly and leap to attack. It is at this point that you should roll for its *fright attack* and chance of surprising them as they struggle free of the rubble.

SPECTRE

ATTACK 19, Touch (d12, 5)

DEFENCE 12

MAGICAL DEFENCE 11

Health Points 8

Armour Factor 0 (not affected by non-magic weapons)

EVASION 4

Reflexes: 15

Movement: 12m

Any character who climbs up to the balcony is taking a risk—there is a 40% chance that it, like the stairs, will give way and cause him to drop 6m into the stairwell below. Hidden in an alcove off the balcony is the Spectre's treasure: a silver-chased black wood drum and a pewter cup with gems set all around the rim.

These are both magical items. If the drum is taken to a place on the coast and someone starts to pound it, it will summon an eldritch longboat manned by silent oarsmen with long seaweed-matted beards and skins blue with cold. The longboat arrives within fifteen minutes of beginning the drumbeat, and will then convey the drummer and up to six companions to anywhere they wish to go. The oarsmen row tirelessly and (as the superstitious will surely guess) are not truly alive.

Eight gems are set around the rim of the cup. Seven are a dull red, but the last glows brightly. If the cup is turned, the glow moves on to another of the gems. With experimentation, the characters will discover that it is always the gem facing to the north that glows. This cup could thus function as a crude compass, and could be sold as such for up to 4000 florins.

The rest of the fortress is structurally unsafe, and the characters will soon realize there is nothing to be gained from lingering here.

V. THE TEMPLE OF THE MOON

Across the main square, north-east of the black obelisk, stands a hexagonal pavilion atop a flat pyramidal base. There must once have been a huge statue above the pavilion, for the rubble scattered about this edifice has been carefully worked.

Ascending the worn steps, you see the broken feet of this statue still flank the pavilion. The door ahead of you is decorated with a grinning skull above a crescent moon. To either side of the door stands the white marble statue of a large hound. The hounds sit upright on their

haunches higher than a man's shoulder, and their stone gums are bared to display wicked fangs.

GM: The statues are Moon Dogs, magical guardians that will come to life and attack anyone who tries to pass them and enter the Temple. They will attack only that character (or characters) and will ignore attacks made on them by any others. The Moon Dogs will fight until slain, or until their victim(s) is dead, unconscious or driven from the Temple steps—whereupon they will lope back to their positions beside the door and revert to stone.

MOON DOGS

Rank-equivalent: 6th

ATTACK 18, Bite (d8 +1, 5)

DEFENCE 4

MAGICAL DEFENCE 10

Health Points: both 23 HP¹

Armour Factor 6

Movement: 12m/25m

EVASION 4

Reflexes: both 14

Assuming that the characters find some way to pass the Moon Dogs and enter the Temple:

You enter a large hexagonal chamber, the roof of which is domed and glass-like. The floor is elaborately incised with spiral patterns enclosing circles of coloured stone. In the centre of the room a large slab is tilted up, revealing a staircase which winds downwards.

Beside the slab are three skeletal corpses. One wears scraps of ceremonial vestments and clutches an ebony-and-silver staff in its fingers.

Noticing score-marks on the floor, you infer that heavy fitments were ransacked from this chamber.

GM: Any character who touches the staff will suffer a *Curse* with a MAGICAL ATTACK of 25.

The newel staircase leads down to the underworld section of the Temple—the priestly quarters and the cult's inner chambers. Looters have penetrated even here; the characters will discover smashed pottery, splintered wood and a scattering of silver coins as they descend the steps.

1. The foot of the stairs

You descend to the bottom of the newel staircase. Old bones and riven armour lie tangled here. Picking your way across the debris, you find yourselves at the intersection of two 3m-wide corridors.

¹ Moon-dogs automatically heal back up to normal HP every time they revert to their stone form.

Looking north, you see a wide flight of steps leading down to a heavy mahogany portal. There are no doors along the east and west branches of the corridor that you can see, but when you shine your lantern south it falls upon two doors only a few metres from where you are standing.

GM: If they choose to explore the rooms of the underworld, they might of course do so in any order. Brief notes are given for you to create a description.

2. Living quarters

The door stands ajar. Within you find the rotted remnants of clothing and furniture. A large iron-bound chest stands in one corner of the room.

GM: The chest was booby-trapped, being set to release a poisonous snake as soon as anyone touched the hasp. The mechanism of the trap is long since rusted, the snake long dead. Whatever items were stored inside the chest have been consumed by mould and the centuries.

3. Store-room

This room contains the remains of spades, buckets and other tools. In the midst of the debris lies a skeleton with a corroded spear beneath its fingers.

4. Living quarters

GM: This room is similar to 2, but there is no chest.

5. Robes and ritual artifacts

Broken demon-masks and ceremonial staves and adjuncts are strewn across the floor here. There are further signs of looting, and the bones of defenders and despoilers lie intertwined. One skeleton wears fragments of a silvered head-dress, and on its finger is a white gold ring in which is set a chip of jade.

GM: The ring is a *Ring of Agonizing Doom* (described in detail on p. 144 of the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook) with six charges remaining. The other artifacts in the room include some silver chalices and bowls worth a total of 500 florins. They feel evil to the touch, and will not fetch such a price until purified by a cleric.

6. The cells

The corridors you traverse are wide and well-paved even though the floors are cracked in places by an ancient earthquake. Carvings in low relief adorn all the walls, showing life within the citadel in its heyday, full of activity and vigour. Wars against barbarian tribes are depicted in detail, and the spoils of victory are seen being carried by many captives.

This corridor ends with four barred cells, within which you see the mouldering remains of many chained captives. They must have starved to death centuries ago—a terrible punishment for who knows what crimes? It is a dismal place, and you swiftly return northwards.

7. Dormitory

This room shows signs of having been the living quarters of several men. The damp rotted wood of eight pallets are arranged along the room.

8. Dormitory

GM: This is similar to the room opposite, except that a tapestry hangs along the southern wall. This

has remained curiously untouched by the passage of the years. It is embroidered with ghastly scenes of human sacrifice, necromancy and still more obscene practices. These rites are being conducted beneath a gibbous moon, from which a pale-skinned demon has come down. The demon has the body of an androgynous humanoid, but from its neck and wrists grow writhing hooded snakes.

So horrible and heavy with evil is this noxious tapestry that any who attempt to destroy it are subject to a MAGICAL ATTACK of 15 which, if successful, drives the victim insane with terror. The insanity can be cured with *Dispel Magic*, but even then the character will always be beset by qualmy unease whenever he beholds the moon in the sky.

9. Library

The decayed shelves of this room once held carved stone plaques. These are now just splintered fragments underfoot. Looking more closely at a large piece of one of the plaques, you see that it was once covered with small carved script that you have no hope nor wish to read.

10. Devotional room

GM: This small chamber is bare of adornment except for a silver crescent-moon motif on the western wall. It was where the priests came for solitary prayer to the less bloodthirsty aspect of their many-natured deity.

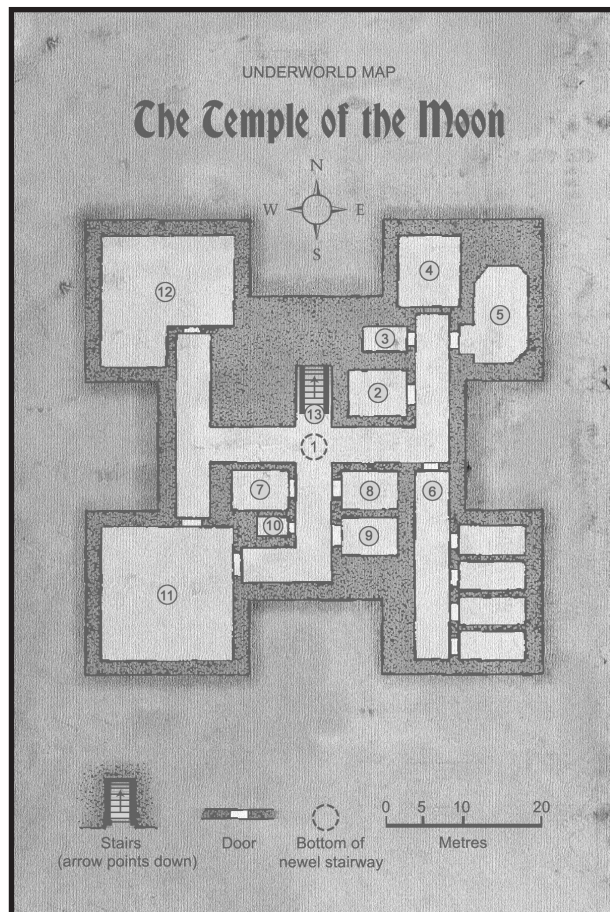
11. Secondary cult room

You reach a large mahogany portal at the end of the passage and swing it open. Beyond lies a large vaulted chamber full of ritual paraphernalia—sceptres, masks, bells, drums, rotted vestments. In the crumbling racks that once lined the walls you find a few scroll-cases.

GM: The scrolls are worm-eaten and unreadable. Other items in the room include some vessels of precious metals and gems which could be sold for up to 100 florins, once purified of their 'evil' taint.

12. Main cult room

You enter a wide pillared chamber. Nine warrior Skeletons stand waiting to greet you, with silvered scimitars in their bony hands and wide deathly grins on their fleshless faces. Each wears a silver tore about its neck



and a serpentine wrist-band of silver coiled about its left arm.

GM: The Skeletons will not attack at once. They point with their scimitars towards the door through which the characters have just entered. If the characters turn around, the Skeletons escort them to the steps down to the charnel-house (see 13). Otherwise, they close and attack.

SKELETONS

ATTACK 11, Scimitars (d8, 4)	Armour Factor 0 (2 vs stabbing weapons)
DEFENCE 5	EVASION 3
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	Reflexes: all 12
Health Points:	Movement: 10m
No.1: 2 HP	No. 6: 4 HP
No.2: 2 HP	No. 7: 5 HP
No.3: 3 HP	No. 8: 5 HP
No.4: 3 HP	No. 9: 7 HP
No. 5: 4 HP	

When each Skeleton is destroyed, the snake-band around its wrist will grow and become a real snake that waits coiled over the fallen remains, hissing at any who approach. These are in fact merely illusions, and can do no harm to the characters. The silver torcs are worth 60 florins each.

Once they have destroyed all the Skeletons:

You look around the room these undead creatures were guarding. On the floor beside a pattern of painted designs and small brass censers lie two long-dead bodies in rotted robes. They hold ritual staves, and appear to have been slain in the middle of some ceremony.

GM: The priests had summoned a demonic entity just before the reavers burst in and slew them. The demon has remained pent within the confines of the painted designs ever since. If any character enters the pattern he will break the binding spell, releasing the demon. Immediately there will be a rush of wind and darkness, accompanied by an unholy shriek of glee. Everyone within the room at this time suffers a *fright attack* of 2d6 intensity. The demon then returns to its own plane of existence, taking with it the unfortunate souls of any slain by its fright attack.

The soulless bodies left behind will arise as Ghouls within three days if not cremated or buried on consecrated ground before then.

The ritual equipment within the room is worth about 200 florins, though once again it requires

purification before this value can be realized.

One of the staves is similar to the one in the hexagonal chamber above, with identical effect if touched. The other is of silver birchwood, and can be used by a Sorcerer to cast *Illusion* and *Phantasm* spells at half the normal Magic Point cost.

13. Ossuary

You begin to make your way down a flight of cracked and rubble-choked steps towards a large black door. Niches in the walls contain skeletal remains, and you realise you are passing through the charnel-house of the temple.

Reaching the door, you find it to be twisted within its frame and stained by sea water at the bottom. Water must seep through here at the spring tide.

A heavy bar of black stone secures the door in place. You cannot read the fearsome sigils inlaid in silver along it, but they seem to be warning you to turn back—

GM: And well they might! The bar is a trap, and if characters do not search they will activate this as they lift the bar. A massive block of stone falls from the ceiling (SPEED 12 to dodge). A character who fails to evade this will be crushed to a pulp.

For those that survive the falling slab:

Beyond the door all is pitch black. Lantern light seems absorbed by the slick blackness of the walls. Will you go forward...?

If they do:

A short corridor brings you to a steep newel staircase that winds up inexorably without door or window. The air is stifling, and your footfalls echo in an eerie quiet. You clamber up and up. Long after you should have reached the surface, you are still climbing the shadowy twisting newel.

GM: There is no turning back now. Magic has transported them within the black obelisk—Karvala's Tower. Their destiny is to meet a demi-god.

VI. KARVALA'S TOWER

Your legs ache with the climb, and your breaths come in tortured gasps. Reaching the last of your strength, you push through a wall of darkness that seems as thick as

A



swamp mud. Suddenly you are in a clear circular room. Moonlight streams in through wide windows. You feel disorientated; you cannot be sure how long it was since you walked through the ossuary and drew open the black door....

Ringed the room are twelve chairs whose high carved backs are etched with symbols of the moon in its various phases. A pattern of lines and symbols covers the floor, as if some arcane game is to be played here. Wooden playing pieces that represent men and beasts, cities and forests, occupy seemingly random positions across the pattern.

GM: The chairs will undoubtedly hold a fatal (possibly fatal) fascination for the characters, and at least one of them is likely to sit down. Should this be so, the character will appear grey and insubstantial to his companions, as he becomes a participant in the Game of Karvala. He will remain in the chair until his part in the Game is done.

You must divide the player-characters into two groups—those who have sat in the chairs and those who remained standing.

To any seated character(s):

You stare at the patterns and playing-pieces on the floor, but the sense of it eludes you. Glancing up, you find no sign of your companions!

Through a window opposite you can see the snow-shrouded citadel bathed in moonlight. Your eyes water without reason, and as you blink a gaunt figure seems to shimmer from the silver beams. He steps towards you, a regal man in pale robes, ghostly grey in the half-light.

"Welcome," he whispers, "to Karvala's Game."

GM: While, to the eyes of any characters who have not been so rash as to sit:

A change comes over your comrade. An awful grey in the moonlight, he is as insubstantial as a ghost. You back hastily away and cross yourselves. Your comrade pays no attention to you; he stares with rapt attention at the mysterious pattern on the floor, white knuckles grasping the arms of the chair.

You sense a presence behind you. A tall figure in pale robes stands there. Death comes on a pale horse, they say, and this man is as grey and ghastr as that dread rider. His face is thin and aristocratic, and framed by the lunar crescent of his cloak's silver collar.

He gestures at the chair. "What will you give to free your friend?"

GM: Karvala will carry on two simultaneous conversations now, and you must keep the two groups of players separate until events have played their course. The seated character(s) is enmeshed in Karvala's strange Game. He will soon find that the pieces move on the pattern in response to his thoughts, though he has no inkling of what his moves mean. Gradually, as he watches the moves that Karvala makes, he begins to glean fragments of the befuddling rules of play.

Throughout all this, Karvala will speak to the character—it is obvious that he expects a protracted game, and is happy to pepper it with urbane conversation. If the character gets the feeling that he could be playing the Game for centuries, he is right! To represent the abstract intellectual struggle, the player rolls 3d12 and must score equal to or less than his Intelligence. If he succeeds, he gets to attempt the same roll again—he is gaining a small advantage in the Game. If he fails the roll, he suffers a setback in the face of Karvala's superior tactics and spends another day playing on before he gets to attempt the 3d12 roll again. If and when he manages to succeed in this difficult roll ten times in succession, he has beaten Karvala and is free to depart.

This, of course, might take years of game-time! But there is another way for the characters to gain their freedom. Those who have not joined the Game can strike a bargain with Karvala. If he accepts, he will release the seated character(s) from the Game and transport all of them to the citadel gates.

What kind of bargain might be struck? There are many—it is up to the players to think of something that tempts Karvala. He is an immortal, the nearly divine shaman-king of the people who once lived here. He cares naught for earthly pleasures—as he will demonstrate by fashioning moonbeams into a stream of gold and precious stones that vanish as they touch the floor. Neither will threats move him, for within his Tower his abilities and powers are almost without limit. However, trapped within his Tower in self-imposed exile from the world, he yearns for new things. If the characters offer some wild new experience that they can bring to him, he is likely to accept. Whatever bargain is made must be followed to the letter by Karvala and the char-

acters; he will give them each a torc to wear about their necks. These torcs cannot be removed, and in a year and a day will transport the characters back to the Tower to fulfil their agreement.

If your players are not experienced gamers, they may find the role-playing that this situation demands to be beyond them. In this case, have Karvala himself propose the bargain. Choose one from the following, depending on what you have planned for your players next:

1. They must find for him the legendary sword of the long-dead king, Ildyr the Pendragon. (This can be discovered at the climax of the next adventure.)
2. They must go forth and bring to him, within the space of a year and a day, the sword from the tomb of Elvaron the Elf, a mighty sorcerer of ancient times. If you go on to use the adventures in the campaign *The Elven Crystals*, they will indeed find that their fate is to journey to Elvaron's tomb!
3. Devise a similar 'adventure hook' to draw the players in to a different scenario of your own devising.

If they agree, he will give each a torc and then teleport them out of his Tower.

VIII.

RETURNING TO THE SHIP

GM: It takes two days to render the Linden seaworthy. If the characters have not returned by then, the baron will have no choice but to set sail without them. He cannot allow anything to jeopardize his mission.

If they return safely, they will be required to hand over any treasure they have found. The baron will then return what he thinks fitting as gifts; these will be items representing half the value of the treasure. If the characters are wearing Karvala's torcs, they will not of course be able to relinquish these (however much they may wish to!) They will not lose favour for this, because it will be clear to the baron that strange sorcery is at work. However, if the characters are asked about their adventures, they will be unable to speak of the Tower or write down any account of it. Karvala protects his secrets well.

CHAPTER 5

THE ONE-EYED GOD

Introduction

THE ADVENTURE IS ideal for 4th-rank characters. Assassin characters may be useful, but are not essential to the party's success. The GM must familiarize himself with the rules of Chapter 5 of the rulebook, as the NPC villain is an Assassin.

Overview

An attempt on the baron's life fails, but the assassin escapes and the player-characters are sent after him. The chase takes them to an ancient burial mound infested with goblins, where a three-cornered battle may ensue.

I. TREACHERY

GM: The adventure, following shortly after 'Hunter's Moon' as it does, takes place in the early part of the year. This setting is optional and will depend on the time of year your own campaign has reached.

The hour is late. Huddled in your thick cloaks of fur, you stand on the battlements of Baron Aldred's castle and look out across the countryside. Winter has draped the land in a sparkling frost, and in the icy-clear air you can see for miles. The stars glitter like a thousand scattered diamonds. They say that on a night like this, a sorcerer can look up to heaven and hear the very music of the spheres.

Numbed by the bitter cold, you glance down towards the Great Hall. The hearth fire crackles invitingly there, casting a flickering red glow on the waxed paper screens across the windows. Your own watch should be over soon. You can hand over to another group of shivering sentries and go and curl up in the warmth.

White lamplight drowns out the red of the fire. Confused shadows leap across the windows as some commotion breaks out in the Hall. You hear shouts. Your hands grip your spears more tightly as you move towards the steps that lead down from the battlements. A figure appears from below and strides towards you. Recognizing the baron's eldest son, Almeric, you call out in greeting. He makes no reply at first, but instead stands by the tower and peers out into the wintry night, watching intently. Then he shrugs and turns to you.

"There has been an attempt on my father's life," he says. "Fear not, he is unharmed. A pitcher of water in his bedchamber was poisoned, but his dog, Ajax, licked up some that was spilt. Luckily the faithful creature managed to rouse our liege before it died—"

He breaks off as someone else climbs to the battlements. It is Aldred himself, his face black with anger. In the chill air, he snorts steam like an old dragon as he beckons you over. "It was Ulfalder," he growls, referring to a knight who has been staying at the castle for a few days. "He has already made his escape, the cur. A sentry on the postern gate was found with his throat cut."

If Ulfalder stole a horse from the town—and he must have done so—he could be miles away by now. Down in the courtyard, you see mounted knights gathering to ride out. The baron turns to you. "Fetch horses from the

stable. You will give chase at once. Ride to Karickbridge; leave no stone unturned until you have found the one this maggot has crawled under. Leave him his tongue, as I wish him to sing me a ballad before I snuff out his worthless life!"

The characters hurry down into the courtyard behind Aldred, who is bellowing orders to the milling soldiers. The horses they are given to ride are alarmed by the commotion at first, but quickly settle down.

If one of the characters is a Mystic then he will be able to use a *Pursuit* spell to track Ulfalder. If not, then have them accompanied by one of the baron's servants, a peasant called Jenk. This fellow is a skilled hunter and woodsman and will soon pick up Ulfalder's trail. The characters should treat him well, because Aldred prizes him highly. In addition to his skills, Jenk is loyal and resourceful, and servants like this are hard to come by. He will not fight except in the most extreme circumstances.

JENK

ATTACK 13 Staff (d6, 3) Armour Factor 1
or Bow (d6, 4)

DEFENCE 6

MAGICAL DEFENCE 4

Health Points 9

EVASION 3

STEALTH 12

PERCEPTION 4

(Strength 14; Reflexes 10; Intel 17; Psychic Talent 12; Looks 9)

You have not gone many miles along the road to Karickbridge before you begin to notice the signs of your quarry. The pane of ice across a ditch-puddle lies shattered where his horse's hoofs struck it; white frost-rimed grass has been snapped and trampled like delicate filigree. You see that he left the road and struck out across the fields, skirting scattered farmsteads. You spur your horses to leap a hedge where cobwebs shimmer like silver. Under their pounding hoofs, the cold ground is hard like iron. Plumes of freezing breath rise from the nostrils of both mounts and riders.

Ulfalder made several devious manoeuvres in an attempt to throw pursuers off the scent. He knew skilful trackers would be sent after him whether or not Aldred died as planned, so a lot of the false signs he has left are double bluffs—a point where he pretended to double back across a stream but in fact went straight on, a turnstile where he surreptitiously left his handprint on the frost where only a keen eye would spot it, etc. None of these will fool a Mystic's spells, of course, and Jenk (if he is with the party)

is too crafty to be taken in so easily. The characters will remain hot on Ulfalder's trail.

Interlude: Ulfalder's story

The characters will be familiar with the political situation from their previous adventures in the campaign. The Earl of Montombre, whose fief lies south of Aldred's domain, is a longstanding and bitter foe. He was, if not the instigator of Beorn's plot against the baron (see p. 22 of 'A Shadow on the Mist'), then certainly a supporter of it.

Ulfalder is, as the characters will probably guess, Montombre's agent (his 'lickspittle' as the baron might put it). Montombre has grandiose plans involving the throne; they will not come to fruition for years, but he has resolved to rid himself of potential opponents at the earliest possible opportunity. He has already disposed of a couple of minor lords, but Aldred is the chief thorn in his side. Hence he sent Ulfalder to kill him.

A special arrangement was made for Ulfalder's return after the assassination attempt. Only a few hours' ride from Aldred's castle, on the rolling heathland of Oster Moor, there is an old barrow which the locals jocularly call 'Valour Hall'. Cynewulf Magister, Montombre's sorcerer, placed an *Astral Gate* in a chamber of this barrow some time ago. The *Gate* leads to Montombre's castle, but when Ulfalder reached the barrow he found that the tunnel leading to the *Gate* had become blocked, apparently by a cave-in. Consequently he is still in the barrow even now, labouring to clear the blocked tunnel so that he can escape through the *Astral Gate*.

III. GONE TO GROUND

Ulfalder's headlong flight came to an abrupt end. You find his horse in a ditch, its body clumsily concealed under a blanket of uprooted holly. It must have broken its leg jumping a stone wall and Ulfalder finished it off with his sword. The warmth of its body melted the frost from the ground under it. It cannot have been here more than an hour.

Cracked branches from a nearby blackthorn show you where Ulfalder fell. He must have been hurt, and on foot he will not have got far. You stare out across the bleak, rolling moorland. You can see smoke rising from the hearths of a few forlorn hovels. The stars glare coldly from a crystal-black sky.

The trail will lead the characters to the barrow, of course. This is out on the moors about two miles from where they found the dead horse. Possibly they will take a detour to one of the peasants' cottages first. Dogs will rouse the inhabitants as they approach (most of the people who live around here are shepherds). A visit from strangers at this late hour will not be much appreciated, but the peasants are not likely to argue with vassals of the baron. They therefore answer the characters' questions grumpily but accurately and offer no hospitality that is not demanded from them.

Questioning of the peasants will reveal that their sheepdogs earlier began to bark at something out in the night. This was about an hour ago. Whoever or whatever it was, it soon went past and the dogs quietened down again. Nobody bothered to get out of their warm blankets to investigate. If the player-characters suggest that this was the person they're after, the peasants just shrug. He was going in the direction of 'Valour Hall' they say, chortling grimly. "Won't see 'im no more, then!"

Their gleeful good humour soon disappears if this line of questioning is taken any further. The barrow is a place to steer clear of—"the Wooden Man" lives there, they say. He sleeps under the mound in the gold armour in which he was buried. Does a lust for treasure shine in the characters' eyes at this point? "Oh aye," mutters one of the peasants. "Gold an' jewels all over 'is body—and a great pit beside 'im that goes right down t' the fires of Hell!"

Little of this can exactly be corroborated, of course. It is just the local folktale. Unusually for such a tale, much of it is accurate: there is gold in the barrow, and there is a pit. Also unusually, most of those present can claim quite truthfully to have seen the huge, one-eyed face of the Wooden Man peering from the barrow entrance. They hold a Samhain ceremony around the barrow, when they light need-fires and propitiate the Wooden Man with offerings of meat and cider.

In fact, in the peasants' ceremony can be seen fragments of pagan myth that the player-characters may recognise (roll under Intelligence on d20 if any of them ask about it)—Valhalla ('Valour Hall') and Woden, whom their ancestors incorrectly identified with the one-eyed deity of the ancient people who built the mound. Neither of these old gods actually dwells within the barrow, of course. The face that has been seen was actually a magical prank played by the Boggart who lives there—see later.

III. The BARROW

The peasants' houses are sheltered in the lee of a hill, beside a thick copse of trees. You trudge away from them, hearing the ice crunch under your boots, and remount. Taking the horses up to the crest of the hill, you cringe in the teeth of a raw easterly wind. You make your way across the frozen moors, towards where the barrow is said to lie.

Ulfalder must have been making straight for it—a long, bracken-clumped mound in the midst of desolate heathland. Briars grow between the ragged stones that protrude from its mossy surface. The entrance is formed by two tapering upright blocks and a heavy lintel, like the arch of an ancient henge. Icicles hang like teeth from the blue stone.

The barrow is actually the home of a Boggart and six Goblins. From time to time, the Boggart uses his magic to create the image of a huge face peering from the barrow, and thus masquerades as a fallen god of ancient times ('the Wooden Man').

BOGGART

Rank-equivalent: 4th

ATTACK 13, Shortsword (d8 +1, 4) and Sling (d6, 3)¹

DEFENCE 7

MAGICAL ATTACK 19

MAGICAL DEFENCE 9

Health Points 9

Armour Factor 1

EVASION 4

STEALTH 23

PERCEPTION 15

Magic Points 15

The Boggart is a 4th-rank Sorcerer and has the following potions: Vial of Smokes (× 2), Sands of Slumber, and Dust of Transformation (toad-form). Its silver earring functions as a one-use Shielding Charm. It also has six special spells—see p. 51 of the *Bestiary* for full details.

SIX GOBLINS

Rank-equivalent: 1st

ATTACK 13, Shortsword (d8, 3) and Sling (d6, 3) Armour Factor 1

DEFENCE 7

MAGICAL DEFENCE 5

Health Points: No.1: 7

No.2: 8

No.3: 7

No.4: 5

No.5: 7

No.6: 5

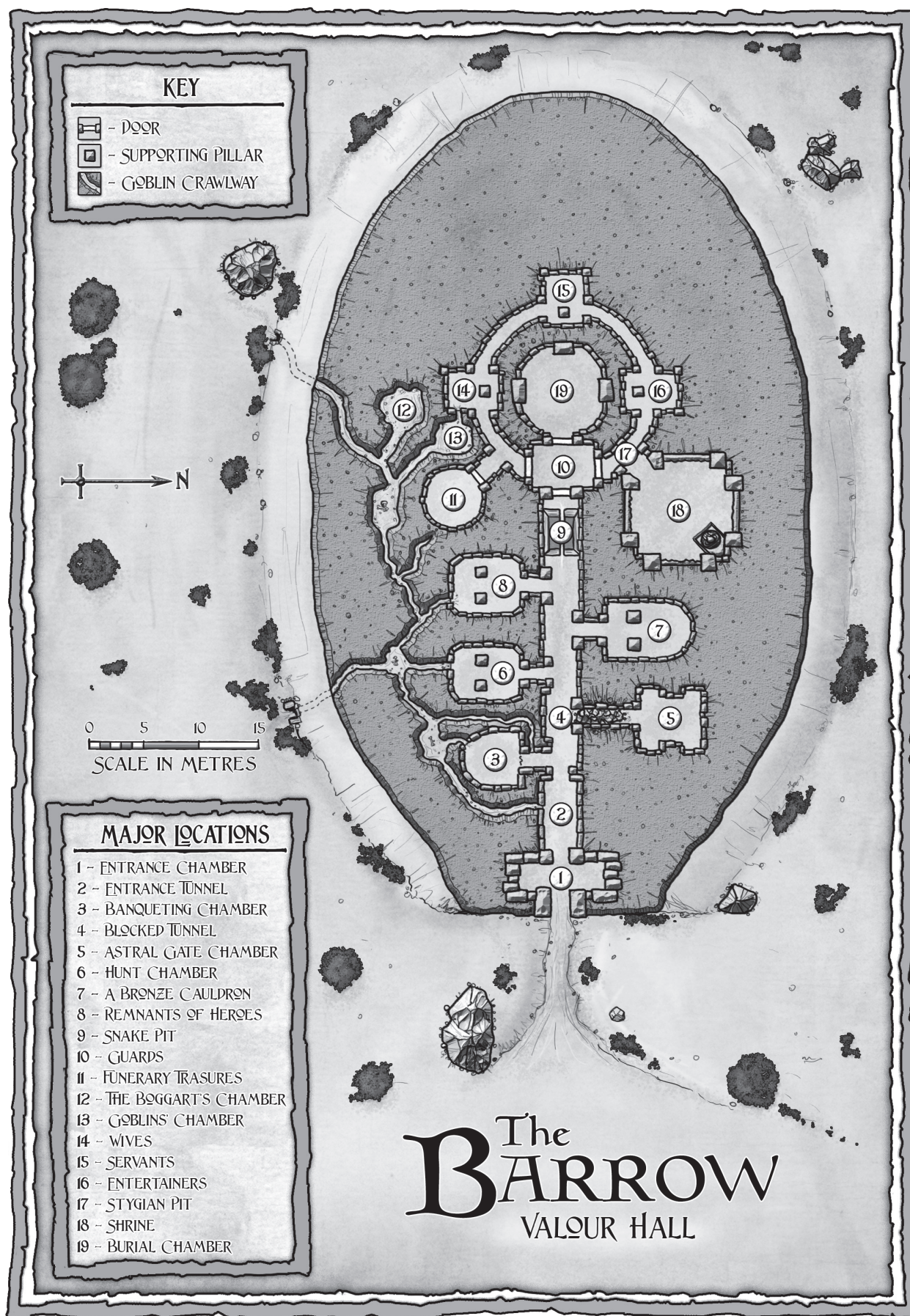
EVASION 5

STEALTH 21

PERCEPTION 13

All have a Reflexes score of 13 and move at 12m per Combat Round (25m/CR when running).

¹ The Boggart's shortsword is a +1 magical weapon. The +1 bonus has already been added to its Combat Factors. Remember that its attack with the sling is only 12.



These creatures rather resented Cynewulf putting an *Astral Gate* in their barrow. They hid until he was gone, then went and blocked the tunnel to the *Gate* with rubble and broken branches. When Ulfalder turned up at the barrow about half an hour ago, he was thus thwarted from making the quick getaway he had planned. He is unaware of the barrow's occupants and assumes that a group of bold peasants must have crept in and, fearful of the glowing *Gate* they saw, perversely barricaded the tunnel.

General notes about the barrow

- A. The passages and rooms are all constructed of irregularly shaped blocks of stone. Heavy pillars and buttresses abound, providing ample cover for an Assassin to move around unseen. Lantern-light will cast deep shadows that may obscure narrow crevices and alcoves in the walls. In short, the conditions for stealth are ideal and Ulfalder will exploit this to the full.
- B. In the two centuries or so they have dwelt here, the Boggart and Goblins have excavated a system of narrow crawlways throughout the barrow. These emerge into chambers at various points such as behind a support or by a ledge near the ceiling. The entrances just look like any other crevice in the walls, and characters will overlook them unless they search carefully. Even if they find the entrance to a crawlway, they will not be able to use it. The crawlways are just wide enough to accommodate one Goblin (with occasional alcoves to allow them to pass one another); they are much too narrow for the characters. The crawlways twist and turn continually, so a lantern shone into one will only illuminate the first few metres.
- C. At first the Goblins, hidden in their crawlways, will only observe as the characters and Ulfalder hunt each other through the barrow. They would ideally like to see as many fatalities as possible, so they may intervene on the losing side in a battle—or simply snipe at random with their slings. They use hit-and-run tactics and will only risk open confrontation if anyone tries to get into the tomb chamber. They are very frightened of releasing the spirits they believe to be buried there.
- D. The 'doors' in the barrow are simple slabs of stone. Unless otherwise indicated, they require a combined Strength of 24 to move. Up to two

characters together can try, and each loses 1 HP for the exertion. The door stays open, of course, unless the characters exert themselves a second time to push it shut.

- E. Ulfalder is in the barrow. He has been labouring to clear the blocked passage (4) so that he can escape through Cynewulf's *Astral Gate*. Hearing the player-characters approaching, he backs off to hide in the shadows. The hunted becomes the hunter...

ULFALDER

7th-rank Assassin

ATTACK 19, Sword (d8 +1, 4); Armour Factor 2

Throwing spike (d2 +1, 2)

DEFENCE 11

EVASION 6

MAGICAL DEFENCE 10

STEALTH 24

Health Points 15¹

PERCEPTION 14

(Strength 11; Reflexes 12; Intel 12; Psychic 14; Looks 13)

Paraphernalia—sword; hand lantern; nine throwing spikes; Assassin's Lotion (five applications); three flash pellets; 40 florins

If the party contains several lightly armoured characters, Ulfalder will confront them and hurl venom-coated spikes. Otherwise he relies on shock attack tactics. In either case, he will retreat as soon as he loses the advantage (by hurling down a flash pellet and skulking off while characters are dazzled), then wait for a good moment to attack again.

1. Entrance chamber

A vestibule of worked stone lies just inside the entrance. Squat pillars frame a passage leading west, supporting a lintel into which a face is carved. It is the face of a stern, bearded man with a patch over his left eye. His good eye seems to be gazing at a point on the floor of the vestibule.

The characters may suspect that something is hidden under the floor. However, no matter how closely they search they will find nothing. The item that is here can only be seen by someone who covers or closes his left eye. If one of the characters does this he will see a depression in the floor where the carved face is looking. A bright gold amulet rests in the depression. The character (still with his left eye closed) is able to pick this up. To his companions

¹ Ulfalder's normal HP score is 17; he was slightly wounded in falling from his horse.

it will seem that he dipped his hand into the solid stone of the floor and plucked out the amulet!

This is an *Amulet of the Afterworld*, a rare but not unique enchanted item. It will be of use if the characters reach the central Tomb Chamber (19) on page 51, where its use is also explained.

2. Entrance tunnel

Along the rough stone walls to either side, murals of hunts and savage battles have been daubed in black and rusty brown. You cannot escape the uneasy feeling that the brown pigment may actually be dried blood. Even though you are out of the biting wind at last, it seems even colder here in the barrow than outside. In your lantern-light, the old stones sparkle under a patina of frost.

3. Banqueting chamber

A fur rug hangs across the entrance to this room. If the characters push it aside:

Your mouths water as you smell the enticing odours of cooked meat, fresh-baked loaves and spiced wine. A tall man in white robes stands beside a stone table strewn with thick furs. He is middle-aged, or seems to be: his hair must have been golden once, but is now turning a silvery white. He greets you with a smile and gestures at the sumptuous feast laid out on silver plates in front of him. You notice ruby-studded gold bands around his wrists and a gold tore at his throat.

"Welcome; my name is Althas. Will you join me in my repast? I can offer roast venison, or beef—perhaps a cup of hot mulled wine to thaw your chilled bones?"

'Althas' pretends to be a priest. If questioned, he will hint cryptically of an evil entity that lives in the barrow and which is only held in check by his own magical efforts. He will tell them that he knows where Ulfalder the Assassin is hiding, also. If they attack him, Althas simply smiles. He makes no attempt to defend himself. Any wounds he takes will appear to heal almost instantaneously, though bloodstains will gradually accumulate on his robes.

In fact he is just an *Illusion* cast by the Boggart, who is watching everything from a spy-hole by the entrance to this room. The characters have a 5% chance of seeing through the *Illusion*, but only if they are suspicious enough to study it carefully. The food on the table is real enough (created by the

Boggart's *Banquet* spell), but does not taste nearly as appetizing as it looks. The silver plates, also real, are worth 1000 florins.

The purpose of all this is to lure as many characters as possible into the room, whereupon the Boggart intends to cast his *Mist* spell. The effect of this will be very eerie as the characters look round from talking to Althas and see a thick mist seeping out of the stone blocks of the wall, completely obscuring the exit. A character who blunders into the mist must roll 1d6 each Round as explained on p. 51 of the *Bestiary*; a roll of 1 does not indicate an encounter with the Boggart (who is concealed in the crawlway inside the wall), but rather that the character has found the exit. If only a few characters remain outside the room, the Goblins might risk a quick attack on them while the others are still lost behind the *Mist*.

Note: You are advised to determine in advance how long the Althas *Illusion* will last, as the players will guess something is up if you make a string of Spell Expiry Rolls as soon as they start talking to him. Remember to reduce the Boggart's Magic Points score to 9 for the *Banquet* and *Illusion* spells (though it can recoup 1 MP if the *Illusion* has not run out by the time it creates the *Mist*).

4. Blocked tunnel

The entrance to 5 is completely blocked by rocks, broken branches and other debris. Ulfalder has been trying to clear it, but quite a bit more work is needed before there will be a hole large enough for a man to get through. Three characters working together could unblock it in about fifteen minutes.

5. Astral Gate Chamber

At last you manage to dig your way through the rubble to the small chamber that lies beyond. A translucent oval hangs in the air ahead of you. There is a frenzied squeaking, then rats scurry into the pool of light shed by your lanterns.

These are just ordinary rats—i.e. not the giant variety. There are five of them, and they were placed here by the Boggart to ensure that Ulfalder would not get to use the *Astral Gate* even if he had a quick way of clearing the rubble. The rats have been told to jump through the *Astral Gate* if anyone gets through into this room. There is 1 chance in 6 the *Gate* will van-

ish each time one of the rats jumps through it. They will only do this if the Boggart who commanded them is still alive. If the Boggart has been killed, the rats will attack for one Round in an attempt to get past the characters and escape.

FIVE RATS

Rank-equivalent: 1st

ATTACK 10, Bite (d3, 1)

carries Black Death

DEFENCE 4

MAGICAL DEFENCE 2

Health Points: all 1

Armour Factor 0

EVASION 4

Reflexes: all 16

Movement: 12m (25m)

The irony is that Ulfalder has no chance of escape anyway. Montombre has learned via the speculum of Cynewulf, his sorcerer, that the assassination attempt failed. The earl is not a man who can tolerate failure. He has had Cynewulf place a second *Astral Gate* in series with this one, so that anyone who steps through will appear only momentarily in his castle before plunging through the other *Gate*. The character will end his magical journey in a Gryphon lair—an inaccessible pinnacle of rock about a mile out to sea.

6. Hunt chamber

This room is filled with the paraphernalia of hunting: rotted quivers containing rusted arrow-heads, heavy iron spears pitted with corrosion, hunting horns and the mummified bodies of dogs. They were left so that the pendragon, or chief, who is buried here could hunt in the Afterlife.

The characters may possibly find a use for the spears at 9. Nothing else is of any value.

7. A bronze cauldron

A heavy bronze cauldron once hung from the ceiling of this chamber, but the chain that supported it rusted through long ago and it now lies on its side. If the characters examine it very carefully they will just be able to make out engravings that run around the outside. Though badly blurred by corrosion, it is possible to decipher these crude pictures as men running alongside a pack of hunting dogs (the people who built the barrow did not ride horses), either chasing or being chased by a giant boar and a giant stag. Because the scene goes right around the cauldron, it is not clear whether the men are in pursuit of the beasts or vice versa.

The stag and boar depicted here are Helvenian and Garambar, beast-deities who occupied an ambiguous position in the barrow people's pantheon. The cauldron was intended to provide for the pendragon's banquets, but was used by the Boggart for alchemy until corrosive vapours from the potions finally rusted through the support chain.

8. Remnants of heroes

The floor of this room is littered with broken glass cups, pottery, drinking horns, worm-eaten wooden platters, and stone pitchers in which wine and oils were stored. Scattered amongst all this are a number of skeletons wearing a few scraps of broken armour. There is a horrible smell of decay.

The characters will soon see that some of the bodies were killed quite recently—in the last year or so. Certainly they do not date from the time the barrow was built. These are adventurers who entered the barrow and were killed by the Boggart and Goblins. They have been looted of everything of value, and the characters will not find even a copper coin on them.

There is one item of interest here, a gold-chased drinking horn with magical properties. A thorough search will probably be needed before it is discovered amongst the clutter: roll d100 for each character every Round of searching, and the drinking horn is discovered on a roll of 01–03.

If the horn is picked up by a male Knight or Barbarian, it magically fills to the brim with mead. The character may drain the contents of the horn or drink from it and then hand it to someone else. Careful note must be kept of how much everyone drinks.

The horn holds three litres. The first litre each character drinks has no ill-effects; each litre thereafter reduces his/her ATTACK, DEFENCE, EVASION, STEALTH, PERCEPTION, Reflexes and Intelligence all by 1. This is temporary, and reduced scores each recover by 1 point per hour after the character stops drinking. If any score is reduced to 0, the character passes out and sleeps soundly for 1–6 hours. If the horn is put down while there is still mead in it (or if the mead is poured away), a luminous gold warrior appears and strikes with his sword at the offending character. The warrior has an ATTACK score of 28 and his sword is a (d10, 5) weapon. After one swipe he disappears.

The horn is worth about 150 florins.

9. Snake pit

At the end of the passage there is a deep pit spanned by a narrow spike of rock. On the far side there is a ledge in front of a heavy stone doorway. The surface of the door is intricately carved with a series of inter-twined, curving lines.

You shine your lanterns down into the pit. There is a furious hissing—you are looking down into a snake pit. There are hundreds of snakes slithering about below, glaring back at you with dark, glittering eyes. In the midst of them a wooden staff has been fixed upright in the ground, and in the air above it floats a round object something like an egg.

The pit is 10m deep. A character with Reflexes of 10 or more can cross it easily by means of the narrow spike of rock. Others must roll under their Reflexes on 1d20 or fall into the pit. A long, heavy pole (perhaps one of the spears from 6?) could be used for balance, just like a tightrope walker. A character who tries this gets a bonus of +5 to his Reflexes for the purposes of getting across. The spike has a very sharp upper edge which makes it almost impossible to straddle or get across hand over hand.

There is only one safe way to lower a character down to seize the hovering egg. This is by using two ropes: one supporting him from each side of the pit. Any other strategy—lowering him from the mid-point of the spike, etc.—will almost certainly end with all concerned falling into the pit. Landing in the pit means certain death unless the character has powerful magic (e.g. *Impregnable Sphere*) to protect him. Remember that any attempt to get the egg will be an ideal time for Ulfalder and/or the Goblins to mount an attack.

The egg seems solid and glassy, like a fossil. It is a magical Serpent's Egg. A character must know what its powers are before he can use it. (A Sorcerer of 4th rank or above will know what it does; other characters have a 25% chance of remembering legends which may or may not be accurate.) It has the power to counteract poisons, foretell danger and assist its owner in battle:

- i. Whenever it is called upon to treat poisons, it has a 20% chance of doing so. It works like an *Antidote* spell. If used by a Sorcerer who casts an *Antidote* of his own at the same time, it completely negates any toxins in the recipient's bloodstream.
- ii. It foretells of danger by becoming warm to the

touch. It has a 20% chance of doing this in any given situation where its owner is about to be attacked. This negates any chance of the character being surprised (including by shock attack)—assuming he is touching the Egg at the time.

- iii. It aids its user in battle by nullifying critical hits against him. The chance of this is again 20%. If it works, the critical hit is treated like any normal hit and requires a successful Armour Bypass Roll to wound the character.

10. Guards

You push back the stone portal and enter a wide chamber with sealed exits in the west, south and north walls. Your lantern-light falls on three gaunt figures. With a shudder you behold their empty eye-sockets and shrivelled flesh. These undead husks of mighty warriors were obviously laid to rest on the cold stone slabs in the middle of the room. They must have risen and taken up their black iron swords when you violated the barrow, and now you must fight them.

There indeed seems no other option but to fight: retreat is hardly feasible across the slender stone bridge, and the other doors from this room will take time to open. Mummies are described in the *Bestiary*, on p. 81.

THREE MUMMIES

Rank-equivalent: 6th

ATTACK 18, Two-handed sword (d10, 5)

DEFENCE 12

MAGICAL DEFENCE 9

Movement: 10m (15m)

Health Points:

No.1: 15 HP

Armour Factor 1

EVASION 4

Reflexes: all 7

No.2: 16 HP

No.3: 17 HP

As each of the Mummies is destroyed, it will hurl its sword at the stone portal in the west wall (i.e. the one leading to the pendragon's burial chamber). Throwing off a cascade of sparks and emitting a harsh screech, the sword buries itself up to its hilt in the stone. The portal cannot be moved until all the swords have been removed from it.

Any character can pull a sword out of the portal—no great strength is required, but the character will suffer a curse with a MAGICAL ATTACK of 18 in doing so. To find its effect, use the Curse Table on p. 123 of the rulebook. This curse is in place of the Mummies' usual power to inflict a *Doom*.

11. Funerary treasures

This chamber is filled with staggering wealth in the form of plates, goblets, arm-rings, brooches and buckles—all of precious metals, and many of them studded with jewels. The overall value of everything here is about 25,000 florins. For encumbrance purposes, because much of the treasure is bulky and difficult to carry, the whole hoard counts as 60 ‘items’. By sorting out the most valuable artifacts, the characters could gather about one-third the total value in the form of 10 encumbrance ‘items’.

12. The Boggart’s chamber

Short of excavating the entire barrow, it is difficult to see how the characters could find this chamber. It is just a small sanctum off one of the crawlways, used by the Boggart when he wishes to scheme and count his treasure in solitude. The treasure in question consists of 1000 silver florins, 400 gold crowns and three swords whose bejewelled scabbards make them worth 20 crowns each.

13. Goblins’ chamber

There is nothing of interest here except for a coffer containing 2000 copper pennies and a jewelled dagger (worth 5 crowns) that the Goblins think their Boggart leader does not know about.

14. Wives

Hollows in the floor contain the bodies of three women—now shrivelled and leathery, but once the most beautiful of their race. They were the pendragon’s wives, put to death in order to accompany their lord into the Afterlife.

15. Servants

Twelve servants were also sent into the Afterlife to cater to the pendragon’s wants. Like the wives (14) and the entertainers (16), they are buried with their heads to the west and feet to the east.



16. Entertainers

The pendragon's tribe assumed he would desire entertainment, and thoughtfully interred his three favourite entertainers with him. The mouldered remains of two harps lie beside the bodies of the storytellers; only the strings and small bronze fittings have stood the test of time. The third body is of an acrobat or jester; the characters may guess this from the foolishly grinning face depicted on the baton he clasps in his skeletal fingers.

17. Stygian pit

You come to a pit, and just beyond it the passage enters a large room. The pit extends right across the passage, but it is less than 1½m wide and should be easy to jump. Peering down, you can see for only a few metres. Darkness swirls in the pit like smoke.

There is a magical force just above the pit that tends to pull objects down into it. This force is quite weak. A character who knew about it would still be able to jump over, but if he was unaware of the force he might be taken by surprise and misjudge his leap. The characters will see there is something odd about the pit if they try tossing, say, a coin across, as it will fall in a strange trajectory. If anyone tries to jump the pit without knowing about the magical force he must roll under his Reflexes score on 1d20. Failure indicates that he misses the far side and falls into the pit. This spells his doom unless he took the precaution of roping himself to the others—the local folklore was true, and this pit extends right down into Hell!

18. Shrine

The passage emerges in the south-west corner of a square room. Directly opposite you is a stone idol—a very stylized figure fashioned from a slim pillar; it represents a bearded man with a patch over his left eye. It almost seems that a softly glowing aura hangs in the air around the idol's head—but perhaps this is just a trick of the light.

In the centre of each wall, a carving in high relief is set back in an alcove like a false arch. Each carving shows a one-eyed figure looking into the room, flanked on either side by figures facing inwards. In the carving set into the north wall, the one-eyed figure is youthful and holds a spear aloft. In the carving to the west he

is shown as a middle-aged kingly figure placing torcs about his vassals' necks. The east carving depicts him as a bearded old man seated in a tree with snakes curled around the branches. The carving in the south wall shows him as a fierce warrior crushing the skulls of his enemies.

This is a shrine to Lahmfada, the principal god of the barrow people. The high relief carvings show his various faces—as hunter, chief, wise man and destroyer.

19. Burial chamber

The heavy stone door opens into a circular chamber. The armoured figure of a warrior stands on a simple stone dais, his gilded sword held out before him. For a moment it seems he is another undead creature ready to strike, but then you see that he is not moving. His life-like stance is the result of the embalmers' skill.

Your torchlight blazes on the burnished gold blade, lingers on the garnets and golden fittings of his armour. Beside him are other weapons whose iron parts have become gnarled with rust, but many of them gleam with gems or gold. There is also a battle-standard crested by the figure of a muscular woman with a crow's head. A drinking horn rests on the floor beside a board game with masterfully crafted ivory pieces. You see other weapons, a shield, trinkets of silver and gold...

Probably it will not take much guesswork for the characters to realize that this is the burial chamber of the pendragon, or chief, of the tribe who built the barrow. His name was Ildyr. The various items of treasure buried here with him are worth some 15,000 florins. The greatest treasure by far is the gilded two-handed sword he wields. It is a +3 magical sword, but it is not easy to acquire.

If anyone takes the sword, Ildyr's spirit will know this and begin to claw its way back through the planes of existence so that it can exact retribution. All torches and lanterns will gutter and go out. They cannot be relit, and even *Moonglow* or other magical illumination will give only a murky blood-red glimmer. A low rumbling comes from within the walls and a wind gusts from nowhere, carrying on it the stench of death, whipping up the dust and forcing the characters back.

As suddenly as it arose, the wind dies. There is a moment of calm.

With a terrible shriek, Ildyr's spirit arises from his corpse in a wreath of red flames. Everyone is subject to a 1d12 *fright attack* (see the rulebook, p. 122) as the spirit flits towards the character who took the sword:

THE PENDRAGON'S SPIRIT

Rank-equivalent: 11th

ATTACK 20, Touch (d10, 5)

Armour Factor 0, but
immune to nonmagical
weapons

DEFENCE 4

EVASION 4

MAGICAL ATTACK 3d10

STEALTH 10

Reflexes: 16

PERCEPTION 18 (panopticol)

Health Points 16

Movement: 18m

The spirit attacks physically with its chilling touch. Every third round it also unleashes a *Death* spell with a MAGICAL ATTACK of 3d10 (see Wraiths in the *Dragon Warriors Bestiary*, p 86). Enchanted weapons are required to harm it. The only spells that can inflict damage on it are *Phantasm*, *Vorpal Blade*, *Sword of Damocles*, *Battlemaster* and *Steel Claw*. It is immune to direct-attack spells.

If Ildyr's own sword is used to strike the spirit, it inflicts normal damage (8 HP) for one blow and then shatters into a thousand fragments rather than wound its ancient master a second time.

If anyone is wearing the Amulet of the Afterworld (see earlier) its powers will activate automatically. It shines with white light which coruscates around his body; sparks dance on his fingertips. The character is rendered immune to the spirit's *Death*

spell and he will be able to wound it whether or not he has an enchanted weapon. Once the spirit is destroyed, the Amulet disintegrates. Its power can be used only once. (If the characters acquire the Amulet but leave the barrow without entering the burial chamber, keep a note of its effects. It will automatically activate when its wearer is attacked by a Spectre, Wraith, Eaves Phantom or Mordu.)

IV. FINALE

As Aldred's retainers, the characters should hand over any treasure to him on returning to the castle. You should not have to remind them of this; it is part of their obligation in a feudal society. Magic items will be handed back to them as a matter of course, and Aldred will also bestow between 10% and 50% of any cash they bring back. The exact amount depends on how successful the mission was.

The same holds as far as experience awards are concerned. Ideally they should bring Ulfalder back alive for interrogation—this is worth some 7 experience points each. Returning with his body is a partial success, but if they come back empty-handed then you might award only 3 or 4 points.

Additional points (over and above that earned for defeating opponents) should be given to characters who showed tactical or leadership skills. GamesMastered aggressively, this adventure will have given them a run for their money!

CHAPTER 6

SINS OF THE FATHERS

Introduction

THIS IS A seminal adventure which marks an end of the characters' adventures around Baron Aldred's fief. It works well for 5th-rank characters.

Overview

Looking after the baron's son on a hunting trip, the characters are drawn into an adventure against ancient beast-folk who see the race of men as usurpers. The faerie king whom they eventually meet reveals a fateful truth which will have repercussions beyond this scenario.

I. EMBROIDERED

The baron's eldest son Almeric (named after his grandfather, a warrior of legendary prowess) is like most healthy young men—hot-blooded and occasionally too reckless for his own good. His adventurous spirit would be difficult to curb even if his father wanted to, so instead Aldred gives Almeric free rein for his exploits and only ensures that he takes along a few trusted companions to keep him out of trouble. His permanent 'minder' is Sir Grisso, an old knight who has been in the family's service even in the days of Aldred's father. For the latest hunting trip, you have also been sent along.

Such trips are usually uneventful. Apart from vetting a crazed disputing knight whose challenge Almeric cared to accept, and steering him clear of a pretty nun

who took his fancy on the road from Karickbridge, you have had little to do. Nonetheless, the duty is not a tiresome one. Almeric is a bright and good-natured youth who can even raise a smile on solemn old Grisso's lips. The jaunt is enjoyable, and you feel honoured the baron has seen fit to entrust you with the care of his son.

This evening you are sitting in the common-room of Gully's Inn. Almeric and Grisso set out this morning on the trail of wild boar, and left you here at the inn. ("Am I to be wet-nursed into adulthood?" replied Almeric jovially when you suggested you should go along.) The wine in your goblets is a little harsh and sour, but a better prospect than the weak beer that most of the villagers hereabouts must make do with. A few other travellers, merchants and ne'er-do-wells are chewing at Gully's gristly stew, but you will wait for your companions to return before feasting on grander fare. A passing minstrel reclines in an alcove by the hearth, plucking at a lyre as he sings for his supper. The room is a hubbub of chatter and nobody bothers to listen to the minstrel. Not much of a song—but then, not much of a supper, either.

The door is thrown open and a bedraggled figure lurches in out of the rain. Gully, who is serving drinks, puts down his tray and rushes to help the man to a chair. Across the smoke-filled room you see the man shakily take a cup of mulled wine that Gully offers him, and as he does so the cowl drops from his shoulders—

A man on the next table is saying something about Gully not usually being so hospitable; that caterwauling minstrel is still strumming away. The newcomer is Almeric.

You push your way past the customers to his side. He looks up, bewildered, recognition dawning slowly on his face. Slowly and falteringly, he tells his story:

"Dusk was upon us and a dank mist rising from the moors as we tracked our quarry into the Bleaks. Grisso was for turning back, saying there would be time for hunting on the morrow, but in God's truth I was hot for the kill and would not abandon the chase. Venturing further, in the gloom we espied an ancient gate entangled with briars. Words were carved into the stone posts, and Grisso rode closer to read them.

"Even as I called out to him to come back, shadowy figures with the heads of wild beasts shambled out and seized his mount's reins. Grisso was as one enthralled, and made no protest as they pulled him through the thorns. I was sick with horror as I saw my loyal friend vanish into the deep darkness beyond the gate. Suddenly I seized my spear and, with a red rage clouding my eyes, hurled it hard at the last of the creatures. I saw it tear through his gorge, splattering bright blood on the weathered stone. There came an awful scream at which my horse took fright—aye, and I myself, though it is my shame to say it! I knew no more till I came to my wits and found myself back on the country road...."

GM: Almeric is like a man possessed. In contrast to his normal manner, he seems indecisive and even afraid. His particular obsession seems to be the stain of cowardice he has incurred by deserting Sir Grisso. He also mutters fitfully, frantically, of the need to retrieve his spear, an enchanted weapon that was his grandfather's last gift to him.

Obviously they cannot set out at once. Almeric is exhausted, and travel across country in the rain and darkness would be foolhardy in the extreme. There is one strange incident during the night. Sometime after midnight, the eerie sound of a hunting horn drifts across the moors. Everyone in the inn except for Almeric is awakened, by the baying and howling of Gully's dogs. If anyone opens the door, the dogs rush outside for an instant and bark wildly across the fields, hackles rising and ears pressed back to their heads. In a moment they slink back inside, whimpering, to cower by the fire.

II. GETTING THERE

Almeric still looks haggard and pale when he enters the common-room for breakfast, but at least he seems to have recovered his usual determination. He heard nothing

of the nighttime disturbance, but mentions something about a bad dream.

The fields are sparkling with dew as you set off quietly—almost despondently—on your adventure. After a few hours Almeric begins to lead you towards a wooded knoll that seems stark in the chill morning air. Crows cry desolately from the leafless branches. Hoping perhaps to exorcize his dream, Almeric relates it to you:

"I seemed to be riding through country such as this. I had been hunting, and though my hands were wet with the blood of slaughter I yearned still for more killing. A proud stag leapt between the trees, and a blast of my hunting horn summoned the hounds to the chase. The air was oppressive and the land dark; it seemed that a storm was gathering. The hunt drew me to a strange wooded knoll. The baying hounds poured like a black tide into the undergrowth. I dismounted and rushed through the trees, barely able to draw breath. The hounds found their quarry in a clearing, and leapt savagely upon it. I beat them away still more savagely, almost retching when I saw that it was no stag that they had torn apart, but a man.

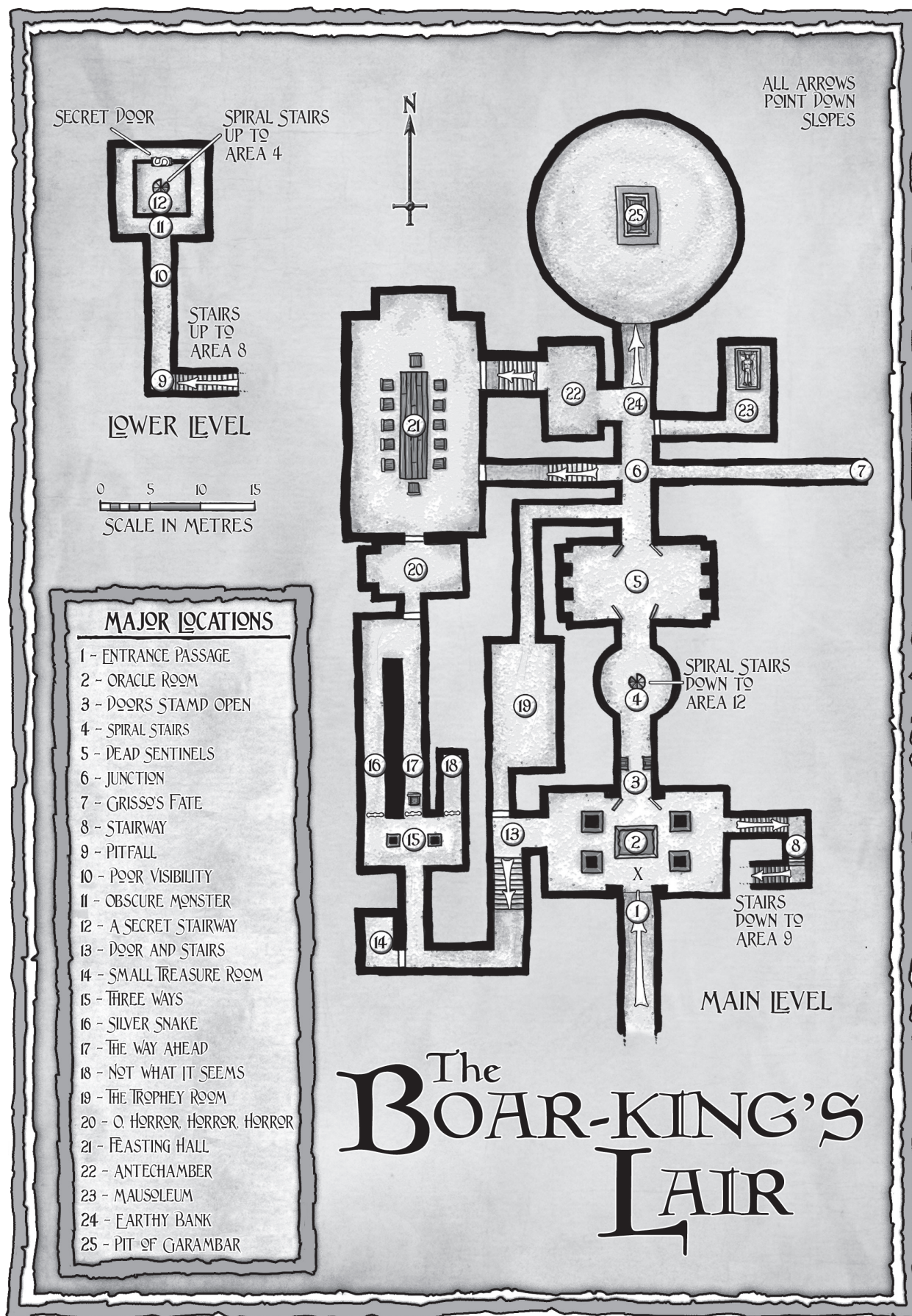
"Somehow I knew what I would see even as I reached down with trembling hand to turn the body over.... I looked straight into my own dead face."

GM: The significance of this strange nightmare will become all too horribly clear later.

Passing through gnarled trees, you come upon a stone gateway choked with moss and thorns. Worn steps lead down into darkness beyond it. Floating in the air is Almeric's lost spear, glittering gold in the wan sunlight. As you approach, it drifts towards the yawning gateway and descends into the depths.

The spear will head northwards through the underworld, pausing at the exit from each room so that the characters can follow it. The descriptions below assume that they do follow it, and you will need to take that into account if they actually try a different route. They may assume at first that it is giving them safe guidance through the underworld, but they will soon see that it is just leading them headlong into danger. (The spear is directed by Garambar, the beast-king whose lair this is. Almeric's grandfather stole the spear from him, as the characters will discover if they survive.)

Almeric's stats are given below for you to run him as an NPC. Sunk in introspection, he will fight when he must and acquit himself well but plays no



decisive part in any major battle. He will not be any help in formulating tactics or solving problems.

It is not possible for Almeric to be killed in this adventure, nor succumb to any spell that would incapacitate or control him. He may take occasional injury, but will still be with the party when they reach the Pit (room 25). The reason for this will be explained later. 'Fudge' the dice rolls if necessary to make sure Almeric gets through—this is a GM's prerogative if the story demands it, but be careful not to over-use it or your players will notice.

ALMERIC

5th-rank Knight

ATTACK 19, Two-handed sword (d10, 5) Armour Factor 5

DEFENCE 13

EVASION 7

MAGICAL DEFENCE 9* Health Points 16 (*see above*)
(*Strength 15; Reflexes 18; Intel 13; Psychic 16; Looks 16*)

III The Underworld

1. Entrance passage

With the spear floating eerily ahead of you, you make your way down a long, sloping passage. The air smells dank and earthy. The spear reaches the end of the passage and drifts into a chamber beyond. As you advance, your torchlight is thrown back in a green, watery reflection along the passage walls.

There is a concealed trapdoor just beyond the threshold (at the point marked X on the map). There is no chance of spotting this unless the characters specifically stop to search (and why should they?), hidden as it is under layers of moss and twigs. Almeric, if he is in the front rank of the battle order, will mysteriously walk right over the trapdoor. It flips open when the first of the player-characters steps on it, and he must roll under his Reflexes on 1d20 to jump clear—otherwise he plummets 8m to land at (9).

Once the characters know where the trapdoor is, there is space for them to safely go around it and get into the room.

2. Oracle Room

You are in a large, vaulted hall from which passages lead west, north and east. The light of your lanterns falls

upon a glimmering murky pool that lies between the main columns supporting the roof. Broken stucco on the walls still shows traces of an old frieze. From the fragments that remain, it was a scene of beasts and beast-men disporting wildly in a tangled vineyard.

The spear sways around the pool and floats out of reach towards the open doors to the north.

Almeric seems oddly reluctant to approach the spear. It will successfully evade any attempt from the characters to trap or seize it.

After the characters have been in the room for half a minute or so, a cacophony of howling begins to resound from the walls. Then, as though taking shape out of the darkness, a pack of seven gaunt Rimwolves lope towards them.

SEVEN RIMWOLVES

ATTACK 17, Bite (d6, 6)

Armour Factor 1

DEFENCE 3

EVASION 5

MAGICAL DEFENCE 12

STEALTH 16

Reflexes all 16

PERCEPTION 13 (elfsight)

Health Points: all 12

Movement: 15m (28m)

Rimwolves are larger and stronger than normal wolves. They are also faerie beasts with a curious magical ability: at any time only one member of the pack will be vulnerable to weapons, but any wound inflicted on this Rimwolf will also appear on all the others. Start the combat by deciding at random which of the Rimwolves is the vulnerable one. Blows struck against the other six will have no effect, but if and when the seventh takes a wound then the fur of all of them will start to run with blood. When this happens, the vulnerability transfers to one of the other Rimwolves—roll d6 to determine which. If any of the characters casts *See Enchantment* or *Detect Aura* he will be able to see that one of the creatures has a slightly different aura.

All the Rimwolves will fall at the same time, of course. Defeating them is worth a total of 21 experience points. About half should go to any Sorcerer or Mystic who worked out what was happening and used his spells to single out the weak link.

The bodies soon decompose into a grey-green miasmal vapour, leaving behind a glittering green jewel on a silver chain. A character who approaches the pool while holding this jewel will observe something strange. The reflections of his comrades become murky while his own image shines brightly. Suddenly his reflection turns and appears to walk to the north doors. As it slams them shut, ripples break

up the image and then all is back to normal. This phenomenon will happen once for each character, but if Almeric tries it he gets only a still black image with no reflection at all.

The jewel has no magic apart from this. It is worth 343 silver florins.

3. Doors stand open

In the corroded blue-green surface of these bronze doors you can see the bas-relief of a boar's head surrounded by engraved leaves and vines. Just north of the doors, the spear floats in the air above two wooden chests.

The chest against the east wall contains 900 silver coins, worth about half a florin each when the tarnish has been cleaned off them. The other chest contains 900 verdigris-stained copper pieces, each worth a penny.

4. Spiral stairs

The passage is interrupted by a small vestibule from which a cracked newel stairway winds down. You lean over the marble balustrade and play your lantern-light downwards, but you cannot see the bottom of the stairs. The spear hangs in the air for a moment and then floats off to the north.

(Change this description if the characters ascend from the lower level!) The stairs lead down to 12.

A Giant Spider waits in the northern branch of the corridor, just above the archway off this vestibule. Alerted by the spear passing below, it is now ready to drop its web on the first characters to continue north along the passage.

GIANT SPIDER

Rank-equivalent: 3rd	
ATTACK 18 Bite (d6 +1, 4 and normal poison)	Armour Factor 2
DEFENCE 3	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 4	Reflexes: 16
Health Points 13	Movement: 15m (20m)

This specimen is slightly tougher than the average Giant Spider (*Bestiary*, p. 35). Its webbing is correspondingly stronger, and will entangle a character to the extent of -3 ATTACK, -2 DEFENCE each round. If brought down to 4 HP or less the Spider will break off combat to scuttle through the party and down the spiral stairs.

5. Dead sentinels

(If the characters come to this room from the south, read the following description. If they have taken a route via the Feasting Hall and then doubled back to enter from the north, the spear will be hovering at (6). In either case, the doors close and cannot be opened until the Mummified Warriors have been slain.)

Passing between open doors, you enter a musty room where embalmed warriors with stags' heads stand in alcoves. Another set of double doors stand open to the north. Suddenly the spear flashes across the room and through the doorway ahead. Both sets of doors slam violently, sealing you in the room.

Without doubt, the players will expect the Mummified Warriors to come to 'life'. In fact, they do not do so straight away; each pair of Warriors will only animate and attack when a character crosses the east-west line between them. Unless they blunder stupidly right across the room, the characters need not fight more than two Warriors at a time.

MUMMIFIED WARRIORS

Rank-equivalent: 6th		
ATTACK 17, Warhammer		Armour Factor 2
(d8, 4) or Antlers (d6, 6)		
DEFENCE 11		EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 8		STEALTH 15
Reflexes: all 9		PERCEPTION 12 (darksight)
Movement: 10m (18m)		
Health Points:		
No.1: 15 HP	No.2: 12 HP	No.3: 16 HP
No.4: 23 HP	No.5: 19 HP	No.6: 8 HP

These undead have dry, leathery bodies and are especially susceptible to fire-attacks. Any time one of them is struck with a flaming torch, *Dragonbreath* spell, etc. it has a 20% chance of starting to burn. It takes 1d4 HP every round until it manages to put the fire out (indicated by a roll of 5-6 on d6). Unlike normal Mummies, these monsters do not have the power to *Doom* a character.

Once all the Mummified Warriors are destroyed, the doors will fly open again. They cannot be opened otherwise.

6. Junction

The golden spear sways slightly as it reaches the junction. It points along the eastern passage for a moment, then

swings around and drifts north. There is a thick carpeting of moss, leaves and twigs on the floor and sculpted faces leer from the vaulting.

The carpet of leaves is actually a dormant Jack-in-the-Green. This is a nature spirit which will rise up into its active form—a tumbling, rolling column of damp soil, twigs and leaves—to pursue the characters once they have passed on from this point. It moves at a fast walk and attacks by engulfing a character, harrying him with magic as it rends, tears and strangles.

Each round 1–6 of the Jack's thorn branches will tear at the enveloped character's flesh; it cannot miss with these attacks, and Hit Rolls are only made to check for a critical hit. He is also subjected to its supernatural assault, which drains 1–4 HP (regardless of armour) and 1–12 experience points. The victim may thus be reduced in rank, losing spell-knowledge, fighting skill, etc.; this reduction in rank is permanent. If a Jack-in-the-Green slays a victim after reducing him to 0 experience points, his soul is destroyed and he can never be restored to life.

Being engulfed means that the character cannot effectively wield a weapon larger than a dag-

ger, though if he has a dagger then he can certainly wound the Jack every round—no Hit Roll is needed. If he is a Sorcerer then he is unable to cast spells, as his arms are not free for the necessary gestures. His companions can strike to free him—edged weapons must be used, and a miss necessitates a check (under Reflexes on 1d20) to avoid hitting the struggling victim engulfed inside the Jack.

JACK-IN-THE-GREEN

Rank-equivalent: 9th	
ATTACK: 1-6 Brambles (d8, 3)	Armour Factor 0
MAGICAL ATTACK 16	EVASION 3
MAGICAL DEFENCE 11	STEALTH 17
Movement: 15m	PERCEPTION 17 (panoptical)
Health Points 33	

7. Grisso's fate

A single candle flickers at the point where the corridor reaches a dead end. In its guttering light you see a lifeless body hanging in chains. It is Sir Grisso, Almeric's retainer, his body pierced by russet-fletched arrows, his face fixed in a horrible grimace. Lifting your lanterns, you see that the eyes have been ripped from his head.



Should any character snuff out the candle, he is immediately subjected to a *Curse* with **MAGICAL ATTACK 21**. Use the *Curse Table* (rulebook, p. 123); remember that if it is a delayed-effect curse the character will not know yet that anything is amiss.

8. Stairway

This steep, narrow flight of stairs leads down to (9).

9. Pitfall

A character who falls through the trapdoor in the Oracle Room will land here.

Looking north, the passage slopes down to an area that is thick with mist or smoke. Stairs lead up to the east.

10. Poor visibility

Nearing the end of the passage, you have to feel your way along the walls. The stone is cracked and mossy under your probing fingers. A dense grey fog prevents you from seeing more than a couple of metres in front of you. The passage widens out into a room.

The mist is harmless apart from the fact that it will prevent them from seeing the Obsidiak that lurks ahead.

Obscure monster

Passages branch left and right. After a few paces they turn to the north, and you can now feel a series of grooves along the inner wall.

An Obsidiak (*Bestiary*, p. 42) will ambush the party as they turn the corner at the north end of either of the two stretches of corridor. Because of the mist in the air, the Obsidiak has surprised them.

OBSIDIAK

Rank-equivalent: 2nd

ATTACK 14 Bite (d8, 3) or envelop

DEFENCE 6

MAGICAL DEFENCE 6

Health Points 13

Armour Factor 3

EVASION 3

Reflexes: 15

Movement: 8m

Once they have killed it:

The corridors join together, effectively forming a room with a large, square pillar in the middle. The walls of

the pillar sound hollow when you tap them. Your vision of the walls is totally obscured by the mist which pours in in even greater quantities now you have slain the monster. Your fingers find the grooves in the east and west walls of the pillar; they seem to converge towards the centre of each wall. In the north wall there is what you feel to be a bas-relief of a face—but not an entirety human face, for it is incised with serpentine scales. There are deep hollows where the face's eyes should be.

If a character feels along the grooves to the centre of the east or west wall, his hand will encounter a circular hole. If he reaches into either hole he must roll under his Reflexes on 1d20, otherwise his hand will be seized in a razor-sharp stone vice that suddenly clamps across the hole. This causes 1d3 HP damage. Also the hand that has been crushed cannot be used again unless a *Miracle Cure* is cast upon it. If it was his principal hand (75% likely if the player did not specify) he loses 1 from both **ATTACK** and **DEFENCE** until it is restored. A Sorcerer with a mangled left hand (all Sorcerers are left-handed) has a 5% chance of miscasting his spells.

The bas-relief face conceals a secret panel. Touching the eye-socket depressions in the face causes this panel to open, revealing a small chamber (12) within the pillar.

12. A secret stairway

You are standing in a small, square chamber. A newel stairway leads up. Just at the foot of the stairs is a marble plinth on which rests a silver wristband in the shape of a coiled serpent.

The secret panel in the north wall cannot be opened from this side, though it is clearly visible. The stairs connect to (4) on the upper level.

The silver wristband may be of use at (16).

13. Door and stairs

The passageway bends to the left and then descends a long flight of slimy steps. Opposite the top of the steps there is a wooden door, it must once have borne fine carvings, but a damp mould has eaten away the detail from these.

If they go down the steps:

At the bottom of the steps there is an archway on your right. A long stretch of corridor leads off ahead of you.

Half-way down you can see a rusty suit of armour propped against the wall. The visor on the helmet is up, and as you get closer you see to your horror that there is a lolling skull inside it. The same blue, furry mould that covers the walls here grows out of the skull's eye-sockets and mouth and nose cavities. Ahead there is an iron-bound door, and there the corridor bends to the right.

As the characters pass the armour there is an insidious hiss and wisps of blue spores shoot out of the empty eye-sockets of the skull. Everyone must roll under his/her Reflexes on d20 or breathe in the spores. Any character who fails the roll is subjected to a strong poison attack. PCs who previously announced they were holding their breath are given a -4 adjustment to the die roll (though an unadjusted roll of 20 still counts as failure). A character who thought to wind a damp cloth over his face (perhaps wetted in the pool at (2) does not need to make the die roll.

14. Small treasure room

The door opens easily. The air here is thick with the fungus spores already described above. The room can only be entered safely by someone with a damp rag wrapped around nose and mouth.

The treasure lies on a damp bed of pallid fungus that the characters will be able to see on a stone plinth by the far wall. It consists of 200 silver coins (smaller than florins—worth about 10 crowns all told), a crystal spy-glass (this will be of value at (18) and a gilded key which unlocks the door to the Feasting Hall. The room is otherwise empty.

15. Three ways

The corridor leads to the north and then opens out into an east-west gallery. The pillars of the gallery are pitted with age, but you can still see that they were fashioned to resemble clumped vines, the entablatures like bunches of grapes. In the north wall, three archways are barred by black iron grilles.

None of the grilles is locked. The characters can see what is beyond each before opening it.

16. Silver snake

In the passage beyond the grille, you can see a huge serpent with burnished silver scales coiled on the floor. As

you shine your lantern-light down the passage it guards, it rises into the air on wings of greenish shadow.

As the grille is opened, if one of the characters is wearing the silver wristband from (12) he will feel it begin to throb with occult energy. The serpent will shrink and transmute, becoming a second silver wristband on the floor of the passage. This wristband is like the first, but coiled in the opposite direction—to be worn on the other wrist. If the character puts on this wristband also, he will be enveloped by a shimmering aura of silvery light. This aura quickly fades to leave his skin scaly and silver. The character's Armour Factor is increased by 2, but his Looks score is reduced to 3. Only a *Dispel Magic* will negate the effect and allow the character to remove the wristbands. (It is important to remember that people are very superstitious in the *Dragon Warriors* world. A character with an unpleasant serpentine complexion had best go around masked, as he could easily be mistaken for a monster and end up on the point of a Crusader's lance!)

Without the first wristband, the Winged Snake must be fought or avoided. Its bite injects a strong venom which causes the permanent loss of 1d3 Strength and 1 Health Point if the victim succumbs. It can also spit this venom up to 5m (not in the same round as attacking with its fangs). Resolve this as a missile attack at the victim's eyes (add +4 to the d20 Hit Roll because the Snake is aiming at a very small target). If hit, the victim is automatically blinded for 2–8 rounds but takes no other damage, (Knights sometimes wear full helms that cover the face. If a character had previously established that he used a helm of this sort, apply an additional +2 Hit Roll penalty when the Snake spits at him.) Winged Snakes are described on p. 44 of the *Bestiary*.

WINGED SNAKE

Rank-equivalent: 9th

ATTACK 19, Bite (d8 +1, 4 & venom) or Spit (see above)

DEFENCE 5

MAGICAL DEFENCE 8

Reflexes: 17

Health Points 21

Armour Factor 4

Movement: flying—25m

EVASION 5

STEALTH 14

PERCEPTION 13 (panoptical)

17. The way ahead

On the other side of the grille, an armoured skeleton wearing an iron crown lolls on a carved oak throne. Beyond, the corridor continues north.

As the grille is swung open, the skeleton rises with a languid motion from its throne, adopting an alert fighting stance.

It is no threat, however (though the characters may be alarmed into casting some of their spells prematurely), for it is actually an inanimate corpse and is only made to seem otherwise by a clever arrangement of thin cords which lift it like a puppet when the grille is opened. There is room to get past the throne and continue down the otherwise empty passage to (20).

18. Not what it seems

Through the bars of the grille you see that the corridor ends in a blank wall after only a few metres. An open treasure chest stands unguarded. Gold and sparkling gems spill over from it on to the floor all around. Beside it against the wall lie several beautifully wrought short-swords with gem-encrusted scabbards.

If the characters have the crystal spyglass from (14) and use it to look at the scene before them, they will see the reality that lies beneath the illusion.

Squatting on a pile of bloody carrion you see a large, gnarled goblin-like creature with a rusty cleaver lying in his lap. His long cloth cap is soaked in gore and his sallow face is twisted in a grotesque leer as he licks at a thighbone torn from the carcass.

The illusion of treasure vanishes the moment the grille is opened, revealing the Redcap in all his 'gory'. If the characters did not use the spyglass they will be surprised; if they did, they should surprise the Redcap. (But remember that the Redcap can see and hear what they're doing through the grille. If a character raises the spyglass to his eye, exclaims, "It's a monster!" and starts cranking up his crossbow, the Redcap will obviously realize they've seen through his trick and will rush out to attack.)

REDCAP

Rank-equivalent: 7th
 ATTACK 20, Cleaver (d6 +1, 5)* Armour Factor 2
 DEFENCE 13 EVASION 5
 MAGICAL DEFENCE 10 STEALTH 20
 Reflexes: 10 PERCEPTION 15 (darksight)
 Health Points 17 Movement: 10m (20m)

(*The Redcap's cleaver is infected with Wasting Disease. Anyone wounded must roll under their

Strength on d20 to avoid contracting this. For the details on Wasting Disease, see p. 126 of the rule-book.)

There is a treasure of sorts behind the illusion—though the characters may not recognize it as treasure. The carrion the Redcap was eating can be used to get past the Beast Men in 21.

19. Trophy Room

A long passage brings you to a gallery. Mounted trophies—the heads of slaughtered knights and woodsmen—stare sightlessly down from the walls. Another passage leads off the far end of the gallery.

Perhaps the characters could discover the head of someone they have met. A merchant or forester from Axbridge, a friar or a knight from Aldred's castle whom they thought was off on a quest, etc.

20. O horror, horror, horror

A short passage leads into a room where you are almost overcome with horror. Huntsmen have been butchered and their bodies treated barbarously, hung on hooks as game or roasted slowly on spits.

The succulent odour of cooking meat both entices and disgusts you. A large grey wolf is padding from one roasting carcass to the next, occasionally turning a spit with its slavering jaws. On the other side of the chamber you see a stout wooden door with an ornate lock.

The wolf growls if anyone approaches one of the spits. It will only attack if anyone tries to take the meat.

WOLF

Rank-equivalent: 1st	
ATTACK 15, Bite (d4, 5)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 3	EVASION 3
MAGICAL DEFENCE 1	Reflexes: 15
Health Points 10	Movement: 12m (25m)

If the characters look through the keyhole they will see the Beast Men (room 21) drooling impatiently as they wait for their dinner. The door is locked and requires the key from (14) or from (22) to open it. (The Beast Men lock themselves in and place the key some distance away in (22) as they are not otherwise patient enough to wait for their meal to cook. The wolf is trained to turn the spits and bark when the meat is properly roasted.)

If they use a key, the characters will obtain surprise as the Beast Men reach for their weapons. Otherwise the door must be broken down in the usual manner, and this negates any chance of surprise.

21. Feasting hall

You enter a long hall. A host of weird creatures rise to their feet along an ichor-spattered dining table. They look like men but have the heads of wild beasts—wolves, badgers, hares, stags, boars and eagles. They sway drunkenly as they heft their swords.

These Beast Men are creatures of the old wood who look upon men as game. All are hungry and somewhat drunk. If hunks of carrion (from 18) or roasted flesh (from 20) are thrown to them, there is a chance they will ignore the characters and fall ravenously upon the meat.

Roll d6 for each Beast Man; on a roll of 1–4 his bestial nature gets the better of him and he drops his weapon to eat. Failing this, the characters must fight.

BEAST MEN

Rank-equivalent: 1st

ATTACK 14, Sword (d8 +1, 5) Armour Factor 0

DEFENCE 6 EVASION 4

MAGICAL DEFENCE 4 STEALTH 15

Reflexes: all 8 PERCEPTION 12 (elfsight)

Movement: 10m (20m)

Health Points:

No.1: 5 HP	No.2: 10 HP	No.3: 9 HP
No.4: 5 HP	No.5: 6 HP	No.6: 8 HP
No.7: 8 HP	No.8: 8 HP	No.9: 7 HP
No.10: 5 HP	No.11: 10 HP	No.12: 9 HP

The only items of any interest to be found are pots of salt and pepper and numerous jugs of bitter nettle wine.

22. Antechamber

White bones litter the floor of this chamber, though of the creature that picked them clean there is no sign. You also notice a silvery trail of mucus across the floor as though a large, slimy object was dragged through here. A large key hangs on a hook on the wall.

The key unlocks the door of the Feasting Hall (see 20 and 21).

23. Mausoleum

You sense the aura of death here even before your lantern-light falls upon the grand sarcophagus of white marble against the far wall. Its sculpted lid depicts a tall figure with a human body but the head of a stag.

Up to five characters at once could try to lift the lid of the sarcophagus. A combined Strength of at least 75 would be needed. It contains no body, only two short-swords. These are both +2 magic weapons. They are protected by a *Curse* (MAGICAL ATTACK 21) which affects any character who tries to take them. The character's body will become hairy and his hands and feet become hoofs—he therefore cannot use any weapon until returned to normal by *Dispel Magic*.

24. Earthy bank

You stand at a T-junction. The northern branch continues straight on from this point and then begins to slope downwards, becoming a steep decline covered with moss and twigs. You can dimly see that it opens into a large chamber at the bottom. A faint cold light glimmers up from below.

The climb down is an easy one, holding no dangers in itself. Though the floor of the shaft is strewn with loose soil, there are plenty of stout roots to provide handholds.

As the characters near the bottom, a ghastly monster will burst among them from within the bank, showering soil and moss about as it emerges. It has the glistening body of a slug; its manlike head has a mouth filled with serried fangs and a slug's probing horns in place of eyes. Unless the characters saw the trail in room 22 and deduced there was some sort of slug-monster about, it achieves surprise by the sheer horror of its appearance.

MAN-SLUG

ATTACK 22*, Bite (d6 +1, 5) Armour Factor 0

DEFENCE 3 EVASION 3

MAGICAL DEFENCE 8 STEALTH 13

Reflexes: 6 PERCEPTION 10 (darksight)

Health Points 33 Movement: 6m

Rank-equivalent: 7th

(*On a Hit Roll score of 1 it swallows an opponent into its vast maw. The swallowed victim takes 1d3 HP damage each round from the monster's diges-



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tive juices and can only be cut free once it is dead.) The Man-Slug dislikes fire and has a 20% chance of retreating if struck by a *Dragonbreath* spell. If salt (perhaps collected from the Feasting Hall) is scattered over its body it will retreat into the bank with a voiceless howl.

25. Pit of Garambar

You descend into a large, roughly circular chamber. It is shaped like a low dome, illuminated by colourless daylight that washes down from a crevice in the ceiling. The golden spear hangs motionless in the air above the monolithic grey sarcophagus that dominates the centre of the chamber. Your gaze falls on a limp figure who hangs in chains at the back of the chamber. His face is hidden in shadow, but somehow you know he is dead.

A deep growl comes from the open sarcophagus. At once, the spear hurtles through the air and impales the dangling figure. Bright light flashes from its golden shaft and you see the figure's face clearly. It is ghastly pale, caked in congealed blood. It is Almeric's face.

Almeric shrieks in despair now as the truth becomes clear and memory returns to him. He was slain the

day before, along with Sir Grisso. It is his revenant that has brought the characters here, burdened by guilt because he died a coward. He throws up his hands and fades away, leaving only a lamenting wail in the cold air.

A powerful warrior arises from the sarcophagus as Almeric's ghost fades away. He is encased in heavy armour, but wears no helmet. His head is that of a fierce boar. Lifting his axe, he bellows: "I am Garambar, Boar-King, Overseer of the Forest, who has ruled here since ancient times. I am Lord of the Beasts, and you who have come from the world of mortal men have no place in my realm.

"This golden spear was mine, plundered from my hoary abode by the young lord's grandfather, who also slew my brother Helvennian. My quarrel with his line has now been settled in blood. The spear that was taken from me is returned. You have seen how I deal with my enemies—if you count yourselves wise, begone!"

Garambar will indeed let them go unmolested if they choose to. Though he has no love for mortal men, his argument was with Almeric, grandson of his old enemy, and his thirst for vengeance has been

slaked. Of course, if the characters leave now they will never possess Garambar's treasure.

Garambar has three great magical treasures. His golden spear is +2, but since it is pinning Almeric's body to the wall he will use his axe for the moment. His silver hunting horn summons a creature of the forest to his aid; this is like a *Wolfcall* spell, though the animal that comes may be a wolf, a boar or a stag (equal chance of each). A character must have a Strength of at least 17 to blow the horn, and such effort is involved that he loses 1d3 HP in doing so. Garambar's bronze shield, which he will not use in a fight with the characters, is +1 and gives +2 MAGICAL DEFENCE against Elven sorcery.

GARAMBAR

Rank-equivalent: 13th

ATTACK 26, Axe (d8 +2, 8)
or Tusks (d6 +3, 8)

DEFENCE 17

MAGICAL DEFENCE 13

Reflexes: 16

Health Points 31

Armour Factor 5

Movement: 12m (25m)

EVASION 7

STEALTH 17

PERCEPTION 18 (elfsight)

If the Beast Men in the Feasting Hall have not already been killed, they will come to aid their liege within 3–12 Combat Rounds.

Any character who has a hand in killing Garambar will henceforth always be singled out for attack during any encounter with woodland animals. His claim to be Lord of the Beasts was no idle boast!

IV. AFTERMATH

The player-characters ought to realize that they have a problem that they cannot just walk away from. The baron will soon guess that his son has met a sticky end, and if the characters have gone missing he will send out his knights to scour the countryside for them. The characters' version of events will carry more conviction if they return to the castle of their own accord—and with Almeric's body, preferably.

Baron Aldred's advisers may scoff as the characters relate their far-fetched tale, but the baron believes it, and only nods sadly. He knows the story of how his father found the gold spear in an ancient wooded bower, after slaughtering a stag which (according to the whispers of those who rode with him that day) somehow became a man....

Even absolved of any blame in Almeric's death, the characters should soon see that they cannot remain at the castle. The painful events have cast a pall. Within hours of the sad news entering the castle, rumours and whispers are circulating. Word reaches the player-characters' ears that a group of knights in Baron Aldred's retinue believe they can curry favour with their master by killing the people who through their failings allowed Almeric to die.

It should be clear that it would be better for them to move on. If they need more persuasion then a brief audience with the baron should do it: he tells them that while he holds them blameless, others are not so understanding and he does not want their blood on his hands. Perhaps they should lie low for a while, perhaps even travel a little. Ferromaine, in Kurland, is said to have many opportunities for adventurers such as them. Maybe he even knows of a trade-caravan or an important official travelling there and in need of an escort-party.

Baron Aldred bids them farewell. Doubtless they will ride through the castle gate with heavy hearts, thinking of the adventures they have had here. But then perhaps they will breathe in the cool, fresh, morning air and spur their horses along the road to the coast. And perhaps, as their ship sails from Clyster and heads south towards the wonders of the great continent, they will catch a glimpse of a strange castle on the coast, cut off by the rising tide, and on its battlements a robed figure brandishing aloft a sceptre of curious design, surrounded by a force of black-garbed... can they be skeletons?

The continent, the oceans and the Lands of Legend stand before them. The adventures that lie ahead of them will be fabulous indeed!

CHAPTER 7

MUNGODA GOLD

Introduction

THIS IS A more open-structured adventure than most that appear in this book. It consists of a number of episodes—capsule scenarios—linked by a main storyline. An adventure of this sort requires an experienced GamesMaster and players who are capable of good role-playing. A group in which the player-characters have reached 7th rank (the appropriate rank for this adventure) ought to qualify.

By way of an overview, the adventure involves a long sea-voyage in the employ of Melano, a merchant who has staked everything on the venture. Unbeknown to the other characters, there is an Assassin among the crew and his aim is to see that Melano dies on this trip. The adventure will culminate with a mission that the player-characters must undertake in order for the trip to be a success. In doing so they may find themselves up against a powerful group of NPC adventurers from the land of Khitai.

I. IN FERROMAINE

An offer of employment

The story begins in Ferromaine, or another port on the shores of the Coradian Sea. The characters are approached by a servant representing Melano Fiorensca, a merchant-adventurer. The servant asks them to come to Melano's townhouse for lunch the following day.

The characters have the chance to make a few enquiries. For the price of a round of drinks they can buy the common knowledge that Melano belongs to a cadet branch of the influential Senfriti family. By the standards of Coradian merchants he is not rich. If they want more information they must look further than the tap-rooms of Ferromaine. Other merchants and clerks will say that Melano squandered his inheritance on foolish ventures. This is the 'official line' among the well-to-do but the characters will get closer to the truth if they question sailors or longshoremen.

Melano's career has been deliberately stifled by rivals in high places. His brisk demeanour and reluctance to bestow the usual inducements made him several enemies, and these enemies were not slow to take action when his business interests encroached on their own. Most of the traders of the city have been advised not to handle Melano's goods, and his warehouse was badly damaged by a fire.

There is a last bit of information. Melano has been out of town for the last eight months, and after his return recently he has cashed in all his remaining investments in order to buy and outfit a larger ship. He has hired an excellent crew and filled the hold with a bizarre miscellany of goods: porcelain, hides, wine, dyes—even longbows. Nobody can suggest exactly what he is up to, but it is obvious that this is to be some kind of last, desperate trading venture.

The characters will not be kept in suspense for long. Following the servant's directions they make their way to Melano's townhouse in the Brasenose

Quarter, a somewhat shabbily genteel district of Ferromaine. The house is boarded up. Tentatively ringing the bell that hangs by the gate, the characters are startled to see a hunched form emerge from the front door and hobble down the path towards them. It is the servant they met the day before, and he is carrying a large haversack across his shoulders. He wrenches open the gate and motions them in, then plods testily past them into the street. "My erstwhile master awaits you in the vestibule," he snaps. He turns to go, then looks back as they approach the house. "Be warned that he surely has some hare-brained scheme that can bring you only hardship and woe. He is so far bereft of his wits that he has lately dismissed an old and valued servant."

The characters enter the house to find a tall man in his mid-thirties pacing restlessly around the vestibule. He wears scarlet hose, a thick overrobe bordered with miniver, an elegant peaked cap, and a doublet of black velvet with slashed sleeves showing a blaze of red silk beneath. The immediate impression is of a very successful Coradian businessman, though that image is hardly borne out by what they can see of the house: scuffed bare floorboards, dusty,

devoid of furniture, with several cracked panels in the walls.

Melano (for it is he) notices them and steps forward. "Greetings. I must apologize for this disarray—one of my minor residences, you understand. I intended my servant to bring you a message this morning suggesting we meet instead at a tavern, but obviously that message did not arrive." He begins to usher the group towards the door. "Come, let us go to Tacco Veruchi's, an excellent eating-house a few streets away."

Melano is making every effort to seem prosperous so that the characters will join his venture. The townhouse was rented, and Melano's rent is so far in arrears that his landlord sent some bully-boys around this morning to seize Melano's furniture and wardrobe. He has lost everything except the clothes on his back and his belongings already aboard his ship in the harbour. His servant continually urged Melano to abandon his plans, sell the ship and retire to the country. When he refused to have any more to do with the scheme—even to redirecting the characters to Tacco Veruchi's for the meeting—Melano dismissed him.



Once settled in a private room at the eating-house, Melano explains his proposition. He is planning a sea-voyage to the mouth of the Mungoda River to trade with the natives there. He has already made one trip and discovered that the natives were able to obtain large quantities of gold from other tribes upriver. He has asked them to obtain more in expectation of his return, and has come back to Ferromaine to stock up on suitable goods for trading. He has only rough ideas of what kind of thing that Mungoda natives would want in exchange for their gold, but he is confident that the trip will make a bountiful profit.

"In exchange for a topaz-and-silver hatpin they gave me this." He reaches into his belt-pouch and takes out a battered gold artifact as big as an egg. "On that one transaction I made a profit of more than a thousand Matapans." He tosses the artifact onto the table. "A thousand Matapans—a hundred crowns—now, to split between you. After our mission you will each receive another 500 Matapans for every month you have been in my service, and a twentieth part of the profits to share out. This is a considerable offer, I know, but I will expect you to earn it. On my last voyage I lost one of my two cogs to pirates and barely escaped with my life when I encountered a horde of lizard-men in the jungle. Persons of your reputation will ensure that trouble gives us a wide berth—or founders if it does not!"

Melano's venture

There is an obstacle to Melano's schemes. Melano is not aware of it. The Knights Capellars are well-established throughout the lands of the True Faith as bankers and financiers. They have large stocks of gold, and as a consequence they would not like to see a sudden devaluation of that metal. That is exactly what would happen if Melano's trip were to prove successful. Melano's captain on the first trip informed the Capellars about it, and they are now preparing to dispatch an expedition of their own. This will not be a trading expedition, however; they intend to take the gold by force of arms.

Meanwhile, Melano must be eliminated. The Capellars would prefer not to risk any whiff of scandal in Ferromaine itself (they have ample political problems already), so they have infiltrated an agent into the crew of Melano's ship. This fellow pretends to be from Emphidor but is in fact a Marijah Assassin—a group with whom the Capellars have quite

cordial links. He will either sabotage the ship so that they have to put into Crescentium (where the Capellars can take direct action) or, if that fails, simply dispose of Melano quietly one night.

TAKANDER, 'AN EMPHIDIAN SAILOR'

10th-rank Marijah Assassin

ATTACK 25	Armour Factor: as worn
DEFENCE 17	EVASION 9
MAGICAL DEFENCE 14	STEALTH 28
Health Points 16	PERCEPTION 17
<i>(Strength 15; Reflexes 16; Intel 16; Psychic 15; Looks 10)</i>	

Paraphernalia: Ankh of Osiris; Potion of Control; Sands of Slumber; nine throwing spikes (d2 +1, 2); five applications of Assassin's Lotion; six flash pellets; sword (d8 +1, 4); dagger (d4 +1, 3); other tools of his trade.

Apart from the player-characters, Melano, and Takander, the ship's complement is as follows:

- ♣ *Hieronymus Vant*, the captain, a freeman of Asmulia; he is short, gruff, and runs a tight ship.
- ♣ *Fustian Worlo*, pilot and first officer, also from Asmulia; he has sailed with Hieronymus for years and is a loyal friend.
- ♣ *Dialko Latumofis*, the ship's doctor; he is from Ferromaine, a kindly, passionate man in early middle-age.
- ♣ *Akron Treefeller*, the Mercanian helmsman, a tough red-bearded giant of a man with a fondness for strong liquor.
- ♣ *Tirant of Baumersheim*, the ship's chaplain; a priest is always useful on board ship to keep up the crew's morale, but Melano rather resents having to pay the 70 Matapans a week that this idle pedant is costing him.

There are also fourteen ordinary seamen (in addition to Takander) and a cabin-boy named Spruk.

Melano has chosen his men carefully. All except Spruk and Dialko are armed with swords and know how to use them. Treat them as equivalent to average 1st-rank Knights (ATTACK 13, DEFENCE 7, d6 +7 Health Points, etc.—see the rulebook, p. 119). Akron, when drunk, becomes absolutely fearless and should be treated as a 2nd-rank Barbarian.

The ship is called *The Pantocrator's Fist*. She is a medium-sized cog, presently carrying an assortment of goods worth roughly 2500 crowns on the Ferromaine market. Melano has chosen bulky, readily available goods that would be of little interest to thieves or pirates. There are four cabins: one of fair

size for Melano himself, and smaller ones for the captain and for Dialko and Fustian (who double up). The fourth is a larger cabin which Melano intends to be shared by player-characters of higher class. It can hold up to three people comfortably, so any other player-characters must make do with a tarpaulined-off section of the crew's space below deck. Sleeping arrangements and watches are entirely the player-characters' own concern.

Spruk has a sleeping-mat in Melano's cabin. Player-characters may wonder at their relationship, but they would have no way of knowing that the lad is actually Melano's illegitimate son. Melano intends one day to acknowledge him as his heir, but in the meantime he keeps things secret so that Spruk does not inherit the enemies that he himself has acquired.

III. The JOURNEY

The journey from Ferromaine to the Mungoda estuary will probably take about two months. For most of the way the captain will stick close to the main trade routes, though with a weather eye for rival merchants who might decide to follow them. The GamesMaster can use the random encounter tables found in the *Dragon Warriors Bestiary* to liven up the tedium of a long sea voyage. In addition, the three 'Saturday Night Specials' below can be introduced at points along the way.

Men of zeal

A huge cog appears on the horizon and gradually draws closer. The player-characters can hear whoops of delight as crowds of people appear on the deck. Amid all the confusion, several stern figures in white tabards, try to induce some order among the passengers. As everyone crowds to the near rail to look at *The Pantocrator's Fist*, the ship lurches dangerously to one side because of the weight.

One man stumbles over the side and is only saved by a burly, white-tabarded knight who seizes him by the collar and pulls him back. As player-characters would know from the eight-pointed indigo cross on their chests, the knights are of the Worshipful Order of Saint Wythan—the Knights Capellars, in other words. Fortunately, the particular Capellars in charge of this ship are not involved in the plot on Melano's life.

The commander of the Capellars signals that he wishes to come alongside and, receiving no objection from Hieronymus or Melano, soon brings his vessel within hailing distance. The name of this huge ship—which dwarves *The Pantocrator's Fist*—is clearly visible painted on her prow: *The Deliverance*. As before, you can paraphrase and extrapolate from the following:

"Aboy, Pantocrator's Fist!" cries the leader of the Knights. "Your ship has a God-fearing name."

"We are God-fearing men," shouts back Melano, introducing himself. "We are out of Ferromaine and bound for Paru town, which is to be found upon the Mungoda."

"An adventuresome mission indeed, good Melano. I am Runalf of Corvenna, lately Provincial Commander of the Knights Capellar in Braeburg. Now I am taking this horde of unlikely pilgrims to the Holy Land." He gestures jovially at the crowds packing the deck, who reply with a spirited cheer. It is apparent that Runalf is a well-liked man. At this distance you can make out the faces of some of the other Capellars, however. They have the sour, uncompromising expressions that are more typical of the Order.

Runalf bellows away good-naturedly for another fifteen minutes or so. If any player-character shows an interest in the Crusaders' voyage he will invite them to join his ship. Naturally, Melano will want his money refunded if a character actually takes Runalf up on this offer! (If you wish, you could have one of the sailors on *The Pantocrator's Fist* suddenly 'see the light' and ask to go with the Crusaders. Melano will not be entirely happy about that, and it may lead to an interesting exchange depending on whose side the player-characters take.)

Erewornian pirates

One day, shortly after dusk, an approaching ship is sighted in the fading twilight. The doleful sound of a drumbeat carries across the grey waves. Akron stares grimly out towards the longship and declares that it is a vessel of Ereworn. Unless anyone asks, he will not bother mentioning that he can identify it from the tempo of the drumbeat.

The longship swings into a broadside position at a distance of about 250 metres. It is a large vessel with two banks of rowers. Those on deck sit hunched over their oars, resting. At this distance it

is possible to make out the shouted commands of the oarsmaster as he calls strokes to hold the ship's course. One bank of oars is enough to keep up with Melano's slow cog.

Two or three tall figures stride along the deck towards a tarpaulin. It is drawn back and the characters can now see that the Erewornian ship is equipped with a catapult. "They are pirates, then..." murmurs the captain, fingering the hilt of his sword.

They lose sight of the three figures—presumably the Erewornian officers—and then a strange, pale-green glow becomes visible in the cup of the catapult. A pirate scurries to release the catch. A green projectile is flung high into the air and begins to arc down towards *The Pantocrator's Fist*. From here you may wish to paraphrase the following:

The crew scatter in all directions as the strange projectile descends. For, a moment you think it is going to miss the deck, but then it veers in mid-air and falls with a slushy hiss. It looks like a huge ball of green snow, maybe, or else a very dense cloud of glowing vapour. You take a few steps forward, perplexed. The captain has ordered pails of water brought, thinking that the object was a lump of flaming pitch. But it gives off no heat or flames, just a billowing column of pale-green vapour.

Something is happening. The column of vapour rises higher, thickening. Something dark is visible inside the swirling cloud: three figures. A sudden gust of wind stirs the cloud and disperses it. As the tattered wisps drift away, three black-armoured warriors are revealed. They are swathed in cloaks of black and vermillion and stand in a circle, their hands resting on the pommels of their unsheathed swords. The tallest has long black hair with a single streak of silver. You draw your own swords as you see how his eyes blaze with malevolence....

These three are Ghulfang, Varun and Rashang, three Erewornian Warlocks. More accurately, they are *Simulacra* of the Warlocks, who remain on the safety of their own vessel while sending these magical twins to do their fighting. Their dramatic entrance was achieved by using a special spell they obtained from a Cabbandari manuscript, a spell which transforms its caster into a cloud of cohesive vapour. (Doubtless this was one of the ultra-powerful magics used at one time by the true magi of Krarth.) The cost of casting this and the *Simulacra* spells has already been deducted from the Magic Point scores given here.

GHULFANG

13th-rank Warlock

ATTACK 25, Two-handed sword (d10, 5)

DEFENCE 20

MAGICAL ATTACK 26

MAGICAL DEFENCE 17

Magic Points 13

Armour Factor 5

EVASION 7

STEALTH 16

PERCEPTION 12

Health Points 17

(*Strength 11; Reflexes 13; Intel 18; Psychic 11; Looks 13*)

Skills: Appraise Enemy (roll 1d20 under *Psychic* to determine opponent's rank and Profession); Arrow Cutting (can apply DEFENCE against arrow); Fight Blind (only loses 2 ATTACK and 4 DEFENCE when unable to see opponent); Unarmed Combat (d6, 3); Minor Enchantment of Weapons (advanced—can produce +2 weaponry)

Weapon Groups: IV and VIII

Paraphernalia: Flask of Aitheron; (with the real Ghulfang on the longship: +2 sword; +1 plate armour; Ring of Red Ruin—5 charges)

The strategy of the attack is quite simple. Ghulfang's *Simulacrum* uses the flask of Aitheron to create an Air Elemental (*Bestiary*, p. 33) which he commands to seize as much treasure as it can carry back to the longship. While it is doing this, the three *Simulacra* keep the crew busy. Ghulfang and his cronies are used to dealing with ordinary sailors—who usually just stand and shiver after seeing the way this sinister trio come aboard! A fight with the player-characters will make them work for their loot, but the sailors will not join in until it is obvious that the *Simulacra* are going to lose.

VARUN

11th-rank Warlock

ATTACK 24 Two-handed sword (d10 +1, 5)

DEFENCE 16

MAGICAL ATTACK 24

MAGICAL DEFENCE 15

Magic Points 9

Armour Factor 5

EVASION 5

STEALTH 15

PERCEPTION 10

Health Points 12

(*Strength 17; Reflexes 9; Intel 12; Psychic Talent 14; Looks 9*)

Skills: Minor and Major Enchantment of Weapons

Weapon Groups: IV and VI

Paraphernalia: (all with the real Varun: Severblade; Amulet of Soul Storing; Ring of Sentinels—1 charge)

RASHANG

11th-rank Warlock

ATTACK 23, Two-handed sword (d10, 5)

DEFENCE 16

MAGICAL ATTACK 25

MAGICAL DEFENCE 16

Magic Points 9

Armour Factor 5

EVASION 6

STEALTH 15

PERCEPTION 11

Health Points 14

(Strength 13; Reflexes 9; Intel 14; Psychic Talent 16; Looks 7)
 Skills: Minor and Major Enchantment of Armour
Paraphernalia: (all with the real Rashang: +1 sword;
 Nullplate; flask of Love Philtre; two flasks of Aitheron;
 Mephisto's Bow—a longbow whose arrows cast *Curse* on
 the target if they hit, at a cost of 1 MP to the user)

The GamesMaster should remember to check Spell Expiry for the *Simulacra*. Once the Air Elemental returns to the longship with some plunder from the cog's hold, the Warlocks will break off the attack and dispel their *Simulacra*—unless they have spotted one of the player-characters using a particularly luscious magic item, in which case they will concentrate their attacks to kill him and then send in the Air Elemental to grab the item(s) in question.

The Warlocks will avoid ship-to-ship combat if at all possible, preferring the snatch-and-run tactics that have served them so well in the past. If forced to make a stand, they will use their catapult to hurl rocks at *The Pantocrator's Fist* and then grapple with a view to boarding. Presumably the player-characters will have the sense not to pursue once the *Simulacra* are dealt with. Melano and Hieronymus will not push their luck if they see the pirates' ship leaving, anyway. As for any lost cargo or items stolen by the Elemental—Melano shrugs: "Think of it as a toll," he says wryly.

It is extremely unlikely that the player-characters will turn things around so far as to take the pirate ship. In case they do, however, fifty of the oarsmen count as unranked characters (ATTACK 11, DEFENCE 5, etc.) and the remaining thirty should be treated as 1st-rank Knights. The oarsmaster and other senior crewmembers (there are eight in all) are 5th-rank Barbarians. All wear leather armour and use ordinary swords. In any attack on the longship, the Warlocks will of course deploy their full magical arsenal listed above. The ship's coffers presently hold about 30,000 florins

The Tower of Night

This third episode comes after *The Pantocrator's Fist* has navigated the Gulf of Marazid and is sailing southwards along the coast towards the Mungoda estuary. For maximum effect it will help if someone of importance has been killed shortly before the encounter. If none of the player-characters died fighting Ghulfang and his cronies, stage-manage

Melano's death at the hands of Takander just before the following events take place.

Hieronymus and his officers are obviously nervous because they are in unfamiliar waters. All they have to go on are some simple charts prepared after Melano's earlier trip. Still worse, a storm is obviously brewing in the south-east. Strong winds are blowing in towards the shore and it is necessary to take the ship out into the open sea for safety.

The storm rolls in like a shroud across the sky. A rough swell soon turns into high waves that threaten to swamp the ship. Sheets of flickering lightning crash between the clouds, illuminating the pale and terrified faces of the sailors.

Things go from bad to worse. Hieronymus staggers along the deck, holding onto the rail for dear life, to tell you that the wind is shifting. A westerly gale is flinging you right out into the middle of uncharted seas!

You should go through the motions of rolling for weather, ship damage and so on, but disregard any disastrous results. A wreck at this point would not be in the best interests of the adventure! *The Pantocrator's Fist* is blown eastwards for a day and a night, with every hand on deck struggling to bale water and see that none of the cargo is washed over the side. At last the wind dies. Dawn rises on a limping ship and tired, bedraggled crew:

In the light of a new day you begin to take stock of the damage. Some kegs of wine that were not tied down securely have gone over the side. Miraculously only one of the sailors is missing. The sky is sullenly overcast, but a glimpse of the sunrise allowed you to get your bearings. "We are far out in what the Ta'ashim sailors call the Deep of Rasakna," announces Hieronymus. "Though you are all exhausted, repairs on the rigging must begin at once. Master Worlo will organize shifts."

He stops short and stands gaping into the distance. Following his gaze you see a tall pinnacle touched by a single shaft of pink sunlight. "Could it be land? An island...?" muses Hieronymus. He snaps orders and soon the damaged ship is being sculled towards the pinnacle.

When you draw closer you see that it is actually an immense tower of coral rock that rises straight up out of the ocean depths. A staggering sight indeed—especially as the coral gives the strange impression of having grown to form this tower. Buttresses jutting out from the sides form four harbours where your ship could dock. There is a brief argument about the wisdom of staying here, but



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the damage to the ship means that you really have no choice. Inching into the harbour mouth, you catch sight of an armoured figure standing in front of a massive archway into the tower. He waits as you dock and steps forward when you jump down onto the quayside.

Without a word, this figure gestures for the characters to follow him. They may notice a powdery scent in the air behind him. He takes them through the archway into the tower, then through a wall of glittering energy that parts to admit them. They stand in a vestibule. The energy-wall forms again behind them and there is a moment of dizziness. Then the wall fades again—but not to reveal the archway and the quay beyond. The scene has changed; somehow they have been transported into the tower and are now looking into a darkened audience chamber.

On the far side of the chamber, a wall of clear crystal gives a view of the ocean depths. The only light comes from strange luminous fish that dart to and fro in the water. There is a dais on the far side of the room, against the pane of crystal, and silhouetted against the shifting pattern of lights a seated figure can be seen. He raises his hand in greeting and

speaks, saying: “Welcome, travellers, to the home of Azhahn.”

The characters have found their way to the Tower of Night, the home of Azhahn the Weaver of Enchantments. Azhahn is centuries old and very powerful. His tower is a truly enormous edifice of coral stone that rises a hundred metres or more above the waves and has its foundations in the fathomless depths of the sea. His only companion is silent Morclasto, the heavily armoured warrior who met the characters when they docked.

The characters are probably feeling rather nervous by now, but Azhahn’s intentions are not at all hostile. This is fortunate because he is a superhumanly powerful wizard against whom mere mortals would stand little chance. Mighty as they may be, the player-characters would last only a few seconds in combat with him. Since Azhahn himself is not going to start a combat, the only way this can happen is if the player-characters decide to act aggressively. If they do, they deserve what they get. All that Azhahn requires from them is a few hours’ company and pleasant conversation. In return he will provide them with a great deal.

Morclasto waits by the door as his master talks with the characters. They cannot see the wizard very clearly in the gloom, but as their eyes adjust they will notice that he wears heavy gold-and-azure robes and an ornamental pectoral studded with star sapphires. His hands are gloved and a mask of painted wood conceals his face; the mask appears to have no eyeslits.

Azhahn tells them that he would like them to conduct the repairs to their vessel in the safety of his harbour, and that Morclasto will provide any materials they need. He also invites them to join him for dinner that evening. Adding that he is aware they have suffered recent bereavement (a reference to whichever character has been killed previously), Azhahn says that he will “set matters to rights”. Doubtless the player-characters will ask him what he means by that, but Azhahn has a leisurely manner and simply adds that in time all mysteries are dispelled. (Players often find cryptic NPCs annoying, but this is not an excuse for violence—as they will hopefully realise!)

After the audience with Azhahn, Morclasto takes them back to the ship. Repairs go well, and by late afternoon the ship is fully seaworthy. Towards dusk the sky begins to darken, but though thick clouds pile up and blot out the sun there is no wind. This is not another storm. Within minutes it has become as dark as night, and there is a tingling in the air as though massive energies are gathering. Suddenly a startled sailor shouts something and points down into the water: a fine tracery of glowing filaments converge on the ship like a web. The centre of the energy-web seems to be the pallet where the dead character’s body was placed. The characters gather to watch as Azhahn’s wizardry takes effect:

You catch glimpses of filaments of sparkling light moving fast through the air. The energy is only visible out of the corner of one’s eye, but everyone—even the least psychically gifted—can feel the tremendous surge of power flowing in towards the ship. Towards the corpse on the pallet.

Outside, everything is black except for the network of lights beneath the water and a soft glow outlining the Tower of Night. The lamp in the cabin flickers and goes out. Someone is about to relight it, but then there is a gasp as everyone present realizes there is a faint glow around the corpse. Now you can hear a high whistling in the air. Sparks play around the body and make an acrid taste in the air.

Suddenly the corpse stiffens and sits bolt upright! There is a ghastly expression set on its grey face, like a soundless scream. All hearts skip a beat. The corpse’s eyes snap open and it gives vent to a shriek, then slumps forward. The lamp catches alight again, and a wash of red sunset floods into the silent cabin. The tracery of light fades away. Instead of dead flesh you are gazing down on a living, breathing form. Your comrade is with you once again.

The characters will never again see such a dramatic resurrection. The character who has been brought back from the dead is *fully* restored—no reduction in Health Points or characteristics when Azhahn’s magic is involved. Fortunately, the character has been resurrected just in time to dress for dinner.

You return with Morclasto to the audience chamber. Silk cushions have been set out around a cloth spread with a mouthwatering array of pastries, seafood dishes and sweetmeats. There are even some real surprises among the dishes: roast quails, pickled eggs, venison and fresh fruit! Seated on his dais, Azhahn bows in greeting and invites you to join him.

The room is lit, as before, by the luminous glow from the fishes on the other side of the crystal window. Azhahn has also had some oil-lamps placed along the room so that the characters can see to eat, but he remains half hidden in the shadows.

Azhahn does not eat (nor does Morclasto, who stands in silence beside his master), but entertains his guests with old legends while they dine. Afterwards he may invite one of the characters to play a tune (Dialko is, in fact, quite an accomplished flautist) or tell a tale. He is pleased to discuss any subject the characters find interesting. Theology is a favorite topic of his (he belongs to the Ta’ashim faith, though could hardly be called dogmatic) but he will break off any argument if anyone becomes offended or upset.

The most important thing to Azhahn is that his guests enjoy themselves. You should also note that he does not use or discuss magic except when absolutely necessary. He happily resurrected the characters’ dead companion but he does not bother with paltry tricks like levitating the wine-jug or creating sorcerous music.

The hour is late, and Azhahn notes that some of his guests are getting sleepy: “Forgive me, you will wish to

return to your ship. But before you go, allow me to show my gratitude for your excellent company.”

He turns and waves Morclasto forward. The armoured giant bears a large wooden chest over to you and sets it down. It contains the following: a silver ring with a serpentine band; an ivory baton; a black-and-gold lacquered mask; a cedarwood flute; a bronze gauntlet decorated with garnets; a jade amulet consisting of several plaques in the shape of inscrutable faces; a fist-sized globe of yellow crystal; a mirror of polished copper; an iron torc; a slender dagger with an onyx pommel, and a small bronze bell.

“Please take a gift that will serve as a keepsake of your visit here,” says Azhahn.

Each of these items is enchanted to allow the person who owns it one use of a given spell. An item works only for the character who chooses it, so the characters cannot swap them once they find out what they do. As each character takes his choice from the selection, take the player to one side and reveal what the item does. Alternatively, prepare notes or file cards to hand each player. Your description should tell the character what the effect of the one-use spell will be, not the spell’s name. Saying, “It’s a *Pursuit* spell,” would mean nothing to a Knight—or to anyone but a Mystic, for that matter.

Each person at the dinner can take an item. The player-characters may or may not have the good manners to let their employer choose first. The NPCs at the dinner will be Melano, Hieronymus, Fustian, Dialko and Tirant. Therefore if there are more than six player-characters in the party you will need to invent a few more items. The specific power of each item is as follows:

Item	One-use spell
Ring	<i>Phantasm</i>
Baton	<i>Terminate Enchantment</i> (16 Magic Points)
Mask	<i>Invisibility</i>
Flute	<i>Raise Fog</i>
Gauntlet	<i>The Trickster’s Hand</i>
Amulet	<i>Miracle Cure</i>
Globe	<i>Pursuit</i>
Mirror	<i>Teleport</i>
Torc	<i>Command</i> (with MAGICAL ATTACK of 58)
Dagger	<i>Animate Bones</i>
Bell	<i>Destrier</i>

Activating the power of one of these items is an action and takes a full Combat Round.

The characters will not see Azhahn again. Morclasto comes to the quay the next morning to see

them off, but he is as uncommunicative as ever. They sail away across a rich blue sea under a sky with only a few high wisps of cloud, and when they turn back for a last look at the fabulous Tower of Night they find it is already out of sight.

From here it is plain sailing. Within a week *The Pantocrator’s Fist* has reached its goal: the sixty-mile-wide mouth of the great Mungoda River.

III. The Mouth of The MUNGODA

All too often, players fondly imagine that their characters can get away with flaunting the rules of common sense. Just because *Dragon Warriors* is a fantasy game, however, there is no reason to be unrealistic. Realism is a very desirable ingredient of the campaign, because it undercuts and so accentuates the magical elements when they occur. This is why two special rule points are discussed next:

Problems of climate

The Mungoda basin is noted for its heat and humidity. A man who tried to wear full armour would quickly boil alive. Fortunately, some body areas are more likely than others to be struck in combat (the arms and shoulders are hit more often than the chest or the belly, and so on) and so it is possible to discard much of one’s armour coverage without losing all the armour’s protective value.

‘Stripped down’ armour for use in this tropical climate gives the following reduced Armour Factors:

Armour type	Armour Factor
None; gambeson	0
Padded armour	1
Mail hauberk, mail armour	2
Plate armour	3

Magic armour provides half its normal AF bonus when stripped down—so +2 plate (normally Armour Factor 7) becomes AF 4. Fractions are rounded up.

If the GamesMaster and players have a taste for realism, they may wish to further reduce the AF of stripped-down armour where missile weapons are concerned. Whereas it is possible to say that a swordsman will hit one’s forearms rather than one’s back and so discard backplate but not vambraces—an arrow might as easily strike either.

Disease

The climate brings a second problem. The Cosh Goyopë region is rife with diseases, which can be contracted from insect bites or simply from drinking the water. For each week spent on or near the river, the GamesMaster rolls d100 for each character to see if he/she has picked up a disease:

<i>Character's rank</i>	<i>Chance of illness</i>
Unranked or 1st–3rd	15%
4th–6th	10%
8th–9th	5%
10th up	1%
<i>Modifiers</i>	
Assassin	–5%
Knight or Barbarian	–4%
Warlock or Mystic	–2%
Wearing armour	+3%

(Adept Mystics are of course entirely immune to disease—see the rulebook, p. 35).

If a character becomes ill, another roll is made to determine which of the diseases of the region he has caught:

<i>d100</i>	<i>Disease</i>
01–35	The Trembles
36–45	Gods' Feasting
46–80	The Barbed One
81–00	White-Eye Grin

These are direct translations of the native names for the diseases. Often they have quite similar symptoms to familiar diseases such as leprosy (see the rulebook, p. 126), but because they are indigenous to the Mungoda region they are difficult for non-natives to shake off. Player-characters (except for the very occasional Barbarian who comes from this part of the world) will have low natural resistance to these ailments.

The basic rule for any of these diseases is as follows. The afflicted character attempts a Recovery Roll each day. Usually this is made on 3d6 (exception: see *God's Feasting* below), and the character must score under his current Strength to recover. If he fails, he tries another Recovery Roll the next day, but this time he adds 1 to the dice roll, then 2 the next day and so on. If he fails to make a successful recovery within the disease's specific term then he either dies (if it is a terminal illness) or becomes prey to periodic bouts of the disease (in the case of a chronic illness).

The following modifiers are applied to the Recovery Roll:

Complete rest	–2
Treated by physician	–2
Treated by shaman	–1
<i>Cure Disease</i> spell	–3
<i>Purification</i> or <i>Miracle Cure</i>	–6
Strenuous exertion, etc.	+2
Under <i>Curse</i>	+1d6

Note that the usual curative enchantments are not fully effective against these unfamiliar maladies. They do not give a guaranteed cure, merely a better chance of making the day's Recovery Roll as shown above. A character who is brought back from the dead by the *Resurrect* spell is 80% likely still to be suffering from any diseases he had caught. The *Phoenix* spell, however, cleanses the body of all ailments.

The Trembles are caused by a virus found in river-mud. A character who falls into swamp water must make an immediate check to see if he contracts the disease. The effect of Trembles is uncontrollable shivering followed by palsy. An afflicted character temporarily loses 2d6 from Reflexes and 1d10 from Strength. If either score goes to 0 he must be left in his bed or carried around in a litter. The *term* of this illness is 10 days, and if the character has not recovered by the end of this time he has a 5% chance of dying. The Trembles are rarely fatal, however, and more probably the character will be prone to relapses every 1–3 years. After each bout of Trembles the character's Strength and Reflexes return to normal but are permanently depleted by 1 point each.

God's Feasting is the Mungoda euphemism for leprosy, which the river-folk believe is caused by the invisible spirits devouring a victim alive. This malady is virulent and Recovery Rolls are made on 6d6. The disease initially causes the loss of 1 point of Strength, Reflexes and Looks each week. The *term* is 1 month, and if recovery is not made in this time it is not long before the hands and feet begin to mortify and rot away. The character is not dead, but his adventuring life is certainly over.

The Barbed One is so-called because it gives the impression of a small spiny creature wriggling within one's bowels. The victim temporarily loses 1d3 Strength, 1d4 Reflexes and 1d4 Health Points. He suffers continual diarrhoea and vomiting. The *term* of this illness is 4 days, and if the character fails to make his Recovery Roll by then he will suffer

further bouts at intervals of 3–18 months. Fortunately the victim's Strength, etc., are not permanently reduced, returning rapidly to normal after each attack of the malady.

White-Eye Grin is a fever which attacks the brain. The victim falls into a coma. If he does not recover within the disease's *term* of 2 weeks he either dies (20% chance) or suffers the permanent loss of 1d3 Intelligence. In the latter case, the malady recurs every 1–6 months.

Arrival at Paru

Paru is a large sprawling town one hundred miles up the Mungoda estuary. There is no problem reaching here; the Mungoda is deep enough that an ocean-going vessel could sail more than six hundred miles upstream. The town lies on the fringes of the Cosh Goyopë swamplands and consists of hundreds of bamboo huts built on stilts out over the water. Plank walkways connect the huts, but the most common mode of transport for the people of Paru is the dug-out canoe. By keeping out from the bank the river-folk avoid the hunting parties of Dracomen (*Bestiary*, p. 18) that trudge through the marshes in search of human prey. Food comes from the river and from trade with other tribes upstream, so it is possible for a native to live his entire life out on the Mungoda without ever venturing onto dry land.

Melano has an acquaintance from his previous visit here: Imbi, a wily old trader who seems to have an incredible number of sons and grandchildren. The characters will be conveyed to Imbi's hut (quite a grand dwelling by the meagre standards of the town) in dug-outs rowed by his sons, served with drinks by his granddaughters and grandsons, and so on. Imbi affects the disposition of a bucolic rascal and pretends that his command of Nascérine (the mutual tongue in which he must converse with Melano's group) is worse than it is. Thus he might say: "Good sirs! Good sirs! Imbi's home, your home. Make free with food and grandchildren. Tomorrow talk barter, much glitter-money for your wares, yes?" Melano is aware that this is just a pretence, and that Imbi is as shrewd a businessman in his way as any merchant-prince of Ferromaine.

Imbi's main rival in Paru is a fellow named Lakto, a trader whose hut lies at the other edge of the town. Lakto is very jealous of Imbi's friendship

with the foreigners and will send his own grandchildren swimming like fish along the river to invite the characters to negotiate with him instead. In the middle of the feast Imbi lays on, a boy's voice calls out through the dusk: "Masters! Good sirs from afar! Imbi is big rogue; take your business to Lakto's hut!" This attempted poaching of his clients enrages Imbi, who leans out of the window and yells abuse at the lad before sending some of his household to drive him away. "Lakto has worm in place of tongue!" is all he will say to his 'honoured guests'.

The next day the characters may care to take a canoe-trip along Paru. They will see that the nearest huts to the shore are where the poorest people of the town live—and even these are at least two hundred metres out over the water. Townsfolk pole past on rafts with their wares, and a bustling river-market develops by mid-morning. In net-corral encircled by planks they see natives farming the *ngokla*, a hideous trilobite crustacean considered to be a great delicacy. As they approach Lakto's huts they discover a three-masted junk lying at anchor, triangular sails folded like paper fans. It is a vessel from the great eastern land of Khitai, as Akron will be quick to point out. An elderly man in fine robes sits under a parasol on the deck, apparently painting. He leans forward to scrutinize the characters as they row past, revealing unpleasantly disfigured features and a withered arm as he leaves the concealing shade of the parasol. He appears not to understand anything the characters may call out to him, but soon goes back to his 'painting' (actually he is writing with the brush-pen used in Khitai) as though they do not interest him. If the characters ask the boy rowing their canoe who this Khitan is, he merely grins and says, "Lakto's guest. Big magic-man from far off."

In fact the characters have caught their first glimpse of Subotai the sorcerer. He is here in the party of Lord Chonmaru, a Khitan noble. They intend to do some trading with Lakto, but they also have other plans. They have been more meticulous in examining the Paru artifacts than Melano was. The artifacts are clearly of ancient Kaikuhuran design, and this bears out an old legend that, thousands of years ago, high priests and aristocrats who fell from favour at Pharaoh's court would be sent into exile across the Deeps of Rasakna to the Mungoda Jungle. Acting on the theory that these nobles (often sent into exile with hundreds of guards and servants) maintained a secret civilization here, Chonmaru and his group hope to find the Kaikuhuran

ruins where they believe the Paru traders are getting their gold artifacts.

The expedition from Khitai

The Khitan party comprises: Lord Chonmaru, the young noble who is funding their expedition; Subotai, a wizard of considerable ability; three henchmen, one of whom is from Opalar; two ship's officers (Chonmaru himself functions as captain) and twelve ordinary seamen.

With luck it will be possible for the player-characters to have some conversation with the Khitans before the inevitable hostilities commence. Subotai speaks Opalarian and Nascérine fluently and can make himself understood in Ancient Emphidian, and he is able to read Qemor Hieroglyphs. Chonmaru has a smattering of Nascérine, and Hiwan and Kalung have picked up enough words of both Nascérine and Opalarian for their new colleague Farima'al to understand them. In particular they can discuss military tactics, women and gambling odds with considerable fluency. (All the Khitans speak Tsutsuneng, of course, but it is doubtful if any of the player-characters will know that one!)

SUBOTAI

13th-rank Sorcerer

ATTACK 17, Left 'hand' (d4 +2, 5) Armour Factor 0

DEFENCE 11

EVASION 6

MAGICAL ATTACK 31

STEALTH 16

MAGICAL DEFENCE 21

PERCEPTION 13

Magic Points 47

Health Points 11

(Strength 9; Reflexes 9; Intel 15; Psychic Talent 17; Looks 4)
Paraphernalia: +2 metal 'hand'; fan with *Invisibility* spell;
 Amulet of Sovereignty over Violence; Flying Carpet; two
 sachets of Amianthus Dust.

(As a Sorcerer of Khitai, Subotai's spells would logically be slightly different from those of western mages. The GM can use the same rules but describe any spell that Subotai casts as though it were something unfamiliar. His *Deathlight* appears as multiple converging beams of many-coloured light; his *Tanglevines* manifests itself as a ruby band which encircle the target's legs, etc.)

Subotai was born into a nomad family from beyond the north-western provinces of Khitai. His tribe was attacked by another, and although he was young at

the time Subotai can remember the scenes of carnage as his parents and brothers were slaughtered all around him. Somehow he was passed over in the orgy of destruction, and later sold by a nomad warrior to a Khitan magistrate. Noting the young Subotai's sharp intellect, the magistrate took him off household chores and saw to his education. When he reached manhood, Subotai was given his freedom by the old magistrate, who also paid his entry fee into the Civil Service examinations. Subotai passed these with flying colours and went to the capital, Pashang. He made wise friendships and bribed the right people, so that his influence went from strength to strength.

The other bureaucrats of Pashang disliked Subotai. He was a foreigner, after all, and seemed inordinately successful in his career—and unreasonably popular with several Imperial Khitan princes. Plots were hatched to bring him low. On a hunting trip with Prince Latong he became separated from the main group and was attacked by thugs hurling pots of 'Emphidian Fire'—a sticky, inflammable stuff used in sea battles. His horse threw him, his bearers scattered. Subotai retaliated with magic (he was a powerful sorcerer even then) but was splashed with the burning liquid and overcome with pain. Luckily for him the prince had sent several men of his bodyguard back to look for his friend. They came upon the scene to find a thug just about to slay Subotai as he writhed in agony. The thugs were captured or driven off, and the captives soon induced to reveal who had paid them to ambush their prey. The prince soon saw to it that the plotters were punished for their crimes—executed, assassinated, exiled or reasigned, according to their status.

The injuries Subotai had suffered forced an absence from his office at the Palace of Overseeing Wisdom. His burns responded slowly to treatment, and that treatment slowly dwindled away his resources—and protocol also demanded lavish gifts for Prince Latong in return for his kindness. Finally impoverished, he was obliged to retire to his country estate. He returned to the study of magic which had absorbed him in his younger days. He became, in time, one of the mightiest wizards of all Khitai.

Now about sixty, Subotai is a portly man who dresses elegantly in velvet tunics and silk brocade gowns. His manner, clothing, makeup and lacquered hair all suggest a well-to-do Khitan dignitary, but on careful inspection his darker skin and narrow eyes betray his nomad origin. His face is horribly dis-

figured—the scars he still carries from the ambush decades ago. This is particularly noticeable on the left side of his face. He lost an eye, in fact, which he has replaced with a facsimile in apple-green jade. The scrutiny of this false eye is somewhat disturbing, and many say that he can see more with it than with his good eye. By this it is meant that Subotai can look into a man's heart to determine his motives and intentions.

The burns also withered his left arm, which is now supported by a framework of iron hoops and rods. Most of the fingers on the left hand are missing, but the arm support terminates in a fretwork claw with which Subotai can fight if he has to. All his sorcery has been unable to restore the burned flesh (perhaps because of a 'mental block?'), but in some way the spells intended to heal his arm have imbued his arm support and metal claw with strength and magic power. This is factored into the stats given above.

Among his other possessions Subotai has a paper fan bearing some elaborate Tsutsuneng calligraphy. It reads: "I keep them hidden, my robes of scarlet...", these being the opening lines of a famous Khitan poem. If the fan is waved three times rapidly in each direction it will cast *Invisibility* on the person fanned. It does this once a day. His Flying Carpet is unsuitable for intercontinental travel but is fine for cruising over the jungle treetops—as the player-characters should see for themselves later. Subotai's travelling-chest contains about 15,000 florins-worth of gold, silver and gems.

CHONMARU

10th-rank Knight

ATTACK 23*, Magic sword (d8 +2, 5) Armour Factor 3

DEFENCE 18

EVASION 7

MAGICAL DEFENCE 13

STEALTH 15

Health Points 21

PERCEPTION 10

(Strength 11; Reflexes 14; Intel 13; Psychic 14; Looks 13)

Combat skills: Swordmaster (critical hit on Hit Roll of 1 or 2); Sword Weaponskill (+1 Armour Bypass, included above); Disarm Technique (when opponent makes a Hit Roll of 20, roll 3d6 higher than his rank to disarm)

Paraphernalia: +1 metal sword; Healing Potion (one draught); Phlogiston (one bottle); Theriac (one draught); Ring of Teleportation (5 charges)

Chonmaru is the grandson of Jurekmai, the magistrate who nurtured Subotai in his youth. Subotai does not like him and is dubious about the worth of their mission, but when Chonmaru approached

him for assistance Subotai's burden of obligation was such that he could not refuse.

Chonmaru is a typical Khitan aristocrat: hot-tempered, arrogant, vain and distrustful of foreign 'barbarians'. His redeeming qualities are impeccable manners, disregard for danger, a strong sense of honour and a love of the fine arts. This expedition is his pet project, something he has been planning for years. He intends to make his reputation on its success, and would only be deterred from his aims by extreme violence.

If they share a common tongue, player-character Knights or Barbarians might strike up a friendship of sorts with Chonmaru. He admires the qualities of a strong and disciplined personality, a rigorous devotion to warrior skills, and an eye for delicate beauty. Sometimes he relaxes by making ink drawings of the jungle, and an aesthetically inclined character might glean something of his temperament and dexterity in the clean, precise lines of his sketches.

The greatest honour he will give (only if he takes a real shine to a character) will be to display his full suit of armour—a lacquered masterpiece with mother-of-pearl and ivory decorations. He beams with pleasure at any words of praise a character may have for this fine harness, e.g.—*player-character* (in faltering Nascrine): "It's pretty good armour." *Chonmaru* (nodding vigorously): "Oh yes, but please excuse me correcting your Nascrine; you mean to say, particularly magnificent. Similar-sounding words can be confusing."

Chonmaru also brought along three of his family retainers. One died on the passage from Khitai, and Chonmaru hired a replacement for him in Opalar. These three are all average 4th-rank Knights:

HIWAN	ATTACK 16	MAGICAL DEFENCE 6
	DEFENCE 10	EVASION 4
	Health Points 16	
KALUNG	ATTACK 16	MAGICAL DEFENCE 6
	DEFENCE 10	EVASION 4
	Health Points 16	
FARIMA'AL	ATTACK 16	MAGICAL DEFENCE 6
	DEFENCE 10	EVASION 4
	Health Points 13	

All are armed with swords (d8, 4), crossbows (d10, 4) and daggers (d4, 3). Because of the sweltering heat, their mail harness has been stripped down to Armour Factor 2.

The officers and sailors aboard the junk should be considered to be normal unranked characters (see

the *Bestiary*, p. 17) in all respects except that they get +1 on ATTACK when shooting a crossbow. This is something they have had to do quite a lot of over the years, and numerous encounters with the pirates of the South Sea have turned them into fairly skilled bowmen. If forced to *mêlée* they fight with swords (d8, 4) and wear no armour.

The total wealth aboard the ship (excluding Subotai's coffer) comprises silver, gold and jewellery to the value of 25,000 florins. Chonmaru's armour is worth a great deal to any Khitan noble, though few would deign to give money for it. If bestowed as a gift it could secure a noble's friendship and patronage for a time, however.

No deal!

The player-characters return to Imbi's but after their tour of Paru to find their employer in a very distressed state. Essentially, the problem is this: Imbi has become wise to the fact that, although gold seems worthless to him, it is obviously a valuable commodity where Melano is concerned. He is no longer falling happily into line with Melano's plans to sell common Ferromaine goods for a king's ransom. Instead, he wants Melano to provide something commensurate with the gold's value. Specifically, he wants Melano's hired warriors—the player-characters—to drive off a hostile tribe that recently migrated into the region.

The people of Paru have never had trouble avoiding the clumsy Dracomen, who shun the river and thus cannot get to the stilt buildings. These newcomers are another matter. Sometimes they launch night raids to set fire to huts and carry off women and children. Their attacks on river traffic are costing Paru (and Imbi in particular) dearly. Sometimes they ambush the foraging parties who go ashore to gather nuts and fresh meat. Imbi's people are not warriors, so he wants the PCs to deal with the problem. Then, he says, there will be gold aplenty.

Back aboard *The Pantocrator's Fist* the alternatives may be discussed. Melano could trade his goods, but as long as there is something else that Imbi wants he will hold out for that instead. Melano might even get less than the market value in Ferromaine! The characters could simply seize Imbi's gold by force and sail off, but Melano does not approve of that approach. Moreover, his opinion is that Imbi does

not keep much gold in his hut, but only sends his people to get some when he needs it for trading purposes. The gold is presumably taken from old ruins somewhere in the jungle—Melano has not thought much about it—but the chances of finding out where seem pretty remote.

In the end there is really only one conclusion: they must do what Imbi wants. Since this will involve the player-characters in greater danger than was expected when they signed on, they could start to renegotiate their cut at this point. Melano will not be happy with any change in the share-out, but without their co-operation he will get nothing. He has to agree.

Once the player-characters are equipped, Imbi provides them with a couple of his nephews as guides. These two, Junja and Ganni, have inherited their uncle's sense of self-interest and will be coming along purely as non-combatants. They are ordinary unranked characters armed with bows and daggers. They will take the player-characters through the jungle until they find an encampment of the Aknatli (as they call the hostile tribe) and let them take things from there.

Encounters in the jungle

The expedition will be travelling through semi-swamp and lush jungle. In such terrain it will be impossible to move much faster than ten to twelve miles a day. The chance of an encounter is 20%, checked as usual at dawn and at dusk. A special encounter table is used:

<i>d100 Roll</i>	<i>Encounter</i>
01–20	Aknatli tribesmen (2–12 <i>kasha</i> and 0–5 <i>ushok</i> ; see below)
21–31	Python
32–40	Crocodiles (1–8)
41–43	Fungus Men (1–20)
44–60	Dracomen (2–20)
61–64	Skullghasts (2–8)
65–66	Wyvern
67	Jumbees
68–75	Weretigers (1–2)
76–80	Mere-Gaunt
81–90	Jaguar (stats as Wolf)
91–00	Harmless/nuisance encounter (monkeys, parrots, large dragon-flies, etc.)

The Aknatli tribe

These people are part of a large hunter-gatherer tribe that inhabits the hinterland of this continent.

They revere a totemic spider-deity and it is their habit of dressing in ritual war-cloaks (see below) that has led to stories of ‘spider-folk’ living deep in the Mungoda Jungle.

Most of the tribe’s warriors are normal unranked characters, primarily hunters whose favoured weapons are the club and the dart javelin. When fighting human opponents they coat these darts with an aromatic resin. Anyone wounded by the dart must roll Strength or under on 2d6 or succumb to the resin’s effect, in which case the victim loses 1d3 Health Points each Combat Round until cured or dead. These hunters are called, in their own tongue, *kasha*.

The special champions of the Aknatli are called the *ushok*. These are fighters (Barbarians) of 1st rank or higher. They are the specialized representatives of the tribe in its dealings (i.e. battles) with outsiders. They disdain the use of missile weapons and the trapping-skills developed by the *kasha* hunters, preferring to fight their enemies at close quarters with poison-tipped spear or with shield and obsidian-edged club. *Ushok* are readily distinguished from the lower-status *kasha* by their hair (which they wear plaited into eight thick strands which hang down to their shoulders), the ‘spiders’ eyes’ warpaint design on their chests, and the furry russet cloaks which are designed to spread out into eight sections when the *ushok* warrior is leaping and running through the jungle towards his prey.

The Aknatli are out of their native territory here. The poisoned darts used by the *kasha* are quite effective in the open forest inland, but are almost useless in the thick undergrowth of the Cosh Goyopë because the close proximity of the trees and bushes makes it difficult to get a clear throw at the target. Apply an ATTACK penalty of 3 at medium ranges and 7 at long ranges. It is precisely because they are not very successful hunters in this terrain that the Aknatli have started to prey off the river-folk.

Picking up the spoor

The player-characters’ aim should be to find a small group of Aknatli and follow them back to the tribe’s encampment. A Mystic with the *Pursuit* spell will make this task a lot easier, as the characters must otherwise rely on good Stealth Rolls. The trail will take them two days’ trek into the deep jungle, until they finally arrive at their goal:

The ground rises, becoming steadily drier until you have left the muddy swamp far behind. You are still walking through thick forest, having to hack your progress past huge nets of creepers at times, but at least you are no longer plagued by the stench of the marsh or the incessantly biting mosquitoes.

You come to a clearing so abruptly that you almost stride straight into it without realizing. That would have been a mistake: you can count the huts of at least sixty Aknatli tribal warriors.

Taking cover behind the thick boles of the trees, you peer into the wide clearing. The Aknatli have camped against what you first take to be a grassy hillock. Noticing the snagged ranks of moss-coated columns protruding through the earth, and the gaping stone doorway in the side of the hill, you can see that it is a ruined pyramid half-buried under the soil and vegetation of centuries. Imbi’s nephews are outraged. “Vile Aknatli!” hisses Junja between his teeth. “Make camp in front of uncle’s treasure-hill!”

Scouring the clearing, you see only a few people moving about—but the array of spears and swords in the weapon-racks suggest that many more are taking a siesta inside the grass huts. Then your gaze alights on five figures you had certainly not expected to run into here in the jungle: the travellers from Khitai whom you saw on the junk moored near Lakto’s hut. They appear to be trying to communicate in sign language with a group of russet-cloaked Aknatli warriors. What makes it a particularly odd scene is that they are standing on a carpet which hovers about a metre off the ground!

Subotai is about to give up trying to negotiate with the *ushok*, who are protesting because he wants to enter the ruined pyramid. It would certainly be a mistake for the player-characters to attack him now, as they may need his help to overcome the Aknatli warriors. Chonmaru, beside him, is getting very impatient and suggests they take the Flying Carpet up for an aerial attack on the camp. The stats for the Khitans have already been given (see pp. 75-76). The warriors of the camp are as follows:

FIVE SENIOR USHOK

4th rank

ATTACK 17, Spear (2d3, 4 and *poison*)*

Armour Factor 0

DEFENCE 10

EVASION 6

MAGICAL DEFENCE 6

Reflexes: All 13

Health Points:

16

17

17

18

15

*Not being metal-tipped, these spears are slightly less effective in penetrating armour than those the player-characters might have occasion to use.

SIXTEEN USHOK

1st rank

ATTACK 14, Club (d6, 4)

DEFENCE 6

MAGICAL DEFENCE 3

Health Points: All 13

Armour Factor 0 (and shield)

EVASION 5

Reflexes: All 12

In addition to these fighters there are the normal hunters of the tribe. They will try to stay out of mêlée if possible. Remember that here in the clearing their dart javelins are fully effective, though they will not very well be able to use them once the *ushok* are in the way.

SIXTY KASHA

1st rank-equivalent

ATTACK 11, Club (d6, 4)
or Javelin (d6, 4 and *poison*)

DEFENCE 5

MAGICAL DEFENCE 3

Health Points: All 7

Armour Factor 0 (and shield)

EVASION 3

Reflexes: All 11

The shields they are using are only hide stretched over a light wooden frame: Such a shield will break after deflecting one blow from a steel weapon.

The Aknatli have no reason to fight to the bitter end. Once they have taken 10%–15% casualties (or the loss of more than one senior *ushok*) they will gather their children, livestock and womenfolk and flee into the undergrowth.

The Pyramid

Any reasonably knowledgeable adventurer who enters the pyramid will recognize the Ancient Kaikuhuran style of its architecture. This may come as a surprise to the player-characters but not to Subotai and Chonmaru. In fact, the Kaikuhuran nobles who were periodically exiled here by Pharaoh controlled a small empire of enslaved natives. They built many temples, palaces and tombs in the style that reminded them of their homeland. This—the tomb of one quite minor prince—is merely one of the more accessible ruins.

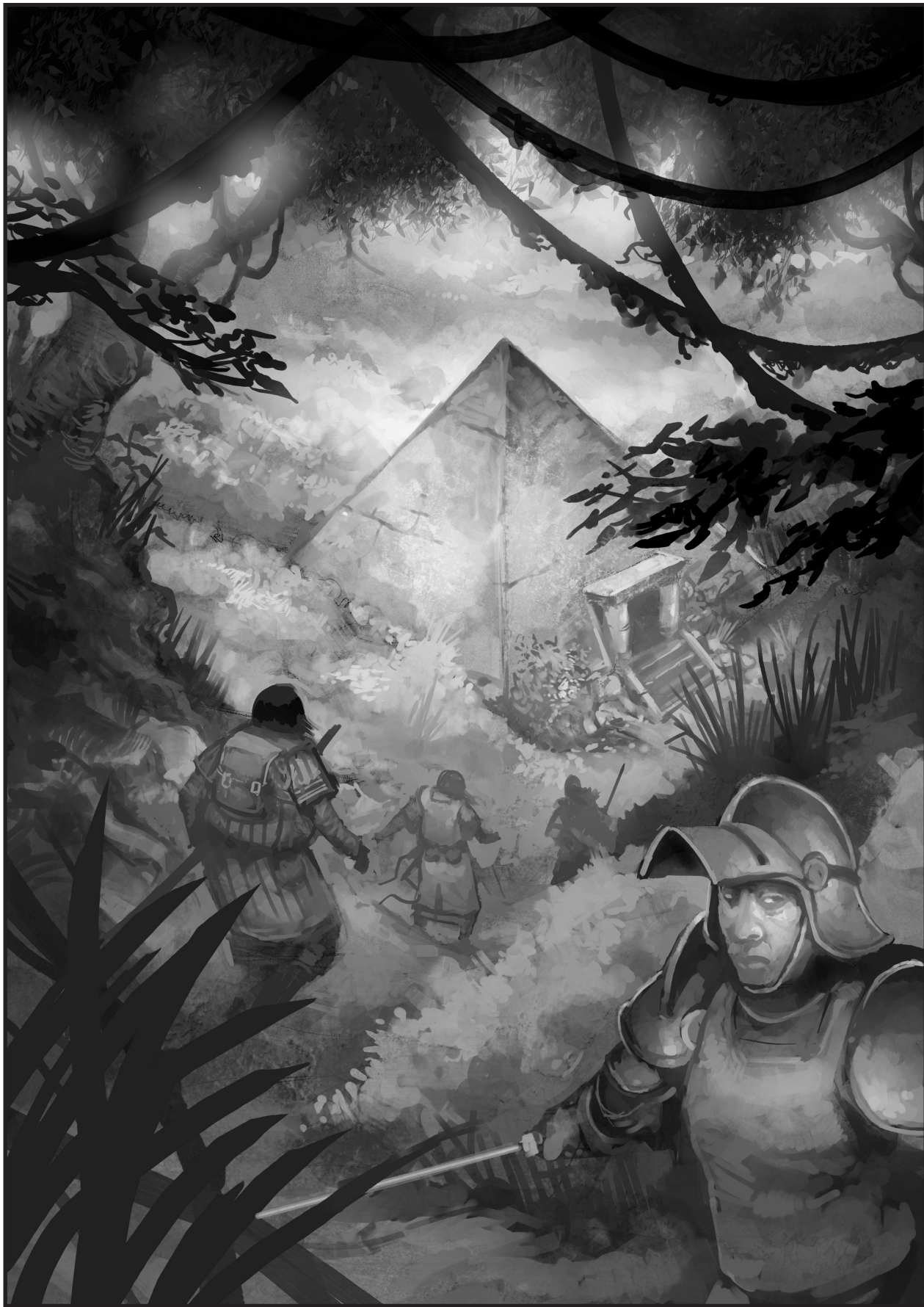
Beyond the entrance the characters pass through a rubble-strewn vestibule and into a wide corridor

that leads into the interior of the pyramid. Numerous secondary burial-chambers were built off this corridor to accommodate the household and servants of the prince. Some of these burial-chambers have been broken into and rifled (by Imbi's sons, of course), but there are still a dozen that remain unopened.

The stone blocks sealing each chamber will take about one man-hour to excavate. The typical contents of a chamber is: one mummified corpse swathed in linen and sealed in a stone casket; various implements and/or weapons, now mostly rotted and useless; clay tablets detailing the life and achievements of the chamber's occupant, and setting out the kind of pleasures wished for the deceased in the next life; a few gold artifacts, together worth 200–400 crowns.

In all, it is possible for the characters to turn a tidy profit just by emptying the side chambers of their gold. Even so, they will doubtless continue along to the end of the corridor where a massive stone portal bars the way into the main burial chamber. If anyone present can read Qemor Hieroglyphics (and remember that Subotai can, if he is still with them) they will be able to make out the inscription on the door-seal. This translates roughly as: *SHEFRU CHA'AF, Lord of Light, Master of Enchantments Against Enchantment; Wielder of Swords Against the Fray: Now are the Bright Songs turned to Dust*. This inscription has no particular significance except as a fragment of Kaikuhuran poetry.

The bronze seal that holds the door shut is easily broken. The door swings aside to show a low-ceilinged tunnel sloping gently downwards. Tall characters will have to stoop to walk along it. If anyone tries, they will soon experience the powerful spell that Shefru Cha'af's priests laid on this tunnel. A Sorcerer, Warlock or Elementalist who walks along the corridor will be gradually drained of his power (Magic Points) with each step he takes. This effect is proportional to the character's rank, so that any Sorcerer, etc., who walks the whole length of the tunnel and steps into the tomb chamber will find that he has 1 MP left (assuming he had at least that when he entered the tunnel). He will be aware of what is happening, and if he turns back at any point he loses no further Magic Points that is, the tunnel only drains power from magic-users who are going into the tomb. Magic Points that have been drained will recover normally once the character has left the pyramid.



The tunnel has a different effect on other characters—i.e. Knights, Barbarians, Mystics, Assassins and those not belonging to any adventuring Profession. This time it is the character's physical energy that is sapped: his Health Points, in other words. A character who walks right down the tunnel to the tomb chamber at the far end will lose half of his normal Health Point score. If he was badly wounded when he stepped in, this could of course be fatal—you should warn the player and give him a chance to turn back if this is going to happen. Health Points lost in this way can be restored by the usual spells, but natural healing cannot occur while the character remains in the pyramid.

The purpose of the tunnel is to weaken tomb-robbers so that they will be no match for the Guardian Demon (see below). It was easier and safer for Shefru Cha'af's sacerdotess to arrange things this way—a blanket spell debilitating each intruder as he enters—than to summon and bind a much more powerful demon.

However, there is a way around the problem for any party that includes at least one Sorcerer, Elementalist or Warlock. The character can cast a durational spell, walk down the tunnel losing all but one of his available Magic Points in the process, then cancel the durational spell once he reaches the tomb chamber itself. This gives him back half the Magic Points he used to cast it. (It takes four rounds to walk the full length of the tunnel, but you should perhaps waive the need for Spell Expiry Rolls if a player has this idea. It would be rather unfair to let an unlucky dice roll spoil an elegant plan!) Characters with healing spells can then bring their comrades back to full health before the final encounter.

The tomb chamber is a high vault faced in grey-green stone and shored up by massive tapering buttresses. The prince's gilded sarcophagus rests in a niche in the opposite wall. It is set above the floor, with its base on a level with your eyes.

You are immediately aware of a presence gathering in the room. A long adventuring career has taught you to recognize the stench of malign magic. Something hunched and indistinct is taking shape in the centre of the room: a smoky, long-limbed monstrosity. You see no eyes or any other features until it opens its sharply angled jaws to reveal a glowing gulf of blue light. You have the impression that its head consists entirely of a wide gaping mouth—then it gives an awful howl and leaps to the attack—

GUARDIAN DEMON

Rank-equivalent: 16th	
ATTACK 30, Claws (d12, 9 and <i>strong</i> poison)	Armour Factor 5
DEFENCE 20	EVASION 6
MAGICAL DEFENCE 11	STEALTH 9
Health Points 52	PERCEPTION 14 (panoptical)

Rings and amulets do not function in this chamber. Potions, however, can still be used. If the demon is defeated there is nothing else to stop the characters ransacking Shefru Cha'af's tomb. The total value of the treasure here is 250,000 florins. Mostly this in the form of gold ornaments, but there are also some jewelled ornaments on the prince's corpse.

IV. WRAPPING UP

The adventure is, of course, far from over. The player-characters still have to discuss the division of the spoils with Melano. The voyage home still lies ahead. They may have befriended Subotai or slain him—or made of him one of those perennial NPC enemies that are the spice of a good campaign. The mysterious Knights Capellars have not abandoned their intention to snuff out Melano's life, and they may decide to deal with the player-characters at the same time. All of these plot-threads can be used to generate further adventures that may take place weeks or months after this one.

All in all, though, Melano ends up happy—at least for now—if the characters return with their mission a success. Imbi has some gold artifacts ready with which to buy most of the cargo aboard *The Pantocrator's Fist*. Enriched, Melano now envisages another scheme: he hopes to return with a larger expedition and strike out into the jungle in search of further gold-laden Kaikuhuran ruins. Whether or not the player-characters decide to accompany him next time is up to them.

They may alternatively decide to return to Ellesland and the fief of Baron Aldred—if not now then perhaps after a few more adventures. You may have to give them a reason to leave their partnership with Melano. A letter from Baron Aldred asking to see them is perhaps heavy-handed; but a message telling them that a close relative is very ill or close to death will remind them they have a home and loved ones there. Whenever they do return, 'The Greatest Prize' will be waiting for them.

CHAPTER 8

THE GREATEST PRIZE

Introduction

THIS LAST SCENARIO is an 'open structure' adventure that calls for an experienced GamesMaster. The player-characters will have a wide range of options. The best outcomes provide them either with a castle of their own, or with the gratitude and friendship of a powerful sorcerer.

Overview

Back in Baron Aldred's fief, a group of knights try to delude the characters into helping them assault the fortress of an old sorcerer. If the characters kill the sorcerer, they can enter the magical underworld below the fortress in an attempt to control the power of his sceptre. If they side with him against the knights, they are in for a battle-royal!

You may want to run this adventure shortly after the player-characters return from their adventures overseas, before they have a chance to reintroduce themselves to Baron Aldred (it is your choice whether their involvement in the death of Almeric has been forgotten). Alternatively you could run some short scenarios and encounters in Ellesland first, to create atmosphere and build up a few of the themes of this climactic adventure: the heightening tensions between Aldred and Montombre, the threat of war and the growing lawlessness. Perhaps the PCs are involved in the capture of a spy or saboteur; or witness troops on the move; or find an old friend forced by poverty to turn to banditry, or treason.

I.

Three Knights at the Inn

You are travelling south along the old Coast Road, which meanders out of the port town of Clyster and then skirts the craggy peaks of the Hourla Hills before joining an old straight highway, built by the legions, which leads south as far as Breylak and beyond.

At evening you are at the southern borders of Baron Aldred's fief, close to the eerie domain of Montombre, the 'Elfin Earl'. These are lawless lands, full of outlaws. Rogue knights roam unchecked, and you have no great wish to tarry after nightfall on the road, for it is said that spirits of evil intent sometimes rise up out of the ocean depths to accost travellers or range out of the forested wastes to hunt along this lonely stretch of the road.

Thus, when you espy the lights of a roadside inn through the dusk, you hurry towards it with a grateful prayer on your lips. The inn lies close by a fishing village, and many of the locals come up from their cottages to share a drink and ribald stories with passing wayfarers. As you pay for your mugs of foaming ale and turn from the bar, three proud knights who are seated by the hearth look up. With nowhere else to sit, you join them at their table.

These three are Grafven, Ector and Vermal, battle-hardened knights but lately returned to these shores after ten years' campaigning in the Crusade. They say little of their own past or exploits, however (see later), but strike up a conversation with the player-characters concerning local folklore.

The region has its fair share of bugbears, and the knights mention dread Nosso, a gaunt, blue-faced man on horseback who hunts men with his pack of wild hounds. Further inland, the locals believe, lies the cave of Black Annis, a sorcerous hag who prowls the countryside only in the depths of winter, and reaches through cottage windows to steal away babies for her cooking pot. Of course, there are also many legends connected with the sea, and Vermal recounts with relish how, if a man sees the ghost ship of the infamous Captain Sabre, it is thought to be a harbinger of his own death. Then there are the tales of Nuckelavee, a demon who is half-man and half-horse, flayed and terrible to behold, who emerges from the waves by night and pursues lost souls along the clifftops.

The knights also listen to any stories the player-characters wish to tell, but before long they steer the conversation to the matter that really concerns them:

"Mostly these are wives' tales for unruly children," says Grafven. "But, as warriors yourselves, you must know that there are many fell beings of witchery that truly exist. I myself wrestled with a pagan demon whose hair was matted with the blood of many Crusaders, and would have met my end had not Roger le Faucon flung holy water in its face."

"And for my part," says Ector, "I once stopped by a tarn to drink, and a chortling hobgoblin took the opportunity to steal the saddle from my horse's back. A vile prank which rankles to this day...."

Grafven holds up his hand. He is clearly their leader. "Specifically, I wish to tell you of events that happened only a few days ago, and only a few miles from this very inn. At that time there were four of us, all veterans of God's War. Riding northwards from Breylak town, we saw from the cliffs a small castle set on an island, linked to the mainland only by a narrow strand of shingle. Since the hour was late and we were intrigued by the castle, we rode to its gates and called out to be granted shelter for the night. The portcullis was raised—I thank God now that we did not see the gateman's face in the twilight!—and we entered, to be met in the courtyard by an old man who held a jewelled sceptre."

Vermal takes up the story. "We seemed to be in a dream. The old man, whose name was Myrkyn, led us through the dusty halls of his castle to rooms that were already prepared for our visit. He left us then, saying that we would be summoned when it was time to eat. I opened my door at a knock but found no one in the passage outside, and the others tell the same story. Shaking our heads in bewilderment, we went down to the hall. Myrkyn was waiting for us, and seven cowed servants stood in the deepest shadows behind him."

"We sat, and Myrkyn lifted the covers to display a magnificent repast of roast meats, broth, succulent fruits and spiced wine. We reached out eagerly, but our comrade Baldon shrank back in alarm. He possessed a talisman that enabled him to see through any faerie or sorcerous mirage. As he waved the talisman before him, the image of magnificence fell away like a snake shedding its skin, and we saw that the marvellous food we had been enticed by was no more than rotting pulp, a mummified pig's carcass, stagnant water in tarnished goblets. Myrkyn gave a scream of rage and his seven servants strode into the lamplight. God's mercy—they wore the faces of Death himself!"

"We might have died but for Baldon's courage," says Grafven in hushed tones. "Myrkyn took up his sceptre and kissed it, imbuing it with awful energy so that it crackled with lightning. As he lowered it to point at us, Baldon leapt forward and dashed his arm aside, taking into himself the bolt with which Myrkyn had meant to slay us all."

"Our comrade fell dead with the sceptre under him, and when the warlock saw that he could not quickly retrieve his weapon he took refuge behind his chair, whining for his deathly servants to dispatch us. Luckily we had kept our swords with us—ten years on the Crusades taught us to defer etiquette to caution—and fought our way clear. And so we fled from the wizard's castle, leaving behind our steeds and all that we possessed, save what we now wear."

"But Myrkyn was not done with us. It was a great distance back to the shore, and as we ran he appeared on the battlements. 'Flee, then!' he cried, holding aloft his sceptre. 'Abandon your slain comrade, craven knights. His animated body shall join the ranks of my bodyguard.' I have heard that no wizard can cast his spells across the sea, and it can only be that fact which prevented Myrkyn from striking us dead as we ran. Much as we would like revenge for Baldon's death, the difficulty of entering the castle undetected has dissuaded us from returning. However, we do not intend to let the matter rest."

"The peasants hereabout are reluctant to speak of Myrkyn, for they fear his wrath, but we have parted with some gold and learned a little that may be of use. If you are willing to co-operate, we may all benefit."

GM: The background and motives of Grafven and his comrades are not quite what they seem. They are keeping back some details in order to convince the player-characters that Myrkyn will be easier to defeat than is, in fact, the case. Also, they do not want the characters to glean their actual motive for wanting Myrkyn out of the way—namely, that they desire his castle for themselves. The full truth is as follows.

A decade ago, the castle where Myrkyn now lives was the home of one Althor, a minor noble, and his retainers. Grafven was one of his greatest knights, and Myrkyn was his adviser. When the Crusade came Grafven, always a pious knight, set out with ten men. He hardly imagined then that he would not see his homeland for ten long years. When he did return, now with a retinue of fifteen warriors, it was to hear reports that his liege lord was dead. As he hastened to the castle to find out if this was true, Grafven met with an old woodcutter who recognized him. From this man, Grafven learned that Althor had not been seen for seven years and Myrkyn—who, everyone supposed, had murdered him—now dwelt in the castle.

Grafven decided to proceed cautiously. Instead of letting Myrkyn know he had returned, he went about incognito. With his companions Vermal, Ector and Baldon, he visited various inns and found out more about Myrkyn. After Althor's disappearance, Baron Aldred had apparently attempted to take the castle, but it was defended by Myrkyn's sorcery and proved unassailable. From their experiences in the Holy Land, Grafven and his friends know the value of a well-located castle. This one is a particularly desirable residence because it commands control of the southern road out of Baron Aldred's fief. Seeing that there would surely be war between Aldred and Montombre before long, Grafven planned to occupy the castle, ally himself with Montombre, conduct a few risk-free sorties against Aldred's men and be richly repaid by the 'Elfin Earl' when his forces achieved victory.

Finally Grafven visited the castle and presented his plan to Myrkyn. He did not intend to exclude the sorcerer, but an argument ensued when Myrkyn made it plain that he had no interest in such politi-

cal strategy, considered himself now the rightful owner of the castle, and had no intention of admitting Grafven's men. The Knights attempted to kill Myrkyn, but had reckoned without the augmented powers he enjoys because of the sceptre. Baldon met his death much as Grafven related, except that Myrkyn is not quite so dependent on the sceptre as Grafven would have the player-characters believe.

Grafven has evolved a plan to take the castle with minimum danger to himself and his men. He hopes to entice the player-characters into visiting the castle and launching a summary attack on Myrkyn. Whether or not they are successful, Grafven's men will then take advantage of the diversion to scull boats out to the island, scale the cliffs to the castle and occupy it by means of stealth rather than by main force. The Crusade has taught them the value of such tactics.

If the player-characters agree to go along with him, Grafven will then describe the version of his plan he has prepared for them:

"We cannot return to the castle ourselves—the wizard would recognize us and be on his guard at once. However, we can assist you against Myrkyn just because of our special knowledge of his powers."

"From what we saw, it seems that all his magic resides in his sceptre and he is powerless without it. Moreover, it only activates when he performs this strange ritual of kissing the gem set into it, so if you strike without hesitation he will be dead before he has time to know what is happening. Nor should you fear his servants, for they are slow and can be outdistanced with ease. Shortly before sunset, when undead sentries avert their eyes from the west, we shall cross to the island so that we are on hand to join the attack Myrkyn himself should be dead by then, and together we shall make short work of his remaining servants."

"You should have no trouble gaining admittance to the castle, as it is common knowledge that Myrkyn welcomes strangers with open arms, poisons them with his deadly fare, then boils the meat from their bones so that he can add their skeletons to his undead retinue! Just ensure that you touch no food or drink that he offers you, and you will be safe."

"Now we must discuss division of the spoils. We have spent much effort and gold in learning of Myrkyn's weaknesses, but we would not deny that it is you who must take the greater part of the risk in this venture. Consequently, we suggest that each of you takes twice as much treasure from his coffers as each of us. You may also

take his sceptre, if you wish—we'll have no truck with sorcery, and would sooner cast it into the sea than use it ourselves."

Grafven bangs down his empty mug on the table with the air of one sealing a bargain. "If you agree to these terms, I suggest that we set out for Myrkyn's castle in the morning."

III.

Journey to the castle

GM: Grafven, Ector and Vermal will accompany the player-characters most of the way to the castle. They are riding rather worn-out horses in order to tally with their story earlier. Grafven has ordered his remaining thirteen men to follow at a distance of several miles and to wait for him at an arranged rendezvous point. In the event of any random encounters on the way, the stats for these three may be needed. All are 6th-rank Knights.

GRAFVEN

ATTACK 19	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 13	EVASION 5
MAGICAL DEFENCE 9	STEALTH 14
Health Points 16	PERCEPTION 7

ECTOR

ATTACK 18	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 12	EVASION 5
MAGICAL DEFENCE 8	STEALTH 14
Health Points 15	PERCEPTION 7

VERMAL

ATTACK 18	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 12	EVASION 5
MAGICAL DEFENCE 8	STEALTH 14
Health Points 17	PERCEPTION 7

All three wear chainmail armour (Armour Factor 4) and fight with bows (d6, 4) and two-handed swords (d10, 5). They also have some magical equipment—Grafven carries two potions, Hydon (*Dragon Warriors* rulebook, p. 140) and Dust of Transformation (bat-form) (rulebook, p. 140), and Ector wears the Ankh of Osiris (rulebook, p. 142).

They arrive at the castle about midday. Grafven points it out from the cliffs when they are still some miles away. It is high tide at this time, and the path

to the island is completely submerged. Any character who points out what an excellently placed castle this is will get a suspicious glare from Grafven—the Crusader is jealous of 'his' castle, and assumes that anyone who takes an interest in it must share his own scheming notions.

III.

Entering the castle

It is mid-afternoon by the time you ride down on to the beach and look out across the water towards the rocky knoll on which the castle stands. The tide is going out now, and you begin to make your way along the strand of shingle that still lies under a foot of water.

The stone of which the castle is built is a sombre black granite. The walls are not high—only some 10m—and there is but one main tower. The castle is of simple construction, very old, but ideally situated. Thirty men could hold it against an army.

Ascending a narrow path that snakes treacherously up the hillside, you cross a drawbridge that spans a chasm in the rock and approach the inner gate. You see hunched, black-clad figures on the battlements. An old man in flowing robes calls out in greeting and walks towards you. To judge by the gem-encrusted sceptre tucked into his belt, this must be Myrkyn. As he approaches, an armoured knight appears from the door of the tower and stands stiffly, watching.

GM: The old man is indeed Myrkyn, and the armoured knight is his *Doppelganger* duplicate of Baron Althor, which he created as a servant seven years ago after killing the original. The black-garbed figures on the castle walls are the Skeletons that form the castle's garrison.

MYRKYN

10th-rank Sorcerer	
ATTACK 12, Sceptre (d6 +1, 5)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 6	EVASION 4
MAGICAL ATTACK 25	STEALTH 15
MAGICAL DEFENCE 15	PERCEPTION 10
Magic Points 35 (140)	Reflexes: 6
Health Points 8	

Because of his sceptre, which he found in the mystical underworld below the castle's dungeons,



Myrkyn's power is greater than any normal 10th-rank Sorcerer. The sceptre has the effect of multiplying his stock of Magic Points by four when held. If he puts down or drops the sceptre, his available MPs are reduced by 75% (rounding fractions down).

Myrkyn is extremely loath to deplete his own energies if he is attacked, preferring to take the time to draw the sceptre from his belt first. Taking the sceptre out is an action requiring one full Combat Round, and in the event of a sudden massed attack he will gain time by casting a *Bastion* around himself first.

Myrkyn generally has a hospitable attitude to visitors. His soulless servitors, though perfectly suited to their task of guarding him, provide no human company or conversation. Under normal circumstances, he welcomes those who arrive at his gates, treating them lavishly. At present, Sir Grafven's recent visit is preying on his mind. He knows that Grafven will not have abandoned his project without putting up a fight, and is consequently expecting trouble. He behaves courteously but coolly towards the player-

characters. If they ask for shelter (and do not attack him at once), he takes them in but will keep the sceptre in his hand at all times. The Doppelganger (rulebook, p. 88) follows him like a shadow.

DOPPELGANGER

5th rank-equivalent

ATTACK 17, Two-handed sword (d10, 5); Bow (d6, 4) Armour Factor 5

DEFENCE 11

EVASION 5

MAGICAL DEFENCE 7

STEALTH 14

Reflexes: 12

PERCEPTION 8 (normal)

Health Points: 16

The Doppelganger's standing orders are to protect its creator at all times. Myrkyn can, of course, change these orders whenever he wishes. If he dies without giving new orders, the Doppelganger will stop what it is doing and stand motionless—if its creator is dead, it cannot comply with the command to protect him. Whimsically, Myrkyn addresses the Doppelganger as "my lord"—as, for example, "Pray show our guests to the Great Hall, my lord."

SKELETONS

ATTACK 11, 2-handed sword (d10, 5), Bow (d6, 4)	Armour Factor 2 (4 vs stabbing weapons)
DEFENCE 5	EVASION 3
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	STEALTH 13
Reflexes: all 10	PERCEPTION 7 (gloomsight)
Health Points: all 4 HP	

Myrkyn has a retinue of 21 Skeletons organized for the purpose of receiving commands into three groups of seven. The standing orders of one group are the same as the Doppelganger's. The others have been commanded to man the walls, to warn their master if anyone is seen approaching, and to attack anyone who tries to enter the castle without Myrkyn's authorization. All are garbed in silver-trimmed black tabards and decaying ringmail armour, and Myrkyn has enhanced their already eerie appearance by setting red gems into their eye sockets. Most of these Skeletons are the mortal remains of Althor's knights and the rest are adventurers who have attempted violence against Myrkyn through the years.

IV. Myrkyn's Castle

1. Outer Gate

The steep path from the causeway is bounded by a sharp ridge on one side and a rocky slope on the other. It ends some 15m from the castle walls, split by a chasm. This can be crossed by means of a drawbridge which will be lowered for small groups (no more than ten men) unless Myrkyn orders otherwise. Lowering the drawbridge also drops a portcullis at the back of the Outer Gate. Characters must file across and wait for the drawbridge and portcullis to be raised before they can proceed.

There is no way into or out of the guardroom of the Gate. The three Skeletons who man it are impregnably sealed inside. (This is why they are not included in Myrkyn's retinue of 21 Skeletons.)

2. Storage areas

Grain, oil and other essentials were kept here at one time. They are mostly empty now, as Myrkyn eats

Banquet food most of the time. The castle's other inhabitants, of course, do not eat at all.

3. Guardrooms

Since Skeletons do not need rest, these are unused.

4. Armoury

This room contains twenty two-handed swords, twelve one-handed swords, fifteen shields, ten bows, three crossbows, ten javelins and about two hundred arrows. There are also some pots of excrement (used to 'season' arrow-points, etc.)

5. Stables

Unless the PCs arrived on horseback, the only occupants here will be the four horses that Grafven and his lieutenants abandoned on their previous visit.

6. Chapel

Two storeys high. Myrkyn has kept this place in much the same state as it was when Althor ruled here. He cleaves to older religions himself, but he respects the faith of travellers who visit the castle from time to time.

7. Well

Fresh water can be got here except after a long dry spell. Minerals in the rock give the water a brackish taste, and Myrkyn prefers *Banquet* water or wine.

8. Garderobes

These are alcoves in the castle wall, covered by a drape. A channel leads down from a stone seat, conveying sewage outside.

9. and 10. Servants' quarters

These were servants' quarters at one time. They are now used only on the rare occasions when a high-born visitor brings his/her own retinue of servants.

11. Kitchen

The huge fireplace is mostly cold. Meals are usually the product of Myrkyn's sorcery.

12. Stairs up

A spiral staircase leads up to (14).

13. Stairs up

The staircase in this tower room leads up to (15).

14. Stairs up and down

Spiral staircase that leads down to (12) and up to the battlements (23).

15. Stairs down

Stairs lead down to (13), and thence to the courtyard.

16. Guardroom

From this vantage point above the gate, a heavy portcullis can be lowered. Arrow-slits then allow the Skeleton guards here to shower arrows on would-be attackers before they can retreat.

17. Common Room

This is where Althor's knights would often sleep after a long evening's feasting and drinking in the Great Hall. A ladder leads up to the battlements (22) and latticed windows overlook the courtyard.

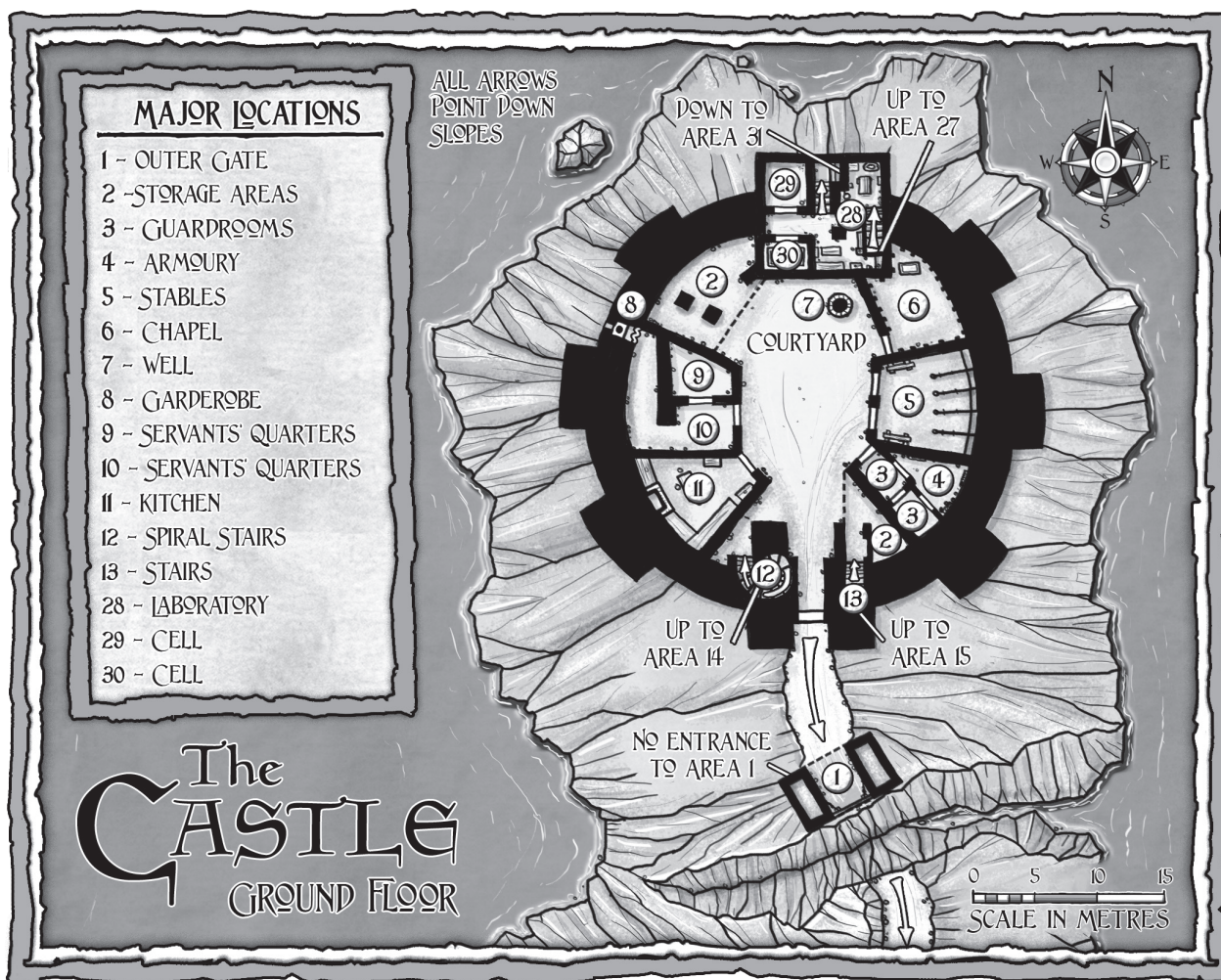
18. Great hall

Myrkyn will entertain the characters to dinner here—if he lives that long. The room is dominated by a long oak table where, many years ago, Althor, Myrkyn, Grafven and the others would gather.

Above the wide hearth, armorial blocks depict the coats of arms of Althor and his chief knights. From the windows, one can look down into the courtyard some 4m below.

19. Myrkyn's bedchamber

As befits the former apartment of the lord, this is the most finely appointed room in the castle. The



four-poster bed has a magnificent pastoral tapestry hung above it, and many of the furnishings are elegantly carved. Windows overlook the courtyard. An ornate bookcase holds Myrkyn's occult tomes and notebooks.

20. Guest chambers

The characters will be given these rooms.

21. Corridor

Unremarkable.

22. Doorway from battlements

A ladder leads down to the Common Room (17).

23. Stairs down

A spiral staircase connects with the lower floors (14 and 12).

24. Machicolation

A shaft opens out above the area in front of the portcullis. On the battlements beside it are a cauldron, jars of water and a heap of pebbles. Boiling water and red-hot stones can be showered on attackers who are trying to break into the castle.

25. Antechamber

A stout doorway connects this room to Myrkyn's bedchamber (19). This door and the one in the east wall are kept locked; the keys are on Myrkyn's belt. A newel stairway in the north-east corner of the room leads to the floor above (32).

26. Lookout galleries

A Skeleton stands in each of these rooms, constantly surveying the coast in case of attack.

27. War Room

During a concerted attack on the castle, Myrkyn comes here to co-ordinate the defences. Eight *Astral Gates* are arranged around the walls, visible as shimmering silver ovals against the black granite. Anyone who steps through one of these will appear

to walk right into the wall and vanish. Three of the *Gates* lead to caves on the mainland, four to points on the atoll and one (Myrkyn's final practical joke on his enemies, should he be killed) opens directly over the chasm in front of the Outer Gate. A character who uses this *Gate* will fall to his death on the rocks below.

A battered plate of dull green metal hangs at eye level by a silver chain from the middle of the ceiling. This artifact functions as a speculum to enhance Myrkyn's *Scry* spells. It allows for more rapid change of viewpoint and gives greater resolution than usual. Myrkyn can observe any attack as if from a point high in the sky above his castle and, after assessing weak points in the enemy's deployment, send *Phantasms* through the *Astral Gates* to counterattack.

There is a mahogany chair in the south-west corner of the room; its high back is decorated with a gilt pentacle. Beside it is a small cabinet containing four stoppered pots. The pots are labelled—but in a personal code that only Myrkyn can read. They contain elemental essences: two quantities of Phlogiston, one of Aitheron and one of Hydon.

Steps lead down from here to room 28.

28. Laboratory

Once Althor's torture chamber, the northern part of this room is still festooned with bizarre devices that only the most repellent of characters could even imagine how to use. Myrkyn has no liking for torture (if he needed information, he could always *Command* a captive to speak), and these items have mercifully been left to gather dust for the last seven years.

To the south, the room is given over to Myrkyn's alchemical workshop. The more valuable ingredients are kept locked in a cupboard, the key to which is on Myrkyn's belt-ring. Any character opening the cupboard will be faced with a *Rune* containing a *Stasis* spell—match its MAGICAL ATTACK of 25 against the MAGICAL DEFENCE of up to three characters standing nearby.

Along the walls of the passage to the cells there are a number of very ancient skulls in niches. Steps descend from this room to the dungeon (31).

29. Cell

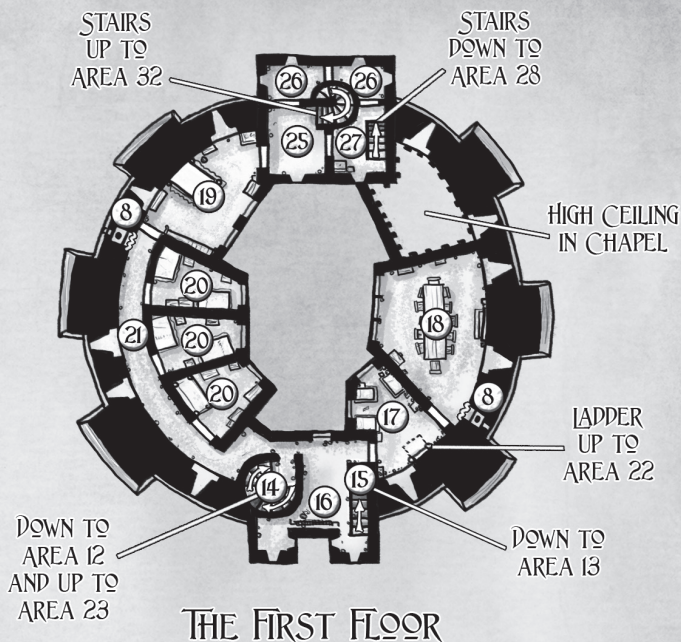
The only occupants here are spiders and lice, and the occasional rat.

The CASTLE OTHER FLOORS



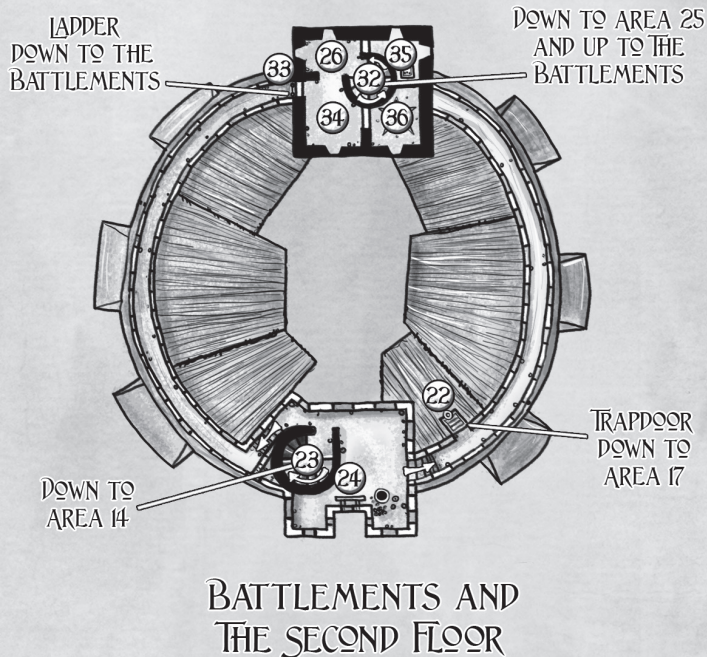
ALL ARROWS
POINT DOWN
SLOPES

0 5 10 15
SCALE IN METRES



MAJOR LOCATIONS

- 8 - GARDEROBE
- 14 - SPIRAL STAIRS
- 15 - STAIRS DOWN
- 16 - GUARDROOM
- 17 - COMMON ROOM
- 18 - GREAT HALL
- 19 - MYRKYN'S BEDCHAMBER
- 20 - GUEST CHAMBERS
- 21 - CORRIDOR
- 22 - DOORWAY FROM
BATTLEMENTS
- 23 - STAIRS DOWN
- 24 - MACHICOLATION
- 25 - ANTECHAMBER
- 26 - LOOKOUT GALLERIES
- 27 - WAR ROOM
- 31 - DUNGEON
- 32 - STAIRS DOWN AND UP
- 33 - DOOR TO BATTLEMENTS
- 34 - HAUNTED ROOM
- 35 - FANE
- 36 - TREASURY

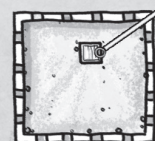


CRYSTAL BENEATH
FLAGSTONE TELEPORTS
TO THE UNDERWORLD



THE DUNGEON

UP TO
AREA 28



TRAPDOOR
DOWN TO
AREA 32

THE BATTLEMENTS

30. Cell

Nothing stirs in this chamber. It is kept securely locked at all times and, as before, the key is among those on Myrkyn's belt. It contains only an undorned stone sepulchre. If they lift the lid (requiring a total Strength of 32), the characters find it is filled with a sweet-smelling oily fluid. The perfectly preserved body of a beautiful woman is immersed in this. She wears a samite gown tied with a golden girdle, and on her finger is a ruby ring.

This is the body of Jamana, Althor's wife. After taking over the castle, Myrkyn tried to make her immortal with one of his potions. The attempt failed, transforming Jamana into one of the living dead—a soulless zombie that cannot die. Appalled at what he had done, Myrkyn shut her in the sepulchre. He could not bring himself to destroy her.

Soon after the sepulchre is opened, she will begin to move. (This should preferably be when none of the characters is looking!) Her white hand reaches out of the oil and takes hold of the nearest person, pulling him towards her with irresistible strength. Her dead eyes open and look right into his face for a moment, then she releases him and sinks back quiescent into her tomb.

The ring on her finger is worth fifty gold crowns, if they can bear to take it.

31. Dungeon

Steps lead down from room 28. Upright stone sarcophagi, each with an anaglyph effigy of its occupant, form buttresses along the walls. The effigies show armour and weaponry of a style no longer known. This is the ossuary of the castle's original inhabitants, though in later centuries it was used as a place to shackle prisoners.

One of the flagstones can be lifted; see 'VI. The Underworld' on the next page for details.

32. Stairs down and up

A newel stairway leads down to (25) and up to the tower battlements.

33. Door to battlements

This door is about a metre above the level of the battlements, in order that attackers who capture the

wall cannot easily break into the tower. A simple wooden ladder leads down to the battlements along the wall. This door has no lock, but can be barred from the inside.

34. haunted room

Most castles have their ghosts, and this is no exception. On certain nights it can be glimpsed standing by the arrow-slit window—a tall man in a grey cloak. It turns and strides silently to the door, then along the battlements. Before it reaches the gate tower, a cloud always obscures the moon; when the cloud passes, the ghost will have disappeared. A *fright attack* (*Dragon Warriors* rulebook, p. 122) should only be used for this ghost if a character is alone in the room when it manifests. It is unlikely to appear more than once or twice a year.

35. Fane

On a plain stone altar here reside the idols representing the three divinities Myrkyn reveres. The first is of a big-bellied woman with a fierce countenance; this is Boi, goddess of the rocks and the earth and the elements. She represents continual restoration and plenty—really a fertility-goddess but, in Myrkyn's view, linked to the dream of immortality. The second idol is an ash-wood figurine that Myrkyn found washed up on the beach one day. Cracked and weathered, it depicts a nameless goddess of the ancients. Her face is gentle and reflective. A slender bronze serpent curls up around her from the feet to the neck, where it splits into two and spirals down to her wrists. The snake's two heads rest calmly in her cradling hands. The last idol is of pale Hecate, a painted image in alabaster. Her face is sharply handsome, intense and irresistible. She holds a torch in one hand and a sword in the other, indicating that knowledge (magic) is power. Two black dogs lick her bare feet.

36. Treasury

Myrkyn's leather-bound coffer lies open within a *Pentacle of Entrapment* (MAGICAL ATTACK 25). The release-word for the *Pentacle* is 'element'. The coffer contains 2500 florins, 90 crowns, four jewels (worth 200F, 250F, 500F and 900F) and an unlabelled ceramic bottle (Elixir Vitae).

Interlude: Seven years ago

It was not long after Grafven left for the Crusade that Myrkyn discovered the sceptre. It was concealed in the castle wall, revealed when lightning loosened a stone after a heavy storm. The sceptre led Myrkyn into a mysterious underworld beneath the castle, where he learned how to use its power.

Althor and his knights soon noticed how Myrkyn's power had grown. They began to fear the old sorcerer and fear soon turned to hate. Eventually, one black night, they tried to kill him. Myrkyn unleashed the full power of the sceptre, stalking the passages of the castle in a desperate frenzy of sorcerous violence until, as dawn broke, none of the knights still lived.

Thus it must be said that, although no better a man than any other, Myrkyn was no traitor to his liege-lord, for he slew Althor in retaliation. Before that night he had never killed at all.

V.

Sequence of events

The unfolding of events from the moment the characters enter the castle will be approximately as follows. The time-line for events inside the castle depends entirely on the characters' actions, of course—whether they slay Myrkyn at once, warn him of the impending attack, etc. Consequently, the details as set out here are provisional, and you must adjust them as you see fit in order to take such actions into account.

- 3.30 PM Characters enter castle.
- 3.40 PM Myrkyn invites them to drink with him in the Great Hall.
- 4.30 PM After convivial discussion, Myrkyn has a Skeleton show them to their rooms.
- 4.40 PM Myrkyn sets a Skeleton at each end of the guests' corridor. Their orders are to fetch him if the characters leave their rooms.
- 4.45 PM Myrkyn goes to the tower with the *Doppelganger*.
- 6.00 PM Myrkyn leaves the tower to prepare for dinner.
- 6.15 PM A dinner-gong is rung. A Skeleton arrives to show the characters to the Great Hall.
- 6.20 PM Myrkyn and the characters meet in the Great Hall. Six of Grafven's men ride along the causeway towards the castle.

- 6.25 PM A Skeleton enters the Hall and signals that men are approaching the gate. Myrkyn asks the characters to wait while he goes to investigate. Grafven, Ector, Vermal and seven others set out from the beach in small fishing boats. Using one of his potions, Grafven has a Water Elemental under control.
- 6.35 PM Myrkyn meets the six riders at the gate. They ask for lodging. Myrkyn is beginning to sense something is wrong. As they approach the castle, Grafven uses his Dust of Transformation and flies up to the walls.
- 6.40 PM Almost sunset. Two of the Skeleton sentries see Grafven and rush to attack him. He destroys them and drops ropes to his men in the boats, then shouts out a prearranged signal. In the courtyard, Myrkyn and the *Doppelganger* are suddenly attacked by the six mounted men there.

Grafven's boats will by now be very close to the castle. By coming from the direction of the setting sun, they have managed to escape notice from the Skeleton sentries until the last moment. Unless the player-characters intervene, Grafven will slay Myrkyn and take the castle by 6.48 PM, losing six of his men in the process. All survivors will have taken 1d8 HP wounds.

The stats for Grafven, Vermal and Ector have already been given on p.85 (remember that both potions were used in the assault); the other thirteen men are all average 2nd-rank Knights with chain-mail, bows and two-handed swords:

THIRTEEN KNIGHTS

(six of these will be slain by Myrkyn's Skeletons if the player-characters take no part in the action)

ATTACK 14, Sword (d10, 5) Armour Factor 4
or Bow (d6, 4)

DEFENCE 8

EVASION 4

MAGICAL DEFENCE 4

STEALTH 13

Reflexes: count all as 11

PERCEPTION 5

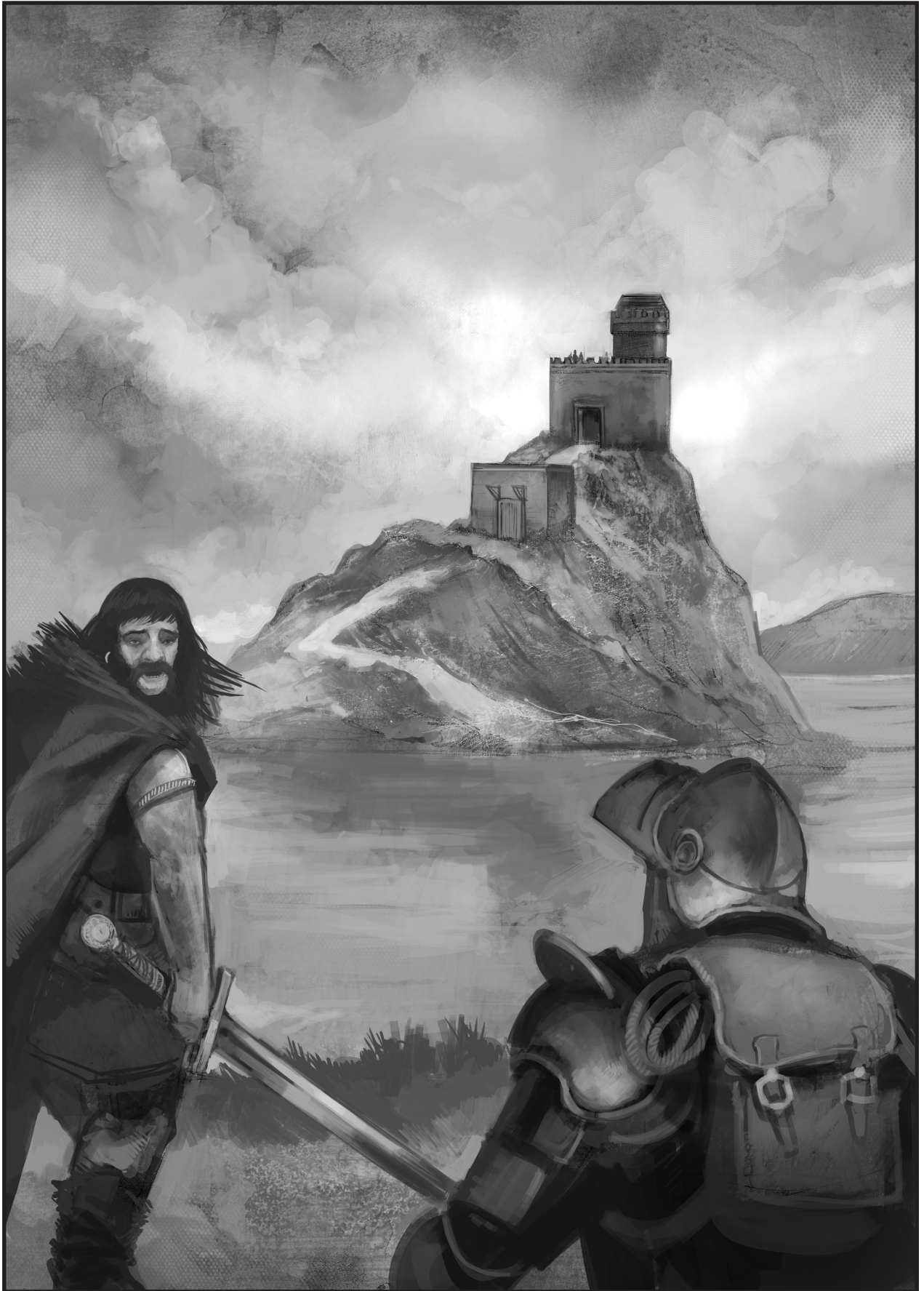
Health Points:

No. 1: 13	No. 2: 9	No. 3: 10	No. 4: 14
No. 5: 14	No. 6: 9	No. 7: 11	No. 8: 10
No. 9: 11	No. 10: 12	No. 11: 13	No. 12: 12
No. 13: 13			

Having taken the castle, Grafven has no further use for the player-characters. He will either murder them or try to get them to leave.

If the player-characters side with Myrkyn and help him to defeat Grafven and his men, they will have the Sorcerer's lasting gratitude and friendship. Astute players will soon see that this is worth any amount of gold and silver!

8

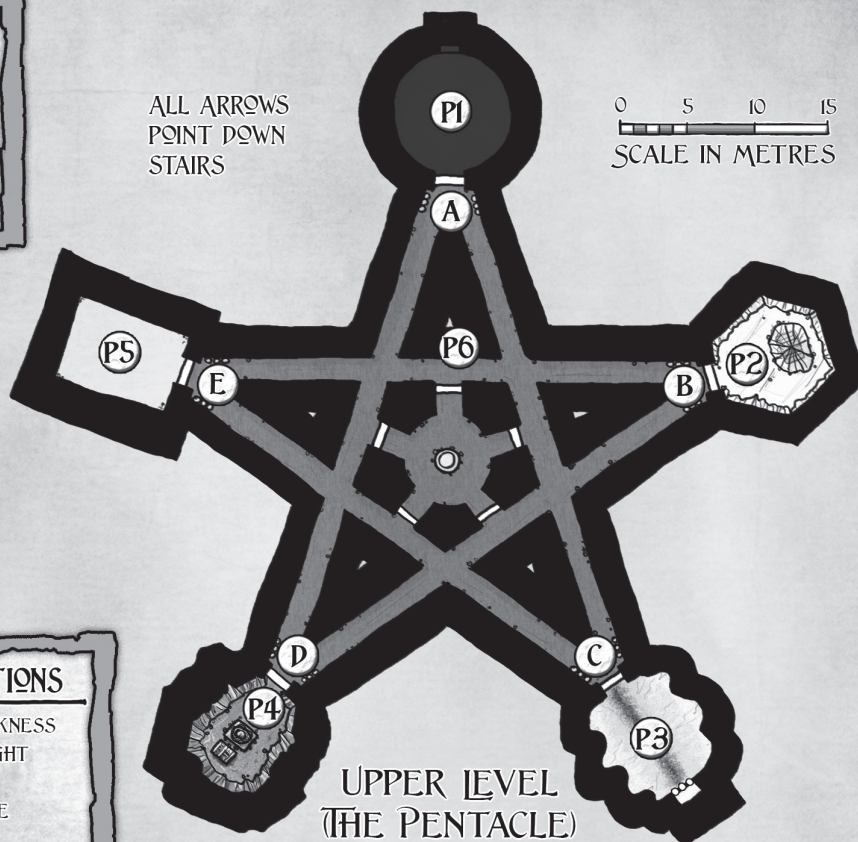


DOOR SYMBOLS

- A -
- B -
- C -
- D -
- E -

ALL ARROWS
POINT DOWN
STAIRS

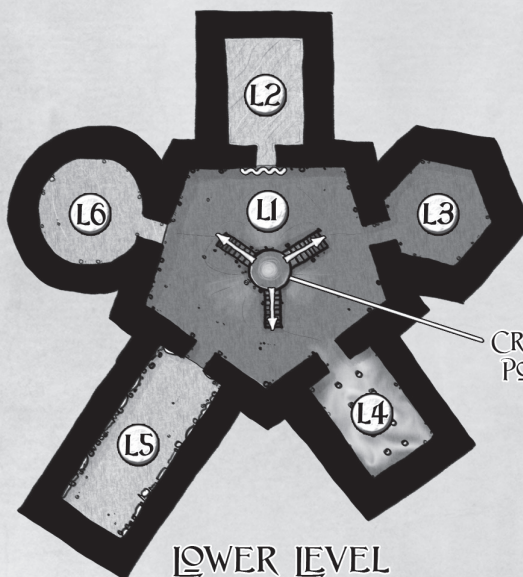
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SCALE IN METRES



UPPER LEVEL
(THE PENTACLE)

MAJOR LOCATIONS

- A - DOORWAY TO DARKNESS
- P1 - CHAMBER OF NIGHT
- B - DOORWAY TO ICE
- P2 - CHAMBER OF ICE
- C - DOORWAY TO FIRE
- P3 - CHAMBER OF CONFLAGARATION
- D - DOORWAY TO EARTH
- P4 - CHAMBER OF STONE
- E - DOORWAY TO AIR
- P5 - CHAMBER OF THE UNSEEN
- P6 - INNER CHAMBER
- L1 - A SPECTACULAR DESCENT
- L2 - THE EYES OF THE INELUCTABLE SCRUTINY
- L3 - THE CHALLENGE OF THE UNREAL
- L4 - THE GAUNTLET OF SKULLS
- L5 - THE SWORDS OF SWIFT EXECUTION
- L6 - THE KEY THAT LIES WITHIN



CRYSTAL IN THE
PORTICO LEADS
TO AREA 31

LOWER LEVEL

The UNDERWORLD OF MYRKYN'S CASTLE



VI.

The Underworld

The underworld that lies beneath the castle may only be reached using Myrkyn's sceptre. It is only by means of an adventure in this underworld that the sceptre's power can be used by the characters.

Myrkyn's sceptre is presently attuned to work for him—as it has been since his own foray into the underworld, seven years ago. If he is slain, the sceptre begins to pulse with a stark grey light. If touched by a Mystic or a Sorcerer it will remain unchanged, but if a Knight Assassin or Barbarian picks it up then it alters to become the favoured weapon of that character. If handed to another, it changes again. Magic-detecting spells will perceive that it is strongly enchanted though it does not seem to confer any remarkable powers on the wielder.

However, if a character lifts the sceptre (as we shall continue to refer to it, though it may now have another form) and concentrates, he gets a hazy mental picture of room 31 in the castle dungeons. Once in this room the character with the sceptre feels a force guiding him to one of the flagstones. This lifts up to reveal a large crystal, set fast into the bedrock and also throbbing with grey light. If the sceptre is touched to the crystal every character within 10m is immediately teleported to area A on the Pentacle Level of the underworld.

UPPER (PENTACLE)

LEVEL

This level is hewn out of the rock on which the castle stands, but the corridors and rooms are all faced in the same dark stone from which the castle walls were built. There is no illumination, though there are unlit torches beside each of the doors at A–E. The corridors are high and sharply arched, with convoluted vaulting at the junctions and intersections. The characters have never seen architecture of this form before.

A. Doorway to Darkness

The dungeon walls shiver and flow like a painting

washed by the rain. Suddenly you find yourselves standing in a tall, vaulted vestibule of black stone. The only light here is the chill, grey radiance from the sceptre. You see a heavy wooden portal inscribed with a strange symbol. Unlit pine torches rest in intricate wall brackets to either side of the portal.

GM: Any Sorcerer of 3rd–5th rank has a chance (rank × 15%) of recognizing the symbol as the alchemical representation of Darkness. A Sorcerer of 6th rank or higher will certainly recognize it.

The door is not locked, and opens easily when pushed.

P1. Chamber of Night

The portal swings back to reveal a curtain of darkness which your light cannot penetrate.

GM: There is no way for the characters to illuminate this room, for all light is magically negated at the threshold. However, by shouting into the room they can make a rough estimate of its size. In an alcove opposite the door there is a smooth black stone on a length of blue thread; it is clearly an amulet of some sort.

This room is perhaps the ideal place to lure and fight the Anaxogor—the invisible monster that usually resides in room P5. Here, it will be unable to see the characters, just as they are unable to see it.

B. Doorway to Water

This is a doorway like the one you found when you first arrived, except that it is marked with two symbols, one rather larger than the other.

GM: As before, a Sorcerer may recognize one of the symbols as the alchemist's glyph for Water. The smaller symbol is a hexagonal design which has no significance in alchemy—its use here is intended to represent an ice crystal.

Again, the door is not locked.

P2. Chamber of Ice

You cannot help shivering as a wave of cold air sweeps from the open doorway. You step into a room where the walls and floor are coated with a thick layer of sparkling

ice. Your breath forms clouds in the air. Frozen within a huge slab of ice, you can see a small casket of dull grey metal.

GM. The characters will soon find that it is not feasible to chip the casket out of the ice. The room is so cold that the ice refreezes as quickly as they break it away, magically regenerating so that they are no closer to getting the casket. Even with icepicks it would be an impossible task.

There are two ways to obtain the casket. The first is to visit room P3 and return with the Ifrit in hot pursuit. The Ifrit's flames will melt the ice here, and the resulting gush of water will drown the Ifrit. The other way is to defeat the Telamon in room P4, grind it into powdered salt with the pestle and mortar there, and scatter the salt over the ice. This will melt enough of the ice so that the casket can then be dug out.

The casket is not sealed. It contains two items: a sparkling green jewel on a silver thread, and a key made of ice. A spell that has been placed on this casket permanently maintains its interior temperature below freezing point. Dipping a finger into the casket is like putting it into a bath of icy water. The key will never melt as long as it is kept in the casket.

C. Doorway to Fire

You come to a weirdly vaulted vestibule where the corridor turns sharply back on itself. A heavy wooden door leads from the vestibule, similar to the first doorway you found.

GM: The alchemical symbol in this instance is the one that corresponds to Fire. Again, the door is not locked.

P3. Chamber of Conflagration

As the door swings bade you are greeted by a scorching blast of heat. Scarlet flames leap up to the ceiling and the walls glow like the sides of a furnace. Small rivulets of molten lead stream across the floor. A path of cinders is the only safe route to a gateway of red-hot iron that seals off an alcove in the opposite wall. A talisman hangs in the alcove—a red spinel on a gold cord. But you can see that the gate is securely padlocked.

Suddenly a torrent of white fire streams down from the ceiling to form a flickering column in the centre of

the room. You have to shield your face from the intense glare, and when you look again you see a tall figure with skin of molten bronze, his eyes and mouth full of spouting flame.

First things first. There is no way to get the talisman without opening the iron gateway—it is protected by a spell that blocks *Telekinesis*, etc. A character *Transformed* into a tiny creature, or mistified by *Evaporating Potion*, will likewise find he cannot get past the bars. The gateway can be unlocked with the ice key from room P2. However, there is a problem with this, in that the ice key would melt within a few seconds of being removed from its casket in this room. The characters can get around this by collecting some of the magical clay formed when the Anaxagor dies (see section P5, below). In the cool of the Chamber of Ice, this can be used to take an impression of the ice key. They can then bake the clay mold in this room and make a duplicate key from the molten lead that flows here in abundance. Such a duplicate will last long enough to unlock the gate so that they can take the talisman.

The fiery figure is an Ifrit. If the characters make no move to enter, he will boom terrible curses and threats in an unintelligible tongue, then fling the door shut with a gesture. If they enter, he will attack. If they then try to escape, he will pursue them throughout the rest of the underworld.

IFRIT

Rank-equivalent: 10th	
ATTACK 21, Firesword (d8 +1, 8)	Armour Factor 5
DEFENCE 15	EVASION 7
MAGICAL DEFENCE 15	STEALTH 4
Movement: 12m (20m)	PERCEPTION 16
Health Points 25	(panoptical)

The Ifrit has a number of powers that are showy rather than effective: he can materialize in a bolt of flame, bellow in a voice that shakes the very stones around him, and conjure minor illusions out of fire. If the characters flee from him, they may look back to see him as a choking cloud of black smoke, shot through with red fire, thundering along the passage behind him

These powers are intended merely to frighten, but he also has other, more potent abilities. He can create a scimitar of flame at will, and this he wields to devastating effect. His body glows red-hot, so that anyone striking him suffers 1d6 HP burn damage. (Armour of ringmail, chain or plate protects from

this for the first 1–4 blows, but thereafter heats up and provides no defence). He can belch a gout of flames once per Combat Round—this is equivalent to a *Dragonbreath* spell, but he cannot use it at the same time as hitting with his sword.

His ultimate weapon is the ability to discharge a blossom of flames from his body in all directions. Any character within 5m who fails to jump clear (match the flames' SPEED of 16 vs the characters' EVASION scores) takes 1d6 +10 HP damage, from which armour will protect by absorbing its Armour Factor. Each time he exerts this power, the Ifrit loses 1d10 HP himself. Because it is such a severe drain of his energy, he will use it only when mêléed by several opponents.

D. Doorway to Earth

You come to another wooden doorway. A strong glyph is carved into it—an inverted triangle crosses by a horizontal line. As before, torch-brackets hold unlit flambeaux.

GM: Of course, the glyph here represents the element of Earth. The door is not locked.

P4. Chamber of Stone

Beyond the door you find an irregularly shaped room of unworked, lumpy rock. A tall pillar, carved to resemble a man, stands on a plinth in the centre of the room. It seems a fine piece of sculpture, and its stone form is veined with crystal deposits that sparkle like quartz. Behind it you can see a large chest and, lying on a spur of rock next to this, a black iron key.

GM: The carved 'pillar' is in fact a Telamon, a stone guardian something like a Gargoyle. It will not animate and attack unless one of the characters steps into this room. Having animated, it will pursue the characters until it is destroyed or they are. If it is destroyed, the quartz-like veins of crystal that run through its body will be found to be rock salt.

TELAMON

Rank-equivalent: 12th

ATTACK 25, Fist (d10, 5)

DEFENCE 17

MAGICAL DEFENCE 13

Movement: 10m (15m)

Health Points 35

Armour Factor 6

EVASION 5

STEALTH 5

PERCEPTION 8 (panoptical)



A character wearing metal armour will feel a tug of force as he enters the room. This force buffets the character unpredictably as he moves across the room—not strongly enough to knock him off his feet, but enough to make him sway off-balance at times. The force is due to the magnetic lodestone from which the walls of this room are made. Because of the magnetism, anyone fighting with metal weapons in here incurs a penalty of -1 to ATTACK, DEFENCE and Armour Bypass Rolls. A metal-armoured character who tries to flee from this room will be slowed to half normal movement until he is out of the doorway.

The chest is sealed and can be unlocked with the iron key. The latter is not as accessible as it first seems, though, because the strong magnetic attraction of the lodestone prevents any character of less than superhuman might (Strength 19) from pulling it free. The magnetism will be immediately and permanently dispelled if the Ifrit can be lured here and goaded into using his flame-attack. This is because heat destroys magnetism. Unfortunately, this would only be known to a character with some knowledge of alchemy—i.e. a Sorcerer of at least 3rd rank. If there is no such character in the party, the players cannot deliberately use this ploy. They may know something about magnetism, but to their characters it is all “just magic”. The chest contains a large pestle and mortar, and another amulet—this time a cube of chalcedony strung on a leather thong.

Ⓔ. Doorway to Air

At a point where the passage turns sharply, you find another wooden door. The symbol cut into it is an upright triangle divided by a crooked line. Two torches, unlit, rest in iron brackets on either side of the door.

GM: The glyph indicates the element of Air. Like the others, this door is unlocked.

P5. Chamber of the Unseen

The door swings back. The room beyond shimmers with blue light that comes from no obvious source. For a moment you think it is empty, but then you sense something advancing towards you. It makes a faint howl in the air as it moves. The door is grasped by an invisible hand and flung shut in your faces with tremendous force.

GM: The invisible monster in this room is an Anaxagor. It can be seen very briefly if struck by an indirect-attack spell such as *Shadowbolt* or *Deathlight*, which cause its outline to be haloed with energy for one Round. The rest of the time (unless they have some way of seeing invisible creatures) the characters must fight it at -4 ATTACK, -8 DEFENCE.

ANAXAGOR

Rank-equivalent: 9th

ATTACK 22, Claws (d8, 5) Armour Factor 2

DEFENCE 10

EVASION 8

MAGICAL DEFENCE 16

STEALTH 22 (invisible)

Movement: 30m

PERCEPTION 15 (panoptical)

Health Points 30

Each time the characters open the door, the Anaxagor waits a couple of Rounds and then slams it shut. If the characters enter the room it will fight them. If they try to flee, it will pursue them along the corridors uttering an eerie moan. If they turn to fight it in the corridors it will retaliate, but it will only initiate an attack after following them into one of the rooms P1-P5. As mentioned above, the characters can gain an advantage if they entice the Anaxagor into the Chamber of Night, where its invisibility is of no value.

The Anaxagor becomes visible when it is killed, and rapidly degenerates into a shapeless grey mass of clay. Searching this, the characters will find a small aluminium box buried in the clay. The box contains one of the five elemental talismans they need: a cabochon moonstone on a slim platinum chain.

P6. Inner Chamber

Five dimly lit passages converge on a central room. Your torchlight sparkles back in splinters of colour from the dazzling mosaic of the walls. A column of glaring grey light streams down from the ceiling and flows into a circular pit in the floor.

GM: The character with the Sceptre feels a force drawing him to this pit. This force is not so strong that he cannot resist it—it merely gives him an indication that this is, perhaps, the way to go.

Standing at the edge of the pit and looking down, a barrier of streaming flame is visible below, completely blocking the shaft. Occasionally, breaks in the barrier

appear, revealing a stratum of clashing rocks below it. If anything lies beneath that, you cannot see it.

Anyone who steps into the column of light will be lowered down the shaft by an invisible force. In doing so, he will pass through five elemental barriers—in order, Fire, Earth, Air, Darkness and Water. These barriers are very dangerous unless the character is wearing the appropriate amulet (obtained in rooms P1-P5). Each amulet will dispel the barrier to which it corresponds and, in doing so, vanish back to the room in which it was found. In this way, the underworld ‘resets’ itself.

The barriers are:

- ♣ **Fire.** This is negated by the red spinel amulet. Without the amulet, the barrier inflicts 4d10 HP damage on any character passing through it. Armour reduces this damage by half its AF rounded up. A PC who suffers a wound of more than 15 HP (and survives) is permanently disfigured by burns—his Looks score is rerolled on 1d4, and can only be restored by a *Miracle Cure*.
- ♣ **Earth.** A layer of boulders and abrasive sand in constant motion. If a character passes through without the chalcedony cube, the boulders grind and crush him for 8d4 HP damage. Armour gives no protection. A wound of more than 12 HP indicates that 1–3 of the character’s limbs have been maimed; roll randomly for which. A maimed arm reduces the character’s ATTACK and DEFENCE by 2 points. Two maimed arms mean that he quite obviously cannot use a weapon or (unless a Mystic) cast spells. A maimed leg means that the character can only limp. His normal movement rate and EVASION are halved, ATTACK and DEFENCE are reduced by 1, and he cannot run at all. A character with both legs maimed is unable to stand, much less walk. A *Miracle Cure* is required to heal a maimed limb.
- ♣ **Air.** Streaming winds tear the very breath from the character’s lungs, unless neutralized by the moonstone talisman. A roll of Strength or less is needed on 5d6. If this fails, the character dies of asphyxiation. Even if he survives, he will be *Weakened* (as the spell) for the next ten minutes.
- ♣ **Darkness.** This layer is one of utter blackness, heavy with the primordial fear of the night that all men are prey to. If not dispelled by the black stone amulet it subjects characters moving through it to a 2d20 *fright attack* (see the rule-

book, p. 122). If there are Elves or Dwarves in the party, they take a fright attack of only 2d10 intensity—they are less afraid of the dark. A character on whom the fright attack succeeds is literally scared to death; even if it fails to take effect, the character is still shaking in fear for the next ten minutes—a penalty of –1 from ATTACK, DEFENCE and Armour Bypass Rolls.

- ♣ **Water.** Seething, turbulent waters buffet any character who descends through this last stratum. It is eliminated by the green jewel amulet, but if the characters do not have this then each must roll under his Strength on d20. This roll must be made five times, and each time a character fails one of the rolls he loses a greater number of Health Points: 1d6 for the first failure, then 2d6, 3d6 and so on.

If they pass through all the barriers safely, the characters reach the bottom of the shaft and emerge into room L1 on the Lower Level of the underworld.

LOWER LEVEL

L1. A Spectacular Descent

Supported by the column of light, you drift gently down the shaft. It stretches deep into the ground, and you have only a vague idea how far down your descent has brought you. Possibly you are now below sea level, in the heart of the rock on which the castle stands. At the bottom, the shaft opens out into a large room faced in white marble. You float down to alight on a high dais of reddish-black stone from which three flights of steps lead down to the floor of the room.

You step from the light beam and make your way down the steps. Now you can see that the dais on which you alighted is actually the roof of a circular portico which stands in the middle of the room. Inside the portico there is a large gemstone flickering with grey light. You could almost reach between the pillars and touch it.

GM: If any character should enter the portico, he will find that a mysterious influence begins to sap his energy. He loses 1 HP every Combat Round that he remains under the portico roof. Also, if he tries to approach closer than 2m from the glowing gemstone, there is a sharp crack as a lightning bolt

flings him back out into the room—inflicting 2d6 HP damage (less Armour Factor, if any) as it does.

Five archways lead off from this room. One is covered by a curtain of bright green cloth, the others are open. A chime hangs from the wall above each archway, and each of these chimes appears to be made of a different metal. Starting with what you take to be the northernmost arch, and looking clockwise around the room, the chimes are of copper, silver, bronze, iron and gold.

GM: The PCs will soon find that there is no way they can physically move these chimes. They cannot be made to sound, either—no matter how hard they are struck. In fact, the only way to sound a chime is to enter the archway it hangs above and cross the room beyond. If the characters succeed in doing this in all five of the rooms L2-L6, and thus sounding all five chimes, they can control the power of the Sceptre and return to the castle (see L7).

As the PCs may guess, the five rooms here—like the five rooms on the Pentacle Level above—correspond to the five universal elements. In this case, however, the elements are symbolized by five of the adventuring Professions. Darkness (room L2) is the element of the Assassin, and in this room cunning may succeed where even stealth cannot. Water (room L3) represents the magic of the Sorcerer; from the ebb and flow of the tides it correlates with the moon, and the sea is renowned for its mystery and magic. Fire (room L4) stands for the fierce spirit of the Barbarian, earth (room L5) for the strength and determination of the Knight. Lastly, Mystics symbolize the element of air (room L6), for their doctrines transcend all physical bonds.

(None of this is vital information, incidentally. The characters can solve the problems, attune the Sceptre and return to the castle without knowing anything about the symbolism of their actions or how it might relate to them personally. It is mentioned only as special background knowledge for the GM.)

L2. The Eyes of Ineluctable Scrutiny

Pushing aside the green drape that covers this arch, you look into the room beyond. It is faced in smooth green marble, and you have to took carefully to make out the

joins where walls and floor or ceiling meet. There is an oblong plaque of black stone set into the far end of the room, and a gleaming path way leads to this. Strangely, the air is filled with hundreds of floating, disembodied eyes which constantly swivel and blink as they survey every part of the room.

GM: The eyes are too agile for it to be possible to strike them out of the air with weapons. They can be shot down with arrows, but there are so many of them that there is no way the characters would have enough arrows to deal with them all.

If a character tries to cross the room, more and more of the eyes turn to watch him as he goes. He feels a tingle as the hairs on his neck rise. A cold shiver runs down his spine. For each step he takes, he is subjected to a *fright attack* of increasing intensity—1d4 for the first step, 2d4 for the second, etc. This fright attack is not fatal but, if it takes effect, the character runs in panic back out of the room.

At least six strides are needed to reach the far wall. By the time a character has got to the black plaque, all the eyes will be watching him. Suddenly, narrow streams of harsh green light shoot towards him from the largest of the eyes. He may be struck by 2–8 of these (SPEED 18 to dodge), and each that hits inflicts 1d20 HP—with armour giving no protection. If the character somehow survives this, the eyes will allow him to run back to room L1. If he tries to touch the plaque, however, they will shoot again.

The eyes can see any intruder, regardless of how stealthful he may be. They do have one ‘blind spot’, though—they cannot see in the green part of the visible spectrum. This means that if a character is dressed entirely in green (the drape can be torn down and used for this purpose), he will be invisible as far as the eyes are concerned. This allows him to cross the room and touch the plaque in safety.

As soon as any character touches the plaque, the copper chime over the arch sounds a low note. The gem stone under the portico flares up with brilliant light, then continues pulsing dimly as before.

L3. The Challenge of the Unreal

You approach the archway above which the silver chime hangs. Beyond it you see an empty room whose grey-

black walls are covered with occult symbols. At the far end of the room, a plaque of polished silver faces you.

GM: As soon as any of the characters enters the room, read the following:

Mist seeps from the walls around you. It swirls rapidly towards the centre of the room. As you watch, it coagulates to form a repulsive monster—a giant rattlesnake with a bovine skull in place of its head. It holds this shape for a moment, then alters to become a ragged giant with bulging eyes, then a long-taloned vulture with fleshless bones beneath its rotting plumage. Scuttling closer, it utters a vicious cry as it transforms into a huge spiderly being with envenomed mouthparts.

GM: This monstrosity is not, in fact, real. It is a kind of apparition which relies on its victim's own fears to do him harm. It can be combated physically, if the character accepts it as real. Provisionally, it has an ATTACK of 27, DEFENCE of 12, an Armour Factor of 5, and 38 Health Points. Its fangs/claws/whatever count as a (d10, 6) weapon. You might adjust these scores up or down somewhat if the player gives any indication of how powerful he thinks it is. Its power should correspond to what those fighting it imagine it to be.

Every Round, the apparition adopts a new and even more horrible form, subjecting each character it is fighting to a 1d12 *fright attack* (see the rule-book, p. 122). A character who succumbs to the fright attack runs screaming from the fight and will not be able to return to this room until the creature is disposed of.

When the apparition strikes in combat, it inflicts real damage because the characters believe that it is a real creature. They will thus see armour rip and blood flow in a very convincing fashion. However, if they later discover that it was only an illusion then each character gets a roll to 'disbelieve' some of the damage he took. This requires a roll of less than Intelligence on d20; if successful, the character recovers half the Health Points he lost in the battle. You will need to keep a record of the wounds each character takes in this encounter, therefore.

There is a very easy way to thwart this illusory monster: close one's eyes and block one's ears. It cannot hurt a character who does not know exactly when he is supposed to feel its attacks!

The silver chime will sound as soon as any of the characters touches the plaque. It strikes a slightly

higher note than before, but the effect is otherwise the same.

L4. The Gauntlet of Skulls

You peer through the archway under the bronze chime. Thick fog fills the air of the room, and you cannot get a clear idea of its size and shape. You can, however, see that two lines of wooden stakes extend across the room, and an ancient skull is set atop each of these. Mysteriously, despite the fog, a brazen plaque is somehow clearly visible on the far wall.

GM: The moment that one of the characters enters this room, a bronze grille drops into place across the archway behind him. This grille cannot be moved, nor the bars bent, until the character touches the bronze plaque on the other side of the room.

As the character makes his way along the avenue of skulls, they will rise up in pairs, pulling substance from the fog to become savage warriors in blue war-paint. After the character has defeated each pair, he must pass on and fight the next two. He could just race across the room as fast as he can go, of course, but in this case all the warriors will come to life together and he will find himself surrounded.

The trapped character's companions can aid him by shooting arrows or spells between the bars of the grille. If they do this, all the warriors will animate at once. (If the characters won't play fair, neither will they!) This also happens if the character tries to cross the room outside the avenue of stakes.

There are eight warriors in all.

SAVAGE WARRIORS

Rank-equivalent: 1st

ATTACK 15, Battleaxe (d8, 6)

DEFENCE 6

MAGICAL DEFENCE 4

Health Points:

First Warrior 10 HP

Second Warrior 10 HP

Third Warrior 12 HP

Fourth Warrior 12 HP

Armour Factor 0

EVASION 5

Movement: 12m (25m)

Reflexes: all 14

Fifth Warrior 13 HP

Sixth Warrior 13 HP

Seventh Warrior 15 HP

Eighth Warrior 15 HP

Having battled his way past the Savage Warriors, the character can touch the bronze plaque. A note sounds from the chime, and the glow of the crystal under the portico intensifies for a moment. The grille can now be moved easily.



L5. The Swords of Swift Execution

Looking through the archway under the iron chime, you find a long room decked with the panoply of war. Fine swords and shields hang on the walls, and banners depict the coats of arms of many a forgotten knight. On the wall directly opposite, an iron plaque is set at eye-level.

GM: The moment that a character steps into this room, the swords will begin to sparkle with blue light, animate as though seized by invisible hands and fly through the air to block his way. If he persists in trying to cross the room, he will be struck at by 1-6 of the swords every round. He can attempt to parry up to three at once, but he can move no faster than half walking speed (i.e. 5m/round) while doing so. He can only move at a quarter of his normal walking speed if he is trying to fight back. Each sword has ATTACK 16, DEFENCE 10. They cut skillfully but with little force—treat them as (d10, 2) weapons. Striking a sword does not damage it.

Other than fighting his way across the room, a character may deal with the swords in two ways. Firstly, he could grab one of the shields from the wall: they give +12 DEFENCE against these swords only. Or the character might try to snatch a sword out of the air. This needs a successful Hit Roll, followed by a d20 roll under the PC's Reflexes.

Having caught one of the swords, the character can use it to strike at those still attacking him. Each time he hits one of the swords, there is a flash of blue light and it drops to the floor. Once the character has knocked seven swords out of the air, the others all fall harmlessly at his feet. If retained for later use, the items in this room count in every respect as normal swords and shields. Touching the plaque causes the chime to sound, with the same effect as above.

L6. The Key That Lies Within

The door under the golden chime leads into a room of sky-blue stone. The air is sweet and cool. You find this room serene, unmarred by any feature.

GM: Unmarred by any feature—including a plaque. If they have investigated the other rooms, the player-characters may be expecting to find a fifth plaque is here. The purpose of the encounter that takes place in here is to reveal the plaque to them.

Upon entering the room, the characters hear a voice that speaks with crystal clarity inside their heads.

“How can a thing be in plain sight,” asks the voice, “and yet impossible to find?” As they ponder this, a gold white radiance begins to enclose one character in the party. It will favour Mystics, but if no Mystic is present then the character with the highest Psychic Talent will be singled out. There is time to escape from the room now, but if the character elects to stay then soul combat begins.

Soul combat is a contest of psychic forces—the spirit that inhabits this room against the character who has been singled out. First, Spiritual Points must be determined. These are the analogue of Health Points in the physical world. The character’s Spiritual Points are given by his Intelligence + his rank + Psychic Talent. The spirit he is fighting has 25 SP. Each Combat Round, both character and spirit attempt to diminish one another’s Spiritual Points. To do so, a roll of less than Psychic Talent on 1d20 is required, and a successful roll reduce the other combatant’s Spiritual Points by 1d6. Both combatants act simultaneously. The spirit’s Psychic Talent score is 14.

The soul combat ends when either combatant’s Spiritual Points reach 0. It cannot be broken off before this unless the character’s companions pick him up and bodily carry him out of the room, as he cannot move of his own accord (or sense the physical world around him in any way) while engaged in soul combat. If they do this, the psychic backlash that results will prove traumatic, reducing the character’s Psychic Talent and Intelligence by 2 points each. This condition lasts for 1–6 days, although there is no way that the character could know that it is not going to be permanent.

If the spirit wins the soul combat, the character loses 3d6 experience points but is otherwise unharmed. The spirit will retreat for one hour to recover its energies, then return to challenge anyone who enters this room.

If the character wins, the glow around him fades. His companions may fancy they see a glimmer of gold in his eyes just before the glow fades completely. A voice speaks in the victorious character’s

mind, saying, “The purpose of all searching is to discover that you already possessed the thing you sought.” A crystal plaque appears suspended in the air in front of the character, and if he touches it then the gold chime above the arch resonates with a high note. Additionally, if the character is a Mystic, this insight will give him +10 to the roll on any attempt he makes to reach Adepthood.

L7. Journey’s End

When all five of the chimes have been made to sound (the order does not matter), a change comes over the crystal in the portico. It glows more brightly, and the rhythm of its pulsing becomes steadily more rapid, until it is giving off a steady white light. It is now safe for characters to step into the portico and approach the crystal. By touching the crystal, they are teleported back to room 31 in the castle above.

The Sceptre (or Sword, or whatever form it now has) is attuned to whoever was holding it when the fifth chime sounded. (If nobody is holding or carrying it then nothing happens—powerful magic plays by tough rules). In the hands of a Sorcerer, it increases his Magic Points by a factor of four, just as it did for Myrkyn. A Mystic can use it to subtract 6 from the d20 roll when he makes a Psychic Fatigue Check. An Elementalist will find the Magic Points in his main element quadrupled, and those of his other elements doubled. Warlocks have their Magic Points tripled.

A Sorcerer, Mystic or Elementalist who uses it in mêlée gets no bonus to Combat Factors, though it does count as a (d6 +1, 5) enchanted weapon. For a Knight, Barbarian or Warlock it functions as a magic weapon which grants +10 to ATTACK and DEFENCE, uses 2d8 for Armour Bypass Rolls inflicts 8 HP damage on a successful hit and adds +2 to the character’s Armour Factor while he is fighting with it. If used by an Assassin, it counts as a +3 magic weapon and also grants +8 to STEALTH and PERCEPTION; while using it, the Assassin can always stay hidden from the sight of 1st-rank characters without having to make a Stealth Roll.

But there is a catch. The Sceptre only works in the vicinity of the castle. It draws its power from the rock on which the castle stands, and it cannot do this at a range of more than half a mile or so. This is one reason why Myrkyn refused to hand over the castle to Sir Grafven.

VII.

Summing up

The adventurers could come out of this adventure in many ways. If they go along with Grafven's plan and kill Myrkyn for him, they must act swiftly to control the Sceptre's power if they then wish to turn the tables on Grafven.

Assisting Myrkyn against Grafven will provide them with a powerful ally if they are on the winning side. To have a 10th-rank Sorcerer for a friend is every adventurer's dream, for he can provide them with spells and magical items—and a secure refuge when they need it.

If they side with Myrkyn and he is later killed (admittedly unlikely; with advance warning he should make short work of Grafven and his men), they had better either decamp quickly before Grafven finds them, or else flee from him into the underworld and try to attune the Sceptre. Of course, they will then need to clear the castle of Grafven and his retainers if the Sceptre is to be of any use to them!

Experience awards are left to the GamesMaster's discretion—although doing 'the right thing' (i.e. helping Myrkyn against Grafven and thus acquiring the wizard's friendship and gratitude) should be worth very nearly as much as descending into the underworld and figuring out all the chambers there. Don't worry if then the underworld is not used in the scenario—you can always slot it into a different adventure!

Final note: Who built the underworld?

This is something the player-characters will never know for sure. Maybe they will get the chance to chat to Myrkyn about it, and his theory is that it is a relic of the Sithi Danu, a race of High Elves worshipped as gods by the ancient Madhir tribe that once dwelt in these isles. As for why they built it the way they did—that is anybody's guess. The Sithi Danu were fond of mystical challenges, *objets d'art magique*, and strange intricate puzzles. Their ways were not the ways of men. If they were indeed the architects of the underworld, the artificers who made the Sceptre, the truth of it all died with them, a dozen centuries ago.

VIII.

Looking ahead

Depending on how things have gone, the player-characters will now either in control of a strategically important castle, be allied with the owner of the castle, or be out on their ear with a grudge against a certain group of knights. Any of those is a fertile bed for future adventure seeds, and you can take your campaign in several directions from here.

Myrkyn, if he has survived, is now even less willing to leave the castle or to allow strangers to enter it. But with war increasingly likely, Baron Aldred needs the castle: being able to station troops there would strengthen his defences, and he cannot risk it falling into the hands of Montombre. He may ask the PCs to negotiate with Myrkyn for him, or tell them to betray their friend and take control of the castle by force, for the greater good. This conflict between duty and friendship would fuel a powerful storyline and some memorable adventures.

It's reasonable to assume that at some point the player-characters will control the castle. This makes them powerful people. If they were so minded, gifting it to Baron Aldred would expunge any remaining taint from their involvement in the death of his son, and he would give them senior positions in his retinue. Conversely, if they refuse to let him use it then they will find he is a powerful enemy. Myrkyn's skeletal troops will not answer their command: if they want to defend their territory or conquer new ones they must recruit (and pay) a garrison.

Whether they embrace their new status as castle-owners and become involved in the games of politics and military strategy played by the barons of Ellesland, or whether they hand over control of their fortress to another and resume an adventuring life is up to them. It may mark a radical shift in the style of your game, so be prepared for that. But if you find the player-characters have become dull homebodies and refuse to leave the castle, then you may decide it has other ancient defences and tricks built into its stonework: more sinister ones.

And if Aldred and Montombre do go to war, then a long siege, assassins, or sappers undermining the walls may persuade them to leave their sanctuary and enter the battle. Legend needs all the heroes it can find!

DRAGON WARRIORS

SLEEPING GODS

Those who lie under the earth should not be woken

WHEN YOU TOOK the job, you never thought it would lead to this. Escorting a prisoner to the court of Baron Aldred did not sound like the start of your path to glory and riches.

As you stare out over the battlements of your castle, you reflect on the long, twisted journey that brought you here. How a chance meeting with a village priest led you to the lost tomb of the legendary king Vallandar. That drew the attention of the Baron's steward Sir Beorn; and the strange mission he asked you to do convinced the Baron to make you his trusted guards.

Then from there... the bizarre island; the attempt on the Baron's life and the tragedy of his eldest son; the long sea-voyage to the jungles of Mungoda; and finally here, fighting for control of this ancient castle and its hidden secrets.

As the enemy's soldiers stand at the causeway, waiting for low tide to begin their assault, you ask yourself: has it been worth it? Smiling, you draw your weapon. Glory is its own reward, and today will be glorious indeed.

SLEEPING GODS is a series of seven adventures that will lead player-characters from their first steps in the world of DRAGON WARRIORS, through atmospheric quests, tense journeys, rescue missions, trading expeditions, exploration and more. With each success their reputation rises with nobles and patrons, until at the climax they may win control of a castle that can decide the outcome of a war.

Along the way they will come face-to-face with important patrons, powerful sorcerers, ancient beast-spirits, vengeful revenants, treacherous companions and terrifying monsters of many kinds... and perhaps a god too.

The book is suitable for novice gamesmasters and players, but has atmosphere, richness, depth and variety that will entertain experienced gamers too. The adventures can be played as a sequence to create a single story, or interspersed with other scenarios from different sources or the GM's imagination, or rearranged and played in any order.

With great new artwork from Jon Hodgson, Andrew Law, Scott Purdy and Scott Neil.

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