

# THE CHAINS OF HEAVEN

AN ADVENTURE LOCATION BY MICHAEL PRESCOTT

## THE SITUATION

At the roof of the world, the Seree constructed a fortress, an enchanted prison meant to wring magic from the gods themselves.

The Seree fled centuries ago when a trio of demigods, led by Deel, razed it and freed their trapped kin.

Now, the prison is controlled by the sorceress **Nacharta**, who claims Seree ancestry and seeks to reclaim the powers of her forebears.

## THE GRANARY

**Nacharta's** forces keep a store of "witch-grain". A steady stream of ensorcelled birds and insects bring seeds, nuts, and beetles gathered in the valleys below, and deposit them through holes in the mud-thatch roof.

## THE WEST TOWER

Empty, save for two **Nuss mongrels** spying on **Nacharta's** activities.

## THE ORRERY

Once used to chart divine motions, its ornate spheres are now blistered, flaking metal.

Rotating it once advances the heavens by one day, and ages the mover by one year.

## THE SOUTH TOWER

This empty shell holds stairs down to the **inner halls**. The **Nuss mongrels** keep their use of it secret.

## THE PIT MOUTH

This magical pit once snared celestial beings from the heavens, trapping them with an intense gravitational pull.

The effect is unsettling, as if the ground (though flat) tilts sharply toward the pit's edge, and anything near is dragged in.

The anchored chain drops 30' to the top of the **remnant**, a massive pile of stones and debris, littered with dead birds.

## THE NORTH TOWER

Apparently an enormous, single block of pink stone, the north "tower" bears scars from the battle and several later attempts to break in, but it remains impregnable.

Breaching the tower's 15' thick walls will draw the attention of **Sigordine**.

The hairline doorway outlines are a ruse and do not open.

## THE WINCH HOUSE

**Nacharta's** minions built this dry stone structure from collected rubble.

d3 **acolytes** and d6 **thralls** tend a stone oven, used for baking bread and for smelting **remnant ore** retrieved from the pit.

The minions built a winch to lower a chain into the pit, but the pull proved too great for them to pull it up.

A rack holds four pairs of iron hooks, used for climbing the chain, as well as three iron picks.

Cots for ten stand against the walls.

## THE EAST TOWER

The ground floor is a crowded workshop packed with tables and tools for metal-working, book restoration, and innumerable mundane tasks (mending, candlemaking).

d6 **acolytes** and d6 **thralls** toil, eat, and sleep here.

**Nacharta** lives on the first storey, served by her three most loyal **acolytes**. Her apartment is crowded with shelves: the salvaged Seree library.

The storey above is open to the elements and is unused.

## GREAT HALL

This two-storey building exists only as a shell around an enormous gouge.

The hall once housed the masters of the fortress, and it was the first point attacked during the razing.

The mixture of rainwater and rubble pooled at the bottom of the gouge conceals two artifacts that have lain here for centuries.

## THE ICE LORDS' ANVIL

An anvil of indestructible star-glass, stolen from the Vinteralf. Anything forged on the anvil is brought to the full attention of the powers of the luminous void.

## THE WHITE LANCE OF DEEL

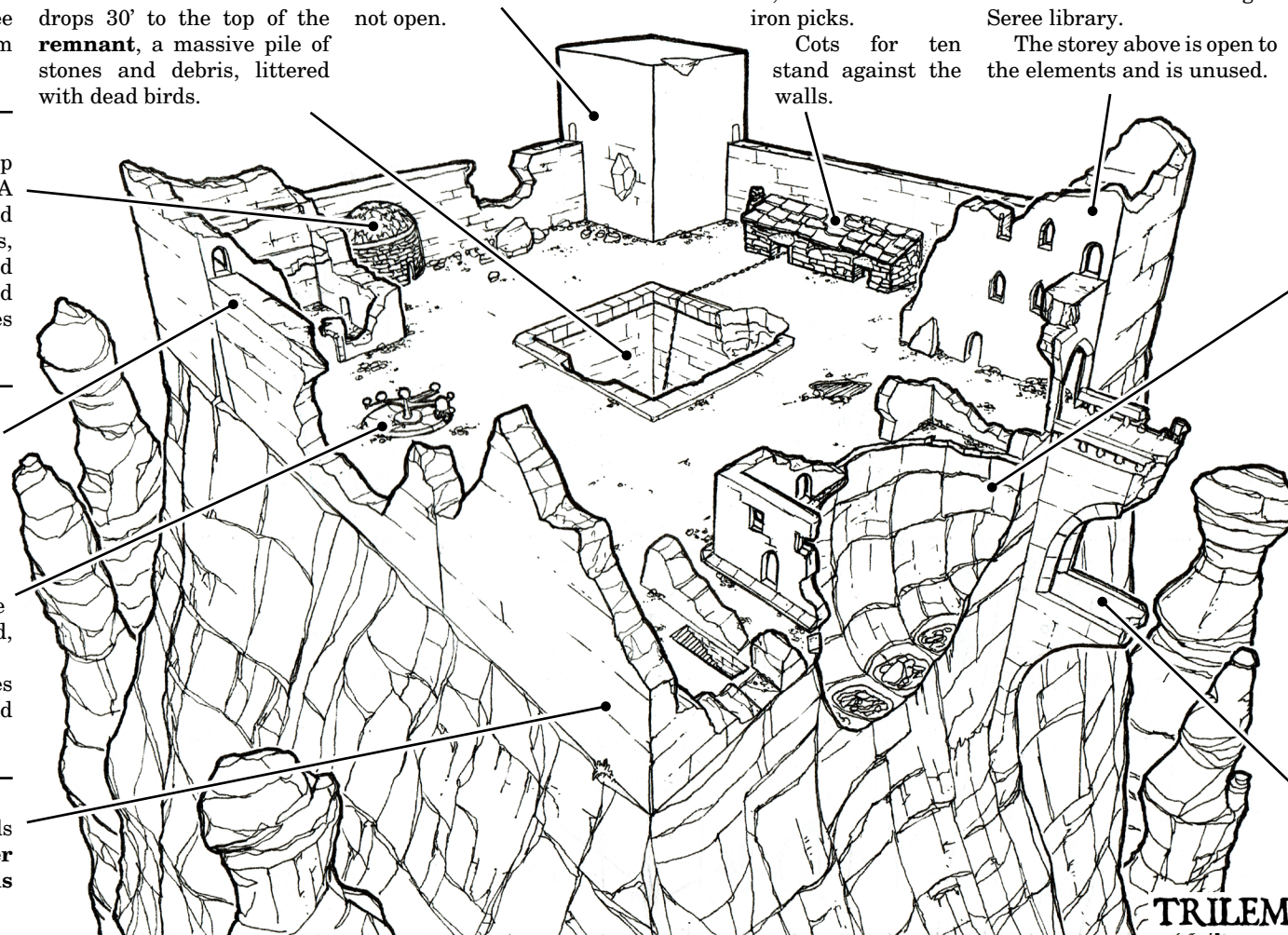
A javelin of white metal two paces in length is embedded in the rock. This is the weapon that destroyed the Great Hall. If thrown forcefully, it will inflict similar damage again.

Collateral damage (e.g., to the thrower) is certain, and the discharge will be felt by powers and magical sensitives for hundreds of leagues.

## THE BRIDGE

The Seree used the essence of chained deities to project an artificial ley line southeast, allowing them to walk directly to their next mountain-peak fortress, barely visible six leagues to the southeast.

The lower bridge is one of two entry points to the **inner halls**.



TRILEMMA ADVENTURES

REACHING THE FORTRESS

Built on the peak of a mountain, the approach is difficult and slow. Nights grant an incredible view of the stars, but are exceedingly cold.

**Sigordine** has set a trio of **Nuss mongrels** to watch all the approaches, to learn the capabilities and disposition of anyone approaching.

THE PIT REMNANT

The pit is 70' deep, though the bottom 40' is a great pile of rubble pulled in when the towers were destroyed during the razing.

The haphazard angles of the blocks makes it possible to clamber around and beneath them, deeper into the pile.

The deeper one goes, the stronger the pull, and the smaller the gaps. Every move is an effort, and any tumble can break bones. Eventually, breathing itself becomes difficult, and rest provides no benefit.

A half-dozen **thralls** have perished here. With them is a husk in flattened plate armor.

GODMARKS

30' from the bottom, the walls of the pit are marred by silvery streaks—gouges and cuts filled in with a white, glossy metal.

These are godmarks, congealed celestial power left by the imprisoned deities as they thrashed and writhed. A potent record of suffering, looking at them causes fear.

Near the top of the remnant, the marks are few, and have been picked clean of metal by **Nacharta's** minions. There are larger and more numerous marks lower down, but the work is dangerous. The order has found that even the rubble can be smelted for small quantities of the precious metal.

The bottom 10' of the pit is filled with silvery, metal-infused rainwater, though none have seen it and returned.

REMNANT BAUBLES

The order has been working the metal into jewellery in an attempt to make its power usable.

Each **acolyte** carries d2 baubles, fashioned into rings, thin bracelets, or medallions.

| d6 | Remnant Bauble Powers                                                                                                                                                                |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | The bearer can see from the eyes of a visible target of their choice.                                                                                                                |
| 2  | Disintegrates the bearer and their belongings into dust. They remain as a disembodied observer, and can reassemble at will.                                                          |
| 3  | Projects a repulsive sphere centered on the bauble, like the pit but in reverse. Impedes attacks against the bearer; scatters small objects.                                         |
| 4  | Teleports the bearer 10' in the direction of their gaze.                                                                                                                             |
| 5  | Shoots a lash of electricity 15'; harms as crossbow; starts fires.                                                                                                                   |
| 6  | Target inanimate object (or portion of one, up to human size) gains life for d4 hours and (d6) 1-2: becomes violent, 3-4: flees in panic, 5-6: demands to know why it was disturbed. |

NACHARTA GREENMANTLE

Nacharta is a fierce, hard-working woman in her late fifties, driven to restore the majesty of Seree power.

Her education as a Panurian missionary introduced her to tales of the Seree, and though she has left that path, she retains a missionary's certainty in her cause.

ROBES AND GLOBUS

She wears heavy, emerald green robes proudly, as they are original Seree relics. Though magnificent from afar, they are threadbare and moth-eaten.

In her pocket she carries a globus, a fist-sized remnant bauble with all six powers.

ACOLYTES AND THRALLS

In all, ten acolytes and fourteen thralls serve Nacharta. Originally porters hired for the mountain expedition, Nacharta ensorcelled them to remain on without pay.

Marone, acolyte-librarian, is responsible for tending the scavenged scrolls and tablets, which are preserved in the East Tower.

THE SEREE LIBRARY

Marone treasures four documents:

A *tome* describing the chant that brings the pit to full strength, snaring any celestial power in position.

A Seree *handbook* on how to exploit the beliefs of a dozen cultures in order to project mythical significance. Marone has begun to update this in the margins.

*Speculations* by 'Forge-Seer Zecoxy' that the pit actually creates god-like beings by concentrating power, rather than trapping existing ones. He frets that the first three, all escaped, will one day return.

A hasty *account* of the razing that names Deel, Cicollus, and Panur as the attackers. It describes them freeing the horrid 'Angnes', 'Cwealm', and 'Egesa' from the pit, and claims that Zecoxy slew Deel with her own 'white lance' before being devoured by Egesa.

THE INNER HALLS

The mountain is mostly solid, but the Seree carved a several chambers below the fortress.

1. South tower room (d6 **Nuss mongrels**)
2. Rubble-filled hall, smashed barrels
3. Bridge room (open to the air, bird nests)
4. Perimeter tunnel for scrying into the pit
5. Pit (inaccessible from the inner halls)
6. Collection circle (white metal extracted from trapped gods would pool here)

Wary of **Sigordine**, **Nacharta** and her minions avoid these dark halls. The **Nuss mongrels** skulk here, avoiding confrontation unless **Sigordine** directs otherwise.

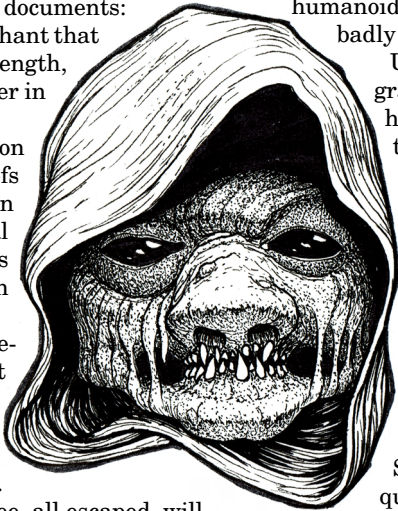
NUSS MONGRELS

Nine mongrels serve **Sigordine**, gifts from the Nuss. They are short, stocky, and wrapped from head to toe in rust-red cloaks.

A close look betrays their alien nature: their skin writhes and pulses, a mass of fine tendrils and naked muscle. Only

**Sigordine's** command binds them to their humanoid shape, which they lose if badly harmed.

Unarmed, they prefer to grapple, as they can sprout horns, jaws, claws, serrated tusks, or venomous spines anywhere on their bodies.



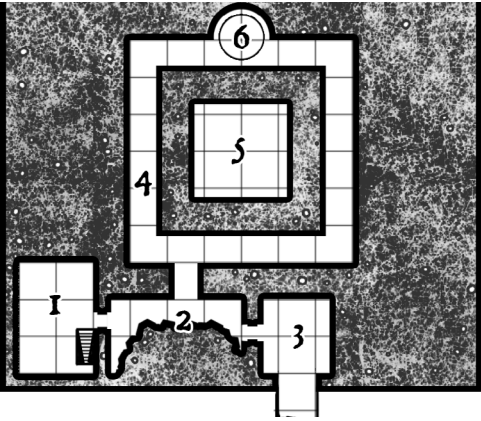
SIGORDINE

The gods left a guardian to ensure the Seree never again worked their cursed pit.

Formed from the remains of Deel, Sigordine appears as a nude figure of dark glass. She bides her time within the quartz circle in room 6.

Bored by the centuries, Sigordine pretends to be bound by the circle, which Nacharta believes. Dismissive of fools, Sigordine considers Nacharta a dabbler, and sees her explorations here as a fitting final insult to the memory of the Seree.

Sigordine resists most magic, can teleport anywhere within a league of the fortress, and punches with the force of a mattock.



INSIDE THE NORTH TOWER

At the center of the solid block is a 10' room, once the inner vault of the Seree.

Sigordine piled it with their skulls, smashed wands, and burned vestments. The shades of these dead are thick with anxiety.

She stores three white lances here, also.