

C7



## CASTLE ON THE HILL



Walt

STEPHEN CHENAULT



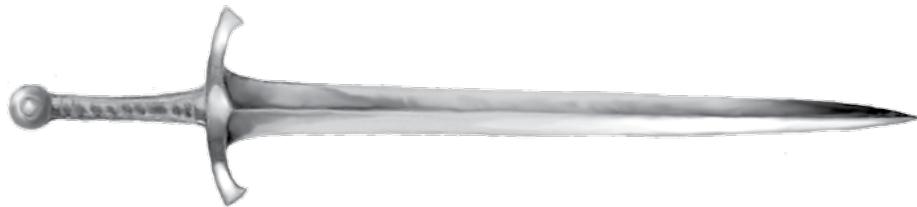
# CASTLE ON THE HILL

By STEPHEN CHENAULT

EDITOR: STEVE EGE, LIBBIE ANN

FRONT COVER: JASON WALTON INTERIOR ART: ZOE DEVOS, PETER BRADLEY

CARTOGRAPHY: PETER BRADLEY



1818 North Taylor, #143, Little Rock, AR, 72207

email: [troll@trolllord.com](mailto:troll@trolllord.com)

website: [www.trolllord.com](http://www.trolllord.com) or  
[www.knightsofthecrusade.com](http://www.knightsofthecrusade.com)

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This is the seventh installment of the Darkenfold Adventures. It is designed for 3-5 characters in the mid to high-level range. The party is confronted with the power of the Green Wizard. The adventure takes place along the banks of the Mistbane River near its confluence with the Powder River.

This adventure is a set piece adventure that pits the party against the might of the Green Wizard and his dungeons beneath the Castle on the Hill. The adventure can pick up after **C6 Ends Meet**, however it is not necessary to play that adventure to enjoy Castle on the Hill. Castle on the Hill is playable in any campaign or setting. However, if you are playing in the world of Aihrde as portrayed in the **Code of Aihrde**, the adventure takes place in the River Basin region of the Darkenfold.

## INTRODUCTION

From Thompson's Point in the east to the Bolan Drops in the west and from Bent's Trading Post in the north, to the Two Dogs River in the south, is the realm of the Green Wizard. He dwells in the ruins of a tower upon the southern bank of the Mistbane River. From there, he has terrorized the region for many years. He hounds any who enter his realm, either killing them or carting them off to his dungeons to torture or experiment upon. He raids eschl villages and carts those he captures off to be sold at auction on the slave blocks of Haverstraw. He breeds beasts in his dungeons, that he unleashes on the whole of the southern Ursal. His is a cruel and wicked realm, one that even the Darkenfold finds abhorrent. He has recently built a bridge across the Mistbane, signaling his desire to begin his conquest.

The adventure begins almost anywhere the CK desires, from Ends Meet to Willowbreak, from Bent's Trading Post to a boat on either river or on any trail. The characters need have no knowledge of the tower or its occupants to stumble upon it.

## FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

The Green Wizard, Anabaxius, is actually a high-level druid. The name "Green Wizard" is a name given to him years ago, and it stuck. Why he was called that is lost to history. His overall purpose is to create a living idol to the goblin god, Ogoltay, and with her power, raise an army of goblins to conquer the Darkenfold and use it as a base of operations to wage war on the kingdoms of men to the north. He came to the Darkenfold forest to do this.

He was well acquainted with the Castle on the Hill, as it was called by the locals, and chose it as his lair. At first, he did not want to draw attention to himself, so he did not refortify the tower, but rather made the land around the tower treacherous. He first covered the broad Hunter's Trail that followed the southern bank of the river and passed by the castle with all manner of wild growth, so that the trail ended long before it reached the castle. He buttressed the forest immediately around the castle hill with tangled brambles and hedges of briars. He cultivated gnarled, twisted trees to break up the ground and impede travel. He waded into the river and cast earthquake, breaking the riverbed and creating dangerous rapids for any approaching the tower. At last, he summoned a fog, and it settled on the area to impede anyone's senses. This last kept the ground always a little muddy and slick

and encouraged a host of mosses and lichens to grow throughout the castle's immediate environs.

Once the castle was fortified, he excavated a temple deep in the ground and through more sorcery created a series of root trees in the temple that allowed him to travel around the forest using the spell *transport via plants*. Once settled, he began to cultivate a root ball, shaping it with his own sorcery to appear as an idol to Ogoltay. He fed the root ball, not with water, but with the blood of living sacrifices. He also cast spells upon the root ball, guiding its development into a living idol.

The idol is only a short time from establishing a connection with the goddess Ogoltay. She is an ignorant, cruel, and vicious beast of deity and one that the Green Wizard hopes to be able to control. Once he has her eye, she can bestow upon him the power to communicate with goblins far and wide and allow him to bend the goblins to his will. In this way, he can raise an army and build a kingdom of his own. Only then can he begin the conquest of Kayomar to the north. This will usher in an age of goblin rule the like of which the world has not seen in many centuries, and he will be its rightful lord and master.

**NOTE:** The root ball is buried in the ground in the temple (see below), and because of this it has established a minor connection with the earth goddess Hroth. At its present state of growth, it could be seen as an idol to either goddess, Ogoltay or Hroth.

## WHO IS THE GREEN WIZARD

Anabaxius was born in the wilds of the Barrowland to a witch, Fridul, who ruled a petty realm in her own right. From there, she terrorized the Ursal Road, robbing caravans that traveled from Kayomar to Kleaves and beyond. For a time, she grew wealthy and powerful. She did so by selling her captives as slaves to the hobgoblins to the north and trading the stolen wares of her ill-gotten gains. Her young son ruled at her side, but his mind was bent toward the wilderness and the unadulterated primeval power of it all.

After some few years, Fridul's raiders kidnapped a niece of the powerful Baron of Cotleberg, a high lord of the Kingdom of Kayomar, and promptly sold her into slavery. The baron, an older man, prone to fight on the slightest whim took up the sword, called his levies to arms, and went to war. He was joined by other northern barons and a small retinue of dwarves from Norgorad Kam who called him kinsman.

Together, the army marched up the Ursal Road, crossed into the Barrowland, and laid waste to Fridul's realm. They put everyone they found to the sword, excepting only slaves, who they freed and armed. They captured Fridul and the baron had her burned alive and her body fed to the crows. They pushed on toward the town of Luxor and sacked and burned it.

The baron did not stop there, but led his army after his niece to the Bleached Hills where several small pitched battles with the hobgoblins occurred. This summed the attention of the god-king Vistenodge the Mad, of the hobgoblin realm. The baron fell back to a Luxor and fortified it and the god-king lay siege to the town.

## 2 CASTLES & CRUSADES

When word of Vistenodge's attack reached King Luther II in Kayomar, he called for the realm to muster all its chivalry and gather in Cotleberg. Within two months' time the army was on the march, some 12,000 horse and men-at-arms. They were joined by a host of dwarves, some 500 strong and an untold number of paladins from the Order of the Holy Defenders of the Flame. The baron had wind of this, and it fortified his people in their siege of Luxor.

What followed was a pitched battle before the walls of Luxor on the plains of the Barrowland. However, few realms in the wide world can stand against the might of Kayomar, for their knights are well accoutered and experienced in battle. By day's end the god-king's army was routed, and the greater part of his host dead upon the field. Luther threatened to pull up the god-king's realm by the roots unless the baron's niece and all other captives were returned. Several hundred, including the niece, were released and given to the king as well as a mountain of gold in payment for this trouble.

Anabaxius lived through all this and watched from afar as his mother was burned alive, her people destroyed, and the might of the hobgoblins extinguished. Though always evil, for he was born with a pestilence in his heart, the war focused his hate, and like the weak often do, he did not blame himself or misdeeds for his misfortune; he blamed others. He blamed Kayomar and all its people for his fall and his mother's death.

For years he wandered in the wilds, honing his craft and learning all there was to learn about the druidic arts. He eventually gathered some few followers and they traveled with him, reaping what spoils they could from adventure and raiding. It came to his mind that the only peoples in the world who defeated the realms of man and dwarf were the goblins, and he became obsessed with finding a mode of ruling an army of them.

It was not long after that he hatched the idea of the living idol and sought out a secluded place. Long ago he had plundered the Castle on the Hill, and knew its strengths and weaknesses. So, he moved his operations to the Darkenfold and the Castle on the Hill.

Though wealthy through years of adventure, Anabaxius quickly used up his funds. He began to actively deal in the slave trade at that point, following in his mother's footsteps. Any who fell into his hands were carted off and sold on the auction blocks. The money from this and other endeavors allowed him to continue his experiments and amass a small fortune.

With this, he has built a small army and houses it in and around the hill-top tower. Most are in a squalid village on the cliffs facing the castle and hill. Others live in the wilderness, moving from camp to camp. It consists primarily of orcs drawn from the Islun Tribe that dwells south of the tower, though there are some men, a few half-orcs and hobgoblins. He also had several giants in his employ and other monsters besides. The army does not number more than 150 souls, of which 50+ are usually out scouring the country or guarding the wizard's borders. His alliances, however, extend beyond the immediate army (see below).



### PLAYING THE DRUID

Anabaxius keeps a careful watch on the Darkenfold. He has for years, using a dozen vultures enslaved to him. He knows much of what goes on and who the various people are. He has made no friends, but attempted to make no enemies beyond the eschl and wandering travelers, whom he slew, enslaved, or robbed.

But this has changed as he is ready to conquer the Darkenfold. To do this he must seize Ends Meet, Greenbriar, East Keep, and Bent's Trading Post. To this end, he has built a large wooden bridge across the Darkenfold. Since the bridge has gone up, he does not care whose ire he raises, confident that with swift and sudden attacks he can overwhelm the better part of the northern Darkenfold and turn it into his fief.

To this end he is, or will very soon, send out a call to muster his army and allies.

**NOTE:** The halflings of the south and the elves are reclusive enough that he does not fear their involvement. For more on both peoples see the **Codex of Ahrde Expansion: The Darkenfold** book.

As for himself, he keeps to his dungeons focusing his own power on the root ball, venturing forth only for the direst of reasons. His primary goal is to make sure the living idol grows and connects

with the goblin goddess. However, if need be, the temple beneath the dungeon is equipped with giant roots of oak trees, nurtured by the druid. With these, he is able to use the transport via plants spell and go almost anywhere in the Darkenfold. He will do so if he must, otherwise he sends his lieutenants.

## TWO TYPES OF GAMES

The Castle Keeper can engage in one of two types of games with this adventure: a simple dungeon crawl, or a larger campaign of all-out war.

**DUNGEON CRAWL:** It can be used as a simple, though short, straight forward dungeon crawl, whereby the characters find and enter the Castle on the Hill and attack its inhabitants and engage the druid in battle.

**CAMPAIGN:** The adventure can be expansive with the Green Wizard beginning his conquest of the Darkenfold. To this end, he has engaged hob-goblins to the north, sent forth packs of were boars, and sends his own army across the bridge he has recently built over the Mistbane River. This requires the CK to keep track of a time line, as the various armies of the Green Wizard all move in one direction or the other, as well as the various militias, the characters, etc. The other six adventures in the C series are necessary for maps, personages, town militias, and other incidentals.

## GETTING STARTED

Castle on the Hill takes place near the confluence of two rivers, the Mistbane and Powder. The characters can approach from either river, or overland from any direction.

### FOR A DUNGEON CRAWL

Use any of the following ideas together or separately.

1) In **C6 Ends Meet**, the letter written by Charl Sands as detailed in Area 6 leads the party past the Green Wizard's tower.

2) The Green Wizard has interrupted boat traffic on the Mistbane. This has enraged merchants in Petersboro and Haverstraw as well as Ends Meet. The characters could be hired to explore the reasons why, an investigation that leads to the Castle on the Hill. This adventure could begin in Haverstraw, Petersboro, or Ends Meet. Talk of this is detailed in **C6 Ends Meet "Talk of the Tavern"** in section 8.

3) Heana Geat, a lawful good cleric in Ends Meet (**C6 Ends Meet**, Area 15) is actively recruiting a party to attack and destroy the Green Wizard. She will join such a party if asked.

4) The characters could wander upon the castle at any time, from any direction, and stumble into the Hedge Wall.

### FOR A CAMPAIGN

Talk of the Green Wizard is pretty common and people know of him and his slave trade all over the Darkenfold. But his lair is far from the three northern villages and the towns on the edge of the

forest, so few worry about him. This common knowledge can be fleshed out with any of the three ideas listed above.

1) Word has spread all across the Darkenfold that a bridge has been built spanning the Mistbane. This is unheard of, no bridge has been built on the Mistbane River in over a century, longer really, but few can remember when. Whether the characters are in Willowbreak or Ends Meet (it doesn't matter), word travels fast, usually via the rangers, coal burners, fisherman, or peddlers. The characters are encouraged to investigate.

2) If the characters have taken an active role in the Darkenfold (adventure in the other six modules), they have no doubt drawn the attention of the Green Wizard. He sends several minions to attack and kill them as part of his plan to strike all the areas of the Darkenfold simultaneously.

3) The rangers of Ends Meet engage the characters to investigate the bridge as there is word that the hobgoblins of the north are on the war path.

## WAR

It defies the scope of this adventure to dictate the movements of the Green Wizard's armies, particularly after the movement of various groups begins. However, he does make some simple moves that start the war, pressing the villages and people on all sides, at different times, to keep them off guard. All of these armies are separate from his army that he keeps at the tower. The Castle Keeper should map out a stratagem that the Green Wizard might take, using his army and allies to both attack his foes, but keeps defenses at the Castle on the Hill in order to protect the living idol.

A rough outline might be as follows:

- 1) Send several hobgoblin bands to simultaneously attack Post Road and Eastfold
- 2) Gauging the response, if anyone goes to help Eastfold he strikes Greenbriar
- 3) Awaiting response, he attacks Alice
- 4) After a few more days he attacks Willowbreak

His real purpose is to keep the forest rangers, characters, and any militia dispatched by towns on the road and trying to put out fires so that he can send his main orc army up river to Ends Meet.

This whole strategy should be played fluidly.

**DRUIDS:** Two druids work closely with the Green Wizard, Veritrix and Tearlag. Tearlag is the older of the two and his most trusted lieutenant for she is fiercely loyal to him and to his desire to conquer the Darkenfold and realms beyond. She is rarely in the Castle on the Hill, however, and almost always in the forest, watching or doing his bidding. Veritrix is a battle-hardened druid and believes fervently that mankind must be purified of his weakness and the only way to do this is to unleash the fury of the primeval world upon them. He commands the orcs and hobgoblins in battle.

**DRUID, TEARLAG** (This 8th level neutral human's vital stats are HD 8d8, HP 60, AC 20/24 (+4 defender). Her primary attributes are constitution, wisdom, and intelligence. Her significant attributes are strength 16, intelligence 16, wisdom 18, dexterity 17, charisma 15 and constitution 17. She uses a variety of weapons in battle: +4 defender short sword, a +2 war hammer that strikes with a wall of wind spell once every four rounds, a +1 dagger, or a +3 short bow. She wears +5 leather armor. She has woodland stride. She has adopted the wolf, cotton mouth snake, and house finch as her totem shapes. She can change into any one of the shapes and back again once per day. Her spells known are 5/5/4/4/2. She has a tattoo of Kekki on her left breast that grants her +3 AC. She wears a +3 cloak of charisma.)

Tearlag is 5'7" inches with long auburn colored hair that she wears in a tightly bound tail. She has a disarming smile that gives her a high charisma. Her demeanor is calm and level headed and she is rarely given to panic. She is able to convince many people to do her bidding.

For stats on Veritrix see "The Bridge" below.

**HOBGOBLINS:** The hobgoblin hives are located in the Gottland Wood. There are dozens of them, spread over a wide area. The hobs break into small bands of 10-40 and begin hounding travelers on the road, stopping all traffic on the Post Road. Their intent is to seize both Greenbriar and Eastfold. To this end they will eventually march forth with several hundred hobs to attack either place. They number roughly 400 hobs, but these are spread out all over the northern Darkenfold. A small band remains with the Green Wizard, guarding the Castle on the Hill.

**WEREBOARS:** The wereboars range up through the Wingnut Bottomlands to Gurthap Falls. They cross the Watchita River to attack Alice and head up the road to Ends Meet, hounding any they see or encounter.

**ISLUN ORCS:** Though many of this tribe have gone to live in Bootstraps Gorge with the Wizard's army, the greater part remains south of the Mistbane and in the Downs. It is for them that the bridge was constructed. The orcs send a raiding party of about 100 across the river and press Willowbreak. Others begin building flat-bottom boats and preparing for an attack on Ends Meet and later Petersboro. They number about 600 warriors, and are led by their War Chief, a fiercely independent leader named BoneStaff.

**DRUIDIC CABAL:** He has engaged a cabal of five 6th level druids to interdict all traffic to Bent's Trading Post. This has been going on for some time. The druids hide the paths to the Post as well as create tangled hedges and impassible bramble to drive traffic away from the Post by making people become lost or killing them. The Post is out of food and supplies and both proprietors have left to purchase them. For more on Bent's Trading Post see adventure C3 Upon the Powder River.

**FOG GIANTS:** He has three fog giants working for him. These stay in the gorge and guard the approaches to the Castle on the Hill.

## BORDERS IN THE WILD

The Green Wizard's domain extends beyond the tangled brush and fog that surrounds the castle and hill. He controls roughly 25 square miles of the river basin. The fog that surrounds the castle extends out from the base of the hill for about 1000 feet. The tangled forest is about 1 mile along the south bank of the Mistbane River.

In order to guard against intruders, the Green Wizard has established a patrol of wereboars on both banks of both rivers and four observation posts (see below).

## EYES ON THE LAND

The Green Wizard has bound a dozen vultures to him through the spell *eyes of the wild* (see **The Adventurer's Backpack**). They continually scout the region, watching for anything unusual. He can see through any one vulture's eyes at a time. He does not always use this ability. He will only make use of it when something alerts him or he is particularly keen on watching a certain region. For instance, if he desires to know what is happening in Ends Meet, he sends one of the birds over there and watches.

There is always a vulture flying over, or perched near, Ends Meet, the new bridge, the Castle on the Hill, Bent's Trading Post, and the rivers. The other seven range far and wide.

These birds do not act like normal vultures and are therefore shunned by all other birds. A ranger or druid may notice the bird's odd nature on a successful wisdom save (CL 9).

## WEREBOARS

The Green Wizard has bound a small army of wereboars to him, mostly by promises of plunder and the right to feast on the dead. They number about a hundred, but are scattered along the river basin from Ends Meet to Willowbreak and back again to the Castle on the Hill. Each band is broken up into 6-12 wereboars and are led by a lesser alpha-boar. The alpha-boar himself has moved to the environs of Alice, hoping for the call to attack that town. He has 12 wereboars with him and will call others if the Green Wizard gives him the go ahead.

The wereboars are not fiercely loyal to the Green Wizard but see in him the possibility for greater plunder and more feasting, thus they serve him. Though they tend to fight to the death when their blood lust is up, particularly when there is food on the line, they are not going to fight to the death for the Green Wizard.

If a lesser alpha learns that the Alpha has been killed, he stops whatever he is doing and moves quickly to kill all the other lesser alpha. If several lesser alpha's are together and in combat they turn on each other immediately, but once one is dominant will flee with the band in order to hunt and kill any remaining lesser alphas. As the bands are likely spread out all over the Darkenfold this is going to take some time as they hunt each other down and kill each other. Allow at least 2 weeks for this to occur. The wereboar population should be reduced by 20% due to internal fighting,

before they return to the service of the Green Wizard, assuming that is something the new Alpha desires.

**NOTE:** It is possible that rangers, druids or bards know the hierarchical structure of the wereboar bands. Allow the appropriate attribute check (CL 5).

**WEREBOAR, ALPHA** (These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 10d8, HP varies, AC 22, XP 1050+10. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a gore for 2d10 points of damage. They are able to alternate their form into a human or back again once per day. They have twilight vision, curse of lycanthropy, regenerate 3 hit points per round and ferocity. Ferocity allows the wereboar to strike a second time if it kills an opponent in one round.)

**WEREBOAR, LESSER ALPHA** (These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 7d8, HP varies, AC 20, XP 315+7. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a gore for 2d8 points of damage. They are able to alternate their form into a human or back again once per day. They have twilight vision, curse of lycanthropy, regenerate 2 hit points per round and ferocity. Ferocity allows the wereboar to strike a second time if it kills an opponent in one round.)



**WEREBOAR** (These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP varies, AC 18. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a gore for 2d6 points of damage. They are able to alternate their form into a human or back again once per day. They have twilight vision, curse of lycanthropy, regenerate 2 hit points per round and ferocity. Ferocity allows the wereboar to strike a second time if it kills an opponent in one round.)

### THE LAIR

The wereboars have a large Run in the Wingnut Bottomlands. Here they often drag the dead and feast upon them, celebrating by worshiping their patron Narrheit. A large round tree stump, flattened to look like a table serves as the altar and both treasure and food is heaped upon it in sacrifice to the god of chaos. There is one pack of wereboars here at all times, guarding the Run. They have maximum hit points.

**TREASURE:** Amidst a great deal of wreck and ruin are 5,000gp in assorted coin, gem and jewels worth 3,000gp and a scepter worth 500gp made by the ancient Ethrum. There is also a *horn of the halfling*, *cloth of hylde* and a *harvester knife* (all three items are found in the *Monsters & Treasure of Aihrde*).

### IAHNEAL DRAGON

Because the bridge is newly built and a key instrument in getting the orcs, and his own army, across the river, the Green Wizard is particularly keen on keeping it safe. To do so, he has employed an iahneal dragon (see *Monsters & Treasure of Aihrde*) to keep watch. The beast dwelt in the Downs for many years but was enticed up to the Mistbane with a small mountain of gold. The dragon has taken up residence on the north bank of the river, not far from the bridge (marked "ID" on area map). He has built his nest in a huge, dead willow that overlooks the river a half-mile up west of the bridge. This way he can watch the country behind him, the trail on the far bank, and the river itself.

The dragon can fly or swim and does not hesitate to attack any water craft on the river.

**DRAGON, IAHNEAL** (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 11d10, HP 88, AC 20. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with 2 claws for 1d2, a bite for 1d8, tail for 1d6 and a wing for 1d4 points of damage. They can attack multiple targets with all their attacks in a single round. They are able to bewilder their opponents by scintillating wings, wisdom save or be mesmerized for 1d6 rounds. They have a breath weapon that can transmute flesh to stone. For more see *Monsters & Treasure of Aihrde*.)

### THE BRIDGE

The bridge is a huge affair, 50 feet wide and 300 feet long and spans the river and beyond. It consists of huge wooden pylons set in the river bed every 40 feet and massive, planked timber cut fresh from the Downs. It has a low rail on it and a small fortified tower on the south bank. It is roughly two miles, upriver, from the Castle on the Hill.

Aside from the dragon, there are a dozen orcs in the tower on the south bank and a druid encamped several hundred feet upriver. The druid's purpose is to alert the Green Wizard of any attack on the bridge or anyone's attempt to pass beneath it.

**ORCS, WARRIORS, LIGHT x 12** (*These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, HP varies, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wear leather armor and carry small iron or wooden shields. They use a variety of weapons in battle: short swords, clubs, axes, hammers, and maces that do 1d6 points of damage. Most carry a flask with a dry tasting stout juice in it as well as a day or two of hard rations. They each have 1-6gp in assorted coin.*)

There is a 10% chance that a larger army of 20-100 orcs will be crossing over, or encamped near, the bridge.

**DRUID, VERITRIX** (*This 6th level neutral human's vital stats are HD 6d8, HP 44, AC 13. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and wisdom. His significant attributes are strength 15, intelligence 14, wisdom 17, dexterity 15, and constitution 18. He carries a +3 hand scythe and four spears in battle. The spears are expert weapons. He has woodland stride. He has adopted the sparrow hawk as his totem shape. He can change into the hawk and back again once per day. His spells known are 5/4/4/2. He also has a bracelet of protection +3 and gauntlets of swimming.*)

His camp is several hundred feet up river, off the trail in some brush. It is not particularly well hidden, but is hard to spot with a casual glance (CL 8). Someone actively looking has a much better chance to see the camp (CL 4). Veritrix uses the *animal messenger* spell to alert the Green Wizard of anything happening on the bridge by sending a sparrow up river. It takes about an hour for the messenger to alert the Green Wizard from the bridge. Once alerted the wizard looks through the eyes of the Vulture.

Veritrix will join the dragon if it looks as though he can overpower any interlopers. He will not fight to the death to defend the bridge. If the odds are overwhelming he falls back to the outpost and alerts the guards.

**VULTURE:** Once alerted to go and spy on the bridge, the vulture takes flight and begins circling the bridge. Anyone spots the lone bird on a successful spot check (CL 2). Refer to the section "Eyes in the Sky" for more on the vultures and how to detect them.

**NOTE:** If the battle at the bridge becomes prolonged, the Green Wizard will begin sending forces up to it piecemeal. First from the outpost, but then from his own troops in the immediate environs of the castle (see below).

## OUTPOSTS

In recent years, the Green Wizard has amassed a small army. As his deprivations have become more aggressive so has his fear of invasion. To guard against this, he has set up four observation posts. Each is manned 24 hours a day, by roughly the same make up of troops. Use the stats below for any observation post the characters encounter, whether from east, west, south, or north.

Each post is roughly the same. They have cut a clearing in the forest and established a camp. Here they store weapons, food, water, and firewood. The camps are large, poorly kept and have no real sanitation, allowing for waste to pile up until an occupant tires of it and scrapes it around.

Each camp is only loosely guarded. The occupants have long grown used to being left alone. That said, they do keep watch, and it is difficult to sneak up on the camp unless one is actively attempting to do so. Anyone approaching without caution will be noticed within 250 feet of the post, those sneaking must make their normal checks (CL 6).

Each of the camps is watched over by Mondule (see **Monsters & Treasure of Ahrde**) summoned by the druid himself. This massive, dead-looking tree, sits motionless until creatures come within striking distance. It is aware of its surroundings.

**NOTE:** The smell of the camp is noticeable from 250 feet away.

### NORTH POST (NP ON MAP)

This post is set on the north bank of the Mistbane River, about 50 feet up from the river on the flank of a 100-foot-high slope. The post is set on the side of a large, fallen cypress tree. The occupants have built a wall of driftwood parallel and at the top of the tree, making a very crude fortress. It is not very defensible and easily open to missile weapons from above.

### SOUTH POST (SP ON MAP)

The southern post is set in the woods about a half mile from the cliff that overlooks the castle. From this post, there is no easy way to the castle. The guards have to follow a trail west until the cliffs dip down to the river's level. They must then follow a path back around the cliffs and to the castle. Either that or they have to climb down a series of rope ladders that take them down the cliff to the village below. They communicate with the tower by shouting across to it, a wholly ineffective way of communicating.

### WEST POST (WP ON MAP)

There is a trail that follows the south bank of the Mistbane river. It used to follow the whole river's length. However, the trail has vanished beneath the druid's forest in and around the castle and hill. The trail picks up about 3 miles west of the castle. The post is a few hundred feet from this trail, right on the bank of the river.

### EAST POST (EP ON MAP)

Much like the West Post, the East Post is set just within the bounds of the Druid's domain a few hundred yards from the borders of the Green Wizard's land.

**NOTE:** If need be, adjust the size and number of occupants by the relative power of the adventuring party. Regardless, there is one giant near, but not in, the camp.

Read or paraphrase the following as the party spies any one of the four camps.

A stench draws you to a wide clearing cut in the bramble, centered around a huge, dead tree. A dozen or more figures lounge about a long, smoldering camp fire. They seem relaxed. Some gamble with one another, others pick at the bones of some recent kill, still others sharpen weapons, and others just lounge about. Equipment is scattered about the camp, placed in no discernible order. There are primarily orcs here, though some seem rather large, and several men. A large, old tree with only a few knobby limbs dominates the central part of the clearing.

The camp can be surprised on a CL 4.

The giant refuses to sleep or set up camp with the others and dwells on the inward side of the post, that is on the side closest to the castle. Anyone attempting to sneak around the camp will no doubt stumble on the giant.

**NOTE:** Druids may detect the nature of the moundule tree on a successful wisdom check (CL 4). Rangers can do so on a successful wisdom check (CL 7).

**ORCS, SUB-CHIEF x 2** (*These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, HP Varies, AC 16. Their primary attributes are physical. They wear scale armor and carry small, iron shields. They use a variety of weapons in battle, but prefer heavy weapons such as long swords and battle axes that do 1d8 points of damage. Most carry a flask with a dry tasting, stout juice in it as well as a day or two of hard rations. They each have 1-12gp in assorted coin. They each carry a small stone enchanted with woodland stride.*)

**ORCS, WARRIOR, LIGHT x 12** (*These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, HP varies, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wear leather armor and carry small iron or wooden shields. They use a variety of weapons in battle, short swords, clubs, axes, hammers, and maces that do 1d6 points of damage. Most carry a flask with a dry tasting, stout juice in it as well as a day or two of hard rations. They each have 1-6gp in assorted coin.*)

**GIANT, HILL** (*These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 9d8, HP 54, AC 17. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with 2 fists for 2d8 points of damage or a giant club for 2d8 points of damage. They are able to throw rocks up to 330 feet for 2d8 points of damage.*)

**MOUNDULE** (*These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 9d8, HP 72, AC 20. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two knobby slam attacks for 3d6 points of damage each. All fire based attacks do one-half damage, one-quarter on a successful save. They are immune to spells involving sight, sound, or taste and have SR 3.*)

**TREASURE:** There is no treasure officially kept in the outposts. The only treasure is that carried by the individuals or that captured from other creatures that wandered into the post's area of operations. The Castle Keeper should roll randomly or place treasure as desired, allowing a Treasure Type 6 for the collective monsters. The giant is clearly going to have more than the orcs.

## A WIZARD'S REALM

The Castle on the Hill sits atop a tall rock formation that is separated from the southern hills by Bootstrap's Gorge and the Sparrowhawk Cliffs. Technically the rock formation is called Irwin's Hill, or more commonly, the Hill, due to its distinctive nature. Across the gorge are the Sparrowhawk cliffs. These are steep and difficult to climb. They mark the beginning of a long range of hills, called the Merryl Plateau, that stretch south to and beyond Two Dogs River. Between the two lies Bootstraps Gorge.

**IRWIN HILL:** The hill itself used to be part of the plateau, however time eventually carved out the softer rocks and soils that separated it from the harder ground to the south. The hill stands about 300 feet from base to top. It is steep and jagged with many smaller cliffs and rock formations rising around its base. The rock is extremely hard and has never been good for tunneling or building underground works.

Irwin hill was settled centuries ago and is covered in the ruins of a network of walls and buttresses.

**SPARROWHAWK CLIFFS:** The cliffs range from 350-400 feet in height. A broad, tree covered scree at the cliffs bottom marks the first 75 feet of the cliff, above which are the steep, jagged crags of the bluffs. Long years of erosion have scored the cliff's face with ledges, fissures, crevices, and clefts. Various vines and low growing bushes and flowers cling to the cliff, rooting in whatever hole or crevice they can find.

The Darkenfold receives a great deal of rain fall and the cliffs are marked by a host of very small, though tall, waterfalls.

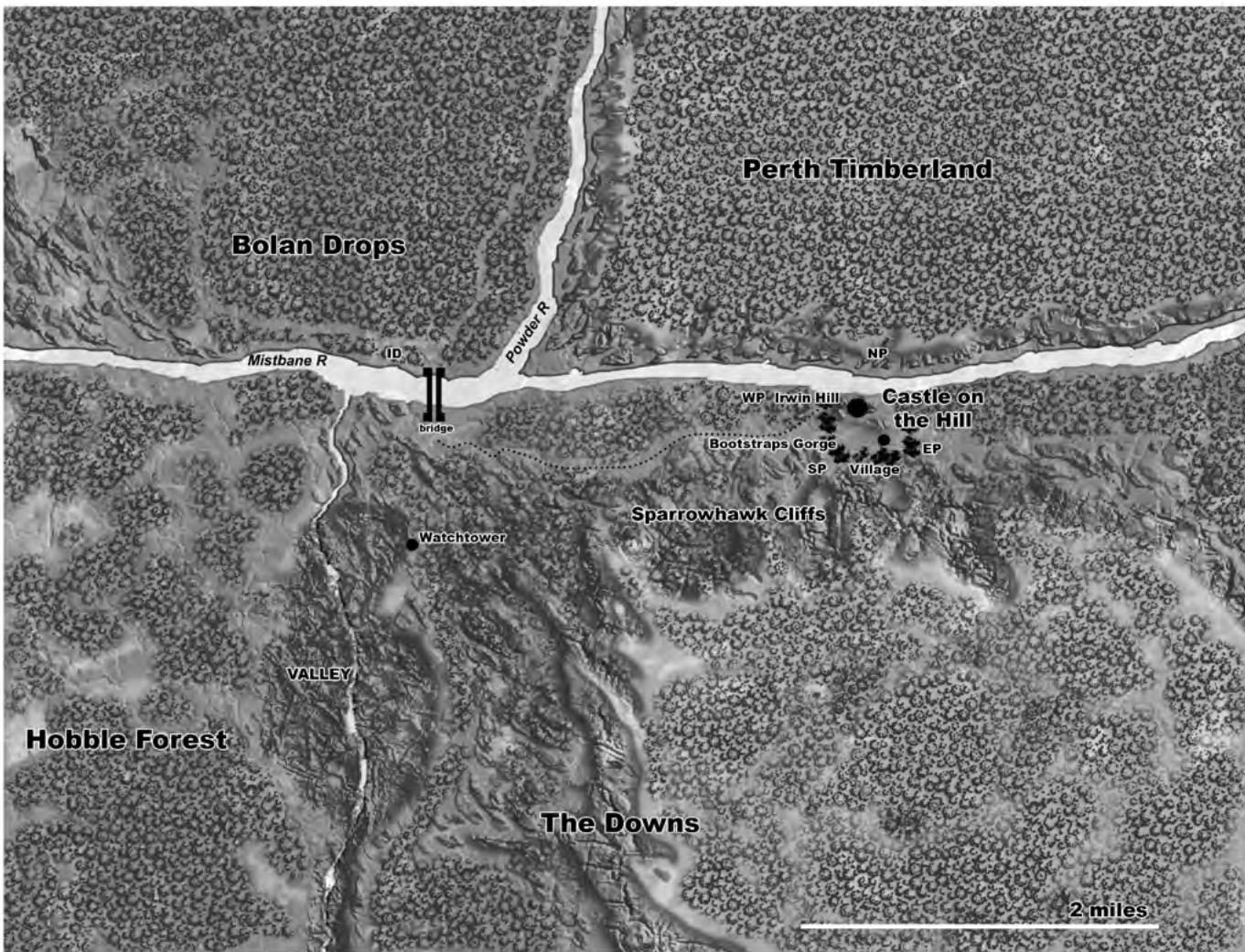
Climbing the cliffs is not difficult as they offer plenty of handholds. The scree itself can be climbed without any attribute checks. Climbing the cliffs requires a successful dexterity check (CL4) for every 10 feet. However, the sheer size of the cliffs is daunting. Check the Castle Keepers Guide for endurance rules and how these affect attribute checks.

**BOOTSTRAPS GORGE:** Bootstraps Gorge is deep and narrow, though not particularly long. It is roughly 2000 feet from end to end. It lies between Irwin's Hill and the Sparrowhawk Cliffs. Normally there is a path, Hunters Trail, that winds through the gorge, in the shadow of the cliffs and hill. However, it is blocked by the Thicket Wall and a magical fog.

## THICKET WALL

The hedge wall begins just before Bootstraps Gorge on both east and west and is roughly 200 feet thick. It is a twisted tangle of vegetation that consists of thorny shrubs and wickedly spiked gooseberry bushes, vines, poison ivy, and sumac. This thicket grows a dozen feet tall or more. In its midst are a small host of black, gnarled oak trees. The oaks are short with twisted, unyielding branches that weave into the thicket about. The whole is an almost impassable wall.

There is a secret pathway into and through the thicket. It begins on a narrow stair that winds up the cliff face 20 odd feet and then dips back down into the thicket. All the orcs and other minions



of the Green Wizard use the path. The druids of course can pass through the hedge without using the path. Finding the path requires some significant searching (CL 7) as it is well hidden. Of course, seeing an orc use it reveals the pathway.

If the path is used, it brings one to Hunters Trail, into the gorge and leads to the Castle on the Hill and follows the course of the river to the east.

Failing to find the trail means they must enter the thicket or take to the river. If the characters plunge into the thicket without following the trail, refer to the following effects:

**ENTERING THE THICKET:** The following occurs to anyone entering the thicket wall.

- Movement is cut by 2/3rds
- All initiative roles are at -2
- All dexterity checks are at -4
- All other attributes checks are at -1
- To hit rolls are at -1
- Every 10 feet crossed that is not cleared inflicts 1 point of damage

**NOTE:** The thicket wall is not a magical obstruction, but one cultivated by the Green Wizard.

There are assassin vines throughout the thicket on both sides of the gorge. For every 20 feet crossed, there is a 1 in 4 chance of encountering a vine or vines.

**ASSASSIN VINES** (These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 29, AC 15. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with vines doing 1d4 damage each, with a failed strength save by the victim indicating constriction. Constriction means the victim blacks out in 3 rounds and will be strangled to death in 3 more if not freed. Their special abilities are constricting, improved grab, camouflage and resistance to cold and fire.)

**NOTE:** There are no assassin vines on the path.

## FOG

The Green Wizard has summoned and bound a heavy fog to protect his castle. It covers the whole of the gorge from east to west, entering about 40 feet into the thicket on either side of Irwin's Hill. It is thick and wet and clings to whoever enters it.

Rangers and druids detect its unnatural aura on a successful wisdom check (CL 8).

Note: The orcs stay on the path that leads either to the village, castle or the far side of the gorge.

**ENTERING THE FOG:** The following occurs to anyone entering the fog.

- Visibility reduced to 5 feet.
- Sound reduced by half
- They must make a successful wisdom check or become turned around (see CKG)

There are three female fog giants that dwell at the base of the Irwin's Hill. They guard the approaches to the castle, however, upon hearing anyone blundering around in the fog they immediately investigate.

It is possible to sneak past the giants, but any unusual sounds draw them to investigate.

**GIANTS, FOG x 3** (These neutral evil creatures' vital stats are HD 12d8, HP 54, AC 26, XP 1375+12. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with 2 slam attacks for 1d10 points of damage each. If they use a weapon it is usually one made of wood and/or stone. They wear only hide armor and use wooden shields. They are able to throw rocks up to 300 feet for 2d8 points of damage. They have twilight vision and dark vision and can see in any fog or mist. The fog giant is able to transform itself into a bank of fog and back again once a day instantly. This allows them to approach opponents without being detected (surprise CL 12). When in their fog state they cannot be hit and move at 80 feet per round. They cannot strike opponents while in their fog state.)

#### FOG GIANT'S HOLE

At one time, the whole of Irwin's Hill was fortified. Walls, great and small, circled the hill. Fortified barbicans and fortified gates held the road and paths. Armories and barracks allowed for its defense. As is noted below, much of this is in ruins now, but some has remained intact. The fog giants have hollowed out a section on the southwestern edge of the hill. Here they have made their home, cook their meals, rest and store their treasure.

There is almost always one giant here in the Hole, unless they have all been slain.

The Hole is perched some 60 feet above the floor of the gorge and protected by a 12-foot-high wall, remnants of the old castle fortifications. The ground is very rocky and always wet and slick due to the fog. It requires some climbing to get up to the wall (CL 6) and even more to get over it (CL 9). The giants, of course, climb it with ease. Rangers and anyone with a natural climb ability can climb the surface, but with their climb rate halved.

The giants, if any are there, hurl rocks on any approaching.

**TREASURE:** The giants have a small mound of treasure set in a massive wooden trunk: 5,000gp in assorted coin, 5,000gp in assorted jewelry, an arm band of silver and gold ringed in rubies worth 1,000gp that gives the wearer a +2 AC, a golden ring (still on the hand of the man who wore it) that allows anyone wearing

it automatic initiative and 2 blankets that grant anyone who sleeps under them for 8 hours a +1 on all attribute checks for the following 16 hours. They also have a vat of healing salve which they use to cure their own wounds. It has 12 applications, each healing up to 1d12 hit points.

#### VILLAGE AND SLAVE PENS

The soldiery of the Green Wizard dwell in a small village perched at the base of the Cliffs on the eastern edge of the gorge. It stands on the inside edge of the thicket just beyond the reach of the fog. It consists of a dozen or so bunker-like, interconnected holes dug in the ground whose entrances are hidden in the thicket. On the cliff side are a host of cages of varying size, stacked one atop the other, where slaves are kept.

Read or paraphrase the following:

A foul stench pervades the area. It is thick, to the point that you can taste it. Before you, stands a small mountain of wooden cages, each anywhere from a few feet wide to a score or more. They are packed with bodies, some living, some dead. Men mostly, but children and women as well, are packed in. Their condition is deplorable and you know they are meant for the slave blocks in the east, probably bound for mines or the cleaver pits in some far-off land. Not far from the cages you spy an opening in the ground, a narrow ramp leading down beneath the earth. Around all this lies more of the thicket, though here and there several funnels jut up from the ground, marking some type of underground structure.

There are 40 cages in all, they are stacked three high. All are rough made of small trees and lashed together with rope. Their wooden doors are not locked, but are heavily tied. Escape is almost impossible as the orcs dwell beneath the cages. Furthermore, the inhabitants are not fed and given very little water, so they are weak and barely able to fight or defend themselves. Despite this there are always 4-8 who are willing and able to try to fight and move about.

The cages have eschl tribesmen in them. There are between 20-80 in the cages. Refer to the **Monsters & Treasure of Aihrde** for statistics on these wild people. They are from a variety of tribes and only 1 in 20 speak Vulgate.

The orcs live in the bunkers beneath the cages. Unless they have already been defeated and scattered, there are anywhere between 40-100 orcs in the village at any given time.

**ORCS, SUB-CHIEF** (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, HP varies, AC 16. Their primary attributes are physical. They wear scale armor and carry small iron shields. They use a variety of weapons in battle, but prefer heavy weapons such as long swords and battle axes that do 1d8 points of damage. Most carry a flask with a dry tasting, stout juice in it as well as a day or two of hard rations. They each have 1-12gp in assorted coin.)

**ORCS, WARRIOR** (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, HP varies, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical.

*They wear leather armor and carry small iron or wooden shields. They use a variety of weapons in battle, short swords, clubs, axes, hammers and maces that do 1d6 points of damage. Most carry a flask with a dry tasting stout juice in it as well as a day or two of hard rations. They each have 1-6gp in assorted coin.)*

### BUNKER

Each of the bunkers is roughly the same size and shape. A narrow ramp leads down about 10 feet underground to a broad, open room. The ramps are covered with a door made to blend with the bramble around. A successful spot check (CL 5) is required to find them.

The room is held together by a wooden roof supported by beams and has a dirt floor. Each room has a host of sleeping rolls scattered about as well as several deep cooking pits, the smoke of which is funneled out, through the ceiling into the thicket above.

Weapons, shields, and helms are stacked along the walls, allowing the orcs to arm themselves quickly and easily. It usually takes 5 rounds for the first orcs to exit, ready for battle.



**Bunker Occupants:** 6 of the bunkers hold orcs, 2 hold hobgoblins. Each hold about 20 occupants.

**NOTE:** The hill giants do not dwell in the valley, but remain in the outposts or wandering about the country in search of food and various curiosities.

### THE CLIMB TO THE CASTLE

The path to the castle is old, but clear to see. It is about 20 feet wide, though in places some of the path has fallen away. It winds around the tower several times, passing through several stone walls and beneath several archways. It is paved and, where necessary, consists of stone steps; however, much of it is covered in dirt and plant growth. It is easy enough to follow, but movement is slow, and the journey is close to a mile.

Climbing the hill off path is much like climbing the Sparrowhawk Cliffs. The rock and vegetation allows for a host of hand holds; however, its sheer size is daunting. Falling means to plunge 10-50 feet down until the climber strikes some jagged ledge or part of the path. All checks should be every 10 feet and require a successful dexterity check (CL 6) or end in a fall.

The path gives way to an open porch some 40 feet wide. It was, at one time, surrounded by columns and roofed, but the roof is long gone and the columns mostly knocked down.

### THE CASTLE ON THE HILL

Many centuries past, the Ethvold stretched from the sea in the south to the Bleached Hills in the north and from the Rhodope Mountains in the west to the Bergrucken in the east. It was a vast forest ruled by the priest-kings of Ethrum, who worshiped Tefnut and the Og Aust. In the south, their borders were protected by the massive tower and castle of Eniel-ot-Blaud, or the Tower of the Blue River. The lords here ruled all the lands south of what later men called the Mistbane River. Their rule extended even to the sea.

The tower itself housed a temple to the goddess Tefnut, stately rooms for the priests and priestesses, nobles, lords and ladies, the soldiery that defended them and what minions that served them. The town was made of stone houses with brightly shingled roofs and walled to protect all from the goblins and other minions of the Red God that hunted the people of Ethrum.

In time however, the kingdom of the Ethrum fell into ruin and their towers passed from the care of men to the wastes of the wilderness. Eniel-ot-Blaud was one such. Forgotten in

the deep forest of the Darkenfold, it became a haunted wreck of ruin and horror as creatures crept into its abandoned halls and made it home. The outer works fell away, wasted by time and the town itself was eventually destroyed by the floods that frequented the river valley. Eventually all that remained was a skeleton of the outer works on the flanks of the hill, and the massive tower that was the heart of the fortification.

## THE OUTER WORKS

In its glory days, a 12-foot-high wall flanked the outer edge of the road as it wound its way up the hill. The wall was slightly smaller, 4 feet high, on those sections that bridged a gap between two cliffs. This served to protect the road and the hill castle's major wall. Towers placed along the path punctuated the wall, making it all the more defensible, as they overlooked the road and walls below. Stone stairs led up to catwalks on the walls which in turn led to the towers. A series of barracks were built along the road as well, usually over the road, allowing travelers to pass beneath. These allowed quick and easy access to the walls and towers and the defense of the castle.

The vast majority of walls and towers have fallen into the gorge or river below. The road, though still largely intact, is in horrible condition. Many of the stones are split, and the road itself has broken away, replaced by a small crevice or a pile of debris from above. None of the barracks remain and only a few of the towers. These are hollowed out structures with little to offer but for a break from the wind and rain.

There are a host of defensible places along the road, in the towers, under bridges, buttresses or spans for small groups of men or orcs. These range from simple overhangs, to the remnants of walls. There are also plenty of places to hide from eyes above and below.

**NOTE:** The fog giants lair is on the flanks of the hill.

The hill is home to a small flock of fiedoth, or shovel mouths. These rare, but highly aggressive beasts are always on the prowl for food. Their nest is on the river-side of the hill.

**FIEDOTH** (*These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 7d8, HP 49, AC 17. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with a bite for 1d10 points of damage and 4 tentacle attacks for 1d6 points of damage. As soon as a tentacle hits successfully it does not let go, but begins to devour the prey, scoring an automatic 1d6 points of damage per round. If the fiedoth successfully strikes a creature with any one of its tentacles, it rises into the air, attempting to get it off the ground. It can ram prey with its head, and unless they make a successful dexterity save they are knocked to the ground, allowing the fiedoth to strike against a prone opponent.*)

## THE TOWER

The tower itself is massive (over 180 feet high) and is supported by four large buttresses. It dominates the river basin and the gorge. Its uppermost works stand some 60 feet above the Sparrowhawk Cliffs, allowing those on top to see the country to the south as well as to the north.

It is roughly 40 feet wide and marked by three very distinctive features, Amenut's Stair, a set of stairs that winds around the tower's outer wall, the buttresses, and the priest's walk (a bridge span that extends some 60 feet out from the upper level).

### AMENUT'S STAIR

The stairs wind around the outside of the tower. They are made of stone and braced every 10 feet. They are 4 feet wide, allowing people to pass each other. The stairs are open, meaning to say that there is no wall or parapet to protect the traveler from falling. There is no hand rail, either. They are worn smooth from years of use and erosion and have become very slippery in the rain.

They were built because certain of the priests who occupied the higher floors of the tower, were forbidden to spend time indoors. The stairs are sturdy and in relatively good shape, though occasionally one has broken and fallen away. These should be relatively easy to navigate.

Going up the stairs is a chore. They are steep and wind around the tower for 300 feet. Require anyone that is heavily encumbered to make at least two constitution checks for endurance. See **Castle Keepers Guide** for complete rules on endurance.

**NOTE:** Anyone using the stairs while it is raining must make a successful dexterity check (CL 2) or slip and risk falling off the edge. Castle Keepers should determine the chance of falling off the ledge as this can be deadly. It is recommended that at least two more dexterity checks are made, one for actually falling off the stairs (CL 3) and an another for an attempt to grab a hold (CL 3) of the stairs before they plummet to the ground below.

### THE PRIEST'S WALK

The span is made of wooden beams covered with a thin layer of flagstones. The spandrels are stone as well as the abutments. Originally, the span extended 80 feet out from the tower, but time has seen the end collapse into the river below, leaving a jagged end exposed to the elements. The span is still supported by a massive abutment that is itself supported by a smaller secondary abutment. There are no parapets or rails. The whole is open to the sky. To fall off is to die.

Originally the priest's walk was designed as a sacrificial temple. Offerings were made to the Og Aust on the end of the span and cast into the river far below. Now few remember this, but theorize that there was supposed to be a second tower on the north bank of the river that would join this one in a massive bridge. The north tower, or so the tales relate, was never built.

The span is safe to walk upon.

It is roughly 450 feet down to the river. The bridge span does not extend over the river, missing it by 20 feet or more. Only when the river is in flood does the span extend far enough to reach the river.

### BUTTRESSES

There are four massive buttresses that help support the tower. These are roughly 50 feet high and connect to the tower in an

inverted L shape. Doors, long gone, lead to the interior floor, though it is also long gone.

## INSIDE THE TOWER

At one time, the tower consisted of 12 separate floors, a ground floor, and the roof. Each of these floors housed the lords of the southern Darkenfold, their families, retinues, and the priests. The priests occupied the top floors and the roof, this allowed those who could not pass within, a place to stay. The nobles occupied the middle floors and the soldier and servants the lower floors.

Stairs and ladders allowed access to each of the floors, and halls between rooms allowed privacy for the various occupants. It was filled with the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

This ended many years ago. Long after it was abandoned, one of the middle floors, suffering from some structural defect collapsed, pancaking the lower floors beneath it. This weakened the upper floors and they followed suit. Now, all that remains are the skeletal remnants of the various floors, some of the staircases and a few cross beams broken off. The rest lies in a great heap of masonry rubble on the ground floor, 20 feet or higher. Only the roof remains intact.

**Climbing to the top:** It is possible to climb the interior surface of the tower wall. The walls are stone and offer plenty of hand holds. Once the climb has begun, the remnants of each of the 16 floors offers the climber a place to rest and recuperate. Any climb attempts, except for those with natural climb abilities, require a successful dexterity check (CL 5).

## THE ROOF

The roof, despite years of exposure, has survived almost completely intact. The floor, covered like the priest's walk, in thin flagstones is in good shape, though smooth with time and erosion. Sitting above the forest canopy the roof has avoided any large buildup of debris. Only nesting birds have left twigs and sticks upon the floor and these are gone within a season or two, usually washed away through the small drainage holes. What isn't washed away is usually blown away as the wind is forever howling on the tower's high top. Four-foot-high battlements surround the whole roof, allowing one to see far and away in any direction. Drains are set every 15 feet around the roof top. The roof is elevated a few inches higher on the east side of the tower, forcing water to flow down and off the tower.

All this has served to protect the floor from water damage and kept the roof intact.

Access is gained from a hatch that leads down to a landing. The landing itself leads to a set of stairs that wind down to the now nonexistent 16th floor. The hatch door is long gone and only an empty hole remains. The stone ladder and landing remain, though the landing is greatly weakened and leads nowhere as the 16th floor is long gone.

**LANDING:** If more than 400 lb. is set upon the landing there is a chance it will fall. The landing should make a primary strength save (CL 1 for every 100 lb. on the floor) with no bonuses.

It is possible to climb down the inside of the tower, using the remnants of the floors, see above.

## ENTRANCE

As noted above the path leads to a broad, columned porch that leads to the tower entrance. The columns are long gone, only the bases remain. The flagstones are in decent shape and lead to the entrance of the tower, which, at one time, possessed two doors. Now, the doors are gone, and a broad open entry way leads to the tower interior.

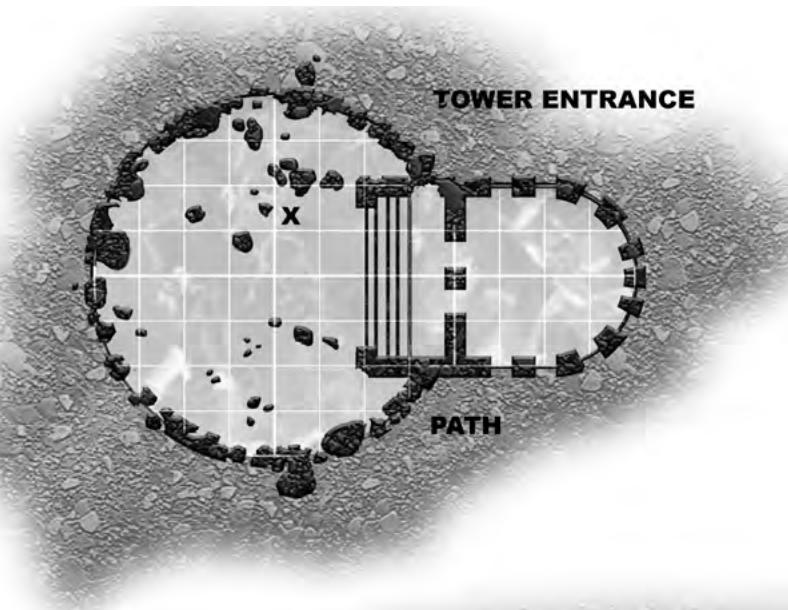
Within is a huge pile of rubble.

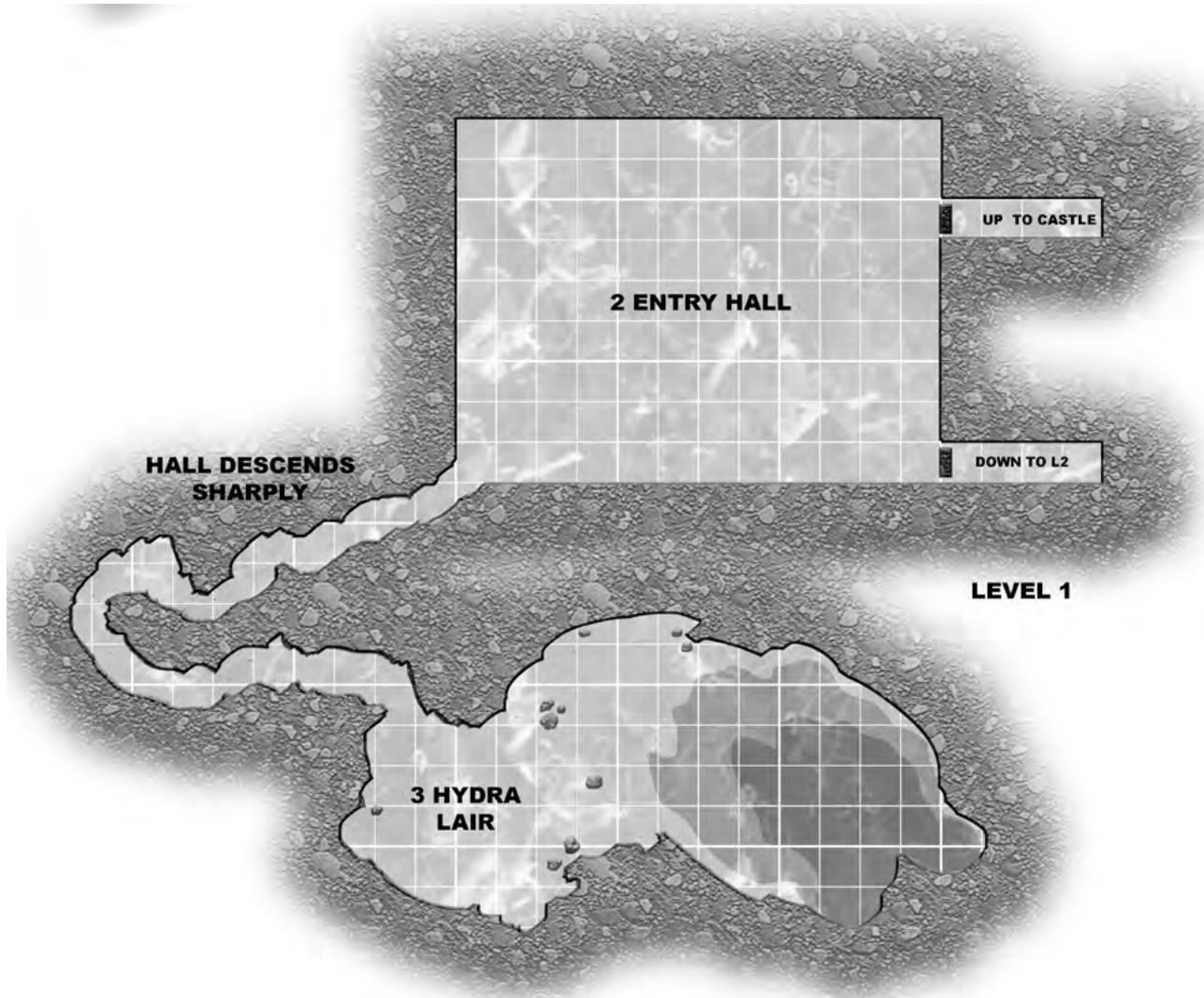
**NOTE:** The tower is old, about 5000 years old and made by human smiths with dwarven assistance and magic. Anyone skilled in stone work, such as a dwarf or a bard's use of legend lore, places the work well before the Winter Dark, about approximate with the age of the tower itself.

As you pass beneath the lintel, a huge mound of rubble greets you, heaped in the pile of the hollow tube of what once was a tower. Clearly, the floors above have collapsed, pancaking, one on top of the other, until they all crashed to the ground in a large pile of masonry, wood and debris. Only the roof, far above, remains intact. That and broken beams and the remnants of floors clinging to the tower walls high overhead. A few sets of stairs remain as well, beginning where floors once stood, and ending in similar vacancies.

The heap is about 20 feet high, cone shaped, but hollow. The Green Wizard has carved a cave out of the rubble, propping it up with beams and other debris. At the center of this small cavern is a trapdoor that leads to the dungeons below.

The entrance is unguarded, the Green Wizard relies upon the outposts, thicket wall, giants, and fog to keep his lair safe.





## HALLS OF THE GREEN WIZARD

Beneath the tower ruins lies the Halls of the Green Wizard. He allows few to enter the halls, preferring the silence for his own experiments and studies.

### STAIRWAYS

The various levels of the dungeon are connected by a series of long stairways. These burrow deep into the mountain, crossing back on themselves before they reach the level below. Each stairwell is roughly 30-36 inches wide and about 6 feet high. The walls are made of stone work, but the ceilings have sagged in places and taller people have to duck to avoid hitting their head. Despite the amount of moisture in the air, the stairs are relatively dry, particularly the further down one goes.

The steps are in good shape and not ruined as the tower above.

### THE GREEN WIZARD

The Green Wizard spends a great deal of his time in the lower levels of the dungeon (mostly in the Hall of Roots) contemplating the root ball that is the source of all his plans. He sleeps upon the floor in that room, having no bed nor furniture. When he is not in the room, he uses the living pillars to travel throughout the forest.

The Castle Keeper should determine whether or not he is in the dungeon. If he is, as soon as the hydra attacks, he is alerted to the character's presence.

### ROOM 1 THE TRAPDOOR

The trapdoor (marked with an X on the map) opens to a corkscrew stair case that leads down 10 feet to a landing. This landing leads to a stair well that descends 40 feet down when it doubles back, descending another 40 feet before it reaches the entry hall.

Unless the characters catch someone in the act of passing through the trapdoor, it is closed and barred from within. There is, however, a pull lever located in the floor of the cave, on the backside of a beam, that triggers it. It can be discovered on a successful search check (CL 8).

**LIFTING THE TRAPDOOR:** It requires a successful strength check (CL 18) to break the lock and lift the trapdoor.

**DESTROYING THE TRAPDOOR:** It takes 4-8 rounds of hacking at the wooden trapdoor to break through the wood enough to allow one entry. Unless a magical *silence* spell is used, the action will be very noisy and alert the hydra in his cave.

**MAGIC:** A *knock* or similar spell will open the trapdoor.

The corkscrew stair case is very narrow, about 30 inches wide, and very steep. The landing below is roughly 10 x 15 feet wide. A doorway leads to a long stair going down. As mentioned above, the stairs double back on themselves before they get to the entry hall below.

## LEVEL 1

This level contains only one large hall, meant as a room to give the hydra, located in the cave beneath it. There is enough room to fight multiple foes.

## ROOM 2 ENTRY HALL

The entry hall is empty. The broad chamber has a stone floor, though, unlike the stairways, it is much scarred. Flagstones have been torn out, sections of the wall damaged and several scorch marks in a blast pattern mar the walls, ceiling, and floor.

The only distinguishable thing about the room is the large hole dug into the corner of the floor and wall across from the entrance.

Long ago, the Green Wizard captured a young pyro-hydra. He bound it to him and set it in this room to guard the chambers below. He fed it generously, usually from the slave pits, but occasionally from interlopers. It quickly grew too large to leave the room and soon after that became a nuisance to any and all who passed through. To give it more room, the Green Wizard carved a hollow beneath the room into a cavern, giving it a lair and a place to stay out of the way.

The hydra is always in its cave, though if any smells waft down to it that he does not recognize, or if there is strange noise, he crawls up the cavern to look and attack if anything seems out of the ordinary. It is particularly aggressive.

**HYDRA, PYRO** (These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 8d8, AC 18, HP 60. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with 8 bite attacks for 1d10 points of damage each. They have twilight vision. The pyro-hydra is able to breath a number of balls of gas equal to its number of heads. The ball(s) of gas each deal 8 points of damage, save for half. The pyro-hydra can fire these balls at multiple opponents or concentrate them all on one. The pyro-hydra has dark vision up to 60 feet and is immune to fire based attacks.)

## ROOM 3 CAVERN OF THE HYDRA

Down a twisted cavernous tunnel, lies a large cave which the pyro-hydra calls home. It is roughly 30 by 40 feet in size. The floor of the cave is broken into three large shelves, that rise toward the back of the room. Here the hydra has dug out something of a bed, and the rock he could not move burned so often that it became brittle and broke away. He nests here, curled up into a ball of pent up rage and frustration.

The room is extremely hot, staying at about 95 degrees. With the hydra in the room it is much hotter, about 120 degrees, making fighting in the confined space a nightmare. Anyone who spends more than 4 rounds with the hydra in the room must make a successful constitution save (CL 12) or suffer the temporary loss of 1 each of their physical attribute points. A save must be made each round they and the hydra are in the room.

**TREASURE:** The hydra has little treasure as the Green Wizard regularly takes what the hydra has taken from his prey. However, it has dragged several victims down into the cave and cooked them, turning them into hardened bone, which he chews on from time to time. The wizard has avoided rooting around in this and has missed several magic items: a *bag of holding* and a *decanter of endless water*, both of which lie in the pit amidst the ash and fractured stone.

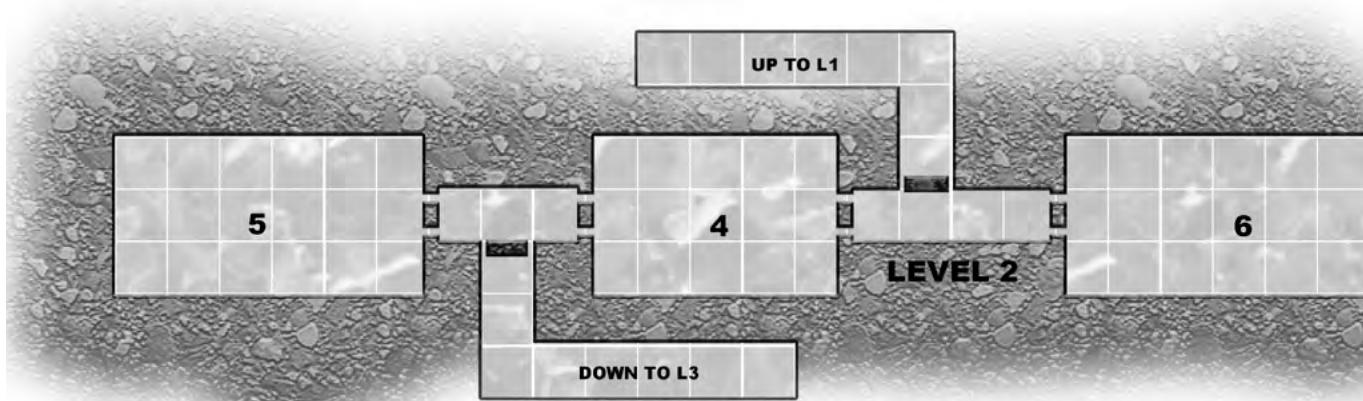
## LEVEL 2

These contain the dining quarters and the sleeping quarters for Veritrix as well as a guest room. They are largely empty, unless Veritrix happens to return.

## ROOM 4 DINING HALL

This hall is barren but for a stone table in the center. It is tall, made for the diner to eat at while standing up. There are four masonry bowls stacked in the center of the table.

A water fountain built into the wall trickles water into a basin that, in turn, drains into the wall. The basin is about 18 inches in diameter. Each of the bowls are magical *bowl of plenty*. See "New Magic Items" for a full description.



## ROOM 5 VERITRIX'S QUARTERS

This room is where Veritrix lives. It is sparsely decorated. A stone bed with a bed roll stands in the far corner and a slop jar for waste is at the foot of the bed. Against the wall stands a wooden mannequin upon which Veritrix hangs his armor. Several sets of clothes, a cloak, and a spare pair of boots are bound up tightly in cords and stored in a clothing net that hangs from the ceiling.

The most unusual aspect of the room is a thick trunk-like root that grows from floor to ceiling in the corner of the room opposite the bed. This allows Veritrix to come and go from the room through use of the *transport via plants* spell.

A perfectly carved ivory idol of Kamat, the wolf god, is on the floor next to the bed. He prays to the idol when here. It is worth about 250gp.

**NOTE:** If Veritrix has survived and knows that someone has invaded the gorge or the castle, he immediately returns via this portal in his room.

## ROOM 6 GUEST QUARTERS

This room is for guests. It has a stone berth in it and slop jar. A clothing net hangs from the ceiling. The slop jar does not appear to have been used any time in the recent past.

There is nothing of value in the room.

## LEVEL 3

This level contains Anabraxius' private kitchen, torture hall, laboratory, and prison cells.

## ROOM 7 OPEN HALL

The stairs empty into this room. It has one doorway and one closed door.

A set of keys hang on a large iron ring on the wall before the open doorway. The vague smell of vegetation hangs in the air.

There is nothing of value in the room.

## ROOM 8 CELLS

There are eight cells in the cell block. They are generally kept full, with 3-4 eschl in each of them. These are the captives that the Green Wizard uses to sacrifice to the root ball or to experiment on.

**The corridor is narrow and dank. Eight doors line the walls, each with bars on the tiny windows. They are locked with heavy padlocks. The vague scent of unwashed bodies hangs in the air, but it is suppressed by a sweet scent that conjures images of a quiet glade on a peaceful evening. You see moss growing in hanging planters from all along the center of the hallway. It is dark green with tiny flowers sprouting along its stalks. It is obviously here to mask the scent of something else.**

The eschl are generally in a deplorable state, unfed and with little access to water. They have not recovered from the wounds they

suffered while in battle, nor have the wounds been treated. They are all warriors of one stripe or the other.

The keys to the cells hang on a large ring on the outside wall of Cell A in Room 7.

**THE MOSS:** Anyone who enters the hall must make a saving throw versus sleep (CL 10) or fall into a drowsy sleep. The moss is a peculiar species of moss found throughout the deeper reaches of the Darkenfold, called nuthatch moss. When in bloom, it releases tiny spores that act as sleeping agents to those who breathe them. Normally, the wind carries them far and wide or they fall to the ground without effect. In the dungeon, however, hanging above the hall and above the cell doors the spores are constantly falling into the corridor and into the cells.

### EFFECTS OF MOSS

Round	Effect
1	Feelings of exhaustion
2	A drowsy feeling with the need to sit down
3	Drift into a sleep
4	Fall asleep

Every four rounds the sleeper is allowed to make a constitution save (CL 8). If successful, they wake up enough to mumble, move a few feet, or take similar small actions. Every round after that they must make a save or fall back asleep and begin the process over again.

Sleepers cannot be shaken awake. The spores are just too thick in the area. The only way to avoid the effects of the sleep are to get out of the hallway.

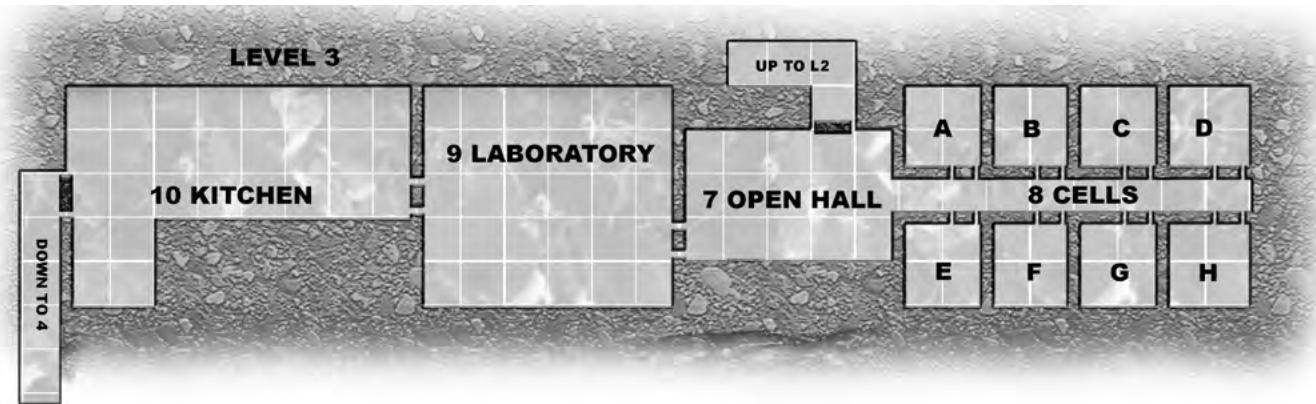
Destroying the moss is easy enough. Fire is the best remedy.

**A-F:** Each of these rooms, except for room G, is identical in shape and have 1-4 eschl kept within them. They are not chained or restrained in any way as the Green Wizard is confident that the spores from the hanging plants will keep them sedated or unconscious. Waking them or motivating them is difficult. They must be dragged from the cells and out into the hallways at the very least.

**G:** This room contains a chief of the Ulut tribe. The Uluts occupy the country north of the Downs. He is managing to keep himself awake, but only barely. If freed, he assists in rescuing the rest of the eschl and guiding them to safety. He is not inclined to enter deeper into the hill in order to fight the Green Wizard, but focuses on making good his and his people's escape. He promises his rescuers safe passage in his country for his rescue.

**THUL-EL, ESCHL, WAR CHIEF** (These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 6d8, HP 45, AC 11 (+ armor). Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with weapons. They most commonly use stone axes, clubs, spears, short bows, and similar weapons. They have scent and twilight vision.)

**H ENCHANTED ROOM:** This room is ensorcelled. Anyone who enters it must make a successful intelligence save (CL 15) or fall



victim to a powerful illusion that makes them feel as if they have stepped through a portal and into the forest beyond. Movement in the forest seems to be normal. There is night and day, the sounds of animals, even water; however, in reality the captive slumps into a corner in a catatonic state. They must be forcefully removed from the cell to break the effects of the spell.

#### ROOM 9 LABORATORY

The room is foul and smells of blood and filth. A long table in the center of the room has four iron bands attached to each corner, clearly a place to bind captives. The table is scored all across its surface, a clear sign of blades chopping or slicing into it. It is stained a dark red.

A variety of implements hang on both walls, from pliers, cutters, and forks to jars of various poisonous herbs, mushrooms, and tins of deadly fungi.

A fountain and small cook stove allow for both fresh water and a place to boil or heat instruments to brand or simply burn.

Anabraxius is an unkind man, driven by lust for power. If he ever had compassion for any, it has long since been lost, eroded through countless acts of cruelty. His end has always been the same: power over others and revenge.

The laboratory has played host to his many demented attempts at snaring others to his will. Here he has prepared the sacrifices, broken the will of the strong, tested drugs and elixirs on some, and cruelly exacted revenge on the flesh of those who crossed him.

There is little of value here to any but a would-be torturer. On the shelves are various ointments, all for causing pain. One in particular is dangerous to any who open it.

**GAS CLOUD:** The clear jar with a purplish gas in it is haphazardly placed on one of the shelves with a host of other jars. The gas within is noxious and created by a decaying fungus, the remains of which are trapped in the jar. If it is opened, the cloud expands rapidly to a 10-foot area around the jar. It causes 2d8 points of damage to anyone caught in the cloud. A successful dexterity save reduces the damage by half. A druid or ranger has a chance of detecting what the gas is on a successful wisdom save (CL 12), before the jar is opened.

**NOTE:** If any of the druids are fighting in this room they will hurl the jar at the characters.

#### ROOM 10 KITCHEN

The door opens to a long, extremely hot room. Here, Anabraxius cooks the meat that his magical bowls cannot eat. A single, long fire pit dominates the center room. Three feet wide and 20 feet long, and it is filled with stones burnt black. The fire pit is always alight, fueled by a fire elemental bound to the druid's service.

An 8 foot-long table sits against the wall with a half-dozen wooden boards and 3 long-handled meat forks stacked on it. Meat is set on the hot rocks, cooked, and lifted off and onto the boards (plates).

The elemental that resides in the fire pit is not particularly strong, nor is it there of its own free will. It is bound in service and wishes nothing more than to escape. If Anabraxius is near, he will order the elemental to rise up and attack. If it does so, it does so reluctantly, pulling its punches and harboring its strength to kill the druid if the opportunity should occur.

**FREEING THE ELEMENTAL:** Anyone with experience fighting elementals (a spell caster or bard) has a chance of detecting the elemental's reluctance to fight. Upon a successful primary class attribute check (cleric/wisdom, wizard/intelligence and so on) (CL 6), they detect the creature's reluctance. To break the spell requires a successful *dispel magic* or similar spell. Once broken, the elemental turns on Anabraxius.

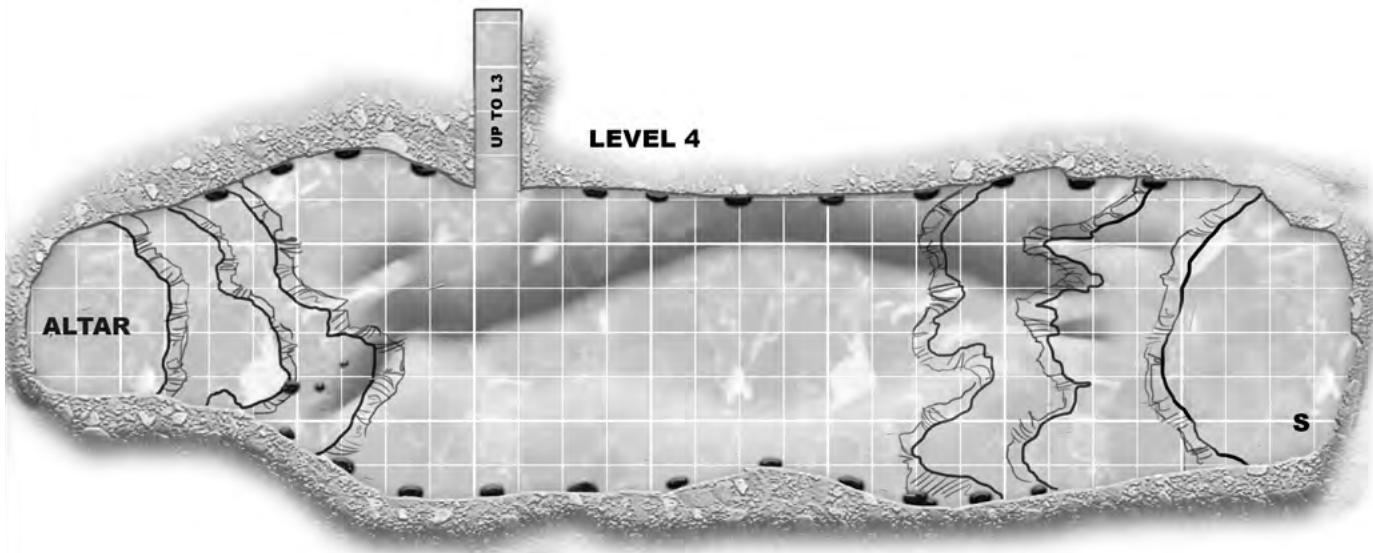
**ELEMENTALS, FIRE** (These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 39, AC 17. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with slam for 1d4 damage and burn 1d2 damage. They have darkvision 60 feet, can only be hit by magic weapons, have immunity to fire and regenerate 2 hit points per round. Their flame is hot enough to light combustible materials.)

#### SECRET DOOR

There is a secret door in the far corner of the room. It is well hidden, but discovered on a successful wisdom check (CL 6). It swings open, revealing a narrow, steep path that leads down. The path switches back after 50 feet and continues another 50 feet until it empties out in Anabraxius' chamber.

#### LEVEL 4

This is the lair of the Green Wizard. Here, he sleeps upon a patch of dirt. Tearlag dwells here as well, though she is rarely in the room, spending most of her time doing his bidding in the Darkenfold.



### THE PILLARED ROOM

The pillared room is bowl shaped, the east and west corners being some 40 feet higher than the center. The secret passage empties out into the center of the room between two large pillars of wood. Read or paraphrase the following:

You enter a dirt-floored cavern. The walls are stone, but broken, with many fissures and crevices. Tall root-like trees adorn the walls, evenly spaced every 30 or 40 feet. They are like pillars, but it quickly becomes apparent that they do not support the cavern above, but rather grow, through their main trunk and thousands of tiny roots, into the dirt of the cavern floor and the rock of the cavern ceiling. The room itself is bowl-shaped and climbs up into the darkness to the left and right. The cool air is fresh, and smells of dry earth.

Anabraxius sleeps in the upper east portion of the chamber. A small concave section is noticeable in the dirt. Beneath this is where he has buried his treasure.

In all likelihood, he is in the room. He will fight to the death to defend the root ball.

**THE PILLARS:** These are the trunks of trees that Anabraxius has cultivated for years. He planted them here and has nurtured them, giving them sustenance from his magic. Each trunk/pillar is 12-14 feet high and about 2 feet in diameter, however, they grow into the wall behind them, making it impossible to circle or get behind. They have no foliage to speak of, but each has hundreds of small roots growing off them and into the ground around them. They allow him rapid transport around the Darkenfold, via the spell *transport via plants*. He can also use these to defend himself and the room via the spell *command plants*.

**SACRIFICIAL ALTAR:** The root ball is half buried in the ground on the upper western end of the room. Chains adorn the wall before it. Victims are chained to the wall, killed and bled. Their blood spilling down into the earth and feeding the root ball.

**THE ROOT BALL:** The root ball is roughly 2 feet tall and about 12 inches wide, it has taken on the vague form of a woman with exaggerated body features. She is round with a round head and large, round breasts. Her thighs and arms are thick and round. Tendrils of roots grow off the figure's limbs. This is both the iconic form that the goblin queen, Ogoltay, assumes as well as one similar to the earth goddess, Hroth. It is half buried in the ground but easy enough to extract. The root ball emanates a vague evil, though it is weak and any detect spell may recognize it as indifference or a sullen anger. Paladins and clerics may determine the dual nature of the root ball with a successful wisdom check (CL 8). A druid too can detect this on a successful wisdom check (CL 4).

### THE ROOT BALL

Taking the root ball to ground hallowed in the name of Hroth will allow it to transform into a powerful, living idol of that deity. Hroth will eventually bless it, allowing the earth around it to become magical. Eventually, once the root has burrowed into the ground, the temple will become a site of healing. Anyone entering the area of the idol and who makes an appropriate sacrifice is healed as with a *heal* spell. Druids or priests of Hroth will pay a great deal of money for the idol, upwards to 10,000gp.

If left alone to grow in the blood-stained soil of the earth, or tossed aside, its latent evil will eventually dominate the idol and it will grow into a ball of tangled evil where goblins and other such foul creatures find a refuge. It will serve to heal them and instill in them a power like no other, doubling all hit dice of the idols worshipers.

**ANABRAXIUS, DRUID, THE GREEN WIZARD** (This 18th level neutral human's vital stats are HD 10d10+24, HP 96, AC 19. His primary attributes are wisdom, dexterity and intelligence. His significant attributes are strength 15, intelligence 17, wisdom 19, dexterity 18, and constitution 17. He carries a feather edge scythe in battle. He also has a +2 curved tulwar. He fights two handed. He has resist elements +2. He has woodland stride. He also has adopted the mountain lion, python, and a bat as hit totem shapes. He can change into any totem shape and back again once per day. His spells known are 7/7/7/5/5/4/4/3/2. He wears +4 leather armor beneath his cloaks. He has a ring of evasion.)

**TREASURE:** Anabraxius has buried a trunk in the dirt beneath his sleeping area (marked with an S on the map). It is roughly 3 feet wide and 2 feet long. Within are 1200gp, 500pp, a bag of 30 diamonds (each worth 100gp) as well as a *manual of bodily health*, a +1 scepter of charisma (see below), 4 arrows of the alkonoth (see **Monsters & Treasure of Ahrde**), the golden quill (see **Monsters & Treasure of Ahrde**), and a potion of longevity.

## NEW MAGIC ITEMS

**BOWLS OF PLENTY:** When held in both hands the bowl of plenty conjures food or drink imagined by the user. The food must be natural, such as fruit or raw vegetables, honey, water, or the like. Each of the bowls is worth 200gp. They can conjure two meals a day. The bowls are relatively fragile, and break if struck very hard. If they are chipped or cracked, they lose their magic.

**CANDLE OF UNDERSTANDING:** This candle appears identical to a candle of invocation, however its powers only manifest themselves in the hands of a cleric. When lit by a cleric, the candle grants the cleric a +1 bonus to his wisdom score and wisdom checks. Regardless of who lights it, the candle will continue burning indefinitely.

**SCEPTER OF THE ETHRUM:** This magical scepter was granted to Lords of the Ethrum to help them command their people. It grants the wielder a +1 on all charisma checks, or conversely increase the CL by 1 on anyone making a charisma save against the scepter's wielder. They were usually accompanied by a similar crown and arm bands. When used in conjunction with the arm bands and crown, it increases the bonus of all three items by 1.

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## CASTLE ON THE HILL

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