

# THE CALL OF THE LIGHT

AN ADVENTURE LOCATION BY MICHAEL PRESCOTT

## THE SITUATION

The Seree empire was destroyed at the peak of its power, scrubbed from the world by the gods for its audacity.

But the matter wasn't settled overnight, as the wizards resisted mightily.

The servants of heaven were forced to make bargains with dark powers of the earth before they were able to achieve victory in this forgotten war.

The tower of **Sar Ebil** is the site of one such bargain. Here, the servants of heaven and the powers of the earth joined forces to build a magical place to draw in and destroy as many *Seree automata* as possible.

When the war ended, the delicate alliance collapsed, and those bound to the tower's purpose were forced to remain.

## RUMORS FOR NEARBY

1. A great hero is entombed in the tower and will emerge at a time of the people's need. [misleading]
2. In my grandfather's time, a child went into the tower and returned with a helm that let him fly like a bird. [true]
3. Sorrowful moaning comes from the tower on the full moon [true]
4. Once, on the full moon, a wooden man came down from the tower. The locals burnt him and found a ruby in his head. [true]
5. Years ago, warriors from the barony came to try to take the tower, but none returned. [false]
6. Another wooden man has been seen returning to the tower; some say he is tall and has but one arm, others say he is short, with a metal helm. [misleading]

## SAR EBIL TOWER

Built on a high, rocky place, the tower of Sar Ebil can only

be reached by its broad, curving bridge.

To those who can tell, the architecture is mostly from the late Seree period, but with incongruous elements (especially the curved bridge, gateway, and east balcony).

The uneven courses in the outer brickwork suggest hasty or troubled construction.

The pair of statues guarding the entrance are named in engravings as 'The Twins', although they are quite unlike: one has the sinuous body and slitted nostrils of an underworld dradkin, while the other has vague features—only a hint of eyes, nose and mouth. Both wield long, smooth lances.

## CALL OF THE LANTERN

From the bridge, anyone carrying patterned magic (memorized arcane spells, or whose thoughts are being augmented by magical devices) will feel a powerful compulsion to enter the **killing room** and fall into the **pit**.

This compulsion is stronger the more patterned magic being carried. *Seree automata* (whose minds are entirely patterned magic) cannot resist at all. For them, the **lantern's** magic has a range of several leagues.

Once every few months, a battered automaton emerges from the forest and joins its fellow victims in the pit.

## THE FACE OF DISCORD

The graven face watches all that approach, and will squirt anyone approaching in heavy armor (i.e. who looks like an automaton) with a jet of **oil of discord**.

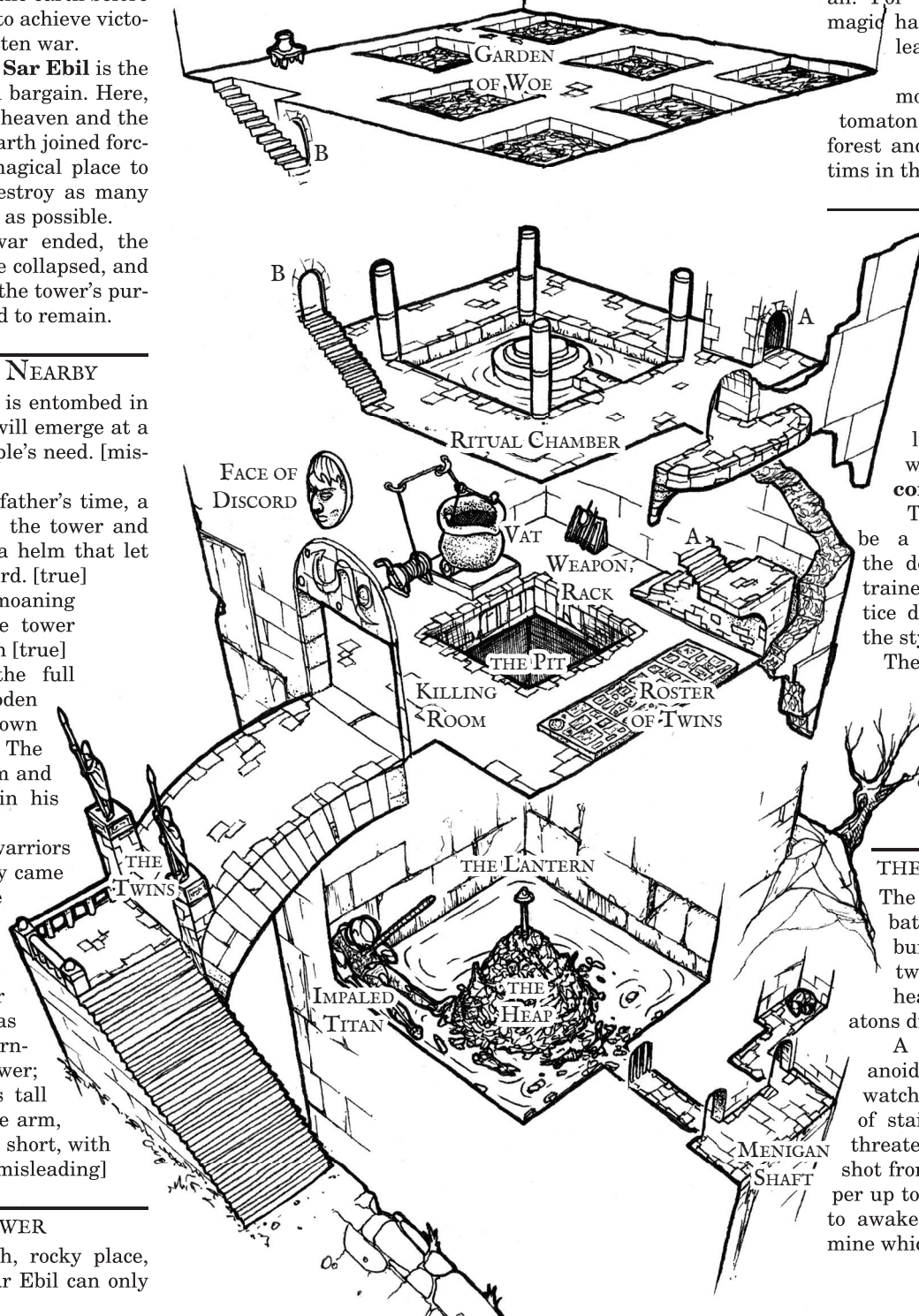
The face appears to be a wrathful aspect of the demigod Cicollus, but trained observers may notice dradkin angularity in the style of carving.

The high relief in the archway shows a serpent (a Seree symbol) writhing amid a chaotic constellation of diamond stars.

## THE KILLING ROOM

The floor and walls are battered, chipped and burnt from battles between the servants of heaven and the automata drawn here.

A reclusive and paranoid hermit, *Scaggol*, watches from the shadows of staircase A. If he feels threatened, he will fire a shot from his bow, and scamper up to the **Garden of Woe** to awaken a defender (determine which randomly).





d6	What do you find on the heap?
1	skull, a <i>wizard flower</i> of semi-precious gemstone inside
2	a shattered limb of wood, brass and leather
3	an injury from sharp metal or splintered wood
4	a functioning automaton with d4 limbs attached
5	a gardening or cooking implement
6	a unique <b>heap relic</b>

#### THE VAT

A mighty iron vat rests on a hinged platform. It is five paces high and easily weighs sixty talents. At the bottom rests a few gallons of **oil of discord**.

A winch allows it to be tilted toward the pit on a badly rusted chain.

If the winch is turned, the oil begins to dribble down onto the **heap**. This elicits a chorus of crashing and clanking from the automata.

If the vat is lowered all the way down, the chain snaps, the vat rolls off its base and falls into the pit, smashing the **lantern** and a good lot of the heap.

#### OIL OF DISCORD

This black, gritty oil disrupts the formation of magical patterns. Wizards smeared with can produce no coherent magic, only showers of hot sparks.

It will animate inert automata or even heavy armor, causing violent twitches and jerks until carefully rinsed off.

It is not easily contained, as it has a nasty habit of seeping past corks and stoppers.

#### WEAPON RACK

A large weapon rack stands mostly empty except for three wicked-looking man-catchers and a *hunter's lance*, a magnificent spear with a point of smoky glass. Anyone pierced by it is held fast until it is pulled out.

#### THE ROSTER OF TWINS

Engraved tiles commemorate the "twins" who died here: mor-

tal, celestial and underworld warriors who fought the summoned automatons.

The dates on the tiles reveal a history to the curious and patient: built five centuries ago. Dozens died in the first year, and a few months later it had to be reclaimed from the Seree by Nurabel (a mortal name), who is honored for invoking the ritual to relight the **lantern**.

This happened again in years 3, 8 and 22 of the tower, with the last recorded death in year 49.

#### RITUAL CHAMBER

Soft, blue light comes from the four pillars surrounding the ceremonial pool. Each is engraved with instructions for one of four rituals. These are simple, but only possible on the dias at the center:

1. Lighting the **lantern** requires the juices from six apocalypse larva.

2. Encysting a 'twin' in the **Garden of Woe** requires a quantity of soil from a child's grave.

3. Brewing oil of discord requires the ground crystal brains of Seree automata.

4. Calling for *aid from the powers* by sacrificing a willing victim means either a celestial warrior of hot white metal forms on the balcony or a demonic cloud of searing grit, teeth and claws flies up the **shaft**.

Since the alliance was broken long ago, these dread beings are free to act how they please.

All they know is that the summons indicates that the powers are once again at war with mortal sorcerers.

#### GARDEN OF WOE

The most fearsome warriors were 'encysted' in the seven soil beds of this darkened hall, awaiting the hour they had to fight again.

Pouring water on a soil bed awakens its occupant instantly. The beds contain Su-Yal, a dradkin hero of the underworld; a pair of demonic panthers with claws and teeth of *dark glass*; a cadaverous changeling who adopts the form of her enemies, and a mortal warrior in fine armor from beyond the Striel mountains.

Two other mortals died during their hibernation and has rotted to mere bones.

Awakened warriors will expect to see familiar faces calling them to battle, and have no idea they have slept for four centuries.

#### THE HEAP

Thirty paces below the killing room is a miserable scene.

Called by the lantern and then either ambushed by the tower's warriors of old or merely smashed by the fall, hundreds of automatons have accumulated here.

Forty can still move, although the magic of the lantern bends their minds to a single

## TRILEMMA ADVENTURES

purpose: climb toward the light.

The automatons are trapped in a cycle of climbing, falling, and climbing. None can speak.

#### THE IMPALED TITAN

Although pinned by a *hunter's lance*, once a month the full moon gives this massive gardening automaton a scrap of mental freedom.

At these times, he tosses an automaton or two up out of the pit in the hopes of freeing them. Few manage to leave the reach of the lantern before the moon wanes, and so nearly all of them soon fall back in again.

#### SNUFFING THE LANTERN

If the lantern is somehow destroyed or extinguished, two things happen: a magical pulse awakens d4 warriors from the **Garden of Woe**, and the automatons are freed.

Ten of the largest will protect their fellows; the rest are entirely focused on the menial work of servitude.

#### THE MENIGIAN SHAFT

Disused now, this shaft drops two miles into the vast and dark spaces of *Ur-Menig*.

A gentle, armadillo-like creature with sensitive, searching eyes lurks near the top.

Visitors from below far below once paid it to squeeze through the bars to retrieve curiosities from the heap, but none have come in years.

#### THE HEAP RELICS

Roll d6 to see which:

1. A spade that does the work of six, though its user must eat as six do or be crippled for a day
2. A drake skeleton
3. A Seree battle standard, woven of a cloth that cannot be pierced
4. A mace that turns its victim's bones to honey
5. A *scrying glass*
6. A *spider shield*, whose metal legs seize weapons

