



THE DEVIL'S BRIDE

BY RC PINNELL

A complete MASTERS GUILD adventure
Including a hamlet map and 3 dungeon levels.
Designed for 9th to 13th level characters

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INTRODUCTION

The following scenario is designed for an "advanced" edition of the role-playing game associated with dark dungeons, fierce monsters--including dragons--and brave adventurers. Much care has been taken to be intentionally sparse and minimal in content. This is purposely done to allow the Game Referee to add his own style into the adventure.

All of the monsters, professions, spells and magic items listed can be found with a minimum of searching in the available manuals and texts relating to the style of gaming as described. Only GRS with adequate libraries should attempt to run this adventure; or arrange access to the information by whatever means they can. Players should not be allowed to read this text and should be discouraged by the GR from reading any manual except that pertaining to player information.

This adventure is designed for a group of 5 to 9 characters ranging in levels from 9th to 13th. The party should include at least one cleric or druid and magic-user, several fighters (including paladins and rangers), a thief and perhaps a bard or monk. Dwarves, elves and hobbits of appropriate levels should not be excluded, for their racial abilities may be of minor aide to the party. The group should be primarily made of Lawful and Good characters. Furthermore, it is the duty of the GR to remove, alter or modify any monster, spell, treasure, magic item or non-player character that he deems necessary.

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BACKGROUND

The endless struggle for control of the cosmos is more than a battle of brawn. Patience, nerve and wit are also key elements, each exercised in proportion to the physical demands to defeat the enemy. The forces of Good and Evil have been locked in such a struggle, each gaining and losing grasp within the ebb and flow of time immortal. Legions of angels of both heaven and hell have come and gone, spent and sacrificed as the machination of their rulers drives onward, blind to the casualties and losses. In addition, the eternal conflict for ruler ship within the evil alliance has pitted the dukes and lords of Hell against one another, making it nearly impossible for the dark camp to maintain a productive assault against their common enemy.

And where, in all this grand design, does Man fit?

Ruling in his palatial abode upon the 8th level of the 9-Hells, Mephistopheles has tried time and again to wrestle control of the plane above him, the 7th level, from its monarch--Beelzebub, in an effort to expand his power and influence in order to launch an all-out war against Asmodeus, the supreme ruler of the 9-Hells. But launching open war attracts the notice of the supreme ruler, and Mephistopheles does not wish his plans to be known. Periodically he has lured men, dwarves and elves from the prime plane with promises of treasure and power, and in exchange these groups would infiltrate Beelzebub's domain, destroying everything in their path and killing minor devils as they went. Such groups usually ended up being destroyed, and never posed a serious threat to the balance of power held by the 9 lords of the Hells.

Wishing to make more headway in his plans Mephistopheles decided to create an artifact that, when used by a mortal from the prime plane, would deliver more damage to his enemies. But not wishing to have his involvement with the item known, he solicited the aid of a powerful and power hungry mage in the world of men to help create a false resonance within the item, thus fooling those that might wield it, and those that might attempt to determine its point of origin. He named his creation **The Devil's Bride**, half in joking, and half in earnest, then allowed the mage to return with it to the prime plane, to put his plan into action.

HISTORY

Five decades ago a group of adventurers went on their last expedition, though they did not know at the time that was to be the case. Upon fresh mounts and equipped with the necessities of survival the group left the great city of ZANTUE on the western coast and headed inland, toward the tall peaks of the mighty mountain range known as "*the Land's Spine*." Led by a brave paladin named YAR, the group included NEK and ENYAWD the clerics, STANWOOD the druid, BERAN the ranger, THORKLIN the dwarf, ATHENA the bard, AVERY the half-elf and HALIM the multi-talented. The group traveled for many weeks until, reaching the foothills of the majestic mountains, they came upon what they thought was an abandoned hamlet, and a razed temple. As they explored the tiny community they came across *The Museum of the Macabre*, run by an elderly and decrepit fellow named, ELRISH. Among the many strange and unfamiliar things they observed was a golden scabbard inset with hundreds of tiny ruby crystals. Inquiring where the sword that fit the item was, the man told them that the legends say it lies deep beneath the ruins of *DUNAITES*, guarded by traps and puzzles and beings of unknown origin. He wasn't lying, of course, for he wished the group to enter the dungeons beneath the temple, retrieve the item and then be lost in the inter-planar caverns leading to Hell's doorstep. The old man, it turns out, was the mortal mage that Mephistopheles had assist him with the making of the item.

Being committed to *the adventure* and intrigued by the old man's words, YAR led the group into the ruins, and down into its catacombs beneath. After many battles with bizarre and unfamiliar monsters the group eventually found itself deep below the ground, passing through winding tunnels and caverns. In the last that they entered they found the legendary sword the old man referred to as *The Devil's Bride*. After careful examination for traps and the use of *detection* spells and items the group determined the sword to be useable. Little did they know their meager skills could not reveal the true power of the sword, or its purpose. THORKLIN the dwarf was never interested in swords, having his mighty war hammer in hand, and suggested that those proficient in its use should decide its ownership. BERAN the ranger preferred his two-handed sword, AVERY the elf preferred his bow, ATHENA, her scimitar, and HALIM shadow-sneaker liked shorter

weapons for surprise attacks. The clerics would not, of course, even touch it. Thus, YAR took the weapon and found that it not only fit his hand well, but boosted his paladin powers.

But the purpose of the sword quickly began to dominate the mighty paladin. And before the group could return to the surface its leader decided to forge ahead, through an inter-planar portal to do battle with the enemies of his faith. Not wanting to leave him stranded the group followed, finding itself on a hellish plane filled with hot, sulfuric air, geysers spewing ash and molten liquid, and creatures never before encountered. They were soon engaged in combat after combat as they were swarmed by the denizens of the plane. And they were losing, badly. With most of them wounded and with the clerics' spells spent, the fighters could not hold back the waves of devils beginning to surround them. In a last surge YAR charged five creatures, only to fall upon killing two himself. In a panic the group rushed to his body and held the rest at bay as BERAN the large ranger hoisted his comrade across his shoulders and the group turned and fled back into the portal.

Rushing through the caves they had earlier traversed the group managed to return to the catacombs of the temple. It was there that they laid their comrade to rest, and sealed the entrance to the caves below. Then, returning to the surface, the group searched for the trickster, ELRISH, to pay him his due--only to find the man had fled. Realizing that they had been duped, they decided to hide the cursed sword beneath the temple, and remain in the hamlet for the rest of their lives as guardians of the terrible artifact, and to prevent others from suffering a similar fate.

START

Rumors spreading through the inns and taverns of ZANTUE have reached the party's ears--the tiny hamlet of TRISTRAN has gone silent, no word coming from it in over 12 months. Travelers have been turned away miles before reaching the community by patrols of druids and their animal associates, concerned for the safety of tradesmen and traders seeking to do business there. Then, an envoy of holy servants dispatched from the Great Temple of MELIKIE to investigate vanished after reaching the village. As gossip runs wild legends begin to resurface, about an artifact once held by a mighty paladin that fell battling diabolic forces somewhere in that vicinity.

Gathering up their equipment and belongings the party mounts up and heads east, out of the city. A long and dusty road lies ahead, and somewhere beyond their sight stands *The Land's Spine*. And nestled somewhere at its foothills, is the sleepy hamlet of TRISTRAN. And if rumors be true, somewhere in or around the little hamlet hides a powerful relic, a magical artifact waiting for them to find it.

Days blend into weeks, and finally at long last the group rounds a bend in the road and emerging from behind the hill in the distance stands TRISTRAN; less than a dozen structures, but the subject of talk across the known realm.

TRISTRAN HAMLET

The tiny hamlet of TRISTRAN is located in the foothills of the great mountain range known as *The Land's Spine* by those that dwell on its western flank. It did not come into existence until 50 years ago. Before then only the temple of MELIKIE stood at the crossroads that merge together there, allowing caravans from the east to stop and refresh themselves on their journey west and vice versa. After the fall of one of their comrades a party of renown adventurers settled the area and created the hamlet. The reason for the founding was never offered or explained, but the services many of them provided to travelers along the routes made such journeys a bit easier; the temple of MELIKIE having been little more than a stone shelter from the wind and cold, and demanding a tithe from non-believers.

Today the citizens of TRISTRAN are hardly recognizable as the once, stout and impressive explorers of their youth. Of the men most have lost their hair, or had it turn to locks of grey. The great strength of the warriors has diminished, replaced with muscles soft from long decades of inactivity. Their once proud and erect postures now reveal a hunching stance of weariness and resignation as they await their final days. The woman among them, once the charming, nubile girl with rosy cheeks, long blonde hair and alluring figure, is now but the tiny, frail shape of a former feminine vixen. Her

eyes have gone gray, and her hair coarse, her figure has abandoned her along with the gaiety in her laugh. Only the two dwarfs and the elf have remained untouched by time. And in fact, seemed to have improved with age.

1. THE DRUID'S GROVE. *STANWOOD OAKSHIELD* is the druid that tends the grove. He is 70 years old, stands 5'9" tall and weighs 140 pounds. Usually attired in a green robe with a brown cloak, he leans and relies upon a tall, oak staff that rises to a height of nearly 7'. Though he is human, his magical connection to the natural world around him has slowed the appearance of age in him somewhat, in comparison to some others. His abilities include, **S11 D8 C14 I12 W18 Ch16, ACL5 HTK46 MV12" ATK1 DAM1-6/1-6 or 1-8/1-8 SPEL 7x1st, 7x2nd, 5x3rd, 5x4th, 3x5th, 2x6th 1x7th**, he is immune to *Charm* spells cast by woodlands or sylvan beings and creatures and can *change form* 3x per day. The druid wears a +3 **magic cloak** and +2 **magic ring**, his **magic scimitar** is +2 in power and is +4 vs. ORCS. He will use spells to aide travelers that visit his grove at no charge if they are of neutral alignment; all others must tithe 100-700 GP depending on the level of the spell cast. He will cast no spell to assist another if he feels it goes against his nature, or the good of the natural world. In a buried chest in the roots of the largest oak in the grove is his treasure, consisting of 4000 GP, 500 PP, and 70 small gems ranging in value from 10 to 100 GP. A survivor of the ill-fated party of long ago, he will not divulge much information regarding those times casually. Those inquiring about such he will usually direct to the temple, and the clerics residing there. (Recommended spells: *Animal friendship, Detect Magic, Entangle, Faerie Fire x2, Purify Water, Speak With Animals; Charm Person or Mammal, Create Water, Cure Light Wounds x3, Heat Metal, Warp Wood; Call Lightning, Cure Disease, Hold Animal, Neutralize Poison, Protection from Fire; Animal Summoning 1, Call Woodland Beings, Cure Serious Wounds, Dispel Magic, Protection from Lightning; Anti-Plant Shell, Commune with Nature, Wall of Fire; Conjure Fire Elemental, Cure Critical Wounds; Conjure Earth Elemental*)

2. TEMPLE OF MELIKIE. Two clerics run the temple today, *NEK (THE PATIENT) L10 & ENYAWD (OF EXQUISITOR) L9*. Contrary to what might seem confusing, this humble structure is, in fact, the temple of MELIKIE. The large, round building just north of the hamlet was a pagan ritual sight long before the temple was erected. (It is *that* location that the wizard, ELRISH, hid the artifact within, and guided inquisitive explorers to in the hopes that they would fall victim to its powers.) Upon their return from the depths of the ruins, and after the loss of their comrade, the two clerics in the group assumed control of this tiny chapel, swearing allegiance to MELIKIE and begging her permission to stand guard over the terrible relic they had uncovered, and was the bane of their fallen friend. In an unprecedented gesture MELIKKI allowed them to retain their full clerical powers and parleyed in their behalf to their former deities, resulting in no punishment from their former lords as long as the clerics maintained a regimen of dual-ritual worship.

NEK, the larger of the two men, stands 6'2" tall and weighs 200 pounds. He is 75 years old, and his hair has thinned and turned gray. During ceremonies he wears a green tunic and black cloak according to his deities requests. His abilities include, **S13 D13 C14 I12 W17 Ch9, ACL10 or -3 HTK48 MV12" ATK1 DAM2-7/1-6 SPEL 6x1st, 6x2nd, 4x3rd, 3x4th, 2x5th**. Should the need for combat arise he can don his +3 **magic plate mail** and carry his +2 **shield**; he always wields a +3 **footman's mace**. NEK is the least likely of the two clerics to talk about the pagan ruins and the fall of their comrade so long ago. He hates the fact that the relic is still buried beneath the ruins, and wishes that they had found a way to destroy it. Though he was never aware--not even to this day--ATHENA, the group's only female member, had a crush on him from day one. He keeps a modest amount of the treasure he accumulated during his career in a chest beneath his bed, about 3000 SP, 2500 GP and 150 PP; the rest he donated to the upkeep of the temple. (Recommended spells are: *Bless, Command, Create Water, Cure Light Wounds, Detect Evil, Remove Fear; Augury, Detect Charm, Hold Person, Know Alignment, Silence 15' Radius, Slow Poison; Animate Dead, Cure Blindness, Cure Disease, Remove Curse; Cure Serious Wounds, Exorcise, Neutralize Poison; Dispel Evil, True Seeing.*)

ENYAWD, also 75 years old, stands 6' tall and weighs 180 pounds. His hairline recedes half way back across his head, creating the beginnings of a horseshoe effect with his reddish-yellow hair. He wears a shaggy moustache and goatee that is peppered with gray, and his once sparkling green eyes have turned dull. Like his friend, ENYAWD wears a green tunic during ceremonies, but in accordance with his former deity, he continues to wear chain mail as well. His abilities include, **S10 D9 C16 I10 W18 Ch12, ACL8 or -1 HTK54 MV12" ATK1 DAM2-7/1-8 SPEL 6 x1st, 6 x2nd, 4 x3rd, 3 x4th, 1 x5th**. When unarmored the priest wears a +2 **magical ring**, and when needed dons his suit of +4 **magic chain mail** and +2 **shield**, wielding his +2 **footman's flail**. ENYAWD is the more talkative of the two priests, the more inquisitive of travelers and their stories. He is also the more persistent in seeking out and punishing offenders of the moral codes associated with honest, god-fearing folk. Thus, he uses his casual and cordial ways to solicit information from those he engages in

discussion. Like his friend he has managed to retain a small amount of wealth that he keeps in a sack beneath a loose stone in his sleeping chamber, 2000 SP, 500 GP 20 PP and a diamond ring worth 750 GP. (Recommended spells are: *Command, Cure Light Wounds, Detect Evil, Detect Magic, Purify Food & Drink, Sanctuary; Augury, Detect Charm, Know Alignment x2, Slow Poison, Spiritual Hammer; Animate Dead, Dispel Magic, Locate Object, Speak With Dead; Detect Lie, Divination, Tongues; Quest.*)

3. MUSEUM OF THE MACABRE. This single story structure has been locked and sealed up for 50 years. Inside is a collection of items so strange and bizarre that many defy explanation. The walls within the largest room are lined with shelves from the floor to about 6' high. Standing freely throughout are counters and display tables while suspended from the rafters is an array of exotic and unknown items; the shelves, counters and tables are covered with items as well. It is impossible to list every item within the museum, for the number must run in the mid to high hundreds. It is thus left to the DM to design as many or as few of these as desired. If the party is not allowed to enter the building then its contents need be no concern, for they will not enter into play, nor have any role whatsoever in the adventure. It should be noted, however, that the gem studded golden scabbard mentioned earlier in the *background* remains within the museum. It, and several other, strange items are presented to give the GR an idea of the possible range of things he can create and stock the shelves with if so inclined.

The Scabbard of the Bride. *This metal case is designed to hold THE DEVIL'S BRIDE, but it will fit any long sword placed within it. If a detect magic spell is cast upon it there will be a positive response. The scabbard maintains a perpetual oil that coats any sword placed within that allows swift withdrawal, and allows the wielder's to strike first and last in each round for the following 3 turns. It also coats the blade, imbuing it with a magical bonus of +3 to hit and +6 to damage for 1-10 rounds; the blade must be returned to the scabbard and allowed to rest within it for 3-6 turns before it can coat the weapon again. It also allows the wearer to understand diabolic tongues and languages.*

The Talking Bottle. *A huge dust covered bottle with a cork stopper stands atop one of the counters. When wiped clean the contents will appear, the giant head of an Ogre Magi suspended in a bluish liquid. Initially its eyes will be closed but if a question, indirectly or otherwise, is posed concerning the item's origin, purpose, or whatever, the eyes will open and the creature will speak; at first sending a rush of bubbles out its orifice and to the top of the bottle. If the stopper is removed the bubbles will pop and the ogre's voice will be heard. The ogre will not participate in idle conversation, but will answer questions much in the manner of a commune or divination spell. The GR must strictly monitor the questions put to the item, ensuring the players do not ask things their characters would have no pre-knowledge of, and provide responses appropriate to the descriptions given in the spells listed. The bottle is generally cylindrical, about 2' across at the bottom which is flat, and about 3' high at its orifice where the cork is tightly wedged into the bottle's neck. It weighs nearly 100 pounds filled with the liquid and head, but if the water is emptied out the ogre will immediately shrink to the size of a fly and escape.*

The Ranger's Stick. *This wooden rod is about 3' long and 2" thick. If it is used to trace the footsteps or impressions of an animal's or being's tracks it can then be placed on the ground and it will spin about in the direction the creature or being went. It cannot tell the continued direction of its target if the creature or being passes through water, such as a stream or lake. It cannot be used on multiple tracks at the same time. It can be used as a weapon vs. the creature or being whose tracks it has traced, acting as a +1 stave, for purposes of weapon adjustment and damage.*

It is up to the GR to create other items to fill the museum, and determine the purpose and what might fill the other rooms indicated on the map. Certainly, crates, boxes, chests and foot lockers containing sundry as well as exotic things will likely fill these rooms as well, unpacked and in various stages of decay.

4. ANTIDOTES & HERBS. This shop is the business and domicile of ATHENA AGULARI. The only woman residing in the hamlet, and the only female member of the retired heroes that now stand watch, guarding the secret of the artifact hidden in the ruins. She stands an impressive 5'9" tall, and weighs 145 pounds. The youngest resident of the hamlet, she is a mere 65 years of age, and her once flaxen hair is now thin and faded, her skin brown and weathered. Being an accomplished Bard (L3) she sits nightly on the stage in the tavern, singing and strumming her lute. But her fighting and thieving skills (at L7 and L8) were what kept her alive most often as she traveled and explored with the band of men so long ago. Her abilities include **S15 D15 C10 I13 W17 Ch15, ACL7 or 0 HTK52 MV12" ATK3/2 DAM2-8/2-16, SPEL 3 x1st.** She is Neutral Good in alignment, and casts druid spells. Her normal attire includes a +2 magic ring, and when she

is armed for combat she dons her +4 **magic chain mail**, wielding a +2 **magical bastard sword**. ATHENA sells potions of antitoxin that will, when consumed, grant the drinker a bonus to saves vs. various poisonous attack by creatures and animals. The ability of the elixir lasts only 1 to 6 turns upon being drank, and will counter a poison that is injected into the victim if the save is made. She will only have 3-6 (a d4+2) at any given time, and the buyer must specify if he wants an antidote to centipede, snake or spider bite; the concoctions do not cross-effect other poisons. The cost varies from 500 GP for a +1 bonus to save, 1000 GP for a +2 bonus, and up to 2000 GP for a +3 bonus. Athena is very motherly concerning the "boys," and will be suspicious of any females acting too giddy in regards to any of them. She is very fond of NEK, and at one time had notions of seducing him away from his profession, but has long since abandoned the thought. In a foot locker beneath her bed is her meager wealth of 1500 SP, 500 GP and 10 PP. She will not divulge information about the relic casually. But with the recent activity detected in the ruins, a strong appearing party might convince her to drop her usual reluctance, steering them toward the hamlet's unofficial leader, BERAN. (Recommended spells are: *Animal Friendship, Entangle, Faerie Fire*)

5. ARROWS & BOWS. AVERY the half-elf runs this shop and lives in the loft above. At 86 years old the 5'6" 130 pound elf-kin still has a couple of decades before age begins to have detrimental effect upon him. Thus, his reddish-brown hair is thick and long, often concealing the semi-pointed tips of his ears. His shop is filled with arrows and bows in various stages of completion, and he sells the missiles by the single unit, by the dozen, or by the quiver, which holds around 30. His prices are more or less on par with those found in any large village, town or small city, and his craftsmanship is excellent. Though a skilled fighter in his day (L6) his elf blood was too strong to avoid the attraction to magic and its use, and his skills at spell dabbling eventually exceeded that with sword and bow (L7). Being the only member of the hamlet of elf blood it might seem puzzling why he would remain among humans and dwarves. The fact of the matter is that upon meeting the fair and beautiful ATHENA so many years ago he fell in love with the mortal woman, and has remained so ever since; though he dare not tell her, knowing of her affection for the cleric, NEK. His abilities are, **S14 D15 C14 I17 W10 Ch6, ACL7 or 3 HTK28 MV12" ATK3/2 DAM1-8/1-12 or 1-6/1-6, SPEL 4 x1st, 4 x2nd, 2 x3rd**. He wears standard leather armor when in his shop or going about the hamlet, but will don his +2 **magic cloak** and +2 **magic ring** if circumstances warrant such, grabbing up his +1 **magic long sword** and +1 **magic short bow**. He has all the racial abilities of his kind, and is Neutral Good in alignment. Not known for saving treasure, his last bit of booty consists of 5 gems worth 50 to 100 GP each, 500 GP and 10 PP in a box behind a loose brick in his chimney. Of all the members of his party he is closest to the ranger, BERAN, and admires the man for his wisdom. Should anyone inquire of him concerning the rumors of the hidden relic he will steer them toward the ranger's abode. (Recommended spells are, *Charm Person, Detect Magic, Magic Missile, Read Magic; Continual Light, Knock, Locate Object, Web; Fireball, Suggestion*. It is suggested that the GR fill out his book by selecting the spells desired to meet the minimum requirement per his intelligence.)

6. HOSTEL. HALIM the dwarf manages and runs the only inn in the hamlet. Short for his race at 3'11" tall and weighing a mere 130 pounds, he is the oldest member of the retired heroes. But due to his race, he is chronologically only half way into his *mature* years. Because of his size he has relied more on this skills of dexterity than his brawn, though he is a capable fighter (L7); his abilities at thievery being somewhat better (L9). The inn supports a drinking room (as one enters), a central kitchen, a dining hall (to the south) and his private quarters in the western end of the building. A set of stairs leads to the second story where guests can choose from a large common room with 6 cots to semi-private ones with 3 or less bunks, to the one private suite; naturally costs increase with privacy. A large attached stable will house up to 30 horses easily; and another 15 if quartered tightly. HALIM depends on caravans of merchants and tradesmen to supply him with the necessary food stock and other items he needs. Thus, he sets a fairly simple, and lean table with breads, cheese, salted meats, tubers and roots that will keep fresh long in his storage cellar. His prices are slightly higher than those found in nearby towns. His abilities are, **S16 D16 C14 I12 W12 Ch9, ACL7 or 5 HTK35 MV6" ATK3/2 DAM1-6/ 1-8 or 1-6/1-6**. When relaxed he wears simple dwarf attire, and a +1 **magic ring**, but will slip into his leather armor if the need arises. Should that occur he will grab his +2 **magic short sword** and +1 **magic short bow** from beneath the bar. He has all the racial abilities of his kind, but is Chaotic Neutral in alignment, unlike most of his kin. Known to be a hoarder, a heavy metal bound and locked chest kept in a secret compartment in the floor of the kitchen holds most of the wealth he has accumulated over the years, 3000 CP, 2000SP, 1500 GP, 50 PP, 6 gems worth from 50 to 250 GP each. HALIM serves an array of malts, ales and beers in the "public" room of the inn. Though it is seldom crowded, customers from passing caravans will usually congregate about the tiny stage in the northeast corner and listen to ATHENA sing throughout the night. Being a clever bartender, he's a good listener, and is not beyond *shadowing* a caravan outside the hamlet's borders

should he hear that it carries an item that interests him. He is not a big talker, however, and will not carelessly reveal the secrets hidden beneath the ruins. If someone inquires of such things, he will grumble and huff and suggest they talk to the ranger, BERAN.

7. PRIVATE RESIDENCE. This is simply the abode of the two clerics, NEK and ENYAWD. It is furnished with simple items that are fitting to their professions and philosophy. Each has a separate sleeping chamber. The GR can create more information regarding this structure if he so desires.

8. CROSSBOWS & MISSILES WEAPONS. This is the shop and abode of BERAN the ranger (L10). At 6'4" tall and 225 pounds the 76 year old man still presents an imposing figure one would not wish to tangle with. His once chestnut brown hair and beard are now almost completely gray, as are his once sparkling blue eyes. His skin is dark brown and weathered, lined with age and furrows deep in his brow and around his eyes. The former co-leader of the band of heroes that came here so long ago, he is now the *unofficial* authority of TRISTRAN. Knowing that he and his fellow former explorers have grown too old to hold back the forces of evil that threaten to enter the catacombs beneath the ruins, he has been obsessed for the past decade with designing and making superior crossbows and machine missiles that will allow other, younger explorers to finish the job he feels he and his friends did not. Thus, if a group comes to TRISTRAN curious as to the rumors that have been spreading about, he will size them up to see if they are worthy of his goods and assistance. If they show that they are, he will sell them several crossbows and scores of missiles, and instruct them in the use of the items. He will also reveal much of the information provided in the *History* section (the DM should determine how much of it should be revealed). If he is convinced the adventurers stand a chance of driving back the impending threat he will advise them to proceed through the first level beneath the ruins, and locate the false-floor he and his friends laid so long ago, and to remove this and enter the caverns beneath. He is so mournful over the loss of his comrade so long ago that he believes his inventions will allow a group to enter the portal, and slay the creatures beyond. But he has no idea that the "beyond" is an entire realm, a layer of the 9-Hells itself! Though his age prevents him from adventuring any more, his abilities are, **S16 D14 C15 I13 W16 Ch12, ACL5 or -3 HTK 58 MV12" ATK3/2 DAM1-8/1-12 or 1-8/1-8, SPEL 2 x1st (d) and 1 x1st(mu).** In his everyday attire he will be wearing **+3 magic leather armor** but it required he can get into his **+3 magic splint mail** and **+3 magic shield**. He always carries and will wield his **+2 magic long sword/giant-slayer** and will retrieve if possible his specially constructed heavy-crossbow. BERAN has kept little treasure throughout his career, and his wealth is down to 300 SP, 150 EP, 200 GP that he keeps in a footlocker beneath his bed.

The specially designed crossbows and missiles BERAN constructs allow rapid fire, and deal more damage. With a spring loading mechanism, the weapon can fire up to 3 times per round. This requires a clip that holds up to 6 bolts that drops the projectiles down into the launching saddle. The missiles deal out 1-8/1-8 damage each, and are designed so that the head will break off inside the victim, and continue to work its way through, inflicting an additional 1-6 points of damage. At present he has 3 such weapons and roughly 90 missiles finished. Realizing that non-magical weapons did no damage to the creatures he and his comrades confronted so long ago, he has spent decades gathering up minor magical daggers and arrows and, with his friend, THORKLIN'S help, has forged the missiles from those. Thus, all the bolts are effectively **+1 magic items.** (Recommended spells, *Animal Friendship, Speak with Animals*--druid; *Friends*--magic user. The GR should create a spell book for him based on his intelligence)

9. ARMS & ARMOR. The last shop in the hamlet before reaching the ruins is that owned by THORKLIN the dwarf. At 4'5" tall and 170 pounds the dwarf poses an impressing figure of chiseled muscle and broad features. At 90 years of age he is in the prime of his maturity, and still commands the great strength he often used in his adventures with his friends and comrades. And though he would have liked to have spent some of the past 50 years out exploring he has remained, instead, in the hamlet with his friends, dedicated to guarding the terrible secret that lies beneath the ruins. For, being Lawful Good, as was his former friend, the fallen paladin, his word once given, is a vow he does not take lightly. To keep himself busy all these years he has fallen back on his childhood passion of metal working; a family skill he was taught at an early age by his father, who was taught by his father, and so on. Turning raw ore into molten mass that could be worked into shields and armor capable of withstanding an ogre's blow, the dwarf's skill at armoring is such that any armor type he fashions that requires metal plates, rings, or studs, is imbued with a protective rank 1 better than that of standard pieces of similar design by humans; his shields receiving a bonus of **+1** to their saves vs. Crushing Blow, though they are

not, otherwise, magical. He will only have 1-4 shields in his shop available for purchase, and a % chance of having 1 each of the following armors, 80% studded leather, 70% ring mail, 60% scale mail, 50% chain mail, 40% splint mail, 30% plate mail. Should any of these be present, he will sell them at a rate of 20 times that listed in the manuals for armor up to splint mail, and 10 times the rate of plate mail. But being only *semi-retired*, he is still a formidable fighter (L9), and his abilities include **S18/36 D17 C19 I13 W15 Ch9, ACL4 or -5 HTK107 MV6" ATK3/2 DAM2-5/1-4**. His casual attire consists of a hard leather smith's apron but he will don his +3 **magic chain mail** and +3 **magic shield** in time of need. He always carries his +3 **magic war hammer** on him, and keeps a +3/+4 vs. dragons **magic short sword** with his armor. Being a dwarf he has hoarded some of his accumulated wealth over the years. In an iron chest beneath his bunk is 3000 CP, 2750 SP, 1300 EP, 750 GP and 50 PP, along with 12 gems of value from 25 to 150 GP each. When not in his shop during the day, he will be at the Hostel taking his meals, or at the ranger's shop, reminiscing. If questioned he will direct those inquiring to seek out the ranger.

Note: none of the non-player characters will ever refer to the relic by its name.

THE CURSE OF YAR is the term associated with the ruins north of TRISTRAN hamlet. While the term *ruins* might conjure up images of collapsed roofs, toppled walls, smashed pottery and splintered wooden doors and shutters that is not the case with the round, stone structure that is standing. A pagan ritual site for over two centuries, the stone structure is but a recent addition, being built about 75 years ago. Its purpose, and the rituals that went on within it, have faded from the memory of all but the most learned of sages, and even they would be pressed to offer a complete explanation of the ruins now. The heroes knew nothing of the site, nor its past either, being drawn to it only because of the legends surrounding the artifact. Their story, described in the *History* need not be repeated here, but their reluctance to tear down the building upon their return is an odd addition to the bigger picture. And their decision to transform the ruins into a shrine of their fallen friend, and a prison to hold the artifact, only makes the picture more intriguing. Their attempt to seal off the access to the catacombs beneath the pagan temple were feeble, at best. Laying a false floor in the cylinder at area 10 on level 2 was not enough to prevent invasion from the plane beyond the portal from entering should that have been so desired. Their ignorance of the bigger picture--as described in the *Background*--is what has kept them connected to the place, and was responsible for them settling here and establishing the hamlet, to act as unnecessary sentries for the last 50 years. Unfortunately, despite the plans of Mephistopheles, and the undying dedication of the heroes to guard the site, some of the minions of Beelzebub have managed to slip through the portal beneath the ruins, and are threatening to reach the surface, once they break through the false floor, and past the traps and guardians on level 2.

DUNGEON LEVEL 1:1. At about 180' in diameter this large round structure was the site of many pagan rituals over the past 2 centuries. Originally it was simply a circular wall enclosing the area, but eventually a domed roof was added; when and by whom is another of the many unknown stories regarding the ruins. Two wooden doors strengthened by iron bands and studs stand closed much of the time. Each is 8' tall, 4' wide and 6" thick; a normal Open Doors is required to swing the portals inward if they are not already opened or stand locked. Each has a key-box device built into it that will withdraw the bolts running through one to the other. The round wall is 8' in height, and the dome reaches an impressive 32' above the floor in the center at its peak. A row of statues stands at each side of the chamber, with 4 to each row. These (A) are fashioned in the likenesses of a female figure with wings fixed to its back bearing a sword in one hand and staff in the other. Each stands 7' tall. If anything or anyone of an evil alignment enters the chamber they will animate and move to repel the intruders out through the doors. Each staff emits a beam of force that will drive the target backward unless a Save vs. Staff is made. If the intruder-target resists or moves to attack the statue or deface anything in the chamber the statue will attack with its sword, as if it were a 12 HD warrior, doing 2-16 points of damage. The statues are considered **ACL10** for attack purposes, but any bladed weapon striking them must make a Save vs. Crushing Blow or be smashed to bits. The statues will suffer only 1 point of damage from piercing or slicing weapons, and half damage from blunt ones. Each statue can sustain 100 points of damage before they crack and crumble to bits. Two columns of benches in four sections B stand in the center of the chamber. These are long, narrow wooden pews with backs to them; on the ends of some rows are support posts going up to the dome above. Two sets of stairs, one at each location marked C lead down to the level below. A square opening in the top of a buried cylinder is visible at this location D and if leaned over one will feel a strong force trying to push anything above the opening higher up into the dome. Anyone wearing enough weight to equal his own can actually walk across the space to the opposite side. Wearing less and attempting the same will cause the character to rise upwards, while wearing significantly more will allow the character to slowly descend to below (passing through level 1 #4 and going to area #10, level 2). Beyond the square hole is a raised platform E and what

appears to be a pagan shrine or altar **F**. The altar looks to be much like a stone bench, designed for sacrifices of some kind, with a large stain of blood dried and embedded into the stony material. A trail of this stain leads off the altar at the east end, where it stops, only to have another large stain appear on the floor beneath. In the center of the altar is a 4" diameter hole, also stained completely around it, and at the front face of the altar about 6" below the surface is a smaller one, again with reddish brown stain around it; simple deduction will conclude that this is a drainage pipe for some reason.

1:2 A **Clay golem** stands guard in this chamber, and will not allow anything or anyone of evil alignment to ascend from below or descend from above. the chamber is otherwise empty. **HTK50**

1:3 A **Guardian Naga** stands vigil at this location. It hides among 3 large clay pots filled with water. **HTK77** (Recommended spells as a 7th level cleric, *Command, Resist Cold; Hold Person, Silence 15' Radius; Dispel Magic; Cure Serious Wounds*) At the bottom of the pots lie its treasure of 5000 CP, 1000 SP and 100 gems each worth from 10 to 100 GP.

1:4 The corridors leading east and west from the chambers above end at a curved wall. This is the top of the cylinder and access to the chamber is possible only from above (1:1 item D) or below (2:10). A square hole in the ceiling of this chamber (K) is actually the opening in the floor in chamber 1 above (D), while about 30' below is the false floor built by the heroes in chamber 10 of level 2. An anti-gravitational field exists within the cylinder, and ascending or descending through it is possible as described previously. Should other means be devised to traverse this passageway the DM should carefully determine the parameters of the means, and mechanics involved, and the odds of success. There is no monster or treasure otherwise present.

1:5 Four white **Blink Dogs** currently reside in this chamber. **HTK32** each. They will attack anyone or anything evil attempting to pass through their station; they have no treasure.

1:6 An **Androsphinx** guards this chamber. **HTK88**. A large door at the south end of the chamber is actually a dimensional portal (J) that will allow those that enter to pass to level 2, below. However, the guardian will not allow anyone of evil alignment past, attacking them and anyone that attempts to force their way by him. All others of good or neutral alignment must solve the riddle he poses or he will refuse them access. The GR should then speak the riddle for the creature, "*Solve the riddle and enter as friend ,but if you fail you've reached the end. I am one of many that comes and goes, I follow the light in the sky that glows, when evening falls I disappear that my brother, the night may share the year. What am I?*" The correct answer is, **the day**. If answered correctly the creature allows the party to pass through the portal. If they answer incorrectly, they must find another way to reach the levels below. Those that pass through the portal will end up in one of the 4 chambers on the level below (11, 12, 13 or 14) chosen by the DM or determined randomly. Only one person may pass through at a time, thus it is possible the party could be split up. If they choose to fool the creature, or bind him with spells or other means, he will attack with all his resources. (Recommended spells as if cast by a cleric L6, *Command, Detect Evil, Sanctuary; Know Alignment x2 , Silence 15' Radius; Dispel Magic, Prayer*)

1:7 Four white **Blink Dogs** identical to those previously listed occupy this chamber. They will act the same.

1:8 The sphinx's treasure chamber. Glass crystal and clay pots and vases contain the treasure of the Androsphinx. One such jar is filled with 80 gems ranging in GP value from 10 to 1000 each. In another is 30 pieces of jewelry, consisting of rings, necklaces, tiaras, and so on, each ranging in GP value from 500 to 2500. One vase contains 15 +1, 10 +2 and 5 +3 **magic arrows**, along with 3 **arrows of slaying--devils**. There is a secret door in the center of the north wall.

1:9 Four white **Blink Dogs** identical to those mentioned occupy this chamber and will act the same.

1:G A chest filled with "gold" sits on the floor at the end of this secret passage. The gold is an illusion, however, and the coins are made of iron. Roughly 10,000 fill the chest.

1:H A chest filled with copper pieces sits on the floor at the end of this passage. Roughly 2,000 fill the container, but the lid is closed, and standing atop it is a **Guardian Familiar** that will protect its charge to the fullest of its ability. These coins and those described above will possibly have a role to play once the party reaches the next level below. The creature begins with **HTK8**.

1:I This secret T-shaped section contains two additional dimensional doors/portals that will lead to the level below. These are one-way devices, and once the characters pass through them they cannot return the same way. The portals will deliver the party into a long, narrow corridor at either the east or west end; the east one being between chambers 12 & 14 and the west one between chambers 11 & 13 on level 2 below. And like the portal at area J they can only be entered by one person at a time. If more than one attempts to do so the device will shut down for 6 turns.

(GR notes for technical data and game information)

DUNGEON LEVEL 2:10 When reaching this section of the cylinder the party will encounter what feels to be a semi-solid floor. It will quiver and shake infrequently, as it has not been maintained often throughout the 50 years it has been in place. A large crack over 20' long and 5' wide is visible, and the anti-gravitational force rising up from within it is at its strongest there. A platform like ledge protrudes into the chamber, to which the floor beneath is attached, that leads into a corridor going south. Movement up or down within the cylinder is a matter of floating or sinking, based on the amount of weight of the person or object concerned. Generally, if a person weighs 175 lbs he will hover, suspended, unable to rise or sink at all; by adding or removing weight, the character can determine his direction of choice. For characters that are lighter or heavier than this, the rate of movement involved will be 10' per segment per every 25 pounds difference. Thus, a hobbit weighing a total 45 lbs would never sink, but rise upwards at a rate of 50' in 5 segments. In contrast, a large heavy warrior weighing 225 pounds would sink and never rise at a rate of 30' in 3 segments. The DM can, of course, modify this phenomenon to accommodate a simpler mechanic if desired. Also, anchoring of ropes at each end of the cylinder and pulling oneself along will alter move rates and the DM should compute such actions as he sees fit. The anti-gravitational force at work here is much stronger should the floor actually be removed, or collapse (falling slowly down to the level below).

2:11-14 Each of these chambers contains a dimensional-portal. These, however, are exits only, and cannot be entered in an attempt to return to area 6 **J** on the floor above. In addition to the device that allows entry, each chamber's walls are literally riddled with holes, and covering most of the floor space in each, are thousands of coins. In chambers 11 and 14 these look very much like gold, while those in 12 and 13 appear to be copper. Mingled among these are tiny bits of cloth, bone, teeth and other things that might imply once belonging to or being part of a living being, all covered with rusty-brown dried blood and dust. Approximately 10,000 iron or 1000 copper will be present in each chamber. All of these coins and those mentioned before, are tools the party can use to assist them through their next challenge. Unfortunately, the party will soon realize that there are not as many copper coins as iron ones, and must figure out some way to transfer the former back and forth to allow them all to pass through the next chamber to the south.

2:15 This wide dog-legged corridor is a veritable trap. A strange magnetic force is at work here that will pull anyone attempting to pass through at a rate of 10 times their normal move. This force flip-flops every 3 turns, going from the corridor that enters from the north in a south westerly direction to the wall at location **L**, where they will smash into an L-shaped barred gate. After 3 turns it will change directions going back the way it came, and so on. Characters burdened with the fake gold equal to their own body weight or less will be dragged with such force as to inflict 2-24 points of damage when they strike the wall. Those carrying twice their weight in fake gold will be pulled slowly, at a rate of 10' per segment. Characters carrying the copper coins will not be effected by the force, but will be physically burdened by the weight and have to move on their own. A second barred gate in the southern section will rise, cutting through the corridor and imprisoning anyone caught in the area marked **L** one segment after the cycle of the force ceases. At that point the cycle will change directions, possibly dragging characters against this new barrier, and causing 1-8 damage per round that they are being crushed against it. If anyone is caught east of this second gate when it rises, they will be dragged northeast into a third barrier that rises there at the beginning of the new cycle. The bars forming the northwest corner of area **L** have weakened with time and may be bent at a bonus of 20% per attempt.

2:16 If anyone becomes trapped at location **L** they will be subject to missile attack from the two creatures penned up at areas **M** and **N**. Each one holds a **Manticore** that will immediately fire a volley of its tail spikes into the shaded area (see map) possibly damaging any characters there. The creatures each have **HTK40**. They have no treasure, but the bars holding them in their cells have become loosened with the passing of time at the ceiling and floor, and the creatures can possibly force their way through, taking 1-3 rounds to do so. The GR should determine the odds of this occurring, as they are very hungry, and likely to attempt it should a party enter this chamber from area **L**.

2:17 This secret chamber still contains the personal treasure YAR the paladin possessed in life. Six large chest stand on the floor of the room, one filled with 79,680 SP, one with 80,000 EP, one with 50,000 GP, one with 10,000 PP. Mingled amongst the contents is 100 pieces of jewelry, each averaging a value of 2500 GP, and 250 gems each having an average value of 1,000 GP. Also buried within these chests is a **magic ring of regeneration**, an **amulet of protection versus evil**, a pair of **magical bracers of ethereal travel**, and a pair of **gauntlets of ogre power**. Hanging attached to the north and west walls are a +3 **magic shield** and +3 suit of **magic plate mail** along with a +2 **magical bastard sword** and +4 **magical footman's flail**. The chests are bound by metal bands and locked, but the mechanism securing them is weak and fragile and will easily break should a thief fail his lock picking attempt by more than 50%. Should the devices break the lids will open freely.

2:18 This odd shaped room is separated in two by a stone archway that allows passage into the northern section. But atop the arch is a unnerving sight, a robe draped skeletal looking shape sitting on a high back chair. This **Crypt Thing** will not move to attack anyone or thing that enters, and will not offer much in the way of information. It can be an annoying nuisance to a party should they decide to molest it in anyway, for it has *all* the powers of both types of its kind mentioned in the manual, and will attempt to *paralyze* those that move against it, turn them *invisible*, then *teleport* them randomly throughout the dungeon. The archway rises a good 12' above the floor of the chamber, making it difficult for the party to physically reach. If they do, it has **HTK42**.

2:19 A giant, stone figure stands in the center of this chamber. It will not let anyone pass unless they state, "We have come as friends" or "We come to pay our respect" or something similar. Failing to do so will trigger the guardian to block their attempts to pass, and force it into combat if necessary. This **golem** has **HTK60**. There is no treasure in the chamber.

2:20 This long rectangular chamber was recently transformed into a crypt for the envoy of 6 clerics that came to investigate the rumors spreading throughout the land. Unwilling to listen to BERAN'S warnings, the group descended into the caverns below and were slaughtered by hideous devilish creatures. The ranger, along with THORKLIN, NEK and ENYAWD managed to retrieve the bodies of the poor souls and place them in this location. Each was laid to rest in a coffin (Q) and has remained more or less unmolested for the past 13 years. BERAN dispatched a message to the head temple of MELIKIE explaining the death of the fallen priests, but no word was ever returned, nor another envoy to retrieve the bodies. A large **Bone Golem** stands guard over the priests (R) and will move to attack anyone or thing that disturbs the corpses, or molests their former possessions located at (S). *The GR should determine what items the 6 clerics would have had, based on random rolls or personally chosen; in either case, such treasure and goods should be based on the priests having been of levels 6, 4, 3, 1, 1, 1.* The golem has HTK40, suffers only half-damage from piercing or slashing weapons and is treated as if it were a "Flesh" construct regarding all other statistics.

2:21 Not really a chamber, but a long corridor in a rectangular shape connected in the center by a shorter one, 4 **Stone Juggernauts** stand in the wider spaces of the four corners (T). These 10' cubes of stone will slide swiftly to one of 8 locations every other turn, and remain there for one turn before returning to their original location. The GR should roll a d8, with 1 being north, 2 northeast, 3 east, 4 southeast, 5 south, 6 southwest, 7 west and 8 northwest. Anyone caught between the cube and a wall when this occurs must make a Save vs. Breath Weapon or be crushed to death. Those that make their save suffer 6-36 points of damage from not having escaped, totally; all items must make a Save vs. Crushing Blow or be destroyed, while those possessed by anyone crushed and killed fail automatically. A corridor leading north from the top of the rectangle delivers the party to a wide chamber, with three stone cubes standing in a row, 10' apart. These are an illusion, and on the southern face of the southern column is scribbling that reads, " *Trust not what you see, and you will feel it not. Feel it not, and you are free to pass*" in an old dwarfish tongue. If anyone attempts to disbelieve what he sees, or simply closes his eyes and proceeds forward, they will pass through the columns one by one until reaching area (V). Attempting to walk around the columns causes the party to step onto teleporting squares. The one at (W) will return the person or persons to (X), while stepping onto space (Y) will return the person or persons to (Z). This will occur even should someone attempt to *fly* above the teleporting pads, or jump, or cross over using a rope or even a spell. Once the party reaches area (V) they may proceed north unrestricted. They must use the teleporting squares to return to the entrance, for the illusionary walls are one-way only; going south, they are actually solid stone. An alcove near the end of the corridor going north contains a *Helm of Teleportation* that will not only allow the wearer to travel to the first layer of the outer planes, but bestows as well the ability of adaptation to any environment that might be met; thus allowing the wearer to breath normally, move, attack, cast spells, etc., as if on the prime plane.

2:22 This large chamber is empty save for the six iron pillars supporting the ceiling above. Two 20' square alcoves, one to the east and one to the west, contain a **LAMMASU** each, and these guard the coffin of YAR that rests in the 3rd alcove at the northern end of the chamber. Each creature is exceptionally large, having HTK63 and attacking as if 9HD. They will not assault beings that they detect as being good, but will stop and question those of a neutral nature; anyone that appears to be evil at all will immediately be attacked. They can communicate in their own tongue, and the language of Lawful Good, as well as in a limited form of telepathy; the latter they use to determine a being's nature. (Recommended spells at 7th level cleric ability, *Command, Cure Light Wounds x2, Resist Cold; Detect Charm, Know Alignment, Silence 15' Radius; Dispel Magic, Prayer; Cure Serious Wounds*) The body of YAR the fallen paladin lies in state in an ornate coffin, a series of spells cast upon him to prevent his corpse from being animated and possessed by evil beings or creatures. He does not decay, due to the powerful magic involved. Guarded by *magic wards* he has remained here, for the past 50 years, untouched, and unseen but for a very few that were close to him in life. Anyone attempting to remove him from the coffin, or to move it, or assault it and him, will be struck by an *Ice Storm*, followed by a dozen *Lightning Bolts* each capable of causing 10-60 points of damage, followed by a *Flame Strike* of triple proportions and strength. He is dressed in fine and rich attire, and his hair and beard are always combed, and never get any longer. There is no sign of the sword that brought him to his demise, for the artifact was returned to the location that he and his comrades found it so long ago, on the level below this one.

2:23 Two "watchers" dwell here temporarily, guarding the item in the alcove just south of them. Known as **Spectators** they will rush to prevent anyone from removing the item. Each has HTK36 and will use all their abilities to defend themselves and stop the theft of the item under their guard. They have no personal treasure.

DUNGEON LEVEL 3. Once the party reaches this level they will have entered a world unlike anything they might have experienced in the past. Six large naturally formed caverns, an underground river of molten rock, and two hand worked chambers are located here, deep beneath the pagan ruins above. This level is hot, humid, and reeking of sulfur. Hot burning sand, often crystallized by the sweltering temperatures and often a foot thick covers most of the floors. The walls of the caves glow with heat emanating from the metal ores embedded within them. Ledges and cracks appear at various heights, and at various lengths, while many of the cavern ceilings hang a staggering 30' to 45' above the floors. The whole place seems like some scene out of hell itself, which explains a lot once the party begins to encounter the various creatures roaming the level. These diabolic beasts, as accounted for in the *Background* and *History* of the adventure have been slipping through the portal over the past 5 decades, with some taking up residence in the great caverns. Some are groups that come and go, since the use of the device has been discovered, sent on missions to gather information about what lies beyond. Most have been stopped by the strange gravitational *force* in the cylinder that seems to push down against them. When a floor was constructed by the heroes, they sealed the passageway to the surface, further inhibiting the creatures from gaining access to the prime world. But over time the floor has weakened, and a large crack-like opening has appeared. Many of the creatures capable of flight have now begun to try to get up and through the opening, only to have the strange *force* repel them downwards time and time again.

3:24 Buried beneath 3' of sand is a part of the device responsible for the anti-gravitational *force* going back and forth through the cylinder (see map). The GR can decree this to be part of an ancient, buried intergalactic spacecraft that crashed into the earth hundreds of thousands or perhaps millions of years ago, and design a complete ship awaiting to be explored by the adventurers; of course it should contain deadly devices, traps and creatures as well. It is not necessary to this adventure that such be done, and is suggested merely to encourage the GR to add more to the story if desired. If the idea is not to be included then the party should never discover the device beneath the sand. This huge cavern is otherwise empty save for a tall, steel statue standing against the western wall. At 30' tall this iron man is more than impressive, it is an asset to any party that can somehow animate it, and maintain control over its actions. A magic-user that casts a *Magic Jar* can then occupy the iron man with his life force, and manipulate it in order to move, attack, or carry upon command. The *golem*--as such--receives no save against this spell. The possession of the iron man is subject to the terms of the spell description. It has **HTK90**, but is identical to the *Iron Golem* in all other regards except for height. It is capable of carrying a full grown man seated upon each shoulder, and a dwarf, elf or two hobbits seated in the palm of each hand turned upwards. The temperature in this cavern is very warm, but not harmful.

3:25 Unlike the previous cavern, the temperature in this one is so overwhelming as to reduce 1-6 hit points of life energy from a character per each turn spent within it unless some means of countering this is applied. The ceiling height varies from 40' to 50' above the cave floor, and ledges along the walls (see map) appear between 20' and 30' up the walls. On each of these at present is 6 **Spined Devils**. These diabolic creatures have wings and can fly about. They each have HTK25. There is no treasure in this chamber.

3:26 One of the two largest caverns on the level, it reeks beyond belief. As the party enters they will understand why. A large group of 77 **Stench Kow** are roaming about in here. 12 are bulls that fight as 6HD creatures, having **HTK51**, while the females (60) have **HTK5-27**; the 5 young are non combatant. Like the chamber before it, this one is so hot as to be harmful to those remaining in it (see effects in chamber above). They have no treasure.

3:27 The other of the largest caverns on the level, it is the domain of the king of the Stench Kow, a bull of tremendous size and strength (double that of the normal bull) that the sight of it will cause **fear** in characters less than 8th level (no save), while those of more experience that make a Save vs. Death Magic can combat it unaffected; those 8th level or higher that do not make their save will fight at -5 to hit and damage, and have their move rate reduced by 50% out of **fear to move**. This creature will fight as a 12 HD monster, having double the gore attack of the regular bull, doing 15-28 points of damage per gore, and having **HTK99**. It is surrounded by a harem of 30 females that are each as strong and tough as a bull, and will die trying to protect their king. The heat in this chamber continues to effect the characters as the two previously described. There is no treasure within this cavern.

3:28 Hotter than the caverns previously mentioned, the heat and pressure reduces a character's life energy by 3-18 points per turn spent within. Potions will evaporate after 3 turns, and exposed scrolls and paper items that touch the walls might burst into flame if left unattended. The ceiling is about 25' above the floor, giving ample space for the guard posted here at present. A **Pit Fiend** is currently stationed here. **HTK91**. The chamber is otherwise empty, and there is no treasure.

3:29 A long, winding underground tube allows a river of lava to run through this location. The ceiling of the tube is about 40' to 50' above the molten river, and the ledges overlooking it (see map) are 10' above the rushing lava. Each turn spent within the tube will reduce a character's life energy by 4-24 hit points unless some means to counter the effect are put into play. The challenge here is to somehow get across. Should a magic-user have taken possession of the *iron man* he will be able to transport from 4 to 6 characters across. He can only do this once, before melting into the hot lava and floating away. Should a character fall into the lava he is killed instantly unless some magical device or item will normally prevent this.

3:30 This large chamber is, oddly, very cold in contrast to the ones north of the lava river. In fact, the further south one moves from the flowing lava, the temperature drops remarkably tens of degrees. By the time the group reaches the center of this cavern, it is a nippy 32F (0 Celsius). Though the reason might not be clear, the current occupants understand, and will rush to attack any non-devil they see enter. Four **Ice Devils** are presently stationed here guarding the portal device to the east. Each has **HTK66**, and will use all its abilities to defeat intruders.

3:31 The larger of the two hand-worked chambers, this great hall has 9 pillars of ice rising from the floor to the ceiling 30' above. Each is 3' in diameter, and will freeze one's hand to it should one behave so foolishly. Those caught thus will take 1-10 points of cold damage per turn, or half if a Save vs. Dragon Breath is made each turn caught. Pulling away one's hand by brute strength can be done with a successful *Bend Bars* but doing so will peel the flesh off the appendage and inflict an additional 1-6 points of damage. In the center of the south wall is a 20' alcove and standing within this is the portal to the 8th plane of Hell, a silver archway 18' in height at the center with a 20' span at the base. It was through here that the party of heroes passed some 50 years ago, and met with a terrible fate. For each turn spent exploring this area there is a 5% cumulative chance that another **Ice Devil** will step through the device; another 10% cumulative chance that the being-creature at area 32 will come to investigate any disturbance. The only way to destroy this portal is to somehow manage to transport a cubic yard of molten lava from the river and pour it atop the device. Doing so will result in an explosion, causing 12-72 points of damage from the brittle shards of metal that was the arch. Those within a 20' range taking full or half damage depending if they make a Save vs. Death Magic. Those beyond 20' taking only half damage if they fail their save and none if they make it.

3:32 The smaller of the two hand-worked chambers, this one is the location of the cursed relic, where the heroes of old placed the item so that others might avoid falling prey to its powers. Upon the eastern wall of the shallow alcove hangs the sword. Well, *hangs* is not technically accurate, for what appears to be a giant hand reaching out from the wall, with the item firmly in its grasp, only handle and blade tip showing above and below the clenched fist, is a powerful spell created to hold tight the relic and not let go. Surrounding the fist is an *anti-magic shell* that will block any spell short of a Wish or Alter Reality from affecting it. Should the shell be removed, the fist will not release the item unless or until it sustains 200 hit points of damage; blunt weapons inflicting only half-damage upon the hand. It can only be harmed by +4 or better **magic**

weapons, making it difficult to damage the hand and extract the relic. Currently pacing about within the chamber is the magic-user, ELRISH; or what could be said is left of him. This fellow in league with the diabolic has spent the past 20 years trying to get the artifact free from the clutching fist, to no avail. Thinking that perhaps he would have a better chance if he wasn't connected to the prime plane, the fool went through decades of changing his form through sinister use of the dark arts until he eventually transformed himself into a **LICH**, thinking the state of being Undead might aid him in releasing the item from the hand's grasp. Now he paces endlessly trying to figure out the right spells to cast to accomplish his Master's demands. Four 10' square alcoves at each corner of the room are filled with mounds of items, spell components and ingredients, that he has used over the years. Most of these are no good any more, though one or two might be of use to a magic-user in the party. Should ELRISH hear any commotion in the direction of the portal he will move to investigate, otherwise, he will be here when the party reaches this chamber. As a **LICH** he has **HTK88**, and casts spells as a L20 magic-user. (Recommended spells are, *Burning Hands, Detect Magic, Jump, Magic Missile x2; Darkness 15' Radius, Detect Invisibility, ESP, Invisibility, Web; Blink, Dispel Magic, Fireball, Fly, Slow; Confusion, Dimension Door, Fumble, Ice Storm, Polymorph Other; Animate Dead, Cloud-kill, Cone of Cold, Monster Summoning III, Wall of Force; Death Spell, Disintegrate, Geas, Stone to Flesh; Delayed Blast Fireball, Power Word, Stun x2; Incendiary Cloud, Maze, Mind Blank; Meteor Swarm, Power Word, Kill*) Oddly, he will not immediately attack the party, but attempt to hide, since he wishes the relic to fall into the hands of a new wielder, according to his Master's wishes. He will, however, defend himself if attacked. No longer needed, the former possessions of the magic-user are contained in a chest in the southeast alcove, hidden by an *invisibility* spell. Inside the chest is a pair of **bracers ACL2**, a **+3 magic ring**, a **+1 magic cloak of protection**, a **staff of striking** fully charged, 3000 PP, and a spell book. The GR should determine all the spells in the LICH'S book, including those listed above, but not any of the "*B/GBY*" spells.

(GR notes for technical data and gaming)

THE DEVILS' BRIDE is a +4 long sword with a special NG alignment. Upon hitting any devilish being or creature the victim must make a Save vs. rod, staff or wand or lose half its hit points and half its HD combat value. The lost points are temporarily gained by the sword user and are removed first should he take any damage from attacks, or will fade away after a number of turns equal to the creature's original HD value unless he engages in combat before then. The sword user also temporarily gains the HD value lost by the creature for a number of turns equal to the HD gained. Once combat is finished or over, this gain fades similar to the hit points. The maximum combat level the sword user can attain is a THAC0 4 rating. Should the HD gained reach a point that equals or exceeds the HD of the sword user, there is a 1% cumulative chance per HD gained that the sword user will become possessed by the diabolic forces within the relic. This results in turning the user from LG to CE and from CG to LE. There is no save against this. In the hands of a paladin it doubles his spell casting ability and (1) extends detect evil to 180', (2) makes all saves at +3, (3) adds immunity to lycanthropy, (4) increases his "lay on hands" to 4 hps/level, (5) doubles the amount of disease curing allowed, (6) remains unchanged, (7) allows the paladin to Turn Undead as a cleric of equal level. It is useable only by paladins, and rangers and fighters of good alignment. Rangers and fighters gain only the +4 bonus to hit and damage devils. Thieves of good alignment can wield it, gaining the same bonus as a non-paladin, but with every use he must Save vs. Spell or become *magic jarred* into the item, releasing a BALROG from within that will take possession of it and attack any non-devil close at hand. Clerics, magic users or any other class that touches it will receive 10-60 points of damage (no save) and lose one level of experience.

CONCLUSION

To any seasoned gamer of high fantasy adventure and role playing this adventure might ring a familiar tune in one's ear. If you recognized at first glance the similarity between this work and that of some Decatur, Illinois folk of long ago then you are not mistaken. To those novice gamers who are not familiar with JUDGES GUILD or the name BOB BLEDSAW then be informed that the adventure contained within was carefully created to emulate the feel and style of some of the earliest modules in the fantasy game industry. And also, that a fair share of them came from this company, and that man. In fact, more Judges Guild modules were produced from 1975 to 1978 than by TSR. But all that is another story, for another time.

To say that this adventure is simply a *knock-off*, an attempt to create a copycat version of a JG adventure I can only say, well, yeah. What better way to honor someone or thing than to imitate it? And that is, indeed, one of the reasons that this format was used. It could have as easily been produced in two or three columns, with font used by TSR in its heyday, but such would not have served the purpose of this, which is to pay homage to JG and its creator.

While I have not attempted to copy every bit of the signature style of JG, I have tried to capture enough to present a reasonable facsimile. If in doing so it prompts your curiosity to track down some OOP JG material on "the bay" or in a used book or hobby store, then, great. Or if it stirs up long forgotten memories of your adventures with Dark Tower or Tegel Manor then, cool, more than I hoped to accomplish.

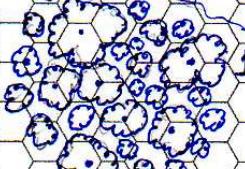
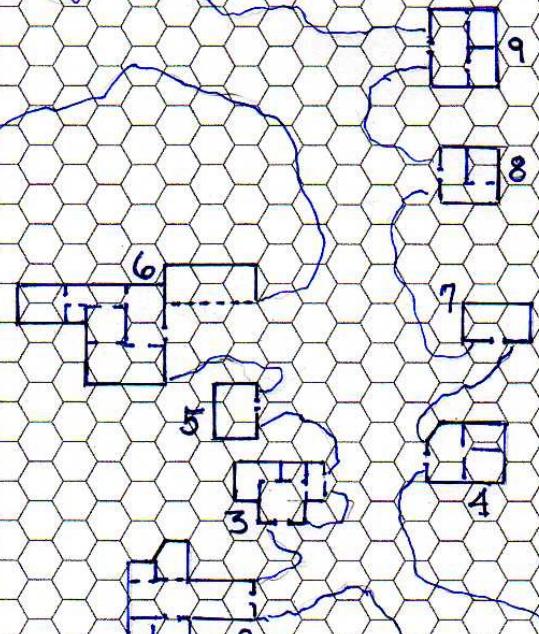
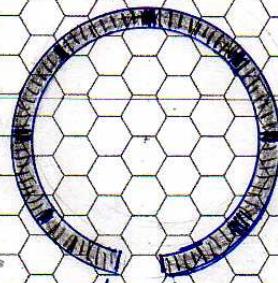
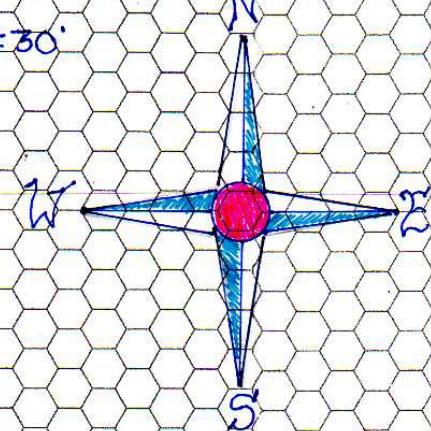
In closing, my purpose in designing adventures has always been, at its core, to present challenging quests, interesting plots, and unusual encounters for players and referees to experience and, hopefully, enjoy.

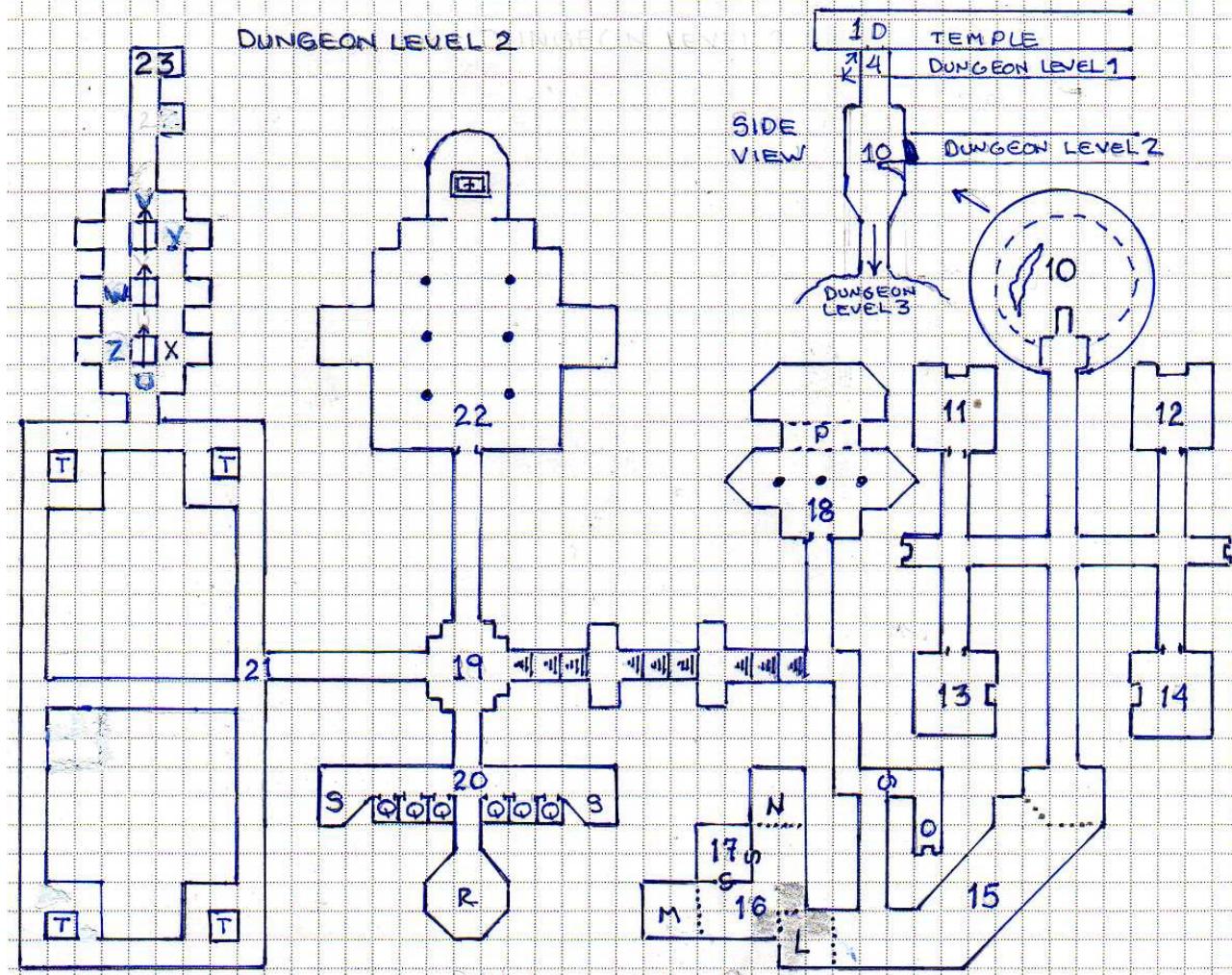
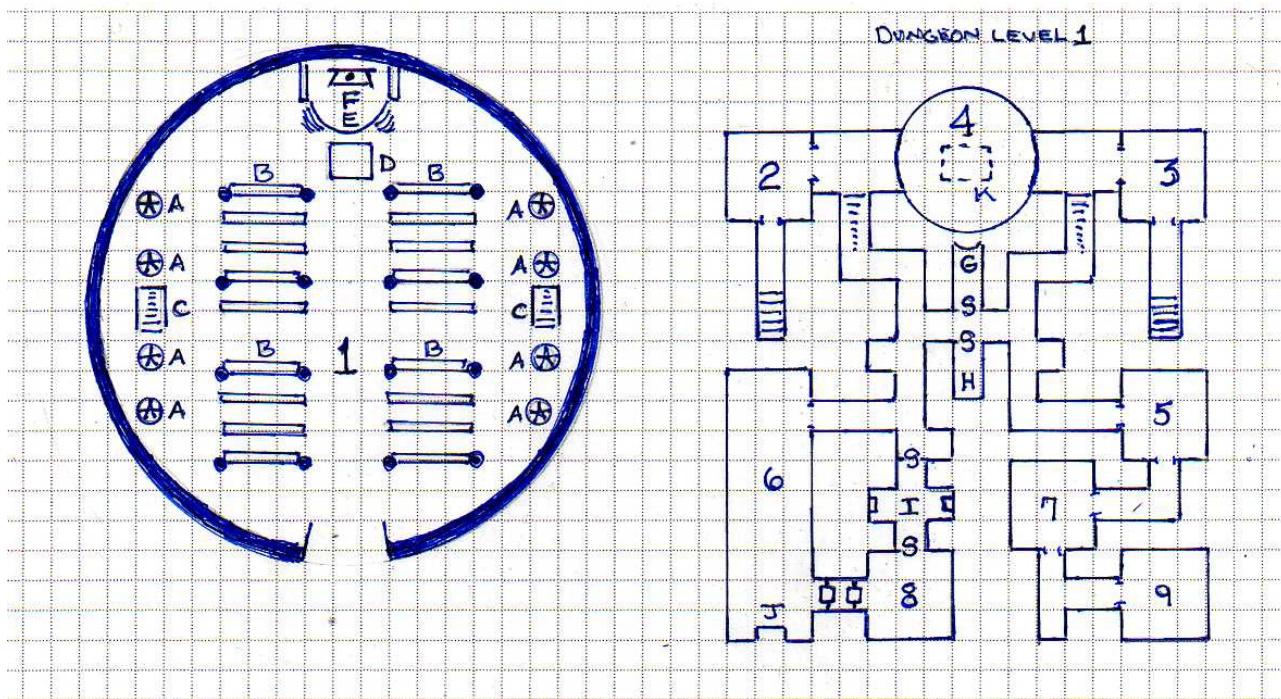
RC PINNELL

MENIFEE, CA 12-08-09

TRISTRAN

HEX=30'





DUNGEON LEVEL 3
Square = 10'

