

Frank Mentzer's

ENT11002

# The Case of the Missing Magic



Copyright 2012 by Eldritch Enterprises, Ltd. All rights reserved under copyright and trademark.  
The Case of the Missing Magic, Eldritch Enterprises, and the Eldritch Enterprises Ltd. logo  
are trademarks of Eldritch Enterprises, Ltd. and may not be used without permission.



**Adventures  
are easy.  
This is hard.**

## **Are YOU good enough?**

*Adventures are easy to run.  
You describe the situations and roll the dice.  
Adventures are easy to play.  
You usually just fight your way through.*

*But this is a mystery to be solved.*

*This will challenge your skills as a Game Master.  
Eleven key people work at the Acaemum complex.  
One of them is a criminal.  
You will portray all of them. To do that you need to know them.*

*The players will have to interview many of these people.  
None of them can be removed by combat.*

*The building itself is modern and elaborate.  
Security procedures are extensive.  
Yet someone managed to beat them.  
Who? and Why?*

*The Case of the Missing Magic is unlike any fantasy roleplaying game you've ever run.  
This is a conventional mystery  
set in a world of magic and monsters.  
It is written in generic language,  
and usable with all game systems,*

*Characters may be of any type and power.  
Players should be experienced at roleplaying,  
especially the nuances of in-character and  
out-of-character actions.*

*This adventure and many more are available at  
**[www.EldritchEnt.com](http://www.EldritchEnt.com)**.*



Fatality Rating: 10%

# The Case of the Missing Magic



A Fantasy Mystery

*by*

**Frank Mentzer**

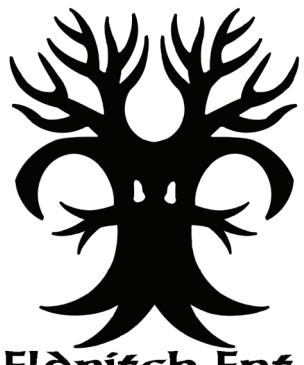
Cover

**Don Higgins**

Interior Art

**Don Higgins**

**Christopher Clark**



**Eldritch Ent.**

Editing

**Timothy J. Kask**

Layout & Maps

**J.F. Mentzer**

Special Thanks To

**Mark Greenberg**

**Jeff Imrie**

**Doug Rhea**

**Ken Trbovich**

First Printing, December 2012

Copyright 2012 by Eldritch Enterprises, Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

No portion of this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part by any means including electronic without the express permission of Eldritch Enterprises, Ltd.

Copyright © 2012 Library of Congress number: pending.

Eldritch Ent., Eldritch Enterprises, Mystery of History, and the Eldritch Enterprises logo are trademarks of Eldritch Enterprises, Ltd. and may not be used or reprinted in any fashion without the expression written permission of Eldritch Enterprises.



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Preface

This is my first\* RPG work in 25 years. Most who know of my past efforts may expect this to be an Old School product—especially since my new publishing company, Eldritch Enterprises, is composed of partners whose experience and roots go back to the 1970s, the very roots of the RPG industry.

But this is not an Old School adventure.  
You are hereby Warned.  
And it contains little or no combat.  
You might not even roll dice.

This is a scenario for those of you who may delight in solving an unconventional fantasy mystery (essentially a logic puzzle) while you adapt to an atypical environment (a three-story office building), all within a game mode featuring the cerebral dichotomy of IC vs OOC.

This is not a dungeon crawl. It's a head game.

This is not to say that this style of adventure is any better or any worse than a dungeon crawl, wilderness campaign, tactical miniatures game, or any other form of role-playing entertainment.

Each has its pros and cons, and each has its fans. But this is very different from all those forms, in sharp contrast to what's offered by other RPG publishers. And that, impavid reader, is my hidden agenda—to reach for the boundaries of our chosen form of hobby entertainment, and to perhaps expand them a bit.

In the current roleplaying environment (*i.e.*, many 'New School' games) we find a methodology wherein your fictional character will almost never fail, let alone die. It's a stacked deck; if you can't defeat a dragon, you'll never meet one. All the so-called challenges are non-visceral, testing only your skills at knowing the complex rules of the game and using them to your best advantage. The thrill of a true life-or-death situation has become a thing of the past.

This scenario does not contain lethal dangers, but you can certainly fail at solving the mystery. Yet since happiness is a journey, not a destination, you may find this jaunt entertaining.

Thank you for trying it.  
Prepare for some mental aerobics.

\* Yes, yes, I know, we released Lich Dungeon (Level 1) back in March. But I wrote this one before that.



*Frank*

With thanks to two groups of official playtesters, and a nod to a separate field test at the North Texas RPG Convention ([NTRPGCon.com](http://NTRPGCon.com)).

In my Home Campaign:

Derek "Buttmonkey" Jones  
Bill Meinhardt  
Darren Spurrier  
Roman Szykulski  
Andrew G. Zambrzycki

At the Concentric game convention, Chicago:  
David Crippin Brian Ogozalec  
Frank Holub John Yarbrough



## Introduction for the Game Master

This will be a different sort of game than any you normally play. It will challenge you and your players. And it will be fun. I promise. —F

In most RPG sessions, a participant can play a role to some extent, and can then relax while others do the same. In combats one may state intentions, roll the dice a couple of times, and then sit back while other combat elements are reconciled in a comfortable, familiar fashion. In a typical gaming group with six players and one game master, a player may only be active 10% of the time, on average.

But in this ‘adventure’, the players will have little or no ‘rest time.’ This is for the players to solve, not the characters. At no time can a player say “Okay, I talk to him; what dice do I roll to succeed?” Sorry; there are no rolls to be made. The player—not the character—must think about the situations that arise, decide what to say, analyze and integrate the results, interact with the other players in comparing options and possible deductions, and

If you’re inexperienced at IC vs OOC, consider this example.

John plays a hulking fighter with brawn but not brains.

During this adventure, an IC interview with a suspect reveals new information. The players shift to OOC. John contributes freely, discussing the details.

When the group returns to IC mode, John’s character cannot logically be the one to voice his own (OOC) opinions! Another character, perhaps a wise cleric, will voice John’s concerns.

so forth... and all virtually non-stop. There is no time to step into the wings, as it were... they’re “on stage” for the duration.

The players should of course be portraying the roles of residents of this fantasy environment. Beware; some players may incorrectly believe that if their characters are of low intelligence, they are not permitted to act otherwise. Act proactively to correct such misconceptions, should they exist at your table. Whatever their characters may be, the players should actively contribute to the discussions “out-of-character” (OOC). But when the context shifts to in-game activity (In-Character, or IC), others may be better suited to bring up those same points. This dichotomy of IC vs OOC is common in many role-playing games, but may be strongly accentuated in this adventure.

And while all this is going on, the players are learning the details of a new environment, the three-story Acaeum History building and its many employees. There is no dungeon to delve, and no monsters to slay, so for the typical fantasy roleplaying enthusiast the task of adapting to this new type of setting will be a challenge in itself.

You should probably forewarn the players.





## The Case of the Missing Magic



As Game Master, you will be challenged in portraying up to a dozen very different individuals—sages, managers, guards, and others—in extreme detail. A great many notes on their behavior and personalities are thus given herein, but the players will ask things that aren't covered. You can count on this. You must thus ad-lib as needed, filling in details, and must then remember what you said (or make notes as you go). The story is quite complicated enough without adding new variables through minor errors of this sort!

You are doubtless familiar with the problems of Player Knowledge vs Character Knowledge. That principle, though new in the early days of roleplaying games, is now both well-known and enforced. It works both ways, of course; your fighter knows more about combat than you ever will, but he's never heard of a cell phone. In this scenario you know all the hidden details that await the characters' discovery—but a challenge will arise when you are playing the roles of the individual employees herein. You must then strictly segregate your GM Knowledge from the Character Knowledge. Furthermore you must picture the Acaeum from that character's point of view, and convey that limited perspective in the employee's replies and comments.



When not In Character you'll shift to the role of neutral narrator, feeding the characters' eyes and ears with your descriptions of the detailed Acaeum building and its operations. For best results you should be intimately familiar with the building, its operations, layout, procedures, safeguards, and the like. To gain that level of comprehension I suggest that you read the whole work, then re-read it thoroughly to catch more detail, while making your own notes as you see fit. Learn well the details of the Setting, especially as regards the Sef and their “shy-rec” creations, for that background, though minimally relevant to the mystery itself, provides the underlying rationale for the whole.

In private playtests and at game conventions the investigation has taken 4-6 hours to resolve. In some cases the players correctly identified the Culprit; in others they did not. But in nearly every case the players affirmed that they *did* have fun, that they did *not* feel ‘let down’ by partial success (or even complete failure!), and that they wanted to run the mystery for their friends and gaming groups.

*Nota bene*—identifying the Culprit does not mean 100% success. A premature alert can give warning, allowing the Culprit to abandon his plans and escape. Only a cunning scheme that results in the retrieval of the ill-gotten booty *and* ensnarement of the thief will count as an unmitigated success.

Prepare well, and show your players that you can handle it. I'm sure you're up to the task.





# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Players' Introduction

### Post-War Empyrea

The Great War was 51 years ago. Empyrea, the capital of the former realm, is long gone. This is a time of relative peace, though factions struggle to fill the huge power vacuum left by Empyrea's departure. Cities and towns are thriving and safe, but ogres and bugbears prowl the hills, giants roam the mountains, and dragons lair in distant caves. Ancient treasure-hoards lie hidden deep underground, awaiting the brave and daring. Parties of adventurers have set forth in search of glory and gold, risking their very lives in mortal combat with monsters of all sorts.

The war also claimed Johnstown, the original seat of government near the west coast. This in turn brought a huge influx of people and money to the nearby fishing-village of Woolness, which became a great and thriving port city.

**YOU were once hardy adventurers. But the nearby treasure hoards were soon exhausted, and all such are now far, far away. You now work at what temporary jobs you can find, and you currently live in the suburbs of Woolness. Your take-home income is about 5-20 gp per person per week, enough to pay the bills and a bit extra for discretionary spending.**



### The Acaeum

A century ago, several small schools were founded near Woolness. In the post-war boom, these saw an influx of scholars and students, and of sages who had preserved the knowledge of the Empyreal realm. They came in droves, bringing scrolls, tomes, and memories... every scrap of lore they could find.

Three great buildings now keep the knowledge of the world, and contain all that is known about Nature, History, and (other) Fact. The fourth building is for Opinion, as raw data must have context and interpretation to be of real value. Anyone can use the Acaeum's basic services without charge, though formal studies at these schools (now the continental University) are quite costly, a resource only for the rich.

### The Job

The Acaeum has recently let it be known (quietly, through the adventurers' guilds) that they are in need of some 'special' services... not the usual researchers, but services requiring the skills of seasoned adventurers, if any still remain in town. The pay is not high, but it's light and honest work. At your guilds you find other former adventurers (the other players' characters of course) talking about this new opportunity. One thing leads to another, and so you decide to apply as a group and see what this is all about.

The next morning you gather, armed and armored with your old gear (unused for months but still functional, albeit in need of some polish), and you set out across town to the great Quadrangle of the Acaeum. The guild advertisement noted that you should apply at the History building.



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Months, Days, & Dates

The dating convention used herein warrants a brief mention. The Aquaria setting uses a local perspective to assign the number of the year, the most common form measuring from the date of coronation of the first king, John Asperman (John I). The common method used by the “old country” fell out of favor during more than two centuries of history, but in this scenario (51 years after the disappearance of the capital city of Empyrea, taking the King and many other royals with it), the Common Year method is making a resurgence. The current year is 291 JR (JohnsRule), or 305 CY.

In designating months and days of the week, however, the campaign has struggled, evolved, and compromised. We tried various fantasy methods, but these required the extra effort of translation and note-keeping. This was a delightful feature early in the campaign’s life, but became a chore

after a decade or two of use. Thus, 35 years of play have resulted in a hybrid, using the names of months and days that we find in modern life (North America circa 2012 A.D.), but rejecting the curious and arguably irrational phenomenon of variable lengths of the months. And as this is a fantasy world, subject to our whims, we finally adopted a shorter year of 336 days, and a nice, neat 12 months of 28-days each – thereby retaining the names of the days and months, primarily for the ease of the players. (A calendar for this adventure’s event sequence is provided on page 11.)

If you like the convenience of this method, it is easily given more of a fantasy flavor by simply renaming the months and days. But if you prefer a different method, perhaps one that applies to your recurrent game, feel free to adjust the dates and methodology given herein.

## Additional Notes on this Setting

### for both Players and Game Masters

#### Sef

The neutral rulers of the seas are called the Sef. Their control is so strong that no ship sails, and thus no intercontinental naval commerce occurs, without their permission and/or participation.

The Sef are large coleoid cephalopods (giant squid) ranging in length from 20-100 feet (6-30 meters). They communicate<sup>1</sup> with each other by using organs below the skin (photophores) to create moving multicolored lights along their lateral sides. This language can be understood by others with proper training, though non-Sef cannot ‘speak’ in this way for obvious physiological reasons.

Sef can hear the sounds made by certain other races, and may understand some (such as the

Common language of non-aquatic humanoids). In their dealings with other races, Sef are always accompanied by aquatic humanoids, most commonly the quimari<sup>2</sup> (formerly called mermen and mermaids by the ignorant or provincial), who have proven themselves proficient and diplomatic translators. The quimari claim to be the Sef’s allies, rather than servants *per se*.

<sup>1</sup> This sentence is not fictional! For more on these and other habits of real-world squid (cephalopods of the order *Teuthida*), search “teuthology.”

<sup>2</sup> ‘Quimari’ is pronounced ‘kee-MAH-ree’, from the Latin *qui maris*, or ‘person[s] of the sea.’



# The Case of the Missing Magic



The Sef are actively ruled by a matriarch of immense size and intelligence who allegedly is the original mother of the race (and thus may be more than five thousand years old). No details of any contacts with this “Sea Mother” have been documented.

Although the Sef do not play an active role in this adventure, the following details are pertinent.

- The Sef always act in their own long-term interests, and their plans may involve decades or even centuries.

- Some Sef have manipulated life forms by magical/mental means to create new beings (and whole races) specialized for certain purposes. By these methods they created the beings (Prawls) which create the SHiRecs (see below).

- In the Eternal Struggle, the Sef strongly favor the Divine. (In other words, they support the dominance of magic and the gods, as opposed to the usurpations of this authority by mortals, including the black arts of Technology.)

- Sef money built the Acaeum, and continues to fund it.



## The SHiRec

The Sef created a small creature able to observe reality and place its impressions on an object. These objects are commonly called “shy-recs” (for SHiRecs, meaning **Sef H**istorical **R**ECords). Physically, a standard Shirec is a clam-shaped (ovoid) stone object about 1” thick and 2 ¾” wide (2.5 x 7 cm). The creature itself (called a Prawl<sup>3</sup> by those few who know of them) is froglike in appearance, eyeless, about 2” long (5 cm), and requires an aquatic environment with very high salt content and various trace substances.

A prawl has mere animal intelligence. Although it has no obvious sensory organs, it is nevertheless able to sense everything within approximately 16’ (5 meters). Its unique senses also enable it to verify what is real and what is not; for example, it can sense invisible beings and falsehoods (including both lies and magical illusions). It can be trained to transfer these impressions to an object, and anyone observing such a record will see and/or sense the truths and falsehoods within the scene.

The duration of the impression on a Shirec may be up to 10 minutes. The Shirec object

must be within 1’ (30 cm) of the creature for the impressions to be affixed, a process that takes only 5-15 seconds (varying by the duration of the record). Any interruption of that process results in complete failure (no impressions are affixed). Impressions affixed to a Shirec cannot be modified in any way, and may simply vanish if the object is sufficiently damaged.

**Cultural Note:** The Shirec has become an essential part of the business and legal affairs of the entire planet. The Sef have made the Shirecs available at very low cost, and have trained selected individuals in the proper care of the prawls. Shirecs are used for sworn testimony, property transfers, testimonials and wills, and more. Shirecs are common, though the prawls (and their keepers) are rare.

For better or worse, the Sef have successfully made their creation a fundamental part of civilization on a global scale.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Prawl’ derives from the proto-Indo-European *praw*, meaning ‘to jump.’



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Modifying the Setting

Many hobby gamers play regularly, their characters rising in stature over time and existing within a well-known campaign world. Many details of the Acaeum environment may thus be incompatible with your regular game. The most common solution is to run this adventure separately, as an exception to your normal games (oft called a “one-off”). In that case no modification is needed; all you need to is understand the notes given herein.

But if you wish to integrate this story into your campaign, you have some work to do before running this adventure.

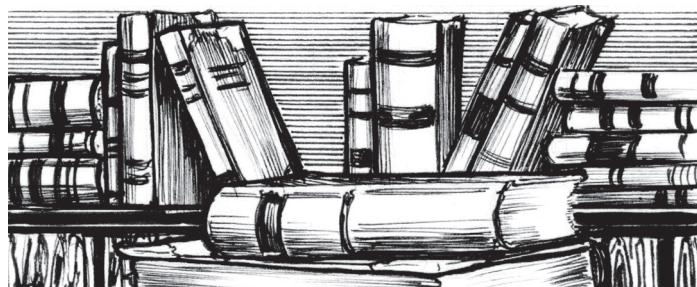
### Dates

The dates given are for the standard Aquaria campaign, using the methodology explained earlier (*Months, Days, and Dates*, page 6). If you adjust this adventure for compatibility with your game campaign, be sure to adjust the dates to match the conventions you prefer.

### Omitting Shirecs

As noted above, the Shirec is a cultural force of the first order, with literally global implications. You may wish to incorporate it nevertheless, and that will probably take considerable time and thought. As its creator I urge you not to corrupt it by inventing a way to forge or corrupt these records, perhaps unless the highest possible magics—or even black technologies—are employed. Remember that the Sea Mother is preternaturally wise and intelligent, and can foresee and plan for almost anything.

As a relatively easy alternative, omit the Shirecs entirely, and consider the second floor of the History building (and perhaps other areas on the first and third floors) to be for storage of records in more conventional form – tomes, scrolls, magical containers of various sorts, *etc.* The two sages proficient in Shirecs (Grantyx and Feegis) can just as easily be specialists in the historical records themselves, rather than the mechanisms for such.



You can also increase the staff substantially to include *Memorists*, specialists in remembering historical records. The options are many, and the choice is yours.

### Changing the Water System

Facilities for processing the liquid and solid excretions of living beings (*aka* Lavatoria) are a key part of the Acaeum buildings. The system is simple: a continuous trickle of water originates at a source on the rooftop, and ultimately flows down to the cellar drains. In this adventure, that source is a small opening (Interplanar Portal, or *iPort*) connecting this location to a point on the Elemental Plane of Water.

Elementalism is a central feature of many mythological and otherwise ancient beliefs, and should not conflict with your game’s setting. But such micro-portals to elemental planes, though common in the high-magic theme of the Empyrean setting, may be problematic in your own world.

An acceptable alternative is a water-lifter, a device with origins in early history. A series of small troughs is secured to parallel ropes which lift them (filled with water) to the rooftop. There they dump their contents into a receiver and then return slowly to the lowest point, where they are refilled by immersion in the water source (a large tub or vat).

If you replace the given *iPort* with a mundane water-lifter, anticipate security and operational issues by making the whole system as enclosed as possible, add a nearby stream to ensure a steady source, and include a rainwater collection system to improve efficiency.



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Cast of Characters

### Executives

Director **Tokkay Smith**, male half-elf, age 68: Director of the History Building; Purlman's boss.

Director **Todd Purlman**, male human, age 53: White Sage, Asst. Director of the building, head of Operations. His Amulet of Silence vanished 4 days ago, so he has ordered an investigation.

Director **Lenore Cindersport**, female human, age 64: Head of Security & Personnel, boss of Hestin & Rick; reports to Dr. Smith.

Personnel Manager **Hestin Medina**, male half-elf, age 168; reports to Lenore.



### Sages

 (principal targets of the investigation)

**Abacus Dyfrost**, female half-elf Tan Sage, age 126: Works on the 3rd floor. Misplaced a *Scarab of Study* 8 weeks ago, and reported it.

**Feegis**, male gnome Yellow Sage, age 332: Top technical expert on Shirecs (trained by the Sef) and one of the few who know how to tend the creatures (prawls). Uses his *Gem of Seeing* to do that work. Unofficial custodian of Grantyx; will gain official Senior title once Grantyx retires.

**Grantyx**, male human sage, age 78: Grey sage (semi-retired White sage), valuable consultant in Shirecs; lives & works on 2nd floor. Misplaced his *Wand of Light* 2 weeks ago but forgot about it.

**Merlin Dimstave**, male half-elf sage, age 155: Apprentice Sage, works on any floor. Lost his *Potion of Climbing* 27 days ago, and reported it.

**Oberon Daython**, male human sage, age 37: Probationary Sage, works on any floor. Misplaced an *Incense of Memorization* (his personal property) about 1 month ago.



### Security Personnel

**Franklin Plumsue**, male human, age 32: Assistant to Dr. Purlman

**Rick Ruchson**, male half-elf, age 90: Head of Security (reporting to Lenore); reasonably smart, very fit.

Squad of 4 human **security guards**, ages 25-35: Frad Grusit (male, squad leader); Edgar Doncus (male), "Herb" (Herbert) Mune (male), Cupid Fethrok (female)

### And the Others...

One hundred forty-five other Acaeum employees, including sages and security personnel

Hundreds of Acaeum visitors in hallways and rooms

...and the Party of any number of player characters (all former adventurers) with any profession, skill, and/or level within normal ranges



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Overview

### Time Line

**Eight weeks** ago, on 11 March, the Tan sage Abacus Dyfrost reported that the Acaeum's magical *Scarab of Study* was missing.

**Six** weeks ago, on 25 March, the Grey sage Grantyx misplaced the Acaeum's *Wand of Light*, but he forgot to report it.

**Four** weeks ago, on 25 April, the Brown sage Oberon Daython misplaced his personal *Incense of Memorization*, but (for personal reasons) has not reported it.

**27 days** ago, on 26 April, the Black sage (Apprentice) Merlin Dimstave reported the loss of a personal *Potion of Climbing*.

**4** days ago (Sunday 21 May), Dr. Purlman—the #2 executive in the organization—found that his (actually the Acaeum's) *Amulet of Silence* had disappeared; and thus:

**Wednesday** 24 May: a “help wanted” notice is posted in the Guilds; the characters discuss it and decide to apply.

**Thursday** 25 May: the party arrives and meets with Hestin, the personnel manager, and is tentatively hired.

**Friday** May 26: the characters are Briefed and the investigation begins.

(At some point Feegis' *Gem of Seeing* may be stolen, followed by Hestin's *Ointment of Healing*.)

**Sunday** May 28 (at midnight) is the deadline for the players to finish, because on...

**Monday** June 1 (at 7am) powerful mages & clerics commence their infallible quarterly magical procedure (detailed on page 28).

| Missing Item                   | Date     | Victim          | Reported? |
|--------------------------------|----------|-----------------|-----------|
| Scarab of Study                | March 11 | Abacus Dyfrost  | Yes       |
| <i>Wand of Light</i>           | March 25 | Grantyx         | No        |
| <i>Incense of Memorization</i> | April 25 | Oberon Daython  | No        |
| Potion of Climbing             | April 26 | Merlin Dimstave | Yes       |
| Amulet of Silence              | May 21   | Todd Purlman    | Yes       |

### The Game Week (Wednesday through Monday)

| Name of Day       | Date     | Events                             |
|-------------------|----------|------------------------------------|
| Wednesday         | May 24   | Posting of Guild notices           |
| Thursday          | May 25   | Job Interview (with Hestin)        |
| Friday            | May 26   | Start of characters' Investigation |
| Sunday (midnight) | May 28   | Deadline to finish Investigation   |
| Monday (7 am)     | June 1st | Quarterly Security Check           |



# The Case of the Missing Magic



| Mon          | Tue | Wed | Thu  | Fri  | Sat | Sun  | Date                | Event                    |
|--------------|-----|-----|------|------|-----|------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>March</b> |     |     |      |      |     |      |                     |                          |
| 1            | 2   | 3   | (4)  | 5    | 6   | 7    |                     |                          |
| 8            | 9   | 10  | 11   | 12   | 13  | 14   | 11-Mar              | Scarab                   |
| 15           | 16  | 17  | (18) | 19   | 20  | 21   |                     |                          |
| 22           | 23  | 24  | 25   | 26   | 27  | 28   | 25-Mar              | Wand                     |
| <b>April</b> |     |     |      |      |     |      |                     |                          |
| 1            | 2   | 3   | 4    | 5    | 6   | 7    |                     |                          |
| 8            | 9   | 10  | 11   | 12   | 13  | 14   |                     |                          |
| 15           | 16  | 17  | (18) | (19) | 20  | 21   |                     |                          |
| 22           | 23  | 24  | 25   | 26   | 27  | 28   | 25-Apr<br>26-Apr    | Incense<br>Potion        |
| <b>May</b>   |     |     |      |      |     |      |                     |                          |
| 1            | 2   | 3   | 4    | 5    | 6   | 7    |                     |                          |
| 8            | 9   | 10  | 11   | 12   | 13  | 14   |                     |                          |
| 15           | 16  | 17  | 18   | 19   | 20  | (21) | 21-May              | Amulet                   |
| 22           | 23  | 24  | 25   | 26   | 27  | 28   | 25-May<br>26-28 May | Job Interview<br>The Job |
| <b>June</b>  |     |     |      |      |     |      |                     |                          |
| 1            |     |     |      |      |     |      | 1-Jun               | The Quarterly            |

## Rationale for the Investigation

In most mystery stories set in fantasy settings, the first question that arises is almost always “why don’t the authorities just use magic to solve it?” In this story, a full magical security procedure (“The Quarterly”) is indeed scheduled, and for the very near future (the Monday following the characters’ weekend investigation).

The party is hired to solve an apparent problem of mere pilferage by far cheaper means. This experimental procedure was suggested because of a perceived unfairness (and a touch of jealousy), and was approved for budgetary reasons.

During daily operations at all four Acaeum buildings, the Security Staff routinely handle all manner of infractions—trouble-makers, petty thieves, and the like—and as a result they get all the accolades (and cash bonuses) related to handling such incidents. By sharp contrast, the Personnel department—headed by Hestin Medina,

its Manager—gets the boring and non-glamorous work, out of public view, and for them accolades are rare and bonuses nearly non-existent.

In a helpful attempt to right this wrong, Hestin proposed that the Personnel Department conduct its own investigation, using outside contractors. In this he takes a slight risk that these outside specialists (the player characters) will not betray him and will not pose a threat to the Acaeum... but if he is wrong, it will merely be a failed experiment of little consequence. In view of his long and loyal service, the characters’ failure will not reflect on him very strongly.

But if the characters can successfully solve this mystery and apprehend the perpetrator, that will certainly bolster Hestin’s reputation and validate his proposal. He will receive a raise and, more importantly, gain status within the organization, and added respect from the Directors.



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Plot Summary

The beginning of the scenario is necessarily linear; the players must accept certain premises to get jobs as investigators. This activity takes place on Wednesday (background information), Thursday (the hiring interview), and the first meeting on Friday (the formal Briefing).

From that point the players take the reins, and are free to choose what they should do and in what order. This player-driven middle part of the scenario may be difficult for you to handle, requiring comprehensive knowledge of both the building and the employees.

The players receive a map of the 1st floor during their initial Briefing. When (or if) the characters examine the 2nd and/or 3rd floors of the building, hand out the maps for the players' reference. As with that of the 1st floor, the actual maps used by the characters will be much more crude, and similarly available from Hestin.

The characters will probably examine the building, establish the boundaries of the problem (the unassailable 'givens,' or logical axioms), and gather information by conducting interviews—first with those who have lost certain magic items, and then other employees as well. Information unearthed in some of those conversations may reveal other individuals who should be interviewed, for initially only two items are known to be missing, while in fact there are four (two of them unreported).

This mass of information will inspire the players to suggest theories, which the group can analyze for ways of testing their validity. In many cases the result will be "unproven for lack of information," much as in a conventional mystery.

At some point the players should realize that, given the extreme security measures applying to the stairways and to falling magic items (see page 27), the plumbing is the most probable method used by the Culprit to get the items out (notably the 3rd floor items: Abacus' Scarab, known initially,

and also Grantyx' Wand, the absence of which is discovered later). Of course, the plumbing leads them downward, to the cellar. The answers to many questions lie therein, and the cellar is thus a common convergence of all groups participating in this scenario, concluding this player-driven section.

Up to that point the events are somewhat predictable, and the information provided to you is reasonably organized. But after the players learn what is in the cellar, the scenario becomes too non-linear to predict. Certain actions are probable, to be sure, and some guidelines are given for those. Yet however appealing those plot lines may be, you cannot force them to occur. Nor can you tilt results for or against the party; they must succeed or fail on their own merits.

In this final part of the scenario, your challenge as Game Master is to cope with whatever the players decide. Thus, feel free to modify the given details to produce dramatic results, within the limits of the setting. If at all possible, adjust 'on the fly' to extemporaneously create an enjoyable finale as a result of the players' choices and the given actions of the Culprit and others.





# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Avoiding Time-Wasters

The players may advance theories that involve details (even people) not explained herein. For example, Hestin mentions in passing that an alcoholic Janitor was fired for non-performance. Players might wish to interview him as a 'suspicious character'—though he actually has nothing to do with the mystery.

You are of course free to add details to account for such things, but that is not recommended. For most roleplaying hobbyists, game time is precious and limited.

The solution to this potential problem is satisfactory, if a bit jarring. First specify that your comment is "Game Master to Players," and then tell them simply that the detail or individual (or location or item) is irrelevant, not part of the mystery. Your players will appreciate your candor, and will be able to refocus on the pertinent details needed to solve the puzzle.

Do not use this solution in every case, and resist attempts to get similar clues within the borders of the mystery (*i.e.*, within Acaeum History building or related to any of the people detailed therein).



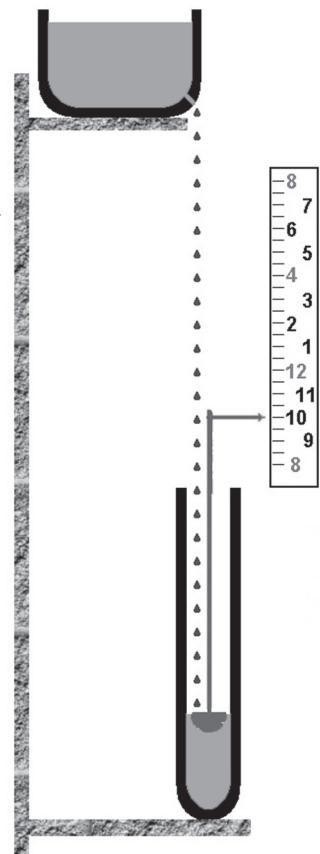
## Tracking Time

The characters have from Friday morning through Sunday night to solve the mystery. When they first exit the Briefing interview in Hestin's office (see page 16), mention the time of day. Mention the time regularly thereafter during play, especially when the investigators move to a different floor, or spend a lot of time on an interview.

You may often be forced to estimate the time spent on a given activity. Try to err in favor of less time, *i.e.*, in the players' favor. Be open to reasonable objections on this point by players... but, if needed, point out the many unemphasized time-consuming factors, such as the many users of the Acaeum facilities who sometimes clog the hallways and stairs.

The use of this style (frequently mentioning the time) has multiple purposes. It obviously keeps the players (and characters) aware of the time of day within the game. It reinforces the psychological effect of their time being limited (only three days, and only from 8am to 8pm each day). It is a feature not normally present in fantasy roleplaying adventures (there aren't normally clocks in a dungeon). And most importantly, when the characters emerge from their first visit to the cellar, the Culprit starts to move quickly in pursuit of a specific agenda, and specific notes on timing may be crucial in properly adjudicating the results (see "The Rest of the Adventure", page 22).

Also see "Timekeeping" (page 26) for notes on the timekeeping devices used and on prominent display within the building (illustrated above, "C" on the maps).





# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Solutions

### Default Solution

(but see "Alternate Culprit" below)

The thief is Merlin, a completely unremarkable half-elf worker on the lower floors of the Acaeum History building. His 'missing potion' is fictitious.

Merlin first worked here 25 years ago. While prowling in the cellar around amongst the piles of refuse (mostly broken furniture) he discovered a heavy and complex metal object: the "Olston" device (see cellar room 14). He didn't know what the device was for, but it looked fascinating. He proceeded to tinker with it and thus neglected his job.

Merlin was soon fired for incompetence and laziness. For almost two decades he remained secretly obsessed with the device, hoping to get back into the Acaeum cellar, often trying, always failing. Then two years ago Merlin discovered the Medina family's private shame, and used that as leverage to get his old record purged and himself re-hired.

Merlin has now experimented with the Olston and now knows how to activate it (though not its actual purpose). Six magical items fit into the device, and Merlin has already acquired four of them: an Amulet, Scarab, Wand, and a block of Incense.

### How He Does It

Merlin keeps an assortment of stolen sages' robes, as well as uniforms from both the Security and Janitorial staff, hidden in the cellar. When he plans a pilferage, he sets up a screen to block solids from leaving via the waste disposal exit (see North Bridge, area 4). He then pilfers the item, drops it into the waste disposal system (any Lavatorium), goes back to the cellar as soon as possible, recovers the item wedged against the screen (an awful mess in the sewage, but it's worked so far), and then hides the screen and the newly acquired item. He then washes up, changes clothes, and returns to his work.

### Keys

During the last year, Merlin has acquired copies of three keys (itemized below). He keeps them on a key-ring along with the key to his apartment, two keys to chests in the cellar, and two old (useless) keys. The bows\* of these three keys have rough edges. (Merlin had brief access to all three Acaeum keys, and used a simple clay mold to make impressions each time. Merlin's duplicate keys were produced by the local Thieves' Guild, which does not keep records of such routine services.)

Rooms 147 and 173 (both use the same key),  
for access to the Cellar

Room 223 (a Shirec Storage Room),  
to eventually acquire Feegis' *Gem of Seeing*  
Room 141 (Personnel Manager's Office),  
to eventually acquire Hestin's Jar of *Ointment*

\* bow: the part of a key that is NOT inserted into the lock, as differentiated from the *blade*

### Complications

Other creatures have gotten into the cellar, and these "Iki" (Merlin's epigrammatic name for them; see "New Creatures", page 43) have threatened to expose Merlin's activities unless he pays them off. He thus promised to use the power of the Olston, once complete, to help them (though doesn't know what it does). They in turn have agreed to hide items temporarily if necessary, and are hiding one at the moment: the *Wand* (cellar area 11).

The Iki are unskilled in identifying humans and humanoids (they all seem too similar), but have learned to differentiate somewhat by focusing on certain audible and visual elements. Security guards and janitors visit the cellar regularly, and the Iki have learned to recognize their outfits (dull red and drab green, respectively) and thus hide from these individuals. However, they emerge when Merlin calls aloud for them, and may thus mistake any other half-elf for him on the basis of imperfect voice identification.



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Alternate Culprit

If you suspect that your players have heard of this adventure and/or its solution, you may wish to alter the story. In this case, omit Merlin's prior history.

In any of these Alternate solutions, Merlin is entirely innocent of everything but sloth. He is nervous, worried that his poor performance will be noticed. His *Potion of Climbing* was indeed stolen, by a janitor of two years' tenure (who finally succumbed to greed, and who will not show up for work on the coming Monday, fearing the revelations of the Quarterly)—but of course this has nothing to do with the investigation.

The Culprit cannot be anybody in Security nor any executive (Dr. Smith, Dr. Purlman, or Ms. Cindersport), all having been cleared by various means (including the Quarterly magical exams). The Culprit may be Abacus, Feegis, Oberon, or even Hestin. As with the default (Merlin), the Culprit does not know what the OLSTON device does, though they suspect it to be blackly Technological. If the culprit is not Hestin, they are forcing him to remain silent, using his family history as a tool to manipulate him (again as with Merlin).

Add to or modify the motivations and behavior of the Culprit as follows. They are arranged by ease of implementation, easiest first. Choose one only, of course.

**Oberon** has the history as given for Merlin (a previous employee who returns, obsessed with the OLSTON device). His foul personality will attract suspicion, but the proof will take a while to unearth.

**Hestin** resents being overlooked. After discovering the OLSTON device in the cellar he has pursued its solution, believing that it may be of great value to the Acaeum. Though he is sure that his actions will be exposed by the Quarterly, he deludes himself that “the ends justify the means”, and hopes that the thefts will be forgiven in light of the Great Discovery he will achieve.

**Abacus** (a female) is far overdue for promotion. Dr. Purlman is gender-biased, and refuses to permit her advancement. Abacus is kept from the most sensitive projects in her professional field, and thus has spare time... which led to her recent discovery of, and interest in, the OLSTON device.

**Feegis** is interested in Technology (as are many gnomes), despite the position of the churches and mages' guilds condemning it as the blackest of heresies. He discovers the OLSTON device and is fascinated with it, believing that it hides a great benefit to both him and his race.



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Start

### Choose Characters

Have the players choose what characters they wish to portray, possibly those most often played on a regular basis. These may be any profession, skill, and/or 'level', within normal ranges ('normal' as defined by your game system of choice). They will begin with all their usual adventurers' equipment (armor, weapons, magic items, etc.), but when they start their investigation they must leave most or all of it either at their homes or in a secure room provided at the Acaeum.

During some playtests the game master surprised the players by offering to let them choose any character type or class. This produced some interesting results (and some startled players) but presented no notable problems in running the adventure. So feel free to experiment!



## FIXED EVENT Sequence

### The Game Week

#### Wednesday

The characters find the notices in their respective Guilds on Wednesday, gather and discuss the matter, and will be ready the following morning.

Present the Players' Introduction and (if applicable) the additional notes on the postwar Empyrean setting (including the Sef and Shirecs, pages 6-7). These sections may either be read aloud (by you or a player) or presented for quiet reading by each participant.

#### Thursday

The characters go to the Acaeum to apply for the jobs advertised. Someone asks for help at one of the four windows in the lobby, and they are directed to Hestin's office, room 141.

Convey the following information in your own words and style, taking the role of Hestin. This is your first in-depth role portrayal of the adventure (with many more to come), so be sure you are thoroughly familiar with him. (See the Profile sheet on page 56.)

Hestin interviews the characters (general details only, including their professions) and handles questions. If the players are not portraying their usual characters, this is a good time for them to describe themselves to each other, and to establish the nature of the roles being assumed for this scenario.

Referring to the Guild posting, Hestin vaguely refers to "some minor items gone missing," but does not elaborate at this time. He defers specific questions until the next day, explaining that Security will first have to check the characters' backgrounds. (Nothing adverse will result from such checks, of course.)



## Fixed Event Sequence



Hestin now decides to hire the party, commenting that the three prior applicants (all coming late Wednesday) were 'scruffy losers,' and that the characters seem quite acceptable and professional. The initial offer of pay is 25 gp for the entire group, for the entire investigation. This is certainly subject to discussion, and the characters may (if they work at it) negotiate the amount up to 25 gp per person per day. Hestin alludes to a possible bonus for full success, of 'perhaps a hundred,' but will not commit to such.

Next Hestin summarizes the garment policy for employees (robes for Sages, uniforms for Security and Janitorial), and suggests that the investigators could requisition some to 'blend in.'

Each character may acquire up to two such costumes. The color of any Sage robe must be specified if requested—and White, Grey, or Yellow robes will be denied, as they are exclusive to the highest-ranking Sages. Hestin does note that the Directors and the entire Security division will be informed about the investigators, so these disguises will have limited effect.

After the party accepts the job, Hestin tells them to return the next morning (the building opens at 8 am, but they can come any time thereafter) and to do so in 'civilian' clothes, as their adventuring gear is problematic. They carry only minor weapons at most, things that can be concealed under their attire (such as a hand axe, dagger, or sling).

This last topic may give rise to a clarification of security as regards magical items, most of which is public knowledge. In addition to a large guard staff, the Acaeum is protected by an effect that deals with magic items of all sorts.

Be sure to include the following in Hestin's comments, as these points are crucial to the investigation:

- Magic items can't go up or down any of the stairways. They stick to the stairs, as if they were magnetic.
- All falling magic items vanish. You have to retrieve them from Security.

The items will stick to the first or second step, depending on the individual's movement rate. Falling items reappear in a special Security room, and can often be claimed and recovered. Note that this applies to items only; magical effects already in place are unchanged... but all such effects are removed every 15 minutes. (For more details see "Building Security", page 27.)

### Friday

The party may proceed directly to room 141 or check in at the lobby, whichever they choose. They may also freely wander about the Acaeum, as do all users of its services.

Hestin Medina greets the group (or representatives thereof) and, before briefing them, will open his safe and produce bags of gold, each containing the promised pay rate (based on Thursday's negotiations), one bag per person, but for one day only. (If they work both weekend days as well, they will get paid daily in the same fashion.) Hestin's safe is 5' tall and 3' wide, and requires three separate keys to open; inside the characters may glimpse various papers and a small lockbox. He closes and locks the safe carefully before he continues.





# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Briefing

**Give the players the map of the First Floor.** (Hestin gives the characters a similar map, though hand-drawn and less detailed.)

Atop the safe, amidst more papers, is Hestin's precious jar of magical ointment for his arthritis. He rubs ointment on his hands and wrists while summarizing the problem. (If characters ask, he will freely explain its use and his minor infirmity.)

**Convey the following information in your own words and style,** again taking the role of Hestin.

- On 11 March, Respected Primary Sage Abacus Dyfrost reported that a magical *Scarab of Study* was missing.
- On 26 April, Apprentice Sage Merlin Dimstave reported the theft of a magical *Potion of Climbing*.
- Abacus and Merlin were interviewed by Security, who conducted the usual check on facts and suspects. Both cases remain open, unsolved. They will certainly be closed during next week's Quarterly.
- “The Quarterly? Oh yes, about that...” Hestin reveals the (non-confidential) details of ‘The Quarterly’, and mentions three related data:

1. Over the last five years, employees have occasionally quit shortly before the Quarterly, which then showed some to be guilty of minor infractions during the previous threemonth. Nobody has quit this week, including today (Friday).
2. No staff have been hired since the last Quarterly. Only one (a Janitor) was fired during the last threemonth, for failing to show up for work 7 weeks ago. He was an alcoholic.
3. All three of the reported items have vanished within the last threemonth.

- “Three items missing? Ah yes, I’ve gotten ahead of myself...” The *Scarab* and *Potion* have been mentioned; the third missing item is an *Amulet*

**Roleplay this entire Page!**

*of Silence* used by Director Purlman—the head of Operations, second only to Dr. Smith—and thus (in contrast to the two lesser past problems) mandating a formal Investigation. Merlin’s *Potion* was a personal possession, but the other items are property of the Acaeum.

- So with the Quarterly coming up, why hire the characters? Hestin now briefly explains his subcontractor proposal, its approval, and his own motivation (that their success could mean respect and a raise for him). See *Rationale for the Investigation* (page 11) for more details.
- Objectives: Hestin emphasizes that to succeed fully, the characters must:
  - (a) **find out who stole the missing items**, whether an individual or a gang,\*
  - (b) **retrieve the items** if possible, and
  - (c) **discover the motive(s)** (though Hestin says glumly that it is likely simple greed, and the items may be long gone).

\* Note that the suggestion of a gang is to deliberately mislead the players... though Hestin considers it an entirely valid theory.

- Hestin asks pointedly that Security’s involvement be minimized; the whole point is for the Personnel Department to solve this on their own (as Security gets the praise—and the bonuses—all the time).
- Finally, Hestin asks the characters to check in each morning to inform him of the general progress of the investigation (specific details at the characters’ discretion) and to pick up each day’s pay in advance. He has modified his usual weekday work schedule, and will be working 8 am to noon today (Friday) and the same on Saturday and Sunday.

If the characters ask for the Security Investigation Reports on file, they can be delivered after a delay of 30 minutes. See the appropriate Profile sheets (Abacus, Merlin, and Dr. Purlman) for the transcripts.



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Friday through Sunday: The Investigation

### PLAYER-DRIVEN event sequence

At this point the fun of playing in this adventure begins in earnest. The ground rules are clearly specified and the objectives are clear. The players may choose who to interview, and where to go, in whatever fashion, and in any order. You should react accordingly, summarizing and clarifying their obvious options as needed, but steadfastly avoiding any hints or suggestions. The investigation is entirely theirs to plan and conduct. Hestin will not participate, of course, but neither will he impede them; the subcontracting is his own idea.

The investigators may wander freely in the public areas as they try to come up with theories. They

are not permitted in Secure areas on any floor, nor in the Secure portion (*i.e.*, most) of the 3rd floor, nor the Shirec storage rooms on the 2nd floor.

The characters may examine “Protected” rooms if accompanied by an escort group of Guards. They may ascend to, and examine, the rooftop and its guard-barracks under the same conditions. These escorts will always be the quartet of Frad, Edgar, Herb and Cupid. No Profile sheets are given for this quartet of guards; this is an opportunity to add your own ‘touch’ to the mystery. You are encouraged to develop reasonable and memorable personalities for them, and portray them in as much depth as the other individuals in this adventure, if appropriate.

Rick Ruchson (the guards’ supervisor) may accompany them briefly at any time, but never for longer than 5 minutes.



Above: the roving Security Foursome. Frad Grusit (male squad leader, left), Edgar Doncus, “Herb” (Herbert) Mune, and Cupid Fethrok (female, at right)

### Important: A Subtle Clue

The Culprit mentions during his interview that he heard ‘by the grapevine’ that “Grantyx is also missing something... but that probably happens a lot, he’s old and forgetful.”

However, Grantyx comments (in his interview) that he never reported anything missing, and he has not mentioned that to anyone. From this subtle and hard-to-find clue, the characters may wish to re-interview the Culprit with greater pressure.

Due to the flexibility of the solution to the mystery (see page 15), this comment is given in the Merlin’s Profile (the recommended Culprit), but is NOT included in others. **If you implement an Alternate solution, be sure to insert this ‘grapevine’ rumor into the appropriate interview.**



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Interviews

To arrange an interview, the characters must ask for the individual by name at any of the four windows in the first-floor Lobby. According to standard protocol, the individual should be named or addressed by his full title. The party will initially not be aware of this, but the helpful clerks will always use those titles.

Room numbers are given for some interviews. In these cases the front desk personnel select a vacant consultation room on the same floor as the work area of that individual, and they inform the sage (by way of a messenger, or 'runner') of the time, room number, and topic of the discussion. The sage goes back to his work if nobody shows up within 5 minutes of the designated time.

Some of the employees will be available immediately, while others will not, and in the latter case an appointment must be scheduled. Their availability is summarized below.

## Sages

**Abacus** (Respected Primary Sage Abacus Dyfrost): In room 306, but up to a 4 hour delay (choose or roll randomly). The investigators can also find her in the Cafeteria around lunchtime or dinner (exact times highly variable).

**Merlin** (Apprentice Sage Merlin Dimstave): In room 168, any time from 9 am to 5 pm; works Friday and Saturday but not Sunday. He will be in that room before the characters arrive.

**Grantyx** (Senior Reseco Sage Grantyx): In room 239 (a Shirec room), but up to a 2 hour delay (choose or roll randomly). The investigators can also find him at the Cafeteria around lunchtime or dinner, or for a snack (exact times highly variable).

**Oberon** (Probationary Sage Oberon Daython): In room 175, any time from 10 am to 8 pm Friday or Saturday (he has Sunday off). He will be in that room before the characters arrive.

**Feegis** (Senior Secondary Sage Feegis): Only in the Cafeteria, precisely at 6 pm, his dinner break. (Though the front desk does not mention the following, the characters may see him scurrying about on the 2nd floor, tending to the Shirecs and related business. They may interrupt him for up to 5 minutes, although he will be irritable and impatient to get back to his tasks.)

**Purlman** (Director and Senior Primary Sage Todd Purlman): see Managers, below.

## Managers

**Dr. Tokkay Smith**: In room 127, near the end of his workday (shortly before 8 pm) on either Friday or Saturday.

**Dr. Todd Purlman**: Monday morning only (which is of course useless to the party), and he'll be out of the building all weekend. However, the clerk will take pity on the investigator, and will comment quietly that Dr. Purlman always eats a salad for lunch (near noon), at the Cafeteria ("you didn't hear it from me, understand?").

**Dr. Lenore Cindersport**: In her office (room 132), but up to a 4 hour delay from the time of request (choose or roll randomly).

**Hestin Medina** (Personnel Manager): In his office (room 141), daily from 8 am to noon only (off the premises otherwise).

**Rick Ruchson** (Security Manager): Roving (checking on his staff), most likely on the 1st or 2nd floor, daily from 8 am to 8 pm. Can meet anywhere briefly, at the investigators' request, but for 5 minutes at most. (Select any vacant room if the investigators request privacy.) Rick works all weekend, and has Tuesdays and Wednesdays off.

Use the **Employee Profile sheets** during the interviews. For your ease of use, they are collected near the end of this booklet (pages 50-60).



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Turning Point: The Cellar

When the party expresses interest in the cellar, the reaction from others (such as Hestin or any security guard) will be somewhat negative ("*that old place? Yuck—better hold your breath, it's an open sewer!*"). The characters will not be given keys; Rick Ruchson will let them into either of the two stairway access rooms (147, 173), and he will of course be free to chat with them if they wish (see Profile). Neither Rick nor any other guard will accompany them into the depths at this point.

Note: Rick emphasizes that they must inform Security when they re-emerge from the cellar, else a search will be conducted.

### Constraints of Real Time

As Game Master you are free to omit all the denizens of the cellar, or to leave the whole as described. If you are running this scenario in a public venue (such as a game convention), and/or where time and space are limited, you should omit the creatures entirely.

You may similarly treat all Secret Doors as being found if a character merely passes within one map square (10') of them. But do not short-cut this aspect unless time is truly at a premium.

### Creature Behavior

The primary denizens of the cellar, the Iki (see page 43), have poor skills at visually identifying humans and humanoids. They will thus keep hidden whenever anyone enters the cellar, not revealing themselves unless closely approached (only possible at the bridges: 4, 8, 11, 23) or if they hear a half-elven voice. The Iki are accustomed to avoiding the janitors who mop the floors weekly, and the occasional (but rare) checks by security guards. But they know and have dealt with the Culprit, and have seen him (or her) in both colorful robes and janitors' outfits.

The vermin (rats and spiders) who cohabit the cellar will generally avoid everyone, but may defend themselves if threatened.

## Very Important!

### Results of Cellar Exploration

The party might here find three magic items (Abacus' Scarab and Oberon's *Incense* in room 12, Purlman's *Amulet* in room 18), but will not find Merlin's (fictitious) *Potion*. They may also find the hidden room containing the mysterious *OLSTON*, and perhaps even Grantyx' *Wand* (hidden and guarded by the Iki in the sewage channel below the East Bridge, #11).

If the characters are unaware of Oberon's *Incense* but find it here—and do not find Merlin's *Potion*—they may realize that the affair is more convoluted than they had previously thought. Their optimal course of action is to leave the items hidden (so as not to warn the Culprit) and continue their investigation. However, at this point the adventure may go in any of several directions, based on the party's actions.

### If they..

**insert an item into the OLSTON**, it will hum and whirr and start to light up. This process escalates with each additional item inserted. As long as fewer than 6 items are inserted they are all easily removable. (They lock in place when the sixth is added, and the dire results are then inevitable.)

**return the items found** (up to 4), they will never learn of the Culprit's plan. They will be paid their negotiated wages through Sunday, and dismissed. The Culprit will thereafter formulate a new plan to get those or similar items.

**tell someone about the OLSTON**, it will be checked by Security and then disregarded, dismissed as useless junk. The Culprit may continue his plan (though he must find items to replace any that are recovered and returned to their original users). The investigation may continue, however.

**simply go back upstairs**—with or without the magic items—the characters may continue the investigation. However, if the party delays at this point they may fail to stop the Culprit. (See *The Dash for the Finish*, page 23.)



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Hiding in the Cellar and/or Failing to Inform Security

One or more characters may try to hide in the cellar without telling Security, perhaps while the others ascend and continue investigating. In this case their absence will be noted, and Rick will personally give them one chance to go retrieve their comrades—*quickly*—before Security has to take action. (Also see ‘staying overnight’ below.)

## Staying Overnight

After searching the cellar, characters may wish to leave one or more of their number therein after-hours. This is ultimately useless (the Culprit’s activities are all during normal hours, due to

the high risk of discovery otherwise), but will be permitted if they are accompanied by the usual Security quartet (Frad *et al.*) the whole time. Should they accept these terms, the party’s performance is downgraded, as they will have involved Security personnel despite Hestin’s request to the contrary.

If one or more characters hides in the cellar without the presence of Security, their absence will be noticed, and a full-scale search will be conducted. This will end in the discovery of not only the offending individual(s) but the Culprit’s hidden stashes, as well as the Olston device (room 14). Security will take over at that point, and the adventure ends in failure, the characters being summarily dismissed and ordered to depart.

## The Rest of the Adventure

In this final part of the scenario, your challenge is to cope with whatever the players decide. Be creative, and change details extemporaneously to create an enjoyable finale combining the players’ choices with the given actions of the Culprit and others.

The characters may take as much time as they like to explore the cellar. But **when they head back upstairs, the Culprit starts his final routine.** Keep track of time as exactly as possible from that point onward... but do it subtly, to avoid alerting the players.

Much of the following might never occur in your game! Yet however appealing the following elements may be, do not force them to occur. These are merely suggestions, tools for you to employ if needed.

The following timeline illustrates the general plan. It will likely not survive intact. Modify it, perhaps extensively, to reflect the Culprit’s evasion of the investigators (and Security) as he attempts to reach his objective.

### Time Zero: Party emerges from cellar

The Culprit has noticed or heard of the investigators’ visit to the cellar. He decides that they are becoming dangerous, and that his plan should conclude as soon as possible. He loiters in the vicinity of the central area (139), covertly watching east and west, and when the party comes back upstairs from their first visit to the cellar he will spot them. He is familiar with the party’s composition, and will count to be sure everyone is accounted for. If not, he will delay his plan and continue watching until the missing individuals emerge.

### Culprit Activity Schedule

Starting at Time Zero

| Minutes | Culprit activity   |
|---------|--|
| 5       | change into green robe (Room 18)                                 |
| 15      | arrive on 2nd floor (“Feegis’ Gem”, step 1 next page)            |
| 20      | put stolen gem into the toilet                                   |
| 35      | arrive in cellar again (“Stash & Change”, step 2)                |
| 35      | (separately: Rick finds the party)                               |
| 50      | go back upstairs, head for Room 141 (“Hestin’s Ointment, step 3) |
| 60      | return to cellar, gather all other items, activate device        |



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## The Dash for the Finish

### 1. Feegis' Gem

Shortly after the party comes back upstairs from their first visit to the cellar, Feegis is supervising a Shirec recording in Room 232 with three executives from a large city business.

The Culprit is wearing the Green robe retrieved from Room 18. He proceeds to the 2nd floor, uses his duplicate key to enter room 223, and finds and pilfers Feegis' *Gem of Seeing*. The Culprit then drops the *Gem* down the nearby toilet (just West of that room) and heads for the cellar at a leisurely and unsuspicious pace. The *Gem* will reach the outflow screen about 20 minutes later.

If the characters are in the immediate vicinity at this time (unlikely but certainly possible) they may (at the GM's discretion) notice this familiar face. If they speak with him at this time, the Culprit will be obviously nervous. He will keep his composure as best he can and, to facilitate his exit, may claim that he has work to do, attributing his nervousness to job pressures. He is keeping track of the time, and wants to return to the cellar before the sewage starts to overflow (blocked by the outflow screen).

(If the investigators also notice that the Culprit's robe is of a different color than during a previous meeting, the affair may quickly be brought to a conclusion.)

If the Culprit gets to the cellar unhindered, he retrieves the *Gem of Seeing* and hides it (Room 18).

Feegis concludes his business 10 minutes after the theft and proceeds to Room 223 to retrieve his *Gem*. Finding it missing, he searches the vicinity for 15 seconds and then runs to Security (201) to get help. At this time the Culprit (if not delayed) is very probably on the 1st floor, heading for or entering room 173 (stairs down).

### 2. Stash & Change

Back in the cellar, the Culprit recovers the *Gem of Seeing* from the outflow screen (area 4) and then removes the screen, placing it under the bridge as usual. He then heads for room 18, hides the *Gem*, and changes into his normal garb. (See "And Meanwhile," next page, to compare character actions at this time.)

### 3. Hestin's Ointment

Next the Culprit proceeds back up to the 1st floor and to Hestin's office (141) to acquire the final piece of his puzzle, the *Jar of Ointment*. Hestin is absent and the door is locked. (If the time is later than noon, Hestin isn't even on the premises.) The Culprit intends to use his duplicate key to enter, and can then easily accomplish his task.

As with the previous incident, the characters may be in the vicinity, and (if so) may see the Culprit in the hallway. If the Culprit sees *them*, he will not enter room 141 immediately, delaying up to 30 minutes if necessary. He may again claim that he has work to do.

If he acquires the *Jar*, the Culprit intends to return to the cellar immediately. He may delay this quite a bit, however, to keep his actions covert. (At this point a delay presents no real danger in the cellar, as the outflow screen is no longer in place.) His plan is to finish the whole thing today—to gather the rest of the items, insert them into the OLSTON device, and see what happens.

### Run for It ???

If the characters start to focus on the correct Culprit, and if the Culprit learns of this (e.g., if the characters openly alert Hestin or Security) or strongly suspects it, he may abandon his plans and simply leave the building, if at all possible. He will pick up his most cherished possessions at his home and leave town. Flight is better than imprisonment, and perhaps he can try again some day...



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## And Meanwhile...

Thirty-five minutes after the characters emerge from the basement, Rick Ruchson approaches them, wherever they may be. He will interrupt any interview they may be conducting at the time, for "Urgent" reasons, but will wait as long as necessary if the characters refuse to immediately comply. Rick escorts them to room 202, where they meet Dr. Purlman and Feegis. The gnome is irate: his magical *Gem* has been stolen and he

insists that the "professional investigators" find it immediately. Purlman adds his usual verbal abuse.

If the party wants to return to the cellar, they may ask for (and get) security guards as reinforcements. If so, this will be Rick Ruchson plus the usual quartet of Frad *et al.* (The party here fails partially by involving Security.)

## Conclusion

The scenario may end in any of various ways, depending on the actions of the characters, the time used, and so forth. In adjudicating the conclusion, consider the following points.

- If the characters return to the cellar before the Culprit returns with the Jar, they may catch him neatly. In that event, pause the game and ask them, one by one, "Who is coming down the Stairs?" Tally the votes, and reveal the identity for a suitable dramatic climax.

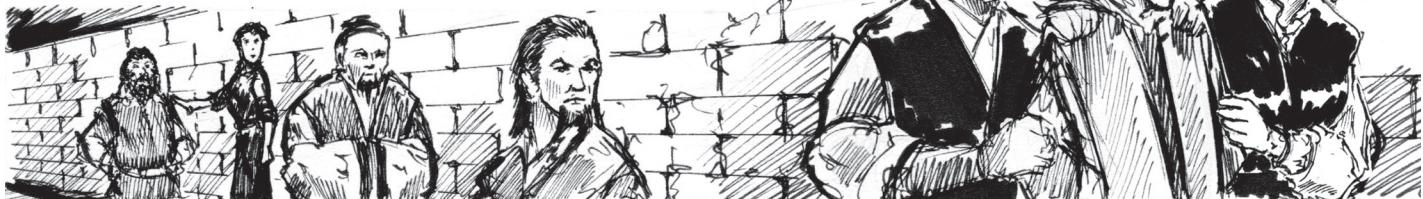
A scuffle ensues. The Culprit cries out for assistance from his monstrous allies, but the Iki are undependable and are unwilling to risk or give their lives for him. He is thus easily apprehended, and is taken into custody by either security guards (if present) or the characters.

- Hestin will pay the group a bonus of 500 gp for a full success (*i.e.*, apprehension of the thief and recovery of the items).
- The disposition of the Culprit, decided by Dr. Cindersport, will be a trial for heresy, punishable by death. (As he did not know the nature of the device, he will probably receive a lighter sentence of up to 25 years' imprisonment, plus 1 year per item stolen.)

- If the characters demonstrate (to security guards or to building executives) how to partially activate the Olston device, the machine is revealed as Technological, the blackest of heresies. It will be placed under constant guard and soon hoisted out of the place and destroyed by high church officials. This earns the characters an additional 500 gp bonus for the group.
- If the Culprit is blackmailing Hestin for his silence, the following apply:

If the party brings the Culprit to Hestin's offices, Hestin will assume that his part in the affair has been revealed (whether or not that is the case) and beg for mercy.

As Hestin was blackmailed into covering for the Culprit, he will not be dismissed for his actions... and the Directors will make clear that in this enlightened age, a White Elf in the family tree is no cause for alarm. The Medina family will finally find peace.





# The Case of the Missing Magic



## The Acaeum History Building

### Exterior

The entire three-storey building is made of hand-cut marble. Its dimensions are about 320 feet square and 45 feet tall, plus one smaller 12' tall structure on the rooftop. Fourteen curved sections line the outer walls, each lined with metal frames holding custom-made glass windows. The whole was obviously very expensive to construct.

The curved Main Entrance at the southeast corner is two stories tall and sheltered by an overhang. Eight large doors lead into the main Lobby. Exterior engravings above the doors and below the overhang depict four scenes of Empyreal history: the Arrival of the Colonists, the Founding

of Empyrea, the Signing of the Demihuman Pact, and the Coronation of King John IV. (Each is a rather fanciful interpretation of the historical event, as is typical for such an edifice.)

*Historical Timeline, for those interested: The coronation of John I initiated a new dating system, Year 1 of JohnsRule (JR). Empyrea was founded in 100 JR; the Pact of Neutrality was in 177 JR; John IV was crowned in 203 JR; and Empyrea vanished in 240 JR. The current date is technically 291 JR, though most call it Common Year (CY) 305, for the old country dating system has come back into favor during the last five decades.*

### Interior

The building is normally open to the public from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week. During those hours its 100+ employees assist a variety of users, both human and otherwise, in researching Historical data. The average number of users per day is often 300 or more, reaching an occasional peak of double that.

The interior of the building continues the marble theme, although the ceilings and outer walls are hollow (behind marble facings). The hollow areas contain metal structural supports, the plumbing system, and a few top-secret wooden stairways used only by Security. (These secret stairs are not subject to the magical defenses described under Building Security, page 38 hereafter.) Each ceiling is 12' above each floor. There is 3' between each ceiling and the floor above it.

Many visitors, singly and in groups, can be found on the first floor of the building. Some come here in full adventuring or military garb, so armed and armored individuals are common. Signs inside the lobby and by all staircases warn (in several common languages) "No SPELLCASTING." Other signs

by the staircases (only) warn that magical items are not permitted above the first floor.

Four customer-service windows in the Lobby are obvious upon entry, and three hallways lead west, northwest, and north. The four service windows are staffed, and short lines of visitors may be at one or all of them. Above those windows are more windows, overlooking the lobby, but these are darkened, and a visitor cannot see what is within them.

### Light

All public areas are lit by magical light, which emanates from the floors and the ceilings. Its brightness (luminosity) is about 400-500 lux (or that of a real-life room brightly lit by electric lighting). Private areas are somewhat darker, about 200-300 lux, and the 2nd floor Security areas (with windows overlooking the entry lobby) are much darker, only 5-10 lux (twilight equivalent). This magic is specific to the structure, and is not subject to the *Dispel* effect that occurs every 15 minutes (see Building Security, below).



# Acaeum History Building



## Temperature

Most of the building is at 55-80° F (13-26° C) during most the year. The heat produced by the many visitors and staff is vented into the walls and can escape at the rooftop, although the whole lacks active air circulation. The marble walls, thickest at the perimeter, are very effective insulators. Sunlight entering the tall curved windows adds warmth. During cold winters, the 1st floor temperature in the mornings (when the building opens for business) only occasionally drops as low as 45° F (7° C), though the outer portion of the 3rd floor can be somewhat cooler. The warmth accumulates in mid-year, however, and at midsummer, the third floor rotunda can reach almost 100° F (37 ° C).

## Historical Records

Many of the historical records are scrolls and tomes. These fall into two general categories, Rare and not. All the Rare materials (some Unique) are kept on the 3rd floor under extreme security, and these include all magical writings. Most non-rare items are stored on the 1st floor, in either Protected or Secure rooms.

The other category of records is the large collection of Shirecs. See the notes on the Setting and the specific details for the 2nd floor of the building.

## Timekeeping

Water clocks, their positions designated with a green “C” on the maps, are located on each of the three floors of the building. Water drips at a slow and constant rate through a tiny hole in a broad ceramic bowl, falling into a tall thinner ceramic tube below it. A floating stick in the latter rises slowly as the water fills, and a pointer atop the stick aligns with a vertical arrangement of numbers. Unauthorized tampering with a clock will attract security guards.

Janitorial staff drain most of the lower tubes, returning the water to the large upper bowls, each

morning and evening, shortly after the building opens and before it closes. Security personnel check their accuracy (roughly to within 10 minutes) at about the same times, adding water as needed from nearby water sources. Clocks in private apartments are the responsibility of the tenants (or typically their personal assistants).

## Organization

The building has one Director, “Toke” (Tokkay) Smith (a skilled administrator but not a sage), and one Assistant Director (Head of Operations), sage Todd Purlman. The senior Personnel Director is Ms. Lenore Cindersport, and the managers reporting to her are Hestin Medina (Personnel) and Rick Ruchson (Security). All except Ruchson wear normal (non-uniform) garb. Security staff (including Rick) wear a dark red uniform, and Janitorial staff wear green utility garb.

All Sages wear comfortable robes, the colors of which vary by their status, as summarized below:

## Sage Rankings

Tenured positions:

|        |                      |
|--------|----------------------|
| Grey   | Senior Sage Reseco   |
| White  | Senior Sage Primus   |
| Yellow | Senior Sage Secundus |

Non-Tenured positions:

|       |                          |
|-------|--------------------------|
| Tan   | Respected Primary Sage   |
| Blue  | Respected Secondary Sage |
| Green | Staff Primary Sage       |
| Red   | Staff Secondary Sage     |
| Brown | Probationary Sage        |
| Black | Apprentice Sage          |

Tenured staff have jobs for as long as they wish (barring criminal activity), while Non-Tenured are subject to performance reviews and renewals. This, as well as the color-coding, is common to all four of the Acaeum buildings, which handle History, Nature, other Fact, and Opinion.



# Acaean History Building



## Building Security

Many magical and mundane protections apply to the building. These automatic systems supplement the security staff. The principal ones are summarized below.

Except as specified in this adventure (such as during the characters' Briefing by Hestin Medina), none of these security measures will be divulged, or even alluded to, by any Acaean staff. If asked, they will merely refer to the posted signage.

Note that fire can occur within the building but is suppressed at regular intervals. A magical effect extinguishes all combustion of all types every 15 minutes (see #2 below). As a result, the pipes and cigars common to this culture can be enjoyed within the building, but only for a limited time. Elemental fire (which exists without combustion) is also abjured, but by a separate (though simultaneous) effect.

**1. Spellcasting is simply not possible** on the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd floors. An effect drains the flow of magical power shortly after any spellcasting begins. The spell is incomplete and fails, producing no effect. (This effect is much like a magical 'ground wire', draining the magical power.)

**2. Magical effects already in place are utterly negated every 15 minutes.** (This does not affect magical items, per se, but is limited to effects already in place.) A separate but simultaneous negation affects all combustion, extinguishing all fires and even smoldering embers. These abjurative effects have no visible element (i.e., no 'flash' or other clue) and are often unnoticed, but an invisible person will suddenly become visible, and ongoing magical effects (such as magical detection abilities) will suddenly cease. Of special note, conjured beings (such as elementals and other magical servants) are also abjured by this effect, which returns them to their plane of origin if applicable.

**3. Magical items** are affected by two separate security measures:

a) **Any falling magical item** is teleported (within 1 second of the start of its fall) to Security room 137 or 138 (1st floor). Note that if a magic item is accidentally dropped, it typically vanishes just before hitting the floor, and may be caught (and thus retained) prior to that time. Any teleported item arrives safely, lands on a cushioned platform, and is handled by a security guard stationed there during open hours. (The guard typically uses an implement to collect and store the item, and has orders not to touch it by any other means.) An item dropped from an open area (such as 220, 229, 230) will vanish after falling less than 5 feet.

b) When any magical item is **above any part of any stairway**, it is immediately pulled downward by and to that stair and sticks to it firmly. In practice the item always lands on the first or second stair of a staircase. The offender's clothing may be pulled down by the item, or may be simply torn open. The magic item may be damaged (probable in the case of potion-bottles). Given sufficient strength, the stuck item may be moved by sliding it, and is freely movable once it lands on the main floor, off the staircase. If this procedure is not known to the offender, guards (who will arrive shortly, responding to all such events) will handle the sliding, and will return the item, pointing at the posted nearby sign and reinforcing the gravity of the warning. If breakage has occurred, the guards send for Janitorial assistance. Repeat offenders may be ejected and the offending magic items confiscated.

**4. The walls and windows** of the building prevent any magical movement through them. Teleportation and other magical attempts to gain entry will fail (with results at the game master's discretion, but easily handled by unintentional horizontal displacement to a point 10-60' beyond the exterior wall).

Some of these protections do not apply to certain areas, as detailed in "Exceptions" (next page).



# Acaeum History Building



## Exceptions

Eight specific areas are unaffected by either abjuration #1 or #2 above. These are Security rooms 131 and 132 on the 1st floor (behind the customer service windows in the lobby), Rooms 201 and 203 on the 2nd floor (with a clear view of the lobby), and the four "boom rooms" on the 3rd floor (330, 341, 343, and 345).

The Cellar and the Roof are also not subject to effects 1 or 2, and the stairs to these locations (all within secure areas) have no enchantment (3b). However, falling magic items in these areas are subject to effect 3a. All of the cellar and the Roof are subject to effect #4.

Several players have deduced that magical effects may be initiated outside the building, and remain in place after they enter... but these are removed within 15 minutes (#2).

## Security Teams

The many Security Guards will quickly respond to altercations and violations of the posted regulations. They are stationed in pairs, and one will hold back to observe (and report if necessary) while the other handles a given incident.

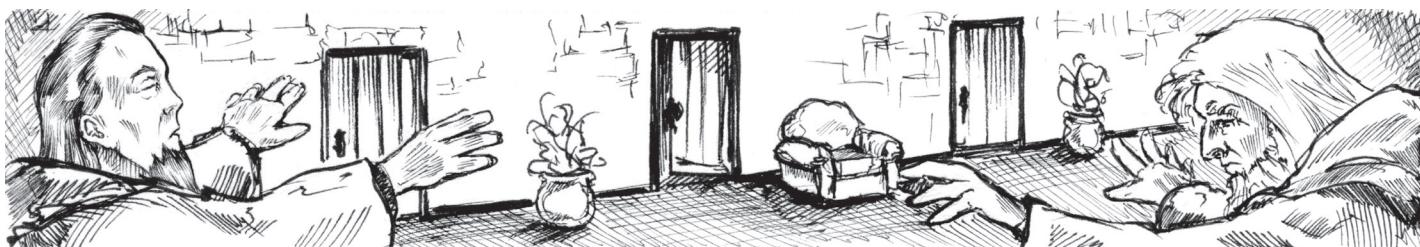
Each guard carries a simple wooden rectangle, about an inch long, with a sliding bar embedded in each side; one side is painted green, the other red. If a guard is called to routine duty while his partner is busy, he moves the slider on the green side. If a guard needs major and/or urgent assistance, he moves the red side. These are utterly normal nonmagical items, but their usage is magically detected by the Supervisor On Duty at Security Central (Room 201), who dispatches backup personnel as appropriate. Red Alerts are very rare.

## The Quarterly

A full magical security procedure is scheduled for Monday following the characters' weekend investigation. This is a standard quarterly procedure, and infallibly reveals any and all persons, organizations, and devices that may pose a threat to the Acaeum building, its contents, operations, and/or its employees. The magical spells used to get this crucial information are of the highest order, drawing upon the mightiest magical resources known to mortal man. The specifics may vary by the rules system and/or setting you prefer, but are categorically of this maximum power in any event.

Such great powers are not free of charge, and in fact typically incur a very high cost. The Sef, who fund the Acaeum, find it prudent to pay for these procedures, but they balance their cost and the necessity. The Sef have chosen to accept a certain degree of risk within each threemonth, bringing this power to bear four times each year, within a week of the first days of March, June, September, and December.

Most Acaeum staff know about "The Quarterly" to some degree. The amount of knowledge varies by their positions. Lower level staff know only that some 'unbeatable' check is made, but no details thereof, and they only generally know the dates (e.g., 'this week or next'). Higher staff (such as Personnel Manager Hestin Medina) know a bit more about the procedure, and the Directors (Smith, Purlman, and Cindersport) are familiar with every detail, including the specific date, the spellcasters employed (all bearing the highest references from Magic Guilds and Churches), and the spells used. For obvious security reasons they will divulge none of these details to the player characters, as they are mere 'temp' (temporary employees).





## Plumbing & Lavatoria

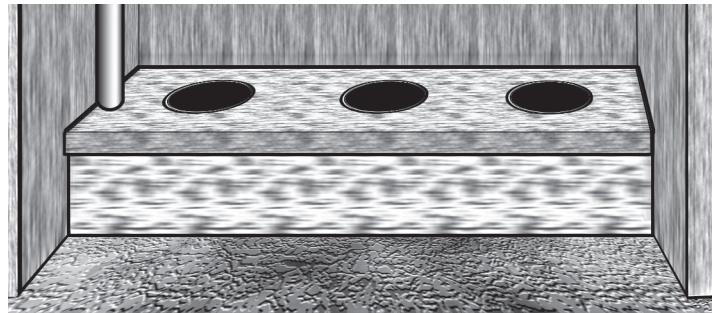
The water source on the roof (*q.v.*) creates a continuous flow that is routed to five stone cylinders. Each cylinder remains mostly full as the water trickles downward from a small hole at its base, beginning its journey through the interior plumbing.

An important feature of the building (and a major element of the mystery itself) is the indoor plumbing system and its Lavatoria (*aka* Latrine, Water Closet, Comfort Room, Rest Room, Privy, or Netty), *i.e.*, the locations where humanoids customarily dispose of excreta. Sanitation and hygiene are vital features of any civilized peoples, though usually omitted from roleplaying game treatments. (If you have juvenile players in your game, who often focus on this topic as a source of amusement, try to downplay these aspects as mundane and merely practical.)

Most of this system is constructed of wooden troughs lined with blown glass, to minimize maintenance. The construction allows little or no water to come into contact with wood. The plumbing is carefully built so that every trough is mounted at a slight angle, ensuring that the combined forces of gravity and constant water flow keep the system running smoothly at all times. (Some few access doors do enable repairs within the walls.)

On the upper floors, these troughs channel the water to each Lavatorium and then divide it into 3 separate streams: waste, washing & drinking, and bypass. The clean water in the bypass continues downward to the floor below. The first floor needs no bypass but is otherwise identical.

Within each Lavatorium in the building are two waist-high cabinets along one wall, for washing and drinking, and an elongated wall-to-wall box-like structure opposite, atop which are 3-5 wooden seats. Clean water from small glass-and-wood troughs atop the former cabinets flows into a bowl and out a drain below. The cabinets are used for storage of towels, drinking containers, spare sponge-sticks, and buckets.



Wastewater enters from one side of the long box, passing below the seats, and exits into the opposite wall. Atop the box are several towels and wet sponges on sticks (the method employed in ancient Rome).

Those in this culture know to use the sponge-stick to clean the anal area after defecation, thereafter rinsing and cleaning the stick in the flowing water below so the next user will not be inconvenienced.

The aroma of waste is minimal in the Lavatoria, as the constant flow of water, and low percentage of waste within that flow, suffice to keep the system reasonably clean.

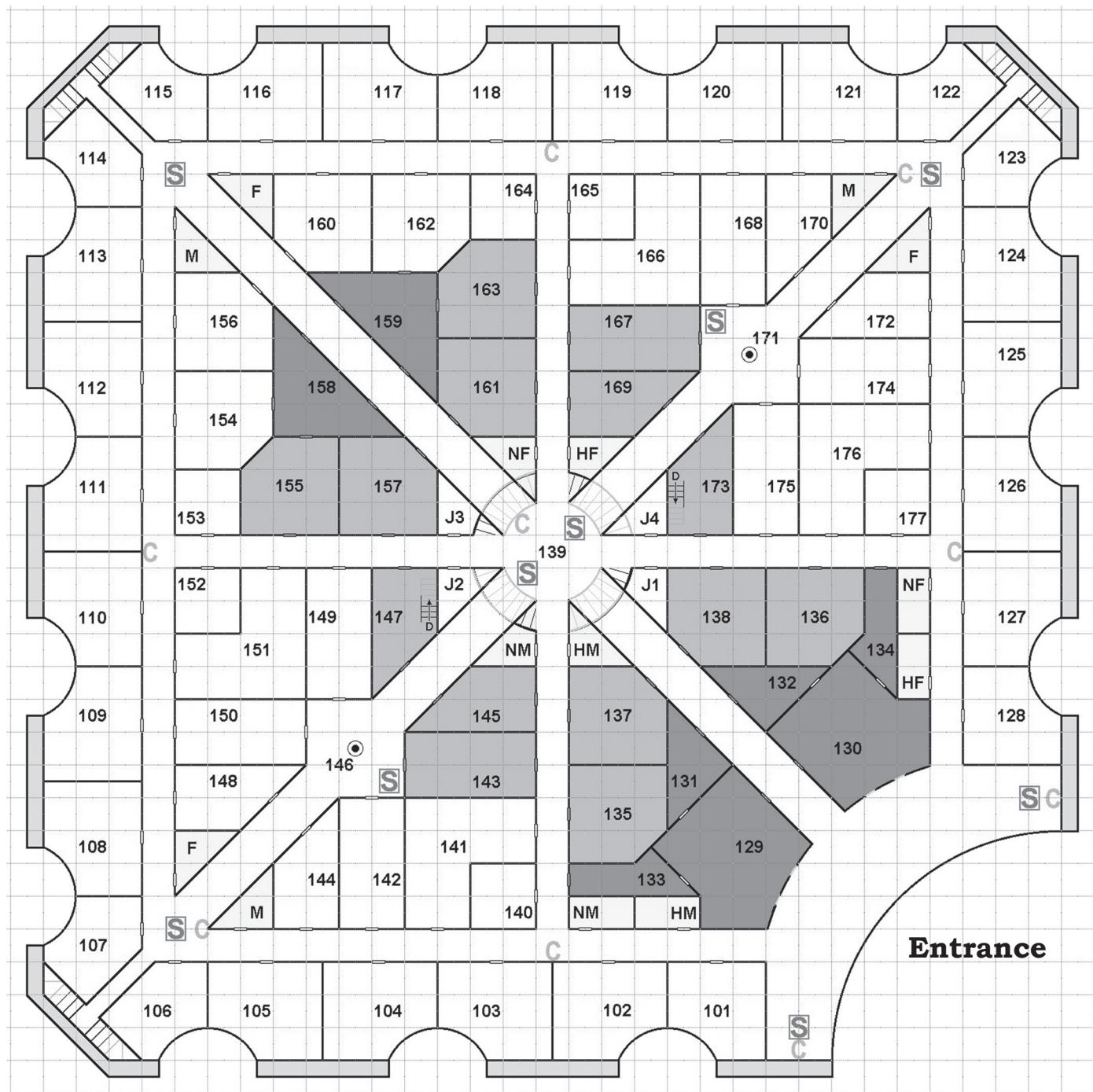
All the outflow from a Lavatorium is merged (within the wall) into a waste-channel. This wastewater follows a continuous slanted route within the walls, never falling freely but often at a 30-45° angle between the floors of the building. All the water eventually reaches one of the five collection vats in the cellar (*q.v.*). (After the conclusion of this mystery, the system will be modified to include several free-fall drops into collection vats, to resolve this gap in the security system.)

On the maps, the Lavatoria are coded as follows. The same information is given on prominent signage near each (in several common languages, as with other signage). The term "Human" applies to any man-sized humanoid, including elves and half-elves. Non-human facilities are for all shorter folk, including gnomes and dwarves.

|           |                          |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| <b>HM</b> | <b>Human Males</b>       |
| <b>NM</b> | <b>Non-Human Males</b>   |
| <b>HF</b> | <b>Human Females</b>     |
| <b>NF</b> | <b>Non-Human Females</b> |



# First Floor Map



Darkest grey  
Light grey

Secure Area  
Protected Area

1 square = 10'

Lettered areas: Lavatoria  
M = Male, F = Female  
H = Human only  
N = Non-human

**S** Security Guards  
**C** Clock (see page 13)



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Keyed Areas

### First Floor

#### 101 through 128. Consultation Rooms

for handling inquiries by visitors

#### 129-134. Secure/Restricted

Customer Service & Security

#### 135-138. Protected Storage

Storage of non-rare Scrolls & Tomes

#### 139. Main Rotunda

3 stories tall, lined with staircases. Note that the stairs down to the Cellar are hidden in secure rooms 147 & 173. Signs here indicate optimal stair usage:

South stair: 2W 3N    West stair: 2N 3E  
North stair: 2E 3S    East stair: 2S 3E

*Translation:* These are the most direct routes to the floors above. The sign by the south stair indicates that it leads to the 2nd floor West side, and to the 3rd floor North. The other signs use the same convention. Staff are accustomed to the abbreviations, and visitors eventually learn.

#### J1, J2, J3, J4. Central Janitorial storage

Each room contains a rack with four green Janitorial outfits of different sizes (all suitable for human-sized beings) and at its base are thick boots to match. Three used but clean mops stand nearby, along with two wheeled buckets. A small sink for washing stands nearby, and a lower water-feed for filling the buckets flows continuously into a floor drain.

#### 140, 142, 144. Consultation Rooms

for handling inquiries by visitors

#### 141. Office of Hestin Medina, Personnel Manager

#### 143, 145. Protected

Storage of non-rare Scrolls & Tomes

#### 146. Gallery South

A large statue is on display in the center of this two-story tall section of the southwest corridor. The sculpture is changed each sixmonth. Currently on display is a 20' tall onyx (black stone) carving of King John I (John Delaric Asperman), founder and builder of Empyrea, gazing to the northeast toward the statue of his Queen. His head is barely visible, high above this vantage (see 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, area 229).

#### 147. Protected Room

West Stairs down to Cellar (see J1-J4 Central Janitorial Storage for contents)

A stout trap door is on the floor near one wall, obvious hinges on its north edge. It can be lifted to reveal sturdy but dusty wooden stairs leading downward. (Note that most magical security measures end at the level of the floor. On these stairs and in the cellar, spells may be cast, magical effects will not be abjured, and so forth.)

#### 148-151. Consultation Rooms

for handling inquiries by visitors

#### 152-153. Acaeum Offices

#### 154, 156. Consultation Rooms

for handling inquiries by visitors

#### 155, 157, 161, 163. Protected Storage

Storage of non-rare Scrolls & Tomes

#### 158-159. Secure/Restricted

Security Office Northwest

#### 160, 162. Consultation Rooms

for handling inquiries by visitors

#### 164-165. Acaeum Offices



## Room Key: First Floor



**166, 168, 170. Consultation Rooms**  
for handling inquiries by visitors

**167, 169. Protected Storage**

Storage of non-rare Scrolls & Tomes

**171. Gallery North**

A statue is in display in the center of this two-story tall section of the northeast corridor. The sculpture is changed each sixmonth. Currently on display is a 20' white alabaster carving of Queen Rosamund (Wife of King John I), gazing to the southwest toward the statue of her husband. Her head is barely visible, high above this vantage (see 2nd floor, area 230).

**173. Protected Room**

East Stairs down to Cellar (see J1-J4 Central Janitorial Storage for contents). See area 147 for notes, except that the trap-door's hinges are on its south edge.

**172, 174-176. Consultation Rooms**  
for handling inquiries by visitors

**177. Acaeum Office**

## Second Floor

**The Shirec Collection**

**201-203. Security Overview**

This area is dim, at the approximate level of twilight in contrast to the brightly lit lobby, enabling security personnel to covertly monitor the area below. Windows on the southeast walls provide a full overview of the lobby from directly above the four customer service stations on the 1st floor. Additional windows east and south of the center room provide a similar overview of the sides of the lobby (waiting areas with seating & tables).

**204-206, 208-210, 213-215, 217-219. Private Residences**

Here dwell twelve of the executives and senior sages who work in the building. Each suite includes an outdoor view through the columnar windows, and each is subdivided into several rooms as customized for the resident. Each has a static water supply, but residents must use the communal Lavatoria.

Largest residences (senior executives):

209 Dr. Purlman  
214 Dr. Smith  
218 Dr. Cindersport

Others of note:

204 Feegis  
213 Grantlyx

**207, 211, 216. Security Posts**

These three areas are adjacent to the corner stairways down to the 1st level. At least one security team member is actively stationed nearby at all times, watching over everyone using the stairs. Note that the letter "S" on the maps indicates the positions of paired security guards.

**212. Cafeteria**

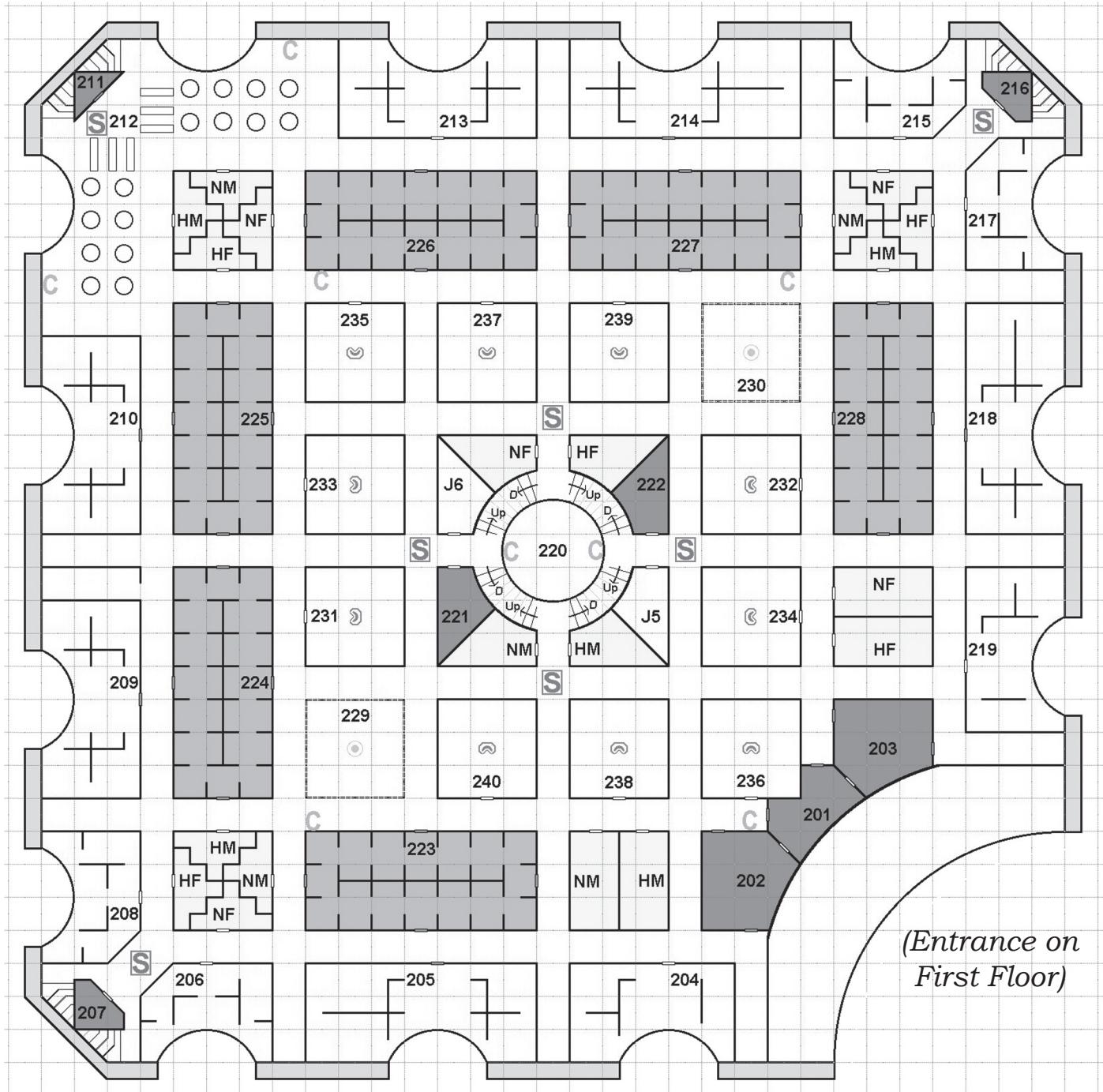
Employees of the Acaeum can here acquire a variety of cold foodstuffs. Self-serve buffet tables are located near the northwest stairways, and more than a dozen small tables with chairs are located nearby, as are Lavatoria. Up to 6 attendants stock and maintain the area. Salads are available at all times, and the other offerings are rotated as follows:

|                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| 8 am to 10:30 am   | Breakfast |
| 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm | Snacks    |
| 11 am to 2 pm      | Lunch     |
| 5 pm to 8 pm       | Dinner    |

All the food is cold because of the automatic magical fire suppression throughout the building. The salads, milk, vegetables, and other spoilables are kept on ice. (A guard in area 211 regularly uses a *Wand of Ice* to transmute normal water for this purpose, but the resulting ice is nonmagical.)



## Second Floor Map



Darkest grey  
Light grey

## Secure Area Protected Area

1 square = 10'

Lettered areas: Lavatoria  
M = Male, F = Female  
H = Human only  
N = Non-human

**S** Security Guards  
**C** Clock (see page 13)



## Room Key: Second Floor



The cafeteria services are free of charge for Directors, Managers, and all sages above Probationary status. Security and Janitorial personnel may also eat here freely, but the cost is debited from their wages. Guards (from 211) stand by to ensure order and to make note of those to be debited. The characters may use the cafeteria without fee, though the Personnel Department will be debited for the costs.

### 220. Rotunda

There is no floor in the middle of this area; users can see down to the first floor and up to the third. Metal railings prevent accidental falls. Signs indicate optimal usage:

South stair: 1E 3W      West stair: 1S 3N  
North stair: 1W 3E      East stair: 1N 3S

### J5-J6. Central Janitorial Rooms

Each room contains a rack with four green Janitorial outfits of different sizes (all suitable for human-sized beings) and at its base are thick boots to match. Three used but clean mops stand nearby, along with two wheeled buckets. A small sink for washing stands nearby, and a lower water-feed for filling the buckets flows continuously into a floor drain.

### 221-222. Central Security Rooms

### 223-228. Secure Area: Shirec Storage

These large store-rooms are filled with racks of Shirec discs. The wall of each room nearest the building perimeter (for example, the south wall of room 223) holds blank (usable) discs, clearly marked as such. If a room is not filled, the end racks (30' long) are left unused.

A full record of all the discs kept in storage is located on a special Shirec Inventory Disc kept in each cabinet housing a prawl tank (231-240).

When a given Shirec image is needed for reference, an authorized staff member retrieves it from the appropriate room and takes it to one of the

Shirec devices not in use, meeting the public user requesting the disc at that location. That staffer is responsible for the disc and its return to the proper location.

A small metal box, usually empty, is on a shelf by the north door to area 223. It is here that Feegis places his *Gem of Seeing* on occasion.

### 229-230. Gallery overview

Each of these 30' square areas is surrounded by a metal railing. Passers-by may here look upon the heads of the 20' tall statues which rest on the first floor in areas 146 and 171 (q.v.). Their heads are more than 3' tall, reaching to 5' above the floor (7' below the ceiling).

### 231-240. Shirec Stations

Each of these rooms is a clear, blank white for optimal image-viewing results, and is regularly cleaned to maintain that. In the middle of each room is a sturdy wooden platform (4' x 4', 1' tall) upon which stands one prawl cabinet (4' tall and 3' wide). Two or three Shirecs are left in a storage niche in the lower part of each device, one clearly marked "Shirec Inventory" and the other(s) blank and unused. Locked within each cabinet is a prawl tank, each similar to a turtle aquarium and containing very salty water, some rocky dry areas, strange tiny vegetation, a tiny eyeless frog-like being (the prawl itself), and occasionally insects or bits of meat.

The devices are usually operated only by authorized staff, but regular users who bring their own Shirec discs may register and then be permitted independent and unsupervised usage. Access to the creature is not necessary for this process; the prawns are trained to respond to certain audible signals.





# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Third Floor: The Rares

This topmost level of the Acaeum contains the rarest (often magical) scrolls and tomes in the Acaeum History collection. These are numerous, often obtained at great cost or donated by rich and powerful patrons. Many have their own special cases and displays.

This level of the building has one central public area, accessible only by the central staircases and always under the scrutiny of security personnel. The public area is separated from the archives by a thick wall of solid metal, broken only by four doors protected by the highest level of security.

The Archives themselves are arrayed around the central area. The outer perimeter of the level, including all window areas, contains tables and chairs for both discussion and examination of individual artifacts. No items are left in those locations, being kept at least 40' from the outer walls.

All of the employees working in the Archives have passed a high level of security clearance and enjoy a high degree of trust and status in the Acaeum organization.

### **Rooms 319, 325, 331, 337. Security Access to the Archives**

The featureless metal door on the outside wall of each of these small rooms (such as the south wall of 319) has no visible means of use. Only authorized personnel are admitted through this door; the only exception is a single visitor accompanied (and actively vouched for) by one of the senior administrators, *i.e.*, Directors Smith, Purlman, or Cindersport. In that event one or more Security staff will accompany the executive's visitor at all times. Guards accompany all visitors and new employees even unto the Lavatoria, though they do not go to such extremes for familiar authorized personnel.

From a point beyond the metal door it appears almost fully transparent, affording a full view of

the access room. A simple lever control is built into the wall nearby, on the left side. That lever causes the door on the north wall of the security room to lock, and the lever's movement in reverse causes it to unlock.

The metal door can only be pulled opened manually by a person beyond it (*i.e.*, within the secure Archive area) and only if the other door is locked as described above. A security guard is stationed beyond the metal door at all times, day or night, and will faithfully execute the mandated procedures.

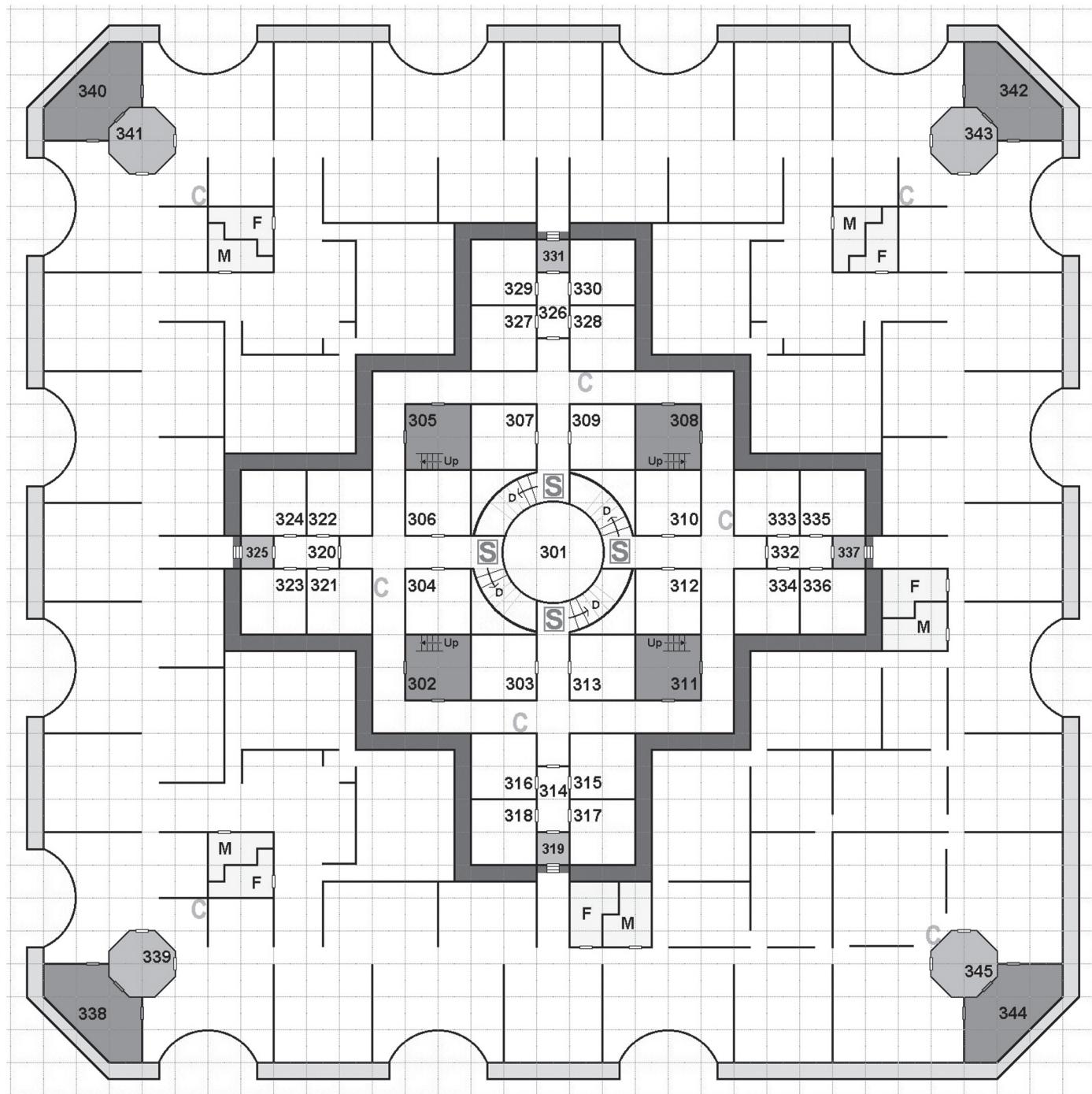


### **Plot note**

The Culprit (if not Abacus) took pains to befriend Grantyx, initially by professing a common love for raspberry pastries. The Culprit was then wearing a (stolen) green robe and using the false name "Harvey." When Grantyx needed an assistant on a project, he requested and vouched for 'Harvey', who became his regular aide for about 18 days (approximately 6-8 weeks previously). During this time the Culprit successfully purloined Abacus' Scarab and Grantyx' Wand, but has not returned since for obvious reasons, as the risk of discovery was quite high. (If Abacus is the Culprit, she could easily accomplish these thefts, as she works on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor on a regular basis. In that case, Harvey is an actual green sage.)



# Third Floor Map



Darkest grey  
Light grey

Secure Area  
Protected Area

1 square = 10'

Lettered areas: Lavatoria  
M = Male, F = Female

**S** Security Guards  
**C** Clock (see page 13)



## Room Key: Third Floor



### 301. Rotunda

There is no floor in the middle of this area; users can see down to both lower levels. Metal railings prevent accidental falls. Signs indicate optimal usage:

|             |     |            |     |
|-------------|-----|------------|-----|
| South stair | 2 E | West stair | 2S  |
| North stair | 2 W | East stair | 2 N |

Looking up from this location, one can easily see and admire the ornate painting that fills the circular ceiling, which rises slightly forming a dome 3' taller. The artwork is a depiction of a great battle, with thousands of monstrous figures and dragons fiercely engaging heroic human and humanoid combatants, most of the latter clad in Empyrean military and royal garb. The portrayal is idealistic rather than historically accurate, depicting the final battle for and within Empyrea before its Evanescence (51 years past at the time of this adventure). The opposing superpowers are minimally shown in the distance: the famed Golden Ziggurat on the north side, and the infamous Black Tower to the south.

Remember that any magical item dropped from this area will vanish within 1 second, after falling 5' or less.

### 302, 305, 308, 311. Security Rooms

In addition to tables and chairs, these rooms contain stairways leading to the rooftop.

### 303-304, 306-307, 309-310, 312-313.

General Consultation Rooms for Acaeum visitors

### 314, 320, 326, 332.

Access Corridors to Privileged Rooms

### 321-324, 327-330, 333-336.

**Privileged Consultation Rooms** for dignitaries

The Privileged rooms are generally used by the exceedingly rich, business executives, members of

the ruling class, and the like. They are furnished in a style more opulent than that of the rest of the public areas, and are often stocked with beverages and snacks (all of the highest quality of course) before a scheduled meeting.

### 319, 325, 331, 337.

#### Security Access to Archives

The heavy metal door is on the far wall of this small room, and only authorized personnel will be admitted (see "Security Access to the Archives"). A guard is stationed beyond each metal door.

### 339, 341, 343, 345. Boom Rooms

These octagonal rooms are used for initial detailed inspection of tomes and scrolls admitted to the Archives. That process involves both experienced sages and sturdy security personnel, and are conducted with the doors secured and guarded from outside. Occasional adverse effects occur during such inspections, but all have been successfully confined to these areas. This has given them the "Boom Room" nickname, which was cheerfully adopted as their formal designation.

The magical security measures affecting most of the building (page 27) do not affect these rooms. Spells may be cast freely within, for example.

### 338. Security Station Southwest

### 339. Examination Room Southwest

### 340. Security Station Northwest

### 341. Examination Room Northwest

### 342. Security Station Northeast

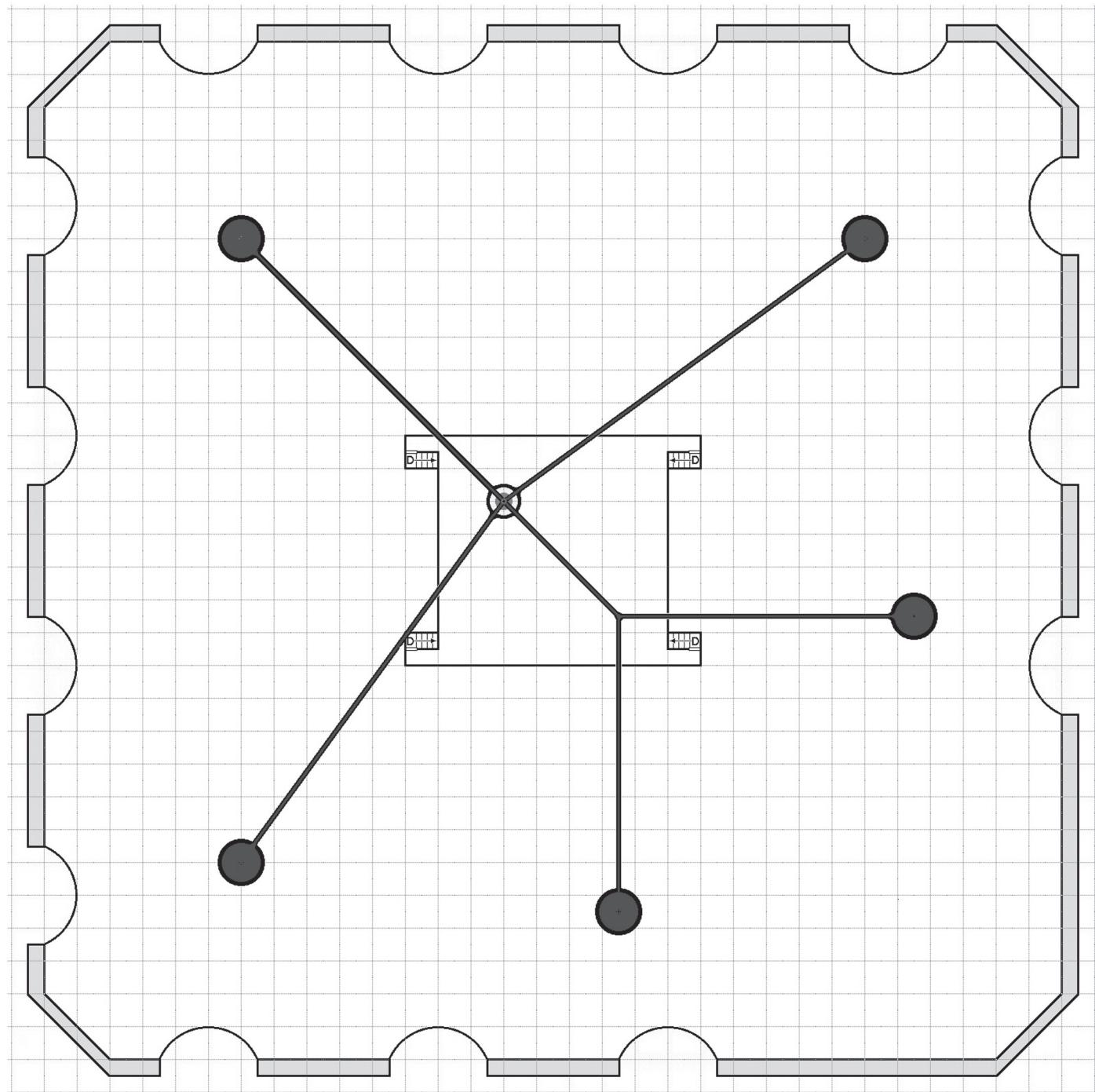
### 343. Examination Room Northeast

### 344. Security Station Southeast

### 345. Examination Room Southeast



## Rooftop Map



1 square = 10'

Dark Circle      Silo



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Fourth Floor: Rooftop

Note: The magical protections of the building (see "Security Procedures", page 27) are not in effect here. Spells may be cast, fire will burn, and magical items are unaffected.

### Ascent

If the characters wish to examine the Roof they can certainly do so, but only with Security escort. The quartet provided for this will be Frad, Edgar, Herb, and Cupid. The stairs upward are in secure areas of the 3rd floor (302, 305, 308, 311), and all lead to the Barracks. The stairs are wooden, not marble (as in most of the building), though quite firm and well-built.

### Interior

Within the rooftop structure are four stairways down, various tables, chairs, and desks, 8 beds, 8 armoire cabinets, and a coal-burning stove. This area is usually staffed by 4-12 security personnel, and up to 8 stay here overnight.

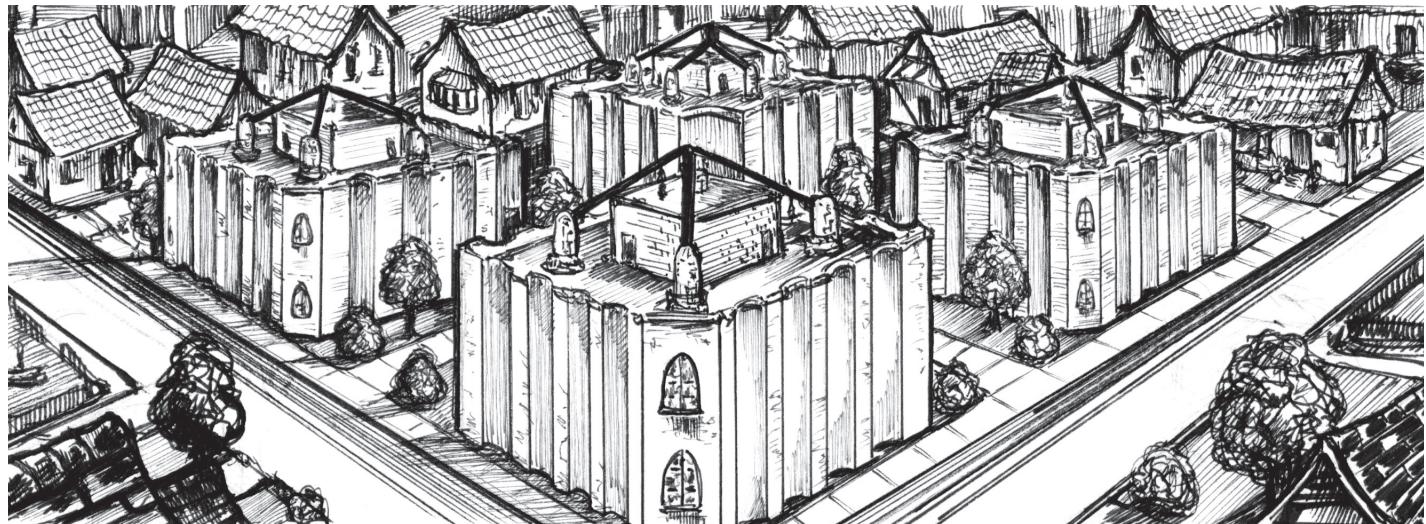
The primary feature of the single large room is a 6' tall stone cylinder from which four stonework tubes extend, each 3' tall and hemispherical in cross-section. These are enclosed channels for water flow. The southeast tube forks within the building, becoming two such channels (see map).

Within the central cylinder is a tiny magical iPort (the common name for an Interplanar Portal) connecting this plane of existence to the Elemental Plane of Water. The constant flow is sent down the channels to the five outer cylinders (collection vats), the flow there controlled to trickle down to and through the plumbing system, eventually reaching drains in the basement. (See "Plumbing and Lavatoria", page 29, for details.)

The iPort itself is a watery sphere a mere 3 inches in diameter. If for some reason its cylinder is damaged, the iPort will automatically deactivate, turn to ice, and cease to flow. (The ice-sphere refills and refreezes if magically melted, but cannot be damaged by physical force.)

### Exterior

When viewed from the outside, the main feature of the roof is a single large structure about 70' square, walls 10' tall, from which five long stone tubes (each 3' tall and hemispherical in cross-section) radiate outward. Each connects to a stone cylinder called a "Silo," that being 15' in diameter and 6' tall with a slightly domed top. The stoneworks (both tubes and silos) are all made of small blocks of granite secured perfectly by masonry of masterwork quality.





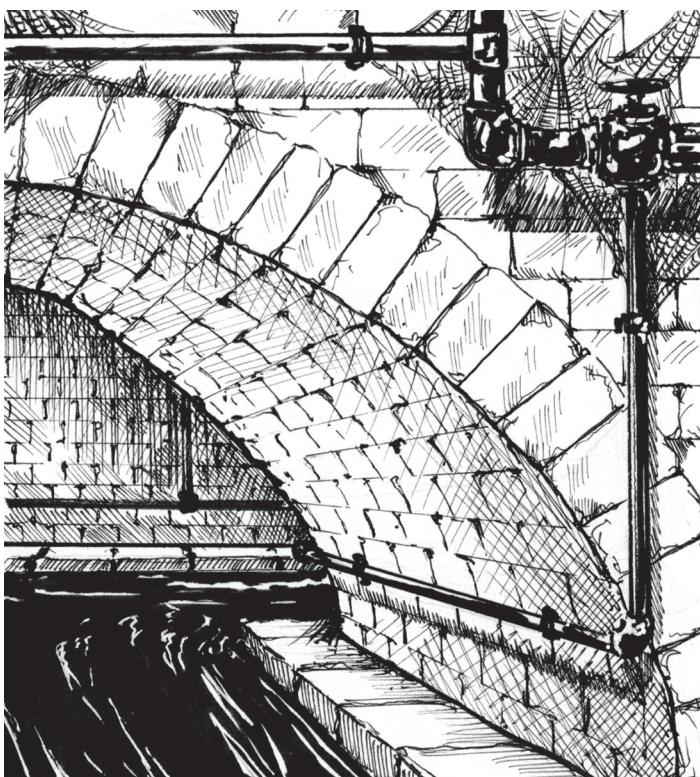
# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Cellar: General Notes

During the initial construction of the building, the cellar excavation was kept to a minimum in anticipation of support issues. The areas below three 1st floor locations – the central rotunda (139) and the two Galleries (146, 171) – are (and must remain) solid stone, to support the load that may occur at those sites. These corresponding cellar areas are thus southwest of vat 13, northeast of vat 21, and south of bridge 8.

In the unlikely event that the characters notably damage or destroy the areas below the great statues, a collapse will occur. City authorities will subsequently detain the party until they are assured of adequate recompense to the Acaeum, amounting to at least half a million gp plus the cost of re-sculpting the statuary.



## Waste Water

Open vats collect the waste flow at five locations, channeling it through trenches in the floor (each initially 1' deep and 2' wide) to a central drain which exits the cellar through the north wall (area 4). This center channel deepens and broadens each time a side channel intersects it, reaching 2' deep and 5' wide at the exit. In two places (center and southwest) the channel becomes a tunnel, its top arching evenly to 3' height. The stench is only moderate throughout the cellar, as the actual content is mostly water.

The flow from each vat is relatively slow. Anyone falling into a channel at that point can climb out fairly easily, though the waste fluid is slippery. In the central channel, however, the flow is greater, reaching its maximum just north of the junction with the flow from the southeast vat. At that point and beyond, anyone falling in will be swept along at the rate of 2' per second, and (due to the slippery fluid) can only escape with assistance from others, or by magical means. (GM's discretion as always, however.)

## Sewer disease

Any skin contact with the waste water may infect the victim with Sewer Disease; the chance of such is 1 in 6. Contact with creatures also may spread the disease (see below).

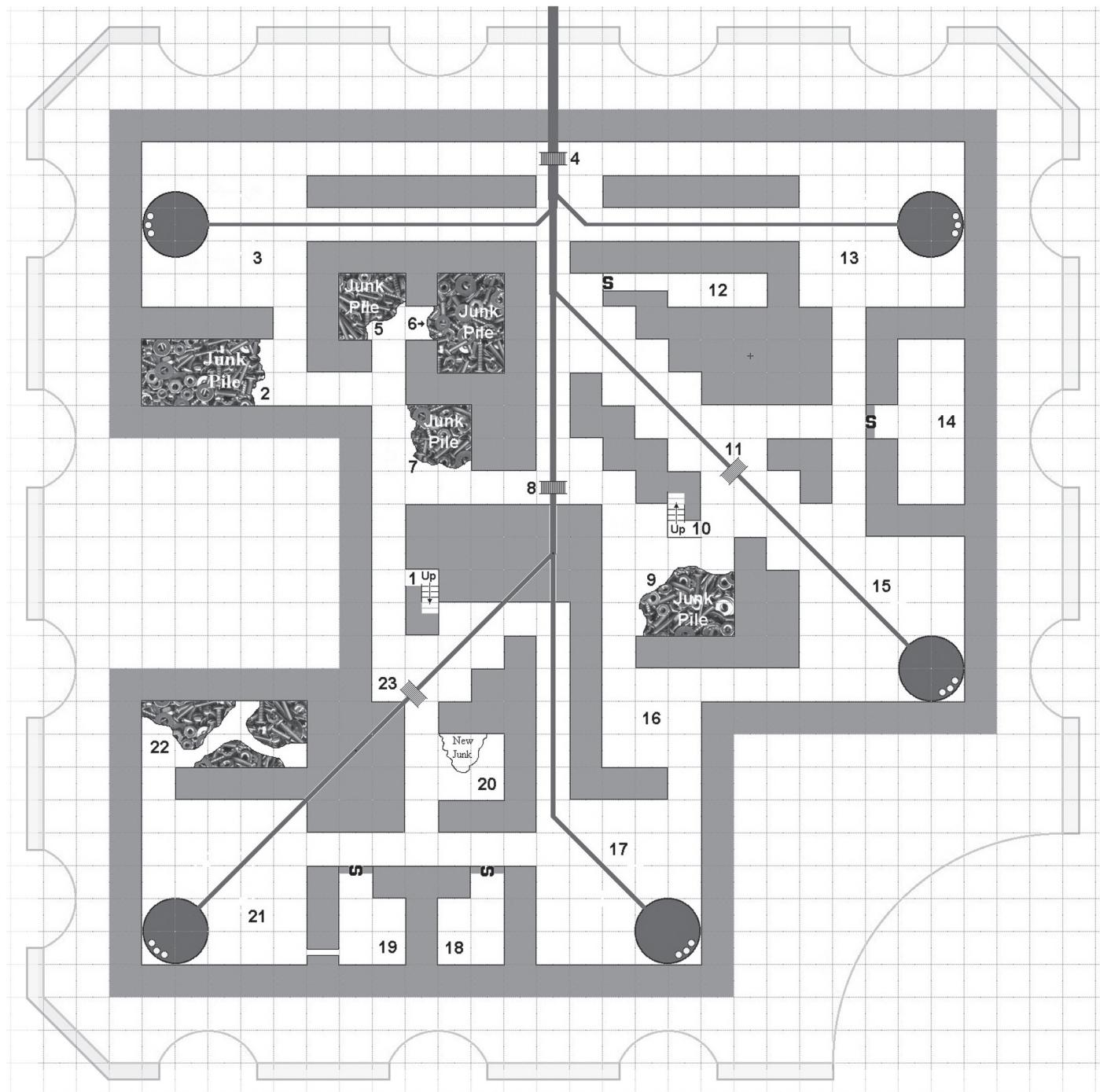
If a character becomes diseased by contact with the waste water or a local denizen, the victim's wounds will not heal by any means, normal or magical. The disease must be cured before any such ministrations will have effect. The more severe and direct effect of sewer disease is long-term, causing the victim to lose 1 Health point per day from internal infection, which escalates to general weakness and chronic cough in its later stages.

## Denizens

Various creatures lurk in the cellar. All will remain hidden if intruders are wearing uniforms, either green (janitorial) or dark red (security).



# Cellar Map for the Game Master



1 square = 10'

Dark circle      Wastewater Collection Vat

**Note:** When the characters enter the cellar, **give the players their map** (page 61).



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## Nomenclature

“**You**” refers to the Game Master, the presumed reader of this work. Some text may be read aloud to players, it then being designated by boldface type.

The usual abbreviations for feet and inches—**’ and ”** respectively (e.g. 5’ 6”)—are used throughout. These English units are used in this American edition, while Metric is used in those customized for most of the world.

A reference to **10'y** indicates a distance of 10 feet if indoors or 10 yards if outdoors, a common feature of some of the wargame rules whence role-playing derived. This obviously does not apply inside, but is often relevant outdoors.

**Percentile** statistics are used in some game systems. When divided by five, each percentile rating also applies to systems designed for a 1-20 range. Both figures are given here. Example: Power 30% (6).

In most game systems, the **abilities** of the players’ characters are usually specified in ranges of either 1-100 or 1-20. Common ‘personal’ stats include the traits of Strength, Agility (Dexterity), Attractiveness, and Mental ability. ‘Tests’ of such traits are commonly used in variable situations, and each will specify a percentage followed by the 1-20 equivalent. *Example:* Strength to open: 110% (22)

For a Ranged weapon, the range (in yards or meters) is subdivided into Short/Medium/Long categories, given after the Damage. Example: orc spear 1d6 (2/3½/5).

**Creature** information appears in the following order. **AH** indicates a rating that applies to an **Average Human** (a typical non-combatant), providing a baseline for comparisons.

**Appearance** is the first impression when a creature is encountered. It may be incomplete (lacking hidden items, for example) but will be sufficient, including general height, garb (if any), and immediately noticeable features.

**Demeanor** describes the general attitude (and often intelligence) of a creature, which is often helpful in determining its first actions when encountered.

**Power** is an overall rating describing the comparative degree of challenge a creature presents. For example, a creature with Power 25% (5) presents about 5 times the challenge as one with Power 5% (1). AH Power is 1-5%.

**Defense** is a measure of the difficulty of damaging a creature. In most systems, a die roll equal to or greater than the Defense stat indicates that an attack is successful and inflicts Damage (below). AH defense is 1-5%.

*Note:* In some game systems, a defense rating starts at zero (unarmored) and rises; in others, it starts at a positive number and decreases. If your defense system decreases, subtract the Defense rating given here from the starting number.

**Health** indicates the amount of damage a creature can withstand before dying. This is often 1-2 per point of Power. AH health is 1-4.

**Move** is how far the creature moves per second, measured in feet. AH is 6-12.

**Init** (short for Initiative) is a bonus or penalty that may determine the sequence of events in a combat ‘round’ or other segment of time. In extreme cases Init may be listed as an absolute: “always first” or “always last”. AH Init is zero (no bonus or penalty).

**Damage** is the amount deducted from an opponent’s Health score if an attack roll indicates success when compared to Defense (above). Each attack form is followed by the dice used to determine the damage. Numbers in parentheses indicate multiple attacks of one type. Example: “Claw 1d4 (x2)” indicates two claw attacks, each inflicting 1d4 damage. AH (unarmed) Damage is usually 1 or 1-2.

**Special** is a brief listing of any abilities not explained previously. AH has none.

**Other** provides all details not fully specified above. Certain Special abilities may be abbreviated above and here described in greater detail.



# The Case of the Missing Magic



## New Creatures

### Iki

**Appearance:** Tiny gilled humanoids 12-18" tall, mottled yellow-green; 4 arms, 4 legs, 4 bulging eyes; all appendages are webbed and have small claws

**Demeanor:** Intelligence slightly below human average; inquisitive but very shy and defensive

**Power:** 10% (2)

**Defense:** 20% (4)

**Health:** 2d6+2

**Move:** 9

**Init:** 0

**Damage:** Claw 1-2 (x4) and see other

**Special:** 50% chance of sewer disease per touch

**Other:** Iki do not bite except as a last resort (1d4), but may claw up to 4 times against up to 2 opponents. When in extreme danger they may attack up to 8 times, using all arms and legs.



### Snake, Slime

**Appearance:** Small version of a standard poisonous aquatic snake

**Demeanor:** Animal

**Power:** 5%

**Defense:** 15% (3) in fluid, 5% (1) otherwise

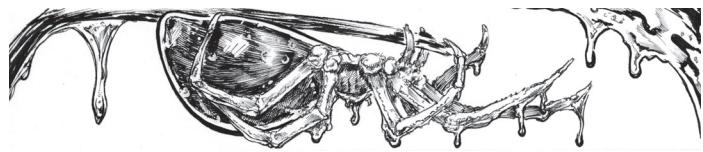
**Health:** 1d6+1

**Move:** 12 in fluid, 6 otherwise

**Init:** 0

**Damage:** 1 + poison and chance of sewer disease (2 in 6)

**Special:** Poison does not take effect for 2d6 minutes, but then causes vomiting and incapacitation



### Spider, Slime

**Appearance:** Large version of a normal aquatic spider, about 6" across

**Demeanor:** Insect intelligence

**Power:** 5-10% (1-2)

**Defense:** 30% (6) on fluids, 10% (2) otherwise

**Health:** 1d6+1

**Move:** 24 on fluids, 12 otherwise

**Init:** +10% (+2) on fluids, otherwise nil

**Damage:** 1 + chance of sewer disease (1 in 6)

**Special:** Nil

### Spider, Very Large

**Appearance:** 2' arachnid

**Demeanor:** Insect intelligence

**Power:** 6%

**Defense:** 10% (2)

**Health:** 1d4+4

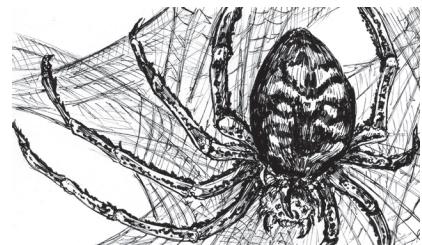
**Move:** 6,  
climbing 9

**Web Move:** 18

**Init:** +5%

**Damage:** 1, plus  
chance of sewer disease (1 in 6)

**Special:** Mild poison, +10% (+2) bonus to avoid (GM's choice of effects)



## Channel Encounters

An assortment of nasty creatures live in the waste water channels, though they rarely enter the vats themselves. If a being or object enters the fluid of a channel, there is a 50% chance that something is nearby (either within the channel or otherwise). If so it can be seen (as light sources or special vision permit), and may attack. Roll 1d10:

|      |  |
|------|--|
| 1-4  | Sewer rat  |
| 5    | Giant rat (see area 22)  |
| 6    | Slime snake (at left)  |
| 7-10 | Iki (except in areas 19-22, replace with 1-2 Very Large Spiders) |



# Acaeum Building: Cellar



## General Descriptions

**Wastewater Vat** (3, 13, 15, 17, 21): The vat is a topless cylinder 20' in diameter surrounded by a foot-thick stone wall. Three wooden extrusions from the ceiling feed waste water into the vat from the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd floors. This flow causes considerable splashing, and the upper surface of the vat wall is wet and slippery. A drainage channel almost 2' wide leads away from the vat, carrying a steady flow of effluent towards the north bridge.

**Bridge** (4, 8, 11, 23): The bridge is 8' long, slightly arched upward, and very sturdily built of wood, with metal braces and nails.

**Junk Pile** (2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 22): Each of these areas is piled nearly to ceiling height (10') with old, rotting, dusty debris, a mixture of wood, metal, and fabric. Examination immediately reveals that this was once old furniture (tables & chairs) and other unidentifiable items of similar ilk, rendered into smaller scraps up to 2 feet long. The weekly mopping by janitors obviously stops just short of the debris, and from the dust and grime, the piles have been undisturbed for decades. (Lines on the map indicate the approximate boundaries of the Junk.)

Assorted normal vermin—mice, insects, and some few normal rats—may be lurking within the piles, but none pose a hazard or threat.

### 1. Stairs West

These connect to room 147 (first floor).

### 2. Junk Pile (see General Description)

### 3. Wastewater Vat Northwest (see General Description)

A drainage channel almost 2' wide leads east.

### 4. North Bridge (see General Description)

The waste channel at this point is 6' wide and 2' deep. An arched hole in the north wall leads the effluent out of the cellar through a hemispherical hole of 5' diameter.

Hidden underneath the bridge is a flat square object, a 6' frame of thin wood with a network of thick hand-made wires attached to form a screen, its holes an inch across.

The Culprit made this screen with discarded cellar materials, and uses it to retrieve stolen items. He places it into the waste flow at and parallel to the wall (covering the 5' hole with 6" overlap on each side), and it prevents solid objects from exiting the cellar.

When placed against the wall and slid downward into the exit channel, the screen is held in place by

the flow. Solid waste material will build up slowly, and the nearby channel will start to overflow in 1 hour, increasing rapidly thereafter. The Culprit is quite aware of this, and usually goes directly to the cellar after pilfering an item.

### 5. Junk Pile (see General Description)

### 6. Junk Pile

### 7. Junk Pile

### 8. Center Bridge (see General Description)

### 9. Junk Pile (see General Description)

### 10. Stairs East

Connects to room 173 (first floor).

### 11. East Bridge (see General Description)

There are always 1d4 Iki under the bridge. Grantlyx' *Wand of Light* is hidden there, kept in a small hole in a side wall near the bottom of the waste channel. (This hole is not visible from above, though the *Wand* could be detected by use of an appropriate spell.) The Iki will retrieve the *Wand* if the Culprit asks them to do so, but will fight anyone else who intrudes (due to their agreement with the Culprit). They are certainly not loyal enough to fight to the death, however, and will flee if any of their number is seriously harmed or slain.



# Acaeum Building: Cellar



## 12. Secret Storage Room

To reach the secret door accessing this place, one must pass very near the waste flow. The passage nearest the north bridge (#4) is only 30" wide on each side, and is wet and slippery from splashing waste and past overflows. Anyone attempting this precarious route must roll a Dexterity check (on 1d100 or 1d20 as appropriate) to see if they slip and fall into the channel, where the flow is maximum (see Waste Water, Channel Encounters, and Sewer Disease, page 40).

The driest and safest route is from the west bridge (#11), and although that passage also requires such a check, it has only a 5% chance of failure. The rate here is still only moderate, and the fluid can be easily escaped.

The secret door has been activated several times by the Culprit in recent weeks, and is thus found at double normal chances of success. A 3-inch square section of stone to the right of the door, about waist-high, is likewise obvious to anyone close by. Pushing it causes the secret door to open outwards, pivoting northward... which may push an unwary intruder backward into the nearby channel. From inside room 12, the door will simply push open with little resistance (+10 to +20% [+2 to +4] bonus to normal chance to open doors).

Within the room are several pieces of old wooden furniture: a workbench, some shelves, two simple chairs, a tall cabinet (armoire), two open-topped bins (each 2' x 4'), and a large plain chest (locked; the Culprit has the key).

**Workbench:** Assortment of scattered carpentry & metalworking tools, a pry-bar, and some used towels. Below it is a bucket nearly filled with water. (This is where the Culprit cleanses his arms after retrieving an item from area 4.)

**Shelves:** Hand-made metal cans of old dried (useless) paint, dried (useless) glue, a box of hand-made 3" nails, and a 4" long Spider (stats at right). This spider is friendly with the Culprit, who feeds it occasionally.

**Bins:** Assorted pieces of wood and metal (suitable for makeshift constructions) plus a 14' length of coiled thick hand-made wire (which matches that used in the grate under north bridge #4).

**Cabinet/Armoire:** Three man-sized sage robes in black, brown, and dark green; 1 janitor coverall, 1 pair of hip-boots, 1 pair normal boots.

**Chest:** Contains 2 maroon velvet bags, one small leather bag, 3 scrolls tied with ribbons (no scroll cases), and 1 large Tome (below).

**3 Magical items:** One Tome with blank pages and a magical trap (purchased by the Culprit long ago), an electrical glyph which explodes when the tome is opened, inflicting 3d8+3 damage, (avoidance roll for half damage). One velvet bag contains Abacus' Scarab and another houses Oberon's *Incense*. (Note that the characters might not know about Oberon's missing item at this point.)

**4 Non-magical items:** One leather bag (containing 20 pp, 20 gp, 10 sp, 2 gems @ 50gp) and three scrolls. Two of these are old maps of the realm, and the other is the Culprit's hand-written diagram of the family lineage of Hestin Medina and his ancestors, including his White Elf relative four generations back.

## Spider

**Appearance:** Normal spider, 4 inches long  
**Demeanor:** Insect intelligence, but somewhat domesticated

**Power:** 1%  
**Defense:** 0  
**Health:** 1  
**Move:** 3  
**Init:** 0  
**Damage:** 0 + poison (diarrhea 1d6 turns later)

## 13. Wastewater Vat Northeast (see General Description)

A drainage channel almost 2' wide leads west.



## Acaeum Building: Cellar



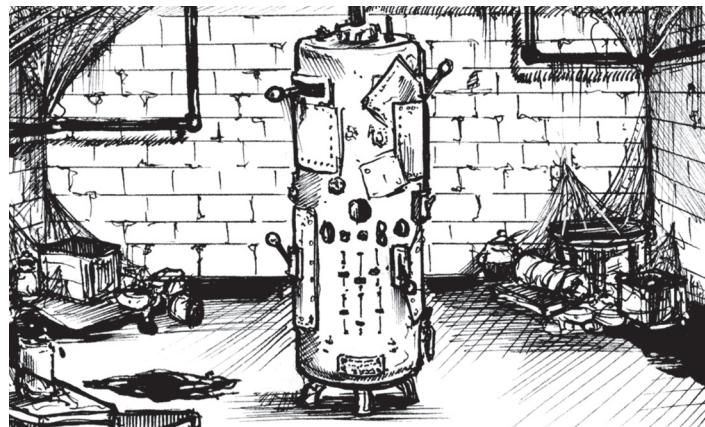
### 14. Secret OLSTON Room or: Why All This Is Going On!

The secret door to this room is hard to find (-10% to -20% [-2 to -4] penalty to normal chances), but if magical means of seeing invisible things are used, or if an expert on tracking examines the area, it will be automatically found. However, its small secret trigger is entirely separate, located 8 feet north of the door on the lower wall, merely 4 inches from the floor, and that area must also be examined for the door is to be opened easily.

If simply forced, the secret door will only push inward with great difficulty: add the Strength scores of all those pushing together and express the total as a percentage.

This room is piled with metal objects and refuse, most of it rusting and none of it useful. The largest single object stands in the southeast corner, roughly cylindrical and 5' tall. Various bits and pieces of metal protrude from it, as if dozens of arms or levers. More than 30 small gem-like facets of various colors are embedded in its surface (but if tampered with they may break, being merely glass lenses for lights within).

The objects comprising the upper half of this object (and most of the arms/levers) were added by the Culprit's tinkering, and have no purpose. A brass plate 2" tall and 6" long is affixed to its base, and the plate is marked with readable lettering: the word "**OLSTON**" is centered in the upper portion, and below that is the phrase "**CHICAGO CITY GOVERNMENT**" in slightly smaller letters. (GM Note: pronounce this "CHICK-ago.")



A close examination of this "OLSTON" device reveals six holes around half of its lower body. These correspond in size and shape to the items listed on the table below—though alternatives are certainly usable, if they are both magical and of the appropriate shape and size.

Other items may match the size of the holes, of course. Most wands will fit into hole #4, and many jars might fit hole #6. The items listed are only those mentioned in this scenario which match the hole sizes.

If a magic item is inserted into the corresponding hole, the OLSTON device is energized: all the lights illuminate, and a soft hum begins to sound from within it. The next item inserted causes the lights to start flashing, apparently at random, and the sound increases. The third and subsequent items cause the lights to flash with greater frequency and intensity, and additional clunking and grinding noises emanate from the device. When the sixth item is inserted, there is a loud "THUNK" noise as all the items are locked into place, and the OLSTON device then proceeds to its ultimate purpose (see page 48).

| Hole                 | Dimensions                | Item                       | User    |
|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------|
| 1 Hexagon            | 2" across, 2" deep        | Gem of Seeing              | Feegis  |
| 2 Circle             | 4" diameter, 2" deep      | Amulet of Silence          | Purlman |
| 3 Square             | 1" across, 2" deep        | Incense of Memorization    | Oberon  |
| 4 Circle             | 1" diameter, 12" deep     | Wand of Light              | Grantyx |
| 5 Figure-eight shape | 3" tall, 2" wide, 2" deep | Scarab of Study            | Abacus  |
| 6 Circle*            | 4" diameter, 3" deep      | Jar of Ointment of Healing | Hestin  |

\* 6: This hole is 4" diameter and 3" deep, but leading to an inner hole only 2" in diameter and 1" deep



# Acaeum Building: Cellar



## 15. Wastewater Vat Southeast (see General Description)

A drainage channel almost 2' wide leads northwest.

## 16. Room Southeast

## 17. Wastewater Vat South (see General Description)

A drainage channel almost 2' wide leads northwest.

## 18. Secret Room South #1

The entrance to this clean room can be easily found, as the Culprit has been using it regularly. It contains a wooden clothes rack along the west wall and a locked chest in the southwest corner. Hanging upon the rack are three spare robes in black, brown, and green, and 1 green janitor's uniform. All are the same size (that of the Culprit). The chest is 2' long, 1' deep, 18" tall, with handles on each end. There may be nothing under the chest, but if Feegis' Gem has been purloined at this point, it is here.

Careful examination and good lighting will reveal a large patch of dry (old) blue mold on the southern portion of the east wall. If touched, it releases a 10' x 10' cloud of spores which may take root in any living being within range (avoid poison with -10% [-2] penalty). Infected victims will start turning into blue mold in 1d10 minutes, losing 10% of their health points each 10 minutes thereafter. Treat the resulting infection as a disease.

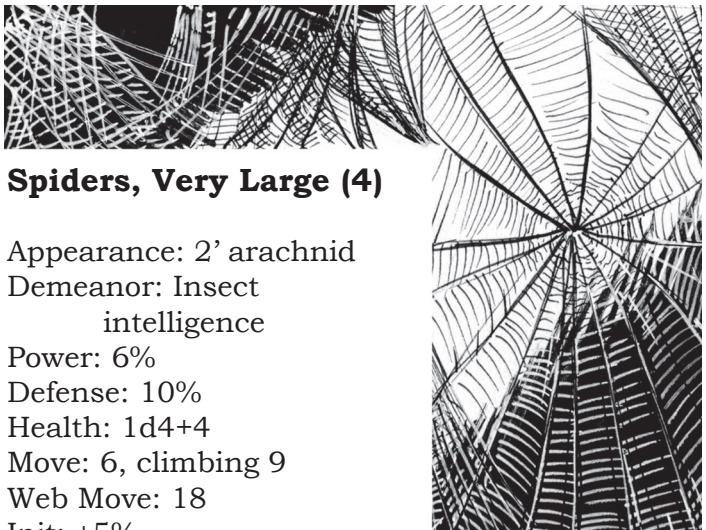
If the chest is unlocked and opened, a small but powerful scythe-trap lashes out at 1' height, neatly cutting through one leg of anyone standing before it. (Extreme bleeding and resultant effects are left to the Game Master, though the damage should be 40-70% [1d4+3] of the victim's total.) The open chest is obviously very shallow, containing only the powerful flat spring that powered the scythe.

If the chest is picked up or overturned (whether opened or not), it is found to be a simple cover, its sides shielding items on the floor from view. (There is no 'false bottom' in the chest.)

## 19. Secret Room South #2

Musty old smells issue forth if the secret door to this room is opened, and webs can be seen within. Herein lurk a family of 4 monstrous spiders (stats below; GM's discretion on poison effects).

A small hole (12-15 inches across) may be found behind the webs, connecting this area to the adjacent waste vat room (21). The spiders survive by occasionally exiting via this route and catching an occasional rat, normal or giant.



### Spiders, Very Large (4)

Appearance: 2' arachnid

Demeanor: Insect  
intelligence

Power: 6%

Defense: 10%

Health: 1d4+4

Move: 6, climbing 9

Web Move: 18

Init: +5%

Damage: 1 + chance of sewer disease (1 in 6)

Special: Mild poison, +10% (+2) bonus to avoid

## 20. New Junk Pile

Only part of this area is piled with Junk, and all of it is newer than what is found elsewhere. Shards of broken furniture and the like are occasionally dumped here, the most recent only 4 months past. The pile is not as tall as in other areas, and only occupies the area by the North wall.

Careful examination and good lighting will reveal a large patch of fresh (moist) blue mold on the east wall. If touched, it releases a 20' x 20' cloud of spores which may take root in any living being within range (avoid poison with -10% [-2] penalty). Infected victims will start turning into blue mold in 1d10 minutes, losing 10% of their Health each 10 minutes thereafter. Treat the resulting infection as a disease.



## Acaeum Building: Cellar



### 21. Waste Vat Southwest (see General Description)

A drainage channel almost 2' wide leads northeast.

Giant rats from room 22 are often in or near this area. The most cursory inspection will reveal a small hole, 12-15" across, high on the southern portion of the east wall. This hole contains some obvious spider webs, and connects to room 19.

### 22. Junk Pile (see General Description)

Amongst the piles of rubble, here dwells a colony of 16 giant rats. They will flee if possible but are rather hungry and irritable, and may attack en masse without reason or warning. However, they can be immediately distracted by food of any sort.

### Rats, Giant (16)

Appearance: Verminous, murine, unkempt  
Demeanor: Cowardly animal

Power: 3% (1/2)  
Defense: 15% (3)  
Health: 1d4 each  
Move: 12, or 6 if climbing  
Init: 0  
Damage: Bite 1-2 + chance of sewer disease (1/6)

### 23. South Bridge (see General Description)

The waste channel at this point is 3' wide, leading north.

Read to players at the conclusion of the adventure:

### The Last Answer

Technologists from another planet built the OLSTON device to convert magical power into a bomb. It was transported here by nonmagical means shortly after the Acaeum buildings were constructed, in hopes that either agents or bystanders would activate it.

Detonation will occur 1 hour after the final item is inserted, and results in the molecular disintegration of everything within 500 yards, leaving a hemispherical radioactive crater. The device is highly resistant to magical attempts to destroy it, rather than move it, and will absorb the magical energy, which may in turn reduce the time to detonation.

Although the detonation cannot be prevented once the device is triggered, the OLSTON can be magically *teleported* to a remote location if a specialist able to cast such spells arrives in time... which, in this scenario, he will.

**Here Ends  
The Case of the Missing Magic**



## Further Gaming & Reading



### Want More?

The sub-sub-genre combining Mystery and Fantasy is rare in the Roleplaying industry. Publishers treat magic in various ways, but most present it as hugely powerful... thereby making mysteries problematic at best. However, some few game systems have succeeded. The list is so short that several mystery novels with fantasy settings and characters are also given here, and many will doubtless be familiar to the hobby game aficionado.

- Most Recommended:

**Gumshoe** RPG System (by Robin D. Laws, from Pelgrane Press)

Mostly fantasy. Each work is very theme-specific (too many to list here; Gothic Vampires, Mutants, Cthulhu, *et al.*)

**Dresden Files** RPG (by Lenny Balsera *et al.*, Evil Hat Productions) \* new in 2012

Large, detailed, well-executed rules set... but intensive; not for dilettantes. Knowledge of the novels a major plus (near-critical).

- Modern non-fantasy mystery:

A Taste For Murder RPG (by Graham Walmsley, self-published)

Dirty Secrets RPG (by Seth Ben-Ezra, from Dark Omen Games)

GURPS Mysteries (by Lisa Steele, from Steve Jackson Games)

Supplement for SJG's "Generic Universal Role Playing System"

- Medieval setting (but not fantasy genre)

Medieval Mystery RPG (by Simon Washbourne, from Beyond Belief Games)

Brother Cadfael (novel series) by Ellis Peters

- Fantasy Mystery Novel Series

| Series Name                | Author        | Publisher                        |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Dresden Files              | Jim Butcher   | Roc Books (Penguin)              |
| Garrett P.I.               | Glen Cook     | Roc                              |
| Kitty Norville             | Carrie Vaughn | Tor Books (Macmillan)            |
| Vlad Taltos                | Steven Brust  | Tor                              |
| The Hollows                | Kim Harrison  | Voyager (HarperCollins)          |
| The Necromancer Chronicles | Amanda Downum | Orbit (Hachette / Little, Brown) |

---

??? **psst:** There is one last mystery to solve... but first you have to find it. Hint: See page 59.  
eMail your solution to [Frank@EldritchEnt.com](mailto:Frank@EldritchEnt.com) and you could win a prize!

???

# Employee Profile

The Acaeum • A SEF INDUSTRY

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Do not Remove  
from this Facility

## Cindersport, Lenore

Biometric: Female Human, age 64  
Position: Personnel Director  
Employed for: 9 years  
Primary work area: Security  
Specialty: Humanoid Resources & Relations



### General Notes

Lenore is short (4'6"), thin and wiry, grey-haired and wrinkled, but is extremely quick-witted and has outstanding talents for both handling people and managing resources. Though extremely busy, responsible for the entire staff of the History building (assisted by her senior staff Managers Ruchson and Medina), she tries to be very approachable, making time to handle any and all direct inquiries and internal complaints. She can 'turn on the charm' quickly and naturally—and turn it off sharply and icily if provoked.

Lenore plays strategy games in her (minimal) spare time and is a chess master of global rank (nicknamed "Cinder-kill" in that field), never missing the annual championship tournament in the Old Country each summer. She lives mostly in a (rent-free) apartment in the building (Room 218), but also owns a townhouse in the city.

If interviewed by the characters, Lenore will answer any questions within the limits of internal Security (quite aware that the characters are temporary employees), but will waste no time on them.

# Employee Profile

The Acaeum • A SEF INDUSTRY

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Do not Remove  
from this Facility

## Daython, Oberon

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Biometric:         | Male Human, age 37  |
| Position:          | Probationary Sage (Brown robe)  |
| Employed for:      | 19 months   |
| Primary work area: | 1st floor<br>temporary assignments on other floors as needed          |
| Specialty:         | Commercial history<br>(especially Trade Routes & evolution of Supply) |

General Notes: Oberon is competent but repellent. He is fat and has warts, and deeply insecure about his physical self, finding comfort only in his mental prowess. He is supremely intelligent but obviously arrogant about it, lacking any pretense of tact or charisma. If asked for details within his specialty he can recite a flood of facts, but may fabricate additional data to seem more learned than he actually is. Oberon is unmarried and unattached, having few friends, and lives in

a small and shabby apartment in a squalid part of the city.

The characters will know nothing of Oberon until the Culprit mentions that he lost something. He initially claims otherwise, but if pressured will confess that he has been using *Incense of Memorization* (a personal possession purchased on the 'black market') to enhance his skills, even bringing it to work occasionally (using it in any unused 1st floor room during his lunch break). (The *Incense*, when burnt for but one minute, greatly enhances the ability to memorize facts for 10 minutes thereafter.)

Oberon 'misplaced' his *Incense* about a month ago (25 April), and is still searching for it both on the Acaeum premises and off. He didn't report its loss because of his shame (wanting to appear brilliant without such magical aids). He did mention its loss to his fellow employee Merlin, who performs his tasks on a similar work schedule, and the two work together on occasion, being of similar low rank. Of course, the Culprit stole it from Oberon's personal effects in an Employee Storage Room (one of the light-security rooms on the 1st floor; Oberon doesn't remember which location was used that day).



# Employee Profile

The Acaeum • A SEF INDUSTRY

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Do not Remove  
from this Facility

## Dimstave, Merlin

Biometric:

Male Half-elf, age 155  
(human equivalent: 57)

Position:

Apprentice Sage (Black robe)  
2 years 5 months  
in consideration for promotion  
to Probationary (Brown robe)

Employed for

1st floor; also temporary  
assignments on  
other floors as needed

Primary work area:

Recent History (Genealogy)

Merlin is calm and cool, confident in his job and his abilities. A former professional adventurer (cleric and fighter), he found this new career that provides a practical use for his long-time hobby of family histories. As a bottom-ranked employee, he is eager to please and very respectful. He is currently single, and has an apartment in the city. He was married decades ago, but his wife was slain in an assault on a lair of giants. He dates occasionally but half-heartedly, his physical needs waning in importance as he ages.

If quizzed about the Security Report (below), Merlin admits that he has had trouble making ends meet on Apprentice wages, and had to sell some of his old magical items at the Guilds, including a Potion of Healing about 9 months ago (true). He was going to similarly sell his Potion of Climbing on the day in question, but it was stolen, and he had to sell a clerical spell scroll instead. (This is verifiable if he is not the Culprit, but is otherwise entirely false.)



Merlin mentions that he has heard 'by the grapevine' (office gossip) that other unreported items are also missing... such as one belonging to a Probationary sage named Oberon.

Special: If Merlin is the Culprit, he adds that "the grey sage Grantyx is also missing something... but that probably happens a lot, he's old and forgetful, as everyone knows." Merlin is ad-libbing in attempting to shift the investigators' focus onto the obnoxious Oberon, but makes a potentially serious error in mentioning Grantyx (see "A Subtle Clue," page 19).

By the end of the interview, Merlin is quite aware of the danger from the party, but is determined to succeed, having spent years preparing for this. He will stick by his story. Note however that if he believes his apprehension to be imminent, he will try to flee (see "Run for It", page 23).

*Security Report:* Apprentice Sage Merlin Dimstave reported the theft of a magical *Potion of Climbing*, a personal possession, on Friday 26 April. He had left it in a designated Employee Storage area (room 138 on that day). Sixteen other employees used that room on that day, and all were interviewed; none reported any pertinent information, though three remembered seeing a potion bottle, that being somewhat unusual. Dimstave stated that he intended to sell the item to a dealer in the city on his lunch break. A *Potion of Climbing* enables the imbiber to climb flawlessly, even up sheer surfaces, for about one hour. Category: Felony Theft; reported to City Constabulary.

(Signed by Edgar Doncus; countersigned by Rick Ruchson)

# Employee Profile

The Acaeum • A SEF INDUSTRY

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Do not Remove  
from this Facility

## Dyfrost, Abacus

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Biometric:         | Female Half-elf, age 126 (human equivalent: 46)  |
| Position:          | Respected Primary Sage (Tan robe)  |
| Employed for:      | 14 years; eligible for promotion to Senior (Yellow robe)   |
| Primary work area: | 3rd floor  |
| Specialty:         | Continental Prehistory prior to the Migration from the 'old country', specific to elves, dwarves, and gnomes |

Abacus is a pleasant (if slightly temperamental) redhead in the prime of her professional career. She tends to use an elevated vocabulary but, being other-oriented and considerate, will rephrase or elaborate if appropriate. She is married (to a slightly older half-elf male cleric) with no children, and lives in the suburbs. The couple's income is notably above average.

When interviewed, Abacus seems to be somewhat nervous, but will deny it if asked. (Her gender-biased boss, Dr. Purlman, has held back her promotion to tenured Senior Sage [yellow], and if she is blamed for the loss of the *Scarab*, that will give him a 'real' reason to suppress her advancement.)

Abacus mentions that she has heard 'by the grapevine' (office gossip) that there may be other items unaccounted-for, but cannot recall any details about such.

The *Scarab of Study* was used (by various staff) to enhance the ability to gain insights into puzzles, and/or assess the relevance or value of individual bits of information.



**Security Report:** Respected Primary Sage Abacus Dyfrost reported on Thursday 25 March that a magical *Scarab of Study* appeared to be missing from the 3rd floor Archives. She had placed the *Scarab* on a work table in mid-afternoon, and was then unable to find it half an hour later. Dyfrost contacted Security within minutes thereafter. Others in the area noted nothing unusual. Category: Accidental Misplacement. (signed by Rick Ruchson)

## Feegis

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Biometric:         | Male Gnome, age 332 (human equivalent: 54) |
| Position:          | Senior Sage Secundus (Yellow robe)         |
| Employed for:      | 24 years (2 years 11 months at History)    |
| Primary work area: | 2nd floor                                  |
| Specialty:         | Shirecs                                    |

Feegis is a classic prima donna, disdainful of all 'lesser' sages and barely respectful of his superiors. He is utterly focused on the Shirec creatures (prawns) and, to a lesser extent, the Shirec collection. He rarely leaves the building, residing in his rent-free apartment (Room 204), though he also owns a large part of a gnome-city in the mountains about 120 miles to the northeast, to the benefit of his extended family. The Acaeum rotates Feegis between the four buildings, and most recently (about 3 years earlier) he completed a five-year update/revision of the Shirecs in the Opinion building.

Feegis is one of the few elite individuals on the continent who know how to tend the prawns, and uses his *Gem of Seeing* (the only magic item on the 2nd floor) during that work. Grantyx, Feegis' co-worker and supervisor, has a superior knowledge of the Shirec process, but Feegis is far better with the creatures themselves, having taken Sef training in a deepsea enclave for several years. He cannot be promoted to White Sage until Grantyx retires, and resents Grantyx' refusal to do so. However, Feegis recognizes that given the short human lifespan, the grey sage cannot last more than a decade or two, and the long-lived gnome can easily wait that long.

As previously noted, Feegis will refuse any interview attempts other than during his



customary 6 pm dinner break; but the investigators may see him scurrying about on the 2nd floor, tending to the Shirecs and related business. They may interrupt him for up to 5 minutes, though if so he will be irritable (even rude) and impatient to get back to his work.

The *Gem of Seeing* allows the user to examine things at a microscopic level of detail from up to 3' range, and here enables Feegis to accurately assess the prawns' expressions, moods, and health.

**Important Note:** Feegis keeps the *Gem* in his apartment when he is therein, and on his person when he plans to tend the prawns. But otherwise he leaves it in a small unlocked box in Shirec storage room 223 (a secure area), for fear that it might otherwise be lost, damaged, or stolen. Grantyx and the Culprit are the only ones who know of this box, Grantyx due to his Shirec work, and the Culprit through assisting Feegis at some point in the past (as he knows he'll need the *Gem* eventually).

# Employee Profile

The Acaeum • A SEF INDUSTRY

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Do not Remove  
from this Facility

## Grantyx

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Biometric:         | Male Human, age 78                                 |
| Position:          | Senior Sage Reseco* (Grey robe)                    |
| Employed for       | 42 years   |
| Primary work area: | 2nd floor; also occasional consultant 3rd floor    |
| Specialty:         | Shirecs; also Notable Events of the last 300 years |



**General Notes:** Grantyx is old and frail, but in good health. He stands erect occasionally (when he remembers to straighten up). He is often absent-minded, and in conversation is often reminded of people and events from his past, prone to launch into stories and anecdotes. Yet he is still a brilliant scholar and keen observer, as he will demonstrate with occasional penetrating comments. (His memory is still good, and he is occasionally called in on special 3rd floor projects due to his expertise in Historical Events.)

The Grey Sage was married twice before but has been a widower for almost 20 years. He is moderately wealthy, and lives in his (rent-free) apartment in the building (room 231).

Grantyx is especially fond of good raspberry pastries, and the Cafeteria staff make the effort to get some daily, as a personal favor to him. If the characters find and speak with Grantyx in the cafeteria, he will be enjoying a raspberry turnover. If they then share their fondness for such delicacies (whether real or feigned), those comments will remind Grantyx of an assistant he once had, who also loved them... someone named Harvey, a Green Sage who he hasn't seen for a long time (actually only about 6 weeks, as "Harvey" was the alias of the Culprit, who developed a

brief friendship with Grantyx to gain access to the 3rd floor archives and pilfer the *Scarab* and *Wand*.)

Grantyx respects Abacus highly and remembers that she misplaced a *Scarab* a while ago. He also remembers the recent loss of Dr. Purlman's *Amulet*: "Who hasn't?" he scoffs, "You can hear him a block away!"

**The Wand:** When first interviewing Grantyx, the characters may or may not have heard that he lost something. If they do know, and do ask him, he remembers and elaborates freely. He was using a standard *Wand of Light* some weeks ago (in late March), and couldn't find it shortly afterward, but assumed that someone else had it... but he hasn't seen it since, which is a bit odd (he reflects). He didn't report it because it's a minor item, and because he thought it must be about somewhere. He dismisses it as irrelevant: "Not worth worrying about; very common."

A *Wand of Light* can produce light of any specified brightness and color (up to daylight strength) in a small area, lasting 1 hour.

\* "Reseco" is an Acaeum title meaning "diminished", normally transitional and leading to "Emeritus" (retired). However, Grantyx has been "Reseco" for 14 months, and stubbornly refuses to retire. (Both titles from Latin.)

## Medina, Hestin

Biometric: Male Half-elf, age 168 (human equivalent: 62)  
Position: Personnel Manager  
Employed for 18 years  
Primary work area: Personnel  
Specialty: Humanoid Resources & middle Management



Hestin is congenial, and detail-oriented, with average interpersonal skills. He is intensely loyal and dependable. He is married and lives with his wife (who works in real estate sales) in a middle-class home in the suburbs of the city. They have three grown children, none of whom are adventurers, to their relief. Hestin hopes to retire within a few years, but wants to achieve a notable success in his profession before he does so. As Personnel Manager he reports directly to Dr. Lenore Cindersport, and his peer and closest friend within the Acaeum is Rick Ruchson (Security Manager).

The secret shame of the Medina family lurks four generations back, when one of the females married a White Elf (a near-mythical underground race thought by most to be innately evil). In reality, few would blame Hestin for something that occurred hundreds of years ago. His family continues to mistakenly believe that their 'dark secret' could ruin them all.

The *Ointment of Healing* in Hestin's office is needed on a regular basis to suppress the pain and swelling of his arthritic inflammation. This is commonly known by those who work with or near him, and he doesn't mind mentioning it, nor explaining (to the characters) its use. Hestin has a jar for the office and one at home. In general (clerical) use such *Ointment* will cure minor diseases and wounds as well. The distinctive shape of the jar unfortunately matches one of the Culprit's needs, and will be the last item stolen.

(If the thief is Merlin or Oberon): Hestin's lineage was discovered by the Culprit about two years ago. Hestin knows that the Culprit is occasionally missing during working hours, and suspects that he might have something to do with the missing items, but he must keep the Culprit's secret in exchange for his silence. He has no specific knowledge of the thief's activities.

# Employee Profile

The Acaeum • A SEF INDUSTRY

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Do not Remove  
from this Facility

## Plumsue, Franklin

Biometric:

Male human, age 32

Position:

Special Assistant to Dr. Purlman

Employed for:

7 months

Primary work area:

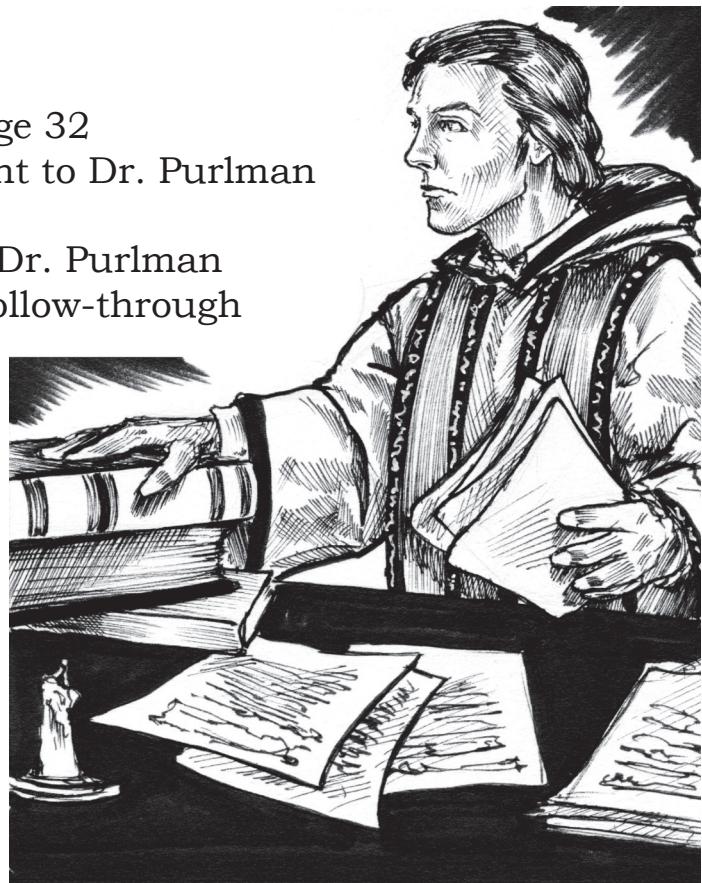
Accompanying Dr. Purlman

Specialty:

Patience and Follow-through

As the long-suffering but invaluable aide to Dr. Purlman (see next Profile), Franklin is patient, unshakeable, and meticulous. He is quite tactful and intelligent, even charming on those rare occasions when encountered alone. He keeps extensive notes on Purlman's activities and orders, and has learned to check on everything, as Purlman will remember every detail and ask about them later.

Plumsue fully remembers the recent incident resulting in the disappearance of Purlman's Amulet (and is regularly berated for his part in that affair). He will cooperate fully with the characters' investigation if possible, but will not leave Purlman's side. (He is very well paid, as his abrasive boss has chased off several assistants in the past.)



Franklin Plumsue is engaged to a fetching young half-elf female, and hopes to marry within the year. His residence is a small apartment in the city, but is accustomed to staying at Purlman's Acaeum suite or at his country Estate, as needed.

*Security Report:* Director Tokkay Smith and Director and Senior Primary Sage Todd Purlman (accompanied by his Assistant Franklin Plumsue) met with three City Council members on Sunday 21 May in Room 110, from 9 to 10 am. Everyone left that room at the conclusion of the meeting, but assorted personal effects were left in the room while the Directors escorted the City Executives to the building's exit. Mr. Plumsue returned about ten minutes later, gathered all the remaining materials, and delivered them to the Directors in the lobby. Dr. Smith went upstairs while Dr. Purlman and his assistant proceeded to Security, to transfer Dr. Purlman's sole magic item (an *Amulet of Silence*) to the 3rd floor (standard procedure due to Intrafloor security measures). At that time the *Amulet* was found to be missing. Subsequent interviews with all on-duty personnel of all divisions were immediately ordered by Dr. Purlman but produced no additional information. Security procedures handled by Director Cindersport and Rick Ruchson. Category: Felony Theft, but the incident has NOT been reported to City Constabulary (by order of Dr. Smith, pursuant to Special Request by Mr. Medina).

# Employee Profile

The Acaeum • A SEF INDUSTRY

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Do not Remove  
from this Facility

## Purlman, Todd

Biometric:

Position:

Employed for

Primary work area:

Specialty:

Male human, age 53

Senior Sage Primus (White robe) and  
Assistant Director (Head of Operations)

4 years 5 months

Administration (all floors) and 3rd floor

Building Operations, and (as Sage) the Royal Family

Dr. Purlman (as he prefers to be called) is a jerk. He is manipulative and self-centered, inconsiderate of others. Unfortunately for the Acaeum staff he is also a brilliant Operations Director, able to remember hundreds of bits of information about the building and its functions, and is a perfect multi-tasker, able to direct any number of complex operations simultaneously. Worse yet, he is recognized and internationally heralded as the top expert on the Asperman family (the Royals), from King John I ("the Founder") through John IV (who vanished with the capital city of Empyrea some five decades ago), as well as the various Queens, progeny, ancillary Prime Ministers, and the like.

Purlman tends to be loud, and he can be heard at a distance no matter what his activities, whether giving orders, firing people, or merely complaining. It is almost impossible to satisfy him.

He is also a misogynist, believing that women are inherently inferior, and thus does not get along well with Lenore Cindersport or Abacus Dyfrost. He is almost always accompanied by his Special Assistant, Franklin Plumsue (*previous page*).

Purlman's *Amulet of Silence* is a well-known adjunct to his activities, as it enables the user to silence anyone within 30' range for a period of 5 minutes. (It can be used once per hour at most.) He is apt to use it whenever anyone starts besting him in an argument.

Purlman was formerly the Chief Executive of a shipping firm owned by the Sef. He joined the Acaeum more than four years ago, and rumors attribute his appointment to Political Influence.

Dr. Purlman resides either in his complimentary suite (Room 209) or at his Estate ("Palomino Pastures") just outside of the city, where he raises purebred horses. He is thrice-divorced and currently unattached.

*Interview:* As noted, Purlman refuses to schedule an interview with the characters, but they can catch him on Friday during his lunch break. He always has a salad (trying to lose some weight) and always complains about the "slimy turkey" (which he keeps trying, in vain). He will be minimally cooperative, but will refer the party to his Assistant (Plumsue) for most details. If bothered excessively (which is likely, given his personality) he starts shouting abusively, while everyone else in the Cafeteria pretends not to notice (having heard such tirades repeatedly in the past).



# Employee Profile

The Acaeum • A SEF INDUSTRY

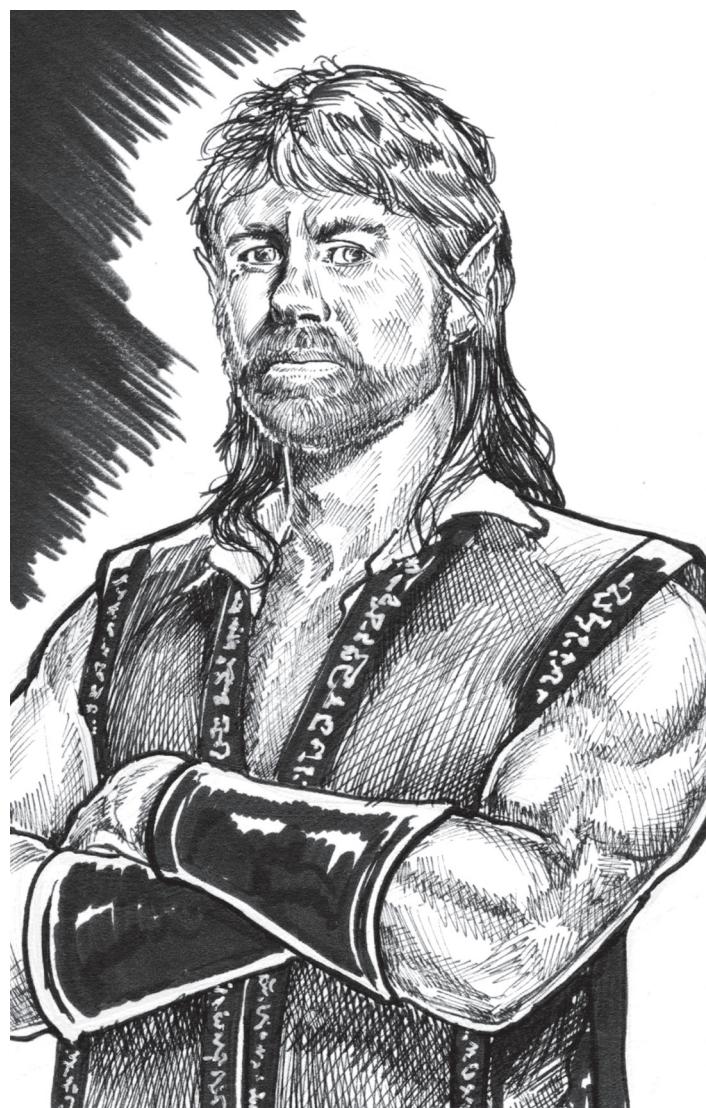
**CONFIDENTIAL**

Do not Remove  
from this Facility

## Ruchson, Rick

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Biometric:         | Male half-elf, age 90 (human equivalent: 33) |
| Position:          | Security Manager                             |
| Employed for       | 12 years                                     |
| Primary work area: | Security                                     |
| Specialty:         | Combat                                       |

Ruchson is of average height with a slender, muscular build. He has average intelligence, certainly enough for his job, but prefers to stay in operations rather than desk-bound management. He looks remarkably like a young Carlos Norris, the American film personality (and you should mention this to the players).



Rick has amazing reflexes, and can pick a flying insect out of the air\*. If attacked (with a punch by an irate visitor, for example), he can pinch the offender's nose before stopping the punch, using the same hand for both maneuvers... which usually gives them pause. *You may wish to demonstrate this with a minor altercation in the presence of the investigators.*

As Security Manager, Rick often contacts his 'opposite number' in the hierarchy, Personnel Manager Hestin Medina. They have a friendship of sorts, though Rick treats it far more lightly than does the lonely Hestin.

Ruchson does not have time to stop for a formal interview, but is quite willing to meet the characters at a time and place of their choosing. After-hours he is often found at his favorite bar near the city docks, where he occasionally practices his skills on belligerent sailors.

Rick has three girlfriends, all humans 22-28 years old, and lives in a small house in the suburbs, where he also teaches martial arts (by appointment only) on his days off.

(\* FRP author Steve Marsh may demonstrate this skill if you ask him nicely.)

# Employee Profile

The Acaeum • A SEF INDUSTRY

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Do not Remove  
from this Facility

## Smith, Dr. Tokkay

Biometric:

Male half-elf, age 68 (human equivalent: 25)

Position:

Senior Director

Employed for

17 years

Primary work area:

Acaeum History Building

Specialty:

Administration



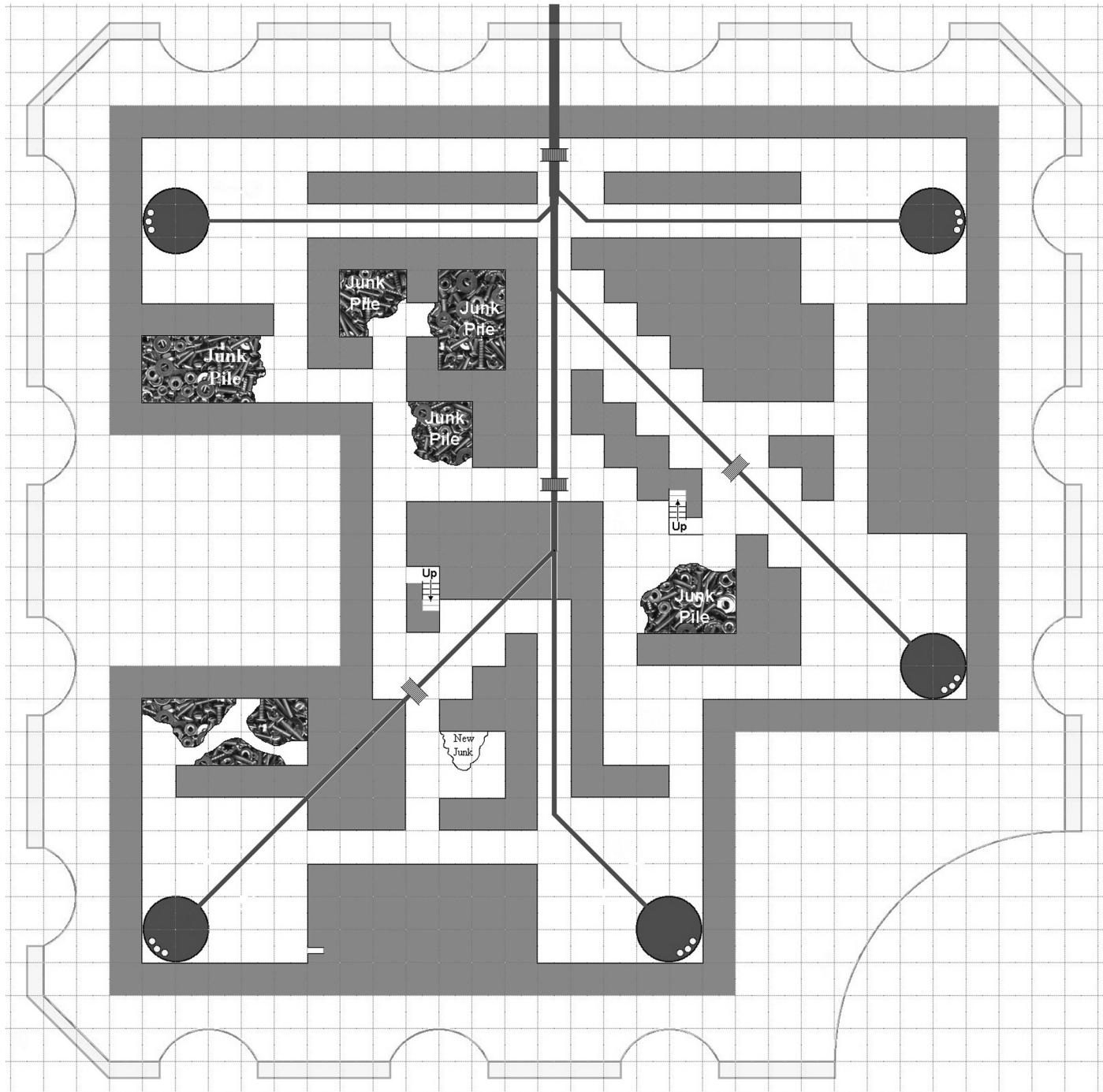
Dr. Smith is a superb administrator with a long history at this building. He has amazing skills at both negotiation and organization, and is charismatic, quick-witted, and physically fit, with excellent taste in clothing and the arts. Though quite young, he has worked exclusively in business administration for 40 years. Part of his success and quality comes from training; his wealthy family spared nothing in preparing him for life. He was graduated with highest honors from the University of Astra, in the old country, before its unfortunate destruction.

“Toke” (as he prefers to be called by almost everyone) will make time for the characters if they so request, though he has little to add to their investigation. He works Friday through Monday, 8 am to 8 pm, and often spends the other days at his businesses. He recalls the recent meeting with the City Councilmen, which ended successfully, but will not divulge its topic. (He of course also clearly recalls the events after the meeting, including the loss of Purlman’s *Amulet*.)

Dr. Smith has a private suite in the building (Room 214) and owns several properties in and around town, including a manorial estate in the country (“Green Acres”), a nearby Winery with adjacent vineyards, and an import/export business (“Smith & Jones”) in which a Sef noble (a longtime friend of the family) is a partner. His wife, an art dealer, resides at their estate.



## Cellar Map for the Players



1 square = 10'

Dark circle

Wastewater Collection Vat

**Players Note:** While you may freely use this map, *play the role* as you do so; your character is not aware of the details of unexplored areas.



## Cast of Characters



### Executives



**Tokkay Smith**



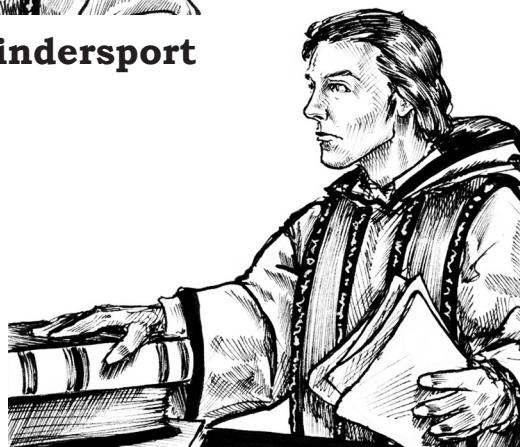
**Lenore Cindersport**



**Hestin Medina**



**Todd Purlman**



**Franklin Plumsue**



### Security

#### Rick Ruchson

Frad Grusit  
Edgar Doncus  
Herbert Mune  
Cupid Fethrok





## Cast of Characters



**Oberon Daython**

**Sages**



**Merlin Dimstave**



**gnome Feegis**

**Abacus Dyfrost**



**grey sage Grantyx**



# Eldritch Enterprises

## WORLDS OF ADVENTURE

Frank Mentzer—James M. Ward—Tim Kask—Christopher Clark

### FANTASY Adventures

Forest of Deceit

Clark

Lich Dungeon Level One

Mentzer

Quondam Fount

Mentzer

Snakeriders of the Aradondo

Kask

Tower of the Scarlet Wizard

Ward

Case of the Missing Magic

Mentzer

### SCIENCE FICTION Adventure

Dark Outpost      Ward & Clark

### FICTION Anthology

Heroes & Magic      All

### *and coming soon:*

Dark Visitor      Ward & Clark

Curse of the Weaver Queen      Kask

Lich Dungeon Level Two      Mentzer

Strange Allies      Clark

Print or PDF online at

**DriveThruRPG** **EldritchEnt** **NobleKnight** **Paizo**

Eldritch Ent. Ltd., Box 46464, Cincinnati, OH 45246-6464