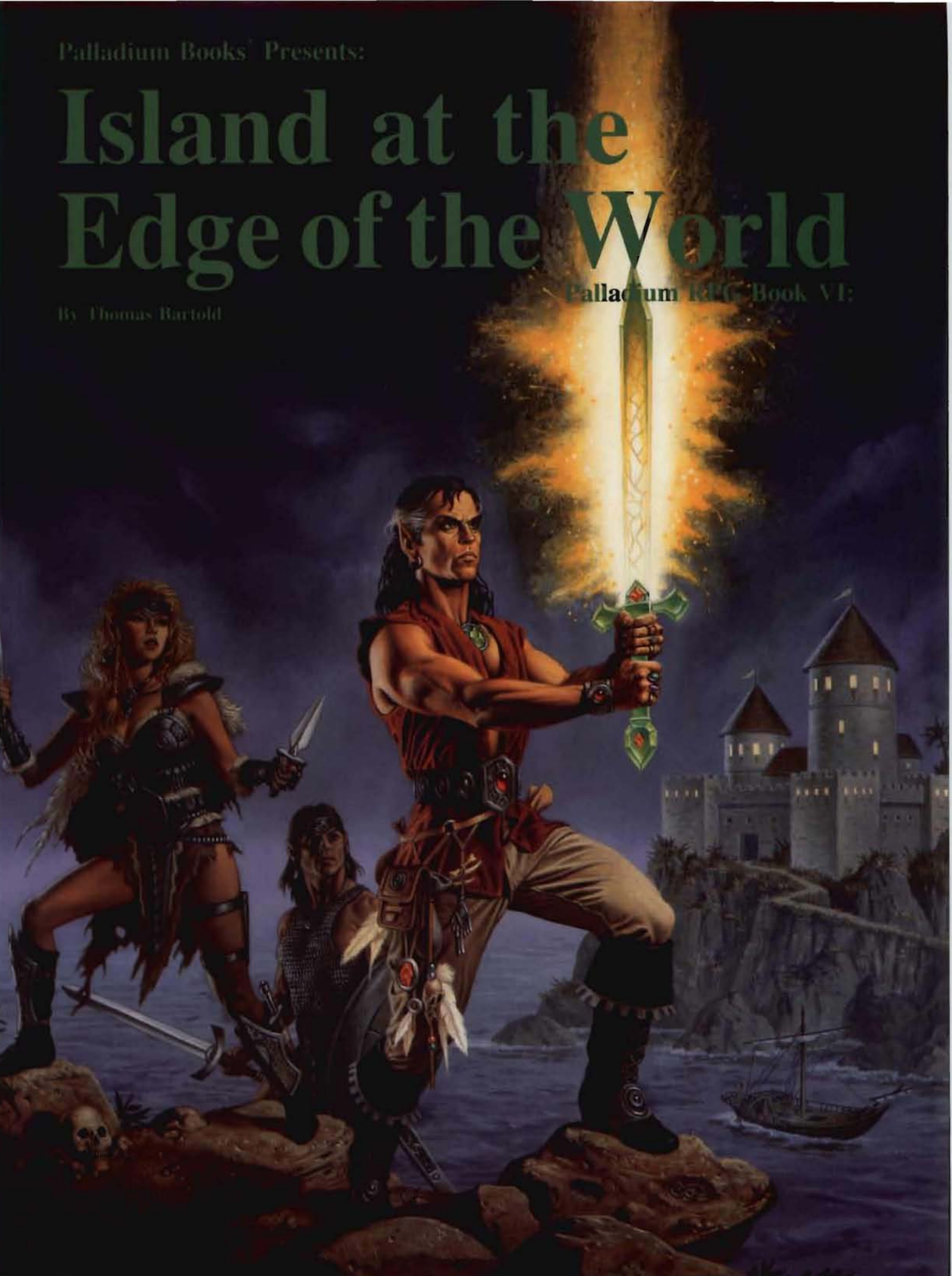


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Island at the Edge of the World

Palladium RPG® Book VI:

By Thomas Bartold



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Dedication

Dedicated to my grandparents. They began an adventure to the end of the world, forsaking comfort and security, seeking freedom and opportunity. Their spirit of adventure is my inspiration.

Thomas Bartold

First Printing — September 1993

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Island at the Edge of the World™ is published by Palladium Books® Inc., 12455 Universal Drive, Taylor, MI 48180. Printed in the USA.

Palladium Books® Presents:

Island at the Edge of the World™



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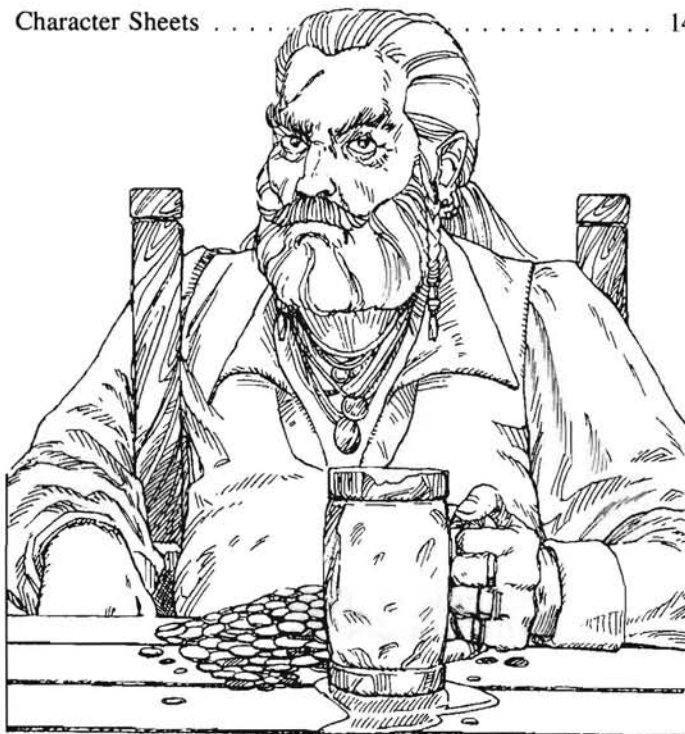
**A supplement for the Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game.
Compatible with the Palladium Books® Megaverse®!**

Special Thanks to Tom Miller for his wonderful artwork (Wayne too), Maryann Siembieda for her ideas and input, and Clyde Caldwell for a striking cover.

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About this Book

The approach Thom and I have selected for this book is a little different than anything Palladium has done in the past.

Those of you who are familiar with our other games and adventure sourcebooks know that we seldom present fully developed, place to place, room to room adventure descriptions. Instead, Palladium presents what we think of as adventure outlines. These "outlines" present a basic plot, conflict, setting, major characters, special items and key locations. The game master can then run with the story elements and develop and extrapolate on them in any way he or she would like. We have found that this style of presentation may mean a little more work for the G.M., but it also gives the G.M. a lot more flexibility in developing the story line, allows for the G.M.'s personal style and approach to playing, and makes the adventure easier to fit into an existing campaign. This approach also means that no two adventures will be exactly the same, even though the same sourcebook and characters were used as the catalyst. Most Game Masters seem to prefer this somewhat unique approach.

Island at the edge of the World takes the *scenario outline* concept a couple steps farther in the sheer scope of the overall plot idea and loosely interrelated stories. If played in the order they are presented, the Game Master and players will find an exciting campaign unfolding before their eyes. But even if he hops around and leaves some elements and encounters out, there should be enough material and ideas for an exciting campaign. Whether this campaign will run for four weeks or four months will depend on the particular G.M., the playing group, and how much the adventures are expanded and/or what adventure off-shoots may occur. Of course, the G.M. is free to alter, build on, deviate from, and present these adventures, ideas, characters and story elements in any way he or she would like.

There are two underlying plot themes throughout. The first, most direct theme is the resolving of conflict(s). There is trouble in the world. The oceans' waters are disappearing and that can only spell disaster. Who or what is responsible and how can it be stopped (and the water replaced)? This can obviously lead to a quest and a series of adventures. As a subplot or sideline, we provide a number of adventures, encounters and dilemmas which may or may not be related to the obvious trouble with the disappearing oceans, but adds to the overall story, with real danger and excitement.

The second intriguing plot theme is about changelings. All changelings are hated, feared and frequently slain on sight by virtually all of the mortal races of the Palladium World; humans, elves, dwarves, wolfen, orcs, etc. What are the reasons for this genocide? When did it start? How long has it gone on? Are all changelings inherently evil? Is their persecution fair — are people justified or is it pure insanity? Are the changelings a dying race teetering on the brink of extinction? Or are the rumors regarding the existence of a secret changeling society true? Do changelings represent the "end" of the world as suggested by the Tristine Chronicles?

Most of these questions are answered, or clues provided, throughout the adventures in this book. The answers are found in the form of character interactions, encounters, history, exploration, mysteries, new magic, discoveries, and adventure. An intricate web that should intrigue, excite, and enlighten the participants. A plot that has its genesis in the history of thousands of years past.

Thomas Bartold, with a little help from Maryann Siembieda (they co-developed most of the changeling plots, Noah and Axel) and I (keeping things on track and adding to some of the writing), have created what we hope is an epic adventure that touches the past and present. When these adventures are finished, the players' characters will have been embroiled in many conflicts and heroics, see events of the past in a new light, and will have glimpsed one possible and frighten-

ing future. We hope the experience is pretty epic and, if nothing else, loads of fun.

Kevin Siembieda

Contributing author, story editor & publisher



More Insight & Information

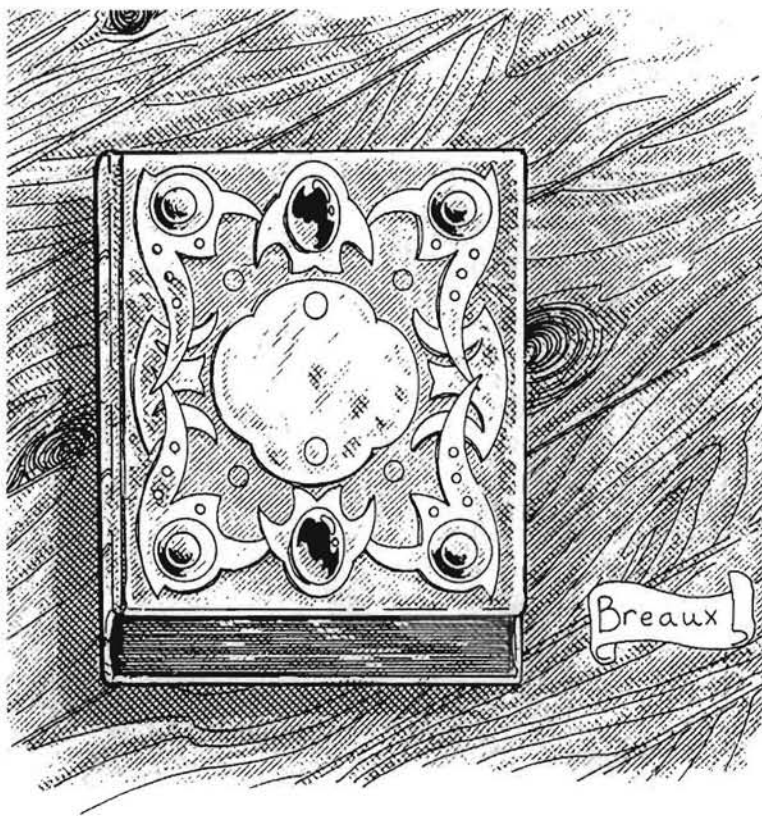
The source material, characters, adventures and adventure ideas presented in this book span two separate and unusual regions of the Palladium World. Everything is bound together by a common thread, Changelings!

There is the Old Kingdom Mountains, known as "The Great Scar" by those who live and worship there. It is a land where time stands still and many of the things of legends are still alive, if one knows where to look. Crystal Magic is being rediscovered — a forgotten magic used to create weapons that rival the rune swords!

The ghosts of ancient kings haunt the Mountain Tombs of the Old Kingdom Mountains, an underground world rife with death and the dead. In those tombs a king's ransom is said to be quietly waiting for the hero willing to confront or bargain with the dead. Allies and items acquired in the Old Kingdom Mountains may be the only way to stop an insane evil sorcerer from destroying the world.

Far to the South are the islands at the edge of the Palladium World. In the context of this book, player characters may visit the Floenry Islands, but their quest will lead them beyond the known world to an island slowly travelling towards the end of the world.

Shadows of the Past



The Mysteries of the Tristine Chronicles

In general, the **Tristine Chronicles** were written to preserve the history of the world. Although no one has ever found the original text, there are many tomes which claim to be accurate copies. There are also copies of key passages and chapters from the Tristine Chronicles found scattered round the world. A few of the famous and seemingly complete volumes are believed to be a hundred percent accurate. However, few of these authenticated and allegedly "accurate" books are actually identical, and raise some question of just how accurate they are. Still, all are incredibly valuable and, to some, they are considered holy books and sacred writings.

The Tristine Chronicles presents the chronological history of the world, beginning with the **Age of Chaos** and continuing to the present day. The writing style and tone are so consistent that it seems impossible that there could have been more than one or possibly two writers. Over the eons, thousands of historians, mages and scholars have studied the text. Most agree that it is written by a single author, the enigmatic Tristine. Yet, the Chronicles are so complete and span such an incredibly long period of time (50,000 to 600,000 years, depending on the scholar one chooses to believe) that no "mortal" being could have lived long enough to have written the book in its entirety, let alone witness all the events that the Chronicles describe! Thus, many experts have concluded that the "one" author must be immortal.

The belief that an immortal being is responsible has led many church, cult, philosophical leaders, kings and peasants alike to point to their favorite god as the author. One of the more popular assertions is that the god Thoth is Tristine. Thoth is one of the few gods well known as a great author and he has existed since the Age of Chaos. Those who disagree argue that Thoth would certainly have claimed authorship to such a renowned book and that the text in The Chronicles is not written in any of the styles attributed to Thoth. The god Thoth enjoys this debate and notoriety and avoids the question of authorship entirely neither denying or confirming the speculation.

Some scholars contend that there is evidence that the text in The Chronicles continues to this day! They are quick to point to the different editions, ALL supposedly the "True" Tristine Chronicles, many separated by thousands of years, with the only difference being the inclusion of new, additional chapters about more recent events. One such edition is said to be only 30 years old! These believers insist that Tristine, whoever he may be, continues to chronicle the history of the Known World to this very day.

The most accepted belief is that Tristine was a great scholar, priest or adventurer who died three hundred years ago. Tristine may have befriended the gods and other ancient beings and wrote down the many stories they told to him. Or he may have been a time traveler or prophet who could see events of the past and future (there is some evidence to support this line of conjecture). Eventually, he weaved these stories into a reasonably accurate history of the Palladium World in his book, **The Tristine Chronicles**. As for the latter chapters, they are not written by Tristine but a series of skilled imitators who have copied his style of writing and have expanded the volume. Many of the kingdoms and churches with ancient editions of the Chronicles are quick to accept this theory because, to their thinking, it proves that their book(s) "are" authentic and possibly even written by the hand of Tristine himself. In some circles, this debate has taken on serious moral and philosophical overtones.

Regardless of who Tristine may have been (or be), the Tristine Chronicles, in all of its myriad forms and excerpted sections, is an important and valuable book to the people of the Palladium World. It is one of the few books that offers great insight to that world's history, and possibly its future.

A Warning about the End of the World

As interpreted by most who read the Tristine Chronicles, the End of the World is destined to occur unless current events are dramatically changed. The Tristine Chronicles have been so frighteningly accurate in other areas that one must wonder if its dire predictions might not also be true. And when? It was such strong faith in the accuracy of The Chronicles, and the resulting fear, that inspired the genocide of the changeling race. The obliteration of the changelings began eons past, and fuels the prejudice that continues to this day. You see, many believe the Tristine Chronicles accuse the changelings of bringing about the End of the World.

The following passage stands out as one of the rare instances where the Tristine Chronicles, a text cataloging the past, has predicted the future. It is also one of the very few passages which refers to changelings. The deliberate reference to the "world" rather than elves or humans would seem to reflect the universal fear and prejudice toward changelings harbored by virtually all the humanoid races of the Palladium World.

When man rose from the ashes of the Elf-Dwarf War, They of Many Faces conspired to commit the greatest deception: to take the face of man and assume his place as the king of the world. Verily, there was a great deception, and the creature man calls "changeling" sought to rule the place known as, The Old Kingdom. But changelings did not try to destroy the world. Nay, they sought only to hold a part of it for themselves and sought to build upon the framework of civilization.

In all the lands, a great outcry rose up against They of Many Faces. Man asked the question that made all people tremble: "Who were safe from the changelings' powers?" So it was that the world reacted in fear and hatred, for the resounding answer to the query was, "none were safe." The changelings could take any face and any body to use as their own. Fear that the changeling would quietly conquer or change the world, consumed all who lived in the world. Thus, the world sought to purge the danger from its soul. In this one thing did the world agree, the changeling must die. Thus, from

that day forward, the blood of the deceiver and all his kin was spilled and their bones ground into the Earth. No mercy or quarter given; the changeling is forever crushed under the heel of the world.

Generation after generation, the inquisition, retribution and genocide continues. The blood of the innocent is spilled to pay for the folly of the past. The world does not hear what I now say, but one day they will recall these words and weep:

The world is engaged in its own folly. It continues to unjustly punish all changelings, and shall be punished in return; for the world cannot destroy the changeling without destroying itself. Reparation will come to the changeling as sanctuary in a paradise set apart from the rest of the world. Like an island of gold, remote and precious, the place will be found at the end of the world. Here will the changelings make a new beginning.

But take heed ye who reads my words: The changeling deceives even himself. He hides from the world and secretly gathers knowledge and power. While the changelings hide in the shadows, their hatred grows as do their numbers. When the time of waiting and hiding is over, they shall return and punish the world. The changeling deceives himself by believing the world will be reborn with bloodshed. He sees his day of vengeance as a new beginning, but it is just the beginning of the End of the World. Nothing can be born from this sad folly.

The Tristine Chronicles also has a much earlier passage about the changeling that is worth relating. It shows that changelings have existed since before the time of the Old Ones. In this passage, Tristine reveals his feelings towards the Old Ones and it would seem that he views changelings with a certain modicum of respect. His kindly attitude toward the shape changers has led some radical scholars to suggest that Tristine may himself be a changeling who has been given the gift of immortality or divination. Few support this ridiculous notion.

The passage of the ages has brought order and regularity to the world. Long before the first archaic beast/men (humans) set foot on the World, there was a different age. An age of constant change. Change and excitement.

It was not always the way of the world that the land greeted the sun as it rose in the east every morning. There was no sun. For truly, there was no sun as we think of it. The very sky rolled with light and darkness during the world's infancy. Chaos and turmoil ruled the sky. The march of seasons were unknown and the very laws of nature were not yet formed. Magic energy filled the air and mystic arts unimaginable today were commonplace. Even the accursed Old Ones had not yet come into the world.

And from the ever changing world were born its children. There arose a great many races that constantly fought for supremacy. Never was there a day, if there were such things that one could call days, that a new race was not born into the world as another perished. But even the forces of chaos could not reign supreme forever. And so it slowly came to pass that the sky settled into a constant pattern of light and dark, and soon the sun revealed itself to eyes turned upwards. And so the loss of chaos led to stagnation. New races were not born as frequently, but the tides of war and discord continued unabated. Many races would reign supreme for generations. Great civilization rose and toppled as the world settled into its violent course.

So it was in the days before elf or man that creatures walked the world whose features were so beautiful that just to look upon them would cause such rapture that one's life force was ripped asunder from its corporeal body. There was such beauty in that time that the ugliness of even an accursed Old One could not diminish it. Yet, it was a time of upheaval. Many races were extinguished simply because the laws of nature changed. In that time, many races of shape shifters came into being. As the laws of nature changed, so

did they change their form. Many of the ancient races of Man's new age still retain some of that ability: Dragons, vampires, werebeasts, the succubus, certain faerie folk, and others. Among the noblest of the shape changers were 'They of Many Faces', for they fought to bring order to the chaos.

Then came the Dreaded Old Ones. The Old Ones attempted to destroy or enslave all other living creatures. In their jealousy of the other forms, and in hatred and detestation of their own appearance, they lost the last of their sanity. The Old Ones gained pleasure only in the torment of all other life forms, for only in their own common misery did they find camaraderie. But this was a time of great change in the world. The forces that created the Old Ones began to disappear. Night and day, though not as those of later ages would understand it, began to follow each other. And as the Old Ones destroyed race after race, others came into being.

The new races were unlike those who had come before. They took only a single form, a single immutable appearance, and in this were like the Old Ones; but in this, the Old Ones found no solace. Their hatred for all life had become a monster unto itself. Even after the Old Ones learned to shape their powers into effective energies, which would later come to be called the disciplines of magic, they did not relent. Even though the Old Ones learned to change their form through magic, they did not relent. Truly, did some of the Old Ones forsake their forms entirely for pleasant appearances, never to return, but they paid great costs.

Another reference to the early changelings exists, but not in the Tristine Chronicles. It is written in the script of **The Chronicler**, believed to be an ancient Wolfen from the Northern Wilderness who has styled himself after the famous Tristine. Here again the existence of the changelings during the age of the Old Ones is mentioned. This does not prove that changelings date from that time, it is only the opinion of **The Chronicler**. Many human scholars insist that **The Chronicler** is often wildly inaccurate in his writings. Others point out that the his accusers have no proof to support their claims. The Chronicler writes:

"We don't know much about the world during the Elf-Dwarf war, and even less about the days before it. But there is one warning that stays with us: Changelings. Even before the Old Ones, the changelings were ancient. They are survivors of a time when the powers of magic and the elements wracked havoc on the world. Many of the early races were destroyed by these forces. The changeling and the Dragon stand as sentinels to that ancient time, unchanged and unchanging, but forever mutable.

"The last of the races to rise up in those days were the Old Ones. The Old Ones were unimaginably vile and disgusting in both spirit and physical form. So horrible to behold, that all who gazed upon them would quake in terror and many who saw them were driven insane. The powers that coursed through their beings changed all aspects of the world, for the Old Ones did not just wield great power, they were power incarnate. Magic was defined by the very actions of these horrid monsters. Yet the Old Ones never understood their vile nature and they loathed their own monstrous appearance. Of all the races that walked the planet, only the Old Ones could not alter their form. Even the lowly changeling could choose a visage of beauty and splendor, although limited to bipedal form, the Old Ones could not. It seems that they were resistant to change, and in fact incapable of it. The changeling by contrast is a creature of change, which is why they walk the planet to this very day."

Note: Also see the section about **Archie the Mage** and his home in **The Valley** for some startling speculation about changelings.

Some General Things about Changelings

Most intelligent life forms in the Palladium Worlds fear and hate changelings. Humans, elves, dwarves, and wolven have all waged a campaign of genocide, slaying changelings on sight for centuries on end. They see the misunderstood creatures as horrible, evil monsters who, if given the chance, would assume their image and try to destroy them. The stories describing changeling treachery are endless. Many are the tales describing how changelings will take a person's form to get close to other humanoids only to steal or worse: rape, torture, or kill.

If all the stories could be believed, malevolent changelings have taken the form of a child in order to slay the mother and then the entire family or those who offer their hand in condolence. They are said to have usurped the thrones of kings and are the best assassins and thieves in the world. There are stories and legends that are thousands of years old, which tell about the treachery, evil and murderous ways of the changeling. So many, that it is impossible to even begin to list them.

All of this rises from the intense paranoia about the shape-changing creature. One can speculate and hypothesize about the potential dangers a shape changer represents till blue in the face. Stop and think about it. A shape changer, such as the changeling, can assume any humanoid form: your mother, father, wife, husband, child, playmate, friend, priest, civil leader, king, police officer, a store clerk, visitor, a beautiful maiden, a handsome young man, and on and on. Anybody could be a changeling! Thus, a changeling could be at your side at any time, learn your darkest secrets, assume the identity of your lover or other loved one. A person could unwittingly be intimate in any number of ways with a terrible stranger and for what purpose? If the changelings are evil, that purpose can only be hurtful and/or selfish.

Many people of the Palladium World consider changelings to be demons! Others see them as hideous, mortal fiends who use their "unnatural" powers for their own selfish needs, desires and terrible pleasures. It is this devouring fear and mass paranoia, exaggerated through wild speculation about what a changeling *could do* and stories about what some changelings have done, that has created this environment of unreasoning terror and murder. Many kingdoms, communities and churches warn of the danger changelings represent and actively encourage their destruction.

Members of virtually every intelligent race of humanoids on the planet have engaged in the extermination of the changeling race. Many will kill a changeling the moment they are discovered. There is no trial or waiting period. The poor creature need not be accused of any crime, and can be the most innocent, good or heroic person to walk the earth, but he is still murdered on the spot; stabbed, beaten to death, beheaded, hung or any number of other methods, as long as it is quick and deadly. Thousands of non-changeling people have also been killed by zealots and bloodthirsty mobs simply because they were suspected of being a changeling or thought to associate with known changelings. This campaign of genocide has been terrible and has continued for thousands of years to this very day.

Many of the monster races such as ogres, trolls, orcs, goblins, eandroth, and others will tolerate the changelings and let them live among them, but even they are suspicious and careful around them. The first serious infraction and the shape changer is beaten, tortured and frequently killed. If lucky, they are merely beaten and banished from the community.

Unscrupulous, evil humans and other humanoids have used changelings for their own insidious purposes. Many thieves and assassins' guilds welcome a changeling to their organization, for who is a better thief or murderer than a creature who can instantly disguise himself by shape-changing. Better yet, if the criminal is captured and found out, it is the changeling race who is blamed, not the thieves' guild. The shape changers are often thrown to the wolves, for few will believe the words of a changeling and people are easily blinded by their hatred.

The fact that there are good and bad changelings, like any other race, is ignored. To even suggest such a thing is likely to brand that person as a dangerous "changeling lover" or dupe. The fact that there have been many brave, honorable, heroic changelings disguised as humans or members of other races, and who have helped humans and others is also dismissed. In fact, a hero who is discovered to be a changeling is assumed to have been slain by the shape changer and his identity stolen — no matter how strong the evidence may be that the hero has always been a changeling!

Strangely enough, many changelings want to walk among the people who would destroy them. They hunger for companionship, culture and to contribute to a community of people. Many secretly adopt a particular race, group or community as their own. Perhaps it is the fact that they are not allowed to build their own community that makes them so desperate to belong to one, even if it's composed of people who fear and hate them. Perhaps they cannot stand the loneliness. Or perhaps, they have never been the demonic monsters they are accused of being.

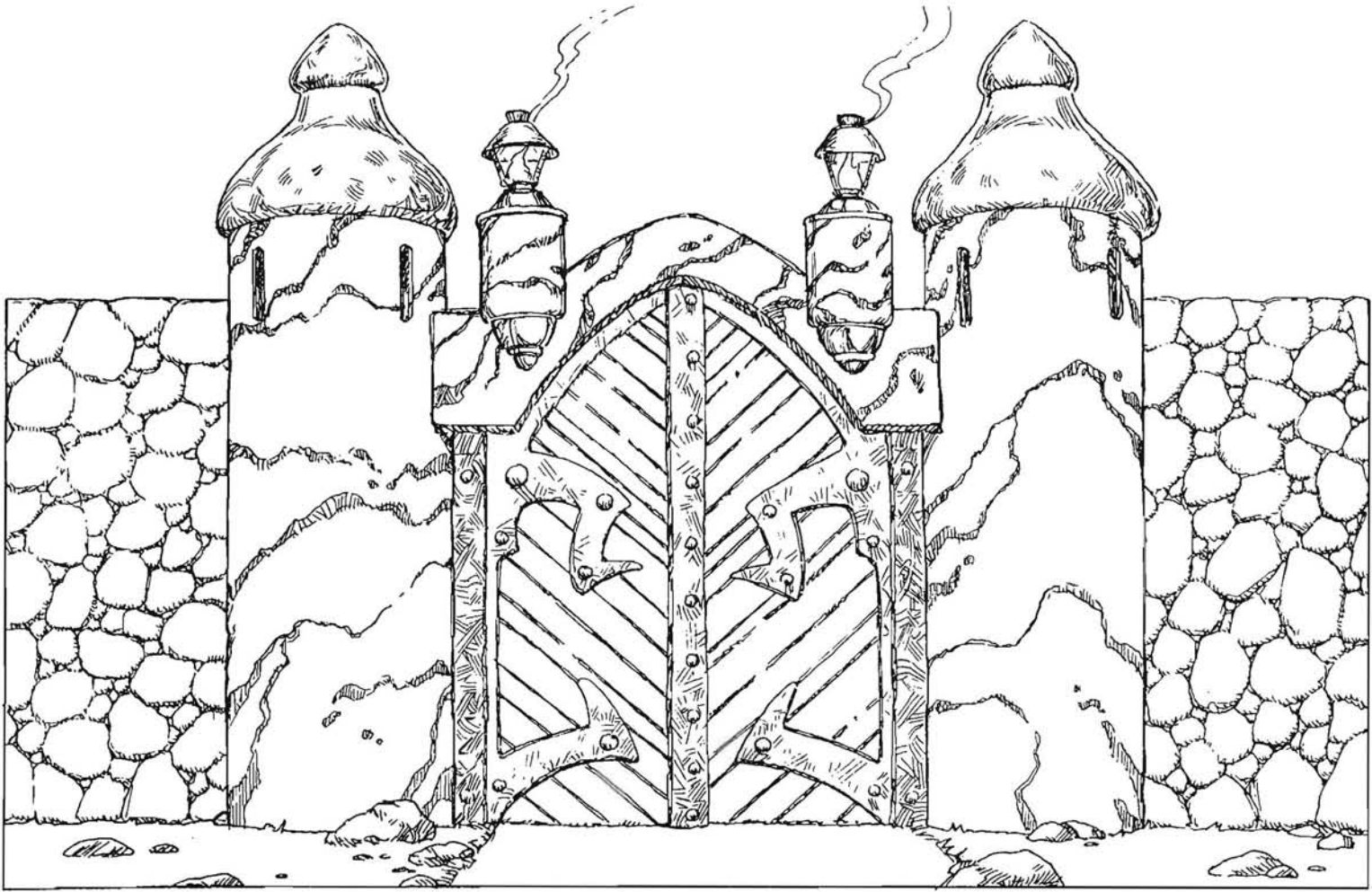
Understandably, there are changelings who have responded to hate with hate. It is hard to forgive somebody for murdering your family, friends and people. When the liberties enjoyed by others are denied you because of your race and you are attacked and killed for the crime of being born a changeling, many become bitter, angry, and hate filled themselves. This has spawned its own evil: changelings consumed with revenge, who hurt and kill all other races. Tormented characters who have fallen victim to the same blinding hatred and unreasoning emotions as their persecutors. A tragic circle of fear, hate and pain continues as these changelings kill the killers, massacring every man, woman and child who are NOT changelings, just as the changelings have been massacred. As one might guess, this only perpetuates the belief that all changelings are evil, murderous monsters.

All this having been said, not all people hate and fear changelings. Some good people everywhere try to be open-minded and accepting. Some communities knowingly allow changelings to live among them, often as equals, as long as they hide their true nature. Often it is necessary to hide their true form, because the community doesn't want to be reminded that changelings live among them — what they don't know or don't see, won't bother them. But most often, it is to avoid persecution by other larger and/or more powerful communities and organizations who would hunt them down, kill them and punish those who would dare to allow such an abomination to exist.

There is even a movement among some scholars' and the recently created (and tiny) Church of Eternal Peace to understand, welcome and protect the changeling race. The people of Eternal Peace point to the passages of the Tristine Chronicles that warns of the world's destruction. They believe that unless the people of the world can learn to accept and live with changelings that a terrible race war will erupt, and much like the devastating Elf-Dwarf wars, they will all perish. Their goal is to learn more about changelings and to promote unity and peace for all intelligent life forms (including wolven and goblins). Needless to say, this is an extremely unpopular position and these people are nearly as persecuted as the shape changers. Those who believe changelings must be obliterated see these people as traitors to their race. They are often beaten, tortured, and killed. Such is the sad state of the world regarding changelings.



The Adventure Begins



The Town of a Dozen Fracts

Design Note: There are six requirements for any town or city: *industry* (barrel making, carpentry, etc.), *services* (messengers, stores, inns, taverns, etc.), *trade* (exchanging finished goods for raw materials), *administration* (a governing body), *research* (city planning) and *development* (instituting new ways for the town and industry to operate more efficiently). Without these six elements, any habitation is nothing more than a village. A city is a town on a grand scale. The Town of a Dozen Fracts really is a town. Most other surface habitations throughout the Old Kingdom Mountains are villages.

The adventure begins in the **Town of a Dozen Fracts**, a backwater community located in the northern half of **The Old Kingdom**. It is found between the Old Kingdom Mountains and the waters of the inland sea. The town is bordered by a large river coming out of the mountains on the east, a main north-south road on the west, and the mountains and forests on the south. The farming and agricultural lands of the town expand outward to the north. The player characters are most likely to approach the Town of a Dozen Fracts from the north.

The first major building they encounter will be the **Reception Center** at the north end of town. The building is a stone fortress almost 200 feet (61 m) across. It has been built up on the foundation of one of the old curtain wall towers of the original city fortification. A guard force of 10 bearmen is usually present, but they show little interest in visitors or travelers. The guards glance at visitors on their way into town to

check them over. If any wizards or characters displaying obvious magic are with the group, the bearmen will call out to them that, "Magic is not permitted in the town." However, the bearmen will do no more than announce the warning.

The **central feature in the town** is an octagonal stone fortress 500 feet (152 m) across, but only 30 to 40 feet (9 to 12 m) tall, with twin towers on either side of the gate. The fortress is a mere shadow of the original fortress. The current stone fortress is built on the foundation and remains of the original keep. The original battlement walls are about a mile (1.6 km) away, beyond the edge of the current town.

History and General Information

This town was built on and around the ruins of ancient **Krikkt**, a dwarven city that has now passed from most people's memory. Krikkt was a small city that was founded long after the Elf-Dwarf wars.

Krikkt itself was built on the remains of a far older habitation. The original fortifications, the remains of which both the city and the town were built on, are believed to have once been an impressive fortified city of considerable size. All that remains of the original octagonal keep is the current fortification. The original battlements enclosed an area somewhat larger than the current town. On the outskirts of the town one may find remains of the original battlement walls. These

walls and all other original foundations follow an octagonal plan. Only one of the original octagonal towers remains on the road to the north, and that has been extensively rebuilt. The mill that lies on the eastern edge of the town, about a mile (1.6 km) from the central fort, is also built on the foundation of an original tower, but has been highly modified.

The river bed near the mill seems to follow the course of the outer curtain wall for a distance and may be evidence that the fortification originally had a very large moat. The "river" passing the mill is very straight, with a clean cut, 135 degree bend at the mill. The river thus follows two sides of an octagon. There is also evidence of smaller, regularly spaced towers along the outer wall. Although this may imply what the scale of the original fortification was like, no one knows for certain. Nor can they say when the original castle was built. It is believed that the dwarven city state of Krikkt had no more than a few thousand residents. The current population of the town also numbers in the thousands, however, the original fortress was much larger than the entire modern town. It could be that the outer wall was simply a city wall, and that there were once as many as 10,000 residents. The full extent of the fortifications imply a garrison of thousands. Some have suggested that these ruins may be from an even earlier time and that the ancient fortification that pre-dates Krikkt dates back to the Old Kingdom and possibly as far back as the Time of A Thousand Magics (not likely, but it's fun to speculate on).

All that is remembered about **Krikkt** is the disappearance of its people. That one day, about a thousand years ago, all the residents *vanished, leaving the town completely abandoned*. It was clear that the inhabitants chose to leave, since there were no signs of battle and they did not leave behind any valuables or personal items.

Many believe that the dwarves have gone into the mountains to reopen one of the ancient tunnel complexes. No dwarf has ever returned to confirm or deny this rumor. Others believe that some horribly powerful mage made the residents into slaves and they were made to serve some evil purpose. The most common rumors suggest that a mage from another world or another time took the dwarves away to some point in the future, or the past, to help save someone or something. Many different versions of the powerful mage rumor exist, claiming ties to everything from the Elf/Dwarf War to the end of the world. There are some who claim to know the TRUE story and are willing to share it with any traveler for the price of a drink. In the pubs and taverns of the town, the mysterious disappearance of the dwarves is a popular topic of speculation. However, no one has ever uncovered any solid evidence to substantiate any of the rumors. The only possible exception is a mountain man named Bernie.

People will tell the adventurers that a ranger named Bernie knows every backwoods trail up and down the mountains. If anybody knows anything about the dwarves it's him. Certainly Bernie knows everything there is to know about the mountains. Likewise, if the player group indicates that they are planning an expedition into the mountains, Bernie will be suggested as the man to see.

Krikkt has been reborn as a tiny ramshackle town of slums and merchants who cater to the adventurers and infrequent merchant caravans that stop on their way into and through the Old Kingdom Mountains. The transient population is high, and the inns are cheap. However, this town is NOT a safe haven for anyone. Forgotten creatures and the monsters of the mountains often make their way into the town to either visit and get drunk or to ransack it. The standing army of 50 bear-men and trolls protect the town to a large extent. Some merchants claim that what they really need is protection from an army.

The town is now known as **The Town of a Dozen Fracts**. The meaning of the word "fracts" is important, or so one would assume, but no one is really sure what it means anymore or from what language might be derived from. One might assume that it refers to the many different "racial factions" and the divisions of the slums where the

different races live. However, any adventurer who can count may notice that there are really only eight sectors in the town, not twelve. Perhaps there were a dozen at some point in the past. Then again eight is close enough to a dozen for the inhabitant who can't add very well. The eight sectors are sometimes referred to as quarters, since most people know that a quarter is a small part of something. In many Old Kingdom villages, there has evolved a system of fractional coinage or "fracts." Eastern, western, and old kingdom coins are often cut up into halves, quarters, and eighths. One rumor in town claims that the current ruler, Pendl, came to power by paying off the old rulers with a dozen fract coins. This explanation of the town's name is enough for most people — and besides, who really cares?

The Town of a Dozen Fracts is small and avoided by neighboring villages. It is nestled up in the foothills of the Old Kingdom Mountains. It is not part of any empire and no one seems to be interested in claiming it as their own.

The main trails to and from this town lead in four directions: To the north lies the Great Inland Sea with the island kingdom of Lopan. **The northern trail** leads to one of Lopan's large coastal colonies.

To the south lies only the mountains. **The southern road** leads up into and over the mountains through **Jedrie Pass**. Though rarely traveled in earlier days, Jedrie Pass is now becoming one of the main routes from Lopan to the inner lands of The Old Kingdom. However, Jedrie Pass is still dangerous. Dragons are said to frequently appear in the pass and caravans are often lost. People intending to cross through Jedrie Pass will often wait in the Town of a Dozen Fracts, sometimes for a year or more, to join the next well armed caravan. These individuals make up part of the transient population of the town. A lone traveler is said to have no chance of surviving the journey through the pass.

The west road snakes and circles but eventually leads to the border of the Western Empire.

The main eastward trail winds along the base of the mountains, eventually branching towards the north and the Eastern Territories, and towards the Timiro Kingdom along the south branch. This eastern trail is becoming an all but forgotten path, superseded by the trails that lead directly from Lopan's coastal colonies to the more populous regions of the eastern Old Kingdom.

Although rumors and legends tell of incredible treasures of gold and gems left behind by the ancient elves and dwarves, they are just stories. Most of the old money was spent on the war or taken away by the survivors when they moved. Real treasure is very rare in the mountains and ruins of the Old Kingdom.

The Old Kingdom Mountains of the present day is some of the poorest and most desolate territory in the Palladium World. The land has been abandoned by most elves and dwarves thousands of years ago. There are pockets of humans, but most have moved East or West, leaving the Old Kingdom to the so-called Monster Races, orcs, goblins, ogres, trolls and other non-humans.

The typical mountain villager will earn less than one-tenth of what a laborer in the Timiro Kingdom earns. However, prices for common items tend to be lower in the mountains, generally one-eighth what things cost in the more civilized parts of the world. This also means that the mountain residents are much poorer than elsewhere. Much of the mountain trade is in the form of barter.



The Inhabitants

The total population of the town often varies between 1300 and 2200 people. The actual permanent population is probably closer to about nine hundred, but the transient population varies wildly. Currently there are approximately 2000 people in town, half of which are transients.

The Town of a Dozen Fracts is inhabited by eight *main* races: kobold, dwarf, orc, goblin, hob-goblin, ogre, human, and bearman. Each has its own section or so-called "quarter" of town. Each section is a slum that is populated mostly by a particular race. In addition to the main eight races, there are visitors and other non-human denizens of the Old Kingdom. These include trolls, ratlings, changelings, troglodytes, the occasional elf, gnome, and others.

The majority of the townsfolk are engaged in businesses and services that cater to the visiting transient population. There are large sections in each of the sectors devoted to housing, feeding, and entertaining visitors. There are craftsmen of all sorts, with the majority of the shops located along the main road, The Wright Way. This is also the main business district, with smith, wright, and craft shops on both sides of the street. Lodging houses and provisions are comfortable but not luxurious.

There are also small farms scattered around the town that provide a variety of fruits, grains, vegetables, and a limited supply of domesticated animals. Other folk hunt or trap in the nearby forests and in the low mountains. The forests also provide a limited supply of wood for lumber, carpentry, heating and building. The frequent disappearance of unwary travelers is often blamed on mountain bandits and monsters; some blame the local diet. The Town of a Dozen Fracts is a rough and tumble place populated by many non-human races. Many of these races, like orcs, ogres, and trolls, eat other humanoids and find humans, elves and gnomes particularly tasty. Visitors must be as wary of their new friends as their enemies in this town.

The majority of the town buildings are built from seasoned pine, forested and hauled down from the mountains. There are numerous taverns, saloons, inns, road houses, hostleries, and all manner of lodgings and restaurants in the town. Since there are more transients than residents, this makes sense. However, each Fract usually caters to one to three races in that particular part of town. For example: A kobold run inn only allows kobolds to spend the night. An orc managed bar may allow only orcs and ogres, or orcs, ogres and humans, and so on. See each individual Fract for racial and social alliances or tolerances.

The residents of the town do not approve of persons of different races lodging together. Even if the group is composed of three humans and a goblin, the goblin will have to stay at a goblin or hob-goblin managed boarding house. The humans would stay at a human run inn at the other end of town. The same is true of using bath houses, stables, and many shops and taverns. Racial prejudice is not as common in the shops on the Wright Way. Still, a dwarf entering an elven shop should expect to pay two to three times more than he would at a dwarven shop. Mixed groups have an advantage on the Wright Way since they can send the appropriate representative into the appropriate shop to do the buying for all of them.

If the player group is composed of more than one race, the **Little Palladium** is the only safe haven for them to all stay together. The alternative is to split up or camp outside of town.

The only prevalent religion in town is the Church of the Scar. The church has some followers but no priests. The most devout warriors in the Church of the Scar fill in for the priests in this community.

Due to the wide mix of races that live here, slavery is strictly forbidden. Any outlander that plans to spend time here had best free his slaves first.



NO Magic Allowed!

The population in the town has a prejudice against magic that is fueled and dictated by Pendl the chief magistrate. However, the inhabitants of this town go much further than most anti-magic communities, and do not tolerate any type of magic user. This includes all men of magic, mind mages, priests, druids, and shamens. Psionics is considered magic or witchcraft and not tolerated either. Any naturally psionic inhabitants of the town, and they are rare, have learned to hide their abilities. Only healers are welcome.

There are no magic or alchemist shops (other than the Little Palladium). However, the occasional magic weapon and items may be found at one of the armories, pawnshops, through an independent thief or offered on the black market which is controlled by the Thieves' Guild. Prices for such items will be extremely high; five to ten times normal.

The only law that the characters really need to be aware of is that the blatant use of magic is not allowed. Users of magic will be dealt with as the guard or police see fit. If any character casts a spell or uses a magic item or weapon in public view, the townsfolk will cry out and the police and/or guard will appear and the offender will be beaten, fined and possibly imprisoned.

The accusation of magic use is not sufficient for being beaten and fined. There must be several reliable witnesses willing to stand up and testify. In the most obvious situations, the guard will publicly beat the accused right on the spot. It doesn't matter that the character may have been defending himself, the use of magic, including magic weapons, devices and scrolls, isn't allowed. Thus, after the character is beaten, any obvious magic items are confiscated, and the character is set free to go, with a stiff warning. If other characters get involved, they will be subject to the same treatment. Most confiscated items can be regained by paying a costly bribe or fine. However, characters should act quickly before the item(s) is shown to Magistrate Pendl. The mysterious Pendl will keep any items he may desire for himself.

Using magic against the guard, police, or the court will result in a beating, capture, confiscation of ALL possessions, imprisonment and

hard labor. Later, the character will have the opportunity to defend himself in front of the court, but that may be after a few weeks in a stockade or as part of a work camp.

Game Master Note: There are two main reasons the use of magic is frowned upon. The first is that it is easier to control the town and its many visitors if magic is not used. Men of magic tend to be powerful and the court feels it's best to watch out for these potential troublemakers and try to control them through intimidation.

The second reason is purely self-serving for both the town and Magistrate Pendl. Men of magic tend to be comparatively more wealthy. If they don't have ready cash available, their magic items will fetch a good price from visiting merchants, adventurers and towns to the east and west. Thus, if people of magic break the law by using magic, their property is confiscated. The "lawbreaker" or somebody else will buy the item(s) back (the former in the way of bribes or fines). Either way, the town, Pendl, and the members of the court all make a profit. Items that are especially valuable, rare or powerful are given or sold to Pendl who collects such things. To help promote this "law," Pendl and the court members often turn a blind eye to small bribes kept by the guards and police; this way they're more motivated to enforce the law. Quite a nice little racket.

The Thieves' Guild

The Thieves' Guild is a separate political entity and is often referred to as the "last quarter" by the residents. It is called that for two reasons. First, it is not acknowledged as one of the eight quarters. Second, they are the last people any right-thinking individual should deal with. The guild is about 60 members strong, and its leader is a troglodyte who has no love for anyone.

Thelma is possibly the most dangerous of the town's subterranean dwellers. She is an intelligent troglodyte with a bad attitude. Thelma hates surface dwellers at an obsessive level. She is especially disgusted by the town's choice to exclude the troglodyte race from the court. Anyone who wants to be part of the Thieves' Guild may have to give up living on the surface to stay on Thelma's good side. Most of the guild members are kobold and dwarf.

The tunnels of the "underworld" controlled by Thelma and her thieves extend to every Fract of the town. There are extensions leading up to business buildings in the town. Most are intentionally left incomplete (haven't broken to the surface) to avoid detection, but any kobold, dwarf or trog can finish the tunnel and break through the surface in ten minutes or less. There are also tunnels to many of the buildings in the old fort/town center area where the members of the court live.

Guild Master Thelma: A female troglodyte, 8th level thief, I.Q. 18, all other attributes typical; anarchist alignment. The typical thief is fourth to sixth level with an average P.P. of 18.

The Court

The Town of a Dozen Fracts is governed by a court of nine, made up of a chief magistrate and one member from each of the eight *main* races in town: kobold, dwarf, orc, goblin, hob-goblin, ogre, human, and bearman. The eight representatives do not strictly represent the eight sectors, although that is the intent. The final member is Pendl, the Master of the Court. No one knows his race and it is suspected that he may be a supernatural creature. Pendl speaks eastern, elven, and southern as well as a native, and can speak faerie, dwarven, goblin, troll, wolfean, and ogre with no obvious accent.

It must be stressed that the town has no ties or formal treaties with any Kingdom or Empire. It is too small and poor for anyone to consider it to be worth their while. Thus the town has absolutely no diplomatic relations or embassies with other nations; Pendl prefers that the town keep a low profile anyway. The town will not appear on most of the maps of the larger nations of the world, but may be noted on local maps and is known to local inhabitants of the region within a five

hundred mile radius (its one of the few towns in the area). It is also known to the operators of merchant caravans who travel the area.

The player characters are not likely to meet the court unless they have committed grievous acts of magic involving the police, or more than one native race. This court acts mainly as an arbitrating panel for disputes that cross racial boundaries, but the nine actually have far greater legal and economic power than most realize, mainly because there is no other law. The court often operates on the basis of fiscal superiority. Whoever has more money is more likely to get a ruling in their favor. The court is corrupt and bribes are common.

The court officials are, for all intents and purposes, the rulers of each respective racial "quarter" and the town itself. There are no formal codes of law in any specific quarter, but the decision of the "ruler" or the court in any dispute between residents is final.

The nine court officials/rulers

1. Talvor Sledge, kobold, 6th level assassin and thief

Talvor is a "respected" high ranking member of the Thieves' Guild, but he is a surface dweller and not respected by the thieves themselves. Talvor has never met Thelma, the true leader of the Thieve's Guild and she detests him. However, Talvor is the most powerful member of the court, since he represents one of the largest quarters. The Thieves' Guild has arranged his placement as a figurehead on the court to let the people think this is the best that the Guild has to offer. However, Talvor does have complete autonomy and a certain amount of power, since he really believes that he is the leader of the Thieves' Guild and does negotiate on their behalf. Talvor doesn't really know much about the "underworld" of tunnels mainly because he is somewhat claustrophobic and never ventures below ground. This also means he has no idea who two-thirds of his fellow thieves are. **Talvor Sledge:** A male kobold, 6th level assassin and thief, I.Q. 10, P.S. 20, P.P. 21, all other attributes average; miscreant alignment.

2. Oberrk, the orc, an 8th level soldier & warrior chief

Although technically the representative of the orc quarter, the second most populated section of the town, Oberrk is a warrior and has little respect for the complacent orcs in this community. Oberrk represents only his own interests and endeavors to maintain his own comfort. Oberrk used to live in the mountains and was a member of the Church of the Scar. He introduced the Guard to the church when he first arrived. At that time he served as the Captain of the Guard, but has since retired. Oberrk still has a good relationship with the Guard and the bearman and tries to represent their interests to the court. **Oberrk:** See the section about the police and the Guard for stats.

3. Krib, goblin, a 7th level ranger and trapper

Krib represents the third largest community in town, the goblins and hob-goblins. The residents are mostly hunters, trappers and thieves (but only 10% belong to the thieves' guild). Krib almost always votes against Talvor. He tends to rely on his own opinions and does what he can to support goblin interests. Krib still continues to work as a trapper and runs a small business composed of trappers and traders that is attempting to open trade with the Lopan colony in the north. Krib's business is on The Wright Way. **Krib:** A male goblin, 7th level ranger and trapper, I.Q. 9, P.S. 14, P.P. 22, P.B. 4, all other attributes average; aberrant alignment.

4. Clive Aldon, a 7th level human mercenary fighter & Police Chief

Clive technically represents the interests of the human residents of the town, although he is generally self-serving, and will always favor the story of a police officer over a resident, even when that resident is a human. He is an absolute creep and bully who takes all sorts of bribes and may blackmail visitors into doing things against their will. He loves his position of power and enjoys it as much as he can. However, he knows where his bread is buttered and will never betray or steal from

the town, other court members or Pendl (who he's sure is a demon of some sort). **Clive Aldon:** See the section about the police and the Guard for stats.



5. Bren, ogre and 7th level farmer

Although Bren technically represents the ogre community, the ogres are all members of the orc community, and what's good for the orcs is usually what's good for the ogres. Because of this, Bren is more likely to represent the orc's (and ogre's) interests than Oberrk is. Other than his place on the court, Bren does little else. He is extremely lazy and complacent, and is just happy he was elected to this cushy job. **Bren:** A male ogre, 7th level farmer, I.Q. 10, M.A. 8, P.S. 24, P.P. 18, all other attributes average; unprincipled alignment, good natured.

6. Enjel, hob-goblin and 6th level mercenary fighter

The hob-goblin community is effectively a sub-section of the goblin quarter. Enjel is a stupid lout and almost always sides with Krib on any issues brought before the Court. Enjel is effectively crippled by battle wounds that prevent him from serving a "useful" purpose in the goblin community. **Enjel:** A male hob-goblin, 6th level mercenary (retired), I.Q. 6, M.A. 4, M.E. 23, P.S. 13, all other attributes average; anarchist alignment.

7. Feldeshar, dwarf, 7th merchant and blacksmith/businessman

Feldeshar is one of the justices and owns and operates the largest arms seller on the Wright Way. Feldeshar rarely represents the dwarves as a group. He is old, but still powerful. His face is hardened from long years in front of the furnace. Since he is the owner and principal blacksmith at the Wright Arms, Feldeshar tends to represent the interests of the crafts people, and businesses in general. Because of this, Feldeshar often finds himself representing the interests of the elf, Adrian Bendlo, owner of the Little Palladium, which disgusts him. If possible, Feldeshar would love to get the court to ban the Little Palladium, but it will never happen. **Feldeshar:** An old male dwarf, 7th level merchant and blacksmith, I.Q. 13, M.A. 4, P.S. 23, P.P. 19, P.E. 24, all other attributes average; anarchist alignment.

8. Jendre Klaug, bearman, 7th level soldier & Captain of the Guard

Jendre is a rarity among bearmen, he's intelligent! Jendre knows how to handle his Guard, and insists on what bearmen call comfort. The Guard patrols the main roads, and The Wright Way is a part of that. Jendre and the bearmen "protect" the businesses along the Wright

Way, and the business owners "willingly" provide the Guard with its "needs." Jendre and Feldeshar are always at odds in Court. **Jendre Klaug:** See the section about the police and the Guard for stats.

9. Pendl, race unknown: He speaks for all residents, he is a 6th level Water Warlock & Noble who serves as the Court Magistrate

Most often this Court will split its decision, with Oberrk, Jendre, Krib, and Enjel on one side, and Clive, Feldeshar, Bren, and Talvor on the other. The tie is broken by Chief Justice Pendl. Pendl encourages a split vote as often as possible and thus retains almost complete control over most decisions for the town.

Pendl (a scarecrow) is the real power in the town since he has the most supporters. In fact, he has shaped the current "stable" government. However he does not intend to remain in this town forever. If a real threat to his rule arises that he cannot suppress, he will leave with as much of the town's treasury as he can carry (especially magic items). He is horribly afraid of powerful magic (phobia). The Thieves' Guild is one of his strongest supporters, since it has flourished under his rule.

Pendl constantly watches for those who might usurp his power. Magic is strictly outlawed in the city and its users watched closely for infractions. Thieves help in the surveillance of men of magic, in addition to the police and the Guard. The only exception to this ban is inside the **Little Palladium of Desires**. Pendl has come to depend on the large percentage of the take, or tax, that Adrian Bendlo pays to the town. The Little Palladium pays well for its privileged status. In spite of appearances, Pendl is not getting overly rich off the town. The need to have a powerful standing army and related expenses sap whatever the city is able to take in.

The Police

The domestic police serve to keep the peace in all quarters. They do this by keeping the townsfolk afraid of them. They are responsible for arresting and/or roughing up anyone who is causing problems or suspected of such. Those arrested are taken to the fortress, detained, and possibly roughed up further, until the police decide they have learned their lesson. When an individual is particularly unrepentant, they will be taken before the Magistracy, where the police will ask permission to "teach them a little respect." This is the same as a death sentence and the Magistracy normally approves these requests since they are not common. The character will then be tortured, put to death (or at least into a coma), and discarded at the edge of town.

There are 40 human policemen in town, and one in five (8 total) are higher level officers. Each officer will regularly patrol the town with 4 regular policemen. When a character sights this typical group of five policemen patrolling the streets it is best to drop whatever he's doing and look as innocent as possible, no matter what he was doing at the time. If a character is arrested for any reason, his best plan of action is simply to accept the beating, pay any bribe and apologize.

If a character chooses to fight a police patrol, and wins, he will be hunted down by the rest of the police and/or the Guard. Even if the character does not physically hurt the police men, he will have earned their revenge and is marked as a criminal. Any townsfolk who witness the character's insurrection will side with the police, no matter what the circumstances. Anyone who helps a criminal or even sides with him will also be charged with the criminal's crime, arrested and punished.

An understanding has been reached between the human Police and the bearmen Guard. The Guard is responsible for the peace on the Wright Way and all parts outside the town. The Police take care of watching all other areas inside the town. The Police will join with the Guard when monsters or marauding bands threaten the town. The police in all quarters are a band of humans and the occasional orc and ogre who keep the peace as they see fit. The police force is composed mainly of low level (one to third level) mercenaries. In any chance encounter

with the police there is a 20% chance that one of them is a human officer (level 1D6 + 2).

Police Chief: Clive Aldon, Human

Alignment: Aberrant -

O.C.C. and level: Mercenary 7th.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 12, M.A. 20, P.S. 15, P.P. 16, P.E. 19, P.B. 14, Spd. 13.

Hit Points: 65, **Natural A.R.:** 4.

Armour: Standard issue is a full suit of scale mail: A.R. 15, S.D.C. 75, and a small shield (adds to parry — included below). Clive's armour is magically weightless.

Natural Abilities: None.

Psionics: None.

Magic: None.

Combat: 3 attacks per melee, critical strike 19-20, +4 dodge. Clive uses a magic long sword that can also spit lightning 3 times a day (range 40 ft/12 m, 3D6 + 4 damage): +4 strike, +13 parry, 1D8 + 7 damage.

The Typical Town Police "Officer"

Alignment: Usually evil, but sometimes selfish

O.C.C. and level: Mercenary 5th.

Attributes: Physical attributes are above average (14-16), all others average (10-13).

Hit Points: 63, **Natural A.R.:** 4.

Armour: Standard issue is a full suit of scale mail A.R. 15, S.D.C. 75, and a small shield (adds to parry — included below).

Natural Abilities: None.

Psionics: None.

Magic: None.

Combat: 2 attacks per melee, +3 dodge. Officers are issued kobold made long swords (with a superior edge): +2 strike, +10 parry, 1D8 + 7 damage.

The Typical Town Police "Man"

Alignment: Usually evil, but sometimes selfish

O.C.C. and level: Mercenary 2nd.

Attributes: Physical attributes are above average (14-16), all others average (10-13).

Hit Points: 40, **Natural A.R.:** 4.

Armour: Standard issue is a full suit of scale mail: A.R. 15, S.D.C. 75, and a small shield (adds to parry — included below).

Natural Abilities: None.

Psionics: None.

Magic: None.

Combat: 1 attack per melee, +2 dodge. Standard issue is a kobold made long sword: +1 strike, +5 parry, 1D8 + 3 damage.

Typical Troll Guard

Trolls stand 10 to 12 feet (3 to 3.7 m) tall and weigh 400 to 600 lbs (180 to 270 kg), appearing tall and scrawny next to their bearman companions. The trolls and bearman get along amazingly well, mainly because neither can beat the other consistently in a fair fight. The only disadvantage the trolls have in relation to the bearman is a low natural speed.

Alignments: Usually anarchist or miscreant.

O.C.C. and level: Soldier 3rd or 4th.

Attributes: P.S. 24, P.P. 19, P.E. 19, Low M.E., M.A., P.B., & Spd., others average.

Hit Points: 35, **Natural A.R.:** 4.

Armor: None.

Natural Abilities: 60 ft (18 m) night vision. +2 vs magic.

Psionics: None.

Magic: None.

Combat: Two attacks per melee, +5 dodge. Always fights with a large two-handed sword: +4 strike, +7 parry, 4D6 + 11 damage.

The Guard

Jendre Klaug is the current captain of the guard and is on good terms with Oberrk, the retired captain. Jendre looks up to Oberrk as his mentor. Oberrk will often advise Jendre and/or help out in training and organization of the Guard. The trolls among the Guard respect Oberrk and work for Jendre because that's what he wants them to do.

Captain of the Guard: Jendre Klaug, Bearman

Alignment: Unprincipled.

O.C.C. and level: Soldier 7th.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 6, M.A. 10, P.S. 28, P.P. 20, P.E. 30, P.B. 10, Spd. 10.

Hit Points: 63, **Natural A.R.:** 11.

Armor: None.

Natural Abilities: 10 ft (3 m) night vision, poor day vision, good sense of smell. +8 vs magic/poison.

Psionics: None.

Magic: None.

Combat: 3 attacks per melee, critical strike on 18-20, +6 dodge. Always fights with a large, dwarven two-handed sword (with superior edge): +6 strike, +10 parry, 4D6 + 20 damage.

Retired Captain of the Guard: Oberrk, Orc

Alignment: Miscreant

O.C.C. and level: Soldier 8th.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 7, M.A. 15, P.S. 22, P.P. 20, P.E. 19, P.B. 14, Spd. 13.

Hit Points: 62, **Natural A.R.:** 4.

Armor: None. Oberrk would prefer to wear heavy armor, but has gained the respect of the bearman by not wearing any.

Natural Abilities: 40 ft (12 m) night vision, normal day vision. +2 vs magic/poison.

Psionics: None.

Magic: None.

Combat: 3 attacks per melee, critical strike on 18-20, +3 dodge. Prefers to fight with a dwarven battle axe (with superior balance): +9 strike, +7 parry, 2D6 + 11 damage. Also proficient with a two-handed sword (with superior balance) since that is the standard weapon for the guard: +8 strike, +9 parry, 3D6 + 11 damage.

Typical Bearman Guard

Bearmen stand 9 to 10 feet (2.7 to 3 m) tall and weigh 1200 to 1400 pounds (540 to 630 kg). The bearman seldom wear armor and wield huge, specially made, two-handed swords which do 4D6 damage. The Guard are generally stronger than the average bearman and most are 3rd or 4th level.

Alignments: Usually anarchist, but may be scrupulous, unprincipled or miscreant.

O.C.C. and level: Soldier 3rd or 4th.

Attributes: P.S. 24, P.P. 19, P.E. 28, Low I.Q., M.E. & M.A. others average.

Hit Points: 44, **Natural A.R.:** 11.

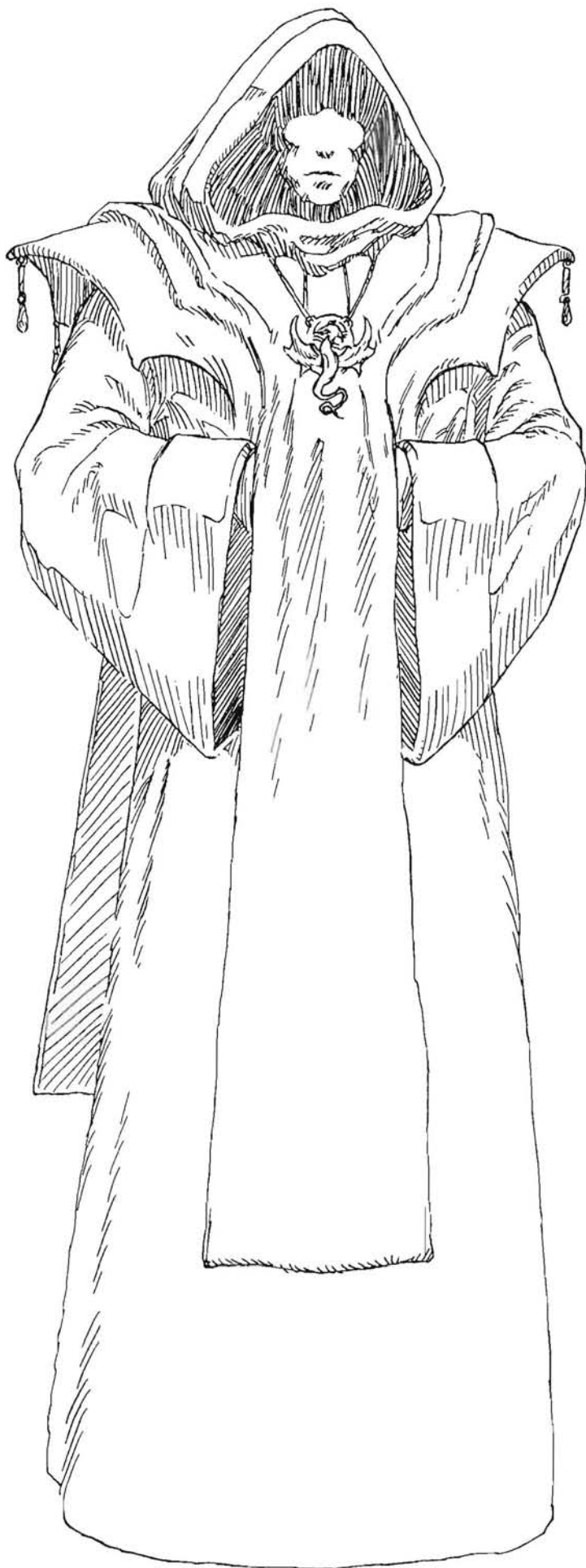
Armor: None.

Natural Abilities: 10 ft (3 m) night vision, poor day vision, good sense of smell. +7 vs magic. All speak Troll.

Psionics: None.

Magic: None.

Combat: Two attacks per melee, +5 dodge. Always fights with a large two handed sword: +4 strike, +7 parry, 4D6 + 11 damage.



Pendl, Chief Magistrate

Name: Pendl

True Name: Pendlcrazy

Alignment: Aberrant

O.C.C. & Level: Water Warlock 6th, Noble 6th

Race: Scarecrow **Age:** N/A **Size:** 5 ft, 11 in tall (1.80 m), 70 lbs (31.5 kg), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 15, M.A. 14, P.S. 12, P.P. 11, P.E. 20, P.B. 5, Spd. 6.

Hit Points: 90, **A.R.:** 6.

Armor: Robe of protection, A.R. 12, S.D.C. 50, impervious to fire. The Robe is impervious to fire, Pendl is not, but the robe can be used to block fire from reaching him.

Bonuses: +1 spell strength, +3 save vs poison, +6 vs magic, +7 vs spells/circles/wards.

Natural Abilities: Normal weapons do no damage, only physical magic attacks are effective, fire does double damage, regenerates 1 hit point every 8 melees except fire damage (even if hacked to pieces).

Psionics: None.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: 2 spell attacks per melee, can cast 12 water spells a day, recognize enchantment 36%, sense elemental 90%, see air elemental 75%, summon minor elemental 30%, summon greater elemental 38%, recognize runes 48%, study circles 54%, study symbols 66%, study wards 66%/30%.

Magic Knowledge: Simple circle of protection, **Spells:** (1) cloud of steam, purple mist, (2) fog of fear, resist fire, (3) circle of rain, sheet of ice, (4) create water, hail, (5) ten foot ball of ice, toxic mist, (6) heal burns, hurricane.

Magic Items/Weapons: Pendl carries two magically colored blue knives which can be considered magic weapons, each is of superior quality (+2 to strike when thrown and +2 damage, in addition to other bonuses).

Combat Abilities: 3 attacks per melee, +7 damage, +4 strike, +7 parry, +5 dodge. Hand to hand: soldier 6th, W.P. knives 6th.

Weapons: Pendl also carries a pair of silver knives. All knives do 1D6 (+7) damage. He can do the same damage with his hands, but prefers to use knives.

Skills of Note: Horsemanship (knight) 6th, disguise 45%/14%, dowsing 82%, forgery 52%/20%, pick locks 50%, pick pockets 35%, prowl 36%, scale walls 48%, use poison 48%, demon and devil lore 80%, faerie lore 80%, math 73%, racial histories 62%, recognize precious metals and stones 55%, sailing 68%, sense of direction 90%, swim 90%, tailor 60%, read/write elven 99%, read/write dwarven, eastern and southern 70%, speak elven, dwarven, eastern, southern, faerie, goblin and ogre 99%, troll, wolven, western and northern 85%.

Possessions: Pendl has access to the town's treasury, but its total value including magic items is under 100,000 gold pieces.

Description: He appears as a very elegantly dressed figure. He stands tall and is very trim. Typically he will wear a finely tailored suit of clothes in royal blue with light blue piping. Over this he wears a very dark blue hooded robe, most often with the hood hiding his features when in public, and in court. Pendl tailors his clothes himself and his robe is actually a cloak of armor. He is armed with 2 silver knives and 2 magically colored (blue) knives. See Palladium Books' Monsters and Animals, page 70, for a detailed description of scarecrows.

Game Master Notes: If Pendl ever abdicates, is driven out of town, killed or vanishes, the Thieves Guild will try to take over the town by force or by subterfuge, whichever is quicker. They need a stable government to thrive and will promote any successor that will ensure their existence. It is extremely unlikely that a single human or kobold will be accepted as a new ruler. It is possible that a lone elf, dwarf, troll, ogre or a mixed group of different races could serve. Another



acceptable candidate would be an intelligent "monster" such as a Lizard Mage, giant, sphinx, or even a Rahu-Man. There is no reason that magic could not return to favor under a different ruler, but the people would be slow to accept it.

Pendl's Protectors

Pendl has a group of personal guardsmen. There will always be 4 to 6 bearmen escorting Pendl wherever he goes. The main job of the protectors is to make sure no one can get close enough to Pendl to see his face.

Bearmen stand 9-10 feet (2.7-3.0 m) tall, and weigh 1200-1400 pounds (540-630 kg). They overshadow Pendl whose head comes up to their chests. The bearmen never wear armor, but wield huge, specially

made, giant sized, two handed swords which do 4D6 damage. Since the average bearman has a strength of 18, their swords will do even more damage. Pendl is rarely seen in broad daylight, and holds most sessions of court at dawn or dusk. This is good for the bearmen since they have poor day vision.

Typical Protector: Anarchist, Soldier 3rd level, bearman, **Attributes:** I.Q. 7, M.E. 6, M.A. 5, P.S. 23, P.P. 18, P.E. 27, P.B. 13, Spd. 12, **Hit Points:** 39, **A.R.:** 11.

Armor: None, **Bonuses:** +6 vs magic, **Natural Abilities:** 10 ft (3 m) night vision, poor day vision, good sense of smell, **Psionics:** None, **Magic:** None, **Combat:** Always fights with a large two-handed sword, two attacks per melee, +4 strike, +7 parry, +5 dodge, 4D6+9 damage.

The “Fracts”

The main races in the Town are: kobold, dwarf, orc, goblin, hob-goblin, human, ogre, and bearmen. The secondary races are troll, troglodyte, gnome, and elf. The town tends to be divided along language lines more than obvious racial lines. The permanent residents are distributed among eight main sectors (or quarters or fracts) which are referred to by race, such as the Human Fract or Goblin Fract, and so on. Often the division between the Fracts are impossible to see by visitors, with one seemingly spilling into the other. However, the residents are like members of a street gang and know their turf and the dividing lines between them. Often there is little crossover between one Fract and another. For example, the goblins living in their sector don't get along with those living in the neighboring Orc Fract.

The main schism between the Fracts comes from the kobolds and troglodytes who don't often associate with anybody else. Most often the orc quarter sides with the humans, since they both hate the kobolds, and the goblin quarter sides with the kobold, simply because of location. The Wright Way lies directly between the goblin and kobold sectors. Goblins and kobolds hate humans more than they hate each other, and since they see each other across the way every day, they've become more friendly.

GM Note: Treat the schism as more of an ideological schism than a physical one. More like Democrats versus Republicans. The hostility is there, always ready to flare up, but no major confrontation should ever occur. Nobody wants a big battle, since these are their homes.

There's also a sense of overall civic pride. If a human is confronted by an outlander from Lopan that says all kobolds are despicable, that human will agree. But if the outlander says that the kobolds of “this town” are despicable, the human will defend the kobolds' honor (but not to the death). Similarly one can find a kobold defending a human. Inhabitants can hate each other, but outlanders have no place to talk. All racial hostilities mentioned in the racial descriptions of the Palladium RPG exist here, they are just soothed by living in close proximity over time.

The Eight Quarters or Fracts

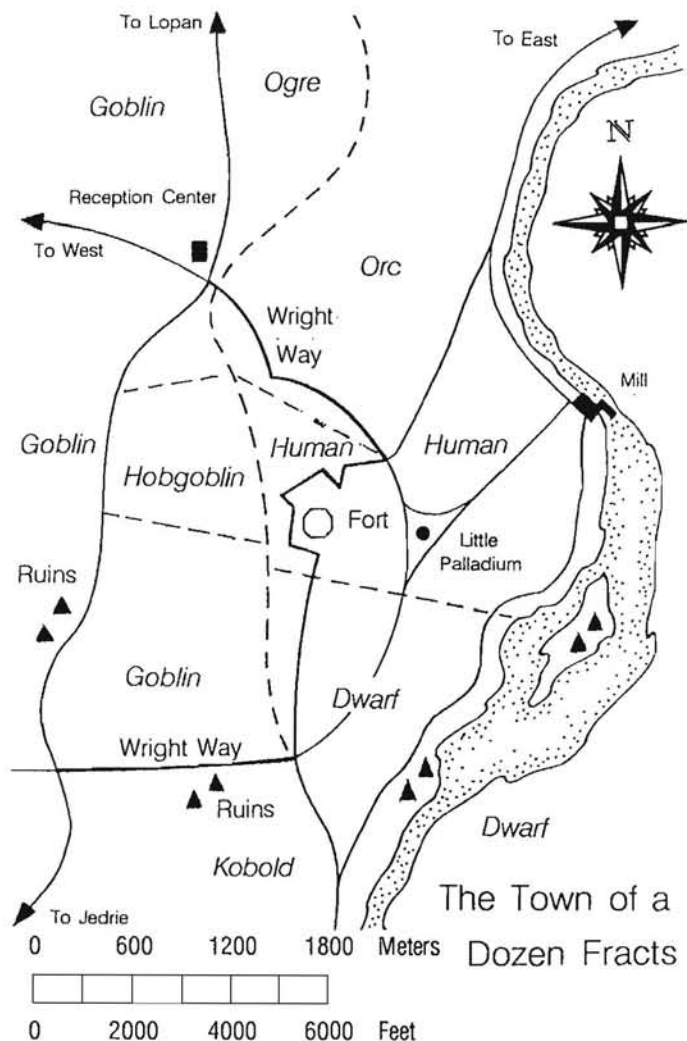
Starting from the north end of town with the reception center, the main sections of town can be viewed as pie segments, with the fortress at the center. The following list gives an overview of each of these sections, listing them in a clockwise order.

The Ogre Quarter: 110 inhabitants. 80 ogres, 20 orcs, 10 trolls. The main language in this Fract is Ogre. The inhabitants of this Fract see themselves as superior to the rest of the ogres in town, but they still get along reasonably well with their ogre and orc neighbors. This sector does not include an underground section, except for secret underground tunnels dug by the troglodyte thieves' guild.

The Orc Quarter: 230 inhabitants. 210 orcs, 20 ogres. The main language in this sector is Goblin which includes an Orc dialect. However, the orcs speak with an extreme and affected accent. This sector does not include an underground sections, except for secret underground tunnels dug by the troglodyte thieves' guild.

There are goblins here because they speak the language, but they are few in number. This district is on the north and northeast side of town with the farming regions. The road to the Inland Sea, north of the reception center, divides the orc and goblin sectors. The sector does not border the fortress. Most of the orcs and ogres work in the farms or hunt in the plains to the north.

The Wright Way begins just south of the reception center and goes through the orc sector first. The first business on the Wright Way is the ogre run resale shop, The Wright One Enterprises. All of the businesses along this first stretch of the Wright Way are owned and managed



by ogres and orcs, giving the town the appearance of being a very rough place.

The orcs and ogres of this Fract are surprisingly friendly with their neighbors to the south, the humans. The orc and human regions are separated by the main farming road that extends to the northeast from the town. The farm road follows the western bank of the river.

The Human Quarter: 150 inhabitants. 110 humans, 20 gnomes, 20 elves. Main language is Southern, but Elven is also spoken.

This is the only Fract where elves or gnomes are allowed to live. This region stretches to the east of the fort, but generally includes the area immediately around it as well. It is divided from the orc sector on the north by the main farming road. There is no distinct landmark between the humans and the dwarven sector to the south. The humans are allowed to log the forests in the dwarven sector. The Little Palladium, the General Hospital, and the Mill are located in the human sector. The mill provides cut lumber and flour to the town. Humans are farmers, hunters, loggers, and crafts people. The humans also make up much of the police force.

Gnomes are the ones holding positions of influence in this Fract, but very few of them actually aspire to hold a position in the town's government. The Mill is owned and operated by a group of gnomes, with human employees. Gnomes dealing with the dwarven smiths remain underground in the neighboring dwarven sector. However, the gnomes must use bodyguards and extreme caution when travelling to any of the other Fracts (a rarity). Gnomes, you see are a delicacy to many of the monster races.

The Wright Way meanders through the human sector near the fortress, and both north and south of it. The main entrance to the fortress borders the Wright Way.

The Dwarf Quarter: 110 inhabitants. 80 dwarves (20 below ground), 10 gnomes, 10 kobolds, 10 troglodytes (10 below ground). Main language is Dwarven.

More than half of the residents live above ground, but the underground section is very comfortable and very well maintained. Some tunnels run deep into iron deposits and there are small scale smelting and smithing facilities underground as well. Dwarven arms and armor are sold and can be made to order for the right price.

The Wright Way runs north-south through the dwarven sector, but turns west when it reaches the forest. The road that continues south from the Wright Way is used by both the kobold and the dwarven sectors for access to the mountains and the forest.

Just south of Miller's Pond is where the old trail from the east enters the town, crosses the dwarven sector, and leads to the fortress.



The Kobold Quarter: 250 inhabitants. 250 kobolds (160 below ground). Normally kobolds speak a dialect of Dwarven, but those living here prefer to speak the older Faerie tongue.

This is largest and only racially pure Fract. A tiny handful of trolls and dwarves also live here, but those that do are looked down upon as kobold sympathizers and low-life scum. The kobolds supply the town with many resources, including wood, ores, and meat. The region they control is a wooded area to the southwest of the fort, on both sides of the road to Jedrie Pass. Tunnels going to underground rivers provide fresh water. There are very few dwarves here and the kobolds prefer to separate themselves from that ethnic group, so Faerie (with the Kobold accent) is the spoken language of the Fract.

The underground tunnel system could comfortably house over 1000 people (more than the population of the fract). However, only about 160 live underground on a regular basis. Extensions of the tunnels known only by the Troglodyte Thieves' Guild extend under the business districts of all other sectors and the fort itself. Some tunnels run deep into iron deposits and there are small scale smelting and smithing

facilities. Kobold arms and armor are available and can be made to order for the right price.

The Kobold Fract is divided from the Goblin Fract by the southernmost branch of the Wright Way. The kobolds control the south side of the road while the goblins control the north side of the road.

The Goblin Quarter: 200 inhabitants. 160 goblins (75 below ground), 40 hob-goblins (15 below ground). Main language is Goblin.

The Goblins live along the main road that runs between the reception center and the road to Jedrie Pass. This road and sector is generally considered the western end of the town. Most of the surface dwellings along the road are small, decrepit and dilapidated. The goblins do little to restore or keep up their dwellings so the ugliest homes of the town are found here.

The goblin residents are most likely to side with the kobold in any disputes, although they have no love for each other. Actually half the inhabitants live underground in decrepit tunnels. The only section of the Wright Way that touches the goblin sector is the southernmost stretch that acts as a border between the goblins and the kobolds.

The goblins sell crude crafts of all sorts along the Wright Way, but the shops most frequented by adventurers are the pawnshops. A lot of good deals can be found and quick cash earned at the goblin pawnshops. However, the pawn shops also act as fences buying and selling stolen goods for the thieves' guild.

The Hob-Goblin Quarter: 180 inhabitants. 100 hob-goblins (30 live underground), 30 goblins, 40 ratlings (25 live underground) and 10 boogiemen. The main language is Goblin.

The second most ramshackle section of town is the hob-goblin Fract. It is located right next door to the Goblin Fract and is discernably different only because the majority of the houses are a little bit larger (hob-goblins are a bit taller than their goblin cousins). They tend to side with the goblin Fract.

The Guard or Bearman "Quarter": 140 inhabitants. 80 bearman, 30 trolls, 30 others. The main language spoken by the guard is Troll.

The Fort Fract is built around the remains of the ancient city-state. The old fort was built by the dwarves of Krikkt in the time before their mysterious exodus. The keep has not been rebuilt, but is used as a less massive fortress wall. The entrance remains relatively unscathed on the southwest side, with both gate towers intact.

The Guard, along with most other bearman and trolls, police, and the Magistracy are all housed in and around the castle. All interior structures are made of wood. **The Magistrate's Palace** is a 60 x 60 foot (18 x 18 m) two story structure (7200 square ft/669 square m total). The second floor is the private residence of Pendl. No one may enter it without his permission and he never grants permission. The first floor contains the official meeting rooms and record offices of the Magistracy. This structure is continuously guarded by at least a half dozen each of Guard, Police, and Thieves; the thieves being unofficial and unseen, but approved by Pendl.

Eight other buildings, each 50 by 50 foot (15 x 15 m), one story structures (2500 square ft/232 m), are the offices of the representatives of each of the eight Fracts. Each of these is guarded around the clock by at least a half dozen soldiers or mercenaries from the Fracts themselves. There are also thieves' tunnels leading to the underside of each of the buildings, although no one in the Magistracy except for Pendl knows this.

The Guard comprises the main portion of the population in this fract, over half of whom are bearman. A resident from any of the other quarters would never be found employed as a Guard and never visit this Fract except to report trouble. The Guard lives in the **fort district** and is always on call to protect the town from invaders.

G.M. Note: The Guard is in many ways above the law as enforced by the Police. The police have no jurisdiction among the Guard and

the Guard answer only to the high court. However, the two do cooperate, especially during a crisis. The Guard also provides a group of four to six "protectors" for Pendl. They are usually 3rd or 4th level, and protect him 24 hours a day. However, an individual Guard member may or may not be dedicated to the task and only 50% will stand to fight when he is faced with stiff competition.

The Army

In emergencies, the Police will stand with the Guard to confront any menace. The Thieves' Guild can also send in its members as a militia. That represents about 200 trained men of arms; most are second or third level. Add to the mix Pendl's powers and it's easy to see why the town survives most situations. In an extreme emergency, virtually half of the town's inhabitants can take arms and defend their homeland.

The Business District: The Wright Way

The Business district is not an actual Fract or quarter, but can be thought of as a separate entity, since different rules apply there. The Business district is the street called **The Wright Way** which meanders through the town, cutting into, through or between many of the eight Fracts. The Way is considered a neutral ground by all races and is always crowded. Here is where the majority of smiths, wrights, craftsmen and taverns are found. Those who work on The Wright Way are among the wealthiest in town. The language spoken in the shop will depend on which Fract it is in, however, most shop owners speak three or more languages. The most common languages are goblin, dwarven, elven and human.

Note: The Little Palladium of Desires and the neighboring stables are the only buildings described that are not actually on **The Wright Way**.

The Little Palladium of Desires

The Little Palladium of Desires is patterned after the fabled and deadly, true Palladium of Desires, said to have once existed in Ophid's Grasslands far to the north. Rumor has it that the owner won a great fortune there. He later decided to build his own, scaled down version of The Palladium.

Adrian Bendlo owns and operates the Little Palladium. He professes to have visited the real Palladium of Desires and certainly seems to know all about it. The Little Palladium of Desires is a tower-like building and is one of the largest in town (most buildings are one or two stories tall). It is a round, wooden building, 200 feet (61 m) in diameter, 40 feet (12 m) tall, and painted yellow. The doorway is large (10×10 ft/3×3 m) with ornate double doors that open outward. Around the doorway the following is inscribed in all languages:

"Welcome to the Palladium of Desires. Please proceed down the stairs where a guide will lead you to your particular desire. May your stay here be a pleasant one."

There are two set of stairs, both lead down to the lobby, a 20 by 20 foot (6 x 6 m) room. A sign against the far wall reads: "Please wait for your host to escort you." This message is also repeated in all written languages common to the area. A number of seats and benches are placed around the room. The room is also tall (30 feet/9 m) with windows looking down from a second level on three sides.

The guests will be greeted by the doorman of the Little Palladium. He is a rather nicely dressed, soft-featured, young human, **Jason**, who

is a 1st level scholar, and speaks all languages (75% or better). He is young, average height, trim, but not athletic.

The Little Palladium is an island apart from the town. It actually offers luxurious apartments, sauna and bathhouses with beautiful attendants, fine food, carnal pleasures, exotic drugs, the best booze, magic, and more. Everything that has been stated about laws, racial hostilities, etc., do not apply here. In fact, the Little Palladium caters to all races and people of magic. Here it is not a crime to discuss or use magic, and the gift shop is even a little alchemist shop.

Guests are always encouraged to sample other offerings in the Little Palladium. Hemp is the smoke of preference, which just happens to give the smoker a great appetite. If a female character opts for a massage, she will get a masseur, a male gets a masseuse, all with a high P.B. and M.A. who just happen to be gigolos. Nothing is free, except for the excellent stage show, where there is a two drink minimum. The characters will definitely have a very interesting, if not an enjoyable time, but it will likely empty their pockets. The customer's satisfaction is guaranteed or the money will be refunded.

The various areas of The Little Palladium include: The gift/alchemist shop (buys & sells), saloon, restaurant, casino, stage/theater, bordello, weight room, massage parlor, sauna, bath, and smoking room. There are also rooms to rent for the night. Prices here are higher than most other places in town, but they do have everything.

One can also rent professional male and female "servers" who are at the renter's beck and call, like a butler or handmaiden. Prices range from 10 to 100 gold per hour depending on the attractiveness of the serving person and the extent of the services rendered (this does not include sex). The server will fetch and carry drinks, food and packages, taste and recommend food, pickup after messes, help him/her select clothes and dress, draw his/her bath, offer encouragement (especially at the gambling tables), heap praise and admiration at everything his/her employer does, laugh at all of his/her jokes, and generally fawn all over the character who has purchased his/her services.

The gift shop is the equivalent of a poorly stocked alchemist shop, with only the most basic components, herbs and items used for magic. It does offer the occasional potion, powder and magic item, but these are usually priced twice as high as normal. The shop will buy magic items at 15% of the current market value (take it or leave it), possibly as much as 30% if a potential buyer is known or the item is truly rare.

Prices (in gold) for common items & services:

Pint of beer 10, glass of moonshine 10, bottle of good wine 25, bottle of excellent wine 75, glass of the finest Western Empire brandy 20, dinner 10, 1/2 hour smoke 5, hot bath 5, 1 hour sauna 5, 1 hour escort 20 to 50, 1 hour massage 10, 1 hour weight room 5, room for the night 25, room for the night with an escort 100. Gold or silver can be gambled in the casino, and the games of choice are blackjack or craps (with the game master acting as the house). One gold minimum, with a house limit of 1000 gold. The games are actually honest, but the odds are in the house's favor.

If the prices for staying at the Little Palladium are too high for the group, Jason will offer them lower rates, especially if they are willing to do some odd jobs, and accept substandard lodgings. The jobs can range from cleaning the stables to running errands in town, doing some shopping for Adrian, or escorting a sick patron to the hospital. The substandard lodgings may mean that the rooms are small, located in the basement and they don't get a maid or room service. Otherwise, they are better than most available in town.

Great Desires

The Little Palladium is patterned after the true Palladium of Desires where it is said that your heart's desire, no matter what it is, can be purchased. Although the price may be high and cost more than money. The Little Palladium makes the same claim, although it is renowned

for its more immediate and simple pleasures of wine, women and song. Still, the owner and his loyal, capable staff try their best to maintain the illusion. Much of what one experiences at the Little Palladium is an illusion.

The polite doorman, Jason, will inform visitors, "Whatever your own particular desire is, we would be glad to help you find it." Whatever the player asks for is said to be obtainable. However, ridiculously high prices are assigned to things that are not possible.

For Example: Frank, the klutz warlock, says that his desire is "to be the greatest swordsman in the world." Jason the doorman would respond something like this, "Ahhh, to be the greatest swordsman in the world. What a wonderful accomplishment that would be. I'm afraid the price is quite steep, sir, at least 100 million gold, perhaps 60 million to be 'one' of the greatest, or, sir, it would be our pleasure to make you the greatest swordsman in this humble establishment for the rest of the night. That sir, we can accomplish for ... say, one hundred gold. Satisfaction guaranteed."

If the player accepts, he will be escorted off to a battle room. There, he is given a magic potion (actually just a glass of wine). Moments later, he meets and defeats opponent after opponent until he is too exhausted to continue. The opponents might be real swordsmen paid to take a dive, or lousy swordsmen who Frank could beat anyway, or it can all be an illusion, a fantasy experience created by a psychic. In any case Frank should feel like he really was the greatest swordsman in the world, at least for the evening. Adrian guarantees that his patrons will get what they ask for, but his methods may not be completely satisfying or real — his specialty is illusion.

Jason wants to ensure that the patrons of the Little Palladium enjoy themselves. To that end, he will pester each character in turn to find out what their desires are and attempt to provide an option for them. The more common types of pleasures are all readily available.

Note: Visitors who can really afford it will be referred to Adrian, the owner and general manager of the Little Palladium. The Game Master playing Adrian should be ready to provide any service. All characters desiring the more expensive and/or exotic entertainments would have to meet with Adrian. Jason takes care of all the low cost entertainments. Adrian is not a man without his means and can arrange for decadent, criminal or secret pleasures. If he cannot perform the service requested, he will either place an impossible price on it or admit that it is "even beyond my resources." He will not con somebody he thinks is dangerous.

The Owner of The Little Palladium

Adrian, a tall, trim, stately elf, is the owner of the Little "Palladium of Desires." He always dresses elegantly, but not flamboyantly.

The Little Palladium is a small oasis in the town that operates to the left of the law, if not completely above it. This is mainly because of Adrian's wealth and favor with the court (namely his ability to buy them off). The profit margin in operating the Little Palladium is lower than one might think, mainly because of the significant "contributions" that Adrian is required to make to the town. Adrian is not making millions off of the venture, but he is content and comfortable.

Recently he has begun franchising the idea of the Palladium of Desires to other towns in and around The Old Kingdom Mountains. Adrian will tell the characters about his franchising and suggest they should visit the "Ogre Palladium" if they are ever in the neighborhood of the Great Falls on the Old Kingdom River. It's in the largest ogre city in the Old Kingdom, but he doesn't remember the name of the city.

Adrian insists that he was once visited by "The Nameless Lord" who invited him to visit his "Palladium of Desires." He has fond memories of the greater Palladium. But that was a long, long, long time ago. He insists that his Little Palladium is "similar" to the original. Adrian swears that he visited the place and that he met beings there known as

The Nameless Lord, The Joker, Coake the Mysterious, and many others. He claims that he built his Little Palladium in memory of the one that was lost, and that "The Joker himself told me to build it."

The Owner of the Little Palladium

Name: Adrian Bendlo

True Name: Adrian Bendelon

Alignment: Unprincipled

O.C.C. & Level: Merchant 10th

Race: Elf, **Age:** 450.

Size: 6 ft, 3 in tall (1.91 m), 197 lbs (89 kg), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 12, M.A. 18, P.S. 12, P.P. 14, P.E. 13, P.B. 25, Spd. 12, **Hit Points:** 52

Armor: Cloak of armor: A.R. 14, S.D.C. 50.

Bonuses: None

Natural Abilities: Night vision 60 ft (18 m), trust/intimidate 50%, charm/impress 75%.

Psionics: None

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None

Magic Items/Weapons: Cloak of armor, rings of chameleon, fleet feet, fly as an eagle, invisibility, impervious to fire, impervious to cold, sense magic, protection from psionics, and x-ray vision. He wears only the rings he feels he might need, but always wears invisibility and sense magic.

Combat Abilities: Adrian never undertook any sort of combat training, he considers it crass, therefore any weapons he uses are without bonuses.

Weapons: None, but may use anything to defend himself.

Skills of Note: Horsemanship (general) at 8th level proficiency, read/write elven 99%, read/write northern, southern, eastern, western, dwarven and wolven 94%, speak northern, southern, eastern, western, dwarven, wolven and faerie 99%, speak goblin, troll and ogre 60%, forgery 90%/46%, prowl 72%, pick locks 70%, pick pockets 60%, disguise 55%/22%, identify plants/fruits 68%/70%, mathematics 99%.



Possessions: Adrian owns, operates and lives in the Little Palladium. His personal savings is about a half million in gold, gems, and jewelry. In addition, the Little Palladium, along with its magic shop and workers, is valued at over three million.

Description: Adrian is tall, trim and stately. He is clean shaven with black hair.

The Stables of Desire

This is where guests of the Little Palladium can safely keep their horses. If you use the facilities provided by the Little Palladium, they will validate your stable ticket. Otherwise the cost is 24 gold per day/24 hour period. It is the only stable that will board riding animals owned by any race.

The Wright One

This shop is the one and only "reseller" on the Wright Way. It is the first shop on The Way, hence its name. The shop is run by a congenial female ogre named Bara'bara. Bara'bara employs a handful of workers in the shop and others that go from shop to shop along the Wright Way looking for good deals on whatever the wrights have produced that they just don't have the space to stock in their own shops. Her employees are from every race in town, and that gives her an advantage in dealing not only with the other shops, but with customers too. There are those elves who want a dwarven manufactured dagger, but would never consider buying it directly from a dwarf. At the Wright One, that elf can buy that dwarven dagger from an elf salesperson!

Just about anything that is sold along The Wright Way can be gotten and purchased at the Wright One, with a very small mark-up (typically 20% more than the other shops charge, but as little as 5-10% to make the sale). In this regard, Bara'bara serves as a broker/resaler. When the buyer has a true hard-luck story, Bara'bara has been known to let some items go "at cost" (i.e. the price the other shops charge), but Bara'bara has never paid full price for anything.

Bara'bara: A female ogre, 9th level merchant, I.Q. 15, M.E. 18, M.A. 11, P.S. 19, all other attributes average; unprincipled alignment. She is smart, resourceful and compassionate (well, at least for an ogre).

Herb the Herbwright

Herb is an ogre who knows everything there is to know about locally grown herbs and dried plants. Herb's is also excellent as a tobacconist and apothecary. They also stock powders and pigments for writing and painting, along with the more common spices, salt, pepper and sugar. Prices are fair and quality is excellent. **Herb:** A male ogre, 7th level healer, I.Q. 13, M.A. 9, P.S. 21, all other attributes average; scrupulous alignment. He has two anarchist orc assistants.

Meat Right

Borg the orc runs the Meat "Right." Borg and all of his employees are illiterate and this is the reason for the shop's unusual name. Borg deals in everything from livestock, dairy cattle, and domestic animals, to any cut of butchered meat. The Meat Right owns a slaughterhouse out in the farm district, minimizing the smell at the shop. Prices are fair to good and so is the meat. **Borg:** A male orc, 5th level merchant and butcher, I.Q. 9, M.A. 7, P.S. 19, P.P. 20 (he's quick and deadly with knives and cleavers), all other attributes average; anarchist alignment. He is assisted by his wife, three sons, two daughters, his brother Phifo and two hob-goblins.

The Greenwright

An orc managed shop that sells the produce of the orc-run farms. The Greenwright is mainly a green grocer, selling many fresh fruits

and vegetables when they are in season, but will also sell preserved and dried fruits and vegetables, jams, honey, and spices year round. Prices are on the high side, especially to kobolds. Orcs and humans pay 10% less than anybody else.

The Wright Way General Hospital

The hospital is located at the corner where the Wright Way changes from being an orc dominated road into a human dominated road. The orcs are to the northwest, the humans are to the southwest. The northeast branch is the farm road between the humans and the orcs. The southeast branch leads deeper into the human sector and directly to the Little Palladium.

The hospital is run by the gnome, Shelden and is a very profitable business considering the absence of magic and clergy in the town. The town pays for the medical needs of the Police and the Guard. Actually, Shelden is expected to provide the services needed as the hospital's contribution to the town, and receives little in return. But this also allows the hospital to operate slightly outside the law. Here the use of magic and psionics for healing is allowed, although its use is expected to be discreet.

The majority of the healing is accomplished by true healers and those with medical/doctor knowledge, but there are times when more is needed. Shelden has arranged with Adrian to treat those particularly acute cases where magic is necessary.

Shelden can often be seen at the Little Palladium, sharing dinner with Adrian. He is also interested in meeting adventurers who do not appear too threatening. Shelden lives a quiet life and likes to hear stories from faraway places. In fact, a good story is likely to earn a character free medical service if the need should arise. Shelden is also good for reliable news and rumors, especially about residents in town.

Shelden: A male gnome, 10th level healer, I.Q. 14, M.A. 11, P.P. 20, all other attributes average; scrupulous alignment. He is thin, sheepish looking, and soft spoken, but very smart, alert and compassionate.

Temple of Druidism

This is one of the few stone structures in town that is now vacant. It is located on the Wright Way in the human sector, near the fortress. The druids were run out of town with all other priests not long after Pendl took over. It is used as an unofficial hangout by boogie-men and thieves looking for trouble.

Temple of the Scar Wright Way Branch

This temple is also located near the fortress in the human sector. It is a large cedar structure regularly frequented by bear-men warriors who talk about the old days when they lived in the mountains. They also meet to drink heavily (the humans who run the nearby distillery and brewery are happy with the business). This is not an actual branch of the Church of the Scar, but something the warriors have built themselves — it's more of a shrine, a place of remembrance.

The Grainwright (brewery)

This is a human managed liquor store, distillery and brewery. The usual stock in trade for the grainwright is beer, ale, and grain alcohol (any distilled spirits made from fermented grain beverages). In short, whatever they can make cheaply from the occasional excess yields from the farms. The booze is strong and cheap, typically nine gold for a five

gallon keg of beer, seven for a keg of ale, ten gold for a bottle of moonshine (called "gut rot") and 20 gold for a bottle of good whiskey. Grains for cooking are also sold.

John Wright's

John Wright is the human owner and manager of the shop. He is a blacksmith, tinker, and armorer. He also employs a few human and ogre apprentices. John and his people make and repair pots and pans, as well as armor and shields. John Wright's has most types of armor in most sizes (90%) and will even have a few suits with extra S.D.C. (10%). He gladly repairs armor, and can add S.D.C.; all at standard prices. The workmanship is very good, although not even close to dwarven or kobold quality.

John: A young human male, 5th level blacksmith, I.Q. 8, P.S. 20, P.P. 18, P.E. 17, all other attributes average; scrupulous alignment.

Miller's Wright Way Outlet

This is a small shop located on the human portion of the Wright Way. The gnomes who run the mill use the store to sell their wares: woodworking, wood utensils, axe handles, mallets, wooden spikes, sawdust, grist, flour, etc. The woodwright and grainwright employees from the mill work in the shop on slow days. When the mill is busy, the outlet is usually closed.

The Locksmith is Right

This is a small locksmith shop owned and operated by a retired troglodyte thief. She can build, repair and open most locks, traps, and unusual metal devices. The shop is located next to the fortress entrance.

Verl Trogl: An ancient looking female troglodyte, 10th level thief, I.Q. 9, P.S. 22, P.P. 22, Spd 26, all other attributes average; anarchist alignment.

Wright around the Corner

A human operated shop that sells all manner of soft goods. Anything that can be made from cotton, wool, flax, or hemp is on sale here. Items include ropes, nets, netting, paper and parchment. There are weavers who work at the shop that will take special orders. The shop also has access to a limited supply of dyes and inks that are used in the products and are also offered for sale. The shop is located at one of the many "corners" on the Wright Way. The Way turns sharply four times in the human sector.

The Wright Look

This shop is operated by a human named Dave. He is always dressed in the nicest clothes and prefers calling himself an "appearance stylist." Dave is the only barber in town. The majority of the business he gets is from other shop owners in exchange for his needs. He often says something like, "I can make you look gorgeous for the price of a meal today." A high natural M.A. and P.B. usually win their hearts.

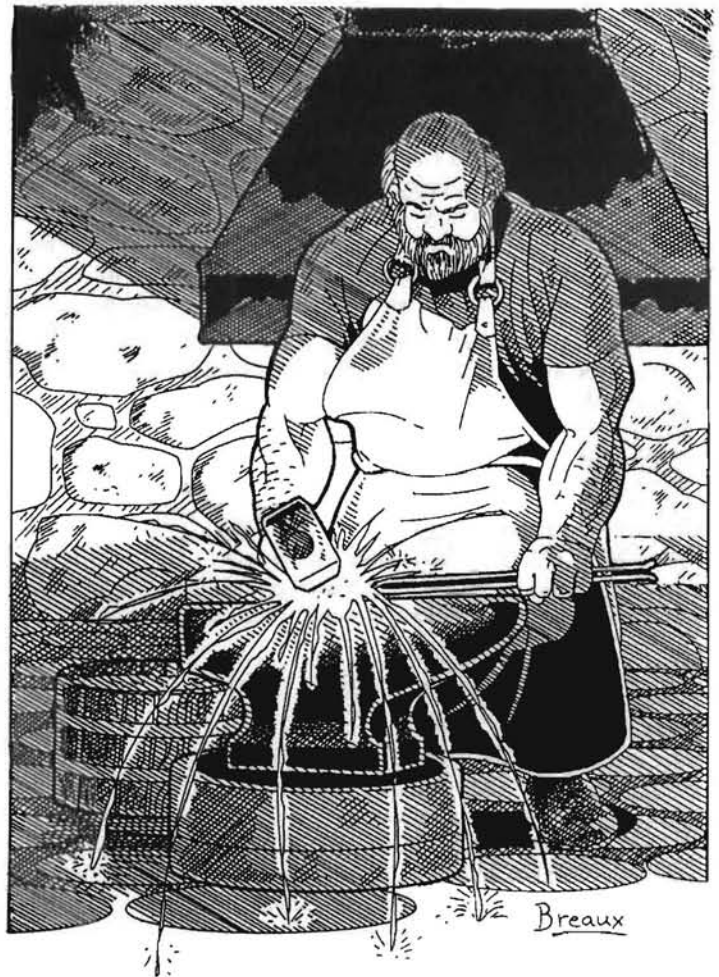
Dave: A robust, middle-aged man with a neatly groomed beard and full head of hair. He is a 6th level merchant/barber, I.Q. 9, M.A. 21, M.E. 17, P.P. 20, all other attributes average; unprincipled alignment.

The Trail Wright

A human and orc operated bakery and dairy. They sell fresh and trail loaves, along with fresh milk and harder cheeses. The Trail Wright is the place to stop for any human looking for fresh dairy items or trail supplies. The lovely human owner, Sylvia, has 13 single daughters and is always looking for a strong adventurer type to settle down with one of them. Unfortunately, her orc farmhands are probably more attractive than her daughters (average P.B. 6).

The Light Wright

A combination potter, glassworks, and waxworks that makes and sells all manner of candles, oils, lanterns, torches, etc. They also deal in ceramics, glass, earthenware, and porcelain. The shop is owned and operated by goblins.



The Wright Arms

The Wright Arms is an extensive shop and smithy. Feldeshar, one of the court justices, owns the place and is still the head blacksmith. The shop also employs a number of weaponsmiths and toolsmiths, all dwarves. The shop has woodcutting tools, lock picks, hand picks, hammers, metal spikes, grappling hooks, lengths of chain, and mountain climbing gear in stock at all times. They can also make any sort of simple tools on demand.

The weapons made in the shop are all dwarven quality and there is the standard 30% extra cost even for standard weapons. Elves and kobolds will be charged twice the normal price. Feldeshar and his people will not haggle on price. All standard weapons are available and some of superior quality are in stock: 30% chance of any being +1 to strike and parry, 10% for +2 to strike and parry, 40% +2 to

damage, 20% +4 to damage. The Wright arms will NOT make silver weapons. The shop also has a government contract and supplies the Guard with swords.

Inquiries about magic weapons at either of the weapon shops (the dwarven Wright Arms or the kobold All Wright) will normally (01-90%) be met with outrage, and a player will have to think fast if he wants to avoid a scene. But sometimes (91-00%) the salesperson will reply in a whisper: "That item just might be available for ... (double book price)." If the player is interested, he will be told: "Meet me at ... (place) at ... (time), and make sure no one sees you." The player will learn about the Black Market and thieves' guild if he should keep his meeting. Prices for magic arms and armor are five to ten times book value (the earlier quoted price will never be referred to again). However, precautions should be taken by the purchaser. A foolish and unprepared individual is very likely to be beaten and robbed when he goes into a dark alley at three o'clock in the morning to meet a black marketeer.

Grthtak, the black marketeer: A robust and muscular dwarf, 5th level thief, I.Q. 10, P.S. 21, P.P. 17, P.E. 18, all other attributes average; miscreant alignment. **Note:** Most of the dwarves at the Wright Arms have similar attributes and a typical alignment of unprincipled or anarchist.

Feldeshar, the owner: An old male dwarf, 7th level merchant and blacksmith, I.Q. 13, M.A. 4, P.S. 23, P.P. 19, P.E. 24, all other attributes average; anarchist alignment.

Stone Wright

This shop is run by an old, mostly retired dwarf, Bregger. He used to work as a mason and sculptor for the previous administration. Bregger is a skilled stone carver, painter, artist, and sculptor. He's a bit down on his luck since few visitors or residents seem to appreciate "art." He will gladly talk about the town, the rulers, the mountains, Bernie the ranger (they're old friends), and rumors (he loves the most outrageous ones) for the price of a few drinks and/or a meal or other goodie (jar of jam, honey, tobacco, etc.). **Bregger:** An old male dwarf, 6th level merchant and stonemason, I.Q. 10, M.A. 8, P.S. 24, P.P. 15, P.E. 20, all other attributes average; anarchist alignment. He won't tolerate the presence of elves.

The Millwright

A dwarven group runs the shop that is famous as the builder of the mill and all mill-like machinery. The group is skilled in the construction and operation of large scale machinery and has years of experience building siege weapons.

There is also a large "Land Ship" parked at the side of the shop. Land Ships are huge sailing vessels on wheels that are uncommon even on Ophid's Grasslands where they were first used. Anyone in the shop can tell the characters that Adrian commissioned the building of the ship when he returned from a journey to the north many years ago. Adrian was convinced that the Land Ships could be used as merchant transports and would move faster and more cheaply than the standard caravans. The only real problem is that the winds are always blowing towards the south, not north, east or west. Furthermore, the strange vehicles are really only effective in the hands of somebody who can control the winds or air elementals, so the ship just sits there.

The dwarves who run the shop are all family members. Most are quite cantankerous and always in a hurry. Typical alignments are anarchist and aberrant.

All Wright — Let Go of My Arms

This is a kobold weaponsmith. The owner, Roh Zenstein, is a horrible punster and will work almost any idle comment into a pun of some sort. Newcomers who seem to sincerely enjoy his humor and laugh at all of his jokes are likely to get a 5% discount.

The weapons are of superior quality and cost 20% additional even for standard weapons. All standard weapons are in stock and available, along with a few superior weapons: 30% chance of any weapon in stock being +1 to strike and parry, 50% +1 to damage, 20% +2 to damage. Special orders for weapons with bonuses will be accepted as long as they are paid for in full, in advance. Roh and his smiths will also make silver weapons, but they cannot have bonuses and the cost is ten times normal. This shop supplies many of the Police with their weapons.

Roh Zenstein: A muscular kobold, 7th level blacksmith and mercenary fighter, I.Q. 12, M.A. 9, P.S. 18, P.P. 14, P.E. 24, all other attributes average; aberrant alignment. **Note:** Most of the kobolds at the All Wright have similar attributes and a typical alignment of anarchist, miscreant or aberrant.

Wright Fur Ewe

This is a kobold managed clothing store. The owner Teev Shearing, is almost as bad as the armorer, Roh Zenstein, when it comes to puns.

The shop employs furriers, tailor, and seamstress. They rarely have, but do sell cloth and padded armor.

Teev and Roh are the unofficial leaders of the kobold business community, and thus the acknowledged leaders of the entire sector. The district generally ignores the court and Talvor, their "representative" who sits on the court. The kobold domain is slowly growing away from the town, deeper into the ground, forest, and mountains, and only the shops on the Wright Way hold them to the town.

Teev Shearing: A cheerful kobold, 9th level merchant and tailor, I.Q. 15, M.A. 11, P.S. 12, P.P. 14, P.E. 20, all other attributes average; aberrant alignment. **Note:** Most of the kobolds at the Wright Fur Ewe have similar attributes and a typical alignment of anarchist or aberrant.

Gary's Wainwright

Gary's is an ogre operated cooper (barrel maker) and wheelwright, constructing mostly smaller items: barrels, kegs, wheels, trunks, boxes, etc. Wood weapons, particularly staves, canes, clubs, hammers, knives, arrows, and weapon handles are also available. They can construct anything of wood and iron, no matter what the size, and were also involved in Adrian's failed Land Ship enterprise. Prices are average.

Gary (G'arree): A powerfully built ogre, 6th level merchant and cooper, I.Q. 11, P.S. 22, P.P. 12, P.E. 19, all other attributes average; anarchist alignment. **Note:** Most of the ogres at Gary's have similar attributes and a typical alignment of anarchist.

Wood Be Wright

This shop employs a number of woodwrights (carpenters), and wainwrights (wagon or cart builders). It is a kobold owned and operated shop. Some of the finest wood furniture is available and all at reasonable prices. The shop can also be hired to build structures. Prices are high.

The True Cobbler

This is a kobold managed shop, employing goblin cobblers, leathersmiths, and tanners. The owner and main shoemaker is a kobold named Snerk. Snerk displays obvious contempt for all goblins, but

most of the other kobold workers get along well with them. They are able to make and repair leather armor, boots, saddles, bags, gloves and clothing.

Snerk: A mean looking kobold, 7th level merchant and shoemaker, I.Q. 11, P.S. 10, P.P. 15, P.E. 20, all other attributes average; miscreant alignment. **Note:** Most of the kobolds at the True Cobbler have similar attributes and a typical alignment of anarchist or miscreant.

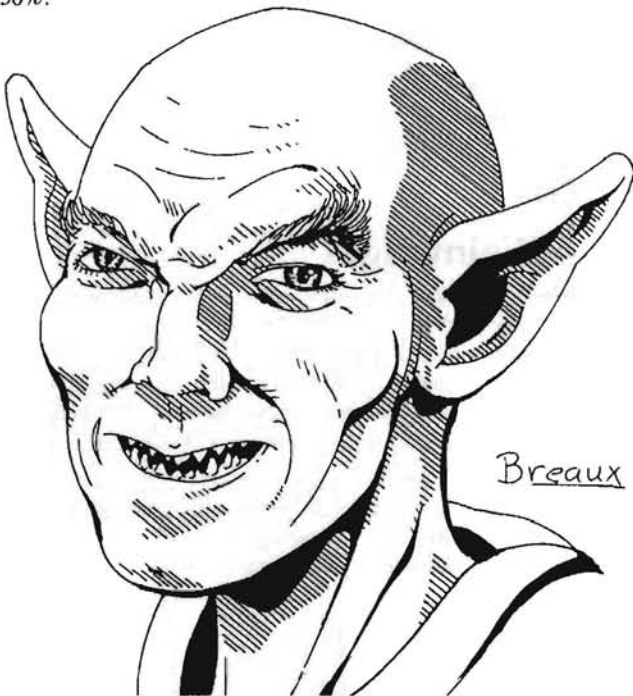
Erri Kly, head of the goblin shoemakers: He is a real goblin "cobbler" who conceals his magic powers. He is a two-bit hood who hates Snerk and steals from him whenever he can. His goal is to one day take over the shop. 4th level cobbler and shoemaker. I.Q. 8, M.E. 21, P.S. 13, P.P. 17, all other attributes average; miscreant alignment.

The Gold Wright

A kobold managed jewelry store. There are jewelers, silversmiths, and goldsmiths all hard at work most days. In addition to jewelry, teapots, and everyday metal items, there are also a few silver weapons on hand (daggers, arrow heads, and hand axes at five times the normal prices). The quality ranges from good to excellent with reasonable prices.

The Wright End

The last shop in the Wright Way is a huge goblin managed pawnshop. It is actually owned by the troglodyte dominated thieves' guild, but they have goblins working there. Almost any used non-magic item can be bought or sold at the shop. Prices for items in good shape are normally about the same as prices at The Wright One. But many cheaper items can be found. In addition, The Wright End will buy anything from anyone (including magic items), no questions asked, for 20% of its current market value. Rare and special items may command as much as 50%.



Game Master Notes

Obviously the Town of a Dozen Fracts provides an interesting setting where player characters can buy supplies, have some fun and get into trouble. Depending on the situation, the town can serve as a base camp where the adventurers get involved in any number of things. Perhaps they follow the lead of some silly rumor or get involved with a visiting thief or mage, or god knows what. Feel free to extrapolate and add your own adventures and subplots as you feel is appropriate. Have fun.

Rumors

Rumors from and about the mountains are commonplace in the Town of a Dozen Fracts, and gossip is one of the residents and visitors' favorite pastimes. Unfortunately, many of the rumors and supposed news reports are ridiculous and completely unfounded. If the story is a good one, it flies through the town like wildfire. The newest and most outrageous rumors are on everybody's tongue; "Hey, did you hear that ..."

Current popular "rumors"

These rumors are prevalent along trade routes, in the colonies of Lopan, the outposts of the Eastern Territories and Western Empire, and especially at the **Town of a Dozen Fracts** and similar places.

- The surviving Old Kingdom Dwarves have secretly returned to the mountains and are re-opening ancient tunnel complexes in the Old Kingdom Mountains where rune magic was created.
- The old dwarf city of **Krikkt** was deserted hundreds of years ago, and no one knows why. A recent and popular legend maintains that the inhabitants of the city were recruited by a great wizard from the past who controlled time itself. Rumors suggest this wizard and/or his secrets can be found in the ancient ruins of Krikkt. Related rumors suggest that evil changelings are looking for or have already discovered the secrets of time travel and plan to use them to conquer the world.
- There have been expeditions recently that have started to reopen the ancient dwarven tunnel complexes and mines of gold, silver and diamonds. Talk around town is that the mountains are dangerous, but not unapproachable. However, a lot of people don't return from the mountains.
- It is believed that a secret colony of changelings is growing in the mountains and planning to conquer the world. **Note:** Changelings are regarded with hatred and fear all over the world. Humans, elves, dwarves, kobolds and wolven have been especially diligent in their extermination. At many towns and cities in the Old Kingdom they are killed on sight or driven from town. Those captured and accused of a crime are killed on the spot.
- A changeling travelling in disguise has been frequenting the towns in the mountains and acquiring recruits for some evil purpose. Inquiring further will reveal that a powerful mage has been asking a lot of questions about changelings. People are certain that the mage is hiding in the mountains.
- The **Church of the Scar** is starting to become expansive and the towns of the lowlands fear the powerful sub-humans. Perhaps someone should find out more about this church, and see if they really are a threat?
- The *Tristine Chronicles* say that the End of the World will come from an evil, changeling warlord who comes down from the Old Kingdom Mountains. At least that's how the locals interpret the passage. Any changeling who seems to be a warrior or wealthy is suspected of being that warlord and is spied upon and/or attempts are made to kill him (and his traitorous minions).
- Rahu-Men are living in the mountains, and are secretly planning to destroy the Western Empire. They pretend to be sheepherders, but that's only a cover.
- There is a demonic forest in the mountains. Anyone who enters it never returns!
- The Southern Oceans are disappearing — falling off the edge of the World. Even the water level of the Inland Sea has decreased.
- An old, popular standby is that the ghosts of dwarven kings and warriors haunt the ancient ruins of the old dwarven empire. Any who defile these places will be haunted, cursed or killed, so don't go treasure hunting! This rumor never stops anybody.

Old Bernie

Bernie is a wizened ranger infamous to these parts. He is a frequent visitor to the Town of a Dozen Fracts and The Little Palladium. However, the player characters can encounter him just about anywhere in the Old Kingdom Mountains (G.M.'s decision).

The old man appears to be senile. Some would argue that he's totally insane. He tends to chuckle to himself, tell long, wandering stories and will not remember talking to the same character from one evening to the next. Bernie will ask the group if they are adventurers. If they say no, he'll simply walk away, but he'll approach them again at another place and another time with the same question. If they ever say yes, Bernie will respond with one of four statements (roll percentile or pick one):

- 01-25% There is a man in the mountains who needs your help. I can lead you to him. I'm sure that he will reward you for your help.
- 26-50% Do you seek a quest? I know where you can find one. Follow me.
- 51-75% The greatest adventure of your lives awaits you in the mountains. I can show you the path that leads to its beginning.
- 76-00% I have found a path that leads to ancient magic. If you are resourceful enough, perhaps you could put it to use.

Bernie is always up to some scheme or adventure, so the four comments above could refer to almost anything: The Magic Valley (The Valley), the Haunted Forest (The Silent Forest), the titan, rahu-men, and just about any place or person in the mountain where there is rumored to be adventure or magic (G.M.s can use Bernie as a foil to lead characters all over the place).

Even if the group does not take Bernie seriously and dismisses him as a senile old man, others in town do take him seriously. Everybody knows the "crazy old coot" and will vouch for his expertise as a ranger and his incredible knowledge of the mountains. Despite his eccentricities, he is the best mountain guide around. Everybody recommends him. The old ranger might even be introduced as "someone who I'm sure will be able to help you." The feeble ranger is preoccupied with adventure and he loves to lead expeditions into the mountains.

When the group finally decides to join Bernie on his trek into the mountains, they should outfit themselves for a long journey. If they have made friends with any of the town locals, the residents might even do what they can to help prepare them (for a price).

The path that most adventurers will start on is the winding **Jedrie Pass**. It is the only known and relatively safe pass through the mountains. The Jedrie Pass leads mostly south from the Town of a Dozen Fracts, upward in an easterly direction into the mountains. Other paths and trails (some visible only to Bernie) stem from this main trail. Parts of the path have been widened by a wizard who lives in the mountains. Little is known about this wizard except that he calls himself Archie, or "the Arch Mage" as others called him. He used to visit the Town of a Dozen Fracts regularly but has not been seen anywhere in the mountains for 15 or 20 years. Bernie has probably worked with him, but has no recollection of the fellow and will not recognize him should they meet. However, he does know of him and has a number of stories and rumors he can tell. He knows that the wizard lives in The Valley, but he only has a vague "notion" where it is located. He will NOT take them to The Valley, but can send them in the right general direction.

No matter what they are looking for, Bernie will help them find it. The problem is that there are dozens of side paths and adventures that Bernie could take them on (G.M.s use your imaginations). Bernie is terrible at giving directions. He knows where people and places are, he just can't express himself verbally. Many people have gotten lost trying to follow Bernie's directions. The ranger also has a problem indicating distances, time and locations. Everything is "Just up the mountain a piece." Or, "A little ways from here." If landmarks are questioned he'll respond, "Not thet big boulder, twixt two trees, a

different one," etc. When he gets flustered he'll simply say, "I'll know it when we get there, I'm certain of that." If the old fellow ever says anything is far away or dangerous, you can bet your bottom dollar that the journey will be extremely arduous, lengthy and fraught with danger.

Bernie will try to desert the group at the **Barren Cirque**. If made to stay, he may very well meet his end in the maw of the Beast Dragon. If the group travels beyond the Barren Cirque, or meet Knemm, they will learn exactly where the Crystal Valley lies.



Bernie, The Old Ranger

Name: Bernie
True Name: Bernard Jamison
Alignment: Anarchist
O.C.C. & Level: Ranger 8th — sort of.
Race: Human, **Age:** 47
Size: 6 feet, 2 inches tall (1.88 m), but appears 5 feet, 6 inches (1.68 m) because he's always stooped over. He weighs 140 lbs (63 kg) and looks like he's wasting away. **Sex:** Male.
Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 6, M.A. 5, P.S. 9, P.P. 6, P.E. 13, P.B. 3, Spd. 5.
Hit Points: 16
Armor: Hard Leather: A.R. 10, S.D.C. 30.
Bonuses: None.
Natural Abilities: None.
Psionics: None.
Magic/Clerical/Healing: None.
Magic Items/Weapons: None.
Combat Abilities: Special hand to hand: ranger, W.P. staves, W.P. longbow, all at second level proficiency. Bernie gets no other combat bonuses and can only attack twice per melee round, but does get an automatic parry.
Weapons: Carries a wooden staff and a longbow with a quiver full of 3 dozen arrows.
Skills of Note: Horsemanship (general) at 8th level proficiency but does not get combat bonuses, speak northern, eastern and elven 99%, speak western, southern and dwarven 95%, disguise 45%/14%, dowsing 65%/32%, identify plants/fruits 84%/86%, identify tracks 82%/62%, medical 86%/90%, prowl 52%, scale walls 56%, track 86%/37%, trap/skin large animals 88%, trap/skin small animals 96%/99%, cook 99%, carpentry 82%, faerie lore 99%, fishing 59%,

preserve food 99%, plant/farm lore 88%, racial histories 70%, recognize poison 76%, sense of direction 99%, swim 99%.

Possessions: He carries everything he owns, his weapons, his armor, enough food to last him two weeks, and 5D6×10 in gold.

Description: From appearances, Bernie seems to be a very frail, very old man who is obviously senile. The age and frailty that he shows is misleading, since the weathering of his features is due more to wind, sun, and frost than age. His body is tough and strong. His apparent senility has not been caused by old age either, but something else. What that something may be remains a mystery.

He is a human who has the skills of an 8th level ranger, however he has experienced something in the mountains that has affected his mind, memory and fighting abilities.

Sigmund, The Dragon Wolf

Bernie is often seen in the company of a dragon wolf named Sigmund. This character is just out looking for adventure and Bernie is only too glad to oblige him. If the group ends up leaving town with Bernie, they will meet up with Sigmund as they head up the mountain.

This particular dragon wolf is a young, inexperienced mercenary fighter. He craves adventure and longs to see the world. He will welcome the player characters with a large, toothy grin and compliments. However, the wolf is an opportunist who looks out for himself. He will sell the group out if the price is right or to save his own neck. He will also try to hog the glory and grab the best loot. Sigmund is also cocky, arrogant and brash, which can get him or the group in trouble. Otherwise, he is a friendly, considerate, and reasonably reliable travelling companion.

Name: Sigmund

True Name: Salimar Relsid

Alignment: Anarchist

O.C.C. & Level: Mercenary 4th

Race: Dragon Wolf, **Age:** 26 (very young for a dragon wolf).

Size: 3 feet, 6 inches tall (1.07 m) in wolf form or 5 feet, 6 inches tall (1.68 m) in humanoid form; 175 lbs (79 kg), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 12, M.A. 7, P.S. 17, P.P. 13, P.E. 20, P.B. 12, Spd. 18 (72 in flight)

Hit Points: 70

Natural A.R.: 12.

Armor: None, not even when in human form.

Natural Abilities: Fly, night vision 60 ft (18 m), resistant to fire and cold (half damage), track or sense invisible presence by smell 78%, prowl 44%, can assume humanoid shape when moon is full. Understands and speaks all languages.

Psionics: None.

Magic: None.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Magic Items/Weapons: None.

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand: mercenary, +4 parry/dodge, +4 damage, 3 attacks per melee. Bite 1D8 (no damage bonus), or claws 1D6, or by weapon in humanoid form. W.P. small shield, W.P. blunt, W.P. knives. Frost breath 2D6 (range 10 ft) once per melee instead of one hand to hand attack.

Other Bonuses: +2 vs magic.

Weapons: Rarely uses weapons, and does not carry any, but will use almost anything he finds lying around when in human form.

Skills of Note: Identify tracks 41%/25%, locate secret compartments/doors 12%, pick locks 30%, pick pockets 30%, prowl 44%, scale walls 54%, track 30%, trap/skin small animals 32%/36%, demon and devil lore 55%, faerie lore 50%, fishing 25%, imitate voices 40%, plant/farm lore 12%, recognize poison 35%, recognize precious metal/stones 31%, recognize weapon quality 44%, sense of direction 70%, sing 30%, swim 60%, ventriloquism 8%.

Possessions: Sigmund travels light, and lives day to day. He has never amassed a fortune because he blows it as soon as he gets it. However, he does carry a purse filled with 5D6×100 in gems.

Description: Sigmund is out for adventure and will definitely be interested in going with the group no matter where they go. He will find Knemm, Archie, The Valley, the changeling mystery and all the rest very intriguing. He may remain with the group until he meets his end or finds something more interesting; G.M.'s discretion.



The Old Kingdom Mountains

The description of the mountain areas apply only to the *northern* branch of The Old Kingdom Mountains. From the western-most tip to the Great Falls of the Old Kingdom River. To the south of this mountain chain is The Old Kingdom River. To the north is a mostly unsettled wilderness. This mountain region is dominated by the **Church of the Scar**, the only coherent authority in the region.

The *eastern* region of the Old Kingdom Mountains is quite different and is not described here. References to the eastern part of the mountains, which borders the Timiro Kingdom, can be found in **The Palladium RPG Book II: Old Ones**, which also describes the Timiro Kingdom in detail.

The Northern Branch of the Old Kingdom Mountains are inhabited mostly by orcs, goblins, hob-goblins and kobolds, along with a fair number of humans, ogres, trolls and others. Humans dominate the neighboring lands of The Timiro Kingdom, The Western Empire and the Eastern Territories, with more and more daring to claim land in the Old Kingdom. Elves and dwarves, the primary inhabitants during the glory days of The Old Kingdom, are comparatively scarce.

The lowlands north of the mountains are quite different from the highlands. Here forest gives way to vast expanses of grassy prairies, savanna, scrub and parched earth. It is largely uninhabited and what few inhabitants can be found are mostly those of the monster races. It is only as one approaches the Inland Sea that the grasslands and light forests reappear.

As the people of **Lopan** begin to settle the coast of the great Inland Sea, ancient trade routes from east to west and from north to south are being used again. There is currently no trade between the Eastern Territories and the Western Empire per se, but there is some trade between the various outposts of these huge nations. Lopan has always profited from the sea trade on the Inland Sea, especially with empires that refuse to deal directly with each other. Therefore, Lopan sees tremendous advantage serving as the "land-trade-go-between." The trade routes are also frequented by caravans from distant nations like The Land of the South Winds and even the Wolfen Empire. However, most are run by Lopan merchants.

The Two worlds of the Old Kingdom

Travelers into the Old Kingdom must be aware that there exists two separate worlds within the same territory. The world of surface dwellers above ground and the world of subterranean dwellers below their feet. Dwarves, kobolds, troglodytes and even goblins live underground in tunnels that can stretch for miles. The surface and subterranean worlds should be considered as separate and hostile environments. The two rarely interact and often view each other as enemies.

The world below has passed from the Kingdoms of the Dwarves to the Tribal States of the Kobolds. It is below ground that the kobolds dominate. However, they are far less numerous than when the dwarves ruled supreme. The average kobold spends most of his time below the earth and seldom has any reason to visit the surface. This means there are vast underground tunnel networks, villages, cities and kingdoms throughout the Old Kingdom, especially in the mountains.

Travelers are wise not to invade these underground civilizations. Kobolds and troglodytes are notoriously private and view most intruders from the surfaces as dangerous invaders. Lucky surface folk who invade the domain of the subterranean people are beaten, robbed and taken back to the surface. The not so fortunate may spend the rest of their



lives underground as slaves, or be tortured, killed and eaten. Fortunately, most subterranean dwellers are satisfied with driving invaders away.

Another danger for explorers from the surface are deliberate traps. Kobolds and dwarves are famous for their labyrinths of tunnels. Many are mazes intended to confuse and separate visitors from above. Most subterranean tunnels are protected by traps as well. Concealed pits and trip wires are the most common defensive measures, but there are many others, including sliding or dropping rocks, shooting darts/arrows/spears, animal guardians, magic wards, and so on.

Pits can be large or small, narrow or wide, drop only a few yards/meters or plummet hundreds of feet deep (typical pits are 50 to 100 feet/15.25 to 30.5 m). The floor of the pit may be dirt, stone, or covered with jagged rocks, sharp spikes or filled with water. Some hold deadly animals like poisonous snakes, spiders, or monsters. The walls are usually smooth and difficult to scale.

Trip wires can be used with many different results. They may cause a silent alarm to sound or create a loud commotion. Breaking a trip wire might release shooting arrows, flooding waters, sliding rocks, falling rocks, or even cause a cave-in (crushing or burying intruders alive). Subterranean dwellers also use animals such as cave spiders, bears, rock crawlers, and others to guard passages or to give intruders cause to think twice before they continue any farther.

Many of the kobold and dwarven cities are incredible, with huge vaulted chambers, ornate wall carvings, statues, streets, buildings, underground gardens, wells, fountains, and streams. Others, like the troglodytes and goblins, are just a crude network of tunnels and chambers carved out of the rock and dirt. They show little architectural design, artistry or evidence of culture.

Kobolds, dwarves and any subterranean dwellers may also live above ground. Those who do so are often part of a larger settlement of surface dwelling humanoids. The kobolds who dwell on the surface are a people apart from their underground kin. Many show little or no allegiance to the various tribal states underground. For every one kobold who lives on the surface, there are ten who live below the earth.

Troglodytes are believed to be far less numerous than kobolds or dwarves and live almost exclusively underground. The occasional family of ratlings has made the exodus from the Western Empire to the Old Kingdom, but their numbers are tiny. Like the goblins, they tend to live among other humanoids and are very reclusive.

Goblins are lazy scoundrels found all over the world. They are extremely numerous. Their cowardice and laziness makes them susceptible to domination and enslavement by creatures who are more aggressive and powerful than they. Their laziness also means that goblin often opt to live in the subterranean ruins of abandoned dwarven and kobold dwellings or natural caves rather than dig their own. When they do dig their own subterranean dwellings their tunnels are small (seldom exceeding three and a half feet/0.95 m) wide and high, narrow and crude, with rough walls and dirt floors. Living chambers are cave-like cavities found along the tunnel passages. The largest chamber will be the throne room of the king, which also serves as a gathering place for meetings and festivals.

The majority (60%) of the goblins who live on the surface also prefer to live among the ruins, slums, and dungeons of other creatures. When they do build their own houses or huts, they are crude, flimsy and crooked, often made of mud, wood and scraps (The Town of a Dozen Fracts is a good example). Many have taken to living on the surface with their larger orc cousins and other monster races.

The High Mountains

The highest reaches of the mountains lie far above the tree line which stops at about 6000 feet (1829 m). Beyond the forest is alpine pasture or tundra of grass and scrub. The tundra is much more rocky than the lower areas and has fewer mountain paths and flat areas. At 8,000 feet

(2438 m) the tundra begins to thin and completely disappears at 12,000 feet (3657.6 m). Beyond this point is only barren rock and ice. The tallest peaks and plateaus range from 15,000 to 20,000 feet (4572 to 6096 m) high. From about 17,000 feet (5182 m) the peaks are covered in snow and glaciers year round.

Most of the mountain area above 8,000 feet is uninhabited. There are a number of reasons for this. The high mountains are generally inhospitable, cold, and rocky, with steep cliffs, falling rocks, mud slides, flash floods (caused by rain-storms or melting snow), and avalanches of snow in the winter and spring. Beyond 12,000 feet, the mountains are devoid of vegetation. This hostile and lifeless environment offers little reason for intelligent creatures to climb the ragged peaks. The higher one travels into the mountains, the more difficult it is to scale. This gives creatures such as dragons, dragonclaws, gryphons, the pegasus and dragon wolves a haven to roost.

Other notable inhabitants of the high mountains are small communities of rahu-men, and the occasional sphinx, bearman, dragon wolf, rock crawler, maxpary shambler, troll, giant, dwarf, kobold, human, and minotaur. None of these are particularly common or numerous. However, few humanoids dare to brave these desolate heights, so these creatures are able to live unmolested by monster slaying humans and elves. The high mountain dwellers find security and isolation in its staggering heights.

It should be noted that even creatures capable of flight are limited to how high they can fly. With rare exception, one will not find sparrows, robins, eagles or even the pegasus or gryphon among peaks higher than 12,000 feet (3657 m), especially during the winter months. Even magic flight, such as the fly as the eagle spell, fails in the highest regions of the mountains (maximum altitude is 6000 feet/1829 m).

16,000 feet (4876.8 m) and above is the glacier cap of the mountain. This is nothing but rock, snow and ice year round. The only life a traveler is likely to encounter are dragons and other foolish mountain climbers trying to brave the peaks. More than a few ancient dragons have made their homes in the upper reaches of the mountains, particularly ice dragons, hydra, and basilisks, but any of the dragons can live among these foreboding cliffs.

High Altitudes & Altitude Sickness

Air at high altitude has less oxygen for the characters to breathe. This effect becomes noticeable at altitudes above 8000 feet (2440 m). Even then, the effects are comparatively insignificant.

At high altitude, characters will fatigue quicker due to the reduction in available oxygen, and may pass out if they overexert themselves. Dehydration also accelerates in the thinner air, making it important to drink plenty of fluids. The lack of oxygen also clouds the characters' thinking processes.

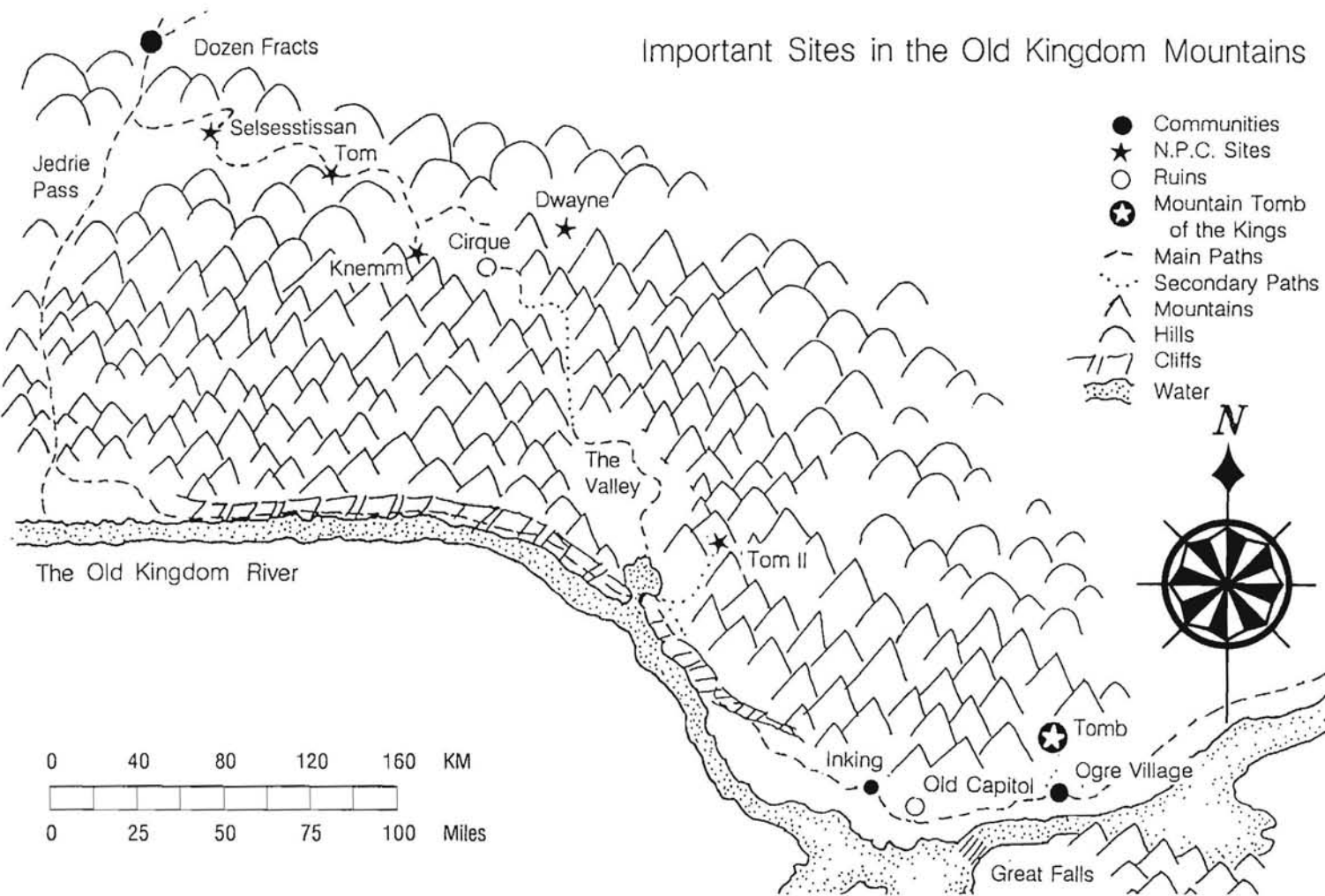
During a character's first week at high altitude the following modifiers will apply: P.E. and speed are reduced by 2 points, bonuses for save vs coma/death and poison/toxins/drugs are reduced by half, and all skills suffer a penalty of -10%.

After the first week, players roll 2D4 days to see how quickly the character adapts to that altitude. After the 2D4 days, the character's body adapts to the thinner air and altitude and suffers NO penalties. The only exception is if he or she continues to ascend to a higher altitude. In this case, the character's body can not adapt and will suffer from the penalties until he stops at a particular level. Also see altitude sickness.

Altitude Sickness

It's only when one climbs to heights above 12,000 feet (3660 m) that the lower level of oxygen and pressure becomes apparent and dangerous. The effects of altitude sickness can be deadly and it can be

Important Sites in the Old Kingdom Mountains



hard to shake off once it starts. The initial symptoms of altitude sickness are shortness of breath, headache, pounding heart, giddiness, insomnia, and vomiting. The only cures for altitude sickness are time, a descent to lower altitude, or the "curative" tea that is available in **The Valley**.

Penalties from Altitude Sickness: P.E. is reduced to 2 (reduce P.E. to 1 if original P.E. was 6 or less), all skills requiring concentration have a penalty of -30%, all skills requiring dexterity suffer a penalty of -60%, and all skills requiring physical exertion are impossible. Once a character acquires altitude sickness, the effects will last at least a week (2D4 + 5 days).

There is no threat of altitude sickness if precautions are taken. The character should avoid alcohol, drink plenty of fluids, eat lightly, relax, and avoid exertion for the first week. The danger of getting altitude sickness passes after the first two weeks, meaning that the body has become fully acclimated to the thin air and high altitude without penalty to the character. However, if the character is forced to engage in lengthy combat (15 minutes or more), running, climbing or similarly strenuous activity, or gets drunk, he or she will get altitude sickness.

If a character feels a "touch" of the sickness coming on, he can also have a cup of "feel good" tea, which is available at the mountain town known as The Valley. This tea will cause a slight loss of feeling and a tingling in the extremities, followed by drowsiness, but will prevent the onset of altitude sickness. There are no other negative or long term effects from the tea. However, the "feel good" tea cannot cure the sickness once it has hit full swing.

There is also a "curative" tea which is a much stronger concoction. This potion will completely eliminate any symptoms of altitude sickness and will also negate the symptoms (penalties) from those affected by the less debilitating penalties from high altitude. After a single cup of curative tea, all attributes, bonuses and abilities will return to normal, no matter how bad a case of sickness. However, the beneficial effects

of the tea wear off a day later (2D4 + 18 hours later). As soon as the "curative" tea wears off, the character will immediately be subject to altitude sickness for a full 2D4 + 4 day period. Another cup of curative tea will remove the sickness within an hour, but to keepit away the character must drink a cup of the curative tea once every 24 hours.

Both versions of the tea are available anywhere in The Valley. A cup of tea is normally provided to visitors free of charge with breakfast, and can be requested with any other meal. There are some residents in the valley that will drink a cup of "feel good" tea every morning, although the only effect is to make them feel good. There are residents who swear by a good strong cup of curative every morning. Those who drink the curative are among the hardest workers in the valley. However, they will often skip their morning cup on the weekends, when they plan to relax.

There are some long term side effects associated with the curative. During the first three days, the character will not be subject to the altitude sickness penalties and will feel completely normal. If he continues drinking the tea, he will start to feel a little hyper and by the 4th to 6th day receives a +1 bonus on his initiative rolls. Continued dependance on the tea will begin to have a more dramatic effect on the 7th through 9th days: +2 on initiative and +2 to speed and the character can work twice as long without feeling fatigued, but is -1 vs psionics. After that he will need half the sleep normally required.

By the 13th day the full effects of the curative tea will be felt. The character will only require three hours of sleep a night, will be able to resist fatigue and pain, and receive +2 on his initiative, +2 to speed and +1 to dodge. On the down side, the character is unable to meditate, I.S.P. is reduced to 1/2 as long as he drinks the tea, and he suffers a modifier of -5 vs psionics. By this point, the character is completely dependant on the curative. He craves the brew and must have one or two cups every day. To miss a cup will cause a severe headache and

a run-down feeling. After that first warning signal of a day, the character is stricken by severe withdrawal systems and altitude sickness unless he can get the curative tea.

To kick the curative habit means to suffer from withdrawal for a full month. The character suffers ALL the effects and penalties of altitude sickness, only magnified! In addition to the usual pounding headaches, fatigue, vomiting, and penalties, the character is -70% on all skills, speed is half, and physical exertion for more than 1D6 minutes is impossible (passes out for 2D4 minutes). The penalties and sickness lasts for one month (30 days). Any time later in life, a single cup of the curative tea will completely addict the character and require the same painful, month long period of sickness and penalties to kick it.

Rahu-men, trolls, and dragons are not affected by altitude sickness. Dwarves, bear-men, sphinxes, ice giants and dragon wolves adapt and recover twice as quickly. Likewise, characters, whether human or non-human, who have adapted to life in the mountains do not suffer from altitude sickness unless they leave their mountain homes to live at a significantly lower altitude for a period of a month or more, then return to the high altitude. The curative and feel good teas are only available in The Valley.

Note: The Valley and Tom II's cave described elsewhere, are the only places specifically mentioned in this book that are above 12,000 feet. The Titan, Knemm, lives in a cave just below the level that altitude sickness will occur.

Mountain Adventures

The typical adventurer who goes to the **Old Kingdom Mountains** might begin at any community. Most mountain communities are small villages. The main occupations are lumber, hunting and sheepherding. Some farmland is found only in the lowlands. Most of the human explorers have come from Lopan or Timiro. They are lured by stories of ancient treasures, lost dwarven cities, forgotten magic and opportunities waiting for those with a strong back or good sword-arm.

Game Master Note: There are any number of reasons the adventurers might go into the mountains: to investigate rumors about gold, magic, and ancient ruins, to find work as a mercenary, to fight a terrible evil or to right an injustice, and so on.

The group's best guide in the mountains is the ancient ranger, **Bernie**. He can be introduced in the Town of a Dozen Fracts, in the forest, or anywhere in the mountains. He might even rescue or help the adventurers in some way. However, Bernie and all of the mountain non-player characters can be left out or presented in any way the Game Master sees fit. Similarly, the player group can be led, misdirected or stumble across The Valley. The Valley is an important scenario sub-plot that should offer a lot of intrigue, sub-plots and adventure opportunities. It should not be cut out.

Random Mountain Encounters

Roll percentile dice and find the result on the following list.

01-09 A group of rowdy, drunken Bearmen. 2D6 soldiers, levels 1D4+2, P.S. 5D6, P.P. 4D6, P.E. 6D6, Speed 3D6, A.R. 11, Hit Points: Standard. They claim to be on their way to a religious festival in the nearest town. They hate everyone and are prone to get into a fight with anyone they encounter over the most trifling matters. An especially seedy looking bearman (he should be the same level

as the adventurers) claims to be the greatest swordsman in all the world and challenges the "champion" of the group to a duel, naked, and armed only with two-handed swords (they have an extra one just in case).

10-18 A young wandering beast dragon (A.R. 12, hit points: 189) is out looking for trouble. She is mean, bold and reckless. She will do everything to bully the group into giving her a horse or mule for lunch. If they anger or insult her, she will attack. There is a 1-50% chance that she will go berserk and fight to the death. If not, she will run away, but hold a grudge against the group and hope for a chance for revenge. Beast Dragons hate true dragons, humans, elves, and dwarves, so she will be particularly nasty to any of those characters.

19-21 A cheerful dragon wolf (A.R. 12, Hit Points 4D6+50, miscreant alignment, second level wizard). Since dragon wolves enjoy adventure and intrigue, he will definitely inquire about the group's purpose. If Sigmund is travelling with the group he will chit chat and leave. If not, he will size them up for robbery.

22-25 Rock crawlers looking for prey. They will fight to the death. 1D6+2 creatures. Natural A.R. 14, average 20 hit points, two attacks per melee, bites doing 1D8 damage.

26-30 2D4 Ogres with a hate for humans and elves. They will attack and beat-up or kill any humans or elves and run off with the pack animals. All the ogres are second level mercenary fighters, miscreant alignment, with about 22 hit points and armed with battle axes and large swords. They will not fight to the death.

31-35 A mountain swamp with Land Squid (6-8 inches/15-20 cm long, A.R. 2, Hit Points 4D4, Speed 4). The squid will drop on the group from above. One for each character on the first round, and 2D6 more (distributed) on the next round.

36-41 A small pack, 3D4 (01-80%), of hungry serpent rats, or a large pack 6D6 (81-00%) of well fed serpent rats will come upon the group's camp. As few as three or four hungry serpent rats will attack a single humanoid. They will be scrounging mostly for garbage, and can easily be dissuaded by throwing food to them. However, it's a good idea to break camp while the rats eat, or they could become quite a nuisance.

42-49 A Rahu-Man, travelling a mountain trail. He will be totally uncommunicative and ignore all overtures made toward him. He will not fight unless pressed intolerably. If the group works magic on him to charm him, he will admit that he is a trapper (5th level ranger, anarchist alignment) who is just travelling to a town to trade his furs for supplies.

50-60 Passing near a cliff, the group hears burrowing from a large cave. Inside are a mated pair of devil diggers (A.R. 8, Hit Points 6D6+12) with a litter of 1D6 young (Hit Points 5D6). If the cave is entered, the diggers will bark a warning. If the intruder(s) does not leave immediately, the diggers will attack from the darkness and fight to the death to protect their young. There is nothing of value inside the cave.

61-65 A pack of 2D6x10 Floaters (A.R. 4, Hit Points 2D6+2, Speed 6) appear overhead, and swoop down towards the group. If not disturbed, the floaters will land and proceed to eat the clearing clean of the berries and seeded grasses growing there. They will also eat any food the characters may have that isn't secured and out of sight. If the group attacks, they will fight back.

66-70 Goblin Thugs: These brigands are just second level mercenaries (average 17 hit points, miscreant alignments) looking for easy pickings. If the player group offers serious resistance the goblins will vanish back into the woods.

71-75 A pack of 1D4+3 Goron (A.R. 12, Hit Points 1D4x10) sneak in to attack. They will first try to subdue or kill the character on watch and, if successful, will steal any available food and obvious valuables. After that they will leave. If they do not succeed at their hit and run tactic, they will stand and fight, but flee if they are clearly outnumbered or overpowered.

76-80 4D4 Tree Eels (3-3.5 feet/0.9-1.1 m long, 4D6 hit points, A.R. 4, two attacks per melee, 1D6 damage, +2 strike, +4 dodge, spd 12) will spring down from the branches or rocks overhead onto the character who leads the group. If immediately attacked by other members of the group, the eels will attempt to escape and return to a nearby mountain spring, pond or stream. Otherwise, they will attempt to subdue the first character. If the rest of the group is very slow to react, another 2D6 eels per each character will emerge to assault the rest of the group.

81-85 A gryphon, peryton, loogaroo or harpy swoops down to inspect the travelers. It will not land and is only searching for food (mountain sheep, goat, deer, horses). It may try to snare any loose meat or snatch a pack animal or small humanoids. If the swooping attack misses, it will soar away into the clouds. If it grabs something or somebody, it will let go if pursued or if its quarry is too difficult.

86-89 An injured non-human (bearman, ogre, troll, or kobold; pick one). He is pinned between some large rocks and his leg is broken. He needs medical help but will try to fight anybody who seems threatening. He clutches a lumpy leather bag close to his chest. He will fight to the death rather than relinquish the sack. He is a fourth level priest of The Scar. Inside the sack is tribute for the church.

If the player characters don't try to rob him and actually try to help, he will allow them to set and splint his leg and work healing magic on him. As a reward, he will give the nicest person in the group a gold bracelet worth 1D6 × 100 gold to be shared with all of his rescuers. He will also offer them directions if they need it. If ever encountered again, he will remember their kindness and try to return the favor.

90-95 A mountain brown bear. It attacks and fights to the death only if startled or attacked first. Two attacks per melee, claws do 2D6 + 6 damage, bite 1D8; +2 to strike, +1 to parry.

96-00 A true dragon flies overhead. Unless the group takes cover quickly, he will likely fly down to inspect them. They are not actually in his territory, so he only demands a small tribute (10% of all the gold and gems they have). If the group does not pay tribute, the group will have to fight, but the dragon will not fight to the death. If the group is being badly beaten and cries for mercy, the dragon will relent, and demand full tribute (all the gold and gems that they have). If the group still refuses to pay tribute, the dragon will continue to fight until he knocks everyone unconscious (but never risking his own life) and in the end takes what he wants.

If at night, this encounter will be with a Night Stalker. During the day, it would be with a fire dragon.

The Silent Forest

An adventure outline

The player group are just as likely to stumble upon the Silent Forest as they are to deliberately go there to investigate. The main mountain passage way is known as the Jedrie Pass. The way to the Silent Forest is to leave the main trail and take a winding dirt trail to a mountain valley a full half day's travel away from the Jedrie Pass.

The Silent Forest is avoided by most mountain folk and considered to be haunted. The forest looks normal enough and is alive with trees, flowers, vegetation, and insects. However, there are few birds or other animals within its 20 mile (32 km) radius. The reason becomes obvious the moment the adventurers step into the enchanted area of the forest. Absolute silence. It is as if a giant globe of silence engulfs the entire area. All the characters will get an uneasy feeling, mainly because communication is difficult and they feel vulnerable. Without sound, they cannot hear an approaching predator or cry for help. This is one of the reasons many of the animals avoid the area. It is a very eerie feeling to travel in a place where there is no sound. One can feel the wind, but not hear it. A bird or rabbit may suddenly dart from its hiding place but there is no rustle of leaves, footsteps or animal sounds. There is no familiar sound of crickets chirping or birds singing. Only Silence.

Anyone who can detect magic will sense some kind of magic at work but very faintly. Using any further powers, whether magic or psionic, will only confirm that the forest is magically enchanted, but that's all.

There are a number of rocky outcroppings along the trail and in the forest. Many of these have deep claw marks in them. Rangers or someone who has encountered devil diggers in the past will recognize their handiwork. Otherwise, the group will just notice that something made the marks and may get even more nervous.

Further investigation will offer little information. There are openings (burrows) around many of the rocky outcroppings. Digging, moving the boulders or crawling into the opening will agitate 1D4 devil diggers or rock crawlers who will attack in defense of their home. Otherwise, there are no apparent monsters currently nearby. Likewise, there are no dangerous animals or humanoids in the forest. The occasional darting animal (rodents and snakes are the most common) and pestering insect may startle the adventurers, but that's about it.

The ranger, Bernie, will have no clue as to what is amiss or whether anything should be done about it. He will simply tag along, making the occasional observation.

The Pillar

At the center of the Silent Forest are several large boulders with the tell-tale claw marks of devil diggers. There is also a tiny, cave-like opening, presumably the entrance to the animals' burrow.

The characters are likely to come upon it purely by accident. They or Bernie could stop at the rocks to rest for a moment or somebody might notice something (a devil digger) moving around in the shadows and go to investigate. Bernie will point to the claw marks, then to the opening and motion people to stay away from it. However, Bernie or one of the player characters may notice that among the pile of large stones is a block that looks like a man-made, rectangular pillar. The pillar is half buried and weighs two tons. Scraping away some of the dirt and moss that is caked on it will reveal some ancient symbols. A man of magic or scholar may recognize them as being similar to those associated with The Time of a Thousand Magics. As exciting as this discovery may be, there is nothing more to learn unless they enter the cave.

The cave opening is tiny. An average human character will barely be able to squeeze through. Beyond the opening is a narrow tunnel that looks and smells like the burrow of a devil digger. The tunnel is also narrow and an average sized human will have to crawl on his belly to get through it. Of course, this leaves the lead person vulnerable to attack and limits their mobility. Goblin size characters can crawl through the tunnel on their hands and knees. Anybody larger than a human will have to stay outside. **Note:** The silence prevails underground!

The burrow tunnel descends at a slight angle for about 60 feet (18.3 m) before it stops at a larger opening to a series of natural caves. The first cave is about 20 feet (6 m) in diameter and has a six foot (1.8 m) high ceiling. Several small, devil digger sized holes and tunnels can be seen along the walls. The smell of devil diggers is powerful. There is a 1-45% chance of encountering one devil digger for every five

minutes the characters stay in this area. The creature will instantly attack the nearest intruder. The smell of humanoid sweat and blood will bring 2D4 additional devil diggers every 1D6 minutes! There are a total of 12 living in this network of burrows.

The typical Devil Digger

Hit Points: 6D6 + 12

Natural A.R.: 8

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 90 feet (27.4 m), track/locate by smell 30%, climb 30%, swim 50%, dig and leap up to four feet (1.2 m) high or across.

Attacks per Melee: Four; bite or claws inflict 1D8 + 3 damage. +1 to parry, +2 to dodge, +3 to save vs poison.

Size: 3 1/2 to 4 1/2 feet (about one meter) long. Powerfully built.

Note: See **Monsters & Animals**, page 24, for details.

The typical Rock Crawler

Hit Points: 6D6

Natural A.R.: 14

Natural Abilities: Sense movement with feelers 120 feet (36 m), track/locate by feelers 90%, climb 90%, swim 50%, prowl 72%.

Attacks per Melee: Two; bite inflicts 1D8 damage. +1 to strike, +2 to dodge.

Size: 3 to 6 feet (0.9 to 1.8 m) long, insect-like creature.

Note: See **Monsters & Animals**, page 68, for details.

There is another cave opening to a narrow cavity that runs for 20 feet (6 m) and is 10 feet (3 m) tall and four feet (1.2 m) wide. 3D4 rock crawlers live inside this small area, leaving only at night to hunt. There is a 1-35% chance they will attack intruders.

The cavity leads to another underground chamber. This one appears to be man-made. There is evidence of many rock slides and cave-ins along its perimeter, suggesting the chamber may have been much larger or part of a larger complex. There is no way to move the tons of rock to unbury the rest of the chamber (there is nothing of value under the rubble).

The ancient complex is completely in ruins except for the one chamber. It is round, domed, and sixty feet (18 m) in diameter with a 30 foot (9 m) high ceiling. A number of devil digger skeletons and the husks of some rock crawlers lie scattered near the entrance.

This is the final resting place of the wizard, Selsesstissan. Lying on a raised, circular dais in the center of the chamber is what appears to be a corpse. The body is that of a very old gromek mage (see **Monsters and Animals**, page 40), somewhat shriveled and naked. A thick coating of dust covers him and everything in the chamber.

Any characters who enter the chamber will feel faint for just a moment. At that exact moment, the body on the dais will appear to stir. A deep, nearly inaudible, single beat reverberates throughout the chamber. If the characters remain in the chamber, or approach the dais, the heartbeat sound will be heard again, only this time, a bit louder. After about five minutes, the heartbeat sound will throb to a regular pattern. However, it is the only sound; they are still affected by the magic silence spell.

All characters within 100 feet (30.5 m) of the chamber will again feel faint and suddenly fatigued. Any character who moves up to examine the corpse will be momentarily stunned! He or she is unable to move or take any action for one melee unless a successful save vs magic is made. A successful save means the character feels weak and woozy for the next melee (all attacks, attack bonuses, and speed reduced by half), but is not stunned. Then it starts to get bad.

The chest of the gromek corpse heaves as the thing takes a deep breath of air. A quick attack on the corpse at this time will destroy it. The area of the chest that holds the heart must be hit. A roll to strike of 14 or better (it is a small target and the gromek has a natural A.R.

of 12) hits and does damage. Only 12 points of damage is needed to kill it and the heartbeat sound stops.

If the adventurers stand back and wait, the heartbeat continues to grow stronger and louder. With each passing minute the corpse absorbs a bit of the group's energy to revive itself. The gromek gains six hit points for every minute that passes. When it has 48 hit points (eight minutes/melee rounds have passed), the creature awakens and sits up. Unknown to our adventurers, the weakness they felt was the gromek absorbing part of their life essence. ALL characters inside or within 100 feet (30.5 m) of the chamber are at half their normal hit points! Any characters standing within 10 feet (3 m) of the dais will be at one third their normal hit point level. **Note:** Hit points can be recovered as normal or via magic. When the creature is awake the magic silence is broken.

If the beast is allowed to awaken, they will be face to face with one of the wizards who lived during the Time of a Thousand Magics. However, the wizard, Selsesstissan, is unlikely to share any knowledge with them and will seem unappreciative that they have awakened him. The gromek will eye them with suspicion and answer only basic questions, such as his name, that he is a wizard, and that he has slept for eons. He will question the group about what the world is like outside. He will smile an evil looking leer when he learns that thousands of years have passed since The Time of a Thousand Magics. He will be equally delighted to learn that other wizards of his time have perished and that rune magic is forgotten. He will be surprised that the dwarven and elven empires have fallen and that man is the dominant civilization.

Selsesstissan may agree to join the group temporarily, if only because they were instrumental in bringing him back to life and he needs to learn more about the current world. Note that a Gromek travelling with the group will attract a lot of attention.

The sorcerer will not take any more of their life force and apologize for their inconvenience. However, Selsesstissan will be in a weakened state and will need to acquire more life energy. He will do so by absorbing the life energy from animals and monsters that they encounter along the way. Selsesstissan is a sort of energy vampire and must have life energy to use his magic and to survive. See special magic powers elsewhere in this section.

G.M. Note: The gromek mage can make an interesting non-player character who can help the group and/or get them into more trouble. At various points, his unique and frightening powers should become obvious, giving the player characters cause to wonder about what they have set loose upon the world. Selsesstissan can make a dangerous enemy.

The Time of a Thousand Magics

There was a time in the Palladium World's history when a vast surplus of magic energy surged through the world. Many of those who believe it happened, claim that the surge occurred because of the battle with the Old Ones. The tremendous energies used in the battle set off a chain reaction in the mystic ether that surrounds the planet. This reaction filled the world with magic energy and temporarily opened dimensional doorways to many different worlds. Others contend that the energy was released long after the battle, centuries later, when the Old Ones who were put to sleep finally died (not all people believe that the Old Ones still live). Still others claim that the magic energy will flare again when the Old Ones try to break out of their prisons. No one knows the truth.

The Time of a Thousand Magics was a period dominated by beings of magic. Many wizards were able to utilize, or perhaps created, the classic arts of runes, spells, circles, wards, psionics, and others. Many others were unique and limited in their abilities. Early contests and petty bickering weeded out the weak from the powerful, and only the most powerful of the wizards survived. Those with the greatest power built empires.

Selsesstissan, the Life Force Wizard, is a product of the Time of a Thousand Magics. He was born at a time when the magic energy of the world was peaking. He mastered his unique abilities and used them to build and command an empire. He came to be treated like a god by his subjects. He dispensed life and death as he saw fit. All other Gromek bowed to him and all Gromek in the present will know the legendary name of Selsesstissan.

As time passed, the most powerful wizards continued to expand their domains. Selsesstissan's domain was huge, covering the Old Kingdom mountains and most of the surrounding territory, including parts of the Old Kingdom and Timiro. However, it was comparatively weak in the area of magic. This led to an alliance with, and eventual betrayal from, a Crystal Wizard that controlled a small region near the Gromek territory. Eventually the Crystal Wizard conspired with many of Selsesstissan's powerful neighbors and enemies to orchestrate the downfall of his empire. But this was a war of wizards, not empires, and Selsesstissan himself was the true target of the onslaught. After a long fruitless battle, Selsesstissan sent word to the Crystal Wizard that he surrendered and promptly vanished from the world. However, his surrender was part of a greater scheme. Even today the Gromek descendants still remember Selsesstissan's last words to his people.

"The time of this empire is past, but not so the time of our people. Let them come and conquer us. Then sleep in their midst. Live among them and wait for their kings to fall. They cannot endure. I bid you to reject the ways of magic that have been our defeat. Rely on brute strength and physical training. Be steadfast as the mountains. Our people will endure and we will rule this world. Neither I nor our people can ever die. Know that I will rise again."

Selsesstissan does not know what happened next, because he has been asleep the entire time. The Gromek did allow their empire to be conquered and divided up. They chose to abandon the Old Kingdom Mountains and migrated to the west where they still remain. The Gromek heeded Selsesstissan's words and to a large extent, still avoid magic, instead focusing on combat and physical abilities. The other empires continued to fight, eventually crippled themselves, and finally fell. The Gromek simply waited and remained outside the ongoing conflicts. Sadly, they fell victim to a terrible plague that killed millions and is responsible for their small numbers today.

Selsesstissan is now only a creature of myth and legend. The Gromek of the present can only trace their history to their arrival in Baalgor, centuries after Selsesstissan disappeared. They know nothing about the Time of a Thousand Magics. Nor do they realize that the Gromek once dominated an area larger than the Old Kingdom. They have since laid claim only to the mountains circling the Baalgor Wastelands and no empire has ever been able to challenge their claim. Some of the Gromek continue to wait for Selsesstissan to return and again lead them to glory, but they are chastised as foolish cultists and dreamers. Selsesstissan's return may bring a new and terrifying conqueror onto the world's stage just as the human race is beginning to gain an upper hand.

The Special Magic Powers of the Life Force Wizard

Life Force Magic is a lost art known only to Selsesstissan and he will not share its secrets. The magic transforms the character into an energy vampire. While he may still enjoy the taste of food and drinks, the wizard draws his sustenance from the life force/hit points of other living creatures. The life force wizard must feed on 20 life force points a day. Starvation will cause the character to become weak (reduce all bonuses and hit points by half) and eventually die. Likewise, the mage must absorb extra life force daily to perform his magic. The following are the special powers.

1. Absorb life force energy from others: Area effect or aimed at a specific opponent. Range: 10 feet per level of experience. Duration: Until hit points are restored and fatigued feeling lasts 10 minutes per

level of experience. Cost: None, an automatic power. Maximum level of energy: 30 points per level of experience.

The life force wizard can drain any one opponent of HALF his hit points in an instant. Or he can drain ten hit points from as many as ten different people or animals within the range radius of this power. Once the person or animal has been drained of hit points, the wizard cannot affect him again until the character has returned to full strength.

The syphoning of the life force/hit points also means that the victims suddenly feel tired and are -1 to strike, parry or dodge and -25% on spd.

Important Note: The stolen hit points or "life points" (LP) are used as energy points to fuel the wizard's other magic abilities. Each spell or power costs a certain amount of "life points" created from the stolen hit points. They work similar to I.S.P. except that the wizard does not have a permanent base of his own. He cannot use his own hit points to power his magic! Only a maximum of 30 LP per level can be stored by the wizard. When that total number is expended within a 24 hour period, he is powerless until the next day. At the beginning of each new 24 hour period, the wizard is powerless and must absorb energy from others to energize himself.

The character is powerless to absorb life energy from supernatural or immortal creatures, including dragons, faerie folk, demons, devils, elementals and gods.

2. Transfer energy to heal and resurrect: Range: Touch. Duration: Until hit points are restored and fatigued feeling lasts 10 minutes per level of experience. Cost: 10 Life Points (LP) and a life.

The life force wizard can breathe life into a dead companion by touching the fallen character with one hand and killing another person or large animal with the other. He then absorbs the life energy of the slain victim, using his body like an energy conduit, to jump start the dead person. The chance of success is 45%, provided that the dead man has not been dead for more than two hours. This strange resurrection power can only be tried three times on the same person. Failure means the person stays dead.

Success means the character's or animal's wounds are healed and he/she/it is restored to 1D4 hit points above zero. The restored person will feel weak and woozy (half speed and combat bonuses) for 2D6 hours, regardless of other healing magics which may be applied to him. The usual insanity rules are also applicable. Remember, dying is a traumatic experience.

3. Drink life energy: Range: The wizard must strike the killing blow. Duration of Powers: 8 hours. Cost: 120 LP and a life. The slain creature must be an intelligent being; animals will not work for this magic.

This frightening magic is reminiscent of the soul drinking power of some rune weapons. The life force wizard can completely absorb the life essence of the person he has just slain! The victim of such a devastating attack cannot be resurrected and his entire body turns into mist and seems to be absorbed by the mage who killed him.

The life force wizard gets an additional 50 hit points and the following bonuses, all of which last for eight hours: +4 to P.S. and +10 to speed attributes, +4 to save vs poison, drugs, and disease, +2 to save vs psionic attacks, plus one additional attack per melee!

4. Death Touch: Range: Touch. Duration: Instant. Cost: 40 Life points.

The death touch cannot actually kill a person but causes the loss of one hit point per level of the wizard, per each touch. The death touch can reduce the victim's hit points down to half, but also causes him to feel fatigued (tires twice as fast as normal and speed is reduced by 10%). This power can also wither a specific plant or make a specific animal sick and lethargic.

5. Control over the life force of others: Range: By touch or 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience. Duration: 2D6 melees. Cost: 15 life points.

The wizard can make the victim of this magic depressed, frightened, sick, sad, and so on, the same as the psionic power of evil eye (bio-manipulation). The life force wizard can inflict any of the evil-eye attacks. Each type of affliction counts as one spell attack.

6. Super bio-regeneration: Range: Touch; self or others. Duration: Instant. Cost: 80 life points.
3D6 × 10 hit points are instantly restored!

7. Super Healing touch: Range: Touch; others. Duration: Instant. Cost: 20 life points.

4D6 hit points are instantly restored! This touch will also give those in a coma a bonus of +10% to save vs coma.

8. Other magic powers known to Selsesstissan: Unless noted otherwise, each of the following is the equivalent to the spell or psionic power of the same name. Durations, abilities and effects are also the same, subject to the character's level of experience. Each costs 10 life points to perform.

Globe of silence, charismatic aura, see aura, see the invisible, levitate self, size of the behemoth, control the beasts, commune with the dead, turn dead, death trance, diminish others, negate magic, tongues, the faerie's tongue, words of truth, magic pigeon, paralysis bolt, wisps of confusion, induce epilepsy, age, curse of boils, curse of fever, detect poison, negate toxin, healing touch (conventional), and cure disease.

9. Pseudo-Immortality: This is another power that all life force wizards receive when they attain 9th level. Selsesstissan is not immortal. He can be killed but it is difficult. Selsesstissan's survival power will operate automatically, drawing on the closest life forces to keep him alive. In order to destroy him with any certainty, his hit points must be reduced to -173, he must be decapitated and the head and body burned in separate fires. Otherwise, he will regenerate and return similar to a vampire, within 2D4 days. This power also makes him impervious to the bites and powers of vampires.

The Life Force Wizard

Name: Selsesstissan

True Name: Selsesstissan

Alignment: Aberrant (lives by his own code of life and death)

O.C.C. & Level: 10th level Life Force Wizard

Race: Gromek **Age:** Unknown, appears to be over 180 (the natural life span of a Gromek), but is more likely to be over 20,000 **Size:** 9 ft 3 in tall (2.82 m), 760 lbs (340 kg), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 18, M.E. 19, M.A. 11, P.S. 23, P.P. 12, P.E. 19, P.B. 5, Spd. 11 (33 if flying).

Life Force Capacity: 300 LF per 24 hours; must be renewed daily.

Hit Points: 173 but only when he is up to full strength.

Natural A.R.: 12

Armor: Never wears armor.

Natural Abilities: Keen vision, fire does half damage, and winged flight.

Combat Abilities: Three hand to hand attacks or three magic attacks per melee. Claws do 1D6 + 8 damage, +4 to strike/parry/dodge.

Other Bonuses: +6 save vs all magic/psionics, always saves vs coma.

Weapons: He rarely uses weapons, instead he relies on his powers.

Skills of Note: Recognize and use poison 98%, medical 98%/98%.
Speaks Troll and Elven but is illiterate.

Possessions: Inside the dais upon which he has laid is a secret chamber.

It contains gems worth 100,000 gold and a stone rune dagger. The dagger is indestructible, has the usual features of a minor rune weapon and inflicts 4D6 points of damage.

Description: A very old and frail looking gromek, belying his real strength and powers. He is a power hungry conqueror who is an



excellent strategist and leader. He is smart, resourceful and cunning, willing to wait to play his hand. He will not tolerate interference from inferior beings, particularly humans, elves and dwarves. He sees himself as a demi-god driven by the hand of fate. He believes it is his destiny to build a new empire. Those who cross him will become enemies for life.

Selsesstissan chose to enter a burial/survival chamber when he knew that the Time of a Thousand Magics was passing and his empire was under siege. His original plan was to sleep for 1000 years, but something went wrong and he has slumbered for countless eons.

Unlike other gromek, Selsesstissan is extremely intelligent. He is very interested in finding out about other gromek in the world. He has always intended to come back to his people and lead them again. However, when Selsesstissan encounters other gromek there may be difficulties. He will automatically treat all Gromek as his subjects, even though most will not know or acknowledge him. Nor will these modern Gromek see him as a god. However, if he can prove who he is, then they will regard him as a creature of legend. Gromek legend does tell of an ancient god who once led them in the greatest battles. But Selsesstissan may not be able to live up to the legend. He will also be puzzled and disappointed to discover that his people have evolved into savage warriors with a sub-human intelligence.

Subplots

1. If Selsesstissan learns of the rebirth of the Crystal Fortress, he may desire to attack it and the Crystal King, because it was the Crystal Master who created it and who betrayed him. Thinking ahead for building his new army, he may also want to acquire some of the crystal magic weapons for his troops.

2. The adventurer group may realize they have accidentally unleashed a dangerous and powerful force in the world. Selsesstissan will make it known that he plans on finding his people and rebuilding his empire. This can only mean trouble for the future. However, whether or not the group decides they should raise a hand against the wizard is another matter. Selsesstissan hasn't committed any crimes or threatened their lives. After a while he will want to leave their company to explore his "destiny." It is likely the characters will part company as friends. Later, however, they may find their paths will cross again.
3. Selsesstissan will try to rebuild the gromek empire, but he will have to realize that the gromek are too few in number to do so. This may lead him to unite and mobilize other monster races, particularly goblins, orcs, ogres and giants. The most likely confrontations are likely to arise with the Western Empire and the Land of the South Winds.
4. The wizard may give up on his dreams of building a gromek empire and instead ally himself with other denizens of evil.
5. Selsesstissan may teach Life Force Magic to a promising assistant and ally (probably a gromek, never a human, elf or dwarf). This could be the beginning of a new age in magic.

Tom's Glen

A mini-adventure

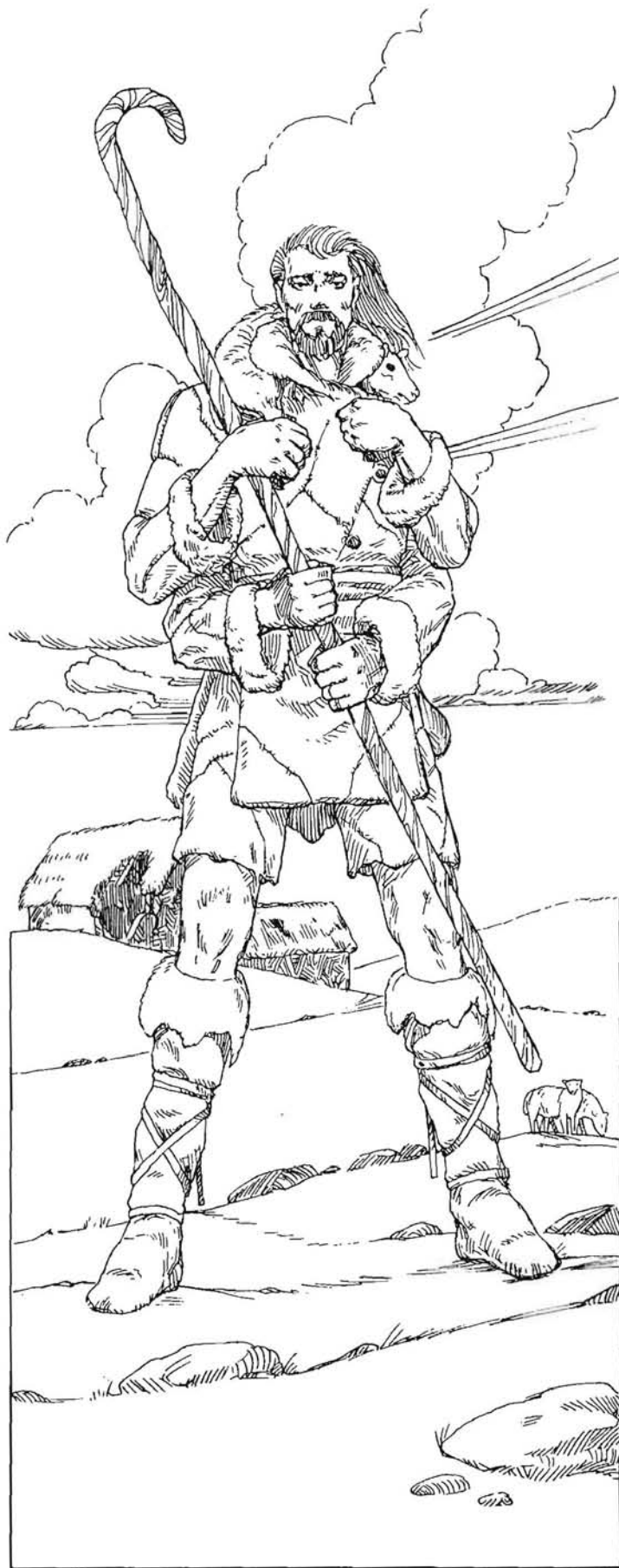
Along a mountain trail beyond the Silent Forest, the group is sure to encounter Tom the Shepherd. Tom is one of the friendliest, good-natured, mountain men they will ever meet. Although he is a rahu-man trained as a warrior, Tom gave up his warrior ways and retreated to a quiet life in the Old Kingdom Mountains.

This meeting will be a pleasant one. The gentle rahu-man will offer the travelers food and shelter from the environment. The food is tasty and lodgings are comfortable. The giant will gladly listen to stories of adventures and world events or talk about farming, sheep raising, wool making and faerie folk. He is only disturbed when the Western Empire is mentioned and will not talk about them or their persecution of his people. Otherwise Tom is continually cheerful and pleasant. The shepherd will warn the group about the Dragon Beast, goblins, bearmen, rock crawlers and other dangers that lurk high in the mountains. He can also direct them to another "nice gentleman," Knemm the titan.

Tom also knows *about* the Church of the Scar and its immortal champion, but can only provide directions to two villages affiliated with the Church. As for the legendary champion, his only comment will be something like, "Oh yes, the Immortal Champion. Quite the fighter that one. I would avoid getting on his wrong side." Likewise, he has heard about the Arch-Mage Archie, the Silent Forest and the mysterious Crystal Valley, but he doesn't know where any of them are located.

Tom will smile and explain that he is content with his life as a shepherd and does not know much about the affairs of others. He keeps to himself.

G.M. Note: Tom doesn't think to mention that the Immortal Champion is his identical twin brother. The two haven't seen each other in a few hundred years and he doesn't know what mischief his brother is up to. He knows that his brother can take care of himself, so he doesn't worry about him. If the characters have already encountered Tom II, his brother will inquire about him and make brotherly comments about their youth together. Tom II is too wild and immoral for his tastes, but if his brother is in dire need he will go to his aid. See the section on the **Church of the Scar** and **Tom II** for details.



Tom the Shepherd

Name: Tom

True Name: Tom Drew'lik

Alignment: Anarchist

O.C.C. & Level: Shepherd 20th

Race: Rahu Man, **Age:** 1000, **Size:** 15 feet tall (4.57 m), 500 lbs (227 kg), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 20, M.E. 14, M.A. 5, P.S. 28, P.P. 22, P.E. 22, P.B. 13, Spd. 8

Hit Points: 95, **Natural A.R.** 4.

Armor: None.

Natural Abilities: None.

Psionics: All 1st level abilities (minor psionic), **I.S.P.:** 80.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Magic Items/Weapons: None.

Combat Abilities: Four attacks per melee. 1D6 + 13 damage by hand, +4 strike, +4 parry, +4 dodge. At one time Tom was a trained warrior, but over the centuries he has forgotten about the ways of combat and doesn't care to relearn any of them. He will defend himself but he will not fight for any cause.

Other Bonuses: +5 vs psionics (normally 12 for a minor psionic so Tom saves with a 7), +7 vs insanity, +4 vs magic/poison, +14% vs coma/death.

Weapons: A giant walking stick and a knife which he uses only for self defense.

Skills of Note: Speak elven, southern, western, dwarven, goblin, troll and faerie 99%, disguise 90%/56%, identify plants/fruits 99%/99%, identify tracks 99%/86%, medical 99%/99%, pick pockets 96%, scale walls 99%, track 98%/46%, trap/skin small animals 99%/99%, animal husbandry 99%, carpentry 99%, cook 99%, faerie lore 99%, general repair 99%/99%, plant/farm lore 99%, preserve food 99%, sense of direction 99%, sing 99%, and swim 99%. W.P. staff, knife, sling and blunt are all frozen at fifth level proficiency.

Possessions: Tom lives in a mountain pasture with sheep and a few trees. He owns a huge, run-down farmhouse where he lives. He wears sheep skin and wool clothes and occasionally carries a walking staff or knife. Tom lives as simple a life as he can. He trades wool, sheepskin, and meat with some of his neighbors and the occasional traveler for other odds and ends. The only things he misses are good brandy and candy. He has no gold or other valuables and will not accept any sort of payment in gold, jewels or weapons. He may trade for tools, rope, food, candy and booze.

Description: Tom is large even for a Rahu-Man. He is nearly 1000 years old, but he has kept himself very fit. He stays away from the stresses of the world and looks much younger than he really is. However, he does have a rugged and well-worn appearance.

The Church of the Scar

a.k.a. The Great Cult

This unusual religion currently thrives only in the Old Kingdom Mountains. Its followers are predominantly non-human races. The Church of the Scar only accepts members that can display their fighting prowess, often in duels or contests. Priests and wizards must have offensive spells, merchants must sell weapons and armor, etc. The greatest fighters are the most likely to rise to prominence in the church. It is believed that the greatest fighters have the powers of the greatest gods behind them. Annual contests are held in various regions of the mountains where the best priest/warrior team becomes that region's representatives and/or leaders.

The church is known under a number of names, depending on the location and the personal preferences of the followers. It is sometimes also referred to as The Church of the Great War, The Church of Great Things, The Church of the Mountains, and The Great Cult. The church has few branches outside of the Old Kingdom Mountains and it is unlikely that it ever will.

Main Gods: The Great Dragon (Kym-nark-mar), The Great God (Thoth), and The Great Old One (Xy).

Alignments: Any. The church is generally viewed as a good organization by most people in the mountains. Certainly under Caloram's direction, the church is mostly a force for good. However, humans tend to look at it as bad, because the church is organizing the so-called "monster" races and could become a dangerous political entity.

Pantheon: Any god or god-like creature purported to have taken part in the last war with the Old Ones, including the Old Ones, The Great Elf (Lictalon), and The Great Angel (Lokum). They also worship "great" things related to the war, like the Great Falls (on the Old Kingdom River), and The Great Scar (The Old Kingdom Mountains themselves).

Type: Polytheistic

Direction: Non-expansive, exclusive, open.

Size: Church

Priesthood: A priest of The Scar may choose any god as his personal deity. He will then derive his powers from that god and his pantheon.

The priest should choose a god whose alignment is compatible with his own. All priests of The Scar select either hand-to-hand: soldier or mercenary as an elective skill and can use light or heavy armor. Most will have combat oriented spells as well as healing magic and knowledge. Ultimately, the character is free to choose any spells that his god knows. Each priest in the church will have a champion (this is optional for player characters, where the champion should probably be another player character). The priest's champion is always one of the men-of-arms O.C.C.s and will often be treated with as much respect as the priest.

Origin: The Church of the Scar may have been founded soon after the Old Ones were put to sleep, but there is no physical record of its early history. The verbal tradition maintains that the church is as old as the Scar (the Old Kingdom Mountains) itself. After The Great War, the Old Ones were cast down, still alive but sleeping underground, the powers of the Old Ones started to fester, and a great Scar boiled up to mark where they were sleeping. This Scar is the Old Kingdom Mountains. The term **The Scar** or the **Great Scar** is always used to refer to the Old Kingdom Mountains. All the great beings and great things involved in that epic battle are the source of strength and greatness. The verbal tradition also maintains that The Great God Thoth founded the church. No physical proof exists for any of these "verbal" traditions or history.

Holy Relic: There is only one ancient relic of the church. Little is known about its origin and it has changed hands countless times in the thousands of years that the church has existed. According to verbal tradition, the relic, known as the **Dragon's Breath**, was crafted by Kym-Nark-Mar for the first Priest of the Church of the Great Scar. The Dragon's Breath, which is also known as The Great Twig, serves as the symbol of the church's highest position of leadership, the Great Priest.

To maintain his position, the Great Priest is required to compete against the winners of the annual, regional tournaments. If the Great Priest loses, he must relinquish the Dragon's Breath to his better and that victorious priest becomes the new leader of the church. The Great Priest is also free to relinquish his title by *giving* the Dragon's Breath to any priest he deems to be worthy. Oddly enough, if the Dragon's Breath is ever stolen, the thief immediately becomes the new Great Priest. This has actually happened more than once. Of course, the thief

must defend his ill-gotten position against the winners of the annual tournaments.

The Dragon's Breath is an 18 inch long piece of wood carved to look like a dragon with its wings folded against its body. The tail is shaped to wrap around the wielder's wrist. Although it is the symbol of leadership, its magic can be used by anyone. It is as powerful as most rune weapons, but it does not possess an intelligence or personality. The rod looks delicate and flimsy, but is actually indestructible.

As a weapon, it will inflict 4D6 damage (W.P. Blunt). It also has a number of powers and grants the wielder certain bonuses.

Magic Spray Powers: Each spray fires from the "mouth" end of the rod. Defenders must roll a saving throw versus magic of 16 or higher. The Great Twig can fire each of the magic sprays/mists once per day. **Sleeping spray:** Range 30 feet (9 m), 10 feet (3 m) wide, victims sleep for 2D6 melees. **Fire spray:** Range 40 feet (12 m), 6 feet (1.8 m) wide, 6D6 damage. **Frost spray:** Range 40 feet (12 m), 6 feet (1.8 m) wide, 4D6 damage. **Poison spray:** Range 30 feet (9 m), 6 feet (1.8 m) wide, paralyzes for 2D6 melees. **Reveal Invisible spray:** Range 30 feet (9 m), 10 feet (3 m) wide, cancels any magic based invisibility, lasts 3D6 melees. **Healing spray:** Range 10 feet (3 m), 10 people maximum, heals 5D6 hit points instantly.

Other Bonuses & Abilities: The user of the rod is +1 on all savings throws and +10% to each of the following abilities (if applicable): identify tracks, track, prowl, locate secret compartments/doors, turn dead, exorcism, animate dead, resurrection, remove curse. The user can also try to perform a teleport self or dimensional teleport as often as once per day, but only has a 1-7% chance for success.

The Annual Tournaments

The annual contest is always a festive affair for the chosen town. The tournament will move from town to town in each region. The regions within the mountains are very loosely defined, since there are no formal kingdoms and each town is autonomous, with its own rulers. The location of next year's event is decided at the end of the tournament and normally chosen by the winner or the Great Priest.

Each member of the church makes his annual donation to the church at this event. This is required for anyone wishing to compete, witness, or otherwise participate in the tournament. Anyone who makes a donation is automatically a member of the church and all members are allowed to attend and compete in the tournament. The best seats in the arena are given to those followers who made the biggest donations, whether or not they chose to compete in the tournament.

A donation of ten or twenty thousand gold is not unusual in order to get onto the team of the Great Priest. Conversely, an untried priest may have to pay his teammates and followers to fill his team. Men of magic are never allowed on the team. Only the opposing priests wield magic.

To participate in the contest, a team must have a priest of The Scar, his champion and three to eight devout followers. It is the priest and his champion who are the main contestants. Most priests are kobolds, ogres and the occasional troll. Many champions are powerful, intelligent monsters such as minotaurs, rahu-men, trolls, and ogres. Typical followers include trolls, ogres, orcs, goblins, puny kobolds, bearmen, and the occasional dragon wolf (joining in for the intrigue). The **devout followers** buy their way onto the team to help as squires to a knight. The more the follower can pay, the better his chance of getting onto a team with a high ranking priest from the previous year. The exact number of followers may vary from town to town and year to year.

The competition is set up as a single elimination, one on one tournament. The path to victory consists of a series of team versus team battles where the battle is always to the death. **To the death** means the death of the opposing champion, not the entire team. The priest rarely dies during the tournament. However, most of the followers on both sides usually die or are incapacitated. However, "death" is not necessarily permanent, since many priests in The Church of the Great Scar are able to perform resurrections. The average warrior priest of The Scar concentrates first on acquiring combat oriented spells and next on healing spells. The church that lives by the sword is forced to place value on healers.



The teams can square off in an arena or open field of combat. The priest and his champion of two teams are placed at the opposite two ends of the combat area. A line and rope are drawn across the center where the followers from both sides line up, facing each other. No physical attacks may be made until the rope is dropped, signalling the start of the contest. However, the priest may cast non-offensive spells, pray, etc., before the start of combat. The priest from either team may never cross the center rope line. The priest may choose to use magic or any of his other powers at any time, to attack, defend, help his followers, or hinder the opposing team.

The followers on each team square off, weapons drawn. The champion will stand back behind the followers to protect the priest. The battle between the followers is usually quick and bloody. Once all the followers on one side are slain, the opposing champion and any remaining followers race across the line to go after the other team's champion and priest. With well matched teams, it often comes down to the champions and priests battling each other one on one to determine the victor. The team whose champion is left standing at the end is the winning team.

There are usually enough high level priests and healers in attendance to bring those teetering at death's door back to life and to full hit points. However, frequent death causes psychological problems, and many followers are insane in some way. It is not uncommon for a team to face two, three, or four battles in a single day. The priest has to be careful not to use up his spells too early either. The last competition of the day is always the toughest. The tournament usually lasts a full week, with lots of quick battles on the first day. When only two teams remain, the tournament is temporarily halted and the teams are given a full day (and two nights) to rest.

The winners (the priest and his team) get to use a portion of the "donations" to make their circuit of the mountains for the following year. The winning priest from each region will tour the length of the mountains with his champion and followers for the year. They are expected to make certain that the greatness of the church is recognized by the inhabitants of the mountains. This may include getting into brawls, taking over a town or two, or even doing a few good deeds. In towns where the Church of the Great Scar rules, the winners serve as travelling judges and wisemen. Their word is the law and their decisions final. The church is also likely to serve as the protector or defender of many towns and villages. A group on tour from any region of the church commands respect, mainly because everyone knows that they are the greatest fighters in their region and some of the greatest warriors in the Old Kingdom.

There are four mountain regions. Each conducts its own annual tournament. The winners of the regional tournaments can then challenge the current, reigning Great Priest, his champion and followers. However, the regional champions are not required to challenge the Great Priest. This means some years there may be one challenger or as many as four (there is always at least one). The Great Priest must accept any challenge made from any or all of the regional winners.

The Great Priest

The current Great Priest of the church is a kobold named Klem. Or so everyone believes. Klem has been the Great Priest for a decade. Unknown to anybody, Klem is secretly a dragon named Caloram. Ten years ago, a little known kobold priest named Klem was making a meteoric rise through the church's ranks because of his champion, a Rahu-Man named Tom II. The dragon watched Klem become the Great Priest, even though he didn't deserve it. One night when Klem was away from his champion, Caloram confronted him and demanded that he hand over the Great Twig. The cowardly priest handed over the relic without a word and hasn't been seen since.

Caloram has always enjoyed interfering in the affairs of the lesser beings and often masqueraded as a travelling priest or champion of the Church of the Scar. He assumed Klem's identity to have some fun as

the Great Priest of the Church of the Scar. Although his original intention was just to have fun, he has since become a devoted priest of the Church. He chooses to worship the Great Dragon God Kym-Nark-Mar and is considered a 15th level Priest of Light.

Caloram is old, even for a dragon. He hopes that his involvement in the church will leave a lasting mark on the mountain people. A legacy that will last beyond his death. He continues to influence the current direction of the Church of the Scar and hopes to establish it as one of the great churches of the world. He praises dragons constantly and encourages the worship of Kym-nark-mar above all other gods.

The Great Priest carries the relic as a symbol of his position, but rarely uses it. He prefers to rely on his own powers. Caloram recognizes that his days are numbered (2D4 x 10 years; short for a dragon) and that he needs to find a new Great Priest who will continue his legacy. One such goal is to see the church expand into the lowlands. As a result, he travels as Klem, The Great Priest, with his champion, Tom II, looking for a likely successor. If he finds a suitable priest, i.e. a follower of Kym-nark-mar who supports his views, Caloram/Klem will encourage and promote his rise in the church. If the ancient dragon begins to feel too weak and sickly, he may even give him the relic and the title of Great Priest.

The Great Priest

Name: Klem the Kobold (really a dragon)

True Name: Calvryn Loramar, a.k.a. Caloram

Alignment: Unprincipled

O.C.C. & Level: Priest of Light, 15th, devoted to Kym-nark-mar.

Race: Great Horned Dragon, disguised as a kobold priest.

Age: 5750 years (very old), **Size:** 30 ft tall (9.14 m), 70 ft long (21.34 m), 120 ft wing span (36.58 m), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 28, M.E. 25, M.A. 30, P.S. 23, P.P. 20, P.E. 25, P.B. 28, Spd. 75 running (150 flying).

Hit Points: 412, **A.R.** 15.

Natural Abilities: Modified Clerical Abilities: Turn dead 98% (includes vampires, ghosts, etc., at 75%), exorcism 98%, remove curse 98%, healing touch 3-18, resurrection 50%, teleport 98%, dimensional teleport 72%. Other Abilities: See page 213 in the Palladium RPG for complete stats.

Psionics: All level 1-3 abilities, sixth level proficiency. **I.S.P.:** 103.

Magic: Fifteenth level proficiency, 37 spells per day.

Magic Knowledge: All spell magic from levels 1 to 11.

Magic Items/Weapons: The Dragon's Breath Twig. See its description under the Church of the Scar.

Combat Abilities: 4 attacks per melee, claws 2D6, bite 3D6, or by weapon. +3 strike, +10 damage, +3 parry, +3 dodge.

Other Bonuses: +5 on all saving throws.

Weapons: Dragon's Breath twig does 4D6 damage plus Caloram's bonuses.

Skills of Note: Caloram has studied many fields of knowledge in his life and can be considered an expert on almost everything. Caloram can perform every known non-magic elective or secondary skill at 99%. He speaks all languages fluently, and is literate in all.

Possessions: Caloram has a mountain of gold hidden away in a cave in the highest reaches of the Old Kingdom Mountains. The mountain could be larger, but he donates a great deal to the operation of the church.

Description: Caloram is an extremely old great horned dragon, and when he is in dragon form he looks old. His color, which is a grey white (storm cloud colored), is rarely seen in great horned dragons, but is a natural color that comes with great age. He rules a large region of the Old Kingdom Mountains, and can often be found patrolling the peaks. He also frequents the lowlands disguised as a kobold priest named Klem.



The Real Klem, Priest of The Scar

Name: Klem

True Name: Klement Kras

Alignment: Anarchist

O.C.C. & Level: Priest of Light 15th, devoted to Thoth.

Race: Kobold, **Age:** 150, **Size:** 3 ft, 3 in tall (0.99 m), 73 lbs (33 kg),

Sex: Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 11, M.E. 10, M.A. 7, P.S. 11, P.P. 10, P.E. 20, P.B. 5, Spd. 10.

Hit Points: 95, **A.R.:** 4.

Armor: Kobold chain mail: A.R. 13, S.D.C. 44.

Natural Abilities: Recognize enchantment 71%, sense evil 65%, night vision 90 ft (27 m), day vision 30 ft (9 m).

Psionics: None.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: 2 spell attacks per melee, + 3 spell strength.

Magic Knowledge: 15th level priest of light. 20 spells, study circles 99%, study symbols 99%. Spells: blinding flash, water to wine, invisibility (self), wind rush, fleet feet, fly as the eagle, armor of Ithan, call lightning, hail, create bread and milk, teleport (self), the faeries' dance, impenetrable wall of force, ten foot wheel of fire, restoration, river of lava, tornado, death, hurricane, resurrection.

Magic Items/Weapons: None.

Combat Abilities: Although a Priest of the Scar, Klem started to study combat late and rose in the church on the combat abilities of his champion Tom II, and later, the abilities of Dragon's Breath. Hand to hand soldier and W.P. blunt at 9th level proficiency.

Other Bonuses: +6 save vs magic, +3 vs poison, +10% vs coma/death.

Weapons: None; avoids fights and backs down or runs away when real danger threatens.

Skills of Note: Horsemanship: general 15th level, read/write dwarven 99%, speak dwarven, troll, ogre, faerie and goblin 99%, disguise 84%/50%, forgery 94%/65%, identify plants/fruits 94%/96%, locate secret compartments and doors 93%, medical 99%/99%, prowl 96%, demon and devil lore 99%, faerie lore 99%, recognize poison 99%, sing 99%, mathematics 99%, paint 99%, play string instrument 98%, play wind instrument 98%, racial histories 99%, religious doctrine 99%.

Possessions: Klem wanders the mountains, appearing very poor, but manages to feed and clothe himself.

Description: Klem is a weary, old, kobold hermit who avoids other members of the church. He is likely to appear on the narrow mountain path anywhere between the crystal valley and the old capitol. The path is also frequented by a rowdy group of bear-men who do battle to decide everything. They don't wear armour, and wield large swords. He tends to remain near them, even if he doesn't actually travel with them. They know he is a follower of the Scar, like themselves, and allow him to stay near. He will stop to see a tournament of the church whenever he finds one, but only as a spectator.

If Klem encounters the characters and a priest is in the group, he will do his best to get them to join the Church of The Scar, or at least watch a tournament. If Peter is the priest, and has the crystal staff from Thoth, he will recognize it as the real thing and try to get Peter to fight in the tournament (and will try to help him win).

Klem is mortified by his act of cowardice and will not show his face until the pretender Caloram, is gone. He reluctantly admits to himself that the dragon is a better, braver and bolder leader of the church than he could ever be, but he still resents him. Over the years, Klem has grown bitter and longs to see Caloram removed as the Great Priest. To this end, he occasionally instigates others to challenge the Great Priest and to question his direction. However, the pretender only grows more popular and the church more powerful with each passing year.

Despite Klem's feelings toward Caloram, he remains a loyal member of the church and would fight to protect it and its members.

Sub-Plots

One: The real Klem, who is also a 15th level priest of the Church of the Scar, is still out there. He has gone into hiding out of embarrassment and for fear of crossing paths with Caloram again. If Caloram ever abdicates, dies, disappears or gives up his Klem persona, the real Klem is likely to reappear to continue his career. The real Klem sees Tom II as a traitor, because Tom knows that Caloram is a great horned dragon masquerading as a kobold priest.

Two: Various powerful beings and rival churches covet and vie for the possession of the Dragon's Breath relic. Among them are the followers of Styphon (the jealous brother and enemy of Kym-nark-mar), the cult of the evil Dragonwright (who believe the relic is rightfully theirs), and the cult of Yin-Sloth the Terrible (whose members worship the Great Old Ones and wait for the day they will awaken).



Tom the Immortal

The Giant on The Peak: A mini-adventure



There are twin rahu-men of renown who live in the Old Kingdom Mountains, Tom and his brother Tom II, also known as Tom the Immortal. The group will probably meet Tom the Shepherd first and his identical twin brother, Tom the Immortal, later. Game Masters should have fun with the obvious confusion that will ensue from the characters initial meeting with the gentle shepherd's twin brother. They should have no clue that the second Tom is someone else. The twins look alike, they sound alike, they have the same mannerisms, and even their aura's are similar. The main difference is that Tom the Immortal is not as nice and he is magically immortal. He tends to live in the higher reaches of the Old Kingdom Mountains and has not seen his brother in centuries.

Tom II the Immortal can be encountered one of the Crystal Quests or may be encountered as a separate side adventure. Player characters could run into the giant while adventuring in the mountains, at a church tournament or through other involvement with the Church of the Scar.

If the group first sees Tom II in a tournament battle, they will be unable to approach him, since he is the Great Priest's Champion and very busy.

If they encounter Tom II on his own land or on a quest for the Crystal King, the players are far more likely to mistakenly recognize Tom II as Tom, who in as much as a single meeting should have impressed them with his friendliness and morality.

The warrior will be quite annoyed with anybody who presumes to know him. He is actually quite good natured and enjoys a bit of deception. Consequently, he is likely to pretend to be his shepherd brother and have some fun with these "lowlanders." He may even go so far as to make up a story and get the characters involved in his own mischief or troubles.

Tom II is NOT evil. Both Tom and Tom II are of the same anarchist alignment. Tom II just has no sense of morality, or rather, has lost all sense of morality, and has trouble distinguishing between right and wrong. He does not do things because they are wrong, or evil, any more than he does things because they are good, or right. Tom II is just as likely to invite the group for dinner as he is to fight them if they insult him. He likes to drink, brawl, gamble and womanize.

Once any difficulties are overcome, and the group acknowledges Tom II as a separate and distinct being from his brother, Tom II is likely to be quite pleasant. If difficulties are not overcome, and the group acts hostile, belligerent, or uncooperative, Tom II will suggest that they leave his land or he will slaughter them. Tom II does not see anything wrong with killing, especially in difficult situations.

If the group remains friendly, Tom II will be interested in hearing about their adventures, as well as their encounter with his twin brother. The twins' paths do not cross anymore and only rarely do they think of or mention each other. However, they are still fond of each other.

Tom II lives near the peak of a mountain in Caloram's domain. His cave is located east of The Valley. He might even warn them about The Valley, saying, "It is a place damned by the gods. Give it a wide berth." He doesn't know much more about it other than it is an unnatural place possessed by "dark" magic.

Tom II The Immortal is also a shepherd when he is not fighting at the side of the Great Priest. He lives very much like his brother Tom, except that he lives at a much higher altitude. Tom II is prepared for a fight at all times. He never knows when Caloram/Klem will appear to take him along to the next tournament or to defend the church. Tom wears magic leather armor (A.R. 15, S.D.C. 300) and has four giant size swords on his person at all times. He can use all four blades simultaneously and is a superior swordsman.

He is called Tom The Immortal, because he cannot die; or so it seems. For reasons unknown to him, the gods bestowed upon him special powers of immortality and superhuman endurance. These powers turned the tide of a great battle against invading soldiers from the

Western Empire. He became a vehicle of destruction and slew every invader — though he was the sole survivor of that particular encounter. The Western Empire gave up trying to track down the last of the Rahu-Men and his people have been able to live in relative peace and prosperity ever since.

A Crystal Quest

If the group is on a Crystal Quest to retrieve a copy of the Tristine Chronicles, they may have to fight the giant warrior in order to get it. Stealing is another possibility, but will earn the group his undying contempt and he will seek revenge.

If asked about the book, Tom II proudly announces that he does indeed have a copy of the legendary tome. It is not, however, the original Tristine Chronicles.

Many times through the ages, the Tristine Chronicles have been referred to and quoted from, but no one has ever seen the original book. The Tristine Chronicles have such a mystique and reverence associated with them that many have sought out the ancient tome, whether for fame, profit, or purely out of scholarly interest. As with any highly desired object, there have been many forgeries and more than a few honest attempts at transcribing the passages attributed to the Chronicles in a single text.

The ancient tome that Tom II holds in his possession is one of these knock-offs of the true text. Tom II's book is entitled: **The Complete Tristine Chronicles**. This tome is valuable in its own right and is probably over two thousand years old. Its age is the only fact that could give it away as a fake. Tom II has held this text since before the Rahu-men fled to the Old Kingdom Mountains and he believes it was once part of the Great Library of the Western Empire. Tom II's copy of the Tristine Chronicles contains no references to events in the last twelve centuries, but is otherwise a complete and unedited edition.

The Favor

Aside from killing Tom II, or stealing the book, the group only needs to do Tom II a special favor and he will give it to them. The rahu-man lives and travels through the upper reaches of the Old Kingdom Mountains, so he has seen the Crystal Fortress and Palace from a distance when looking down from the surrounding peaks. He longs to visit this enchanting place of beauty, but is unable to enter The Valley, because he is considered a monster and is attacked by scores of guardsmen. If the group can arrange for him to visit the Palace, he will give them the book! How's that for irony?

Unfortunately, this is not as easy as it may sound. They must try to convince the paranoid Crystal King to allow a "monster" into The Valley. The king will be very opposed to such a suggestion and will say in retort something like, "It is a monster! I don't negotiate with monsters. Kill it, get my book and be done with it!" No character of a good alignment who has met Tom II will kill him over a lousy book, not even an ancient copy of the Tristine Chronicles. This creates a new dilemma: To defy the Crystal King is to earn his animosity and get scheduled with an Interrogator to be "reformed." The only options left are to run away while on the quest (and be hunted down and slain as the object of somebody else's quest or by Archie or one of the Crystal Knights) or get the darn book.

Showing a true interest in Tom II's welfare, telling him about the Crystal King, their quest and their situation may be enough to win the warrior's favor and convince him to give up the book. More likely, he will challenge the player character group to a contest of combat. If they can defeat him they get the book. Actually, if they put up a good fight and are good sports about the whole thing, he will give them the book, win or lose. In any case, Tom II can be a formidable ally or a dangerous foe.

Note: Tom II's stats are listed under those of The Great Priest in the section about the Church of the Scar.

Tom II, The Great Priest's Champion

Name: Tom II, a.k.a. Tom the Immortal.

True Name: Tomtom Werd'kli

Alignment: Anarchist

O.C.C. & Level: Mercenary 20th, Shepherd 8th

Race: Rahu-Man, but immortal. **Age:** 1000 years

Size: 15 ft tall (4.57 m), 500 lbs (227 kg), **Sex:** Male

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 24, M.A. 5, P.S. 28, P.P. 22, P.E. 22, P.B. 12, Spd. 8

Hit Points: 128 and immortal, **Natural A.R.:** 4.

Armor: He is always clothed in soft leather of iron: A.R. 15, S.D.C. 300.

Natural Abilities: **Immortality:** Tom II cannot be killed. After any battle during which Tom II has taken severe damage, he will fall into a deep healing trance for 8 to 48 hours. The length of the trance will depend on the extent of the damage — generally 8 hours for every 100 hit points of damage or missing appendage. When he awakens, he is fully restored, including the growth of new arms and legs if necessary. Even if he is decapitated or blown into a million pieces, Tom II will reappear 48 hours later in full health. **Note:** Normal healing magic can be used on Tom II to avoid the comparatively long regenerative process.

Second Wind: When Tom II loses half his hit points, he feels like he has the wind knocked out of him. His fighting abilities become impaired. He can continue fighting, but all combat bonuses and attacks per melee round are reduced to half. If he continues fighting, and he is reduced to zero hit points or less, he gains his magical "second wind!" He can continue to fight until — 128. During this period the number of attacks per melee are increased to 12 and all combat bonuses return to normal. When the battle stops, the immortal rahu-man collapses into a coma and automatically begins to heal.

Psionics: Minor, all 1st level abilities. **I.S.P.:** 98

Magic: None.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Magic Items/Weapons: A set of two matched long swords (giant sized, 2D8+5 damage, +2 to strike and parry) and two matched short swords (giant sized, 2D6+3 damage, +2 to strike and parry). All are of dwarven manufacture with superior balance and all are enchanted with eternally sharp blades (all bonuses noted above).

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand: mercenary, W.P. ball and chain, W.P. battle axe, W.P. blunt, W.P. knives, W.P. large shield, W.P. large sword, W.P. paired weapons, W.P. pole arms, W.P. small shield and W.P. small sword at 15th level; W.P. spears/forks, W.P. targeting and W.P. throwing axe at 13th level; W.P. crossbow, W.P. short bow and W.P. staves at 9th level.

Eight (8) attacks per melee, critical strike 19-20, stun 18-20, +12 strike (includes all bonuses), +17 parry (includes all bonuses), +8 dodge, +21 damage.

Other Bonuses: +5 to save vs psionics (normally 12 for a minor psionic so Tom II saves with a 7), +7 vs insanity, +4 vs magic/poison.

Skills of Note: Speak troll, faerie, elven, western and southern 99%, cook 99%, demon and devil lore 98%, faerie lore 99%, preserve food 99%, recognize poison 99%, recognize precious metal and stones 99%, recognize weapon quality 99%, sense of direction 99%.

Possessions: Tom lives for battle, and does not collect much in his cave. He has the "Tristine" book because it was from the good old days. He has his weapons, armor, and a little to live on. Otherwise any treasure he accumulates goes to the church.

Description: Tom II is among the largest of the Rahu-Men, towering at 15 feet tall. He is nearly 1000 years old now, like his twin brother, but he hasn't aged in hundreds of years. He is a four armed giant who is still in his prime. He can use all four swords simultaneously, usually using the short blades to parry any attacks while striking

with the others. Any two normal opponents are sadly outnumbered. Tom II's fighting style has earned him the nicknames of "Goblin Chopper" and "Big Bad Slice and Dice" throughout the mountains. Tom II is often seen with Klem The Great Priest, Caloram's alter-ego. The rahu-man is the only person, other than the real Klem, who knows that the Great Priest is really a dragon. The two are close friends and protect each other.

The Titan's Cave

Adventure

G.M. Note: Knemm the titan, is one of the very few beings in the world who can correctly direct the characters to The Valley of the Crystal Fortress. Thus, Game Masters should have the player group encounter him at some point before they reach The Valley on their own. Bernie knows about the titan but is not likely to have any reason to mention him.

The Game Master should feel free to modify the events leading up to the group's meeting with Knemm, including misdirection to The Valley and additional adventures of his or her own decision. However, they should meet him and see the Crystal Goblet before they reach The Valley and the Crystal Fortress. They can stumble across his cave or run into him in the wilderness. The titan may even come to their aid and invite them to join him at his home, a surprisingly comfortable cave.

The titan is friendly and hospitable, but there is also a feeling of sadness about him. He will make them comfortable and engage in small talk before he begins to tell them a sad tale.

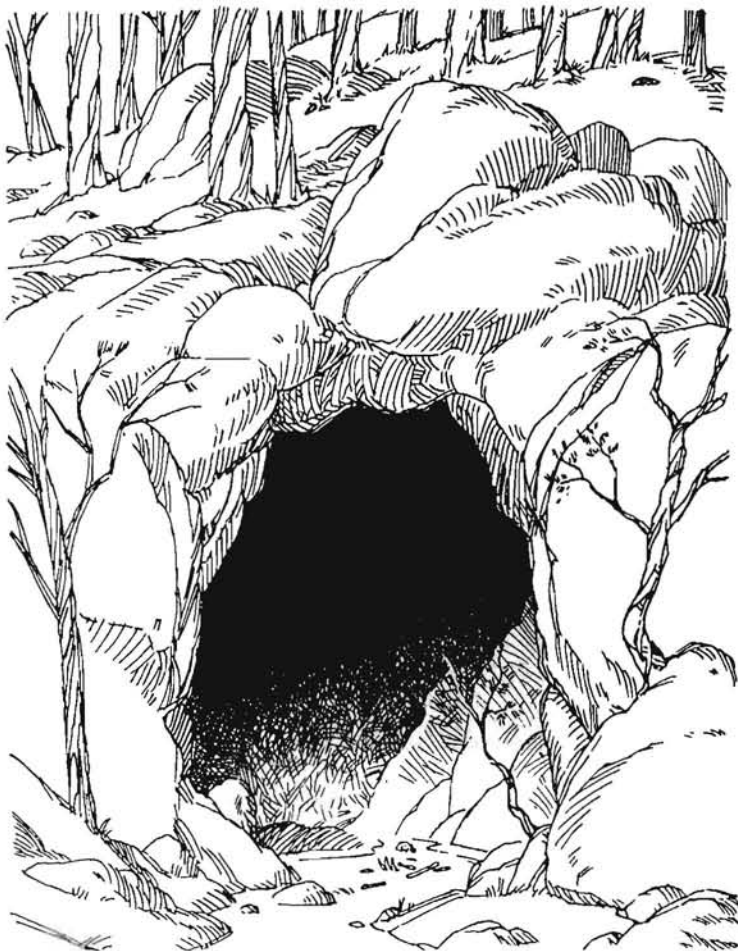
The Story of the Crystal Castle & Crystal Mage

Knemm will tell them the story of the Crystal Castle, as he remembers it. The story that the titan tells differs from the "official" history of The Valley.

Knemm was a knight-errant. **The Crystal Mage**, as Knemm calls the Crystal King, was his partner, an elven knight from the east. Knemm and the knight/Crystal Mage wandered the world as a pair, seeking adventure and righting wrongs. They wandered into **The Valley of the Crystal Castle** and discovered an entire castle, keep and fortress walls made of a strange crystal material. Fascinated, they began to dig and unearthed more of it. The digging went surprisingly well. The climate and terrain of The Valley was far less forbidding than the rest of the surrounding mountain at that altitude.

A handful of crystal artifacts were found. Sadly, they somehow negatively affected his elven companion. The elf seemed to become more solitary, and selfish. Initially, Knemm was granted a number of crystal devices, including a great crystal sword (The only crystal sword that had been found at that point. It is currently entrusted to Sir Slandel). Knemm will go into detail, describing the sword and its powers to the group (see Sir Slandel in the section about **The Crystal Fortress**).

He goes on to explain that the elf, who he now only refers to as the Crystal Mage, tried to keep the majority of the artifacts for himself and even tried to take back the items belonging to the titan. The Crystal Mage continued to change in attitude and demeanor. The two argued and fought. Knemm was beaten in battle and begged for mercy. Luckily the code of chivalry still held some sway over the Crystal Mage, and he did grant him mercy. Knemm was stripped of his armor and weapons, and exiled from The Valley. He was able to keep only a small crystal goblet (and the necklace around his neck which he contends has little or no magic power). He will show our heroes the goblet to convince them that crystal magic does exist.



The goblet is made of solid quartz crystal with a spot of color at its base (a ruby fused into the crystal). There are also fine veins of gold and silver branching out from the colored heart and extending to all edges of the goblet, somehow magically buried in the crystal. The Titan will explain that it is a psionic device and only one of many that were discovered. By expending one (1) I.S.P. on the goblet, while filled it will negate any poison, toxin, or disease in the fluid and make anything drink taste better. The goblet can also convert any beverage into a nutritious meal, fully satisfying, and healthy. Even better, it can convert any liquid in it into a superior healing potion.

Any psychic can use the goblet once he has object read its operation a few times. After using the goblet, more of its powers are revealed. Knemmm is careful not to let this happen and will snatch the goblet out of a person's hand, saying, "Okay, you get the picture." He's very protective of his crystal. Knemmm will say nothing of any other abilities the goblet may have. Any psychic in the player group will only be able to detect the first ability after two (2) object reads. The negation of poison after five reads, and the healing potion aspects after a total of nine object reads.

Knemmm's Necklace

If the group notices his necklace and questions about it, he will explain that like many of the crystal artifacts that were found, its powers were never really uncovered. It is little more than a useless bauble (the power of the necklace will make his words ring TRUE!), but it has great sentimental value for him, since it was one of the only artifacts that the Crystal Mage gave him while they were still friends (very true). If one of the players is able to handle the necklace and do an object read, only its first ability could possibly be revealed. It is unlikely that Knemmm will allow even that.

The crystal necklace worn by Knemmm is an ancient magic device, and one of the less powerful ones at that. Its most apparent power is to disguise the wearer's psionic ability (on command), making him seem to be weaker than he really is; i.e. a master psionic appears to be major, a major psionic appears to be a minor, and a minor psionic appear to have no psionic abilities at all. Even the ability to see aura and detect psionics will be fooled.

But it has other abilities too. It can alter the aura and deceive psionic and magic "senses" to make him appear to be telling the truth even when he's lying, alter his aura to appear to be of a different alignment, weaker or more powerful than he really is and similar disguises on the psychic level. **Note:** Knemmm will never reveal the secrets of the necklace to any member of the group. Also note that the necklace does NOT register as being magic.

Since Knemmm is likely to be using the crystal necklace's abilities whenever he meets with the adventurers. He may use it to completely alter his aura, but he doesn't have much I.S.P. remaining after that and the duration of the magic from the necklace is about an hour.

The Titan's Quest

Knemmm will plead with the group to confront the Crystal Mage, to make him see how he has changed and has been corrupted by the "evil" crystals.

"I must tell you the full tale of glory and betrayal so that you may decide for yourselves whether this venture is worthy of your questing. You have certainly all heard of the Tristine Chronicles and the acts contained therein. The acts and intrigues described in this great book are those that shaped the world and brought to light all that we now experience. I would like to quote to you a passage that began this sorry tale. For it was this passage that brought me to the Old Kingdom Mountains and the spirits of evil and betrayal."

Knemmm will reach into the inside of his cloak to pull out an ancient, or at least ragged, piece of parchment with text that he claims was copied directly from the original Tristine Chronicles. He will put the parchment away as soon as he is done reading, and will let no one examine it.

Yea and so it was in the days that the Old Ones were no more and the world breathed a sigh of great relief. Yea verily did the world relax as the races that remained left the battlefield behind to return to their homelands. It was the dawn of a new age. Many were the outcasts and homeless. Indeed, many homelands did perish in that titanic battle with the Dreaded Ones. The very earth of our world was ripped asunder and only in the final entrapment of the last and greatest of the Old Ones was the land made whole again. And yet it was not as it was before.

So it was, that the mark of that horrid battle should ever remain in the world as sentinel to that time, for us, for all time. A mountain range that will never, yea could never, perish was raised up as a festering scar on the world, marking where the last of the Old Ones was cast down into the ground itself. And so did the ground fester and the mountains climbed up as that wound healed. A scar to mark forever the damage done to the world.

The titan becomes a bit more excited as he continues, "I believe the 'great scar' is what we call the Old Kingdom Mountains. There are other texts that confirmed this notion. Furthermore, in the days before the Old Kingdom or Timiro, this range of mountains was called 'Lic-talon's Scar,' and still is by some of my people. Have you ever heard of the Cult of the Scar?"

He doesn't wait for a response. "Its worshippers also believe that some of the Old Ones sleep beneath the Old Kingdom mountains. Many times throughout the ages, different races have retreated to these highlands. Most recently, the mountains became the last refuge for the rahu-men when they fled the wrath of the Western Empire. Before that, the dwarves chose this as their last refuge in the great war. Even earlier,

a thousand wizards retreated here at the end of the Time of a Thousand Magics. Why here? Are they drawn here by the power and magic of a slumbering Old One?

"There are many stories within the mountains and it seems that in each case the story has an unhappy ending. People who come to these mountains, especially this particular range of mountain, do not flourish. Nay, far more frequently it is a wounded creature crawling away from the world, seeking no more than a comfortable place to die.

"In earlier days I always saw the other side of death, the hope that springs eternal in youth, the belief that death brings rebirth. But nature has forsaken these mountains. If rebirth comes it is always something evil, cursed, or damned!

"I say to you, look as far away from this accursed land as possible. I came here with a fellow knight looking for adventure. We thought we'd find it in a land rich with history. Instead, I lost a dear friend and have doomed myself to a fruitless existence. All because of the evil traps of this god forsaken land! A land I believe has been twisted by the evil and magic of the Old Ones who sleep beneath its rock!"

The aged titan is obviously a tortured soul. He is bound by promises, oaths and dreams which are wearing on him in his advanced age. Knemmm will petition the group to accept a quest. He'll beg them to bring his old friend back to him (the group should realize that Knemmm implies a physical return). To put an end to at least one small part of the "evil" of the slumbering Old Ones that festers in these mountains.

If they accept his quest and are successful, the titan promises to give them a small token of his appreciation, the crystal goblet, as a reward. Any man of magic or thief will estimate its worth in excess of a million gold (if sold to the right alchemist). The titan recognizes its value, but dismisses it as unimportant to him. "My old friendship is worth more than a few million gold pieces." If necessary he will play up the value of the artifact to gain the interest of the greedier and/or less sympathetic members of the group. However, he will reserve the goblet as a reward. He will also beseech them to be on their best behavior lest they also fall to evil.

Knemmm plays the role of the classic titan to the hilt, speaking of goodness and fair play. He will warn them repeatedly to avoid the lure of the magic crystal. He will tell them how when he held the crystal sword, he felt himself changing. He will repeat that his friend has been lost to the crystal and that it has stolen his soul.

"Just as the crystal is cold to the touch and appears like ice, so will it freeze your hearts and harden your minds against others. The lure of the crystal is strong and its beauty is enticing, but it only leads to despair and sorrow. Be strong and fight it. Destroy it, if you can!"

Knemmm The Titan The Crystal King's Old Partner

Name: Knemmm

True Name: Nemus Isarius

Alignment: Good, scrupulous? (actually anarchist but masked by a crystal necklace/amulet that he wears beneath his tunic).

O.C.C. & Level: Knight 20th

Race: Titan, **Age:** 1170 years, **Size:** 13 feet tall (3.96 m), 600 lbs (270 kg), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 5, M.A. 15, P.S. 28, P.P. 18, P.E. 22, P.B. 29, Spd. 16

Hit Points: 102

Armor: Specially crafted Giant Sized Plate Armor: A.R. 17, S.D.C. 350, and it weighs 120 lbs (54 kg).

Bonuses: +14% vs coma/death, +4 vs magic/poison.

Natural Abilities: Night vision 90 ft (27 m), see the invisible, turn dead 80%, great physical strength and beauty, charm/impress 90%.

Psionics: Minor, all 1st level abilities, I.S.P.: 103.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Magic Items/Weapons: Crystal goblet and crystal deceiver necklace.

Knemmm is bonded to the necklace. No one can bond to the goblet.

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand: knight, W.P. large sword, W.P. large shield, and W.P. lance, all at 15th level proficiency. However, Knemmm refuses to fight unless he is fighting by the Crystal King's side.

Weapons: Great Sword, equivalent to a giant sized flamberge, 4D6 damage.

Skills of Note: Horsemanship (Knight), speak troll, northern, southern, eastern, western, elven, dwarven, goblin, wolven, ogre and faerie 99%, read/write elven 99%, disguise 84%/50%, forgery 94%/65%, identify tracks 94%/75%, medical 99%/99%, pick pockets 85%, scale walls 99%, trap/skin small animals 99%/99%, trap/skin large animals 99%, use poison 96%, cook 99%, demon and devil lore 99%, faerie lore 99%, recognize precious metals and stones 99%, recognize weapon quality 99%, sing 99%.

Possessions: Aside from the crystal goblet, Knemmm has few possessions. He has holed up in his cave, making it comfortable, but his obsession prevents him from improving his lot in life.

Description: Silver hair, warm eyes, a giant noble warrior. He does not wear the plate armor nor wield the great sword in his cave, but he keeps them highly polished and on display in his central chamber. Titans are purported to follow the code of chivalry, and Knemmm seems to also. He always seems helpful, honest and friendly.

Although Knemmm is obsessed with getting even with the Crystal King, he is still loyal to him as his only true partner. Knemmm is not evil, although he may be slightly insane.

The Way to The Valley

The Titan will describe the path from his cave to The Valley. It is an arduous path that winds over the spine of the Old Kingdom Mountains. Knemmm's cave is near the top of the mountains on the north face. The Valley is on the south face. Unless great care is taken, the group is not likely to be able to backtrack to the cave once they've reached The Valley. With all the rock crags covered with hard-packed snow, one path looks much like another. When the adventurers come upon the end of the trail to The Valley, they will be in a steeply slanting canyon that leads down to 14,000 feet (4300 m), with steep rock walls on both sides.

Knemmm will insist that they hurry, as the environment on the top of the mountains is extremely hostile. He will harp on the need to hurry and insist that they leave no trace of their path. He will admit that he fears that their path might be tracked back to him.

The only other route for the group to take is back down the mountain, through Tom's pasture, through the silent forest (possibly encountering other things there, especially if Selsessstissan has been released), and back to the Town of a Dozen Fracts. From there, Archie may meet them anyway, and hire them for protection, and lead them either to The Valley or on to other adventures in the mountains. The savvy game master should be able to find any number of ingenious ways to bring the group to The Valley.

Knemmm will give them any possible advice that might aid them in this task. However, his knowledge of The Valley is extremely outdated by about a thousand years. All he knows about The Valley is its exact location, the way through the main entrance, that it has been transformed into a forested paradise (he assumes by use of evil crystal magic). He knows that some humans and dwarves populate The Valley, but he doesn't have any idea how many live there. He will also warn them that the main entrance is guarded, but that they are in no danger as long as the group is polite, friendly and makes no hostile gestures.

The Barren Cirque

A mini-adventure

The group may accept Knemm's quest, or decide to investigate his claims; or not. At any rate, they are likely to head deeper into the mountains away from the Jedrie Pass and in the general direction of The Valley.

The path beyond Tom's pleasant mountain green and/or Knemm's cave leads into the scrub highlands. The path will then begin a dramatic upward ascent. A full two days hard journey will take the group into the heights of the Old Kingdom Mountains. The path is not so steep that mules and horses cannot follow, but they will slow the group down to a four day journey.

There are a number of side trails branching off from the main path. These trails lead to places of little consequence, typically a mountain stream, spring, or tiny village of non-humans. Following the dirt trails can only take the characters away from their intended direction and may lead to trouble (see random encounters). The eastward paths lead to the most hostile area of forest where bands of mean spirited non-humans, monsters and predatory animals make their homes.

Higher up, near the timber line, the forest begins to thin somewhat and the trees become increasingly twisted and gnarled, as is common in a krummholz region at an altitude of over 8000 feet (2440 m). This is also the domain of increasingly gnarled and twisted creatures. Some of the creatures that inhabit this region are predominantly subterranean, but in this twisted forest they may prowl the surface at night. Devil diggers, goron, grunor, loogaroo, rock crawlers, and others are not uncommon.

Another 2000 feet (610 m) higher and even the gnarled trees cannot survive. All that remains are rocks and mountain scrub. The trail is even fainter in this region and the way will become even slower. Pack animals have great difficulty navigating over the jutting rocks and loose earth. The mountainside becomes steep with many abrupt cliffs and inclines. Choosing to scale the face of the mountain would be quicker, although more dangerous. The path may be slow travelling but is comparatively safe. Another 2000 feet (610 m) higher and this part of the mountain ends. The path leads over the top of a cliff and out onto a mountain cirque. Towering glacier peaks are visible on the right and left.

The air is extremely thin up here, so altitude sickness is possible. The quicker and lighter they travel the less likely they are to suffer from the stress of the altitude. Sigmund will be unable to fly at this altitude and even magical flight is difficult. The air is thin, it is very cold, and unless they are prepared for the conditions, the group might suffer from frostbite (the titan will gladly give them furs, blankets and food).

The floor of the cirque is approximately one mile (1.6 km) wide and deep. The mountains closes in on three sides, but the north side is open to the sky. The northern view from the cirque is impressive since the face here is so steep. It is possible to see the Inland Sea which lies almost 200 miles (320 km) to the north, and one can almost make out the coast of Lopan 200 miles (320 km) further. The view is always clear since the air is clean, crisp and cold. The cirque is above the clouds, so it is also very dry.

The trail seems to end in the cirque. It is a desolate square mile (2.6 square km) area. There are the ruins of an ancient village here, although there is no trace of who once lived here. The size and style of the buildings seem to suggest human builders, but who can say? Most of the wooden buildings have collapsed, but the arid conditions have preserved the wood, which is often used to build crude shelters by travelers. Scrounging through the debris (for a full day) is likely to find the industrious individual a handful of coins (1D6 gold or silver) and assorted rusted adventuring gear, but no gems, jewels, or anything else of value.

If Bernie has lead the group to the cirque, he will inform them that this is obviously the end of the trail. He has never travelled any further and it sure looks like a dead end. The old ranger will become nervous and fidgety. He won't want to camp here, even for a few hours. If the group wants to linger, Bernie will bid them farewell and depart. If he is detained by the group, his condition will degenerate. He will become frantic and beg them to leave. He honestly doesn't know why but he must leave and so should they! A mind probe won't shed any light on the situation. One can only presume that something terrible happened to him here and he has blocked it from his mind. Bernie will sneak away the first opportunity he gets.

If Sigmund is with the group, he will prefer to remain in the cirque for a while, rather than go back. He will encourage the group to stay, in hopes of uncovering the mystery of the ruins and possibly Bernie's odd behavior. He'd like to know who or what Bernie thinks they will meet here.

The cirque is not a dead end. Intense searching (several days) will uncover a trail that leads down and east back to the lowlands and a second trail that continues upward.

The Beast Dragon

Nightfall will be uneventful. The group will not be bothered, except by possible encounters with goron or rock crawlers. However, the group's passage through the krummholz below did not go unnoticed, and a variety of creatures could decide to follow them.

One of the creatures that makes his home in the twisted forest below is Dwayne the Beast Dragon. At the end of the second day in the cirque, the travelers will hear a large creature approaching from the trail which they came up. A large Beast Dragon (A.R. 12, Hit Points 310, Speed 20, I.Q. 6), will appear. He is here to terrorize the unfortunates that have come to the ruins. The monster will terrorize the group as best he can and will threaten all types of terrible punishment unless they give him food and valuables. For all of his bluster and bellowing threats, he is unlikely to kill anyone. Dwayne has been terrorizing this area for hundreds of years and has grown soft. He is far more interested in scaring people and picking up a few trinkets than actually doing battle. He has a huge ego and would like to think of himself as the lord of this region.

He is more likely to retreat than to fight when outgunned. He has learned that he can usually get everything he wants without killing. He will often demand tribute from those unfortunate enough to be trapped in the cirque. Dwayne's typical demands will include: "Give me your animals. I'm hungry." or "Give me all of your good stuff. Especially the shiny things." or "Cringe before my might! Beg for mercy and I may spare your worthless lives!" He loves it when people bow, scrape and whimper before him. In fact, if he is really impressed by how afraid people are, he often forgets to ask for any loot and leaves very content with himself.

If the group complies with his demands, Dwayne will leave them unmolested for a few days, after which he'll get hungry, bored, or lonely and come back to terrorize them some more. If the group doesn't have anything that Dwayne wants, except for being afraid of him, he will demand that they "find some good stuff" and bring it back to him.

Dwayne is a silly creature, full of bluster, but he is not to be taken lightly. The dragon beast can be very petty and cruel. When backed into a corner he fights like a holy terror. He does not relate well with humanoids since he is not terribly intelligent and sees them mainly as soft squishy things that taste good. He has terrorized this region for centuries and visited The Crystal Valley before the powers of the fortress were fully in place. In fact, he may tell the characters to "climb up to The Valley and bring me back all the gold and magic items you can carry. Do this and I will spare you." The beast dragon won't offer much more information than that, other than the general direction and that they have little to fear from "a bunch of tiny dwarves and humans."



Dwayne, The Beast Dragon

The Crystal King would like to see the beast slain for two reasons. One, it knows how to get to The Valley and it occasionally sends outsiders to it. Second, in the past it has invaded The Valley and ate two Valley Guards and one Palace Knight, taking with it a crystal communication headband.

Most other inhabitants in the area avoid the monsters. One village of goblins who live near his cave have developed an entire routine in which they bow and pray to the creature as if it were a god. Dwayne loves this and has even come to these goblins' rescue on more than a few occasions. He never asks them for tribute unless he is really hungry.

Name: Dwayne

True Name: Each head has its own name, from right to left they are: Dih, Wahy, and Nih — Dwayne.

Alignment: Miscreant

O.C.C. & Level: Not applicable for this monster

Race: Beast Dragon, **Age:** 1000, **Size:** 20 feet long (6.1 m), 9 feet tall (2.74m), 7000 lbs (3150 kg), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes of Note: I.Q. 4, P.S. 24, P.P. 18, P.E. 20

Hit Points: 245

Natural A.R. 12

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 40 feet (12.2 m), prowl 30%, climb 50%, swim 78%, bio-regenerate 2D6 hit points per melee round, and breathe fire (3D6), breathe toxin (3D6) or bite, 2D6 damage.

Psionics: None.

Magic: None.

Magic Items/Weapons: None.

Combat Abilities: Six attacks per melee (two per each of the three heads).

Other Bonuses: +3 to strike, +4 to parry, +6 to dodge, +6 to damage from bite or claw, and +3 on all saving throws.

Weapons: None, although it may use clubs and throw rocks.

Skills of Note: Speaks goblin, elf, dwarf, and eastern 80%.

Possessions: 1100 in gold, 600 in silver, 2200 in gems, three Old Kingdom dragon coins, plus 13 broad swords, 23 knives, two brightly polished shields, a crown made out of fool's gold, a magic thunder hammer, a cracked and useless crystal ball, three silver daggers, a brass goblet (10 gold), a gold cross (worth 90 gold), a bottle of Western brandy, and a crystal communications headband.

Description: See **Monsters & Animals**, page 15, for a detailed description of the beast dragon. Dwayne lives in a cavern to the east.

G.M. Note: Players may assume that Bernie was afraid of the beast dragon, but this is not the case. The ranger has taken Archie on some adventures and has even been to the edge of The Valley, but his memory has been altered to make him forget and to be afraid, never to return. Unfortunately for Bernie, the Interrogator who "reformed" his mind went overboard and is the root of his strange behavior and memory loss.

A chance encounter with Caloram

All the land between Knemm's Cave and The Valley is the domain of the Church of the Scar (in addition to other adjacent areas). The non-humans of the church are likely to see the adventurers as intruders in their territory. The Great Priest (Caloram) is always on the look out for an heir to carry on his legacy and equally alert for enemies of the church. He may send his champion, Tom II the Immortal to storm down on them or investigate in person. He will spy on them from a distance, before finally sneaking up on them in his favorite disguise (metamorphosis) as **Klem the Kobold**.

When Caloram appears as Klem, he looks like a typical kobold Priest of the Cult of the Scar. Klem's (or Caloram's) aura appears as that of a very powerful priest or even a demigod. It is impossible to distinguish Klem's aura as that of a dragon. The Dragon's Breath Twig is Klem's only visible weapon. Klem is an extremely old looking kobold, just as

he is an extremely old dragon. He may eventually manipulate them for his own purposes. **Note:** The Great Priest will not get involved with the group unless they linger in his kingdom or make a big commotion. See the **Church of the Scar** for more details.

The Valley at the Top of the World

Located in the upper reaches of the Old Kingdom Mountains is a place known as **The Valley**. It is an expanse of flat land that lies between a number of high peaks. The valley is shaped much like a long triangle pointing towards the south. The floor of the valley slopes down from the north to the south. A single river meanders from the north to the south down its center. The source of the river is somewhere in the peaks to the north; a combination of hot springs and melting ice. The flat area stretches 30 miles (48 km) north to south and 20 miles (32 km) east to west. It is located at an altitude of about 14,000 feet (4267 m).

What makes The Valley unusual is that it has a forest, farmlands and people! The scrub ends at an altitude of 12,000 feet. It should be impossible to have any significant vegetation growth, let alone an entire forest, with animals and townsfolk! Obviously some great magic is at work.

The Valley has three notable towns with a combined population of approximately 6,000. Of these, the majority are humans and dwarves, each comprising about 45% (or 2,700 each) of the total population; 5% are elves (approx. 300); the remaining 5% (300) are changelings, orcs, ogres, kobolds, and other humanoid races.

The majority of the dwarves live in **Alpine Burg**, which has a population of 2,000 dwarves, 800 humans, and under 100 from other races. The largest number of humans live in **Lake Town**, which has a population of 1,500 comprised solely of humans. **River City** with a population of 900 is inhabited by almost all of the elves, along with a like number of humans and, as odd as it may seem, a couple dozen dwarves. There are also about 100 residents at the **Crystal Palace**, half of which are Palace Guards.

The remaining 700 or so residents of The Valley live in tiny villages or farms in the areas around and between these three towns. Most of the farms and ranch areas are located between Alpine Burg and River City, and most of those agricultural workers will often live in one town or the other. These people are known as those who live on **The Road** between Alpine Burg and River City; those who live in **The Hills** in the North and Northeast and those who farm and ranch **The Valley Floor**. Yes, unimaginative names, but that's the way these people are. The only other group of people not counted among the regular population are the 200 **Valley Guards**. There are no slaves in The Valley.

In addition to the humanoid residents of the valley are the following domesticated animals: 3,000 chickens, 500 ducks, 100 geese, several hundred quail (allowed to roam wild), 2,500 goats, 1,000 pigs, and 1,000 sheep, as well as about 200 dogs, and fish. It is important to mention these animals because all of them were brought to The Valley — it is too high up, cold, and devoid of even scrub vegetation for these animals to be indigenous. They are the only animals brought to this place of magic; no horses, mules, deer, cows, cats, wild birds, rabbits, rats or other rodents live in the valley. Likewise, there are no domesticated or enslaved monstrous animals such as gryphons or dragon beasts.

Although only about 60% of the population could be considered a work force, over 90% of the workers are engaged in farming, herding (goat, sheep and pig) and fishing. The remainder are either in the service industry (carpentry, making clothes, running shops, and taverns, etc.) or in the military. Agricultural land comprises about 50 square miles (122 square km), roughly 20% of the total land in The Valley.

The Official History of The King & Valley

This is the story of the Crystal King and the Crystal Fortress as told by the residents of the Valley. However, many folks are not likely to care about, or even be aware of, their history. Such is the case at Lake Town.

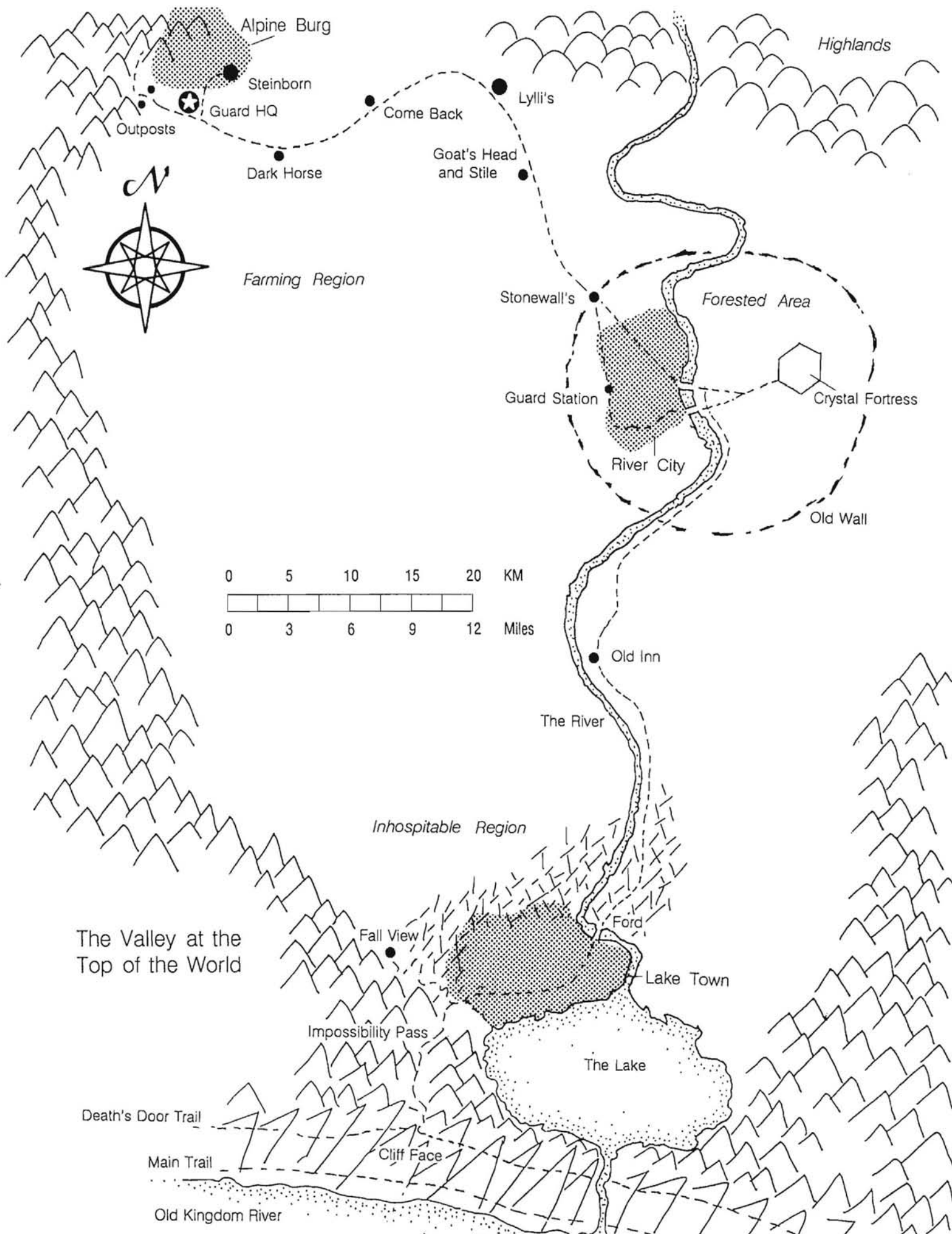
The Crystal King was originally a knight and a master psionic who chose to travel the world as a knight-errant. It is unimportant who he was then, it is enough to know that he was a true knight (**Note:** The Crystal King will not reveal his prior name, only that he was knighted in the Timiro Kingdom).

When the knight discovered the Crystal Fortress about a thousand years ago, it was almost completely buried under the soil of The Valley. Only chance led him to its discovery. He was travelling through the valley, fearing he was being pursued by a Beast Dragon that he had spotted on his way up the pass into this valley. Unable to see the invisible, or sense presences, and thinking that it had turned invisible during its pursuit, he attempted to see auras around him (he wasn't all that familiar with the creature's powers). He attempted to scan the horizon looking for conspicuous auras. Just as he passed near the tallest tower of the buried palace, he was completely blinded by an intense aural flash.

After he recovered, he realized that he was not being chased and he set up his pavilion over the spot where the aura had temporarily blinded him. A piece of crystal projected above the hard soil and snow. He attempted to uncover what was buried there, but soon realized it was much larger than he expected. He was able to uncover the top ten feet (3 m) of the highest tower before he decided to seek help.

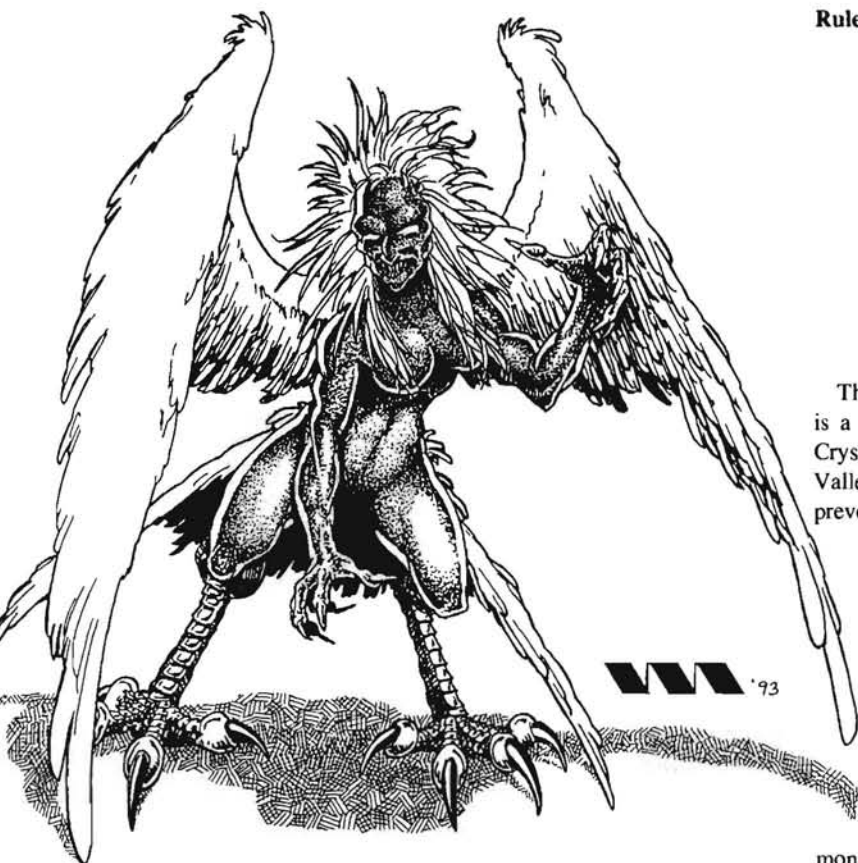
The knight returned to an old Dwarven village at the base of the mountains to hire laborers that would help him uncover what he had found. (**Note:** The village was the city state of Krikkt). As the true scale of his find was revealed, he summoned many of his companions from his travels to assist him, especially to help in protecting his discovery. Many of these men and women were not to be trifled with, being stout adventurers of renown. So it was that the Crystal Fortress and palace were discovered.

The knight became the Crystal King and used his new found powers to transform The Valley into a place where men and dwarves could live. The Valley was beautiful and so safe that the workers decided to make their homes here. The noble king welcomed their company. With



time, entire towns sprung up and the people prospered. The Crystal King used his powers to keep The Valley safe from all dangers. After a while, the people all decided to keep the Crystal King's discovery and the location of The Valley a secret from the rest of the world. The Crystal King accepted their decision and helped form a fellowship bound by an oath comparable to the Code of Chivalry. All who passed through The Valley of the Crystal Fortress were also bound to the oath. Few have ever left. Why would anybody want to leave?

The Crystal King is said to be a fair and honorable ruler and a skilled warrior. He possesses incredible magic powers (although nobody can seem to answer where a former knight could have acquired such powers). He also commands a legion of guardsmen and interrogators who protect him and the people of The Valley. The Crystal King lives in the Crystal Fortress near River City. He is rarely seen outside the walls of his fortress.



The Laws of The Valley

In general there are only a few laws in The Valley. They are so well understood and accepted by the residents that they are rarely talked about or disobeyed. There are also other minor, "unspoken" laws and rules of conduct known and practiced by the inhabitants.

Rule #1 NO MONSTERS! There are to be no monsters of any sort allowed into the valley, not even by invitation by any resident of the valley.

Rule #2 NO KILLING! Except for monsters. If you kill any non-monster in The Valley, you will be forced to pay his next of kin a "weregild." The weregild is the price that the community decides a person is worth. No, there is no such thing as a worthless person here. The weregild will range from 500 gold for a commoner, to perhaps 5 million gold for a member of the court.

The person responsible will then be interrogated and, if necessary, "reformed." The people in power believe everyone is capable of being reformed, even if they have to do a mind wipe and start over from scratch.

Rule #3 NO MONSTERS! It is your obligation to report any sightings of monsters in The Valley or attempt by monsters to get in, and assist in its extermination. Rule #1 is usually taken care of by the psychic powers of the fortress. Rule #3 is a backup.

Rule #4 COOPERATE AND BE FRIENDLY TOWARD YOUR FELLOW VALLEY INHABITANTS. It's only together that we can prosper and keep the monsters away. One for all, all for one; this is a tight-knit and loyal community.

Rule #5 GET AN INVITATION! DO NOT ENTER OR LEAVE THE VALLEY WITHOUT ONE! If you plan on visiting The Fortress, you should first request and wait for an invitation. When you plan to leave The Fortress, make sure you ask for permission. The same goes for entering and leaving The Valley. You need an invitation to enter the valley or be subject to interrogation. Likewise you must notify the authorities when you are leaving. If you plan on coming back, you must get a re-entry permit (invitation). Leave without a re-entry permit and don't plan on coming back.

Rule #6 NO MONSTERS! A little more clarification. A monster includes all demons, devils, and animal-like creatures, including intelligent ones like the sphinx, dragons, harpies, and so on. Minotaurs are also considered monsters and giants are viewed with great suspicion. All monsters were eliminated in The Valley long ago and they want to keep it that way. Races welcomed include: Humans, Elves, Dwarves, Changelings, Bearmen, Gnomes, Kobolds, Wolfen (and kin), Orcs, Goblins, Hob-Goblins, Trolls, Ogres, Rahu-men & Troglydites. True animals are also allowed. Supernatural creatures, including gods, are not allowed. It is interesting to note that the word god has fallen out of the spoken language to be replaced by the word "monster."

There are really two ways the people of The Valley determine what is a monster and what isn't. Both determinations are different. The Crystal Fortress is an intelligent entity and established control over The Valley centuries ago. With the help of its chosen king, it works at preventing any monsters from entering The Valley. The definition of

monster in this instance is provided by the actual crystal magic power/intelligence of the Crystal Fortress and/or the king. In this case, a monster may be defined as any creature proclaimed as such by The Fortress or the king, including humans and humanoids! This, however, is a rare occurrence.

The other way to identify monsters has already been discussed at some length. In the context of the game, a monster is any non-humanoid creature found in the book **Monsters and Animals**, with the exception of most (not all) humanoids (what the Crystal Fortress calls "manlings"). **Note:** The Crystal Fortress was built a long, long time ago, when changelings were still accepted and were not regarded as fearsome "monsters." Thus, it accepts changelings as an acceptable, non-monster race. However, it does not accept any creature that is reptilian or supernatural in nature. This includes such creatures as the gromek, minotaur, lizard men, lizard mage, eandroth, kelpie, faerie folk, demons, devils, elementals and gods, regardless of their alignment. Ordinary animals, even ferocious predators are not monsters.

The residents of The Valley follow the letter of the law and are outrageously paranoid of monsters. The Crystal Fortress and the king have also instilled in the residents a fear and paranoia concerning out-

siders. Any person of any race that is not already a resident of The Valley is viewed as a potential danger or enemy. The Crystal Fortress cannot prevent mortal beings such as humans, elves, dragons, etc. from entering The Valley, however, it does have the power to keep out some supernatural creatures, including faerie folk, ghosts, spectres, and elementals. It does not have the power to prevent a god, devil, or demon from entering.

While there are no other published laws, all other disputes and legal matters, from stealing and vandalism to assault and murder, are settled by the court. There is not that much disorder in The Valley, except from visitors, and there are rarely repeat offenders from among the citizenry, so the court is seldom busy. Serious offenses are likely to lead to the **reform** of the offender. A person is reformed by psionically "correcting" their thinking patterns and/or attitudes to prevent them from doing the same wrong in the future. This reform is done by the **Interrogators** and, if necessary or so desired, by the king or The Crystal Fortress.

Titles & Formality

In some ways, the title "**citizen**" means very little. Every resident in The Valley is a citizen. The "title" citizen, means that you live in The Valley, but in this regard, it also represents a collective mentality in which the word "citizen" means they are members of an elite group. "**Outsiders**" are either an enemy or a potential danger. Anyone coming into the valley either becomes a citizen or a corpse. Every "citizen" is under the mind control of the sentient Crystal Fortress (more on that later).

The title "**Citizen**" with a capital "C" or "Trusted Citizen" is reserved for the select few whom the Crystal King and the Crystal Fortress have allowed to leave The Valley and return. In order for this to happen, the Mind Control and/or loyalty must be tested and guaranteed (more on this later too).

The title "**Valley Guard**" means the character is part of the trusted police force that protects The Valley from monsters and dangerous outsiders. "**Palace Guards**" are the elite warriors who protect the Crystal Palace and The Valley. All Palace Guards are knights.

The title "**knight**" means that the person is a warrior who has earned the right to enter and leave the Crystal Fortress without invitation or escort. A knight is a privileged guardsman. The term "knight" is synonymous with "Palace Guard," all of whom are experienced or elite fighters and all of whom have psionic powers. All military personnel answer to the king.

A "**Crystal Knight**" is something completely different. The Crystal Knight must first be a real **knight** and second, a **Trusted Citizen**. Then he or she must complete a **Crystal Quest** (see the section on the Crystal Palace for more details).

All of these titles really mean very little to the average citizen. However, they are important in how you are treated by the Crystal King, the Court, and the Fortress.

The Typical NPC Valley Guard

The typical Valley guardsman is recruited because of physical strengths important in combat. Many of The Valley's youths serve a few years as a Valley Guard. Although psionic abilities are not common, and the typical valley dweller has no psionic powers, youths with psionic abilities are actively recruited to become guardsmen or interrogators. One in five guardsmen will have minor psionics.

The job of the guard is to serve the king and protect The Valley from monsters and invaders. The guards patrol the entire perimeter of The Valley and regularly visit the various communities. The main concentration of the guards is at the pass near Alpine Burg and their headquarters is located near River City. The guard is made up of about half humans

and half dwarves, with a few individuals from other races. The focus of their training is with the crossbow, since that is the first line of defence against monsters, especially flying creatures. Other areas of combat training include targeting, short sword, large sword, and small shield. They are typically 2nd-4th level foot soldiers with no special abilities. Most are basically good guys. Their total disregard for the lives of "monsters" is more from mental control, conditioning and fear than any evil intent. When a foot soldier reaches 4th level, he either becomes a palace guard, a career soldier/permanent Valley Guard, or quits to pursue other ventures.

There are high ranking guard captains, but they are not common; 1 for every 50 guardsmen. They are the truly experienced "career" soldiers and will be 6th-10th level. Most have no psychic abilities, although they may have magic weapons or armour. There are roughly 200 Valley guardsmen. 72 are stationed at the Main entrance and rotate in shifts of 36. Another 12 to 24 are typically found at the Crystal Palace (in addition to the 50 Palace Guards — all of whom are knights). Each of the three main towns will also have a dozen Valley Guards visiting and safeguarding their community at any given time. The rest are scattered throughout The Valley, typically in groups of six to 12, ever alert for monsters and trouble. Of course, larger numbers will gather during times of trouble and may be joined by Interrogators and Palace Guards.

The Typical Captain of the Guard

Alignments: Any, most often unprincipled, scrupulous or aberrant.

O.C.C. and level: Soldier 8th.

Attributes: P.S. 18 or higher, P.P. 16 or higher, P.E. 14 or higher; all other attributes are average.

Hit Points: Average 60 for a guard captain, or use actual P.E. and level (P.E. + 1D6 per level).

Armor: Hard leather: A.R. 10, S.D.C. 30 or a full suit of chain mail: A.R. 13, S.D.C. 44.

Combat: Hand to hand Soldier or Knight, W.P. small shield, W.P. short sword, W.P. large sword, W.P. crossbow, W.P. targeting. Guard captains will have 4 or 5 attacks per melee, + 10 strike with crossbow, 3 or 4 attacks per melee, and + 7 strike, + 5 parry, + 5 damage with sword.

Psionics: Most Valley Guard captains have NO psionics.

The Typical Valley Guard

Alignments: Any, but usually good; mostly unprincipled & scrupulous.

Race: Human or dwarf

O.C.C. and Average Level: Third level soldier.

Typical Attributes: P.S. 14 or higher, P.P. 12 or higher, P.E. 10 or higher; all other attributes are average.

Hit Points: Average 28 for a typical guardsman.

Armor: Typically hard leather: A.R. 10, S.D.C. 30. Captains and some others may wear a full suit of chain: A.R. 13, S.D.C. 44.

Combat: Hand to hand Soldier or Knight, W.P. small shield, W.P. short sword, W.P. large sword, W.P. crossbow, W.P. targeting. The typical guard will have 2 attacks per melee and is + 5 to strike with crossbow or sword, and + 4 parry, + 2 damage with sword. All are armed with crossbow, short sword, and small shield.

Psionics: 20% (one in five) are minor psionics with 2D6 first level abilities and an average 18 I.S.P. Another 5% (one in twenty) will have major psionics with 2D6 1st level, 2D6 2nd level and 1D6 3rd level abilities and an average of 30 I.S.P.; all others have no psionic powers.



The Valley: Scenario Setting

Entering The Valley

What follows is a description of what will occur when entering The Valley from the *main* pathway. If the group arrives by an alternate route, the Game Master will have to workup his own description (see notes on alternate routes and the section on the Steinborn Inn). Entering The Valley will inevitably involve our heroes in a number of conflicts and adventures, the least of which involves getting out of The Valley alive!



The **main entrance** is through a deep, narrow canyon. The main north-south branch descends steeply for about a mile (1.6 km) until the canyon walls are over 200 feet (61 m) high and the base is only 40 feet (12 m) wide. The canyon turns sharply to the east at the southern end, and levels out. The canyon narrows a bit further, so that it is only about 20 feet (6 m) across. Shortly after, they come to an abrupt end and a grassy plain stretches out beyond. There are guard booth on both sides of the opening, along with large boulders on both sides. Guardsmen are stationed on top of both boulders, inside both guard booths, and generally scattered around the entrance everywhere. No one is closer than 30 feet (9 m) to the entrance except those in the booths. All the guardsmen are armed with crossbows, and short swords, and are proficient in their use.

Approaching travelers will probably be heard before they are seen, unless they take great care in travelling down the rocky, steep-sloped floor of the canyon. Therefore, the guards will be on the alert. If the group is extremely observant, they may notice that there is someone at the end of the canyon. However, the guard will attempt to remain out of sight until the group has entered the valley. If the group calls out first, and it is clear that they know the guard is there, a guardsman will simply respond with "Advance and be recognized." No other information will be given.

When the group finally advances to the guard station, they will see three dozen guardsmen (or more), all brandishing crossbows. A sword and knife also hangs at their waist; half are dwarves the other half are humans. A guard will call out, "Hold where you are and state your business here." Just about any polite response is acceptable, including: "We are travelers visiting (or exploring) this part of the world," or, "We seek adventure." The head guard will smile, signal to two dozen of his men and state, "These men will escort you to town." Either the group accepts the escort or they are asked to leave.

If the group is accompanied by the dragon wolf, Sigmund, or any other dragon wolf or monster character, then the majority of the crossbows are aimed at him. A moment later, before the characters can finish their response, dozens of crossbows are fired with deadly accuracy at the dragon wolf/monster.

Exactly how the player characters react is up to them, but before they can react, Sigmund or any other monster in the group will be dead, or at least seriously hurt and unconscious. Note that the attack is directed only at the "monster." If members of the group make any sudden or hostile movements, the guards will aim at them and repeat, "Hold where you are and state your business here." Anyone who draws a weapon will be fired on and/or forcibly restrained. During each melee round, a guard's voice will be heard calling out, "Drop your weapons now and you will not be harmed." If they turn to run, the guards will pursue and attack. All the while a voice will call to them, "Do not attempt to flee. There is no safety in these mountains. We know them better than you do."

If the group attempts to flee, remember to take encumbrance and high altitude modifiers into account. The guards will not actually pursue beyond the canyon, but a one mile (1.6 km) uphill run at high altitude is going to cause every member of the group to become exhausted. If captured, the player characters will be bound, obvious weapons, backpacks and packages will be confiscated and the group taken to an inn at Alpine Burg.

If the group shows absolutely no resistance, they will not be attacked, but the dragon wolf/monster will still be dead or hurt. They'll be told "not to worry about the creature" and asked to follow them. The guards "may" allow characters to keep their weapons and belongings as long as they remain cooperative and friendly. Even the slightest hostile gesture will incite the guards to ask each of the characters to hand over all obvious weapons "until the elders speak to you in town." They will be assured that their belongings will be safe and returned to them after things have been straightened out. Those who have the power will sense that they are telling the truth.

Along the way, each is questioned in regards to who they are and what their business is in The Valley. There are no accusations or threats, only some basic questions. Everything said is written down. The written record is then taken by a head guard down the road, ahead of the group.

If the characters press the question of why the dragon wolf was attacked without provocation, the guards will get a look of surprise and one will respond, "It was a monster," as if that should explain everything. Another might add, "Look, don't worry about the creature. We'll take care of it. All your questions will be answered in town."

G.M. Note About Monsters: Remember, the king and all the inhabitants of The Valley believe "monsters" are bad and kill them on sight. They don't care whether the creature is good or evil, they simply attack, slay, or chase it away. The townsfolk do not generally consider humanoids to be monsters. Giants are the only exception to the general rule and are viewed with great suspicion. Any giant in the group will be watched closely and should stay on his best behavior, otherwise he will be escorted out of the valley and told to "stay out or die!" If he returns to The Valley and is discovered, he will be attacked and killed! Dragons in dragon form, dragon wolves and other animal-like monsters and demons are considered an enemies to be slain without mercy.

Many of the monsters indigenous to the region around The Valley know that they are not welcome and will be attacked. Thus, most avoid this paranoid place. Other than this general knowledge held by those who live in the immediate area, there are no posted signs, statues, totems or any sort of warning. Unfortunately, Sigmund does not know anything about The Valley and its unreasoning fear of monsters.

What happens to the monster if he is not immediately killed? They finish the job. If they think the creature is dead, they bury it and forget about the thing. This can give some creatures who are in a coma but not actually dead, a chance to recover and escape (or be secretly rescued). Alternately, the monster can pretend it is dead and escape when the opportunity presents itself. Monsters who run away are pursued about a mile outside The Valley before the guards give up. Monsters loose inside The Valley are the subject of a manhunt until they can be found, killed, or chased away.

Alternate Routes Into The Valley

There are four other methods that can be used to enter The Valley rather than using the main entrance.

One is flying. However, the Valley is at such an altitude that the only possibilities for flight into the Valley are dragons, certain gods, and extremely powerful magic. The standard magic spell, fly as the eagle, will not work well: the best the character can hope for is to fly or hover at about 50 feet (15.2 m) above the ground and at half the normal speed.

The second possible route is via teleport magic. However, this is very risky. If the Valley is not known by the person teleporting, the best he can do is 11% (totally unknown place), and no one can describe the Valley to him. Even if he is familiar with the Valley, there is still the possibility of the teleport not working. Anyone who has visited the Valley has had their brain patterns/memories scrambled to prevent them from visualizing the Valley. The maximum chance for a successful return teleport will be 32%.

A third way of entering the valley is by climbing the south face of the Mountains. See the description of this route in reverse along with the description of *Archie's Quest*.

The final method is through the cave of the Beast Dragon described in the Crystal Quests section.

In any case, entry into the Valley by any route other than the main entrance will be noticed first by the Crystal Fortress, and through it, the Crystal King. The King will then send a sufficient number of his

valley or palace guards to locate the intruders and take them into custody. At that point, monsters will be put to death, the intruders will be interrogated, and all else will proceed as previously described.

Alpine Burg

No matter where the player characters arrive in The Valley, they will run into 1D4 dozen Valley Guardsmen and be escorted to a place for questioning by "interrogators." In most instances, they are taken to the Steinborn Inn at Alpine Burg. Until they have been interrogated and approved, they will be viewed as possible enemies. Those who flee will be pursued until they are captured, slain or leave The Valley.

The spoken language of the town will come as a complete surprise. It is elven, even though the population is predominately dwarves and no elves reside here! Translators are made available to help player characters to communicate with the people in case they are unable to speak elven.

The population: 2000 dwarves, 800 humans and approximately 100 other non-human races, including a few changelings.

The Steinborn Inn

Ultimately, the group is escorted to the *Steinborn*, an inn at **Alpine Burg**. Here, they will be given a chance to rest and recuperate while they await interrogation. The population of Alpine Burg is mainly dwarves and with a small percentage of humans and a few other races. The Steinborn Inn is frequented by some of the kinder folk in Alpine Burg, and the group should have a reasonably pleasant stay.

Upon arrival at the inn, the group members will not be trusted to keep their weapons and are told that they must surrender them. They are assured that they will be put away for safekeeping and will be returned when they have received approval (all of this is true).

If the group asks why they are being detained/held as prisoners, they will be met with dumb stares, and a response such as "You are outlanders and the guests of Alpine Burg. I don't understand what you're asking." Any question about their status will be met with a similar answer. If they ask what they are waiting for, they will be told, "You are guests, and will be treated as such until you are no longer guests." Or perhaps, "You are outlanders, and will be treated as such until you are no longer outlanders." Characters who can speak Elf will soon realize that the language spoken is not precisely the elven tongue commonly used in other parts of the world; it is an unusual dialect.

G.M. Scenario Note: If there are any dwarves in the player group, or any who have spoken dwarven (especially if the character appears to be a thief), he will be approached by a dwarf clad in a full cloak and a cowl that conceals his face. He will simply be told, in dwarven, "You can buy a map at Town and Country Books." This will happen at some random time as they approach the town or while they are huddled in the lobby of the Steinborn. The dwarf may go on to exchange uninformative pleasantries with the adventurer, but nothing else clandestine will be said and all further conversation will be in elven. If the adventurer does not speak elven, he will have to call a translator to help him, the dwarf will not speak or respond to anything said in dwarven.

Guest Quarters

As many as six characters are placed in a single room. These particular "guest" rooms have nice, but simple furnishings, with no windows. The door is locked and four guards remain stationed in the hall at the door of each occupied "guest" room. Another four guards stand at the end of the hall and the balance wait in the lobby and outside. The wooden door and iron sliding lock are sturdy, requiring a minimum of 75 points of damage to force it open. The characters are not allowed to leave the room for any reason. If necessary, basic food and medical

help is brought to them. A large chamber pot is also provided. The Steinborn will be well guarded, with rotating watches. Escape is unlikely.

Characters who can magically turn into mist, shrink or astral project themselves may be able to slip out to investigate their surroundings. The inn is a nice place and is an "inn", although most of the rooms are devoid of visitors. The guards do not seem distressed, cruel or menacing in any way and there are no significant conversions about the player characters. The town, described in detail later, is a typical looking town — there's nothing obviously unusual other than the fact that the dwarves and other inhabitants speak a dialect of elf.

Any group member that resists or causes a commotion will be restrained, have their possessions confiscated, be separated from his companions and taken to a less hospitable location; a stone walled cell at the guards' station. If necessary, the prisoner(s) will be helped back to consciousness and bandaged, but always kept restrained until he has been interrogated and agrees to cooperate. Once he agrees to cooperate, he can rejoin the others at the Steinborn.

The Visitor

Archie will be the first to visit them. He is a tall, thin, older looking elf, garbed in leather armor. He will greet them heartily, "Well met fellows (and ladies)! Well met! I have only just learned of your arrival and I'm rather sorry I missed your entrance. I'm told it was a sight to behold. A Dragon Wolf, really? Such audacity! I commend you, nay, I congratulate you! Such excitement is rare in this part of the world. You've helped quite a few of the guardsmen gain rank. Simply wonderful!" By now Archie's run out of breath, and the group may actually get a few questions in.

In response to questions about himself:

"Oh yes, assuredly, I've heard so much about you, I had to make your acquaintance. Nevertheless, I am Archie, Wanderer, and recent Citizen of this valley. When you have the chance you'll have to stop by and visit my new home in Jakobsknopp, in River City. But you've only just arrived, haven't you? Well, we'll talk more after you've met with the king. If all goes well, and I'm certain that it will, I have a job that needs doing, and you look like a group that might profit from the adventure. Yes, call it a joint venture if you'd like. I'm getting on in years, and can't always look out for myself. But there's still deeds that need doing, and songs that need singing, aren't there?"

At this point, our adventurers may begin to realize that this long-winded fellow is not the interrogator they were expecting. Asking why the king would want to see them will illicit a surprisingly short response like: "Oh, not to worry. He's a very kind and just fellow. I'm sure you'll like him."

In response to what might happen to them, Archie is likely to respond with something like, "You don't know? Haven't you been interviewed yet? What's taking them so long?!" He seems quite agitated and continues, saying, "Let's get on with it! Time's wasting and I don't have another day to waste!" At this point he's likely to become frustrated and angry. Any further questions will be met with curt, uninformative replies like, "Yes, no, and How should I know." He'll pace around a bit, seem to regain his composure, then turn to the group, saying, "Well if you're going to work for me, here's a hundred gold piece advance for each of you." He will toss the appropriate number of pouches on the table. "The rate is five, yes five, gold per day, take it or leave it. It's the best wage you'll find around here. If things go well, you may earn a generous bonus, and any coins or gems we run across are yours to keep. Meet me at my home in Jakobsknopp in River City, and I'll present you to the king."

He turns to leave, but then turns back, saying, in a cold, menacing way, "You need not decide today, but if you're not working for me, you will face the king alone. I see none among you that has the savvy

nor the experience to stand up to the king's questioning. I assure you that it would be easier to steal a magic talisman from a sleeping dragon's paw than to face the king alone. I know, I've done both." With that, the strange character departs.

If characters ask the guards or interrogators about Archie, all they will get from them is a comment like, "So you met the king's sorcerer. You should feel honored. He is a very important man." And little more.

Interrogation

Eventually, the interrogators arrive (**G.M. Note:** Our heroes could wait, cooling their heels, for as long as 36 hours). Most interrogators work and maintain residences in both Alpine Burg and River City. Their job is to reinforce the dictates of the king and the Crystal Fortress. This means they travel a lot and may not have been in Alpine Burg when the player characters arrived.

The group doesn't need to know too much about the interrogators except that they do have formidable psionic powers. Every interrogator will wear a crystal headband or necklace as a badge of honor. There are other devices that will provide the character with a psi-power he doesn't have naturally. For example: An interrogator without extended telepathy will have a telepathic communicator headband, etc. All interrogators wear communicator headbands, giving them easier access to the guardsmen and knights.

When the interrogators are ready, each individual character is escorted to a different room at the inn. The room will be shielded from outside interference by a group mind block. It may also be shielded by conventional magic, including magic walls. The interrogators are never disturbed while questioning visitors, except in extreme emergencies. No one is allowed to accompany the subject of interrogation nor are listeners allowed outside the door. The entire interrogation process is conducted one character at a time.

The character being questioned is stripped of any potential weapons and magic devices, including rings and amulets. The character is then ushered into the room and directed to sit across a solid wood table from the group of interrogators (two to four). A mystic drain ward prevents spell casting and guards stand alert and ready for action just down the hall. If the character has a mind block up, he will be asked to lower it. Refusal to lower the mind block will cause them to psionically or physically punish him. When the character is down to half of his normal hit points he will be given the opportunity to surrender and asked again to lower the mind block. Failure to do so will mean more punishment and very likely, his death (he'll be given only one or two more chances to cooperate).

The interrogators take turns asking the character about his background, abilities, and reasons for coming to The Valley. They carefully monitor the character's facial expressions and words, as well as psionically sense for the truth of each statement. The interrogators seldom accuse a character of lying even when they know he is; they simply take notes. Interspersed throughout the questions, the interrogators will inform the character that they do not want him to tell anyone about his experiences in The Valley, and that The Valley must remain a secret. Along with these comments, they will make "suggestions" like, "You want to keep the valley a secret, don't you?" and "You're not going to tell anyone about this place, are you?" Each of these suggestions will be accompanied by the psionic power: hypnotic suggestion. If the character agrees with the suggestion, the interrogators will continue along the same lines, to make sure the hypnotic suggestions take effect.

If a character ever disagrees with the interrogators, they will calmly argue with him. They usually try to convince the person that they mean him no harm, are his friends, and that the location of their unique kingdom must be kept a secret. If the person continually and adamantly refuses to cooperate (or doesn't at least play along), he will be killed, but only after the interrogators have attempted and failed to "reform" him. "Reforming" makes a character more cooperative and friendly by

invading his mind and inserting memories, deleting memories, or altering his personality until he agrees. If none of their efforts prove successful, they will mind wipe the character and start from scratch. If this fails, they will immediately transport the character to the Crystal Fortress and let the king deal with him directly.

The reason for the interrogation is to better understand these visitors and to reduce their resistance to the powers of the Crystal Fortress, as well as implant safeguards in the person's mind to keep The Valley a secret. Game masters should give the player characters every opportunity to agree to the dictates of the interrogators. Psionic brainwashing is not mandatory as long as they believe that the characters are sincere and willing to cooperate in protecting The Valley from discovery by jealous "outsiders" and monsters. The interrogators detest killing and believe that just about everyone can be "reformed." It's just that they are so paranoid and fanatical about protecting their little kingdom that they will take whatever measures they feel are necessary to do so.

When the interrogators are satisfied that the members of the player group can be trusted, they are told that they have four days to report to the Palace east of River City and make an immediate appointment to see the king. They inform the adventurers that, "Failure to make and keep such an appointment will brand you as criminals. You will be hunted down and subjected to a second interrogation and reform." It is the king who will decide how much freedom they will be allowed. The interrogators will leave, and the group is left to explore the town and make their travel plans. The Valley is small so it shouldn't take more than one day to reach the palace from any location in The Valley.

When they reach the Crystal Fortress, they will be stopped and asked to make an appointment with the king. Appointments are hard to come by, and it may be days or even weeks before the king has time to meet them. Until that time they are not to leave the city and may be told to "check back tomorrow," numerous times. However, their mysterious visitor, Archie, can arrange an interview within 24 hours.

A Typical Interrogator

The interrogators are a group of powerful psychics selected by the king and the Crystal Fortress to assist them in the protection of The Valley and brainwashing and controlling the minds of the citizens. The interrogators are all master psionics of level four proficiency and above. Although they may not all be mind mages, all will have most of the following abilities: Aura of truth, detect psionics, object read, hypnotic suggestion, see aura, limited and/or extended telepathy, mind block, and mind wipe. In addition, there will always be one or more with the following high level abilities: cure and/or cause insanity, mind bond, group mind block, insert memory, alter personality, and fantasy experience.

The typical interrogator is a master psionic, and has probably served at least a year as a Valley Guard or even as a Palace guardsman. Psionic individuals are actively sought out to become the protectors of the valley and the people. They are also sought out because they are the most resistant to the psionic based powers of the Crystal Fortress. Each interrogator is given a crystal communicator headband to maintain contact with the king and may also have other crystal devices to enhance their powers.

The first and most common job for the interrogator is to travel through the valley, locating those with psionic powers and recruiting them to serve the king and The Valley. The second job of the interrogator takes them to the Palace to work for the king and "reform" the residents who cause problems. Reform usually involves a team of four to six interrogators who use their abilities to alter the thinking processes, personality, or memories of the offending party so that they won't be disruptive, dangerous or criminal anymore. The third job of the interrogators, which is the least common and requires the highest level mind mages, is to interrogate visitors to The Valley, and help the fortress gain control of them. The team of high level interrogators will have to be sent to

the Steinborn or the Palace to interrogate most visitors. In emergency situations, interrogators who can teleport can arrive within minutes to form their team.

The typical interrogators who work at recruiting are the low (2nd to 5th) level characters. The higher (6th to 10th or higher) level interrogators work in teams of four to six and are usually the ones conducting interviews with outsiders or "reforming" criminals. In any interrogator group of six or more, there will be one high level mind mage who knows ALL the psionic abilities.

The Typical Interrogator

Alignments: Any, but typically unprincipled, anarchist or aberrant.

Typical O.C.C. and level: Soldier 3rd level and mind mage 8th.

Attributes: I.Q. 10 or higher, P.S. 12 or higher, P.P. 12 or higher, all others average. One in six has an M.E. 18 or better and is a true mind mage.

Hit Points: Average 64, or use actual P.E. and level (P.E. + 1D6 per level).

Armor: Typically hard leather: A.R. 10, S.D.C. 30, or leather of iron: A.R. 15, S.D.C. 60.

Combat: Hand to hand Soldier or Knight, W.P. small shield, W.P. short sword, W.P. large sword, W.P. crossbow, W.P. targeting.

The typical interrogator will have 2 attacks per melee and +5 strike with crossbow or sword, and +4 parry, +2 damage with sword.

All are armed with crossbow, short sword, and small shield.

Psionics: All are master psionics. These mind mages will typically be 8th level and have an average of 100 I.S.P.

Note: There are a total of 18 interrogators wandering The Valley and assisting the Valley Guards. In addition, there are 4 retired interrogators living in the valley; all are elderly but reasonably good fighters with three attacks per melee and 2D6 + 50 hit points regardless of level (old age limits their ability). All are 1D4 + 9th level.

Alpine Burg Highlights & Places of Note

Just as much of the city of Alpine Burg exists below ground as it does above. This community was started by dwarves who originally came from the City State of Krikkt and recruited by the Crystal King to help excavate the Crystal Fortress. They attempted to leave The Valley about 700 years ago, but the Crystal King used the powers of the Crystal Fortress to stop them at the edge. Or so it seemed to the Dwarves. Needless to say, the early Dwarves did not appreciate this, but decided, "What else would you expect from a stinking elf!" Over the years they have mellowed, and the younger ones are quite content to live at the edge of The Valley at Alpine Burg. However, there are still those who try to get away.

The Dwarves of Alpine Burg are bilingual, speaking Elven as fluently as Dwarven, however only about 15% can read or write Dwarven while 60% can read and write Elven; the remainder are illiterate. The reason is that Dwarven writing has been outlawed by the king a thousand years ago and it is one of the unwritten laws of The Valley. The Dwarves prefer to speak Elven, which is both the fashion and the way the king likes it. They speak (and some write) their secrets in Dwarven.

The underground portion of the city is made deliberately dwarf size, meaning humans and similarly larger people have great difficulty fitting through the low, narrow tunnels which are seldom taller than four feet (1.2 m). Here below the earth are residences, storage chambers, taverns, inns, and shops. The main city area is a maze of tunnels that will lead the uninitiated in circles and back to the large entrance chamber (big enough to comfortably accommodate two dozen human visitors). There are also many secret passages, tunnels and places beyond the city (see the Syndicate).

The surface town is pretty typical. There's a tailor shop, tool shop, shoemaker and leather worker, market, bakery, two blacksmiths, three inns (in addition to the Steinborn), a dance hall, a dairy (goat's milk and cheese), a couple of taverns and homes. Most of the inhabitants above and below the surface are friendly and courteous.

One notable surface shop is **Darnel's Town and Country Books**. Darnel is a dwarven book merchant and the proprietor of Town and Country books. The book shop is a "hole in the wall" with books that SMELL old. The front "room" of the shop is no more than 10 feet (3 m) wide and 5 feet (1.5 m) deep, with a 15 foot high (4.6 m) ceiling. The walls in the front are filled from floor to ceiling with shelves of tightly packed books. A 5 by 5 foot (1.5×1.5 m) opening above a counter gives access to the back half of the shop and the owner. Maps, calendars and bookmarks occupy all the space on the counter. A glass case with rare books can be seen to the side.

The dwarf who runs the shop looks extremely old and wears clothes that look even older. He is secretly a member of the crime syndicate. He will recognize outsiders immediately and make a mental note marking them as potential targets of crime or as useful dupes or allies. Any dwarven characters will be treated more kindly than others. Elves are ignored as much as possible and overcharged. Darnel only speaks elven and feigns total ignorance of all other languages, including dwarven; a translator may be needed to do business with this gent.



The Syndicate

Organized Crime in Alpine Burg

A powerful crime syndicate has grown up in Alpine Burg, commanded by both humans and dwarves. The name of the organization is The Syndicate and it is renowned as a dangerous thieves' guild populated with thieves, assassins, scoundrels and malcontents. Humans tend to run the operation above ground and the dwarves run it below. A large percentage (40%) of the guards who are regularly stationed in Alpine Burg are on the take and often work for the Syndicate or turn a blind eye to their activities.

In reality, the Syndicate is a secret underground whose main purpose has always been to get out of The Valley. Although they do resort to criminal, cruel and extreme measures, most are dedicated (and desperate) *freedom fighters*. Their ultimate goal: To be free of the Crystal King and leave The Valley. Their desperate situation has led the freedom fighters to associate with true criminals who are often evil, mean, and murderous. Some of these brigands are full fledged Syndicate members, so there are good guys, bad guys and the self-serving among the more well intentioned freedom fighters. Even some of the freedom fighters have become so fanatical and hardened that they use, manipulate and hurt outsiders and fellow citizens.

To aid the underground in their subversive and criminal activities, **dwarven tunnels** have been excavated that reach all the way under River City to the cluster named **Hinterweiler**, as well as under ALL the Inns on **The Road to River City**. The only place that the tunnels do not break to the surface is under **Lylli's**. Lylli is an Elf, but has always treated all the inhabitants of the road with kindness, courtesy and respect. The Syndicate treats Lylli's as the only privileged business in The Valley and the only elf respected as a friend of dwarves. However, the tunnels do come close enough to Lylli's that a branch could be extended there if desired. The tunnels also extend to the cliffs behind Alpine Burg. A few high sentries are on watch at these locations at all times. The Syndicate often knows about approaching adventurers before the Valley Guards.

There are only a handful of members in the Syndicate who have made it to Trusted Citizen status and are allowed to travel beyond the control of the Fortress. Those few are the best cared for operatives in the syndicate. However, just as with any other Trusted Citizen, they are under the full control of the Crystal Fortress and the king. **Note:** Most Trusted Citizens are under greater mind control than an ordinary citizen and typically more than that person realizes. Thus, his or her apparent freedom is only an illusion.

The **Cleaver Gang** (described elsewhere) is effectively an arm of the Syndicate. However, it should be pointed out that most of the Cleavers don't know they are controlled by the Syndicate, and most members of the Syndicate don't know that their organization uses or associates with them in any way.

The leader of the syndicate is known only as "The Big Man." He is never seen. Even during rare meetings, a curtain that touches the floor and goes up to eight feet high is always down in front and around him. In addition, various magics are at work to keep his visage in impenetrable darkness. **G.M. Character Note:** The identity of the "Big Man" (players don't look!) is actually the dwarf who runs Town and Country Books, a small shop in Alpine Burg.

G.M. Scenario Notes

About the Syndicate

The mysterious dwarf who may have approached the group earlier is one of **The Big Man's** (Darnel) hirelings and a member of the Syndicate. In fact, the dwarf in his hooded cloak is likely to be waiting for the character(s) at or near the book shop. This is the place to get the map he talked about earlier. When a character asks to buy a map of The Valley, the shop owner will point to the rack of maps on the counter. The maps detail the places of interest in The Valley, indicating the locations of Alpine Burg, Lake Town, the Crystal Fortress, road houses, and the various clusters in River City. It is the same map that is available at the Steinborn, or any other shop in Alpine Burg or River City. If the outsider was contacted by The Big Man's agent, the map from Darnel (or the hooded figure) will have a clue about the Syndicate in it. Upon close examination, the reader will see that the names of two of the clusters are partly crossed out. Dockweiler has "weiler" crossed out and Hinterhausen has "Hinter" crossed out. "Dock Hausen" is the obvious result, but is meaningless, there is no place or person called Dock Hausen.

G.M. Plot & Story Elements

First, about the map and its clue: It is actually the crossed out words that have meaning. They spell "Hinterweiler," which is one of the supposedly unoccupied River City Clusters.

Hinterweiler: This is a secret outpost of the Syndicate, complete with dwarven operatives, places to hide, and a secret tunnel that leads back to Alpine Burg. Should the player characters seek the help of the Syndicate or become refugees on the run from the law, this is one of the few places (other than Alpine Burg) the criminal underground can easily help them. It is the only place to contact the Syndicate outside of Alpine Burg.

A clear mind: Syndicate members are not as brainwashed or as controlled as the average citizen in The Valley. They hate being trapped and want to get out. This means they will help the player characters escape and/or fight the authorities, including the king.

Darnel is a model citizen with no criminal record whatsoever. He will avoid direct contact with any outsiders and any known or even suspected criminals. However, there is always a Syndicate operative nearby to meet outsiders. He's thought of as an old man content with running his book store and who is oblivious to the world around him.

Contact with the Syndicate: The player group (or a character) will be approached by a dwarf clad in a hooded cloak. The cloak covers his head and the face is concealed in shadow. At first, the dwarf is coy, asking more questions than he answers. By the end of the friendly conversation, he is likely to say something like, "If you find yourself in trouble with the law, or you want to leave our fine Valley, talk with me again sometime." If asked how they can find him, he'll respond, saying something like, "Oh, I'm always around. Don't worry, I'll find you."

If the group seems sincerely disenchanted with the king, the authorities, their situation, or events, the dwarf may be more bold. Speaking in whispers (and probably in Dwarven), he will talk about the "evil" king, his "iron reign," how they are "all prisoners who can never leave The Valley," and how there are "others" who share his sentiments. This is our heroes' first step toward the Syndicate.

If the Syndicate is desperate, or the characters are known to be in trouble with the law and they still have open minds (have not met the king or been subject to "reform"), or seem to have the power to free the Valley people, the dwarf will confide in the outsiders even more. The player characters will be given a brief history about the terrible king and the Crystal Fortress. He will explain that they can never leave the Valley unless the king permits it, and that's a rarity. How most people are mind controlled, especially the Interrogators and guardsmen. He will warn them about the horrors of "reform" and the dangers of the Interrogators and guardsmen. If one or more of their companions are scheduled for "reform," the dwarf will warn that they will have memories and thoughts removed and altered, that the person(s) will never be quite the same again, and worst, may become the mind controlled servant of the evil king.

Life in The Valley is painted as being trapped in a gilded cage, "It looks pretty but it's still a prison." He'll say things like, "Lifelong imprisonment, my friends. That's my fate and now it's yours, too. This is your new home. Get used to that idea. Don't let him fool you. Oh sure, the king may seem generous and offer you freedom via some ridiculous quest, but if you refuse, or come back, you'll never leave this damned valley. Never!" If the group seems convinced, he will serve as their liaison with the Syndicate or other members of the Syndicate. The characters may have trouble trusting him, because he will not show his face or give them his real name. A likely alias will be, "Freeman."

Secret Identities: Should the hood be removed, the face underneath is covered in a human looking mask with slits for the eyes, nose and mouth. Underneath the mask is the typical face of a dwarf (male or

female). Even under torture the dwarf will not reveal his name, the identity of his compatriots or any knowledge about the Syndicate. Although he is a minor psionic and resistant to psychic probes, he will be certain to kill himself at the first hint of being captured by any of The Valley authorities (unless it's a set-up and the guards are on the take). ALL members of the Syndicate will do the same. This may sound extreme, but it's not. They all know that no matter how strong willed a person may be, the Interrogators *will* ravage the mind and pluck from it information that will lead to the reform or death of hundreds. Thus, it is better for "one" to die than to see their last hopes of freedom destroyed and "many" people die. **Note:** Less than 25% of the syndicate members know the true identity or face of their fellow underworld associates; most were masks, hoods, and other facial coverings whenever they meet, or work through a handful of "known" and trusted emissaries and messengers. The vast majority (98%) of the Syndicate members don't know the true identity of "The Big Man" (it's safer that way). Most suspect the name means he is a human. Nobody suspects Darnel is "The Big Man" or that he is even a member of the Syndicate.

The death oath: Any character who actually becomes a member of the Syndicate must be willing to die to protect the Syndicate. All pledge to kill themselves if capture seems likely and do his utmost not to betray his comrades. It is an accepted (and welcomed) policy to assassinate members who are captured and awaiting interrogation or reform (of course they will try to free them first, but assassination is the next stage; better safe than sorry).

One Contact Person: The player characters or group is not likely to have more than one or two known Syndicate contacts. However, many of the other members of the underground will know about them and will help in clever and discreet ways: An old woman might stumble in front of pursuing guardsmen, causing them to fall; a piece of incriminat-



ing evidence disappears; a locked door/cell is suddenly unlocked; a commotion down the street distracts guards; food/supplies/message are found in a character's room (or even in his pocket), and so on.

Working with or being connected to the Syndicate: Such associations will provide the characters with rumors and information about things happening all over The Valley. It may also provide them with secret hiding places and help in the way of food, supplies, weapons and even other fighters (volunteers) willing to risk their lives to help them thwart the king.

The Assassination Plot: If the Syndicate believes the group has a chance of assassinating the king, they will try to entice them to do so. They will appeal to the mercy and compassion of heroes and priests to help free them from their captivity. To others, they may try to use the fact that the player characters are now prisoners too and must act quickly before they fall victim to the king's lies and mind control.

The members of the Syndicate believe that if the king is slain, and his head decapitated and burned, his spell over The Valley will be broken and those who wish to leave can. They insist there is no reasoning with the king and that there is no other alternative; he must die! **Note:** Since the king is an elf and the Syndicate is predominately dwarf, the adventurers may question the validity of some of the Syndicate's assertions and solutions. However, a little research will reveal that virtually none of the Valley citizens have ever left The Valley — although they insist they are happy, so why would they ever want to leave?

Other Activities of the Syndicate: These freedom fighters have been forced into a life of deception, espionage, subversion, thievery and occasional murder to keep their quest for freedom alive. Consequently, they will steal from outsiders and the guardsmen to support their cause. Weapons, magic items, gold and gems are seen as the most important items to acquire. They will steal, trick, gamble and sometimes kill to get these items if they are believed to be very important.

Members of the Syndicate will also help, heal, feed, and hide criminals, outsiders and refugees hunted by the authorities. They do so for one of two reasons. One, because the person(s) wanted may be a valuable asset to the Syndicate (become a new member, pay or trade with them for their services, or be convinced to try to kill the king) or simply to give the hated king and his mind controlled minions hell.

There are also constant ideas, suggestions and plots within the Syndicate regarding assassination and/or escape plans conducted by their membership. In fact, if outsiders seem to be on the brink of defeating the Crystal King, they would rise up and help him/them. There have been seven assassination attacks by outsiders and four from citizens (Syndicate members) in the last 15 years.

The Big Man

Name: Darnel The Book Seller

True Name: Darnel Wrak

Alignment: Aberrant evil with a strong, albeit twisted, code of honor.

He is fair, can be trustworthy if he gives his word of honor, courageous, kind and caring, especially toward the inhabitants of The Valley who want to be free. Darnel is evil in many ways. He will use outsiders for the underground's "cause" even if it means their death (and he has caused the death of many without any feeling of regret). He associates with evil characters and encourages acts of evil when it serves the Syndicate's cause. The Big Man believes that the end (freedom for many) justifies the means (deception, theft, torture, murder, etc.). He is a fanatic dedicated to his cause, which can make him a strong ally or a dangerous enemy. Many of the other Syndicate member are a lot like him — some are worse.

O.C.C. & Level: Merchant 10th, Thief 16th

Race: Dwarf, **Age:** 220 years

Size: 3 ft tall (0.91 m), 120 lbs (54 kg), **Sex:** Male

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 7, M.A. 18, P.S. 15, P.P. 15, P.E. 13, P.B. 4, Spd. 8,



Hit Points: 112, **A.R.:** 4.

Armor: Leather of iron. **A.R.:** 15, **S.D.C.** 60.

Bonuses: None other than from hand to hand and skills.

Natural Abilities: Night vision 90 ft (27 m), trust/intimidate 50%.

Psionics: None.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Magic Items & Weapons: Cloak of shadows, leather of iron, thunder hammer (4D6 damage), matched pair of throwing axes that return to wielder (120 foot/36.6 m range).

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand: thief, W.P. battle axe, W.P. throwing axe at 15th level; W.P. blunt, W.P. knives, W.P. short sword, and W.P. Crossbow, all at 10th level proficiency.

Weapons: Darnel relies on his throwing axes, swinging one from each hand. Darnel is ambidextrous.

Skills of Note: Speak dwarven, elven and southern 99%, read/write dwarven and elven 99%, disguise 89%/55%, forgery 99%/75%, locate secret compartments and doors 96%, medical 88%/90%, pick locks 94%, pick pockets 99%, prowl 99%, scale walls 99%, use poison 96%, carpentry 95%, cook 99%, dance 99%/99%, demon and devil lore 98%, faerie lore 96%, imitate voices 99%, mathematics 99%, paint 99%, plant/farm lore 94%, play string instrument 92%, play wind instruments 92%, preserve food 82%, recognize poison 99%, recognize precious metals and stones 99%, recognize weapon quality 99%, sense of direction 95%, tailor 83%, ventriloquism 99%.

Possessions of Note: Most of Darnel's valuables are kept in the underground vaults protected by the syndicate. Darnel's personal wealth is about a hundred thousand gold, but he administers and has access to the Syndicate's two million worth in gems, gold, jewelry and rare articles. The syndicate also has about a half million on deposit in banks in River City. They have few magic valuables.

Description/Appearance: As the bookseller he is quite old and absentminded; grouchy, especially toward elves and guardsmen. He dresses in old shabby clothing. Nobody has seen him as The Big Man, but when he is on the prowl in the service of the Syndicate, he will be disguised and typically armed to the teeth.

Note: The Big Man should be considered the organization's ace in the hole and a secret agent/weapon rolled into one. He can be used like the cavalry, showing up at the last minute to save the day and then disappearing.

Freeman, The Hooded Dwarf

True Name: Newton F'rlanak

Alignment: Anarchist

O.C.C. & Level: 8th level Thief

Race: Dwarf, **Age:** 150 years

Size: 3 ft, 4 inches tall (1 m), 110 lbs (49.5 kg), **Sex:** Male

Attributes: I.Q. 10, M.E. 7, M.A. 8, P.S. 22, P.P. 15, P.E. 20, P.B. 4, Spd. 9,

Hit Points: 52, **A.R.:** 4

Armor: Studded leather: A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38

Combat: Hand to hand: thief, W.P. small shield, W.P. knife, W.P. blunt, W.P. throwing axe and W.P. axe. Three attacks per melee.

Skills of Note: Scale walls 68%, pick pockets 72%, pick locks 65%, prowl 75%, use poison 64%, locate secret compartments 52%.

Psionics: Minor, whose powers are limited to detect psionics, presence sense, resist cold, resist fatigue, and sense magic; I.S.P. is 37.

The Typical Syndicate Freedom Fighter

Note: 70% are dwarves.

Alignments: 20% are scrupulous, 25% unprincipled, 20% anarchist, 10% miscreant, 5% diabolic and 20% aberrant.

O.C.C. and Average Level: Fourth level thief, mercenary fighter or ranger. There are only a few humans with magic knowledge.

Typical Attributes: P.S. 17 or higher, P.P. 12 or higher, P.E. 16 or higher, Spd 7; all other attributes are average.

Typical Hit Points: 30

Armor: Anything; hard and studded leather are the most common, but chain and scale armor are used by some.

Combat: Hand to hand: mercenary, thief or ranger (dwarves cannot be rangers), W.P. small shield, W.P. blunt, W.P. short sword, W.P. axe, W.P. knife and W.P. crossbow. The typical character will have 2 attacks per melee.

Psionics: 20% (one in five) are minor psionics with 2D6 first level abilities and an average 18 I.S.P. Another 5% (one in twenty) will have major psionics with 2D6 1st level, 2D6 2nd level and 1D6 3rd level abilities and an average of 28 I.S.P.; all others have no psionic powers.

The Typical Syndicate Criminal/Assassin

Note: 60% are humans or non-dwarven races.

Alignments: 10% unprincipled, 30% anarchist, 40% miscreant, 10% diabolic and 10% aberrant.

O.C.C. and Average Level: Fourth level thief or assassin. There are only a few humans with magic knowledge.

Typical Attributes: P.S. 14 or higher, P.P. 14 or higher, P.E. 10 or higher; all other attributes are average.

Typical Hit Points: 25

Armor: Any, but the most common are studded leather (A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38) and chain (A.R. 13, S.D.C. 44).

Combat: Hand to hand: thief or assassin, W.P. small shield, W.P. blunt, W.P. knife, W.P. short sword, W.P. large sword, and W.P. crossbow. The typical character will have 2 attacks per melee.

Psionics: 5% (one in twenty) have any kind of psionic powers.

The Road to River City

The road from Alpine Burg to River City winds through the agricultural region of The Valley for about 30 miles (48 km), or about a one day journey on foot (9 to 14 hours depending on one's speed and weather conditions. Remember, there are no riding animals in The Valley). There are a number of roadside taverns and restaurants, but the biggest and best is Lylli's. This quaint roadhouse is located at the halfway point between the two cities and is the most popular place for travelers to spend the night. Going from Alpine Burg to River City, the following establishments are encountered: **Dark Horse Tavern, Come Back Inn, Lylli's Roadhouse, Goat's Head & Stile, and Stone Wall's**. Each is about five miles (8 km) past the previous one.

The road is a beaten dirt and rock pathway. Goat carts and travelers on foot are common. From Alpine Burg to Lylli's, the vegetation is mountain scrub and grass; some goat herds can be seen in the distance beyond the road. From Lylli's to Stone Wall's, the area is mostly cultivated farmland and fields of flowers and grass. From Stone Wall's to River City, the area is covered in forest. None of this vegetation is natural at this altitude — it is all part of the magic of The Valley and the Crystal Fortress.

The only certain danger along the road is the Cleaver Gang who can strike anywhere between Alpine Burg and River City. The only other dangers are from the weather (which is usually nice), the occasional Syndicate pack of thieves (seldom more than five and rarely bloodthirsty) and the very rare visiting monster. Travelers, especially outsiders, may be questioned or followed by guardsmen, but never molested by them.

The Cleaver Gang

The Cleaver gang is made up of two dozen young humans and a little over a dozen dwarven toughs from River City and Alpine Burg. They consider "The Road" between the two cities to be their domain, and expect the respect of the travelers. All of these hoodlums are under age 18 and are either first or second level thieves. The most experienced is Wally, their leader, a third level thief with a high M.A. The "cleaver" gang gets its name from their favorite and "trademark" weapon, a meat cleaver. The gang members all carry two to four cleavers (only a handful also use a different weapon). A cleaver is cheap, not classified as a weapon and, therefore, easy to acquire. Many will attack by throwing or brandishing their wicked blades.

Although the Cleavers can be accused of making threats, intimidation, cat-calling, dangerous pranks, pelting travelers with rotten food, theft, brawling and roughhousing, they seldom openly assault anyone and are almost never the first to strike the first blow. In most combat situations, the Cleavers will always harass or frighten the traveler(s) until he attacks and the ensuing combat can be claimed as self-defense. They take merciless advantage of unwary travelers, subjecting them to pranks, mischief, misdirection, and theft (the Cleavers often seem to "find" valuables "lost" by others). Their primary tactic is to try to intimidate people into giving them what they desire.

Both Lylli and Jack (the owner of Stonewall's) have stood up to the Cleavers and refuse to allow them into their roadhouses. Wally has declared vendettas against both of them and their establishments. However no three Cleavers are a match for Lylli, and no dozen Cleavers are a match for Jack. Consequently, retribution thus far has been limited to name calling, minor vandalism and some pranks.

G.M. Plot Ideas & Notes: The main danger the Cleavers pose for the players' characters is that they will be a real nuisance and one of the characters may fight and kill one of them. Killing, for any reason, is against the laws of The Valley and means big trouble.



The authorities tend to ignore the activities of the Cleaver Gang, attributing their unsavory behavior to the exuberance of youth and that they'll "settle down" when they get older. Wally is the only one really skating on thin ice because he's 20 years old and still a troublemaker. It's only a matter of time before he's reformed. **G.M. Plot Idea:** If our group of heroes have encountered Wally at some point, it might be interesting to have them run into a passive, polite and quiet Wally after being "reformed." A graphic and unnerving example of what the interrogators can do to a person.

Elite members of the Syndicate secretly assist and manipulate the Cleaver Gang for their own purposes. If they need a distraction, they might liquor-up the gang members or Wally and encourage them to attack somebody, vandalize or cause trouble. Wally's ego makes him easy to manipulate because he's always ready to prove how tough or clever he is. He is such a braggart that he'll accept the credit for any crime anybody wants to attribute to him. Another tactic is to entice them to attack outsiders so that a member(s) of the Syndicate can come to the outsiders' rescue and get in tight with them. Similarly, if outsiders won't sell or trade an item the Syndicate wants, they'll get the Cleavers to steal it for them and nobody knows the difference; the gang is a great "scapegoat" for many things. The Syndicate also uses the Cleaver gang as a source of information and the means to spread false rumors. All of the Cleaver Gang's fences and connections are members of the

Syndicate. Remember, the majority of the Syndicate members don't know anything about this manipulation and think of the gang as a bunch of wild, troublesome punks.

Leader of the Cleavers

Name: Wally

True Name: Walter Benjamin Martin

Alignment: Anarchist bordering on miscreant.

O.C.C. & Level: Thief 3rd level

Race: Human, **Age:** 20

Size: 5 ft, 4 in tall (1.63 m), 120 lbs (54 kg)

Sex: Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 12, M.A. 19, P.S. 18, P.P. 15, P.E. 14,

P.B. 10, Spd. 16, **Hit Points:** 27, **A.R.:** 4.

Armor: Studded leather: A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38.

Bonuses & Natural Abilities: Trust/intimidate 55%; also see combat.

Psionics: None.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Magic Items/Weapons: None.

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand: thief, W.P. knives, W.P. short sword.

No W.P. bonuses for meat cleavers. 2 attacks per melee, +2 parry, +2 dodge, +3 damage.

Weapons: Cleavers doing 1D6 damage. In a pinch, he can use a short sword or knives.

Skills of Note: Disguise 35%/11%, forgery 38%/19%, locate secret compartments/doors 24%, pick locks 30%, pick pockets 44%, prowl 45%, imitate voices 40%, plant/farm lore 28%, recognize precious metals/stones 28%, recognize weapon quality 34%, speak elven & dwarven 52%, ventriloquism 34%.

Possessions: Just what he wears and carries in his pockets. Wally usually has 50 + 1D6 × 10 gold at any time.

Description: Wally is the leader of the Cleaver Gang. Wally is young, tough, bold and cocky. He is strong, short, slim, and fast. He is a loudmouth punk, who is outspoken, brazen, cocky, mean tempered and quick thinking. There is no doubt that he is the king of his little troop of miscreants. His minions look up to him as a tough guy who does what he pleases and (so far) always beats the system.

Note: Wally's incredible arrogance will never allow him to believe that he and his gang are ever manipulated by anybody. He's his own man and does as HE pleases!

The Typical Cleaver Gang Member

Alignment: 85% anarchist and 15% miscreant

Average O.C.C. & Level: First or second level thief.

Race: 65% Human, 35% dwarf

Average Age: 16 (roll 11 + 2D4), **Sex:** 90% are male.

Attributes: P.S. 10 or higher, P.P. 10 or higher, all others average.

Average Hit Points: 17

Armor: Padded: A.R. 8, S.D.C. 15 or soft leather: A.R. 9, S.D.C. 20.

Psionics: 10% have minor psionics.

Magic/Clerical/Healing Powers: None.

Magic Items/Weapons: None.

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand: thief, W.P. axe/cleaver, W.P. blunt. 2 attacks per melee, +2 parry, +2 dodge, +3 damage.

Weapons: Cleavers, knives, clubs, frying pans and pipes do 1D6 damage, a blackjack does 1D4.

Bonuses: Few have any other than W.P. and basic combat.

Skills of Note: Pick locks, pick pockets, prowl, plant/farm lore, recognize precious metals/stones, speak elven & dwarven.

Possessions: Just what they wear and carry 2D6 gold, 1D4 cleavers, a knife or club or frying pan, their armor and personal items.

Note: There are a total of 36 gang members, but travelers seldom encounter more than 1D6 + 3 at any given time, unless the group is led by Wally who will be accompanied by 3D4 + 7.

Dark Horse Tavern

The tavern is the only human owned establishment on the road. It has been in the same family's hands for ten generations (about 300 years). The current owner is Percival Minerson, who is also the chief cook. The chief bartender is Kroj, a 180 year old dwarf who has worked for the last six generations of Minersons. Kroj is stocky, even for a dwarf, and one might even call him fat. Kroj is extremely good natured. The farm workers, who stop in most mornings on their way out from Alpine Burg or on their way home, are his favorite customers.

In the evening, the Dark Horse becomes the main hangout of the **Cleaver Gang**. The Cleavers are surprisingly very well behaved inside the Dark Horse. Even so, neither Kroj nor Percival like them nor encourage their business, but they are afraid of the consequences if they try to keep them out. Unknown to Kroj, the Minersons, or the Cleavers, the syndicate has access to the tavern through a secret door in the basement. The secret door leads to a branch of the main tunnel that follows the road from Alpine Burg to River City.

Meals and drinks are available in the main room at reasonable prices. Overnight lodging is available in twenty rooms upstairs for 8 to 10 gold pieces. Drinks cost two to eight gold and a hot meal is six to twelve gold. Kroj lives in a three room suite in the basement. The entrance is

through a trap door and ladder beneath the bar. Percival lives behind the bar with his wife, Evangeline, who manages the lodgings upstairs. The Dark Horse employs an additional staff of seven as waiters, cooks, bartenders, and maids.

G.M. Plot Note: The player characters will run into Wally and his gang just about any evening. The Cleavers will see "outsiders" as an easy mark and target them for trouble. This is also a good place to get information about the gang and some basic information about the king and the Crystal Fortress.

Come Back Inn

The Come Back is a small, seedy inn that caters to those who can't afford Lylli's. The main room is a counter service bar and grill. Prices at the Come Back are about half of what the Dark Horse charges, a single gold piece will buy a flagon of ale or beer and two to four gold buys an entire meal, but the food frequently makes one sick. The rooms for rent are dingy and dirty and the linens are always bug infested.

The proprietor of the Come Back Inn is a sleazy looking dwarf named Pitker, the son of Atkist, who runs the Steinborn. Pitker wants to manage the Steinborn after his father and feels that he is proving himself by running his own inn. Atkist is simply glad that his son doesn't work for him anymore.

G.M. Plot Note: There is a 50% chance of running into 2D4 Cleaver gang members, but never Wally; he finds the Inn too cheap and dirty for a man of his importance and sophistication. The Syndicate occasionally uses the Inn as a secret meeting place and usually has a spy present to keep an eye on things. Pitker, the owner, usually starts the day off sober, but by nightfall he will be well on his way to getting smashed. When he's drunk, he whines incessantly about his "unappreciative" father and all the other problems in his life from long hours of unappreciated work to his toothache.

Lylli's Roadhouse

Lylli's is a large, sprawling establishment that covers about two acres (87,120 square feet/8096 square meters). It is without question the largest and nicest establishment on the main road. The roadhouse is a sprawling, one level building. The roadhouse itself has 60 rooms for rent, a dance hall/tavern complete with a stage and ornate bar, a large dining room, three small private dining rooms, and is always clean and cheerful. The tavern/hall area has nightly live entertainment including live music and dancing. In the back room is an area for dart throwing and games. Lylli's Roadhouse is as much a place of entertainment and relaxation for the neighboring communities and families as it is a haven for travelers. It is one of the largest businesses in the entire valley and employs four dozen service people who clean rooms, tend bar, cook, wait on tables and provide security (bouncers).

Nearby is an open farmer's market that is open all day long. It sells grains, wheat, jam, dried meat, fresh meat, fresh fruits and vegetables, goat's milk and cheese, wool and wool clothing.

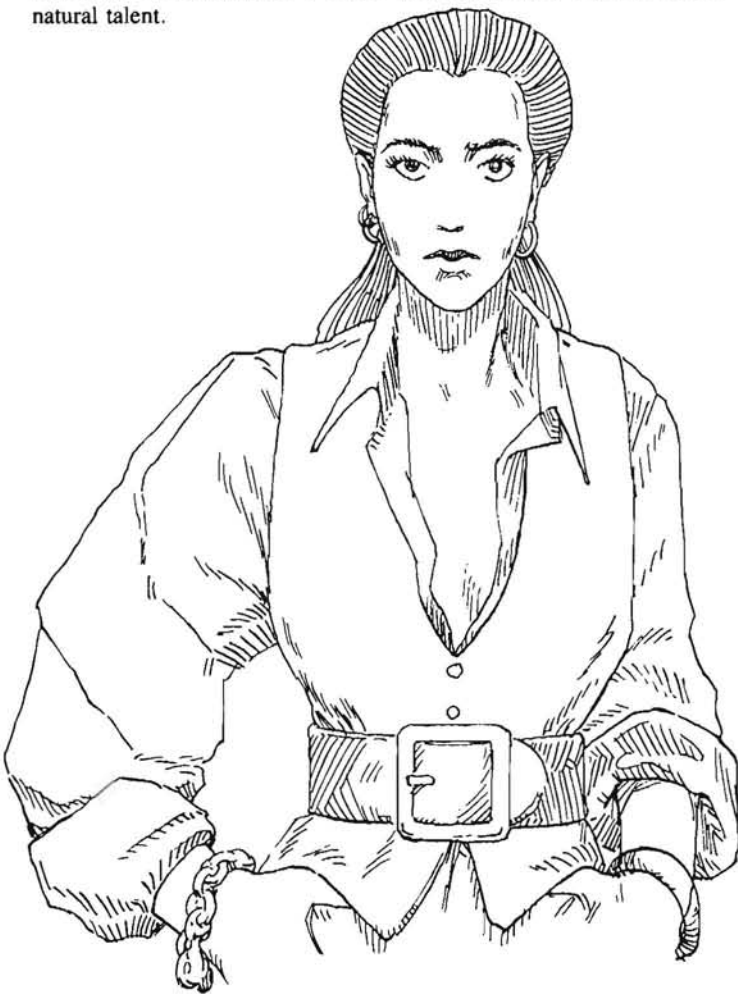
Lylli is the flamboyant elf merchant who owns the roadhouse. She is tall, even for an elf, 6 foot, 8 inches (2.03 m), beautiful, congenial, smart and strong. She prefers to wear leather, fur and "ornamental" metal armor than frilly dresses and high heel shoes. Her weapons of choice are fine knives and she is an expert at throwing them and darts. However, Lylli is mainly a merchant, not a warrior. She does what she needs to keep the peace in her roadhouse, which may mean mixing it up when things get out of hand. She employs most of the elf population in The Valley, but has excellent relations with humans, dwarves and all others.

The Cleaver Gang is not welcome here and her security force, composed of a half dozen elf rangers and human fighters, has had more than one run-in with them. The rangers and the majority of Lylli's staff

are hill folk from the north end of The Valley. Although Lylli and most of the other elves in the valley grew up in River City, a large population of elves has "gone native" and live in the hills. There is a variety of domestic animals that have also "gone native" in the hills.

Peter, the handsome young elf who tends the main bar, bears an obvious family resemblance to Lylli. Peter is her son, and is always running back and forth to talk to the latest guest. He is especially fond of "outsiders" and loves to hear tales of adventure and the world beyond The Valley. Peter is friendly, but extremely naive. When the characters arrive, he will immediately attach himself to their group, making sure they get the best service, the best food, and if need be, the best lodgings. Peter dreams about adventure and believes he is ready to "cut the apron strings" and leave mom (and The Valley) behind.

Peter is a zero level non-player character because he has not yet found an occupation and has no well formed skills. He is immature and lacks any kind of discipline or training other than being a friendly bartender. However, he is a master psionic, and has a great deal of natural talent.



G.M. Plot Notes for Lylli's

If the group is polite and/or encourages him, **Peter** will plead to join them on their adventure or quest. To show his sincerity, he will offer to assist them as a translator, guide and even baggage carrier. He will cheerfully accompany them to see the king and speak on their behalf. If the characters agree, he will be thrilled and prove to be a loyal (and overly enthusiastic) ally. If they decline his many offers, he may follow them anyway to prove himself worthy, by tagging along a few hundred yards/meters behind them. Peter can actually become whatever O.C.C. the group needs him to become. However, Peter could never be a mind mage, he lacks the required discipline. Nor could he ever become something cruel or evil. The innocent, courageous and sincere Peter can make a delightful non-player character who can get the group in as much trouble as he is helpful and loyal.

Lylli is not ready to let Peter leave the nest and will not look kindly on any group that encourages his "nonsense." If she cannot dissuade him from pursuing this "foolishness," she'll grudgingly give him her blessings and make it clear to the characters in the playing group that "they" had better take good care of her son. She expects that the group will treat him well, protect him, and bring him back home unhurt when they're done with their adventure. If the group shows respect for Lylli's wishes, she will refuse any payment for their stay and wish them all well. In her own way, Lylli can be a powerful ally because she is well loved and respected by the people of the local communities. Her word will carry nearly as much weight as an Interrogator or Palace Guard. Furthermore, people will listen to her and trust what she says.

Odds are, the group will eventually leave Lylli's with Peter in tow. Only after the group gets underway, will he tell them about his dad who happens to live in River City and how they should really meet him. Peter's dad is the Crystal Knight and Court Sorcerer, Sir Archie, our group's visitor back at the Steinborn.

Valley Guards and Interrogators frequent this pleasant establishment on their travels. Lylli provides their rooms and food at half price (booze is full price) so their presence is not unusual. This means outsiders, refugees and plotters against the king should exercise caution when staying at Lylli's. There is a 1-55% chance of 2D4 Valley Guards or a 1-30% chance of 1D4 + 1 Interrogators stopping to spend the night at the roadhouse.

Lylli

Name: Lylli

True Name: Lylantha Shelmar

Alignment: Unprincipled

O.C.C. & Level: Merchant 9th level

Race: Elf, **Age:** Appears to be around 30, actually 132.

Size: 6 feet, 8 inches tall (2.03 m), 171 lbs (77 kg), **Sex:** Female.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 14, M.A. 10, P.S. 20, P.P. 20, P.E. 15, P.B. 29, Spd. 16

Hit Points: 55

Armor: Either fancy studded leather: A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38, or half plate (and leather): A.R. 14, S.D.C. 60

Bonuses & Natural Abilities: Fabulously beautiful: Charm/impress 90%, plus night vision 60 ft (18 m), high physical strength, prowess and endurance. Also see combat.

Psionics: None.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Magic Items/Weapons: None.

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand: mercenary, W.P. knives, knife throwing and targeting at 9th level proficiency, plus +5 damage, +4 strike/parry/dodge.

Weapons: Knives. Lylli wears at least 3 knives at work, and six or more when travelling. One is silver plated.

Skills of Note: Speaks elven, southern and dwarven 99%, read/write elven 98%, read/write dwarven 88%, carpentry 90%, cook 97%, dance 99%/99%, disguise 25%/4%, forgery 82%/41%, identify plants/fruit 76%/78%, mathematics 99%, paint 99%, pick pockets 35%, pick locks 50%, play wind instruments 70%, play string instruments 72%, preserve food 90%, prowl 48%, recognize precious metals/stone 77%, recognize weapon quality 60%, tailor 99%.

Possessions: Lylli owns the roadhouse and all it contains. A safe beneath the desk in her office contains nearly 50,000 in gold and she has an additional 100,000 in gold at a bank in River City. The safe is guarded by a magic ward and spell system designed by Archie.

Description: Lylli is a beautiful, mature, but not old, female elf. She is tall, even for an elf, and unusually strong. She has long black hair and dark brown eyes. Lylli is normally seen at the roadhouse wearing leather clothing, furs or silks. When she is expecting trouble on the road, visiting the Crystal Palace or another city, she can be

seen wearing leather or metal "ornamental" armor, along with fur cape, fur trimmed boots and gloves and a plumed hat. Her weapons of choice are fine knives, but she'll use anything handy in a pinch. Lylli completely lacks discretion in social situations. She tends to be honest, outspoken, brave and is a shrewd businesswoman and merchant.

Peter, Lylli's Son

Name: Peter

True Name: Peter A. Shelmar

Alignment: Scrupulous

O.C.C. & Level: None at the start of the adventure, but he is a latent master psionic. He is likely to lean toward noble adventurer occupations, including mercenary fighter, knight, paladin, ranger scholar or wizardry (like his father).

Race: Elf, **Age:** 17 in elf years and looks like a 16 year old teenager (and will for the next 20 years).

Size: 6 ft, 10 in tall (2.08 m), 171 lbs (77 kg), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 20, M.A. 9, P.S. 12, P.P. 15, P.E. 20, P.B. 26, Spd. 12.

Hit Points: 20

Armor: None to start with.

Bonuses & Natural Abilities: +3 vs psionics (master psionics normally need to roll above a 10 to save), +3 to save vs magic (+9 with medallion), +3 vs insanity, +3 vs poison, night vision 60 ft (18 m), and charm/impress 80%.

Psionics: First level master psionic and knows only meditation, object reading, resist cold, see aura and sense magic. **I.S.P.:** 25

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Magic Items/Weapons: Anti-magic medallion (ancient artifact given to him by Archie): +6 to save vs magic. The Medallion is a circular disk and chain carved from a single dragon bone. The rune symbol for magic is on the front, with a dragon coiled around the symbol. The back is an intricate design made up of runes and symbols. The medallion will not register as magic from a spell based detect magic; the medallion protects itself even from that simple magic. A psionic based detect magic will reveal that it is a magic item, but an object read will not reveal its power.

Combat Abilities: None to start, one attack per melee.

Weapons: A knife and a wooden staff.

Skills of Note: Bartending 90% (special), math 70%, speaks Elven, Dwarven, and Southern 90%, reads Elven 40%, and cooks 40%.

Possessions: A fur lined cloak, an extra set of clothes, a wool cap that can be pulled around his ears, wool scarf, leather gloves, leather boots, an extra knife, a large sack, two small sacks, a backpack, and a bottle of fine wine.

Description: A young elf with an adolescent appearance. Peter is taller and thinner than his mom, but looks a lot like her. He wears his hair as long as Lylli's and it is an even darker shade of black. His eyes are also slightly darker, but his skin is a shade paler, which is the only reason his P.B. is lower than his mom's. Initially, Peter is a sweet, caring, considerate, polite, compassionate, fiercely loyal, and honest kid. He is also bold, always ready for action, foolishly courageous, and takes foolish risks. Like most young people, he has never considered his own mortality and tends to underestimate people and the seriousness of a situation. How his association with the characters, the events of his first adventure and choice of an occupation may change him is up to the Game Master and fate (be reasonable).

Note: Peter has retained his mother's last name, even though his father is Archie. The mother and father had a falling out years ago.

Goat's Head and Stile

The Goat's Head and Stile is run by a couple of dwarves, Arrak and Hakkir. Both are employed by the Syndicate. The tavern is frequented mostly by dwarves from Alpine Burg who need to go to River City on business. Most dwarves prefer to stay at a dwarven establishment so the two owners do quite well. Prices are high, but half price for fellow dwarves and known Syndicate members.

The Goat's Head's connection with the Syndicate affords them protection from robbery and mischief. The owners are frequently used to pass along messages to other Syndicate members, help and hide members on the run from the law, and keep an eye and ear open for trouble and opportunities. They are also encouraged to let the Cleaver Gang frequent the inn without altercations.

G.M. Plot Notes: This is one of the places the Syndicate uses as a meeting place and safe-house. There are secret tunnels underneath that lead to Alpine Burg and River City, as well as 200 feet (61 m) beyond the woods (ideal for quick exits). There are also several secret underground chambers used to hide weapons, loot and people from the authorities. Syndicate spies and assassins also frequent the Goat's Head & Stile.

Stone Wall's

Stone Wall's gets its name from the fact that it is a large stone and metal building built on the remains of a stone wall that's hundreds of years old. The wall was originally built by the residents of The Valley to protect themselves from wild beasts that once invaded the region. That was a long time ago.

Stone Wall's is run by a huge human named Jack. Jack is 6 feet, 8 inches (2.03 m) tall and weighs around 300 pounds (135 kg). He has a full head of bright red hair and a full red beard to match. Jack has a reputation throughout River City as running a "tough" bar. Stone Wall's caters to the residents of River City who are looking for a place where they won't get kicked out for slugging someone who looks at them the wrong way, particularly the guardsmen (still it's quite popular with the guardsmen who enjoy roughing it up as much as the next guy). There are no rooms to rent at Stone Wall's and the food is generally greasy. The people who frequent the place come for strong drink, roughhousing and brawling. Jack brews his own beer, and distills his own moonshine. He frequents the market near Lylli's to get the best grain and the best corn to use in his brews.

Jack is an ex-Valley Guard, a skilled fighter and a marksman with the crossbow. Jack can be considered a 15th level Soldier (with hand to hand: soldier, W.P. crossbow, W.P. knives, and W.P. targeting) if the need arises. He keeps a couple of crossbows, a war hammer, small shield and a half dozen clubs out of sight beneath the bar. He always wears studded leather armor and has a knife, blackjack and a heavy club (2D6 damage) hanging from his belt.

Jack hates the Cleavers and has banned them from his bar. Four years ago, when Wally was still a runny nosed kid, Jack cornered him, disarmed him and gave him a spanking that he'll never forget. The Cleavers plan to get even with him someday, but they mostly avoid "Big Jack" as they call him.

The Syndicate also avoids antagonizing Big Jack, but will usually have 1D4 members present every night to keep an eye on things, gather rumors and plunder drunk guardsmen, and outsiders.

River City & the Clusters

The main residential section in The Valley is located at River City. River City was a preplanned city with what might be considered zoning laws. The city is divided into a number of villages or clusters, with a limit on how many people, shops, buildings, etc., may exist in any one cluster. Each is quite different from the next and there are over two dozen such villages. Only a few will be mentioned here. There are about 900 official residents of River City, plus about 200 visitors from other parts of The Valley staying at inns or with friends at any given time. There were many more clusters back when the Crystal Fortress was still being excavated and everyone lived in River City. The other major communities, Lake Town and Alpine Burg, were founded by people who left River City.

There are only two dozen occupied clusters now, but there used to be over eighty. The number of residents in each cluster also used to be higher. Many of the clusters are now abandoned with homes and shops standing vacant. However, the city has been slowly growing lately and some of the older clusters are being reclaimed.

The typical cluster has: 40 to 60 residents, 10 to 20 residential buildings (90% are single family), and four to six businesses (typically a tavern or pub, a general store, or other shops).

All paths in River City lead from one cluster to another. Each cluster is connected by these paths from one to four other clusters. The paths between clusters generally run about three quarters of a mile (1.2 km), and the entire inhabited region covers an area of about twenty square miles (51 square km).

The path from The Road to the Crystal Fortress goes through the following clusters: Kronnenburg, Kirchweiler, Puetzborn, Erdorf, Dockweiler, and Muellenbach, where the Knight's Bridge crosses the river.

The Path from the Road to Archie's home goes through: Kronnenburg, Kirchweiler, Wallenborn, Niederstadtfeld, Steffeln, and finally Jakobsknopp, where Archie lives.

The Laws of River City

In addition to The Valley laws, River City has five additional laws:

- One school per cluster (one cluster may have only an elementary school while the next may only have a secondary school).
- NO churches (NO GODS).
- NO warlocks (elementals are gods of a sort).
- NO druids (them too).
- NO monsters! (just a reminder)

Kronnenburg

Kronnenburg is where the central offices of the Valley Guards are located. No one lives in Kronnenburg, but there are residences for guards who are staying overnight or for a short period of time. The only building that is constantly occupied is the main guard station where all travelers entering or leaving River City must stop to register. The only paths leaving Kronnenburg lead to the Road or to Kirchweiler.

Kirchweiler

Kirchweiler is the first junction a visitor to River City comes to. It has a huge inn called "The Faithless" that looks a lot like a church. In fact, long ago when worship was still allowed in the valley, it was a church. The inn has a dozen extremely nice rooms for rent, and is almost always filled with travelers and guardsmen on business between cities. The rate is a meager six gold a night for room and board, which is about twice what other inns in River City charge. This cluster is safe, clean and picturesque, with a well manicured park at its center. One of the human inhabitants Shawn Kalan (and his family of four) is a secret member of the Syndicate.

Hinterweiler

Hinterweiler is the only cluster where the Syndicate has a significant presence. It is believed to be abandoned, which is the way the Syndicate likes it. In reality, this cluster is a secret outpost for the underground. With underground tunnels connecting the numerous buildings, basement hideaways, secret underground compartments and chambers and one tunnel that runs all the way back to Alpine Burg. There are always one or two dozen Syndicate operatives active in the Hinterweiler cluster. Its many abandoned buildings and secret underground network of tunnels makes it an ideal location for secret meetings, to hide loot and weapons, and to stash fugitives. Also see the sections about The Syndicate and The Big Man.

The only cluster that Hinterweiler connects to is Nohn, which is also abandoned. The path from the Road to Hinterweiler goes through Kronnenburg, Kirchweiler, Puetzborn, and Nohn.

Muellenbach

The Knight's Bridge is located in Muellenbach which only has buildings on the west bank of the river. No one is allowed to build or live on the east bank because that's the main road to the Crystal Fortress.

There are no shops of interest in residential Muellenbach. Its only significant feature is that many of the lower ranking Palace Guards and a few Valley Guards and their families live here. The Syndicate and fugitives stay away from this cluster.

From Muellenbach the main path leads across Knight's Bridge. Once on the east bank, a path leads north to the Peasant's Bridge, east to the fortress, or south to the road leading to Lake Town.

Dockweiler

Dockweiler is where the old docks are located. There are pilings in the river on both banks that indicate where the docks once existed, but most have rotted away over years of neglect and most of the others are no longer safe or usable. The old docks were used before the bridges were built and mainly existed for the ferry service that no longer exists. The few good docks are obviously in much better condition and are used by fishermen and people who boat for pleasure. Under one set of rotting docks is a secret underground chamber built by the Syndicate. Inside are food supplies and drinking water for two weeks, a rusty short sword, a knapsack, two lanterns, a two-man canoe and a small boat (fits four people).

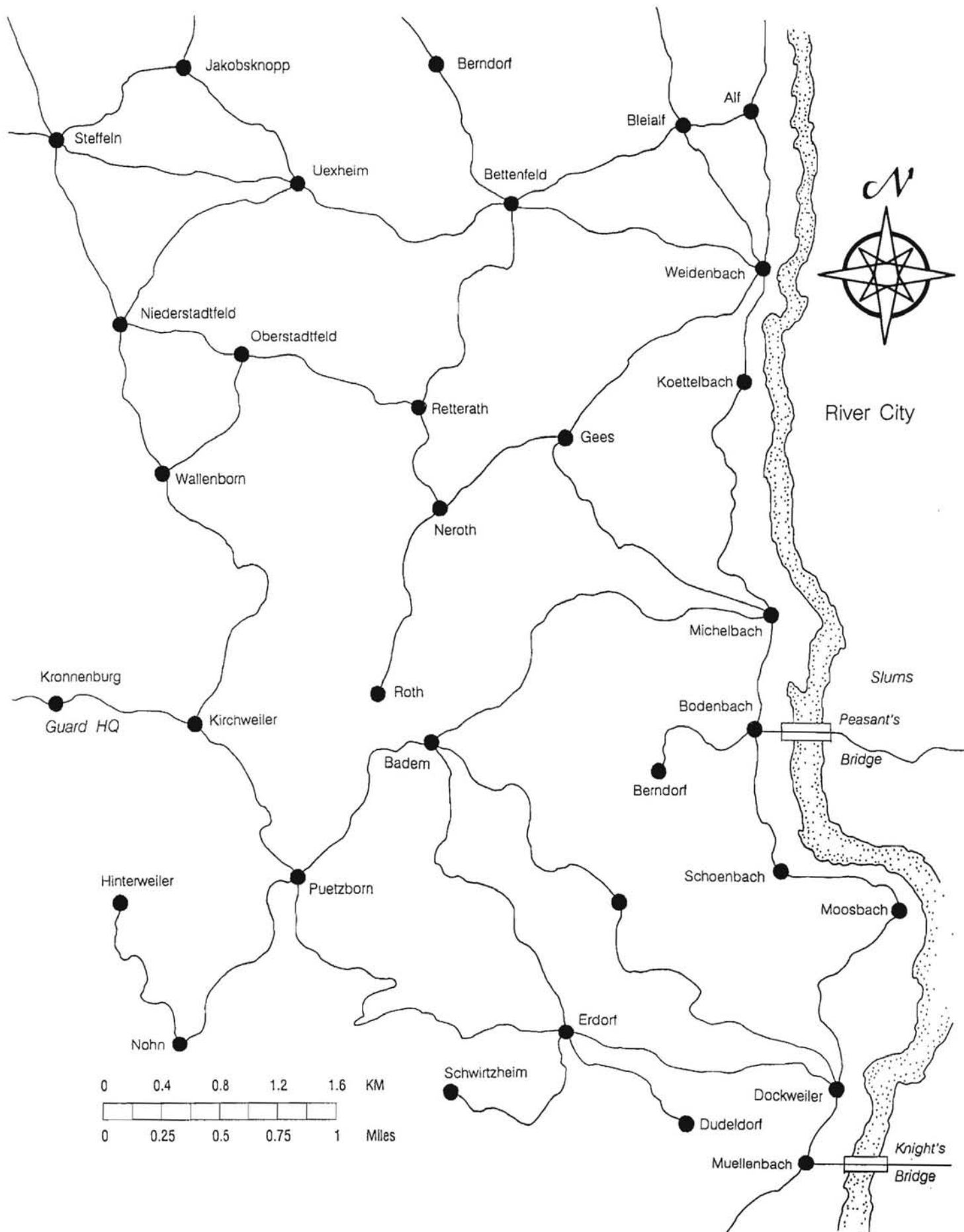
Otherwise, Dockweiler is a pleasant riverside village with many very old and very stately homes. There is an excellent antique shop, restaurant, bakery, tailor, a comfortable local pub, and little else of note.

Dudeldorf

The Falcon's Rest is the "official" knight's tavern and is found in Dudeldorf. The Falcon's Rest is frequented only by the newest and youngest knights/Palace Guards and Interrogators. The old timers tend to stay away from here. All official notices from the king to his knights, and to those who would be knights are posted at the Falcon's Rest first. The list referred to as "The Crystal Quests" is maintained here also.

Outsiders are not welcomed and are asked politely to leave. If they can't take a hint, they are thrown out. Even other River City residents are not welcomed at this "exclusive" tavern. The Syndicate has been unable to infiltrate this establishment.

Dudeldorf also offers a small sports arena where friendly games of skill and strength are played, as well as the occasional dance and sing-along. The "Dude" is a blacksmith's shop that can repair, modify and improve weapons and armor of all kinds. The shop will have 1D6 sets of studded leather armor and chain mail suits and 1D4 suits of scale or plate armor; prices are high. The shop is run by a family of dwarves.



Schwirtzheim

A tavern called The Changeling is a strange little bar that is supposedly owned by a changeling. It is famous for daily drink specials for anyone who comes in looking like the "race of the day". If the race of the day is wolven, any wolven, or anyone dressed up to resemble a wolven, gets all drinks at half price. The race chosen is always an uncommon or exotic one. There are no wolven in the valley, so any true wolven who comes in would have to be a changeling who couldn't drink anyway!

The owner is never seen and the place is run by a pair of seedy humans who cater to the seamier clientele. Gambling and brawling are common. The booze is strong and the prices reasonable.

Bodenbach

Bodenbach is known for two things, the Fishbone Tavern and the Peasant's Bridge. Fishbone's is a popular bar among the laborers who work in Michelbach. It is also a popular hangout for the Crystal Knights. The Knights (big-K) prefer to avoid the younger and annoying knights (little-k). The Crystal Knights are mostly humans and elves and the majority of the dock workers are dwarves. The dwarves working the docks tend to be friendly and tolerant of the elves. They also support the king and have never had any desire to leave The Valley, so they get along with the Crystal Knights and guardsmen. A lot of gossip and the swapping of interesting tales goes on at the Fishbone Tavern.

The Peasant's Bridge is the older, smaller, and less stable of the two bridges crossing the river. It is a swing bridge that swings out of the way when a dwarven barge needs to pass. By comparison, the Knight's Bridge is newer, larger, and more solidly built, and the barges can easily pass beneath it. The Peasant's Bridge is still in service because the dock workers live and work on both sides of the river, and the Knight's Bridge is a bit out of the way.

Michelbach

Many of the dwarves who left River City lived across the river from Michelbach, and that region still shows the scars of the old dwarven ghetto. Although there are many abandoned and available residences in River City, some of the less well-to-do residents prefer to live in the slums that remain on the east bank of the river. The climate is generally pleasant and the inhabitants have refurbished the interiors of their residences, but prefer to keep the exteriors looking slovenly as a sort of rebellion against the king. People are not allowed to live east of the river, and that's just another reason to live in the slums on the east bank.

The new docks serve the dwarven barges that are regularly poled down to Lake Town and back. The barges are able to supply River City with the tastiest fruits and vegetables year round. Although the Fortress is able to control the climate of The Valley, the warlocks of Lake Town surpass even its abilities.

Other Main Clusters & Connections

These are the main connections leading off the main route between the Road and the Crystal Fortress. The places of interest are either located on or near this path, or along the river.

Paths from **Kirchweiler** lead to Puetzborn, Wallenborn, and back to Kronnenburg.

Paths from **Puetzborn** lead to Erdorf, Badem, Nohn, and back to Kirchweiler.

Paths from **Erdorf** lead to Schwirtzheim, Dudeldorf, Dockweiler, and back to Puetzborn.

Paths from **Dockweiler** lead to Fensdorf, up river to Moosbach, downriver to Muellenbach, and back to Erdorf.

Going north along the river from Dockweiler, the path runs through Moosbach, Schoenbach, Bodenbach, Michelbach, Koettelbach, Weidenbach, and on north through other abandoned clusters. There are also clusters lying off to the side from the main riverside path, but they

are mainly residential, with no places of note. The same is true of the clusters located to the south of Dockweiler.

Jakobsknopp

Jakobsknopp is a remote cluster on the outskirts of River City. Any clusters around it are abandoned. The shortest route from Jakobsknopp to the Crystal Fortress goes through Uexheim, Bettenfeld and Weidenbach, and then follows the river south, through Koettelbach, Michelbach, Bodenbach, Schoenbach, Moosbach, Dockweiler, and Muellenbach. Then the path goes across the river via the Knight's Bridge and leads east to The Crystal Fortress.

The village (if it can truly be called a village) of Jakobsknopp has a total of four buildings. One is the residence of Archie, the other three are also residences; there are no businesses. **Archie's residence** is built against a hill and some of the lower level rooms are actually built into the face of the hill. The other residents of the village are common folk who keep to themselves, but keep an eye on everything that happens. One is a human couple with three young children, ages 2, 5, and 6. The husband works on the docks, while the wife takes care of the home and the children.

The second is an elf couple, ages 121 and 134, with a daughter, age 17 who is still in school. The wife works at the palace in a variety of capacities, maintaining court records and assisting Elana and the court as a translator. She is good friends with Archie and with Elana. The husband remains at home writing and painting.

The third residence is a very small, old building occupied by a 930 year old elf woman, called **Homa**. She is Lylli's grandmother and one of the original residents born in the early days of The Valley. The house that Homa occupies is one of the oldest in the city. She is a scholar whose parents were originally from Lopan. Archie's residence was owned by Lylli's parents (Homa's son and daughter-in-law), who are no longer alive.

G.M. Plot Notes: The old woman is still as sharp as a knife, intelligent and knowledgeable of The Valley's history. She has no love for the king and will speculate about the Crystal Palace and its power over the people and the mountain valley. She is also useful in providing information about Archie. She is especially open and talkative if her great grandson, Peter, has joined the player group. Like his mother, she will advise the group to take good care of the "precious boy" and will shed some light on Lylli's and Archie's tumultuous pasts.

The long and the short of it is that Lylli and Archie fell in love, had a romantic affair, talked about marriage, but Archie didn't want to settle down. They had several big fights which severed their relationship. When Archie discovered she was pregnant with his child, he sheepishly offered to marry her. His half hearted offer was the final straw and she quite literally threw him out. She bore a son and has raised him mostly by herself. To Archie's credit he has never denied the child as being his son and has tried to offer his support, both emotionally and financially (although Lylli often refuses it). Unfortunately, Archie was often away on the king's business or caught up in mystic studies. Still he was a better father than many and cares deeply about his son and Lylli.

Note: Homa is not a member of the Syndicate and does not agree with their tactics or methods. However, she is sharp enough to know that they can be contacted at the Hinterweiler cluster.

Archie's Home

The house is a two story structure, with the front of the building having only a door on the lower level and no windows. There are three equally spaced windows with flower boxes on the level above, but the windows' shutters are usually closed. The gable has a single circular window which is usually opened.

The front door is always magically sealed (the sorcerer's seal) from the inside. However, if the player group or other visitors have been invited, a magic pigeon will fly out of the gable window to greet them. Peter, Lyli, and Homa have open invitations and are always welcomed. The pigeon will tell them the password of the day in order to enter and lock the door behind them.

Archie's house is protected by his own sophisticated brand of magic, a mixture of spell and symbol magic. Each spell or ward is activated by a series of conditions and counter-conditions. From this point on, the only people who are truly safe are those who were given the password by the magic pigeon.

The main room is a living/front room and safe haven for Archie's guests. The room is completely closed (no windows), however it is magically lit by a pleasant sun-like light. Along each wall, there is a series of six living stations (twelve total). Each is a small cubicle with a simple cot, dressing table, end table, chair and desk. There are also two washrooms/toilet cubicles at the back of the hall. The washrooms are magically enhanced and always clean and fresh. The cubicles seem to have independent lighting and when anyone enters the cubicle a light automatically comes on. However, when the occupant lays down on the cot, the light goes off again. In addition, there is a plate and goblet on each end table. The occupied cubicles receive complimentary bread and milk which magically appear on the end table every evening. If not consumed, the bread and milk simply remain until eaten, but stay fresh the entire time. Likewise, the goblets are magically filled with fresh water whenever they are emptied. None of these rooms have windows and none, except for the main room, have doors leading to the outside.

There are three doors at the back of the main room, one in the back wall and one in each of the side walls. There is also an open staircase leading up. Two of the three doors are locked, and magically sealed. However, with enough persistence, the group might be able to open one or both of them.

The locked and sealed door in the right hand wall leads to a suite of rooms consisting of (in order): an old kitchen, empty servants' lodging and root cellar. Although magically protected, Archie seldom uses these rooms. The servants' quarters are entered through a large doorway in the far wall of the kitchen. The kitchen has no obvious facilities and no fire pit. It appears that there might have been a large stove near the front of the room, as there is evidence of a patched hole for a stovepipe. The root cellar is entered through a doorway in the back wall and is carved into the hillside; it is the smallest of the rooms.

Going back to the main, front room, the unlocked door in the wall to the left leads to a suite of rooms consisting of a study, library and storeroom. This is where Archie keeps all of his non-magic books and paraphernalia. Guests are free to browse. **The study** has a large pine desk with lots of drawers, and a large plain table. There are also a few shelves and a large map of the world hanging on one wall. Pieces of parchment, scrolls, and books are scattered on the desk and table. They are written in a variety of languages; some are written in runes. The freshest looking parchments and books appear to be recently scribed, probably written by Archie. All of these newer texts are written in runes. There is another copy of the map of the world rolled up on the table. It has numerous notes scrawled on it, also written in runes. Those who can read runes will find Archie's notebooks have the following titles: Changelings' Past, Changelings' Present, Noah's Colony and Immigrants, Old Kingdom Kings, Evidence of Permanent Metamorphosis, Lopan Olympiad, Human vs Wolfen, The Elf-Dwarf Wars, and others.

The library is entered through an archway in the far wall of the study. All the walls are lined with bookshelves and there are also shelves set back to back in the middle of the room. All of the shelves are crammed full of books, parchments, scrolls, and notes in many languages. Most of the documents in this room are on topics that Archie

is not currently researching. Guests are welcome to browse, but no books are to be taken out of the house.

The storeroom is entered through a locked doorway in the back wall of the study and is set into the hillside. This is where Archie stores most of his non-magical gear. It contains: Three full suits of soft leather armor, two suits of studded leather armor, one suit of scale mail, two long swords of exceptional quality, two ordinary long swords, three ordinary short swords, six exceptional daggers, two quarterstaves, an iron staff, a dozen wool shirts, six pairs of work pants, two dozen pairs of socks, a variety of light and heavy jackets, a variety of light and heavy boots, a variety of long and short capes and robes, a selection of belts and sheathes, two dozen belt purses, two backpacks, six waterskins, 200 feet (61 m) of rope, 100 feet (30.5 m) of light chain, three dozen iron spikes like those used by mountain climbers, four small mallets, four hand-picks, two grappling hooks, a tinderbox, flint, a lantern, a sleeping bag, and a variety of light and heavy blankets, among other things.

Tunnels Beneath the House

Going back once again to the main room, the center door opens onto what looks like it might have been a root cellar but is now a crude tunnel in the ground that leads directly into the face of the hill. **The tunnel curves** downward and after about 100 feet (30.5 m) opens onto a larger, more finished, professionally excavated tunnel. This larger tunnel runs to the right for another 100 feet (30.5 m) and stops. The larger tunnel also runs to the left for about 300 feet (91.5 m) before stopping. At 40 foot (12.2 m) intervals all along the entire length of the tunnel are pairs of 40 foot (12.2 m) long side tunnels going in both directions. There is also an underground clearing sixty feet (18.2 m) in diameter, that has been excavated around a large crystal structure. The structure is a giant crystal hexagon with six room-like areas (see the description of the Crystal Gateway for details). The huge crystal fills most of the chamber, leaving little space for anything else. This chamber is at the end of one of the 40 foot (12.2 m) side tunnels.

If the group asks Archie about the tunnels, he may or may not choose to tell them anything about them, especially since they probably had to force open a locked door to go wandering where they shouldn't have been. Any explanation will be a simple one: One night, many years ago, as he was preparing to do a magic experiment, he did a presence sense to make sure no one was nearby. Much to his surprise, he sensed a presence that was in the ground below his home. He decided to locate the source and began tunnelling. To his surprise, he found an existing network of tunnels with no evidence of who built them or when. More disconcerting was that the presence he had felt was gone. Other more important matters have distracted his attention about them.

Any comments or questions about the giant crystal will visibly surprise him. The crystal and additional tunnel passages weren't there the last time he was down there several years ago. He'll want to investigate immediately.

G.M. Plot Notes: Jon Hanlon, the warlock who founded Lake Town, is the person who built the tunnels and was the presence that Archie sensed. Why Jon Hanlon did this, or why he does anything, is beyond explanation. Jon Hanlon is very insane (see his description in Lake Town). Archie has not returned to the tunnel complex below his home in a number of years and does NOT know about the giant crystal structure! Jon Hanlon returned to the area later and found the huge crystal structure that was buried there. Jon didn't know what it was, but he cleared out the area in an attempt at getting a better view of it. It is just fortuitous that one of the tunnels connects to the chamber. See the description of the **Crystal Gateway** which is in the section on crystal devices.

Unless Archie is told about the device he will have no reason to return to the tunnels, and will simply reseal the door so that the characters can't get through. Another plot device to find the gateway is to create

a reason to go back down into the tunnels, perhaps the presence/Jon is felt again, sending Archie (and the player characters?) to investigate. He's gone when they arrive, but they stumble onto the crystal.

Archie's Sanctuary

The open stairway leads upward and into what appears to be a solid ceiling. In reality, there is a trap door. The door is the most ornately decorated part of the room, with numerous wards, runes, and other carvings covering its surface. The wards and carvings alert Archie of intruders and inflicts its protective magic against any who try to force entry. Anyone who so much as touches the trap door will have to save against three separate but simultaneous despair wards. Repeat each and every melee that he or another touches it. A mystic drain is also activated and affects everybody in the entire room. If anyone is foolhardy enough to remain in contact with the trap door for more than two minutes/melee rounds, they will also have to save separately against magic blinding and agony every melee they continue to mess with the door. All wards are at eighth level strength (i.e. +3 ward strength, agony inflicts 8D8 damage for 8 melees). Even invited guests are not safe from this magic unless Archie opens the door and invites them in.

If the character(s) should manage to get past the trap door or Archie invites them up into his sanctum, they will find a large 30×30 foot (9×9 m) room that is clearly the abode of a man of magic. Circles of power and protection cover most of the floor, though most of them are inactive. A permanent mystic drain is in effect everywhere in the room for everyone except Archie. There are magic scrolls and potions lining the shelves of the wall to the left. The wall to the right is lined with shelves and racks that hold any imaginable ward or circle component and then some.

There is also a *dimensional rift* floating in the air at the far side of the room. The dimensional rift circle is connected to two protection circles, protection from good and evil, and a force circle with a power matrix. There is a small staircase leading up to the rift. If the characters ever get to go through the rift, they will find an identical room on the other side.

The other dimension is no more dangerous than the one the characters are in now and that world is very similar to the Palladium World. In fact, the house on the far side is located in what appears to be an average, Palladium World style small town of about 800 human-looking people. Archie is known as a wizard of little significance in this other dimension. The main reason for having this other room is for Archie to meet with "monsters" from other worlds, dimensions, or even from the Palladium World without ever having to leave home or disrupting The Valley. What this means is that although Archie occasionally visits this other dimension, he has not set foot in his native Palladium World outside The Valley in fifteen years.

The Archie NPC

Archie has a reputation as a powerful mage throughout the mountains. Since the mountains are not known for harboring really powerful mages, he is commonly known as "The Arch Mage." Beyond the mountains he is known to very few. Many fellow sorcerers in the Old Kingdom will recognize his name, but his fame is not as a powerful mage but as a historian and artist. Archie is a skilled painter and enjoys painting almost more than studying magic. His paintings tend to concentrate on the theme of supernatural creatures, magic and dimensions. They are popular among the Old Kingdom magic guilds and most guilds will have at least one "Archie" hanging in their headquarters. Some of his paintings can be found as far away as the Timiro Kingdom.

About thirty years ago, Archie began travelling the world looking for changelings who would like to move to a colony in the south seas. A colony owned, ruled and inhabited by changelings. His long time friend, Noah, had founded the community and hoped to change the dire prophecy of the Tristine Chronicles by creating a quiet community

where changelings could live and prosper in peace. Archie was prone to finding and inviting the average changeling, rather than heroic adventurers. The heroic sort is not likely to go along with all of the colony's edicts for peace and mediation. Eventually, Archie's travels took him to the Old Kingdom Mountains where he happened upon The Valley and the Crystal Fortress. That was about twenty years ago.

Archie became fascinated by the many anomalies of The Valley, its inhabitants, and, more than anything else, crystal magic. He and the Crystal King hit it off and after he had accomplished his first quest for the King (the details of which he will never reveal to the group) he was pronounced "Sir" Archie of the Crystal Knights and given a Crystal Sword. It was around this time that he met and romanced Lylli. Although they fell in love immediately and Lylli bore Archie a son, her impudence and his incorrigible wanderlust finally drove them apart. He chose to live in River City, a halfway point between the Crystal Fortress and the home of Lylli and Peter, his son.

Archie has a tendency to immerse himself in whatever happens to fascinate him at the time. When things fell apart between him and Lylli, he became obsessed with unravelling the secrets of crystal magic. He has also spent a large part of his time researching the changeling race; not just because of his friendship with Noah and other changelings, but because it appears that ancient changelings may have created (or at least mastered) crystal magic. Archie's crystal sword was built by a changeling (and the rune sword-like intelligence inside it, with its obsession for knowledge, has had a significant influence on Archie).

The last time Archie left The Valley was fifteen years ago, on a visit to the changeling colony. Archie went, hoping that Noah could help him unravel the power of an ancient circle which was described in one of Elana's books. Something about that visit with Noah disturbed him greatly. He did not tell his friend about his discovery of crystal magic and he has not gone to visit him since. Again he focused his attention toward unravelling the secrets of crystal magic and the history of the changeling race. Meanwhile, he contentedly waits for the next group of outlanders to visit the valley.

Archie and Changelings

Archie has spent decades trying to unravel the truth about changelings. One key discovery he has made is about the human rulers of the Old Kingdom before it was ... well, old. Archie has begun to refer to this time period as the "Ancient Old Kingdom," as opposed to the well known and documented "Modern Old Kingdom."

He has found many other references in ancient writings that predate the Elf-Dwarf Wars to suggest that the changelings were once a significant power in these mountains and had their own formidable magic, crystal magic, and may have helped the dwarves develop rune magic. It is not clear what status the changelings had within the Ancient Old Kingdom, but at least it appears that they were not feared and hunted.

He is convinced that the changelings' involvement with the royal family of the Great Prestida led to the events of deception and treachery so often quoted from the Tristine Chronicles. It was the death of the last great Prestida king that sparked the persecution of changelings that lasts to this day.

One passage that Archie claims to have come from a rare edition of the Tristine Chronicles is especially interesting. Archie contends that many of the existing Chronicles are edited versions that have deleted this passage. He has a copy on parchment made by his own hand (in elf) which player characters can examine or it can be read to them.

"Yea, for untold centuries did they plot. The changelings did not perish in the Great Elf-Dwarf War as had been believed. King Prestida XIII, the greatest of the human Old Kingdom kings, the last in a line of great kings and noble lineage, had been revealed to be one of 'They of Many Faces.' Man charged the changelings had tried to take control of the known world, secretly murdering



the King and replacing him with one of their own. The wrong they wrought would see the world rise up to purge changelings from the very face of the planet.

"The once noble and ancient changelings had planted the seeds of their own destruction. When it was discovered that the good King Prestida XIII was a changeling, thousands were hunted down and slaughtered. What evidence of their civilization crushed and scattered to the winds, for wherever the changelings did gather, they were destroyed. And lo, many others who were not They of Many Faces lost their lives from those who feared that they might be changelings. Parents of any yellow or pale white skinned child were quickly put to death with their tainted progeny. Two thirds of all changelings perished. Generation after generation of flowing blood was all that could appease the world's fears. The Old Kingdom and much of the world would be forever scarred by this terrible scourge. Such was the madness that consumed the world."

Archie sees the language of the rare text as ambiguous and worded in a most interesting and deliberate way. Tristine does not openly accuse the changelings of any crime. He uses the phrase, "Man charged the changelings" with the crime of murder, not that the changelings were actually guilty of any crime; certainly not the murder of the king. In fact, he seems to refer to King Prestida XIII as "a changeling." The wording of the passage and the fact that it has been deleted from most versions of the Tristine Chronicles (why?) makes Archie suspicious and piques his curiosity.

His theory is that the changelings didn't kill King Prestida XIII and assume his identity, but that they had assumed the human form and the identity of the Prestida family centuries earlier. That each and every King Prestida had been a changeling. For centuries, disguised as humans they helped to build a thriving human (and changeling) kingdom from the ashes of The Great Elf-Dwarf war without anybody ever realizing it. A kingdom that would eventually move east to become the Timiro Kingdom! A fluke accident revealed King Prestida XIII to be the changeling he had always been. The humans assumed the worst, and branded the man they once heralded as a great king a murderous monster. The changeling king who dared to secretly lead/help humans was put to death and the genocide of the changeling race for this horrible deed was begun. Pure unsubstantiated conjecture? Idle and groundless musings? He doesn't know. If his theory is correct, the centuries of persecution are all the more tragic.

To substantiate his speculation, he can't help but to note that all the Prestida kings abstained from drink, even at celebrations, and ate bland foods. The family was always very private, kept to themselves, and it was the Prestida family that started the tradition of burying dead kings in the Old Kingdom mountains (away from prying eyes where they might be discovered to be changelings, not humans).

The kings of the Old Kingdom were ceremoniously buried in a place referred to as **The Mountain of The Kings**. When the Old Kingdom kings were buried, they were buried with many of their personal belongings, including books and rune weapons. Archie has an idea where this place might be and wants to go to explore it. He has convinced the Crystal King of the worthiness of a quest to find and plunder these tombs and has gotten his tentative approval. However, Archie secretly hopes that some of the articles he may find in the tombs, perhaps even the skeletal remains of the kings, would confirm once and for all whether any were changelings. Personally, the elf mage suspects that the entire Prestida family line have all been changelings.

Archie, The Crystal Court Sorcerer

Archie is a typical arrogant elf. He despises most other men of magic (as is natural for an arrogant elf wizard), but is himself an experienced wizard and diabolist. He presents himself as a wandering scholar and explains that he intends to explore the mountains of the Old Kingdom where the dwarves used to manufacture rune weapons.

He is looking to hire adventurers who are willing to protect him and help look for clues about rune magic (and changelings). He offers 5 gold per day per person with possible bonuses and a percentage of any treasure they find; a good wage, especially for missions that don't seem too dangerous. He is willing to haggle about payment and percentages, but he will reserve first pick of any artifacts that the group locates and lays claim to ALL crystal and rune items. He estimates that it should take them a month or so to complete the explorations and return. He is willing to pay 30 days pay up front, with the remainder on return. Overflowing with arrogance, he informs them:

"If you serve me well, I may find reason to hire you for future missions."

The members of the adventurer group are likely to recognize Archie as a valuable, if unpredictable and erratic, ally in The Valley and just about anywhere else in the world.

G.M. Plot Notes: Archie can be the driving force in motivating characters, instigating adventure, and serve as the element in link most of the adventures together. He can be a useful tool in getting the group in and out of trouble, especially when they get in over their heads. As an N.P.C., Archie will use whatever abilities he has to keep the group motivated. He should be played as condescending, arrogant, superior and a bit removed from reality. He is consumed by his own agenda; anybody else's needs and ideas are secondary. He despises men of magic, even though he's one himself, and is especially rude to them. He looks at men at arms as dumb brutes, and priests as, "too often blinded by their divine affiliations." The people he respects most are scholars, historians, teachers and most people of learning who have an open, inquisitive mind. Archie loves to talk at great length about history, science, philosophy, magic, and his ingenious observations and theories, especially regarding the history and future of changelings.

Although Archie may like members of the adventure group, he will remain aloof and cool even toward fellow elves. Every time Archie has to come to the group's aid or they make a mistake, he's likely to rub their noses in it. He'll make comments about character's shortcomings and habits too, such as, "Eating again?" or "You sure tied one on last night." "Pee-you, you still smell like a distillery, so please stand up wind from me, won't you." And things like, "That wasn't very bright," or "Well done for a brute like you," or "Surprisingly clever of you. I'm impressed, really." and so on.

Members of the group may come to resent him, but he should be a valuable addition to the team and he will do nice things for them from time to time. For example, he is more than fair in dividing up treasure, except when it comes to rune weapons, magic items, and history books. He may treat them as worthless buffoons or incompetent morons, but he will defend them to others and will loyally help them get out of trouble (especially if he's the guy who got them into trouble in the first place).

As for his son, Archie has always felt very awkward in the role of father and is afraid to openly show his affections. Archie tries not to favor or coddle Peter and often makes him do the grunt work and chores of the expedition. Even so, he treats Peter the least rudely of anybody, applauds his accomplishments, takes his time to explain things to him and keeps a watchful eye on him. If Peter is hurt badly or (heaven forbid) killed, Archie shall become the unmerciless hand of vengeance and the player characters will see the might of his magic unleashed in a destructive torrent. Peter's death will affect the elf mage deeply.

The game master should use Archie as the perfect foil to develop plot and direction for the group and the campaign. Archie can push, entice or manipulate the characters into encounters and adventures that they might not have otherwise considered. The subplot about the history of the changelings should eventually intrigue every player character as they try to unravel the truth, so don't keep this Archie's little secret; remember, he likes to talk and show off his intelligence.

Note: The player group can meet Archie just about anywhere in the world, under any circumstance. He is a wanderer, although he hasn't done much wandering lately. The best place to introduce the character is in **The Valley**. Visitors to The Valley are rare and well announced. Archie will want to be involved in welcoming any outsiders to the community as soon as possible, hence his first appearance at **Alpine Burg**.

Name: Sir Archie

True Name: Archimedes Magellan, but he prefers to be addressed as Archie or Sir Archie. Anybody who insists on calling him Archimedes will only earn his ire.

Alignment: Unprincipled

O.C.C. & Level: Diabolist 9th, Wizard 9th, Healer 5th

Race: Elf, **Age:** 562, **Size:** 6 ft 3 in tall (1.91 m), 160 lbs (72 kg), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 19, M.E. 16, M.A. 11, P.S. 13, P.P. 15, P.E. 16, P.B. 20, Spd. 12, **Hit Points:** 105, **A.R.:** 4.

Armor: Leather of Iron A.R. 15, S.D.C. 300, or Cloak of Armor: A.R. 14, S.D.C. 250.

Bonuses: Includes all attribute bonuses, O.C.C. magic combat, and chest wards. +5 vs spells, +6 vs wards, +4 vs circles, +5 vs poison, +3 vs insanity, +16% vs coma/death, +3 vs psionics. Additional +3 vs psionics when using Crystal Sword.

Natural Abilities: Charm/impress 50%, recognize magic items 58%, decipher circles 91%/72%, scroll conversion 66%, recognize enchantment 80%. **Other Bonuses:** +4 save vs fear/charm magic/psionics, +2 save vs mood altering magic/psionics. Impervious to psionic and magic sleep.

The following are due to a series of wards that are "tattooed" into his chest. A number of them incorporate fragments of dragon bone (permanence wards), and bits of bone show through the skin surface of his chest. 1/3 damage from cold/fire, 1/2 damage from energy, see invisible, 60 ft (18 m) night vision (even in magic darkness), speak all languages 99%, read/write all languages 99% (native language is elven), recognize enchantment 88%.

Psionics: 9th level minor psionic. Since the base save vs psionics is 12, Archie only needs a 6 because of his bond with the magic sword.

I.S.P.: 98, **Powers include:** Aura of truth, detect psionics, hypnotic suggestion, object read, presence sense, resist fatigue and sense good and evil.

Healer Abilities: All level 1-3 healing abilities. **Healer I.S.P.** 72

Magic/Clerical: **Spells:** 14 spells per day, +3 spell strength, 2 spell attacks per melee. Can write scrolls at 9th level (diabolist and wizard). **Circles:** +1 circle strength. **Wards:** knows wards, 16 wards per day, +3 ward strength.

Magic Knowledge: Knows all symbols, knows runes, knows wards, knows all power words. **Spells:** enchanted cauldron, all spells from level one through five; the sorcerers seal, exorcism, dispel magic barriers; teleport (superior), dimensional teleport, and resurrection. **Circles:** all protection circles, all summoning circles, all power circles, and the following circles of legend: elemental forces, permanent metamorphosis.

Magic Items/Weapons: Crystal Sword with psionic protection (additional +3 vs psionics; and a crystal communicator headband, in addition to many herbs and components for ward and circle making, including two pairs of faerie wings. See possessions.

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand: non men at arms, W.P. large sword, W.P. knives, W.P. staff. 3 attacks per melee, kick attack 1D6, critical strike from behind, +4 strike, +8 parry, +3 dodge, +3 damage.

Weapons: Crystal Sword doing 5D6+13 damage (includes all bonuses).

Skills of Note: Disguise 73%/39%, dowsing 71%, forgery 99%/60%, identify plants 73%/75%, locate secret compartments 35%, medical 99%/99%, pick locks 73%, pick pockets 51%, prowl 75%, scale

walls, 55%, trap/skin small animals 59%/63%, speak all languages 99%, read/write all languages 99%, carpentry 67%, cook 95%, dance 98%/95%, demon and devil lore 99%, faerie lore 99%, imitate voices 61%, mathematics 99%, paint 99%, plant/farm lore 59%, preserve food 77%, racial history 73%, recognize poison 61%, religious doctrines 83%, sense of direction 99%, sing 95%, swim 80%.

Possessions: At his home in River City he has the equivalent of a few million gold worth of magic components and items, two or three scrolls of every spell he knows, and countless books on magic and history. He also has a half dozen suits of leather of iron and cloaks of armor, and a flying carpet. He has a similar stock on the other side of his dimensional rift.

Description: Archie is a little less than average height for an elf, and rather thin. He also looks to be the equivalent of a human in his mid to late forties, but it's the weathered look of experience, and he still has a bright fire burning in his eyes. In reality, the elf is 562 years old. He was the illegitimate son of a wizard, born in the early days of the Eastern Territories and raised as a scholar. He has led a long life and has travelled to just about every corner of the Palladium World. He has even spent time on the magic council at the Place of Magic (see **Palladium RPG Book II: Old Ones**), and as advisor to a king in Timiro. He is arrogant, feeling superior to all others, especially other men of magic, however, he has a phobia of clergy.

Archie is one of the most independent and well protected mages to walk the world at the present time. This is partly because of Horatio, his guardian angel, partly because of his chest wards, and partly because of his sword. Archie wields a crystal long sword that is bright green, with a hint of yellow at the core of the blade. The sword hilt has a red gem at the base and at the point where the blade begins. The crystal sword hilt hangs from his belt along with numerous small leather and cloth pouches. Many of the pouches have rune symbols painted on them, and are filled with magic components. He dresses in a simple leather jacket (leather of iron) and slacks. He wears a crystal necklace and bracelet. He also wears many ornate rings that suggest magic.

Horatio, Archie's Unlikely Companion

Archie's constant companion is Horatio, a Cherub (a scrupulous angel) who has worked with Archie for the past forty years. Although Archie tends to think of him as his familiar or trusted servant rather than a true friend, Horatio is fond of the elf and will do everything in his power to help and save Archie and Peter. One of Horatio's powers is the ability to look through Archie's eyes (perhaps Archie is actually Horatio's familiar?) and see everything that Archie sees even though they may be as far as two miles away. Horatio tends to stay out of everybody's way and lets them do what they must. However, he does lend a helping hand and offers kind words to those with a kind heart or who do a good deed. Most of the time he quietly waits in another dimension until he senses that Archie needs him, or until Archie calls for him. Horatio usually remains invisible while in the Palladium world and spends as little time as possible in it.

Horatio understands the danger that threatens the Palladium world and recognizes Archie's and our heroes' importance in stopping the evil from spreading, even if Archie doesn't. Consequently, Horatio will do everything in his power to keep the group on track and smooth things over between them and Archie. Horatio can call upon 1D4 other angels to help, especially in sending dreams, visions, and inspiring ideas to the group.

Archie's Guardian Angel

Name: Horatio

Alignment: Scrupulous

Attributes: I.Q. 20, M.A. 24, M.E. 20, P.S. 23, P.P. 18, P.E. 20, P.B. 30, Spd. 8, flying speed of 74 (50 mph/80 kmph).

Race: Cherub — Spirit of the Air.

Age: 9,000 years, **Size:** 3 feet tall (0.9 m), 50 lbs (22.5 kg), **Natural A.R.:** 12

Hit Points: 75

Natural Abilities: +3 on all saving throws, night vision 90 ft (27 m), see the invisible, turn invisible, metamorphosis, bio-regeneration (1D6 every two melees), dimensional teleport 50%, understands and speaks all languages.

Psionics: All level 1-3 abilities, fifth level proficiency, **I.S.P.:** 60.

Magic: All level 1-5 air elemental at sixth level proficiency.

Clerical: Turn 2D6 dead 80%, exorcism 40%, remove curse 36%, healing touch (2D6 once per melee), resurrection 15%.

Combat: 2 attacks per melee, 1D8 damage, or by weapon or magic. +2 strike, +6 damage, +6 dodge, +4 parry.

Description: Horatio, like other cherubs, appears as a human infant with feathered wings and eyes of yellow flame. Horatio rarely appears in the Palladium World, but will normally meet with Archie in "neutral" territory, usually the astral plane. When he does enter the Palladium World, he will remain invisible. Just like elementals, he cannot stay in The Valley for more than 24 hours and cannot enter the Crystal Fortress.

Angels rarely take a direct hand in the affairs of mortals, but have been known to ally themselves with mortals involved in great con-



licts with evil forces. Angels (and elementals) can immediately sense the location of Axel's circle and the corrupt nature of its power when they enter the Palladium World. However, they have no reason to act against it. The circle threatens the entire world, but only as a future possibility. Horatio has informed the other angels in his home dimension about the power circle of elemental forces activated in the south, and may come to the aid of any mortals who try to stop it.

Horatio has been involved in Archie's schemes over the past forty years and he has become more closely involved in the world's affairs than is typical for a cherub. Horatio has gained a certain fondness for the Palladium World and all its creatures. In the past, because of his familiarity with Archie and his fondness for the world, Horatio has taken too active a hand in the affairs of the world. He has been chastised by other angels and is afraid that he may be cast out of the community if he's not careful. Therefore, Horatio has avoided telling Archie directly about the danger represented by the changeling Axel, the circle of elemental force in the south, and the dire consequences of events currently in motion. However, Horatio plans on discreetly directing Archie (and his allies/the player characters) to the circle of elemental forces and to put a stop to the events that threaten the world.

The Road to Lake Town

The journey to Lake Town is a cold and inhospitable one. The north end of the road and the river toward River City are covered by forest. The area beyond it, toward Lake Town, changes dramatically to mountain scrub, just beyond the old city wall. Here the land is rocky, with sparse vegetation, sudden winds, cold temperatures, frost and even snow (typically between freezing and about 50 degrees Fahrenheit).

The road to Lake Town hasn't been used as a common thoroughfare in nearly two hundred years, but its narrow path is still evident as it runs along the eastern side of the river. An old, dilapidated inn remains on the road halfway between River City and Lake Town, but it too has been abandoned for years. The old road crosses over to the west side of the river, via a fording point, near Lake Town and is seldom used by travelers. Once in a while, one will see the occasional Lake Town or River City citizen or outsider traveling on it, or more often, human children romping in the woods or playing on the road throwing snowballs and making snowmen. The Cleaver Gang and members of the Syndicate sometimes use nearby forests and rocky crags as temporary hiding places and can be seen skulking down the road for a moment before they disappear behind a rock or tree.

The Valley Guards and other Valley protectors also tend to avoid this area, giving it a quick visit and look over about once every 1D4 months. Despite all this, there is nothing particularly dangerous or mysterious about this area of The Valley; it's simply an old area no longer used or inhabited by anyone. The desolation and cold temperatures are the result of Lake Town warlocks letting the rest of The Valley inhabitants know that they are not welcome and to stay away. The few who do travel to Lake Town use boats on the river.

Lake Town Today

Beyond the threatening scrub and snow area that divides Lake Town from River City is the region controlled by the warlocks. It is the garden spot of the Valley. The sun always shines during the day, the temperature is always a pleasant 70 to 80 degrees, a fine mist falls every evening, and plants grow in abundance. There are a variety of plants and trees that are only found in this area controlled by the warlocks. Most notable are fruit and nut bearing types. The small farms always produce an abundance of vegetables and greens. Fish from the lake is the other staple eaten by the residents; most are vegetarians. The only animals around seem to be made of clay. This can be a bit unsettling, but one gets used to it.

Lake Town is a sprawling community of about a fifteen hundred inhabitants. It is the province of humans (99%) and warlocks. The city was founded by **Jon Hanlon** when he and his followers failed in their attempt to escape from The Valley and the control of the Crystal Fortress. When they failed, they decided to ostracize themselves from the rest of The Valley inhabitants and established Lake Town. Since then they have kept mostly to themselves. That was over nine hundred years ago. Because the humans have much shorter lifetimes than elf, dwarf, or changeling, many generations have been born and died in Lake Town while the same Crystal King rules the Fortress.

The town is pretty much ignored by everyone else except the river rafting traders. The inhabitants dislike all elves (because the king is an elf) and avoid most other people. The dwarves of River City are the only ones the humans have regular contact with and they aren't too thrilled with them. They view outsiders with suspicion but will generally welcome any humans to their town. Most of these people seem angry and hostile although even they don't seem to know why. They hate the guardsmen and interrogators even more than elves and there is inevitably a conflict whenever any of the "King's men" visit. Cat calls, pranks, and brawls are directed at those who serve the Crystal King. **G.M.**

Note: The hostility is because they cannot associate with their elemental brothers. This separation causes a disturbance in their psyche and spirit which makes them cantankerous, depressed and angry/hostile.

There is some limited trade, with River City exchanging grain, cotton, fruit, fish, wine and lumber for dairy products, wool, metalworks, and finished goods, but the actual needs of Lake Town are surprisingly few so the trade is light. If the dwarven barges did not come to Lake Town, there would be no trade and the Lake Towners would learn to drink their wine without cheese.

The Lake Towners don't know much about the rest of The Valley, since they have everything they need right where they are and avoid contact with the rest of the area inhabitants. The vast majority of the city's inhabitants are warlocks (66%) of one breed or another. About 40% are air warlocks, 30% water, 25% earth and 5% fire. Almost all are only first and second level. Very few (10%) have progressed to higher levels and it is the task of the higher level warlocks (typically five to seventh level maximum) to lead the community.

The people are not very industrious. No one really runs the town, and since there is an overabundance of most everything, it is rare that anything **needs** to be done. The slow, lazy pace of the Lake Town inhabitants frequently means things are usually left undone for weeks at a time. Things that involve using elemental magic are done first. Elemental magic is easy for most of the warlocks and they like to show off to each other. When a dwarven barge comes down from River City, a half dozen young warlocks may run to the beach to call a wave to push the barge ashore. Thus the barge always hits the beach at Lake Town travelling at or above twenty mph (32 kmph, spd 29). Passengers not tied down are likely to get thrown from the vessel and even suffer bumps and bruises. (Possible damage: 01-30% chance of being thrown off the barge and suffering 2D6 hit points damage, 31-00: no damage).

The History of Lake Town

Jon Hanlon was an air warlock who assisted the Crystal King in settling The Valley. One of Jon's jobs was to make the weather in the Valley more hospitable for the workers and settlers. In those days, Alpine Burg was only an outpost at the entrance to The Valley and the King was just beginning to unravel the secrets of Crystal Magic. Jon also worked as the leader of a group of warlocks who assisted the dwarves in their excavation of the Crystal Fortress. Jon was loyal to the King who treated him with respect and generosity. The majority of the settlers were humans and dwarves, with the occasional elf or changeling. All of the warlocks were humans, which was not that unusual. The warlocks recognized Jon as their leader and soon most non-warlock humans also began to look at him as their natural leader.

With the passage of time, the Crystal King became removed from the common man and learned to use the weather control powers of the Crystal Fortress. Jon and the King were still good friends, but the savvy warlock began to notice things changing. One of the more distressing occurrences was a sort of psychic pressure exerted by the Crystal Fortress (or the King) that made elementals feel uncomfortable and encouraged them to leave the valley.

After several more decades spent in the service of the King, Jon and the warlocks decided that the time had come for them to leave The Valley. There was no animosity, they just felt they wanted to move on. After notifying the king (who tried to dissuade them), they headed south from the Crystal Fortress towards the southern exit from The Valley. Jon chose the southern route because it was safer and quicker for humans. However, when they reached the southern part of The Valley, they all suddenly changed their minds. They couldn't find the willpower they needed to make the descent down the southern cliffs and they decided to start a new town right near the lake. Unknown to them at that time, the king in concert with the Crystal Fortress, was exercising their will over them. In actuality, the king was as much a

victim as Jon and his people. The king had mixed feelings about the departure of his long-time friend and the exodus of the humans. When he felt confused, ambivalent or depressed, the forces (and personality) of the Crystal Fortress were able to more easily influence and control him. Through him they stopped Hanlon and the others.

Jon Hanlon and the humans founded the community of Lake Town on the northwestern edge of the lake. Naturally, the warlocks called upon elementals to assist them in building their new community. At first, the elementals were able to overcome the increasingly powerful psychic force that wanted them to leave The Valley. As the power of the Crystal Fortress grew stronger, it became difficult for the elementals to resist and they were forced to leave the "control zone" that The Fortress had established. Elementals were able to enter The Valley when summoned, but would plead to be released and leave within 36 hours. The warlocks, ever sensitive to the desires and pain of their elemental "brothers," would release them. After awhile they became apprehensive about summoning them at all (just as The Fortress had hoped).

The warlocks of Lake Town learned to live without the help of their elemental brothers, but it saddened them to be forced apart. Despite this, the mind control of the Crystal Fortress and the king prevented them from questioning the situation or from considering leaving The Valley. Some of the older warlocks could not bear to live without contact with their elemental brothers. These lonely individuals would go as far south as the Crystal Fortress would allow and stand high among the rocks and wind, lost in thought for hours on end. Some would summon an elemental to visit for just a little while (1D4 hours) and release it upon its first sign of discomfort.

Jon was deeply troubled and confused by this unnatural situation and frequently went to the Crystal Palace to visit with the king and ask for his advice and guidance. The Crystal King would try to comfort his old friend but was increasingly cold and somehow different. Finally, the king revealed that it was he, using the power of the Crystal Fortress, who was preventing the visits of the elementals, as well as preventing Jon and his people from leaving The Valley. He mocked Jon as being a blind fool. He told him that he and the other warlocks "belonged" to The Valley and would never be allowed to leave. Jon begged him to free his people. For a moment, the king seemed to soften. His face suddenly took on the compassionate visage of old. A tear trickled from one eye and the Crystal King said in a soft, sad voice, "I ... I truly want to help you, Jon. It's just ... I ... I can't! The Fortress ... the other ... it ..." Then the moment passed and the king, again under the full control of the Crystal Fortress, snarled and said, "This is your home, warlock. Accept that and live in peace." With those words the king left and refused to see Jon ever again.

Jon Hanlon lived out the rest of his life in frustration and guilt. He could not accept his fate and became obsessed with the idea of escaping from The Valley. Although he and many others frequently tried to fight the mind control of the Crystal Fortress, they could not break its spell. The guilt ate at him like a cancer: because of him, his fellow warlocks, their families and offspring were the prisoners of the insane king and the mysterious Crystal Fortress. Although Jon was getting old (by human standards), he never stopped searching for a way to help the others escape. He studied all four branches of elemental power and mastered them all; a rare feat. In turn, he summoned greater elementals from each of the four disciplines in hopes that they could help his people escape, but to no avail.

At the age of 93, Jon's body, eyes and mind were beginning to fail him. He remained healthy for his age, but nature was taking its toll. If he was going to continue his quest he'd have to shed his natural body for one that could stand the test of time. So it was that Jon Hanlon decided to create an iron golem in his own image and transferred his life essence into it. The new, powerful body renewed his spirits and he continued his quest to free the people from The Valley. Unfortunately,

the mental strain and guilt from his obsession continued to torment his fragile mind. After a few decades as the golem, he became increasingly paranoid, especially about the king and his special knights. Jon also developed an intense fear of the Crystal Fortress, convinced that it was out to kill him. He became more reclusive and one day simply vanished. At first many people thought he had finally found a way to escape, but then they began to catch glimpses of the iron golem prowling the forests, hills or even wandering through the town late at night when he thought nobody would see him.

Some years later, the erratic and dangerously unbalanced warlock summoned several greater elementals. He gave them the task of freeing his people. When the elementals could not step into The Valley more than a few hundred yards before having to turn away (the Fortress has grown incredibly strong), the mad golem refused to release them. They argued with Hanlon but he would not relent in his command. The elementals became furious and attacked, savagely beating him. Ironically, it was the magic of the Crystal Fortress that forced the elementals to leave The Valley, saving the golem's life. What tiny shred of sanity that Jon Hanlon may have had left vanished when his elemental brothers attacked him. He is quite insane, steadfast in his belief that NO living creature can be trusted, including elementals, who he has never called upon since that day forward.

The Four Elementals

The elementals Jon Hanlon summoned have become prisoners themselves. The insane warlock has never released them. They cannot get to him to plead or slay him, so they are trapped on the mountain. The elementals, frustrated and angered by their captivity, are furious. They have slowly come to accept their current situation in the Palladium world, but take out their pain and anger on any intelligent creature they encounter. They are responsible for sudden storms, avalanches, rock slides and other disasters in the mountains around The Valley.

There are four major elementals of water, earth, fire, and air. All are bound by Hanlon and unable to leave until he either releases them or dies. The Golem/Jon Hanlon summoned them so only he can release them. No other warlock can command or free them. They can communicate with other warlocks and, in an effort to free themselves, the elementals will try to pursue warlocks and other adventurers (often forcing them into The Valley) to accomplish the task Hanlon has set them to: To free his people.

The Mad Golem

Name: Jon Hanlon

True Name: Jon Hanlon

Alignment: Anarchist

O.C.C. & Level: Earth Warlock 10th, Air Warlock 10th, Fire Warlock 10th, and Water Warlock 10th.

Race: Supernatural; an iron golem possessed by a human life essence.

Age: 1000, **Size:** 7 ft tall (2.1 m), 1000 lbs (450 kg), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 14, M.A. 12, P.S. 25, P.P. 20, P.E. N/A, P.B. 18, Spd. 10

Hit Points/S.D.C.: 124

Natural A.R.: 17

Bonuses: +4 vs all spells, +3 vs other magic, +2 warlock spell strength.

Natural Abilities: Normal and magic toxins, gases and poisons have no effect. The golem does not need to breathe. Fire and cold have no effect. Mend metal will restore its S.D.C.

Psionics: None.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: Special: 40 spells per day (10 earth, 10 fire, 10 water, 10 air). 10th level proficiency as a warlock, but Jon will not summon elementals and has come to fear them.

Magic Knowledge: Earth: Chameleon, rock to mud, grow plants, wall of clay, create mound, earth rumble, repel animals, sand storm,

river of lava, travel through earth, earthquake, mend metal, stone to flesh, travel through stone, create golem, wall of iron, cap volcano, magnetism, soul transference, suspended animation.

Air: Breathe without air, cloud of slumber, levitate, wind rush, call lightning, walk the wind, invisibility, phantom footman, protection from lightning, breath of life, invisible wall, whirl-wind, electric field, electromagnetism, mist of death, vacuum, tornado, hurricane, atmosphere manipulation.

Water: Dowsing, float on water, resist fire, water seal, resist cold, sheet of ice, shards of ice, part waters, ten foot ball of ice, earth to mud, toxic mist, whirlpool, heal burns, hurricane, ice elemental, encase in ice, drought, rain dance, storm, tidal wave.

Fire: Blinding flash, flame lick, fiery touch, swirling lights, extinguish fire, wall of flame, flame friend, heal burns, blue flame, breathe fire, screaming wall of flame, dancing fires, eternal flame, flame of life, ten foot wheel of fire, fire whip, melt metal, river of lava, burst into flame, drought.

Recognize runes, study circles, study symbols and study wards at 10th level proficiency.

Magic Items/Weapons: None; preferring to use his fists or magic.

Combat Abilities: Four hand to hand attacks per melee or two magic. 2D6 + 10 damage with fist, +3 parry/dodge. Hand to Hand: Non-Men of Arms, W.P. Blunt, W.P. Knives, W.P. Short sword, W.P. Large sword, W.P. Staves, W.P. Small shield, W.P. Short bow, W.P. Crossbow, all at 10th level proficiency.

Skills of Note: Horsemanship: general at 10th level, speak southern, northern, eastern, western, elven, dwarven, goblin, troll, wolven, ogre and faerie 99%, read/write southern 94%, read/write northern, eastern, western, elven, dwarven and wolven 84%, disguise 65%/30%, dowsing 99%, identify plants/fruits 76%/78%, medical 94%/96%, pick locks 70%, pick pockets 60%, prowl 72%, scale walls 80%, use poison 80%, carpentry 85%, cook 98%, dance 94%/91%, demon and devil lore 98%, faerie lore 99%, imitate voices 84%, mathematics 97%, paint 91%, plant/farm lore 84%, play string instruments 86%, play wind instruments 96%, preserve food 94%, racial histories 74%, recognize poison 78%, recognize precious metals and stones 87%, recognize weapon quality 75%, religious doctrine 95%, sailing 97%, sense of direction 99%, sing 91%, swim 99%, tailor 90%, ventriloquism 78%.

Possessions: None. Jon has no need for weapons, gold or any other possessions.

Insanities: Major Insanities: Still obsessed with freeing the humans and warlocks from The Valley. Neurotically afraid of the Crystal Fortress and elementals. Extremely paranoid, and extremely afraid of other creatures. Other Insanities: Jon Hanlon has been locked away in his golem body for over eight hundred years, and has finally come to terms with it. However he has picked up quite a few insanities along the way. Hanlon has acquired every affective disorder, neurosis, psychosis, and phobia that it is possible to have all at the same time (excluding mindless aggression). The result of this is that no one has seen Hanlon in a couple of hundred years. He is hiding in the ground under Lake Town, and the entire valley. No one knows he's there except the elementals that he summoned, and they can't get to him. The elementals want his death! Hanlon is deathly afraid of the elementals he summoned so long ago, and will not go near them, and will not release them.

Description: Jon Hanlon is an Iron Golem, but he is rarely seen, and most people have forgotten who Jon Hanlon is or don't know he has become the golem. He spends most of his time underground in the tunnels under Archie the Court Sorcerer's home, dwarven constructions (new and old), or prowling along the rim of The Valley. He travels through the ground under the valley, and has been seen by the underground inhabitants of Alpine Burg. However, he chooses to be unapproachable.

The golem is still looking for a way out, although 50% of his time is spent laying in a depressed, catatonic state lost to despair, feelings of guilt and wild imaginings. A quarter of the time is spent hiding from his enemies, who include the Crystal King, Archie the Court Sorcerer, all guardsmen, knights and servants to the king, the Crystal Fortress, and elementals. On occasion, the golem will follow and watch outsiders and members of the underground (concealing himself with his magic). On some occasions he will approach them, but his words and actions often smack of insanity; one minute lucid, the next rambling; one minute an ally and the next a dangerous opponent.

An appearance might include any of the following situations:

- The golem appears to help the player characters or Syndicate members defeat or escape from the king's men. He may also appear or use his magic from a distance to point them in the right direction or help in some other way.
- The golem appears to warn them about the king and/or his sorcerer, Archie. Unfortunately, his ramblings don't make much sense and he is more frightening than helpful. Such a conversation might go something like this: "Wait! Wait!" cries the golem who appears out of thin air. "You mustn't trust him, you know (never bothering to identify 'him'). He ... he's insane. Dangerous. A madman he is. My friend, but no more, no. He's a puppet. A puppet of the crystal. Beware! Don't become his puppets too. All are fools, but not I. I know the truth. There is no escape! Noooo! There must be!! We must find it, yes?" And so on.

If the group asks too many questions or angers him, Jon the golem may cast a spell as a reflex reaction and cause thunder to boom, lightning to flash or rain to fall. A fight might even ensue, but Jon will seldom kill anybody. Then, he disappears and may or may not appear again.

- The golem may leap out of the shadows and attack, accusing our confused heroes of being, "HIS denizens of evil." and demand, "Freedom! Tell him to free my people!!!" Again, the golem will seldom kill anybody nor will he fight to his own death.
- Jon can also be responsible for sudden storms or be heard screaming like a crazed animal from a distant hilltop.
- Unknown to Archie, one of the golem's regular haunts are the tunnels under the elf's home. He sees Archie as the king's main henchman and therefore, a dangerous and frightening enemy.
- The iron golem will sense if the Crystal Fortress is hurt because its mind control will be weakened. The golem is likely to go and investigate. If our heroes are locked in combat with the Crystal King, Fortress or their champions, but seem to be winning or making a significant impact, the golem will rush to their side and fight with them. However, if they begin to lose or if the King seems too powerful, the golem will become confused and frightened. This will result in him either stopping his fight to cringe in a corner or to flee.

Story Note: If the Crystal King and the Crystal Fortress are ever defeated and the spell over The Valley is broken, the golem will fall to his knees and thank the gods. He will regain a bit of his lost sanity, at least for the moment, release the elementals (who will come to find him as soon as the barrier is down) and try to lead the humans from The Valley. What becomes of the mad golem after that is up to fate and the Game Master.



The Crystal Fortress

Associated most closely with River City, the impressive Crystal Fortress serves as the abode of the Crystal King, the High Courts, and as a military installation and training camp. The Valley and Palace guardsmen are all trained here. The majority (50) of the Palace Guards reside at the Fortress as well.

The Crystal Fortress lies in an artificial depression of the land with the peaks of high mountains visible over the earthen mound or rampart that rings the Fortress on all sides. A single road leads over the mound and down to the hexagonal crystal wall ring. The wall consists of six straight sides, each a mile (1.6 km) long and 40 feet (12 m) thick, built from solid crystal blocks. At each of the six corners stands a six-sided, pointed tower or pillar. The road leads to the base of one corner.

At the center of the ring is a huge six-sided, crystal keep. Each side of the keep is 100 feet (30.5 m) long, surrounded by an excavated ditch or fosse. The keep rises straight up on all sides for 80 feet (24 m) and has a flat top (approx 26,000 square feet/2415 square meter surface — huge). Built atop the keep is a crystal palace with ornate spiked towers and buttresses. It is the combination of the hexagonal ring of crystal walls and the crystal keep/tower that is The Crystal Fortress. The palace that rests atop the Fortress is an ornamental place of residence.

The stories of the great wealth of gems and crystals obtainable in the Old Kingdom mountains comes to light in the very structure of the Crystal Fortress. The ring of walls around the Crystal Fortress rise a mere thirty feet (9 m) above the surrounding lands, but it is definitely impressive. The walls are not made of normal stone, but are composed of crystalline blocks. In the light of the sun, the walls sparkle in reflected and refracted light, shining with the colors of the rainbow. There is no obvious mortar, and if examined closely, it can be seen that there are

NO gaps between the irregularly shaped crystal blocks. There is also a fine network of metallic threads running throughout the crystal structures.

All psionic individuals will sense something unusual here. If a detect magic is performed, nothing will register. If detect psionics is performed, the walls will indicate some kind of psionic aura, even at a distance. Presence sense will reveal that many beings, at least 50, are in the area. A see aura, even from a distance, is likely to psionically blind the psychic; dazed for 1D6 minutes and unable to use any psionic sensing abilities for 1D4 hours!

The Crystal Fortress is never referred to as a Castle. There is the Palace, the Keep, and the Crystal Ring Wall. Only the titan, **Knemm**, calls it the "Crystal Castle."

The Crystal King

The Crystal King is never referred to as a mage or "Crystal Mage," only as the Crystal King. Although the Crystal King is called king and Elana his queen by all the residents of The Valley, he never uses these terms himself.

Another point of confusion is that the general populace never (or at least rarely) sees the Crystal King, his queen or his entourage. They often speak of the king and the king's court, but most do not have firsthand experience with them. In fact, since Sir Bonafiet and the Crystal King both sit in judgement at Court which causes some general confusion as to who is actually the king. The residents of River City describe the "king" as a homely, bald, yellow skinned guy (a changeling?). In Alpine Burg, the general populace refers to the king as a "stinking" elf. In Lake Town (often referred to as the "Land of the

Fruits and Nuts"), the king, the court, and the fortress are ignored and viewed with disdain.

The Crystal King's alignment appears to be scrupulous, but he lives by his own ethics, and seems to be more of an aberrant or anarchist alignment. He fears what would happen if word of this place leaked out, so he doesn't allow anybody to leave, or wipes their memory of The Valley's location. The paranoia and discrepancy between alignment and action is the result of his mind bond to the Crystal Fortress. It is the influence of the original Crystal Master that makes the king a fanatical paranoid and enslaver. So much psychic power went into the formation of the fortress and the builder exerted control for so long that elements of his life essence and personality have been permanently imprinted in the Crystal Fortress. The effect on the elf king has been so great, that he has not only taken on the ancient Crystal Master's personality and insanities, but has also shaved his head bald in an effort to look like him.

The Crystal Fortress is a sort of computer connected to an incredibly powerful psionic mechanism. It is the powerful mental imprint of the dead Crystal Master, its creator, that directs the powers of the Fortress to work its evil. It is the mind bond that binds the Crystal King to the Fortress. It also binds and merges the more forceful (and familiar) mental imprint (its past memories, fears and personality) with those of the living king. The king's true personality is overshadowed by the imprint of the dead Crystal Master, making him believe these alien thoughts to be his own. Thus, he feels the dead man's nagging paranoia and fears which, in turn, fuels the Crystal Fortress and causes it to work its psionic magic against all who it/the king/the dead Crystal Master, see as a threat. The king has lost his own identity and is the puppet of the emotions, fears, insanities of a man (changeling) who died thousands of years ago.

The Crystal Fortress was built well over twenty thousand years ago (nobody knows exactly how long ago, it is probably tens of thousands of years older). The Crystal Master who created the Crystal Fortress was a changeling hiding from the world. His fears of discovery, desire for seclusion, and his paranoid delusions were transferred into the Crystal Fortress in the form of a permanent mental imprint stored in the matrix of the Fortress. Anyone who bonds with the Fortress also bonds with the imprint of the dead Crystal Master. Even in death, the psionic presence of the Crystal Master is so strong that it overpowers and takes control of the person who has initiated the bond.

One might say the Crystal King is possessed by a spirit of the past, for it is the insane personality, memories, fears and delusions of the dead Crystal Master that has taken control of the king. It is the dead mage who has driven the king to use mind control to manipulate and enslave the people. The people of The Valley did not decide to stay because of its splendor. Nor did they swear to any oath to keep the place a secret. The people cannot leave because the psionically possessed king, using the Crystal Fortress, won't let them. This same paranoia caused him to expel the elementals. The King/dead Crystal Master feared their magic and worried that either they, or his friend, Jon Hanlon, would uncover his secrets, so they were forced out. That's also why supernatural beings are not allowed in The Valley; they are too powerful and resistant to his/their mind control, thus a potential danger to be avoided. It is the insane personality of the Fortress's creator that makes the king take such extreme measures.

Mind Control & Mental Lock-Outs

The Crystal Fortress is a huge, mystical, psionic device. It is detailed in the section about *Crystal Magic* elsewhere, but one of its main abilities is mind control. The mind control ability is not directly controlled by the Crystal King. The king does not deliberately use mind control on all of his people. It is an automatic part of the Crystal Fortresses defenses. Subconsciously, the king's altered/merged personality with that of the incredibly paranoid and neurotic creator of the Fortress wants

absolute control and secrecy. It is into this part of his subconscious mind that has the Crystal Fortress instills its mind control in the form of subtle hypnotic suggestions and mental locks.

The Crystal King, through his fears and apprehensions about secrecy and security (understood and acted upon by the Fortress) creates mental "locks" in every citizen's mind. They set up additional locks in a Trusted Citizen's mind to insure his or her trustworthiness. The Crystal Knights are subjected to the most locks. However, in each case, the Fortress requires that the "lock" be hidden from discovery, or scrambled. It accomplishes this control with very selective, very delicate, but constant mind wipes in reference to the controls. Once the Fortress has effected its selective amnesia, nothing short of the power of a god or Crystal Master can restore the knowledge blocked by the locks.

The main mental lock or block is that nobody without the permission of the king can leave or communicate with people beyond The Valley. Similarly, those allowed to leave The Valley cannot divulge information about the Crystal Fortress, its powers, the Valley, its inhabitants, king or location. Even if they try words fail them and they talk only gibberish. Even a telepathic probe will be scrambled and provide the mind reader with no information of value.

Example: For game purposes, suppose a player has left The Valley and is trying to tell an outsider where he has been. The player might say, "I was travelling through the Old Kingdom Mountains, when the path I was following led into this unusual valley, high up among the peaks, and there was this Crystal Palace there and everything!" Well, that's what he believes he said. What he actually says is something like: "I was travelling through the Old Kingdom Mountains, when the path I was following led into this overflowing bucket, sharply flop apart the flacks, and there was this Crinkle Plofit there, and everything!" The control of the Crystal Fortress is complete and absolute!

The unfortunate traveler can think about his adventures in The Valley, but anyone looking in on his thoughts can't see them. The memories may be there, but they are either blocked (nothing) or have been scrambled (fuzzy and difficult to see). The character's thoughts regarding The Valley have been encrypted with an unbreakable code. Even two companions who have both been to the "overflowing bucket," will have difficulty discussing it between themselves. Each will basically understand what the other means without being able to clearly articulate it.

Trying to write or draw what he means is equally useless. The character may start to draw a picture or a map, but stops, unable to depict anything — his mind is a blank. Likewise, trying to bring an outsider to The Valley with the purpose of revealing its location or to cause trouble will impair the character's memory and judgement, sending him wandering through the mountain peaks without ever finding it. **Note:** There is no way to correct this scrambling. The mental locks are permanent in regards to The Valley and its location.

The True History of the Crystal King

The Crystal Fortress is an incredibly powerful "device." In many respects, it is a computer linked to a physical body of incredible power. However, for any of those powers to be used, the computer and its connecting machine parts must be *accessed* and directed by an operator. Without an operator, it is a dormant tool. Likewise, the device cannot take any action on its own. The computer may display a menu of things to choose from and may offer programmed responses to certain situations, but it is the operator who makes the decisions and tells the machine what to do. The Fortress itself is not alive and does not desire, fear, hate or think. It is a crystal computer. A machine that has inadvertently been programmed to operate in a bad way.

The operator of the Crystal Fortress must be psionic. The psionic nature of this computer-like "tool" means that a mental bond/connection is made between it and the operator. This mental link is established through the psionic power to mind bond, always a dangerous and tricky power to utilize. The Crystal Fortress was the creation and tool of an

ancient Changeling Crystal Master. This particular character, through his magic, lived for thousands of years. The psychic bond between the device and its creator was incredibly strong. So powerful, that the old Crystal Master left his psychic imprint on the Crystal Fortress. On a psychic level, it is the person's strongest emotions that are the most easily read/felt. Thus, the imprints left on the Crystal Fortress are predominantly the ancient Master's fears.

When the good elf knight and his titan companion discovered the Crystal Fortress, the knight, being psionic, touched it and did an object read. For the first time in eons, the Fortress flickered with a spark of life. The knight could feel the object's power and gleaned some of its potential. He also learned how to activate it. With good intentions, he mind bonded with the device. A psionic mind bond is always dangerous because the bond lowers all of his mental defenses to allow the thoughts and emotions of the other to flow into him. The mind bond enables the psionic to learn EVERYTHING there is about the other and vice versa. In an instant, the knight and the Crystal Fortress became one. Unfortunately, this also meant that the psychic imprint of the old Crystal Master was imprinted over his own psyche and personality — powerful, unhealthy emotions and fears. The change was almost immediate and in a short time the knight soon became the Crystal King, a very different person.

So here's the paradox: The knight/Crystal King controls the Crystal Fortress and all its powers. Without the king, the Fortress would be powerless and the people of The Valley would be free. The Crystal Fortress controls the king — or more to the point, the mental impressions, fears and insanity of a madman dead for thousands of years have been superimposed over the king. The imprint of these emotions and fears have transformed the king and enslaved the people of the Valley. Without the king there would be no valley. Without the Crystal Fortress there would be no king or valley. It is the *two*, combined, that have created the Valley and are responsible for the mind control and its captivity of The Valley residents. One without the others is powerless!

The true "evil" is NOT the Crystal King or the Crystal Fortress (or the power of a slumbering Old One), but insane fears and emotions of a dead man. In a strange way, the Crystal Fortress is *haunted* by the mental impressions of a dead man.

The Crystal King

Name: The Crystal King

True Name: Until the king is taken away from The Valley, he cannot remember his name. It was once Sir Leonnon Kelaan.

Alignments: The once noble knight was/is scrupulous, however the controlling personality of the changeling Crystal Master is anarchist, bordering on the miscreant.

O.C.C. & Level: 10th level Knight, 15th level Noble

Race: Elf, but resembles a changeling! See description below.

Age: 1003, but looks to be in his forties or fifties by human standards of appearance. The Crystal Fortress has retarded the knight's/king's aging, making him look more like a 500 year old elf. **Size:** 6 feet, 7 inches (2.00 m), 200 lbs (90 kg); appears 8 ft, 7 in (2.62 m), 200 lbs (90 kg), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 28, M.A. 12, P.S. 16, P.P. 22, P.E. 11 P.B. 16 Spd. 12

Hit Points: 91

Armor: None, unless prepared for battle, then he wears the Crystal Armor: A.R. 18, S.D.C. 300, but it must be energized with one I.S.P. every two melees, and he cannot use the powers of the Crystal Fortress when his body is completely covered and he's not touching the Fortress with his bare skin.

Bonuses: +7 vs psionics (+11 when the sword is active), +11 vs new insanities. Note that the King gets no bonuses from the Fortress.

Natural Abilities: Night vision 60 ft (18 m), charm/impress 30%.

Psionics: Master Psionic. He actually only knows 60% of all abilities from any level, but can use ALL abilities when tapped into the Crystal Fortress; all at 12th level proficiency.

The king's natural I.S.P. is 127, which is fully restored every melee, however, he unknowingly draws on the approximately one million I.S.P. stored in the keep of the Crystal Fortress. Furthermore, the fortress will expend I.S.P. to restore the Crystal King's hit points in the form of psionic bio-regeneration. The number of hit points and I.S.P. it can restore is virtually unlimited (actually an upper limit of about a million I.S.P. exists), but the Fortress can only restore $3D6 \times 10$ of the king's hit points and I.S.P. per melee round.

Whenever the king is hurt, he automatically bio-regenerates.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None; see psionic healing.

Magic Knowledge: A limited knowledge of how to operate/use crystal magic devices, including the Fortress.

Magic Items/Weapons: Crystal Sword, Lance, Holy Battle Axe (+6 damage bonus and sense evil), and a variety of other magic weapons which he rarely uses.

The three crystal items that the king is bonded to are the Palace, the Fortress and the Sword.

Combat Abilities: Hand to Hand (Knight), W.P. large shield, W.P. lance, W.P. large swords, W.P. ball and chain and W.P. knives at twelfth level. W.P. Battle axe, W.P. Pole arms, W.P. Spears/Forks, W.P. Small shield and W.P. Short swords at tenth level. W.P. Short bow, W.P. Crossbow, W.P. Throwing axe and W.P. Sling at 5th level. W.P. Blunt and W.P. Staves at 1st level, stuns on 18-20, critical strike 18-20, kick attack 1D6. Bonuses with Crystal Sword: 4 attacks per melee, +9 strike, +14 parry, +8 dodge, +6 damage.

Weapons: The Crystal Sword inflicts $5D6 + 16$ including attribute and combat bonuses listed above. It has all the standard powers of a typical crystal sword. It was also the personal weapon of the dead Crystal Master who made it and the Crystal Fortress. This only serves to reinforce the personality and outlook of the ancient mage. Crystal swords are similar to rune weapons in that the most powerful have an independent personality and alignment. The king's sword is anarchist and paranoid like its ancient master.

Skills of Note: Horsemanship (knight) at 12th level. Read/write elven 99%, speak elven, troll, southern, faerie, and dwarven 99%, disguise 75%/38%, forgery 90%/50%, identify tracks 84%/60%, medical 98%/99%, pick locks 80%, pick pockets 70%, prowl 84%, scale walls 96%, trap/skin large animals 96%, trap/skin small animals 97%/98%, cook 99%, dance 99%/99%, demon and devil lore 99%, faerie lore 94%, fishing 77%, general repair 66%/63%, paint 99%, plant/farm lore 92%, play string instruments 96%, play wind instruments 96%, preserve food 96%, racial histories 44%, recognize poison 95%, recognize precious metals and stones 96%, recognize weapon quality 99%, religious doctrine 54%, sailing 77%, sailing 96%, sense of direction 92%, sing 99%, swim 99%, tailor 84%.

Possessions: The limited wealth and resources of The Valley are his to command, however he needs little and rarely leaves the Fortress. All crystal artifacts are the king's by right and must be surrendered to him when found. The king may then decide to give them to deserving Knights. Each knight is given a crystal communicator headband, because there is a large supply. His most trusted knights are given a crystal sword. The limited supply of swords limits the number of Crystal Knights.

Description: The Crystal King used to be a powerful elf knight and he still is. However, he is convinced that he is an ancient changeling and has shaved his head to make his delusion more real. This is one of the disorders induced by the Crystal Fortress. The king is afraid to leave the Crystal Fortress, his source of power. The fortress and his changeling personality will not allow him to be taken away without a fight and the king/dead Crystal Master has taken a number of precautions to prevent his abduction or murder (see the powers of the Crystal Fortress and the King's guards and champions).

As a defense mechanism, the Fortress has placed powerful mental locks on the king which makes him physically unable to leave The Valley. Even if forced to The Valley's edge, a profound, weakness overcomes him and he will collapse, too weak to even talk. This will occur within half a mile (0.8 km) of The Valley's outer perimeter. He must be carried or dragged to remove him from the influence of the Crystal Fortress.

The knight portion of the confused king misses the outside world, and he lives vicariously through his Knights, and through other stories of adventurers. Tales of adventure by the player characters will help win his favor.

Just as with all crystal magic, the wielder must bond to the device before he can tap its power. Thus the Crystal King has bonded to the Crystal Fortress itself. No other individual can bond with it until the king dies.

The Inhabitants of the Crystal Fortress & Palace

The Crystal King, Elana his Queen, their trusted champions, the Crystal Knights, and select guards men and invited guests reside in the palace atop the Fortress keep. The palace and entire Crystal Fortress area is well protected by the powers of the Fortress/king and his protectors.

The King, Queen, Sir Slandel and Sir Bonafiet are the royal four, and although all other Crystal Knights are welcome to stay at the palace, these are the only permanent residents. Archie maintains lodgings in River City, as do Sir Molderi and Sir Blaine. Sir Mack and Sir Stephen are off on quests and have been given rooms in the palace to use for storage while they are away.

When the royal four appear in public, the Crystal King and Elana will always walk side by side, with their respective champions behind them. When seated at the thrones, Elana sits behind the Crystal King and Slandel behind Bonafiet.

The Queen

Elana is the "queen" of The Valley. She is a scholar, not a fighter. She is skilled in much of the lore of the Palladium World and acts as court librarian. She can speak, read and write every known language (except runes and other magic symbols). With the help of Archie, as the Court Wizard, the king's quests and the Crystal Fortress, she has compiled a wondrous library. Among the many rare tomes and parchments is an ancient, unedited edition of the **Tristine Chronicles** written in elven. The outer casing of the book is encrusted in jewels worth a million gold. The pages are decorated with drawings and gold leaf. The last chapter of this book ends with the collapse of the elven and dwarven empires and the rise of humans. This and other aspects would suggest that this edition is approximately ten thousand years old and may have belonged to a king or aristocrat of the old Elf Empire. It even includes the passages about changelings including the one Archie may have told the characters about. This book is worth a fortune to one who appreciates such things (as much as 4D6 × one million gold).

The queen is a mature human woman who looks to be around fifty years old, but is remarkably attractive for her age (she is really 93 years old, but her physical aging process has been slowed by the magic of the Fortress).

She loves to read to the Crystal King almost as much as he loves listening to her. One of her greatest joys is teaching others to read and write. Much of her library contains stories written by the palace folk and wayfarers. There are no books of magic in her collection, but there are many bits and pieces of some of the most ancient and legendary

texts located in this library. Elana is not likely to allow anyone to handle her prize possessions, let alone walk off with a book; thieves are severely punished. One of Archie's main reasons for remaining in the Valley is to have access to Elana's fabulous collection. Every evening there is time set aside for Elana to read to the residents and visitors of the palace from one of her books. No matter what language the book is in, she will relate it in Elven. **G.M. Note:** These books belong to the innocent Elana. Characters of a good alignment will not steal, seize or cheat her out of them, even if the king is killed.

One of the parchments in the library may hold the clue about the possession of the Crystal King by the personality imprinted upon the Fortress. The passage is found under a brief section about legends concerning ancient magic; crystal magic. It reads:

"Towers and fortresses could also be built, but these were the most powerful and most dangerous. One legend tells of a Crystal Master who was dominated by a preexisting spirit locked in the crystal tower. This spirit completely changed and dominated the master until he was physically dragged away from the cursed place."

Name: Elana or the Crystal Queen

True Name: Yllynni Ryyn

Alignment: Principled

O.C.C. & Level: Scholar 8th

Race: Human, **Age:** 93, **Size:** 5 feet, 6 inches (1.68 m), 120 lbs (54 kg), **Sex:** Female.

Attributes: I.Q. 20, M.E. 12, M.A. 24, P.S. 6, P.P. 7, P.E. 11, P.B. 23, Spd. 12

Hit Points: 38, **A.R.:** 4.

Armor: Typically, none. When training or travelling she will wear soft leather.

Natural Abilities: Trust/intimidate 80%, charm/impress 65%.

Psionics: None

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None

Magic Knowledge: Elana studies the lore of magic as a scholarly pursuit and can recognize runes, wards and mystic symbols, but cannot read them.

Magic Items/Weapons: None.

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand: non men at arms at 6th level. W.P. small shield and W.P. short sword at 1st level.

Weapons: Elana is learning to use a small sword and shield, but she never carries them with her.

Skills of Note: Horsemanship (general) at 6th level, read/write southern, northern, eastern, western, elven, dwarven and wolven 99%, speak southern, northern, eastern, western, elven, dwarven, goblin, troll, wolven, ogre and faerie 99%, forgery 74%/36%, identify plants/fruits 69%/71%, identify tracks 64%/46%, locate secret compartments and doors 58%, medical 94%/98%, pick locks 66%, mathematics 99%.

Possessions: The library at the Crystal Fortress is Elana's most prized possession. She would rather keep it than all the gold, jewels or magic in the kingdom.

Description: Elana is a charming and beautiful older woman. Her hair is stark white, her skin is finely wrinkled, but she is not in the least frail and still has a comely figure. Sir Slandel has convinced her that she needs to learn to defend herself, just in case he's not there to protect her. She goes along with the training, but knows Slandel's real intent is to get her out of the library and into the fresh air. Slandel will always be at her side.

Elana is constantly trying to find a nice girl for Slandel, just as she is always trying to find a nice boy for Molderi. Molderi and Slandel are her favorite Knights, and she treats them as if they were her own children.

Although Elana is the Queen, she does not have any mental link the Crystal Fortress. She is unaware of any mind control or discontent among the inhabitants of The Valley. She is no more than an advisor to the King and Bonafiet. She is a scholar first and foremost, and the library at the palace is heaven to her.

Elana arrived in The Valley, escorted by Slandel. She keeps her past a closely guarded secret (**G.M. Note:** She is actually from a different world and only arrived on the Palladium World through a dimensional rift. She was an older woman when she arrived, and the whole world was a new learning experience for her. Elana and Slandel met in the Western Empire over forty years ago. Slandel took an immediate liking to Elana, and she to him. He has been escorting her on her quest for knowledge ever since).

The queen cares for the king and they have had their moments of passion and friendship. However, they are not currently in love. The king has grown increasingly distant and cold towards her. It's interesting to note, however, that the knight persona of the Crystal King loves and misses her. If he is freed from the control of the Fortress, a sweet romance will develop between them.

Slandel, Elana's Champion

Elana and Slandel are among the few residents of The Valley who were not born there. Slandel was escorting Elana on a quest for knowledge in the Old Kingdom Mountains when they stumbled into The Valley twenty years ago with Archie. Slandel and Elana met when he was just beginning his travels and was inexperienced, just as she was. Archie met them in the mountains, but was an aloof companion and still remains apart from them. Slandel first gained status as a Crystal Knight, then Elana rose to prominence as the court librarian.

Sir Slandel sees himself as the Crystal King's logical successor (he isn't; he has no idea what role the Fortress itself plays in the workings of the Valley). He honors Elana above all others and respects the Crystal King's desires for the Crystal Fortress's security. While at the palace, he is the finest example of knighthood. When away from the palace he is easily distracted, and at times, the only things that draw him back is the lure of someday taking over the palace as king, his friendship to Bonafiet and his responsibility for the younger knights. Slandel is one of the trusted few to wield a Crystal Sword, and the only one to wield the Great Crystal Sword. Slandel believes that the Crystal King is an changeling.

Name: Sir "Mad" Slandel

True Name: William Turnkey

Alignment: Principled

O.C.C. & Level: Palladin 10th level

Race: Elf, **Age:** 103, looks 22 by human standards.

Size: Six foot (1.8 m), **Sex:** Male

Attributes: I.Q. 16, M.E. 16, M.A. 16, P.S. 16, P.P. 16, P.E. 16, P.B. 16, Spd. 16

Hit Points: 69, **A.R.:** 4.

Armor: Studded Leather: A.R.12, S.D.C. 38.

Bonuses: +1 vs psionics, insanity, magic and poison. +4% vs coma/death.

Natural Abilities: Night vision 60 ft (18 m), trust/intimidate 40%, charm/impress 30%.

Psionics: Minor Psionic 10th level proficiency, detect psionics, meditation/trance, object reading, resist cold, resist fatigue, sense good/evil; **I.S.P.:** 64.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None

Magic Knowledge: None

Magic Items/Weapons: The Great Crystal Sword. This is a one of a kind sword, much larger than any other. It is a two-handed sword for a human-sized wielder and inflicts 1D4×10 damage (1D4×10+16 including hand to hand and attribute damage bonuses). Other than this, it has all the powers of the typical crystal sword; plus the Crystal Skin ability: A.R. 20, S.D.C. 24, and will block all attacks before personal armour is affected. The Crystal Skin can not be used with Crystal Armor. The Great Crystal Sword's

blade has a deep red colored core, with a white glow surrounding it. Slandel also has a crystal communicator headband.

Combat Abilities: Hand to Hand (Palladin), W.P. lance, W.P. large shield and W.P. large swords, all at 10th level. W.P. short swords and W.P. small shield at 8th level. 4 attacks per melee, stuns on 18-20, critical strike on 17-20, kick attack 1D6 damage. Bonuses with the crystal sword: +5 strike, +8 parry, +3 dodge, +6 damage.

Weapons: Great Crystal Sword that does 1D4×10+16 damage (includes bonuses). It too is principled in alignment and champions his causes. He also wields a dwarven made flamberge sword (Old Reliable, +4 to damage, +1 to parry), a matching short and broad sword (but he never uses the short sword except in training Elana), a silver lance and a large silver plated shield. Any of the weapons available to the guardsmen are at his disposal.

Skills of Note: Horsemanship (palladin) at 10th level. Read/write elven 99%, speak elven, western, dwarven, eastern and southern 99%, identify tracks 74%/52%, medical 94%/96%, prow1 78%, scale walls 92%, track 80%/25%, trap/skin large animals 80%, trap/skin small animals 96%/94%, cook 99%, dance 40%/34%, faerie lore 32%, play string instruments 32%, preserve food 96%, recognize precious metals and stones 79%, recognize weapon quality 89%, sense of direction 92%, sing 98%, swim 94%.

Possessions of Note: Slandel prefers to keep his cash in the form of gems and rarely keeps much other equipment: "It slows me down." He gives everything else away. The only exception to this is a beat up dwarven quality flamberge that he calls "Old Reliable" which he keeps at his side, "Just in case this psionic thing (sword) stops working." He has about 2500 gold pieces worth of gems with him.

Description: William chose the name of "Slandel" because that was the name of the most recent great knight he slew in battle. William changes his name whenever he slays another "great" knight. This is one of the reasons his fellow Knights have nicknamed him "Mad," or "The Mad Knight," as in a bit loony. Slandel finds the nickname amusing and would like to think his reputation gives him an edge in combat.

Slandel is a very happy, good-natured person, who is always "bouncing around" wherever he goes. Sir Slandel will only wear light armor because "You can't duck a punch when you're wearing plate." However, if he feels the battle will really challenge him, he will use the crystal skin power of the sword. Slandel never uses any but the largest swords or lance, and has refused to train with any other weapon. Recently he has learned to use the short sword and shield in training Elana. If no large sword is available he will fight with fists, or with any non-weapon that is handy. Slandel often sings during battle, usually making up songs about how well he is fighting, or how amazingly well his opponent is holding up. Slandel is also frequently seen strolling the streets of Alpine Burg, playing his guitar, and singing of his adventures. Slandel is the only Crystal Knight who seems to enjoy the company of the younger knights, especially those who like listening to his songs.

The Mad Knight tells everyone that he is an anarchist and a non-conformist, but when it comes down to it, he holds to the strict letter of the code of chivalry and acts with the strongest possible moral character. As Elana's Champion he is the highest ranking knight, so Bonafiet and all other Crystal Knights answer to him.

Sir Bonafiet

The Crystal King's Champion

Sir Bonafiet is the Crystal King's champion. He came to The Valley as an adventuring mind mage in search of great secrets. At that time, he had no idea he would find those great secrets. He has always wanted to live in a place where he would be respected instead of feared for his powers. Mind mages have felt nothing like the fear and hatred that the

changelings have felt throughout history, but they are often treated with contempt and suspicion.

Bonafiet sensed the psychic magic at work in The Valley and was immediately drawn to the Crystal Fortress. The palace's aura is partly a reflection of the Crystal King's aura and partly the original Crystal Master's. The latter was soothingly familiar to Bonafiet, since it was so much like his own. He and the Crystal King became fast friends. He has worked closely with the Crystal King since arriving at the palace and is the only one who knows for certain that the Crystal King is not a changeling. Bonafiet serves as both advisor and protector to the king. He wields a crystal sword with no additional powers. Bonafiet is fiercely loyal to his king and has actually taken the king's appearance during public appearances to protect him from assassination.

Name: Sir Bonafiet

True Name: Claude Bonafiet

Alignment: Scrupulous

O.C.C. & Level: Mind Mage 5th, Knight 10th.

Race: Changeling, but always appears as an elf.

Age: He appears to be in his late thirties by human standards, but is really 980 years old,

Size: 6 feet, 6 in (2.00 m), 210 lbs (94.5 kg).

Sex: Appears male.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 28, M.A. 21, P.S. 15, P.P. 14, P.E. 15, P.B. 5 appears 23, Spd. 17

Hit Points: 75

Armor: Crystal Armor: A.R. 18, S.D.C. 500, must be energized by 1 I.S.P. per melee, all powers as listed. When the king needs the Crystal Armor, he will wear Full Plate: A.R. 17, S.D.C. 160.

Bonuses: +8 vs psionics, +1 vs spell magic, +13 vs insanity.

Natural Abilities: Recognize illusions 39%, trust/intimidate 65%.

Psionics: Master Psionic, knows all 1-5 level abilities along with create illusion with sound, heal other, mind bond, teleport self, generate personal aura, induced catatonic state, multiple phantoms, group mind block, insert memory and alter personality, 2 psionic attacks per melee, I.S.P.: 138.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None.

Magic Knowledge: Recognize runes, study circles, study symbols and study wards at 5th level.

Magic Items/Weapons: Crystal Sword with the Crystal Shield power. Also bonded to the crystal armor and a crystal communicator headband.

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand: knight, W.P. large shield, W.P. large swords, W.P. ball and chain, W.P. knives, W.P. crossbow, and W.P. targeting, all at tenth level; W.P. small shield, W.P. short swords and W.P. throwing axe at 8th level; W.P. battle axe, W.P. staves and W.P. blunt at 3rd level. Stuns on 18-20, critical strike on 18-20, kick attack 1D6, 4 attacks per melee. Bonuses when using his Crystal Sword: +4 damage, +4 strike, +9 parry, +3 dodge.

Weapons: Crystal Sword doing 5D6 + 14 damage (includes bonus from above). The sword is also scrupulous in alignment.

Skills of Note: Read/write elven 99%, speak elven, northern, southern, eastern, western, dwarven, goblin, troll, wolfen, ogre and faerie 99%, disguise 30%/6%, dowsing 75%, locate secret compartments and doors 40%, medical 94%/96%, pick locks 27%, prowl 34%, scale walls 86%, cook 90%, demon and devil lore 98%, faerie lore 98%, imitate voices 72%, mathematics 98%, plant/farm lore 60%, play string instrument 30%, play wind instrument 30%, preserve food 94%, racial histories (selected twice) 28%, recognize poison 84%, recognize precious metals and stones 77%, recognize weapon quality 87%, sense of direction 99%, swim 92%, ventriloquism 26%.

Possessions: Bonafiet has about 2,000 in gold coins, but has little use for it. As one of the royal four, he spends most of his time at the palace and has everything provided for. However, as the King's Champion he has access to the wealth of the fortress.

Description: Sir Bonafiet is second only to the Crystal King. He rarely leaves the palace, except when needed as an Interrogator. All interrogators answer to Bonafiet and he decides who works as an interrogator. When reform is needed, as decided by the court, Bonafiet will either do the reformation himself, or supervise the proceedings.

Bonafiet arrived at the palace while it was still being excavated. At that time he was a young mind mage, but the king convinced him to stay and work with him. Bonafiet trained as a knight under the titan, Knemm, and later took Knemm's place beside the king. Note that anyone trained as a knight in the valley is totally unfamiliar with horses and lances since they do not exist here. Knemm's jealousy of Bonafiet and suspicions about the king, caused his banishment. The king awarded the Great Sword to Bonafiet, who has used it for many years. Bonafiet honored Sir Slandel by giving him the Great Sword when he became Elana's champion. Bonafiet and Slandel are close friends, and are often seen together at Fishbone's, although Slandel spends far more time outside the palace than does Bonafiet.

Bonafiet is the king's true friend and the king confides in him. When Bonafiet came to The Valley hundreds of years ago, he had the appearance of an elf. He takes on the king's appearance to act as his double when needed. It concerns him that the king has taken the appearance of a changeling, and he wonders if old Knemm might have been correct about the king changing. He fears that the king is losing his sanity (the king is not insane, only losing his identity to the powerful personality of the insane and selfish dead Crystal Master).

The residents of Alpine Burg think that Bonafiet is the king, since the king is an elf, and think that the changeling who never leaves the palace is just one of the Knights.

Sir Molderi

Defender of the Palace

Sir Molderi appears to be a tall, gangly woman. She is however quite agile and very quick when she needs to be. Molderi is often depressed and moody. She seems truly happy only when she can help out in a fight, especially against monsters. Molderi has proven herself many times over in defending The Valley. Elana is constantly trying to find a nice boy for her to settle down with, but all of her attempts have failed. All of the male knights consider her to be just one of the guys and the best person to have at your side in battle.

When not actually required to be at the Palace, Sir Molderi can be found in River City, sometimes prowling the villages for interesting trinkets, chatting with shopkeepers and villagers, or palling around with the other Knights at Fishbone's. "Defender of the Palace" is an honorific title. It increases her pay but does not impose additional duties on her, leaving her a lot of free time.

Name: Sir Molderi

True Name: Molly Dorfmann

Alignment: Scrupulous

O.C.C. & Level: Knight 6th

Race: Human, **Age:** 36, **Size:** 6 feet, 1 inch (1.85 m), 150 lbs (67.5 kg), **Sex:** Female

Attributes: I.Q. 10, M.E. 7, M.A. 15, P.S. 14, P.P. 22, P.E. 12, P.B. 8, Spd. 19

Hit Points: 43

Armor: Half suit of chain, A.R. 9, S.D.C. 20.

Bonuses: None

Natural Abilities: None

Psionics: Minor psionic 6th level proficiency, aura of truth, detect psionics, object reading, resist thirst, resist fatigue, sense magic, I.S.P.: 29.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None

Magic Knowledge: None

Magic Items/Weapons: Crystal Sword: A crystal sword with crystal skin ability. Other Crystal Devices: crystal communicator headband, protector necklace, spirit wristband, and two crystal finger bands (healing and resist temptation).

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand: knight, W.P. large shield, W.P. large sword, W.P. short sword, W.P. knives, W.P. paired weapons, W.P. crossbow, W.P. short bow, W.P. targeting. Kick attack 1D6 damage. 3 attacks per melee, +7 strike, +15 parry, +7 dodge, +3 damage.

Weapons: Crystal Sword does 5D6+13 damage (includes damage bonus, scrupulous alignment. Large shield provides an additional +5 parry. She also has a pair of silver daggers, a pair of dwarven short swords (each +2 to damage, +1 to strike and parry), and a crossbow.

Skills of Note: Speak eastern and elven 99%, identify tracks 36%/20%, scale walls 50%, trap/skin small animals 48%/52%, carpentry 32%, cook 80%, dance 99%/88%, demon/devil lore 80%, faerie lore 70%, imitate voices 32%, recognize weapon quality 67%, sailing 56%, sense of direction 80%, swim 45%, ventriloquism 24%.

Possessions: Although Molderi is paid well and has acquired large sums of money and treasure in her adventures, she is a spendthrift. Molderi never has more than 100 gold at any time and if she does, she'll find something to spend it on. She frequently buys rounds for the other Knights and often for the dock workers as well. She constantly buys things to give to the townsfolk and unfortunates, simply because the only thing that gives her pleasure besides fighting is giving gifts to people. She is a frequent and welcomed visitor at Fishbone's and loved by most of the townsfolk throughout The Valley.

Description: Sir Molderi wears an illustration of the palace on her breastplate and shield. She also wears a crystal headband, necklace, wristband, and two crystal finger bands. She is however, only bonded to the sword, headband and necklace. The rest of the crystal devices are mainly worn as badges of honor and she cannot use them. A crystal sword hilt and a short sword hang from her sword belt. The sword hilt has a single green gem at its center and, when activated, the blade is sky blue in color, with a hint of a not so pale blue at the core. She is likely to be wearing a half suit of chain mail, without a helmet.

Sir Blaine

A Silent Knight

Name: Sir Blaine

True Name: Jeremiah Blaintrum

Alignment: Anarchist

O.C.C. & Level: Soldier 6th

Race: Human, **Age:** 27, **Size:** Six feet (1.8 m), **Sex:** Male

Attributes: I.Q. 11, M.E. 15, M.A. 11, P.S. 24, P.P. 13, P.E. 15, P.B. 12, Spd. 19

Hit Points: 34

Armor: Sir Blaine wears a suit of crystal armor which covers him completely (it is very much like environmental body armor). A.R. 18, S.D.C. 300.

Bonuses: None

Natural Abilities: None

Psionics: Minor psionic, 6th level proficiency, aura of truth, meditation/trance, object reading, resist cold, resist thirst, resist fatigue. **I.S.P.:** 35.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None

Magic Knowledge: None

Magic Items/Weapons: Blaine's crystal sword has a series of different colored gems embedded in it. When activated, the blade is a deep purple color, with a hint of deep blue at its core. Sir Blaine and his

sword are equally strong personalities and neither dominates. Sir Blaine has a strong purpose, as does his sword. Sir Blaine finds himself at odds with his sword at times, so he does not use it unless absolutely necessary. He is bonded to a crystal communicator headband, the armor, and his sword.

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand: soldier, W.P. large sword, W.P. small sword, W.P. knives, W.P. crossbow, W.P. small shield. W.P. targeting. 3 attacks per melee. Bonuses when using large sword: +3 strike, +6 parry, +3 dodge, +12 damage.

Weapons: Crystal Sword doing 5D6+22 damage (includes damage bonus from above) with the death trap psionic power. The sword has a miscreant alignment and always looks at the negative and vengeful side of things.

Skills of Note: Speak southern 99%, speak elven and dwarven 88%, identify tracks 50%/32%, medical 56%/60%, prow1 36%, scale walls 68%, track 56%/13%, trap/skin small animals 44%/48%, cook 80%, fishing 66%, plant/farm lore 28%, preserve food 42%, recognize poison 20%, recognize precious metals and stones 18%, recognize weapon quality 63%, sense of direction 80%, swim 85%.

Possessions: Like the other Knights, Blaine has very little in the way of possessions. Although he doesn't state it as flamboyantly as Slandel, he feels that things weigh him down. Knights from The Valley do not have squires or horses and must carry everything themselves. However Blaine does keep a hefty purse filled with 3,000 gold pieces worth of gems and coins. He has another 6000 in gold stashed in a secret hiding place.

Description: Sir Blaine is a lone wolf. He can often be found along the waterfront in River City when not at the palace. He enjoys spending idle time conversing with the dock workers and fishermen, although he rarely goes into the slums. He can be found at Fishbone's when the other Knights are hanging out there, but doesn't associate with them otherwise.

His blade's strong blue color is reflective of the defeatist attitude of the mage who built the blade. That attitude conflicts strongly with Blaine's own purpose and disturbs him when he uses the sword. The blade also shows the deep purple of Blaine's own purpose, reflecting his dream that he will someday rule his own kingdom. The conflict between Blaine and his blade has worsened, and he avoids the company of the Knights because their blades do not give them the same trouble.

Sir Belveder

The Dwarven Knight

Belveder was born in The Valley, grew up in Alpine Burg, and joined the guardsmen early. He relies more on his psionic powers than weapons. He considered soldiering as a temporary occupation. After minimal training, he returned to developing his powers. Despite his psionic abilities, he has refused to become an interrogator and is happy as a Crystal Knight.

Name: Sir Belveder

True Name: Angrel Belveder

Alignment: Principled

O.C.C. & Level: Soldier 3rd, Mind Mage 9th

Race: Dwarf, **Age:** 98, looks to be in his fifties by human standards.

Size: 4 feet, 3 inches (1.30 m), 220 lbs (99 kg), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 15, M.A. 3, P.S. 23, P.P. 21, P.E. 22, P.B. 6, Spd. 3

Hit Points: 60

Armor: None. Belveder relies on the crystal skin power of his sword.

Bonuses: +5 vs magic, +4 vs poison, +14% vs coma/death, +2 vs insanity, +3 vs psionics.

Natural Abilities: Recognize illusions 69%, night vision 90 ft (27 m).

Psionics: Master Psionic, knows all psionic abilities and has two psionic attacks per melee. **I.S.P.:** 110.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None

Magic Knowledge: None



Magic Items/Weapons: The personality of Sir Belveder's crystal sword and the knight are in perfect concert with each other. The entire blade is bright white. However, it cannot be said whether it was Belveder's personality or the sword who influenced who. Sir Belveder often activates his sword at idle moments: in court, at the dinner table, or even at rest with other companions. Belveder's sword also has the crystal skin power. The crystal skin is the most common power among the swords. He is also bonded to a crystal communicator headband.

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand: soldier 2nd level, W.P. targeting, W.P. knives, W.P. short swords, all at 2nd level. Hand to hand non men of arms, W.P. crossbow, W.P. large sword, W.P. staves and W.P. small shield, all at 9th level. Critical strike from behind, kick attack 1D6, 3 attacks per melee. When using his crystal sword: +7 strike +8 parry +6 dodge, +10 damage.

Weapons: Crystal sword 5D6+20 damage (includes bonus from above). Belveder is also trained in the crossbow, which is a required weapon for guardsmen, and carries one with him. Most of the guardsmen also learns W.P. targeting, but Belveder did not continue to study when he returned to concentrating on his psionic abilities.

Skills of Note: Read/write dwarven and elven 99%, speak dwarven, elven, southern and faerie 99%, disguise 25%/4%, forgery 26%/12%, locate secret compartments and doors 64%, medical 80%/84%, pick locks 67%, pick pockets 17%, prowl 58%, scale walls 44%, trap/skin small animals 68%/72%, cook 80%, demon and devil lore 95%, faerie lore 96%, fishing 90%, general repair 90%, plant/farm lore 52%, preserve food 72%, racial histories 60%, recognize poison 78%, recognize precious metals/stones 66%, recognize weapon quality 84%, sense of direction 99%, swim 99%.

Possessions: Like the other Knights, Belveder has few possessions. He rarely carries more than 400 gold with him at any time, but he does have savings of about 14,000 gold pieces that are kept in Alpine Burg.

Description: As dwarves go, Belveder is larger than the largest and stands out among his own people. He is strong, agile and has fantastic endurance. When it comes to moving, however Belveder is painfully slow.

Belveder is recognized as a mind mage and as such would make an excellent candidate for Bonafiet's interrogators. However, Belveder still enjoys the physical side of knighthood. He says he will join the interrogators if, and when, he feels his strength waning.

Palace Guards & the Crystal Knights

There will always be a group of palace guards patrolling the road to the palace. It should consist of at least two guards, denoted by their lack of insignias and crystal headbands. The headband is worn more like a sweatband than a crown. The headbands are usually communicator devices used to keep them in direct contact with the king and the fortress. The palace guards should be wearing full suits of chain mail, no helmet, and carrying simple broadswords and shields. A palace Knight, such as Sir Molderi, or Sir Blaine could also be in the company.

The Typical Palace Guard

In addition to the Valley Guards, there are those who have attained the rank and honor of becoming a Palace Guard. They start out as regular Valley guardsmen and receive the same training and assignments. Those who excel as soldiers, reaching a minimum of 4th level experience, and have some measure of psionic powers are recruited for the Palace Guard. Those without the object read ability usually "wash out" and will quit the guard rather than return to being a regular guardsman.

The typical palace guard ranges from 6th to 8th level. Three in four will have only minor psionics with 2D6 first level abilities and 36 I.S.P. The remaining one in four will have major psionics with 2D6 1st level, 2D6 2nd level and 1D6 3rd level abilities and an average of 50 I.S.P. There may be the rare guardsman with master psionics, but those are usually recruited to be interrogators. Those with major psionics will have the abilities of object read, mental bolt of force and/or evil eye. All Palace Guards wear a crystal communicator headband, enabling them to contact the king at the palace in an instant. Half of all Palace Guards are human, the other half, dwarf.

Palace Guards are all considered to be *knights*. This gives them the added responsibility of being witnesses at **The Court** to determine if a crime has been committed and to help decide on a just punishment. The knights who serve as the Palace Guards are sometimes invited to the palace as honored guests. This is usually for dinners, celebrations, and to hear Elana read a new book she's discovered in the library, or something one of her star pupils has written.

The Typical Palace Guard/Knight

Alignments: Any, but most are unprincipled, scrupulous or aberrant.
O.C.C. and level: 6th to 8th level Knight.

Attributes: I.Q. 8 or higher, M.E. 9 or higher, P.S. 19 or higher, P.P. 16 or higher, P.E. 16 or higher; all others are average.

Hit Points: 48 for the typical Palace Guard, 60 or higher for the captain of the guard.

Armor: Typically wear a full suit of chain mail: A.R. 13, S.D.C. 44 or a suit of scale mail: A.R. 15, S.D.C. 75.

Combat: Hand to hand: knight, W.P. small shield, W.P. short sword, W.P. large sword, W.P. crossbow, and W.P. targeting. The typical guard will have 4 attacks per melee and +8 to strike with a crossbow, and three attacks per melee: +6 strike, +5 parry, +4 damage with a sword. All are armed with crossbow, short sword, and small shield. The captains of the Palace Guards will have a crystal sword.

Psionics: 80% are minor psionics with 2D6 first level abilities and an average 36 I.S.P. The remaining 20% will have major psionics with 2D6 1st level, 2D6 2nd level and 1D6 3rd level abilities and an average of 50 I.S.P.

Note: There are a total of 80 Palace Guards. 50 are always found at the Palace, the other 30 are on the road assisting and guiding the Valley Guards. In addition, there are 11 retired Palace Guards living in the valley; all are elderly but reasonably good fighters with three attacks per melee and 3D6+40 hit points regardless of level (old age limits their ability). All are 1D6+8 level.

The Crystal Palace

If the group enters the Keep, it should be when they are accompanied by Archie or the palace guard (usually a dozen or so citizens with men of arms O.C.C.s). The path through the Keep to the Palace will be like a walk through a house of mirrors, although the images in the mirrors are fragmented. The king will be monitoring the progress of the group and the guard leader who is always a knight. The king will use the powers of the keep to communicate with the knight through his crystal headband. Via telepathic communication, the king will direct his knight and company through openings and passages that may close or change after they have passed.

There are various hidden chambers in the keep, and only the Crystal King has access to them. One of the deepest chambers is being used as a storage vault containing crystal items and other valuables.

The path will finally wind upward through the keep, and anyone with a sufficient sense of direction (location) will realize they are at the base of the palace, on top of the keep.

A courageous psionic individual might try object reading the walls of the keep or palace. The result will be a feeling of fire ripping through the point of contact, as the fortress draws an additional 1D10+10 I.S.P. from the individual. However, the reader will learn the following: The Crystal King (the current owner) is alive and well and residing in the palace. He will also get a sense of conflict and a feeling that there is a second influence/owner (but the identity of the second owner is not revealed). A glimpse of the history of the palace is likely to reveal only its last few centuries, with the crystal king always there. The psionic will also sense that the palace is ancient, tens of thousands of years old.

The group's best chance for a successful, trouble free, first visit to the palace will be in the company of Sir Archie acting as their spokesperson. He or the knight who leads them will quote a passage from the Tristine Chronicles when they finally arrive in the court. The passage is read before the king and his entourage arrives.

"Yea, and so it came to pass that the new races learned to wield the magics of the Old Ones. Unto some, the magic brought great power, but to others, only great woes. Thoth walked the earth in those days,

directing the new races into new molds. Thoth detested the strife that reigned, as the many races fought for the aspects of power shriven from the Old Ones and the lands left barren by the Great War. Thoth retreated from the world and many were the devout that followed him to Lictalon's Scar. Some returned with magics both new and those thought lost, yet most never returned. And yea, verily did many races pass in those days, as did so many of the magics. We are left stripped of that wonderment in our own time, with little more than a handful of the many that once flourished. Even now, some of them still fade from our understanding, whether it be the selfishness of those that wield the magic, or that still the world continues to lose its variety. The time of magic passes."

Archie or the knight will smile, saying, "We stand in the presence of lost magic. This palace and all the crystal are all the remnant of a forgotten age. Show this place and the man who rules over it the respect they deserve."

The court is a large chamber, 60 feet wide by 200 feet deep (18.3 × 61 m). Hanging tapestries near the walls and hanging from the ceiling at the center of the court makes the chamber appear a bit smaller than it really is. Ornate carpeting is laid at the center of the court, covering a portion of the solid crystal floor.

When court is in session, all visitors are seated before the royal four arrive. The seats will be arranged to form a rectangle in the center of the hall, with two crystal thrones at the far end from where the visitors enter.

During a trial, the hostile witnesses of those on trial will be seated on the right side of the rectangle, with their retainers, etc., seated behind them; the friendly witnesses (this normally includes the Crystal Knights), and their companions are seated to the left. The accusers will normally be seated with the hostile witnesses. The seat closest to the accused in both the right and left hand galleries is reserved for the person most hostile or friendly (respectively) to the accused.

Archie will be seated to the left hand side of the group in the separate gallery, but closest to them, since he is their spokesman.

The royal four will enter from behind the thrones, and the entrance they come through is hidden (via crystal magic). The four will proceed to the thrones, take their places, and wait for a spokesperson to speak.

Any court case should be relatively quick and simple. The entire trial is conducted like an interrogation. Whatever the characters say will be noted, and recorded by members of both the friendly and hostile gallery. No one but the characters will speak until they have said all they plan to, and then the King will speak and pass judgement. The entire trial, with witnesses making claims, refuting or supporting what the characters say, will be conducted entirely by telepathic contact to the King and Sir Bonafiet. The G.M. knows all the facts behind any case and should be able to determine the king's reaction with little input from the players.

When the trial is over, the king delivers his judgement, which may involve fines, acts of restitution, reformation, quests, the decision to mind wipe a character or death. Nobody is incarcerated in The Valley.

Meeting with The King

The eventual meeting with the Crystal King is likely to be a bit anticlimactic. The king is aloof, abrupt, paranoid and will not seem particularly happy to make their acquaintance. He will probably let his right-hand man do most of his talking for him, interjecting his own comments from time to time. The general atmosphere will seem more like an inquisition than festive. The air of the meeting will be less formal and strained if the group is represented by Archie.

If the group comes to see the king on their own, they will be caught up in ridiculous, bureaucratic red tape and it will take days or weeks before they can have an audience with the king. One reason that

the king dislikes meeting new people is because they could be dangerous. On the other hand, he insists on seeing new arrivals so that he can get a feel of whether or not they are dangerous.

If he thinks they are dangerous he will have them watched closely and have Interrogators "talk" with them again. Even the slightest negativity may lead to some "reformation." If they challenge the Crystal King's history, with respect to what Knemm may have told them, they will be brought before the Court and charged with espionage and suspected as assassins or thieves working for Knemm or other outside "enemies." An extensive interrogation will follow. It may take a lot to win the king's favor. If Archie is present, he can talk their way out of trouble, unless the player characters continue to make things worse with incriminating statements.

If the group seems to like The Valley, the king will show his delight and offer them a home to use (eventually keep) located in the neighboring town. He will also talk about how much he is certain they will enjoy living in The Valley and how they may serve him and the residents as Valley Guards (and possibly as Palace Guards). He will ignore any comments about "leaving The Valley" and, instead, focus on all the good things about his kingdom (pointing out all the terrible things in the world beyond The Valley). They will be subjected to the citizenship interviews and all that is required to become a trial Citizen.

Eventually, talk will turn to freedom, glory and adventure. "Of course you'll be free, as long as you obey the laws. You don't believe in anarchy do you? One must obey the law to avoid anarchy. But those who obey and serve me well become distinguished and loved citizens; privileged and wealthy, their names sung on the lips of every citizen."

He pauses and grins, "As for adventure, my court's sorcerer (Archie) and I have many Crystal Quests that only the most brave adventurers dare to undertake. If that's what you want then that's what I will grant you. You see, I want all my people to be happy."

Game Master Notes: Crystal Quests: This is where intriguing subplots and mini-adventures come into play. The Crystal King uses newcomers for his own ends. He will send them on quests to get things he wants, to spy, or to eliminate people/creatures he sees as dangerous. He may also spy on them and their associates in The Valley. He may leave them "unreformed" only to see who befriends them. In this way, his knights, guardsmen and interrogators may be led to citizens who are in need of "reform." The quests will also serve to test their loyalty to him and The Valley. If they are honorable and obedient, he will be pleased and they really can advance through the ranks of the kingdom, especially if they possess psionic powers.

Other situations

1. **If the group comes with Archie**, they can meet with the king within a day or two. The meeting will be more relaxed and friendly if Archie is acting as their representative. He will speak on their behalf and smooth things over with the king. Prior to the meeting, he will coach them on proper behavior, as well as tell them that he will do most of the talking and that they should NOT contradict anything he says. The latter may become disturbing as Archie, speaking on their behalf, will agree to things the group may not. He will also accept any quest on their behalf "as a symbol of their sincerity and desire to cooperate" (G.M.'s choice of quest). They are also likely to be placed under Archie's supervision/custody.

If Archie speaks for them, they will be made trial Citizens. Afterwards, they will be shown the wonders of the palace, exchange stories with Elana and the Crystal King and be asked to preserve the secret of this place. At no point will Knemm be mentioned, unless the group brings him up.

Note: Ultimately, Archie wants to manipulate the king to send them with him on the quest to the Old Kingdom burial place of ancient kings. He secretly wants to examine the remains of the Prestida family to see if they were changelings. Archie may also

use his influence with the king for other quests of his design and for his own purposes.

2. **If the group comes to the Crystal Fortress claiming that they were sent by The Titan, Knemm**, the Crystal King and his knights will do all they can to get them to reveal Knemm's whereabouts. The king and his knights have long believed that the titan had left the mountains and had been slain by a beast dragon. Learning that the titan still lives will visibly disturb the mighty Crystal King.

The king and his people have their own twisted laws and perceptions. They are likely to appear without honor or even a bit insane to any of the characters. This is good, because the King's intentions are far from honorable.

The Crystal King will accuse the titan of being a traitor and a thief. He may even try to entice the player character to accept a Crystal Quest to retrieve what is rightfully his. The mad king wants all the crystal items in the giant's possession returned to him. He may also want the group to kill Knemm. However, the Crystal King is more likely to send two to four of his Crystal Knights or champions to do the deed, but only after the group has retrieved the crystal items. The king (influenced by the dead Crystal Master) fears that Knemm is a serious threat to his kingdom. He'd like to eliminate that threat once and for all.

Game Master Notes: The players should learn of the king's plans and can either cooperate with the Crystal King or side with Knemm. Either way, they are in for some trouble.

Also note that Knemm honestly doesn't know the extent of the Crystal King's power, the degree of his changed personality, or the size of the Crystal Fortress. Knemm and the king had a serious conflict resulting in his being banished from The Valley. The falling out occurred because Knemm grew jealous of the Crystal King's link with and subsequent powers from the Crystal Palace. He grew even more jealous of Sir Bonafiet, whom he saw as taking his place beside the king. Knemm challenged Sir Bonafiet to a duel to the death. He would have killed him, but the Crystal King interceded. It was only after his banishment that the king learned that a keep existed below the palace, extending deeper into the ground. Excavations began anew and the keep and crystal ring wall were unearthed.

3. **If the group comes in force**, they will find the full defenses of the Crystal Fortress against them. They will face the might of the guardsmen, Crystal Knights, interrogators/mind mages, royal champions, the king and the powers of the Crystal Fortress! However, a conflict seems inevitable.

The Crystal King's Quests

The king and Archie are always devising special quests, which the king calls his Crystal Quests. Most quests serve the king or the royal four in some way. It may be a test of loyalty or skill, or a means to acquire an item or information of value. Likewise, a quest can also be a mission of revenge, capture, defense, or espionage.

Most of the quests that Archie presents are designed as a means to allow him to leave The Valley for a while (he always comes back, thanks to the mind control) to see the world or for his own pursuits of knowledge. Archie has become quite skilled in presenting his ventures in ways that seem beneficial to the Crystal King or The Valley (often playing on the king's paranoia). His quests are almost always approved.

The following are a number of quests the king is currently considering. They are presented in no particular order.

- Kill the beast dragon known as Dwayne. The creature has been terrorizing The Valley over the years, but more disturbing, he frequently sends foolish travelers to The Valley on mission of robbery and trouble making. Remember, the only good monster is a dead one! Dwayne will run away and hide if possible. He will fight to the death when cornered.

- Find and return the Crystal Goblet. It was one of the few crystal artifacts found during the early excavation of the palace, and the only one ever stolen from the palace. No one knows where it is now. The group may have already seen the Crystal Goblet in the possession of the titan, Knemm.
- Steal crystal items from Knemm the Titan. Knemm won't allow this to happen without a fight. This quest is applicable only if the king learns that Knemm is still alive.
- Kill Knemm the Titan and return all the crystal items in his possession. Knemm will fight to his death. He will leave his cave only to find a new secret hideout and only when his initial attackers have been defeated. This quest is applicable only if the king learns that Knemm is still alive.
- Kill Selssesstissan! If the Crystal King or The Fortress discover that this ancient adversary again walks the face of the Earth, they will want him killed! The king will paint a horrible picture of what a devilish fiend the gromek mage is, and what danger he represents to the entire world! **Note:** Selssesstissan may accompany the adventurer group to the mouth of The Valley, but will know enough not to enter. He will either wait outside or disappear. He is likely to try to sneak inside The Valley on his own to look around. In fact, he may try to kill the king or cause trouble. He may even try to usurp the throne and grab as many of the crystal items for himself as he can. G.M.'s decision.
- The Crystal King has heard tell of the existence of a copy of the Tristine Chronicles and would like to retrieve it for Elana. Years

ago, a wayfaring knight told of having seen a complete edition of the coveted book in the possession of a giant who resided in the neighboring mountains. He was given the quest to retrieve it and was never heard from again.

Rumor has it that the giant still resides on a nearby mountain peak. The Crystal King might consider its retrieval a worthy quest for newcomers to prove their mettle. Get the Tristine Chronicles from Tom II the Immortal. No easy task. See **Tom II, The Immortal** for further information.

- Locate and retrieve any other crystal artifacts from anywhere in the world. The only purported artifact is a sword seen in a citadel somewhere in the far north. The sword to the north is the artifact that Sir Mack and Sir Stephen are questing for. However, bringing the crystal golem, or just its sword back from the mountain tomb is worthy of a crystal quest.
- **Archie's Quest:** The elf mage has convinced the king of the worthiness of his quest to explore the tombs of the ancient Old Kingdom kings. He has convinced the king that there may be important books, artifacts and even crystal items that should be brought back to The Valley. The king will need little persuasion to send the player characters with Archie on this quest.

Note: Archie, the Crystal King, the Queen or one of the champions may suggest other quests. The Game Master is free to add or alter quests as he or she sees fit.

What Price Freedom?

Freedom for the Player Characters

The player characters can escape The Valley at any time early on. They may have to fight their way through guardsmen and interrogators, and may be pursued for a few days by the king's knights or champions (sent on a quest), but they can escape. However, they will forget how they got to The Valley and may never be able to find it again (G.M.'s option).

If they spend more than a week or two in The Valley, the influence of the Crystal Fortress will begin to control them and make them want to stay. This is especially true of characters with a low M.E. (8 or less) and those subjected to "reform." Even so, even these characters can be sent away on a quest and make a run for it, never to return. They will have sufficient mind blocks in place that they will not be able to find The Valley again (G.M.'s option). Eventually, they will forget about the place entirely.

The dilemma most good characters will face is whether they should save themselves by running away or try to free the residents of The Valley. The latter can only lead to a life and death battle of epic proportions. The problem is compounded by the fact that about half the people seem to genuinely like living in The Valley under the rule of the Crystal King. Of course, one can rationalize their contentment by assuming they are the victims of mind control and should be "saved" whether they want to be saved or not. The Crystal King/Fortress will not let any of his/their subjects leave. To even suggest it is to brand oneself a traitor and a candidate for reform.

Freedom Adventure Possibilities

One way to free the people of The Valley is to capture the king and take him out of The Valley. Once he is at least 32 miles (51.2 km) away from the Valley and the Crystal Fortress he will be free of its mind control and second personality. Two other alternatives are to kill him or destroy the Crystal Fortress.

All are difficult tasks. Characters of a good alignment who suspect that the king is as much a victim of the power of the Crystal Fortress as anybody in The Valley are likely to try to get the King *out of* the Valley rather than kill him.

Newcomers to The Valley will not yet be under the full influence of the mind control that prevents the residents from escaping. Thus, they CAN still leave, unless the characters have undergone psionic "reform." Even so, the members of the group will hesitate at the edge of The Valley and will ask each other whether or not they should continue. This pause will last 1D6 minutes before they snap out of it and move on. However, such a period of hesitation may be all that's necessary to bring pursuers and/or Valley defenders upon them.

Once the Crystal King is 32 miles (51.2 km) away from the Crystal Fortress he will suddenly seem to change, his entire demeanor. He will seem a bit dazed, as if awakening from a bad dream. The first words out of his mouth will be, "Thank you." He automatically knows that he can not return to The Valley for at least a decade. To do otherwise will instantly recreate the psychic bond between him and the Crystal Fortress and keep the nightmare alive. Even after ten years have passed, the knight/king will still be susceptible to the power of the Crystal Fortress and knows it is best that he never returns.

If our stalwart heroes (or greedy miscreants) decide to fight the Crystal King and his Fortress, they will be facing an incredible power. All the king's men will fight to the death to protect him although none can leave The Valley. The king will draw on all of the power of the Crystal Fortress to protect himself, the Crystal Fortress and The Valley. Furthermore, he will NOT willingly leave the Crystal Fortress for any reason! The Fortress is his source of power.

Some important details: The mind control over the people is a constant influence, even when the king is unconscious. Likewise, weather control and other basic functions of the Fortress continue to function until the king is either killed or taken beyond its 30 mile (50 km) range.

If the King is taken from the Valley or killed, there will be a dramatic and instant change. The facade of the Crystal Fortress will seem to darken and glitter less brightly. Without the king the Crystal Fortress is effectively shut off. The magic that controlled the weather and helped to protect the valley from the natural elements is gone. In a matter of minutes, the temperature will become the same as the surrounding mountain and altitude. A light snow will begin to fall, water freeze, plant life will wither and die. In a matter of days, the forest will die and the animals will try to flee to more hospitable conditions in the low mountain ranges.

The residents of the Valley must also flee for the lowlands or die from exposure and storms. The hostile conditions will force most to flee almost immediately. Once a few have left the rim of the valley, others who have longed for freedom will rush after them. Most residents will assume the king is dead and/or that the magic of the Crystal Fortress has been destroyed. Few have any inkling about the power of the Crystal Fortress so they will not even consider trying to reactivate the crystal magic. Most believed it was the king who held the power, not the Crystal Fortress. Still, there is some danger that another psychic will bond with the Fortress and become engulfed by the psychic imprint of the mad Crystal Mage who created it. Thus, player characters may want to stay at the Fortress until they are certain that all of The Valley residents have departed. After a few months, the only trace of The Valley will be the abandoned, snow covered edifices of the towns and the Crystal Fortress.

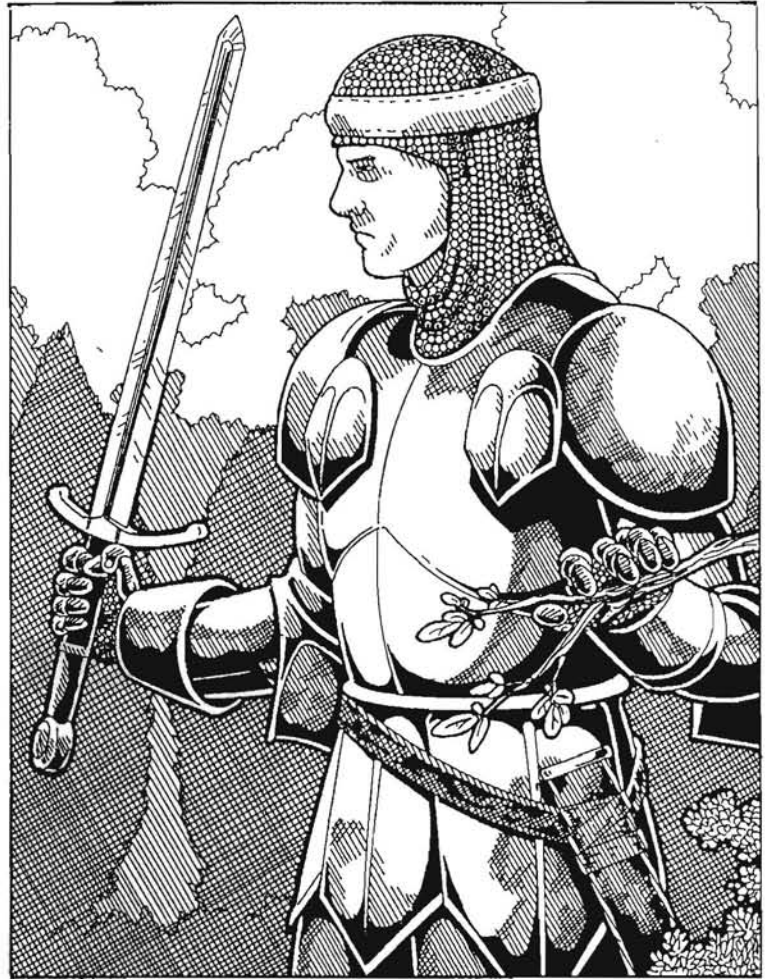
Once deactivated, the Crystal Fortress is completely powerless and benign to all but the knight who was the Crystal King. It does not beckon or lure people to activate its powers. The only way to activate the Fortress is to touch it and perform a psionic object read. The object read will reveal many of its powers and how to learn more through a psychic mind bond. Any fool who tries a mind bond will suffer the same fate as the elf knight who became the Crystal King. Player's characters should be tipped off the moment this happens because the Crystal Fortress will regain its brightness and the weather will be less violent, although still cold and windy.

The character bonded to the Crystal Fortress will either want to stay behind for any number of reasons, or simply disappear (he or she won't want to leave The Valley). It will take years for this new victim of forgotten knowledge to learn to master all the powers of the Fortress and/or establish his/her own kingdom. Consequently, this new Crystal Mage can command only a tiny fraction of the power offered by the Fortress and should be relatively easy to defeat and capture; if he/she can be found. It is important to note that none of the Crystal King's minions will recognize or obey the new master of the Crystal Fortress and the mind control over The Valley will be dramatically weakened — everybody can leave.

Story Note: The deactivation of the Crystal Fortress will not suddenly put everything right. The townsfolk will not awaken as if from some enchantment and suddenly recognize the player characters as heroes. Most are still mentally conditioned to stay in The Valley, but more importantly, not all of the residents of The Valley will be happy about its end. Not all remained just because of the mind control, they liked their towns and their quiet lives in them. These people (about 40% of the residents) will see the player characters, not as heroes, but as foul villains who have slain their king (even if he's really alive down the mountain) and destroyed their homes! Many will even try to capture, punish or kill those they believe are responsible! Our heroes may find themselves fleeing from an angry mob of townsfolk who want their heads on pikes!

The player characters will also become the targets of guardsmen and the king's champions who seek to avenge their king and kingdom. A few may dog their tracks to the point of following them across the world until they finally give up the quest, are defeated or slain.

Those subjected to "reform" by the Interrogators will remain changed and can only be restored by an Interrogator or another mind mage.



Furthermore, chaos will reign. There will be some degree of panic under the best of circumstances. The more malevolent, criminal members of the Syndicate will assault people and loot homes and businesses. Some will engage in acts of revenge and cruelty (will the Cleaver gang finally get the best of Big Jack or Lylli?). Inevitably, some will try to raid/invoke the Crystal Fortress in search of the king's gold and valuables.

If the king/knight lives, he will realize the chaos that will unfold in The Valley and he will beseech our heroes to go back to help, even though they may be the target of angry mobs and guardsmen.

Game Masters should think about this situation and respond accordingly. Breaking the bond between the Crystal King and the Fortress, and what happens afterward can be a story in and of itself.

Notes for Archie Regarding Freedom

The mage Archie is not particularly loyal to the Crystal King in the sense that he knows the king is either insane or manipulated by some supernatural force. He even suspects that the Crystal Fortress may be responsible for the king's erratic and paranoid behavior. However, Archie is quite pragmatic and practical. His association with the king and The Valley has been mostly good for him. It has given him information and opportunities to research his theories about changelings, the Old Kingdom and the chance to study crystal magic devices. This same attitude also means that he will recognize that it may be time for him to move on and that it may be time for the reign of the Crystal King and his Valley to come to an end. Archie is not likely to lift a finger to help or hurt the king, unless he or those he cares about are put into jeopardy. This means the player characters will be mainly on their own unless circumstance (or the G.M.) dictates otherwise.

If the king is defeated and the Fortress turned off, Archie will be packed up and ready to leave on a moment's notice. At that point, he is likely to come in to help mop up and to protect the characters from retribution. Of course this will mark him as a traitor in the eyes of the King's champions and knights. However, as long as the Crystal Fortress is activated, Archie is under its control and cannot willingly leave The Valley for any great length of time, unless he's on a quest.

Once free of the Valley (or if on a quest), Archie will try to entice and/or pay the group to join him on the grand adventure to stop the oceans from disappearing. No serious adventurer will pass up this opportunity. This adventure is just too glorious and important. After all, it may be signalling the end of the world and they may be the only ones able to prevent it! Not to mention the money, magic, knowledge and fame that may be acquired from such an ambitious venture.

The Psychic Science of Magic and Crystals

The crystal magic devices found in The Valley were constructed tens of thousands of years ago. The ancient science or mystic art involved is unknown in the present day Palladium World. The old science/magic was called the *Psychic Magic of Crystal Aggregation*. Most modern scholars call it *psionic crystal magic*. The art of crystal manipulation is lost, much like true rune magic. Modern alchemists can only create pale imitations of the simplest of the ancient crystalline devices.

The **Crystal King** who lords over the Crystal Fortress is the only known authority on the lost art. He possesses a wealth of ancient crystal devices and knows how to use them. However, even he is incapable of creating any *new* crystal devices. He has only a rudimentary knowledge of how crystal magic works. The Crystal King's area of expertise is in the expert "use" of the ancient devices.

A wide variety of crystal devices once existed during The Time of a Thousand Magics. Today, the most numerous crystal devices are found in The Valley, hidden away in the Old Kingdom Mountains. This may be the last refuge on the planet where crystal magic still exists. There are only a tiny handful of other known crystal artifacts dating to that age and they are scattered around the world. There may be other lost caches of crystal magic hidden in underground catacombs and tombs of ancient kings in the Old Kingdom or elsewhere in the world, but they remain undiscovered.

Note: Remember, even The Valley is unknown to most people (and few ever leave its confines), so few men of magic have ever actually seen an ancient crystal artifact from The Time of a Thousand Magics. However, all have read about crystal magic and such rare artifacts are as coveted as rune weapons.

Other dimensions, including **Rifts Earth**, may use crystals for magic purposes (like techno-wizardry) and there are a variety of magic sciences that utilize crystals, but the *psionic crystal magic* of the Palladium World is unique — and forgotten.

Making Crystal Devices

The ancient creators transferred psionic power into a crystal structure by laying down some sort of *psionic circuitry*. This circuitry, represented by the threads of precious metals and gemstones, empowered the device with psionic or magic like powers. The crystal itself may be little more than an energy housing and amplification system.

The creation process was laborious and dangerous. Most alchemists believe that the simplest crystal device took six to eight hours every day to slowly build and instill with psychic energy. The creation process required the skilled hands of a jeweler and the third eye of a psychic. The psionic circuitry had to be laid and formed perfectly. Working too quickly or carelessly might cause the device to fracture, rendering it useless, or even explode (The I.S.P. needed to be instilled uniformly over the entire construction period. The same amount must be fed in each day. Only the individual who started the construction could supply the I.S.P., and must be its sole builder). A simple finger band took weeks to make, while the powerful swords took nearly a year.

All psionic crystal magic devices are made of clear, bright quartz crystal. The most common crystal component is six sided quartz. Gemstones are also used in constructing the psionic devices. They are usually embedded inside a larger quartz or other crystal and are found only in the more powerful devices. They are usually found at the heart of a web of metal threads. The threads are made of fine copper, gold, and/or silver which form a fine network of wire inside the crystalline structure.

The simplest crystal device required precious metals, crystals, and gems valued at no less than 10,000 gold. A crystal sword, the hilt/handle being the most costly and important portion, cost its creator a minimum of 100,000 gold and sold for five to twenty times more.

Psionic Crystal Devices

All psionic crystal devices are useless to non-psionic individuals. Only characters with some degree of psionic power can activate and use one of these ancient weapons or devices.

Each power of the device requires the channeling and expenditure of Inner Strength Points (I.S.P.) as if the character were using one of his or her natural psionic abilities. In some cases, the power of the device is constant, which means it continually and automatically drains a bit of the user's I.S.P.; this is another reason for the psychic bond exemplified through the shared aura. Note that the most powerful devices may require so much I.S.P. that characters with minor psionics may not be able to use all of the item's powers.

Bonding & Powers

When a psionic character initially object reads a crystal device, he only senses its first power or main ability. Remember, only a psionic character can use the ancient crystal devices.

When a crystal device is successfully object read for operation, the character will learn three things: (1) The device is identified as a genuine psionic crystal magic device, (2) Directing the appropriate number of I.S.P. into the device will cause its first power to activate. (3) There is more to the device than will be revealed with time. The character will also have a positive feeling about the device. Unlike rune weapons, the artifact does not have an independent intelligence or alignment, nor does it radiate as magic.

When a character decides to keep the device for himself, a *bond* is begun. The bond between the user/owner and the crystal device develops over the course of time and familiarization with the device.

After getting familiar with the device by using it frequently, the character will discover that he can expend I.S.P. to restore any S.D.C. damage the device may have sustained (2 I.S.P. per every one S.D.C. point). Each restored point makes the crystal appear brighter/newer. This restoring knowledge is typically revealed after about a month of frequent use.

After another full month the character will sense that the device is more powerful than he initially suspected. Suddenly, he will realize

that there are other abilities and he/she will discover the second power. Each additional power will reveal itself as the character's psionic and empathic bond with the device deepens. A new ability will be revealed every two or three months, especially if the character uses the item often. It takes twice as long if he/she uses it infrequently. A typical crystal device will have five or six powers, only a few have less or more. Once all five or six powers are learned, the character is at full expertise in using the psionic device.

Psionic crystal devices can only be activated and used by intelligent beings who possess some measure of psionic ability. In this sense, they are NOT magic devices and do not register as magic (although magic was used to create them). Instead, the strange devices have the same psionic aura as its owner. This *shared* aura occurs because the user and the psionic device link and become one. When not in its owner's possession, or when used by non-psychic individuals, the device becomes dormant and none of its powers can be used. Likewise, it does not register as being either magic or psionic in nature when in this dormant state (only a psi-object read will reveal its psionic nature). Another psionic can use the item and, with time, meld with it and share auras. The psionic nature and shared aura of these crystal items makes them undetectable when worn or used by its psionic owner. Rune weapons, by comparison, have their own unique aura, separate from that of its owner.

Basic Powers & Data

The psionic energies at work in any crystal magic device, molds the crystal, metal, and gem components into a nearly indestructible crystal-line mass.

- All crystal devices have a natural A.R. of 18.
- The number of S.D.C. the device has will depend on the amount of I.S.P. that went into creating it. A simple finger band only requires 1000 I.S.P. and has 100 S.D.C. (typically $1D4 \times 100$). A basic simple sword costs 10,000 I.S.P. and has 500 S.D.C., the most powerful may have as many as 1200 S.D.C. points ($2D6 \times 100$). Damage occurs only when an attacker is deliberately trying to destroy the crystal item. There is no damage from incidental combat (i.e. a crystal sword does not suffer damage when it strikes an opponent's armor or when it is thrown, dropped, etc.).
- When the S.D.C. of a crystal device is reduced to 10 or less it begins to fracture. Tiny cracks begin to form and the device becomes unstable. The I.S.P. cost to call upon the crystal's power is now twice as much and lasts half as long or does half damage. Tiny sparks and flashes sputter inside the crystal along the lines of fracture. When its S.D.C. is reduced to zero or below, it shatters and is irrevocably destroyed.
- **EXPLOSION!** Generally, a crystal device that is fractured becomes unstable. When the S.D.C. of the crystal is reduced to zero or below, there is a 1-80% likelihood that it will explode. Everything within 10 feet (3 m) of the device suffers from the explosion. The amount of damage is indicative of the device's level of power. Finger bands do a mere $4D6$ damage. Most simple devices do $1D4 \times 10$ damage, crystal swords $1D6 \times 10$, crystal armor and golems do $2D6 \times 10$ and crystal portals, fortresses, palaces and other huge and powerful crystal constructs will do $2D4 \times 100$ damage to a 50 foot (15.2 m) area.
- However, even a fractured crystal device can be psionically healed. At any time its psionic owner can restore lost S.D.C. This can be done only by the character who is bonded to the device. Other psionic individuals cannot restore its S.D.C. through any means. To heal the crystal, the owner of the crystal artifact must expend two I.S.P. for every one (1) point of S.D.C. damage to be restored. The character regains his expended I.S.P. through rest or meditation as usual.

Crystal Rings

There are two distinct classes of crystal devices. We refer to these two classes as **rings** and **rods**. There are also double ring devices called **stars** which have greater powers than simple rings.

Rings include finger bands, bracelets, necklaces, and headbands.

Rods include crystal wands, staves, and swords. The staves have the greatest power. Swords often have wand-like powers but some also have staff-like powers.

Wheels are the few items that combine both crystal rods and rings. The typical wheel device is composed of a rod surrounded by a ring. The crystal goblet can be thought of as a ring (the cup/bowl area) mounted on a rod (the stem of the goblet). Most of the wheel devices have powers from both classes, in addition to a few unique powers. The Crystal Fortress is one example of a rod and wheel combination at its most powerful. The crystal gateway is another.

There also exist a few ancient crystal constructs that seem to defy or go beyond the more traditional categorization above. These include crystal armor and the crystal golem.

Finger Bands/Rings

Crystal finger bands (rings) are the smallest and least powerful of the crystal ring devices. Finger bands can have only one (1) power, typically "receptive" or protective magic. The finger band will either be a single crystal attached to a metal ring or a solid band of crystal. A maximum of two (2) rings can be worn by a single character; one on each hand. Available powers are as follows.

Notes about finger rings: Require 1000 I.S.P. to build. The finger band will have 100 S.D.C., larger bands (simple items) will have $1D6 \times 100$ S.D.C. The average market value of a crystal ring ranges from 30,000 to 100,000 gold. The value of the item can fluctuate by as much as 75%, usually higher than those listed, depending on the situation and desire for the item. ALL are extremely rare. Engaging/activating a psionic crystal power counts as ONE of the character's psionic melee attacks. Powers that are active 24 hours a day automatically use up the necessary I.S.P. at the beginning of every 24 hour period. This means the character will always be short that number of I.S.P. Removing the ring does not instantly restore the points. Furthermore, finger rings must be worn all the time to enjoy their special power.

Receptive Magic

Receptive magic is inward, soothing, and calming. The typical effects of receptive magic are to prevent disease, allow psychic awareness to blossom, attract love, money, healing and friendship.

Charm: Charisma: Adds +6 to the character's M.A. as long as the ring is worn. The magic is instantly gone when the ring is removed and those who once admired the character will take an immediate (though not necessarily lasting) dislike to him or her. I.S.P.: 12 per 24 hour period. Cost: 50,000 gold.

Charm: Love: The opposite sex finds this character extremely attractive and will be more receptive to his/her suggestions and conversation, as well as flirt with, fawn over and help him/her. Members of the same sex will find the character to be impressive and trustworthy, somebody to respect. The magic is instantly gone when the ring is removed and those who once admired the character will take an immediate (though not necessarily lasting) dislike to him or her. I.S.P. 12 per 24 hour period. Cost: 60,000 gold.

Healing: Others by touch, three times per day; restores $2D6$ hit points. Furthermore, the owner/wearer is +10% to save vs coma, +1 to save vs poison and disease, and heals at twice the normal rate (constantly in effect, using up 4 I.S.P. per 24 hour period). I.S.P.: 10 per each use. Cost: 60,000 gold.

Healing: Remove Illness: Others by touch, three times per day. The healing touch will instantly negate poison, dispel nausea, stomach cramps, headaches, fever, and non-deadly diseases. I.S.P.: 10 per each use. Cost: 50,000 gold.

Healing: Soothe Pain: By touch, three times per day, others only. Removes 50% of a character's pain and discomfort (and 50% of associated penalties), but does not cure illness, stop damage or restore hit points. I.S.P.: 4 per each use. Cost: 40,000 gold.

Limited telepathy: Identical to the second level psionic ability. Unlimited use as long as the character has I.S.P. to burn. I.S.P.: One point per every three melees/minutes. Cost: 30,000 gold.

Precognition: Same as the third level psionic ability. Duration: One minute. Three times per day. I.S.P. 8 per each use. Cost: 60,000 gold.

Sense Magic: Ten minutes per level of the owner; same as the psionic power. Three times per day. I.S.P.: 6 per each use. Cost: 40,000 gold.

Sense Psionics: Ten minutes per level of the owner; same as the detect psionics power. Three times per day. I.S.P.: 4 per each use. Cost: 50,000 gold.

Sense Sadness: Ten minutes per level of the owner. An empathic type ability that enables the wearer to sense when (and who) around him is sad. Three times per day. I.S.P.: 4 per each use. Cost: 30,000 gold.

Sense Supernatural Evil: Five minutes per level of the owner. The wearer can sense the presence of supernatural evil, such as devils, demons, gods, Old Ones, alien intelligences, and similar. Dragons, creatures of magic, and men of magic don't count. Twice per day. I.S.P.: 4 per use. Cost: 35,000 gold.

Sense Traps: Same as the fourth level psionic ability. Ten minutes per level of the owner. Three times per day. I.S.P.: 6 per use. Cost: 45,000 gold.

Understands & Speaks all Languages: Ten minutes per level of the owner; same as the tongues spell. Three times per day. I.S.P.: 5 per use. Cost: 35,000 gold.

Protective Magic

Protective magic is concerned with physical or psychic protection, health, well being, prosperity, luck, resisting unhealthy habits, fatigue, disease and other dangers.

Impervious to Despair: Continuous protection from all forms of despair and depression, including magic and psionic attacks. I.S.P.: 8 per 24 hour period. Cost: 75,000 gold.

Impervious to Disease: Continuous protection from all normal disease, +2 to save vs magic disease, illness and curses. I.S.P.: 10 per 24 hour period. Cost: 75,000 gold.

Impervious to Fire: Continuous protection from normal fire and heat. Magic fires inflict half damage. I.S.P.: 12 per 24 hour period. Cost: 80,000 gold.

Impervious to Possession: Continuous protection from all forms of possession and mind control. I.S.P.: 14 per 24 hour period. Cost: 90,000 gold.

Luck: Fighting: Constantly in effect: +1 to dodge, +1 initiative, takes half damage from falls and similar "accidents." I.S.P.: 18 per 24 hour period. Cost: 75,000 gold.

Luck: Money: Constantly in effect: Often finds a good deal on weapons, supplies, equipment and lodgings (2D6% discount; not applicable to magic or rare items — any discount or good fortune is left to the discretion of the GM). I.S.P.: 14 per 24 hour period. Cost: 70,000 gold.

Mind Block: Continuous protection from all forms of psionic communication and mind probes; identical to the third level psionic power. I.S.P.: 8 per 24 hour period. Cost: 45,000 gold.

Resist Anger/Hate: The magic soothes the character's emotions when he/she is angry. This enables the character to keep a calm head and not lash out in anger or succumb to a berserker rage. I.S.P.: 12 per 24 hour period. Cost: 40,000 gold.

Resist Charm: Constantly in effect: +2 to save vs all types of charms, including faerie magic; furthermore the character is not overly impressed by beautiful and charming people. I.S.P.: 12 per 24 hour period. Cost: 30,000 gold.

Resist Cold: One hour per level of the owner. Cold does half damage. Once per day. I.S.P.: 12 to use. Cost: 30,000 gold.

Resist Fatigue: 30 minutes per level of the owner. The character does not suffer from any sort of fatigue penalties from physical exertion during the period of magic; does not need to rest. Once per day. I.S.P.: 12 to use. Cost: 55,000 gold.

Resist Fear: Five minutes per level of the owner. +4 to save vs all types of fear (horror factor) and adds +1 to the character's initiative roll. Three times per day. I.S.P.: 10 per each use. Cost: 45,000 gold.

Resist Hunger: One hour per level of the owner. The character has no craving for food and does not suffer any penalty from lack of nourishment. Once per day. I.S.P.: 19 to use. Cost: 40,000 gold.

Resist Pain: Five minutes per level of the owner. All types of physical damage/attacks (including poison and magic) are half! Three per day. I.S.P.: 12 per each use. 100,000 gold.

Resist Temptation: Five minutes per level of the owner. The character can activate the magic to give him/her an iron-clad resistance to any one temptation. This can be done to stop him/herself from stealing, lying, drinking, fighting, etc. Three per day. I.S.P.: 10 per use. Cost: 55,000 gold.

The Typical Crystal Band

All ring devices have a number of flat crystals all bound together with the predominantly silver and only a few gold wires that snake through the crystals, becoming a mesh between the crystals. The band stretches and contracts to fit around most humanoid heads, necks, wrists, arms or fingers. The inner metal wires seem almost elastic in nature. The crystals lay flat for maximum contact with the skin.

All of the larger crystal devices are more powerful than the simple finger band and will have 1D4 + 1 powers. Powers can be selected from one or both of the categories, receptive or protective. However, 60% of all rings will have powers only from one of the categories. Only one crystal band can be worn/used, but it can be combined with as many as two crystal rings, one crystal wand or staff and one crystal sword.

Special Crystal Rings/Bands

A number of powerful headbands, necklaces and arm bands were created during the Time of a Thousand Magics. However, few seem to have survived the passage of the ages.

The most common of these bands in The Valley are the communicator headbands. The Crystal King often gives them out to his knights so that he can maintain contact with them. The king also has in his possession 1D4 of all the types listed in this book, as well as a dozen different finger rings. Many are located in different crystal vaults scattered throughout the Crystal Fortress. Or the G.M. may assign a few to the king's champions (NPCs or new characters).

Note: The powers of these bands can be used repeatedly, until its psionic owner runs out of I.S.P. Remember, only characters who have psionically bonded with the device (a process that takes months or even years) can use all the powers of the crystal artifact. Two or more powers can usually be engaged/emplaced at the same time. Each use of a psionic crystal power counts as ONE psionic melee attack.

The Crystal Communicator

The crystal communicator is always a headband. Its powers are as follows:

1. Detect Psionics. Identical to the psionic ability. I.S.P.: one point. Duration: 2 melees per level of the wearer.

2. Extended telepathy. Identical to the psionic ability. I.S.P.: 2 points. Duration: 3 melees/minutes.
3. Short range call. This is a one-way telepathic message to a specific individual within 1/2 mile (0.8 km). When calling to another headband, the range increases to 5 miles (8 km). I.S.P.: Five points. Duration: 4 melees/minutes.
4. Long range telepathy. Same as extended telepathy but the range is increased to five miles (8 km). When communicating with another headband, range increases to 50 miles (80 km). I.S.P.: 10. Duration 2 melees/minutes.
5. Long range call. This is a one way telepathic message, to a specific individual within 30 miles (48 km). When calling with another headband, range increases to 300 miles (480 km). I.S.P.: 12 per one melee/minute.
6. Worldwide call/communication. A one-way call can be made to any one character anywhere in the world. Two-way communication is possible only if both characters are wearing a crystal communicator. I.S.P.: 24 per one melee/minute.

Market Value: 100,000 + gold

The Defender

The defender is typically a headband or necklace. Its powers are as follows:

1. Shadow Meld. Identical to the wizard spell. I.S.P.: 6. Duration: 4 melees/minutes.
2. Mind block. Identical to the second level psionic ability. I.S.P.: 4. Duration: 8 melees/minutes.
3. Turn Invisible. Identical to the third level psionic ability. I.S.P.: 8. Duration: 10 melees/minutes.
4. Basic force field. Identical to the fifth level psionic ability; S.D.C. 20, A.R. 8., I.S.P.: 12. Duration 8 melees.
5. Crystal skin. Similar to ability found in many crystal swords and staves. Creates an impervious shell of crystal around the wearer. ALL blows will strike the crystal shell first. A.R. 20 +, 100 S.D.C., does not regenerate. I.S.P.: 30. Duration: 5 melees/minutes. The armor can be recreated in an instant by expending another 30 I.S.P.
6. Energy Shell. Creates a shell of psionic energy around the wearer, making him impervious to heat, fire, cold, ice, light, electricity, and energy (including high-tech energy weapons such as lasers). All such attacks are harmlessly dissipated. Physical attacks, including punches, kicks, swords, arrows, etc., go right through the energy field and inflict full damage. I.S.P.: 40. Duration: 5 melees/minutes.

Market Value: 500,000 + gold

The Protector

The protector is typically a headband, necklace or armlet. Its powers are as follows:

1. Nightvision. Can see 30 feet (9 m) in the dark. Can see even in magic darkness. I.S.P.: 4. Duration: 10 melees/minutes.
2. See the invisible. Identical to the third level psionic ability. I.S.P.: 8. Duration: 10 melees.
3. Resist cold: Identical to protective magic (see finger rings). I.S.P.: 12. Duration: One hour per level of the owner.
4. Impervious to fire: Similar to the ring protection power: normal fire and heat does no damage, magic fires inflict half damage. I.S.P.: 10. Duration 20 melees/minutes.
5. Absorb lightning/energy attacks. Normal and magical lightning or other forms of energy attacks do NO damage. I.S.P.: 10. Duration: 20 melees/minutes.

6. Breathe without air. Similar to the air warlock spell. Allows breathing underwater and protection from all gases, except magical ones (but +1 to save). I.S.P.: 10. Duration: One hour.

Market Value: 400,000 + gold.

The Spirit

The spirit band is extremely rare and coveted by mind mages. It is typically designed as a headband. Its powers are as follows:

1. Sense spirits. The wearer will become aware of any spirits (including ghosts, entities, spectres, and astral travelers) within a 120 foot (37 m) radius. He can see and follow their movements. I.S.P.: 2 points per melee/minute.
2. Commune with spirit. Identical to the psionic ability. However, the spirit does not need to possess anyone to respond, it can communicate to the wearer through the spirit crystal headband. The chance of success is 82%. The character can speak to the spirits but they do not have to answer. I.S.P.: 10. Duration: 6 melees/minutes.
3. Dispel Spirits. Identical to the 5th level psionic ability. I.S.P.: 10. Duration: Instant.
4. Summon spirit. Identical to the spirit summoning circle; except the making of the circle is not necessary. The wearer of the crystal band is the only person who can summon the spirit and will have to face a battle of wills with the entity summoned. I.S.P.: 20. Duration: 5 melees/minutes per level.
5. Spirit bond. This is a mind bond with a spirit, which can be especially informative, and dangerous. Use the mind bond results table from the sixth level psychic ability. I.S.P.: 40. Duration: See mind bond. Note: Insanity may occur.
6. Spirit beast. This is a very deadly power. The wearer who is completely bonded to the crystal band of Spirits goes into a trance while his mind is transported into the body of a spectre! The spectre is the spirit beast and is created in conjunction with the psychic power of the headband. All abilities of the Spectre apply (see **The Palladium Book of Monsters and Animals**, page 77 for complete details).

The Spirit Beast: Attributes: P.S. 2D6, P.P. 2D6, P.E. 3D6, P.B. 2D6, Spd. 2D6, Fly 18, A.R. 14, fire and cold resistant, impervious to normal weapons, +2 to hit and dodge. I.Q., M.E., and M.A. are equal to those of its creator/wearer of the crystal. Psionics: The spirit beast has all level one, two and three psychic abilities, and if the wearer has additional psionic abilities, they are also available to it. An additional 90 I.S.P., plus whatever the psychic has remaining are available to the spirit beast. Expended I.S.P. are first subtracted from the beast form. Maximum hit points: 48.

When the spirit beast suffers hit point damage, so does its creator. The unconscious/entranced body of the creator/crystal wearer is also vulnerable to attacks, theft, etc., and can suffer additional hit point damage or death. If the creator is slain, the spirit beast disappears. If the spectre is slain, its creator is hurt and achy but alive.

I.S.P. needed to create the beast: 100! Duration: 15 minutes per level of experience. The spirit beast can be dispelled by its creator at any time.

Market Value: 800,000 + gold.

The Deceiver

The deceiver is a rare device that typically takes the form of a necklace or headband. Its powers are as follows:

1. Reduce psychic aura. Its first power is to disguise the psionic's true power by altering his aura and psychic emanations. Thus, the

apparent psionic ability of the wearer seems less than he or she really is; i.e.: a mind mage/master psionic appears to be only a major, a major appears to be a minor, and a minor psionic appears to have no psionic powers at all. I.S.P.: 2 per hour. Duration: One hour, but can be extended at will by expending more I.S.P.

2. Alter apparent alignment. The wearer can completely disguise his or her true alignment (alignment of choice and can be changed at will to fit the situation). I.S.P.: 5 per hour. Duration: One hour, but can be extended at will by expending more I.S.P.
3. Hide psychic ability. The crystal enables the psychic character to completely hide the presence of any psionic abilities, including crystal devices. Any sensing powers by others will show that the character is without psionic powers. I.S.P.: 4 per hour. Duration: One hour, but can be extended at will by expending more I.S.P.
4. Projection of truth. The power of the crystal enables its owner to lie convincingly. Even words of truth and other means of magic or psionic detection will NOT reveal his lies. Likewise, the character cannot be forced to tell the truth. Everything the character says will give the impression that he/she is being completely honest. I.S.P.: 10. Duration: Five minutes.
5. Charismatic aura. Identical to the spell. I.S.P.: 10. Duration: One hour.
6. Alter aura. Ultimately, the device can be made to alter the person's aura to appear to be anything of any level that the character chooses (with the appropriate reaction and consequences by those who can see auras). I.S.P.: 50. Duration: 12 hours.

Market Value: 400,000 + gold.

Stars or Double Rings

The star construction consists of twelve crystals. One set of six identical large crystals and one set of six slightly smaller similar crystals. The larger crystals are woven into the large outer ring. A second, smaller ring of crystals is placed inside the larger ring in a cross position and connected by the mesh at the top and bottom. This creates a sort of spherical appearance. Each of the crystals is held together by the traditional wire mesh of the metal circuitry. The shape and light reflective appearance of the device gives it a "star-like" quality, hence its name.

Unlike the more traditional single band crystal devices, the double ring or star crystals cannot be worn and are usually quite large.

Crystal "double" rings always have a minimum of six powers and the most powerful will have two sets of powers (one set for each ring, with a total of as many as 10 or 12; never an odd number of powers). Available powers include any of those listed under the single rings and finger bands, as well as those that follow, listed under specific types of crystal stars. An additional feature of the star crystals is the finger band powers are doubled in range and duration. Note however, that any of the powers of the crystal star are only in effect when the star is activated and the owner is within its range of effect (constant finger band powers are in effect for two hours from the moment of activation). A double ring or "star" will have 500 S.D.C.

The smallest are the size of a soccer ball while the largest can be the size of a house. The typical crystal star falls somewhere in between, with 50% ranging between the size of a soccer ball and a 50 gallon barrel. Obviously, the large size of these devices makes them difficult to conceal and transport. The two rings cannot be flattened or separated without destroying them.

To use the device, its owner must hold the star in his hands or set it down in front of him. Some are large enough to sit inside. To activate the device, the character must touch it and expend two (2) I.S.P. Once activated, the owner can stop touching it and move away. As long as

he/she stays within a certain distance of the crystal, the character can continue to draw on its powers by expending I.S.P. The larger the device, the greater the distance its owner can walk away from it and maintain his mental link to its powers. The range of contact/connection with a soccer ball sized star is 20 feet (6 m). Double the range for each geometrically doubled size. Thus, a star twice as large as a soccer ball will have a contact range of 40 feet (12.2 m), a star twice as large as that will have an 80 foot (24.4 m) contact range, and so on. The maximum size of a star is 44 feet (13.4 m).

Campfire Star

The powers of the campfire star are:

1. Light. The crystal device will radiate light equal to a large, well fed campfire. The light is normally a flickering type like a campfire, but can be made steady and constant for double the I.S.P. cost. The light can also be reduced in intensity or turned off with a thought. This light does not radiate heat. I.S.P.: 2 per hour.
2. Warmth. The star gives off heat much like a campfire. The amount of heat can be regulated by its owner, but will never exceed the owner's comfort level. The crystal rings remain cool to the touch and light is not necessary to have heat. I.S.P.: 4 per hour.
3. Protection from insects/animals. A psionic (magic?) aura keeps away pestering, non-intelligent insects and animals. I.S.P.: 4 per hour.
4. Environmental shield. An area as large as the device's connection range with its owner is kept at its owner's comfort level. This means temperature and humidity control (despite the actual conditions outdoors) and keeping the area dry and clear of smoke, foul air/smells, fog, rain and disease. I.S.P.: 20 per hour.
5. Protection from monsters. An area as large as the device's connection range with its owner is kept safe. This magical aura functions like a simple circle of protection and repel animals spell. Predatory animals, giant insects and other low intelligence animals will not invade the campsite area. Evil members of the monster races and supernatural beings cannot enter the area of protection. I.S.P.: 20 per hour.
6. Energy Absorption. An area as large as the device's connection range with its owner is kept safe from energy attacks. Lightning, forest fires, laser beams, etc., are magically absorbed without ever harming anybody within its sphere of protection. I.S.P.: 6 per hour.

Market Value: 250,000 + gold

Monitor Star

This device functions very similarly to a crystal ball and can be used to observe, track and follow individuals. However, the individual being observed must be well known to the owner of the monitor star. Furthermore, the character being observed and followed will always know that he is being magically watched. The person using the monitor will see and hear everything the character being monitored sees, hears, and says, but he cannot speak to that character. Two-way communication is impossible. The monitor also gives the user a definite sense of where the person is, i.e. how far away and in what direction. It cannot see into other dimensions. ONLY the owner of the monitor star (who is psychically linked to the device) can use its powers.

Note: The monitor star actually looks in on the conscious mind of the person being watched. When the subject sleeps, the monitor sees nothing. When the subject is awake, but has his eyes closed, the monitor still sees nothing. Likewise, if the subject is deaf, the monitor will not be able to hear anything.

The powers of the monitor star:

1. Close range monitor. The user can track a single individual, humanoid or animal, at a distance up to one mile (1.6 km). I.S.P.: One (1) per melee/minute.

2. Long-range monitor. A single individual can be tracked at up to 100 miles (160 km) away. I.S.P.: Two (2) per melee/minute.
3. Worldwide tracking. The range is extended to anywhere in the world! I.S.P.: 6 per melee/minute.
4. Monitor psyche. The owner of the star can sense the emotions of the character he is observing. Fear, anger, sorrow, happiness, love, anxiety, and other emotions can be recognized. I.S.P.: An additional 4 per melee/minute added to the close, long range or worldwide power.
5. Monitor the area around the subject being observed. The owner of the star can sense the presence of magic, psionics and supernatural evil through the person he is observing. He can also see astral travelers. I.S.P.: An additional 4 per melee/minute added to the close, long range, or worldwide power.
6. Dimensional monitor. The star cannot see into other dimensions, but it will indicate that the subject of observation is alive and that he has gone to a different dimension. This power also enables the user to see astral travelers and entities who may be observing him or in the area. This is possible because the astral traveler's physical body is still in our physical world and the traveler is looking into our dimension. I.S.P.: 10 per melee/minute.

Market Value: Millions!

Group Monitor Star

The group monitor star is a more powerful and rare psionic device similar to the monitor star previously described. The only difference is that the star can be used to track as many as eight individuals travelling in the same group or area (within 100 feet/30.5 m of each other). Or it can simultaneously observe two different individuals miles apart. The I.S.P. costs are doubled, otherwise the powers are identical.

Controller Star

The controller star has the following abilities:

1. Empathy. This power works like the psionic power, but is limited to the connection range/area effect of the device as limited by its size. Everyone within range will be subject to broadcasting their emotions. I.S.P.: One (1) per every four melees/minutes.
2. Extended telepathy. Identical to the psionic power, but again the range is limited by the size and area effect of the star. I.S.P.: Two (2) I.S.P. per every four melees/minutes.
3. Mind wipe. By touching the star and a character, the owner of the crystal device can psionically erase memories. Identical to the mind wipe ability. I.S.P. cost: 10 for a single thought, 50 to completely blank a mind.
4. Cure insanity. Any form of insanity, whether resulting from trauma or magic, can be permanently cured. I.S.P.: 90.
5. Protection from hostility. All within the area of effect are impervious to possession and vampire mind control. Similarly, possessing entities and vampires cannot enter the area. Furthermore, any creatures with hostile thoughts are unable to enter (or stay in) the area of effect around the crystal. A saving throw to save vs psionics (16 or higher) is allowed. A successful save means the creature can enter the area and attack but is -4 to strike, parry and on initiative. I.S.P.: 15 per hour.
6. Mind scrambler. The memory of every person within the area of effect is scrambled. Thoughts are a confusing jumble, details are impossible to remember and its victims cannot articulate their thoughts. Penalties: -14% on all skills, -2 on initiative, -2 to strike, parry and dodge, -4 to save vs hypnotic suggestion, charm, mind control and illusions. A saving throw to save vs psionics (16 or higher) is allowed. A successful save means the character is not as "scrambled" and all penalties are half. I.S.P.: 20 per hour.

Market Value: 500,000+ gold.

Crystal Rods Projective Magic

The average crystal device will have five or six different powers. Some devices, such as certain wheels, and the crystal staff, may have as many as twelve. There is only one rod device that has over 20 powers, the crystal fortress.

Crystal Rods tend to display projective and destructive powers, but are also capable of healing. **Projective** magic is typically forces directed outward at somebody. It is aggressive and dangerous. It is composed of strong, forceful energies which deflect evil, overcome inertia, and create movement. Projective magic can be used to cure disease, strengthen the conscious mind, and increase courage and determination.

Destructive magic includes magic that impairs, debilitates or harms an opponent. The following destructive powers (identical to the spell of the same name) are available to crystal wands and staves: paralysis bolt, blind, mute, age, fire ball, call lightning, wind rush, levitate others, animate others, wisps of confusion, speed of the snail, magic net, negate magic, dispel magic barriers, and special powers as described under the specific wand description that follows. Each of these powers cost 10 I.S.P. to use.

To activate and use any type of crystal "rod," whether it be wand, staff or sword, the owner must first energize it with his/her Inner Strength (I.S.P.). The act of energizing gives the owner of the item special and immediate bonuses that stay in effect as long as the item is active. Special/magic powers may remain in effect after the rod is no longer active. When a sword is energized, its blade appears and only then may its greater powers be used. The staff, the greatest of the rods, is always active when bonded to a master psionic and does not need to be energized to access its higher abilities.

The Crystal Rod Devices were created in an age when battle was an everyday reality. Opposing camps, specializing in different forms of magic were constantly trying to expand their territories. The Crystal Wizard, the first Crystal Master, was a skilled soldier and had faced magic weapons in combat that were designed by others. The power wands are an example of the devices created for war by the Crystal Wizard. However, battle with some of the other magics often turned into hand to hand confrontations. The Crystal Wizard was a skilled soldier, and hand to hand combat training was a required skill. When the staff was designed, the crystal wizard included a new energization process in the psionic circuitry that hadn't been used in other devices. The energization of the rod turns it into a formidable hand to hand weapon. This "new" psionic energization circuit is now incorporated in the sword and the energy wand, all other devices use an older energizing circuit. Many wand powers are similar to magic spells and psionic powers, but others are unique to the crystal. The typical "rod" device is a wand made of (in decreasing order of power) solid crystal, a pair of crystals connected by a metal rod, or a single crystal at the end of a metal rod. The most powerful rods are always those made from solid crystal.

Kinetic Power Wand

A power wand will be composed of a solid metal rod, about 12 to 18 inches long (30 to 46 cm), with one or two crystals at both ends. The metal will be gold, silver, copper, or a combination of these. The crystals will always be six-sided but rarely more than a half inch thick (1 cm). The crystals may have rounded, pointed, or flat tips and are usually very colorful, with bits of metal and gems buried in them.

The power wand has the following abilities:

1. Energize. Gives the wielder a +2 save vs magic. I.S.P.: One (1) per every two melees/minutes.
2. Stop Object. Any object weighing 50 pounds (22.5 kg) or less can be stopped from moving, even if in mid-flight. I.S.P.: 5. Duration: 2 melees/minutes.
3. Paralysis bolt. Identical to the spell. I.S.P.: 8. Duration: Paralysis lasts 6 melees.
4. Levitate other. Identical to the spell. I.S.P.: 6. Duration: 6 melees/minutes. Limitation: Up to 250 pounds (112.5 kg) per level of the psychic.
5. Animate object. Identical to the spell. I.S.P.: 20. Duration: 6 melees/minutes. Limitations: Up to 150 pounds (67.5 kg) per level of the psychic.
6. Fly. Identical to the Fly as the Eagle spell only it can be cast on the crystal's owner and as many as one other person per level of the owner's experience. I.S.P.: 25. Duration: 20 melees/minutes.

Market Value: 300,000 + gold.

Wand of Psychic Force

This wand projects psychic energy with the following results:

1. Energize. Gives the wielder a +1 to save vs magic and psionic attacks. I.S.P. Cost: One (1) per every two melees/minutes.
2. Enhanced Awareness. The crystal's owner and all those he regards as his allies, within a 20 ft (6 m) radius of the crystal, will have their awareness strengthened. They are +1 on all saves, +1 initiative, +1 to parry, +1 to dodge. I.S.P.: One (1) per melee/minute.
3. Protection from Evil. An additional +1 to save vs magic or psionic attacks from evil characters. I.S.P.: 2 per melee.
4. Globe of Daylight. Identical to the spell. I.S.P.: 6 per hour. Duration: One hour and travels with the wand.
5. See the Invisible. Identical to the spell. I.S.P.: 6. Duration: One hour.
6. Awaken and Awareness. All comrades within a 20 ft (6 m) radius who are asleep or otherwise distracted will suddenly be made fully and immediately awake, alert and/or aware at any sounds, sights or feelings of danger. All are +2 on initiative, guards will not fall asleep on duty and the characters cannot be surprised by a sneak attack. The owner of the crystal can deliberately limit the power to effect as few as six individuals or to affect everyone. I.S.P.: 12 points per hour. Limitations: Applicable only when the group is camped, resting, and/or sleeping in one location. It does not count when the individual or group is on the move.

Market Value: 200,000 + gold.

Controller Wand

The controller wand has destructive/combat powers. It costs one I.S.P. to activate the wand for two melees/minutes at a time. The owner of the device is +1 to save vs mind control.

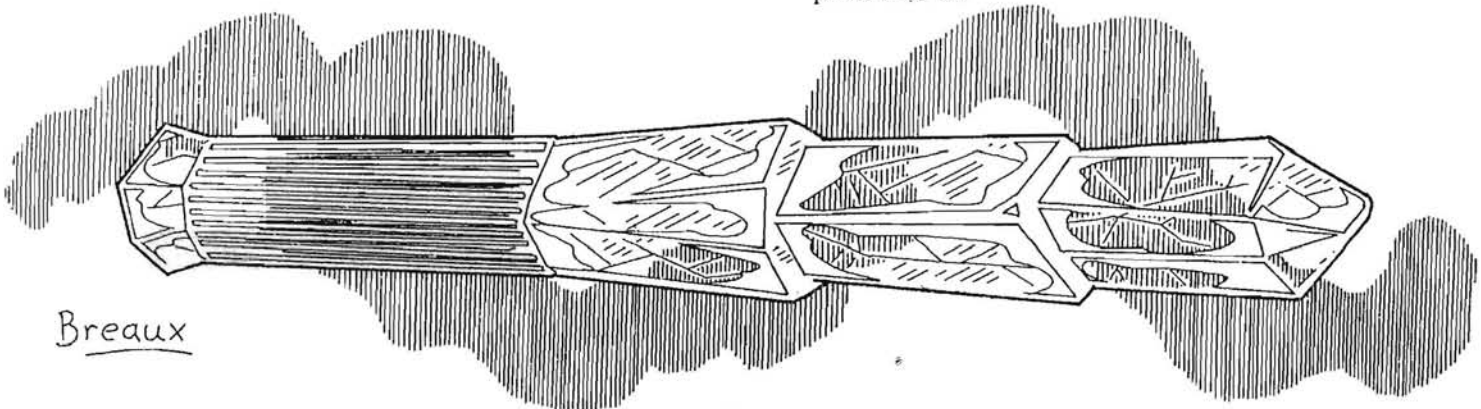
1. Dazzle. The creature is dazzled by a burst of "friendly" energy from the wand, startling and/or distracting it. The creature will be -2 on initiative for the entire melee and -2 to save against other powers/attacks of the wand. I.S.P.: 2 points. Duration: The flash of light is instant. Its dazing effect lasts one melee/minute.
2. Hypnotic suggestion. Identical to the psionic power. I.S.P.: 2 per each hypnotic suggestion.
3. Banish supernatural creature. The wand forces any one supernatural creature to leave the area and not return for at least an hour. This includes animated dead, mummies, zombies, entities, vampires, and low level devils and demons. High level creatures can roll to save vs magic. A roll of 14 or higher is a successful save and the creature is not banished. But if it saves, the power of the wand can be tried again on the same creature. I.S.P.: 12 per each attempt. Duration: The creature must stop any attack and flee the area for at least one hour.
4. Blind. Identical to the magic spell. I.S.P.: 10. Duration: 5 melees/minutes.
5. Cause insanity. Identical to the psionic power. I.S.P.: 20 per insanity.
6. Enslave and Bind creature. Any one creature can be magically bound and enchanted. The creature is prevented from going more than 60 feet (18 m) away from the wand, cannot attack the wand holder, and its hands and feet appear to be restrained by invisible shackles (reduce the number of attacks, combat bonuses and speed by half). High level creatures can roll to save vs magic. A roll of 14 or higher is a successful save and the creature is not bound or enchanted. But if it saves, the power of the wand can be tried again on the same beast. Dragons, high level men of magic (8th and higher), and powerful or high level supernatural beings are not effected at all. I.S.P.: 20 per 15 melees/minutes.

Market Value: 400,000 + gold.

Healing Wands

The healing wand can be used to affect either the wielder or others, one individual at a time.

1. Stop bleeding. When the wand is energized it will stop any bleeding by the owner of the device and, if kept activated during combat, it will prevent bleeding whenever he/she is cut. If touched to a wound on another character, it will instantly clot, stop bleeding and begin to heal — hit points recover twice as quickly as normal. I.S.P. cost: One (1) every two melees/minutes.
2. Heal wounds. Can only heal physical damage, i.e. damage caused by cuts, scrapes, bruises, falls, etc. I.S.P.: 5 per each 1D6 hit points restored.



3. Heal burns. This magic will restore hit points lost by fire/burns, energy burns or frostbite burns. I.S.P.: 5 per each 1D6 hit points restored.
4. Negate poison. This will negate any active poison or toxin, and can restore hit points lost through the effects of the toxin. I.S.P. cost: 8 per each 1D6 hit points restored.
5. Lust for life. Provides a bonus of +24% to save versus coma and death. I.S.P.: 15.
6. Cure disease. Any disease is immediately cured. No hit points lost through the course of the disease will be restored, but a quick recovery can now begin—heals twice as fast as normal. I.S.P.: 20.

Market Value: 500,000 + gold.

Energy Wand

An energy wand is always a straight length of crystal, measuring six to eighteen inches in length (15 to 46 cm), and rarely more than a half inch thick (1 cm). The crystals are normally six sided, with pointed tips and usually very colorful. There is only one type of energy wand which manifests powers based on pure energy. These powers cannot be used in any other type of wand. The powers of the energy wand are as follows.

1. Energize Wand. Although typically small (18 inches/0.5 m), the wand becomes an energized blunt weapon. The wand will do 2D6 damage. Bonuses from W.P. blunt, hand to hand, and attributes should be added. I.S.P. cost: One (1) point per every two melees/minutes.
2. Energy Bolt. The wand can shoot a psionic energy bolt. The bolt is composed of energy similar to electrical and will do 4D6 damage! Maximum range is 100 ft (30.5 m) and the target must be in line of sight; +5 to strike. I.S.P.: 6. Duration: Instant.
3. Energy Field. The wielder can direct the wand to create a psionic energy field or bubble with a radius of nine feet (2.7 m). The crackling sphere of energy will seem to be shooting off from the skin of the wielder and cascading around him. Anyone else within the energy field will take 4D6 damage per melee. I.S.P.: 50. Duration: 5 melees/minutes.
4. Sparkling Balls of Energy. The balls appear much like ball lightning but are not electrical energy. The wielder can aim his wand and shoot out one ball per melee action. The wielder must roll to strike, but the balls get a bonus of +4 to hit. Each ball does 3D6 damage. Maximum range is 60 feet (18 m). I.S.P.: 12 for three energy balls plus an additional 4 I.S.P. for each additional ball created.
5. Call Lightning. Identical to the spell. I.S.P.: 12. Duration: Instant. Damage: 1D6 per level of the crystal owner.
6. Dome of Energy. A solid dome of pure energy forms over the wielder of the wand. Any character touching the wall will suffer 1D6 damage every time it is touched. The dome is solid but seems flexible. Normal objects, including arrows, will bounce off and will not pass through. Likewise fire and energy bolts do not penetrate. A character can force his way through but such constant exertion against the energy will require one full minute, leaves the character open to attack for that minute (he cannot parry, dodge or stop pushing), and will suffer 5D6 damage in the process. I.S.P.: 15 I.S.P. per melee/minute.

Market Value: 500,000 gold.

Crystal Swords

The most dynamic of the crystal rods is the sword. The crystal sword is a rod that functions as a special version of the energy wand. Only the hilt/handle part of the rod is constantly visible. When not activated, this is all that can be seen; the blade is invisible when not in use.

However, once it is psionically activated for combat, the entire length of the crystal blade is visible and glows with energy.

For an individual other than the one who constructed it to use a crystal sword, a successful object read is required. As with all crystal magic items, only characters with some measure of psychic power can use the sword. As usual, the character must bond with the device in order to use its full range of powers. The crystal sword must be activated to be used as a sword or to access any of its other abilities.

When a crystal sword is activated or energized, a powerful magical transformation and physical manifestation takes place. A crystalline looking blade grows out from the hilt, and a sound not unlike the sound of metal scraping against metal, or a sword being drawn out of its sheath is heard. It is believed that the sound is actually that of ectoplasm crystallizing. The blade is constructed of ectoplasm and psychic energy, but once formed is indistinguishable from the crystal that makes up the solid hilt. The crystalline edge of the blade is extremely sharp and can be used to cut almost anything. The blade is indestructible as long as psychic energy is fed into it to constantly renew the ectoplasm.

To activate a crystal sword, the individual simply grasps the bladeless hilt/handle and expends one I.S.P. The psionic energy instantly awakens the power of the device and creates the crystallized ectoplasmic blade. The weapon functions like a real sword with excellent balance and sharpness. The psionic owner of the sword can bond to only one crystal sword, but can also use a crystal staff or wand, one simple band and as many as two finger bands.

The blade appears to shatter into thousands of chips of crystal and a sound like breaking glass is heard whenever the sword is deactivated/shut down or it loses contact with its owner. The chips of crystal immediately disappear, seemingly evaporating into an ectoplasmic mist which quickly fades.

A typical sword has an A.R. 18 and 1D4 × 100 + 500 S.D.C. points. Remember, the S.D.C. only becomes applicable when someone is trying to deliberately damage or destroy it.

The creation of a crystal sword requires metals, crystals, and gems valued at no less than 100,000 gold to be built into the hilt. The choice of specific gems is purely the preference of the builder. The actual psionic circuit encoded in the sword is not visible.

Every blade will be a different color. The color of the blade depends both on the wielder and the sword itself. The intermix of color in the blade tells two things: One, the core color is the characteristic color of the blade's maker. Two, the surrounding color is the characteristic color of its current owner. The specific colors reflect the wielder's alignment and health. Colors correspond with the colors of mystic symbols: **good or peace loving** is white, silver, or light blue; **selfishness/self serving and/or healing** is yellows, gold, shades of orange, and greens; **evil and/or a warrior's nature** is reds, blacks, grays, browns, and dark blues. The same colors will dominate the character's psychic aura. The deeper or brighter the color, the stronger the personality it represents. The paler the color, the weaker or less focused that personality. The degree to which one color dominates the blade indicates which personality element is the most dominant.

For Example: Archie's sword is bright green with a yellow core. Any crystal sword that Archie wields will be bright green, but the core of the blade may have a different color. For instance, with the sword that Sir Belveder wields, the blade always shows a bright white core no matter who uses it. If Archie was wielding Belveder's sword, the core of the blade would still show bright white and could be seen clearly through the rest of the green blade. Archie's green blade is a result of his interest in healing and partly from his selfish nature. The blade's yellow core indicates that the builder's focus was on light and knowledge and his good alignment.

The Curse of the Crystal Sword

The creation of a crystal sword is an intense, exhausting, and mind numbing task. One of the side effects of the months long project is that the creator's personality is often (50%) instilled into the sword. This is not true with most other rods. Crystal swords encoded with aspects of its creator will have its own alignment, prejudices, insanities, likes and dislikes which manifest themselves as subtle emotions, desires, impulses and fears. The personality of the sword never reveals itself until the wielder has reached a third level bond. At that level the psychic will begin to feel the crystal's presence. At fourth level this other personality begins to exert itself and personality changes or conflicts may begin to manifest themselves. Remember, the psychic bonding links the crystal sword and its owner/user together; in this case one influences the other. Unlike a rune sword, the crystal sword is not a completely independent personality. It does not have an I.Q. and it cannot communicate with the wielder. Even though the sword may have a particular alignment, it can be used by any psionic individual. Mutual alignments will simply mean less of an emotional clash than conflicting alignments. Every crystal sword has *at least* one powerful personality element or alignment and gives it to its owner (typically 1D4 + 1; G.M.'s discretion). Luckily, the majority of these elements will be personality traits and/or phobias, and seldom serious or debilitating insanities. The wielder cannot be cured of any insanities or odd habits/personality traits as long as he owns the crystal sword. These elements can NEVER be removed from the sword.

Crystal Sword Abilities

The basic ability of the sword is to become a powerful magic weapon, the equal to any rune sword. They all do a minimum of 5D6 damage when used as a sword.

The damage increases as the bond between the wielder and the sword becomes stronger. Add +2 points of damage for every level of the bond (2-6, ten points total when bonding is complete). Since the weapon is considered to be magical, it will hurt creatures that are impervious to normal weapons, but vulnerable to magic.

Duration as a sword: The crystal sword will remain active for four melees/minutes for each one I.S.P. expended and as long as contact with the hilt is maintained. The crystal sword can be deactivated at any time with a single thought from its owner/bond-mate. This means that the sword's owner can activate it and lend it to another person for a few minutes before the sword automatically deactivates (it can only be renewed/maintained as a blade when held by its owner). The weapon deactivates when the wielder is knocked unconscious.

Powers:

1. Energize. The magic sword blade appears. Damage: 5D6 (add +2 damage per each additional level of bonding starting with number two). Bonuses: +1 to strike, +2 to parry. I.S.P. Cost: One (1) point keeps the sword activated for four melees/minutes.
2. Combat Awareness. The crystal sword's owner is +1 on initiative, +1 to dodge and cannot be surprised by sneak attacks. I.S.P.: None; one of the more advanced powers from the basic act of activation.
3. Protection from Energy Attacks. Fire, heat, electrical and all energy attacks, including magic, do half damage. I.S.P.: None.
4. Pick one finger band "Protection" power.
5. Pick one Special Wand Ability as described under the specific types of crystal wands.
6. Pick one of the "Special Powers of the Crystal Sword;" see the descriptions that follow.

The Special Powers of the Crystal Sword (pick one):

Psionic Protection: The wielder gains a bonus to save vs psionics as a result of the bond created between the wielder and the sword. The character gains a +1 to save vs psionics when the sword is NOT activated and +3 when the sword is activated! I.S.P. cost: None, this is an automatic power.

Crystal Skin: A thin layer of crystallized ectoplasm forms around the owner/user of the sword like a second skin or flexible body armor. The Crystal Skin has an A.R. of 20 and a S.D.C. of 24 points! The skin also deflects electrical or lightning blasts (no damage) as well as bolts of flame and lasers/light beams (no damage). Magic cold, particle beams, psionic attacks and physical strikes do full damage. When the S.D.C. of the skin is depleted, it disappears in a mist. This is the same as the Master's Staff ability. I.S.P. cost: 24 per 10 melees or 24 per skin.

Crystal Shield: A whirling circle of psionic energy and ectoplasm leaps out of the sword and forms a crystalline shield in the character's other hand. The circular shield is +4 to parry. I.S.P. cost: 10 points for every 10 melees/minutes.

Blinding Flash: This is the same as the magic spell, but the sword is the only crystal device that has this ability. The sword suddenly swells with energy and sends out a burst of intense light. Opponent is temporarily blinded, -4 to strike, parry, and dodge for 1D6 melees. Standard save vs magic. I.S.P. cost: 4.

Any One Psionic Ability: A crystal sword can possess any one psychic ability regardless of level. Psionic strength, range and duration is equal to a sixth level mind mage. I.S.P. cost: As per that particular ability, see the psionics section in the **Palladium RPG**.

Market Value: Varies from 500,000 to over a million gold.

Crystal Staves

One the most powerful crystal rods is the staff. The typical staff is made of solid crystal. A staff will be four to eight feet (1.2 to 2.4 m), but most are around six feet (1.8 m) in length.

The crystal staff combines elements of all the other types of crystal rings and rods. The energization of the staff turns it into a formidable hand to hand weapon, but only a master psionic can tap into all of its powers. Minor and major psionic characters can only access the first six abilities, which are similar to those of the sword. This is true no matter how complete the psychic bond or how many decades the character may have the staff in his possession. Only a master psionic can access all 12 of the crystal rod's powers.

Powers:

1. Energize. The magic staff is activated. Damage as a blunt weapon: 2D6. Bonuses: +1 to parry. I.S.P. Cost: One (1) point keeps the staff activated for four melees/minutes.
2. Combat Awareness. +1 initiative, + dodge and cannot be surprised by sneak attacks. I.S.P.: None, one of the more advanced powers from the basic act of activation.
3. Pick one finger band "Receptive" power.
4. Pick one finger band "Protection" power.
5. Pick one "Destructive" wand power as described in the wand section.
6. Pick one of the "Special Powers of the Crystal Sword;" see the previous description.
7. Pick one additional "Destructive" wand power.
8. Pick one additional finger band "Protection" power.
9. Pick one of the wand "Healing" powers.

10. Pick one additional Special Power of the Crystal Sword or one of the Staff's Cloud abilities.
11. Rod does an additional 2D6 S.D.C. damage as a blunt weapon (staff).
12. Pick one Crystal Staff Cloud ability.

Crystal Staff Cloud Abilities:

Cloud of Health or Sickness: A green or black cloud of ectoplasm spreads out from the staff covering a radius of five feet (1.5 m) per level of the staff's owner. The cloud can be maintained for one melee/minute for every 40 I.S.P. spent. The clouds have the following effects: Green: Soothing/healing/curing: Restores 2D6 hit points, relieves discomforts of any kind, negates poison and disease, and provides a bonus of +50% to save vs coma and death.

The Black Cloud: Pain/suffering. Everybody who enters the cloud loses 2D6 hit points and suffers from fever, nausea and stomach cramps for 1D4 hours. Victims are -2 to strike, parry and dodge, reduce speed and attacks per melee by half, plus the characters are -2 to save vs sickness and poisons.

A successful roll to save vs magic requires a 16 or higher and means the symptoms are less severe and penalties are half. I.S.P.: Either cloud costs 40 I.S.P. Duration: 1D4 hours.

Cloud of Knowledge or Trouble: A yellow or blue cloud of ectoplasm spreads out to cover a radius of 5 feet (1.5 m) per level of the rod's owner, with the following effects: Yellow: Restores memories removed or lost by mind wipe, mental blocks or amnesia (there may be some special exceptions; G.M.'s discretion). +20% on all skills, +1 on initiative, and concentration is sharp and focused. The Blue Cloud: All within the cloud are subjected to ill luck for a period of 1-4 hours: -1 on all combat rolls, -1 to save vs magic and psionics, -4 to save vs illusions, -2 to save vs poison and disease, -10% on all skills, and tends to make mistakes, stumble, fall and make noise at the wrong time.

A successful roll to save vs magic requires a 16 or higher and means the penalties are half as severe. I.S.P.: Either cloud costs 60 I.S.P. Duration: 1D4 hours.

Cloud of Peace or War: A white or red cloud of ectoplasm spreads out to cover a radius of 5 feet (1.5 m) per level of the rod's owner, with the following effects: White: Everyone in the cloud loses the desire to battle. Victims of this magic suddenly have a greater understanding and compassion for his opponent. They are likely to smile, laugh, call a truce, and/or (for the moment) go their separate ways without bloodshed. Anybody who persists in fighting is -10 to strike and to inflict damage, and +10 to parry and dodge. Everyone gets an automatic parry!

The Red Cloud: The mood is one of anger. Tempers flare, prejudices and petty dislikes turn hostile! Victims of the cloud's magic are aggressive and mean, +10 to strike and damage, -10 to parry/dodge, and the voice of reason cannot be heard. Some may fight to the death.

A successful roll to save vs magic requires a 16 or higher and means the penalties, bonuses and effects are half as severe. I.S.P.: Either cloud costs 90 I.S.P. Duration: 1D4 x 10 minutes.

Cloud of Discord: A brown cloud spreads out to cover a radius of 5 feet (1.5 m) per level of the rod's owner, with the following effects: It diffuses ALL other magic and psionics! The Anti-Magic Cloud spell was based on this cloud! There is only a 1-50% chance that any magic will work while in the cloud and those that do work are only at FIRST level strength! No psionic powers function! Psionic characters find it difficult to concentrate and cannot even successfully meditate!!

A successful roll to save vs magic requires a 16 or higher and that means the duration of the cloud is reduced by half for that particular

character. I.S.P.: 130! Duration: 1D4 melees/minutes.
Market Value: 2D4 million gold!

Crystal Wheels

The wheel is more complex than the average crystal device. Although many more were once possible, only three crystal wheel devices are known to exist: **The Controller Wheel**, **The Crystal Fortress**, and the **Crystal Gateway**. The typical wheel is made up of seven main crystals. There is a central rod, or "hub" crystal, and the six other matched, but smaller crystals located around the hub, connected by metal or crystal spokes.

The Controller Wheel

The controller wheel has all of the abilities of the controller star and wand (12 powers total). In addition, the range of all the powers are two times that of the star or wand. Particularly large wheels may have tremendous range that may cover miles.

There is a controller wheel in storage at the crystal fortress and no one is currently bonded to it. The Crystal King is not likely to let most people use it; only an extremely trusted character. This particular controller wheel is eight feet (2.4 m) in diameter and weighs nearly three hundred pounds (135 kg). This wheel is composed of a huge hub crystal weighing 200 pounds (90 kg), and 2 feet long (0.6 m) and 8 inches (20 cm) in diameter. The six ring crystals are connected to the hub and each other by wire mesh, making it very easy to take down and carry. In storage or when it is being transported it is about the size of a duffel bag, two feet (60 cm) long and one foot (30 cm) in diameter.

The Crystal Fortress

The **Crystal Fortress** is a unique crystal device that is actually made up of two functionally separate parts. The Fortress itself is composed of the **keep** and **ring wall** (the rod and the ring), the palace section is a separate part. The **Crystal Palace** which sits atop the **Keep** is described separately because it is a distinct device that may function without being connected with a crystal fortress (rod and wheel).

Like most crystal devices, only one person, its master, can *bond* with the fortress and draw on its powers. To use its powers, the master must physically touch some portion of the fortress, the walls, floor, pillars, ceiling, etc. As long as any portion of exposed skin (hands, feet, etc.) is in contact with the crystal, its master/owner can draw on its powers. Skin to crystal contact with the keep/fortress also provides contact with the palace, if it is attached to the keep (such is the case with the fortress in The Valley). The only known Crystal Fortress and Palace is found in The Valley, nestled in the high peaks of the Old Kingdom Mountains. Its master, the Crystal King, is always barefoot and often wears little more than a loincloth in order to maintain easy contact with the Crystal Fortress and Palace.

The **Crystal Keep**, a tall, narrow tower, is the *rod portion of the structure*. The **hexagonal Ring Wall** is the ring or *wheel* half of this large scale rod and wheel. This particular rod and wheel combination is so large that people can actually live inside or around them. There are actually different floors, ramps, stairs and chambers within the keep/rod. Inhabitants, other than the fortress' master, the Crystal King, are not affected in any negative or overtly magical way.

The keep is effectively a very large, hollow, crystal staff at the center of a six sided ring. The **Fortress Keep** serves separately as the rod and *focus* of the master who controls it; in this case the Crystal King.

The keep/rod is 100 feet (30.5 m) in diameter, and 100 feet (30.5 m) long/tall. It is six sided, with a flat top and its bottom is located beneath the ground. At the joint of each corner of the hexagonal wall

is one of the six, giant ring crystals. Each stands about 50 feet (15 m) tall and 50 feet (15 m) in diameter with a flat top. These six *ring crystals* are connected to each other by a one mile (1.6 km) long length of solid crystal wall. Each wall section of crystal is a mile (1.6 km) long and 30 feet (9 m) tall. The top of the wall parts have a sharp chisel point, making it difficult to scale. Holding onto the chisel point inflicts 1D6 points of damage and cuts like a knife. Falling or leaning on the chiselled point causes 3D6 points of damage and is akin to falling on an axe blade.

The huge area encompassed by the Fortress wheel/ring wall (one mile/1.6 km radius) gives the fortress complex a 30 mile (48 km) range of operation.

The Curse of the Crystal Fortress

The building of such a colossal construction takes years to complete. It is an intense and exhausting task. One of the side effects from the great amount of time and effort put into its creation is that some portion of the creator's personality is ALWAYS instilled into the giant device. Consequently, a Crystal Fortress will always have the alignment, prejudices, phobias and other strong emotions or insanities from its creator. The psionic bonding process with the device means that the new master of the fortress or palace also bonds with the psychic impressions imprinted into the device when it was made. This psychic imprint of the original creator can have a profound effect on the new owner. At first, the other personality traits manifest themselves as subtle emotions, desires, impulses and fears.

At seventh level bonding (the 7th power) the other personality begins to exert itself and can begin to change the personality of the new owner. Conflicts of alignment, motives and desires will occur regularly. By the 12th level of bonding the new owner may change his or her alignment and is likely to have several new personality quirks, habits and goals that the character never had prior to his bonding with the crystal device. With the passage of time and further bonding, the new owner, especially characters with an M.E. of 20 or less, will take on much of the personality of the original creator, and may even talk and/or try to look like him/her. All of this happens on the subconscious level so the real personality and conscious mind of the new owner is completely oblivious to any change and dismisses any comments to the contrary.

Note: All characters who bond with a crystal fortress or palace will be subject to the changes noted above. The alignment will change, unless the two alignments are the same, and the character will suffer from 1D4 + 1 phobias (and/or obsessions; obsessions can be found in other Palladium RPGs, including **Heroes Unlimited** and **Rifts**), and one additional insanity of the G.M.'s choice (be reasonable). This is in addition to new quirks, habits, prejudices, likes and dislikes. The owner/user of the crystal device cannot be cured of any insanities or habits or personality traits as long as he is linked to the crystal fortress or palace. The only way is to leave it/them and never come within 100 miles of it! The same thing will happen to any new character who links with the crystal structures. These elements can NEVER be removed from the crystal structures! **Also see** the description of the Crystal King for more specific details.

Remember, only one person can link with and use the powers of the crystal fortress. If the fortress is abandoned by its current owner, it will become completely dormant, awakening only when a new psionic character links to it. If the old owner returns after a new character has linked to the device, he cannot exert any control or power over it; his link, at least for the moment, is broken. Only the current owner can call upon its powers. However, if the current owner is slain and the previous owner is within the 30 mile (48 km) range, the fortress bonds to him whether he wants it to or not. The link is instant and complete, giving him immediate and total control (up to the level of his previous knowledge) over the device.

Crystal Fortress Statistical Data

The entire ring wall is 6 miles (9.6 km) long, 30 feet (9 m) thick, and 30 feet (9 m) tall. Each 20 × 20 × 20 ft (6 × 6 × 6 m) section of the ring wall and keep has 20,000 S.D.C. This is a little harder than stone. For comparison, the same amount of iron has 25,000 S.D.C., the same amount of stone would be rated at 18,500 S.D.C. It is impossible to breach any section smaller than a twenty feet (6 m) because of the nature and construction of the crystal.

Explosion Note: Destroying any area of the wall will cause an explosive discharge of energy! The 20,000 S.D.C. rating still represents a high internal energy density. **If the ring wall were to fracture and explode**, it would do 10D6 × 20 damage to anything within 10 feet (3 m) of it, or 10D6 × 2 damage to anything within 100 feet (30 m) of it. However, in order for the entire ring wall to fracture, its entire 100 million S.D.C. must be depleted.

Repair Note: The wall can be made to regrow NEW crystal in a matter of minutes. A 20 foot section will require the Crystal Palace to expend 20,000 I.S.P. and will be as good as new within 10 minutes.

The total S.D.C. of The Crystal Fortress amounts to 100,000,000 S.D.C. because of the large amount of crystal in the structure. The entire fortress cost in excess of 1,000,000,000 I.S.P. to build and activate, requiring the work of over 3000 mages, slaving under the wizard for about 15 years, to complete the construction.

Note: The Crystal King/owner instantly senses when and where damage is occurring to any part of the fortress, ring wall or palace.

The powers of The Crystal Fortress

The fortress has the powers of the **controller rod**, **controller star**, **campfire star**, **monitor star**, and the **communicator headband**. Many of these powers are effectively "on" all the time.

The range of most powers (including the campfire and monitor powers) is 30 miles (48 km). This covers the entire valley.

I.S.P.: The King expends all of his personal I.S.P. every day in maintaining the Crystal Fortress, restoring S.D.C. damage, and replenishing the storage battery. The Keep/rod is really an I.S.P. storage battery with a maximum capacity of one million I.S.P. The Fortress also draws small amounts of I.S.P. from ALL of the residents in The Valley. The Crystal Fortress is able to replenish its reserve of psionic energy by drawing I.S.P. from anyone within The Valley, but only when they are sleeping or meditating, and only if they are near their maximum I.S.P. level. While they sleep, the Fortress draws one I.S.P. per hour from each, providing it with nearly 10,000 I.S.P. per day.

Its current reserve is at a whopping 901,450 I.S.P. Only the Crystal King can access the I.S.P. reserve or use any of its formidable powers.

Remember, the Crystal Fortress is effectively a computer with access to incredible powers and abilities. However, for any of those powers to be used, it must be *accessed* and directed by the Crystal King. It is the king (albeit under the psionic influence of the Crystal Fortress) who actually controls every aspect of the Fortress, from weather control to daily functions. Without him the Fortress shuts down.

Levels of Power

Communicator Powers

Note: Most of these powers are on all the time. That is one of the reasons that the fortress must constantly collect new I.S.P.

1. Detect Psionics. I.S.P.: Not applicable; always on. Duration: Constant. Range: 30 miles (48 km). Note: When a psionic approaches the keep, the Crystal King and the Fortress will sense the character's presence.

2. Extended telepathy. I.S.P.: Not applicable; always on. Duration: Constant. Range: 5 miles (8 km).
3. Short-range call. I.S.P.: Not applicable. Duration: Constant. Range: 10 miles (16 km).
4. Long-range telepathy. I.S.P.: Not applicable; always on. Duration: Constant. Range: 30 miles (48 km). When communicating with a communicator headband, the range increases to 50 miles (80 km).
5. Long-range call. I.S.P.: 10. Duration: 1 hour. Range: This is a one-way telepathic message to a specific individual within 30 miles (48 km). When calling a person wearing a communicator headband, range increases to 300 miles (480 km).
6. Worldwide call/communication. I.S.P.: 20. Duration: 1 hour. Range: A one-way call can be made to any one character anywhere in the world. Two-way communication is possible only if the character being contacted is wearing a crystal communicator.

The Powers of the Campfire Star

Note: Most of these powers are on all the time and is one of the reasons that the fortress must constantly collect new I.S.P.

7. Light. The crystal device will radiate light equal to a large, well stoked campfire. The light is normally a flickering type like a campfire, but can be made steady and constant for double the I.S.P. cost. The light can also be reduced in intensity or turned off with a thought. This light does not radiate heat. In the case of the fortress, the king can turn the light on in any or every room, or cause the entire fortress and ring wall to glow with light. I.S.P.: 2 per hour.
8. Warmth. In the case of the fortress, the king can create warmth in any or every room, or cause the entire fortress and ring wall to radiate heat (not dangerous although it may seem menacing). The amount of heat can be regulated by its owner, but will never exceed the owner's comfort level. The crystal itself remains cool to the touch. I.S.P.: 4 per hour. Range: The entire valley, 30 mile (48 km) area! This is what protects The Valley from the cold temperatures of the surrounding mountain area.
9. Protection from insects/animals. A psionic aura keeps away pestering, non-intelligent insects and animals. I.S.P.: 4 per hour. Range: The entire valley, a 30 mile (48 km) area!
10. Environmental shield. The environment of the entire valley, a 30 mile (48 km) area, is under the control of the Crystal King and kept at his comfort level. This means temperature, humidity, rain, wind, etc., are all regulated by the king and the Crystal Fortress! I.S.P.: 20 per hour. Range: 30 miles (48 km).
11. Protection from monsters. The entire valley, a 30 mile (48 km) area, is under the protection of the Crystal King and his fortress. The magical aura that encompasses the entire valley functions like a simple circle of protection and repel animals spell. Predatory animals, rock crawlers, devil diggers, giant insects and other low intelligent animals/monsters will not invade the area. Evil members of the monster races and supernatural beings (including elementals, devils and demons) cannot enter the area of protection either. I.S.P.: 20 per hour.
12. Energy Absorption. The entire valley, a 30 mile (48 km) area, is under the protection of the Crystal King and his fortress. The Valley is protected from all types of energy attacks, including lightning, forest fires, etc.

Note: This also means that magic powers such as call lightning, ball lightning, fire balls, circles and walls of any kind will NOT work, cannot be cast, anywhere in The Valley. However, the Crystal King can work any of the Fortress' powers or temporarily cancel this protection or a small area of this protection to allow his wizards to work their energy magic. I.S.P.: 6 per hour. Range: The 30 mile (48 km) area of The Valley.

The Powers of The Monitor Star

Note: The Crystal King can use any or all of these powers at will by simply looking into any part of the Crystal Fortress, Palace or ring wall.

13. Close-range monitor. The user can track a single individual, humanoid or animal, at a distance up to one mile (1.6 km). I.S.P.: One (1) per melee/minute.
14. Long-range monitor. A single individual can be tracked at up to 100 miles (160 km) away. I.S.P.: Two (2) per melee/minute.
15. Worldwide tracking. The range is extended to anywhere in the world! I.S.P.: 6 per melee/minute.
16. Monitor psyche. The owner of the star can sense the emotions of the character he is observing. Fear, anger, sorrow, happiness, love, anxiety, and other emotions can be recognized. I.S.P.: An additional 4 per melee/minute added to the close, long range or world power.
17. Monitor the area around the subject being observed. The owner of the star can sense the presence of magic, psionics and supernatural evil through the person he is observing. He can also see astral travelers. I.S.P.: An additional 4 per melee/minute added to the close, long range, or world power.
18. Dimensional monitor. The fortress cannot see into other dimensions, but it will indicate that the subject of observation is alive and that he has gone to a different dimension. This power also enables the user to see astral travelers and entities who may be observing him or in the area. This is possible because the astral traveler's physical body is still in our physical world and the traveler is looking into our dimension. I.S.P.: 10 per melee/minute.

The Powers of the Controller Star

Note: Most of these powers are on all the time and that is why the fortress must constantly collect new I.S.P. It is the powers of the Controller Star, directed by the personality and paranoia of the Fortress' creator, that is responsible for the mass mind control and memory losses of The Valley's inhabitants.

Also note that the Crystal King is not consciously aware of powers 19-24, or powers 29 or 30. Consequently, he cannot call upon or deliberately use them. Powers 19-24 are in force as part of the king's subconscious fears and as a result of the personality bonding with the fortress' insane creator.

19. Empathy. This power works like the psionic power, but is limited to the connection range/area effect of the device as limited by its size. Everyone within range will be subject to broadcasting their emotions. I.S.P.: One (1) per every four melees/minutes.
20. Extended telepathy. Identical to the psionic power. I.S.P.: Two (2) I.S.P. per every four melees/minutes. Range: 30 miles (48 km).
21. Mind wipe. By touching the device and a character, the owner of the crystal device can psionically erase memories. Identical to the mind wipe ability. I.S.P. cost: 10 for a single thought, 50 to completely blank a mind. Range: This power can only be used at the Fortress and Palace.
22. Cure insanity. Any form of insanity, whether resulting from trauma or magic, can be permanently cured. I.S.P.: 90. Range: This power can only be used at the Fortress and Palace.
23. Protection from hostility. All within the area of effect are impervious to possession and vampire mind control. Similarly, possessing entities and vampires cannot enter the area. Furthermore, any creatures with hostile thoughts are unable to enter (or stay in) the area of effect. A saving throw to save vs psionics (16 or higher) is allowed. A successful save means the creature can enter the area and attack but is — 4 to strike, parry and initiative. I.S.P.: 15 per hour. Range: This power can only be used in the Fortress and Palace.

24. **Mind scrambler.** The memory of every person within the area of effect is scrambled. Thoughts are a confusing jumble, details are impossible to remember and its victims cannot articulate their thoughts. Penalties: -14% on all skills, -2 on initiative, -2 to strike, parry and dodge, -4 to save vs hypnotic suggestion, charm, mind control and illusions. A saving throw to save vs psionics (16 or higher) is allowed. A successful save means the character is not as "scrambled" and all penalties are half. I.S.P.: 20 per hour. Range: 30 miles (48 km) within the entire valley.

The Powers of the Controller Rod

Note: The Crystal King can use any or all of these powers by touching any part of the Crystal Fortress, Palace or ring wall.

25. **Dazzle.** The creature is dazzled by a burst of "friendly" energy, startling and/or distracting it. The creature will be -2 on initiative for the entire melee and -2 to save against other powers/attacks. I.S.P.: 2 points. Duration: The flash of light is instant. Its dazing effect lasts one melee/minute.
26. **Hypnotic suggestion.** Identical to the psionic power. I.S.P.: 2 per each hypnotic suggestion.
27. **Banish supernatural creature.** This power forces any one supernatural creature to leave the area and not return for at least an hour. This includes animated dead, mummies, zombies, entities, vampires, and low level devils and demons. High level creatures can roll to save vs magic. A roll of 14 or higher is a successful save and the creature is not banished. But if it saves, the power can be tried again on the same creature. I.S.P.: 12 per each attempt. Duration: The creature must stop any attack and flee the area for at least one hour.
28. **Blind.** Identical to the magic spell. I.S.P.: 10. Duration. 5 melees/minutes.
29. **Cause insanity.** Identical to the psionic power. I.S.P.: 20 per insanity.
30. **Enslave and Bind creature.** Any one creature can be magically bound and enchanted. The creature is prevented from going more than 60 feet (18 m) away from the user, cannot attack, and its hands and feet appear to be restrained by invisible shackles (reduce the number of attacks, combat bonuses and speed by half). High level creatures can roll to save vs magic. A roll of 14 or higher is a successful save and the creature is not bound or enchanted. But if it saves, the power can be tried again on the same beast. Dragons, high level men of magic (8th and higher), and powerful or high level supernatural beings are not affected at all. I.S.P.: 20 per 15 melees/minutes.

Special Power

31. One ability unique to the fortress is the power to create openings, portals and passages through solid walls. The Keep and each of the six standing ring crystals at the ring wall have secret internal passages that are accessible only to the Master of the Crystal Fortress, the Crystal King. Both the Keep and ring wall pillars seem to be completely solid but are actually made up of millions of individual crystals which can be manipulated and moved by the king to make openings and passage ways.

The king can also use this power to reshape the internal rooms, hallways and passages of the keep, turn doorways into solid walls and solid wall into a doorway.

He also uses the power to create **secret vaults** where he stores valuables and crystal devices. These vaults are small chambers or pockets inside solid walls or pillars. There is no door or opening to the vault because only the king may access it. To do so, he simply moves the crystal to make an opening. In some instances, shapes and colors of the objects contained inside a vault can be seen through the semi-transparent crystal, but it is impossible to

tell exactly what the object may be and the only way to get to it is to smash through the crystal. Any attacks against the structure of the fortress or palace, and the location of the attack, is instantly known to the Crystal King.

The I.S.P. cost for rearranging a ten foot (3 m) area of crystal is 20 I.S.P. per action/change. For example: To turn a door into part of the wall costs 20 I.S.P. and counts as one melee action. Likewise, to make an opening/door it costs 20 I.S.P. and counts as one melee action. To make a vault means making an opening, creating a room or pocket, and sealing the vault; 60 I.S.P., taking three melee actions/attacks or about one to one and a half minutes.

Other Unique Crystal Devices

The Crystal Palace

The Crystal Palace is a special crystal structure similar in some ways to the Crystal Fortress. It has the same special power to create passages, rooms, vaults and doorways, as well as the same basic S.D.C., repair, and explosion stats. The palace also has the same **campfire star** powers and those of the **healing wand**; 13 powers in all. The healing powers work automatically on the master of the palace. Typically a week's rest and relaxation in the palace will restore all of a character's hit points, and cure any disease. It also has water purification fonts, fireless cooking pits, flushless toilets, and numerous other convenient abilities.

The Crystal Palace rests on top of the Crystal Keep and has about a half acre (20,000 square feet — 1,858 square m) of functional living area, spread over three main levels. It can easily house forty people in palatial comfort, but currently has less than a dozen permanent residents.

The Cradle Crystal Ball

The crystal ball is an ordinary, pure ball of crystal, typically 4, 6, or 8 inches (10, 15, or 20 cm) in diameter. It is pure, raw, but polished crystal, and I.S.P. do not go into making it. The crystal ball itself is basically not the source of the psionic crystal magic, but the method of view (i.e. a monitor). This is why the modern crystal balls cannot originate from the ancient crystal-magic devices from the Time of a Thousand Magics.

The power of this ancient style of crystal ball rests in the **cradle** that holds the ball. The cradle is cut from a block of crystal, and has a six sided, faceted, concave depression to hold the ball. The pedestal is clearly a crystal-magic device complete with the psionic circuitry of gold and silver threads woven through the block. The cradle is useless without a proper size, perfectly round, perfectly polished, pure crystal sphere (non-magical). Size is seldom a problem because the place for the ball is actually a six faceted in-cut crystal shape that can hold a range of appropriate sizes, just nothing too small or too large.

Note: Only the character linked to the crystal cradle can see, hear and communicate through the cradle and ball. Others see nothing inside the crystal ball.

The powers of the cradle crystal ball:

1. **Locate and view others.** A single individual or group who is well known to the crystal user can be located, observed and followed up to 2000 miles (3218 km) away. The crystal viewer sees and hears everything the subject person sees, says or hears. Similar powers and restrictions as for a conventional magic crystal ball apply (see page 139 of the **Palladium RPG**). I.S.P.: One (1) per melee/minute.

2. Call & link to another crystal ball. This must be a functional crystal ball and cradle, and it must be within 1800 miles (2900 km). The call is heard at the other crystal, but the first sees nothing until the second is also activated. When the other side of the link is established, full two-way sight and sound can be transmitted from one to the other. I.S.P.: One (1) point per melee/minute. Users of both crystals must expend I.S.P. in order to maintain the link.
3. Bird's eye view. This allows the crystal viewer to look at a wide area (50 foot/15.2 m radius) around the subject person he is observing or communicating with from a bird's eye view (height of 50 feet/15 m). I.S.P.: An additional 10 points per melee/minute.
4. Roving sight: Allows the user to direct the bird's eye view to travel in any direction at a speed of 45 (31 mph/49 kmph), but always maintaining a height of 50 feet (15 m) above the surface. I.S.P.: An additional 20 points per melee/minute. Range: 1000 feet (305 m).
5. Dimensional call and link to crystal ball. Same as number two, only this link can transcend to other dimensions! I.S.P.: 30 points per melee/minute. Users of both crystals must expend I.S.P. in order to maintain the link.



Crystal Armor

Crystal armor is a special crystal item that may be related to crystal rings. Its hollowness and circular, tube shapes may make it a deviant rod and ring structure.

Armor Rating: 18

S.D.C.: 300

I.S.P.: One (1) point for every two melees/minutes of movement.

Movement & Limitations: Crystal armour is very different than the usual suit of armor. When it is not activated, it stands as one solid, rigid piece like a life sized sculpture. It weighs only 30 pounds so it can be transported with relative ease. It is impossible to even enter

the suit unless it is activated/energized at a cost of one I.S.P. for every two melees/minutes of movement. When energized, the armor's owner simply backs into it. The crystal allows him to press through and covers every inch of his body. The action of donning the suit counts as one melee attack for that round. The crystal suit seems to be weightless and does not encumber the wearer in any way (no prowling or speed penalties).

Repairs: The suit will protect the wearer until the S.D.C. reaches zero. Up until that point, all the armor's powers remain fully functioning.

The character pops out of the armor the moment it reaches zero S.D.C.; however, the armor is not destroyed until it has taken an additional 300 S.D.C. damage below zero. The zero or below zero armor simply stands or lays on the ground in a temporarily unusable condition. It cannot be worn or its powers used until it is brought back up to at least one point above zero. The S.D.C. can be replenished/repaid at a cost of one I.S.P. point per each one S.D.C. point. The I.S.P. can come only from the armor's owner. Obviously, tremendous damage may require several days or even weeks to restore the armor to its full level of 300 points. If more than 300 points below zero (600 total) are inflicted, the armor is destroyed.

Magic Powers: All crystal suits of armor have the same 18 powers: The six **communicator headband** powers, the six **defender ring** powers, and the six **protector ring** powers. The powers are available to the wearer at the same levels as listed with those devices and the I.S.P. costs are the also the same. As usual, the character using the armor must have some measure of psionic abilities (needs I.S.P.) and must mentally link/bond with the armor. The longer the bond, the more powers are available to him.

Note: At least a dozen suits of crystal armor have survived the ages, two of which are located in The Valley.

Crystal Golem

The **Crystal Golem** is frighteningly beautiful to behold (P.B. 28) and 86% of those confronting it are loath to attack it for fear of damaging it! The crystal golem stands fifteen feet (4.6 m) tall and its appearance resembles that of an elf. It has bright green emerald eyes and a huge, glowing, red ruby for a heart. Its hair is pure flowing silver. Gold, silver, and copper threads run throughout its body more densely than with other crystal objects. It seems that crystal bones can even be seen beneath its crystal skin.

The only known crystal golem stands at the entrance to the tomb of the kings in the Old Kingdom Mountains (Prestida family). It will allow no one to pass. It is not an intelligent creature, so it will not try to communicate or offer any information. It will not attack unless a character tries to pass (enter the tombs) or attacks it first. A **Crystal Sword** hangs from the waist of the golem, but the creature cannot bond with or use the blade in any way.

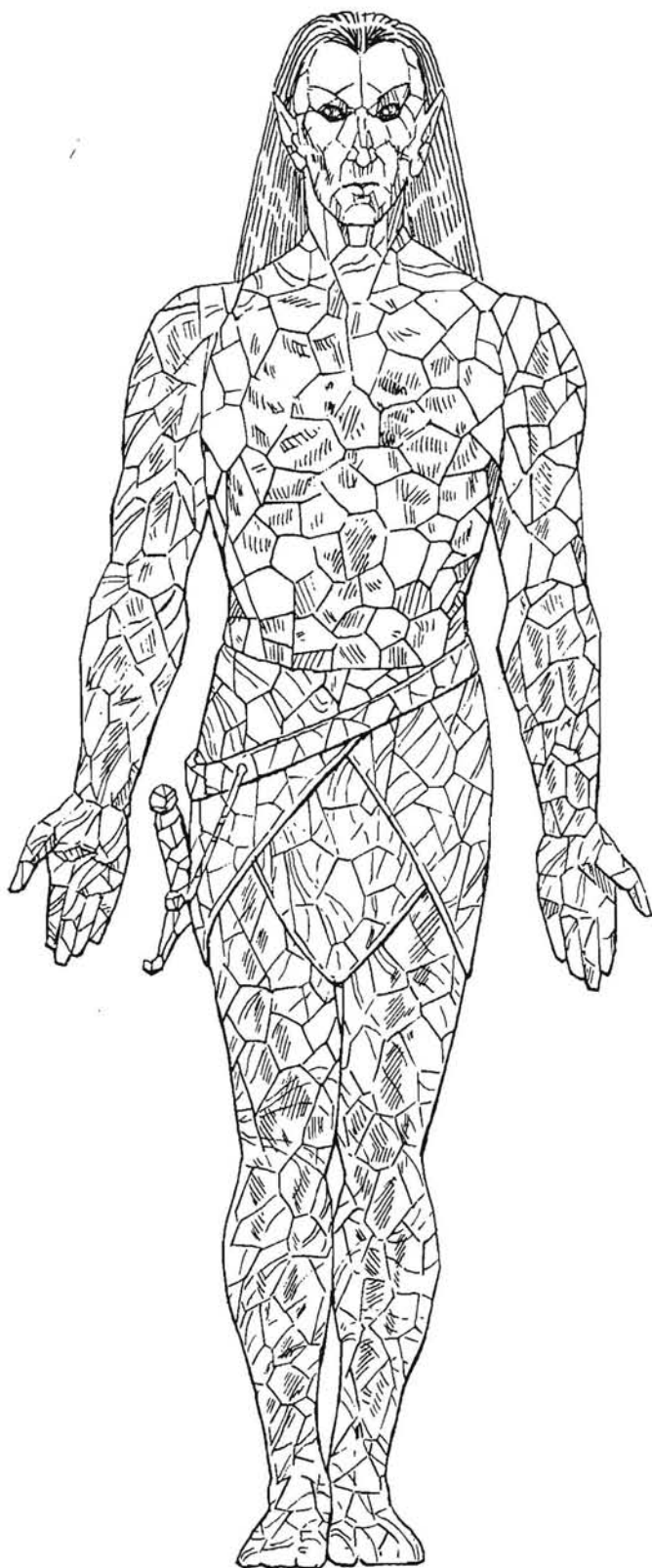
The golem was created thousands of years ago as the protector of the tomb. It has loyally done so for eons. It keeps the sword for its creator, who has never returned (Died? Gone to another dimension?). It can be thought of as a complex structure composed of rods and rings. The crystal golem is the only animated crystal with preprogrammed responses and independent actions — it functions like a robot.

The Typical Crystal Golem

Attributes: I.Q. 8, P.S. 25, P.P. 20, P.B. 28, and Spd 12. The M.A., M.E. and P.E. are not applicable.

Natural A.R.: 18

S.D.C.: 712 (The golem originally had 1000 points but its master has never returned to replenish its S.D.C.). If the golem sustains 712 S.D.C. damage, it will be deactivated, but not destroyed. An additional 400 S.D.C. below zero must be inflicted to destroy it. Otherwise, the golem can be healed by its owner (who is presumably dead) at the usual cost of one psionic I.S.P. per one S.D.C. point.



If the total S.D.C. are depleted, it will fracture and explode doing $1D6 \times 100$ damage to a 30 foot (9 m) area.

Attacks per Melee: Five. Damage is $2D6 + 10$ by punch or kick, or by weapon, +3 to strike, parry and dodge, +1 on initiative. The golem can also shoot a pair of laser-like beams from its eyes as often as twice per melee round. Each laser blast counts as one of its melee attacks. Laser damage: $3D6$ per blast, range: 200 feet (61 m).

Bonuses: +3 to save vs magic and psionics.

Abilities: It is impervious to poison, gases, drugs, and disease, as well as to most magic and psionics; i.e. it has no mind, so charm, sleep, mind control, illusions, etc., have no effect. It has no body of flesh and blood so it is impervious to cold, heat, pain, itching, blindness, age, illness, etc.

It is also impervious, fire, light/lasers, and electricity. Even magic fire, cold, electrical and energy attacks do half damage. Damage can be inflicted by physical attacks only, and then the high natural A.R. of 18 (hard crystal) prevents most damage. The golem possesses nightvision equivalent to normal day vision and can see the invisible.

Size: 15 feet (4.5 m) tall and weighs nearly 4,000 pounds (1800 kg).

The Crystal Goblet

The goblet is made of solid quartz crystal. It has a large bowl on a thick stem with a wide base. A single blood red ruby is at the base of the bowl (fused into the crystal). There are also fine veins of gold and silver branching out from the colored heart and extending to all edges of the goblet. It can be considered a modified ring (cup) and rod (the stem of the cup).

Any psychic can use the goblet once he has object read its operation. This is the only device that can be used without instruction or permanent mind bonding. The character must first object read the device and, if successful, will discover how to use the first ability. After he uses the goblet the first time, he can object read it again, while it contains a liquid, to discover what it can do with that fluid. Note that only certain powers will be revealed depending on the liquid that the goblet contains.

It is always best to use the first level power to purify the liquid before invoking any of its other powers. The Water of Life power requires that the fluid in the cup be purified water or it will not work.

The powers of the Crystal Goblet:

Note: The goblet is the only crystal device which is indestructible.

1. **Purify Liquid.** Any water, beverage, or fluid poured into the goblet will be purified and made drinkable, eliminating/negating any poison, toxins, disease, or other harmful impurities the fluid might contain. It will even eliminate the harmful components of acid. The purification process makes any beverage taste better. I.S.P.: Two points per cup (8 ounces/236 milliliters).
2. **Instant Breakfast.** Any purified beverage in the goblet is transformed into a potent, tasty drink that is the equivalent of one nutritious, balanced meal, fully satisfying, filling and healthy. I.S.P.: 10 per cup; the entire cup must be drunk to equal a complete meal.
3. **Cleansing Liquid.** Purified water in the goblet will be changed into a potion that can negate any poison or toxin. It also has a 1-20% chance of negating magic potions, drinks, tonics and teas. I.S.P.: 15 per cup; add an additional 10 points when trying to negate a magic potion.
4. **Healing Potion.** Any clear liquid, purified or not, is converted into a healing potion. A purified liquid restores $2D6$ hit points, non-purified $1D6$ hit points. The entire cup must be drunk. I.S.P.: 25 per cup.
5. **Super Healing Potion.** Any purified liquid is converted into a super healing potion which restores $1D6 \times 10$ hit points. I.S.P.: 50 points; the entire cup must be drunk.
6. **Water of Life.** Purified, clear water in the goblet will appear to be unchanged, but has been transformed into another type of super healing potion. This time the water is poured directly onto the head of a character dying of poisoning or in a coma, (but not yet dead). The healing waters immediately negate any toxin or successfully brings the character out of a coma with 10 hit points above zero. I.S.P.: 75

7. **Blood of Life.** Red wine poured into the goblet will be changed to blood. When the healing blood is poured directly onto the throat of a recently deceased character, it will immediately repair the damage and bring the character to two hit points above zero. There are limitations: 1) The character must have been dead for less than one hour. 2) This magic cannot help a character who has died from fire, cold, poison, or magic. I.S.P.: 100
8. **Ectoplasm of Restoration.** Pure spirits (any kind of distilled alcohol) poured into the goblet will be changed into sort of ectoplasm. When the ectoplasmic fluid is poured onto a the damaged location, it will immediately fully transform and restore the missing appendage, limb, or organ. The fluid can also be used to remove scars. There are limitations and conditions: 1) The missing appendage must have been lost less than one year ago. 2) This magic cannot help a character who has lost the appendage from fire or magic. 3) Restored appendages such as legs and arms are not quite restored to full strength and will always have half the P.S., P.P. or Spd of the other. I.S.P.: 200
9. **Fountain of Youth.** Pure fruit juice (100% fruit juices only; any fruit is suitable) placed in the goblet will be transformed into a potion that restores youth to the character. The character is quickly restored to the appearance and physical vitality of a 20 year old! Attributes that have decreased because of age will be restored. There are limitations and conditions: 1) This magic only works on humans, changelings, ogres, wolven, coyotes, and kankoran! 2) The character is transformed back to FIRST level! Skills, level of proficiencies, abilities, powers, and hit points are all back to first level. Experience points start at zero. 3) Memories of years past are still remembered, but details of experiences, like how to ride a horse, or fight, or track, etc. are lost (back to 1st level). The old memories of past events are the equivalent of remembering the events seen (not lived) in a movie. I.S.P.: 250

10. **The Power of Life.** A purified liquid of any kind is transformed into a magic potion that instills the drinker with hope, courage and a will to live. Any magic, psionic or drug induced despair, sorrow, depression and similar emotions are dispelled. The character is reborn with confidence, courage, a resolve toward doing what is right and just, and a desire to fight to live or to save others. The latter provides the following bonuses: +1 on initiative, +1 on all saving throws, +10 to save vs horror factor and insanity, +10% to save vs coma, and +10 on M.A./charisma! I.S.P.: 200, Duration: One hour. When the magic elapses, all bonuses are gone, but the magic or psionic despair is gone and the character feels very positive about his/her life.

The Crystal Gateway

During the Time of a Thousand Magics, these gateways were used to send a series of people through to other places and dimensions. It was a fantastic means of instantaneous travel that could, within limits, span the universe. The crystal masters who controlled these crystal gateways would often send people all over the world or to new worlds to explore. Or they could create a dimensional portal that opened into the center of an enemy's stronghold and then send troops, spies or assassins through it. Best of all, there would be no trace of the mystic portal in the enemy's camp and they were powerless to retaliate unless they knew who sent the troops and had a crystal gateway too.

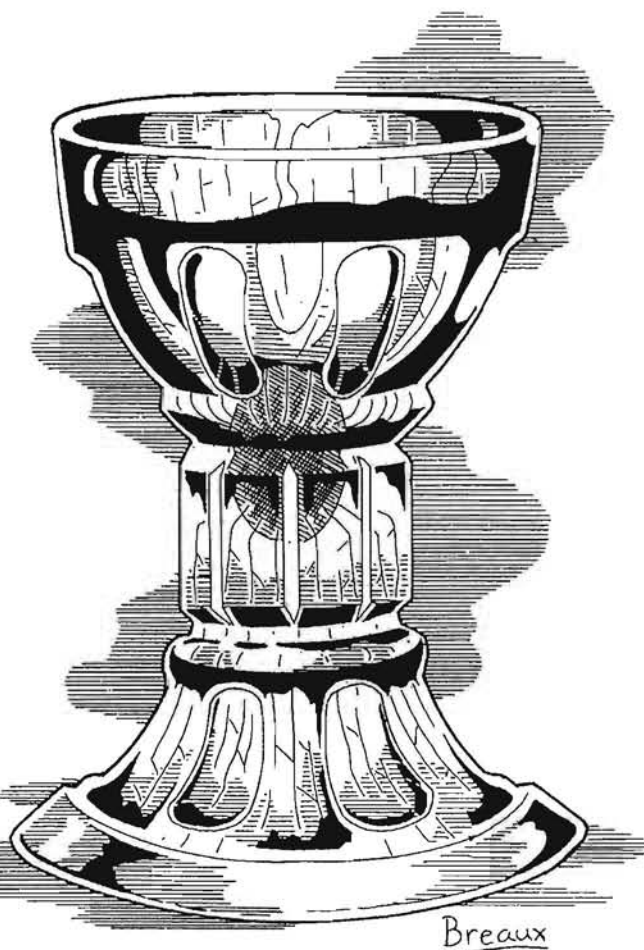
The Crystal Gateway is a special case for crystal magic wheels. The gateway wheel is built far more solidly than most other wheels, with two solid links between each pair of outside crystals (at the top and bottom) forming six doorways or arches. Solid crystal sheets or planks link the six ring crystals to the central six-sided rod giving the wheel a sort of stonehenge appearance. This actually creates six "rooms" with a doorway or archway on the outside of the device, two solid side walls, a dirt floor, an open ceiling, and a solid inner wall which is the inner gateway.

The six outer arches are six "outer" gateways which can be activated to become portals to places within the same dimension (locations around the known Palladium World). One of the outer gates is linked to the pyramids of Enry Isle. Another to the ocean bottom, somewhere south of the western edge of the Land of the South Winds. The third to the seacoast due east of the valley, near the southern end of the Eastern Territory. The fourth to a spot on the northern coast of the Baalgor wastelands. The fifth leads to the Bruu Gar Belimar mountains, and the last to the southeastern edge of Ophid's Grasslands. Each is a location over a thousand miles (1600 km) away. **GM Note:** You have the option of setting the outer gate links to any specific place you choose. However they have limited range, as will be described.

Relocating an outer gate has other limitations. Only one outer gate can be relocated at a time, and only one gate can be relocated per day. When relocating an outer gate, the I.S.P. is expended, and the controller looks through and controls the gate for one hour per level of the bond. The range is limited to 2000 miles (3200 km) and the portal must be on the surface of the planet (portals under the water reduce the range by 1000 miles (160 km). The range of each gate is further limited in that each can only reach one-sixth of the world. The range of the six gates cover pie shaped regions, the six together making up a circle 2000 miles (3200 km) in radius, with the gateway at the center.

Each of the gates can be activated by anyone with sufficient psionic power. A character does NOT need to control or bond to the gateway to use it. However, the place that each gate opens to can be changed only by the person who controls (is bonded to) the crystal device. Only one character can bond with and control the crystal gateway.

When one of the six inner gateways is activated, the person opens a dimensional rift. Before he steps through it, he can see glimpses of the world on the other side. Dimensional travelers will immediately

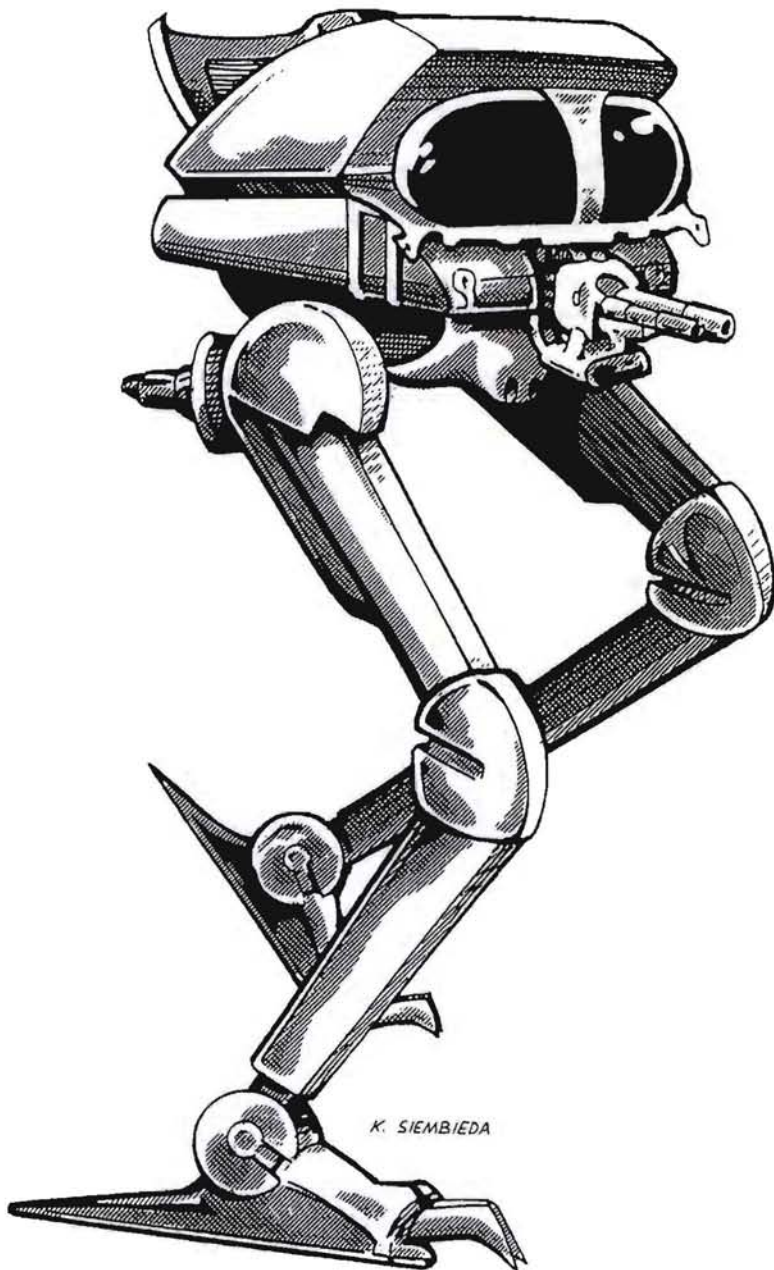


recognize other dimensions that they have visited in the past. New worlds remain a mystery. To visit that other dimension, one simply walks through the portal. Once the character has stepped through the dimensional gateway, it closes and the doorway deactivates. Only a single person may step through, although that person does not have to be the person who activated the doorway. The person stepping into another world can bring/carry a maximum of 100 pounds (45 kg) worth of equipment and personal belongings. Unfortunately, all of the gateways are **one way**, so an alternate route home must be found (ideally made/known in advance).

Statistical Data

The Crystal Gateway has 160,000 S.D.C. and stands 40×40×40 feet (12×12×12 m) in size. A 20 foot section of it would have 20,000 S.D.C. If the gateway fractures and explodes it could do as much damage as the crystal fortress. Likewise, S.D.C. can be restored in the same fashion and at the same cost as the fortress.

Using an outer gate to travel to places within the same dimension (in this case the Palladium World) costs 25 I.S.P. Controlling, or changing the location of an outer gate can only be done by its controller and will cost 50 I.S.P.



Using an inner dimensional gate costs 50 I.S.P., while changing the location of an inner gate to a new dimension will cost 200 I.S.P. The destination of an inner gate can only be changed to a known dimension or a random unknown dimension (no control in its selection) by the character who is mind bonded to the crystal device. Only one gate can be relocated at a time and only one gate a week can be relocated, assuming that the controller has enough I.S.P. **GM Note:** You have the option of setting the inner gate links to any dimension/world you may choose.

The Lost Portal & Dimensional Travel

There is only one known **Crystal Gateway** in the world. It lies buried beneath a hundred feet (31 m) of earth in The Valley, north of River City, off the west bank of the river. If it is excavated, it will be dormant but can be activated.

The portals to the alternate dimensions were selected by the original Crystal Wizard and though the gateway is dormant, it is still linked to those worlds.

If this (or another?) Crystal Gateway should be excavated, the GM can create or select his own world environments or he can randomly roll a six-sided die to find out which dimension that particular gateway opens onto (or pick one). Also note that Crystal Gateways *may exist* in other dimensions! After all, the ancient masters of crystal magic were dimensional explorers.

1. Gateway to contemporary earth. This could be the world of **Heroes Unlimited** and/or **TMNT** or **Ninjas & Superspies**. The only way back home is by using an experimental or alien time travel or dimension warping machine. Or it could be the world of **Beyond the Supernatural** (it is possible to use magic or open a dimensional rift to get home). Or the Earth that we live and play on today, with no known way to get back to one's home dimension.
2. Gateway leads to a primitive, developing world similar to the Palladium world (or Earth of the past). This world may or may not be populated by humans or even humanoids. It may have dinosaurs, or similar monstrous inhabitants.
3. This dimensional doorway leads to a fantastic high-tech world of giant robots and aliens. This could be the world of **Robotech**, **Southern Cross**, **Invid Invasion**, **Robotech II: The Sentinels** or **Macross II**, or other similar environments.
4. The fourth gate opens into the universe of **The Mechanoids** (either the planet Gideon E or the solar system of the Intergalactic Federation) or some other science fiction-like environment. Getting home is possible only through experimental space and time warping devices.
5. The dimensional door leads to the monster filled domain of **Wormwood** or another horrific, monster/demon filled place.
6. The final gate opens to Rifts earth at any of the powerful ley line nexus points. Due to the power of a nexus point, there is a chance that the portal will remain open or that the characters can find a mage who can reopen the dimensional rift and send them home.

Note: Any of Palladium's world settings (one of the Splugorth's slave worlds, a vampire world, the home of the Sunaj assassins, etc.) or any parallel dimension that mimics Earth's past, or any alien world or place inspired by movies, comic books, novels, RPGs, and imagination can be substituted.



The Quest for the Tombs

The Quest

Through astral projection, Archie has explored a network of tunnels which he believes are the Old Kingdom tombs of the ancient kings. Although he has been able to astral project into the tombs, and is familiar with the layout of the catacombs, he has been unable to locate their physical location in the mountains. This strange occurrence has only convinced him that these are the tombs he seeks. He is certain that he will recognize the catacombs when he sees them and he has a general idea where they are located.

He has also sensed the presence of crystal magic but not its source. Archie's conviction that there are crystal devices in the tombs and his intentions to recover them for the Crystal King is an exciting prospect and has garnered him the king's tentative approval. All Archie needs is to select a team for his expedition and choose the right moment for his departure. The mage will suggest to the king that the timely arrival of the adventurers is a sign that they should accompany him. He will also point out that by selecting them, no True Citizen of The Valley will be endangered, and this quest is certainly a dangerous one — the newcomers are expendable.

Archie wants this quest for himself more than any service to the Crystal King. He wants to examine the old tombs to see if the Prestida kings were all changelings. He has spent decades trying to unravel the truth about changelings and these ancient catacombs could hold the answers he seeks. He is unwilling to share this knowledge with the king and doesn't want to share the spoils of other treasures and books with other knights (the king is interested only in the crystal artifacts). Thus, Archie wants the newly arrived adventurers (player characters) because they don't know him well and should not challenge his authority or question his motives.

This quest is likely to begin in **The Valley**. The search for the Old Kingdom Tomb of Kings is the task that the sorcerer, Archie, speaks about. It is possible that the player characters encounter Archie at some other place and time. Likewise, many adventures may happen between the group's first meeting with Archie and the beginning of this quest. It may even take place after their excursion to the Island at the Edge of the World (although it is best if the island adventure takes place afterwards). No matter what events transpire, Archie will find a reason and a way for the player characters to join him on this mission.

In joining Archie's quest, the characters will be granted full citizenship to The Valley and be given permission to leave and return to The Valley.

Some Historical Background

The only concrete references indicating the existence, let alone location, of the **Tomb of the Kings** is an ancient book in Elana's library entitled **The Changeling Menace**. This book is a particular favorite of Elana's, but it is not one that she shares with most members of the court. Elana and all prior owners of the book have always considered it a work of fiction.

Much of the work seems to parallel real history, but then goes off on a fictional tangent where it tells of changeling sorcerers, scholars, noble knights, kings and a line of changeling kings known as the Prestida (everybody knows the ancient Prestida family was human). Much of the story takes place at the **Mountain of the Kings**, an apparently fictional place, because no real mountain has ever existed at the location described in the book. There are many other inconsistencies (at least from most people's point of view) involving the sophistication, culture and level of achievement by changelings.

Archie has gained Elana's confidence and she has shared this ancient work with him. Elana trusts Archie because of his sympathetic attitude towards changelings and love of literature and history. However, Archie has never admitted to anyone that he feels **The Changeling Menace** deals with fact and not fantasy. Archie believes the book was written before the Changeling Inquisition and that the location of the fabled tombs of the kings is real. It was only after the **Changeling Inquisitions** began that the locations of the tombs and much of the history about the Old Kingdoms from that period was lost. Very few records remain due to the widespread devastation of the inquisition. The ancient Prestida Capitol itself was devastated during the inquisition and most scholars of today believe it to be a myth.

The Prestida Line of kings was once a great ruling power in the non-elf or dwarven part of the Old Kingdom. If the myths can be believed, most accounts identify them as having been human. Only a few identify to them as elven lords. The last Prestida died thousands of years ago. Most scholars agree that, if they ever really existed, the Prestida's ruled the Old Kingdom for two to four thousand years. These kings encouraged peace and harmony among many different races and encouraged the acceptance of changelings. A misplaced moral decision that proved to be the Prestida family's downfall — or so popular history tells it.

Archie has unearthed an ancient scroll, presumably from that time, relating the events that revealed the Prestida King to be a changeling.

The death of King Prestida XIII, the last in the line of Prestida kings, was a most unfortunate accident. Prestida XIII was supposedly an excellent rider of horses but was thrown from his saddle during a state ceremony. Landing badly, his head struck a stone staircase. He was killed instantly and the dying body took the form of a changeling. The public was stunned. Then it was proclaimed that the king had been secretly assassinated and his identity taken over by the inhuman murderer. Further investigation revealed several other family members to be changelings (presumably fellow assassins and conspirators to usurp the throne). The outcry was intense. The Prestidas' had encouraged the acceptance of changelings during their reign and fell to their treachery. Thus began the Changeling Inquisitions.

Archie has been pursuing the line of reasoning that the Prestida kings had always been changelings disguised as humans to help build a better world for humans, changelings and others. Ironically, their deception was so clever that nobody ever suspected the truth. When the king was discovered to be a changeling, the worst was assumed and the entire race has ultimately become branded as murderous monsters who steal the identities of others'. There are many references in **The Changeling Menace** that seem to confirm this blasphemous theory. Archie wants to find the tombs of the ancient kings and prove once and for all if he is correct. He knows that few would believe him or that such a discovery would make any difference in the world. At this point his curiosity knows no bounds. He must learn the truth no matter what the cost!

Archie's research has indicated that the ancient tombs are located close to the ancient Prestida capital city and so the quest begins in earnest at that location. It is left to the Game Master as to where the action jumps from The Valley to the ruins of the old capital or whether adventures take place on their journey to the tombs.

There are a number of ways for the group to leave the Valley, but Archie will direct them to the south. The route leads to **Impossibility Pass**, which is southwest of Lake Town, down the face of a cliff, and back east along the southern face of the mountains. The first part of the route along the cliff face leads under a huge waterfall along a trail that is called **Death's Door**. It is ten miles (16 km) beyond the falls before the trail becomes easy.

As soon as the group leaves the controlled area of The Valley, magic pigeons will begin arriving with messages for Archie. The Game Master should refer to the description of **Noah's Paradise** for the content of those messages and Archie's likely reaction to them. The news is not good, but Archie will press forward at least for the moment.

One difficulty facing the group is that there are many ancient ruins, supposed capitals, and burial sites. Most people assume that the old capital, which is near the great falls on the Old Kingdom river, was always the capital. But this is not the ancient capital were the Prestida ruled. This is the ruins of the capital city and the Mountain Tomb of the Kings of the "modern" Old Kingdom. This is the more famous capital city that was founded after the **Changeling Inquisitions** began. The ancient Prestida tombs are located farther from The Valley and higher in the mountains. Still, this area is on the way to the ancient ruins and the adventure group will pass this way.

Adventure One: The Inquisition Village

What follows is a subplot or side adventure that is not meant to be overtly deadly, but to give the characters a flavor of what it feels like to be subjected to a witchhunt.

There are a number of villages scattered throughout this area of mountains that carry on the traditions of **The Great Inquisition**. One such place is the village known as **Inking**. It is located near where the modern capital city used to be. When the characters arrive they will find a village of about 1000 individuals; 20% are humans, 30% are

ogres, 30% orcs, and 20% other sub-human races. 70% are members of the Church of the Scar.

Beware the Changeling

This section describes the attitudes and traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation regarding changelings.

The villagers are pleasant enough as ogres and orcs go, but any mention of changelings or shape changing will bring a barrage of questions from the village folk. Refusal to answer the questions will only breed suspicion.

Similarly, the subject of changelings, usually in a negative connotation, is sure to be mentioned by the villagers. For instance, if a character asks where he might find a saloon, a villager is likely to respond, "You know it's true what they say about alcohol killing changelings?"

All the food served in the village is quite salty. A complaint about it being "too salty," or asking for a dish "without salt," is likely to cause every villager in the room to stop and eye the character(s) who complained. Somebody is likely to say something like, "Why don't you try another bite." Everybody continues to watch, waiting for the character to take a bite. At some point, several burly non-humans are likely to demand the visitor take another bite and may even force him to eat salty food or pour salt into his mouth. If the visitor swallows the salty morsel he or she will be seen as being okay and everybody will resume what they were doing with an air of relief and laughter.

The Signs

All the villagers are familiar with local legends about changelings (all bad). All also know how to recognize "the faceless monsters." Consequently, they ask a lot of questions from strangers in an attempt to uncover any disguised changelings. Every villager, including children, knows the standard tricks to uncover a changeling. The most notable are that changelings are highly susceptible to alcohol and cannot tolerate salt or salty tastes. If a character doesn't like salt or booze he will be immediately suspected of being a changeling.

Other less telling signs are that changelings cannot see in the dark, usually speak elven as their natural language, have poor physical endurance and that they are usually slow when it comes to running.

The people of the village will be fascinated by stories of encounters with changelings and will hang on the visitor's every word, especially if the story ends with the torture, defeat or death of changelings. The villagers become quickly disinterested in any discussions that don't deal with changelings and shape changers. The people have little knowledge of politics or events taking place more than 50 miles (80 km) away.

The Inking Day Festival

If the adventurers make comments about leaving, or continuing their quest, the people will seem saddened and beg them to stay just one more day. "In fact," they will be told, "you have come just in time for our annual festival, Inking Day." No one knows where the name comes from, but the tradition stretches back to a time well before the Church of the Scar became known in the Mountains.

Whether the group chooses to stay two days or two weeks, the **Inking Day Festival** will come just as they are preparing to leave. The day before Inking Day, the adventurers will be witness to all kinds of activity in the village as they prepare for the great celebration. They will be told that the big parade will be the next morning and that the festival lasts all day long. Musicians will be practicing, bakers will be baking, and brewers will be concocting special brews. All the villagers will be happy to share their preparations with the visitors.

As the preparation day wears on, the characters should be encouraged to sample more and more exotic specialties from the vats and the ovens of the villagers. Every free sample given to one of the travelers will



be laced with a slow acting drug that will put them into a deep, deep sleep that night. Unless the characters are extremely paranoid, or have potent powers on their side, the drug will go unnoticed and they will fall victim to it.

At the dawn of Inking Day, the characters will awaken from their drugged sleep only to find themselves stripped to their underwear and in custody. Those who do not succumb to the drug will be forcibly captured, stripped and chained. All are accused by the townsfolk of being changelings or in league with changelings. They must submit to interrogation and tests if they want to prove they aren't.

If the majority of the group escaped the sleeping drug, the villagers will attempt to take the group into custody by force. The player characters can either allow themselves to be taken, or they can try to escape or fight, but every last man, woman, and child in the village will be desperately trying to capture and restrain them with no regard to their own safety. Whether the adventurers fight or surrender, they will witness the intense fear and rituals that still linger in the Old Kingdom Mountains. The fear is unreasoning when it comes to changelings, all shape changers, and, in general, all things foreign or unusual.

The once friendly villagers are transformed into a bloodthirsty mob. The discovery of any changelings or other shape changers in their midst will cause them to attack, beat and hang the poor creature by the neck until it is dead! The person's only crime needs be that he was a changeling or shape changer. The "servants" of changelings are also beaten and hung. Those judged to be the witless pawns and/or unknowing companions of changelings are tarred and feathered and lectured about the evils

of changelings and how to recognize them in the future. Player characters caught trying to flee or who fight back are viewed with the greatest suspicion and asked why they reacted in such a manner if they had nothing to hide. Of course, the Game Master should give all player characters an opportunity to escape with their lives and most important possessions.

The suspects will be placed in a large iron cage on a cart and paraded through the streets. The prisoners will be subjected to angry screams and cat calls as the cart is pulled through the village. Finally, the parade stops at the village square. A village elder will produce a scroll and read:

"Let all gathered know that these outlanders are accused of being changelings. We are gathered here to give them the opportunity to explain themselves. We are hereby absolved of any blame in their deaths, for as Tristine himself said: '*Changeling are to blame for their own destruction.*' Let the trial begin."

Other villagers will then begin questioning the captives. The questions should revolve around the group, their reason for coming to the village, and how they know so much about changelings. Some sample questions could be:

"Do you deny that you are being accused of being a changeling?"

There's really no good way of answering this and it will simply evoke a cry of "Changeling" from the crowd.

"How do you know so much about changelings?" Denial of such knowledge will be met with an outcry of "Liar!" A character explaining that he learned about changelings from others will be asked, "Why do

you associate with Changelings and Changeling Lovers?" A character explaining that he read about them will be chastised for reading such foul books. An answer like, "I read and learn so that I may recognize Changelings and destroy them!" will elicit oohs and ahs of approval from the crowd. Daring to suggest that one learned about changelings from the village folk will again illicit the cry, "Liar!" and will not win any favors.

"Would you like a drink?" A negative response will be met with a shout from the crowd of: "Changeling!" or "The Changeling's afraid of a little drink!" or "Kill the changeling!" A positive response will get the character a large drink of an extremely potent alcoholic beverage. Unless the character has a very high tolerance (P.E. 20 or higher), he will feel its effects immediately. A changeling who drinks this brew will pass out.

"Would you like a piece of salted meat?" A negative response will also be met with a shout from the crowd of: "Changeling" or "The Changeling's afraid of a little salt." or "Kill the changeling". A positive response will garner the character a piece of meat so incredibly salty that the average character will gag on it. Regardless of the taste, the character is wise to swallow as much of it as he can. This will go a long way to prove his innocence.

"If you are a changeling, you could easily narrow your shape to slip out of these bonds. Why don't you?" Any changeling, other shape changing character or wizard that chooses this moment to try this stunt, is supremely stupid, and will be killed instantly by villagers rushing forward to beat him to death!

"In what manner would you like to be killed?" This is another question that may be difficult to answer in any positive way. Courageous and definite responses are the best. One bold enough to spit on his accusers and announce that his death will prove his innocence (because he won't turn into a changeling) will cause a great round of cheers to erupt from the crowd. He, and any of his comrades who second this sentiment, will be removed from the cage, hoisted on shoulders and proclaimed to be a hero and champion of the festival. He (they) will be unbound, his possessions returned, and treated like a king to the finest food, booze and fun the people have to offer. Strange but true!

An Archie Plot Note: The elf mage is likely to have just wandered off on his own (to investigate some leads) in time to avoid capture and interrogation. He may have to return to save the rest of the group.

If Archie is with the group when they are captured, he will offer no resistance and surrender his weapons and possessions. He will seem to be lost in thought and carefully observing the entire proceeding. Now and again he might voice a comment such as: "Now I can see what they meant." or "Fascinating." or "So this is what it was like. How terrible." Archie will display no fear during any of this ordeal and will wait patiently to see what the outcome will be.

Otherwise, the village of Inking is a pleasant place to rest and recuperate from any recent battles, or just to get over the effects of the high altitude. The village of Inking has its own herbal remedies for the effects of altitude and will be happy to share them with the travelers.

The Ancient Tests

There are also a number of torturous, physical tests which can be used to determine whether a person is a changeling or not. These tests are usually reserved for outlanders who are strongly suspected of being a changeling and/or who were the loudest protestors or troublemakers.

The first of such tests focuses on the character's physical endurance. It is known that changelings have weak constitutions and cannot stand up to demanding labor. Thus, the character is placed inside what appears to be a coffin. The inside of the lid is lined with rusted spikes. There are two spaces where a person can place his hands between the spikes, but everywhere else they are more densely packed and razor sharp. As the lid is closed, the spikes begin to descend and, if unchecked, they

will stab the character in about a hundred places (3D6 × 10 punctures with 1D4 damage per puncture; quick roll: 2D6 × 30 total damage).

If the character attempts to hold the lid up and away from his body, he will find that it can be held away with very little difficulty. However, he must hold the lid up, with increasing pressure, for a long time. Unless he can find another way out by pleading with his torturer (this seldom works), he will be forced to endure the test. The character's ability to hold the lid up is measured by the character's physical endurance (P.E.). As time passes, the person's arms begin to tire. A character can hold the lid for about ten minutes per each one of his P.E. points; i.e.: A P.E. of 9 means he can hold the lid up for 90 minutes, a P.E. of 20 means he can hold the lid up for 200 minutes/over three hours. A character may have a small chance of surviving even if the lid falls on top of him, but the odds are not good (minimum damage is 60 hit points). Typically, after two and a half to three hours the "test" box is opened and the "suspect" is subjected to a new ordeal.

Note: Typically, only one or two suspects are tested at a time. Their companions are kept nearby to watch. This means psionic or magic allies with the power of levitation or telekinetics can help hold the lid up for their friends and give them time to rest. Likewise, a number of other magic spells and powers can be used to avoid damage (shrink self, diminish others, armor of Ithan, force fields, phantoms, etc.). If Archie is with the group or secretly nearby, he will inconspicuously use his magic to assist every character needing help to survive the tests.

The second test

The character is now placed in a cage next to another cage in a straight, underground racecourse. The track extends a half mile (0.8 km) in one direction. The test subject is told that he needs to run to the far end and turn to the right to reach safety (true). The character is released first, but is told that the tiger (or other quick, hungry predator) in the cage next to him will be released in ten seconds and is especially fond of the taste of changeling flesh. The tiger (see page 137 of **Monsters and Animals** for a full description) has a speed of 20, 49 hit points, three attacks per melee, with claws doing 2D6 and a bite doing 1D10 damage.

The test subject is allowed to get a little less than halfway down the track before the tiger is released. A character with a speed of 12 has a 01-50% chance of making it to safety. A speed of 11 or less is tiger food. Any character with a speed of 13 to 17 will just outrun the pursuing cat. Those with a speed of 18 or better can outdistance the tiger with ease. Any character who chooses to fight the tiger has doomed himself to death or, at best, more agonizing tests. Even if he survives the battle, choosing to fight instead of running is an admission of guilt. After all, a changeling could never outrun the creature and would have to stand and fight. Test subjects who use magic or other powers to survive may get away with it if they are clever. However, if too blatant about it, he may find himself accused of cheating to hide the fact that he is really a changeling and may have to take the test over or endure additional tests.

As long as the group doesn't make any major mistakes, most should survive the torture tests. Eventually the villagers satisfied that the characters are or are not changelings and the frenzy should come to an end. However, if things went so far as testing more than one of the visitors, the characters will be taken to the edge of the village, given all of their possessions, and asked to leave. Failure to leave will result in a fight to the death.

Epilogue

After their inquisition and possible testing and before they leave, the group may have the opportunity to meet with the village elder who quoted Tristine. Archie would be very interested in the elder's source of knowledge.

It just so happens that the village elder has a copy of a few choice passages from what he insists is the Tristine Chronicles. These "sacred writings" have been passed down for centuries and have always been used to defend their actions against visitors suspected of being changelings. The elder is glad to read additional passages from his handful of scrolls, but he will not lend them to any person who is not a member of the village.



One passage of note reads as follows: *So it comes again and again, the evil and horror of the He of Many Faces. The Changeling suffered great losses in the Great War that cast down the Old Ones, but survived. The creature fought on both sides and their loss brought no regret to the people of the world. Yet, The Great God Thoth did walk the world in those days, restoring what was lost, and promoting the cause of all shape shifters; Dragon, Faerie, and Changeling. Elf followed Thoth in those days and listened to his every word. And so, from Thoth's urging did the Elf offer the Changeling some measure of trust.*

But lo, that trust would be betrayed. Even now, after the Great Betrayal, and The Reprisal, the Elf and a few others continue to trust.

The ancient Old Kingdom fell to the sword and the knife with the deception of the Changeling. So says the Elf: "Changeling are to blame for their own destruction."

The Elf, the Titan and the Dwarf came together once again to build a new kingdom. They chose to turn their backs on acts of terror. And in so doing they turn their backs on the dawn of a new age.

Their punishment will come. The Changeling will return to destroy the world. I have seen the end of the world. It is a nightmare that is a gathering of shape shifters, such as has not existed since the days of the Old Ones. I see the castle on the mountain, ruled by Changeling. Deceit and control are his weapons. He works ancient magic. Lost magic. And magic from another world. He uses it to destroy and conquer. Trust not the Changeling. Trust not the Elf. Trust not Thoth. History has taught them nothing.

I see the end of the world and the Changeling is there.

The passage is fascinating, but Archie is confident that it is not a true excerpt from the Tristine Chronicles. The style is similar but markedly different. Most telling is its direct prophecy of doom. The Tristine Chronicles are seldom so blunt, direct, and prejudicial against any race. Archie's best guess is that the prophecy is the written words of a priest, scholar or seer who may have actually seen some sort of vision, or who interpreted select passages from the Tristine Chronicles and embellished them to support his own views or hatred.

The elder also warns the group to stay away from a place in the mountains haunted by the "ghosts of the past." This haunted place sounds like it is at or near where Archie believes the ancient tombs can be found.

Ancient Ruins

The Inking village is located less than 25 miles (40 km) from the ruins of the modern Old Kingdom capital and tombs. The game master or players may wish to explore these ruins first, but they will be disappointed. These ruins have been explored and ransacked many times. All they will find are pieces of broken pottery, rust eaten weapons, boogie-men, inhuman bandits and a small tribe of mean spirited goblins living in subterranean passages under the earth.

From these ruins to the Great Falls on the Old Kingdom River is about 5 miles (8 km). From the Falls to where Archie believes one can find the Prestida capital and tombs is another 50 miles plus a two mile ascent into the high mountains.

What follows is an outline of a simple mountain village, complete with key places and characters. Exactly what adventures take place at this location is left to the Game Master. The village may make a reasonably good base camp for the explorers.

Adventure Two: The Prestida Site

The group will finally come to an ogre village that Archie proclaims to be the ruins of the Prestida capital city. He insists that the general lay of the land and mountains hints that this place is mentioned in the book, **The Changeling Menace**. The river is completely wrong, but that's because over the thousands of years the falls has shifted fifty miles (80 km) to the west. Although the book suggests that the Prestida tombs existed on an imaginary mountain, Archie has deduced that it really refers to a particular peak in the real mountains. An area elves once called "The King's Peak."

The village is built on ancient ruins, but whether they are ruins of the Prestida Kingdom is anyone's guess. Ruins of all kinds are common in the Old Kingdom. No one living in the ogre village knows anything about its past. The few remaining surface ruins are so badly destroyed that it is impossible to glean anything from them. The only creature who could possibly confirm that this is the ancient Prestida Kingdom is a ghost who haunts the ruins of the old castle.

The habitation is a ragged conglomeration of wood and stone huts and hovels clustered around the fallen ruins of an ancient castle. The village does not actually have a name. The ogres seem to refer to themselves as "We of the High Mountain." The village is spread out with approximately 330 occupants covering a two mile area. The majority (50%) live in the main part of the village near the ruins of the castle. The inhabitants are almost entirely non-human: 70% are ogres, 20% orcs, 5% kobolds and 5% other races. 60% of the ogres and orcs are cannibals; 70% are members of the Church of the Scar.

Most of the villagers view strangers with great suspicion and dislike humans, elves and dwarves. Unlike the village of Inking, they have no particular fear or hatred toward Changelings. For the most part, these are a rough and tumble people who live a hard life where only the strong survive. They have little regard for culture, law, learning or refinements. They view most humans as sissies, pretty boys and weaklings. Fellow ogres, trolls and giants will get the inhabitants' best regards and treatment. Small and weak characters are looked upon as targets for robbery, beatings, enslavement and eating. A show of combat strength or magic should quickly earn the villagers' respect and prevent any serious altercations.

Like most of the mountain villages, the gold piece is not the standard unit of coinage and it has little value. Instead, the ogres are far more interested in **trading** items and services. They are always in the market for quality weapons, especially giant sized items (they call human size weapons "toys"), as well as booze, sweets, magic, and jewelry that

might catch their fancy. Only the Ogre Palladium and Boelaerian accepts gold. Thus, a meal may require washing dishes, cutting meat, or sweeping the floor. A night's lodging may cost a bottle of booze or a bag of candy, or require that the character mend a fence, and so on.

Although huge by Ogre standards, the overgrown and sprawling village is small. There is no central authority and each neighborhood polices itself. There are only a few places of note, with the rest of it just a big ogre village. The high points are the Ogre Palladium, Boelaerian's, the Downslider Tavern, and the Ruins. These are the safest and cleanest places in the village. Travelling anywhere else is definitely ill-advised.

There is also a tournament grounds, which is mostly controlled by an active branch of the Church of the Scar. Throughout the year, the tournament grounds have a regular schedule of events. The contests have a certain western flavor to them, which may indicate that the village's wizard who organizes these events has roots to the Western Empire.

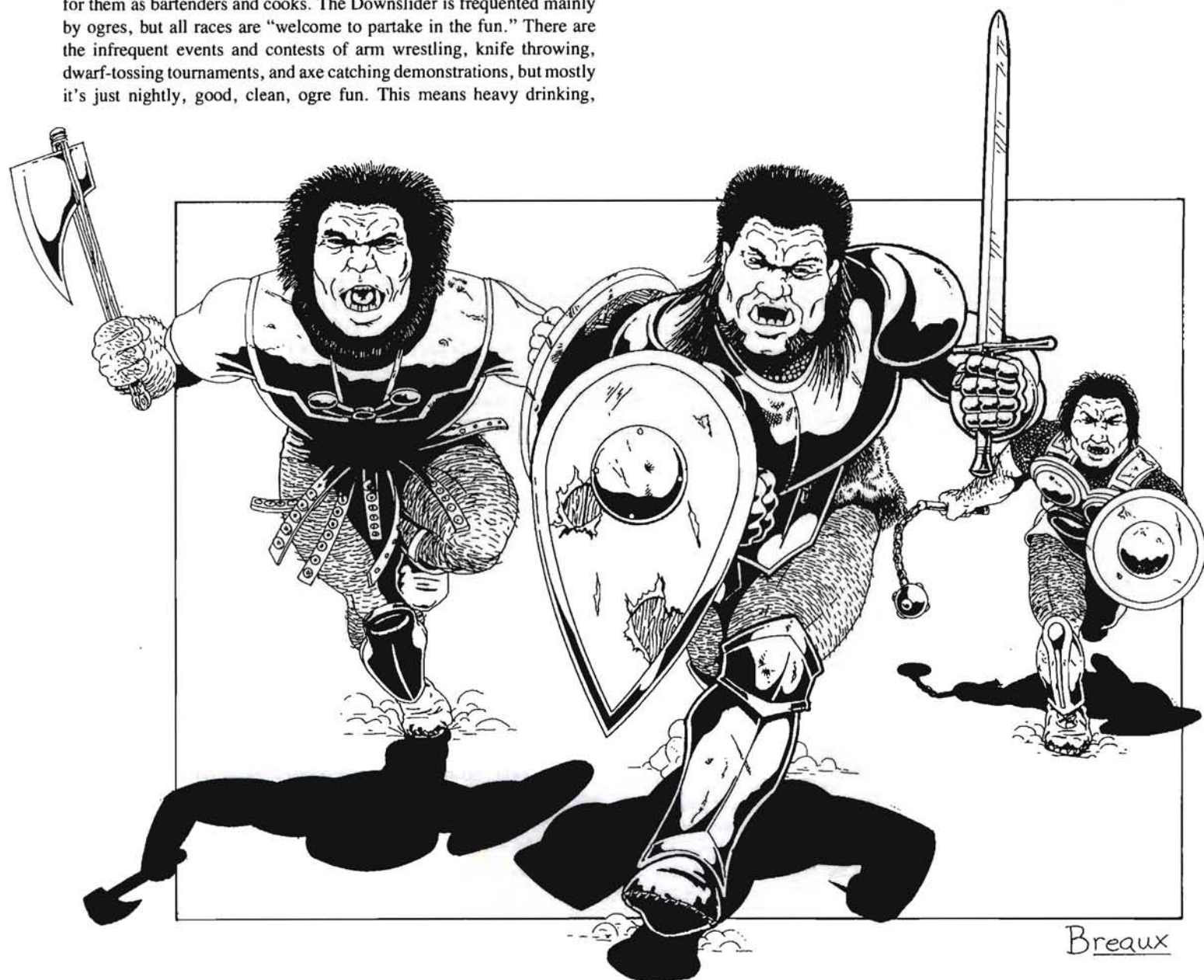
The Downslider Tavern

The Downslider is run by a couple of savvy ogres, Grott and Slarty, who have acquired several recipes for making ale and moonshine. The two run the business and have a dozen or so younger ogres working for them as bartenders and cooks. The Downslider is frequented mainly by ogres, but all races are "welcome to partake in the fun." There are the infrequent events and contests of arm wrestling, knife throwing, dwarf-tossing tournaments, and axe catching demonstrations, but mostly it's just nightly, good, clean, ogre fun. This means heavy drinking,

loud bawdy fun, dancing and brawls. One of the favorite nightly entertainments includes pinning a quiet patron to the wall and throwing things (knives, axes, mugs, dwarves) at him until he "liven's up" (starts screaming). Most patrons are intoxicated and — 4 to strike. If the patron proves extremely entertaining he will be provided with a round or two of drinks and a lot of backslapping.

There are no waiters or waitresses, only a long bar and a number of bartenders. There is a kitchen consisting of piles of meat, an open fire, and a couple of cooks. A patron must muscle his way up to the bar where he orders and pays for his food and drink. Most are careful to step on other weaker patrons and avoid anyone who looks like he could rip your arms off. Food orders are infrequent, and generally not screwed up, however it's best if you wait while they prepare the meat, otherwise someone else may claim it. Drinks are served immediately and flawlessly.

The Downslider has a limited but good menu. Good by ogre standards. There is meat, ale and moonshine. There is also a limited variety. There is good meat (fresh), average meat (a few days old), and foul meat (some weeks old); the cost changes respectively to the quality. Then there is warm meat (raw but heated), there is cooked meat (cooked rare), and there is sissy-meat (cooked medium rare). The type or cut of meat is never specified and it is probably best if the tavern goer does



not ask. Generally, the meat is humanoid (mainly orc and goblin, but occasionally human and ogre). The Downslider is frequented by cannibals and the only thing keeping the patrons from slicing up an appealing guest is the low price of the meals. The only other deterrents are the fists and weapons of the bartenders and the other patrons; the Downslider wants to maintain its image as a safe and friendly place to visit.

As far as drinks go, there is pale ale, dark ale, and moonshine. However all the ale drinks taste basically the same. The moonshine is called "spirits" and is about as potent as alcohol can get without killing somebody. The smallest size for any drink is a full pint, 16 ounces. Drinking more than half of one mug of spirits may kill any humanoid who is not an ogre, giant or who doesn't have a P.E. of 20 or higher! Characters must roll to save vs poison. A roll of 14 or higher means the character lives and only suffers 2D6 damage and is drunk as a skunk. A failed roll means he suffers 6D6 damage, is drunk, and can barely move except to vomit. He is sick for 2D4 hours. The danger is not advertised. Moderation is advised.

Given the abundance of good food and drink at the Downslider, another popular entertainment is eating and drinking contests. The contestants are judged not only on how much and how fast one consumes, but also the "style" that one uses to consume. Someone who can disgust the other contestants with his style of eating is more likely to win. These contests are not for weak stomached observers. Many of these contests also turn into food fights with projectile vomiting.

Another passtime related to eating is to gross out the casual observer. Any patron who clearly avoids the eating contests will find other patrons attempting to gross him out in other ways.

The Exterior: The Downslider is a large sprawling building complex, portions of which have been built up, torn down or rebuilt over the years. The complex consists of a number of older buildings that have been joined together under a common roof. There is only one entrance, but there are enough dwarf-sized holes in the walls around it that one could easily squeeze in and out anywhere. The Downslider is open around the clock, and does not shut down even for repairs to the structure. A little sawdust only adds fibre to one's meal and keeps the floor dry.

The Interior: Because the Downslider is built up from so many different buildings, where the walls between the buildings have been crudely removed, the floor is not uniform. There are roughly six areas inside. The main entrance leads to the largest of the areas and has no tables or chairs. This area is always crowded with people trying to push their way to or from the bar, or simply milling around trying to get in someone's way. There are two areas off to the left, and two to the right, but aside from location they are essentially similar. Each area has tables, chairs, and a raised "stage" against one wall. The stage is actually a number of tables nailed together. This is where the entertainers are expected to perform. The final area is behind the bar. This is the kitchen and storeroom. The only entrance to the bar area is a separate, secret doorway in the back wall.

Grott

Alignment: Aberrant

O.C.C. & Level: 8th level mercenary fighter and bartender

Race: Ogre, **Age:** 51, **Size:** 8 ft (2.4 m) tall, 300 lbs (135 kg), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 13, M.A. 7, P.S. 21, P.P. 14, P.E. 22, P.B. 4, Spd. 12

Hit Points: 75

Armor: Studded leather: A.R. 12, S.D.C. 38.

Psionics: None.

Magic: A crystal arm band! This is a crystal protector ring that Grott's grandfather found in the haunted ruins nearly 200 years ago. It is a precious family heirloom that Grott will never relinquish.

Slarty

Alignment: Anarchist

O.C.C. & Level: 6th level ranger, cook and bartender

Race: Ogre, **Age:** 36, **Size:** 7 ft (2.1 m) tall, 250 lbs (112.5 kg), **Sex:** Female, Grott's mate.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 17, M.A. 6, P.S. 19, P.P. 12, P.E. 23, P.B. 6, Spd. 15

Hit Points: 59

Armor: Chain mail half suit: A.R. 9, S.D.C. 20.

Psionics: Minor powers: 33 I.S.P., powers include: Aura of truth, hypnotic suggestion, resist cold, resist fatigue, sense magic.

Magic: None

Weapons of Note: A giant sized wooden club (2D6 damage) and a giant kobold quality battle axe (3D6 damage, +1 to strike).

Note: Both Grott and Slarty are loved and respected in the community.

The Ogre Palladium

Back at the Town of a Dozen Fracts, there was a place called the Little Palladium. Its owner, Adrian, will have mentioned the existence of other franchises of his Palladium concept. This is one such franchise. Although the Ogre Palladium is apparently run by an ogre, the organizer behind it is a wizard named Boelaerian.

The Ogre Palladium is much different than Adrian's. It is made of stone excavated from the old castle ruins and is built like a fortress. The building is about 40 feet (12 m) tall and 100 feet (30 m) in diameter. The walls are solid stone, and the single doorway is halfway up the side of the structure. Twin stairways descend from either side of the doorway, and down the face of the building. The doorway itself is an iron portcullis that is raised by guards who are stationed on the top of the structure.

The same inscription is carved at the base of each stairway, but is difficult to read. It seems that the person that carved the inscription was copying from a handwritten note and had no concept of written language. This is in fact the case. The inscriptions proudly proclaim: "Welcome to the Palladium of Desires. Please proceed down the stairs where a guide will lead you to your particular desire. May your stay here be a pleasant one." However, there are only stairs leading upward.

Approaching the doorway and portcullis, an adventurer will be greeted by Jason, a young Ogre who is familiar with most languages to some small degree (35%). He is fluent only in Ogre and Goblin (98%). If the group asks to enter, and Jason feels they can be trusted, he will disappear behind a wall and the portcullis will be raised. Once the group moves into the entrance chamber, the portcullis will be closed. While the portcullis is open, there are no open doorways out of the entrance chamber. The chamber is 20 by 20 feet (6 x 6 m) and a stone doorway sits in the right side wall. After the portcullis closes, the stone doorway opens and Jason will reenter the chamber.

Unlike Adrian's Palladium, the Ogre Palladium cannot provide the characters with much of anything they desire. However, the Ogre Palladium is a safe haven for any travelers. The wizard Boelaerian keeps a constant watch on his establishment by sending shadow beasts to relay the happenings back to him.

Requests other than safe food, drink, and lodgings will be told to the wizard, Boelaerian. What small desires he can accommodate, he will. Unlike the rest of the village, the wizard prefers payment in gold, silver or gems. If a patron is looking for entertainment or a night on the town, Jason will direct him to the Downslider.

Standard rates for lodging at the Ogre Palladium will generally apply to everyone. The management does not discriminate against any race, and everyone is expected to pay a premium. A reasonably tasty meal at the Ogre Palladium will cost about 10 gold, the same as a night's lodging. The comparative high prices at the Ogre Palladium prevents

the Ogres who live in the village from frequenting the establishment. Prices elsewhere will be a fraction of these prices.

The neighborhood around the Palladium is one of the nicest and safest in the area. The 50 or so inhabitants are especially courteous to visitors staying at the Ogre Palladium (or face the wrath of Boelaerian).

The Ruins

The ruins are the remnants of old fortifications and buildings from the ancient Prestida kingdom (or so one can presume). The buildings and fortifications fell to ruin long ago. Not one building is intact and many of the old stones have been used to build the homes of the current village and other villages within a hundred miles.

The ruins visible from the surface are few and found only in the area occupied by the village. However, these ruins are like the tip of an iceberg with much more buried under rock and dirt for miles around. There are only a few known underground places in the village. Most are simply basements of fallen buildings. None lead to any tombs. However, the villagers will tell of another area said to be haunted by ancient human kings in the Valley of the Dead! This is the also the haunted place mentioned at the village of Inking.

Boelaerian's Magic Shop

This establishment is located near The Downslider and serves as an herb/magic shop and the home of the wizard known as Boelaerian. There is no sign on the shop, but it is distinguished by being one of the nicer hovels and built to human scale.

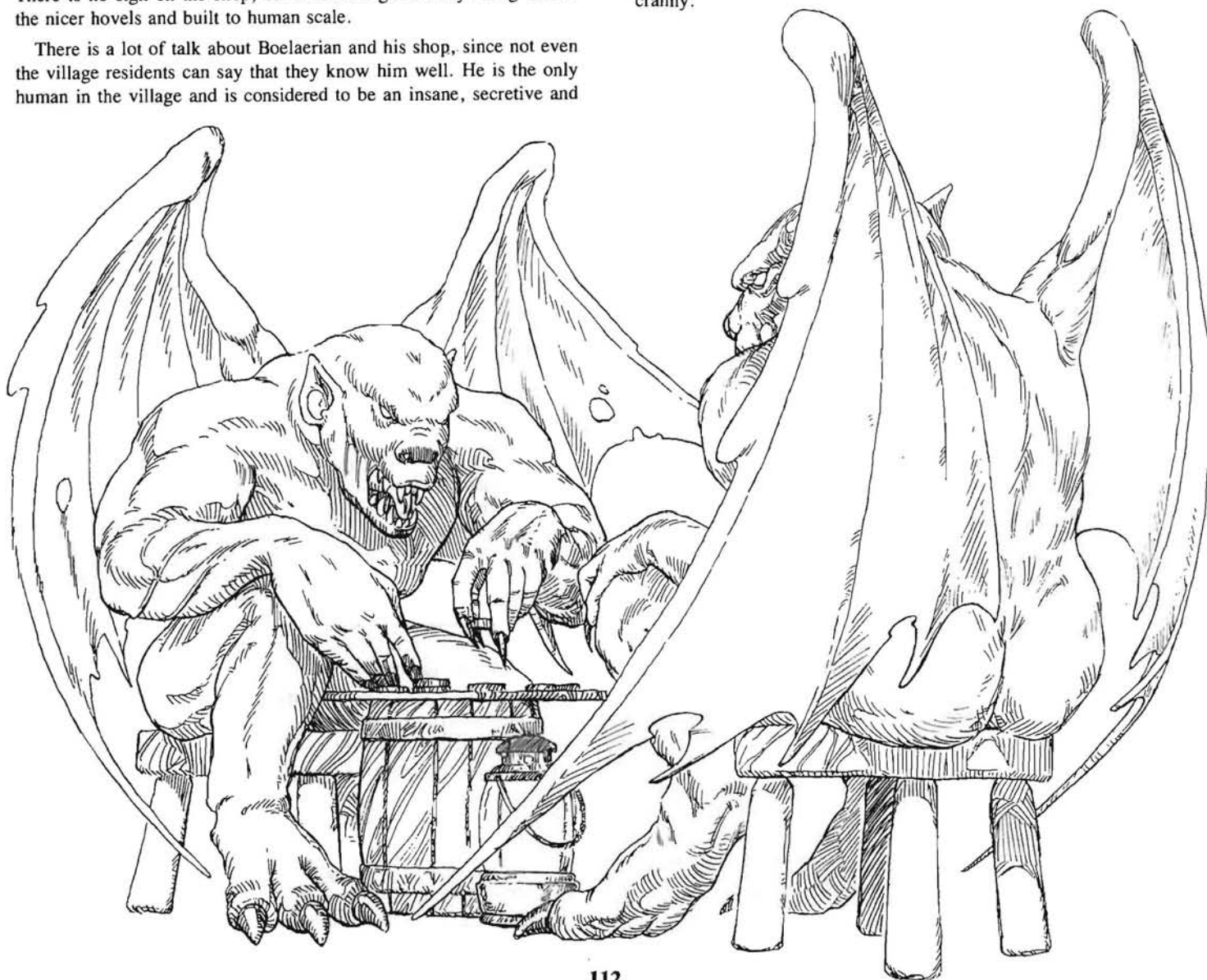
There is a lot of talk about Boelaerian and his shop, since not even the village residents can say that they know him well. He is the only human in the village and is considered to be an insane, secretive and

powerful wizard. As evidence of his craziness, villagers gesture toward the rather pointless Ogre Palladium; enough said.

Adventurers can try to visit the shop, but it seems to be closed most of the time. Vandals who attempt to break in either never succeed or are attacked, often slain, by shadow beasts or baalrogs! The general attitude of the residents is that if the shop was important, someone would know something more about it. Since no one knows much about it or its owner, they tend to ignore it. Most villagers only come to Boelaerian when they need herb or healing tonics.

The exterior of the shop is weather worn, wood and stone. It looks old and dirty, but reasonably solid. There are two blacked out windows (the glass is actually indestructible), and a "small" human-sized door. The entire building is impervious to fire. Sensing from the outside will reveal three presences, supernatural evil, and magic. The door will open only if the characters have been invited or summoned by Boelaerian. Otherwise, the door will not open regardless of how much a person may try (sorcerer's seal).

The interior is lit by the light of a single lantern hanging near the opposite end of the room. Near it is an old potbellied stove. The entire shop is dusty and smells like a tomb. The ceiling is unusually high at about 20 feet (6 m). The shop is dark and filled with shadows, some of which are magic darkness used to hide shelves filled with herbs, magic components and other odds and ends. There are no mirrors or any reflective items anywhere in the shop. Any items that might show a reflection are kept in darkness. Magic radiates from every nook and cranny.



The most disturbing sight is that of two ancient looking Baalrog demons playing checkers in a doorless, adjoining room! A small overturned keg serves as their table. Both are seated on crude stools. The checker players are real baalrogs and radiate supernatural evil. This explains the high ceilings.

The baalrogs completely ignore most visitors. They act upon the command of Boelaerian, when they are attacked, or when Boelaerian or the shop is threatened. Although the wizard will let the players believe that the demons are under his control, he will not admit to it nor will he offer any other information about himself or the demons.

The ancient wizard may also be lurking in the building, but invisible, metamorphed (usually to look like one of the player characters or villagers), or shadow melding. When Boelaerian speaks, his raspy voice may come from any corner of the room and it is constantly moving. He employs the ventriloquism spell to achieve this effect. He speaks to talk about eternal youth, offer deals or **pacts**, and has great wealth at his command. He is willing to sell or trade for almost anything that strikes his fancy and will pay a fortune for the secret of eternal youth said to be hidden among the ancient ruins. He may even give a character a very good deal if he feels it will encourage that person to do his bidding. Boelaerian also frequents the Downslider Tavern. He is usually accompanied by one or two shadow beasts and stays invisible and in the shadows. He often selects tavern patrons as willing or unwilling subjects in his schemes and petty amusements. Boelaerian's schemes go beyond simple magic.

When Boelaerian was younger he pursued magic with a vengeance and dreamed of ruling the kingdoms of men. His choice in the mystic arts were wizardry and summoning and he became a master at both. The sorcerer concentrated on summoning demons, relying on his superior wizard magic to impress and control them, since his mental endurance was low and he was likely to lose most battles of wills. At first, this plan seemed to have succeeded, but after a while, word spread about him among the demons. Boelaerian was a cruel summoner who made hard demands on his demonic slaves and subjected them to torture and abuse. His cruelty became legendary and led to a confrontation with the lord of the Raksasha, Abdul-Ra. What else Abdul-Ra may have planned for Boelaerian is unknown. This nagging anticipation for disaster only adds to the mage's neurotic and paranoid behavior. In all likelihood, Abdul-Ra is satisfied with the pitiful state of mind of the once great wizard and has nothing more in store for him. However, all raksashas know the name of Boelaerian (and Bill Loraine, his true name) and will torment him whenever he is encountered.

Boelaerian cannot remember the details of the confrontation and trembles uncontrollably whenever Abdul-Ra's name is mentioned. Whatever transpired has left the summoner with an insane fear of being seen by anyone, particularly demon lords and raksashas. He also suffers from a strong sense of general paranoia, along with an insane love (obsession) for darkness and shadows. Boelaerian is nervous around other men of magic, most demons, supernatural beings and large populated areas.

The only creatures he feels truly comfortable around are shadow beasts and baalrogs. The two checker-playing baalrogs and six others have been the summoner's companions for over 30 years. They enjoy his evil schemes, acts of cruelty and treachery. They are not under his control, but pretend to be to give the mage confidence and to fool his enemies. The baalrogs will usually do whatever Boelaerian asks them to do and more. Rarely more than two or three baalrogs show themselves at any one time, but all eight are around somewhere.

Shadow beasts are more savage and simple-minded, making them one of the few demonic monsters Boelaerian can still summon and control. His love of shadows, darkness and black-hearted deeds makes the shadow beasts kindred spirits who welcome serving this evil man. He is usually accompanied by one or two shadow beasts wherever he goes, but seldom has more than four around at any one time.



The Mad Quest

Boelaerian came to the ogre village to find seclusion and peace. However, his tortured mind and evil ways cannot be squelched. He has since turned his attention to uncovering a magic formula that provides eternal youth. Local legends suggest that such a potion is hidden somewhere in the ancient ruins around the village. He has decided that such a potion would restore his mind and vitality so that he may avenge himself against Abdul-Ra and continue with his age old plot of conquest. Unfortunately, his forays into the underground ruins have proven too demanding an undertaking, even with the help of his baalrogs (they loathe digging and avoid it, lying to Boelaerian about their efforts). The shadow beasts are equally useless in this regard. His efforts are further thwarted by the presence of ghosts who haunt many of the ruins. His fears have prevented him from even going near haunted places. Consequently, he (hidden in shadows) or one of his minions will inform visitors that the mage will pay a king's ransom (a million in gems and several million in magic) to the adventurer(s) who can bring him the secrets of eternal youth.

With the encroachment of old age falling upon him, Boelaerian has become increasingly desperate, cruel, and insane. He is so jealous of all creatures with long life spans, particularly elves, changelings, and gnomes, that he will cause trouble for visitors out of spite. His obsession with (and failure of) finding a fountain of youth has driven him to conduct terrible experiments on elves and changelings. These experiments torture and kill his captives in a futile effort to learn the secrets of their longevity. He has extracted their blood, glands, brains and internal organs to make powerless concoctions. Underneath his house is a basement torture chamber and laboratory. The underground complex is where Boelaerian conducts his experiments and keeps prisoners. He uses live subjects for a variety of magic experiments and sadistic pleasures.



Breaux

Boelaerian, Master of Shadows

Name: Boelaerian, Master of Shadows

True Name: Bill Loraine

Alignment: Diabolic

O.C.C. & Level: 15th level Wizard and 9th level Summoner.

Race: Human, **Size:** 5 feet, 7 inches (1.70 m) tall and weighs 140 pounds (63 kg), **Sex:** Male.

Age: He is 123 years old and is likely to live many more years, continuing his search for a youth potion. His will to live is incredible.

Attributes: I.Q. 23, M.E. 10, M.A. 19, P.S. 10, P.P. 15, P.E. 14, P.B. 2, Spd. 7. **Note:** Boelaerian's M.E., P.S., P.E., and speed were originally much higher but have been reduced by old age and his experiments.

Hit Points: 135

Armour: None, uses magic protections when necessary.

Bonuses: +4 to save vs spell magic, +2 to save vs circles/wards and an additional +2 save vs all magic due to his rune dagger and holy staff. He is 55% to evoke a feeling of trust or intimidation.

Psionics: None.

Magic: He can cast 23 spells per day at +4 spell strength, +3 circle strength. He has two spell attacks per melee.

Magic Knowledge: All spells levels 1-11. All summoning and protection circles. He does not know power circles or spells of legend. Knows all symbols, all power words, recognize runes 99%, study wards 99%/99%, deduce circle function 99%, decipher circle invocation 94%. He is also able to recognize magic items 60%, recognize enchantment 80%, sense evil 55%, and is an impressive 99% at scroll conversion.

Magic Items/Weapons: Boelaerian's two main weapons, other than the use of his demonic minions, are a rune dagger and a magic staff. The rune dagger is a soul drinker named Gryl with a diabolic alignment, major psionic abilities, 100 I.S.P. and clerical abilities. Damage and bonuses using the dagger: 4D6 + 4 damage, +3 strike, +8 parry.

The iron staff is a greater holy weapon with healing touch (2D6 points) six times a day, +1 magic save bonus, +6 damage bonus, and sense evil. Bonuses using the staff: 1D8 + 12 damage, +6 strike, +10 parry.

Combat Abilities: Four hand to hand attacks per melee or two by spell magic. Hand to hand non men of arms and W.P. staves at 15th level. W.P. knives at 9th level. Critical strike on 19-20, critical strike from behind, kick attack 1D6 damage, and +5 to dodge.

Skills of Note: Horsemanship (general) at 15th level. Read/write western, northern, southern, eastern, elven, dwarven and wolven 99%, speak western, northern, southern, eastern, elven, dwarven, goblin, troll, wolven, ogre and faerie 99%, disguise 85%/49%, forgery 99%/79%, identify plants/fruits 99%/99%, medical 99%/99%, pick locks 99%, pick pockets 78%, prowl 91%, use poison 87%, demon and devil lore 99%, faerie lore 99%, plant/farm lore 99%, racial histories (selected three times) 99%, recognize poison 99%, sense of direction 99%.

Possessions: The value of the contents of Boelaerian's magic shop is 1D4 million gold, plus he has another 500,000 worth of gold and gems (he lies about what he can pay foolish adventurers for the secret of eternal youth). However, he never carries more than 1,000 worth of gold with him and he rarely has use for gold and gems in the village. When he needs something, he orders a baalrog or shadow beast to get it for him, frequently killing a few humanoids in the process.

Description: Boelaerian is originally from the Western Empire but has travelled throughout the world. Despite rumors to the contrary, he is not a hunted criminal. His current obsession with discovering a youth potion is fueled by his rune dagger who has never before been given the opportunity to drink as many souls as Boelaerian has provided for it.

Although Boelaerian is physically fit and healthy for a man of his great age (and likely to live another twenty years), he is horribly disfigured. His hair and teeth are gone, bones are twisted, his joints and fingers have become hideously gnarled and his body is covered with scars. Most of this is the result of old pacts and encounters with demons. His appearance is repulsive even to people from the so-called monster races. The demented wizard is fond of saying that he looks a bit like an Old One. He does not like what age and his sordid life has done to his body and is obsessed with finding a way to recapture his youth.

Game Master Note: This madman can be the catalyst of many adventures and conflicts for the player characters. The Crystal Goblet can give Boelaerian the youth he seeks but he will be furious that he loses all of his magic powers and starts life again as a first level wizard. Even so, his baalrog friends will remain at his side and help him relearn the mystic arts. He will refuse to pay the characters for his new-found youth and will want the Crystal Goblet for himself (even though he cannot use it; no psionic ability).

The Mountain of the Kings

Once the group has settled into the ogre village, they can begin to explore the area. As long as they don't disturb the ogre inhabitants and don't wander off alone (or even in pairs), they should have few troubles with the ogres.

Learning the approximate location of the ancient Mountain of the Kings and actually locating the Tomb of the Kings are two quite different tasks. But Archie has a plan. Astral projection won't work because although the astral traveler can get inside the tomb, he cannot seem to see or remember the way to get there. Using a **Crystal Monitor Star** (the Crystal King has one which Archie is attuned too) to observe and follow the astral traveler might work, but it's hard to say. Another possibility is to commune with the spirits in the area. Archie is fairly certain that the reason for his personal quest, ties with Noah and sincerity will get him the cooperation of any changeling spirits. This may or may not be as easy as the Arch-Mage thinks. Game Masters, take this opportunity to misdirect the adventurers to other adventures, trouble and subplots. However, eventually, this should work.

The Valley of Death

Archie will decide that the best place to start is in the area the villagers call **The Valley of Death**. This is also the place that the elder from the village of Inking warned the group to avoid, because it was haunted by the "ghosts of the past." Archie figures that even if the ancient tombs are not located in The Valley of Death, the area should provide him with spirits who can help him in his quest. He hopes to commune with spirits to get some leads. Random digging around the valley will offer little in the way of useful artifacts nor will it show a way into the Kings' Tombs.

Communing with Spirits

Communing with spirits and the mention of changelings will inevitably bring references about the current crisis of disappearing oceans (something the group may not yet know about).

One spirit will be particularly damning of the player group and Archie. "The oceans fade and you do nothing. Why?" Archie will remain silent. Whatever the group's response (we didn't know, what can we do, it's not our problem, etc.) will garner condemnation.

"Your leader (Archie) knows, but chooses to do nothing. The mystic pigeons bring cries for help, but he does nothing. This elf who claims to be the friend of man and changeling (this may be news too) chases the ghosts of the past when the living has need of him! Need of you all! Would you turn your backs on your fellow man? The voice of destiny calls to you but you have deaf ears! Do not linger here for long. Go to the Island at the Edge of the World."

The spirit refuses to say any more and vanishes. Archie dismisses the incident as "strange" and "inexplicable" — he feigns ignorance. Other spirits may make similar, although more cryptic comments such as:

"Why do you rummage through the bones of the past when the living have need of thee? Go where you are needed most."

"The life-giving waters thee can fill."

"Where the sun makes its bed, the changelings suffer."

"The evil of the past hides behind the light of the future. Can you not see this?"

"Stop the flow to oblivion."

Some spirits are helpful, others don't know a thing, and some are stupid or spiteful. Through these communications, it can be established that this was once the Prestida Kingdom, that humans, elves, ogres and changelings have lived and died on this land and that the tombs of the kings are nearby. The exact location will not be given.

The gentlest and most talkative spirit is the Last King, **Prestida the XIII!** In fact, the human looking, young king is likely to appear in all his ghostly splendor. The King wanders throughout the entire area which was once his kingdom. He frequently finds himself drawn to The Valley of Death for reasons he does not understand. He also frequents the ruins of the old castle. Like most ghosts, he has forgotten most skills, his memories are faded and distant, and his thoughts muddled. The good king never attacks or deliberately frightens anybody. He will answer questions in a vague and general way and seems confused and lost. The king knows little about the current state of the world and refers to the ogres as his people. He will NEVER come out and say whether or not he and the other kings were changelings, but he does seem to have an in depth understanding about them.

G.M. Note: More than likely, your players are going to try and find out something about the past from The Last King. While he is far more communicative than the other three kings, and has not been trapped in a tomb for tens of thousands of years, it's amazing how much a ghost can forget in that time. He remembers little of his days as king, except that life was a happy time for him. However, he can offer some insight to events of the ancient past, although many of his answers are ambiguous. A typical conversation with the Last King may go something like this:

Question: Who are you?

King: "I am King Prestida XIII."

Question: Why do you haunt this area or walks the earth as a ghost?

King: "Ghost? I am the last king. It is my duty. This is my home."

Question: Were you a changeling or is human your true form?

King: "I am what I am. It is my curse. It is the truth."

Question: Were the members of the Prestida family changelings?

King: "History has forgotten us. We are shadows from another age."

Question: Did you kill the real king and take his identity?

King: "I am not a usurper."

Question: Where is the tomb of the Prestida Kings?

King: "The answers you seek are buried beneath the phantom falls (where the waterfall used to be). Learn from the past, but do not bury yourselves in it. Turn your eyes to the future."

The ghost will turn and look directly at Archie and say, "Free yourself of the dead magic that freezes your soul like crystal. He who is your friend ... who is more than a friend ... has need of your friendship in this his darkest hour." Archie will pretend he doesn't know who the king is talking about.

Question: Who is this person ... This "friend?"

King: Pointing to Archie. "He knows."

Question: What happened after you died?

King: "Died? I am dead, aren't I? The world changed. My kingdom ... our dreams ... died with me."

Question: Do you know about the Time of Inquisition?

King: "Yes. Betrayal and change ... destructive change. But then the world is ever changing." He knows nothing about the world today.

Question: Do you know of what became of the changelings?

King: "He suffers as he has always suffered."

Question: How do you feel about changelings?

King: "More than any other creature, their nature is one of change and duality. Some were once strong and noble creatures who fought for peace. The brave were counted among those who dared to raise their hand against the Great Old Ones. Others were evil and vile creatures who fought to preserve the Great Old Ones and lived for conquest and death. Some built great kingdoms. Others destroyed those kingdoms, but always did the changeling seem to live in the shadow of others. The Old Ones, the elf, the human, always part of a greater whole, yet always a part. Sad, so sad."

Question: Did the changelings use or create crystal magic?

King: "Many magics did the changeling master: crystal, rune, ward, spells. But always was there the danger from greater beings and splintered minds."

"Despite his strengths and adaptability, the changeling is always a creature of change ... like the chameleon. Sometimes the change was too much and many would spring from the one. Duality was always a danger. One becoming two sides of the same coin. Always did the potential for evil walk in hand with the good. Magic and the supernatural often divided the changeling making him savior and monster."

Question: What will become of the changeling?

King: "What will be will be. I am told that at the edge of the world he teeters on the brink." With these last words he flies away and vanishes. **Note:** The G.M can add to the conversation if he or she so desires, but the king doesn't know very much.

The Entrance to the Catacombs

The old entrance to the catacombs is buried by thousands of years of shifting earth and rock. It is impossible to find. The entrance would have been located near where the great falls were located thousands of years ago. In fact, the Valley of Death appears as if it may be a small, dried up lake bed. Above it is a sheer cliff with a wide trail of rocks rubbed smooth by the cascading waters of what may have been a waterfall. Archie will be excited by these observations. He may even do a little dance and proclaim, "Gentlemen, you have brought me good fortune. This is the resting place of ancient kings. I know it. I can feel it." This is no psionic premonition, it's just a positive hunch.

Exploring the cliff facing will reveal a tiny cave opening to a human-sized, man-made tunnel. A rock crawler has dug some of the dirt away and in so doing, has exposed part of an ancient, stone archway. This was one of the secret entrances to the catacombs. Long ago, this entrance was located "behind" the waterfall. The tombs Archie and the group seeks are deep inside the mountain, not in or around the valley floor.

The Catacombs

The tunnel leads straight across into the mountain. After about 500 feet (153 m) it opens into a larger, natural looking chamber. The dome of the underground cave is 300 foot (91.5 m) in diameter and 100 to 150 feet (30-46 m) tall. The walls slope down from the ceiling and could be climbed rather easily except for being covered by rocky rubble.



The southern-most portion of the chamber is completely closed off by cave-ins.

On the opposite side of the entrance is another tunnel that seems to lead deeper and downward into the mountain. The walls of this tunnel are obviously man-made.

There is a whole army of skeletons bordering the walls of the chamber. All are frozen: like statues in combat ready poses. They line both sides of the great chamber and there are at least 300 of them. They appear to be armed with a variety of hand-to-hand weapons, with 25% of them equipped with a crossbow and short sword. The skeletons stand motionless and do not react when the characters set foot into the chamber. Archie suggests they might only be statues made to frighten away grave robbers or are symbols of spiritual warriors guarding their king's final resting place. Still, he advises caution and to stay away from them.

The First Traps (main chamber)

The ancient catacombs are still intact and have never been disturbed. This means they are still protected by ancient traps, magic and ghosts.

There are a dozen different types of traps (G.M.s, feel free to embellish). They are intended not only to keep people out, but to slay any intruder trying to leave after plundering the tombs. Thus, characters will have to be careful coming and going. Anyone tampering with one trap is very likely to set off 1D4 others. These traps are set off by an individual setting foot on a particular part of the floor or wall, or by disturbing wards impossible to see under the cover of thousands of years of dust and cobwebs. Sensing for magic will indicate that the whole area is a place of magic. A sense traps will inform the character that they are in big trouble (many). Unfortunately, it is very hard to discern where any particular trap might lie.

The first trap to be triggered causes a large panel in the ceiling to slide open. There is a rush of air, some falling dirt and ... nothing.

Closer inspection will reveal a narrow tunnel that goes up at a 45 degree angle and ends in a pile of dirt and rubble. Originally, this tunnel connected to the waters of the falls and would send torrents of water flooding through it. Its walls collapsed a thousand years before the falls changed its path. It is harmless. **Note:** When the ceiling panel opened, a heavy stone door slid to seal off the tunnel at the other end of the chamber. It will take some time (3D4 minutes) and great strength (a combined P.S. of 50) to slide this door back open.

The second trap drops two tons of rocks from a small portion of the ceiling. Characters underneath this section of the chamber must roll to dodge. A roll of 12 or higher means a successful save. A roll of 11 or less means the character was caught by some of the falling rocks, suffered 1D6 × 10 damage and may be pinned by falling debris (1-50% chance).

The third trap: If any of the characters approach the skeletons, their presence will cause 2D4 mechanical skeletons to activate, turn and fire crossbow bolts toward them. Roll to strike for each. The bolts inflict 2D4 damage each. Once the bows have been fired, the skeletons stop moving and are harmless. These shooters are obviously mechanical and may lead one to presume that all the skeletons are simple machines or mannequins designed to frighten intruders. A bad assumption.

The fourth trap: As the adventurers approach the skeletons closest to the wall of the main chamber or the far tunnel, they will set off a series of wards underneath the dust (even if flying or levitating). Magic skeletons are activated by the wards (equal to an animate/control dead spell). Approximately one hundred skeletons spring to life and attack. Another hundred skeletons stand motionless (waiting to attack?).

Each is human in size and general appearance. They will try to slay every living creature in the chamber, but will not pursue intruders beyond the chamber. Thus, the adventurers will be safe (for the moment) if they retreat to the tunnel that leads back outside or into the far tunnel on the other side (don't forget the sliding door will have to be opened first). Likewise, they can stay out of most of the skeletons' reach if they can fly, levitate, or use telekinesis; only 25% have crossbows. Priests and men of magic may be able to turn many of the skeletons as they make their way to safety. Once activated, the one hundred skeletons remain activated, which means the characters will have to deal with them every time they enter the chamber.

The Tunnel into the Catacombs

Opening the heavy, stone sliding door will reveal a large, 10 foot tall and 10 foot wide (3 m), tunnel stretching into the darkness. It too is lined with hundreds of armour clad skeletons standing motionless (for the moment) on both sides of the wall. Each is spaced approximately three feet (0.9 m) from the other. Most have their arms raised and fists clenched around swords and battle axes. One in ten is armed with a crossbow. The tunnel stretches 1000 feet (305 m) before the skeletons end and the passage branches into two. There are approximately 600 skeletons in all.

Fortunately, these skeletons are all mechanical statues triggered by stepping on certain stones implanted in the dust covered floor. Every time a person walks past a pair, both skeletons strike in a quick, double action.

It is possible, but very difficult, to parry both attacking skeletons. Roll a 15 or higher to parry for each attack. A failed roll means getting hit and taking 2D6 damage. After the skeleton robot strikes, its arm locks back into place and waits to strike at the next intruder. Running through the tunnel without parrying means that only one in eight will actually hit and all damage is applied to the character's armour first. That means the potential damage is 2D6 × 75 (150 to 900 points of damage). Crawling along the floor or blocking the attacks with magic walls, or force fields has similar results, with only one in twenty actually striking (2D6 × 30 — 60 to 360 points of damage). Flying through the

passage or floating above the ground will not activate any of the statues; no damage!

After the skeletons, the tunnel branches to the right and left.

The Left Passage

The left is a long stretch of empty tunnel. Its sides are less smooth and more rocky than the passageway to the right. There are no traps or difficulties for a long way. When the characters have gone down 500 feet (153 m) they will see a dim light. Beyond this point, the rock is composed of crystal. The rest of this passage is coated with many faceted, golf-ball sized, crystals that seem to be made of glass. A number of them appear to be giving off a soft light, about as much as a small candle. Archie will see this as a sign they are going in the right direction and press onward. **Note:** Trying to dig the light crystal from the wall will cause it to explode into shards of glass and cause 1D6 points of damage.

A **ghostly hand** will run its fingers through one of the character's hair and another is bumped or tapped on the shoulder. A voice, speaking in elf or dwarf, whispers, "get out ... stay alive." Those who can see the invisible will see the ghost of a king flying down the tunnel in front of them.

After traveling another 500 feet (153 m) through the magically lit tunnel, the investigators will see that the tunnel ends in another 100 feet (30.5 m). A circular chamber with other passages branching from it waits for them at the end of the tunnel.

As the explorers step into the last stretch of 100 feet (30.5 m), harmless, but blinding light beams shoot from the light crystals. A popping sound can also be heard in front of them. A moment later, 1D6 "chasers" (see High Seas for full powers of the crystals) come flying and screaming towards them. The chaser will strike only one character, inflicting 2D6 damage, and disappear. The character must also save vs psionic attack or he will be in a state of emotional shock for 1D4 × 10 melees/minutes. Shocked characters will be unable to walk, talk, or communicate until the trauma passes. They can be carried or dragged by others.

Passing the tunnel of blinding light will put them into the adjoining chamber. **Inside the chamber** are four short passages. At the end of each is a stone sarcophagus.

The four side chambers: All the sarcophaguses and markings in this area seem to be from the same time period.

Chamber Number One: Entering this room causes a portcullis of spikes to drop from the ceiling. If it strikes, the person(s) it hits suffers 4D6 damage. The spikes automatically rise and lock into place. The **ghostly voice** says, "Beware ... turn back." The stone sarcophagus in this chamber is that of a child. Opening the lid and examining the body shows that she was a human. There are no valuables in the coffin, only some of the child's toys.

Chamber Number Two: A human-sized gargoyle sits perched on this adult sized sarcophagus. It is a guardian stone that will come to life to protect the sanctity of the dead. It has 140 hit points, spd. 14, natural A.R. 14, three attacks per melee, 3D6 by bite, or 4D6 by claws or tail, is +2 to strike, parry and dodge. The stone monster will not leave the room. Destroying it will cause it to fall into a pile of rubble. Before any character can remove the lid, he will feel a hand on his shoulder and the **ghostly voice** whispers, "Don't do it."

Inside the coffin are the mummified remains of a man. His arms are crossed over his chest. One hand holds a scroll and the other, a golden scepter. Removing the scroll will cause it to crumble into a thousand pieces (it is ancient). Removing the scepter will cause a thunderclap that echoes throughout the catacombs. The scepter is worth 5000 gold. There are no other valuables. It will take at least 15 minutes to examine the body to tell whether or not it is human (it appears to be a changeling, but is actually human).

Chamber Number Three: This is the sarcophagus of a noblewoman, princess or a queen. Mystic symbols and wards rim the sides of the lid. The moment the sarcophagus is touched, a magic beam of light appears, like a spotlight, to highlight the rune symbols: Love, Light, and Magic/Forces. The wards (for those who can read such things) are listed in the sequence that they will go off per each time the tomb is disturbed.

Fear: area affect.

Blind: area affect.

Agony: 8D8 damage, area affect.

Death: 2D6 × 8 damage, area affect.

Then these four are repeated six times. Probably not worth the trouble.

The **ghostly voice** asks, "Why do you persist? Let the dead sleep." Should the group press their luck and actually survive opening this ward covered sarcophagus, they will find the mummified remains of a woman wrapped in gold! It will take 6D6 minutes to remove the gold sheeting (a grisly task that many will not under take). There is a total of five pounds worth of gold wrap worth 200 gold a pound. The **ghostly voice** growls in disgust, "You are pigs without respect or honor. You deserve your fate."

Also in the coffin are two six inch tall (0.15 m) jade statues of titans. They are really guardian stones that activate the instant that either the body or the statues are touched. The guardian stones grow to nine feet (2.7 m) tall in the blink of the eye. The statues will only fight those who stand their ground. Characters who flee are pursued into the main chamber, but the jade titans will not follow them down the lighted tunnel. When the danger is gone, they return to the room, replace the lid and turn back into miniature statues laying on the ground. They are activated again the moment any grave robber touches them or the sarcophagus. The woman is human.

Chamber Number Four: A miniature dust storm whips up, sending dust and grit flying into the faces of all who have entered the room. This is the work of a different, silent ghost via limited telekinesis. After 1D6 minutes, the ghost stops and disappears.

The dust covered sarcophagus is that of a nobleman, prince or king. Mystic symbols and wards rim the sides of the lid, but none are activated. A pair of familiar looking jade statues, this time of thunder lizard dragons, rest in a niche in the lid. Both radiate magic and are guardian stones that will grow to nine feet (2.7 m) tall to defend the tomb. **Note:** All guardian stones have 140 hit points, spd. 14, natural A.R. 14, three attacks per melee, 3D6 by bite, or 4D6 by claws or tail, are +2 to strike, parry and dodge.

To open this lid, the characters must first defeat the two guardians. Inside is the body of a mummified man (changeling). He wears a gold crown inset with jewels (worth about 50,000 gold total) and a large ruby ring (worth 6000 gold). At his waist is a scabbard and short sword (good quality, worth about 50 gold). None of the items are magic.

In the center of the main chamber is a large stone sarcophagus. Its lid is carved in the shape of a king. Opening this lid will take some work and a combined strength of 30. A toxic gas is released when the lid is moved even the slightest bit. Everybody in the room must roll to save vs poison cloud (16 or higher). A failed roll means 2D6 damage plus the character has trouble breathing and needs to get some fresh (non-toxic) air. The gas dissipates within 1D6 minutes.

Going back to remove the lid will reveal a mummified body that grabs the nearest person and tries to kill him! This is a real mummy!! It can either be destroyed or forced back in and the lid slid back into place (it can't move the lid by itself). Killing the mummy will show the stone coffin to be empty.

Under The Main Chamber: Inside the stone sarcophagus of the mummy is a secret panel that, when depressed, causes the entire sarcophagus to slide away to reveal a spiral staircase leading down about 20 feet (6 m). At the bottom of the stairs is a 30 × 30 × 20 foot (9 × 9 × 6

m) chamber filled with shelves and trunks. The shelves are covered in thick piles of dust, paper fragments and the remains of leather book jackets. There are also remnants of fabric. It is safe to presume that this was once a secret library and/or storage room. Sadly, the books, scrolls and tapestries have deteriorated into dust.

The ghosts of three angry Prestida Kings (III, VII, and XII) appear and warn the characters to proceed no farther. Only one, Prestida XII, speaks, while the others nod in agreement or make angry gestures. The silent two seem more hostile and need to be restrained by king Prestida XII. "We are the sentinels of this place for the dead. We beseech you, stop this madness and turn back. Please do not defile our final resting place."

Characters of a good alignment should stop and think twice about what they are doing. Is it a crime to rob graves over 10,000 years old? Their quest may do some good, but should they stop? Should they honor the request of a ghost? Archie will make an apology and try to ask the ghosts questions, but their spokesperson only repeats that they should leave (G.M.s can embellish this conversation as much as they wish, but the ghosts offer no insight about the rest of the catacombs or whether or not the Prestidas were changelings).

Finally, the king says, "You have been warned. Go back to the living or stay forever among the dead you so envy."

After this ominous threat, King Prestida XII vanishes. The other two ghosts turn invisible and hover above the characters, waiting to see what they say and do. Any character who starts to dig through the debris in the room will be pelted by leather bookcasings, scraps of wood, pebbles and handfuls of dust. This is the handiwork of the two angry ghosts using limited telekinesis. They may also hurl or knock over loose shelving and debris toward the character until he stops. They can also use telekinesis to bump or push the adventurers, but such shoving is not very hard (they can only move 30 lbs/13.6 kg through telekinesis).

Note: Rummaging through the debris will unearth 2D4 magic scrolls (G.M.'s choice of spells and level), six dozen empty glass vials (the contents have evaporated over the centuries), a silver short sword and two matching silver daggers (probably used in ceremonies), and a bronze lantern. Everything else has been reduced to rubbish. Archie will not stop others from taking things but he will refrain from doing so.

The Passage to the Right

This part of the tunnel is smooth and man-made. It is not lit so humans will need to light torches to see. After about 500 feet (153 m) the tunnel comes to an abrupt end. It has been walled off. One can only speculate that the actual tombs must lie beyond the wall. The wall is unmovable and almost seems to form fit the opening of the tunnel. It is 80 feet (24 m) thick (not that one can tell), is impossible to move, seems to be indestructible and radiates magic. Looking around the area will show a number of cobweb covered wards on the tunnel wall, to the right, near the ceiling.

The magical wall is from the wall of stone spell linked to a complex sequence of wards, including a rare permanence ward. Any attempt to dispel this magic barrier will fail. The wall was designed to be impenetrable. There are a number of mystic drain wards incorporated into its design, so any spell directed against the wall will be drained and powerless against it; no saving throw. If the group continues to look around and brush away dust and cobwebs, they will find another ward sequence on the opposite wall, near the floor. This one is a ward of power and has the ward number three connected to a permanence ward. If this ward is touched, the wall of stone will disappear, but only for three minutes. Then reappears. This power ward works as an on and off switch, but there is only one and it is on the outside of the stone wall. Any characters trapped behind the wall when it reappears are permanently trapped unless somebody on the other side touches the ward to

remove the wall (three minutes every time). Behind the man-made tunnel walls is the solid rock of the mountains.

If the group chooses to tunnel through the man-made tunnel walls to get around the magic wall, they can, but it will take 2D4 weeks to chop through the natural rock and granite of the mountain.

Behind the magic wall is a dark, 80 foot (24 m) long, 40 foot (12 m) wide passage. The interior of the passage, including the floor, ceiling and sides, are covered with wards! Most of the wards are active! A diabolist and possibly a summoner should be able to determine that as long as they stay on a narrow three foot (0.9 m) wide path down the center they will be unharmed. To step off the path is almost certain death (3D6 × 10 damage each time).



A ghostly voice or telepathic message will warn, "Only death awaits you inside. Turn back. Turn back!" Likewise, when anybody gets hurt or killed, a terrible laughter will ring through the halls and say, "Death and suffering will be yours unless you leave this sacred place." One or more of the characters may also feel something bump or push them. It is not enough to push him off the path, but should be enough to make him think twice. Characters who can see the invisible will see the ghost of three, human looking kings. Only one of the ghosts will speak (dwarf or elf) and speaks only of warnings and suggests that they should turn back and never return.

At the opposite end of the chamber is a silver-plated door. It can be easily slid open to reveal an incredible burial chamber 100ft (30 m) diameter with a ten foot (3 m) high ceiling. The walls are gold plated and inscribed with pictograms and mystic symbols. Each 3x3 foot (0.9 m) section of gold plating weighs 10 pounds (4.5 kg) and is worth 3000 gold. The words are written in elven and runes and tell the story of the Prestida family, listing specific kings, family members, and great feats. The pictures show scenes of healing, dancing, battle and even one of Thoth coming down from the heavens to stand before King Prestida the First. The room is breath taking, especially when one realizes that

no living creature has set foot in this chamber in over ten thousand years. However, this chamber is not the tomb itself, there is no sarcophagus.

In the center of the room is a large, flat pedestal that resembles an altar, except it is only three feet (0.9 m) tall. The platform is large enough for a dozen human-sized people to stand on. Dangling from the ceiling, seven feet (2.1 m) above the platform, is a gold ring hanging from a thick chain. A **ghostly voice** or telepathic message will suggest, "Take it. It's gold. Pull it right off and put it in your pocket, robber of graves."

The slightest tug on the ring causes the entire floor around the platform to suddenly drop away. Anybody standing on the fall-away floor plummets into a 200 foot (61 m) deep pit. Damage from such a fall is 1D6 × 10. Ten thousand years ago, half of the pit was filled with water from the river. Today the pit is empty except for cobwebs. When anybody gets hurt or killed, a terrible laughter will ring out of thin air. "See, we tried to warn you. Go home."

Only those standing on or clinging to the platform (actually a stone pillar) are saved from falling. A few minutes later, the floor panels swing back up and snap into place, so any rescues should be done with haste (of course a tug on the ring and the floor will fall away again). While the floor is down, the ceiling above the platform opens up. It is a simple matter to toss a hook and grappling line into the opening and climb the ten foot (3 m) distance to the ceiling (or stand on another person's shoulders and hoist oneself up). Inside is another short, 10 feet (3 m) tunnel that leads to the burial chamber.

The **main burial chamber** is 1000 feet (305 m) long and 20 feet (6 m) wide. It contains the remains of the first twelve Prestida kings and their immediate family members. Each was put to rest inside a simple, stone sarcophagus. Inside most of the coffins are 2D4 × 1000 gold worth of valuables, mainly jewelry (there are 97 in all). Each of the 12 kings have one magic crystal ring still on his finger. All of the sarcophaguses are protected by 3D4 wards of confusion, agony and death.

The Defenders of the Tomb

The Crystal Golem

In the center of the chamber stands what appears to be a crystal statue. It is really a crystal golem (see the section on **Psionic Crystal Magic** for complete stats). The crystal golem is the chief defender of these tombs.

If the group tries to talk to the golem, it will not respond. If anyone tries to pass by it, the golem will knock him back. To try to pass again will cause the crystal behemoth to attack. The crystal creature will also attack any person who attacks it or who defiles any of the tombs. It will fight until intruders leave the chamber. The golem cannot leave the room.

The golem's incredible and mystical beauty will make it difficult for characters to attack for fear of breaking it. This is true even when the giant thing comes to attack them. Anyone failing their magic saving throw will be forced to defend himself by parrying and backing away, out of reach. The golem will fight to its destruction without hesitation.

The **three ghosts** will help to formulate tactics and warn the golem of attackers, traps and danger. This makes sneak attacks and backstabbing impossible. The entire while, the ghosts will chide the invaders and continue to warn them to, "leave this place lest you die."

The Three Ghosts

The **ghosts of Kings Prestida the III, VII, and XII** appear with a warning.

"The living should not disturb us ghosts of the past. No living mortal has touched a Prestida in over 10,000 years. He who does so today shall never see the light of day. Heed my words or join the dead!"

Prestida XII is the spokesman for the group and will address the adventurers in elven or dwarven (98%). He is also familiar with the giant and faerie languages (75%). The king does not know any human languages. All the ghosts can communicate through limited telepathy whenever they choose. The visage of all three is grim and frightening. When angry, each grows from human size to eight feet tall (2.4 m).

They are the sentinels of the tomb. They alone can control and direct all the other magical defenders, such as the golem, mummies and guardian stones. They do not welcome anyone who disturbs their sanctuary and will work to frighten or chase them away. Failing that, they will use all the resources available to them to destroy intruders intent on grave robbing.

The three ghosts can understand the curiosity and greed of the living, but if the interlopers refuse to heed their first few warnings, they will use their limited powers to destroy them. At some point, one or two (one always stays to help guide the other defenders of the tomb) will try to possess one or two of the adventurers. If possession is successful the ghosts will use that person's body to attack the other members of the group. Only ghosts who used to be men of magic or psychics can use magic powers or perform psionic attacks, but only if the body they possess has such abilities.

Mummies

If the golem is defeated, the three ghosts disappear (turn invisible) and, together, telekinetically remove the lid from four false sarcophaguses. Inside each is a mummy. The mummies will attack anybody inside the burial chamber and fight to their destruction. Like the golem, the mummies will not leave the chamber.

Guardian stones

At the entrance, standing on little shelves cut into the stone are a dozen, six inch tall, jade statues: four titans, four thunder lizards and four gallu demons. All twelve are guardian stones. They will activate only to prevent grave robbers (characters who have taken things from the graves) from leaving. The stone monsters will kill anybody who has plundered the tombs, including thieves who try to steal the jade guardian statues. Apologies are not accepted. If a character steals, he dies. If the thief has any obvious artifacts from any other part of the catacombs, he will be asked to return them. Failure to comply means the guardian stone attacks. Each of the guardians will stand 9 feet (2.7 m) tall, have 140 hit points, spd. 14, natural A.R. 14, three attacks per melee, 3D6 by bite, or 4D6 by claws or tail, are +2 to strike, parry and dodge.

Another Damn Quest & Long Awaited Answers

There is only one thing that could appease the Kings for being disturbed. The last king of their line was not buried in the royal tomb, even though there is a place for his body. His changeling corpse was thrown into a gorge from the top of the old falls. That was a long time ago. The body of the last king drifted along the river and was never recovered. It could lay buried under thousands of years of silt on the bottom of the river.

If the group agrees to find and return what little of his skeleton may remain, the ghosts will spare their lives and may grant them an additional reward.

One way to find the body is a month long campaign of studying the river in the gorge, and ancient maps to guess at where the bones are now, and digging for them.

A **better method** is to show respect and work with the dead kings. The ghosts do not know how to help, but they do hold clues that can be of help. For example: Whenever a king was laid to rest, his family or successor would be the last to leave the tomb. The new king would often leave a tribute for the dead king in the tomb that no one else would know about. The **Last King, Prestida XIII**, placed his own rune dagger, Bklethek, in the coffin with his father, King Prestida XII. The father will allow a psionic character(s) to open his sarcophagus and object read the dagger.

The object read will indicate where the body is today, as well as the fact that kings Prestida XII and XIII were both really changelings! Archie's theory is correct. If Archie does the object read, tears will begin to stream down his face. He will slowly stand up and say in a very serious tone, "We will find your Last Great King and put his soul to rest. I ... share your people's grief."

The **rune dagger**, awakened from its slumber, will plead with the object reader and the ghosts to let it live. The ghost will keep it for the time being, but give it to the group if the adventurers are successful in returning the remains of the Last King.

Another way to find the body is to somehow communicate with the spirit of the Last King. Unfortunately, he wanders the entire expanse of the old Prestida Kingdom and may be difficult to contact. The three ghosts cannot leave the catacombs and have no way of finding him. If the player group successfully contacts Prestida XIII he can help by describing, in general terms, where his body is located, but not the exact location.

A **possible subplot**: Nothing comes easy, so if the Game Master feels particularly mischievous or ornery, the skeletal remains of the Last King may be in the possession of some nefarious fiend. An evil witch or wizard or monster or dragon who keeps the skeleton for any number of twisted or sentimental reasons. This can lead to an entire night of adventure. Your option.

Rewards

The group (or an individual) can choose to head for the hills once the ghosts let them leave the catacombs, for they have no means to pursue them. However, if the group succeeds, the kings will look upon them with favor. They will give Bklethek, the Rune Dagger, to Archie. He in turn will give it to one of the player characters (probably the bravest and/or most helpful person). In addition, the group will be given a total of 15 Old Kingdom dragon coins, each worth 5000 gold. If a greedy character tries to steal anything else, he will be struck down without mercy.

The ghosts will also offer a helpful warning and advice.

"Other spirits have told us of a danger to the world. Far to the southeast, there is an island that hides from the rest of the world. Here a people once dreamt of creating a new kingdom. A kingdom of peace and harmony. Something evil has perverted that dream and, with time, will spread hatred and war throughout the world. Stop its evil now, while it is in its infancy."

Turning to Archie, the eldest spirit says,

"You more than any here understands the horror. You know the way. You have met the danger. Go to the Island at the Edge of the World and prevent history from repeating itself."

If nothing else brings Archie back to his senses, the events of this adventure and the words of the dead kings will. The elf wizard will suddenly realize that he has become too complacent with his life in The Valley. He also realizes that the magic of The Crystal King and Fortress has dulled his senses and crushed his sense of adventure. A magic that controls and amputates the spiritual legs of all who live there. **Game Master Note**: Whether Archie and our player characters go directly back to The Valley to confront the Crystal King or first go the Island at the Edge of the World is left entirely to the whim of the players and you, the Game Master.

Non-Player Characters (N.P.C.s)

The Eldest King

Name: Prestida III

True Name: Unknown, forgotten.

Alignment: Anarchist (selfish)

O.C.C. & Level: Mind Mage 7th, Noble 15th

Race: Ghost — looks human, **Age**: Looks to be about 60, **Size**: 8 ft tall (2.6 m), **Sex**: Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 23, M.E. 29, M.A. 19, physical attributes are not applicable, **Hit Points**: N/A, **A.R.**: Special (ghost-like, intangible)

Armour: N/A.

Bonuses: +9 vs psionic, +14 vs insanity, +1 vs magic.

Natural Abilities: In ghost form: fly 30, night vision 120 ft (36 m), see invisible, natural state is invisible, can pass through solid objects (including magical walls), totally intangible — **cannot** be affected by magic or physical attacks, vulnerable to psionics only.

Psionics: 2 psionic attacks per melee, Master psionic (base save vs psionics is 10, but include the appropriate bonus), all levels 1-10 abilities, 15th level proficiency, **I.S.P.**: 189

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None in ghost form.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Magic Items/Weapons: Bonded to the Crystal Golem.

Combat Abilities: None.

Weapons: None.

Skills of Note: N/A.

Possessions: None.

Description: The three kings are the ghosts of ancient Prestida Kings. They were all changelings and master psionics. All belonged to the O.C.C. Noble and were good, compassionate and strong leaders. Each of the kings lived a long life, especially by human standards (150 to 250 years). They are trapped in the tomb, destined (doomed?) to guard it through eternity. They will not allow anyone to defile the contents of the family graves. They can choose to **Mentally Possess Others** in order to protect the tomb and help guide the other protectors.

The Middle King

Name: Prestida VII

True Name: Unknown, forgotten.

Alignment: Unprincipled (selfish)

O.C.C. & Level: Mind Mage 5th, Noble 12th

Race: Ghost — looks human, **Age**: Looks to be about 45, **Size**: 8 ft tall (2.6 m), **Sex**: Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 27, M.A. 23, physical attributes are not applicable, **Hit Points**: N/A, **A.R.**: Special (ghost-like, intangible)

Armour: N/A.

Bonuses: +8 vs psionic, +12 vs insanity, +1 vs magic.

Natural Abilities: In ghost form: fly 30, night vision 120 ft (36 m), see invisible, natural state is invisible, can pass through solid objects (including magical walls), totally intangible — **cannot** be affected by magic or physical attacks, vulnerable to psionics only.

Psionics: 2 psionic attacks per melee, Master psionic (base save vs psionics is 10, but include the appropriate bonus), all levels 1-10 abilities, 12th level proficiency, **I.S.P.**: 148

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None in ghost form.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Magic Items/Weapons: None.

Combat Abilities: None.

Weapons: None.

Skills of Note: N/A.

Possessions: None.

Description: Same as the previous king.

The Late King

Name: Prestida XII

True Name: Unknown, forgotten.

Alignment: Scrupulous

O.C.C. & Level: Mind Mage 7th, Noble 15th

Race: Ghost — looks human, **Age:** Looks to be about 80, **Size:** 8 ft tall (2.6 m), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 16, M.E. 27, M.A. 15, physical attributes are not applicable, **Hit Points:** N/A, **A.R.:** Special (ghost-like, intangible)

Armour: N/A.

Bonuses: +8 vs psionic, +12 vs insanity, +1 vs magic.

Natural Abilities: In ghost form: fly 30, night vision 120 ft (36 m), see invisible, natural state is invisible, can pass through solid objects (including magical walls), totally intangible — **cannot** be affected by magic or physical attack, vulnerable to psionics only.

Psionics: 2 psionic attacks per melee, Master psionic (base save vs psionics is 10, but include the appropriate bonus), all levels 1-10 abilities, 15th level proficiency **I.S.P.:** 147

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None in ghost form.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Magic Items/Weapons: None.

Combat Abilities: None.

Weapons: None.

Skills of Note: N/A.

Possessions: None.

Description: Fundamentally the same as the previous ghost. The late king was the father of the Last King and is the spokesman of the three haunting ghosts. He was kind, compassionate, understanding, forgiving and just. As a ghost, he longs to have the remains of his son brought to rest with the other kings and family members.

The Last King

Name: Prestida XIII

True Name: Unknown, forgotten.

Alignment: Scrupulous

O.C.C. & Level: Mind Mage 7th, Noble 8th

Race: Ghost of a Changeling **Age:** looks to be about 30, **Size:** 6 ft tall (1.8 m), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 26, M.A. 18, physical attributes are not applicable, **Hit Points:** N/A, **A.R.:** Special (ghost-like, intangible)

Armour: N/A.

Bonuses: +8 vs psionic, +11 vs insanity, +1 vs magic.

Natural Abilities: In ghost form: fly 30, night vision 120 ft (36 m), see invisible, natural state is invisible, can pass through solid objects (including magical walls), totally intangible — **cannot** be affected by magic or physical attacks, vulnerable to psionics only.

Psionics: 2 psionic attacks per melee, Master psionic (base save vs psionics is 10, but include the appropriate bonus), level 1-8 abilities, 8th level proficiency, **I.S.P.:** 134.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None in ghost form.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Magic Items/Weapons: None.

Combat Abilities: None.

Weapons: None.

Skills of Note: N/A.

Possessions: None.

Description: The last king is the ghost of the last Prestida to rule the kingdom. Shortly after his death, the Changeling Inquisitions and the destruction of the kingdom began. He was a changeling, master psionic, and belonged to the O.C.C. Noble. He started his career as a mind mage and switched to the O.C.C. of Noble when he was crowned king. He was a kind, caring and just leader who, in the tradition of his family, worked to build a kingdom where all people could live in harmony.

The Last King died an unnatural and early death and is considered only an 8th level noble (the other kings are considered 15th level). Upon his death, a noble family of humans sought to usurp the reign of the Prestida family and instigated the great Changeling Inquisition. Members of this selfish family had suspected the Prestidas to be changelings for many years, but had no evidence. They seized upon the death of the king and the public revelation that he was a changeling to their advantage. It was they who created and spread the stories about the "human" Prestidas being assassinated and their identities taken by evil changelings. It was they who started the changeling witch hunt and mass extermination. They saw to it that all of the remaining Prestidas and their kin (all changelings) were tortured and killed. To the human family's dismay, they did not expect the anti-changeling frenzy to sweep the world. Nor did they imagine that it would destroy the kingdom that they had hoped to rule. As fate would have it, history has forgotten the name of the human family who instigated the tragedy; all of whom died in violent and terrible ways.

Note: With his skeleton interred in the family tomb, the ghost of the last king will eventually follow his bones to the tomb and find eternal peace.

The Rune Dagger

Name: Bklethek (pronounced Beh-kleh-theek)

Alignment: Unprincipled

Features of Note: I.Q. 14, female, blue-grey in color.

Powers of Note: In addition to the usual traits, indestructible, telepathic link with its owner, etc., Bklethek also has four earth warlock powers: Chameleon, rock to mud, wall of stone, and travel through stone. All are equal to a sixth level warlock in strength and it can cast a total of four spells (in any combination or repetition) per day.

Damage: 4D6 and is considered a magic weapon.

Note: After 10,000 years stuck in a box, Bklethek craves adventure. This will cause her to suggest foolish risks and to travel the world. The dagger is reasonably honorable and trustworthy.

To the Edge of the World



The Floenry Islands and Beyond

One way or another, our heroes find their way to the southeastern oceans. In all likelihood, this is the result of the prodding from the ghosts at the Kings' Tombs and messages from magic pigeons. Archie will confess that he has a friend, Noah, who is having some changeling trouble on an island. He fails to mention that Noah is a changeling or anything about Noah's unusual powers (that will come later).

Their destination is the Enry Island. This means they must travel from the Old Kingdom Mountains, through the **Timiro Kingdom** (see **Palladium RPG Book II: The Old Ones** for details about this old human kingdom) and book passage on a ship.

If the group has not yet confronted the Crystal King, they should be able to convince him to send them to the island on one of his Crystal Quests. If they cannot convince him to do so, it may provoke a conflict.

Another possibility is that they can head directly to the island rather than return to The Valley first. This is a dangerous decision because the Crystal King will find out and assume the worst. He will then send two champions and six of his knights to either return the traitors or kill them.

Alternately, the group could be surprised and magically whisked away and plopped down on the coast of Timiro near a waiting boat. The captain seems to recognize them (well, at least Archie) and reports that a priestess of Isis and Thoth has made arrangements for his boat to take them to any place they want to go. He will also comment that they should hurry because they are already three days behind schedule. Archie will mumble something about interfering, know-it-all priestesses (was that a name? Cassandra?) and old adventures coming back to haunt him. He thanks the captain for his patience and tells him they will set sail tomorrow. The group will have one full day to purchase provisions.

Stories of strange storms, unusual migration patterns of sea monsters, the oceans disappearing and the sea level dropping are prevalent among the sailors of Timiro and the Land of the South Winds. The stories are just now beginning to reach into the Old Kingdom and places like the Town of a Dozen Fracts. The adventurer group will have heard many of these wild stories during the course of their adventures. If they have not, the crew of their chartered boat will gladly fill them in.

A score of magic pigeons will have flocked to Archie as soon as he stepped outside of The Valley. He is not likely to divulge the contents of the messages until the group is on its way at sea. The reason there

are so many pigeon messengers is because they were unable to fly into the anti-magic zone of The Valley and have waited, in some cases, 20 years to deliver their message. All are from the same person, Noah. The multitude of magic pigeons can be played for laughs by the G.M. as well as providing information to the group. Many are, "How are you? I am fine" type messages. But the other half say things like:

"My friend, strange things are afoot. We need to talk. Come as soon as you can."

"Archie, I need your help desperately. Please, if you receive this message, please come."

"We have grave troubles. I need your advice. Contact me."

"The oceans and sky are being sucked beyond the Edge of the World. Come!"

One even states: "The blackness at the edge of the world marches toward us. Dark magic threatens us all."

In addition, Archie will encourage the group to head south with him because "There are some matters there that may need my attention." But he will only encourage them after they have been to the tomb of the kings.

Enry Island

Any number of adventures may transpire on their way to the Island at the Edge of the World. They may encounter pirates, sea serpents, storms, magic, monsters, and civil unrest. Or the trip may pass without incident — jump right to the Edge of the World; it's up to the Game Master and his/her players.

One definite stop will be at **Enry Island**. The ship will need to restock and the crew rest for at least one or two days. Any repairs to sails or the body of the vessel can be accomplished at this port. Archie will probably want to explore the recently discovered ruins and civil unrest may cause additional intrigue.

Enry Island once held the means to get to The Island at the Edge of the World (Noah's Paradise) via a secret teleport circle created by Archie. He may or may not use the circle to take the group to the island more quickly (it may have been discovered and destroyed). He is just as likely to set sail by ship in order to find time to think and see how this part of the world has changed (remember, he's been stuck in The Valley for 20 years).

Religions: Church of Light 50%, Church of Enlightenment 35%, Anti-Thoth cult 15%.

Main Ports: Port Miro (70% of imports and exports) and Port of Truth.

Political Divisions: There are now two separate church states on Enry Island, North Enry is controlled by the Church of Light, and South Enry is controlled by the Church of Enlightenment.

Affiliations: North Enry is still considered a self sufficient territory of the Timiro Kingdom. South Enry is not recognized by the current rulers of Timiro. Timiro does not involve itself with the government of the island.

Government: Church State. The majority of the island is under the rule of the High Priest of the Church of Light based in Port Miro. The southwestern third of the island is under the control of the Church of Enlightenment based in Port of Truth.

Population: 65,000, 70% Human, 15% Other, 15% Orc Slaves.

The Recent History of Enry Island

The description of Enry Island as it appears in **Adventures on the High Seas** is a bit out of date. The Yin-Sloth cultists eventually did push Enry Island into a bloody civil war, but they failed to usurp any power. The handiwork of the Yin-Sloth cultists was discovered and rooted from the island. The pro-Thoth and anti-Thoth groups were able to mediate their differences in order to cleanse their island of the evil cultists.

When the civil war was over, there were still major differences between the two. Even mediators from Timiro tried to settle things, but nothing worked. The one group could not tolerate or condone the worship of "Thoth the Deceiver." Although negotiations broke down, the violence did not return. Instead, there has been a mostly amicable separation of the two factions. Most of the former cultists have forsaken the jungle gods to join the anti-Thoth cultists, and worship Ra and Isis. These people have become members of a new church called **The Church of Enlightenment**. They have established themselves in the new city of Port of Truth on the opposite end of the island. Some of the anti-Thoth cultists continued in their beliefs, and maintain their separation from the Churches. However, the anti-Thoth cultists no longer hold allegiance to Yin-Sloth. They are Anti-Thoth separatists, a distinctly militant subset within the Church of Enlightenment.

The Church of Light

Over the last thirty years, the **Church of Light** has been the dominant political and religious force on the island. Although the Church of Light still controls the largest city and the main port, Port Miro and the communities around that half of the island, their power has been diminished. The Church of Light retains absolute control over the oldest, most prosperous and largest seaport city on the island, Port Miro.

The Church of Enlightenment

The **Church of Enlightenment**, also known as the Church of True Light, has established a separate domain on the island. It has attempted to remove itself from the other two religious groups.

The priests and followers of the Church of Enlightenment worship Ra and Isis, but hate and fear Thoth. They insist that Thoth is a dangerous pretender who once associated with the Dreaded Old Ones. They blame the recent increase of storms at sea, lower water levels and most disasters on the God of Wisdom. The main reason for the civil war and the schism between the two churches is that the Church of Light dares to worship Thoth as part of their pantheon of gods.

The Church ministers quote the teachings of a visiting elf visionary named Nona, who revealed many startling things about Thoth and the Gods of Light. These out of context and misrepresented teachings of the scholar/adventurer Nona, have become the precepts of their religion. Nona arrived on their island 40 years ago, helped them eliminate the violence that had plagued the island and helped them to reorganize their church.

The philosophies and doctrines of the Church of Enlightenment have been at direct odds against the island founding families who are the followers of the Church of Light. In the last decade, both struggled over control of the island, particularly Port Miro. The Enlightened ones have recently removed themselves completely from the Church of Light, without violence, by establishing a separate state and a separate port of their own. Their **Port of Truth** is located at the south end of the island on the northeast edge of the Bay of Tranquility. It is only navigable by small oceangoing ships, which means it is unable to compete with Port Miro for trade.

The Anti-Thoth Cult

There is also the **Anti-Thoth cult**, a militant branch of the Church of Enlightenment which continues to worship elemental forces and jungle gods. These worshipers loathe Thoth and all the gods of light who would associate with the "Spawn of Magic and Evil" as they call him. They try to convince people that the worship of Thoth, or any god in the pantheon of the Church of Light, is dangerous. These people charge The Spawn of Magic and Evil with every crime, disaster or atrocity imaginable. Among his most heinous crimes is his intervention to save the changeling menace, allowing the Elf/Dwarf wars, associating with evil forces (including the Old Ones) for selfish purposes, being the corruptor of science, perverter of magic, keeper of forbidden knowledge, and a host of others.

These fanatics are much more cautious since the destruction of the Yin-Sloth cult, but they can be dangerous in the extreme. Any character who is suspected of working for Thoth or of being a changeling may be abducted, mugged or assassinated. Young Peter is a devout believer in Thoth and will be hardpressed to hold his tongue in Port Miro or the Port of Truth. Archie does not worship Thoth, but respects him greatly. This could cause trouble for the group in general and get them in the middle of any number of arguments.

A branch of the Anti-Thoth Cult is a haven for pirates and assassins. A safe house for such brigands is located at a run-down building on the waterfront in Port Miro. A sign on the building indicates it was previously occupied by **Nelson and Christian, Importers and Exporters**. If its cover is blown, all residents from the safe house will scatter to other locations and may be impossible to trace.

Other Island Inhabitants

In addition to the humanoid residents on the island, there are small jungle tribes of hytril, grimbor, and krel scattered through the wilderness. The hytril maintain contact and relations with the humanoids and sometimes help them against the grimbor or in avoiding krel. The grimbor are giant ape-like beings who tend to keep to themselves. Except for rogues, most grimbor will not attack humans unless they are threatened. The people of the "civilized" portion of the island occasionally capture the grimbor to work as a slave labor force, fight in the arena or to be exported to arenas and slavers on the mainland. The feline krel tend to remain hidden from the humanoid populations and only hunt humanoids for sport when they enter the jungles. Many foolish young couples and island visitors vanish in the jungles without a trace, falling victim to the carnivorous pleasures of the krel. None of these jungle people are affiliated with any of the three religious factions on the island. See Palladium's **Monsters & Animals** for complete details on these three races.

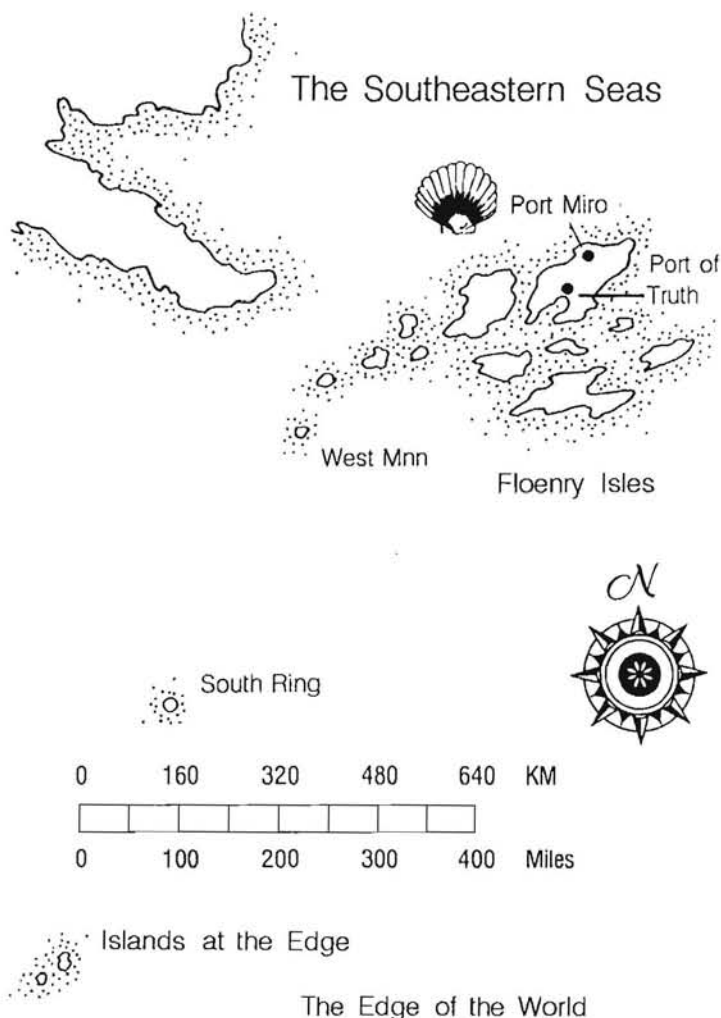
Ancient Ruins

At the center of the island, in an area of jungle recently cleared for farming, stone ruins have been discovered. Several Greek/Roman style building have been excavated along with a large stone pyramid. The locals believe them to have once been part of a temple complex for the worshipers of Yin-Sloth and/or other jungle gods. However, Archie will recognize them as being identical to the ancient ruins found on the islands at the Edge of the World. The ruins can be examined, but there's not a lot to be discovered about them. Archie will be startled to find a map of West Mnn and otherwise uncharted islands south of West Mnn. The map also shows the Edge of the World.

Sub-Plot Ideas for Adventure on Enry

As if our adventurers haven't run into enough trouble already, they overhear a pair of scoundrels talking about an assassination or kidnapping plot against the head of the **Church of Light**. The plot may be instigated by Yin-Sloth cultists seeking revenge, over-zealous Anti-Thoth cultists, or pirates who think they can command a big ransom for the spiritual leader. If the adventurers try to learn more or warn the Church, they will inevitably become embroiled in the entire sordid affair. G.M.s, this should be a minor adventure without serious consequences. Archie will avoid involvement and go off to study the ruins some more. Or maybe the Yin-Sloth Cultists are trying to make it look like **The Church of Enlightenment** is responsible to renew the civil war.

Another side-adventure could involve jungle gods. A hytril informs the authorities that a horrible creature appeared at the site of the pyramid ruins just as the full moon reached its zenith. The authorities regret to inform the adventurer group that this monster has captured their friend, Archie. From past experience they know that Archie will be used in some sort of magic sacrificial ceremony the next night and the monster will disappear. The authorities refuse to help rescue Archie because,



one, the last time this happened they lost seven men and 16 others were wounded. Secondly, Archie is an outsider and not worth the effort. They offer their condolences and leave. Nobody will lift a finger to help, other than a group of bandits who will try to mug the group when they go into the jungle.

The group is now faced with rescuing Archie from the grip of a nightmarish monster. The creature can be Yin-Sloth the Terrible (or something like him), Pith the snake god (or a snake-like monster), Tark the Spider Goddess (or spider monsters) or some other slime covered, multi-tentacled thing. After fighting this creature and/or its minions, the group discovers that Archie was never its captive, but they may save some innocent villager. When they get back to town, they find Archie comfortable in bed. Oh, yes, he saw the monster(s) and it nearly had him, but he was able to teleport out of harms way and popped back into town to get some rest. Where have they been? They look like they've been brawling.

West Mnn & Pirates

A few years ago, there was what was called **The Piracy Purge**. An effort organized by Timiro, South Winds, and the Western Empire to eliminate rampant piracy. The campaign worked for a while, eliminating the pirate threat by as much as 50%, but as soon as the policing of the trade routes ceased, piracy returned in full force. Today the pirates are as thick as flies, plunder ships of all kinds and sizes.

Rumors among the Islands that suggest the ocean level itself is beginning to drop and that there is something terribly wrong in the south are

most common among the pirate community, and therefore, generally disregarded by proper folk. But then again, the pirates are the most knowledgeable about the southern seas, and they may know more than the landlubbers who discount their words.

The Free Port of West Mnn, on the southernmost island of the Floenry chain, is a pirate haven (see full description in **Palladium RPG Book III: High Seas**, pp. 169-170). It is one of the few places where the word of buccaneers, filibusters, and freebooters are treated, if not with respect, at least without contempt.

Captain Kirsten is a notorious lady pirate who operates in and around the Floenry Islands. She has recently been recruited to join the infamous **League of Pirates** based somewhere around West Mnn. In anticipation of her future captaincy within the League, she has been studiously gathering information about trade routes, schedules, and the traffic patterns of the merchants and crews that dock at the Port of Truth on Enry Island. In return for this information, she provides her informants with forbidden goods and a market for otherwise unsalable items.

The League of Pirates is a small group of extremely secretive and successful pirate crews. They have their own secret base of operations located at West Mnn and terrorize the entire southeastern ocean. The League is controlled by a notorious pirate from the Western Empire known as **Captain Goldthirst**. Kirsten is supposed to contact the League in West Mnn where she is to meet with an emissary from the League. Once a year, a League ship docks at the Port of Truth only long enough to get a quick report from its current spy. Naturally, the League ship would fly false colors and log false ports of call on its itinerary.

The League will have at least two pirate spies stationed in Enry, Totugo, and West Mnn at all times. The League uses the pirates stationed at West Mnn to communicate between ships. Every League ship is required to dock at Free Port once every few months, unless it is on a special mission. At least one ship from the League will visit West Mnn every two weeks.

No merchant captain is likely to hire out his ship on a voyage to the south. Most sailors avoid The Edge of the World. Any ship the characters may hire from West Mnn that is willing to travel south is most likely a pirate ship. Of course, hiring a new ship and crew should not be necessary unless their ship has been damaged in some way. Their crew isn't thrilled about heading toward the edge, but the priestess who hired them paid triple, and they are sailors who live up to their word (a rarity in these waters). On the other hand, being attacked by pirates, especially this far south, is a very real danger.

South Ring

The Secret Base of The League of Pirates

South Ring was a barren island not listed on most maps. Twelve years ago, Captain Goldthirst and his crew discovered the island and made it the base of their piracy operation. The League of Pirates consists of many captains who escaped The Purge. Other pirates either fled to other parts of the world or were eliminated during The Piracy Purge. As a result, the League has some of the most experienced and most knowledgeable pirates in the south seas.

Only the League knows the location of South Ring. Travelling at good speed (6 mph), most ships could reach South Ring in a little over two days (50 hours). But it would be very hard for any other ship to find South Ring. Other sailors may have heard of it, but few have actually seen it. Besides, few sailors want to travel that close to the Edge of the World.

It was an uninhabited atoll with a large, pleasant lagoon. Goldthirst decreed that South Ring was to be a safe haven, to be used only for rest and relaxation and a place to hide. Later, he and the other captains decided it should be used exclusively by the captains. There are only

two buildings on South Ring and a small farming region. The two buildings are: 1) a captains' meeting hall where captains from the various ships can meet with no possibility of the crewmen overhearing, and 2) a lady's residence where women and some families who work the farms reside. Wild plants provide the pirates with fresh fruit and vegetables. It should be noted that many of the ladies do not remain on the island by choice, but are kept as slaves by Goldthirst and his men. Any women captured by League ships are taken to South Ring and added to the slave stock. Men and troublemakers are usually put to death. Goldthirst has little compassion for his slaves and new ones can always be captured.

There are no weapons or buried treasure on South Ring. There is no need for defenses on the island since no one but the League knows it exists and no other ships have come close to finding it. The ladies farm the land, raise a few farmyard animals, and serve the pirates as they demand.

If the player characters are smart, they will avoid this island. Any attempt before or after the events that take place on The Island at the End of the World can only lead to a bloody conflict with pirates. Of course any character of a good alignment who learns of these poor slave women's plight will feel compelled to save them. Yet another avenue for adventure on the high seas.

The Enry Island Assassin

Name: Thadeus

True Name: Dahmoel Mikail Levard

Alignment: Anarchist

O.C.C. & Level: 6th level Priest

Race: Human, **Age:** 35, **Size:** 5 feet, 6 inches tall (1.68 m), 145 lbs (65 kg), **Sex:** Male.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 10, M.A. 20, P.S. 9, P.P. 21, P.E. 10, P.B. 22, Spd. 16

Hit Points: 34

Armour: None.

Bonuses: None.

Natural Abilities: Trust/intimidate 60%, charm/impress 60%.

Psionics: None.

Magic: 6 spells per day, 2 per melee, sense evil 40%, sense enchantment 30%, +1 save vs magic, +1 spell strength.

Magic Knowledge: Water to wine, chameleon, rock to mud, phantom, animate plants, encase object in stone.

Magic Items/Weapons: None.

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand: soldier, +3 parry/dodge, +3 to damage, 3 attacks per melee. W.P. blow pipe (+3 to strike, 4 rate of fire), W.P. knives (+2 strike, +2 parry, +3 throw), W.P. sling (+3 strike, 5 rate of fire).

Weapons: Blow pipe and a dozen darts with a variety of poisons.

Special Items: 4 darts tipped with blackroot poison. Blackroot poison can only be made from the "blackroot" bush which only grows in the Yin-Sloth jungle. However, there are a few blackroot bushes on Enry Island growing in the jungle near the ruins. The plants were brought to Enry by Yin-Sloth cultists. The production of blackroot poison is fatal! Thadeus did not make the poison, but acquired the darts through a member of the anti-Thoth cult.

Skills of Note: Disguise 45%/15%, identify plants/fruit 48%/50%, prowl 50%, use poison 56%, read/write 90%, medical 78%/82%, demon and devil lore 90%, recognize poison 58%, religious doctrine (church of light, anti-thoth cult, church of the seven waters, elementalism, and others) 88%, sailing 56%, sense of direction 80%, swim 75%, faerie lore 40%, imitate voices 32%, speak faerie 60%, speak elven 60%.

Possessions: None aside from his weapons and his clothes.

Description: Very good looking, slim, 35 year old human male. He is extremely dexterous and quick. He dresses modestly as a priest, but will also be seen in very nondescript peasant garb.

Although on the short side and physically below average (weak but extremely agile), he has an intimidating and charming presence. He is also reasonably intelligent. He is committed to the removal of Thoth from the pantheon of the Church of Light. He is very easy going, but fanatical about religious doctrines and will only talk to people who are willing to discuss the various churches of the south. In conversation, he will discuss both sides of the Thoth debate, although he will never let on that he supports the anti-Thoth camp. He believes that, in the long run, his mission will bring the Church of Light back together. Although very charming and attractive to the ladies, he has no friends because they get tired of his fanaticism over doctrine and they eventually can't stand talking to him.

The assassination of the leader of the church was not his own idea, but a powerful hypnotic suggestion implanted in him long ago (before he became a priest for the Church of Light) by an operative of the League of Pirates. He originally intended to become a priest in the Church of Enlightenment, but the League was able to direct him along another path.

Captain Kirsten

Name: Kirsten

True Name: Kirsten Timiro

Alignment: Anarchist

O.C.C. & Level: 7th level pirate

Race: Human, **Age:** 30, **Size:** 5 feet, 10 inches tall (1.78 m), 131 lbs (59 kg), **Sex:** Female.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 8, M.A. 20, P.S. 14, P.P. 15, P.E. 8, P.B. 22, Spd. 10

Hit Points: 34

Armour: Light types.

Bonuses: None.

Natural Abilities: Trust/intimidate 60%, charm/impress 60%.

Psionics: None.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None other than weapons.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand: pirate, +3 parry/dodge, +3 to damage, 3 attacks per melee. W.P. blow pipe (+3 to strike, 4 rate of fire), W.P. knives, W.P. short sword, W.P. targeting, W.P. paired weapons.

Magic Items/Weapons: Chameleon cloak, and boots of speed. Six magic daggers (one invisible, one eternally sharp, one turns holder fire resistant, 3 return to wielder) and a magic cutlass (flaming sword).

Other Weapons of Note: Blow pipe and a dozen darts with a variety of poisons and a blackjack.

Skills of Note: Speak southern 99%, read/write southern 78%, speak elven, faerie and western 85%, speak eastern 75%, locate secret compartments and doors 24%, palming 51%, pick pockets 29%, sleight of hand 32%, use poison 48%, astronomy 72%, fishing 66%, general repair 49%/46%, recognize poison 54%, recognize weapon quality 59%, rope works 75%/50%, sailing 76%, sense of direction 90%, sign language 56%, swim 95%.

Possessions: 75,000 in high quality gems and 1,500 in gold.

Description: Extremely attractive, tall, and athletic 30-year old woman. She is extremely lithe on her feet. In addition, she has an intimidating and charming presence and is rather intelligent and resourceful. Kirsten works only for herself.

The Leader of the League of Pirates

Name: Captain Goldthirst

True Name: Flynn Sandcaster

Alignment: Aberrant

O.C.C. & Level: 12th Pirate.

Race: Human, from the Western Empire **Age:** 55, **Size:** 6 ft 2 in tall (1.88 m), 220 lbs (99 kg), **Sex:** Male.



Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 11, M.A. 15, P.S. 19, P.P. 12, P.E. 12, P.B. 10, Spd. 8

Hit Points: 49

Armour: Studded Leather of Iron, A.R. 15, S.D.C. 60.

Bonuses: None of note.

Natural Abilities: None.

Psionics: None.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: None.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Magic Items/Weapons: Simple rune short sword, 4D6 damage, aberrant alignment, dark red.

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand: mercenary, W.P. knives, W.P. short sword, W.P. paired weapons, W.P. grappling hook.

Other Weapons of Note: Grimbor warclub, and a pair of daggers.

Skills of Note: Read/write western 96%, speak western, southern, eastern, northern and elven 99%, concealment 15%, disguise 42%/12%, forgery 95%/55%, locate secret compartments/doors 76%, medical 65%/69%, palming 38%, pick locks 75%, pick pockets 70%, prowl 52%, scale walls 29%, use poison 96%, astronomy 98%, fishing 30%, general repair 91%/88%, recognize poison 99%, recognize precious metals and stones 86%, recognize weapon quality 89%, rope works 99%/80%, sailing 99%, sculpt/whittle 15%, sense of direction 99%, sign language 21%, sing 35%, swim 99%.

Possessions: Gold Fin: a Corsair ship from Bizantium and its cargo which includes the equivalent of a million gold pieces in gold bullion, gold pieces, jewelry, and gems. The gold jewelry alone that Goldthirst typically wears is valued at 15,000 gold pieces. The Gold Fin flies Goldthirst's private flag, a white skull on a black field. The skull has a patch over one eye socket, and a western 100 gold piece over the other eye socket. Goldthirst has an additional six million gold distributed at banks in Free Port, Timiro and the Western Empire under assumed names.

Description: Goldthirst is the leader of the League of Pirates. He commands eight other pirate captains and their crews. Most are extremely loyal to Goldthirst and the League. He has also established a code of piracy that all captains and sailors of the League are sworn to uphold. The primary reason for the code is secrecy.

Goldthirst, or more properly, Flynn is an ex-merchant from the Western Empire who turned to piracy after his own ship and cargo were stolen and he was demoted and beaten. That particular cargo was a vast sum of gold that was important in a treaty being negotiated between the Western Empire and Timiro. Before that event, Flynn was one of the most trusted of the Western merchant captains and often gained government contracts because of the speed of his ship and the efficiency and reliability of his service. Since then he has travelled the world striking mainly at ships known to be carrying gold or whose flag is that of the Western Empire. The pirate captain is notorious around the world and all nations would pay a great deal to see him hang. The Western Empire has offered a bounty of one million gold if he is brought to the Empire alive!

Goldthirst was an extremely athletic, agile and strong young man, but he has grown a bit soft in his old age. He is now a little overweight, but not obese, and is still reasonably strong. He is 55 years old, has long grey hair and a full beard. He wears lots of gold jewelry.

The Island at the Edge of the World

The Approach by Sea

More than likely, the group will approach the Edge of the World from on board a ship. When they are about a hundred miles (160 km) away, they will begin to see a distinct change in the southern horizon. The sky is shades of dark blue and grey, with large grey clouds and a jet black wall of energy spans the horizon.

It will take a full day to approach the darkness. Even at a good and constant speed of 6 mph (10 kmph) they are still 16 hours away from the edge.

The "Edge of the World" is the black wall that spans the horizon from east to west. There is no break in the wall nor change or discoloration — only even blackness as far as the eye can see. The adventurers will realize that to see the wall from such a distance, that it must be huge. As one approaches, he is able to make out a maelstrom of light and dark and colors, weaving in and out and across the field of blackness.

The maelstrom is immediately fatal to anything alive that enters it. Everything it touches is said to be broken down into its elemental components and those components become part of the maelstrom. (**G.M. Note:** To illustrate this, the Game Master may want to have a small ship or sea monster get sucked into the wall and be disintegrated). Clouds spit forth lightning as if in protest to being swallowed by the insidious energy wall. Pulses of flashing red and orange break the darkness of the wall as if a volcano flared for just a moment and then was smothered by the unnatural blackness. The air, the ocean waters, the fish and all that exists below the waves are slowly drawn into the maelstrom. A primordial blend of air, fire, water and earth seem to compose the living blackness. The energy wall reaches from the floor of the ocean and seems to stretch into the cold darkness of space, fifty miles (80 km) into the sky. Furthermore, it encircles the entire lower portion of the world; if there is any remnant of the world beyond the black abyss.

The crew, especially if they are not seasoned sailors, are likely to panic as they ride toward the devastating maelstrom. Their hair and the sails will be blown by storm winds. Settling the crew down and helping with the sails should take the adventurers' minds off what they may be getting themselves into.

Archie has seen the Edge of the World before and the sight is always breathtaking, but this time the wall is different. He will simply stand at the ship's rail transfixed by the frightening vision before him. If the characters try to speak to him, it will be obvious that he is either lost in thought, or possibly psionically communicating with someone. He will absent-mindedly draw his crystal sword and activate it. If nothing else, the sword gives him a bonus to save vs psionic attacks. If the characters persist in bothering Archie, the most he is likely to say is something like: "It's wrong. All wrong. It has never been like this. Never devouring everything. It just doesn't make any sense. Why didn't he (Noah) tell me what was happening."

The black energy wall at the Edge of the World has existed as long as recorded history can account for. Legend says that the wall appeared when the Great Old Ones were put to sleep. Some have suggested that beyond the wall is the place where the Old Ones slumber. Others believe that the wall is a manifestation of the slumbering evil monsters. Whatever it is, any who go too near are sucked in and disintegrated. None

have touched it and lived. No magic can dispel it and none have ever gone to the other side and returned (presumably there is nothing on the other side). For this reason the wall at the Edge of the World is avoided. Few seafaring men speak of it. Superstition warns that to talk about the wall is to jinx one's vessel and bring disaster. Few land dwellers know anything about it. There are no land masses near it and any islands beyond the Floenry Island chain are uncharted.

Archie has been, to Noah's uncharted islands and has seen the energy wall many times. Once, he even travelled within ten miles (16 km) of it. Always it has been a silent expanse of mystic energy that only responded to intrusion. Something has changed that. Somehow the wall has become an active force, inching forward and slowly devouring the oceans and sky. A force that if left unchecked, might devour the planet! A chill runs through Archie's very soul. For the moment, he says nothing to panic his companions, but resolves to find a way to stop it or die trying.

The elf wizard will be so disturbed by the appearance of the wall that he will not remember to completely brief the characters and crew about the island they are heading towards. The only thing on his mind is getting to the castle and talking to Noah. That's all he is likely to tell the characters.

Uncharted Islands

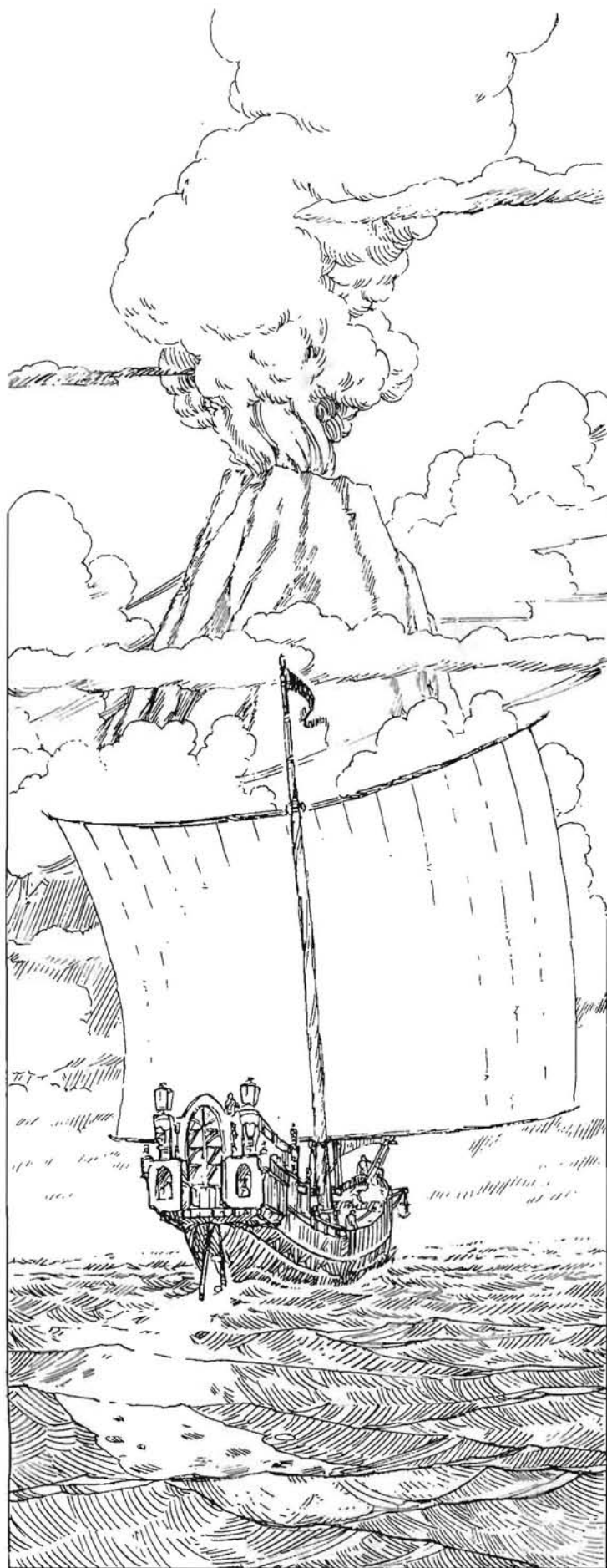
As the ship gets much closer (less than 30 miles/48 km away), a group of islands, silhouetted against the blackness, become visible. The so-called Island at the Edge of the World is the last of a chain of several small, closely spaced islands. The two main bodies are **The Island of Ruins** and **Noah's Paradise** (the last in the chain). Approximately 30 tiny islands are scattered around the two main islands. None are larger than a mile in diameter and some are little more than rocky outcroppings three hundred feet (91 m) across. Most are completely unpopulated and offer limited expansion opportunity for the future. The tiniest have little or no vegetation or animal life.

The Island of Ruins

The first island seen by ship will be the **Island of Ruins**. It is the northernmost and largest of the islands. Noah's Paradise is the southernmost of the two main islands and may not be visible depending on the angle of the ship's approach. Noah's Paradise lies 20 miles (32 km) southwest of the Island of Ruins and is barely visible from the north.

The Island of Ruins is rocky, hilly, and parts of it are covered by a thin tropical forest. It gets its name from the toppled, ancient, alien, stone buildings and structures that cover its surface. Noah, Archie and the island's inhabitants suspect the ruins are the creation of otherworldly visitors from another dimension. The size and design of the buildings suggest that they were humanoids, but the design is not of any known from the Palladium World. The few skeletal remains discovered appear to be human, but it is impossible to tell whether they were the builders of the ancient city or later day pirates.

Among the ruins is a stone pyramid identical to the one on Enry Island. This means that our heroes may (probably inadvertently) use the pyramid on Enry Island to teleport to the pyramid located on The



Island of Ruins. Likewise, this pyramid can be used to teleport back to Enry Island, providing that the group figures out how to use the structures. **Story Editor's Note:** The ruins are actually the handiwork of ancient Atlanteans who escaped the destruction of their continent by dimensionally warping from Earth to the Palladium World. They lived on the island for 500 years before falling to a plague carried to them by seafaring marauders. The plague also explains why there are few bodies, since most of the deceased were cremated in a futile attempt to stop the spread of infection.

Noah's Paradise

Noah's Paradise is a tropical paradise. It is surrounded by sandy beaches and beautiful turquoise lagoons. A lush tropical forest covers the majority of the land. On the western side of the island is a rock prominence that breaks the otherwise smooth line of the beach. Atop the prominence stands a tall castle keep built from cut blocks of volcanic rock. The island extends about 12 miles (20 km) from east to west, and about 6 miles (10 km) north to south.

If travelling via the teleportation circle from Enry island, it will place them inside the basement of the castle. Archie knows exactly where he is and he'll escort them upstairs to the pleasant insides of the castle. If the group has used magic to reach the islands, the black energy wall to the south will be a bit less evident, but it will be far more unsettling when they finally see it. They haven't had time to see it from a distance and get used to it; from this island the wall fills one part of the horizon.

If they have arrived by ship, Archie will direct the crew to anchor it near the castle on Noah's Paradise. Small rowboats and/or magic flight will be used to ferry the characters and crew to the island. Archie will gather the members of the group and lead everyone to Noah's castle.

Since the colony originally started on the eastern end of the island, that is where most of the buildings are found. The central community covers an area of about 3 square miles (8 square km), with a population of about one person per acre (250 people per square km). Buildings are all hut-like structures composed mainly of sturdy branches and large leaves; some of which are quite extensive. Although they appear very temporary, the buildings are strong and durable. The only structures one would consider substantial are the amphitheater and Noah's castle, both constructed completely from stone. The amphitheater is actually the only example of the ancient ruins that is like those found on the Island of Ruins. It has been rebuilt and is located in the center of the main community.

The island itself is poor in minerals. The lowlands are composed mainly of sand, sandstone, and limestone. The highlands are composed of volcanic rock and extremely rich soil (used predominantly for farmland). There are two important resources that are totally absent. The first is metals. Without metal, there is a general scarcity of metal items and many crafts are impossible. The second is hard wood. This means these raw materials must be imported. It is difficult to import such items without giving away the island's position, so they mainly do without. This has prevented the colonists from building more substantial structures and implements. It has also prevented them from building oceangoing vessels. The largest boats the colony uses are canoes. Many innovative designs for canoes exist, but the most common is the outrigger, the double hull and the triple hulled canoes. The typical canoe also mounts a sail. The boats are used for transport between the islands and for fishing.

The Plantations

The fertile soil and excellent climate on the island have allowed the inhabitants to grow just about anything they might desire. The central third of the island was designated as the agricultural zone. This area comprises approximately 20 square miles (51 square km). Most of the original colonists chose to live off the abundant fruits of the island. Life was extremely easy, and the colonists were freed from the hard

labor they were used to back on the mainland. As more colonists arrived and the facilities of the community grew more extensive, the need to establish farms became evident.

The Amphitheater

The Amphitheater is located in the center of the Colony. It is an ancient structure that was probably built at the same time as the other ruins. Nothing is known about the builders of the ruins, but they seem to have been distributed across the entire Floenry chain and these distant, southern islands. The Tristine Chronicles mentions stone magic and pyramids, but there is no indication about who the creators/users might have been.

Trouble in Paradise

Noah greets Archie with a hug and the group with a warm smile and handshakes. Any friends of Archie's are welcome in his home. Noah appears to be a very old and not particularly handsome elf. Although he is obviously delighted to see his friend, he is also very distressed about something.

For the sake of the player characters, Noah explains that he had organized a peaceful island community. This community had prospered for 20 years, until a war-like mage arrived. This vile character, who calls himself **Lord Axel**, has created great dissension among the people and has turned the once peace-loving community into a divided camp of would-be-conquerors and pacifists. Noah leads the pacifists, while the evil mage has established a military compound on the Island of Ruins. He has learned that Axel plans to invade the Floenry Islands. The gentle elf fears this is only the first step in a scheme of wide spread conquest and needs their help to stop him.

What about the black wall at the edge?

Noah and the residents of Noah's Paradise are not at all intimidated by being so near the edge. They have been watching the edge approach them for five years now, but it is moving so slowly, (less than half a mile in five years) that there's plenty of time to worry about it later. Noah is so cavalier about the edge that the adventurer group may well believe it is not a danger they should worry about. One cannot see it moving towards them and the general disregard of it by all the island inhabitants should dispel their fears.

The islanders have a more immediate problem closer to home. This paradise has a snake in it, Lord Axel. He has been causing unrest among the islanders since his arrival six years ago. Lord Axel preaches that the Island is a prison and its people must rise and free themselves from its confines. In Axel's opinion, Noah's Paradise is a gilded cage that breeds acceptance of a pitiful existence in seclusion from the rest of the world. From Lord Axel's point of view, the pretty island has no substance. He and his followers plan on magically invading the Floenry Islands and conquering them as their kingdom. Noah fears this will only bring misfortune to them all and cause many deaths.

Archie and Noah need to talk, think and plan. The will politely excuse themselves. It will be several days before they will be ready to meet with the entire group and share their thoughts with them. The player group will be told to relax and enjoy the hospitality of the island. They are free to wander wherever they please.

The Island's True Face

This place is indeed a tropical paradise. Beautiful flowering plants blossom everywhere, palm trees and ferns softly flutter in the wind. There are no mosquitos and few pestering insects. The people seem to be from all walks of life and include all manner of beings. Even a few changelings walk the streets without worry. The inhabitants are pleasant, gentle, and kind. All speak about peace, generosity and scholarly pursuits. They fear Lord Axel and express great consternation that so many of their brothers (they tend to call everybody brother, including the adventurers) have been so easily swayed to join him. They are clearly

anti-war and may question obvious warriors among the player characters as to why they are so drawn to violence and murder. None of these discussions are meant to be accusatory and the questioner will apologize for any offense he may have caused.

The pleasures of the island are simple: long sandy beaches for sunbathing, swimming, surfing, and fishing, lush forests, pretty ladies, and laughter filled gathering places. Every night there is dancing, sing-



ing, poetry, acrobatics, juggling, and theater. There is no booze served on the island although there is a delicious fruit punch that seems intoxicating (actually it's just the splendor and joy of the people that is so contagious).

It is only after a day or two that the characters will make a discovery that will put the danger of the hater, Lord Axel, into a terrifying new perspective.

The player characters are likely to make friends quickly. Let's say they meet an elf, named Sheila. After a rousing night of campfire dancing and singing they become friends (perhaps more). The next afternoon, the characters go looking for their friend only to discover she is nowhere to be found. Finally, a huge wolfen greets them like an old friend. "How are you today? You look well rested." When asked if they have ever met before, the wolfen replies with a toothy smile, "Of course, we have! We danced the night away. Oh. I see. You're ... not ..." Suddenly, the wolfen begins to transform and takes the shape of the elf, Sheila. "I just felt more burly and wolfish today." She winks, turns back into the wolfen and says, as she trots away, "We're changelings, silly. Well, most of us anyway. See you later."

Virtually the entire population is changeling. Only 5% are not. This is one aspect of the island that Archie and Noah failed to mention. It wasn't meant as a secret, it was just overlooked. Nobody on the island will mention being a changeling because they don't think about it, because most everybody on the island is one. They will simply assume that the adventurers are changelings themselves or sympathetic to their kind. Changelings, when free and not concerned about persecution by non-changelings, will change their appearance like humans change clothes.

Noah and Lord Axel are also changelings. This also means that the islanders who have joined the evil wizard are all changelings! Axel's plans for invasion coupled with all of their recent adventures involving changelings, the Tristine Chronicles and the warnings from the ghosts, can only make the characters wonder if this could be the beginning of the changeling's revenge and the end of the world! If they don't make this observation, Archie or Peter (Archie's son from the Valley) will. At some point Archie may even reveal something like,

"I helped Noah establish this place, you know. It seemed like a good idea at the time. Not all changelings are evil or crave revenge. Noah's my best friend. He thought it would be wonderful to give changelings a place where they could live in peace. That such peace would help temper their anger and pain. When we discovered these islands so far away from other people, it seemed like a dream come true. A paradise. By the gods! What's happening here!!"

Archie is concerned about the threat Lord Axel represents, but remains unusually preoccupied with the black wall at the Edge of the World. He'll mutter about the lowering of water levels and that the wall "should not be devouring our world." He will tell his companions that the black wall of energy has always been at the Edge of the World, but that it has never drained the oceans or swallowed the skies. Some incredible evil is afoot. Something unknown, because no sorcerer in the known world possesses mystic knowledge like this. According to Archie, this is the power of an Old One or a creature from the Time of a Thousand Magics. He'll rule out Selsessstissan because that creature has only recently been awakened, but perhaps somebody like him. Noah is at a complete loss. Other than Lord Axel, there haven't been many new arrivals in the last six years. None of them have the power to influence the energy wall and even Axel does not possess that kind of power (or does he?).

The History of Noah's Paradise

Noah and Archie are old friends who have travelled together on many great adventures. Each has earned the other's trust, respect and love a hundred times over. For years Noah had a dream to build a kingdom where changelings could live free from the pointing fingers and

frightened whispers of non-changelings. A place where they could be themselves, free of reprisal.

Noah and Archie found the islands at the Edge of the World during one of their sojourns. The location was perfect and the two set about to make Noah's dream a reality. Noah organized everything for the colony and established the way stations and teleport circles on Enry Island and South Ring. Archie was responsible for recruiting changelings from around the world and helping them get to Enry Island. The elf also made it his personal goal to uncover as much of the "true" changeling history as he could.

Noah started with a group of a few dozen changelings, but this number quickly grew. At first, many were skeptical, but after they visited the island and saw that the promises were true, they sent word for others to follow. From time to time, Archie, Noah and other recruiters would go off in search of these, and help them get to the Enry Island way station.

After a few years, Archie, the eternal wanderer, longed for adventure and the two friends parted company. Noah stayed behind to continue to breathe life into his dream. He decided to step down as the sole ruler of the community and a council of elders was established as the governing body. Noah was unanimously elected as an honored council member. Few formal laws had been established, although the elder council met regularly to resolve disputes and to establish certain guidelines.

As the changeling community grew to nearly 3000, the elders decided that active recruiting should cease. Noah was one of the few who disagreed with this action. The council then decided that no changeling should be allowed to return to the mainland. They feared that travelers might inadvertently reveal the existence of their community to those who would destroy them. Noah objected strongly and the vote was narrowly defeated. Unfortunately, this created a rift between Noah and many of the elders. A few years later, the decision was made that the way station on Enry Island was a security threat. The encampments on Enry Island and South Ring were closed down. New arrivals and the departure of citizens to and from the island paradise now required the authorization of the council; all to the consternation of Noah.

Disputes between Noah and the rest of the elder council grew more frequent and more heated as time went on. Noah established the colony as a safe haven for changelings. A place where they were free and not a paranoid city-state where the residents couldn't leave without permission. Noah's paradise had become tarnished and taken out of his control. He grew more and more frustrated, but took solace in the fact that most residents were so happy on the island that they didn't want to leave. He convinced himself that this made the issue a moot point. Still it bothered him deeply.

A few years later, Axel arrived and seemed to rub salt in his wounds. The mage targeted Noah as being weak, unwilling to stand up to the council elders (which was not true). The council was presented as tottering, old, paranoid fools intent on making them all prisoners of their fears. This moved into the changeling's destiny and talk of revenge and war. After a while, many who had never been bothered by the law before, were suddenly incensed. Rebellion was in the air.

Noah's Paradise

Population: 1932 people, 45% are unprincipled, 25% scrupulous, 20% anarchist, and 10% other. Noah, the changeling mage, is their leader.

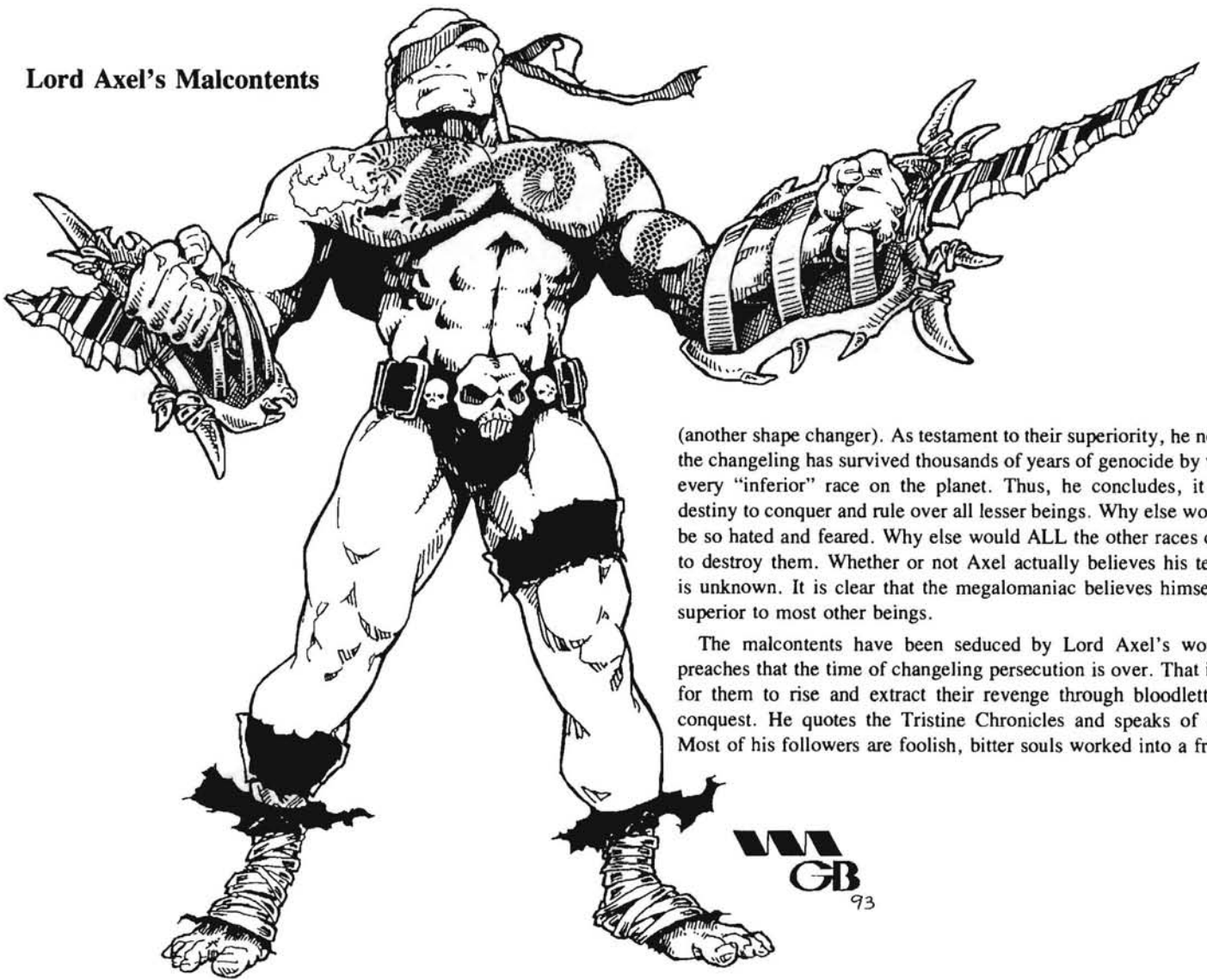
95% are Changelings	2% are Humans
2% are Elves	1% are Others

The Island of Ruins (Lord Axel's base of operation)

Population: 1612 people, 55% are anarchist, 25% miscreant, 10% aberrant, 5% diabolic, and 5% other. Lord Axel, the changeling sorcerer, is their leader.

98% are Changelings
2% are Others

Lord Axel's Malcontents



(another shape changer). As testament to their superiority, he notes that the changeling has survived thousands of years of genocide by virtually every "inferior" race on the planet. Thus, he concludes, it is their destiny to conquer and rule over all lesser beings. Why else would they be so hated and feared. Why else would ALL the other races conspire to destroy them. Whether or not Axel actually believes his teachings is unknown. It is clear that the megalomaniac believes himself to be superior to most other beings.

The malcontents have been seduced by Lord Axel's words. He preaches that the time of changeling persecution is over. That it's time for them to rise and extract their revenge through bloodletting and conquest. He quotes the Tristine Chronicles and speaks of destiny. Most of his followers are foolish, bitter souls worked into a frenzy by

Not everyone is content with living in peace and harmony. There are some changelings who miss life in the greater world. Many of the older changelings are content to live in the colony, because they remember the persecution and fear that haunted them. Here they are free. For the most part, the changelings who chose to come to the colony were tired of the problems of living among the other races who hated them.

However, the colony has been in existence for nearly 40 years and not everyone moved there by choice. The younger changelings were either brought to the colony by their parents or were born there. These youngsters did not choose the colony instead of the world, and in fact, do not believe things could be as bad as their elders tell them. This is not meant to imply that ALL the younger changelings are unhappy, but there are always those who believe that the grass is greener on the other side of the ocean. Many are filled with the energy and overconfidence of youth. They are easily stirred up by talk of revenge, adventure, power and glory.

The majority of Axel's followers are young, but they are not children. Axel's followers range in age from 15 to 60, which means that most are physically mature, but young by changeling standards whose natural life span is about 800 years.

One of the main tenets of Axel's teachings is that changelings are superior to all other humanoid races, especially humans, or as they prefer to call them: manlings. Axel teaches that the changeling is inherently superior to any race that they can emulate. He points out that the race is older than even the elf and that they may be kin to the dragon

their hatemongering leader. They simply need a good swift kick in seat of their pants and a reality check. If Lord Axel is defeated or slain, their community and plans of conquest will quickly fall apart. Most (75%) will go back to Noah's Paradise, heads hung low in shame and repentance. Likewise, if Lord Axel proves to be too maniacal and cruel, 1D4 x 10% will defect. Only 25% are serious warriors, assassins, or thieves bent on revenge and war. **Story Note:** The remaining 25% will stay apart from the rest of the community and continue their talk of hate, conquest and revenge, but they will not be a danger for decades to come.

Except for a tiny fraction (2%), the malcontents are ALL changelings. They are not disguised, and they do not wear much more than simple peasant clothes either. For the moment, they are poorly equipped. Most wield clubs, throwing sticks, spears and stone axes. Only 40% have weapons made of iron and less than 20% have any type of body armor. The evil Lord Axel is their main source of power and defense.

Evil Lord Axel

One of the latecomers to the island was a powerful changeling named Axel. There was something disturbingly ominous about this tall changeling wizard. He seemed to know everything there was to know about the colony, more than any stranger should. He also seemed to know and dislike a lot about Noah. The two instinctively avoided each other. Axel's manner was arrogant and gruff and his opinions militant and unwavering. Shortly after his arrival, he insisted on being admitted to the council of elders, but balked at the notion of elections. He began

to fill the minds of the young with talk of revenge and their hearts with hate. He chastised Noah and the elders as being weak and cowardly. Noah seemed to be an especially enticing target. It became painfully obvious that Axel would be a problem. They all hoped he would simply go away. He did not.

Lord Axel is a mage who lives and fights by magic. He carries no weapons or belongings with him. His minions follow him blindly. Although he will engage any number of player characters, he tries to do so when Archie and Noah are not with them. He will never appear when Noah is present (the group may deduce that the dreaded lord fears his changeling rival). If the battle goes badly, Lord Axel will disappear before he can be defeated or captured. Surprisingly, he is unlikely to deal any deathblows to the player characters, and just be satisfied with their defeat and humiliation. With a laugh or mocking comment, he vanishes. He teleports or flies from one area of battle to reappear at another. Fight and go. It should be obvious that Lord Axel is incredibly

powerful, enjoys the battle, and is involved in his own cat and mouse games. Axel is totally arrogant and cruel. He enjoys belittling and hurting his opponents.

Axel's stronghold is among the old ruins in the elevated areas of the eastern part of the island. The malcontents have been able to rebuild a portion of those ruins into a military compound. The roofs are made from palm leaves and bamboo. The buildings serve as barracks and gathering places, but do not constitute any sort of fortifications. Separated from the compound by a lower, water covered region is the huge stone pyramid. Axel has claimed the pyramid as his private residence (the living area is found at its summit). He has also discovered that the structure has inherent magic properties. Fortunately, he has not figured out how to tap into most of its powers. Nor has he realized that he can use it to teleport to the sister pyramid on Enry Island. What he does know is that sleeping in the pyramid seems to rejuvenate him.

Game Master Information

The Elements of Battle

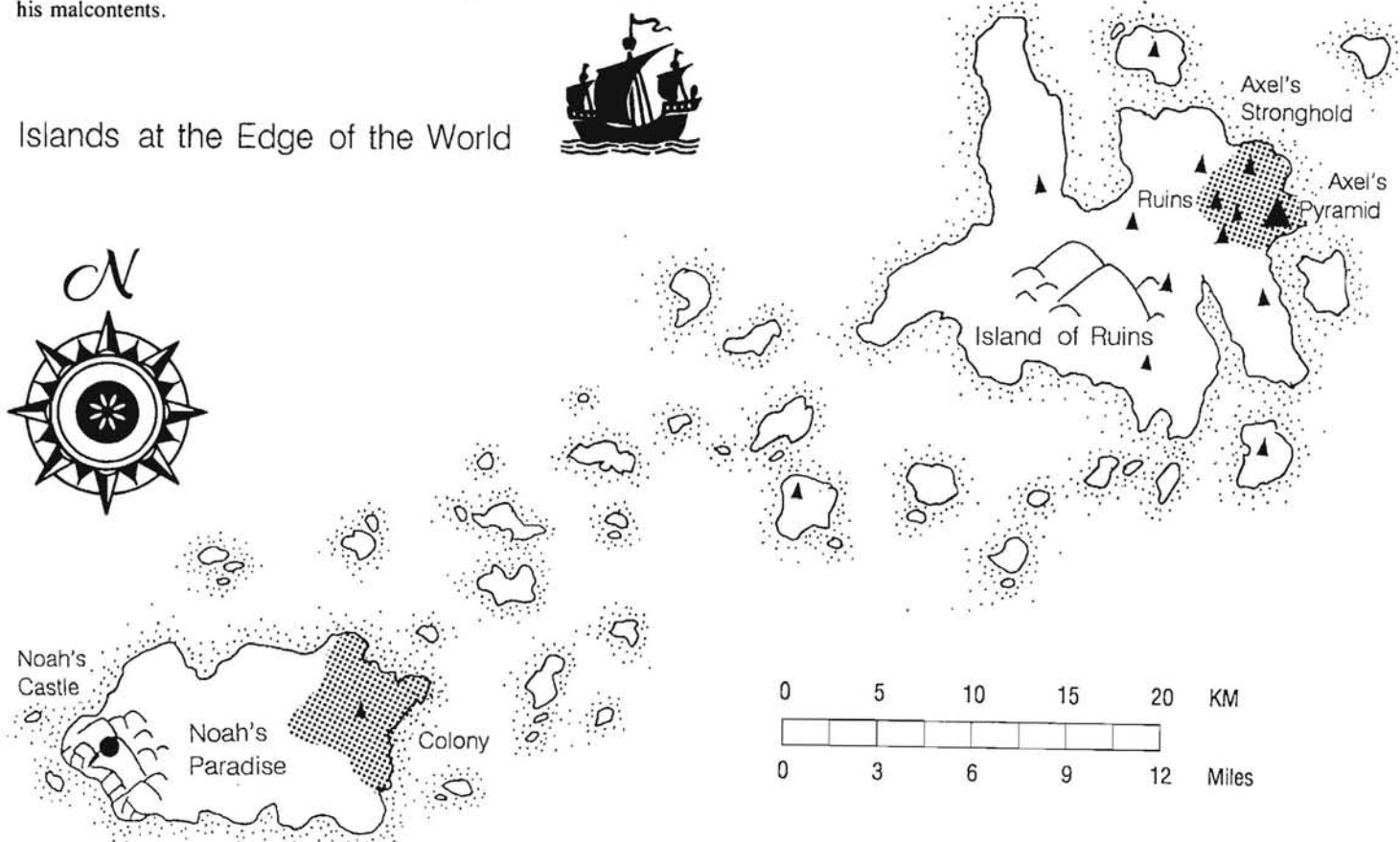
An Adventure Outline

Exactly what transpires next will depend largely on the player characters and the Game Master. This scenario setting can be embellished into a long-running series of adventures or condensed into one or two dynamic game sessions. Either way can be lots of fun. Adventures can include a preliminary spying mission and/or several small skirmishes with Axel. He may capture or try to hire the player group, send assassins after Archie or Noah, attack Noah's Paradise, and so on. Ultimately, this adventure will culminate in a final battle against Lord Axel and his malcontents.

Some General Data

1. In any case, Archie and Noah will convince the group that Lord Axel is a dangerous threat.
2. Archie will want some sort of advanced reconnaissance, although he will reluctantly agree to an attack if that is the consensus of the player group.
3. Archie considers Axel a likely candidate for being responsible for the change in the wall. If nothing else, they need to meet this villain and learn what they can about him and his forces.

Islands at the Edge of the World



4. No character of a good alignment can turn his back on this crisis and even those of selfish or evil alignments should appreciate the gravity of the situation. Those of a more evil or selfish nature may see this as a dangerous opportunity.
5. Noah has tried to lead a number of assaults against Axel's stronghold with his own people, but never got anywhere.
6. The changeling pacifists are not trained for combat and are not heroic figures. They are refugees who are now happy to be free of persecution. They have dedicated their lives to peace and intellectual advancement, not war. However, with the addition of Archie and the player group, Noah has renewed hope.
7. Noah will plead that most of the changeling malcontents are basically well meaning and should not be slaughtered if it can be avoided. Too much changeling blood has already been spilled over the centuries. Besides, he wonders if they might be under a spell of enchantment.
8. Archie is likely to remain in a detached state, knowing that the battle is not his choosing. He will suggest that the group should avoid direct conflict with the changeling malcontents, especially since they pose no real threat, and have them search for Lord Axel. To find the evil Lord they may have to split up in pairs; Archie and Noah will go off on their own. This should lead to some individual encounters with Lord Axel.
9. Noah will stay on his island to prepare his people for the inevitability of war.
10. Lord Axel and his malcontents have taken over the **Island of Ruins**. The group can reach the island by means of a boat, magic flight or teleportation. Axel seems to be adept at avoiding Noah and appearing whenever Noah is off somewhere else. He also seems to know everything that's going on in Noah's Paradise, which strongly suggests that Axel has spies in the colony.

Time

Time is not of the essence. Lord Axel will not mount an attack against the Floenry Islands for at least six months. However, the longer the characters wait the more control he will gain over Noah, the more he may learn about the magic pyramid and the more the black energy wall will devour. Furthermore, the longer they wait, the more likely Lord Axel and his malcontents are to attack Noah's Paradise. The death toll could be high.

Outside Help

Many of the characters that the group have met on their adventures will be willing to join them in their battle against Axel. The Crystal King will gladly send his Crystal Knights. Selsessstissan will join the battle, if they can find him again. He will see it as his chance to fight like they did in the old days. However, his underlying motives and reactions will be selfish and this adventure could provide him with dangerous information. Tom, Tom II, Caloram, Klem, and other warriors from the Church of the Scar will gladly join the battle, but if the Church of the Scar learns about the changeling colony they will return with an army to destroy it. Even Boelaerian may be able to bring his Baalrogs into the fight against Axel. The adventurers will have to decide who they are willing to work with and what it will cost them and the island inhabitants. It may not be prudent to solicit help from outsiders.

Clues from Conflict

During one Battle, the following transpires. He toys with our heroes and mocks them.

"Do you think YOU can stop me? Do you think that this flock of children is the source of my power? How can you be so blind? I could crush you like a worm beneath my feet. Oh, still you attack me. Such spirit. Let us continue this little farce a bit longer then, shall we?"

Lord Axel chides Archie in a more direct manner.

"The Great Archie, world traveler, wizard, historian and friend of the changeling. Look at what your meddling has wrought! Now you too have the blood of the changeling on your hands."

He may go on to say something like, "Look towards the magic that you have brought back to the world. Do you not recognize your own handiwork? Look to the south (where the black wall is), all of you! Look upon the magic that Archie has brought to us. Look at the power that he has brought to me!"

Regarding Noah, Lord Axel bellows:

"Let it be known to all that your Noah has no power compared to me! He is a weakling! A fool whose dreams have brought my people to me. I pity your stupidity if you really think you can defeat me! I pity your trust in Archie the Destroyer and Noah the Weakling! Follow me if you dare. Taste the sweet nectar of power!"

With these last words, Lord Axel will unleash a torrent of elemental magic against the island. He then vanishes, teleporting away. The assault is not aimed at any particular person, but intended as a spectacular show of his power. Something to impress and frighten. Axel is confident in his own supremacy, and merely wishes to show them how pathetic their powers are compared to his. Any deaths he causes are purely incidental to him.

The entire island is battered by hurricane force winds and pelted by a torrent of rain. The storm is devastating to island vegetation, and perhaps hurts or kills a few of the people. Even the malcontents will be shocked by their leader's show of power and brutality. It frightens them to the point that they abandon the fight and run for cover. Any of Noah's people who had joined the fight will look around in confusion, followed by a hasty retreat.

What does the group do now? Archie is stunned and speechless. He sincerely has no idea what this madman was talking about. He can only guess that those were lies meant to divide them. They can hurt him and Axel knows it!

Noah will have vanished in the confusion.

Axel & Noah

Players be warned. If you read any further, you may ruin some of the drama, suspense and the big surprise. So STOP right now! Turn your eyes away and enjoy the story as it unfolds. Game Masters, read on.

What no one realizes, not even Noah or Archie, is that Axel is a creature fostered by the pressure and frustration of Noah's own mind. Axel is not an evil immigrant, he is Noah!

Noah is a peace loving person who always suppresses his anger and dark emotions. He also dislikes confrontation, so he has given in to the council on matters that he believed were wrong or which he was helpless to change under their laws. These feelings of helplessness, frustration and anger have caused him to become a multiple personality. Noah is the gentle, demure, nice personality, while Axel represents the outspoken bully who vents his anger and cruelty. When a changeling suffers from a split personality the results are dramatic. Not only does the personality change, but the appearance of the body as well. For all intents and purposes, Noah and Lord Axel are two different people sharing the same body!

Noah has become the submissive personality, with Axel becoming stronger everyday. If something isn't done soon, Noah may entirely disappear, leaving the fiendish Lord Axel in his place. The Noah personality is unaware that Axel is an extension of himself. Noah cannot admit to himself that he is capable of such deep, dark emotions. It is this denial and his frustration that gave Axel life. Until Noah is willing to accept the truth about himself he can never defeat Axel. However, if Noah can be made to believe that Axel and he are one and the same,



he does have the strength of character to contain and conquer his inner demons. The trick is to reach Noah.

Axel has only existed for six years and won't give up his life easily. He calls Noah a weakling and seems to despise him because of it. However, the truth of the matter is that Axel is terrified of Noah. It is a fear born out of the knowledge that Noah can contain, control or even destroy him if he ever comes to believe in his existence as a living fragment of his dark emotions.

Axel is the current dominant personality and will try to keep as much control as possible. As the dominant personality, Axel knows everything that Noah knows. This means he has all of Noah's magic knowledge, memories and skills, and the maliciousness to use them in terrible ways. This also means he can anticipate Archie's strategies and tactics and knows his abilities well.

Axel fears Archie because he is the one person who is most likely to figure out what's going on. Archie knows Noah better than anyone, knows more about changelings than most changelings do, and has seen Noah fragment his personality in the past under supernatural conditions. Archie knows that his friend had once merged with the life essence of an evil sorcerer imprisoned by Thoth. This evil force possessed him and may have tainted him with a fragment of that evil. Archie is also the one person who can reach Noah even when Lord Axel is in control.

The player characters are seen as a threat because they are warriors and, more importantly, represent an unknown element. He knows nothing about them, but does know that Archie tends to associate with powerful and heroic adventurers. He also knows that Noah will respect them above many others because they are the associates of his trusted friend, Archie. This means that they too may be able to reach Noah. Furthermore, these warriors are not emotionally attached to Noah and will have far less hesitation killing him/them (Noah/Axel) if they feel they must.

Noah remains constantly frustrated and agitated by the elder council, but he tries to work with them (and often has considerable influence in their decisions). As Lord Axel, he can vent his pent up frustration and anger in direct and militant opposition. Lord Axel has even threatened to kill some of them. Actually, Axel threatens and shouts a great deal but has seldom hurt anybody, yet. This is mainly because Noah's personality is still strong enough to stop him, not that Axel realizes this. In fact, during battles, Axel may hesitate or argue with himself (distracted) when it comes down to delivering the final death blow to anybody, especially Archie and the player characters.

Although Axel's appearances were rare at first, his existence caused the elders to become even more close-minded and paranoid. They feared that Axel might reveal the existence of the colony and finally attempted to placate him, but he rejected any compromise. The elders turned to Noah as arbitrator, but Axel's refusal to even meet with Noah worsened the situation.

Axel's initial plan was to turn the colony against the elders and take over. However, Lord Axel became more ambitious as his confidence and dominance over Noah increased. The fiend now sees taking over the changeling colony as a stepping stone in a mad scheme of more widespread conquest. The fact that he will destroy everything that Noah has built, pleases him. The fact that thousands may die and that changelings will be persecuted even more than they are, is of no consequence to the madman. In his own demented way, Axel is trying to help changelings by bringing them to power and extracting revenge.

Reconnaissance

Reconnaissance of the Island or Ruins will provide the group with information about Lord Axel and his troops. They may even be able to eavesdrop on one of his speeches about changeling superiority and destiny to rule the world. Unless they attack Axel, they should be able to avoid, escape or defeat any group of malcontents.



Investigating Lord Axel's lair inside the pyramid is the most dangerous. The malcontents that serve their leader at the pyramid are the most loyal, evil and experienced. They are dedicated to the man and his views. The average guard, protector or attendant is likely to be evil, 1D4+3 level, assassin, thief or other man at arms. There is only one other wizard, a changeling called Mark (aberrant alignment, 6th level wizard). At the pyramid they are also likely to encounter and have a skirmish with Lord Axel. Again he is not likely to kill the characters, but he may hurt them badly and capture a few to be tortured (the torture is to attain information and for pleasure).

There is a small chance that even a quick reconnaissance of the pyramid will allow the group to stumble upon a pair of circles. One is a teleportation circle and the other is a strange power circle that pulsates with energy. They will definitely encounter Lord Axel if they linger around the circles for more than a minute or two. Archie will recognize the strange circle and he will pale with horror. He will urge them to leave immediately, not just the pyramid, but to leave the Island of Ruins, so they can talk. Finding the circle is the last clue that will tip Archie off about Noah's split personality. With this revelation, he will also correctly surmise that the teleport circle is connected to the circle in Noah's castle (not that Noah is aware of it) and he can use it to teleport the entire group back to Noah's estate.

If Lord Axel sees them in his circle room, he will fear that Archie and the group have (or will soon) learn the truth about him. He will order his minions to eliminate them, sending changeling assassins and possibly summoned demons to destroy them. However, the odds against

them will never be overwhelming and he will not attack them himself (Noah's subconscious influence) unless they invade his island. Noah is nowhere to be found.

The stone pyramid itself has a volume of 48 million cubic feet (1.36 million cubic meters), and a mass of approximately 7.5 million tons of stone (6.8 million metric tons). It is immense, towering over 400 feet (122 m) tall and 600 ft (183 m) along each side. A much smaller pyramid can be found nearby. The ancient stone masters who originally built the big pyramid used the smaller one for rest and recuperation and to enhance their own powers. Even so, the great pyramid required the constant efforts of a dozen 8th to 15th level stone masters a little over 3 years to construct. A large number of other, lower level, stone masters were engaged in quarrying and moving the stone to the construction site, along with helping to build the rest of the city.

Any character sleeping over night inside the stone pyramid will completely recover from stress and fatigue. While resting inside the pyramid, the healing of hit point damage is increased to one and a half times faster than normal. The only being currently in the Palladium World who knows how to use stone pyramids is Thoth. For the full powers of the stone pyramid, see **Rifts World Book Two: Atlantis**.

The Circle of Legend

Archie is a historian and man of magic. One of his pastimes is to try to rediscover the secrets of ancient and forgotten magic. During one adventure with Noah, the two discovered an incredibly rare Circle of Legend. Archie has never found the time to completely figure out how to use it. This is mainly because he believes the circle is too powerful and dangerous to explore. He decided to give up research on circle magic for awhile and went into seclusion, studying other forms of magic and unravelling changeling history.

As he has done so often in the past, Archie shared his findings with Noah. Noah, and later Axel, have worked on the puzzle of the circle for years. Unfortunately, it was Noah's evil split-personality who finally figured out the last elements in using it (Noah does not know its secrets). Since Noah was the only other person who had any knowledge of the circle, it will make Archie realize that Noah has redeveloped a multiple personality complex and that Axel and Noah are one and the same.

A Circle of Legend: The Circle of Absolute Elemental Power

Range: Varies.

Duration: The circle is permanent until the circle maker cancels its magic or is killed and his blood spilled inside the circle.

Saving Throw: Standard for entering the circle. Lord Axel is +3 in circle strength which means a roll of 16 or better is required to enter and save.

The circle is sealed, so only Lord Axel may enter without taking damage. Anyone else entering the circle will suffer 4D6 damage per melee round; no saving throw. The saving throw is also standard for the destructive zone.

This Circle of Legend seems to summon the very chaos that shaped the world in the time when the Old Ones lived. The circle maker gains immense magical power, but at an unbelievable cost.

The Primary Power:

The circle creates a destructive elemental force of unbelievable magnitude. A magic circle of destructive energy that slowly expands, destroying all in its path. As the circle gets larger, it begins to expand faster, it draws energy and matter from all directions within its range. Anyone caught in its expanse must make a saving throw (16 or better) every melee or **cease to exist!!** Fire is extinguished, water is turned into mist, air becomes unbreathable, earth is turned to lifeless dust, and people are vaporized. The very life force of an area is sucked away. Its destructive powers are greater than the regenerative forces of nature, creating vast deserts and wastelands in its wake. The notorious **Baalgor Wastelands** are the creation of this terrible circle!

Invoked at sea, the effect is to create an expanding hole in the ocean. A hole that causes terrible storms and drains the water and all in it. The water of the ocean slowly pours out into space and turns into a cold steam. The ocean floor below will be glowing with the energy being sucked out of it. There is also a constant wind blowing into the hole.

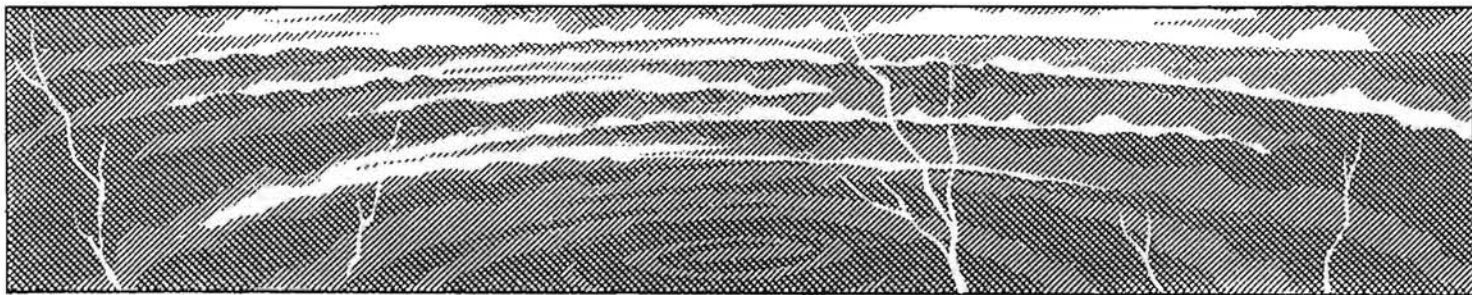
Secondary Powers:

1. As long as the destroying energy circle is in force, it gives the circle maker all four of the elemental powers. This means the character can cast ALL Warlock spells, earth, air, fire and water, equal to a 10th level warlock! A total of 40 spells can be cast per 24 hour period! This means the circle maker can summon a hurricane, cause earthquakes, tidal waves and firestorms in a matter of minutes.
2. Meanwhile, the circle maker retains any other magic abilities and knowledge he may also have. The elemental powers remain as long as the devouring circle of Elemental power continues to grow.
3. No elemental, not even greater elementals and spirits of light, can raise a finger or cast a spell against the circle maker. In fact, elementals are forced to leave the area and come no closer than one hundred miles (160 km).
4. The elemental circle maker is impervious to poison, gases, drugs, disease, heat, fire, cold, and to the destructive force of the circle. He can also breathe without air and bio-regenerate 1D6 × 10 hit points four times a day.
5. The circle maker is not required to remain inside the circle once it has been activated and can be thousands of miles away and still retain all the powers.
6. Only the circle maker can stop the destructive force before it runs its full course. In the alternative, pouring the blood of the circle maker (or killing him while inside the circle), will stop it instantly.

When magics collide

The usual size limitations and duration for the devouring circle is normally 100 square miles (256 sq km) per level of experience and seldom lasts more than a few weeks. The circle that Lord Axel has created is close to five years old and picking up steam.

Lord Axel, through the additional (and unexpected) power boost from the mysterious stone pyramid, has caused the circle of Absolute



Elemental Power to be merged with the wall of black energy at the Edge of the World! The powerful circle magic has transformed the otherwise stationary wall into a planet spanning Circle of Absolute Elemental Power!! This mutant, mega-circle is a force that will obliterate all life on the planet! Axel doesn't care. In his demented mind, the world deserves to face obliteration for what it has done to changelings. The ultimate revenge and quite possibly the end of the world as predicted in the Tristine Chronicles!

The rest of the world does have some time before Axel's circle becomes an immediate threat. The wall will continue to move towards the mainland at a rate of 24 miles (39 km) per year, and will not reach West Mnn for another 25 years or so. Another 25 years and it will finally reach Timiro. Still, it is swallowing the ocean and making the known world smaller.

Components: Known only to Axel. Symbols of force, directed power, unbridled power, magic. In order to activate the circle, one of each of the four greater elementals must be sacrificed. The symbols are drawn with the blood of a changeling, a faerie, and a dragon. The circle is drawn with molten platinum. Platinum is a scarce element occurring only in limited quantities in conjunction with gold. Platinum is also impossible to melt with normal fire, given the technology of the world. Platinum can only be melted with magical fire. Obtaining enough platinum to create this circle is a task beyond the capabilities of almost all mages. The circle must be drawn with molten platinum.

Power Words: Known only to Axel. Acba yin (circle wielder's true name) yin Xy.

Note: Only Axel can cancel the circle, but he is not likely to do so even to save himself. Noah doesn't know how and cannot access Axel's memories. Archie will guess that the blood of the circle maker (at least a pint), poured into the circle may turn it off (this is true of some other circles). Deactivating the circle will stop the destructive advancement

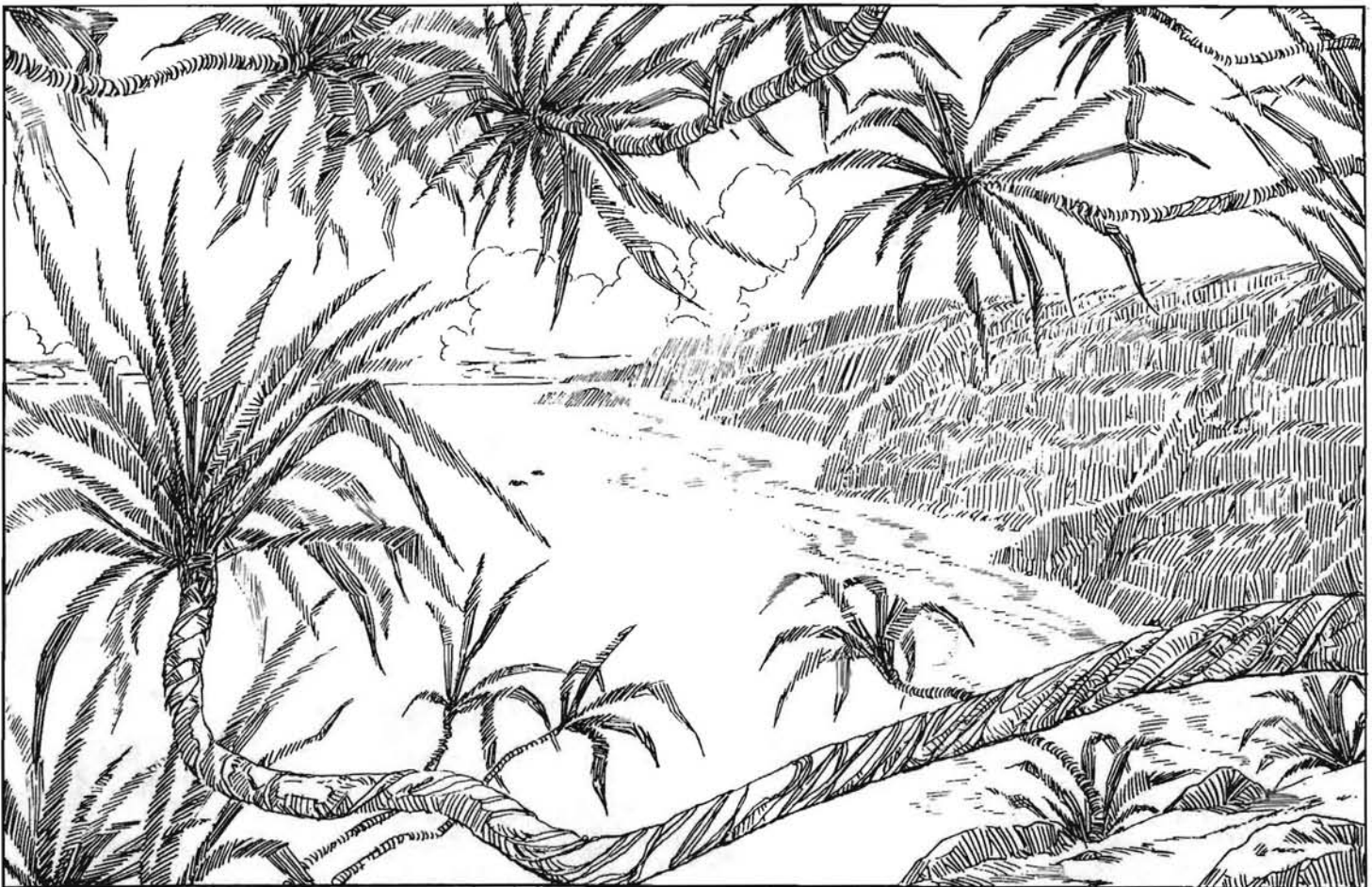
of the black energy wall and it will revert to its normal structure. This means no more storms or red flashes and no more loss of the oceans' waters. Only those who enter the wall of energy seem to be disintegrated (**G.M. Note:** In reality, the person and his vessel are molecularly disassembled and reassembled in a random dimension! However, nobody who has passed through the wall has ever returned).

The Final Battle

The scale of the final battle can be immense, with hundreds of combatants, or a focus on key characters. Although Archie is a likely candidate for the big showdown, he should take a back seat to the player characters (after all, its the player characters who are the real stars of this drama). It is the player characters, working together who should be responsible for the defeat of Lord Axel (Archie could be trapped elsewhere, unconscious, off on a wild goose chase, etc.).

To cause confusion, Lord Axel will tell the group that it was Archie who discovered the circle and gave it to him (Noah actually). He will attempt to turn the group against Archie and each other by using mass hypnotic suggestion to reinforce his accusations. Of course, Axel will also use his elemental powers.

When backed to the wall, Lord Axel will do whatever it takes to survive. He will lie, cheat, and kill. He will try to unnerve and manipulate Archie by revealing that he and Noah are "brothers of the same mind, bound to the same body." Everything Archie has ever told Noah, Axel has learned. Axel will talk about the discovery of the circle, their adventures together and so on, all things only Noah could have known. He may even let Noah resurface for a moment. He does so in hopes of catching Archie off guard and/or to prevent him or others from killing him.



The End

The circle of Absolute Elemental Power was designed by the Old Ones and draws upon their power. The last circle maker to hold its dark secrets perished during the Elf/Dwarf Wars. If Axel can be convinced of this, only then will he cancel the magic circle. Axel shares an obsessive loathing and fear of the Great Old Ones. Noah once decreed:

"Only fools will worship a dreaded Old One in any guise... I pity anybody who becomes the pathetic pawns of such an evil master!"

Using these words against Axel has a good chance of making him stop and think about what he is doing and deactivate the circle. This traumatic realization may also bring Noah's personality back into dominance. Axel will transform into a totally confused Noah before their very eyes.

Remember, the only way to keep Axel gone is to convince Noah that Axel is the manifestation of his dark emotions. A monster from his id. A split personality. Only then can Noah's personality engage in a battle of wills to maintain dominance over his mind and body. Of course, the only absolutely sure way to prevent Axel from ever resurfacing is to kill Noah. Both Archie and Noah will seem confident that Noah can persevere and that Axel is gone forever.

Game Master Note Number One: Allowing Noah to live means that Axel can be brought back as a villain at a later time. He will remember and despise all those involved in his defeat and will seek revenge if he should ever regain control. A Mind Mage capable of curing insanities or mind wipe can try to place mental blocks and barriers into Noah's mind, but they will be of little help.

Game Master Note Number Two: In this final conflict, the players will have to give it everything they can. If anybody holds anything back at this point, they may doom the group to failure. The assault may even become a full suicide attack to stop Axel. Even Archie will put everything he has into it. Archie is likely to be Axel's prime target and could even be killed. Everyone else should be pretty much clear to take important action. Plan the balance so that the action moves smoothly and quickly. Be certain that the players get the lion's share of the action. Make this the toughest battle they've had to face yet (perhaps ever).

If the group has played it perfectly, and really put everything they had into it, they should be winning the battle. If Axel is killed or he can feel his control over Noah's body slipping away, his personality dies before his body does, his form appears to distort slightly, and his last words seem almost like a plea.

"Stop! You're killing the new world! You're destroying the magic!"

Epilogue

If things went reasonably well, the heroes should have won. Noah or the council of elders will offer to let the heroes stay and live on the island if they like. They have little of value to offer them as a reward, other than their eternal gratitude and healing. If they desire to leave, they will be allowed to do so, after each character swears on his word of honor that he will keep their secret from the world.

Axel's treasure-trove will have vanished, absconded by his minions during the final battle.

If Archie lives he may give each of the characters who fought at his side as much as 30,000 gold and a token of his esteem (a minor magic item, potion, scroll, book, etc., but only if he hasn't lost his possessions in The Valley). He will escort the group back to West Mnn and will part company with them (unless the G.M. deems otherwise).

Whether the group gets a financial reward or not, they know they just stopped war, saved thousands of lives and maybe even saved the world (assuming they stopped the Circle of Absolute Elemental Power). The purpose of this battle was not personal gain but to save lives. Game Masters, don't cheapen it by awarding millions of gold worth of booty. Reward them with the affection of the people. Perhaps, in some future

adventure, the hand of a changeling stops an assassin from cutting the characters throat and says, "Stay your hand. This person (or insert character's name) is the friend of all changelings and saved all civilization at the edge of the world."

Noah, Founder of the Changeling Colony

Name: Noah

True Name: Nona

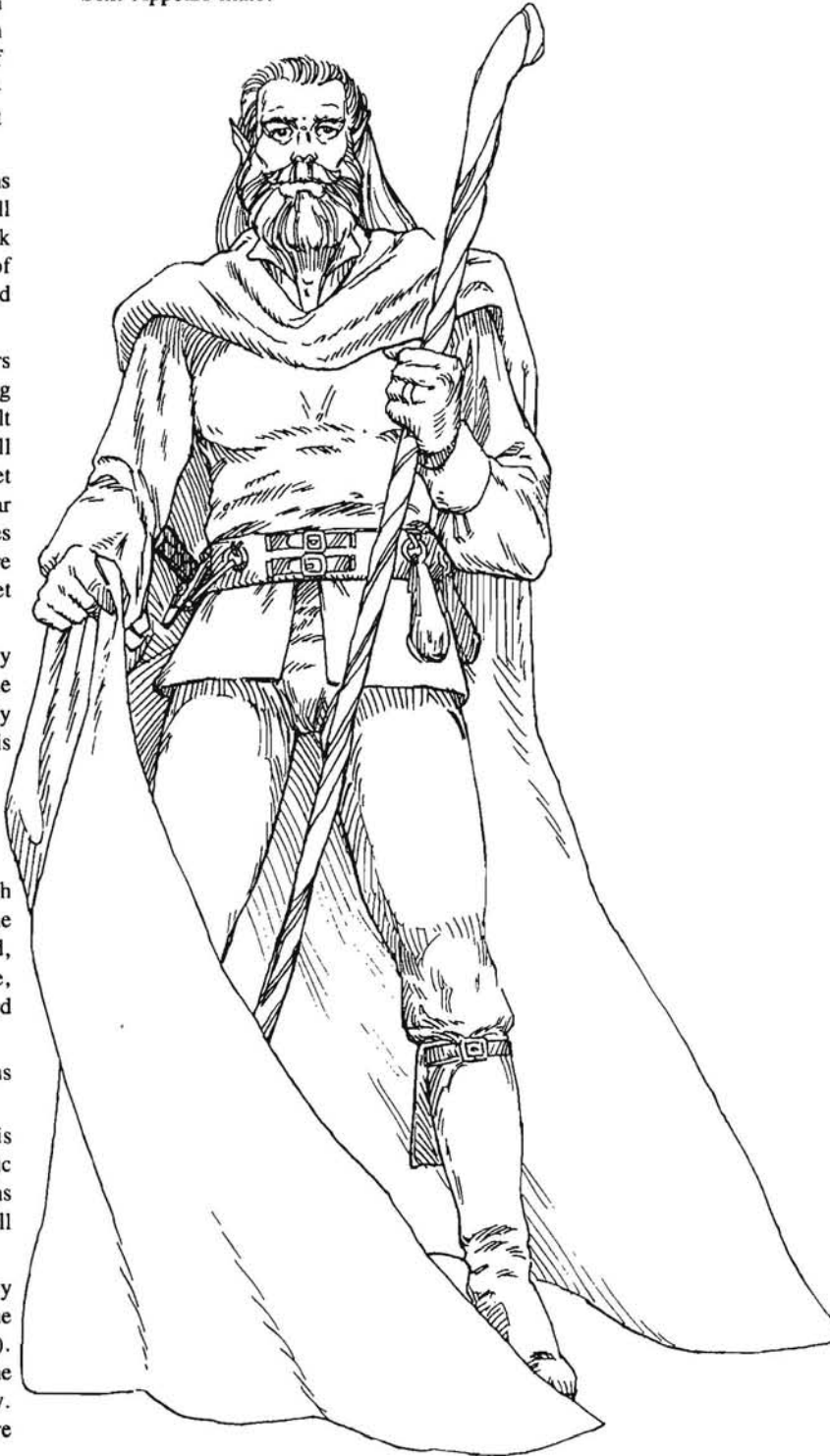
Alignment: Unprincipled

O.C.C. & Level: Wizard 15th, Summoner 11th.

Race: Changeling but appears as an Elf, **Age:** 200 but appears 580,

Size: Typically appears as 6 feet, 3 inches (1.91 m), 180 lbs (81 kg),

Sex: Appears male.



Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 21, M.A. 19, P.S. 12, P.P. 13, P.E. 6, P.B. 5, Spd. 4, **Hit Points:** 135, **A.R.:** 4.

Armour: None.

Bonuses: +3 vs psionics, +4 vs insanity, +4 vs spell magic, +4 vs circles, +3 vs wards.

Natural Abilities: Trust/intimidate 55%, decipher circles 99%/99%, scroll conversion 92%, recognize enchantment 80%, sense evil 55%, recognize magic item 60%.

Psionics: None.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: 23 spells per day, 2 spell attacks per melee, +4 spell strength, +3 circle strength. Although he is a high level wizard, Noah never took a great interest in magic, and only knows a handful of spells. Noah can learn any spell from Archie at any time, and Archie will teach him. He enjoys studying circles, but never uses them.

Magic Knowledge: Knows all symbols, knows all power words, recognize runes 99%, recognize wards 99%/75%. Spells: Decipher magic, sense magic, cloud of slumber, sphere of light, tongues, the enchanted cauldron, fly as the eagle, armour of Ithan, magic pigeon, and teleport self. Circles: Knows all circles of summoning, protection, and power.

Magic Items/Weapons: None.

Combat Abilities: Hand to hand non-men of arms, W.P. staves, W.P. knives, W.P. short swords and W.P. large swords all at 15th level.

Weapons: Common wooden staff, and common knives. But does not fight. When danger threatens, Noah will simply teleport away.

Skills of Note: Horsemanship (general) at 15th level, read/write elven, southern and eastern 99%, speak elven, southern, eastern and faerie 99%, astronomy 96%, carpentry 95%, cook 99%, demon and devil lore 99%, faerie lore 99%, fishing 96%, imitate voices 99%, mathematics 99%, plant/farm lore 96%, preserve food 99%, public speaking 94%, racial histories 99%, recognize poison 99%, recognize precious metals and stones 98%, recognize weapon quality 96%, sailing 99%, sense of direction 99%, swim 97%, ventriloquism 98%, disguise 90%/56%, forgery 99%/70%, identify plants/fruits 69%/71%, medical 99%/99%, pick locks 86%, pick pockets 79%, prowl 94%, use poison 54%.

Possessions: Noah is a simple man, and refuses to acquire wealth. Anything he has acquired or will acquire will be donated to the Colony, or to some well deserving individual. Noah has been known to give fortunes away to street urchins.

Description: Noah appears as an elf who is well past middle age. He sports a grey mustache and beard, and has long grey hair (the points of his ears show through his hair). He has a gentle, soft featured face, usually smiling, and always kind. Noah frequently wears peasant's clothing with a simple robe or cloak over them, and leather boots. He uses a plain wooden staff as a walking stick.

Noah's needs and wants are simple. He lives in the castle because his companions decided it was important that the founder of the community should have an impressive home. The castle also serves as a defense fortification should the island ever be attacked. In an emergency, 2000 people can squeeze behind the castle walls.



Evil Lord Axel

Name: Axel

True Name: Nona/Noah

Alignment: Miscreant

O.C.C. & Level: Summoner 15th and Wizard 15th level. He also knows/can use all warlock spells equal to a 10th level warlock.

Race: Changeling. He adopts other forms only to deceive and manipulate others. He cannot take Noah's features for more than 1D4 minutes without losing control to Noah.

Age: 200, **Size:** 8 feet, 3 inches (2.51 m), 180 lbs (81 kg).

Sex: Appears as a male sorcerer.

Attributes: I.Q. 15, M.E. 21, M.A. 19, P.S. 12, P.P. 13, P.E. 6, P.B. 5, Spd. 4, **Hit Points:** 345, **A.R.:** 4.

Armour: None.

Bonuses: +3 vs psionics, +4 vs insanity, +4 vs spell magic, +4 vs circles, +3 vs wards.

Natural Abilities: Trust/intimidate 55%, decipher circles 99%/99%, scroll conversion 92%, recognize enchantment 80%, sense evil 55%, recognize magic item 60%. The natural enemy of ALL elementals.

Psionics: None.

Magic/Clerical/Healing: +3 circle strength. Unlike Noah, Axel loves to use circles, and Noah's efforts at learning circles served him well. Axel has gone far beyond Noah in the study and mastery of circles as a summoner. Axel's skills also reflect his higher level. Note: Axel tends to rely on the warlock elemental powers from the circle.

Elemental Magic: As many as 40 warlock spells per day. He can cast spells from all of the four elemental spell categories (see the Circle of Absolute Elemental Power), +3 spell strength, 2 spell attacks per melee.

Magic Knowledge: Knows all symbols, knows all power words, recognize runes 99%, recognize wards 99%/75%. Circles: Knows all circles of summoning, protection, and power. Also knows the legendary power circle of absolute elemental power. Elemental Magic: All elemental spells.

Magic Items/Weapons: None.

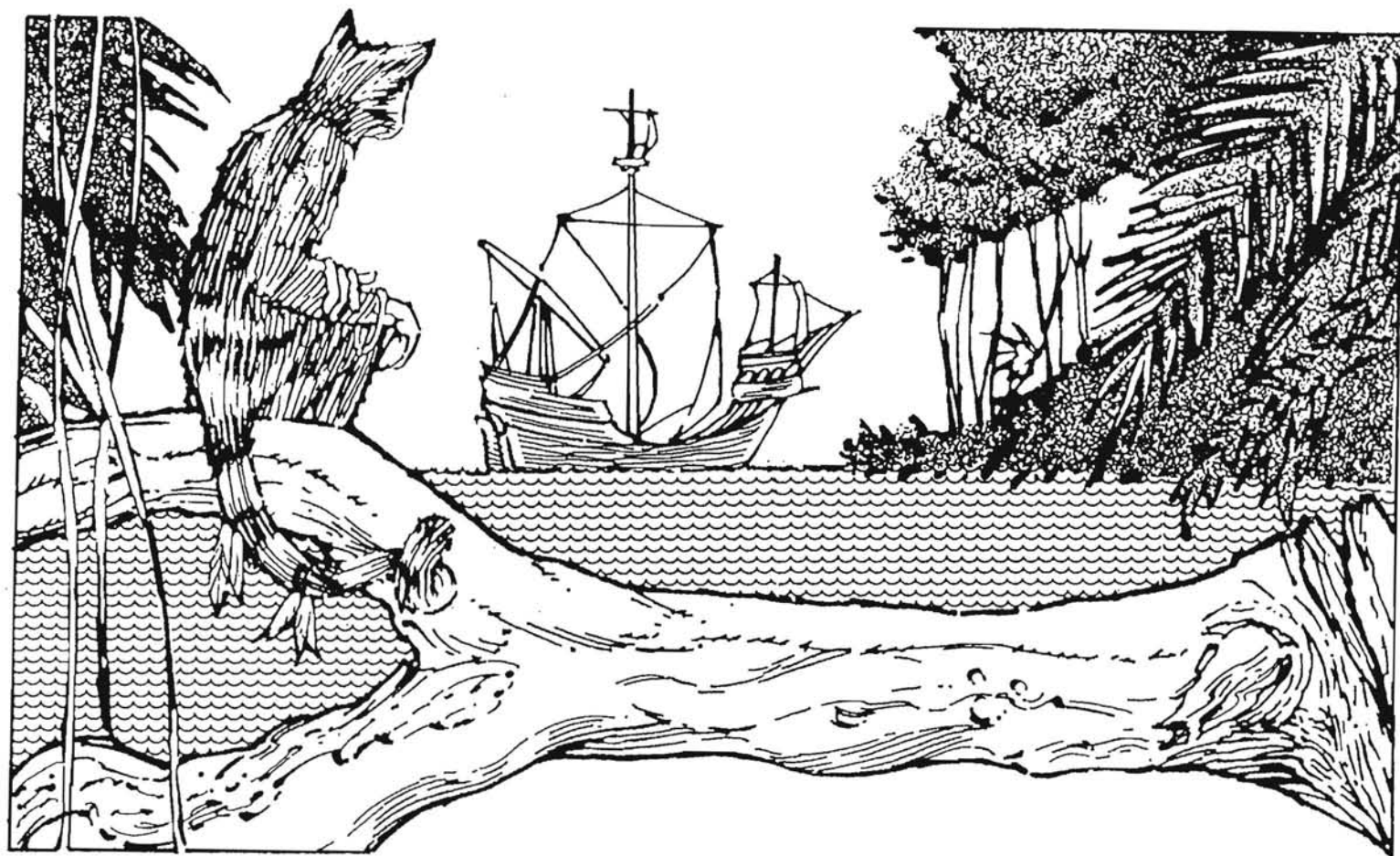
Combat Abilities: Hand to hand non-men of arms, W.P. staves, W.P. knives, W.P. short swords and W.P. large swords all at 15th level.

Weapons: Uses ceremonial dagger for summoning sacrifices, but otherwise depends on magic.

Skills of Note: Horsemanship (general) at 15th level, read/write elven, southern and eastern 99%, speak elven, southern, eastern and faerie 99%, astronomy 96%, carpentry 95%, cook 99%, demon and devil lore 99%, faerie lore 99%, fishing 96%, imitate voices 99%, mathematics 99%, plant/farm lore 96%, preserve food 99%, public speaking 94%, racial histories 99%, recognize poison 99%, recognize precious metals and stones 98%, recognize weapon quality 96%, sailing 99%, sense of direction 99%, swim 97%, ventriloquism 99%, disguise 90%/56%, forgery 99%/70%, identify plants/fruits 69%/71%, medical 99%/99%, pick locks 92%, pick pockets 89%, prowl 98%, use poison 99%.

Possessions: Axel has not had the opportunity to acquire much wealth, however, he has amassed about $2D4 \times 10,000$ gold worth of precious stones and metal.

Description: Axel always appears as a changeling, pale face, bald, no facial hair. He dresses in black with a red lined cape. He does not wear jewelry.



PALLADIUM™ RPG CHARACTER SHEET

Name: _____ Race: _____
 True Name: _____
 Occupation: _____
 Alignment: _____
 Hit Points: _____
 Experience Level: _____
 I.Q.: _____ Age: _____
 M.E.: _____ Sex: _____
 M.A.: _____ Weight: _____
 P.S.: _____ Height: _____
 P.P.: _____ Land of Origin: _____
 P.E.: _____ Birth Order: _____
 P.B.: _____ Disposition: _____
 Spd.: _____
 Insanity (if any): _____

O.C.C. Skills

Elective Skills

Secondary Skills

Valuables:

Gold: _____

Jewels: _____

Equipment: _____

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand (Type): _____

Number of Attacks: _____

Strike: _____

Parry: _____

Dodge: _____

Damage: _____

Stun: _____

Critical: _____

Kick: _____

Special: _____

Bonuses to Save: _____

Weapon Proficiencies

S

P

Thr

R

Weapons: _____

Armour: Type: _____

A.R.: _____

S.D.C.: _____

Weight: _____

Cost: _____

Special Properties: _____

Magic Items: _____

NOTES:



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