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SACRED GROUND

A SOURCEBOOK OF HOLY SITES



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SANDERS

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INTRODUCTION

SACRED SITES

*Not with slow, funereal sound
Come we to this sacred ground;
But with the trumpets' blare
And shot-torn battle-banners flung to air,
As for a victory!*

— Thomas Bailey Aldrich

Whether you're looking for a powerful temple to provide magical healing after a long dungeon crawl, an isolated holy site in which to set your next adventure, a magically fortified lair for your players' newest arch-nemesis, or just something to put over top of your lovingly crafted dungeon, *Sacred Ground* is for you.

Sacred Ground is an SRD rules sourcebook that details four sacred sites for your fantasy roleplaying game. Described in full are holy locations dedicated to gods of combat, the winds, summer, and the undead. Each site includes complete maps and illustrations of the location, along with magical and mundane protections that will make any would-be intruder quake.

But *Sacred Ground* goes beyond the walls of these unique places; the personalities behind the sites are vividly depicted for each location. Dangerous intrigues, elaborate plays for power, and inscrutable secrets are sure to enthrall your players even after they've explored the site's hidden recesses.

Like all Penumbra RPG products, *Sacred Ground* gives you material that's adaptable to any fantasy campaign, whether it's a published setting or a world that you've created. You can use these locations straight out of the book at a moment's notice, or make them a foundation for holy places of your own design. Either way, *Sacred Ground* promises to enhance your next game session with mystical sites designed to captivate every player's imagination!

THE SITES

The four sites included in this book cover a variety of designs and types. Each was created by a distinct group with its own goals and motivations and harbors secrets and dangers unique to itself.

GABRIEL'S AERIE

Floating high above the earth, the Aerie is, to all appearances, an airborne island of tranquility and peace held aloft by unfathomable magic. The island is covered in wild growth and inhabited by all manner of strange and exotic winged creatures, including priests who spend their time soaring like birds on cunningly crafted wings. This paradise isn't as serene as it seems, however. The frequent raids of roc-rider warriors threaten everyone's safety, and Melodious Whisper, the elemental lord who lives inside the wind farm dangling from the Aerie's lowest groundside peak, plots to depose Gabriel.

SUMMER'S BARROW

The myths of the death of the Summer God in autumn and his resurrection in spring are true. The location of the tomb is kept secret from the general populace for the god's safety, but the religion's clergy and the most devout of the god's faithful travel to Summer's Barrow on pilgrimage during the winter months. And when necessary, a Sacrifice is sent into the Underworld at midwinter to find the god and guide him back to the world of the living.

THE NECROPOLIS

On an island that was the site of a necromantic disaster, a five-story ziggurat rises from the barren ground. Known to outsiders simply as “the Necropolis,” this temple is dedicated to the Judge of the Dead, who claims dominion over all souls and sees them to their final resting places. This god’s monks simultaneously oppose the unlawful reanimation or resurrection of the dead and assist in bringing back those whose time has not yet come, while eliminating the undead that still arise on the island.

RETREAT OF THE WARRIOR SAINT

The followers of the Warrior Saint once led the common people against their oppressor and now run a renowned martial arts school, training any who will learn in unarmed combat and the use of peasant tools as weapons. They view themselves as the protectors of the commoners in the realm, and maintain a widespread information network that allows them keep close tabs on the various nobles and rulers of the domain, watching for the signs that they are needed to step in and remove another tyrant. For now, they’re content to wait, watching for signs that it is time to once again fulfill their holy mission.

SECTION LAYOUT

Each holy site is described using the headers below for easy reference. The index in the back of the book also lists all of the NPCs given in this book, as well as the new OGC material, for quick referral.

AT A GLANCE

This section provides a summary of the site’s history, purpose, and inner conflicts. It discusses the group that built it, and describes a few of the characters inhabiting it, as well as their basic goals and motivations.

PLACEMENT

The Placement section discusses the locations where the site is best located in your campaign world. This section usually gives choices designed to adapt the site into your campaign with minimal effort, and talks about changes that might help the site fit in realistically.

CHARACTERS

Here you can find statistics and descriptions for the site’s most influential characters, and for “typical” inhabitants. This section describes their personality traits, motivations, goals, and their potential interactions with other NPCs and the player characters. The larger politics

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and tensions involved in the situation are many times outlined in this section, as well.

THE SITE

This is the bulk of the entry, where the physical description of the site is given room by room. Detailed accounts are included here of the site's layout, traps, hazards, magical protections, design features, magic items, treasure, and all the crunchy bits that make the site what it is.

SCENES

This "adventure seed" section contains ideas for ways PCs can become involved with the site. This includes hooks for getting the characters to

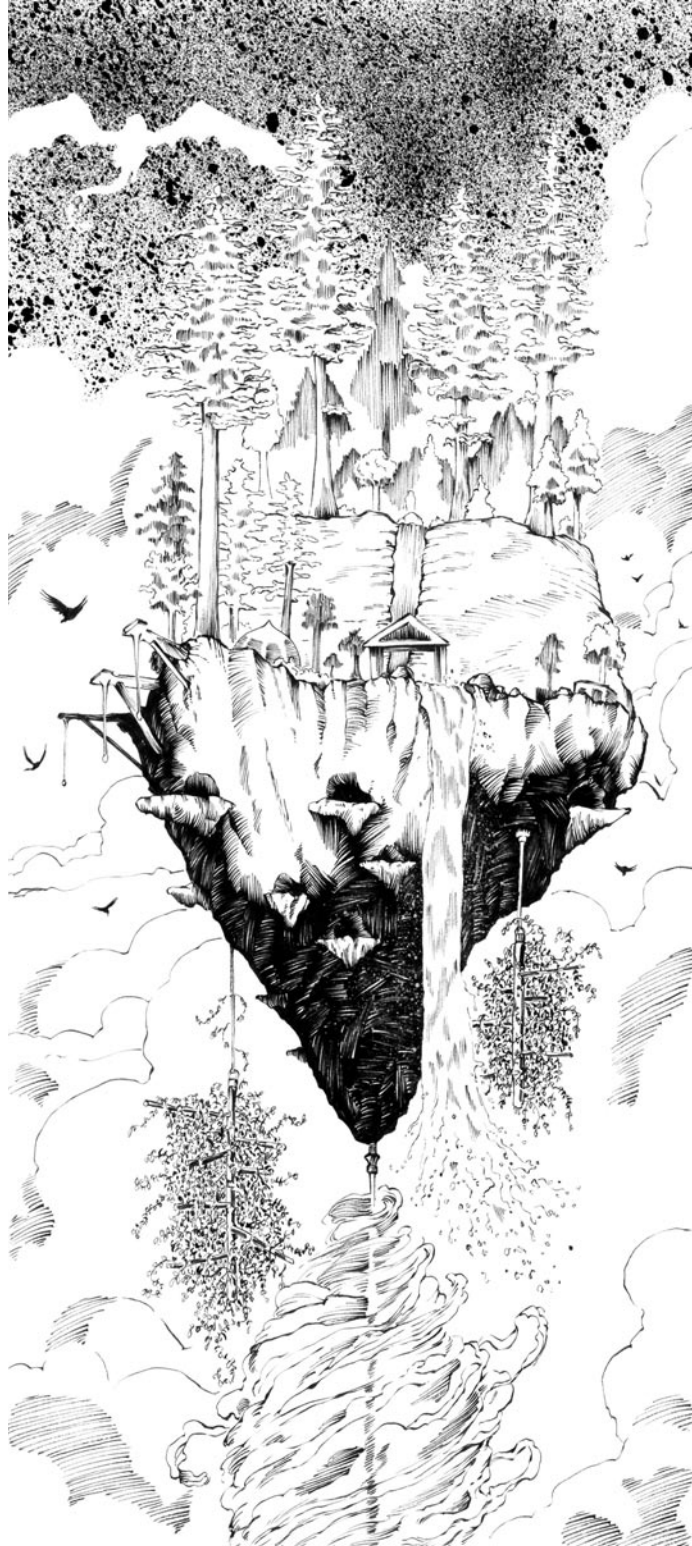
the site and suggestions for involving them in the internal machinations of its inhabitants, as well as larger plotlines that can involve your players.

ALTERNATE VERSIONS

Finally, we give some ideas for modifying the site so that it can play a different role in your campaign. The personalities and goals of the site's inhabitants might change drastically, or the site itself might be transformed. What if the residents are really the evil minions of some dark god, for instance, and not the kindly caretakers they would have the PCs think them? Maybe they're hiding a deeper agenda that only the player characters can discover. These are the kinds of variations that are suggested in this last section.

GABRIEL'S AERIE

BY CHRIS JONES



AT A GLANCE

The Four Winds receive homage the world over. In most cultures, they assume minor celestial roles, at best, but some afford them the respect and prominence they deserve. Gabriel's Aerie is one such rare place. Floating high above the earth, the Aerie is, to all appearances, an airborne island of tranquility and peace held aloft by unfathomable magic borrowed from the elemental realm of air. Gabriel Ventosus, its founder, preaches an unexpected philosophy, claiming the wind lords are not the mercurial, emotional creatures that other cultures perceive them as, but instead creatures of logic driven by predictable behavior. Adherents to the wind faith are not many, and even fewer subscribe to Gabriel's particular "heresy." Nonetheless, a fair number of pilgrims still come to pay tribute to him and the Four Winds, and to receive their blessings.

Unfortunately, most realize after they arrive at the Aerie that they cannot abide Gabriel's volatile temper and arrogance, fleeing just as quickly as they arrive. Yet, a few find within themselves the fortitude to stay, becoming priests in his service. The island, despite being covered in wild growth and inhabited by all manner of strange and exotic winged creatures, provides these priests with a relatively comfortable life. When not reciting prayers or meditating, they spend their time soaring like birds on cunningly crafted wings with an ease and grace normally reserved for those born to it.

This paradise isn't as serene as it seems, however. Frequent raids against it carried out by Gabriel's former lover and her roc-rider warriors threaten everyone's safety. And then there is Melodious Whisper, the wicked and cruel elemental lord who lives inside the wind farm dangling from the Aerie's lowest groundside peak. Rumors persist that he murdered the Aerie's original draconic inhabitant and now plots to dispose of Gabriel.

PLACEMENT

The island floats in the middle of an isolated mountain range high above the tallest peak. Clouds usually hide it from the eyes of casual observers. In fact, most of the mountain range's native residents don't even suspect its existence. Airships visiting the island approach from such heights that they appear to those on the ground to be birds or dragons.

Rumors abound in the humble mining camps and logging towns of the area; one claims that an evil flying wizard with designs on world-domination has built a terrifying castle in one of the higher and more treacherous passes. Camp priests, on the other hand, speculate about a divine war between two armies of angels who use the skies above as their battleground. Neither tale is true, but they may give the adventurers a clue that something is going on in the mountain peaks.

Keep the following in mind when placing the Aerie:

- Because the Aerie hangs in the air, you can place it just about anywhere you want. No single culture defines it, though it does draw some influence from the classical culture of real-world Greece. If your campaign world has a similar culture, then the temple will probably fit in nicely there.
- Floating, magical islands are a staple of fantasy literature, but they shouldn't be so com-

monplace as to make them mundane and trite. When introducing the Aerie, be sure to stress how exotic the place is, and how utterly alien it is that such a vibrant piece of otherwise normal landscape can just hang weightlessly in the sky. Adventurers approaching it for the first time will encounter rocs, harpies, pegasi and temple priests, all drifting lazily on the air currents, perhaps flying close to get a better look at them.

CHARACTERS

GABRIEL VENTOSUS

Conflicted Saint

"Leave my island, you wretched bug, or I shall have you thrown off!"

All his life, Gabriel felt a deep reverence for the creatures of the air. When he came of an age to adopt priestly vestments, he went on a journey to the mountains to find one of the rare temples honoring the Four Winds. His quest lasted many years, and the hardships were considerable. But in spite of many setbacks, he persevered. Eventually, he found what he so desired—a temple dedicated exclusively to the wind gods. Built atop a remote mountain far from civilization, it was maintained by a temperamental young priestess named Aris Skyfeather. At first the woman resented Gabriel's intrusion on her treasured solitude, but after many weeks of alternately rationalizing with her, ducking stony missiles lobbed at him from behind towering boulders, and flat-out pleading with her, he finally convinced her of his sincerity. She reluctantly agreed to take him on as her disciple, but it wasn't long before they became lovers. For the next ten years they lived together there, giving shelter and protection to the creatures that required it and honoring their gods with daily prayer and ritual. Their love affair was a chaotic one, filled with

GABRIEL VENTOSUS

20th-Level Human Cleric

CR 20; SZ M (humanoid); HD 20d8+40; 133 hp; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 23 (+1 Dex, +5 *bracers of armor*, +3 *amulet of natural armor*, +4 *ring of protection*); Atk melee +16/+11/+6 (1d6+1/1d6+1, crit 19–20/x2, quarterstaff, or 1d4+1, crit 19–20/x2, dagger); or +16/+11/+6 (1d4, crit 19–20/x2, dagger); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells, Turn Undead; SQ Spontaneous Casting, Streamlined; AL CN; SV Fort +14, Ref +7, Will +18; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 22, Wis 12, Cha 18

Skills: Handle Animal +10, Climb +10, Concentration +15, Diplomacy +15, Knowledge (math) +16, Knowledge (religion) +15, Listen +10, Scry +10, Spellcraft +18, Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +10

Feats: Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Leadership, Maximize Spell, Skill Focus (Handle Animal), Spell Focus (Enchantment), Improved Critical (Quarterstaff)

Languages: Auran, Common, Celestial, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Sylvan

Spontaneous Casting: Gabriel can “lose” a prepared spell in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

Streamlined (Su): When flying under his own power or by magical means, Gabriel receives a sacred speed bonus of +10 feet per round. This does not apply when piloting a mechanical flying device.

Turn Undead: Gabriel can Turn Undead seven times per day.

Spells:

(6/6+1/5+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/4+1/4+1)
Gabriel worships the Four Winds. His domains are Law and Sky. These domains

allow him to cast Law and Sky domain spells at +1 caster level, and give him the Streamlined supernatural ability. The DC to resist his spells is 11 + the spell level. He has the following spells prepared; domain spells are marked with an asterisk.

0 Level — *cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *mending*, *read magic*

1st Level — *bless*, *command*, *detect chaos*, *feather fall*, *obscuring mist*, *protection from chaos**

2nd Level — *cure moderate wounds*, *enthrall*, *hold person*, *lesser restoration*, *speak with animals*, *summon swarm**

3rd Level — *create food and water*, *daylight*, *deeper darkness*, *dispel magic*, *magic circle against chaos**, *wind wall*

4th Level — *air walk*, *dismissal*, *fly**, *freedom of movement*, *spell immunity*, *summon monster IV*

5th Level — *atonement*, *commune*, *control winds**, *greater command*, *healing circle*, *screaming*

6th Level — *banishment*, *blade barrier*, *greater dispelling*, *planar ally*, *wind walk**

7th Level — *control weather*, *dictum**, *greater restoration*, *repulsion*, *summon monster VII*

8th Level — *antimagic field*, *greater planar ally*, *mass heal*, *summon monster VIII*, *sunburst**

9th Level — *energy drain*, *gate*, *miracle*, *summon monster IX** (flying creatures only), *true resurrection*

Possessions: *Staff of the magi* (30 charges), *wand of order's wrath* (15 charges), *wand of polymorph self* (12 charges), *ring of protection* +4, *ring of invisibility*, *helm of teleportation*, *bracers of armor* +5, *figurine of wondrous power* (bronze griffon), *amulet of natural armor* +3, dagger, holy symbol (aeolipilia), fine clothes, belt pouch, teakwood abacus, potion of *cure moderate wounds* (x4), potion of *intelligence*, potion of *gaseous form*, potion of *protection from arrows*, and 345 gp.

NEW DEITY: THE FOUR WINDS

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Domains: Air, Law, Sky, Weather

Typical Worshipers: Flying creatures, natives of the Elemental Plane of Air, and those who live in especially windy environments.

The winds of the world are infinite in scope and multitudinous in number. The Four Winds are the rulers of them all. Every culture has its names for them, but their true, ancient names are Nidarus the North Wind, Polymilus the South Wind, Coriolean the East Wind and Axilyta the West Wind. Even though they are individuals, the Four Winds must cooperate as a single entity with regard to blessings, granted powers, and spells.

These incarnations of the Four Winds are not the wildly chaotic, unpredictable entities sometimes depicted by other faiths. Rather, they are logical and structured. Air currents always flow in predictable patterns, and their behavior in any given situation can be easily predicted if one possesses a quick mind capable of performing rapid calculations. Adherents devoted to this particular doctrine tend to have logical, orderly dispositions.

The most important teaching of worshipers of the Four Winds, though, has nothing to do with logic and everything to do with that

which is holy in life. They believe that the sacred breath animates every single living creature. The eternal wind is life itself. As such, a windless existence is an anathema to the Four Winds. So-called “creatures of the Void” are considered to be completely vacant of the sacred breath. The Void and its minions are jealous of the windborne, and will stop at nothing to destroy them.

The aeolipila is the holy symbol of the Four Winds. It is a brass coin pierced through the center with four feathers dangling from it. As a rule, the feathers come from an eagle, a vulture, an ostrich, and a thunderbird. Each one has inscribed upon it in silk the symbolic name of the wind deity it represents.

The Four Winds favor spears as weapons. A long spear makes an excellent melee weapon when riding a flying mount. Short spears or half spears, on the other hand, are the preferred ranged weapons since they are heavy enough to not be adversely affected by casual winds, unlike arrows, bolts, and sling bullets.

Priests who worship the Four Winds have access to the Air, Law, Sky, and Weather domains. Wind priests may be of any lawful alignment, though lawful good and lawful neutral are the two most common.

NEW DOMAIN: SKY

Granted Powers: You cast Sky domain spells at +1 effective caster levels higher than your current caster level.

You also gain the Streamlined supernatural ability. When flying under your power or by magical means, you receive a sacred speed bonus of +10 feet per round. This does not apply when piloting a mechanical flying device.

Sky Domain Spells

- 1 **Feather Fall.** Objects or creatures fall slowly.
- 2 **Summon Swarm.** Summons swarm of small flying (only) creatures.

- 3 **Gust of Wind.** Blows away or knocks down smaller creatures.
- 4 **Fly.** Subject flies at speed of 90.
- 5 **Control Winds.** Change wind direction and speed.
- 6 **Wind Walk.** You and your allies turn vaporous and travel fast.
- 7 **Control Weather.** Changes weather in local area.
- 8 **Sunburst.** Blinds all within 10 ft., deals 3d6 damage.
- 9 **Summon Monster IX.** Calls (flying only) outsider to fight for you.

SACRED GROUND



many peaks and valleys. Gabriel's domineering nature often got the better of him and rapidly became the source of many of their arguments.

By the end of their decade together, Aris spent more and more of her free time in the deep hinterlands away from the temple, carrying on a secret affair with a roc-rider chieftain's son. Inevitably, Gabriel found out, and jealousy and rage consumed him. The following evening he sneaked into the boy's tent while the lovers slept and strangled him to death. But Aris awoke and Gabriel attacked her, accusations flying wildly from his lips. Their struggle awoke the rest of the roc-rider village and when

the chieftain saw his dead son, he vowed to destroy the other man. Fortunately, Aris managed to stay his wrath while Gabriel fled.

Gabriel's travels, seemingly as random and inconstant as the wind, consumed another decade of his life. When the Four Winds deemed him worthy, they revealed to him the floating island upon which he now resides. With the considerable assistance of pilgrims sent to him by the wind deities, he built the temple and all its buildings. Today, the Aerie is a popular gathering spot for all creatures of the wind. The wind gods, pleased by his fealty and ardor, eagerly dole out blessings. Divine magic freely flows through him to the faithful, and the gods do what they can to protect the island. Unfortunately, Aris and the father of the young man Gabriel killed still bear a grudge against him, as do the spirits she honors. Raids against Gabriel's Aerie are commonplace, as are retaliatory raids carried out by the island's own congregation.

Gabriel is an extremely intellectual and rational person. While he's not prone to deep sentiment, he does possess a notorious temper. He constantly strives to achieve a state of perfect tranquility, but his unpredictable nature makes this a near impossibility. Fortunately, a peculiar philosophy lends him succor. He believes that the chaos of the world can be resolved through

⊗ THE HIERARCHY

To Gabriel's thinking, the wind is predictable and structured. So too is the Aerie's chain of command and authority. Gabriel is the temple patriarch, and the leader of the hierarchy. Tenured priests oversee the activities of the less-senior ones, teach temple canon to the

uninitiated, and generally keep the island operating smoothly. Class levels often play an important part in determining rank, but it is not the sole criteria. In fact, those who are rational, mathematically minded, and well-organized tend to rise fastest.

Title	Class Level	Form of Address	Population
Patriarch	20th	Holiness	1
Hierophant	15th – 19th	Eminence	2
Pontifex	10th – 14th	Reverend	3
Epulonis	7th – 9th	Elder	5
Mystagogue	3rd – 6th	Messenger	7
Pilgrim	Any	Brother/Sister	2 – 12

observation, deduction, and logic, and this comforts and encourages him. The wind most exemplifies this “order within chaos.” When he sees it, feels it, tastes it, and hears it he intuitively understands everything about it. The sudden intersection of two differing air streams, for example, holds no mystery for him: he can predict with perfect accuracy not just the immediate result but also its impact on other air streams many days, or even weeks hence. This makes him a genius of the rarest sort.

Gabriel has no patience for the dim-witted — which is practically everyone around him, as far as he is concerned — and his short temper and biting tongue are legendary.

Notwithstanding his shortcomings, Gabriel’s intentions have always been good. The few who do understand his unusual doctrine manage to swallow their pride and stay with the temple; all the same, not even they are entirely immune to frustration resulting from his ubiquitous rage.

Aris Skyfeather has increasingly occupied Gabriel’s thoughts of late. He still resents her for the heartbreak she dealt him so many years ago, but also knows deep down inside that he cannot possibly live without her as long as the two of them drift upon the winds of this world. The raids against his Aerie only serve to increase his frustration with her and constantly remind him of his illogical obsession with her. He doesn’t want to kill her, but he truly does believe this is his only option now.



ARIS SKYFEATHER

Bitter Rival

"I arm myself with the justice of my quarrel."

Aris was born into a village of mountain-dwelling folk called the Krakitaaw, known less formally as "roc-riders" because of their reputation for capturing and training the gargantuan birds. Like all of the tribe's children, everyone expected she would join the roc-rider ranks. But by the onset of puberty she had become as rebellious, as wild, and as temperamental as the wind. Although she loved the rocs almost as much as she loved her siblings, something else called out to her. On her fourteenth birthday, she took her leave of the tribe and went on a vision quest. After twenty-five days of fasting, surviving only on medicine bread, water, and occasional juice squeezed from fruit pulp, the wind spoke to her. Why settle for just riding on the back of the windborne, it asked, when she could *become* one of the windborne? They offered her awesome power in exchange for her devotion. Aris accepted.

They sent her to a cliff high in the mountains, a blessed place where another in their service fell to assassins a thousand years ago. Their intentions were good, but they still made her life difficult. The wind gods have always been a capricious, mischievous lot, prone to temper tantrums, prank-playing, and forgetfulness. Yet, she persisted. In time she built them a temple worthy of their approval. Life was good.

Then Gabriel Ventosus showed up. A rugged, handsome youth, he both charmed and frustrated her. Her divine masters whispered bitter words of warning in her ears, pressing her to abandon the boy to his fate in the wilderness. The portents surrounding him were dire, indeed. At first, she tried to drive him away, but he persisted. It was not long before her longing for human company finally allowed her to relent. She took him in, and for the next ten years taught him the ways of her world. Their love affair was a torrid one.

Unfortunately, the source of her masters' warnings became evident: his temper seemed to know no bounds, and Aris eventually sought solace in the arms of another, a beautiful young roc-rider from her people's village. She and the boy spent many a night in each other's arms, whispering promises of devotion in the darkness. Inevitably, Gabriel found out. Blood was spilled, and in the end her lover died in her arms. Gabriel fled, afraid for his life.

The memories of that night have haunted her ever since. The slain boy's father, Ivor Tree-Talon, also obsesses over Gabriel, aching for revenge. Aris spends her time with the older man, perhaps trying vainly to absolve herself of the guilt she feels. Not so strangely, she sees the same things in him that she was attracted to in his son. Preparations for war consume most of their time these days, however. Aris' spiritual masters give her counsel while Ivor's riders test Gabriel's defenses. The floating island presents a difficult target, but she is confident it will fall. Gabriel will then beg for his life from down upon his knees. This vow, which she has whispered countless times, is all that gives her comfort anymore.

Aris' faith is the polar opposite of Gabriel's. To her, the winds are not logical, orderly constructs dominated by routine. They are the quintessence of chaos, raw and unfettered, something Gabriel could never appreciate. Gabriel's doctrine terrifies her masters, but while it disturbs her as well, revenge is all she really cares about.

Aris is just shy of six feet tall. She's a thin woman, with jet-black hair worn loose and unfettered. She has nut-brown skin, hard black eyes, and high cheekbones. Her clothes are simple yet of high quality, usually consisting of a soft cotton tunic and hide breeches. She finds boots uncomfortable, so she walks around barefoot. Attractive silver and turquoise jewelry adorns her wrists, ears, ankles, and neck. One piece in particular bears an obsidian holy symbol that her gods blessed to make her immune to the island's barrier.



ARIS SKYFEATHER

20th-Level Human Cleric

CR 20; SZ M (humanoid); HD 20d8+20; 109 hp; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC: 27 (+3 Dex, +7 chain shirt, +4 small steel shield, +3 ring of protection); Atk melee +18/+13/+8 (1d8+1, x2, heavy mace, or 1d4+1, x3, punching dagger) or ranged +18/+13/+8 (1d8, x3, shortspear); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Rebuke Undead, Spells; SQ Spontaneous Casting, Streamlined; AL CN; SV Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +16; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 19, Cha 15

Skills: Concentration +10, Diplomacy +8, Handle Animal +6, Heal +11, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (religion) +12, Ride +12, Scry +2, Spellcraft +10, Wilderness Lore +5

Feats: Weapon Focus, Martial Weapon Mace, Combat Casting, Mounted Combat, Spell Focus, Spell Penetration, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Scribe Scroll, Craft Staff, Empower Spell

Languages: Auran, Common

Rebuke Undead: Aris can rebuke undead four times per day.

Spontaneous Casting: Aris can “lose” a prepared spell in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

Streamlined (Su): When flying under her own power or by magical means, Aris receives a sacred speed bonus of +10 feet per round. This does not apply when piloting a mechanical flying device.

Spells:

(6/6+1/6+1/6+1/6+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/4+1/4+1) Aris worships the spirits of the wind. Her domains are Chaos and Sky, which allow her to cast Chaos and Sky domain spells at +1 caster level, and give her the Streamlined supernatural ability. The DC to resist her

spells is 14 + the spell level. She has the following spells prepared; domain spells are marked with an asterisk.

0 Level — *detect magic, guidance, inflict minor wounds, resistance, read magic, detect magic*

1st Level — *cause fear, command, detect law, divine favor, magic weapon, protection from law*, shield of faith*

2nd Level — *augury, death knell, desecrate, remove paralysis, resist elements, shatter*, speak with animals*

3rd Level — *animate dead, bestow curse, deeper darkness, dispel magic, gust of wind*, prayer, wind wall*

4th Level — *air walk, chaos hammer*, cure critical wounds, freedom of movement, greater magic weapon, poison, spell immunity*

5th Level — *break enchantment, circle of doom, control winds*, plane shift, summon monster V*

6th Level — *banishment, blade barrier, greater dispelling, wind walk*, word of recall*

7th Level — *control weather*, destruction, greater restoration, greater scrying, repulsion*

8th Level — *antimagic field, cloak of chaos*, greater planar ally, mass heal, sunburst*

9th Level — *energy drain, implosion, miracle, summon monster IX**

Possessions: Orb of storms, wings of flying, ring of protection +3, chain shirt +3, small steel shield +3, heavy mace +2, shortspear, holy symbol of remove curse that grants Aris immunity to the geas/quest of the wind barrier, punching dagger, average clothes, holy symbol (obsidian feather), backpack, scroll of finger of death, scroll of firestorm, scroll of word of chaos, scroll of wall of stone (x2), scroll of control winds (x3), scroll of cure critical wounds (x3), scroll of spell immunity, exotic roc mount (use standard stats in the SRD), and 547 gp.

A tame roc named Stormcrow serves as Aris Skyfeather's mount. He has white, russet-tipped feathers and hateful eyes.

THE ROC-RIDERS

Vengeance-Seekers

"A baptism of blood by my sword-hand awaits your master, dog!"

Roc-riders, as their name implies, fly upon the backs of gargantuan raptors that they capture and train from birth. Each bird only responds to its rider, who it considers a friend rather than a master. The riders, in turn, treat their birds with the utmost respect. Among the Kraakitaaw, being a roc-rider is considered the greatest honor on earth — a blessing bestowed by the holy spirits of the wind.

The roc-riders follow Aris Skyfeather not because of any overriding sense of loyalty to

her, but instead because their chieftain, Ivor Tree-Talon, commands it. They enjoy the favor of the wind spirits thanks to her influence, but her zealousness makes them extremely uncomfortable. Nevertheless, Gabriel Ventosus murdered their chieftain's heir in cold blood, and for that he has earned their eternal enmity.

Roc-rider attacks rely heavily on ranged weapons, such as shortbows, slings, and spears; if they have to engage the enemy with melee weapons, they do so by swooping in to strike with lightning-fast hit-and-run tactics. Most roc-riders are rangers, and so augment their battles with magic. Like Aris, they all wear the holy symbol of the wind spirits, which protect them from the magical barrier surrounding Gabriel's Aerie.

At present, 15 roc-riders fly with Aris on her missions against the Aerie. In the years that they have been battling Gabriel and his followers, they have lost just three men and women.

Ⓢ TYPICAL ROC-RIDER

8th-level Human Ranger

CR 8; SZ M (humanoid); 8d10 HD; 45 hp; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+5 armor, +3 Dex); Atk melee +11/+6 (2d4+2, crit 18-20/x2, falchion or 1d6+2, crit 19-20/x2, short sword), or ranged +11/+6 (1d6, x3, shortbow); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Favored Enemy; SQ Track; AL NG; SV Fort +6 Ref +5 Will +3; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 16

Skills: Animal Empathy +10, Climb +6, Craft (any one) +4, Handle Animal +10, Hide +6, Knowledge (nature) +3, Listen +8, Move Silently +6, Ride +12, Spot +6, Wilderness Lore +8

Feats: Alertness, Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Ride-By Attack, Track

Languages: Common

Favored Enemy: A roc-rider gains a +2 bonus to his Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, and Wilderness Lore skill checks and to damage in combat versus magical beasts, and a +1 bonus versus beasts.

Spells: (2/0) A roc-rider casts spells as a 4th-level caster. The DC to resist these spells is 11 + spell level. Roc-riders typically have the following spells prepared:

1st Level — *entangle*, *resist elements*

Possessions: *Falchion* +1, short sword, shortbow, *chain shirt* +1, arrows (20), holy symbol of *remove curse* that grants immunity to the *geas/quest* of the wind barrier, exotic roc mount (use standard stats in the SRD), and 45 gp.

THE AERIE CLERGY

Loyal Disciples

"May His Holiness spare you the Long Fall, child."

There are two types of clerical adherents at the Aerie: those who are "just visiting" and those who stay for as long as they can tolerate Gabriel's temper. The short-timers are called "pilgrims," while long-timers are given titles based on their rank within the island's clerical hierarchy (see below). The faithful come from

the world over, sharing just one common but crucial characteristic: their devotion to the wind faith. Anyone may hear the calling, regardless of circumstance or convenience. Once they do, adherents often follow the wind and their instincts to get to the Aerie. This is never an easy undertaking, and managing to stay in the Aerie is even more difficult still. Gabriel holds impossible standards for the faithful. Most don't last a week. Those who do manage it become diligent and valuable members of the island's community.

⊙ TYPICAL AERIE CLERIC

10th-Level Human Cleric

CR 10; SZ M (humanoid); HD 10d8+20; 67 hp; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk melee +7/+2 (1d6, x3, halfspear) or ranged +9/+4 (1d6, x3, halfspear or 1d4, crit 19-20/x2, dagger); SA Spells, Turn Undead; SQ Spontaneous Casting, Streamlined; AL LN; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 12

Skills: Balance +3, Climb +2, Concentration +4, Craft (any one) +2, Diplomacy +4, Heal +4, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Knowledge (religion) +8, Profession (any one) +5, Ride +6, Spellcraft +3, Spot +10

Feats: Scribe Scroll, Brew Potion, Dodge, Pilot Airframe, Quicken Spell

Languages: Common

Spontaneous Casting: An Aerie cleric can "lose" a prepared spell in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

Streamlined (Su): When flying under his own power or by magical means, an Aerie cleric receives a sacred speed bonus of +10 feet per round. This does not apply when piloting a mechanical flying device.

Turn Undead: An Aerie cleric can turn undead three times per day.

Spells: (6/5+1/5+1/3+1/3+1/2+1) An Aerie cleric worships the Four Winds; his domains are Law and Sky. These domains allow him to cast Law and Sky domain spells at +1 caster level, and give him the Streamlined supernatural ability. The DC to resist his spells is 12 + the spell level. He has the following spells prepared; domain spells are marked with an asterisk.

- 0 Level — *detect poison, guidance, light, mending, read magic, resistance*
- 1st Level — *comprehend languages, divine favor, entropic shield, feather fall*, obscuring mist, sanctuary*
- 2nd Level — *aid, calm emotions*, delay poison, resist elements, sound burst, speak with animals*
- 3rd Level — *daylight, dispel magic, magic circle against chaos*, prayer*
- 4th Level — *discern lies, fly*, spell immunity, tongues*
- 5th Level — *control winds, dispel chaos*, flame strike*

Possessions: Halfspear, dagger, holy symbol (aeolipilia), *figurine of wondrous power* (silver raven), *eyes of the eagle*, *stone of alarm*, healer's kit, vestments.

SACRED GROUND

There is no dress code, but most priests wears loose-fitting cotton robes that can be removed in an instant should the urge to go swimming or skydiving suddenly overcome them. Because the priests spend their free time flying on the wind currents using artificial wing contraptions, the island's other residents casually refer to them as "wind-divers." Priests who rely on magic in order to fly are looked down upon as cowards.

THE SITE

The Aerie is a verdant island of earth and stone floating high above the world. Resting upon it, at the center of an artificial lake, is the temple, its marble columns glistening brightly each morning in the dawn light breaking over the edge of the horizon. Gabriel's tower, guest-houses for pilgrims, and a few other buildings also occupy the topside. Surrounding it all is a lush forest, the home to hundreds of species of aerial creatures. The underside, too, is covered in flora. Hanging from it by enchanted ropes are two globular gardens and the "wind farm," an impossible cyclone that opens on the elemental realm of air, and which holds the island aloft. The farm is also home to hundreds of air elementals.

Ages ago, the island served as a nest for the great dragon Hwiddersung Abudisse. In order to get it airborne, she opened a gateway to the elemental realm of air using ancient magic, and lived on the island for the remainder of her life,

basking in the sun and flying with absolute freedom on abundant winds. Eventually she fell to an assassin's dart; rumor claims the wind farm's elemental lord Melodious Whisper murdered her in order to take control of the magic fueling the cyclone underneath the island. By the time Gabriel found the island, all that remained of the dragon was her dry, sun-bleached skeleton. Claiming the island for his own (oblivious to the inhabitants' opinions on the matter), he set to work making it into his new home. The dragon's bones he used for the temple's foundation, and then later completed it with marble transported on the airships of clever wizards. As the years passed, wind-adherents heard about his effort and came to render aid. Some stayed to help, but most did not, unable to abide Gabriel's temper. In time, he completed the Aerie to his satisfaction.

Despite the inhospitable height, the Aerie's weather is generally mild and pleasant. The island rotates slowly to port, requiring twelve hours to complete a single turn. A thin bubble of wind generated by the wind farm keeps out the cold air and gale-force winds. The occasional chill, strong wind or even thunderstorm still manages to squeak through, but they are insignificant compared to what the barrier keeps out. The barrier also keeps the island from being buffeted in the sky like a piece of cork adrift at sea.



The envelope of wind surrounding the island is similar to a *wind wall* spell cast by a 20th-level cleric. It has the following attributes:

NEW COMMUNITY: GABRIEL'S AERIE

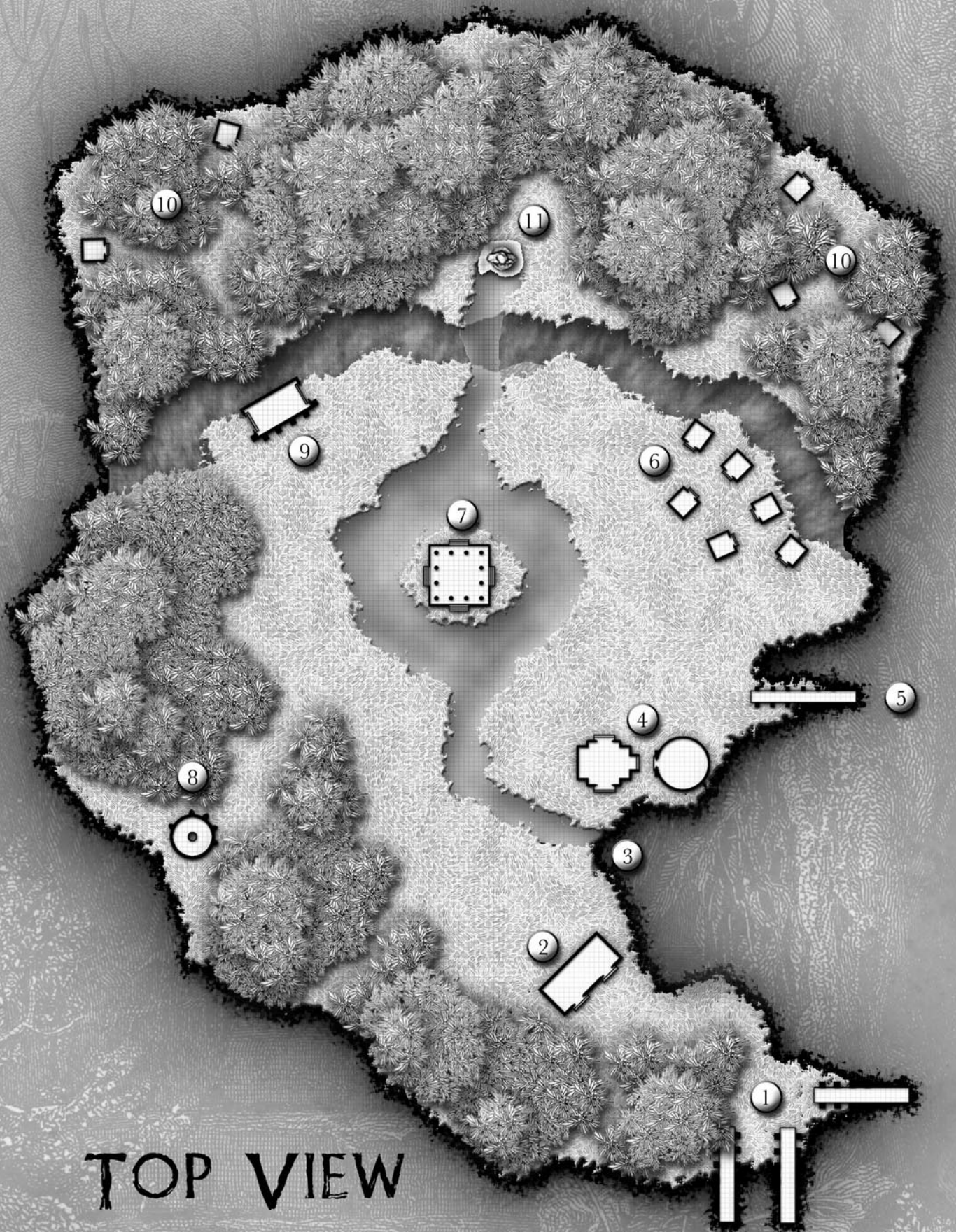
Size: Thorp; **Power Center:** Magical; **Alignment:** Lawful Neutral; **GP Limit:** 40 gp (plus magic, weapons, and armor); **Ready Cash:** 80,000 gp

Population: 92 adults (36% human, 27% halfling, 20% harpy, 10% elf, 8% other, 3%

dwarf, 2% gnome); 8 children (63% halfling, 24% harpy, 12% dwarf)

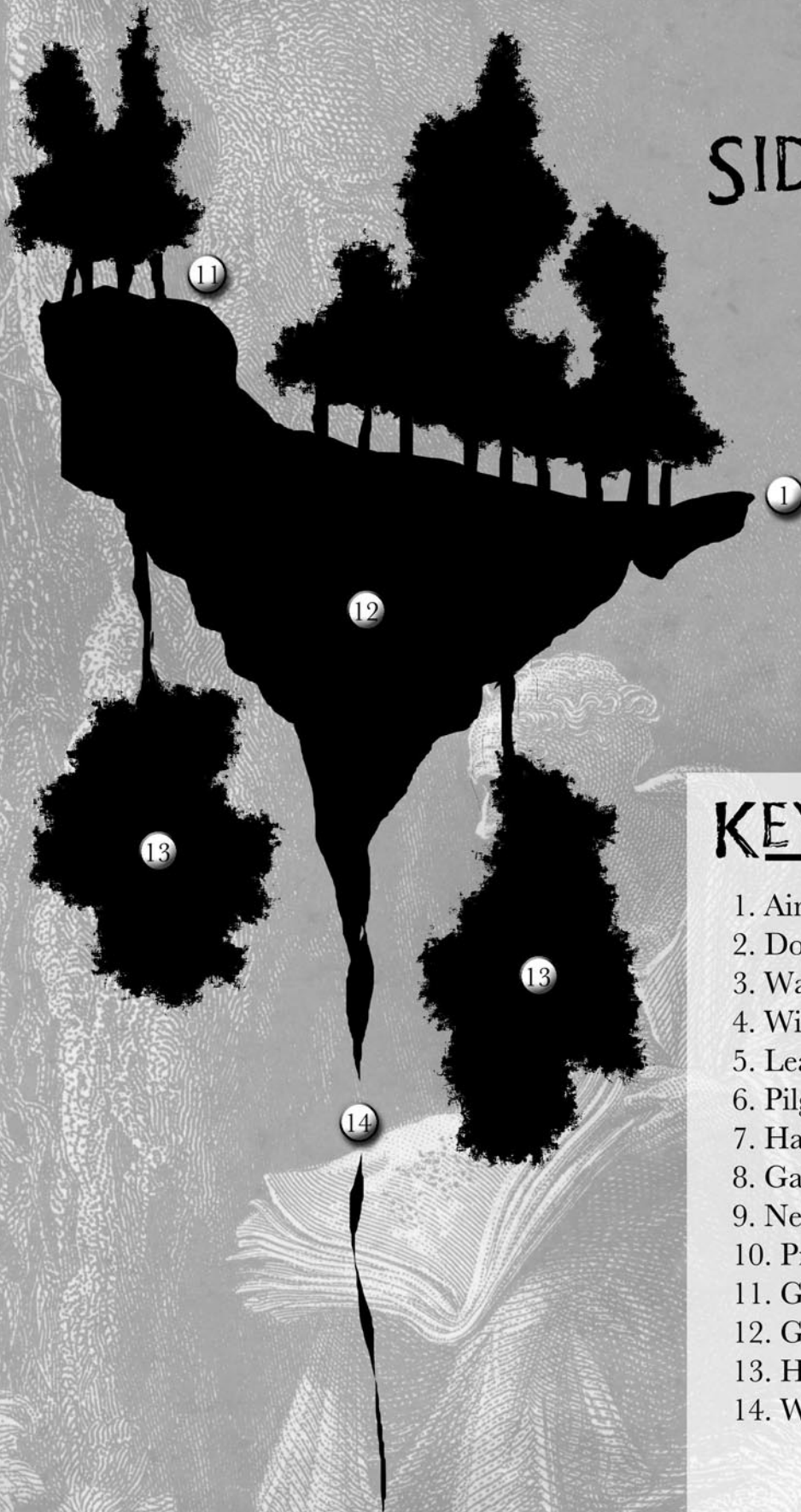
Authority Figures: Gabriel Ventosus, 20th-level human cleric; Melodious Whisper, 9th-level elder elemental wizard; Aettryne eax Frumscaeft, old green dragon; Sissy Aiofe, 15th-level halfling ranger.

TOP VIEW





SIDE VIEW



KEY

1. Airship Docks
2. Dockhouse
3. Waterfall
4. Wingdiver Congress
5. Leap of Faith
6. Pilgrim Guesthouses
7. Hall of Benedictions
8. Gabriel's Tower
9. Nesting Stables
10. Priest Houses
11. Gabriel's Statue
12. Groundside & Rookeries
13. Hanging Gardens
14. Wind Farm

SACRED GROUND

- It is permanent. Magic shed by the wind farm fuels it as long as the wind continues to blow in from the Elemental Plane of Air.
- It is ovoid shaped, enveloping the island in all directions. It has a radius of 600 feet, measured from the island's exact center.
- It is too large to be dispelled by a single spellcaster, and it cannot be dispelled permanently as long as the wind farm's breach remains open. However, a spellcaster may cast *dispel magic* (DC 31) or *greater dispelling* (DC 31) as a targeted dispel effect on a section of barrier equal to five feet in diameter per caster level. This field negation lasts a number of rounds equal the spellcaster's level plus the modifier for his primary spellcasting ability.
- The wall affects those who pass through it into the island's airspace as per a *geas/quest* spell cast by a 20th-level cleric (Fortitude save DC 25 to disobey). The terms of the spell are dictated by the truce (see below). Only those inside the wind farm are spared this effect.

While the Aerie is not exactly a true neutral ground, creatures inhabiting or visiting it are expected to maintain peace with one another. Feeding is part of the normal cycle of life, and so non-intelligent creatures are allowed to hunt and kill non-intelligent ones, as is their right. Intelligent creatures are either provided food by the island's priests, or are expected to get their own from the mountain range below. Humanoid prey is always off-limits, as is making open warfare upon or actively killing other creatures for sport or vengeance.

Naturally, there are those who thwart this restriction. When murder occurs, the priests mercilessly hunt down the guilty party and mete out justice; generally this means exile from the island.

The first exception to the truce is that it does not apply to self-defense situations, which many would-be thieves have found out the hard way, especially in the roc and harpy rookeries. The other is Aris, and, by extension, her raiders: Gabriel believes her patron spirits shield her and the roc-riders from the barrier's magic, a prospect that bothers him more deeply than he is willing to let on.

🌀 THE WIND'S BLESSING

A lawful character unaffiliated with the temple or the wind gods who recites at least four of the benedictions may roll 1d20, adding her Wisdom modifier. If the result is 20 or higher she receives one of the following class-dependent blessings:

Fighter, Monk, Paladin or Ranger: Add +5 to Strength when calculating carrying capacity.

Cleric: Gain access to the one of the following domains of the player's choice, if she doesn't already have it: Air, Law, Sky or Weather. Each day when she prepares her spells, she may select her domain spells from any one of these as well as from the domains allowed by her own deity. This does not apply to clerics of the Four Winds.

A cleric of the Four Winds who prays in the Hall of Benedictions should roll 1d20, adding her Wisdom modifier. On a result of 15 or higher, she gains the benefits of the *commune* spell. She may receive this blessing once per week.

Druid, Sorcerer, or Wizard: Casts divination spells at +1 caster levels higher than normal.

Rogue: Gains a +5 sacred bonus to Balance skill checks.

The wind's blessing lasts for 1 month. It may only be received once per year.

RANDOM AERIAL CREATURES

The following are lists of random aerial creatures that may be encountered in and around the Aerie. Unless special circumstances warrant it, always roll first on Table 1 for typical encounters.

Table 1: Common Aerial Creatures

D100	Creature
1 – 5	Arrowhawk, Adult
6 – 10	Animal, Bat
11 – 15	Animal, Eagle
16 – 20	Animal, Hawk
21 – 25	Animal, Owl
26 – 30	Animal, Raven
31 – 35	Dire Animal, Bat
36 – 40	Giant Eagle
41 – 45	Giant Owl
46 – 50	Griffon
51 – 55	Harpy
56 – 60	Hippogriff
61 – 65	Pegasus
66 – 70	Roc
71 – 75	Sprite, Pixie
76 – 80	Stirge
81 – 85	Vermin, Giant Bee
86 – 90	Vermin, Giant Wasp
90 – 95	Will-O-Wisp
96 – 00	Roll on Table 2

Table 2: Uncommon Aerial Creatures

D100	Creature
01 – 05	Arrowhawk, Elder
06 – 10	Belker
11 – 15	Chimera
16 – 20	Cockatrice
21 – 25	Couatl
26 – 30	Dragon (Roll on Table 3)
31 – 35	Elemental, Air, Small
36 – 40	Elemental, Air, Medium
41 – 45	Elemental Air, Large
46 – 50	Elemental Air, Huge
51 – 55	Elemental, Air, Greater
56 – 60	Elemental, Air, Elder

61 – 65	Gargoyle
66 – 70	Invisible Stalker
71 – 75	Manticore
76 – 80	Mephit, Air
81 – 85	Pseudodragon
86 – 90	Sphinx (Roll on Table 4)
91 – 95	Wyvern
96 – 00	Yrthak

Table 3: Dragon Encounters

D20	Dragon Age Category
1	Wyrmling
2	Very Young
3	Young
4	Juvenile
5 – 7	Young Adult
8 – 10	Adult
11 – 13	Mature Adult
14 – 15	Old
16 – 17	Very Old
18	Ancient
19	Wyrm
20	Great Wyrm

D10	Dragon Color
1	Black
2	Blue
3	Green
4	Red
5	White
6	Brass
7	Bronze
8	Copper
9	Gold
10	Silver

Table 4: Sphinx Encounters

D8	Sphinx Type
1 – 3	Andro-
4 – 5	Crio-
5 – 7	Gyno-
8	Hieraco-

SACRED GROUND

Gabriel and the other residents call the top of the island the “sunsides,” even though the bottom side receives almost as much sun on days when the clouds aren’t thick. It is a wide, flat plain that rises into a plateau-like hill. Exotic grasses, dense foliage, and ancient, towering trees grow over most of the island’s surface. A pegasus herd, a couple of hippogriff flights, and a pride of surly griffons use the starboard pasture for feeding, mating, and playing. Worshippers of the Four Winds use the port pasture for recreation and relaxation. Between the two sits the temple proper, called the Hall of Benedictions. This is where adherents study the canon of the faith and meditate. A placid lake surrounds the building, fed by a stream originating in the pedestal of a tall statue on the hill above. The water temperature is always frigid, and on hot summer days all manner of beast enjoy cooling off in it.

The underside of the island, the inverted mountain that lies beneath the sunside, is referred to as “groundside.” It is essentially a giant dirt plug that tapers to a point hundreds of feet below. The divine grace of the Four Winds keeps this part of the island from disintegrating under the constant threat of erosion and gravity. As with the sunside, dense foliage grows on the slopes. Crooked trees reach up toward the sky like outstretched arms, while vines, flowers, and bushes dangle from the slopes like tresses of hair. Rocky outcroppings emerge from the foliage, kept clear by the rocs and harpies that nest upon them. Thousands of rivulets of every size and speed trickle down though the canopy, as run-off from above. The largest of these is a waterfall.

The wind farm inhabited by air elementals hangs from an enchanted rope attached to the bottom of the Aerie. It is the source of the island’s suspension magic — an inter-planar breach roils in the farm’s heart.



A character attempting to scale groundside must make Climb check (DC 15) every 20 feet. Groundside is an inverted 45-degree slope with plenty of thick vegetation, trees, rocky carbuncles,

and other sorts of miscellaneous hand- and footholds.

If a character enters combat or attempts to do anything complex while hanging in the foliage, he must make a successful Climb check (DC 20) every round or lose his grip and fall. A character who fails and falls should be given one chance to grab a tree branch, vine, or ledge in a last-ditch effort to save himself (Dexterity check DC 20). If successful, he stops his fall but takes 1d6 points of subdual damage. If he fails, then he plummets to the earth below and takes falling damage of 1d6 per 10 feet fallen, to a maximum of 20d6.

HALL OF BENEDICTIONS

The largest building on the island, this is where the vast majority of the ceremonies committed to the Four Winds are performed. It is 60 feet in length and width, 40 feet tall, and consists of a floor and a high-ceilinged roof held up by open columns, floating in the center of the island’s lake. A narrow balcony, which people may access by means of an even narrower spiral staircase in the hall’s southwest corner, runs along the perimeter of the hall where the walls would otherwise be, close to the ceiling. The entire building is made of the finest marble and skillfully worked ivory scavenged from the Abudisse dragon’s corpse. Overall, its architecture is simple, traditional, and elegant. It is truly beautiful to behold, especially on clear days when it scintillates brightly in the unimpeded sunlight. Wind always flows through it.

Priests recite benedictions in the Hall seven times a day. The acoustics of the ceiling are such that the slightest whispers become greatly amplified. When the prayers are spoken *en masse*, all of sunside hears it with crystal clarity. Creatures residing here have become accustomed to it over the years, but those that haven’t manage to be elsewhere during the prayer ceremonies. Island guests are expected to attend at least two benedictions per day whether they subscribe to the faith or not, sim-

ply as a matter of courtesy. During the benedictions, priests and pilgrims congregate beneath the hall's roof, arranged in concentric rings with the presiding priest held aloft on a small column of air at the exact center. Guests must observe in silence from the lake's edge.

There are no statues or effigies inside the hall. Nothing at all, actually, except for the air itself. Representations of the Four Winds are impossible to accurately make, though that doesn't stop the few adherents who fancy themselves artists from trying. Gabriel accepts none of their works, and he certainly doesn't encourage them wasting their time pursuing such a fruitless endeavor. In the time between benedictions, random air eddies coalesce below the roof, allowing the faithful to step off into them from the balcony, where they sometimes hover for hours on end.



Any person who attempts to enter an air eddy from the balcony must make a successful Dexterity check (DC 10) or plummet 40 feet to the ground, taking 4d6 points of falling damage (Reflex save DC 14 for half damage).

The air eddies are enchanted as per the spell *levitate* cast by a 20th-level sorcerer. Affected creatures can control their vertical movement, but if they move more than five feet horizontally they crash to the floor, taking falling damage. Another Dexterity check (DC 10) is required to move from an eddy back to the balcony.

Pilgrims and priests utilize the air cells for meditation, though a few have been caught late at night using them to expunge their carnal desires with a friend or two. Gabriel is strict enforcer of propriety. Those he discovers engaged in such lascivious activity, or in other act that violates the Aerie's sanctity, are promptly expelled from the island. The most egregious violators are thrown from it.



If a spellcaster meditates inside an air eddy, he can prepare his daily spells in half the time normally required.

Additionally, an arcane spellcaster need only rest for 3 hours before spell preparation.

CHAIN OF BENEDICTIONS

The holy benedictions are recited seven times a day, as follows: morning, mid-morning, noon, mid-afternoon, dusk, mid-evening, and midnight. Everyone is welcome to participate; those who do so frequently can expect to be asked by the priests to assume various temple responsibilities. Truly sincere, dedicated adherents are formally asked to join the priesthood after four months.

The Benediction of Dawn is the first prayer of thanksgiving, recited in appreciation of the dawning of a new day. Adherents believe that the world turns on its axis due to the constant flow of wind around it. Each day the sun rises is another day that the Four Winds have bestowed upon the mortals of the world.

The Benediction of Winds is a prayer for guidance wherein priests beg the Four Winds to steer them on the proper path. Those who follow the faith are like the sails on a ship, with the wind pushing them onward to their destiny. It is a daily renewal of the priests' commitment to the gods.

The Benediction of Life is a prayer of recognition. The priests proclaim that the sacred breath of life possesses every worldly creature. It is the first gasp each newborn creature takes. The benediction asks the divinities to deliver sea creatures from the burden of a windless life. While they too possess the breath of life, it is primeval and impure.

The Benediction of Whispers is a prayer for protection, chanted with the hope that the children of the Four Winds will be safeguarded from the creatures of the Void, who live in shadow and speak only in whispers because they do not have the proper means to talk.

The Benediction of Nightfall is the second prayer of thanksgiving, recited by everyone on

the sunside. Another day has passed and for that they are thankful to the winds. This blessing is similar to the Benediction of Dawn in content and structure.

The Benediction of Grace, spoken by the highest-ranking priests, is a prayer of warding that safeguards the island.

The Benediction of Ascendancy is a prayer for deliverance. Gabriel's greatest hope is for all the faithful to one day transcend this world and transform into immortal spirits of the wind, to become the sacred breath of life itself.

PILGRIM GUESTHOUSES

Pilgrims come to the Aerie to study, meditate, receive spiritual guidance, and otherwise "get under foot," as Gabriel is fond of saying. They are not bad people, certainly not if they're devoted to the winds; it's just that the more zealous members of the priesthood don't believe pilgrim faith is nearly as strong as it could be. Nevertheless, they fully realize that pilgrim donations keep the temple financially healthy, so don't go out of their way to alienate these people or make them feel wholly unwelcome. Accordingly, these houses were built for pilgrims to use during their stay on the island.

Guesthouses are two stories tall, 20 feet long, and 20 feet wide. They are built from taupe-colored stone bricks imported from groundside, and red, clay shingles protect their roofs. Pilgrims usually leave the windows wide open so they can take advantage of the island's cool breezes. The second floors contain bunk beds and lockable chests, all arranged in a dormitory manner. The ground floors have sparsely furnished kitchens and common rooms.

Priests expect pilgrims to leave a 1 silver piece donation each night that they stays in a guesthouse. Donation boxes are kept in the kitchen and emptied once a week when those pilgrims assigned to the task change the linens. Stealing from a donation box is considered bad form, as is not donating at all. Freeloaders are given the

majority of the grunt work, such as washing and changing linens, preparing food for the other guests, and cleaning out the borehole latrines behind each house.



The guesthouse doors are simple, unlocked wooden doors with the following stats: Thickness 1 in.; Break DC 13 (stuck); AC 5; Hardness 5; Hit Points 10.

PRIEST RESIDENCES

These are more or less identical to the pilgrim guesthouses. Up to four priests of varying ranks live in each one, with the second floor partitioned off into four individual rooms that the occupants may decorate and do with as they please. As an indicator of status, the priests' homes are built on the Aerie hill, giving them both privacy and an amazing view. Unlike the guesthouses, these buildings have lockable doors and windows designed to keep out unwanted visitors.

The quantity and quality of a priest's possessions depends on his experience and how much he's accumulated over the years. Gabriel doesn't require that his devout followers live like mendicants. In fact, he actively encourages them to find or buy as many magical items and artifacts as possible. With Aris Skyfeather increasing the frequency of her raids against the Aerie, they need everything they can get to give them the advantage.

Twelve priests currently live in four of the houses. Empty houses are kept locked, with the senior pontifexes keeping the keys.



The residence doors are strong wooden doors with the following stats: Thickness 2 in.; Break DC 23 (stuck), 25 (locked); AC 5; Hardness 5; Hit Points 20; Open Lock DC 25.

WIND-DIVER CONGRESS

Wind-diver airframes are built, repaired, and stored in this large building. Like the Hall of Benedictions, the Congress is constructed from marble and dragon bone. A beautifully carved dome covers an open-air amphitheater at one end of the building. Originally, Gabriel intended the Congress to be a theological university. Shortly after abandoning the idea, he gave it to the wind-divers, tired of always tripping over all the airframes and other related equipment lying about the island.

Wind-divers store their equipment in the main building and use the amphitheater as a lecture hall, where they teach a wide variety of topics ranging from wind dynamics to the

maintenance of airframe to techniques for out-flying dragons.

THE LEAP OF FAITH

This small platform extends out from the sun-side's edge. It's called the "Leap of Faith" because wind-divers run off it as fast their legs can carry them with their airframes, trusting the air currents to catch them and keep them aloft. Once airborne, they fly in and out of the wind barrier, skimming off the air currents generated by it and the nearby waterfall in order to fly at faster speeds. Once in a while, an especially brave wind-diver uses the outer edge of the wind farm to propel away from the island at breakneck speed.

NEW FEAT: PILOT AIRFRAME [GENERAL]

You understand the intricacies of piloting an airframe or other similar flying device, such as a hang glider.

Prerequisites: 1 or more ranks in Ride

Benefit: You may add your Ride skill ranks to your Dexterity ability check when piloting an airframe. Moreover, you do not need to make an ability check when performing easy or difficult maneuvers in light or moderate winds.

NEW EQUIPMENT: AIRFRAME

Cost: 125 gp
Weight: 60 lb.

An airframe is a pair of 20-foot wings built from bamboo tubes and light sheets of extraordinarily durable hide. An airframe allows a person to fly (or glide, to be precise) but only if he leaps from a suitably high surface (70 feet, minimum). There are certainly easier means to fly (such as with spells or magical devices), and the sport definitely isn't for the faint of heart. Only a true daredevil would use an airframe.

Speed: Fly 50 feet (poor). A character piloting an airframe uses its speed rather than his own. A strong tailwind adds +5 feet to an airframe's flying speed, while a severe tailwind adds +10 feet. A strong headwind reduces the

speed by -5 feet, and a severe headwind reduces it by -10 feet.

Maximum Load: 240 lbs. This is the upper limit of weight the device may bear without being adversely affected. For every 10 pounds over this, the character receives a -5 penalty to his Dexterity check when piloting the airframe, up to a maximum of -20. Once the weight load reaches 340 lbs., it becomes impossible to fly. Attempting to do so results in an immediate, unrecoverable plummet.

Hit Points/Hardness: 15/3. If the airframe receives damage equal to half of its total hit points it no longer functions. It falls into an unrecoverable plummet if airborne and deals falling damage to the pilot and any passengers.

NEW RULES: PILOTING AN AIRFRAME

A character must have a good spatial sense and even better hand-eye-coordination in order to keep an airframe aloft. Piloting this kind of device relies on Dexterity ability checks for resolving piloting maneuvers.

There are three general kinds of piloting maneuvers: easy, difficult, and challenging. Wind effects and weather conditions always have an effect on maneuvers, usually by increasing the DC for the ability check. (The light, strong, moderate, severe, windstorm, hurricane, and tornado wind effects are described in the standard SRD rules.)

As a rule of thumb, a Dexterity check is not necessary if a character performs an easy maneuver in light wind conditions, though performing a difficult or challenging maneuver does require it. A Dexterity check must also be made if the character performs an easy, difficult, or challenging maneuver in a moderate or stronger wind conditions. Flying an airframe in hurricane or tornado conditions is impossible.

If a character loses control of an airframe, he plummets toward the ground. If he hits the ground, he takes falling damage. An unrecoverable plummet is one in which the character has no chance of regaining control over the airframe. The average wind-diver almost always has a backup *fly* spell prepared in case of such an accident, which happens more often than the proud flyers like to admit.

Piloting an airframe is a full-round action. If the character takes other actions during a round, including combat, he may not perform any piloting maneuvers other than gliding.

Pilot Airframe Maneuvers

Easy Maneuvers	DC*
Descend	10
Glide	10
Take-off	10
Turn	10

Difficult Maneuvers	DC*
Accelerate to maximum speed	11
Ascend	11
Catch tailwind	12
Decelerate to minimum speed	13
Land	14
Maximum turn	14

Challenging Maneuvers	DC*
Climb against headwind	25
Climb with tailwind	15
Controlled downward spin	17
Inverted loop-de-loop	40
Loop-de-loop	30
Recover from plummet	20

Pilot Airframe Conditions Modifiers

Special Conditions**	DC
Hurricane	Impossible***
Light wind	+0
Moderate wind	+4
Rain, light	+2
Rain, moderate	+4
Rain, strong	+6
Rain, severe	+8
Rain, thunderstorm	+10
Severe wind	+8
Strong wind	+6
Tornado	Impossible***
Windstorm	+10

* Armor penalties apply to all Dexterity skill checks when piloting an airframe.

** Special Condition modifiers are cumulative.

*** Attempting to pilot an airframe under these conditions results in an immediate, unrecoverable plummet.



A wind-diver who uses the wind farm to accelerate must fly to within 70 feet of its outer edge and make a Dexterity check (DC 40).

If successful, he gains a +40 feet speed bonus for 10 rounds. After 10 rounds, he decelerates back to his original speed at a rate of -10 feet per round.

If he fails, he and the airframe are affected as per the tornado wind effect and plummet. Additionally, the airframe takes 4d6 points of damage.

Occasionally, an unfortunate wind-diver hits a dead spot of air and falls to his death. Some say those who die in this manner must have offended the Four Winds. Others believe that to die like this is an honor — that the winds have claimed the victim because he was beloved more than any other.

THE WATERFALL

The stream from the lake terminates at the island's edge in a spectacular waterfall. Thick, billowing clouds of water vapor cling to it, and the air currents generated in the falling water's wake are thunderous and cold. At 600 feet, the waterfall turns into a fine mist and disperses.

Wind-divers love flying in and out of the vapor clouds, spiraling around the waterfall and then catching one the numerous updrafts. The challenge on the way back up is to pierce the waterfall without tearing one's airframe to pieces and falling to a nasty death.



Once per day, drinking water from the lake, stream, or waterfall gives the imbibor the See Air Currents supernatural ability that allows her to see all air currents in the region as faintly pastel-colored light streams. This lasts for one hour per Wisdom point possessed and gives her a +10 sacred bonus to all piloting or flying checks for the duration.

AIRSHIP DOCK HOUSE

Not every adherent has the skill and fortitude to make it up to the Aerie on her own. In fact, the vast majority of them don't: they usually arrive by enchanted (or even the odd mechanical) airship. Airships are not commonplace; itinerant gadgeteers and wizards built those few that do exist primarily out of curiosity and a love for flying. Any airships commissioned specifically by the Aerie have the wind gods looking out for them, so they don't have much trouble with severe weather or rogue air streams. Unfortunately, they make attractive targets for certain mischievous sky dwellers. Dragons, in particular, enjoy blasting them out of the sky, as they're easily offended by the airships' boxy, lumbering shapes and the noisy, mechanical clamoring emanating from their engines.

The airship docks are built from huge redwood platforms that extend out from the island's edge. Welcoming parties often greet disembarking guests on the docks, orienting them and striving to make their first impression of the Aerie a good one before they meet Gabriel.

A well-worn stone path leads from the docks to the dock house, which is the island's most recent addition, built from marble and granite. Once a grand reception hall, priests originally used it to receive important dignitaries such as visiting hierophants, kings, and queens. Today, it is nothing more than a fancy storehouse and machine shop, packed with spare parts and mysterious-looking equipment used to carry out airship repairs.

Note: Rules for airships are beyond the scope of this book, but are available in sourcebooks such as *Broadsides* from Living Imagination, Inc.

GABRIEL'S STATUE

This is the only real piece of artwork anywhere on the island. Gabriel believes creating art is counterproductive to serving the wind



faith. But, this one statue — quite an exceptional piece, really — was a gift from an old, dear friend and ally who passed away many years ago. It towers over the Hall of Benedictions from atop a magic pedestal on the crest of the hill. Standing 60 feet high, it depicts a handsome, singularly angelic man with arms spread wide to encompass creation. Feathery wings emerge from his back, and he wears a commoner's robe and sandals. Inscribed on the pedestal is the following dedication: *Gabriel Ventosus, Blessed Savior. May the Four Holy Winds Carry Him to Even More Exalted Heights.*

A stream of ice-cold water flows from the statue's pedestal. This is the source of the island's freshwater supply.

NESTING STABLES

Pegasi, hippogriffs, and griffons build their nests in this wooden structure, built up against the cliff face. The animals use the grassy plain outside for grazing or toying with prey brought up from the mountains below. Every so often, a magic-wielding pilgrim summons more intelligent and challenging prey for the hippogriffs and griffons, but because this disturbs the pegasi Gabriel strongly discourages it.

The pegasus herd consists of 20 individuals. The two hippogriff flights have a total of 11 members, and the griffon pride, which nests between the other two, has 6 members. Neither

the hippogriffs nor the griffons especially like the pegasi, not because they view the herd as potential food — they don't, since they know pegasus meat is far too stringy to be enjoyable — but because they find the horses' insipid "holier-than-thou" attitudes annoying, to say the least. Still, they know enough to submit to the island's truce lest they earn Gabriel's ire.

Despite being cleaned every day, the stables reek of animal sweat, urine, dung, and leftover food. Fortunately, the winds circulating around it and the grassy plain keep the stench localized, preventing it from spreading to the rest of the island.

GABRIEL'S TOWER

On the island's port side is a two-story tower that floats on a column of air generated by an enormous enchanted stone hand. This is Gabriel's residence. Like the other buildings, the tower is built from marble. The stone hand was once flesh and blood. In his younger days, Gabriel claimed it from a giant, petrified sorceress — an odd memento from their ten-day battle. The enchanted column of air generated by it not only holds the tower aloft but also carries anyone who steps into it up to the house. A hole cut into the floor allows entrance to the tower's sitting room. A second hole in the sitting room's ceiling opens into the tower's second floor. Once he enters either the sitting room or the second-floor terrace by means of the air column, a visitor can easily "jump" out of it.

Ⓢ MINOR ARTIFACT: ROCK OF VENTOSUS

This pedestal is 5 feet high and 20 feet in diameter. It produces an unending stream of fresh water capable of supplying a small lake or river in the same way a natural spring does. Water emerges from a 1-foot-wide opening in the pedestal's base. Casting *dispel magic* on it has no effect, but casting *greater dispelling* disables it for 1 hour per level of the spellcaster.

Inserting a *staff of the magi* into a tiny hole in the center of the pedestal's top surface summons a torrential downpour as per the spell *storm of vengeance* cast by a 20th-level cleric. Each time a character uses the pedestal in this manner 1 magic charge is drained from the staff.

Caster Level: 20th; *Weight:* 20 tons

SACRED GROUND



A character stepping into the column of air from the ground must make a Dexterity check (DC 15) or miss the hole on her way up. If she fails, she smashes into the tower's underside, receiving 1d4 points of subdual damage, a lump on the head and, undoubtedly, a bruised ego.

A Dexterity check is not necessary when stepping into the air column from inside the tower, as the column has the same width as the door-holes.

The sitting room is spacious and comfortable, with expensive tapestries hanging from the walls and a plush rug (with an obvious hole in the center) draped across the floor. A rosewood couch with tidy, embroidered silk cushions occupies one wall. Bobbing about the room and encased in a bubble of enchanted wind is a colorful fireball that provides both warmth and light. Wood tubes and shelves honeycomb the ceiling, filled with scrolls. Some of the larger ones even have books. Magic keeps the gravity-defying bookcase from spilling its contents into the room, and a pair of ornately decorated glass doors seals it. Opposite the couch are two matching chairs and a rosewood table. All of

this elegant furniture is reserved for guests, as Gabriel prefers to sit on the air column itself.



The bookcase contains the following items:

- Arcane scrolls containing 1d6 1st-level spells, 1d6 2nd-level spells, and 1d3 3rd-level spells.
- Divine scrolls containing 1d10 1st-level spells, 1d8 2nd-level spells, 1d6 3rd-level spells, 1d4 4th-level spells, 1d3 5th-level spells, and one 6th-level spell.
- 102 religious tracts that, as a collection, provide a +20 circumstance bonus to Knowledge (religion) checks made while referring to them.
- 27 tomes on botany and zoological that, as a collection, provide a +5 circumstance bonus to Knowledge (nature) checks.
- 68 books on ancient history that, as a collection, provide a +10 circumstance bonus to Knowledge (history) checks.

MINOR ARTIFACT: THE WRACKBARROW PALM

Desara of the Wrackbarrows was an undead cloud giant sorceress who threatened many lands with her mad magic. A powerful wind priest finally put her down, petrifying her when he turned one of her own spells against her. Afterwards, he dismembered her body and then scattered the fragments across the land with the hope that she would never return. He kept her petrified left hand, however. Because she had been transformed in mid-spell, her hand retained some of the wind magic that had begun to coalesce there when she was transformed.

The hand is approximately 15 feet in diameter. A powerful wind current emanates from

its upturned palm and climbs 20 feet high. Anything placed in the current floats weightlessly upward, rising at a rate of 10 feet per round. Characters inside the wind stream must move to the column's perimeter and jump to exit. The enchantment is permanent and seems to know no weight limits. Dispelling magic has no effect on it.

Some say that the hand also possesses foul necromantic powers that can summon angels of entropy. Whether this is true or not remains to be discovered.

Caster Level: 20th; *Weight:* 8 tons

SACRED GROUND

- 25 books on magic and spellcraft that, when consulted as a collection during magic item creation, reduce cost of said creation by 1/4.

The bonuses conferred by these books apply only when an entire collection is used to conduct research.

The bookcase is locked (DC 40) and protected against thieves by a *greater glyph of warding* cast on its glass doors by a 20th-level cleric. The glyph stores a *summon monster VI* spell, which calls five Medium-size air elementals to the room when triggered. One elemental immediately flees to warn either Gabriel or the hierophants, while the other four attempt to deal with the thief.

Starboard lies the doorway to Gabriel's bedroom. Gauze curtains dangling from the ceiling enshroud the bed, and shelves lining the walls contain clothes and personal effects. It is not a large room for someone of Gabriel's rank, but it suffices well enough for him. Material

possessions have little value to an enlightened man (or so Gabriel preaches).

The second floor is a terrace. It has no walls, but it does have a dome-like roof held up by four marble pillars. Gabriel usually takes breakfast and dinner here. A table and four chairs sit to the right of the entry hole. Three urns filled with fresh water rest nearby. Regardless of the season or time of day, the wind on the terrace always feels pleasant and refreshing.

ROOKERIES

Numerous stone ledges stick out from ground-side's slopes, called "rookeries" because rocs and harpies have taken them over. The average ledge is about 60 feet long and 20 feet wide. Nests cover every available flat surface, and some ledges actually have shallow caves dug into the island. Harpies especially prize caves as they provide much-sought-after privacy. Dung coats everything on the harpy ledges, while the roc ledges tend to be fairly tidy. At the

WONDROUS ITEM: LIGHTWASP

This is a shard of elemental flame encased in a 2-foot sphere of wind. It provides a maximum amount of light equivalent to a torch and warmth on par with a small cook fire. Both the light strength and heat intensity can be regulated using the proper command words, or extinguished altogether. A *lightwasp* can hover up to a maximum of 20 feet off the ground; again, its position can

be changed with the appropriate command words. Flammable material that makes contact the flames ignites normally.

Caster Level: 3rd; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *produce flame*, *levitate*; *Market Price:* 700 gp; *Weight:* —

WONDROUS ITEM: KISTRA'S PREPOSTEROUS BOOKCASE

An academic wizard named Kistra Tibbit invented this enchanted bookcase, which defies the laws of gravity and allows its owner to place it against any relatively flat surface regardless of spatial orientation. Kistra, an avid reader with more books than she knew what to do with, used to keep them stacked on every wall in her house, and eventually on the ceilings where they would be out of the way of other more important volumes. Books placed

inside the bookcase always rest as if they are on a level surface. While the bookcase will easily cling to an inverted surface like a ceiling, getting it up there can be difficult.

Caster Level: 3rd; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *spider climb*; *Market Price:* 5,400 gp; *Weight:* 85 lbs.

SACRED GROUND

moment, 8 rocs and 21 harpies live on the rookery ledges.

Intruders climbing around an inhabited rookery ledge can expect a nasty reception from the residents. During the roc mating season, the rookeries are nigh unapproachable, as the air around them is thick with the swarming, shrieking creatures. Harpies, on the other hand, seek out private grottoes and caves for their mating rituals, desiring above all else privacy and even intimacy.

Periodically, thieves and troublemakers from sunside or the hanging gardens climb down to the ledges to steal roc eggs and harpy loot.

THE HANGING GARDENS

Two spheres of plant life hang from the Aerie's underside. They entwine a pair of 200-foot-long, 20-foot-thick redwood posts, and enchanted ropes anchored to groundside bear their incredible weight. Attached to the bottoms of the posts are heavy granite blocks, which are designed to keep them from swinging in the currents. An old three-legged green dragon named Aettryne eax Frumscaeft rules the larger garden, mostly spending his time sleeping ... since he lost a hind leg to an adventurer, he's had little interest in confrontations with glory-seekers. As long as its residents don't pester him or touch his meager treasure horde, he leaves them alone. When he does stir, it is usually to feed. Aettryne and Gabriel maintain an uneasy truce with one another. Each is convinced that he is the garden's rightful master, but neither is interested in testing the other's patience over the matter.



A group of halfling refugees who fled their home city in the elemental plane of air live in the smaller garden, which they call "The Thorpe." Their leader is a 15th-level ranger named Sissy Aoife who gets along famously with Gabriel, often dining with him in his tower. (In truth, though, he detests her and

is interested only in the information she possesses about her home plane.)

No one knows how many individual trees make up the bulk of the gardens. Huge, serpentine branches weave through each one in a dizzying, gravity-defying maze that always loops back on itself, with the thousands of smaller branches sprouting from them only contributing to the confusion. Even though there is little nourishing soil in the gardens proper, the magic that keeps the island floating somehow helps to sustain it.



Climb checks inside the hanging gardens are not necessary because there is so much foliage about that a person can move around relatively easily. However, if a character does anything that could compromise his stability, he must make either a Climb or Balance check (DC 10 to 15, at the GM's discretion).

THE WIND FARM

The reason for the island's continued existence at its current improbable height can be found here, with the wind farm. Hanging from the Aerie at the end of 200 feet of enchanted rope is a colossal post made from unknown material. A specially engineered joint at the top of the rope allows it to spin independent of the island. Attached to the post are hundreds of long-bladed fans, all spinning madly. Together, they create a powerful conduit that draws magical winds out from the breach at the farm's heart, which opens on the elemental realm of air. The resulting cyclone fuels the protective barrier around the island and ultimately holds it aloft.

From a distance, the wind farm looks like a monstrous tornado, spinning faster than the eye can follow. The cyclone is 100 feet at its widest, gradually tapering to 20 feet at either end. At its lowest end it transforms into a wildly dancing dervish of debris and air. The winds lose their deadly strength before reaching the island or the two hanging gardens, becoming a part of the outer barrier or joining the ubiqui-

SACRED GROUND



tous air currents permeating the region. Wind-divers sometimes try to fly as close to the farm as possible without getting caught in its insane currents and battered to death.



The wind farm is a dangerous place, to say the least. Few mortal creatures can enter it and hope to come out again unscathed, if at all. Keep the following in mind:

- Wind effects in the farm apply to all non-elemental creatures.
- Tornado-force winds move at 175 to 300 mph, and make ranged attacks and

Listen checks impossible. Characters within 70 feet of the wind farm's funnel who fail a Fortitude save (DC 30) are sucked toward the center of the wind farm. Flying creatures are treated as one size class smaller than their actual size when faced with wind effects. This means that on a failed Fortitude save, flying creatures of Huge size and smaller are sucked toward the funnel $2d6 \times 10$ feet and sustain $2d6$ points of subdual damage due to buffeting. Gargantuan creatures are sucked toward the funnel $1d6 \times 10$ feet, and Colossal creatures are sucked toward the funnel $1d6 \times 5$ feet. Those who come in contact with the actual funnel are picked up and whirled around for $1d10$ rounds, taking $6d6$ points of damage per round, before being violently expelled; falling damage may apply if the character isn't able to recover her flying ability.

- Casting spells within 70 feet of the funnel while flying generally requires Concentration checks with a DC of at least $20 +$ the spell level (equivalent to that required by an *earthquake* spell); damage taken during the casting of the spell can be added to this DC.
- Weather and wind-based magic (such as *control weather* and *wind wall*) cast successfully inside the wind farm's air-space have all their numeric variables doubled (duration, range, area of effect, damage, and so on).

The farm's sole inhabitants are air elementals. With easy passage between the mortal world and their home plane, the elementals come and go as they please. They delight in cavorting in the farm's insanely powerful cyclone, and feeding on the winds of this world makes them heady. An elemental sorcerer named Melodious Whisper rules them, enforcing his will through awesome might, treachery, and terror.

Gabriel doesn't come down here if he can help it because he and Melodious Whisper vehemently hate one another. The wind lord is the oldest creature residing in the Aerie, and doesn't appreciate intrusions by outsiders in the least. Gabriel's presumption of sovereignty over the Aerie, which he believes is rightfully his, offends the elemental. It is Melodious Whisper's magic, after all, that keeps it suspended in the air (or so he believes), making Gabriel nothing better than a would-be usurper. Gabriel, on the other hand, regards the elemental with jealousy (though he will never admit it), afraid that the Four Winds give the tyrant adoration and attention that should be reserved for him. Most of all, Gabriel hates the elemental lord because he is the epitome of all the cleric strives to be, and yet he utterly abuses this gift.

Rumors point to Melodious Whisper as the dragon Hwiddersung Abudisse's murderer. How he managed it, if he is truly guilty, is still hotly debated over by over-zealous pilgrims and mystagogues bent on righting the injustice of the sky dragon's death.

SCENES

Gabriel's Aerie is a complicated place with many opportunities for adventure. The three separate factions—Gabriel and his priests, Aris Skyfeather and her warriors, and Melodious Whisper—are enough to keep any party of stalwart adventurers occupied for a long time.

The following are ideas for using Gabriel's Aerie as a source of adventure.

WANING WINDS

The wind barrier that protects the island has always offended Melodious Whisper's sensibilities. For many centuries he's sought a way to safely nullify it without closing the planar breach in the process, and has finally acquired

the magical artifact necessary to do this. At first nothing noticeable happens, but when gathering storm clouds fail to be deflected, chaos breaks loose. Torrential rains threaten to erode the island down to the nothing. Trees snap in half as gale-force winds lay siege to them. Lightning strikes everything in sight.

Gabriel and his priests manage to keep the worst of the storm's effects at bay, but it becomes increasingly difficult as the storm swells. He rightly suspects Melodious Whisper is the culprit behind the disaster. Unfortunately, neither he nor his priests can afford to go to the wind farm to confront the elemental lord. A messenger asks the adventurers to talk to Melodious Whisper on Gabriel's behalf. The artifact can be found in the elemental lord's castle, which floats on the other side of the breach. The wind barrier regenerates as soon as the artifact is destroyed.

THE MAINLANDER KING

The ruler of the land over which the Aerie floats claims the island belongs to him. His representative, an officious weasel of a man named Calico Pale, informs Gabriel that he can either vacate the island immediately (taking his "pets" with him), or agree to become a vassal of the king. To back up his authority, he has a fleet of 30 airships carrying 600 elite soldiers and a surly archwizard who'd like nothing better than to blast the island out of the sky because, in his estimation, floating islands give wizards a bad name. Knowing the island couldn't possibly withstand such an assault, Gabriel agrees.

Meanwhile, on the surface below, the adventurers are going about their lives as usual when an Aerie hierophant approaches them. Their reputation is widespread, she tells them, their fame is great, their martial and intellectual prowess is unparalleled. Her flattery is not without purpose, for a problem plagues her people, one neither she nor her leader can solve without substantial assistance. She tells them about the island, the purpose it serves, and of Gabriel's dilemma. Would they be able to help



MELODIOUS WHISPER

9th-level Elder Air Elemental Wizard

CR 20; SZ H (elemental, air); 24d8+96 + 9d4+36; 263 hp; Init +15 (+11 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd fly 100 ft. (perfect); AC 27 (-2 size, +11 Dex, +8 natural); Atk melee +31/+26/+21/+16 (2d8+9, slam); Face 10 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 15 ft.; SA Air Mastery, Spells, Whirlwind; SQ Damage Reduction 15/+3, Summon Familiar; AL N; SV Fort +15, Ref +28, Will +14; Str 22, Dex 33, Con 18, Int 21, Wis 11, Cha 16

Skills: Alchemy +14, Craft (ring making) +16, Concentration +16, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Listen +26, Scry +16, Spellcraft +12, Spot +26

Feats: Craft Ring, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Heighten Spell, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (spellcraft)

Languages: Common, Auran, Sylvan

Air Mastery (Ex): Airborne creatures suffer a -1 penalty to attack and damage rolls going up against Melodious Whisper.

Elemental: Melodious Whisper is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning, and he is not subject to critical hits.

Familiar: Melodious Whisper does not currently have a familiar, as the wind farm's harsh environment is not conducive to their survival.

Whirlwind (Su): Melodious Whisper can transform himself into a whirlwind once every 10 minutes and remain in that form for up to 16 rounds. In this form, he may move through the air or along a surface 100 feet per round. The whirlwind is 5 feet wide at the base and 30 feet wide at the top. Melodious Whisper can control the exact height of this form up to 50 feet.

Creatures one or more sizes smaller than the whirlwind might take damage when caught in it and may be lifted into the air. A targeted creature must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 27) when it comes into contact with the whirlwind or take 2d8 damage. The creature must also succeed at a second Reflex save (DC 27) or be picked up bodily and held suspended in the powerful winds, automatically taking 2d8 damage each round. A creature that can fly is allowed a Reflex (DC 27) save each round to escape the whirlwind. The creature still takes damage but can leave if the save is successful.

If Melodious Whisper touches the ground in whirlwind form, he creates a swirling cloud of debris. This cloud is centered on him and has a diameter equal to half the whirlwind's height. The cloud obscures all vision, including Darkvision, beyond 5 feet. Creatures 5 feet away have one-half concealment, while those farther away have total concealment. Those caught in the cloud must succeed at a Concentration check to cast a spell (DC 27).

Spells: (6/7/7/4) Melodious Whisper knows the following spells. The DC to resist his spells is 13 + the spell level.

- 0 Level — *arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, light, mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic*
- 1st Level — *animate rope, change self, charm person, color spray, floating disk*
- 2nd Level — *blur, hypnotic pattern, invisibility, whispering wind*
- 3rd Level — *stinking cloud, hold person, summon monster III*
- 4th Level — *fear, dimension door*

Possessions: *Rod of absorption* (32 spell levels), *ring of blinking*, *eversmoking bottle*, scroll of *ice storm* (x4), scroll of *fireball* (x2), scroll of *detect thoughts*, scroll of *burning hands*, *potion of cure serious wounds* (x2), *potion of non-detection*.

her “re-negotiate” with the mainlander king? She doesn’t care how they persuade him to change his mind. The reward is moderate, but if they are successful she promises them the wind deities’ favor, something that is normally impossible to buy with coin or magic, and worth more than they can imagine.

ALTERNATE VERSIONS

Instead of floating high above a mountain chain, you could set the island hovering in the heart of a deep valley. The temple is dedicated to a god who has been forgotten by the world, exiled by his divine cohorts for a crime he didn’t commit. Gabriel Ventosus, his lone mortal servant, seeks the key to his lord’s freedom. For decades he has scoured the world, but to no avail. That is, until recently, when he learned that it might not be hidden in the mortal realm but in the Void. In this version of the Aerie, Aris Skyfeather serves the Void. It commands her, willing her to topple the Aerie by whatever means she can. If Gabriel succeeds in rescuing the key to his master’s freedom, then the Void creatures’ doom is surely sealed, for the “forgotten” god won’t rest until he slays their master, the enigmatic entity who helped frame him in the first place.

Another option is to set the island adrift on the winds like some Victorian explorer’s garishly painted air balloon. Populate it with adherents from the multitude of lands through which it has moved over the years. Once a decade it passes over the city the adventurers call home,

an event that’s signaled by every trader within a two-hundred-mile radius trekking to the island’s mooring point in order to exchange goods and information. The island is like a moving embassy, filled with strange peoples, customs, and cultures.

If the adventurers are experienced planar travelers, have the island serve as an important gateway connecting this world to the multiverse at large. As written, the breach in the wind farm beneath the island opens directly on the elemental realm of air, but you could just as easily have it open on any other plane. Once each hour the breach, slowly rotated by the winds encircling it, opens on a different plane.

Finally, think about what would happen if the island had crashed to the ground centuries ago and all that remains are its shattered ruins. Low-level characters happen upon it and, after clearing out the goblin tribe inhabiting its maze-like tunnels and crevices, discover Gabriel Ventosus’ spirit. He begs them to rebuild his once-beautiful Aerie. Though the task will take many years, possibly even decades, it is not an impossible one. Using the ruins as a home base gives the PCs unlimited access to Gabriel, who comes to them late at night so he can teach them what they need to do next or guide them to their next adventure. As they grow in power, fame, and fortune, they bring the temple closer to its restoration. If they survive to see the Aerie ride once more upon the winds, then they become the island’s new leaders, inspiring those who would soar upon the Four Winds.



CHAPTER TWO

SUMMER'S BARROW

AT A
GLANCE

The Church of Summer has a secret: the myths of the death of the Summer God in autumn and his resurrection in spring are true. Each autumn, the Summer God comes to a hidden location and dies, his body lying in a guarded tomb until his spirit returns and re-animates it in spring. The location of the tomb is kept secret from the general populace for the god's safety, but the religion's clergy and the most devout of the god's faithful travel to Summer's Barrow on pilgrimage during the winter months.

Secrecy is a primary concern for the followers of the Summer God. While the god lies dead through the winter, he is vulnerable. During the summer, things are relaxed and informal, but during the winter, security is tight and a militaristic discipline is put in place.

This is the most sacred place of the Summer God, and the center of the mystery that the religion embraces. Not only does the Summer God lie here during the winter, but this is the place where, when necessary, the Sacrifice is sent into the Underworld at mid-winter to find the god and guide him back to the world of the living.



PLACEMENT

Placement of the Barrow can be a little tricky. The cramped quarters of the complex mean that the place cannot be totally self-sufficient, although clerical magic can alleviate this to some degree. It has to be near enough to a population center that supplies are handy, but

must still remain unobtrusive. Large, ancient cities with extensive graveyards dating back centuries or millennia are ideal places for such a structure. As a second choice, place the Barrow near a large, well-established town, where it is ignored as part of the landscape. More remote locations create problems with supplies and logistics.

NEW DEITY: THE SUMMER GOD

Alignment: Neutral Good

Domains: Good, Summer, and Sun

Typical Worshipers: Farmers, travelers, and others who depend on the summer for their livelihoods. In an agrarian society, that means almost everyone.

The Summer God is the representation of warmth and fertility brought about by the summer season, and the manifestation of death and rebirth. His own death and rebirth each year both mirrors and produces the

changing of the seasons, the growth of crops, and the beginning of new life.

The Summer God is normally represented as a tall man with a shining face robed in green. His hair and beard are made of stalks of grain, and he is crowned with vines and flowers. The god's symbol is a stalk of corn centered on a solar disk, or a doll woven from corn and wheat stalks, crowned with laurel or grape leaves. His favored weapon is the shortspear.

SUMMER DOMAIN

Granted Power: Turn or Destroy creatures with the Cold subtype as a good cleric Turns Undead. Rebuke or Command creatures with the Fire subtype as an evil cleric Rebukes Undead. Use these abilities a total number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.



Summer Domain Spells

- 1 Endure Elements.** Ignores 5 damage/round from one energy type.
- 2 Resist Elements.** Ignores 12 damage/round from one energy type.
- 3 Protection from Elements.** Absorb 12 damage/level from one kind of energy.
- 4 Plant Growth.** Grows vegetation, improves crops.
- 5 Control Winds.** Change wind direction and speed.
- 6 Heroes' Feast.** Food for one creature/level cures and *blesses*.
- 7 Control Weather.** Changes weather in local area.
- 8 Holy Aura.** +4 AC, +4 resistance, and SR 25 against evil spells.
- 9 True Resurrection.** As *resurrection*, plus remains aren't needed.

CHARACTERS

During the summer, the Barrow is nearly deserted, with only the prelate, the prospective Sacrifice, and a few junior priests in attendance. With the arrival of the Summer God in autumn, temple guards arrive to see to the security of the facility. During the winter, important members of the faithful make their pilgrimages to the Barrow, and Sacrifices for future years are evaluated and trained.

PRELATE MALCAR TALANN

Beloved Child of the Summer God

"He will return. He always does. Sometimes, he just needs a little help."

Prelate Malcar Talann is the head of the church of the Summer God and is responsible for overseeing the training of Sacrifices and the security of the god during winter. He lives in the Barrow year round, venturing out rarely. The small group of priests that live in the Barrow with him see to his needs, and to the needs of the Sacrifice, leaving Malcar free to devote his time to the mysteries of his faith and his spiritual duties.

Over a century ago, Malcar acted as Sacrifice for the Summer God, journeying into the Underworld to fetch the dead god back to his body. He completed the final test to free the god from the Underworld in such a manner that he now carries a tiny portion of the Summer God's very essence in his own soul, which has granted him extended life and great supernatural power.

Malcar has devoted his life to the Church of Summer, rising through the ranks of the clergy to reach his current status six decades ago. He enjoys the confidence of the Summer God, and the respect of his clergy, and is proud and content with how his life has turned out. There are

some in the church who grumble about Malcar's extended tenure as prelate but, as he has the support of the Summer God, his position is secure.

Of course, it's not normal for a human to live as long as Malcar has. He has outlived his parents, siblings, and most of his nieces and nephews. All the priests who trained him, or trained with him, are dead and gone. A large number of the priests who he's trained over the years have passed away, as well, and he sometimes is taken by surprise at meeting a doddering old man who claims to be a young boy that he once instructed in the basics of clerical magic. This has led Malcar to cultivate a distance between himself and his clergy, and has made him lonely.

Malcar is of middle height for a human, with a strong build unbent by his years. His hair and eyes are both a gleaming gold, and his skin is alabaster white, shining softly from within. He dresses every day in the regalia of his office, a powerful collection of magical items that belong to the position of prelate. During the summer, he is relaxed and talkative, willing to take time out of his schedule to meet with pilgrims or supplicants. In winter, the burden of guardianship turns the prelate into a stern taskmaster, devoting every moment to the protection of his god. He rarely meets with visitors at this time, and spends his time drilling the Sacrifice and inspecting the protections in the labyrinth below the Barrow.

THE SACRIFICE

Fanatical Martyr

"How is this supposed to help me on my journey?"

Sim is typical of the Summer God sacrifices. She comes from a poor family of farmers, and felt a calling to the service of the Summer God. She developed a strong faith very young, and soon prevailed upon her parents to present her to the local church for training. There, she was tested by the clerics and found to have a very

PRELATE MALCAR TALANN

15th-Level Half-Celestial/ Half-Human Cleric of the Summer God

CR 16; SZ M (outsider); HD 15d8+75; 158 hp; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft., fly 90 ft. (good); AC 21 (+2 Dex, +6 *celestial armor*, +1 *ring of protection* +1, +1 *amulet of natural armor* +1, +1 natural); Atk melee +17/+12/+7 (1d8+6 and 2d6 holy damage, crit x3, shortspear); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells, Spell-Like Abilities, Turn Undead; SQ Immunities, Low-Light Vision, Poison Resistance, Spontaneous Casting; AL NG; SV Fort +16, Ref +9, Will +20; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 14, Wis 28, Cha 18

Skills: Diplomacy +17, Heal +17, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (astronomy) +14, Knowledge (religion) +19, Spellcraft +12

Feats: Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Focus (Evocation), Spell Penetration, Weapon Focus (shortspear)

Languages: Common, Celestial, Elven

Immunities (Ex): As a half-celestial, Malcar is immune to acid, cold, disease, and electricity.

Outsider: The prelate has Low-Light Vision that lets him see outdoors on a moonlit night as well as he can during the day, and if slain he cannot be *raised* or *resurrected*, although a *wish* or *miracle* spell can restore him to life.

Poison Resistance (Ex): As a half-celestial, the prelate has a +4 racial bonus to Fortitude saves against poison.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): The prelate can use the following spells as if cast by a 15th-level caster. The DC to resist these abilities is 14 + the spell level.

1/day — *aid*, *bleed*, *cure serious wounds*, *detect evil*, *dispel evil*, *hallow*, *holy smite*, *holy word*, *neutralize poison*, *remove disease*, *symbol*. 3/day — *holy aura* and *protection from evil*

Spontaneous Casting (Sp): Malcar can “lose” a prepared spell in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

Turn Undead (Su): The prelate has the ability to Turn Undead seven times each day.

Spells: (6/8+1/7+1/7+1/6+1/6+1/5+1/3+1/2+1)
The prelate casts spells as a 15th-level cleric of the Summer God with access to the Summer and Sun domains. Seven times each day, the Summer domain allows him to Turn creatures with the Cold subtype or Rebuke creatures with the Fire subtype. Once per day, the Sun domain lets him perform a Greater Turning against undead in place of a regular Turning (or Rebuking) attempt. The DC to resist the prelate’s spells is 19 + spell level, or 21 + spell level for Evocation spells. Malcar receives a +2 bonus on rolls to overcome Spell Resistance. The prelate has the following spells already prepared; domain spells are marked with an asterisk.

0 Level — *create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *mending*, *purify food and drink*

1st Level — *bleed*, *bleed water*, *divine favor*, *doom*, *endure elements**, *protection from evil*, *remove fear*, *sanctuary*, *shield of faith*

2nd Level — *augury*, *gentle repose*, *hold person*, *lesser restoration*, *make whole*, *resist elements**, *silence*, *zone of truth*

3rd Level — *continual flame*, *create food and water*, *daylight*, *dispel magic*, *magic circle against evil*, *negative energy protection*, *prayer*, *searing light**

4th Level — *death ward*, *dismissal*, *divination*, *imbue with spell ability*, *neutralize poison*, *plant growth**, *restoration*

5th Level — *atonement*, *break enchantment*, *control winds**, *dispel evil*, *hallow*, *righteous might*, *spell resistance*

6th Level — *banishment*, *fire seeds**, *forbiddance*, *greater dispelling*, *greater glyph of warding*, *word of recall*

7th Level — *control weather**, *greater restoration*, *holy word*, *sunbeam**

8th Level — *holy aura*, *sunburst**, *symbol*

Possessions: *ring of protection* +1, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *gloves of dexterity* +2, *periapt of wisdom* +4, *cloak of resistance* +2, *celestial armor*, +1 *holy shortspear*

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sharp mind, strong body, and unwavering faith: the perfect combination for the Sacrifice. She was given training in weapons and instructed in the legends and secret stories of the church. She spent her winters at the Barrow, learning from the former Sacrifice, until it was his turn to go through the Underworld door and fetch the Summer God back from death. He didn't return when the god did.

Since that time, Sim has been living at the Barrow, learning from the prelate, and preparing her soul for her trip down the dark road into death to bring back her god. Her faith has hardened into fanaticism, and she has purged herself of most human concerns in her determination to serve her god. This single-minded

drive makes her unpopular with the clergy, and the terror of the young prospective Sacrifices who she trains during the winter. She insists that everyone except the prelate call her by her title of Sacrifice, rather than by her name. It has started to worry the prelate, who fears that Sim longs for the chance to die for the Summer God more than she wants to live for him.

Sim is unconcerned with the worries of the clergy. She drives herself to exhaustion in weapons training and devotes the rest of her time to puzzling over the accounts of the few returned Sacrifices. The fact that the accounts differ in important ways worries her and her discussions on the subject with the prelate don't reassure her. Malcar has tried to prepare her for the ordeal, but he knows that the quest is

SACRIFICE SIM LAFTAK

6th-Level Human Fighter/ 3rd-Level Cleric of the Summer God

CR 9; SZ M (humanoid); HD 6d10+12 + 3d8+6; 69 hp; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 20 (+9 *full plate* +1, +1 Dex); Atk melee +13/+8 (1d8+6 and 1d6 fire, crit x3, shortspear); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells, Turn Undead; SQ Spontaneous Casting; AL NG; SV Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +9; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 16

Skills: Climb +7, Concentration +5, Jump +7, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (religion) +14, Listen +5, Ride +10, Spot +6, Swim +0

Feats: Dodge, Endurance, Expertise, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (shortspear), Weapon Specialization (shortspear)

Languages: Auran, Celestial, Common, Ignan, Infernal

Turn Undead (Su): Sim has the ability to Turn Undead six times each day.

Spontaneous Casting (Sp): Sim can "lose" a prepared spell in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

Spells: (4/3+1/2+1) Sim casts spells as a 3rd-level cleric with access to the Summer and Sun domains of the Summer God. Once per day, she may perform a Greater Turning against undead in place of a regular turning attempt. Six times each day, she may attempt to Turn creatures with the Cold subtype or Rebuke creatures with the Fire subtype. The DC against her spells is equal to 12 + spell level. Sim has the following spells already prepared; domain spells are marked with an asterisk.

0 Level — *detect magic, detect poison, guidance, light*

1st Level — *endure elements*, protection from evil, sanctuary*

2nd Level — *augury, endurance, heat metal**

Possessions: +1 *full plate*, +1 *flaming shortspear*, *cloak of resistance* +1

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different for each Sacrifice, and that the powers of the Underworld attack where the Sacrifice is weakest. He fears that Sim's obsession with knowing the "right" way to complete the ritual may be the thing that causes her to fail.

Sim is a tall, broad-shouldered woman, her farm breeding augmented by her martial training. She projects an aura of strength and determination at all times. Her hair is a mousy brown, tied back in a simple ponytail, and her eyes are a startling green. Her face is plain, though she gives the impression of a handsome woman. This is due to her strength of her personality, and the animation of her features, rather than any inherent beauty. When practicing with her weapons, she wears full armor to remain accustomed to the weight, but she dresses in simple priestly robes when not training. Her weapons and armor have been provided by wealthy supporters of the church to aid her in her task.

BARROW GUARDS

Keepers of the Secret

"You're not supposed to be here."

The guards of Summer's Barrow are all faithful members of the congregation, earning their living by keeping the church facilities safe. They are devoted to the cause, even if they're not the

most pious people in the world; crude jokes and gambling are common in the barracks, and they occasionally sneak away to a nearby tavern to get drunk. Still, they are loyal to the church both as an employer and as their divine patron.

During the summer months, there are only two guards at the Barrow, to help out the Sacrifice and prelate by running errands, sparring, and escorting the priests on their rounds. Discipline is non-existent, aside from the respect and deference that the guards grant the prelate and the Sacrifice. It's not unknown for the prelate to join the guards in the evenings for a drink and a game of dice, although the Sacrifice never does.

In winter, two dozen guards from various other temples spend the season in the Barrow, standing guard over their dead god. Discipline is tight, and duty shifts are strict. Nothing is out of place, as the guards perform the most important service they can for their church.

The guards all know the upper Barrow intimately, and are able to navigate its confusing narrow corridors unerringly and at speed. They drill in taking different routes, so as to be able to come upon intruders from various directions, making good use of the tunnel network to surround and flank invaders. The narrow, curving corridors are perfect for their shortspears, while making large slashing weapons and missile weapons far more difficult to use.

Ⓢ TYPICAL BARROW GUARD

4th-Level Human Fighter

CR 4; SZ M (humanoid); HD 4d10+8; 36 hp; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (+5 masterwork breastplate, +1 Dex); Atk melee +9 (1d8+6, crit x3, shortspear); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL NG; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Skills: Listen +6, Move Silently +1, Ride +8, Spot +4

Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Expertise, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (shortspear), Weapon Specialization (shortspear)

Languages: Common

Possessions: masterwork breastplate, masterwork shortspear, potion of *cure moderate wounds*, potion of *endurance*.

BARROW PRIESTS

Sacred Attendants

“Of course I will lead you in prayer. Please, just come into the chapel with me.”

The clergy of the Summer God all have to spend at least one winter at the Barrow under the supervision and instruction of the prelate to achieve high office in the church. It's not a popular duty, but everyone understands the need for it. The current prelate is the most vocal advocate for this system, claiming that time spent guarding the god and interacting with the Sacrifice is fundamental to understanding the mysteries of the faith.

During the winter, there are twenty priests in residence, helping to man the defenses and see to the needs of the pilgrims. With the opening the Underworld door at midwinter, the possibility of undead sneaking into the Barrow is a real threat, and the priests must stand ready to defend their god alongside the guards. Discipline among the priests is as tight as among the guards, and they work directly with the prelate to train and to bolster the defensive magics of the Barrow.

In summer, there are only two priests in residence, helping the prelate and ministering to the guards. They help keep the stock of scrolls and tend to the various chapels. Sometimes they provide clerical instruction to the

⊗ TYPICAL BARROW PRIEST

7th-Level Human Cleric of the Summer God

CR 7; SZ M (humanoid); HD 7d8+14; 49 hp; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+5 *chain shirt* +1, -1 Dex); Atk melee +7 (1d8+1, crit x3, shortspear); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells, Turn Undead; SQ Spontaneous Casting; AL NG; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +8; Str 13, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 12

Skills: Diplomacy +6, Heal +8, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (religion) +10

Feats: Extra Turning, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (shortspear)

Languages: Common

Turn Undead (Su): These priests have the ability to Turn Undead four times each day.

Spontaneous Casting (Sp): Clerics can “lose” a prepared spell in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

Spells: (6/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1) The priests of the Barrow casts spells as 7th-level clerics with access to the Summer and Sun domains

of the Summer God. Once per day, they may perform a Greater Turning against undead in place of a regular Turning attempt. Four times each day, they may attempt to Turn creatures with the Cold subtype or Rebuke creatures with the Fire subtype. The DC against their spells is equal to 13 + spell level. The typical priest has the following spells already prepared; domain spells are marked with an asterisk.

0 Level — *create water, detect magic, guidance, light, mending, purify food and drink*

1st Level — *bane, bless, detect evil, endure elements*, protection from evil, sanctuary*

2nd Level — *bull's strength, endurance, heat metal*, hold person, silence*

3rd Level — *create food and water, dispel magic, magic circle against evil, searing light**

4th Level — *divine power, fire shield**

Possessions: +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *shortspear*, *cloak of resistance* +1, *potion of spider climb*.



Sacrifice, but Sim prefers to learn from the prelate, and he doesn't seem to mind. Things are relaxed in the summer, and the priests and guards tend to mingle freely, keeping each other amused. Most evenings see the guards and the priests gathered in the dining hall, drinking, gambling, and telling tall tales. Some evenings the prelate joins them, but the Sacrifice keeps to herself.

When on duty, the priests dress in their shining mail shirts and green cloaks, and carry their golden spears. During the winter, they wear their regalia whether on duty or not, just to be ready. They defend the Barrow as actively as the guards if necessary, but tend to rely on their magic rather than close combat.

THE CYCLE OF THE YEAR

All of life in Summer's Barrow revolves around the seasonal cycle. The year begins for the inhabitants on the day that the Summer God rises from the dead. His rising is announced by the grass and flowers springing to life on the mound, and by a joyous shout that reverberates through the complex. This day is spent in celebration, dancing, and picnicking on the fresh grass and wildflowers atop the mound. The next day, the winter residents of the Barrow begin preparations for departure, leaving over the course of the next week or so.

Once the winter occupants have left, the remaining inhabitants settle into their summer routine. Services are held in the open air, celebrating the presence of summer in the world, and rejoicing in the bounty that the Summer God brings. The prelate works on rebuilding the warding magic in the labyrinth, and the Sacrifice relaxes slightly from her training and anxiety.

As autumn nears, the prelate spends more time in the sanctum, watching for the signs in the stars that will reveal the date of the Summer God's impending death. He usually has a day or two notice before the Summer God arrives, and spends those days checking all the preparations with a feverish intensity and sending word for the clergy and guards to gather for their winter vigil.

When the Summer God dies, the plants on the Barrow wither in a matter of moments, and anguished weeping echoes through the corridors of the Barrow as the god comes to rest on his bier in the tomb. The weeping lasts for three days, and the faithful of the Summer God rub ashes on their faces for that time. The prelate and the Sacrifice keep up this ritual for the entire winter, not washing the ashes off until spring, but other members of the church think that keeping the ashes on for more than three days is false piety.

Once the Summer God arrives, the prelate renews the sanctification of the site, and makes

SACRED GROUND

an inspection of the tomb and labyrinth, with the Sacrifice. Neglected defenses are braced up, and magical guards renewed. The turmoil of arrivals lasts for a few weeks, and then things settle into the winter routine.

Winter is occupied by the demands of guarding and defending of the Barrow. Priests work to produce the scrolls that fill the Barrow's vault, and to learn the mysteries of the religion from the prelate. The Sacrifice labors long and hard, training with weapons and trying to wring the last bit of insight from the accounts of previous Sacrifices. The guards train and drill, and work tight shifts patrolling the surrounding area and guarding the entrance.

Throughout the winter, pilgrims make their way to Summer's Barrow to meet with the prelate, to receive guidance or a blessing, and to make offering. Most of these visitors have no idea of the purpose of the Barrow, only knowing that this is where they go to meet with the prelate. They are usually at least moderately wealthy, and rarely stay the night: winter accommodations consist of a pallet in one of the public chapels.

At midwinter, the prelate opens the Underworld door to allow the cold to seep into the Underworld and, hopefully, convince the gods of the Underworld to release the Summer God and restore warmth to the world. This has the side effect of allowing the spirits trapped in the Underworld to find their way back to the tomb. Since the tomb is connected to the labyrinth, and then to the upper Barrow, this means that spirits sometimes manage to get all the way out through the sanctum to threaten the Barrow's living inhabitants. This is the threat that the priests are here to guard against, and they keep close watch for incursions of undead.



Each week after the Underworld door is opened, roll percentile dice:

Roll d%	Result
01 – 75	No undead
76 – 80	1 allip
81 – 85	2 – 5 shadows
86 – 90	2 – 4 spectres
91 – 95	2 – 5 wraiths
96 – 00	2 – 5 ghosts of 5th-level characters

(GMs may choose to add other incorporeal undead to the mix.)

Once undead have entered the tomb, there is a 50% chance each day that they find their way up to the labyrinth. In the labyrinth, there is a 20% chance each day that they find a path up to the upper Barrow, where they begin to prey on the inhabitants.

Every night after the Underworld door is opened, the prelate spends time in the sanctum, watching the stars for the sign that the Summer God is set to return, or that the Rite of Sacrifice needs to be enacted. This is a stressful time for the inhabitants: undead attacks, the tension of waiting to see if the Sacrifice is needed, and the close quarters and plain rations begin to fray nerves.

If the signs point to the Rite of Sacrifice, the Sacrifice is ritually clad in her regalia, given the map of the Underworld, and sent through the Underworld door to lead the Summer God back. Most Sacrifices never return from this journey, but only once was a second Sacrifice needed to retrieve the god.

With the return of the Summer God, the Barrow blossoms once again, and the cycle begins anew.

THE SITE

The Barrow is a large mound, an oval four hundred feet along the long axis and three hundred feet along the short axis. It rises fifty feet and is topped with three tall obelisks at the center. At the base of the obelisks is a crystal disk three feet in diameter, letting light down into Sanctum below. The obelisks create a magical field between them that keeps the crystal clear of snow, frost, and mist.

During the summer, the mound is covered in thick grass and wildflowers. As soon as the Summer God arrives for his winter stay, the growth dies, and the hill remains barren and lifeless all winter. On the day the Summer God rises, new grass immediately grows on the mound, and flowers begin to bloom. The death and growth of the plant life happen preternaturally fast, in a matter of minutes, but this is a natural effect of the presence of the Summer God, and is not magical.

During the winter, squads of guards patrol the area, making sure that no one approaches the Barrow undetected, or tries to dig a way in. They are armed and use lethal force if need be in order to keep intruders away. The prelate has made it clear that he would rather resurrect a dead pilgrim than to face an intruder already within the Barrow.

Digging into the Barrow is a difficult possibility. At the shallowest, there are twenty to thirty feet of hard-packed soil to dig through, and all such places are close to the entryway where excavation is noticed. In more-secluded areas, the depth is between fifty and a hundred feet.

An average person can dig five feet deep in a five-foot diameter every hour during the summer, and half that in the winter when the ground is frozen. This leaves diggers exposed for an extended period, making them easy for the patrols to spot.

Within the Barrow, the corridors are claustrophobic. They are irregular, varying between two and a half and three feet wide, and between six and six and a half feet high. All the surfaces of the corridors are irregular flagstones, and they are not set flush. Behind the stones is close-packed earth. Doors are heavy stone, with well-made locks built into them.



Unless otherwise noted, the doors of the Barrow are all 4-inch-thick stone, balanced near one side, and always open into the rooms. They have AC 5, Hardness 8, and 60 hit points. The Break DC is 28, and the Open Lock DC is 30.

UPPER BARROW

The upper Barrow is the only part of Summer's Barrow that's open to pilgrims and most priests. It is also the only part of the complex that's located completely within the material world. Most people who come to visit the Barrow never have any idea that there's anything more to the place than these cramped corridors and tiny rooms, however.



The upper Barrow is protected by a *hallow* spell tied to the *endure elements (cold)* effect. This allows the winter residents to do without fires for warmth. There is also a *continual flame* torch set at

WONDROUS ITEM: THE SUMMER STONES

The obelisks on the mound are one example of a fairly common item produced by the clergy of the Summer God. Within the area defined by the placement of three obelisks, the effects of inclement weather are kept at

bay — it is always summer between the obelisks.

Caster Level: 3rd; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *resist elements*; *Market Price:* 12,000 gp; *Weight:* 600 lb.

SUMMER'S BARROW

UPPER BARROW

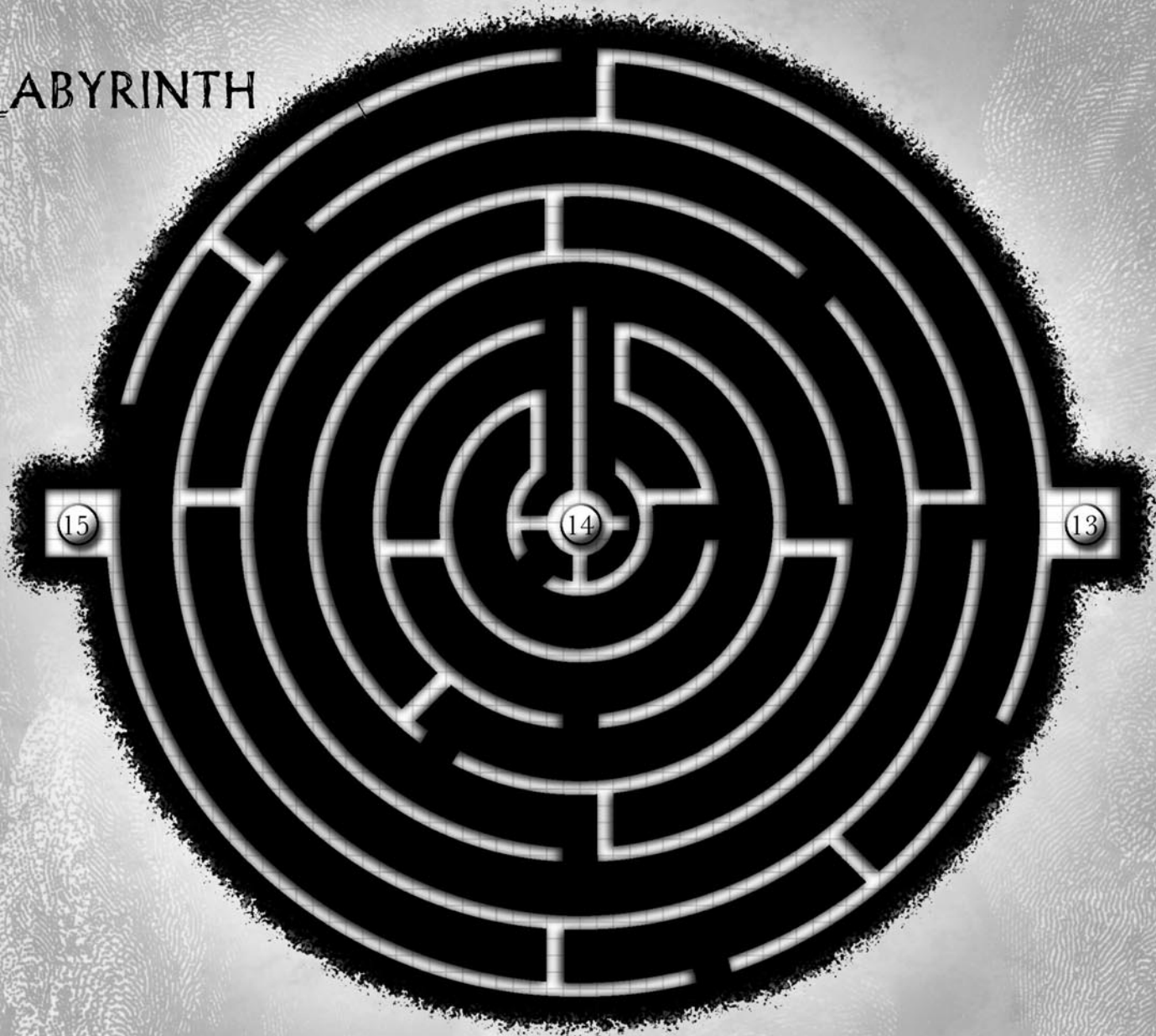


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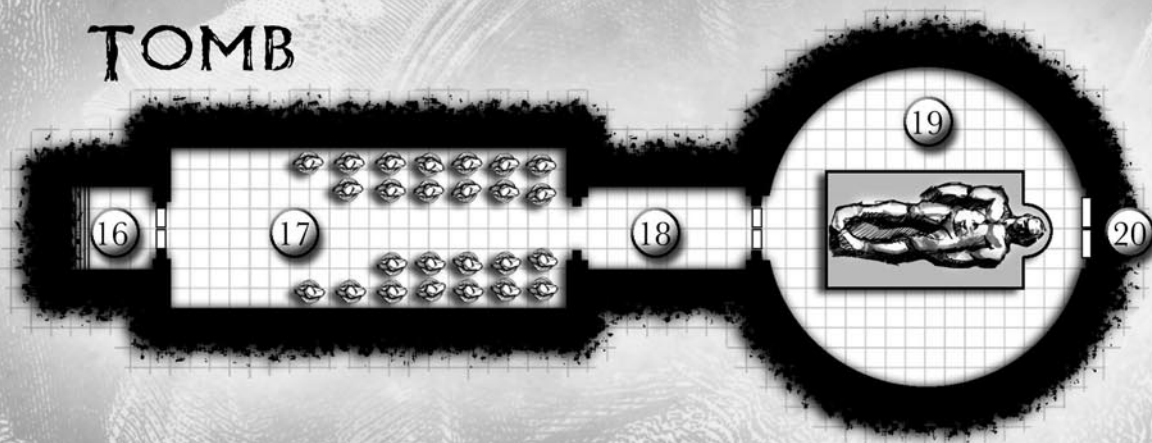
- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Entrance | 8. Vault | 15. Labyrinth End |
| 2. Antechamber | 9. Kitchen | 16. Tomb Antechamber |
| 3. Guard Barracks | 10. Public Chapels | 17. Hall of Sacrifices |
| 4. Prelate's Chambers | 11. Private Chapels | 18. Hall of Memory |
| 5. Sanctum | 12. Dining Hall | 19. Sepulcher |
| 6. Sacrifice's Chamber | 13. Labyrinth Entrance | 20. Underworld Door |
| 7. Priest Barracks | 14. Labyrinth Center | |



LABYRINTH



TOMB



SACRED GROUND

each corridor intersection, and within each room. Ventilation in the Barrow is not good enough to allow many open flames.

Many of the magical protections within the upper Barrow are keyed to passage batons, short sticks carved with the image of the Summer God. These are given to legitimate residents and visitors, allowing them to avoid

the protective magics in the public areas. There is nothing magical about these passage batons; they are simply the mark of someone allowed into the Barrow.

Entry to the Barrow is through a tunnel about halfway up the south end that runs twenty feet in to the door to the antechamber. The door is locked, but touching it causes a bell-like tone to ring, summoning a guard.

NEW COMMUNITY: SUMMER'S BARROW, SUMMER

Size: Not Applicable; **Power Center:** Magical; **Alignment:** Neutral Good; **GP Limit:** 40 gp, 700 gp for scrolls; **Ready Cash:** 15,000 gp; **Population:** 6 adults (96% human, 2% halfling, 1% elf, 1% other).

Authority Figures: Prelate Malcar Talann, 15th-Level Half-Celestial Half-Human Cleric of the Summer God; the Sacrifice Sim Laftak, 6th-Level Human Fighter/3rd-Level Cleric of the Summer God.

NEW COMMUNITY: SUMMER'S BARROW, WINTER

Size: Thorp; **Power Center Type:** Magical; **Alignment:** Neutral Good; **GP Limit:** 40 gp, 700 gp for scrolls; **Ready Cash:** 15,000 gp; **Population:** 50 adults (96% human, 2% halfling, 1% elf, 1% other).

Authority Figures: Prelate Malcar Talann, 15th-Level Half-Celestial Half-Human Cleric of the Summer God; the Sacrifice Sim Laftak, 6th-Level Human Fighter/3rd-Level Cleric of the Summer God.

COMBAT IN THE BARROW

The narrow, low, curving corridors of the upper Barrow and the labyrinth make combat difficult. Aside from forcing invaders to proceed single file, the narrow corridors make using Medium-size or larger slashing and bludgeoning weapons difficult. Attacks with Medium-size weapons suffer a -2 circumstance penalty because of the lack of room to swing them. Attacks with Large weapons suffer a -4 circumstance penalty. Piercing weapons may be used without penalty regardless of size.

The curving path of the corridors limits the range of missile weapons, as well. All missile weapons with a range increment greater than 10 feet have their range increment reduced to 10 feet, and all missile weapons with a maximum range of greater than 40 feet have their maximum range

reduced to 40 feet. These penalties apply to rays and energy missiles produced by spells as well as normal missile weapons. Line-of-sight spells are limited to 40 feet.

These modifications apply only in the curved corridors: combat within a room proceeds normally.

Throughout the Barrow, the uneven floor is treacherous if moving at speed. Anyone moving faster than normal, either by taking a double move action, a charge action, or a partial charge action, must make a Reflex save (DC 16) or fall prone, ending their move. This applies to every area except the sanctum and the tomb. The inhabitants of the Barrow are exempt from this save, as part of their training includes practice moving quickly through the structure.

SACRED GROUND

Antechamber

During the winter, there are four guards and a priest on duty here at all times. They carry all their equipment and each has an extra passage baton. During the summer, no one is on duty here, and visitors seeking entry must wait outside the door while the bell summons someone.

Passage batons are necessary in this room, as it is magically warded.



The Antechamber is protected by a *greater glyph of warding*, cast by the prelate. He checks it each day, renewing it as necessary. Entering the room without a passage baton causes the *glyph* to activate, filling the room with a *blade barrier*. The activated barrier lasts for two and a half hours unless dispelled, giving the residents plenty of time to mount a defense. As the whole room is full of spinning blades and the exit corridors are only three feet wide, it makes a bottleneck for the defenders.

CR 6; No attack roll, *blade barrier* (15d6 damage); Reflex DC 27 to avoid; Search DC 31 to notice; Disable Device DC 31 to disarm.

Guard Barracks

Each of these two locations is a slightly curving room with seven sets of double bunks and fourteen footlockers and chamber pots. During the summer, only the southernmost room is used, but winter sees both barracks full to capacity.

As there is no housekeeping staff, it is up to the guards to dispose of their own night waste, carrying it out to the midden pit about half a mile away. In the summer, the guards take the duty in turns, and also see to the needs of the priests, and the prelate and Sacrifice. During the winter, the job requires at least three people, and the prelate generally assigns the task by lottery, or as a punishment.

Priest Barracks

These two rooms are very similar to the guard barracks, but each only has five sets of bunk beds, ten footlockers, and ten chamber pots. There are also two writing desks and chairs in each room.

Private Chapels

Each of these two locations is a small chapel, used by the prelate or the Sacrifice to meet with important visitors or for meditation. Each has a small altar, with expensive altar dressings, and a mosaic of the Summer God on the wall behind it. Three padded benches with prayer books and hymnals face the altar. The floors are covered in woven rugs, and the walls are hung with tapestries of summer scenes. The doors are kept locked when the not in use; the Sacrifice and the prelate each have keys, and an extra key hangs in each of the barracks rooms.



The altar dressings are silks and linens with intricate embroidery, worth a total of 600 gp. The altar furnishings (candlesticks, plates, chalices, etc.) are gold and emerald, with a vine motif. They are bulky (around 20 pounds total), and worth a total of 8,000 gp. The tapestries weigh a total of 150 pounds, but are woven with gold and silver threads in among the wool, and would fetch 1,000 gp on the open market. These totals are for each of the private chapels.

The candlesticks in the private chapels are pure beeswax, in green and gold. This is one of the few places that burning candles are allowed.

Prelate's Chamber

This door is always kept locked. The prelate has a key, and one duty guard keeps one key.



Malcar has placed a *forbiddance* spell on his chambers (Will save DC 25).

SACRED GROUND

The room is simple and nearly bare. It contains a bed, a footlocker, an armor stand, a writing desk, a chair, and a small pedestal holding the prelate's most treasured possession: the *Summer God's tear*.

The pedestal is set in one corner of the room, with a protective spell to make sure no one makes off with the tear.



The pedestal is protected by a *greater glyph of warding*, cast by the prelate, in a two-foot circle around the pedestal base. The *glyph* is keyed to a pass phrase that the prelate chooses when he casts the spell. He gives this phrase to others if he is sending them to bring him the tear, and changes it the next day. The *glyph* triggers a *geas/quest* spell, commanding the affected creature to bring the tear to the prelate and give it to him.

CR 6; no attack roll, *geas/quest* (subject must give the tear to the prelate; resisting causes 3d6 points of damage each day, Fortitude save DC 25 to avoid sickening or becoming crippled); No Save; Search DC 31 to notice; Disable Device DC 31 to disarm.

The footlocker contains a few changes of simple clothing and several bundles of letters. These last are from the prelate's family. The

last one is dated fifty years ago, informing him of the death of his last sister, from a grandniece who he has never met.

There are a few homey touches to the room: a brightly colored patchwork quilt on the bed, a crudely-fashioned clay mug with a smiling face on it sitting on the writing desk, a few scattered books, a knife with a half-carved antler handle, and a few other signs that show this room is a home. The prelate spends a great deal of time in his chamber when not needed elsewhere, basking in the glow of the tear and remembering the years that have passed by. When this gets too close to maudlin self-pity for his liking, he goes looking for companionship among the other residents.

Sacrifice's Chamber

The Sacrifice's chamber is identical to the prelate's, but lacks the personal items. Sim keeps a key to her chambers on her person, and the on-duty guard keeps the other key. This room barely shows a sign that it's occupied, serving only as a place to sleep for the Sacrifice. Unlike the prelate's chambers, which, though austere, are clearly someone's home, the Sacrifice's room is just a temporary accommodation for Sim. So little does she regard the room that she often leaves without locking the door, or even bothering to close it, which frustrates the guards to no end.

NEW ARTIFACT: SUMMER GOD'S TEAR

This item is the crystalline tear shed by the Summer God when he witnessed the faithfulness and devotion of Malcar Talann, the Sacrifice come to lead the god back to the world and end the winter. Malcar doesn't speak about the incident that prompted the shedding of the tear, but it was so profound an event that it changed Malcar into a half-celestial and left behind this powerful artifact.

The tear is a fist-sized, faceted, clear crystal, lit from within by subtle green and gold lights. It exudes the odor of green grass and

running water, and touching it causes small warm breezes to dance around the room. When held in the hand, it renders the bearer immune to fire and cold damage. It has other capabilities in the hands of a cleric of the Summer God: it functions as *gem of brightness* with unlimited charges, a *phylactery of faithfulness*, and can cast *control weather* as a 20th-level cleric once per day during the summer.

Caster Level: 20th; *Weight:* 2 lb.

SACRED GROUND

Sanctum

This is the most sacred site of the main complex. In this room, the prelate charts the course of the stars, predicting the death of the Summer God, and ascertaining the need for the Rite of Sacrifice. This is the place for the high sacred rituals, including investiture of the Sacrifice, ordination of new prelates, and weather magic. Only the prelate has a key to this room, and the doors are huge iron valves with strong locks.



The iron doors of the sanctum are three inches thick, with AC 5, Hardness 10, and 90 hit points each. The Break DC is 32. The locks on the doors have an Open Lock DC of 35.

The room is also protected by a *forbiddance* spell cast by the prelate (Will save DC 25) and keyed to the passage batons.

The sanctum is actually a twenty-foot-wide shaft running to the surface of the mound. At the top of the shaft, nearly thirty feet up, is the lens set into the ground between the obelisks. This lets light into the chamber from above. It also focuses the light on the floor, which is a highly polished mirror under a thick crystal cover. The crystal is etched with lines breaking the reflected sky into radial sections, with a few constellations marked across them. At night, the lens projects a perfect image of the stars onto the floor, allowing minute study of the positions of the constellations in relation to the seasonal markings on the crystal. The prelate uses this in making his predictions of the Summer God's death and deciding whether or not the Sacrifice must enter the Underworld.



If a cleric of the Summer God casts a *divination* spell within this room at night, consulting the constellations and the star charts, he does not need the normal material components of the spell, and receives a 15% bonus to the chance for a correct answer. The casting time in such situations is increased to one hour.

The room also provides a +4 circumstance bonus to Astrology skill checks if using the Astrology rules from *Occult Lore* by Atlas Games.

The walls are covered with mosaics of star charts, showing the various constellations in position for the equinoxes and solstices, all labeled in tiny script inset in silver. The stars are tiny stones that glow with their own light, yet don't seem to affect the visibility of the projection. Inscribed above the autumnal equinox mosaic is the word "Nivaram," and above the vernal equinox mosaic is the word "Alatoril."

If someone standing in the room says "Nivaram," the floor ripples like water, and flows away to reveal a spiral staircase that leads two hundred feet down through the earth to the entrance of the labyrinth. To close the staircase, the word "Alatoril" must be spoken.

Public Chapels

There are two public chapels given over to the worship of the Summer God. In each, an altar is located on the southern wall, adorned with nice but inexpensive dressings. The wall behind the altar is plaster, and painted with an image of the Summer God. Four rows of benches with padded seats face the altar, and a small cupboard opposite holds prayer books and hymnals.



The altar dressings are cotton and wool, with cotton embroidery. They could be sold for 50 gp. The altar furniture is brass with green crystals, and worth about 500 gp. The candlesticks for the altar each hold one gold- and green-painted stick with a *continual flame* spell cast on it.

The public chapels are usually empty during the summer. The dressings and furniture are stored in the cupboards until winter. Often the Sacrifice will claim one of these room and pile the benches against the wall, using the larger space for martial practice. Other than that, the

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only use the public chapels see in the summer is when one of the few residents wants a little private time without leaving the Barrow.

During the winter, the chapels are used for services for the winter residents and visitors. When visitors to the Barrow spend the night, they usually have to make do with a pallet on the floor of one of these rooms for sleeping accommodations: room is very tight.

Vault

The vault holds the magical and monetary treasure of the Barrow. It has a six-inch-thick iron door with two locks, and the duty guard and the prelate each have one key.



The door has AC 5, Hardness 10, 180 hit points, and a Break DC of 36. The locks have an Open Lock DC of 36, and both locks must be opened simultaneously or they reset and lock again. The locks are built into the door.

Inside the vault, the walls are lined with scroll racks, and a large wooden cupboard sits against the far wall.



The vault room is further protected by a *forbiddance* spell cast by the prelate (Will save DC 25) and keyed to the passage batons. The scroll racks contain, carefully labeled and ordered, at least two scrolls of every cleric spell from levels 1 through 4, all scribed at 7th level. The cupboard contains strongboxes holding 15,000 gold pieces. The prelate is willing to sell one of each of the scrolls at market price, and will give a 10% discount to devout worshippers and clergy of the Summer God.

The scrolls are the winter work of the priests who stay in the Barrow. By spring, the number of scrolls has nearly doubled, and it dwindles through the summer as the prelate sends them out to the faithful or uses them himself. The money in the cupboard pays the operating expenses of the Barrow, and is collected from

the offerings and gifts of the pilgrims, as well as the donations sent from other church branches.

In a secret compartment in the bottom of the cupboard is the map of the Underworld that the Sacrifice uses as a guide during the Rite of Sacrifice. The map is a blank sheet of vellum everywhere but in the Underworld, where it shows the route that the Sacrifice must follow to bring back the Summer God's spirit.



The secret compartment is well-concealed, with a Search DC of 25. The lock, which is keyed to both the Sacrifice's key and the prelate's key, has an Open Lock DC of 25.

Around the Barrow, the rumor is that the vault is protected by a powerful spirit of winter chained inside. The prelate vehemently denies this, but always cautions anyone who asks about it not to go near the vault without himself or the Sacrifice in attendance. His caution reinforces belief in the story, just as intended.

Kitchen

The kitchen of Summer's Barrow is so simple as to be almost primitive. There is a small stove at one end, with a pipe leading up to ground level, and two barrels of charcoal beside it. Other barrels contain meal, salted meat, flour, oats, pickles, and water. During the summer, this is about all it contains, along with a few pots and pans, and some simple plates, knives, and spoons. Priests and guards make regular excursions into the nearest town to pick up fresh supplies every couple of days, and they take turns preparing it for all the residents.

As winter approaches, more supplies start to arrive. Barrels of smoked and salted fish, hams, cheeses, dried sausages, dried vegetables, rashers of bacon, crates of hard tack biscuits, and jars of salt and other spices are shipped in. It's not enough to feed the entire winter complement for the whole season, however, and must

SACRED GROUND

be augmented by occasional shipments, trips to the town, and magically created food.

During winter, the cooking must be done in shifts due to the crowding of the provisions in the room. Guards and priests generally take turns cooking, and carry their food to the dining hall on the other side of the upper Barrow.

Dining Hall

The dining hall is simple and rustic, much like the rest of the Barrow. There are four trestle tables set crosswise in the room, with benches on either side. The room can seat up to eighty people at once if they crowd in, but usually has far fewer.

This is the social center of the Barrow, summer and winter. Off-duty guards and idle priests congregate in the room to snack, talk, gamble, and tell tall tales. In the summer, they are sometimes joined by the prelate, come to share in the companionship. Winter finds him too preoccupied to attend, but the crowds are much livelier. Sometimes a visiting pilgrim or other winter resident will bring along a musical instrument, and an impromptu concert and dance may be held.

The Sacrifice assiduously avoids such fellowship, finding it a distraction from her training. The prelate takes this as a challenge, and has been trying, with limited success, to convince her to take a more active role in the social life of the Barrow. She feels that such concerns are irrelevant to her goals, and does all she can to dodge them without giving offense to the prelate.

LABYRINTH

The labyrinth is designed to guard the approach to the resting place of the Summer God. It is similar to the upper Barrow, but has no light sources at all. It exists deep within the earth, on the border of the

Underworld. It is not wholly in the material world, but not wholly in any other, either. The border nature of the place makes it impossible to dig down to the Labyrinth, bypassing the upper Barrow. The only way to reach the labyrinth is to pass through the stairway in the sanctum.



The Underworld is whatever plane of the dead you wish it to be in your campaign, and the labyrinth is a gateway to that plane.

Entrance

The stairway from the sanctum leads in through the north wall of the entrance. Narrow corridors lead off to the left and right into the darkness. On the south wall is a huge mosaic map, showing the path through the labyrinth clearly. It's a false path; the map is accurate up to the third ring of the labyrinth, and then leads to a dead end.

There is another red herring map hidden in the room.



A successful Search check (DC 18) will reveal a loose stone in the floor, hiding a small compartment.

The map in the compartment leads through the center of the labyrinth and out the long western corridor leading to a dead end.

The true path through the labyrinth is not written down on any map. The prelate, the Sacrifice, and the priests all know the route through the labyrinth. No one else needs to know.

Center

The center of the labyrinth is a circular room twenty feet across and eight feet high. Corridors lead off in each of the cardinal directions. In the center of the room is a large stone table, on which the False Sacrifice is chained.

⊗ THE FALSE SACRIFICE SPECTRE

Medium-sized Undead (Incorporeal)

CR 7; SZ M (humanoid); HD 14d12; 110 hp; Init +9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (good); AC 18 (+5 Dex, +3 deflection); Atk melee +13/+8 (1d8 and energy drain, incorporeal touch); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Create Spawn, Energy Drain; SQ +2 Turn Resistance, Darkvision 60 ft., Sunlight Powerlessness, Unnatural Aura; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +11; Str —, Dex 20, Con —, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 16

Skills: Bluff +10, Hide +15, Intimidate +13, Intuit Direction +10, Listen +13, Search +10, Sense Motive +9, Spot +13

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (incorporeal touch)

Languages: Celestial, Common, Infernal

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by the False Sacrifice becomes a spectre in 1d4 rounds; use the standard stats in the SRD for spectres. Spawn are under the command of the False Sacrifice and remain enslaved until his death. They do not possess any abilities they had in life.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by the False Sacrifice's incorporeal touch attack receive two negative levels. The Fortitude save to remove a negative level is DC 20.

Incorporeal Subtype: Incorporeal creatures can only be harmed by other incorporeal creatures, by +1 or better weapons, or by spells, spell-like effects, or supernatural effects. They are immune to all non-magical attack forms, and cannot be tripped or grappled by corporeal creatures. They cannot fall or suffer falling

damage. An incorporeal creature has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. The physical attacks of incorporeal creatures ignore material armor. Incorporeal creatures are not burned by normal fires, affected by natural cold, or harmed by mundane acids. They do not leave footprints, have no scent, make no noise, and can pass through solid objects at will.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex): The False Sacrifice is utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flees from it. If caught in sunlight, he cannot attack and can only take partial actions.

Undead: Undead are immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromantic effects, and mind-influencing effects. Undead are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage or drain, or energy drain. They have no Constitution scores and are therefore immune to any effect requiring a Fortitude save (unless it affects objects). Undead have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet. Negative energy can heal undead creatures. An undead creature is not at risk of death from massive damage, but when reduced to 0 hit points or less it is immediately destroyed. Undead cannot be *raised*. *Resurrection* can affect them, but generally fails because they're unwilling to return to life.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Both wild and domesticated animals can sense the unnatural presence of a spectre at a distance of 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

SACRED GROUND

Thirty-five years ago, the Summer God failed to return from the Underworld. The prelate sent the Sacrifice down into the Underworld to bring back the god's spirit, but nothing happened. That year passed without a summer, and the church feared that the god had been lost forever. At the proper time the following year, the prelate took the *Summer God's tear* and went into the Underworld as he had once before to find the god and bring him back.

After a week, the Summer God rose, and the prelate came back through the Underworld door, dragging the Sacrifice with him. The Sacrifice had betrayed his charge and thrown in with the lords of the Underworld. To punish him for this crime, the prelate stripped from him his name, calling him the False Sacrifice, and confined his spirit to defend the labyrinth forever.

What's left of the False Sacrifice is a powerful spectre, shackled to the stone table with mystic chains. He is doomed to stay and defend the labyrinth, slaying anyone who tries to pass through the room without the prelate or Sacrifice, both of whom he is forbidden to harm. The only thing that can free him is someone willing to take his place.

The chains that hold the False Sacrifice are not physical, and don't restrict his movement as he slips through the walls of the labyrinth. He can pursue intruders unless they start back to the entrance of the labyrinth; as long as they keep trying to reach the tomb, they are

his prey. He tries to convince one of the intruders to take his place before he attacks, but really doesn't have much hope that it will happen. He's not above playing on pity to gain an advantage, though.

The Labyrinth's End

The end of the Labyrinth is a bare, featureless room, twenty feet square, with no sign of any exit.



This room is protected by a *forbidden* spell cast by the prelate (Will save DC 25) that is alignment dependent. It admits those of neutral good alignment.

If a prayer to the Summer God is said while facing the north wall, it opens, revealing a steep staircase descending two hundred feet to the tomb.



This is the first stage of the portal to the plane of the Underworld. The door and staircase don't actually exist until the prayer is said, so it cannot be found with a Search check.

DEAD END DANGERS

The prelate has worked hard to make the labyrinth a dangerous place. On each dead end wall, he has inscribed a *symbol*. When a character reaches the dead end, the *symbol* activates. Roll 1d8 to determine what symbol is scribed on each dead end:

d8	Symbol	Save
1	Symbol of death	Fort save DC 25
2	Symbol of discord	No save
3	Symbol of fear	Will save DC 29
4	Symbol of hopelessness	Will save DC 29
5	Symbol of insanity	Will save DC 25
6	Symbol of pain	Fort save DC 29
7	Symbol of sleep	Will save DC 25
8	Symbol of stunning	Fort save DC 25

THE SUMMER GOD'S TOMB

The tomb sits on the very borders of the Underworld, and can only be reached from the Underworld or from the labyrinth. It is a beautiful complex, with walls of green and gold marble, veined through with clear quartz that sheds a soft, warm light. The ceilings are high and arched, with graceful groining decorated with carvings of ivy, wheat, and trees.



The entire tomb area is affected by a *hallow* spell, linked to *negative plane* protection.

Anteroom

The stairs from the labyrinth lead in through the south wall. They are concealed or revealed by reciting a prayer to the Summer God in this room. The room is twenty feet square, with the top of the arched ceiling fifteen feet above. The doors into the rest of the tomb are ten-foot-tall double doors made of solid gold, with relief images of the Summer God on them. They are open during the summer, and closed during the winter.



The doors aren't locked, but are tremendously heavy. Opening or closing one of the double doors is a full-round action, and requires a successful Strength check (DC 20).

Hall of Sacrifices

This is an eighty-foot-long hallway, with the peak of the ceiling forty feet overhead. The hall is forty feet wide, although there is only a ten-foot pathway down the middle of it. Each side of the hall is lined with rank upon rank of statues in white marble, depicting all the sacrifices that have gone into the Underworld to retrieve the Summer God's spirit. Near the far end of the hallway is a statue of the prelate, done in gold. Across from that statue is a shattered statue of black marble: the False Sacrifice.

During the summer, the statues stand quietly with a look of peace on their faces. In winter, they stand with their faces turned toward the floor, with the occasional tear dripping from an eye. When the current Sacrifice enters, the statues raise their hands in salute. A new statue appears of each Sacrifice that passes through the Underworld door.





The statues themselves are not magical, but are animated by the

Summer God. Their actions are a by-product of his existence.

THE RITE OF SACRIFICE

The Rite of Sacrifice is not a spell, but is the ceremony during which the Sacrifice goes through the Underworld door to find the Summer God and lead him back. It is not necessary every year; normally, the cold from the opening of the Underworld door at midwinter convinces the lords of the Underworld to release the god and bring summer back to the world. Every decade or so, either the lords of the Underworld decide to keep the Summer God or else the Summer God forgets the way back. This is when the Sacrifice is needed to go down into the Underworld.

Each Sacrifice's journey into the Underworld is different, and the Sacrifice is usually never seen again, though there has been only one instance of the Summer God not returning to the world after a Sacrifice has gone after him. The Sacrifice enters the Underworld with his or her weapons and armor, a pack of food and water, and the map of the Underworld. He is usually gone for two or three days and the prelate keeps watch at the sepulcher during that time. If the Summer God returns alone, he always has the map of the Underworld with him, and the prelate returns it to the vault.

Although each Sacrifice faces different challenges, there are certain constants. The Sacrifice faces opposition from the inhabitants of the Underworld, and must fight at least once. He also meets several mythic characters, which he must recognize in order to interact properly. This requires a successful Knowledge (religion) check for each character, with DC ranging from 15 for simple allies to 25 for tricksters and foes. There is also the challenge of spotting the lies and answering the riddles that the guardians of the Summer

God use to keep their charge. These require a successful Knowledge (arcana) check, with a DC ranging from 10 for easy riddles and blatant lies to 30 for subtle distinctions and deep mysteries.

The final challenge is to free the Summer God from his place of confinement and lead him back to the world. This is when the Sacrifice is confronted by the lords of the Underworld, and must bargain for the god's freedom. Normally, the lords of the Underworld require that the Sacrifice take the place of the god. Sometimes they want more or less, based on the character of the Sacrifice; they may demand that a proud Sacrifice give up his place in history, letting his name be forgotten, or they may require a former bard to pay for the freedom of the Summer God with a new song created just for them. Malcar Talann was required to cut his own heart from his chest and lay it at the feet of his god; this so moved the Summer God that he shed a single mystical tear, and gave a piece of his own heart to his faithful servant.

The Sacrifice need not succeed in the challenges in order to return the Summer God to the world. If he succeeds in all of them, and bargains well with the lords of the Underworld, he is allowed to return with the god; otherwise, he is kept in the Underworld. If he fails, or is slain, his very attempt is enough to wake the Summer God and bring him back, though usually late and in a weakened condition. This leads to a short summer, poor weather, and general disappointment within the church. Only one Sacrifice has ever completely failed to return the god, and he suffers for eternity, chained in the labyrinth for his betrayal.



USES OF A DEAD GOD

A dead god is defenseless and subject to whatever indignities may be visited upon him. The body of a dead god can be harvested for a variety of useful purposes. The secrets of harvesting and using the parts of a dead god are carefully concealed in riddles and cryptic allegories: it requires a successful Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) check (DC 25) to know the use of any single part of the body.

The body parts of most gods, including those of the Summer God, never decay. There are exceptions, though: gods of destruction and corruption quickly putrefy if they are not used.

Brain: Eating the brain of a dead god permanently increases the Intelligence score of the eater by six points. The brain may also be used in the manufacture of any magical items that enhance Intelligence or provide telepathy. One brain can provide up to 50,000 experience points for creating these items, which need not be spent on a single item.

Eyes: The eyes of a dead god can each be used as a *crystal ball* with *true seeing*.

Tongue: Someone in possession of the tongue of a dead god is constantly affected as by the *tongues* spell and may, at will, make use of the *message* spell.

Skin: If the entire skin of a dead god is used, someone with the Craft Magic Arms and Armor feat can produce a suit of *+3 leather armor* that confers immunity to fire, cold, and electricity, and Damage Reduction of 15/+5. The skin may also be used for the manufacture of other kinds of magic armor or clothing. One skin provides up to 30,000 experience points for this purpose, which need not be spent on a single item.

Blood: Drinking all the blood in the body of a dead god permanently increases the Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores of the

imbiber by two points each. The blood may also be used for the manufacture of potions. The blood from one dead god provides up to 50,000 experience points for this purpose, which need not be spent on a single potion.

Heart: Eating the heart of a dead god permanently increases the Wisdom and Charisma score of the eater by four points each. There is another use for the heart, though: if the heart is implanted in someone's chest, replacing their own heart, the recipient of the heart acquires either the half-celestial template (if the god was of good alignment) or the half-fiend template (if the god was evil). Accomplishing this exchange requires some means of keeping the recipient alive during the transfer.

Bones: The bones of a dead god can be used to craft rods, rings, staves, weapons, and wands by someone with the appropriate item creation skills. They provide up to 30,000 experience points for this purpose, which need not be spent on a single item.

Sinews and Intestines: These can be made into a ropes, chains, or cables that can bind anything, even other gods or incorporeal beings. They can be used to bind abstract concepts, like tying happiness to a house. Each dead god has enough sinews and intestines to make up to a thousand feet of binding materials. This requires the Craft Wondrous Item feat.

There is a downside to all these benefits. Any item made using a piece of a dead god's body, or anyone who has increased an attribute through the consumption of part of a dead god, is automatically recognizable by any outsider. The outsider can also tell which god was used, and that will seriously affect any interaction with him. Former allies of the dead god will always be hostile to the character without necessarily knowing why, while all others will never be better than indifferent, and all will be very wary.

Hall of Memory

This hall is forty feet long, twenty feet wide, with thirty-foot-high ceilings. The walls are lined with tiny niches, creating the impression of a stone honeycomb. Each niche holds some small item of importance to the Summer God, to remind him to return to the world. There are preserved flowers, poems written by his worshippers, flasks of liquor, tokens from his favorites, musical instruments, miniature paintings, and other offerings that the prelate has judged to have a chance of luring back the Summer God.



Ten minutes of searching will net looters 1d10 items worth twenty to eighty gold pieces each, and the undying enmity of the Church of Summer.

The doors into the sepulcher are identical to the doors leading in to the Hall of Sacrifices. Again, they are open in the summer, and closed in the winter.

Sepulcher

This hemispherical room is eighty feet wide, and forty feet high at its highest. It is dominated by a huge gray stone slab: the resting place of the Summer God. The slab is only occupied during the winter. During the summer, it lies empty.

Underworld Door

The doors to the underworld are one-foot-thick slabs of rusted iron forty feet tall. They are barred and kept closed most of the year. At midwinter, the prelate opens the Underworld door, and it remains open until the Summer God returns. This is the door that the Sacrifice enters to bring back the spirit of the god.

Passing through the door leads one directly into the Underworld, the land of the dead.

The door works both ways: creatures from the Underworld can also walk through the open door into the tomb. This happens less frequently than might be imagined, mostly because the lords of the Underworld guard the residents well.



The Underworld door has AC 5, Hardness 10, and 360 hit points. The Break DC is 38.

SCENES

The most common reason for heroes to come to the Barrow is a pilgrimage, either on their own or as an escort for a wealthy pilgrim or band of pilgrims. They may or may not stay the night, but most likely meet the prelate and the Sacrifice.

The presence of a powerful cleric in this unassuming location can also bring in adventurers in need of healing, resurrection, or other divine aid. Again, this allows them to meet the prelate and Sacrifice, and gives them a chance to spend the night if they come during the summer.

The following adventure ideas can also be used to get PCs involved in the Summer Barrow.

TOMB RACE

Members of the Church of Summer have discovered a plan by a powerful wizard to harvest the god's body for his magical workings. The wizard has hired a band of unscrupulous adventurers to find a way into Summer's Barrow and abscond with the body. The congregation members want to hire their own band of heroes to find the other group and stop them. They don't want to alert the clergy protecting the Barrow, however, because one of the congregation was the leak that gave the secret away.

The player characters can take the part of either team, depending on their alignments and natures. Either they need to come up with a workable plan, infiltrate the Barrow, and make off with the god's body, or they have to figure out the identities of the prospective looters, track them down, and stop them before they complete their plan, all without giving away their mission to the prelate and clergy.

THE CLIMB BACK UP

The door into the Underworld works both ways. Heroes stranded in the land of the dead may locate the door and use it as a means of escape. Of course, they'll have some explaining to do no matter what happens on the way out, and no explanation will be sufficient if the cler-

gy finds that they've harmed the Summer God's body or done any looting.

ALTERNATE VERSIONS

The descriptions in this chapter describe two versions of Summer's Barrow: the summer and winter variants.

Another easy change is to make the knowledge of the Barrow's purpose public, and perhaps even locate the Barrow in or near a large community. This forces the church to keep a winter complement of guards and priests in residence at all times, and heightens the paranoia of the prelate and the fanaticism of the Sacrifice.

CHAPTER THREE

NECROPOLIS

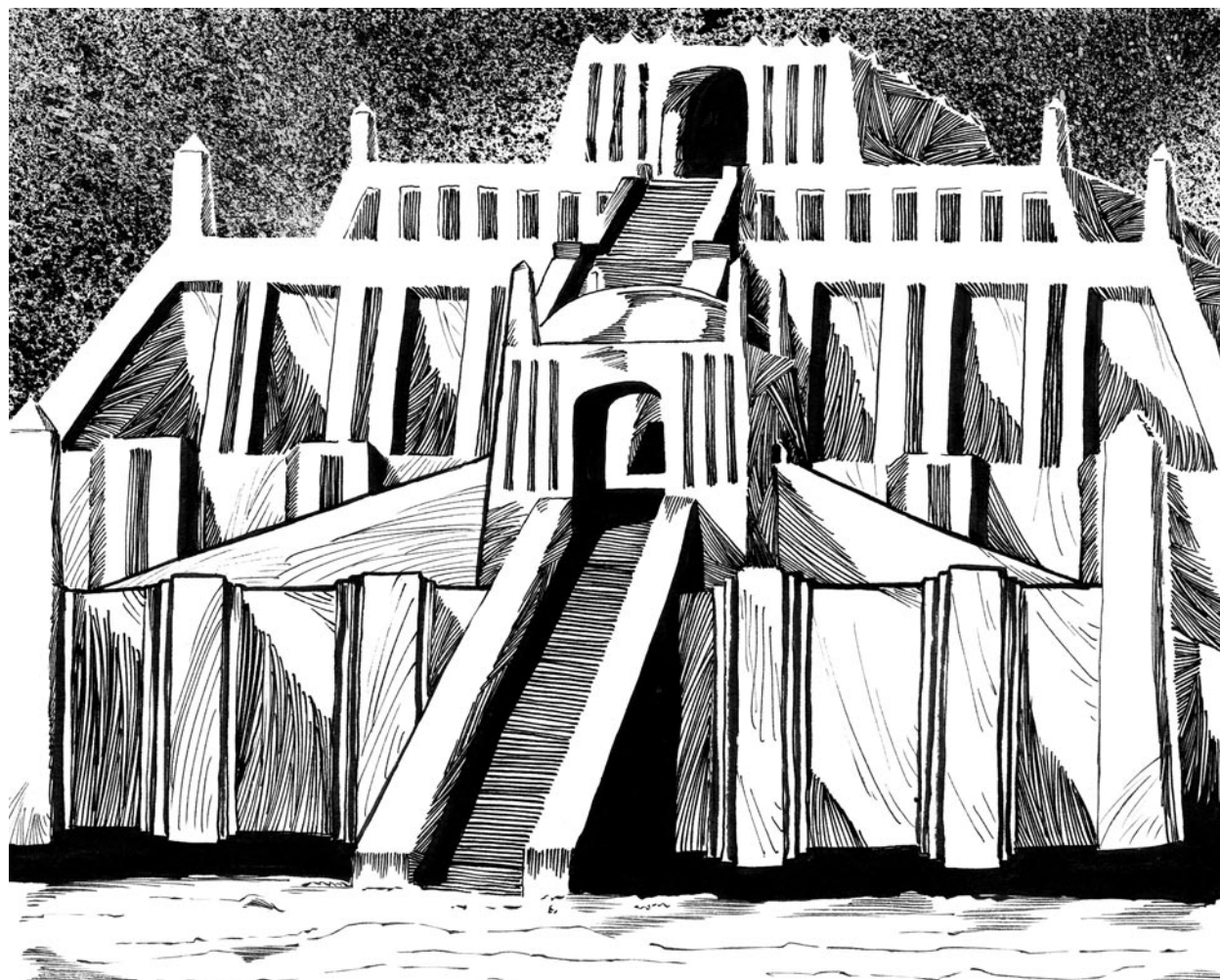
By James Maliszewski

AT A GLANCE

Known to outsiders simply as “the Necropolis,” this island temple is in fact the chapter house of an enigmatic religious group called the Order of the White Rose. The Order is dedicated to the Judge of the Dead and is renowned throughout the world. The Judge is a non-evil god of death, who claims dominion over all souls. The Judge’s only interest is in seeing the dead reach their final resting place, an activity to which the Order also devotes itself. Thus, its priests simultaneously oppose the unlawful reanimation or resurrection of the dead and assist in bringing back those whose proper time

has not yet come. Unsurprisingly, the Order is also an implacable foe of the undead, which they view as abominations existing outside the bounds of life and, more importantly, death.

The Necropolis presents a remarkable sight to anyone visiting it. The small island on which it sits is almost wholly barren, devoid all but the smallest copses of trees and other plant life. This desolation only adds to the impressiveness of the Necropolis itself — a five-story ziggurat whose exterior is faced with marble and basalt. The south side of the ziggurat holds the entrance to the structure, as well as the majority of its few windows. At each corner of the ziggurat’s tiers, there is an obelisk capped with



ivory, upon which is engraved frightful sayings attributed to the Judge of the Dead. Occasionally, black smoke can be seen rising from the eastern side of the second floor — the result of the smithy situated there.

There is very little traffic around or near the Necropolis. The Order does not receive pilgrims. Simple devotees of the Judge of the Dead are rarely permitted to travel to the buildings, and are instead directed to other more accessible temples for worship. The priests themselves rarely leave the Necropolis, except on “business” — which is to say, the elimination of undead that still arise on the island, which is the site of a necromantic disaster.

PLACEMENT

For the Necropolis to be used to its fullest extent, it should be placed on a deserted island as far away from civilization as possible. There are two reasons for this. The first is that the Necropolis has few visitors and the Order of the White Rose would like to keep it that way. The second reason is that the island on which the Necropolis stands suffered an arcane disaster in the distant past, the results of which attracted the Order to it in the first place. The island is now uninhabited and nearly uninhabitable, except by the priests who have made it their life’s work to reclaim and cleanse it of its evil taint.

Even so, you need not place the island out in the middle of a distant ocean in order to achieve the desired level of isolation. You could just as easily place it in a lake known for its foul character, or even in a large river renowned for its fierceness. All that’s important is that you make the island inaccessible to the general populace. In addition, it’s also helpful if the island is placed in an area in which it wouldn’t be impossible for a powerful necromantic cabal to have been active several centuries ago. The past presence of these dark wizards is another

important element of the Necropolis, and one that shouldn’t be overlooked when placing it within your campaign setting.

CHARACTERS

ABBOT SARTANI

Open-Minded Abbot

“There are fates far worse than death.”

Both by law and tradition, Sartani is the undisputed leader of the Necropolis. In practice, though, the fresh-faced abbot is more of a first among equals. That is, Sartani prefers to share his power and authority with other members of the monastery, right down to the lowliest acolyte. The abbot believes that the mission of the Order of the White Rose is so important — so dire — that he cannot afford to rule as a tyrant. Unless everyone feels that they have a stake in the governance of the Necropolis, disaster could result.

This isn’t to say that Sartani doesn’t make decisions on his own or that he is a mere figurehead — far from it, in fact. Rather, the abbot prefers a consultative approach that emphasizes dialog and discussion to blind obedience and unquestioning loyalty. Consequently, Sartani makes himself readily available to any member of the monastery, no matter his or her position in the hierarchy. He enjoys the give and take of debate and appreciates hearing different perspectives before he makes a determination about any course of action.

Sartani learned this approach to governance at the feet of the previous abbot of the Necropolis, Ursaan, who found it essential to maintaining peace in the monastery. Prior to Ursaan’s abbacy, the Necropolis was governed strictly and according to an unwavering hierarchy. Though effective in maintaining order, this austere system did little to maintain morale

☉ THE JUDGE OF THE DEAD

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Domains: Death, Judgment, Law, Travel

Typical Worshipers: The Order of the White Rose, foes of the undead, embalmers

The Judge of the Dead is an important, if minor, deity revered as the final arbiter of the fates of all creatures possessing souls. According to his mythology, the Judge personally greets every soul who passes through one of the Wells of Souls and into his divine realm. He then gazes into them and determines whether they should be forever consigned to their eternal fate (for good or ill) or allowed to return to the Material Plane to live again (thanks to powerful magic like *raise dead* or *resurrection*). The Judge has little interest in where a soul ends its journey, only that it goes where it should and that no mortal power interferes with their ultimate

reward or punishment. Thus, a worshiper of an evil god can expect the Judge to send him on to his dark master for damnation while a follower of a good god can expect him to send him on to eternal bliss. The Judge takes a dim view of undead, especially intelligent sorts, and his devotees are often dedicated to their destruction.

The Judge of the Dead is usually depicted as a stern, yet strangely kindly, old man dressed in black judicial robes. He is clean-shaven and bald, with penetrating dark eyes. He usually bears a balance in one hand and a large gavel in the other. The Judge is often shown seated upon a throne, although he may also be generically shown looking down from on high. His symbol is a skull and a gavel and his favored weapon is the warhammer.

☉ JUDGMENT DOMAIN

Granted Power: Add +2 to the saving throw DC to any Enchantment (Compulsion) spell you cast.

Judgment Domain Spells

- 1 **Command.** One subject obeys one-word command for 1 round.
- 2 **Zone of Truth.** Subjects within range cannot lie.
- 3 **Bestow Curse.** -6 to an ability; -4 on attacks, saves, and checks; or 50% chance of losing each action.
- 4 **Discern Lies.** Reveals deliberate falsehoods.
- 5 **Atonement.** Removes burden of misdeeds from subject.
- 6 **Geas/Quest.** As *lesser geas*, plus it affects any creature.
- 7 **Repulsion.** Creatures can't approach you.
- 8 **Discern Location.** Exact location of creature or object.
- 9 **Storm of Vengeance.** Storm rains acid, lightning, and hail.



and, over the years, more and more priests left the Order or asked to be reassigned to another monastery.

Sartani's election came as no surprise to anyone except a faction of traditionalists led by his opponent Arbelam. Not only had Ursaen expressed a clear preference for Sartani as his successor, but a clear majority of the Council of Elders (not to mention the priests and acolytes) favored the vigorous and progressive priest as

the next leader. Thus, Sartani is extremely popular with all but a handful of the Necropolis' inhabitants and his popularity only grows more powerful with each passing day.

Even so, no one — not even Arbelam — questions Sartani's dedication to the Judge of the Dead and the mission of the Necropolis. In his younger days, the abbot was a missionary who traveled the world putting the dead to rest and fighting against those who would usurp the

Ⓢ ABBOT SARTANI

15th-level Male Human Cleric

CR 15; SZ (humanoid); HD 15d8+30; 100 hp; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 21 (+9 *banded mail* +3, +2 *amulet of natural armor*), Atk melee +11/+6/+1 (1d8+5, crit 20/x3, +3 *warhammer*); SA Spells, Turn Undead; SQ Spontaneous Casting; AL LG; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +13; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 16

Skills: Concentration +12, Craft (calligraphy) +3, Diplomacy +12, Heal +8, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (religion) +19, Knowledge (undead) +7, Spellcraft +8

Feats: Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Extra Turning, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Scribe Scroll

Spontaneous Casting: Sartani can "lose" a prepared spell (other than domain spells) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

Turn Undead (Su): Sartani can Turn Undead ten times per day.

Spells: (6/6+1/6+1/6+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/2+1/1+1) Sartani worships the Judge of the Dead; his chosen domains are Judgment and Travel. These domains allow him to add +2 to the saving throw DC to any Enchantment

(Compulsion) spell he casts, and for 15 rounds per day he can act normally regardless of magical effects that impede movement. The DC to resist his spells is 14 + the spell level. He has the following spells already prepared; domain spells are marked with an asterisk.

0 Level — *create water, create wine, detect magic, light, purify food and drink, read magic*

1st Level — *bleed, bless water, comprehend languages, detect undead, expeditious retreat*, magic weapon, sanctuary*

2nd Level — *augury, consecrate, endurance, gentle repose, locate object*, remove paralysis, spiritual weapon*

3rd Level — *continual flame, create food and water, daylight, dispel magic, fly*, magic circle against evil, prayer*

4th Level — *death ward, dimension door*, dismissal, divination, greater magic weapon, tongues*

5th Level — *atonement, break enchantment, commune, healing circle, teleport**

6th Level — *blade barrier, find the path*, geas/quest, heal*

7th Level — *holy word, resurrection, teleport without error**

8th Level — *mass heal, phase door**

Possessions: *banded mail* +3, +2 *amulet of natural armor*, +3 *warhammer*

Judge's rightful role by keeping souls in bondage beyond their appointed time. Under his abbacy, the Necropolis has stepped up its efforts to clear the island's catacombs of undead and to put an end to the plague of evil that still taints the land. It was for this reason that Sartani established the Knights of the White Rose and increased recruitment into the Order from among those with martial experience.

Despite his popularity and successes, Sartani is given to fits of melancholy and self-doubt. He appears resolute and unswerving when he stakes a position, but privately questions every decision he has made and constantly second guesses himself.

Order Hierarchy

The Order of the White Rose is a monastic order of priests dedicated to the service of the Judge of the Dead. As such, the Necropolis uses a hierarchy very similar to that used in other temples dedicated to the Judge elsewhere in the world.

At the summit of the Necropolis' hierarchy is the abbot, Sartani. On the island, his is the final word and he is obeyed by all priests junior to himself. However, Sartani is something of an innovator within the Order and allows a wider degree of latitude among his underlings than might be accepted in other chapter houses of the Order. This isn't to say that Sartani is lax in using his authority or that his position within the temple is on shaky ground. Rather, it means that the abbot is looser in his interpretation of ancient proscriptions than some other abbots are and allows even junior priests the opportunity to air their concerns in council. This hasn't endeared him to many of the senior priests, most notably Arbelam, but it has made Sartani popular with the youngest members of the hierarchy.

Beneath the abbot is the Council of Elders, made up of the ten most senior priests in the Necropolis. These ten priests act as the abbot's advisors on important matters. Theirs is a

strictly advisory body, however. The abbot is under no obligation to take their advice, let alone act on it — no matter how vociferously the Council may disagree with him. Of course, no abbot would undertake anything that didn't enjoy at least a majority of the elders' favor. To do so would be both arrogant and dangerous. The Council elects the abbot's successor upon his death from among their number. However, appointment to the Council is made at the abbot's discretion.

The senior priests who are not members of the Council of Elders are next in the hierarchy. By dint of age and experience, everyone within the temple holds these priests in high esteem. Strictly speaking, they differ from junior priests only in this respect. They possess no greater authority than any other priest, however. Neither do they have a ritual function more important than that of their juniors. Yet, only the most cocksure or ignorant younger member would dare to ignore the word of his elders.

The junior priests represent the lowest levels of true clerics within the hierarchy. They have all taken vows to serve the Judge of the Dead and have dedicated their lives to the Order's goals. Most possess a fair degree of erudition and enjoy discussing various elements of their theology with one another and with outsiders. This tendency toward garrulousness is, according to many senior priests, a recent occurrence and owes its origin to Sartani, who has encouraged outspokenness among his followers. Despite these charges, the junior priests are hardworking and content with their station.

Beneath even the junior priests are the acolytes. "Acolyte" is a broad term that encompasses several types of people. Some are simply assistants to the priests — unordained men and women dedicated to the Judge, who serve in menial capacities. Once upon a time, there were many such acolytes in the Necropolis. Under Sartani, their numbers have dwindled considerably. More common are the fighting members of the Order — warriors, fighters, rangers, and even paladins — who have made it their goal to exterminate every undead being



on the island. These individuals are the other side of the equation in Sartani's new order. When diplomacy and negotiation fails, the judicious application of force is often the only answer.

The Knights of the White Rose is an order of warriors instituted by Sartani shortly after he became abbot. Led by the paladin Jezirpa, they exist somewhat outside the normal hierarchy of the Necropolis. Their activities must be approved by the abbot, but the day-to-day handling of such matters rests with Arbela, who is a strong supporter of the Knights' mission to destroy evil undead and put to rest tortured souls lingering too long in this world.

SENIOR PRIEST ARBELAM

Clinger to the Old Ways

"This is not how things were done in our fathers' time."

Arbela is, in many ways, very much like his abbot, Sartani. Both men are young for their positions and well versed in the teachings of the Order of the White Rose. Both men are well known and respected by their underlings for their devotion to the Judge of the Dead. But where Sartani is open-minded, Arbela is opinionated, and where the abbot is convivial, the senior priest is dour. Sartani has often said

SENIOR PRIEST ARBELAM

12th-level Male Human Cleric

CR 12; SZ M (humanoid); HD 12d8+36; 90 hp; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20'; AC 19 (+2 half-plate, +1 Dex), Atk melee +7/+2 (1d8+4, crit 20/x3, +2 warhammer); SA Spells, Turn Undead; SQ Spontaneous Casting; AL LN; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +15; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 20, Cha 15

Skills: Concentration +8, Craft (bookbinding) +1, Craft (calligraphy) +1, Diplomacy +7, Heal +7, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Knowledge (religion) +17, Knowledge (undead) +6, Spellcraft +2

Feats: Extra Turning, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge (religion)), Spell Focus (Abjuration), Spell Penetration

Spontaneous Casting: Arbela can "lose" a prepared spell (other than domain spells) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

Turn Undead (Su): Arbela can Turn Undead nine times per day.

Spells:

(6/7+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1)

Arbela worships the Judge of the Dead; his chosen domains are Law and Travel. These domains allow him to cast law spells at +1 caster level, and for 15 rounds per day he can act normally regardless of magical effects that impede movement. The DC to resist his spells is 15 + the spell level. He has the following spells already prepared; domain spells are marked with an asterisk.

- 0 Level — *create water, detect magic, light, purify food and drink, read magic, virtue*
- 1st Level — *bless water, detect evil, detect undead, expeditious retreat, invisibility to undead, remove fear, shield of faith*
- 2nd Level — *augury, calm emotions, gentle repose, lesser restoration, remove paralysis, shield other*
- 3rd Level — *create food and water, daylight, fly, glyph of warding, negative energy protection, remove disease*
- 4th Level — *death ward, divination, order's wrath, restoration, spell immunity*
- 5th Level — *flame strike, hallow, mark of justice, teleport, wall of stone*
- 6th Level — *greater glyph of warding, heal, hold monster*

Possessions: half-plate armor, +2 warhammer

that the Order needs more men like Arbelam, men “whose faith is unshakeable, even in the face of contrary evidence.” Although the abbot means it as a genuine compliment, Arbelam sees it as yet another jibe by a man who does not understand the importance of tradition in a monastery like the Necropolis.

Arbelam may be respected, but he is not well liked. Only a handful of senior priests seek his company and many of them would privately admit that he makes them uncomfortable. That’s because Arbelam is the epitome of the humorless puritan. He wears a perpetual scowl and takes pleasure — if one can even call it that — only in doing his duty, no matter how unpleasant it may be. Under the abbacy of Sartani, Arbelam finds a great many of his duties unpleasant, particularly listening to the opinions of junior priests and acolytes, who now have the right to speak before the Council of Elders — yet another of the abbot’s “innovations.”

Arbelam believes that the days before Ursaen was abbot were a Golden Age in which the Necropolis worked like a well-oiled machine, and when devotion to the Judge was never greater. That he did not live during those days is probably an explanation for his opinion, since the few surviving senior priests from those days do not speak of them so highly. They say that Arbelam’s so-called Golden Age was a time of frustration and decline that nearly spelled the end of the Necropolis itself. Naturally, Arbelam dismisses these ancient priests as “trouble-makers” and criticizes their “laxity,” preferring to believe that the old days could only be the best days, for surely they could not be worse than the present.

Ironically, Arbelam does support many of Sartani’s decisions since becoming abbot. He takes especial pleasure in the creation of the Knights of the White Rose, a group he pushed for in the waning days of Ursaen’s abbacy and which Sartani approved as one of his first acts as abbot. He maintains a good relationship with Jezirpa, the leader of the Knights. The two have as close to a friendship as Arbelam seems capable, much to the surprise of other priests.

Arbelam also maintains a good relationship with Shamruk, a senior priestess who has only recently come to the Necropolis. Like Arbelam, she supports the old ways and sees little good in Sartani’s recent innovations in governance. The two of them work together in sponsoring more traditional solutions and approaches and have occasionally won a few victories. Arbelam has promised Shamruk that he will use his influence to get her a seat on the Council of Elders when a vacancy arises, little suspecting that the priestess is in fact playing off his prejudices and preconceptions for nefarious purposes.

SHAMRUK (HAJAH LUUD)

Traitor in the Midst

“I find myself drawn to the history of this place.”

Shamruk is a recent addition to the Necropolis, having come to the monastery only a few months ago at the recommendation of her superiors on the mainland. A middle-aged woman of commanding presence, Shamruk has the reputation of being both a traditionalist and a scholar. Her knowledge of the history and ways of the Order of the White Rose is matched only by her understanding of the undead. As a younger priestess, she, like the abbot, traveled the world and battled undead in the name of the Judge of the Dead.

Unfortunately, the woman who currently goes by the name of Shamruk is not the original priestess but a lich named Hajah Luud who killed the original and assumed her identity. Through a combination of spells and force of will, Hajah has maintained her ruse and infiltrated the Necropolis without detection. Not even Arbelam, with whom she works closely, suspects that she is anything other than a conservative priestess who is especially well versed in the lore of the undead. Hajah has used her closeness to Arbelam and his traditionalist faction to her advantage, since Sartani makes a great effort not to pry too deeply into their affairs, for fear of appearing close-minded.



SACRED GROUND

Thus, the lich operates more or less freely within the Necropolis to advance her own nefarious plans.

Although history records that everyone who originally inhabited the island was destroyed in the necromantic apocalypse that created its

☉ SHAMRUK (HAJAH LUUD)

12th-level Human Lich Wizard/ 5th-level Cleric

CR 19; SZ M (undead); HD 12d4 + 5d8; 57 hp; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+1 Dex, +3 *bracers of armor* +3, +5 natural armor), Atk melee +13/+8 (1d4+4, crit 19–20/x2, *dagger of venom* +1 plus a poison spell 1/day) or melee +12/+7 (1d8+5, touch) or ranged +11/+6 (1d4+4, crit 19–20/x2, *dagger of venom* +1 plus a poison spell 1/day); SA Damaging Touch, Fear Aura, Paralyzing Touch, Spells, Summon Familiar; SQ Damage Reduction, 15/+1, Immunities, Phylactery, Rebuke Undead, Spontaneous Casting, +4 Turn Resistance; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +17; Str 17, Dex 12, Con —, Int 22, Wis 17, Cha 16

Skills: Bluff +10, Concentration +20, Diplomacy +12, Hide +9, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (history) +15, Knowledge (religion) +20, Knowledge (undead) +25, Listen +13, Move Silently +9, Profession (scribe) +5, Scry +15, Search +14, Spellcraft +24, Spot +13

Feats: Alertness (while with familiar), Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Necromancy), Still Spell

Damage Reduction (Su): Shamruk's undead body is tough, allowing her to ignore 15 hit points from most weapons and natural attacks. A +1 weapon or better negates the ability.

Damaging Touch (Ex): Shamruk may use her icy cold touch in melee to deliver 1d8+5 points of damage to living creatures; a Will save with a DC 20 reduces the damage by half.

Fear Aura (Su): Shamruk is shrouded in a dreadful aura of death and evil. Creatures of

less than 5 HD in a 60-foot radius that look at the lich must succeed at a Will save or be affected as though by *fear* as cast by a 17th-level sorcerer.

Immunities (Ex): Shamruk is immune to cold, electricity, polymorph, and mind-influencing spells.

Paralyzing Touch (Su): Any living creature the lich touches must succeed at a Fortitude save or be permanently paralyzed. *Remove paralysis* or any spell that can remove a curse can free the victim (see the *bestow curse* spell). The effect cannot be dispelled. Anyone paralyzed by Shamruk seems dead, though a successful Spot check (DC 20) or Heal check (DC 15) reveals the victim is still alive. This power works in conjunction with Shamruk's Damaging Touch.

Phylactery: Shamruk's phylactery is a small metal box (Hardness 20, 40 hp, DC 40 to break) that she keeps hidden in the catacombs. It has a caster level of 12.

Rebuke Undead (Su): Shamruk can Rebuke Undead six times per day.

Spontaneous Casting: Shamruk can "lose" a prepared spell (other than domain spells) in order to cast any inflict spell of the same level or lower.

Summon Familiar: Shamruk has a tiny poisonous snake named Venom as her familiar, whose existence she keeps hidden from everyone else in the Necropolis.

Turn Resistance (Ex): When resolving a Turn, Rebuke, Command, or Bolster attempt, add +4 to the Shamruk's Hit Dice total.

SHAMRUK (HAJAH LUUD) (CONT'D)

Undead: Undead are immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromantic effects, and mind-influencing effects. Undead are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage or drain, or energy drain. They have no Constitution scores and are therefore immune to any effect requiring a Fortitude save (unless it affects objects). Undead have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet. Spellcasting undead make Concentration checks using their Charisma modifier, and negative energy can heal undead creatures. An undead creature is not at risk of death from massive damage, but when reduced to 0 hit points or less it is immediately destroyed. Undead cannot be raised. *Resurrection* can affect them, but generally fails because they're unwilling to return to life.

Spells: (5/4+1/3+1/2+1) As a cleric, Shamruk worships a deity of malign evil; her chosen domains are Death and Trickery. These domains allow her to use a death touch once per day upon succeeding at a melee touch attack against a living creature (if the creature's hit point total is less than 5d6, it dies), and take Bluff, Disguise, and Hide as class skills. The DC to resist her cleric spells is 13 + Wisdom modifier + the spell level. She has the following spells already prepared; domain spells are marked with an asterisk.

- 0 Level — *guidance, light, mending, purify food and drink, resistance*
- 1st Level — *cause fear, change self*, detect undead, protection from good, summon monster I*
- 2nd Level — *desecrate, hold person, invisibility*, undetectable alignment*
- 3rd Level — *contagion, deeper darkness, nondetection**

Spells: (4+1/6+1/6+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/3+1) As a wizard, Shamruk specializes in Necromancy and cannot cast Divination spells. She knows the following spells; those prepared are marked with asterisks. The DC to resist her wizard spells is 16 + the spell level.

- 0 Level — *arcane mark*, dancing lights, detect magic*, ghost sound*, mage hand*, ray of frost, read magic*, resistance*
- 1st Level — *change self*, charm person*, expeditious retreat*, feather fall, hold portal, hypnotism*, mage armor, magic missile*, magic weapon, protection from good, spider climb, ventriloquism**
- 2nd Level — *alter self*, darkness, fog cloud, ghoul touch*, hypnotic pattern*, obscure object, protection from arrows*, scare*, see invisibility, summon monster II, web**
- 3rd Level — *blink*, dispel magic*, fireball*, flame arrow, haste*, magic circle against good, slow, suggestion*, vampiric touch, wind wall*
- 4th Level — *dimension door*, fire trap, ice storm, improved invisibility*, minor globe of invulnerability*, polymorph other, polymorph self, stoneskin*, summon monster IV**
- 5th Level — *animate dead, dominate person, feeblemind, magic jar*, summon monster V*, teleport*, transmute rock to mud*, transmute mud to rock, wall of force*, wall of stone*
- 6th Level — *anti-magic field*, chain lightning*, disintegrate, globe of invulnerability*, mass suggestion*, summon monster VI*

Possessions: bracers of armor +3, dagger of venom +1, amulet of undetectable alignment, phylactery, spellbook

AMULET OF UNDETECTABLE ALIGNMENT

This silver amulet hides the wearer's alignment just as the *undetectable alignment* spell does.

Caster Level: 8th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *undetectable alignment*; **Market Price:** 80,000 gp; **Weight:** —

SACRED GROUND

present condition, there was in fact a single survivor — Hajah Luud. Hajah was an apprentice of the necromancer Umkas Ozav and shared to some degree in his dark wisdom. She had hoped her master would succeed in his foul plan to breach the wall between the living and the dead so that she might share in a portion of his newfound power as Lord of the Undead. His destruction, along with that of everything else on the island, left her crippled, deformed, and without any hope of achieving the power she lusted after.

Hajah spent many decades slowly building up her own power, eventually achieving lichdom so

that she might recreate her master's experiments. She believes she has almost every element she needs to succeed. All that she requires now is unfettered access to the Well of Souls, something she has not yet been able to manage. This may take some time, since many of the junior priests of the Necropolis fear her (a consequence of her undead status) and even some of the seniors openly wonder why she keeps to herself and spends so much time in the catacombs.

In public, Hajah plays her part as Shamruk perfectly. Her knowledge of both undead and the Order of the White Rose is impeccable. Her only real fear is that one day someone who

VENOM

Tiny Snake Familiar

CR —; SZ T (animal); HD 17; 28 hp; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 23 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +8 natural); Atk melee +16/+11 (poison, bite); Face 2 1/2 ft. x 2 1/2 ft. (coiled); Reach 0 ft.; SA Poison; SQ Alertness, Empathic Link, Improved Evasion, Scent, Share Spells, Speak with Master, Speak with Snakes, SR 17, Touch; AL N; SV Fort +4, Reflex +5, Will +8; Str 6, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 2

Skills: Balance +11, Climb +12, Hide +18, Listen +8, Spot +8

Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite)

Alertness: While Venom is within arm's reach, Shamruk gains Alertness; this has been included in Shamruk's stats.

Empathic Link (Su): Shamruk can communicate telepathically with Venom up to one mile away.

Improved Evasion (Ex): If Venom is subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex save for half damage, Venom takes no damage on successful save and half on a failure.

Poison (Ex): Venom's poison is administered on a successful bite attack. On a failed Fortitude

save (DC 11) it deals initial and secondary 1d6 temporary Constitution score damage.

Scent (Ex): Creatures with Scent can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell, and can pinpoint the source of a scent if it is within 5 feet. They can follow tracks by smell, making a Wisdom check DC 10 + 2 per hour that the trail is cold.

Share Spells: Any spell Shamruk casts on herself may also affect Venom if he is within five feet. She may also cast spells with a target of "You" on Venom instead of herself.

Speak with Master: Shamruk and Venom can communicate verbally.

Speak with Snakes: Venom can communicate with other snakes.

Spell Resistance: To determine if a spell or spell-like ability works against Venom, the spellcaster makes a level check (1d20 + caster level). If the result equals or exceeds 17, the spell works normally, though Venom still gets a saving throw if the spell allows such.

Touch: When Shamruk casts a touch spell, Venom can act as the "toucher" and deliver the spell.

SACRED GROUND

knew the genuine Shamruk will visit the Necropolis and expose her for the fraud she is. Of course, the wily lich has already prepared for such a possibility, having secreted provisions and supplies in the catacombs beneath the monastery. Should she have to do so, Hajah will retreat there until she can escape to plot the downfall of the monastery from a more secure location.

JEZIRPA

Slayer of Undead

"Can there be a more noble vocation than putting the dead to rest?"

The paladin Jezirpa is the leader of the Knights of the White Rose and as experienced a hunter of the undead as one can find in the Necropolis. Though younger than both Sartani and Arbelam, Jezirpa has a long history battling against the evil dead. Her father was a ghost hunter from the mainland who taught his craft to his daughter and instilled in her a devo-

tion to the Judge of the Dead. From the time she was a young girl, Jezirpa imbibed the teachings of the Order and vowed to follow in her father's footsteps, a path that eventually led her to the Necropolis in the dying days of Ursaan's abbacy.



Jezirpa commands a force of twenty Knights of the White Rose, half of whom are 1st-level Warriors. The remaining ten are equally divided between 2nd- and 3rd-level Warriors.

Jezirpa is well liked by her underlings and is generally respected within the Necropolis. She enjoys an unusually good relationship with Arbelam, who, despite his conservatism, has always backed the idea of a military arm of the Order. Like many people, she is uncomfortable around Shamruk and she has begun to suspect there is something unusual about the priestess. Jezirpa is pleased with her work on the island, but hopes one day to return to the mainland to found other chapters of the Knights at other monasteries. For now, Sartani has not granted his permission to this enterprise, worrying how

ULTALAN

Heavy Warhorse

CR 3; SZ L (magical beast); HD 8; 54 hp; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 50 ft.; AC 20 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +10 natural); Atk melee +9/+4 (1d6+4 each, crit20/x2, 2 hooves), melee +4 (1d4+2, crit20/x2, bite); Face 5 ft. x 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Empathic Link, Improved Evasion, Scent, Share Saving Throws, Share Spells; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 7, Wis 13, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +7, Spot +7

Empathic Link: Jezirpa and Ultalan can communicate telepathically up to a distance of one mile.

Improved Evasion (Ex): If Ultalan is subject to an attack that allows a Reflex save for

half damage, he takes no damage on a success and half damage on a failure.

Scent (Ex): Creatures with Scent can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell, and can pinpoint the source of a scent if it is within 5 feet. They can follow tracks by smell, making a Wisdom check DC 10 + 2 per hour that the trail is cold.

Share Saving Throws: Ultalan uses his own base save or Jezirpa's, whichever is higher.

Share Spells: Any spell Jezirpa casts on herself may also affect Ultalan if he is within five feet. Jezirpa can cast spells with a target of "You" on Ultalan instead of herself.

SACRED GROUND

the Order as a whole might react to this innovation of his. Nevertheless, he has promised that he will one day give his permission and it

is for this day that Jezirpa waits with great anticipation, for it would be the fulfillment of her dreams since childhood.

JEZIRPA

1st-level Human Ranger/ 8th-level Paladin

CR 9; SZ M (humanoid); HD 1d10+1 + 8d10+8; 78 hp; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+7 *banded mail* +1), Atk melee +15/+10 (1d8+5, crit 20/x3, +2 *warhammer*); SA Favored Enemy (undead), Smite Evil, Spells, Turn Undead; SQ Aura of Courage, Detect Evil, Divine Grace, Divine Health, Lay on Hands, Remove Disease, Special Mount; AL LG; SV Fort +13, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 15

Skills: Climb +1, Concentration +3, Craft (trapmaking) +5, Diplomacy +3, Heal +7, Hide +1, Intuit Direction +5, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Knowledge (religion) +8, Knowledge (undead) +7, Move Silently +1, Ride +2, Search +2, Sense Motive +4, Spot +6, Wilderness Lore +4

Feats: Ambidexterity, Combat Reflexes, Extra Turning, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (warhammer)

Aura of Courage (Su): Jezirpa is immune to fear, and allies within ten feet of her gain a +4 morale bonus to saves against fear effects.

Detect Evil (Sp): At will, Jezirpa can *detect evil*, as the spell.

Divine Grace: Jezirpa applies a bonus of +4 to all saving throws.

Divine Health: Jezirpa is immune to all diseases, including magical diseases.

Favored Enemy: Jezirpa gains a +1 bonus to Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and

Wilderness Lore checks when using them against undead. She gets the same bonus to weapon damage rolls against creatures of this type.

Lay on Hands (Sp): Jezirpa can heal 16 points of damage by touch as a standard action. She can cure herself or may choose to divide her curing among multiple recipients. Alternatively, Jezirpa can use any or all of these points to deal damage to undead creatures like a touch spell. She decides how many cure points to use as damage after successfully touching the undead creature.

Remove Disease (Sp): Jezirpa can *remove disease* as the spell, twice per week.

Smite Evil (Su): Once per day, Jezirpa can Smite Evil with a +4 bonus on her attack roll and deals 6 extra points of damage. If she accidentally Smites a creature that is not evil, the Smite has no effect but it is still used up for that day.

Special Mount: Jezirpa keeps a heavy warhorse named Ultalan.

Turn Undead: Jezirpa can Turn Undead 9 times per day. She Turns Undead as a cleric of 6th level would.

Spells: (2) Jezirpa casts spells as a 4th-level caster, and the DC to resist her spells is 13 + the spell level. She has access to any spell on the paladin spell list, but normally prepares the following spells.

1st Level — *detect undead*, *protection from evil*

Possessions: +2 *warhammer*, +1 *banded mail*

PRIESTS OF THE WHITE ROSE

Devout Servants

"We gladly give up our bodies — for only our souls truly matter."

The typical priest of the Necropolis has spent a good deal of time in study and meditation, learning the secrets of death and life. He is dedicated to the service of the Judge of the Dead and obeys Sartani's commands without obvious question. Of late, many have become more outspoken in their opinions about matters of policy, but few are disloyal or unhappy with the abbot's leadership. When not in prayer, they work in one of several areas within the monastery, such as the infirmary, blacksmithy, or the library. Despite the cold nature of their surroundings, most priests are friendly and open with outsiders — the few they ever see, that is.



⦿ TYPICAL PRIEST OF THE WHITE ROSE

3rd-Level Human Adepts

CR 2; SZ M (humanoid); HD 3d6+9; 22 hp; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (Dex), Atk melee +2 (1d8+1, crit 20/x3, warhammer); SA Spells, Summon Familiar; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 11

Skills: Concentration +3, Heal +2, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Knowledge (religion) +5, Knowledge (undead) +3, Profession (any one) +3, Spellcraft +2

Feats: Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (warhammer)

Summon Familiar: The priests possess the ability to summon a familiar, but none have

exercised it as yet, since it runs counter to the traditions of the Order of the White Rose. However, Abbot Sartani has indicated that he will not forbid any priest from breaking with tradition if they choose.

Spells: (3/3): The priests worship the Judge of the Dead. The DC to resist their spells is 11 + the spell level. They can cast any spell on the adept spell list, but usually have the following spells prepared.

0 Level — *detect magic, light, read magic*
1st-Level — *bleed, detect evil, protection from evil*

Possessions: warhammer

THE SITE

From a distance, the Necropolis is an especially impressive sight — a five-story ziggurat of dark stone surrounded by greenery on an otherwise desolate and forbidding island. Anyone approaching the monastery will be impressed by its sheer mass. The large areas of plant life — crops, vegetables, even flowers — immediately circling the structure are a stark contrast to the deadness of the rest of the island, not to mention a symbol of the Order's dedication to its cause.

HISTORY OF THE ISLAND

Hundreds of years ago, a necromantic cabal led by the wizard Umkas Ozav was drawn to the island because of the presence of the Well of Souls (see right). The Well, while not unique in the world, was nevertheless sufficiently unusual that Ozav could not overlook its potential in his nefarious schemes.

Ozav believed that, because the Well is a conduit between this world and the realm of the dead, he could use it to rend the veil separating the two, creating a hellish new reality in which the living and the dead exist side by side. Ozav hoped his plan would not only succeed, but would give him untold power as the Lord of the Undead. Filled with unmatched ambition and a hatred for the order the gods had imposed on mortals, the necromancer saw the Well of Souls as his chance to achieve his own dark dreams.

Fortunately for the world, Ozav was as incompetent as he was arrogant. He failed to under-

stand the true nature of the Well of Souls and, in the process of enacting his ritual, created a necromantic disaster that destroyed nearly all living things on the island and leveled buildings for miles around. Its effects were felt even on the mainland, but the worst aftershocks occurred on the island itself. Undead appeared in huge numbers, spawning seemingly spontaneously. The more-intelligent of them used the island's terrain to hide themselves, including the catacombs that riddled the place. Only Ozav's apprentice, Hajah Luud, escaped the holocaust that turned the island into a haven for the living dead — a fitting testimonial to Ozav's insane plan.

The lingering effects of Ozav's ritual drew the attention of the Order of the White Rose. A contingent of priests visited the island and quickly determined that the Well of Souls must never again be misused in this fashion, lest a more proficient necromancer achieve what Ozav failed to do. Soon thereafter, construction of the Necropolis began over the site of the Well. Upon its completion decades later, it became a minor pilgrimage site for those who sought the judgment of the Judge of the Dead, or his aid in resolving issues relating to life and death. Yet, the protection of the Well and the cleansing of the taint of death upon the island remain the primary missions of the Necropolis. In this, all abbots have been united for hundreds of years.

GROUND FLOOR

The ground floor is all that most visitors to the Necropolis ever see. This is not only a function of the Order's secretiveness, but also of design.

NEW COMMUNITY: THE NECROPOLIS

Size: Hamlet; **Power Center:** Magical; **Alignment:** Lawful Neutral; **GP Limit:** 100 gp (plus clerical magic, weapons, and armor); **Ready Cash:** 1,000 gp; **Population:** 102 adults (98% human, 1% half-elf, 1% other).

Authority Figures: Abbot Sartani, 15th-level Human Cleric of the Judge of the Dead; Arbelam, 12th-level Human Cleric of the Judge of the Dead; Jezirpa, 1st-Level Human Ranger/8th-Level Paladin of the Judge of the Dead

SACRED GROUND

Entrance Hall

The entrance hall is also known as the “outer temple” for good reason. Dominating this large room is an equally large statue of the Judge of the Dead, a sculpture so tall that its head reaches up into the second floor above, around which a catwalk and balcony have been constructed. The hall is decorated with numerous other images and icons that represent the Judge, the Order, and the various historical personages associated with both, such as saints, martyrs, and heroes. These images show the

glory and power of the Judge and emphasize his stern nature over his kindly one.



Several junior priests (use the Typical Priest stats) and at least one senior priest (a 7th-level human cleric) always staff the hall.

These priests attend to the veneration of the Judge through rituals and prayer. Anyone who enters the Hall is very likely to do so while some sort of ceremony is under way. The priests do not mind such interruptions, provided the visi-

NEW WONDROUS ITEM: WELL OF SOULS

In many ways, the Well of Souls is the true holy of holies in the Necropolis. Its presence on the island is both what drew the Order to it and why the Order remains despite the lingering malignity of the necromantic disaster. To all appearances, the Well is simply a very large container set in the ground, filled with a black liquid whose surface reflects even the slightest bit of light in brilliant — almost pyrotechnic — ways. In reality, the Well contains not a drop of liquid at all. Instead, it is a planar conduit between the Prime Material Plane and the Outer Planes. According to the priests of the Order, it is the means by which the souls of the recently departed travel from this reality to the Judge of the Dead’s court before being sent to their final reward.

The Well is exactly as the Order believes it to be. Anyone who immerses himself in its “liquid” surface is instantly transported to another plane, where the Judge rules and metes out punishment and reward to the dead. The exact details of this plane are left to the GM to determine, based on the planar cosmology he uses in his own campaign. What is important is that the Well functions like a *well of many worlds*, except that it works only one way. That is, anyone who passes through the Well cannot return to the Material Plane, unless the Judge specifically allows him to do so. This is why the Order does not use it in

this fashion, as well as why the souls of the dead cannot escape into the Necropolis.

The priests of the Order rarely use the Well for any purpose, preferring to keep it locked away from prying eyes. Only the abbot and the Council of Elders ever visit this room and then only rarely. That’s because, in addition to its other effects, the Well is a powerful amplifier of necromantic spells. Any spell belonging to the Necromancy school cast within 10 feet of the Well has its effectiveness doubled, just as if it had been affected by the feats *Enlarge Spell*, *Empower Spell*, and *Extend Spell*, although the caster suffers none of the drawbacks associated with those feats.

Since the Well is supposedly the means by which the souls of the dead leave the Material Plane for their just rewards, the priests also believe that it is a “weak point” in reality. Consequently, an unscrupulous person might find the means to further weaken the Well and create a rift between the Material Plane and the Outer Planes, thereby effecting a disaster of grand proportions. Indeed, many priests believe that just such a disaster is what led to the desolation of the island — and they are quite correct.

Caster Level: 17th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *gate*; *Market Price:* 82,000 gp; *Weight:* immovable

tor does not interfere with their ministrations or attempt to leave the room before they have properly identified themselves.

Hall of the Dying

The Hall of the Dying is a large open infirmary room where the priests receive those who wish to end their lives under their care. Though the priests are capable of great healing, those who come to the Necropolis for often do so because they wish to die and are prepared for their ultimate judgment. For whatever reason, they have elected to forego magical means of resuscitation, believing it best to trust in the Judge's wisdom.

At any given time, the Hall of the Dying is filled with between two and twelve dying persons. Though many are elderly, others are stricken with diseases or dire magic. There are a half-dozen priests (use the Typical Priest stats) who attend to their physical needs, as well as talking with them and leading them in prayers to the Judge.

Funerary Rooms

The funerary rooms are a natural extension of the Halls of the Dying. It is here that bodies are prepared for burial, after being ritually cleansed and dressed, according to the rites of the Order.



Every body that passes through these rooms is blessed with the *gentle repose* spell to prevent its rising as an undead creature. Funerary rites are also celebrated here, before the body is consigned to the earth outside the Necropolis.

Most of the time these rooms are empty, and no priest spends any time in them.

Inner Temple

The inner temple, though smaller than the entrance hall, is in fact where most of the priests worship when they do so communally. The size limitation prevents the whole of the Order from worshipping together all at once, but during important holy days the inner temple is packed wall to wall with as many priests and acolytes as possible. Since this is still never sufficient to accommodate all of the Order's members, multiple ceremonies are held on any given day, each one led by a different senior priest.

Interestingly, the inner temple is a much less oppressive worship area than the entrance hall. There is neither a monumental statue of the Judge nor any representations of the great saints and heroes of the Order. Indeed, there are no images at all within the inner

THE DOORS OF SOULS

The huge steel doors at the south end of the inner temple exist to block the way to the Well of Souls chamber that lies beyond them. Standing 10 feet tall and engraved with a different representation of the Judge on each (one stern, one kindly), the doors are magically protected against entry by those without permission. The doors are kept locked at all times and only the abbot and members of the Council of Elders possess keys. However, only the abbot may pass through the doors unhindered whenever he wishes, for even the Elders must have specific permission from Sartani to do so. Attempting to pick the lock is a very difficult Open Lock check (DC 40).

Beyond the keys, the doors are protected with a *greater glyph of warding* against anyone who does not worship the Judge of the Dead. Anyone who does not meet this criterion and attempts to pass beyond the doors (with or without a proper key) sets off the spell and summons four formian warriors, who immediately attack the intruders and sound the alarm. If a rogue attempts to Search for the *glyph* or Disable Device check on it, both checks must be made against DC 31 — a nearly impossible task. The doors each have a Hardness of 10, 60 hp, and DC 28 to break.

SACRED GROUND

temple. That's because it services the "inner mysteries" of the Order, which emphasize the kindly and benevolent aspect of the Judge over his sterner public face. The only obviously impressive elements of this chamber are the huge steel doors that bar the way to the Well of Souls chamber beyond. Only rarely are outsiders allowed to enter the inner temple, let alone to worship here. There are several junior priests and at least one senior priest here at all times, as well as a handful of acolytes. They prevent anyone from entering the Well of Souls chamber who does not have permission to do so, even at the cost of their lives.

Apothecary

In their dealings with the dead and dying, the priests of the Order have become very knowledgeable about herbs and medicines of all sorts. Consequently, the Necropolis possesses a very large store of remedies and cures, some of which are unique to the monastery and are exported to the mainland.



These herbs and remedies include several *potions of darkvision* and *remove paralysis* (used by priests venturing into the catacombs), as well as an assortment of *potions of cure light*, *-moderate*, and *-serious wounds*. The apothecary also contains healer's kits containing salves, balms, and other curative ointments that grant a +1 competence bonus to all Heal checks made while using their contents.

Hospital Wards

Generally, the Necropolis is concerned only with the dying and the already dead. Nevertheless, the priests maintain three large rooms that are used as hospital wards in times of trouble. As recently as six months ago, these rooms were bustling with activity, as a foolhardy mercenary company landed on the island and attempted to seize the Well of Souls for their mysterious employer. The priests

defeated the mercenaries but at great cost both to themselves and their attackers.

The abbot and Arbelam learned from the mercenaries that someone intending to recreate Umkas Ozav's original necromantic experiment hired them. This revelation frightened both priests, who doubted that anyone remembered the disaster that devastated the island so long ago. Now they are both on the lookout for signs of other attempts to follow in Ozav's footsteps. This has made Shamruk's own goals more difficult, as she must tread even more carefully lest she reveal her true identity. The lich also ponders the identity of the mercenaries' employer, considering the possibility that she might not have been the only person to escape the disaster centuries ago.

SECOND FLOOR

The second floor is rarely seen by anyone who is not a member of the Order. While it contains little that is truly secret or hazardous to outsiders, there is also very little reason for them to visit.

Casting Rooms

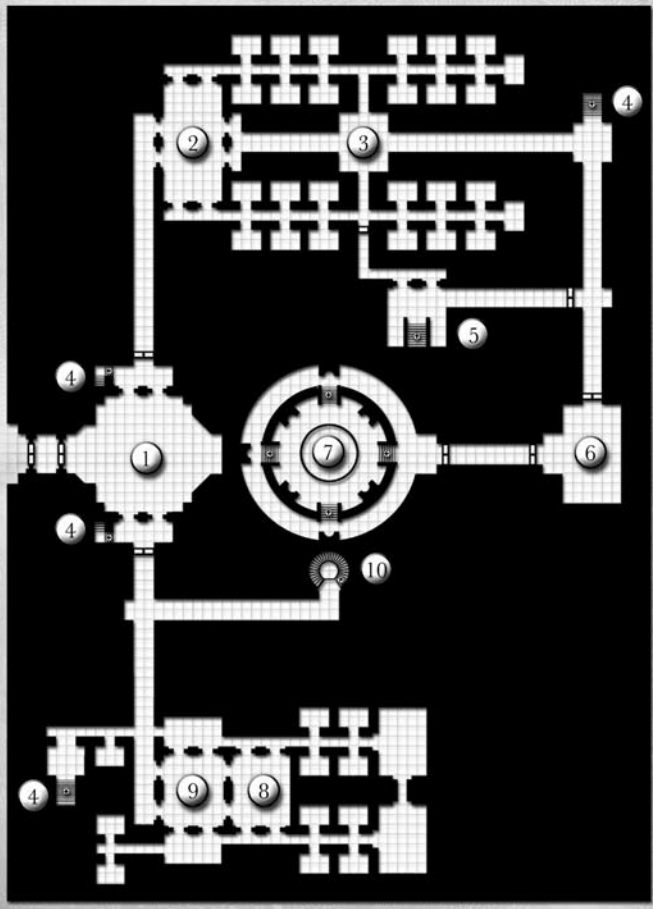
The casting rooms are actually a collection of classrooms and work areas, where the priests of the Necropolis practice their magical arts. These rooms are generally empty, except during times when the abbot has ordered a major magical endeavor or when new priests are being taught the ways of the Necropolis. In both cases, the rooms will often be filled during daytime hours and stand empty only at night.



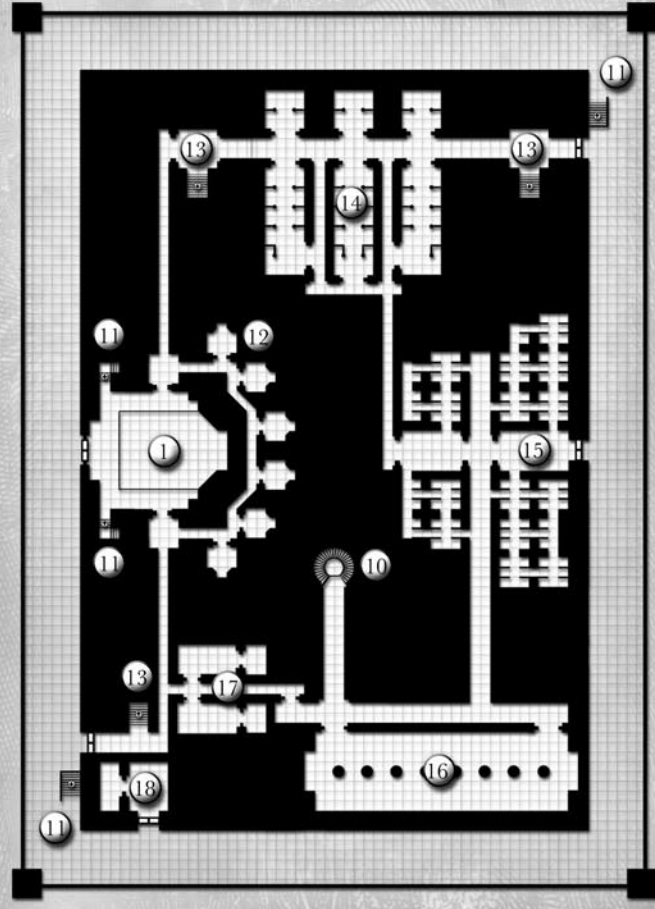
Because they are used for complex magical rituals, these rooms all include shelves with magical components and divine foci of various sorts. Provided the item that's desired is worth no more than 500 gp, each casting room can be assumed to have at least one of any given spell component or divine focus required for clerical spells.

THE NECROPOLIS

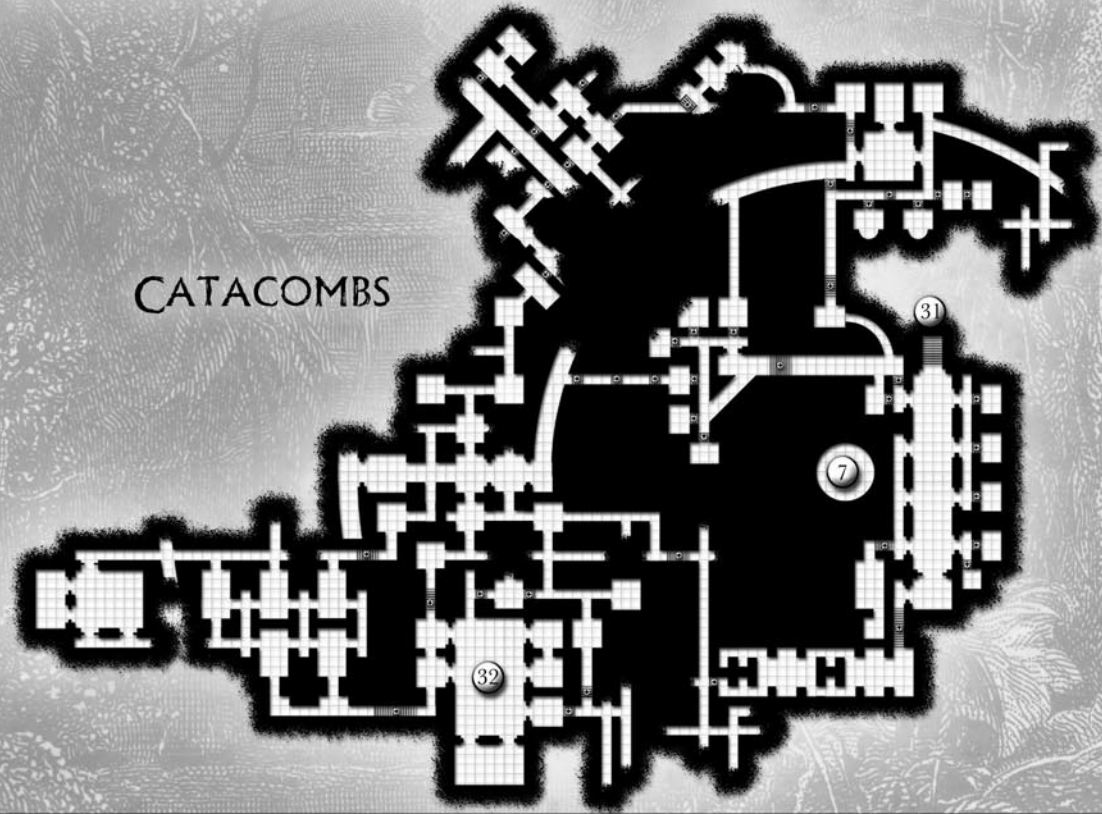
LEVEL ONE



LEVEL TWO

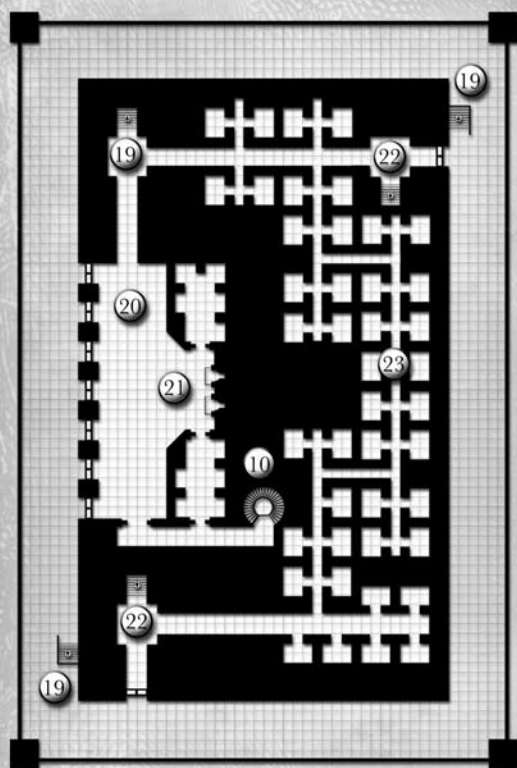


CATACOMBS

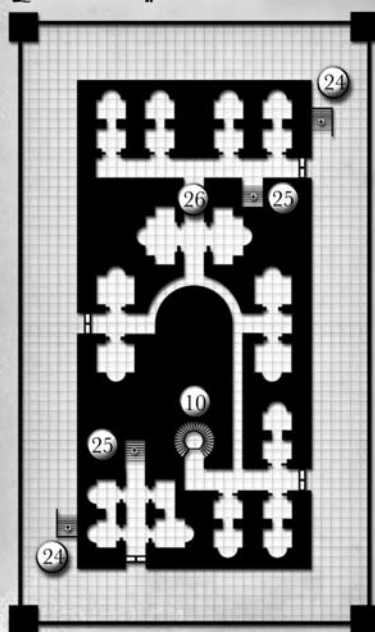




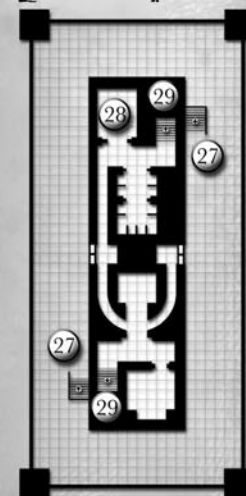
LEVEL THREE



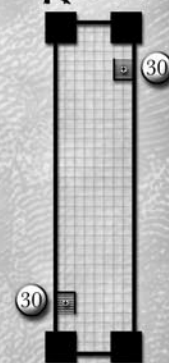
LEVEL FOUR



LEVEL FIVE



ROOF



KEY

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Entrance Hall | 11. Stairs Down to Level One | 22. Stairs Up to Level Four |
| 2. Hall of the Dying | 12. Meditation Chambers | 23. Junior Priests' Cells |
| 3. Funerary Rooms | 13. Stairs Up to Level Three | 24. Stairs Down to Level Three |
| 4. Stairs Up to Level Two | 14. Acolytes' Quarters | 25. Senior Priests' Quarters |
| 5. Stairs Down to Catacombs | 15. Halls of Wisdom | 26. Stairs Up to Level Five |
| 6. Inner Temple | 16. Hall of Learning | 27. Stairs Down to Level Four |
| 7. Well of Souls | 17. Casting Rooms | 28. Abbot's Quarters |
| 8. Hospital Wards | 18. Blacksmithy | 29. Stairs Up to Roof |
| 9. Apothecary | 19. Stairs Down to Level Two | 30. Stairs Down to Level Five |
| 10. Central Stairs
(Connecting Levels 1-4) | 20. Dining Hall | 31. Stairs Up to Level One |
| | 21. Kitchen | 32. Great Hall |

SACRED GROUND

Hall of Learning

The Hall of Learning is an adjunct to both the casting rooms and the Halls of Wisdom. It is, in effect, a large and open area for instruction in any matters that require space larger than that available elsewhere. From its inception, the Order has had a tradition of peripatetic teaching, in which an older and more experienced priest walks about, followed by his students. Though many priests no longer hold to the old ways, preferring to use this room simply as a large classroom, traditionalists like Arbelam maintain the forms of the past. Interestingly, his maintenance of this tradition has proven very popular with even the youngest generation of acolytes. Consequently, Arbelam is favored as an instructor in the monastery.

At any given time (except night), there are always a handful of priests here, either seated in one place studying or wandering about in contemplation. The room's arrangement, with a series of thick pillars through its center, has an unusual effect, creating "wells" of silence, from which sounds do not easily echo. This is a purely natural phenomenon and is far inferior to the silence afforded by magic. Many priests use these wells to ensure their teaching does not disturb others in the hall, however. They're also where Shamruk occasionally meets her allies within the Necropolis, as she plots its downfall.



The Hall of Learning also contains two items of special significance. The first is a *helm of comprehending lan-*

guages and reading magic, which is kept in a glass case in the center of the room. Instructors occasionally use it to augment the abilities of inexperienced priests.

Also hidden in a false wall panel (Search DC 25) is a spare *amulet of undetectable alignment*, which Shamruk has secreted here for safekeeping.

Meditation Chambers

The philosophy of the Order of the White Rose, as well as the teachings of the Judge of the Dead, emphasize the importance of the mind and its superiority to the body. That isn't to say that the body is denigrated, for it is the vessel of the soul and the vehicle of the mind. It has a noble task and the desecration of the body is a grave crime that the Judge frowns upon most severely.

Nevertheless, the Order teaches that it is the mind that survives death and is the bearer of one's essence. Those priests who devote themselves to the improvement of their minds spend their time in these meditation cells. Sometimes they do so in solitude, sometimes with fellow priests. Many spend all their spare hours here, and a handful of priests can be found her at any time of the day.



One senior priest, a former member of the Council named Erled (14th-level human cleric), has not left his medi-

📖 USING THE LIBRARY

Without an intimate knowledge of contents and catalog system, the large number of books in the Halls of Learning may make it difficult to find anything specific. The head librarian is the only priest who truly knows every nook and cranny of the library. Convincing him to aid you, without the specific order of the abbot or a senior priest like Arbelam, requires a Diplomacy check (DC

15) to succeed. Failure indicates he is too busy to assist the character at this time.

Once a character has gotten the books he requested, he gains a circumstance bonus of +1 or +2 (at the GM's discretion) to any Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) checks made while researching in the Halls of Wisdom. This represents the vast resources the monastery has to offer in these fields.

tation chamber for any more than a couple of hours a day in twenty years!

Erled is an exception, but his presence here is important to keep in mind.



Casters of divine spells from domains granted by the Judge of the Dead who cast spells within the meditation chambers are treated as one level higher for the purposes of determining any variable effects associated with the spell (range, duration, etc.), due to the profound calm of these rooms.

Halls of Wisdom

The Halls of Wisdom make up the large library that the Order of the White Rose has accumulated over the years. Originally, this was little more than the personal collection of codices, books, and scrolls of the first abbot himself. Over time, thanks to the generosity of both the Order and other patrons, as well as the relentless dedication of a succession of abbots, the library has grown to its present size. There is an especially large quantity of books relating to arcane and religious topics, both of direct and indirect relation to the work of the Order.

There is also a reserved collection of books on the undead, necromancy, and the occult. These books are available to priests only with the express permission of the head librarian, who acts under orders from the abbot and Council of Elders. Should such permission be given, a user is permitted access to a specific book, according to the wishes of the librarian. No more than a single book from this collection may be used at a one time and no such books are permitted to leave the Halls of Wisdom themselves.



Among the books of the library's reserved collection is a *book of infinite spells*.

Acolytes' Quarters

The lowest level of the monastery's hierarchy is made up of acolytes (use the Typical Priest stats). All of these men and women have taken only simple vows to the Order. They are not fully initiated members of the Necropolis, though many of them may one day take more solemn vows before the abbot. Until then, they live here in communal rooms, spending their waking hours in a variety of activities — cooking, cleaning, guard duty, etc.

Many acolytes are temporary residents of the Necropolis. They come to spend a few months or even years with the priests, during which time they work side-by-side with them. After their period of service ends, they return to the mainland to whatever lives they wish.

The primary exceptions are the Knights of the White Rose. These men and women, led by Jezirpa, have pledged themselves more formally to the Order, to serve as its foot soldiers in the battle against the undead and foul necromancy. The Knights are considered acolytes only because Sartani has not yet found a better place for them in the hierarchy.

Blacksmithy

The Necropolis is largely self-sufficient. The Order does not want the priests to rely on outside support, if they can avoid it. The blacksmithy is one example of this philosophy put into action. Several priests possess considerable skill at crafting weapons, armor, and other metal implements. They use the island's considerable iron deposits to forge these items, many times of the strange metal they occasionally find called "grave steel." Grave steel is brown in color and highly magical. It appears to have been created as a byproduct of the necromantic disaster centuries ago. Grave steel is in short supply, but the abbot has ordered that it be used to give the Knights of the White Rose powerful defenses against the undead, something at which the strange metal excels.

Magical weapons and armor are fashioned here as well. Occasionally, Sartani allows outsiders to obtain these items in exchange for a promise of service to the Order. Adventurers from the mainland sometimes make such arrangements. So far, the abbot has been reluctant to allow grave steel weapons to leave the island, for fear knowledge of its existence will draw the attention of unpleasant parties. Unfortunately for Sartani, Shamruk has already made its existence known to her compatriots and the lich plans to seize some of the metal herself for use against the Necropolis when the time is right.

THIRD FLOOR

The third floor of the Necropolis is home to the junior priests of the monastery. They live, sleep, and eat here. Most of the time the floor is very quiet, even during mealtimes. Visitors almost never see this floor.

Dining Hall

The dining hall is where the priests gather for their communal meals. Every member of the monastery, from acolyte on up to the abbot, eats at the same time and there is little regard shown for hierarchy. All priests eat the same meals and sit at the same simple tables. While they do so, a priest reads aloud to his comrades from the pages of sacred scriptures or the writings of previous abbots. The priests listen silently while they eat, for there is no speaking during mealtimes — a rule that is strictly enforced even under the relatively open-minded rule of Sartani.



The priests eat bland, vegetarian fare collected locally from the tough roots and tubers that grow on the island, supplemented by the judicious use of *create food and water* spells.

In keeping with the Order's desire that the Necropolis be self-sufficient, almost no foodstuffs are imported from the mainland. On spe-

NEW MAGICAL MATERIAL: GRAVE STEEL

Grave steel is a rare and magical dull brownish metal. When worked into steel, it becomes a potent material from which to fashion weapons and armor to use against the undead. Armor made from grave steel is just as heavy as that made from normal materials, but spell failure chances for armors and shields made from it are decreased by 10%, maximum Dexterity bonus is increased by 1, and armor check penalties are likewise decreased by 1. Non-armor or non-shield items made from grave steel weigh the same amount as those made from normal steel. Note that items not made primarily of metal are not meaningfully affected. (A longsword is affected, while a spear is not, for example.)

Weapons or armors fashioned from grave steel are treated as masterwork items with regard to creation times, and the masterwork quality does affect the enhancement bonus of

weapons or the armor check penalty of armor, as normal.

Grave steel's true benefit comes when a crafter creates magic weapons with the *bane (undead)* quality. Good or neutral spellcasters who do so may add the quality for only a +1 bonus cost as opposed to the usual +2. Neutral and evil spellcasters may do the same when adding the *bane (humanoid)* quality.

Grave steel has a Hardness of 10 and 20 hit points per inch of thickness.

Item	Market Price
Light armor	+1,000 gp
Medium armor	+3,000 gp
Heavy armor	+8,000 gp
Shield	+1,000 gp
Other items	+400 gp/lb.

SACRED GROUND

cial occasions (such as feasts and high holy days), the priests are allowed a cup of mushroom wine, cultivated by the abbot himself from fungi that grow in the catacombs. Its taste is an acquired one, but most of the priests (even Arbelam) have come to enjoy its unique flavor.

Kitchen

The kitchen serves not only as the food preparation room for the monastery but also its storage area. Large containers of roots, tubers, and grains can be found here, as well as casks of water, wine, and ale. Because all of the food served in the monastery is so bland, cooking is not an important duty in the Necropolis and those priests assigned to it find it dull and unexciting.

Junior Priests' Cells

The junior priests of the monastery all have similar rooms: small cells that they typically share with one other priest. This leads to a lack of privacy but also helps to forge a bond between the priests, who must rely on one another to survive the dangers of the island. The junior priests have little more than a rough cot and perhaps a chair in their rooms. Personal effects, while not strictly forbidden, are rare and tend to be small and of little value.

FOURTH FLOOR

The fourth floor is home to the senior priests. Only senior priests from other monasteries of the Order are ever allowed to venture this far into the Necropolis. Both the abbot and the Council of Elders agree that this is for the best, since the priests' sleeping quarters are a sanctuary that no one wishes to see violated. Even junior priests and acolytes are rarely allowed here except for a specific purpose.

Senior Priests' Quarters

The senior priests' quarters are somewhat more spacious than their junior counterparts but only slightly so. Even senior priests share their quarters with a fellow priest, quite likely someone they've lived with since they were lower in the hierarchy. It's not uncommon for monastic bunkmates to rise in the Necropolis together and live and work side-by-side for many years.



In addition to their other effects, every senior priest possesses a silver holy symbol of the Judge of the Dead worth 100 gp, which they use as the divine focus for their spells and attempts to Turn Undead.

FIFTH FLOOR

The fifth floor is the private sanctum of the abbot. He maintains his quarters here, as well as a small collection of rooms he may use as he sees fit (such as a meditation chamber or a meeting room). No one except the abbot and members of the Council of Elders may come here unbidden.

Abbot's Quarters

Sartani's quarters are the closest to "spacious" one can find in the Necropolis, and that is only because he has no bunkmate like the other priests under his care. Moreover, the Spartan lifestyle that Sartani has adopted makes his rooms seem even bigger than they actually are. He owns few possessions and has only a limited number of personal effects. Beyond prayer books, vestments, and an icon of the Judge of the Dead, there is little else in the abbot's quarters. Sartani sleeps on a reed mat on the floor and uses neither a pillow nor a blanket. His personal austerity impresses even Arbelam, who finds it all the more strange given the abbot's willingness to stray from tradition in other areas.

SACRED GROUND



Sartani's icon is magical and allows him to discern the will of the Judge of the Dead. Once per day, the icon grants

its possessor the ability to *commune* with the god as per the 5th-level clerical spell of the same name.



LICH LICHEN

Small Plant

Hit Dice: 1d8+1 (5 hp)

Initiative: +1 (Dex)

Speed: 0 ft.

AC: 14 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +2 natural)

Attacks: 4 Tendril slams +3 melee

Damage: Tendril slam 1d3+3 plus poison

Face/Reach: 5 ft. x 5 ft./0 ft.

Special Attacks: Poison, Seize

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft.

Saves: Fort +3, Ref —, Will -4

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12,
Int 1, Wis 2, Cha 1

Climate/Terrain: Any underground

Organization: Solitary or patch (2 – 4)

CR: 2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 2 HD (Small), 3 – 4 HD
(Medium-size)

Lich lichen is a peculiar type of plant life that can be found only in the catacombs beneath the Necropolis. The greatest minds of the Order of the White Rose believe it to be a side effect of the necromantic disaster that devastated the island long ago, although there have been, as yet, no other reported examples of this plant elsewhere in the world.

Despite its name, lich lichen is actually alive, yet imbued with the baleful power of the Negative Energy Plane. The plant appears to be a large mass of gooey, white tendrils between 3 and 5 feet square. The lichen can be found nearly anywhere in the catacombs, but it prefers to grow in dry areas rather than wet ones. The catacombs beneath the Necropolis are large and extensive and the priests have found examples of lich lichen in a wide variety of environments. However, darkness or near-darkness is a constant, since the plant cannot survive direct exposure to sunlight for very

long. The lichen possesses a sickly sweet smell, very similar to the aroma of rotting flesh.

Plant: Plants are immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. They are not subject to critical hits or mind-influencing effects. Lich lichen has Darkvision to a range of 60 feet rather than the Low-light Vision typical of plants.

Poison (Ex): Any creature a tendril seizes or hits with its slam attack must make a Fortitude save (DC 12) or take 1d6 points of temporary Constitution score damage. One minute later, the creature must make a second save against the same DC. Failure indicates that the creature has suffered the loss of an additional point of temporary Constitution score damage. This secondary save must be made whether or not the first one succeeds or fails.

Seize (Ex): Any creature that comes into contact with a lich lichen tendril (either by touching it or being hit by a successful slam attack) must make an opposed Strength check against the lich lichen. Failure indicates that the tendril has grabbed the victim, and the creature is affected by its poison. Each round thereafter, the creature may retry the Strength check to disengage one tendril, but must also make a Reflex save (DC 14 plus the number of tendrils grasping the creature) as one additional tendril attacks the creature and exposes it to more poison damage if the Reflex save is unsuccessful. Each additional tendril after the first that seizes the creature grants the lich lichen a +2 bonus to its Strength checks from that point on.

The tendrils may be cut with edged weapons. They have a Hardness of 5 and 15 hp. For the purposes of spells and other effects, the tendrils are not themselves considered living things.

ROOF

The uppermost level of the Necropolis is its roof. Two staircases lead up to this level, although few priests are ever allowed to visit it. Here, the abbot and the Council of Elders sometimes conduct rituals to the Judge of the Dead, especially on nights when the moon is new and the sky is dark. The elevation of the roof affords a very impressive view of the island, allowing the watcher to see both the devastation of the ancient disaster and the growing greenery that the priests continue to add with each passing year.

THE CATACOMBS

The catacombs are a collection of rooms and chambers located beneath the Necropolis. They are all that remain from the buildings that once stood on the island before Umkas Ozav's necromancy failed centuries ago. When the Order first came here, they built their monastery on top of these foundations and sub-basements both for stability and to ensure that the inhabitants of the catacombs — many types of undead — didn't find their way out.

The Knights of the White Rose occasionally launch forays into the catacombs to battle the undead. Over the years, they've slowly whittled their numbers down to only a handful compared to the vast multitudes that once dwelled here. Shamruk visits the place regularly, maintaining

contact with the undead and furthering her plots against the Necropolis. Should her secret ever be discovered, she will retreat to the catacombs before making her own counter-attack.

The Order has, over the centuries, buried its own dead in the catacombs as a show of defiance against the dark powers that claim this area. These tombs are simple and unadorned, and careful records are kept of which members of the order are buried where. Periodically, priests will take an "inventory" of the tombs to ensure that none of their former brethren have been disturbed or otherwise desecrated.

Great Hall

The great hall is the largest room in the catacombs. It was once the headquarters of Umkas Ozav's cabal of necromancers. The walls are covered with grotesque bas-reliefs and frescoes, depicting all manner of unsavory activities. The priests regularly debate whether to deface and cover up these images, but have never done so, partially out of respect for the past — even an evil past — and partially out of the fear that ill consequences may result. When Shamruk descends into the catacombs, she sometimes meets the undead who dwell here in the great hall. This place holds great significance for her, even centuries later. At the same time, she's careful not to linger here too long, for fear that she might be discovered.



SCENES

One easy way of introducing players to the Necropolis is for them to take the role of pilgrims. The PCs could come to the Necropolis to find the source of the fabled grave steel they've heard tales of, and forge their own magical weapons and armor. Or do-gooder PCs may have heard of the plight of the island and come to join the Knights of the White Rose in their battle against the undead that plague the place. Here are some other ideas for longer adventures:

PATH TO THE DEAD

Various ancient tomes speak of the power of the Well of Souls, and provide information about the failed necromantic ritual of Umkas Ozav. His megalomania is recorded in many books of ancient history — but so are sketchy details of his grand plan to unite the lands of the living and the dead. A sage who presents herself as skeptical of the Well's power contacts the PCs with an offer of great wealth if they're able to verify its existence. Little do the characters know that the sage plans to use the Well as a conduit to travel to the lands of the dead on her own ... and if she succeeds, they may have to follow her there to prevent another necromantic apocalypse!

STRANGER AMONG US

Shamruk's family hasn't heard from her in far too long, and have petitioned the Order

of the White Rose to grant them an audience with her. Priests from a mainland chapter house of the Order begin to suspect that the woman claiming to be Shamruk at the Necropolis is, in fact, someone else entirely when she refuses to consider seeing them, and seems to have large holes in her memory. They contact the player characters to pose as acolytes and discover the secret behind Shamruk's behavior.

ALTERNATE VERSIONS

The Necropolis could be inhabited by a heretical sect of the Order of the White Rose seeking to recreate Ozav's ritual so as to extend the Judge's rulership into the lands of the living as well.

Shamruk might not be evil. She might actually be a special agent of the Judge, sent to the Necropolis in order to share her unique insights as a creature caught between two kinds of existence. Perhaps the traitor in the monastery's midst isn't Shamruk but someone else — Arbelam or even Sartani.

The Well of Souls might not be what the Order believes it to be. Instead, it might be a portal to a very different realm of existence, perhaps one inhabited by wholly evil creature awaiting their chance to seize the Necropolis and use it to gain a foothold in this world.

WANDERING MONSTERS

The catacombs are home to many undead creatures, as well as vermin and other nuisances. The following table provides the GM with an appropriate cross-section of the catacombs' inhabitants.

Roll d%	Creature(s) Encountered
01 – 25	1d2 centipedes, Huge monstrous
26 – 43	1d2 dire bats
44 – 54	1 lich lichen
55 – 65	1d6+2 skeletons
66 – 76	1d4 zombies, Medium-size
77 – 89	1d3 ghouls
90 – 95	1d2 shadows
96 – 100	1 wight

CHAPTER FOUR

RETREAT OF THE WARRIOR SAINT

AT A GLANCE

The followers of the Warrior Saint rose to prominence several hundred years ago, helping to overthrow an oppressive regime. The Order was granted land by the new rulers, and given dispensation to carry out their martial training. The clergy seeks to train any who will learn in all forms of combat, including unarmed combat and the use of peasant tools as weapons.

The Retreat is the heart of the Warrior Saint's church; it is the oldest surviving temple and abbey, and there is great prestige to being trained there. The abbot is famed for his

understanding of the ideals and techniques of the Warrior Saint. Coupled with the martial abilities of the sergeant, the training at the Retreat is second to none.

Despite the high demand for the training provided at the Retreat, few people seek it out. This is because the reputation of the Retreat is only well known among the most powerful warriors and priests of the land. The Retreat itself is unassuming and keeps a low profile, aided by its location, but is well respected in the immediate locale. The presence of the smithy, magical healing, and the winery and brewery often attract those without martial or esoteric interests.



There is value to this anonymity, because the Order has a secret charge. They view themselves as the protectors of the commoners in the realm, and keep close tabs on the various nobles and rulers of the domain, watching for the signs that they are needed to step in and remove another tyrant. Needless to say, they don't talk about this much to outsiders, but their involvement in training and helping the people of the kingdom has allowed them to establish a strong grassroots information network. For now, they're content to wait, watching for signs that it is time to once again fulfill their holy mission.

PLACEMENT

The Retreat of the Warrior Saint sits in a remote valley in the foothills of a mountain range. This should be near settled land, about a day's ride from a small town or large village. The area was once a frontier, back when the Retreat was established, but has been encompassed by the expanding settled lands. The terrain of the area can be altered, but the Retreat should be off the beaten track, and somewhat isolated by geography.

CHARACTERS

ABBOT VERDIVAIN SURESTRIDE

Fanatical Martial Artist

"Good try. Turn your hip more, next time, and try not to let me see what's coming."

Verdivain (VER-dih-vayn) came to the Retreat of the Warrior Saint as a child forty years ago, an orphan from the nearby village. Early in life, he developed a determination to

master the secrets of the Order's fighting style in order to be ready when the Order is again needed. He views this as his destiny, and the reason that his parents were taken from him. He plans to become the repository of the Warrior Saint's martial teachings, learning and teaching until the end of his days. In the meantime, he keeps close watch on the actions of local nobles, looking for the chance to make a difference.

His dedicated pursuit of this goal has had a few unfortunate side effects. When the former abbess of the Retreat died eight years ago, Verdivain was chosen to take her place. He did so with humility, certain that this was his destiny, and his reward for his dedication.

He soon found out how ill-prepared he was for the position, though. His devotion to mastering the fighting style made him an excellent teacher, but a poor administrator, and he was distressingly brusque with the village representatives. His dismissive attitude towards anything other than his studies quickly caused a rift between the Retreat and the village.

The chaplain, Moorvid Dram, came to his rescue, using her gentler touch to soothe the ruffled feathers of the townsfolk, and to steer the new abbot in the proper direction. She has been guiding him in learning to handle these duties, and he trusts her judgement implicitly.

The abbot is still dismissive of what he views as distractions from his calling. Because of this, he seems uninterested in anything other than learning or teaching the secrets of the Warrior Saint fighting arts and examining intelligence reports. The abbot dresses in the simple garb of a monk, wearing a long tunic and snug trousers made of homespun cloth. The only mark of his rank is the vest he wears, emblazoned with the symbol of the Warrior Saint.

Ⓢ ABBOT VERDIVAIN SURESTRIDE

15th-level Human Monk of the Warrior Saint

CR 15; SZ M (humanoid); HD 15d8+15; 84 hp; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 80 ft.; AC 27 (+3 Dex, +9 monk bonus, +1 *ring of protection* +1, +3 *bracers of armor* +3, +1 *vest of natural armor* +1); Atk melee +14/+11/+8/+5 (1d12+3, unarmed), or melee +15/+10/+5 (1d4+3 subdual, weighted rope); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Ki Strike, Quivering Palm, Stunning Attack; SQ Abundant Step, Diamond Body, Diamond Soul (SR 25), Improved Evasion, Leap of the Clouds, Purity of Body, Slow Fall (50 ft.), Still Mind, Wholeness of Body; AL LN; SV Fort +10, Ref +11, Will +14; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 23, Cha 11

Skills: Balance +20, Climb +12, Diplomacy +9, Escape Artist +11, Jump +21, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (religion) +5, Sense Motive +7, Tumble +20

Feats: Bundle of Sticks, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Guardian Stance, Improved Trip, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (weighted rope)

Languages: Common, Celestial

Abundant Step (Sp): The abbot can slip magically between spaces, as per the spell *dimension door* cast by a 7th-level caster, once per day. The abbot's effective casting level is 14th.

Diamond Body (Su): The abbot is immune to poison of all kinds.

Diamond Soul (Ex): The abbot has Spell Resistance 25.

Improved Evasion (Ex): If the abbot makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. On a failed save, he takes only half damage. Evasion can only be used if the abbot is wearing light armor or no armor.

Ki Strike (Su): The abbot's unarmed strike damage can deal damage to a creature with Damage Reduction as if the blow were made with a weapon with a +2 enhancement bonus.

Leap of the Clouds (Ex): The abbot's jumping distance (vertical or horizontal) is not limited according to his height.

Purity of Body (Ex): The abbot is immune to all diseases except for magical diseases.

Quivering Palm (Su): The abbot can use the Quivering Palm attack once a week, and must announce his intent before making his attack roll. Creatures immune to critical hits cannot be affected. The abbot must be of higher level than the target (or have more levels than the target's number of Hit Dice). If the abbot strikes successfully and the target takes damage from the blow, the Quivering Palm attack succeeds. Thereafter, the abbot can choose to try to slay the victim at any later time within 15 days. The abbot merely wills the target to die (a free action), and unless the target makes a Fortitude saving throw (DC 22), it dies. If the saving throw is successful, the target is no longer in danger from that particular Quivering Palm attack (but may be affected by another one at a later time).

Slow Fall (Ex): The abbot takes damage as if a fall were 50 feet shorter than it actually is as long as he is within arm's reach of a wall.

Still Mind (Ex): The abbot receives a +2 bonus to saving throws against spells and effects from the Enchantment school.

Stunning Attack (Su): The abbot can use this ability once per round, but no more than 15 times per day. He must declare he is using a Stunning Attack before making the attack roll (thus, a missed attack roll ruins the attempt). A foe struck by the abbot is forced to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 22). In addition to receiving normal damage, if the saving throw fails, the opponent is stunned for 1 round.

Wholeness of Body (Su): The abbot can cure his own wounds. He can cure up to 30 hit points each day, and can spread this healing out among several uses.

Possessions: Weighted rope used as belt, *ring of protection* +1, *bracers of armor* +3, *vest of natural armor* +1, *periapt of Wisdom* +2, *gloves of Dexterity* +2, *boots of speed*.

SERGEANT NACUN SECONDSONG

Aspiring Crusader

“Are you sure it was just a wolf? We should probably organize a war party, just to make sure it wasn’t a werewolf.”

Sergeant Nacun (NAY-kun) is a young elf considering his accomplishments. He’s only 142 years old, and owes his meteoric rise to his drive to seek out challenges. Over the ten years since he started on his path, he has distinguished himself in combat against mundane and magical threats, all to the greater glory of the Warrior Saint. The hierarchy of the Order felt that he would be a perfect person to put in charge of the defense of the Retreat, where he could gain a little seasoning in the less-martial aspects of service.

While grateful for the promotion and the trust placed in him, the sergeant isn’t sure that he’s the best man for this job. He chafes at the inactivity, longing for a more-challenging assignment, but remains because it is the will of the Order. He takes every opportunity to patrol the

valley around the Retreat and the village, seeking dangers to face and foes to best, but usually returns disappointed. Reports of possible oppression in the kingdom drive him into a frustrated frenzy, as he knows he cannot just ride out and dispense justice.

To keep himself occupied, he drills the acolytes relentlessly, turning them into fine warriors and a very tight unit. Discipline among his troops is strict, but the sergeant’s even-handed manner, heroic reputation, and willingness to work as hard as his men have elevated morale to a fanatical level. Indeed, the acolytes and not a few of the monks follow the sergeant more so than the abbot, and some whisper that the sergeant is the real power in the Retreat. Nacun does everything he can to quash such rumors, but he is flattered by the regard his men have for him.

Bolstered by this respect and goaded by his boredom, Sergeant Nacun has been trying to persuade the abbot to allow his forces to take a more active role in the area. He advocates extended patrols, an increased garrison, and expeditions to eliminate nests of brigands and monsters. To fill the ranks, he suggests recruiting from the village and other towns in the

NEW FEATS: BUNDLE OF STICKS [GENERAL]

You are skilled at working with others who have this feat, cooperating to protect each other from attacks.

Prerequisites: Dex 12+, Wis 12+

Benefit: You gain +1 AC for each ally fighting with you who possesses this feat and is within 10 feet of you, to a maximum bonus equal to your character level.

GUARDIAN STANCE [GENERAL]

You are adept at protecting others.

Prerequisites: Dex 12+, Wis 12+

Benefit: You may distribute any bonuses you receive to your AC among any allies within 5 feet of you in combat, as long as they are not directly between you and their assailant. You decide who gets what portion of your bonus,

and you may shift these bonuses around each round as a free action on your Initiative turn. While another person is benefiting from your AC bonus, you do not. Thus, if you have an AC of 14 from high Dexterity, and you choose to assign +2 to an ally on your left and +1 to an ally on your right, your own AC becomes 11.

☉ SERGEANT NACUN SECONDSONG

10th-level Elf Paladin of the Warrior Saint

CR 10; SZ M (humanoid); HD 10d10+10; 69 hp; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 24 (+1 Dex, +9 *full plate* +1, +3 *large metal shield* +1, +1 *ring of protection* +1); Atk melee +16/+11 (1d8+5, crit 17–20/x2, +1 *longsword*) or ranged +11/+6 (1d8+2, crit x3, mighty [Str 14] masterwork composite longbow); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Smite Evil, Spells, Turn Undead; SQ Aura of Courage, Detect Evil, Divine Grace, Divine Health, Lay on Hands, Remove Disease, Special Mount; AL LG; SV Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +11; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 20

Skills: Concentration +8, Diplomacy +11, Heal +9, Knowledge (religion) +8, Ride +14

Feats: Improved Critical (longsword), Lightning Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Languages: Common, Elven, Draconic

Aura of Courage (Su): The sergeant is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within 10 feet of him gain a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects.

Detect Evil (Sp): At will, the sergeant can Detect Evil as a spell-like ability. This ability duplicates the effects of the spell *detect evil*.

Divine Health (Ex): The sergeant is immune to all diseases, including magical diseases.

Elven Traits (Ex): Elves are immune to magic *sleep* spells and effects, have a +2 racial bonus to Will saves against enchantment spells or effects, have Low-light Vision that lets them see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, or torchlight, and an elf who merely passes within five feet of a secret or concealed door is entitled to a Search check as though actively looking for it.

Lay on Hands (Sp): Each day the sergeant can cure a total of 50 hit points. He can cure himself, or may choose to divide his curing among multiple recipients, and he doesn't have to use it all at once. Alternatively, the sergeant can use any or all of these points to deal damage to undead creatures. Treat this attack just like a touch spell. He decides how many cure points to use as damage after successfully touching the undead creature. Lay on Hands is a spell-like ability whose use is a standard action.

Remove Disease (Sp): The sergeant can Remove Disease, as per the spell *remove disease*, three times per week.

Smite Evil (Su): Once per day, the sergeant may attempt to Smite Evil with one normal melee attack. He adds his +5 Charisma modifier to the attack roll and deals 10 extra points of damage. If the sergeant accidentally smites a creature that is not evil, the smite has no effect but it is still used up for that day.

Special Mount: As a relatively sedentary paladin, Sergeant Nacun has not bothered to acquire a special mount for himself.

Turn Undead (Su): The sergeant may use this ability eight times per day, and Turns Undead as a cleric of 8th level.

Spells: (2/2) Sergeant Nacun casts spells as a 5th-level caster. The DC to resist his spells is 15 + spell level. He has prepared the following spells:

1st Level — *divine favor*, *protection from evil*
2nd Level — *resist elements*, *shield other*

Possessions: +1 *longsword*, +1 *full plate*, +1 *large metal shield*, mighty [Str 14] masterwork composite longbow, 20 normal arrows, 5 +1 *arrows*, *ring of protection* +1, masterwork healer's kit, dagger.

area, and calling in some of the wandering acolytes from their intelligence-gathering duties. So far, the chaplain has been able to keep the abbot from granting these requests out of frustration, but Nacun hasn't given up.

On duty, Sergeant Nacun wears his armor and weapons. Otherwise he dresses much as the monks do, in a long tunic and snug trousers, though the cloth and workmanship of his clothing is finer than those of the common monk.

CHAPLAIN MOORVID DRAM

Bastion of Quiet Strength

"Have some tea and tell me what's wrong. I'm sure it's not all that bad."

The chaplain is responsible to seeing to the spiritual side of life at the Retreat, and

CHAPLAIN MOORVID DRAM

11th-Level Human Cleric of the Warrior Saint

CR 11; SZ M (humanoid); HD 11d8+33; 83 hp; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+1 Dex, +5 *+1 chain shirt*, +1 *ring of protection +1*); Atk melee +9/+4 (1d8-1, grain flail); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells, Turn Undead; SQ Spells, Spontaneous Casting; AL LG; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +13; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 21, Cha 17

Skills: Concentration +10, Diplomacy +17, Heal +19, Knowledge (religion) +15, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +8

Feats: Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (grain flail), Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (grain flail)

Languages: Common, Halfling, Dwarven

Turn Undead (Su): The chaplain has the supernatural ability to turn undead six times each day.

Spontaneous Casting (Sp): The chaplain can channel stored spell energy into healing spells that she hasn't prepared ahead of time. She can "lose" a prepared spell in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower (a cure spell is any spell with "cure" in its name).

Spells: (6/6+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1) The chaplain casts spells as an 11th-level cleric with access to the Healing and Protection

domains provided by the Warrior Saint. These domains allow the chaplain to cast healing spells at +1 caster level, and to create a *protective ward*, granting one creature +11 on its next saving throw. She can use the *protective ward* once per day, and it lasts for one hour. The DC to resist her spells is equal to 15 + spell level. The chaplain has the following spells already prepared; domain spells are marked with an asterisk.

- 0 Level — *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*
- 1st Level — *command*, *comprehend languages*, *divine favor*, *obscuring mist*, *protection from evil*, *sanctuary**, *shield of faith*
- 2nd Level — *aid*, *augury*, *enthrall*, *hold person*, *shield other**, *zone of truth*
- 3rd Level — *daylight*, *dispel magic*, *glyph of warding*, *prayer*, *protection from elements**, *searing light*
- 4th Level — *discern lies*, *divination*, *greater magic weapon*, *sending*, *spell immunity**
- 5th Level — *commune*, *dispel evil*, *scrying*, *spell resistance**
- 6th Level — *antimagic field**, *greater dispelling*

Possessions: Masterwork grain flail, *+1 chain shirt*, *cloak of resistance +1*, *ring of protection +1*, scroll of *raise dead*, scroll of *ethereal jaunt*, scroll of *wind walk*, potion of *fly*, potion of *heroism*

SACRED GROUND

Moorvid Dram (MOOR-vihd DRAHM) has been doing that for the past twenty years. She loves the quiet life of the Retreat, tending to the Temple and her herb gardens, dealing with the minor injuries and petty sins of the students and teachers. Even dealing with the townsfolk is a comfortable routine.

When Verdivain Surestride became abbot, she took it upon herself to school the abbot in basic diplomacy and negotiation, building him into the man that the Order needs him to be. She also taught him how to handle the intelligence reports that pour into the Retreat, and how to evaluate each one.

At sixty-eight years of age, Moorvid Dram is the oldest human in the Retreat, and has a maternal attitude towards her charges. Her soft, gentle manner has helped many students, monks, and acolytes to find their way through the temptations and distractions of the world to the core of the Warrior Saint's teachings. Most residents of the Retreat confide in her regular-

ly, trusting her discretion and judgement. She likes the feeling of knowing all the secrets of her little community.

Of late, she has begun to worry about the influence that Sergeant Nacun exerts over the Retreat. She is carefully trying to keep the abbot aware of the problem without creating a rift, which requires her to walk a fine line.

The chaplain dresses in comfortable, loose-fitting robes of rough cloth, but she still has armor from her more adventurous days in her chambers.

RETREAT MONKS

Spiritual Warriors

"Balance is the key to mastery, and discipline is the key to balance."

The monks trained at the Retreat are predominantly human, but may be of either gender. At

NEW DEITY: THE WARRIOR SAINT

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Domains: Healing, Protection, War

Typical Worshipers: Professional soldiers, warriors, oppressed peasants, and exiled nobility all petition the Warrior Saint for protection and a redress of wrongs.

The Warrior Saint is the guardian of the oppressed, and the defender of the defenseless. His priests preach that each person has a place in life, and that the loss of any of them damages the whole. Tyranny is seen as inherently self-defeating, because the tyrant will at some point go too far, and be overthrown. Only by respecting the worth and the responsibilities of everyone in the social order can the society grow.

The Warrior Saint is generally depicted as a powerful warrior in heavy armor, although in his aspect as defender of the oppressed, he is usually shown in peasant clothes and armed

with a grain flail. His symbol is a shield marked with a bundle of sticks, and his favored weapon is a grain flail.



any given time, there are approximately twenty monks studying, training, and working at the Retreat. From time to time, monks leave the Retreat to spend a time wandering the world. In their travels they hone their skills and spread the word of the Warrior Saint, as well as gather information on the state of the common folk in the kingdom. They are rather reserved and def-

erential around visitors, but do not hesitate to leap to the defense of any of the inhabitants of the Retreat, especially the much-loved chaplain.

Standard costume for monks is a long tunic, hanging to the knees, snug-fitting trousers, and peasant sandals. Hair is cut short in a simple bowl cut.

⊙ TYPICAL MONK OF THE WARRIOR SAINT

6th-Level Human Monk

CR 6; SZ M (humanoid); HD 6d8+6; 36 hp; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 50 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 monk bonus); Atk melee +6/+3 (1d8+2, unarmed) or melee +6 (1d8, 19–20/x2, grain flail or 1d6, x3, shovel); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Stunning Attack; SQ Evasion, Slow Fall, Still Mind; AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 8

Skills: Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +6, Jump +11, Move Silently +7, Tumble +11

Feats: Bundle of Sticks, Dodge, Guardian Stance, Mobility

Languages: Common

Monks trained by the Order of the Warrior Saint are taught to make use of everyday implements commonly available to even the most downtrodden peasants. The more esoteric weaponry used by Middle Kingdom monastic orders are not taught by this order. Instead, the monks learn to turn simple gardening implements into deadly weapons. These monks are identical to standard monks except for this difference in training. Use the following entry in place of the standard information for the monk class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Monks of the Warrior Saint are proficient with basic peasant weapons and special weapons whose use is part of their training. The full list includes club, crossbow (light or heavy), dagger, grain flail, handaxe, hoe, javelin, light hammer, pitchfork, quarter-

staff, rake, scythe, shovel, sickle, sling, throwing axe, and weighted rope.

A monk using a sickle, handaxe, or dagger can strike with her unarmed base attack, including her more favorable number of attacks per round. Her damage, however, is standard for the weapon, not her unarmed damage. The weapon must be light, so a Small monk must use Tiny versions of these weapons in order to use the more favorable base attack.

Evasion (Ex): If a monk makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, the monk instead takes no damage. Evasion can only be used if the monk is wearing light armor or no armor.

Slow Fall (Ex): The monk takes damage as if a fall were 30 feet shorter than it actually is as long as she is within arm's reach of a wall.

Still Mind (Ex): The monk receives a +2 bonus to saving throws against spells and effects from the Enchantment school.

Stunning Attack (Su): A monk can use this ability once per round, but no more than six times per day. She must declare she is using a Stunning Attack before making the attack roll (thus, a missed attack roll ruins the attempt). A foe struck by the attack is forced to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) in addition to receiving normal damage, if the saving throw fails, the opponent is stunned for 1 round.

Possessions: Grain flail or shovel, 1d6 sp in a pouch.

NEW EXOTIC WEAPONS

These are all Large exotic weapons. Attempting to use one of these weapons without the appropriate Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat incurs a -4 penalty on all attack rolls with that weapon.

Grain Flail: A grain flail is two pieces of wood, each roughly 3 feet long, joined end-to-end by a short length of rope or chain. It is used to beat cut grain, separating the grains from the stalk.

Hoe: A hoe is a wooden handle, usually 4 to 5 feet in length, with a metal blade set cross-wise on one end. It is used to break and till the soil. In combat, it can be used to make trip attacks. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the hoe to avoid being tripped.

Pitchfork: A pitchfork is a wooden handle, usually 4 to 5 feet in length, with a set of three or four metal tines on the end. It is used to handle hay and straw. In combat, using the tines to entangle an opponent's weapon grants a +2 bonus on your opposed attack rolls when attempting to disarm an opponent (including the roll to avoid being disarmed if you fail to disarm the opponent).

Rake: A rake is a wooden handle, usually 4 to 5 feet in length, with a row of short teeth made of wood or metal set cross-wise on one end. It is used to gather up leaves or stalks, or to till the soil. In combat, it can be used to

make trip attacks. If you are tripped during your trip attempt, you can drop the rake to avoid being tripped.

Shovel: A shovel is a wooden handle, usually 3 to 5 feet in length, with a wide, flat blade attached to one end. It is used to move earth, grain, and other loose substances.

Weighted Rope: A weighted rope is a length of rope or thick twine, roughly 15 feet in length. The ends are either tied into large knots to give them weight, or are attached to small weights like rocks or sticks. You can use a weighted rope as a double weapon and fight with it as if fighting with two weapons, but if you do, you incur all the normal attack penalties as if you were using a one-handed weapon and a light weapon. Conversely, you can use it as a single weapon with reach, attacking targets 10 feet away. Unlike other weapons with reach, you can also use it to attack opponents adjacent to you. You may switch from double weapon to reach weapon as a free action each round if you are proficient with the weighted rope. Because the rope can wrap around an enemy's legs or other limb, you can make trip attacks with it. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the rope to avoid being tripped. When using the rope, you get a +2 bonus on your opposed attack roll when attempting to disarm an opponent (including the roll to keep from being disarmed if you fail to disarm your opponent).

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Grain Flail	4 gp	1d8	19–20/x2	—	10 lb.	Bludgeoning
Hoe*	1 gp	1d4	x2	—	2 lb.	Slashing
Pitchfork*	3 gp	2d4	19–20/x2	10 ft.	5 lb.	Piercing
Rake*	1 gp	1d6	x2	—	3 lb.	Bludgeoning
Shovel	2 gp	1d6	x3	—	8 lb.	Slashing
Weighted Rope*	1 gp	1d4 S	x2	—	4 lb.	Bludgeoning

* See the description of this weapon for special rules.

S This weapon deals subdual damage rather than normal damage.

RETREAT ACOLYTES

Martial Priests

“For glory and the Warrior Saint!”

Acolytes are the main troops of the Warrior Saint: well-trained and disciplined warrior priests dedicated to the overthrow of tyrants and the protection of the oppressed. While the monks have the duty to train others to fight for themselves, the acolytes are responsible for the military operations of the Order. They are predominantly human, though they may be of either gender. There are usually twenty to twenty-five acolytes at the Retreat, with the

number fluctuating as they are transferred between commands.

The uniform of the acolytes is a white tabard over their armor, emblazoned with the symbol of the Warrior Priest.

There is a subtle rivalry between monks and acolytes of the Warrior Saint. Each group feels that it represents the truest vision of the Warrior Saint’s teachings, with the other as a lesser appendage. With the charismatic Sergeant Nacun obviously espousing the view of acolyte supremacy, and the abbot representing the monkish ideal, this rivalry is very much a tension in the Retreat.

⊗ TYPICAL ACOLYTE OF THE WARRIOR SAINT

3rd-Level Human Fighter/ 3rd-Level Cleric of the Warrior Saint

CR 6; SZ M (humanoid); HD 3d10+6 + 3d8+6; 46 hp; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 19 (+7 masterwork half-plate, +2 large steel shield); Atk melee +9 (1d8+2, crit 19–20/x2, longsword) or melee +8 (1d8+2, crit 19–20/x2, grain flail); Face 5 ft. x 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells, Turn Undead; SQ Spells, Spontaneous Casting; AL LN; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10

Skills: Climb +0, Diplomacy +3, Handle Animal +5, Heal +5, Knowledge (religion) +3, Ride +7

Feats: Bundle of Sticks, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (grain flail), Guardian Stance, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (grain flail), Weapon Focus (longsword)

Languages: Common

Spontaneous Casting: Neutral clerics can “lose” a prepared spell (other than domain spells) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

Turn Undead (Su): The acolyte has the ability to Turn Undead six times each day.

Spells: (4/3+1/2+1) The acolyte casts spells as a 3rd-level cleric with access to the Protection and War domains of the Warrior Saint. These domains allow the acolyte to once per day generate a +3 *protective ward* as a standard action with a duration of 1 hour, and gain the Martial Weapon Proficiency and Weapon Focus (grain flail) for free. The DC to resist an acolyte’s spells is equal to 12 + spell level. They usually have the following spells prepared; domain spells in the list below are marked with an asterisk.

0 Level — *detect magic, guidance, resistance, virtue*

1st Level — *bane, bless, magic weapon*, protection from chaos*

2nd Level — *aid, bull’s strength, shield other**

Possessions: Masterwork half-plate, large steel shield, masterwork longsword, potion of *cure moderate wounds*, healer’s kit, pouch with 2d6 gp.



THE SITE

The Retreat is a walled complex at the end of a steep valley. The hillsides around the Retreat are terraced and cultivated, growing wheat and barley for the inhabitants. A stream runs through the retreat grounds, and the trail leading up to the Retreat is lined with nut and fruit trees.

Relationships with the nearby town are cordial. The abbot is the nominal lord of the vil-

lage, and is undemanding as a feudal master. Taxes are collected in foodstuffs and a few luxury goods, with just enough coin to pass on to the crown. The other needs of the Retreat are provided by offerings of the faithful and the grateful, and by the fees paid in return for training.

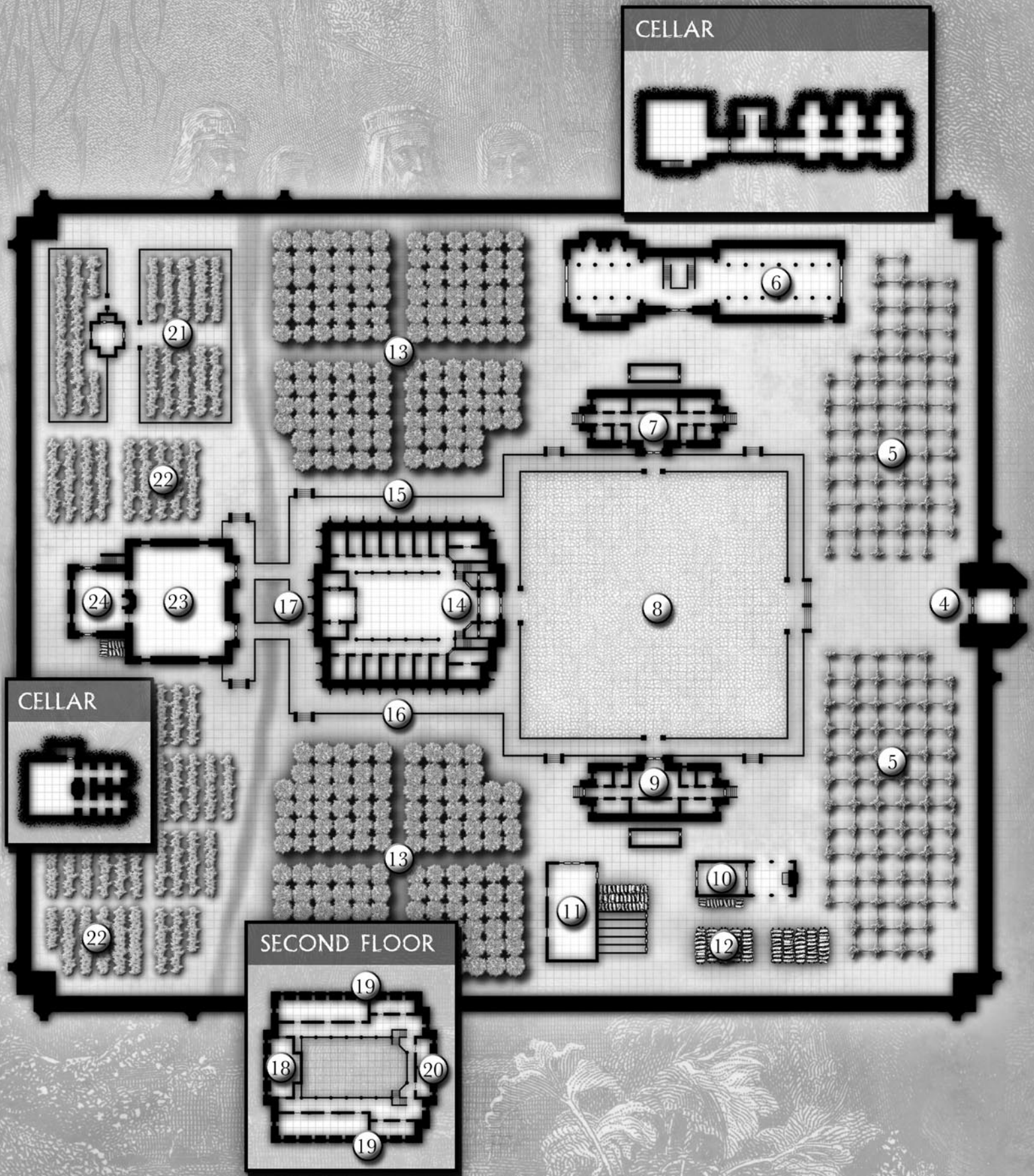
The fields are small enough to be tended by residents of the Retreat; the inhabitants only plant what they can tend, relying on the town nearby to make up any shortfall. The labor is more of an exercise in discipline and hard work

NEW COMMUNITY: RETREAT OF THE WARRIOR SAINT

Size: Thorp; **Power Center:** Conventional; **Alignment:** Lawful Neutral; **GP Limit:** 40gp (plus clerical magic, weapons, and armor); **Ready Cash:** 17,200 gp; **Population:** 53 adults, 21 children (96% human, 2% halfling, 1% elf, 1% other)

Authority Figures: Abbot Verdivain Surestride, 5th-level Human Monk of the Warrior Saint; Sergeant Nacun Secondsong, 10th-level Elf Paladin of the Warrior Saint; Chaplain Moorvid Dram, 11th-Level Human Cleric of the Warrior Saint

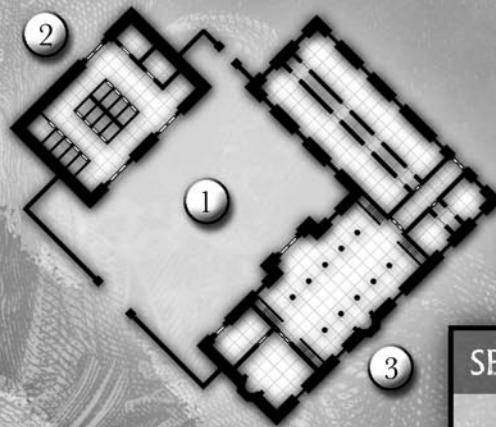
RETREAT OF THE WARRIOR SAINT





KEY

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. The Pilgrim's Pillow | 13. Orchards |
| 2. Stables | 14. Temple Entrance, Guard Posts
& Armories |
| 3. Manor House | 15. Northern Cells & Chaplain's Suite |
| 4. Gate House | 16. Southern Cells & Guest Suite |
| 5. Grape Arbors | 17. Abbot's Suite & Vault |
| 6. Winery & Brewery | 18. Library & Scriptorium |
| 7. Women's Barracks | 19. Dormitories |
| 8. Practice Yard | 20. Proctors' Cells |
| 9. Men's Barracks | 21. Herb Garden & Apothecary |
| 10. Smithy | 22. Vegetable Gardens |
| 11. Carpentry Shop | 23. Refectory |
| 12. Woodpiles | 24. Kitchen |



SECOND FLOOR



than anything else. The funds coming into the Retreat make it easy to purchase any needed supplies. The teachings of the Warrior Saint advocate working for sustenance, however, so his followers work.

Aside from training, the Retreat has another export: their ciders and beers are justly famous in the region, commanding high prices in inns and taverns. They don't often show up in more upscale establishments, though; they're still simple, rustic drinks, despite the high quality.

THE PILGRIM'S PILLOW

Outside the gates of the Retreat is a small hostel set up for those who come to petition the residents. Only those who serve the Warrior Saint, or those with a dispensation from the abbot, spend the night within the walls of the Retreat. All others take advantage of the Pilgrim's Pillow.

This two-story fieldstone manor house has stood since before the Retreat was completed. When the area was given over to the Order of the Warrior Saint, the monks used the manor house until they were able to complete the temple, barracks, and walls. Since that time, they have chartered an innkeeper to run the establishment for the convenience of supplicants.

The innkeeper is a portly gnome named Tarquin Gamelskogan (TAR-kwin GAM-ehl-skoh-gahn). He has held the inn charter for the last ten years, and is concerned with making as much money as he can without angering the abbot and having his charter revoked. His prices are high, but the service is good and the facilities are spotless. He justifies the higher costs by pointing out the expense of bringing in supplies from the village.



Tarquin Gamelskogan is a 5th-level expert. His primary skill is Profession (innkeeper).

The prices at the Pilgrim's Pillow are 50% higher than normal, and the accommodations offered are Common or Good, depending on how much the customer is willing to pay. Meals are of Common quality. Some of the local beers and the Retreat's apple, cherry, peach, and plum ciders are worthy of special note:

Beverage	Cost
Cider, hard, pitcher	4 sp
Cider, hard, mug	1 sp
Cider, soft, pitcher	3 sp
Cider, soft, mug	7 cp
Beer, dark, pitcher	5 sp
Beer, dark, mug	8 cp
Beer, light, pitcher	3 sp
Beer, light, mug	7 cp

The staff at the Pilgrim's Pillow consists of a cook, two servers who double as maids, a pot-boy, and a stablehand. Notably absent are any guards or bouncers. If trouble starts, Tarquin tries to quell it with threats about a negative report to the abbot. This is not an empty threat; the abbot sets much stock in how his guests behave, even outside the Retreat walls. If this threat is not sufficient, one of the staff runs to the Retreat to fetch help.



Help from the Retreat arrives in the form of the sergeant and five acolytes after ten rounds.

The inn has a large common room, taking up half the main floor, with a kitchen attached. The rest of the floor is given over to barracks-style bunks. The upper floor has ten small rooms for guests with money, and a suite for Tarquin and the staff. A roomy stable with a hayloft sits across the innyard from the Pilgrim's Pillow. The yard has a low stone fence around it, joining the two buildings together.

GATEHOUSE

The gatehouse is the only entry into the Retreat. It is a single-story fieldstone building with a crenellated battlement on top. The gates

SACRED GROUND

are ironbound oak, and open into a short tunnel. The tunnel ends in another set of gates on the inside. In the middle of this tunnel is a set of iron bars with a locked door in it. Doors just past this grill on either side of the tunnel lead to the gatehouse proper. During the day, the gates stand open, although the door in the iron bars remains locked at all times.



The heavy oak doors are six inches thick, with AC 5, Hardness 5, and 60 hit points. They are barred from the inside (Break DC 25).

The iron bars in the grill half way through the tunnel each have AC 5, Hardness 10, and 30 hit points. They can be bent with a Strength check against DC 24, but are spaced so closely that bending two apart only allows passage for Small creatures. A bar must be removed and the two on either side bent to allow a Medium-size creature to pass.

The lock in the gate in this grill is quite well made, with an Open DC of 32. The porter, the sergeant, and the abbot each have a key to this door.

The walls and buildings are made of fieldstone fitted with mortar. The surrounding wall is twelve feet tall and five feet thick, while the walls of the buildings are usually two feet thick, with eight-foot ceilings. The roofs are steeply peaked and thatched.



Climbing the rough walls is fairly simple, with a Climb DC of 10. Going through the walls is a little tougher: they have AC 5, Hardness 8, and 900 hit points.

Trying to go over the outer walls is not difficult, but there is a network of divine protections on top of the walls.



The top of the walls surrounding the Retreat are covered by *glyphs of warding*. Maintaining them is the respon-

sibility of the chaplain of the Retreat. Every morning, the cleric examines the walls to make sure that none of the spells have been discharged, and replaces those that have been triggered.

The *glyphs* each contain a *bestow curse* spell that inflicts a -6 effective decrease to the target's Constitution score. Only those who worship the Warrior Saint can pass the spells without activating them.

CR 5; no attack roll, *bestow curse* (-6 Con score); Will DC 18 to negate; Search DC 28 to notice; Disable Device DC 28 to disarm.

The duty of watching the gate and greeting visitors falls to the porter. Currently, the office is held by Arayam (ah-RAY-ahm), a sixty-year-old human and former acolyte. Though she is slowing down, she takes the job seriously, and has come to rely on her wits over her sword, though she still dresses in full armor and carries her weapons on duty.



Arayam has the same statistics as a typical acolyte, though has no Dexterity bonus to AC, Initiative, or Reflex saves, and no Strength bonus to attacks or damage.

Visitors seeking entrance to the Retreat are interviewed by the porter and informed of the rules of the Retreat. The first rule is that they must leave their weapons in her care, locked inside the gatehouse. She will not search visitors, knowing that any weapon small enough to smuggle past her won't be a huge advantage against the full complement of the Retreat.

The porter is backed up by a squad of four acolytes who wait in the gatehouse. They only come out if Arayam calls them to impress her seriousness upon recalcitrant visitors.

The rules for visitors to the Retreat are fairly simple and straightforward.

SACRED GROUND

1. No weapons. Drawing a weapon within the Retreat will meet with an immediate armed response.
2. Do not interfere in any training, instruction, or work being done by the students or teachers.
3. Do not stray outside the public areas of the Retreat. These include the gatehouse, the practice yard, the refectory, and the chapel in the temple.
4. Please be respectful and courteous to all the residents, especially the abbot, the sergeant, and the chaplain.

Arayam asks each visitor individually if he will agree to follow these rules. She recites them in rote fashion, and has no patience for those who seek to find loopholes in them by questioning her about fine distinctions. She cautions them once, and then she refuses them entry, explaining that they obviously don't intend to follow these simple rules, as evidenced by their attempts to circumvent them. An apology and an end to questions is enough to satisfy her. Arguing the point further guarantees that she does not admit them that day, although she goes through the routine again if they come back the next day.

PRACTICE YARD

This open square is bracketed on either side by the barracks, and faces the front of the temple. It is paved with cobblestones that are swept clean several times a day by the students. The stones are a gleaming white, with the symbol of the Warrior Saint picked out in darker stones.

At dawn and dusk, the entire population of the Retreat assembles here to worship the Warrior Saint by performing a stylized battle dance that is the basis for the unarmed combat form taught here. The dance takes about ten minutes to perform, and is conducted in unison, although more-skilled and experienced monks

often add embellishments and decorations to their routines.

The rest of time, groups of students train in the corners of the yard. Classes are divided by experience and age. Students spend half their time training here in shifts, with the rest of their time devoted to working in the fields surrounding the Retreat, or in the gardens and facilities within the walls.

Many of the students who assemble here bring the tools that they've been using elsewhere in their work to receive instruction in how to use the items in combat. It is not unusual to see a sparring match in which one student is using a small wood axe against another armed with a rake.

At midday, the acolytes drill in the center of the practice yard. During this time, they work with conventional tools of warfare and learn small-unit tactics. The student monks usually take advantage of this time to take care of personal chores or grab a few moments of relaxation in the orchard or refectory.

At night, a single guard stands watch in the middle of the yard. This is not a popular duty, and is handed out as punishment to those who have broken a minor rule. As the sergeant has a habit of surprise inspections in the early hours of the morning, the watchman is alert at all times.

MEN'S BARRACKS

This long building is lined with a row of bunk beds down either side of the central hallway. There are two small wooden chests at the foot of each set of beds, and a privy at either end of the structure. Narrow windows with wooden shutters let a little light in between each pair of beds, and a pot-bellied cast iron stove sits beside each privy door, with a stack of wood beside it. The beds are covered in thick blankets, with a thin pillow at the head of each.

SACRED GROUND

This is where the male monks, acolytes, and older students sleep. There is no privacy in the building, as even the privies are communal. There's room for twenty-eight residents here, and most of the beds show signs that they have been claimed: small personal touches like a brightly embroidered quilt decorate them, or a pair of boots is placed under the edge of the bed.

From dawn to dusk, this building is empty except for one or two night guards sleeping off-shift. All the residents are kept busy either training or working on various projects around the Retreat. At nightfall, the men return here to sleep. A few candles on the windowsills provide a little light, but the building quickly darkens as the tired inhabitants settle in for sleep.

There is a simple wooden door facing the practice yard at each end of the building and a low shaded porch on the front with a few chairs for people lounge in on pleasant evenings. The doors do not lock. Women are not allowed in the men's barracks, and vice-versa.

WOMEN'S BARRACKS

Except for the fact that this barracks is the home to the female monks, students, and acolytes, and is on the other side of the practice yard, it is identical to the men's barracks.

TEMPLE

The temple of the Warrior Saint is the only two-story building in the Retreat, and dominates the complex both physically and spiritually. The walls of the temple rise twenty feet, and the structure is topped with a steeply peaked roof. The fieldstone walls are supported by heavy timber frames on the inside, and the interior walls and floors are wooden planks.

There is only one door into the temple, and only a few narrow windows, nearly arrow-slits,

on the second floor, making the temple highly defensible when the heavy doors are closed.



The temple doors are heavy oak, six inches thick, with AC 5, Hardness 5, and 60 hit points. They can be barred from the inside (Break DC 25).

The doors are left open except in time of attack, allowing all to come and go freely.

Guard Post

There are two guard posts, each holding two acolytes at all times, along with a pair of chairs, a small table, and an alarm bell. One of the two acolytes in each room stands at the guard post door, while the other waits in the room, ready to sound the alarm in the event of any trouble.



If the alarm is sounded, reinforcements arrive fairly quickly. During the day, the sergeant arrives with two acolytes and the abbot in five rounds, and two acolytes and a monk arrive each round thereafter until all are present. At night, double the time required for the acolytes and the sergeant, but the abbot and four monks arrive in five rounds, with two monks each round thereafter until all are present. Until help arrives, the acolytes on guard fight defensively to keep intruders from gaining access to the temple, pushing the doors closed if possible.

Guard shifts are six hours long. The midnight to six in the morning shift is often assigned as punishment duty.

Armory

Behind each guard post is a small armory, containing ten longswords, ten heavy crossbows with 200 bolts, ten longspears, ten bucklers, two lanterns with six pints of oil, and a healer's kit put together by the chaplain. These doors are never locked, so that defenders can reach the supplies in an emergency.

Sergeant's Cell

This is the private room of Sergeant Nacun Secondsong. It's slightly larger than a typical cell, but just as austere. It contains a bed, chest, armor rack, weapon rack, writing desk, brazier, and chair. A washstand sits in one corner, and a chamber pot is tucked neatly under the bed.



In the weapon rack are two *javelins of lightning*, along with four normal javelins and the rest of the sergeant's weapons when he's in his room. The chest contains a few sets of simple clothes, two *cure light wounds* potions, two *cure serious wounds* potions, one *fly* potion, one *tongues* potion, two divine scrolls of *magic weapon*, and two divine scrolls of *protection from evil*. The chest is locked (Open DC 25), and the sergeant has the only key.

Chaplain's Suite

As the spiritual head of the Retreat, the chaplain has a small office attached to her sleeping chamber. Most of the time, the chaplain works in the apothecary near the herb garden, but she still uses her office in the temple for official meetings and in the winter.

The outer room contains four hard chairs, a table, a writing desk, a brazier, and a scroll rack.



The scroll rack is protected by a *glyph of warding* identical to the ones placed on the tops of the walls surrounding the Retreat. On the rack are four divine *raise dead* scrolls, one divine *ethereal jaunt* scroll, and one divine *wind walk* scroll.

The inner room is the chaplain's sleeping room, and contains a bed, chest, washstand, brazier, and chamber pot. The chest is not locked, and contains the chaplain's official vestments and everyday clothes.

Cell

Each cell is identical: a small room with a bed with a straw mattress and rough blankets, chair, writing desk, chest, washstand, brazier, and chamber pot. These cells are given over to advanced students who come to study at the Retreat, or to couriers bringing word from the intelligence network.

Brewmaster's Cell

Except for Cogen the brewmaster's personal effects, this room is identical to a normal cell. Cogen keeps his pipe and tobacco tucked into the bottom of his chest, out of sight of the students. Sitting prominently on his writing desk is a large ledger that he uses to record each year's brewing results, both quality and sales.

Guest Suite

This pair of rooms is slightly more luxurious than the other chambers in the temple, and is reserved for very important visitors to the Retreat. The outer sitting room is furnished with a writing desk, four stuffed armchairs, a table, and a brazier, and the walls are hung with tapestries depicting scenes from the mythology of the Warrior Saint.

The sleeping chamber has a feather bed with thick comforters, as well as a brazier, wardrobe, washstand, and chamber pot. These walls are also hung with tapestries.

Smith's Cell

This is where Molan the smith lives. It has all the normal accoutrements of a temple cell, along with random bits and pieces of metalwork in various states of repair.



Locked inside Molan's chest (Open DC 35) is his masterpiece: a +2 *holy lawful longsword*, with a market value of

SACRED GROUND

72,315 gold pieces. She uses it only in defense of the Retreat.

Cook's Cell

Lantron's quarters are a cluttered mess, quite in contrast to the ordered nature of the kitchens. It contains the normal furniture of a temple cell, but everything is overlaid with numerous loose pieces of parchment and paper, all covered in recipes, partial recipes, and notes for recipes. This is the brainstorming room for Lantron's famous desserts.

Porter's Cell

Arayam lives in this room. It is a model of military discipline and neatness, with no distractions, and contains the same furniture as the other temple cells.

Abbot's Suite

The pair of rooms given over to the abbot of the Retreat are as bare and functional as he has been able to make them without damaging the reputation of the Retreat with important visitors. The walls of the sitting room are hung with tapestries as the guest suite is, but the chairs are simple hard wood. There is a brazier, table, and writing desk in the room, and a large book on a reading pedestal. The book is a record of all the students of the Retreat since the abbot took charge, and their accomplishments.

The sleeping room is exactly like a normal cell in the temple, except for the presence of the door to the vault.

Vault

The vault contains the valuables of the Retreat. The chaplain is charged with providing magical protection, and the abbot holds the only key.



The lock on the door is extremely good, with an Open Lock DC of 40. The entire vault protected by a *greater glyph of warding*. The *glyph* contains a *slay living* spell. Only those who worship the Warrior Saint can pass the spells without activating them.

CR 6; no attack roll, *slay living* (death; successful save inflicts 3d6+11 points of damage); Fortitude DC 21 for partial damage; Search DC 28 to notice; Disable Device DC 28 to disarm.

The treasures of the Retreat consist of the previous abbots' records of students, the Retreat's funds, and a relic of the Warrior Saint. In addition, several large ledgers detail the intelligence received from the wide-spread network of informants and wandering monks, along with the abbot's analysis of each situation and his response, if any. There is easily enough information in these books to unsettle even the most lenient ruler.



The funds of the Retreat are locked in two large chests, and consists of 100 platinum pieces, 5,000 gold pieces, 10,000 silver pieces, 20,000 copper pieces. There are also letters of credit drawn on the crown and several local mercantile concerns totaling 10,000 gold pieces.

The *saintly flail*, a relic of the Warrior Saint, is also kept here.

Storage

These two cells are used to store candles, spare crockery, brooms, buckets, cleaning supplies, and other everyday items.

Chapel

The chapel rises two stories, with a railed balcony running around the perimeter of the second floor. Two staircases lead from the back corners of the chapel up to the second story. At

SACRED GROUND

the front of the chapel is a simple stone altar to the Warrior Saint, and a large mosaic on the wall behind it shows the Warrior Saint's symbol. Rough wooden benches in long rows provide seating for thirty, although double that number can be squeezed in if necessary.

As the primary devotions are conducted each day in the practice yard, only the most important ceremonies, like ordinations or investments, are conducted in the chapel. Mostly, it is used as a common area for the students and a spot for quiet reflection and meditation, especially in winter.

Proctor Cells

Each of these areas is a slightly larger cell, with bunk beds, a brazier, two chests, a table, a washstand, and two chamber pots. This is where the senior students — those charged with looking after the younger students in the dormitories — stay in the Retreat. Narrow windows with heavy shutters look out on the practice yard below.

Dormitories

Each of these four dormitories is a long room, with bunk beds, braziers, chests, and washstands. Each bunk bed has two chamber pots under it. Between the bunk beds are narrow windows with heavy shutters.

This is where younger students are housed, under the watchful eyes of the proctors. They are moved out to the appropriate barracks at thirteen years of age (or the equivalent for non-

human races). Until that time, the students are rigorously trained and disciplined in the ways of the Warrior Saint, and are used to perform the menial tasks around the temple, including cleaning duties, emptying chamber pots, and carrying messages.

Library and Scriptorium

This room has its walls lined with bookshelves and scroll racks. Several writing desks run down the center of the room. Narrow windows with heavy shutters open between the shelves.

Although the library is fairly small, it is of excellent quality in certain areas.



The Retreat library confers a +2 circumstance bonus to any Knowledge (religion), Knowledge (local history), or Knowledge (politics) check made when at least two hours are spent in research. This bonus applies to one check, which must be made at the end of the two hours of research. The abbot, at the chaplain's insistence, makes the library available to supplicants for the charge of 5 gp per day.

WOODPILES

These are three huge stacks of seasoned firewood used for heating and cooking in the Retreat. It is piled neatly under tarpaulins in stove lengths. Large chopping blocks and splitting axes are kept nearby, ready for use. Splitting wood is a common chore given to new students, especially those who need to build upper body strength.

NEW MAJOR ARTIFACT: SAINTLY FLAIL

This is a grain flail reputedly used by one of the first followers of the Warrior Saint. It has no powers except in the hands of a follower of the Warrior Saint or someone protecting the defenseless. In either of these cases, it becomes a +2 *grain flail*, and allows the user

to wield it as if he were proficient in the use of the grain flail, and had access to the Weapon Focus (grain flail), Bundle of Sticks, and Guardian Stance feats. In addition, the wielder is granted Spell Resistance 25.

HERB GARDEN AND APOTHECARY

The apothecary is a small shed on the edge of a large herb garden, and is the domain of the chaplain. On summer nights, she usually sleeps in the apothecary shed rather than in the temple, tending to her brews, poultices, and potions. The garden grows a wide variety of medicinal plants and kitchen herbs, all tended by the residents of the Retreat under the chaplain's supervision.



The chaplain provides healing free of charge to monks, acolytes, students, and clergy of the Retreat, as well as to inhabitants of the village. Others are expected to make an offering to the Retreat in return for services; this offering, coincidentally, is the same as the normal fees for healing magic and medical care.

The apothecary serves as the infirmary for the Retreat, having two pallets for sleeping, and all the chaplain's work things carefully arrayed on the benches and shelves lining the walls. Bundles of herbs hang drying from the rafters, and there is always some concoction bubbling over the fire or distilling through a network of pipes.



With the wide variety of ready ingredients available in the apothecary shed, all Heal checks receive a +4 circumstance bonus. In addition to the mundane medicines, the Apothecary also contains the chaplain's store of potions: 10 *cure light wounds*, 5 *cure moderate wounds*, 2 *cure serious wounds*, 3 *remove blindness/deafness*, and 5 *remove disease* potions. These are in a small wooden box inscribed with a *glyph of warding* identical to the ones used on the walls of the Retreat.

GRAPE ARBOR

This is a winding maze of trellises covered with thick grapevines. In summer, it is a cool, dark

network of alleys, and a favorite trysting spot for the students after dark. The grapes are used to make wine, which is a special treat for the residents on the high holidays. Not enough wine is produced to sell, although there is enough of a surplus for the abbot to serve it at important meetings with those petitioning for training at the retreat. The wine is of good quality, a full-bodied red, but nothing spectacular. A bottle of wine, should the abbot or Cogen be convinced to part with one, sells for 1 gp.

WINERY AND BREWERY

Empty most of the year, this building becomes a bustling hive of activity in the late summer and early fall. Over half the fruit harvested from the orchard and the plentiful trees in the surrounding forest is brought here to be pressed into the cider that is the Retreat's second claim to fame. Peach, apple, cherry, and plum ciders are all pressed here, and bottled in both hard (alcoholic) and soft (non-alcoholic) varieties.

At the same time, grapes are brought in to be made into wine for the high holidays in the Retreat, and barley and hops for the beer. The beer is almost as popular as the cider, with a nutty flavor and thick body.

Barrels and bottles are stored on racks in one end of the building, and pilferage is dealt with sternly by the abbot and the gruff old halfling brewmaster, one Cogen (KOH-gihn), who oversees the production, distribution, and security of the potables produced here. During the busy season, Cogen sleeps on a pallet in this building, but stays the rest of the year in one of the temple cells.



Cogen is a 7th-level halfling expert, whose primary skill is Profession (brewer).

CARPENTRY SHOP

This is a simple shed with carpentry tools and an open workspace. There is no full-time car-

penter at the Retreat; the shop is used by the residents to perform minor, simple repairs on wooden items and to turn the handles for rakes, hoes, and other gardening implements. Most finished wooden goods are purchased from the artisans in town.

SMITHY

The smithy is much more a going concern than the carpentry shop; indeed, the Retreat employs a skilled weaponsmith and armorer to maintain the acolytes' equipment, and a few of the monks serve as apprentices to help with plows and other gardening equipment.



The smith, Molan, uses the statistics for a typical acolyte, but has 9 ranks in each of Craft (armorsmithing), Craft (blacksmithing), and Craft (weaponsmithing) instead of the skills noted in that entry.

For the most part, Molan (moh-LAHN) is kept busy manufacturing and repairing the arms and armor of the acolytes. When she builds up a surplus, it is shipped off to other acolyte units throughout the land, or to a group of valiant freedom fighters.



Molan charges an extra 10% surcharge to non-worshippers of the Warrior Saint for such commissions, and will work at normal rates for the faithful. All proceeds go to enrich the Retreat's coffers.

Stored in the back of the smithy are five crates. Two contain five masterwork longswords each, packed in oiled cloth, and the other three each contain two sets of masterwork half-plate armor, also packed in oiled cloth. They are earmarked to be sent to a group of exiled knights whose bid to regain their lands is being backed by the Order.

VEGETABLE GARDEN

The garden is dedicated to what the cook thinks of as "emergency vegetables," vegetables

that are needed quickly to round out a meal. As such, it grows onions, peppers, carrots, and cabbage, with a few pea vines, runners of squash, and the occasional dillweed peeking up in between the rows. Tending the garden is often given to the youngest and oldest residents of the Retreat, so that they don't have to make their way up into the terraced fields.

ORCHARD

The orchard is a mix of apple and cherry trees, with a few chestnuts and hazelnuts as well. The fruit on these trees is used as table fruit or in dessert pastries. During the fall, they are stripped for cider, just as the trees outside the Retreat are.

Students and monks use the shaded rows of trees to meditate and practice. It is not unusual to come across a pair of students sparring in slow motion, or a solitary monk seated in quiet contemplation. The branches are useful places to practice balance while punching, kicking, and leaping, and the fallen leaves present a challenge for those perfecting their stealth.

KITCHEN AND REFECTORY

The refectory is a large room filled with simple trestle tables and benches. There is room to seat two hundred people in close quarters without undue crowding. It is rare these days for there to be more than fifty or sixty people gathered here, but the chaplain is sometimes able to convince the abbot to host gatherings for some of the townsfolk, and the refectory serves as the venue, bringing a bit of festivity to the Retreat. The abbot views such things as distractions, but the other residents of the Retreat look forward to them enthusiastically.

The kitchen is a simple affair, with counters lining three of the walls and a huge stove and ovens on the fourth. There are large windows with very heavy shutters on them, left open during mild weather to allow ventilation. This

is the domain of Lantron (LAHN-truhn), the Retreat's cook.



Lantron is a semi-retired monk, with all the stats of a typical monk, but with 9 ranks of Profession (cook) replacing the Tumble skill in the entry.

Lantron rules his realm with an easy manner and a ready wit, but tolerates no distraction or interference with his duties. His subjects are the monks on kitchen duty; usually adolescents who need supervision to make sure they stick to matters at hand. The food they produce under Lantron's direction is simple and filling, with a few little flairs from time to time. The one constant touch of grace at table is the sweets that Lantron prepares personally for every dinner. These range from simple apple or cherry tarts to meringues and confections. Speculation amongst the residents as to what the evening's sweet will be is a constant source of small talk during the working day.

Meals are served at seven in the morning, one in the afternoon, and seven in the evening. Those who are elsewhere during scheduled meal times either have their meals delivered to them or make do with cadging food from Lantron when they have time.

SCENES

There are many ways that PCs might make their way to the Retreat of the Warrior Saint. They may join a procession of believers making the trek to visit the Retreat in order to pay homage to the Warrior Saint, or be hired to guard one such expedition. They could come to the Retreat seeking combat training, or the reward for bringing back a runaway merchant's daughter who has joined the ranks of the Warrior Saint's followers. Well-connected PCs might be hired by the Order to act as spies against the local government, or by suspicious nobles to find proof of the Order's espionage. The following episodes can also be used to

inspire adventures set in the Retreat of the Warrior Saint.

TOURNEY

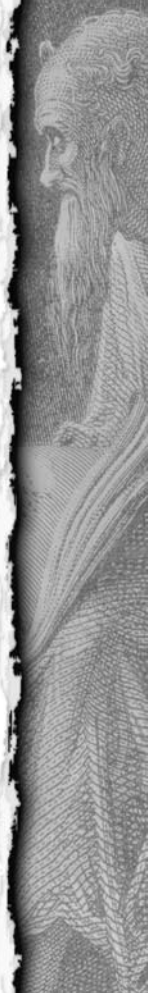
Every three years, the Retreat hosts a martial tournament for the greater glory of the Warrior Saint. Competitors come from far and wide to display their prowess and win the prize purse. The abbot is barred from competing, and is the traditional judge of the tournament.

This is the one official duty that the abbot relishes, and he does a lot to encourage his students to compete and do well. Sometimes he pushes too hard, though, and the students of the Retreat have begun to dread his attention at these times. But they dread even more what will happen if someone from another Order house wins; the abbot accepts defeat at the hands of other traditions, but for the Retreat to lose to someone trained in their own style by a different teacher is too much to bear.

Betting is heavy for these events, and cheating attempts are rampant. Usually, the transgressors aren't the competitors themselves, but try to skew the odds in favor of someone that they've bet on. The abbot and the chaplain take a very dim view of this, and the sergeant feels that these attempts are a personal affront. Punishments are swift and severe.

Behind the festive activities, a darker game is being played. The Order uses these opportunities to learn more about the other competitors, and where they stand on the issues of tyranny and freedom. Monks and acolytes do their best to evaluate potential threats, and "accidents" in competition have ended the career of more than one prospective despot.

Party members may come to take part in the competition, or to view the extraordinary displays of fighting skills. Armed and unarmed competitions are held, and there's always room for one more contestant. Either way, they will probably be pulled into the political maneuvering that is so prevalent here.



INTERNAL STRIFE

The rift between the acolytes and the monks is deepening, aided by the growing tension between the abbot and the sergeant. In this shrine to unity, division rears its ugly head, and the chaplain has given up on trying to heal the wound, retreating to the apothecary in order to distance herself from the conflict.

The abbot tries to ignore the tension in the Retreat, and his students close ranks around him, thinking his disinterest is enlightened unconcern with worldly things. The acolytes are contemptuous of the lack of practicality they see in the abbot and his monks, and look only towards the sergeant for leadership. Sergeant Nacun takes full advantage of his position, mounting numerous expeditions into the surrounding areas, hunting monsters and bandits.

The party may be sent by another Order house to investigate the rift and mediate a resolution, or may happen upon the divided state of affairs when visiting the Retreat for another reason. Either way, the villagers and most of the inhabitants of the Retreat would be immensely grateful to have things resolved before the tension develops into open conflict or a religious schism.

ALTERNATE VERSIONS

The default setting for the Retreat is in a settled area in an established kingdom. The entire tone of the place can be changed by moving it

to a wilderness area, far from the central government. The complements of monks and acolytes double, and Sergeant Nacun is in his element defending the Retreat and the neighboring village from bandits and monsters. The abbot feels besieged, torn from his study of fighting techniques by the needs of defense. Pilgrimages are few and far between, and the Pilgrim's Pillow becomes a fortified manor house, offering some defense to its residents.

You can also move the Retreat to a totalitarian regime, where the abbot and his students are called upon to perform their secret charge of casting down another tyrant. The monks of the Warrior Priest take up their traditional duties of teaching the common folk how to fight with the weapons they have at hand, and the acolytes move in small groups across the land, assembling to strike important targets, then splitting up again. The support of freedom fighters and outlaws steps up, with another smith or two brought in to help make weapons and armor. It all happens in secret, however, as the Order does its best to remain close enough to the crown that they are able to strike decisively when the moment comes.

For a different take, assume that the Order has a vested interest in propping up the decadent tyranny. The Retreat becomes the headquarters of the royal secret police, with the monks acting as spies and infiltrators and the acolytes working as elite bodyguards and strike troopers. The abbot in this version is a shadowy figure that inspires fear in the common folk, a name that conjures dread in all those who resent the current government of the land.

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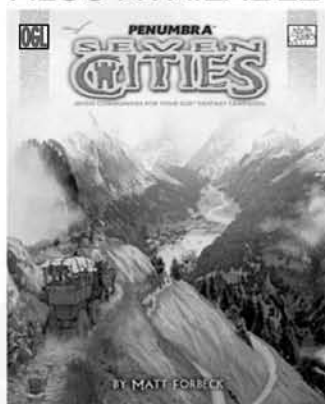
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- **THE NECROPOLIS:** A vast, barren necropolis island is maintained by the Order of the White Rose — servants of the god of death. These priests must carefully weigh every decision to raise or resurrect a mortal who dies within their purview.

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Third Edition, published by Wizards of the Coast.®

