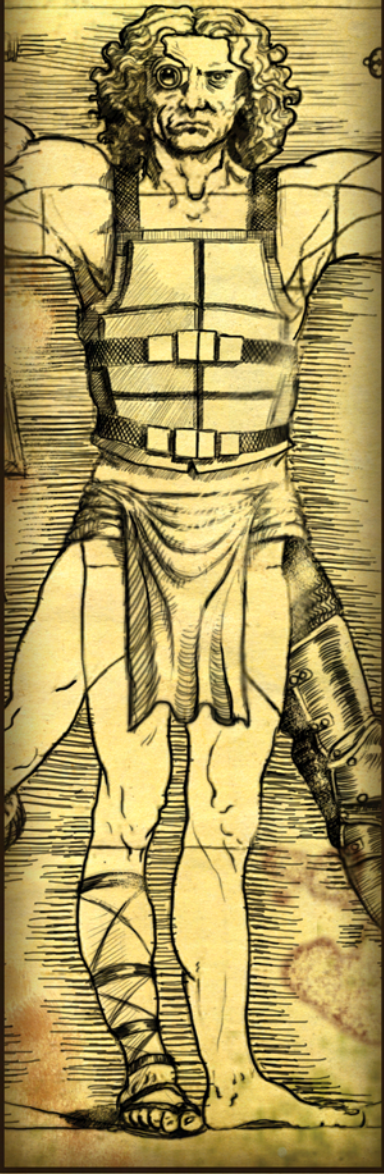


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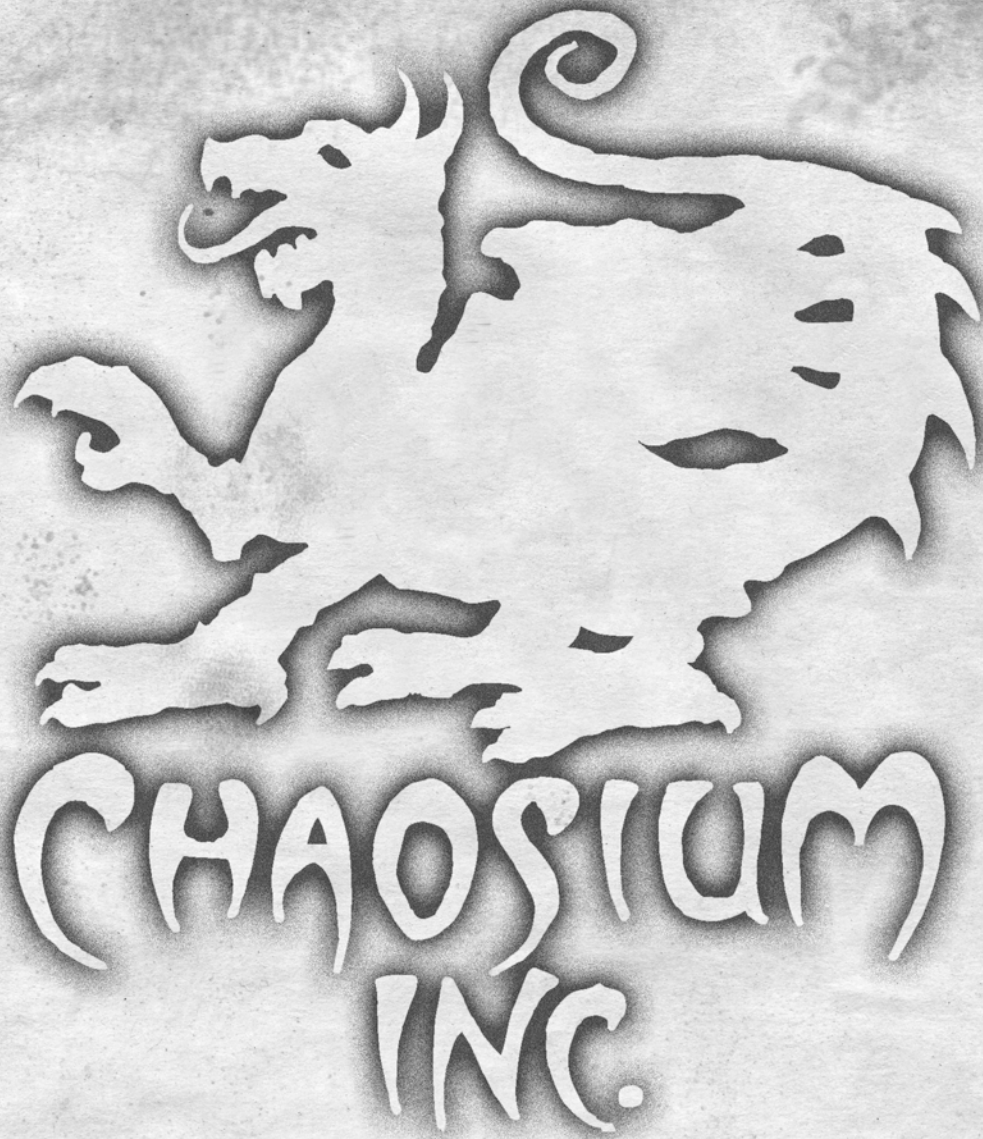
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Light Without Shadow, Blade Without Edge



A Fantasy Adventure for
Basic Roleplaying Heroes





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Light Without Shadow, Blade Without Edge

by David Fitzgerald



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Light Without Shadow, Blade Without Edge

The characters begin as caravan guards taking supplies to a group of monks in a remote village. The characters aid the monks in overcoming an orc attack and gain their trust.

Several months later the characters are called back to the monastery to solve a mysterious aging curse that is slowly killing the monks. They solve the mystery, however all but one of the monks has died. He thanks them and tells them that he will never forget them. He asks them if he can call on them in the future.

After a short hiatus, the characters wake up in a huge stone cavern. They are informed that they have been brought 300 years into the future. They are in a fortress called Stand Town. It is the last island of human resistance against the new masters of the world, vampires.

They are told that in the past a group of monks guarded a sword called the Sun Blade. Unfortunately the order died out. However the last of the monks wrote a detailed account of a group of adventurers that came to their aid in the past and that had promised to help again if called upon to do so. The promise that the characters made is being called in by the defenders of the hold.

There are several issues that stand in the way of a quick resolution, which the characters have to overcome:

Blood from the monks of the extinct order must be used to get into the tomb. The last vial of blood belongs to a vampire collector of vintage blood who lives in a nearby town. The characters must steal it.

The blood must be placed on the hands and mouth of a statue that blocks the entrance to the tomb, however when the characters arrive they find out that the statue has been broken up. The head and hands must be recovered.

The person responsible for the monks' trouble is still alive, now a vampire. She begins to suspect that something is being done to uncover the monk's legacy.

The chapters should run something like

The Caravan

The characters are introduced to each other and meet the Monks of Myrhone. They are shown around the property and taken to see the order's pride and joy, a large statue of Myrhone himself. The characters are introduced to some of the inhabitants of the village of Sand Towers. They meet the village priestess Cybil Ciolet, who represents the main church which the monks are a part of. That night the monks' abode is attacked by a group of orcs, but the beasts are driven off by the characters.

A Plague of Ages

Several months later the characters are sent for by the monks. A plague has fallen on them. The disease only seems to be affecting the monks, and the sufferers are aging rapidly. The characters lift the plague and it is discovered that the priestess Ciolet was behind the attempt to kill the monks.

Fortress of Prisoners

The characters are summoned into the future about 300 years from their own time. They are charged with helping the remaining humans fight against the new rulers of the world, the vampires. Before they can begin they are asked to complete a small mission for a local overlord.



A Fine Vintage

The characters are sent into the nearby vampire city to steal the blood of the last of the monks from a vampire blood connoisseur. Stealing the blood is easy, but they must flee across the blasted lands back to the stronghold of Stand Town, and safety.

Some Things Are Missing

Using an ancient gate the characters are teleported to the town of Sand Towers. The monks' old manor is on the other side of the village. The characters must avoid patrols of humans that work for the vampires. When the characters get to the monks' manor they find that the hands and the head of the statue are gone, making it impossible to carry out their quest. They must search around to see if they can recover the items before the spell teleports them back.

The Masters Table

The characters are sent back to their earlier time/location, this time to check several areas that might possibly have the head and hands. They find the hands easily but the head is in the lord of the manor's parlor. It turns out that the lord of the manor is the former priestess Cybil Ciolet. She remembers the characters and is suspicious. The characters are teleported back to Stand Town.

The Dance of Death

Time is of the essence, since there is a chance that Cybil might figure out what is going on. The characters are sent back to Sand Towers to complete the quest during the one holiday the vampires celebrate, the Dance of Death, where a select number of deserving humans are transformed into vampire overlords. The characters are given a run for their money and get one last chance to fight priestess Ciolet.

CHAPTER 1: THE CARAVAN

It is the year 114 ADF (*After Deserata's Founding*) The civil has been over for almost a year and Distaria I is the queen. Although only 16, the new queen seems wise beyond her years... and ambitious. But this is of little interest to the characters since they have, for various reasons, decided to leave the city for the border villages.

The characters are on board a sky ship. Read or paraphrase the following:

You're leaving the grand city of Deserata. The jeweled spires glitter in the sun as the sky ship moves higher and higher from the sky dock. The city disappears replaced by an ocean of sand ahead of you. (The crew move about you and the other passengers, getting the vessel ready for the long trip to the border town of Sand Towers.

A Chance Meeting

Read or paraphrase the following:

Amongst the passengers you see a priestess of the Goddess Chaldisaya, the dominant local deity. Although wearing the full blue robe of an Andurn (priestess) of the religion, she seems rather young. You look around for her retinue but see no one.

On board the ship is a rich passenger, Andurn (Priestess) Cibil Ciolet. She will be quick to attempt to befriend the characters, and will tell them she is heading to the village of Sand Towers where she is an Andurn of the local religion (Chalidisaya). She has just come from a series of meetings with the Arc of the religion, Priestess Morgana. She tells the characters that she is carrying a "monastic artifact" back to the village. This is the blood of Myrhone The Accursed, who is the patron of the order of Brothers of Myrhone, who are based in Sand Towers.

She will relate the story of Myrhone if asked.

The Story Of Myrhone

Myrhone was castellan for the lord of Sand Towers many years ago, but became jealous of his lord's wealth and power. One day in the heat of battle he stabbed his master, leaving him to die on the battlefield. Someone saw what happened however, and there was a manhunt of him. When he was captured he swore that he was innocent and demanded to face his accuser in single combat, and thus prove himself innocent. When he saw that the accuser was his lord, badly injured but still alive, he confessed.

Many wanted Myrhone to be executed by impalement but his lord could not give the order. Instead, Myrhone was exiled into the desert; he tried to take his own life in grief but was compelled to live when the Goddess Chaldisaya came to him in a dream. The next day he began to bleed from the mouth and right hand since he had used both, by his word and by his deed, to injure his lord.

For seven years he wandered the desert helping lost travelers. Eventually the goddess forgave him and sent him back to his old lord, who was by then on his death bed. His lord was overjoyed to see him. When they kissed in friendship Myrhone stopped bleeding from the mouth, and when he clasped his lord's hand he stopped bleeding from there as well. His lord let out a great sigh and began to die, and Myrhone grasped his hand, begging to be allowed to follow him into the afterlife and be his "right hand" again. They both died at the same time.

The Order of Brothers of Myrhone was established 150 years ago. It is a religious order where those that have done great injury to others may go and ask forgiveness of the goddess by doing good works in her name.

The Job

Cibel tells the characters that it was scandalous that Morgana let her leave without a guard of any kind, but she did provide money to hire one. She would be willing to hire the characters to escort her when the sky ship lands.

The sky ship will deposit her in the desert where she plans to join a land caravan that is carrying the heavier part of the cargo. She mentions that the work will

be easy. The caravan is a large one and will be heavily guarded, so it is unlikely to be troubled by orcs.

The next day the sky ship sights the caravan they are to rendezvous with. Read or paraphrase the following:

Making its way through the desert below is a rather large caravan with over 20 of the common six- and eight-wheeled wagons. The sky ship circles and drops ropes so the people below can hold the ship in place while you and the others climb down swaying rope ladders. The Andurn is lowered in a chair.

That night Cibel shows the characters the relics. The Blood of Myrhone is contained in two earthen bottles wrapped in blue Chaldite cloth and sealed with lead stoppers. She will tell them that the bottles contain the scared blood of Myrhone himself. They are to be taken to the Brothers of Myrhone.

The Ambush

After the first full day of travel the caravan beds down for the night. At dinnertime the priestess allows the characters to tap into the stores of alcohol that she is transporting to Sand Towers. (The GM needs to take note on who doesn't drink the beer). Later that night a sandstorm springs up and in the middle of it the caravan is attacked by a large group of orcs. Read or paraphrase the following:

The cooks bring around the food and the Andurn breaks out some of the cargo she is carrying to Sand Towers, some rather good beer.

Allow the characters as much role-playing as they wish and then read the following to anyone who is on watch.

The desert wind kicks up and soon small things that weren't tied down begin to blow around the camp. After an hour or so it becomes almost impossible to see the rest

of the caravan. You notice black shapes emerging out of the storm.

Characters who drank will find themselves drunker than usual (all skills at -30%). The characters are attacked by 3 orcs. No sooner do the characters get a handle on the situation than they hear the screams. They see the Andurn, who is being carried off into the storm by a pair of orcs. Any characters following the priestess and her kidnapers will chase them for about 10 minutes; eventually in order to get away the orcs will drop her and try to make their escape. If the characters continue the chase the orcs will turn and fight, but only as a last resort.

Anyone who stays behind will see a third orc sneakily going through the priestess' things. If given time he will gather up the artifacts and carry them off into the storm in the opposite direction to which the priestess was carried. He will not notice that he is being followed unless attacked. If the characters attack him, he proves to be a good fighter.

If the characters have killed the orc and returned the artifacts, Cibel will be grateful and offer blessings to the characters.

If no one stayed back with the caravan the Andurn will notice that the artifacts are missing from her wagon. Cibel will be besides herself at losing them. She will explain how humiliated she will be when they arrive, to have lost something that is so sacred to the Myrhoneites, and will try to get the characters to organize a search party as soon as possible.

Orc (Desert Raiders)

STR 14 CON 11 SIZE 11 INT 11 POW 10
DEX 14 APP 7 HIT POINTS 10

Armor 1 Point and leather helm

Scimitar 35% 1d8+1 Shield 35%

Climb 55% Dodge 40% Hide 35% Language (common)
30% Listen 50% Sense 35% Spot 45% Stealth 40%
Track 30%

The orcs have been divided up into three groups. Group 1 is to conduct a general attack on the caravan. Group 2 is to “pretend” to kidnap the Cibel and carry her off into the desert. Group 3, 1 orc has been

instructed to go into the caravan during the fight and get the flasks of Myrhoneite blood.

No sooner is the search party put together than a group of men emerge from the sand storm. If the artifact has been taken they will have it (having killed the orc) and present it to Cibel, otherwise they will simply show up.

Brothers

Read or paraphrase the following:

To your trained eyes the men standing before you look like veteran soldiers, even the young one. They are armed with a varied assortment of weapons.

The men introduce themselves as the Brothers of Myrhone. They were excited about the arrival of the artifact and decided to walk out to meet the caravan, but they had been delayed by the storm. Cibel seems cool toward them even if they brought the artifact to her.

The three are Jag Vocs (Monastic Brothers) Cirril, Alex, and Owen. Cirril is the leader of the community. He explains that the village consists of 7 small buildings on the outskirts of the town of Sand Towers. While the Order has been beset for three weeks by a howling sandstorm, Sand Towers – only 3 miles away – has remained untouched by the storm.

All the monks' crops have been destroyed and the previous week their livestock had been lost to poachers. Cirril displays a crudely made arrow taken from an animal's corpse. He comments that this looks like an orc arrow. Orcs in this area are known for attacking small caravans and hunting parties. He wonders aloud about why they have become so bold.

The rest of the night will pass uneventfully.

Early the next day the caravan will dig itself out of the sand and continue the trip to Sand Towers. Since the Myrhoneite compound is on the eastern side of the village (see map) they will arrive there first. The Jag Vocs will mention that this is the first day in weeks in which the compound hadn't been beset by a sandstorm. They will take it as a good sign – maybe the

arrival of the Blood of Myrhone has something to do with it. Andurn Cibel will state that she has to go directly to the shrine of the Chaldisaya and see to the delivery of the cargo. She promises to visit in a few days. She will “forget” to hand the bottles back to the Jag Voc’s before leaving.

The Tour

[Map 1] Jag Voc Cirril will give the characters a tour of the Myrhoneite compound, a small village. He will walk them over to the old hall, a keep on a rock outcropping. The keep hasn’t been used since the time of Myrhone himself. Legend says it was there that he made peace with Lady Chaldisaya and was taken to heaven. Paraphrase or read the following description:

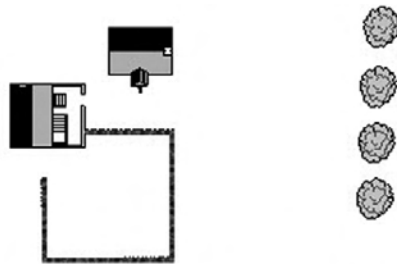
The keep is two towers connected by a short wall perched upon a piece of wind-

blown rock. It’s obvious that the keep will need lots of work just to make it livable. In a niche in the northern face of the rock is a statue of a hooded man. He stands with head lowered, arms open wide.

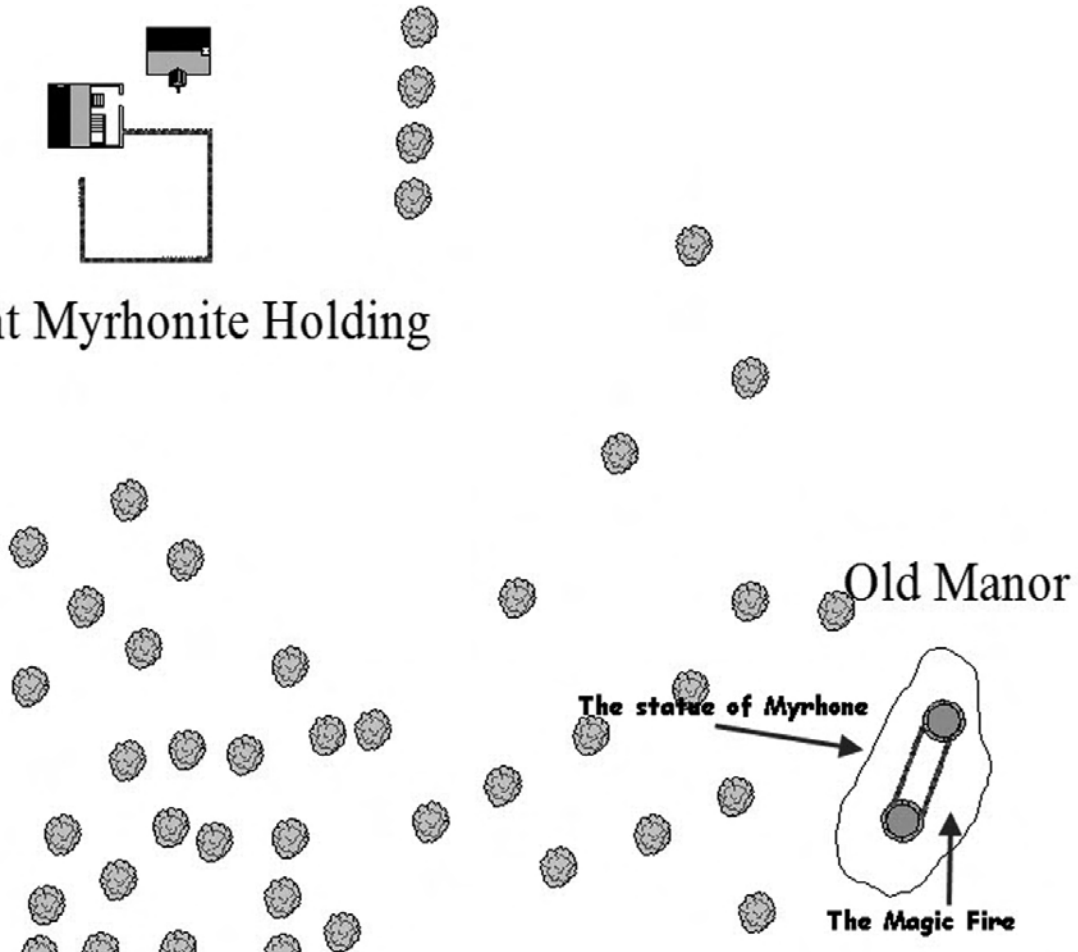
[Map 2] Cirril will point out the statue of Myrhone at the base of the keep. Cirril will mention that this is the only statue of Myrhone know to exist. He will also tell the characters that originally the town of Sand Towers was closer to them, but has moved away from it to the north. Since then it’s fallen into disrepair. In a cleft at the base of the cliff is a statue of a man standing with his arms outstretched. Back at the compound they will settle into the long house where the brothers live. Unless the characters do anything the night will pass uneventfully.

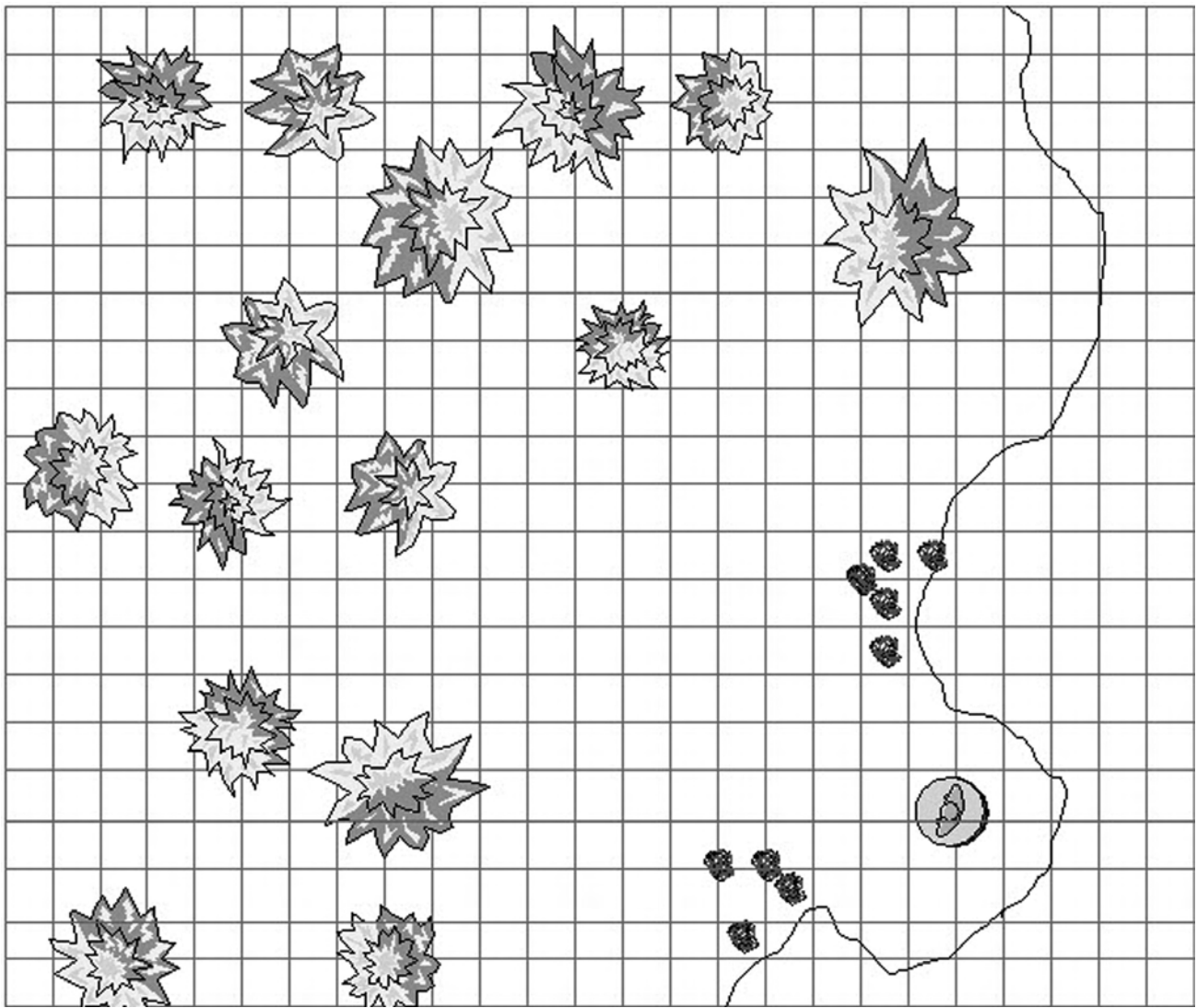
The next morning the Jag Vocs will prepare a sumptuous meal for the party. Cibel will return and hand over

Map 1 - showing the location of the mage’s fire as well as where it is in relationship to the Myrhoneite compound.



Current Myrhoneite Holding





Map 2 - A close up of the area around the statue of Myrhone

the artifact to Brother Cirril with very little pomp. She will then pay the characters the agreed amount before leaving. It's very obvious that there is no love lost between the Andurn and the Jag Vocs. Cirril will mention that there is an issue of hierarchy that hasn't been settled between the priestess and him. Although the brothers are part of the church they are not under the control of Cibel, due to the way that their order was chartered by the earlier queen, Deborah. Cirril mentions that he hopes the temple lawyers can straighten out the problem to the satisfaction of both parties. Cibel will thank the characters for their help and say her goodbyes.

Anyone who snoops around will notice that the monks' larder is low, but if the characters try to give the brothers any money Brother Cirril will decline it.

He will acknowledge that they are short on money but if Santal (Saint) Myron can live in the desert for 10 years without food then the goddess Chaldisaya will provide for them also.

Anyone venturing into the village proper will find the following.

Sand Towers is a medium-sized village or, more accurately, three semi-autonomous villages put together.

THE VILLAGE

Old Town

[Map 3] This is the most western part of the town on the upper spur that overlooks the lower section – see the map for details. This part is known as “Old Town” and is the original village built by the Red Hat Empire years ago. The inhabitants are primarily miners and have a strong sense of identity as a separate village (even though they are not). Party members will be given the cold shoulder if they go there.

The Mycetia Hearth

This is a small village up in the mountains. It is inhabited by a race of creatures known as Manthootians. The village has no bearing on the adventure and can be left out if you don't want the local color.

Common Town

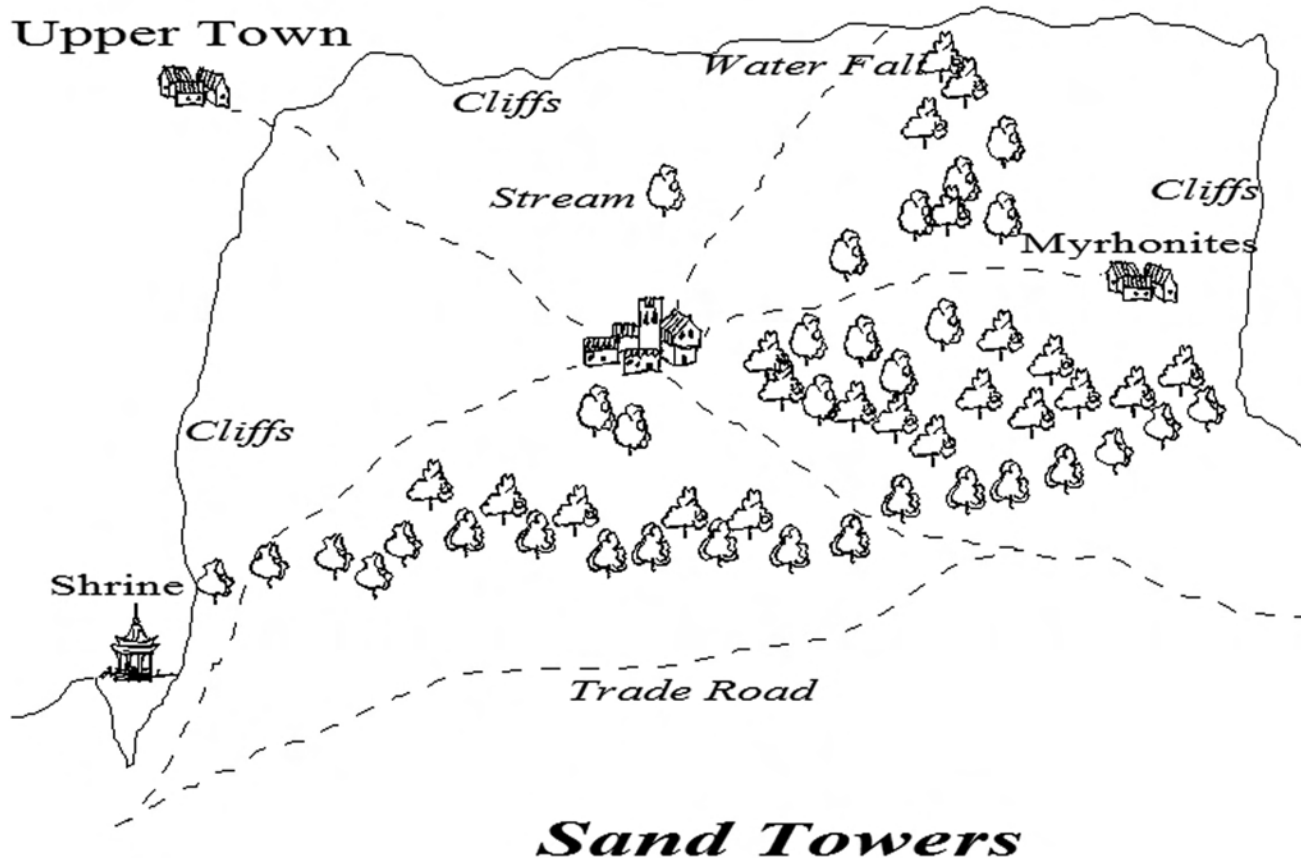
This is the main part of the village, derisively referred to as “Common Town.” It makes up the central area of Sand Towers and is closest to the Myrhoneite compound. The party members will receive warm welcomes in this area (because of their money.) Most of the villagers feel sorry for the Myrhoneites' predicament but have no idea what to do to help.

Local Characters:

An Voc (Mayor) Khyll Toshin is the government-appointed governor of all of Sand Towers. He has his hands full keeping the town running during the past period of instability.

Kennis Kelly Sailon is the illegitimate daughter of first Queen, Sylvia the Good. She has silver-white hair. She has no claim to the throne of Deserata. After talking to her for a short time the characters will realize that she is quite insane. She claims to be the daughter of the former Queen and the Weather God

Map 3 - The village of Sand Towers



Volhoom (no one in the village has ever heard of this god.) Kennis Kelly, being his daughter, claims demigoddess status. Characters who play along will find her an ally with deep resources. Those who show any doubt will be sent on their way in a brisk manner. She lives alone with a few servants

Later that day.

The characters make their way back to the Myrhone chapter house. They could stay at the inn in the town but they will miss the last part of the adventure.

Any character with tracking ability that makes their “Spot” will notice orc tracks around the Myrhone compound. Any character taking 10-15 minutes tracking them will come across a place overlooking the compound where there was a meeting of some sort (very un-orc-like.) Characters making a spot roll (-30%) will notice some human footprints amongst the orc prints but they will be unable to track them.

The Night

Whether the characters prepare for it or not the orcs will attack that evening through the sand storm (which will lessen when they attack).

The orcs will attack without subtlety from the South. There will be 2, plus 1 for each character. There will also be an orc hidden in the bushes with a longbow waiting to target any character that seems to be doing really well, but if not the archer will target the Myrhone one at a time until they drop. The archer’s skill will be degraded due to the storm so will only have a 30% chance of hitting.

The orcs will fight until they have lost half of their number and then run off. Captured orcs know nothing of who hired them. If torture or mind reading is used they will divulge that they were commanded by a human woman from the village, with yellow hair or white/silver hair. Humans look too much alike to the average orc for them to make a better identification.

Orc (Desert Raiders)

STR 14 CON 11 SIZE 11 INT 11 POW 10
DEX 14 APP 7 HIT POINTS 10

Armor 1 Point and leather helm

Scimitar 35% 1d8+1 Shield 35% Composite bow 35% 1d8+1

Climb 55% Dodge 40% Hide 35% Language (common) 30% Listen 50% Sense 35% Spot 45% Stealth 40% Track 30%

This group of orcs is what’s left of the desert raiders from earlier. Priestess Cibel has decided to use them to attack the characters and the Myrhone and the party. This group is armed with bows.

After The Battle

Soon after the battle the sandstorm will end. A group of villagers will arrive with weapons and torches; they have come to help the Jag Vocs. Amongst them will be priestess Ciolet who asks that local villagers stay at the compound to help defend the brothers, now that the sand storm has passed.

Ending The Adventure

The characters can stick around for a few days, but there will be no more attacks and no more clues. There will be some conjecture that Kennis Kelly was behind the attack since she claims to be daughter of a weather god, but there will be no proof.

If he survives Cirril will thank the characters for their help, and proves generous with what little money they have. He says his order will say prayers for the characters’ safety. He will also ask the characters if the order may call upon them in the future, since they have no one else to turn to.

Priestess Ciolet will thank the characters as well. She will give each character a generous amount of money for their help and also offer the blessings of the Lady Chaldisaya on each of the characters. She tells them that the next day the caravan will be leaving. As a favor the Andurn has secured a caravan guard position for each of the characters at double the regular rate, should they wish.

CHAPTER 2: A PLAGUE OF AGES

It has been several months since the characters worked for the Jag Vocs of Myrhone. They will receive two messages but both say about the same thing. The first will be from Brother Cirril asking the characters to come and help them, the second from Andurn Ciolet offering money if the characters will come to the aid of the brothers.

Arrival

Read or paraphrase the following:

As you arrive at Sand Towers you see the Shrine of Chaldisaya, a crystal building on the rim of the cliffs above Sand Towers. You notice how nice the weather is as you head up the path to the shrine. Ahead you see a group of people waiting for you. One is obviously Andurn Cillet, along with a few of her novices.

Cillet will greet the characters. She will tell them that the weather around the Myrhone compound has been good since the last time they were there and villagers have set up a watch to help keep the brothers safe from any marauders in the area (there have been none). She mentions sheepishly that she has also made her peace with the Jag Voc and everything was going well until a few weeks ago. She leads them through the village but refuses to tell them more until they get closer to the compound. When they get close they see that white sheets have been hung from the long house, each sheet displaying a red circle with three dots in the center, the symbol of a plague house.

Cibel will take them into the house, having first asked the blessing of her Goddess to protect them all from disease. All three of the Myrhoneites are lying in bed. They do not look like the strong warriors that the characters left a few short months ago, but like old men. The Andurn will tell the party that this wasting sickness is aging the brothers and they will be dead in two days.

She tells them that she has used what spells are available to her to lift the plague, but nothing has happened. Even though no one else in the village has come down with the plague the villagers are afraid to approach the compound, leaving the Andurn and her novices to take care of the Jag Vocs. She says she feeds them broth and keeps the place as clean as possible.

Looking Around

Characters that snoop around will find the following:

Lead 1. The food that Cybil is feeding them is pure and good; anyone with Alchemy or Poison skill can easily tell that. There is a “bitter” taste to the food, which comes from the Quan fruit extract that she has added. If a sample of the food is taken to a local they will identify the bitter taste as Quan plant, a harmless food additive.

Lead 2. Talking to Kennis Kelly will be a waste of time; she will proclaim that the brothers could be saved if they worshiped her instead of Chaldisaya (wrong).

Lead 3. Looking around the edge of the area, a character will notice many scuffed tracks near the edge of the woods. Further searching will show that someone was clearing land. This is due to the brothers themselves making more room for a future building project.

Lead 4. Characters with a good Spot roll looking around in the surrounding forest will notice a proliferation of several kinds of mushrooms. The mushrooms are especially evil-looking, black with a foul odor and dripping a dark, smelly liquid. A character who is a herbalist will be able to easily identify the mushrooms as non-poisonous ones.

Lead 5. Any character poking around the keep and making a Spot roll will notice that there are several dead fires in the keep. One of the fires is more than it seems. When investigated the character will notice that the fire contains pieces of human hair, charred jewels and other stones. Anyone with Spell ability will know this fire was used to cast a very powerful spell.



TAKING ACTION

[Use MAP 1] There are several options for how this section of the adventure may play out:

Option 1

the characters don't find Lead 5 by the late afternoon. A local will come forth and tell them about seeing strange fires up on the Keep for the last few weeks, and suggest that the characters should check this out.

The local will hang around while the characters talk. He wants to hear as much of their plan as possible. He will then report back to Cibel. If the characters make plans to go up on the tower at night, there will be token resistance in the shape of a gargoyle.

Sometime during the fight Cibel and a group of villagers loyal to her will barge in and arrest the characters for directing harmful sorcery against the JagVocs. The characters will be thrown in jail for a couple of days after which they will be released, but the Jag Vocs will be dead by then.

If you want to role-play the mock trial let the characters make Fast Talk and Orator skills to keep themselves out of the lock-up. If the characters do get locked up they will be in the local jail, although it looks formidable the characters should be able to escape by pulling up floorboards or bribing a sympathetic guard..

Option 2

[MAP 4] The characters decide to climb the hill, that the tower is on of their own accord. In this case they will catch the sorcerer casting his spell; he is protected by several gargoyles that will fight to the death to protect him (one per character) When the characters win the spell will be ended and the Jag Vocs will be restored to health.

Option 3

The characters decide to go up the hill and invite the priestess along. In this case Cibel will bring along several (one for each party member) loyal villagers. When the characters engage the sorcerer in combat the Priestess' loyal men will throw their weight

against the characters as well. If the party dies, push the characters directly to the next adventure. If the characters win the Priestess will claim that she knew nothing of the plans of the villagers, she was merely a pawn in the whole affair. If this fails she will fall back upon claiming "Clerical Immunity" and tell the characters they are bound not to hurt her because she is a priestess.

Gargoyles

Flying reptile men

STR 14 CON 15 SIZE 11 INT 11 POW 10
DEX 12 APP 10 HIT POINTS 12

Scaly skin counts for 1 point of armor

Claw 30% 1d4

Climb 60% Dodge 45% Grapple 50% Hide 35% Jump 50% Listen 50% Sense 35% Spot 45% Stealth 40%

The Shaman Of Distaria

A ragged man wrapped in soiled clothing, chanting in front of a strangely glowing fire.

STR 9 CON 11 SIZE 11 INT 11 POW 15
DEX 14 APP 7 HIT POINTS 10

Armor: n/a

Dagger 35% 1d6

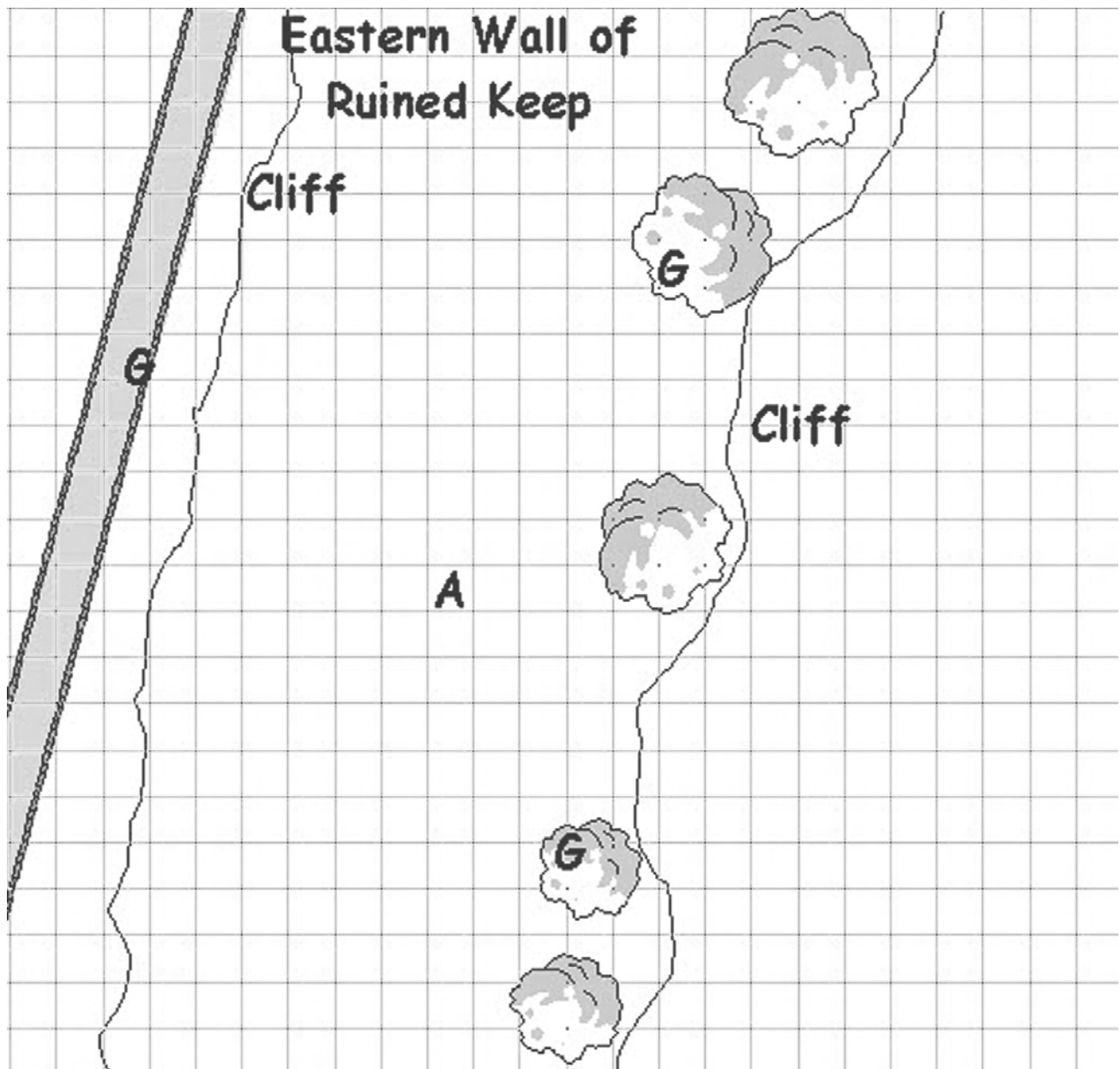
Climb 55% Dodge 40% Hide 35% Language (common) 30% Listen 50% Sense 35% Spot 45% Stealth 40% Track 30%

Spells: Aging spell

The shaman sent by Distaria to use the "curse" to destroy the Myrhoneites. The shaman doesn't know how to control the spell only that each night he is to build a fire close to the Myrhoneites compound and feed special fuel into it. If his concentration is broken the spell cannot be cast for another 24 hours. Each night the spell ages the targets 5-10 years. If the spell is not complete (10 nights) the targets return to their original ages. Tonight is the last night of the spell

The End

There is a massive celebration and the characters are treated like royalty. The An Voc (Mayor) hangs around



*Map 4 - This is the place where the last encounter will take place.
A-The fire the mage is using to cast the aging spell. G-Gargoyle perches.*

with the characters. If Cibel is alive and unrevealed as a villain she will be there. If the characters honor her “Clerical Immunity” she will have been sent off under guard to Deserata to face trial by her own church. The characters might be wise, should she be killed, to make it look like she was helping them when she died. In that case her body will be sent back to Deserata under honor guard.

CHAPTER 3: A FORTRESS OF PRISONERS

Awakening

The characters wake up. This could be months after the last adventure or almost instantly if they “died” in the last adventure. They find themselves in the caverns below the fortress of Stand Town. Read or paraphrase the following:

You find yourselves in a cavern. A pool of water shimmers off in the distance, barely seen between the stalagmites and stalactites. From the other direction flickering firelight reflects off the cavern walls and you can hear what sounds like talking.

Anyone approaching the pool of water and putting their hand in will notice that no matter what they do they cannot actually get any water out of the pool. The liquid feels warm to the touch but anything placed in it comes up dry.

Fire Encounter

As they characters get closer to the fire they hear a voice mumbling and whining. If they sneak up the person will not notice them. Read or paraphrase the following:

You see a small gnome-like creature dressed in tattered rags. The strangest thing about it is that it has two left arms; the other left arm is attached where the right arms should be but it's attached upside down. The creature is staring longingly into a small fire, laughing and cooing at it. The creature speaks lovingly to the fire and then takes a burning stick from it and puts it in his mouth. When the fire touches the inside of his mouth he roars and screams with the pain, tossing the stick away. After a few seconds the creature begins the whole silly process again, quite oblivious of you.

Ember

STR 7 CON 19 SIZE 5 INT 11 POW 10
DEX 14 APP 7 HIT POINTS 12

Ember is a construct created by the Fire Magister long ago. It is dressed in simple rags, long hair falls down its back. No matter what the characters do the Ember it will not fight. Unless the characters have some form of fire it will pay little attention to them.

If/when the characters talk to the thing it will introduce itself as Ember. The creature is obviously some kind of construct; it has a simple mind and offers little information. The characters will probably notice (Spot Roll) a small winding staircase going into one of the larger stalactites. After a while the door opens and a woman dressed in a long red and yellow robe emerges. She has dark chocolate-colored skin that carries horrible burn scars.

The woman introduces herself as Charcoal, the adept of the Fire Magister. She beckons the characters to follow her as she takes them to see her master/mistress.

Charcoal

Charcoal is a dark skinned woman that is a devout follower of the Fire Magister. To prove her devotion she has scared her skin with fire. Although not meant as an enemy for the characters to fight it's possible the characters could provoke her.

STR 9 CON 11 SIZE 5 INT 19 POW 21
DEX 14 APP 7 HIT POINTS 13

Dagger 35% 1d4

Appraise 35% Dodge 45% Grapple 50% Hide 35%
Jump 50% Knowledge (Occult) 70% Listen 35%
Research 75% Sense 35% Spot 45% Stealth 40%

Spells: Conjure Fire Elemental 25% Fire 25%

What Charcoal can tell them?

1. They are in the fortress of Stand Town on the continent of Sadakadish.
2. The lord of the fortress is the Peace lord called "The Red"
3. Charcoal knows that her master/mistress spun a summoning spell several days ago; she feels that they are the product of that spell.

The Fire Magister

The Fire Magister is actually one of the player characters who has lived here for the past 300 years. (Pick the character that is closest to being a mage, if there is a tie pick the one with the highest POW). In that time they have learned hundreds of spells and transformed themselves into living fire. The characters will be told

later that it was their promise to the Myrhoneites that brought them to the future, but this is a lie. The characters were brought to the future because of their association with the Magister's past self. (Obviously this should be kept secret.)

Rest

The characters are led to a pleasant, windowless room lit by a single indirect skylight and asked to wait a while Charcoal informs her master/mistress of their arrival. Just as the characters are beginning to get a bit bored the Fire Magister comes in dressed in yellow and orange like Charcoal, the hood of the robe drawn down to hide the face, although occasionally wisps of smoke escape from it. While he/she is in the room the temperature will rise slightly.

The Fire Magisters Message

The Fire Magister tells the party the following:

1. The characters have traveled roughly three hundred years into the future where creatures of dark (the vampires) now rule the world. He/She doesn't know what happened, how the creatures of dark took over. It's said that the Queen of Deserata herself was the portal from which they came. Her reign began the destruction of the Goddess Chaldisaya's followers.
2. They are on the far southern continent of Sadakadish, under the protection of the last Peace Lord known as The Red. At one time there were many such men and women but now only this one remains.
3. The characters were summoned from their time because of the promise of assistance they gave to the Jag Vocs of the Myrhoneites.
4. Creatures called Vangfur have overrun most of the inhabited continents. All organized resistance save from this place has been crushed. It is only a matter of time before this place is also destroyed.
5. There is the possibility of turning back the tide a little.

Continued Conversation

The Fire Magister, after detailing the above, will tell the characters that this city is under the protection of the last of the Sadakadishian Peace Lords and he wishes to see them. He/She will warn them that Sadakadishians are a very proud and ordered people and they need to be very careful when talking to any of them, especially The Red.

The characters will be taken up more winding staircases and through large hallways. As they go further they will begin to see Sadakadishian soldiers, though these will ignore the party since they are in the company of the Fire Magister. The further they go, the more soldiers they will see. The penultimate room is absolutely full of soldiers, beyond which they will come to a dimly lit room. Behind a desk sits a middle aged man, his hair pulled back into a ponytail which is curled back onto itself. It's obvious by the color of his skin that The Red is not a Sadakadishian.

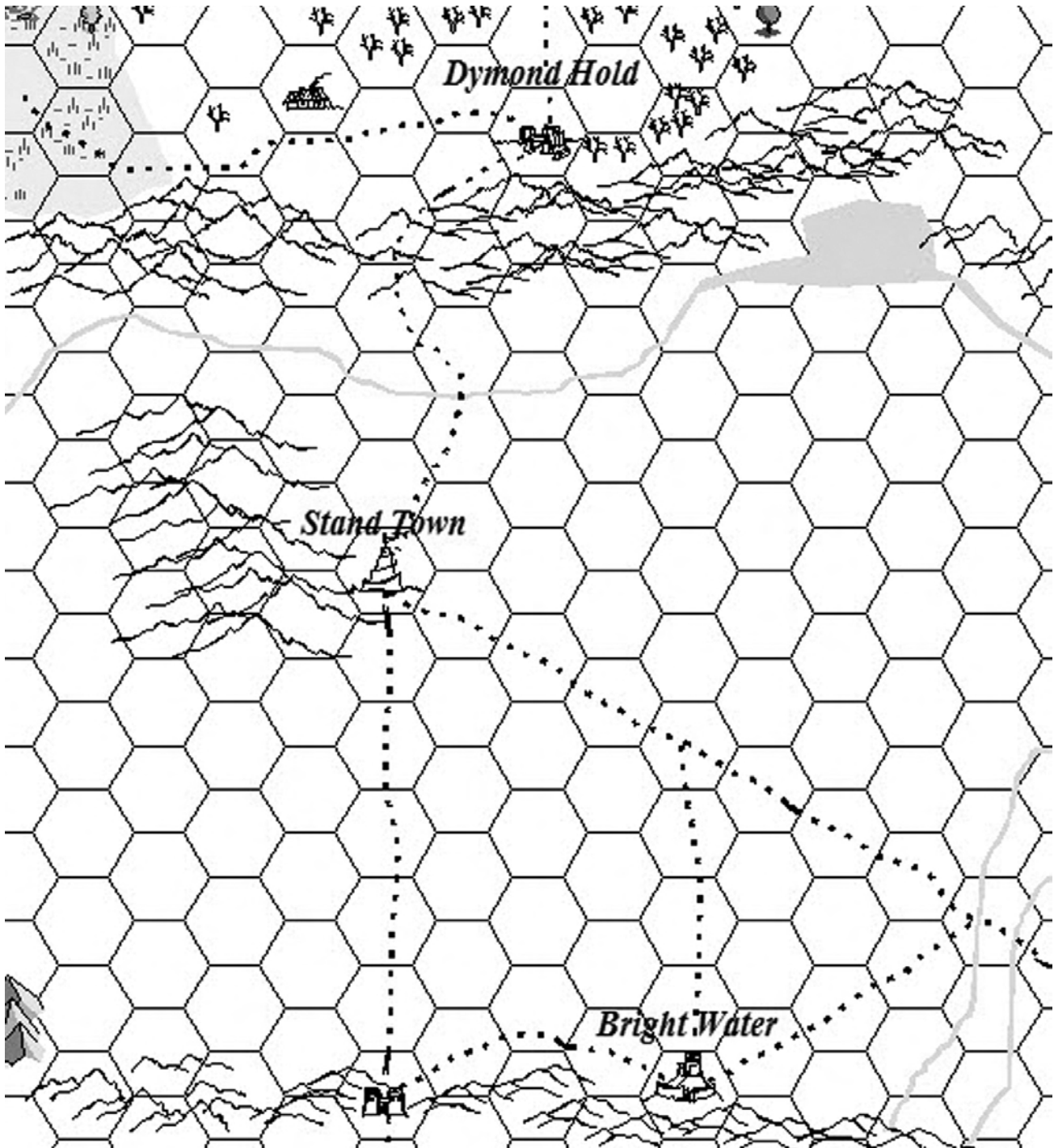
Sadakadishians

The southern continent known as Sadakadish is populated by a yellow-brown skinned race. The prominent hair color is blue/black and their eyes are yellow, with an almond shape to them. They usually wear armor made up of small, hardened wooden scales.

Some say that all Sadakadishians are short and bandy-legged. This is not true. Of the sub-races only the Tre Hum Da are short and bandy-legged, the Myotian and Khan sub races being quite tall.

Before being taken over by the dark forces, Sadakadish had an ancient culture that was in balance. Society was divided into three casts, The Do, the merchants and the farmers.

The Do (pronounced the same way as dough) lived only for war. These warriors were allowed swords but forbidden holdings and money, looking to the Peace Lords for food and shelter. The merchants were allowed to hold money but were prohibited weapons and ownership of land. The farmers were allowed to own land but not weapons or large amounts of money; they were not allowed to leave the land without permission. This social structure was destroyed by the coming of the dark creatures.



Map 5 - the area surrounding Stand Town

The Visit

The Fire Magister will wait in silence while The Red finishes what he is writing. After a short wait he will look up and acknowledge their presence. The Fire Magister will relate that his/her spell has indeed worked and the characters are the result. The Red will talk to the characters asking basic questions, like the characters fighting background and lineage. Eventual-

ly The Fire Magister will direct the conversation more to the task at hand. The Red will hold up his hand and stop the conversation, saying that before the characters can perform any tasks, he has a mission of his own for them. The Fire Magister will argue that what they are to do is very important and they should get to the task he/she has set for them. The Red will respond by saying that his mission must come first.

Walking over to the far wall, which has a heavy black curtain on it, he will pull it aside. Read or paraphrase the following:

Through the window beyond the curtain you see that you are actually high in some kind of citadel, which is ringed by three sets of walls. Buildings are tightly packed into the fortress. Outside, circling the city, is an army that sits like a black tide upon the land. Beyond the army the land is cracked and barren. The light from the sun is murky and dark.

The Red will tell them the following:

1. The army outside is the army of darkness. The creatures of the night have been besieging the city for several years and he feels that the inhabitants need some relief.
2. He mentions that everything that is eaten in Stand Town is grown here. There are crops on the roofs of most buildings and animals graze there as well. He worries that one day the water cisterns will give out.
3. Although he understands the Fire Magister's overall plan he feels that the city needs relief now.
4. He will tell the characters that the armies of the dark, although not Vangfur themselves, are afraid of light. The sun is kept shielded by a Heart of Darkness, a powerful magical spell. At great cost he has found the location of the heart which maintains the darkness over Stand Town. If it were to be destroyed then the citadel would be bathed in light and the siege might be lifted.

THE PLAN

[Map 5] The Plan: Destruction of the Heart of Darkness

1. The characters will be led out of the city via a secret tunnel. Once out they will be led by some of The

Red's Do Warriors to a citadel several days away. This is where the "heart" is.

2. The citadel has never been attacked, but a heart has never been destroyed so The Red believes that it will be lightly defended.
3. The hearts are old magic. Even if they can be repaired it will probably be a long time before it is functioning again.
4. The Fire Magister will provide a spell that will destroy or at least damage the heart.

The audience at an end, the Fire Magister and the characters will head back to her quarters, where she can help prepare the characters for the mission. It is obvious that she is unhappy. The characters will be given what equipment they feel they need (within reason).

At some time in the preparation the Fire Magister will take the character that is their "past" self to one side and warn them to be careful, but will not reveal who they are. The Fire Magister tries to impress upon them that they must protect themselves above all. This has nothing to do with the mission but stems from the Fire Magister's own sense of self-preservation. Once he/she is done talking to him/herself, the party will be given a scroll of great power which, if read, should destroy the Heart.

The Tunnel

The characters are led down into the lower sections of Stand Town, accompanied by 4 of The Red's soldiers. Only one of them (Samis) speaks the character's language. After a day long journey through the twisting turning tunnels the party will need to rest in a large cavern.

Samis will tell them that it will take another day's travel through the underworld before they emerge behind the dark creatures' lines. After the second day of travel they will emerge from the tunnel. Read or paraphrase the following text:

Even though it is noon, the light from the sun is dark, murky and sheds little light. The land is cold with only the hardest

of plants clinging to life. The buildings around you are mere shells, ready to fall at the slightest touch. Off in the distance is the range of mountains which is to be your destination.

When the party enters the hills looking back they will see:

Below you, beyond the village you left, is a long line of troops all streaming toward the west, forces to be added to the siege of Stand town.

Not All are With Us (Optional Encounter)

Not every human is on the side of Stand Town. Late in the day the party will be attacked by a group of brigands 2-4 in number. The brigands will attack until they lose 25% of their number.

Brigands

Dressed in tattered rags, some of these men carry the armor of defeated soldiers of the Red.

STR 16 CON 14 SIZE 15 INT 10 POW 10
DEX 12 APP 10 HIT POINTS 15

Sadakadishian lacquered bamboo armor 2 points of armor.

Long Knife 50% 1d6+1 Club 50% 1d8 Fist 50% 1d3
Climb 60% Dodge 35% Grapple 50% Hide 35% Jump 50% Listen 50% Ride 35% Sense 35% Spot 55% Stealth 40%

Treasure: 1d6 Silver pieces in treasure. A deck of playing cards.

The Soldiers of The Red

Veterans of the Long War against the Dark Queen.

STR 16 CON 15 SIZE 14 INT 11 POW 10
DEX 17 APP 13 HIT POINTS 15

Sadakadishian lacquered bamboo armor 2 points of armor.

Katana 50% 1d10+1 Fist 50% 1d3

Climb 60% Dodge 35% Grapple 50% Hide 35% Jump 50% Listen 50% Ride 35% Sense 35% Spot 55% Stealth 40%

If you don't want to use this encounter you can speed things along. Feel free to mention how there is very little vegetation with the plants only getting half-light. Samis will point out the path as they go. If asked he will tell them that he knows the way because this was a private path that leads to the fortress city of Bright Water, his family's ancestral home, where the dark forces have set the Heart of Darkness.

Bright Water

After a couple of days' travel they will come to the spur on the hills that is Bright Water. Read or paraphrase the following:

You see before you the stronghold of Bright Water. The fortress sits on a mountain, with waterfalls tumbling out of passages cut into the cliff faces. The fortress walls follow the edge of the cliff, providing a sheer drop. The stronghold can only be accessed by a path winging its way up the side of the cliff. The path presents many places where defenders can attack the people below. At the bottom of the mountain is another open area with a low wall around it. A deserted village sits inside the walls.

It is obvious to anyone that taking the direct road would be suicide, however Samis knows the old re-tainer tunnel where supplies were brought up. Heading across the killing zone and past a watch tower the party enter a crack in the village wall and then a hidden cleft in the mountain face.

Once inside the tunnels the path leads up a narrow stone hallway which eventually leads into a wooden cellar. The cellar in turn leads to the interior of the fortress. Samis will tell the characters that few guards have been posted because the fortress is in such a remote location and because of the large army surrounding Stand town. '

In The Fortress

Read or paraphrase the following:

The inside of the fortress is suffering from years of neglect, the wooden floors have cracked and puddles of water are everywhere. As you climb the numerous stairs you see faded and torn wall hangings.

Inside the fortress is a typical Sadakadishian castle, mostly wood. There is a 1 in 10 chance of an encounter in the fortress for every 30 minutes the characters spend there (see the encounter chart below).

1. The Vangfur lord of the fortress (see Vangfur description). He will be alone and caught unawares at first. The hallways are very narrow and the characters will have to squeeze in to get more than 2 within striking distance. If the lord of the tower is killed the characters will find a set of keys on his body, as well as a silver necklace, and golden ring on his finger. Most likely the lord of the manor will flee using his inhuman speed. He will then mobilize the Bloodguard at this command to find the characters.

2. Guards. The guards are human but not expecting trouble. The four of them can be easily taken by surprise by the characters. The guards are not very well trained (See Standard Guards). They will fight until two of them are killed or driven off, after which they will fall to their knees and beg for their lives. What the characters do with them is their decision, but Samis will suggest slitting their throats. (It should be noted which characters try to spare their lives, as this will be rewarded later.)

3. Cook and apprentice. The cook is unarmed except for the bowls of food he is carrying, his apprentice has a butcher knife concealed on his belt. The cook will fall to his knees and beg for his life, but the apprentice will attack if it looks like they are going to be killed in cold blood.

When the characters make it through the two hour crawl through the castle they will arrive in the hallway leading to the main audience room. Standing at attention in front of the door are four of the tower's guards. These are all Bloodguard and cannot be surprised. After defeating the guards the characters can attempt to

open the door. Any character with Fine Manipulation who examines the locks (or makes a really good Spot roll) will notice that the lock is magically trapped. A magic user will need to cast Counter Spell on it in order to avoid it. If the trap is triggered an alarm will sound to alert the other guards in the castle.

Blood Guard (Lesser)

Servitors of the Vangfur

STR 14 CON 15 SIZE 13 INT 11 POW 9
DEX 14 APP 13 HIT POINTS 14

Sadakadishian lacquered bamboo armor 2 points of armor.

Sword 50% 1d18+1 Fist 50% 1d3

Armor 1 point armor

Climb 30% Dodge 25% Grapple 30% Hide 35% Jump 30% Listen 50% Ride 35% Sense 35% Spot 55% Stealth 40%

Treasure 1d6 Silver each

THE AUDIENCE

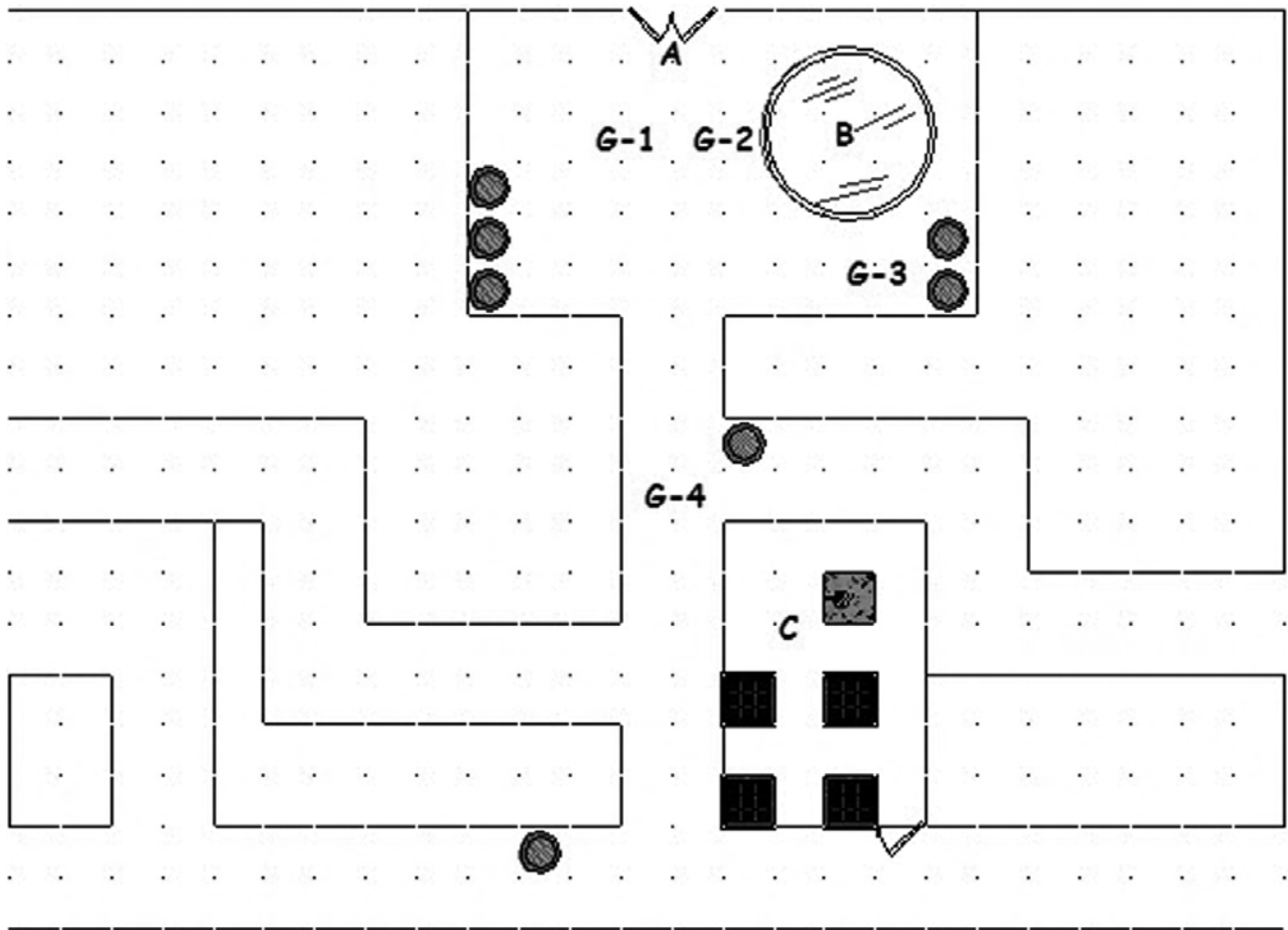
[Map 6] If the characters try to throw open the door (and just set off the trap) the operator and anyone within 20 feet will need to make a POW roll vs. POW 15 or be stunned for 15 minutes. The springing of the trap also alerts the Vangfur lord who will arrive in 10 minutes with 6 Blood Guard. Stunned characters may be revived by a successful First Aid roll.

Inside the room

Read or paraphrase the following:

You see a fifty-foot-square empty room. In the center of the room floats a black orb the size of a football. The orb is the blackest thing you have ever seen. The room has a high ceiling, which has a skylight. Streaming in the skylight are a series of white light fibers, which are pouring into the orb.





Map 6 - This is the area of the final encounter with the Bloodguard. The characters can approach from any of the corridors. A- These are the doors leading to the room where the Heart of Darkness is. B- A reflecting pool. C- Guardroom and holding cells (in the floor). G- The Bloodguards

Anyone making a Spot roll will notice a faint shimmering field surrounding the orb. The field is a level 3 ward and will need to be dispelled before the characters can use the scroll on the Heart.

The Dispel

Once the spell the Fire Magister gave them is thrown, strange things start to happen. Read or paraphrase the following:

The room fills with a deep rumbling sound and you find yourself being sucked into the orb along with everyone else in the room.

Characters will need to make a STR vs. STR roll against the pull of the orb (STR 15). Characters mak-

ing the roll will find themselves in an empty room with the orb still floating and absorbing light. Characters that make the roll will need to sit out a short part of the adventure.

In The Orb

Characters in the orb will see the following:

The walls of the room you find yourselves in are black like the orb, and in the center of it is a wizened old man holding a white stone in his hand. The stone is glowing like a white-hot coal. White light coming from the ceiling is streaming into it.

What The Old Man Knows:

He doesn't know his own name, but he does know that he is an ancient spirit asked by Jkennis Distaria to help save the world eons ago (some characters may remember her as the former Queen of Deserata). Once she had accomplished this, she asked him to stay within the orb and keep the world safe until such time as man is worthy of Chaldisaya's return.

He cannot be hurt by weapons or spells. He mistakenly believes that he is keeping the world safe from evil.

Getting The Heart Turned Off

If the characters try to convince them that they are good he will, with a wave of his hand, pull the other characters into the sphere and begin a discussion on how they can prove their virtuous intentions.

The characters may try Fast Talk or Persuade on him, which will only work if the roll is a critical success and the characters must role-play it. They only get 1 chance each but don't tell them that!

If the characters mention Myrhoneites the old man will nod and say that he now remembers who he was. Once he was Cirril of the Myrhoneites. He will immediately lift the darkness and the characters will find themselves back in the main room, the orb gone.

If there is no other resolution, the old man will make them an offer. He will leave the orb to check that the characters are telling the truth. If, in his opinion, the characters aren't lying then he will leave the orb and send it back to the chaos where it belongs. However he cannot leave unless the orb has a rider, so one of the player characters must volunteer for the job. If he decides that the characters are lying he will not return and the rider will be locked in the orb forever. (Don't tell the characters but this is a test and will not happen. The old man wants to see if someone is willing to die, or at least be eternally trapped, for the cause.) When a person comes forward the old man will hand over the white orb and tell the character that once they take the orb from him the changeover will be sealed. As soon as the orb is taken the old man smiles and tells the person that it was all a test. He gives that character a gift and is gone (see The Old Mans Gift.)

Treasure

Once the characters finish they are returned to the room they were originally in. The tower is deserted. If the characters take 20 minutes and make a Spot roll they receive 1-10 GP worth of trinkets and miscellaneous treasure found in the abandoned structure.

The characters will notice that Samis and the other Dos do not take any plunder, since they are forbidden to own carry money. When the characters are done they will be led from the hold. They will notice that the valley below is clear of troops as well. As Samis and the others lead the way down the road they will see large amounts of equipment left behind. The sun is shining brightly on everything.

Back To Stand Town

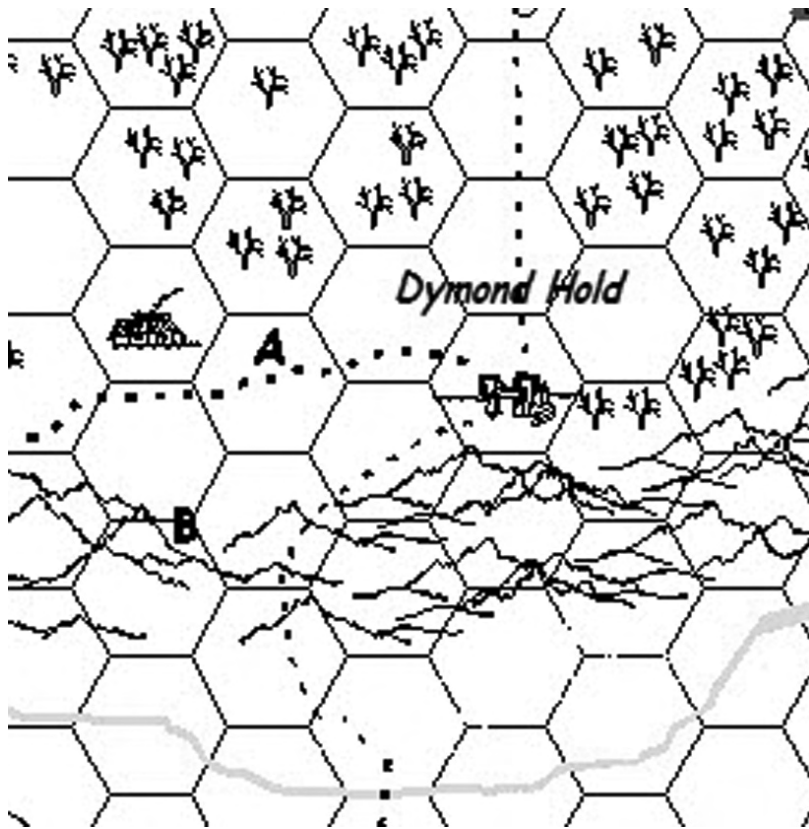
Returning to Stand Town, the characters will see that the siege has been broken, the besieging army is gone but their weapons are still there. The gates of Stand Town are open and people are breaking apart the weapons of the dark army. The characters will be taken immediately to The Red.

This time around the audience is rather different. They don't have to wait and he almost looks happy. Samis whispers in The Red's ear for a minute, who then addresses them.

His demeanor is almost jovial. During the talk he looks through one of the character's loot bags, takes out a random piece and proclaims that it's a piece from his old fortress. He personally thanks the character for bringing it back to him and appropriates it despite any objections. The Red will continue to do this until the loot bags are empty and their treasure is gone.

He then thanks them most graciously for returning his valuables. If a character breaks silence he will give them a glaring look to silence them. If a character asks for reward, they will be stared down. Eventually he gives them an oily smile saying that he is deeply grateful... then leaves quickly. When he is gone, Samis will hold up his finger for the characters to be quiet then open a side door. A man in less than nice clothes enters and places several boxes at the character's feet. Each box contains double the monies that they got from looting. If a character didn't loot the tower he/she





Map 7 - Each hex is 10 miles. A-This is the manor house where the blood of the Myrhoneites is kept. B-This is the pass the characters will have to escape through.

will be given 10 gold coins. The Fire Magister then returns to show them to their rooms.

CHAPTER 4: A FINE VINTAGE

This is a good place for the characters to take a break from the future if you wish to do some adventuring in their own time. When you are ready to continue with the main plot, the characters are summoned back to 300 years in the future or you can continue where they left off. It has been three months since they were last in Sadakadish. They find themselves in the cavern again, and this time the Fire Magister is there in person to meet them. Since there is no need to present them to The Red to show that they can be summoned they can be send off on the next mission now.

The Crimson Curtain

Ancient records tell that the Myrhoneite order was once given a special weapon to hide away. The weapon was called The Light Without Shadow, Blade Without Edge. Through scrying, the Fire Magister has determined that it is in a place called Sand Towers, deep in the heart of the dark forces. The weapon is supposedly some kind of sword that mimics the light of the sun, a sure way to kill Vangfur.

The problem is that the Myrhoneites hid the weapon well. Fortunately the Fire Magister knows where. It is in a ruined keep near the edge of town. The locking mechanism was the statue at the base, an effigy of their patron Santal (Saint), Myrhone. The key to unlocking is to take the blood of the saint and dab it on the outstretched hands and lips of the statue. This will release the Light

Without Shadow, Blade Without Edge. The problem is that the blood is currently owned by a Vangfur in the nearby town of Dymond Hold, though he doesn't understand its significance. The Vangfur is a connoisseur of vintage blood, and it would be near impossible for anyone to find the correct vials in his large collection. Since the characters have seen the containers they are tasked to go into the town, find the Vangfur's manor house and look through his collection to find it.

The Plan

[Map 7] The Fire Magister informs them that he/she will use a fire gate to send them to Dymond Hold. There they will find Johan Fion, the owner of a small inn named the Crimson Curtain. He will give them directions to the Vangfur collector's house. Once there they need to sneak in and get the blood. They will then have to travel overland back to Stand Town, since the Dymond Hold gate is only a receiver.

Humans are little more than cattle in the Vangfur lands. To afford them a little protection the Fire Magister has found red Bloodguard scarves for them to wear. These simple disguises will hopefully keep them from being

stopped and questioned. Nevertheless they must be careful. Once the gate has been used it is possible that a Vangfur magister will sense it. They must get away from the gate as soon as possible and find Johan Fion. Tell him who sent them and he will hide the characters for a few days.

After any questions the Fire Magister draws a line of fire on the wall and pushes it open like a door. As the characters pass through there is a sudden lurching sensation and they find themselves elsewhere.

Read or paraphrase the following:

You are standing on a small hill, the top of which has been cut away to reveal granite underneath. Scratched into the stone are glyphs and wards. (A magister will recognize that this is a gate.) Off in the distance you see a small village, huddled against a mountain range. The lights of the village are beginning to come on as it is getting dark.

When they enter the village of Dymond Hold the characters will feel a noticeable chill travel through their bodies. What should be a thriving village on a major trade road is little more than a cluster of unkempt buildings. There are poles on several street corners from which people are suspended upside down, buckets slung off of their chins, to catch their blood. There is a miasma of oppression in the village, more than any human overlord could inspire.

Off to the side of the village is a well paved road. Dymond Hold should be a prosperous village, being at the foot of a mountain pass, but it's not. On the other side of the road is a huge encampment of the dark army.

It's not hard to find the Crimson Curtain. It squats in the middle of the town; gaudy red lights make it look like a bordello. The characters will notice that there are two entrances to the bar, one marked with a red scarf, the other marked simply with a single white fang.

The Wrong Door

The door with the fang over it is for Vangfur only. Any character entering will find themselves going up a staircase to a private room. The room is set up much like a gentleman's club, with a few chairs and a couple of tables. It looks very refined. There are glasses and bottles lining the wall with various different colors of elixir. The far wall is covered by a curtain, a few minutes a couple of other Bloodguard will come up and escort the character down to the proper door.

The Correct Door

Any character entering through the Bloodguard door will find a bar similar to what they are used to in their own time, although there are heads lining the wall which are either well preserved or wax. The far wall is a reddish brown curtain. A couple of bouncers will prevent prying characters from looking under it. Asking for Johan Fion will result in the characters being pointed to a booth and told to wait.

Characters downstairs will notice that the bar begins to fill up; they may notice that all of the patrons are Bloodguard. Drinks are distributed, along with huge bowls of meaty chili. After a few minutes the show begins.

The Show

NOTE: This is not the place to fight, that needs to be hammered into the characters. This is a place for the GM to show the characters exactly what a Vangfur looks like.

Read or describe the following

The curtain is slowly pulled back to reveal a stage filled with people tied to poles. Up from the balcony the characters will hear calls for blood. A rotund man will mount the stage and begin to cut the people. At one point a Vangfur jumps from the balcony. Its eyes are black orbs and a black forked tongue licks parched lips. The creature falls upon the bleeding humans and begins to drink thirstily. Meanwhile,



the rotund man who was just on stage will approach the characters. They will notice that he has a thick leather collar around his neck. Before the festivities get too graphic he will beckon for the characters follow him.

Fions Information

Johan Fion is in contact with the Fire Magister, who told him that the characters were coming. He doesn't know exactly what their task is but he knows it has something to do with the local Magister's "hobby" of collecting human blood.

Johan will take them to the cellar, a heartbreaking place where hundreds of humans are kept waiting their turn; the GM should lay on the description of how nasty a place this is to make the characters pity the caged humans. Of course freeing them is out of the question. That would cast too much suspicion on their benefactor, Johan.

At the back door Johan has horses and another human waiting; he introduces him as Adran the Coward. Adran knows the location of the Magister's manor and will ride with them as guide. Johan tells the characters that the Magister will be at the Crimson Curtain until about an hour before dawn, at which time he will probably head back to the manor. The manor is only lightly guarded during the night, but when daylight comes the guard will be more vigilant so they must get out of their as soon as possible. It is currently 7:00 PM and it will be light at 6:00 AM, so ideally they should be done by 5:00 AM.

Questions Johan can answer:

It is a thirty minute trip to the magister's manor.

It would probably not be a good idea to come back to the town after they have completed their mission (remember he doesn't know what they are going to do).

There is a pass between the mountains that few know about; they should take that back to Stand Town. Taking the main road would be faster but there are road blocks and they would probably be stopped, even with their Bloodguard scarves.

A Night Ride

Once they are on the road, Adran will ask about the characters' mission. Should they decide to tell him about it he will be unphased, and tell them that he knows where the magister's cellar is and how to get down to it. The ride to the magister's manor is uneventful. A short distance from town the party will run into a Bloodguard patrol (2 × the number of party members). They are on their way to Dymond Hold and more worried about arriving too late, so will not be in the mood to challenge the party. They will ask questions about where they are from and be interested in what has been going on in the town. A minute after the characters have started talking to them the Bloodguard will begin to talk in hushed tones. A character making a Spot check will notice. After another few minutes one of them will come over and whisper something to the Bloodguard leader. When they are done the leader tells the characters that one of his men, Bogan, isn't feeling well and wants to return to the manor. He would take it as a personal favor if they would let him ride back with them.

Babysitting Bogan

Bogan is feeling rather poorly, and will request that the characters ride more slowly for his benefit. As a result the ride to the manor will take an hour to complete. Aside from this Bogan will be little trouble, but his presence will make it hard for the characters to make any plans. On the other hand he will make it easy to get into the manor gates, since the guards know him. Bogan will tell the characters that they can bunk in the visitors' barracks.

THE VANGFUR HOLD

[Map 8] After Bogan has dropped the characters off at the barracks they will be alone. Adran will tell the characters that they are near the magister's cellar. Through partially opened shutters he will point out a free-standing building as their target. They will notice a couple of guards patrolling the interior of the manor yard, but there are other people also walking around. The guards just nod to them and keep up the patrol, checking that each door they walk by is locked.

Getting In

The building that leads to the cellar is in the middle of the yard. It is small, closet sized in fact, and in the middle of the yard.

The characters will have to find a way to pick the lock on the door, and locking it again behind them is also a good idea since the guards are checking the doors and may become suspicious if they find one unlocked. The guards come by every hour or so, but could be slowed down by distractions, even something as simple as someone going over and talking to them. Any kind of noisy fight will rouse the rest of the guards in the barracks, so if the characters want to put the guards

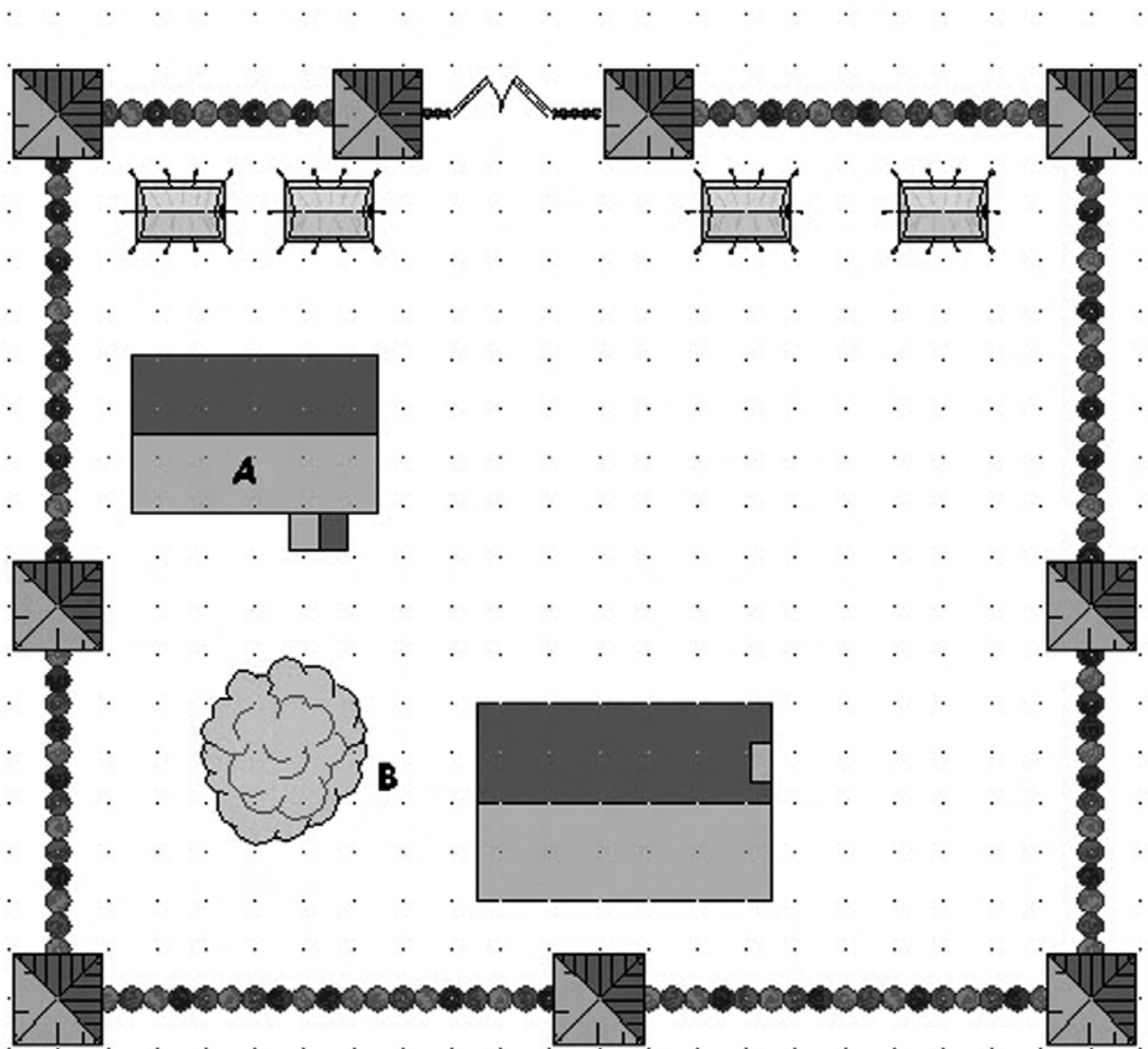
out of the picture more permanently they must do so quietly.

The Sacred Vintage

Description:

Going down the steps of the cellar the characters emerge in a large darkened room filled floor to ceiling with racks. In each rack are hundreds, maybe thousands of bottles.

Map 8 - Vangfur Hold. This is the place where the blood is being stored. A- This is the dorm the characters will be housed. B- The Blood Cellar entrance is here under the tree.



Characters that accompanied Andurn Cielet to the Myrhone commune in the first part of the adventure will be the only ones that can correctly identify the Myrhone blood containers. Even they need to make a Spot or Search roll. If none of the original characters are present they will have to match the bottles to a drawing that the Fire Magister has given them.

Time To Go

Once the blood has been located the characters need to extricate themselves from the cellar. If they don't raise a fuss on the way out it's a quick enough task to get the horses and ride out of the manor. After a few minutes of hard riding they will notice that Adran has fallen out of the ranks.

Betrayed

Unknown to them Adran has chickened out of going to Stand Town and has decided to betray the characters. When he has a chance he will slip away and warn the Bloodguard. It will be about 30 minutes before the Bloodguard get themselves sorted out and give chase. The characters will need to get out of the manor before then. Characters will hear the sounds of the Bloodguard pursuit before they catch up, so there will be a chance of outrunning them.

The Bloodguard Attack

The characters hear the sounds of horses' hooves and see the Bloodguard bearing down on them. These are the outrunners of the Bloodguard – there is a much larger group some distance behind them. The characters may recognize the face of Adran the Coward amongst the riders.

There will be 2d6 Bloodguard in the posse as well as Adran (who will not fight.) These Bloodguard are not the best fighters, nor are they well led. If even one of them is killed the rest will attempt to flee. This will mean that the characters have a further head start on the main force. Unless the characters move really slowly the rest of the Bloodguard has a very slim chance of catching up. The rudimentary map below shows the path the characters need to follow to get over the mountains and back into the safety of the sunlight surrounding Stand Town.

The Blood Guard (Lesser)

Servitors of the Vangfur

STR 14 CON 15 SIZE 13 INT 11 POW 9
DEX 14 APP 13 HIT POINTS 14

Sadakadishian lacquered bamboo armor 2 points of armor.

Sword 50% 1d18+1 Fist 50% 1d3

Armor 1 point armor

Climb 30% Dodge 25% Grapple 30% Hide 35% Jump 30% Listen 50% Ride 35% Sense 35% Spot 55% Stealth 40%

Treasure 1d6 Silver each

Rendezvous

While one posse is chasing the characters, another has been dispatched from Dymond Hold to head them off. Although starting later, the "intercept posse" will be in a good position to catch up with the characters if they dawdle. The Intercept posse has a pretty good idea where the characters are going; they're not the only ones who know about the secret pass. This posse numbers 10 men on horseback.

This group of horsemen are much more formidable than the other. The Bloodguard are all wearing heavy armor, in fact even a few of the horses are armored.

Fast Party

Description

You hear the sound of heavy horses behind you, and a party of mounted Bloodguard come into view. They are wearing armor and some of the horses are armored as well. The riders spur on their mounts, driving them hard to overrun you.

If the party is moving fast they will see the intercept posse behind them as they climb. There is no way for the posse to catch them before they crest the rise, however they will lose 3-4 arrows towards them (10% chance to hit)

Medium Party

Just as the characters start up the hill into the pass a volley of arrows will fall amongst them (3-4 30% to hit). Then a group of horsemen will crash out of the woods. The Bloodguard are all large men in intimidating armor, and some of the horses are armored as well.

If the party is moving slowly they will arrive around the same time as the larger posse. The Blood Guard will charge the characters but, since they spend most of their time cowering a defeated populace rather than training, their horsemanship is poor. Characters who make Ride rolls will have little trouble avoiding them. Characters that fumble their rolls will find themselves unhorsed and will either need to be saved or risk capture unless they can evade the Bloodguard.

Slow Party

The party will hear sounds of horsemen up ahead. If they sneak a look they will see that the road is blocked.

If the party is especially slow they will have a problem, as they close on the mouth of the pass they will see that the Bloodguard are already there, holding the tight entrance to the pass, and the characters will need to figure out a way past them. Unlike the posse following the characters these are seasoned Bloodguard that aren't afraid of a fight.

The Bloodguard

Servitors of the Vangfur

STR 14 CON 15 SIZE 13 INT 11 POW 9
DEX 14 APP 13 HIT POINTS 14

1 point of armor.

Sword 60% 1d8+1 Fist 50% 1d3

Armor 1 point armor

Climb 30% Dodge 25% Grapple 30% Hide 35% Jump
30% Listen 50% Ride 35% Sense 35% Spot 55%
Stealth 40%

Treasure 1d6 Silver each

The Pass

Once the Bloodguard have been dealt with the passage through the mountains is uneventful, You might throw in a random encounter but, once in the area unaffected by a Heart of Darkness, the party is safe from the evil forces and can safely return to Stand Town.

The trip through the wasteland that surrounds Stand Town will be without major incident. As the party approaches the city of Stand Town they will see that the inhabitants have been busy rebuilding the walls of the town and branching out to try to grow some food outside them. The characters will eventually be recognized and taken to the Fire Magister to be debriefed. As they walk through the city they will see the better side of humanity. The characters will be given lodgings in the lower city, and within minutes the Fire Magister will visit them along with Charcoal (both in heavy robes). The Fire Magister will praise the characters for their accomplishment and tell them to get some rest.

CHAPTER 5: SOME THINGS ARE MISSING

The characters find themselves back in the caverns below Stand Town. The Fire Magister is here, stirring a huge cistern of glowing blue water. She will greet the characters. If asked she will explain that the cistern is the last depository of the Tears of Chaldisaya, which she cried before departing this plane. There are only 100 of them left and they are a powerful medicine capable of curing serious wounds. She will also tell them the following:

Now that the blood has been recovered the next step is to smear it on the hands and mouth of the statue of Myrhone in Sand Towers. As the characters were there long ago, they are the natural people to send.

Statuesque

When the characters' questions are answered the Magister will give them each a potion of Greater Healing (10 points healed). He/she will tell them that these are very rare in the world and if they are not used they

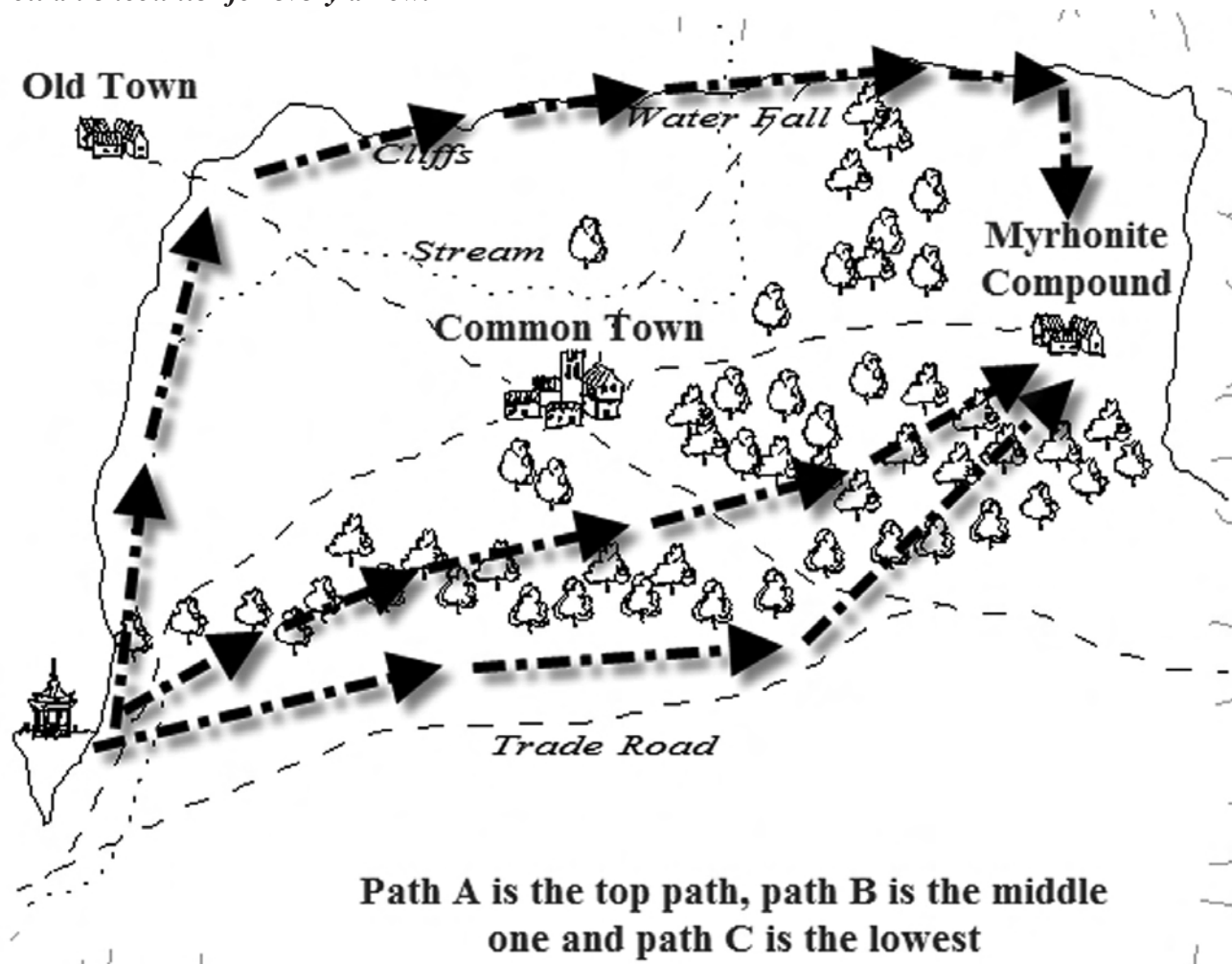
need to be returned. He/she will also give them each a Gate Gem. When activated this device will gate them all back to Stand Town, however if one is triggered then they all trigger.

The gate that she will be sending them to reads as a Priest Gate (from her scrying), one of the old gates from an earlier age. It will most likely bring them out in the Sand Tower temple which is, as best as can be remembered, across the valley from the Myrhoneites' compound. Once they arrive there all they have to do is smear the blood they got earlier on the face and hands of the statue and it will release the Light Without Darkness, Blade Without edge.

The Plan

[Map 9] According to the map the Fire Magister has, there are 3 good paths to the Myrhoneite compound

Map 9 - The Paths. These are the three ways the characters can get to the Myrhoneite Compound. Roll an encounter for every arrow.

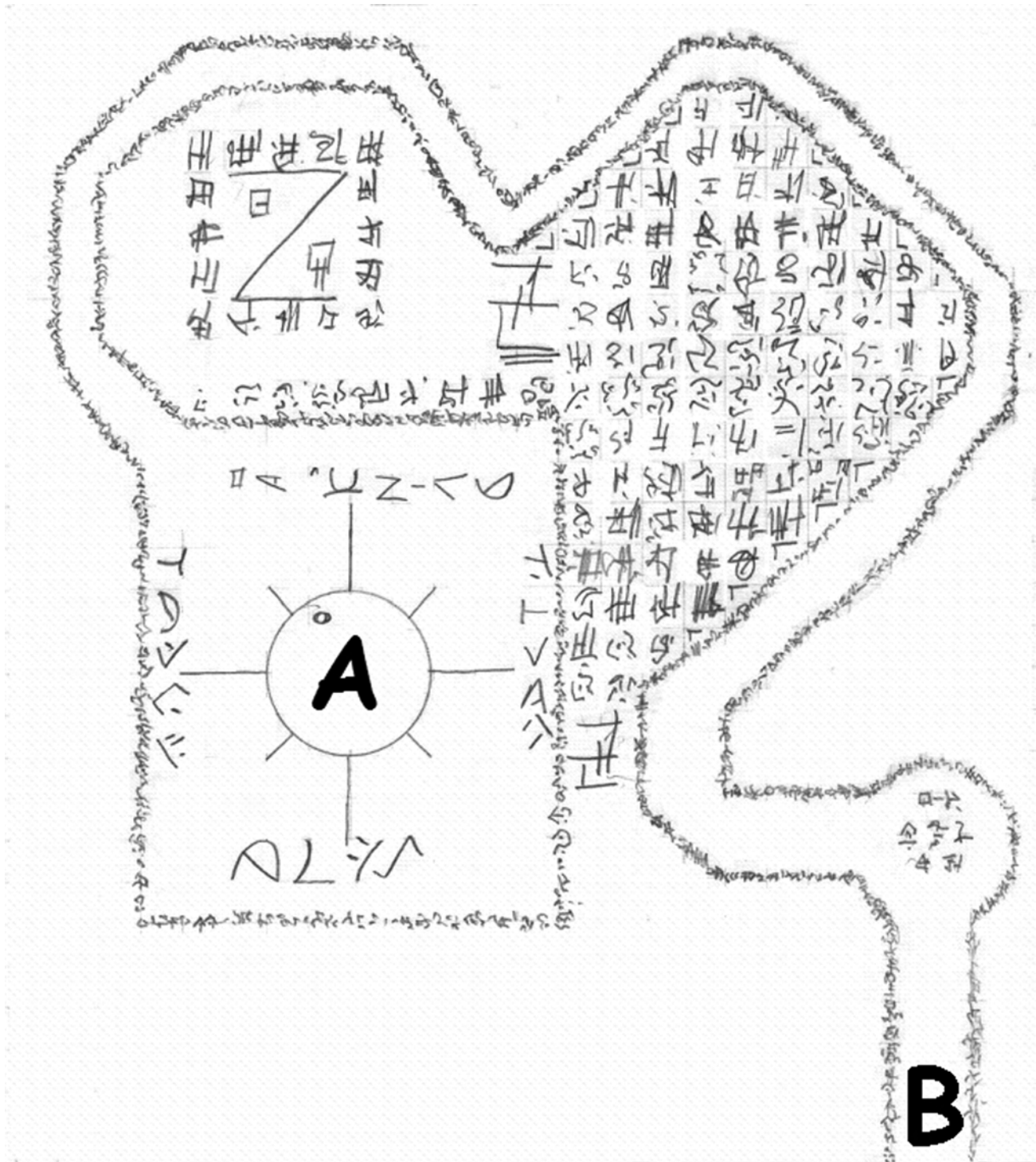


from the Priest Gate (see attached). He/she will show the characters the rough map of the area so that they can plan their journey.

Path A: The Northern path is the most dangerous since it follows a well traveled road and has almost no cover until the party reaches the cliff and after it the forest.

Path B: The Middle path is the safest, however it goes right near the city proper. Its advantage is that almost the entire way is in the trees.

Path C: This is the southernmost path and despite skirting most of the city it is the most dangerous, because it is mostly out in the open the local militia heavily patrols both it and the southern edges of the woods.

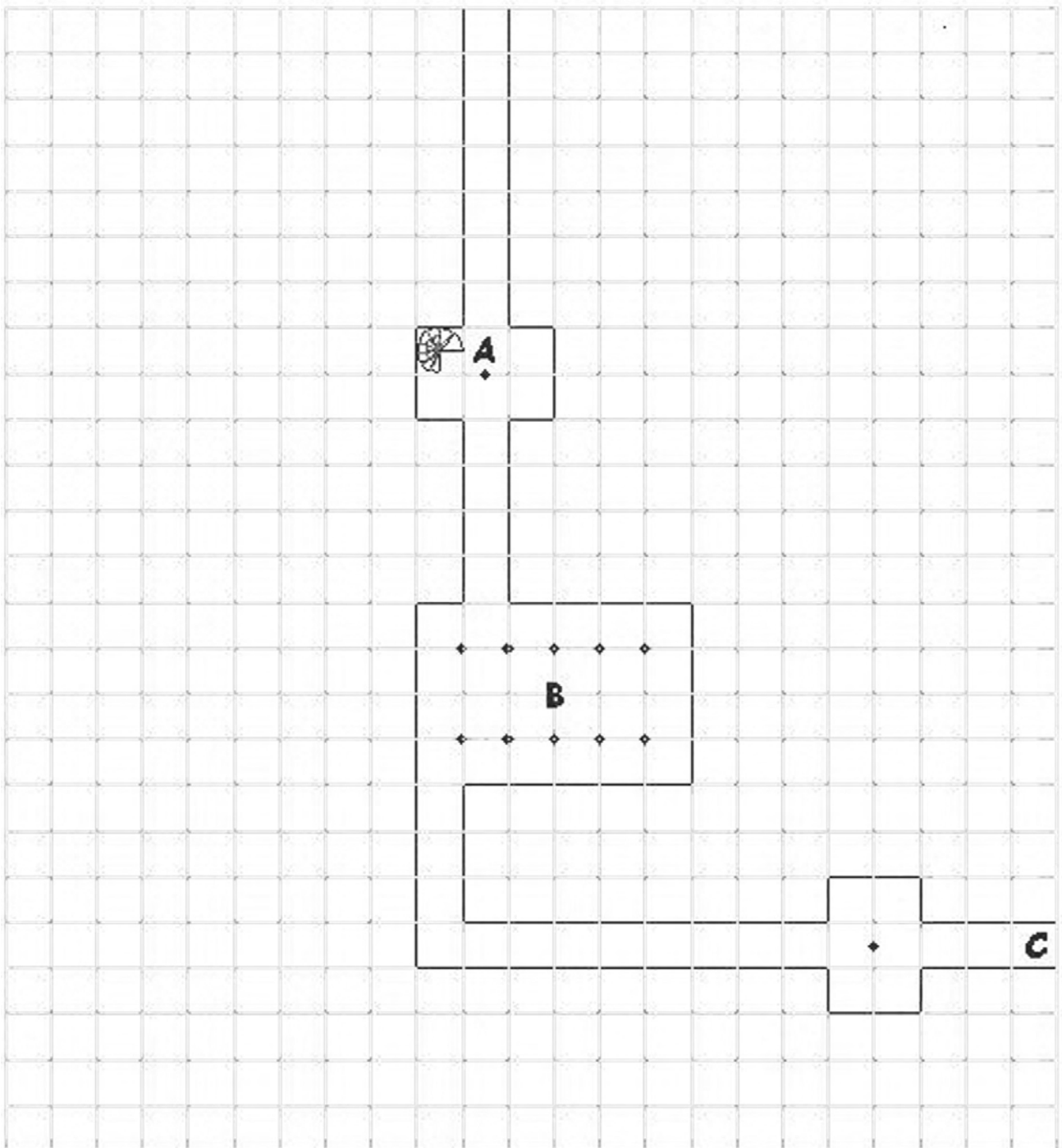


Map 10 - The Demon of Desire. This is the receptor gate where the characters will appear. A- Where the characters start. B- The end of the “demon”. This map connects to Map 11.

Once the party have decided on their path they will be sent via the Fire Gate to the gate underneath the cliffs of Sand Towers. Read the following to the players:

Demon of Desire

You find yourselves in a huge cavern. The floor is made of a black glasslike substance. Etched into it are silver runes, hundreds of them. Looking closer at the



Map 11 - The characters enter from the top of the map. This is the exit of the tunnel from the Demon of Desire [Map 10]. A- A small room with a spiral staircase up to the abandoned shrine of Chaldisaya. B- A room with a set of pillars in it. C- The exit on the face of the cliff.

runes you notice that they seem to move as you watch them.

[Map 10] [Map 11] [Map 12] The room around the Priest Gate is a rift in space known as the Demon of Desire. As the characters walk to the gate's exit they need to make rolls vs. Dexterity to find a purchase

on the slick glasslike surface. If a character misses a roll they fall and touch one of the symbols which, being a demon's name, will attempt to possess them. The player must roll POW vs. 15 to avoid this. If possessed the character will thrash around on the floor for 1d3 minute speaking gibberish and foaming at the mouth.

The character will find that the mark they touched has been branded on their skin permanently.

The GM will need to look at the GM map for this part of the quest. The northern path is A, the central B and the southernmost is C. The longer the path the lower the encounter chances and the more benign the encounters.

Path A

Encounter occurs on a roll of 1 on a D6, seven chances for encounters

- 1- Insect Swarm
- 2- Slip and fall
- 3- Slip and fall
- 4- Dog pack
- 5- Strange noise
- 6- Young lovers

Path B

Encounter occurs on a roll of 1 or 2 on a D6, five chances for encounters.

- 1 - Bear
- 2 - Wolves
- 3 - Insect swarm
- 4 - Bloodguard
- 5 - Kennis Kelly

Path C

Encounter occurs on a roll of 1 or 2 on a D6, three chances for encounters.

- 1 - Brigands
- 2 - Bloodguard
- 3 - Wolves
- 4 - Orcs

5 - Creature of Distaria

6 - Towns folk

PATH ENCOUNTERS

Creature of Distaria

A huge bat-like thing flies over the characters screeching as it goes. All characters need to make a POW roll vs. a 14. Those who fail feel the creatures burning eyes probe them. This is a creature of Distaria the evil Queen of Deserata. The creature has seen the characters and slightly glimpsed their purpose, this information will be passed on to Cibel.

Bear

The characters have accidentally come between a mother bear and her cubs. The mother bear will attack with great ferocity until the characters flee, or she is killed. Characters who make a Spot Hidden roll will see the cubs once the mother bear has attacked.

Bloodguard

These three Bloodguard are on patrol, primarily looking for brigands and orcs, but the area is pretty quiet so unless the characters are being noisy they will get a chance to hide. The characters should make a roll against the guard's Spot skill if they take this opportunity.

The Bloodguard (Lesser)

Servitors of the Vangfur

STR 14 CON 15 SIZE 13 INT 11 POW 9

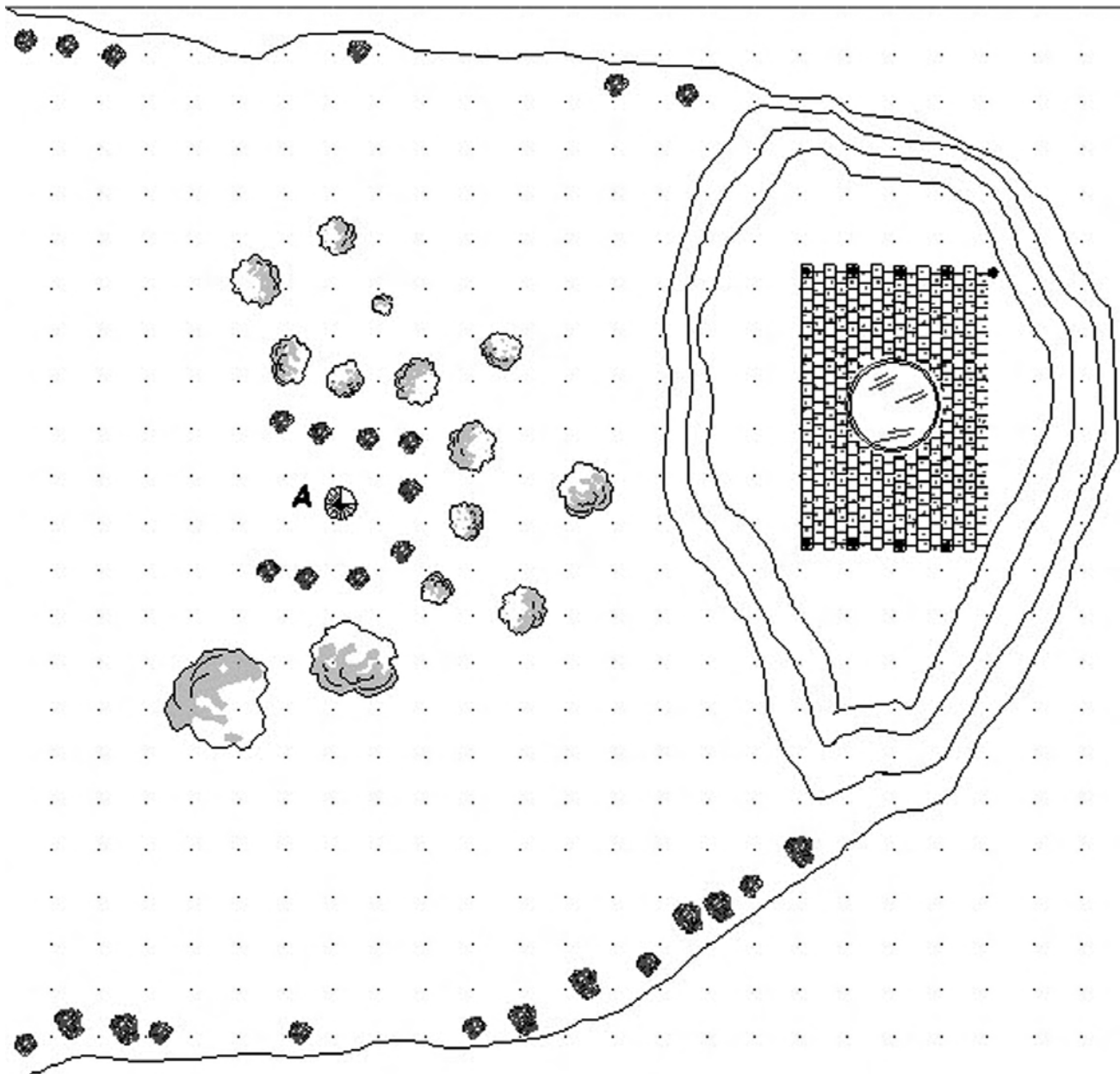
DEX 14 APP 13 HIT POINTS 14

Sword 50% 1d18+1 Fist 50% 1d3

Armor 1 point armor

Climb 30% Dodge 25% Grapple 30% Hide 35% Jump 30% Listen 50% Ride 35% Sense 35% Spot 55% Stealth 40%

Treasure 1d6 Silver each.



Map 12 - The Ruined Shrine. A-This is the spiral staircase from the dungeon below. Because this is a former shrine, the Vangfur avoid this area and will not enter it.

Brigands

There are still a few bands of human brigands left in the world. These brigands are scouts for a larger force looking to raid the village. The brigands do not care that the characters are human, if they see them they will attack them. There are 1 per character in party plus 1d4.

Brigands

Dressed in tattered rags, some of these men carry the armor of defeated soldiers of the Red.

STR 16 CON 14 SIZE 15 INT 10 OW 10
DEX 12 APP 10 HIT POINTS 15

Sadakadishian lacquered bamboo armor 2 points of armor.

Long Knife 50% 1d6+1 Club 50% 1d8 Fist 50% 1d3
Climb 60% Dodge 35% Grapple 50% Hide 35% Jump
50% Listen 50% Ride 35% Sense 35% Spot 55%
Stealth 40%

OUTSIDE OF THE GATE

Taking Path A

The characters leave the Demon of Desire cave and head north along the dried out wash that parallels the road. Eventually the wash pans out and the party will be out in the open, heading north. After several minutes they will see the lights of “upper town” before getting in the lee of the cliff. Hugging the cliff will be easy and the characters will be well-concealed until they get to the waterfall. The water is swift and cold, and the characters must either try to climb the rocks behind the waterfall or follow the river to the bridge. Parties following the cliff wall to get behind the falls will have a tough time of it, with cold water constantly splashing down on them as well as rocky terrain and unsure footing. After 30 minutes of tough going the characters will spot a cave behind the falls about 30 feet up. Groups that choose to ignore the cave will emerge battered but safe on the other side of the water falls.

Having a Look-See

Climbing up into the cave will reveal an empty tunnel that was carved into the living rock hundreds of years ago. Characters that make Spot Hidden rolls will notice that the back of the cave looks too perfect to be natural. A little bit of work will reveal that there is a secret door cleverly hidden in the cave wall. Opening the door will reveal a small box with the word “Myrhone” on it. The scroll says the following

The Lady has given unto Myrhone the keeping of her most sacred trust, The Light Without Darkness, Blade Without Edge. This alone has cleansed him and brought him back into the fold of her worship.

If mankind should forget those basic precepts then he will be doomed and devoured by the very creatures of the Time Before The Barrier.

Should this happen, and I feel that it will, let us entrust that others would seek out the balm for themselves.

Let the characters make of this what they will, the rest of the trip to the compound will be uneventful. Although not magical the scroll is worth something due to its historical value, and the Fire Magister will offer the party 100g for it.

Taking Path B

The characters leave the Demon of Desire cave and strike out through the woods. They travel for a while but eventually come relatively close to the village, they will see lights in the windows but now movement from the buildings.

Taking Path C

This path takes the party out into the desert keeping close to the tree line. They seem to make good time, but the cold wind off the nighttime desert will chill them, giving a minus -10% penalty to hit with their weapons for the first turn of any combat they enter whilst travelling.

Arrival

The characters arrive at the former Myrhonite compound. The place is little more than a pile of timber and worn down walls. Beyond is the abandoned hold. As they get closer to it they see the large statue of Myrhone in its niche at the base. Read or paraphrase the following:

The old keep seems untouched by time, but as you get closer you see the statue of Myrhone in its niche in the cliff, and notice that both the head and hands are missing.

Looking around the base of the statue will reveal that the head and hands are not there either. What the characters decide to do is up to them. If they wait long enough a patrol of Bloodguard will come by (2-12). The Bloodguard aren't expecting trouble so it's possible that the characters can hide from them. Unless the characters come up with a plan they should be en-

couraged to use their Gate Gems to return to Stand Town.

Back So Soon?

Upon arrival at Stand Town the Fire Magister will listen to the characters story, and says that he/she will scry out the location of the head and the hands of the statue for them. The characters are left to wander around town for a few days. If you are returning them to their own time on a regular basis it's probably best to send them back home for a while and bring back as the Fire Magister finishes his/her scrying.

Watching Fire

The characters are summoned to the Fire Magister's quarters. As might be expected, Ember and Charcoal are in attendance. In the center of the room is a roaring fire and in the middle of that a picture floats. The picture is of a living room with a large table in the center. Standing upon it like as a centerpiece is the stone head of Myrhone.

Fire Visions

The Fire Witch will tell the characters that her scrying ability is limited to fires and what is near them. She doesn't know where this is exactly but it looks like a house in Sand Towers. Characters who make Spot Rolls will notice that it's a very nice house. Paintings and such can be seen in the background. If the characters watch for 1-10 minutes they will see Cibel Ciolet (from episode 1 and 2) walk by.

After the characters have gleaned enough from the first vision the Magister will show them the second. This one is very hard to see, and it is explained that they are looking through the flame of a torch. The characters see a Bloodguard sitting in a dark place. Characters that make Spot Rolls will notice that there is a bright circle of light in the distance. The characters will have to figure out that the soldier is sitting in a cave and the light is its opening.

Through the Priest Gate Again

The characters will be equipped similarly to the way they were before, however they will not be sent with the Blood of the Myrhoneites which the Fire Magister is holding onto for safekeeping. The Fire Magister will tell them to locate the head and hands first then return to Stand Town and report their locations rather than taking them straight away. They can retrieve them at another time after proper planning.

Once they pass through the Fire Gate the party will be in the middle of the Demon of Desire again. Getting out of the gate will be the same as it was the first time. In this case they are free to roam around and look for the buildings. This part of the adventure is freeform as they look around for the location of the hands and the head.

There are several clues that the characters may discover to help them determine where the head and hands are.

Resting Hands

The hands are in a cave, near the old Myrhoneite compound. They are in a pile of refuse.

-The bright light is the moonlight coming into the mouth of a cave. The only place for the caves are the cliffs to the north.

-The cave is closest to the old Myrhoneite compound. When they are near the cave a simple Spot roll will reveal that there are obviously people in the cave. There is a rope ladder pulled up at the edge of the cliff and trash at its foot. The hands are in the cave guarded by three Bloodguard who abandoned their patrol and decided to get some rest in the cave.

The Bloodguard (Lesser)

Servitors of the Vangfur

STR 14 CON 15 SIZE 13 INT 11 POW 9
DEX 14 APP 13 HIT POINTS 14

Sadakadishian lacquered bamboo armor 2 points of armor.

Sword 50% 1d18+1 Fist 50% 1d3



Armor 1 point armor

Climb 30% Dodge 25% Grapple 30% Hide 35% Jump 30% Listen 50% Ride 35% Sense 35% Spot 55% Stealth 40%

Centerpiece

The head is set up as the centerpiece on a table in Old Town. The house belongs to Cybil Ciolet, who is now Vangfur. She voluntarily turned to the undead cause years after the characters encountered her and has become the village's de facto leader. She keeps the head of the Myrhone statue on her coffee table not because she knows anything about the Light with Shadow Blade without Edge but because she sees it as a trophy of her victory over the old religion.

Read the following to the characters or paraphrase it:

The Upper town of Sand Towers is almost deserted. The houses appear old and worn except for the largest in the middle of the village. It seems to be in good repair The building is set back from the others. The windows are large and arched and the panes are of real glass.

-Characters making a Spot roll during the fire viewing of the room will remember how well furnished the house was. Additionally the windows were arched, and this is the only house with arched windows in the village. The house is empty apart from maybe (GM's option) a guard or two. Cybil is not in residence.

Distractions

1. There are predatory animals out in the forest (wolves and such) that will prey upon anyone in the forest.
2. The characters might encounter a slaver with a load of humans heading to the town in preparations for the coming feast. The slave caravan has 3-4 guards (poorly trained soldiers) acting as security as well as one human who is the "dealer." The dealer is of no consequence in a fight; the only interesting thing is that he has a leather collar fastened around his neck marking him as a human who is valued by the Vangfur. If the characters attack the caravan and free the

humans they will have to figure out what to do with them since the spell that recalls them to Stand Town is keyed only to the party.

End of the Adventure

Even if the characters haven't found the head and hands they will be teleported back to Stand Town at the appointed time. If the characters uncovered nothing then the Fire Magister has uncovered some more clues as to the whereabouts of the items. He/she will also tell them that she believes that the Vangfur are getting suspicious and the characters will have to get the items and perform the ritual to restore and bloody the statue on their next trip.

We Still Can Not Find It

If the players are totally clueless then the Fire Magister will have pinpointed the exact location of the head and the hand using a more time-consuming ritual. The magister cuts his/her fiery finger and red hot molten lava issues out. After staunching the bleeding the drops of blood are placed into a glass tube until they have cooled. The Magister will then remove two of the hardened droplets and hold them over a map of Sand Towers saying, "Show me the things I desire," before dropping them onto it. Looking closely the piece of blood that vaguely looks like a small head will land in "Old Town" while the piece of blood that looks like a small hand will land near the cliffs. He/she will tell the characters, "This is all I can do for you."

CHAPTER 6: THE DANCE OF DEATH

Preparation

This is the final chapter of the adventure. The characters should have the head and the hands with them or at least know where they are.

The Last Trip

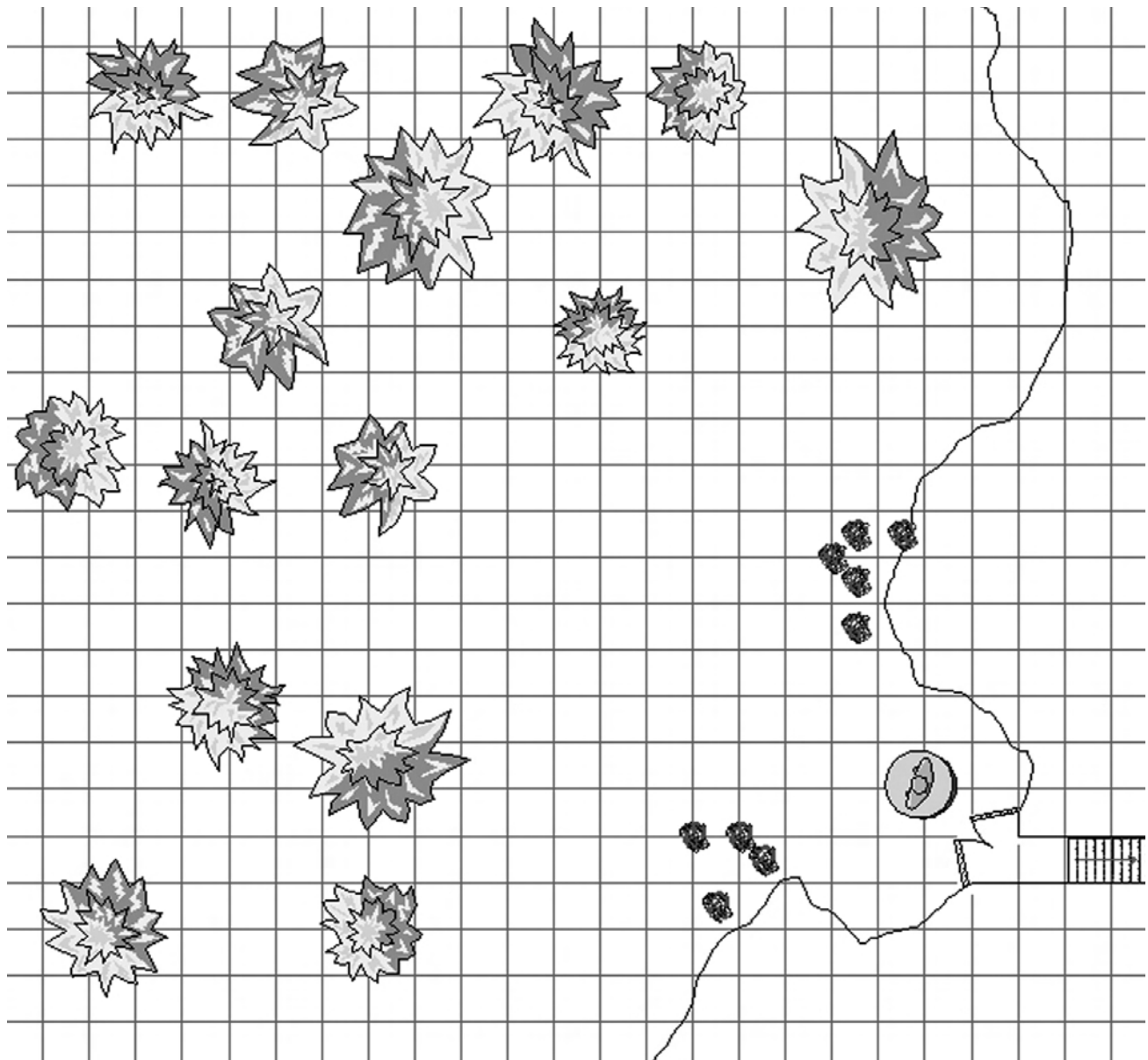
This time the characters will be sent with the head, the hands and the Myrhone blood. Their job is restore the statue near the old fortress and stain its hands and face with the blood from the vial. Supposedly this will open the crypt and release The Light Without Darkness, Blade Without Edge.

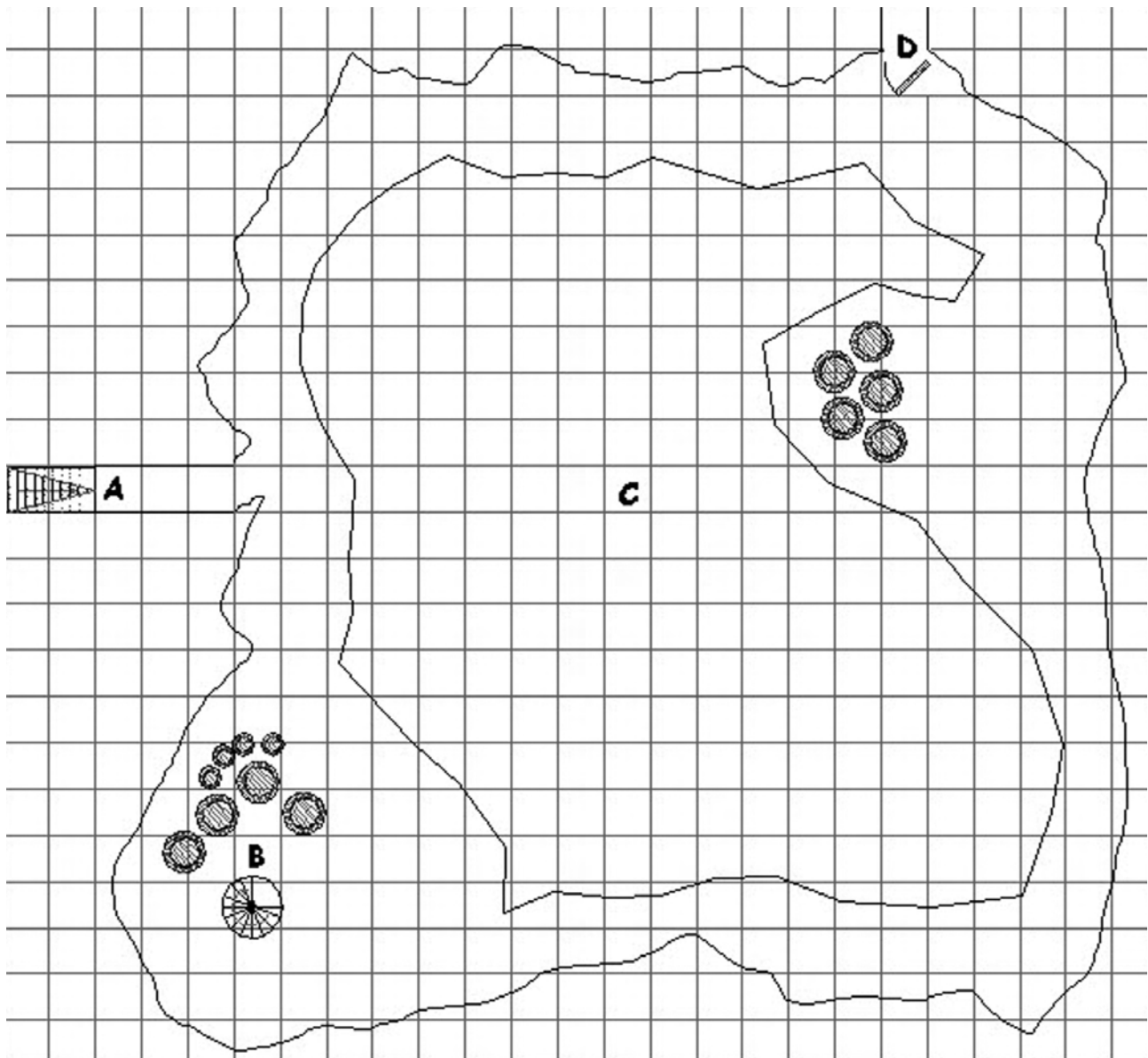
Although the characters will be expected to finish the quest, they will be given medallions that if grasped hard will teleport them back to Stand Town. However the medallions cannot be replaced and once used are gone forever.

One of the advantages the characters have is that the Dance of Death is taking place. This is the yearly celebration where new Vangfur are made. Despite what the legends say one Vangfur bite cannot turn you into one of the creatures, it takes repeated bites. Vangfur society has turned this celebration into a most profane ritual where unspeakable things happen.

Part of the reason for striking this time of year is that Sand Towers plays host to a rather large Dance of Death ritual that attracts some of the higher ranking Vangfur in the dark army. This would be a good time to hit a lot of them in one place.

*Map 13 - The Secret Door.
After blood has been spilled on the statue, the door behind the statue opens.*





Map 14 - The room behind the statue.

A- This is the entrance from outside. B- The floor staircase where the skeletons of the Myrhoneite dead will come out of. C- The lake of stagnant cold water, about 2 feet deep. D-Exit to Map 15.

Tripping the Warding

The characters will appear inside the Demon of Desire as before. At the exit they will encounter a warding spell. Magic user types will notice it 5 feet before they trip it, non-spell users will not. Once the warding has gone off the spell users will feel it and know that an alarm of some kind has been triggered.

Not Tripping The Warding

If there is a magic user in the lead or within 5 feet of the lead they will sense the warding before it is tripped. A cursory look at the warding will tell them what it will do but not who it will warn. The only way to get past it is for the spell caster to dampen it. This will not stop the warding from going off but will delay its reporting. The spell caster will need to make a POW roll vs. a POW of 16. If the roll is successful the warding will not go off for one or two hours. If the caster fails, then the warding will report immediately.

Behind the Scenes

When the warding goes off the Vangfur will scramble an elite team of Bloodguard who will go directly to the entrance of the Demon of Desire and wait for Priestess Cibbel and her escort. They will then be tracking the party.

Cibbel's Escort

This group will consist of 4 Elite Bloodguard and the priestess herself.

The Scramble Team

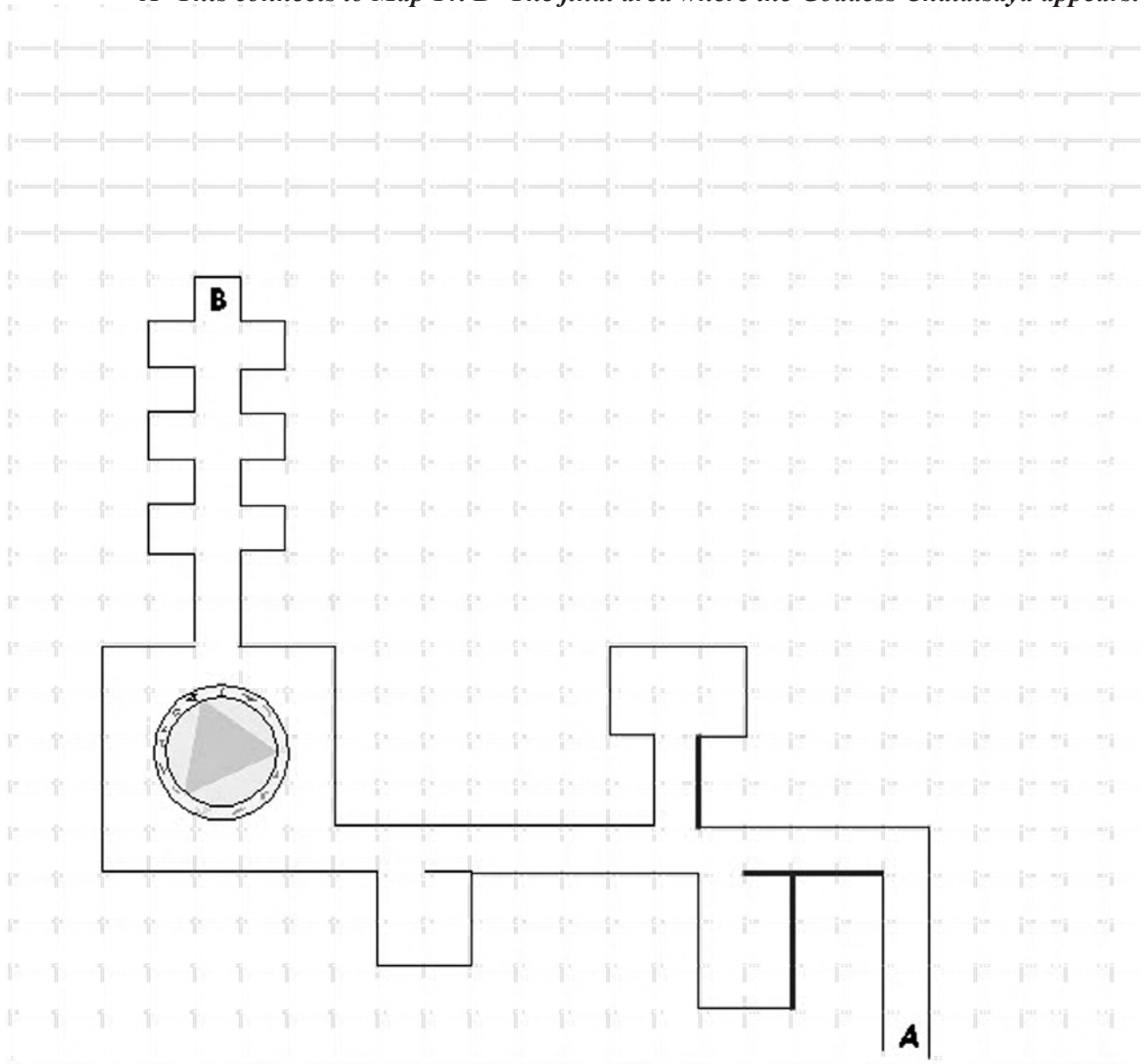
This group will consist of 4 Elite Blood Guard and a tracker.

AT THE TOMB

[Map 13] [Map 14] [Map 15] This time the characters will only have one path that they can safely follow; the central path to the Myrhone compound. If the characters attempt to go via any other route they should be

Map 15 - The deeper part of the catacombs.

A- This connects to Map 14. B- The final area where the Goddess Chaldisaya appears.



told that the areas are full of revelers celebrating the Dance of Death and are too dangerous.

It normally takes an hour and a half to travel this path with three encounter rolls along the way, but if the characters took the central path last time they will only take an hour and two encounter rolls because they have been that way before.

The Tomb

This is the conclusion of the adventure so feel free to play it up. There is a very good possibility that there might be a drunken group of Bloodguard revelers having a drinking party right at the site the characters need to get to.

No matter what they try there is no other entrance to the tomb, the only way the characters can get in is through the section where the statue is. There are 15 Bloodguard along with a bevy of local party girls. If you want to play for more time have one of the Bloodguard stand up and act out the story of Myrhone, getting most of it wrong.

The revelers are VERY drunk and have only a 10% chance of hitting an opponent in combat. They will more likely than not run away if the characters attack. If a character walks in and makes a Fast Talk roll the Bloodguard will believe what the character is saying.

Once the Bloodguard have been driven off the characters will be left to put the head and the hands on the statue and break open the ancient cask that contains the blood of the last of the Myrhoneites. This is meant to be the crowning moment of the adventure, so it will be even more disappointing when nothing happens! Well, nothing except that Priestess Ciolet will show up with her guards and move in. It's good if she gets the drop on the party. Once she has their attention she will explain the following.

1. There is no such thing as the Light/Blade/Shadow, she herself made the story up and spread the rumor around several hundred years ago. She finds the additional stuff that has intertwined around the legend very interesting, but for the most part the Myrhoneites were a group of drunken old men (She is lying but the characters don't know that.)

2. If the characters surrender they will be dispatched in a humane manner.

OPTIONS

Surrender Option

If the characters surrender the Bloodguard will lead them over to the foot of the statue and slit their throats. Pick out the character that has been in the campaign the longest and met the lead Myrhoneite. His throat is slit first. When the blood sprays from his cut it bathes the head and the hands in gore. There is a blinding white light that issues out of the hidden door behind the statue.

There will be a silence and all of the characters will get a chance to take a free action.

Don't forget to ask the character that has been decapitated what he/she wants to do. If they don't have an action suggest that they put their head back on. Once placed on the neck it will reattach and next round the character may function normally.

Non-Surrender Option

If the characters refuse to surrender the fight begins in earnest. The Blood Guard will herd the characters toward the statue of Myrhone. The characters will have a chance against the Blood Guard but if/when Priestess Cibel wades into the combat, likely after the characters have been weakened, their fortunes will grow dim. As they are crowded towards the statue some of the blood will splash on the statue.

Characters who make a Spot roll will notice that the blood splashed on the statue will seem to have a life of its own, crawling towards the mouth and hands where it is needed.

The only blood that will work to open the gate is the blood of the actual character/characters that were present when the sacred blood was handed over to the priests of Myrhone. The characters may not remember that they were greeted as brothers to the Myrhoneite

cause, but their blood does and is trying to open the gate.

Once the blood has reached the lips and hands the secret door behind the statue will melt and a blinding white light will issue from it.

All the characters' foes will be knocked down and the characters get a free turn. The statue of Myrhone itself has also been toppled; the blood is now acting like normal blood.

The Last Discussion

Cirril Myrhone will step out of the area behind the statue and smile at them. If asked he will tell them the following:

1. There is no "super sword" to kill the Vangfur. The Light Without Shadow, Blade Without Edge, the only thing that can destroy the Vangfur, is faith pure and simple, the blinding light so bright and inescapable that there can be no shadow for ignorance to hide in. It is also the blade which is sharp and yet cannot cause harm because it bears no edge.

He will say that he lived in the darkness but the characters brought him light. They have brought back the truth, the blade without edge. Now the goddess Chaldisaya can come back and help humanity drive the Vangfur back to where they came from. A blue light will emerge from the cave and take the form of a woman clad in blue. She will say, "I shall collect all my tears for I need shed them no more." Then the goddess Chaldisaya, for it is she, will disappear.

2. The Vangfur will be vanquished because of the sacrifices the characters have made. The Vangfur in the immediate vicinity will be destroyed.

Optional Ending

Understanding that not everyone likes non-combat endings, I originally created the following one. Adjust it to the group that you have. The optional ending is more of a dungeon crawl and supposes that the opening of the door to the tomb doesn't summon the specter of the last Myrhonite. In this case the party will have to travel into the catacombs, followed by the forces of Cibél. Let the local Bloodguard catch up so

you have a force large enough to menace the party and force them to retreat in the main room.

Main Room

This room is dominated by a large pool in the middle. There is also a tunnel to the tombs of the lesser soldiers of the Myrhonite sect (see attached), who will rise from their graves as the fight draws near. It should be quite disconcerting for the characters to see skeletons coming up behind them but they need not fear. Although undead, these soldiers are the blessed of Chaldisaya and will fight on the side of the characters.

The Fight

If the Bloodguard force their way into the main cavern then the skeletal Myrhonites will rise and come pouring out of the tunnel in the floor. The characters can stand and fight or go for sanctuary in the deeper tunnels. In the deepest part of the tunnel they will find the Spirit of the Myrhonites and the adventure ends as before.

The Bloodguard (Greater)

Servitors of the Vangfur

STR 14 CON 15 SIZE 13 INT 11 POW 10
DEX 14 APP 13 HIT POINTS 14

Sadakadishian lacquered bamboo armor 2 points of armor.

Sword 65% 1d8+1 Fist 50% 1d3

2 point armor

Brawl 65% Climb 50% Dodge 35% Grapple 35% Hide 35% Jump 30% Listen 50% Ride 35% Sense 35% Spot 55% Stealth 40%

Skeletons of Chaldisaya

STR 11 SIZE 13 INT 11 POW 1 DEX 11
HIT POINTS 13

Sword 55% 1d8+1 Fist 50% 1d3

Dodge 35%

Magic Items

The Old Man's Gift: a dagger with a blade that glows with the ferocity of the sun. Any Vangfur that is touched by it is destroyed if they fail a roll of POW vs. 15. As long as it is drawn characters trying to hit the holder are at -20% to attack.

Vangfur

Although not the supernatural creatures of past myth, they are distantly related. In appearance the Vangfur maintain their human form, except for the deathly pallor of their skin and black orbs for eyes. The eyes are larger than when they were human and have almost no sclera (the white part of the eye). Because of this Vangfur see as well in night as a human does in day, but are nearly blind in normal light and can only venture out with veils and such covering their faces.

Vangfur are much stronger than humans and are faster. They can tell from a single drop of blood its owner's lineage and health. It's believed that whatever transforms a person into a Vangfur is transmitted by being bitten, however a single bite does not seem to be enough to turn a person and most new Vangfur are created during the yearly Dance of Death.

A Vangfur's gaze can be used to hypnotize (POW vs. POW roll). As long as the Vangfur doesn't make any sudden movement the victim is kept enthralled. If left alone the victim is held in place for 1 minute for every POW point the Vangfur has.

Vangfur have encouraged the spread of misinformation about their weaknesses. They do not have to sleep in a coffin of their home soil, despite feeling lethargic and becoming incredibly weak (STR 5 in daylight).

Vangfur are slightly annoyed by garlic or any pungent aroma but will not be deterred from a meal by it. Holy symbols have no effect on them and they can be killed by massive amounts of damage (-10 Hit Points) rather than needing to be killed by a stake through the heart.

The most closely guarded secret the Vangfur have is their vulnerability to water. Common cold water has the same effect on Vangfur flesh as acid has on human

flesh. They take 1 point of damage per fluid ounce of cold water that comes into contact with their skin.

CREATURE LOG

Bloodguard

The Bloodguard are humans that work for the Vangfur. They are denoted by the blood-red scarves they wear around their necks. The Bloodguard are in line to someday be elevated to the ranks of the Vangfur. What few outside of the Vangfur horde don't know is that there are two levels of Bloodguard. The first wear common red neckerchiefs, and are a step above common warriors. The second, the Greater Bloodguard, wear a darker red neckerchief. Greater Bloodguard gain their rank by sacrificing a loved one to the Vangfur. Many of the Greater Bloodguard try to take on aspects of their masters, sharpening their teeth and bleaching their skin to seem more vampiric.

The Bloodguard (Greater)

Servitors of the Vangfur

STR 14 CON 15 SIZE 13 INT 11 POW 10
DEX 14 APP 13 HIT POINTS 14

Sadakadishian lacquered bamboo armor 2 points of armor.

Sword 65% 1d8+1 Fist 50% 1d3

2 point armor

Brawl 65% Climb 50% Dodge 35% Grapple 35% Hide 35% Jump 30% Listen 50% Ride 35% Sense 35% Spot 55% Stealth 40%

Blood Guard (Lesser)

Servitors of the Vangfur

STR 14 CON 15 SIZE 13 INT 11 POW 9
DEX 14 APP 13 HIT POINTS 14

Sadakadishian lacquered bamboo armor 2 points of armor.

Sword 50% 1d8+1 Fist 50% 1d3

Armor 1 point armor

Climb 30% Dodge 25% Grapple 30% Hide 35% Jump 30% Listen 50% Ride 35% Sense 35% Spot 55% Stealth 40%

Treasure 1d6 Silver each

Brigands

Dressed in tattered rags, some of these men carry the armor of defeated soldiers of the Red.

STR 16 CON 14 SIZE 15 INT 10 POW 10
DEX 12 APP 10 HIT POINTS 15

Sadakadishian lacquered bamboo armor 2 points of armor.

Long Knife 50% 1d6+1 Club 50% 1d8 Fist 50% 1d3
Climb 60% Dodge 35% Grapple 50% Hide 35% Jump 50% Listen 50% Ride 35% Sense 35% Spot 55% Stealth 40%

Treasure: 1d6 Silver pieces in treasure. A deck of playing cards.

Gargoyles, Flying Reptile Men

STR 14 CON 15 SIZE 11 INT 11 POW 10
DEX 12 APP 10 HIT POINTS 12

Scaly skin counts for 1 point of armor

Claw 30% 1d4

Climb 60% Dodge 45% Grapple 50% Hide 35% Jump 50% Listen 50% Sense 35% Spot 45% Stealth 40%

Orc (Desert Raiders)

STR 14 CON 11 SIZE 11 INT 11 POW 10
DEX 14 APP 7 HIT POINTS 10

Armor 1 Point and leather helm

Scimitar 35% 1d8+1 Shield 35%

Climb 55% Dodge 40% Hide 35% Language (common) 30% Listen 50% Sense 35% Spot 45% Stealth 40% Track 30%

NPCS

Charcoal

Charcoal is a dark skinned woman that is a devout follower of the Fire Magister. To prove her devotion she has scared her skin with fire. Although not meant as an enemy for the characters to fight it's possible the characters could provoke her.

STR 9 CON 11 SIZE 5 INT 19 POW 21
DEX 14 APP 7 HIT POINTS 13

Dagger 35% 1d4

Appraise 35% Dodge 45% Grapple 50% Hide 35% Jump 50% Knowledge (Occult) 70% Listen 35% Research 75% Sense 35% Spot 45% Stealth 40%

Spells: Conjure Fire Elemental 25% Fire 25%

Cibel Cilet

Description: Cibel is blonde and buxom and kept from being considered a “beauty” by the scowl that she habitually wears.

Background: Cibel has grand ambitions than cannot be fulfilled serving a small temple in a desert outpost. Recently she was visited by a royal messenger who offered her entry into Queen Distaria’s faction, obviously had she refused she would have been killed but Cibel willingly joined.

Cibel continues to minister to her flock, caring for the sick, blessing marriages and collecting alms for the poor. Once a week she rides under escort to the border garrison to perform services there, usually riding back the following morning.

One of her other priestly duties is to look in on the Myrhoneite’s. Although Cibel has been told that Distaria wants the Myrhoneite sect destroyed she must be very careful, being former soldiers of the garrison the Myrhoneites are fairly popular despite their austere ways. She needs to make sure that whatever she does cannot be easily traced back to her. She has been told she will be greatly rewarded if she succeeds.

STR 14 CON 13 SIZE 14 INT 15 POW 20
DEX 13 APP 12 HIT POINTS 14

Weapon Skills:

Dagger 65%

Kick 30%

Magic Skills and Spells:

Other Skills:

Art (Illuminated Manuscripts) 35% Command 25%
Dodge 40% First Aid 45% Insight 35% Knowledge
(Religion)70% Language (Common) 70% Listen 45%
Literacy 70% Perform (Hymns) 35% Persuade 45%
Ride (Horse) 35% Spot 40% Status 35% Teach 30%

cibil cilet (vangfur)

Description: Cibel is still statuesque, her hair has gone to silver which highlight the large black orbs of her eyes.

Background: Cibel is extremely happy with her life as a Vangfur, she relishes in the power she holds over the village and the elaborate “Dance of Death” they hold every year.

STR 28 CON 26 SIZE 14 INT 15 POW 20
DEX 26 APP 12 HIT POINTS 20

Damage Bonus 2d6

As a Vangfur Cibel is very strong and fast, more than a match for the average person in a one on one fight. She does have a problem with bright lights and cold water which acts like acid to her skin.

Although she could get a weapon she doesn't use them, she likes to slap opponents with her open hand which does 2d6 damage, she likes the feeling of power she gets from being able to kill this way.

Cibel's gaze can be used to hypnotize (POW vs. POW roll). As long as she doesn't make any sudden movement the victim is kept enthralled. If left alone the victim is held in place for 1 minute for every POW point the Vangfur has.

JagVoc Owen Myrhone

Description: Middle aged, his bright red hair betrays his Second Kingdome heritage.

Background: Jag Voc Owen is a former garrison soldier. He joined the cult of Myrhone as a way to atone for his accidental killing of a young man in his unit.

He was acquitted of all wrong doing by a military court but still feels responsible for the soldier's death.

STR 15 CON 14 SIZE 15 INT 13 POW 11
DEX 13 APP 13 HIT POINTS 15

Weapon Skills:

Spear 65% Shield 65% Short Sword 65% Dagger 65%
Kick 60%

Other Skills:

Brawl 45% Climb 50% Dodge 35% Ride Horse 30%
First Aid 35% Hide 35% Listen 35% Spot 35% Stealth
20% Strategy 25%

JagVoc Alex Myrhone

Description: A young man in his early 20's.

Background: The youngest of the Myrhoneite JagVocs. Alex was a sub Altman in the border garrison for many years but grew tired of army life and some of the brutality it entailed. Alex joined the Myrhoneite as penance for his past deeds in the border skirmishes. Alex still has friends in the garrison who come to visit from time to time.

STR 15 CON 14 SIZE 15 INT 12 POW 11
DEX 15 APP 13 HIT POINTS 15

Weapon Skills:

Spear 65% Shield 65% Short Sword 65% Dagger 65%
Kick 60%

Other Skills:

Brawl 45% Climb 50% Dodge 35% Ride Horse 30%
First Aid 35% Hide 35% Listen 35% Spot 35% Stealth
20% Strategy 25%

JagVoc Cyril Myrhone

Description: An older man, with grey at his temples and beard, but still physically strong.

Background: The oldest of the Myrhoneite. Cyril had a sterling record as a soldier in the army of Deserata and was part of the royal bodyguard. A man of deep religious convictions he was swayed by several priests into helping kidnap the Queen (Deborah I). He was told it was to bring a more “religious” leader to the throne and the Queen would be exiled. Once the kid-

napping had taken place he was horrified when they royal family was murdered.

Many of those that participated in the killing disappeared, Cyril fled to Sadakadish, where he tried to enter the clergy to atone for his crime but he was turned away. He was allowed to become a JagVoc or brother in the order of the Myrhoneites where he was allowed to sign on as a caravan guard. After that duty he was sent to Sand Towers to oversee the construction of the new chapter house.

STR 15 CON 14 SIZE 15 INT 12 POW 11
DEX 15 APP 13 HIT POINTS 15

Weapon Skills:

Spear 75% Shield 65% Short Sword 75% Dagger 65%
Kick 60%

Other Skills:

Brawl 45% Climb 50% Dodge 35% Ride Horse 45%
First Aid 55% Hide 35% Listen 55% Spot 35% Stealth
20% Strategy 50%

Samis Tyre

Samis is typical of the Sadakadishian “Doh” or soldiers of the Hin Gon. They are raised to be fearless fighters and protectors of the Hin Gon’s lands. The Doh are by tradition landless and not allowed to amass wealth, even the Peace lords the Hin Gon’s generals are beholden to him for the basic necessities.

When a Doh is first introduced he must full recite the following:

1. His mentors or family’s name
2. His family greatest victory

STR 6 CON 15 SIZE 14 INT 11 POW 10
DEX 17 APP 13 HIT POINTS 15

Sadakadishian lacquered bamboo armor 2 points of armor.

Katana 50% 1d10+1 Fist 50% 1d3

Climb 60% Dodge 35% Grapple 50% Hide 35% Jump
50% Listen 50% Ride 35% Sense 35% Spot 55%
Stealth 40%



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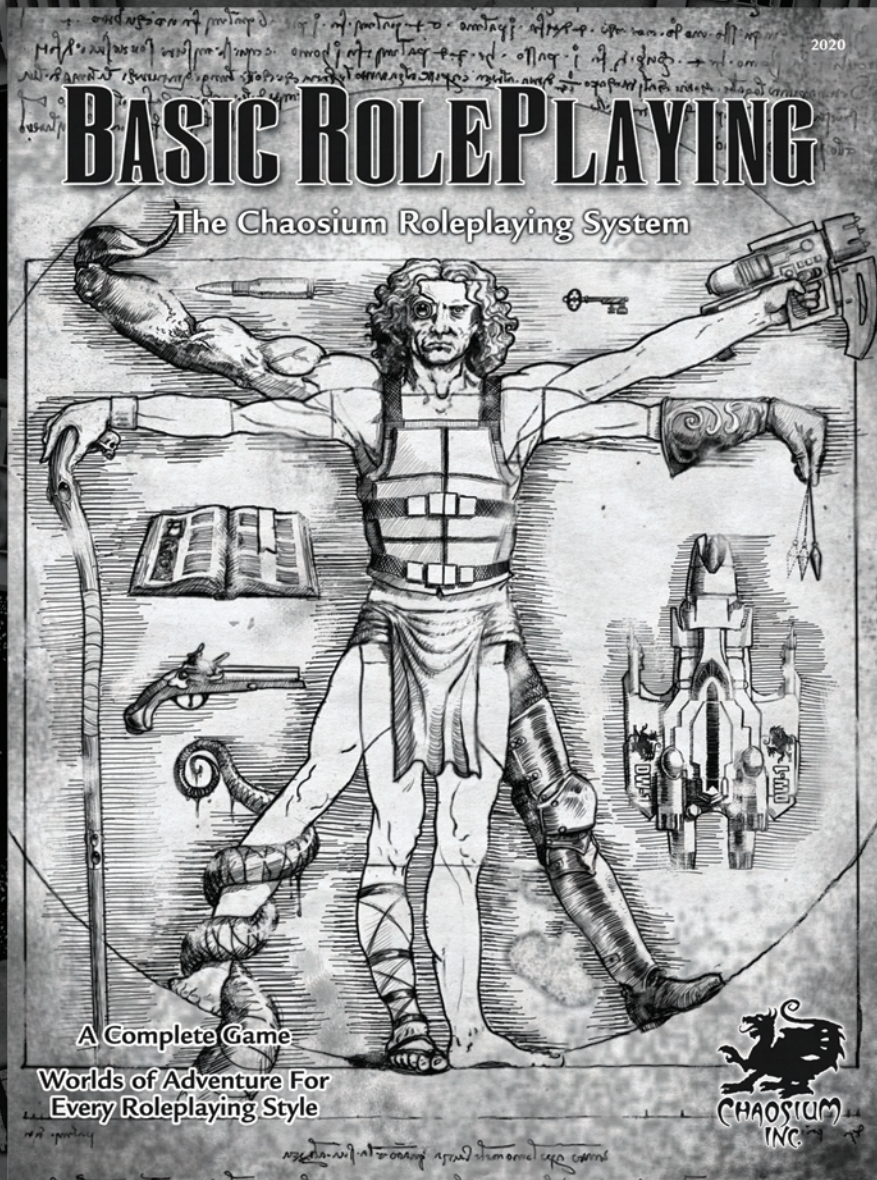
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