

CASTLES & CRUSADES[®]

THE LONG VALLEY



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The Long Valley is designed for 3-6 characters of 3rd - 5th level range. The adventure is scaled so that some encounters can be adjusted to allow for higher levels or less characters, or both. This adventure takes place in a valley in the mountains. It is easily ported to any homebrew adventure or other setting. It is, however, designed for use in the world of Ahrde and takes place in the Bergrucken Mountains, just north of the Norgorad Kam where the Lost City of Gaxmoor stands.

The valley was tamed long ago. The deep gorges were bridged, a road cut through her swampy bottoms, and towers set to watch the road to keeping the mountain's predators at bay. But that was long ago when the kingdoms of men were young and strong. For now the valley is empty of its old inhabitants. The towers are in ruin, the road in disrepair, and her people long gone. Even the bridges offer a deadly and dangerous challenge to the unsuspecting traveler.

The Long Valley is an overland adventure that allows the characters to explore the whole 30 mile stretch of country. The challenges range from the monstrous to the terrain, itself. Death lurks at every turn for the valley is as dangerous as it is beautiful. There are several encounter areas--including dungeons--loosely strung together.

INTRODUCTION

The broad, open Valley of Ix stood empty for many long years; a peaceful retreat for winged beasts and wild animals. It was not settled until a road was built in the valley, and the post of Gaxmoor (which evolved into a city) was built to protect it.

From the west, the valley is accessed by the Cliff Post Road. This road clings to the high ridges of the eastern mountains before it dips down to the broad plateau that overlooks the valley proper. Gaxmoor sits upon this plateau. From the east, the valley is accessed via a narrow canyon, where only one can travel abreast. But the valley itself, once reached is a wonder to behold. Towering mountains to the north and south give way to a valley almost 10 miles wide and 30 miles long. Lush grasses grow along the banks of many meandering streams and small copses of trees dot the landscape. The beauty is cut short, for three great gorges cross the valley, as if some ancient god had laid into it with his axe. The gorges run north to south; each is bridged.

ENTERING THE VALLEY

To enter the valley from the west along the Cliff Post Road, one must go through or skirt around the city of Gaxmoor. If the adventure is being played separate from Gaxmoor, then simply treat the city as a ruin. If Gaxmoor is being used, consult the book *Lost City of Gaxmoor* for adventures in the city. A short section below details the Cliff Post Road and adventures on it.

If the valley is approached from the east, through the canyon, refer to the canyon section below and begin play.

Characters can also enter from a mountain path to the north or south of the valley and begin play wherever they enter, referring to the text below.

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USING THE LOST CITY

The city of Gaxmoor was once a powerful city state that guarded the road that crossed through the Valley of Ix. In order to save it from destruction, its leaders turned to the gods to save the city. As a result, the city passed from the mortal world to another plane where it remained for over a thousand years, slowly decaying. Recently, it has returned to the world. Or, rather, it has rejoined the time stream. It is now visible upon the plateau. Its high walls and towers dominate the Valley of Ix once again, though now time has worn them down. Cracks and fissures appear everywhere, making scaling the wall far easier than ever it should have been. The gates are broken open; the street buckled in places, buildings sag and show signs of decay. In short, Gaxmoor is a ruin.

The original occupants are, of course, long dead having passed on to the Arc of Time despite the sorcery that kept them in a stasis. However, the town is not wholly unoccupied; Narrheit, the god of chaos, called for minions of chaos to occupy the city. The call did not go unanswered and many creatures came to Gaxmoor for the promise of easy loot and treasure.

When the city returned, they attacked. Finding no one within, they set to plundering and were soon fighting amongst themselves. Within a few short months, they had carved out small kingdoms for themselves inside the city, making Gaxmoor's ruins a battlefield.

For all adventures in Gaxmoor refer to the already published *Lost City of Gaxmoor*.

GETTING STARTED

The CK can use any of the following to introduce *The Long Valley* adventure, or develop their own.

- 1) The characters have come to a mountain range and found the whole impassable, except for a small canyon opening with a cobbled road. Entering the canyon leads to the valley.
- 2) Local rumors, picked up in a tavern, with a caravan or other similar method, speak of a lost valley where a wizard's cottage tower stands. The tower is reputed to have a set of magical books hidden in it.
- 3) The characters are being pursued by a band of humanoids, mercenaries, or other enemy. Their flight leads them to an opening in a cliff wall and the canyon beyond. Both lead to the valley. This adventure path allows for some drama in pursuit.
- 4) Rumors of an ancient city lying within the Valley of Ix draw the characters to the valley. This can be used with or without the *Lost City of Gaxmoor*.

FROM THE EAST

The valley consists of several prominent areas. From east to west they are the following: Canyon Road, Therbigge Road intersected by the Helkemps Gorge, Robard's Gorge, Cuft Gorge, the plateau (where Gaxmoor sits), and Cliff Post Road.

Each area is discussed below.

The Castle Keeper should refer to that section where the party enters the valley, Cliff Post Road if from the west, and Canyon Road from the east. If a trail is used that is not on the map, pick the point of entry most desired.

CANYON ROAD

The rolling plains of the Massiff climb steadily up toward the looming bedrock of the Bergrucken Mountains. The entrance to the canyon lies on the eastern slopes of the mountains in the Bottled Rock Cliff. It is a narrow crevasse that gives way to the Canyon Road.

The Bottled Rock Cliffs extend for about 20 miles east and north, the range from 100 feet high to over a thousand. Climbing them is very difficult and the mountain above not much better. Any attempt to climb the cliffs requires a successful dexterity check (CL 6) every 10 feet. Once the cliff is topped the mountain above is steep, climbing another 5,000 feet to the top of the mountain where it levels off in a ridge that extends about 4 miles before it drops back down and into the Valley of Ix. Climbing is possible above the cliffs but offers many opportunities for falling. Climb checks at a variety of challenge levels should be made frequently.

CANYON ENTRANCE

The plains end abruptly at the foot of the cliff, but a small opening appears there. Read or paraphrase the following:

The looming cliffs dominate the horizon, extending as far as you can see, north and south. They are not unbroken, however, for there is a small fissure--an opening in the cliff. Boulders and rocks lie to either side of it, as if long ago, someone had burst out of the mountain and made a mad cap dash down the slope. The entrance is about 3 feet wide, and on either side are carved, in relief, the faces of two men. Who they were, or what, has long since been lost for they are weathered by rain and wind and only the traces of them remain.

The statues were of an Aenochian emperor and his wife who ordered the road constructed.

The road once led up to the crevasse and was cobbled. However, that has long since sunk into the earth and only faint traces of it remain. A ranger or dwarf may discover such traces on a successful primary attribute check (CL 4).

CANYON ROAD

The narrow canyon is 14 miles long and no more than a dozen feet wide at its widest. It is narrow and dark except around noon. There is a wind constantly blowing through the narrow reaches. Stones and pebbles fall continually making any journey here nerve wracking.

Small trees and scrub bushes grow throughout making travel here arduous and slow. When the Therbige Road was used,

the canyon was constantly cleared of debris, but any more it is littered with detritus from the canyon walls. No wagons, carts, or any livestock can travel the canyon; it can only be traveled on foot. Travel is slow. It takes the better part of half a day to move through the canyon.

About two miles in, read or paraphrase the following:

In front of you, the canyon road widens to about 10 feet, though the walls seem more stark and jagged. You can, however see bones scattered about. A few feet more, and you spy a heap of bones, easily 4 feet deep and a few feet wide, and more lay scattered about as if gnawed on by some wild animal.

The pile is actually a monstrous bag o' bones. Though it has no intelligence or ability to reason, the creature has kept the path to Canyon Road clear of interlopers. It was left here by a wizard whose bones lie in the debris about.

If anyone approaches the crevasse, the bones begin to rattle and quickly rise up into a monstrous heap of bones that fall upon the party.

BAG O' BONES (*This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, AC 15, HP 40. Its primary attack is physical. It attacks with one claw for 1d6 points of damage, or by weapon. Due to its nature, the bag o' bones has a natural turn resistance, and it is turned as an 8 hit dice monster. They only take half damage from edged weapons and piercing weapons.*)

Treasure: Beneath the heap of bones lies the creature's treasure; the the wizard's gear of old. Within are the remains of an old backpack, whose only remaining contents is a *magical rope* that is twice as strong as a normal rope and unties itself when the user desires. There is also a potion of *cure serious wounds*, a *glyph of protection from evil* carved on a small clay tablet that once broken gives the user a protection from evil for 5 rounds. There is a scroll case with five 3rd level spells in it. The CK should pick the spells.

It opens into the Eastern Ix.

VALLEY OF IX

Once through the canyon, the traveler comes to the long Valley of Ix. The road here still exists, though it is in horrible shape. Cobbles have fallen away or disintegrated. Where the road passed through low-lying areas it vanishes into the earth entirely, consumed by the valley. Along hilltops, it's weathered and ground away, but still serviceable. In short, the trained eye can notice the path the road took, though much of it is gone. Following it is relatively easy, until one comes to the first of the three gorges.

As noted, the valley is cut in three places by very large gulches. They were impossible to bypass, so three large bridges were constructed, one crossing each gorge. This road, from the canyon to the plateau was named Three Bridge Way by the locals, which eventually was bastardized into Therbige Way.

Habitations: There are many small buildings, all made of stone and most without roofs, along the road. One was built every 4 miles. They were also built at the both ends of each bridge. For the most part, these are little more than walls and floors, void of any furniture or item of decoration. These served as rest stops on the road to the lost city.

It is roughly 11 miles from the canyon to Helkemps, the first of the gorges.

HELKEMPS GORGE

The bridge here is long gone and the gorge impassible but through magic or a risky climb. The gorge is over 170 feet wide and about 300 feet deep. Her sides are steep, but peopled with loose rocks so climbing down it is very difficult and risky. Climbing is possible (CL 7), but the danger does not lie in the climb itself, but rather the crumbling cliff. Every 100 feet the CK should make a check on a d20, any roll below 12 means the cliff gives way beneath a climber. The climber is allowed one dexterity check to grab a second hold before falling (CL 5).

A young gyno sphinx has taken up residence in the ruins around the bridge. She sleeps some, but mostly contemplates the heavens and the world around here. She is clever and can be kind but is not entirely without a temper.

She dwells beneath the hollowed out ruins of an old stone building just off the road.

The sphinx has been watching the characters' approach for some time, so she is not in anyway surprised unless one actively attempts to sneak up on the bridge. She does not, however, make any attempts to hide herself, lying as she is in the ruins of the building, enjoying the weather.

When the party gets within a few hundred feet of the ruined bridge, she crawls out of her ruined den and settles on a mound of stone. She moves very slowly, non-threateningly as she settles in to watch them. She is only a few feet off the road.

As they approach, she heralds them and seeks to talk to them. She is curious about who they are, where they are going, what they know. If the party warms to her and talks with her, she eventually offers them a deal. If they can answer three riddles she'll fly them across the gorge and put them, one at a time, on the other side.

If they agree the terms are simple: three riddles, three tries each riddle. If they get all three she flies them across. If they fail, they must go around or find their own way up or down.

For her the whole exercise is one of entertainment; she seeks nothing more.

Riddle 1

What is greater than the All Father and more evil than the Horned God? The poor have it in abundance and the rich need it not at all and if you'll eat it, you'll die!?

Answer: "Nothing."

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Riddle 2

My life can be measured in hours.

I serve by being devoured.

Thin I am quick.

Fat I am slow

Wind is my foe

What am I?

Answer: "A candle."

Riddle 3

I have two arms but fingers none.

I have two feet but cannot run.

I carry well but I have found I carry best with my feet OFF the ground.

What am I?

Answer: "A wheelbarrow."

If they answer all three riddles she will carry them one after the other to far side of the gorge. If they fail, she laughs with them but returns to her lair and leaves them to their own devices.

If they attack her. she might fight if she feels she can defeat them, but she has no interest in it either way and is more likely to fly away than stand and suffer wounds and possible death.

SPHINX, GYNO (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 8d10, AC 21, HP 80. Her primary attributes are mental. She attacks with 2 claws for 2d4 points of damage. She is able to move 40 feet and fly 60 feet per round. She has dark and twilight vision. They are able to use the following spell-like abilities: detect magic, read magic, see invisible, locate object, dispel magic, clairaudience/clairvoyance, remove fear and legend lore. Once a week they can cast symbol.)

It is possible to bypass the gorge by moving into the mountains to the north or south, but this requires several days of difficult travel either way.

1 THE WIZARD'S COTTAGE

On the far side of the gorge, the road snakes up a long, gentle slope. Here the road is still visible and travel is easier. A small tower juts out of a break in the trees about four miles beyond the gorge, and about a half day's walk from the edge. The tower is lost in the trees that grow a almost equal in height to its walls.

The tower is set about a thousand feet to the south of the road. It consists of an entry hall, presently concealed by the trees, and a three story tower. It is long abandoned, though it is locked and magically guarded.

Off to the south the road the ground rises slight, the grass climbing a gentle slope to a hillock covered in a thick copse of short, thick-bowled trees. In their midst, a tower rises, standing above the highest of them. A few vines climb its lonely flanks to coil up and into the roof. It is old and seems somehow cold and forlorn.

A path leads off the road and through the forest to the tower itself. It ends at the doorway of the entry hall.

The forest around the tower is old growth oak and elm. The trees are thick and squat with heavy canopies that rise about 60 feet from the forest floor. The tangle of branches and roots make passage to the tower difficult, though not impossible.

The tower itself has only one entrance, the entry hall.

Room 1 Entry Hall

The path winds around the forest to a heavy, squat iron door set in a stone wall. The building itself is 12 feet high and 20 feet wide, though much of the building is hidden by the forest.

The door fits comfortably in the wall; it is locked from the inside and opens inward. There is a glyph of warding set on the stone walk before the door and can be spied on a successful spot check (CL 5). If stepped upon, the glyph explodes for 5d4 points of damage, wisdom save for half. Everyone within five feet suffers the damage.

The door is unlocked on a successful pick lock check (CL 4). Otherwise a *knock* spell or something similar must be used to open it. The door can be battered on a successful strength check (CL 4).

The room within is lavishly decorated, though everything is old and covered in a fine layer of dust. Two chairs sit against the south wall. Another set of chairs and a table, with two intricately wrought candelabra on it, stand against the west wall. A wood burning stove stands between them. A heavy rug on the floor adds a touch of warmth to the room. It was obviously used as a sitting room.

If the room is searched nothing of value is detected, however, a detect magic reveals that both the candelabra and the stove are magical.

Treasure: Each of the candelabra has 4 arms and eight sockets, two per arm. When touched and the word “light” is uttered a candle appears in each of the eight sockets and lights as a normal candle. When the words “dim light” are spoken and the candelabra touched, only four of the candles light. The stove is also magical. When opened and the word “fire” is uttered a magical fire ignites within, it burns and warms as would a normal fire. The stove itself is small, about 2 feet deep and a foot and a half wide. It has no chimney pipe, nor does it put off smoke or fumes. The stove is very heavy, about 300 pounds.

Aside from the furniture itself, there is nothing else of value in the room.

Room 2 Parlor

The door that leads from the entry hall to the tower proper is shut and locked. There is a glyph carved on the front door, it resembles two letter “P”s, set back to back.

To open the door requires a successful open lock check (CL 4), otherwise there is a key on the lentil above the door that opens it.

The door opens to a large half moon shaped room. Within is a large, cushioned chair set against the east wall. A tall, 5 arm, 10 socket candelabrum stands next to it as does a night stand. The room has a large carpet as well as several hanging tapestries, the largest behind the chair. A statue of a four-armed man stands against the north wall. A small opening to the left leads to an anti-chamber and stairs.

Anyone entering the room that does not utter the command word “be still” rouses the gargoyle from its stupor. The creature immediately attacks.

GARGOYLE (*This chaotic evil creature’s vital stats are HD 5d8, AC 16, 23. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 2 claws for 1d3, a bite for 1d6, or a gore for 1d4 points of damage. This gargoyle is incapable of flight. It has darkvision 60 feet, and is able to appear as a stone statue by freezing itself in place.*)

Extra-dimensional Space: Anyone carefully investigating the chair and table may notice a single rope hanging in front of it (spot CL 4). The rope is not attached to anything but hangs against the tapestry. It is a *rope trick* with a *permanency* spell cast upon it. Pulling the rope does nothing, but climbing it brings one to a small extra-dimensional space: the wizard’s library.

There are about 60 books in the library, neatly set on several book shelves. The books themselves are histories, geographies and language books. The language books, 4 in all, are all magical. Reading them from cover to cover teaches the reader the language in the book. Upon a successful intelligence check (CL 2) the reader can learn to speak, read and write the language. The languages are elf, orc, gnome, and demon.

Floor grates: There four metal floor grates in the room, each about 12 inches long and 12 inches wide. They are easy to open, within is a small compartment with chunks of half burnt coal in them. They were used to heat the room, by lighting the coals.

Treasure: Aside from the books in the rope trick room the candelabrum is magical, responding to the same touch and commands that the candelabra from Room 1 do.

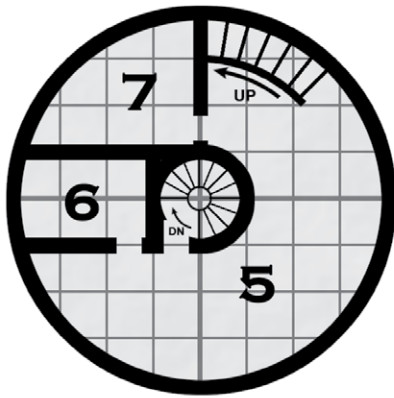
The anti-chamber serves as an entry to the stair case that leads to the second level of the tower.

Room 3 Kitchen

A small cook stove, similar to the one in Room1 and magical in nature, stands against the west wall. There is also a long counter with cabinets on the north wall, a butcher block in the center of the room, and a hutch against the south wall, by the door. The room is very clean and well preserved. The hutch has iron dishes, silver cutlery, simple iron mugs, pots, and pans in it. The counters above the long table have various tins of preserved spices.

Treasure: The stove is magical, as in Room 1. There is also a small tin of spices, mixed in with the normal spices, in a brass tin (all the others are silver). Within are a dozen red flower petals. These are red glass petals, that allow one peaceful sleep,

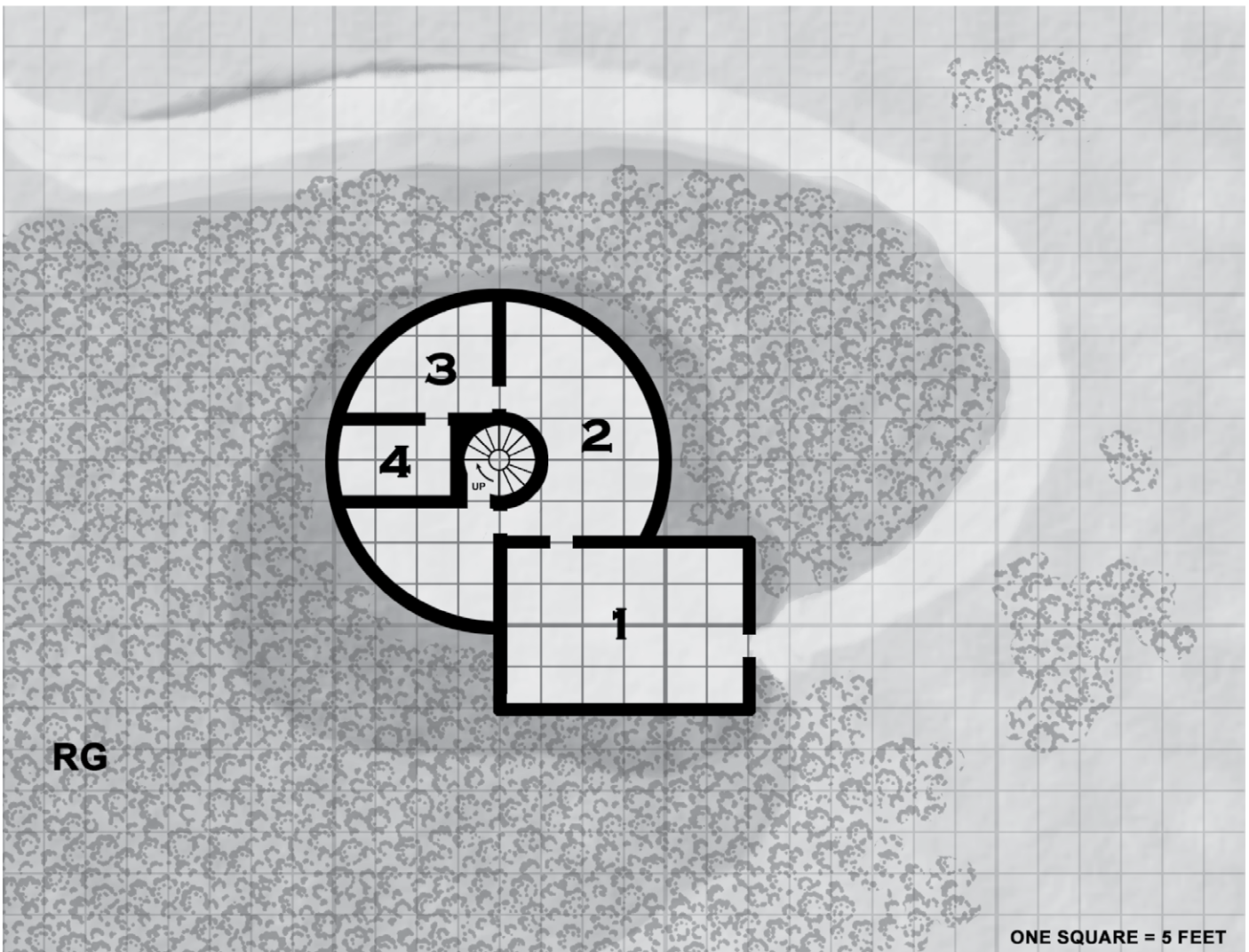
WIZARDS COTTAGE



LEVEL TWO



LEVEL THREE
(ROOF)



or if misused, eternal sleep. The smell is gentle and intoxicating, its fragrance calms the nerves and numbs the mind. Anyone who rests within a few feet of a single flower slips into a restful, comfortable sleep, undisturbed by dreams or ailments of the mind. However, if they sleep near a bed they risk falling into a sleep from which they cannot wake (constitution save CL 5) unless magically cured. The petals of the flower are deadly if ingested. Eating only a few of them causes one to go blind (CL 5) and within a few minutes to become witless as the brain numbs (CL 7). For this reason, the petals are used as a potent poison. They are plucked, dried, and baked. Made brittle, like small flakes of red glass, the petals are turned into a powder, used as a spice or slipped into a drink. In this form it is a type VI poison.

Room 4 Buttery

The door to the buttery is locked, (CL 3). The key, as in other areas of the tower, is above the lintel.

Within, are 11 casks stacked against the wall. There is a large, 50 pound sack labeled flour and smaller 15 pound sack labeled sugar and for crates with coal in them. A long shelf on the wall next to the door has several tools on it: a crowbar, hammer, pry bar, and a tap. The tap is obviously used for the casks.

There are four casks of wine and 7 of beer. All of it is well preserved and drinkable.

Room 5 Laboratory

There is a door at the top of the steps that leads to the laboratory. It is locked (CL 3) but again, the key is above the lintel. The door opens to the odd smell of charcoal.

The peculiar smell of charcoal greets you as you enter, and a fine haze of black dust hangs. It clings to your face, clothes, armor, and packs as you enter the chamber. Another half moon shaped room greets you but here there is only wreck and ruin. A long bench that stood against the wall is split asunder and all the beakers, jars, and bottles it held are no more than shattered glass on the floor. A huge burn mark on the floor and counter indicate what must have been a massive explosion. The room seems to have been engulfed in first a fireball and then a slow-burning fire. Everything in the room--chairs, tables, boxes and more--were hurled against the various walls and there they burned slowly. The remains of most are plain to see, half burnt. A good dozen books lie burnt and ruined about the floor. Shelves on the walls suffered the same fate, the explosion driving them up and off their moorings, and whatever they held was lost in the cacophony of debris on the floor. The disaster is compounded, however, by the sprawled figure of a man against the north wall. The blast tore open his chest, splitting it wide, and burnt a great deal of the flesh from his body. It is old, dried and somewhat petrified. The form is unrecognizable.

The wizard was attempting an experiment with several explosive compounds, trying to hold a door open to the Wretched Plains. The compounds exploded killing him instantly, but they did so, not through his error, but rather through the machinations of a demon who slipped through the gate.

DEMON (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d10, AC 18, HP 31. Its primary attributes are mental. It prefers to attack with a fire-whip that it is able to summon. The whip does 1d4 points of damage on a successful strike. Anyone who is hit by the whip must make a successful intelligence save or be struck by a psychic blast that reveals a look at the Wretched Plains. A failed save means the view is so horrific that they are stunned for 1d4 rounds. It can attack with two claws for 1d4 and one bite for 1d6 damage points of damage. It is immune to fear or fear type spells, can fly 60 feet per round and cast color spray once per day. It is able to assume the form of a shadow once per day.)

Treasure: The wizard was wearing a magic +2 ring of protection and a ring of telekinesis.

Note: The wizard's spell books were destroyed in the explosion.

Room 6 Lavatory

The door is not locked here but it is shut. Within is a single long bench with a hole cut into it. A bucket with a long handled scrub brush sits next to the bench, near the hole. Several papers lie stacked on the bench next to the hole.

It is clearly a lavatory.

Beneath the hole, suspended on three chains and plain for all who look under the bench to see, is one of two ring gates. The wizard used this to send his waste out of the tower. Anything that went into the ring gate came out through the other ring gate, which he hung from a tree branch outside the tower (see RG on the map).

Treasure: The ring gates, if they are retrieved. The stack of papers next to the toilet hole is actually a shatter spell.

Room 7 Bedroom

The door is closed but not locked. The key is on the lintel overhead.

Within is a simple bed against the wall and a wardrobe across from it. A stand and wash basin are next to the bed. The bed itself is very comfortable and covered with 4 quilts of various designs. A very nice feather pillow sits propped against the wall.

Within the wardrobe are a variety of clothes, pants, shirts, a heavy cloak. A box with several sets of gloves and socks sits on beneath the clothes. Above that are a set of sheets and another quilt.

Treasure: The pillow is a restful pillow, anyone who sleeps on it gets a very restful sleep, all natural healing is doubled. Behind the quilt in the wardrobe is another small wooden box with

several rings in it (each worth 50gp), a small necklace (worth 150gp), and bag of coin with 25gp in it.

Room 8 Solarium

The top of the tower served as a place for contemplation for the wizard. The roof itself stands about 3 feet above the tower wall, suspended by six posts, allowing one to see out all around the tower. Furthermore, the center of the roof is open, allowing light, rain, and snow in from above. The skylight is centered on the peculiar shape carved onto the floor. There is a long-handled lever lying on the floor.

The skylight can be closed with a hatch and with the long-handled lever.

Here, the wizard sat and pondered those things wizards are inclined to ponder.

Sitting in the center of the carved shape, at the center of the room, has a peculiar affect on someone. It automatically increases their intelligence and wisdom by one point, so long as they are in the center of the room. It also allows them to cast a spell as if they were one level higher so long as they are in the center of the room. It also allows them to see as if the roof were not there at all and increases their vision so that they can see to the far ends of the valley.

ROBARD'S GORGE

Robard's Gorge lies 9 miles beyond Helkemps and a further 5 miles from the wizard's cottage. It was named for the architect who built the bridge that spanned the gorge. The gorge itself is 120 feet wide gorge to the top and 40 feet wide at the base. It is some 400 feet deep. Here jumbled cliffs offer far more handholds and an easier climb than Helkemps Gorge.

Here, some of the bridge remains intact. Both spans on the east and west remain, each reaching out about 30 feet from their base. It is the middle span that is missing. Long ago, a 60 foot section fell way, falling into the gorge below. Crossing is a hazardous affair.

There are two barbicans on the bridge, and both gateways guarded the bridge. The western barbican is in ruins, the eastern one is still largely intact, and it is presently occupied by several mephits. These small gang of fire spirits have wandered down from the ruins on the plateau, flown over the bridge and have set about making their lair in this abandoned room.

MEPHIT x 3 (*These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 15 and HP 14. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with a bite for 1d6 and a stinger for 1 point of damage. The mephit is able to summon a minor flame strike once every 3 rounds for 1d6 points of damage. All fire damage deals half damage but cold based damage inflicts double damage. They are highly aggressive.*)

Treasure: The mephits have amassed a small treasure. One of them wears a *horn of fog*, another has necklace and ring set worth 300gp and the third has pouch stuffed with 42gp and 12pp.

Crossing the Gorge: The characters can climb down, attempt to bridge the gap or use the *horn of fog* (assuming they capture it) to get across the bridge. Climbing down the gorge is possible (CL 3) and falling more difficult. If some should fall they should be allowed a dexterity check to catch themselves every 10 feet for 30 feet (CL 5). After 30 feet their momentum is too great and they plunge to their death.

Wreckage: At the bottom of the gorge beneath the bridge lies a heap of rubble from the bridge, the ruins of three large wagons, and the bones of those who drove them and the horses who pulled them. The wagons were headed to west when the bridge gave way and all fell to their doom. They were carrying loads of food and beer, though one had armor and weapons in it. The bulk is, of course, ruined. There is, however, one large Greek-style +2 shield with rusted, wasted remains of the mundane armaments.

2 BARROW MOUND

The road winds its way up to a small rise in the land that overlooks the eastern edge of the valley and Robard's Gorge. From here it snakes for several more miles before it reaches the next gorge, which is not visible from this point in the road. The path is well persevered and seems cared for. A successful track check (CL 3) reveals that someone has been tending to the path, cutting the grass, etc.

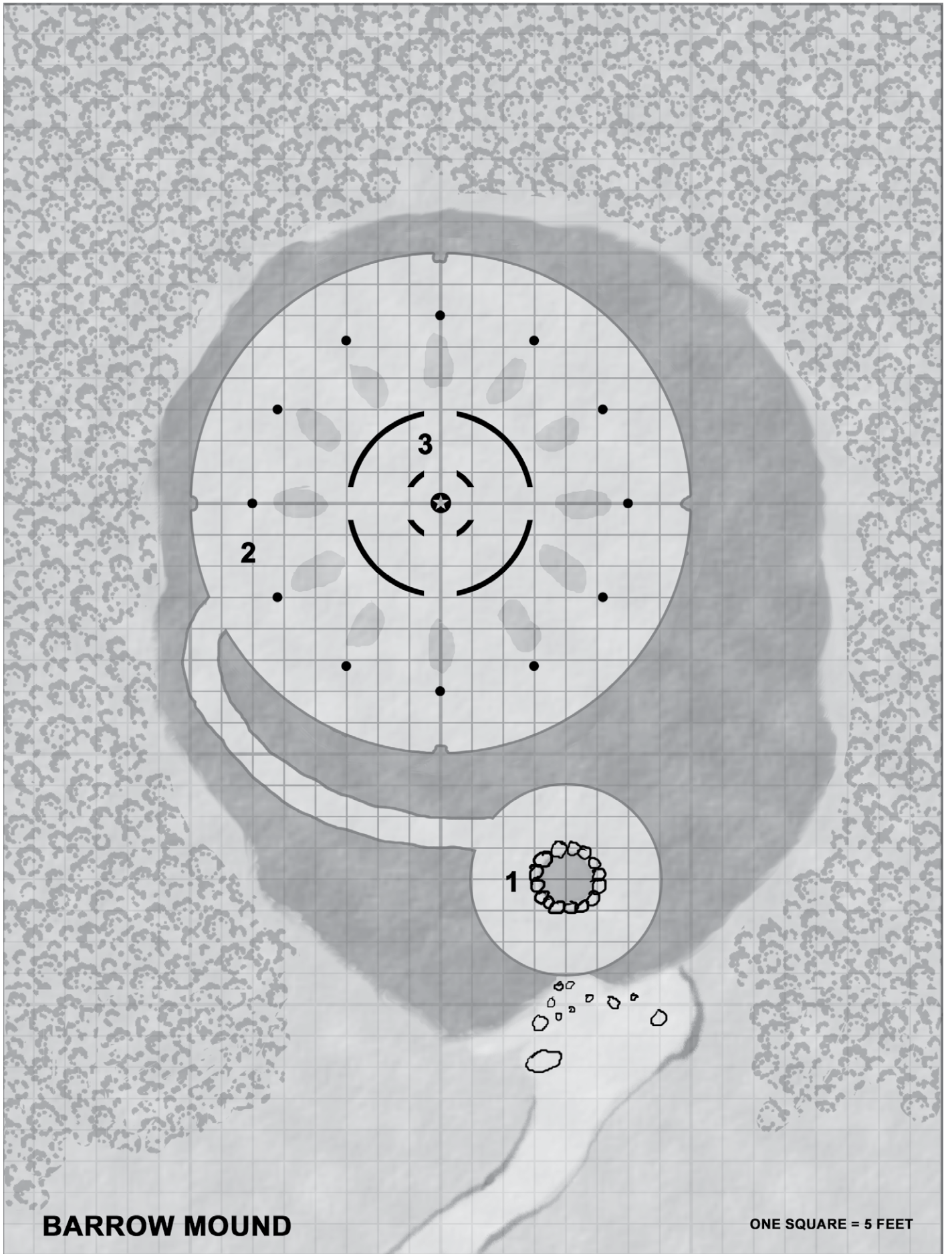
About two miles up from Robard's, a small path veers from the main road, heading north. Like the main road, it is cobble, but unlike the main road it is relatively good shape. It winds over several small hills, a low marshy bog, and then up to a barrow mound nestled in the shadow of the mountains about 4 miles away. The mound is in no way related to the valley's sordid past, but is a rather recent entry, being only about 300 years old.

It houses a cleric of the god Narrheit who was buried here by his minions at his request. He chose the valley for its peculiar association with Narrheit, but also for location far from the haunts of man. The priest cast his own soul into a *magic jar* and the jar was set in a small shelf beneath his head in the bier of the barrow. His body was laid upon the bier and allowed to rise once a month, during the full moon, so that he might wander the valley and see the stars and moon from time to time. His acolytes joined him in death, slaying themselves around him and lying upon smaller mounds of earth.

The Dead Rising: A lamp set in the ceiling above the main crypt magically lights upon each full moon. As soon as the light touches the exposed corpse of the priest he animates. He then takes up a torch and passes around the room, the light having the same affect on his undead acolytes as it had on him. They each animate in turn. They rise with him and follow him on the path, doing his bidding. He commands them to tend the path while he stands upon the road, or in the bog, or even upon the barrow mound itself. Wherever he is, the acolytes are not far away.

Note: This encounter can happen inside the barrow or outside, at the CKs discretion. Allow that the moon is full and the dead are wandering the path.

8 CASTLES & CRUSADES



BARROW MOUND

ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET

Room 1 Entrance

The path leads to a large mound, almost 40 feet high at its apex. The mound is covered in grass from top to bottom, merging smoothly with the grass of the area around. The path, however, leads to a flat area covered by a large stone.

The stone weighs 400 lbs and covers the door completely. Moving it takes a herculean effort. A successful strength check (CL 8) rolls the stone out of the way. At least three people can try to move the stone together. If a group effort is attempted, one player rolls the strength check, but adds the strength attribute bonus of all three making the attempt to the dice. Any kind of leverage used to move the stone, add a +5 to the check. If the attempt fails, the party must wait 30 minutes before the same members can try it again.

Room 2 Vestibule

This small room is empty but for a pool in the center surrounded by large stones. A small set of steps leads into the pool. It is for the ritual bathing of the body before it was laid to rest. The water is cool and refreshing. There is nothing else of interest in the room.

Room 3 Outer Crypt

The outer crypt consists of 12 thick, wooden columns set to hold up the roof overhead. At the base of each is a bier, small about 3 feet off the ground. On each bier, a figure lies covered in thin, white, silk coverings. Beneath the sheets there are bodies plain to see, unless of course the encounter occurs outside. If that is the case, the silk shroud is folded neatly at the foot of each bier.

The bodies, assuming they are in the room, animate as soon as light touches the cover that lies over them. Anyone entering the room with a torch, lantern or magical weapon accidentally animates the corpses and they rise, attacking the interlopers.

The zombies are wearing ornate clothing and jewelry and carry kopesh blades at their sides. They attack until they are destroyed or they drive out the interlopers.

If no light spills upon the inner crypt, the wight remains still and does not rise to aid his acolytes. If some how light should touch him, however, he rises from his bier and attacks.

ZOMBIES x 12 (These neutral evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 8, 9, 11; AC 11. They have no primary attributes. They attack with one claw that does 1d8 damage plus possible rot grub infestation. For each extra zombie attacking they collectively gain a +1 to hit. So if there are three zombies attacking one target they all get +3 to hit.)

Room 4 Inner Crypt

The inner crypt is set off from the outer by large slabs of stone, however there is no door, only the openings (allowing the light from the outer crypt to easily spill into the room). The bier here is tall, about 5 feet off the ground. The wight lays upon

it in perfect repose. He wears a suit of dark, gun metal gray chain mail with a coif and helm upon his head. His high, hard leather boots are in good condition as are his pants and the undergarments beneath. A mace and shield are set at his feet.

The lantern hangs on a long chain attached to the rafters over head. It is about 15 feet long and hangs roughly 15 feet above the wight. It is always burning, though only lights upon command or when the moon is full.

WIGHT (This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d12, HP 26, AC 15. Its primary attributes are mental. It attacks with claws for 1d6 points of damage, and a successful hit drains the victim of one level of experience. Its special abilities are create spawn, energy drain, and dark vision 60 ft.)

Set in an open shelf carved into the head of the bier beneath where the wight's own head rests is a small clay jar. In the jar is the priest's soul. The jar is obviously magical. It is sealed with wax with magical glyphs written on the side. It requires a successful intelligence check (CL 4) or magic to decipher the glyphs. If they are read aloud, they translate to "bound within." If the seal is broken the creature is allowed to escape, he either attacks the party or flees the barrow. Treat as a shadow.

SHADOW (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d12, HP 15, AC 13. Its primary attributes are mental. It attacks with an incorporeal touch for 1d4 points of damage. They can cause strength drain. They have darkvision 60 feet, are able to blend with their environment but have sunlight vulnerability.)

Treasure: The clothing all disintegrates if removed from the corpse, but the +1 chain mail is serviceable. The mace is a normal mace. The magic jar as noted above.

CUFT GORGE

Seven miles from the path to the barrow mound lies the third and final gorge. It lies a further 6 miles from the plateau and the Cliff Post Road that leads one from the Valley of Ix.

The Cuft Gorge is roughly 100 feet wide, and only 250 feet deep. Here the bridge remains intact and easy to cross. The bridge is 40 feet wide, made of stone and possesses a lip 3 feet high on either side. It is in remarkably good shape. This bridge, however, is home to an ancient and malevolent spirit.

The Tale of Ealuta

When Gaxmoor first passed from the Arc of Time, many of her citizens were caught unawares. They were in the hills or valley around Gaxmoor, hunting, gathering food, or on some other outing. When the city passed, they were left behind. Many fled in despair, fleeing on either road to the east or west. Most perished, though some remained, convinced that their beloved city would return. These gathered together and sought shelter in the rocky cliffs to the south of the city.

Here they lived for some time, refugees from their home. They hunted for food, built shelters and carved a meager living from the Valley of Ix. In the end, though, privation began to hound them and in the very end, murder.

10 CASTLES & CRUSADES

In their midst was an old washer woman, Ealuta, who had not left Gaxmoor willingly that day, but rather been driven out by her family for she was a thief and threatened murder. She cursed her family, fled the town and laughed in scorn when the city disappeared. She gathered with the refugees near the Cuft Gorge and helped them build a home of loose rock. In time, however, she began to steal from them, and later, when winter struck and food ran short, she stole more. She was eventually found out and driven out of the makeshift town. They hounded her over the bridge and drove her into the snow to die.

But she did not die, for she was pickled with hate for all living things, and this hate kept her warm. She found shelter under the eastern side of the , and there carved out a hovel where she found some comfort.

When the first of the refugees died, she took note and watched as the others buried him. When they left the grave, she dug up the body and gnawed upon it, devouring the flesh raw. She tried to hide her crimes but was too weak. So, she took a rock and cut the remains into pieces and bore it back across the bridge to her lonely world. There, she buried the meat in the dirt.

The others soon discovered her crime but were too weak to pursue her, for the snows were deep and the food already gone. Three more died and were buried in shallow graves, only to suffer the indignity of becoming Ealuta's meal, one after the other. What followed was a nightmare of death, murder and a witch's haunt, until at last some few fled into the west to find succor and only one remained, a young girl, whose brother lay in the cold ground. She would not leave his side for him to become a meal for the witch.

So Ealuta found her, kneeling in the snow over her brother's grave, and she sought to make a fresh kill and eat her there and then while the meat was still warm. Her clawed hand grasped the child's throat to choke the life from it, but far faster and more agile, the child spun and struck Ealuta across the brow with a rock. The witch fell back into the snow, and the girl leapt upon her and stove her head in with the rock. With the last of her strength she took the witch by the hair and dragged her to her gorge and cast her mangled body to the floor far below. With that she left her brother and the valley to the east and came in time to the Massif and the people there where it is said she prospered, but would never speak of those dark days but to her own children.

The tale did not end there, however, for Ealuta rose from the gorge, a twisted creature of evil and spite. Wild and without purpose, she haunted the bridge slaying any and all who came to it. Driven by a hunger she could not satisfy, she dwelt there from that day to this.

She is utterly mad, but will treat with the characters, pretending to be an old woman, lost in the wilderness (which is true). She will speak of her daughter and gesture to the ruins of the town to the south and ramble on about how she is there but taken by some foul demon. She leads them if they will let her, seeking for an opportunity to murder one and eat their flesh.

EALUTA, GAUNT (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 6d8, HP 31, AC 17. Her primary attributes are physical & mental. She attacks with claws doing 1d4+6 points of damage plus an energy drain of 1 level with touch. Her special abilities are blood drain, energy drain, tree stride, and these spell-like abilities: entangle (2/day), charm person (2/day), sleep (3/day; only cold iron, mistletoe, or magic to hit.)*)

Description: She appears as a very thin, very old woman whose skin is yellowed and blotchy. She is hunched over so that her face looks upon her feet. She hobbles when she walks and stinks of the grave. Her clothes are rags. Her head is caved in on the left side and the hair there is matted, greasy and fused with the skull.

3 The Town

The town is hardly a town. It consists of a long, low wall built out from a vertical cliff face and several buildings built within. Here the last of the refugees dwelt, and it has sat unoccupied since they left. It can offer the characters a refuge and place of rest during forays into Gaxmoor.

Wall: The wall is about 100 feet long, and curves out from the cliff about 40 feet at its furthest and has one easy entrance. It consists of stacked stones with some mud as plaster and about 18-24 inches wide and about 4 feet high. The rocks are black, like the cliff, generally flat, and chip easily. It has fallen down in many places.

Houses: There are three small houses within the wall. They are built of the same rocks as the wall, only stacked a little thicker. Each is small, about 20 x 20 feet, with 8-foot high walls. None of the ceilings remain. They have roughed out chimneys, all of which are clogged with debris and will need some cleaning if they are to be used.

Set upon a ledge inside one of the chimneys is a magical ring, placed there many centuries ago. The ring is *a ring of feather falling*.

The town is watered by a small fissure in the cliff that sends a constant trickle of water into a broad pool at the cliff's edge. The pool never spills over (unless it rains extremely hard) as the water is siphoned off beneath the ground.

THE FINAL ROAD

From the Cuft Gorge it is roughly six miles to the plateau that houses the lost city. The plateau marks the end of the Valley of Ix, or its beginning depending on which direction you come from. The plateau itself is part a large geographic formation that includes the mountains to the west and the Cliff Post Road that crosses them.

This final stretch of the Thebigge road is in good shape. The cobbled road is slightly elevated and the ground here rockier, making the whole very stable. The plateau, which rises some 300 feet above the valley floor in three vast shelves of rock, is clearly visible and anything that dwells in the city, ruined or otherwise, has a clear view of the road and any that pass over it.

The path climbs the plateau in 3 broad switch backs, making the climb slow, but far easier than a straight ascent. The lost city itself sits a mile or so back from the cliff's edge.

The switch back path is not without danger, however. Several vimnel have taken refuge upon the cliff overlooking the path. Driven from the town and ruins, they have settled in the frame of a ruined building that sits a few hundreds yards back from the edge of the plateau.

VIMNEL (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 23, AC 15. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with 2 claws for 1d4 points of damage each and a bite for 1d4 points of damage. They are able to use weapons, but don't often do so. The vimnel is able to emit a howling of despair that and anyone who fails their wisdom save suffers a -4 from all dice rolls. For more see *Monsters & Treasure of Aihrde*.)

Treasure: Previous victims have left the vimnel 250gp in assorted coin, a necklace worth 75gp and an +1 sword (CK's choice).

PLATEAU

The plateau extends 10 miles to the north and south, covering the whole width of the valley. It is about 3 miles deep before it comes to another large cliff that rises above the plateau and officially marks the beginning of Cliff Post Road.

The lost city sits on the middle of the plateau, Thebig Road entering it from the east. It exits to the west and crosses the remaining two miles of the plateau entering a deep forest that grows at the edge of the cliff that leads to Cliff Face Fort and Cliff Post Road.

The plateau is relatively quiet, however, creatures come and go from the lost city quite frequently causing what mishaps they desire.

The forest on the western edge offers plenty of fire wood, shelter, fresh water and some small game to hunt such as rabbits and ground hogs.

CLIFF POST ROAD

Entering the valley from the west is much more difficult than the east. A road, more a track than anything else, was built connecting the lost city to the lands west of the mountains. The road is narrow, passing along the northern flank of a series of chasms and into the high mountain country. It follows a difficult path before it finds its way to the cliffs overlooking the plateau (see above). It could travel upon with some security, fairly fast and easily. This road is called the Cliff Post Road because it clung so tightly to the cliffs above.

The road is not cobbled and never was, being a simple path on worn stone. It runs for about 12 miles from the plateau to the edge of the mountains and the plains beyond.

It begins with a broad path that winds up a bolder strewn slope to a gap between two large, jagged east-west ridgelines. The path

then proceeds to snake east. It overlooks several interconnected gullies to the north of the path. These are 300-400 feet deep and marked by jagged cliffs and narrow ledges. On the southern edge, the mountains rise abruptly in a series of stark cliffs so that the traveler is forever blocked by tall cliffs on the one side and deep chasms on the other.

The road is only dangerous in bad weather. If a sudden storm should blow up, snow or rain, the road becomes slippery and floods easily, filling with the run off from above.

THE STORM

In the early afternoon of the second day, a storm builds up on the high slopes above the party. It offers to deluge the travelers in a mountain of rain. Any druid, ranger, or outdoorsman should be able to detect the danger of violent flash floods with any attempt at staying on the road for very long. Allow a wisdom check (CL 2). If successful, they determine they have a few hours to find a place to take refuge.

Any observation up reveals that the cliffs are slippery and dangerous and offer little purchase; A downward glance on the cliffs below the road, in the chasm, reveals a stone ledge that winds along the edge of the cliff. It begins about 20 feet below the road, but angles its way down the cliff until it is roughly 60 feet beneath the cliff and ends in a broad ledge.

The path is 2 feet across at its widest, 20 feet down at its closes to the road. It clearly was part of a path that snaked along the mountain for some distance but has long since fallen away.

The chasm tumbles down hundreds of feet into a narrow floor where a stream tumbles noisily, fed from above and flowing westward to leave the mountains by some other path. But the chasm does offer some clue as to its past. Here, an arched door seems built into the cliff face, a span of stone remains, bridging both sides of the chasm. Further down a long arc of stone, clearly built by the hands of some creatures juts out of the lower cliff face, hanging over the empty space below, seemingly as if it once bridged the chasm. Near at hand a ledge clings to the cliff clearly cut there long ago. It leads to a broad ledge with the signs of cobbles on it, and an opening in the chasm's wall, not far beneath you.

Any dwarf is allowed an attribute check (against his primary attribute), if successful they realize that the chasm was once a part of a large underground dwarven hold that has clearly fallen way and into ruin, slowly consumed by the mountains.

Climbing down the cliff face should be done with care as any mishap will likely lead to the character's death. A straight climb down requires a successful dexterity check (CL 3). The skilful use of ropes will remove any need to make an attribute check. Rangers and rogues can climb the surface.

The path leads to Darin's Tomb, an old dwarven burial site that has been unearthed over the years by the wind and rain.

4 DARIN'S TOMB

This area once served as a series of catacombs for dwarves of renown. Their bodies were laid to rest in various crypts accessed through paths and bridges that led from above, below and across the crevice. It was once, of course, all enclosed.

Darin was one such dwarf. His people are well known in the realm of Norgorad Kam that lies to the south, and his tale is as well. As a young beardless he set out from the Brass Halls seeking a life of adventure. The years saw him on many paths, pitted against many foes and plundering holds and dungeons of the ancients. His wealth and prestige grew, and many a dwarf sang his praises over camp fire and bar stools.

His fate was sealed however when he was caught unawares in a mountain to the north by a host of frost giants. They battled for several days, over many miles, and the giants hounded him and his comrades. Many fell, including many giants, until at last Darin turned on them and held them at bay so that his people could escape. His body was pulled from the wreckage some weeks later and brought back to the catacombs where he was laid to rest. He has lain there ever since. When the hall overlooking the catacombs collapsed it tore down much of the structure, pitching it all into the canyon below. A narrow path to his crypt remained and the entrance was torn wide.

Room 1 Landing

The entrance is little more than an arched doorway that has largely collapsed. The arc is intact, made of simple buttressed stone. The ceiling just beyond and for roughly 10 feet into the hall has collapsed, leaving heaps of rubble everywhere.

Entering is not an easy task. There is, however, a small opening in the rocks, about 3 x 2 feet that can be navigated or the characters can remove the rubble from the way.

If they remove any stone, there is a small chance that more will come crashing in. It will take about an hour to clear the walk way. There is a chance of a cave in. A cave in happens on an unsuccessful dexterity check (CL 0, if there is a dwarf, mountaineer or anyone experienced with dungeons, rocks or similar terrain, they gain a +5 to their check). If a cave in happens everyone working on the rock heap suffers 1d4 points of damage. Work can continue with no chance of a second cave in.

If they do not clear the way, it takes 3 rounds for any one character to wiggle through the rocks.

Beyond is a large, open hall that leads to a set of double doors at its end. There are two alcoves about 40 feet down the hall.

Room 2 Basins

These rooms each contain a basin built to hold water; a statue overlooks each of the basins. The basins were used as donatives for any visiting the crypt. Coins were set in the water in a show of respect to the fallen. Each alcove has lost its purpose and suffered through the ages.

Alcove A: The statue here is of a tall female dwarf, Darin's mother. Written at the base of the statue are the words "Frost Giants Wealth." This is the password to enter Room 4.

Here the basin remains full of water, but the water is enchanted and is actually a water foul, called and undine in the old language. Though the original water long dried up, this creature has crept into the basin, found the coin at its bottom and settled into the pool, making it his own.

WATER FOUL, UNDINE (*This neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 3, AC 14, HP 21. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a slam for 1d6 points of damage. It is able to hide in the water, gaining a +4 to its surprise rolls. It can change shape at will. It has improved grab, forcing anyone struck to make a successful strength save or be consumed by the water foul. Anyone so grabbed can be pulled into the water and drowned, requiring a successful strength save to break free. They can animate water within 10 feet, tripping anyone near. The victim gets a dexterity save.*)

Within the basin, beneath the water is 125gp worth of coin.

Alcove B: The statue here is of a tall male dwarf, Darin's father. Written at the base of the statue are the words "Frost Giants Doom." This is the password to enter Room 5.

The basin here is cracked and broken and the water long drained.

There is nothing of value in the room.

Room 3 Tomb of Darin

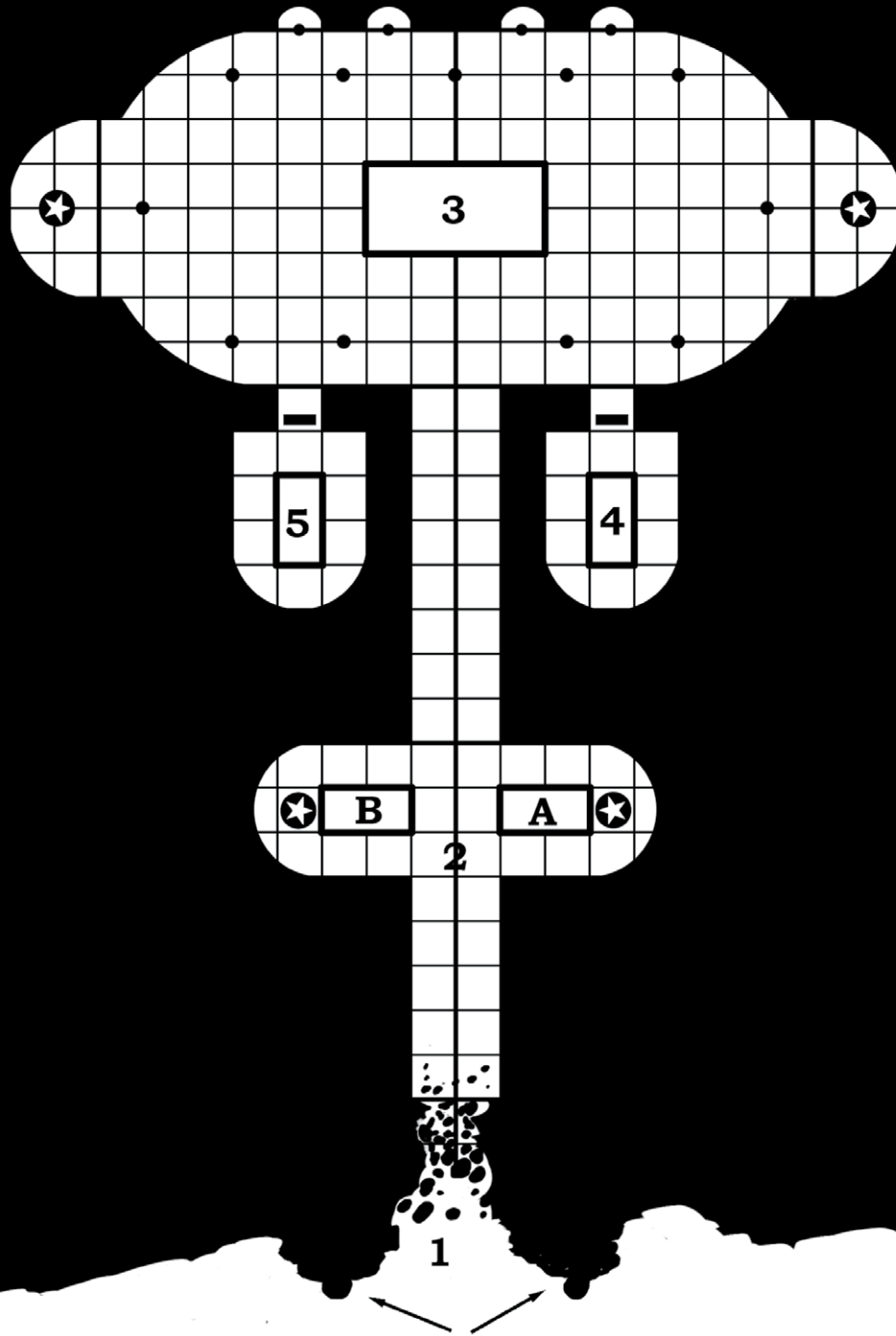
This large, open chamber is clearly the final resting place of Darin. His tomb dominates the center of the room and is surrounded by a high roof and many columns. Two large alcoves contain statues of the dwarf lord himself, as he was in the days of his glory.

You enter a massive, vaulted chamber. A smooth stone floor is dominated by massive columns. Walls of carefully laid bricking rise to a ceiling where a dozen or more long chains hold braziers. To the left and right, on the fall walls, stand two statues, one of a dwarf fighting two giants, the other of dwarf standing over the prostrate forms of the giants. The room, itself, is dominated by the giant tomb that sits in the middle. A dozen feet long and 7 wide, its carefully carved lid holds the effigy of a dwarven warrior. Carved into the tomb, facing the door, and clear for all to see are the words "Darin Forkbeard".

Tomb: The tomb is magically guarded. There are four handles, one on either end and one each on the sides. The handles are as wide and long as the tomb itself. Each of these handles is wrapped in what appears to be corded rope. The rope is of course stone carved to look like rope. The tomb does not radiate magic, but the handles do.

Grabbing the handles without speaking a spell to the All Father triggers their latent magic. Each of the ropes is transformed into

TOMB OF THE FORGOTTEN KING



WEATHERED STATUES

ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET

a snake and immediately attacks whoever is in the room. The longer, side ropes, transform into large constrictor snakes, and the smaller ropes transform into poisonous adders.

Detecting the magical trap is possible on a successful dexterity check (CL 4). The trap can be dispelled with a successful check (CL 5).

Note: If the handles are not touched, the snakes do not activate.

SNAKE, CONSTRICTOR, 2 (*These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 13, AC 15. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with 1 bite for 2d4 points of damage. Their special abilities are constricting. The victim must make a strength save or the opponent receives 1d2 points of damage a round and can not act.*)

SNAKE VIPERS, 2 (*These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 1 each, AC 1. Their prime attributes are physical. They attack with a bite that does 1 HP of damage and requires a constitution saving throw or take and additional 1d4 damage.*)

The handles of the tomb remain, whether the snakes are victorious or defeated. The rope/snakes reappear after 24 hours.

Within the tomb are the remains of Darin. He lies in the shallow sarcophagus decked out in his chain hauberk. There is little left of the body but a dried up husk, barely holding the mail on the body. There is a chain around his neck with two keys on it; these are keys to Rooms 4 and 5.

Treasure: Darin wears +2 chain mail, a ring set with an emerald worth 200gp and a golden arm band worth 150gp. There is a drinking cup set at his feet. It is bronze and slightly dented. If held in the hand for 1 round it fills with beer.

Alcove A: A large statue of Darin fighting three frost giants.

Alcove B: A large statue of Darin standing over the prostrate forms of three frost giants.

Room 4 Treasure Room

The door to this room is locked and trapped. Anyone attempting to open the door without the use of the key or the password triggers the lock. The password is "Frost Giants Wealth" spoken in in the dwarven tongue. To pick the lock requires a successful dexterity check (CL 6). To discover the trap requires a successful dexterity check (CL 4). To disarm the trap requires a successful dexterity check (CL 4).

The key is around Darin's neck in the tomb in Room 3.

Trap: If the trap is triggered a 10 x 10 foot section of the floor gives way before the door. Anyone on it must make a successful dexterity check or fall into a 10 foot pit with spikes. Along with possible fall damage (1d6) the victims may land on 1 or 2 spikes. For each spike they strike (roll d2), allow the victim a dexterity save (CL 3). If they fail their save, they suffer 1d6 points of damage.

Within, the small room is decorated with many friezes depicting Darin's exploits. The floor is dominated by a large stone sarcophagus. The lid is heavy, requiring a combined strength of 40 to lift it. Once lifted, within lies Darin's most prized possessions.

Treasure: There is 1000 gold pieces in the tomb. These coins are all large, about 1 inch wide and a quarter inch thick. They are heavy, being fashioned long ago for the dwarves of Darin's age.

Room 5 Armory

The door to this room is locked and trapped. Anyone attempting to open the door without the use of the key or the password triggers the lock. The password is "Frost Giants Doom" spoken in the dwarven tongue. To pick the lock requires a successful dexterity check (CL 6). To discover the trap requires a successful dexterity check (CL 4). To disarm the trap requires a successful dexterity check (CL 4).

The key is around Darin's neck in the tomb in Room 3.

Trap: If the trap is triggered a 10 x 10 foot section of the ceiling slams down. Anyone beneath must make a successful dexterity (CL 4) check or be crushed for 2d8 points of damage. The stone rises after 5 rounds.

This room also has many friezes of the dwarf's exploits. There is a large tomb like box in the middle of the room. It contains Darin's most prized armaments.

Treasure: Lying in the bed of gold is a double headed hammer. It is blunted and dented and shows signs of long use. It is a +3 dwarven warhammer. A small iron shield lies there as well, along with a small helm and dagger. Each of these items is +1.

THE LOST VALLEY

A day's journey beyond Darin's tomb (depending on how fast the characters travel) lies the Lost Valley. This region is just before the Valley of Ix the cuts through the mountain range.

The Lost Valley is a narrow valley, several thousand feet wide at the top, but only 50 or so feet wide at the bottom. A creek marks the valley's beginning in the west, bubbling up from the ground and wandering its slow way down the valley floor until it comes to a small copse of trees. From there, it tumbles down a mountain cliff and into the Valley of Ix. It is upon that cliff that the Cliff Face Fort is built.

Travel in the valley is not easy. As noted, the road is non-existent and moving along the valley rim leads one on a treacherous narrow path. Following the valley floor, with the creek is easier, but it is relatively rocky and going is slow. From the beginning of the valley to the end is roughly 12 miles and generally takes about 2-3 days to cross from one end to the next.

Roll random encounters as noted above.

The Guardian: Before Gaxmoor was returned to Aihrde, the god Narrheit found a boy hunting in the valley, he learned of the

city's whereabouts from the boy. The boy treated him guardedly, but shared food and clean water with him. For whatever reason this pleased the god of chaos an evil and he took a liking to the boy. He knew that he was about to unleash Gaxmoor from its tether and set his minions upon it. He knew too that they would bring chaos to all who dwelt in the region; so to repay the boy's kindness he set a guardian upon the Lost Valley. He slew the boy and set his ghost in the valley, tasking it with driving out all evil from the region. In this way, the boy's people were protected from the horrors and wicked evil done to Narrheit's own minions.

The ghost of the boy lingers now as spirit, haunting the valley's length from one end to the other. It only attacks lawful evil, chaotic evil and neutral evil creatures. It ranges from the west wall (see below) to the valley's edge.

If good creatures pass through the valley the boy is inclined to follow them. Incorporeal for the most part, the ghost is invisible, but those with sharp eyes may see it (CL 6) or others may catch a glimpse out of the corner of their eye (CL 9). If they CK wishes the party to encounter the ghost, no check is required. The ghost will, at times, sit at the fire, living its last day of life over again, talking and eating. It will converse with good characters if it is seen either at the fire or following. It does not have any idea of what is going on, it believes its living in its last moment. It will relate the tale of the Haunted Valley as noted above.

GHOST (*This lawful good creature's vital stats are HD 10d8, AC 20, HP 80. His primary attributes are mental. He attacks with a slam for 1d10 points of damage. Any successful hit ages the victim: humans and half orcs 1d4 decades, Halfling 1d6 decades, and dwarves and gnomes 3d6 decades. Elves are immune. It is also able to utter a frightful moan, and unless a wisdom save is made, anyone who hears it is subject to a fear spell. He is incorporeal and can use telekinesis. The ghost cannot be turned by any cleric.*)

5 Cliff Face Fort

To the west, the Cliff Face Fort faces the wooded end of the Lost Valley. When it was originally built the fort looked to the east over the cliff, to the city of Gaxmoor and the Valley of Ix, and to the west it looked up the long Lost Valley and the mountains beyond. In those days there was no forest in the Lost Valley--only the creek, the fort and the cliff it sat upon marking the end of one valley and the beginning of the other. The creek passed through the fort wall and tumbled down into the Valley of Ix.

Now, a forest has grown up on the eastern end of the valley, up to the very walls of the fort. It blocks anyone's view from the fort or anyone's view of the fort from the west. Those who occupy it haven't the imagination or desire to clear the forest back away from the wall in order to make the whole fort more defensible. The forest itself is roughly a mile thick.

The fort itself consists of a two sets of walls. Facing the Lost Valley and the woods is the West Wall. Overlooking the cliff is the East Wall. Within the fort are the ruins of four stone buildings.

Viewing the Fort: It should be noted that the fort really only consists of two walls, each running north south. The east wall is built upon the cliff edge and, the west wall, is built about 100 feet in from the cliff. It was never built as a major fortification, but more as a waypoint in getting up the cliff from the Valley of Ix and Gaxmoor.

One can view the entire fort if they climb up the valley wall on either the north or south ends. Standing several hundred feet up near the valley end allows one to look down at the valley floor, the small wood, and the walls and inside them.

Read or paraphrase the following description if the characters look at the fort from any vantage.

The valley comes to an end at the top of a large cliff, but the view is obscured by the ruins of what was once some type of fortification. Walls built across the valley, one on the cliff edge, the other further in, wall in a compound several hundred feet wide and long. Between the walls are several buildings long since fallen to ruin, the opulence of their long lost wealth captured in the scattered statuary that lies in the wreckage. Beyond this there is little of interest in the compound, and less life, only the stream that runs the whole length of the valley beyond, passes under the western most wall, through the compound and out again to tumble over the cliff.

In the ruins of the buildings are a number of statuary. Some of it is natural statues set here long ago, but others are gargoyles.

Note: The gargoyles do not perch upon the edge of any wall or cliff, but lie in the rubble of the ruined buildings as if they were part of it. They do not move, nor show any signs of moving until the characters have settled in. Even then, they move with great care, using stealth and their ability to be still to snatch the unwary.

West Wall: The west wall faces the Lost Valley. It is 12 feet high, and 4 wide. It runs from the valley floor up both sides of the valley wall. The floor wall is roughly 50 feet long, once it leaves the floor it begins a steep climb up both the north and south walls. It tapers off on either end about 100 feet above the floor of the valley. There, if one is skilled enough to climb the valley wall, they go around the wall itself. The wall is in deplorable shape and climbing it is relatively easy.

There is a gate built into the wall on the south side of the valley floor. It is small, only 4 feet wide and 8 tall. The original door is long gone, however, rocks have been heaped up in the doorway, blocking of any easy entrance or exit. The rocks are in a jumbled pile and removing them will take four able bodied people 4 hours.

There is a small culvert built into the center of the wall where the creek passes through. It was barred once, but they are long gone. Some debris lies around the culvert, evidence of past floods. The water runs through it easily, and the whole thing allows passage of small individuals, halflings and the like.

16 CASTLES & CRUSADES

East Wall: The east wall covers only the cliff of the valley floor. It is 4 feet high and only a few feet wide. It was clearly built to keep people and goods from fall down the cliff as much as keeping people from climbing up. The stream passes through a second culvert and tumbles in a waterfall to a pool below where it picks up and meanders on east toward the town of Gaxmoor.

Stairs: On the north side of the wall, there is a gap in the wall that leads to a set of stairs, carved into the cliff, that lead down the 200 foot cliff to the Valley of Ix below. Travel on the stairs is relatively easy.

Lift: There is another gap a dozen or so feet in from the stairs where a lift once stood. It is long gone and whatever mechanism allowed goods and livestock to be lifted up and lowered is long gone. A successful intelligence check (CL 5) reveals the nature of what once stood here.

Compound: There is little of value within the compound. Two houses have long since fallen to ruin, and only a few walls remain here and there. Occupying them gives one protection from the wind that funnels down the Lost Valley, but little against rain or snow. There is no furniture in the houses or ought else of interest; there are only the ruins of old statues laying about the compound.

The third house is largely intact, with all four walls, though no roof to speak. It has a chimney as well, still in serviceable condition. Not long ago this house was hallowed in the name of Tefnut and Let, and it acts in all respects as hallowed ground as the spell of the same name. The gargoyles that occupy the fort do not enter the house.

Gargoyles: As noted there are several gargoyles hidden the rubble. They do not immediately attack unless they are discovered, rather lying in the rubble as any of the other statues. The CK should determine how many gargoyles there are by the size and composition of the party.

They do not generally attempt a direct attack, but prefer to wait until their prey are bedded down or on watch in the late hours of the night.

GARGOYLE (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, AC 16, HP variable. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with 2 claw for 1d3, a bite for 1d6, or a gore for 1d4 points of damage. They fly at a speed of 75 feet per round. They have darkvision 60 feet and are able to appear as stone statues by freezing themselves in place.)

Their treasure lies in a cavity underneath the rubble (easy to find if the area is searched, wisdom check CL 3). Within are 4 gems worth 75gp, 2 potions of cure serious wounds, a wand of levitation with 12 charges and a candle of invocation.

A Refuge

Once the gargoyles are overcome, the fort can serve as a refuge for the party. Little molests them there as evil cannot enter the valley from the west and the cliff is easy enough to guard from the east. Repairing the walls is easily done, and there is fresh

water. It offers the perfect vantage to see the Valley of Ix and the city of Gaxmoor itself.

MONSTERS

BAG O' BONES

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 19

MOVE: 30 feet

HIT DICE: 5d8+5

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1-6

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4+1 per claw or by weapon

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Turns as 8 HD monster, edged & piercing weapons only do ½ damage

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: 4/See below

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

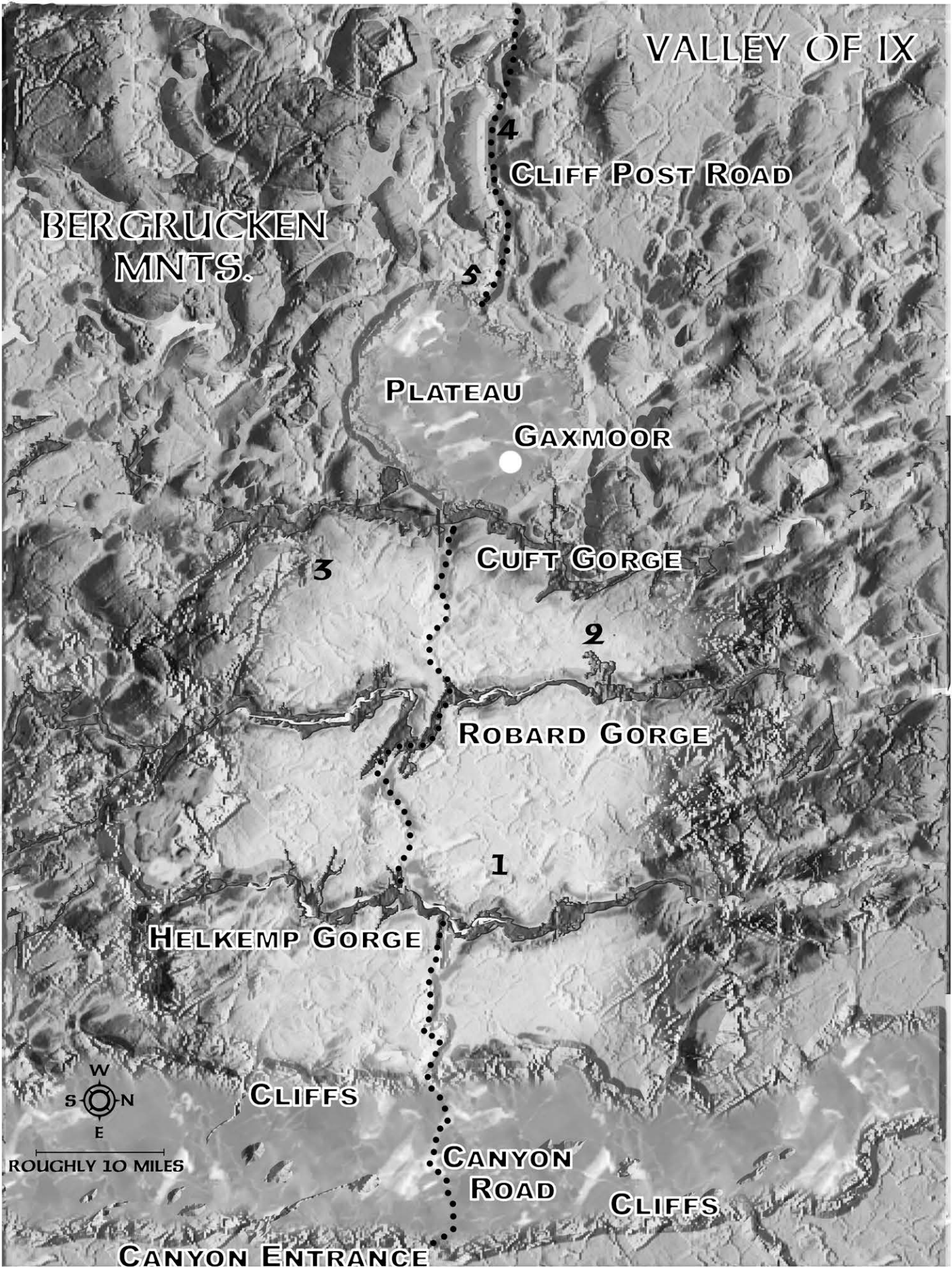
SIZE: L (7-10 feet)

The bag o' bones appears as a skeletal colossus of various human and animal bones grafted together in odd patterns to create a yellowed bone figure of grotesque proportions and terrible aspect. Its eye sockets glow with amber light whenever it is being controlled by its master and it will move to fulfill its orders with deadly precision.

The bag o' bones is a result of the blending of the necromantic arts of the undead with the alchemical lore of golem creation. It is used predominantly by necromancers as a guardian due to its resistance to turning and its ease of control. This allows the necromancer to telepathically communicate with it and, if necessary, guide its actions. The bag o' bones has little intelligence on its own, usually only able to follow simple commands similar to those given to skeletons or zombies. When under the control of the necromancer who created it, the construct has the intelligence score of the necromancer and makes all INT, WIS and CHA saves as said necromancer. This is also a liability, as any spells that affect such statistics will affect the necromancer instead of the bag o' bones.

Bag o' bones only take ½ damage from edged weapons (such as swords) and piercing weapons (such as arrows), but blunt mass weapons do full damage.

The creation of such a monster requires expensive ingredients (at least 10,000 gp), months of preparation equal to a stone golem, and requires the assistance of both a high level cleric and a master wizard coordinating their powers. As a bag o' bones is an assembly of several skeletons, it can have 1-6 different attacks depending on the number of arms grafted onto the form, though if there are more than 4 the bag o' bones suffers a -1 penalty to all attacks if in combat while being controlled by its creator (due to the awkwardness of coordinating such limbs).



VALLEY OF IX

CLIFF POST ROAD

BERGRUCKEN
MNTS.

PLATEAU

GAXMOOR

CUFT GORGE

ROBARD GORGE

HELKEMP GORGE

CLIFFS

CANYON
ROAD

CLIFFS

CANYON ENTRANCE



ROUGHLY 10 MILES

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CASTLES & CRUSADES

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