

DRAGON WARRIORS

IN FROM THE COLD



Ancient lore and rediscovered adventures
By Dave Morris

DRAGON WARRIORS

IN FROM THE COLD

Those who forget the past are doomed

IN FROM THE COLD is a collection of classic articles from the golden age of RPGs, when Dragon Warriors creator Dave Morris was the foremost writer for *White Dwarf* magazine—so prolific that he used pseudonyms to disguise the sheer volume of his output. This book collects the very best of his articles and adventures from the 1980s, fully revised and expanded to fit the rules and world of Dragon Warriors.

IN FROM THE COLD features two major articles and six complete adventures for Dragon Warriors player-characters of all levels, including:

♣ *Dealing with Demons*: Demonologists as a playable profession, with complete rules for summoning and binding the inhabitants of the abyss, new spells and rituals, a chapter of new minor demons and rules on using the game's existing demon races, plus full descriptions of the powerful and terrifying Demon Princes.

♣ *The Unquiet Grave*: rules and instructions for giving undead and ghosts the properly chilling effects on PCs that they deserve.

♣ *A Box of Old Bones*, a fan-favourite scenario, set in Osterlin Abbey where the bones of Saint Giles are attracting unwelcome attention;

♣ *The Lone and Level Sands*, wherein an ancient tomb long buried in the desert proves to have some unexpected contents;

♣ *The Serpent's Venom*, in which a chance remark gives the party an opportunity to beat a band of rivals to a treasure, if they move fast;

♣ *A Ballad of Times Past*, an adventure from the history of the Lands of Legend, when magic worked strangely and required powerful patrons;

♣ *Temple of the Lost God*, an excursion deep into the Mungodan jungle to search a cursed ancient temple for a frankly bizarre prize;

♣ and the classic *Key of Tirandor*, an epic quest for a forgotten city, a world of dreams and the ultimate power within.

An essential collection, *IN FROM THE COLD* has something to offer every Dragon Warriors player and GM. The book also features great new art from Jon Hodgson, Steve Dismukes, Gordon Napier and Scott Neil.

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DRAGON WARRIORS

In From The Cold

Contained in this grimoire of ancient knowledge are quests that will lead those who dare to crumbling temples, labyrinthine tombs, sand-swept pyramids and vast mountain halls. Here are demons and gremlins, ghosts and traitors, the ways and means to reach fabled cities and mayhap escape with your life. Also etched within are words of warning and counsel for those who would follow the demonic arts; tales of how to summon and banish infernals and setting a good price for one's soul in a bargain with a lord of the Abyss.

By Dave Morris
with Oliver Johnson and Mike Polling

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DRAGON WARRIORS

In From The Cold

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INTRODUCTION

IN FROM THE COLD is a collection of articles and adventures that originally appeared in the pages of *White Dwarf* magazine, most of them over the course of a single year: from August 1983 to August 1984. This was in the heyday of *White Dwarf*, the period often referred to as its golden years. Although these articles appeared under a variety of authors' names including Phil Holmes and Liz Fletcher and were written for RPG systems including *AD&D*, *Runequest* and *Empire of the Petal Throne*, they were all, bar one, the work of Dave Morris, and all display the fantasy sensibility which a year later would reappear in the first books of the *Dragon Warriors* series, at the heart of the Lands of Legend.

We've converted them from the systems they were originally written for, re-siting them within Legend, and adding new text when the original seemed to have been constrained by the tight word-limits of *White Dwarf*.

The Articles

Dealing With Demons (*White Dwarf* 44, 45 & 46) is rightly regarded as a true classic, one of the definitive interpretations of demons and how to deal with them in fantasy RPGs. It is an almost perfect fit with *Dragon Warriors*, slotting alongside the game's existing hierarchy of infernal creatures. While not ideally suited to being player characters, demonologists may become powerful allies, occasional collaborators, or arch-villains of devastating impact. Of course, being able to summon and bind the beings of the abyss potentially gives a character enormous power, and some people have asked what PCs can

do to counter that directly. We look forward to answering that question in the near future.

The Lone and Level Sands (*White Dwarf* 48) was written as a follow-up to 'Dealing with Demons', and features several of the themes and demons from it. It was written by Dave Morris and Oliver Johnson together, and was originally dual-statted for *AD&D* and *Runequest/Questworld*, although its *Dragon Warriors*-ish sensibilities should be obvious from the outset.

The Key of Tirandor (*White Dwarf* 49 & 50) is the only piece in this book not written by Dave Morris. Instead it was created by Mike Polling, a friend of Dave's and a regular in his game-group at the time. The adventure was printed with *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* stats but had originally been played using a prototype version of the *Dragon Warriors* rules as far back as 1981. Dave describes it as "a seminal influence on *Dragon Warriors*", and Mike has agreed to let us include it in this anthology.

A Ballad of Times Past (*White Dwarf* 51) was written by Dave Morris under his own name, originally for *AD&D*. While its flavour is unmistakably *Dragon Warriors*-esque, it needs to redefine some of the rules of magic in order to work as a story—see the Special Notes section below.

The Serpent's Venom (*White Dwarf* 52) was written by Dave under the pseudonym 'Liz Fletcher', an irregular alter-ego whose *White Dwarf* career up to that point had mostly involved doing *AD&D* conversions of the monsters from 'Dealing with Demons'.

Temple of the Lost God (*White Dwarf* 54) originally appeared as ‘Temple of the Doomed Prince’, an adventure for the *Empire of the Petal Throne* RPG by ‘Phil Holmes’, another one of Dave’s pseudonyms. The Doomed Prince is a specific deity within the world of Tekumel so we thought it best to change the name and resite the adventure to Mungoda, where it fits extremely well.

The Unquiet Grave (*White Dwarf* 55) was Phil Holmes’s second and last contribution to *White Dwarf*. Originally written for *Runequest*, it works as a way to make sure that undead retain their supernatural chill in your games. As such it’s an excellent fit for *Dragon Warriors*.

A Box of Old Bones (*White Dwarf* 71) is the exception to the introduction above. It originally appeared in November 1985, and was the only *Dragon Warriors* adventure that the magazine ever published. It’s been out of print ever since, though clandestine copies have been circulating among the game’s fans. Not only is its action set in the middle of Baron Aldred’s fief, at the heart of many campaigns—Osterlin Abbey is marked on the map on page 219 of the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook—but it also gives important insights into the organisation and workings of the True Faith, particularly its institutions such as abbeys and monasteries. We’re glad to see it properly back in print at last.

It must be said that these were not all the articles that Dave Morris wrote for *White Dwarf* in this time, they are just the ones that have the biggest crossover with *Dragon Warriors*. In fact the main reason for the existence of Liz Fletcher and Phil Holmes was to disguise quite how much of the magazine’s content he was responsible for each issue—and that despite being a freelancer, not a member of staff. Now at last these pieces have been brought together, carefully re-engineered to fit with Dave and Oliver’s own RPG rules and game-world, and we hope you enjoy the result.

Special Notes

Two of the adventures in *In from The Cold* are set in places that are not established parts of the Lands of Legend. This is intentional.

The two adventures in question are ‘A Ballad of Times Past’ and ‘The Key of Tirandor’. The first is set in Beorsca, a country that is superficially much like the Lands of Legend, particularly the kingdoms of Ellesland, but differs from them in one important aspect relating to magic and spellcasting. ‘The Key of Tirandor’ takes place in a slightly different but equally magic-light land, and is supplied with pre-generated characters if you don’t want to bring your regular *Dragon Warriors* PCs to this place.

There are various ways that you can integrate these strange new lands into your existing version of the Lands of Legend. They could simply be *terrae incognitae*, unknown lands—think how little of our world was known to the people of the middle ages. There are any number of ways to get a group of PCs to these new locations, from a demon’s curse or a horribly mis-cast *Astral Gate* spell to having the characters set out on an epic journey, quest or pilgrimage of thousands of miles across the world, encountering these places along the way (or, in the case of Tirandor, at the end of their quest.)

‘A Ballad of Times Past’ could easily take place in the history of Legend. Perhaps the PCs have activated an ancient and arcane trap that throws them back through time to the moment the trap itself was set, and only a boon from Talionis will restore them to their proper era. Alternatively you could run it as a one-off, with ancestors of your group’s usual PCs as the adventuring party. An inventive GM could use that to set up all kinds of interesting story-threads for characters in the present day... and of course Talionis and Protervus may still be alive.

The solution I personally prefer is for the player-characters to be on a sea-voyage and caught in a strange storm that blows them weeks off course, finally stranding them on the distant shores of an unknown country. (Perhaps they previously offended a local weather-spirit, or demon, or fairy lord, or went against a local superstition, or were cursed, or are unlucky.) This could be either Beorsca or Brontir—the two countries could be adjacent, or you could roll them into one—and ‘Key of Tirandor’ could provide the route home; or alternatively the PCs might then have to make their own way home, Odyssey-like, in an epic journey filled with strange encounters and unknown perils.

Ultimately, so long as you’re having fun then however you play *Dragon Warriors* is the right way.

—James Wallis

CHAPTER I

DEALING WITH DEMONS

Demon Magic

TO THE SUPERSTITIOUS, a demon is any obviously powerful supernatural being. In the precise sense, however, a demon is a being which usually abides in Hell, but which is capable of acquiring a physical presence in the lands of Legend.

It is fairly well known among those with more than a passing understanding of the subject that the demonic hierarchy consists of sundry demon races ruled by ascending ranks of nobility up to the demon princes, each of whom may reign over several different planes of existence.

The categorization, study, and control of the many demonic types is the area of expertise of the demonologist, a sorcerer who specialises in summoning, binding, and bargaining with demons.

Becoming a Demonologist

You cannot just walk into a college and enrol in demon magic classes, obviously. Demonologists tend to be scarce and reclusive for several very good reasons. One is the fact that they occasionally indulge in human sacrifice and other odious practices. Another is the very high risk taken by the habitual summoner. Most telling of all, the clergy consider demonology synonymous with demon worship, a threat to their own authority, and so the

practice is universally frowned upon if not actually outlawed.

How then is a character to learn the demonic arts? There are two ways: either collect the rare books and study them; or else seek out one of the few reclusive Masters of this dark art and convince him that he needs an apprentice.

Any sorcerer of up to 4th rank may switch professions and become a demonologist, as long as has access to such a book or Master (and either should be extremely difficult to get access to in-game). In most regions where the True Faith holds sway, even sorcerers and elementalists are viewed with suspicion verging on outright hostility. A demonologist will be the target of every right-thinking person. Potential teachers of the art will be highly reluctant to reveal their profession to anyone, let alone to take on apprentices. Books on demonology are scarce in the extreme, and very much in demand, more by those who want to see them destroyed than those who want to study them.

The GM should carefully consider whether to allow player-character demonologists at all. If they're to be permitted, it makes sense to give sorcerers who are interested in learning demonology a chance to find a teacher or book, somewhere around 3rd or 4th Rank, though such a chance will involve an epic adventure in its own right. The sorcerer may need to steal a tome from the well-guarded library of a more powerful mage or a branch of the True Faith that specialises in combating the occult. Any prospective teacher will first need to be found, then

persuaded that the sorcerer is a genuine seeker after dark wisdom, rather than a spy for a hostile Church, and finally convinced that it is in her best interests to take on a new apprentice.

Once the would-be demonologist has found a book or willing teacher, it will take two months of game-time for him to switch professions from sorcerer to demonologist. During this time, he retains his existing sorcerous powers, but does not yet have access to demonologist powers.

The Demonologist Profession

A demonologist has access to first-level, second-level, third-level and fourth-level sorcerer spells exactly as does a sorcerer of the same rank. However, after 4th rank, the demonologist gains no new sorcerer spells, and fewer new magic points, as follows:

DEMONOLOGIST MAGIC POINTS

<i>Demonologist's rank</i>	<i>Magic Points usable per day</i>
1st	4
2nd	8
3rd	12
4th	15
5th	18
6th	21
7th	24
8th	27
9th	30
10th	33

(and + 3 MPs per rank thereafter)

DEMONOLOGIST CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

- +1 to both **ATTACK** and **DEFENCE** when the character reaches 4th rank, then +1 at 7th rank, +1 at 10th rank.
- +1 to the character's **Health Points** score when he reaches 2nd rank, 4th rank, 6th rank, etc.
- +1 to both **MAGICAL ATTACK** and **MAGICAL DEFENCE** each time the character increases in rank.
- +1 to **EVASION** on reaching 5th rank, then another +1 on reaching 9th rank.
- +1 to the character's **STEALTH** and **PERCEPTION** on reaching 4th rank, then another +1 on reaching 7th rank, and a further +1 on reaching 10th rank.

Demonic Specialism

A demonologist is particularly effective at magically attacking and defending against demons. He gets a +1 bonus to **MAGICAL DEFENCE** and **MAGI-**

CAL ATTACK against all Infernal Creatures from the *Dragon Warriors Bestiary* (pp 67–73), all the demons in this book, and any other creatures that the GM logically decides are demonic in nature (that is, summoned from Hell). This bonus increases to +3 at 7th level, and to +5 at 12th level.

Demonology

A demonologist is an expert in demonic lore. Demonology is a chancy, inexact science, full of rumour and myth, and so the demonologist can never be entirely sure his information is accurate. A demonologist has a Demonology Skill equal to his Rank, with bonuses or penalties dependent on his Intelligence, as follows:

<i>Intelligence</i>	<i>Demonology Skill</i>
3-5	-2
6-8	-1
9-12	No effect
13-15	+1
16-18	+2

To the demonologist, knowledge is most definitely power. Any novice demonologist will know the names and general skills of common demons such as those listed here, but their exact strengths and vulnerabilities can only be found out through exhaustive study and calculation. For example, a 4th-level demonologist would know that B'krath are stealthful killers who operate to best effect in shadow—but it is hardly common knowledge that these demons do not barter, and will only serve in exchange for a precise quantity of gold.

Demonology rolls are usually made by the GM on the character's behalf, so that the character can never be entirely sure that his information about a demon is correct until he has actually tested it out. Information is broken down for convenience into five categories:

1. The demon's full game statistics. A successful Demonology roll means that each ability is known to within $\pm 25\%$ (randomly determined by the GM).
2. Special wards against the demon, if any.
3. The demon's probable requirements in bargaining.
4. The demon's bonus to **MAGICAL DEFENCE** against Summoning. A successful Demonology roll lets the character know this to within ± 2 .
5. The demon's bonus to **MAGICAL DEFENCE** against Binding. A successful Demonology roll lets the character know this to within ± 2 .

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Characters trying to discover these facts for a particular type of demon check for them after every 2–20 days (roll 2 d10). This represents the time taken in research and meditation. The check is made for each of the five information categories separately. In each case, if the GM makes the character's demonology roll, then he gives the character the correct information—within the limits given above. On a roll of 20, the GM gives the character completely erroneous information. Any other result on the Demonology roll simply means that the character has turned up nothing useful and will need to spend another 2–20 days in study.

A character might want to double-check his results: he can go on devoting study time to a demon as long as he wants.

Example

Hajpool the Wary is a student with a Demonology skill of 6, trying to find out about Storm Demons. Hajpool's master has told him most of what he wants to know, but insists that as an exercise he determines for himself any wards that can be used. After his first study period,

Hajpool is informed by the GM (correctly, because a 5 was rolled) that the appropriate ward is a fence of sharp copper rods around the perimeter of the pentacle. Wanting to make sure, Hajpool spends another 2–20 days in his master's library. This time he turns up no further information. After six more study periods Hajpool has twice been told that copper rods are the proper warding, four times drawn a blank, once been told to use garlic and once that the proper ward is a gold Life Rune. He realises that the last two must be incorrect results from rolls of 20, and that the two answers which agree are almost certainly the right answer.

Note that Demonology requires an extensive library of books on demonology to be fully effective. The demonologist should be constantly seeking out new and rare works on the subject; if he does not, the GM should consider not increasing his Demonology skill when he goes up a rank. Likewise, a demonologist without his full library (for example, out on an adventure, with only a couple of his most valued books in a backpack) has a temporary –2 penalty to his Demonology skill.



The Pentacle of Protection

In case a demon turns out to be hostile, the Pentacle of Protection is a useful defence for the demonologist. The Pentacle must be drawn out with various substances on some hard surface around the demonologist. This takes several minutes and so must be prepared before the Ritual of Summoning is begun. When the Pentacle is complete, the demonologist expends one Magic Point, thus activating it for the next hour. So long as another MP is cast into the design before the hour has passed it will remain active. Once the Pentacle's power is allowed to lapse, the design smoulders away into fine ash.

A hostile demon cannot cast spells into nor enter an active Pentacle. Neither can it use summoned minions of its own to attack the summoner. There are minor design differences between Pentacles according to the type of demon the Pentacle is intended to ward against. If the wrong demon materializes, the Pentacle is useless.

Any demonologist of 4th Rank or higher may draw a Pentacle.

Once drawn, a Pentacle has a MAGICAL DEFENCE score of its own, equal to that of the demonologist, against the demon type chosen. A demon may attempt to cross it. If the demon overcomes the Pentacle's MAGICAL DEFENCE, there must have been some minor error in the design, and the Pentacle is useless. If the demon fails to overcome the Pentacle's MAGICAL DEFENCE, that particular Pentacle will always repel that demon type, so long as the caster continues to expend a MP each hour.

Remember that the demonologist won't know whether he has drawn out the Pentacle correctly until a hostile demon tries to violate it. Also, one Pentacle cannot be drawn inside another, so characters cannot 'double their insurance' that way. Pentacles are not the demonologist's last line of defence, by any means. Common sense and experience can provide a beleaguered demonologist with further wards (special herbs, words and spells that the demon will retreat from, etc.) to slow an enemy demon's attack until it can be dispelled.

The Ritual of Summoning

Obviously, summoning is the form of magic most people would think of in connection with demonology. The Ritual of Summoning is known to any demonologist of 4th rank or higher.

Hajpool the Wary finished laying out his third row of copper rods. 'No Storm Demon's going to heatschock me!' he exclaimed. His master paused in mid-ritual, and turned incredulously to his apprentice. 'But we're summoning a B'krath, you idiot!', he screamed.

The Ritual of Summoning takes fifteen minutes to perform and requires several rare components such as incense, chalks, paints and certain powders and distillations. These components are used up in the Ritual and must be prepared for each summoning, at a cost of $2d4 \times 10F$. As the demonologist completes the incantations he makes a MAGICAL ATTACK roll against the demon's MAGICAL DEFENCE to see if it appears. If he rolls exactly 20, some other demon than the one intended will appear.

Bringing the demon into being causes a terrible drain on the demonologist's life force. At the moment of completing the Ritual he loses 1d3 points from his Strength score, later recovering at the rate of one point per week. Once the demon has been evoked, it remains on this plane of existence for 1-4 hours and then fades back to its own world. Only the *Ritual of Binding* (see page 13) will prevent this.

Simply evoking a demon does not give the demonologist any control over it, and if he does not use the Ritual of Binding he will have to bargain for its services. In this case, the GM should treat the demon like any other NPC, though bearing in mind its demonic nature, of course. It could be hostile to the demonologist, or it could take an immediate liking to him, or any reaction between. Ideally the GM should prepare a few notes about the demon's personality and quirks in advance, but if this is impossible, either come up with a response on the fly, or roll 1d10 on the Demon Response Table.

DEMON RESPONSE TABLE

Roll	Response
1	Aggressive and hostile; will attack immediately.
2-4	Antipathetic; will need a lot of convincing to do anything other than attack.
5-9	Surly; may serve, if offered a good deal.
10	Friendly.

Note that some demons may have different Response Tables; if so, new tables are listed in their entries.

A demon which takes an active dislike to its demonologist will attempt to kill him; if thwarted in this (by a Pentacle of Protection, for example, or if the demonologist is obviously too powerful) it will depart. An antipathetic or surly response indicates that the demon may be willing to serve, but may drive a hard bargain; if offered significantly less than it would normally expect, it may become enraged and attack, or simply depart. A friendly demon will probably settle for a deal close to the demonologist's first offer, as long as this is not wildly short of its expectations. The GM should take the demon's role and haggle.

Once the deal has been agreed and the demon has received its payment, the demonologist must say, 'Here then are my wishes...' and go on to describe the service he wants the demon to perform. This must be concisely and carefully worded. Demons are adept at twisting the meaning of a casual phrase and at following the letter of an agreement in order to discommode their summoner.

The demon will then embark on the task set and continue until it has done what was asked of it or until the time limit on its summoning runs out whichever comes first. Demons are typically quite happy to undertake suicidal missions, because the destruction of their physical form only returns them prematurely to their own plane. If the demon's spirit or freedom of action is endangered, however, it will become considerably less enthusiastic about completing the task set. If it voluntarily backs out of an agreement, the demon must return 90% of its payment to the summoner.

The lesser demons are usually called upon to kill, spy or steal in their evocator's service. Although the demons may have special skills which make them excellent for such activities, it is after all much the same sort of thing for which common thugs or mercenaries might be hired. Demon lords and princes will not stoop to menial annihilations and the like, but may be persuaded to use their grand supernatural forces sometimes to the summoner's lasting benefit.

The demonic Lord Kesh, for example, can teach a character to brew venoms and acids. The exact services available from the various demons, and the payments they might ask in return, are described in the next two chapters.

Banishing a Demon

For a number of reasons the summoner of a demon may want to banish it before it would normally fade from this plane of reality. Banishment requires the demonologist to chant a mystic phrase; this takes five Combat Rounds (30 seconds), during which time he can defend himself, but not attack or cast spells. When the chant is completed, the summoner makes a **MAGICAL ATTACK** roll against the demon's **MAGICAL DEFENCE** to see if his attempt is successful—if so, the demon immediately vanishes.

Only one attempt at banishment can be made—if that fails, other means must be used to destroy the demon.

A demonologist will also be able to use banishment against a demon summoned by someone else, but will have a penalty of -2 on the roll. As before, the character has only one chance to make the banish roll.

There is no Magic Point expenditure to banish a demon.

The Pact of the Dark Companion

After successfully bargaining with a demon its summoner can, instead of requesting a service, offer the Pact of the Dark Companion. This applies only to lesser demons—demon lords will not even consider making the Pact with any except the mightiest human heroes.

For the demon to accept, the GM must have decided the demon is very well-disposed towards the character, or have rolled a Friendly reaction on the demon response table. The Pact is then sealed in any of several revolting ways, the result of which is that the evocator gives the demon some of his own life and soul; his Magic Points and Health Points both drop permanently by 1 point. After sealing the Pact, the demonologist receives the demon's mark and the creature departs.

Thereafter, the demonologist can call on his Dark Companion at any time. The normal summoning procedure is unnecessary. There is a 20% chance each round of calling the demon's name that



Demonic Familiars

At 6th level, a demonologist can bind a summoned demonic spirit into a small, previously ordinary animal, turning it into a demonic familiar. The following animals from the *Dragon Warriors Bestiary* are suitable: bat, dog (hunting), snake (python), and spider (tarantula). Alternatively a cat, toad, raven, or ferret may be used.

A familiar retains the basic game statistics of the original animal, but thereafter it increases its attack, defence, magical defence, health points, evasion, stealth, and perception at the same rate as its master increases his own.

The familiar can understand the same languages as the demonologist, and can reply, if close by, in whispers only he can hear. The demonic spirit within it makes it about as clever as the average human (Intelligence 10), so it can recognise specific people, understand motivation, and so on, making it an excellent spy.

It must be fed nightly on human blood (1d3 Health Points' worth), either the demonologist's, or another's. If unfed, it will lose 1 Health Point per night. Demonologists who regularly feed familiars this way will grow an extra nipple for the task.

Familiars generally stay close to their human masters, and smaller ones may live in their clothes. They will do their masters' bidding to the best of their ability but on their own terms—they will not twist their master's wishes like their greater demonic brethren, but neither are they completely under their master's control.

Though largely loyal to their demonologist masters, most familiars have other masters too, within the demonic hierarchy—ultimately, each one will be under the command of a Demon Prince (see chapter 3), intending someday to persuade its more human master to summon that prince and agree to some form of service (preferably a Greater Gift). Much of the content of the familiar's whispers to the demonologist will probably be suggestions of evil acts that he might do, as the familiar's ambitions for advancement are best served by encouraging the demonologist down his own fell path.

If a familiar is killed, its master the demonologist immediately loses as many Health Points as the familiar had at full health. He also permanently loses 1 Magic Point.

CAT

ATTACK 11, Bite (d3, 1)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 9	Movement 12m (25m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 6
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	STEALTH 19
Reflexes 17	PERCEPTION 15 (elfsight)

Health Points 1

Rank-equivalent 1st

Domestic and feral cats are similar in game terms, with neither posing a significant threat to humans, at least in their natural states.

FERRET

ATTACK 12, Bite (d3, 2)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 8	Movement 12m (25m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 6
MAGICAL DEFENCE 2	STEALTH 18
Reflexes 17	PERCEPTION 14 (elfsight)

Health Points 1

Rank-equivalent 1st

Ferrets are small predators, particularly effective in tunnels. They are able to squeeze through the tiniest of gaps with no loss of speed.

RAVEN

ATTACK 10, Bite (d3, 1)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 9	Movement 5m (flying 25m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 6
MAGICAL DEFENCE 2	STEALTH 15
Reflexes 15	PERCEPTION 15

Health Points 1

Rank-equivalent 1st

Ravens are carrion birds, larger and more aggressive than crows.

TOAD

ATTACK –	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 9	Movement 5m
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 5
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	STEALTH 20
Reflexes 13	PERCEPTION 10

Health Points 1

Rank-equivalent 1st

Toads are rarely seen by humans, being small in size & naturally camouflaged. They have the reputation of being connected with devils and demons, due to their baleful appearance and foul-smelling exudations.

it will hear and come to aid him. It will always serve to the best of its abilities, but cannot remain on this plane for a total of more than twenty-one Combat Rounds in a single day. If slain, it vanishes and cannot rematerialize that day.

The Dark Companion must slay at least one sentient being each month, as it feeds on the release of life-energy. If this is prevented it will end the Pact and then seek to slay the demonologist before returning to its own world forever. The demonologist can thus force a conclusion to the Pact by withholding victims. Other methods are to try banishing the demon or else to destroy it with the *Curse of Asterion* (see p. 15).

A character can have only one Pact operating at any given time. A demonologist learns the Pact of the Dark Companion at 7th Rank.

Demonologist Spells

5th level

THE RITUAL OF BINDING

Binding eliminates the necessity of bargaining with a demon but it has its drawbacks in that attempting to bind a demon without its consent will certainly enrage it.

Match the caster's MAGICAL ATTACK with the target demon's MAGICAL DEFENCE. If the character succeeds then the demon is bound in his service. Instead of vanishing after a few hours, it remains on this plane until killed or banished. A bound demon cannot directly harm the one who bound it, nor can it deliberately kill itself in order to escape from this plane. The binder can give it one command of up to thirteen words, and the demon will obey this command literally. Commands such as 'Obey all my future commands' or 'Serve me loyally' are not effective, and immediately free the demon if tried. That is, the command must specify particular services and actions rather than establishing conditions or attitudes for future behaviour.

A character cannot have more than seven demons bound on this plane at one time; if he tries to bind an eighth, all are freed.

Some demons have a special resistance to bind-

ing, which increases their MAGICAL DEFENCE solely against this spell.

Binding can in some cases be to the demon's advantage. It may want permanent residence on this plane. Demon lords invariably desire to return to their realms as soon as possible, but some of the lesser demons lead a difficult existence in their own world and would prefer being bound to this plane. The problem is one of trust—there is nothing to prevent a summoner from agreeing to bind a demon 'as a favour' and then giving it any order he likes. There is thus only about a 1% chance of a demon asking to be bound—if you then actually keep your word and bind it without giving it a command, you will have that demon's eternal gratitude.

6th level

POSSESSION BY ELDYR

Range: 1m

Duration: Spell Expiry Roll applies

The possession spells are a group of enchantments for possessing people (usually the caster's companions) with the spirit-essence of a demon lord. The demon is not summoned by the spell.

Unlike most normal spells, *Possession by Eldyr* takes five Combat Rounds to cast.

To cast the *Possession by Eldyr* spell one must also have the talisman appropriate to the demon lord invoked—this may be a mask, wand, bell, gong, censer or one of several other items. The caster must prepare talismans for any demon lords he wishes to invoke, at a construction cost of 3d6F each. Alternatively, he can buy or otherwise obtain talismans prepared by another demonologist. The character must make a Demonology roll to see whether he has properly prepared a particular demonic talisman—a *Possession by Eldyr* spell will always fail (still with an expenditure of Magic Points) if the talisman used is defective.

Up to three people are affected by a single casting of *Possession by Eldyr*. To be affected they must be conscious but passive—the spell cannot be applied to a character in combat. Possession can be directed at subdued or magically charmed enemies of the caster, but he must match his MAGICAL ATTACK against their MAGICAL DEFENCE for the spell to take effect. Also, *Possession by Eldyr* does not give the caster control over the spell's recipients—the

possessed characters retain their own normal aims and motives. However, they cannot under any circumstances harm the caster so long as he carries the proper talisman.

Note that two different *Possession by...* spells cannot be combined. Possessed characters are also unaffected by the following spells: *Enslave*, *Enthrall*, and *Pacify*.

The possessed characters have magically charming voices and demeanours. Any characters of 3rd rank or below who listen to them speak for one Combat Round or more will be affected by the possessed characters as though they had cast a *Command* spell (see the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook, p. 82). Looks scores are raised to 19.

POSSESSION BY KESH

As per *Possession by Eldyr*, except the following applies instead of the final paragraph:

The possessed characters have an aura of terror about them. If anyone attempts to come within 5m of one of them, he pits his MAGICAL ATTACK against the MAGICAL DEFENCE of the approacher. If he succeeds, the possessed character is so terrifying that the victim may not approach any closer, and may not attack the possessed character by any means.

7th level

POSSESSION BY TSIENRA

As per *Possession by Eldyr*, except the following applies instead of the final paragraph:

The possessed characters gain +2 to ATTACK and +1 to DEFENCE, and have their Reflexes scores raised to 19.

POSSESSION BY KOJURO

As per *Possession by Eldyr*, except the following applies instead of the final paragraph:

The possessed characters gain +2 to ATTACK and +2 to DEFENCE, and gain a +1 bonus to damage and to all armour bypass rolls in mêlée combat.

8th level

POSSESSION BY AKRESH

As per *Possession by Eldyr*, except the following applies instead of the final paragraph:

The possessed characters gain +2 to DEFENCE, a +1 bonus to any armour worn (or natural armour 2 if no armour is worn) and an increase of +2d6 Health

Points. Damage is removed from the bonus Health Points first.

POSSESSION BY HRAGAHL

As per *Possession by Eldyr*, except the following applies instead of the final paragraph:

The possessed characters gain +2 to MAGICAL ATTACK and +2 to MAGICAL DEFENCE, and have their Psychic Talent scores raised to 19.

9th level

POSSESSION BY ENGALA

As per *Possession by Eldyr*, except the following applies instead of the final paragraph:

The possessed characters have their Strength scores raised to 19, and gain an increase of +3d6 Health Points. Damage is removed from the bonus Health Points first.

POSSESSION BY SARASATHSA

As per *Possession by Eldyr*, except the following applies instead of the final paragraph:

The possessed characters gain +6 to MAGICAL DEFENCE, are immune to Fright Attacks, and have their Intelligence scores raised to 19.

Sarasatha's possession is double-edged, in that the recipient could become sunk into lethargy and pensive introspection (roll Psychic Talent or less on 2d10 when coming out of possession to avoid this). A lethargic character will be unwilling to take any action that involves effort. He may attempt another Psychic Talent roll after every hour of lethargy to throw off the effects.

10th level

POSSESSION BY KYRAX

As per *Possession by Eldyr*, except the following applies instead of the final paragraph:

The possessed characters gain +4 to STEALTH and PERCEPTION.

POSSESSION BY UMALU

As per *Possession by Eldyr*, except the following applies instead of the final paragraph:

Roll 1d20 for each possessed character:

- 1 Grows 2 extra arms; may wield either two, two-handed weapons, or two shields and two one-handed weapons, attacking or defending with all (this will allow a character to make 2 attacks, and potentially attempt 2

- shield parries, per combat round).
- 2 Thick, armoured plates all over. The character gains an Armour Factor of 6 (not cumulative with other armour). Furthermore, any attack that does penetrate his armour does 1 point less damage than usual.
 - 3 Catlike quickness. The character's Reflexes increases to 19, his movement is increased by half as much again, his EVASION increases by +2 and his ATTACK and DEFENCE increase by +2.
 - 4 Venomed claws, horns, or other natural weapons. The character may make an unarmed attack that is d10, 5, and inflicts a strong poison attack on the target.
 - 5 Huge pincers, or club-like arm, or similar. The character may make a d12, 7 unarmed attack.
 - 6 Terrifying appearance. The character gains a Gaze Attack (*Dragon Warriors* rulebook, p. 123). He matches his MAGICAL ATTACK against the targets' MAGICAL DEFENCE. If he succeeds, they are paralysed with terror for 1d6 Combat Rounds, unable to move or perform any actions.
 - 7 Wings. The character's movement doubles, and he may fly, with all that that entails.
 - 8 Chameleonic skin. The character's STEALTH increases by +6, and DEFENCE by +4.
 - 9 Flaming flesh. Anyone who is in mêlée combat with the character suffers an automatic hit each combat round, with d6 armour penetration and doing 4 damage.
 - 10 Flaming breath. The character may breathe flame each round, with a range of 20m, doing 5d6 damage to anyone who cannot evade its speed of 15 (armour worn reduces the damage by 2, regardless of type).
 - 11 Acid blood. Anyone who successfully wounds the character in mêlée combat must dodge a speed 16 attack, or suffer 6d6 damage (armour does not offer any protection, and indeed has a 25% chance of being melted and rendered useless).
 - 12 Death touch. The character's right hand becomes cold and lifeless, imbued with necromantic energy. If he manages to touch an opponent in combat (normal ATTACK versus DEFENCE roll applies), the victim suffers 1d6 damage (armour does not protect) and must roll equal to or less than his Strength on 2d10 or die on the spot.
 - 13 Living shadow. The character becomes immune to damage from non-magical weapons, which simply pass through him without harm. His own attacks ignore non-magical armour.
 - 14 Giantism. The character's Strength increases to 19, and he gains an increase of +5d6 Health Points. Damage is removed from the bonus Health Points first.
 - 15 Webbed feet, withered legs, or tentacles instead of legs; movement is halved, and the character has a -2 penalty to STEALTH.
 - 16 One arm (determined randomly) withers away, or is replaced by a non-functional claw or other appendage. The character may not use a shield or 2-handed weapon.
 - 17 The character's sight is interfered with, perhaps with the eyes being replaced with insectoid eyes, or perhaps with a flap of skin hanging over them. -2 penalty to PERCEPTION, DEFENCE, and ATTACK.
 - 18 The character's whole face is hideously warped and disfigured. Looks score is reduced to 1.
 - 19 The character's bones become brittle and thin; all damage he suffers in combat is increased by +1.
 - 20 The character's brain becomes soft and mushy, or is exposed to the air by part of the skull drawing back to reveal it. His Intelligence and Psychic Talent scores are each reduced by -6 (to a minimum of 1).

10th level

THE CURSE OF ASTERION

Also called the *Curse of Binding Energy*, this is a technique for dispelling a particular demon for all time. It is usable only once in a character's lifetime (for reasons which will become obvious), and in fact only two cases of its use are recorded—once when the noble Asterion employed it to save his daughter's life, the other when the lunatic mage Athat turned it against a demon lord in a moment of arrogant pique.

A fairly short phrase, the *Curse* is only effective if the character follows through the complex logical arguments associated with it as he speaks the words of the *Curse*; this is represented by the demonologist rolling under his Intelligence score on three six-sided dice.

The procedure is as follows: the character must touch and grapple with the demon (represented by a successful attack against its DEFENCE) as he (or she) activates the *Curse of Asterion*. If successful, both the demon and the character disappear forever from this world. Are they both disintegrated by the power of the magic? Or transported to a dimension of their own where they battle on together throughout Eternity? The truth is unknowable.

CHAPTER 2

THE LESSER DEMONS

THE FOLLOWING SECTION presents the lesser demon races and their abilities and weaknesses, the ways in which they should be dealt with and the ‘benefits’ they can give the summoner.

It is a rash student of demonic magic who expects to start his career by summoning the great demon lords and princes. Such a career would be short-lived. It is best to begin with lesser demons, even though their services are scant beside their masters’ powers.

Those Demons Often Summoned

In the descriptions below, the first paragraph is general information about the demon that any demonologist would know or that could be found in some demon bestiary or other work of reference on the subject. The second paragraph is specialized information that can only be discovered through the right Demonology roll.

B’krath

B’krath are slender, prowling killers—roughly humanoid in appearance but with musculature and stance reminiscent of a jaguar. The jet-black fur of a B’krath makes it particularly adept at stalking in shadows (its DEFENCE and STEALTH abilities are halved in bright light). B’krath fight with their long powerful talons and needle-sharp teeth.

Specialized knowledge: B’krath when summoned always appear in groups of three. The summoner thus temporarily loses 3d3 points of Strength! The three B’krath are identical in their characteristics, reaction to the summoner, etc., and are in permanent mental rapport (a telepathic mind-link) with one another so that they hunt and fight as a team. B’krath will not haggle over payment for their services—indeed, they never communicate with humans except to receive their instructions. B’krath will undertake only assassinations, and must be paid 3,000F-worth of gold dust for this.

B’KRATH

ATTACK 23, claws (d10, 6)	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 12	Movement 15m (30m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 9
MAGICAL DEFENCE 11	STEALTH 23
Reflexes 16	PERCEPTION 14 (darksight)
Health Points 2d6+20	
Rank-equivalent: 8th	

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +3 vs Summoning; +2 vs Binding.

Porphyrs

Vampiric blue-skinned demons, porphyrs are very tall and gaunt and have all the normal powers of a *Dragon Warriors* vampire (see the Bestiary, p. 84). They have bald, veined heads, eyes of limpid yellow and long seemingly delicate nails. Over its robes a Porphyr will wear a silver cuirass with intricate designs worked upon it.

Specialized knowledge: Porphyrs have all the vulnerabilities of a vampire. They have great difficulty controlling their passionate thirst. Fresh garlic flowers are even more effective against a Porphyr than against regular vampires, causing it a -2 penalty to its ATTACK for 2d6 rounds against any character so protected. The Porphyr will demand at least one sentient living creature as payment. From this it will drain all blood, destroying it. Porphyrs can be as varied in game statistics as human vampires, but most will be equivalent to barbarians of around 6th-8th rank.

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +2 vs summoning; +3 vs binding.

Amorphs

An Amorph is an oozing blob of grey-mauve protoplasm, full of eyes and chattering mouths. It will occasionally extrude temporary appendages.

Specialized knowledge: Amorphs are best used as guards in dank places or assassins where there are moats and rivers to be crossed, as they travel freely through water. Fire causes an Amorph 50% extra damage (round up). Amorphs take 2d6 damage if they cross a line of eucalyptus oil, so this makes an excellent warding material.

Amorphs serve in exchange for a pint of snake venom, on which they feed.

AMORPH

ATTACK 19, appendage (2d6, 8)	Armour Factor 3
DEFENCE 13	Movement 5m
MAGICAL ATTACK -	EVASION 2
MAGICAL DEFENCE 12	STEALTH 17
Reflexes 11	PERCEPTION 16 (panoptical)
Health Points 2d6+30	
Rank-equivalent: 7th	

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +1 vs summoning; +1 vs binding.

Qarīnah

These are demons of carnality. In their natural form they are bat-winged, tall, evil yet beautiful humanoids, with fangs and talons. They can appear to victims as human beings of perfect beauty. They then match their MAGICAL ATTACK against the victim's MAGICAL DEFENCE. Success means that the victim succumbs to seduction.

Specialized knowledge: What makes these demons particularly hazardous to summon is the fact that, if hostile, they may turn their charms against the demonologist and convince him to leave his Pentacle of Protection. The demonologist should thus chain himself (or herself) within the Pentacle's bounds and have some trusted servant take the keys. Wearing a silver ankle chain gives the demonologist a +3 bonus to his MAGICAL DEFENCE against the charms of a Qarīnah. Another defence is to drink the juice of limes, which further increases the demonologist's MAGICAL DEFENCE for charming purposes by +1.

Qarīnah barter for payment of any kind—jewels, spell potions, etc.—to a value of about 900F. When they sleep with a victim they can drain him or her of 1d8 Strength (which recovers at the rate of one point a week). A male Qarīnah has a 3% chance of impregnating a female victim, who will later give birth to a demon child with its father's powers.

QARĪNAH

ATTACK 17, talon (d8+1, 5)	Armour Factor 3
DEFENCE 10	Movement 15m (25m)
MAGICAL ATTACK 23	EVASION 5
MAGICAL DEFENCE 11	STEALTH 15
Reflexes 13	PERCEPTION 6 (panoptical)
Health Points 1d6+12	
Rank-equivalent: 6th	

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +2 vs binding.

Sraim

Sraim have a giant maggot's body on four long spidery legs, with a face which is lumpish and misshapen as though made of putty. They can detect items that the demonologist has lost and will lead him towards such an item.

Specialized knowledge: Sraim serve in return for at least one dose of Strong poison. In addition to biting in combat, a Sraim can also spit acidic venom (normal strength poison) up to 10m, at speed 14.

SRAIM

ATTACK 20, bite (2d4+1, 7) or spit venom (speed 14)	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 14	Movement 12m (25m)
MAGICAL ATTACK -	EVASION 6
MAGICAL DEFENCE 11	STEALTH 18
Reflexes 15	PERCEPTION 9 (dark-sight)
Health Points 2d6+12	
Rank-equivalent: 7th	

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: none.

Melechs

These demons are tall, muscular, bronze-skinned humanoids, with malevolent but not unhandsome features and dancing flames for hair. They can breathe fire up to 10m.

Specialized knowledge: Melechs make particularly useful servants because of their powers of illusion (they can cast *Illusion* or *Phantasm* spells at will, with no MP cost) and their unusual resistance to magic (as well as their high MAGICAL DEFENCE, they are completely unaffected by spells that cost 1 MP or 2MP).

Melechs require payment of about 750F-worth of ivory.

Offering a drink of water brought from an oasis causes a Melech to become more tractable (+1 on the Demon Response Table on p. 10).

MELECH

ATTACK 19, flaming two-handed sword (d10+1, 6) or breathe fire (speed 13, 2d8 damage, any armour reduces damage by 2)
DEFENCE 10
MAGICAL ATTACK 18
MAGICAL DEFENCE 11
Reflexes 15
Health Points 2d6+12
Rank-equivalent: 7th

Armour Factor 3

Movement 10m (20m)

EVASION 5

STEALTH 18

PERCEPTION 9 (darksight)

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: none.

Stalkers

Stalkers are the premier demonic assassins. They can pass freely through wood, stone, etc. (although they are tangible to metal and magical materials), and have excellent STEALTH. Stalkers appear to be vaguely humanoid, hunched inside their dusty robes, but have withered brown skin like tree bark and a cowed vulture's head.

Specialized knowledge: A Stalker's abilities are not bought cheaply. The demon will require at least one minor magical item, and may often barter for significantly more powerful items.

The only ward against a Stalker is to blow a silver whistle on which protective sigils have been etched (at a cost in materials of 5d10 florins); for as long as the whistle is blown within 5m of the Stalker its ATTACK is halved.

If a Stalker wounds its foe it matches its MAGICAL

ATTACK against his MAGICAL DEFENCE, with success costing the opponent two points of Strength, which later recovers at one point per hour.

Every fifth round a Stalker can cast bolts of white light up to 10m with a speed of 18, dealing 1d20 points of damage (armour offers no protection against this damage).

STALKER

ATTACK 22, claws (2d6, 6)

DEFENCE 13

MAGICAL ATTACK 20

MAGICAL DEFENCE 12

Reflexes 17

Health Points 2d6+22

Rank-equivalent: 9th

Armour Factor 5

Movement 12m (25m)

EVASION 10

STEALTH 23

PERCEPTION 14 (panoptical)

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +4 vs summoning; +4 vs binding.

Rult

Rult have large, hunched bodies with dry, shredding flesh, a large head like that of a fly and skeletal wings draped with a torn web of skin.

Specialized knowledge: Rult must be summoned at the place of execution of a man who has murdered more than once. They will haggle for gold, silver and gems—a Rult usually requires about 1,000F.

Rult have two special abilities. First, they can teleport over distances of up to 2 miles, with the restriction that some living or once-living body which they have encountered is at each end of the teleport.

Secondly, Rult can breathe a poisonous vapour (weak poison), affecting everyone within 2m; damage from this poison cannot be healed with magic. A demonologist may create an amulet (at a cost in materials of 2d10F) that gives the wearer a +1 bonus to his MAGICAL ATTACK against a Rult.

RULT

ATTACK 18, claws (1d6, 5)

DEFENCE 12

MAGICAL ATTACK –

MAGICAL DEFENCE 9

Reflexes 11

Health Points 2d4+13

Rank-equivalent: 6th

Armour Factor 4

Movement 15m (30m)

EVASION 6

STEALTH 12

PERCEPTION 8 (darksight)

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +3 vs summoning; +3 vs binding.

Demon Steed

These large, black demon horses are usually summoned as a mount for the demonologist, as they can cross any terrain at 20 miles an hour.

Specialized knowledge: Demon steeds can only be evoked after sunset, and dissolve into mist if exposed to sunlight. There is no other special defence against them.

A demon steed will require a pint (equivalent to 1d8 Health Points) of the summoner's blood in return for its services.

DEMON STEED

ATTACK 18, kick (1d12, 7)	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 7	Movement 15m (30m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 6
MAGICAL DEFENCE 8	STEALTH 12
Reflexes 11	PERCEPTION 8 (darksight)
Health Points 1d6+18	
Rank-equivalent: 6th	

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +1 vs summoning; +1 vs binding.

Storm Demons

These creatures of living lightning can only be evoked in the midst of a thunderstorm. They appear as flickering, electrical humanoid figures up to twice the size of a man.

Specialized knowledge: Storm Demons are resistant to non-magical weapons.

A Storm Demon can hurl bolts of energy up to 20m at a speed of 16; these inflict four 1d8 wounds on the target (non-metal armour reducing the damage from each wound by 1, but metal armour giving no benefit). Alternatively, it can attack an opponent in mêlée, dealing 7 damage (again, with non-metal armour reducing the damage from a touch by 1, but metal armour giving no benefit) and having a 20% chance of setting the victim's hair or clothing afire (additional 1d6 damage per round, with armour giving no protection, till the victim can spend a full Combat Round putting out the flames).

A paling of sharp copper rods will cause 3d6 damage to any Storm Demon which tries to cross it and will deflect lightning bolts cast by the demon so



DRAGON WARRIORS

that anyone behind the paling gains a +4 bonus to EVASION against them.

Storm Demons require 800F worth of sapphire dust for their services.

STORM DEMON

ATTACK 18, touch (n/a, 7) or hurl bolts (speed 16, four 1d8 wounds)	Armour Factor 6 (but only 2 vs magical weapons)
DEFENCE 10	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 5
MAGICAL DEFENCE 10	STEALTH 5
Reflexes 11	PERCEPTION 10 (panoptical)
Health Points 1d6+10	
Rank-equivalent: 7th	

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +1 vs summoning; +2 vs binding.

Gremlins

These are small (two and a half feet tall), thin humanoids with elongated toes and fingers like a lizard's and a globular head perched on a narrow neck. They have pale green skin and their large, saucer-shaped eyes give them a rather comical look. Gremlins are demons of (bad) luck.

Specialized knowledge: Gremlins are ineffective fighters, but their special ability is that anyone within 8m of a Gremlin suffers bad luck—any rolls that the character makes, or that target him, are adjusted by 2 so as to be less favourable to him.

Gremlins have excellent natural camouflage in all surroundings, and utilize this to skulk near their victims and bring down upon them the vicissitudes of disaster.

If forced to fight, Gremlins use long straight-bladed knives. Gremlins will require a minimum payment of 350F.

They cannot harm anyone who currently has a *Warding* spell cast on them (see *Dragon Warriors*, p. 81).

GREMLIN

ATTACK 14, claw (d6,4)	Armour Factor 2
DEFENCE 9	Movement 12m (25m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 7
MAGICAL DEFENCE 6	STEALTH 25
Reflexes 11	PERCEPTION 14 (darksight)
Health Points 1d6+6	
Rank-equivalent: 2nd	

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: none.

Additional lesser demons

The following Infernal Creatures (see the *Dragon Warriors Bestiary*, p. 67) may also be summoned as lesser demons.

This list of demons is not intended to be exhaustive. GMs are encouraged to shift abilities around and invent demons of their own to prevent player-characters from becoming complacent.

hell hound, and hell hound, Greater

Large, black dogs or wolves with red eyes. They have excellent tracking skills and are best employed as hunter-killers.

Specialized knowledge: There are two distinct kinds of Hell Hound, the standard ones and the Greater ones. All Hell Hounds have an especial hatred for a certain pungent-scented marsh herb known as stinkweed. A Hell Hound will be at –1 to MAGICAL ATTACK against any Pentacle that incorporates stinkweed in its design, and at –1 to ATTACK against any character carrying stinkweed about her person. The minimum payment for a Hell Hound's services is a blood sacrifice; in the case of a Greater Hell Hound, this must be a sentient being, though standard Hell Hounds may be summoned with the sacrifice of a small animal. It's just as easy to summon a pack of either kind of Hell Hound as a singular one—simply perform more blood sacrifices. The entire pack of demons can be affected by the same Summoning, Binding, Pentacle, etc., but the demonologist will still lose 1d3 Strength points for each demon summoned. Hell Hounds must be summoned by night.

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: none.

hellion

These demons exist solely to corrupt good humans, and gather the souls of evil ones for their internal masters.

Specialized knowledge: A Hellion can be summoned only by destroying a sacred object of some kind—preferably a holy relic, but an altar or crucifix stolen from a popular and pious church would do at a pinch. This acts as its payment. Summoning a Hellion is extremely risky, even compared to summoning other demons: a demonologist is, by definition, a wicked person, and thus the perfect target

for a Hellion's attentions. If the Pentacle fails, the Hellion will always attack its summoner in hopes of sending his soul to Hell, whatever the result on the Demon Response Table. In a few rare cases of failed summonings the Hellion is reported to have possessed the body of the unfortunate demonologist, though the mechanism by which it achieves this is not understood.

A demonologist usually summons a Hellion to attach itself to one specific individual, either to beguile him into servitude to a demonic lord (perhaps the same lord the demonologist serves) or to attack him in the hope of destroying him utterly. It will only target a genuinely evil victim (GM's discretion), and a Hellion instructed to slay a non-evil target will simply ignore its instructions, revelling in a chance to go after the nearest truly evil victim it can find. Hellions are vulnerable to both relics and crucifixes (*Bestiary*, p. 70).

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +3 vs binding.

Nightmare

The nightmare is another demon usually summoned to wreak havoc on the demonologist's enemies, destroying or possessing them by entering their dreams.

Specialized knowledge: A nightmare will demand a Potion of Dreams as payment. A nightmare who has been summoned but neither bound nor bargained with successfully will not attack the demonologist immediately, but will appear to vanish; in fact, it is waiting nearby, planning to invade his dreaming mind, either the next time he slumbers or at some future date, after it has amused itself with the dreams of unfortunate travellers first. Anyone can protect against a nightmare by wearing gold on his head somewhere—a circlet or earring being common. A character wearing gold jewellery in this way gains a +4 bonus to his MAGICAL DEFENCE against Nightmares, and a +4 bonus on his roll to wake up.

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +1 vs summoning; +1 vs binding.

Succubus

Succubi are demon thugs and assassins, much-prized for their ability to pass through walls.

Succubi are generally quite willing to serve demonologists (+1 on the Demonic Response Table); they are quite low on the demonic hierarchy, and so working for a human master makes a change from being ordered around by demon lords. A succubus will serve for rubies (1d4 × 100F value) and red meat (around 1kg of it). If their task takes more than one day, they will require the same amount of gems and meat each day. They can regenerate wounds from non-magical weapons, but are vulnerable to relics (see *Bestiary*, p. 72).

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: none.

Sufiriad

These demons cannot be summoned by demonologists. But while the Sufiriad cannot be summoned, since they already exist in the Land of Legend, it is possible for a demonologist to bargain with them, if he can find one. They cannot be bound, being already in effect bound to their temples. However, a demonologist with plenty to offer—usually great treasure (for example, a magical weapon, or at least 2,000F in gems or gold) and a number of sentient victims (at least 3) for the Sufiriad to destroy—may be able to persuade the Sufiriad to let him into their ruined temple, where he is almost certain to find great demonic lore and perhaps strange artefacts.

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: none.

White Lady

These demons cannot usually be summoned by demonologists.

It may be possible for a demonologist to summon a White Lady if he is closely allied to or associated with the Demon Lord Fengris, but the precise mechanism for this is uncertain. As with the Sufiriad, a White Lady might be bargained with, if encountered elsewhere rather than summoned. Again, she may not be bound (being, in effect, bound to her tower), but could be persuaded to take the soul of a specific foe of the demonologist's. She will want a two-for-one deal the demonologist makes her earthly task a little easier by giving her two warriors (2nd rank or above) for her to *Enslave*, and she will then *Enslave* the victim of his choice, too.

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: none.

CHAPTER 3

THE DEMONIC NOBILITY

THE DEMON LORDS and princes of Legend are individual beings of immense power who rule the demon planes. They have, of course, been summoned far less frequently than the lesser demons, so no exact canon of knowledge is available as with the latter. A summoner who does some research may find suggestions and theories as to how to deal with the demon lords (“... Rokash the Pious records that the powers of the Lord Eldyr are diminished by bright tight...” etc.), but exact wards—if any—are a matter of conjecture.

Similarly there is some uncertainty as to the precise levels of power of the demon lords. T sienra’s stats are given here as a guideline, but GMs must design these creatures to suit their own campaigns. They should be virtually impossible to overcome with raw power alone, and if your campaign abounds with Rank 20+ characters, then the abilities of T sienra and the others should be increased accordingly. While some of the demon lords have suffered defeats in the past, in almost all cases it has been through the summoner’s quick wit and daring, rather than from spells and swords.

As a general rule all demon lords will have a MAGICAL ATTACK of at least 30, and can draw on unlimited Magic Point reserves from their home dimension for casting spells. They are hostile about 20% of the time and otherwise neutral. They will only be friendly if there is a very good reason why they should react favourably to the summoner—Umalu prefers demonologists of barbarian origin, and so on.

The Gifts

While not precluding the possibility of striking completely unique bargains with a summoned demon lord, there are two types of deal which are ‘commonly’ made. These are the Lesser Gifts—minor exertions from the demon’s point of view, made in exchange for a permanent reduction in Magic Points from the demonologist—and the Gifts, which are abilities bestowed on the summoner in exchange for a soul-pledge. A soul-pledge means the summoner gives the demon 1 Health Point to seal the bargain and promises him a further 3d10 Magic Points later. These further points are intended to be collected on the summoner’s death, but there is a 2% chance the demon will arrive if it feels the summoner’s life-force is burning low—in game terms, whenever the character’s Health Points or Magic Points reach 2 or less.

Once the demon arrives nothing can stop it from devouring the Magic Points promised to it. These Magic Points are permanently lost to the character; if he does not have enough, he permanently loses Health Points to make up the missing amount. At this point the soul-pledge is ended, and he loses the Greater Gift. If he survives the Magic Point and/or Health Point loss, he can later bargain again for a Greater Gift, with the same or a different demon lord. A character can buy any number of Lesser Gifts from demon lords (if he can spare the Magic Points), but it is only possible to have one Greater Gift at a time. Note that to receive any gift at least 4,000F or equivalent must also be offered.

The Demons

The important parameters for each demon lord are his or her MAGICAL DEFENCE, and any bonuses or penalties to MAGICAL DEFENCE against being summoned, being bound, and crossing a pentacle.

There are a number of other demon-lords which could not be listed here—among them Bakshuro the Screamer, who inhabits a dimension so hostile that only he can live there; Valladolyn of the Emerald Eye, who sees all; Fengris, the Eater of Souls, who slavers constantly for the immortal souls of men; and Lady Kleshkala of the Pit, whose face is so terrible that merely to summon her is to court insanity.

Balor, who is described in the adventure *Prince of Darkness*, is not a demon-lord, but something more primordial and elemental. He may not be summoned by these means, and woe betide those who might try.

The Lord Tsienna

Screaming Metal Spirit, Demon of Ferocity

Tsienna usually appears as a metallic figure, something like a huge tiger armoured in intricately patterned plates of tarnished silver and with a violet light burning behind his eyes and gaping maw. He embodies the lightning attack, the unrelenting ferocity of battle, the prowling spirit of savage death. Possession by the spirit of Tsienna gives great speed and grace to the recipient's fighting prowess.

Greater Gift: Tsienna can give the power of ferocity. When a character with this power uses it, his Strength and Reflexes are both effectively increased to 19 for combat purposes, his ATTACK increases by +7, and his DEFENCE increases by +2. The character expends two magic points to go into ferocity and then another point for every minute he keeps it going.

Lesser Gifts: For the permanent sacrifice of one Magic Point, Tsienna will teach his summoner the new spell *The Talons of Tsienna* (see below).

For two Magic Points he will use his skill at stalking between the planes to take the summoner within a few miles of any location he specifies, now matter how great the distance.

For three Magic Points he will enchant any sword to become a +3 magic sword.

TSIENRA

All characteristics: 19

ATTACK 31, bite (2d6+2, 20) Armour Factor 6
or bolts (strike 2d6 characters
for 4d8 damage at speed 20;
armour does not protect)

DEFENCE 26 Movement: 15m (30m)

MAGICAL ATTACK 32

MAGICAL DEFENCE 23

Health Points 70

Rank-equivalent: 20th

EVASION 9

STEALTH 18

PERCEPTION 19 (panoptical)

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +4 vs binding; +2 vs crossing pentacle.

THE TALONS OF TSIENRA

6th-level demonologist spell

Duration: Spell Expiry Roll applies

This spell causes foot-long talons of red light to spring from the caster's wrists. They are used with the demonologist's normal ATTACK, but ignore all armour (even magical armour), cannot be parried by shields, and cause the target's DEFENCE to be halved against them. They do 6 damage on a successful hit. They are able to harm anything that has Health Points, even if it is usually immune to some types of damage.

his Fell highness Eldyr

Prince of Deceit, Demon of Persuasion

Eldyr is overlord of Qarīnah, Succubuses and Grem-lins. He may pass in any guise he chooses, the better to advance his wiles, but will always eventually cast images aside to reveal his true (perhaps true) self. In the *Chronicles of the Conjunction*, Eldyr's own description of himself is recorded: 'My hair is like black silk, my skin is burnished copper in the moonlight, my eyes are sapphires and my robe embraces the starry night...' This description was for the benefit of the elven sorceress Cordelia, who had wisely blindfolded herself before the summoning. Without defences such as this, all in time succumb to Eldyr's charms; the evocator must attempt to banish him at once, therefore, if he begins to use his powers in a hostile fashion.

Greater Gift: Eldyr can give the power of harmonic spirit. This is a combination of charm and blind luck. It costs nothing to activate this power, but each morning the character must roll Psychic

Talent or less on 2d10 to see if the power works for that day; there's a -3 modifier if the power was working the previous day, and a +1 modifier if it was not. The character re-roll one die roll per day. Furthermore, anything that would kill him outright (by reducing his Health Points to -3 or by any other means) has a straight 5% chance to simply fail. He gets a Looks bonus of +4 and can seduce as though he were a Qarīnah. Finally, his MAGICAL ATTACK is affected by his Looks score as follows:

Looks Score	Magical Attack
3-5	-2
6-8	-1
9-12	No Effect
13-15	+1
16-18	+2

Lesser Gifts: For a sacrifice of one Magic Point, he will aid a character in an attempt to persuade others of something. Unless the target of the persuasion attempt would be actively hostile to the idea, this will work automatically. However, it never functions against another demon prince or similarly powerful supernatural creature.

For a sacrifice of two Magic Points, Eldyr will give a luck ring. This silver ring has 20 charges and each charge can be used to alter any die roll (even one made by someone else) by +1 or -1. The wearer must declare how many charges he is committing before the roll is made. When all charges are expended the ring permanently tarnishes and is powerless thereafter.

For a sacrifice of three magic points, Eldyr will give a character 1d4+1 succubi as servants; they will work for him either until they die, or until each one has performed d10+10 tasks (rolled in secret by the GM), whichever happens first.

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +6 vs binding; +2 vs crossing pentacle.

The Lord Umalu

The Whip of Chaos, Demon of Pain

The spirit of Umalu is that of glorying in the inflicting of pain. He is a fierce, powerful demon who hates followers of the True Church with an intense passion and is little better disposed towards other religions. Umalu manifests himself as a 3-metre

tall muscular black giant with a long mane of white hair, face perpetually contorted in hatred. He wields a glittering whip which can horribly deform and wither any victim, and an envenomed shortsword which inflicts terrible wounds.

Greater Gifts: Umalu can mutate a character, giving him or her a permanently useful feature similar to those listed under the *Possession by Umalu* spell (see p. 14-15). He can also give the power of excruciation, so that any wound the character inflicts has a 20% chance of dealing an extra 4 damage to the victim's hit point total owing to extreme pain.

Lesser Gifts: In exchange for one Magic Point he will teach a character to be an expert torturer, giving them a 75% chance to torture useful information out of a helpless victim within 2d4 × 10 minutes of starting the torture.

For two Magic Points he grants the new spell *Curse of Anguish* {see below}.

For three Magic Points he will personally torture a captive to obtain information on the summoner's behalf (100% chance of success, within 2d6 Combat Rounds of commencing the torture).

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +4 vs summoning; +2 vs binding.

CURSE OF ANGUISH

5th-level demonologist spell

Range: 30m

Duration: Spell Expiry Roll applies

The caster of the spell is able to inflict wracking pain on a victim. Match the caster's MAGICAL ATTACK against the target's MAGICAL DEFENCE. He can alter the victim's health point total at will to represent the pain, and can thus force the victim into unconsciousness, vary the pain so that he must fight at a disadvantage (up to -4 to ATTACK and DEFENCE, at the caster's whim), or merely threaten him with the effects. The Curse of Anguish cannot kill—its victim will merely lapse into a coma if the pain level is increased too far (awaking when the spell ends). This spell does not affect undead, most creatures of sorcery (see the *Bestiary*, pages 63-66), or other creatures which do not actually experience pain.



⌘



his Demonic Majesty Adelmar

Lord of the Vaults of Eternity, Monarch of Demons

Summon the terrible Adelmar only when you plan such grand designs of mayhem and destruction as would make lesser demons quail, for he is a proud and potent force and should not be summoned lightly. Standing about three metres tall, he is ebony-black with the lower body of a serpent, a human torso and an armoured, horned head like that of a triceratops. He wields enchanted scimitars in each hand—one of which feeds on the blood of victims, the other on their souls. Adelmar is said to dwell in a labyrinthine castle on an island in an unknown lake; when Adelmar is summoned, the demonologist and his party {up to six others} are carried to this castle to petition the demon.

Greater Gifts: Adelmar has a limited power over time itself, and can give the ability of temporal navigation. This enables a character to cross up to ten years either into the past or future, arriving within

1–12 weeks either side of the required date. Each use of temporal navigation costs the character 1d4 permanent Magic Points.

Lesser Gifts: For a sacrifice of one Magic Point, Adelmar will open the veils of Time to uncover some secret at the summoner's behest.

For three Magic Points he will send an army of demonic warriors—equivalent to five thousand elite cavalry—to fight in one battle beside the army of the summoner (or his employer).

Adelmar can also add to a character's lifespan—two years for one Magic Point, four years for two Magic Points, eight years for three Magic Points and so on. A character can only petition for this gift once. During the added years the character does not age, but the deal must be phrased with exceptional caution or Adelmar will surely twist things to the summoner's detriment.

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +4 vs summoning; +4 vs binding; +2 vs crossing pentacle.

The Lord Akresh

Spirit of Thunder in the Mountains, Demon of Invincibility

Akresh represents steadfast strength of purpose, the glowering look that intimidates a foe, the essence of power that cannot be assailed. Possession by the spirit of Akresh is called waiting-within-a-fortress; it hardens the will, shields the body from harm and augments the recipient's physical might. Akresh himself can only be evoked in mountains, where he may appear as a shadow against the sky and a booming echo between the peaks.

Greater Gift: The power that Akresh can grant is indomitability. A character with this power may activate it at any time, at a cost of 1 Magic Point per combat round. While indomitable, the character remains fixed in position waiting for attacks. He can automatically sweep aside all attacks made by characters of below 6th rank, including missile attacks, taking no damage; his Strength increases to 19; he gets a +4 bonus to DEFENCE, and any non-magical weapon used to attack him will shatter into pieces on an ATTACK roll of 20. Finally, any armour he wears has a +1 to its Armour Factor (even if already magical).

Lesser Gifts: For a sacrifice of two Magic Points he can enchant any shield so that whoever carries it has a +2 bonus to DEFENCE.

For three Magic Points he will summon mountain storms that can throw whole armies into confusion, or block a pass with landslides.

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +4 vs summoning; +6 vs binding.

her Eldritch highness

Sarasathsa

Princess of Mystery, Demon of Paradox

Sarasathsa has sovereignty over things impenetrable or unknowable. Sarasathsa may have many forms, but is often described as a very tall (3 metres), slender, graceful woman in blue and green robes. Her skin is pale and mottled in a serpentine pattern, and the right side of her face is concealed behind a fan-

tastical mask in the form of an embryonic dragon. All summoners describe her as cold and disdainful, and rather draconic in temperament.

Greater Gift: Sarasathsa can grant morphetic counsel. Whenever the character has some problem to solve or mystery to uncover she will whisper clues to him in his dreams. The character can get clues to the locations of lost objects (even artefacts lost for centuries), hints as to the locations of fleeing felons, insights into ancient history and myth, and so on. The power also allows him important visionary dreams. Of course, any such power must be at the GM's discretion, but it should be worthwhile, like any other Greater Gift. He gains +2 Psychic Talent as a side effect of the dreams.

Lesser Gifts: For one Magic Point she will answer any three yes/no questions about the past or present with 99% accuracy.

For three Magic Points she grants a character a permanent +2 increase in Intelligence.

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +2 vs binding.

The Lord Kojuro

Who is One with the Sword, Demon of Fighting Skill

Kojuro appears as a slender man with greyish skin and sharp white shark's teeth. He wears white and grey cotton robes and carries a number of swords and throwing knives. His province is skill in combat, particularly swordplay.

Greater Gift: Kojuro can immediately improve a character's skill with swords, giving him a permanent bonus of +6 to ATTACK and +6 to DEFENCE whenever he is wielding any sword or dagger.

Lesser Gifts: For one Magic Point point Kojuro will increase a character's ATTACK by +1.

For two Magic Points he give the wielder a sword-shaped talisman that can be activated once per week to cast a Vorpal Blade spell at no further MP cost.

For three Magic Points he will increase the ATTACK of an entire army by +1 for a single battle.

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +2 vs binding; +4 vs crossing pentacle.

The Lord Kesh

Jewelled Serpent, Demon of Confusion and Terror

Kesh embodies the transfixing gaze of a snake. He causes awe by his presence alone, a massive bejewelled, serpentine shape coiling about the Pentacle and rearing up to the roof of the summoning chamber. Match Kesh's MAGICAL ATTACK of 32 with the demonologist's MAGICAL DEFENCE; if it succeeds, the demonologist will agree to any bargain Kesh proposes.

Greater Gift: Kesh grants the power of intimidation. Given two Combat Rounds in which to talk to foes before he fights them, a character with this power can threaten with such unholy force that he matches a MAGICAL ATTACK against the MAGICAL DEFENCE of those hearing him, reducing their ATTACK scores by half if he succeeds. The character also acquires a mesmeric gaze identical to that of a vampire (*Bestiary*, p. 84).

Lesser Gifts: For one Magic Point Kesh will reveal the location of an ancient treasure hoard (treasure type: good—see the rulebook, p. 131).

For two Magic Points he will set a giant demonic serpent to guard your treasure for you.

For three Magic Points he will teach you how to brew all types of poison and venom (at an ingredients cost of 10F for weak, 20F for average and 40F for strong poison).

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +6 vs binding; +4 vs crossing pentacle.

DEMONIC SERPENT (SERVANT OF KESH)

ATTACK 23, bite (d10, 8) (treat as strong poison)	Armour Factor 5
DEFENCE 13	Movement 15m
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 14	STEALTH 25
Reflexes 17	PERCEPTION 16
Health Points 2d6+20	

The Lord Engala

Gatherer of Darkness, Demon of the Undead

Engala is usually characterized as the zombie spirit, embodiment of unrelenting attack, but in fact he is

the lord of all undead creatures. Engala appears as a dull-eyed, expressionless man with dead white skin, robed in grave-soiled black raiment. His movements are slow and languid, like a corpse underwater, and when he speaks his lips hardly move to his hollow, emotionless tones. Those possessed by his spirit-will fight until cut apart.

Greater Gift: Engala can make a character into a vampire or mummy. The customary pledge of Health Points is useless to Engala because he is an undead being, so instead of that pledge he imposes a peculiar condition on his Gift. Every ten years the character must find a champion to play Engala's representative at a game not unlike chess. If the champion loses, Engala drains him of all life and destroys him. If the character cannot find a champion he must play Engala's representative himself—in this case, if he loses, Engala will come and take the character as one of his personal servants.

Lesser Gifts: in exchange for a magical item other than a potion, Engala will give a lead amulet which grants the wearer some protection from undead. No undead will ever attack him, and if he encounters a more-or-less mindless undead, such as a zombie, whose master is dead, he may be able to take control of it by concentrating on doing so with the amulet in hand (one combat round to make the attempt; MAGICAL ATTACK versus MAGICAL DEFENCE to succeed). Occasionally Engala may give favoured summoners a zombie or skeleton guard to serve them.

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +4 vs summoning; +4 vs binding; +4 vs crossing pentacle.

The Lord Kyrax

Blizzard Flame, the White Lord, he Who Descends from the Storm

Kyrax is one of the oldest demons. He has the form of a giant white wolf, or sometimes a man of feral aspect. He is the master of stealth and guile, can cause invisibility, blizzards and darkness, and particularly aids those who were once mighty, for he is the demon lord of regathering old powers.

Greater Gifts: Kyrax can grant a character +8 to STEALTH. Or he may personally aid a character in a single master plan.

Lesser Gifts: For one Magic Point he will

increase either STEALTH or PERCEPTION by +2.

For two Magic Points he will give a one-use power to summon thick mist in a 150m radius; the caster can see up to 30m in this mist, but for others the visibility is under 10m.

For three Magic Points he will summon a blizzard or turn a character invisible for eight hours.

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +2 vs binding; +4 vs crossing pentacle.

His Excellency Hragahl

Minister of Lightning, Demon of Intellect

This bizarre and ancient demon lord is master of all matters connected with logic and philosophy, and if he is impressed by a summoner's ability in these areas he will have a friendly reaction to him. Hragahl materializes as a giant (one-metre) bald, fanged head with silvery-blue skin, incandescent white eyes and giant wings springing from his temples. He has a tongue of flickering lightning which can snake out up to 20m.

Greater Gift: Hragahl can transform a weapon of the summoner's so that it has powers of a Stormblade.

A Stormblade allows its user to summon storms once a day. The storm will muster within one minute and will then last for up to fifteen minutes. The main force of the storm is concentrated to a zone 150m around the sword; within this zone, visibility drops to 6m, all movement is halved, normal communication is impossible and flying creatures must roll Reflexes or less on 2d10 each round or be buffeted helplessly by the winds. There is a clear zone (the eye of the storm) for 3m around the sword. While the storm rages, the user can cast lightning bolts from the tip of the sword at the rate of one every five Combat Rounds. These bolts leap for 1-8 beings within 16m, with a speed of 14. A bolt which hits deals the target 4d6 damage; armour gives half normal protection.

Lesser Gifts: For one Magic Point he will summon up a Storm Demon and place it under the summoner's control for fifteen minutes.

For two Magic Points he will give a +1 bonus to Intelligence.

For three Magic Points he can increase a being's Intelligence by +2, or summon storms to confound an enemy.

MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses: +6 vs binding; +2 vs crossing pentacle.

Final Notes

A word of warning: campaigns where demon lords get summoned up every weekend and every other character has a Greater Gift are going to get dull very quickly. Scenarios could involve a demon lord's influence without requiring him to make a personal appearance—player characters could battle a small cult worshipping one of these entities, or inadvertently break a chain of events set in motion by a demon lord long ago.

Bear in mind that even the Lesser Gifts of a demon lord are powerful and hard to come by. There is (or should be, if GMed properly) a high risk factor in any summoning, and the demon lord must have a favourable reaction to the summoner if any deal is to be struck. Few generals would care to swell their army's ranks with demon warriors, even if they can seek out one of the demonologists powerful enough to make such a bargain. Only three cases of military use of demonic powers are recorded in the Land of Legend's history—each time by the extravagant, whimsical Kaikuhuru, for whom normal caution and logic seem meaningless.

Lastly, words of thanks to everyone who might have inspired or actively fed me with demonic ideas—in particular, Steve Ditko, Richard Lupoff, Miyamoto Musashi, Yvonne Newnham, Mike Polling, Jack Vance, Oliver Johnson and William Burroughs. Vance's short story 'The Miracle Workers' directly supplied the idea of possessions, and gives a vivid account of their effects. For a host of further demons, Professor M A R Barker's *Book of Ebon Bindings* is recommended. It details, with many colourful anecdotes, creatures for Barker's *Empire of the Petal Throne* game, but usable in any setting.

CHAPTER 4

THE LONG AND LEVEL SANDS

An adventure for 4th–5th rank characters

Overview

The action begins in Ta'amar, a teeming desert town on the border between the Sultanate of Opalar, the Nomad Khanates and the Caliphate of Zhenir.

Ta'amar's wealth comes from trade; it's technically just outside the borders of both Zhenir and Opalar, and unclaimed by any Khans, so it can trade officially with the nomads and Opalar, as well as semi-officially with Zhenir. Opalari merchants use Ta'amar as a base to get goods between all three kingdoms, though officially anything going from Zhenir to the Khanates or vice versa must first travel over the border into Opalar. Ta'amar is still a hotbed of intrigue and smuggling, though.

Players' Introduction

'Be it known to you that in the earliest days the great families of the Kaikubrans lived as nomad tribes in the desert lands west of where now stands the city of Sardonyx. The gods were high above them then, not yet ready to raise the Ancient Kaikubrans to the heights of their power, and each tribe carried with it its totem spirit, guardian deities who intermediated between the tribes and the celestial powers which guided their lives. In later years, as the tribes unified into the Ancient Kaikubran Empire, built their mighty civilization and finally began the slow fall into the decadence they know today, these totem spirits became degraded into mere demon-lords. Akresh, Tsienna, Eldyr and the others—now they

seal bargains of eldritch power with those mighty enough to summon them, but once they were deities themselves and the greatest among them remember those days with anguish and rage at the infidelity of the Ancient Kaikubran Race.'

This scroll fragment from the one of the great temples in Deliverance is shown to you by Astragard, a wandering sorcerer you met three days ago in the Lying Monkey bar in Ta'amar. He explains his plan: to travel south and enter the tomb of an Kaikubran noble called Gutheron of the House of Org. Gutheron was a pure-blood descendant of the tribe which worshipped Akresh in prehistoric times, and Astragard hopes to loot his tomb of many treasures relating to Akresh's powers. You ask about your share? Astragard laughs and claps a meaty hand down on the table—All the gold you can carry! There is vast treasure for the taking, and in a few months we will all return to Ta'amar town wealthy men!

You have a few days to buy whatever standard items you need at Astragard's expense. One lunchtime you are joined by one of the wizened old men who seem ubiquitous in Ta'amar. 'If you are the ones employed by Astragard,' he says through toothless gums, 'I have a parchment which you may want. Only give me a few coins for it so I can buy some food for my old belly.' After haggling he lets you have it for thirty florins, and wanders off into the pressing crowd in search of wine and opiates. The parchment is very, very old, written in ancient Kaikubran. You get it translated at a stall in the bazaar for five florins:

'As I die, I leave a testament of my faithlessness. We built

our master's resting place in the desert west of the great city, I and the venerated Koram, chief architect of Lord Gutheron of the House of Org. Above it we set a likeness of She in the Sky, so that She might look down into the place's depths. In the final chamber we put reverently the living statue of Thunder-in-the-Mountain—let not Lord Eldyr's son find it! Koram and I it was who saw to it that our fellow builders slept the righteous sleep next to our lord; after Nepthe's phial Koram slit their throats—but none feigned, all were in the Pleasant Garden already. Climbing then to the top of the place we blocked forever the ascending way so none will ever disturb our master's repose. We returned through the dreadful place of sacrificed bones, protected by our lord's gift, the sign of Man, through the place of mirrors where the shadows yet kept at bay, held by the Lady's light that we then shut out forever. With our sleeping friends we stood at last, our hearts beating fast as we thought on the journey to come, the phials in our trembling hands.

"Drink now," Koram said, "and let us lie forever over the gateway of death, my comrade", and so saying drank his draught to the dregs, but a fatal stay fell on my hands and the phial fell from them as my dying friend watched me betray my lord's faith. At last Koram slept in the Garden with our lord, but life in me still reigned. I took a torch, my writing scrolls and left that place. Yet by the demon whose eye I passed through I lost my way in the desert, parched by the Lady's now-merciless eye.'

Pity my bones, dear friend, and bury them under the drifting sands...'

The translator will, for a further 3 florins, explain that the script is written in a style typical of about 1000 to 1500 years ago, and will suggest that the 'great city' is probably Sardonyx, capital of the Ancient Kaikuhrans, and the allusions to 'Thunder-in-the-Mountain' and 'Lady in the Sky' refer respectively to the demon lord Akresh and the Kaikuhran goddess Cotalqueh.

GM's Introduction

The parchment above reappears at the back of the book, as a handout for you to give to the players.

Gutheron died 1200 years ago. He used his sorcerous and demonological powers to devise bindings to place on Akresh. He planned to use a holy relic of his ancestors to channel his powers against the demon lord and make himself invincible and immortal, but the relic was in the possession of

Lord Eldyr's half-human son (the man who now calls himself Astragard, widely known as the Black Serpent then), and Gutheron's agents recovered it too late. Gutheron died, then, and was buried. Astragard intended to loot the relic from the tomb at once, but then decided to leave it safely where it was while he searched the length and breadth of the land for the spells which would enable him to activate the relic's power. At last, after twelve centuries of study and preparation for this single moment, he believes himself ready. If he is correct, he has only to reach the holy relic, recite the arcane formulae and the unimaginable powers of a demon lord will be his to command.

ASTRAGARD

HALF-HUMAN SON OF LORD ELDYR;

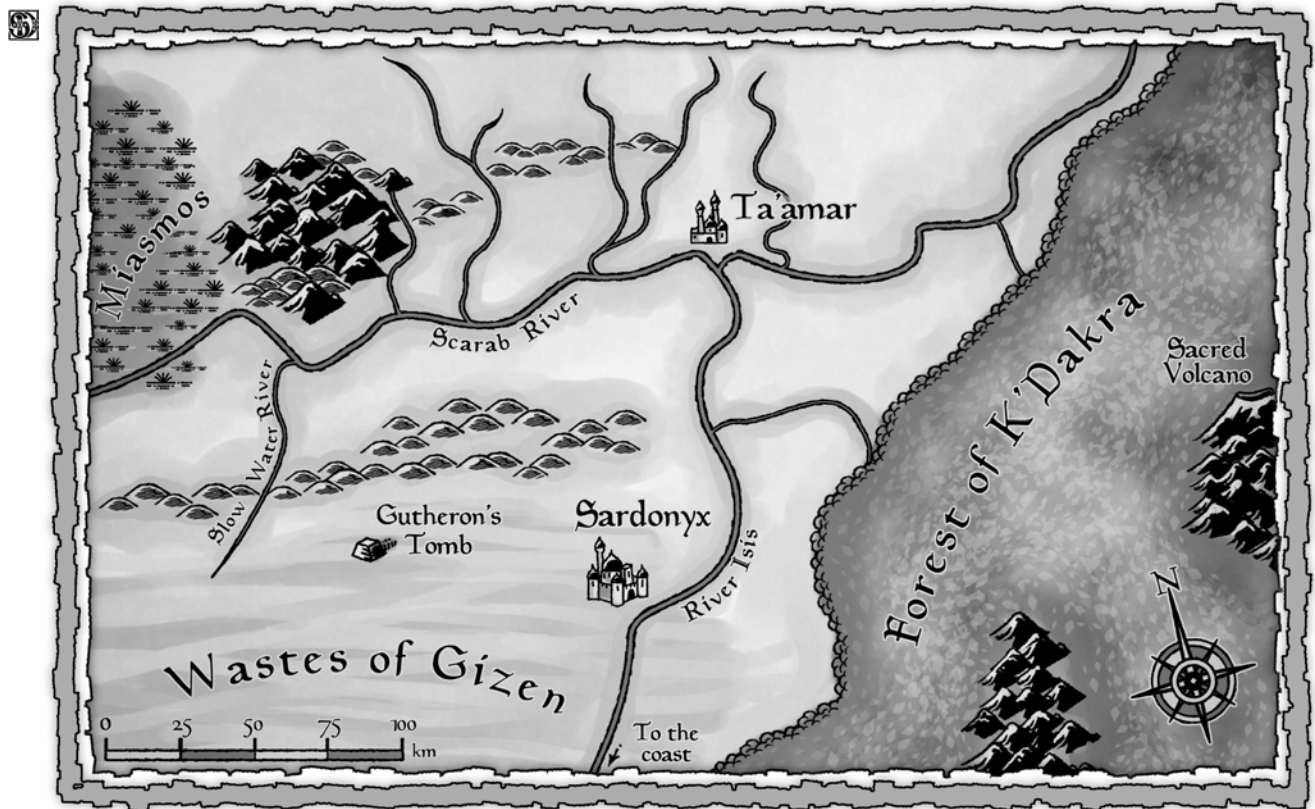
6TH-RANK DEMONOLOGIST

ATTACK 16, two-handed sword (d10, 5)	Armour Factor 3
DEFENCE 10	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK 23	EVASION 6
MAGICAL DEFENCE 13	STEALTH 17
Reflexes 18	PERCEPTION 7
Health Points 11	
Magic Points 21	

Treasure: +1 padded armour; The Ring of Negation; eucalyptus oil; 2 doses of strong poison (for bargaining with Sraim); miscellaneous components for summoning demons; possession talismans for Engala and Tsienna; +1 two-handed sword with a gem in the hilt that allows the wielder to *Teleport* (as the Mystic spell) once per day; The Key of the Dark Labyrinth; Crystal of Sraim
Summoning (one use; automatically summons a Sraim when shattered, with no need to match MAGICAL ATTACK against its MAGICAL DEFENCE to summon it).

Astragard has special knowledge of history, language, theology, and myth. Given a few minutes to converse with someone, he can attempt to *Enslave* them (*Dragon Warriors*, p. 85) at no Magic Point cost.

Astragard, the son of the demonic Lord Eldyr and a human woman, is a tall young man of almost androgynous beauty, but can appear in a number of illusory guises, usually as a hearty, middle-aged sorcerer with a huge red beard. He has demonic good luck, making him immune to harm from gremlins and allowing him to re-roll one die roll per day (though he must accept the result of the re-roll). He will not voluntarily handle silver (although it does not harm him); his true form is reflected in any silver mirror. He can see in the dark (darksight). Lord



Eldyr would react favourably to him if summoned but Astragard has sworn to his mother that he will never do this. Astragard is several thousand years old, and may be naturally immortal, in that he will not die of old age.

Astragard plans to go to Gutheron's tomb and there summon a Sraim to locate the relic he seeks.

Astute player-characters may realise from this that Astragard must once have owned the relic himself. He believes he can use the relic to bind Akresh. Astragard, sadly for himself, failed his Demonology skill roll and so miscalculated the magic formulae involved—the relic will not allow him to control Akresh, as he is simply not powerful enough.

KEESHA

CAT FAMILIAR

ATTACK 13, bite (d6, 3)

DEFENCE 10

MAGICAL ATTACK 12

MAGICAL DEFENCE 4

Reflexes 15

Health Points 10

Rank-equivalent: 3rd

Armour Factor 0

Movement 12m (25m)

EVASION 7

STEALTH 19

PERCEPTION 16 (elfsight)

Keesha is a demon cat about the size of a lynx. Keesha serves Astragard by virtue of the latter's demonic

parentage; he is both larger and more powerful than the typical demonic familiar. He grants Astragard the same benefits as any other demonologist familiar. If he bites a victim and inflicts any damage, he can match his MAGICAL ATTACK against their MAGICAL DEFENCE. If successful, he drains 1d6 Intelligence from them; this recovers at the rate of 1 point per hour, but if the victim is reduced to 0 intelligence he becomes unconscious.

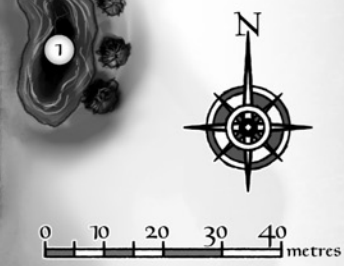
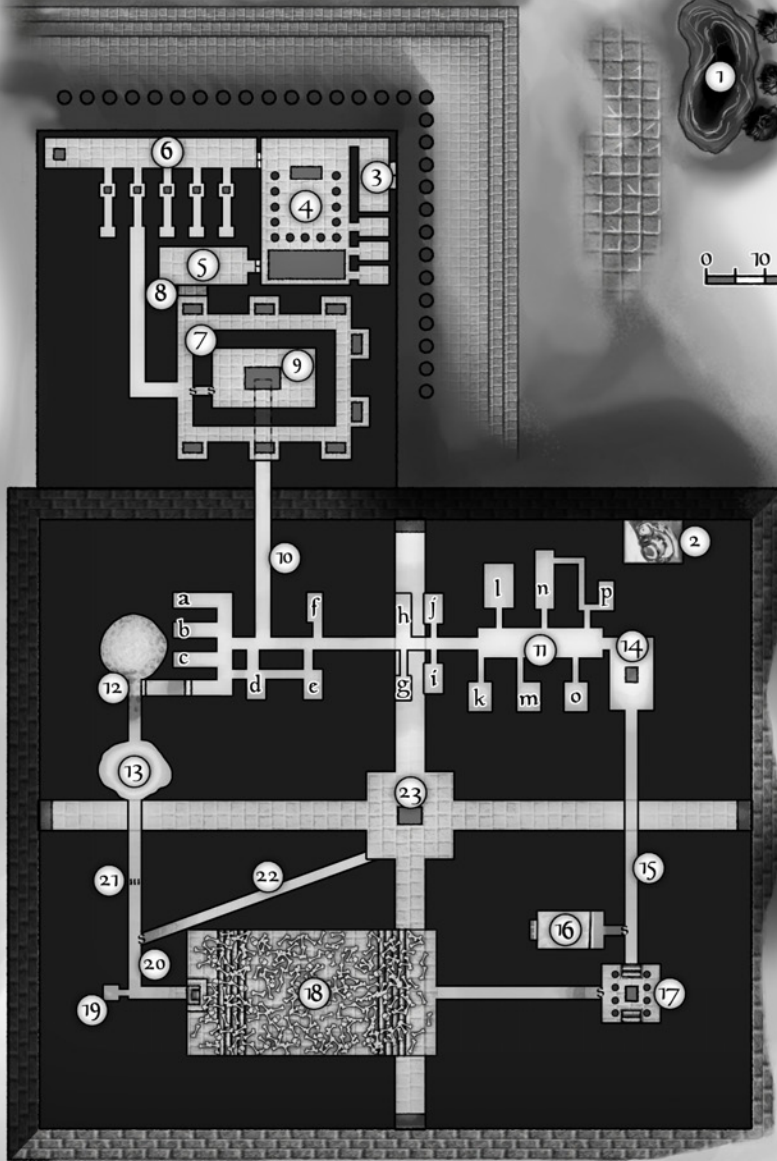
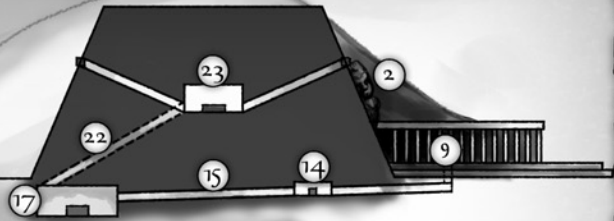
Gamesmaster's Material

The Journey to the Tomb

A week-long journey through a great flood plain leads to a 15m bluff with a narrow wadi snaking its way up to a plateau. An encounter should be rolled for now and once more before the adventurers reach the tomb complex; use the Desert Encounter Table (*Dragon Warriors Bestiary*, p. 12), but assume that any Adventurers rolled are in fact Bandits (3d6 in number).

The plateau is the Wastes of Gizen. It consists

The Tomb of Gutheron of Org



of enormous sand dunes, some as much as 20-30m high. No tracks are visible; the sun beats down remorselessly. From now on the party will consume water rations at four times the normal rate—around two waterskins' worth of water per person per day.

Note the party's water supplies, and if the water supply runs out, subtract the following per character per day for days without water:

-2 Strength; -2d4 Health Points; -2 Intelligence

A character reduced to 0 Strength or Intelligence by this will become unconscious. A character reduced to negative Strength or Intelligence will die.

The Tomb Complex

Two days' journey into the wastes is a broad pavement constructed of jagged stones. A mile further on, it disappears into the side of an enormous dune, with a gigantic head 15m up its side. To the right of the pavement lies a low ruined building surrounded by a ruined colonnade, disappearing into the dune.

1. The Oasis

To the left of the pavement is a shallow puddle of stagnant water surrounded by stunted palm trees. No recent footprints can be seen.

Encounters (only if water is taken from the oasis). Daytime: 25% Amorph (reroll every 15 minutes of game time). Night-time: 100% Amorph (see p. 17; 35 Points).

In the sludge underneath the water lie numerous human and animal bones. A 30-minute search may reveal a silver sceptre worth 155F with curious arcane inlays that increase its antique value to about 500F. Because of the rotting corpses, treat the water as a medium-strength poison. Anyone who drinks has a 10% chance of catching Wasting Fever (*Dragon Warriors*, p. 126).

2. The Colossal head

The head is the tip of a 15m statue of the Goddess Cotalqueh; only highly knowledgeable characters (having a background of Priest, Scribe or Professor; or perhaps a particularly scholarly and/or local Sorcerer or Mystic) will recognise her. The climb

up to the head because of the shifting sand is quite hazardous (Difficulty Factor 15). However, because of the cushioning effect of the sand, subtract 4 from falling damage.

The eyes (a type of sapphire, about 500F) of the statue glitter in the sunlight and can be prised out after about two hours' labour. However, any weapon (unless magical) used to extract the eyes will become very blunt (-1 to Damage and Armour Bypass Roll). No light will reach room 14 if they are removed, as they focus the sunlight.

3. The Mortuary Temple

The single entrance in the east wall leads to a vestibule, the floor of which is covered with drifts of sand and the imprints of many feet, some human and some of an odd cloven shape.

A melech will be encountered here (see p. 18; 18 Health Points). The melech appears as an old hermit. Its orders when bound were: 'Misdirect strangers and allow none to pass through the bronze double doors.' It may ask characters to bring it a drink from the oasis, and if they succeed it will be better disposed towards them—though it must follow its orders to the letter. If Astragard suspects it is a demon (give the PCs a chance to spot this first) he will try to banish it at once. The melech always keeps in the shadows, as its own shadow would reveal its true shape.

4. The Open Courtyard

The two double doors in the west wall are solid bronze. The northern door is embossed with a swirling pattern decorated with battling demonic bodies. The southerly one is embossed with a skull and the sigil of the Ancient Kaikuhran god Nebrovolent (Astragard will recognise it). They are unlocked.

Behind the middle of the three wooden doors on the east wall lie two desiccated corpses in a state of perfect preservation, in leather armour, seemingly cut by a sword in several places (actually the melech's sword). They have swords, javelins, shields and about 20F scattered about. The melech will try at all costs to stop the adventurers from entering this room, although it will let them in the other two (empty). Knowing that if the player-characters discover the corpses he is likely to be slain and his servitude finished, he has clawed a riddle in the Ancient Kaikuhran tongue on the courtyard wall:

‘To find that which you desire seek out misfortune.’ It refers to the gremlin statue in 6, which the adventurers must pass to reach the tomb complex proper. The pool here is now dry.

5. Nebrovolent Shrine

Set into the south side is a 1.5m-high altar. In front of it is a large pewter plate with an offering of extremely desiccated meat. A thin layer of dust covers everything. There is script in Ancient Kaikuhran etched into the plinth of the altar. ‘Lay yourself, human, as a sacrifice on Nebrovolent’s altar’.

The wall behind the altar is hollow (8) and is a cavity filled with a hermetically sealed gas cloud (strong poison); it is quite viscous, and will only affect player-characters actually standing on the altar; others will have time to move away. Survivors may move through 8.

6. The Demon Passage

Long and unlit. Five slits just wide enough for a large human to wriggle through stand about 2.5m up on the south wall. Behind each slit stands a statue of a demon associated with the tomb complex. They are the b’krath, the rult, the stalker, the gremlin and Akresh himself. Behind the statues, apart from the gremlin, a narrow passage leads to a tiny offering room in which gifts appropriate to each demon have been placed. There is no offering behind the gremlin’s statue; in fact, a corridor leads off to 7. None of these gifts are necessary for the binding of the demon; they are of merely ceremonial significance.

STATUE	GIFT
The b’krath	A gold-covered wooden figurine of a panther.
The rult	A skull made of mosaic tiles.
The stalker	A flute made from a human thigh-bone.
Akresh	Plates of precious metals, worth 850F.

A large statue (3m high) stands at the end of the demon passageway of a warrior in ancient armour wielding a war mace over the body of a fallen foe. An inscription at its base (in Ancient Kaikuhran) reads: ‘The Lord Gutheron of the House of Org’.

As the player-characters pass the gremlin statue a real gremlin will slip out of a concealed cubby hole at the back and follow them doggedly through the complex, keeping as well concealed as possible. Originally there were two gremlins, but one of them

followed the hapless architect (whose death note the adventurers may possess,) and caused him to lose his way in the desert.

GREMLIN (see p. 20)

11 Health Points

Treasure: Ring of Dark Madness. This ring allows the wearer to cast a *Benight* spell (*Dragon Warriors*, p. 105) once per day with a MAGICAL ATTACK of 13.

7. Corridor of the Sleeping Ones

Unlit with plain granite walls. The eight granite sarcophagi are open, with 3-4 desiccated corpses piled one upon another in each. Empty phials are littered around each sarcophagus, and each of the corpses’ throats has been cut. These are the builders’ graves mentioned in the player’s Ancient Kaikuhran script. The character with the highest PERCEPTION score will discover the hinged granite slab that leads to 9.

8. hollow Wall

Gas-filled cavity. See area 5 for effect.

9. Koram’s Wraith

In here is a basalt sarcophagus with a phial of amber-coloured strong poison. Inside is a corpse in magisterial robes, an empty phial in one hand, and an ornately covered dagger blackened with what appears to be dried blood in the other. Its throat has not been cut, and a horrible rictus grin is frozen on its desiccated face.

Encounters: Koram’s Wraith at all times.

KORAM

ATTACK –

DEFENCE 4

MAGICAL ATTACK 1d10 per
Combat Round ATTACK is
delayed

MAGICAL DEFENCE 11

Reflexes 11

Health Points 15

Rank-equivalent 5th

Armour Factor 0 (immune
to non-magical weapons)
Movement 15m

EVASION 4

STEALTH 10

PERCEPTION 13 (dark sight)

Hidden Spots

The bottom of the sarcophagus is a granite slab that can be prised up to reveal a shaft leading 6m downwards into the darkness with room for only one average-sized humanoid at a time. A mould-

ered bit of rope hangs from a metal stanchion and disappears down to 10. If the old rope is used for the descent it has a 10% chance of snapping (roll separately for each character using it), increased to 15% for any character wearing armour of AF4 or AF5. Remember that the gremlin will alter the chance of falling if present.

10. Funeral Corridor

Totally unlit. The light of torches or lanterns will reveal bas-reliefs etched on the walls—a large funeral procession making its way towards a vast, truncated pyramid across a desert. Some mourners wear cloaks made of birds feathers, others masks that resemble the faces of desert creatures such as jackals and hyenas. Bas-reliefs further down the corridor depict various ceremonies being performed on a corpse by purple-robed figures. Over the corpse as if hovering in mid-air is depicted a squatting, rotund figure, its head surrounded by black clouds and thunderbolts; in each hand he holds the top of a mountain.

Scholarly characters, or those from the local area, will recognise the pyramid structure as a typical ancient Kaikuhran noble tomb, the purple-robed priests as priests of Nebrovolent, the ancient Kaikuhran god of death. Demonologists will recognise the mountain-shaking demon as Akresh (see p. 25).

Traps: a *Shadowbolt* spell will leap from a black gem set in the wall and strike anyone who walks within 2m of the Akresh relief.

11. The Gallery of Offerings

The arches off the central corridor lead to rough-hewn chambers where gems and precious metals glint in the torchlight. If any of the side chambers are entered, as the first character steps through an arch, translucent grey hands thrust down, out of the stone ceiling and into his skull. At the same moment, a terrible shriek will be heard which affects anyone who hears it with a *Weaken* spell (MAGICAL ATTACK 18). The character attacked will suffer a strength 8 Fright Attack, after which the ghostly hands dissolve into thick acrid smoke. If still alive, the character may be blinded by the fumes (treat as a weak poison. If the roll is failed, he is blinded for 2d4 hours rather than killed. If the roll is successful, there is no effect). Each treasure niche will have this effect only once, and a *Dispel Magic* will suppress

the defence for two minutes.

The side chamber contents are as follows:

- a. A mahogany figurine of Gutheron on horseback, armed for war. Artistic merit but no intrinsic value.
- b. A jewelled fan, worth 200F. Anyone fanning themselves for more than one minute will enter a trance-like state for one hour. This trance is intended as a psychedelic diversion, typical of Ancient Kaikuhran amusements, but is also quite refreshing and enables the character to regain 2d4 Magic Points (if he has any).
- c. A gold statue of Gutheron hunting, worth 2000F.
- d.. An alabaster sceptre. This functions as both a +1 Mace, and a Periapt.
- e.. A bronze coffer with gold and gems worth 5000F.
- f. A bust of Gutheron's wife, Yashara, in blue marble streaked with white.
- g. A gold pectoral (worth 2500F) with an Ankh of Osiris set into it.
- h. A rosewood throne set with gems and silver inlays, total value of 12000F. Note: this item is very heavy.
- i. Fourteen grey candles set in a vortex pattern. When lit these summon one of Gutheron's ancestors back from the vortex of Nebrovolent (treat as a Wight; *Bestiary*, p. 85), which will attack any intruders immediately. The candles lose this power if moved.
- j. Gutheron's favourite bow, and a quiver with ten arrows. The arrows are all +2 arrows.
- k. A number of staves of office, apparently all solid gold but in fact merely wood covered in gold leaf.
- l. A large shield with Nebrovolent's symbol inscribed upon it. This gives the user +2 DEFENCE.
- m. A silver mask inlaid with sapphires and jet, worth 3500F
- n. A large obsidian statue of Akresh, represented as a muscular and heavily armoured warrior.
- o. A silver truncated pyramid about two feet high. This is hollow and when opened will be found to contain gold and gems worth 6000F
- p. An 8' tall statue of a bulbous, roughly humanoid warrior with spiked clubs in place of hands. There is no *Weaken/Fright Attack* effect in this chamber, but the moment anyone enters the statue animates.

ANIMATED STATUE

ATTACK 18, club (d6+2, 5)	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 13	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE –	STEALTH 10
Reflexes 10	PERCEPTION 13 (panoptical)
Health Points 22	
Rank-equivalent: 6th	

The animated statue is unaffected by direct-attack spells, and so has NO MAGICAL DEFENCE score. When there are no living creatures in the Pit of the Night Demons (16), the statue will de-animate.

Exits: Through 12. In addition, the character

with the highest PERCEPTION will notice that one of the granite blocks of the walls is slightly protuberant compared to the rest of the wall. If this is prised away, a low passageway will be seen leading to 14. There will also be a faint glimmer of light.

12. The False Door

Like the other alcoves in 10, a *Weaken/Fright Attack* will be made on anyone attempting to pass under the archway of this niche.

The adventurers will see a small snake slither away through a crack in the far wall. This wall is of thin plaster, and if broken down leads to a 10m-long passageway. At the end is an ornate wooden portal with skull bas-reliefs carved into it. It surrounds double doors with life-size statuettes of strange cult priests protruding from them. They open inwards.

When the first door is opened a complex pulley system within the first statue is activated, a slab of stone will drop down a slot behind the party in the north wall, and a cascade of loose pebbles will fall from an overhead shaft upon the backs of anyone in front of the double doors (speed 12). Anyone struck by the pebbles will receive d6 +3 damage, and must roll Strength or less on 3d6. If this roll is failed the character has been swept down a steep passageway behind the doors to 13. Two more rolls (this time rolling Strength or less on 4d6, or 5d6 for the last one) are allowed before the character is swept into a pit full of quicksand (13). There is about 3m between the quicksand and the lip of the pit.

13. Quicksand Pit

A stalker (see p. 18; 24 Health Points) hides here. It will not come forth until the adventurers reach 21. The pit is about 10m across; on the other side of it an ascending passageway disappears into the darkness (see 21 and 22).

14. Summoning Room

A glimmer of reddish light comes from an opening 6m up the north wall which is a shaft about 30cm square leading to the eye gems of the statue at 2. If these have been removed the light will be very dim. A thin layer of dust covers a chalked pentangle that encloses the marble plinth in here. On it is a brass hand-bell with sun symbols on it. It has no clapper inside it. Instead a precious gem lies underneath

(1500F). If the eyes of the statue at 2 are still in place then the gem, if left on the plinth, will focus light down gallery 15, illuminating its entire length so it can be seen. A few specks of what appears to be gold dust may be seen to sparkle in the sunlight or from the light of torches.

This room was used to summon the b'krath that stalks 15. The summoner, however, nervous of failure, arranged some protection for himself through his light focusing mechanism. The gold-dust on the floor is the remains of a supply the summoner had ready in case he had to strike a bargain.

15. The Corridor of Mirrors

The entire length is covered by wall-mirrors. Characters looking at their images will find them diminishing into infinite regress. It is frequently difficult to recognise oneself in the images; it is as if they were being subtly distorted. There is a slight downward gradient.

The door to 17 is made of wood and engraved with serpentine forms, some of them patterned as if in an ornate script. A mirror (2m × 2m) hangs over the door lintel reflecting the whole length of the corridor. It is made of enchanted silver (value 3000F) and will reflect Astragard's true form (that is, if the other players notice in the confusion of the b'krath attack). It will also reveal such things as stolen items concealed on players, any disguises they may have assumed, for example, invisibility. It is linked with the sky goddess Cotalqueh, who in the ancient world was a goddess of seeing the truth, among other things. This symbol is engraved on its back. The mirror will continue to reveal hidden secrets even if removed from its present location. The script on the door in in Ancient Kaikuhran and reads: 'The last resting place of Gutheron and the Thunder-in-the-Mountains, beware lest men of deceit accompany you'.

Encounter: B'krath at all times (see p. 16; 24 Health Points), but it will attack with less efficiency if corridor is lit by the prism in room 14.

Hidden Spots: One of the mirrors towards the end of the corridor swings in to reveal room 16.

16. Pit of the Night Demons

Just past the entrance is a 3m-wide marble platform. The rest of the room is a 4m-deep pit full of swirling mist, so that no pike, spear etc., can touch the bottom from the platform. The mists muffle the

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sound of anything thrown into them. Within the mists dwell minor spirits. Anyone immersed more than a foot into the mist will be subject to a **MAGICAL ATTACK** of 17; if effective, this attack causes 2d6 damage, which appears as livid bruising under the character's armour. The attacks will continue each round until the character leaves the mist.

In a niche on the other side of the pit is some jewelled armour. It is black with a cobalt blue decoration and a three-pointed star symbol in sapphires on the chest. It counts as +2 mail armour, with the sapphire working as an Amulet of Sovereignty over Violence.

This was Gutheron's famed Harmonic Armour. It is enchanted so that it follows the actions of whoever wears the matching helmet. Normally this meant that Gutheron would wear the helmet and armour together, thus effectively augmenting his strength in combat because the armour follows the helmet-wearer's actions with its own strength of 19 (+2 to Armour Bypass Rolls and damage). The

helmet is presently on Gutheron's mummified body (room 23).

Jumping: because there is very little landing space at the other side of the pit, leaping across it is tricky (roll under Reflexes on 2d10).

17. Room of the Cobras

If the player-characters stop to listen, they will hear a pronounced hissing noise coming from this room before they enter it.

The steep flight of steps leads down into the low, false burial chamber intended to fool plunderers. A large unopened granite sarcophagus stands at the foot of the steps. Other steps lead upwards on the other side of the room to a wall painting. The high ceiling is loosely raftered with cedarwood, and large areas of disturbed rafters are visible. The roof is supported by cedarwood pillars. Thousands of hissing snakes cover the floor, stairways, pillars and rafters.

The wall painting shows Gutheron with his

DRAGON WARRIORS

back to the chamber actually holding the sun in his right hand. A tracery of fire stretches over his head to his other hand. The sun in his right hand may possibly indicate the only other exit to the room, a movable granite block high up in the western wall (6m). A heap of smashed wood lies in one corner of the room; this used to be the ladder to this door, but was smashed practically beyond recognition by Koram and his accomplice.

Encounters: Vipers, everywhere. Giant Vipers hidden in the rafters will drop on anyone inspecting the sarcophagus.

VIPERS

ATTACK 12, bite (d3, 1), poison	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 4	Movement 12m
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 3
MAGICAL DEFENCE 1	STEALTH 19
Reflexes 17	PERCEPTION 8 (normal)
Health Points 1d6+3	
Rank-equivalent: 1st	

Vipers are small snakes, typically no more than 1m long, but quite venomous.

GIANT VIPERS

ATTACK 13, bite (d3, 2), treat as a strong poison	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 5	Movement 15m
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 2
MAGICAL DEFENCE 1	STEALTH 18
Reflexes 15	PERCEPTION 9 (normal)
Health Points 10, 10, 11, 12, 13, 13, 14	
Rank-equivalent: 2nd	

The sarcophagus holds the desiccated corpse of a man dressed in antique robes. He holds an idol in one hand. It is made of wood and depicts a squatting, malevolent-looking god or demon.

Naturally it will not deceive Astragard, who knows just what he is looking for. The idol will detect as strongly magical but is in fact useless.

18. The Judgement Room

The room is carpeted with human bones and skulls, in most places to a depth of nearly a metre. A throne stands in the middle of the west wall on the dais. Large bas-reliefs, apparently of Ancient Kaikuhran gods, cover the walls on either side.

Encounter: A rult (see p. 18; 19 Health Points) will manifest itself through the bones along with

four Skeletons with shortswords.

SKELETONS

ATTACK 11, shortsword (d8, 3)	Armour Factor 0 (2 vs stabbing weapons)
DEFENCE 5	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 3
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	STEALTH 13
Reflexes 10	PERCEPTION 7 (gloom-sight)
Health Points 5, 6, 7, 7	
Rank-equivalent 1st	

The rult's orders were: 'Kill any who enter this chamber after the tomb is sealed'. Whenever the rult teleports it appears to dissolve into a grey fog and merge with the body it is teleporting through.

The throne bears an inscription in Kaikuhran script: 'Let no one sit here but Gutheron, who Judges the People, Death will come to the usurper.'

The whole throne is in fact a trap. Anyone sitting on it will activate a catch which will swing it around activating a flight of javelins concealed at 19. There are six of these, each of which will target a randomly determined party member with a speed of 18. The mechanism will operate silently and a replica throne with an identical inscription will appear in its place on the far wall. This is the only way the player-characters can reach 19 from here; by operating the trap.

19. Alcove

Small alcove with six empty (or full if the PCs approach from 13) arbalests on a frame. A cord attached to the throne runs back down the corridor.

20. Ceiling Entrance

Concealed in the ceiling of this long corridor is the way up. It is a large granite slab, 5m up, almost identical to the others that line the ceiling. The character with the highest PERCEPTION score will spot it, if the ceiling is examined.

21. Portcullis

This will be dropped by the gremlin at this point, trapping any PCs descending the corridor. He will also cast his *Benight* spell using his Ring of Dark Madness. The portcullis itself is made out of incredibly hard stone and will require one man one week to break through. The stone to either side of it is softer and could be removed in 3 days, without magic.

Encounters: At some stage the stalker will rise out of the pit (13), though it will conceal itself from the party at first.

The stalker's orders were 'Pursue any who loot the tomb and slay them individually, then return'. It may thus attack survivors of the party after they have returned to Tamary and (they think) safety.

22. Ascending Corridor

Bas-reliefs on the walls of this gallery depict a number of creatures—in progression; jaguars, snakes, spiders, eagles and scorpions. An enchantment causes anyone walking along the gallery to lose one point from, in turn, Strength, Looks, Intelligence, Psychic Talent, and Reflexes as they pass each of the five creatures depicted. If the character walks up and down the gallery he/she will lose points each time. These characteristics later recover at the rate of one point per hour. A *Dispel Magic* will suppress the gallery's enchantment for two minutes, making it safe to traverse.

The passageway is blocked by a plaster wall. If this is pierced a large granite block will begin sliding down the corridor. Total the party's Strength; they must roll under this on 12d6 to stop the block. If there are three failures by the party, assume that the block is now moving so swiftly that it cannot be stopped. Do not forget to deduct further Strength if the party are forced back past the jaguar glyphs. The block will push any player-characters through 20. Anyone surviving the fall of 6m may be crushed (and instantly killed) by the block when it falls at a Speed of 12, unless they evade it.

23. The Burial Chamber

A sarcophagus rests in the exact centre of the room. Ramps 4m across disappear into the darkness at the four cardinal points. They slope steeply upwards and have large round blocks lying at their ends. The sarcophagus lies open. In it lies a human skeleton with a jade sceptre in its right hand and wearing a helmet of black metal, like 17. A squat rock idol of a monstrous god/demon stands at the head of the sarcophagus. A Kaikuhran inscription is etched into the side of the sarcophagus: 'Stand firm even in the grip of death, O servitor of Akresh'. Anyone lifting the idol will cause the following to happen:

a. There will be a roar as if of distant thunder draw-

ing swiftly near.

b. The blocks plugging the ramps will give way at exactly the same time and come hurtling down the ramps. Characters can attempt to evade them (Speed 10), dying if they fail. Characters who remain firm will find themselves merely enclosed in a neat frame as the round blocks meet with a crash and come to rest in a cloud of dust. The blocks are about 3m high and can be vaulted easily. Sand will begin coursing down the ramps, and as soon as the sand clears from the top of the pyramid, sunlight (or starlight) will be shining into the tomb chamber through the holes left by the blocks in the outer casing.

c. Gutheron's skeleton will rise up as a mummy and attack with a horrible cry of rage.

GUTHERON'S CORPSE (MUMMY)

ATTACK 19, sceptre (d8+1, 4)	Armour Factor 1
DEFENCE 13	Movement 10m (15m)
MAGICAL ATTACK -	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 9	STEALTH 15
Reflexes 12	PERCEPTION 12 (darksight)
Health Points 20	
Rank-equivalent: 7th	

Although retaining his former intelligence, Gutheron does not retain full awareness of his condition. He will fight single-mindedly to destroy those who invade his tomb, and his primary aim will be to protect the sacred relic. He recognises Astragard (whom he knows as the Black Serpent) in any guise, and will treat him as the principal foe.

If Gutheron is wearing the helmet for his harmonic armour (and he will be, unless the characters have removed it), then the character wearing the armour will immediately find the armour duplicating Gutheron's own movements with an effective Strength of 19. The link between helmet and armour can be broken for two minutes with *Dispel Magic*.

Treasure: Idol for summoning of Akresh. This relic negates Akresh's MAGICAL DEFENCE bonuses against summoning and binding, and reduces Akresh's MAGICAL DEFENCE against the wielder by -2. Astragard has made some fatal miscalculations, though, believing that the relic would enable him to easily bind the demon prince, it would in fact, take centuries to master the formulae needed to operate the relic.

Exits: Four ramps give onto the dune covering the top of the pyramid.

CHAPTER 5

A BOX OF OLD BONES

An adventure for six characters of 1st-2nd rank

DM's Introduction

THE LIFE OF an adventurer is constantly threatened by the powers of evil and darkness, and the advantage of owning a relic is obvious. Relics—the bodily fragments or personal effects of saints—possess sacred power, and are physical evidence of the truth and history of the religion. Monasteries prize these items for another reason, however. Possession of a relic gives the monastery status and prestige. Still more mundanely, a monastery that owns a renowned relic is more likely to attract notice, and to receive the rich endowments that nobles hand out in their pious moments. Men (even holy men) being what they are, this means that fake relics abound, and monasteries vie for ownership of the authentic ones with a zeal that is often all too secular.

This, then, is a tale of human greed.

Osterlin Abbey houses a priceless relic: the mortal remains of Saint Giles. Great lords and ladies come from far away to venerate the relic, often bringing lavish gifts for the Abbey's coffers. The monks of Osterlin live well as a result.

Recently, a knight called Notker of Balcorn was engaged by the monks of a rival abbey who wish to obtain the relic. They had already sent one of their number to join Osterlin as a novice and thus have a spy within the abbey walls. Their spy had

assessed the lay brothers whose job it is to guard the relic. When the time was right, he bribed those he deemed most venal so they would allow Notker to enter the church at dead of night and substitute the bones of some nonentity for those of the famous saint.

The plan is for Notker to visit the abbey for a few days. One of the travelling-chests of his entourage will contain a skeleton which he can switch for the true relic on the last night of his visit. The theft should not be detected until he is long gone—if indeed it ever is.

But this elegant plan has developed a fatal flaw at its outset. The spy misjudged the character of one of those he tried to bribe; as soon as he pocketed the money, this man went secretly to the abbot and told him what had happened. Seeing a means to embarrass the local monks, weed out untrustworthy lay brothers, and even pick up a little cash from the bribes the spy was offering, Father Eorwin instructed him to give no indication that anything was amiss. 'Accept further bribes as they are offered, invent difficulties for which you will need even more. Breathe no word of this to any other lay brother, for others may not have your own exemplary nature.'

As the lay brother left (perhaps happily con-



templating the advancement which he had surely secured for himself), the abbot began to make plans of his own. Calling the monks together in the Chapter House, he told them the whole story. Many were outraged, demanding immediate expulsion of the guilty lay brothers, and some form of action against the rival order. Eorwin lifted his hand for silence. 'But if they want our relic so badly,' he said with a smile half saintly and half rather devilish, 'we should allow them to steal it...'

The relic was quietly removed to the abbot's house for temporary safekeeping. Thus, unbeknownst to Notker and his accomplices, they will merely be switching their skeleton for another that is no less sacred.

Players'

Introduction

You have often heard travellers mention Osterlin Abbey, famous for the bones of St Giles the Martyr that are kept in a reliquary in the church there. The hospitality shown

to wayfarers is scarcely less famous and perhaps this is why, on your way to Hesard's Ford (or any other destination), you consider it worth a slight detour to visit the abbey.

It is late in the afternoon as you approach. Sunlight sparkles off the brook that provides the monks with drinking water and a plentiful supply of fish. A few peasants in shabby rags wander in a line through the meadows. They have just collected pork and grain from the abbey's almonry. Lay brothers have been hard at work tending the fields, but now they are hurrying back for vespers.

You are met by a slightly built monk who seems to be the guest-master. 'Alas!' he says, shaking his head as you approach. 'We cannot take you in. Sir Notker of Balcom and his retinue presently occupy the larger of our guest houses, while the other must be kept ready for a group of pilgrims who will be arriving shortly. I am sorry.'

'What are you saying, Giraldu?' calls out an elderly monk who has been helping pass out the alms. 'Would you have these good people sleep in the fields, with this cold wind coming down from the north? There are a few pallets in the lay brothers' dormitory, I'm sure.'

Brother Giraldu complies at once. As he leads you away towards the lay brothers' dormitory, he tells you that the elderly monk was Eorwin, the abbot.

The Abbey

1. Smaller Guesthouse

The guest-master, Brother Giraldu, and two assistants occupy a room here. The other rooms are empty, awaiting the arrival of a pilgrim group on the morrow.

2. Larger Guesthouse

This is where Notker and his companions have been staying.

3. Well

4. Almonry

5. Stables

6. Fishpond

7. Orchard

There are apple and pear trees here, and a number of beehives clustered by the cellarium.

8. Lay Brothers' Dormitory

This occupies the top floor of the building above the cellarium (store room) and lay brothers' frater, or living quarters. The player characters will be sharing it with the menials from Notker's entourage, and with fifty lay brothers and novices. Apart from Cadric, all the NPCs here are normal men with no combat experience.

9. The Cloister

The hub of monastic life. The section adjacent to the church constitutes the scriptorium. Here, in bays called carrels, monks spend part of each day reading and copying manuscripts.

10. Water-Trough

This stone bowl has running water for the monks to wash their hands before dinner.

11. Kitchen

12. Dining hall

13. Calfactory

A fire burns here throughout the day in winter, so that any monk who gets too cold while working in the scriptorium can come to warm his hands.

14. Monks' Dormitory

The dormitory is over the monks' frater (common room), and extends above the chapter house and library right up to the south transept of the church. From here, the night stairs (24d) lead down into the church. There are some twenty-five monks usually resident in the dormitory, and none of these have more than basic fighting skill.

15. The Abbot's Lodging

This is Father Eorwin's private house, usually also occupied by a couple of monks or lay brothers who act as his secretary and servant.

16. Reredorter, or latrine

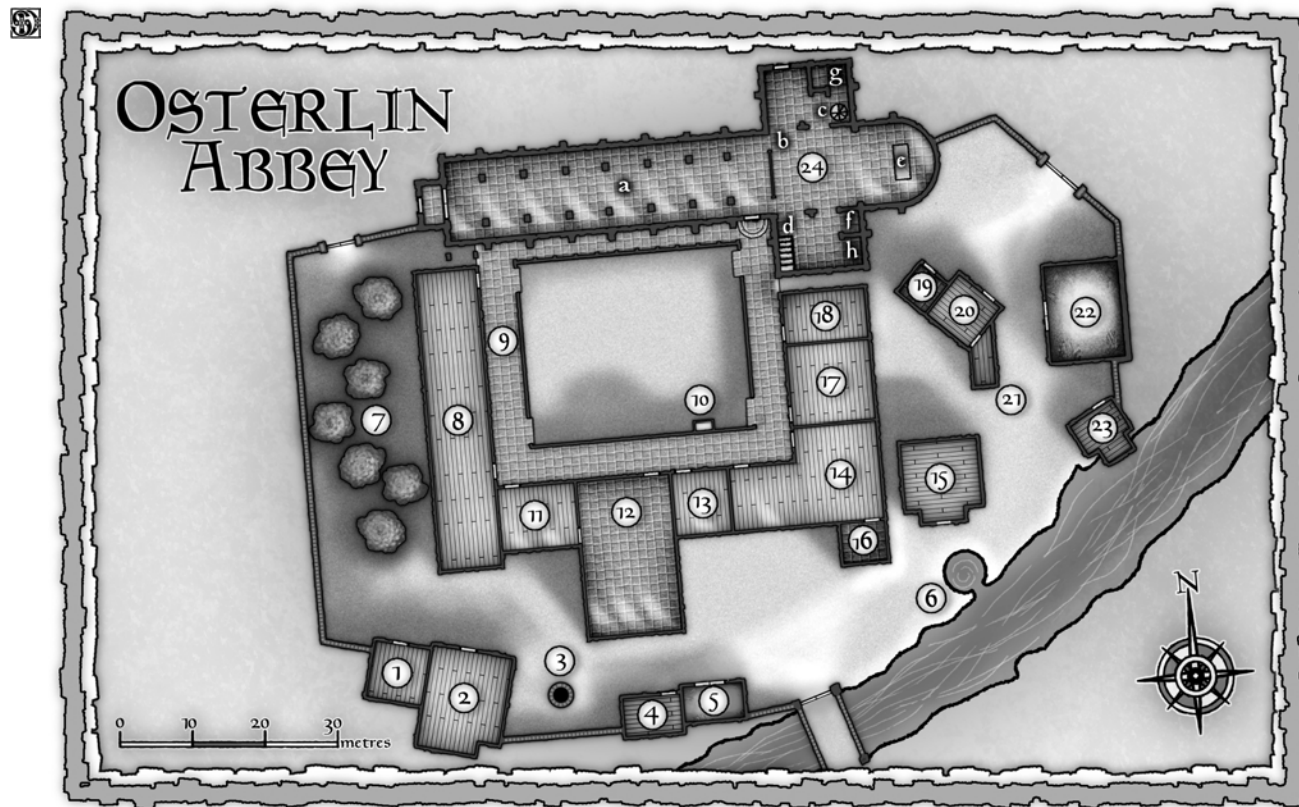
An ingenious sewage system leads underground into the stream.

17. Chapter house

This is on the ground floor, under the monks' dormitory. The monks assemble here daily to discuss the running of the abbey and other secular business.

18. Library

This houses about two hundred scrolls and five hundred books—many of the latter chained up. Even if they could gain access (it is kept locked and only the librarian, claustral prior and Father Eorwin have keys) most adventurers would find the contents rather boring.



19. Chapel

This small place of worship is attached to the infirmary.

20. Infirmary

This is for the treatment of sick and elderly monks. The infirmarian here is Brother Odilo, a jovial fellow whose cheeks are often flushed with drink. He sees to all medical treatment as well as the blood-letting which every monk enjoys twice yearly. In these tasks Odilo substitutes enthusiasm and goodwill in place of medical skill.

21. Infirmary Kitchen

22. Barn

23. Mill

24. The Church

By night this is an eerie place, illuminated only by

the red glare of the sanctuary lamp and the moonbeams streaming through stained glass windows. The first service of the day, consisting of Nocturns and then the Lauds of the Dead, takes place a half-hour after midnight. The various parts of the church are:

- a. The nave
- b. Rood screen: a large carved and painted screen surmounted by an ornate crucifix.
- c. A newel stairway that leads up to the belfry and down to the undercroft. Several abbots and prestigious benefactors are buried in the undercroft, while others are in the graveyard outside.
- d. Night stairs down from the monks' dormitory. When the PCs come upon Notker *et al*, the stairway will be occupied by the ghostly manifestation of Adamnan's magic Whispering Hat.
- e. Chancel with altar and decorated with ornate panelling
- f. Sacristy
- g. Chantry chapel bequeathed by Gefmund, father of the present baron.
- h. Reliquary chapel. The cause of all the trouble is kept here in a silver casket inlaid with mother-of-pearl and supported by two partly gilded silver angels. Tonight, of course, the remains of St Giles reside elsewhere and the bones of an old peasant are accorded a temporary honour.

The Adventure: timeline

Evening

The player-characters and any companions they have with them are given pallets in the lay brothers' dormitory. This is certainly unusual for persons of any standing (presumably some of the characters, at least, will be knights), but is sometimes necessary at important abbeys such as this, which may have to accommodate several groups at once. If any of the group are wizards of any type, they would know to keep quiet about it. Such folk, often thought pagan, are rarely welcome at a monastery.

Many of the lay-brothers were taken in by the monks at a very early age and have spent their whole lives around the cloister. Some were freemen who joined in later life but these are still for the most part young men. One is of the gentry—Cadric (see stats); he is still learning to be humble and may become very belligerent if the characters try to treat him in an overbearing manner.

Along with the lay brothers, they are sharing the dormitory with the menials from Notker's entourage. If they care to question these menials they will soon discover they are not peasants from Notker's manor (as might be expected) but were hired at a good rate from the village of Ashmore. Ashmore lies some three days journey away on the far side of Hel-fax Wood. It seems that when Notker first arrived there he was travelling with a group of monks.

If the characters are beginning to show an interest in their tale the menials will expect a few silver pieces for the last tidbit: the monks who were with Notker were not from Osterlin Abbey.

Supper

Supper follows vespers. Everyone, including guests and lay brothers, eats together. The characters sit at Father Eorwin's table along with Notker and his retinue, but no talking is permitted as one of the monks is reading aloud from Barnabas's *Life of St Giles*. The long tables are a flurry of motion as the monks converse in sign language, while the abbot and his guests sit in quiet dignity.

Their first impression of Notker is of an intense, hard-faced knight in early middle age. He seems always alert, watching like a hawk, assessing everything and everyone with sharp intelligence. Not a

man to cross. With him are four men and a woman. Three of the men are obviously knights, while the fourth—a short, pudgy fellow with short grey hair—may be Notker's personal priest. The woman may be a nun, for she wears the black robes worn by nuns or widows.

Supper is frugal for all but the abbot and his guests—but this is after all one of the more luxurious monasteries. Most serve only one meal a day. The meal over, the brothers and lay brothers file off to the church for the short service of compline. Most will then retire gratefully to their dormitories, exhausted from their long day, though a few may walk a while in the cloister, or spend half an hour chatting in the parlour.

Father Eorwin, with Giraldu the guest-master and the claustral prior Willibrord, take all the guests to the abbot's lodgings. They are offered some of the fine minty liqueur that the monks prepare, and there is the chance for a little conversation. Astute characters may notice a certain coldness between Adamnan (the grey-haired tubby priest) and Lady Marianna (the nun). Notker himself talks distractedly, as if preoccupied. The three knights—Einhard, Grest and Denchille—are glum military types who keep themselves to themselves and seem uncomfortable with small talk, though they can be drawn into enthusiastic discussion on such subjects as campaigning, warhorses, jousts and the finer points of swordplay.

Before very long, Notker gets to his feet. He thanks the monks for their hospitality and, noting their tiredness, bids them goodnight. All the guests see this as the cue to turn in. Willibrord shows the characters back to the lay brothers' dormitory.

Night-time

You can approach this sequence in two ways: you can simply tell a PC of your choice what happens, or you can role-play through it, as they wake in the middle of the night with a feeling of dread. Whichever you choose, try to create a sense of strangeness, of the world not being quite right, as if the character is still half in a dream—perhaps the residual effects of the Hand of Glory, or something more sinister.

One of the characters comes awake to see a grotesque shadow looming over his pallet. He sits bolt upright, but manages to stifle a cry of alarm when he sees that it is just a shadow cast by one of the stone figures that adorn the cloister roof. Sweating,

he gets up and goes over to the window to breathe in the fresh night air. The stone figure squats outside the narrow window. Whimsically following its gaze, he sees a strange thing: a man in a large cloak steps furtively from the dark cloisters into the courtyard below. Starkly visible for a moment in the light of the moon, he dips his hand into the water-trough and brings out a small item that was concealed there. After a quick glance about, he darts back into the enveloping shadows of the cloister.

The GM should select a responsible and responsive player-character for this—one who will realise that something suspicious is afoot and wake his companions. Attempts to wake the lay brothers will be mostly unsuccessful. This is because Adamnan the sorcerer is using his Hand of Glory, an occult talisman which holds 0th-rank characters in deep sleep. If they go around the whole dormitory, they will be able to awaken only Cadric, Gondris the spy and three others whose monastic discipline makes them equivalent to a ranked character. Of course, if Gondris is woken then he will slip away at the first opportunity and hurry straight to the church to warn Notker.

Trying to wake the lay brothers would cost the player-characters time that they may not wish to waste. The same can be said of armouring up, and in fact only the most wretchedly uncouth of characters would don heavy armour in the monastery without a very good and proven reason. The GM may allow a boorish and timorous barbarian to pull on a mail shirt if he insists on doing so, but others barely have time to put on leather jerkins.

After descending the stairs to the cloister, the characters will notice a flicker of lantern light beyond the scriptorium. This is quickly cut off by a heavy door closing. Someone is in the church—and there is no sign of the four lay brothers who should be standing guard on the church steps.

Interlude: Notker's Plan

By means of his bribes Notker has ensured that the church keys would be secreted in the water trough where he could easily obtain them. The four lay brothers who should have been guarding the church have been paid off. At Notker's signal they fetched out the two monks who normally stand watch directly in front of the reliquary chapel, claiming they had seen intruders crossing the lawn between the infirmary and the graveyard. The monks (who

were pleased to go along with this diversion) took two of the lay brothers on a tour of the abbey grounds. The remaining two guards waited until they saw Notker approaching and then hurried off towards the orchard. If anything goes wrong with the theft, they can later claim to have gone looking for the others.

At this point it is about a quarter to midnight—almost an hour before the monks are due to come down to sing Nocturns. Notker's intention was to enter the church, have Adamnan place the Whispering Hat (q.v.) at the bottom of the night stairs so no sleepless monk would overhear anything, then quickly substitute his bag of bones for what he thinks is the true relic.

He has nearly accomplished this when a complication arises. A monk called Cedric has been travelling from Clyster Port for the last few weeks and has returned at this late hour. He is accompanied by a man he met on his journey, Ruttgur of the Knights Capellars. Both men being extremely devout, they have entered the church by the porch door at the west end of the nave (normally locked of course, but Cedric has a key) in order to say a short prayer before retiring. Thus neither knows anything about Notker's theft, or Father Eorwin's plan to turn the tables on him. As they round the rood screen they come face to face with Notker and his group. With the gate of the reliquary chapel open and the keys in his hand, they have caught Notker in the act of committing the crime.

The player characters should arrive on the scene around this point in time.

Dramatis Personae

The Villains

Notker of Balcom intends to divest the abbey of its great relic, the bones of St Giles. With him are three trusty retainers—Einhard, Grost and Denchille. His monastic employers hope for a smooth and uneventful robbery which may not be detected for many months, but just in case anything goes wrong they have provided two magical helpers in the form of Adamnan the sorcerer and Lady Marianne. If anything should upset the plan (as Ruttgur, Cedric and the player characters hopefully will) Adamnan's *Astral Gate* scroll should allow for a dramatic exit.



(Remember that it will take Adamnan four rounds to prepare this spell if he needs it: one to take out the scroll and three to visualize his destination—an ancient stone circle near the village of Ashmore.)

MAGICAL DEFENCE 8
Reflexes 15
Health Points 16

STEALTH 14
PERCEPTION 6

Treasure: Shielding charm

Notker of Balcom

Formerly a knight of the most chivalrous and noble sort, Notker became embittered by the atrocities he witnessed on the Crusade. In middle age he has become a sometime adventurer and agent for anyone who can pay him to do their dirty work. This is more out of world-weariness than greed or bad character. He has no desire to see anyone hurt, and his sword has remained sheathed until the point where Ruttgur attacks him in church. Years of adventuring have taught Notker to think on his feet—he can change his plans quickly and cleverly. If things are going very badly, he will abort the mission (probably escaping through Adamnan's *Astral Gate*) rather than struggling on to the bitter end.

NOTKER

4TH-RANK KNIGHT

ATTACK 18, sword (d8, 4)
DEFENCE 12
MAGICAL ATTACK —

Armour Factor 1
Movement 10m (20m)
EVASION 6

Adamnan

A small, fat man who is impressive more for the magical items he possesses than for any personal power. He is timid, and in any confrontation will keep well out of danger. His face is often damp with perspiration and his eyes may be a little watery from too much drink. The latter, combined with his reluctance to use sorcery on consecrated ground, gives him a 10% chance of miscasting any spell.

ADAMNAN

3RD-RANK SORCERER

ATTACK 10, dagger (d4, 3)
DEFENCE 5
MAGICAL ATTACK 17
MAGICAL DEFENCE 7
Reflexes 12
Health Points 7
Magic Points 12

Armour Factor 0
Movement 10m (20m)
EVASION 3
STEALTH 13
PERCEPTION 5

Treasure: The Whispering Hat, Hand of Glory, Scroll of Astral Gate, Casket of Fays

Special Items

The Whispering Hat. See *Dragon Warriors*, p. 180.

Hand of Glory. See *Dragon Warriors*, p. 173. Note that Adamnan carries a vial of blood with which to extinguish the Hand. He made the Hand himself, and could be forced or persuaded to reveal the secrets of manufacturing more Hands of Glory, if captured.

Scroll. This fine parchment contains an *Astral Gate* spell. It was scripted by a sorcerer in Beltayn and obtained for Adamnan's use in this specific mission at considerable expense to his employers. It is designed for affording a rapid escape route if anything should go wrong.

The Casket of Fays. This is Adamnan's most extraordinary item, though he does not fully understand its workings. Adamnan believes that it may be used twice a day, but if opened a third time all the fays would escape and its power would be gone. Actually he is mistaken: the Casket may be opened any number of times without draining its power, though eventually it will be retrieved by its makers. See *Dragon Warriors*, p. 170, for full info on the Casket.

Marianne

A slender, imperious woman in early middle age (about thirty). She affects the sombre habit of a nun or genteel widow, though she belongs to neither category. The reality is that she is a Mystic. She was hired, like Adamnan, to provide magical back-up on this mission: the two of them maintain a vitriolic rivalry.

MARIANNE

3RD-RANK MYSTIC

ATTACK 12, unarmed (d3, 2)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 7	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK 17	EVASION 3
MAGICAL DEFENCE 6	STEALTH 14
Reflexes 10	PERCEPTION 8
Health Points 10	

Einhard, Grost and Denchille

These three stalwarts have been with Notker for years. He paupered himself to get the four of them to the Holy Land, and they have been doggedly loyal to him ever since. They are very unimaginative except in matters military and for the purposes of this scenario they may be treated as average in all characteristics (including Reflexes of 11)

2ND-RANK KNIGHTS

ATTACK 14, sword (d8, 4)	Armour Factor 1
DEFENCE 8	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK -	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 4	STEALTH 13
Reflexes 10	PERCEPTION 5
Health Points 12, 14, 11	

Others

The other two NPCs who will definitely become embroiled in the adventure are Ruttgur and Cedric. They will be fighting against Notker's group—probably, but not certainly, alongside the PCs. One of the lay brothers, Cadric, is also detailed here as he may get involved. Other monks should be treated as untrained normal men, if needed.

Ruttgur

A tall, broad-shouldered warrior who recently returned from the Crusade. His white tabard with eight-pointed indigo cross on the chest marks him out as one of the Knights Capellars, a fighting order formed in the last few years to protect pilgrims and settlers in the Holy Land. Unlike most people, Ruttgur has no reservations about spilling blood in a church or anywhere else. He is a violent fanatic, and behaves in just the way that a good Capellar is supposed to behave.

RUTTGOR

4TH-RANK KNIGHT

ATTACK 18, two-handed sword (d10+1, 6)	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 12	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK -	EVASION 5
MAGICAL DEFENCE 7	STEALTH 9
Reflexes 13	PERCEPTION 6
Health Points 15	

Brother Cedric

Cedric, an intense dedicated man, has been absent from the abbey for over a month. Consequently he knows nothing about the plot and counter-plot. If the player-characters side with Ruttgur then he may leave them and run to wake the monks. Remember that he will have to pass through the shadowy figure formed by the Whispering Hat in order to reach the night stairs, and he has no way of knowing that

it cannot hurt him. If the player characters throw in their lot with Notker, Cedric will have to take up his staff and wade in—he will not leave Ruttgur to fight them alone, and the Capellar will not retreat.

BROTHER CEDRIC

ATTACK 12, quarterstaff (d6, 3)	Armour Factor 1
DEFENCE 6	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	STEALTH 14
Reflexes 14	PERCEPTION 5
Health Points 7	
Rank-equivalent: 1st	

Cadric

A young gentleman who recently joined the abbey as a lay brother. He has a quick temper which he is trying to curb. He occasionally guards the relic though not tonight; and for this purpose he keeps a heavy iron-shod crucifix by his pallet. In the event of trouble, this serves very effectively as a mace.

CADRIC

1ST-RANK KNIGHT

ATTACK 14, mace (d6, 4)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 7	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	STEALTH 11
Reflexes 9	PERCEPTION 5
Health Points 9	

Gondris

Gondris is the lay brother who has been acting as Notker's cloister spy. At the first hint of trouble he will try to warn Notker, if this seems possible without jeopardising his own safety. After that he will make his getaway over the orchard wall.

Epilogue

The scenario should allow for a talked-out solution or a denouement with drawn swords, according to the tastes of the gaming group. But PCs who prefer a subtle approach, and would rather offer Notker a chance to give himself up, will have their hands full calming Ruttgur down.

Notker is a fast thinker, and if the PCs are not wary he will draw his sword and gesture at them—'Aha, you villains, we have caught you in the very act of stealing the bones of Saint Giles! Surrender in the

name of the Church!' Ruttgur and Brother Cedric may take a little convincing that it is the PCs who are the guilty party here, but Notker will demand that they watch over the alleged robbers, and before they can argue will go outside to raise the alarm.

His hastily made plan is to cause a diversion (most likely by locating some alert monks and reporting that a barbarian and a thief disguised as a priest are trying to steal the relic from the church, but are being guarded by the valiant PCs), and in the confusion he and his men will grab the bones and flee. If the PCs further heighten the confusion by getting into a fight with Ruttgur, Cedric and the guards then so much the better. The inhabitants of the Abbey will recognise Cedric and will believe whatever he tells them is happening, but Cedric himself is not exactly sure. If the Abbot is raised then he can clarify matters, but Notker will try to make his escape as quickly as possible.

What happens after the point where the player-characters encounter Notker, Ruttgur and Cedric depends entirely on you and your players. If Notker escapes with the skeleton, Father Eorwin may offer the characters the job of going after him. This is only for the sake of appearances—he doesn't care about getting the bones back, but the rival monks would be suspicious if no force was sent out to retrieve the 'relic'. Eorwin wants them to put their stolen skeleton on show with all pomp before he reveals it to be fake. This alternative leads to the player-characters becoming innocent dupes of course—the pawns in a game played by far more influential men—but any grudges they develop against the NPCs in question can only be good for the long-term campaign.

The similarity in name between brother Cedric and the former knight Cadric is a coincidence that you should exploit for dramatic and comic potential, as people shout at each other down echoing stone cloisters and deaf old priests mis-hear instructions.

If Notker is caught, or at least prevented from accomplishing his theft, the characters should expect some gratitude from the monks. Some, but not much—they may have acted from the very best of motives, but in effect they only blundered in and spoiled a perfectly good bluff. Small consolation comes from the fact that they now have firm friends in Brother Cedric and Ruttgur, who might have been in for a long spell in the infirmary if they hadn't come along when they did.

Characters who try something crazy like teaming up with Notker or dashing through the *Astral*

Gate after him will not benefit much from the adventure. They should get a few experience points, and Notker will soon manage to lose them.

Continuing the Adventure

If Nokter or any of his group get away with the relic, there are a number of directions you can take ‘A Box of Old Bones’ from here. Having the abbot tell them of the scheme may be amusing and will fit some campaigns, particularly if you plan to bring Notker back as a recurring adversary, but for groups who demand adventure and glory it isn’t enormously satisfying. Here are three possibilities.

Denouement

The morning after the theft, Father Eorwin reveals his subterfuge to the PCs. What he now needs is a group who will publicly reveal that the thieves have the wrong bones, but who can’t be traced back to him or Osterlin. What he has done is to conceal a parchment within the cracked thighbone of the false skeleton. It reads: ‘These are the bones of Tiberus Ash, a good and holy man, stolen from Osterlin Abbey by thieves who believed them the relics of St Giles. Please bury Tiberius appropriately.’

How the PCs reveal the existence of this parchment is left to them, though it is likely the relics will be unveiled in their new setting in a grand public display. Whatever they do, it seems likely that unless they act carefully they will become embroiled in a feud between the two abbeys for years to come.

Hidden Agenda

What Father Eorwin knows but has not told anyone is that the rival monastery’s reason for stealing the relics of St Giles is not as simple as mere rivalry and greed. After all, if they were to put a recently stolen saint’s skeleton on display, it would be fairly obvious it had been acquired in a manner hardly befitting a holy establishment.

Notker’s patron is in fact a demonologist who has been using ancient texts in the other abbey’s library to further their dark researches. He intends to use the relic to summon a Hellion (pp. 20-21). However, with the false bones instead of the actual ones

this summoning will go catastrophically wrong—which is Father Eorwin’s intent. However he knows only a little of demons and does not realise what damage a Hellion in the form of a senior member of a major religious institution could potentially do.

Eorwin learns too late of the chain of events he has set in motion, and now sends the PCs out to stop the impending disaster—either by intercepting Notker, or interrupting the summoning, or by any other means. But if word of his meddling gets out his career in the True Faith will be finished, so they must act alone.

Traditional Climax

This one needs a bit of revision to what has gone before. The abbot is aware of Notker’s plot and swaps the skeletons as previously described. He had heard from nearby monasteries and abbeys that a band of thieves have been stealing their relics, three have been stolen in the last few months. One of the raiding party was caught when their last mission went wrong and confessed that he and his fellows had been paid by a ‘witch’ to steal the bones to use in some kind of spell. He either did not know or would not say any more than that.

Notker gets away, either alone or with his group, and with or without the skeleton. For reasons left to the GM, Adamnan’s *Astral Gate* scroll is unavailable.

It is night and the party can just make out the shadowed form of Notker stumbling up and over a hill, fleeing in the direction of the mountains. Notker is panicked and weary so the PCs are able to gain ground on him but only if they run. The PCs are also tired and are at a –1 to Strength and Reflexes unless they take a ten-minute rest. They see Notker disappear behind a large tree next to the sheer rock face of the mountain, and when they have caught up they see no sign of him in the vicinity.

Success on a PERCEPTION check will discover footprints dead-ending at the rock face. Success on a second PERCEPTION check will discover that there is a door-sized crack in the rock and disturbed soil at the base.

GM: Get the entire party to roll either PERCEPTION, Intelligence or Luck, whichever is highest, against a difficulty of 13. On a success they will find a small lever which opens the doorway. Alternatively the rock door will shatter after taking 50 points of damage. If the PCs take a ten-minute rest here they will not suffer the penalties of the pursuit.

The Mountain

As the door swings almost noiselessly into the mountain, your eyes adjust slowly to the dim light. A narrow tunnel, around sixty meters in length stretches before you and curves to the right so you cannot see its end. The tunnel is low-lit with candles in tiny alcoves at ten meter intervals. You have to walk single file and slightly hunched to get through without banging your head.

GM: The end of the tunnel opens up into a small chamber, roughly five meters by seven. This chamber is also lit with candles and at the far end is an arched double doorway. Standing before the doorway are 5 skeletons. You see Notker issuing orders to the skeletons and disappearing through the doorway. The chamber is otherwise empty.

SKELETONS

ATTACK 11, 2 × sword (d8, 4), 2 × mace (d6, 4), 1 × morning star (d6, 5)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 5	Movement: 10m
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	EVASION 3
Health Points 4, 4, 5, 5, 6	STEALTH 13
Rank-equivalent: 1st	PERCEPTION 7 (gloomsight)

Having killed the skeletons the PCs move to the door. It is locked but the catch looks rusty. A single hit with a sword will shatter the lock with no need to roll. The PCs can rest here if needed: if they did not rest before entering the mountain, recommend that they do it now to restore the -1 to Strength and Reflexes.

Through the door is another short passage, a little wider and taller than the last and lit with candles. As the PCs walk through the passage it opens up into a chamber roughly ten meters square. The room is luxuriously decorated with thick tapestries adorning the walls, patterned rugs on the floor and large, ornate furniture dotted throughout. The right-hand side of the door appears to be used as a work space, with a wide desk and chair, a cauldron and dozens of tiny vials, pouches and crystals stacked on shelves. Here there is also a bird cage and a ragged-looking raven sits on a perch. On the desk can be seen three small chests (the PCs may know from the abbot that there have been three thefts of ancient relics in the past few weeks.)

Standing in the centre of the room is a slight, dark-haired woman in a long blood-red dress. Her

face is beautiful but looking upon it for too long starts to give the PCs an inexplicable feeling of unease, so much so that they cannot look at her for more than a few seconds without having to look away.

Nalis, a 4th-rank Demonologist, is talking to a breathless and pleading Notker. She knows he has failed her and she does not take failure lightly. Seeing the PCs enter, Nalis looks up from the grovelling Notker and gives them a smile that makes them shiver. With a wave of the hand she dismisses Notker who scurries away and disappears through a previously unseen passageway on the left-hand wall of the chamber.

Nalis turns to the PCs and greets them. If the PCs wish they can enter into conversation with her. She has stolen the bones from various monasteries and abbeys to complete the summoning ritual of a Demon Lord she refuses to name. She asks if they can supply her with the bones of St Giles in return for a boon from her infernal lord. If they decline, she sternly requests them to leave now or face the consequences. If they do not, she will attack the closest member of the party with a *Dragonbreath* spell (see *Dragon Warriors* page 80). Nalis will also use the *Infect Wound* spell (*Dragon Warriors* page 80) on the party and attack with her +1 staff.

NALIS

4TH-RANK DEMONOLOGIST

ATTACK 12, staff (d6 +1, 3)	Armour Factor 2
DEFENCE 6	
MAGICAL ATTACK 18	EVASION 3
MAGICAL DEFENCE 8	STEALTH 14
Health Points - 10	PERCEPTION 9

Items: Staff of Night Vision (+1), Amulet of the Blue Scarab.

Treasure: Three chests full of the bones of relics, four tapestries worth 100F each but very heavy to carry, 2 potions of healing, 1 potion of strength, 1 vial of smoke and one pouch of Amianthus dust. There are gems and gold worth 600F dotted around the room. There is also a book of demonology on the desk.

PCs can leave Nalis's chambers the way they came in or can attempt to follow Notker. They will not find him, and instead will come out on the other side of the mountain. If they bring the chests of relics back to the abbot, they will be rewarded with 150F each.

CHAPTER 6

THE UNQUIET GRAVE

The Return of the Dead

Lost on the barren moors of north of the Hourla Hills after nightfall, you have little hope of surviving to see another dawn. You have trudged through the freezing mud for hours but finally you stumble and sink to your knees, your iron will no longer a match for your weariness. You bow your head and compose yourself to meet your god. Your only regret is that you did not die in battle.

Through the closing haze of darkness you seem to see a light, and dully you turn your head to watch it approach. An old man stands before you holding a lantern aloft. When, in later years, you think back to this moment it seems that you recall vividly the look of quiet strength in his grey eyes, and the sound of his cloak as the gale snaps it around his frail body.

Beckoning you to follow, he turns and walks away. Somehow you find the strength to rise and stagger after him. Holding the bobbing lantern up to guide you, he leads the way to a small cottage where a welcoming light shines from latticed windows. A few more steps would take you to the cottage door, but your fatigue is too much and you pass out. Barely conscious, you sense yourself being lifted up and carried towards the cottage. As in a dream, you abstractly wonder at the strength in the old man's arms. He takes you inside and lays you on a pallet beside the fire. Your last recollection is of thick fur blankets being drawn up around you.

It is noon before you awaken. At first you remember little, but as fragments and tatters of memory return from the previous night you are amazed to find yourself in a dusty, derelict cottage. There is no sign of your rescuer and there does not seem to have been a fire in the grate in the recent past. Outside, the bleak landscape lies bathed in cold, winter sunshine. You see smoke rising from beyond a wooded hill and head in that direction.

An hour's walk brings you to the village of Hobvale where you quickly seek out an inn and treat yourself to an ample and warming repast. Then, sitting by the fire with a cup of mulled wine in your hand, you relate the events of the previous night to the innkeeper.

'An extraordinary tale,' he says, 'but one which I have in fact heard once or twice before from other travellers like yourself. Some years ago an old monk called Alaric lived in a hermitage out on the moors. Anyone who came to his door would receive shelter, and he often went out with his lantern when a sudden storm or blizzard might have caught wayfarers unawares.'

'Why, then, clearly this was he.' You are on your feet at once. 'Come man, I am no churl. Tell me where he lives now and I shall go to thank this monk and reward him for his kindness.'

The innkeeper shakes his head and waves you back to your chair. 'Hah! I cannot think you would care to undertake the journey. He took in a stricken travel-

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ler some ten years past and then died himself when he braved the storm to fetch the man a doctor. So you see, he resides now in Heaven!

For thousands of years people have enjoyed ghost stories. A dip into the folklore and literature of any country will uncover dozens of variations on the theme. Unfortunately this rich vein of imaginative material is all too often reduced to absurdity by the need to frame everything in simple game-terms. How impoverished and inadequate the modern horrors of adventure gaming can seem when compared to the originals from which they were derived (Grendel, Dracula, the Green Knight, the Balrog, *et al.*)

The problem in part comes from trying to define things exactly, for this can also limit them. It would be very difficult to create anything like Macbeth in a standard adventure, say. Banquo's ghost would either have to be a genuine *Dragon Warriors* ghost with a 1d12 Fright Attack, or a figment of Macbeth's guilt-ridden imagination (which can be established if the PCs have some way of detecting spirits or the undead when the ghost next shows). Storytelling

allows ambiguity whereas games enforce the tedious certainty of Aristotelian logic.

I am not suggesting that creatures should not be defined at all in game-terms, however. But there should certainly be a shift away from the present rules-and-stats approach which makes it all too easy to roll hosts of uninspired random encounters. There must be a sense of (and fear of) the unknown when encountering fantastic creatures, particularly ghosts and undead. Player-characters should not think of such things as standard, nor should they ever feel that they or anyone else in the world knows very much about them.

To help deal with the problem, here is a new term for GMs to use: **relict**. A relict is anyone who returns from the dead—whether in physical form, as an apparition, or as an ambiguous and undefined combination of the two. There is no one set of stats for all relicts, because they are not all of one nature; some you can fight, some you can banish with magic, but many can only be dealt with by discovering their particular weaknesses.

Alaric's relict could be thought of as a sort of 'psychic residue'. It could not harm a character, nor



be harmed. It could not be pigeonholed as a standard *Dragon Warriors* ghost, because it was not a conscious and reasoning entity, it was a part of this honourable man which did not fade from the world when his body died and his soul passed on. Relicts like this will appear in scenarios as a means of giving the characters clues to past events, assisting them, hindering endangering them or simply to create an eerie effect.

Relicts may be brought into existence when a person dies as a result of gross injustice, or with a task or duty still to complete. This is the nebulous and inconstant magic of the human psyche, there is no 'Create Relict' spell!

If you left a companion to die then his relict might pursue you with a view to evening up the score. Maybe he can only be laid to rest if you go back, find his body and give it a decent burial. Or maybe you will have to fight the relict because it will only be satisfied by your death. Possibly the relict will depart if you can merely fool it into thinking you are dead. Scenarios involving a relict will thus often revolve around finding out what it wants and then accomplishing this with minimal unpleasantness to yourself!

Relicts are a useful way of keeping powerful PCs on their toes; the characters might be able to defeat ghosts and spectres with their hands tied behind them, but they will just have to rely on their wits when facing a relict which inconveniently ignores all the usual tricks for dealing with undead.

Any powers that a relict possesses should be counterbalanced by specific vulnerabilities. These could relate to the way the relict arose, so if a person died in a fire, his/her relict could manifest itself in a form mutilated by horrible burns, becoming able to utilise flame-related attacks and be harmed by almost any Water Elementalist spell.

When you're devising a relict, start by deciding on its 'life' history and how you're going to bring it into the scenario, and only then work out its stats and powers (if any)—let your imagination take the lead and make the rules run to catch up!

Second, take great care in the way you play a relict. Supposing you have a relict which wants a character dead; it might make repeated attacks night after night, but it would not plan its attacks as would a human assassin. Relicts are isolated fragments of a psyche, and they lose their qualities of awe and strangeness if made to act like rational living beings.

Scenario Outlines

The High Priest of Nebr'volent

After discovering the pyramid of a wealthy Ancient in Opalar, a High Priest in times long past, the characters return home with a fortune in tomb treasures. Shortly afterwards, a succession of deaths among the NPCs who accompanied them alerts the player characters to the danger they are in. The next night, one of the PCs is visited in a dream by the High Priest's relict. In the dream, the character finds himself running, parched and weary, across the desert sands. In the moonlight, he sees an oasis and heads for it. As he cups his hands to drink, however, his relief turns to dread—for reflected in the water he sees a terrible apparition standing behind him. It is the mummified corpse of the Ancient, dressed in its priestly finery. It reaches for him with claw-like hands but he cannot move or turn to defend himself. The water in his hands turns to dust and he awakes in a cold sweat. The dream recurs every night, and each morning the character finds he is getting weaker. (In game terms, he is losing a Health Point every four nights.)

Consulting local sages, the player characters are told by the most well-read sorcerers and exorcists that someone must sit with the character while he sleeps and cast *Hold Off The Dead* the moment that it seems the dream is beginning. This course proves partially effective—it drives back the relict until the next time the character goes to sleep—but the sorcerers are charging a great deal each time they are called on to cast the spell...

The other PCs probably realise it is their turn once the haunted character is dead, so they do everything possible to keep him alive.

In desperation (and after a gentle hint from the GM) the character goes down to the docks and seeks out a notorious sorcerer who lives there. This fellow consults his books, charts and astrological devices and then explains that the tomb was cursed. He tells the character that he has only one hope (choose the solution which fits best into your campaign):

1. (For long-term campaigns). The characters must gather together the priestly regalia they stole and return it to the tomb. The problems arising from this are that they possibly do not have enough cash to buy back some of the items, or a col-

lector who bought one of the items refuses to part with it. Once they manage to get back all of the items and set off for the tomb, the haunted character loses no more Health Points—but he doesn't recover the Health Points he's already lost until all the items are safely back and the tomb sealed.

2. (For episodic campaigns). The sorcerer knows of a way to help the character fight back: he must go to sleep clutching a pile of salt in his left hand and an antique jade shortsword (provided by the sorcerer) tied to his right with a silk cord. When the relict appears behind him in his dream he is able to throw the salt up into its face and then, with its gaze momentarily averted from the pool, he is freed from his paralysis and able to turn and fight it. This is a straight 'physical' battle; no spells can be used.

The character and the relict are closely matched, and neither has armour. The relict wields a mace of mauve stone. If he defeats it, he wakes to find he is back to full health. If he doesn't defeat it then he never wakes up, and the next PC will have to pay the sorcerer for his services.

A Noble Knight

This is intended as a sub-plot to run alongside whatever 'main' adventure the characters are on at the time. A number of strange events occur over a period of several days—e.g. a golden hawk leading the characters to a companion who has fallen in the hills and broken his leg, a lion which silently approaches when they are lost in the mountains at night and guides them to safety. Mention enough of these that the player-characters have a sense of something significant in the offing, but keep them busy enough with the main adventure that they don't have time to analyse it all.

Eventually, while traversing a mountain pass, they are ambushed by bandits. Things look bad for a while until the sudden intervention of an armoured knight on horseback saves the day. The knight turns out to be an uncommunicative sort, though he does reveal his name (Helveas) and seems very pious. He walks with a slight limp. At the next town the characters lose him, but he meets up with them when they continue their trek into the mountains in search of whatever tomb or treasure trove they are after. Helveas accompanies them when they enter a cavern complex infested with monsters, and several times steps into mêlée to save a character's life as the party fights on towards its objective.

Finally, after a pitched battle in the main cavern chamber, the characters look around to find Helveas gone. But while gathering the treasure, they discover the corpse of a knight in the shadows under a shelf of rock to one side of the cave. Mystics with the party can tell that he died of a wasting infection—probably caught from the monsters when they took him prisoner. His left leg was broken. Although his armour was rusted over the years, the characters can still recognise the heraldic design on the breastplate. A golden eagle on a red sun—Helveas's coat-of-arms. His relict has helped the adventurers reach his body so that they can administer the proper funeral rites.

Recommended sources

Films: *The Fog*; *The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean*; *High Plains Drifter*; *Rashomon*; *Don Giovanni*.

Books: *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* by M R James; *Dracula* by Bram Stoker; *British Folktales and Legends* by K Briggs; *The Room in the Tower* by E F Benson; *The Bull and the Spear* by M Moorcock

Not all of these are strictly concerned with relicts, but they are valuable as inspirational material.

CHAPTER 7

THE SERPENT'S VENOM

An adventure for 1st to 3rd-rank characters

Players'

Introduction

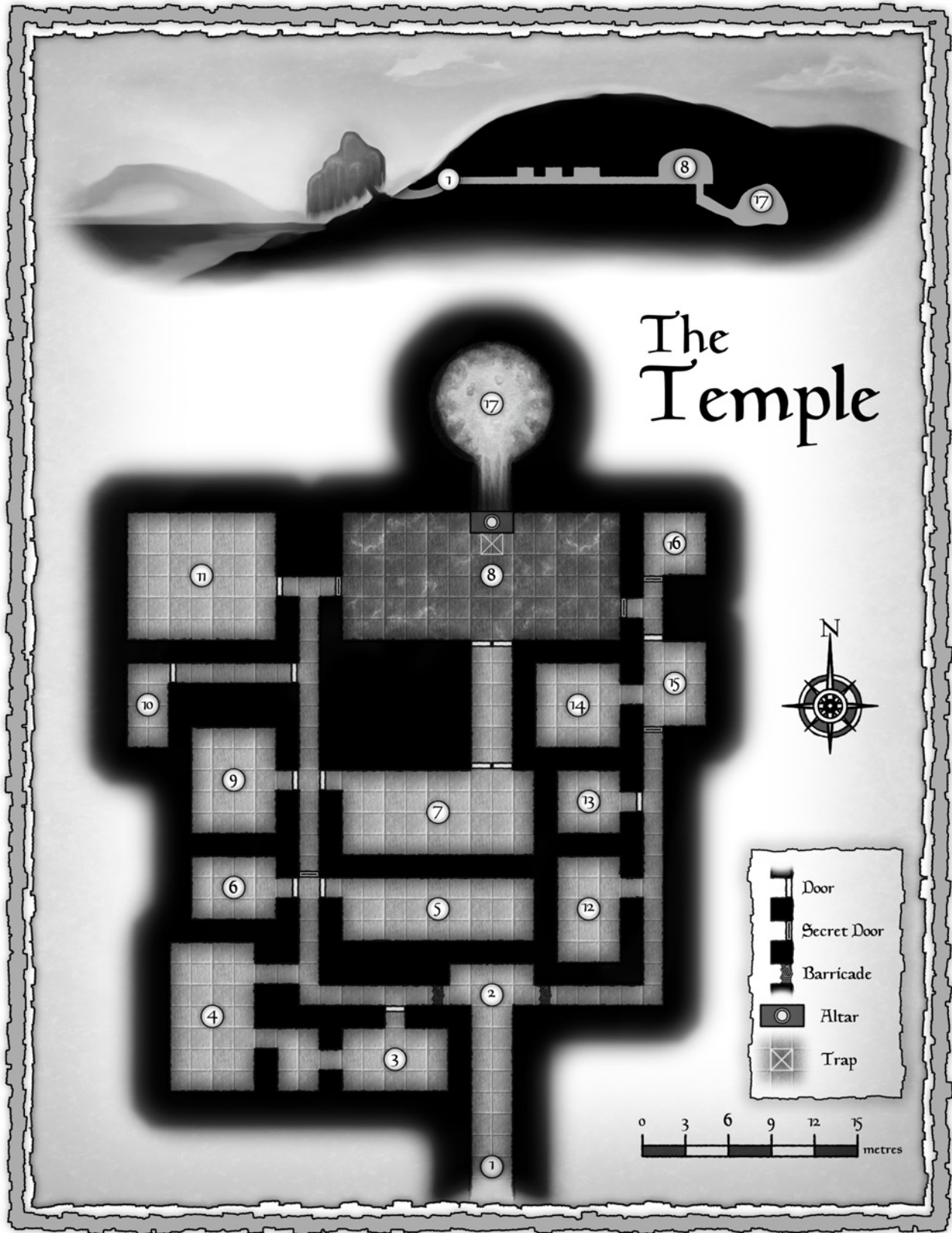
FINDING THEMSELVES SOMEWHAT impoverished, the player characters enter the town of Overdale in the north of Albion, one cold evening, and are forced to make do with only a meagre supper of bread and cheese at the Black Rose inn. Naturally, then, they are quick to accept when a tall, slender blonde in robes of green and grey approaches and invites them to dine with her.

'I am Galadria the Gifted,' she says, 'I know what it is to be down on one's luck, so I extend this charitable hand to a group of fellow adventurers.' The charitable hand in question glitters with a number of heavy gold rings. She sweeps gracefully between the benches where the common patrons of the inn sit drinking, and leads the characters to one of the partitioned tables off to one side of the room. She orders stew and mulled wine for them, all before explaining that she is an elementalists who has been looking for a party of suitable adventuring companions to help her deal with an awkward situation.

As the food is brought, there is a brief lull in the conversation, and the characters cannot help overhear something of what is being said by the group at the next table. The word 'treasure' is mentioned sev-

eral times. Discreetly listening at the thin wooden partition, they hear snatches of discussion—the other group are also adventurers, planning to explore and loot an abandoned temple a day's ride to the north, in the foothills of the Pagan Mountains. The temple appears to be located in an underground complex hidden beside a lake surrounded by weeping willows. Galadria whispers that she knows the lake, having recently passed that way—it is called Willow Lake. Suddenly one of the men at the next table rises to leave. Galadria and her player characters immediately pretend to be chatting to one another. The man who has risen says goodbye to his friends and leaves. At the door, he turns and calls back: 'I'll get some horses and see you back here in two days, then!' before walking into the night.

Galadria leans forward and speaks in hushed tones, glancing from time to time at the next table as if to reassure herself that the eavesdropping has not been detected. 'Luck has delivered us an excellent opportunity, or so it seem. If this group aren't planning to depart for another two days, we can steal a march on them. I hope that none of you consider this dishonourable—they do look rather disreputable types themselves, and honour must go by the board when one's pocket is almost empty of gold.'



GM's Background

This has actually been a con, an elaborate charade enacted to dupe the player characters. Galadria is the accomplice of the men at the next table. She and they are worshippers of the evil god Balor (see *Prince of Darkness* p. 28). The abandoned temple to the north was their own, but it was attacked almost a year ago by a knightly order. Galadria and the others were the only ones to escape. They would like to retrieve the idol of Balor and the coffers from the temple, but have been unable to do so because several of the skeleton guards of the temple were not destroyed by the knights and now patrol parts of the complex following their original orders: to attack anyone not accompanied by a full Priest of Balor (a Balor-worshipping elemental of at least 5th rank).

For some time, Galadria and the others lured several adventuring parties to the temple in order to whittle down the number of undead guards without risking themselves. Then events were complicated by a group of orcs moving into the abandoned temple. Their leader, a human sorcerer, instructed the orcs to board the skeletons into one section of the complex. Although many orcs died in the attempt, this was achieved, and the skeletons do not have the orders or the intellect to dismantle the barricade.

The remaining worshippers of Balor know about the orcs. They have evolved new tactics. Galadria will take the player characters into the temple and make a drive straight for the main shrine in order to get the sacred idol. On the way out, Vargus and the others plan to mount an ambush—whereupon Galadria will reveal her true colours and (they intend) the player characters will be slain.

GALADRIA

3RD-RANK DARKNESS ELEMENTALIST (SUBSIDIARY ELEMENTS: FIRE, WATER)

ATTACK 11, staff (d6, 3), dagger (d4, 3)	Armour Factor 2
DEFENCE 5	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK 17	EVASION 3
MAGICAL DEFENCE 7	STEALTH 13
Reflexes 12	PERCEPTION 5
Health Points 9	
Magic Points 9/3/3	

Treasure: 13 florins, quarterstaff, dagger, lantern, tinderbox, padded armour, Orb of Darkness, the Eye of Foreboding, Vial of Smoke.

The Journey to the Temple

The ride north takes the characters through rolling green countryside, through vales and gentle hill, past small hamlets and farms where peasants till the fields. The terrain gradually becomes more craggy and less populous. At one point they espy a sombre black chapel or monastery across the valley. Even at a distance it is easy to see that it is deserted and overgrown.

GM: This chapel was the home of the knightly order that raided the Temple of Balor. So many were slain in the endeavour that the wounded who returned decided to deconsecrate their chapel and move south. As a consequence, it is deserted.

Finally their objective is in sight. As the PCs ride towards the lake, however, they are suddenly attacked by a party of five orcs who are out foraging.

ORCS

ATTACK 12, short sword (d8, 3)	Armour Factor 3 (mail hauberk)
DEFENCE 5	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 3
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	STEALTH 9
Reflexes 10	PERCEPTION 4 (darksight)
Health points 5, 6, 7, 7, 9	
rank equivalent 1st	

These orcs will not attempt to reach the temple (if they try to escape, it will be into the wilderness) because they know that the look-out there will have seen the characters approaching and will have given the alarm, so the way in will be barricaded (see below). Galadria will try not to use her spells unless absolutely necessary. She does need at least three of the player-characters to carry the idol out of the temple, however, so she will bear this in mind. The entrance to the temple is a cave mouth on the lake shore. This is concealed behind the trunk of a weeping willow but Galadria will soon 'stumble across' the entrance if the characters don't spot it. Once inside the temple, her aim will be to lead them directly to the major shrine and the temple treasury. This will involve Galadria 'noticing' several secret doors and although she will try to pretend that she is just doing this by luck, her eagerness to complete the mission may make her find the secret doors suspiciously quickly.

The Temple Complex

1. Entrance Passage

Crudely hewn steps lead up about six feet behind the willow tree. The passage then levels out and carries on for another five feet or so—just more than the range of torchlight.

2. Entrance hall

Barricades to the left and right block the exit passages from this room. Sturdy ropes lead across from behind the left barricade and are secured to the other. As the characters enter, they can see several orcs peering out from the left-hand barricade.

Suddenly the ropes go taut and the right-hand barricade is pulled down. There is a noxious tittering from the orcs as four skeletons advance through the collapsed barricade and attack the characters. There is a total of nine skeletons in the temple complex, previously trapped in the passage to rooms 12, 13 and 14; they will issue forth to attack the characters at the rate of 1-3 a round until all have been killed. They will also attack Galadria, even though she is a worshipper of Balor, because she is not accompanied by a priest of the god.

SKELETONS

ATTACK 11, 5 maces (d6, 4), 4 spears (2d4,4)	Armour Factor 0 (2 vs stabbing weapons)
DEFENCE 5	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 3
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	STEALTH 13
Reflexes 10	PERCEPTION 7 (gloomsight)
Health Points 3, 3, 4, 4, 5, 5, 5, 6, 7	
Rank-equivalent 1st	

The barricades are made of logs and branches. The left-hand one must be broken down for the characters to reach the orcs. This will take 4-6 combat rounds, with the orcs sniping at the adventurers all the time. Galadria will prefer to take the party this way even if all the skeletons haven't been destroyed, because she knows about the skullghast guarding the armoury and regards it as the safer of the two routes.

The orcs and their leader occupy the section of the complex covering rooms 3, 4, 5 and 6. Their leader is Althalos, a sorcerer. He regards the temple complex predominantly as a convenient base from

which to raid and perhaps eventually take over northern Albion. Though he reveres no gods, he does also think there's a possibility he may be able to tap into whatever dark sources of magical power were once associated with this place.

ORCS

ATTACK 12, 3 maces (d6, 4), 3 shortswords (d8, 3), 2 swords (d8,4), 2 battleaxes (d8,6); slings (d6,3)	Armour Factor 3 (mail hauberk)
DEFENCE 5	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 3
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	STEALTH 9
Reflexes 10	PERCEPTION 4 (darksight)
Health Points 4, 4, 5, 6, 6, 6, 7, 8, 9, 9	
Rank-equivalent 1st	

Treasure: The orcs with swords also have shields; those with maces or shortswords also have slings. The slingers are the ones who will snipe at the player-characters. Between them, the orcs also have small change and trinkets, amounting to a value of 7F.

ALTHALOS

4TH-RANK SORCERER

ATTACK 12, staff (d6, 3)	Armour Factor 2
DEFENCE 6	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK 18	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 8	STEALTH 15
Reflexes 11	PERCEPTION 6
Health Points 12	
Magic Points 15	

Treasure: Scrolls of *Warding* and *Shadowbolt*; 43F.

3. Storeroom

This was originally the temple storeroom. Some game hangs from hooks in the ceiling for a banquet the orcs were planning. The smaller chamber off to the end is where the food is prepared.

4. Refectory

There are plain wooden benches and a table.

5. Dormitory

This is where the lower-ranking worshippers slept (Galadria, Vargus and the others). It is now the orcs' dormitory, of course. One orc lies in bed here. He has Swamp Fever (see *Dragon Warriors*, p. 126), and

could not join his fellows in defending their lair. Anyone who touches him has a 5% chance of contracting the disease.

6. Outer Shrine

There is a black bas-relief of a muscular red-eyed demon on the opposite wall. Originally the room was hung with tapestries and was a place for solo rituals devoted to Balor. It is now Althalos's private chamber, and he uses the tapestries for his bedding.

7. Robing Room

Several black robes with a stylised eye design in white over the abdomen hang on hooks around the room. A wooden cupboard contains six black iron crowns, with tines in the form of rough, icicle-like spikes. There are five mouldering corpses in the room, two of which wear rusting armour. (Roll a d20; on a 1, the player-character with the highest PERCEPTION will notice that Galadria is unusually disturbed by the sight of these corpses. The three unarmoured ones were priests of the temple; the other two were knights slain in the attacks.)

8. Major Shrine

This is a large chamber of black marble veined with quartz. On the altar stone there is a solid onyx idol to Balor, with eyes of red gold and a leering forked tongue, this is the idol Galadria wants. (Note: as a worshipper of Balor, Galadria should perform a genuflection as she crosses the threshold of this chamber. She won't actually do this because it would be an obvious giveaway, but from that point she will be at -1 to ATTACK, DEFENCE, MAGICAL ATTACK, MAGICAL DEFENCE, STEALTH, PERCEPTION, and EVASION, until ritually absolved by a priest of Balor.)

There are two traps on the idol that even Galadria doesn't know about. Firstly, if touched anywhere except behind the head, it will shoot out its forked tongue (speed 19, damage 3, normal poison) to strike any character standing directly in front of the altar stone (unless they have taken specific precautions against this). Armour will not help, unless the player has specified that the character is wearing a full-face helmet, or has his visor down, in which case the tongue will have no effect.

Secondly, a 5' x 5' trapdoor will open directly in front of the altar, dropping anyone standing there

down a sloping chute to room 17 unless they can evade its Speed of 16. The idol is worth 450F and radiates a palpable aura of evil.

9. Priests' Dormitory

There are five beds with decaying linen. There are two corpses here—it seems that an armoured knight slew one of the sleeping priests but was then struck down from behind.

10. High Priests' Room

Two decomposing bodies lie together on the floor. The armoured knight thrust his sword through the High Priest, but the latter locked his hands around the knight's throat and choked him even in death. The knight's sword has not rusted, unlike his armour. A black pentangle amulet hangs on the far wall. The High Priest was trying to reach his Amulet of Sovereignty over Violence when the master of the knightly order caught up with him. The knight's sword is +1.

When the characters have been in this room for two combat rounds, a shadowy form will rise from the High Priest's corpse. It will attack anyone except a worshipper of Balor. It is the High Priest's spirit, now a wraith. The strength of Balor's magic in this place, and the High Priest's fanaticism, are such that the he was able to become a wraith in far less time than usual.

WRAITH

ATTACK (see <i>Bestiary</i> , p. 86)	Armour Factor 0 (immune to non-magical weapons)
DEFENCE 4	Movement 15m
MAGICAL ATTACK 1d10/ Combat Round ATTACK is delayed	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 11	STEALTH 10
Reflexes 12	PERCEPTION 13 (dark sight)
Health Points 9	
Rank-equivalent 5th	

If this wraith is struck with the knight's sword it will be destroyed immediately because some of the knight's virtue has remained in this weapon which was the cause of the Priest's death.

11. Library

Shelves around the room are stocked with numerous books, all of which deal with the revolting and



terrible rituals of the priesthood of Balor. Any character of the True Faith who reads one of these books through completely will be subject to a **MAGICAL ATTACK** of 16, permanently losing a point of Intelligence if affected.

12. Barracks

A bare room. This is where the skeletons remained when 'off duty'.

13. Tomb Chamber

Two sarcophagi contain the mortal remains of earlier High Priests of this temple.

14. Cells

Manacles hang from the walls. There is a decayed corpse chained here. This is where victims were kept awaiting sacrifice to the deity.

15. Armoury

A skullghast guards the special weapons of the temple. The skullghast will attack anyone except the High Priest, so Galadria knows better than to enter the room.

The skullghast will not leave this room, even to pursue intruders, as its orders were to stay and guard.

SKULLGHAST

ATTACK 16, flame (d10, 3)

Armour Factor 0 and see *Bestiary*, p. 66

DEFENCE 15

Movement flying 30m

MAGICAL ATTACK 8

EVASION 7

MAGICAL DEFENCE 8

STEALTH 15

Reflexes 10

PERCEPTION 12 (panoptical)

Health Points 3

Rank-equivalent 4th

The special weapons and armour are a +1 morning-star; a +1 mail hauberk; two +1 shields.

16. Treasury

The temple coffers contain 328 florins, guarded by two zombies.

ZOMBIES

ATTACK 10, maces (d6 +1, 5)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 4	Movement 6m
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 1
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	STEALTH 5
Reflexes 3	PERCEPTION 4
Health Points 17, 19	
Rank-equivalent 1st	

17. A Dank Chamber

Contains the temple's special guardian, which will attack any who fall down the chute into its lair. It is a nargut (see *Bestiary*, p. 42). It usually subsists on small creatures such as rats and moles which burrow into its lair (the priests used to feed it regularly). A human should provide quite a feast!

NARGUT

ATTACK 16, acid bite (d10, 3), claw (d8, 5)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 4	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK 0	EVASION 2
MAGICAL DEFENCE 6	STEALTH 14
Reflexes 6	PERCEPTION 7 (darksight)
Health Points 22	
Rank-equivalent 6th	

Leaving the Temple

As the characters leave the complex, they are ambushed by Vargus and the other worshippers of Balor. The player-characters will almost certainly recognise them from the overheard conversation in the inn; this may allow them to work out what has happened, if not immediately then later on. Galadria will turn on the party now, if she hasn't been killed in the temple.

Since the sacking of their temple by the knights, these remaining worshippers have devoted their efforts to recovering the idol and the temple coffers. Losogon, although but an acolyte, is their spiritual leader now but he is not a leader of men, so it is Vargus, as an officer of the temple guard, who gives the orders.

Galadria, by virtue of her intelligence and personal power, wields much influence, but the others do not see her as leader because most Balor-worshipping fighting men would not take orders from a female elemental.

VARGUS

2ND-RANK KNIGHT

ATTACK 15, sword (d8 +1, 4)	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 8	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 4	STEALTH 9
Reflexes 11	PERCEPTION 5
Health Points 12	

Treasure: Shield; 23F

Notes: Streak of white hair in beard.

LOSOGON

1ST-RANK DARKNESS ELEMENTALIST

SUBSIDIARY ELEMENTS: FIRE AND EARTH

ATTACK 11, morningstar (d6, 5)	Armour Factor 2
DEFENCE 5	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK 15	EVASION 3
MAGICAL DEFENCE 5	STEALTH 13
Reflexes 10	PERCEPTION 5
Health Points 7	
Magic Points 3/1/1	

Treasure: fig-wood staff carved in snake-form, worth 50F.

ANABAT

1ST-RANK BARBARIAN

ATTACK 14, two-handed sword (d10, 5)	Armour Factor 3
DEFENCE 6	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 5
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	STEALTH 10
Reflexes 11	PERCEPTION 5
Health Points 12	

Treasure: Gilded dagger worth 25F.

Notes: Scar over left eye

RISH

1ST-RANK ASSASSIN

ATTACK 13, sword (d8, 4)	Armour Factor 2
DEFENCE 6	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 5
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	STEALTH 19
Reflexes 14	PERCEPTION 8
Health Points 8	

Treasure: Sword with serpentine hilt, worth 10F.

CHAPTER 8

THE TEMPLE OF THE LOST GOD

An adventure for five to eight characters of 4th-6th rank

GM's Introduction

THE TEMPLE OF the Lost God is set deep in the dark continent of Mungoda. The eastern edge of the Thanagost peaks and the foothills and jungles for many miles around are occupied by the brutal yet sophisticated Tochel Empire, ruled with an iron fist by Queen Tiacapan. Tiacapan is an absolute ruler who claims to be immortal. Certainly it is said that she remains strikingly, terrifyingly beautiful, despite having been queen for many decades.

The Tochel practise human sacrifice. Though foreigners may regard this as morally repugnant, it is a matter of course here, and those sacrificed are thought of as highly honoured. Slaves are often sacrificed, since by being given to the gods, they may end their sordid, pointless existence by being transmuted into a higher, more spiritual substance. The slaves, of course, may disagree.

'Temple of the Lost God' is designed to be used when the characters first arrive in these lands, guided here by an ancient scroll discovered during the course of their other adventures in the south of Mungoda, near the great river (for example).

The Tochel people will welcome the characters as Pale Gods from a distant land, thinking they may amuse the queen, or perhaps be used against her. Intrigue is rife in these lands, with every village chieftain and high priest having some kind of angle, some kind of agenda.

The Tochel language is just one step removed from Ancient Kaikahuran, as some of the founders of the Empire, many thousands of years ago, were exiles from that land. Adventurers will have at least some chance to learn the tongue, particularly if they already know Ancient Kaikahuran, from whatever southern Mungodan guides or boatmen they have employed to take them upriver. One or two of the Tochel villagers will be able to speak a little Nascerine, which is a useful trade language for many travellers in Mungoda.

The Worship of Echcatl, the Lost God

Echcatl, the Lost God, Lord of the Four Winds, He of the Two Masks, Mover of Sun and Moon, is an ancient god, said to be one of the very creators of the World. He has been lost from Tochel and the world for generations, after he fell in love with a human girl, Mayael. The adoration of a god was too much for her mortal frame, the magical force of his love slaying her outright and scattering her corpse into seven pieces. It is said that Echcatl has been searching the three worlds for her ever since. His worshippers became obsessed with death and

the Undead, believing that if they could find all the Seven Fragments that once made up Mayauel's body, and clothe it once more in flesh, their god might return to them. In the years since Echcatl's disappearance, many priests became more interested in life, death, and undeath than in returning Echcatl per se, though some remain devoted to finding the Seven Fragments and bringing Echcatl back to his rightful place as ruler of Mungoda's gods.

The priesthood of Echcatl is very highly organized and secretive. Though their fascination with the undead would make them social pariahs in any other society, most of the priests are not evil, but are simply dedicated men and women of learning, often being respected scholars and physicians. They wear strange, double-faced masks and swirling robes of pale blue.

Yxtab, the Doomed Woman

Yxtab is the Goddess of Suicide and Despair. She is worshipped only by a few Darkness Elementals and similar evil cultists, though few of the cults last long. A typical pattern would be for a cult to arise in an isolated village, spreading through the villagers till there are enough of them to murder their neighbours, then massacre another nearby village or two before turning on each other and themselves in a frenzy of self-destruction.

Players' Introduction

By chance, one of you discovered some information concerning a temple to the Lost God, Echcatl, located high in the easternmost Thanagost peaks. The records you have looked at show that the temple was founded two hundred years ago. Another brief reference, from a hundred years ago, states that the temple was abandoned just before that time, and that the priests' exodus was apparently so hurried that most of the temple relics and treasures had to be left behind. You set out at once.

Your journey north has brought you nearly five hundred miles along a tributary of the Mungoda river, into lands that pay homage to the much-feared Queen Tiacapan, sometimes referred to as Witch Queen or Vampire Queen, though never when her spies might hear. You left the river two or three days ago and travelled due north, seeing the jungle give way to light forest as you head into the mountain range known as the Thanagost Peaks. Through a pass you have come to the village of Mandir,

at the foot of impressive cliffs. Somewhere beyond, only a few miles away now, lies your goal.

GM's Notes

GMs should feel free to adapt or expand the Players' Introduction above to fit their own games.

The Village of Mandir

The sun is low over the western mountains as the party approach Mandir. In the north, storm clouds gather. The village consists of about thirty houses—low wooden buildings with many-sided totemic pillars at each corner supporting roofs of black tile.

The party are greeted formally by Tulkesh Nraga (preferably in Tochel, but in Naserine if necessary). Tulkesh, a slightly built man about forty years old, is village headman and a worshipper of the local cult of Echcatl, to which more than three-quarters of the villagers belong. He is quite affable towards strangers—particularly if the party suggests they are interested in converting to the worship of Echcatl—and will invite them to dine with him and stay for a few days. No payment is expected unless the party presume too much on the villagers' hospitality.

Also at dinner is a strange young man called Nomikaru Teteli, the local priest of Echcatl. As soon as the meal has begun he starts to chew a local hallucinogenic weed and becomes by turns either vague or abstractly argumentative. He was once a high-ranked priest in a major temple, who fell out with the temple elders and now chafes at his demotion to lowly village priest.

Tulkesh will freely answer any questions. Mandir was settled by pioneers from the west two hundred years ago. The temple that the player-characters are interested in was founded at about the same time, but it appears to have become deserted less than a century later. Tulkesh is not sure of the details—just that the priests abandoned the place after a number of unexplained events. One story he has heard is that the priests were later attacked and killed by outlaws as they made their way back toward the village, so a full report was never made. From time to time since then there have been mysterious disappearances, and nowadays people try to give the temple a wide berth. Nomikaru adds that there are probably wights and grave gaunts (see below) guarding the temple compound, and will relish describing these creatures to

the ignorant. The party may choose to look around the village before heading for the temple.

Getting There

The trail from Mandir leads up through the cliffs and foothills. It is steep and overgrown, and now quite arduous after a recent storm. There is a steady, grey drizzle and the skies threaten further storms, for this is Shapru, the month of rains.

The whole trek takes about seven hours for a moderately burdened party. This assumes ten-minutes' rest each hour. The last part of the journey involves trudging up a particularly steep and muddy path, and characters who don't take a ten-minute break at the bottom will fight at -1 ATTACK for the next hour owing to fatigue.

Temple Background for the GM only

Although the temple was founded ostensibly as a centre of worship for the people of Mandir, its major value to the priesthood of Echcatl must have been as a spiritual retreat; an isolated monastery where priests could conduct their studies and research without disturbance from the factional disputes common within city temples. A number of wights and grave gaunts were provided by the founders of the temple.

Unbeknownst to the temple founders, the caverns below the shrine were used millenniums ago by devotees of Yxtab. In fact this was the root cause of the troubles at the temple, as will become clear.

The Abandoned Temple

The Temple

As the party approaches, the temple's ruined state becomes clear. Some time in the past the gatehouse was shattered by lightning, charred, and then rotted by the elements. The stone wall around the temple compound has collapsed at several points. The paving stones within are cracked and subsided, the buildings are tangled with vines and in disrepair.

Dominating the temple is the twenty-foot pyramid on which stands the shrine dedicated to Echcatl. Just as the party passes through the ruined

gate, dark, winged shapes rise up from here and the colonnade below, soaring aloft and then swooping down on the adventurers....

These are grave gaunts (*Bestiary*, p. 79), guardians of the temple. There are seven of them.

GRAVE GAUNTS

ATTACK 16, spear (2d4, 4)	Armour Factor 1
DEFENCE 9	Movement 8m (flying—90m)
MAGICAL ATTACK —	EVASION 7 (in flight), 3 (on ground)
MAGICAL DEFENCE 9	STEALTH 13
Reflexes 13	PERCEPTION 6 (darksight)
Health Points 11, 12, 13, 14, 14, 15, 16	
Rank-equivalent: 4th	

The Library

The roof has fallen in at the western end—many of the books are rotten and worm-eaten, but three sealed bronze chests have preserved the most important books in excellent condition. There is also a scroll of interest to demonologists, concerning the intersection between the Infernal Realms and the magic of necromancy and undeath.

The real find, though, is the temporal codex of the temple—the daily record of events. The entries of interest deal with a month or so, just over a hundred years ago, and are written in the Tochel tongue.

(These codex entries are also given as a hand-out for players, on pages 109-110.)

Day 1

In the midst of preparations for the coming ceremony, two priests who had climbed down to the forest to collect *glabeq* flowers for the festivities went missing. One crawled back into the temple compound in the early hours of this morning, bloodied and tattered. His tongue had been ripped from his head. Ministrations proved ineffective and he died without providing an account of what had befallen.

Day 3

The Festival of the Sorrow of Echcatl was commemorated. The celebration was more muted than in previous years owing to the absence of four of the six slaves prepared for sacrifice. These four must have escaped just a few hours

before dawn, but their means of egress from the temple precincts is by no means apparent. None of the other slaves seems to have witnessed the escape—a story which they maintain even under diligent torture. It remains a mystery.

Day 15

Senior Priest Ishankoi Reshlan has disappeared—spirited away, so to speak, in the middle of the night. Magical means have been employed in an effort to contact him, to no avail. His Holiness the Archpriest has sent word via Mandir to the Imperial Palace. Ishankoi has always seemed a stable fellow, and it is difficult to believe him capable of such dereliction of duty as to go missing only hours before the Ceremony of the Sifting of Hell.

Day 17

Those of us who thought ill of Ishankoi have had cause to revise our judgement since his mutilated form was found in the Lower Shrine shortly after lunch. Who can have performed this horrible deed? Recalling the fate of Shrakan and Elvaru earlier this month, one is forced to the conclusion that some monstrous being has come up from the forests. In spite of the heavy rainfall, Yugao Ludum insisted on taking another message to the runner in Mandir.

Day 23

The heavy storms of the last few days continue unabated. Tekketal Kuroda has gone missing. One can only hope he has not suffered the fate of Ishankoi. Yugao Ludum suggested at dinner that these strange events result from an incursion of Shunned Ones from the forest, and is himself preparing a note to this effect to send to the Omnipotent Legion in the capital—though some of us believe it would be more seemly to first inform the Temple at Arelu.

Day 26

Tekketal's corpse has been located in the wight pit, mutilated even more gruesomely than Ishankoi. To some extent this was due to several of the wights having mistaken his body for an

exotic item of their diet. Further, two acolytes have gone missing.

Day 28

Goduku Raitlan has now vanished, along with his personal servant. On the orders of His Holiness, Yugao Ludum used his magic to communicate our troubles to the High Temple at Coyol. We are assured that investigators have been despatched.

Day 29

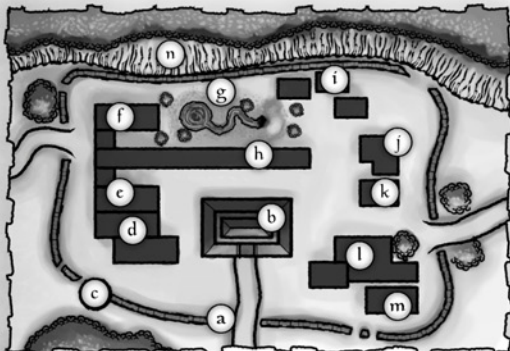
Like one who is infected with the eggs of the gnaw-worm, we have suffered from a traitor within! Yugao Ludum has been uncovered as the source of our woe! Along with two young acolytes he has been worshipping at an ancient shrine to the terrible goddess Yxtab in the caverns below our temple. After a few minutes of careful questioning he lapsed into a ghastly calm which he retained even when flayed alive. After this his heart was cut out and the corpse flung into the catacombs where he had his shrine. The acolytes were similarly treated, but spoke freely of a baleful influence which called them to the caverns. They died utterly insane. Our troubles are at least now at an end.

Day 30

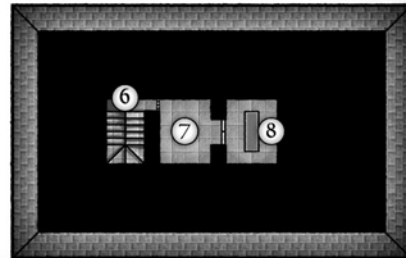
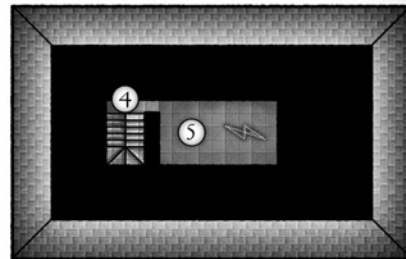
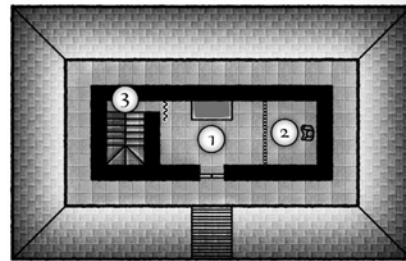
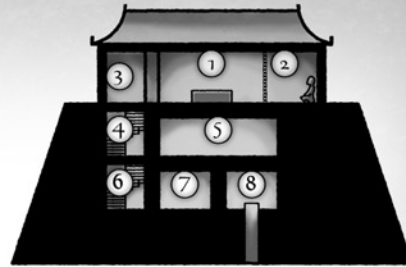
After the Celebration of the Wandering Prince, His Holiness the Archpriest was found to be missing. A thorough search of the catacombs uncovered his butchered form, treated not unlike that of Yugao. No magic could revive him. Moreover, there was no sign of the carrion deposited in the catacombs only yesterday.

Day 31

Two more were found dead, and those who remained have been forced to evacuate the temple. Apart from a few slaves only I remain, for I am too infirm to travel far. I and the slaves keep to the library now. I have released the wights and the grave gaunts into the temple precincts, with instructions to attack even those robed as priests of our Supreme Lord. The grave gaunts accommodate themselves to such orders with

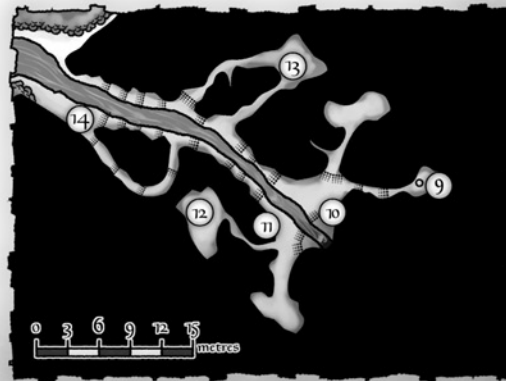


- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Ruined Gate | h. Colomade |
| b. Shrine on Pyramid | i. Misc. Storehouses |
| c. Tower for Temple Gong | j. Animal Dens |
| d. Living Quarters | k. Slave Dens |
| e. Refectory | l. Library |
| f. Kitchens | m. Administrative Office |
| g. Temple Gardens, now wild. | n. Cliff, forest 60m below |



- Stairs
- Door
- Curtain
- Bronze Grate
- 1.5m Slope Down

Temple of the Lost God



relish, of course, but the wights seemed dully reluctant. It is tempting to think of this as a sort of loyalty, but I know that the spark of true reason has faded from their dead minds and it is only the illusion of thought that I perceive in them.

The rain is a heavy curtain in the courtyard. Once or twice I thought I glimpsed a figure out there.

Day 32

There is food for only two more days, but I do not think it will come to that. I have had an idea for a treatise on the ethology of the wights. A pity I will never get the chance to write it.

The Pyramid

The Shrine

The roof of the shrine is of a sturdy, black-lacquered wood which has suffered little from time and the elements. There are steps up the south side of the pyramid. The doors are locked.

1. The Outer Shrine

There is an altar stone of blue marble against the north wall, under a double-headed snake mask—one of the insignia of Echcatl.

2. Side-chapel

Behind a locked bronze grille is a small shrine to Ecoatl, Cunning Cadaver, the aspect of Echcatl to whom this temple was particularly dedicated. There is a small gold statue of the skeletal snake, Ecoatl. This is worth up to 6000F, although it would be considered an act of terrible sacrilege if anyone less than a high priest of the priesthood of Echcatl were to remove it from the shrine.

3. Steps lead down within the pyramid

4. A Landing

The steps continue down and there is an archway to the east, from the chamber beyond which issue forth four wights:

ECHCATL WIGHTS

ATTACK 17, spear (2d4, 4)

DEFENCE 10

MAGICAL ATTACK 20

MAGICAL DEFENCE 10

Reflexes 10

Health Points 16, 18, 18, 19

Rank-equivalent: 7th

Armour Factor 2 (and see *Bestiary*, p. 85)

Movement 12m

EVASION 3

STEALTH 13

PERCEPTION 11 (darksight)

These huge (2m) undead warriors are sometimes used by the priests of Echcatl as temple guards but only in the lower catacombs, as they cannot stand the light of day. As might be expected, they look somewhat different to the usual run of wights, being large, muscular, and savage, in contrast to the gaunt, bleak glory characteristic of wights of northern lands. Their armour is made from tanned jaguar skins, reinforced with thick beads of bone.

5. The Lower Shrine

A chamber of black stone, intended for the more sacred and secret rituals. There is a lightning-flash symbol inlaid in polished quartz shards into the floor.

6. The stairs end

A locked bronze grille bars the way.

7. Antechamber to the Inner Shrine

Each of the double doors to the east bears a serpent skull emblem on a great panel of beaten silver.

8. The Inner Shrine

An effigy of Echcatl, carved of black wood and masked with gold, lies on a couch studded with blue mosaic. He holds a silver staff topped with a large sapphire cut to resemble a serpent's head. The whole room is faced with black marble.

The mask is worth about 200F; the staff, 10,000F. The same applies as with the statuette of Ecoatl in the side-chapel above.

A search of this room will reveal lines of faint scratches on the floor running between the couch

and the east wall. If the couch is lifted up slightly it can be slid aside to reveal a pit. This requires a combined strength of 30.

The Caverns

The Caverns below the Pyramid

These caverns were a centre of worship for the sect of Yxtab centuries before the western pioneers colonized the area and built their temple to Echcatl.

The only worshipper here now is Yugao Ludum, the treacherous priest of Echcatl mentioned in the extracts from the temporal codex.

YUGAO LUDUM

8TH-RANK DARKNESS ELEMENTALIST

MINOR ELEMENTS AIR AND EARTH

ATTACK 13, mace (d6, 4)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 7	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK 23	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 13	STEALTH 15
Reflexes 10	PERCEPTION 7
Health Points 14	
Magic Points 24/8/8	

Equipment: Shield, mace, Amulet of Sovereignty against Violence.

Though he looks undead, Yugao is not quite dead yet, though it is something of a moot point. His life-force has been sustained all these years by the power of his goddess. He presents a grisly spectacle, still in the state that his erstwhile comrades left him—flayed to the waist, his skin hangs like a kilt leaving an upper torso of raw flesh and sinew, a skull-like mask of a face with lidless, staring eyes. There is a gaping hole where the priests tore his heart out. Outside the caverns Yugao's life would ebb away at the rate of one health point per combat round.

Besides Yugao the caverns hold another danger—the Jalush, a creature which has guarded the Goddess's fane for hundreds of years. The Jalush may be a unique, demonic creature or it may be the last survivor of an extinct species. It has six limbs, walking on the back four and using the forelimbs for grasping and striking. It has an outer integument, smooth and ivory-pale, with sharp clusters of spines at its joints. It stalks with the slow, precise

movements of a praying mantis and strikes with a scorpion's vicious speed; any NPC of 4th rank or less has a 15% chance of fleeing in terror if suddenly confronted by it.

JALUSH

ATTACK 24, claw (2d6, 5)	Armour Factor 5
DEFENCE 8	Movement 12m (25m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 5
MAGICAL DEFENCE 14	STEALTH 22
Reflexes 16	PERCEPTION 13 (panoptical)
Health Points 26	
Rank-equivalent: 8th	

Any character hitting the Jalush with a *mêlée* weapon will automatically be struck by its poisonous spines, which act as a weapon (d6, 2) and deliver a strong poison. Even a character who succeeds in his Strength roll against the poison loses one health point permanently, as well as taking the usual damage.

The Jalush has keen senses and moves almost silently despite its size: it surprises the party on a roll of 1-3 on d6.

For any encounter in the caverns, roll d6:

Roll	Result
1-3	The Jalush
4-5	Yugao
6	Yugao and the Jalush

Of course, Yugao is always somewhere in the caverns. Have the party encounter him in the Goddess's fane if they haven't run into him before then.

9. Low chamber

There is a drop of about twenty feet from the floor of the Inner Shrine down a narrow shaft which opens into the roof of this cave. The climb down is not difficult. A tunnel slopes gently downwards from the south-west part of the chamber. The sound of running water can be heard.

10. Underground stream

This dries up in summer, but at the moment is in full flood. The stream is 1m at its deepest point.

11. Secret passage

A boulder conceals the narrow passage. It takes a combined strength of 20 to roll it back.

12. The Goddess's Fane

This cave is taller than most of those here and seems to have been enlarged by excavation at some time in the past. The walls have been stained white and covered with squarish crimson designs. There is a rough altar—a natural table of rock—to the south-east. On this is a rough, pitted idol of light grey stone, depicting a thin-lipped woman slashing her own throat with an obsidian blade.

Anyone touching the idol will receive a fleeting but horrible vision: a tall, unsmiling woman dissolves into the repulsive apparition of a torn, rotting monstrosity—the woman's head, shoulder and right arm—flying through illimitable darkness towards the viewer. She wields a great ceremonial mace and seems to be shrieking in rage with her hair streaming as if in a wind. However, there is no sound.

After a moment this vision fades; the idol will not affect a character more than once. Removed from the fane, it loses this power.

13. The Bone Chamber

Skulls and broken bones—the Jalush's victims over the years. There is a 1m-wide shaft in the floor of this chamber, set with many razor-sharp chips.

If a character manages to get down the shaft he will feel a sense of tremendous premonition, as though on the verge of a great discovery. Rather than merely telling the player this, the GM should try to create a mood, to heighten the sense of significance—describe the dank air at the bottom of the pit, the rasping of the character's own breath in the stillness, the rough wood of the torch in his hands, its heat on his face. There at the bottom of the shaft lies a desiccated hand, carefully wrapped in decayed bandages of fine silk and wearing a heavy gold ring. If he picks up the hand, it feels almost icy cold, and remains so even if heated. It cannot be damaged in any way.

This is one of the Seven Fragments of Mayauel required to free Echcatl, presumably concealed here by one of the followers of Yxtab. It cannot be

detected as such by magical means, and only a great scholar could identify it for certain. Nonetheless, anyone who sees it will have some kind of 'sixth sense' as to its importance.

14. Cave entrance and waterfall

The stream emerges from the cliff face. The forest is 30m below. From here characters can see a great lake stretching to the west and, mistily through the continuing drizzle, the great mountain peaks in the north. There are a number of ledges and handholds which make the cliff an easy climb.

After the adventure

For those who like to loot, there's about 900F in cash distributed around the temple—mostly in the bursary strongbox in the administration building, but some also in the private quarters.

If the player characters take the temple relics (the statuette of Ecoatl, etc.) then they had better be careful about where they sell them if they don't want the priests of Echcatl as enemies; the priests have eyes and ears far beyond Tochel (though not beyond Mungoda). Even if they return the relics to the priests, the latter may still view the removal of these items from the temple as questionable or even sacrilegious. The optimum course would be to leave the relics in place and inform the Echcatl cultists in Mandir, who will call in their superiors from deeper within the Empire. The priests of Echcatl will give about 25% of the relics' value as a reward to their discoverer.

If the party show the Fragment to Nomikaru Teteli, back in Mandir, he may try to get it from them so that he can take it himself to the priesthood. This is not to say that Nomikaru will recognize it as being one of the Seven Fragments, merely that it is an interesting artefact which could help him to ingratiate himself with his superiors.

CHAPTER 9

A BALLAD OF TIMES PAST

An adventure for about eight players of 4th – 5th rank

GM's Introduction

THE ADVENTURE is set in Beorsca, a small kingdom in a land very like much of Ellesland. However magic users are very scarce in this world: all sorcerer, elemental, warlock and demonologist spells above 2nd level require, as the material component, a pinch of dragon dust made from the powdered shell of an unhatched dragon's egg (in hatching, the fledgeling drains the magic from the shell). As this would involve getting past a protective mother dragon, both the dust and magic users are very rare. One whole eggshell would provide 100 pinches of dust.

Players should be told that spellcasters (other than mystics) are almost unknown, but not why. They can be knights, barbarians (retainers of King Athelred involved from the start), mystics and assassins (from the local abbey and minstrel troupe respectively, who join in as indicated in the text). Mystic spells do not require dragon dust, but in this world there are no mystic spells above 3rd level. If generated specifically for this adventure, all player characters begin at 5th rank.

Background to the Adventure

The 42 year-old King Athelred rules Beorsca from Hreod Castle. The first of his line, Athelred deposed

the previous king when barely 21. He is a capable and fairly popular ruler, still strong despite his years. Under him, priests of the True Faith have gradually prevailed against the callous Old Gods, whose worship is now reduced to a very few.

Note: This scenario should be read to the players virtually as written. All the text that appears in boxes is intended to be read out loud. Information not to be read to the players is and marked 'GM'.

First Part:

In the Great hall

It is the second night of the midwinter feast. In the Great Hall of the castle, roaring fires and tankards of mulled ale soon drive away all thoughts of the bleak, snow-covered lands outside. The king and his retainers, seated at tables forming a large U around the Hall, dine, drink and watch the entertainers who have flocked to the feast. There are jugglers, actors, acrobats, wrestlers, story-tellers musicians and animal-trainers. Eventually, when the ale-dazed warriors are content to sit back and listen to a ballad, Skuli, one of a minstrel troupe from across the seas, steps forward and sings this poem:



*It was a time of hardship,
and everywhere the anger of the dragon
was seen in gutted barns and barren
fields.
Then two close companions, worthy hall-
heroes,
came hard against the walls of the welkin,
scaling high peaks to put an end to terror.
One, golden-haired with eyes of grey,
his comrade, with blue eyes burning;
they advanced to face their foe.
But three drops of blood sufficed to win
that battle,
and parley and word-play were the only
sounds
while steel remained sheathed and shields
unlimbered.
Soon the heroes' labours won peace,
and when the dragon's pool ran clear
it was a time for the giving of gifts.
The golden one savoured but a sip from
that spring—
waters where he glimpsed and grasped his
destiny.
His friend favoured a future drawn in
dust.*



During Skuli's ballad, Athelred's usual gusto and ebullience slip away. By the end, he is listening intently, sombre-faced and sober. There is silence. The bemused Skuli makes way for some tumbler while Athelred rises shakily and leaves the hall on the shoulder of his eldest son, Osric.

The best and most stalwart of the king's warriors (including any PC knights and barbarians) also rise and file out.

GM: Outside the king's chamber, the warriors are met by Queen Gudrun and the royal advisor, an old monk named Hengist. (Hengist is an accomplished sage with expertise in history, languages, legends and theology and some knowledge of astrology and dweomercraft.) Gudrun tells the warriors, 'Your liege is troubled and has retired to his chambers. If the king needs you I will send for you.' Hengist, realising that something of great import is in the offing, sets about gathering men with skills to complement those of the king's warriors. A messenger is sent to the nearby abbey. He returns with any PC mystics; if none, then one NPC Mystic.

Some hours after midnight, there is a commotion as Athelred comes striding from his chamber. Half-slumbering men-at-arms rouse: Gudrun throws a fur cloak across his shoulders as he marches out into the snow pursued by Osric, Hengist and some men-at-arms (perhaps including some player characters). Athelred, stone-faced and intent, strides toward the minstrel encampment oblivious to the biting cold and Hengist's protests. Some of the minstrels rise to their feet, bewildered and a little alarmed at the visitation.

Athelred steps up to the crackling fire and grimly confronts Skuli—the slender balladeer in his rough clothes; the old king towering above him in fine furs. 'The ballad that you sang,' growls the king softly, 'Whence came it?'

'Sire, almost a month since, I had the fever. Before it broke, I dreamt the words as though they were whispered to me in some hot, dark, secret place.'

Athelred strokes his beard. 'And did you sing it all or was there more?' Skuli hesitates. Suddenly the king grasps him with huge hands, hauling him up so their eyes are level. 'Speak, damn you! Or by the sacred heavens...'

'Father!' Osric leaps to restrain the king. 'You make this good man sore afraid with such words.'

Athelred's sudden rage leaves him and he sets the balladeer down with gruff apologies.

Skuli nods. 'There was more, sire, that I did not deem fit to sing on such a joyous festival.' Seeing the determination in the king's eyes,

Skuli takes up his lyre and sings:

*The passage of years sits heavy on men's shoulders,
but counts for little in the dragon's unblinking eye.
In such a time, the tide of treachery can rise.
Blue eyes now glint with greed; hatred dwells in the heart.
He who had been a hero, a sinister sorcerer now,
seeks to steal and shatter the dragon's shell.
With the blood-oath broken, grief shall fly across the land,
and he who put on the mantle of the monarch,
he shall mourn his golden son.*

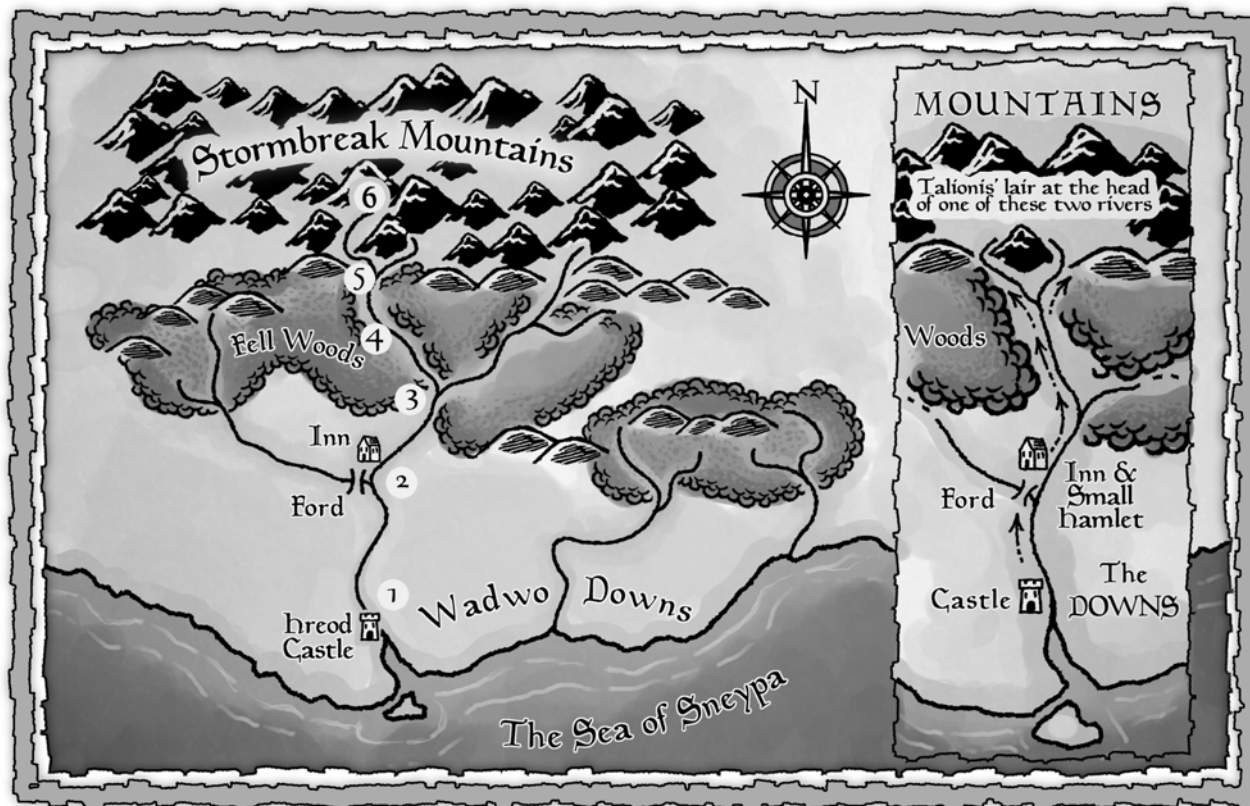
The words are a hammer-blow to Athelred. He stands dazed; staring into the fire. At last, he raises his head, saying to his men:

'Many years ago, before I was king, Beorsca was troubled by a dragon who dwelt in the

northern mountains and came down to steal away cattle. Many were the heroes who sallied into the old worm's lair nevermore to see the light of day. Two young warriors came at last, hoping to win fame and fortune. The warrior with eyes like the cloudless sky was Caedmon. I was the other.

'We entered the caverns to put an end to the dragon or die in the attempt. But when we met her, she spoke to us in an old tongue which Caedmon knew, and so we parleyed with her. A magic pool had become stagnant; a pool sacred to her. We unblocked the channel into the pool by swimming within—something the dragon was too large to accomplish. After many hours, for there was much rubble below the water, the pool flowed fresh again. The dragon agreed not only to honour our earlier bargain that she nevermore troubled Beorsca, but also to add gifts of our choosing. With the water flowing again, the pool had a magical hue; I requested that I might drink of it and received a single sip which showed me dreams of things to come. This knowledge stood me in good stead when I wrested the kingdom from corrupt old Pendris.

My friend, Caedmon, who had some knowledge of wizardry even then, saw a golden



dust in the lair, fragments of an unhatched dragon's egg shattered by a warrior years before. He desired this for its sorcerous properties, and the dragon gave him half-a-hundred pinches.

'Caedmon and I stayed a week with the dragon and sealed a bond in blood. The dragon called herself Talionis. She said that as long as we were true to that bond, we were as siblings. Now, somehow, whether by design or accident, she has sent this message to me through this balladeer. Hengist! How read you these signs?'

'Clearly, sire,' replies the sage, 'the "golden son" is Lord Osric, your firstborn whose eighteenth birthday falls on winter solstice in three days time. The ballad warns that his life is imperilled, just as Caedmon threatens the offspring of the dragon Talionis—who is, as you have told us, sire, your sibling by an oath of mingled blood.'

The king is thoughtful. 'Although, my friend, Caedmon was a secret and dark-souled man who never turned to the new gods. Though I have never seen him since, I have heard that he dwells in a tower across the bleak Wadwo Downs. Osric! Gather my best men. Take them to the lair of Talionis and protect her and her unhatched offspring from Caedmon. Make haste, for the wizard must be already on his way! It is not only for my oath to Talionis that I charge you thus, but because I fear that somehow our destinies are interwoven, hers and mine. Any harm which befalls her fledgeling may bring down doom upon your own head, my son.'

GM: As the others return to the castle, Hengist and Osric remain in the minstrel camp enquiring after any brave men with the skills that minstrels have. (any remaining PCs enlist at this point.)

After a few hours' sleep, the party takes a light meal and prepares to depart. Because there are few horses at the castle, the time of year, and the terrain which lies ahead, the journey will be on foot. Characters may have any armour up to mail armour (AF4) and any standard weapons and shields. Hengist gives to Osric two items he has cherished for many years: a sealed blue bottle containing a Potion of Strength, and a tiny clay pot containing six applications of Healing Potion in the form of a salve. (Osric is unlikely to use them himself, preferring to bestow them on any characters he considers particularly needful or worthy.)

Hengist also tells of something he has read in one of his books: 'Those who are true of heart need fear no harm from the dragon's inferno...'. The book was penned by Ulrich, a monk, by whose advice Hengist sets great store. Finally, he hands the party a rough map which he helped the king to prepare; but Athelred warns that years have passed since he took this route, and the map is uncertain in places.

Second Part:

Waylaid at the Inn

In the early evening of the first day, you reach the junction of two rivers. There are a few cottages, an inn, and three boats down by the river, which is not frozen over. Osric suggests stopping at the inn, and also enquiring there about hiring a boat.

The low-ceilinged inn is murky with smoke from the fire in the grate, but gloriously warm. One or two figures sit drinking at crude wooden benches. The innkeeper, Owain, greets you, observing that you are not the peasants or impoverished travellers he usually caters for. Osric does not introduce himself, but orders cups of mulled wine.

As the wine arrives, two of the other patrons leave. But another figure you hadn't noticed sits alone in the shadows away from the fire. He is dressed in a rough garment like a monk's habit, with the cowl pulled over his head. His face is not visible, but with a sudden tension you feel sure he is watching you. Abruptly, he straightens and raises his clenched right hand. You stare directly into his eyes; clear, sky blue, and alive with glittering malice. He begins the words of some invocation. A sparkling dust falls from his fingers...

GM: Anyone who says they're diving for cover at this point automatically evades Caedmon's *Deathlight* spell. Osric is quick-witted and will have done this. Other characters will need to roll as normal.

With a crack like thunder, an incandescent white bolt leaps from the wizard towards you. Utter confusion follows. After you pick yourselves up, the wizard has gone; the door bangs open in the wind.

GM: If the characters follow, they see Caedmon getting into one of the boats, a hooded figure (Erik Iceheart) already at the oars. The boat moves off upriver. The other two boats have been sabotaged. Any character with a bow has time to fire 4 arrows before they're out of range. The first two will miss automatically as the archer adjusts for the wind. The remaining shots are at -4 to hit. If hit, Caedmon will retaliate by *Enslaving* one of the party who will then try to stop his friends from firing.

Inside, Owain is inspecting the damage. Several beams are charred and a few stones around the fireplace are cracked. Shrugging, he begins to set the scattered stools upright. You spot a very small leather pouch on the floor near where Caedmon was sitting. It is empty but for one or two grains of golden dust.

GM: Since he seems relatively unperturbed, Owain may be suspected of having known Caedmon's intentions. But the innkeeper will maintain (truthfully) that Caedmon, a regular if infrequent visitor, has used his sorcery often enough for Owain not to be startled by it. If asked about the pouch, he will add that Caedmon always wears a number of such pouches at his belt, but on this visit he seemed to have only four. The pouch they have found contained the dragon dust used to cast the *Deathblight*



Third Part:

The Vough

The next day is even more bitterly cold. You trudge through sparse woodland under a bleak, grey sky. Snow threatens. You spy a splash of red ahead, gleaming against the snow. A wild rose. More are scattered along in a winding trail, though there is no sign of footprints. Examination reveals that the roses have been cut rather than plucked.

GM: It is up to the player-characters whether they investigate this. Osric will go along with the majority decision.

The trail of flowers leads to a stagnant pond in a small copse. The pond is iced over—black, with a powdery sprinkling of freshly fallen snow. It is eerily quiet. As you watch, a cold wind swirls the snow in patterns across the ice. Slowly the patterns coalesce and rise into the silver, spectral image of a beautiful woman. Her hair is long and black; her skin, like alabaster. The only colour is the rubies set in tarnished silver links about her pale throat. Her expression is infinitely sad.

GM: If anyone has collected a rose, she drifts towards them, holding out her hands, imploring. If anyone reaches out to her (perhaps to hand her a rose), she matches her **MAGICAL ATTACK** against their **MAGICAL DEFENCE**; if she is successful, they are drawn onto the ice, which has a 15% chance of breaking per person on it. If no one reaches out, she pauses at the edge of the pond for a few moments, then starts to fade. Suddenly (automatic surprise), the ice shatters and a rotted crone, clad in decaying rags, mud and tangled weeds, leaps from the black waters. Her dread shriek chills the blood; match her **MAGICAL ATTACK** against each character's **MAGICAL DEFENCE**, with success meaning that the character stands stock-still, paralysed with terror, for 2d4 combat rounds.

THE VOUGH

ATTACK 16, touch (see below)	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 8	Movement 7m (15m)
MAGICAL ATTACK 19	EVASION 3
MAGICAL DEFENCE 9	STEALTH 13
Reflexes 8	PERCEPTION 10 (panoptical)
Health Points 2d4+10 (this has 16)	
Rank-equivalent: 6th	

This foul undead being can create *Illusion* (*Dragon Warriors*, p. 82) at will. Her chilling touch works in exactly the same manner as a wraith's (*Bestiary*, p. 86). She takes no damage from the first hit on her struck by each opponent, but takes double damage when hit by anyone who bears a holy relic of any kind. If slain, she rapidly decomposes into muddy slime.

If she is slain, any roses collected by the party or left lying in the snow will have vanished.

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Fourth Part: In the heart of the Forest

At nightfall, having gathered fuel, you sit around your fire devouring stew. A lone peasant comes into sight gathering wood. He greets you and asks to share the fire for a while. He is fairly young, below-average height, and wears dark green garments of coarse wool.

GM: If questioned, he says he will tell a tale of past and present, a tale of a dragon. Any who listen (Osric and any NPCs will) will fall asleep. The next thing they know will be when they awaken beside the burnt-out fire under a cold afternoon sky. Any player who says their character is turning his attention to anything else as well as, or instead of, listening to the tale will notice the others dozing off. If he asks, he should be told that he feels drowsy himself but can jerk himself back to wakefulness to see a premature smile of triumph on the face of the young 'peasant' (actually a faerie creature). A single shout will rouse those asleep, but the faerie will have vanished completely, without a trace.

If the party succumb to sleep, they will lose six hours, waking early the next afternoon. This must be made up by pushing on quickly and perhaps even marching on after nightfall. Characters will fight at -1 ATTACK and DEFENCE, and be down 1-3 Health Points, through fatigue after such exertion, until they get a full night's sleep.

Fifth Part: The hermit's Cottage

Shortly after midday (or late afternoon if trapped by the faerie storyteller), you reach the edge of the forest, a few hundred yards on the river forks in two. A low cottage with a blue wisp of smoke curling from its squat stone chimney stands on the river bank, a woodpile beside it and a small boat beyond.

GM: Erik Iceheart waits inside the cottage for the party. He and Caedmon arrived hours ago, murdered the trapper who dwelt here, and hid his body in the woodpile. They left the woods some way to

the west. Their footprints, now partially obscured by fresh snow, will be found only if the party specifically scouts around. Caedmon has gone on to Talionis' lair alone, leaving Erik to deal with the pursuers.

You are some 50m from the cottage when a man wrapped in thick furs emerges from it. Approaching you, he introduces himself as Jorundr the trapper and gruffly warns you that if you mean to rob him he will put up a good fight. He pushes away his cloak, revealing his scabbarded greatsword.

'We intend you no harm, good fellow,' says Osric. 'We are the king's men, on a mission most holy for our liege. We must cross the river here, and I ask only that you lend us your boat.' Jorundr grumbles, but eventually accedes. 'The boat only holds three,' he points out, 'I'll row the last two across so I can bring the boat back afterwards.'

GM: Erik's plan is to wait until the last two are about to cross, and then attack them. After putting them down, he will then take cover in the cottage to avoid any arrows the others may shoot at him from the far bank. After waiting for the party to leave, he will track them and pick them off. If the party decide not to cross the river here, for some reason, he'll misdirect them and follow the latter tactic. If at any stage Erik thinks he is in serious personal danger, he'll either flee or bargain for his life with information. He is very canny, remember and will demand a holy oath from the party that he goes free and unharmed if he keeps his side of the bargain.

The party's map shows that the dragon's lair is at the head of one of the two branches of the river, but which branch? A close look will reveal that the western branch is faster-flowing and slightly warmer. This is because it flows through the heat of the lair at its source. The eastern branch will be found to be frozen over half a mile upstream.

The Final Part: Into the Dragon's Lair

It is now late on the night of the winter solstice. Stars glitter in the sky like hoarfrost. You have followed the river into the foothills. The river is

considerably warmer here, melting the ice and snow on its banks. Trudging up a steep slope, you see where the river gushes from a fissure. After stooping to pass through, you light torches to reveal a winding passage through which the river flows. You are on a rock ledge barely wide enough for two to walk abreast. The other wall, some 20m away, holds a still narrower ledge on that side of the river.

GM: The ledge is slippery. Traversing it takes 4 Combat Rounds and each character must check each round to see if he slips. Treat this exactly like a climb with a Difficulty Factor of 10. Anyone who slips will get one final chance to roll reflexes or less on 1d20 to grab the edge before sliding into the river. If they were nearer the wall, they also bowl anyone alongside them into the water as well. Up to three characters can grab at a falling companion, needing to roll reflexes or less on 1d20 to get a good grip. If at least two people can grab him, the character is saved otherwise he is swept away and drowns.

After what seems like hours of tortuously traversing the ledge, you round a bend and enter a cavern through which the river flows. There is more space now, at least 6m between the wall and the water, and you may quickly reorganise your battle order before advancing. It is much warmer, and you throw off your heavy furs. The river issues from another passage about 12m ahead. Beside this is a pile of fallen rocks—and something else, something gleaming like ivory. The bony corpses of several long dead warriors. Their bones are very white: cobwebs veil their eyeless sockets; tattered flesh hangs from their limbs; their weapons and scraps of armour gleam bright and clean. You feel your skin crawl as the skeletons rise from the dust and move out to block your path. As you prepare for combat, a slight form resting on an oak staff emerges from the shadows of the passage ahead. He brushes some dust from his fingers. There are only two pouches at his belt now. He gives you a last look of mingled amusement and regret, and turns back into the darkness.

GM: Caedmon has used his *Reanimate the Dead* spell on some fighters slain by Talionis over the years. The number of zombies is one more than the

number of the party, up to a maximum of six:

ZOMBIES

ATTACK 10, 2 two-handed swords (d10+1, 6), 4 swords (d8+1, 5)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 4	Movement 6m
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 1
MAGICAL DEFENCE 1	STEALTH 5
Reflexes 5	PERCEPTION 4 (gloomsight)
Health Points 17, 17, 18, 18, 19, 19	
Rank-equivalent: 1st	

For a moment you survey with horror the grisly forms of your fallen foes, then remember the urgency of your mission and press on. After another 10m or so, the tunnel opens into a chamber. The river flows from a vivid blue pool over which hangs a soft mist. Deep below its clear waters, you can make out the bones of old dragons. Another tunnel going deeper into the mountain leads from this chamber...

GM: This is the Pool of the Wyrms' Ancestors from which the king drank. One sip will give the drinker fleeting images of the future—nothing very specific, and not of the immediate future. A second sip at any time has a 50% chance of causing insanity (*Dragon Warriors*, p. 124); and any further sips guarantee insanity. The water loses this magical property, and its colour (why the river isn't blue) five seconds after leaving the pool, so it is of no use if taken away for later use.

The party will have no time to investigate the pool now. If they help Talionis against Caedmon, she will offer them each a sip later, and warn them that they must never take more than one sip. The vision each character has is up to the GM. It should be something that will be of use to the character. For example, 'You see robbers lurking in some bushes, about to waylay a lone rider. It is spring, judging by the flowers and leaves. The rider comes closer and you recognize yourself!' The character is thus forewarned of an ambush.

There is a stillness in the air. The passage winds on another 18m and then seems to end abruptly, but shadows dancing across the glistening rocks make it clear that the tunnel does not end here but snakes sharply to the left. Turning the corner, you find your way blocked

by a wall of flame. From beyond it you hear the roar of a great beast and a human voice speaking in an unknown tongue.

GM: Hengist's advice was correct—anyone of the True Faith, as well as pagans who live an essentially virtuous and honourable life, can walk through the flames unharmed. Characters such as demonologists, darkness elementalists, or others who have performed wantonly evil acts, will take 4d6 damage on walking through the flames—but if their intention is to aid Talionis, the damage taken is the minimum possible (ie, 4 points). They may attempt to leap the flames to avoid the damage (roll reflexes or less on 5d6, or be damaged anyway).

You step from the fire into a huge cavern. The dragon's golden egg is on the far side, cloaked by protective flame. Caedmon and Talionis are 18m away, squaring off for their final battle. Neither has noticed you. Talionis rears up, spreading her great wings to the cavern walls. Caedmon's flesh is coated with a bizarre ashen powder, as though he had already been burned by the dragon, but coruscating tongues of eldritch white flame lick around him too, unlike any dragon-fire.

Raising his hand, he shouts a spell just as Talionis unleashes her fiery breath. White lightning arcs over red-gold flames. Talionis shudders as the wizard's *Deathlight* bolt sears her; but it seems that Caedmon must be defeated as for several seconds he is engulfed in the dragon's awesome inferno.

However, the flame dies and the wizard stands barely harmed; safe in his coating of Amianthus Dust. He smiles at the damage his bolt has done, and raises his staff. Then, as though some sixth sense has warned him, he turns and flashes a cobalt glare at you...

GM: The party's arrival means some quick rethinking for Caedmon. His bolt wounded the dragon severely, so he should be able to finish her off with the power in his Ring of Red Ruin. But he must manoeuvre so as to catch the party with his bolts as well; or else try to slay Talionis quickly and reach the egg before the party can stop him.

He has not long before his Amianthus Dust and Ring of the Burning Halo subside, and he'll need 1 combat round with the Dust still working, to get through the egg's protective flame. He is out

DRAGON WARRIORS

of dragon dust, but has his Rings and his 1st- and 2nd-level spells. Remember that Talionis is protecting her egg. She realises that the party want to help her, but that will not prevent her from breathing on Caedmon if they are in the firing line.

If the party and Talionis defeat Caedmon, she will invite them to spend the solstice celebration with her. Her fledgeling hatches at midnight and takes an immediate liking to his soul-brother Osric. (Dragons in this world spend 18 years in the egg listening to the voices of their ancestors before hatching. The young dragon, Protervus, is almost adult, therefore.) Talionis herself keeps calling Osric by his father's name—it seems to her such a short time since she saw her old friend!

You may decide to let PCs choose an item from her treasure hoard. Talionis will remember them in the future, and may be able to provide boons or ancient wisdom, becoming a powerful if reclusive patron and even instigator of future adventures.

THE CAST

OSRIC

4TH-RANK KNIGHT

ATTACK 17 (d10, 5)

DEFENCE 10

MAGICAL ATTACK –

MAGICAL DEFENCE 7

Reflexes 12

Health Points 16

Armour Factor 4

Movement 10m (20m)

EVASION 4

STEALTH 14

PERCEPTION 6

Treasure: Two-handed sword; dagger; mail armour; 2 javelins (plus potions from Hengist—see p. 73).

Osric, the heir to the throne of Beorsca, is not quite 18 years old. A tall and handsome youth, he is probably the sort of warrior his father would have liked to be, for although Athelred has remained doggedly true to the new religion, he never has the effortlessly pure heart of his son. Osric's long golden hair and grey eyes make him much like a younger version of his father, though he has not the king's full beard or battle scars.



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CAEDMON

9TH-RANK SORCERER

ATTACK 13	Armour Factor 2
DEFENCE 8	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK 25	EVASION 5
MAGICAL DEFENCE 15	STEALTH 15
Reflexes 12	PERCEPTION 8
Health Points 13	

Treasure (at the start of the adventure): four pinches of dragon dust; gnarled oak staff; the Ring of the Burning Halo; the Ring of Red Ruin.

In his youth, Caedmon was a close friend of Athelred. When they befriended the dragon some 20 years ago, Caedmon was given 50 pinches of dragon dust. He now chafes at the fact that his former friend went on to win a kingdom while he lives in his tower in bitter and lonely seclusion. This resentment eventually drove him both mad and evil. He wants enough dragon dust to have a chance of taking over the kingdom, but failing that he will settle for enraging the dragon into causing widespread destruction.

Caedmon has not borne his 42 years as well as Athelred, He is frail and bent. His hair is sparse, and his complexion is unhealthily sallow. Only his eyes reveal the hidden energies within, for they are a clear and most startling sky-blue.

ERIK ICEHEART

6TH-RANK BARBARIAN

ATTACK 22, two-handed sword (d10+3, 8)	Armour Factor 2
DEFENCE 11	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 6
MAGICAL DEFENCE 8	STEALTH 15
Reflexes 12	PERCEPTION 7
Health Points 20	

Treasure: Two-handed sword (see below); dagger; padded armour; bow and arrows

Erik is a slightly built man in his early thirties. He is of medium height with a handsome face and short, golden brown hair. A travelling mercenary, he came to Beorsca six years ago and fell in with Caedmon. He intends to help the wizard get the dragon dust (hopefully with minimum risk to himself) and eliminate him once they have won the kingdom from Athelred.

Erik is utterly cold-blooded, and quite willing to dispatch anyone in the way of his plans, hence his nickname.

Erik's sword, Ymir's Fang, is a +2 two-handed sword. The sword has been passed down in Erik's family for generations, but it cannot be possessed by an outsider. If Erik is slain and Ymir's Fang examined, it will be found to be made of murky ice! It will then melt to a puddle of dirty water within minutes.

TALIONIS THE DRAGON

ATTACK 25	Armour Factor 5 (immune to non-magical weapons)
DEFENCE 20	Movement 15m (25m) (flying—150m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 5
MAGICAL DEFENCE 12	STEALTH 8
Reflexes 12	PERCEPTION 19 (panoptical)
Health Points 37	
Rank-equivalent: 15th	

The dragon is 10 metres long with coppery-red scales along her body. She is only interested in guarding the egg she laid 18 years ago, which is now about to hatch. She can speak, is fully intelligent, if a little slow on the uptake, and can breathe flame.

CHAPTER 10

THE KEY OF TIRANDOR

An adventure by Mike Polling for 5-6 characters of rank 6-9

GM's Introduction

'The Key to Tirandor' is set in a territory which may or may not be part of the Lands of Legend (see p. 5). It has a long history and its own folklore and customs, but magic is extremely rare here. Although the peasants believe in local deities, intelligent men (travellers, city-dwellers, etc.) regard their worship as ignorant superstition. There are no gods. Concepts of good and evil are matters of psychology and perhaps philosophy.

This self-contained world has many creatures unique to its lands. All characters must be human; there are no non-human player races.

For reasons that will become obvious, there should be no forms of illusory magic (*Illusion, Phantasm, Image*, etc.). Because there are few adventurers, and little magic, the player characters are amongst the most powerful people in the world.

Six ready-rolled characters are provided for the campaign. You can use your own characters, or roll new ones, but please note the special requirements and limitations of the characters provided—and remember, there can only be one sorcerer, up to one mystic, and no other magic-using classes. Don't be afraid of making decisions based on your own judgement. Each game is different, and you should respond to the requirement of your game.

The lost city of Tirandor is no fable, although the player-characters should be led to believe it is. Once a very powerful city state, its strength was derived from some source of immense ethereal or

mystical power located in the mountains, probably at the original city site. This was carefully controlled by the mage-lords of Tirandor; but eventually, one of the most powerful, named Karapadin, found some means of usurping all the power for himself. Another mage-lord, the noble Bitranthaa, attempted to stop him. In the ensuing battle, Karapadin was killed; but the power had been drained from Tirandor and it perished. Only Bitranthaa remained. He harnessed the power himself, and attempted to use it to re-establish Tirandor on his own. But by himself he couldn't handle the power, and became steadily madder, building up a Tirandor of illusion. Before he finally retreated inside the fortress of dreams, he captured the dragon Yrgael and set him to guard the source of the power, and established the Nine Gates in an attempt to ensure that if anyone did get to the power, it would be in a much reduced form.

Over the following centuries Bitranthaa has slowly extended his power. Now quite mad, and living in a world of his own fantasies, he is incapable of distinguishing reality from illusion.

The wizard Kastarys has spent some years delving into ancient archives, and has found some vague fragments relating to Tirandor and formed the impression that the power is still there. He has heard of the characters, and magical research has indicated that they are the people for the job. Zanak in particular has been indicated as important, although Kastarys doesn't know why. The other characters should not regard themselves as Kastarys's employees, but rather as partners. Zanak has a family

heirloom, an ancient amulet known in the family as the Key of Tirandor. He has no idea of its significance. The setting is worthless, but the gem has all the colours of the rainbow continually flowing through it. It is, in fact, one of the five pieces of the actual Key. The entire Key consists of two identical gems, an amulet to hold them, and two sections of rod which join together—the top section of the rod fitting into the base of the amulet. The whole thing is about six inches long.

The other four pieces are scattered along the road to Tirandor, and it is only with all of them that Tirandor can be found. Each piece gives the wearer a strong sense of the direction in which he must travel to find the next piece. The player of Zanouk should be told that he cannot bear to be separated from the Key; he should guard it jealously, and covet each new piece as it comes along.

When he finds a new piece, it is instantly obvious to him how it fits together with the piece(s) he already has. As he gets more of the pieces, he will start to feel ill, getting iller with each new piece. Don't tell him that it's the Key that's causing his illness. Even if he finds out, he should still want to keep the Key and bear the illness. It cannot be cured until the Key is put in its proper place—at which time he will be glad to get rid of it. Finally, it's entirely up to him whether he decides to tell the others about it or not.



The Player Characters

These characters are recommended for use in the adventure. If there are more than six players, or if any of the characters are irrevocably killed, further characters should be rolled of comparable power.

KASTARYS

8TH-RANK SORCERER

ATTACK 15, sword (d8+1, 5)	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 8	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK 24	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 14	STEALTH 15
Reflexes 10	PERCEPTION 7
Health Points 12	
Magic Points 28	

Treasure: Ring of Red Ruin (18 charges); +1 sword; +2 Padded Armour; Ring of Sentinels (4 charges); Elixir Vitae.

ZANOK

7TH-RANK KNIGHT

ATTACK 21, sword (d8+2, 6) or 20; crossbow (d10+1, 5)	Armour Factor 7
DEFENCE 16	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 6
MAGICAL DEFENCE 9	STEALTH 16
Reflexes 15	PERCEPTION 8
Health Points 19	

Treasure: Heirloom gemstone—'The Key of Tirandor'; +2 Plate Armour; Shield; +2 Sword; Ring of Teleportation (2 charges); Crossbow with three +1 Quarrels.

VALAKAR

7TH-RANK KNIGHT

ATTACK 22, Morning Star (d6+2, 7), or 21; bow (d6+1, 5)	Armour Factor 7
DEFENCE 16	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 6
MAGICAL DEFENCE 9	STEALTH 16
Reflexes 14	PERCEPTION 8
Health Points 18	

Treasure: +3 Mail Armour; Amulet of Sovereignty over Violence; +2 Morning Star; +1 Dagger; Bow with four +1 Arrows; Elixir Vitae.

SLITH

8TH-RANK ASSASSIN

ATTACK 24, sword (d8+3, 6) or Bow (d6+2, 6)	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 13	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 8
MAGICAL DEFENCE 11	STEALTH 26

DRAGON WARRIORS

Reflexes 17

PERCEPTION 15

Health Points 17

Combat Techniques and Skills: Armour Piercing; Shock Attack; Climbing; Jumping; Pilfer; Pick Lock (60%); Track.

Treasure: +2 Padded Armour; +2 Sword; Ring of Regeneration; Bow with six +2 arrows; the Ankh of Osiris; Evaporating Potion.

RHIGAT

8TH-RANK MYSTIC

ATTACK 20, Spear (2d4+4, 8) Armour Factor 5
or 17; bow (d6, 4)

DEFENCE 12

Movement 10m (20m)

MAGICAL ATTACK 23

EVASION 4

MAGICAL DEFENCE 15

STEALTH 17

Reflexes 18

PERCEPTION 13

Health Points 14

Abilities: Premonition 41%; ESP 74%; Adepthood (immune to poison, diseases, mind control, etc.); Spell Mastery (Hidden Target).

Treasure: +2 Mail Hauberk; +3 Spear; Bow and 10 arrows; Elixir Vitae; Wristband of Extreme Luck.

KELN

7TH-RANK BARBARIAN

ATTACK 24, two-handed sword (d10+3, 8) Armour Factor 6

DEFENCE 15

Movement 10m (20m)

MAGICAL ATTACK –

EVASION 6

MAGICAL DEFENCE 9

STEALTH 16

Reflexes 12

PERCEPTION 8

Health Points 20

Treasure: +2 Mail Armour; +3 Two-handed Sword; Bow with twelve +1 Arrows; Elemental Essence (Aitheron); The Abraxas Stone.

General Notes on the PCs

All characters start with three potions of their choice (from Healing, Dexterity, Strength, Occult Acuity, Replenishment, Amianthus Dust, Night Vision, Sands of Slumber, Vial of Smoke and Theriac), and 700F with which to buy provisions, non-magical equipment and so forth.

The characters should be allowed any basic non-magical equipment, but magical items are very hard to come by and extremely expensive.

The characters start in Brontir, where they meet Kastarys. Once you've sorted out the basic details, show them the map (p. 85) and ask them where

they're going.

Kastarys knows the rough direction (towards the mountains) but only Zanak has any feel for the precise direction—to the swamps: If they don't follow his 'instinct', or if he doesn't tell them about it, they will wander around aimlessly, having the odd random encounter.

Kastarys's Manuscripts (on the next page): The Dragon Song of Tirandor refers to Yrgael's imprisonment (see p. 102). The Sayings and the letter fragment refer to the Nine Gates (see p. 103). You can find player handouts for these and other items from the adventure on page 111 of this book.

Players' Introduction

You are all seasoned adventurers. Although none of you have met before, each has heard of the reputation of the others. Your individual adventures have taken you throughout the known world: from the powerful city-state of Kirag across to the trading-towns of Nalti and Pesh, and down to the most powerful and wealthy city-state, Brontir.

There is little magic around but when you have encountered it, it's been dangerous, mysterious, and frightening. Sorcerers are few and far between, and usually not terribly powerful; they are often disliked and mistrusted, despite the good they can (sometimes) do.

You have all, separately, been requested to pay a call on Kastarys, a well-known sorcerer who lives in Brontir. Little is known about him except that he is pretty much the most powerful wizard around. The message you receive from him doesn't say much—just asking you along to see him, and referring vaguely to the possibility of great power, in connection with the fabled city of Tirandor.

Tirandor is pure myth; a children's tale. Long ago, so the story runs, in the Mountains of Tirandor stood the beautiful and mighty city from which the mountains derive their name. Its dominions extended as far north as Kirag, perhaps beyond. It was the familiar golden age. Somehow, the whole thing is supposed to have collapsed; all Tirandor's lands fell into anarchy, from which they slowly and painfully emerged into the present city-state system. There's not a shred of evidence to substantiate these fairy-tales.

Kastarys's Introduction

You have spent some years looking into dusty old archives, digging up mouldering manuscripts and as a result you are convinced that Tirandor is no legend. You feel that there is immense power in the mountains, just waiting for someone to go and get it. There will be danger, of course, which is why you need to persuade some of the best adventurers around to accompany you on your quest. And persuade them you must—after all, they're not very likely to pay much attention to idle talk about a fairy-tale. The only concrete information you have found (which you should show the other characters) is in the form of old manuscript fragments:

From 'The Sayings of the Sage Emrallam'

Tirandor was a shadow-play on the face of the Abyss. If you are searching for great power, look for the key to the door which has no lock, follow the path of the gate which is not. Victory comes only through death. Defeat your lustings and cravings for worldly things. Release yourself

from the cycle of endless recurrence; overcome yourself. Men are fools, the things of the world toys to befuddle the mind.

The Dragon-Song of Tirandor

The Lord of the Skies
The Prince of the Flame
Is lost from our eyes
Our loss is our shame
In the weight of the Earth
In the boundless Sea
Our loss is our dearth
Until he is free.

Manuscript fragments relating to the history of Tirandor

... but at length there arose one of the mage-lords, named Karapadin, and he penetrated to... rejecting ... and calling instead for ... And having usurped the power, he sought to establish his own empire ... Bitranthaa, who fought against



him in an awesome battle ... Lord Karapadin was defeated and destroyed, but the power was drained from Tirandor for ever ... And Bitranthaa came down, and watched in silence as the towers of Tirandor crumbled into ruin, and confusion and destruction came down upon the land. But some say Bitr ...

Fragment of an ancient letter

... as you requested, my lord, I humbly report that the old man is no more than a lunatic, crazed in his wits. He talks of the mage-lords of Tirandor and other such ravings. And if such babble is not enough, he appears to believe that someone has returned from death or something to that effect. These peasants, my lord, are children—dirty children at that. He wanders much in his speech, referring to the Nine ...

The Campaign

The road to the swamps runs alongside the river. It passes through scattered settlements, although these stop about 15 miles from the swamps, where there is much murmuring, unease, and vague rumours about the swamps among all sorts of superstitious rubbish.

About half-way to the swamps, the party is attacked by bandits, at night. There are twenty ordinary bandits, plus a leader and sorcerer.

LIORK THE BANDIT-CHIEF

7TH-RANK BARBARIAN

ATTACK 21, two-handed sword (d10+1, 6)	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 12	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 6
MAGICAL DEFENCE 9	STEALTH 16
Reflexes 11	PERCEPTION 8
Health Points 19	
Treasure: Mail Armour; Dagger; 2-handed Sword; 10F.	

SERKATON

5TH-RANK SORCERER

ATTACK 12	Armour Factor 2
DEFENCE 7	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK 20	EVASION 4
MAGICAL DEFENCE 10	STEALTH 14
Reflexes 11	PERCEPTION 6
Health Points 10	
Magic Points 19	
Treasure: Staff; dagger; 5F, Pendant of Alarums.	

THE BANDITS

1ST-RANK BARBARIANS

ATTACK 14, sword (d8, 4)	Armour Factor 2
DEFENCE 6	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 5
MAGICAL DEFENCE 3	STEALTH 13
Reflexes 10	PERCEPTION 7
Health Points 10, 10, 10, 11, 11, 11, 12, 12, 12, 13, 13, 13, 13, 14, 14, 14, 14, 15, 15, 15	
Treasure: 3F between them.	

Liork is cunning; if he sees his men destroyed he will try to escape, or argue himself into safety. If he sees a reasonably safe way of killing or damaging the party he will take it.

Serkaton has an amulet around his neck, which the character with the 'Key' will feel he wants and needs, although he cannot explain why. If Serkaton has been killed, the character will search his body and find the amulet immediately. It looks just like an ordinary gem set in gold. Serkaton, if still alive, does not think it magical. It has a curious and ancient setting; as the player-character with the 'Key' takes it, the stone falls out to the ground; the 'Key' gem falls out of its setting, and the PC automatically catches it. The 'Key' must obviously be fitted into the amulet once possessed by Serkaton.

As the party journeys onwards, the adventurers notice odd behaviour amongst the animals: nocturnal animals out by day and vice versa, not taking care to hide themselves from the party, behaving violently, often attacking each other, and even herbivores attacking other creatures.

Before the party reaches the Swamps, it is attacked, by day, by a pack of twelve wolves, who will not turn and run when in great danger, but who will all fight to the death. They do not seem to have a pack leader.

WOLVES

ATTACK 15, fangs (d4, 5)	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 3	Movement 12m (25m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 3
MAGICAL DEFENCE 1	STEALTH 16
Reflexes 12	PERCEPTION 11 (elfsight)
Health Points 5, 5, 6, 6, 7, 7, 8, 8, 9, 9, 10, 10	
Rank-equivalent: 1st	

The Swamps of Dorganath

As they approach the swamps the player-characters meet a deranged peasant who thinks they are insane

to try the swamp, but suggests they keep to a path which is marked out by slashed trees. He's never penetrated very far inside the swamps himself; about half an hour into them, the marked path disappears. Encounters: roll d8 for every 8 hours spent in the swamp. On a roll of 1, roll 1d20 on the table below.

Swamp Encounters

d20 roll	Encounter
1	Giant scorpions
2-5	Crocodiles
6-8	Pythons
9	Giant spiders
10-11	Rats
12-14	Giant vipers
15-17	Tarantulas
18-20	Miscellaneous harmless creatures

Dorganath, as Lord of the Swamps, knows what is happening within them at all times. The swamps are completely magical; Dorganath is, in a sense, the embodiment or essence of the swamps. He is telepathically aware of everything in them, and knows of the characters' entry. As they move on, he opens up areas of firm ground which will lead them inexorably to his mansion. If anyone tries to spy out the area by flying over it, he will only see undifferenti-

ated swamp: no sign of a path, and no sign of the mansion. Unless they get lost, it should take them about a day to reach Dorganath's mansion.

In the fullness of time they reach a large house with a tower at one side—the path leads here. Whether they arrive by day or night, Dorganath knows they are approaching and will be ready for them whatever they decide to do. If they try to break in, they will suddenly find themselves surrounded by twice their own number of warriors. Attacking them will do no damage; they will not fight. Their eyes are dull and empty, and one of them speaks in a flat monotone with no intonation or stress at all, 'My master would like you to join him inside.'

Awaiting them in the hall is Dorganath. His voice is also monotonous. He tells them it is a long time since he saw humans, and his name. (This is actually a lie, in a way; originally he was not called Dorganath, but his original name is lost. He was a wizard who came to live in the swamps, hiding from the wrath of the Princes of Tirador—he has been here ever since. He has come to assume the identity of the swamps from which he derives his power. In effect, he is a part of the swamp and it is a part of him. When one is killed, the other will die.) Needless to say he is pretty deadpan and humourless—swamps aren't known for their sense of humour.



DORGANATH

IOTH-RANK WATER ELEMENTALIST

(MINOR ELEMENTS EARTH AND AIR)

ATTACK 17, sword (d8 +4, 8) Armour Factor 0 (immune to non-magical weapons)
DEFENCE 12 Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK 26 EVASION 7
MAGICAL DEFENCE 16 STEALTH 18
Reflexes 17 PERCEPTION 8
Health Points 13
Treasure: +2 sword; Ring of Negation (in the form of a tarnished silver wristband).

Dorganath's swamp control takes several turns of concentration to effect, so is of no use in combat. He is immune to non-magical weapons. He can also summon 3-12 Swamp Beings. These are created magically out of the substance of the swamp itself, huge shambling things that exude a nauseous stench and leave a trail of putrid slime.

SWAMP BEINGS

ATTACK 19, limb (d6 +2, 6) Armour Factor 5
DEFENCE 7 Movement 6m (12m)
MAGICAL ATTACK - EVASION 1
MAGICAL DEFENCE 8 STEALTH 12
Reflexes 5 PERCEPTION 8 (panoptical)
Health Points
Rank-equivalent: 6th
Treasure: None.

He also has any number of servants. These are essentially zombies, the pitiful remains of foolish adventurers who stumbled into the swamps. They have no will whatsoever. They are extremely fast, and very strong. These servants, however, will not fight under any circumstances; if the characters attack Dorganath (or even the servants themselves) they will take no part. They cannot be commanded or controlled except by Dorganath.

He will conceal his hostility to the characters, seeming friendly and interested in them. In fact, his intention is to find as much information from them as possible, then feed them to the swamp and turn their soulless remains into more servants. Despite his great power, fire (of any kind; a hurled torch, a simple spell) terrifies him, and if he is brought into contact with it, he will instantly flame up and perish. His servants etc will die with him, crumbling into dust. All the fireplaces in his mansion are sealed up, and light at night is provided by strange glowing stones. When he dies, the swamps will begin to shrivel up and die.

The Mansion of Dorganath

The interior of the mansion is generally dilapidated, slimy; damp, dusty, squalid. It is hard to believe that anyone lives here, human or not.

Ground Floor

A: hallway

Long hall reaching up to top of house with staircase leading to balcony on first floor.

B: Storeroom for kitchen

This room contains pots, pans, etc. all disused, rusty, ancient. Bits of squalid mouldy food.

C: General storeroom

This room contains clothes, linen, odds and ends, ancient and disused.

D: Kitchens

Also disused. Fireplace blocked up, as are all fireplaces.

E: Dining room

Disused, fireplace blocked up.

F: Reception room

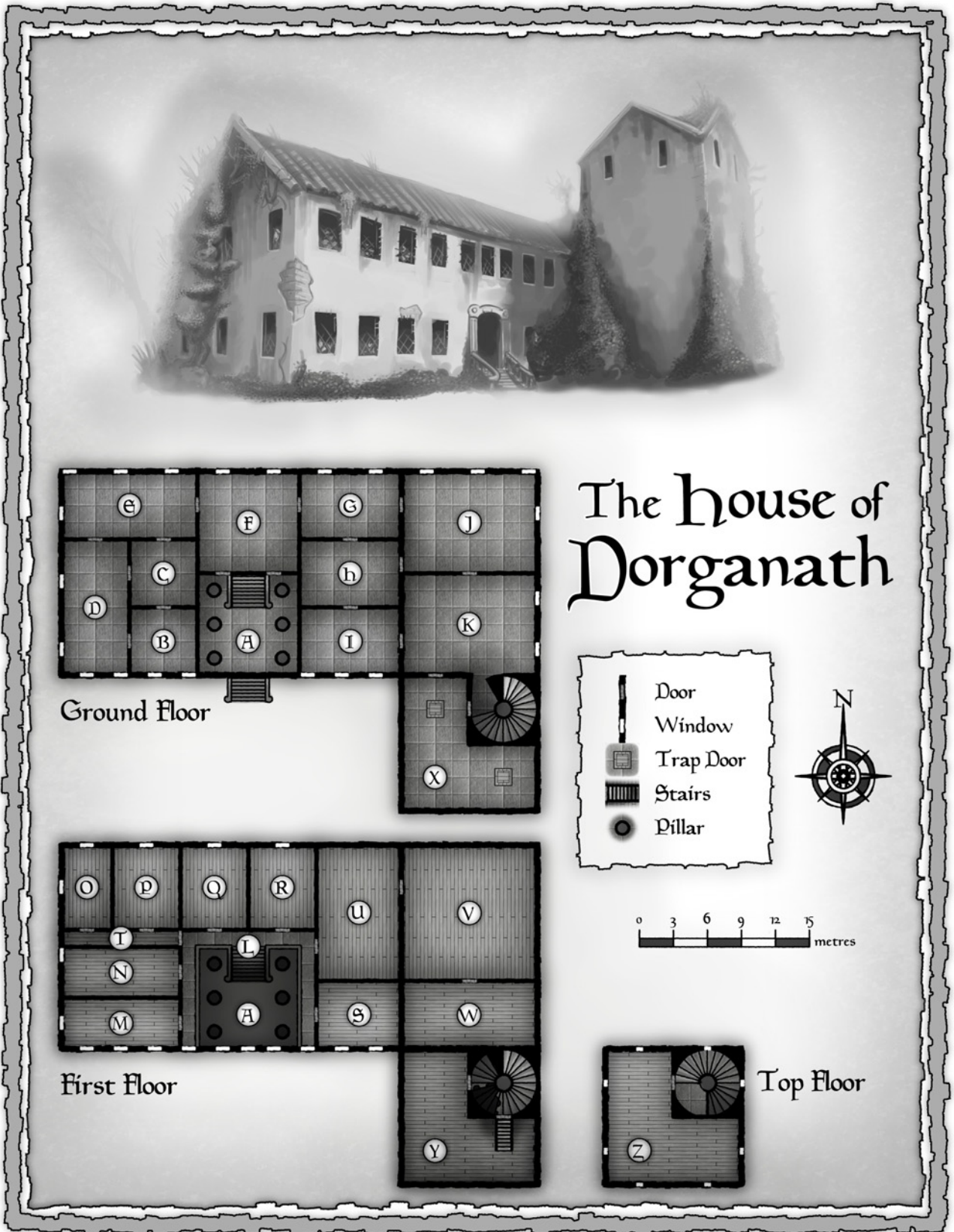
G, h, I: Reception rooms

Empty and dusty

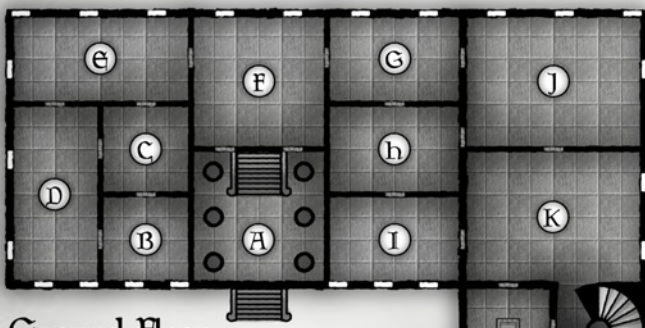
J: Dorganath's library

Hundreds of books. On the bottom shelf in the SE corner, behind a chair, inside a locked cabinet, are three rare books on demonology, and scrolls of *Oracle* and *Mantlet*.

K: Dorganath's study

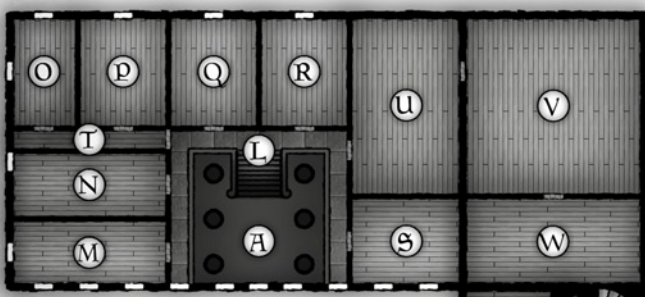
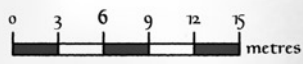


The House of Dorganath

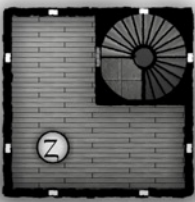


Ground Floor

	Door
	Window
	Trap Door
	Stairs
	Pillar



First Floor



Top Floor



First Floor

L: Balcony

Lining the balcony are doors to mouldy bedrooms M, N, O, P, Q, R and S. T is a corridor to O and P.

U: Empty room

Completely empty with no window.

V: Dorganath's treasure-room

All the treasure is covered in dust, obviously untouched for long ages. Hidden amongst the piles of treasure are spiders, about three feet in diameter. If they bite they inject a mild poison. Treasure: 4400F in gold and gems; 1 potion of strong poison; 1 Amianthus Dust.

W. Empty

The Tower

X. Dorganath's torture chamber

Thick walls, no windows, soundproof. There are two trapdoors in this room.

There is a girl, unconscious and dressed in rags, chained in one corner of the room. She is Keladi, captured by Dorganath because she possessed a worthless gem, a family heirloom—it is in fact, the second part of the 'The Key', at present residing in Dorganath's lab (Z)

KELADI

8TH-RANK MYSTIC

ATTACK 17	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 12	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK 22	EVASION 6
MAGICAL DEFENCE 13	STEALTH 18
Reflexes 16	PERCEPTION 13
Health Points 13	

(Str 12; Reflexes 16; Int 17; Psychic Talent 12; Looks 16)

Abilities: Premonition 41%; ESP 74%; Spell Mastery (Assessment).

Treasure: None.

Keladi is a wandering adventuress. She is prepared to say and do absolutely anything at all if she feels

that this will in some way benefit her. She will pretend to be a peasant girl, and accompany the party as such, because she thinks there's something useful in it for her. She cares about nothing at all except herself and her own possible gain. If she joins the party, she will very subtly attempt to sow seeds of dissent.

Beneath the trapdoors into the swamp is a mere-gaunt (see the *Bestiary* p. 41).

MERE-GAUNT

ATTACK 20, bite (d10+1, 7)	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 12	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK -	EVASION 6
MAGICAL DEFENCE 12	STEALTH 12
Reflexes 10	PERCEPTION 7 (darksight)
Health Points 21	
Rank-equivalent: 8th	

Y. Empty Room

The stairs between the first floor and the top floor have crumbled to nothing. Player-characters will have to enter the room and climb the makeshift wooden steps Dorganath installed (instead of repairing the staircase) to the top floor.

Z. Dorganath's lab

Contains all sorts of arcane and esoteric equipment etc, all apparently useless. In the middle of the table is a gem, similar in all respects to the 'Key'. It fits neatly into one side of the amulet containing the 'Key'.

The Mountains of Tirador

Getting out of the swamp is fairly easy. Ahead, the peaks of the Mountains of Tirador reach up forever, as the player characters begin the ascent into the foothills. The foot-hills are quite thickly wooded, and after a while begin to rise into the mountains proper. Random encounters are twice as frequent as usual; when the encounter occurs, the creatures are more vicious than normal, as if maddened.

While they are more or less in the middle of the foothills, they are attacked, by day and from behind, by six huge, shaggy beasts, which seem to appear out of nowhere.

WOOD-DEMONS

ATTACK 17, claws (d8, 4)	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 10	Movement 6m (12m)
MAGICAL ATTACK 17	EVASION 5
MAGICAL DEFENCE 10	STEALTH 16
Reflexes 11	PERCEPTION 5 (elfsight)
Health Points 1d6 +12 (these ones have 13, 15, 16, 17, 17 and 18)	
Rank-equivalent: 6th	

The wood-demon (not in fact a demon at all, but so called by ignorant and superstitious peasants) can shriek. Match the wood-demon's MAGICAL ATTACK against each party member's MAGICAL DEFENCE; if successful, the shriek causes confusion (an inability to cast spells or to fight, though the victim may still defend himself). This lasts for three combat rounds. The demon can also create an illusion of being a rock which is near-perfect (+5 to STEALTH when using the rock illusion).

Aroyendis

As the party reaches the point at which the foothills begin to turn into mountain, they find a small hut nestling in the trees with smoke coming from the chimney.

Inside is an old man called Aroyendis. Aroyendis is friendly towards them—he tells them he is friendly to all passers. He points out that since the days of Tirandor no one has passed his door twice. He will provide them with food and a place to sleep; if anyone needs healing or revivifying he will do that for them at no cost. They may stay with him for as long as they like.

If questioned, he will tell them that they have a great danger ahead of them, perhaps insurmountable, and that great power lies there for the one who can take it. He does quite a bit of philosophising, telling them frequently that all is illusion, a shadow-play on the face of the abyss. He advises them to leave the path of eternal recurrence, the whirlpool of endless seeming, and to find instead the centre of the wheel of change and return, to sit at the 'still point of the turning world', at the 'point of intersection of the timeless with time'.

The clever player will spot that this ability to quote T. S. Eliot so glibly comes from the sage's position at the precise point where all dimensions, all times, all universes, in short, all realities, meet. The danger which threatens the world, and them in particular, cannot affect Aroyendis, who knows that

all is illusion. He is often almost wilfully obscure, although he explains this as being the most coherent way he can hope to make anything truly clear. The question of Truth is one which amuses him greatly: the 'human' idea of there being a Truth, like the concept of Good, Evil, Meaning, Purpose, etc., he finds quite ludicrous. Before the party leaves, he will give one of its members (the one who has spoken most intelligently to him; failing that, random roll) an ancient amulet, which has words engraved upon it (see below).

Note: As a parting jest, he tells them cryptically that the one true power is that of life through death, after all else has been renounced.

Aroyendis cannot be harmed by anything. Weapons pass through him; the energy from spells simply disappears. If the player characters look back after having left the house, there will be nothing there except trees and rocks. On the amulet, engraved circularly and turning towards the centre, are the words:

Obverse:

*That which was before anything was
Which sighed before breath had life
Which was the serpent of creation
Which moved on the face of the waters
Which whispers with a thousand empty voices
Which has no age or death*

Reverse:

*That which destroys with a thousand tongues
Which laughs with a meaningless sound
Which lights the way of life and death
Which speaks with the voice of consuming fear
Which raises the legions of the damned shadows
Which breathes the roar of chaos and pain
In the name of and
I release you*

The words in the blanks have been obliterated; they should read, respectively, 'Wind' and 'Fire'. The amulet becomes important later. There is a players' handout version on page 111.

Although there is no clear path for them to follow, Zanak will feel instinctively that he knows which way the party should go.

After about half a day's climbing, they are attacked by a party of shortish, hairy, muscular men (actually illusions).

THE ANAK

ATTACK 15, sword (d8, 4)

DEFENCE 7

MAGICAL ATTACK –

MAGICAL DEFENCE 4

Reflexes 11

Health Points d6 +10

(these ones have 11, 11, 12, 12, 12, 13, 13, 13, 13, 14, 15, 15, 15, 16, 16)

Rank-equivalent: 2nd

Armour Factor 2

Movement 10m (20m)

EVASION 5

STEALTH 13

PERCEPTION 5

The Anak were a peaceful and civilized race, their civilization had once reached greater heights than anywhere else in the land. They kept very much to themselves, until Bitranthaa tried to extend his power. For some time they successfully resisted the mad Mage-Lord, standing against him when every other living creature around had fled or succumbed to his power. Their priest was Dessom (see later).

In the end, Bitranthaa overcame them. Those he did not destroy fled, and nothing more is known of them. The characters are attacked by 15 of these beings—not ‘real’ Anak, but Bitranthaa’s illusory creations.

Once they have overcome these Anak, the PCs will come across an Anak stronghold; and the bearer of the Key feels strongly that they should enter.

The Anak Stronghold

An improvement upon natural caves and rock passages in the side of the mountain. The Anak lived within the mountain itself. The passageways are tall and wide; the whole system is very spacious. Where possible, light has been let in from holes in the rock, and reflected into obscure corners by means of mirrors.

Where the passages are too far away from possible light from the sun, there are glowing stones which give off a clear radiance. Everything is extremely elegant and graciously constructed, and adorned with great taste and artistry—wall paintings and hangings, wood carvings on doors, etc. All gives the appearance of a very civilized and cultured race.

Almost everything here, including any Anak they may meet will be illusions. The real Anak fled about a hundred years ago, yet it looks as if they had only just left, appearances maintained by illusion. Any random or wandering-monster encounters in the stronghold will be 1–10 more Anak that will attack on sight.

A. Living Quarters

This building is deserted, recently by the look of it.

1. Bedroom

Cushions covered with rugs for sleeping on, floor cushions for sitting on; low tables.

2. Living quarters

All rooms are divided off by thick hangings which can be drawn aside and changed around with ease. Good carvings and wall hangings.

3. Entrance and reception area

4. Kitchen

Fireplace (as in every room), pots, pans, etc.

B. Living Quarters

1. Entrance and reception

2. Library of Scrolls

These are mostly incomprehensible, treatises on art and works of Anak scholarship. Study-cushions, low tables, and writing instruments are scattered throughout the room.

3. Living-area

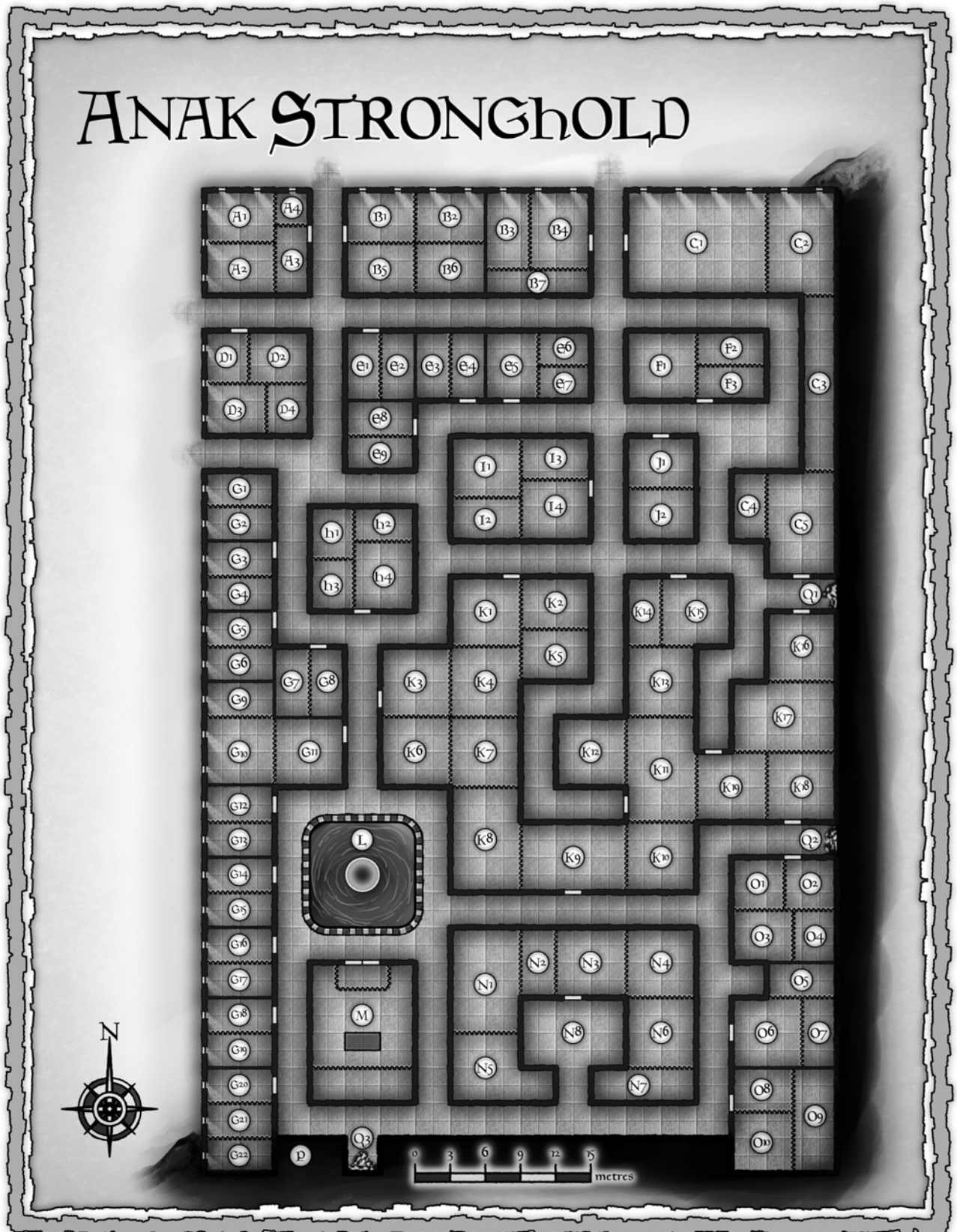
This is a dusty room filled with cushions, fine paintings, carvings and hangings.

4. Entrance-reception

5. Guest-room

6. Main bedroom

ANAK STRONGHOLD



7. Kitchen

C. Museum and Library

All the great artefacts and works of science and art are kept here.

1. The Gallery

The finest paintings, wall-hangings, carvings. Also a display of musical instruments.

2. The Library

Vast collection of scrolls piled from floor to ceiling. These actually are genuine—the Anak had to flee too quickly to allow them to take their museum or library with them. In reality, everything is in a pretty bad state, but it all looks new, thanks to the illusion.

3. Long passageway

Intricately decorated with curious weapons on the walls. Although, like everything else, these weapons look new, they are in fact ancient as hell and pretty useless.

4. Sleeping-quarters

5. Curator's office

Low tables, useless scrolls, writing equipment etc.

D. Living-Quarters

1. Entrance-reception.
2. Kitchen.
3. Living area.
4. Bedroom.

E. Living-Quarters

- 1, 4, 7, 8. Living areas.
- 2, 3, 6, 9. Bedrooms.
5. Entrance-reception.

F. Living-Quarters

1. Living area.
2. Bedroom.
3. Entrance-reception.

G. Living-Quarters

- 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 21. Entrance and living areas.
- 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 13, 15, 17, 19, 22. Bedrooms.
11. Entrance-reception.

H & I. Living-Quarters

1. Living area.
2. Kitchen.
3. Bedrooms.
4. Entrance-reception.

J. Living-Quarters

1. Entrance-living area.
2. Bed.

K. Administration

All of these rooms were used as offices for various functions.

L. Artificial Pond

Has fountain in the middle.

M. Temple

Dedicated to the unknown gods of the Anak. Decorated with breathtakingly beautiful wall paintings and carvings. At the southernmost end is an altar.

N. Palace of the Prince of the Anak

Sumptuously decorated home of the former Prince of the Anak.

1. Living area.
2. Reception room.
3. Entrance-reception.
4. Study; nothing worthwhile.
5. Bedchamber.
6. Main bedchamber.
7. Treasure-room. Walled off from the rest of the house, with a door. Contains 9 chests: seven are

full of gold coins, worth 3000F per chest; two contain gems and jewellery to the value of 7000F per chest; all illusion, of course.

8. Courtyard.

O. Living-Quarters

1. Cooking.
- 2, 6, 8. Entrance-reception.
- 3, 7, 10. Living areas.
- 4, 5, 9. Bedrooms.

P. Solid rock. Smoothed

Q. Passageways

Leading nowhere; blocked by fallen stone.

Originally, the domain of the Anak extended much further, but the illusion is only being maintained for this small area.

Bitranthaa's power is that of illusion; he is extending his power into this reality slowly, increasing the element of illusion in the world. He is mad, and likes to play with his victims before destroying them. What he does to destroy, essentially, is to drain out the reality of his victims which he transforms into magical energy and uses to extend his power; the victims themselves then become illusions, sustained only by his imagination, over which he has complete control. The victims are neither living nor dead, for he has not actually killed them, i.e. released their souls, which are trapped within the illusion. The illusions are thus trapped in Bitranthaa's world of illusion, and are conscious of it, but helpless rather like being in a dream, or a figment of someone else's imagination, but aware of it. Any illusions cast by any of the player-characters are useless, and the energy used in creating them just goes to Bitranthaa.

The party is a genuine threat to Bitranthaa, because they possess the parts of the Key which may destroy him. He cannot destroy them immediately, for the power of the Key is protecting them. He has no power to destroy the Key.

Bitranthaa is aware of the PCs' entrance into the Anak stronghold although awareness for him is not the same as it is for most: he is largely unable to differentiate between illusion and reality (this is in practice; in theory he does distinguish to the extent

of knowing what he is trying to remove and what he is trying to impose). Nevertheless, whether consciously or unconsciously, he is aware of their intrusion, and so will warp the appearances within the stronghold, shifting walls and doors, etc, although the real layout of the stronghold remains as it is in the diagram. These false appearances will warp the senses (unless they are disbelieved), but if any adventurer pushes on through a 'wall' where he knows a passage to be, the illusion will vanish.

At the entrance to M (The Temple) is a huge stone block which is half-illusion, half-real. It is real enough to be impossible to penetrate, although if it is broken it will become transparent, which is no use as there is a very real curtain behind it.

In order to reach the inside of the temple, they must drink the water from the pool at L. Illusion cannot affect the pool, nor can it affect the temple itself—it can only put the door in the way. Once the water has been drunk, it enables the PCs to see to a certain extent through the illusion that surrounds them. It has a disastrous effect upon that illusion which must be believed in to be sustained. The walls begin to shift, to dissolve and melt, as in a melting reel of film or a painting that has been splashed. Everything begins to merge with everything else.

The Anak can no longer attack, indeed they are in a pitiful state. It is difficult to get bearings and even balance is affected. Only the temple remains solid, and the stone block is no longer in the way. The passageways are impossible to find now, so it is unlikely that the party will do anything except make for the temple. Inside everything is solid and 'ordinary'. All is bathed in a calm green light. On the altar is a small shiny cylindrical rod which is the next part of the Key, for which they have come. This will fit quite easily into the slot in the base of the amulet.

From behind the curtain behind the altar (unless someone has already gone behind it, of course) they hear a voice calling them. Behind it, lying on a bed is the Anak called Dessom. He is very old, and dying. His voice is indistinct, and only a few words can be made out, here and there, disjointed. He tells them that he is the last of the Anak who lived here, that he has been fighting a lone battle for over a hundred years, that the power is too great and increasing, that he cannot hold it any longer; that he had enchanted the pool and that he keeps the temple safe.

Dessom was the Anak priest, endowed with considerable magical powers, and he used his talents to

hold off Bitranthaa's influence while he searched feverishly for some means of defeating the mad mage-lord. When Dessom at last found the way to destroy Bitranthaa's power, he was too old and too enfeebled to use it. He has managed to survive and keep himself safe from Bitranthaa, hoping that someone will come along with the ability to use the spell he has devised. He points to a symbol on the wall, which glows with a luminous green. He says, in a broken and incoherent fashion, that a sorcerer must trace this symbol, and that it binds reality. He is very insistent that this must be done, and that there is very little time.

When Kastarys does this, a great pain shoots up his arm, a numbing cold, and he momentarily blacks out but recovers almost immediately. Dessom tells him that he will know when he has to use it again. (In fact, he almost immediately forgets the form of the symbol; he will only remember it when finally confronted by the prince in the castle, over the crystal coffin; see p. 100.)

Dessom tells them all to leave, fast, muttering that he is 'holding it for as long as he is able'. As they leave the temple, they notice that everything has lost its polished, unnaturally new look, and has become a ruin. Everything is dusty, decrepit, old, in fact, as it really is. Huge cracks begin to appear in the stone; great cracking and smashing noises are heard. Rocks begin to fall from the roof of the huge cavern, walls begin to give way and come crashing in. Some massive rifts appear directly overhead, and it looks as if the whole roof should fall on their heads, burying them under the mountain.

Miraculously this does not happen, and they feel that some great force is somehow holding it back. Dust rises all around them from the parts that have collapsed. However, provided they don't hang around or do anything silly, they will get out in time. Shortly after they get outside, the whole area gives way with a massive crash and a roar, a whole section of the mountain crumbles, so the characters should be well clear. This incidentally also means the end of the 'illusion-Anak'.

The party must continue along up the mountain, always guided by the holder of the Key. The effect of the water they have drunk will wear off after about 20 minutes, leaving them just as subject to illusion as ever.

Note: Water taken from the Pool in flasks etc has no special effect outside the Anak stronghold.

The climb is a pretty arduous one and will take them two or three days. At length, coming to the top of a ridge of mountains, they find themselves faced with a sheer precipice, a mile across and a 6000-metre drop. Arching across this vast gulf is a slender bridge (actually 10 metres wide) made of pure silver. (Any silver taken from the bridge instantly becomes a pile of worthless ashes.) On the other side it is as if the top of the mountains has been sliced off. A mile beyond the edge of the plateau can be seen the white towers of Tirandor soaring up into the deep blue mountain-sky.

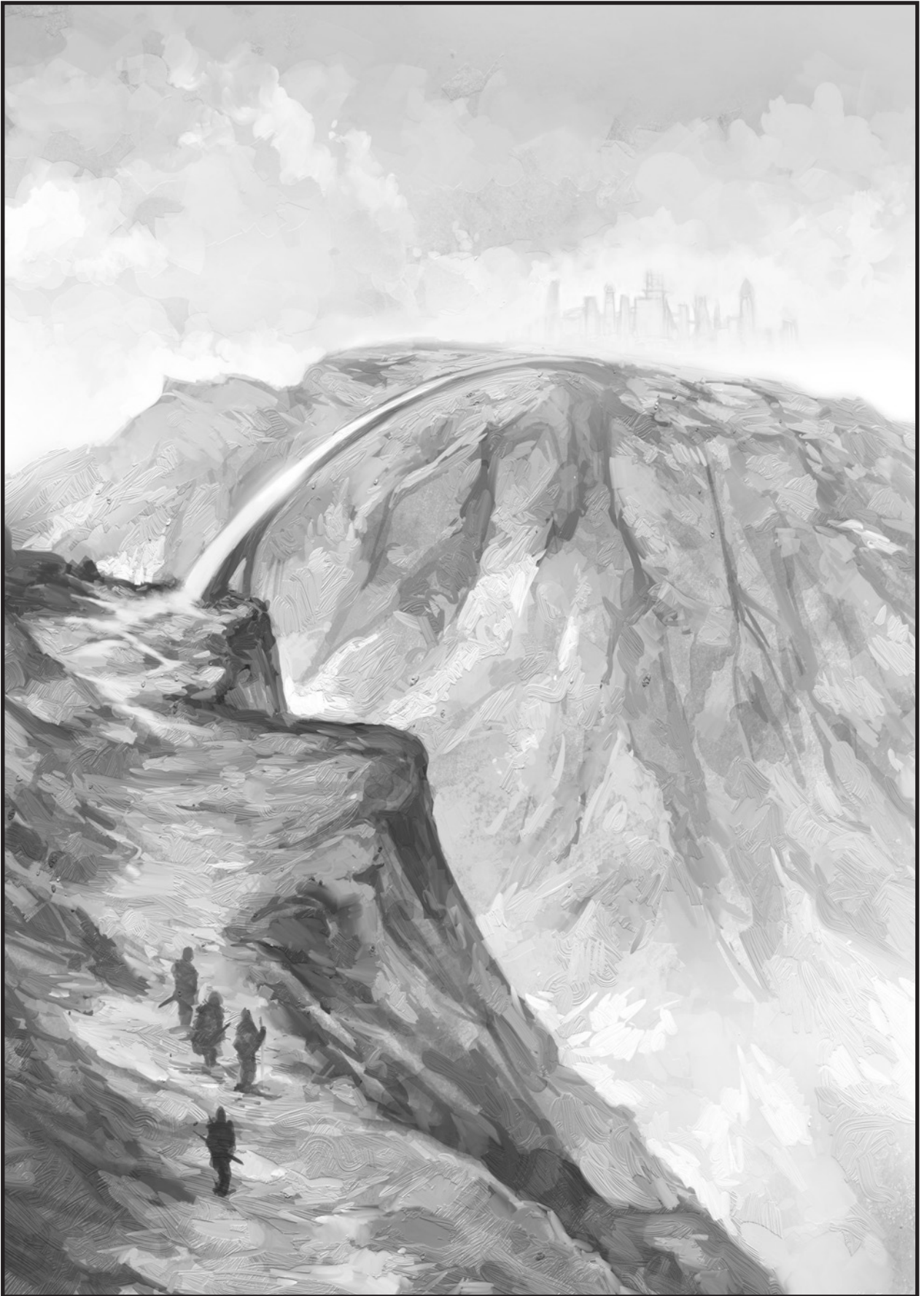
The bridge is perfectly safe. On the other side, there is no snow and no wind, and although still quite cold it's a lot warmer than the rest of the mountains. The walls of Tirandor seem to stretch for miles. They are made of a seamless metallic substance, totally resistant to everything. If anyone tries to walk round the walls, he can walk forever without seeing them end or returning to his starting point; if anyone tries to fly over them, he will find the walls stretching up and up and up, as far as he can fly. The gates, facing the travellers, are made of the same substance and are tightly hermetically sealed. Five figures stand in front of the gates.

Outside the City

Standing in front of the gates are the Guardians of the City, established here while Tirandor was still a great power, to prevent anyone from entering who does not know the correct way. Only Bitranthaa is left who still knows the correct way. There is no other way in except through this gate. The Guardians are totally and utterly impervious to all magic of any kind whatsoever, even to Bitranthaa's illusions. He, of course, is not bothered by them; he never leaves Tirandor, and even if he did he would know the correct way to re-enter. In fact they perform a pretty useful service for him, assuming that anyone could ever get this far.

GUARDIANS OF THE CITY

ATTACK 21, huge sword (d10+1, 6)	Armour Factor 4
DEFENCE 8	Movement 7m (15m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 3
MAGICAL DEFENCE –	STEALTH 7
Reflexes 12	PERCEPTION 6 (panoptical)
Health Points 2d6+25 (these have 30, 32, 33, 39).	
Rank-equivalent: 8th	



Jr

Guardians are three meters tall and wear black armour. Their faces are hidden in the shadows of their great helms. They wield two-handed broadswords in one hand, a large shield in the other. They are impervious to all direct-damage spells; this does not mean that adventurers cannot use whatever magical defences against physical attack they may possess. The Guardians can see invisible beings. They always wait to be attacked, or at least for someone to attempt to open the gates which in itself constitutes an attack in their eyes. They never sleep. They do not speak and will not kill unless by accident (although not trying to kill they won't soften their attack or their blows in combat). If they put someone down, they will allow his companions to take him away. They fight one-to-one: two of them will never attack a single enemy.

To one side of the Guardians, but behind them, lies a pile of treasure which has been taken from those who have tried to get through before and have died in the attempt. A picturesque little pile of human bones is scattered around on the ground before the Gate.

Treasure: 8000F; gems worth 100; 200; 350; 50; 280; 30; 700; 1300; 50; 80; 2000; 550; 150; 900; 400; 800; +1 Mail Hauberk; +3 Battteaxe; Ring of Obedient Parts.

Inside the City

After the party has killed the Guardians, at a touch of the (still incomplete) Key the doors will open silently and remain forever open. Revealed to the party's wondering eyes is a majestic and beautiful city, with gleaming towers that seem to touch the sky. It is entirely pure white.

Its numerous inhabitants are wandering about their daily business almost noiselessly and do not seem in the least interested in the party. They are all remarkably beautiful people. There are shops and taverns, and the party may do as they wish to provision themselves. The inhabitants will serve them and speak pleasantly to them; nowhere are there any signs of violence or disorder.

Everything is peaceful, it seems a haven of tranquillity. The inhabitants will talk about anything the player-characters care to discuss with them but any attempt to question them on history or on the subject of their quest will result in vague, imprecise

answers that get them nowhere. The general attitude conveyed by these people is that nothing much matters, certainly not those subjects in which the party is most interested. In fact, they are all illusions, souls that Bitranthaa has trapped in the same way as he did those of the Anak. Any food or refreshment the party takes is actually unreal. It will seem to them that they are really eating and drinking, but their hunger and thirst will not go away.

In this city, in the heart of Bitranthaa's domain, simply disbelieving will not work; they are in the city, and so are caught up in the illusion. There is no such thing as money here; everyone takes whatever he wants, and no one minds. The people are peaceful, and they don't question anything. They believe that they are ruled by the Prince, although they've never seen him, and they know he lives in the Palace, although they don't know where it is.

Any character that flies up into the air will only see the city all around him, everywhere nearly the same. No sign of the Palace and no signs of the walls or the gates, which the adventurers will not be able to find again if they wander away from them. If asked questions they can't answer, the inhabitants will be mildly interested in the problem, but not really concerned. They may be attacked and killed without offering any resistance; if wounded, they will still remain quietly friendly with their attackers. When killed, gratitude and relief can be seen on their faces.

At some point, a messenger with flowing grey hair and white robes will come to find them. He tells them that the Prince of Tirandor has heard of their entry into the city and would wish to speak with them. They can of course refuse to go, and the messenger will not press them. Periodically he will return and repeat the invitation.

Eventually, of course, they will accept as there's nothing else for them to do. The Prince lives in a huge and magnificent Palace of unearthly beauty, the sort of beauty one only ever dreams of. They are met with much gracious and courteous ceremony by the Prince himself, who shows them to some rooms and orders some servants to wait on them.

The Prince is Bitranthaa's idealised projection of himself in this fantasy world. The whole of Tirandor, as the player-characters see it, is illusion conjured up by Bitranthaa's insanely powerful dreaming mind. It is the only way he has been able to fulfil his (originally sane) wish to recreate Tirandor, and the Prince is his dream-image of himself.

THE PRINCE

20TH-RANK SORCERER

ATTACK 18	Armour Factor 0
DEFENCE 12	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK 39	EVASION 7
MAGICAL DEFENCE 29	STEALTH 17
Reflexes 18	PERCEPTION 6
Health Points 20	
Magic Points 75	

Spells: He can produce any spell-effect he wants within Tirandor, because all are illusions created at his whim. Treat him as being able to cast any spell, from any profession, with no Magic Point cost or Psychic Fatigue Roll requirement.

Bitranthaa will make no reference to illusion or dreams—if questioned on this point he will reply as if it is all real (which in a sense, to him, it is). He knows of everything that has happened to them since they entered the swamps except the encounter with Aroyendis and the episode in the Anak temple. He is unaware of his lack of knowledge. He will impart as little information as possible about anything.

The Prince could obviously kill the party at any time, but he is mad. If he is attacked then he will toy with the party for minutes on end, causing walls to warp into grasping hands, the air to swim in hypnotic patterns, etc., like a cat playing with a mouse. He always remains most courteous, though, and if they attack him and then stop, or surrender, he will once again invite them for dinner.

The servants will show the adventurers to separate chambers. There are baths in each of the rooms, and fresh clothes waiting for them the standard long white robes of the Tirandorians, with a gold motif around the edge. The clothes fit perfectly indeed, better than any clothes the player-characters have ever worn before.

In each room faint, soft ethereal music can be heard, with no identifiable source. If the adventurers leave their rooms, they will find the corridor outside deserted. Wherever they go they find an endless succession of corridors and locked rooms. They will not be able to find their way to the entrance, nor to the rooms from which they come. They should not be allowed to draw maps. All the corridors look the same; they should have no sense of direction; behind them, corridors turn into walls and doors vanish or appear but only when they aren't looking.

Some of the doors have small glass windows in them (getting into these rooms will be impossible),

through which the following scenes can be seen:

1. A beautiful woman, unconscious and dressed in rags, hanging in chains in a dank dark cell.
2. An elderly, grey-haired woman hanging by her neck from a gallows.
3. A tall, old, distinguished-looking man stretched on a rack.
4. A handsome, powerful-looking middle-aged man sitting on a stool in a bare, white, evenly lit room, staring blankly ahead of him. He doesn't move at all, but he can be seen to be breathing. Looking closely, the adventurers will notice an uncanny resemblance to the Prince.
5. A half-human, half-animal creature in a dark cell with dirty straw on the floor, crouched over, ripping something to shreds. The object of his ferocity is still moving.
6. A number of small, purple-skinned goblin-creatures, armed with strangely intricate spears, engaged in a revolting bloodthirsty battle. Despite the injuries inflicted and the mounting pile of dead, there are always enough to continue the battle.
7. An empty room, from which can be heard the sound of a voice laughing non-stop.
8. A huge, dimly lit room containing hundreds of beautiful, scantily clad women, all sleeping.
9. A room swirling with freezing mists. As they part briefly, two figures can be seen half-frozen into a block of ice. One of the figures has his teeth buried in the other's neck and is gnawing away. The second figure is also alive.
10. Finally they round a corner to find themselves faced with a huge fractured mirror, which reflects a horribly distorted and fragmented picture of themselves.

None of the doors can be opened by any means whatsoever.

As the adventurers wander down the corridors, they can hear the constant babble of many voices, at different pitches and intensities, making no sense whatsoever, (If the player-characters later ask the Prince about all this, he will simply flatly deny any knowledge of the rooms.) With each scene, the adventurers should be given the feeling that somehow, deep down, they recognise what they are seeing. The scenes are in fact fragments of the mad Bitranthaa's shattered psyche.

After wandering for an indeterminate period, the adventurers turn a corner and find themselves back at their rooms. No matter how hard they search they will not be able to find their way back to the corridors they have just come from. In effect, what has happened is that Bitranthaa has just remembered them. Outside the rooms, a messenger is waiting to take them into dinner.

The Banquet

The messenger will escort them into a huge banquet-hall. Long tables piled high with food form three sides of a massive square, the fourth of which is a wall with two huge double doors in it. The tables are raised up off the ground, with three steps leading up to the raised area. In the middle, directly opposite the double doors (through which the party enter), is a dais raised still further off the ground, with a richly embroidered canopy over it, where the Prince is sitting.

All the other 'guests' are already there, and stare silently at the party as it enters. They are conducted to seats on either side of the Prince. He is a charming and witty host and is extremely interested in all they have to tell him. Throughout the meal, none of the other guests say anything at all they just stare towards the Prince and the party, apparently merely going through the motions of eating and drinking.

Standing just behind the Prince is an elderly, imposing-looking figure wearing mail armour and a long cloak, and holding an enormous two-handed battleaxe. He is unlike all the other Tirandorians

both in costume and looks; he is elderly and by no means as handsome as all the others. He wears a permanent scowl and stands motionless for most of the time. Although he looks like a bodyguard, the player-characters should come to realise that he is actually watching the Prince, not them.

The Prince seems a little worried by this character, and occasionally darts a glance at him—almost as if seeking approval. At no point is the scowl lifted from his face. This is in fact the Prince's Chamberlain, once Bitranthaa's closest and most trusted advisor, now the embodiment of his conscience. He is almost completely powerless.

During the meal, they are entertained by a series of remarkable illusions: the area enclosed by the tables becomes a green field, and flowers of unknown colours and scents spring up. They can even see a blue sky with white clouds and feel the warmth of the sun and the cooling breezes. Birds chirp merrily. A vine grows up out of the ground. A castle appears in the distance. Riders on horses sally forth from it and engage in a hunt: hundreds of deer are slaughtered. The sky grows darker and darker, the hunt gets more and more savage, more and more



bloody, until the sight sickens them and they can eat no more (of course, on the other hand, it might just increase their appetite, depending upon character).

The Prince, who had at the beginning seemed quite at ease, enjoying himself hugely, as if he had a private joke to relish, now looks ill at ease, sweating, biting his lip, frowning, looking bewildered. All at once the hunt fades away, and we can see the castle again. Every thing is unnaturally still, claustrophobic. The gates of the castle swing slowly open and a figure on horseback issues forth. He moves closer and closer, and everything gets darker and more still. The Prince by now looks really worried. No one can move.

When the rider gets close enough to be seen—he is a huge warrior, on a huge horse, armed entirely in black, as is his horse—the Prince jumps up with a start. A door appears next to him, and he rushes through; as soon as he is through, the door vanishes again. Now the other guests have also disappeared, as has the room and the palace they were in, instead they are standing in the open countryside watching the rider approach.

The illusions are created by the Prince Bitranthaa and were destined to kill the party in an entertaining fashion. The trouble is that Bitranthaa, although to a great measure in control of the illusions he creates, is still not in complete control. No one can control their dreams totally, as Bitranthaa is finding to his cost, for there are always impulses hidden that one may not even be aware of, let alone able to control. Bitranthaa's dream of power has tilted him towards insanity.

Originally it was a fine and noble dream: he wished to have complete power because he felt that he would be able to rule the world wisely and benevolently. He did not want it for itself, but for what it could bring mankind. Such power and responsibility was too much for one man. He became unable to distinguish means and ends, lost sight of his original purpose, until power became its own end. He was unable to find a reason for this; then became unable to find a reason for anything, and finally, in despair, abandoned reason altogether. He has already reached the stage of being unable to distinguish truth and illusion, reality and dream.

Parallel with this is a growing inability even to control his illusions and his dreams. Different feelings are splitting away from each other, and from him, and are assuming different and independent beings, almost personalities in themselves (except

that genuine personality is composed of all the disparate fragments united). His mind is literally 'falling apart'.

The dream originally involved the controlled use of destructive impulses; the control rapidly gave way; finally it became combined with a deep-seated self-destructive urge. What is left of his rational mind his 'soul' longs for death; his instinctive self loathes it and runs from it. The Black Rider is the combination of the destructive and self-destructive urges although it is not of course the whole lot, merely one manifestation. These can only finally die with Bitranthaa. So the Black Rider, embodying, as it does, these urges, is out to get anything and everything. The adventurers, incidentally, are now inside Bitranthaa's subconscious mind.

THE BLACK RIDER

12TH-RANK KNIGHT

ATTACK 26, battleaxe (1d8 +2, 8)	Armour Factor 7
DEFENCE 19	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK —	EVASION 5
MAGICAL DEFENCE 14	STEALTH 15
reflexes 10	PERCEPTION 10
Health Points 30	

The four-meter tall Black Rider can see invisible beings—in fact he is aware of their presence even if they are behind him. His weapon is a battleaxe which he wields in one hand while carrying a massive shield in the other. His horse is an appropriate size; it can't be wounded or damaged by anything. The Black Rider can be wounded; but although he takes damage, it never looks as if he's hurt until he finally dies.

When defeated, he and his horse will simply vanish. Lying on the ground at the spot where the Black Rider disappeared is a small metal cylinder, pointed at one end; the other end fits neatly into the rest of the Key. It is the final piece: the Key of Tirandor is now complete.

The Fortress of Dreams

There is only one direction, now: towards the castle. As they move on, the landscape around them slowly shifts and changes. Now they are in a region of darkness and chaos, a dismal forest valley near a dark and gloomy lake. The castle lies before them. When they are quite close, they can see a pair of huge and

intricate gates, behind which is a huge tree, reaching up so far that they cannot see its top. The gates will not open unless the bearer of the Key approaches them; then they will swing open quite easily.

Through the gates is a courtyard, in which are vast numbers of people, all deformed in some way, some lacking limbs, some lacking heads, twisted and writhing, and all in great distress, moaning and groaning, but soundlessly. All that can be heard is a sound as of rustling leaves. To one side of these bodies is a huge loom, abandoned and decayed.

The door to the castle is open. Everything is derelict and forsaken, but was once obviously of very great beauty. After much wandering through dark and deserted corridors they finally come to a large room which is well lit with lurid red flames from smoking braziers. On the walls all around are grotesque and distorted pictures of leering, grinning creatures, all basically human and yet quite obviously not. In the centre of the room is a crystal coffin with a sleeping form inside it. An old, grey-haired man. Standing in front of it is the Prince.

He laughs somewhat insanelly; and congratulates them for having got so far. He explains that now, unfortunately, he is going to capture their souls, and subject them to an eternity of torment. He points out that the figures they saw in the courtyard are spirits he has previously enslaved. He explains that the sleeping figure in the crystal coffin is Bitranthaa and that he is extending his domain into the real world and will soon subjugate it. He further tells them that he is the 'Guardian of Bitranthaa's Sleep'.

Nothing the player-characters do will have any real effect upon the Prince. He will hurl illusions at the party, and here your own imagination should come into play. He can warp the scenery, the surroundings, to be anything at all; but at all times, he remains in front of the crystal coffin. The illusions he throws at the adventurers are easily dispersed; a wave of the hand will cause them to melt away. Sword-blows will feel as if they are cutting through empty air, and will dissolve several illusory beings at once; but they come on in vast and overwhelming waves.

Each time a player-character is touched, he loses a point of Strength; if anyone gets down to 0, he's permanently destroyed, and his spirit joins those in the courtyard. It is at this point that Kastarys should remember the Rune he traced in the Anak temple (see p. 94); if he doesn't remember it, a timely

reminder just at the last moment would not be out of place. Bear in mind that the 'last moment' need not be Kastarys's; he should really 'remember' the rune before anyone is entirely destroyed.

When Kastarys traces this rune on a solid surface, in the air his finger leaves a trace of fiery green behind it. The Rune expands, tearing an ever-widening rent in the fabric of the dream, letting reality appear through it, until the dream they are in dissolves completely. As it does so, the Prince falls back with a horrible cry as he, too, is torn asunder by the Rune.

The characters find themselves standing in the ruins of Tirandor, as reality takes hold. There is no sign of the walls or the people—just piles of rubble with occasional chunks of cracking masonry. A wind whips at their clothes and hair, raising clouds of dust. Nothing else remains of the city. Just in front of them, at the same distance as it was in the dream, is the crystal coffin. But now it is huge—seven metres long and three metres broad. And it has been smashed open by some huge force and is quite empty.

About 200 meters away is a monstrous figure, its back to them. This is the Overlord.

THE OVERLORD

ATTACK 25, fist (d8+3, 10) or thrown rock (d6+3, 8)	Armour Factor 4 (immune to non-magical weapons)
DEFENCE 18	Movement 10m (20m)
MAGICAL ATTACK –	EVASION 6
MAGICAL DEFENCE 25	STEALTH 12
Reflexes 12	PERCEPTION 20 (panoptical)
Health Points 35	
Rank-equivalent: 13th	

The Overlord can see invisible beings. He contains within him immense magical power—particularly now that the dream has been smashed, and he no longer needs to use most of his magic sustaining it. Owing to his madness, however, he is not capable of actually performing the procedures required to cast a spell. Instead, he releases this magical potential in the form of bolts of pure energy which leaps from his hands (cast at will instead of making another attack; Speed 16, 3d6 damage ignoring armour).

The Overlord is Bitranthaa as he is now, his physical degeneration matching that of his mental and moral faculties. He is completely insane—to the extent that he behaves now like a mindless, enraged beast, ten metres tall. Its abdomen and legs appear to be made of solid metal; its left hand is



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apparently made of the same metal, and terminates in three silver claws in the place of fingers. Its left arm and chest are covered in revolting greyish-black fur. It has pointed ears and slitted black-rimmed eyes with no pupils; its greasy, revolting hair ends in a barbarian pigtail. The effect is at once disgusting and terrifying.

This being spends some time wandering round blasting the rubble into dust, completely at random. Eventually he begins to sniff the air; he senses the presence of the adventurers; and begins to make his way towards them.

Once they have killed the Overlord, the party will find that there are peaks above Tirador—hitherto completely invisible, enshrouded in mist. These are not that much higher, and they can see a strange glowing in the sky; the clouds reflect this glow in a continuous succession of rainbow-colours. The gems in the Key, too, start to glow with the same mysterious succession of colours.

At the very top of the mountain—it is pretty cold up here—there is a brightly glowing but otherwise indescribable object. The character with the Key must place it in this object—there is a place where it seems naturally to fit. After he has done so the light increases in brightness until suddenly it seems to explode. A great black tear appears in the sky directly ahead of the party. The one with the Key has felt a moment like death—all his characteristics reduced to 1—but this passes and for the first time he returns to his original characteristics, and feels much better.

The Black Tear is to be passed through. It will remain there until the whole party has passed through, after which it will close up.

Yrgael

Ahead of them they see what looks like a fair-sized hill with a stream running along beside it. On closer inspection this hill reveals itself to be a huge dragon. The dragon, Yrgael, stares unblinkingly at the party. He is not like the usual *Dragon Warriors* dragon; he is a kind of ancient being of immense power rather like some traditional Chinese mythological dragons (though not quite the same as the shen lun). He will not attack them, and he cannot be wounded or killed. If he is attacked, he will not bear a grudge, for he knows how stupid humans are.

YRGAEL

ATTACK 35, talons (d12, 9)
DEFENCE 30

MAGICAL ATTACK 35
MAGICAL DEFENCE 30

Reflexes 19
Health Points 100
Rank-equivalent: 25th

Armour Factor 8
Movement 15m (25m)
(flying—150m)
EVASION 7
STEALTH 12
PERCEPTION 25 (panoptical)

In his present condition; protecting himself magically, and protected by immensely powerful spells Bitranthaa wove aeons ago, and further protected by the power he is guarding, nothing whatsoever can injure him or affect him in any way. He was captured by Bitranthaa long ago and set here to kill anyone who came near the power. However, he has succeeded in freeing himself from this power to the extent that he no longer has to kill anyone, and so he waits here for the day when someone will come and free him.

In order to free him, the spell on the amulet (from p. 90) must be recited, with the appropriate words filled in. If this is done correctly, a great wind will come, and lightning will shoot down from the skies, appearing to set everything on fire. It will be like a holocaust but last only a moment and no one will be harmed. When the fire-storm clears, Yrgael will rise up on his wings.

Note: If they look closely enough, they will see that Yrgael's feet are buried in earth, and that his tail disappears into the water of the stream. The firestorm will destroy the stream.

During the holocaust, the one who has pronounced the spell (or the one who solved the problem if it is not the same person) will feel a mental bond with Yrgael, which he senses will never dissolve. What this means is that very occasionally Yrgael will provide useful information telepathically; that he will assist occasionally through his influence with powerful occult powers; that on very rare occasions indeed—like about three times in the adventurer's lifetime—he will come to that PC's assistance in person. He may also, from time to time, need help himself.

Yrgael tells this player-character that if he wishes for great power he must reject all temptations and seek the Way of Death; and that once he has found it he must never leave the path in the valley. All the adventurers are told 'keep to the path in the valley'.

He will also tell the PCs that Bitranthaa bound him there through the power of earth and water, before he became corrupted by the power, to prevent anyone from reaching the gates and opening the way. Originally he was to have destroyed anyone who attempted it, but as Bitranthaa got progressively madder, so his control on Yrgael slackened—never to the point where he could free himself but at least enough to allow him not to kill those who sought the ways. But the original spell retained its power, and that was that the ways would never be revealed until the dragon was released.

Any further explanations that the player-characters want or any questions they have about anything that has happened so far will be provided by Yrgael—but he won't tell any of them anything else about what lies before them.

The character who has the link with Yrgael finds himself standing directly in front of a gate which has just blackness beyond. He must step through this gate. The others can be seen standing below him, where the dragon was, looking up at him. Whether or not he waits for them, only one can step through at a time; and by the time the second has stepped through, the first has already completed the whole thing.

From now on, everything is done individually; the GM taking aside the players one by one and running them through the path to the power of Tirandor.

The Eight Paths of Life and the Way of Death

Once through the Gate, the adventurer finds himself in a large circular room with no roof: above his head he can see the stars. Surrounding him are eight gateways similar to the ones he has just come through—which has itself vanished. If the PC tries to demolish the walls of this room, or to get out over the top, he will find it impossible. He must choose a Gate.

The characteristics of what must be fought behind each of the eight gates are not given, because they must be adapted to the individual character. In each case, the character should be given a reasonable fight, but it shouldn't be too tough. The real challenge comes from those who choose the Ninth Gate. Clockwise starting from the east:

1. The Path of Wealth

The character looking at the beautiful and intricate carvings around this gate feels the immense attraction of money, can see all the power and all the luxury that money can bring. Passing through this Gate, the PC finds himself in a huge treasure-chamber containing limitless wealth. Facing him over the treasure is a golden giant, who must be killed. This figure, like the others that will be found behind the other gate, must be worked out to match the player-character.

If the character wins, then all the treasure in the room vanishes. He finds himself in a small room with a door at the end. A table is facing him, and on the table are three gems, one blue, one red, and one green.

Blue: transported to a huge fortress-palace. The adventurer is now (and has always been) Prince (or Princess) of Tharmon, a small principality near Visel; owner of this area and of a small army; and with wealth to the value of over 1 million florins. This wealth makes the character an important person in the aristocratic society of Visel and Malnam. The importance of the area agriculturally for the two towns means that their armies will always be ready to protect it from the luckily rare wars with Kirag. Character is raised one rank.

Green: the PC is instantly transported back home to their rooms in Brontir. A man knocks at the door and enters. He is the equivalent of a lawyer's clerk: a distant and hitherto unknown relation has died, leaving the character an estate worth 1.5 million florins. Raised two ranks.

Red: The character steps into an office and finds himself wearing rich robes. The office is richly decorated. He is a wealthy merchant of Malnam, dealing in almost anything, legal or not; he is worth 1.2 million florins. Raised one rank.

2. The Path of Love

The adventurer, looking at the carvings and pictures round the gate, feels the power of love, the attraction of being always loved by everyone, of being surrounded by hundreds of the most attractive members of the opposite sex, all ready to obey every whim or command. Passing through this Gate, the character finds himself with a hermaphroditic demon to fight.

If victorious, he passes through the door at the end of the room and emerges into his own rooms



in Brontir. The character's Looks score is raised to 19 and he has a 98% chance of charming (not in the magical sense) and a 90% chance of seduction. Character is raised one rank.

3. The Path of Ease

The PC looking at these carvings and paintings feels the attraction of a life of peace and rest, undisturbed by anything. He has nothing to fight. On a table facing him are a brick and a stone.

If he takes the brick he finds himself in a comfortable home with everything necessary to make life easy and enough money to live comfortably on, but legally bound up in such a way that he cannot get at it for any other purpose.

If he takes the stone, ditto, but in a farm in the country with enough slaves to do all the work.

4. The Path of Might

The PC looking at these pictures and engravings feels a heady surge of power (magical or physical); feelings of invincibility, of the glory of hand-to-hand combat, etc. Passing through the door he

finds himself with a warlock to fight: 3 metres tall, immensely muscled, aura of great power. Having killed this, the PC passes through the door at the end, to find himself back at home in Brontir.

Strength and Reflexes are raised to 19. The character is raised one rank and permanently gains +1 health point.

5. The Path of Song

The PC looking at these pictures and carvings feels the beauty of nature, life and art, can feel great inspiration welling up inside, can hear most beautiful music, etc. Passing through the Gate, the PC is confronted with a most beautiful sculpture (like Michaelangelo's 'David' for example). This comes to life and stands in his way, and he must destroy it, smash it to rubble.

Beyond the statue is a table with a flute on it. Reflexes are increased to 19; Intelligence and Psychic Talent are increased by 2 points each (maximum 19). The character can make beautiful music and is a pretty good artist in all forms: i.e. the moment he blows a note from it he can command a high fee.

On any instrument whatsoever he can soothe all

natural creatures, relaxing them and doubling the speed at which they regain lost Health Points. This affects everyone within hearing; obviously, it must be done at peaceful moments, not during combat. It can also raise the failing courage and morale of people about to engage in a battle. Ability to charm all natural beasts (non-intelligent) and to give them simple instructions; ability to speak with and understand them. The flute can cast *Greater Healing*, *Antidote*, and *Cure Disease* 3 times a day (each). Character is raised one rank.

6. Political Power

The PC looking at these pictures and carvings feels the pull of being able to sway crowds, of being able to control the fate of a nation.

Passing through this Gate the PC is faced with an ancient and white-robed man who is a magician and incidentally a good fighter.

Oratorical abilities conferred: 80% chance of persuading a crowd or mob or gathering to do as he suggests. Does not work on individuals.

A character passing through the door at the end finds himself in rich town-house in Brontir; he is a leading politician, and to a great degree in control of the state. Raised one rank.

7. The Way of Glory

The PC looking at these pictures and carvings feels attraction of fame, of being a household name, of having his name live on through his deeds generations down into prosperity, of being a synonym for great heroic valour or evil, his deeds sung in innumerable epics and songs, etc.

He must fight his way through ranks of warriors (not very strong but cumulatively powerful) and a monster before he can reach and rescue the fair damsel in distress. If he succeeds, then he must pass through a door, mount on a horse and ride into the city ahead of him with the maiden to great popular acclaim; he is feasted by King Ridon of Kelger, whose daughter it is that he has saved, and given a title and the gift of an estate worth 500,000 florins.

Great fame becomes his, and anything that he does in the future will become well-known and pass into myth. This also means that enemies will on the whole be scared of him and that people will be likely to help him as far as they can. Raised one rank.

8. The Way of Victory in Battle

The PC looking at pictures and carvings feels the power of victory, sees himself at the head of great armies sweeping all before him, the intoxication of blood and battle and fear and victory.

Faced with a mighty warrior to fight and defeat (magician in the case of magicians). If successful, the character passes through huge double doors which swing open, mounts on a horse and finds himself at the head of a great army returning victorious from war. He is the chief general of the Malnam army; he has palatial abode in the heart of the city, and a fortune of 400,000 florins; he is a strong figure in local politics.

Leadership qualities: lower-rank characters are likely to be impressed and to execute his orders 1st-5th rank characters will be 90% likely to follow him. The character is also raised by one rank.

9. The Dark Way of Death

In order to take this way, the PC must resolutely reject all the other paths and demand this path (although not actually kill himself), If he does so, then the other eight paths will disappear.

Facing him is a road lined by vast grey columns, stretching away into the distance. There is a very faint light, just enough to see the way. It is a long road, apparently taking hours to walk, and no progress seems to be made. Looking back there is no entrance, just the columns stretching away out of sight. The PC has a feeling of emptiness and desolation. Nothing living or moving. A yawning gate stands at the end, with just black nothingness beyond. Faintly, very small and distant, a few stars can be seen, not of this world; none can be seen on either side of the gate. They do not shimmer but are hard and steady.

Stepping through the gate, the character finds himself in a wide, wide valley, with mountains dim in the distance on either side, for the light is very dim, just the light of the hard distant stars. Gradually the eyes become accustomed to the gloom until the character can see reasonably well. It is a slightly undulating plain, with nothing growing or living, no sound at all. Underfoot is loose rubble, grey and dusty. Each footfall sounds loud, but the sound cuts dead and flat: there is no echo at all. Ahead, faintly, stretches a path (which must not be left; if it is, he will never find his way out). It is not easy to move;

the character is overcome with weariness and each step is difficult to make. He would like to lie down and sleep, but he must not. He must disencumber himself of all his equipment if he is to proceed. All his characteristics are reduced by 2.

Ages seem to pass. Finally the character can make out a mountain range, and then immediately he notices a dark tower just close to him. He should have the conviction that his civilization is falling apart; and an increasing sense of loneliness. Growing sense of dread as he approaches the Tower. Going up to the door, he can see a horn hanging by it. The door will not open; the horn must be blown. The sound cracks the silence. The door swings open; the character's hand closes round a sword-hilt.

Magic will not work here, it must be physical combat. His image emerges from the door, dressed in the same way and carrying an identical sword. All factors are back to normal although the character does not feel this. He must, in fact, 'kill' himself.

If successful, the sword crumbles to dust and he can continue along the path. Along this way he encounters numerous temptations of the flesh similar to those presented by the eight other gates, this time not in the form of pictures and carvings, but apparently genuine, and all just slightly off the path. Once they are passed, they vanish.

The road goes on and on, and tiredness seems consistently about to overwhelm him. Great hunger and thirst rage within him. All factors, including Health Points, are down to the minimum. A tall, cowed figure appears at his side, but off the path, and offers him food and drink, which seem incredibly tempting. All he has to do is to step off the path to get them. Finally the cowed figure offers him a resting-place by the side of the road and says he will give him everything he desires if he will step off the road and follow him. Needless to say, if the offer is accepted, the character will never leave this land.

If all this is rejected, the cowed figure vanishes and a gate appears at the end of the path and the character must drag himself to it. Through the gate he finds himself in a clearing in some woods; the path goes through the middle of a stream. He no longer feels tired or hungry or thirsty. The wood is beyond anything human.

Great crystal cliffs cleave the sky. In the wood the rocks are precious stones, gleaming brightly; but the character must not pick them up as they are off the road. The trunks of the huge trees are blue and indigo like burnished silver the thickset leaves quiver on every branch. The gravel on the ground is in fact precious pearls. He feels refreshed and peaceful. Birds of flaming hues fly from tree to tree; their song is unearthly, indescribably beautiful.

The river-banks seem made of fine gold thread; the stream itself is of bright beryl; the water makes a delicious sound. At the bottom are bright stones that glow and glint like a beam of light through glass, or like the streaming stars that shine in the sky on a winter's night. Every pebble set therein is an emerald, a sapphire or other noble gem, so that all the pool gleams with light.

The character must walk through the water, in which he will be completely submerged. Emerging on the shore on the far side, he passes through another Gate and finds himself returned in a trice to his room in Brontir. If he is a wizard then he finds he is wearing a cloak and carrying a staff; if a warrior, he has a suit of armour, a quiver of arrows, and a two-handed sword.

The character's characteristics are altered as follows: one is increased to 19 (Strength for a Barbarian or Knight, Intelligence for a Warlock or Sorcerer, Psychic Talent for an Elementalist or Mystic, or Reflexes for an Assassin); his Looks increases to 17 or by +2, whichever is higher; all other characteristics are raised to 16 or by +2, whichever is higher. He rises 3 ranks.

The items function only for the character himself. The cloak functions as an Eye of Foreboding (see *Dragon Warriors* rulebook p. 142) and is Armour Factor 5 without encumbering the wearer or interfering with spellcasting, while the suit of mail armour is +3. The staff is +2, and lets the wielder cast *Deathlight* once per day at no Magic Point cost (even if not a sorcerer). The two-handed sword is +3. Both staff and sword enable the user to fly at will, and can emit light enough to see by, on command. The arrows in the quiver are +2, and are never exhausted; as long as the character reaches for another arrow, there will be one there.

Player handouts for The Lone and Level Sands

Parchment acquired in the marketplace of Ta'amar

As I die, I leave a testament of my faithlessness. We built our master's resting place in the desert west of the great city, I and the venerated Koram, chief architect of Lord Gatheron of the House of Org. Above it we set a likeness of She in the Sky, so that She might look down into the place's depths. In the final chamber we put reverently the living statue of Thunder-in-the-Mountain—let not Lord Eldyr's son find it! Koram and I it was who saw to it that our fellow builders slept the righteous sleep next to our lord; after Nepthe's phial Koram slit their throats—but none feigned, all were in the Pleasant Garden already. Climbing then to the top of the place we blocked forever the ascending way so none will ever disturb our master's repose. We returned through the dreadful place of sacrificed bones, protected by our lord's gift, the sign of Man, through the place of mirrors where the shadows yet kept at bay, held by the Lady's light that we then shut out forever. With our sleeping friends we stood at last, our hearts beating fast as we thought on the journey to come, the phials in our trembling hands.

"Drink now," Koram said, "and let us lie forever over the gateway of death, my comrade", and so saying drank his draught to the dregs, but a fatal stay fell on my hands and the phial fell from them as my dying friend watched me betray my lord's faith. At last Koram slept in the Garden with our lord, but life in me still reigned. I took a torch, my writing scrolls and left that place. Yet by the demon whose eye I passed through I lost my way in the desert, parched by the Lady's now-merciless eye.'

Pity my bones, dear friend, and bury them under the drifting sands...

Player handouts for The Ballad of Times Past

Skuli's Ballad

*It was a time of hardship,
and everywhere the anger of the
dragon
was seen in gutted barns and
barren fields.
Then two close companions,
worthy hall-heroes,
came hard against the walls of
the welkin,
scaling high peaks to put an end
to terror.
One, golden-haired with eyes of
grey,
his comrade, with blue eyes
burning;
they advanced to face their foe.
But three drops of blood sufficed
to win that battle,*

*and parley and word-play were
the only sounds
while steel remained sheathed
and shields unlimbered.
Soon the heroes' labours won
peace,
and when the dragon's pool ran
clear
it was a time for the giving of
gifts.
The golden one savoured but a
sip from
that spring—
waters where he glimpsed and
grasped his destiny.
His friend favoured a future
drawn in dust.*

Skuli's Ballad (the second part)

*The passage of years sits heavy on
men's shoulders,
but counts for little in the
dragon's unblinking eye.
In such a time, the tide of
treachery can rise.
Blue eyes now glint with greed;
hatred dwells in the heart.*

*He who had been a hero, a
sinister sorcerer now,
seeks to steal and shatter the
dragon's shell.
With the blood-oath broken,
grief shall fly across the land,
and he who put on the mantle
of the monarch,
he shall mourn his golden son.*

Player handout for Temple of the Lost God



Temporal Codex

Day 1

In the midst of preparations for the coming ceremony, two priests who had climbed down to the forest to collect glabeq flowers for the festivities went missing. One crawled back into the temple compound in the early hours of this morning, bloodied and tattered. His tongue had been ripped from his head. Ministrations proved ineffective and he died without providing an account of what had befallen.

Day 3

The Festival of the Sorrow of Echcatl was commemorated. The celebration was more muted than in previous years owing to the absence of four of the six slaves prepared for sacrifice. These four must have escaped just a few hours before dawn, but their means of egress from the temple precincts is by no means apparent. None of the other slaves seems to have witnessed the escape—a story which they maintain even under diligent torture. It remains a mystery.

Day 15

Senior Priest Ishankoi Reshlan has disappeared—spirited away, so to speak, in the middle of the night. Magical means have been employed in an effort to contact him, to no avail. His Holiness the Archpriest has sent word via Mandir to the Imperial Palace. Ishankoi has always seemed a stable fellow, and it is difficult to believe him capable of such dereliction of duty as to go missing only hours before the Ceremony of the Sifting of Hell.

Day 17

Those of us who thought ill of Ishankoi have had cause to revise our judgement since his mutilated form was found in the Lower Shrine shortly after lunch. Who can have performed this horrible deed? Recalling the fate of Shrakan and Elvaru earlier this month, one is forced to the conclusion that some monstrous being has come up from the forests. In spite of the heavy rainfall, Yugao Ludum insisted on taking another message to the runner in Mandir.

Day 23

The heavy storms of the last few days continue unabated. Tekketal hi-Kuroda has gone missing. One can only hope he has not suffered the fate of Ishankoi. Yugao Ludum suggested at dinner that these strange events result from an incursion of Shunned Ones from the forest, and is himself preparing a note to this effect to send to the Omnipotent Azure Legion in Khirgar—though some of us believe it would be more seemly to first inform the Temple at Mrelu.

Day 26

Tekketal's corpse has been located in the wight pit, mutilated even more gruesomely than Ishankoi. To some extent this was due to several of the wights having mistaken his body for an exotic item of their diet.

Further, two acolytes have gone missing.



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Temporal Codex (cont.)

Day 28

Goduku Raitlan has now vanished, along with his personal servant. On the orders of His Holiness, Yugao Ludum used his magic to communicate our troubles to the High Temple at Coyol. We are assured that investigators have been despatched.

Day 29

Like one who is infected with the eggs of the gnaw-worm, we have suffered from a traitor within! Yugao Ludum has been uncovered as the source of our woe! Along with two young acolytes he has been worshipping at an ancient shrine to the terrible goddess Yxtab in the caverns below our temple. After a few minutes of careful questioning he lapsed into a ghastly calm which he retained even when flayed alive. After this his heart was cut out and the corpse flung into the catacombs where he had his shrine. The acolytes were similarly treated, but spoke freely of a baleful influence which called them to the caverns. They died utterly insane. Our troubles are at least now at an end.

Day 30

After the Celebration of the Wandering Prince, His Holiness the Archpriest was found to be missing. A thorough search of the catacombs uncovered his butchered form, treated not unlike that of Yugao. No magic could revive him. Moreover, there was no sign of the carrion deposited in the catacombs only yesterday.

Day 31

Two more were found dead, and those who remained have been forced to evacuate the temple. Apart from a few slaves only I remain, for I am too infirm to travel far. I and the slaves keep to the library now. I have released the wights and the grave gaunts into the temple precincts, with instructions to attack even those robed as priests of our Supreme Lord. The grave gaunts accommodate themselves to such orders with relish, of course, but the wights seemed dully reluctant. It is tempting to think of this as a sort of loyalty, but I know that the spark of true reason has faded from their dead minds and it is only the illusion of thought that I perceive in them.

The rain is a heavy curtain in the courtyard. Once or twice I thought I glimpsed a figure out there.

Day 32

There is food for only two more days, but I do not think it will come to that. I have had an idea for a treatise on the ethology of the wights. A pity I will never get the chance to write it.

Player handout for Key of Tirandor

Kastarys's Manuscript Fragments

From 'The Sayings of the Sage Emrallam'

Tirandor was a shadow-play on the face of the Abyss. If you are searching for great power, look for the key to the door which has no lock, follow the path of the gate which is not. Victory comes only through death. Defeat your lustings and cravings for worldly things. Release yourself from the cycle of endless recurrence; overcome yourself. Men are fools, the things of the world toys to befuddle the mind.

Fragment of an ancient letter

... as you requested, my lord, I humbly report that the old man is no more than a lunatic, crazed in his wits. He talks of the mage-lords of Tirandor and other such ravings. And if such babble is not enough, he appears to believe that someone has returned from death or something to that effect. These peasants, my lord, are children—dirty children at that. He wanders much in his speech, referring to the Nine ...

Manuscript fragments relating to the history of Tirandor

... but at length there arose one of the mage-lords, named Karapadin, and he penetrated to ... rejecting ... and calling instead for ... And having usurped the power, he sought to establish his own empire ... Bitranthaa, who fought against him in an awesome battle ... Lord Karapadin was defeated and destroyed, but the power was drained from Tirandor for ever... And Bitranthaa came down, and watched in silence as the towers of Tirandor crumbled into ruin, and confusion and destruction came down upon the land. But some say Bitr ...

The Dragon-Song of Tirandor

The Lord of the Skies
The Prince of the Flame
Is lost from our eyes
Our loss is our shame
In the weight of the Earth
In the boundless Sea
Our loss is our dearth
Until he is free.

Amulet

*That which was before anything was
Which sighed before breath had life
Which was the serpent of creation
Which moved on the face of the waters
Which whispers with a thousand empty voices
Which has no age or death*

*That which destroys with a thousand tongues
Which laughs with a meaningless sound
Which lights the way of life and death
Which speaks with the voice of consuming fear
Which raises the legions of the damned shadows
Which breathes the roar of chaos and pain
In the name of and
I release you*

Final Word

It is my sad task to bring you the news that this is the last *Dragon Warriors* book to be released by Magnum Opus Press. The rights to *Dragon Warriors* now belong to a new company, Fabled Lands LLC, and we have been unable to reach a mutually satisfactory agreement with them about the future of the game-line. So I'm afraid that we will not now be able to bring you Legend: The Players' Book, nor the Realms of Faerie, the Algandy sourcebook, the Pirates sourcebook, the Jewelspider Forest book, or any of the other projects that we have talked about.

There is talk of a new company emerging to take up the reins, but at press-time nothing official has been announced. Watch the websites for news.

I want to take this chance to say a few public thank-yous to people who have been involved in bringing this edition of *Dragon Warriors* to you.

First and foremost my great thanks to Dave Morris and Oliver Johnson, for creating the game in the first place and for letting a new group of writers and artists have a chance to shape it.

JON HODGSON'S COVER FOR LEGEND: THE PLAYERS' BOOK, SHOWING THREE NEW PLAYER-CHARACTER PROFESSIONS: THE HUNTER, THE PRIEST AND THE GRIFTER.



Secondly, Jon Hodgson has set the graphic tone of this new edition of the game, from the cover of the rulebook onwards, giving it a style and atmosphere that has matched the content in every way. Working with Jon on the covers and interior art for the *Dragon Warriors* books has been one of the most enjoyable creative collaborations I've ever been involved in, and if you are a fan of fantasy art then I recommend you follow his career closely, because he is destined for great things.

Jon was also largely responsible for rounding up the core team of artists who have worked on the books: Scott Neil, Scott Purdy, Andy Hepworth and Andy Law. I was the one who brought Erik Wilson, Gordon Napier and Steve Dismukes on board, the latter two for this volume. Thanks to them all.

Of course I also need to thank the writers and editors: Ian Sturrock, Adrian Bott, Fraser Payne, Shaun Hately, Joshua Kemp, Michael Klein, Robin Low, Damian May, Ben Monroe, Jon Reed, Kieran Turley, Andrew Wright, Beth Lewis, Robert Dale, and Mike Polling. Also to the many who sent proposals for new supplements, particularly those which will not now be released.

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James Wallis
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