

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

THROUGH THE
DRAGONWALL

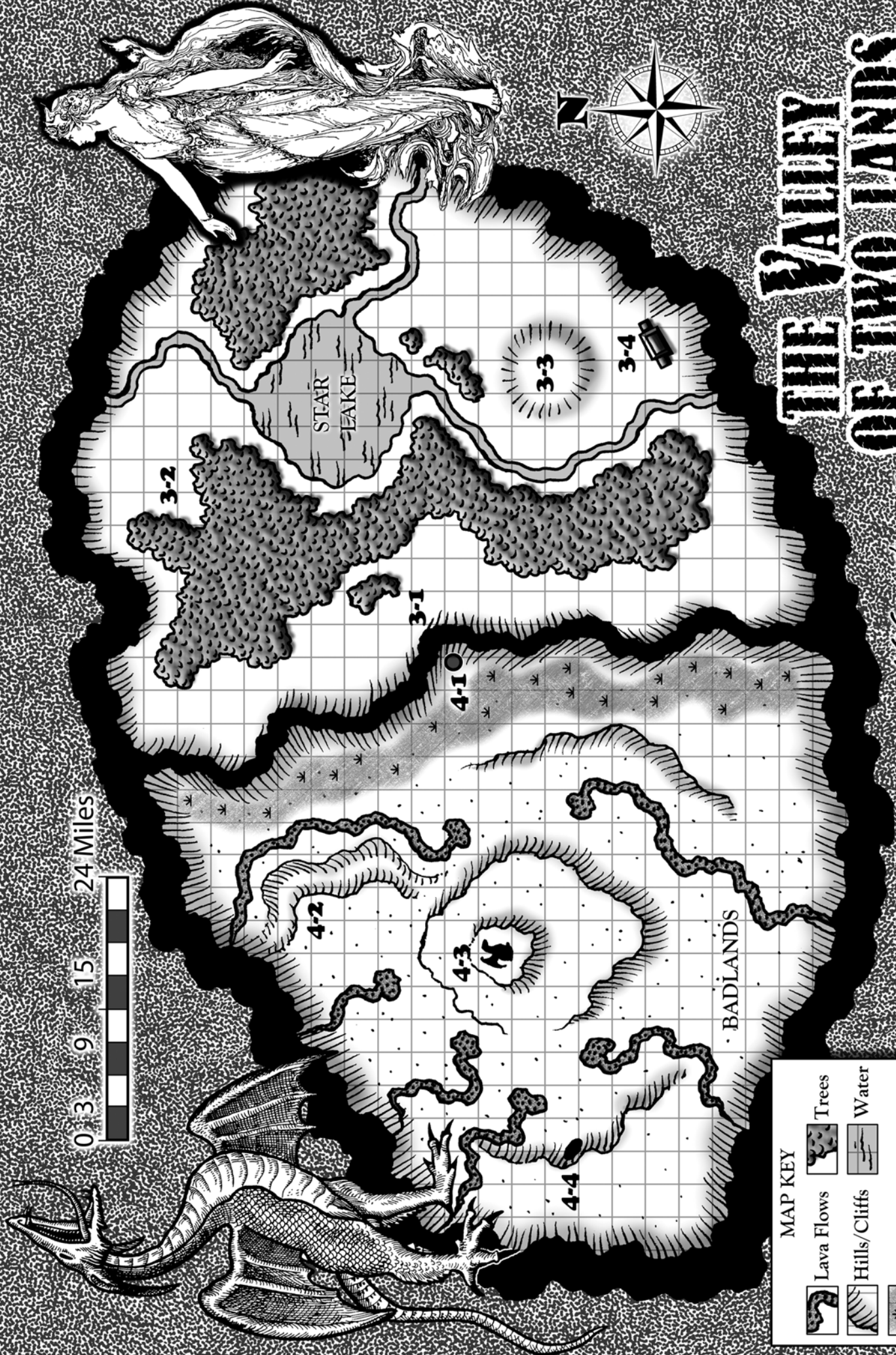
#92: A LEVEL 3
ADVENTURE
BY DANIEL J.
BISHOP



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THE VALLEY OF TWO LANDS

by Compton 16



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MAP KEY

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THROUGH THE DRAGONWALL

A LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE

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INTRODUCTION



Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. *Dungeon Crawl Classics* don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you fear, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

Legends are born from epic heroes and timeless adventures. While some are content to while away their lives wresting grubby pieces of copper from kobolds and goblins, a select few are called to high adventure. Many will rise and many will fall, but those that survive will have earned the fated title of Hero.

Through the Dragonwall is designed for 5 characters of 3rd level, but can easily be scaled to accommodate higher-level PCs or larger adventuring companies. The adventure assumes a balanced party, with at least one thief, wizard, cleric, and warrior...or non-human characters that can fulfill those roles! The inclusion of at least one elf PC will make the adventure more challenging, as elves find the *Dragonwall* extremely debilitating.

Caution: *Through the Dragonwall* is not recommended for first-time judges or players. The adventure is designed to reward intelligent play, just as foolish choices must surely be punished. New players, testing their characters' wings, may find the adventure unforgiving and harsh, while new judges may be challenged when the adventure calls for improvisation. There are many other excellent adventures eminently more suitable for beginning players and judges.

However, for players and judges looking for a challenging, dynamic adventure, or for those brazen enough to laugh in the face of danger, the *Dragonwall* awaits!

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Chasing an agent of Chaos, the PCs are lured through the *dragonglass*, a one-way teleport trap that brings them to a hidden valley bisected by a mystical barrier—the *Dragonwall*. The Green Land is the prison of the Elder Kindred Empress J'Aleth and her Court. The Black Land is ruled over by the Bone Dragon and his creatures. Each Land has its own denizens and challenges; the Green Land is a corrupted faerieland and the Black Land is a bleak volcanic wasteland inhabited by reptilian monsters.

Nothing can leave the Valley of Two Lands until either the Empress or the Bone Dragon is dead. The characters must decide who should live, and who should die...and then survive the consequences of their choice. The *dragonglass* opens again, allowing passage to the Lands We Know, but it doesn't remain open forever. In a final, deadly scuffle for the exit to the prison valley, the PCs must triumph or be trapped forever.

JUDGE'S SECTION

This adventure is a complex trap, requiring smart play and clever choices against superior foes to survive. The judge is given several ways to clue the players into the background story and the nature of the trap. The more of these you use, the more fun your players will have trying to determine a means of beating the scenario – and the more likely that they will achieve a satisfying triumph!

BACKGROUND



Long ago, the ancient ancestors of elves and men vied over the nascent world. The Elder Kindred used ancient pacts with occult powers to subjugate the early proto-humans, enslaving them, or hunting them like beasts through wood and field. Yet some among the subjugated devised pacts of their own with the dark gods of that long-ago age. Congress between the two species was strictly forbidden by the laws of both Elder Kindred and early humans, and the Powers who sustained them.

Through the machinations of the Courts of Chaos, the Elder Kindred Empress J'Aleth, favored of the King of Elf-land, captured Valgazur, the High Priest of the dragon-god Baphotet Khor. The two should be enemies by the laws of their people, by the demands of their patrons and by their very nature, but J'Aleth found something fascinating about the strength and determination of her captive. For his part, Valgazur could not help but find the Empress beautiful. For a time, the two became secret lovers.

Mortal hearts are fickle, and love knows no master...and the Lords of Chaos know no greater joy than the misery of lovers. The affair was exposed. The King of Elf-land demanded the life of the priest of Baphotet Khor. When the Empress refused, the dragon-god demanded that Valgazur serve her smoking heart at His table. The priest also refused. When their servants would not end their romance even under stern rebuke from both sides, the Lords of the Courts of Chaos sent an envoy to both Elf-land and the dragon-god, offering to resolve the dispute their subjects had caused.

The two were placed within a limbo-world, the Valley of Two Lands, there to remain until one or the other was slain by violence, with the *Dragonwall* keeping the lovers forever apart. The Courts allowed servants to each side in order to prolong the conflict, and offered a means for outsiders to be used as playing pieces in the great game they were devising. Baphotet Khor transformed Valgazur into the Bone Dragon in mockery, and his proto-human servants into pale reptile-men.

A thousand years or more the conflict has endured. Each side has long since forsaken the other. The Empress J'Aleth wants nothing more than to escape her prison and re-establish an Elder Kindred Empire in the Lands We Know. Valgazur wishes for only one thing more than the dissolution of his own unendurable life – a dragon-like desire to possess again his one-time lover!

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

The adventure starts when an agent of Chaos lures the PCs to the Dragon's Maw. Judges can modify this agent to be (or take the likeness of) an escaped villain from a previous adventure. For instance, if the party has played through *Dragora's Dungeon*, they could easily be in pursuit of Dragora. Judges can also design story hooks specific to their PCs, or modify one of the following:

- A PC with the King of Elfland as a patron is sent to slay Valgazur and free J'Aleth.
- The final piece of some new spell is said to lie beyond the *dragonglass*.
- A cleric's deity sends her to ensure that the Chaos Lord Retrimax never escapes his prison (see area 3-2).
- Only the *Spear of Elfland* can restore a PC's damaged body to health.
- A patron allied to Retrimax wishes the PCs to free him from his prison.

Note: The agent of Chaos is a plot element, designed to lure the PCs to a specific place. As the judge, please adjust this to suit your campaign and players. The adventure is written to keep the agent always one step ahead of the characters, but that need not be the case. Even if your PCs catch and slay the agent, they will likely continue exploring into the trap that awaits them...

THE ELDER KINDRED AND BAPHOTET KHOR

The Elder Kindred, first described in *DCC#88.5: Curse of the Kingspire* as the *Elder Kith*, are ancient forebears of the elves, whose nature is even more closely entwined with the Elflands. They suffer an additional 1d6 damage whenever struck by an iron or steel weapon. The Elder Kindred all have the ability to use an action die to pass through the Hidden Ways – holes in the weft of reality that allow them to disappear from one place and reappear in another. An Elder Kindred can use this ability to effectively teleport up to 10' away per hit die of the Elder Kindred, but cannot use it to bypass the Dragonwall or escape the Valley of Two Lands.

Few Elder Kindred still dwell in the Lands We Know. Most passed into Elfland so long ago that even the elves view their time in the Known World as part of a semi-mythical past. When dealing with elves, the Elder Kindred tend to address them as "younger cousin."

The ancient dragon-god Baphotet Khor first appeared in *DCC#82.5: Dragora's Dungeon*. The judge may wish to emphasize the links to these previous adventures for players who have hazarded them both.

PLAYER BEGINNING

The adventure begins with the PCs tracking a thief through rough or mountainous country. The judge may devise details of this pursuit, or merely begin outside the Dragon's Maw. The thief is an agent of the Courts of Chaos, able to elude the PCs with supernatural powers prior to reaching the *dragonglass* (area 1-9). The thief will have stolen some item that the PCs rely upon often. The judge should alter any descriptive text as needed to convey the identity of the foe being pursued, or to match an alternate hook (as described above). Read or paraphrase the following:

At last you have brought your quarry to ground! The trail leads here – to a cave mouth carved to resemble a dragon's head! The path leads beyond stalagmite "teeth" into a maw a full 40' wide and half again as tall. The carving is too perfect to be natural, but it is ancient-looking, as though it were here long before men came to these lands.

SUMMARY OF KEY ELEMENTS

- Once the PCs pass through the *dragonglass*, they cannot escape the Valley of Two Lands unless either the Empress J'Aleth or the Bone Dragon dies.
- The Valley is bisected by a mystic and physical barrier, the Dragonwall, which makes it difficult for the Elder Kindred or the Bone Dragon to directly confront each other.
- The Dragonwall mystically weakens fey and reptilian creatures, and creates illusory phantoms to destroy those who enter.
- The Green Land is a faerieland ruled by the Empress J'Aleth.
- The Black Land is a volcanic wasteland lorded over by Valgazur, the Bone Dragon.
- Other creatures inhabit both Lands, and the Dragonwall itself. These creatures can be dangerous, but some of them may become allies or sources of information for the PCs.
- The Bone Dragon can be summoned to the Idol of Baphotet Khor. This gives a chance for the players to plan their encounter with the creature. If they fail to take advantage of that opportunity, some or all of the PCs are likely to die.
- When the PCs interact with NPCs, the judge should use the opportunity to seed information about the adventure background, and the key elements described above.
- If either the Empress J'Aleth or the Bone Dragon is slain, move immediately to the **Escape!** portion of the adventure (page 22).

THE DRAGON'S MAW

Area 1-1 – The Dragon's Breath: *The carved interior goes back into darkness, some 70' deep, with a deeper void indicating a wide passage beyond. The floor is uneven, carved with a raised but weathered forked tongue woven into a complex series of knots.*

The floor creates a complex pattern of raised surfaces and small pits. The pits are just large enough to catch a foot, and some of these are both deep and acid-filled. Crossing the raised parts of the "tongue" is simple enough for the unencumbered – a DC 5 Agility check is all that is needed (AC penalty applies). Those who simply attempt to cross the floor must roll a DC 15 Reflex save to do so without incident. PCs who attempt to run take a -1d penalty on the dice chain to these rolls.

Failure in either case indicates getting a foot momentarily stuck in a pit. The PC must succeed in a Luck check or the pit is filled with a mild acid (DC 10 Fort save or take 1 point of temporary Agility damage and a -5' penalty to movement until it is healed).

There is a cumulative 1 in 6 chance for each PC who places a foot in a pit that a pressure plate is engaged. (There are pressure plates in all of the pits, but they are so old that they often fail.) A series of nozzles hidden in the ceiling disgorge a weak acid (2d4 damage, DC 10 Reflex save for half, and characters with feet in pits roll this save with a -2d penalty on the dice chain [d14]). A mundane explanation is that a reservoir above the dragon's carved head contains minerals that acidify rainwater, replenishing the trap. The Lords of Chaos may also take an interest periodically.

A thief who looks for traps can locate this one easily (DC 5), but disabling it requires more than a die roll.

Area 1-2 – Swallowed: The area at the back of the dragon's maw is a 20' diameter chute that extends eastward and descends over 17'. The chute appears to be almost 35' long. The stone is slick, being easy to slide down, but requiring a DC 20 Climb check to climb back up. An acid-scorched boot is abandoned near the top of the slide. Wise players may spend time pounding a spike into the wall here, and attaching a rope to aid them in climbing the slope on their return.

Areas 1-3 through 1-8 form a gigantic spiral staircase leading downward, some 50' in diameter with a 60° exterior arc. These steps are each 25' high, with a smaller staircase (5' wide) around their exterior margin. It is possible to see the next two steps from whichever step a PC is on, given sufficient light.

Area 1-3 – First Steps: *The slide ends in a roughly triangular area, some 25' deep and just over 20' wide where you entered. There is a solid stone wall to the right, but to the left there is only empty air. To the left, along the curved wall, a narrow stone stair leads downward. Ragged sheets of dusty cobwebs stir in a gentle air coming up from below.*

These webs cannot be burned, although they are easily brushed away. If the PCs went down area 1-2 without wait-

ing to secure a rope, they hear a muffled curse from below (pain and surprise as their quarry encounters the faerie spiders in area 1-5).

Area 1-4 – Next Step: *The stairs go down 25' to another triangular area, spaced like steps of an enormous spiral staircase. The level of the "step" you descend from creates a stone wall behind you, but another series of narrow steps leads outward from the open area in front of you. Like the level above, dusty sheets of cobwebs move in a light breeze wafting up from below.*

Touching the webs here causes characters to feel faint echoes of lover's voices, a parent's touch, or the smell of freshly baked bread. Like the webs above, they do not burn.

Characters who look can catch a glimpse of their quarry hurrying down the stairs from area 1-6 to area 1-7, lighting his way with a candle. Searching the area uncovers another boot, the undamaged mate of the boot found in area 1-2.

Area 1-5 – Faerie Spiders: *Passing down another "step," you can see that there are at least two more "steps" ahead of you. The webs are thicker here, but you can still feel the breeze from below, and the webs are torn where your quarry passed through not long ago.*

As the PCs come into contact with the webs, they gain strong impressions of fingers caressing them lovingly. There is a scent like apples and honey that brings to mind long-forgotten childhood joys and pains. Images of lovers, friends lost, and relatives appear in the shifting curtains of webbing, always tantalizingly just beyond reach. These are the potent webs of faerie spiders, which trap the mind rather than the body. Once a PC comes into contact with the webs, they must succeed in a DC 12 Will save to pull away. One save is allowed each round.

Two rounds after a PC makes contact, three faerie spiders emerge from cracks in the walls, near where the western wall meets the narrow downward stair. To those affected by the webs, these appear as gently glowing maidens, with incredible sensual allure. To those unaffected by the webs, these appear as human-sized spiders with smooth-skinned pale green bodies. Their venom reduces willpower – causing a -2 penalty to Will saves (DC 10 Fort save or increase to -4). This penalty lasts for 1d5 rounds, and is cumulative with multiple poisonings.

Finally, the spiders may attempt to push a target off the step, if it is near the edge. This requires an attack roll at +3, and an opposed Strength check (the spider gains a +1 bonus). The attack does not otherwise cause damage, but the 25' drop results in 2d6 normal falling damage. With their sticky feet and anchoring web strands, the spiders gain a +2 bonus to avoid being pushed themselves.

Faerie spiders (3): Init +1; Atk bite +3 melee (1d3 plus poison); AC 15; HD 3d8+3; hp 16 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP webs, poison, push, stability; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +3; AL C.

Area 1-6 – Leavings: *The next “step” down is much like the one above, although there are fewer webs. Near the wall formed by the last “step,” you can see the mummified and cocooned leavings of the creatures above – unhappy creatures which came this way and here met their end!*

Most of the corpses here are from human adventurers, whose arms and armor have long since become useless. It takes no time to determine that the PCs’ quarry is not among the dead. Those who search more thoroughly are rewarded by a smattering of coins (3d7 sp and 2d5 gp) as well as a usable helm. The webs here, like in area 1-4, cause brief flashes of remembered sights, scents, and touches, but are not dangerous.

Area 1-7 – Stone Dragons: *The next “step” down seems to be clear of webs, but your light reflects off the glittering stone scales of a statue near the center of the area. The statue is of two entwined, wingless dragons – one jet black and the other a striated dark green hue.*

Both the King of Elfland and Baphotet Khor placed guardians in the Dragon’s Maw. The faerie spiders were from Elf-land; these stone dragons are from the halls of the ancient dragon-god. They have already been awakened by the passage of the agent of Chaos, and attack any who enter this area. If for some reason the PCs wait more than an hour to reach this area, the stone dragons are dormant and take 1d3 rounds to become active again.

The stone dragons make a grinding noise, like the sound of stone slates sliding over each other, when they move. They are immune to non-magical piercing weapons, such as arrows and spears. These weapons clatter off their stone skin harmlessly. They take half damage from non-magical slashing weapons, but full damage from bludgeoning ones or weapons designed specifically to damage stone (such as a pickaxe).

The black dragon breathes a cone of bone shards 20’ long and 10’ wide at its base (3d6 damage, DC 10 Ref save for half). The green dragon breathes a cloud of summer leaves and flowers with a 15’ diameter. Although beautiful, their touch is corrosive (2d6 damage, DC 15 Fort save for half). A breath weapon attack can be used in lieu of a bite once every 1d5 rounds (max 3/day).

A slain stone dragon rapidly collapses into stone fragments, then gravel, and then dust, before disappearing forever. The place where the stone dragon dies is forever after stained with the dragon’s color before death, like a shadow sunken in rock.

Stone dragons (2): Init -2; Atk bite +4 melee (1d8) or claw +4 melee (1d4); AC 22; HD 4d8; hp 20 each; MV 30’; Act 2d20; SP immune to non-magical piercing weapons, half damage from non-magical slashing weapons, breath weapon, death throes; SV Fort +10, Ref +2, Will +8; AL C.

Area 1-8 – Last Step: *The last “step” in the great spiral downwards appears to be empty. A staircase goes downward, similar to those stairs that wound down the great staircase, but these pass instead into a rough stone tunnel, heading west.*

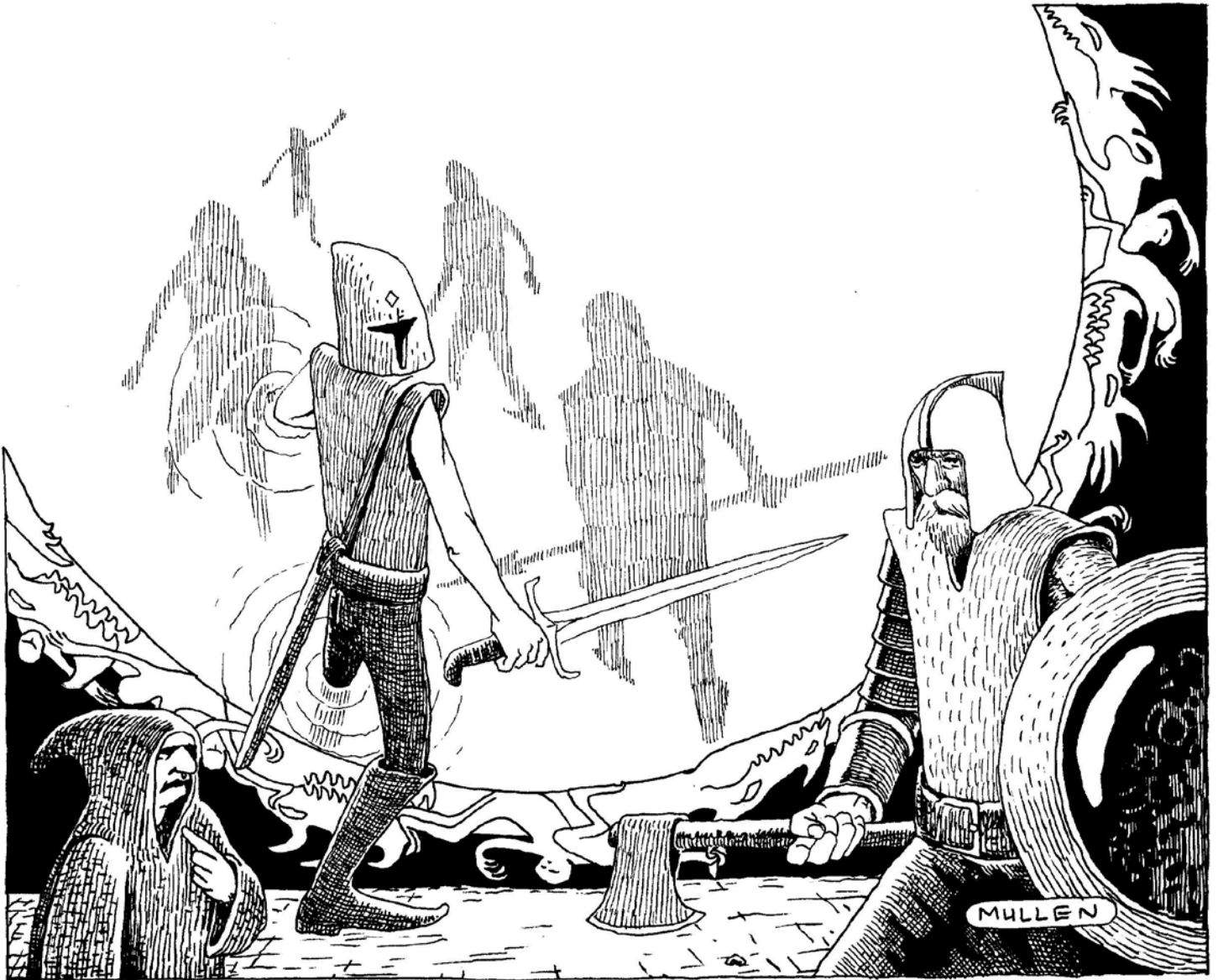


There is a trail of fresh blood – a streak and then sporadic drops – starting halfway across this area. Here the agent of Chaos stepped on an invisible blade, one of several that are set into the floor to bisect this area. A DC 5 Find Trap or DC 10 Intelligence check can discover some blood on one of the edges, apparently suspended in midair. Using any sort of fluid, chalk dust, or similar method of investigation can be used to locate the blades, making crossing the floor a simple task. Otherwise, any PC who fails a Luck check takes 1d3 damage and has his move reduced by 5’ until the damage is healed.

Area 1-9 – Chamber of the Dragonglass: *The tunnel goes 20’ down with rough steps to a chamber 20’ wide and 25’ long. The entire chamber is illuminated by the object at its far end – a great round mirror or window, 10’ across, whose surface shimmers with gentle light like a summer pond. The heavy silver frame is decorated with images of cavorting elves and faeries, twined around the tails of sinuous dragons whose eyes are blue, yellow, and deep red gemstones.*

The walls of the chamber are painted with murals of two regions. To the right, a fair green land is depicted, while to the left the land is dark and desolate. The far wall behind the glass has no mural, and is simply bare stone. You arrive just in time to see your quarry disappearing through the mirage on the surface of the glass.

The dragonglass itself is a magical construct that connects the Lands We Know to the hidden Valley of Two Lands, which is nestled in its own plane of existence. So long as both the Empress J’Aleth and Valgazur the Bone Dragon



live, this portal cannot be moved or damaged by any mortal means. It is also one-way, so that adventurers may enter the Valley, but cannot leave. Once either the Empress or the Dragon are slain, the passage can be used to escape the Val-

ley...but 3 turns after it has been used, the glass shatters and the mirror collapses in upon itself, ceasing to exist. Any still in the Valley are trapped forever (barring some quest of the judge's devising).

THE DRAGONWALL

Characters passing through the *dragonglass* leave the Lands We Know, travelling an unknown distance across the planes to appear in area 2-1, beneath the Dragonwall. The Dragonwall was created by the Chaos Lords to keep J'Aleth, Valgazur, and their servants apart, so that the contest between Baphotet Khor and the King of Elfland could never be resolved without outside intervention.

Any elf within 1 mile of the Dragonwall is at -1d on the dice chain to all rolls. An elf in contact with, or in the passage beneath, the Dragonwall is at -2d. This power is even more potent to the Elder Kindred, creatures of Faerie or Elfland, or reptilian creatures (potentially including familiars or

PCs with patrons related to fey, Elfland, or reptiles). These suffer a -2d penalty within 1 mile of the Dragonwall, and suffer a -4d penalty in contact with, above, or beneath the wall. Moreover, they take 1 point of damage each round they remain in contact with the Dragonwall. A PC with a reptilian or faerie familiar can choose to take the damage instead of the familiar, but cannot offset penalties to the creature.

Elder Kindred cannot pass through the Hidden Ways within 20' of the Dragonwall.

If either the Empress or the Bone Dragon is slain, these effects cease and the Dragonwall is permeable to creatures of either side.

GENERAL FEATURES

The area below the Dragonwall is a maze of 40' square rooms, 15' high, connected by 20'-wide passages. The floor of these chambers is not even – subsidence over the aeons has created areas where the chambers and passages dip or bulge. Although the walls seem solid, their immense antiquity is obvious, and a dwarf who sojourns here may take a +1d bonus on any one die roll of his choice during each such journey, as his morale is bolstered by the age-old worked stone. Note that this bonus only applies to a roll made while beneath the Dragonwall, but it applies anew each time the dwarf re-enters these passages.

Some of the chambers have shafts cut into the ceilings. Each of these shafts is 1½' square, and extends 7' upward to another layer of chambers. These are inhabited by spindly pale green-white humanoids called the Qophu. Each stands approximately 8' high, with 6'-long limbs and narrow, elongated heads that allow them to squeeze into the shafts. There is something reminiscent of spiders about their facial structure, but they are fungus-eaters, and are capable of great kindness as well as great ferocity. The Qophu crossed into the Valley through the *dragonglass* long ago, and now haunt the region of the Dragonwall to defend themselves against the Valley's other inhabitants. Despite their appearance, the Qophu are very strong (+4 bonus). They attack with long knives somewhere between a dagger and a short sword in length.

Qophu: Init +3; Atk long knife +5 melee (1d5+4); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 60', strong (+4 bonus), squeeze into small areas, immunity to all mind-altering spells and effects; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; AL N. Rough linen tunic, long knife.

PHANTOM ENCOUNTERS

Whenever the PCs enter a new chamber (including any they have recently vacated), there is a 1 in 5 chance that a phantom encounter is triggered. These phantoms are created by the Chaos Lords, and may take many forms (as indicated below). Phantoms can be disbelieved (in which case they cannot harm, or be harmed by, the disbelieving character), dispelled (by *dispel magic*, clerical turning from a lawful or neutral cleric, *banish*, or similar means), or defeated in combat. Disbelief requires a DC 12 Will save, and uses an action die. Once defeated, phantoms simply fade away.

To create a phantom, use the following stat block as a base, and then roll 1d7, 1d8, 1d10, and 1d12, as indicated on the table on following page.

Phantom: Init -2; Atk see below; AC 9; HD 2d6; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP see below; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

Phantoms can pursue PCs beyond the chamber they appeared in, but not beyond the Dragonwall. It is thus possible to multiply phantoms as PCs run from room to room. Because the Qophu are immune to mind-affecting effects, they can neither harm, nor be harmed by, these phantoms. Note also that disbelief can negate lasting effects of special attacks, but it does not otherwise heal damage already taken.

USING THE QOPHU

Although there are no designated encounters with the Qophu, they may be used by the judge in a variety of ways:

- *Creep Factor:* A long arm or leg descending from – or withdrawing into – the ceiling is a great initial sighting of these beings. By holding off a full encounter, the judge can create and maintain tension. The PCs will enter the Dragonwall at least three times: (1) their initial arrival, (2) to pass from one side of the Valley to the other, and (3) to escape the Valley. The judge is encouraged to leave the Qophu mysterious until at least the second passage.
- *Don't Judge by Appearances:* When the PCs finally interact with the Qophu, they have a chance to make strong allies, if they can only get past the Qophu's appearance. This ties in thematically with the beautiful but wicked J'Aleth and the seemingly-undead Valgazur.
- *Friend or Foe:* The Qophu are hunted by the folk of the Green Land and the Black Land alike, and may be eager to make allies. If the PCs treat them well (and elves can differentiate themselves from the Elder Kindred), the Qophu's knowledge of the Dragonwall maze may be invaluable, as they can quickly guide PCs from one entrance to the other, or to the *dragonglass* portal. Likewise, the Qophu's enmity or friendship can matter a great deal in the final race to exit the Valley – unfriendly Qophu may hinder the PCs, while allies may instead obstruct the PC's foes!

PHANTOM ENCOUNTERS TABLE

| Result | Base Form (1d7) | Attack (1d8) | Special Attack (1d10) | Added Feature (1d12) |
|--------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Camel | Bite +1 melee (1d3) | Fiery breath (1d8, DC 10 Ref save for half, 20' long cone with 5' base, once per encounter) | Heavy scales (+2 to AC) |
| 2 | Elder Kindred | Bite +2 melee (1d5) | Paralysis (on successful attack, 1d3 rounds, DC 10 Fort save negates) | Wings (fly 40'); roll 1d4 for type: (1) butterfly; (2) dragonfly; (3) bat; (4) vulture |
| 3 | Lizard Man | Claw +3 melee (1d3) | Paralysis (free gaze attack, 1d5 rounds, DC 10 Will save negates) | Displacement (opponent's first strike always misses; 50% miss chance thereafter) |
| 4 | Dragon (man-sized) | Claw +3 melee (1d5) | Chilling touch (+1d4 damage to successful attack) | Immune to magic |
| 5 | Panther | Kick +4 melee (1d4) | Pestilence (1 point of temporary Stamina damage per day for 1d5 days with successful attack, DC 15 Fort save negates) | Immune to non-magical weapons |
| 6 | Ape | Spit +3 ranged (1d3) | Venomous (1d3 Agility damage, DC 15 Fort save or 1 point is permanent) | Extra action die |
| 7 | Dryad | Pummel +2 melee (1d6) | Giant strength (+4 damage, 1d4 on Crit Table G) | Improved action die (1d24) |
| 8 | | Curved sword +3 melee (1d8) | Burning touch (DC 15 Will save or be set alight with successful attack; 1d6 damage per round until a DC 10 Ref save succeeds) | Limited teleportation (can use move action to disappear from current location and appear up to 60' away) |
| 9 | | | Drowning kiss (+2 melee with bonus 1d20 action die, DC 15 Fort save or suffer 1d3 temporary Stamina damage as lungs fill with water; damage recovered instantly if phantom is defeated) | Faster (all movement speeds increase by +1d3×10') |
| 10 | | | Grapple (successful attack allows phantom to latch on, doing automatic damage each round; only defeating the phantom breaks the hold) | Lightning strike (+1d8 initiative modifier) |
| 11 | | | | Additional Special Attack (1d10, previous column) |
| 12 | | | | Roll 1d10 twice in this column |

ENCOUNTER AREAS

Area 2-1 – Beyond the Dragonglass: *You emerge from the mirror into an ancient, 40' square room, with a 20' wide passage directly before you. The corners are festooned with ancient cobwebs, and the floor is thick with dust. Behind you, there is a mirror exactly duplicating the one you passed through. Its likeness is so perfect, down to the marks of each dragon's scales, it may well be the same mirror-window, existing in this place as well as where you just were.*

Here the PCs have a reckoning with the agent of Chaos, now appearing as a red-haired youth with a mocking expression and the sign of the eight-pointed arrow upon his forehead in scarlet. If reduced to 0 hp, he says sardonically, "May you bring my Lords of Chaos more sport than the last," and fades away. Anything stolen by the agent remains behind. The agent of Chaos may be turned by a lawful cleric.

Agent of Chaos: Init +3; Atk dagger +3 melee (1d4) or stolen weapon +3 melee (by weapon); AC 13; HD 4d6; hp 15; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; AL C.

The *dragonglass* in this chamber is exactly like that in area 1-9, but is impassable until either the Bone Dragon or Empress has been slain.

Area 2-2 – The Green Land: *The passage goes some 40', sloping gently upwards towards an exit to this subterranean place. You find yourself standing on a long earthwork berm overlooking a pleasant green landscape. You can hear the sound of running water somewhere, hidden by trees in full leaf. Some bear luscious golden fruit that you can almost taste, even from where you stand. You realize that you are in a great valley, ringed by tall cliffs – some marked with splendid waterfalls. At the top of the cliffs, rather than sky, you see a rippling surface, like a silvery lake suspended overhead. By the light from this strange sky, it appears to be early morning.*

Behind you is a grim-seeming dark stone wall, marked with horned towers every 100'. Although fires seem to burn within the windows of the towers, there is no sign of movement otherwise. The wall appears to be at least 200' high, and the towers rise another 50' above its jagged parapet.

This passage emerges into area 3-1 of **The Green Land**.

Area 2-3 – The Black Land: *The passage goes some 40', sloping downward until it emerges above a slough of dark water and sad-looking reeds. You find yourself standing on a long earthwork berm overlooking a barren, evil-looking country, filled with the broken remnants of dead trees and ashy plains of powdered volcanic stone. This land is part of a valley ringed by tall cliffs. Bright magma rolls down some of these from some hidden source above, for there is no true sky. Instead the cliffs rise into a dark and agitated surface, like a great water in a storm laced with lightning-like discharges. It appears to be that darkening time just before full nightfall, casting the land into fitful shadows.*

Behind you is a dark stone wall, marked with horned towers every 100'. Although fires seem to burn within the windows of the towers, there is no sign of movement otherwise. The wall appears to be at least 200' high, and the towers rise another 50' above its jagged parapet.

This passage emerges into area 4-1 of **The Black Land**.



THE VALLEY OF TWO LANDS



The Dragonwall: Although the Dragonwall has already been described, it should be noted that any creature attempting to fly over the wall hits an invisible barrier dealing 3d6 damage. This barrier is impervious to both material weapons and magic, so long as both Empress and Bone Dragon live.

Attempting to climb the Dragonwall requires a DC 10 check per 20' climbed. A failed check means only that the climber cannot find a further way up that round, but failing three checks in a row results in a fall. If a PC manages to gain one of the towers, he discovers that there is a cresset burning with a source-less flame, but there is no way out of the tower save by windows, and there appear to be no occupants. If a climber puts out a cresset, it is mysteriously lit again at some point while he climbs back down.

Because of the invisible barrier, it is impossible to climb one side of the Dragonwall and down the other.

The "Sky": The water-like surface over the Valley is 3 miles above the lowest point in either Land. Any creature coming into direct contact with it discovers that it feels elastic, giving but not breaking. A creature can "stretch the sky" for about 50' until it reacts, shocking the audacious being for 2d6 damage (DC 20 Fort save for half) and throwing the character downward 3d6×100'. Flying creatures that survive the shock have plenty of time to recover before they reach the ground.

Note that while the sky doesn't appear to change, time passes normally in the Valley.

THE GREEN LAND

The Green Land is the side of the Valley ruled by J'Aleth, Immortal Empress of the Elder Kindred. This half of the Valley is like a forgotten corner of Elfland, but the Chaos Lord Retrimax's dark influences are felt here as he attempts to lead J'Aleth away from the King of Elfland with false promises of release.

It is always just before morning in the unvarying sky of the Green Land. Beyond the berm of the Dragonwall, the Green Land consists of forest, parkland, streams, and the Starlake.

Forest: These areas consist of mixed deciduous woods: oak, ash, beech, and other trees that no longer grace the Lands We Know. Beechnuts and acorns are plentiful, as are faerie fruits, which taste like sweet wine and ambrosia. The trees are sentient, being the outward manifestations of beautiful female tree spirits with golden hair and large green eyes. Their eyes dance with motes of light, like moonbeams, but have no pupils. A tree spirit can charm mortal beings (as *charm person* with +3 to the spell check) with their kisses, but cannot otherwise act directly upon the world. If a tree is damaged, they can cause accidents which seem to be merely by chance: as a tree falls, it hits a branch of another tree that strikes at a character, or a felled tree lands upon a hapless woodcutter. These attacks have a +4 attack bonus and do 1d6 damage, achieving a critical hit on an 18-20, using 1d8 on Crit Table I. Weapons and spells pass harmlessly through them.

Parkland: Parkland covers gently rolling hills, with grasses growing a foot above the ground. Wild flowers grow everywhere, scenting the air with their fragrance. These areas are home to harmless fat yellow rabbit-like creatures with two small black pronghorns.

Streams: These swiftly flowing waters descend from the cliffs around the Green Land and rush towards the Starlake, from which no water flows. The streambeds are of wide terraced stone, easily forded, but clear and very cold.

Starlake: This cold lake is named because the water is eternally dark, reflecting the stars of the Lands We Know, which can never be seen in the false sky. All waters in the Green Land flow into the Starlake. At its center it is very deep - none here know how far it descends. At its deepest point, tiny portals keep the lake's depth even, transporting water back to the hidden regions above the artificial sky, where it joins the waterfalls forming the streams of the Green Land.



RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Roll 1d14 for every three hours spent in the Green Land, or for every three squares travelled. The judge may increase or decrease the frequency of encounters based on PC actions.

| D14 | Encounter |
|-----|---|
| 1-7 | No encounter. |
| 8 | <p>Elder Kindred maidens (2d3): Init +1; Atk dagger +1 melee (1d4); AC 10; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 10'; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C. Dagger.</p> <p>These maidens seek to bring the PCs to area 3-4, and only fight to defend themselves. They will attempt to convince the PCs of their pleasant nature. If questioned closely, they will mention their "tormentor from beyond the Wall," but are quick to push aside other questions, saying that the answers are for their Empress J'Aleth to give, not for her mere maidens.</p> |
| 9 | <p>Hunting party of Elder Kindred huntresses mounted on riding moths. To determine what they are pursuing, roll 1d5: (1-2) deer; (3) catkins; (4) unicorns; (5) the Ebony Stag.</p> <p>Elder Kindred huntresses (2d6+2): Init +1; Atk spear +1 melee (1d8); AC 13; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 10'; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C. Leather armor, bronze spear.</p> <p>Riding moths (1 per huntress): Init +3; Atk none; AC 12; HD 2d7; hp 8 each; MV 10' or fly 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +0; AL N.</p> <p>A riding moth is a large, pale green moth with feathery antennae. Bearing a single rider, it can fly no higher than 30' above the ground. Bearing two riders, it can attain 10'. If carrying a third rider, it can only walk.</p> <p>Huntresses attempt to capture any PCs they encounter, to bring them as a living trophy before the Empress J'Aleth. If even one is killed, they flee rather than fight – only to return in 1d3+1 hours with a party of 4d6+4 huntresses armed with large nets woven from their hair (+3 ranged, DC 15 Reflex save or become entangled; escape with a DC 12 Strength or Agility check, DC increases by +2 per failed check). These huntresses know well that their mistress seeks pawns to pass the Dragonwall and slay her one-time lover.</p> |
| 10 | <p>Deer (1d4+1): Init +5; Atk hooves +0 melee (1d3) or antlers +2 melee (1d5); AC 12; HD 2d6 or 4d6; MV 50'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will -4; AL N.</p> <p>Under most circumstances, deer are non-combatants. A group will include at least one stag. Of the remaining deer, 1d3 are does and whatever remains are yearlings. A hunter, forester, or warrior with a bow may bring down a doe or yearling with a DC 10 Agility check (the creature is injured and must be followed for 1d6×10 minutes before it falls), or a stag with a DC 13 Agility check. Otherwise, yearlings and does have 2d6 hp and stags have 4d6 hp.</p> |
| 11 | <p>Catkins (2d4): Init +3; Atk crystal hook +2 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 1d6; hp 4 each; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP infravision 60'; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +1; AL C.</p> <p>Catkins are halfling-sized spotted feline bipeds with crystalline hooks that jut from their forearms. They are intelligent, and have been lost within the Valley long enough to know the Elder Kindred and their Empress very well. If communications can be established (they speak the language of gnomes), they may warn the PCs about the nature of the Elder Kindred, who hunt them for sport.</p> |
| 12 | <p>Unicorns (1d3): Init +6; Atk horn +6 melee (1d8) or hoof +4 melee (1d5); AC 17; HD 6d8; hp 25 each; MV 70'; Act 2d20; SP immune to poisons, charge (+4 attack, x2 damage with horn attack only), +8 bonus to all saves vs. spells; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +10; AL C.</p> <p>These silvery-pelted creatures flee when encountered, but if chased or cornered, may become fierce. In the Lands We Know, their skins may be sold for 50 gp or more, and their horns for 100 gp. A severed unicorn's horn is considered a sovereign remedy against all poisons, destroying their harmful nature with a touch. According to some sources, their quicksilver blood may be used to preserve an unholy sort of life, but it causes untold corruption in those who would partake of it.</p> |



| | |
|----|--|
| 13 | <p>Great butterfly: Init +0; Atk tongue spear +3 ranged (1d6 plus blood drain); AC 17; HD 4d8+8; hp 25 each; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP blood drain; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C.</p> <p>The great butterflies of the Green Land are as large as elephants, with great wings covered in geometric patterns, although they are too heavy to fly. They attack by shooting out a spear-tipped tongue up to 20' away. The tongue can be severed with an attack dealing 5 points of damage (this does not count towards the creature's total hp), or pulled out with a DC 13 Strength check (causing 1d3 damage). So long as the tongue is attached, the great butterfly drains blood, causing 1d3-1 points of temporary Stamina damage each round. The great butterfly has 1d5 tongues, and can regrow a severed tongue in 5d7 hours.</p> |
| 14 | <p>The Ebony Stag: Init +7; Atk gore +8 melee (1d7+4) or hoof +4 melee (1d3+4); AC 22; HD 8d8+16; hp 70; MV 80'; Act 3d20; SP unaffected by spells or magic, "death throes"; SV Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +10; AL C.</p> <p>The Ebony Stag is a new arrival in the Green Land, having been here for only a century or so. Already the Elder Kindred believe that capturing the beast will allow them to escape the Green Land. The rumor is that the 10-foot spread of its antlers and its pitch-black hide can both be used to open the <i>dragonglass</i>, and that the blood of the Stag will protect those daubed with it from the debilitating weakness of the Dragonwall. Both the Stag and the rumors are spread by the Chaos Lord Retrimax. In truth, if the Ebony Stag is reduced to 0 hp, it disappears in a cloud of foul-smelling smoke, only to reform 2d5×10 hours later.</p> |



ENCOUNTER AREAS

Area 3-1 – The Dragonwall: Characters enter the Green Land here as they pass from under the Dragonwall at area 2-2.

Area 3-2 – The Abyss: Here you can see a low, rounded hill-ock topped with a ring of dark standing stones. There is something sinister in the way the stones lean in defiance of gravity, as if the laws of nature do not apply to them.

If the PCs climb the hillock, read or paraphrase the following:

A chasm yawns in the center of the stone ring, a roughly circular opening about 40' across. Uneven steps lead downward along the rim of the pit, driving downwards at least 150'. You can faintly see a glimmer, as of water, far below. The light from the shimmering false sky should go straight down the shaft, but it seems gloomier below than it should. You could only pass down these stairs single-file.

As PCs wind their way down the stairs, they become aware of a faint mist in the air, which smells of rotting vegetation. At 150', there is a field similar to that of the sky above – a shimmering that appears almost like water, but is not. The stairs continue downward through the barrier, which stretches and then gives, into another chamber:

Beyond the barrier, at the base of the uneven steps, is a shadow-

filled chamber 60' in diameter and just as deep. The earthen area seems natural, save for a face carved in black basalt on the eastern surface – a face both handsome and cruel, which has been carved fully 40' high, so that it dominates even this large area. You can sense its brooding presence, and realize that what faint light there is in this space comes from the carving itself.

The stone face is the Chaos Lord Retrimax, imprisoned when the world was young by the forces of Law. The creation of the Hidden Valley sufficiently weakened his prison to allow a portion of him to escape. He can only manifest in a male body, and then only if the character consents to “taking his spirit in.” The Chaos Lord can speak to anyone in this chamber, and will work to gain the consent of any male character. He will admit to being imprisoned, but not to being a Chaos Lord. He claims:

- The character will not die, but will be aware of all that occurs while Retrimax is in control.
- Retrimax knows how to escape the Hidden Valley and return to the Lands We Know, if he has the body to perform the necessary actions.
- The vessel of Retrimax will know honor, glory, and riches.
- The vessel will only need to serve for a short time, until all can escape the Hidden Valley.



This last argument is half true. Escaping in this way leaves Retrimax's body trapped in its prison, and any mortal body containing the Chaos Lord's spirit will quickly begin to break down, suffering 1 point of permanent damage to Strength, Agility, or Stamina for each full 24 hours the Chaos Lord inhabits it. Retrimax, of course, claims that any such loss is temporary, and will seek another to "help bear the burden" once his first stolen body approaches dissolution.

If this offer is accepted, Retrimax seeks to kill the Empress and then escape through the *dragonglass*. He will happily leave all others behind in his quest for freedom. The Empress has spoken with Retrimax often, and believes his lies. She might bring a strong male character here as a potential host for the Chaos Lord, binding him if necessary until such time as he agrees to play host to Retrimax's spirit. When Retrimax possesses another, the face disappears from the wall.

If a PC agrees to host Retrimax, use the base PC's statistics with the following changes:

- +4 bonus to attack rolls and damage.
- Critical hits rolled using 1d12 on Table DN.
- Hit points increased by 3d12.
- Intelligence and Personality increase to 18.
- +8 bonus to Will saves (in addition to bonus from Personality increase).
- Alignment is chaotic.
- Can cast the following spells using 1d20, with a +8 bonus to the spell check: *chill touch*, *invisible companion*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *demon summoning* (as "With Patron"), *darkness*, *paralysis*, and *lotus stare*.
- If the PC is slain, a dark fissure appears, and scaly demonic arms drag the character into hell. At the last moment, it is clear that the Chaos Lord's spirit has fled, and the PC is still alive! The fissure then closes, with a noise like a clap of thunder. The basalt face reappears on the wall, as Retrimax is returned to his prison. If the judge desires, a special quest may be devised to recover the taken PC from eternal torment!

Retrimax knows everything that the PC knows, and the PC is aware of everything Retrimax does with his body. If the player is willing, and the judge deems him capable of playing the role, he can play the Chaos Lord during the possession.

A *banish* spell with a result of 32+ can force Retrimax back into his extradimensional prison. At the judge's discretion, this may weaken the weft of the Valley of Two Lands enough that a portal to another world opens.

MAJOR PLAYERS IN THE GREEN LAND

J'Aleth, Empress of the Elder Kindred: Init +5; Atk *Spear of Elfland* +6 melee (1d8+2); AC 15; HD 5d8; hp 25; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 50', spells; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +7; AL C. Mithril chain mail, *Spear of Elfland*.

Spells (+6 bonus to spell check): *charm person*, *comprehend languages*, *invoke patron* (the King of Elfland), *magic shield*, *invisible companion*, *phantasm*, *runic alphabet* (fey).

"It is long since We have looked on those from the lands We once knew. We give thee good greetings. May the Fates smile upon our meeting."

"You remind me of another who once We favored. Joy is fleeting, but punishment seems eternal."

J'Aleth needs the PCs to cross the Dragonwall and kill Valgazur, thus reactivating the *dragonglass* and allowing her to escape the Valley. She portrays herself as a sympathetic victim, but her quick temper when thwarted tells a different story. It galls her to feign weakness, and to need the aid of lesser beings. What she cannot win by guile, she attempts to win by force. She will trap the PCs in the Valley when she departs, if she can.

Spear of Elfland: Wielded by the Empress J'Aleth, the *Spear of Elfland* is a +2 chaotic weapon that grants its user a +2 bonus to initiative. The *Spear* has a unique relationship with time, so that any struck by it must succeed in a DC 10 Will save or be slowed, losing its next action die, and taking a -2 penalty to AC until it can act again. Whoever grasps the *Spear of Elfland* may cause time to flow backwards, undoing the effects of any one specific injury, but doing so causes the *Spear* to return immediately to Elfland. Finally, the twin-pronged mithril spear can unleash a single lightning bolt, to a range of 50' and causing 3d6 damage (DC 10 Fort save for half). This last power is fueled by the wielder's soul, causing an equivalent of 1d3 points of spellburn per use.

If the Empress is slain, refer immediately to **Escape!**

General Miriamun: Init +2; Atk mithril longsword +4 melee (1d8+1); AC 14; HD 4d8; hp 20; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 40'; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +3; AL C. Mithril chainmail, mithril longsword.

"Were it not for my Empress' command, I would hunt you like the beasts you so clearly are."

"I have not forgotten the old days, when your kind where but slaves or game for the table. May it be so again."

Scarred General Miriamun is the Empress' right hand. She is loyal, but not subtle. She cannot be turned to the PCs' cause, save by magic, but she may inadvertently let slip many things that her mistress would sooner keep hidden.

Lady Orialle: Init +1; Atk mithril dagger +1 melee (1d4); AC 11; HD 1d8; hp 7; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 10'; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C. Mithril dagger.

"I have not seen so handsome a creature for many an age. Surely, thou must love me, for am I not beautiful, O mortal?"

An Elder Kindred woman of handsome appearance, the Lady Orialle is an opportunist with no loyalty to any save the Lady Orialle. She toys with the PCs, delighting in setting one against another in pursuit of her promised favors. And why not? Mortal creatures are mere playthings to the Elder Kindred, and none has ever returned from beyond the Dragonwall.

Rishi, Handmaiden of the Empress: Init +1; Atk bronze dagger +0 melee (1d4); AC 10; HD 2d6; hp 8; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 20'; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; AL N. Bronze dagger.

"Say nothing. You have entered a den of serpents, and every word may end with a poisoned embrace."

Among the Elder Kindred, Rishi is positively kind-hearted. She tired of J'Aleth's pride long ago, and now seeks an opportunity to warn the PCs of the Empress' plans. She begs only that they take her with them when they escape the Valley of Two Lands. Rishi gives the judge an opportunity to share background information with the players; at the very least, share knowledge that the Empress and the Bone Dragon were once lovers, and that opening the *dragon-glass* from the Valley requires the death of one of the twain. She also knows that, once a living thing escapes through the *dragon-glass*, there is but a limited time before the passage closes forever.



Area 3-3 – The Mound of Graves: Here there is a great hill, with many green grave mounds set upon it, forming a spiral path toward a single white stone standing upright on the crest of the hill. There are well over one hundred unmarked graves here.

The Elder Kindred are nigh immortal, but accident and conflict have winnowed their number since arriving in the Hidden Valley. These are the graves of those Elder Kindred women who served the Empress J'Aleth even unto death. The graves closest to the top of the hill are the oldest, coming from a time when both the Green Land and the Black still tested the barrier of the Dragonwall. Others of the Elder Kindred perished in the Black Land, in the early days, and were there consumed by reptiles. Their bones now lie in area 4-2 of the Black Land, but the memorial stone was raised in their honor. (See table on following page to randomly determine contents if PCs decide to loot the mounds.)

Area 3-4 – The Palace of J'Aleth: Ahead there is an ancient palace of pale green stone, covered with flowering ivy. Even from a distance, it is clear that much of the structure is no longer inhabited and has fallen into ruin. Still, dark green and bright yellow pennons fly from the central mass...the place is not wholly deserted.

This is the palace of the Elder Kindred Empress J'Aleth, both the center of her prison and the stronghold of her power. About three-quarters of the palace are no longer inhabited – Elder Kindred who die here are not replaced, and the number of maidens serving their Empress has slowly dwindled over the long ages. All of the Elder Kindred in the Green Land are female.

Unaccompanied PCs are met by 2d4 Elder Kindred knights mounted on riding moths. Dangerous creatures dwell in the Green Land – catkins, great butterflies, and other beings that may pass through the *dragonglass*, but they are few compared to the Elder Kindred. Their watch is lax, and stealthy PCs may even enter the palace through some unused portion unobserved.

Guests here are given well-appointed quarters, with furniture of rare woods curiously carved, silken sheets, and delightful food and drink. Carnal companionship is easy to come by...all the Elder Kindred in the Green Land are female, and they are already punished for their Empress's breaking the prohibition against relations with humans. What more can the King of Elfland or the Courts of Chaos do? Guests may be gifted with handfuls of pearls and emeralds (3d6 stones worth an average of 20 gp each). In need, weapons and arms – even those of mithril – may be supplied.

In addition to special characters, the remaining population of the palace consists of:

Elder Kindred knights (20): Init +2; Atk mithril longsword +3 melee (1d8); AC 16; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 20'; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C. Mithril chain mail, shield, mithril longsword.

Elder Kindred huntresses (35): Init +1; Atk spear +1 melee (1d8); AC 13; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 10'; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C. Leather armor, bronze spear.

Elder Kindred maidens (127): Init +1; Atk dagger +1 melee (1d4); AC 10; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 10'; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C. Bronze dagger.

Riding moths (52): Init +3; Atk none; AC 12; HD 2d7; hp 8 each; MV 10' or fly 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +0; AL N.

THE BLACK LAND

This half of the Valley is ruled by the Empress's one-time consort, Valgazur, who has been transformed by Baphotet Khor into the Bone Dragon. This is a bleak and harsh land, where rivers of magma pour down into smoking holes of sulfurous darkness. It always appears to be just before nightfall, beneath a tumultuous false sky.

Beyond the great slough that fronts the Dragonwall, the land here is a mixture of rocky, ashen wastelands and magma streams. Little grows beyond the slough, and what does is dry and thorny.

Slough: Creatures passing through this boggy region move at half normal speed, and must succeed in a Luck check for each square passed to avoid becoming trapped in the mire. Trapped characters lose any Agility bonus to AC and another random encounter roll is made while they free themselves.

If even one PC becomes entrapped by the slough, the PC with the lowest Luck must succeed in a DC 10 Reflex save or be caught in quicksand. A character trapped in quicksand has 10 rounds to escape before being lost. The character can succeed in escaping with a Strength check (DC 20 minus the number of rounds remaining), but each failure uses an additional round as the violent action drags him deeper into the slough (i.e., if a PC with 5 rounds remaining attempts a DC 15 Strength check to free himself, but fails, he has only 3 rounds remaining thereafter). Other PCs can attempt to pull the trapped PC out using ropes or poles, and this has only a 1 in 3 chance of causing an extra round to be lost.

A character with an appropriate occupation (halfling vagrant, hunter, outlaw, smuggler, etc.) can avoid these risks for the entire group with a DC 10 Intelligence check per square traversed.

Badlands: These are areas of hard black stone covered in places with thin soil and pumice ash. In addition to random encounters, these badlands are inhabited by a species of chicken-like lizards, which survive off of the sparse and thorny vegetation.

Magma Streams: Hot magma rolls off the cliffs of the Black Land, creating a great reek and clouds of poisonous air. They become slow-moving streams that cross the ashen badland, eventually disappearing into deep, dark pits. Any character within 1 mile of a magma stream must succeed on a DC 5 Fort save or pass out for 1d3×10 minutes. At the end of this period, if they remain within 1 mile of a magma stream, they must make a DC 10 Fort save or remain unconscious for another 1d5×10 minutes and suffer 1d3 points of temporary Stamina damage. At the end of this period, if still within 1 mile of the lava stream, a DC 15 Fort save is required to prevent death from poisonous fumes.

A creature coming into contact with magma takes 2d6 damage, and must succeed in a DC 20 Fort save or permanently lose 1d3 points of Strength, Agility, or Stamina damage (determine ability randomly for each point). A creature that has even ¼ of its body immersed takes 5d6 damage, takes 1d3 points of permanent damage to Strength, Agility, or Stamina, and must succeed in a Fort save (DC equal to 10 +

ability score damage taken) or die. Any creature with half or more of its body immersed dies instantly. So hot is the molten rock that even being within 20' of it requires a DC 10 Fort save each round to prevent 1d3 damage.

A character attempting to climb into one of the magma pits (DC 5) must also succeed in a DC 10 Fort save each round or take 1d3 damage. In addition, they must make a DC 15 Fort save each round or pass out, falling 1d7×10' and taking appropriate falling damage. A character making it down a full 200' discovers a pool of lava. This drains at the rate it fills, reappearing at the top of the magma stream.

Badlands: The broken ground of this region is embedded with chalky white boulders that appear to be the calcified heads of male near-humans who died in pain and fear. The stone heads vary from smaller than life-sized to vast bulks easily six feet across. Steam vents up from between the heads, through mouths frozen in silent screams, and through empty eye sockets.

There are no random encounters here. Instead, every 1d7×10 minutes, a geyser of super-heated water and steam erupts in the vicinity of the PCs, causing 3d6 damage (DC 10 Ref save for half). Geysers are easily visible from 3 squares away, potentially giving characters warning before they enter this region.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

For every three squares traversed, or three hours spent in the Black Land (except the badlands), roll 1d16 and consult the following table. The judge may alter the frequency of encounters as circumstances dictate. Random encounters in the Black Land are keyed to terrain type.

Items Found in Mound of Graves (d7)

- 1: A twisted rod of black petrified wood; grants a +2 bonus to spell checks to invoke the King of Elfland.
- 2: Copper plate depicting stag-mounted Elder Kindred hunting ape-like humanoids (15 gp).
- 3: An ancient set of faerie-themed ivory tarot cards which can be used to cast second sight. The first casting uses 1d16 for the spell check, and each subsequent casting reduces the check -1d down the dice chain. This resets at each full moon.
- 4: Onyx chess pieces, white dragons vs. black elves, with half the pieces missing (5 gp).
- 5: Thousands of tiny beetles with humanoid faces scatter; the bones are all but consumed.
- 6: The bones still wear mithral chainmail, which has survived the centuries.
- 7: The dead Elder Kindred is wrapped in a gossamer cocoon; within, it is transforming into *something else*. 20% chance of bursting forth as a new great butterfly (starting at 1 HD, but gaining 1 HD with every 5 Stamina damage caused, until it reaches full size); 80% chance of an inert *something else* (exactly what is at judge's discretion).

| D16 | Slough | Badland | Magma Stream |
|-----|--|--|--------------|
| 1-8 | No encounter | No encounter | No encounter |
| 9 | Crocodiles (1d3): Init -3; Atk bite +5 melee (3d4); AC 17; HD 3d8; hp 13 each; MV 20' or swim 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will -2; AL N. | No encounter | No encounter |
| 10 | Large crocodile: Init -3; Atk bite +7 melee (3d4+2); AC 19; HD 5d8; hp 20; MV 20' or swim 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref -2, Will -2; AL N. | No encounter | No encounter |
| 11 | Qophu (2d3): Init +3; Atk long dagger +5 melee (1d5+4); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 60', strong (+4 bonus), squeeze into small areas, immunity to all mind-altering spells and effects; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; AL N. Rough linen tunic, long dagger. See also page 7. | Black drakes (1d3): Init +3; Atk bite +4 melee (1d6 plus infection) or claw +1 melee (1d3); AC 14; HD 2d6; hp 9 each; MV 30' or swim 30' or glide 30'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision, keen sense of smell, infection; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; AL N. Reptiles the size of large dogs with glistening black scales and two dorsal sails which can be used to glide. Their saliva festers in wounds, doing an additional 1 point of damage each hour unless treated. A DC 10 Fort save prevents infection, and a DC 10 Intelligence check allows the wound to be treated. The judge should remember that characters without appropriate occupations roll this check on 1d10 instead of 1d20. | No encounter |
| 12 | Giant leech: Init -2; Atk bite +2 melee (1d3 plus blood drain); AC 12; HD 1d6; hp 4; MV swim 25'; Act 1d20; SP automatic 1 damage after bite; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -4; AL N. These leeches are about 3' long. They drop off, sated, after draining 10 hp of blood. | Red drakes (1d4): Init +3; Atk bite +2 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 1d6; hp 4 each; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP low-light vision, keen sense of smell, blistering breath; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +0; AL N. Smaller than the black drakes, with dull reddish scales, and with only vestigial sails incapable of gliding, red drakes can breathe a cone of scalding air, 20' long with a 10' base, once every 1d6 rounds (1d6 damage, DC 10 Fort save for half). | No encounter |

| D16 | Slough | Badland | Magma Stream |
|-----|--|---|--------------|
| 13 | <p>Elder Kindred spirits (2d5): Silent, translucent spirits of female Elder Kindred warriors who perished in the slough after passing beneath the Dragonwall, they may disconcert PCs but otherwise cause no harm. They linger for 2d5 rounds, and have a 1 in 3 chance of provoking another random encounter roll.</p> | <p>Grey drake: Init +2; Atk bite +6 melee (1d8) or claw +1 melee (1d5); AC 16; HD 4d8; hp 17; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP low-light vision, keen sense of smell, camouflage; SV Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +2; AL N.</p> <p>The largest of the drakes, these are shaped like tuataras the size of a large ponies, with two hard ridges where other drakes have sail-like membranes. They are ashy gray and able to remain still in the badland, surprising prey on a 3 in 5 chance once it is within 1d8x10'.</p> | No encounter |
| 14 | <p>Green drake: Init +1; Atk bite +3 melee (1d5 plus poison); AC 15; HD 2d8+2; hp 11; MV 20' or swim 30'; Act 1d20; SP venom; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +0; AL N.</p> <p>Dog-sized swimming reptiles with dull olive scales and a venomous bite (1d3 Strength damage; DC 10 Fort save or 1 point is permanent). Two sail-like membranes (like those of a dimetrodon) are used to swim.</p> | <p>Reptilemen (2d6): Init -2; Atk club +4 melee (1d4+1) or bite +1 melee (1d3); AC 14; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.</p> <p>These ape-like reptilemen have scales the color of bone. They speak only the language of elves and the Elder Kindred. Reptilemen serve the Bone Dragon, and seek to bring bound and weaponless captives to him. To this end, each group has a 20' coil of rope. These are the transformed male near-humans who served Valgazur in the Lands We Know.</p> | No encounter |

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| D16 | Slough | Badland | Magma Stream |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 15 | Sudden shower: Lasts 1d3×1d6 minutes; roll 1d10 to determine intensity, from a light mist (1) to a heavy downpour (10). | Shadows (1d3): As per the DCC rulebook, pp. 425-6. | <p>Salamander: Init +3; Atk bite +3 melee (1d3 plus heat), claw +5 melee (1d5 plus heat), or tail +4 melee (heat plus grapple); AC 16; HD 4d12+4; hp 25; MV 30' or swim 30'; Act 3d20; SP immune to heat and fire, double damage from cold, heat (2d4 damage, DC 10 Fort save for half), grapple with tail, destroy non-magical weapons; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +6; AL C.</p> <p>Malevolent reptilian creatures from the elemental plane of fire, a salamander causes additional damage from the heat of its body with every successful attack. It can grapple with its tail (+2 to opposed Strength checks to break free), doing automatic heat damage to one foe each round.</p> <p>Non-magical missiles that strike a salamander are destroyed instantly. Non-magical melee weapons are destroyed if the wielder fails to roll under Luck on 1d24, as they are melted or burnt away.</p> <p>If possible, a salamander will grapple a foe and drag him into a magma stream out of sheer malice. These creatures feed off of heat, and do not need to eat.</p> |
| 16 | Quicksand: As described above (see Slough), but an Intelligence check cannot avoid this encounter. | Lightning Strike: Lightning strikes down from the false sky, dealing 2d8 damage to a random character (preferably a PC wearing metal armor). DC 15 Reflex save for half. There is a 1 in 5 chance for a second strike immediately following the first, for 2d6 damage. | Roll 1d6+10 and consult the Badland column. There is a 1 in 6 chance that the creature encountered is unconscious, dying, or dead. |

ENCOUNTER AREAS

Area 4-1 – The Dragonwall: Characters passing from under the Dragonwall at area 2-3 enter the Black Land here.

Area 4-2 – Chasm of Bones: A great chasm breaks the volcanic rock, over a mile long and perhaps 1,000' across at its widest point. You cannot tell how deep the chasm may be, as it is filled with the skeletal remains of thousands of creatures. The bones are almost to the level of the chasm; it would require only a short scramble to reach them.

After a moment, the PCs become aware of a cloaked figure moving amid the piled bones. It stoops here to examine some fallen being, then bends to caress a fallen form or to lift a brown skull before letting it fall with a clatter and a

sigh. This is a mental projection of Valgazur. If approached, it appears as a handsome male human with dark skin and ice blue eyes.

“Here is one I knew in life. Well I remember his laughter in elder days. This was Empartans, a liegeman of my house, before the curse overcame us all. Here is some poor creature of this world, brought hence to die for the amusement of cruel gods. Here also is one from another land. I remember that she was very wise, but her cunning availed her not, and here she rests forever. Return, O’ mortal folk, for all who walk the Black Land come hither to rest, sooner or later. Go back while yet thou mayest.”

Having spoken these words, the apparition fades away. No matter how often the PCs return to this place, it is never seen again.

Area 4-3 – The Idol of Baphotet Khor: *Rising from atop the slagheap of volcanic stone is an enormous jet statue of a titanic three-headed dragon, nearly 80' tall. The towering bulk is of enormous age, pitted and weathered, with many sharp edges. Before the statue is a warped bronze gong on a stone frame, 5' in diameter. A giant's bone hangs nearby on a silver wire, one end wrapped in dull red scaly leather.*

This statue is an image of the ancient dragon-god Baphotet Khor, who was worshipped by bestial humans at the dawn of time. Climbing the statue is easy (DC 5), but avoiding getting cut on the sharp stone while doing so is difficult (DC 15 Reflex save) without thick leather gloves and similar coverings for feet and body. A character cut in this way takes 1 point of temporary Strength damage as his blood soaks into the stone – a sacrifice to a long-forgotten god! Valgazur the Bone Dragon gains 1 point of Luck for each point of Strength damage taken, which he can spend to modify rolls (as does a PC).

Striking the gong creates a wavering note causing 1d3 damage to all within 30' (DC 10 Fort save negates) and summons Valgazur to this location in 2d6 turns. This allows the PCs to fight the creature closer to the Dragonwall, or even prepare an ambush. There are pieces of slag and ash, some large enough for even two characters to hide behind. A PC who climbs the statue may escape detection and attack from above, with a DC 10 Hide check.

Area 4-4 – Cave of the Bone Dragon: *A gaping hole at least 30' in diameter opens ahead of you. The air is filled with the reek of sulfur and melted stone. Steam rises in a wavering haze, visible even in the near-dark of the Black Land.*

This is the cave of the Bone Dragon. There is a 140' drop down the shaft, into a stone chamber at least 140'x110' in size, rising to a height of 60'. Within, an island of black basalt is surrounded on three sides by magma (see **Magma Streams**, p. 17). The heat in this place is so intense that PCs take an automatic 1d3 damage each round, and must succeed in a DC 10 Fort save or take an additional 1d5 damage. Actual contact with the magma is treated as per the magma streams, but there are no poisonous fumes here as on the surface. The molten rock is not as hot as in the constantly moving streams, even though the shape of the chamber maintains a punishing degree of heat. A 20'-wide passage from the basalt island goes 30' to a secondary cave, where carved images in stone or bone are heaped. Each is an image of the Empress J'Aleth, the "treasure" of the Bone Dragon. The average statue weighs 1d5 lbs. and is worth 1d7 sp in the Lands We Know. There is a 90% chance that the dragon is here, if not summoned to area 4-3, and a 20% chance that it is asleep.



Spicing Up the Wasteland

The Black Land is a harsh environment, which is intentionally devoid of major variations. The judge may use these events to vary travel therein:

1d4 Event

- 1 The wind seems to call "J'Aleth" in a mournful, masculine tone.
- 2 A symmetrical hole is found, 1d3 feet deep and half filled with dark but potable water.
- 3 The remains of a black drake are found, clearly killed by something larger. Images of the Empress' face have been carved into the bones.
- 4 A black onyx ring is found, inscribed with the sigil of Baphotet Khor. Any who wears it understands the language of dragons.

VALGAZUR THE BONE DRAGON

Valgazur the Bone Dragon: Init +8; Atk 4 claws +10 melee (1d8), bite +10 melee (1d12), tail slap +10 melee (1d20), wing buffet +10 melee (2d12), or crush +10 melee (3d12); AC 18; HD 8d12; hp 80; MV 50' or climb 50'; Act from 1d20 to 8d20 (see below) +1d20 (spell); SP breath weapon, spells, immunity to heat and fire (including magma), half damage from non-magical or non-mithril weapons, detect Elder Kindred and elves within 100'; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +8; AL C.

Spells (+8 bonus to spell check): *food of the gods*, *paralysis*, *word of command*, *lotus stare*, *wood wyrding*, and *animate dead*.

Breath Weapon (4/day): Line of fire, 10' wide and 3d6×10' long. Damage equal to current hp; DC 18 Reflex save for half.

Valgazur appears as a skeletal dragon as long as a ship, whose eye sockets and jaws glow with a fiery red light. His wings are tatters, and he cannot fly, but he can climb any surface with ease. The Bone Dragon casts cleric spells through Baphotet Khor, but the ancient dragon-god now seldom comes to his call, so Valgazur begins the encounter with a disapproval range of 1d6. He does not need a holy symbol or other material components to cast spells.

The great wyrm could easily spell the doom of a third-level party, but he is weary of existence and has faced no serious threat in centuries. He begins an encounter with only a single action die, gaining one additional action die per round until he reaches his full 8 dice. He gains his action die for spell checks on the third round. Otherwise, each action die gains a new attack according to the progression noted in his statblock: claws, then bite, then tail slap, etc. **Note:** If the PCs should manage to reduce the Bone Dragon to 20 hp or less, he immediately gains all action dice on the next round.

The Bone Dragon speaks the languages of elves and of Elder Kindred, an ancient form of the common tongue, and draconic. He can be spoken to, and will parley for the body of his one-time lover, the Empress J'Aleth. He craves possession of her form as other dragons crave gold.

ESCAPE!



As soon as either the Bone Dragon or the Empress dies, a great shudder crosses the false sky, and it brightens to a clear blue.

If the PCs slay Valgazur, unless they took extraordinary precautions, the Elder Kindred will be exploring the Dragonwall, seeking the *dragonglass* exit, by the time they return. If the PCs slay J'Aleth, the Elder Kindred pursue them to the Dragonwall. In either case, the methodology of running the PCs' escape from the Valley of Two Lands is the same:

- Remember that the special properties of the Dragonwall cease when either Valgazur or J'Aleth die.
- No encounters occur in the first three rooms, unless the PCs have befriended the Qophu. If the PCs have befriended them, a group of 1d3 Qophu are encountered in the third room. They are willing to guide the PCs to the *dragonglass*.
- Thereafter, roll 1d3-2, 1d4-2, 1d5-2, and 1d7 for each chamber the PCs enter:
 - 1d3-2 is the number of Qophu which are encountered (minimum 0). They may be allies or foes based on previous PC conduct, or may simply flee.
 - 1d4-2 is the number of Elder Kindred knights that are encountered (minimum 0). **Elder Kindred knights:** Init +2; Atk mithril longsword +3 melee (1d8); AC 16; HD 2d8; hp 9 each; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 20'; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C. Mithril chain mail, shield, mithril longsword.

- 1d5-2 is the number of Elder Kindred huntresses encountered (minimum 0). **Elder Kindred huntresses:** Init +1; Atk spear +1 melee (1d8); AC 13; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP iron vulnerability, pass through Hidden Ways 10'; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C. Leather armor, spear.
- If the 1d7 comes up "1", J'Aleth, Empress of the Elder Kindred, and General Miriamun are encountered. If J'Aleth is encountered and slain, further encounters with Elder Kindred occur only in 1d3-1 more rooms.
- If the 1d7 comes up "7" (and they are not with the PCs), either Lady Orialle or Rishi is encountered (equal chance of each). See page 15 for statistics. If J'Aleth is encountered and slain, further encounters with Elder Kindred occur only in 1d3-1 more rooms.
- If the PCs slew J'Aleth instead of Valgazur, the Bone Dragon is encountered on a roll of "7". The dragon attacks random creatures. It takes the dragon 1d5 rounds to squeeze down any hallway once encountered.

If the PCs slay Valgazur and dawdle, seemingly heedless of the need for haste, the Empress will escape, allowing the *dragonglass* to close behind her. Perhaps the Chaos Lord Retrimax really can aid them. Perhaps it is now possible to climb out of the Valley, through the now-blue sky...although they may now be upon any world in the cosmos. Perhaps they must remain here until a patron, god, or powerful magician calls them forth. Perhaps they are merely lost.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Passing through the dragonglass, you emerge into the chamber where you first entered. The air tingles with electricity, and there is a smell like ozone in the air. You sense the regard of the powerful forces whose game you have played. You can sense, almost as though a voice spoke within your mind, that with the game done the board will soon be folded and put away. You realize that, as soon as you leave this place, the Dragon's Maw will collapse upon itself, as though it had never been. If you linger too long, it may disappear with you still here...

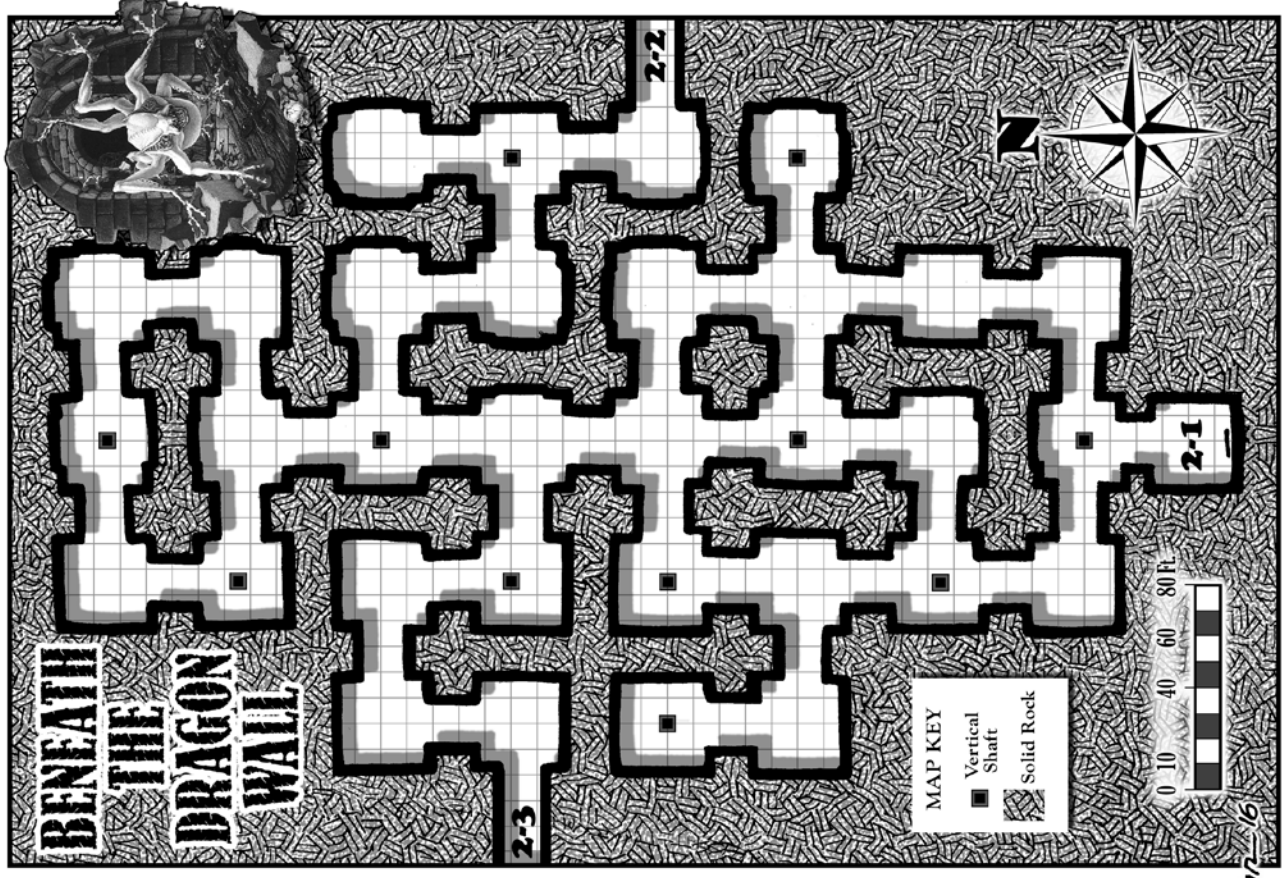
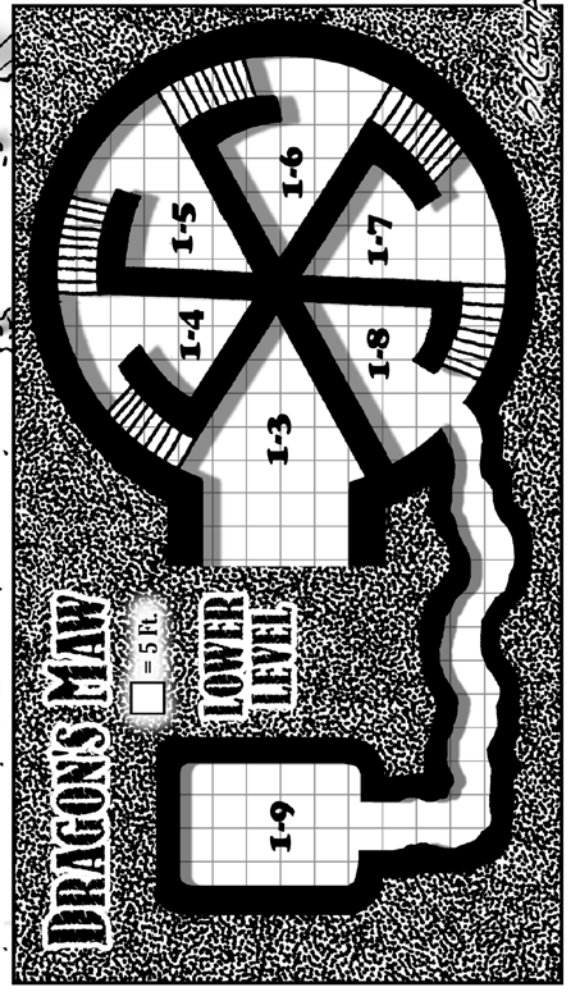
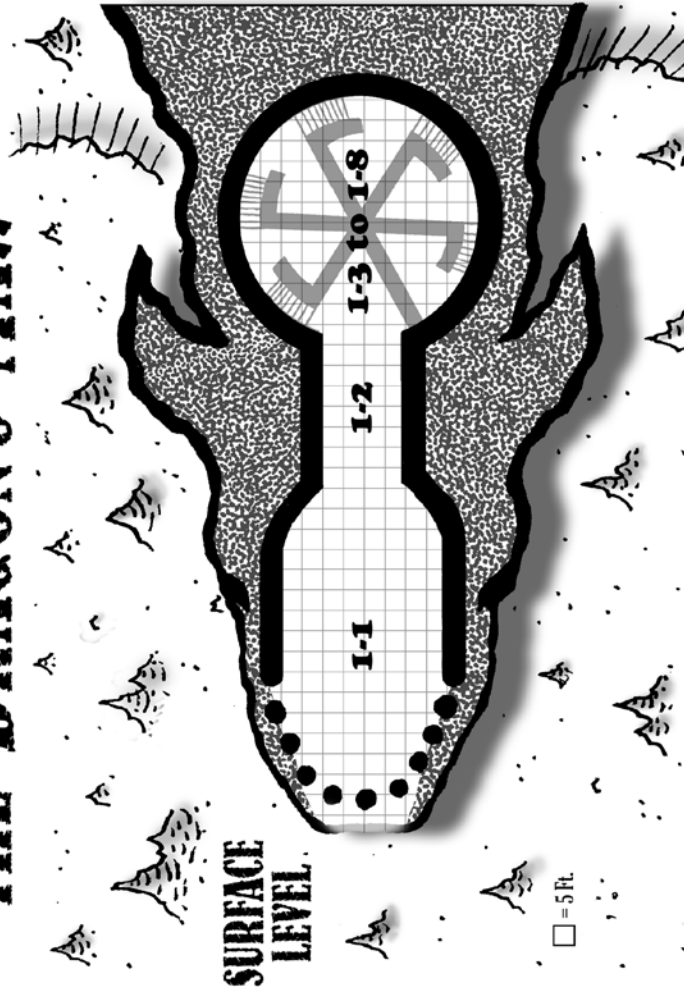
If the Bone Dragon was slain, each character gains a favor from the King of Elfland, which manifests as a free casting of *invoke patron* with a +3 bonus to the roll. (Remember that non-casters use 1d10 for this spell check.)

If J'Aleth was slain, each character gains a permanent boost of 1d3 hit points and the ability to speak the language of dragons, as a gift from Baphotet Khor.

It is entirely possible for the PCs to gain *both* of these gifts upon returning to the Lands We Know.



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