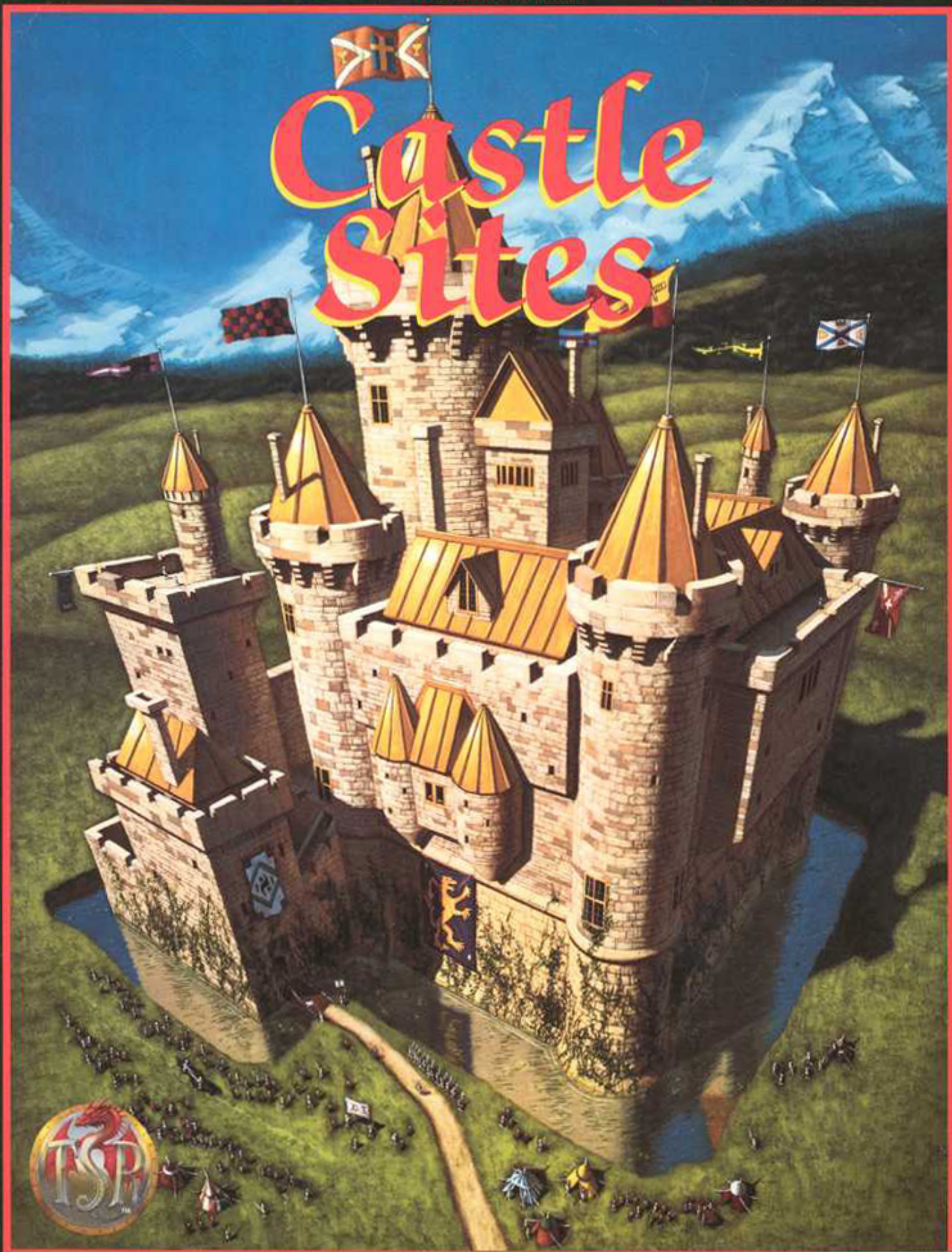


Castle Sites



Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

Official Game Accessory

Castle Sites

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Introduction

Castles stand as an integral part of fantasy literature, rising up on borderlands as brooding guardians against the tide of savages beyond, or serving as the sanctuary of peasant and noble alike. Often the center of culture and learning, a castle becomes the place where skilled artisans come to exhibit their wares, wizened sages dispense advice, and outspoken minstrels offend and delight. Castles can be young and vibrant, filled with life and possibility, or they can be ancient and crumbling, teeming with forbidden knowledge or deadly creatures of an age long gone.

Every castle, keep, or fortress in the fantasy worlds of the *ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*® game contains the seeds of adventure within its walls, waiting for a group of determined player characters to bring them to full bloom.

How to Use Castle Sites

In this book, the Dungeon Master will find several detailed castles, each in a unique setting which can be placed in nearly any fantasy campaign world. Each castle's entry contains a detailed history of the structure; geographical information; a description of its appearance from the outside; sights, sounds, and smells around the castle; and a room-by-room description of the castle's layout. A castle without inhabitants remains an empty shell, however. Nonplayer characters populate each castle, providing the flesh and blood to each building's bare bones. The DM will find NPC descriptions, statistics, and motivations to round out each castle.

Finally, *Adventure Hooks* appear at the end of each castle's entry to supply the gamemaster with possible adventures. These adventure ideas range from politically motivated role-playing opportunities to simple hack-and-slay scenarios.

Nonplayer Characters

Each castle details several important NPCs who play important roles in and around the castle and its environment. The NPC descriptions include the following elements not given for average inhabitants:

Proficiencies: Weapon proficiencies appear first, including specializations for fighters. Non-weapon proficiencies appear next; the number in parentheses is the NPC's check number on a d20.

Languages: The DM should pay particular attention to languages, as some NPCs may not speak common.


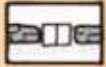



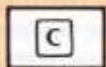

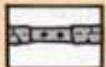
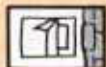

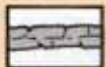


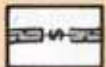


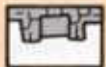
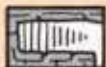

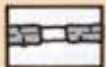
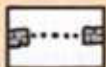

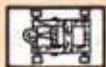
Armor: This includes any magical or non-magical armor, shields, or protective magic worn by NPCs.

Weapons: This category covers normal or magical melee and missile weapons, and knowledge of castle weaponry (including catapults, ballistas, and other siege weapons). The DM should refer to the *DUNGEON MASTER*® *Guide* for details on magical weapons.

Equipment: This details normal and magical items that the NPC usually carries, excluding weapons and armor.

Spells: The spells listed here appear in ascending order by level. The DM should feel free to alter the spell lists to tailor the encounters to the specific PC group.

The NPCs in this product interact best with PCs of 5th to 9th level. The DM may wish to make special adjustments for PCs of higher or lower level.

Map Key					
	Door		Double Door		Dais
	Spiral Stairs		Table		Door, Ceiling
	Battlements		Barred Window		Bed
	Pottery		Wall Foundation		Arched Doorway
	Locked Door		Secret Door		Wooden Partition
	Arrow Slit		Fireplace		Stairs
	Crates		Window		Portcullis
			Illumination (torch, lantern)		Catapult

Playing Castle Sites

The DM should thoroughly read a promising castle entry *before game play*. Reading through the complete entry allows the DM to fully capture the flavor of the site, allowing an accurate portrayal of the castle, its location, and the intention of all NPCs involved.

Although the DM can turn each of these entries into a stand-alone adventure, the castles presented here may also supplement a campaign. Several of these castles could serve as a temporary or permanent base of operations for PCs, and several others could easily make for interesting recurring situations.

In no way should a group of adventurers be able to take over one of the castle sites. The NPCs in each castle have their own plans and agendas, none of which includes surrendering their fortress to greedy player characters. In addition, each of

these castles supports a military force that dishonorable PCs must deal with should they break the law of the land or offend the powers residing in the castle.

The DM can alter each of these castles to fit his or her own campaign. However, the flavor of each of these castles depends on its geography, on its purpose, and on the villains opposing it. Changing any of these items drastically will take away from the essence of the site.

Below, the DM will find the various map symbols used throughout *Castle Sites*. Each of the maps of the various castles uses these symbols in common.

Kaurak Kholzil

Kaurak Kholzil stands upon the ledge of a sheer mountain face, resting 6,000 feet above the valley floor on the eastern side of Mount Arachnos. From the base of the mountain, Kaurak Kholzil appears as a speck on a sheer cliff face, but it is in fact a massive citadel housing over 300 dwarves. The exterior face of the castle remains unadorned, and all of the outer portions either house livestock or support the castle's defenses. A battlement runs along the top of the castle's outer wall, bristling with catapults, ballistae, and a minimal force of a dozen dwarves at all times. Because the dwarves of Kaurak Kholzil have limited access to timber, they constructed all of the exterior fortifications from granite, marble, and limestone.

The majority of the castle's structure lies underground. Two great grey granite doors guard the only entrance allowed to nonresidents. The working of a complex system of dozens of pulleys, gears, and levers allows the doors to open and close swiftly, despite their immense weight. There are no windows in Kaurak Kholzil.

While surveying Mount Arachnos nearly a century ago, the dwarven Clan Gembright located possibly the largest vein of adamantite ever found. After considering their options and preserving the closest secrecy, Clan Gembright consulted with Clan Mastersmith, the undisputed masters at smelting and refining adamantite. The two clans decided to enter into a joint venture in mining and refining the precious ore. After reaching an honorable and mutually profitable agreement, the marriage of Rorrina Gembright and Daggan Mastersmith joined Clan Gembright and Clan Mastersmith. The dwarves of both clans began to work immediately, and they completed Kaurak Kholzil just over a year later.

The dwarves built this kiva castle (see *DMGR2, Castle Guide*, p. 72, for more information) from inside the mountain first, building the castle's exterior structures last. The clans built in this fashion to guard against the variety of monsters that inhabit exterior portions of the mountain and the

nearby valley, creatures which began to investigate the site once construction on the exterior began. Mount Arachnos takes its name from the multitude of giant spiders that inhabit the lower cliffs of the mountain and the valley and forest below, and Kaurak Kholzil means "spider cavern" in dwarvish.

The original entrances into the mountain that the dwarves used consisted of a series of caves and tunnels inhabited by hundreds of poisonous spiders. Some of these underground tunnels still serve as homes to various species of spiders, but the dwarves have collapsed many of these passages in order to prevent a flanking attack by enemy forces. Since knowledge of Kaurak Kholzil and its supposed riches has slowly leaked to the outside world, several foolish thieves have perished deep within the bowels of the treacherous mountain.

Outsiders can reach Kaurak Kholzil only from the air. The dwarves know the secret tunnels through the mountains to the valley below—but they guard this information with their lives, and, more important for a dwarf, with their personal honor. No nondwarf knows of the secret passages to Kaurak Kholzil, though many have died trying to find such passages.

The dwarves use griffins to reach their castle from the air, and to trade with cities far away. The dwarves of Kaurak Kholzil also maintain outposts in nearby cities, and the dwarves in these outposts can provide traders with transportation to the remote citadel. The outposts also serve as a first line of defense, as the dwarves can refuse transport to any person, or group of persons, they deem dishonorable.

A large portion of the ledge which holds the castle's above-ground walls serves as a landing pad for griffins and other aerial creatures used to reach the dwarves' home. The landing area becomes a de-facto trading post when visitors display their wares for the dwarves.

The interior of the castle holds a great number of dwarven miners, smiths, and warriors that call



this castle their home. Little light other than a few torches and candles shines inside Kaurak Kholzil, as the dwarves prefer to mine using infravision, and smelting and smithing provide their own light from the fires. The average dwarf goes about his business in near darkness.

A pungent, burned aroma fills the halls of Kaurak Kholzil, sometimes wafting out the great doors and over the outside ledge. Smoke and heat from smelting the adamantite ore filters out through a chimneylike vent, which exits the mountain 200 feet above the castle through an old spiders' lair. Although the majority of the smoke issues through the vent, some smoke does drift through the interior of the castle. The dwarves, having been exposed to the smell for nearly a century, hardly notice it at all.

Castle Operations

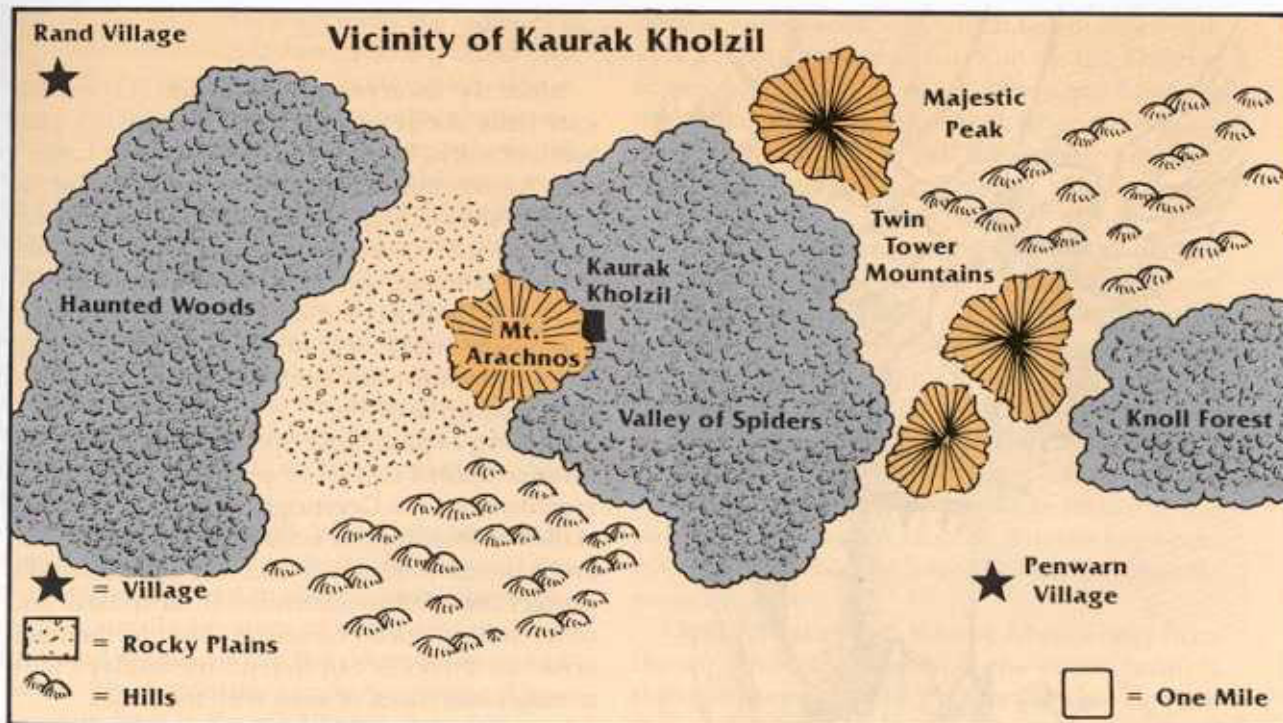
Since the dwarves in the interior of the castle care little about surface times or seasons, they work in shifts, keeping the castle busy 24 hours a day. As one shift works, another sleeps, and yet another shift indulges in recreation (which to non-dwarves seems the same as work). Daily activities include laboring in the mines below the castle, exploring tunnels, patrolling across the mountain and nearby valley on griffins, training and drilling to guard against invasion, harvesting food, and maintaining the castle.

Mining expeditions into the tunnels below Kaurak Kholzil consist of an average of a dozen members of Clan Gembright, who are extremely skilled at locating and extracting adamantite ore, and a dozen warriors of Clan Mastersmith, who protect their fellow clansmen from spiders and other subterranean creatures. Should the need arise, all dwarves can defend themselves with mining tools, rocks, or even with their fists.

A group of dwarven griffin riders, known collectively as *Mordinulud Taerinthord* (roughly: peak-flying bone-snappers, the dwarvish term for griffons) or *Mordinen* for simplicity, patrol the air space surrounding Kaurak Kholzil and the valley below. All of the 20 riders train rigorously with their griffins, raising them from hatchlings, and none of the *Mordinen*'s personal griffins will allow any other person, even another dwarf, to ride it. All of the griffins follow one word commands in dwarvish, and they will fight to the death to defend their rider. In addition to keeping watch on the mountain peaks, the *Mordinen* also closely supervise anyone approaching Kaurak Kholzil from the valley floor.

Military training stands as an important part of the daily life in this citadel, as the dwarves have many enemies waiting for the first sign of weakness, ready to attack to take what the dwarves have worked so hard for. All dwarves, male and female, train daily with their individual weapons of choice. The dwarven troops who patrol the

Kaurak Kholzil



outer walls practice daily with catapults and crossbows, ready for any type of assault on their home. This intensive training and near-paranoiac obsession with security has worked well for the dwarves, however; a few decades ago the Mordinen and the siege crews fought off the attacks of a young blue dragon looking for an easily-gotten lair. The ambitious dragon fell to the trained and grim dwarves, but Kaurak Kholzil lost many good dwarves that day.

The three hundred residents of Kaurak Kholzil live on a diet of fish, fungus, small farm animals kept on the outside ledge, and fruits and vegetables purchased or traded from visiting merchants. The goats and chickens which the dwarves raise out in the sunlight they use for their milk and eggs, and to feed to the griffins. In the event of a siege or other assault on the castle, the population can live for months on the trout and carp they

raise in small underground ponds, and on mushrooms raised on fungus farms inside the mountain.

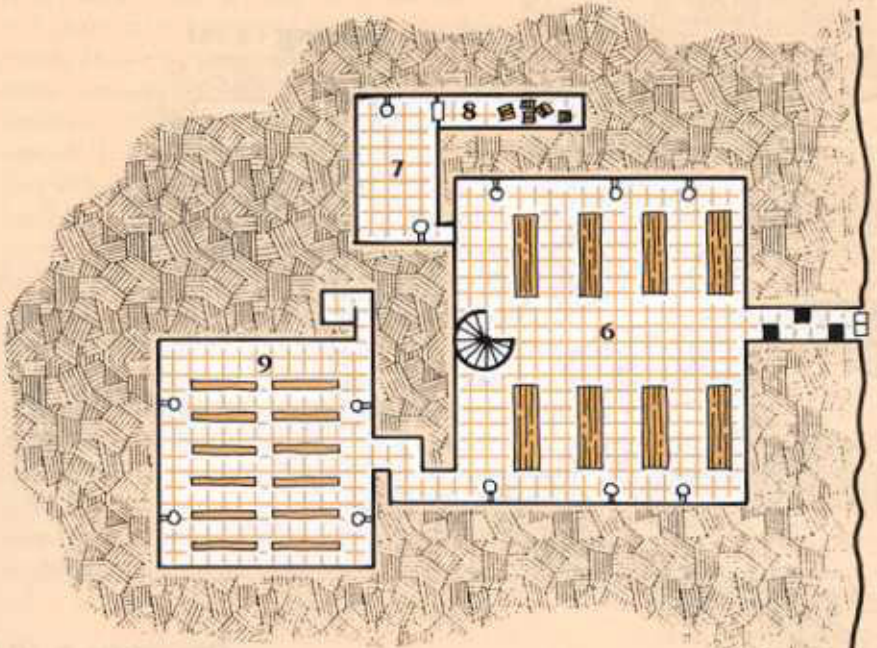
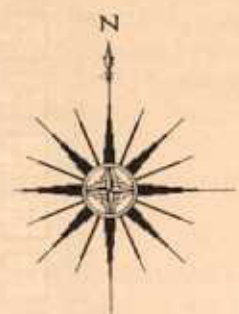
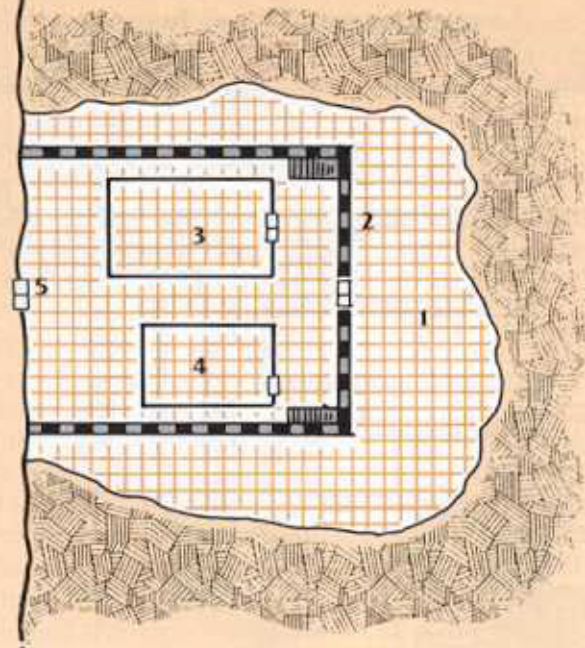
The dwarves of Kaurak Kholzil keep a rigorous schedule for their castle's general maintenance. The industrious Mastersmiths and Gembrights constantly rebuild and reinforce the exterior stone structure, always finding better ways to fortify the outer walls against an attack.

Trade and Other Activities

The Mordinen, in addition to securing the skies around the citadel, stand responsible for ensuring that regular shipments of food and supplies reach Kaurak Kholzil. Nearly every week the castle's rulers allow trusted merchants to land at the citadel to show their products. If the dwarves agree to buy anything they pay in adamantite ingots; being

Kaurak Kholzil

Layout, Exterior



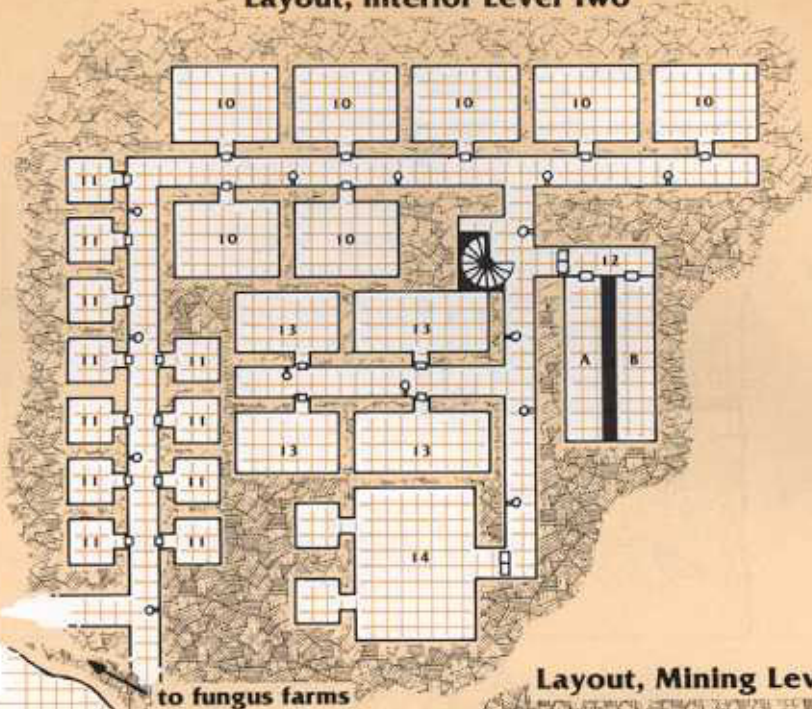
Layout, Interior Level One

One Square = 10 feet

Kaurak Kholzil

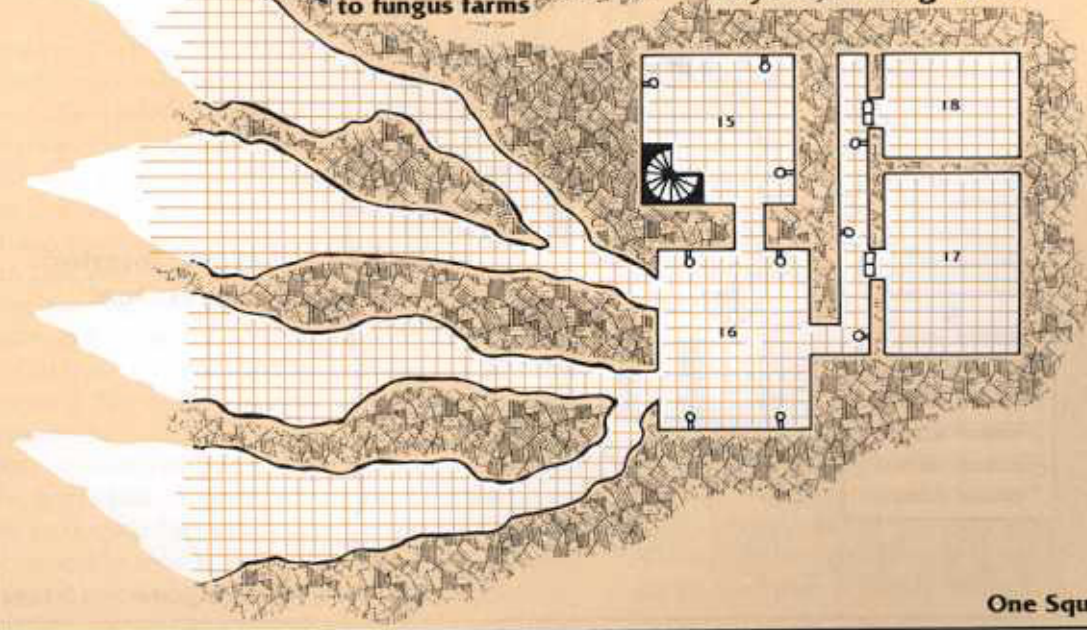
Kaurak Kholzil

Layout, Interior Level Two



to fungus farms

Layout, Mining Level



One Square = 10 feet

for the most part self-sufficient, the dwarves almost always get the better part of the deal. Sometimes the Mordinen load ingots in their packs and fly far afield to trade, keeping the location of such a rich treasure a careful secret. The dwarves sell and trade approximately 75% of their adamantite, using the rest to craft weapons and armor, and to store for future use.

The dwarves have also amassed a large amount of gold and platinum from their sale of adamantite, which they split evenly between the two clans. Since the dwarves buy very little from the outside world, but everyone wants what they sell, a hoard of coins worthy of a dragon rests in the walls of the dwarven kiva.

Very few nonfamily dwarves have ever seen the interior of Kaurak Kholzil, and even fewer non-dwarves have peered into the inside. Only a handful of merchants and trusted associates of prominent family members have ever been invited to the citadel. It is rare for a human to be allowed inside the halls of the castle, and the dwarves would never allow elves to enter their sanctum.

Dwarves, as a race, seldom get bored with their lives, as they consider the satisfaction of their work a rewarding experience. Nevertheless, the families of Kaurak Kholzil sometimes find the need to host a yearly celebration apart from those festivals celebrating the infrequent marriages or births. Such a celebration might include trusted friends, battle companions, or other dwarven families found throughout the area. Visitors find festivities at Kaurak Kholzil to be very elaborate affairs, as dwarven families spare no expense for the yearly gathering. Expensive meats, exotic wines, and decadent spices grace the stone tables stacked with luxuries the dwarves otherwise never enjoy. For once, the work in the mines and refineries stops, though the ever-dutiful dwarves take turns at guard duty, never leaving their castle undefended.

Layout

The majority of the citadel lies within the slopes of Mount Arachnos. The dwarves built all the rooms and hallways to dwarven size, though the exterior walls and battlements reach more massive dimensions. The ceilings average only 6 feet in height, with certain gathering areas comprising ceilings up to 8 feet high. Humans and other races, were they allowed inside, might feel extremely claustrophobic while visiting the dwarven fortress.

Exterior

1. Ledge: This area is a natural outcropping of rock which the dwarves use as a landing area for the *Mordinen*, and as a public entrance for the castle. The doors here lead to the interior of the battlements.

2. Battlements: The exterior walls of Kaurak Kholzil reach a height of 50 feet above the landing ledge. A series of stairs and ladders lead from the ledge up to the battlements, which vigilant dwarven warriors constantly patrol. Every 20 feet along the battlements the dwarves have placed catapults and ballistae, alternating one then another for the entire length of the wall. Near the catapults the dwarves store baskets of ammunition (a combination of rocks and greek fire), and near the ballistae they keep the large bolts those weapons need. In select places along the wall the dwarves keep light and heavy crossbow bolts that their sharpshooters need.

Dwarven Guardians (12): AL LG; AC 5 (chain mail); MV 6; F3; hp 19 ea.; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 by short sword, 1d4 by light crossbow bolt; SD resistance to poison; SZ S; ML 14

3. Stables: This area serves as the home of the griffins of Kaurak Kholzil. An aging trainer named Madryk Featherstone, along with the

Kaurak Kholzil

Mordinen, tends the 30 mounts here (20 for the Mordinen, and 10 extra), the only dwarf besides their riders the griffins tolerate in their aerie. This gruff, elder dwarf enjoys a reputation as the best griffin trainer in the land, and what he doesn't know about the creatures is not worth discovering. Despite prodding by the rulers of the castle, Madryk insists on living in a cramped back room of the stables, sleeping on a small straw mattress.

Madryk Featherstone: Str 15, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 13; AL LG; AC 10; MV 6; F5; hp 35; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+2 by *warhammer +1*; SZ S; ML 13

4. Guardhouse: This building serves as an outside station for the guards who patrol the battlements. Here the dwarves store additional weapons and armor, and a small supply of food and water. This building also serves as a greeting area for visitors to the castle.

5. Interior Portal: This massive set of double stone doors remains the only publicly-known entrance to the castle. Each of the doors weighs in excess of 1,500 pounds, and an intricate system of gears and levers swings them outward to open. Just inside the doors the dwarves keep a huge bar of adamantite which they may lower into slots on the back of the doors. Nothing short of the weight and fury of an ancient dragon can force the doors open when they are barred from the inside.

The exterior of the right door bears the symbol of the Gembright Clan, a perfect faceted diamond. The left door bears the symbol of the Mastersmith Clan, a hammer striking an anvil with sparks flying forth.

Interior Level One

6. Great Hall: Great stone benches surround equally massive tables in this great hall, all engraved with fantastic and detailed scenes of dwarven legends. This chamber serves as an

assembly hall for the leaders of the two dwarven clans, as a meeting area for privileged visitors, and as a massive dining hall. During meals here the dwarves all join in ritual song to Moradin, Greater God of the dwarven race. Echoes from their singing ring throughout the deepest of the mountain's tunnels.

7. Kitchen: In this area cooks prepare the food for the dwarves of Kaurak Kholzil. Tantryn and Mith Mastersmith—two of the finest dwarven chefs ever, according to connoisseurs of dwarven cuisine—prepare their masterpieces on a huge stove/oven. There is a saying in Kaurak Kholzil that the brothers could make a fine meal out of a bulette's feet . . . a saying that just might be true.

Smoke and heat from the massive stove funnels out through the same vents used in the smelting process. Aside from the refinery, the kitchen stands as the hottest place in the castle.

Tantryn & Mith Mastersmith: AL LG; AC 9; MV 6; F3; hp 19, 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (frying pan); SZ S; ML 13

8. Storeroom: This long, low chamber is filled with all manner of dwarven-style foodstuffs, including fish (raised in the castle) cured in quartz crystals, eels packed in hot salt, and pretzels made from the finest barley. Water is also stored here in several dozen caskets, as well as a secret stockpile of dwarven ale in the back corner.

9. Temple of Moradin: This temple serves as a center of faith for the dwarves of Kaurak Kholzil, tended night and day by the aged cleric Dennin Gembright. A dwarven cleric well into his fourth century of life, Dennin enjoys the respect of all the dwarves of the castle, who turn to him in times of need, both physical and spiritual. Dennin sometimes travels into the tunnels with the miners, as accidents and poisonous spiders often menace the workers.

Dennin's quarters consist of a small chamber in

the rear of the temple, a place he prefers, despite offers by the leaders of the castle to give him more elaborate quarters.

Interior Level Two

The ceilings of this level soar to 10 feet in height, and torch or lantern light sometimes leaks into the halls. As on Level One, the dwarves worked the stone of the walls and floors perfectly. Visitors are not welcome on the second level, which houses the dwarves' private quarters.

10. Common Family Living Chambers: Each family has a small suite of rooms consisting of bedrooms for the parents, and a smaller room for any children, even if the couple does not currently enjoy the thud of little dwarven feet.

11. Unmarried Male Living Chambers: Since living space in the castle remains at a premium, unmarried male dwarves often bunk together. Two to three males live together in one of these chambers.

12. Bathhouses: These washrooms are labeled for use by males (A) or females (B). Gravity feeds water here from a tank above the chamber. Dwarves bring their own soap and toiletry articles, as they consider using another's things a serious breach of etiquette.

13. Stately Chambers: The leaders of the Gembright and Mastersmith clans, with the exception of Rorrina and Daggan, live here.

14. Leaders of Kaurak Kholzil: Rorrina and Daggan Mastersmith occupy these impressive rooms. In addition to living, dining, and sleeping chambers, Rorrina and Daggan enjoy a separate bathroom and the formal office for the citadel. A small room has been added to the side of the chamber, and the couple has been trying diligently to have a second child for several years.

Mining Level

15. Mining Center. This area is the heart of the castle's mining operation. Here the dwarves store maps of the mines, the foremen plot the mining for the next day, and the miners leave for their various duties. The few young dwarves in the citadel learn the basics of mining from the foremen here as well.

The chief foreman, the dwarf in charge of the entire mining operation is Watcher Gembright, a gruff and grumpy old dwarf who members of both clans think can smell adamantite through solid rock.

Watcher Gembright: Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 12; AL CG; AC 3 (plate mail); MV 6; F5; hp 35; THAC0 16; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d4+4 by miner's pick; SA weap spec. in pick; SZ S; ML 16

16. Smelting Chamber: Ore brought from the mines below comes directly to this chamber. Here the dwarves separate the adamantite ore from other metals found in the mines. Those ores the dwarves of Kaurak Kholzil consider secondary, ores containing iron, copper, and silver, wait in piles for those times the main refinery is not busy with smelting adamantite.

Grysygonth Mastersmith, a haggard dwarf who lost his right eye to a molten piece of metal decades ago, rules the smelting chamber as the undisputed master refiner. Grysygonth and his two apprentices, Nor and Zuth, smelt between 1,000 and 1,500 pounds of raw ore daily, with each 500 pounds yielding 1d3 pounds of unrefined adamantite per day, or between one and six pounds of other metals such as copper and iron.

17. Refinery: Other than the mines themselves, the refinery hosts the largest group of laborers in Kaurak Kholzil. Two huge furnaces occupy the southern and western walls, taking up more than half the room between them. The rest of the room com-

Kaurak Kholzil



prises ore storage and work space for dwarven laborers. Like the smelting chamber, the refinery area uses a complex exhaust system composed of hundreds of small tubes to carry the heat and smoke out of the castle.

Ore brought to the refinery becomes workable adamantite in a multi-stage process. First, the raw ore is mixed with a special flux and heated to a temperature just below its melting point, and held at that temperature for two hours. The dwarves then raise the heat on the ore/flux mixture, melting it. They pour the mixture into great iron crucibles, which they move into the furnaces on long iron hooks. The flux draws the impurities from the ore at this point, forming a slag of impurities that floats atop the pure molten adamantite. After it spends several hours in the furnace, the dwarves retrieve the molten metal, drawing off the slag and pouring the adamantite into ingot molds. When the metal cools in several days, the dwarves can

then use it to forge weapons and armor, or to sell to merchant traders.

The entire refining process remains extremely hazardous, as the dwarves handle red hot refining pots from the ovens, filled with metal as hot as the interior of a volcano. Awkward and strenuous, the refining stage of the operation has resulted in serious burn injuries needing treatment by Dennin Gembright.

Refined, pure adamantite sells for 500 to 800 gold pieces per three-ounce ingot, and since the refinery can produce as much as nine pounds of metal a day, the dwarves of Kaurak Kholzil can become very rich indeed. Blacksmiths prize pure adamantite ore because of its high tensile strength and durability, and its ability to hold powerful magical enchantments.

Orablyn Mastersmith runs the refinery, one of the youngest dwarves in the history of Clan Mastersmith to become an accomplished ore refiner, working closely with Grysygonth Mastersmith in the smelter. Orablyn is constantly finding new ways to refine and process all types of ore, including some previously unknown elements recently uncovered. Though Grysygonth would never admit it, he remains very proud of his young cousin.

18. Blacksmith: Ulnorn Mastersmith, older brother of Orablyn Mastersmith, serves as the castle's expert blacksmith, the most accomplished metal worker in Kaurak Kholzil. Ulnorn is one of the few dwarves alive who knows what he calls "the soul of adamantite," the secrets of its shaping, and wizards can enchant his weapons to magical bonuses as great as +5.

Ulnorn currently searches for an apprentice to carry on the Mastersmith tradition. Although several promising candidates have arisen among the two clans, none have yet approached Ulnorn's nearly unattainable standards.

Major NPCs

Daggan Mastersmith

7th Level Dwarven Warrior

Alignment:	Lawful good		
AC:	-1		
Move:	6		
THAC0:	14		
Hit Points:	84		
Strength:	18 (22)	Intelligence:	13
Dexterity:	12	Wisdom:	16
Constitution:	18	Charisma:	15

Proficiencies: Battle axe (specialized), hand axe, short sword, crossbow, sling, mining (13), riding, airborne (14), blacksmithing (18), stonemasonry (16), weather sense (15)

Languages: Dwarven, Common

Armor: Adamantite plate mail +3

Weapons: Battle axe +3, crossbow of speed

Equipment: Ring of free action, amulet of life protection, Crown of Kaurak Kholzil, fur mantle, signet ring, five adamantite ingots.

Age: 119

Height: 4' 2"

Weight: 158 lbs.

Hair/Eyes: Gray/Black

Daggan's family raised him from birth to be the leader of Clan Mastersmith, and at the extremely young age of 19 summers he wed the only daughter of Clan Gembright in an effort to cement the union of the houses of Kaurak Kholzil. Daggan resisted the marriage at first, longing to be the best miner his clan had ever seen, but eventually he came to love his wife Rorrina on his own.

Despite Daggan's noble status, his heart contains a deep-seated feeling to be just an average dwarf with nothing to look forward to each day but the joys of work and toil. Daggan often enters the mines to work with the other dwarves, much to the dismay of his personal guard.

Rorrina Gembright-Mastersmith

5th Level Dwarven Priest of Moradin

Alignment:	Lawful good		
AC:	3		
Move:	6		
THAC0:	18		
Hit Points:	24		
Strength:	14	Intelligence:	14
Dexterity:	10	Wisdom:	18
Constitution:	16	Charisma:	16

Proficiencies: Warhammer, mace, footman's flail, engineering (11), healing (16), reading/writing (15), religion (18), singing (16), spellcraft (12)

Languages: Dwarven, Common, Gnomish

Armor: Adamantite chain mail +2

Weapons: Warhammer +2

Equipment: Talisman of pure good, Crown of Arachnos, signet ring.

Age: 118

Height: 3' 9"

Weight: 108 lbs

Hair/Eyes: Gray/Brown

Spells/Day: 5 5 2

Preferred Spells:

1st: *bless, cure light wounds* x2, *light, purify food & drink*;

2nd: *heat metal, know alignment, slow poison, spiritual hammer, withdraw*;

3rd: *hold animal, stone shape*

Rorrina Gembright is the only surviving child of the leaders of Clan Gembright, who died during a goblin raid in their now-distant former home when she was an infant. Though pampered by the remainder of the clan, her uncle Dennin raised Rorrina with a stern hand, determined that she become the next clan priest of Moradin as well as the clan's next leader.

Following the discovery of the rich adamantite deposits below Mount Arachnos, Rorrina agreed to marry the eldest son of Clan Mastersmith. She

Kaurak Kholzil

became Daggan's wife not only for the profit it would bring her family, but because she secretly loved him, falling head over heels at first sight. In time, Daggan's love for her grew as well, and now the two live together as the rulers of Kaurak Kholzil. Rorrina showed ability as an excellent administrator, and her husband happily leaves her in charge of all the financial and political aspects of the castle.

Rorrina and her husband are trying desperately to have a second child, and at the tender age of 118, she has decades of possibility ahead of her. Their first child, a son named Trodus, was killed fifty years ago when a giant spider infiltrated the castle from the caverns below and poisoned the infant. Rorrina and her husband are not bitter about the loss, as they know their son awaits them at the right hand of Moradin when they pass from this life.

Dennin Gembright

10th Level Priest of Moradin

Alignment: Lawful good
AC: 10
Move: 2
THAC0: 14
Hit Points: 32

Strength: 8 **Intelligence:** 16
Dexterity: 9 **Wisdom:** 19*
Constitution: 16 **Charisma:** 14

**special immunity to:* Cause fear, Charm person, Command, Friends, Hypnotism

Proficiencies: Warhammer, mace, morning star, staff, ancient history (15), engineering (15), healing (17), herbalism (15), religion (19), fishing (18), heraldry, dwarven (16)

Languages: Dwarvish, Common, Gnomish, Undercommon

Armor: None

Weapons: Warhammer +3 (he has trouble lifting it)

Equipment: Holy symbol of Moradin

Age: 445

Height: 4'

Weight: 119 lbs.

Hair/Eyes: None/Brown

Spells/Day: 7 6 4 5 2

Preferred Spells:

1st: *animal friendship, create water, cure light wounds* ×4, *magical stone*;

2nd: *aid, chant, find traps, slow poison* ×2;

3rd: *continual light, meld into stone, prayer*;

4th: *cure serious wounds* ×2, *neutralize poison* ×2, *reflecting pool*;

5th: *cure critical wounds, spike stones*

Dennin is the eldest son of the founder of Clan Gembright, and most likely the oldest living dwarf for thousands of miles. He devotes himself first to his god Moradin, and second to the ruling families of Kaurak Kholzil. Dennin is without a doubt the wisest dwarf in the citadel, and many of the younger dwarves look to the old cleric for hidden wisdom and divine truth. Some say he holds the special favor of Moradin, Soul Forger, to have lived so long to see the success of Kaurak Kholzil.

Adventure Hooks

- A rich merchant has asked the PCs to help to establish trade with the dwarves of Kaurak Kholzil. However, the dwarves have ignored the merchant's attempts to contact them through agents in other towns. The merchant will offer the PCs a weapon laced with adamantite (which is capable of holding a +3 enchantment) or 2,000 gold pieces each if they can secure a trading contract.

The merchant neglects to tell the PCs that he cheated the dwarves of Kaurak Kholzil on a previous deal, and Rorrina wants nothing to do with him.

In spite of this, all is not lost. Rorrina is willing to consider the treaty once again if the PCs can rid the dwarves of an umber hulk that has found its way into the dwarven mines. This umber hulk is powerful, having maximum hit points and being exceptionally intelligent.

The ancestral home of the Tempest family of storm giants, Cloud Keep serves as a mobile trading platform able to travel great distances unrestricted by geographical barriers. From the ground Cloud Keep appears as a huge, dark storm cloud, with lightning flashing and thunder rumbling as it passes high overhead. When the castle nears a city wishing to trade the cloud slows and the lightning and thunder diminish and then cease altogether, and the clouds surrounding the castle become white and bilious. As the castle lowers to the earth to conduct trade, the keep's 90-foot-high walls and great central tower reveal themselves to viewers confined to terrestrial travel. When at last Cloud Keep settles onto the ground, most of the cloud vapor evaporates, revealing the majesty of a cloud-borne citadel come to earth.

Cloud Keep itself rests on a slab of granite nearly a quarter mile in diameter and 80 feet thick in the middle, which visitors never see for all the vapor and fog surrounding the base. The weight of the castle usually forms a crater in the earth where the castle lands, which normally brings the thick base nearly equal to the surrounding landscape. A single, massive, wrought iron gate, a full 40 feet wide, 50 feet high, and 10 feet thick, guards the entrance to the castle. The gate weighs over 5,000 pounds, and despite the large gaps formed by the beautiful iron work, only the tallest frost giant could hope to climb inside. It takes at least a storm giant's strength to muscle the gate open.

Inside the gates the buildings soar to storm giant proportions, with steps taller than a halfling and doorways wider than most city gates. The giants use the open interior bailey as a trading bazaar, where the giants' agents and visiting merchants conduct business. Another building, cramped by storm giant standards but echoing and vast to PCs, serves as a shelter and secondary place to conduct business should the weather become unsuitable for beings less durable than storm giants.

In the early days of the keep's creation the storm giants lived and traded in the keep without

any other humanoids or giants. Soon after beginning the trade business, the Tempest family realized their huge size and larger reputation terrified the humans and demihumans with whom they wished to trade. After careful consideration, the giants hired the Castellius merchant family to act as representatives to the regular-sized citizens who wished to trade with them. This arrangement proved so profitable for both parties the giants soon invited members of the Castellius clan to come and live in Cloud Keep. The Castellius family eagerly agreed, smelling profit the way a bear smells honey, and they have conducted trade with the giants for the past 20 years.

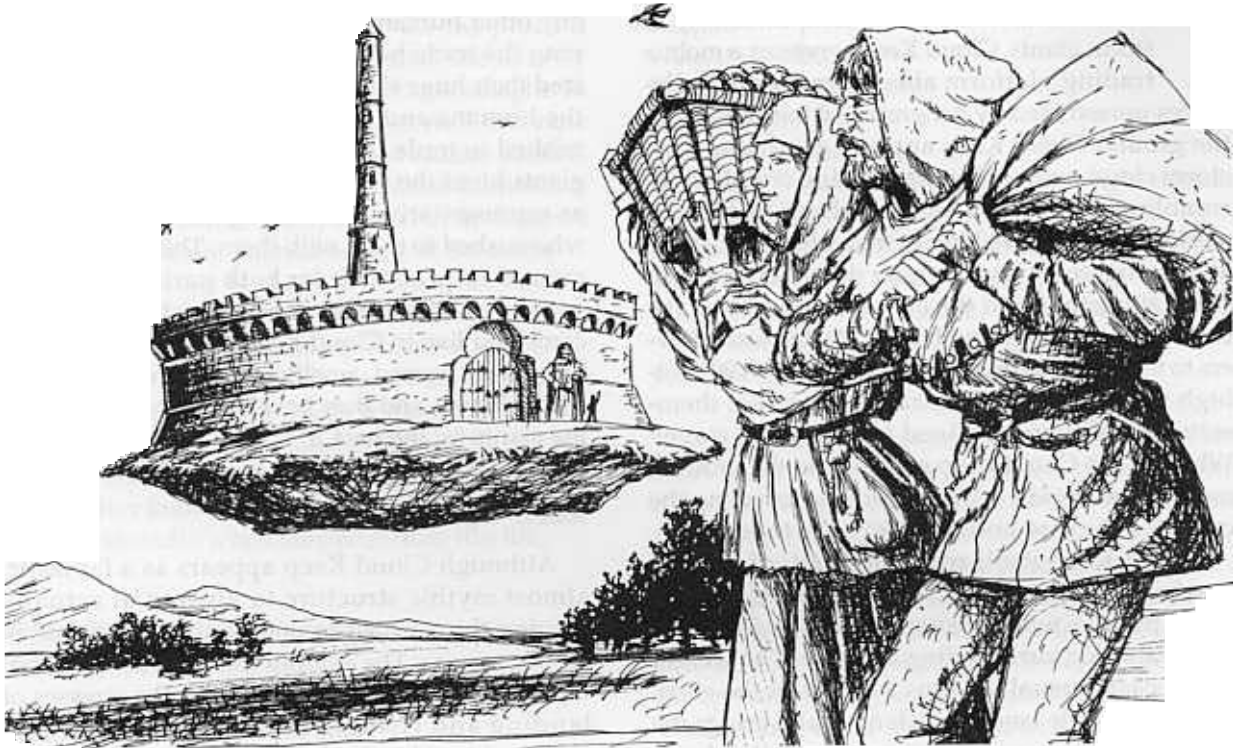
Keep Operations

Although Cloud Keep appears as a fantastic, almost mythic structure to visitors, it actually requires the constant reconditioning and repair all castles require. The exterior plateau needs special repair only once a year (to relieve the stresses of landing and rising), which an army of stone masons hired by the Castellius family performs perfectly. The granite and marble walls of the keep require the work of expert craftsmen as well, also once a year, or following enemy attacks (an extremely infrequent occurrence).

The interior of the keep takes much more punishment, and thus requires a more regular maintenance plan. Because storm giants weigh so much, the Tempest family must repair or replace their furniture frequently, and even the solid granite and marble floors wear swiftly under the feet of giants. Only once in Cloud Keep's 200 year history have the giants replaced the plateau upon which they built the keep, a task none of them wants to repeat soon.

The giants move the keep through the sky using a device similar to a spelljamming helm. The device, resembling a gargantuan crystal ball, channels a storm giant's innate lightning powers into magical energy which levitates the keep. The same device also creates the clouds which surround the

Cloud Keep



keep when it rises higher than 100 feet from the ground.

The storm giants must recharge the device every 24 hours in order to continue levitating the entire weight of the keep. To actually move Cloud Keep across the heavens a storm giant, usually Matriarch Tabriia, must touch the crystal ball and concentrate on the castle's movement. No one, neither a member of the Tempest family nor of the Castellius family, touches the crystal ball without the permission of Matriarch Tabriia.

Trade and Other Activities

The merchants of Cloud Keep do not limit themselves to one particular trade, rather the Tempest and Castellius alliance deals in whatever merchandise an area needs, depending on the season. The DM can assume that Cloud Keep carries whatever fruits and vegetables apply to the current sea-

son, and the Castellius family will have available goods from anywhere in the game world. If the PCs cannot find a particular item in stock, chances are that Berlon Castellius knows where he can get it and plans to be in that place soon. In addition, the giants use their cloud-top vantage point to hunt for rare beasts like yetis and remorhaz, selling pelts and other bits at a tidy profit.

The giants of Cloud Keep also offer caravan service for merchants, ferrying them across mountain ranges, forests, bodies of water, and other vast natural barriers. Caravans paying the steep fees have brought goods and services (the giants accept passengers as well) to parts of the world that would normally take them weeks, even months, to reach overland.

The shrewd trading skills of the Castellius family have become a legend wherever Cloud Keep travels. Berlon Castellius, head of the portion of the Castellius family staying in Cloud Keep, is a

clever and ingenious man, and, as the saying goes, he could "sell torches to salamanders and the flint to light them with." Berlon thought of the idea to use Cloud Keep as a ferry across natural barriers, and that expansion of Cloud Keep's services has brought wealth and a certain amount of acceptance to the storm giants wherever they travel.

In appreciation for the business traders bring, Matriarch Tabriia expresses her gratitude by treating her merchant associates to elaborate evenings of wine, rare food, and late evenings of singing and dancing. As great an honor as such a fine occasion bestows, many merchants feel understandably reluctant to attend, afraid of being caught underfoot during a waltz or roundelay.

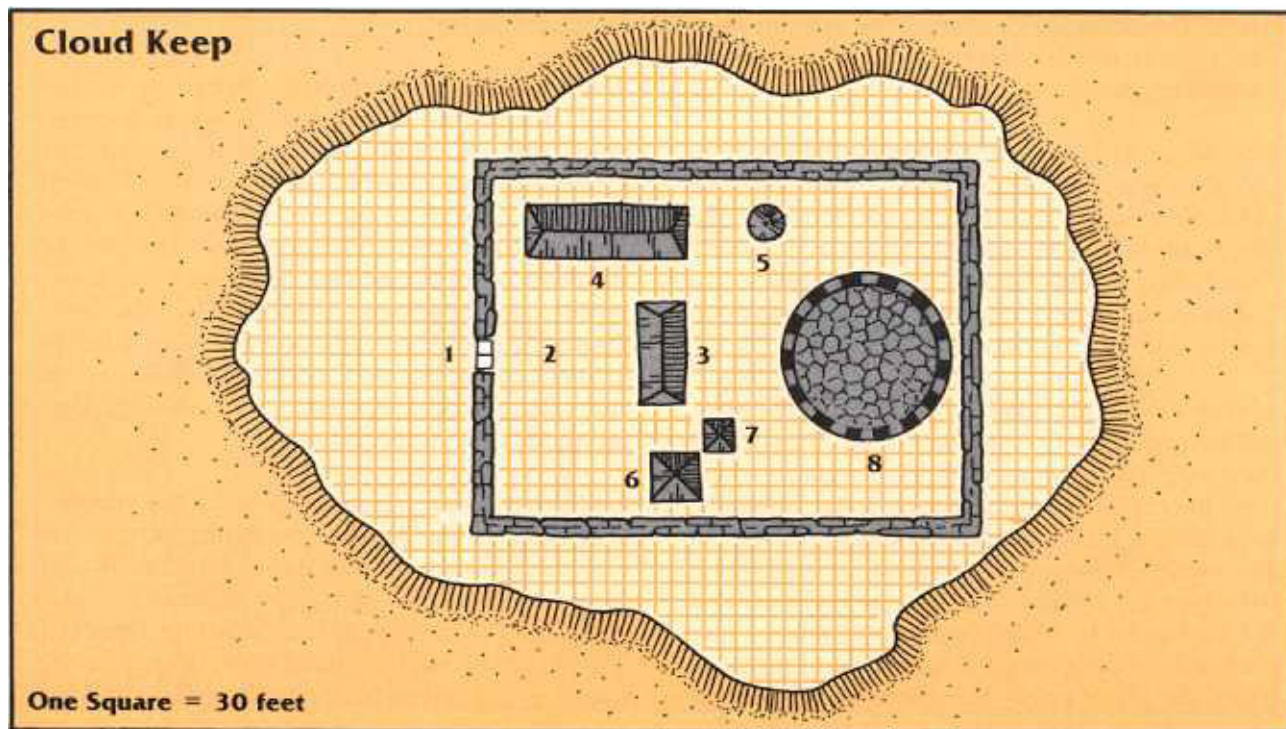
The Castellius clan observes a week-long winter festival common in their homeland, though it remains a much more sedate and austere celebration than those held by the storm giants. During this festival the Castellius family arranges to meet

with other trading families to secure future business dealings. Only during this festival do the giants allow humans other than the Castellius family to stay for extended periods of time within the keep's walls. The "boys" of the Tempest family always carefully watch such visitors.

Another regular visitor to many of Cloud Keep's festivals is a silver dragon named Vardegax. The very old dragon seems to appear whenever the keep celebrates anything, assuming human form to converse all night long. Vardegax often brings important news and rumors from the outside world, which, both Tabriia and Berlon agree, makes him an asset, even if he does eat more than any three giants.

Layout

1. Exterior Wall: Cloud Keep, though normally not subject to sieges against the occupants, boasts



Cloud Keep

a massive exterior wall to help repel attacks and to ensure privacy. Huge slabs of limestone blocks mined from the top of a remote mountain form walls with large sections of interlocking timber reinforcing the entire length. These walls have no battlements, and reach a height of 90 feet above the plateau.

2. Bazaar Bailey: Mistress Tabriia seldom allows outsiders past this interior bailey, so as far as many merchants are concerned, the bailey is Cloud Keep. Murals on the interior walls depict the storm giant creation story, with imposing life-size representations of the storm giant gods (see DMGR4, *Monster Mythology* for details on the giants' pantheon). Berlon Castellius personally designed the look of the bailey to impress and to awe visiting merchants, placing them at a distinct disadvantage during negotiations.

3. Bazaar Meeting Hall: This building serves as a meeting hall for the Castellius family to conduct special conclaves with traders. It becomes an alternate bazaar area should the weather outside be particularly harsh.

4. Storage: This building holds all the goods in Cloud Keep's extensive inventory. Chiara Castellius catalogues these items, making corrections daily. Her brilliant system of organization makes it extremely easy to find any item quickly and efficiently. Chiara shows all her journals recording items stored here to Matriarch Tabriia on a weekly basis.

5. Water Pool: The giants constructed this huge walled pool to store water for Cloud Keep. Using their magic to condense clouds, the giants transform the vapor directly into fresh water, filling the large cistern. It is forbidden to bathe or to swim in this water, although the residents do take water from here for bathing. The granite walls around the pool stand 10 feet high, magically shaped into graceful, flowing forms reminiscent of a glacial basin. The giants empty the cistern weekly, simply

forming a cloud from what water remains, drying the inside, and condensing another cloud to fill the basin again.

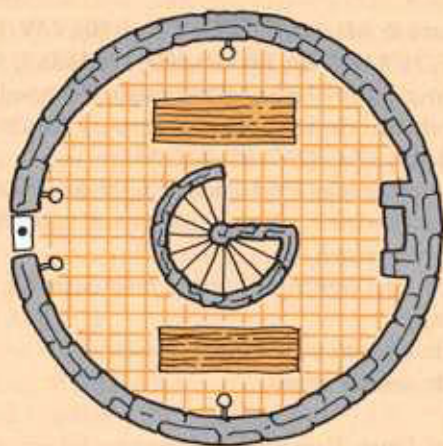
6. Castellius' Home. The Castellius clan lives in this building. Expensive marble adorns the living quarters, with fluted columns across the front and vast, polished floors throughout. Each Castellius family (Berlon's and his two sons') enjoys private sleeping rooms, but they keep the rest of the building communal, preferring the company of their relatives. The kitchen and dining room connect to one another, forming the largest room in the building. A smaller room located off of the dining room serves as a meeting area for the master of the Castellius clan. Berlon Castellius often uses this room to discuss matters and plan family strategy for upcoming trades.

Currently, six members of the Castellius clan live within Cloud Keep: Berlon, his wife Chiara, their grown sons Bermul and Berake, their wives Aerynn and Naralah, and Bermul's twin sons Jalain and Galain.

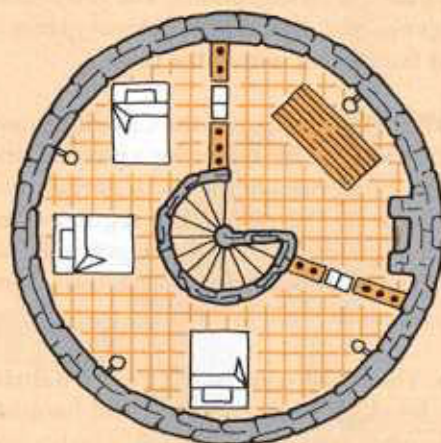
7. Aviary. The Castellius clan is extremely fond of birds of any type, but they particularly love falcons. This aviary houses the 50 or so birds the Castellius clan currently keeps. Berlon himself takes time out of his busy schedule daily to care for the falcons, though his sons train and care for the other birds. Berlon also raises the birds to use in the event of an aerial attack against the keep. Though much too small to pose a serious threat to griffins or dragons, the Castellius birds have been trained to attack a creature's riders in a huge, fluttering, squawking swarm.

8. Giants' Tower. The storm giants of the Tempest family make this towering marble and granite structure their home. Intricate scrollwork and incredibly detailed engravings of the castle's travels cover the surface of the building. Doors of finely carved marble guard the entrance to the tower; while not as heavy as the front gate, the

Cloud Keep Giant's Tower

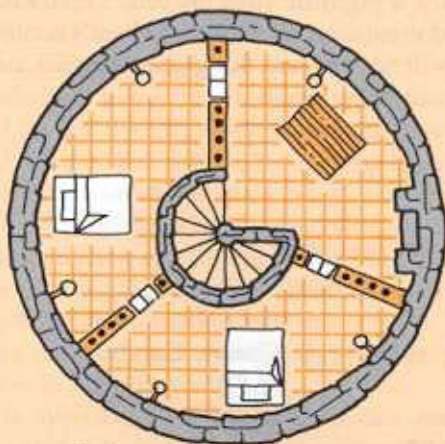


Level One

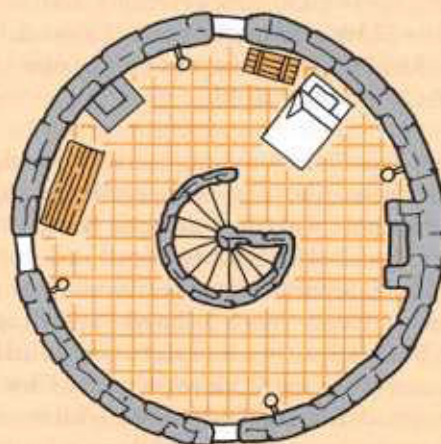


Level Two

Level Three



Level Four



One Square = 10 feet

Cloud Keep

doors do require a strength of 20 or greater to open. Over 300 feet in diameter, the tower soars to a height of over 170 feet. The interior of the tower boasts vaulted ceilings 40 feet high, with floors larger than many parade grounds. The tower contains four levels, and a total of six storm giants of the Tempest family live within the tower.

Level One: Both the giants and the Castellius family use the first level of the tower for a meeting and relaxing area. Immense chairs and a gargantuan table stand here for the giants, but regular-sized furniture also remains for the Castellius family. No nongiants, even members of the Castellius Clan, have seen beyond the first level of the tower.

Level Two: The three sons of Matriarch Tabriia live on this level, all of them proud and haughty storm giants who have little to do with the trading aspects of the keep—aside from killing the animals whose furs they barter and carving the reliefs on their tower. These male storm giants, Gartus, Kular, and Straldav, have successfully defended Cloud Keep several times, once against an invading white dragon and another time from a brace of poisonous wyverns.

Sons of Tabriia: AL CG; AC -6 (0); MV 15, Sw 15; HD 19+; hp 140, 130, 128; THAC0 3; #AT 1; Dmg 3d10+12 by giant two-handed sword; SA spell-like abilities; SD impervious to electricity; SZ G (26' tall); ML 18.

Level Three: Tabriia's two daughters, Bura and Mista, share these quarters. More civilized and cultured than their warrior brothers, Bura and Mista keep exquisitely decorated and well-kept chambers. Mista decorated her section with imprints of avian creatures such as hawks and dragons, while Bura's living area pictures clouds, mountains, and other scenic views of places Cloud Keep has traveled. Both of Tabriia's daughters are clerics of Stronmaus, mighty god of the sun, skies, and weather. Under their mother's guiding hand

Bura and Mista help control the weather surrounding Cloud Keep, though the giants and the humans of the castle do not necessarily prefer the same weather.

Bura & Mista: AL CG; AC -6 (0); MV 15, Sw 15; HD 19+, P9; hp 103,100; THAC0 3; #AT 1; Dmg 2d10+12 by giant club; SA spell-like abilities, cleric spells; SD impervious to electricity; SZ G (26' tall); ML 18.

1st: *bless, cure light wounds, light, sanctuary*

2nd: *obscurement, resist cold, speak with animals, wyvern watch*

3rd: *call lightning, create food & water, stone shape*

4th: *divination, neutralize poison*

5th: *control winds*

Level Four: This level belongs to Tabriia and also doubles as a temple to Stronmaus. The mistress of the castle keeps the crystal ball which levitates Cloud Keep in her room, though she allows the other giants in so that they might use their lightning to power the device. Tabriia keeps records of each place where Cloud Keep stops (and of what they trade or acquire) on enormous pieces of parchment that cover her huge desk. Chests here contain the accumulated wealth of the Tempest family, a gigantic sum indeed. Tabriia has a detailed mental account of each chest's contents, and she will notice if anything goes missing, no matter how small the amount

Major NPCs

Tabriia Tempest

15th Level Storm Giant Priestess

Alignment:	Chaotic Good
AC:	-6 (0)
Move:	15, Sw 15
THAC0:	3
Hit Points:	149

Strength:	24	Intelligence:	15
Dexterity:	15	Wisdom:	18
Constitution:	20	Charisma:	14

Proficiencies: Club, ancient history (15), navigation (13), reading/writing common (16), religion (18), weather sense (17), spellcraft (13)

Languages: Storm Giant, Common

Armor: None

Weapon: Giant club (2d10+12 damage)

Equipment: Holy symbol of Stronmaus, *crystal ball of levitation*

Age: 220

Height: 27' tall

Weight: 2,800 lbs.

Hair/Eyes: Violet/Silver

Spells/Day: 8 8 7 7 4 2 1

Preferred Spells:

1st: *bless, create water, cure light wounds* ×3, *detect poison, light, remove fear*

2nd: *augury, charm person, enthrall, hold person* ×2, *resist cold* ×2, *speak with animals*

3rd: *dispel magic* ×2, *hold animal, protection from fire, remove curse, starshine, stone shape*

4th: *detect lie* ×2, *divination, neutralize poison, reflecting pool, tongues* ×2

5th: *air walk* ×2, *control winds, true seeing*

6th: *blade barrier, weather summoning*

7th: *control weather*

Tabriia Tempest is one of the oldest and most powerful storm giants in recorded history, though she will be the first to deny it. Tabriia has outlived all three of her husbands, and she currently searches for a fourth one (as a companion rather than as a potential father). The matriarch of Cloud Keep decided long ago to break with the tradition of many storm giants, raising her children in a way similar to humans. She feels this sense of family makes a storm giant stronger than living alone in the clouds would.

Tabriia inherited Cloud Keep from her mother, who was also a powerful priestess of Stronmaus. It was Tabriia's decision, however, to turn the float-



ing citadel into a mechanism for trade—one that has been highly profitable for her family. Tabriia's children had trouble accepting her decision to bring a group of humans to Cloud Keep to help with trade matters, but eventually they discovered that not all humans are inherently evil natured, greedy, and self-destructive. Tabriia trusts Berlon Castellius to use his best judgement with the operation, but the matriarch still keeps a close eye on him and the rest of his family.

All things considered, Tabriia actually likes dealing with humans, though most humans shy from dealing with someone four times their height. Tabriia is no one's fool, however agreeable she finds small folk, and she is an excellent judge of character as well; she will not hesitate to use her clerical spells to determine someone's true intentions.

Berlon Castellius

10th Level Human Male Warrior

Alignment: Chaotic Good

AC: 3

Move: 12

THAC0: 11

Hit Points: 72

Strength: 15 **Intelligence:** 17

Dexterity: 17 **Wisdom:** 17

Constitution: 14 **Charisma:** 16

Proficiencies: Crossbow (specialized), long sword, spear, bastard sword, dagger, animal training, avian (16), direction sense (17), weather sense (15), mountaineering (NA), navigation (14), survival, mountains (16), appraising (16)

Languages: Common, Dwarven, Storm Giant

Armor: Chain mail

Weapons: *Flametongue +1, dagger +2*

Equipment: Trading ledger, fine fur cloak, fur hat, moustache wax.

Age: 54

Height: 6' 2"

Weight: 195 lbs.

Hair/Eyes: Red/Green

Berlon is a stern and powerful man, full of himself and sure of his skill as a merchant. Few men can stand before Berlon without feeling somewhat awed by the man's presence, and fewer yet can match his skills as a businessman.

Before settling down with the storm giants, Berlon made a name for himself by seeking out dangerous trade routes for the Castellius family. As a young man, Berlon negotiated a contract between a dragon and the Castellius family that allowed Berlon's clan to gain access to new trade routes, providing his family with a great edge over other traders.

For five years, the now-patron of the Castellius family sailed the southern seas, operating as both pirate and merchant. Tales of his exploits ran the

coastal fest-hall circuit, and many a pirate or sailor claimed to have sailed with Scarlet Berlon, the honorable pirate. By the time he was ready to return to his family, Berlon had made himself a legend.

Upon his return home, Berlon served as his father's closest confidante, eventually assuming control of most of the Castellius family fortune. After 10 years the elder Castellius retired fully, making way for his son. Berlon built his family's fortune for the next several years, spreading the Castellius name far and wide. It was no surprise, then, that when the storm giants began looking for merchants to aid them in their endeavor, they approached the Castellius Clan.

Despite the counsel of his advisors, Berlon decided that he would take the giant's commission himself. Bringing his immediate family with him, the Castellius Clan's elder departed, and has served the giants faithfully for the past 20 years.

Adventure Hooks

- The Tempest Family is looking for new trade routes, and they invite the PCs to the castle to confer with the Castellius family. Once there, Berlon offers the PCs a princely sum of money if they can find new trade stops for Cloud Keep. Accomplishing this task will prove much more difficult than it sounds, as many city magistrates do not like the idea of allowing a storm giant's castle to land nearby. Berlon Castellius's formidable reputation may also prove a hindrance in the process.
- Matriarch Tabriia has been known to exact harsh retribution from individuals who do not honor their trading contracts with Cloud Keep. Tabriia hires the PCs to track down a wizard named Eleos who owes the giants a considerable sum of gold (his agents picked up a shipment but never returned with the payment). Rumors state this elven mage hides in a stronghold in a nearby mountain range, but so far the giants have been unable to locate the stronghold or the wizard.

Sentinels' Stand keeps guard on the civilized side of a large river, preventing the savage hordes of gnolls just across the river from invading nearby cities and villages. The river (the DM can give the river any name to fit into the campaign world) is deep for dozens of miles in each direction, except at the site of Sentinels' Stand, where the river reaches a maximum depth of only 5 feet. Before the castle's construction, masses of gnolls forded the river here during the paucity of winter, attacking the nearly defenseless villages and farming communities beyond.

Soon after Sentinel's Stand was completed, however, the gnolls began to build crude rafts, using felled saplings to pole across the ford, clinging to the river banks until they found a suitable place to land far downstream. Some brave gnolls even learned to swim, but they soon discovered that carrying plunder across a swift river on their backs made for a quick trip to the bottom. Because of the gnolls' cleverness, patrols of experienced troops monitor the river banks along both sides of the river. Recently, the commander of Sentinels' Stand has sent patrols of skilled troops and mercenaries across the river into gnoll territory to hunt down some of the smaller tribes of gnolls, hoping to end the incursions by decisive action beforehand.

Sentinels' Stand presents immense fortifications, with walls reaching 50 feet into the air, stretching for hundreds of yards in either direction from the ford, and encircling the main portion of the keep to provide secure housing for the great number of troops which live here. Granite and limestone, brought here on great barges from upriver, form the walls, which the soldiers in the citadel white-wash every three to four months. Since the nocturnal gnolls prefer to attack in the evening hours, Sentinels' Stand's wizard and clerics cast *light* and *continual light* spells on the white stone to create a blinding brilliance, illuminating the riverbank and yards of the surrounding countryside.

Massive, iron-shod doors bar entrance at both ends of the castle, but more guards patrol the

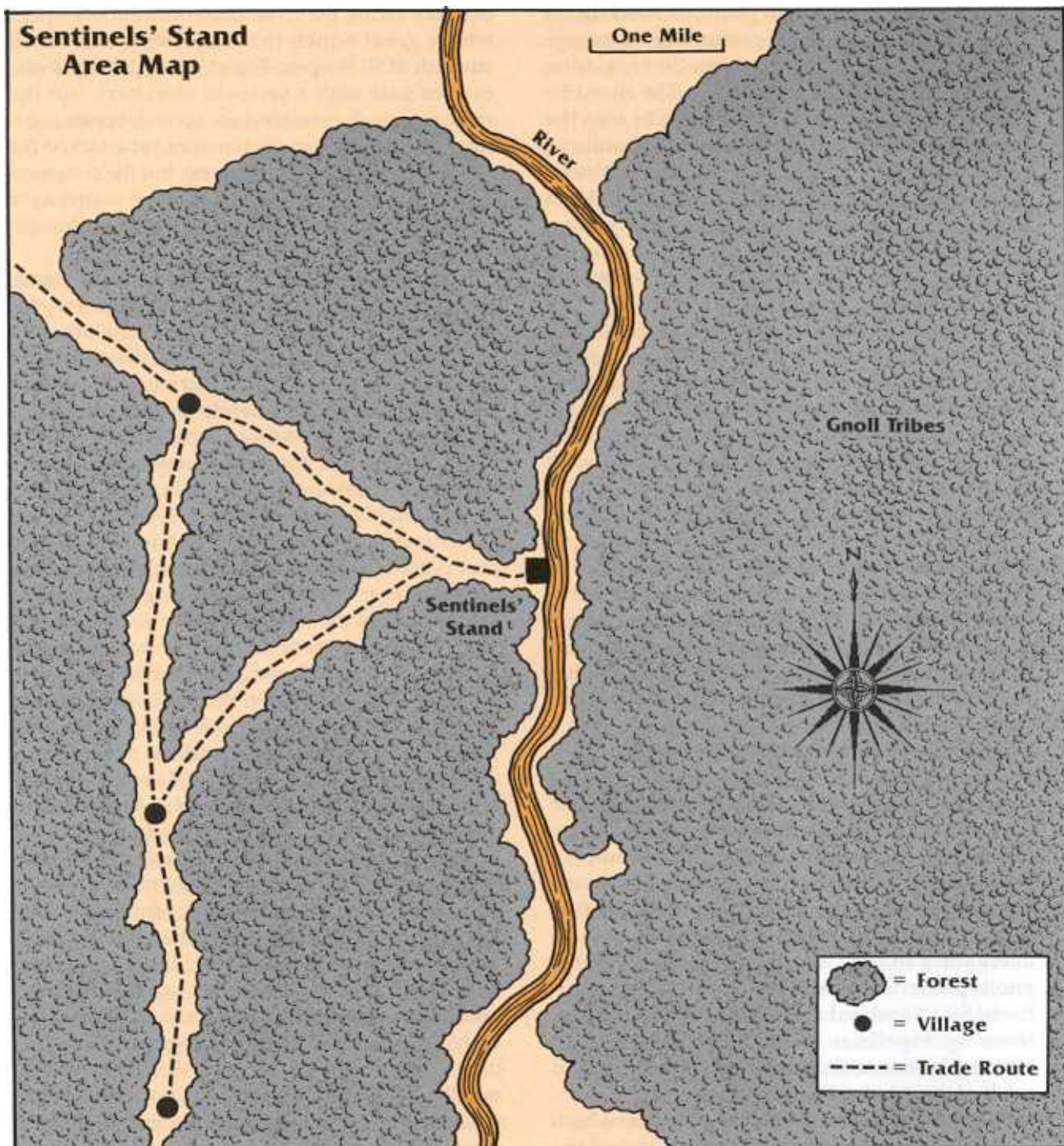
entrance facing the river. Each of the doors opens with a great winch that requires a combined strength of 50 to open. The soldiers can secure the eastern gate with a series of steel bars, but the western gate does not feature such elaborate security measures. The gnolls have not yet attacked the western gate (opposite the river), but the commanders of the castle maintain a diligent watch for a rear attack; no one in Sentinels' Stand underestimates the gnolls.

Crenellations top the walls of Sentinels' Stand, and guards stalk the walls 24 hours a day, wary for any sign of attack. The watchtowers contain catapults and ballistae pointed across the river, and skilled archers take watch duty on the eastern walls. It takes approximately five minutes for a guard to walk from one corner of the wall to another on normal patrol, much faster if the guard hurries, much slower if he examines the wall and the ground immediately below.

Rangers and woodsmen march regular patrols on the grounds just outside Sentinels' Stand, travelling as far as 300 yards away along the river, but seldom across the river (for exceptions read further). These keepers of the peace search constantly for signs of the unrelenting gnoll excursions across the river. The guards atop the walls and those on the ground carry hickory stick whistles which they blow when seeing intruders, producing a piercing screech. Each guard post's whistle has its own particular tone, immediately identifiable to all within earshot (450 yards on a calm day).

Patrols of 10 to 20 cavalry ride out of Sentinels' Stand each day to scour both sides of the river for up to 20 miles in either direction. Mounted troops not on duty drill within the castle walls on most days, moving out to the surrounding plains a few times each month. Whenever scouts discover gnolls gathering for an attack these drills immediately become active military engagements. Soldiers dread the winter months, or "hungry months," as the gnolls call them, because the tentative strikes the gnolls executed in the summer become desperate fights for survival, with gnolls

Sentinel's Stand



who have nothing to lose braving the chill of the river to try to plunder the riches on the other side.

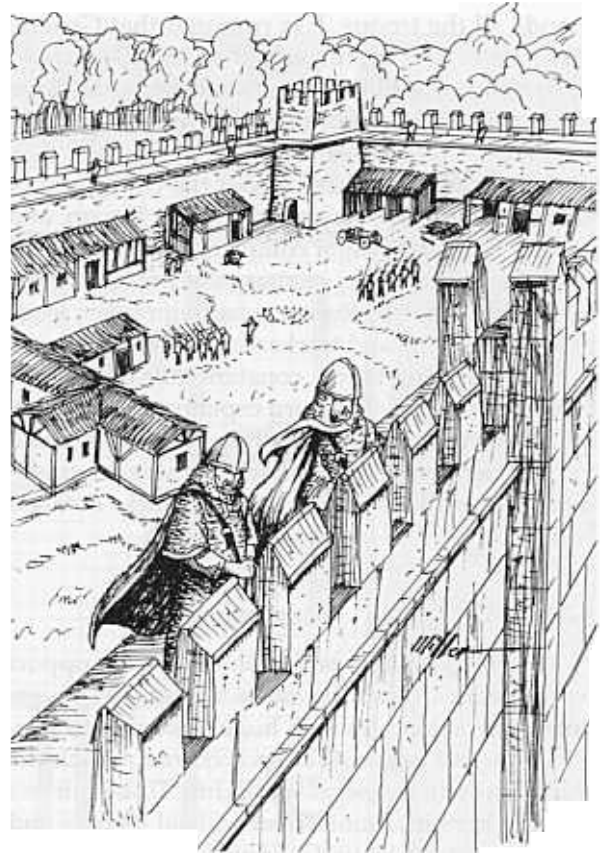
Lord Stephen Dhentalis rules Sentinels' Stand. An ex-adventurer who used the wealth he had accumulated over the years to finance Sentinels' Stand, Lord Dhentalis sees protecting the borderlands as his life's duty. In the years following the keep's construction, Lord Dhentalis has asked surrounding communities for taxes and military levies to help support his efforts. These regions, unwilling to see the return of the horrible invasions, readily agreed to the Lord's proposal. With regular taxes the Lord of Sentinels' Stand hosts a sizable military force, which since its creation has prevented nearly all encroachment of gnolls and other creatures across the river.

Every soldier, cavalryman, and scout in Sentinels' Stand helps to maintain the castle, paying special attention to the foundations and exterior walls. The river threatens to erode the keep's foundations, so Lord Dhentalis hires dwarves and other engineers monthly to inspect the Stand's repair efforts and to reinforce the original work. Every occupant goes on "paint detail" at least once a month, including Lord Dhentalis, helping to whitewash the extensive walls of the Stand. Besides aiding the illumination of the various nightly *light* spells, the white walls serve as a kind beacon of right for the defenders, representing the higher ideals which their dirty work enables.

Sentinels' Stand Activities

Caravans journey to Sentinels' Stand three to four times a week bringing supplies, reinforcements, and replacement troops. The number of visits increases to nearly ten a week during the winter season or during times of increased activity across the river.

Every four months Lord Dhentalis holds a two-day banquet for his troops. At this grand feast the Stand honors those soldiers who have served well in the previous months, and particularly noteworthy citizens and communities of the surrounding



Military Forces

The grizzled old veteran General Hargrim Murgol, a warrior who has seen more conflicts than all the soldiers of Sentinels' Stand combined, com-

Sentinel's Stand

mands all the troops. It is rumored that General Hargrim carries more years than his 60-year-old appearance would lead one to believe; some claim the warrior to have been part of an excursion into the gnoll lands 100 years ago.

Three captains stand under the command of General Hargrim—Captains Myagar, Runan, and Borisir. Captain Myagar commands all the ground troops and the forces in charge of protecting the keep itself. Captain Runan, a half-elf ranger, leads groups of scouts and trackers across the river and the surrounding lands, constantly searching for possible invaders. The third captain, a human paladin named Borisir, commands the mounted cavalry of Sentinel's Stand. Each of these commanders lives with his troops in the barracks detailed below.

Layout

The 50-foot walls of Sentinel's Stand support battlements around the entire length. No towers guard the corners, though huge lanterns and mirrors hang off brackets at each corner, which the soldiers rotate to use as spotlights. These mirrors provide light in a cone 5 feet wide at its base and 100 feet wide at its widest point, some 100 yards distant. Beyond 100 yards the lights hide more with shadows than they illuminate. The lantern over the eastern gate throws light well over the river, shining on the bank beyond.

The main body of the castle sits above the water line, resting on a thick stone embankment 5 feet above the water's 50-year flood stage. Buildings within the walls of the keep are typically single-story wood structures unless otherwise stated. The doors on these buildings do not carry locks, but all can be barred from within if hostile forces get inside the castle.

1. The Eastern and Western Gates: Massive pairs of doors, the identical eastern and western gates each open outward, swinging easily on their huge hinges. The western doors facing the forest behind

the keep open an hour after sunrise and close an hour before sunset. When the western gate stands open, six soldiers patrol the entrance, each soldier carrying a hickory stick whistle.

Sentinel's Stand's eastern gate faces the river's ford, and Lord Dhentalis allows it open only when patrols leave for the wild lands or return. This gate can be barred from the inside and is done so after dark, opened only in the most dire of circumstances—and only with the approval of a senior officer. Whenever either gate is opened after dark an alarm is sent throughout the keep, arousing guards to deal with any potential problem.

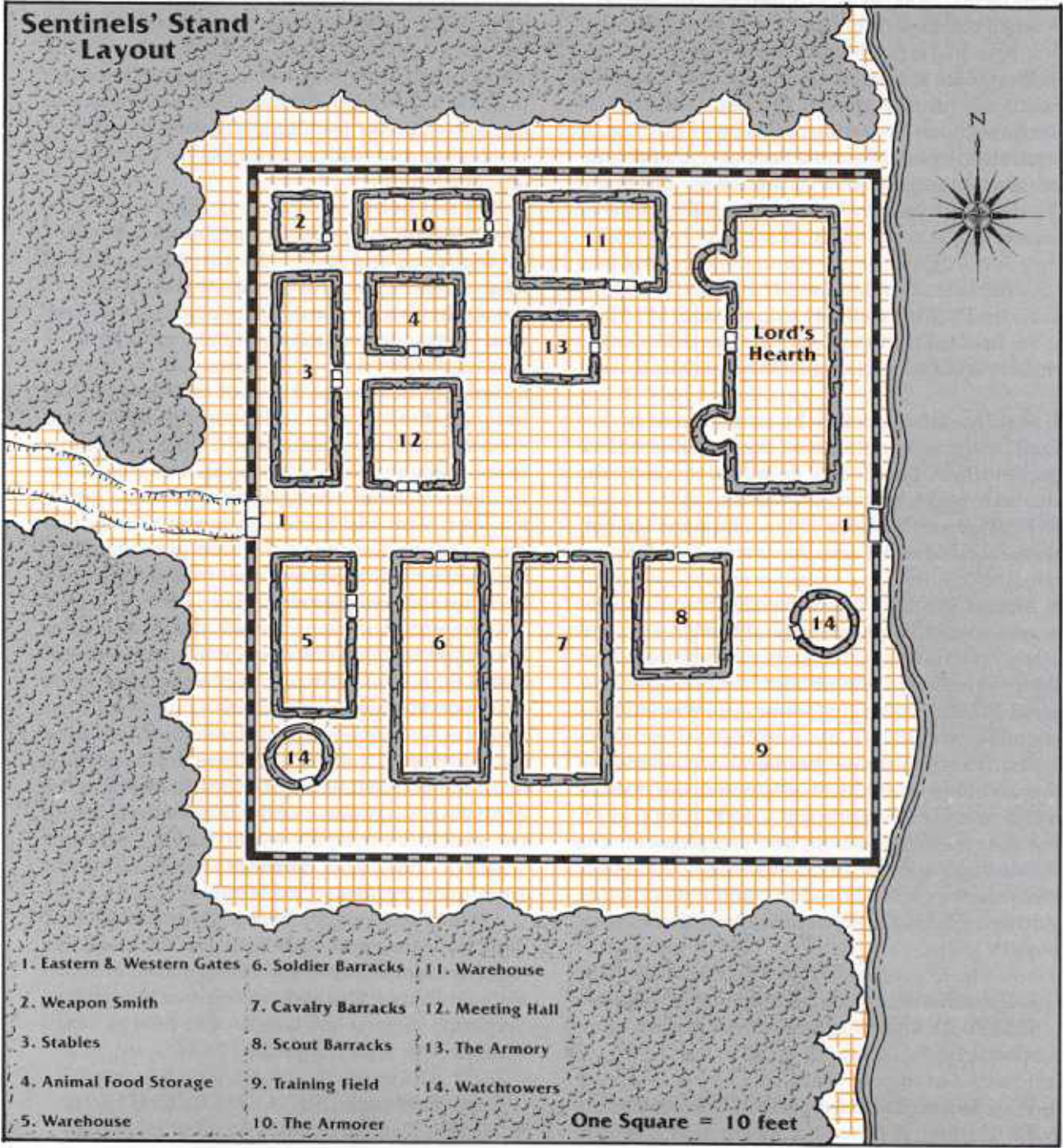
Guards found stationed on the walls, and elsewhere throughout the keep, have the following stats:

Standard Keep Soldier: AL LN; AC 5 (chain mail); MV 12; F4; hp 20 ea; THAC0 17; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+2 by long sword; SA weapon specialization; SZ M; ML 13

2. Weapon Smith. Glintrollic Hyrasyllon, a young male gnome, serves as the weaponsmith for Sentinel's Stand. A legitimate workaholic, the gnome spends 18-20 hours of each day hammering away, repairing and creating weapons for the multitude of soldiers. He constantly strives to perfect his craft, working to create the keenest edge or sturdiest blade. The main drawback to this perfectionist attitude remains the time he takes to repair weapons—it takes Glintrollic almost twice as long as normal to do any job. Glintrollic can complete a job quicker, but no one besides the Lord of Sentinel's Stand seems to hold enough authority to impress the young gnome.

As would be expected, Glintrollic keeps his smithy extremely well-equipped. A massive forge fills the center of the southern wall, flanked on either side by massive display racks of Glintrollic's finest work. A huge table in the center of the room serves as a work area. Glintrollic provides chairs at the eastern end of the room, seats for those who choose to learn from his work (he loves

Sentinels' Stand Layout



- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. Eastern & Western Gates | 6. Soldier Barracks | 11. Warehouse |
| 2. Weapon Smith | 7. Cavalry Barracks | 12. Meeting Hall |
| 3. Stables | 8. Scout Barracks | 13. The Armory |
| 4. Animal Food Storage | 9. Training Field | 14. Watchtowers |
| 5. Warehouse | 10. The Armorer | |

One Square = 10 feet

Sentinel's Stand

to show off his skills to an appreciative audience). A small cot, generally half-buried beneath weapons, rests in the northwest corner, providing Glintrollic a place to take the four to six hour long naps he allows himself during the day. Glintrollic's weapons fetch above normal price if purchased separately from his normal Sentinels' Stand commission. Twenty percent of these weapons are of good enough quality to be enchanted up to a +2 bonus.

Glintrollic Hyrasyllon: Str 15, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 11; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; F4; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+3 by short *sword* +3; SD as gnome; SZ M; ML 11

3. Stables. This structure houses up to 50 horses used by the calvary to patrol the lands surrounding Sentinels' Stand. Two guards watch over the stables at night, keeping tabs on the horses as well as the three stable boys (0 level humans Gregor, Steffas, and Morgal) who live in an upper loft.

4. Animal Food Storage: Sentinels' Stand's horses need a considerable quantity of food, water, and other materials, and the stableboys store everything here. The building is also home to a new resident, a killmoulis, which found its way into the keep five weeks ago, its presence so far undetected. This shy animal has lain low, listening to the ramblings of others. If confronted, the creature could provide PCs pertinent information regarding the castle's operations and complement. The PCs have to find the tiny little being first, though, and then they would need to capture it, an action sure to anger and frighten the superstitious stableboys.

Killmoulis: AL CG; AC 6; MV 15; HD ½; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT Nil; Dmg Nil; SA special; SD special; SZ T (1' tall); ML 8; XP 7

5. Warehouse. This two-story-tall structure has walls of stone. A water storage area occupies the

north half of the warehouse, filled from springs just outside of the western gate. During times of drought, Sentinels' Stand often supplements its water supply with river water. This is a dangerous practice, since the gnolls have been known to foul the water upriver from time to time. The quartermaster stores dried foods and other edibles in a separate building.

The rest of the warehouse is filled with tools, raw building materials (metal for weapons and armor, wood and mortar for construction), and other essential items for the day-to-day running of the castle. During the nighttime hours two standard keep guards watch the warehouse.

6. Soldier Barracks: Another two-story stone building, the barracks has a flat stone roof which serves various purposes. Should attacks penetrate to the inner areas of the castle, archers would use this barracks roof as a hold-out position. During summer, Sentinels' Stand regulars use the roof to escape the heat of evenings on the ground behind high walls; during other times of the year the roof becomes a sparring ground.

The interior of the barracks is not as spartan as one might imagine. Because guards serve at Sentinels' Stand for the duration of their careers, the Lord does his best to keep them as comfortable as possible. No soldiers enjoy private rooms here, but the bunk room contains a large fireplace which heats the polished wooden floors through a series of heating vents, keeping the floor and the rest of the structure extremely warm during the keep's winter months. Like the other barracks, this one has a small bathhouse and latrine.

Seventy men occupy this building, thirty-five to each floor (use standard keep guard stats). The commanders of Sentinels' Stand's soldier force, Captain Burren Myagar and his two lieutenants, Sergeants Jurgans and Grecko, live here as a sign of respect for their troops.

Captain Myagar: Str 16, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 16; AL CG; AC 2 (*plate mail*)

+1); MV 12; F10; hp 67; THAC0 11; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+3 by *long sword* +3; SZ M; ML 16

Sergeants Jurgans & Grecko: AL NG; AC 4 (chain mail & shield); MV 12; F6; hp 36, 34; THAC0 15; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+2 by long sword; SA weapon specialization; SZ M; ML 15

7. Cavalry Barracks: A smaller unit than the common troops, the cavalry keeps smaller barracks. Lord Dhentalis built the barracks just over a year ago, when he added the cavalry unit to the keep. A simple, one-story log construction packed with mortar for insulation, the cavalry barracks uses several fireplaces to heat the structure in the winter months, without the fancy floor venting the regular soldiers' barracks uses. The building houses the 35 members of the cavalry unit, known as the *Swords of Justice*, as well as their commander, Captain Borisir the True.

Members of *Swords of Justice* are well trained, experienced warriors (many of them paladins) whose horsemanship skills far exceed the average soldier's. Captain Borisir, one of the youngest officers (36 years old) to serve under the stringent General Hargrim, personally trained each rider in this unit. These riders would gladly give their life in the service of Borisir, so brave, courageous, and battle-worthy has he proved to be. In the year since its advent, Borisir's force has suffered only one casualty, a point of pride for the hard-fighting cavalry.

Captain Borisir the True: Str 17, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 17; AL LG; AC 0 (plate mail + *shield* +2); MV 12; P9; hp 43; THAC0 12; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+2 by *long sword* +1 or 1d8+4 by *heavy lance* +3; SA land-based riding skills; SD as paladin; SZ M; ML 16

The Swords of Justice (35): AL LG; AC 4 (chain mail + shield); MV 12; F6 or Pal6; hp 36 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 by long sword or 1d8+1 by heavy lance; SA land-

based riding skills; SD as paladin if applies; SZ M; ML 14

9. Scouts' Barracks: The smallest of the three barracks, this structure houses Sentinels' Stand's 15 scouts. Another log structure, having been constructed after the initial construction of Sentinels' Stand, the scouts' barracks appears similar to the barracks of the cavalry.

Referred to as the Outriders, this group of men and women constantly cover the grounds surrounding Sentinels' Stand and the lands across the river for any signs of gnoll or other humanoid activity. The Outriders perform the endless task of spying on the relentless gnolls or, as the Outriders put it, "dog surveillance."

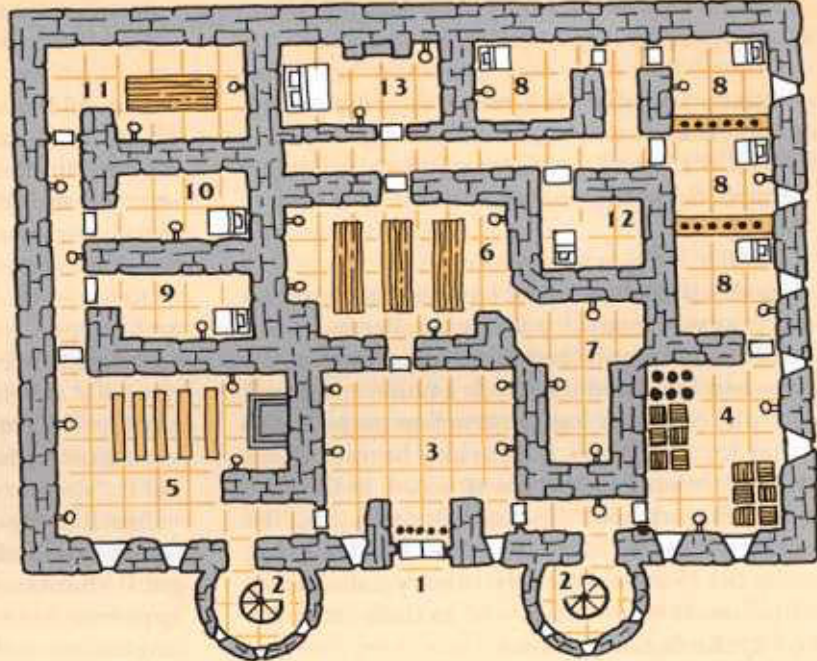
Much to the dismay of many of the residents of Sentinels' Stand, one of the Outriders is actually a gnoll shaman named Tok. This peculiar gnoll appeared before the gates of the keep one day demanding a dialogue with Lord Dhentalis—and he spoke in fluent Common. Tok lived most of his life trying to reform his savage brethren, but after many years of ridicule and failure, Tok decided to join with the human and demihuman defenders of Sentinels' Stand.

The gnoll shaman uses his knowledge of the area and of his own people to help keep the savage creatures at bay. Although he has objected to the soldiers killing his people, he understands that out in the wilderness, force must meet force; if his people cannot understand that before they beat themselves into extinction on the Stand's walls, Tok knows it is the gods' will. All members of the Outriders have come to accept Tok as one of their own, even if most of Sentinels' Stand does not.

Captain Runan Pathfinder, an aging half-elf ranger and old adventuring colleague of General Hargrim's, commands the Outriders. Because he and the general have been friends for so long, Runan is one of the few people who knows the general's secret (see p.35). Runan is a strict but skilled ranger who has been tracking evil humanoids over half his life.

Sentinel's Stand

The Lord's Hearth



One Square = 10 feet

Captain Runan Pathfinder: Str 16, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14; AL NG; AC 3 (studded leather + Dex); MV 12; R8; hp 42; THAC0 13; #AT 5/2; Dmg 1d8+1 by scimitar, 1d6+1 by short sword; SA fight with two weapons; SD 30% resistant to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M; ML 15

Soldiers of The Outriders: AL NG; AC 6; MV 12; R5; hp 29; THAC0 16; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8 by long sword, 1d4 by dagger; SA fight with two weapons; SZ M; ML 13

Tok the Gnoll Shaman: Int Very; AL CG; AC 3; MV 9; HD 4; hp 25; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+3 by staff; SA clerical spells; SZ L; ML 15
Spells/Day: 3 3 2 1

Preferred spells:

1st: *detect snares & pits*, *invisibility to animals*, *pass without trace*

2nd: *barkskin*, *goodberry*, *speak with animals*

3rd: *hold animal*, *spike growth*

4th: *sticks to snakes*

10. Training Field. This area serves as a training ground for the military of Sentinel's Stand. Each of the three captains spends time on the field every day; the soldiers practice in the morning, the cavalry in the afternoon, and the scouts in the evening. Once a month the three captains conduct a friendly contest between their three commands. The contest begins as each captain chooses five of his troops, male or female, to fight at his side, arming each with a quarterstaff. When Lord Dhentalis blows his hickory-stick whistle, a wild free-for-all ensues, each combatant doing subdual damage on as many others as he or she can reach, until the last person is left standing. These events have never been fatal to the participants, though all suffer severe bruises, with the occasional broken bone.

11. The Armorer: Baruina Silvervein is a female dwarf who serves as the castle's primary armorer. She, unlike the gnomish weaponsmith, works quickly. While any armor she makes or repairs will endure standard punishment, the pieces often look fragile and delicate, Baruina's gentle touch showing through. All the soldiers swear by her designs, however, *The Outriders* especially.

The interior of this building is littered with a bizarre mishmash of "homey" crafts and half-finished pieces of armor. A large forge dominates the southern wall, surrounded by scattered bits of battered metal and torn scraps of vellum with designs hastily scribbled upon them. Two small tables stand in the center of the room, one used to serve ale to guests, the other used as Baruina's work table. The dwarf's bed, a hammock, stretches across the southeast corner.

Baruina Silvervein: Str 17, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 12; AL NG; AC 10; MV 6; F2; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+2 by warhammer; SZ S; ML 13

12. Warehouse. This warehouse contains the majority of the food for Sentinels' Stand. Dried fruits and meats are stored here, along with salted fish and a small selection of wines and beers.

13. Meeting Hall. From time to time, Lord Dhentalis calls all off-duty soldiers here to discuss defenses, to announce important news, and to converse with his men. More often than not these meetings outline preparations for an attack against the gnolls in the area, though sometimes the meetings become award ceremonies following military actions. Occasionally, Lord Dhentalis calls a meeting simply to boost morale, allowing soldiers from one barracks to become better acquainted with those from another.

14. The Armory. This area contains all the castle's spare weapons and armor: 40 short swords, 200 arrows and light crossbow bolts, 20 long swords,

30 long bows, 20 light crossbows, and odd numbers of other weapons. A large portion of the building contains ammunition for the catapults and ballistae mounted on the battlements. Also here, secured in large chests, Lord Dhentalis keeps specially prepared ammunition similar to greek fire. These bombs cause a tremendous explosion on impact, doing 3d10 points of damage in a ten-foot radius, and covering the target in a burning liquid which continues to inflict 1d6 points of damage for 1d3 rounds thereafter. Only General Hargrim knows the formula for these bombs.

15. Watchtowers: These two towers, one near the west entrance and one near the east entrance, command a view of the surrounding countryside for 2 miles in any direction. The towers reach a height



Sentinel's Stand

of 75 feet, reinforced by a wide base and sturdy dwarven construction. The same dwarves who built the walls of the keep constructed the towers of similar stone, and members of the clan make a yearly trip to the keep to ensure their good repair. Three ballistae mounted on swivels rest atop each of the towers.

The Lord's Hearth

Within Sentinels' Stand lies a miniature castle which serves as not only the heart of the keep, but as home to Lord Stephen Dhentalis. Once the outer walls of the citadel kept the workers safe from the gnolls, construction began on this interior structure.

The Lord's Hearth defends the interior of Sentinels' Stand. Arrow slits line the building, and a longbow or crossbow sits in every room. Lord Dhentalis keeps a sizable amount of oil on the upper level, which soldiers can quickly heat with a brazier in times of trouble. A heavy portcullis can block off the entrance, and bolts grace the interior of every door.

The ceilings within the mini-castle reach only 8 feet high. Lord Stephen commanded the rooms thus, as the space would prove extremely cramped for the 7 to 8 foot tall gnolls to fight under. Several *continual light* gems lay in each room, providing light which might deter the nocturnal humanoids.

This compact structure can withstand just as much punishment as the exterior walls. To guard against possible fire attacks, Lord Dhentalis ordered the floor throughout the building constructed of the same limestone as the exterior.

1. Entrance: The spacious entrance contains the heavy portcullis used to secure the structure. Releasing the three ropes in the next room will let the portcullis drop into place. Once down, the portcullis takes a combined strength of 90 to reset or to open.

2. Towers: Defenders can reach these two 40-foot outlying towers through the main hall. The brazier to light the oil sits here next to an ample supply of arrows and crossbow bolts. Should the barred door below fall to invaders, the soldiers have standing orders to pour the oil down the steps, lighting it as soon as a number of enemy troops file inside.

3. Main Hall: Lord Dhentalis uses this large chamber as a gathering hall, though it would be a place for the defenders to make a possible last stand. Doors here lead to the towers and the other rooms of this structure.

4. Storage: The quartermaster uses this chamber for additional storage in case of a siege. It is filled with fresh water, dried fruits and vegetables, jerky, nuts, and other nonperishable foodstuffs. The only door inside the Hearth not to have a bar, General Hargrim keeps it triply padlocked and only he and Lord Dhentalis have keys.

5. Temple of Corellon Larethian: After gnolls decimated his nearby tribe, the High Priest Euritham Snowmane came to Sentinels' Stand to offer his services. Euritham is a high elf, nearly 300 years old, with long, braided white hair flowing down his back. Euritham worships Corellon, greater god of the elves.

Euritham remains extremely bitter over the loss of his family, friends, and tribes, and wishes nothing less than the utter destruction of the savage gnolls across the river. Strangely enough, despite his hatred, Euritham keeps on good terms with Tok the Shaman. Shortly after Tok's arrival, he and Euritham spent three days locked within the temple, "settling differences, and coming to a bruised understanding," as Tok says. When they emerged the two had come to an uneasy truce which holds to this day. The two, gnoll and elf, even work together during attacks, helping to fend off the attackers and to heal the wounded.

Lord Stephen, pleased that Euritham had taken

to his cause, spared no expense in giving the elf anything he needed. Inlaid with pure white limestone, the interior of the temple features dozens of candles and incense sticks, all burning in homage to Corellon. In his limited spare time Euritham carves scenes of his former home into the stone walls of his church, planning to finish the entire surface before he dies. When entering the church, worshippers can almost hear the touching singing of distant elves.

The small chamber off the main temple serves as Euritham's modest quarters.

Euritham Snowmane: Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 17; AL CG; AC 3 (*elven chain +1 & Dex*); MV 12; P10; hp 39; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+3 by *staff of striking +3* with 15 charges; SA spells; SD 90% resistant to *sleep* and *charm* spells; SZ M; ML 14
Spells/Day: 8 8 5 5 2

Preferred Spells:

1st: *cure light wounds* ×8

2nd: *goodberry* ×4, *slow poison* ×2, *speak with animals* ×2

3rd: *call lightning, hold animal* ×4

4th: *cure serious wounds* ×4, *tongues*

5th: *cure critical wounds, raise dead*

6. Dining Hall: This broad hall leads to a room with several low benches and thin tables. Off-duty soldiers take their meals here. At the head of the hall a tall rack contains eating utensils, plates, and tar-coated leather flagons. This hall can comfortably seat 45, uncomfortably it seats almost the entire host of Sentinels' Stand. This room is constantly busy, as all soldiers of the keep eat in shifts.

7. Kitchen: No actual cooking is done here, but the cook re-spices, garnishes, and dresses the food up to look and to taste much better than it otherwise might. Lord Dhentalis learned long ago that simple dishes could be made much more enjoyable if a proper chef prepared them. Thus, he hired the

renowned halfling chef Gordo Flickertongue, whose cooking even other halfings prefer to their own. Along with his two assistants, Gordo happily serves all the men of Sentinels' Stand twice a day. Rumor has it Gordo was an old adventuring companion of General Hargrim, and the halfling cooks to repay a favor to the old veteran.

8. Guest Quarters: Guests of importance from nearby cities or villages often use these quarters during their stay. Two simple cots sit in each room, with a small table and a wash basin.

9. Mage of Sentinels' Stand: Lord Dhentalis' daughter, Juliana Dhentalis, a wizard of considerable knowledge and power for one so young, calls this chamber home. After completing her apprenticeship a little over a year ago, Juliana insisted that Lord Dhentalis allow her to live at Sentinels' Stand, acting as an advisor for her father.

Juliana has simple tastes for a wizard. This room, while large by the standards of Sentinels' Stand, remains quite small in comparison to the dwellings of most wizards. A four-poster bed dominates the space, leaving room for a bookshelf and a writing desk. A chest of drawers stands on the other side of the bed, next to a mirror and a washstand.

The wizard prides herself on what she considers to be her "relative asceticism". She has few needs or wants outside of her thirst for knowledge, and spends most of her time locked away in her laboratory or lending advice to her father.

Despite an unfriendly facade, Juliana isn't as anti-social as she appears. She genuinely likes Sentinels' Stand's soldiers, and she would probably like them more if she could spare more time from her studies and experiments.

12. Apprentice's Chamber. Juliana doesn't employ an apprentice, but demands that this room remain set aside should she ever need one. In the meantime, visiting dignitaries use this chamber, with Juliana's grudging agreement.

Sentinel's Stand

13. Hall of Records. Sentinels' Stand keeps an extensive records hall, with detailed records on the Stand's every action. Lord Dhentalis wants a log of every gnoll attack, every wilderness excursion, every skirmish joined, and all the day-to-day operations of the castle recorded here. An elderly man named Jenson, a scribe who can read and write a dozen languages, keeps the records for Lord Dhentalis. Jenson is a grumpy man, always worried that someone might tamper with his records. He does, however, have a soft spot in his heart for Juliana, who often uses the Hall of Records as a place to study away from the rest of the Keep. Jenson sleeps in one of the guest chambers when they're empty, but otherwise bunks with General Hargrim, who apparently is an old friend of the scribe.

14. General Hargrim's Chambers: The general lives the simple life, devoted to his work and to the Lord of the Keep. The chamber contains a small bed, a table, a wash basin, a lantern for reading, and a small selection of books. A small, locked iron chest under the bed contains the general's personal diary and a *rod of lordly might* with 33 charges, which he wields only if Sentinels' Stand is under attack.

15. Lord's Chambers. Lord Stephen keeps surprisingly small chambers for a man of his power and importance. Despite its small size, the room looks quite comfortable and elegantly decorated. Shields of family heroes decorate two of the chamber's walls, and ancient tapestries preserved through powerful magic drape a third wall. The most prominent item in the chamber is a suit of plate mail which bears the family crest of the Dhentalis family, a white griffin on a black field. This full suit of plate mail is actually *plate mail of etherealness* +5, which Lord Dhentalis has taken off its stand only twice, both times during the two gnoll sieges the castle has endured.

A secret chamber here contains Sentinels' Stand's treasury, known only to Lord Stephen, his

daughter Juliana, and General Hargrim. Lord Dhentalis keeps between 60,000 and 70,000 gold pieces in the secret compartment, the total fluctuating with the time of the year and needed expenses. Most of the money is Lord Stephen's personal wealth, supplemented by taxes.

A small table in one corner serves as Stephen's office, and several papers and writs lie upon the makeshift desk awaiting the Lord's personal seal.

Major NPCs

Lord Stephen Dhentalis

14th Level Human Male Warrior

Alignment:	Chaotic Good
AC:	4/-8 in full <i>plate</i> +5 & shield
Move:	12/9
THAC0:	7
Hit Points:	98
Strength:	18/25%
Intelligence:	14
Dexterity:	17
Wisdom:	15
Constitution:	15
Charisma:	16

Proficiencies: Long sword (specialized), two-handed sword (specialized), lance, light crossbow, short sword, dagger, armorer (12), blind fighting (na), navigation (12), tracking (15), carpentry (18), direction sense (16), riding, land based (18), rope use (17), stonemasonry (16), weather sense (13)

Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish

Armor: *Plate mail of etherealness* +5

Weapons: *Long sword defender* +4, *short sword of quickness* +1

Equipment: Signet ring, leopard fur cloak, fine clothing.

Age: 51

Height: 6' 3"

Weight: 240 lbs.

Hair/Eyes: Black with gray/Green

Stephen Dhentalis had been an adventurer for nearly 25 years before deciding to use the wealth he had accumulated to build Sentinels' Stand six years ago. Stephen had experienced hardship at the hands of gnoll tribes and other evil humanoids during his travels, and he decided to halt to their pillaging by building a fortification. Since the gnolls used the ford to cross the river into civilized lands, it made sense for Stephen to build Sentinels' Stand here. A cold gleam comes into Lord Dhentalis' eyes when he fights gnolls, but only his close friends know that gnolls slew his wife 20 years ago, and each gnoll Stephen kills makes the pain of grief go away for a short time.

A proud, decisive man, Stephen is determined to end the humanoid excursions across the river. Warriors and rangers from nearby towns and villages respect and admire Lord Dhentalis for his reputation as a fair and just man who lives to see better days for all. Serving under Lord Stephen Dhentalis is considered a great and noble honor.

Although Stephen has always intended to remove the threat the gnolls pose to civilized people, he realizes the creatures may not come under control during his lifetime. For this reason he has made plans for his daughter to take control of Sentinels' Stand after his death. Lord Dhentalis has taught Juliana the inner workings of the citadel to prepare her for the day she will carry on his work. Now that Juliana understands how to operate Sentinels' Stand, Lord Dhentalis has set himself the task of finding her a suitable husband. A doting father, however, the Lord of Sentinels' Stand has not found anyone he thinks good enough for Juliana.

General Hargrim Murgol

17th Level Human Male Warrior

Alignment: Chaotic Good
AC: 0
Move: 12
THAC0: 4
Hit Points: 74

Strength: 15 **Intelligence:** 16
Dexterity: 11 **Wisdom:** 17
Constitution: 15 **Charisma:** 16

Proficiencies: Long sword (specialized), warhammer (specialized), footman's mace, footman's flail, short sword, heavy crossbow, dagger, endurance (15), hunting (18), survival (16), tracking (17), animal training, equestrian (17), riding, land-based (20), ancient history (15), reading/writing (18)

Languages: Common, Elvish, Gnoll

Armor: *Chain mail* +3, *shield* +2

Weapons: *long sword of sharpness* +1, *dagger* +3

Equipment: metal helm, heavy warhorse, troop ledger.

Age: actual 199, physical 67

Height: 5' 11"

Weight: 177 lbs.

Hair/Eyes: Gray/Black

This wily veteran has devoted his life to the military. Never a family man, Hargrim married his work, living to protect local villages from the hordes of evil humanoids to the east. Hargrim has spent his entire long life in the vicinity of Sentinels' Stand, fighting the good fight against the gnoll tribes across the river. When lord Stephen Dhentalis built Sentinels' Stand, Hargrim stood out as the only logical choice for commander.

Hargrim has extended his life with a *wish* he received from a powerful wizard many years ago, when he was 23; though Hargrim chose his words carefully, the *wish* did not grant him the immortality he sought. For every four years that pass, Hargrim ages only one year. Although he still possesses much of the prowess of his youth, Hargrim has recently been experiencing health problems and has come to realize he may not live through the next decade. A warrior to the end, Hargrim has decided to take as many of the gnolls to the grave as he can before he passes on to the next world.

Sentinel's Stand

Juliana Dhentalis

8th Level Human Female Wizard

Alignment:	Neutral Good		
AC:	5		
Move:	12		
THAC0:	18		
Hit Points:	23		
Strength:	10	Intelligence:	18
Dexterity:	17	Wisdom:	15
Constitution:	13	Charisma:	17

Proficiencies: Staff, dagger, ancient history (18), herbalism (17), reading/writing common (20), reading/writing elvish (18), spellcraft (16), dancing (17), riding, land-based (18), singing (17), swimming (12)

Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Gnoll, Halfling, Orcish

Armor: None

Weapons: *Dagger* +2, *wand of fire* with 29 charges, *staff* +1

Equipment: Three spellbooks, *necklace of adaptation*, *ring of free action*, silken robes, fur cloak, signet ring.

Age: 29

Height: 5' 7"

Weight: 118 lbs.

Hair/Eyes: Auburn/Blue

At an early age young Juliana Dhentalis had a curiosity about magic. Although disappointed she did not take up the sword, her father, Lord Dhentalis, sponsored her apprenticeship to one of the most powerful mages in the land. Juliana has only just returned to Sentinels' Stand after studying far away, and she has chosen to devote her magical skills to defending the citadel. After learning all

about the keep and how her father administers it, Juliana now turns her attention to making acquaintances among the troops, not an easy task for a powerful wizard who awes the soldiers with her presence.

Juliana knows Lord Dhentalis searches for a suitable mate for her, and she considers it a sweet, if somewhat misguided, exercise. A strong woman, Juliana prefers to make her own choices about the company she keeps.

Adventure Hooks

- *The Outriders* have uncovered increased movement among the gnolls, and Lord Dhentalis hires the PCs to venture into the heart of the gnoll tribes to determine if the gnolls plan an attack. Juliana Dhentalis can provide illusion spells or magical devices to the PCs so they can pass as gnolls, making it easier to infiltrate the tribes.
- On a recent excursion across the river, a member of *Swords of Justice's* horse bolted into the wilderness after throwing his rider. The owner of the horse would pay a considerable sum to have someone retrieve her prize stallion. Since the gnolls consider horses to be tall cows, but better tasting, time is of the essence.
- Someone, or something, is rallying the gnolls and organizing them in a way that they've never been before. Juliana is convinced there is a sinister reason for the increased action, and she hires the PCs to capture a gnoll and return it to the keep for questioning. The wizard has determined that the method of the creatures' attacks suggests someone from inside Sentinels' Stand is supplying them with information. Unfortunately, Tok is the prime suspect.

Five hundred years ago, the black dragon Murk came to the land around what is now known as Dragon's Coffin. A huge, hulking, ravenous beast, Murk razed the countryside, devouring farm animals and citizens alike in a months-long eating frenzy. Eventually Murk settled in a swamp several miles to the east, emerging every few weeks to sate his enormous hunger. Wave after wave of brave heroes marched into the swamp to do battle with Murk, but all fell to his talons and acid breath. Within two years anyone with sense had moved away, and the kingdom warned its subjects not to approach Murk's swamp.

One hundred years ago a group of fanatic humans timidly approached Murk, offering him their worship. Murk ate several cultists straightaway, and when that did not frighten the rest, he decided to listen. The humans called themselves the Cult of Murk, which pleased the dragon, and they offered to move him and his treasure into a place where no one would be able to bother them, a place where the cultists could worship Murk as long as they liked. After short consideration and a meal of yet another cultist, Murk agreed.

The Cult of Murk had found a large cavern under Wyrms' Peak (named for the nearby Murk), and they began to move the dragon into his new home, transporting his treasure from the swamp into his new, dry, echoing cave. The cult built a fortress at the entrance to the cave, leaving a large hole as an exit for Murk, and they cleaned out the rest of the caves, giving the object of their worship a safe place to sleep. Living the easy life spoiled Murk, and as the cultists brought him captives and livestock to eat, and more treasure to count, he grew lazy. Murk's indolence and the cultists' belief in their superiority would prove to be their downfall.

Since news and proof of the cult's existence and activities reached the ears of King Gelmoor Serelind 30 years ago he planned to defeat the dragon. Consulting his generals, King Gelmoor decided the best approach would be to trap the dragon in his own lair, slowly starving him to death. Twenty-

nine years of planning, of planting spies in the Cult of Murk, of gathering weapons, of recruiting wizards, of training warriors, and of assembling a crew of dwarven engineers culminated in a huge offensive strike against the Fortress of the Black.

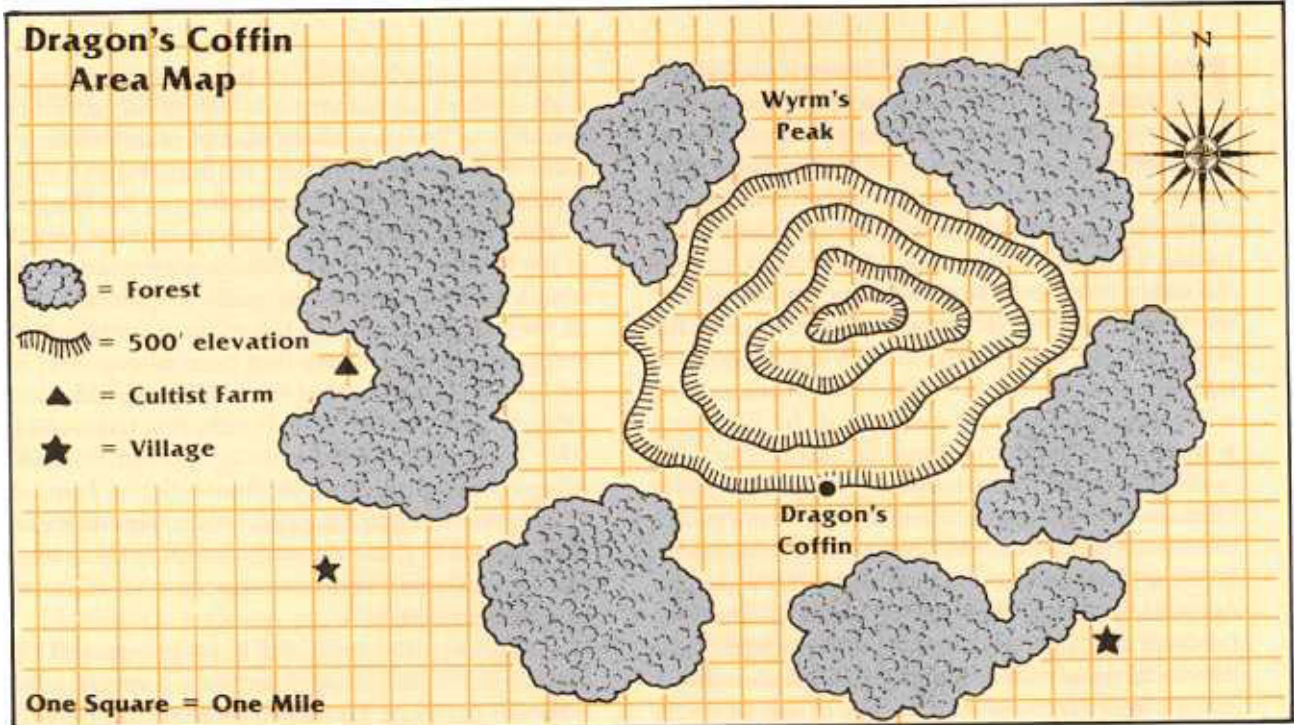
King Gelmoor and his forces caught the cultists entirely off-guard. Bloodthirsty mercenaries and king's men out for revenge easily dispatched most of the cultists, and only the most powerful worshippers escaped. Murk had been asleep, and by the time he woke to find himself besieged he had already lost the battle. Wizards erected *walls of force*, *walls of iron*, and *walls of stone* around the dragon, trapping him. As Murk threw himself against the walls of his prison, dwarven stonemasons rushed to shore the walls, keeping them from falling outward and bracing them to take the dragon's weight.

Racing against time, the dwarves coated the outside of the dragon's prison with a special acid-resistant material. Cracks appeared in the walls, and the sharp smell of acid assailed their nostrils, but the dwarves worked on, helped by the wizards. Though Murk tried mightily to escape, nearly burning through the walls with his acid breath four times in three days, by the end of the fourth day the dwarves had finished, and Murk was well and truly imprisoned.

King Gelmoor sat back, his forces at the ready, waiting for Murk to starve, or to break out of his prison to face the might of the king's army. The king's herald and a clever bard re-named the cavern and fortress *Dragon's Coffin*, sure of the King's success. However, after two weeks Murk had not tried to emerge, nor had he bellowed in hunger nor pleaded for his life, and the King became worried.

The cultists who had escaped the forces of King Gelmoor rallied outside the lair to plot their god's escape. The cultists widened natural fissures in the mountain, allowing them access once again to their hallowed wyrm through the floor of his prison. The fanatics brought food and water, and Murk helped himself to a meal of several cultists,

Dragon's Coffin



whereupon he calmed down. The head priest, Jarim Blackspawn, noted that while Murk could not leave, neither could the king's forces enter, which gave the cult all the time they needed to try to save the dragon.

It has been a year since Murk was trapped in the confines of his lair, and each day the cultists get closer and closer to finding a way to free the sinister dragon.

Construction and Appearance

Dragon's Coffin (the citadel) rests within the mouth of the dragon's lair in Wyrms Peak, former home of Murk the black dragon. King Gelmoor's forces have made several changes since the siege began a year ago.

In addition to reinforcing the inner wall to help repel the attacks of the dragon, dwarven engineers

still on King Gelmoor's payroll work on the outer battlements of the castle (the wall facing south out of the caverns). With the possibility that the Cultists of Murk may decide to attack the fortress from either inside or outside the cavern, the King has ordered these walls equipped with additional catapults, ballistae, and bow weapons.

After several cultists tried to enter Dragon's Coffin carrying poison and weapons, the king's men constructed a guardhouse outside the cavern. All visitors stop here, endure a thorough search, and then continue on.

The dwarven engineers have reconstructed the original walls of the Fortress of the Black, covering them with a dull, dark gray stone painted with a stuccolike material resistant to the black dragon's acid breath. While nonreactive with acid, the substance does not endure physical punishment, so several of the dwarves have been

working to improve their formula, hoping to make it durable.

Dragon's Coffin does not resemble any type of standard castle structure, much to the dismay of the dwarven engineers. Cultists erected walls in the original structure seemingly at random, and none of them possessed any real engineering or masonry skills. Part of the dwarves' free time involves planning improvements to the walls, trying to make the structure into something resembling an actual building.

Great iron beams shore up the walls of the fortress facing the interior of the cave. All the castle's heavy weapons on the outside face the cave mouth as well, each loaded and ready to fire at a moment's notice. Because of the strain constant readiness places on the weapon's components, the king's men perform regular maintenance on each catapult and ballista.

The Great Wall (as it is called by the Coffin's residents) is truly massive. The wall is slightly over 100 feet in height, being raised nearly 30 feet after the takeover because of the sheer height of the dragon. This wall, as well as the one exiting Dragon's Coffin, were constructed with an enormous gate which Murk would use to exit his lair. Although the outer gate is still used as an exit from the castle, the inner gate has been sealed with several feet of granite and steel enforcement. Since the inner wall was of primary importance after conquering the castle, the outer wall has only recently come under serious repair.

The interior of Dragon's Coffin is a hodgepodge of meeting rooms, sleeping quarters, and other impromptu chambers that were constructed whenever the cultists of Murk decided they needed more space. King Gelmoor's engineers have helped to put certain sections of the citadel in order, but work on the outer walls has taken precedence. For now, the interior of Dragon's Coffin is suitable for the King's forces.

Military and Other Activities

The King's Royal Lances (25 elite warriors), 120 skilled warriors, four wizards, 18 priests, and five dwarves inhabit Dragon's Coffin, their sole purpose to destroy Murk. Each person in Dragon's Coffin (Royal Lance, regular soldier, or dwarf engineer) has a specific duty to perform, and they carry out those duties as if they were in the center of a battle zone.

King Gelmoor appointed his most trusted senior advisors to the command of Dragon's Coffin. Major Kald supervises the King's Royal Lances and organizes the siege engine crews, the Royal Wizard Vendreth oversees the construction and deals with the dwarves and wizards, and Battle Priest Abbel commands the regular forces and supervises his junior priests. All equal, each commander answers to the other two, and all take command when King Gelmoor leaves Dragon's Coffin. Kald, Vendreth, and Abbel each defer to the others' areas of expertise, allowing no personality conflicts come into play; they share a common goal and understand the need for common cause. The three commanders know that at any moment their forces could face the wrath of a true wyrm, so they take their work very seriously.

The three commanders run drills inside or outside Dragon's Coffin approximately four times a week. No one knows when the drills might happen, so everyone keeps sharp and prepared. The drills always simulate attacks either from within the dragon's prison, from outside the cavern, from inside the cavern, or all three at once. The commanders time their soldiers' responses, grading them on their performance, speed, and thoroughness. Any person not meeting the commanders' strict requirements quickly finds him- or herself assigned to another duty elsewhere in the kingdom.

Major Kald regularly organizes the King's Royal Lances into patrols, sending them out to scour the countryside for secret entrances into Wyrms' Peak. After the second week of no sound

Dragon's Coffin



from the dragon, the commanders reasoned that the surviving cultists somehow provided Murk with a regular source of food and water. Still, after a year, the king's forces have yet to discover a tunnel or any other method by which the fanatics carry sustenance in. The patrols leave several times a week, always returning at dusk, having discovered nothing.

The priests at Dragon's Coffin gather once a tenday to celebrate their faith, gatherings which the soldiers (faithful or not) use as a morale-boosting conclave. The soldiers discuss the week's events, listen to prayers, and remind one another of their purpose at the castle. After the prayers end the priests pass among the soldiers delivering blessings and entertaining supplications.

Vendreth and his wizards hold their own, private meetings. They study tactics to use against the dragon, and plan sequences of spells to best deal with an angry wyrm. The wizards are certain

that the end game of the siege draws close, and they do not intend to lose.

Many of the men and women stationed at Dragon's Coffin harbor a generations-old hatred of Murk, and several of them have repeatedly offered to enter the dragon's lair to slay the beast and appease the spirits of the dead. The commanders of Dragon's Coffin have wisely refused such requests, sending revenge-minded soldiers to a priest for counseling. Three times, however, exceptionally foolhardy soldiers have rushed the dwarves during a repair, pulling loose stone aside and wriggling into the dragon's lair, intending to prove their valor. The dwarves could do nothing but seal the breach quickly, notify the commanders, and listen to the screams as the soldiers died. Though the commanders lost only three men to such idiocy, they now post Royal Lances to guard the dwarves any time they work on the dragon's prison.

No one visits the castle except merchants and soldiers. Merchant caravans arrive from time to time, delivering supplies and news from the rest of the kingdom. The king pays these merchants before they leave for the castle, so aside from the payroll Dragon's Coffin keeps no regular funds.

Several times over the past year representatives from communities which Murk had terrorized came to Dragon's Coffin with fine food, expensive wine, and lavish entertainment. At first King Gelmoor and Major Kald saw nothing wrong with this morale-boosting activity. However, after an incident during one of these parties in which a drunken soldier tried to batter down the interior wall to confront the dragon, King Gelmoor moved the celebration to the nearby city. The festival now occupies a week's worth of events, and each soldier earns two- or three-day passes so they can attend. During a very solemn part of the celebration Battle Priest Abbel reads aloud the names of those killed by Murk over the years. The list takes nearly three hours to complete, giving soldiers and other members of the community time to reflect upon what would happen should the dragon once again terrorize the countryside.

Maintenance

The dwarves and soldiers perform twice-daily inspections of both major walls in Dragon's Coffin. So far Murk has been unable to break through, but no one believes he has simply fallen back asleep; the dragon will assail the walls again some day, and the king's men plan to be ready. The interior of the castle also needs constant renovation and remodeling, but the dwarves save that work for their off time, since most of those changes serve aesthetic needs, rather than address the task at hand: ridding the world of Murk.

Recently, large numbers of rats have found their way into the castle's water supply barrels and food storage rooms, and the castle stewards have been searching feverishly for a way to elimi-

nate them. Junior priests have kept busy casting *create food & water* spells, but the commanders know that if the rats continue to inhabit the fortress, the problem will never go away.

The Cult of Murk

These fanatical, misguided humans believe that dragons, especially evil dragons, walk the earth as gods. For the cultists, dragons exist for humans to worship, and anyone who does not share that belief obviously does not deserve to live. Since King Gelmoor conquered their fortress a year ago, these fanatics have been desperately searching for a way to free their beloved patron. Though the cultists currently have access to a great number of magical items and spells, they still do not have a



Dragon's Coffin

viable solution to their god's imprisonment.

Since the cult lost its home, their membership has dropped to 30 priests of Faluzure, 40 warriors, 11 rogues, and a handful of zero-level humans.

Although the cult contains several powerful clerics, Murk ate the few wizards who possessed the talent to release the dragon from captivity. Currently, the Cult of Murk concerns itself with two problems: providing a constant supply of food for their dragon, and finding a way to free him. The cult solved the first problem days after the king occupied their fortress, using a secret access tunnel they dug to the lair several decades ago. Through this several-miles-long tunnel the cultists bring Murk food and water, not enough to satisfy his hunger, but more than enough to keep him from starving.

In order to address their second concern, Jarim and his remaining agents comb nearby cities and towns, looking for the proper spells or magical items to help free Murk from his imprisonment. Jarim has even taken the risky step of recruiting thieves' and adventurers' guilds to aid in the search, an action likely to bring more opportunists than rescuers. So far, though, no one has uncovered the means to free the dragon.

Members of the cult not only watch from the inside of the dragon's prison, but they manage to keep a presence inside the citadel as well, watching and waiting for a sign of weakness from King Gelmoor.

Area Layout

The Dragon's Coffin fortress occupies only a small part of Wyrms' Peak. Tunnels and caverns extend for miles into the mountain, but the king's men control the area immediately surrounding the citadel. A breakdown of the area, including Dragon's Coffin, follows.

1. Guardhouse: 10-20 soldiers staff this building at all times, keeping an eye on the road approaching the castle. *Everyone* entering Dragon's Coffin

undergoes a complete search at the guardhouse, with no exceptions. Even the king and commanders endure a search, demanding the same treatment as everyone else. Battle Priest Abbel always posts a female soldier on duty here as well, to preserve the virtue of any women visiting the castle.

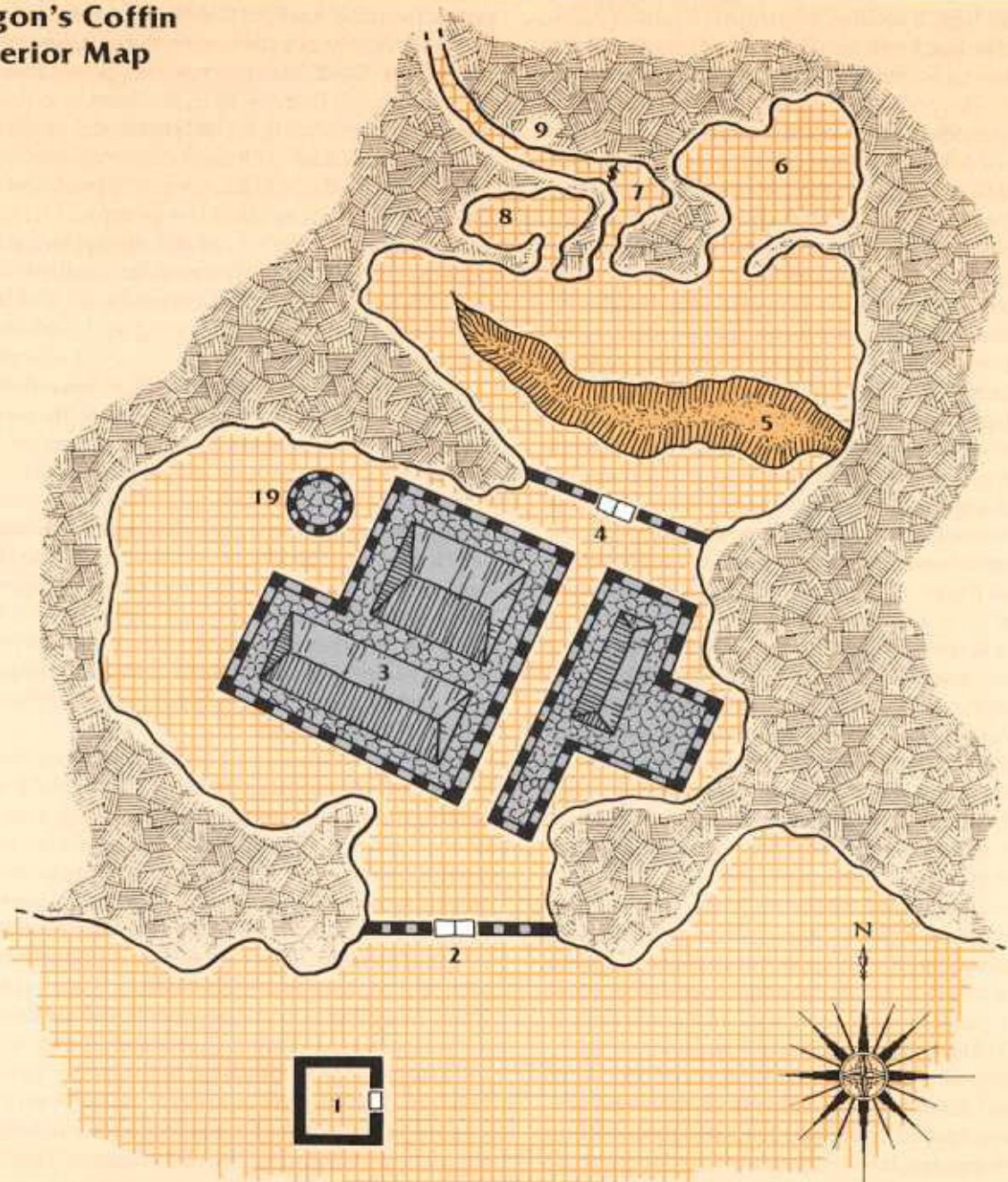
2. Outer Wall: The members of the cult who constructed Dragon's Coffin barely understood which end of the hammer met the nail, so many portions of the fortress suffer from a lack of construction skill—especially the outer wall. Over 150 feet long and 50-60 feet high in certain places, the outer wall needed more attention than any other part of the castle, including the dragon's prison. Basically structurally sound, the outer wall includes battlements and gates which need extensive repair. The existing sections of the battlements currently consist of nothing more than poorly built wooden walkways, which will buckle under the weight of three to four soldiers.

Now reinforced with iron beams and stone blocks every 20 feet, the wall will soon carry complete battlements, just as the inner wall does. The siege crews have already pulled several catapults and ballistae into place, and the remaining siege engines rest inside the cavern, behind the wall, waiting for the dwarves to complete the platform.

The dwarves, however, are worried mostly about the gate. Under the punishment of siege weapons, this gate would buckle in minutes. King Gelmoor bought large amounts of oak planks and iron bands from several savvy traders, but it will take months before these materials arrive. The ramp leading from the main portion of the castle (which Murk used to leave the cave) has been disassembled, making it difficult, but not impossible, for the dragon to exit through the outer wall.

3. Main Castle Structure: This area is the main living and storage of Dragon's Coffin, having once served as home for the Cult of Murk. A hodgepodge of rooms built over the course of several decades, this larger structure actually comprises

Dragon's Coffin Interior Map



One Square = 10 feet

Dragon's Coffin

several smaller structures. Once a temple, a storage building, a smithy, a barracks, meeting halls, and a lookout tower all stood under separate roofs, but now they all sit under one roof.

4. Interior Wall: Only this wall stands between the wrath of Murk the Black and the outside world. Also called the Great Wall by its defenders, this wall has been built up over the course of the past year to be able to withstand the fury of the dragon. Over 100 feet tall, the Great Wall includes newly constructed battlements across the top lined with catapults and ballistae.

The dwarves have sandwiched layers of their acid-resistant compound between successive layers of granite and limestone quarried from Wyrms' Peak. The numerous iron braces and wooden supports also form a layer of the material, should gaps ever develop through which Murk could shoot his breath weapon. Where once a great wooden door stood, now a huge blockade, twice as thick as the rest of the wall, dominates the cavern.

Two dozen soldiers, each skilled in the use of siege engines, the long bow, the crossbow, and wise in the use of greek fire, walk the battlements here. A nerve-wracking duty, with the occasional shifts of the dragon inside producing ominous rumbles in the cavern beyond, this post is considered the most prestigious by the soldiers. Major Kald rotates his Royal Lances through the duty, often making surprise inspections.

5. The Great Rift: This immense gorge covers most of the interior of the enormous cave which is Murk's lair. A ledge to the western end of the cave allows passage past the gorge and leads deeper into the black dragon's lair.

The span of the rift varies between 40 and 60 feet, and reaches a depth of several thousand feet. In his prime, Murk could leap over the 40-foot span to exit the lair, but since living the good life the cult provided, the dragon uses the ledge more often than not.

6. Inner Lair: This cave, now blocked from the outer cavern by the Great Wall, served as home for Murk for nearly a century; now the same cavern is his prison. Gold, platinum, silver, gems, and assorted magical items—five centuries of plunder from the surrounding countryside—are scattered across the chamber, with most of it underneath the dragon's incredible girth. Over the past century the Cult of Murk spoiled the pompous dragon with a constant supply food and obsequious pampering, giving him little reason to venture forth from his cave. As a result, Murk grew fat and lazy, easy prey for a determined king and his battle-ready men.

Now, however, Murk is slender, rested, and anxious to leave his cave. Jarim and his senior lieutenants meet with Murk weekly, informing him about their search for magic to free him, and relaying news about Dragon's Coffin's current forces. More than once Jarim has had to convince Murk that he would not survive the battle if he broke down the Great Wall and tried to escape through the cavern.

Every so often the noise of Murk's movements will leak through to the outer cavern, letting the king and his commanders know that the dragon is in fact still a prisoner.

7. Cult's Cavern: After their pact with Murk was certified nearly a century ago, members of the Cult of Murk appropriated this cavern as their own. Over the last few decades Jarim ordered escape tunnels dug from this cavern to secret locations far from Murk's Mount. Using several *wands of earth and stone*, members of the cult constructed a passage which emerges nearly three miles from the lair. Unfortunately, the cult's wizards used all the charges in the wands during the digging, leaving nothing for Murk to use to dig a hole out of his cavern.

Currently, this chamber serves as home to 35 of the cultists (including Jarim) who survived the assault on their home a year ago. The remainder comb the land for a means to free their master.

Filled with makeshift bunks, this cavern includes an area used to prepare food for Murk, and a store of weapons and armor kept for any offensive assault the fanatics may plan in the future.

Cultist Warriors (15): AL CE; AC 6 (ring mail & shield); MV 12; F4; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 by long sword; SZ M; ML 13

Cultist Priests (19): AL CE; AC 5 (chain mail); MV 12; P5; hp 21 ea; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 by footman's flail; SA spells; SZ M; ML 13

Spells: 3 3 1

Preferred Spells:

1st: *command, cause light wounds, cause fear*;
2nd: *charm person or mammal* ×2, *hold person*
3rd: *curse*

8. Jarim's Quarters: A cavern reserved for the leader of the cult, Jarim Blackspawn currently lives here. Jarim needs the privacy this cave provides to hatch plots and to instigate schemes. The evil priest keeps quite a stash of gold and gems here separate from Murk's hoard, totaling over 10,000 gold pieces in treasure.

9. Secret Passage: This tunnel stretches over five miles from Wyrms' Peak to the nearby village of Goydin, emerging on a farmstead secretly owned by the Cult of Murk. Through the years the cult has managed to maintain secrecy regarding this farmstead, even going so far as to have Murk attack it, slay several farmhands (cultists who willingly gave their lives in service of their master), and eat cattle. A dozen cultist warriors who also double as farmhands guard the passage in shifts, 24 hours a day.

Elite Cultist Warriors (12): AL CE; AC 4 (chain mail & shield); MV 12; F7; hp 42 ea.; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+2 by long sword; SA weapon specialization +1 to hit/+2 damage; SZ M; ML 12

Castle Layout

10. Soldier's Barracks: Home to all the soldiers of Dragon's Coffin, the soldiers' barracks also serves as quarters for the Royal Lances. Recently the king ordered additional soldiers to duty here, making for a bit of a squeeze during some shifts.

Simple cots with bedding line the walls, and the quartermaster issues each soldier a small iron chest with a lock to secure his personal belongings. A total of 145 warriors live here, though not all of them are present in the barracks at the same time. Each soldier works an eight-hour shift on duty in Dragon's Coffin (scouts leave the castle for up to 12 hours at a time), then a soldier works another four hours on maintenance detail (personal equipment and siege engines as well as infrastructure), and has the remaining twelve hours free. King Gelmoor pays his soldiers well, up to 10 gold pieces per week, and once a month each soldier can earn a three-day leave to travel to a nearby village for rest and relaxation.

Major Kald lives in the barracks with his soldiers, refusing a personal chamber. Kald has devoted his life to King Gelmoor's cause, as thirsty for Murk's blood as any of his soldiers. Years ago, as Murk began to grow lazy, the Cult of Murk kidnapped Kald's younger brother and fed him to the dragon. As a result, Kald shows no mercy to captured cultists, nor to cult sympathizers.

Despite the urging of King Gelmoor, Kald never takes leave of the castle, preferring instead to relax by reading one of the books Vendreth the mage brings to the Coffin, or by practicing his weapons skills furiously. Major Kald commands the deep respect of all his soldiers.

Major Baragon Kald: Str 18 (25), Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 14; AL CG; AC -1 (*chain mail* +3 & shield); MV 12; F9; hp 61; THAC0 12; #AT 2/1; Dmg 1d8+8 by *long sword* +3; SA: *weapon specialization*, +1 to hit/+2 damage; SD *ring of protection* +1; SZ M; ML 16

Dragon's Coffin

Soldiers of Dragon's Coffin (120): Int Average; AL LG/CG; AC 4 (chain mail & shield); MV 12; F5; hp 35 ea.; THAC0 16; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d8 by long sword or 1-6 by long bow; SZ M; ML 13

11. Guardian Temple: Priests of the watchful god Heimdall use this building for their temple. (Note: the DM should substitute an appropriate guardian god for his or her campaign, such as Helm, St. Cuthbert, or Kiri-Jolith. Eighteen followers of Heimdall live in Dragon's Coffin, each a tireless servant of King Gelmoor and their master, Battle Priest Abbel.

The Church of Heimdall at Dragon's Coffin remains simple, although Abbel has allowed the acolytes to paint a mural of the brawny Heimdall standing at his post on the rainbow bridge leading to Asgard ("for inspiration" Abbel says). Fourteen men and three women, each wearing enameled white plate mail and wielding a flanged mace in defense of their castle and King, comprise the clergy of Dragon's Coffin. Battle Priest Abbel has personally trained each of Heimdall's faithful, and the priests would follow his orders or the orders of the King though it meant their deaths. Known at Dragon's Coffin as the *Vigil*, each of these priests has refused payment, stating that they only perform their sworn duty, guarding, and they need no remuneration.

The Vigil (17): Int Very; AL LG; AC 2; MV 12; P6; hp 22 ea.; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 by broad sword; SA: spells; SD see up to 100 yards day or night; SZ M; ML 18

Spells/Day: 3 3 2

Preferred Spells:

1st: *command, cure light wounds, remove fear*

2nd: *hold person, know alignment, wyvern watch*

3rd: *dispel magic, hold animal*

The priests also keep medical supplies (bandages, splints, poultices, etc.), and herbs used in the treatment of the sick and injured at the Temple

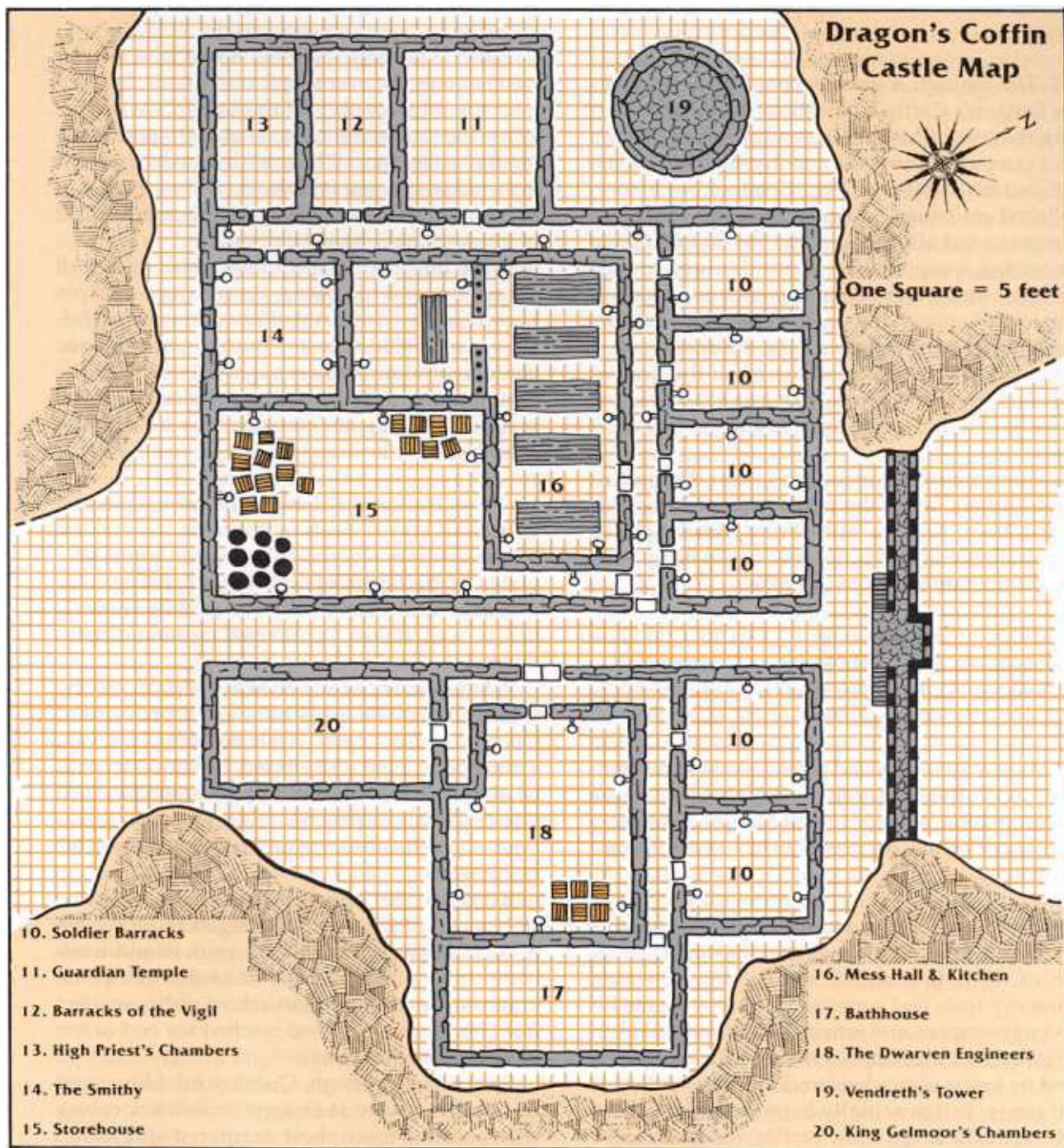
of Heimdall, in the event of an assault on the castle in which the clerics run out of spells before they can heal all the wounded. The Vigil also stores a supply of 30 *potions of healing*, four *potions of vitality*, and 20 portable cots here.

In addition to the storage of medical supplies, Battle Priest Abbel has hidden an impressive stash of armor and weapons. Several suits of plate mail, chain mail, splint armor, and shields wait here for a worthy soldier to wear. In addition, Abbel keeps broad swords, short swords, maces, and flails hidden with the armor, ready for a strong arm to swing them. Only the Battle Priest, King Gelmoor, Major Kald, and the wizard Vendreth know of their location. Among the regular items, Abbel keeps several of a magical nature: a suit of *plate mail +3*, *splint mail +2*, *Flametongue +1*, *crossbow of speed*, a *net of snaring*, and a *hammer of thunderbolts* which no one currently at Dragon's Coffin can wield properly.

The DM should note that Battle Priest Abbel will only dispense weapons to those he deems worthy of the honor. Other priests dedicated to Heimdall might make the cut, but someone would have to prove himself many times over in order for Abbel to allow him to use items restricted from his own clergy.

12. Barracks of the Vigil: This small chamber serves as humble home to members of the Vigil. Twenty small beds line this chamber, each with a small chest for clothes and other items beneath it. Only for a few hours during the day do sleeping priests occupy this room, as they spend the majority of their time on the walls of the castle, guarding. On one of the walls the faithful have painted a mural similar to the one at the church.

13. Battle Priest's Chambers: This room serves as sleeping quarters to Battle Priest Abbel. A simple bed, clothes closet, and desk occupy the room, though like his pupils Abbel seldom remains in his quarters. In a locked chest beneath his bed Abbel has a *book of exalted deeds*, given to students



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of Heimdall he deems worthy of the gift of wisdom.

14. The Smithy: A gnome named Mulgey serves as Dragon's Coffin's official smith. After suffering the loss of his business after one of Murk's last rampages across the countryside, this gnome offered his services to King Gelmoor. An accomplished craftsman, Mulgey can repair or replace weapons and armor in record time. In addition to repairing weapons and armor, Mulgey spends his free time diagraming new weapons for use against the black dragon. Several of his devices have become prototypes (like the *dragonvise*, a huge construct designed to smash the dragon against the back of his lair), but his workload usually interferes with their testing and completion.

There are no weapons for sale at the smithy, and Mulgey needs the permission of King Gelmoor, Major Kald, or Battle Priest Abbel to sell or repair anything that is not specifically being used by the military of Dragon's Coffin.

Mulgey the Gnome: Str 17, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 11; AL NG; AC 5 (ring mail & Dex); MV 6; F3; hp 19; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+3 by *warhammer* +2; SZ M; ML 13

Mulgey has cultivated a good working relationship with the dwarven engineers. These five dwarves often attempt to pull Mulgey away from his "experimental nonsense" to have a drink of ale and relax.

15. Storehouse: This massive building contains the supplies needed to maintain the vigil at Dragon's Coffin: food (dried and fresh), oil, water, masonry tools and supplies, and metal ingots for forging weapons and armor. A clerk named Felten organizes all the supplies into specific categories, and he keeps meticulous track of his inventory at all times. Felten actually belongs to the Cult of Murk, but he keeps a low profile, and does his job

well and thoroughly, hoping to escape notice, which so far he has accomplished.

Felten is the only spy the cult sent who made it past not only the ever-suspicious guards, but also past the mind probes of the Coffin's wizards. When the time is right, Felten plans to poison the food supplies stored here with a toxin that will make all who ingest it violently ill for a period of 48 hours. With most of the castle afflicted, the Cult of Murk will take back their home.

Sadly for Felten, Battle Priest Abbel knows all about him and his plans. Preferring to keep a known enemy close, Abbel has not revealed Felten's true affiliation to any but the commanders, afraid the zealous soldiers might kill the clerk. The commanders use Felten to carry misleading information to his leaders, though they have yet to determine how he does so.

16. Mess Hall and Kitchen: The cook, Quenton Caberwail, serves meals in this room twice a day. Those soldiers who have just eaten often take plates to their comrades still on duty. The commanders of the castle prefer to take their meals here as well, unless a prolonged meeting dictates otherwise.

A temporary wooden wall separates the kitchen from the mess hall, an improvement Quenton insisted upon. While the cook does want a more permanent wall erected, he knows it could be months before the dwarves get around to such non-essential construction. Still, Quenton sometimes shorts the dwarves on food, just to show his displeasure.

King Gelmoor brought Quenton, known to be crabby and ill-tempered, to Dragon's Coffin from his own kitchen. Figuring the cook would work better in an atmosphere of strict discipline, the king transferred Quenton after a polite request from his Queen, who had reached the end of her patience with the cook.

Surprisingly enough, Quenton has blossomed during his tenure at Dragon's Coffin. Dealing with soldiers more short-tempered and sullen

than he, the cook has developed into a culinary virtuoso, making the combat rations into things of beauty and savor. He still has a quick temper, however.

Three warriors-in-training, Kenv, Paten, and Leth, assist the chief cook. Major Kald took the three brothers (orphaned by the Cult of Murk) under his protection just after the occupation. The boys wish nothing more than to become heroic soldiers in defense of the crown. All 12 years of age (fraternal triplets), Quenton remains in charge of them until they reach the age of 15, when their military training will begin, should they still wish to pursue that path.

Meanwhile, if the boys perform their duties well in the eyes of their grumpy supervisor, Major Kald will take a few minutes with them every few days to teach them the fundamentals of sword play. Of all the boys, Leth shows the most promise as a warrior, though Paten seems adept with a mace.

Quenton Caberwail: Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 10; AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; 0 level human; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 by kettle; SZ M; ML 13

Kenv, Paten, & Leth: AL CG; AC 8 (padded armor); MV 12; F1; hp 4, 4, 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 by wooden sword; SZ M; ML 8

17. Bathhouse: One of the most useful pieces of construction left by the cult (according to the dwarven engineers), the bathhouse taps a natural underground hot spring. By King Gelmoor's order, all residents of Dragon's Coffin must bathe at least once a week. Though sulphur-smelling and bitter, the hot spring's water could serve as an emergency source during a siege.

The citadel's latrines also rest in this building.

18. The Dwarven Engineers: The dwarven brothers hired by King Gelmoor—Isilar, Tol, Rathagos, Ygdal, and Adlon Stonepounder—use this room to work their construction magic on the unfin-

ished, crude structure taken over from the cultists a year ago. This vast area serves as the dwarves' storage area, workshop, and sleeping quarters. King Gelmoor pays the dwarves a large sum of money to repair and reinforce Dragon's Coffin, and the brothers intend to earn every coin of it with honest work.

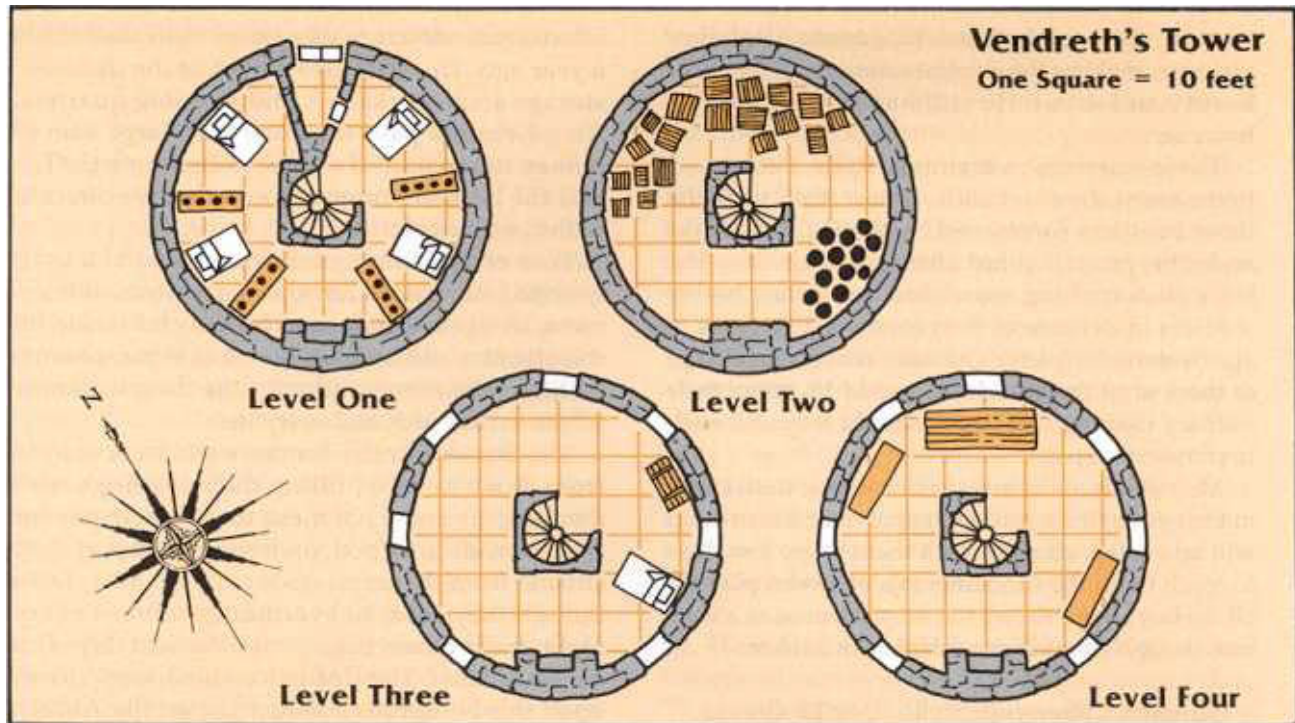
Pots of molding mortar, dozens of blocks of quarried stone used for repair, and rows of hammers, wedges, chisels, and blocks and tackle fill this chamber. Although it seems as if paraphernalia litters the room randomly, the dwarves know where to find each and every item.

The Stonepounder brothers work constantly from dawn to dusk, filling their evenings with dwarven ale and a hot meal; the brothers pay for their own ale and food, preferring to import their cuisine from dwarven traders in the area. Even though they seem to overindulge almost every night, the brothers begin work the next day with no complaints. The Coffin's commanders frown upon this boisterous conduct (especially Abbel), but they say nothing because the dwarves produce stonework unmatched for hundreds of miles.

Though the dwarves offer the commanders and select soldiers their hospitality, the humans almost never agree to join in, bound by strict military conduct and the orders of Major Kald. Every night the dwarves try to entice the gnome smith Mulgey to celebrate with them, attempting to gauge the gnome's character. Nine times out of ten Mulgey finds himself with too much work to be able to join the dwarves, but on the rare occasions he does socialize, it seems the entire castle holds its breath. No one knows precisely what mischief a handy gnome and clever dwarves can find, but the soldiers of Dragon's Coffin could tell tales.

Stonepounder Brothers: AL CG; AC 7 (leather); MV 12; F5; hp 34 ea.; THAC0 16; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d4+3 by warhammer; SA weapon specialization; SD +2 saving throw bonus; SZ M; ML 14

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19. Vendreth's Tower. Vendreth the wizard and his apprentices live in this four-level tower. Though it appears from the outside as nothing more than a pillar of stone stretching from the cave's floor to the ceiling, Vendreth actually created the tower with his own spells and several magical items. The dwarves mistrust anything built with magic, but the tower remains structurally sound inside and out. The pillar has no windows.

Once inside, the interior of the tower proves much more ornate than the outside. The apprentices live on the first floor, spending most of the time in their small chambers studying texts Vendreth himself wrote. When not in their room, the apprentices busy themselves with odd jobs and the occasional helping hand in Vendreth's magical experiments.

The apprentices seldom speak to anyone else in Dragon's Coffin, so most other residents take no

pains to make their acquaintance. The junior mages wear cloaks which mimic Vendreth's own ornate cloak, but theirs lack the intricate weaving found on the master mage's garment. The cloaks completely obscure the apprentice's faces and body shapes, leading some soldiers to speculate about the sex of the apprentices. In reality, one of the apprentices is a female, Vendreth's own daughter, the most skilled of the four.

The second floor is the wizard's storage area, containing obscure, nonmagical texts, and crates and jugs filled with various spell components. Vendreth also keeps a small stash of food here, for the times he and his apprentices forget to eat until long after Quenton goes to sleep.

Vendreth makes the third floor his personal chamber. No one but the wizard and King Gelmoor have ever been on this level or higher within the tower. The door to this level and the door to

the upper level contain numerous powerful magical glyphs and wards; Vendreth knows that the cult could use many of the magical items here to free Murk from his imprisonment, should they gain possession of them. Each door carries the spells *fire trap*, *power word stun*, and *symbol of death* which will trigger when anyone who does not speak the proper command words tries to open them. A large, plush, feather bed dominates the room, along with a cedar cabinet for the mage's robes and other articles of clothing. The wizard keeps his other belongings, magical or otherwise, on the fourth level.

The last level of the tower serves as Vendreth's laboratory and library. Four large shelves of books (most in some way magical, and some centuries old) line the walls of this level. A desk cluttered with parchment and spilled ink lies opposite the bookcases, and candle holders covered with melted wax rest on the corners of the desk.

Two large oak chests contain Vendreth's precious magic. The first chest contains the wizard's spellbooks, a veritable arsenal of spells ranging from 1st to 9th level (including spells like *teleport*, *rock to mud*, and *passwall* that could free Murk from captivity). The second chest contains magical items Vendreth and King Gelmoor have acquired for possible use against Murk and his insane cult. The items here include a *rope of entanglement*, *slippers of spiderclimbing*, a *robe of blending*, a *wand of frost* with 44 charges, 10 applications of *sovereign glue*, a *ring of jumping*, and a *two-handed defender +4*. Vendreth also keeps a fortune in diamonds here, over 40,000 gold pieces worth of the precious stones. The chests are trapped in a method similar to the doors to level three and four, and in addition Vendreth has *wizard locked* them at 17th level of ability.

Apprentices of Vendreth

Dian Felon: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 12; AL N; AC 9; MV 12; W2; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 by quarter staff; SA spells; SZ M; ML 10; Preferred Spells *burning hands*, *wall of fog*

Orld Thurland: Str 14, Dex 14, Con 9, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 14; AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; W3; hp 13; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 by dagger; SA spells; SZ M; ML 10; Preferred Spells *color spray*, *taunt*, *hypnotic pattern*

Hordon Teshic: Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 15; AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; W4; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 by quarterstaff; SA spells; SZ M; ML 11; Preferred Spells *detect magic*, *friends*, *sleep*, *wall of fog*, *knock*, *scare*

Alicia, Daughter of Vendreth: Str 9, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 15; AL LG; AC 4 (*bracers AC 4 & Dex*); MV 12; W4; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d+4 by *dagger +1*; SA spells; SZ M; ML 11; Preferred Spells *magic missile*, *light*, *jump*, *ESP*, *web*, *fireball*

20. King Gelmoor's Chambers: While at Dragon's Coffin, King Gelmoor uses this chamber as quarters. Though they are rather small, the king demanded these simple chambers in order to allow some of the larger rooms to be put to better use. There is a large comfortable bed, a wash basin, numerous changes of clothes, and storage space for almost anything Gelmoor brings with him on his many visits. Whenever the king is in his chamber, two guards are stationed outside.

Dragon's Coffin

Major NPCs

King Gelmoor Serelind

9th Level Human Male Fighter

Alignment: Lawful good
AC: 8/0 in armor
Move: 12
THAC0: 12
Hit Points: 66

Strength: 16 **Intelligence:** 16
Dexterity: 16 **Wisdom:** 15
Constitution: 14 **Charisma:** 17

Proficiencies: Long sword (specialized), two-handed sword, short sword, spear, short bow, dagger, blind fighting (na), mountaineering (na), brewing (16), survival (16), appraising (16), direction sense (16), rope use (16), weather sense (14)

Languages: Common, Dwarven

Armor: *Plate mail* +1, shield

Weapons: *Long sword of dancing* +1, short bow with 10 arrows +3, *dagger* +1

Equipment: *Amulet of life protection*, substitute signet ring, *ring of protection* +3 saves only.

Age: 51

Height: 6'

Weight: 177 lbs.

Hair/Eyes: Black and gray/Green

For the past 500 years the dragon Murk has been the bane of the Serelind family, a bane Gelmoor hopes to end soon; the dragon has directly or indirectly caused the deaths of all the Serelind kings since he came to their land. During Gelmoor's grandfather's reign, Murk captured several members of the royal family, demanding the crown jewels as ransom. Gelmoor's grandfather delivered the jewels in person, and Murk devoured him, keeping the royal signet and the hand which wore it. Gelmoor grew up hating the creature, and he swore at his father's memorial service that he would see the creature dead in his lifetime.

After their father died, rumored poisoned by agents of the Cult of Murk, Gelmoor remained at court, and his older brother Izan went into hiding as a priest of Heimdall. With the help of Izan and the church of Heimdall, Gelmoor's mother, the queen, spent her remaining years training Gelmoor to become a great king who would see the end of Murk's reign of terror. The queen died of old age the day following Gelmoor's coronation on his twentieth birthday, leaving her son to put an end to the scourge of Murk the Black.

King Gelmoor spent decades looking for a way to defeat the black dragon, but Murk's power base seemed secure—then came the construction of the Fortress of the Black Wyrn. King Gelmoor saw the new fortress not as a threat, but as an opportunity.

After several years of planning and observation King Gelmoor was ready to make his move, and he acted decisively, as his mother had taught him to. Following the attack, victory, and re-fortification of the fortress now named Dragon's Coffin, King Gelmoor has come one step closer to realizing the dragon's death.

A stern but honest man, King Gelmoor spends much of his time at Dragon's Coffin. Although he knows the defense of the castle rests in capable hands, he wishes to deal the killing blow to the creature himself. Gelmoor has a wife and three children (two boys and a girl) whom he has sent away until the final fate of Murk is decided.

Battle Priest Abbel (Izan Serelind)

15th Level Human Male Priest of Heimdall

Alignment: Lawful good
AC: -2
Move: 12
THAC0: 12
Hit Points: 55

Strength: 12 **Intelligence:** 13
Dexterity: 14 **Wisdom:** 18
Constitution: 11 **Charisma:** 16

Proficiencies: Broad sword, mace, flail, blind fighting (na), heraldry (13), weather sense (17), ancient history (13), reading/writing Common (16), spellcraft (12), endurance (13)

Languages: Common, Dwarven, Elvish, Giant

Armor: *Splint mail* +2, *shield* +2

Weapons: *Broad sword defender* +4, *flail* +2, mace

Equipment: *Ring of free action*, *brooch of shielding*, *eyes of minute seeing*, *incense of meditation*, holy symbol of Heimdall.

Age: 72

Height: 5' 9"

Weight: 152 lbs.

Hair/Eyes: Gray/Green

Spells/Day: 8 8 7 7 4 2 1

Preferred Spells:

1st: *bless*, *command* ×2, *cure light wound* ×2, *detect magic*, *light*, *remove fear*

2nd: *aid*, *charm person or mammal*, *detect charm*, *hold person* ×2, *know alignment* ×2, *speak with animals*

3rd: *dispel magic*, *glyph of warding*, *meld into stone*, *prayer*, *remove curse*, *speak with dead*, *stone shape*

4th: *cloak of bravery*, *cure serious wounds* ×2, *detect lie* ×3, *divination*

5th: *commune*, *cure critical wounds*, *raise dead* ×2

6th: *aerial servant*, *blade barrier*

7th: *confusion*

The Battle Priest Abbel is really Izan Serelind II, the older brother of King Gelmoo, thought to have perished in an ambush by the Cult of Murk 50 years ago. Izan did not die at all, but he went into seclusion, and then he entered the service of Heimdall, allowing his baby brother to become king of the land. The church of Heimdall has since guarded the Serelind family and watched over the land.

Over the years Izan rose within the ranks of the church of Heimdall, gaining power and influence. The continued presence of the black dragon Murk and his cult still bothered Abbel, though. When his brother approached him with a plan to trap and then kill the dragon, the priest could hardly contain his zeal; during the battle Abbel and his

priests carried the day, bringing victory over the cult members.

The cornerstone of the priests of Dragon's Coffin, Battle Priest Abbel has molded the faith of each of his disciples over the years, preparing them for what he knew would be a decisive confrontation with Murk the Black. Though nearly 70 years old, Abbel walks the castle's walls every morning, fulfilling his duty to protect Dragon's Coffin and to bring about the destruction of its vile prisoner.

Vendreth the Wizard

17th Level Human Male Wizard

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

AC: -2

Move: 12

THAC0: 15

Hit Points: 47

Strength: 12 **Intelligence:** 18

Dexterity: 11 **Wisdom:** 14

Constitution: 16 **Charisma:** 14

Proficiencies: Staff, dart, dagger, ancient history (17), engineering (15), herbalism (16), reading/writing Common (19), spellcraft (16), ancient languages (18)

Languages: Common, Dwarven, Halfling, Gnome, Dragon Tongue

Armor: None

Weapons: *Staff of the magi* with 20 charges, *dagger* +3

Equipment: *Bracers AC 2*, *ring of protection* +2, *cloak of protection* +2, *wand of illusion* with 17 charges, *gem of insight*, *boots of levitation*, *bag of holding*, *bag of marbles*, *pipe w/tobacco*.

Age: 75

Height: 5' 4"

Weight: 145 lbs.

Hair/Eyes: None/Blue

Spells/Day: 5 5 5 5 5 3 3 2

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Preferred Spells:

- 1st: *change self, magic missile, protection from evil, spider climb, Tenser's floating disc*
2nd: *continual light, ESP x2, mirror image, stinking cloud*
3rd: *blink, dispel magic, lightning bolt, protection from normal missiles, spectral force*
4th: *fire shield, minor globe of invulnerability, ice storm, polymorph self, stonewall*
5th: *cloudkill, cone of cold, false vision, passwall, teleport*
6th: *death fog, mass suggestion, projected image*
7th: *finger of death, shadow walk*
8th: *mass charm, power word blind*

Vendreth and Abbel have known each other for a long time, since both were at court together as children. Abbel, Izan at that time, was a royal whelp while Vendreth was a cobbler's apprentice who sneaked visits to the palace to play soldier with Izan. When they became teenagers the boys' paths diverged, Izan eventually pursuing his present subterfuge, and Vendreth finding talent not in shoe leather and sole tacks, but in words of power and mystic sendings.

After many years separated, Vendreth and Izan finally reunited at Dragon's Coffin. Vendreth immediately recognized his old friend, but said nothing; after a week Izan, now Abbel, revealed himself to his childhood friend. Now the two can play at soldier again, this time for real.

Vendreth has served the Serelind family for his entire career. The mage commands power, enough power, some believe, to destroy Murk and his deranged cult. Though he knows the extent of his abilities, Vendreth is not willing to test himself in a one-on-one battle with the wyrm. Murk may be out of shape and trapped in his lair, but he remains an ancient dragon with considerable power of his own. Meanwhile, the wizard spends considerable time within his tower searching for the answers that will restore order to the lands of Serelind.

Jarim Blackspawn

12th Level Human Male Priest of Faluzure

Alignment:	Neutral Evil	
AC:	-1	
Move:	12	
THAC0:	14	
Hit Points:	65	
Strength:	17	Intelligence: 14
Dexterity:	17	Wisdom: 18
Constitution:	15	Charisma: 10

Proficiencies: Flail, staff, mace, dagger, sling, engineering (14), herbalism (12), reading/writing (15), religion (17), spellcraft (12), direction sense (18), mining (14)

Languages: Common, Black Dragon

Armor: Splint mail +2

Weapons: Flail +2, dagger of venom +1

Equipment: Ring of jumping, wand of secret door and trap location with 56 charges, scroll of protection from magic, boots of elvenkind

Age: 42

Height: 6' 3"

Weight: 202 lbs.

Hair/Eyes: Black/Green

Spells/Day: 8 7 6 4 2 2

Preferred Spells:

- 1st: *command, cause light wounds x3, darkness, pass without trace, cause fear, protection from good*
2nd: *charm person, enthrall, hold person x2, messenger, resist fire, silence 15' radius*
3rd: *animate dead, cause blindness, dispel magic, curse, paralysis, speak with dead*
4th: *cause serious wounds, poison, protection from good 10' r, reflecting pool*
5th: *flame strike, slay living*
6th: *harm, word of recall*

A cruel, malicious man, Jarim wants nothing more than to accumulate enough power to subjugate others to his own will. Jarim was born into

the Cult of Murk, the child of two worshippers of the wyrm, and his own malevolence mirrors that of the dragon himself. Jarim seized control of the cult nearly a decade ago, demonstrating to the great dragon his power and ability, and Murk allowed him to live and to carry on another generation of dragon worshippers. Jarim venerates Murk as an avatar of Faluzure, the night dragon (Faluzure, a lesser god of undeath, decay, and hate, wanders the plane of Tarterus as a smoky black dragon, slaying anything foolish enough to approach it).

The Fortress of the Black, as Dragon's Coffin was once known, was Jarim's pride and joy, despite its ramshackle, run-down condition (or perhaps even because of its condition). He loved to walk the miles of corridors, surveying his holdings and reflecting on his own importance. Now he skulks like a burglar in his own house, forced to sneak tidbits in to Murk like a galley servant.

Jarim takes the loss of his castle seriously, and thinks of nothing but revenge upon King Gelmoor and the current occupants of Dragon's Coffin. However, in the year since the castle's occupation by the forces of Serelind, Jarim has not been able to free his dragon lord from the prison. Should his scouts and subordinates fail to discover a means to free Murk soon, Jarim may abandon his god and find another dragon to venerate.

Murk, Venerable Black Dragon

Int Very; AL CE; AC -5; MV 12, Fl 30 (MC C), Sw 12; HD 18; hp 142; THAC0 -2; #AT 3+ special; Dmg 1d6+10/1d6+10/3d6+10; SA breath 10d4+10, spell-like abilities; SD: Save as F18; MR 35%; SZ G (150' long); ML 19; Abilities: *water breathing, darkness three/day, corrupt water once/day, plant growth once/day, summon insects once/day*; Spell-like abilities: *Detect magic (x2), gaze reflection, identify, magic missile, mending, shield* at 20th level.

A long time ago even as elves measure years, in a dismal swamp, a black dragon made a nest to keep her eggs. After carefully padding the nest and ensuring that all seemed ready, the dragon laid her eggs and then did what any good black dragon mother would: she abandoned her unhatched young to their fates. One lucky dragon hatched a full day before his nest mates, eating them whole before they could pose a threat to him. That hatchling black dragon ventured into the swamp to make a name for himself, and that name eventually became Murk. In a few brief decades Murk had become the scourge of his home swamp, even challenging his mother for the right to hunt in certain areas. Soon the swamp became too small for two hateful, vicious dragons, so Murk, unable to kill his mother, moved on.

Now nearly 1,000 years old, Murk has grown soft since the cult chose him as their god. There was a time when the mere mention of Murk would inspire terror in the people of the land. The last time Murk waddled free from the confines of his lair, almost two decades ago, he could barely fly from the lack of exercise and excessive eating. Several times since his imprisonment the dragon has wanted nothing more than to throw himself against the newly-erected barricades, but Jarim calmed his fury. For now, the dragon waits for his cult to produce results, hoping the fruits of their search will free him.

Murk has accumulated a vast treasure hoard with the cult's help, most of which he still sleeps on in his lair. The Serelind family's crown jewels often rest on the dragon's head, and Murk keeps the king's signet ring on the severed hand that once belonged to Gelmoor's grandfather. The hoard itself is mostly devoid of magical items (a few minor potions), but is full of gold, silver, platinum, and uncut gems totaling over 200,000 gold pieces.

Murk does not at all like captivity, and he blames the cultists for his predicament; had they not taken him from his beloved swamp, King Gelmoor might never have captured him. Though he

Dragon's Coffin

longs to devour each cultist, Murk realizes that they represent his only avenue of escape, so he bides his time and takes their offerings of cattle and captured humans.

surprise; poisoned food has halved the military forces, making the PCs' jobs that much more difficult.

Adventure Hooks

- While adventuring in a nearby city, some of the magical items owned by the PCs have come to the attention of the Cult of Murk. The cultists steal some of the PCs' items, and they leave a trail for the PCs to follow, leading them to Dragon's Coffin. Once there, magic brought by the party, magic that could free Murk, will be within the grasp of the cult.
- Vendreth hires the PCs to obtain components for a potion of black dragon control. Many of these ingredients are easy to find, with the exception of black dragon's blood. The PCs must search nearby swamps for the blood they need, or they must sneak into Murk's lair to obtain a small blood sample. The latter is a more dangerous option, given the fact that a cornered beast is a dangerous one. Vendreth will supply the PCs with magic that will offer protection, and a *contingency* spell to get the PCs out of the lair.
- Felten the clerk and spy for the Cult of Murk decides to turn traitor against the dragon. He relates his story to the commanders, who hire the PCs to check out the facts. Felten takes the PCs to the cult's farm, and proposes to take them to the dragon. Is Felten a true turncoat, a very clever cult agent, or a double agent so turned around he no longer knows where his loyalties lie?
- Murk decides not to be a prisoner any longer, and against the cult's wishes and advice, he organizes an offensive against the castle. The PCs, at the castle as guards for a merchant caravan, find themselves in the middle of things. Note that: Felten's timing has caught Abbel by

Centuries ago, during a savage, bloody war with the orc tribes to the north, dwarven, elven, and human communities cooperated to build the Guardian, barricading the only valley through the mountains separating the Orclands from civilized domains. Building during the worst fighting of the centuries-old conflict, the combined forces of good folk kept the waves of orcs, goblins, and kobolds confined to the narrow valley below, while the largest exterior wall rose into the sky. After three months of bitter, pitched, heroic fighting, the humans, elves, and dwarves completed their first line of defense. Retreating behind the First Wall, the defenders worked to complete a castle and additional fortifications. In a scant two years the defenders of the civilized lands finished the Guardian and routed the goblinoid hordes. So decisive was the victory that in the 500 years since, no humanoid force has successfully challenged the citadel.

The golden era of cooperation proved short-lived, however. Pride, jealousy, and racial antipathy broke apart the fragile coalition, sending the elves and dwarves back to their more traditional homes, and leaving a war-torn human regime in command of the Guardian. The human kingdom could manage to muster only a skeleton force to hold the castle over the years, and the fortress fell into severe disrepair. The orcs, however, kept their distance, remembering the crushing defeat they had suffered centuries before.

Recently, however, a great orc war chief has risen to power, calling for a decisive strike against the "soft races," gathering a force reportedly twice the size of the one centuries before. The present human king, Ulan, fearing for the security of the civilized lands, approached the elven nation for assistance. Although the elves and humans still disliked and mistrusted one another, the common threat the orcs presented proved too great to ignore. The elven king, Finnard Earindelquion, sent troops to help garrison the Guardian, working side-by-side with the humans in an uneasy and volatile alliance. Currently the defenders

watch warily for encroaching orc bands while working feverishly to reinforce the Guardian against the tremendous gathering horde.

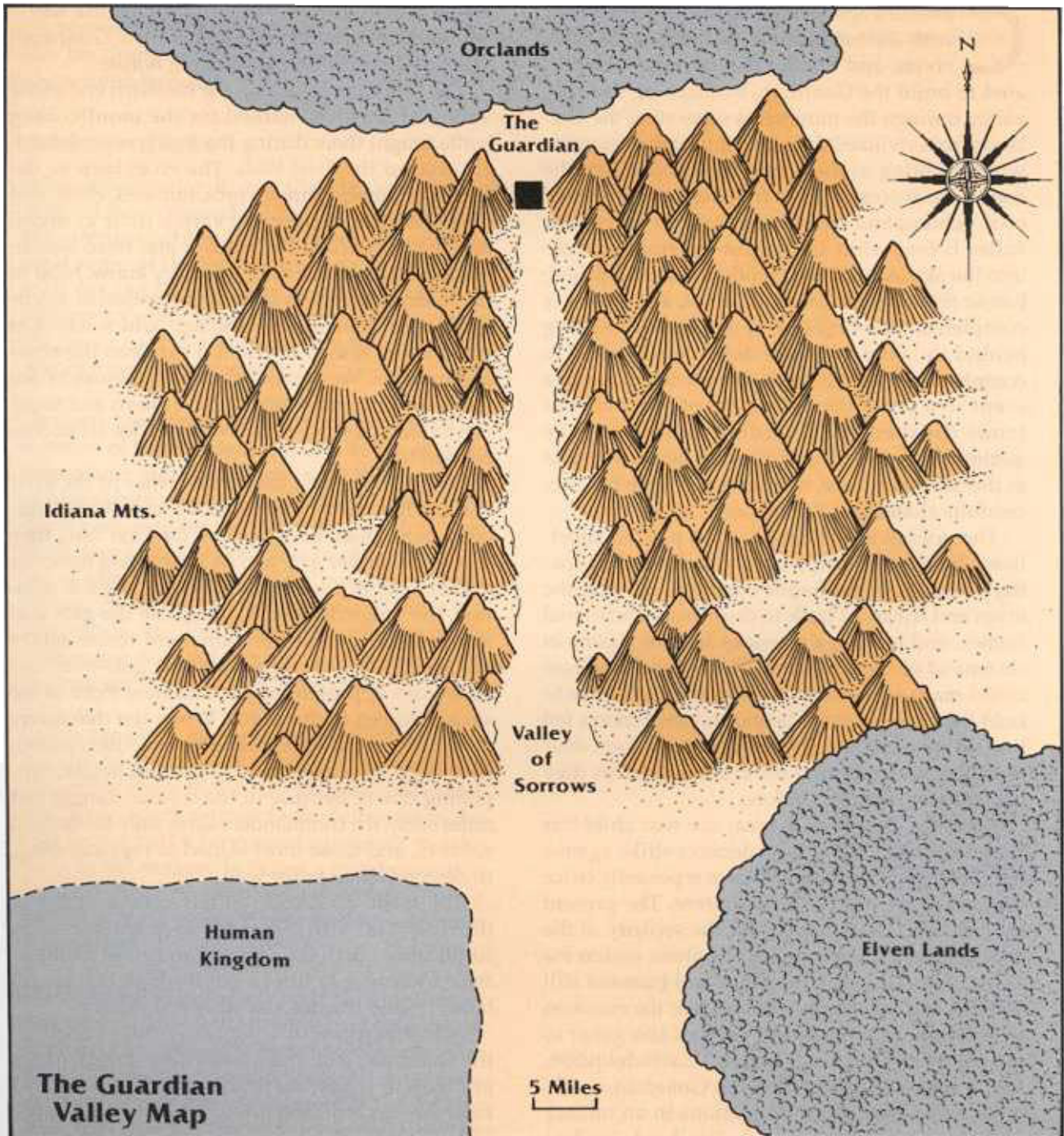
The Guardian stands on the northern end of the Valley of Sorrows, named for the months-long battle fought there during the first war as defenders erected the First Wall. The elves believe the ghosts of the slaughtered orcs, humans, elves, and dwarves still wander the valley floor at night, fighting the ancient battles over and over, searching for release in the only way they know. Most of the human defenders scoff at the notion of spirits fighting battles resolved long ago, which serves as yet another source of friction between the elves and humans. Very little of the citadel shows as one looks south, just the tips of the eastern and western towers, as the First Wall blocks all access beyond it.

Originally, a gate sat in the center of the First Wall. When the human masons and elven engineers began their new work on the First Wall, they found the former gate and its supporting masonry in exceedingly poor repair. Needing a quick solution, the kings decided to eliminate the gate and any possibility that the humanoid forces might breach it. The masons bricked the gate over and reinforced it, presenting an unbroken front to the savage forces to the north. When the defenders need to enter the Valley of Sorrows to reconnoiter, they drop long ropes to the ground below, rappelling down. Because of the serious danger just miles away, the commanders allow only the bravest soldiers, and those most skilled at rope-climbing, to descend the massive wall.

The castle itself rests on the southern edge of the First Wall, with sheer cliffs to either side of the fortification. Both the humans and elves maintain their own supply lines back through the mountains, neither trusting the other completely.

A vast expanse of wilderness ranges north of the Guardian, a land dominated by dozens of orc and goblin tribes. As in the past, one powerful ruler has united these tribes, fueling their battle lust with tales of riches waiting for them once they

The Guardian



conquer the soft races to the south. This warlord, Ghelgruk Bloodtusk, controls a force of nearly 4,000 goblinoids which he can summon to battle in five days time. Ghelgruk's orcs form fully two-thirds of the horde, about 2,600 swords, with the remaining force comprised of goblins, kobolds, and a few hill giants.

Uneasy Alliance

When the human and elven kingdoms agreed to help one another at the Guardian, they decided that the eldest child of each king would serve as commanders of their respective forces. While the eldest child of each king is female, the resemblance ends there. No two people could be more different than Princess Branwyn and Lady Luviera, who have not yet found a topic on which they agree. Both women, however, remain committed to the alliance and to defending their lands, though they have (sometimes heated) discussions late into the night on the proper methods they should employ.

A skilled warrior, Princess Branwyn considers it a high honor to command the forces defending her realm in the Guardian. She can use swords and bows equally well, and she commands the respect of many throughout the land. Years ago she served a tour of duty at the Guardian, thus she knows the citadel and the surrounding lands well. Branwyn brought with her 200 warriors and 20 priests, all of whom leapt at the chance to serve with her in this most dangerous post.

As much as Princess Branwyn delights in her assignment to the Guardian, so Lady Luviera despises her tasks, both of leading the elven forces and of working with the humans she considers inferior. Luviera resents the time commanding the elven forces takes from her magical studies, and though she tries to hide it from the troops, almost all know she does not like anyone who is not an elf; however, she does not let this bias interfere with her duty. Lady Luviera brought to the Guardian a contingent of 80 elven warriors and 8 elven

wizards, including herself.

Princess Branwyn and Lady Luviera use entirely different methods to command their forces. Lady Luviera allows her wizards and soldiers to develop their own methods for accomplishing a task, asserting that the people who do the job know best how it should be done. Branwyn, however, prefers to delegate authority and supervise responsibility, giving orders she expects to be followed to the letter. Luviera feels that the Princess stifles initiative and creativity with her chain of command, while Branwyn feels the elven Lady cares too little about the threat at hand, letting her subordinates take their own time getting the job done, reporting to no one. So far neither has seen the advantages of the other's position.

The Military

The commanders segregated their common warriors at first, but both commanders reached the decision (independently) that humans and elves had to learn to work together if they were to defend the citadel properly. Princess Branwyn advocated forming a special group of warriors from the ranks of both troops, a group of archers which Luviera named *Valiqinga* (Weeping Bows in elvish). This band of human and elven bowmen have learned to work together despite their differences, each race learning from the other to form a powerful and deadly force eager for the chance to prove their mettle against a goblinoid attack.

Recently, a second group of humans and elves began working together. Calling themselves the *Wildmen* (even the elves), these 10 rangers comprise the force that rappels down the First Wall to spend their day spying on the goblinoids nearby. The *Wildmen* rappel down the wall before sunrise every other day and they return well after nightfall, immediately reporting to both Lady Luviera and Princess Branwyn to deliver intelligence.

Though the princess and the elven wizardess command the Guardian, each employs a subordinate who commands the troops during defensive

situations and daily drills. Captain Ravig Hul was chief of King Ulan's personal guard before accompanying his daughter to the Guardian, and the elven Lord Mesper Moonshadow has lived over 200 years, becoming an expert archer and an accomplished swordsman. Together this human and elf coordinate the defense of their kingdoms at the Guardian; Lord Moonshadow enjoys almost total autonomy, exercising his discretion, while Captain Hul follows the exacting commands Branwyn gives him.

Although superficially cordial, Mesper and Ravig actually foment a rivalry that goes much further than mere racial mistrust. Instantly disliking one another the moment they met, neither has a kind word to say about the other. Mesper thinks they share a mystic bond that defines their relationship, but Ravig simply thinks the elf rubs him the wrong way. Once a week the two square off on the practice field and duel to first blood. Everyone not on duty usually attends the "practice," typically a long exercise since the two remain evenly matched. Neither Ravig nor Mesper allows any sort of wagering concerning their duels.

The commanders of the Guardian have developed a plan for skirmish drills three times a week, the times for which each soldier knows. During the drills the entire citadel goes on full-scale invasion alert, as if vast armies of orcs were actually advancing on the First Wall. When the soldiers are not performing the skirmish drills they prepare for the next one, and they help to repair the more important parts of the castle. With the post under constant threat, the soldiers enjoy very little free time, preferring to use that time for sleeping, or for minor hobbies like whittling or writing home. The commanders and their subordinates do not allow gambling, drinking, fighting, or any of the other things most soldiers do to relieve tension or boredom. Any PC who tries to organize a friendly game of chance or tries to offer a round of drinks may find himself lowered down the north side of the First Wall with only a pen knife for a weapon.

Princess Branwyn picks two random times each week to perform a snap inspection of all the troops, on duty or not. She inspects each post, each battlement, and every building but the wizards' tower. At the conclusion of these inspections Princess Branwyn commends those she finds deserving, and disciplines those who fail to meet her standards. The inspections have drawn the human and elven troops just a bit closer, as they work to make their posts the best in the citadel to meet the Princess's impossible standards. Branwyn, of course, knows this, and encourages the practice by issuing half-days off duty for the post that most pleases her that week. Luviera feels that troops who fear their commander lose respect for her, though she finds it increasingly difficult to argue with Branwyn's results.

Both human and elven troops serve six-month tours of duty, with an option to extend their tour for a year after a full month off between tours. The human kingdom pays its soldiers triple the normal rate, though many of the soldiers of the Guardian consider it an honor and a privilege to defend their kingdom against the orcish hordes. The elves find themselves less concerned with money, honor, and duty, serving instead for the chance to see a bit more of the world, even if it is a rather dingy, unattractive portion. They serve because their ruler has asked them to, and because their grandfathers have related to them the horrors of the last invasion, an event they cannot allow to happen again.

Other Activities

No merchants visit the Guardian, and the commanders do not allow social gatherings, parties, or contests (other than Ravig's and Mesper's "practice"). No one "just happens by" the Guardian, and any unauthorized personnel, wandering PCs for instance, will find themselves on the wrong end of the bows of the *Valiqinga*.

Supply caravans from King Ulan and Lord Finnard bring food, water, and other common

goods. The supply lines to the Guardian wind back through the mountains to two storage depots, one for the elves, one for the humans. Supply caravans leave the depots daily, one day from the human depot, one day from the elven depot, arriving at the Guardian two days later. The caravan drivers spend the night within the castle, and then they return to the civilized lands in the morning. One dozen skilled warriors guard each caravan, humans riding with the elven caravans, and elves riding with the human caravans. Lately, the supply lines have experienced several attacks by hungry mountain predators (pumas, giant eagles, cave bears), forcing the caravan guards to be more vigilant.

Besides their regular duties, most soldiers also help to repair and maintain the castle. With the exception of the First Wall, much of the castle's infrastructure needs attention. Things like broken doors, chipping mortar, and other minor inconveniences fall at the bottom of the repair list, replaced regularly by more important concerns, such as maintenance of the First Wall. However, when the time comes that something needs a minor repair immediately, Princess Branwyn hires outside craftsmen (escorted under heavy guard), or Lady Luviera suggests her wizards cast spells such as *mending* or a cantrip.

Currently, the Guardian's overworked masons and craftsmen are attempting to construct a winch with which they might lower members of the *Wildmen* and other personnel to the other side of the First Wall. They also plan to use the new winch to help with repairs on the hard-to-reach outer sections of the walls.

The Orclands

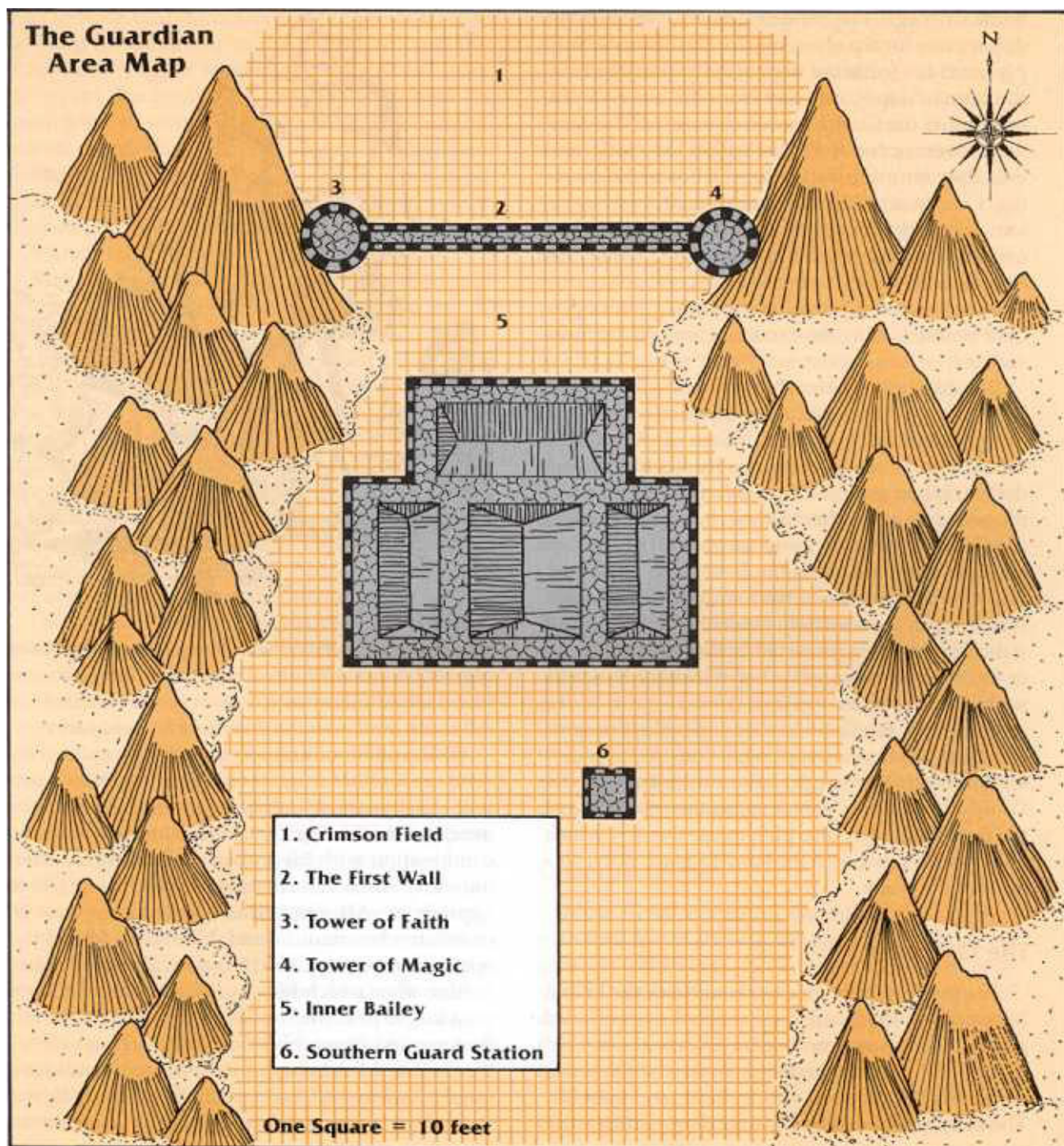
The expanse of savage lands north of the Idiana Mountains has been the home of uncivilized goblinoids since time began. Sparse trees, arid plains, and parched badlands make the Orclands suitable for no one but orcs, goblins, and kobolds. The orcs' poor husbandry and disregard for the



most basic conservation techniques have left their region barren and desolate. The goblinoids see their lack of plenty as the fault of the soft races to the south, and a matter for war and vengeance.

Ghelgruk Bloodtusk has become the most powerful orc warlord in ages, rising to his position in a few short years. Much more intelligent than the average orc, Ghelgruk used his immense size in combination with his sneaky cleverness to eliminate any orc warlord who blocked his path to supremacy. After mercilessly killing the first 10 chieftains he encountered, Ghelgruk found the rest much more inclined to surrender their tribes to him, after which he would kill the leader anyway, just to hear the survivors curse his name. His first success proved his first failure, however, as the civilized lands began to hear rumors about a huge orc army and took precautions. As Ghelgruk steered his troops to what he thought would be an

The Guardian



easy victory over the minimal force present at the crumbling citadel, he found instead a force of humans and the hated elves, behind a wall that seemed to have been built the day before.

The orc warlord chose not to attack at all that day. Instead he rode forward on his worg to just within bowshot, and delivered a challenge. He told the defenders that he would "bring the soft ones' toy house crashing down on their heads," whereupon the archers (not yet *Valiqinga*) pierced him with at least 10 arrows. Ghelgruk laughed and rode his worg away, to prepare to deliver on his promise.

Ghelgruk sends raiding parties out regularly to test the Guardian's defenses and preparedness, and to search for ways around the citadel. The orcish soldiers welcome the chance to poke at the proud humans and cruel elves, and each hopes he will be the one to discover a weak link which will allow the goblinoid horde to sweep into the soft race's lands.

The orcs, goblins, and kobolds believe their leader walks with the orc gods, and they will do anything he orders them to do. Rumors abound that Ghelgruk's army includes many shamans, who venerate orcish, kobold, and goblin gods, giving the army more magical force than that usually associated with a goblinoid mob.

Ghelgruk Bloodtusk: Str 18 (98), Dex 14, Con 19, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 8 (16 to goblinoids); AL CE; AC 3 (chain mail & shield +1); MV 12; F10; hp 104; THAC0 11; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d10+7 by two-handed sword +2; SD +1 saving throws vs poison; SZ M; ML 19

Layout

Unless otherwise noted, interlocking granite blocks reinforced with scorched olive wood compose the walls of the Guardian, both the First Wall and the citadel itself. Burning the olive wood renders it almost as hard as steel, making it a perfect material for use in a fortification such as this one. In the citadel the walls are between 10 and 15 feet thick, and the ceilings reach a height of 10 feet in most chambers. *Continual light* globes illuminate high-traffic areas of the castle, while personnel use oil lanterns in their chambers.

1. The Crimson Field: This open plain north of the Guardian was the site of a days-long slaughter centuries past, hence the name. Just beyond the Crimson Field, mere miles away, the orc warlord Ghelgruk marshals his forces.

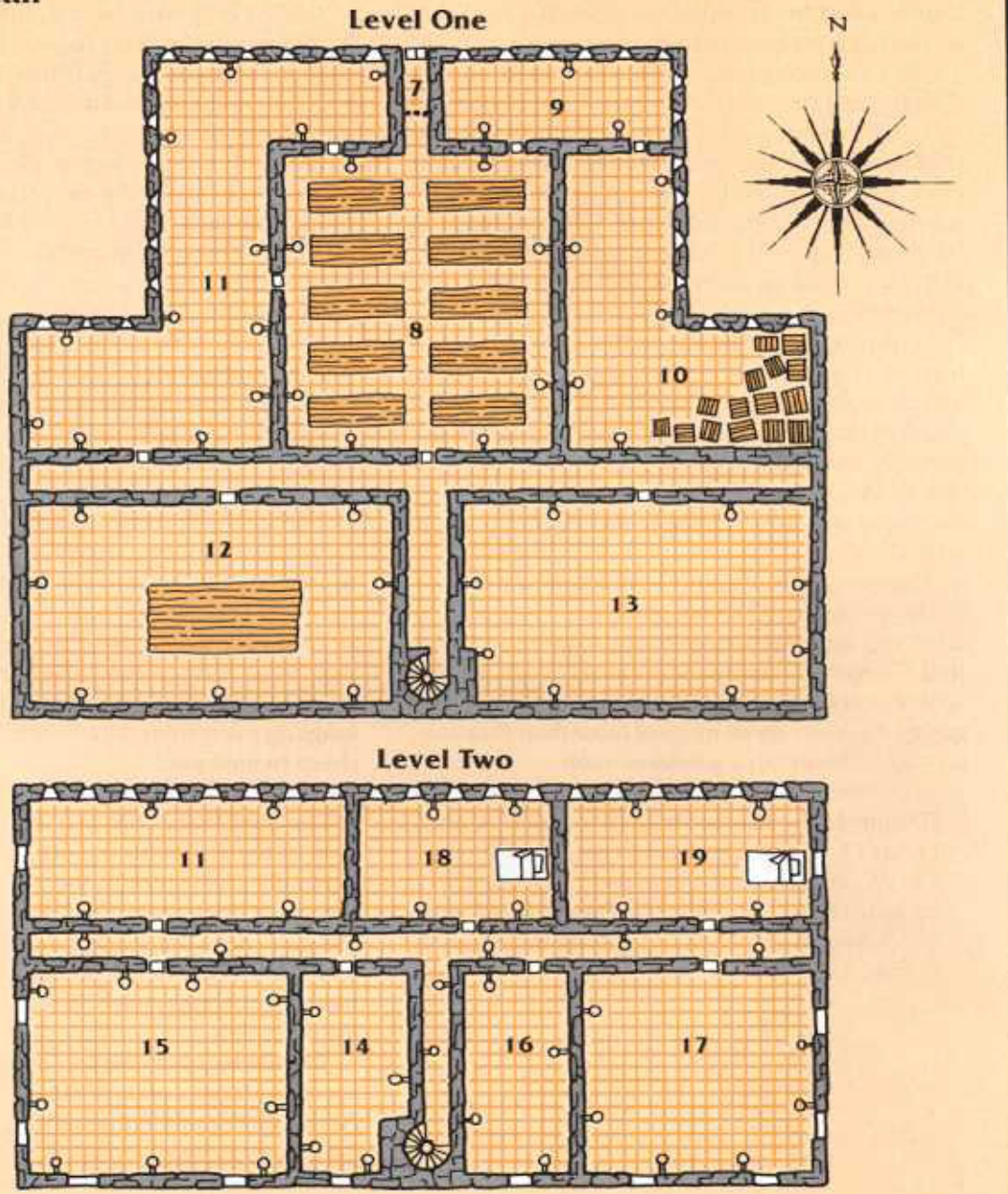
The *Wildmen*, using a *spade of colossal excavation* on loan, recently dug over 100 holes in three hours, placing within the holes jars filled with tightly coiled barbed wire. The ceramic jars act as land mines: too resilient to break underfoot, the weight of a siege machine (or ogre) will crack them in an instant, releasing the barbed wire, and tangling everything in a 5-foot radius with razor-sharp twined steel.

2. The First Wall: This vast wall extends from one side of the valley to the other, a distance of 200 yards. Ten feet thick at its most narrow, the wall reaches a thickness of 20 feet near the site of the old gate, now the strongest part of the wall. The wall reaches a uniform 60 feet high, looking much like a dam across a river, a comparison not lost on the defenders.

Battlements line the top of the First Wall, with several catapults and ballistae at regular intervals. At the spots most vulnerable to siege engines the defenders have placed pots of oil, with magical braziers to heat them. No one but the masons and the commanders knows that the extreme edges of the First Wall would fall in a matter of minutes to a

The Guardian

The Guardian



determined battering ram attack. The masons have been working from the center out, trying to anticipate an orc's thinking, which would dictate going for the presumably weaker center portion (Branwyn assumes). The winch being constructed to lower people to the other side of the First Wall rests near the western edge of the wall.

Twenty soldiers patrol the First Wall at all times, presenting a force bristling with arrows and spears. During times of increased goblinoid activity, or at the urging of the *Wildmen*, Captain Ravig doubles the number of guards atop the First Wall and places an additional soldier in both the eastern and western towers. The *Valiqinga* have become expert at shooting inside their maximum range, drawing orc patrols well into the line of fire, then loosing a lethal volley on the surprised orcs, killing one or two before the rest manage to escape.

3. Western Tower, Tower of Faith: The 30 warrior-priests who accompanied Princess Branwyn to the Guardian occupy this two-story tower. These followers of Thor (the DM should substitute an appropriate god of combat and bravery for his own campaign) offered their services to King Ulan when it became known that the orcs had gathered an army. The priesthood of Thor has traditionally been the kingdom's protector, and the priests served the human realm during the first goblinoid war.

The lower level of the tower serves as an unadorned temple where the priesthood conducts simple services each morning. Stairs lead up to the second level of the tower, which is open to the sky and armed with a catapult. During cloudy, rainy weather or during thunderstorms, all the priests not on duty gather on the second level to praise the storm and to honor their god.

Kyman Thunderbolt stands as the highest-ranking priest of Thor at the citadel. Brother Thunderbolt, a hulking brute of a man some say is the earthly incarnation of the god of thunder, serves at the Guardian to atone for a transgression the order

committed during the first goblinoid war. A series of botched orders sent an entire platoon to their deaths, and while no one knows what actually happened, the priesthood of Thor assumed responsibility, professing their negligence and dereliction of duty. Brother Thunderbolt hopes to ease his order's centuries-old burden of guilt in a glorious, storm-tossed battle. All members of the priesthood serve Kyman faithfully, and each member of the order claims to be the equal of any three regular soldiers in the fortress.

Kyman Thunderbolt: Str 18, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 14; AL CG; AC -1 (*plate mail +1 & Dex*); MV 12; P10; hp 51; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4+3 by *lucern hammer +3*; SA spells, summon rain; SZ M; ML 18

Spells/Day: 6 6 3 3 2

Preferred Spells:

1st: *bless, command, remove fear, magic stone, create water, protection from evil*

2nd: *chant, dust devil, spiritual hammer x2, barkskin, obscurement*

3rd: *call lightning x2, dispel magic*

4th: *free action, protection from lightning, control temperature 10'r*

5th: *flame strike, control winds*

Priests of Thor (19): AL CG; AC 2 (*plate mail & shield*); MV 12; P5; hp 25 ea.; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 by *lucern hammer* or 1d4+1 by *warhammer*; SA spells, summon rain; SZ M; ML 14

Spells/Day: 4 4 2

Preferred Spells:

1st: *bless, magic stone, light, faerie fire*

2nd: *hold person, spiritual hammer, barkskin, obscurement*

3rd: *protection from evil 10'r, call lightning, dispel magic*

4. Eastern Tower, Tower of Magic: On the orders of their liege, Finnard Earindelquion, seven elven wizards accompanied Lady Luviera to the Guard-

The Guardian

ian to support the human contingent with a powerful magical presence. These wizards have segregated themselves from the rest of the Guardian's community, and even some of the elven warriors consider them standoffish and rude. Despite their attitude, each of these wizards commands formidable power which may soon be put to the test against the encroaching goblinoids.

The wizards' tower also reaches only two stories, though walls enclose the upper level. The Tower of Magic's second level features large windows facing the Orclands from which the wizards can cast spells over the First Wall. The southern portion of this level and the entire first level have been renovated to provide the wizards quarters. The mages and Lady Luviera argue that they need privacy to study their magic, a position the non-mages in the citadel do not seem able to understand. After living around Luviera for some time now, however, Branwyn has come to appreciate the amount of concentration and study a mage needs to devote to his or her craft. The Princess has been trying to ease tensions concerning the mages' separation, but so far she has had little success.

Lady Luviera leads the wizards personally. The five male and two female wizards all studied under the elf princess. Although none of them appreciates being pulled so far from their home, they will follow the orders of Lady Luviera without question.

Elven Wizards (7): AL N; AC 7; MV 12; W6; hp 17 ea.; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 by dagger or 1d6 by quarterstaff; SA spells; SD 90% resistance to *sleep* and *charm* spells; SZ M; ML 13

Spells/Day: 4 2 2

Preferred Spells:

1st: *color spray*, *dancing lights*, *magic missile*, *phantasmal force*

2nd Level: *darkness 15' r*, *pyrotechnics*

3rd Level: *lightning bolt*, *protection from normal missiles*

5. Inner Bailey: The soldiers of the Guardian use this area as a practice field for drills. However, should the First Wall fall, the entire garrison has orders to fall back to the bailey to make a final stand. The original builders fit the north wall of the bailey with many arrow slits, preparing for a breach in the First Wall.

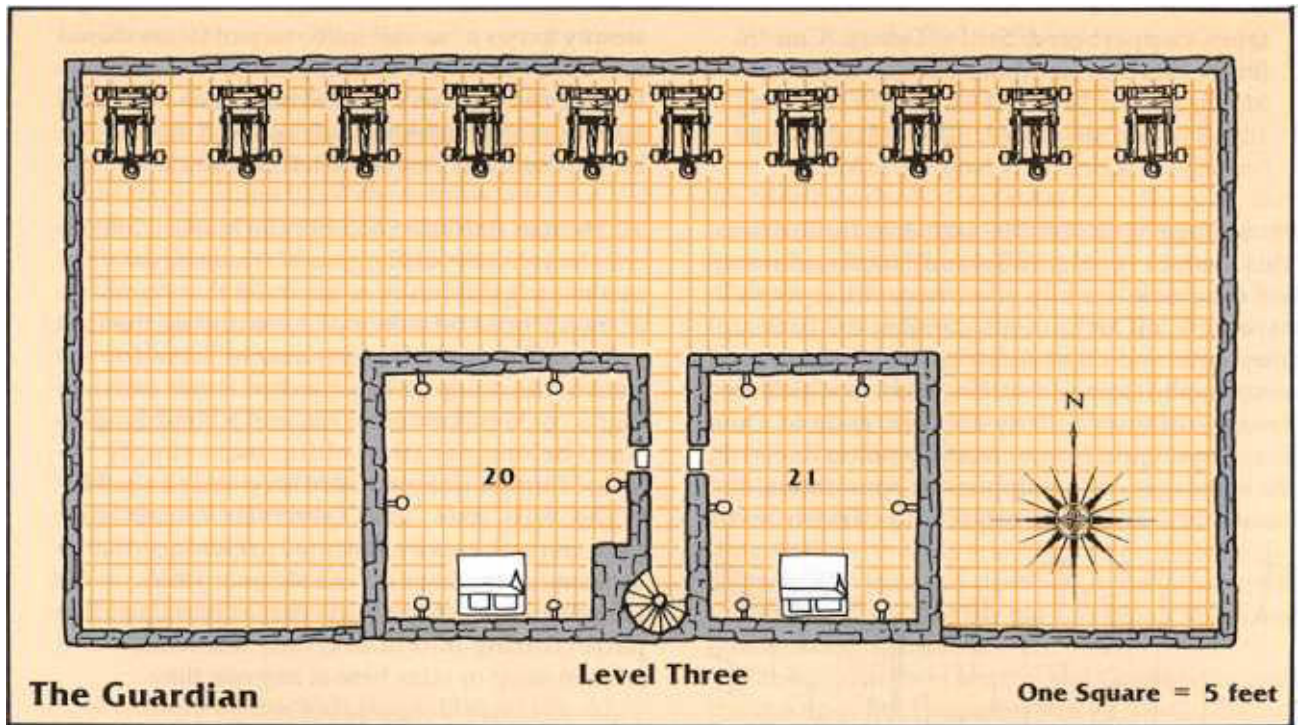
6. Southern Guard Station: Persistent yet unsubstantiated rumors that the orc forces have found a tunnel under the Guardian have forced the commanders to post guards here. Neither the human nor the elven kingdom has the resources to build a wall at this spot, as they currently focus their attention on the present threat to the north.

One dozen elven warriors occupy this post, while another dozen human soldiers patrol the mountain pass. Both patrols assist arriving supply caravans, hunting down the predators which threaten the carts. Recently the elves have seen something moving along some of the lower cliffs, but they have been unable to identify anything, being entirely unfamiliar with mountains and their ecology. One or two sharp-eyed humans have also seen a flash of movement, which they cannot identify. All people entering the Guardian must stop at this guard post—no exceptions allowed.

Castle Layout

Level One

7. Inner Gateway: The only entrance to the Guardian's castle proper, thick iron double doors remind the inhabitants daily about their duty. Guards can lower a large iron rail to bar the doors from the inside. Once past the doors, the short passage leading to the main hall carries one last mechanical defense before an enemy could reach the castle's inner sanctum: halfway down this hallway a weighted iron portcullis hangs in the ceiling. Pulling a lever just inside the main hall will release the gate, blocking the passage. Once the gate falls



it takes considerable effort to reset the 1,000 pound device.

8. Main Hall: This enormous hall serves as both a meeting area and a dining room for the troops of the Guardian. Several rows of tables and chairs line the room, which defenders have orders to use to block the entrance in case of an attack. A raised platform sits at one end of the room, for Princess Branwyn and Lady Luviera to use when addressing their soldiers.

9. Kitchen: This area contains the only nonmilitary personnel stationed by King Ulan. Six orphans and would-be squires, all 0-level humans, work under the watchful eye of the old dwarf Quin Copperbeard. These half-dozen young men all tried to enlist in the military to fight the orc hordes to the north; since they were almost of age, King Ulan

consulted with Branwyn, and agreed to begin their training at the Guardian, in the thick of the action. Quin and his staff prepare meals for the 200+ men and women of the Guardian each day, the wrinkled dwarf working his staff from dawn to dusk to insure the troops are fed.

Quin is cheerful, and not one defender stationed at the Guardian can honestly say he or she does not like the jovial dwarf. Even the elves, who do not care for dwarves much at all, find themselves smiling a little more in his presence, infected by his charm. What surprised the elves the most, however, was Quin's light touch with the delicate vegetables and touchy sauces they love. Though they judge him not nearly as good as a true elven chef, the elves do like the food Quin prepares for them.

The Guardian

Quin Copperbeard: Str 16, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 17, Cha 13; AL LG; AC 8 (leather); MV 6; F4; hp 34; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+3 by *warhammer* +2; SD +4 saving throw bonus vs. magic and poison; SZ S; ML 13

10. Storage: Quin and his staff care for this area. This chamber contains not only food and water, but the castle's many other necessities as well: paper, ink, oil for lanterns, candles, medical supplies, cots, and other sundries. Five locks control access to the storage chamber, locks to which only Princess Branwyn, Lady Luviera, and old Quin have keys. Quin cannot read Common or elvish, the languages on the supplies he administers, and none of his assistants can read dwarvish, so he



simply keeps a mental inventory of items stored here. The old dwarf, despite his age (193 winters), keeps amazingly accurate records, often telling his assistants on which shelf they can find the last carrot or how many cloves are left in a bottle.

11. Human Barracks: Most of the human defenders sleep in one of the two barracks areas. The castle's original builders assumed that hundreds of men would be stationed here during the first goblinoid war, so there is ample room for the present-day troops. The Guardian issues each soldier a cot, a pillow, blankets, and a chest for personal belongings (the soldier must supply the lock). Though some soldiers keep their valuables in the chest, many also keep their valuables on their person, more a cultural preference than a concern for safety, as no one steals anything at the Guardian. Since the soldiers of the Guardian often patrol during odd hours, only a few men and women sleep or relax here at any one time.

Human Soldiers (188): AL LN; AC 4 (chain mail & shield); MV 12; F4; hp 23 ea.; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 by long sword or 1d6 by long bow; SZ M; ML 12

Members of the Valiqinga-Human (10): AL LN; AC 5 (leather armor + Dex); MV 12; F5; hp 30 ea.; THAC0 16; #AT 2/1; Dmg 1d8+1 by long bow (sheaf arrow) or 1d8 by long sword; SA specialization in long bow; SZ M; ML 13

12. War Room: A large table and several chairs occupy this room. Maps of the castle, the Orclands, and the civilized lands to the south cover the table. Princess Branwyn, Lady Luviera, and their military advisors, Kyman Thunderbolt, Captain Ravig, and Mesper Moonshadow, gather in this room to plan their forthcoming strategy against the goblinoid forces. Princess Branwyn and Brother Thunderbolt use this chamber the most, drawing up contingency plans for contingency plans, preparing for anything.

13. Elven Barracks: The elves who occupy these chambers absolutely hate them. More at home in the forest, the graceful elves chafe at confinement in the castle. Many of the elf soldiers get little sleep, and some find themselves waking after horrid nightmares. Some have shared this information and their concerns with Lady Luviera, but they do not wish this to be known outside their race.

The elven barracks appears exactly the same as the human barracks, though of course there are fewer elves. The elves resent having to keep their personal chests locked, but they do so as they still do not trust the humans completely.

Elven Soldiers (67): AL LN; AC 1 (*elven chain & Dex*); MV 12; F5; hp 27 ea.; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 by long sword or 1d6 by long bow & arrows; SA +1 to hit with long sword & long bow; SD 90% resistant to *sleep & charm*; SZ M; ML 13

Members of the Valiqinga-Elven (10): AL LN; AC 4 (leather armor + Dex); MV 12; F5; hp 26 ea.; THAC0 16; #AT 2/1; Dmg 1d8+1 by long bow (sheaf arrow) or 1d8 by long sword; SA specialization in long bow, +1 to hit with long bow and long sword; SD 90% resistant to *sleep & charm*; SZ M; ML 13

Level Two

14. Smith: Malm Tragath, a human smith of some renown, handles the armor and weapon repair needs of the Guardian's forces. This large workshop is his pride and joy, with a forge that would please any dwarf. Malm is always willing to talk to those with an interest in his work, and he knows much about what is going on at the castle. Any good piece of gossip at the Guardian eventually finds its way to Malm, as both humans and elves stop by to chat with him regularly. Malm, for example, knew about the movements on the cliffs before the commanders did. This area serves as Malm's personal quarters as well as his work place.

Malm Tragath: Str 18 (25), Dex 14, Con 18, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 14; AL LG; AC 10; MV 6; F2; hp 19; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+3 by hammer; SZ M; ML 13

15. Stoneworkers' Barracks: Over the past few months the large crew of masons and craftsmen have returned to the civilized lands to the south. Although a fair amount of work yet remains, Princess Branwyn declared that the Guardian needed troops more than laborers, thus she sent half the stoneworkers home. Currently, eight men work to keep the walls of the Guardian in good repair, all of them de facto members of the human military, though none of them has ever carried a sword. This barracks appears similar to others in the castle, with simple cots and chests for valuables. In addition, this chamber probably looks the finest in the castle, as the masons repair their own quarters during their time off.

The twin brothers Jeremy and Gol Makyar lead the contingent of masons still at the Guardian. Alone either of these men would be the best stoneworker for hundreds of miles around, but together they become the most formidable team of carvers and fitters since the dwarven masons who supervised the first construction on the Guardian. With their six assistants they keep the walls standing and the ceilings from falling in. Both of the middle-aged bachelors play hard to compensate for their hard work, totally disregarding the Guardian's "no-alcohol" policy, having grog smuggled into the Guardian encased in thick blocks of limestone. Princess Branwyn has almost sent the brothers home twice, but lady Luviera managed to change her mind, pointing out the good they do, despite their off-duty carousing. Princess Branwyn will not change her mind a third time, however.

16. Aviary: Birds, especially hawks and pigeons, constitute a necessary part of the Guardian's communications network. Pigeons carry messages for long distances, back to the kingdoms, for instance,

The Guardian

and hawks carry more urgent messages over shorter distances.

This aviary houses 10 pigeons and five hawks, all trained by Princess Branwyn. If not tending to her duties or sleeping the Princess comes here, either to wait for messages or to care for her birds. Two soldiers are always stationed outside the door to this chamber, while a man inside awaits important messages.

17. The Wildmen: This chamber is quarters to the Guardian's scouts, the *Wildmen*. Since their schedules differ from the other soldiers', Princess Branwyn gave them their own chambers. Having their own quarters also engenders the *Wildmen's* strong unit identity.

A half-elf ranger, Edyn Pathfinder, leads the *Wildmen*. The only thing that surpasses Edyn's skills as a ranger is his intense hatred for all the goblinoids of the Orclands. Several other members of the *Wildmen* have studied under Edyn's supervision, and they share his hatreds.

Edyn Pathfinder: Str 17, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 15; AL CG; AC 1 (*bracers AC 4 & Dex*); MV 12; R8; hp 49; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+2 by *long sword* +1 and 1d4+3 by *dagger* +2; SA two weapon fighting, +4 vs goblinoids; SD 30% resistant to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M; ML 15

The Wildmen: AL CG; AC 5 (*leather armor & Dex*); MV 12; R5; hp 30 ea.; THAC0 16; #AT 2/1; Dmg 1d8 by *long sword* and 1d4 by *dagger*; SZ M; ML 13

18. Captain's Quarters: This chamber serves as sleeping quarters for Captain Ravig Hul. The chamber remains very plain and unadorned, since Captain Ravig spends little time here, mostly sleeping and reading a bit. Ravig keeps only a cot (the same issue as a common soldier's), a chest, and a small table with a lantern here. Despite his lack of personal valuables Ravig keeps a finely

crafted lock on the door because he is in charge of the payroll for the human soldiers of the Guardian. He stores it in the chest under the cot.

Though extremely tough and disciplined, the Captain truly cares for his men. King Ulan secretly charged Ravig to keep Princess Branwyn safe, but after he followed her around for their first week at the Guardian, Ravig came to realize that Branwyn can keep herself safe. Now he counts her as a friend rather than as a little girl to protect.

Captain Ravig Hul: Str 16, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 15; AL LG; AC 0 (*plate mail* +3); MV 12; F12; hp 88; THAC0 9; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4+4 by *broad sword* +3; SA weapon spec. +1 to hit/+2 damage; SZ M; ML 16

19. Mesper Moonshadow: These chambers are home to Lord Mesper of the elven contingent. Unlike Captain Ravig, Lord Mesper has spared no expense in decorating this room to something more his taste. A four poster feather bed dominates most of the chamber, covered in elegant silk sheets and scented pillows. A hand carved desk of solid oak rests in one corner of the chamber, parchments and a lantern resting on top. An ornamental rug covers the floor on one side of the bed, an exquisite work of elven craftsmanship.

Mesper spends most of his off hours here, revolted at the thought of spending time out in what he considers a ruin of a castle. During his free time the elven lord spends his time writing poetry, and he has completed several books.

Though he does not hate humans, he does take exception to being at the Guardian. Many elves stationed here respect Mesper for his accomplishments back home, so his poor attitude sometimes rubs off on his men—though he wishes it wouldn't.

Mesper Moonshadow: Str 15, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 15; AL N; AC 0 (*elven chain mail & Dex*); MV 12; F9; hp 58; THAC0 12; #AT 2/1; Dmg 1d8+3; SA weapon spec. +1 to

hit/+2 damage, +1 to hit with long bow & long sword; SD 90% resistant to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M; ML 15

Level Three

20. Princess Branwyn's Chambers: This large room serves as both a sleeping chamber and an office for the human princess. The door to this chamber is locked, and only the princess has the key. While she sleeps, two guards stand duty outside her door. Comfortable but not elegant furniture dominates the room—a bed, a dresser, a table, two chairs, a small bookcase, and a desk with two lanterns above it. A tiny, secret alcove below the desk holds a *ring of spell storing* containing a *teleport* spell. King Ulan gave the ring to Princess Branwyn for her protection, instructing her to use the ring should orcs overrun the castle. Branwyn, of course, has no intentions of abandoning her post for any reason at all, and she plans to use the ring to send at least three severely wounded soldiers back in her place. The secret alcove also contains the following items: 776 gold pieces, 245 silver pieces, 10 opals worth 50 gold pieces each, a *potion of super-heroism*, and three *potions of extra-healing*.

21. Lady Luviera's Chambers: The chambers of the elven commander appear nearly identical to those of her human counterpart. Luviera does not wish to seem superior, refusing to decorate her chambers in a manner similar to Lord Mesper's. Two elven guards stand outside the Lady's chambers when she sleeps or studies spells.

However, unlike Branwyn's chambers, Luviera's chambers include several magical wards protecting the chamber and Luviera's personal belongings. A *fire trap* spell wards the door, a precaution all stationed within the Guardian know about. A chest beneath Luviera's bed contains her precious spellbooks, 400 platinum pieces, 4 diamonds worth 150 gold pieces each, a *wand of paralysis*, a scroll of *protection from magic*, and a *rope of entanglement*.

Major NPCs

Princess Branwyn Rhovanmark

9th Level Female Human Fighter

Alignment:	Lawful good		
AC:	-2		
Move:	12		
THAC0:	12		
Hit Points:	57		
Strength:	16	Intelligence:	15
Dexterity:	16	Wisdom:	16
Constitution:	13	Charisma:	17

Proficiencies: Morning star (specialized), short sword, short bow, spear, dagger, dart, blind fighting (na), mountaineering (na), tracking (16), ancient history (14), reading/writing Common (16), etiquette (17), animal handling, avian (15), animal training, avian (16)

Languages: Common, Elvish

Armor: *Banded mail* +2, shield

Weapons: *Morning star* +3, *short bow of distance*, 10 +2 arrows, *dagger* +1

Equipment: *Brooch of shielding*, *ring of free action*, scroll of *protection from gas*, *wand of illumination* w/33 charges.

Age: 27

Height: 5' 6"

Weight: 140 lbs.

Hair/Eyes: Red/Green

Branwyn is an extremely attractive woman, but her stern demeanor makes her far more intimidating than alluring. Her fiery red hair frames a face constantly furrowed with lines of intense concentration and concern. Her brilliant green eyes search persistently when she speaks to anyone, and more than one warrior has found himself staring at his shuffling feet when confronted with her stare.

Branwyn seems young to be in her position, but she has proven her worth many times over. When Branwyn's mother died before producing a male

The Guardian

heir, King Ulan reluctantly sent his daughter into military training, hoping she would one day rule the kingdom. Branwyn proved amazingly adept at military matters, rising to the top of her class and outperforming all the other students. When she was only 20 years old, she took command of a training exercise after orcs killed the commander, hunting down the raiding band and carrying back their heads personally.

There could be no more perfect commander for the Guardian than Branwyn, who has made studying the citadel her life's work. When she was 12 she traveled to the Guardian against the express wishes of her father, to see the castle firsthand. She knows every nook and cranny of the castle, often walking the walls at night to see her troops. She has studied records of the Guardian's construction, accounts of the conduct of the first war, and descriptions of orc tactics to prepare herself for the battle to come.

Princess Branwyn the woman, not the commander, is quite shy. She knows one day she must marry to produce an heir to her family's throne, but she becomes very timid when men try to court her. For Branwyn, the relationship of commander to subordinate seems much easier than a romantic entanglement. Her father remains patiently optimistic, however, knowing his daughter will do her duty both to the Guardian and to the kingdom as a whole.

Lady Luviera Earindelquion

10th Level Female Elf Wizard

Alignment:	Neutral Good		
AC:	-3		
Move:	12		
THAC0:	17		
Hit Points:	27		
Strength:	9	Intelligence:	17
Dexterity:	19	Wisdom:	16
Constitution:	10	Charisma:	15

Proficiencies: Staff, dagger, astrology (16), herbalism (15), ancient languages (17), reading/writing Elvish (18), reading/writing Common (18), spellcraft (15), artistic ability: sculpture (16), direction sense (17), singing (15), musical instrument: clarsach (18)

Languages: Elvish, Common, Orc

Armor: None

Weapons: *Staff of the Magi* with 16 charges, *dagger* +1.

Equipment: *Bracers of Defense AC 0*, *robe of eyes*, *necklace of adaptation*, *wind fan*, *scroll: fireball*, *teleport*, *cone of cold*, & *hold monster*, *wand of frost* with 43 charges, *ring of shooting stars*

Age: 95

Height: 4' 10"

Weight: 101 lbs.

Hair/Eyes: Blond/Golden

Spells/Day: 4 4 3 2 2

Preferred Spells:

1st: *magic missile*, *shield*, *spook*, *unseen servant*

2nd: *detect invisibility*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *summon swarm*

3rd: *lightning bolt*, *protection from evil 10' r*, *spectral force*

4th: *Evard's black tentacles*, *solid fog*

5th: *cloudkill*, *wall of force*

Elves of the forest look up to Lady Luviera Earindelquion, seeing in her the qualities that once made the elven nation great. Many of the elves, including her father, hope that Lady Luviera can help to eliminate the goblinoid threat to the north, securing the realm's future. These expectations have proved quite a bit of responsibility for an elven mage who did not want the job.

Luviera studied under the direction of one of the greatest elven mages of the land, and showed great promise at a young age. Thus the elf did not wish to co-command the Guardian with Princess Branwyn, thinking it not only a waste of her talents, but precious time taken from her studies. After much soul-searching, the female mage decided to follow the path her life had taken, vow-

ing to do her best to rid the land of the encroaching goblinoid forces.

A firm, austere woman, Lady Luviera remains sure of her magical abilities. She leaves the command of the elven soldiers to Mesper Moonshadow, concentrating on the development of the mages under her charge. Luviera often secludes her mages within the Eastern Tower, trying to ensure that the raw wizard recruits are prepared for the battles which are to come.

There was a time after she first came to the fortress when Luviera felt that her human counterpart constituted a threat to her command. However, after getting to know not only Princess Branwyn but many of the other humans stationed here, Luviera changed her mind. She and Branwyn still do not get along, but now Luviera thinks their disagreements are more a function of similar personalities using different methods to achieve the same goals. Every day Lady Luviera sees the wisdom of her father's decisions coming to fruition.

Adventure Hooks

- The orcs manage to discover a tunnel which comes out somewhere south of the citadel in the mountain pass. Ghelgruk's troops have begun massing in the Orclands, so the citadel cannot spare the soldiers to investigate. King Ulan has hired the PCs to find the tunnel and to close it.
- A dozen men were killed in a freak accident at the Guardian, and the PCs are hired on as mercenaries until the kingdoms can transfer suitable replacements. The PCs will learn the vigorous routine of the citadel, and any rangers or rogues in the party may be asked to accompany the *Wildmen* into the Orclands.
- While PCs are serving as caravan guards spending the night at the Guardian, Ghelgruk Bloodtusk's forces make their first major offensive against the castle. Depending on each PC's skills, they will be assigned to a different section

of the Guardian's defenses. Although this first wave will be unsuccessful in breaching the First Wall, the DM should feel free to make up BATTLESYSTEM® game statistics and fight the siege of the Guardian as a tabletop battle.

- Princess Branwyn and Lady Luviera commission the PCs to travel deep into the Orclands to learn more about the goblinoid forces. The party is supplied with magical spells to conceal their exterior, appearing as orcs or goblins in order to infiltrate the goblinoid tribes.

Shadow Tor

An ancient, crumbling castle resting atop cliffs overlooking a vast, cold ocean, Shadow Tor has been home to one powerful wizard for over a millennium. Fourteen hundred years ago, Alumananx the Vile raised an army of undead soldiers and set out to conquer the land around his castle for 500 miles in all directions. At first he met strong resistance, and many brave and true warriors lost their lives defending their kingdoms from the evil wizard. Army after army fell before the decayed sword arms of the undead forces, and the slain men and women added to the ranks of Alumananx's corrupt legions. After 100 years of struggle, Alumananx the Vile reigned supreme in the land.

Decades passed, and the wizard lost interest in his lands, and with no worthy opponents left to challenge him, the unnaturally long-lived mage began to study legends and ages-old rumors. Alumananx undertook unspeakably evil experiments, and no corruption was too horrible for him to commit. As an end came to his already too-long life, Alumananx took the ultimate step and transformed himself into a lich. Over the next two centuries Alumananx immersed himself in his work, oblivious to the happenings in the world around him. Mortals slowly took back portions of the land he had conquered, bringing life into the spoiled soil. Many of his undead failed over the years, falling to decay and neglect, but the lich kept many more still, enough to deal with any unwanted guests.

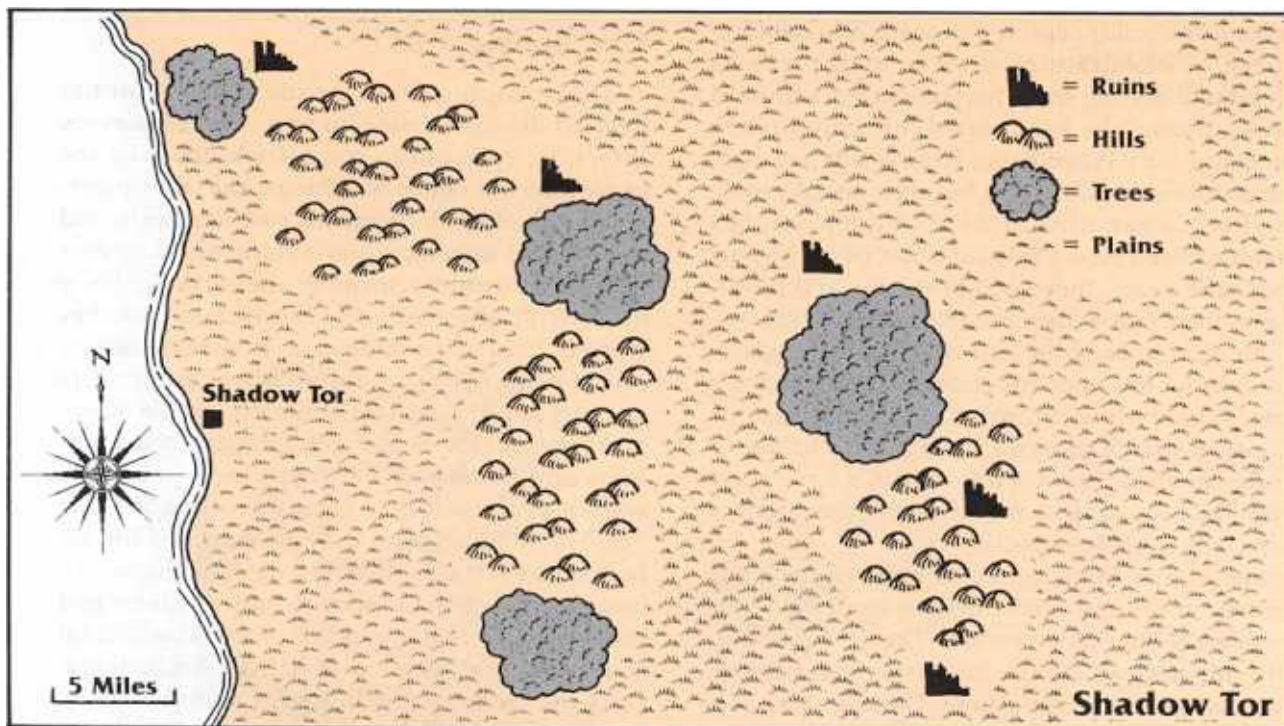
One day, however, a powerful group of adventurers approached the castle determined to discover if the legends were true, and to see if the wicked Alumananx still lived. After defeating platoons of undead guards, the adventurers confronted the lich in his dungeon lair. Alumananx proved too powerful for the adventurers, and he made them his undead lieutenants as punishment for interrupting his work. By chance or by favor of the gods, one member of the party escaped, bringing the news to civilized lands that Alumananx the Vile had transformed into a powerful lich.

For centuries afterward no one ventured within 50 miles of Shadow Tor, heeding the rumors and listening to the stories about the place over crackling campfires on cold winter nights. Alumananx returned to his arcane work, taking time out every few years to tend to his undead guards. Every century or so for the past millennium a foolish group of adventurers would again try to rid the world of Alumananx, only to become new undead guards for the lich. By now the name Alumananx is all but forgotten, relegated to old wives' tales and children's stories, but everyone knows *something* lives in Shadow Tor, something very evil indeed.

Prior to Alumananx, the history of Shadow Tor remains unknown for certain. Ancient texts state that at least three would-be conquerors held the castle before the lich, and yet others state that the wizard Alumananx raised the structure in a day with the aid of bound tanar'ri. Crumbling dwarvish rune stones relate that the now-dead Ironblock clan built the castle to pay a debt to the Formontree elf family, a claim the elves strongly deny.

Shadow Tor rests atop a promontory overlooking the water below, but no other natural barriers exist to defend the castle from an attack. The cliff upon which Shadow Tor rests rises 3,000 feet above the sandy beach below, a sheer, virtually unclimbable drop. The land immediately around Shadow Tor is barren, the life sucked out of it by Alumananx and his undead. Farther out, though, the land has over the centuries recovered, returning to the forests and verdant hills of long ago. No living beings make their homes within 50 miles of Shadow Tor, and no towns or settlements exist within 100 miles. The cold reach of Shadow Tor extends a long way.

Once a grand structure, Shadow Tor featured ornate gables, sculptured arches, and flamboyant windows crafted in great elegance by unknown architects. Now, however, all the wooden portions of the castle have long since rotted to dust, adding to the reek of decay and evil that permeates the place.



Shadow Tor was once a two level castle, but much of the second level has crumbled or totters precariously. Though the first level remains just as decayed, one may walk upon the floors without fear of falling through, though the stones of the second level might fall on a person's head in any event. Alumananx the Vile and his minions live far below the ground floor, a fitting sepulcher for the walking dead.

Shadow Tor Forces

At the height of his worldly power, Alumananx crushed the human and demihuman forces brought against him and his castle. He killed many enemy soldiers with *cloudkill*, *death spell*, *power word: kill* and other such enchantments which left the bodies of his victims whole. Alumananx later animated the corpses using his foul

magic, adding to the evil undead army. As adventurers invaded his home, the lich added them to the ranks of his lifeless servants as well.

Kurai, a powerful vampire himself over 1,400 years old, leads the undead forces of Shadow Tor. Kurai allied himself with Alumananx over 1,200 years ago, when the would-be lich was still human. Kurai hoped to find a ready source of blood, while at the same time providing a supply of corpses for the necromancer. For the centuries during which Shadow Tor was the center of conflict in this part of the world, Kurai fed better than any vampire and he planned for the future.

Under the terms of their unholy agreement, Alumananx spent 100 years instructing Kurai in the intricacies of foul magic. As a result, Kurai knows many powerful spells (such as *teleport*) which allow him to travel to populated, civilized lands in search of food. In a chamber near his

Shadow Tor

crypt Kurai holds captured humans and demihumans, slowly draining them of their precious blood and adding them to Alumananx's undead ranks, though he has created few vampires to challenge him. When Kurai feels lonely, he sometimes drains the life from a beautiful female, making her his vampiric bride. Though Kurai has taken undead wives several times over the past thousand years, they soon bore him, and he destroys them before they become too powerful.

Humanoid zombies, half-wights, wights, skeletons, and a few spectres comprise Alumananx's forces. Every few centuries, Alumananx sends Kurai in search of more fresh bodies to use to make zombies. The spectres remain a force apart from the rest, Alumananx reserving them for his especially horrible projects.

Sometimes the wights and half-wights grow restless, and Kurai sends them to scout the countryside several times a month. These wights usually ride undead steeds, increasing the distance they can cover in a day's time. These undead outriders try to find groups of wanderers or settlers, whom they immediately attack. News of these attacks sometimes reaches ears in civilized lands, and concerned communities send bands of investigators into Alumananx's domain. Thus far, none have returned.

Besides Kurai and Alumananx, one other intelligent, independent undead haunts Shadow Tor—the ghost of a paladin named Sir Pelvost Nikke. Sir Pelvost led the last major offensive against Shadow Tor 1,000 years ago, and Alumananx himself stands responsible for making Pelvost a ghost. Pelvost's soul remains anchored in the halls of Shadow Tor for as long as the lich remains on the Prime Material Plane. As a lone ghost Pelvost can do little against the legions of undead surrounding him, and Alumananx does not concern himself with such a minor distraction.

Surrounding Area

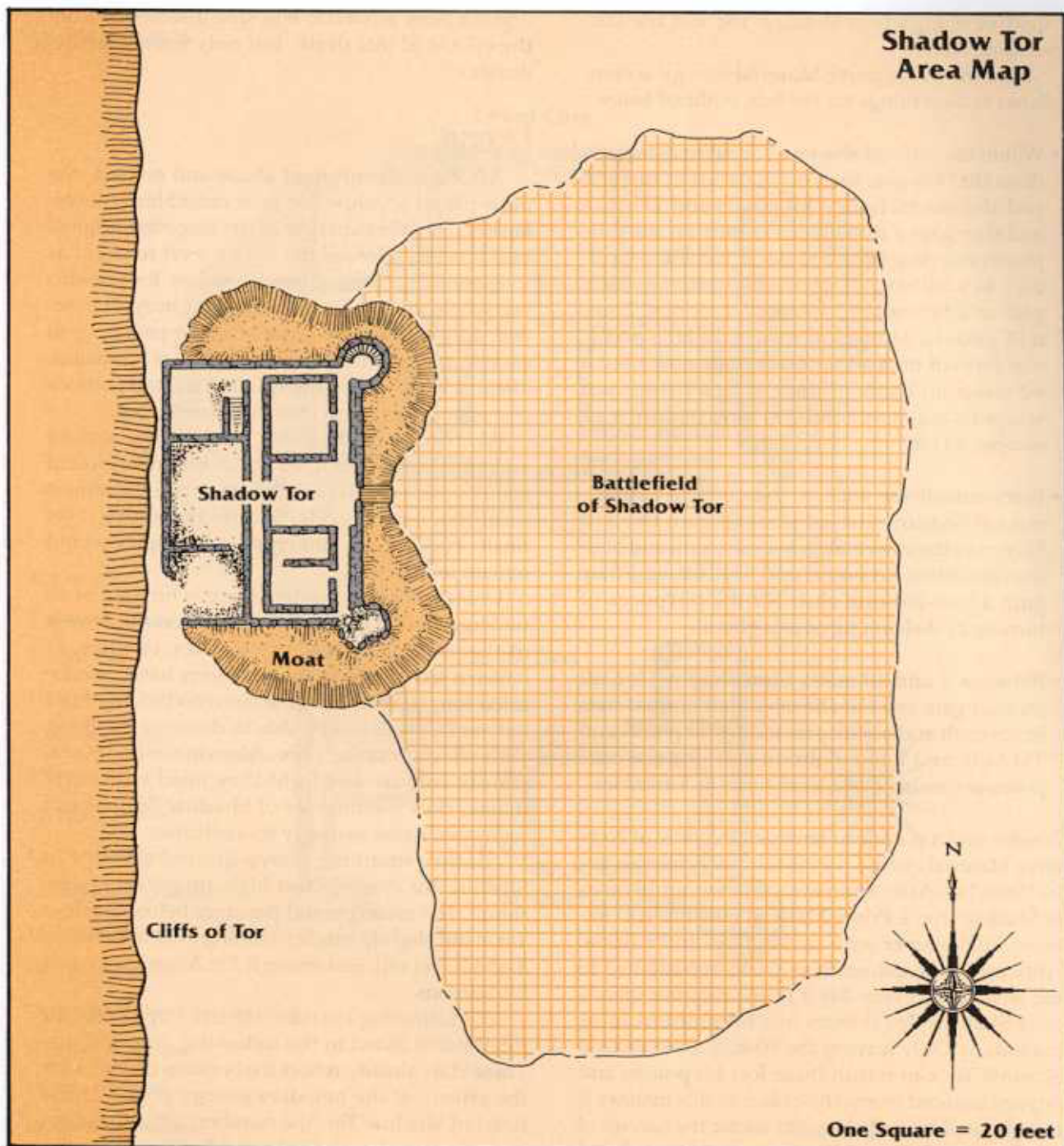
The corruption leaking from Shadow Tor has infected the countryside for tens of miles in every direction, even out to sea. Fifty miles from the castle travelers notice odd things, like large insects and a lack of small mammals and songbirds, and people feel uneasy, experiencing night terrors which they cannot remember after waking. Forty miles from the castle the landscape becomes twisted, trees either stunted or stretched horribly out of proportion, and no natural animal life appears at all. Zero-level humans cannot sleep, and they run the risk of going insane. Pack animals and horses balk (except for a paladin's warhorse) and refuse to go any closer to Shadow Tor. Thirty miles from the castle animal life returns, but it too is horribly disfigured, and a bizarre ecosystem takes over, with predator and prey roles reversed at random; a coal-black rabbit could stalk and eat a red-eyed bear, for instance. Only the brave or foolhardy (PCs, for instance) make it this far. Twenty miles from the castle the land and fauna take on the color of ash, and only lifeless parodies of animals exist, as do the odd skeleton patrols or wight cavalry. Ten miles from the citadel Alumananx's grip tightens (see *Magic of Shadow Tor*, below), and nothing at all grows or walks but that he commands it.

Infrequent visitors have noticed that the zone of corruption extends just a bit farther each year, perhaps only inches. No one can doubt, however, that Alumananx's power grows steadily.

Magic of Shadow Tor

To ensure his victory over the forces allied against him centuries ago, Alumananx opened a small portal to the Negative Material Plane to augment the power of his undead army. At that time, the gate spanned little more than the width of a gold coin (an American dime). Today, the portal stretches nearly a foot in diameter. Each year the portal widens a bit more, flooding more and more

Shadow Tor Area Map



Shadow Tor

negative energy into Shadow Tor and the surrounding lands.

The flow of Negative Material energy accomplishes several things for the lich, outlined below:

- Within the walls of Shadow Tor, all undead gain three Hit Dice over their normal stats in strength and abilities including hit points and THAC0, and they gain a three-column shift for the purposes of turning (thus a skeleton turns as a shadow). In addition, all undead within the castle gain an additional +1 weapon immunity. Thus, if PCs need a +1 magical weapon to hit a particular form of undead normally, they now need a +2 weapon. Undead once struck by normal weapons (such as zombies) now require a +1 weapon to hit.
- From outside the walls of the castle to within 1 mile of Shadow Tor, all undead gain two Hit Dice over their normal stats in strength and abilities including hit points and THAC0, and they gain a two-column shift for the purposes of turning (a skeleton turns as a ghoul).
- Between 1 and 10 miles from Shadow Tor, all undead gain one Hit Die over their normal stats in strength and abilities including hit points and THAC0, and a one-column shift for the purposes of turning (a skeleton turns as a zombie).

Besides making undead stronger, the flow of Negative Material energy harms normal Prime Material Plane life. After approaching to within 10 miles of Shadow Tor, a Prime Material creature will initially buckle over with severe pain and nausea. Although the creature soon grows accustomed to the feeling, for every day a Prime creature spends near Shadow Tor it loses one hit point from its maximum. Only leaving the 10-mile zone around Shadow Tor can return these lost hit points, and anyone reduced to zero hit points in this manner is transformed into a half-wight under the control of Alumananx. Spells such as *protection from evil* and

negative plane protection will shield someone from the effects of this drain, but only for the spell's duration.

Layout

After a millennium of abuse and neglect, the once-proud Shadow Tor now crumbles and collapses. Only the expertise of the forgotten original builders has allowed the upper level to stand as long as it has. Above ground, Shadow Tor presents one whole story and a partial second story. The second story suffered the brunt of a long-past magical assault, and now only a small portion of it remains. The first story seems largely intact, though portions of it appear less stable than the second story.

Alumananx used *wands of earth & stone*, and *dig* and *move earth* spells to construct his underground levels, which endure much better than the almost forgotten upper levels. Should the above level finally collapse, the underground complex would remain unaffected.

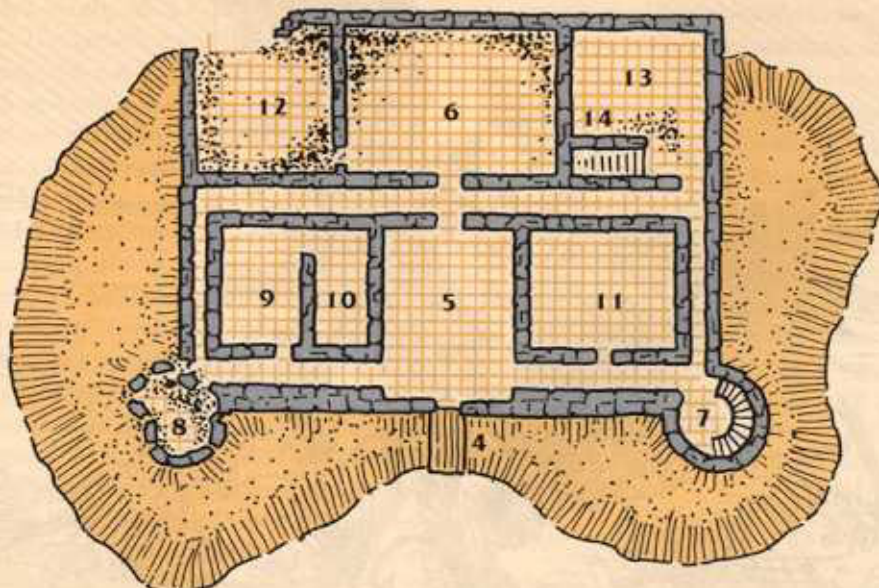
Unless otherwise stated, there is no light at all underground in the Shadow Tor, a condition most of the undead prefer. Any torches, candles, or lanterns left by careless adventurers have deteriorated long ago and there is no wood of any kind left, so PCs will not be able to discover anything with which to make a fire. Alumananx and Kurai simply conjure any light they need with their magic, thus the interior of Shadow Tor has not seen open flame in nearly six centuries.

All the remaining above-ground ceilings in Shadow Tor reach 15 feet high, unless otherwise stated. The underground passages below Shadow Tor stand slightly smaller, coming only to between 8 and 9 feet tall, just enough for Alumananx and his minions.

The following creature statistics apply for all inhabitants listed in the following descriptions. These stats already reflect the bonuses received for the effects of the negative energy portal at the heart of Shadow Tor; the numbers after the slash indicate stats for undead outside the wall of the

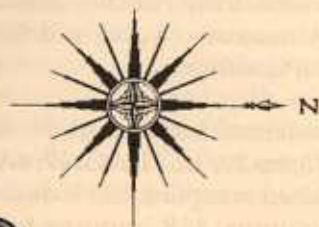
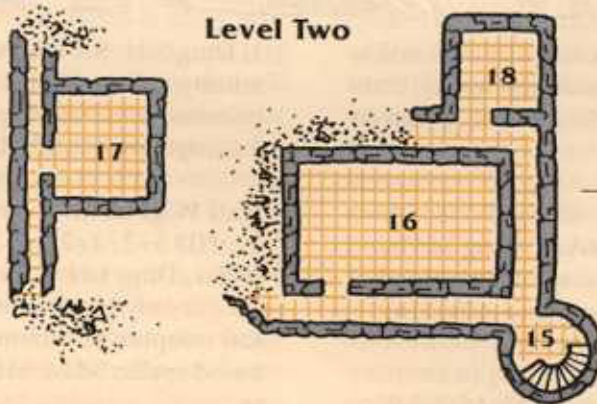
Shadow Tor

Level One



- 4. Entrance
- 5. Garden
- 6. Main Hall
- 7. Northern Tower
- 8. Southern Tower
- 9. Storage
- 10. Ju-ju Zombies
- 11. Antechamber
- 12. Collapsed Chamber
- 13. Wight Haven
- 14. Passage Down
- 15. Northern Tower, Second Level
- 16. Kural's Chamber
- 17. Intact Chamber
- 18. Open Air Chamber

Level Two



One Square = 10 feet

Shadow Tor



castle (e.g. Skeletons: HD 4/3, four Hit Dice inside the castle, three Hit Dice outside the walls). Stats for Alumananx, Kurai, and Sir Pelvost appear in the NPC section..

Skeletons: Int Non; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 4/3; hp 20/16; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 by rusted weapons; SD ½ damage from edged weapons; MR immune to mind effecting spells; SZ M; ML 20

Common Zombies: Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 5/4; hp 23/18; THAC0 15/17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SD spell immunity; MR immune to mind effecting spells, poisons, cold based spells; SZ M; ML 20

Ju-Ju Zombies: Int Low; AL N(E); AC 6; MV 9; HD 6+12/5+12; hp 45/38; THAC0 15; #AT

1; Dmg 3d4; SA hurl weapons; SD spell immunity; MR immune to mind effecting spells, poisons, cold based spells, electricity, psionics, *magic missile*; SZ M; ML 20

Half Wights: Int Average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 5+2/4+2; hp 30/24; THAC0 15/17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA energy drain one level; SD Hit only by silver or +2/+1 or better magical weapon; MR immune to charm and cold-based spells; SZ M; ML 15

Wights: Int Average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 7+3/6+3; hp 42/35; THAC0 13/15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA energy drain one level; SD Hit only by silver or +2/+1 or better magical weapon; MR immune to charm and cold-based spells; SZ M; ML 16

Ghouls: Int Low; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 5/4; hp 30/24; THAC0 15/17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6; SA Paralyzation; SD immune to *sleep & charm* spells; SZ M; ML 14

Spectre: Int High; AL LE; AC 2; MV 15, FL 30(B); HD 10+3/9+3; hp 77/68; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA energy drain two levels; SD +2/+1 or better weapon to hit; MR immune to *sleep, charm, hold*, cold-based spells, poisons, and paralyzation; SZ M; ML 18

1. Battlefield of Shadow Tor: The land immediately surrounding the castle endured many epic battles during Alumananx's mortal life. Because of the negative energy flowing from Shadow Tor, the undecayed skeletal remains of many warriors still strew the landscape. These skeletons animate upon command from Alumananx or Kurai.

At any time a total of 100 + 2d20 skeletons can appear from the battlefield, and the creatures will group together forming ranks at the command of Alumananx or Kurai. Many of these skeletons still wear the clothing or armor they did in life. PCs searching the remains of the skeletal army will find magical items here and there, including a *ring of protection +3*, *brooch of shielding*, *chain mail +2*, *short sword of quickness +1*, and a *helm of underwater action*. With his attention focused elsewhere for centuries, Alumananx has yet to discover these hidden items.

2. Cliffs of Shadow Tor: The sheer cliffs west of Shadow Tor act as a natural border between the castle and the ocean below. The drop to the rocky beach stretches over 3,000 feet, the entire cliff face consisting of loose shale and wet slate. Should any PC try to climb the cliff, he will incur a -40% penalty to the attempt. The cliff stretches for tens of miles north and south of Shadow Tor, eventually sloping down to meet the beach far from the citadel. The cliffs make Shadow Tor eminently defensible.

3. Moat: Centuries ago water filled the moat surrounding Shadow Tor, providing a home for dozens of predatory fish and mammals. Following Alumananx's final defeat of the civilized forces, the wizard allowed the moat to dry up and the creatures which guarded it to perish.

Today nothing more than a trench of mud, the moat encircles Shadow Tor in a half moon shape. Any person weighing more than 30 pounds who steps into the mud will sink 1d4+1 feet into the clinging mire. Only by shedding armor and other equipment, may a trapped victim gain the chance to make a saving throw versus paralyzation; success indicates the PC has broken free and can claw his way to freedom.

Many mindless undead have been caught in the moat, to Kurai's dismay. The vampire abandons any skeleton or zombie which falls into the moat, and PCs may see one or two still struggling to free themselves after decades of entrapment.

Castle Level One

4. Entrance: The original drawbridge to the castle, preserved by Alumananx's magic, spans the moat of Shadow Tor and allows entrance into the structure. Gears and pulleys which once raised and lowered the bridge have long since rusted and fallen to bits, as have the bridge's hinges and moorings. Six ju-ju zombies armed with spears guard the bridge. These powerful zombies let none pass without the permission of Alumananx or Kurai, and stand a vigilant watch 24 hours a day.

5. Garden: Once a fine, formal garden, only the outlines of paths and raised beds endure here now. Sickly weeds and crops of mandrake grow like mad, and horrible mutated versions of normal plants raise cracks in the pavement. The zombies of Shadow Tor stay in this area.

Alumananx stores 80 common zombies in the garden, minus any that are on patrol or within the castle. The undead simply sit or stand within the courtyard, awaiting commands from Kurai or

Shadow Tor

Alumananx, never tiring or complaining even after years in the same position.

The garden serves as Shadow Tor's first line of defense against anyone foolish enough to attempt to infiltrate the castle through the front door. Many of these zombies still possess items they used in life. Among these items are a *cloak of protection +1*, *ring of free action*, *girdle of hill giant strength*, and *studded leather armor +3*. Kurai knows the zombies have these items, but he leaves them with the undead to give visitors an unexpected surprise.

6. Main Hall: This great hall is open to the sky, the result of the rooms of the second floor caving in centuries ago. Huge chunks of mortar lay strewn about this room, though the zombies have cleared a path through some of the debris. PCs who can fly may try to reach the second floor through the gaping hole in the ceiling, but anyone standing on the floor above runs a 50% chance per round (not cumulative) of falling through and taking 1d6 damage from the fall and 1d10 damage from the debris he brings down with him.

7. Northern Tower: The eastern face of Shadow Tor includes two siege towers from which undead archers used to rain arrows down upon attacking forces. Unlike the southern tower, the first and second levels of this tower remain intact. This tower also contains the only intact staircase left above ground in Shadow Tor. Other than some loose rubble on the floor, there is nothing of value here.

8. Southern Tower: Just over 100 years ago, during a terrible storm conjured by Alumananx, the second level of this tower collapsed onto the first, destroying several sections of the castle's second level as well. A small section of the tower's first level remains, but rubble blocks the door to a small chamber.

Trapped from above and below by the collapsing tower, a killer mimic lives out its final days here. Despite its pliable form, the mimic cannot

find an opening large enough to squeeze through to exit the ruined tower. The creature has been living off of mutated rats and other vermin for a century since being trapped here, and has nearly died of starvation several times. Should PCs ever unwisely clear the entrance to the tower, the killer mimic will likely lash out in hunger and fight to the death. Neither Alumananx nor Kurai knows of the creature's existence.

Beneath the killer mimic, in a compartment Alumananx never discovered, artifacts from before his victory lie. A secret compartment in the floor contains the following items: 20 bars of platinum worth 100 gold pieces each, a *scroll-protection from dragon breath*, a *manual of stealthy pilfering*, a *talisman of pure good*, and a *harp of charming*. Each of these items possesses a unique symbol which could be a clue to the castle's origins (The DM may choose to integrate this into his campaign however he sees fit. The origin of the castle is left open to integrate into any campaign world.).

9. Storage: With no one left to defy him, Alumananx retired most of his war-making gear to this chamber. Dozens of rusted, useless short swords, long swords, shields, and bits of armor lie along the walls and in large heaps, tossed there by heedless undead. Kurai, however, has salvaged some equipment, adding pieces from slain adventurers over the centuries. Currently he cares for 10 long bows, seven short bows, 100 flight arrows (1d6 damage), and 15 short swords. Kurai trusts these weapons to the ju-ju zombies guarding the gate.

10. Ju-Ju Zombies: There are very few of these creatures present at Shadow Tor, as Alumananx decided not to create many of the superior zombies following his conquest of the civilized lands. Nearly all of the ju-ju zombies here are over 500 years old, but the presence of the Negative Material rift has preserved them well.

Kurai keeps the ju-ju zombies within this chamber when they are not on patrol or guarding the front gate. By keeping them out of the elements,

the vampire believes he extends their usefulness. Counting the six ju-ju zombies guarding the bridge, a total of 18 of the creatures “live” at Shadow Tor. If the ju-ju zombies are not in this chamber, they are patrolling the grounds or adding to the force on the bridge. The zombies will attack anyone other than Alumananx or Kurai who enters this chamber.

Each of the ju-ju zombies is armed with short sword and long bow. Kurai has repaired the door to this chamber but he does not keep it locked.

11. Antechamber: The undead forces of Shadow Tor never use this chamber, and thus thick dust and huge cobwebs fill the room. The door has long since rotted to nothing, and the hinges have crumbled to powder. There is nothing of interest in this chamber.

12. Collapsed Chamber: The outer wall of this chamber, which faces the western ocean, collapsed when a large portion of the second level caved in a century ago (see Room 8). Because it stands exposed to the elements, Kurai has decided to leave the chamber as it is, unintentionally leaving the ghost of Sir Pelvost a place to reside. The ghostly paladin spends his days here hiding in the shadows, roaming the grounds of Shadow Tor at night.

Sir Pelvost guards a precious treasure in the remains of this chamber—a suit of *plate mail* +3 which belonged to him when he stormed Shadow Tor with his army centuries ago. Pelvost was able to get the armor here by *magic jarring* a human female destined to become one of Kurai’s vampiric brides. The possessed woman dug up Sir Pelvost’s armor (buried by wights since Kurai could not bear to touch it) and brought it to the chamber where it remains today. Should someone worthy encounter Sir Pelvost, the ghost might tell him of the armor if he promises to use it to destroy Alumananx the Vile.

13. Wight Haven: This large chamber is home to the wights of Shadow Tor and their undead steeds.



Due to their restless nature, Kurai often sends the wights on scouting missions with horses captured from explorers or brought here by the vampire’s magic. Currently, there are not enough steeds for the nine wights and seven half-wights of Shadow Tor, so many of them cannot leave on the long-distance scouting missions across the countryside. Those wights who cannot leave the castle to find mortals to terrorize sometimes take out their frustrations on the zombies, further whittling Alumananx’s army.

Undead Steeds (5): AL N; AC 9; MV 15; HD 3; hp 22; THAC0 17; #AT Nil; Dmg Nil; SD immune to *charm* and mind effecting spells; SZ L; ML 20

Shadow Tor

14. Passage Down: This passage to the underground complex beneath Shadow Tor is hidden behind a wall of broken mortar. Alumananx and Kurai only use this passage to send undead servants up to the surface, they themselves use magic to leave the underground complex.

Castle Level Two

Shadow Tor's second level could collapse at almost any moment; even nondwarves should be able to figure this out at a glance. Combat or flamboyant activity could cause sections of the tower and the rest of this level to collapse to the level below. Anyone falling through to the first level will take 1d6 damage from the fall, and another 1d10 from falling brick and mortar.

15. Northern Tower-Second Level: The stairs from the first level lead to this area, and the rest of Shadow Tor's extant second level. There is nothing of value in the remains of this northern tower, only passages leading to remaining chambers.

16. Kurai's Treasure: The vampire uses this chamber in an extremely unstable section to store some of his most precious belongings. Knowing it is difficult to reach this area by normal means, Kurai has hidden a chest here containing the following: 755 gold pieces, 248 platinum pieces, 20 uncut diamonds worth 100 gold each, Kurai's spellbooks, a pair of *gauntlets of ogre power*, a *wand of illumination* with 36 charges, *dust of appearance* with nine pinches, and *boots of varied tracks*.

Should any foolhardy PCs wish to investigate the rubble, the DM should allow it, requiring a Dexterity check every 5 feet. Success indicates only a mild shifting of the floor, while failure means the section has collapsed, sending the PC, the rubble, the floor, and the chest crashing down to the first floor. Any PCs caught on the ledge also fall, taking 1d6 from the fall, and 2d8 from the falling debris. Kurai will instantly know if his belongings have been disturbed.

17. Intact Chamber: Aside from Kurai's secret treasure chamber, this is the only other intact room on the second level. This chamber was once a bedroom for Alumananx while he was still human, a room which the lich has forgotten over the centuries. The room contains crumbling piles that used to be a four-poster bed and a dresser, patches of cloth that used to be tattered ornamental rugs, and a tarnished mirror barely hanging onto the wall; only the lich's residual magic has allowed these furnishings to remain even as barely intact as they are.

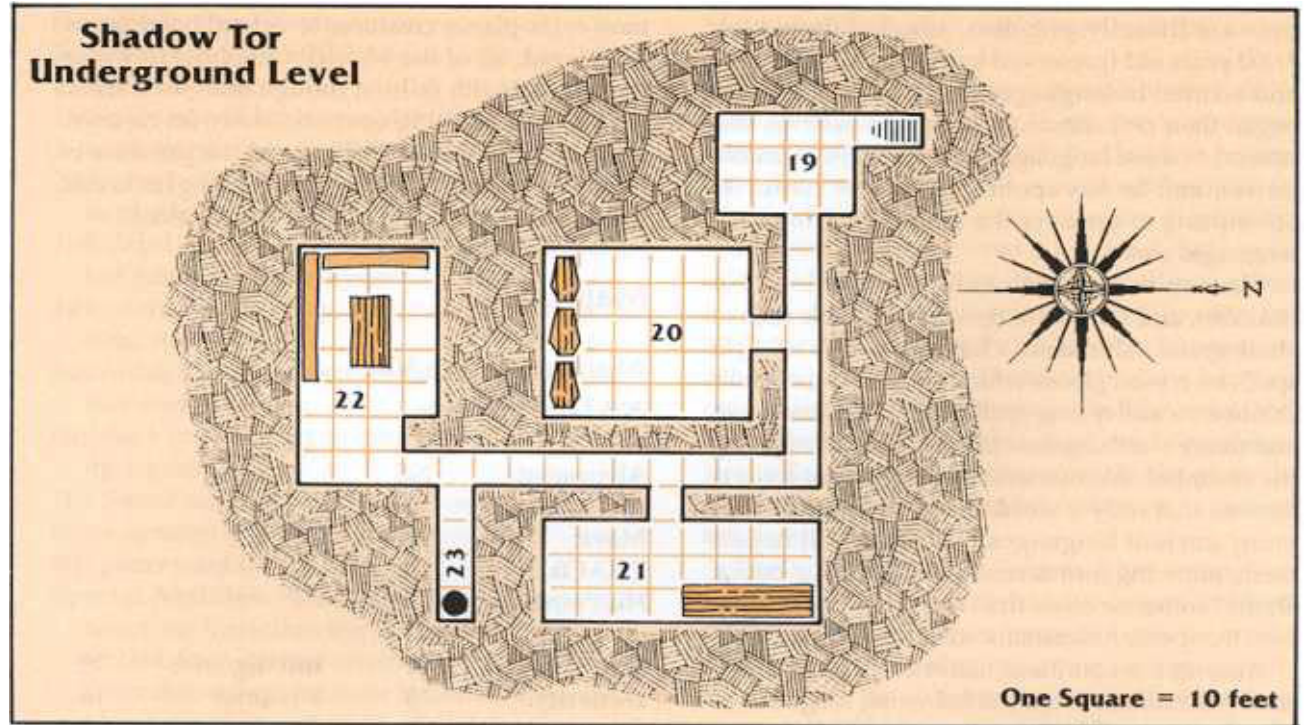
One of the evil mage's old spellbooks rests on the remains of the putrefied dresser. The book contains the following spells—1st Level: *affect normal fires*, *hold portal*, *wizard mark*; 2nd Level: *alter self*, *fool's gold*, *spectral hand*; 3rd Level: *haste*, *lightning bolt*, *hold undead*, *wraithform*. Age has also affected the spellbook, and simply handling the book could result in its destruction. Each time the book is opened it must make a saving throw versus crushing blow or that particular page crumbles to unreadable dust. As a whole, the book itself suffers a -1 to all saving throws because of its age.

18. Open Air Chamber: This is the only other section of the second level which is not caved-in, but is open to the air above. For anyone who flies, this is an easy place to enter the ruined castle. There is nothing else of value here.

Underground Complex

19. Guard Chamber: Although Alumananx knows his undead army can keep trespassers away, the lich still experiences intense bouts of paranoia. Unless they are out on business for Alumananx, this chamber contains the four spectres under the command of the evil mage.

Neither the ancient texts nor Sir Pelvost (if the PCs think to ask him) knows whence the spectres came. Without a doubt Alumananx could not have created the spectres, but they follow his directions, and report back to him. Perhaps his control over the Negative Plane portal has bound them to him.



Should Kurai capture any living being, he usually places it in the spectres' care, which always leads to insanity and death.

20. Kurai's Chambers: This room contains Kurai's coffin and two other coffins for any female companions the vampire might have at the moment. Other than the coffins, the room stands unadorned and otherwise empty. Anything the vampire values he keeps on his person or in his hidden chest on the second level.

21. Laboratory: Hundreds of vials of spell components cover the stone tables in this chamber where Alumananx the Vile conducts his unholy experiments. The lich learned that wooden tables and shelves deteriorate through the centuries, so he used his magic to fashion stone furniture which endures.

There is an 80% chance that a curious PC can find at least one example of any spell component in this room. Labels on each container identify the contents and the spells for which a wizard might use the contents. However, Alumananx has written this information in an obscure, archaic language, and only a PC with *ancient languages* proficiency or a *comprehend languages* spell can decipher the cryptic writings.

22. Alumananx's Lair: Unless the lich is encountered elsewhere in the castle (highly unlikely), Alumananx the Vile can be found in this chamber. The undying mage spends most of his time poring over ancient texts, volumes he has collected over the 1,700 years of his existence.

For the past 400 years Alumananx has sequestered himself within the walls of Shadow Tor, studying his books in this chamber. The tomes

Shadow Tor

here are literally priceless, some of them over 3,000 years old (preserved by Alumananx's spells) and written in languages forgotten before elves began their civilization. Alumananx believes that several of these languages hold the keys to untold power, and he has spent the last few centuries attempting to uncover the secrets he knows the languages conceal.

Floor-to-ceiling shelves line the walls of this chamber, and books cram every available inch of shelf space. Alumananx has cast *continual light* spells on crystal globes which illuminate the whole chamber; a *wall of force* spell guards each bookcase, and many wards against fire and bookworms ring the chamber. Alumananx has rigged his *walls of force* so that only a word from him in one of the many ancient languages he knows will negate them, allowing him access to his precious books. Should someone other than the lich try to circumvent the spells, Alumananx will know immediately.

Among the countless historical volumes present, Alumananx keeps the following magical volumes: a *libram of gainful conjuration*, a *libram of inef-fable damnation*, a *manual of golems*, a *manual of quickness in action*, and a *tome of clear thought*. Of the other tomes present, the majority of them will mean nothing to the PCs. Alumananx has spent centuries studying these texts and ancient languages, and the chance of anyone else making sense of the ancient scribbles, regardless of skills or proficiencies, is vanishingly small (1%).

With the exception of the books and the lich's plain desk, there is little else of value here. Several empty books rest on one corner of the desk, awaiting the lich's pen, and a dozen dry inkwells litter the floor. Alumananx keeps his notes in the obscure languages, mostly to prevent Kurai from reading them.

23. Negative Energy Rift: This narrow alcove contains the small rift to the Negative Material Plane which Alumananx created long ago. The wizard caused the rift by accident shortly after taking possession of Shadow Tor, while attempting to sum-

mon extra-planar creatures to defend his domain. Afterward, all of the wizard's attempts to widen the rift met with failure, though later he learned the rift was opening ever so slowly on its own. After he became a lich he learned the presence of Negative Material energy was extending his unlife, so Alumananx decided to leave the rift alone.

Major NPCs

Alumananx the Vile

20th Level Lich Mage

Alignment: NE
AC: -6
Move: 6
THAC0: 5
Hit Points: 61

Strength:	11	Intelligence:	19
Dexterity:	13	Wisdom:	16
Constitution:	8	Charisma:	-4

Proficiencies: Staff, dagger, dart, ancient history (20), ancient languages (20), reading/writing ancient languages (18), reading/writing Common (20), spellcraft (19), astrology (19), local history (20)

Languages: Common, Ancient Language (DM's choice depending on his campaign)

Armor: None

Weapons: *Staff of power* with 21 charges, *staff of swarming insects* with 9 charges, *dagger of venom* +2

Equipment: *Ring of protection* +3, *cloak of protection* +2, *scarab of protection* +1 with 9 charges, *wand of conjuration* with 52 charges, *wand of polymorph* with 22 charges, *ring of blinking*, *medallion of ESP*, *mirror of life trapping*, *rug of welcome*, *crystal ball*, *cubic gate*, *stone horse*, and a *wand of frost*.

Age: 1,723 years old

Height: 5' 4"

Weight: 74 lbs.

Hair/Eyes: None/None

Spells/Day: 5 5 5 5 4 3 3 2

Preferred Spells:

1st: *comprehend languages, detect magic, identify, magic missile, unseen servant*

2nd: *alter self, ESP, know alignment, ray of enfeeblement, whispering wind*

3rd: *dispel magic, hold person, lightning bolt, protection from good 10' r, tongues*

4th: *confusion, fire trap, magic mirror, polymorph other, stonewall*

5th: *advanced illusion, chaos, contact other plane, summon shadow, teleport*

6th: *death spell, enchant an item, globe of invulnerability, legend lore*

7th: *limited wish, prismatic spray, vanish*

8th: *polymorph any object, prismatic wall*

9th: *power word kill, time stop*

Special Abilities: *Paralyzation* (as a lich); permanency on the following spells: *detect good, protection from normal missiles, read magic, and detect invisibility*; immune to *charm, sleep, enfeeblement, polymorph, cold, electricity, insanity, death spells, and poisons*; cannot be turned at Shadow Tor.

Alumananx the Vile was an ancient wizard even before becoming a lich 1,200 years ago. No one knows where the wizard Alumananx came from originally, and it has been so long that even Alumananx must struggle with the memories of his origins. At the time of his advent to Shadow Tor, however, Alumananx was already over 300 years old. Once nearby kingdoms levied vast forces in an attempt to purge the land of this great evil, sending heroes and soldiers to fight the good fight—and they lost horribly. Alumananx has reigned secure for over a millennium now, and he grows more powerful every year.

Alumananx has vowed to continue his studies until he finds the secret that will allow him to achieve the goal of his unlife: to destroy all life everywhere. Given his extended lifespan (between four and five thousand years due to the Negative

Material rift), the lich might very well realize his ambitions.

Currently, Alumananx concerns himself only with his studies, assigning Kurai the duty of protecting Shadow Tor. The lich holds great power over the vampire, and he would not hesitate to utterly destroy Kurai if the vampire displeased him; Kurai knows this and takes great care not to offend his master. Alumananx sometimes alters his appearance with magic and travels to cities far and near searching for the lost secrets he needs to achieve great power. These excursions happen once a decade or so, on average, and the rest of the time Alumananx sits at his desk, studying sleeplessly. Rarely does Alumananx walk the grounds of Shadow Tor to inspect his troops or to survey the surrounding land.

The lich searches for secrets from an ancient race of wizards who might have begun modern magic. Back when mages were young in the world and the presence of magic was more powerful, wizards cast much more potent spells than they can presently. According to Alumananx's research, the ancient wizards cast complex spells by speaking only a simple word, words of power which have been lost over the countless centuries, but still survive in bits and pieces in spells such as *power word blind, stun, and kill*.

Alumananx believes that if he learns enough about the ancient times the lost art of ultimately powerful magic will be revealed to him. Gathering the fragments has been difficult for the lich, since the ancient wizards left few written records of their secrets. Alumananx has so far collected numerous fragments of several "power words", but he cannot unlock whatever mystical energy the fragments possess.

Shadow Tor

Kurai

10th Level Vampire Wizard

Alignment: Chaotic Evil
AC: -1
Move: 12, Fl 18 (C)
THACO: 11
Hit Points: 55

Strength: 18(76) **Intelligence:** 16
Dexterity: 14 **Wisdom:** 17
Constitution: 15 **Charisma:** 14

Proficiencies: Long sword, dagger, staff, ancient history (15), reading/writing Common (18), spellcraft (16), direction sense (18), disguise (13)

Languages: Common

Armor: None

Weapons: *Dagger +4*

Equipment: *Cloak of protection +2, brooch of shielding, wand of darkness (as spell) with 44 charges, ring of spell turning, a deck of illusion with 27 cards.*

Age: 1,398 years old

Height: 6' 3"

Weight: 182 lbs.

Hair/Eyes: Black/Black

Spells/Day: 4 4 3 2 2

Preferred Spells:

1st: *change self, friends, magic missile, wall of fog*

2nd: *darkness 15' r, invisibility, mirror image, whispering wind*

3rd: *dispel magic, lightning bolt, protection from good 10'r*

4th: *stoneskin, wall of ice*

5th: *teleport x2*

Spell-like Abilities: *Charm person; drains two life energy levels; regenerates 3 hit point/round, assume gaseous form; immune to sleep, charm, hold spells, poison, paralysis; half damage from cold and electrical attacks; shape change to large bat; spider climb*

Special Immunities: Given Kurai's great age, the

vampire has developed an immunity to garlic, and holy water does only 1d4 points of damage per vial.

Sir Pelvost

10th Level Human Paladin Ghost

Alignment: Lawful good
AC: 0/8
Move: 9
THACO: 11
Hit Points: 71

(stats and skills as in life)

Strength: 17 **Intelligence:** 15
Dexterity: 14 **Wisdom:** 17
Constitution: 15 **Charisma:** 17

Proficiencies: Long sword, footman's flail, heavy lance, light lance, sling, staff, dagger, blind fighting (na), endurance (15), direction sense (18), rope use (14), swimming (17)

Languages: Common, Elvish, Gnomish

Armor: *Plate mail +3, shield +1*

Weapons: *Flail of Goodness* (powers similar to a holy avenger), *mace +2*

Equipment: none

Age: 1,323 years old

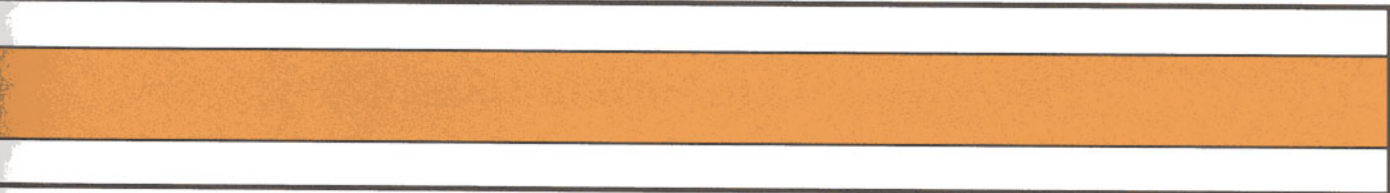
Height: 6' 3"

Weight: 182 lbs (in life)

Hair/Eyes: Black/Green

Special Abilities: Detect evil 60', protection from evil aura (these abilities still function in his present form)

Sir Pelvost led the final assault on Shadow Tor 1,300 years ago, an attack which failed after days of back-and-forth fighting. Alumananx's wights captured Sir Pelvost and stripped him of his possessions. Alumananx placed the paladin before the Negative Material rift as an experiment. After many days of being exposed to the corrupt energy, Sir Pelvost became a ghost. Though not evil, Pel-



vost's spirit must wander Shadow Tor until his original reason for coming to the castle is fulfilled, and Alumananx the Vile is slain.

Unlike regular ghosts, Pelvost maintains a few of the paladin's powers he had in life. Sir Pelvost cannot use the aging attack most ghosts employ (or perhaps he *will not*).

Alumananx knows the paladin still roams the grounds of the castle, but he does not care. Pelvost poses no threat to him or to his studies, so he leaves the cursed human alone. Kurai, on the other hand, hates Sir Pelvost because there is nothing he can do to rid Shadow Tor of the spectral paladin.

Should Sir Pelvost have the opportunity, he will aid any non-evil entities who come to Shadow Tor. The paladin's armor still exists, hidden on the castle grounds (room 12), and he will lead good PCs to it if they agree to kill Alumananx the Vile. A generous DM might even allow his PCs to find Sir Pelvost's weapons (outlined above, but not placed anywhere in Shadow Tor).

Adventure Hooks

- A young girl known to one of the PCs is kidnapped, and divination spells lead the PCs to Shadow Tor. Kurai kidnapped the young woman during one of his recent trips to civilization, and the PCs have only a few days before he drains her of blood and makes her one of his brides.
- On a previous adventure, the PCs discovered an ancient scroll written in a language no one could understand. Days after they return, an anonymous message sent to the PCs offers to purchase the scroll for 500,000 gold pieces. The message gives directions to Shadow Tor, naming a wizard called Alumananx as the buyer. Of course, the lich has no intention of honoring the reward.
- A shipwreck strands the party at the base of Shadow Tor's cliffs. The forbidding walls of the castle are the only source of shelter in sight for the cold and wet characters.

Watch Tower

This last entry to *Castle Sites* is a watch tower typically found on the borders of kingdoms, the first line of defense for civilized lands against invading countries or wandering monsters. This entry involves one such watch tower, and the men who protect their monarchy from unknown dangers. Several of these mini-castles could be found in dozens of locations on the boundaries of any kingdom. The DM can alter the names and locations to fit his own campaign.

Watch Tower Four

Located on the frontier, this watch tower stands between forests to the east and plains to the west, both filled with savage predators such as bulettes, worgs, hill giants, and even an occasional dragon. Watch Tower Four is one of several located on the civilized boundaries, although this particular tower maintains a greater force of military personnel (even a wizard). Due to its strategic importance, some of the most skilled warriors in the militia work a tour of duty here under the watchful eye of Trell the Bold.

Orphaned as a toddler and raised by the soldiers of the land, Trell has earned a reputation as a great warrior in his three decades of life. Given Trell's skill with a sword and his wise military decisions, the king granted him command of this important outpost. The warrior takes this duty extremely seriously, and since he took command of the watch tower no monsters have invaded civilized territory.

Currently a force of 20 skilled warriors, Trell the Bold, a wizard advisor named Keal Zonrazz, and the elderly ranger Bolvin occupy Watch Tower Four. Each of the warriors is a master in the saddle, and they use the war horses kept here to scout the untamed lands, covering greater distances than they would on foot. A regular supply caravan comes to Watch Tower Four once a week, bringing food, water, and additional supplies for the men and the horses.

Military Forces

Those serving at Watch Tower Four follow simple orders: prevent the intrusion of unwanted creatures or troops into the kingdom. If unintelligent monsters try to invade, the forces of Watch Tower Four mobilize to eliminate the threat as quickly and efficiently as possible. Should the invaders possess intelligence (another kingdom's soldiers, some kinds of humanoids, etc.) Trell the Bold, the mage Keal, and four other soldiers will sally forth to attempt to reason with the intruders.

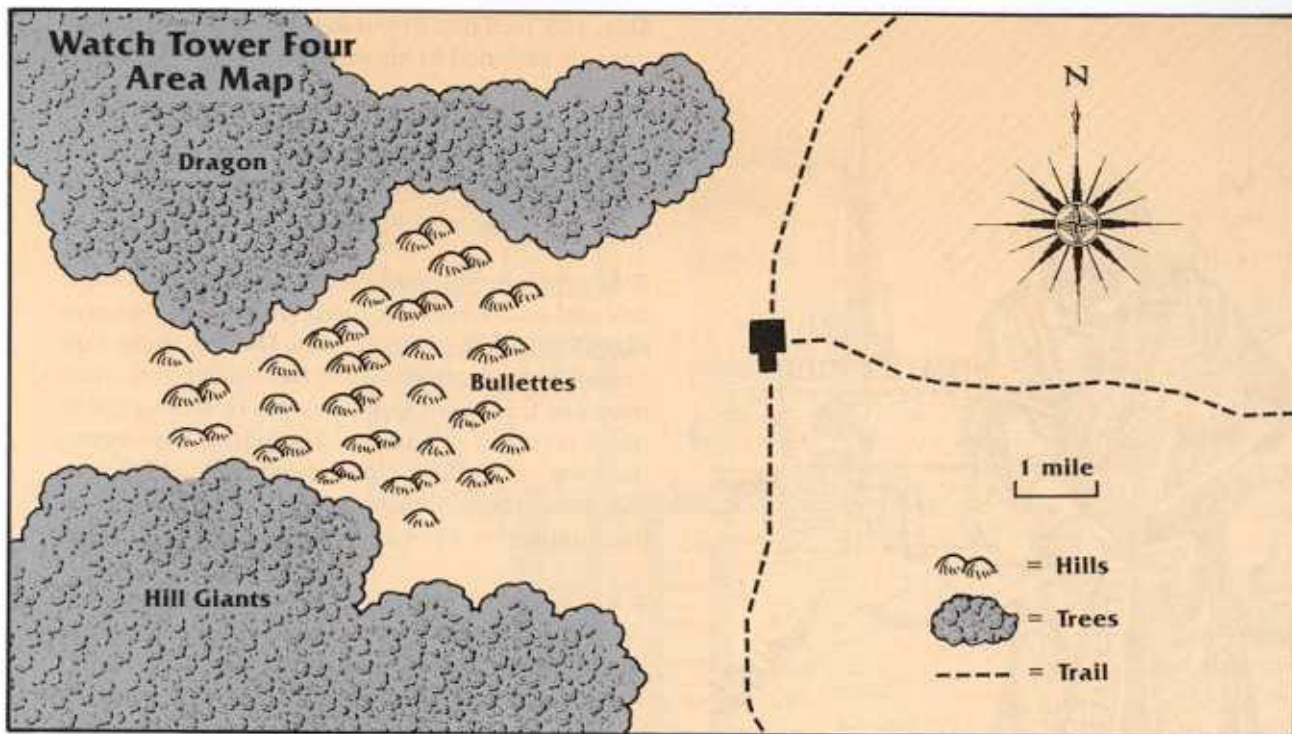
The soldiers under the command of Trell the Bold are skilled warriors chosen for their prowess with the blade, their variety of skills, and experience in the field. Despite a few complaints about being stationed so far from the comforts of the city, the men enjoy the duty and respect Trell the Bold greatly. Most of the soldiers know tracking, animal handling (equine), weapon smithing, bowyer/fletcher, local history, an assortment of languages, and other important skills.

Watch Tower Four posts guards on duty 24 hours a day, with many of the soldiers working 14 hours a day or longer. The soldiers are stationed here for terms of one or two years, though Trell signed for five years—his way of “paying dues.” Many of Trell's men view the duty the same way he does, and they will stay with him at this assignment, following him to the next one.

The Untamed Lands

There was always a need for patrols and watch towers on the edge of the untamed lands, but only recently have the beasts and savage races of these lands become a problem great enough to require a military presence. The Untamed Lands have never seen a civilized presence, and the creatures who live here view humans and humanoids as food rather than as settlers or simple travelers.

Many violent predators roam the lands near Watch Tower Four, but recently bulettes have become a marked problem. The “land sharks”



attack and eat anything organic to satisfy their vast appetites. Unfortunately for Trel the bulettes use the land around Watch Tower Four as a breeding ground, and every two years over one dozen of the creatures return to this area to mate. None of the monstrosities has ventured near the tower or the civilized lands—yet.

In addition, a rather numerous tribe of hill giants make their home in the nearby plains. The tribe had lived in the area for hundreds of years without approaching Watch Tower Four, but the scouts report signs of hill giant activity nearer to the tower than ever before, which concerns Trel. From what the old ranger Bolvin can deduce, the hill giant's food supply is at an all-time low, giving the brutish giants a reason to move into civilized territory.

Finally, the most serious threat against Watch Tower Four is a young green dragon that has taken up residence in the forest. Patrols and travel-

ers see the creature regularly, as she circles the area looking for food, feeding on the native wildlife, including local hill giants. This dragon is very young (only 23 years old), and despite her bad temper and hatred for humans and humanoids, she may not yet be ready to battle warriors and mages. As long as she does not threaten the kingdom, Trel plans to let her fulfil her role at the top of the food chain.

Layout

Unlike some of the other watch towers across the kingdom, Watch Tower Four remains in good repair because of its strategic importance. Most of the ceilings in the watch tower are 10 feet high, and the inhabitants use lanterns as their primary source of illumination, though the wizard Keal does use magical illumination.

Watch Tower



Ground Level

1. Entrance: The only entrance into Watch Tower Four is covered by a heavy iron portcullis to keep out unwanted visitors. This gate is under a 24-hour guard, along with the rest of the structure. Turning the large winch just inside the main hall opens the portcullis.

2. Stables: The 13 war horses kept at the watch tower sleep and eat in this large area. This section is an extension of the watch tower, surrounded by a 15-foot wall. A wooden shanty protects the horses from the elements and keeps their straw dry. Each of these horses is well trained and valu-

able, and Trel had to call in some favors to get the animals assigned to his unit.

Medium War Horse (13): Int Animal; AL N; AC 5 (leather barding); MV 18; HD 4; hp 25 ea.; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6 by kick; SZ L; ML 11

3. Main Hall: The soldiers use this area as a mess hall and as a debriefing room where Trel recounts events from the previous day. During those rare occasions when the soldiers have some free time, they use this room to play cards or to engage in other forms of relaxation. The winch that opens the front portcullis is also located here, and Bolvin has mounted weapons loosely on the walls in preparation for a possible siege.

4. Kitchen: The soldiers of Watch Tower Four eat mostly dried fruits and meats, their supply replenished once a week by supply caravans. Watch Tower Four cannot afford the luxury of a person whose sole duty is cooking, so each soldier works a rotation in the kitchen in addition to his regular duties. Though seldom used, the kitchen does include a wood-burning stove. Sometimes, when a scout returns with a fresh deer or fowl, the old ranger Bolvin puts on his cooking smock and prepares a magnificent dinner for everyone.

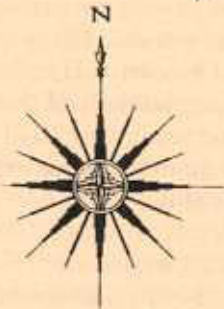
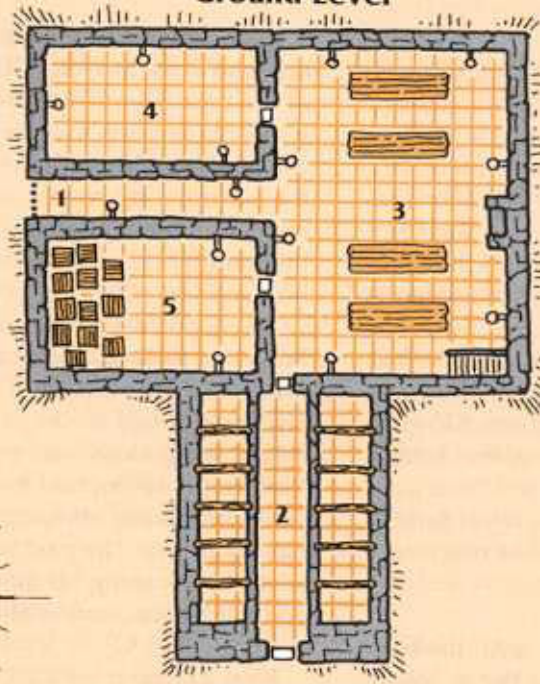
5. Storeroom: This chamber has been well sealed for the storage of the dried fruits, meat, and casks of fresh water. The seals are so tight that not a rat or an insect will be found here.

Second Level

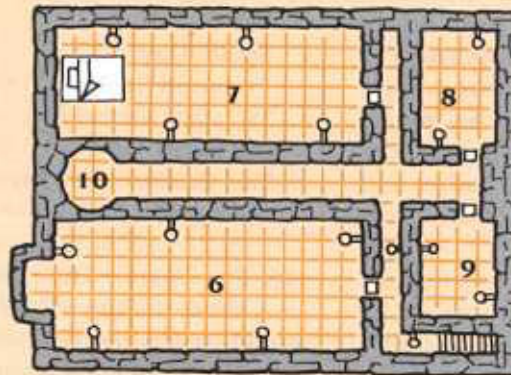
6. Barracks: This chamber serves as a communal sleeping chamber for the soldiers of Watch Tower Four. Each soldier possesses a cot, a pillow, several heavy blankets, and a small wooden chest for personal belongings. The room also contains a fireplace to warm the chamber during colder months. There are no windows in this chamber: however,

Watch Tower Four

Ground Level



Second Level



One Square = 10 feet

Watch Tower

double doors lead to a balcony which overlooks the untamed lands. The soldiers place a wooden partition covered in heavy tapestries in front of the drafty doors during colder weather.

7. Trell the Bold: The commander of Watch Tower Four resides in this room during his resting hours—in other words, not very often. There is a better chance to find Trell either out on patrol with his men or keeping watch on a nearby hill. Since he spends little time here he has not decorated the chamber lavishly. Furnished with exactly the same accoutrements as his soldiers keep, Trell's chambers also include a second large chest in which Trell keeps his men's pay and several powerful magical items given to him by friends and commanders back home. The chest contains 650 gold pieces, seven *potions of extra-healing*, two jars of *Keoghtom's ointment*, and a scroll of *protection from dragon's breath*. The adviser to the royal family gave Trell the scroll, as he knows how much of a threat a dragon of any age can be.

8. Bolvin the Ranger: Many of the men have no idea why this aged ranger serves at Watch Tower Four. One day the man simply appeared at the door and offered his services to Trell. The young commander's instincts told him the tower needed the wilderness skills of the ranger. In truth Bolvin is Trell's long lost father, and the old ranger is feeling guilty in his old age about abandoning Trell and his mother when Trell was an infant. Bolvin has decided to live out his remaining years close to a son who doesn't know his father still lives (Bolvin has not revealed his true identity to Trell).

The ranger's chambers are as meager as his son's room, and he owns nothing more than he carries on his person. Bolvin can often be found scouting the area and giving advice to the soldiers.

Bolvin the Ranger: Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 15; AL NG; AC 5 (*leather armor +3*); MV 12; R8; hp 41; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg

1d8+2 by *long sword* +2 and 1d6 by short sword; SA two weapon fighting, +4 versus ogres; SZ M; ML 15

9. Keal Zonrazz: This chamber is home to the wizard who came to Watch Tower Four at the request of his best friend, Trell the Bold. Keal does not regret his decision to come here, and in fact, he has come to love the wilderness, taking time to study the surrounding countryside. He has also proven himself in battle, earning the respect of many of the men when he slew an invading bulette with his magic.

As a contrast to the other private chambers, however, Keal has decorated his quarters elaborately and expensively. The mage owns the only four poster bed in the tower, covered with silk sheets and goose-down pillows. He keeps a large desk in his room, and a neatly organized bookshelf containing his spell books and the notes he has taken over the past few years. Keal hopes to write a book using his notes about his experiences and wilderness studies at the tower.

Keal Zonrazz: Str 12, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 14; AL LN; AC 5 (*bracers AC 7 & Dex*); MV 12; W6; hp 19; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 by *staff* +2; SA spells; SZ M; ML 14;

Spells/Day: 4 2 2

Preferred Spells:

1st: *affect normal fires, color spray, phantasmal force, sleep*

2nd: *flaming sphere, ray of enfeeblement*

3rd: *lightning bolt* ×2

10. The Tower: The passage beyond this door reaches to the top of Watch Tower Four. A guard stands watch here 24 hours a day, surveying the land with a magical spyglass similar to *eyes of the eagle*. On a clear day, the soldier stationed here can see as far as four miles away. Given the tower's position, it would be very difficult for anything to approach unnoticed.

Major NPCs

Trell the Bold

9th Level Human Male Fighter

Alignment: Lawful good

AC: -1

Move: 12

THAC0: 12

Hit Points: 71

Strength: 18(22) **Intelligence:** 15

Dexterity: 15 **Wisdom:** 14

Constitution: 16 **Charisma:** 16

Proficiencies: Scimitar (specialization), long bow, crossbow, sling, throwing dagger, hunting (13), navigation (13), tracking (14), animal handling, equine (13), direction sense (15), riding, land-based (17)

Languages: Common

Armor: *Chain mail +2, shield +1*

Weapons: *Scimitar of speed +1, 15-light crossbow bolts +2, 5-throwing daggers +1*

Equipment: *Potion of heroism, cloak of the bat, 25 feet of rope.*

Age: 33 years old

Height: 6' 4"

Weight: 209 lbs.

Hair/Eyes: Auburn/Brown

Trell the Bold became an orphan at age three. When his mother, a cook in the militia, died, soldiers who were friends with his mother took Trell in, raising him. Over the years Trell grew up as a soldier, and with the military being his life, the young warrior rose quickly through the ranks.

Trell is a solemn man, married to his military life and duty. It is for this reason that he was chosen as the commander of Watch Tower Four. The last commander of this post was killed by a wandering troll while on patrol, and reports attribute the tragedy to the late commander's lack of mili-

tary experience—another reason to bring in the young Trell. No matter what dangers the young man will face over the next few years, Trell the Bold will stand fast to his duty.

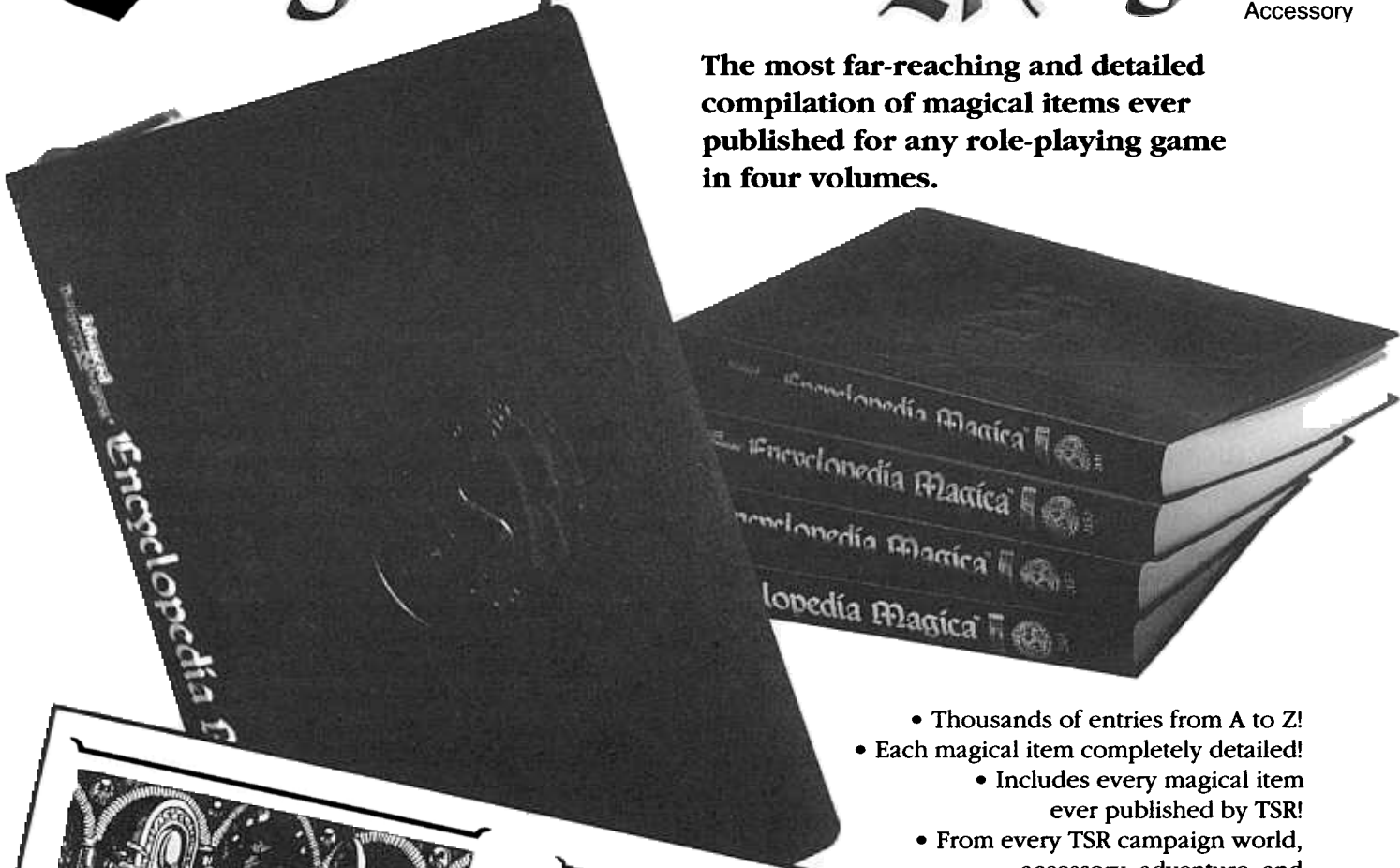
Adventure Hooks

- The PCs are assigned temporary duty to Watch Tower Four. As mercenaries in search of work, the PCs replace a five-man scouting party which failed to return from the wilderness a week ago. While scouting the same area, the party discovers the reason for the men's disappearance.
- The PCs uncover a treasure map which leads to the wilderness surrounding Watch Tower Four. Trell gives the party permission to stay at the post while they search the area, provided they present the commander with details regarding their activity. The map leads to ancient ruins deep in a nearby forest, very near to the young green dragon.
- The bulette mating season is in full swing, and two male bulettes have begun a battle for a female within 20 yards of the watch tower. If left alone, the winner of the battle will prove his worth to the female by bringing her several meals—which might include the men of Watch Tower Four.

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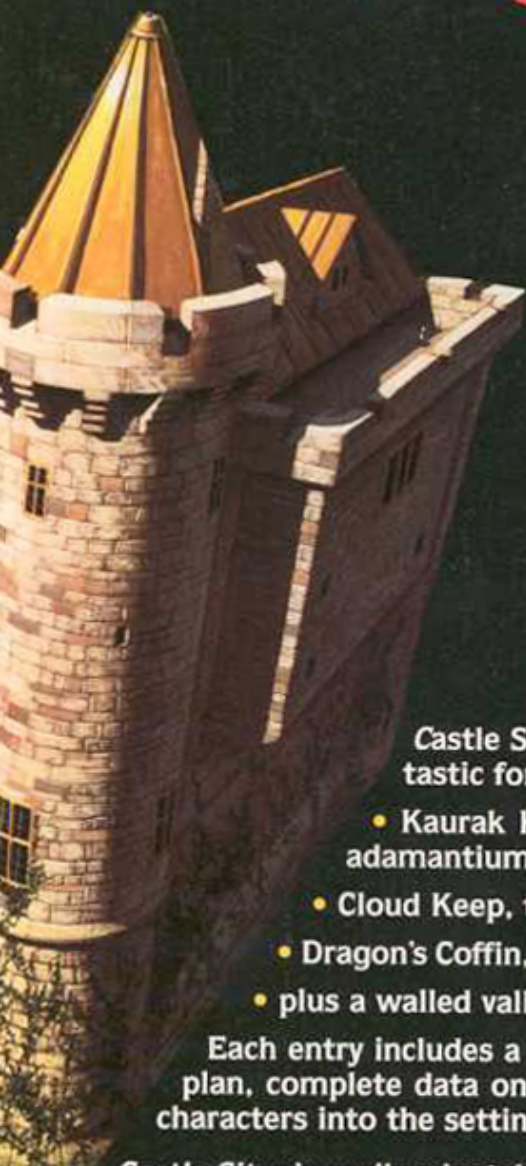
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