

KIN AND KINSMEN

by Andrew Getting

The King is dead...

Hidden in frozen wastelands and surrounded by untold treasures is the Kingdom of the Seven-Day Sun, and home to wise King Jarrod. But times have changed. At the peak of the winter festivals, the head of Jarrod's guard finds his lord dead upon his throne — *murdered*. As the castle and its grounds close by both snow and suspicions, Crown Prince Hess and his council, the Table of Lords, begin an investigation.

During his coronation, Hess is also targeted and everyone is suspect. Even his own kin, the Table of Lords, is not above suspicion, for each is a potential heir to the throne. Fingers point and old rivalries return as the truth is sought.

In the dead of winter, among murderous alliances and old bonds of blood, regicide looms large. The greatest terror the land has ever seen grows terrifyingly close to the throne, and all that stands between the Kingdom of the Seven-Day Sun and its fate is a band of foreign warriors untrusted by all.

...long live the King!

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Requires the use of the
Dungeons and Dragons® Player's Handbook,
Third Edition, published by
Wizards of the Coast®

Kin and Kinsmen





HOW TO USE THIS PRODUCT

This adventure is designed to be easily dropped into your existing *Third-Edition D&D* campaign. It can be run in a just a single session and makes for an excellent evening's gaming. To prepare yourself to run the adventure, you should read it completely at least once to familiarize yourself with the material. You may wish to photocopy the map in the center of the book for ease of use as well. The text on the back of the book can be read to your players to introduce them to the adventure. After that, you're ready to begin. Good luck!

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS

This module requires the use of the *Dungeons and Dragons® Player's Handbook, Third Edition*, published by Wizards of the Coast.® You won't be able to run this adventure without it.

UNBALANCE THE SCALES!

PLAY EVIL AND MAKE THE
GAME MASTER FEAR YOU
FOR A CHANGE!

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Who said you had to play the good guys? Being evil just got easier. This d20 system sourcebook has everything you need to run evil characters, develop evil campaigns, and make your nasty NPCs just a little bit nastier. *Evil* has rules for new prestige classes, new spells, new clerical domains, and demon summoning. If you're playing good after this book is out, you're on the wrong side of the game. 128 Pages, soft cover.



GAME MASTER BACKGROUND

This adventure is intended for a party of four to six characters of levels three to five, but can easily be adapted to any level party as the adventure is very interactive, requiring a great deal of investigation. It easily adapts to any existing campaign and works exceptionally well if you replace the characters herein with the nobility from your own campaign. It takes place in a small mountain realm, the Kingdom of the Seven-Day Sun, home both to miners and traders.

During the a winter festival, the last before the passes freeze up and the harsh weather forces leaner times, an assassin slays Old King Jerrod upon his throne in the dead of night. Jerrod's son, Crown Prince Hess, orders the castle grounds sealed immediately, then consults the parliamentary Table of Lords, made up of his lesser kinsmen. The Table of Lords ratifies Hess' claim to the throne, and his coronation is announced within hours. When Hess' own life is threatened and the Lords implicated, Hess and the Table of Lords turn to the player characters to investigate.

The truth of the matter is simple — Hess is himself the traitor, and desires both absolute rule and an assured dynasty for his children. As the Table of Lords has the legal power to remove a king from his throne, as well as its own ties to the royal lineage, Hess has come to the conclusion that the Lords and their families must be destroyed.

The adventure begins with the party's arrival on the palace grounds during the final day of the Festival of the Last Sun. The revelry is short-lived, however, as the guards close the gates to the city in the middle of the night.

The following morning, the populace nearly revolts when they find themselves trapped within the city walls. The mood grows uglier when Hess announces both his father's death and his own coronation later that day. It is during this coronation that a man in the crowd fires a crossbow bolt at Hess, striking the captain of the guard instead. The would-be assassin is brought down by the PCs and the palace guard, and on his body is found a letter offering 10,000 gp for the death of Hess — and wax seal bearing the signet of one of the Table of Lords.

The palace guard escorts the PCs, the Table of Lords, and King Hess into the palace. Here the Lords and Hess ask the PCs to find the traitor. As the PCs investigate, they find the Lords are also hunted by an assassin. Once they catch the killer, the evidence implicates not the Lords, but King Hess himself. The King flees when confronted, disappearing into a secret passage.

In the twisted lair hidden within the castle walls, Hess unleashes the Slayer of Dreams, the beast his ancestor trapped to earn his kingdom. The Slayer, unbound by Hess' will, first attacks him and then the heroes, sapping their hopes and wills. Once the creature is defeated and Hess' body recovered, the Lords reward the PCs and promote one of their own to lead the kingdom out of this bloody reign. PCs may even find themselves with honorary titles of nobility.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

The following NPCs are vital to the plot and the GM should familiarize himself with the details of each, replacing characters with his own where possible.

King Hess: The newly-crowned king and technical head of the Table of Lords, he has long plotted to betray his fellows so that only he and his may rule the Kingdom of the Seven-Day Sun.

Lord Rigel: Though Rigel's blood ties to Rince are the weakest of the Lords', he is the actual leader of the Table of Lords. Rigel has misgivings about Hess' suitability for the throne, and knows of his affair with Lord Martin's daughter, but keeps these and other secrets for the good of the nation.

Lord Dugal: Though part of a conspiracy against the throne, Dugal is worried that the assassinations are from his cabal, which has advanced their plans without him. Unable to trust anyone, he will attempt to leave the city at the earliest opportunity.

Lord Martin: Also part of the conspiracy, Lord Martin believes that killing Hess would only save the country from the heartache he himself received from Hess. He realizes that Dugal and Fain are both after the thrones themselves, and plans to turn himself and his cohorts in to Rigel once Hess is destroyed.

Lord Fain: Hess' first cousin, Lord Fain was heir before Hess was born, and views the child as an upstart. He and Hess are otherwise very much alike, right down to their plans for the Table of Lords.

Lord Jordan: An elderly man who was technically closer to the throne than Old King Jerrod, Jordan is also inbred to the point of idiocy. He is quiet, however, and does as he is told, and so he sits on the Table of Lords as a pawn of Fain protected only by Lord Martin.

Lady Allain: The only lady on the Table of Lords is also the only former peasant, the product of a childhood romance of King Jerrod. Though she has no designs on the throne, both Hess and Fain believe otherwise, and wish her dead.

PART 1: THE FIRST MURDER

It is the last night of the Festival of the Last Sun, the final celebration of the Kingdom of the Seven Suns before the winter sets in. Under the shadow of Old King Jerrod, the town of Rovedgaard, bustles with foreign merchants packing their wares or selling their final goods at any price they can fetch. Some traders, already packed, are leaving even now, guessing that the snow will bury the mountain passes early this year. The townspeople no longer take part in the festival, save for some last-minute purchases of furs and spices. People shout, laugh, and sing with misting breath amid the early frost. In the morning, the wintry lean times begin.

Let the players make the rounds for a couple hours of game time. Many of the merchants happily sell their fine goods far below the going price (particularly if the items are bulky or perishable). Bear in mind many customers have picked over the wares already.

When the players are done, read the following aloud:

Soon, too soon, the shopkeepers and traders close down their carts and wagons, and as the sky darkens, the streets fall silent. Though the taverns and inns remain as boisterous as ever, it is as though the town itself were bedding down for the winter ahead.

Without much to purchase or carouse about outside their inn, the players retire for the night. Some characters, particularly those who watch the rooms in shifts during the night, or those rogues on the rounds for unseemly profits, notice the night's happenings even before the townspeople do.

At the stroke of midnight, the town guard pours from its barracks, quickly and silently with their leathers and maces. Within moments, the town guard has three men at every exit to the city, and another dozen at both the main entrances and the castle's vast doorway. In minutes, the city is sealed, and no one can leave without challenging the guard.

Canny PCs may later note that this action is not consistent with the hunting of an assassin, normally performed through closing the castle itself, rather than the town around it.

Town Guard, Human Ftr 4: CR 4; M (humanoid); HD 4d10+2; hp 24; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 Scale); Atks Longsword +6 melee (1d8+1); AL LN; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 11, Wis, 11, Cha 10; Skills: Jump +4, Listen +2, Spot +2. Feats: Cleave, Dodge, Power Attack, Run, Track, Weapon Focus (longsword).

If any Town Guardmen are left alive or conscious at the beginning of their initiative phase, they call for reinforcements — 1d6 additional guards arrive in 1d4 rounds. Characters who subdue the guards and escape the town find a large bounty upon their heads as Hess frames them for the assassination of his father.

PART 2: A NEW DAWN IN THE SEVEN SUNS

Morning arrives with the shouts and clamor that accompanies most towns, but there is something different today. Outside, the people are shouting at the guardsmen, some even throwing rotten food. A mob has formed

and armed city guardsmen hold back the angry citizenry. The gates to the city are closed, and despite the protests of tradesman and townsman alike, the guards allow no one to leave.

A town crier, his face red and sweaty, stands on a corner, shouting: "Crown Prince Hess and the Table of Lords demand the attention of all persons before the castle at noon to address the foul treason upon Old King Jerrod's person. After which is the coronation!"

At this, the townspeople grow pale, and the traders return to their their packing.

Should anyone attempt to escape the city, they find six guards at the side gates and twenty-four at the main gates.

Assuming the players maintain their composure and go to the coronation as was demanded, read the following:

At noon the town convenes before the castle. The cool air chills you to your bones. A raised platform, the night before a host to bands and dancing, now acts as a stage for the eight regents of the Table of Lords and the Lords' cousin, Crown Prince Hess. A large man in chain mail stands at Hess' side, his eyes darting through the crowd. Young Hess, barely fifteen, wears enough dyed furs to double his size. Finally the prince speaks:

"It is an unbearable pain that forces me to hold you, my loyal subjects and honored guests, here against your will. Our kingdom is beset, and this past night a man did murder my father upon his throne. This treason, this affront to us all, cannot go unpunished, and I fear that I must keep you all within these walls until the assassin is caught. I am truly sorry."

The audience mumbles. The foreign traders are clearly unhappy at the delay. The townspeople, however, are genuinely worried.

Murmurs spread through the crowd as one of the Lords steps forward, bearing a fist-sized, uncut ruby in his hand.

"Old King Jerrod is dead! By the will of the Table of Lords and the commandment of the gods, his son, Hess, shall succeed the throne."

The Lords glance between themselves, and more than one openly glares at Hess. Though the Table approved Hess' rise, it was clearly not an unanimous decision.

The Lord bearing the stone raises it to the sky.

"Long ago, King Rence saved us from the heart of despair, from the Slayer of Dreams. In so doing, he earned both his throne and our undying devotion. The Heart of Loyalty demands no less.

"Will you, Hess, take up your ancestor's role, and lead us from the winters of body and soul?"

The Lord lowers the stone, the Heart of Loyalty, and presents it to Hess. As Hess takes it, a brilliant white light burns within the Heart. He, too, then holds it to the sky.

"The true King of the Seven Suns can do no less."

The assembled throng and Lords kneel before their new king.

Have the party make a Listen or Spot check (whichever is easier, DC 14, do not reveal the DC). The player who rolls highest sees an **assassin (hp 6)** raise a small crossbow towards the King. If nobody in the party makes the roll, the King's guardsman does, and throws himself in front of the bolt.

False Assassin: CR 1; M (humanoid); HD 1d6+1; hp 7; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atks Shortsword +1 melee (1d6+1), or light crossbow +2 ranged (1d8); AL NE, SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 8, Wis, 8, Cha 10, Skills: Hide +3.

Once the assassin is brought low by either the guard or the party, read the following to the players:

As soon as the man throws up his hands in surrender, the crowd lunges for him. Though the guard quickly pushes them back, it is too late. The assassin lies dead. Guards pick over the dead man for clues, retrieving his possessions.

King Hess steps down from the platform. He looks each of the witnesses in the eye, before coming to rest on the lot of you. His hands still hold the Heart of Loyalty, its light blinding you.

"You have witnessed this second affront to our sovereignty. Be so kind as to join us tonight, at dinner, and tell us what you have seen. If you are helpful in thwarting this threat, we shall see that you are suitably rewarded."

Clever players not only notice the poor quality of this assassin, but will also note that a royal's invitation to dinner is rarely anything short of an order.

PART 3: A TABLE DIVIDED

The castle of the Seven Suns is a simple affair solid walls jutting from the base of a mountain, surrounding and protecting the entrance to the castle proper. The wall of the mountain above the entrance is encrusted with a series of sculptures, depicting a young warrior with a short sword and a chest wound fighting an indistinct figure wielding two daggers.

The Table of Lords and King Hess convene with the party and other witnesses over dinner in the dining room (area #7). During supper, King Hess eats heartily (another clue — for a man who's just escaped an assassination, he is quite cavalier about the only marginally more subtle method of poison), and engages in small talk. The *heart of loyalty*, now on a chain around his neck, has faded to an inert black-red.

The characters, during this time, may ask any number of questions of both the King and the Lords (who eat sparingly). General topics, such as economics, military, and crime come and go quickly — despite the veneer of civility, neither the Lords nor the King are interested.

Should a character ask of the Old King, Hess replies:

"My father was... a good man. Tired, perhaps, since my mother's untimely death, but a good man. The Kingdom of the Seven Suns mourns his passing. He brought us wealth and peace. He will be missed."

Should a PC speak of *the heart of loyalty*, Hess defers to Lord Rigel as to the stone's history.

"Long ago, these mountains were home to nothing more than tiny villages built around the mines. Soon enough, as often happens in such dark places, one of the miners broke through a vein of iron, and opened a door to a cavern. The miner ventured in, then fled screaming mere moments later. The mine was shut down, soon after.

"Thieves and smugglers soon infested the shaft, searching for cheap loot. One thief stole his way into the heart of the mine, but did not leave.

"This rogue died of fright within the mine, but not before telling all he knew to the mine's denizen. This beast, the Slayer of Dreams, was left over from before the creation of the world. The gods banished it here, to sleep below these mountains. Though the miner unwittingly woke it, it was the thief who gave it true power: the Slayer knew where to find victims, and soon it feasted all fears.

"Whole villages went to sleep at night, and died in nightmares by morning. The mountains grew quieter.

"Rence was but a boy when the Slayer fell upon his family in the night. From his hiding place, he watched as the Slayer took the life of his grandparents, his parents, his brother and sisters, his uncles and aunts, and all his cousins. With each death, the Slayer howled in unholy glee. With each death, Rence felt a part of his hope die, until there was nothing left but hatred.

"The Slayer, finally sated, retreated to the caverns. Rence watched, and followed, armed with only a short sword and his vengeance. Into the earth he followed the creature, until he attacked the beast in its lair.

"It had been untold centuries since anyone laid hands upon the Slayer of Dreams, yet Rence cut it twice before it fought back. Using its daggers, the Slayer pierced Rence's heart, to feed upon the man's fear.

"But Rence had no fear, only hate. The daggers, locked into Rence's chest. Their bloods mingled and soon, the demon was trapped.

"Rence survived. When he emerged, the remaining villagers chose Rence as their king. It is from him that King Hess and the Table of Lords draw their heritage. The Heart of Loyalty, Rence's own heart, determines how strong his lineage is, even as the Table of Lords casts its favor or doubt upon the royalty's own hearts."

If a player asks about the King and the Table of Lords, conversation quickly dies before Lord Rigel speaks again:

"Though King, and the undisputed ruler of the Kingdom of the Seven Suns, Rence knew well the frailties of the heart. Though he selected his first son as heir, he formed a council of his other children to advise and watch over the King. King Hess is the descendent of Rence's first son, and the Table of Lords are descended from Rence's other children."

If the players speak of the assassination of King Jerrod, or the attempt on Hess' own life, King Hess speaks:

"I... we have discussed the matter in private chambers, and come to a conclusion. The assassin had certain evidence on his person, and the Table and I have agreed to reward you handsomely if you were to investigate this matter on our behalf. We shall speak of this in private, as matters of state are involved."

The other witnesses take the hint, finish their meals quickly, and leave in the company of the Lords. Lord Rigel and King Hess remain.

At last, Lord Rigel speaks:

"Whatever secrets you find within these walls, remains within them. The Kingdom of the Seven Suns is closer to peril than we previously thought.

"The guard found these on the body of my would-be killer." Hess lays out some maps and letters. Though the letters are in code, the maps are clear — they are of the castle. At the base of each letter is a wax seal.

Noticing your eyes upon it, Hess nods.

"That is the seal of the Table of Lords. My friends, there is a traitor in this castle.

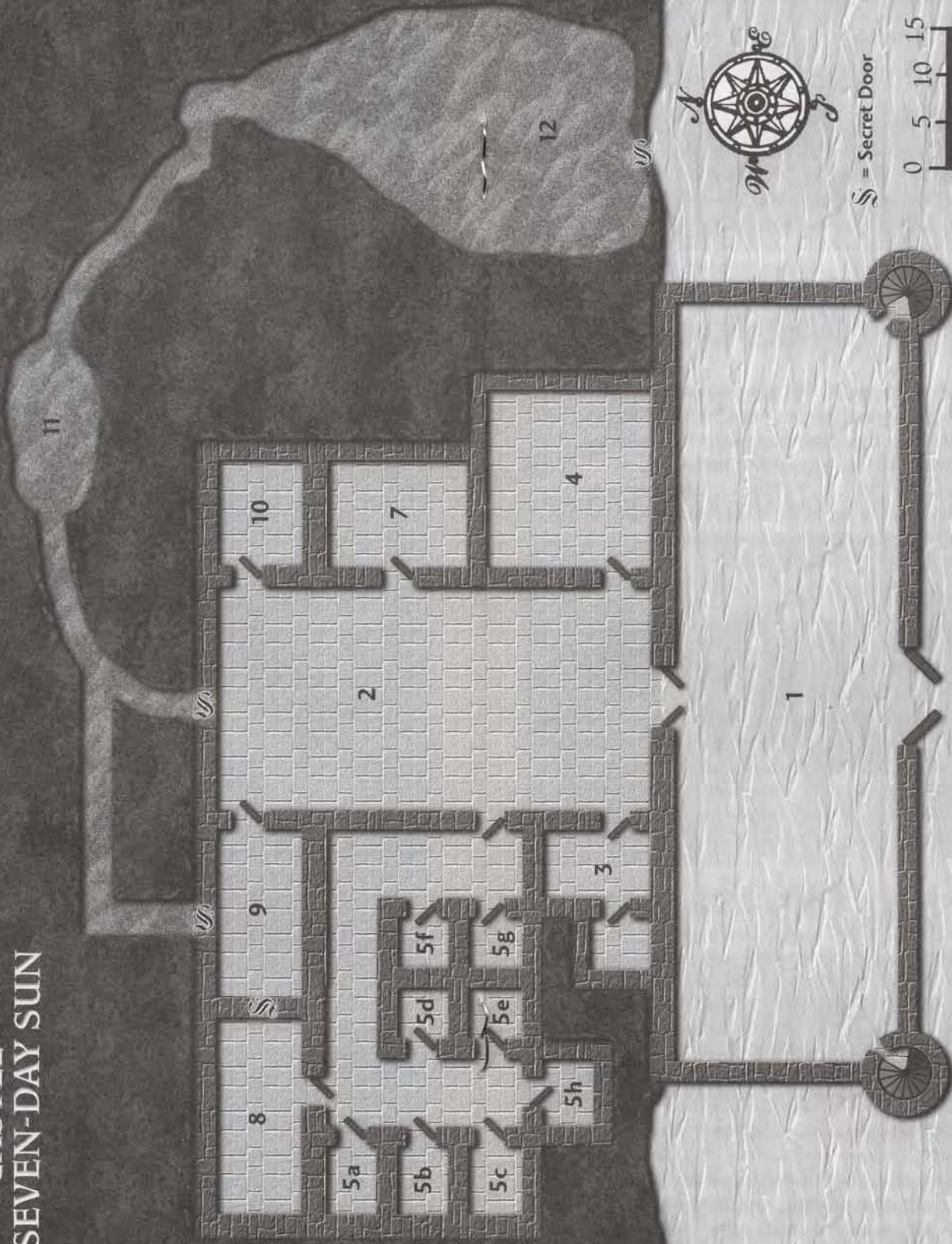
"You are hereby given leave to interview each of the Lords. After I depart, you may begin with Lord Rigel. The rest of the Lords are waiting in their chambers in the west end of the castle. Once you have ferreted out the traitor, return to me with proof."

With that, Hess leaves the room, and Lord Rigel sits at his place of the table, waiting for you to begin...

At this and each successive interview in a location marked #5 (a-h), roll 1d6 and add the number of interviews with a Lord that the party has already held. If the result is greater than seven, the party enters a room with the assassin (*see room #6 for details*).

Rigel is Lawful Good, and despite his distant tie to Rence, views his position as the head of the Table of Lords as the only honor he needs. While not lacking ambition, he also does not trust Hess, but will not volunteer such information unless specifically asked. Hess, he feels, is not only too young for the throne, but also views it as a birthright, rather than as a responsibility.

THE CASTLE OF THE SEVEN-DAY SUN



The following are encounters related by the room numbers and events that transpire. Some room encounters change depending on what has transpired elsewhere.

1. THE COURTYARD

The first time the party arrives here, read the following:

Above the gate is the magnificent sight of King Rence battling the Slayer of Dreams. The carvings are over fifty feet high, and unworn by the continuous wind and freezing ice. All about you, by the gates and on the sentry points along the walls, the guards watch and wait.

If the players did not ask about the *heart of loyalty* during dinner, a guard tells the story. Parties that attempt to leave find the gates blocked by **6 palace guards (hp 48)**.

Palace Guards, Human Ftr: CR 6; M (humanoid); HD 6d10+6; hp 48; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 Chain Shirt); Atks Longsword +7 melee (1d8+1); AL LN; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 11, Wis, 11, Cha 10; Skills: Jump +4, Listen +4, Spot +4. Feats: Cleave, Power Attack, Run, Sunder, Toughness, Track, Weapon Focus (longsword).

2. THE THRONE ROOM

The throne room sprawls before you. Guards line the halls. The east side of the room bears three doors, and the left side only two and a hallway.

At the north end, King Hess sits on the throne, a rather simple affair of stone, cut from the mountain like the carvings of the palace face. Behind the throne is another carving of King Rence, his arms enfolding the throne. Rence's eyes are closed, and where his chest would be, there is instead a fist-sized hole.

If the players have evidence proving that Hess is the traitor, read the following:

As you approach, Hess looks into your eyes. He knows. Before you can raise the alarm, he stands and thrusts the Heart of Loyalty into the hole in Rence's chest. The statue opens its eyes as the floor beneath Hess gives way, pulling Hess and the Heart with it.

At this point, the players are free to follow the trap door to location #11.

If the party does not have proof of Hess' guilt, he merely waves them on vaguely, and does not answer them.

There are **10 palace guards (hp 36)** and **2 town guards (hp 24)** in the throne room, all reporting information to King Hess.

3. KITCHEN AND STOREROOM

This room is filled with pots, pans, and cutlery. A cook and her two stewards, who served you at dinner, look up from scrubbing.

"Milords?" says the cook.

The crew do indeed know quite a bit about Hess, Jerrod, and the Table of Lords — up to and including how everyone feels about everyone else (see area #5). They did not see the murder of Jerrod, however. They answer any and all other questions about the castle, including the nature of the secret doors and the indiscretions of Hess. They are unlikely, however, to divulge anything dangerous — such as the cabal of Lords who truly are attempting to assassinate Hess. To such questions, they reply vaguely, with responses such as "Between you an' me, I ne'er trusted 'im. Not one bit."

The servants know that Lord Fain hates Hess because Hess seduced and abandoned his daughter. They do not think much of this information though and only reveal it if the PCs steer the questioning in that direction.

4. PALACE GUARD BARRACKS

As you enter this room, the small platoon of guards looks up at you from their bunks or their benches. Many are sharpening their weapons. One man, a clean-shaven fellow, stands at attention.

"I am acting Sergeant-at-Arms Harrisson. In what way may we be of service?"

The guards know nothing of the actual conspiracy against Hess — if they did, they'd have taken matters into their own hands by now, and arrested any conspirator the PCs provide testimony. Neither were they witness to Jerrod's murder, though they volunteer a small speculation: that the killer was no common assassin, but rather someone that Jerrod trusted enough to meet in private in the throne room, eschewing guard. The guards also know of the secret passages, but do not volunteer this knowledge unless the party has chased the assassin through the encounters in areas #8 and #9.

There are **20 palace guards (hp 48)** in the barracks.

5. PRIVATE OFFICES OF THE LORDS

Remember to roll 1d6 plus the number of interviews conducted to determine whether the assassin strikes. If the total is greater than seven, the **assassin (hp 37)** (see #6 on the next page for full statistics) is present and has struck already in all rooms marked 5a through 5f. Use the descriptions of encounter 6 from here out.

5a	Lord Rigel	5e	Lord Jordan
5b	Lord Dugal	5f	Lady Allain
5c	Lord Martin	5g	Empty Office
5d	Lord Fain	5h	Privy

Lords Dugal, Martin, and Fain are co-conspirators. Though minor compared to their dead allies, these Lords are unhelpful, resenting any questioning and behaving ill-tempered. Lords Dugal and Fain plot for personal gain; Lord Fain hates Hess because Hess seduced and abandoned his daughter. Fain admits to his part in the conspiracy if confronted with this information. He flatly denies responsibility for Jerrod's death, however, as he believes Jerrod was a good, honorable man who served the kingdom well.

Lord Jordan and Lady Allain, however, are loyal members of the house. While they, too, do not care for Hess, they feel that the stone proves his heritage, and hope the Table can guide him toward a better rule.

If the assassin hasn't struck yet, then the Lord is still alive, awaiting an interview.

If the assassin struck, read the text from encounter #6 instead.

6. THE ASSASSIN REVEALED

Before you stands a man dressed head-to-toe in black leather. He pulls a blood-stained knife from the back of Lord [name], and smiles at you.

Assassin Rog 6/Asn 1: CR 6; M (humanoid); HD 7d6+7; hp 37; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+3 Dex, +1 *studded leather*); Atks +2 *dagger* +10 *melee* (1d4+3); AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10; Skills: Bluff +6, Climb +9, Balance +11, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +9, Hide +12, Jump +7, Listen +10, Move Silently +12, Read Lips +7, Search +7, Spot +7, Tumble +6, Sense Motive +6. Feats: Dodge, Expertise, Weapon Finesse (*dagger*), Weapon Focus (*dagger*).

Tactics: The assassin waits for the first opportunity to flee, charging through the corridor to room #8, through the (now open) secret passages into room #9.

7. THE DINING ROOM

The dining room still contains Lord Rigel, who is pouring over the evidence sadly. He continues to answer any questions posed to him. He knows of the affair Hess has had with Fain's daughter, and confirms their suspicions if they ask. If someone asks him about Jerrod's death, and offers the guard's speculation, he reluctantly acknowledges that Hess himself might be suspect.

8. THE TABLE MEETING CHAMBER

This room is the Table meeting chamber, a long table with the King's seat on one end, a total of nine seats in all. On the eastern wall is a carving of Rence and his children.

If the assassin has entered this room already, the secret door is open. Otherwise the PCs can find the secret door on a successful Search check (DC 20).

9. HESS' CHAMBERS

Entry is forbidden from the east. The only entry is through the secret door. If the PCs are chasing the assassin do not read the following.

The assassin stands in Hess' bedroom, the former chamber of his father. The door on the east wall has just closed, and the assassin yells as he throws his dagger at the door.

"Damn you, we had a deal!"

He then pounds on another carving of Rence, this one of him watching over his family's death. This carving, too, lacks a heart.

If the PCs chase the assassin into this room, he puts a knife to Hess' throat and tells the PCs to drop their weapons. He tries to escape through the secret door into the caves, taking the King's ruby with him. If the party reduces the assassin to ten hit points (or less), he surrenders and testifies against Hess.

The secret door on the north end is concealed and found only on a successful Search check (DC 20).

10. THE TREASURY

The treasury door is locked with **2 palace guards (hp 48)** always standing at the ready. Entry is forbidden.

11. HIDDEN CHAMBER

The ground here descends and the smooth rock makes it hard to walk. As the slide stops, you find yourself in a rough-hewn cavern. A large body of light just ahead and to the right draws you in. Something lies at your feet.

The object at the party's feet is either Hess' body or the Assassin's (depending on who ran in here). His chest is cut open, and he holds in his hands *the heart of loyalty*.

Hess' stash of embezzled funds, totaling 10,000 gp, is strewn about the room in large coffers.

12. THE SLAYER OF DREAMS

A large, natural cavern yawns wide before you, lit from within by the unholy light of two red daggers. The daggers are held by a creature with the shape of a human, demonic features dotting its face. Behind it is another carving of King Rence, a gapping hole in his chest. Still-wet blood and a rainbow liquid smears across the body of the statue. The demon beckons you to come closer.

This creature is the **Slayer of Dreams (hp 65)**.

Tactics: The carving is another clue as to the Slayer's weakness — players who smear the *heart of loyalty* with Hess' blood, the blood on the carving, or their own blood, and the blood of the Slayer, entrap it once again.

PART 4: A NEW KING

With King Hess dead, the remaining Table of Lords convene after the return of the Heart. If Rigel is the only survivor, he reluctantly takes power. Otherwise, the remaining Table of Lords elect him as the new king. Depending on the depth of your campaign, develop a complicated process of determining who takes power, throwing the city into a temporary panic, while the regents discuss the appropriate measures. It could go to a vote, or merely political and economic support for one regent over another.

In the days (or weeks) that follow, the newly-crowned King Rigel speaks with the PCs in private, offering them honorary positions in the palace guard and free travel through his lands. He also offers his city's hospitality should they wish to stay the winter.

NEW MONSTER

THE SLAYER OF DREAMS

Medium Outsider (Evil)

The Slayer of Dreams is a demon of shifting light, taking a terrifying vision when it wants. It wields two cursed daggers. Those wounded by the daggers are drained of their will and spirit.

The Slayer of Dreams was imprisoned in the Heart of Loyalty — the actual heart of Hess' ancestor and the kingdom's first king. When the creature tried to slay King Rence, it found itself trapped in the heart. The *heart of loyalty's* ability to sense the ties to Rence's bloodline is a manifestation of the Slayer's hatred of Rence's descendants.

COMBAT

The Slayer of Dreams is a cunning, but cowardly foe, relying on its natural abilities.

Fear: Those damaged by the Slayer of Dreams' daggers fall into despair (Will save DC 16 to resist). Despairing characters must make an additional Will save (DC 16) each round to take any action until the Slayer is either destroyed, banished, or imprisoned.

Turning: Though not actually undead, the Slayer is vulnerable to the strong force of will associated with undead turning, and is vulnerable as though it were an undead with 9 HD. Attempts to rebuke the Slayer, however, affect it as if it were an 18 HD undead creature.



Emotional Resistances: The Slayer is immune to all means of swaying its emotions, both magical or otherwise. Spells or spell-like abilities that attempt to charm, enchant, or sleep the Slayer automatically fail. Bluff or Intimidate attempts automatically fail as well.

Infernal Blades: The Slayer wields two +2 daggers of *wounding*. These daggers are compromised of infernal energy. They fade to smoke and cinders when the slayer is banished or destroyed.

Hit Dice: 7d8+14 (65 hp)	Abilities: Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 14
Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)	Skills: Bluff +3, Hide +12, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +3
Speed: 30 ft.	Feats: Ambidexterity, Two-Weapon Fighting
AC: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 Natural)	Climate/Terrain: (naturally) the Abyss
Attacks: 2 Infernal Blades +9 melee	Challenge Rating: 7
Damage: 1d4+5, fear, wounding	Treasure: Two Daggers +2
Special Attacks: Infernal Blades, Fear	Alignment: Chaotic Evil
Special Qualities: Emotional Resistance, SR 25	
Saves: Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +5	

NEW MAGIC ITEM

THE HEART OF LOYALTY

The *heart of loyalty* appears as nothing more special than a reddish lump of rock the size of a fist (actually, it is the calcified remains of King Rence's heart). When brought before someone's face it glows dull, red if the person is of indirect descent of Rence's bloodline, or brilliant white before those of direct descent.

Further, the Heart of Loyalty is a prison for the Slayer of Dreams, an extraplanar creature native to the Abyss. Should a descendent of Rence show mortal fear in its presence, the creature uses this to escape. The wielder of the Heart can imprison the Slayer (or any other Outsider) by smearing his own blood upon the surface of the Heart, and then smearing the Outsider's. The Outsider must make a Will save (DC 14) or be imprisoned in the Heart. The Heart may only contain one Outsider at a time; attempting to contain more destroys the heart, freeing the imprisoned monster, as does taking the Heart to another plane.

Should the Heart contain an Outsider, whoever holds it may speak aloud the Outsider's true name and three times per day, *commune* with the Outsider, as per the spell. It is not likely that this information can be trusted, but the PCs do not need to know this.

In addition, once per day the wielder may command the Outsider to use one of its natural abilities (including spellcasting; DM's discretion on which abilities may or may not be used).

Caster Level: 11th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *analyze dweomer*, *banishment*, *permanency*; **Market Price:** Priceless; **Weight:** 4 lbs.

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KIN AND KINSMEN

Author: Andrew Getting
Project Manager: jim pinto
Editor: Dave Lepore

Creative Director: Mark Jelfo
Graphic Design: Steve Hough
Art Director: jim pinto

Illustrations and Cartography: Cris Dornaus

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