

The
Dying Earth

Based on the work of Jack Vance

Lords of Cil

A Cugel-Level adventure for DERPG



By
Ian Thomson



Pelgrane Press



Based on the **Dying Earth Book Series** by **JACK VANCE**

The Lords of Cil

Cugel-Level Adventures for the Dying Earth Roleplaying Game
Written and Designed by Ian Thomson

"In the Footsteps of Fools" - Episode 1.4

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[Cil Palace and Ruined Keep adapted from templates in Profantasy's "Castles" software, using Campaign Cartographer and PhotoShop]

Similarities between characters in this game and persons living or dead are coincidental.

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Conventions of Presentation

Within the following text on many occasions we will simply indicate the suitability of a given ability in a particular circumstance by inserting it within brackets with this symbol, thus: (Ψ WHEREWITHAL) or thus: (Ψ PERSUASION, SEDUCTION). [NB: an indication '-1' after such a skill means that it is not entirely appropriate and a penalty or levy of 1 need be applied at the GM's discretion.] Likewise we use abbreviations in place of the full title of success and failure results. (HBS - Hair's-Breadth Success, DF - Dismal Failure, etc). In some cases, success achievements are listed in ascending order, as a Prosaic Success (PS) expands on the information given in a Hair's-Breadth Success (HBS) etc. In such cases read out the entry for the character/s with the best roll, and tell any others that succeeded less well that their character knows similar but less precise detail. When reading such information out, simply begin at the lowest useful success and stop when the entry for the rolled success level is described.

At many places in the following text we cover merely one likely example of activities the PCs may undertake, sometimes suggesting other possibilities. Each GM will need to adjust and improvise according to the whims and actions of their own PCs. Similarly, not every step of the way is detailed. Pay at least passing acknowledgment to terrain and time taken to pass from place to place when actually running this scenario. You may wish to invent incidental odd encounters to further build atmosphere.

Reference Abbreviations: **TDE** (Tales of the Dying Earth, Millenium 2000), **CC** (Cugel's Compendium, Pelgrane Press 2001), **DERPG** (Dying Earth Rules, P Press 2001), **DDE** (Demons of the D. Earth, P Press 2003), **TT** (Turjan's Tome, P Press 2003)

What You Will Need to Run this Adventure

You will need either the original DERPG Rulebook or (less-ideally) the Quickstart rules to understand game mechanics. *Turjan's Tome* would also be useful, as it is referenced within. However, the GM could merely invent the items referenced. *The Lords of Cil* is the third publication in the 'Footsteps of Fools' campaign. (It could be parts 1.4 & 1.5 due to its size, but remains 1.4 because it isn't split into sub-adventures). *The Lords of Cil* will be followed by *Beyond the Mountains of Magnatz* (1.5), and continues directly from *Strangers in Saskervoy* (1.2 & 1.3 combined), which follows *All's Fair at Azenomei* (1.1). You do not technically need to own the earlier publications to run this one, but since it is a logically organized series, far better to run it as an ordered whole, especially as each part of the series is designed as a different style of adventure.

GM Introduction

This series is designed to carry PCs from Cugel-Level to either 'Advanced Cugel-Level' or 'Turjan-Level'. Should the GM run this as an independent scenario at Cugel-Level she can restrict all benefits to charged items, and decide learning spells is impossible without proper tuition. For other introductory notes refer to the previous 2 scenarios, especially *Strangers in Saskervoy* (for more elaborate details on gaming at 'Advanced Cugel-Level'). If you've not run *Strangers*, then motivation for the PCs to return to Almery - that also leaves scope for them to tarry - needs to be firmly established before this game begins. (I point you towards the purposely designed elaborate reasonings and game-mechanics available in *Strangers in Saskervoy*.) The primary motivation of this whole campaign is the desire for vengeance on a certain Iucounu the Laughing Magician, whose arrogant and arbitrary wiles cast the PCs adrift in this remote spot. Though they may tarry in their desire to accumulate funds (and perhaps skills & information) vengeance upon Iucounu is never far from the forefronts of their minds. Find ways during pauses in play, to slip in little asides on how Iucounu disposed of them so casually, and how even now he might be bragging of how casually he dealt with them. Or, even worse, perhaps he accounts so little for them that they are already long gone from his mind! Read this mini-campaign carefully before beginning. You may need/decide to make notes on possible activities, alliances, and loyalties (both those suggested within and any invented by you as extra ideas), and to note a rough order of things from the many possibilities. (This could be used as a 'start to finish' scenario, but is better treated as a campaign pack to review and enhance.) We also suggest that you obtain the free rules supplements at the February 2005 submission at www.dyingearth.com/violetcusps.htm - 'Enhanced Action Ruling' and 'Supernatural Terrors at Cugel-Level'. These articles may greatly enhance play, especially during the Old Palace explorations & the action finale.

Purchaser's Note: The continuing evolution of this series is dependent on the initial scenarios achieving sales of at least minimal significance. Therefore, inform your friends and associates of the astounding quality of this resource, and stringently resist any thoughts of gratis distributions. Despite his love of the genre, the author can no longer commit the considerable time required to writing long role-playing adventures without any remuneration at all.

We need hardly remind players that reading beyond this point will radically spoil enjoyment of this scenario.



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Chapter 1: Smolod & Grodz

1.1) Beginning these Adventures

As described at the end of the previous scenario (*Strangers in Saskervoy*), in a cruel GM plot of the 'All Roads Lead to Kaiin' variety, the PCs find themselves marooned once more on Shanglestone Strand. If for some reason you are not running the whole campaign, then you will need to invent reasons as to how they arrived in this predicament.

The PCs are again thrown back on the most basic need: 'survival'. To the west lies Saskervoy (and - if you have run *Strangers in Saskervoy* - numerous punitive committees); and the distance is much too far to travel in a single day anyway. (Half-men haunt these parts, and death would be certain to those failing to reach shelter by nightfall.) To the east lies the unknown. Unknown that is except for the fact that the eastern landmass runs south until it conjoins with the continent on which (further south still) are the lands of Almerly and Ascolais to which the PCs wish to return.

As noted at the end of *Strangers*, the PCs are presently near Smolod and Grodz, whose lights were dimly visible at night if the PCs were onboard ship anchored offshore. Smolod is closest, west of the Cil River, only half a mile inland. Roofs are visible from atop the dunes of the shore. A rude town of around 70 huts of varying sizes - built like birds' nests from mud and sticks; smelling vilely of ordure and general filth. Among them wander people "as unlovely and graceless as the huts." "Squat, brutish and obese, their hair being coarse yellow tangles, and their features mere lumps". However, each person has eyes that are "featureless presentations of violet hemispheres".

A slim chance exists that PCs retain wealth & magic items. The GM should find imaginative ways to reduce these over the next few days if possible. E.G. if some items are useful in combat, introduce zesty half-men in such a fashion as to reflect the hazardous nature of this world. Do not willy-nilly snatch everything from them, as the new style of play now allows them to retain some useful goods.

One or more Players may have read 'The Eyes of the Overworld', in which this town and nearby Grodz are detailed. In this case, they know what the Violet Cusps are, and may wish to acquire some. PCs do not have such specific knowledge, and will have to learn what the cusps are by asking. These items are detailed in the DERPG book *Demons of the Dying Earth*, and we reproduce that entry here for your convenience, in a somewhat abbreviated form:

The Eyes of the Overworld

(4 points for one cusp, 7 points for two, Permanent)

Somewhat ill-named, these are Underworld creations. During the Cutz wars the Demonic Centrality Unda-Hrada sent observant tentacles to the upper world. Each was tipped with a cusp that made vision of the surface pleasant. Simbilis the 16th pained this entity, which retreated so abruptly to its subworld that 414 cusps fell into the Cutz Marshes. A House of Domber wizard carefully collected these, & a local entrepreneur later salvaged them from his ruined manse. A pair of 'Eyes' may be fitted over one's own, and allow one to view the Dying Earth as a shared grandiose illusion. Foul things look magnificent, although objects of already high visual merit remain unchanged. Dangers transform but not ignored - IE armed brigands will appear as dour and threatening mercenaries, and a deodand as a grim-faced vengeful knight or some noble manbeast of legend. Ridiculous items are seen as works of abstract art. Those wearing even one cusp also have their sense of taste and touch subtly transformed, so they can fully appreciate the illusions in which they are involved.

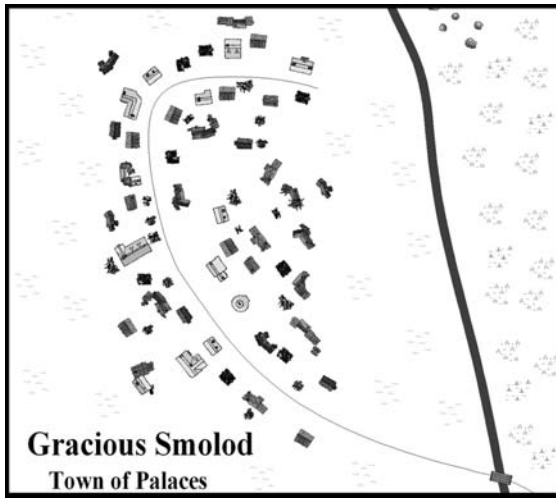
The 'Eyes' would appear to have little practical utility to adventurers upon the Dying Earth, save as marvels to be stolen and sold. However, they do have some game uses:

- i) If someone wearing a single cusp is tricked into looking through both eyes, the dissonance of realities causes several rounds of confusion, or even short-term unconsciousness.
- ii) Any being with Magic 10+ will appear to the viewer in its natural form amidst the otherwise splendid vistas. This applies even if the being is using an illusion as a disguise. Thus, a person using cusps sees the regular folk around them as noble knights and ladies, but sees Ildefonse the Preceptor as a "portly middle-aged gentleman with thin blond whiskers and a balding pate". (Although Ildefonse's magic causes all without cusps or similar revelatory magic to view him as a "stalwart young bravo with golden curls".)
- iii) Any being or item that is naturally magical will be seen in its normal form. This includes demons (even those using illusions), and magical clothing and artifacts - which to the cusp-user will not change the way they normally look.
- iv) In the presence of very strong demonic energy, such as within the Palace of Cil, the Eyes drain energy from the user, equaling expenditure of 1 Magic pool point/minute.

Note that although the cusps are reasonably robust, dropping one onto a hard surface has a 50/50 chance of shattering it.



1.2) Smolod



This ramshackle town has 412 cusps in its possession, equating with 206 inhabitants. The youngest is 50, most are aged 60+. We advise GMs to re-read the first part of the 'Eyes of the Overworld' prior to running this part. Natives are unfit, due to over-indulgence, so players may think nothing (barring their own consciences) stops PCs from harvesting cusps left right and center from the stunned (or deceased) inhabitants. (Not even when they realize that these folk imagine themselves to be fearsome warriors or valiant ladies.) However, 206 folk armed with crude daggers, and homemade spears, enraged & vengeful, could easily trap and slaughter the PCs amidst the huts, or chase them down the beach or out into the marshy barrens.

Remind overeager players of this fact through subtle description of suspicious-seeming watchers (Smolod folk who fancy themselves proud and righteous princes.) Remind them also of the geographic remoteness of this place and the fact that the PCs depend on the goodwill of locals until they can find some way to safely move on to Cil or some other place of greater civilization. The mass delusion occurs because the locals believe themselves to be living in the lap of luxury in a series of glorious palaces set around a magnificent terraced plaza. In reality they subsist on smoked fish, lentils, seeds and cereals (delivered by the squires of Grodz every second day around noon).

The **challenge** for the PCs is to **find a way to move on to Cil**, ideally with a cusp or two as a souvenir. They do not know the way, or possibly even (that Cil exists). The Smolod folk are singularly unhelpful, in that they live in an imaginary world and have little concept of what is beyond their immediate perceived environment. A few retain rudimentary recollections of what the world is really like, but will not wish to dwell on it, and are likely to degenerate into incoherence even if threatened professionally.

Players who have read the DE books may assume that their PCs know general directions in these parts, but they do not. A player holding the Saskervoy Map in hand, and saying "We go this way" does not equate with the PCs having a reliable sense of direction or being able to navigate this unfamiliar wilderness. Even an IS at Pedantry/Living Rough reveals only the general direction and a potted history of the realm of Cil. The plain facts are that the PCs know that the region they are in is extremely hazardous. They also can see (or easily find out through a wander into the wilderness) that there is no safe place within reach of a day's return trip out into the wilds.

Some players may wish to have their PCs walk boldly into the unknown, relying on the GM's goodwill to keep the characters alive. Should any players state that this is what their PC is starting to do, remind them that the PC is not the player. The PC will have sensible fear of the wilds, and the threshold after which such desperate acts might be taken lies some weeks into the future. Food is available in the local vicinity, and shelter. Nothing of survival-level urgency calls them to move on. Therefore no PC will trust their lives to an uninformed march out into the salty marshes (beyond the point of no return before dusk), towards a destination that might be three days distant – or more – for all they know. Remind the Players that PCs are survival-focussed. Their energies will move towards things such as: getting reliable directions and distances from the locals (only the Grodzians know this coherently), preferably having a map created for them, ascertaining if any other means of transport are available through this region. And such things are not easy to come by.

Although the Smolod folk don't wish to be reminded of the way things really are, a few of the more intelligent may (Ψ PERSUASION) tell what little they know of the outside world. (They become resentful and discomforted when talking of the world beyond their illusion, and many will not even let themselves do so. Thus a contest is required to break this barrier of self-deception.)

The only information to be gained from a typical Smolod resident is: (i) Grodz (the place where their loyal squires live and work) is a mile or two to the SE along the shore, and (ii) the ancient town of Cil (from which the founders of Smolod and Grodz originally came) is a far greater distance beyond that, also on the coast. They don't want to discuss or even remember previous existences, especially not the fact that each and every one of them was a criminal of some kind, exiled from Cil. So each has created a profound delusion, and if they talk about anything outside that, it is as a distant and minimally recalled dream. Note that nobody can recall the exact reasons for the founding of Smolod and Grodz (except Hallibi Chank – see below).



Generally, Smolod residents will be aloof and self-important, fancying themselves to be great Lords or Ladies bestowing their time graciously on lesser persons in need of guidance. Any PC that tries to convince a Smolod resident of the reality of their former existence will (if they succeed to any degree) likely cause some manner of anguish in their victim or even temporary mental breakdown. (Recovery takes place in hours, or days at most.)

Getting Hold of a Cusp or Two:

Since the PCs' survival is not threatened, killing someone for cusps will accrue an inordinate number of negative sympathy points. However, getting someone drunk and stealing them, or even rendering someone unconscious would not (if the PCs are smart enough to manage it without raising a hue and cry). Perhaps a series of people might be so relieved of their cusps if the PCs are extremely crafty, though such a plan had better be carried out immediately before the PCs' permanent departure. Run social interactions in moderate detail. PCs will need to get to know, and fool, inhabitants, and set up identities for themselves in order to gain trust. Pretending to be part of the local nobility whilst living in squalor is a challenge indeed, and PCs will always be regarded with suspicion by some. The GM may wish to set up local personalities with names, people the PCs befriend, and others that regard them with severe distrust. (Most will be warily polite.) One person at least will always be keeping a close eye on them. Mostly the inhabitants retain enough awareness to know that if they lost their cusps that the world would be a much poorer place. Thus they would not give them up under any circumstances. However, imaginative PCs might seek (and should be rewarded by finding if they put enough social effort [IS with Etiquette/Imposture/Seduction] into the task) a couple of residents of advancing age who have forgotten the importance of the cusps and might be convinced to give them up (or take them off temporarily). Nobody here can be convinced to leave. All have worked and waited twenty-thirty years for their cusps, a too heavy investment. Unless PCs are exceptionally cunning, the wariest residents will protect the more simple of their fellows from any obvious duping or bushwhacking. Work with your players here by rewarding smart plans, and discouraging overly-violent activities - through the acts of the residents. PCs might befriend someone and get them alone, or break into a hut at night. But since typically three or four people live in each hut, a hue and cry could ensue. If the PCs hatch some plan to harvest cusps en masse (perhaps because they are utterly poverty-stricken), and thus thumb their noses at Sympathy Points, so be it. But, should Smolod or Grodz (a runner will be sent) folk get wind of any such thing, they will engage in a mass hue and

cry. Any overly violent PCs caught are tarred and feathered and chased into the wilds. (GM can mention geographic remoteness and the large numbers of villagers as if merely in passing - if Players discuss plans of violence. If further warnings are needed, also casually mention the Law of Equipoise as it applies to attackers of the weak & unwary.) Ideally, in your game murder, & casual aggressive sword-play without thought for injury, is not commonplace. If one PC alone does such a thing, this might be the time to illustrate the Law of Equipoise, by allowing them to be caught and turned out of town as above. If they thus die, they can be replaced by a criminal from Grodz (see later) - perhaps a shipwrecked traveler who tried to steal some food in Cil and has been here for some months. [Having since then grown a beard (or shaved it off) and having acquired new clothes (actually rags) he's confident he won't be recognized on his return to Cil with new companions.]

In my game in the rare situations of the "I stab him" overreaction, I usually remind the player of the 'What goes around, comes around' interpretation of the Law Of Equipoise. IE: "If you stab this unarmed person, then I put in my notes that the next time I have to decide whether this PC has received subdual damage or a disabling actual wound then I go the 'wound' route." Clubbing some innocent unconscious is also frowned upon, but is infinitely more preferable, especially if only rarely and more appropriately applied. Stealing with minimum violence by crafty means is positively encouraged in this play style.

If an attack or similar group mischief goes badly, the PCs will be arrested, stripped of possessions and thrown into Grodz gaol. From there the GM can encourage and assist their escape. They might escape from the town hall or from slave labor in the fields. In such circumstances possibly use the suggested shipwrecked sailor as an accomplice eager for their help to return to civilization. Or maybe there are a number of indentured workers here, and organizing a mass escape allows the PCs to survive a trip to the Ruined Keep through sheer numbers. (These are emergency measures only, for if the PCs really mess up.)

Derwe Coreme may be used as a GM foil to rescue (off-screen) any individual PC in the wilds, and take them back to Cil in her walking-boat. She does this for amusement, and after questioning them locks them up. Free PCs will not know this, and continue the adventure without their companion. (Until they reach Cil and are able to free the captive.) In explanation, the GM merely says that this PC is out of the game for some time, & the Player must sit tight. Of course some PCs might cunningly sneak back into town & spend the night on a roof or some such, then rescue their fellows.



GM Notes

The PCs may be here for a few days. You might help speed things up by asking that PCs (especially after the first day) specify plans (rather than just milling around). Eventually, even the idlest PC will be motivated to do what they can to get away from this tedious place. Should play begin to drag, use GMCs to stir things up and inspire action. Few PCs will be able to stomach the ignominy of being forced to work in the fields for their keep, and the folk of Grodz might give them three days warning that this will happen. If Derwe Coreme were to openly visit in her walking-boat (as she does in the original story), no doubt one or more PCs would try to Seduce/befriend her, or seek information that she has no real reason not to give - or otherwise gain access to the walking-boat so as to escape from these parts. Therefore we do not include this option except as part of the emergency measures - if all else fails & PC/s are lost in the Wilderness, or if she is seen in the distance & chased. Resourceful PCs might do odd things, & the GM will need to improvise. Once PCs get an idea of what goes on here, one or more might proclaim themselves a disguised inspector from Cil, either on a routine visit or assessing amnesties. In other society's such an idea would be ridiculous, but not here in the distant reaches of the Dying Earth. Everything depends on the PC's skill at Persuasion (possibly granted boons or even a bonus depending on the vibrancy of the invented story) or Imposture.

The Town Hall

At first glance not much different from the other buildings. The PCs will need to wander town for a while before they notice it. It is four or five times larger than the largest other hut (but huts are routinely squished together and surrounded by lumber heaps and ancient refuse piles, so this is not immediately obvious). It is maintained through application of the local crude version of 'wattle and daub'. Originally it was a stone structure, and its basic form is still sound. (Viewed through cusps it appears in its exact former magnificence.) This is the only building in Smolod with a room where PCs might be restrained. It is also the home of the Pontefactor (equivalent to headman/mayor).

Pontefactor Hallibi Chank

As this scenario was originally written Chank was Jarkan Slaye, hiding out since nearly being killed 20 years ago when his older brother (Varnil) sent a demon after him. He was to have risen in challenge to the PCs in the Finale (having posed as merely a faithful friend all that time). In playtest the PCs wouldn't trust him, and so refused to bring him along. We re-present this option if it suits your game. If you use this, Chank assumes this role (as friend) only after a while - giving chance to roleplay the other options here first. NB: His magical capabilities suffered significantly when he was exiled.

Chank is a minor mage who has been hiding out in Smolod for more than six decades after an unfortunate run-in with a conclave of magicians elsewhere. The price of retribution for his previous deeds is death, and so he maintains his secrecy at all costs. (Or if he's really a Slaye then this is his cover story.) In personality Chank will be welcoming and obsequious, but it will quickly become clear that he is deranged and deluded. He indicates that he believes himself to be the head of the last bastion of civilization in a decayed world. (A delusion widely supported by his 'subjects'.) This position is not challenging for the other locals, as people mainly see to their own affairs. But eventually locals might point the PCs in his direction. The PCs might befriend him and gain a room in his home, at least temporarily, if they say they are wealthy travelers passing through. He may even (for amusement or personal gain) support any Imposture a PC is enacting. If you plan to present him as an ongoing GMC, then his delusions will gradually reduce as he interacts with the out-of-towner PCs. Should he be required to have a few basic spells (perhaps in order to defend his person from PCs), grant them as you see fit. Plus you can give him a whole heap of cantraps. Or he may just have personal dark magic defenses in the form of charms and enchantments kept from the old days. (Demonist knowledge was his mainstay of spells, and this was taken.) Eloquent [___], Wary [___], Caution [___], Dodge [___], Health [___], Magic (Demonic) [9 - was 19], Athletics [___], Etiquette [___], Gambling [___], Imposture [11], Pedantry [gradually recovers 3 to 12], Perception [___], Stealth [___], Stewardship [recovers 3 to 10], Wherewithal [___].

Rooms in the 'Town Hall': Parlor, Guest Quarters, Dining Room, Main Entrance Hall, Chank's room, Library/Workroom, Storage (can be used as a secure cell), and Meeting Hall. All of course are fetid and dank, but to anyone wearing cusps are impressive and palatial. The **Library/Workroom** is the only place worthy of specific mention. It and the Storage have the only lockable doors (Chank wears the key around his neck), also very sturdy. He rarely goes here anymore, having become lost amongst his delusions. Once upon a time he conducted magical experiments, and still has a decent collection of magical books, and spell materials, and alchemical equipment (all covered in dust and cobwebs). Amongst his journals and reference tomes a diligent researcher (a PC will have to pay handsomely if the PCs have retained any wealth from the previous scenario) might discover the following:

- some details on the protective stones (and on the activation chant) around Smolod and Grodz [see later]
- The origins of Smolod and Grodz [see elsewhere]
- A map showing the Saskervoy Reach (but no trail to Cil)
- A number of cantraps. These cannot just be 'learned' in an instant but must be studied - see the article on cantraps at: www.dyingearth.com/violetcusps.htm



- A potted history of the land of Cil (amidst other histories). *This includes details of the rulership (an awkward rotation between the three ruling houses: Slaye, Domber and Marbon that sometimes included assassination and general betrayals) and locations.* The only primary information worth mentioning in isolation is:

(a) A section that talks of the Lords of Cil prior to the Cutz Wars. Apparently all houses were fervent demonists and creators of half-men, and the origin (and prevalence) of anthropophages in this region is widely attributed to those creatures who escaped from workshops and spread and interbred in the wild; and (b) the first exposure of the PCs to the legend (only briefly mentioned) that: *“As the Cutz Wars drew to a close, the Lords of the House of Marbon declared it their intent to save the land from the forces of Simbilis. They marched into the west and were never seen again, and thus the house of Marbon fell into memory. Some say that they vowed to one day return, and for many years their supporters looked in vain for their coming out of the sunrise. Others declare that the Lords did return, and despaired at the ruin into which Cil had fallen. In consequence they are said to have interred themselves beneath a hill, there to await their reawakening when the land of Cil needs them most.”*

NB 1: Ideally the PCs will come across this reference during their stay in Smolod. If all else fails perhaps give Chank a change of heart. Bored by his life, he takes them into his home. Nonetheless in some games this may simply not be possible. In this case see notes about the Ruined Tower.

NB 2: Someone who possesses this reference tome or has studied this work at length is able to avoid GM penalties when rolling Pedantry in relation to Cil.

None of the above information is easy to uncover and will require significant study. The GM should invent further incidental information to be dropped in when the PCs make good rolls. If Chank is only an incidental GMC, then no attempts to blackmail him will work, as he is too far-gone in his mind. Long-term wearing of cusps has broken him. He does however value all his possessions, even those he no longer uses, and may well be in the market to collect more.

PCs may stay in Smolod a day or two without causing too much fuss. They need merely behave politely, or describe themselves as travelers, or even call for mercy as regards the predators of the wilds. Should they wish to stay longer, they might concoct some kind of story about themselves (a reason for being in this part of the world for a while), & interact appropriately (Ψ ETIQUETTE/PERSUASION/IMPOSTURE). If they make themselves busy (perhaps having said they are inspectors, dilettante archaeologists or students of culture) they could drag this out a week or two. If they fail to pull it off or simply not think of such, the Grodz folk will be informed on their next visit, and a ‘committee’ will shortly arrive to take the visitors to Grodz. (Where the Smolod folk are convinced the PCs will be more appropriately at home.)

NB 1: Coincidentally, the next visit of Grodz squires with supplies does not happen on the first day the PCs arrive, but

the day after. On this first visit they are suspicious of the PCs, but will not act against them providing the Smolod residents are happy. (Grodzians may not even see the PCs, and may not even be told of them if nothing untoward has happened.)

NB 2: Town supplies are kept in a distribution store in the center of town, or possibly the store-room at Chank’s.

Smolod Resident: Obfuscatory 8, Obtuse 10, Caution 6, Parry 7, Health 4-6, Athletics 3, Etiquette 9, Gambling 3-8, Perception 2.

1.3) Grodz



Smaller than Smolod, since people sleep several to a hut, and number only around 120. The huts are in better condition than that first village and everything is more orderly. The inhabitants are fitter too; they are industrious – fishing, and tilling the fields of crops that surround the town. They even have their own small inn, where they serve a very poor locally fermented beer. All are from Cil, and will claim to have come here for the express purpose of laboring long enough to become eligible for a pair of the violet cusps when one of the inhabitants of Smolod dies. The average wait is 20 to 30 years. No children are here – any that are born are sent back to Cil when they are weaned. *(A squad comes from Cil twice a year on a routine visit, and is due in another 4 months. It may be that the PCs decide to stay here that long in order to try to convince the squad of some story that arouses their pity and results in the PCs being escorted to Cil. This should be discouraged, except as a last resort. The PCs could be asked for regular rolls to Resist Arrogance after a while – because of their poor living conditions and increasingly more squalid lives. Those who fail become highly motivated to find a safe way to travel on.)*



Grodz Resident: Fortright 8, Penetrating 10, Strength 9, Dodge 9, Health 8, Athletics 7, Etiquette 3, Gambling 6-10, Perception 4, Stealth 3, Tracking 3, Wherewithal 4.

Smolod was founded more than two centuries ago by a religious sect, whose original goals have now been forgotten. (Since the lives of those using cusps tends to be vague and indolent.) Grodz was formed originally of their supporters (IE the dupes in that grand plan). Its numbers are now replenished from criminals exiled here from Cil, at the number of 3 or 4 a year. Those that break their sentence and return to Cil are hung; those that set off in any other direction tend to perish in the wilderness. (Few attempt to do this since the heavy presence of anthropophages in the area is well known.) An old enchantment protects the precincts of both villages during the day and night, blocking the incursion of any creature with more than a hint of demonic plasm. However, at night the usual half-seen carnivorous figures patrol the shadows only tens of yards from the village perimeters, and it is not safe even to travel between the two towns.

The folk of Grodz will not normally talk of their criminality, but will pretend to be here as a matter of choice – drawn by the lure of spending their latter years as Princes and Princesses in Smolod. Nonetheless, it is a penal colony, and its inhabitants are mostly lumpish & burly individuals. Clever PCs might notice that the ‘criminal type’ is well-represented here. None will leave here with the PCs though – being too afraid of retribution (unless an exceptional new PC is being introduced as suggested earlier, or a special GMC plot device). The PCs will be allowed to stay here for free only for a short time (1-4 days dependent on the GM’s requirements). After that they will be expected to toil in the fields, or fish in the shallows, every day - alongside the regular Smolod folk. This is in order for them to be allowed to reside and eat with the townsfolk. Since food and conditions are poor, this should motivate PCs to seek ways to travel on. During this time they will only have evenings free. If they have wealth they may negotiate (at extreme disadvantage) in return for their stay. This is most amusing if some of the PCs are in a position to do this whilst others are not. Some PCs living well whilst others grovel for lentils and scraps...

Options for Moving On

The folk of Smolod will not talk of how they got here, except in the most general terms. They are trying to forget, and one of the few rules of the town is that their pasts are never discussed. If this rule is broken it is punished by expulsion – a severe penalty to encourage the fostering of the illusion of noble purpose. The truth is only likely to be gathered through Chank, unless PCs successfully bribe, threaten or – with expressional cunning – Persuade a

newcomer Grodzian. When new prisoners are delivered they are brought under guard overland. (Cil does not have its own ships.) The trek takes two days – one short and one long when travelling back east – and the band shelters in a ruined keep along the way. Apparently the keep is magically protected from half-men, perhaps by some ancient enchantment (like Smolod and Grodz). This is the only safe way known to get to Cil without being slain by half-men along the way. No Grodzians will have a problem in warning the PCs of the terrible demons of the salt marshes. These shambling entities are killing-machines with enormous vigor and a repulsive and confusing stench.

Legend says they are the cursed remains of demonically-enhanced warriors of the ancient Cutz Wars. Fortunately rarely encountered, nonetheless only a few years ago one group travelling from Cutz was slowed during the day, and was approaching Grodz at night when one attacked. It slew four of the guards and all three prisoners before the survivors reached the safety of Grodz’s enchantment.

The GM can allude to the dangers of the wilds by having any PCs that strike out boldly find half-men tracks in thick profusion, vividly described. Presumably anthropophages eat game in the wilds when they can’t get ‘manflesh’, so partially devoured corpses of beasts might be found, or a half-man crippled in a dominance battle, or even a partially devoured half-man disfigured with numerous slashing wounds... The PCs may become lost and barely make it back to town as dusk falls, and be threatened or chased by a swamp-demon (see later details) barricading themselves into the burrow of a visp & spending the night coated in slime. (Only to wake and find they have traveled in circles and are only a half-mile from Smolod or Grodz.)

Do whatever it takes to show (rather than tell – after the first warning) the Players that if the PCs strike out alone they will die. A PC may suggest travel along the shore, perhaps with the idea of sleeping on a tethered raft. Those that have not already experienced shipwreck should be discouraged from this by tales of codorfin, and shown the desiccated body of one that was washed up on the beach. Furthermore, Shanglestone Strand ends less than five miles further on, and becomes intraversable salt marsh, forcing walkers to turn inland several miles in any case.

1) If the PCs have anything to trade, a newcomer Grodzian might be convinced to draw a map of the way to Cil. Bear in mind that something exceptional is needed to tempt a Grodz person to break local rules. (And possibly for game realism the only thing tempting enough might be the promise to bring this person with them south.) If they do gain a map, the GM will need to invent various landmarks: a rocky hill that looks like a dog’s head, a lake with an island on which stands two trees, a wind-weathered obelisk



that marks the beginning of the trail into the hills etc. Such a person would have to be found and convinced secretly and carefully, with much use of casual asides and veiled suggestions. Almost everyone who is propositioned to aid them this way will respond with horror, and the PCs will quickly and quietly be warned of possible naked expulsion into the wilds - should they continue such questioning.

A map-maker will not be found until RPG possibilities are exhausted. This person may come to them if they are ostensibly wealthy. As noted above, this person may well insist on being rescued and taken to Cil as part of the deal. They will need to be guaranteed some manner of disguise. In this case a map is not required. GMs will be forgiven for including this person's idiot sibling as part of the deal, but will further be forgiven for having both GMCs killed off before the group reaches Cil. Remember that in DERP when an agreement has been made it is stuck to. Breaking one's word does not happen without pressing necessity, and even then accrues major negative Sympathy Points.

2) If the PCs are not wealthy, one option is to convincing someone that a better life exists elsewhere, and providing guarantees of safe passage. Again the person's idiot brother might be part of the deal. They may also insist that the PCs steal a pair of cusps. *"I have labored bear four long years for my cusps. I refuse to leave without them. So much is only just."* Such a Persuasion will need to take place over several days, with the PCs whittling the person's resistance. This resistance could be indicated through bonuses to their Rebuff roll. Information that may be gleaned from the person they convince to lead them back to Cil:

"It is a terrible shame that Cil has fallen to this. It was once a magnificent land ruled by powerful but fair Lords."

"During the Cutz Wars all of Cil's Lords were slain battling the demon followers of the mighty and terrible Underberd."

"The surviving stewards formed the houses of Slaye, Marbon and Domber who struggled pettily as the world slid towards oblivion."

(NB: This is slightly contradictory to other material, and deliberately so. This was all long ago, and folk tales have distorted the truth.)

The Shrine

Wherever possible there should be a chance for PCs to destroy any quaintly structured odd mini-society found. Here is that opportunity! If Chank is their ally, he may mention things that lead them to a basic understanding of the magic protecting Smolod & Grodz. At the center of Grodz is a shrine worn so badly that it looks like nothing more than a natural obelisk until viewed close up (whereupon ancient runes can be barely discerned). Every second morning the Grodzians gather here and perform a senseless chant for several minutes before going off to their labors. The PCs will be required to learn this chant and to join in once they become

workers. Each time they do it, they lose a point from their Magic pool, which regenerates in 2 days. A hundred yards around both towns is a ring of similar but much smaller stones now all but buried in the soil. It will take luck or a thorough search to notice that these semi-protruding stones are some kind of regular emplacement. (They are boundary markers protecting the towns from half-men.)

If any three are dug up, and the main rock defaced, (or if the chant is not performed for three days in a row) the magic ends around both towns. It won't take more than an hour or so the next night for the few opportunistic half-men who are hanging around to realize this and come in. Unless defeated they will slay D6 Grodz folk each. The slaughter will be worse at Smolod, with a full third of the people slain or carried away. Such an event would produce pandemonium and everyone for themselves. The PCs may find themselves part of a running battle, eventually barricading themselves into a hut with shrieking locals.

Causing this problem would be another way that the PCs might travel safely from here to Cil. Once the folk of Smolod and Grodz realize that their protection is gone, they have no choice but to make the long march back to Cil. Before they go they will blame the PCs and tie them to stakes. By the time the PCs are free it is too late to follow the tracks of the surviving locals. Instead they will have to find a safe place locally to spend the night (perhaps a terrifying defense whilst barricaded into Chank's Smolod residence). If the group survives, they will be housed back at Cil in the town, not the palace.

However they depart from this part of the world, hopefully the PCs will remember to take provisions. If not they will need to hunt along the way or suffer severe hunger pangs.





Bonus Tricks and Cons for Smolod & Grodz

Smolod

Cusps on Offer 1: One of the most recent arrivals from Grodz (Lady Caras) has only been permanently wearing cusps for a few months, and remembers her previous life quite well. If the PCs have goods and funds she will offer to aid them in any way possible in return for considerable payment. But at the end of the day she will merely charge them inordinately for every attempt, and always there will be some kind of problem. (Either a genuine one, or one she has set up with unwitting/ill-informed accomplices.) *Her desire for wealth is Avaricious, as she has no practical use for it.*

Cusps on Offer 2: Chank can be given more of a real 'headman' role, and be the person who officiates at the ceremonies where people are invested with cusps. For a considerable fee he will point out the oldest and feeblest Smolod inhabitants, and offer to arrange a discreet meeting with them somewhere on the edge of town at a certain time near dusk. After that he says that he could also be open to discussing (and being paid handsomely for) officiating a special ceremony of investiture. Ideally PCs will reject his unmentioned idea of outright murder, but might be able to do something else with this. *His desire for wealth is based round some indefinite idea that one day he will leave.*

Grodz

The Pit of Underherd: One of the smarter (more recent?) residents happens to mention that two years ago a wizard (bearing a pronounced physical resemblance to Iucounu) was here asking about the origins of the cusps, and looking for the Pit of Underherd. He wonders if the travelers would be interested in examining this huge natural crater some miles away? According to legend this is where the cusps were found, and other things have occasionally been found there. If the PCs have funds, this is a conspiracy to rob them, and results in an ambush by mattock-wielding peasants. (And possibly PCs being divested of their goods after painful injury.) If the PCs have no goods, then this is something more sinister, an agoraphobic murderous response towards foreigners. Describe the ancient overgrown and worn crater in majestic detail. If the PCs stay and search, reward them with an encounter with a wysen-imp who claims to have found one of the missing cusps many years ago. It can be Persuaded/bargained to show it to them if they succeed against it, but at the last minute changes its mind & must be pursued and/or slain.

A Presumptuous Claim: One of the residents makes a connection between the arrival of the PCs and the recent increase in deodand sightings (which may be real or imagined). He is really just nervous that they will push into

the line for cusps, and makes outrageous claims about them being evil wizards come to ruthlessly harvest cusps and take them away. Unless they publicly argue against him (Ψ PERSUASION), this turns many Grodzians against them, making their stay here much more difficult and dangerous.

Poor Treatment: PCs who arrive here without funds are relegated to the utter worst possible drudgery, because the Grodzians are convinced that the PCs want to jump the queue for cusps. They are pushed around, spat on, taunted, and worked every hour of sunlight (except the Holy Day). PCs with funds are charged for everything, & very heavily!

A Big Phony: Someone befriends them and seems like a helpful person. Eventually he/she furtively expresses sympathy and offers to sell/swap them a map of the way back to Cil (in return for a few trinkets). The map is bogus and nearly leads them to their deaths in a swamp. On their return the person has set up lies about how the PCs beat and threatened them, and engaged public sympathy.

Madlock Revenge! The enraged and vengeful madlocks from *Strangers in Saskervoy* arrive after a few days, having pursued the PCs across the wilderness. They are seen approaching (or someone tells the PCs they have noticed a scout), giving the PCs time to rally a spirited defense (and make up a explanatory story), which they will need in order to survive the attack of these vicious, well-armed creatures.

A Heated Protest: More likely here in Grodz than in Smolod, but you never know. Wealthy PCs will be targeted in order to rid them of valuables. Poor PCs will be targeted in order to indenture them into labor, or other ignoble punishments. Claims for damages or emotional distress must be adjudicated in a pseudo-formal court session. (GM takes advantage of however the PCs inconvenience locals.)

Derwe Coreme and the Walking-boat: It matters not whether this occurs near Smolod or Grodz. Late one afternoon after the PCs have been marooned here for some time, the Walking-Boat passes across the marsh a half-mile away, heading east. Its speed is not so great that the PCs might not catch it, and the figure inside seems oblivious or faintly curious. Anyhow, it does not stop, and must be chased across tussock and pool, at great personal indignity. They might even manage to make leaps towards the deck before Derwe laughs in cruel amusement and turns up the speed, leaving them quickly behind. Half-men of course threaten them as they return forlornly to town. *Should you be presenting Chank as a GMC (with hidden purpose), this may very well be the event that triggers his sudden change of heart towards them, though he explains this as mere interest in Equipoise.*



Chapter Two: The Road to Cil

2.1) Hazards of the Trail

Only a few miles from Smolod the salt-marsh closes in, expanding northward from the sea's edge. A rough track begins here, and the PCs can follow it, though this often fades and causes them to have to wade through the mire or hop from tussock to tussock. Many animal tracks traverse this area. (If the PCs ask, the most common non-anthropophagous creatures of this region are swamp-deer, wysen-imp, fox, rabbit and feral badger.) If they did try their own explorations earlier, then a map (or human guide) proves essential, leading them across the marshes by means of landmarks such as peculiar rock formations, lightning blasted trees, wind-worn obelisks etc.

It is possible that the PCs never properly explored whether locals were telling the truth about the dangers of the trackless countryside. If so, and if they are unaccompanied and bought a map at high cost, then have the track be much more obvious, an ancient roadway quickly becoming visible only a few miles away. This leads directly to the ruin and from thence down to the beach at Benbadge Stull. (This may be the case even if they failed to find their own way earlier. Place the ancient roadway further north or south of where they explored.) *Particularly amusing if Chank is guiding them after earlier trying to sell them a bogus map. NB: If Chank is with them he is still addled and needs their aid, and only begins to act coherently after they arrive at the Palace.*

The ruin is only 15 miles distant, so passage through the marsh must be described as justifiably difficult enough for them to reach the keep only a little while before dark. (Rather than asking for endless Athletics rolls, have them make 3 for the trip. Judge their final condition by the worst Success level and make fine mock of the state of their attire and demeanor. DFs indicate falls into fetid quagmire, and perhaps the necessity for swift rescue if you wish to role-play these challenges. The rolls themselves need not be difficult to effect a rescue, but PCs whose rescuers roll badly may lose shoes, personal items, even trousers!)

The terrain is dank and soggy, and the vegetation that emerges from the mud and pools is only bog-grass, rotting reeds and a few larches and willows. Make pains to describe the desolate and fetid nature of this environment. It takes an arduous march to reach the eastern hills, and only close to them can one of the crags be discerned as a shattered tower of a ruined keep. It would not be untoward to introduce deodands or worse creatures (swamp-demons) at this stage, to skulk in the growing shadows. If the PCs are excellent fighters or have offensive magic, be sure to

have at least one marsh-demon lunge from the shadows of a rock formation, intending to rip off arms and snack upon them. (Or possibly it starts to trail them as soon as dusk begins.) These creatures moan horribly as they move, and reek so much (a possible give-away that one is near) that all abilities against them except Attack & Defense are reduced (Penalty/Levy of 1). In reality Attack is reduced too, but this is factored into the equation by giving the sluggish marsh demons a reasonable parry (the stench is one of the 'other items' used to parry with – DERPG, p19)



Marsh-Demon: Strength [___], Parry [___], Health [___], Magic (Resistance only)[___], Athletics [___], Perception 2, Wherewithal Ω.

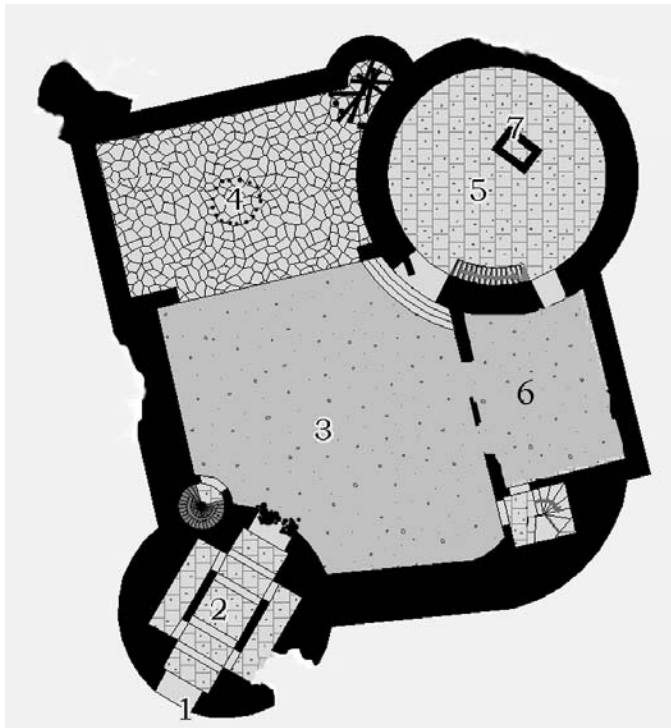
2.2) The Ruined Keep

A mostly extant keep, though its roof and upper floors have long-since collapsed. (The upper floors were largely wood that rotted away.) It stands on a rocky bluff with steep sides, and is reached by a narrow path (worn over the ages from a wider way). It looks wonderfully defensible, which may be a relief as darkness finally settles in.

The path narrows at one point, due to an old landslide that has since stabilized. The PCs must shuffle carefully around the edge. This doesn't require rolls, being an incidental part of the ancient ambience, rather than a noteworthy event.



When they finally reach the top, moldering stones form a partial barricade across the only doorway. Runes carved above the doorway are almost worn away, but are clearly more recent than the building. (They are the focus of the magic that keeps half-men away.) As Jack Vance says: within is “silence and the odor of dust and damp stone”. This is not a fun place to hang out, but a crumbling ruin. The map provided may assist the Players in visualizing the scene. In one corner under a partial overhang is a huge pile of serviceable firewood. And in the middle of the floor nearby is a crude fire pit filled with ash, though clearly it has been at least many weeks since it was used.



1: This tower can be entered either through the partially blocked doorway with the runes above it, or via the massive hole where the wall collapsed many years ago. The inner entrance from this tower into the keep itself was once barricaded with a mixture of natural rocks and fallen blocks from the keep’s structure, but this has not been maintained for some decades.

2: Various iron gates once protected entry into this keep, but all have long since corroded away almost to nothing, leaving only their stone housings. The few remaining pieces are not easy to reach from the main path through, and if touched will tend to collapse into gritty fragments

3: The central courtyard. Open to the weather as it always would have been, but now filled with piles of windblown earth, small bushes and a carpet of weeds and scraggly grass. The spiral stair in the bottom left corner is at the

base of a broken tower and choked with fallen stone from the walls. With difficulty one could clamber up and onto the edges of the broken keep walls, but easier ways exist.

4: This raised and paved area is still partially roofed, although the stone beams and huge slates that make up the roof are damaged and let the starlight through large gaps. At the center of this area is a place where the floor has subsided slightly, which has clearly been used as a fire-pit. It is blackened with many years of ash and various charred timbers from its last use. (The Perceptive will place that event as some months ago.) The marked area (dotted line) in the corner, is the place with the most secure roof above it and for some yards also out in front. Here is a large pile of firewood. (The PCs may later wish to move the firewood and settle here as the weather grows worse, as the sheltered areas along the walls here will no longer provide sufficient cover.) For GMs of an active frame of mind as regards dangerous fantasy, here might be an ideal place to locate some huge carnivorous worm that was sleeping peacefully beneath the logs. At Advanced Cugel-Level play the odd bit of surprise combat with some actual risk is entirely appropriate. Make the beast strong and dangerous enough that a running combat must take place with at least some of the other PCs needing to assist the person/s who is/are attacked. Also make the description of whatever creature you choose suitably fantastical.

5: At the top of these wide circular stairs one lower fragment of a huge wooden door still stubbornly clings to its housing, showing signs of fire damage. This huge tower once had at least two floors above, all of which have collapsed. And since they were constructed from wood, very little now remains. (All wood having either rotted away or been burned by visitors.) The main point of interest here now is a large stone sarcophagus-like box more than half-buried in wind-blown earth and debris. The stairwell against the wall here goes all of the way up inside the tower, terminating on the edge of the jagged walls above. It is worn with the rain and wind and looks (and is) hazardous to traverse due to ancient fragility.

6: This area too was once roofed, and was possibly a stable or smithy, or both. Virtually nothing remains of the roof, and there is no shelter here. The stone stairwell in the SW corner once led both up and down, but has long since fully collapsed. No access to the basements is possible here.

7: Should the PCs spend the necessary effort to clear the earth from around this stone structure they will see that it does indeed appear to be a sarcophagus. Ancient original runes have been worn away to virtual indecipherability, and more recent (and far cruder) writings too are almost unreadable despite their far more recent origins. (An IS with Perception reveals that they were in the common



language of the Dying Earth, but only now the words ‘warning’ and ‘temptation’ are potentially intelligible.) This hefty stone container is protected by an enchantment and cannot even be chipped without first removing this magical protection. (Suggesting that whoever made the most recent inscription was a magician.) Should the PCs go to the immense effort (or have magic to do this for them) of opening up this hefty stone lid after removing the magical protection, inside is an ancient skeleton clad in dry rags. It is clutching a book on the House of Marbon, emblazoned on the front with the Marbon coat of arms. However, this too falls apart when touched. Nonetheless, Players should be allowed to believe that PCs’ opening the sarcophagus is what triggers the following ghost encounter. Further searching the dust below the remains may (Ψ PERCEPTION) uncover a single silver ring decorated with engraved spirals. Inside the band is written (in the old language): “*The one ring: if lost please return to Lord Marbon, Palace of Cil, Cape of Sad Remembrance.*” It has no significance to this scenario.

Spending the Night at the Keep

Take pains to describe the eerie night as it falls, and after. Half-seen anthropophages will indeed soon lurk just beyond torchlight outside the ruins, muttering and calling out for flesh. Their words should indicate that few humans travel these parts, as they beg and plead for the rare delicacy to be made available to them. Sleep will be difficult, because the keep is also haunted. This is not evidenced with an overt ghost or ghosts, but with shifting shadows, distant whispers and odd smells. These begin at rare intervals. Call for Perception rolls – especially if only one or two people are on guard - and describe each whispered phrase or half-seen shape as if every detail actually meant something specific. These ghostly manifestations should all allude to the former greatness of Cil in some way, and the fact that this ruined keep was once a feasting hall for the Lords of this land. (Mages angry that their works are no more, proud Lords weeping over lost glory, women wailing for their forgotten beauty, shadows of armed men performing close order drill...) Nonetheless these are subtle half-seen things, rather than some major haunting, and the PCs should eventually sleep.

2.3) The Ghostly Vision

At some point all will be asleep except the person/s on guard. (If more than one is on duty, call for alertness/fortitude rolls until one falls asleep.) The guard remaining will hear some small sounds from the shadows. Nothing unusual compared to what has happened already, but then a man emerges from the shadows. (Perception IS/PS will show that he is a ghost.) This man is dressed in the ancient finery of court magician. He wanders the area muttering.

NB: If Chank is with them he cannot hear or see the ghost. Nor can he later enter the Marbon Crypt. PCs should assume this is because they are the ‘chosen ones’, not because Chank is being denied access. If they return here from Cil later, have Chank stay in Cil at that time.

If the PC guard tries to interact with the ghost, the ghost will tell a sad tale (see below). If the PC does not try and interact, the ghost will eventually notice them anyway, and come over to tell them the tale. Note that it is possible that the PC will not know for certain that this person is a ghost. However, it is also possible that the PC is frozen with fear (the GM merely says that this is so), and has no choice but to listen. Other PCs may also awake (Ψ PERCEPTION).

The Tale: *“It was a cold night such as this, some centuries ago, when the Lords of Marbon returned. Cil had fallen into ruin, and its greatness was no more. In despair the Lords used their magic to entomb themselves in this place, prepared to rise again when Cil was sufficiently restored to be worthy of their presence. I was summoned at that time, to watch over the security of their resting-place, to be sure that none would steal their magical relics or noble accoutrements. I was cursed to remain here until the Lords rose, or until the last two stones of this edifice were sundered. Alas, Cil never recovered, and those magics have failed. The Lords of Marbon perished unknown, and their last resting-place is forgotten. Never will they return to the glorious Palace of Cil, where their heirlooms and treasure chambers remain sealed awaiting their return. I beseech you, set me free from my dismal fate by dismantling this ancient keep. It will be work of weeks, but I can speak tales of elder days to wile away the hours and will pledge myself to your service for one full year when the work is done.”*

One useful idea to back up the appeal of this little speech, is to have either those awake see visions, or those asleep have dreams (which they will recall on waking or being woken after this encounter). These depict the X [same number as PCs] Lords returning to the keep when it was still mostly standing. They are dressed in rich armor and heraldry, carry impressive weaponry. One at least looks like a powerful mage, and retainers accompany them. They ride enchanted (glowing) horses. A second section of the vision shows the Lords descending into the keep’s basement in solemn procession, whilst retainers mourn and take poison. The ghost’s purpose behind its speech is to evoke their sympathy, and their promise to pull down the whole keep so it will be free. It is a liar, and its promise to be their servant would expire as soon as the last two blocks were sundered. It is also open to negotiation, since it in fact is really promising nothing. Especially it will tell them of the treasure rooms and magical devices locked away in the Palace of Cil, waiting the return of the Lords. *“Should you free me, I will accompany you to the Palace, and there we will find some way to bypass the wards that block the sealed halls from any but the rightful Lords. I still have some magics remaining. Your rewards will be munificent. Tell me what is your heart’s desire?”*



The PCs may engage in conversation, saying how they wish both wealth and a means to travel back to Almetry. The ghost will confirm that not only treasure halls remain in the Palace, but that magical transportation machines also still await the return of the Lords. It will particularly describe Derwe Coreme's walking-boat in glowing terms. However, really this is all GM's primer for subtly feeding the PCs' ambitions to become the returned Lords of Marbon.

As they listen/talk, the PCs will quickly become aware that things are unlikely to eventuate the way the ghost wants. Even a cursory look at the keep shows that it would take months to dismantle, and doing so would very likely result in fatalities from falls or crushings. So, the game purpose behind the ghost's speech is to alert the PCs to the fact that the goods and accoutrements of the lost Lords of Marbon are entombed somewhere nearby, ready for the taking. The PCs will no doubt assume that they are beneath this very keep, but that is not quite accurate. The Lords are in the sub-basement, beneath the collapsed basement.

If the ghost is engaged in conversation it can also furnish them with some basic information about the state of Cil these days. For instance, the city still exists – though it has crumbled to a small town. Also, the Palace is still largely whole, but only one wing remains occupied, and this by petty squabblers who call themselves stewards to a yapping and vain girl who has not yet quite reached her majority and so is not even actually a Lord of Cil.

The PCs may wish to communicate with the ghost, to try and engage it in some kind of compromise. They may try and trick (Ψ PERSUASION) it to show them how to get to the tomb. It will inform them that this is impossible, since the basement has collapsed and the weight of the keep would prevent any kind of excavation. It does not wish them to be the new Lords of Marbon, and will not suggest this. It will vehemently argue (Rebuff +1) against any kind of subterfuge. There is one clear exception to this:

If the PCs emphasize the ghost's fate to stay here until the end of time, guarding something with no purpose... And if they suggest that they are the Lords of Marbon reborn (or returned, or whatever), then it is at a disadvantage (Rebuff -1). However, this needs to be a full Persuasion contest, and the ghost needs to be played as extremely reluctant. The ghost may at first totally disbelieve them, but may also change its tune as it begins to lose the Persuasion contest. The more the PCs can phrase their deal as the ghost 'looking the other way' rather than assisting them, the better it will respond. Play this as a dialogue, rather than as rolls with a few choice words thrown in.

If the PCs convince the ghost that the only way for it to find freedom from this fate is to accept them (the PCs) as

the new Lords of Marbon, finally it will cave in and grovelingly apologize. It will be more fun if you play the ghost as knowing it has been conned, and knowing that the PCs know it knows it's been conned... with a hint of guilt & embarrassment that it's been reduced to such chicanery after having originally been bound to noble purpose. "The great day is here!" (It booms out unconvincingly.) Then it pulls a trumpet from under its arm and blows a loud fanfare. The center of the courtyard opens into a magical spiral stair that descends to the sub-basement tomb.



The Weather

During the night a storm is building during the beginnings of the ghost encounter. Lightning cracks in the distance, thunder rumbles, and slow heavy drops of rain begin to fall. As the action progresses, the rain begins to get heavier as a massive storm rolls in from the ocean. Anyone on the battlements can see the huge bank of black clouds. Eventually the storm hits and driving torrential rain strikes the keep. Only the corner where the firewood was stored can be made into anything like a half-decent shelter.

This extreme weather serves multiple purposes:

- i) It adds atmosphere and makes the game world more real, and also hints that great and mythic things are afoot
- ii) It makes the PCs more receptive to getting into the crypt
- iii) If they don't convince the ghost then it opens up the reason for how come the pathway has eroded so much in the night (see below)



If the PCs fail to convince the ghost or don't think to do so, then it will fade away, a sad spirit tied to a forlorn task. However, further dreams of the tomb of the Lords of Marbon, or of the grand spectacle of their return, may allow you to call for rolls against Avarice. (Or against Arrogance if the PC in question sees themselves riding the fine horses and wearing the heraldic gear.) Anyone who fails then wakes in the early hours of the morning (it is still quite dark) still dreaming of wealth and prestige.

Note that this is not meant to be a GM hammer blow of conviction or plot manipulation. Or rather, it is not meant to appear as though it is. The game is best run so that the PCs themselves make the link of realization that it would be great to pose as the new Lords of Marbon returned, and thus take advantage of the wealth and magic at the Palace. We have two further plot aids a little later in this piece that will prove very convincing to taking up this subterfuge at a slightly later time, even if the PCs don't do so now. (For instance, in some games they may be interested in doing so, but prefer to check out the lay of the land in Cil first. Don't railroad them to take up this option now if they don't naturally do so.)



The ghost can be called again in the early hours, should they wish to do so, and can be conversed with further. Use your GM cunning to subtly glamorize the Lordship option. Once it has been convinced that this is the only way for its freedom, the ghost might enter into collusion with them. It may assure them how easy it will be if they don't like the job to secretly horde away as much of the treasures as they can, arrange a hunting expedition to the west, and simply ride away. Or possibly take one of the magical walking-boats out for a tour, and then strike south-west along the coast for the Land of the Falling Wall.

The PCs may choose to leave the keep without investigating the possibility to become Lords. If so, then this part of the scenario is where that narrow piece of track

becomes another hint at the ease and possibility of their becoming the Lords of Cil, and this option does not include the ghost:

The narrow section of trail is now even narrower. The heavy rain of the night has caused a further landslide. Athletics rolls are required to ease one's way past. Clever PCs may use rope and other assistances to prevent falling. If so, simply have part of the remainder of the path collapse. Or if they by-pass this section entirely call for Perception rolls to see if somebody notices the natural cave entrance that has been revealed here. The most amusing way is for someone to fall into the passage as it collapses, or for them to roll down the hillside and come to rest on a ledge where the opening is now revealed. Once again this does not mean they must go inside, nor that if they do that they must immediately begin to pose as the Lords of Cil.

2.4) The Marbon Crypt

A wooden door blocks the end of the passage. It is of great age, and carved with runes and heraldic markings of Cil. Invent here whatever magical or mundane defense your PCs can deal with in a medium-challenge. In the central oval chamber beyond are the exact amount of alcoves as there are PCs (and perhaps one extra if a GMC is with them or if one of their own has been taken to Cil already – whether they know it or not). A wall of opaque magic force blocks each. At the far end of the room is a wooden chair on which sits a skeleton in robes. This proves of no interest whatsoever until the last PC opens their alcove or the PC party attempts to leave. Inside each alcove is also a stone bench on which the original Lord lies in splendor. It might be nicely horrible if as soon as a PC steps in the body sighs and disintegrates, leaving only clothes etc. The only way an alcove can be 'opened' is for a PC to stand before it. When this happens the barrier vanishes, and the PC finds a dressing room beyond - containing clothes and accoutrements. All are in exactly their size. At the moment the barrier vanishes, the PC's original clothes become unstable, and will quickly disintegrate. Magical clothes will not disintegrate, but regular clothes with spells cast on them will. Other objects will not disintegrate, magic or not. Exact number/gender of original Lords matches the PCs (plus significant GMCs the GM cares to include). Invent new clothes and possessions. Fine new rapiers, daggers, staffs/rings/amulets of office, steed barding and saddlebags (sadly no actual horses), even purses of coins... Rich and alluring descriptions of clothing and special items allow you to call Resistances (Ψ AVARICE/ARROGANCE) if any PC is reluctant to adopt a new persona. Taking possession of even one item gives penalties on Resistances available against eagerly assuming the whole role.



The Ghostly Steward

At an appropriate moment, the ghost from the dream reappears, on the seat where the skeleton is. It speaks:

“At last I have fulfilled my charge. The Lords of Cil have returned!”

[Possible pause, uncertain look round, falters & continues.]

“All hail the Lords of Cil, glory to the Lords of Cil. Cil shall...”

[Possible place to pause and falter, ghostly equivalent of an embarrassed and unconvinced shrug] *“...be redeemed.”*

PCs may well have to walk in their new finery and carrying new possessions, as no horses have been provided. Or they may do a deal with the ghost wherein it summons horse hybrids from the surrounding countryside for their use. This could be particularly amusing, since the ghost finally ends its existence as they enter Cil, and its control on these wild beasts will end at that moment – probably with interesting results. It will neglect to advise the PCs of this.

2.5) Introducing Ramaf Slaye

The old road becomes even more visible beyond the keep, and the PCs may travel in reasonable ease through the hills for the morning. In the early afternoon the road reaches the cliffs of the Great Sandy Beach (on the map just above the ‘S’ of ‘Sandy’) and vanishes. Erosion has entirely worn it away. Fortunately, traversing the beach is easy.

Around middle afternoon they see in the distance an old man rummaging on the ground. Eventually they reach him. He carries a large wooden sieve and is sieving the sand energetically. He is so caught up that he does not sense them until they are nearly upon him, or until they shout. When he does he leaps up, & greets them with puzzlement. Ramaf Slaye is the most recent descendent of the House of Slaye and has some small knowledge of Slaye magic. Most think he is just a harmless loon, whereas in fact he has tried many plots over the years to bring back enough power to himself to overthrow Domber and gain control of Cil.

GM Notes: Whatever their apparent identities, Ramaf is crotchety and unco-operative. PCs must use abilities to gather information from him. He won’t recognize Chank/Jarkan, as they had little contact and that was 20 years ago when Chank was unstooped & possessed a massive beard. He hangs back, or is ignored by Slaye (as a no-account).

Apparent age discrepancies are explained by demonic magic.

The PCs in their normal garb: If they aren’t posing as Marbon Lords, Slaye will tell them his plight in full detail. Herein is another GM opportunity to make the possibility of their becoming Lords much more attractive. He will talk freely and greedily about the wealth and magic of the Palace, and how within the year (due to maintaining her age of majority) it will be in the hands of a frivolous girl, unfit to rule. He will tell of his family’s disenfranchisement

at the hands of Derwe’s aunt Amalda (who was a stronger mage than his father) twenty years ago, which was the closest a Slaye has come to rulership in many generations. He is understandably bitter and twisted about this. Make sure his anger shows as subtle psychological instability.

It is possible that his speech extolling the wonders available to Lords endorsed by the stewards will cause the PCs to turn back to the keep. Slaye will also (if asked) explain the process of ratification by the stewards as he sees it: they are corrupt cowards who respond only to threats and powerful personality. If he finds the Icon of his house that was lost by his great-grandfather when a ship was wrecked here on the beach, then he’ll be making changes. (The Icon of Cil is not actually a Slaye heirloom, but a magical artifact of Cil Palace that controls a specific demon that assists the ruler in wielding supreme power. He currently believes it his last hope of gaining power. But will not divulge these details.) *Once again don’t bully the PCs into becoming the Lords. (Carefully-designed bullying occurs later, with their poor treatment at Cil Palace and Town if they have still not taken this option.)*

GM Note: If PCs first encounter Slaye as themselves, and then later return as Lords of Marbon, he will be frustrated and angered that they have changed and now appear about to usurp him. He will rant and throw stones and worse. They may even kill him, and if they do this version of him will be one of his replicants (see later). Thus the following information will need to be adjusted. If attacked when he has possession of the Icon he has an enchantment active that can transport him to safety.

If they are dressed as the Marbon Lords when they first meet him, Slaye immediately says: *“I have never in my life seen folk so finely dressed as you in these lands. Pray pardon my curiosity as to your identities and intentions.”* He portrays himself as simply ‘Ramaf’, acting the harmless crank who sieves sand seeking lost treasure from wrecks, offering general Cil information in return for general information on them, claiming only curiosity. In reality he suspects that the lost house of Marbon has somehow been reinstated. (He recognizes the heraldry.) If they tell him the truth he feigns dispassionate interest, appearing to ask questions purely in an academic capacity. If they talk to him for any length of time he will quickly discern that they are ‘pretenders’.

If asked the way to Cil, Slaye will misdirect them, sending them inland along a path that begins a few miles away (just above the ‘h’ in ‘Great Sandy Beach’ on the map). He hopes that they will perish at the hands of anthropophages.

“In a few miles you will see the road head north-east away from the beach. In a mile more it swings east and down to the Cil head-land, avoiding treacherous coastal quicksands and the precipitous Nag’s Head rocks, and will see you arriving at Cil well before dark.”



The Road to Cil

The real way to Cil is along the beach until you reach the visible old road across the Nag's head to Castle Cil or the old town. However, Slaye gives them directions (see above) that take them away from the beach a few miles before the headland, along the old north road that once (long ago) led to Vauntsat. This road takes them up and into the Cil Forest. Since this misdirection is part of a long day's travel, by the time they realize it is not turning south-west again, but heading deeper into the forest, dusk is likely beginning – or at least on its way. Only if they disbelieve Slaye and continue along the beach will they reach Cil before dusk; otherwise they are stuffed. There is no reason to disbelieve Slaye unless they question him and are particularly smart. He is well-versed in playing the genial old man.

If questioned about his own activities, 'Ramaf' claims that he is searching for valuable items lost years ago in wrecks offshore. If asked for details the GM must improvise, as he has no wish to divulge information to Marbons.

Nobody from Cil (apart from the groups that travel to Grodz) ever comes out this far. Players may know something of Slaye from Vance's story, and thus have their PCs search the sand, hoping to find the Amulet of Slaye (TDE, p161). They will not succeed as it does not feature in this adventure. Nonetheless, suspicious PCs may question him further and use Perception. Should you suspect Players with knowledge of the stories are pushing their PCs unrealistically, ask for justification or apply harsh penalties. Clever Players might get round this by quoting 'sensible caution' as their reason, and fair enough if their PC is a person who ever behaves with sensible caution. Or they may make up some other amusingly ridiculous reason.



"The Lords of Cil" by Ian Thomson

2.6) Finding the Icon of Cil

A short distance after they have left Ramaf Slaye sifting sand and mumbling, PCs may notice (Ψ PERCEPTION -1) something metal protruding from the sands. If nobody does, make "tut tut" noises and shake your head. Describe a chill breeze suddenly blowing across the beach and a prickling in each PC's neck as the fates turn course. Do not allow anyone a second chance – the PCs have no idea what this wind signifies, nor that they just missed something. (This is for the benefit of the Players, and they should be aware that something profound was missed.)

If it is noticed, pulling the object from the sand reveals it to be a ten-inch tall black metal statue of a humanoid demon. It has somehow survived its exposure to the elements entirely unscathed. On the upper surface of its base is a strange inlaid rune. Whenever this is pressed, loud and unearthly groans of pain emanate from the surrounding air. Slaye will notice any activity and hurry over. They may hide the object or show it to him. If he sees/hears it he asks for it eagerly. They may or may not agree. Slaye (if he is aware of it) will claim that it is another item (not mentioning the Icon) that was lost by the House of Slaye in a wreck.

If questioned further, he explains that it is dangerous in untrained hands, and that he alone knows how to harness its powers through the correct cantraps. If asked what its powers are, he (once he has made a show of visually examining the runes upon its base) says that the creature appears to be a brute of great strength but slow wit, that it can support great weight (but is otherwise simple and unthreatening). They may or may not believe him. (A Perception IS notices he is somewhat unbalanced.) *Slaye has Rebuff bonus of 1 for any Persuasion attempts to convince him that item should remain with the PCs. All attempts unrelated to restoring the House of Slaye to power are at a penalty of 1.*

Option A: Ramaf Slaye ends up with the Statue

Unlikely but not impossible - since the item is useless to the PCs. Slaye has little to bargain with for the item. (GM can invent small items if this matters, such as charms against the cold, that reveal the presence of poison, that assist a person to locate the nearest edible fish, a codpiece that keeps you pleasantly warm whatever the ambient temperature etc.) He is not willing to either admit to his designs on the lordship of Cil, or the innate value of the piece. Nonetheless, he is clearly eager for it, and begs and pleads if all else fails: talking of its symbolic value as a piece representing the prestige of his ancestors. (If the PCs are generous, or fail in a Persuasion contest, this will affect his judgment of them in the scenario finale if he is the victor.) If the statue is in his hands he'll press it, evoking a demonic tune of groans, cackle insanely, then vanish with it!



If they miss the statue and pass on, after a half-mile further they will hear Slaye shout with glee, and see him dancing as he raises a large amulet on a chain in his hands. Should they return to see what is going on, Slaye flees for his hut & vanishes if pursued. If he ends up with the amulet, then it is the Icon of Cil that grants him his magical powers and presents the opportunity to perform the ceremony that drives him insane. It will be the very thing that the PCs and GMCs can contest for at the end of this adventure.

Players who have read the stories will know something more of Slaye, but not of the statue, which is newly invented for this scenario. If people jump to conclusions, tell them to be wary of prior knowledge. Specifically say that whilst some themes remain identical to those in Vance's stories others have been altered, and the Players will be best served to act only upon what their PCs know and perceive.

Option B: The PCs take the statue away

In this case, the statue is truly only a servitor. They may (later) work out how to activate it, and have it assist them. But bear in mind that it is a dullard, small in stature, and little more than a doorstep (CC, p7/8) and will be more trouble than it is worth. Even so, the fact that the PCs took it away, despite it being a true heirloom of Slaye, angers Ramaf. This theft fires and fuels his hatred, which drives him to treat them badly at the end if he is the victor.

Ramaf has various active spells protecting him, and one that can transport him to his Old Palace hideout. He does not have enough power to attack with a good chance of disabling or slaying all PCs. If attacked or threatened or rudely treated, such acts will increase the cruelty of his behavior at the end of the scenario – if he is the victor. If the PCs later return to extract vengeance for his misguiding directions, both he and his hut contents have vanished.

Benbadge Stull

Just beyond where they encounter Slaye are the remains of Benbadge Stull. (Slightly east of their map indication, but what of it? Perhaps the Stull stretched for miles?) Once a prosperous port rivaling Saskervoy, it has long-since been swallowed in sand, and its ruins are a half-mile above usual high water mark. A wide crumbling stone breakwater that splits the beach remains, emerging from the sand only a foot or two, and a few abandoned and collapsing huts partially built from the stones (and amongst the paltry ruins) of the old quay's buildings. Slaye has made one his temporary home - firewood is stacked outside. Inside is a rough pallet and a collection of rudimentary magic charms.

2.7) The Shell Creatures

Readers of the original stories may well await an encounter with these, and we won't disappoint. A mile beyond Ramaf Slaye, the PCs spot a rocky outcrop at the beach's edge where waves lap languidly up the sand. Scattered on and

around the outcrop are several huge shells, most of which are partly opened. Various sinewy beings have partially emerged from them, and appear to be conversing. These beings hurriedly withdraw into their shells as PCs draw close, their homes snapping shut with solid finality.

They like to talk, but are very shy, and will need to be coaxed or flattered out of their shells. A typical encounter involves PCs using Persuasion, or trading pretty baubles or small magics, to gain information, and ending with someone being given a fine jacket that turns to water (see over). Do not make this easy. The creatures demand high payment or a very convincing Persuasion. The GM may also improvise from the information on the following page.

- The house of Domber rules Cil through a steward's council
- Ramaf is here seven days a week sieving the sand
- He searches for a powerful heirloom to make him Cil's Lord
- It is an amulet that summons and controls demons. (Or, if the PCs gave him the statue – it is a “Statue that allows the wielder to summon and control a demon prince.”)
- [General information about local personalities/geography.]
- If the PCs have not donned the accoutrements and identities of Marbon Lords, these creatures might be the ones to reveal much of the glories of Cil that will belong to its rightful Lords

2.8) The Journey Through the Woods

1) Eventually they reach a crossroads. In the under-growth is a worn obelisk. In the old language it says that Cil is to the right and is still five miles distant. Dusk threatens and five miles is a long way to go. ‘Ramaf’ was clearly misguided in his estimation, or perhaps... No time to think of that now. If they ride or run like the wind, they may reach Cil just ahead of night's deadly full dark. Obviously as they near the palace, the GM can insert visions of brooding half-men amongst the trees, and give the PCs as many hazardous encounters as they are able to cope with. A party of hunters returning to town from the forest unusually late might also save the day, but this should be kept as a last resort. (NB: Travelling this way will cause PCs to arrive at the town first, not the palace.)

2) They turn back, and seek ‘Ramaf’ for vengeance, reaching B. Stull just before dark. They can barricade themselves into one of the sturdier huts, using material from other huts to make it even more secure. The night is spent defending themselves from curious aquatic half-men.

3) They continue north, desperately seeking somewhere that can be secured. Kindly GMs allow them to discover a rocky cave/abandoned manse which they can defend overnight. (After slaying its peculiar current inhabitants.)

If they decide not to follow his advice they should later incidentally learn that doing so would have been a deadly mistake.



The Androbranci

“The four large shells now were open; heads looked forth, attached to naked shoulders and arms. The heads were round and fair, with soft cheeks, blue-gray eyes, tufts of pale hair.”

Known Facts

The Androbranc is a hybrid of mollusc and man, a creature that seems to have no purpose and may have evolved from some other magical creatures or been created at the whim of some ancient magician who left no reputation for this work. Amongst their pastimes they weave fine garments and other items from skeins of seawater; alas, these objects turn back into water brief minutes or moments after leaving the proximity of their persons.

These uncommon beings live on remote shorelines in temperate and sub-tropical locations, in small societies away from any large human habitations. Often it is considered bad luck to interfere with them, as they know some magic and may invoke small curses against those who harm them. In appearance they first are seen as large white or gray shells with deeply fluted corrugations across the surface of each. At first glance the creature within resembles some kind of humanoid, with vaguely anthropomorphic arms and heads (usually with tufts of fair hair and pale blue-gray eyes), but up close can be seen to be made of only semi-substantial liquid matter. Also, they have no lower bodies, being joined to the interiors of their shells by thick filaments and adhesive pads, which resemble a mass of entrails, and their skin is pale, almost translucent.

If these beings believe themselves to be unobserved they may partially emerge from their shells in order to converse, though their intelligence is best suited only to mindless gossip and pranks. They have little interest in the affairs of mankind, and in fact being ageless consider humans to be largely beneath their notice. Despite their potential longevity they are far from immortal, and although their bodies are resistant to non-magical weapons, if their shells are smashed they can be hauled out and will shortly expire. The shells are extremely tough and cannot be casually broken open; brute force and a sufficiently robust and heavy object are required. Still, they are timid, because other sea-creatures such as keak may attempt to sneak up and rip them from their shells in order to devour them.

A Dying Curse

Some androbrancii are possessed of innate magic powerful enough for them to utter dying curses. As noted in the original rules (DERPG, p82), dying curses may come in a variety of forms, usually single-outcome orientated. (EG: ‘Before this day is out, you will lose your heart’s desire’, or

‘may foes fall upon you before the sun goes down’, or ‘I turn the waters against you’.)

Game Notes: The GM will need to see that such curses come about. In the first instance some wonderful opportunity must be subtly brought into play and then snatched away at the last moment. For the second example an unexpected ambush will occur, or a powerful menacing foe will latch onto their trail. In the final example, the person will find all water nauseous when consumed – though other strong liquids are palatable; and all watercraft they enter begin to develop leaks from the moment of their boarding.)

Local Knowledge

Though their knowledge of places more than a mile or two distant from their residence is extremely limited, the androbrancii do converse with locals and travelers from time to time, and may have useful current or historical information to impart to those who are friendly, respectful, entertaining or charming enough.

Tricksters of the First Order

These creatures may impart some snippet of honest knowledge in order to draw in a dupe, but a minimum of nine tenths of anything they say is extremely misleading, or often a downright lie. Anything they do say is designed specifically to cause the maximum amount of trouble for anyone who treats the information as being true and acts accordingly.

Watery Illusions

The androbrancii are able to create many objects out of water, forming them so they appear to be (even to the touch) entirely real. Their magical crafts allow these objects to appear of the finest sparkling quality, although they are restricted to making items that are flexible – in the sense that anything they make will be flexible, and objects that should not be (such as shields and swords) will immediately appear useless. Should a person ever do a good deed for one of these creatures, they actually know a cantrap that will make such an item solid for an entire week, and will bestow it upon their benefactor with great ceremony. (Though possibly forgetting to mention that it will turn back to water after this time.)

A Typical Androbranc

Persuade (Glib) 1~, Rebuff (Wary) 1.25~, Attack (Caution) 0.5~, Defense (Misdirection) 0.5~, Health 0.5~, Magic (innate) 8, Appraisal 2, Gambling 3, Pedantry 2, Perception 2, Quick Fingers 3, Wherewithal 2.

NB: This page is a reproduction of the full entry originally offered as part of the Dying Earth Bestiary – a publication that has now been subsumed into the DE Compendium with entries much foreshortened.



Chapter Three: The Glories of Cil

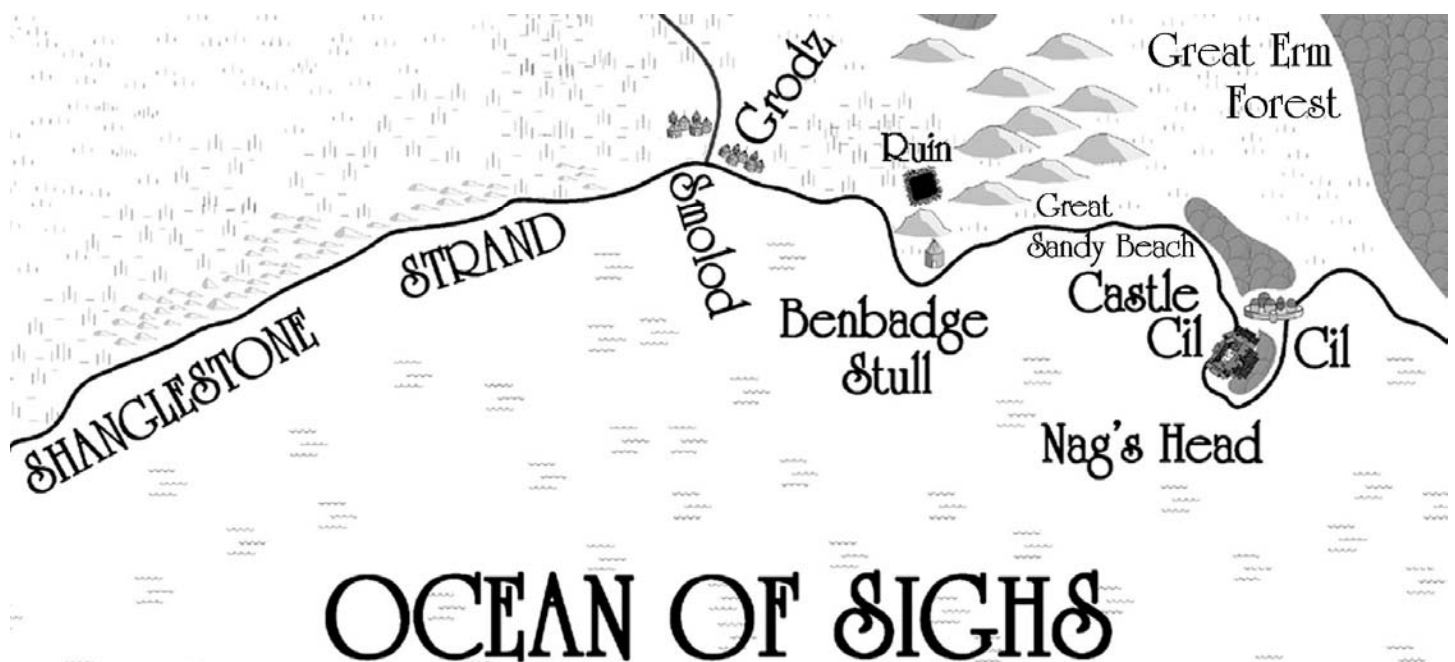
3.1) The Town of Cil

The PCs may not initially take up the bait to pose as the Lords of Marbon. If so, **they may arrive in town as mere unknown itinerants**, cunningly wanting to observe local atmosphere and politics before deciding how to present themselves. The town of Cil is covered in its own appendix. It is important to note their reception if the PCs arrive here in any way except as Lords. Strangers are not welcomed. Everyone is expected to pay their way. If the PCs are poor or penniless, merely have standard/high charges apply. Those unable to pay will not be turned into the wilderness, but will be given menial jobs such as gutting and skinning in the hunter's yard, digging new composting latrines, collecting firewood from the forest. All should be framed not as cruel, but as hard, arduous labor without any respect or empathy from any of the hard-nosed and practical Cil folk.

If the PCs have retained wealth and possessions from the previous adventure, then have the townsfolk charge exorbitantly for everything – food and accommodation. All in all, the point here is that the PCs should quickly learn (through experience rather than being told) that coming back into town as the Marbon Lords of Cil will be a hugely more satisfying experience. The townsfolk talk often of the ancient glory days and their desire to see a Lord of old back on the throne. Then, they say, things will change, and the magnificent times of prosperity will return.

None will know exactly how this will come about, but all are glad to hope for it. Nobody will ever overtly badmouth Derwe Coreme, but the PCs will get the impression that the townsfolk consider her an ineffectual upstart who even when she reaches majority and becomes a full Lord of Cil is unlikely to improve things in these parts.

In contrast, should **the PCs first arrive here as Lords**, the townsfolk will cheer and be amazed. Also note in the next section the description of what happens when any riding beasts vanish, and extrapolate to here if necessary. The 'House of Marbon' inn (see Cil Town appendix) will be immediately re-opened, and refurbished in a rush. Though of course the 'House of Domber' will retain good patronage also, since Derwe Coreme is still technically ruler of Cil. Brolt (the hunchback from the House of Marbon) will expect special consideration, and the other townsfolk will treat him with as much courtesy as reflects the attitudes of the PCs towards him. His persona is fawning and awed. He has kept their memory alive for nearly two decades, cleaning and repairing the inn and the decorative items and heraldry within. (Such things will he tell as he grovels at their feet expecting praise for his efforts: "I always knew you would return!" etc.) He is quite mad, but fanatically loyal. If they adopt him as a mascot, reward them by having him sacrifice his life to save a PC at the first dramatically appropriate moment. And if he somehow survives the first such instance, he will remain unswervingly loyal for as long as he lives. (Perhaps becoming a GMC whom they value.) Nonetheless his dramatic expiration is certain.





Cil - Common Local Knowledge

The Cil Empire stretched from northern ice to southern shore, east into the Great Erm, and south-east to the Mountains of Magnatz. The Houses of Marbon, Domber and Slaye rivaled each other, sometimes working in alliance, othertimes in enmity. The people of Tugersbir were the first to throw off the Imperial yoke, and following that Cil fell slowly into decay. The House of Slaye had ruled for tens of generations prior to this point, with few breaks in their dominance, but Domber was then in ascendancy - and remains so. The House of Slaye was relegated to second-rate supporters.

Little now remains but the palace and the title. By this time it has shrunk to include simply the palace and the village of Cil. The hinterland, save for a few scattered and largely self-sufficient farming communities, has been lost to the forest and half-men who haunt the area. In their youth Ramaf's father, Varnil, and Derwe Coreme's Aunt, Amalda, were magicians of evenly matched potency. During a struggle 20 years ago [when Chank was reduced in magic and exiled, though nobody recalls this] the House of Slaye was nearly restored. But Amalda Coreme killed Varnil Slaye and retained control of the enchantments that allow Derwe to operate the basic magics throughout the Palace [opening locked doors, controlling the lights etc].

Seven years ago before she died, Amalda reinstated an ancient tradition that had been used several times before, during times of political uncertainty - upgrading the Cil Stewards. Various educated citizens always held these formal roles. Amalda upgraded their duties, instating them on a more or less equal footing with the regent, who in this case was her niece Derwe. Amalda passed away seven years ago, and Derwe has been waiting for her 21st birthday (in 10 months), when she will assume her full authority.

Cil (Less Common Knowledge)

At the time Amalda left this world she was unaware that Slaye had a son (Ramaf) or a younger brother (Chank/Jarkan) if you are following this thread. She also had no suspicion of the magical warden that the mages of the house of Marbon had left behind at the Keep. Thus her plans were not well-formed enough to withstand the stupidity and power-mongering of these later days. Her plans are faltering. In recent years Slaye has been bribing and threatening some of the stewards, splitting up what was already an organization rife with petty rivalries over prestige and privilege. His hopes lie in recovering sufficient of his family's demonic knowledge to threaten the stewards with physical harm. As much as he hates this fact, he needs to consensus of the stewards to ordain him as the rightful ruler, otherwise he gains access to only a small proportion of the vast resources of the old palace.

Any and all of the above might instead be found through PCs' own researches in the library if they don't make good social connections. For a full list of personalities, and maps and descriptions of the various parts of the palace and its grounds, refer to the Appendices.

3.2) Arriving at the Palace

From the West

This is the way Cugel approached; from the beach. On reaching the headland, PCs can see the following up through the trees: "A balustrade surrounding the gardens shows intermittently through the foliage; somewhat below, a colonnaded rotunda overlooks the ocean to the south."

A pathway travels up from the beach, winding between sweetly scented plants such as "dymphian, heliotrope, black quince, olus, beds of long-stemmed stardrops, shade ververica, and flowering amanita." When the path levels out it eventually passes through a ruined balustrade which presumably marks the edge of the estate, then through a dense grove of bay trees. Finally it reaches a weed-covered oval: probably once a parade ground or exercise field.

From the East

Those coming from town must follow a road through the forest. Yes, it is possible to bypass the town and cut through the woodlands, and this is relatively safe in the daytime, but it is excessively arduous, and clothes will be torn on briars, skin cut, and tempers sorely tested. This old and excessively-worn road climbs the side of the headland

and eventually ends in a hollow on the other side of the oval. It is not obvious to those arriving from the west, and easily overlooked, especially in the growing evening gloom. (Which explains why Cugel didn't see it.)

At The Palace

A tall stone wall marks this south (seaward) boundary of the property. A great ceremonial portico supporting an ancient heraldic device intersects it. The gates stand open, revealing a mile-long marble-flagged promenade. At the end of it (presuming sufficient daylight) the palace can be seen - a richly detailed structure of many tiers, with a green bronze roof. A terrace extends along its front, reached from the promenade by a flight of broad steps. (Seen from a mile distant - in fading light the GM may temper descriptions.)

If they are posing as Marbons in their full glory: the Lords have returned! Thus, passing through the gates marks the end of the ghost's duties. Some few minutes/moments later (dependent on the GM's assessment of maximum game amusement) any riding beasts revert to their wild nature. Being so close to civilization frightens them so much that, after throwing their riders and only a few rudimentary attacks, they depart at speed.



On the ground floor palace map, the two lines approaching the house indicate the promenade, and the dots at its center are the last of the busts of Cil's rulers on marble plinths. (Side dots are urns of flowers.) The line and dots along the front of the palace indicate the columned terrace. For your information, current residents live only in the 'south wing'. That is to say, entirely in rooms 1-13 on the ground floor and 47-58 on the first floor. They also have access to turrets 93 & 95. However, both doors of 93 & 95 have been solidly bricked up. Other doorways within the palace have also been permanently bricked up.

⊕ "Once upon a time the promenade was a work of inordinate elegance, but now its cracked and mossy flags speak of grandeur long forgotten. The elaborate gardens either side of the path are sorely neglected and overgrown."

⊕ "Down each side of the promenade marble urns filled with carnelian and jade show that someone still makes at least some basic effort. Along the middle, at regular intervals, six-foot pedestals support the busts of noble humans, with the earliest examples being the most weather-worn, their features lost in a blur of erosion. As the palace grows near the quality (presumably due to their more recent age) of the busts improves. The final one (100yds from house) is a young, attractive woman." (Derwe)

Once they are close to the main building, the PCs will see:

⊕ "The massive portal that is the main door looks formidable indeed. The palace windows are 7ft above the terrace, and on the ground floor are all too narrow to allow egress in any case. On the upper floors are a few larger windows and a balcony, but reaching them would require amazing feats of agility or magic."



(NB: The palace, like Flutic, has magical defenses that cannot be breached by mere acrobats or dabblers. If your PCs have some unusually potent magical items, then you will have to improvise.)

A modicum of Perception reveals a smaller side-door to the right along the terrace. Beside it, most uncomfortable (he saw the PCs before they saw him), is a guard (the duty watchman), in rough approximation of heraldic uniform. He stands nervously at attention, hands on the pommel of a huge sword, whose point is pressed against the ground. (No watchman stands outside during full darkness, and if they are here at dusk he is nearing the end of his shift, which explains his nervousness. Otherwise his fear is explained by the fact he is merely an overpaid local in metal armor.)

If any approach is made towards the guard he panics, lunges in through the door beside him, and locks and bolts it behind him. He is utterly unused to anyone arriving at night, especially if they are posing as a party of grandees. From inside the door he will negotiate, and eventually will go to fetch one of his superiors. This may become a matter of some urgency, as creatures of the night begin to enter the gardens, drawn by the scent of the PCs.

Ghouls

Abbreviated from Demons of the Dying Earth

Various entities go by the epithet 'ghoul' - dependent on the region. These particular beings are rare spawn of deodands that are born with more of the demonic characteristics of their race than usual. Less than one in a hundred deodand births produce such, and many are slain by their parents whilst young. Scholars claim that its existence is a natural throwback, since the origins of deodands through breeding between human and demon. Ghouls have a sullen, brutally lascivious, nature, and a taste for human flesh surpassing even a normal deodand. They grow stronger than their parents, resist magic more powerfully, and will dine upon human carrion if this is easily to hand. Although they are intelligent, this is a base sentience - normally expressing itself only through subhuman grunts. The few who have held an actual conversation with a ghoul, and lived to tell the tale, speak of its disturbingly moribund predilections. These beings do not even share the grim humor or sickening necessity of the deodand, nor the gluttonous nervousness of their parents. They are strong, self-assured and possessed of a bestial arrogance - believing that might is right and that they are free to take whatever they crave, and that no-one has the right to stand in their way.

Typical Ghoul: Intimidating 15, Penetrating 13, Strength 20, Sure-Footedness 19, Health 20, Magic (resistance only) 14, Athletics 17, Concealment 10, Living Rough 10, Perception 13, Stealth 17, Tracking 11, Wherewithal 15.



How much fear, combat, Persuasion contests, and other challenges are brought into play at this point is up to the GM. A similar set of difficulties were presented when the PCs first encountered Flutic, but if they have not been used as a plot device since then, then feel free to milk the situation for all that it is worth. Refer to Flutic (*Strangers in Saskerwoy*) for inspiration. If the PCs perform particularly poorly, they may end up barricading themselves inside one of the ruined out-buildings or huddled on the tiny 1st-floor balcony outside the (securely shuttered & barred) window of Room 50. Not an auspicious beginning. Or, if they play their roles well, an intimidated servant will admit them.

Paupers at the Palace

This situation is a prime motivation for the PCs to return to the ruined keep and assume the personas of Lords of Marbon if they haven't done so already. Basically paupers arriving at the palace will be given the minimum attention to keep them alive for the night and then turned out the following morning. (Or possibly have to find their own means of survival against a trio of determined ghouls.) Rebuff rolls of anyone in the palace are at a bonus of 1 against paupers. Even foreigners with money and possessions need to have convincing explanations of why they should stay here rather than go to town. (Or they need to bribe and posture very flamboyantly.) Should their stay be allowed, they'll be allotted Suite 8. Use their position within the household as temporary guests as an opportunity for them to learn of the wealth and magic available to the ordained Lords, and that there is no other possible way to gain access to the bulk of these things. (And that even accomplished thieves could only get at a small fraction of the possible rewards that an ordained Lord could claim.)

Ramaf Slaye Revealed

He worked here but kept his identity secret until after Amalda's death, then was tolerated in the Palace Household as a might-have-been. Three years ago he stumbled across references to his family's old powers (in the hidden family townhouse vault). Inspired, he delved deeper, and managed to contact the ghost of one of his ancestors. Though this connection was weak, the ancestor mage managed to teach Slaye some useful things, and Slaye took up residence in the Old Palace and began producing copies of himself. More recently Slaye activated the Icon of Cil, but was unprepared and thus partially-possessed: an unstable and constantly feuding mix. This unholy duo seeks endlessly to recover the relics of Cil, so that it can become an officially sanctioned Lord and thus gain access to the magics of the Palace Libraries, and restore itself to full potency. Whether the demon or Slaye is more in power, and how often, is irrelevant to the PCs' involvement in this adventure.

3.3) The Return of the Lords of Cil

Eventually it will be the case that the PCs arrive in Cil posing as Lords. Townsfolk and servants will be awed and compliant (though possibly scared or resentful if the PCs treat them badly). Once the PCs are posing as Lords, the various Palace personalities (**Appendix 1**) will condescend to treat them civilly and grant them the right to stay at the Palace and use its facilities. But they will not automatically treat them as superiors or as folk worthy of respect. More so, the personalities already present will put on an obvious façade of respect, but clearly are only doing so on the slight offchance that the PCs will make good their claim. All will defer primary loyalty to Derwe Coreme as the titular ruler and person most likely to be ordained.

How the PCs get on with palace personalities in the long-term depends on (a) the personality – see notes in the **Appendix 1**, and (b) the actions and attitudes of the PCs. Play out the first days around the following notes as you see fit. Allow players to invent how their PCs portray themselves, and run the GMCs according to this, and according to the successes of Persuasion and/or Imposture.

Early Activities at the Palace

Note that the following activities will all take place as the GM sees fit, in response to the actions of the PCs and the requirements of the scenario. Thus, read the rest of this chapter carefully before running it. Refer also to the Appendix (1) describing the Cil Stewards and their activities and agendas. If Chank is their companion portray him as the only truly helpful person in the ranks of GMCs- a fellow outsider who sides with them against the arrogant/indifferent Palace residents.

Proving their Quality: Even when arriving as Lords in all their splendor, the PCs will understandably cause a considerable amount of surprise and disbelief. Their first task is to convince Yodo (who answers the door) that their claim is genuine. Then Yodo will go and fetch one of the stewards (Whomever the GM decides will be most amusing or game-useful) to verify their claim as being at least potentially genuine. The second task is to convince this person with an explanation of where they have come from. Some imagination may be required as to their lack of memories to their previous deeds and personalities, and as to how it comes that they have now awakened.

Other stewards/personalities will arrive. Derwe Coreme (challenged by their presence) will probably be the one to ask most of the most awkward questions. PCs originally here as paupers will need to explain that discrepancy, perhaps saying they wished to view Cil folk in the raw, without their being influenced by the new Lords.

Should the PCs perform abysmally, then have Wizard Tarandjal save their bacon, perhaps saying that “the time spent in magical enchantment can temporarily confuse the



senses and recollections”. This will be part of his first attempt to become their primary ally. But any failure to convince will nonetheless taint the atmosphere of their acceptance, with everyone treating them with more overt suspicion than would have been the case, including the servants. If they are convincing, then the servants at least will treat them with due courtesy and respect.

Spending the First Night as Lords: The PCs will be offered the superior suite at 55. If Yodo had them in the worse rooms when they were here previously, he will be continually and obsequiously apologetic. Derwe Coreme will invite them to dine if it is early enough, and they will be introduced to each personality (use the potted descriptions in **Appendix 1**). [*Introductions will happen first thing in the morning if they arrive too late at night or convince Yodo that they must not be disturbed. Note though that Yodo’s descriptions of the food available may require Resistances rolls against Gourmandism to even consider not attending dinner.*] At the table the various personalities will pose casual questions. At this stage nobody wishes to offend the potential Lords, and so a façade of extreme politeness will be maintained.

The Groaning Demon: If the PCs have possession of the Slaye statue, causing it to groan will have a similar effect as to Cugel’s use of the Slaye amulet in the stories. Servants will be convinced that mere possession of such a thing automatically reveals the legitimacy of the self-proclaimed Lords. And even if they are really lying, no regular person argues with someone who has any skill at demonic magic! However, stewards and Derwe will be less impressed, unless the PCs use Imposture or Persuasion to act with extreme congruence. As in the original story, Derwe and perhaps other stewards too, will encourage (politely) the PCs to give some further evidence of their potency with this object. It might be comparatively easy to come up with an explanation that serves for most (if accompanied by a successful Persuasion/Imposture that a few notables witness). IE: *“This is Gruthbak the Reaver. Whenever he is released he must devour a human soul as payment for his task. Do not trouble me with frivolous requests, else I place your name atop his menu.”*

Even so, Derwe at least will not believe them, and will push for proof as tactfully and as often as suits the scenario flow. And the more they use its groaning without any further evidence of potency, the less effective it will be.

Scheduling Activities: These early halcyon days before Slaye’s curse begins to show itself can be played as slowly as you like, or fairly swiftly. If you want to draw out their time here, then the stewards have to research the appropriate ceremony and confirm the procedures required to address this surprising new circumstance of the Marbon Lords returned. Their investigation of the appropriate tests and ceremonies may well be held up by the fact that they fear

change, and also fear the wrath of Derwe Coreme. Nonetheless, they will spend much time in the library and can be seen there. (Although PCs barging in by surprise may well interrupt them in a game of cards, or some obscure pedantic discussion that is totally off topic. They will of course claim that they were merely taking a well-earned respite amidst hours of challenging research.)

Interview with Stewards (1): Probably by the end of the PCs’ second full day, the stewards want a formal interview with them. (A major scene. They must convince stewards of some manner of validity.) They pose difficult questions as to what the PCs remember of the old days, and who their forebears were, & what they remember about Cil’s traditions. Amnesia due to prolonged magical suspension is one straight-forward argument, and your players might have others – such as that the souls of the Lords of Marbon now inhabit their bodies. (Tarandjal might even suggest this as a perfect cover story, since it incorporates the truth. If they haven’t told him the truth, maybe he guessed.)

This will also be a time when each steward tests out what they might get from ordaining the new Lords of Marbon. If PCs promise wealth and ease, and promise it convincingly, then they will draw stewards to their side. And the objective is of course to get three to support them (see below). This should be complicated as much as possible using the information about rivalry and one-upmanship in the personalities information in **Appendix 1**. The stewards will start by seeming to be a united body, but soon reveal themselves as the petty squabblers they are. Ideally the PCs will swing most of the stewards onto their side, since when the stewards start to die one by one, the PCs will have a sense of urgency and responsibility to keep the others alive. The stewards will also reveal the following general knowledge: **(i)** Candidates for Lordship must be confirmed by a minimum of three of the stewards; **(ii)** Once their potential legitimacy is confirmed, they must serve a period of no less than three months, and more normally an entire year, in proof of their competency and suitability. This service includes overseeing the well-being of Cil Town and the good order of the Palace; **(iii)** At the end of this trial period (exact length to be researched/decided by a stewards’ meeting) a ceremony takes place in which the majority of stewards must unanimously proclaim that the candidate/s is/are potentially valid. Once the ceremony is complete, so they are told, the magic spirits (actually enslaved demonic spirits, but this is conveniently ‘forgotten’) of the Palace attune the new Lord or Lords to the Palace magics. From then on the Lord or Lords can access all rooms and magics within the Palace without recourse to anyone; **(iv)** Probationary Lords are entitled to a stipend – make this a furious debate over the amount!



General Interactions: As the PCs go about their early times here, before the curse strikes, whatever the true general attitudes of the stewards and senior servants, an attitude of polite (if possibly strained) curiosity will pervade. Choose some palace personalities and have them question the PCs at various intervals. People want to know what it was like in the old days, what kind of magic they used to suspend themselves throughout the ages. What kind of a man was Simbilis when they knew him. Continued protestations of lack of memory will be treated with (barely) concealed growing suspicion. However a strong claim as to some reason why they cannot, or choose not to, reveal knowledge of their personal business will actually impress and convince some people more: *“I do not wish to discuss the magical secrets of my family”*. *“Simbilis was a man of great bearing. He did not suffer fools wasting his time with pointless questions.”* PCs successes/failures will determine how well they are treated.

offer bribes and promises, and forge alliances). Whether this is a total whitewash just to get votes, or if the PCs actually want to get involved in Palace politics is up to the GM as she measures the tone of the scenario.

(i) The trial period can be varied between 3 months and 1 year, depending on the perceived urgency and validity of the situation. *The council at this stage are in varying degrees of being convinced, depending on what has happened so far. They set a time of either 6, 9, or 12 months. PCs have the opportunity to argue this down to a lesser time. Judge such things on their merits, applying bonuses to steward Rebuffs of arguments lacking substance.*

(ii) During the trial period, **which starts with a small official ceremony in the great hall**, the probationary Lords must adjudicate civil disputes, oversee palace maintenance, begin new public works to revitalize Cil town, ridding the area of the half-men threat, having the main roads rebuilt, & generally increasing the prosperity of the domain. Perfection is not expected, but substantial progress in setting up such things is said to be a convincer for the stewards. Tarandjal (see below) will (if they want) act as their representative on the stewards council (possibly posing as a neutral arbiter rather than an ally) and call for assurances that they will not be asked to perform miracles such as “returning Earth’s lost moon to its orbit” before legitimacy is confirmed. PCs may also ask for time to ‘get to know the domain’ (or some other excuse) in order to delay what appears to be an arduous set of duties. This will be a Persuasion contest, and not an easy one for PCs.

Exploring the Old Palace: One reason why nobody has even tried this since Amalda is that unless you are an ordained steward, lord, probationary lord, or guard officer, all the doors in there remain locked and must be picked and forced open. Also, defenses still function that need magic to repel. Such details should not be fully explained to the PCs (unless they are smart enough to ask the right questions of the right person) until they’ve made at least one dangerous foray wherein they couldn’t open any doors the easy way. Initial explorations should be slow, careful and scary events, and probably small scale. Do not allow PCs to breeze into the Old Palace on a whim, without suffering harsh consequences or at least a terrific reality-check. GMCs will initially discourage such things, and later will advise much preparation, citing confusing magical defenses that no longer behave rationally, ghosts, even time distortions (actually a myth), and historical disappearances. (Much is folklore and fear-based inaccuracy, so ham it up in character as whichever GMCs the PCs talk with.)

Mundane Activities: PCs/players may begin assuming that this scenario is based around them solving problems as probationary Lords. This will indeed be the case, although the problems will be direr than those they might expect. During the brief peace, before the curse begins to show itself, the PCs can direct their own activities for a few days.



Interview with Stewards (2): When the GM decrees it, the stewards finish their research. By now the PCs will ideally have made allies. The PCs are then invited to a formal interview in the council chamber. Describe the setting, attendees, and formal servants, with suitable pomp and ceremony. The PCs may have lacked finesse in the previous interview and since been briefed by Tarandjal (or Derwe) on how to ‘butter up’ the stewards. Prior to this section being played, the PCs might think (or be advised) to have individual interviews with the stewards (in order to



Lull them into a false sense of security. Have them visit the town (especially if they haven't already). Have what appears to be the first of many civil supplicants come from town to press claims against their fellow townfolk. It could be fun at this stage to actually invent a few disputes wherein townfolk present complaints like a 'stolen chicken', 'trespass in their vegetable plot', 'someone cursing their sheep'. Make many such things stupid and amusing, prime examples of the slow-wit of the majority of the townfolk, and their eagerness to pass on responsibility for their lives to some higher authority rather than to exercise their natural autonomy. A few more legitimate complaints might be included, such as the state of the roads, the poor merchant deals with Saskervoy when it comes to local beer.



Set up at least one council session where at least one PC must listen to civil complaints. Have this be posed as a regular affair, that might well be presumed to be ongoing. Of course it won't, because the curse will strike, but PCs won't know this. Here is a prime possibility to have the PCs arguing amongst themselves as to who does this arduous duty. Use Resistances against Arrogance or Indolence to spur an argument if the Players are having their PCs act too reasonably. This sounds like, and will probably be, an utter bore and chore, that persons of leisure and prestige won't really want to be bothered with. Unless of course you have PCs that like to exercise influence and control in petty situations, in which case allow them to take full control of the local legal system. Stewards (or Derwe, who might be

behind this ambitious behavior if she has an attachment to a PC) can even suggest assuming ancient titles and the Chancellor's hat and staff of office. Allow any PC who goes this route (or a similar one) to make the most of this opportunity for self-aggrandizement. Possibly he/she will even become a champion of the 'little people' and gain great local acclaim. Such will be all the better a little later on when all such pomp and loyalty comes to mean nothing. The basic idea is to set up a frame of normalcy, and give the PCs an idea of regular life in Cil, and perhaps a sense of attachment to its people, before the terrors that follow. No doubt the presence of the old palace and all of its secrets will intrigue PCs. Early role-play opportunities are explored/outlined shortly, and expanded in **Appendix 6**.

Palace Knowledge: None of this will be volunteered. The PCs will need to make friends, bribe, or at least flatter and engage whilst asking questions. The GM makes up more as she sees fit, and also decides who is likely to know what, and makes notes for future reference if it matters:

- i) The center of the palace was occupied as recently as 20 years ago, but abandoned when ghosts and demons began to manifest after the furious battle between Amalda Coreme and Varnil Slaye. (They arose as a result of Varnil's death curse.)
- ii) Strange noises sometimes come from the walled-off sections of the palace, but people have ceased to worry, since nothing truly dangerous ever happens here in the south wing.
- iii) Derwe is spoiled and has a fierce temper and has ordered staff members whipped before now. She seems to have calmed in the last year or two, possibly because she is lonely.
- iv) Derwe's aunt Amalda was a woman of considerable magical potency and would enter the old palace wings from time to time, sometimes returning with books or objects.
- v) Amalda and Varnil Slaye were lovers at one point.
- vi) Ghosts sometimes manifest in the palace during the night. Things vanish and sometimes never reappear (a good rationale for if things are stolen by, or from, the PCs).
- vii) The greater palace was abandoned originally some centuries ago when a curse was sent by Cil's enemies, which turned many of the spirits of the house against their masters. The fact that Amalda used to travel the larger house perhaps means that this curse has since expired. But nobody is brave/powerful enough to test out this possibility.
- viii) The palace's magic spirits still maintain the day to day maintenance, which presumably explains why the drains and everlasting candles still work, and why the larger palace hasn't collapsed despite being abandoned.
- ix) Ramaf was resident here until three years ago when he began challenging Derwe for the right to rule. He was very angry and threatening, and the stewards preferred Derwe. He is now barred from the south wing by order of the stewards.
- x) Ramaf maintains a house in town. (Known to few.)



Research: PCs may wish to do library research: a good way to have game time pass. Allow rolls for whole days (or days when the majority of time is spent in research). This isn't all they will find (one piece of info per IS), but a great deal of reading is so general or so obscure as to be meaningless.

Should PCs ensconce themselves in the library, stewards may visit them seeking interview, staff may come fawning or delivering unasked for refreshments etc (hoping for promotion), Derwe may linger suspiciously. And the PCs might actually find out useful or interesting information. The GM can invent much, and we offer the following:

i) The Marbon Prophecy: *"Out of the mists of ages, the [X?] Lords of Marbon will return, bringing with them the doom of Cil."* No explanation for this, merely a quote in a book of otherwise weird prognostications that have no relevance to the present day. (Such as *"The domain of Simbilis shall last seven centuries then dissolve into memory. Simbilis himself will vanish into the west."*)

ii) The Founders of Cil: *"The lands of eastern Saskervoy were largely wild until the demonists Slaye, Domber and Marbon arrived. Bringing their followers with them, they enslaved the local population and set up their own kingdom. Being immortal they ruled in turn for one half century each and then gave up their title to the next in line. Eventually, all three were slain by a mass uprising of their own great-grandchildren. Since then the rites of succession in Cil have been problematic at best."*

iii) Should a PC dedicated to the magical arts spend several long and arduous days here and you deem it appropriate, they might gain your permission to spend Improvement Points on another point of Magic rating. A second improvement will not be so easy (perhaps taking weeks instead of days), since they will have already devoured the most useful/accessible material. They might also find a few anti-demonic cantraps to learn.

iv) The rest of the Old Palace was abandoned without being stripped of its spoils. This was because the curse slew most of the nobles alive at that time, and all of the servants. It was years before the Lords of that time finally evoked sufficiently powerful countercurses to clear the South Wing and make it fit for habitation. They intended to clear the rest, but only succeeded with the central section before their deaths.

v) In the Cutz Wars many proclaimed themselves the 'forces of right'. Except for Simbilis 16th, all involved drew heavily on demonic daihaki. No-one 'won', and desolation was near absolute. Simbilis was the most powerful mage left alive.

vii) Various dodgy genealogies claiming who may be a rightful Lord, but not naming names that the PCs know. Give the impression that ascension is a matter of open dispute.

viii) Ancient Lords had an icon (describe statue if Slaye has it; or the Amulet from Chapter 5 if not) with a powerful bound demon that wielded immense powers but was capricious.

ix) The last major demon of the Cutz Wars was Magnatz. Vull Faris, a follower of Simbilis, defeated it using his emblem: A crystal raven that was the center of a binding enchantment. *Add this subtly. It's the solution of Chapter 1 of the next publication.*

3.4) The Calm Before the Storm

Set the PCs up to believe that politics and petty problems are the main theme that they, as Lords of Cil, will field until their ordination. Tarandjal, Derwe or whomever else you have chosen as main GM's mouth-piece, may suggest they should enjoy the full privileges and rights of the position, even recommend some traditional activities. **Appendix 6** contains extended ideas on this theme. It is positioned separately entirely for GM ease, and for no reasons that have anything to do with last-minute additions after play-testing, or delicate balance of page-printing considerations.

You might like to devise a rough timetable to work around for the first few days, incorporating civil disputes, time in town, library research, ending with the 1st murder (see next chapter). PCs' actions will not necessarily run to a timetable (unless its one they have done themselves or had drawn specifically to maximize fun & games), but its good to have ideas on hand. And some things you can set in stone as to exactly when they happen. PCs planning to go on a hunt might have to attend the judging of the annual Cil turnip contest for instance. This can go on for as long as you like. If it is fun for players and GM alike **simply explore being petty Lords of Cil. If you desire**, outline activities in and around Cil, and **turn this into an entire chapter**.

Nothing stops you manufacturing romantic alliances or dalliances if you include such in your game: or holding a soiree for the new Lords, Palace notables, and the wealthiest Cil folk. A pompous garden party with games of croquet, billiards and the like might be ideal for classic DERPG pettiness. Invent croquet rules, have some Palace notables be good with the mallet and eager to set wagers on the chance of relieving new Lords of some of their stipend/valuables. PCs can be drawn in by challenges evoking Resistances to Arrogance/Avarice. Take full advantage of this opportunity to reveal/explore petty rivalries & one-upmanship attempts. A Saskervoy delegation will be part of such, plus belligerent peasant delegations complaining about the state of the realm.

The town of Cil itself will never be a place of much fun, and should be portrayed from the very beginning as dour and gray. Perhaps some signs of hope are seen in the people, especially if the new Lords bring a new energy. But unless the PCs are obviously proactive towards Cil's general welfare, attitudes won't change much. Nonetheless, the people of Cil know their place and are rightfully intimidated by nobility. None of the regular folk will question the right of the new Lords to be there, and will obey any reasonable orders. It is up to the GM whether this is with appropriate subservience or with a hidden edge that says they are used to being downtrodden, but don't actually like it one bit.



Chapter Four: The Curse of Slaye

GM Notes: Impeding a Desire to Leave

Especially after things begin to get ‘hairy’, but perhaps even before then, PCs may wish to leave for diverse reasons. Put fears to rest regarding Saskervoy. Someone explains that even a probationary Lord is now Cil gentry, and anyone from Saskervoy impugning such a noble would be given short shrift indeed. Those in power still have pride, and, the Palace is magically protected. No Saskervoy vessel is expected for at least 4 months. *(If you decide a party from Saskervoy arrives somehow, PCs who are probationary Lords can turn the tables on their accusers in amusing ways, and may recruit stewards who loathe Saskervoy folk more than they do the PCs.)*

Since sea-monsters prevail once ships are out from the coast, then travelling overland seems the most logical. Research or local knowledge will reveal that although an ancient road leads towards the Mountains of Magnatz, it is mostly lost to erosion and overgrowth. Also, the journey is long and dangerous. The first four days are across barren heath, where deodands and erbs can be expected. The fifth crosses an area of variable marshland), and then through the arm of the Great Erm Forest that grows wide around the banks of the River Erm itself, although it is wide & shallow in many parts. Busiaco thieves dwell here!

If travel is swift, before the end of the fifth day comes the only settlement before the mountains. Dordge is a farming community that is technically part of Cil but rarely has contact. Then, on the 6th day one passes into the Magnatz foothills. No-one in living, or written, recall has ever entered the mountains and returned. Perhaps they fell prey to the reputed erbs and grue. A road enters the mountains, but does it continue in any fit condition? Presuming it does, and allowing time for natural hazards such as fording rivers, it would take at least four days to cross the mountains directly, and possibly far longer if the road is circuitous.

Hopefully, all of the above is sufficient to convince the PCs of the idea that they must gain access to one of the magical Old palace machines.

4.1) The Murders

Murder is the first act that presages the change in scenario atmosphere. One of the stewards is found dead. Exactly who is up to the GM. Only, for goodness sake, keep track of such details between sessions. They are important to the story-realism, and if you forget who is dead, and when and how this happened, things are less inherently believable.

The PCs won’t know what is going on, and the murder will have been set up to look like an accident. Everyone is suspicious of everyone else, including the new Lords if this steward was not one that sympathized with them.

If you decide to sacrifice a GMC who actually dislikes or is neutral to the PCs, this is a good way to start things off with no clear motive, and make it look like it was possibly an accident. Since the murderer is an entity summoned by Ramaf to destroy those who stand in the way of his ambitions, this will be a deliberate diversion – a test case to see how well his creature performs. You might also have the first person murdered be one of the staff, since such people are expendable. This runs the risk of making it quite unrealistic that the rest of the staff would stay on and risk death. Perhaps you can make it explicit that they are being very well-paid and that life here at the palace is much more interesting and comfortable than life in town (even as a servant). In this case, since no other servants expire, it isn’t too much a stretch of credibility that only some leave.

You may have the first murder fairly soon after the PCs arrive. (But after the initial ceremony that confirms their probationary status.) Then PCs have no choice (particularly after the second ‘accident’ reveals a pattern) in taking responsibility. This is part of their duties as probationary lords, and also necessary to clear themselves of the suspicion aimed their way. The stewards will demand that they find the killer, and the staff will beg for their help.

Also, possibly excepting Tarandjal (who may become their ally/assistant), nobody is competent to investigate murders. All are too timid, stupid, or decadent to be any use. Thus, we enter a new (brief) red herring section, wherein PCs may suspect the essence of the scenario is their being set-up as detectives in a murder-mystery. This is partially true, although, the mystery becomes far darker in the near future. GMCs will be proactive in their own defense. More guards may be recruited from the town and posted around the Palace, protective charms invoked, locks repaired etc.

The First Expiration: Someone (we suggest Myrtridge) is pushed over the balcony into the great hall (after first being bashed on the head). This is ideal for the first murder, since it *could* have been accidental, and the Palace staff & notables will want to believe it is. Any PC up and about during the night may hear a scuffle, and approach, only to merely see the body. A discarded flagon of strong ale remains. The PC may follow, only to find the situation is a set-up. Moments later, they see a shadowy shape disappear into the doorway/corridor on the other side of the balcony (or fade into shadows). A hue and cry is evoked, in which the PC is accused when found near or fleeing the scene. (Unless they hide with great expertise and avoid suspicion.)



It all looks innocent enough afterwards, but the PC will know the cry of pain preceded the sound of a body landing by significant moments. Still, since nobody liked or disliked Myrtridge particularly, and the style of his ending seems in character, nobody takes it very seriously once protestations of innocence have been convincingly registered. Mind you, nobody in living memory has had a fatal accident from the balcony, since the balustrade is firm and relatively high.

Other Possible Accident/Murder Styles:

After the first death there will be a respite of a couple of days at least. Invoke the next murder when you feel that the game has milked the most out of any frivolous activities and atmosphere you have created. After this, have stewards loyal to the PCs be bumped off one by one, at a speed that suits the tone of the scenario (no more than one a day). Ideally several stewards have become allies to the PCs. This may happen at the beginning of their stay here, or it may take a few days for some stewards to sense where the wind blows (based on perceived confidence and capabilities of new Lords). Should the murders chomp through stewards at a rate of knots, and the investigation failing, you will have to subtly assure that the creature can be found and ended before things get much further. We need to leave three stewards alive so that the PCs are confident that they will one day be ratified as Lords.

1) The Deadly Visitation: A steward needs to use the latrine area during the night, not being interested in commodes. But not being completely stupid, they take with them a man-at-arms. This does not help. The shapeshifter (probably before it is discovered that this is what is killing people) takes the place of the guard before this event. The steward is slain by the guard's official halberd. Abruptly-terminated screams rouse the nearest folk, or anyone on watch. However, the latrine room is locked from the inside, and a master key required. The scene inside is fairly graphic, with blood and brains splattered. (Describe as much or as little as suits the tone of your scenarios.) Clues are: [a] empty armor in the middle of the room (marking the former presence of a man-at-arms, or imposter); [b] on one of the larger exit drains (good Perception roll to find) is some unearthly slime hanging in a great glob; [c] the unfortunate man-at-arms who was killed earlier was coincidentally disposed of in this room – his body is wedged into one of the small reservoirs beneath the latrines.

Another clue is that the guard was stabbed in the chest at close range (suggesting someone that he trusted), then had his throat cut after he fell. Do not feed this information to the PCs, though it is something that Gellink could tell them if the PCs insist he examine the body. If any PC thinks to suggest it, Tarandjal could identify the goop in his laboratory, although this takes as long as the GM decides necessary to retain the tension of not knowing what they're dealing with. If Tarandjal is their ally, also feel free for him to have wider knowledge of 'forensics' and be willing to teach one or more PCs a few basic cantraps alchemical tests, and research tips that reveal and identify clues/spoors etc etc. This adds to his character, thus to the inherent realism here, and to PC skills.

2) Death at a Distance: Nobody uses longbows anymore, but a few hang from walls as decorations. Late one evening, or early one morning, a steward is in the garden when someone comes onto the balcony of Room 50 and begins firing. The first one just misses, the second one wounds, and the third one mortally wounds. An amusing complication here is if the shapeshifter decides to take on the appearance of one of the PCs whilst it stands on the balcony. (Since witnesses see them only from a distance, identification is not 100%. Nonetheless, suspicions will be raised and maintained.) If PCs see the unfortunate steward trying to flee, they might try to intervene, or to work out where the assassin is and rush to catch them. If possible the shapechanger will then assume the form of someone the PCs won't suspect, and try to mingle and flee. Ideally the PCs won't identify or seriously threaten the assassin this early, but be flexible if it enhances the game experience. *It is up to you GM as to how closely involved the PCs might be in this incident. Afterwards someone (a PC?) might decide it could be wise to have all missile weapons destroyed, or locked in the wizard's tower.*

3) Strangled in the Night: The leucomorph oozes under a door or through a pipe or window, or some other narrow way. It reforms into a human shape, or its own bestial humanoid self, and garrotes the victim. Guards may hear the struggle but be unable to break down the door in time. An alternative is that the creature attempts to slay a PC and is discovered in time to save the PC. Only do this if the creature stands a good chance of escaping, as this may be the time that someone sees it change shape and thus guesses what type of creature it is, so research can be more focussed from now. Or more goop might be found at the scene. Or perhaps maximum fear and confusion has already been sown and now is the exact best time to finish the creature off? Only you will know.

4) Ashy Ambush: The creature hides up the chimney of the fireplace of Room 50, peering out by lowering its head in the shadows of the flickering candles. When a steward strolls past the creature drops down, lunges with a rapier (piercing the steward through the middle) and scrambles back. The rapier is abandoned, but is just one it stole off a wall. As mentioned in **Appendix 5**, this fireplace was overlooked as a possible access point to the upper floor. It is up to you whether the way is too narrow for anyone except a bendy leucomorph, or if the creature unwittingly presents the PCs with a way to access the Old Palace. If so, the other residents will have it bricked up quick smart, or at least wedged with great planks of wood that can be moved with relative ease only from inside the games room! The creature will assume the appearance of someone not present to do this deed. It is up to the GM whether PCs are present when this happens. If not, it will have assumed the appearance of one of them.

Should the murders continue, invent more. We recommend against poison unless PCs have magic to counter it. Bothag might be the only steward who survives a murder attempt, which may or may not cause suspicion.



The Leucomorph

“But are you not in haste? The sun declines, and after dark the leucomorphs appear.”

The leucomorph is a white, man-like creature of unknown origins. Little is understood about this species. They are primarily nocturnal but not exclusively so, and possess a strange intelligence. In range they are recorded from the Great Erm and the Old Forest of East Almerly, and so are presumably forest-dwelling. On several occasions they have been noted standing still for hours at a time, after which (or if interfered with) they will suddenly burst into action - or change shape into a loathsome ropy mass and slither away. They are notably timid, and if threatened by a clearly superior opponent will attempt to escape at speed.

Damage Resistant

Leucomorphs are preternaturally robust and hard to injure. *Game Notes: It makes its Health rolls at a bonus of 1 when struck by non-magical weapons. However, if magic is used to directly enhance weapons this resistance does not function, nor does any innate spell-resistance it might have. Whenever resting comatose in its natural form it regains a point lost from its Health pool.*

Human Form

Some few leucomorphs resemble humans so closely that with sufficient practice they could blend in to any rough and ready gathering with little difficulty. Or even mingle amongst a tavern crowd as long as they were not forced to enter into convoluted discourse requiring first hand knowledge of human desires and foibles. (Their claws and fangs retract magically, leaving no trace when not in-use.) These are the beings known as 'vampires'.

Game Notes: Add - Appraisal 4, Etiquette 6, Gambling 6, Imposture 6, and the Pedantry rating is at least 6.

Lizard Form

Some leucomorphs can alter shape to become giant lizards. (This trait is rare to certain highly unusual specimens.)

Game Notes: See details and statistics on pp169/170 of the DERPG Rulebook.

Shapechanging

The leucomorph requires three rounds to change form (and possibly a lot longer if its Athletics pool is low), and can be prevented from doing so by physical attack. Once it has changed form it can ooze up and over walls, through relatively small gaps (less small if it contains a recent undigested victim) and is highly resistant to non-magical damage and fire.

Game Notes: The expenditure of a point from its Athletics pool is required to change form. When opposing damage from fire and regular sources in its plasmic form it makes Health rolls at a bonus of 1.

Spell Resistant

In either form the leucomorph evidences its otherworldly nature through defying the effects of spells.

Game Notes: Add: Magic (Resistance only) 10 to both forms.

Vulnerable to Fire

The leucomorph fears flame, because it takes damage in the same way that a human does. Many half-men resist minor damage such as singeing or small burns without even blinking; not so the leucomorph. Perhaps due to its magical construction, exposure to flames pains any form of a leucomorph, and the human form might give away its nature if it is not able to hide its fear of fire.

Game Notes: No extra damage accrues, but leucomorphs must make a Wherewithal check to attack strong foes wielding fire. (Although, even if unwilling to attack directly, a leucomorph may follow at a distance - waiting for one's guard to drop, or may attack from ambush later.) It fears fire as it is partially demonic, thus both instinctually fearful and unable to magically resist the damage of the flames.



Humanoid Form

Persuade (Charming) 2~[17], Rebuff (Lawyerly) 1.5~[14], Attack (Cunning) 2~[16], Defense (Sure-Footedness) 1.5~[13], Health 1.5~[13], Athletics 1.5~[15], Concealment 1~, Pedantry 0.5~, Perception 0.5~, Stealth 9, Tracking 2, Wherewithal 1.5~[13].

Plasmic Form

Attack (Speed) 2~[17], Defense (Misdirection) 2~[20], Health 2~[18], Athletics 1.25~[11], Perception 6, Stealth 2, Tracking 4, Wherewithal 0.75~.

NB: This page is a reproduction of the full entry originally offered as part of the Dying Earth Bestiary – a publication that has now been subsumed into the DE Compendium with entries much foreshortened. Design your own version for this scenario, using this as a template.



4.2) The Investigation

Once the PCs effectively take charge of tracking down the murderer, and thus greatly assisting the chances of survival of the remaining stewards, some stewards may have a change of heart as regards the validity of the PCs' claims to the Lordship of Cil. All of them will agree that they can reduce the waiting time for ordination to the minimum of three months if the PCs become active in a noble defense. (After all, such things are very Lordly!) It is not possible to shorten this any more, as the time period was set by a small official ceremony to evoke the attention of the palace spirits (the demonic forces). They have long ago been programmed (to prevent violent acts as part of a forced succession) and cannot respond for at least this time. PCs may learn of this, and think to bargain for this as a condition of their helping (the most ideal option), or this incentive may be offered them.

It is up to the PCs how they run things. The incompetent and under-skilled men-at-arms are loyal in word, and follow the letter of instructions, but have no real experience and little backbone. (The GM will need to give them ratings, and decide if they flee at specific crucial moments etc.) They respond reasonably when led directly. Left to their own devices they are less competent. If set on regular night patrols they shirk their duty as best they can (through fear and incompetence rather than direct dereliction), unless PCs or a steward checks them regularly. And even then, if the time of the check is known they will shirk for the rest of the night. They are useless at sneaking, no matter how hard they try, and PCs will likely be better off working on their own until any final trap where guards can lurk in hiding. The PCs may also set security measures (as their ally GMC will advise). And, stewards will, of their own accord, take up a permanent bodyguard after the second murder. Sensible PCs may announce edicts that two bodyguards are preferable, and maybe other measures, such as that people should only travel the palace in small groups. Certainly have people defer to the PCs whenever possible. The game rationale might be that people suspected all along that the PCs were travelers/adventurers and now seek their experience as part of the salvation from the curse.

Why Do Residents Not Flee the Palace?

Most people could if they wanted to, but not the stewards. As soon as they invoked the initial ceremony of ordination, they became locked into a complex series of magics that have tied them to the Palace and its grounds until the new Lords are invested with their full powers. Should they be dragged forcibly from the grounds they will suffer terrible convulsions, from which they will shortly expire – unless returned back within the palace boundary. As mentioned earlier, the staff fear loss of their well-paid positions (the only well-paid work in the whole of the kingdom), and in any case are not the persons under attack.

The Creature

The GM has plenty of leeway as to exactly how smart, fast, and strong this entity is. One possibility is that the reason why the murders are not coming thick and fast is that not only does Slaye want to prolong the terror he causes, but that the creature is slow of wit and needs careful coaching and rehearsal before each act. In such a case it may still take on the form of one of the lesser residents of the Palace, but only one already known to be dull and uncommunicative. Or it might be smart but weak, and take on a more middle-range identity from amongst the senior staff. Such a person might hide their change of character by posing as hysterical or grief-stricken as soon as the murders begin.

Various means exist as to how to find the creature and thus stop the murders. We suggest only a few amongst the notes here, as much depends on the resourcefulness, skills and character of your PCs.

Do your own statistics and behavioral ideas based on the capabilities of the PC party.

- a) Should the PCs possess any Violet Cusps, then identifying the creature posing as a servant will be easy. Being innately magical it appears in normal (bestial anthropophagous) form when viewed through cusps. Bear in mind that no-one else can see this, and all residents will energetically seek to stop a PC from violently attacking another resident. (Thus it may escape.) Also note that anyone wearing a cusp or two will look very odd to anyone else, and will be the focus of attention, and often of direct questions (that draw attention to the PC).
- b) The first time PCs encounter the creature it should ideally escape through shape-changing. This should be described in supernatural detail as part of the 'weird magics' of DERP. G.
- c) A leucomorph's fear of fire is an obvious way to confront it, once this has been uncovered. Everyone carrying torches and sleeping with lit torches around them will provide some protection. But the creature does not fear water, and could throw a pale of water over someone sleeping next to fire. (Wryly amusing to find a sopping wet corpse in the morning.)
- d) Setting a trap makes sense. The PCs need to find a steward willing to put their life on the line by pretending to be alone - whilst PCs hide beneath sofas and inside suits of armor. (And men-at-arms lurking behind drapes?) If they don't think to do this straight away (prematurely ending the fun of tension), then it could be the way the creature is brought to end.
- e) If possible the creature should be injured badly and still escape, so it can be encountered later when PCs investigate the old palace. Feigning death could be one way it does this.
- f) Known and unknown servants being found half-devoured can add to the atmosphere, but not if this all begins to be too similar to the murders that occurred in *All's Fair At Azenomei*. Although sometimes reprising a previous theme can be an amusing game device. Use your discretion as to the actions of the shapechanger and the traces it leaves.



Possible Edicts from the new Lords:

Everyone travels in groups of 3 or more, and lives this way. *Stewards will rebel against this until someone else dies. One exception is that most will happily accept the company of 1-3 armed guards.*

Everyone must research in the library.

Many people cannot read, or are just stupid. Those few who can read do so poorly, except for a handful of individuals, whom the GM should play fully as to whether (and how willingly) they help the PCs.

We must beat and search every section of the Palace and grounds seeking this creature. *Good luck organizing this one!*

Everyone must submit to a test to prove they are real.

If the PCs have given a reasonable argument that the murderer is a leucomorph and researched how to expose one by testing its fear of fire, then this could turn into a very interesting game exercise. Some few will refuse out of pride, others out of vehement denial. If the creature is posing as one of them, then it of course will also not want to. (But will smartly not make a fuss about this, and merely try to slip away.)

g) The creature does not have to kill in order to assume someone's shape, but it does kill to eat, as it is an anthropophage. The odd partially-devoured body never goes amiss in a scenario like this, and could be one way to stimulate reduction in the ranks of residents (as some staff survivors opt to resign and head back to town).

h) The creature might be slow-witted, but Slaye is not. He uses magic to see through the creature's eyes, and could compose taunting letters to be left where the PC in charge of the investigation will find them. You may choose to have this be the way in which PCs come to learn that they have angered Slaye and set off his wrath. He can talk of his rage in some of the notes: *"I am the one true Lord of Cil, and your upstart posturings will bring you to death."* etc

i) The creature's impostures might mean that it is seen in two places at once. (Although both sightings resemble the imitated person, not the creature.) Typically this will happen just once, and a PC passes one servant in one room, and then sees that same servant again two rooms later.

j) If they catch it alive, it may reveal who its master is. (Slaye.) It may also talk of the angered man's lair in the Old Palace, where he speaks to himself as if possessed and plots horrible revenge. The creature might be convinced to lead them there, but Slaye has thought of all such contingencies and placed an enchantment on it, so that it cannot consciously remember the way, but can only come if called. It thinks it knows the way, but will wander randomly if used as a guide to find Slaye. (Roll 50/50 at any junction, and there is a 1:6 chance it thinks that Slaye's hideout is behind any door they come to.) PCs may assume that the creature is being deliberately obstructive, although the more astute may notice that it appears a little confused. (Eventually perhaps he activates its self-destruct, and it melts horribly!)

"The Lords of Cil" by Ian Thomson

Why Do PCs Not Flee the Palace?

Nothing stops them directly. In the context of the adventure, stewards will beg them to stay, offering them huge rewards from the Palace's coffers, and a guaranteed title to Derwe's walking-boat once things have settled down again. Since venturing into the wilds means death, the PCs really only have one choice – they could relocate to town from the Palace. Doing this makes them vulnerable at night to a series of half-man attacks or to Slaye setting fire to whatever building they are in – both things he cannot do to the Palace. Slaye can control half-men sufficiently to set gangs of them after the PCs once they are outside the Palace grounds. This should be overtly explained (probably via Tarandjal) if necessary to dissuade PCs from leaving.

k) Other weaknesses may be discovered through research. (Tarandjal?) Perhaps shapechangers are vulnerable to the touch of silver, or the PCs find an incantation that reveals them, or a cantrap that allows someone to see their trail?

Why Does Derwe Stay?

Initially she cannot accept that Slaye can do any serious harm, not seeing the deaths of a steward or two as serious. But mainly she is too scared of the outside world (a severe psychological issue). Also her identity hinges on her control of Cil, and how can she do that if she isn't here, or if she leaves it to fall into someone else's hands? But when things grow bad enough she will offer to give the PCs control of her carriage if they defeat Slaye. This presents the GM with a tangible reward to dangle in front of the PCs:

"Once Slaye is defeated I shall give you full ownership and control of my magical walking-boat. This I swear on the power of Cil."

4.3) The Curse Strikes

The real curse may begin whilst the shapechanger is still being sought. Again these events begin with lesser hazards that increase in severity. The idea is for the PCs to realize that Slaye is growing stronger, and that they are cut off inside the Palace. If they don't realize it themselves either Derwe or Tarandjal will 'feel' Slaye's growing demonic energy and advise that he must be stopped as soon as possible. This motivation is the most direct 'kicker' to impel PCs to investigate the rambling depths of the Old Palace.

The curse events are listed in suggested order. To have them come too quickly suggests that Slaye is gaining power by the hour, which is not what we want to infer. (Such a thing is likely only to motivate PCs to flee, and we want to present the idea that a solution is achievable.) The following may go on over days whilst the PCs do research, or happen relatively quickly as the PCs organize expeditions into the depths of the Old Palace. Whilst we only summarize here, expand these things for best effect. Note that as many of the events as possible/suitable to match the tone and pace of

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your story need to be actually ‘solved’ by the PCs. That is to say these are things that require ingenuity and action rather than just things that happen for the sake of illustration. Various suggestions along these lines are given.

- 1) Stormclouds** mass overhead, but not just ordinary stormclouds. These have strange colors and seem to contain roiling forces of evil within them. And they stay overhead, from now until Slaye is defeated. [*No solution possible.*]
- 2) Ghosts** begin appearing in town. These are spirits of personalities of old, disturbed from their rest by the demonic energies that are massing. Some come to taunt and revel in the coming chaos and suffering. Others bring cryptic warning. The Palace is more heavily protected by enchantments, so random ghost encounters do not happen there. This particular curse effect will be most noticeable when townsfolk arrive in small groups to seek the aid of the new Lords of Cil. Make such characters desperate and worthy of sympathy. [*If you want to expand: PC magicians or assisting Tarandjal, can go into town and conduct exorcisms. Soon, however these happen too often to be manageable, and ghosts become accepted phenomena, though the worst of them causes whole sections of houses to be abandoned.*]

PC Magicians

The way I run Magical development in DERPG, PCs can only add points to their Rating if they’ve actually undergone training or performed substantial research. It’s possible that one or two of your PCs may be trying to increase their Magic capabilities, and if so, then this is the ideal time to have them uncover books that deal with defensive magics and go to town attempting exorcisms and other repulsions. This section is a prime example of how briefly-noted adventure opportunities can be expanded substantially. In this case PCs could collect tomes, go into town, confront a ghost and deal with its attacks or emanations, then pit their own will (Magic rating boosted by whatever power the incantations/rituals add) against it. The GM adds supernatural effects and hazards to fit the moment: ectoplasmic whips, hideous wailing, freezing cold, doors being held shut, objects flying around, sudden gusts of wind etc etc. One way to introduce more magic to your adventure series without vastly increasing the capacities and capabilities of the PCs is to have them be able to access tomes with spells written in them. As explained in the free article on Dabblers & Magic at Violet Cusps (www.dyingearth.com/violetcusps.htm), being able to read a spell from a tome is a far cry from learning it, and may also have amusing failure effects. As mentioned elsewhere (**Appendix 1**) the rulers of Cil have in recent generations forgotten the arts of memorizing spells. Their reliance on artifacts made this unnecessary (in their typical DE Indolence), but the artifacts gradually ran out of charges, or the ability to recharge them was forgotten.

Spell memorizing is now unknown, because those few who learned how to do it became less willing to teach anyone else (for reasons of suspicion and holding power).

Consider referring to the Dabblers & Magic article and expanding this section of this adventure so PCs can plunder the Cil library for spells and go try them out. (Either for their own benefit in dealing with the manifestations in the South Wing and with the problems they meet in the Old Palace, or in fits of altruism when assisting the villagers.) The PCs won’t be taking many (or any) tomes with them at the end of this adventure. So, this is an opportunity to have PCs play with impressive magics without upsetting game development/ balance. You may expand their research, experimentation with, and use of, Cil spells and rituals into a significant part of this adventure, expanding difficulties faced in the Old Palace, so that use of ancient and powerful Cil magic is essential for their success.

- 3) Terrible Dreams.** Various people, including PCs, begin to have dreams about horrible demonic realms, and precognitive dreams about demons roaming the town and the palace. Someone significant will dream of Ramaf in his workroom pouring a bottle of blood onto a black crystal skull whilst chanting and cavorting insanely and arguing with himself in two voices (regular and demonic). This is a **significant clue**, showing that whilst Ramaf is strong, he is far from master of his own powers. [*No solution possible.*]
- 4) The Water in the Town turns to Blood.** Some townsfolk arrive distraught at the Palace, even though the effect only lasted for twenty minutes. [*Or the effect might be permanent and PCs need to solve it using rituals or a particular spell from an old book.*]
- 5) Demons** appear in town. Only individually and of lesser power, but they kill domestic animals, break things, and frighten children. Representatives from town arrive to beseech the new Lords of Cil to take up arms and lead a band of guards into town to slay these entities. [*The GM may wish to encourage/ allow PCs to become demon-slayers: either with spells or using special weapons and armor available in the Palace – and they may have some success. The first demons might be relatively easy to kill and scary only to weak and superstitious townsfolk. However, they might gradually get worse. Also whilst the PCs are in town the next demon effect (8) could occur, causing flight to the Palace as local civilization ends horribly.*]





6) Slaye's Voice at Night. Throughout the dark hours one night Slaye can be heard chanting in a horrendous dark language, occasionally interrupting himself with corrections in a far nastier voice. His voice is amplified by his magic. The first of the demonic manifestations (see below) in the Palace might also happen at this time. [*He cannot be located by following his voice, as it echoes from the air, rather than from a specific source.*]

The Diabolical Ceremony

Slaye (possessed by the demon) has gathered his resources and enacted a subworld curse. He called upon the old demonic allies of Cil to assist him. Yes, he is utterly insane, thinking he can trust demons who, as we all know, “do not share power”.

7) Slaye Reveals the Doom of Cil: An apparition of Ramaf appears somewhere that Derwe Coreme and any perceived leader of the PCs can see it. Perhaps in a fire, or a mirror, or just in the air. It should be presaged by a chill wind, the magical candles of the Palace dimming or even going out for a few moments. Ramaf appears, seen dimly but clearly him. Shadows of hideous demeanor flutter behind him, giving the impression of loathsome winged horrors. Slaye speaks, and his voice booms down the corridors of the South Wing, so that all can hear his pronouncement:

“Too long has the House of Slaye been ridiculed and diminished. I, we, no I, the rightful Lords of Cil, will put things aright! Your doom will not be swift, but it will be certain. Derwe Coreme and the upstart Lords of Marbon will all perish in the chaos of our curse.”

Add whatever other words you want. The idea is to give a clue that Slaye is possessed, set up the idea that time is left before his final strike, and alert the PCs that they are targets. Derwe Coreme might go hysterical and shout out that he is “hot air like all Slayes”, unable to command the forces he summons. And that if he can truly exact revenge why not do it “right now!” Play this subtly, but yes it is a broadcast clue that Slaye is not as powerful as he makes out. His response will be one of petulant annoyance, and perhaps insult-swapping with Derwe. Images of the demon may flicker into being around Ramaf and then vanish, showing the battle for control. If the PCs don't do any research, Derwe (or Tarandjal) will examine astrological charts/tomes and see that no full conjunction of communication with the demon realms is possible for X (number) of days yet. Inexperienced Slaye has acted too soon!

8) A Demon Horde pours out of the ground and takes over the town. Slaye has made a breakthrough with his raw power. Again the Palace and its grounds are protected by ancient enchantments, but the town is not. A small band of survivors may reach the Palace, but the town itself is over-run. These are not major demons, but aggressive minor fiends. They take over the town by force and threat, killing only when they absolutely must, and creating a place that exists only to serve their gross appetites. [*Some GMs may wish to turn this into a chapter of the adventure, and have crusading PCs lead a mass charge of guards into the town to slay the demon leaders and drive out their underlings. Or the PCs alone or with one or two allies, might take a*

magical battle to these minions of evil in the manner of other classic RPGs. In either case we heartily recommend Demons of the Dying Earth as a publication to assist in such an endeavor. Otherwise, use the collapse of the town as an illustration of the severity of the situation, and to show that the PCs are trapped and must act for their own survival.]

8) Demonic Manifestations in the Palace. Now that Slaye has made his breakthrough, even the Palace's defenses can't hold back the full demon threat. Strange things begin within the Palace. Some can be solved by force, others by magic, and others must merely be endured. Again we advise that these summaries be incorporated in much greater detail into the unfolding adventure. Do so subtly rather than heavy-handedly. Ideally this is all part of the 'build-up' rather than turning into a demon-fest that makes it appear that everyone will be imminently slain. Some folk hold hope that Palace defenses will hold out until Slaye exhausts himself. Others (wailing and attacking the PCs whom they blame for all this) are less optimistic. Many residents beg PCs for assistance, promising whatever is within their power, and basically acting as if the PCs are the only ones who can avert the end of the world! This is the stage at which you might need the list of Palace personnel. (If only to see which of those are possible allies, and which may suffer at the hands of particular demonic effects.) If it works for you, extend this over two or three days as the residents try to continue life as normal, in typical DE denial of the weirdness of the world around them. (Or at least denial of their responsibility for, and involvement in, such weirdness.) If they haven't already, the PCs may well begin amassing whatever things from the South Wing that they think might help them.

- Ugly imps perched in high places, laughing and throwing noxious excrement [*Need to be killed, either with magical missiles or mundane methods, whichever best suits the tone.*]
- Patches of stinking ooze appear on walls or in the middle of rooms [*These reappear if cleaned off with mundane means. Have the PCs uncover some enchantment against demonic effects in a tome, which is usually successful but costs 1 Magic pool point.*]
- Horrible demonic footprints track reeking earth across rooms (though no demons present) [*No solution necessary.*]
- A more dangerous semi-corporeal succubus or incubus takes advantage of one of the residents (whether this is a physical attack or a psychic one depends on the tone of the scenarios you run) [*This is more serious. PCs struggle – physically or magically or with Resistances – against force barriers and lusty psychic impulses in order to approach the thing. If it can only be dealt with through magic, so much the better. But as a basic final option it has some physical attacks and heavy resistance to damage, and so the PCs become involved in a group action of distraction and attack as they risk injury ducking in and out to gradually finish it off.*]
- Mirrors show demonic representations of those looking into them. [*No solution necessary unless these demonic events continue for significant time. In this case perhaps the demonic*

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doppelgangers gradually become more efficacious. First of all they move independently of the watcher, then begin testing the mirror as if it is a force wall, then one manages to reach out and try to throttle a PC. Finally of course one does get out and needs to be exterminated before it slays people. It may of course slay the person it was copying as a first act, before anyone else knows that it is around.]

- Food at dinner table wriggles and squeals when you try to eat it. [*Casting a counter-curse on the entire meal before dining.*]

- Something huge slowly approaches down a corridor (massive heavy footfalls) and tries to smash down a door. (The door bends unnaturally.) Eventually it all goes quiet for a minute and then the door flies open and shatters against the wall. [*On the other side is Yodo, hand raised, because he just knocked to alert them to the fact that dinner was ready.*]

- Bubbles of demonic plasm float around the house. Whatever they hit they warp it in peculiar and unpleasant ways. If they strike human flesh they cause a searing burn (1 Health pool point) [*Wearing heavy clothes helps, but the warping is not severe enough to merit serious attention, until the effect gradually begins to build up to turning the Palace into something demonic.*]

- Small harpies fly around the grounds and spit poisonous phlegm at people. They also try and get in through windows and open doors. Two or three might succeed and need to be slain as they go on a rampage breaking things and attacking people. [*Magic or force: whatever suits best. See next page for more details on harpies.*]

- Invent new ghastly ideas; in advance or spontaneously.

The Harpy

"A stuffed bird, standing four feet high, with a woman's face under a coarse mop of black hair."

Harpies were once fairly widespread, but now are rarely found anywhere other than along the eastern coasts of the Xardoon Sea – and even there are not common. They roost in caves on high cliffs, and have a preferred diet of human carrion – so are constantly on the look out for dead and dying travelers and seafarers. Their bodies are strange mergings of imp, eagle, and human female. Each harpy has the head of a woman, some of which can be quite attractive apart from the wide mouth filled with sharp teeth, and the pointed ears that are usually hidden beneath a mop of hair. Some harpies also evidence a transparent crest, stretching back across the head from the center of the forehead.

A Danger to Shipping

When the presence of human carrion is lacking, harpies are not above flying down onto passing ships during the hours of darkness, and carrying off lone watchmen. Of course, because harpies are smaller than humans, two or three of them (or four, if the target is a large man) must work in concert to achieve such a feat, often utilizing a crude net.

"The Lords of Cil" by Ian Thomson

Cranial Crest (1)

The harpy's cranial crest is an auditory aid, allowing the creature to hear sounds over three times as far as the human auditory range. Such an ability is no doubt extremely useful when arranging ambushes.

Cranial Crest (2)

This physical accessory aids the harpies in registering air-currents as they fly around their cliff homes, and is also edged with sharp barbs to assist aerial combat.

Habits of the Harpy

Harpies collect treasures and interesting items merely because they can, as baubles that were once attached to their food. They have no interest in normal trade, no concept of reward, and are arrogant and cruel by nature. In spite of this they can be argued and bargained with if a future reward of human victims is offered, or if fresh flesh is on the menu. Sometimes a harpy will keep a prisoner for days or even weeks, tormenting them with possibilities of freedom, before slaying them and devouring their remains.

Harpies and Magic

An occasional rare harpy is capable of learning spells from stolen tomes or from prisoners. They may also become involved with demon-worshippers and are capable of learning the common demonic magics. These rare individuals value magical treasures above all other things, and desire to accumulate as many such objects as possible.

Game Note: Change Magic rating to: Magic (Demonic) 12

Jangk Harpies

Once much larger harpies were also present on the Dying Earth, but none have been seen this aeon. They still exist on Jangk, the distant planet of the archveults, and this has led to the supposition that rather than being created in vats, harpies were actually imported from beyond the stars. The Jangk harpy is in bulk twice the size of a human adult. They do not feed very often, but when they do, they are capable of dislocating their jaws and swallowing a victim whole. Normally they only do this when back at their lairs, then fall comatose for three days whilst their dinner digests.

Common Harpy

Forthright 1~, Contrary 1~, Cunning 1~, Vexation 1~, Health 8, Magic (innate) 6, Athletics 0.75~, Concealment 1.5~, Gambling 12, Perception 7, Stealth 1~, Wherewithal 1~.

Jangk Harpy

Intimidating 1.5~[12], Penetrating 1.25~[10], Strength 1.5~[15], Parry 1.25~[12], Health 2~[17], Magic (innate) 10, Athletics 1~, Concealment 0.5~, Perception 9, Stealth 3, Tracking 6, Wherewithal 1.5~[14].

Design your own harpies using this as a template. This text was also condensed from material originally earmarked for DE Bestiary.

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Chapter Five: Saving Cil from the Vile Pretenders

The Accursed Town

After the curse hits, Cil town changes. We include only an overview, since it's unlikely the PCs will go back. But if they do, Cil has been transformed into a minor province of a horrible subworld. Again referring to *Demons of the Dying Earth* will greatly enhance such ideas. The town should illustrate the horrible demonic insanity that they need to defend against through confronting Slaye in the Old Palace:

- The town seems initially deserted. (The last few free folk have boarded themselves into cellars and attics with supplies, and only the most foolish or brave venture abroad – and will flee anyone they don't know well.)
- A strange sulphurous stench hangs on the air, and occasional clouds of acrid mist drift about the town
- Distant howling or crying, someone screeching in pain or terror (abruptly curtailed).
- The town priest nailed to the door of his temple.
- Strange demonic animals roam the streets
- Horrible stinking fungus is taking over the vegetable gardens
- Small work gangs of humans whipped along by demons
- Human bodies torn and discarded

Some GMs may wish to take this to the Nth degree and have the townsfolk of Cil come to some terrible mass fate simply so that the PCs can observe the depths of horror before fleeing back to the Palace with the grim news.

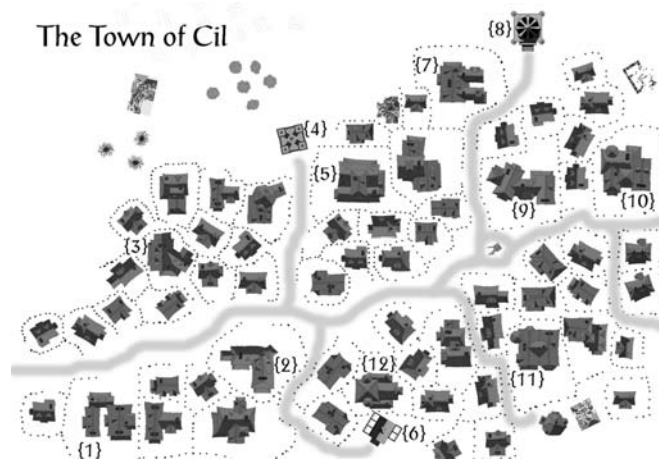
5.1) The Bold Defenders

PCs as Action Heroes

If you can set things up so that the PCs do not want to go into the Old Palace to solve this adventure (on account of extreme fear), but are eventually left with no choice, then that is ideal. A perfect achievement is to have the PCs begin researches in the library, and Old Palace explorations, early in this scenario - merely in order to amass benefits for themselves. Then, as difficulties begin, the PCs consent to help the people of the town and Palace simply in order to keep the favor of the stewards and other residents of note. Thus the PCs (who in comparison to the rest of the locals are war commandos) gradually become enrolled as the saviors of Cil. So when it comes to the crunch, in order to save their own skins they have no choice but to seek out Ramaf in order to put an end to his curse.

Make sure to balance the scenario so that the PCs must choose from one of two options. Either they feel they have a reasonable chance of success against insane Ramaf and his ill-founded demonic dabblings. Or they feel that they literally have no choice if they want to survive his attacks.

That is to say, things are slowly getting worse, and nobody else is remotely competent, so unless someone stops Ramaf Slaye everyone will perish, as his curse grows ever stronger. Since nobody else has a remote chance of countering Slaye, the PCs have no choice but to become the reluctant heroes. Don't labor the point by having people tell them this. Yes, some GMCs may beg for aid if the PCs have proven themselves willing and able to solve problems before. But most GMCs will be typically fatalistic, and assume that nobody can help them, and that doom threatens. They may continue life as normally as possible, hoping that Ramaf will spare them, or they may become fearful shadows of their former selves, hiding in corners and whimpering.



Allies Staunch and Powerful

As you will see when reading further, it is important that several GMCs accompany the PCs, so you must realistically set up this opportunity, so that when it happens it doesn't jar the inherent reality you have built up so far. Explain that when it comes to the crunch these people find their quality, arm themselves, and gather a few loyal followers or guards. Derwe, Tarandjal and Bothag are ideal, aided by a bodyguard or two each. Plus any other stewards. Derwe, as acting Lord of Cil, might also be useful as a plot device to allow the group to open doors that were formerly immovable & invulnerable. She has all the rights of a steward, and so can open all the secure doors that they can. Note that apart from Bothag none of these are capable of action, and will therefore follow the PCs at a safe distance. Likewise with the men-at-arms. A few of the best will be with Bothag, but the other GMCs will demand their own band of protectors. The best they will (Ψ PERSUASION) offer is a 50/50 split of whatever guards are available, with the PCs getting half, and the personality GMCs getting the



others. Mind you, all of this might change with intelligent role-playing. Persuasive arguments, or convincing bribes or threats, could just possibly (but not likely) have a squad of guards storm Slaye's Lair, whilst the PCs pretend to lead but actually hold back. The GM will quickly invent terrible defenses that the guards overcome with their lives.

Should guards with the PCs begin to expire during the general search of the Old Palace, it is unlikely that others will volunteer from the rear party! Nonetheless, it is crucial to have these GMCs with the party, or present at the end when Slaye is confronted, so that the final showdown can be the complex and frustrating battle of avaricious and arrogant fools that it is set up to be. By the time the lair is reached, the only GMCs actually standing alongside the party are likely to be Bothag and any surviving sergeants. Others will at best be hanging back at a (very) safe distance. Having GMCs sneak after the PCs is another option if the PCs utterly refuse company. Again guards, or possibly armed servants, will accompany these. You may decide that the PCs become aware of this group following (quite likely considering their ineptitude). If so, then incorporate their presence as an annoyance, and an example of the typically stupid behavior of DERPG GMCs who are protecting their own interests. Do not broadcast, or admit if challenged, that some of these are crucial to the final plot resolution. If it's easier, have them only be detected as the PCs approach Slaye's hidden headquarters.

5.2) Searching for the Lair of Slaye

Use the general Palace Appendix (5), and the Old Palace Appendix of Random Encounters (4) as the backbone of this action finale to the scenario. Appendix 4 includes those things that have appeared in the Old Palace since Slaye activated his curse, and which are not specific to any location. Those are the majority of the weirdnesses that PCs will encounter as part of this section. Appendix 5 describes things as they are before the curse is activated. However, it also, in cases where it matters, describes how an old encounter may change after the curse is cast. We have also included a few location-specific Curse Effects as special entries in Appendix 5. Slaye's Lair itself, being flexible as to location, is the only thing fully detailed at the end of this section. This is because PCs may wander the Old Palace two or three times before this grand finale, and because the action has numerous variations on how it might play out.

Placing the Lair of Slaye

It is important that the PCs reach Ramaf's base of operations (nominally Rooms 98, 99 & 100) after a satisfying exploration of the Old Palace. You as GM must decide when is the best time to find the lair, and you have some control over this through the lair being flexible as to its location. If the PCs threaten to approach too soon

(perhaps by entering the Old Palace through the door into Room 30, turning left and keeping on going) you can:

a) Have the spiral stair that starts between Rooms 38 & 46 be **securely bricked up** above the next floor. IE: one can ascend to (or descend from) the stair between Rooms 75 & 76, but one cannot go higher from there because the stairway was sealed a long time ago. If you choose to do this and it diverts the PCs from entering these rooms at this time, then the true entry to Slaye's lair in this location will be **either via** a secret door at the end of the parapet that leads from Turret 97, **or via** the turret roof of Room 90 (crossing to the roof of the turret above the stair that we just mentioned as being bricked up on the floor below).

Note that it is not possible to climb up exterior upper walls without risk of extreme danger (either through falling or from the gargoyles).

b) **Move Slaye's hideout** to somewhere the PCs are not close to and have not been before. You can reserve your choice until the time feels right (keep track that options remain. Use: 19/20 (split room 19 in half), or 22/23/24 (24's door to corridor bricked up), or 27/28, or 45/46, or 65/66/67, or Tower 96 (it can become two or three-story – see glossary entry – and has no access save via the parapet). *A final idea I just had is of using the Lord's Tower (Rooms 36, 78, and 97), because it is sealed against intruders, and yet Ancestor Slaye may have been able to break the seal. If at precisely the right time a PC discovers the secret door in Room 35 and enters flooded Room 36, then split Room 78 above into two, and move the upper spiral stair across to the other side so that the PCs must cross the first two rooms of the lair to access the stair to Room 97, which is the Inner Sanctum.*

Yes, this is a trick, but one well worth playing. The idea is that the PCs get to experience something of the vastness, weirdness and wonders of the ancient Old Palace before coming across the Lair. This is because: (a) the finale of the scenario begins once they attack Ramaf in his lair, and there are no more opportunities to explore the Old Palace; and (b) interesting magic doodads are available throughout the Old Palace that may help in the fight against Slaye and his defenses. (Rather than having these found all at once in a few rooms prior to taking on Ramaf, far better to scatter them around amidst the Old Palace's general menace.)

*Feel free to adapt your version of the map of the Palace if you need to make an alternate location of the lair seem sufficiently large to be believable to the PCs. In particular the **Inner Sanctum** needs to be a very large room to accommodate the action that will take place here, and the grandeur of its description. However, that is large in standard terms – it does not need to be a massive room like the huge chambers in the rest of the Palace. (It just cannot be a pokey little place.) And as you will see, we present the option that this room can be a dimensional anomaly in any case, existing partly in a subworld and partly in this reality. Which negates the problem altogether.*



5.3) The Last Battle

As you will observe from the description of the final action, it is important to have at least three personality GMCs with PCs at the end. An ideal selection might be Derwe, Bothag and Tarandjal. If not, then you will need to adapt the text. For instance if Chank has been their staunch companion since Smolod, he may take the place of Bothag (who may then be horribly killed sometime during this last part as he tries nobly to save someone, or simply standing fast against a demon). Or possibly Tarandjal will have died earlier and Chank replaces him. Either one of these can be a GM foil who rallies their capabilities when it comes to the crunch, and performs short rituals that (if successful) solve certain magical problems. We recommend describing such things in reasonable detail and requiring several persons (but not everyone – which gives scope for arguments and Persuasion contests) to donate blood (1 Health and 1 Magic pool point), or just psychic power (Magic pool) if you prefer not to role-play direct personal bloodletting.

You may also wish to have this be the time when the PCs are able to (and believe they must for the sake of their own survival) rally the remaining guards into something resembling a fighting force. Perhaps inspiring them with promises of rich reward and/or words of encouragement and solidarity (Ψ PERSUASION/IMPOSTURE). If this happens, describe any valiant actions by the guards in suitably glowing terms, even if these actions lead to their doom.

5.3.1) The First Room

If you are using one of the Lair location options where space is limited, consider adapting this room so that the inhabitants and action are all outside the lair. Thus you might change the description of the room or corridor immediately outside to include false walls, barricades of furniture, tables and bric-a-brac, a second illusory wall through which foes attack, or otherwise adjust the architectural geography... whatever works for you.

This encounter is the beginning of the showdown, or finale, of this adventure, so needs to play out with an air of excitement, tension, and danger. Ramaf Slaye is arrogant and unbalanced. He had no expectations that anyone from the South Wing would seriously challenge him, and yet he didn't want to risk being taken by surprise. So, part of his plan has been to ensure that he can rest at night and engage in his research without constantly having to look over his shoulder in case of attack.

To that end he set up this little base of operations and enhanced it with protections. Which ones you choose should depend on which items or skills the PCs have that will allow them to overcome these. I make suggestions for ways to bypass each one, and you will need to be sure that the PCs have all the capabilities they need before they engage with these challenges. However, you may also find that they have other things that help, and again should be prepared to improvise from any interesting/intelligent actions they take.

Illusory Wall: The door to the 2nd room blends into the wall. *Solutions: The illusory wall bisects (Perception/Tracking) a footprint in the dust; A noise is heard beyond the door (Perception); The wall is examined and found to be plastic and physically permeable. The Eyes of the Overworld will also see that something is wrong with the wall, but not reveal exactly what (other than a strange bulge where the door is). Crystals MB1 will dispel the illusion, but not affect the door itself.*



Enchanted Door: Slaye has placed a demonic enchantment upon this door. When it is first touched it (without uttering the correct cantrap) it suddenly sparks with magic, spewing out bright motes of green light. Immediately after this a number of ropy tentacles emerge from its surface (which becomes a solid black material as this happens). The door needs to be fought as if it were a living (demonic) creature. On an IS that is not countered by at least a PS, a tentacle will grab hold of a victim and proceed to do them 1 Health pool point damage per round as it crushes, or as it uses them as a club. Fer'city [___], Parry [___], Hlth [___], Magic (Demonic) [___] *Solutions: You may choose that the door is resistant to non-magical damage. In that case they will need to take it out with magic weapons or a spell or a special item (such as: MD1). Otherwise just give it high Health and have them gradually hack it to bits (as in 'Tazan's Looming Restriction', DDE p61)*

Demonic Mist: Once the door is destroyed, but before its tattered remnants can be pulled from its frame to allow entry, thick rivulets of mist pour out. These flow into the corridor and attempt to attach themselves to any living beings who are not quick enough (Ψ ATHLETICS). If they succeed they attack the victim's Magic rating with their own, and begin to drain points, a process experienced as so painful that all abilities are at a Penalty of 2. Once the Magic pool is exhausted the effect spreads to the Health pool with injurious effect. Magic (Demonic) [___]. The mist spreads only up to around ten yards before the doorway and then stops. However, it stays here for about six hours, immobile unless approached. During



this time, or if the PCs leave and then return Slaye resets this defense when it runs out. It can be activated three times before he runs out of resources and has to perform a several-hours-long ceremony to replace it.

Solutions: Liberation of Warp, and similar DE spells, cannot block this effect. The strange demon dust-sucker (DD1) will work though.

The Room Itself: Once the PCs get a look inside, this chamber is a simple one. At the center of the floor is a huge thaumaturgical circle. (If you use the option of having Room 1 be a hallway outside the lair, then this circle is on a wall beside the door, and is revealed when the illusion is passed and therefore annulled). In each corner (or one on each side of the door that leads into the lair proper if this is a hallway) is a black iron brazier of glowing coals that gives off a thin sickly green smoke. (NB: If using a pre-existing room, describe how the original features have been pushed aside, destroyed/damaged, etc.) There may also be a wooden door (ladder/whatever) leading on. If a choice of two doors exists, the door into the Inner Sanctum is also hidden by an illusion.

Malevolent Ghosts: Entering the room (or after dispelling the mist from a corridor) the temperature drops suddenly, and the distant sound of tormented voices is heard, as if a door were opened then closed again. After only a round, three forms appear at the center (or in front of) the thaumaturgical circle. Each of these faint cadaverous figures is dressed in the rags of ancient finery is a former magician of the House of Slaye. They bring with them the essence of terror, and although this is tangible in game terms it only mechanically affects those that a 'specter' manages to touch. Anyone touched (Ψ ATHLETICS) [or stared at if you choose to make it a gaze attack] must roll Wherewithal (see 'Enhanced Action ruling' and 'Supernatural Terror' rules) or else suffer a terror effect such as fleeing in panic back towards the South Wing. Note that the ghosts do not merely lean forward going 'Woooooh!', but emanate a very physical aura of otherworldly evil: "Something about these beings is hideous, terrifying, very very wrong. Your skin prickles, your hair stands on end, you shake in your boots and want to run or scream or both!" We suggest that most unimportant GMCs who flee when failing this roll do not return. NB: GMCs who succeed may also choose to flee, but not so far and not in an uncontrolled fashion. Uncontrollably fleeing personality GMCs – especially those who feature in the finale – are either prevented (by PCs or other GMCs, or knock themselves out as they run into walls, or find somewhere convenient to hide quivering around the nearest corner). Two of these ghosts will stay near the door, but one may pursue (obviously or sneakily) retreating parties, and ambush them by coming out of a wall! Exceptions are if the PCs defeat one and then taunt the others - to try and lure one to approach them. *Solutions: Normal weapons pass through these ghosts as if they are not there. The blade enhancer (MC1) will solve this problem. The helm with*

feather ears (HM1) will also aid in this struggle. Violet Cusps too make the ghosts less fearful, turning them visually into the powerful Lords they must once have looked like.

Slaye the Vengeant: Enhanced by demonic magic to make him tough as anything, one of Slaye's simulacrum jumps out of a cupboard or from behind a tapestry, swinging a ceremonial cutlass and shrieking in anger. He is grossly muscled and clad in a loincloth. If realistic, his first strike severs the head from one of the GMC guards. Fer'city [___], Parry [___], Hlth [___], Magic (Resistance) [___]

The Flame Door: The PCs may have defeated the ghosts, or be in the process of doing so, when the door out of this room (or both doors if there are two) suddenly burst into cold white flame. (See 'Curse of the White Flame', DDE p58). This effectively does normal flame damage but not to the door itself, and expands out from the door to engulf anyone who stands adjacent, thus making sure people stay well away. Any round someone is within the effect of this flame they lose a Health point and suffer agonies of chill, meaning a Wherewithal check is required even to expose oneself to this pain (even if you believe you can open the door). *Solutions: Someone protected from fire could still stand within the flame and pick the lock. However, some magics only do partial protection, such as reducing the damage to 1 Health pool point per 2 or 3 rounds. Standing thus may require Wherewithal checks to resist the pain, possibly with a bonus of 1 if they all clearly perceive that their lives are at stake. The peculiar effect of ring SR1 would be most useful here.*

5.3.2) The Second Room

Bear in mind that this description should be enhanced to include whatever doors and corridors exit the room, depending on where you have chosen to position Slaye's Lair. And far be it from us to suggest that if there are a choice of exits from the first room that whichever one they choose to pass through goes here rather than to the Inner Sanctum.

This is the workroom where Ramaf Slaye studies demonology and genealogy and where he sometimes lives. In one corner is a curtained area behind which are six rough pallet beds, a wall fountain that he uses as a washbasin, and a cupboard for clothes. Along one wall is a workbench and associated shelf that holds jars of powders, liquids, lizards' eyes, squid tentacles, powdered bone, blood, raven feathers, snake scales, human fingerbones etc etc.

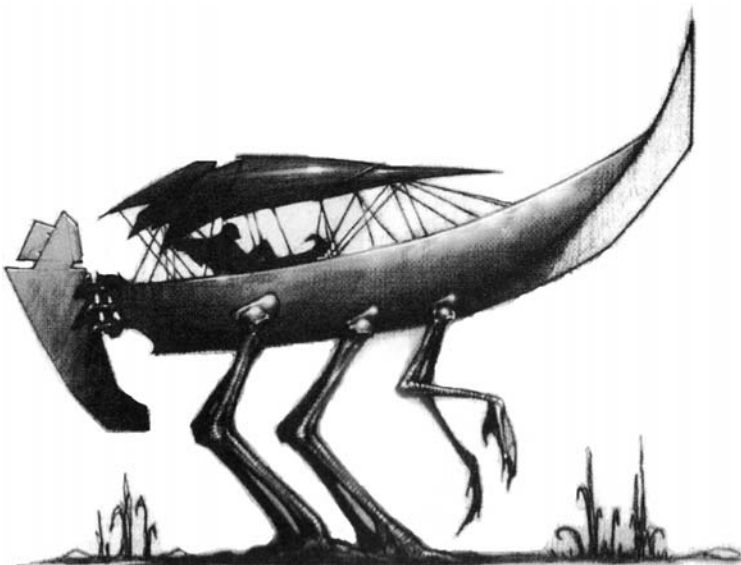
Three Slayes: (i) Slaye was hard at work at the bench, and now stands concealed against the wall beside the door. He will attack the first intruder with a large butcher's knife that he is using to dissect some large animal's heart. (ii) Slaye was also taking a hard-earned nap on the beds (twice), and both these Slayes hide under the beds until they can lunge out with daggers. Or possibly they will pull down the curtains on top of someone and stab their wrapped form repeatedly. The fun here is that each Slaye acts as if he were the real one, cursing the intruders for being usurpers and foiling his plans. *Solutions: Stab them, shoot them, truncheon them, blast them with magic!*



Shadow Demon: As the last of the simulacrum fall and things become quiet again, from nearby (but an unidentifiable source) everyone in the room hears the end of a horrible chant. Immediately, the shadows in the corners of the room flow together at a single point, making a solid bulk of blackness which pulls itself to its feet and reveals itself to be an eight-foot tall demonic being with horns and great pointy teeth. The damage this demon causes is experienced as a terrible draining chill, but is calculated via normal mechanics. It rolls Health at a bonus of 1 against normal physical damage. Str'gth [___], Dodge [___], Hlth [___], Magic (Resistance) [___]
Solutions: The Amulet (AM1) will bring a PC to parity in combat. The Heliosdactum (TH1 – Room 66) would also be of great use.

False Icon: If the PCs let Slaye have the demonic statue way back at Benbadge Stull, and are aware that this is the focus of his power, then an exact replica of this item stands at one end of the workbench. This is a trap, affecting the first person to touch it. If that person is a GMC that can be spared, then the curse on this statue is 'The Deadly Distension' (DDE p62) and the unfortunate person quickly swells and explodes unless the PCs have some countermeasure. If it is a PC or GMC that you wish to survive into the next room, then the curse freezes the person into a rigid icy form. (Duration is as long as you like.) The false icon disintegrates as this spell begins.
Solutions: Throwing a crystal (MB1) at this person will end the effect. Other things might help at the GM's whim.

Once the action is over, the PCs may examine the room. However, spending much time here won't be countenanced by any of their fellows, since Slaye is clearly nearby and could be readying multiple new defenses even as they speak. "Strike now, and strike hard!" Bothag will say. You as GM may put random items here if they seem suitable and PCs perform a quick search. Demonic workbooks are present of course, plus a manual on the operation of Derwe's walking-boat.



5.3.3) The Inner Sanctum

This is the demonic shrine where the curse was activated and where the final showdown occurs. It needs to be big enough for lots of ducking and weaving and running about. However, since we are dealing with magic, then it is entirely possible that the demonic energy here has warped space, creating a huge hall within - whatever room this originally was. Peculiar effects might be noticed, such as shadows of the original room onto which this new room has been superimposed.

⊕ "This long dark hall is strange indeed, and larger than you expected from your understanding of the layout of the Old Palace. Two rows of huge twisted pillars support the arched roof high above, and a thick mist covers the floor up to knee height, moving around like something alive. The source of this mist appears to be some kind of depression at the center of the room. To ease the gloom, sputtering torches bearing sickly green flame are stuck into sconces at irregular intervals around the walls and columns. In this peculiar light you can make out a large stone throne at the far end of the room, on which sits a man in wizardly garb." The shadows on the edges of the room hold whatever you care to put there. The man on the chair is Slaye (the actual Slaye), firmly holding the statue, or obviously wearing the amulet, whichever is the focus of the demon. The mist comes from a hole in the center of the floor that is about a quarter as wide as the room. Few, if any GMCs, will enter the room, whether commanded or of their own volition.

More Slaye Simulacra: If this is still amusing, have as many more Slaye copies as you like lunge from the shadows, wearing whatever armor you like, and carrying more and more ridiculous weaponry, from huge serrated spears to immense halberds that they can hardly wield. The Slaye on the throne will laugh as they are slaughtered, and laugh especially hard if any of the PCs' allies are killed or injured. This is an ideal way to have PCs use up any excess spells, as up to two dozen Slayes rally themselves into a phalanx and break into a run. It is appealing that they might stand fast about the throne, sacrificing themselves to save their master, but this doesn't tie in with the action if the PCs are able to end the magical effect that holds this room in existence.

Solutions: Kill them the old-fashioned way, or blast them with magic.

Demonic Energy Barrier and Bodyguards: The final third of the hall is protected. From the mid-point onwards it is difficult to move forward, becoming more so the further you actually go, until it is like trying to run through treacle. Whilst his attackers try to penetrate this, Slaye laughs & laughs. With a flick of his wrist he expands the energy barrier down the hall, trapping everyone like flies. (The most agile may try and flee ahead of its effect.) Then he stands and wields the Icon of Cil, holding it aloft and chanting. If the Icon isn't the statue from earlier in this scenario then it will be a large 'bracelet of black metal shining with a purple luster. Around the circumference are numerous bright studs' (each circled by a



set of engraved runes). Two great groans come from the statue, and two demons appear, one each side of the throne, each ten foot tall and wielding a mighty sword. Emotionless and dripping with menace these beings move down the hall. Str'gth [___], Dodge [___], H'lth [___], Magic (Resistance) [___]
Solutions: Ideally someone will have the Statue of Miamatta (GS1) and use its major function now – since there is no other obvious way to prevent themselves being chopped to bits. If so, everyone is at the same disadvantage, including the demons and the angered Slaye. If nobody has this item then now is the time for one of the GMCs (preferably not Derwe or Tarandjal but one of the hidden claimants) to pull out some kind of amulet. When they break it, it has the same effect nullifying all magical and gravitational rules in the room (and in the connecting rooms if that is where some of the PCs are). It is possible that this hall also becomes sealed off from the rest of the world, or that the Lair in general does. This prevents unseemly retreat and means that the showdown must take place here. (NB: Should the PCs use the device instantly they enter the room, then merely decide that it takes some rounds before it's full effects are felt, and take pains to describe the growing power before it fully activates.) After the ending of the enchantment, the demons will be floating through the air like everyone else. Decide whom they target and call for Athletics rolls as demons and their quarry 'swim' around the pillars. Demons are bigger and stronger, but slow to turn and less agile in dealing with this unusual circumstance. Descriptions of them crunching headfirst into stone columns won't be out of place. But this won't do more than slow them.

The Sinkhole: When the statue of Miamatta (or whatever other magic) is used, the mist will gradually be drawn back into the huge hole in the middle of the floor. Floating adventurers will also be affected when anything drifting around the room begins to be drawn towards this. Slaye wails in anger as this happens, holding tight to his throne as he (more strongly than they) is pulled towards the hole
Solutions: Athletics rolls. (Here is where the 'Enhanced Action' ruling comes into primacy.) Any PCs that disappear into the hole can be summoned back by whoever wins, but far better to have people hanging on by their fingernails and rescued by their fellows when the tables are turned. Athletics rolls and good use of rope or any pertinent devices may also save people from being swallowed here. Since the subworld is primarily pulling back its own, the demons are drawn there much more strongly than anyone else. Note that any demonic books or items the PCs have will also be affected by the pull from the hole, especially towards the end of the effect, and will have to be abandoned if the PC doesn't want to disappear with them into an unknown subworld. GMs can be forgiven for fudging dice rolls so that PCs do not vanish into the abyss, or having them get their braces caught etc etc, and needing to be rescued as they howl in fear. And such persons may be spat out at the last second as the hole closes.

The End of Slaye's Possession: At least one of the PCs will be watching when the second of the demons vanishes into the hole. At this moment the pressure on Slaye grows stronger and stronger as his cries grow louder and louder. Then something bizarre: a hideous demonic spirit is pulled out of Slaye's body and sucked quickly across the room (flailing as if it was physical) and into the hole. Which then instantly closes.

GMCs Claiming the Icon of Cil: When the demon-spirit goes in and the hole closes, a great thudding sounds marks this, plus a belch of noxious fumes. The room then reverts to its more normal form, although the throne remains (perhaps crushing some original item of furniture), and gravity reasserts itself. A clunking sound marks the Icon of Cil landing on the stone floor. Everyone else also falls, possibly (Ψ ATHLETICS) taking injury. Derwe will lead the charge for this item, followed by whichever of Bothag, Tarandjal or Chank are here. Slaye too will rally himself and charge into the scrum. Maybe a PC or two will be part of this unsightly kerfuffle, but of they delay they will be second rank challengers at best, and thus likely to be repelled by the building energy.

Each GMC will try and press the right runes and make the chant to summon a demon to do their bidding. Each other GMC will attempt to wrestle it from them, abandoning all pretensions to civilized behavior. Eye-gouging, flying punches, hair-pulling, head-butting, strategic kicks to the privates. If a PC is involved he/she should be the receiver of some of this treatment. Describe in some detail the scratches, blood flowing, howls of pain and anger. This is a major thing! During the scramble the claimants will each be shouting their justification. Beginning with, and variations upon:

Slaye: "I was possessed, but I now understand the errors I committed. I have the right by blood. Give it to me!"

Derwe: "I am the rightful heir, niece of the previous ruler!"

Bothag: "You are a pathetic child. I am the more rightful heir of Domber, a closer blood relative to the true line than you!"

Tarandjal: "I am the true heir of Marbon, bound by right to rule this land. Too long have I and my line waited in disguise and silence to return to power!"

Chank: "You all lie. I am the true heir – Jarkan Slaye, forgotten brother to the man cruelly slain by Amalda Coreme. I claim my revenge!"

It could be amusing to stagger these revelations. Derwe and Slaye may be the initial combatants, then Chank, then Bothag, and finally Tarandjal. The delay can be encompassed in the general surprise and, in the case of the claimants, may be due to outrage at the sheer gall of these lesser nobodies - daring to make such an assertion. IE: Tarandjal with disbelief: "This is preposterous, who do they think they are?" PCs nod or comment in agreement, then are taken by surprise when Tarandjal also leaps into the fray bellowing his claim.

Action/Solutions: *Tarandjal and Chank both have cantraps that zap the others with bursts of flame and sparks, Bothag has his physical strength, and Derwe reveals psychic powers, hair standing straight out and flashes of electricity flying from her fingertips. Only the PCs are at a disadvantage, unless they have some magic item to use to separate the squabblers? If the PCs do not intervene (at all or effectively) a great mass of energy builds. Each of the GMCs will call of the aid for the PCs (and any other GMCs, though these will flee). Describe this battle in some detail. All are protected from casual spells.*



If the PCs are involved in the scum, as the energy builds they will suffer damage and be hurled around by the building force, unless protected by magic. But they do have the chance to make a decision here, if they can act in concert and get the Icon into the hands of their favorite, and keep the others away for a few seconds, see below. (This does require acting decisively and swiftly, but if they do will greatly enhance their favor when judged in the next section.) If not, it is up to the GM to roll randomly to see who comes out on top in this psychic battle. Or if the PCs run it will happen offscreen, in which case invent suitably impressive sound-effects.



PCs Claiming the Icon of Cil: Possibly (Ψ ATHLETICS) the PCs will gain the item for themselves, wrestling the contesting GMCs aside before the power builds sufficiently to drive them back (or in some other imaginative way managing to gain hold of it). The PCs don't know the right cantraps, but might have sufficient magic to fend off the claimant GMCs and retain control of the Icon, or simply throw it around between them as the GMCs lunge for it and command the various remaining guards (if any survive) to go grab it. This is a primary option for fun RPG improvisation.

If you need to restrict the amount of time the PCs hang onto the item (force them to make a decision), then have the demon within the item begin attempts to possess whatever PC is holding it. Have these attempts start off weak but gradually and inevitably grow. The PCs must not hang onto this item, but may attempt to. In all events prevent this. The best device will always be that the Icon itself wishes to belong to a true Lord, and will exert mental control upon the PC. If the PC that has it is somehow protected from mental manipulation, then the Icon can make itself extremely hot, or even burst into flame. It can also make itself appear to be something it isn't, and can cause things in the house to 'attack' the PC – a ceremonial halberd falling onto their head, a door slamming open with stunning force as they run round a corner, suits or armor blocking the way...

GMCs, with or without cause, will call on past friendship, and enter into a bribing war, offering money and magic, positions for life as Stewards of Cil, that sort of thing. Go to town, and

really have the most tempting things set up! Smart PCs might actually cotton on to the fact that the less they ask for the more likely they are to get it. If they do a deal with the most formerly sympathetic GMC and ask merely for the walking-boat, some funds for the journey, their own gear, and supplies, then this will lead to the best possible treatment (see next Chapter). And the GMC will comment favorably upon their lack of greed when they are allowed to leave the Palace. (In fact, make it clear to them that this tactic actually gained them extra favors.) Otherwise, sadly, few if any of these promises will be kept to, although if they give the Icon to someone who has actually been a friend and confidante then they will receive the best treatment option possible.

What Happens Next: If the PCs stick around but don't intervene, they will see the combatants become enmeshed in lines of dark force, that begin to shred reality, letting glimpses of subworld fire into the room. Eventually there will be an explosion, a scream of triumph, and a rapid-fire incantation, followed by utter silence. What happens (if the PCs can see or hear it) is that the failing claimants are hurled away across the room and temporarily stunned. Then a powerful demon appears, and the victor speaks the words that bind this being to service. Unlike Slaye, and possibly unlike any who failed to gain control over the Icon, the victor knows the right cantraps and incantations. The servitor they summon is stable and also able to leave this room in the company of their new master.

The Just Reward

If Derwe or Chank win, they will command the demon to kill both Bothag and Tarandjal (as powerful potential rivals). It will stride over and snap necks, as Derwe screams (or chuckles if she is the new Lord). Chank will allow Derwe to live because she is a young woman, and Derwe will allow Chank to live because he is a friend of the PCs (and the PCs indirectly greatly assisted the new Lord's sudden rise to power). The new Lord will explain this as he/she marches out in the company of their new demon bodyguard. Likewise, Tarandjal or Bothag, if the victor, will have the other slain in this fashion.

In the game Ramaf has shown himself to be incompetent to wield the Icon, but nonetheless has claimed (during the struggle) that he knows what he did wrong. So, if he is the one to attune himself to it first, which is what the GMCs' struggle is all about, he will burst forth with dark demonic energy. In order to balance out his previous incompetence we must see a struggle for control, with the demon trying to possess him once again. Other GMCs may try to attack him and grab the Icon at this point, but will be forced back by the dark energies. On a roll of 5 or 6 he succeeds. On any other roll a terrible struggle for his soul takes place, one which he loses, and as his failing body sinks to its knees the other GMC claimants rush forward en masse to grab for the Icon, and one will get it.

If Ramaf Slaye is a loser in the contest, then he will not be executed. The first thing that happens when the new Lord gains control of the demon is that it will approach the quaking



Ramaf and speak in a pitiless voice: “I am told that a bargain was entered into; a bargain that must now be paid for.” Slaye will beg for mercy, but be ignored. The new Lord will lean down and grab Slaye’s head, and the GM describes his horrible demise in a way that suits the tone of their campaign. Bear in mind that even if some kind of negotiation of ‘who gets the Icon’ was entered into with the PCs, the victor is insane with power and possibility. Unless some extremely deep genuine camaraderie has been forged previously with the victor, such as through minimal demands as suggested above, things don’t initially go well for PCs. The victor will have the demon summon and control a squad of suits of armor. These soon arrive and take everyone into custody and march them to the old cells (20 – unless this was the Lair, in which case to some other securable room such as the new cells at 5). One possible way out for the PCs here is to match the arrogance of the new Lord, and congratulate them most flatteringly, whilst kneeling or otherwise offering their heartfelt allegiance. (Ψ IMPOSTURE, PERSUASION -1, SEDUCTION -1) Don’t suggest this to the PCs, but in the playtest it met with good results. Then the new Lord next marches to have a word with any surviving stewards, about the inevitability of their rapid full acceptance of the new official Lord of Cil. Sackings, some fatal, others merely: ‘Be gone from the grounds within the half hour or I shall have you slain’ may also take place. Fortunately (see next chapter) the Law of Equipoise works in the PCs’ favor. Irrespective of how they treated the new Lord, they were still pivotal in the role of saving Cil. (Although possibly to install someone else to enact their own brand of crazed and murderous behavior.) Thus at the least they will be healed and allowed to leave with their lives.

You Agreed to Send Us Back to Almerly, Safe & Whole!

PCs may have been promised magical transportation back to the south in return for surrendering the Icon. This is in the power of a true Lord. (Or rather is within the power of their demon servants.) But obviously this cannot happen at the end of this scenario, or else the series ends here. Nonetheless hopeful claimants may have agreed to anything if the PCs held the Icon, or if the doom of Cil seemed at hand. If so, here is why it won’t happen when they are invited/commanded to leave. New Lord is accompanied by a large, repulsive demon bodyguard, which may affect (amongst other things) the tone in which people voice disagreements. (See next Chapter for details on Lord’s other actions, dependent on emotional state.)

Furious Lord: “I deny you your hearts’ desires. Your presence here has brought nothing but ill-fortune. Get out of my sight!” (If they argue against this breaking of a promise, they are soundly beaten as well as everything else. They cannot win.)

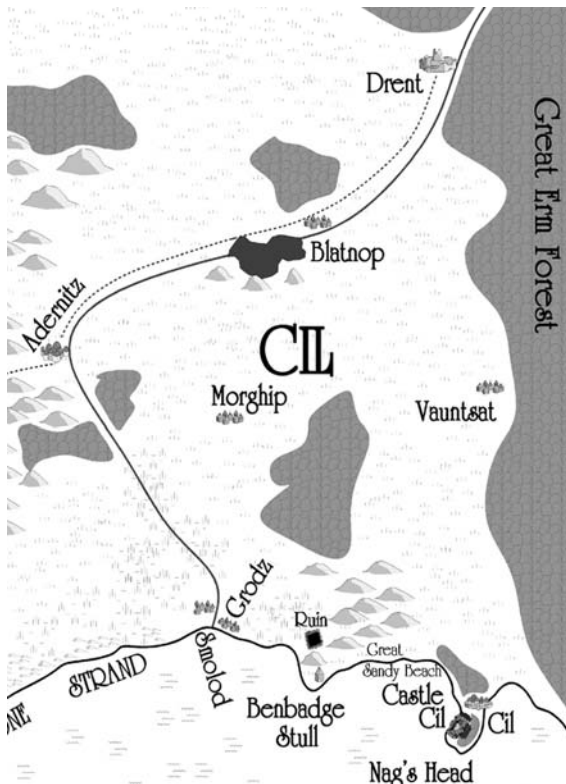
Angered Lord: Same words as ‘Furious Lord’. If the PCs argue, the Lord becomes Furious (details of actions in next Chapter).

Somewhat Miffed Lord: “Such efforts are costly, taxing, and take much time to prepare. I have considerable work to do here, and after due consideration realize that I cannot spare the energy or attention.” If they argue and lose the Lord becomes ‘Angered’ instead of ‘Miffed’. If they win, the Lord lets them off paying for the walking-boat, as a manner of compensation.

Passably Pleased Lord: Same words as ‘Miffed’ Lord, except the Lord is slightly apologetic. If they argue and lose, the Lord becomes ‘Somewhat Miffed’ instead of ‘Passably Pleased’. If they win, the Lord allows them each to choose a tome or magic item from the Palace as partial compensation.

Very Pleased Lord: Same words as ‘Somewhat Miffed’ Lord, but genuinely regretful. If the PCs argue with this stance and lose, the Lord’s actions reduce to his/her being only ‘Passably Pleased’ – since the PCs are behaving impertinently. If the PCs win the argument, the Lord apologizes properly and takes a moment to explain that the demons he/she has to negotiate with are quick to sense weakness. All of his/her energies will be needed for dealing with them for the next few months, and possibly year or two. After that, if they care to wait... (If they do care to wait, increase the executions and callousness of the new Lord to the extent that the PCs are driven out. Also, they will soon sense that the new Lord has no real interest in using his/her precious power to aid them, and is becoming more and more of a dangerously unstable arrogant power-monger.)

Remember that however the Lord feels about the PCs, this new Lord is becoming power-mad and unbalanced. Their reasons for denying their promise, and the way they explain such need not be rational. The new Lord of Cil has nothing to prove, and without the existence of the Law of Equipoise would probably just deal with the PCs summarily as annoyances. [If the promise was never made and PCs merely ask for such a consideration now, just adapt the text from ‘Somewhat Miffed’ box above.]





Chapter Six: The Marbon Lords Deposed

The Treatment of the PCs

Provide a fitting finale. Spend time describing the state of the Palace, how the terrible demonic clouds gradually roll away, how the last of the incidental demonic evidence begins to become brittle and disintegrate. Much damage was done through corrosion and vandalism, but nothing that can't be repaired. Mind you, some of this may only be noted during the PCs short stay after release from the cells.

Whoever is now in control of the demonic amulet soon learns to summon and command demons, as well as being invulnerable to incidental harm. They will summon silent demonic minions to act as their guards. These beings will don the Palace armor and act in all ways as loyal soldiers.

If there is doubt as to the victor's liking the PCs, then the PCs and surviving personality GMCs that are perceived as rivals to the victor are stripped of all goods and thrown into the cells, where demonic guards watch them vigilantly. Use this incarceration as an excuse for GMCs to blame PCs for whatever you can think of, maybe even attack them in desperate anger. (Possibly so violently that a PC has to kill them or demonic guards rush in & slaughter the offender.)

How soon the PCs are freed depends on how well the victor intends to treat them. Allow the PCs to suffer for at least a while, or languish in bitter squalor for days (listening to, or possibly watching, executions of the victor's rivals).

The Treatment of PCs by the Victor

Much depends on the relationships formed between the victor and the PCs. Choose the victor's level of pleasure as regards his/her perception of the PCs' defense of Cil and their previous treatment of the victor specifically:

Very Pleased: The victor will give them Derwe's walking-boat and a sack each that they can fill with treasure. The victor also allows them to take two magic items or tomes from the Palace, and allows them to keep all of the goods they arrived with, plus a fine suit of clothes from the Palace wardrobes. They will be feted with a grand meal (but perhaps somewhat horribly demonic) and allowed to stay for a 'while'. Engineer it so that the PCs decide themselves to leave as soon as possible. Ways to do this include the victor offering that they can stay as long as they want, but in the meantime horribly executing his/her rivals/perceived enemies, and generally exhibiting demonic behavior and growing instability. Some evidence of this will be the gibbets set up along the promenade towards the main gate, where living enemies of the victor wriggle and groan. (This vision could be appropriate no matter how or when they are invited/forced to leave the Palace.) Sensible PCs will

provision themselves well from the Palace kitchens. GMCs may be forgiven for amusingly adapting dialogue & feeling from the scene where adventurers part from an Elf Queen in a certain famous fantasy movie trilogy, if Derwe is Lord.

Passably Pleased: The victor gives Derwe's walking-boat and a small bag of gems each. Plus they can depart with all the food they want and all goods they arrived with. They are allowed to stay one full day (after release if imprisoned) then asked to depart the following morning. The victor has much to do and doesn't want to be disturbed.

Somewhat Miffed: The victor gives them Derwe's walking-boat, but will take any powerful magic items or important tomes they carry (in payment for the boat). Boat is given in return for their pivotal (if incidental) role in bringing the victor to power--to appease the Law of Equipoise. PCs are asked to depart the next morning, straight after breakfast. Any argument causes the victor to passively threaten them by having demonic enforcers glower & growl. Nonetheless, it is possible for PCs to argue (Ψ PERSUASION) for slightly better treatment from this position. (An upgrade to Passably Pleased.) Quoting valiant deeds and any time they directly saved the victor from harm adds bonuses/boons.

Angered: They will be thrown out, with the most of any gear they had on arrival (not including really interesting magic items or books) thrown after them. The victor (flanked by tough-looking 10ft tall demons) says they must leave the domain of Cil and never return. Only if they actually saved the victor from serious harm might a very Persuasive PC argue successfully for better treatment, and the only likely improvement is gaining the walking-boat.

Furious: They will be thrown out of the Palace (literally down the steps by a squad of guards) with only the most basic of gear that they arrived in. *"You have three days to leave the domain of Cil. If you have not done so I will release the demon bounds upon your trail."* (Followed by a list of complaints about their specific poor behaviors and attitudes towards the victor.)

Truly smart PCs will have amassed and hidden some valuables outside the Palace, and thus may end up wealthy even if they are thrown out by an angry/furious new Lord.

Companions in Exile

It may be that other GMCs will be expelled with the PCs and/or beg to come with them. Perhaps the PCs/Players want them to come along. Such may be a way PCs can feel good if otherwise they did badly. (IE Persuading the victor to release other prisoners. Rolls not necessarily required.) GMCs may accompany the PCs beyond Dordge, but such



must be those that can be included as incidental retainers personal companions (IE a player takes responsibility for them) and that do not unbalance play. The next scenario package focuses around a small band of travelers, though what wealth & possessions (even the walking-boat) they begin with is flexible. Derwe Coreme and Chank will be exiled if they are not victorious. Derwe is an ideal candidate to become a replacement/supplemental PC. Her arrogance nature and dislike of toil makes her ideal. Notes on including GMCs in the group that leaves Dordge are included at the start of 'Beyond the Mountains of Magnatz'.

Departing Cil

However they leave, PCs will pass through the town of Cil. Refer to previous notes (and to how you ran the scenario) for the state it is in, & the likelihood of shattered survivors (and sacked former stewards) wandering the ruins amidst rotting demonic corpses. Using the walking-boat, Cil Town is soon behind. Otherwise PCs have opportunity to savor its terrible fate and rich aromas of decay and abomination. See p30 for descriptions of land beyond Cil Town. If they have the walking-boat it has a cover that closes at night, although much could be made of the PCs' attempts to properly master the controls. If they do not have this magical transport then we recommend they are expelled from Cil along with other notable GMCs and accompanied by at least 20 or so survivors who want to flee this demon-accursed place and the insane aspirations of the new lord. This is not so unrealistic as you might think at first glance, because another area of semi-civilization is 5 days away – Dordge (see p30). Normally five days through the wilds is a huge and dangerous trek, and thus visits from this place are few and far between. But nonetheless people know that it exists and that life there is pleasantly dull and ordinary.

Thus PCs without the benefit of the walking-boat can lead a bedraggled group of survivors. Should you wish to do so, run this journey as a roleplay, though possibly abbreviated. Someone (only PCs or a major notable Palace personality if such a person is with them) may be capable of organizing a fire and proper defenses at night, but the general folk will not. Even searching for a defensible cave, or building an effective barricade out of thorn bushes, is beyond the mass of this motley bunch. So reward any resourcefulness shown by the PCs with a great reduction in lost lives.

Nonetheless, the group will face two challenges. Busiaco Rafters live on and around the river in the Great Erm, and will attempt to profit from the travelers, by charging extortionately to lead them through the (what turns out to be relatively peaceful and narrow) branch of the Forest the Great Erm, or outright theft/extortion. Also, on the last night before Dordge, a group of anthropophages (knowing that the dinner they have been tracking for four days is

about to evade them) will gang up and attack the camp.

If such things match how you run your DERP scenarios have the PCs aid in a pitched battle. If not, give them an opportunity to flee with a handful of others—whilst those around them are slain or dragged screaming into the trees. Personality GMCs may or may not expire at this point depending on your whim. Even an unlucky PC may perhaps perish. Should you wish to save the day, have any captured PCs be amongst those taken alive back to a den for later feasting. They can be rescued the following day when someone who escaped brings back of huge band of strapping Dordge farmers led by the local Witchfinder.

At Dordge

As noted on p30, this is the last civilized place in Cil. PCs in the walking-boat can reprovision: charged exorbitantly. Various crude attempts at theft will be made by local crooks (not by the regular folk), even of the walking-boat if left unattended. Foolish trust will find this device damaged beyond repair when drunken locals pull it over or fill it with water. But, as you will see in 'Beyond the Mountains of Magnatz', more elegant ways exist to dispose of the walking-boat than its casual dismemberment by yokels. Those not in the walking-boat will arrive as bedraggled refugees. Word of what has happened at the Palace will reach the town inhabitants through the voices of other survivors, and non-locals (PCs) will be viewed as potential hazards, along with any exiled Palace personalities. All will be told to leave after two nights and one full day, and recommended to follow the road into the mountains. Nobody has come out of the mountains for generations and, of the few that entered in living memory, none have returned. Thus the Dordge folk cannot give any advice on what to expect. Nonetheless, they insist that the PCs leave in case the new Lord comes to look for them, bringing demonic vengeance in his/her train. They are not unkind and are considering the best options of survival for all.

Dordge is yet another town of yokels who play skax, hunt erb, and good-naturedly try to swindle travelers out of their terces. (Though they may be kinder to shocked survivors.) For those who just survived the harrowing events as Lords of Cil, this stopover may be a pleasant return to the 'good old days'. It may be apposite to end this scenario as a PC produces a pack of worn cards before the inn's fire and asks if anyone is interested in a hand of Rumpolio "for the sake of camaraderie and a few paltry coins?" Whether the PCs have already been asked (or merely plan) to leave on the morrow, or anticipate a few days rest before continuing south-west, tonight the ale is palatable and cheap, and most of the locals are bawdy and good-natured. For this brief happy moment in time all is right with the world.



Appendix 1: The South Wing Inhabitants

Independent Personalities (2)

1) Derwe Coreme

"Your aspect is unusually repellent, yet I am curiously intrigued."

Effective ruler of Cil, everyone will at least pretend to hold her in high esteem. When her aunt Amalda died, Derwe was proclaimed senior warden of Cil, but is not able to access the majority of the magic of the Palace. The spirits (demonic forces) are waiting for the full instatement ceremony. Her limited ordination as acting Lord means can only be revoked when someone other than her is instated as Lord (or as Lords). Thus she will be majorly annoyed when upstart PCs claim Lordship, but will not want to upset the stewards in case they see the PCs as a better option and later rule against her.

She had no big plans for Cil and is a bored and spoiled child who wants to control everything. Her full ordination in about ten months (on her 21st birthday) was something she looked forward to only in that it secured her position and would give her access to the magics locked in various parts of Amalda's suite and the books in the sealed section of the library. (These she hoped would allow her to learn how to reactivate some of more impressive palace magics.)

Game Opportunities:

i) She can use her master key to open any door, can control the intensity of the lighting in the South Wing by the command of her will. She also commands the total obedience of the Palace Guard (except Bothag, who refuses any ridiculous requests, but she values him sufficiently much not to ask such things of him).

ii) She may enter a romantic liaison with a PC, but this would only be genuine if the PC is exceptionally intriguing/impressive (although impressive might mean congruently arrogant). She does not favor the vagabond type. For such a thing to happen quickly would be because she is manipulating them and playing both sides (hers and theirs) to get what she wants. When getting to know someone she will reveal that her Aunt gave her several special gifts, one of which is the ability to see a person's aura. This may help in identifying the shapechanger, or you may think of other game uses.

iii) She will become at least an ally of the PCs when things start to get tough, and proves quite bold and resourceful, though she may pretend that she needs their protection.

iv) Trips in the walking-boat may present opportunities for a PC/PCs to challenge each other for her attentions, and to learn how to operate the device and its capabilities.

If she does not make any personal connection or alliance with the PCs, or before this happens, she will do what she can to sabotage their reputations. (Although she remains coldly polite to the new Lords on the surface.) The GM can devise further ways, but here are a few prime suggestions:

(i) She feigns attraction to one of the PCs, promising 'favors' in return for their revealing to her who they truly are and why they are here. Most likely she will merely use them, and leave a PC in an embarrassing position of having revealed secrets because of failing to Resist Rakishness. However, it is possible that if the rolls and story go well she will form a romantic attraction with a suitable PC. Such would evolve slowly, as she is extremely wary and will still be looking for ways that she will benefit. Possibly this will be a fail-safe measure so that if the new Lords are ordained then she can at least be ordained as one of them, or as a consort at the very least. But she will initially insist that she must be accepted as an equal. In any case, this will not happen very soon during this section of the scenario, as she is too valuable as an antagonist at this stage.

(ii) She spies on them, lurking behind tapestries and doorframes, listening to their conversations. If she overhears something that strongly suggests they aren't who they say they are, then she denounces them to the stewards. The PCs will need to defend themselves (Ψ PERSUASION/IMPOSTURE) before a meeting of the council of stewards if she has evidence or witnesses. Or she will merely accuse them of underhand behavior if they ever do anything that can be misconstrued. Not personal harassment, but incompetence, theft, activities proving they are mere vagabonds from overseas... This she will point out to one or two of the stewards who will question the PCs informally. Where this develops to depends on how seriously the PCs have managed to portray themselves.

(iii) If possible she will (either herself or a loyal servant, possibly Yodo) rifle any bags and belongings left in their quarters. She is looking for evidence of their past, and will steal anything she really likes the look of, either for herself, or for use as evidence when she denounces them to the stewards.

Derwe Coreme

Eloquent [___], Wary [___], Finesse [___], Sure-F²ted [___], Health [___], Magic (Curious) [___], Appraisal [___], Athletics [___], Concealment [___], Driving [___], Etiquette [___], Gambling [___], Pedantry (Cil Magical Traditions) [___], Perception [___], Seduction [___], Stealth [___], Stewardship [___], Wherewithal [___]. Resist Avarice [___], Resist Rakishness [___].

Or use information on p99 of 'Demons of the Dying Earth'



Domber's Motile Carriage (the walking-boat) (10 points, Permanent)

Description: This peculiar carriage is shaped like an elegant small boat perched atop three pairs of giant, and incredibly lifelike, swan's legs - each taller than a man. Its interior is fitted out as a divan of pink down, and it's interior is protected from the wind and rain by a magical shield of gentle force. What few know is that it is formed from a bound demon, tied thus until the sun dies. It has three speeds: walking (human jogging speed), loping (a sprightly human could outpace it but only over a relatively short distance), and running (the speed of a fit and healthy human sprinter). It is controlled through code words and steered by a discreet brass handle attached to a control panel at the rear of the vehicle. One advantage of this odd carriage is that it can adapt to almost any terrain, even water. Another advantage is that two of the legs (the central ones) can be given simple instructions and sent away from the carriage to perform basic errands - usually defensive.

Purported Location: Cil: Derwe's Aunt Amalda magically attuned her niece to it, and so it will obey nobody but her.

Not an Escape Clause: If Derwe Coreme becomes an ally of one (or all) of the PCs, somebody may wonder about simply loading up the Motile Carriage with the provender of the Palace larders gold, silver, gems and other valuables, and striking off across the ocean. Derwe is the only one who can control this machine, and as explained in the text, she will never abandon Cil to its fate. She will only agree to attune others to the walking-boat if they first save Cil.

2) Ramaf Slaye

"I deny your ambitions with utmost force. Desist or suffer my wrath!"

Not actually a south wing resident, but he once was. If PCs find out he has a house in town, it was abandoned some weeks previously. Still, some clues remain as to his growing interest in demonology (chalked circles and bleached human skulls), and also in the basement someone has dug deep into the earth and revealed an ancient lead-lined box which is now open and empty. As well as filling in his ratings, you need to spend some time considering what his magical abilities and/or defenses are. He is not a magician, but is a magical force to be reckoned with as regards some (largely defensive) demonic enchantments. Suggestions for his strengths are noted in the finale of Chapter 5.

Ramaf is the central force behind the curse and the murders that are the focus for a of this scenario. Some years ago he began recovering the lost demonic artifacts and knowledge of his house. More recently he found and attempted to gain full control of the Icon of Cil, but was instead partially-possessed by the demon. If the kindly PCs left him with the

statue, then this is the Icon. If they didn't, then Slaye found something else after they left him on the beach.

Game Opportunities: After some days/weeks (dependent on how much game time you want to allow before the curse begins) Slaye finally worked out how to activate some of the magics of the Icon. The first thing he did was to send a shapechanger against his enemies ("The Murders"). Next, after appropriate attunement to the device and assistance from the demon, he activates a far direr curse.

Ramaf Slaye

Forthright [___], Lawyerly [___], Caution [___], Dodge [___], Health [___], Magic (Demonic) [___], Athletics [___], Concealment [___], Imposture [___], Pedantry (Cil Magical Traditions) [___], Perception [___], Stealth [___], Wherewithal [___]

GMCs Using Cil Magic

Derwe, Tarandjal (& Chank if you have him as a hidden Slaye) are said to have knowledge of magic. Therefore why do they not have spells that can assist the PCs? Because the magic of Cil is different, and relies upon demonic rituals & ceremonies and the assistance of relics, and local folk were banned from using spells (lest they get ideas above their station). The Lords and Stewards of old knew actual regular spells, but that was long ago. As Cil society degenerated, the ongoing ruling generations became more and more reliant on magical devices that stored spells and/or had magical properties. (Some of which may be found within the Palace still.) The diligence required to force actual spells into sensoriums became rarer and rarer until it was no more. Varnil Slaye and Amalda Coreme were the last to do such.

Thus the magical knowledge of Cil 'mages' is mostly composed of the capacity to work out how to activate and use Cil items by reading the runic markings and uttering the correct activation cantraps. And should such folk ever go and study magic elsewhere, they would also have a strong basic grounding that would put them well ahead of other students, but in this scenario that general knowledge is of no practical use. Such folk can also still 'sense' magic and have an affinity for it, which may have some game use, and maybe Tarandjal can conduct basic rituals (with PCs help).

Although spells are unknown, cantraps can be common (should you wish to invent them for each of these GMCs and other stewards, or choose them from the cantraps available on the Violet Cusps page or in *Demons of the Dying Earth*). However, true spells are no longer known in this land. Which incidentally means that if one of your PCs actually knows a couple of spells, he/she will be held in some manner of awe, and their credibility as a potential Lord assisted if they can demonstrate their magic suitably impressively. (Bells, whistles and grand gestures.)



The Stewards of Cil (9)

The role of this august body was originally to (a) advise the Lord/s in the daily running of the palace and the lands of Cil, and (b) to rule temporarily during succession disputes, and at those times when the succession was delayed. Amalda died when Derwe was in her early teens, and these stewards have ruled the several years since. In most cases they were Amalda's senior staff. Each of them has (as does Derwe) a magically-aided master key that will open any room in the South Wing, except to another stewards' private rooms. These also open most Old Palace doors. Most stewards have apprentices that assist them in their duties, are learning the trade, and one of whom will become their successor. Should a steward expire before allocating a successor it is possible for the other stewards to do this allocation instead. (Although nobody will accept such a role whilst the murders continue, and apprentices are the most likely people to desert the palace when it is realized that the stewards are the murder targets.) The GM will need to enhance and expand the personalities and allegiances and rivalries to the extent that it suits her running of this scenario. She may even wish to upgrade apprentices to personalities in their own right.

Game Opportunities: Each steward will attempt to speak privately with the new Lords during the first day or two after their arrival, in order to try and ascertain their quality, and in order to put their own case for promotion and to air their grievances. (In most cases these will be petty indeed.) The PCs should be aware that they need to gain the promise of at least three stewards to ratify their accession, which means that they must make agreements and promises under the table. In the first full meeting held to decide on the legitimacy of these new claimants, at least three stewards must vouch for them. And if this fails, a new meeting must be held (which Tarandjal - or possibly Derwe if you set her up this way - will help prepare them for: suggesting who to bribe and threaten).

Stewards are also needed to assist in any investigation of the Old Palace. PCs can pick locks or force doors, but not all of them. Ideally they will need a friendly steward to accompany them, and this is unlikely to be an easy thing to find. All stewards sensibly fear the Old Palace, and not until dangers become so overwhelming that trips into the Old Palace seem essential will one agree without having to be subject to a major Persuasion. Nonetheless, cunning PCs might think of ways to convince someone to come along, at least on a simple quick investigation. Appealing to arrogance or avarice might work, or promising them prominent positions in a new hierarchy. For several reasons Derwe is likely to be the one who accompanies them.

1) MASTER SARMAN (Chamberlain)

"I believe sir will find that in Cil one normally dresses on the left."

Sarman oversees the running of the house, so is technically superior to the other stewards except Tarandjal and Bothag. He does not pursue these rights other than through general bossiness and arrogance. Normally he leaves people to get on with what they do best, merely chiding them habitually. Other stewards either resent and ignore, or just ignore, this. He is responsible for palace finances, but since funds are not low, this too is neglected. He was more responsible in his younger days when Amalda was alive, though even then he passed much responsibility onto his staff. He still favors Derwe and is her primary confidante and supporter. Sarman will regard the newcomers as upstarts and behave with cold formality, unless Derwe makes a public alliance with them. (In which case he will temper slightly.)

Forthright (—), Lawyerly (—), Caution (—), Dodge (—)

Apprentices: *Yodo and Cronk are Over-Footmen, and supposed to be chamberlains in training, but in fact are merely ambitious and semi-educated youths of the town who rush to assuage Sarman's every need - in return for a substantial wage and every other weekend off. Rigbert, Hunkler, and Quipp are regular footmen (butlers) who fetch and carry, answer doors, pass messages, relay orders and the like.*

Steward Allegiances: *Sarman likes Gellink and good-naturedly tolerates Druitt, who he thinks is a silly old sod, but a harmless one. He dislikes Tarandjal and Bothag, and doesn't trust them, because they are independent of his control. He will slander them with complaints about self-interest, ineptitude and a lust for power, if he thinks the PCs will listen sympathetically to his complaints.*

Game Opportunities: Sarman will treat the PCs with condescension, and oversee their training in Palace etiquette and stewardship. (Though he won't do much if any of the hard work himself.) If you run games where PCs need to have training to improve, then here are opportunities not to be missed. He and the other stewards accept that the PCs need to fulfil local obligations (such as solving disputes) and engage in periods of study of Cil's history, and more (see **Appendix 6**). He will present their activities in a timetable that is punishing (but leaves chunks of personal time for the PCs to engage in off the cuff activities), and be the loudest voice suggesting they are not sufficiently educated in the ways of the Palace and lands to rule Cil. There is no way to convince him to favor them over Derwe until things get so bad that they look like the only hope. Then he will drop Derwe from favor like a hot potato. Prior to that he will make it his business to keep track of them, pester them to behave more like Lords of Cil, and generally criticize them for their unsuitability for those roles. But he will do this in an advisory way, rather than as an overt enemy, making pains to have his criticisms seem to come from sympathy and helpfulness rather than personal disfavor.



2) MASTER MYRTRIDGE (Supplymaster)

"I recommend the Adernitz '49; a boisterous wine with a full body."

A habitual drunkard (tipsy usually rather than blind, though exceptions occur). He is a replacement since Amalda was in charge, and does little other than check the pantries now and again before asking one of his assistants to send orders to town. Supplies of meat and vegetables and grain come in from the town regularly as a form of taxation (the only form of tax remaining). The Palace also grows its own food around its grounds. He sees his duties to be making sure everyone who is important is fed well, and that he has a regular supply of beer. Otherwise he doesn't care who is in charge, & defers to whoever is. Relatively good-natured, but a little bossy with his staff. Has no particular enemies.

Eloquent(____), Pure-Heartd(____), Strength(____), Dodge(____)

Apprentices: *Wenler (m) and Wirrupa (f) are trainees that Myrtridge attempts to teach. Unfortunately he is utterly incompetent. Fortunately Wirrupa is not. She will become next Supplymaster.*

Steward Allegiances: *Myrtridge doesn't have a serious bad word for anyone, but that's because he is an old soak with no real awareness of what is going on around him. He may admit that Sarman is rather uptight, in his opinion, and that Madams Lascatt and Zora can be rather formidable when under stress, but with no real ill feeling.*

Game Opportunities: His attitude towards the PCs is that they are just another possible change of personnel, and wants to know their preferences for food and drink. He is not likely to be around long enough to have much game potential. Nonetheless, his passing can be all the more poignant if one of the PCs spends good drinking time with him in an attempt to secure his goodwill. For instance, he may be found to be an amiable drinking companion, and fine source of Scuttlebutt, and take a friendly shine to the PC in question. A Gourmand, he might also introduce them to a sampling regimen of the cellars and foodstores, claiming that true understanding of a region can only come from sampling its finest provender and comparing the best offerings of its wines. (Little wine is now produced locally, and most in the Palace comes from its dwindling cellars.)

3) MASTER TARANDJAL (Wizard)

"I am a mere dabbler compared to the Cil mages of the elder days."

The position of Cil Wizard has no particular duties other than responding to any magical dangers that threaten the palace. He spends a lot of time in magical research, but is not actually a very accomplished wizard. Nonetheless, he is the most intelligent of all here, pretending to be impartial.

Eloquent [____], Penetrating [____], Finesse [____], Misdirection [____], Health [____], Magic (Studios) [____], Athletics [____], Concealment [____], Etiquette [____], Pedantry (Cil Magical Traditions) [____], Perception [____], Stealth [____], Stewardship [____], Wherewithal [____].

He and Derwe are not close. He will pose as someone disgruntled with the stupidity and decadence in which he finds himself. If asked about his life here, he explains that as a man of learning amongst the imbeciles he is constantly frustrated and disappointed. Whilst he is careful not to directly bad-mouth his fellow stewards, he will subtly suggest that he is able and willing to be a powerful ally for the PCs. He will also suggest that in public he should pretend to be no friendlier to them than he is to anyone else, and otherwise meet them in secret. Don't make him too obvious. Present this as an 'option' for PCs; be crafty.

Apprentices: *Uniquely Tarandjal has no apprentice. This is frowned upon. However, since he has not aged in the last 40 years he has special exemption. The reason for his long life is a small supply of potions, one of which he has to drink every five years. He has enough left to prolong him for another 120 years, but is nonetheless spending significant time in his laboratory trying to replicate them. So far he has utterly failed. (They were created by a much more powerful Cil wizard long ago – someone who perished in the Cutz Wars.)*

Steward Allegiances: *Tarandjal is too smart to slander anyone until he knows which way the PCs lean. If he thinks he has their trust he will say that Sarman is power-hungry and possibly siphoning off the Palace funds, and that Myrtridge, Gellink and Druitt are incompetent and should be retired and replaced.*

Game Opportunities: He looks after his own interests as a major priority, but (if the GM likes the idea) will secretly offer his support to the PCs and suggest that he acts as their advisor. (Though he will also suggest that this support be kept publicly informal, as if he is continuing to exercise his impartiality.) Tarandjal might become their primary ally and main GMC mouthpiece. (Unless the GM chooses Derwe or another steward.) He may individually approach the PC that he (the GM) sees as most likely to be sympathetic to a joint plan to further all their ambitions (perhaps a Magic-wielding PC whom he offers to begin teaching Cil runes to). He says that he will be content with being appointed as their senior advisor when they come to power (which grants secondary rights and privileges of access within the Palace and to its magics).

Tarandjal will also offer to cunningly defend them should Derwe launch any attack against their credibility. He will if necessary simply accuse her of fabricating it all, and offer himself (and possibly a bribed – or threatened – servant or two) as witness to her sneakiness/thefts. He will not outright stand against her though, but merely "wish to show how one's actions can be misinterpreted".

When the curse hits and he is technically responsible, he will seek their aid, and defer to the PCs, since he is helpless against such forces. As you will see when reading Chapter 5, Tarandjal is presented as a primary option for one of the GMCs who reveals his true nature in the Scenario Finale.



4) MASTER GELLINK (Herbalist and Chirurgeon)

"I have previously only observed such injuries in medical literature!"

Gellink operates the infirmary (Room 53), of which part is an annex for potion-making and poultice preparation. An old man now, Gellink was a particular friend of Amalda Coreme, and supports Derwe totally.

Obfuscatory (___), Wary (___), Caution (___), Dodge (___)

Apprentices: *Gellink has only Spalenk on his staff. Spalenk is an eager young man who replaced Gellink's older and wiser assistant who died of a winter cold two years ago.*

Steward Allegiances: *Gets on well with Sarman, but finds him bossy. Also gets on well with Druitt. Dislikes Tarandjal, whom he considers odd (phobia of wizards & things one doesn't understand). And he dislikes Zora, whom he finds too much of a busybody.*

Game Opportunities: The idea of anyone else ruling Cil is preposterous. The House of Domber must continue! He too treats the PCs with cold politeness. He does have a store of healing potions (they increase pools, or add boons), which PCs might steal, or Persuade him to give them for the good of the Palace. Should a PC suffer injury they will rely on his Physician skill to see them through, which is aided by knowing which potion or salve to use from the wide stock still stored in the infirmary. He will of course treat PCs in his care well, just in case they do become the Lords. Gellink could be Persuaded to support PCs if they show they are dedicated, responsible and stalwart. Gellink will turn to the bottle after Myrtridge is killed. Spalenk will take over his role, and will accept the position of steward, if his safety is assured with round-the-clock bodyguards.

5) MADAM NATTUCCA (Mistress of the Kitchens)

"I have no time even to contemplate such impracticalities."

A woman of later years who runs the kitchens very firmly, but also fairly. She is a hands-on steward and is head cook. She has no time for politics, and does the bare minimum to fulfil her other steward's obligations. Completely neutral.

Forthright(___), Pure-H'rted(___), Caution(___), Dodge(___)

Apprentices: *All of the kitchen staff, including Bilbab the undercook who is tipped most likely to be her successor.*

Steward Allegiances: *Dislikes Myrtridge whom she thinks is an old soak. Gets on well with Madam Lascatt. No respect for Sarman.*

Game Opportunities: Convincing Nattuca to support them depends on PCs convincingly flattering her about her fantastic work as a cook, as well as convincing her they will be more responsible leaders than Derwe Coreme. She will initially refuse to co-operate with Myrtridge in supporting the PCs, until the PCs convince her that this will be for the good of Cil in the long run. Anyone pitching in significantly to help in the kitchen will also get in her good books (+1 boon on Persuasion). If they convince her she becomes a primary candidate for the shapechanger's fatal attentions.

6) MADAM LASCATT (Mistress of Linen)

"Don't just stand there. Assist my niece with those laundry baskets!"

This woman is a matriarch of Cil Town, and has a huge family that dotes on her. Her daughters and nieces are constantly here (until the murders become regular) helping out doing the laundry, ironing and repairwork. Regarding succession she has no opinions and doesn't care about it. Fortright(___), Penetrating(___), Caution(___), Vexation(___)

Apprentices: *Her relatives.*

Steward Allegiances: *Lascatt likes Nattuca, but has no time for anyone except her extended family. She is frustrated with Myrtridge because he can't do his job, but has no problem with him as a person.*

Game Opportunities: Nattuca's nephew Ildesen vanished the day before the PCs arrived. He was driving a delivery cart from Cil to the Palace, and the cart was found the next day, goods intact. The (unintelligent) beast of burden is a bauk and was found grazing nearby. The only avenue for influence they have with her is if they prove their practical worth by finding her nephew. Ildesen was taken by some entity such as Thrang the Ghoul-Bear [TT, p133] that recently migrated into this area. The new 'Lords' can approach this any way they want: recruiting guards, hunters, or going it alone. The hunters have refused to look for Ildesen because of a feud between his family and Bothag's.

7) MASTER DRUITT (Keeper of the Grounds)

"Tis the season for rutabagas, or was it radishes, or possibly apples?"

Old Druitt knew Amalda well, dotes on Derwe, and does what he can to make her life more pleasant. She tolerates him. As a gardener and a head gardener he is useless.

[Obfuscatory (___), Obtuse (___), Caution (___), Parry (___)]

Apprentices: *Undergardeners: Sergey, Migg, Swarak, Helmindop, Wicklott and Preet are youths from the town, who do the minimum of work required to keep their positions. Mostly they don't even turn up for work, or at least leave very early, or spend their days lounging around in the sun. Their reasoning is that since the grounds are too big to maintain without a crew of dozens, why bother. The sole exception to this is that they keep the vegetable gardens thriving so that they can harvest ample for themselves and their families without it being missed.*

Steward Allegiances: *Druitt dislikes Zora, is frightened of Tarandjal, and nervous around Bothag (whom he thinks is bossy and controlling). He quite likes Sarman, and gets on well with Gellink.*

Game Opportunities: Druitt is a man with a position for life who has made ineffectuality his watchword. He hides behind expressions of loyalty to Derwe and will report all attempts to inveigle his devotion. PCs may uncover that he has an agreement with Busiaco who live in an outbuilding, wherein he steals Palace nick-nacks and exchanges them for cash to line his retirement nest. (A PC may spot him arranging a rendezvous by swinging a lantern at an upper window, and trail him as he goes to the main door with his footman accomplice and latest bulging sack of loot.)



8) MADAM ZORA (Mistress of the Halls):

“Don’t trouble me with such nonsense. Cil’s glory days are long gone.”

A woman of early middle age who was an under-mistress when Amalda ruled Cil, but has been Mistress of Halls for five years. She is here to do her job and collect her wage, and wishes to maintain this situation, no matter who rules Cil. She will be the most outspoken about her neutrality, but despises fools and so is unlikely to favor the PCs. Her job is to oversee the cleaning maids and bootboys.

[Forthright (___), Wary (___), Cunning (___), Dodge (___)]

Apprentices: *The cleaning maids are not so hard-worked as one might suppose, since petty magics do much of the work. Nonetheless, the palace is huge, and so they are kept quite busy. (Mathilde, Clarissa, Ermintrude, Ampletha, Snovella and Krya.) The Bootboys (Hod and Prykle) are also lesser underfootmen doing general tasks.*

Steward Allegiances: *Zora has a complaint about everyone if she thinks the PCs will listen to her Scuttlebutt. They are either lazy or incompetent or both, except Tarandjal, whom she secretly respects.*

9) MASTER BOTHAG (Commander of the Guard)

“The erb spear is best held with blade pointed towards the erb.”

He was recruited from the hunters of the town three years ago, after his predecessor was eaten by an erb when he went out to patrol the grounds one pleasant summer night. (Nobody goes outdoors at night any more.) If the PCs are competent and bold he will support them. If they are ineffectual he treats them with profound indifference. He is the only palace guard with high combat skill.

Intimidating [___], Penetrating [___], Finesse [___], Sure-footedness [___], Health [___], Athletics [___], Concealment [___], Gambling [___], Pedantry (Cil Magic) [___], Perception [___], Stealth [___], Wherewithal [___].

Apprentices: *Technically all of the palace guard, but actually all of the town hunters, one of whom he has already appointed as his successor in documents labeled to be opened in the event of his death.*

Steward Allegiances: *Dislikes Sarman, who he thinks is bossy and incompetent, but will be reluctant to say. He tolerates everyone else, whom he thinks are all incompetent, except for Tarandjal, whom he thinks is an intelligent schemer (but again is unlikely to voice this).*

Game Opportunities: Has professional intelligence, but otherwise not educated. PCs may respect him and seek his advice even if he doesn’t like them. May become a staunch ally as things degenerate and PCs rally. Can command guard loyalty in all eventualities save the most dire. That is to say the guards will do their best to aid and obey him in any situation where the odds are reasonable and Bothag stands fast. If things look overwhelming they may flee even if Bothag commands them not to. He offers weapons training to anyone interested, and is most likely to lead their bodyguard on any trips away from the Palace. He is also set up to be a pivotal figure in the finale of this scenario.

A Change of Leadership

Your PCs may be unused to taking the decisive actions required to solve such dangers as those in this scenario. Or perhaps they merely need guidance. Either way, it is possible to use Bothag as a GMC with both common sense and boldness. If it is useful to do so, once the murders and curse set in, have him recognize them as the best hope of Cil, and become their mentor and confidante in rallying resources and setting up plans of action. He will want it to appear that they are the ones making the decisions and running things, because (a) they are Lords and he is a hireling, and that is how things are done, and (b) he hides his ambitions by not appearing too publicly competent. Don’t have him run the show, but he could nonetheless be a leader of men whom they turn to for advice and support (either alongside or instead of Tarandjal). And as a GM mouthpiece you can use him to suggest various options and point out obvious oversights. Bothag after all is in charge of the defense of the Palace, and since he regards Derwe as selfish, cruel and incompetent whom else is there for him to turn to? The guards are not a serious force, and the hunters of the town not only despise the Palace folk but are skilled in the outdoors, not within structures.

Use Bothag as a pillar of sanity in this ridiculously ineffectual castle society, someone who actually feels he has a duty to preserve Cil as best he can. (Later – Chapter 5 – it may turn out that he did it all in order to give him a chance at Lordship, which only adds to the realism of the story.)

THE GUARDS – Not particularly brave, fit or dedicated, each of these 15 was originally hired as a strapping youth from the town, and most (except for three callow newcomers) are now much older. Their duties are dull, and rarely is there any cause for combat. Occasionally a half-man haunts Palace grounds, so the guards maintain basic practice in weapons once a week, either out on the oval or inside Room 5 in poor weather. Motivation is supplied by a small personal stipend paid in perpetuity, including throughout retirement. Only the two sergeants are actually reasonable fighters: Quidgiffon and Zenkle. When things get tough in the castle (but before they become calamitous) it will be possible to hire another six men from town, but they are not of the highest quality. Desertions amongst the guards may well become a feature of the scenario as events grow more serious.

Sergeant: Glib 7, Wary 9, Strength 9, Parry 11, Health [___], Athletics [___], Concealment [___], Perception [___], Stealth [___], Wherewithal [___].

Guard: Obfuscatory 5, Obtuse 8, Caution 7, Parry 8, Health [___], Athletics [___], Concealment [___], Perception [___], Stealth [___], Wherewithal [___].



Appendix 2: The Town of Cil

Overview

A pale shadow of a pale shadow of its former self. Once a city that spread for miles; what you see is now what you get. This cluster of 60 or so houses of varying sizes were once a central suburb of the large town. All around them, especially to the south, ruins indicate the former extent of this settlement. The docks are to the east and south-east, and are still sound. They are now covered in underbrush and stunted trees - though the stumps of warehouses still remain.

Food is grown in the garden plots around most houses, often including small orchards and enclosures of sheep and goats. Hunters patrol the near wilds for larger game, and fishermen wade the shallows for shellfish, and sweep the bay for fish from small boats. Industry has been reduced to small crafters – mainly seamstresses, bakers, butchers, carpenters, cobblers etc, who produce necessities and sometimes goods for the Palace. Things run on a mix of barter and ancient coinage.

Wooden fences and sections of wall show boundaries between properties, typically in poor repair, and numerous ‘public’ footpaths wind in and around the houses, bearing no remark to these statements of property. Some gardens within these fences are well-tended, and fruit and vegetables are in evidence. Others are derelict or poorly cared for, or overgrown with feral fruit-trees and vines. Likewise around a fifth of the houses are clearly either derelict and abandoned, or very nearly so.

Atmosphere

The folk here are gloomy and slow. Poorly educated on the whole, and with no ambition, they pursue much of their lives with little enthusiasm. Food and shelter are catered for, a poor local ale is made at the brewery using an ancient recipe that converts the furze and bracken of the surrounding lands into something useful. It is bartered with Saskervoy in exchange for smoked fish and cheap but serviceable clothing. The weather reflects the mood, with dampness always in the air, and gray clouds often creating a dim ceiling, even during those times when it is not raining. The cobbles of the streets are usually slick with rain. As soon as the evening closes in doors are fairly shut against the elements and the dangers of the night, and are not opened again until dawn has fully broken. No enchantments protect the inhabitants from the depravities of half-men, and this is actually made worse by the fact that half-men rarely come here. Thus folk are lulled into a false sense of security, and once or twice a year someone is taken and devoured as they wend their way home after dusk. This misfortune only adds to the decline in town size over recent decades. Nine years ago three deodands haunted the area for some weeks and thirteen people died before the town’s hunters found the lair of the anthropophages and put an end to them. When the cursed stormclouds set in, wind and rain empty streets. PCs then find themselves in a gothic setting that includes distant banging of shutters and dismal moaning of the air as it rushes in between the gables of the larger buildings.

The Inhabitants

This town does not breed persons of note. The GM can manufacture self-taught petty scholars, crafters, fishermen and drunken youths as she sees fit. The GM can invent lackluster characters as the PCs wish to (or need to) encounter them. A typical towns person is dispirited and soul-less, little more interesting than a superstitious country bumpkin. In short, this is not an environment in which the PCs are likely to encounter much in the way of social spirit – unless they were to carry out a significant raid on the brewery. Only about 400 adults, 100 youths, and 100 children, live here, each coming from one of only 150 different families. Two dozen bawls in medium health assist with labor, and chickens, goats and sheep are bred.

Places of Note

1) **“House of Slaye” inn** – This building shows some small signs of life. Its inn sign shows the head and shoulders of a bearded and hearty man (who looks a bit like Ramaf Slaye but isn’t him). The clientele of this inn consists merely of thirty or so families that by tradition remain loyal to Lord Slaye’s memory. These folk are not allowed to acknowledge the current pretender to the throne (Ramaf), but are allowed to revere former Lords Slaye. Anyone coming inside in Marbon colors will be savagely attacked by a dozen or so menfolk aged between 20 and 50, and a couple of bargirls. Broken bottles, pointed sticks, and thrown tankards will need to be fended off to avoid injury. Should the supporters of Slaye gain the upper hand over any PC, they will attempt to rip off the offending heraldic items, and destroy them with fire and force. The PC himself will receive what is quaintly known in some parts of the world as a “good kicking” before being thrown out onto the street. Such an attack should be played for maximum confusion and laughs (by those players of PCs who escape). Initially, when the PCs enter, there will be bemusement, then amazement, then realization. Then the quaint bar scene will erupt into aggressive pandemonium.



- 2) **“House of Domber” inn** – This building appears to be a typical small-town inn – the center of the social scene. Lights show at most windows, and raucous singing comes from the taproom. A magnificent heraldic crest hangs above the door. PCs will find a lively environment. However, this will all freeze when they enter. If they appear as mere travelers, talk will reluctantly begin again, though many will stare with curiosity and fear. Rooms are available, because many who drink into the night choose to sleep over rather than risk the streets. Locals pay very little, however the ancient register (and tariff sheet) will be hauled out for visitors. (Unless the visitors somehow charm the locals with their personalities and/or antics.)
- 3) **“House of Marbon” inn** – Nearly as large as the other inns, but may not be seen since it is a ways back from the road, and has no visible signs of habitation. Plus, like several other buildings, it is falling into advanced disrepair. The single resident (and caretaker) is Brolt, the town hunchback, who may become a GMC attached to the PCs by fanatical loyalty.
- 4) **The Gaol** – Almost never used now, especially since no body of authority remains to enforce the law. Law is summary in these parts, mostly carried out by the hunters, who are the only group of competent men in the town.
- 5) **The Brewery** – The only building that is a matter of civic pride. Possibly the largest building in the town, it was once residential but was taken over a couple of generations ago by Master Hale Perinthot, a traveler of unknown origins. He is now deceased, but his Perinthot brood continue the work. Cil Ale is now the last significant export of the region and accounts for the twice-yearly visit by merchant ships from Saskervoy. (If the PCs didn’t leave Saskervoy by ship then one vessel visited three months ago. If they did, then that ship that they were on would have been one of these.)
- 6) **The Stables** – Not particularly of note, and virtually abandoned. The only significant thing about this stables is that it contains only horses. This is a reflection of Cil’s former high status, although none of the current beasts is in great health or condition. Most of these animals are working beasts rather than steeds. Travelers from other regions where the horse is rare (such as PCs from Alмеры) will be startled to find this noble beast used so poorly. Fegnur Weele runs the stables.
- 7) **The Home of Jansood Vinnk** – An anomaly in this town, a man with drive and character. Unfortunately his drive and character do not lend themselves to social usefulness. He is a doomsayer and a harbinger, who believes that long ago the folk of Cil, including their Lords trafficked with demons and directly brought about the downfall of the last true civilization of the golden age of the Earth. The fact that he is right has not the slightest bearing on this scenario nor on the experiences of the PCs. His presence in town is that of a lank-haired bent old man of surprising energy, who regards anyone trying to emulate the old ways as being demon-worshippers and worthy of stoning. Fortunately, certainly at the start of this scenario, nobody takes him seriously. Vinnk somehow understands something of the historical worship of the deity Miamatta – the God of Justice, and maintains (as best he can) the church (see below). Vinnk’s family consists of a wife more crazed than himself, a huge son who rarely ever speaks, and three retainers who try in vain to keep this enormous residence in some kind of repair. Vinnk is very wealthy, one of the few in this town with a store of coin from the days of Cil’s glory.
- 8) **Church of Miamatta** – This building is in very poor repair, a sad relic of bygone days. Much of the domed roof is missing or fragmentary, and weeds and even bushes grow inside. Nonetheless, someone (Vinnk) is doing their best to keep the central area as clean as possible. A crude and worn stone statue of a six-armed man stands upon a hexagonal altar. (One of the upper arms has broken in the middle and is held together with wound twine.) In truth nobody remembers what this building once was. It is at least 200 years old, possibly much more, and may well have been a religious precinct. However, it was long-abandoned and emptied before Vinnk began his crusade nearly 20 years ago.
- 9) **The Home of Master Renton Peelew** – Peelew is the mayor of Cil, for all that means. This is a hereditary position handed down from one Peelew to the next for generations, although apparently the position of mayor was filled through some other means of selection. The Peelew family also retains some wealth from the domain of Cil’s former glory days.
- 10) **The Schoolhouse** - Education goes on only until the age of 12. The schoolhouse is far larger than its needs require, and was clearly once an impressive establishment. Some few optimistic scholars still wander amongst the moldering tomes of the old library. The schoolteacher is Harcop Dowel, a pessimistic man now in his eighties. Nobody is equipped to take his place when he passes on. This place may be an information source for the PCs as they examine the moldering archives.
- 11) **The Hunter’s Lodge** – Not only does Haggio Quink (the town’s oldest and most experienced hunter) and his family live here, but also two dozen men in their 20 and 30s who form the town’s hunting band. These men are also responsible for general security. Working hard one week on and one week off, these few are the only folk in town with a significantly empowering lifestyle. Their needs are met from within the community as repayment for their efforts to keep the town fed.
- 12) **The Home of Fegnur Weele and Family** (see ‘6’)



Appendix 3: The Palace of Cil - General Information

When I read about the Palace of Cil for the first time many years ago I wondered what the rest of it was like – Cugel’s visit being so fleeting. Now coming back from the point of view of a writer I had the opportunity to invent a version suitable for role-playing. I’m grateful for the permission to adapt these maps because otherwise I could never have done justice to this eponymous edifice.

A3.1) Introduction

This section of the adventure is the biggest chunk, but will not ideally be played out in one fell-swoop. Before the curse takes hold, the PCs may already be eager to launch an expedition into the vastness of this place. Their primary motivation will be because there is literally no known way to proceed to the south except under the protection of one of the old palace’s magical travelling machines. Thus, the existence of these machines should be revealed early on – Derwe recalls clambering over them as a child under the careful gaze of her aunt. But she does not recall the location of the hall they were stored in, only that it had a huge door that opened to the outside of the palace – and that no such door is visible from the palace grounds. It may well be that the primary motivation of the PCs remains as wanting to find and gain control over a machine. Your Players and PCs may treat everything else that happens here in Cil as a distraction (other than of course the opportunity to also collect great wealth to transport with them, and perhaps also magical items and spell-books).

The PCs will need to explore the greater part of the disused sections of this massive palace, both in the search for these machines and to put a stop to Ramaf Slaye’s curse. It is entirely up to the players whether they send their PCs there in one grand exploration, or whether they engage in several expeditions separated by other activities. Since a huge palace slog might become a little repetitive we encourage GMs to play on the eagerness of the PCs to explore this ancient ‘treasure chamber’ as soon as possible, so that they get at least one expedition happening before the curse begins. Various details are up to the GM: e.g. whether or not it is possible to convince (Ψ PERSUADE) any men-at-arms to accompany them, but this is not ideal as part of the initial play, since then various threats become far less of a challenge for the PCs. It should ideally be a long-held goal of getting an armed expedition behind them, before it actually happens (as the curse sets in and assists people in changing their attitudes towards such things).

Some GMs are happy running supporting GMCs, others are not. Later in the scenario Men at Arms can provide valuable buffers against various potentially-fatal hazards, but realistically after two or three have died the others are likely to flee (unless so deep within the palace that a return trip is even more likely to end in their demise. Other details are up to the Players: which direction they go, how long they stay in the old parts of the Palace before returning, what equipment they take, what research they do before venturing away from the known south wing etc.

A3.2) Useful Information

GM: General Map Notes

The dashed lines on Map 2 indicate the terrace at the front (which is not roofed) and the two wooden roofed porticos that travel around the inside of the gardens. (See details at 14 & 15 for information on the latter.)

Map 4 contains no numbers, and is displayed only for your convenience. Any details pertaining to the roofs of these turrets are given with the appropriate tower room of Map 3.

If in doubt, assume that a staircase rises up through all levels of the building. (Except for those noted as being walled off.)

Important doors are usually noted as hollow squares on the maps. However, at various other points throughout the map, both internal archways and large arched windows are shown as light gray oblongs. Unless the description of a room specifically says that it is has an archway instead of a door, it is at the GM’s discretion. If no door is mentioned such a marking will indicate a window.

Few sections of corridor are numbered. The GM will need to describe these as she sees fit, and retain the atmosphere of ancient abandoned grandeur. They of course still sport the odd decayed portrait or landscape, rusting ornamental weaponry and shabby suit of battered half armor.

Strange squiggly lines in the inhabited area indicate that a bricked up or barred door has been discreetly obscured behind a substantial (though decaying and dusty) drape that hangs from ceiling to floor.



GM: Notes on the Palace Magics

Keys and Locked Doors: All doors outside of the South Wing close and relock (unless to servants' quarters or work-rooms) if nobody passes through for 3 minutes. At first explorers may think they are being followed or threatened. If a door is wedged, spiked or similar it will stay open until some minutes or perhaps hours after being secured (depending on the room's importance). On their return after this time, all impediments will have been politely put a side. All the stewards have master keys, as does Derwe. Probationary Lords are not entitled to keys. Amalda Coreme was the last person who knew the ceremonies to invoke the enchantments that would turn a regular key into a master key. These keys are personally attuned (a process which the stewards still know how to do, although it takes at least three of them to perform the arduous ritual), so stealing one to use yourself does not help. All doors to personal or guest suites in the South Wing also close and lock spontaneously in this fashion if the owner forgets to do it. However, this is not the case for the regular rooms, so PCs may otherwise explore the South Wing. Magical locks can be picked (Ψ QUICK-FINGERS: At -1 if protective magic not dispelled, and a further -1 if no Lockpick Tweak possessed). A simple cantrap suffices to temporarily remove magics from doors to rooms of minor or middling significance (stewards with knowledge of Cil magic know this cantrap), but full spells (which neither PCs nor GMCs are likely to know) are required for doors to more significant rooms. (Or magic items from the glossary and the random found items list.) The GM decides which rooms fit which classification, and notes in glossary.

Illumination: Standing & hanging, candelabras illuminate almost the entire Palace (save those rooms specifically noted as being dark). They are magic, and any candle taken will stay lit for the entire time it remains in the house. Once outside it reverts to a normal candle. Only an appointed or probationary Lord, or guard officer can command the candles to reduce or enhance their glow in contradiction to their standard illumination cycle (dimming at night, bright in day as needed compared to the illumination available through windows). Only the windows on the lower floor are shuttered & barred, and the magic here has failed somewhat, so the lower floor is in a flickering twilight – lit by dimly functioning magical candles. The shutters can be opened, but have been chained and spiked, so doing so requires mammoth effort. Shutters on the upper floors are (unless otherwise indicated) open, allowing sunlight or starlight into the rooms and corridors.

Making Things Difficult: PCs might have various spells or magic to assist them in flying around, vaulting onto rooftops etc. You as GM have a duty to realistically put an end to any such things that might make a mockery of the dangerous rambling gothic grandeur that is the Palace of Cil. As well as gargoyles, ancient enchantments defend the Palace from aerial intruders, repelling magics that equate with flying, leaping or teleporting up, across or into the building. It is also impossible to teleport through walls or doors in the Palace, nor can one disintegrate sections of Palace to affect egress. The Palace enchantments are subworld in origin, and block many regular DERPG spells (when it comes to affecting the substance or integrity of the Palace or the safety of its rightful residents). [See *Demons of the Dying Earth* pp45 & 56/57 for further ideas.]

Old Palace: Ambience and Incidental Detail

The Palace of Cil is huge. The rooms are huge and cavernous, reminding visitors continually of the ancient wealth and pomp that was taken for granted by the original builders and inhabitants. Built into the stonework are (mostly non-functional) drinking fountains, niches for ornamental flowers, busts, statuettes, ornate sconces for torches, shelving for (long-vanished) ornaments etc etc. Incidental furniture also abounds: wooden trunks, stone chests, cupboards, tables, curtained alcoves... Within the text we may make allusion to such things, but not detail them by and large. Your job as GM includes reminding the PCs of the impressive (though decaying) grandeur that surrounds them. Do this as soon as they enter the old palace. Don't allow them to experience the old palace as just another building to wander around. Phrases of description can include such terms as: "musty with decrepit age", "as silent as a long-forgotten crypt", "your voices echo coldly down the vastness of this voluminous hall", "the air is still as the pause after a shattering scream", and "though nothing appears to pose a threat, menace hangs on the air like motes of dust in a lonely shaft of sunlight".

Your job also includes (and this is of **primary importance**) evoking the ancient crumbling abandonment of the old palace areas. When exploring, the PCs should feel that the old palace is: **vast** (talk of the massive rooms and high shadowy ceilings – remembering that rooms are all larger than the map might adequately illustrate); **neglected** (mention dust – not so bad as it might be because of cleaning magics but accumulating in corners and high places, the loud echoes made by their voices and any dropped objects or doors closed without due care and attention); **mysterious** (mention odd scuffmarks in the dust or on the stone, distant strange noises on occasion); and **dangerous** (evoke fearful potential by not hurrying anything, and by allowing the PCs to explore step by step). As regards this latter point, since the palace is so huge too much tarrying by the GM could result in its exploration taking forever and a day. Thus, skill may come into play through retaining a rich atmosphere of slowness whilst actually making your sketching and verbal descriptions succinct.



Accessing the Other Wings

Various doors lead **out of the internal gardens**. The door into Tower 16, doors into corridors (by Rooms 17, 19, 22, 30 and 37, and between Rooms 42 & 45), the door into the stairwell annex by Room 22. All doors are barred and sealed, and will need to be smashed down at great effort. All of the windows that open onto Garden 1 (14) are too narrow to climb through, with the exception of the wide window onto the passage between Rooms 41 & 43. This is boarded and glassed, and would require serious demolition to break open. It is also a few feet above ground level. Nonetheless, if this were done, any regular sized human could squeeze through. Likewise Garden 2 (15) has boarded windows that lead into Room 39. These are wide enough to fit even a large human, should the arduous demolition work be done to open them.

No resident will agree to any of **the blocked doorways in the inhabited south wing** being opened, and the manpower and time required for doing such would be substantial. (The stonework is as strong or stronger than the walls themselves.) Just for reference there are bricked up doorways into the other wings between: Room 1 & Room 39, Room 11 & Room 27, the corridor by Room 47 & Room 59, Room 49 & the corridor outside Room 69, and between Room 56 & the corridor next to Room 84. And bricked up doorways exit into the gardens from Rooms 1, 2, 3, 10, & 11. As noted elsewhere, the only doorway into a garden that can be opened with relative ease, is the one between rooms 4 & 5. Also note that the spiral stair up from Room 3 is blocked beyond the first floor. (IE one can ascend to Room 47 and down that corridor, but above this point the stairwell has been solidly walled up with three layers of masonry stone.)

As noted elsewhere, the **exterior windows of the building** are too narrow for egress on the ground floor and likewise for the first floor, at least on the outside of the building. The single exception to this is the balcony leading off Room 50. This could be climbed up to from the terrace, but since (a) it is securely barred at night with a massive wooden frame, and (b) it leads into the occupied south wing, what's the point. A greater effort could lead a climber to the balcony off Room 86, which is only shuttered – although levering open shutters whilst hanging from a wall is an almost impossible task.

It is possible to enter the main building by **climbing from Garden 1 (14)**. (Never even hint at this being the case: PCs will only discover it through trial and error – or at least through scanning carefully with this intent and making an excellent Perception roll.) A good climber (levy or penalty of 1 applied for each of the two rolls needed) could negotiate the rickety roof of the covered walkway, scramble up the outside of the bay window in the passage opposite Room 48, and so gain the roof. Crossing the roof to the walkway adjacent to Room 86 requires another Athletics roll (no penalty). When we say that this is easy, perhaps we are not being totally honest. A DF cannot be re-rolled and means at the very least that the walkway roof has collapsed and at worst that the character has plummeted from two floors up! A secured and lowered rope negates the penalty for any future climbers, and may negate all failures barring a DF if you like to keep your rules-rolling simple.

The simplest (though not most silent) method of entering the main building is by entering Garden 2 from the partially blocked doorway near Room 4. There one erects some kind of scaffolding outside the too narrow and heavily shuttered windows of the bay of Room 39, before busting through the larger windows of **the bay outside Room 69** on the first floor, and squeezing in one at a time. (Again never tell the Players any of this, as GM or as GMC. It is all up to the PCs, and none of the GMCs has the 'nouse' to consider such things, except perhaps Derwe, and she has no wish to aid them.)

Another possibility is accessing the roof walkways from **Turrets 93 or 95**, but would require substantial dismantling of a wooden roof, or major demolition of their bricked up doors. Also, all their windows are far too narrow to climb through.

Since the building is only three stories high, **scaling the wall** is not totally out of the question - if your adventure series routinely involves heights of athletic prowess. A grappling hook could be thrown onto the upper walkway or the lookout above *Room 63* (with suitable levies or penalties to Athletics). Thus scaling might be relatively easy, although a gargoyle might try to bite through the rope whilst the first PC is in the middle of climbing. Here is a good point to note that at advanced Cugel-Level, Resistances to Indolence tend to only be applied when the PCs have no pressing concerns and/or are being tempted by things far too sumptuous for such persons as they to resist. Therefore you may choose to insist on an IS with Wherewithal rather than asking for Resistance to Indolence if you think a PC is being overly ambitious or risking their life to perform this feat - IE has no big athletics pool and no tweaks related to climbing rope. (*This is all if someone is not used to making long dangerous climbs. If a PC is established as being brave and athletic, then one only needs to call for Wherewithal rolls if they wish to attempt something which is unusually dangerous, and one can vary the Success level required according to its apparent level of danger.*)

Hidden doors At 31 (stones piled outside), 38, via a tunnel into 36 from a cemetery crypt. (This latter should not be discovered until late in the scenario if it leads to Slaye's Lair, and might be flooded near the Palace if you want it to be.) [See Glossary for details on these.] All secret entrances are protected from discovery by excellent masonry and obscurity enchantments. The entryway from the crypt could be kept in reserve if it leads to the lair, perhaps revealed by research or a clue from a loyal ghost.



South Wing Inhabitants (Complete List)

Derwe Coreme: (Domber heir to the Lordship of Cil)

Master Sarman: Chamberlain (steward)

Master Myrtridge: Supplymaster (steward)

Master Tarandjal: Palace Wizard (steward)

Master Gellink: Herbalist and Surgeon (steward)

Madam Nattuca: Mistress of Kitchens (steward)

Madam Lascatt: Mistress of Linen (steward)

Master Druitt: Keeper of Grounds (steward)

Madam Zora: Mistress of the Halls (steward)

Master Bothag: Commander of the Guard (steward)

Yodo (over-footman)

Cronk (over-footman)

Rigbert (footman)

Hunkler (footman)

Quipp (footman)

Wenler (supplymaster's assistant)

Wirrupa [f] (supplymaster's assistant)

Spalenk (apprentice Chirurgeon)

Bilbab (undercook)

Jortwin [f] (undercook)

Slattuct (kitchen-hand)

Timms (kitchen-hand)

Arelle [f] (kitchen-hand)

Leelan [f] (kitchen-hand)

Dora Lascatt [f] (seamstress)

Eemel Lascatt [f] (seamstress)

Tornel Lascatt [f] (seamstress)

Mana Lascatt [f] (laundress)

Tonna Lascatt [f] (laundress)

Weelo Lascatt [f] (laundress)

Sergey (undergardener)

Migg (undergardener)

Swarak (undergardener)

Helmindop (undergardener)

Wicklott (undergardener)

Preep (undergardener)

Mathilde [f] (maid)

Clarissa [f] (maid)

Ermintrude [f] (maid)

Ampletha [f] (maid)

Snovella [f] (maid)

Krya [f] (maid)

Hod (bootboy/underfootman)

Prykle (bootboy/underfootman)

Quidgiffon (sergeant of the guard)

Zenkle (sergeant of the guard)

Assandak (man-at-arms)

Beschemp (man-at-arms)

Crandarak (man-at-arms)

Dugwil (man-at-arms)

Fraderigg (man-at-arms)

Glottal (man-at-arms)

Hussij (man-at-arms)

Jonswep (man-at-arms)

Klausten (man-at-arms)

Loppo (man-at-arms)

Ming (man-at-arms)

Nathanet (man-at-arms)

Samstunf (man-at-arms)

Tem, Ungil, Virgek, Wanasal, Xent, Yikklow
(potential guard recruits from town)



Appendix 4: Old Palace ‘Random’ Encounters

Note that we do not, in the nature of other RPGs, suggest dice rolls to decide when and where an encounter occurs. It is more important that the GM insert these encounters as and when feels most appropriate for the entertaining unfoldment of the game-story. You will notice that many of these encounters are not fully detailed. Once again we use the fact that PCs in DERPG vary enormously in magical and mundane competencies as an excuse to leave you the responsibility of designing the fine detail of foes and difficulties so as to render them suitable challenges for your PCs.

A4.1) Pivotal Found Items

Obviously you as GM can invent whatever else she likes that is found about the Old Palace, bearing in mind that Derwe’s aunt and Ramaf Slaye have wandered around to some extent and so major magics are unlikely to be sitting about in the open. Items noted here should be placed logically in cupboards, under beds or sofas, in lockers, in the pockets of clothing hung in wardrobes, stuck behind the drawers of desks or wherever else seems logical that they’ve not been noticed before. Since the Old Palace is so huge, it is not so unlikely that things were overlooked. Nonetheless they won’t just be sitting on tables. PCs will need to roll Perception whenever they search a room. (Another time where we recommend the ‘Enhanced Action’ ruling.)

A thorough search of a huge room takes time, so keep track of how long they are taking. It takes one-and-a-half person-hours to properly search a large room, one person-hour for a medium-sized room, and half-an-hour for a smaller room. (There are no really small rooms in the Palace.) An interesting Found Item is only uncovered when rolling an IS. Always ask PCs if they also hope to find anything specific when they search, and allow any reasonable items (for the location being searched) that do not upset game balance to be found on a PS - or possibly even an HBS if they are simple non-magical non-valuable items. Note too that if full details aren’t given, the GM decides if something is permanent or charged (and if charged how many remain).

Never reveal to your Players that you are releasing the following things at whim or that they are not Room specific. As described below, some of these items may be pivotal for dealing with either the random dangers or in assisting the PCs during their final encounter with Ramaf in his lair. So, make sure you keep half an eye on the chances of the PCs getting out of this scenario alive.

Demonic Runes of Cil

Typically magical items can be revealed amongst their mundane counterparts because of the Cil Runes that label or decorate them. The demonic runes of Cil are distinctive: strange and discomfiting etchings that are inherently magical. Thus any artifact marked with such runes by definition is (or at least was) enchanted using Cil magic. As for purpose, some will be self-evident through trial and error or obvious utility, but some will not. The PCs will need to have a friendly steward with them to decipher (Ψ PEDANTRY *if you want to make the chances uncertain*) the Runic inscriptions. As mentioned elsewhere, Tarandjal and Derwe are formally known to have an understanding of Cil magic, and so are ideal. However, Bothag (if you have decided he is a forgotten Domber – see Chapter 5) may also read such runes. If he does so, he will put on an act that it is extremely hard for him to decipher them, and will make general interpretations rather than clear and precise ones. If Chank is here, then presumably you have him held ready to be revealed as Jarcan Slaye in the Grand Finale. He too can decipher such runes, but for him to do so could give away his importance too early. Thus, if there is anyone else to do the job he will not voice anything. If not, and the devices seem important to him (as regards supporting the PCs until they can get him within reach of the Icon of Cil), he may speak. He will pretend that his general knowledge of magic (rather than specific knowledge of Cil demonism) allows him some idea of what the item is said to be.

Since it might otherwise be hard to track what items are useful where, we provide each found item (whether random or not) with a code (so as not to make the importance of the pivotal items obvious). When a PC takes possession of any item, ask the Player to note two things on their character sheet or amidst their game notes: (1) the code, so that they can mention it whenever the item is examined or used, and (2) the room number in which the item was found (so that you can look it up with ease if it is not one of the pivotal items listed here). Merely act as if such information is a convenience as regards your checking the exact properties of the item in question as required. It is probably also useful for the GM to be the one who keeps track of charges/items used if appropriate. (Since unless the item is analyzed in a magician’s workroom the PCs won’t know how many there are.) And if the PCs ever find a random object and leave it alone, remember to note that location in case they later decide to go back for it. When someone quotes a reference and a room number and you don’t find the item (because you forgot that it was a random item), that’s of course when you check back here to this appendix. Do so coolly and easily so as not to alert the Players to the extra importance of the item in question. You may even like to keep a separate (secret) easy reference list of what code numbers equal ‘random’ items that the PCs have found, linked to which page numbers are correct for their full details.



MB1) A Small Ornate Metal Box: Inside this (locked?) box are *seven peculiar twisted crystals in settings that used to hold fourteen*. Anyone familiar with Cil runes can learn that the crystals are for impeding magic. Such a person will also know that the normal way to activate such crystals is to throw them hard at the target, so that they break against it. IE no knowledge of Cil magic is required to use them.

MD1) A strange bracelet with seven ornamental carbuncles, each inscribed around with runes. This is a lesser ‘multiple demon-binding contrivance’ (DDE, pp71/72/TDE, p161). If the PCs already have possession of the groaning statue, then the three active carbuncles around this bracelet do not groan but exude silver motes instead. (*Cross out in pencil which does not apply.*) However, if the amusing groaning idea has not been used, then this is where it happens. Anyone familiar with the runes of Cil can tell that a demon is bound into each of the three carbuncles that respond, and will perform one service, when released by uttering the cantrap detailed in the runes. It is unlikely that any PC has learned enough to activate these runes successfully, and failure results in the demon running amok or laughing and vanishing. Each demon should be described individually, and is capable of doing one task. Such a task may be mundane, such as attacking one person with intent to kill or remove a body part etc, demolishing a wall (not in the Palace, which is magically protected), following a trail, or pitting itself against another demon or demonic enchantment. As GM, you actually decide if the demon succeeds or fails when pitted against another demonic opponent (whether being or magic), as best suits the flow of the game at that point.

DD1) A Demonic Statue the size of a small child: Possibly a child’s toy, since it has wheels beneath it. This creature squats with an open mouth pressed down to ground level, and is utterly inanimate, yet has Cil runes written upon its back. Further examination will show that its wings extend as handles, so that it can be pushed along the floor with ease. Anyone who can read Cil runes can tell that it is a filth-devourer. Speaking the simple incantation (that can be taught to anyone capable of learning cantraps) will activate it to such in any and all dust and small debris in front of its mouth. Where this debris then goes, who knows? The game use of this is for sucking up the Demonic Mist that guards the door of the second room of Slaye’s Lair. If used for this purpose it will manage it, but manage it with an increasingly pained whine until (shortly after sucking up the last of the mist) it explodes, possibly causing injury to anyone close by, and causing a massive pile of dirt and huge cloud of dust to billow out around where it was. (However, the evil mist will not return.) It does not work against ghosts.

GS1) A Gold Statuette of a Divine Male Figure (Miamatta the God of Justice): This foot-long item has magical runes upon it, but not the demonic runes of Cil. Rather they are the regular magical runes in use today, which herald from the age of Phandaal. Anyone with Magic rating of 3 or 4 has a 1:6 chance to decipher them, with a rating of 5 or 6 has a 2:6 chance etc. Failure to read it on site must be remedied by research. Anyone who reads these runes will note indications that this device is designed so that anyone who holds it is protected from magic that stems from any dimension other than this one (boon or bonus of 1, including when rolling against demonic or ghostly fear attacks). Furthermore it can also put right disequilibriums of a magical nature but this function takes fair degree of personal magic power and concentration. This device embodies the spell “Phandaal’s Primary Dissolution” (DDE, pp35/6), which closes a dimensional portal. How much effort it is to make the major function work, and what that costs should be decided whenever it is used.

HM1) A Fancy Shiny Helm with Tall Silver Feathers attached like Ears: This too has the typical Cil runes, and they indicate that its properties include heroic fortitude. Anyone putting this helm on experiences three effects: (i) they feel very heroic and brave, (ii) they roll their Wherewithal at a bonus of 1 [at a cost of 1 Magic pool point per encounter lasting a few minutes], (iii) they will unquestioningly obey any order to attack that is given by a steward of Cil (as long as this order does not ask them to attack another steward, Lord, or a member of the guard). If bashed out of shape the helm gradually regains its form over a few minutes.

MC1) A Plain Circular Metal Container the Size of a Large Snuff Box: Cil runes atop the box note only that the contents ‘purify cutting implements’. Inside is a silvery paste that can be smeared upon sword blades. When a sufficient amount it put onto a rapier or the like (indicated by a sudden burst of sparks from the blade and a brief flow) for the following three hours it is able to damage incorporeal beings as if they were flesh. The container has sufficient to anoint 4-7 blades. (GM decides.)

SR1) A Silver Ring Inscribed with Cil Runes: The runes indicate only that this ring has something to do with protecting the wearer from the elements, but it is an ancient artifact and the meaning is unclear. Whenever a human puts this on it immediately subtracts 1 point from their Magic pool. That person then instantly exudes a thick coating of fairly pungent yellow mucous over their entire body, saturating their clothes, and dripping over their other worn accoutrements. If they have no Magic pool points it subtracts 2 points from Athletics next, and then Health if the Athletics pool is empty. Most are likely to perceive this as a joke ring since it fouls clothes (perhaps permanently) and makes a person appear ridiculous. However, it is in fact a flame-retardant device. This fact could be discovered by experimentation or by research. It does not protect all of a person’s clothes, as a hat for instance, or a pack, could be damaged by any fire the user passes through.



AM1) A Dark Metal Chain Amulet Set with A Peculiar Blue Stone with runes carved into its setting: Whenever this is put on by a human around their neck (and they let go with their hands) they lose one point from their Magic pool and instantly become intangible and ghost-like. The effect ends if the person then pulls off the amulet. The runes around the inlay indicate that it is enchanted to facilitate the wearer's movement in space. In the Palace this semi-corporeal person cannot pass through walls or doors, nor even gaps, but outside the Palace it may be possible to step through solid objects. The actual game benefit is that they are now in a dimension which corresponds to that of ghosts, or draining shadow demons, and may attack them as if they were corporeal beings. Note, however, that they may be effectively alone.

Bonus Items

None of these are essential, but add them in when you can. We include them here rather than in specific rooms because (a) the GM may feel a need to add more things to a specific location, (b) we don't know which rooms will be overlooked, and (c) we had some space left on this page.. As GM you may also wish to assign these to specific locations before the game begins, simply by noting the code & this page number next to a Glossary room number.

BC1) A Medium-Sized Sturdy Wooden Chest that barks like a dog and follows around the first person who opens it. It will need to be restrained, or else have several objects put inside in order for it to stay quiet. It will continue to follow. At the end of each hour whatever is inside the chest utterly vanishes. (Except for anything magical which is transferred to the Old Palace treasure room.) Due to its demonic nature it is immune to mundane damage (sword thrusts etc).

BB1) A pair of boots that grip on any surface. Three charges remaining. Duration two minutes.

SW1) A wand that permanently turns any item of furniture invisible when it is touched. (Seven charges.)

OG1) An Elegant Gaming Board and box of fancy figurines. When the figurines are set in correct order (which possibly needs to be researched) they will animate in excited anticipation. Moves are spoken verbally and the pieces move themselves, attacking & defending vigorously. When evenly matched pieces confront each other the outcome is uncertain.

BB2) A pair of boots that cause the wearer to dance continuously, and so vigorously that they lose a Health pool point every five minutes. Upon reaching 0 they fall down in exhaustion and if they fail a Health roll at that point they expire. One overcomes this effect through force of Magical will. (Use the 'Enhanced Action' ruling – one roll per five minutes – but only an IS will break the effect, and normal folk cannot, since all rolls are at a penalty of 1.) The person will move as if they do not wish to be stopped, leaping vigorously and fleeing down corridors. They run at human speeds, and could be chased by the unencumbered.

MH2) A fine and fancy hat that when activated instantly projects two identical copies of the wearer into close proximity with the original. These move in similar tempo to the original and occasionally with fine capering actions, taking them closer and further from the true wearer. Providing that the wearer emulates these capering movements from time to time he/she is indistinguishable from the copies. This has all manner of benefits, when it comes to avoiding being targeted by spells, and confusing attackers in a non-confined space. Before any attempt to strike the person, the GM makes a secret roll. On a 1 or 6 the attacker aims for the actual person. Regular attacks will not inconvenience the projections in any way, but some magical attacks will obliterate them. This hat has charges.

SG1) A Pair of fine Silken Gloves. Charged. When activated they increase one's manual dexterity. (+1 to QF and to all forms of Attack except Strength & Ferocity)

SG2) A Pair of Fine Furred Gloves. Charged. When activated (by rubbing them together) they become powered. The next living person they touch (not the wearer) they deliver a massive energy charge to. This typically causes an injury and knocks them off their feet. Anyone making a Health roll IS ('Enhanced Action' ruling) instead takes only a loss of 2points from their Health pool and is staggered instead of flung down.

IT1) A Fine pair of Moleskin Trousers. These adapt to anyone of human size range. And my goodness are they an impressive fit: toning and fine-tuning whatever physique they have to work with. (+1 to Seduction and – when dealing with members of the opposite gender who are in the appropriate age range – also Etiquette and all Persuasions except Obfuscatory & Intimidating.)

MC2) Demonic Walking Chair. A large bulky wooden chair carved with clawed hands as hand rests, thick reptilian limbs as its legs, carved scales across most of its surface, and bulbous closed eyes up on each edge of the back of the chair. On activation the eyes open and rise on stalks, a mouth appears at the base of the head rest, and the chair becomes mobile. It will carry its owner endlessly if ordered. It even exerts a defensive field that keeps out wind and rain. However, it is rude and argumentative and lazy.

SC1) Huge Silver Coin. When you utter the cantrap, throw this, then bend forward, wherever it lands you will appear there bending down to pick it up. Not a problem if it rolls under something or falls into a crack in the floorboards, but a huge problem in some cases: over a cliff, into the sea, through a grate over a substantial drop... (Charged item.)

DS3) Demonic Statue. A few inches high, and made of black metal. When the cantrap is spoken a hulking 8ft demon appears and will loyally do your bidding. Unfortunately it is weak, stupid, easily-frightened, prances as it moves, and has a voice like a lisping Lordling. Nonetheless, if you can Persuade it to remain silent and limit its movements it looks very impressive indeed.



A4.2) Regular Palace Defenses

The importance of these is to add atmosphere and inspire deep caution, especially during the early explorations. The PCs may well be unprepared. Do not throw these at the PCs thick and fast, as the idea is that the Old Palace is silent and menacing more than continually hazardous (in early explorations at least). In contradiction to this, early explorations of any great depth into the Old Palace need to be discouraged if they threaten to cover anything like half of the area. It is important to retain a substantial pristine and unknown area of the Old Palace, as the setting for the Search for Ramaf Slaye that is outlined in Chapter 5, the exploration of which leads to the grand finale of this scenario. One way to do this is to add a greater incidence of combat encounters as early explorations proceed. These should be things that PCs cannot deal with without help, and yet would be relatively easy to manage if a gang of men-at-arms accompanied them.

This option works well in the plot because: (a) men-at-arms will not accompany the probationary Lords at this stage in the story [they still answer only to Derwe, who is still titular Lord of Cil until someone else is ordained], and (b) increasing the danger after a few visits (or a stay that grows lengthy) hints at the increasing reaction of Palace defenses against the PCs' presence. (It also works in terms of atmosphere – allowing the fear factor to build and then be rewarded by greater and more dangerous incidences of actual threat.) After the curse is activated many of the standard defenses cease to work in any case (GM's discretion). Note also that because they are ancient and confused it is not always the case even that the defenses will recognize stewards, or even Derwe, as someone who's commands they must obey.

Introduce all encounters with suitably spooky atmosphere. They are likely to be heralded by ominous noises, footfalls etc. A classic case would be an increased number of suits of armor pursuing them around the Old Palace and necessitating their escape in some precipitous fashion – even smashing open a window and leaping out into flowerbeds! The same introduction is required for any encounters suggested within the Palace Index. Whilst such things will be noted there only in brief, should your PCs come across something (say a demon), they will initially hear odd noises (slurping, growling, whatever), and be able to creep up. This is presuming they were creeping themselves and thus did not reveal their presence first. If they do give it away the demon may hide and ambush them, but PCs should have a chance to spot slime-trails, huge footprints in the dust, or even heavy breathing from behind a curtain etc, before a pounce is made at them.

Those Mischievous Gargoyles!

Originally created as cleaners, these stone beings were later adapted to become defenders as well, but in any case have long since slipped any control that the enchantments of the Palace once held over them. Anyone looking carefully at the upper floors, or seeing them close up (from balconies or windows or through being there) will see that many and varied gargoyles decorate the roof edges and upper buttresses. These creatures eat pigeons and bats, but need to do so only rarely. They are long-lived and semi-intelligent. They see the rooftop as their domain and attack with tooth and claw when it is invaded. It is up to the GM how much of a threat these beings are: whether murderously resilient and cunning or a humorous annoyance, or even starting as the first but growing cunning as the PCs continue to walk willy-nilly through their territory. They will go into the house if they have need to, but prefer not to. If necessary use these creatures to discourage use of ropes and climbing outside the building. They eat through rope in only a few rounds, and can drop large building stones, sharp slates, or even themselves. (After landing on someone they merely play dead, as if someone else threw them.) They will also attempt to steal small objects if people walk by them without realizing they are capable of being animate. The gargoyles come in various sizes but the ones able to animate range in mass between that of a medium to large dog.

Glib [___], Obtuse [___], Attack (_____) [___], Defense (_____) [___], Health [___], Magic (Resistance) [___], Athletics [___], Concealment [___], Perception [___], Quick Fingers [___], Stealth [___], Wherewithal [___].

Suits of Armor: These clanking servitors are standing around all over the place. If you destroy them they rebuild themselves in a matter of hours. The Palace will activate them against perceived intruders. Since Palace defenses are ancient and confused basically use them at will. They cease to function after the curse is cast (so can't be used by or against Slaye). Strength [___], Parry [___], Health [___], Magic (Resistance) [___], Athletics [___].

The Palace Ghosts: Invent as many as you see fit, and they may travel in groups of up to three. All are previous inhabitants of the Old Palace, from historical times. Invent descriptions for each. Some will be heard initially, chattering as they walk, others will groan in torment as they approach, others may drag chains. But few if any should be inconsequential or merely amusing. Each encounter will be with a personality (or personalities), so go to town with descriptions of how they appear and act. The saner ghosts can be reasoned with (Ψ PERSUASION/IMPOSTURE: -1 for the mediumly-unstable), the weaker are no threat at all, but most are attackers, sent by the Palace's defenses against apparent intruders. Like the suits or armor these beings vanish when Slaye's curse is cast. For full details see next page:



Ghosts

Some are little more than wisps of memory (or 'ghosts of ghosts'); others are magical beings with recollections and purpose. In between are malicious spirits who seek to drain the vitality of the living in order to vicariously experience this state once more. All ghosts, save the weakest, exert something akin to the demonic aura of terror (see 'Supernatural Terrors' article on the Violet Cusps page); which in the case of ghosts must be resisted every time, as if it were the first. All ghosts can dematerialize and travel through the spiritworld to emerge at another location. This costs 1 point from their Magic pool for every 50ft (or every 10ft through solid rock or earth), and takes one round for every point spent. They can also remain hidden inside a solid object for any length of time; this costs only 1 point from the Magic pool each time they so hide. Ghosts are invulnerable to most spells, with the following most notable exceptions: Calactus' Immanent Splendor is uncomfortable for ghosts, and they retreat out of range; Phandaal's Primary Dissolution banishes a ghost back to the spirit world for a day (if its Magic rating is overcome); a user of Simbilis' Righteous Mantle is immune to the ghostly fear effect; and the Virtuous Blade of Motholam allows a sword to strike a ghost as if it were physical (hence the inclusion of their Health rating). All ghosts can float across the ground and over obstacles (hence they have Athletics rating); this ability costs them nothing. When a ghost's Magic pool reaches zero it fades into the spiritworld and cannot return for 3 days. Otherwise it can refresh its pool by 1 point for every hour spent in the spiritworld.

Typical Weak Ghost:

Persuade (Eloquent) ~-2, Rebuff (Wary or Contrary) ~-2, Defense (Dodge) ~+3, Health 8, Magic (innate) ~-3, Athletics ~, Concealment ~+5, Perception ~, Stealth ~+6, Wherewithal 8.

Other Considerations: Weak ghosts can only complain and cajole. These are the type most often employed as watchers around the sacred precincts of a necrophage, or even a witch's premises. Otherwise, numbers of them may be encountered haunting grand ruins. They can squeeze themselves through narrow gaps, or dematerialize, in three rounds. In appearance they are merely faint phantasms of indeterminate identity.

Typical Standard Ghost:

Persuade (Glib, Eloquent, Forthright, or Intimidating) ~+3, Rebuff (Penetrating or Lawyerly) ~+5, Defense (Dodge) ~+6, Health ~, Magic (innate) 1.5~, Athletics ~+4, Concealment 1.5~, Stealth ~+8, Pedantry ~, Perception ~+ 3, Wherewithal 2~.

Other Considerations: A standard ghost can touch a living target and then match its Magic rating against the victim's Health directly, draining them of life force as if it were a spell. They can squeeze themselves through narrow gaps, or dematerialize, in two rounds. These are the type most often bound into an item owned by a witch or necrophage, and called out to assist in combat. Normally such a ghost is bound to assist their summoner up to 12 times before they are free to depart to the spirit world. These ghosts may be faint representations of whatever personality they had in their former life.

Typical Powerful Ghost:

Persuade (Intimidating) 1.5~. Rebuff (Penetrating) 1.5~, Defense (Dodge) ~+9, Health 1.5~, Magic (innate) 2~, Athletics ~+8, Concealment 2~, Pedantry 1.5~, Perception ~+5, Stealth ~+10, Wherewithal Ω.

Other Considerations: A powerful ghost can also attack to drain life-force.

Door Traps

We include these examples as a separate entry (rather than attaching specifics to doors about the Palace) again because we can't predict which doors will be investigated, so the idea of writing about all of them lacked appeal. Thus we present here the outline information for producing door traps for any rooms you deem significant enough to have them. Some GMs may deem that no doors have traps in any case. Magic traps are activated by runes within the lock, that respond to lockpicks, the wrong key or the door being burst open. All others are mechanically-activated.

Piddling Small Trap: A ghost runs out & races away, shrieking about intruders; An imp appears from a panel high up in the door & tips a bucket of loathsome ordure on the intruder (IS with Athletics avoids); Imp opens panel & stuns intruder with a blow from a large mallet; Door grows hand & pokes intruder savagely in eye (1 Health point - IS Athletics to avoid).

Inconvenient Trap: Lock-picker is jabbed with poison that makes them quickly so ill that they have the equivalent of an injury (IS with QF or Athletics avoids this); Door grows demonic arms and throttles invader; Intruder enthralled to go directly to the Guardroom (19) and surrender; One-minute howling noise attracts Suits of Armor; Burst of sickly gray light flashes from door – any non-steward in 3 yards has all inanimate non-magical possessions disintegrated; All in 5yds are imprisoned in iron chains, collars and cuffs; Disembodied voice casts minor curse upon the intruder (“All coins will slip forever from your fingers”; “None shall ever believe your lies”) - Tarandjal can cure with a few hours in his workroom.

Major Trap: Eerie flameburst injures all in 5yds (Athletics PS - or armor - reduces loss to 2 Health pool pts, Athletics IS avoids); Demonic lances lash from the door, doing degrees of injury depending on Athletics; Door manifests a hideous demonic mouth which spews forth tiny demons that try to devour invader (a person alone is in trouble, but allies strip victim & swat demonoids); 3yd x 3yd cube of magic jelly traps all in range (suffocation), it can be pulled apart by free allies.



Other Random Encounters Prior to Curse being Cast

Ramaf Slaye! Hurrying around a corner or through a door comes Ramaf Slaye, who pulls up sharply in surprise. This is a replicant sent out to wander the Old Palace by Slaye, in order to spy out the land. However, it draws a rapier to defend, or will flee if it can, and in all ways appears to be Slaye. Engineer things so that the PCs think it is Slaye (unless they pull it apart and find vat matrix within). This should happen at least three times. The final time it will be a clone gone wrong, a frightened simpleton that escaped from the vats, hates and fears all things demonic, and clings to the PCs for protection. Many possibilities present themselves if they can convince it to co-operate.

Ghost of Amalda Coreme. This stately woman in later middle-age will be standing in the shadows and noticed only after time. If approached she shows some fondness and support for Derwe, but of the authoritarian kind. Derwe (if there) may evidence some sadness to see her aunt again. Amalda indicates she knows that the PCs are pretenders, but won't give the game away. (She clearly thinks not even Derwe is fit to rule, but prefers her due to kinship.) She may assist with minor information or just treat everyone with condescension. She may predict the future. All depends on the GM.

Crazed Suit of Armor. Bumping into walls, bumbling along, attacking hat-stands with maximum prejudice.

Distant Voices: The sound of a powerful male voice bellowing orders, then the sounds of many running armored men.

Extra Person: A ghost joins the party, in such a way that people don't notice the addition. Will hold torches, offer advice and such-like. For game mechanics only an IS with Magic reveals this person shouldn't be here. On being identified the ghost will be confused, recalling vague memories of the distant past. They will stay with the party if allowed, but soon vanish when they are not under observation. If they are treated well, they may reappear briefly at a later time to offer a warning, if the GM senses dramatic opportunity. (Or even appear between a PC and some damage, absorbing the blow and dying or being injured realistically, before vanishing.) GM invents personality and appearance.

Poltergeist: Small objects are thrown, vases toppled, curtains pulled down on people's heads etc. This happens only once and in one discreet corridor or room. GM decides on how short or complex this encounter is.

Distant Strains: The sounds of some social gathering – music, laughter, chattering voices. Fades to nothing if approached.

The Scream: Someone wails hysterically for several seconds. No source for this can ever be found.

Distant Sobbing: A woman crying tragically. Again no source for this exists, but PCs may follow it for a short way.

The Muttering Wizard: A magician walks past the end of a corridor nearby, head lowered in thought as he mutters to himself. He looks real but no trace is ever found if they look.

The Cleaning Crew: Rounding a corner to somewhere they have been before, the PCs come across a small troop of one-foot high imps repairing damage that they (the PCs) did. On realizing they've been seen, the imps leap back through trapdoors in the floor and walls. (These trapdoors are not truly physical, but a magical means for the imps to travel about.)

Cascade! When climbing a set of stairs a whooshing noise is heard from above. (A prime moment for the classic GM question of asking people to say specifically what they do, and allowing no discussion between Players.) Within moments a great torrent of water sweeps all off their feet and carries them back downstairs. Anyone at the rear who runs when he/she hears the noise might be quick enough. Real injuries may accrue here, and/or damage to possessions. There is no explanation for this. Possibly it is part of the Palace defenses. Or it could be blood or reeking ectoplasmic slime.

A Disturbing Painting: The entire group (PCs and GMCs) depicted in an apparently ancient painting, walking down a non-specific Old Palace corridor, with the shadow of a huge demon sneaking up behind. Painting vanishes if not taken.

Rescue & Warnings!

PCs might get themselves into dire trouble when investigating in the early stages of the scenario. Especially if you are trying to discourage them and send them back to the South Wing – and yet they don't get the hint. Bothag or Tarandjal (or possibly Derwe) arriving in the nick of time with a posse of guards could save the day. This would have to be someone with a vested interest in keeping the PCs alive – so an ally or personal friend. In such a circumstance if possible have several PCs suffer actual wounds that require bed-rest and healing salves. Otherwise you run the risk of them merely having high tea and a nap before charging headlong back into the Old Palace. Also, real injuries serve the purpose of being a great 'show don't tell' warning about the dangers of the Old Palace. GMCs will also warn about the foolhardiness of going into the Old Palace, and recommend not going there again until after their full ordination, at which point the Palace defenses will not see them as enemies. (May not deter unusually avaricious/inquisitive PCs, but should be said anyway.)



A4.3) Weird Personalities of the Old Palace

The Ghost of Garth Haxt

This encounter is a fine one to delineate the early dangerous explorations with the time when they can explore the Palace more safely. If they succeed here the Palace defenses no longer hassle them. So don't place this too early in your game. But not too late either, as it is one way they might become able to enter the protected library annex. (If they fail here perhaps Tarandjal will find a way to break that barrier for them, as research is important.)

When living, this Lord was a man to be reckoned with. Find a place for him in the Old Palace. The PCs will first become aware of him whilst searching a room (or area) in which his portrait (that they have already noticed) hangs. The air becomes chill, a brief wind flutters curtains, candles and clothes. Then silence and stillness. Any doors standing open will slam closed, and out of the shadows steps the 13th Garth Haxt. As they become aware of his majestic presence they also become aware that many many other ghosts of former nobles are appearing faintly in the shadows. Subtly alert them to the fact that this is a 'significant thing'. He looks them up and down, shakes his head, then: "I am the Thirteenth Garth Haxt, a Lord of the House of Slaye. Appointed representative of the old Lords from all houses. You are here, claiming to be of House Marbon, and yet that line is broken...." He ruminates, then: "Are you truly the ones to reinstate it?" (Bear in mind that he is a ghost and so emanates a faint aura of fear, but not so much that people have to roll against it.) "Tell me..." he scans the PCs intently one at a time, "what gifts do you bring to support your claim?" What he is after (he explains if necessary) is for each individual to tell him something special about themselves, something that makes them stand apart. He is a major ghost and cannot be casually dispelled. Since this encounter is a 'significant thing' different laws of metaphysics apply. The other ghosts will stop anyone (not GMCs) who tries to leave (describe in spooky ways). PCs may say anything they want, and have to convince him. (Players MUST invent an argument. They cannot roll if they don't have an argument for their PC to voice. Give boons or bonuses for remarkable ideas.) He will be skeptical and judgmental. The idea is for the majority of PCs to convince him. (If an equal number then degrees of success must outweigh degrees of failure.) If they fail he will dismiss them as a group: "You are nothing but opportunists. Your claim has been adjudged and found wanting." All ghosts vanish in a great disturbance of freezing wind, and PCs are left with frost on them, and the distant clanking sound of approaching suits of armor? If they succeed he congratulates them (even if some convinced him with lies – he is impressed by powerful deceit), and the other ghosts all mutter amongst themselves, some pleased, some resigned. He speaks, perhaps laughing gruffly: "You have at least the makings of what it takes to become Lords of Cil. [*describe dodgy characteristics matching PC arguments – strength in deceit, arrogance...*] I grant you my boon." A Lordly silver circlet appears on the brow of each PC, an heirloom of Cil. Anyone rightfully wearing this can open the doors using a steward's key, and Palace defenses will now leave them alone. They can also operate Derwe's machine if they know how. But this magic (circlets) only works within Palace grounds. And they can enter the protected section of the library, & other areas as you see fit. (See Glossary)

The Oracle of Cil: a painting of a wise middle-aged woman hangs watches them mockingly, moving, shaking her head, that sort of thing. If spoken to she identifies herself as Nona Marbon. She will accept them as Lords only if they have the circlets. If asked she says she was a 'seer' of Cil. She can tell them about the glory days, she says she sees tragedy ahead for Cil. If asked she says that she believes they will return to Ascolais and wreak their revenge on the Smiling Wizard, but it is unclear as to when this will happen. Demonic forces are at work, she might tell them, and block her attempts to see the future. But, she can tell that Cil is poised on a knife's edge, about to fall, and unless heroes act, the domain will fall under the control of demonic forces and fail.

The Caretaker: A large, powerful deodand with stag's antlers. Anyone (inc. GMCs) with Cil Pedantry has a chance to identify it as a mythical beast that used to appear when Cil was threatened. If they do not, it says it is here to see if they are worthy to be champions of Cil. "Do you accept the challenge?" (If they don't he shakes his head and vanishes.) If they do everything goes misty and PCs (not GMCs except perhaps Yodo if he is a regular companion) find themselves in the Old Palace as it was at the time of the Cutz Wars - a stress environment as the war isn't going well. They are treated as junior Lords, and allowed to explore the Palace (draw rooms in dotted lines on the map). They must find their way to the war room (attention will be on this place: See Rooms 45/46 for more details, and eventually they might be summoned there). The forces of Simbilis are poised for victory, heroic knights and loyal vat creatures are gradually beating back the demonic allies and demonically enhanced troops of Cil. The challenge is to recall (Ψ PEDANTRY-1, or Yodo) that at this point Simbilis summoned a creature of the Overworld named Sadlark who demoralized the Cil troops are turned the course of the war. If they fail to recall, they still frustratingly remember (from history lessons or tales) that this moment was pivotal in the Cutz Wars. If they alert the Lords that this is about to happen, then the Lords can take countermeasures. (This won't actually affect history, but the PCs don't know that and may have to think about the effects.) After this event they find themselves back in the present day. If they decided to aid Cil, or if they decided not to because it might adversely affect history, either was the 'right thing to do' and the heraldic beast is pleased and congratulates them. It hands over a silver rapier each (which is capable of slicing ghosts and demons – see 'Virtuous Blade of Motholam' DDE, p37). Only if they vacillate pathetically will they not receive these gifts. Feel free to enhance the challenge, perhaps with an assassination attempt by a shapechanger on the head Marbon Lord back then. NB: The fact that they go to the War Rooms might end up being a clue as to the location of Slaye's Lair, but only if timing and PCs' deductions make this work in the game.



A4.4) Random Dangers & Weirdness after the Curse is Activated

Demonic manifestations: Noted in the Glossary text are various options where the PCs find demons in rooms after the Curse is cast. If they've been into these rooms prior to the curse, and are aiming to casually by-pass them, remember to have strange noises emanate from them, so that PCs know something is there and have a choice as whether to investigate. Also note that few Ratings have been given for these demons. The usual reason applies, since DERPG games vary so much, we don't know how tough or magically capable your PCs are. In general the demons mentioned briefly in the Glossary should be relatively easy to dispatch, especially any minion-types that are backing up a larger figure. Nonetheless, this equates with how well-prepared your PCs are. The demons might be easy to dispatch because their claws bounce off the suits of armor that each PC is wearing, or easy to dispatch because of the numerous magic artifacts the PCs wield.

Area of Cold: An entire section of corridor or of large room that is very cold by degrees, dropping to sub-zero in the middle (as shown by ice on furniture). PCs cannot pass through without suffering major damage, unless they fathom out some way to ease the freezing force or dispel this demonic effect. If you like, this can be a re-occurring thing that appears at 'random' throughout the Old Palace. IE Now and then PCs are investigating somewhere, or travelling, and the temperature begins to drop and frost form on objects around them. If this happens more than twice, consider that eventually a frost-creature manifests from it. (When it manifests the area of cold itself vanishes and this chunky being labors after them attempting to grasp them and freeze them with its magical touch.)

Area of Shadow: Deepening shadow area that totally blocks vision as it deepens. Like a wall of darkness, but deepening by degrees. Strange shapes and noises are noticeable within to anyone who looks/listens carefully. Anyone who attempts to pass through it must resist Supernatural Terror (see rules article on Violet Cusps page).

Corruption: Doors, statues, and/or other features ooze, twist, writhe groan, and otherwise exhibit demonic interferences. At least once such a thing will attack a PC by surprise.

Deadly Ghosts: See the ghosts entry in the previous section, but invent two or three that are particularly hideous and malevolent – driven mad by the demonic curse that Slaye has cast.

Tentacled Monstrosity: Blocking a corridor is a bizarre demonic creature that is semi-intelligent. It will ask who they are, and can possibly be convinced (Ψ PERSUADE/IMPOSTURE) that they (PCs' group) are agents of Slaye, and so let them pass.

Demonic Beasts: Should your PCs be combat-ready, then at least two or three times you must present them with some kind of slavering demonic creature that needs to be slain with the utmost zeal. Reference to *Demons of the Dying Earth* will be highly useful in this case. (These may have been set on their trail by Slaye, or just be random guards or manifestations.)

Animated Corpses: As noted in *Demons of the Dying Earth*, restrain from classic zombie encounters. But if anyone has died and disappeared, their horrifying animated form/s may be encountered as repulsive foes within the Old Palace.

Demon Patrol: One large demon and a bunch of underlings. Note that it is possible to hear these coming and engage in Stealth and Concealment rather than just fighting them.

Giant Slug: This slow but intractable creature with countless protruding eyes has been put on their trail, and is determined to injure them with its acidic slime. Though easy to outrun, unless they are careful it may corner them.

Fungal Expansion: More than one area has become overgrown with lichens and fungus, turning the room into a colorful but dank explosion of divergence.

Garden of Bodyparts: One entire half of a large room has been heaped with piles of ill-smelling muck. From these piles grow human legs and arms. If any significant folk have disappeared, their heads form the center of the different clusters. If this encounter occurs close to Slaye's Lair, the heads may be enchanted to call out warnings to Slaye and his allies.

A Silver Skull (demonic) on a shelf: When touched it begins to emit haunting music. Anyone who fails to resist its Magic is held enthralled. In a while a hideous insect/humanoid demon will come to see what has sprung its trap. Hopefully someone will avoid the effect or break free and muffle this device somehow.

Demonic Centrality: On the other side of a door is the hideous head and shoulders of a massive demon somehow projecting up through the floor. Hopefully the PCs close the door in time. If not, its tongue produces manipulative tendrils and tries to pull wriggling victims into its maw. This manifestation may well be gone the next time they open the door.

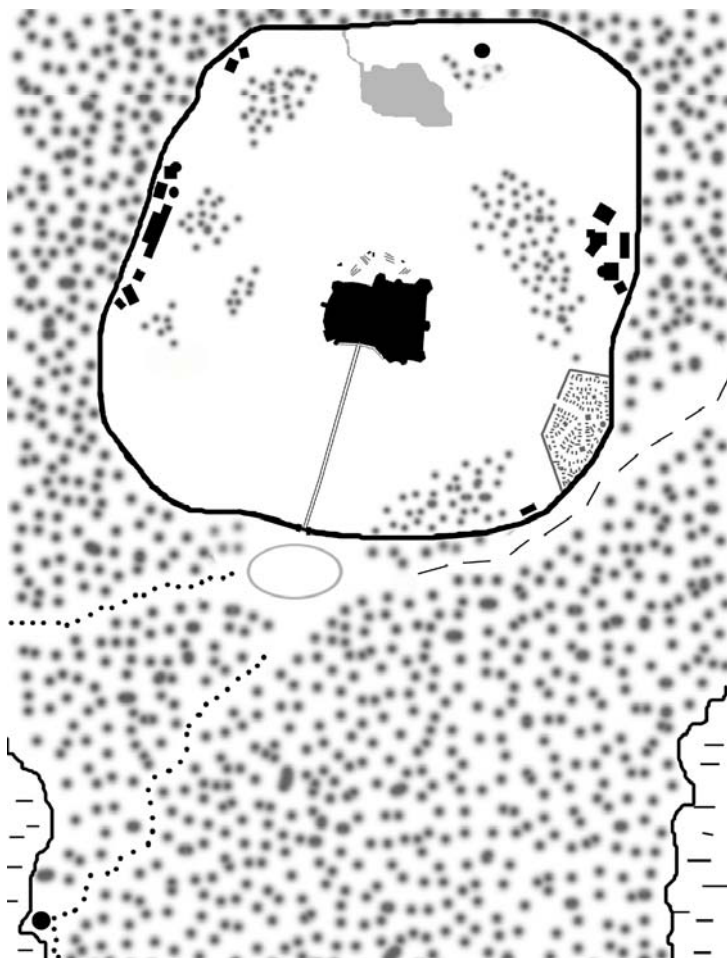
Half-Man!: Something totally unexpected like a Bazil or a Sime is wandering the corridors. Possibly more than one.

Lake of Goop: Section of corridor or room covered by a layer of sickly goop. This corrodes boots & has rotted furniture.

Frits: (DDE, p31). Two or three times Slaye may send these screeching demonic entities after specific individuals.



Appendix 5: The Palace of Cil (Glossary of Rooms)



Outside the Palace: PCs may wander the building's exterior to check for other entrances. Around the back are various vegetable gardens and pens for fowl and sheep. Flowerbeds and shrubs along the walls have not been properly maintained, and so it is not possible to even get up to the wall at most places (except along the front of the South Wing) except after very serious pruning! None of the outbuildings have been described even though they are on the map here. All have been long-since deserted, and are falling into ruin. Only the magic of the Palace itself still maintains structural integrity. As GM you may vary this should you so wish to. A massive barn full of animal stalls and abandoned rooms might have a basement that is now the nest for a small pack of grue. Or ex-Busiaco rafters now live and farm here. Imagine the potential for amusement if these fellows have discovered an Ossip bush area and are tending it with hopes of high profit come harvest. Or are raiding the Palace cemetery for kindling! PCs may have to rally the guard and lead a Punitive Committee of their own!

Inside the Palace

Refer also to the description of Old Palace ambience in Appendix 3.

At regular intervals (except in the few rooms noted) enchanted torches sputter in wall sconces, and/or candelabras of varying sizes flicker from stands or emplacements high on the walls. These will not be things to which you normally refer, and yet they are commonly present. (On the upper floors where light comes through the windows, these may be very low flames, or sometimes not even lit during the hours of daylight. They are magical, and a torch taken at one part of the building will continue to work at any other place within the Palace, providing it is in the hands of a probationary Lord, full Lord, or enrolled member of the palace guard.)

As PCs wander the Old Palace, tell the Players that every room and corridor has paintings, ornamental suits of armor, crossed cutlasses or halberds, empty stone urns, moldering tapestries, heraldic statuary in decorative niches or standing alone, and random pieces of stone furniture such as benches and tables. Corridors likewise have stone or wooden chests, curtained alcoves, statues and stone plaques. This building appears to have been (and was) abandoned in a hurry (when warring mages cast ferocious curses). Mention specifically that you will not necessarily comment on these common ornamentations, but that they will nonetheless be there. (Due to the large amount of rooms, and the chance that many will not be visited, we often include minimal information in the following descriptions.) Thus, when PCs enter and search a room it is up to the GM to spontaneously provide additional important detail if required. However, the Players too have a role:

Player Inventions Are Encouraged:

Specifically tell your Players: "It is your duty to assist the GM in describing small details should they be necessary, interesting or useful. As with basic City Contacts in the *Kainin Players' Guide*, Players are invited to invent game-realistic incidental items in any room. Phrases such as 'I snatch up the heavy vase', or 'Grabbing the poker from the fireplace, I...', or 'I jump behind the massive window drapes', are unlikely to be challenged on grounds of whether these things are present. Even occasional phrases such as 'I put the solid-gold pelgrane-shaped ashtray into my pocket' may be slipped past the GM if judiciously used. The Palace is huge! Spontaneous inventions and related role-playing are heartily encouraged!"

1: The Grand Entrance Hall: "This huge hall is well lit by standing candelabras, and sports impressive portraits of male and female elders of the Cil houses. Ahead of you a huge curtain hangs floor to ceiling. On the left wall a curtain covers a doorway or alcove, and to both left and right heavy wooden doors stand closed in their huge archways. The final exit is a corridor the far right hand corner of the room, and above your



heads an upper floor balcony runs around the entire room. In the middle of all of this is a large circular fountain whose life-size centerpiece is an armored warrior astride a rearing horse, plunging his saber into the chest of a huge and bestial reptilian codorfin that claws at the flanks of his steed.”

Down the corridor alongside Room 4 is the only doorway into the inner gardens that has been used in living memory. When the oldest servants were young part of this garden was used for vegetables. Those who can remember anything about what happened say that something or someone took to pitching gargoyles off the roof, and a servant was crushed to death. This doorway can be opened in less than half an hour in relative quiet, merely by chiseling out the metal spikes and applying crowbars to the boards. The former main entrance (into 39) was bricked up 20 years ago.

2: The Dining Hall: “Along each side of this room stands a row of twenty armored men at arms, some forty in all, in brass armor and helmets of checkered bone and jet. Telamons [gargoyles?] of exaggerated elongation and distorted visage support the smoky beams above. A massive circular table fills the center of the room, but even this leaves enormous amounts of floorspace and room for smaller tables, low cupboards, and chests that rest along the edges of the wall.” *The door stood open when Cugel was ushered in, hence its description as a “tall, narrow arch”. Note that some period, or intensity, of observation will reveal that only six suits of armor are occupied by living men at arms. The others are supported by cunningly crafted stands to appear lifelike.*

Found Items: MA1) Heraldic Armor: Some PCs may wish to adorn themselves in armor (like that on stands in the South Wing’s Dining Hall) before venturing into the closed parts of the house. We leave such things to the discretion of the GM. If it suits the atmosphere of your gaming then have the suits be light and flexible enough to add a boon of 1 to Health and/or Defense rolls in situations where physical attacks are made against the PC. One drawback is that wearers will not be able to run as fast, or climb as well, as they usually do (levy of 1 and reduced speed?). If you are a stickler for the spirit of the rules, then persons using Dodge and Intuition gain as much as they lose (effectively making no change to their Defense capability when wearing the armor), and those reliant on Misdirection actually find that wearing armor impedes their skill. We recommend this latter option for those who like to create difference and rivalry between their PCs. It isn’t essential that the PCs wear this armor.

3: The Kitchens: Many tables, and storage cupboards. At one end is a large curtained alcove in which is a wine store. Various stone storage cupboards here are magically chilled. The ovens and heating plates are also magically activated and powered. *The spiral stair leads up to the corridor outside Room 47. One cannot rise higher than this because the stair above has been securely bricked up.*

4: The Meeting Hall: The door is kept securely locked. Just inside the door are two suits of armor that are actually demonic guardians. No-one here knows how to activate them, but inside their helms faintly glowing red eyes can be seen. Colloquially they are known as the ‘guardians of justice’.

Stewards will infer that these are things the PCs would be well to fear, but in reality none of the stewards ever concern themselves about them. The furniture in the room consists of a massive table behind which are grand seats for the stewards, plus smaller seats and benches in rows on the other side, for anyone being interviewed, and for the audience. Décor consists of crossed halberds, a great tapestry depicting the Domber Coat of Arms, huge candelabras, that sort of thing. In here is a huge safe (effectively a chamber set into the wall behind a tapestry). It has five locks, and five stewards have to be present with their master keys to open it. Herein is stored the considerable wealth remaining in the south wing. Rumor has it that much more is in the rest of the Palace.

Found Item: (BC1) A black crystal skull sits on a shelf gathering dust. It is colloquially known as the ‘wisdom of Cil’ and apparently used to dispense wise words. It has not answered questions since Amalda died. However, if you like it may suddenly become talkative when a PC addresses it. PCs may make of this what they will, and perhaps use it as evidence of their Lordship. However, the skull was merely bored by the residents and decided they weren’t worth talking to. It is not uniformly wise and would be a GM mouthpiece, granting little hints as to what is going on. After the curse strikes it loses all constraints and will try and lead the PCs into peril.

Post Curse: The two ‘guardians of justice’ might well become a threat in some sinister way and need to be dealt with, even if they just stalk the South Wing, striking out in random acts of violence.

5: The Guards’ Hall: The fifteen men who make up the remaining contingent of palace guard live, practice and sleep here. Fifteen curtained alcoves each contain the sleeping pallet and small personal storage cupboard of each. More alcoves once existed but have since been dismantled to create a wider general area. In this section is a large dining table with benches. Generally five or six guards are on duty at any one time, and the others are resting - or sometimes off duty in town. The unnumbered room at the end is the cell area for the South Wing. Probably converted long ago, it is once again mainly storage, with several racks of swords and pole-arms in each open cell.

Found Item: (BA1) A brass automaton is also stored in here. It can be activated by any Guard Officer to serve as a combat-partner for training purposes. However, it is also a potential ally, a trained killer that can march under orders and use varying levels of aggression (from ‘Non-injurious training’ to ‘Extreme Prejudice’). Since it is an automaton, whenever it becomes too useful the next damage it suffers will strike something vital, and from then on it becomes unpredictable. IE Suddenly starts to become non-violent and instruct a foe in better fighting techniques.

6: The Portrait Gallery: Immense portraits of the grandees of Cil throughout the ages. Otherwise just an echoing hall.

Prior to Curse: If the pictures are regarded closely two or three have eyes that move and follow those in the room. If examined the typical Cil runes will be found somewhere. Each is capable of being activated to ask questions of this historic personage. GM decides how useful answers are.

Post Curse: The persons in the paintings all manifest demonic aspects. They will glower and taunt anyone passing through the room.



7: Stairwell Room: Although merely the annex to the stairwell, this room is the size of a regular large room in a normal dwelling (which gives you some idea of the scale of this place). The ground floor has been converted into a carpentry workshop, though it is only used for absolute emergencies and is mostly dust-covered. Up on the next floor this area is used for storage of old furniture and lumber, and the walking space to the stair is actually quite cluttered. (Up there is a fine place for the shapechanger to linger.)

If the shapechanger is around whilst PCs climb these stairs it might throw something heavy down to distract them whilst it flees. Or it might jump out and push someone down the stairs. It will not directly attack a group.

8: Guest Quarters: This is the ‘set of apartments’ that Cugel was first shown into. Here is where newcomer vagabonds will be housed, or servants of noble Lords. This is the only such average accommodation kept ready in the South Wing. The only people to have used these quarters in recent memory are occasional merchants and their families from Saskervoy – here to do business. And little business has been done these last years, so the rooms are not well looked-after. Nonetheless, they are the lap of luxury compared to anything the PCs have experienced recently. Not really a set of apartments, rather one huge room decorated with couches and potted plants, and with three large curtained-off sections – each of which has sumptuous twin beds. One alcove also sports a bath and washbasin, plus a bureau filled with unguents, towels, barber’s tools, washcloths and the like.

9: The Linen Store. An impressive selection of fine clothes and robes, of all styles and sizes are kept here, all stored sensibly and in good condition. One alcove also holds a huge variety of footwear. Another holds raingear (boots and waterproof cloaks).

10: The Linen Room. Tables along the edges of this room mark where rows of maids once maintained the palace’s vast array of clothing. Seamstresses tools and magically heating hot irons are stored in alcoves around the room. Only one small table now seems to be in regular use.

(HA1) A heated iron can be a surprisingly effective weapon, and of course is a relatively portable item that could later be sold. PCs will merely have to convince a maid or steward to tell them how to pronounce the cantraps.

11: Hall of Art: Enormous paintings of Cil landscapes (from back in the glory days), magnificent sculptures of heraldic beasts, even some bronze castings of notable historic Cil personalities (most of which are unknown).

This is another place where the shapechanger might hide, perhaps taking the form of one of the statues it has seen. (Thus causing much alarm when a servant asks: “Who moved that statue here? Oh, wait a minute, it’s still over there as well! How is this so?”

12: The Lower Latrines: Various curtained or partitioned alcoves for commodes that exit into the magically-maintained palace plumbing. One side of the room has distinctly better facilities (for guests rather than staff). Various taps produce

(magically-heated) water. One end of the room has a larger curtained section, which is where the staff and servants of guests bathe themselves. (Residents had private bathing arrangements or used the Upper Latrines at 57.)

13: Stewards’ Suites (1): Four separate suites exist here, belonging to Masters Myrtridge, Druitt, Bothag and Gellink. All have personal possessions lodged within, and individual keys lock all. These doors cannot be opened by a master key, unless in the hands of an ordained Lord of Cil.

GM must invent details if these are ever entered. Each door has a guardian spirit that will ask for anyone’s business who tries to enter.

14: Garden 1: This slightly smaller area of internal garden is overgrown to the point of being a small jungle. Nobody has been out here in many years, and no doorway out of the South Wing can be opened without some major demolition work! The ancestors that blocked them up did the job properly. Even the ground floor windows looking directly out into this area are too small to get through, and are too high from the ground to even peer through without balancing on someone’s shoulders. And even if this was done, the thick primitive glass does not give much vision. Along the south edge is a covered walkway, now ruined. This used to be the main pathway used for passing from the south wing into the west wing, but is now only marginally more navigable than the depths of the garden itself. All doorways leading off this area have been partially bricked (to stop the doors opening outwards, which is how they would open if they could), and barred with solidly nailed planks of wood. (Though these latter have degraded over time.) Several stalwart men with axes, picks, crowbars and mattocks could clear the brickwork in front of a door and remove the wooden bars in less than an hour if they set too with a will and no regard for secrecy. Typical DE residents, even the more industrious, would take at least two hours to accomplish the same task. There are no upper windows large enough to enter through.

Prior to Curse: Various odd plants can be placed here in the wild, such as Ustendrax Vine (DDE p68), an Oozenbaf Plant (DDE p66), and an Ossip Bush (DERPG p115). If anyone searches for such things either Living Rough (-2), Pedantry (-1 if they have a relevant specialization, -2 if not), or Magic (-1 for any except Studios) will help identify them.

Post Curse: Either garden may spontaneously manifest difficult plant-life such as whip-weed and strangle-vine.

15: Garden 2: Not quite as overgrown as Garden 1 (14), the south half of this area was worked as vegetable gardens not all that many years ago. The northern two thirds are not easily passable, due to the thick shrubbery, and the former vegetable gardens are now barely discernible. However, wild fruit trees and berry bushes are out here and can be harvested. For the state of the doors that lead from here, height of windows etc see Garden 1 (except the door that exits near Room 4).

See previous garden for extra ideas.



16: The Old Kitchens: Originally this was the huge main kitchen, with a passage through into the current kitchens at 3. This area is abandoned, but was clearly once an even more impressive area of ovens and fireplaces and workbenches. Metal-gated storage areas are common around the walls. Some of these are even still magically chilled. This area also has a basement, reached through one of the metal doors, which is a wine-cellar. Still well-stocked! Resistances to Gourmandism may apply if the situation isn't too dire. The PCs could literally become as drunk as Lords!

Post Curse: An immensely corpulent demon and a host of scrawny and tiny assistant demons have taken over here and are preparing the foulest dishes. The little demons are easy to deal with, but their boss is a mean band with a cleaver and keeps on fighting no matter how injured. (None will ever explain what they are doing, or for who.) The meals in preparation are as repulsive as you care to make them.

17: Servants' Latrines and Washrooms: Not nearly as well-appointed as any washroom space available for residents or guests, and yet still infinitely superior to anything you'd find in any lesser building. Partitions hide baths, showers, flushable commodes, basins, even areas for cleaning clothes and shoes. *Prior to Curse:* Whining Winifred is a regular ghost who was drowned here so long ago that she can't remember why or by whom. She bemoans her fate and will follow the PCs around the Old Palace making a noise until somehow placated or dispelled.

Post Curse: Winifred exerts her minor psychic powers to keep the door closed as long as she can, and demands that they go away. If they come in she throws things too. If they befriend her (or previously did and remind her that she knows them) she can tell that she senses demon power much worse than usual and is afraid. If this suits the game at this stage, her sensitivity to this new evil can lead them to Ramaf Slaye's lair.

18: Servants' Quarters: Bunks with a few small private areas. *Post Curse:* The demon kitchenhands from 16 have made this their base. It has been horribly fouled and all furniture carved upon or broken.

Rooms 19 & 20 are possible alternatives to the location of Slaye's Lair, and if so the description of the lair in section 5.3 supercedes or enhances what is here, with the original purpose having been abandoned/forgotten.

19: The Old Palace Guard Room: Split into bunks on one side, with weapon racks upon the other, and a magnificent huge sword on a stand above the fireplace. No personal items remain in the lockers, but musty and disintegrating sheets and blankets are on most of the bunks. The weapons are all of the greatsword and halberd variety, thus of no particular use to the PCs. Huge and heavy shields are also here in profusion. The most useful and interesting items are probably the pieces of half-armor (vambraces etc) and large ornate (but also utilitarianly vicious) daggers. And, if you like the idea, a row of a dozen suits of superior armor with runes of power upon their breast-plates, stand awaiting activation. However many you deem fit can be still functional. All that is required (as any guard officer or potential Lord – see Chapter 5 – will know) is for a Guard Officer to pronounce the wearer to be a

recognized defender of the Palace of Cil. Such a suit may have all the lightness and flexibility of clothes, and still grant a bonus of 1 to all Health rolls. Likewise, especially if you envisage a highly combative finale, some few of the other items may still function and have similar benefits.

The Magnificent Sword: This is a 'Fearsome Weapon' (CC, p16). Gives boon/bonus to Imposture/Persuasion and levy/penalty to Attack.

Found Item: (MG1) Glimmister of Sharpness (DERPG, p116): A silvery dust that hardens and sharpens whatever metal it coats. (In metal polish cupboard)

20: The Dungeon: Several cells, small and large, plus a typical torture chamber (to be described in as much or as little detail as suits your style of play).

Post Curse: Tormented and insane ghosts of former prisoners, capable of attacking by draining life force (Health pool) with touch.



21: Seamstresses Hall: Long tables with benches along each side. Several heaps of garments still requiring mending, though now also having deteriorated considerably. Needles, thread, and bales of material show that garments were also made here. *BN1*) Box of needles that sew on command activation cantrap known.

Rooms 22, 23 & 24 are alternatives to the location of Slaye's Lair, and if so the description of the lair in section 5.3 supercedes or enhances what is here, with the original purpose abandoned/forgotten when Slaye took over. If the lair is here, then the door from 22 to 21 and 23 to 21, have been bricked up months ago. Note that access from the roof exists, so a lower lockable door is here, and the inner sanctum will be Room 22.

22: Pursers' Offices: Split into cubicles like an open-plan office. Each cubicle has its own desk and filing cupboards, and one large workspace is presumably the master's office. The records fill the room from floor to ceiling, and go back generations. A historian would have a fascinating time. *Found Item:* (SU1) "Spectacles of Utmost Conviction": When worn they increase Persuasion and Imposture rolls by a boon or bonus of 1.

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Post Curse: A semi-humanoid tentacled monstrosity sits here leafing through the books, already working out the profit-margins his master will make when turning the Palace into an enormous human workhouse. This demonic being is open to conversation if approached, and may reveal that its real master is not Slaye but the demon that possesses Slaye and uses him 'as a rider uses a mermelant'. This rubbery creature will try and maneuver itself so that it can reach out and snap necks. And when it does so it will gibber with delight.

23: Laundry Room: Great vats, troughs and taps. A spiral stair goes up to the roof where the laundry was hung out to dry. There is no regular access from this stairwell to Room 66, but a secret crawlspace can be put there if you like.

Post Curse: This place is active again with a bunch of demons who appear to be washing and stacking (in piles of sheets from the linen store) large egg-shaped stones with great reverence. The room now stinks with the effluent oozing from the objects. The little demons are weak but ferocious.

24: Linen Store: Much of what is here is still serviceable, due to having been in long-term storage at the time the Old Palace was abandoned (protected by cantraps).

Post Curse: Not only have the sheets been used to make 'nests' for the eggs in the Laundry room, but also to make a comfortable resting-heap for the beast now resident in here. This thing has the face and head of a more-or-less human woman (except for the great teeth), but the body of a bloated snake. It dines on piles of huge rank mushrooms, and very half hour or so it excretes another egg. It fights powerfully but has poor maneuverability.

25: Servants' Quarters: Bunks with a few small private areas.

26: Servants' Quarters: Bunks with a few small private areas.

Rooms 27 & 28 are possible alternatives to the location of Slaye's Lair, and if so the description of the lair in section 5.3 supercedes or enhances what is here, with the original purpose abandoned/forgotten when Slaye took over. Make a door twixt 27 & 28, and have 28 be inner sanctum.

27: Abandoned Hallway: Musty old and forgotten. A prime place for some freakish 'random' encounter.

28: Jewelers' Hall: Three large workbenches across the middle of the room, and the walls are lined with cabinets. These hold jeweler's tools, and boxes of gems. This is not a treasure horde, as the gems are mostly decorative. However, if anyone was to full a small sack they could probably sell it in some large city for 200 terces. (And if anyone searches the place from top to bottom – a job taking half an hour or more – they may well find more valuable items tucked away.)

Found Item: (JE1) A jeweler's eyeglass that gives +1 bonus/boon to Appraisal when examining gems and jewelry through it.

29: The Old Carpentry Hall: Once a place teeming with artisans, the workbenches and tool racks are now dust-covered and silent. If the PCs had substantial cartage available, the equipment here would fetch a good price in some large city.

Post Curse: Small demons have a captured servant, and are in the middle of demonstrating the 'sawing the woman in half' trick. Should you be feeling fiendish, these irritating beings have also invented a wheeled attack

cart that they propel through running inside, and charge the PCs with. NB: Noises are heard from 31 too.

30: The Old Masons' Hall: Once a sculptor's paradise. Various work areas retain half-finished masonry blocks, tiles, gargoyles and ornamental sculptures. Apart from the thick layers of dust it appears that the workers merely downed tools and walked away. A door opens from here out into the garden, but has been boarded from the outside.

Post Curse: Small demons throw hammers and other tools. Noises are heard from 31 too.

31: The Smithy/Metalworkers Laboratory: Once a hive of sweaty activity. Several furnaces, large and small have vents that lead up into the walls. Piles of metal bars stand over to one side, and blacksmith tools are arrayed on racks and shelves. The most interesting thing about this room is that a large stone door in the north wall opens to the outside. (Or it would if someone many years ago hadn't heaped a pile of rocks out there. These could be cleared away, and the door leaves no visible sign of its existence outside when closed.)

Post Curse: Three burly demons that appear to be half-human (IE humans with freakish corruptions such as tentacles instead of arms, or lizard eyes) have re-opened the shop for business and begun manufacturing tridents. A rack of 20 have been completed.

32: The Crafters' Store: Carpentry and mason's tools are stored in here, plus raw materials such as piles of lumber, sheets of slate, and blocks of various stone. Again what is here is worth a small fortune in the right market. Various sturdy wheeled carts could be useful to PCs for hauling goods back to the South Wing, but are only viable over fairly smooth ground.

33: Leatherworkers' Hall: Benches, long tables, some holding sheets of old musty and mildewed leather. Cabinets and chests along the walls contain leatherworking tools – cutters & grips.

34: Artisans Quarters: Bunks sufficient for fifty persons, plus personal storage and a communal dining/relaxing area with two large tables, and a large number of plain wooden divans.

Post Curse: Small demons have turned this into a repulsive living area.

35: North Wing Latrines: A typical set of utilitarian latrines and clean-up area, presumably largely intended for the workers of the East Wing. One section of the north wall is beset by damp, especially up to 3ft above floor level. The stonework is blistered and coated in furry lichen. (See 36 for details on the secret door. This cannot be opened from this side by normal means, but magic will work – with amusing results if the water is still to exit Room 36.)

Post Curse: This room's dampness has been taken full advantage of and it is now a garden of huge stinking mushrooms. Should you note this entry early enough, the door is open and these fungi also spread down the corridors, their misceal roots burrowing into the stone. They are easy to cut away but reek and eject noxious effluvium when hewn. Some of them also scream with horribly human voices. The fact of their presence here may well indicate that the Lord's Tower will likely be Slaye's Lair in many cases when this scenario is run, as PCs will tend to avoid the mushrooms.



36: The Lord's Day Room: *Note that if you choose to place Slaye's Lair in Rooms 78 & 97, then Room 36 is the most likely way they will gain access (via the secret door from 35).* This room is inaccessible, except from his receiving room above, the Lord of Cil would relax here. In its day it was most notable for its large private ornamental pond, where nymphs would sometimes cavort. However, the passage of times has caused problems here, and the room is now four-feet deep in water. From this loom the tops of stone furniture, suggesting that wooden items have long since decayed. (The seepage from here has caused the small marshy area outside this turret.) Another interesting thing is a door in the south corner of the room – not visible from the spiral stair. This leads to a tiny room with a spyhole that opens into an alcove between two bathing cubicles in 35. Since the spyhole is at the center of a door let us give the original designer the benefit of the doubt and assume that this was a secret exit for emergency purposes. Using it now would cause a cascade of water to pour into the latrines (35). Fortunately the drains here would eventually cope. If the water has been drained from here, the inch of gooey slime on the floor is clearly visible. If not, the hazards of walking remain unknown until it is attempted. (Wading PCs will have difficulty retaining their footing.) There is a secret door also in the wall between the spiral stair and the north window. This leads to another spiral stair (in the wall) which descends to a low narrow passage that proceeds quite some distance, to a crypt in the cemetery in the Palace Grounds. *Incidentally, this depository for the earthly remains of the Lords and their kin is ripe for development as a spooky site for adventure and horror, and perhaps ghost encounters.*

37: Wet Weather Store: More than wide enough as a main access, on either side are also racks of oilskins and galoshes. *It would be handy to visit this place before searching Room 36.*
Found Item: (DS2) Demon Skin (DDE, p70) A skin (from a skinned demon) that you can don to disguise yourself as a demon and gain toughness (Health rolls: bonus/ boon of 1). 1 Magic pool point each time you don it, and every hour after. And you must know how to pronounce the activation cantrap. A magic-knowledgeable local will know the cantrap to activate it, or be able to learn it via research. Wearer slowly gains demonic tendencies (if they fail to resist its Magic), and is hard to subdue when they go strange. Skin has Cil runes inscribed inside the head.

Found Item: (CR1) Cloak of Flame Retardation (CC, p6). Wearer drenched with stinking mossy water whenever comes within two feet of any open fire larger than a lamp or candle flame. Cloak looks super-snazzy and 'magiciany' (and has Cil runes inside the collar).

Found Item: (LR1) Ever-Lengthening Rope (DERPG, p116). Obscured amongst several other coils of rope, this one has a silver clamp upon one end which is inscribed with three Cil runes. With the correct cantrap it can extend up to 100yds, and shrink back, is capable of supporting tremendous weight, and also retracts and unties on command.

38: Hall of Transportation: "There is no visible door in the large doorway, and one can see into the flickering gloom inside. Here are three bizarre magical machines. One is almost identical to Derwe Coreme's walking-boat, but larger and

obviously sturdier and less ornamental. It even has a small cabin at the rear. One is a strange centipedal chariot with space for half a dozen or so to sit in a small howdah, and one is a stylized metal bird, with room for 4 or 5 to squash into a tiny cabin that makes up the bulk of its back. The latter two seem less elegant and older than the first, being more machine-like and less organic. A large section of the far wall is a huge windowed door with massive metal pistons at each side and at two places above its center."

This room cannot be entered through the regular doorway, as this is blocked by magical force. (Unless the PCs secure high-powered magic to allow passage.) However, anyone searching carefully outside the Palace after clearing away the vegetation (even though the area is disguised as regular palace wall) may eventually find a hidden emergency catch that activates the entire section to swing slowly out and up. This should not be too easy to find, else someone would have done so long ago. Each machine has controls that are beyond the PCs ability to operate, except perhaps for the walking-boat if they have experience with Derwe's. However, they don't have the security cantraps, so the machines won't function outside of the Palace grounds.

39: The Inner Hall: As indicated on the map, the two stairways leading from this large hall have been securely walled off. Opening them again requires either magic or Herculean efforts of industry taking many hours. Ornamentation is typical for the Old Palace – several ancient and massive portraits of dour nobles, three suits of ornamental armor, and a dozen sets of crossed cutlasses. (These too are ornamental and of thin metal soldered together.)

40: The Small Dining Hall: A huge dining hall for any regular building. A great fireplace stands at one side, with a chimney that is incorporated into the castle wall. Two large tables could fit 30 or 40 people each. The sideboards stand empty and forlorn.

Found Item: (TT1) Thrasmo's Trencher (TT, p54): A simple wooden plate (with runes beneath) that once per day provides a simple meal.

41: The Master Dining Hall: The central banqueting chamber. This room has two fireplaces (that again have flues exiting into the castle walls, and presumably thence to outside vents). The central table could easily sit 100 diners, and side tables could cater for 100 more between them.

Post Curse: Three half-human demons are preparing the table for an enormous feast, with all the foodstuffs being accessed via a small hatchway in the wall that actually leads into a subworld.

42: The Small Meeting Hall: Small only for the Palace of Cil, a raised platform and speaker's podium at one end, and the rows of low-backed wooden benches, suggest its purpose.

Post Curse: Someone has enacted a horrid ritual in here and inscribed a demonic circle before the podium. It stinks. Dried blood (only hours old) has drenched the circle, and anyone searching around will find the chewed end of a section of intestine.



43: Outer Crypt: Access to this windowless room is via a bronze double door, embossed with funerary ornamentation (death's heads, wreaths of flowers, and winged beings). These are cold to the touch, but open normally when pushed. Inside this long room are rows of stone sarcophagi set along each wall, plus dozens of stone, bronze, and wooden burial caskets set into large niches in the walls, often stretching four or five deep towards the high ceiling. (Room is in perpetual twilight.)
Prior to Curse: Have eerie shadows and distant echoing voices, and at most a few half-seen shadowy forms drifting at the edge of vision (but gone when one turns for a better view).

Post Curse: Other RPGs might have undead leaping from the sarcophagi in this place. I recommend the alternative of a strange demonic encounter from the random list.

43a: *This corridor merits its own note because someone or something has cut a circular hole four feet across through it, opening access to Room 26 and beyond. No rubble lies strewn around, which suggests magic was used.*

44: Inner Crypt: Again this room is entered by double-doors of bronze. On the left hand door is the embossed image of a lordly man with a beard, holding a flag attached to the end of a spear. "On the right hand door is the embossed image of a proud woman her right hand on the pommel of a sword, the point of which has been driven into the ground." These doors too open when pushed (if you are a steward or probationary Lord only) and are cold to the touch. When entering this room one descends via wide circular steps into a sunken area. "Once upon a time this room must have presented a noble image. But water has seeped in and the floor is now a large pond. From this lake various majorly-ornate sarcophagi emerge at regular intervals like islands of stone. No candles provide even the dimmest light, and no windows either, but a strange pink glow comes from a niche in the wall at the far end of the room." As with Room 36, the water in here has been gradually seeping out (or in), and connects to the swampy area outside.

Ghost Encounter: The last person to be entombed here was Varnil Slaye, prior to his curse making the central section of the Palace uninhabitable. Nobody worth addressing has been here since then. He will make the water ripple as if something nasty swims beneath the surface, and cause eerie shadows to flicker about the place. If Derve enters the room he will appear as a horrid ghost-ghoul apparition and try to scare her to death.

Found Item: (RS1) the Rose Amulet of Simbilis (see DDE Rose Amulet of Mel LeL Laio, p74): is a beautiful carved crystal in the niche. Open rose carved from pink crystal that demons find painful to be near (levy or penalty of 1), and increase wearer's bravery against demons (Wherewithal bonus/ boon of 1).

Rooms 45 & 46 are alternatives to the location of Slaye's Lair, and if so the description of the lair in section 5.3 supersedes or enhances what is here, with the original purpose abandoned/forgotten when Slaye took over. Split the whole area (both rooms) instead into three equal size rooms. Originally they would have been for junior officers (outer war room), senior officers (inner war room), and special commander-in-chief meetings.

45: The War Room: A huge pair of wooden doors, flanked on either side by a suit of black armor with a sealed visor shaped like the head of a carnivorous reptile. Each suit of armor holds a tall serrated spike. Should you so wish, especially if this is the Lair, the suits of armor are combat demons that vigorously resist intrusion. Inside the room is a huge map table on which various rotten charts lie faded and forgotten. Hundreds of small lead figurines (of human soldiers, human cavalymen, demons, and a few mages) lie in discarded and fallen rows.

46: The Commanders' Room: This room is still active after all this time. Not only is the map table still in fine preservation, but so are the realistic charts of terrain on which the hundreds of lead figurines stand poised for action. This is the decisive battle of the Cutz Wars in which the forces of Simbilis faced the forces of Marbon & Cil. Standing against the wall in a corner, covered in cobwebs, is a tall man in uniform and a fancy bronze hauberk. He/it is a vat-creature who was left here on duty and has the capacity to suspend its own animation. It will reawaken shortly after the room is entered. He is very out of touch, and at first believes the war to still be on, and them to be spies. (Gives them only his name, rank and serial number: Whurgan; Senior Adjutant; Batch 604, Series 3, Individual 17.) Truth is, the war was long over before this map was set up as a recreation, and he is merely deranged. Nonetheless he is loyal to Cil and thus may become an assistant if they convince him to accompany them.

Found Item: The hauberk worn by Whurgan is actually Miamatta's 'Cuirass of Purity' (see free article on 'Deities of the Dying Earth' available at the Violet Cusps page.)

46a: *The corridor here has a thick black line across it. The passage has been securely walled, making access difficult for anyone not a fully-skilled mason with a gang of strapping assistants and diverse demolition tools.*

47: Servants' Living Area: Junior and senior staff socialize and take meals here. Food is prepared in the main kitchen.





48: Servants' Sleeping Quarters: This room is split by thin wooden partitions, curtains, and raised platforms into sufficient sleeping quarters for all of the servants as actually work in the palace. Plus a few spares. Room will be allocated here to any servants that the PCs have with them. The best and most self-contained areas belong to the senior staff, none of whom have their own suites elsewhere.

49: Balcony above the Great Hall: Not really a room at all, rather a wide walkway with a stone parapet. Looking up from here, one sees that mighty buttresses support the ceiling (the floor of the third story). A peculiar portrait is in here, of an ancient Lord who wears a robe decorated with magical runes. *His eyes follow you, and faint whispers also (if you linger in perusal, especially at night). It is possible that a PC who spends time communing with this spirit might learn some things about Cil, but from long ago. (Everyone else in the house assiduously avoids touching it or even looking at it.) If any murder takes place here the spirit sees only fluid shadows or the shape of a person whom the shapechanger was pretending to be.*

50: Trophy/Games Room: There are two large billiard tables, card tables, and even a skittle alley here. All of these things are looked down upon by various beheaded creatures mounted on plaques on the walls. (Erb, hoon, deodand, bazil, gargoyle, codorfin, visp, even clevenger.)

The huge fireplace in here leads upwards via a chimney to the huge fireplace in Room 86. This was something the designers overlooked. However since smoke is flexible, we can assume that either (a) the flue is too small for passage, or (b) this point of communication between the two floors had simply never been considered before the PCs came along. If they can access the upper floor here, make doing such as difficult and filthy as possible. Post Curse: The heads howl horribly in the night, and occasionally look at passers-by balefully during the day.

51: The South Wing Library: A far lesser cousin than its predecessor in the North Wing, nonetheless this is a treasure chamber for bibliophiles - far more huge and impressive compared to anything the PCs will have seen outside of Kaiin Scholasticarium and perhaps the Tugersbir Institute. Should anyone spend long hours of specific study here they should be rewarded with specific or general knowledge, at least in the form of Tweaks, or possibly a minor knowledge of Cil (demonic) runes. However, the books and their contents are archaic, and so much of the information is about flora, fauna, and geography of the distant past, or extremely hard to find amidst the weird cataloguing system. Some few books are more modern, that is to say created less than a century ago. Books cannot be taken out of the library without activating a system of alarms, which bring the full contingent of guards running. (Though this information will not be revealed to the PCs unless they specifically ask.) Tarandjal may again appear to defend them, or they may talk their way out of an awkward situation by some imaginative means, or by simply saying they planned to read outside on the terrace.) The section indicated by the dots is marked on the floor by an old and barely visible

painted line. It is protected by magical force through which only Derwe and Tarandjal can pass. (And the books may not pass out of.) Anyone else who tries to cross it is zapped with painful magic force. Here are a number of books on magical theory/practicalities. If they somehow gain access and spend serious study time here, a PC might be rewarded with access to Demonic cantraps (such as those at DDE pp124/125).

Should one wish to learn how to make herbal potions or salves, and other small enchantments a few weeks of study here, combined with access to the necessary ingredients and a small workroom would be sufficient. If the PCs do gain access here there are no books of spells, but within various massive tomes the occasional spell might be found. Such requires hours of study for the fortunate, days for the less fortunate and weeks for the unlucky (before finding a spell they are capable of learning). Most of the books on magic talk in general terms, or provide a primer for learning how to become magically primed. Most of the incantations are not straightforward spells, but require ingredients that the PCs cannot possibly obtain or knowledge of rituals that they do not know. Should any PC think of some reasonable knowledge (or small magic) to help them in their endeavors, grant them some small chance to find it here in one section or other of this library. Nonetheless, much research will be required.

52: The Herbaceous Chamber: Light from the two tall windows is caught in large silver mirrors high up on the opposite wall, and smaller mirrors on the side wall, making this the brightest room in the South Wing. It has to be, because in here are two large raised and walled garden beds containing shrubs and flowers of great beauty. Someone (Derwe) tends these flowers regularly, assisted by various small and harmless imps, whom one only sees if one sits still for long enough admiring the beauty and wonderful scents available here. *See also Room 7 description, for those passing from 52 into the stairwell.*

53: The Infirmary: Several rows of beds, shelves of herbal concoctions and salves, bandages, disinfectants, splints - you name it. The most useful material here are in a locked cabinet that requires a steward's key to open - various potions that bolster the drinker against poison and disease, and even against fatigue. Two gardeners are malingering here, having feigned illness a few days ago when drunk, and decided to take a few days holiday reading and playing cards. This was also the infirmary for the entire palace long ago, and in a storage cupboard are various strange items (such as wands and runed gems) that the current Chirurgeon does not know the purpose. These include the helm, which the steward is superstitiously afraid of because he heard a voice in his head the one time he was brave enough to put it on. He still values it immensely and thinks it should stay here, so any attempt to remove it will need to be argued to the full.

Found Item: (HC1) Laksak's Helm of Curative Virtue (CC, p8): Speeds healing & advises wearer stringently on valuable health regimen.

54: The Upper Lounge: An area of divans and potted plants, where guests staying in the suites at 55 may pass the time.



55: The Upper Guest Room: The facilities to which Yodo would have taken Cugel in the original story, had Yodo heard the Amulet of Slaye in action before he did. This room has been disused for many years, but is still maintained to basic adequacy, should any nobles of Saskervoy or powerful mages and their retinues ever visit. GM invents suitable accommodations/accountrements.

Found Item: (BH1) A hairbrush that brushes hair on command but after a few seconds becomes quickly over-vigorous. This can be thrown and activated at the same time, so could actually be used as a distracter if thrown at a demon with fur. (One needs to know the deactivation cantrap as well.) Possibly it doesn't even need hair, but may just brush a demon's scalp if so commanded.

56: The New Ballroom: Overlooked by a minstrels' gallery that is reached via the spiral stairs, this room also contains huge drapes at various points around the walls, and a bank of huge mirrors along the wall adjacent to Room 57.

This is a fine place to set a trap for the shapechanger.

Found Item: (RD1) In the minstrels' gallery is an old and solid wooden chest that is locked and no-one has opened for many years. Inside is a raggedly-dressed clown puppet the size of a child. It has intelligence and may be seen to blink its eyes, move slightly etc. It will do anything to remain free of the box, including make up lies about its magical potency. At the last it will wail in despair: "No, no. Don't put me back in the box!" It is willful and full of mischief, and loves to be free. But it can be befriended, and has the advantage that it is utterly impervious to Dying Earth magic. A con-artist PC who suggests setting up a partnership ventriloquist con will be met with a most agreeable response. (It also doesn't detect as magic via any regular DE spells.)

57: The Upper Latrines: Basically the same as the Lower Latrines (12) but without the facilities for staff.

58: Stewards' Suites (2): Four separate suites belonging to Madams Nattuca, Lascatt and Zora, and Master Sarman. All have personal possessions lodged within, and individual keys lock all. These doors cannot be opened by a master key, unless in the hands of an ordained Lord of Cil.

GM must invent details if these are ever entered. Each door has a guardian spirit that will ask for anyone's business who tries to enter.

59: Servants' Dining and Meeting Hall: Long tables and benches, simple sofas, card tables. All are of basic quality and ornamentation only. None of the grandeur of the rest of the house is present here. (Off-duty servants were allowed to relax and socialize here. It saved having them cluttering up the place and getting in the way of people who mattered.)

Next to the spiral stair an arched corridor has been securely bricked up.

Found Item: (MP1) Beneath one of the card tables in a hidden drawer is a magical deck of cards made in exquisite style of ancient Cil design. The owner, whomsoever attunes themselves to the pack, gains a boon/bonus of 1 when Gambling with them.

60: Guests' and Residents' Latrines and Bathing Areas: Far more salubrious than the servant's facilities downstairs. Gold-rimmed bathtubs, gem-encrusted back-scrubbers made

with real erb-bristle, ivory-handled toilet brushes. Someone with an empty pack could make quite an investment in here. *Post Curse: A hideous demon with a beautiful singing voice is bathing here (in repulsive goo). Once the demon is dispatched the goo also attacks (as some kind of slime monster) that is very hard to physically injure but might be vulnerable to flame etc.*

61-64: Superior Guestrooms: Each is laid out a bit differently, but basically is a medium or large room, or huge suite of partitioned chambers. Each sleeping area has an enormous four-poster bed, teak wardrobes and dressing tables, the finest wicker baskets handcrafted by blind Romarth artisans, and similar. None seem to have been in use for a long time. Dust is thick, cupboards are empty save for a few cloaks & old shoes, and the beds were made when the room was last emptied.

Found Item: (WS1) A pair of shoes that leave no imprints on any surface that can be walked upon, or (with the right cantrap) can leave a trail pointing the exact opposite way to that which was actually walked.

Rooms 65, 66 & 67 are options for the location of Slaye's Lair, and if so the description of the lair in section 5.3 supercedes or enhances what is here, with the original purpose having been abandoned/forgotten.

65: Superior Guestrooms: As 61-64.

66: Superior Residential Suite: This huge room was in use when the palace was abandoned. Valuables were taken, away, but many clothes and ordinary possessions (of a married couple of Cil nobles) remain.

Found Item: (TH1) The Heliosdactum (TT p43 & DDE p71): A bronze brooch that releases pure sunlight either gently or a blinding flash. (The blinding flash discommodates and slightly injures demons in range.) A spiral stair goes up to the roof through the wall of this apartment, but is not accessible from this room. Having said that, a secret door exists (secret on both sides) that may be found by the extremely Perceptive.

67: Superior Residential Suites: As 66 but not the secrets.

68: Superior Residential Suite: The last person to stay in this room was one of the wizards of Cil, back when such a classification existed. Along with the various other guests, he left in a hurry. However, his room has been thoroughly rifled. Clothes are torn and strewn across the floor, the mattress slashed open, the desk tipped, papers shredded, and various closets, large and small, rifled and left with doors thrown open. *Found Item: (TF1) Yimbolo's Folding Closet (TT, p55): A closet that folds to the size and weight of a medium-sized suitcase when closed.*

69: Grand Meeting Hall: A stage at one end, and rows of comfortable padded benches with slightly reclining backs, shows that this place once held meetings of large numbers.

70: Upper Withdrawing Room: An enormous and luxurious area. PCs may have to Resist Indolence not to wish to take advantage of the numerous comfortable couches, next to which still stand wine jugs and cut-glass decanters. Various smoking paraphernalia indicate that indolence in these parts was taken to a level of high artistry. All portables are valuable.



The Grand Library: Rooms 71-75 make up the library that Derwe Coreme indicates takes up the “whole of the north wing” (TDE, p175). For the sake of this game version of the DE she was exaggerating, and of course neglecting to tell Cugel that he would have to brave the closed section of the palace to even get here.

71: Restricted Library of Demon Lore: The door to this room has been blown apart (literally) within recent times. Its shards lie scattered around, mostly inside the room, but some out here in the corridor. Entry to this room is therefore easy, though since no windows line the walls, its eerie gloom is not inviting. Inside is a large library of bookshelves, some of which are so tall that the wheeled ladders must be used. In several places a number of books are clearly missing, and only a small fraction of these have been left scattered about the floor near that point. Writing and reading desks, and chairs, number more than two dozen. All the books in here have some relationship to demonism, and more than just passing references: this is a specialist place. However, this does not mean it is easy for an untutored rascal to grab a few at random and study demonologia in his spare time. Expert tutoring would be required. Nonetheless, it might be possible to learn a spell or cantrap or two if lucky with one’s choice of which books to purloin. GM needs to invent books titles at will. Here are a few: “Baonbrag’s Guide to the Dark Realms”, “A Buffoon’s Clarification on Matters Demoniactal”, “The Seven Hells” by Trimper the Wise, “Unspeakable Oaths”, and “Kump’s Compendium of Evil”.

Found Item: (TA2) Thrupp’s Automated Identifier (DDE, p73): Small magical/clockwork powered machine that identifies demons and their powers (but does so according to Thrupp’s classic classification codes and flowery specialist language). May quickly run out of charges.

Found Item (OH1): A lead box (only ten inches long) with a series of sigils on the front, which is exceptionally cold to the touch. It has a simple clasp, though this is tight. If the box is opened it reveals inside a dark metal statue of some manner of bestial demon, held securely in red-velvet padding. This demon radiates such a massive aura of terror and despair that every round the box is opened those within 30ft must make a Magic resistance roll (‘Enhanced Action’ ruling.). (Those with 31-60ft must make such a roll every two rounds, and those within 61-90ft every three rounds. The feelings grow slightly less intense over that distance. Nonetheless anyone within 150 yards will feel them and become morose and pessimistic.) Anyone who rolls any failure loses a point from their *Wherewithal* pool. Rolling a HBS or PS negates this loss, but the person still cannot act. Only when rolling an IS does the person regain volition. (And note that unless they are standing right next to the box it takes a round merely to reach it, and a second success will be needed to close it.) When the *Wherewithal* pool is reduced to 0 any such person falls into a catatonic state, which lasts for several hours if unattended, and up to an hour even if returned to civilization and plied with cups of tea etc. Safety clauses occur if any GMCs are around, for whom the GM may fudge rolls. Demons are immune to this effect, as are human followers of this demonic being (but

no such humans are in the Palace). Use of this item could severely affect the battle for the Icon between the claimants, or could otherwise drop the PCs and their allies into deep do-do, so consider carefully the consequences of their possessing it.



72: Super-Restricted Library of Demon Lore: The door to this inner room has clearly been attacked magically. It is blasted and charred, even somewhat warped – but not enough to significantly vary its sturdy denial of access. It is possible that Derwe Coreme’s use of a pass key might open this door, if they convince her to come here prior to the curse being cast. This room is also windowless, but is not merely a library. As well as the numerous books bound in human skin, chained books quivering at their bonds, and massive leather-bound tomes embossed with hideous demonic visages, several peculiar wooden chairs that are carved to look as if they have demonic hands and feet, and demonic eyes merging from their backrests. At the center of the room is a Thaumaturgical circle chalked with red chalk upon the gray stone floor. At the center of it is some half-seen shimmering abhorrence. Behind the circle is a lectern on which rests a black-bound book (demonskin) that radiates great evil. Anyone who approaches it risks being whipped several times with magic invisible lashes. Anyone who survives this and takes hold of (or looks at) the book without uttering the appropriate countercurse is doomed. Not only are they killed by the shock of being flayed alive instantly, but they also release the translucent demon from the binding. Only Slaye is capable of sending this back to the subworld it came from. The only possible rescue option here is to flee whilst GMCs are eaten by the handful, or flee whilst the demon tears itself free. Since most of the books are cursed and require the appropriate spell to make them safe, there is no chance that PCs will leave this adventure with a library of demonic lore. (Well, there is one chance – if the GM encourages, and feels confident to run, a series where one or more PCs are budding demonists.)



Prior to Curse: Something large prowls and growls behind the door, snuffling at the wood whenever they approach. The creature making this noise is a demon that is very powerful, and right at the limit of the ability of the PCs to stop it. If they are poorly-equipped and weak in magic, then it is beyond that ability, and GMCs or even PCs may perish.

Post Curse: Whatever is behind the door has been joined by several fellows, but not necessarily its friends. The noise rises and falls, but never stops. It sounds like whatever beasts or demons within are tearing both each other and the library books apart. Occasionally something thuds heavily against the door. If released these demons rampage through the Old Palace slaying anyone they find, and yes, they have shredded every book in the library

73: Restricted Library 1 (Erotica): Need we say more.

Naughty scrolls, parchments and limp-backed tomes mingle with serious treatises on the athletic and/or spiritual aspects of carnal communion. No prizes for guessing which ones most PCs will find more readily appealing.

Found Item: A box of two silk scarves embroidered with Cil runes.

Anyone who dances with these scarves gains a bonus of 1 to Seduction rolls made at that time (providing the surroundings are otherwise conducive and their target is of the appropriate age range).

Prior to Curse: After someone has been in here for a few minutes, 3-5 attractive and playful semi-corporeal sylphs appear and drift around, stroking peoples arms and hair, and breathing softly in the ears of readers. In times of old the magicians of Cil could make these beings more substantial, for ease of congress.

Post Curse: The sylphs still appear but are more like malevolent succubae. PCs determined to browse may risk losing Health pool points, but may have to Resist Rakishness to avoid this fate.

74: Unrestricted Library: This is a treasure trove of general knowledge on almost any subject imaginable that isn't covered in the adjoining rooms. Outside of the Kaiin Scholasticarium, Tugersbir Institute and the like, this is the largest library the PCs may ever see. In fact of all the rooms, this library illustrates exactly how much of an anachronism the Palace of Cil is. It belongs to a former aeon, an age of greatness that has not been present in the world for a very long time. Gaps in the shelves show from where most of the material for the South Wing's library was taken. The door to the left (73) is mostly covered by a long silk-hanging, on which is the pattern of two people standing in embrace. The door to the right is emblazoned with a single silver rune (translates as 'Magic').

Research: Foresighted PCs may look in here for maps of the lands to the east and south, and it would be churlish to simply deny their existence.

Anyone making the appropriate successes finds numerous maps, both individual large rolled parchments and pages within books. Most are so old as to be meaningless to PCs who do not know local history, but persistence will pay off with the discovery of geographic assessments only 2 or 3 centuries old. From these they can see that two roads lead through the Mountains of Magnatz, and both begin at the end of the single eastward road that heads away from Cil Town and parallels the coast. The first leads north-east around the furthest tip of the range, before beading back south towards the 'Kingdom of Dharad', whatever that is or was. The

second winds through the mountains themselves, moving very roughly in a south-east direction. This road, though more direct as the pelgrane flies, is punctuated by several worrying landmarks such as 'Deep Blade Gorge', 'River of Lost Hope', 'Hundred Arch Bridge', 'Hoon Woods', and 'Windstick Devil Canyon'.

75: Restricted Library 2 (Magic Lore): An unauthorized person touching this door takes an automatic Injury and is knocked backwards several feet in an arch of sparks. Only resisting magic reduces this instead to the loss of a single Health point as one spins away from the full force of the charge. The only authorized person is an ordained Lord of Cil. Given sufficient time Tarandjal might be able to break this barrier, or PCs may have some manner of magic, but remember the demonic defenses of the Palace. Ideally PCs will never get in here, as the magic lore of previous aeons would then be at their fingertips. Mind you, since it takes days or weeks of study to learn a single spell, especially from ancient convoluted tomes... The GM decides.

76: Scriveners' Hall: Writing desks in rows and storage areas around all of the walls initially make this look like a schoolroom, but the desks aren't all facing the same direction. Much of the material here is still in good repair thanks to enchantments. This was where the Palace Librarian oversaw copy and repair of valuable tomes and scrolls. If the PCs want writing materials this is the place to get them. Some of the vellums are still in reasonable condition too.

Found Item: (SP1) A set of seven pens in a silver box that copy whatever the master pen does. IE the writer sets up several books/ scrolls and makes seven copies at the same time.

77: The Waiting Room: A large number of chairs, divans and small tables. The balcony area that juts over the inner garden (15) is roofed, and once upon a time afforded fine views. Various small sculptures and decorative pots enhance the area. *Magic Oddities: (GG1) Three floor-ornaments that look a bit like the imps Gark & Gookin can actually be activated as eager retainers.*

Room 78 (combined with 97) is an option for the location of Slaye's Lair, and if so the description of the lair in section 5.3 supercedes or enhances what is here, with the original purpose having been abandoned/forgotten. Access will be via Room 36, and Room 78 will be split in two, to accommodate the first two rooms of the lair, and the upward spiral stair will be relocated to the far side of the tower so both rooms must be crossed.

78: The Lord's Receiving Room: This room may be only accessible by Derwe Coreme using one of the master keys, or by using unusual magic, or from the room beneath (see '36'). As well as the usual couches, huge chairs, ornate wooden tables, impressive tapestries and standing vases, over to one side is a small raised platform on which are a number of small stone stools

Found Item: Each of the tapestries depicts a once-famous historic scene in the Cutz Wars. Each come alive when looked at for more than a few heartbeats. These magical cloths are huge, but each would be worth a



fortune if taken and sold. A small party of adventurers could easily roll one up and carry it.

Found Item: (QI1) As soon as someone touches the platform a quintet of imps arrives with peculiar instruments and begins to play. The music is terrible because they haven't practiced in so long. The imps are tied to a ruined golden plate hidden in a secret compartment at the side of the stage. Whomsoever carries this plate can command the obedience of the imps.

Found Item: (MM1) Beneath a divan at the corner of the skirting, mostly covered in dust – a steel-rimmed monocle with coruscating rainbow lens. This charged item is a regular magic piece, and allows the wearer (who speaks an appropriate activation cantrap) to observe the overlap between the magical world and the regular world. The untrained see only varicolored auras, but even they may soon learn to distinguish the shades that indicate regular magic and demonic magic for instance. Each charge lasts for only two minutes.

79: Superior Residential Suites: As 66, save a group of young nobles stayed here, and the place is in utter disarray.

Prior to Curse: The ghost of Tenchard Domber is restless here. A pretender for Lordship he was murdered in this room by a Slaye, and hates all non-Dombers.

80: Lower Drawing Room: Windows on both sides give light to this once-sumptuous room. Divans of all sizes, miniature ponds (long-since dried out), portraits of fetching young noblefolk of old Cil, and round tables each boasting a number of (empty) ornate brass bowls.

Found Item: (HC2) A coin that stays spinning indefinitely when set spinning on a tabletop. However, after 2 minutes it begins to sing a hypnotic song. Anyone who hears this must roll their Magic as a resistance (limit of two re-rolls). On any failure they are entranced and without volition. This does not include the person that set it spinning. No cantrap is required, a Cil rune marks each face, and people who are angry or distracted by major events when the coin is set spinning are immune. (IE one must be aware of the coin and in a space to contemplate it.)

Found Item: (RP1) A Gold Brooch in the shape of crossed rapiers. When the appropriate cantrap is uttered (and a point expended from one's Magic pool) the rapiers become actual size, and are sturdy tools of violence.

81: The Treasury: The door to this room is unusually sturdy. It has three locks, side by side. Each must be operated simultaneously by a steward (or ordained Lord of Cil), each holding their own master key. The door is a demon in its own right, held in this form by ancient magic. If they do ever gain access, the treasures in here are of two kinds. Firstly, copper and ceramic urns hold thousands of old silver coins, or small gems of little comparative value. Secondly, locked cases (often magically sealed/protected) hold coinage of higher value, bars of precious metals, larger gems, and valuable jewelry. At the back of the room is a sealed vault (with a metal door on which numerous magical runes have been embossed) that the PCs will likely never open. It contains heraldic magical heirlooms of the Cil houses, such as Garth Haxt's Silver Shield (that repels magical attacks), the Domber Bow (that turns arrows to flame missiles), the Marbon Helm (that stores Magic pool points),

etc. If in doubt as to what items here can do, refer to the list of spells in Turjan's Tome and invent variational effects that are present in appropriate (charged) enchanted items. Anything the PCs take will need reference codes so as to maintain the usual identification system.

Post Curse: The treasury door exudes evil and has a Magical attack that drains the life energy (Health pool points) of anyone who comes near.

NB: There is no access from here to the tower above, and the stone floor means that even if Slaye's lair is up there no sounds transfer either way.

82: Treasury Guard Room: The door to this room is huge and made of brass. At about eye-level is the outside of a peephole, and instead of a handle it has a huge brass wheel onto which runes have been carved. Only stewards or ordained Lords may turn this wheel. Anyone else suffers an attack of freezing Magic and may lose Health points if they cannot break free or are not somehow rescued. (Regular spells will assist with rescue but are unlikely to nullify the door's magic.) This is where the guards of the treasury were posted. Typically, the Lords of Cil did not employ regular guards. Instead, inside here is a bizarre translucent pseudopodic creature the mass of a horse. It is hard to harm through regular means, and also resistant to magic, but is not shy of lashing out and clubbing people with its tentacles. Unusually for the Palace it is a being of the Overworld, and not of the demon realms. Thus it does not change after the curse.

83: Tapestry Room: The walls are hung with several medium-sized tapestries, and beneath the windows are long sewing tables, plus long wooden boxes containing rolls of cloth, balls of colored thread, and heavy-duty sewing equipment.

Post Curse: This room is infested with albinoid slugs that are crawling all around and destroying these priceless relics with their acidic secretions.

Each slug is close on one-foot in length. When pierced with metal they explode, drenching anyone within 3ft with acid that causes damage equivalent to 2 point off a Health pool (or 1pt if in armor).

84: Superior Residential Suite: The door is magically held in the standard DE way, and so can be opened by regular magic. A small suite for this Palace, but large for anywhere else, this room was hurriedly abandoned. Bed unmade, drawers & cupboards open, clothes strewn on the floor, and an opened brass box looks like it was hurriedly pulled from under the bed.

Found Item: (MW1) Hidden by the dust that has accumulated within is a single magician's wand. This is a regular magic charged item that makes anything inanimate that it touches come to bizarre wriggling life.

85: The Games Room: Dart boards, skax boards, billiard tables, card tables, three skittle alleys, and a small roped area that may well have been used for contests of physical brawn and dexterity. Within the roped area is a humanoid made of sack, slumped into a corner. If the 'ring' is entered it leaps up and engages the challenger in a lively game of fisticuffs.

Post Curse: A number of medium-sized demons are enjoying the facilities here, but doing so in a way that is destroying (or at least vandalizing) the structural integrity of all they use. The sparring partner is now possessed and demands a rematch with menaces. (It is also a lot tougher.)

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86: The Grand Ballroom: A huge fireplace at one end of the room, and a small stage (presumably for minstrels) at the other. The magnificent tiled floor shows abstract patterns of startling beauty. Metallic glints from within them suggest that they may reflect light when the room's ambience is strong enough. At the center of the ceiling is a solid silver globe about the same diameter as a cart-wheel; it hangs by a chain from the rafters. (This magical device could be commanded to emit sheets of colored light during dance events.)

Found Item: (MF1) A well-crafted fiddle. Is inside a secretly-binged window seat in the balcony area. The first person to touch it in any day has the ability to play it marvelously for an hour (1 Magic pool point).

87: The Trophy Hall: This place is fairly macabre, although to be fair during the Palace's heyday its atmosphere may well have been more impressive. Four sections of trophies exist, each one identified by a bronze plate beneath the head that is attached to a large wooden plaque in the shape of a standard Cil shield: (i) half-men [asm, bazil, deodand, erb, gid, grue, hoon, pelgrane & sime]; (ii) lesser demons [consult Demons of the Dying Earth, pp18-22, for names, or invent]; (iii) other DE creatures: basilisk, cockatrice, dintraj [a lizard man], giant fancicle, laharq, rock goblin, shamb, sindic, visp; and (iv) aquatic predators: blue codorfin, white codorfin, immature keak, and sea-hag.

Prior to Curse: A deodand ghost is here, the proxy representative of all the slain 'trophies'. It will talk of murder and call them callous for using the slain as visual entertainment. If challenged that this has nothing to do with them, it will demand that the PCs take down all the trophies and leave them in the wild, to decay as nature intended.

Post Curse: The trophies seem semi-alive, their ghosts groaning and calling from their plaques upon the wall. The sea-hag might cast demonic spells ('Demons of the Dying Earth', pp30-34 & 58-64)

88: The Nympharium: The room is still beautiful. Urns are filled with large ferns, beautiful scents waft on a warm breeze, and in the distance sensual music plays. Clearly magic is at work. Taking up almost a third of the room is a large oblong bathing pool, its edges raised 2ft from the floor. Aromatic mists drift from this across the chamber. The roof appears to be open to the elements, but this is an enchantment to allow vision through the tiles above. In the corner of the room that abuts Rooms 87 and 100 (only 5 yards from the door to 88) is a large bank of ornamental ferns. Behind them is a secret door that is hidden, and cannot be opened from this side. (Except if it suits your story that they discover and enter the lair at this time, then it can be opened if touched by a steward.)

Found Item: (NF1) Beneath one of the decorative urns (which presumably used to hold flowers) is a magical silver flute. When played it produces divine music that (a) adds a single bonus of 1 to any Seduction attempt made immediately after it, and (b) is extremely pleasant to nymphs ears.

Prior to Curse: The nymphs flit around as half-seen beings at the corner of vision, but can be tempted into full presence by gifts and flattery.

Post Curse: The magic of this place is broken and gone. It is a sad memory of joys and beauty now driven away forever. The pool is now filled with noxious roiling slime, which exudes tentacles to attack anyone close.

89: The Magical Laboratory: This place cannot be accessed easily (having magical wards in place) except by Ramaf Slaye. He knows how to pass these, because it was the one part of the defenses that Varnil managed to break. Nonetheless, the wards that protect it are regular magic now, and the PCs may have spells to break these. Inside is a fully-equipped mage's laboratory, although much of it is in disarray or abandoned to dust and cobwebs. But, about a quarter of the area (when you add the cleaned benches and vats) is back in use. Against one wall is a series of seven vats, all of which bubble and gurgle as the nutrients within them are circulated via copper pipes attached to a large barrel-shaped tank about nine-feet high and nearly that much wide. Anyone peering into the vats is in for a shock. The closest vat has a hairless homunculoïd the size of a small ape, the furthest vat has an almost complete (except for also being hairless) replication of Ramaf Slaye – just not quite as old. The other vats have every progression in between.

These are the sources of the replicant 'Slayes' that the PCs will have encountered. If you deem it likely to be fun, then a Slaye replicant is in here overseeing the valuable creations.

Found Item: (TA1) Amulet of Azoic revelation (IT, p34): An amulet that lets you identify person or beings who are vat creatures.

Found Item: (DS1) A Box of 3 Demiurge Scales (DERPG, p114): Strange coruscating otherworldly scales. When worn these boost your effective Magic rating by 1 as regards resistance to spells. Unfortunately they also decrease your effective rating by 1 when casting. These have no runes upon them but look obviously bizarre and magical and valuable.

Found Item: (TD1) The Vigilant Demarcation (IT, p54): 30ft of thread. When laid in a circle blasts first to step in with Galvanic Thrust.

Found Item (BC2): Blue Concentrate Projector (under a bench) See DERPG, p116. Only two charges left, discommodes with painful spray.





90: The Chambers of the Palace Wizard: This room cannot be accessed from 89, unless an authorized key-holder uses their master key. Also note that a spiral stair leads up to observation deck above, and it is possible to descend from there if any probationary lord or a steward lifts the trap door. Up here is a strange seat, above which rests an enormous lens, held in place by telescoping struts that can be adjusted by a pair of circular handles, one built into each arm rest. Foot pedals also move the chair itself. (This is a bizarre kind of mini-observatory, part mechanical and part-magical. Who knows what fortunes this would amass if sold in Kaiin!) In the room itself is a large and sumptuous salon (bedroom), plus an office area with desk and storage cupboards. The most interesting thing is that in one corner is a cage in which is a demonic nymph. Although still attractive, it is insane from its prolonged activity and may repeat charming phrases only to attack (with magically manifesting claws) through the bars anyone who comes close enough.

Found Item: (TC1) The Yadrnix Charm (IT, p55): A dewdrop-shaped pendant that deflects the first spell against you in any day.

Found Item: (TN1) The Necrotic Ear Horn (IT, p46): Ornate horn that facilitates basic communication with corpses.

91: The Laundry Drying Area: This area is covered by the turret roof above, but is open and airy, with huge doorways and glassless windows. Metal rods protrude from the walls at various odd angles, apparently in pairs, but their purpose is obscure. (They are not levers: ropes were strung between them to hang laundry on.) Up on the turret roof are larger metal racks 6ft – 8ft high, with many slats between them that have gaps of a few inches between. (The good weather drying area.)

Prior to Curse: Clinging to the wall below the roof is a Pelgrane of considerable size and wit. It will wait until the PCs vulnerable and then spring into action, aiming to have one of them for dinner. If it grabs someone it carries them the center of the main roof and dangles them over the garden in order to torment them. Some manner of rescue may be effected, and/or the victim may fall. Ideally if they are a PC they land on thick foliage and can be rescued whilst the pelgrane is distracted, and later healed. (If this is apposite timing and Turret 96 is the place you have selected for Slaye's lair, then, the pelgrane lands by coincidence atop Turret 96. And this disturbs one of the Slaye simulacra who comes out to try and shoo it away and is devoured, thus allowing the first victim to escape in the confusion, and giving other PCs a big clue about where to go next.)
Post Curse: This is not a pelgrane but a demon if they haven't been here before or if the pelgrane was scared away or disposed of.

92: Upper Guard Post: Various benches and tables, plus a rack for pole-arms, another for swords, and a third containing two metal bows (rusted and ruined). The roof of this tower is unusual in that it contains the disassembled parts of a large missile weapon, plus its oilskin wrapped rotational housing.

93: Tarandjal's Laboratory: It's not that he deserves the best room in the house, just that his experiments can be noisy and smelly, so he has to have the most well-ventilated and removed room in this wing. This room has been the one allotted to the

palace wizard for generations. Many interesting things can be found here by those who understand the basic ways of magic, including a rudimentary vat and a living homunculus in a jar. Traditionally the palace wizard lives in a small annex off his workshop, and Tarandjal is no different. He has his own protections (created by more powerful wizards long ago) and so is safe here. It could be that some people end up sheltering there throughout the nights, and this might be one solution to the murders (but not an ideal one). The top of the turret is gained via a metal ladder, and up there are typically wizardry things: a large telescope on a pivoting mounting, numerous instruments for measuring the stars, a Thaumaturgic circle. Tarandjal may invite PCs up here during the daytime and point out the distant boundaries that once marked the glorious lands of Cil. If so, invent various towns and battles he speaks of.

Room 94 may be part of Slaye's Lair, if you decide the lair is at 96 and when they reach that turret you notice 94 has not yet been visited either. If 94 is part of Slaye's Lair, then ignore the contradictory ideas below, and note that Slaye makes his way to this turret around the edge of Turret 95, and that tiles are cracked in many places against the walls of 95.

94: Isolated Turret Room: Situated above the Upper Latrines, although there is no access from that room. The only way this turret can be reached is via climbing over the tiles around Turret 93 or 95, or by breaking open one of the doorways from those locations out onto the parapet.

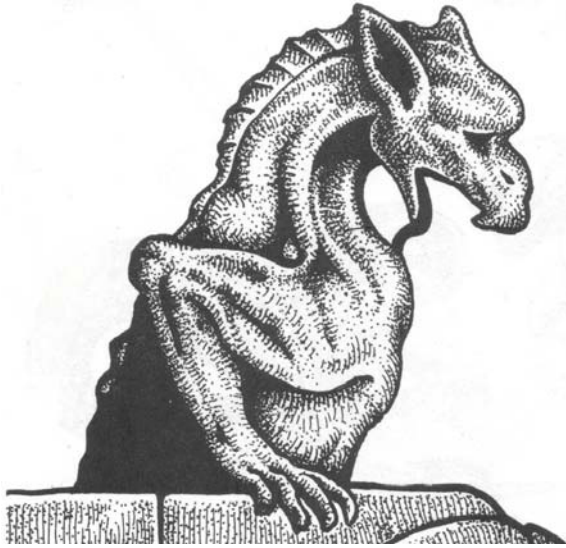
95: The Coreme Suite: Only Derwe can pass through the wardings into this room. Others who try to will find that they become enmeshed in sticky webs. This was originally Amalda Coreme's room, and much of its furnishings and interesting items have been left as they were since that time. Derwe spends a lot of time here trying to decipher her aunt's journals and learn her magic. One part of the room has been partitioned off into a small magical workshop. On top of this turret is also a large telescope on a revolving mount, but nothing else. Derwe very rarely goes up here, as she and her aunt used to spend a lot of time here and the memories are too painful. The trapdoor is securely bolted & sealed with cantraps.

Tower 96 a good second option for the location of Slaye's Lair, and if so it can be split into two or three levels, reached by the ascending stone stair. If the lair is here, its description in section 5.3 supercedes or enhances what is here, with the original purpose having been abandoned/ forgotten when Slaye took over. NB: If the PCs have also yet to visit Turret 94, then make that the third room of the lair. All this needs is a slight adaptation of the action, and for one or more of the servants (or the Slayes) to flee in, or attack from, this direction.

96: Isolated Turret Room: This turret room is/was the eastern upper guard post, with benches, weapon racks, and a strange machine with crumbling leather straps. It still actually works and is a magical weapon sharpener. The spiral stair only goes to the roof – it does not descend to a lower level. If this is not Slaye's Lair, then this room is an upper lounge area with divans and low stone tables.



Found Item: (BT1) Beneath a divan is a bejeweled telescope (that actually 'telescopes' and is in fine working order). Once know how to read the runes on the side, you can use this to make a ten-second recording of whatever is viewed and then play it back for anyone you think will benefit from seeing it. It holds up to seven views before the earliest view is erased.



Room 97 is an option for the final room of Slaye's Lair, with the first two rooms being inside Room 78 (see 78 for full details). If this is the lair, then details at 5.2 supercede the purpose and furnishings described here.

97: The Lord's Bedchamber and Salon: Less grand than the other chambers in this turret, but still the biggest personal suite in the whole Palace. All the goods here are protected by cantraps that have kept them all in excellent condition. PCs can kit themselves out in the grandest of royal gear. Prepare your best adjectives for the descriptions of clothes inside the regal wardrobes!

Found Item: (MH1) A magnificent three-tiered hat that contains an imp that lives in an interdimensional space attached to it. It can open a door in the hat and peer out when called (correct cantrap). It will then observe other bats in the vicinity and rapidly upgrade its own by adding baubles and fringes, or making alterations from within. Such acts can involve it climbing around the hat, and the hat shaking and twitching. Having a supremely fashionable bat adds boon/bonus +1 to Etiquette and Seduction in circumstances where people care about such things.

Found Item: (CM1) A carnival mask that is a charged item that lets you look like someone else (who's appearance you know well) for a single hour. (Body also changes shape, but only within moderate limits. It makes the right gender contours beneath clothing, but not the actual parts.)

Found Item: (CH1) A crystal horse small enough to fit into one's palm. When the right cantrap is uttered it expands to a full-size riding beast still made of shining crystal. Unfortunately due to an error in the magical preparation whenever a DF is rolled when riding it stumbles, falls and shatters, causing the rider an injury. Repairwork then requires a magician's laboratory. (NB: It won't stumble if only walking or trotting.)

Found Item: (JF1) Jar of oily face cream (finite applications). Increases one's appearance when used. +1 bonus/boon to Persuasion & Seduction.

The Probable Lair:

Rooms 98/99/100 are the primary option for Slaye's Lair. If you decide to use them for this purpose, then ignore or adapt the descriptions that follow, and in preference refer to section 5.3.

98: First Schoolroom: Here is where the youngsters of the castle were taught. Rows of grim benches, stationary cupboards with moldering reams of paper, boxes of crayons, and suitably basic storybooks, all covering aspects of Cil's glorious ascension from a subtly nationalistic standpoint.

99: Second Schoolroom: Here is where slightly older children were taught. A skylight up above would have provided some natural lighting and ventilation (and may provide surprise entry to this area if PCs are bold and agile and this is Slaye's lair). Cupboards contain actual books for schoolwork, although all are still now all crinkled and fragile with age. As well as pencils, here are quills and ink. In the corner is a skeleton on a frame.

Found Item: (SQ1) In the master's desk are three magical silvered quills that will copy dictation in a beautiful cursive handwriting (in triplicate).
Found Item: (HS1) The human skeleton is enchanted so that when the right cantrap is spoken it will obey its master, fetching and carrying, dancing, attacking someone, running up and down a corridor. The elemental attached to it is reasonably intelligent and as well as being able to understand instructions as long as two sentences, it can retain three such instructions in its memory, such as: 'Dance whenever I play this tune.'

100: Schoolmaster's Quarters: This area is divided into one study room with desks and cupboards and a small library of educational texts, and three small suites. The largest of these is in the corner that abuts with the walls of Rooms 89 & 88. Hidden in the back of a closet is a spyhole and secret door leading into the nympharium (88). If this area is Slaye's Lair, then the existence of this secret door has alluded him and could be his undoing. (But place the inner sanctum in Room 98, not here in 100.)

Found Item: (CB1) A locked metal box contains a book that is also locked with a hasp. The key is also in the box. The book is entitled. "Madam Lysip's Illustrated Compendium of the Athletic Conjunctions". When the book is unlocked it leaps into the air and flies around like a berserk thing, attacking anyone in the room when the lock is opened. (But ignoring anyone who enters the room after this.) It is extremely hard to catch, can deal you a nasty knock, and has entirely blank pages.

Found Item: (CB2) In the largest room is a huge tome on a reading stand. It is the 'Compendium of Universal Knowledge'. This tome has a mind of its own, and a (patronizing) voice. You can ask it for information and it will show you pictures and text. This is all historical mind you, so of limited use except to antiquarians. Mind you it can also sense the inherent nobility of those around it, so can be useful for sensing impostors, if you flatter it sufficiently. A magician of quality would pay well for this tome, very well, and others might wish to coax lurid views from it. It can be carried in a pack, but because of its weight, little else could be carried without risking overload.



Appendix 6: The Halcyon Early Days in Cil

Stewards will be reasonably polite (just in case the PCs end up becoming full Lords), and the senior staff will be utterly obsequious, though not necessarily diligent. Sarman sets up various activities, assigning Yodo as their personal assistant (a Steward spy) who accompanies them always, even appearing often where not expected. All GMCs will take it for granted that probationary Lords must do these things, and Players should be clear that PCs that bow out of activities without a good excuse or many even with excuses are tantamount to admitting they are impostors.

Sarman: Behaves very formally, but is clearly testing them as to their suitability to be accepted as Lords.

Yodo: Too often around. Overly-curious, though he tries to be diligent. The PCs may eventually have to take him into their confidence, bribing or Persuading him to assist in their deception. He is remarkably open to flattery and hard cash.

The Erb Hunt: Coincidentally Erbs have been seen (or their spoor found) in the woods these last few weeks, and the Lords of old traditionally hunted these beasts for sport. PCs will be kitted out & given a fine riding Bauk each (Ψ RIDING) They may ask for refresher training in the Erb Spear, but how GMCs respond to requests for aid depends on relationships being formed, Persuasions etc. The Lords normally went out alone or with squires, but no GMCs will readily agree to take this role. Only Yodo must go along, but he will be scared and suggest seeking assistance. Tailor the dangers to whatever strengths the PCs have. The signals of success were returning with erb heads/pelts cleanly severed and basically prepared.

The Palace Ball: Some families of wealth, or at least wealthy pretensions, still exist in the town. Thus Sarman will have a garden party organized for one afternoon, which is to evolve into a grand ball in the evening. He (and senior staff & other stewards) will be obviously wishing to assess the new Lords for Etiquette and general appropriate behavior. Opportunities: Croquet (Ψ QUICK-FINGERS, ATHLETICS -1); Engage with Town Snobs (Ψ ETIQUETTE, GAMBLING, IMPOSTURE, PEDANTRY, PERSUASION, SEDUCTION, SCUTTLEBUTT); Eating various dinner courses appropriately (Ψ ETIQUETTE, PERCEPTION -1, STEWARDSHIP -1); Dancing (Ψ ATHLETICS -1, ETIQUETTE -1), Mingling with impressive aplomb (Ψ ETIQUETTE, SEDUCTION).

The Saskervoy Delegation: This could be combined with the Palace Ball, with Sarman seizing the opportunity of the official arrival and political upset as a means to evoke some of the old pomp and ceremony. At some point a formal interview will be held, with the stewards in attendance (officially as back-up for the 'Lords', but really in order to judge their responses). The challenge for the PCs when facing the delegation is to counter their accusations with convincing denial, put different spins on things, and declare themselves reborn as the Lords of Cil (in whatever way they choose to explain this). The Saskervoy folk (including some personalities that the PCs abused) have as much knowledge as you deem it reasonable and entertaining for them to have garnered. They may even be accompanied by suspicious claimants from Tugersbir, who demand that the PCs be returned for trial. The Saskervoy folk have some armed retainers, and can also possibly recruit burly sailors from their vessel, so this might end in an actual attack on the Palace, that the PCs need to orchestrate the defense of. In the end, the folk of Cil have a huge traditional hatred of the folk of Saskervoy. So if all looks desperate as far as the PCs are concerned it may suddenly be revealed that the stewards (and everyone else) welcomes the chance to give Saskervoy folk a sound verbal and physical drubbing.

Informal Activities: In their spare time, the PCs may socialize in town, explore drinking dens, and otherwise squander what wealth they have available (or the probationers stipend they bargained for). How much time you (the GM) allow to be spent on personal relationships and spontaneous PC activities is up to your feeling of how well this makes the game fun.

Collecting the Taxes from Vauntsat: Thirty miles north (two days ride) across the bleak tundra is the only other settlement of note still in Cil. Amidst the ruins of this formerly impressive city a settlement of hardened farmers (gardening amidst the ruins) and hunters (prowling the Great Erm). Many of them are also Busiaco or part Busiaco, and their settlement is a lively one where hard-drinking, fist-fighting, and deodand wrestling are considered pleasant pastimes. Few of these details are remembered in Cil, where Sarman has (after much fevered research) simply found a new way to test these interlopers. How much help (and it will be little at the most) the PCs get to accompany them is up to their skills. Lords of old would have enforced their demands with sorcery and cold steel, and Sarman very much says that if they don't do this then their claims will be much derided. At Vauntsat their demands will be greeted with derision and they will be thrown into prison. (Even if they – wisely – decide not to make such demands this will happen.) The folk of Vauntsat separated from Cil's dominion generations ago. However, some in the city like a good show and arrange for the PCs to engage in a series of contests to win their freedom: aforementioned deodand-wrestling, boasting, knife-throwing, bare-knuckle fighting, riding a wild Bauk in an arena, hurling the clewenger... Each PC must agree to one contest for the amusement of the locals in the old city square. The idea is that if they win a majority of contests they will be allowed to go free. But even if they don't the locals will take pity and let them go. The idea of getting any taxes will be greeted with derision at any stage. Play these people as dangerously tough and untrusting gypsy types, with an initial uncomfortable series of interactions in the town's only inn. This is an ideal final encounter in the halcyon days, with PCs arriving (bedraggled and battered) back in Cil just as things start to go bad. (Thus the very idea of centuries of neglected taxes will be forgotten.)



Appendix 7: Tag-Lines

Tag-Lines are offered for five PCs, and presumes that play proceeds at a certain rate. Such circumstances will not necessarily be the case in your running of this adventure, so you must be prepared to invent tag-lines on the fly (for instance if PCs stay in Smolod & Grodz for two sessions) or give out any extras as bonus offerings, and/or re-order them. Should the final episodes be hard to plot (in terms of what the PCs decide to explore) consider giving out all remaining tag-lines with the instruction that a maximum of 3 or 4 can be used in any individual session.

Session 1: Arrival at Cil, Smolod & Grodz

“I renew my desire for revenge against Iucounu with the utmost zeal! No manner of exacting penalties can be sufficient”

“I mean no disrespect, but your outlook upon the world seems markedly incongruent with any degree of cold rationality.”

“Your protestations are without substance. I merely wished to examine the article in question for my personal edification.”

“Let us consider the most favorable aspect. We are alive and considerable leagues closer to our ultimate goal.”

“What manner of exotic folk stare into the world through peculiar violet eyes? My wariness is roused.”

“I find it perplexing to believe that we gaze upon the last vestiges of the glorious Empire of Cil.”

“I have seaweed in my hair, and sand within my breeches. When will this bitter nightmare end?”

“I am reluctant to march into the unknown, where I shall surely become some half-man’s repast before the coming dawn.”

“How hard can it be to avail ourselves of a fine pair of cusps to share, or even, dare I suggest it, a set for each of our company?”

“What manner of repulsive substances are these? Surely we are not expected to dine upon such deficient provender?”

“Your manner is overly-demanding, and your attire is poor. Do you not recognize your betters when they stand before you?”

“Alas, I cannot see the same spectacular views which you yourself observe. Perhaps there is a way to rectify this situation?”

“As poor as these accommodations are, I infinitely prefer them to cold and fearful death in the barren salt marshes.”

“Have you no ambition but to labor thus, or live in grandiose delusion until the sun goes dark? I offer far wider alternatives.”

“Your slanderous claims have no foundation in actuality. I am an innocent beset by preposterous accusation.”

Session 2: Smolod & Grodz, the Ruined Keep and Benbadge Stull

“You need not address me in such a impertinent fashion. I am neither addled nor hard of hearing.”

“Do I detect a displeasing miasma? My wits warn me that such a stench does not herald our good fortune.”

“Now is an opportunity for us to revel in the greatness that marks us apart from the common herd!”

“This unexpected fortune may be our best means of salvation. Let us pursue it with vigor and determination.”

“Whilst we suffer, Iucounu quaffs Tankilvat and dines upon the eggs of quails. One day he shall devour my vengeance.”

“I would gladly exchange these marsh-encrusted rags for the shining attire of a Lord of old Cil.”

“It is not conceivable that I labor like a common serf. My forebears stand high amongst the nobility of Kaiin!”

“Is it ever to be thus? Crumbling ruins and endless vistas of barren marsh. I refute this fate with all my will!”

“I suspect that you are ignorant, and know nothing save the color of fish and the wetness of water.”

“Having experienced our fates thus far, it is equally likely to reveal vast wealth or some manner of cankerous doom.”

“It is not with the greatest enthusiasm that I greet this particular addition to our widening experiences of the far north.”

“Such wonders bespeak of far greater days. Days to which I am infinitely more suited.”

“Let us tarry no longer. I am anxious to reach shelter before the full threat of night’s dark is upon us.”

“Greetings, peculiar sir, pray guide us on the road to Cil. We have many leagues to travel, and destinies to fulfil.”

“This portentous tale spurs me to consider that high ambition may not always be an abstract hope.”

Reserves

“Your attitude does you no justice. There is no shame in admitting defeat at the hands of a superior adversary.”

“I am swiftly losing my capacity for tolerance. The next person to thwart me shall know the full force of my wit.”



Session 3: Newcomers to Cil

“We wish shelter for the night, and with haste for a creature of dread approaches.”

“I require larks’ eggs in bitterberry source, followed by an entire goose marinated in white wine. And then bring on desert.”

“Let us consider for a moment the possibility that our ascension is assured. How then might your behavior find adjustment?”

“With the passage of time all things dwindle beyond memory. Now is the moment that holds significance.”

“What care I for such trivialities? Bring me high matters of state or remain hidden from my sight.”

“Speak to me with prudence, for one day I shall be supreme ruler of these lands.”

“It is surely inconceivable that our quality could even for a moment be placed under dispute.”

“The dust is thick, and the shadows dark. When I assume Lordship the shutters will be thrown back and all debris vanquished.”

“Amidst the relics of those rooms, do you suspect we may find items sufficient to challenge a wizard of middling potency?”

“This is a building of extraordinary magnificence. One in which a person of my natural standing could learn to feel at home.”

“That is a paltry sum to persons of our high-breeding. Those wishing a future here may do well to reconsider this offer.”

“Normally such things would evoke my utmost concern, but I do believe I just heard the luncheon bell.”

“Whether through deeds or words, it will not take long to establish our undeniable claim to positions of nobility.”

“It is our duty to survey the domain. Let us begin with an exacting assessment of the local taverns and inns.”

“Perhaps a thorough investigation of this edifice can wait until the forces of the guard return to their historic proportions?”

Session 4: The South Wing, Murders, & the Old Palace

“Silence! Bring pipe and slippers. The hour of contemplation is upon me.”

“I wonder if there is merit in approaching this problem whilst encased in tempered steel?”

“How is it that in such a short space of time we move from high comfort to high peril. I profess utter bemusement.”

“Go now and draw me a fine bath, laced with unguents, and lit by perfumed candles. I deserve nothing less.”

“A muted scream, a dull thud, a final croaking breath. Such will not be my doom. To the armory!”

“Whilst the Lordship of Cil holds certain undeniable attractions, I admit to pondering the wisdom of contingencies.”

“Your devotion to duty is impressive, and will no doubt be recorded so upon your grave marker.”

“How dare you challenge me! When I am Lord I shall have you strung up by your thumbs and pelted with ripe fruit!”

“It seems we have no choice save to act with bravery and decisiveness. What remarkable times are upon us.”

“Fetch a bottle of the cellar’s finest wine, and return here at speed. I have matters of import to discuss.”

“Your attitude leaves much to be desired. Leave at once and return only when your demeanor has improved.”

“What foulness skulks in the shadows, what curse of ages past wreaks its deadly revenge? I am beset with terror!”

“I long to accompany you, but have given my promise to adjudicate the annual poultry contest.”

“Look, there amidst the gloom, a figure tall and dark. Strike it now before it flees!”

“It seems we must identify the agency of this mischief, and bring about its expiration before it facilitates ours.”

Reserves

“Let us stride forth like the Lords of old, not fiddle-faddle here whilst there are demons to dispatch.”

“I find myself in the uncomfortably familiar position of fearing for my life.”

“Here are footprints in the dust. Either a giant insect of unknown genus has passed this way, or a party of booted men.”

“True Lords of Cil no doubt stand fast when their lands are threatened. I shall do no less.”

“Wait! The hairs upon my hands have risen: I sense demon work about us.”

“Such a deed is expressly unflattering. What manner of creature would stoop so low?”



Session 5: The Old Palace & The Curse

“By all means amass a significant force and sally forth. I shall take personal responsibility for the lines of supply.”

“The relative merits of endless tundra or infinite cobweb-filled corridors are difficult to adjudge.”

“Your ceaseless carping is causing me to lose my composure. Another word and I shall slay you myself!”

“I mean no disrespect to our good selves, but when we are the land’s last hope then circumstances are dire indeed.”

“The characters marked upon it are both weird and indecipherable, yet I sense that it reeks with power.”

“Your use of the term ‘we’ in your suggestion is presumptive at best.”

“Come now, this is no time for shirking. It is your duty to aid us in this venture, even if it means your certain doom.”

“When will be enough? Is it forever to be our destinies to be caught in the deranged machinations of arrogant magicians?”

“I warn you! Attack me again and the results of my wrath will cause you to regret ever coming into being!”

“Yet another mark in the book of vengeance I am amassing against a certain Laughing Magician of Almerly.”

“An enemy comes upon us unlooked for, and through no fault of our own. Yet, I say that we shall take up the challenge.”

“I sense destiny. Behind this very door may be the single thing that tips the scales of fate in our favor.”

“Those who assist us will find great reward. Those who refuse our commands will learn the true meaning of regret.”

“To the disciplined mind, no problem lacks a solution.”

“The schemes of villains are always rife with error, and therein lies our guarantee of success.”

Session 6: The Grand Finale and Leaving Cil

“I sense about me the forgotten spirits of a former age. Would that they returned to whence they came.”

“What manner of magic is this? That a man may live again and again? When will it end?”

“Such treatment is far less than what we deserve. I implore you to think again.”

“Let us act now in a manner that will make for new legends in this ancient land.”

“Do not force me to injure you further, foul beast of the subworlds.”

“Such a doom, whilst fitting, nonetheless causes me to shiver at its brutal simplicity.”

“The abomination moves with grim intent. We must strike first and strike hard.”

“It is certain that renewed complexities lie within. I advise you to enter the room with the utmost caution.”

“In the words of the great poet Mortiquaan: ‘He who steps softly often comes most surely to the bedchamber’.”

“Incompetencies such as this bring about their own reward.”

“Such an eventuality was not within my expectations, and yet it holds about it a certain inevitability.”

“I raise this tankard with a bitter smile. To yet another chapter in the mocking comedy that is our lives.”

“What trickery happens here? Is there no end to the fiendish imaginings of our foe?”

“Whilst the rites of ascension in Kaiin are often cruel and bloody, in comparison they seem the embodiment of democracy.”

“At this precise moment I desire nothing more than a night free from demons.”

Reserves

“I did not drag myself from Kaiin’s gutters only to perish here like some manner of squashed insect!”

“Lacking any comparable reference, I declare this palace truly unique, in the worst possible application of the word.”

“Such strangeness and horror surpass even the most exotic of my fevered imaginings.”

“What new madness is this? Is it truly any wonder that this land lies crippled in the ashes of its past?”

“With the luck of Mandingo we shall greet the dawn as valiant victors rather than cold corpses.”

“I rate neither Saskervoy nor Cil highly as potential retirement options. Perhaps the Mountains of Magnatz will prove fairer.”