

# REALMS OF ARKONUS

## Advent of Darkness

by Thomas J. Scott



The high mage has revealed the discovery of a portal opening from an evil plane. The player characters must follow his instructions to recover a pair of magical artifacts that can reverse the opening of the portal.

An adventure module for 6 characters levels 10 - 12.

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# Advent of Darkness



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## INTRODUCTION

**RAM3: Advent of Darkness** is an **OSRIC™** compatible fantasy adventure module for a group of six characters levels 10 - 12. The adventure is also suitable for use with any system compatible with First Edition. This module is set in the **REALMS OF ARKONUS FANTASY CAMPAIGN SETTING**. Use of the **REALMS OF ARKONUS FANTASY CAMPAIGN SETTING**, published separately by Magique Productions, Ltd, is helpful, but not required for play.

**Advent of Darkness** was an official tournament module used at Gen Con/Origins 25 and Origins '96 under the title of **Darkness Rising**. This version has revisions and expansions that were not part of the original module.

### **STOP!**

*This module is for the Game Master's eyes only. If you are going to be a player in this adventure, you should stop reading now!*

## ADAPTING TO YOUR CAMPAIGN SETTING

**Advent of Darkness** can be adapted for use in any existing campaign setting. Choose a major city in your world to substitute for Tower City. This should be a place that has a government run by mages or relies heavily on the authority of mages.

## THE DARK COAST

The Dark Coast is an area unique to the **REALMS OF ARKONUS** so following are two alternatives to adapt the setting to your own campaign.

1. The opening of the portal from the evil plane has also caused a radical alteration to the prime material plane. A 64 km radius area of the world has been blanketed in an unnatural darkness that seems to be creeping outward to cover more territory each day. If not stopped, the darkness could eventually swallow the entire world.
2. Time the adventure so that all encounters in the area surrounding Kronis and within Kronis take place during nighttime.

## THE BARRENS

The Barrens is another area unique to the Realms of Arkonus. It is suggested that you should pick an area suitable for this type of environment and adapt the lore of the area for your own campaign world.

## MODULE CONVENTIONS

This module is separated into three parts with points for taking a break at the end of each part. There are three appendices, one for each part of the module. When the module refers you to the Appendix, see Appendix A for Part One, Appendix B for Part Two, and Appendix C for Part Three.



## PART ONE: LAND OF DESOLATION

### GAME MASTER'S BACKGROUND

The inhabitants of Arkonus believed their greatest nightmare was over when they accomplished the impossible in driving the forces of darkness back to the unspeakable fragments of an evil plane. It was a dark time for Arkonus, a time the people didn't care to remember, and so knowledge of the terrible war was carefully suppressed through the generations.

Now over a thousand years later, the high mage of Tower City has revealed the discovery of a portal opening from an unknown plane of evil to the **REALMS OF ARKONUS**. The player characters are summoned by the high mage and instructed to recover a pair of magical artifacts that can reverse the opening of the portal.

The adventure begins in Tower City, where the PCs are currently resting between adventures. Each character is in home or otherwise going about other business in the city or surrounding area when they receive a sealed summons by the high mage. The summons is an urgent plea by the high mage to help with a matter of global importance and they are instructed to meet with him post-haste.

In a meeting with the high mage, the PCs are instructed that they are to be sent on a mission to recover two artifacts that are to be used in the closure of a portal opening from an unknown plane. Their first point of interest is a ghost town located in the "barrens" near the southern coast of Irakaar. There they embark on a quest to save the world.

All NPCs encountered in this part can be found at the rear of the module in the Appendices. Read their sheets and role-playing notes carefully before running this module.

### PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

An otherwise ordinary day takes an interesting turn of events when the player characters are each approached separately and delivered an official scroll bearing the seal of Taymar Balenz, the high mage of Tower City. The scroll is delivered by an Enforcer, one of the great law keepers of Tower City. Once in their possession, the Enforcer leaves without conversation.

Give each player **Handout #1** found in the Appendix.

The enforcer delivering the message will not converse at length with any character. If a PC insists on asking questions, the enforcer will briefly respond as he rides off on his horse on other urgent matters. Unless attacked, the enforcer will not stop. Contrary to what the characters might think, the enforcer doesn't know anything anyway. He was only instructed to deliver the scroll and does not know what its contents are. He is vaguely aware that something serious is developing, but he has not been privy to the nature of the developments.

**Enforcer** (6th/6th Elf Fighter/Magic-User): AC 3 (Banded Mail); hp 31; # AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (+2); SA spells; SD spells; MV 120 ft.; SZ M; AL CN; S 18, I 15, W 10, D 15, Co 15, Ch 13

**Spells Prepared:** 1<sup>st</sup> Level - **Burning hands, sleep, hold portal, enlarge**; 2<sup>nd</sup> level - **Darkness 15' radius, detect invisibility**; 3<sup>rd</sup> Level - **Invisibility 10' radius, slow**

It is assumed that after reading the summons, the characters will quickly find their way to the **Tower of Sight** to see what the nature of the emergency is. If any character does not show up within a reasonable time frame, a group of 6 enforcers will seek out the reluctant character and try to persuade them that they are needed. If the character needs additional urging, tell them that they have done tasks for the high mage in the past, and they are usually for a good cause and often reap great rewards.

The **Four Towers of the Sky** are centrally located in Tower City and easy to reach from anywhere in the city. Each character should be able to make quick preparations and arrive there within 2 hours time.

#### Arrival at the Towers

The towers are the corner points of a mammoth courtyard, their cylindrical shapes seemingly reaching into the clouds above. Even amidst the wealthy establishments and rich housing, the towers seem to stand on their very own.

As each character arrives at the towers, they are guided inside to a large waiting room where they are instructed to remain until called for. If they wonder why they must wait, they will be told that there are others who have also been summoned and the entire group must be present before the high mage will see them.

In the waiting room there is plush furniture for relaxation. Along one of the walls is a long table arrayed with food and refreshments. They are told to help themselves while they wait.

Give the players time to enjoy the high mage's hospitality and talk amongst themselves. Have each character arrive a few minutes apart until they are all present. Their time alone can be used for speculating on the nature of the mission.

About five minutes after the last character has arrived, an apprentice mage enters the waiting room and requests that the group follow him to meet with the high mage. They are taken to a large circular platform within a cylindrical shaft at the center of the ground floor. The apprentice whispers a command word, "yeshrazom," and the platform rises upwards. Moments later, the platform stops before a door near the ceiling of the shaft. The apprentice speaks a series of unrecognizable phrases and the door opens. There they find themselves in the tower's upper room, the chamber of the high mage, Taymar Balenz.

Turning sharply at the sound of the opening door, Balenz looks at the characters with a cold, penetrating gaze. After a moment of inspection he orders his apprentice to wait outside so that he may be alone with them. Then he speaks to the players.

*"I am sorry to have to bring you here so abruptly and mysteriously. However, the urgency of the situation demanded it. The possible crisis we now face will not only affect Tower City, but the entire Realms of Arkonus.*

*"Two days ago, I accidentally discovered an unknown source of energy originating from somewhere within the Dark Coast. Since then, I have been constantly at work in an attempt to identify this strange anomaly. My early fears turned out to be*

the horrible reality. It seems that I have located an accidental dimensional breach from an evil plane to this world.

*“Preliminary research indicates that our world would be in great peril should the breach of dimensions not be sealed quickly. We have only one chance of accomplishing this, but two powerful artifacts, along with a spell I have prepared, are needed to complete the task. Both artifacts are to be found in dangerous lands. The first, a mirror of distortion can be found in the ghost town of Oszeroc within the barren lands to the south. The second, the crystal of energies, is in the possession of an evil giant who resides within the Dark Coast.*

*“Time is not our ally in this matter. You must move quickly if you are to succeed in this task.”*

Taymar Balenz will give the group leader **Handout #2** with instructions for closing the portal. The special spell he has prepared will be given to a party mage.

If the players ask what the spell is that Taymar has given them, tell them there is no title on the scroll. Taymar will tell them that the spell is too complex to explain to them without wasting precious time, but he informs them that they must not be tempted to read the scroll before it is needed. It can only be used once and is essential for the closing of the portal.

Along with **Handout #2** with instructions for obtaining the artifacts and closing the portal, give the players the appropriate map of the continent of Irakaar to aid them in their journey.

If asked further about the opening portal, Taymar can tell them that the portal is not yet large enough to allow any creatures from the other plane to slip through. He estimates that at its current rate of change, it will be fully open within a week.

If the players dawdle for too long or ask too many questions, Taymar will become impatient and insist that they get moving. Once the PCs indicate they wish to get started, Taymar Balenz's apprentice will see them to the exit and on their way.

If the group requires horses for the journey, Taymar's apprentice will take them to the stables at the far side of the courtyard. At the stables, a young stable boy is grooming Aurora, a fine brown mare. Five other horses are nearby. All of the horses are saddled, have saddle bags, and are wearing barding. When the PCs arrive at the stables, Bodo will look at each character, deciding which horse is best for their size and height, and then tell them its name. Information on all horses is given below.

**Medium Warhorse:** AC 7 (5 with barding); HD 2+2; hp 15 each; # AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-3; SA Nil; SD Nil; MV 180 ft. (120 ft. with barding); SZ L; AL N

All of the warhorses are equipped with saddles and two saddle bags. One bag will be empty while the other will be filled with the following:

1 week supply of iron rations, 25' of rope, 2 iron spikes, Tinderbox with flint and steel

In addition to the provisions mentioned above, two of the six horses will carry a water/wine skin filled with fresh drinking

water.

Each of the six horses is well-trained. They are obedient and battle-ready. If left alone, they will wait for a rider's return. They also answer by name. If called from a distance they will come to the rider. The horses and their descriptions are:

**Aurora:** Aurora is a brown mare standing 16 1/2 hands tall. She is extremely feisty and loves to be ridden.

**Tinder:** Tinder is a tan stallion standing 16 3/4 hands tall. He is stubborn, but very affectionate.

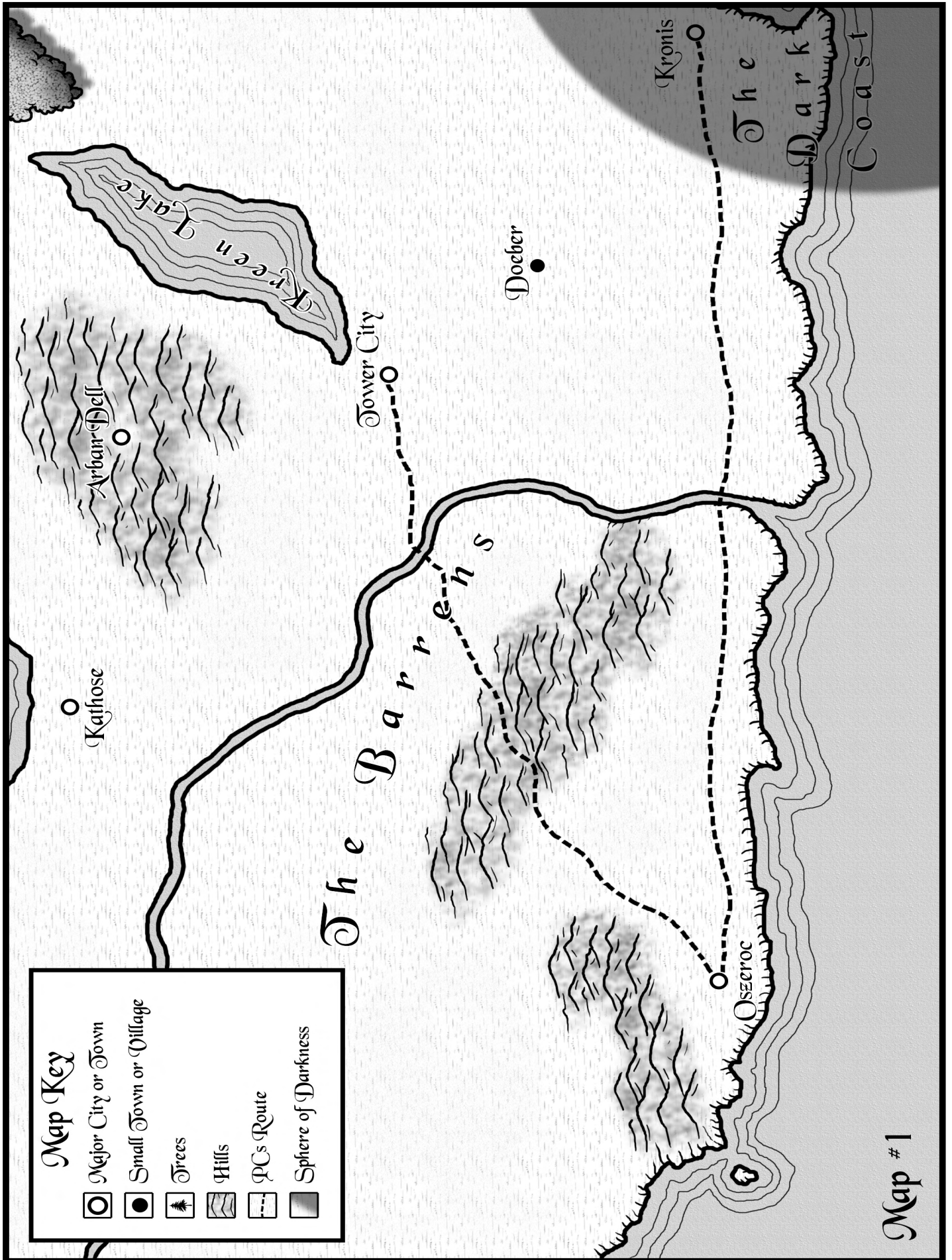
**Crusher:** Crusher is a brown stallion standing 16 1/2 hands tall. He is also stubborn, but is fierce in a battle.

**Leela:** Leela is a white mare standing 15 hands tall. She is elegant and courageous.







**Goliath:** Goliath is a black stallion standing 16 1/4 hands tall. He is stubborn, high-strung, and intelligent.

**Prancer:** Prancer is a brown stallion standing 16 hands tall. He is affectionate and high-spirited.





### Map Key

-  Major City or Town
-  Small Town or Village
-  Trees
-  Hills
-  PCs Route
-  Sphere of Darkness

Map #1

## INTO THE BARRENS

For encounters in the barrens up to, but not including, the **Town of Oszeroc**, use **Map #1**. No encounters will take place between Tower City and the barrens.

### B1. Entering the Barrens

The vibrant, grassy plains suddenly stop short at the edge of a huge, barren expanse of scabrous terrain without an animal, plant, or other form of life in sight. Even the wind has shifted against the PCs, and occasional wind fluctuations cause dust clouds to form across the desolate wasteland. An inspection of the ground reveals no trace of any plant-life and it is doubtful that any vegetation could ever grow in that earth. The ground is dried and cracked as though deprived of rainfall. The once beautiful hillsides have been reduced to rocky mounds and the devastated terrain seems to go on endlessly.

It is common knowledge that the beast that desecrated the land was put into a magical sleep in a cave somewhere within this useless territory. That was some fifty years ago. Even though the magic was powerful, a spell conjured by the wisest mages of Irakaar, it was only supposed to contain the beast for forty years. Every six months since that fortieth year, a group of specially appointed mages visit the cave of the beast to check on its condition. To this day the spell has remained in effect, but no one can predict when it will fail.

When the horses are within a few feet of the barren land, they will become uneasy as if a smell in the air bothers them. However, it is actually the complete lifelessness of the "barrens" that unnerves them. It is the lack of familiar smells like those of other animals, plants, and trees. The horses will travel onward, but except for Leela, it will take some urging to spur them forward. The promise of a tasty morsel may do the trick.

At this point, the PCs are physically exhausted. They have not slept in a day and a half and should stop to rest here for at least a few hours. If the PCs do not stop to rest, fatigue will affect them if they engage in battle. Fatigued characters will have strengths temporarily reduced by 2 (or 50% exceptional strength) and will have trouble spotting obvious features (such as the cave at **Area B2**).

### B2. Approaching the Cave

As the characters cross over a short rise they are faced with a wall of hilly terrain. Approaching closer, they can see the mouth of a large cave in one of the hillsides.

As the PCs approach the cave, whether to enter or pass it by, have each player roll a d20. On rolls of 1-5 the character will feel a slight vibration of the earth. He will feel this vibration which seems to slowly grow in magnitude. If the character dismounts and puts an ear to the ground, the vibration will be louder and more definite. As the source of the vibration gets closer, all characters will eventually notice the vibration. Soon, the vibration will reach earthquake proportions.

The vibration is caused by a giant slug which is burrowing underground and traveling from south to north. In fact, continuing on its present course, the giant slug will pass dangerously close to the lair of the tarrasque. If allowed to

do so, the tarrasque's prison will be destroyed and the beast will awaken. Upon awakening, the tarrasque will forage out of the cave and prepare to resume its devastating march northward, laying waste to anything in its path.

Any PC outside the cave when the vibration reaches earthquake proportions will see the giant slug break through the ground about 100 yards to the south of the cave. After surfacing, the giant slug will continue towards the hills on a course that will definitely intercept the cave of the tarrasque. It should be obvious to the players that they must kill or detour the slug. If they do not seem concerned about the slug, warn them of what might occur should the slug burrow into the prison of the tarrasque. If they have not investigated the cave and are unaware that the tarrasque is imprisoned within, the slug will attack the PCs. In this case, the characters will be forced to deal with the creature before it reaches the hills.

The major weapon of the giant slug is a highly corrosive acidic saliva which it is able to spit with considerable accuracy at great distance. Normal range is 60', with a basic 50% chance of striking its target. For every 10' less than 60', the base chance of hitting is increased 10%; ranges over 60' decrease the probability of hitting by 10% per 10' over 60'. The giant slug is always inaccurate on its first assault, there being only a 10% chance of its hitting its target on the first spitting of acid. Once the range is then determined, second and succeeding attacks are at normal probability.

**Giant Slug (1):** AC 8; HD 12; hp 67; # AT 1; Dmg 1-12; SA spit acid; SD Not hit by blunt weapons; MR Std; MV 60 ft.; SZ L; INT non; AL N

### B3. Cave Mouth

The opening of the cave is roughly fifteen feet in diameter. Inside can be seen a passageway slanting downward into darkness. The passageway is extremely dry and the air is cool. The tunnel slopes downward at a 30 degree angle for the first forty feet and then levels off the rest of the way. The tunnel ends at **Area B4**.

Along the walls of the tunnel are writings in most of the more common languages (i.e. common, elven, gnomish, halfling, dwarven, etc.). The writings are explicit warnings describing great danger to anyone continuing.

A pressure plate, camouflaged as part of the rocky cave floor, is set halfway down the tunnel. If more than 2,000 pounds of weight are upon the pressure plate (30' long by 10' wide), a mesh of extremely sharp silver blades will protrude from the tunnel walls. Anything on the pressure plate will receive damage from 5d4 **blades of sharpness**. Each blade will cause from 1-20 points of damage. Any creatures on the pressure plate will be trapped until dead unless they can break the blades that pierce them. Each blade requires a strength of at least 20 to break and doing so causes an extra 1d6 points of damage. This trap is not designed to cause problems for the player characters. It has been placed in the cave corridor in hopes of preventing the tarrasque from leaving the cave should it happen to awaken. The combined weight of all PCs and their equipment will not be enough to trigger the pressure plate. If a PC is using thieving skills to check for traps, the pressure plate and blade trap can be located with normal success. The trap cannot, however, be removed unless an entire day is devoted to the task.



#### B4. The Sleeping Tarrasque

The slanting passageway ends at a **wizard locked** iron gate which blocks passage to a large cavern beyond. At the far side of the cavern, lying in a heap upon the rocky ground, is a monstrous creature with two horns atop its head, armor-like skin, and a long, jagged tail. It is nearly fifty feet long from its head to the tip of its tail.

The tarrasque remains asleep and though the spell cast upon it was only supposed to last forty years, it will last another five years unless the creature is awakened by some outside force. If the tarrasque is somehow awakened, it will be voraciously hungry and devour anything in sight. It is doubtful the PCs can stave off the brute's relentless attacks. Immediate retreat would be the best strategy since it will be difficult for all the characters to attack the tarrasque within the confines of the cave. Also, the beast will be so hostile it will begin causing cave-ins as it heads for the exit. Each cave-in will be in a 10 x 10 area and cause 4d8 damage to any characters in that area. Check on the chart below to determine the area of each cave-in. Once the tarrasque reaches the pressure plate, the sharpness blades will activate and any PCs within 30' of the tarrasque will be impaled also.

#### Cave-In Location\*

| d6 | Location                        |
|----|---------------------------------|
| 1  | On top of PCs                   |
| 2  | Immediately in front of PCs     |
| 3  | Immediately behind PCs          |
| 4  | Behind PCs within hearing range |
| 5  | At entrance to cave             |
| 6  | On top of PCs                   |

\*- Any cave-in is sufficient to cause damage and to slow the characters, but will not completely block a passage.

**Tarrasque** (1): AC -3; HD 30; hp 300; # AT 6; Dmg 1-12/1-2/2-24/5-50/1-10/1-10; SA "Sharpness" bite, terror; SD see below; SZ L (50' long); MV 90 ft. (+60 ft. rush); AL N

The tarrasque has a carapace of exceptional hardness and reflective quality. Bolts and rays such as lightning bolts, cones of cold, and even magic missiles are useless against the tarrasque. The reflection is such that 1 in 6 such attacks actually reflect directly back upon the caster while the remainder bounce harmlessly away. The tarrasque is immune to fire and it regenerates 1 hit point per round after sustaining damage from any attacks. The tarrasque can be hit only by +1 or better magic weapons. The tarrasque can only be slain if the creature is brought to -30 or fewer hit points and a wish for its death then used.

The tarrasque has no specific attack strategy. It will simply unleash everything in its power to destroy, kill, or otherwise eat anything that stands in its way (If it can do all of these, it will!).

#### B3. The Vulture

After crossing a large hill, buildings are visible in the distance, near the horizon. High above, in the darkening sky, can be seen the form of a vulture flying in circles and inspecting the ground. Shortly after being spotted it swoops down closer as if to inspect the PCs and then takes off towards the town.

The vulture is Baelzen's brother, Varik (see the appendix for a complete description of Baelzen and Varik), who was accidentally polymorphed into a bird when he viewed the **mirror of distortion**. Since then, Varik has forgiven his brother and has remained loyal to him. Varik was out for a brief flight when he spotted the PCs approaching the town. He has gone to warn Baelzen of their coming.

#### B4. The Hermit

Approaching the halfway point between the hills and the Town of Oszeroc, a white-haired old man carrying a mace in his right hand comes walking over a small rise. He stands about a hundred yards away. High above him, circling in the air, is the vulture that was spotted earlier.

Baelzen will remain where he is and say nothing as long as the PCs do not come any closer. If the PCs come within thirty yards, Baelzen will begin to feel the mirror's magic go to work. He will suddenly feel the need to be worshipped by the PCs. Suddenly, the old man raises the mace in the air and cries out in a loud voice, "Halt! Know you nothing of proper behavior when in the presence of divinity, children of the wasteland? Know you not that I am the royal voice of Galhalla, the righteous god. Fall to your knees and hide your eyes in shame or I shall pass judgment upon thee! Beg of me to spare your worthless lives and it shall be so! But heed not these words and I, Baelzen, shall see to your ends!"

If the PCs do not immediately do as Baelzen commands, he continues by saying "So be it foolish mortals! If it is thy desire to perish then let it be as you wish!"

At this point give the players a few seconds to reconsider their actions before proceeding with Baelzen's first attack. If the PCs decide to bow and pretend to worship Baelzen, he will stop short of his attacking and say something like, "Ah, you have seen the error of your ways and wish to make amends. I shall accept thy worship and spare thee." He may also require the PCs to offer some form of sacrifice (perhaps gold or magic at your discretion. Baelzen may be a helpful NPC, but only as long as the PCs continue to act as inferiors and occasionally bow and kneel before him and say things which flatter him. If the PCs act in anyway that is not appropriate in Baelzen's presence, he will spare no mercy in seeing to their destruction.

Baelzen knows where the mirror is hidden, but will never allow the PCs to know about it. If they go anywhere near the mirror he will tell them they are treading dangerous territory and that even he, "the divine one", would not attempt such a foolish act, for there exist dangers beyond imagining."

If the PCs did not immediately bow and pretend to worship Baelzen, he will first cast **monster summoning III**. The following monsters will appear in front of the PCs and attack for Baelzen.

**Bugbear** (1): AC 5; HD 3+1; hp 18; # AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

**Ghoul** (1): AC 6; HD 2; hp 12; # AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA Paralyzation; SD Immune to sleep, charm; SZ M; MV 90 ft.; AL CE



**Giant Lizard (1):** AC 5; HD 3+1; hp 18; # AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA Attack roll of 20 traps victim in mouth for double damage and 2d8 dmg every round thereafter; SD Nil; SZ H (15'); MV 150 ft.; AL N

As the monsters are attacking for Baelzen, he will cast the following spells:

**Silence** on a spell caster

**Magic missile** on the most powerful character

**Fireball** directed at the largest grouping of individuals possible

**polymorph other** on the second most powerful character

If one or more characters begin to close on Baelzen to melee, he will drink his **potion of speed** and prepare for combat with his **mace of disruption**.

If the battle seems to be going against Baelzen, he will cast his **teleport** spell returning to his home. If Baelzen escapes (and he should), he will be at his home casting his healing spells to regain lost hit points. If the PCs find his home, he will again demand they worship him. If the PCs do not comply, Baelzen will attempt one last time to destroy the PCs. See **Area #7** in the Town of Oszeroc for details on Baelzen's final attack strategy.

## ARRIVING AT OSZEROC

When the PCs are a few hundred yards from the town, horses and other party animals will begin to act uneasy. Even Leela\* is hesitant to enter down the town's dusty road which leads amongst dozens of run-down buildings. Loose boards creak

in the wind and an occasional rickety door slam is all that can be heard above the whispering winds. It is now only a few hours 'til dusk; the town beckons.

If the players say that they want to spend the night outside the town before investigating, tell them that they cannot waste time. As Taymar Balenz explained to them, the portal will be fully open before the week is out (perhaps even sooner than that). There is no time to spare. The PCs must investigate and find the mirror before the night is out.

\* - Leela is one of the horses that may have been provided on loan from the High Mage at Tower City.

## Information Regarding Oszeroc

It takes more than just abandoned buildings and empty streets to make a ghost town. A ghost town is a place of mystery, where whistling winds carry dust down dirt roads and echo through the cracks of run-down buildings struggling to stand. It's creaking boards hanging loose in the wind and doors slamming shut seemingly of their own will. It's the feeling that just inside that dark and dusty tavern there lies something in wait--for you. A ghost town is a place where, once abandoned, no one returns.

This town, Oszeroc, is such a place, with one exception: Someone did dare return. Baelzen, the hermit, has made his home in this town. This fact alone shows something of Baelzen's character. He lives oblivious to almost everything the town represents. He survives by means of **create food and water** spells given to him by his god, Galhalla, and he worships in a run-down excuse for a church. Despite the strange things that happen in town during the night, Baelzen has remained. He discovered that most of the spirits haunting the town were harmless. And those areas of the town where there is real danger, he has learned to avoid.

When the PCs arrive in the town it will be only a few hours before sundown. Ghostly activity begins to grow from this point on. Read the next section, "**A Haunting Reminder**", carefully so that you are aware of the various encounters that should take place while the PCs are investigating the town.

## A Haunting Reminder

When the tarrasque ravaged the countryside and drove the people from Oszeroc, only a lucky few escaped its wrath. A great number of the inhabitants of the town fell prey to the atrocity. And as a cruel twist of fate, the victims of the tarrasque remain upon the prime-material plane to haunt their former homes.

Those that were completely devoured by the tarrasque remain only in spirit form and cannot hurt the living. However, some more unfortunate citizens were seriously wounded and left in the creature's wake only to die a slow, torturous death afterward. These poor folk were gathered and buried in plots just outside the town in the local cemetery. They have also been cursed to remain and haunt the town and, since there still remains substance to their decayed forms, they are able to strike out at the living. Their only wish is to be left in peace and they find intrusions from outsiders to be a threat to that peace. Ever since Baelzen arrived in town, they have tried to drive him out. As a cleric, Baelzen was prepared for the undead. He has always been able to keep the spirits and undead at bay or force them back into their resting places.

However, he has not been able to destroy them. Something about the unusual way that the townsfolk died has given them increased strength in their dead forms.

When the PCs come into town, the undead spirits will begin to make their presence known, one by one. There are two hours 'til dusk. Use the specified times below to judge the actions of the undead. Note: the time indicated is the elapsed time from the time of the PCs arrival in Oszeroc.

**Half Hour:** Harmless spirits of the former townspeople will begin to make subtle appearances from out of buildings, homes, and alleyways. They will at first pretend not to notice the players and then will shoot the PCs suspicious glances and look with hatred in their eyes. Eventually they will speak with the players, telling them that they don't belong in the town and that they'd better leave. The spirits will talk in a low, hissing voice and each breath they take is like a droning moan. As more and more of the spirits pop up, they will begin to gather in groups and continue to speak with the PCs. They will continually beg the characters to leave them in peace and will make it clear that they don't want the PCs in their town. The spirits cannot harm the players, but after a large group has gathered, their presence may cause fear. For every 2 spirits there is a 5% chance that the situation warrants a saving throw versus fear for all characters not protected from such fear (horses automatically become feared and will be hard to control if ridden). A failure to save versus fear means that the character or characters will be paralyzed

with fright. The effect lasts until the characters are away from the presence of the spirits. All the PCs are above 10th level so all saving throws versus fear are made at +4.

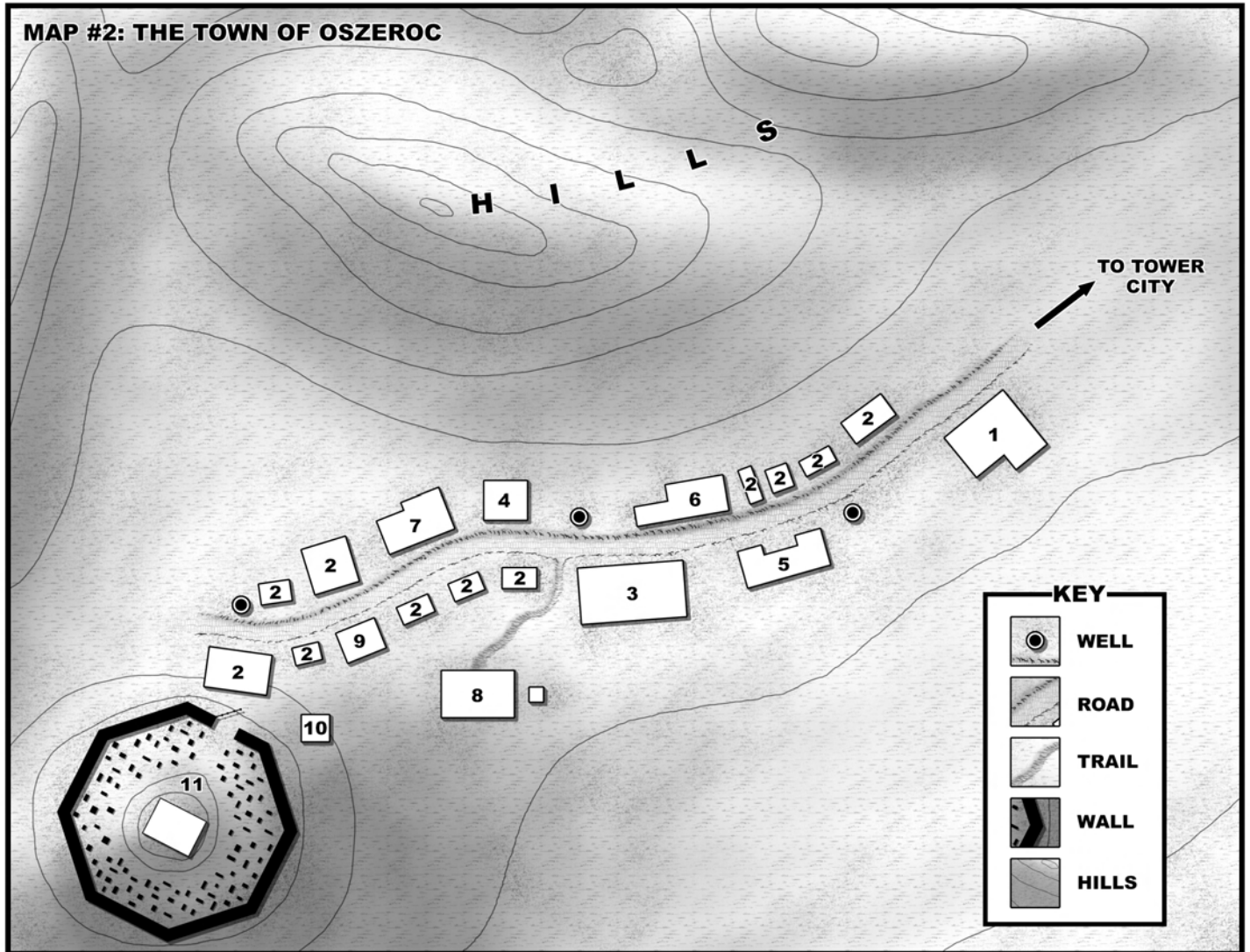
**One Hour:** In the distance, the characters will hear what sounds like a group of horses riding into town at a gallop. If the PCs are near the graveyard, they will see a band of riders on horses heading into town from behind the walls of the graveyard. If the PCs are not near the graveyard, they will not see the skeleton riders until they are riding down the road. Once in view, they will see a band of armored men on horseback charging in their direction.

After spotting the riders, allow the players to have a moment to prepare themselves. Then the armored riders slow their horses and stop just before the PCs; a sickly scent wafts on the wind. The lead horseman's head turns, creating a grinding noise, and it is not a man they see, but a rotted skeleton. Its bone-white jaw drops suddenly, and it emits a shrill cry which reverberates throughout the town. It is then that they will notice that the horses are eyeless.

Immediate attack follows the above description. There are fifteen skeletons in all, and they ride zombie horses which can also attack with a bite for 1-3 points of damage.

Because of the particularly horrible way in which the townspeople died, their skeleton's are a bit more difficult to turn or kill. Treat the skeletons as Type 13 on the cleric's





Turning Undead table for all attempts to turn them. Even when turned, the skeletons will be reluctant to leave. They will back off as if in fear of the priest's holy symbol, but will not run outright. Unless the priest persists in displaying his holy symbol and commanding the skeletons to leave, they will not go. However, after a successful turn attempt, the skeletons cannot attack anyone within 30' of the priest. The following are the statistics for the skeletons and their horses.

**Skeleton** (15): AC 5; HD 5; hp 20; # AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (longsword) or 1-4 (dagger); SA Nil; SD Immune to sleep, charm, hold and cold-based spells. Edged weapons only score half damage. Immune to fear; SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL N

**Zombie Horse** (15): AC 7; HD 3; hp 15; # AT 1; Dmg 1-3 (bite); SZ L; MV 240 ft.; AL N

#### BUILDINGS IN OSZEROC

For the areas on the map that are not specifically designated as encounter areas, choose randomly from the following list of possibilities when the PCs investigate those areas.

##### 1. Tavern

Inside are dusty tables and chairs, dishes and even some remains of rotted food. There will even be some bottles of ale and wine that are not only drinkable, but valuable if left unopened.

##### 2. Abandoned Homes

Generally each abandoned house will have the same things: furniture, lanterns & oil, remains of clothes, and other typical items found in the average household. There is also the possibility that something of value may have been left in a house. Use the table below to determine what may be found, if anything, in each abandoned house that the PCs search.

##### d10 Items Found

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | Gems or jewelry (1-6 hundred gpv)   |
| 2  | Coins worth a total of 10-100 gpv   |
| 3  | Same as #1, but valuables will be locked in something or hidden in a secret compartment |
| 4  | Nothing   |
| 5  | Nothing   |
| 6  | Nothing   |
| 7  | Nothing   |
| 8  | Nothing   |
| 9  | Same as #1 or #2 (50% each), but valuables are in a locked chest or coffer.             |
| 10 | <b>potion of cure light wounds</b>  |

##### 3. Courthouse

Nothing of value can be found here. The only remains are a bunch of old books and worthless files.

#### 4. Jail

The jailhouse has nothing of value. All that can be found are the remains of jailed townspeople who died of starvation in their cells.

#### 5. Old Hotel

Searching through the old rooms will reveal nothing of real value. All that remains are a few personal possessions left by former hotel occupants. There still remains a money box under the hotel clerk's desk. It holds a total of 13 gp worth in mixed coins.

#### 6. Town Store

This place still holds many items of value. Just about anything in the way of adventuring equipment used to be sold here. If searching for particular items, assume that there is a 40% chance that that particular item will still be in the store. Roll separate percentile dice to check for duplicates of the same item. Note that some items may be useless because they have been on the shelf too long, e.g. rope may appear to be strong but would probably break if it was used to hold too much weight.

#### 7. Baelzen's Home (Formerly the "Giant Hotel")

This large building appears to be in use. The front porch is swept clean and the place seems to be in a good state of repair. The sign above the door reads "The Giant Hotel."

This old hotel serves as Baelzen's home. He has kept the main lobby and a few rooms on the main floor in decent shape. Otherwise, the rest of the hotel is as run-down as all the other buildings in town.

Depending on the PCs previous actions, Baelzen will either be with the PCs or in the lobby of the hotel. Continue the adventure as is appropriate.

#### IF BAELEN TELEPORTED TO THE HOTEL AND IS PREPARING FOR ANOTHER CONFRONTATION:

Baelzen is resting just inside the doorway in the lobby of the hotel. If the PCs approach the steps to the porch, a voice calls out from inside. "So, you again approach without behaving in a manner suitable of your lowly status. Drop to the earth and pray for mercy and I may spare thee, but continue this blasphemous charade and I will be forced to expedite your destruction."

The PCs are given a second chance to cooperate with Baelzen by pretending to worship him. If they opt to ignore Baelzen's ravings again, the hermit will proceed in his final attempt to annihilate the PCs.

"Fools, all! Your actions exhibit insolence! This time I shall not hold back. Prepare to feel the wrath of Baelzen!"

Baelzen will start by casting **mirror image** on himself. He will then attack by using the following spells in order.

**Charm Person:** He will cast this on the most powerful character. If this spell works, he will not use the character to attack for him. He will simply have the PC prostrate in worship while he continues his attacks on the other characters.

**Slow:** Cast on as many characters that Baelzen can get within

the spell's area of affect.

**Burning Hands**  
**Stinking Cloud**  
**Phantasmal force**

If Baelzen's final attacks are not successful in either destroying the PCs or gaining their respect and worship, he will cast invisibility and flee from the PCs. He will retreat to **Area #3**.

Searching the hotel will reveal that Baelzen uses the lobby area and two nearby rooms as living quarters. The main area consists of a bed, a desk, a table with one chair, and candelabra. Nothing of value can be found in the main area.

The first room is used by Baelzen as a small study. If searched thoroughly, Baelzen's spellbook can be found here.

The second room is Baelzen's lab and treasure room. The area is filled with failed experiments (potions and spells that Baelzen tried on his brother). If the various liquids are drunk, the following effects are possible:

| <u>d6</u> | <u>Effect</u>   |
|-----------|---|
| 1         | Invisibility which will fail at the most inappropriate moment.  |
| 2         | Temporary insanity lasting 1-6 turns  |
| 3         | None  |
| 4         | None  |
| 5         | Character goes into a fit of coughing which lasts for 1-6 turns. Attacking while coughing is impossible.  |
| 6         | Character begins to grow at a rate of 1 foot every turn. Armor and equipment will not grow with the character. The growth will not reverse until the PC has grown in excess of 15 feet. |

Also in this lab can be found a locked and trapped chest. If opened without a key (Baelzen carries the key) a polymorph gas will release. Those failing their saving throw versus polymorph will turn into rats. Inside the chest can be found the following:

2,200 gold  
1,200 platinum  
3,151 copper and silver mixed  
**potion of undead control, mummies**  
2 gems (200 gpv each)

#### IF BAELEN IS WITH THE PCS AND THEY ARE FLATTERING HIM WITH FALSE WORSHIP:

Baelzen will make a stop at his residence, stating that he will retire for the evening. Baelzen will tell the PCs that they cannot enter his home, but that they can take up residence in any of the abandoned homes in the town. He will also make a point of telling the PCs that if they wish to make an offering that they should visit the church at the other side of town.

If asked about the **mirror of distortion**, Baelzen will deny any knowledge of it. If the PCs press the issue, he will be angered, refusing to speak of such nonsense.

When the undead activity begins to heighten, the PCs can

beg protection of Baelzen, who will then allow them within his abode for the night. Baelzen will assign them rooms on one of the upper levels. He will avoid speaking with them at length, since he has more important matters to tend to.

## 8. Church of Galhalla

When the PCs near this church, they will hear the sounds of a pipe organ being played. The music is strange and haunting.

This building was once a church of Primorus as anyone can tell by the crossed out sign. Above the crossed out letters is written, "Worship Place of Galhalla." The PCs will not recognize the name as being any one of the known deities. This building, like the old hotel, also seems to be in use.

When the players open the massive door to this church, they will be looking down an aisle way leading to a crudely built shrine. There are rows of pews on either side of the aisle way and several small statues set up against the side walls. At the front of the church, next to the shrine is a large pipe organ being played vigorously by a ghostly figure. As the door comes to a creaky stop, the ghost momentarily stops his playing to look back at the PCs with a haunting smile. He then returns to playing his bizarre music at even a more rapid pace than before.

The ghost is like the other spirits in the town. It cannot harm the players, but its presence may cause fear. Each player must make a saving throw at -2 or become extremely uneasy. They will refuse to enter the church with the other players. Those that save will still feel uneasy, but will not be adversely affected.

If a search is made of the church, the players will find nothing of value to help them in their quest. They will notice, however, that the shrine at the far end of the church has been altered quite unprofessionally from a beautiful carving of Primorus to a rather deformed looking older man with a stunning red robe. Other areas of the church appear to have been changed also, e.g. the placing of the statues, removal of statues, alterations to pictures, etc.

## 9. Abandoned Home

This, like most of the other buildings in this town, is abandoned. It was once the home of a small family until the tarrasque arrived and drove the people from it.

The main floor of the building is relatively empty. The furniture remains, but most of the important items have either been removed by the former owners or since stolen by passing bandits.

In the rear of the house is the entrance to a cellar. A small padlock seals this entrance, but can easily be broken by a weapon blow. If the PCs break the padlock and open the door, a cloud of dust and foul scent fills the air. A set of wooden steps lead down into a dark cellar.

The steps leading down into the cellar are wooden. They will hold the PCs weight, but will creak and give way slightly as if on the verge of splintering.

When the PCs reach the bottom of the steps they will be in a 15' x 15' room with various wooden shelves lined with

rotting foodstuffs and miscellaneous items of little use. In the center of the chamber there is a small table on which rests a propped up **mirror** facing the wall away from the players.

The area in which the mirror faces has been affected by the mirror's magical property to alter time and space if left stationary for a lengthy duration. The PCs will view the area facing the mirror as if looking into a portal at other planes, places, or time periods. They will see ghost-like images of long-dead persons or creatures from the lower planes. The time will seem to pass rapidly and the images will change abruptly from time to time to show other places or other time periods, perhaps even a glimpse of the future. The portal the characters are viewing is a one-way gate only accessible from the prime-material. If a PC enters the area in front of the mirror, they will be transported to the current place and/or time period being viewed. That player must be considered lost for the remainder of the adventure.

The only way to disrupt the mirror's magical affect is to cover it with a sack or cloth from behind and then move it to another location. Once the mirror has been moved, the time and space alteration will cease.

## THE VULTURE TAKES FLIGHT

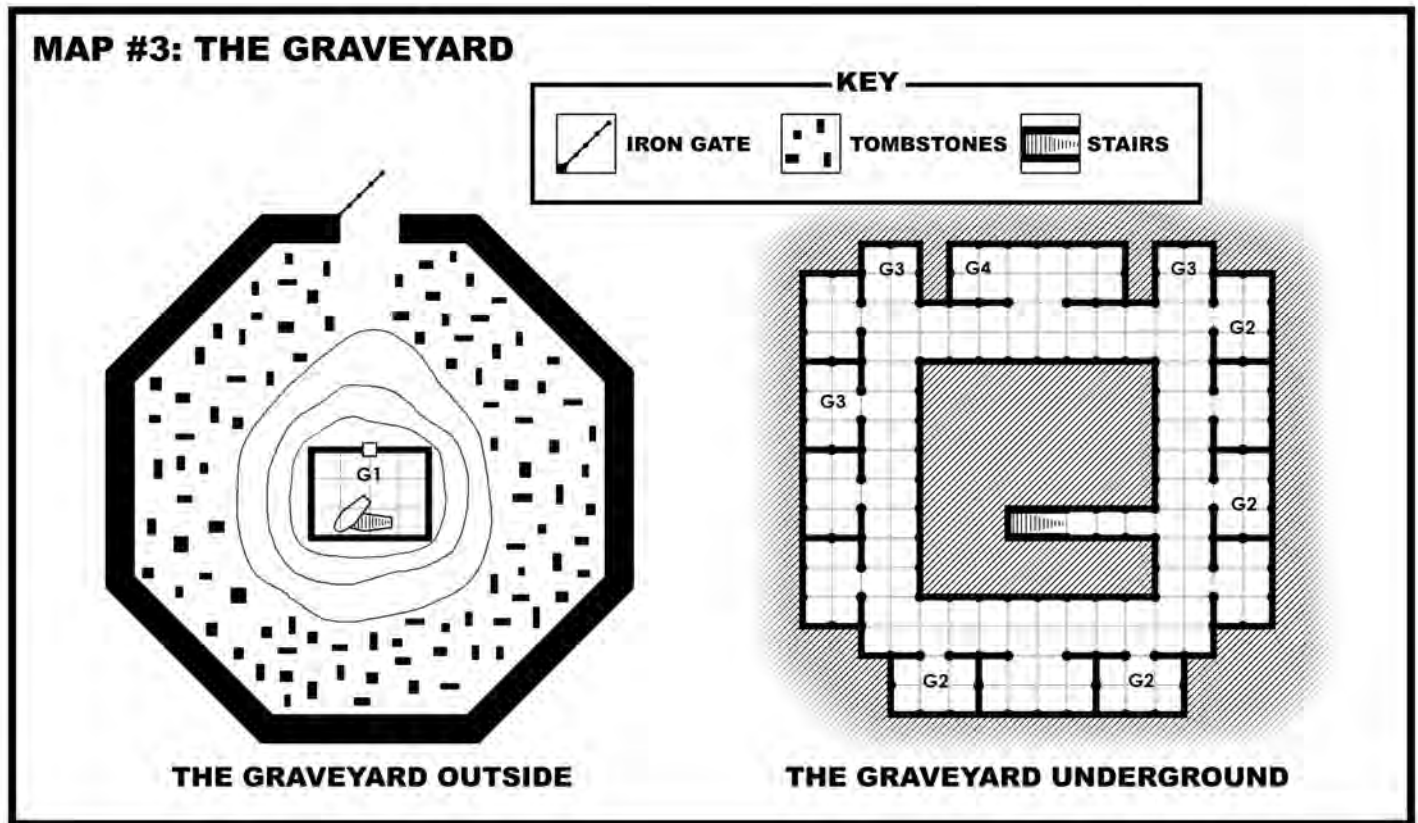
Once the PCs have possession of the artifact, the vulture will appear (surprising the party) and snatch the mirror. When the vulture has successfully taken the mirror, it will fly immediately to **Area G4** in the graveyard. The PCs must follow the vulture into the crypts in order to regain the mirror.

The vulture has stolen the mirror because he is aware of the artifact's polymorph power and wishes to spare the PCs the fate he now suffers. He believes that he is doing the PCs a favor in taking the mirror. Once the PCs have caught up with the vulture, they can persuade him to give up the mirror if they can speak with animals and explain their mission to him. Otherwise, the vulture will not give up the mirror unless killed.

## 10. The Caretaker's Abode

This building served as the home to the caretaker of the graveyard. In addition to the old man's living quarters, the front area of the building was devoted to the business of the cemetery. There is a small desk containing old files on all purchased grave plots, fees for digging graves, headstones purchased, etc. The remains of a few broken headstones lay stacked in a corner behind the desk. Several containers that once held flowers now only contain dust.





## 11. The Graveyard

By the time the players have reached the graveyard, it should be nightfall. An iron gate swings freely on creaky hinges attached loosely to the massive stone wall surrounding the graveyard. Through the gateway, blowing in the breeze, can be seen various tombstones littering the once grassy area beyond. A large crypt rests atop a low-lying hill in the center of the graveyard where several ghostly figures dance amongst the tombstones.

The ghostly figures moving around the tombstones are the same as the others encountered earlier down the streets of the town. They are harmless, but can cause fear if a large number of them are present. Characters will feel very uneasy entering the graveyard area, but will not be required to make saving throws against fear. The ghosts will observe the PCs and occasionally tell them that they are unwelcome in the town and that they should leave.

If the PCs attempt to bring their horses into the graveyard, they will not comply willingly. They will prefer to pitch their riders and then run off somewhere away from the graveyard. Leela, however, can be coaxed into entering the graveyard, but will react nervously once inside.

Encounters from this point on are handled using **Map #3: The Graveyard**. Encounters begin with G1 and end with G4.

### G1. The Main Tomb

The stone door to this central tomb is ajar. It is open only far enough for a small character to squeeze inside. The door must be forced open further to allow entry of human-sized characters.

The door is heavy and has been unused in a long time. It will

take at least two characters with a combined strength of 25 to open the door.

Immediately inside the tomb is a **spectre**. When the PCs enter, roll for surprise. The spectre immediately attacks if it gains initiative.

Near the far wall of the tomb is a large stone coffin. Its stone lid has been offed and the broken remains lie on the floor at its front. Looking inside the coffin reveals that an open false bottom leads to a stairway. The stairway goes underneath the tomb to the crypts.

**Spectre** (1): AC 2; HD 7+3; hp 50; # AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA Energy drain; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR immune to sleep, charm, hold, and cold-based spells. Also unaffected by poison and paralysis; SZ M; MV 150 ft., 300 ft. (Fly); AL LE

### G2. Skeletons

In each of these areas there are two stone coffins occupied by skeletons. The skeletons arise and fight when the PCs near their resting places.

**Skeleton\*** (2): AC 5; HD 5; hp 20; # AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (longsword); SA Nil; SD Immune to sleep, charm, hold, and cold-based spells. Edged weapons score only half damage. Immune to fear; SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL N

\*-These skeletons are turned as Type 13 on the cleric's Turn Undead table as the skeletons previously encountered in the module.

### G3. Mummies

In each of these areas there are two stone coffins occupied by mummies. The mummies arise and fight when the PCs near

their resting places.

**Mummy\*** (2): AC 3; HD 6+3; hp 30; # AT 1; Dmg 1-12; SA Fear, Disease (see MCI); SD Only hit by magical weapons (1/2 damage). Immune to sleep, charm, hold, and cold-based spells. Unaffected by paralysis and poison; SZ M; MV 60 ft.; AL LE

\*-These mummies, like the skeletons, must be turned as Type 13 on the cleric's Turn Undead table.

#### G4. The Vulture and the Mirror

When the PCs reach this area, they will see the vulture in a corner still clutching the mirror with its claws. **Two mummies** rise out of their stone coffins to fight the PCs upon their arrival (use the statistics from **Area G3** for the mummies).

Once the mummies are disposed of, the PCs can attempt to get the mirror back. Using a **speak with animals** spell, the players can talk with the vulture who will tell them that they must not take the mirror because they will suffer a similar fate as his. He will explain the power of the mirror to polymorph and will say that it is irreversible (he does not know that a wish will reverse the effects). If the PCs explain their mission to the vulture, he may give up the mirror although a bit hesitantly. Of course, if the PCs use a wish to restore the vulture to his normal self, Varik will thank the PCs and willingly give up the mirror. He will, however, warn the PCs never to look into the mirror.

If the PCs do not use speak with animals, the vulture will avoid them and attempt to fly away with the mirror again. Even if trapped, the vulture will not release the mirror from his grasp until dead.

This ends the first part of Advent of Darkness.





## PART TWO: CAPITAL OF DARKNESS

"Blind fools! How many of us have discovered the foulness of our deeds only after we had intended the good?!"

Cornelius, Irakaar in Darkness 316 A.H.

### GAME MASTER'S BACKGROUND

This part of Advent of Darkness takes place primarily in Kronis, a small city situated a few miles into the Dark Coast.

The Dark Coast is an area along the southern edge of the continent that is constantly blanketed with darkness due to a permanent total eclipse of the sun by Arkonus's moon, Tarsus. Tarsus's unusual revolution causes the continuous eclipse which forever shields the sun from a sixty-four km radius along the coast. The area has attracted many monsters that normally make their homes beneath the earth. It has become a haven for such creatures as ogres, goblins, gnolls, drow elves, and deep gnomes. Villages, encampments, and small cities can be found almost anywhere along the coast; The largest, and most organized of these, is Kronis.

As player characters venture deeper into the Dark Coast, their chances increase that they will encounter many of the Dark Coast's denizens. During the PCs' journey into the Dark Coast, roll for wandering monsters several times before they reach Kronis. If the result is a 1-3 on a ten-sided die, consult the table below. At least one of the following encounters should be mandatory.

### WANDERING MONSTER TABLE

| d10 | Result   |
|-----|--|
| 1   | Group of 5 ogres, 2 gnolls, and 8 goblins      |
| 2   | Group of 3 ogres and 1 ogre magi               |
| 3   | Camp of 8 gnolls                               |
| 4   | Camp of 2-20 goblins                           |
| 5   | Group of 1-10 goblins                          |
| 6   | Group of 2 ogres, 1 gnoll, and 2 drow elves    |
| 7   | Camp of 3 ogres, 3 gnolls, and 10 goblins      |
| 8   | Group of eight ogres                           |
| 9   | Camp of 6 drow elves                           |
| 10  | Camp of 2 ogre magi, 4 ogres, and 2 drow elves |

Group: This is a small gathering of monsters that are traveling on foot to or from a larger camp, village, or city. They will have little else other than their weapons and a small amount of provisions. There is only a 10% chance that each monster encountered will have anything of value. If so, consult the following table.

| d6 | Valuables on Person* |
|----|----------------------|
| 1  | 1-4 lp**             |
| 2  | 2-20 sp              |
| 3  | 2-20 cp              |
| 4  | 2-20 ep              |
| 5  | 1-6 gp               |
| 6  | 1-4 pp               |

\*- Roll once for each monster found with treasure.

\*\* - Lead pieces. See «Monetary System» for details on the value of this currency.

**Camp:** This is a small gathering of monsters who have pitched camp in the encountered area. There may be several crude tents and a fire. These monsters have weapons and provisions and a 20% chance of having coins (roll on the table as above).

**Ogre:** AC 5; HD 4+1; hp 25; # AT 1; Dmg 1-10 (+2); SA Nil; SD Nil; SZ L; MR Std; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

**Gnoll:** AC 5; HD 2; hp 12; # AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (battle axe); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

**Goblin:** AC 6; HD 1-1; hp 6; # AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ S; MV 60 ft.; AL LE

**Ogre Mage:** AC 4; HD 5+2; hp 30; # AT 1; Dmg 1-12; SA Once per day, the following abilities: assume gaseous form, charm person, sleep, and cone of cold (as wand of cold doing 8d8 damage; saves apply); SD Nil; MR Std; SZ L; MV 90 ft., 150 ft. (Fly); AL LE

Ogre Magi also have the following abilities: fly (for 12 turns), become invisible, cause darkness in a 10-foot radius, polymorph to human form (or similar bipedal humanoid form from 4' to 12' size), and regenerate 1 hit point per melee round

**Drow Elf:** AC 2 (equ. +2 chain/+1 buckler); HD 7; hp 45; # AT 2 or 1 (crossbow or short sword +2); Dmg 1-3 + poison (crossbow darts) or 1-6 +2 (short sword); SA see below; SD see below; MR 62%; SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL CE

**NOTE:** 50% of the drow encountered will have crossbows. Drow Crossbows have a range of 60 yards and each dart is coated with a poison which renders the victim unconscious for 1d6 rounds (save at -4) and cause 1-3 points of damage.

These drow have the following magical abilities usable once per day:

**dancing lights, faerie fire, darkness 15' radius, detect magic, detect alignment, and levitate**

In addition, drow priests can use the following magic spells once per day:

**clairvoyance, detect lie, suggestion, and dispel magic.**

The boots and cloaks that the Drow wear are similar to cloaks and boots of elvenkind, except that the wearer has only a 75% chance of surprising enemies or blending into shadows. The material will not cut easily and cloaks add a +6 to saving throws versus fire attacks.

All Drow make saving throws, whether spells or from devices, at +2.

If within the radius of a light or continual light spell, the dark elves lose 2 from their dexterity, and all attacks are made at -2 on the to-hit roll. If bright light exists, it is 75% likely that the drow will retreat from the situation because of the illumination, unless such a retreat would imperil one of their number, would otherwise be harmful to their desired ends or would expose some important feature to the light-bringing intruders.

Each drow carries a small pouch around his/her neck with

the following:

2-20 gp and 1-4 gems of from 50-200 gpv

The Dark Coast is not a very hospitable place. The inhabitants are primarily evil and have self-centered goals. Battles amongst their own kind are commonplace. These creatures are always on their toes, paranoid of attack, and nearly impossible to surprise. When dicing for surprise, wandering monsters encountered will use a d8 instead of the normal d6.

The darkness of the coast will be to the players' disadvantage throughout the round. If the PCs opt to use torches, they will be spotted by anyone within a few hundred yards. Roll for random encounters at double the frequency if such is the case. Also, utilizing torches will spoil darkvision. Since no light is shed along the Dark Coast, the PCs must follow the wagon path in order to successfully locate the city of Kronis.

Character attacks in darkness are at a -4 penalty "to-hit" (-2 for characters with blind-fighting or those able to take advantage of darkvision). Monsters encountered throughout the Dark Coast suffer no penalties on attacks as they are used to the darkness. If a light spell is cast, the characters can fight without penalty. However, monsters suffer a -2 penalty on all attacks when a light spell is in effect since they are accustomed to total darkness.

The PCs goal for this round is to obtain the **crystal of energies** for the "supposed" closing of the portal. Once the PCs gain the artifact, they must locate the portal and follow Taymar Balenz's instructions to attempt a closure. Of course, long before the PCs arrive in Kronis, Taymar Balenz's assassinator and impersonator has been waiting for them to complete his instructions and "open" the portal to the evil plane. At that time, he will make his appearance, revealing his true form, and then disappear into the portal for reasons unknowable to the characters at this time. However, only encounters up to, but not including, the opening of the portal will be handled in this part.

Before starting this part, be sure you are completely familiar with the situation in the City of Kronis by reading the section that follows, "Kronis: The Darkness Capital."

## KRONIS: THE DARKNESS CAPITAL

Most populated areas within the Dark Coast consist merely of a small number of disorganized monsters such as gnolls, ogres, and goblins gathered together to form camps or villages. They own almost nothing, having only crude weapons and armor. They often abandon their camps and villages in favor of new territories after suffering losses in raids by other groups of monsters.

The largest and most organized area within the Dark Coast is Kronis. It might be thought of as the capital city of the Dark Coast since it is the central supply base and the most fortified area. Supplies are imported to Kronis via heavily guarded supply wagons. Several such wagons leave twice a month on forays into local towns and villages outside the coast. The monsters are always successful in procuring a stockpile of goods and weapons from their pillaging. In addition, young men, women, and even children are sometimes taken for slaves. The raiders never cause major damage to local towns nor are enough supplies taken from an individual area to

seriously threaten that area. However, enough is gathered each month to keep the inhabitants of the Dark Coast coming back to Kronis to squander their valuables on items of necessity. Local humans have chased the bandits to the edge of the Dark Coast on several occasions, but refuse to follow the marauders into their own territory.

The leader of Kronis, responsible for most goings on in the Dark Coast, is Krass, a Ferbolg giant. His authority was questionable several years back, but since his miraculous raid on Tower City, he has become akin to an emperor. He managed to infiltrate the Tower of Sight with the aid of an army of ogres, assassinate the former high mage, Thraediun Zylar, and steal the **crystal of energies**. To this day there is still much talk among the ogres about their once upon a time triumph.

Though Krass has not been able to tap into the real power of the crystal, he has been able to utilize its minor functions such as **wall of force** and **fireball**. The powers have proved very useful to Krass when there has been a need for him to assert his authority. Of course, in addition to the helpful magic, Krass has also become victim to the crystal's side effects. Most noteworthy is the crystal's ability to turn gold within a 30' radius to lead. This side effect infuriated Krass at the outset, but he soon saw a way to turn it to his advantage.

## MONETARY SYSTEM

The City of Kronis originally worked with a system based on the gold piece. Copper and silver were less valuable, platinum was rare and most valuable, and gems and jewelry were appraised according to their content and quality.

Since Krass stole the **crystal of energies** from the former high mage, all gold belonging to him has turned to lead. Instead of ridding himself of the crystal, Krass has changed the monetary system to a base of lead. The new system is as follows.

200 copper pieces = 1 silver piece  
20 silver pieces = 1 gold piece  
5 gold pieces = 1 lead piece\*  
2 lead pieces = 1 platinum piece

\*- Note that only lead pieces which were formerly gold pieces have a value 5 times gold. Chunks of lead or items made from lead are not considered currency.

This system makes it easy for Krass to become very wealthy in his own city. For anyone with gold it costs 5 times the normal price to buy anything. When Krass receives payment for anything in gold, he converts it to lead by putting it near the **crystal of energies**. Under Krass's system, this makes each gold piece worth one fifth its value. The only way to beat the system is to buy everything with platinum, jewelry, gems, or with lead, (if you happen to have any).

Since there are no other major cities along the Dark Coast, members of Kronis and surrounding villages often attempt raids on incoming supply wagons to steal items of necessity rather than pay the ridiculous prices in the city. Krass has assigned one of his personal guards, Cy, to help see that the supplies arrive safely.

## HIERARCHY OF COMMAND IN KRONIS

The diagram below shows the levels of authority in the city



of Kronis.

of these important NPCs.



1. **Krass:** See the appendix for a complete description of this important NPC.

2. **Nesara, Bolfer, Tarian, and Shesun:** See the appendix for complete descriptions of these important NPCs.

3. **Cy and Kai:** See the appendix for complete descriptions

4. **Ogres:** The ogres serve as Krass's most capable fighters. They are dimwitted, but fight unceasingly in a battle. The ogres also serve as a slightly organized group of brutal law enforcers. As these creatures are all brawn and no brain, they are easily riled.

All ogres encountered will have the following statistics.

**Ogre:** AC 5; HD 4+1; hp 25; # AT 1; Dmg 1-10 (+2); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

5. **Gnolls:** These creatures serve in battle under their commanders, the ogres.

All gnolls encountered will have the following statistics.

**Gnoll:** AC 5; HD 2; hp 12; # AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (battle axe); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

6. **Goblins:** To Krass, all goblins are expendable. If a battle arises, he will send hordes of goblins to take the brunt of the attack.

All goblins encountered will have the following statistics.

**Goblin:** AC 6; HD 1-1; hp 6; # AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ S; MV 60 ft.; AL LE

## MOVING ABOUT THE CITY

It is all too obvious that the player characters are going to have difficulty moving about the city without drawing attention to themselves. Therefore, the PCs must devise a plan before attempting an infiltration. Below is a list of possibilities that will have the corresponding chances of success. No doubt there are other probable ways of accomplishing the task. If the players come up with a reasonable plan, allow it to have a good chance of working. However, never give the players a feeling of security. Even the most brilliant plan should give the players the feeling that they will be discovered at any moment.

1. **Polymorph** will allow one or more players to become indistinguishable from the creatures they take the form of. Players without the ability to polymorph could pose as captured slaves. Suspicions would be aroused, however, if the PCs masquerading as slaves were to be fully armed and armored. Also, PCs unable to speak the language of the polymorphed monsters will immediately draw the attention of one or more of the inhabitants of Kronis. If discovered, proceed immediately to the section, "**On Discovery and Possible Capture.**"

2. If the PCs attack and succeed in taking control over the supply wagons incoming the Dark Coast, they may pose as certain monsters on board the wagons with the aid of polymorph as above. Of course, the ogres and gnolls prepared to receive the incoming supplies will question the PCs about the loss of Krass's personal guard, Cy, and certain other monsters not on the supply wagons. The players, if they can speak the language of the questioning monsters, can make up a story about being attacked by humans and barely surviving the onslaught. The story will be related to Krass who will be furious and order the PCs to serve a week's worth of hard labor. The PCs will be assigned to construction at the east end of town. See **Area K11** for details. Krass will speak through one of his advisors (Nesara, Bolfer, Tarian, or Shesun).

3. The PCs can disguise themselves as Dark Elves by applying some form of make-up to their skin to darken their complexion. Characters of the right height and wearing hoods would not immediately be suspect for outsiders.

4. Characters simply entering the town as evil types will be noticed easily, but not necessarily bothered. If the PCs take precautions to look like thieves, beggars, or other disreputable types, they may be ignored. However, as soon as the PCs act in an unusual manner, inhabitants of Kronis will inquire as to their business in town.

5. If the PCs do not have polymorph spells, they can attempt to use the **mirror of distortion**. Of course, anyone doing so will run the risk of staying in polymorphed form permanently. See the description for the mirror of distortion in the appendix for an explanation of this new item.

## ON DISCOVERY AND POSSIBLE CAPTURE

When the PCs are revealed for what they are, the discoverer will immediately report to the next higher in the chain of command, e.g. a goblin will report to a gnoll, a gnoll to an ogre, an ogre to either Cy or Kai, etc. Once word reaches the ogres, they will send out a group of 10 gnolls and 6 ogres

to capture the PCs while then reporting to Cy or Kai. Cy or Kai will then report to Krass's advisors who will report to Krass. Krass will immediately order Cy and Kai to remain with him and will send 2 of his advisors (any 2) along with 8 ogres and 12 gnolls to aid in the capture of the PCs. This entire process takes approximately 12 rounds assuming the discoverer was a goblin. If a gnoll or ogre is the discoverer, the transfer of information will be quicker.

If the PCs elude their pursuers, they will have extreme difficulty in moving about the city without becoming discovered. Chances of not being discovered would be slim to none unless invisibility or change of disguise is employed.

If the PCs are captured, they will be stripped of all obvious weapons, armor, and valuables and imprisoned in the dungeons of Krass's Fortress. See that area for specific details and possible chances for escape.

Use the statistics for all pursuers as found under the section, "**Hierarchy of Command in Kronis.**"

## ENCOUNTER AREAS

### D1. Leaving the Barrens

The threat of a portal opening from an evil plane to the continent of Irakaar has prompted the high mage of Tower City to send the PCs on a difficult quest to uncover two artifacts capable of reversing the process. Their first stop was the ghost town of Oszeroc, located in the barrens. There they met a crazy old hermit demanding their worship, fought off an onslaught of undead, and eventually managed to secure the first artifact, the mirror of distortion.

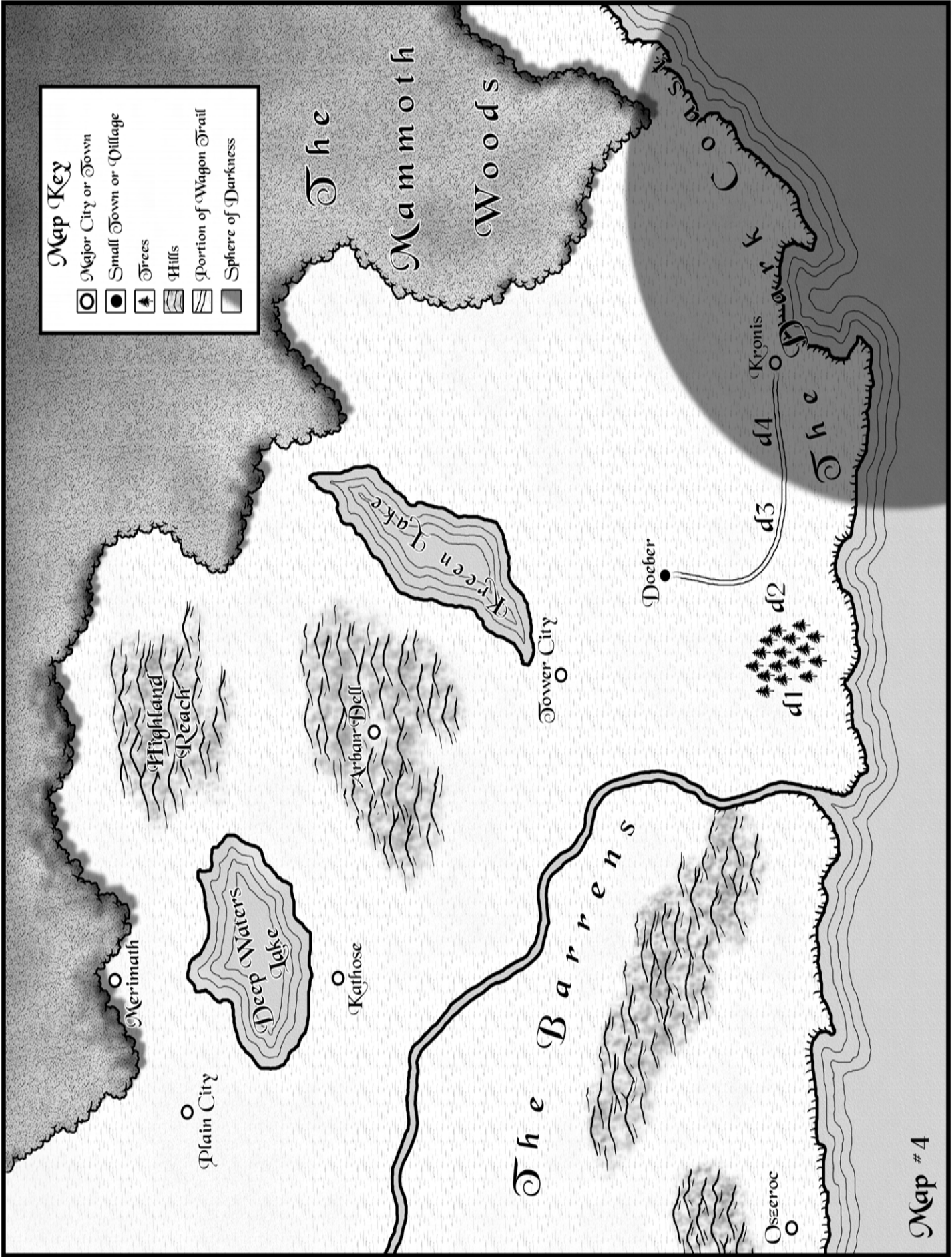
Leaving the barrens takes roughly eight hours by horseback. As the PCs are coming out of the barrens, green grass and patches of trees can be seen ahead. There will be no encounters during the journey out of the barrens. Do not roll for random encounters.

### D2. The Ambush

Before reaching the wagon trail, the PCs will be passing through a short stretch of wooded terrain with a central, almost overgrown, path. Careful inspection of the path by a ranger will reveal that several men wearing hard boots walked on the path within the past week. The footprints appear to have come from the east, circle, and then return to the east.

When the players are nearly out of the woods, the players may gain a clue as to what is going to happen. Have each player roll a d20. Humans rolling a 1 and elves rolling a 1 or 2 will hear what sounds like a caravan of wagons rapidly approaching. Also, have each player roll a second d20. Any character rolling a 1 or 2 will see one or more men hidden in the trees ahead, just at the edge of the woods. A roll of 20 will reveal that there are 5 men in the trees and they are brandishing swords. Their backs are turned to the adventurers.

When the PCs are nearly at the end of the patch of woods, they will see a group of 5 humans rush out from behind some trees, flailing swords above their heads. They are running out onto the plains towards a group of approaching wagons. It is difficult to tell who or what are driving the wagons



**Map Key**

|  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
|  | Major City or Town     |
|  | Small Town or Village  |
|  | Trees                  |
|  | Hills                  |
|  | Portion of Wagon Trail |
|  | Sphere of Darkness     |

The five humans are Gerrik, Balon, Zharis, Konaar, and Rolin. For complete statistics and role-playing notes refer to the appendix. These men made camp in the woods several nights ago in anticipation of catching Krass's supply wagons before they entered the darkness of the coast. The battle proceeds as outlined below. Allow the player characters to jump in and interfere at any time.

The wagons have the following monsters, human captives, & supplies aboard. All human captive statistics and role-playing notes can be found in the appendix.

### Wagon #1

Driver: Krass's personal guard, Cy. See the appendix for the statistics and role-playing notes on this important NPC.

Guards: 2 Gnolls and 1 Ogre

Captives: Joshua, Korack, and Yuris.

Supplies: 20 pints of ale, 35 pints of beer, miscellaneous clothing in sacks, 48 tinder box w/flint and steel

### Wagon #2

Driver: An ogre.

Guards: 4 ogres.

Captives: None.

Supplies: 4 suits of padded mail, 8 pairs of boots, 33 flasks of oil, 1000 feet of rope, 18 large sacks, 3 small chests, 100 wax candles

### Wagon #3

Driver: An ogre

Guards: 5 gnolls.

Captives: Gerryd and Erwick.

Supplies: 10 short swords, 20 spears, 5 light crossbows, 20 dozen bolts, 9 battle axes, 6 long swords, 16 javelins, 3 small shields, 28 daggers, 100 darts

### Battle Progression

| Round | Action   |
|-------|--|
| 1     | The 5 men rush out of hiding and begin to advance.   |
| 2     | The 5 men are halfway to the supply wagons. The supply wagons are slowing to allow their guards to jump down and fight.  |
| 3     | The wagons have stopped. All guards have jumped to the ground just as the 5 men are within range to melee.   |
| 4-8   | Melee ensues. Konaar and Rolin are defeated on round 8.  |
| 9     | Two Gnolls are killed (one by Zharis and the other by Gerrik). One ogre is killed by Balon.  |
| 10-15 | Melee continues. The humans are losing. If the PCs do not interfere, the fighters will be killed within 5 rounds.  |
| 16-20 | Three gnolls are defeated (1 each by Gerrik, Balon, and Zharis). Gerrik, Balon, and Zharis are killed on round 20.   |
| 21-30 | The gnolls and ogres strip the fighters of their weapons, pick up their companions' belongings, and continue on their journey (heading into the Dark Coast and to Kronis). |

If the PCs aid the fighters and defeat the bandits, the leader, Gerrik, will express his thanks and explain to them some of the problems they've been having with the bandits of the Dark Coast. Of course, they will express their desire to get the

stolen goods and captured citizens back to their hometown of Doeber. This news may discourage the PCs from planning a possible deception by posing as gnolls and ogres to get into Kronis. If the PCs say they wish to do so, Gerrik and the others will not think it is a good idea, but will understand if they are told of the urgency of the PCs mission. If the PCs invite Gerrik and the others to come along, only Gerrik and Balon will react favorably. Zharis, Konaar, and Rolin (if they live) will reject the idea, but will not dissuade Gerrik and Balon. The captives: Joshua, Korack, Yuris, Gerryd and Erwick will outright refuse. They are so shaken up by their kidnapping that they are not interested in risking capture again. They only want to get back home as soon as possible. Of course, they will wish the PCs luck in their journey. In fact, Erwick has a small necklace he carries as a good luck charm that he will give to an attractive female member of the group (affectionately "for luck." The necklace, unknown to Erwick, is actually a modest magical item which adds +1 to all surprise rolls (sort of like a sixth sense enhancer).

Even if the PCs manage to convince Gerrik of the necessity of taking the wagons and equipment and posing as gnolls and ogres, Gerrik will insist on keeping one of the wagons so that they (or the others) can get back to Doeber in good time.

For complete information about all NPCs in this encounter, refer to the appendix. Statistics and role-playing notes can be found there.

If the PCs decide to take the wagons and pose as monsters, refer to the section "**Moving About the City**" for details on how this can be accomplished. If the PCs come up with another method, use your discretion as to the chances of success.

### D3. The Wagon Trail

This trail is obviously new and rarely used. The imprints of wagon wheels are shallow and the vegetation is still growing well. It comes from the north, turns westward, and enters the Dark Coast.

From the trail, the PCs can see the Dark Coast as merely a hazy, gray area, almost like a fog bank, that rests unmoving on the horizon. The sun can be seen in the sky, partially blocked by the moon, Tarsus. As the PCs travel eastward, they will notice that the sun seems to be moving behind the moon. Slowly it will get darker and by the time they reach the Dark Coast, the sun will have vanished behind the moon and complete darkness will be upon them.

### D4. Inside the Dark Coast

Once inside the Dark Coast, travel will become dangerous. There are no keyed areas between the edge of the darkness and the City of Kronis, but there is a high probability that the PCs will encounter camps or individual groups of monsters. Consult the "**Wandering Monster**" table at the beginning of part 2. Note that even if the PCs are disguised as gnolls and ogres, there is a good possibility that they will be attacked by monsters residing within the Dark Coast. Remember that the PCs may be riding supply wagons that are headed for Kronis. Once in Kronis, the supplies become expensive marketable items at prices that most residents cannot afford. It is therefore highly likely that the PCs will be attacked by monsters with designs on getting a free cache of goods. This could very well take the PCs by complete surprise since they will probably believe themselves to be quite safe in disguise.

If the PCs are not posing as monsters and transporting supplies, they will be attacked by any reasonable number of monsters encountered on their journey. These attackers will retreat if they are badly wounded or outnumbered.

## ADVENTURES IN THE CITY OF KRONIS

For all adventures in the city, refer to **Map #5: City of Kronis**. Note that **Area K8** is explained in more detail later in the module. A separate map shows the inside of the building: "**Krass's Fortress**."

### K1. Guards at the Gate

The only entrance and exit to Kronis is this gate. There are three ogres guarding the gate, and they will allow no one to get in unless they are paid a sum in gold or gems (or lead pieces if the PCs have any). However, if the PCs are in control of the supply wagon and are convincingly disguised, the ogres will let them into the city without charging a fee.

If the PCs are not disguised or otherwise give themselves away, one of the ogres will go to alert Krass's army while the other two will attack. In 6 rounds 8 ogres, 12 gnolls, 20 goblins, and two of Krass's advisors (any 2) will arrive to aid the gate guards against the PCs.

**Ogres** (3 & 8): AC 5; HD 4+1; hp 25; # AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

**Gnolls** (12): AC 5; HD 2; hp 12; # AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (battle axe); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ L; MV 60 ft.; AL LE

**Goblins** (20): AC 6; HD 1-1; hp 6; # AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ S; MV 60 ft.; AL LE

**Krass's Advisors** (any 2): See the Appendix for complete details and role-playing notes for these unique NPCs.

### K2. Path to the Warehouse

Two ogres stand guard in front of a wooden gate. Beyond the gate is a wagon path leading up to what appears to be a large storage barn. There are gnolls and ogres moving boxes into the building through a pair of large double doors.

The ogre guards will only allow supply wagons or warehouse workers through the gate. Anyone else trying to get past will be under suspicion. Anyone forcing their way in will be attacked while reinforcements are called for (as K1 above).

Once the PCs are let inside in control of the wagons, they will be met by several gnolls and ogres who will begin to unload the supplies. However, just when the PCs think they are home free, one of the gnolls will look extremely suspicious and ask the PCs some questions. He may, perhaps, wonder what happened to certain gnolls that were supposed to be included in the raiding party. Or, if Krass's bodyguard is missing, he will ask what happened to him. If the PCs can speak gnoll, they must fast-talk their way out of trouble. Once told, the gnoll will report to Krass who will be furious and order that the PCs serve a week's worth of hard labor for blundering the raid. They will be assigned to the construction site at **Area K11**. The PCs will be informed of Krass's orders through one of his advisors who will order the sentence. If some of the PCs have not posed as prisoners, the questioning gnoll will

also wonder why no prisoners were taken for slave labor. This would make Krass even more furious so that the hard labor sentence could be followed by a month in the dungeon. Both situations could certainly put the PCs in quite a crisis.

### K3. The Storage Barn

This Barn is simply a very large building set aside for the storage of all items that will eventually be sold at the market place, **Area K4**. The place is guarded by 8 gnolls and 4 ogres who also double as workers.

**Ogre** (4): AC 5; HD 4+1; hp 25; # AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA Nil; MR Std; SD Nil; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

**Gnoll** (8): AC 5; HD 2; hp 12; # AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (battle axe); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

### K4. The Marketplace

This is a large area run by gnolls and goblins where equipment and items of necessity can be purchased. There are various booths set aside, each with related items on sale. The whole place is set-up under a wooden roof with no walls.

Hundreds of creatures; kobolds, gnolls, bugbears, drow, duergar, and others are pushing and shoving their way through the marketplace, each bargaining with a merchant for items on sale.

PCs entering the area will notice two remarkable things about the situation. First, they will discover that everything is outrageously priced (at least 5 times what the items are worth). Secondly, they will notice that all the items are also priced at a value of "lead." Strangely, though, they will find it is cheaper to buy with lead than with gold. Not many buyers are dealing with lead, but if the PCs are specifically looking for it, they will see some creatures who actually have lead coins. If examined closely, the PCs will see that the lead pieces look exactly like a gold piece with inscriptions and symbols as imprinted by local governments. This will come as quite a surprise since there are no known governments issuing lead pieces.

The marketplace could become an essential area for the PCs during the course of the adventure. If, for example, the PCs were captured and escaped, they may need to purchase weapons and other equipment to complete the adventure (if they were unable to restore their own items).

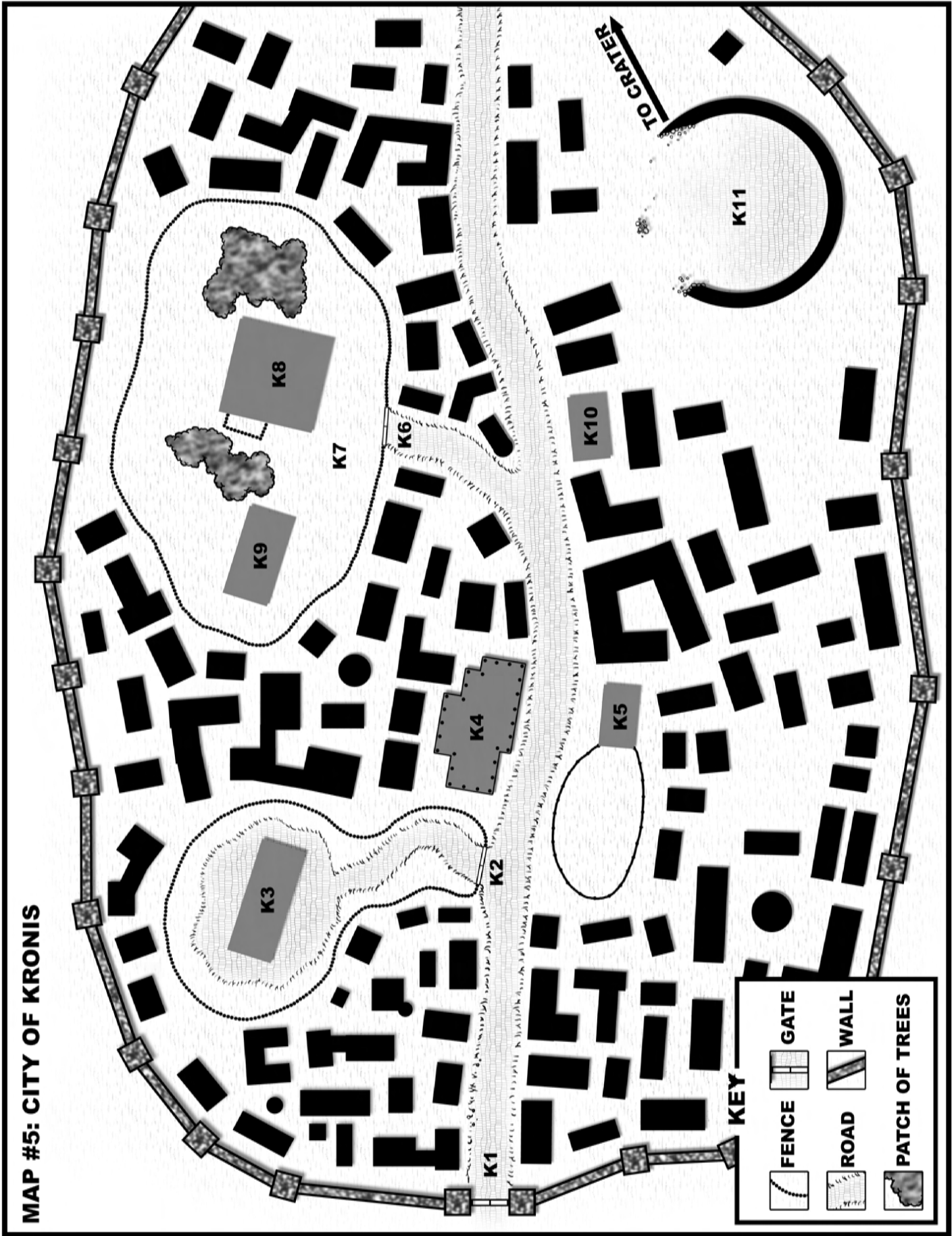
### K5. The Stables

This entire area is closed off by a fence. A barn houses horses and an area is reserved for the horses to run free. Horses can be purchased from the gnoll merchants who live here. The prices for horses are adjusted in the same manner as all sellable items are in this city as described under "Monetary System" at the beginning of this round.

### K6. Entrance to Krass's Fortress

A wagon path leads up to this twenty-foot high iron gate guarded by two ogres. One of the two carries the key to the gate and the other has a small brass horn which he has been instructed to sound if any intruders attempt to pass without permission.

**MAP #5: CITY OF KRONIS**





The iron fence surrounding Krass's fortress is twenty feet high. The bars of the fence are spaced evenly every four inches. It is impossible for anything humanoid to squeeze between them. They can, however, be bent by a strong character.

**Ogre (2):** AC 5; HD 4+1; hp 25; # AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

### K7. The Fortress Grounds

The fortress grounds are patrolled by 5 gnolls. If there is any sign of intruders, or if the ogre guard blows the warning horn, they will release Krass's wolves from their pen (**Area F3**). See the description in the next section of the module for complete details on the wolves and their pen. The wolves are trained to attack to kill all intruders on the fortress grounds. Once the wolves have been released, the entire fortress will be alerted to the presence of intruders. All monsters residing in **Area K9** will arrive within 6 rounds to attack. Monsters within the fortress will not leave to attack intruders outside the building. They will wait until the battle comes to them.

### K8. Within the Gates

Through the iron-wrought fence can be seen a large, three-story stone structure set back between copses of trees. Several low, broad steps lead up to the place's central doorway, which is too large for any ordinary creature.

The place is well guarded. Several gnolls are moving about the fortress grounds and white, four-legged creatures move about within cages attached to the left side of the structure.

A smaller, wooden building is to the left of the stone fortress. There is obvious activity from within as shadowy forms move about by torch-light.

The gnolls moving about the fortress grounds are those described in **Area K7**. The shadowed forms moving about the smaller building are members of Krass's army as described in **Area K9**, and the white, four-legged creatures are Krass's

wolves which are fully detailed at area F3 in the next section of the module, "Krass's Fortress."

The complete inside of the fortress is detailed in the next section. Use **Map #7** for encounters in the fortress.

### K9. Krass's Army Billet

This building is home to the majority of Krass's army. See **Map #6** for encounters in this area. The following is a breakdown of all monsters inhabiting the building.

**Ogres (50):** AC 5; HD 4+1; hp 25; # AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

**Gnolls (60):** AC 5; HD 2; hp 12; # AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (battle axe); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

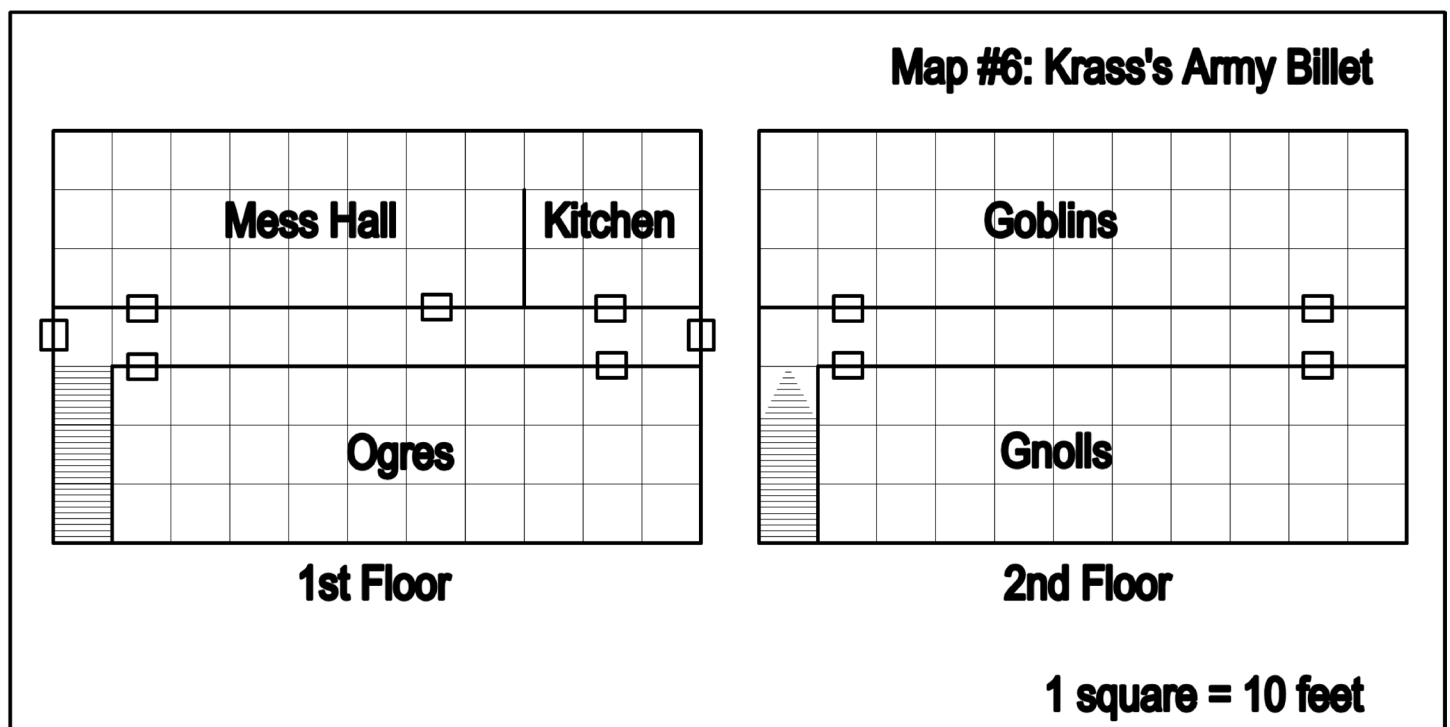
**Goblins (100):** AC 6; HD 1-1; hp 6; # AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ S; MV 60 ft.; AL LE

### K10. The Moneychangers

The moneychangers are under the strict control of Krass and are therefore subject to his monetary rules. See the section at the beginning of this round, "**Monetary System**," for complete details on Krass's bizarre conversion rate on all coins.

### K11. Construction Site and Portal Location

If the PCs venture into this area or are forced to serve hard labor here, they are sure to be in for a shock. A large building of unknown purpose is being constructed. It is circular in shape, but not enough work is done for the PCs to learn much else about its construction. The project is supervised by a group of brutal ogres who apparently gain great pleasure from tormenting the workers. The workers are slaves, abducted from local towns and villages outside the Dark Coast. Most of them are young men, but there are a few women and even some children.



If the PCs are able to speak with any of the slaves, they will be able to learn the following information.

1. The building they are constructing is ultimately going to be an outdoor coliseum, but the purpose is unknown.

2. The prisoners are forced to work for 10 hour periods when they are then relieved by another group of slaves. When not working, the slaves are imprisoned in the dungeons of Krass's fortress (detailed in **Area F5**).

3. The slaves know a little about Krass. They can tell the PCs that the leader of the town is a gargantuan human. They do not know his name, but have heard ogres and gnolls address him with a name that begins with a "K." They know that Krass is powerful. They say they have seen him call forth great balls of fire and lightning bolts. He has done so on a couple of occasions when outsiders tried to invade Kronis. They know that Krass lives in the fortress and is well protected.

The ogres overseeing the construction site are cruel and unmerciful. If they catch anyone talking, they will use whips to invoke discipline.

About a hundred yards from the construction site can be seen a huge circular indentation in the ground (a crater). The crater is fenced off and a posted sign identifies the area as restricted. The PCs can ask any of the slaves about the restricted area who will tell them that the hole in the ground appeared shortly after a violent earthquake a few weeks ago. Many slaves were sent down in the hole to investigate, but never returned. Eventually, ogres and other creatures were sent to check out the hole. Only a few ever returned and told stories of the others being swallowed up by the earth. Since then, the area has been blocked off and anyone going near it does so at his own risk.

The area within the crater is, of course, where the portal to the unknown plane is opening from. Though Taymar Balenz's impersonator needs the two artifacts to successfully open the portal to the evil plane, he has managed to do some of the work himself. A small breach of dimensions has occurred and anything stepping within the immediate area of the breach will be drawn in and randomly transported to a different plane. Several humans and some of Krass's men have suffered such fates as described by the slaves above. When the PCs have obtained the **crystal of energies**, they must return to this area. Any of Krass's men, who are in pursuit when the PCs head for the crater, will reluctantly stop at the crater's edge and go no further. They may, however, throw spears or other missile weapons as the PCs descend into the crater.

## KRASS'S FORTRESS

Unless otherwise stated, all corridor heights are 16' and room heights are 18'. Corridor widths are 15' wide.

### F1. Entrance Hall

A set of broad, stone steps lead up to a 15-foot tall, 6-foot wide iron door. The door is always locked. A large iron knocker must be used to call attention to the door greeter inside who will open the door to anyone doing so. If the characters use the door's knocker, the massive iron door slowly creaks open. Standing before them is an ogre. He wears filthy clothes and stinks of sweat and dirt. In his right hand he carries a large,

spiked club.

If the PCs are not disguised in any form, the ogre will look surprised and be unable to react at first. If the PCs do not immediately react, the ogre will regain his senses (what little he has) and reach for a dangling cord next to the door and yank on it several times while calling out "Intruders! Intruders!" in ogre. The cord is attached to a large bell hidden out of sight which will alert the gnolls patrolling the fortress and the army in **Area K9**. All monsters on the first level of the fortress will come to investigate within three rounds. The monsters at **Area K9** will arrive in 6 rounds and, if the gnolls patrolling the grounds are still alive, they will arrive in 3 rounds.

**Ogre** (Door greeter): AC 5; HD4+1; hp 25; # AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

### F2. Pillar Hall

The entrance hall opens into a 90x50 room with a 25 foot ceiling supported by featureless stone pillars. The walls of the chamber are paintings of creatures at war with men. Several bloody battles of conquest are depicted with the conquering army showing no mercy. The ceiling of the pillar hall is decorated with a mosaic. The basically abstract piece of art seems to resemble the face of an evil human of monstrous proportions. Adjacent to the entrance hall is a corridor leading out of the pillar hall. Two doors are on opposite side walls, and a stairway leads upwards at the far end of the chamber.

Unless the PCs have alerted the fortress to their presence, this room will be empty. Otherwise, monsters from other areas of this level will be gathering and taking up defensive positions throughout the room. Monsters that cannot immediately enter into melee will take cover behind pillars to avoid missile weapons and magic spells.

### F3. Wolf Pen

Pivoting wooden doorways on the outer wall allow the wolves in this dirt-floored pen access and egress. The pen is 40x30 in size and smells of dung and spoiled meat. Eight large wolves are relaxing or pacing about the room.

In the center of the chamber hang three sets of iron manacles. The bones of human skeletons are hanging from them. One skeleton still has a bit of torn flesh hanging from its bones.

If the PCs enter here, the wolves will notice them immediately (even by scent in the case of invisible characters) and attack to kill. Slaves refusing to work, grown too old, collapsed from exhaustion, or those attempting escape are brought here to become food for the wolves.

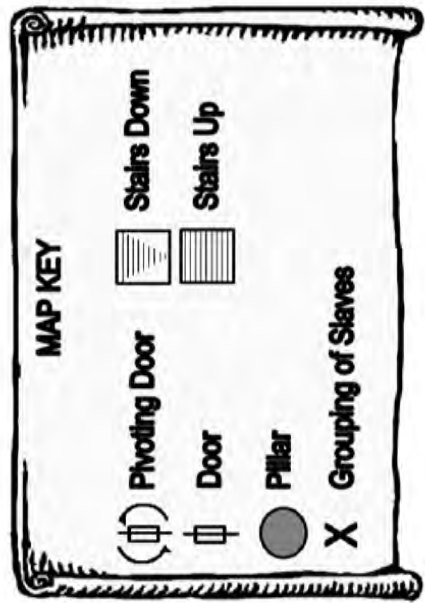
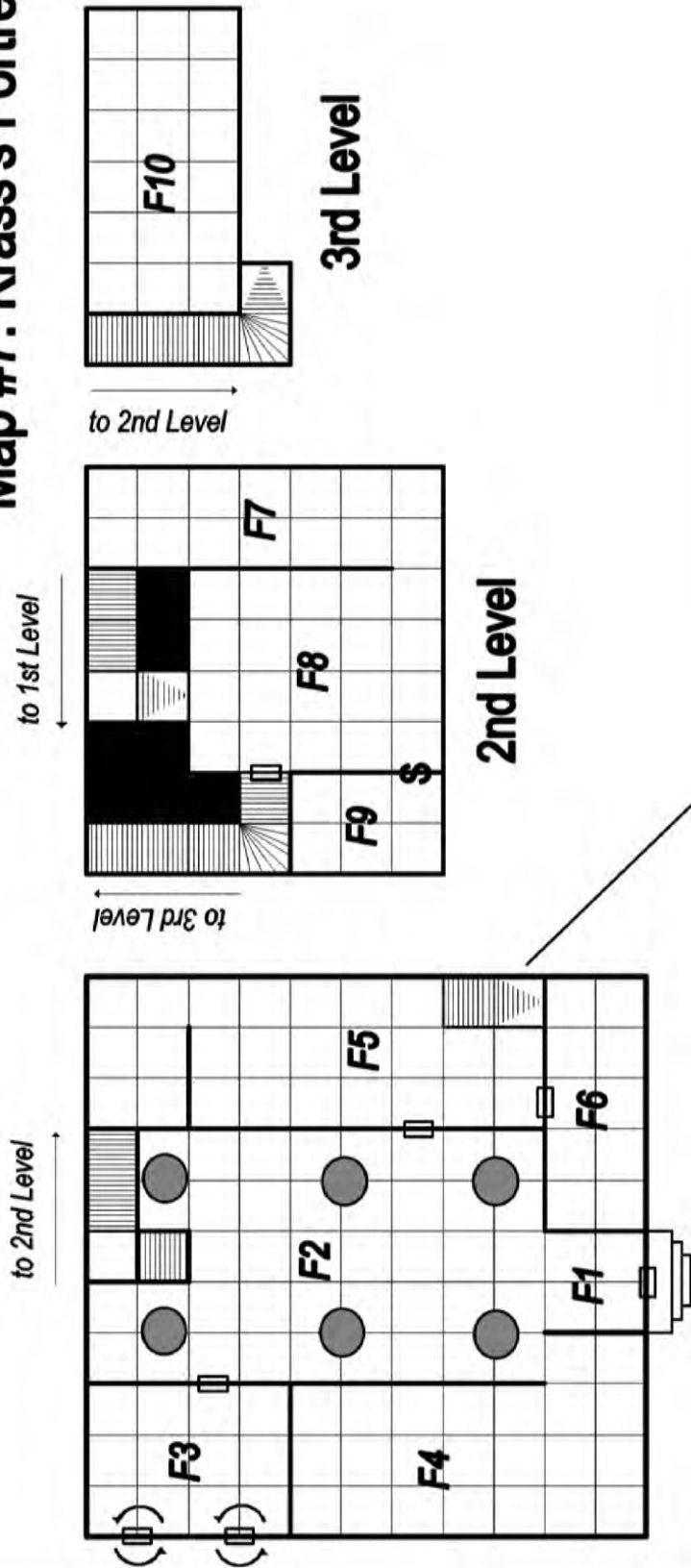
**Worg Wolves** (8): AC 6; HD 3+3 (4'-7'); hp 18; # AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ L; MR Std; MV 180 ft.; AL NE

### F4. Conference Hall

A large wooden table with numerous chairs sits in the middle of this long hall. A parchment map of the continent of Irakaar is affixed to the far wall.

A group of 6 gnolls and two ogres seem to be arguing over the placement of certain markers on the map of Irakaar.

# Map #7: Krass's Fortress



1 square = 10 feet

The monsters in this room are conducting an informal meeting regarding future raiding plans. The raids and the monsters' argument are insignificant and no information can be gained to aid the PCs' quest. A search of the room will reveal nothing extraordinary.

Note: If the monsters on this level have been alerted to the presence of the PCs, the room will be empty.

**Gnolls** (6): AC 5; HD 2; hp 12; # AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (battle axe); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

**Ogres** (2): AC 5; HD 4+1; hp 25; # AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

#### F5. Kitchen and Dining Hall

This huge hall is used solely for the purpose of dining. Several large, rectangular tables are set about the chamber with chairs surrounding them. Near the kitchen entrance is a table sitting higher off the ground than all the others. Its chair is also abnormally large. Five gnolls are currently here having dinner. Two goblin cooks are in the kitchen cleaning up. A set of stairs lead down to the dungeons of the fortress from the main dining area.

If the PCs search the kitchen thoroughly they will find a pouch stashed behind a sack of flour on a shelf. The pouch contains 20 gp, 15 cp, and 5 lead pieces as well as a vial of liquid which is actually a **potion of cure light wounds**.

**Gnolls** (5): AC 5; HD 2; hp 12; # AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (battle axe); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

**Goblins** (2): AC 6; HD 1-1; hp 6; # AT 1; Dmg 1-3 (cooking knife); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ S; MV 60 ft.; AL LE

#### DUNGEONS OF THE FORTRESS

The stairway from this area leads down 30 feet and ends in the dungeons. There is a 70 foot long corridor with several doors on each side. Each door leads to a large cell filled with straw and stinking of dirt and sweat. In each cell there are roughly 5 prisoners. The prisoners are slaves who are used for various tasks throughout the city (mostly for the construction of the coliseum at **Area K11**). Every 10 hours these prisoners are released to do work while those who were working take their place in the cells. The prisoners are only fed left-overs and scraps left behind by Krass's men.

Two ogres are at guard by the bottom of the stairs at all times. One of the guards holds the **key** to the cells. The guards are relieved every 6 hours.

**Ogres** (2): AC 5; HD 4+1; hp 25; # AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

#### F6. Living Quarters

This large area serves as a living area for some of Krass's most favored creatures. Six gnolls and two ogres are currently here. Krass's two bodyguards, Cy and Kai, live here, but are most often found elsewhere busy guarding Krass.

The room consists of several beds and a few large trunks. The trunks contain the following.

Trunk #1: Clothes, rope, necklace (poor workmanship), and a sack with 12 lead pieces.

Trunk #2: Clothes, a large belt, a flail, and a **potion of cure serious wounds**

Trunk #3: Clothes, empty sacks, canteen of watered down wine, a few worthless trinkets, and a small silver ring of **fire resistance**.

**Gnolls** (6): AC 5; HD 2; hp 12; # AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (battle axe); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

**Ogres** (2): AC 5; HD 4+1; hp 25; # AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE

#### F7. Guarded Hallway

If either or both of Krass's bodyguards still live, they will be here. If the PCs have been completely inconspicuous up 'till this point, Cy and Kai will be visible, otherwise they will be invisible and waiting to ambush the party when they are halfway down the hallway.

The ogre magi will first shoot rays of cold which cause d8 of damage. They will then attempt to **charm person** and use **darkness** for confusion. If all fails they will become gaseous and retreat to the 3rd level.

**Ogre Magi** (Cy and Kai): AC 4; HD 5+2; hp 30; # AT 1; Dmg 1-12; SA Once per day, the following abilities: charm person, sleep, & cone of cold (as wand of cold doing 8d8 dice of damage; saves apply); SD Nil; MR Std; SZ L; MV 90 ft., 150 ft. (Fly); AL LE

Ogre Magi also have the following abilities: fly (for 12 turns), become invisible, cause darkness in a 10' radius, polymorph to human (or similar bipedal humanoid form from 4' to 12' size) form, and regenerate 1 hit point per melee round.

#### F8. Krass's Advisors

The hallway ends and an opening in the right wall leads to this 40x50 chamber shrouded in almost complete darkness. Only two subdued lanterns provide any illumination at all. A group of four dark-cloaked, black-skinned humanoids sit behind a rectangular table which nearly spans the entire width of the room. A stairway behind the figures apparently leads to the third level of the fortress.

Unless the PCs attack without even a brief pause, Krass's advisors, Nesara, Bolfer, Tarian, and Shesun will talk with them. First, they will demand to know what the PCs' business is here in Kronis, and then they will demand immediate surrender or they will threaten to destroy the PCs. As soon as any aggressive action is attempted by a player character, have both sides roll for initiative to determine who will attack first.

For the drow elves' first attacks, they will draw their crossbows and fire poison darts at the PCs until they are close enough to do melee. They will then draw their short swords to attack at close range. On certain rounds, the drow may use any of their innate abilities to aid them in the fight against the PCs. **Levitate**, **dancing lights** and **suggestion** (priests only) could prove to be quite helpful. Refer to the stats for these NPCs in the appendix for drow abilities and accoutrements. These drow will fight to the best of their ability and to the death.

Drow Elves (Nesara, Bolfer, Tarian, and Shesun): See the appendix under “**Krass’s Advisors**” for details on these important NPCs.

#### F9. Vault Room

This large vault room contains a stash of all Krass’s riches (except the **crystal of energies** which he keeps on his person). The following can be found here.

15500 lead pieces, 2000 pp, 11000 cp, 8900 sp, various jewelry and gems worth a total of 3355 gp, **2 potions of cure serious wounds, scroll of neutralize poison, scroll of teleport**

#### F10. Krass’s Chamber

The stairway ends and opens into a single chamber approximately 50x30 with a ceiling reaching 20 feet. A large bed and trunk sit near the left wall and a table and chair near the right wall. The walls and ceiling are painted with the faces of unknown gods.

In the center of the chamber is a 10-1/2 foot tall, lumbering giant. In his right hand he holds a purple crystal of massive size. In his left hand he carries a large sword. And on his head rests a golden crown inset with sparkling gems.

Krass is not afraid to use the crystal’s power to attack the PCs. He will start by hurling a **fireball** at them and then a **lightning bolt**. If the PCs then try to advance on Krass, he will cause

a **wall of force** to block their way. Then when the PCs are convinced they cannot get passed the barrier he will lower the defense so he can attack again with a **fireball** and **lightning bolt**. He will continue this strategy until the PCs get close enough to melee whereupon he will fight with his sword to the death. PCs remaining at a distance will still be subject to occasional fireball or lightning bolt attacks. Sometime during combat, Krass will suddenly be **hasted** for 1 turn. Anytime during combat, Krass may cast one of his spells. Note that all cast spells will be “enhanced” in various ways because of the crystal of energies. Refer to the section detailing the crystal in the appendix for complete details.

If Cy and/or Kai have retreated here after becoming gaseous, they will now be in their normal forms. They will, of course, fight alongside Krass and to the death.

Once Krass is dealt with, the armies of Krass will be arriving in droves to see that the PCs meet some unfortunate end. The **teleport** spell can be used to transport the PCs to the crater. If they do not use the spell, be sure to send flowers...

Krass (Ferbolg Giant): See the appendix for specific details regarding this important NPC.

#### DECEPTION REVEALED

When the PCs arrive at the site of the opening portal, they may work from the high mage’s instructions to set up the artifacts and cast the spell to close the breach of dimensions. However, once they perform the ritual, the portal does not



This ends the second part of Advent of Darkness.



close, but opens.

As they stand before the fully open portal, Taymar Balenz appears before them. He looks at each of them with a blank stare and then slowly smiles.

*"Congratulations. Do not think you have failed me. Your performance is to be commended."*

As they watch him it is obvious he is undergoing a metamorphosis. The false image of the high mage is replaced by the sneering visage of an evil wizard.

*"I shall remember you all when I take my place as ultimate ruler of Irakaar."*

With that he turns and enters the portal. When he appears on the other side of the portal, it is obvious that there is a time differential. The wizard moves forward in quick, long lurches as time advances rapidly.

### **Important!**

*Be sure to describe the wizard as a white-haired old mage with long robes of night-blue. Remembering the description of Nim Eirkoon may save their characters' lives later in the adventure.*

## PART THREE: DARK EMPIRE

### GAME MASTER'S BACKGROUND

The Player Characters were left feeling rather foolish at the end of part two. It is obvious to them now that they have merely been pawns in an evil wizard's plan. However, no one has a clue to what that plan is. Their adversary, Nim Eirkoon, is about to accomplish a goal that will enable him to become the ruler of the Realms of Arkonus. Only the PCs can stop him from attaining this ambition, but they must move quickly.

The PCs' goals for this part are:

1. Discover Nim Eirkoon's plans.
2. Stop Nim from reaching Izdukrogg.
3. Close the portal.

The adventure is designed so that the second goal cannot be accomplished. Nim will reach Izdukrogg and exercise control over him with the use of a magic orb. The PCs must then either defeat Izdukrogg, destroy the orb, or conquer Nim. If Izdukrogg is spared and the PCs approach him properly, he may help them to close the portal.

The challenges presented in the final round are many and dangerous. The conclusion should move along swiftly and be quite deadly.

The characters begin this part on a floating island in a place called Krielaar. This giant, floating rock is entirely on another dimensional plane.

### ADVENTURES IN KRIELAAR

For all encounters in Krielaar use **Map #8** and **Map #9**. After the characters enter the portal they will arrive at **Area H1** on **Map #8**.

#### H1. The Portal

When the characters entered the portal, time seemed to stand still. Describe to them that it felt as if they were moving in slow motion and falling endlessly through an orange-tinted mist. Then without warning, their feet met solid ground, the mists vanished, and they collapsed with an overwhelming feeling of sickness in their stomach. Now, with the exception of a slight dizziness, everything seems to be back to normal.

They find themselves on a massive island floating within empty space. Near the center of the island is a large lake and above the lake are three distinct cloud formations; two small clouds on opposite sides of a larger one. Despite a definite breeze, all three clouds remain in a fixed position. The only living creatures that can be seen on this entire island are several winged beasts who seem to be frolicking by the shore of the lake.

The creatures flying about by the lake are **water demons**. Their reactions to the PCs are detailed in **Area H2**.

#### H2. The Lake

Several winged creatures with gleaming wet skin are playing

about in the water. Occasionally one will dive into the water while another will surface and take flight into the air. They become more and more uneasy if the characters approach them.

As explained in the previous encounter, these creatures are water demons. These monsters are not at all friendly, but they will not attack unless they believe they are seriously threatened. Approaching too close would be considered a serious threat. Also, anyone entering into the water, even at a great distance, would be considered a threat to the water demons since their lair is located underwater. To protect their females and their young, they will attack anything entering the water.

There are a total of 8 water demons currently able to attack if they are threatened. If more than half of these are killed in combat, the others will retreat into the water to stay near their families to protect them.

The water demons attack by using their powerful winged arms to grab their opponent. Once they have successfully grabbed their victim, they can lift it and carry it under water. There they will struggle to keep their grip until the victim is dead from drowning. In the air a water demon can only grab onto an opponent by rolling a natural 20 in melee (normal hit rolls causes 2-8 points of damage). However, once a character is held, the hold can only be broken by killing the beast. This is further complicated by the fact that a held victim can only attack with small weapons such as a dagger or knife otherwise all attacks are made at -4 "To-Hit" and damage.

If the water demons are followed under water, the entire colony of demons will attack to defend their lair. The PCs will find it even more difficult to defeat these creatures underwater since a grab attack is successful every time they roll their normal number "To-Hit." If the PCs do manage to slay all the water demons, they will find nothing of value in their lair. The water in the lake is the true treasure. If the PCs drink the water of the lake they will temporarily gain the power of flight at a speed of 12 and maneuverability class C. The power of flight will last from 1-4 turns for each PC. Note, however, that each PC is only allowed to drink three doses of the magic waters. Additional doses do not accrue flight powers. This is extremely important to remember!

#### Above Water

**Water Demons, Male** (8): AC 3; HD 6+5; hp 40; # AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA grab; SD Nil; MR 20%; SZ M; MV 30 ft., 90 ft. (Fly), 120 ft. (Swim); AL CN

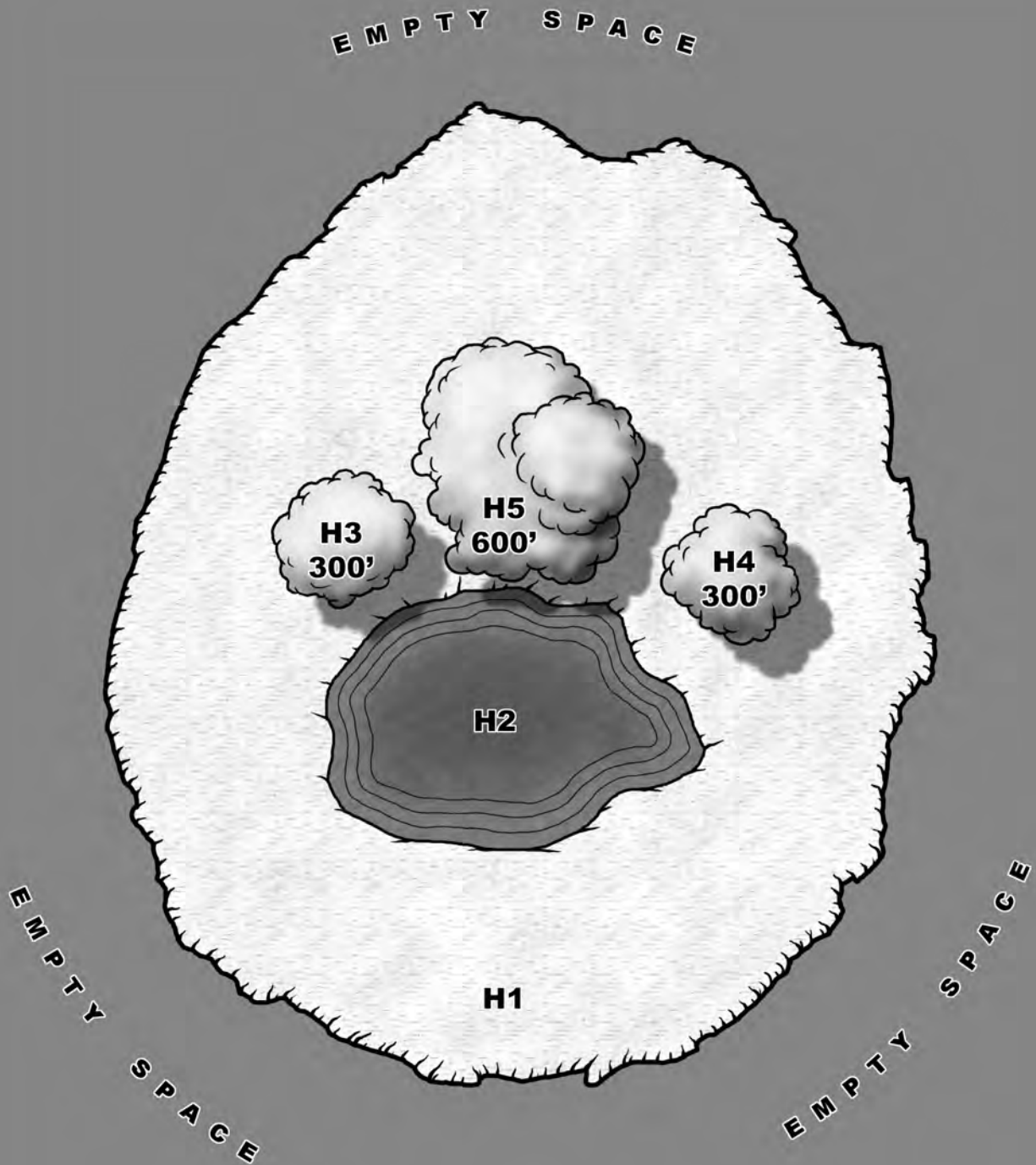
#### In Lair

**Water Demons, Male** (3): same stats as above

**Water Demons, Female** (15): AC 3; HD 5; hp 30; # AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA grab; SD Nil; MR 20%; SZ M; MV 30 ft., 90 ft. (Fly), 120 ft. (Swim); AL CN

**Water Demons, Young** (13): AC 6; HD 1; hp 7; # AT 1; Dmg 1; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR 10%; SZ S; MV 10 ft., 30 ft. (Fly), 60 ft. (Swim); AL CN

# MAP #8: KRIELAAR



## MAP KEY



CLOUDS



WATER



ISLAND BORDER



## Taking Flight

When the PCs take flight and have reached a point above the level of clouds H3 and H4, they will be attacked by the twin blue dragons. Read the following text when the PCs are attacked.

Half-way to the height of the large, central cloud, slightly higher than the left and right clouds, the characters can see mountain-like formations resting gently atop each. From out of cavernous openings in each rocky mound, a large, speedy creature takes flight towards them. Great wings beat against the wind, massive clawed feet bear on them, and parted lips reveal powerful jaws and huge pointed teeth.

The attacking creatures and their motivations are described in full detail under **Area H3 & Area H4**.

**Nim's Passage:** Nim has cast *fly* and *invisibility* on himself to get to Izdukrogg's castle without attracting the dragons' attention.

### H3/H4. Rival Guards

On each of these two clouds rests a small mountain. In each mountain there is a large cavern which is home to a very young blue dragon. Both dragons were captured elsewhere and now serve Izdukrogg in return for the promise of treasure and permission to eliminate any creatures not specifically having a purpose on this plane. In fact, Izdukrogg rewards the dragons based on how many coups they register. Therefore, both dragons are fierce rivals. They don't wish to kill each other, but are in constant competition. Because of this rivalry, the two dragons often use strange tactics when combating enemies. If one of the dragon's is about to make a kill, the other may move in and strike the finishing blow, or breathe the electricity at a distance in order to deliver the coup de grace. Too many such tactics may anger one or the other dragon which may provoke a fight amongst themselves. At such a time, the PCs can escape if they think quickly enough. However, as soon as the dragons discover that their prey is fleeing, they will cease bickering amongst themselves and pursue the PCs. Since the dragons are both capable of speech, they may often be heard saying such things as, "Stay away from that one, he's mine!" or "If you even try and kill this one, I'll come after you next!" Or, in order to brag at how many coups he has, the dragon may speak to the victim and say, "How does it feel to be my 100th victim? You should be honored."

The PCs may try to appeal to the dragons' greed in order to escape their wrath. Since the sole reason the dragons are out to kill the PCs is in anticipation of what they may receive from their master in the way of treasure, the PCs may try to offer magic items in return for their lives. Certainly, this tactic will only work if the dragons have even a slight feeling that they may actually lose the battle. If the dragons have a firm upper hand, they will simply laugh at any bargaining attempts and say, "Why should I let you escape for a mere bribe? When you are dead, I shall have everything you own as well as a handsome reward from my master."

To make it hardest for the PCs to return attacks, the two dragons will use their claw/claw/bite in flying strike attacks and their breath weapon at a distance. If the dragons are

reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, they will quickly retreat to their cavern homes to protect their treasures.

If the PCs use a **wish**, the dragons can be turned against each other, allowing the party to escape.

The dragon caves contain the following items:

Left Cave: 30,182 ep, 44 gems (5900 gpv total), 30 pieces of jewelry (8400 gpv total)

Right Cave: 59,500 gp, 62 gems (12185 gpv total), **potion of climbing, potion of stone giant strength, 1 scroll (Clerical-Augury [2nd Level], Flame Strike [5th level], Heal [6th Level])**

On the walls in each cavern are hundreds of claw markings. Every grouping of four vertical marks has a fifth mark slashed diagonally across the grouping. The left cave has a total of 99 markings while the right cave has 83 markings. The markings represent the number of kills each dragon has made.

It is important that you keep strict count on how long the battle with the dragons lasts. If a player's flying ability expires (1-4 turns for each character), he/she will cease flying and immediately plummet downward. Falling characters will plunge harmlessly in the lake below, but may be subject to further attacks by water demons. The lake water may be drunk again for flight capabilities, but its potency is reduced to 1-2 turns. A third drinking reduces potency to 1 turn. More than 3 doses has no effect.

Blue Dragons, Very Young (Quixolog and Ithlocus): AC 2; HD 10; hp 55; # AT 3+special; Dmg 1-8/1-8/3-24; SA See Below; SD See Below; MR Nil; MV 90 ft., 240 ft. (Fly); SZ L (20' long, Tail 15'); AL LE

Special Abilities: +2 Combat Modifier

Special Attacks: Kick, Breathe 5' x 100' bolt of lightning which causes 4d8+2 (save for half)

Special Defenses: Immune to Electricity

### Approaching the Castle

As the characters soar even higher, above even the lairs of the blue dragons, they come within sight of an ancient castle which floats high above the lake on a cloud.

The characters view the structure from the front where a pair of gigantic wooden doors serve as the entrance. Two narrow towers are at each front corner, and a larger tower is at the castle's rear. Along the parapet they can see statues of winged beasts that seem to stare at them with stony eyes. As they fly closer to the ominous stone castle, their flying powers begin to diminish.

The PCs must reach the castle entrance without delay. Failure to head immediately for a place to land will result in that character falling into the lake below. Regardless of how many doses of the flying liquid each PC took, all doses will now begin to fail. Additional doses will no longer work from this point on. Any characters landing in the lake will take no damage, but will be subject to attacks by any water demons still alive and able to fight.

Characters landing at the castle entrance will be safe for as

long as they remain outside the castle doors. However, upon entering the castle, the **stone gargoyles** (what appeared to be statues along the parapet) will tip a pot of boiling oil onto the PCs from above. There is evidence that the trap exists and so can be avoided by careful groups. See **Area C2** for complete details.

Characters that fly up to the parapet will be safe for only a moment before the stone gargoyles will seemingly come to life and attack. When attacking, the stone gargoyles will attempt to grab PCs, carry them over to the pit in the courtyard, and drop them through. PCs dropped into the pit will land in the lake and be subject to water demon attacks as described above. A stone gargoyle has successfully grabbed a PC when both claw attacks hit on the same round of melee and the PC then fails a -4 strength check (on d20). Characters being carried by stone gargoyles will suffer -4 penalties to both "to-hit" and "damage."

Stone Gargoyles (6): AC 2; HD 6; hp 36; # AT 4; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-8/2-8; SA Grab; SD +1 or better to hit; MR Nil; MV 60 ft., 120 ft. (Fly); SZ M; AL CE

## KEY TO IZDUKROGG'S CASTLE

### C1. The Entrance Doors

Before a pair of massive stone doors there is a mosaic slab, 10 foot by 10 foot extending outward into the clouds on which the characters can stand.

The stone doors are elaborate. Each bears the visage of a man in the center. The door to the right has a youthful countenance, while the one to the left bears wrinkles. Each face has a large, circular brass ring knocker hanging from a stone nose. There is no visible handle on either door. Hanging to the right of the doors is a large shell horn.

The horn is an obvious trap. If it is blown, a group of 2d4 Krie will be alerted and come to investigate. They will be waiting to ambush the party at **Area C4** (see C4 for more details).

Opening the doors is no small feat. Each door requires a combined strength of 30 or more to open. The best way to get them open would be to tie a rope to the door handle and have several characters pull on the rope. The doors are not locked.

If the PCs wish to find another entrance to the castle and have other means of flying, they may circle about the castle looking for another point of entry. However, the stone gargoyles will attack any characters that stray from the group. Also, the only place other than the double doors that the PCs can get to is the courtyard. A force field at the rear of the castle prevents anyone from entering through the tower window or secret passage.

**Nim's Passage:** Nim used **passwall** to gain entrance to the castle.

### C2. Entrance Area

With the doors open, the characters will be looking into an entrance chamber which runs some thirty-feet to the left and right, into darkness. An archway, twenty-feet ahead, opens into a large courtyard. The ceiling of this chamber is so high that it is lost in darkness. The stone floor before them is stained

with a black, grimy substance.

The black residue is evidence of the oil trap about to be sprung on the PCs, if they dare enter the castle. The stone gargoyles will wait until the largest number of PCs is within the twenty-foot area of effect of the boiling oil before tipping the pot. Those in the area of effect must make a save versus paralyzation or take the full 3d6 damage from the boiling oil. Those making their save have managed to avoid some of the oil and will suffer only half damage. A lone PC can approach the edge of the black substance and try to determine what it is before entering the castle. Also, PCs can avoid the boiling oil by skirting the edge of the black stain on the floor. The stone gargoyles will still release the trap, but only splashes of oil can hit PCs (a saving throw indicates no damage while failure accrues only half damage).

**Nim's Passage:** Nim has cast **nondetection** upon himself to further improve his ability to move about unseen. He has been able to travel about the castle completely undetected.

### C3. The Courtyard

The courtyard is empty with the exception of some small trees bearing strange fruit that grow near the walls. A large, rectangular pit is located in the center of the courtyard. Down the pit, the lake can be seen through breaks in the clouds.

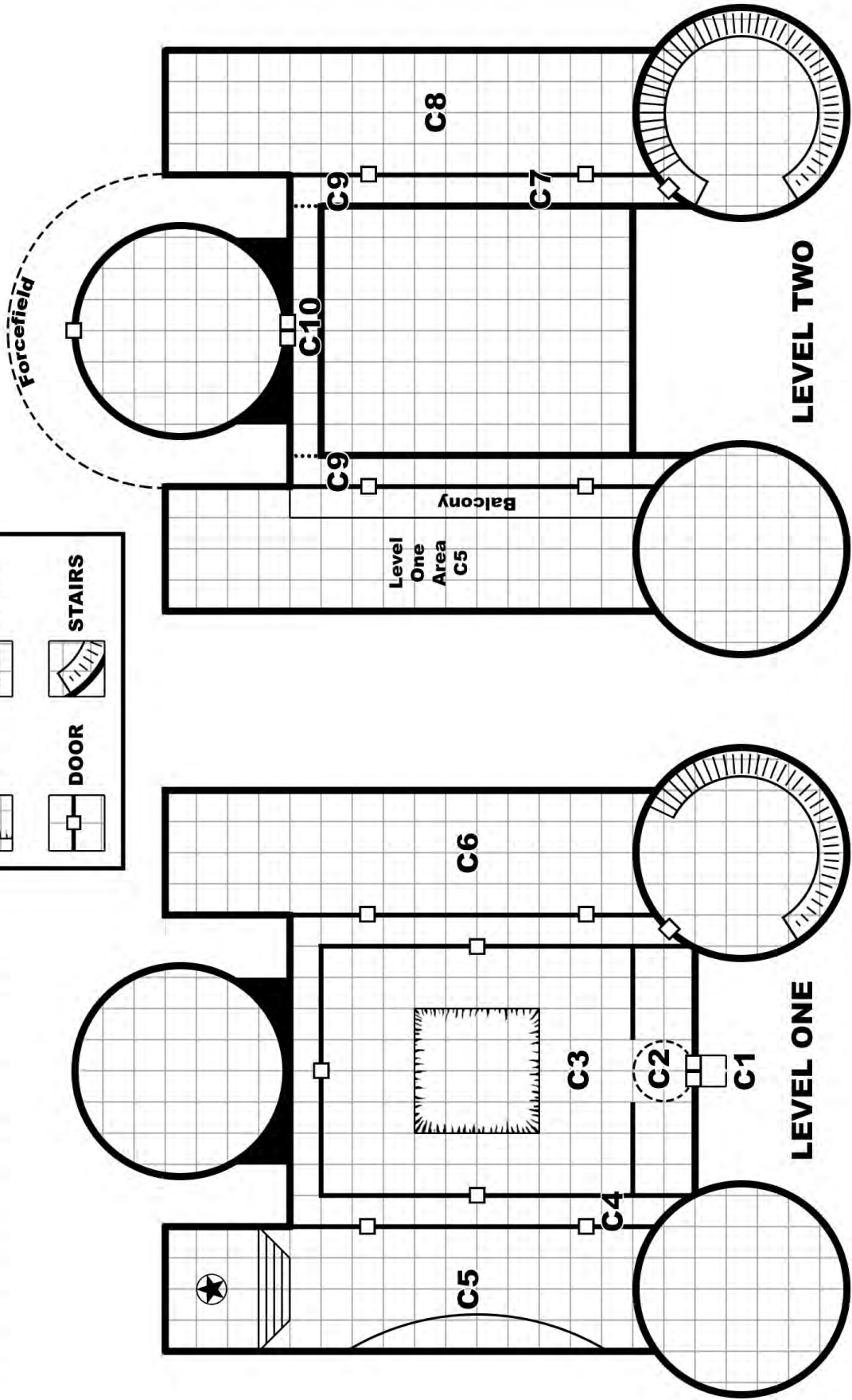
If the PCs enter the courtyard, the stone gargoyles on the



# MAP #9: IZDUKROGG'S CASTLE

**KEY**

|  |             |  |               |
|--|-------------|--|---------------|
|  | <b>PIT</b>  |  | <b>STATUE</b> |
|  | <b>DOOR</b> |  | <b>STAIRS</b> |



parapet will attack in the same manner as described in **Area C1**. Nothing of value can be found in the courtyard.

There are three doors in the courtyard. Each door leads to a section of the ground floor corridor. All three doors are unlocked.

#### C4. The First Corridor

Note: The description for this corridor is also a general description for all corridors in the castle. Describe the following information only once to your players, but remind them occasionally that the stone faces are present in all the corridors.

Protruding from the rock of the corridor walls are the stone faces of various unknown creatures. Their eyes are closed and yet they seem to be staring at the characters.

Once the PCs enter the corridor, the eyes of the stone faces will suddenly open. The eyes of the stone faces will glow bright red. They shift in the direction of the PCs wherever they stand in the corridor.

These are Izdukrogg's eyes. Through them, he can watch the activity of the characters as they travel about the castle. The eyes can be covered with something to block their sight, but there are simply too many for the PCs to waste time on. If they are to move about undetected, they must find other means. As long as Izdukrogg can see the PCs, he will continue to send his minions after them to destroy them. 1d4 Krie will arrive to fight the PCs every Turn. The PCs can opt to fight the Krie or to run about avoiding them (this is preferable unless they can find a way to move about undetected).

**Krie** (1d4): AC 2; HD 6; hp 35; # AT 2 (weapon & bite); Dmg 1-6 +2 (short sword)/1-4 (bite); SA Breathe fire on immediate opponent for 2d8; SD Immune to non-magical fire, all saves +2, hit only by +1 or better; MR 10%; SZ M; MV 60 ft., 90 ft. (Fly); AL LE

Note: Krie can polymorph self 3 times/day

#### C5. Audience Hall

This appears to be a vast audience hall some 300 feet in length. There are very few furnishings and the entire place is devoid of life. The characters will notice several peculiarities about the place. First, the far wall is almost completely covered with a mosaic that depicts thousands of beasts in indescribable torment. Standing amongst the tortured beasts is a tall human in flowing robes who holds a crystal orb in an outstretched left hand. The orb seems to radiate a strange light. The ground in front of the mosaic is painted in white and extends in a semi-circle out from the wall. Where the white ends, the remainder of the stone floor in this hall is painted in charcoal black.

To the right, at the far end of the hall are a series of steps leading up to a stone landing. On the landing there rests a twelve-foot tall stone statue of an unrecognizable creature. On the front extreme right and left edges of the landing is a pair of large stone bowls.

The Mosaic and Zone of Pain -- The mosaic is a very vivid account of the torment that Izdukrogg and his minions suffered when the people of Arkonus discovered the secret

to controlling/dominating them some thousand years ago. They were made to feel great pain and to do things against their will before the people of Arkonus released them on the condition that they return to their own plane forever.

The white area in front of the mosaic is a "zone of pain" and remembrance. Anyone entering the area will suddenly enter a dream-like state during which time they will feel great pain and torture while witnessing actual memories of Krie that lived the events. PCs watching a character in the "zone" will see him first appear to go into a trance and then begin to grasp parts of his body as if in pain. The PC in the zone will scream out in agony and fall to the ground, begging to be released from the torture. A successful save vs. fear and the PC can manage to crawl in the right direction to exit the zone. Otherwise, he will remain in the zone of pain until the other PCs can get him out without themselves entering the area. Once out of the zone, the PC can relate his experience to the others.

The Stone Bowls -- The stone bowls at the edge of the landing are used for burning large quantities of special incense. Characters can see a residue of the incense still remaining in the bowl. If burned, a fetid smoke will begin to fill the area. Anyone within the smoke who breathes it must make a save versus poison or begin suffering from the smoke's effects. The incense is like a drug which will make the character extremely relaxed and content, but utterly incoherent or otherwise aware of reality. He will walk about in a daze and be unable to react effectively for from 2-12 (2d6) rounds.

The special incense is inhaled by krie during a ceremony of remembrance. It is used to ease the excruciating pain that they witness in the zone.

The Statue -- The statue is a very realistic representation of Izdukrogg himself. Izdukrogg is a twelve feet tall obese, winged creature. His hands and feet are overly large and all are prehensile.

As the PCs are examining the statue, Izdukrogg will appear in ethereal form and speak to them in the language of the Krie. Unless the PCs have obtained the **helm of comprehend languages and read magic** and one of them is wearing it, they will hear only gibberish. If a PC has the capability of understanding Izdukrogg, read him the message below.

*"Humanoids, your presence on this plane and intrusion of my castle is a violation of the agreement made with your people. I do not wish to provoke a conflict, but if you fail to return to your own plane of existence, I will be forced to declare war on your puny world. You have been warned."*

After his brief message to the PCs, Izdukrogg will turn and float through the far wall.

Note, even if the PCs cannot understand Izdukrogg, it will be obvious by his booming voice and broad gestures that he is not giving the PCs a friendly greeting.

Even if the PCs are capable of communicating with Izdukrogg, he will say his speech and leave too quickly for the PCs to get a word in edgewise.

#### C6. The Krie Library

Despite initial impressions by the PCs, the krie are a highly

intelligent race of beings. They engage in intellectual pursuits and have a desire to improve their lives by bettering their knowledge of other planes as well as their own. This huge chamber is a storehouse of krie knowledge. It is similar to a library, but is definitely one-of-a-kind.

This chamber is truly a place of wonder. Within is evidence of the highly intelligent nature of the beings that inhabit this plane. The place is filled with bookshelves with thousands upon thousands of tomes containing information one can only dream of. In addition to the many rows of seemingly endless bookcases, all four walls are completely covered with bookshelves that extend all the way to the forty-foot high ceiling.

A section at the center of the chamber contains several tables and chairs. Upon the central of these tables there is a helm which is resting upon a display stand. All seems quiet within.

The krie librarian who is in charge of maintaining the library and protecting its contents is here, but cannot be seen since he is near the far left corner blocked from view by a tall bookshelf. He will hear the PCs enter the library, but will not notice them unless he hears them speaking in the common tongue. If so, he will immediately come to investigate.

Otherwise, he will accidentally bump into them after they've been in the library for a few rounds. Roll for surprise. The PCs will be viewed by the Krie as hostile forces since all Krie are knowledgeable in the events that took place with the people of Arkonus over a thousand years ago. The krie librarian will fight until seriously wounded. He will then fly towards the nearest exit to escape. If his way is blocked, he will indicate surrender and try to reason with the players. Of course, if the PCs cannot speak Krie, they will not understand any of what the librarian says. If this is the case, the krie will try to make the PCs understand that the helm will enable them to communicate. If they do not understand him, he will not press the matter, preferring to remain incomprehensible.

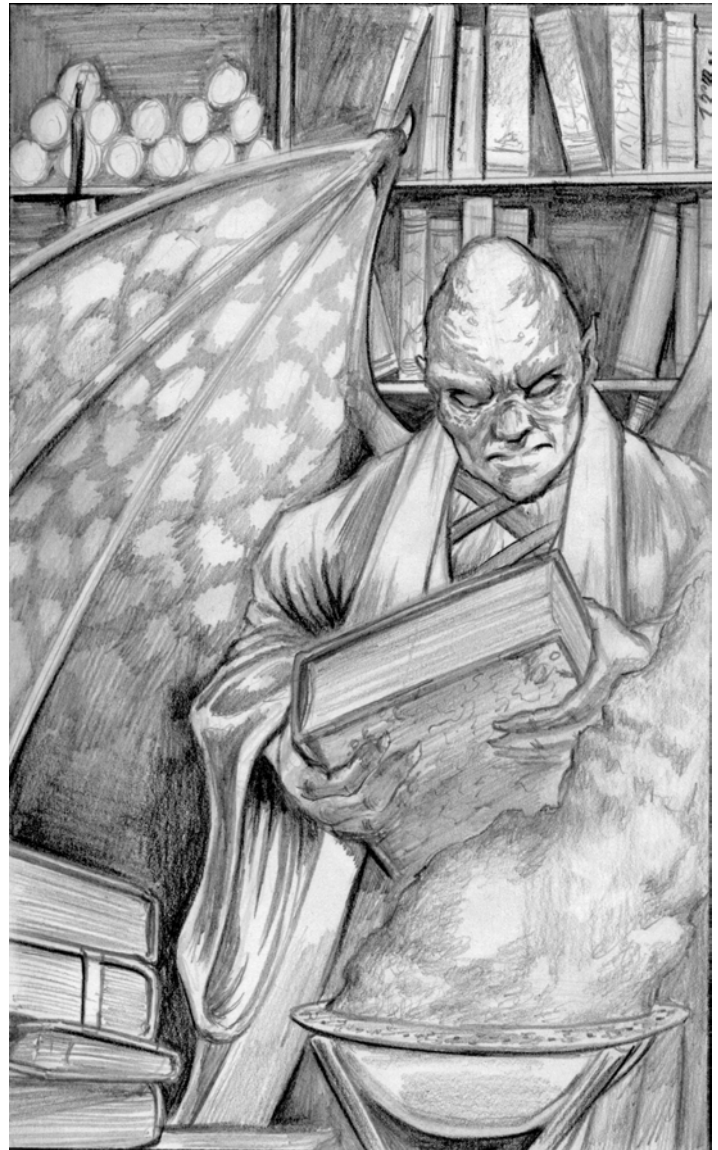
If the PCs converse with the librarian and ask about Nim (giving a description of the wizard), the krie will pretend that he and his people have spotted the wizard on the second level. In truth, Nim has remained completely undetectable. However, using telepathy, the librarian will communicate to other krie who will be preparing a trap for the PCs when they arrive on the second level.

The Helm--The helm is actually a **helm of comprehend languages & read magic**. Since most of the books in this library are written in foreign languages, the helm is needed for the krie to read the texts.

The Books--All the books here are carefully organized by the following scheme:

- Plane of Existance
- World
- Kingdom, Country, etc.
- Race
- Author/Subject

An entire section of the library is devoted to each individual plane of existence. At the entrance to each section, there rests a large tome on a tall, narrow podium. The book serves the same purpose as a card catalog which makes it easy to



find anything in the library without endless searching. All of these books are in the krie language.

The library contains books from worlds the PCs never knew existed. It also contains many books on the Realms of Arkonus including a breakdown of the various races, e.g. humans, elves, dwarves, giant-kind, dragons, etc. The list is too numerous to expound upon. One book of great interest to the PCs is titled "History of the Humanoid War," which can be found under the category, "Histories, World," in the Arkonus section of the library. Locating the Arkonus section will take only a few rounds, but actually finding the book will be impossible unless the PCs use the book on the podium. The book can then be found on one of the highest shelves on the left wall.

A brief perusal of the book reveals some startling information. The characters learn that just over a thousand years ago, the beings of this plane, who call themselves the krie, visited Arkonus where they took control and dominated the lives of everyone on the planet. Their dominion lasted nearly twelve years. However, through the efforts of the inhabitants of the realms, a way was discovered to turn the krie's role of ruler to the dominated. Magic Orbs with the power to control the minds of the krie were designed and built. For a time, the krie were tormented by the orbs' creators, but were then freed, if they promised never to return to Arkonus again.

The krie agreed, leaving in haste to return to this plane. The characters should realize that the information regarding this war has obviously been carefully suppressed through the generations.

Other books in the library show that the krie are travelers who have been to many planes where they have visited dozens of worlds. Many of these worlds the krie have taken control of in recent years. Their realm encompasses at least four planes and countless worlds. None, yet, have been as clever as the people of Arkonus in turning the tides against them. Perhaps this is why the krie so nicely agreed to leave the people of Arkonus alone.

#### C6. The Tower Stairwell

This circular chamber contains a spiral staircase that winds its way upward approximately fifty feet to end at a closed wooden door. The characters may get the strange feeling that something here isn't right.

When the characters begin to walk up the stairs, the entire castle will seem to shake as if an earthquake has struck. The stairs will appear to be cracking and pieces of the ceiling will begin falling on the characters.

Those that do not attempt to disbelieve the illusion must seek shelter or believe that the stairwell is actually collapsing. Eventually, the stairs will appear to collapse entirely and fill the tower chamber, making it seem impossible to reach the next level of the castle.

PCs trying to disbelieve must make a saving throw versus spells at -2. If they succeed, they will not only realize that the stairs collapsing is an illusion, but that the stairs themselves are an illusion as well. After all, what do the flying krie need with stairs?

If the PCs do not discover the illusion for what it is, **marvelous pigments** can be used to create a ladder and trap door to allow entrance to the upper level.

### THE SECOND LEVEL

#### C7. Possible Trap

Depending upon whether the PCs revealed information about Nim to the krie librarian, a trap may or may not be waiting for them at this point. If the PCs did not talk with the krie librarian about Nim, go to encounter **Area C9**. If the PCs did talk about Nim and gave a detailed description of him, read the text marked "A." If the PCs told the librarian about Nim, but did not give an accurate description, read the text marked "B."

[A]

*As you enter the corridor, you see an old gray-haired man dressed in flowing red robes nearly at the end of the hall. He glances back, seeing your group, and then disappears into a door on the right wall.*

[B]

*As you enter the corridor, you see an old white-haired man dressed in flowing night-blue robes nearly at the end*

*of the hall. He glances back, seeing your group, and then disappears into a door on the right wall.*

Going by the description given by the PCs of Nim Eirkoon, the librarian has used telepathy to warn other krie of the PCs motivations. Another krie has used **polymorph** to change his appearance to match the description given by the PCs. However, clever characters will know immediately that this is a trap if the first description is read to them. As explained at the beginning of the round, Nim is a white-haired old man who wears night-blue robes.

The fake Nim has entered area C9 where an ambush awaits any characters foolish enough to believe the hoax. If the polymorphed krie is followed, proceed to area C9 to complete this encounter.

#### C8. Ambush

If the PCs are following the polymorphed krie into this area, they will be walking into a trap that almost guarantees that they will fail their mission to stop Nim. Within this chamber await 12 Krie ready to ambush the party.

As the twelve krie attack the PCs, the fake Nim will remain in the background apparently in control of the attackers. The fake Nim will even appear to hold a magic orb as if using it to control the other krie. Unless the PCs realize their mistake or use some means to see through the hoax, they are almost certainly doomed to fight to the death in an attempt to stop the fake Nim. **True sight** will reveal the trap.

If the PCs manage to defeat all the krie and destroy the fake Nim, their victory will be short-lived. The dead body of the evil mage returns to its true form: another krie. Once again they have been taken for fools.

Time and resources have certainly been wasted on this encounter, but the venture has not been a complete loss. If the players search the chamber, they will find a stone box that contains the following:

The **key** to the wall traps (**Area C9**)  
**potion of flying** (2 doses)  
**ring of feather falling**

#### C9. Wall Trap

When the party is within 10 feet of the end of the corridor, walls will come down to block their path to the tower door. The dotted lines on the map indicate where the walls appear.

The walls are a foot thick of solid stone. If a careful search is made, a keyhole can be found in the corridor wall. Trying to raise the walls by brute strength is impossible. However, the following are possible ways the PCs can get to the other side.

-**marvelous pigments** can be used to create a door in the wall.

-A **javelin of lightning** will destroy a wall.

-A **wish** can be used to get rid of the wall.

-The proper key can be inserted in the keyhole and the wall will rise. If the key is not available, a thief can use pick locks



to trigger the release mechanism.

#### C10. The Third Tower

The entrance to the third tower is an iron door which was guarded by two krie that now lie dead before the portal. Nim killed the guardians, entered the iron door, and has **wizard locked** it behind him. A **knock** spell will open the wizard locked door or it can be busted open by muscle-bound characters.

Opening the door, the characters find merely an empty room. In fact, the thirty-foot diameter circular room is utterly bare. Through a window in the far wall, a breeze circulates throughout the chamber.

The PCs can find evidence of Nim's passage if they move over the window. A small piece of torn cloth (night-blue in color) is caught on a sharp piece of rock on the window's ledge. Looking out the window, the PCs can see the entire back wall of the castle and empty space for as far as the eye can see. Nim is not visible anywhere. Searching the empty chamber reveals nothing else.

There is a secret passage in the outer tower wall about thirty feet down from the window. A PC lowered on a rope can spot the secret door and its triggering mechanism on a 1-10 (d20). The door is large enough to allow a creature the size of Izdukrogg to enter. The door is triggered by depressing a loose stone in the outer wall. By using a rope, the PCs can enter the secret passage.

If a PC looks into the secret passage he/she is greeted by a burst of hot, foul air. Nothing can be seen in the cloaking darkness. Voices can be heard from somewhere deep below, but there seems to be no means of getting down to them.

The entire thirty-foot diameter tower is hollow and runs approximately 100' down to the bottom where Izdukrogg's lair is located. There is no ladder, rope, or handholds to aid the PCs in getting to the bottom. They must find some way of getting there on their own.

Falling to the bottom means almost certain death. A character falling the full 100 feet will take 10d6 of damage. At this point in the adventure, none of the characters should have enough hit points to survive the drop.

At the bottom of the tower is a large, circular chamber furnished with various unusual artifacts of obvious foreign origin. There are tables, chairs, lamps, paintings, tapestries, et al. The far wall of the chamber is dominated by a mammoth archway which leads into an area completely filled with red gases which swirl slowly, but always remain on the other side of the archway. Occasionally a PC can catch a glimpse of some living shapes moving about within.

On the right side of the chamber is Nim Eirkoon. He stands beside a twelve-foot tall, obese winged beast with gigantic clawed hands and feet and a visage of pure evil. The wizard holds in his right hand a large crystal orb which glows with a strange light. The wizard turns and grins at the PCs with delight. He speaks a word and, suddenly, the gargantuan beast takes

flight towards them with obviously hostile intentions.

Nim has set up a **wall of force** in front of himself to block any initial attacks. For the moment, he will just watch while Izdukrogg trashes the PCs gloating over his imminent victory.

The only way for the PCs to truly complete the adventure is for them to stop Nim, NOT Izdukrogg. If the PCs stop Nim, Izdukrogg will offer assistance in resealing the portal and will say that he intends to keep his bargain with the people of Arkonus and not invade their world.

Killing Izdukrogg is no easy task and then the PCs must still face Nim. If Nim is on the verge of death, he will either flee into the archway or teleport away (your choice). In either case the adventure will be over.

**The Archway** - The archway is a gate to the other areas of the plane of Krielaar. Through it, Izdukrogg can summon groups of krie to fight for him. However, Izdukrogg cannot summon krie while under Nim's control. If under his own power, Izdukrogg can summon 1d4 krie every turn.

Nim Eirkoon: See the appendix for complete details on this NPC.

Izdukrogg: AC -2; HD 14; hp 90; # AT 2; Dmg 1-12/1-12 (plus paralysis); SA see below; SD see below; MR 40%; SZ L (12'); MV 60 ft., 90 ft. (Fly); AL LE

Combat Modifiers: +3 Hit, +8 Damage

Special Attacks: Claw attacks cause paralysis in victim struck unless a save versus paralyzation is made at -4, Breathe Fire (up to 2 opponents; 30' range) for 3d6 damage

Special Abilities: Fly, Polymorph at will, Darkness 1/day, turn ethereal 3/day, summon 1d4 krie per turn at will

Languages: Krie, Gargoyle

Height: 12' Weight: 1,000 lbs

Age: 2,153 years

Saving Throws: 9, 5, 7, 9, 6

This ends the final part of Advent of Darkness.





## APPENDIX A

This appendix consists of the following:

Major NPC Descriptions  
Baelzen

New Magic Item  
Mirror of Distortion

Handout #1: Summons

Handout #2: Instructions for Closing the Portal

### MAJOR NPC DESCRIPTIONS

**Baelzen, 7th/10th Level Male Elf Cleric/Magic-User:** AC 7; hp 54; # AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA Spells; SD Spells; MR Nil; MV 12; SZ M (5'5"); AL N; S 12, I 17, W 18, D 15, Co 16, Ch 17.

Weapon Proficiencies (NPP -3): staff, mace, dagger, sling

Racial Abilities: 90% resistant to sleep and charm spells, 60' darkvision, spot concealed doors 1 in 6: 2 in 6 if searching, spot secret doors 3 in 6 if searching

Languages: Common, elven, gnoll, gnomish, goblin, Halfling, hobgoblin, orcish

Magic Items: ring of protection +2, mace of disruption, potion of speed, ring of energy resistance (fire), mirror of distortion\*

Normal Items: silver holy symbol, pouch/belt, 3 daggers, 1 flask of oil, 1 pint of water

Wealth: None carried

Cleric Spells (5/5/3/2): 1<sup>st</sup> - **cure light wounds** (x2), **command**, **sanctuary**, **detect magic**; 2<sup>nd</sup> - **augury**, **find traps**, **hold person**, **silence 15' radius**, **speak with animals**; 3<sup>rd</sup> - **create food and water**, **dispel magic**, **speak with dead**; 4<sup>th</sup> - **cure serious wounds**, **neutralize poison**, **tongues**; 5<sup>th</sup> - **commune**

Magic-User Spells (4/4/3/2/2): 1<sup>st</sup> - **burning hands**, **magic missile**, **read magic**, **charm person**; 2<sup>nd</sup> - **invisibility**, **mirror image**, **stinking cloud**, **web**; 3<sup>rd</sup> - **fireball**, **slow**, **phantasmal force**; 4<sup>th</sup> - **polymorph other**, **wizard eye**; 5<sup>th</sup> - **monster summoning III**, **teleport**

**Description:** Baelzen was a great leader of the Church of Galhalla over 30 years ago. He had gatherings of hundreds of people who believed and worshipped Galhalla. Though the religion of Galhalla was once a new and promised faith, it began to die down and those early worshippers fell away from the church. Baelzen made a plea to his people to continue to believe. He showed them the healing powers as proof that Galhalla existed, but most started to think that it was all phony trickery. It was not long before the church had fizzled out to a mere twenty or so members. At that time, Baelzen went out into the neighboring towns and preached the words of his god hoping to draw believers out of a world of non-believers. So it was that Galhalla had been forgotten, but Baelzen never gave up his faith.

A failure in gathering new believers, Baelzen set out into

the wilderness to worship in peace where he would not be mocked and humiliated by those who looked upon him as a phony. Baelzen became a hermit and found refuge in the barren lands southeast of Tower City. Baelzen has since survived with the aid of his long forgotten god who still supplies him with spells to survive the harsh environment.

Baelzen found a home in the deserted city of Oszeroc and has been there ever since leaving his home town and becoming a hermit. Soon he found that the barren lands were not entirely lifeless as they first seemed. He encountered a breed of huge, bird-like creatures that somehow survived in the "barrens" where other creatures could not. At first these creatures attacked and hurt Baelzen, but later, when Baelzen learned to communicate with animals, they learned to trust him and obey him. In speaking with the animals, Baelzen learned how the creatures managed to survive in the "barrens." The creatures, which Baelzen later called scavengers, survived by preying on sea birds which frequently fly in and out of the barrens to reach the beaches to the south where they hunt.

Things were going well for Baelzen until, by accident, he stumbled upon the mirror of distortion which he found hidden in an old cellar in the city of Oszeroc. He was fascinated by the mirror and soon learned how it could be used to polymorph. He could feel that something was not right about the mirror's power, but was compelled to use the magic several times before he had gathered the strength to resist it. It was too late at that point; he had already succumbed to the mirror's abject side effects. Slowly his hair turned white, and the touch of his hands caused green plants to wither and die.

The third side effect of the mirror did not become evident until, one day, Baelzen's brother braved entering the barren land to find him and plea that he return home where he belonged. It was then that an extremely overwhelming feeling seized him and he demanded that his brother bow down and kneel before him. Varik, his brother, was confused by Baelzen's behavior and refused to bow. Baelzen proceeded to make speeches of superiority and commanded Varik to respond with appropriate behavior or suffer ill-fates. In the heated exchange, Baelzen dropped the mirror of distortion (which did not break), quickly picked it up, and held it close to his bosom as though protecting it. Varik realized that the mirror was responsible for his brother's strange behavior, and so he tackled Baelzen attempting to free the mirror from his grasp. A short battle ensued and when it was over, Varik had dealt Baelzen a serious blow to the head and knocked him unconscious. Varik snatched the mirror and prepared to destroy it when he found himself staring into it. The magic of the artifact took hold of him and forced him to use it. When Baelzen awoke, he found his brother had been turned into a vulture.

Though the situation was irreversible, Baelzen learned his lesson from the incident. He has since kept the mirror in the cellar and does not attempt to use it or even come into contact with it. However, the mirror's side effects had become permanent.

Many times Baelzen has tried to restore his brother to his natural form, but nothing has worked so far. Every day Baelzen prays to Galhalla for the **speak with animals** spell so he can communicate with his brother and explain how sorry he is for causing the accident. Both Baelzen and Varik have remained in the "barrens" since the incident.

## NEW MAGIC ITEM

### Mirror of Distortion (Artifact)

The mirror of distortion is 6 inches long, 5 inches wide, and a half inch thick. The mirror's surface is polished to perfection and cannot be broken by normal means. By casual inspection, the mirror cannot be distinguished from any of the ordinary kind.

Gazing into the mirror causes anyone doing so to have a strong urging to use the mirror's magic. Treat this urging as a powerful suggestion. Characters gazing into the mirror must make a saving throw vs. spells or be compelled to use the mirror. Those failing the saving throw will become aware of one of the mirror's powers, i.e. the ability to polymorph the user into anything desired. The user could become, for example, an orc, an ogre, a rat, a giant (15' tall maximum), or even a box, a sword, a door, or a book. However, the mirror of distortion is unpredictable and dangerous. There is a 20% chance that a polymorph will be irreversible except by means of a wish spell.

The second power of the mirror is even more unpredictable and dangerous. If the mirror remains in one position for more than one turn without being touched or moved in any way, it will begin to alter the area it faces with respect to time and/or space. The actual outcome of the situation varies each time it occurs. The mirror might cause time to advance or regress, or to alter the area in question to interact with another dimensional plane. The mirror could even cause time to stop. If a way could be found to control the magic of the mirror, it could be a very useful item. Dimensional planes could be accessed with ease and time travel would be as simple as casting a 1st level spell.

In addition to the mirror's primary magical properties, the following are additional powers and effects.

#### Minor Benign Powers

Causes darkness upon command in a 5', 10', or 15' radius--3 Times/day  
Adds 1 point to possessor's major attribute

#### Minor Malevolent Effects\*

Possessor's hair turns white  
Touch of possessor kills green plants

#### Major Malevolent Effects\*

The possessor develops a yearning to be worshipped. Those failing to bow and scrape to him/her will be subject to instant attack.

\*- These effects will not be evident unless a power of the item is used.

## HANDOUT #1

Come to the Tower of Sight without delay. A matter of great urgency that may affect all the Realms of Arkonus has developed. Since you have helped me in the past, I know that I can trust you to help me once again. Make minimal preparations and come immediately. Talk to no one of this letter and destroy it as soon as you have read it.

Taymar Balenz

## HANDOUT #2

You must travel into the barren lands to the south, past the lair of the sleeping terror, a despicable creature which, over 50 years ago, turned the beautiful southern coast into a wasteland. Past the slumbering beast, known as the tarrasque ( or Beast of Destruction ), lies the abandoned town of Oszeroc where you will find the first artifact, the mirror of distortion, left behind and thought to be lost forever when the tarrasque laid waste to the countryside and passed through the town.

By itself, the mirror distorts reality in a variety of ways. It is a dangerous and unpredictable item that cannot be controlled properly. It is strongly advised that you do not attempt to tap into the mirror's magical properties until necessary for the closing of the portal.

From the town of Oszeroc, you must travel into the Dark Coast where you will find the city of Kronis, a place run by foul giant-like monsters who find pleasure in subverting others to do their will. There you must exercise extreme caution. The city is extremely dangerous. There will be many times in which you will be endangered and consequently so will your ultimate goals. However, it is within that wretched place where you will find the second artifact, the crystal of energies. Long ago the crystal belonged to a former High Mage, Thraedion Zylar, but was stolen by an Ogre Chief and his army. The crystal is still in the possession of the ogres of Kronis, but evidently they have never been able to unlock the crystal's powers. This crystal, like the mirror, is a device to be handled with care. If not used properly, the crystal can be a destructive item. Even I do not know all of the crystal's properties. However, I do know that it can be used as an individual item to perform various spell-like functions such as fireballs, lightning bolts, and mysterious walls of energy. It can also be used to strengthen other magic, the casting of spells for example, or to control other magic which is perhaps dangerous and unpredictable, like the mirror of distortion.

With these two artifacts and a spell I have prepared, you should be able to close the portal. Using the crystal to control and strengthen the mirror's energy, the mirror of distortion will be aimed at bending the reality of the space encompassing the planar portal causing it to revert back to normality and therefore closed and sealed.

Once both items are in your possession, you must seek out the opening portal. It should be somewhere within or near the city of Kronis, if my calculations are correct. There before the portal, you must set up the artifacts as indicated in my sketch below. When the items are in place cast the spell I have given you on the scroll, and the closing of the portal should begin. Do not alter the positions of the artifacts or change any words in casting of the spell. It could very well have disastrous effects.

## APPENDIX B

This appendix consists of the following:

### Major NPC Descriptions

Gerrik, Balon, Zharis, Konaar, Rolin  
Cy and Kai  
Nesara, Bolfer, Tarian, Shesun  
Krass

### Minor NPC Descriptions

Joshua, Korack, Yuris, Gerryd, Erwick

### New Magic Item

Crystal of Energies

## MAJOR NPC DESCRIPTIONS

| NAME  | GERRIK | BALON | ZHARIS | KONAAR | ROLIN |
|-------|--------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| RACE  | Hum    | Hum   | Hum    | Hum    | Hum   |
| CLASS | Ftr    | Ftr   | Ftr    | Ftr    | Ftr   |
| LEVEL | 4      | 3     | 3      | 2      | 2     |
| STR   | 17     | 15    | 15     | 16     | 13    |
| INT   | 15     | 12    | 11     | 12     | 13    |
| WIS   | 11     | 12    | 9      | 9      | 10    |
| DEX   | 11     | 13    | 10     | 14     | 10    |
| CON   | 12     | 14    | 15     | 10     | 13    |
| CHR   | 14     | 10    | 11     | 8      | 8     |
| AL    | CG     | CG    | NG     | CG     | CG    |
| AC Nm | 8      | 8     | 10     | 10     | 10    |
| AC Rr | 8      | 8     | 10     | 10     | 10    |
| Hp    | 24     | 18    | 19     | 12     | 11    |

### Descriptions and Role-Playing Notes

**Gerrik:** Gerrik is a large and confident man. From a small town to the north of the Dark Coast, he was one of the only men willing to lead a group of fighters to attempt an attack on the bandit wagons of the creatures from Kronis. His courage and wisdom attracted four noble fighters who vowed to follow under his leadership and strike back at the bandits.

If asked about his attack and the presence of the ogres and bugbears, he will tell about the raids on their town and the fact that they were attempting to put an end to it. The PCs have not heard of the raids on small villages and so may be curious as to why they haven't learned of them sooner. Gerrik will ask where they are from. If the PCs say they are adventurers and are away from their homeland, Gerrik will say, "Well, of course, that explains why you haven't heard." However, if they simply say they are from Tower City to avoid confusion, Gerrik will become a bit angry and say, "That figures! The high and mighty wizards and their enforcers care nothing for our small-town problems! They can't be bothered to look into our affairs!" Of course, if the PCs explain they are not associated with the government of Tower City, Gerrik will not take his frustrations out on them personally, but it will be obvious that he is prejudiced against big-city folk.

Gerrik wears leather armor and carries a long sword and dagger as weapons.

\*- Enforcers are fighter/magic-users of no less than 5th level who serve as law officials primarily in Tower City, but also in some of the other major cities of Irakaar.

**Balon:** Balon's parents were captured in an earlier raid by Krass's bandits and are now being used as slaves in the city of Kronis. Balon has sworn that someday he will lead an attack to get them back. For the time being, Balon is using his fighting skills to do everything in his power to stop the bandits from taking any more prisoners. When Gerrik approached him about the plan to lead an ambush on the bandits' wagons, he immediately joined up.

**Zharis:** Zharis is a retired member of a company of soldiers stationed in Tower City. He left the company when he discovered something he didn't like about the way things were being run in the government. He decided to retire and move to a small town in the country away from the big-city problems. When the bandits started their raids, Zharis was sent to Tower City to get help, but found that the government there couldn't be bothered with his hick-town problems. He became infuriated and decided that if he couldn't get help, he would have to offer his expertise and fight for the town himself. Zharis soon discovered that the town of Doeber had a few other capable and brave men willing to fight against the bandits, and so he joined them to attempt an ambush.

**Konaar:** Young and fairly inexperienced, Konaar is studying swordplay under the tutelage of Gerrik. When Gerrik told of his plans to strike back at the bandits, Konaar insisted that he come along. Gerrik refused at first, saying that Konaar was too inexperienced to handle the mission. However, knowing how badly he needed men, and Konaar's persistence, he changed his mind. Konaar was nervous about the ambush, but has never been more excited about anything in his life.

**Rolin:** Rolin has never had any real fighting experience, but is a natural born swordsman. He heard about Gerrik's ambush and approached with designs on joining the group. Gerrik refused him immediately when he saw how young Rolin was. However, Rolin put on an act and told a false story about adventures he had been on and the monsters he'd slain. Gerrik wasn't sure he was making the right decision, but changed his mind and told Rolin he could join the group.

### Cy and Kai

Cy and Kai are twin ogre mages that serve as Krass's elite guards. They appear as exactly the same creature to anyone not knowing them personally. They have pale-brown skin and dark yellow hair. Their nails are black, and their teeth and tusks are very white. A single horn on the tops of their head are ivory colored. Their eyes are dark purple with white centers. Each wears an intricately woven outfit colored in complex patterns. Even though the ogre mages are identical in appearance, Krass can tell them apart by the subtle differences in the way they walk and their slightly different mannerisms.

Cy and Kai have been recruited by Krass to serve as his guards. Krass is not at all arrogant. Krass is a giant with great power, but he is smart enough to know that having a couple of guards to alert him to any danger or to protect his fortress is a wise thing. Cy and Kai are completely loyal. They do whatever Krass wishes of them and in return, they

often receive treasure and are sometimes allowed to satisfy their appetites on a human slave or two. This pleases them greatly.

Cy and Kai have all the abilities and powers of other ogre magi as described at the beginning of part 2.

### Krass's Advisors

Krass's advisors, Drow Elves, are normally found within Krass's Fortress where they are usually in conference discussing plans for the future of the City of Kronis. They handle all matters concerning the duties of Krass's army, new construction, laws, punishments, and other matters too numerous for Krass to handle himself. Of course, Krass is the final authority in Kronis and so can change anything his advisor's come up with that he is not in complete agreement with. These advisors are keenly aware of nearly everything that goes on in Kronis and quick to take action when something is amiss. Trivial problems are always handled directly by the advisors, but big concerns are always brought before Krass (e.g. if the PCs are discovered). All of Krass's advisors are intelligent and always keep their composure in all situations. They will attempt to deal with a problem using logic and reasoning before they resort to any form of physical violence. The advisors have a good working relationship. They almost always agree and will always help another if in trouble. The individual role-playing notes for the advisors is given below. Each has drow abilities as described at the beginning of part two.

**Nesara:** Nesara is a female drow elf. She is the oldest and wisest of the four. If there is ever a serious argument amongst the other drow, she is always consulted to resolve the problem. The others respect her opinion and will always obey her.

**Bolfer:** Bolfer is a male drow elf. He respects Krass, but has a loathing for the other creatures that live in Kronis. He never addressed them in a polite, respectful manner. He will jump on their case any time opportunity presents itself. He has a great need to show his superiority over them.

**Tarian:** Tarian is a male drow elf. Tarian shares Bolfer's loathing of ogres and the other creatures of Kronis, but finds the situation favorable since he gets to order them around quite often. Whenever possible he will make fools of those under his command by making them do things of a ridiculous nature. The ogres are too stupid to ever figure out that they've been duped, and Tarian gains great pleasure in seeing them make fools of themselves.

**Shesun:** Shesun is a female drow elf and the youngest of Krass's advisors. She is the least wise of the group and is always asking for advice from the others. Her life as an advisor has been mostly a learning experience. She is often found wandering about the city with nothing to do.

**Krass, Ferbolg giant:** AC 2; HD 13+3; hp 72; # AT 1; Dmg 1-10 (2-handed sword); SA See below; SD See below; MR 15%; MV 150 ft.; SZ L (10 ½' tall); AL LE/N(CG)

**Description:** Krass was a lone wanderer until a few years ago when he stumbled upon the Dark Coast and ventured inside. There he found an entire world of sun-hating creatures without organization and little direction. Instead of retreating, Krass decided to forage ahead. He found the task to be more difficult when a great number of evil creatures attacked him. He fought many a battle on his journey and amassed a cache

of valuables with each victory. One such victory made him the proud owner of a golden crown which he found to be to his liking. Once placing the crown upon his head, however, he was stricken with a curse which forever changed his alignment from neutral (with chaotic good tendencies) to lawful evil. It was then that he decided that he was to become king of the "forever dark" land. Over the years Krass fought off many attempts by other creatures to claim his position as ruler over the dark coast. Once Krass even ventured out of the coast with a mighty army of ogres and dared to attack the great Tower City. There he miraculously fought his way inside the Tower of Sight (of the High Mage Thraediun Zylar), taking the wizards completely by surprise, and stole a great magical artifact, the crystal of energies. Quickly he made his retreat back to his city of Kronis; here he has remained as ruler. He has not been foolish enough to attempt another such raid on a powerful city. Instead, he has organized minor raids on small villages and towns taking valuable supplies where he resells them in Kronis for outrageous prices. He also captures humans to use as slave labor to construct new buildings in the city. Eventually, he plans to build other cities in the hopes that the Dark Coast can ultimately become the greatest kingdom on the continent of Irakaar. If indeed he could organize the creatures of the dark coast into one cohesive band, his empire would become the most powerful kingdom in the known world. However, the possibility of such a thing actually happening is little to none.

Krass has the following innate spell-like powers usable at will, 1 per round, when not otherwise engaged in melee combat. These powers are: detect magic, diminution as potion (double effect and double maximum duration), fools gold, forget, alter self. Each is usable once per day. Krass is also a shaman and so has the following clerical and illusionist spells.

**Cleric Spells(3/3/2/1):** 1<sup>st</sup> - **cure light wounds, detect magic, light;** 2<sup>nd</sup> - **augury, resist fire, speak with animals;** 3<sup>rd</sup> - **dispel magic, locate object;** 4<sup>th</sup> - **tongues**

**Illusionist Spells(10/4):** 1<sup>st</sup> - **darkness (x2), color spray, detect invisibility, hypnotism(x2), phantasmal force(x2), detect illusion, hypnotic pattern;** 2<sup>nd</sup> - **invisibility, mirror image, fog cloud, blindness**

### MINOR NPC DESCRIPTIONS

**Joshua:** Joshua is a young human boy who is apprenticed to his father, learning the craft of weapon-making. He has a special interest in bladed weapons and never passes up an opportunity to examine a finely crafted sword or dagger. Joshua is 12 years old and already has produced some weapons of his own design. If anyone is interested, he will fish through the stolen items on one of the wagons and show them the 3 daggers that he made himself. An expert would note that Joshua has definite promise in the area of weapon design.

**Korack:** Korack is a middle-aged human who has lived in the town of Doeber most of his life. There he owns his own bar that he runs with the help of his wife, Angela. He will be extremely grateful to anyone who helped rescue him and will remark that he can't wait to return home to his lovely Angela. He says that she will be so worried about him and probably think him dead. If there is anything the rescuers will accept from him, he will give (though he hasn't anything on him) to them as payment for his rescue. However, he will not follow them into the Dark Coast chasing after any monsters. He will

think that his rescuers are fools if they suggest such a thing. After all, Korack is hardly in any condition fit to do battle. He will suggest that the rescuers visit his bar when in town, and he will provide free meals and drink whenever they are there.

Yuris: Yuris is an entertaining young elf who makes his living as a traveling showman. He pays for his room and board wherever he goes by putting on a show. He can perform some sleight of hand, a few magic tricks, and can juggle up to 5 items (blindfolded). He is a handsome elf and definitely the lady's man. He will smooth talk the ladies whenever possible.

Gerryd: Gerryd is a 16 year old human who just recently moved to Doeber to find a job and start his own life. He hopes to meet a beautiful young woman, get married, and have a family. He thought that his life was over when he was captured. He will be overly gracious to his rescuers and anxious to get back home before anything else happens.

Erwick: Erwick is a male human in his early twenties. He makes a modest living as the clerk at a large inn in Doeber. On his free days, Erwick studies astronomy from a local sage. Erwick is hungry for knowledge and is never satisfied unless he has a book to learn from. He carries a necklace around his neck that he will give to a pretty female character for good luck. It is actually a charmed necklace that adds +1 to all initiative rolls.

## NEW MAGIC ITEM

### Crystal of Energies (Artifact)

The crystal appears to be nothing more than a large, amber gem. It is therefore almost impossible to detect at first glance. A detect magic spell will fail if used on the crystal, but if the crystal is held, it will glow softly. However, not just anyone can hold the crystal. Only magic-users or clerics with at least a 16 intelligence can grasp the artifact without ill-effect. All others who attempt to hold the crystal must make a saving throw vs. death magic or become feebleminded. If the save is successful, the character will suffer 4-16 points of damage and be forced to drop the crystal.

Magic-Users or clerics who hold the crystal will immediately become aware of a few of the artifact's powers. They are:

6 Die Fireball on command (range and area of affect as spell)

6 Die Lightning Bolt on command (range and area of affect as spell)

Wall of Force on command (as spell cast by a magic-user of 10th level)

A power of the crystal not immediately evident will make itself known when the magic-user or cleric casts a spell. If a spell is cast, the crystal will strengthen the spell in the following ways (note that not all will be applicable to the particular spell being cast):

1. Range is doubled
2. Duration increases 50%
3. Number of affected creatures or persons increases 50%
4. Area of affect increases 25%
5. Casting time is halved
6. The crystal stores the knowledge for casting the spell within itself (after cast) for up to one turn. If the magic-user or cleric desires to cast the spell again within that time,

he will be able to do so. However, once the spell is cast a second time, it will be lost until memorized again.

Another power of the crystal is that of control. The crystal is capable of hooking into the magic of another device in order to control that device. For example, a sword which can become flame tongue has a side effect when used. The crystal can tap into the flame aspect of the sword and shield the side effect. This ability to control magic energy is not automatic. A complex magic spell may be needed for purposes of linking the crystal to the desired magic item to be controlled. Such a spell could only be prepared by a magic-user of no less than 15th level.

In addition to the above mentioned powers, the crystal has the following powers and effects.

#### Major benign Powers\*

The crystal causes haste in its possessor 1 time/day. The power cannot be called upon, but is activated at a random time each day.

#### Minor Malevolent Effects\*\*

Saving throws vs. magic are made at -1  
All gold within 30' of possessor turns to lead

\*- This power is constant. The artifact need not have been used for this power to affect the possessor.

\*\* - Though the crystal has the power to sift out bad effects in other items, it cannot rid its possessor of its own inherent problems.

## APPENDIX C

This appendix consists of the following:

### Major NPC Descriptions

Nim Eirkoon  
Izdukrogg

### New Magic Item

Orb of Domination

## MAJOR NPC DESCRIPTIONS

**Nim Eirkoon**, 15th Level Human Male Magic-User: AC 2; hp 60; # AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA Spells; SD Spells; MR Std; MV 120 ft.; SZ M (5'10"); AL LE; S 10, I 18, W 14, D 12, Co 18, Ch 10.

Weapon Proficiencies (NPP -5): Dagger, staff, sling

Languages: Common, elven, dwarf, gnomish

Magic Items: bracers of armor +3, cloak of protection +5, orb of domination, potion of cure serious wounds, wand of detect secret doors

Normal Items: 4 daggers, 50' rope, oil, tinderbox, 2 spikes, pouchbelt, mirror

Wealth: None carried

Spells (5/5/5/5/5/2/1): 1<sup>st</sup> - **magic missile**, **detect magic**, **feather fall\***, **identify**, **charm person**; 2<sup>nd</sup> - **knock**, **magic mouth**, **shatter**, **wizard lock\***, **levitate**; 3<sup>rd</sup> - **dispel magic**, **fly\***, **invisibility\***, **nondetection\***, **lightning bolt**; 4<sup>th</sup> - **fear**, **fumble**, **polymorph other**, **wizard eye\***, **confusion**; 5<sup>th</sup> - **passwall\***, **feeblemind**, **teleport**, **wall of force\***, **distance distortion**; 6<sup>th</sup> - **flesh to stone**, **chain lightning**; 7<sup>th</sup> - **limited wish**

\*- These spells will have already been cast when the PCs confront Nim. Text within the module will explain when and why Nim has used these spells.

### Role-Playing Notes:

As a young apprentice to a well-respected mage, Nim Eirkoon desired to acquire great wizardry and attain a seat in the Council of Elder Mages of Tower City. He had little aspiration to do anything else with his life. His master's wish that he pursue such a position and his master's own failure in becoming a council member made him ever the more determined to succeed.

Young Nim developed his skills quickly. His master died of old age on the anniversary of his success in the Wizard's duel (an annual event designed to test the strength and commitment of all medium level mages) and he immediately took his master's place, continuing his work. After training an apprentice of his own and seeing his student succeed in the wizards duel, Nim put in his application as a candidate for the Council of Elder Mages. It was accepted and, soon after, Nim was elected to the first available position in the Council of Vraedion (the section of the council comprising the evil mages of Irakaar).

Nim soon discovered how little power a council member held.

Every council decision was reached only after seemingly endless deliberations, and all three sections of the council (the evil, good, and neutral) had to agree before proceeding with any course of action.

The other evil mages seemed content to keep things as they were. They figured that if they were to have any say in what went on and how things were handled that the balance of the council members was the only way. The good mages feared the evil would become too strong, and the evil feared the good would tip the balance, so both felt a balance was necessary. The neutral mages provided a middle of the road approach which helped in keeping both the good and evil in check.

Nim was different. Nim didn't fear the good. Nim didn't like the constant struggle to keep a balance. Nim wanted power. Nim wanted to rule. And Nim decided he was going to get it.

Nim knew he couldn't get what he wanted by remaining a lowly council member. His only hope was to become the high mage--the final and absolute authority on the entire continent. In that position he could secretly make plans to gather allies, gain power, and then strike from within.

Nim set about to put his plan into motion. He vehemently spoke out against the council, refusing to listen to any of their discussions and refusing to go along with any of their views. It wasn't long before Nim was brought before the high mage, Taymar Balenz, to answer for his outrageous behavior. In a private meeting with the high mage, Nim assassinated him and took his place. Immediately he called for the other mages. When they arrived, they found Nim disguised as Taymar Balenz and the dead body of Balenz magically transformed to appear as Nim. Nim Eirkoon made up a clever story about how "Nim" attacked him and how he was forced to strike him down. The story was believed. They didn't even doubt his word. And so life went on with a new ruler.

As the new high mage, Nim Eirkoon found that he now had access to all manner of previously unavailable information. While searching through secret vaults and library stores, Nim discovered a dark secret kept suppressed for centuries. He learned of an attack by creatures from another plane who once enslaved the people of Irakaar and who were finally defeated by the creation of orbs which could magically control them. The monsters were presented with a choice: banishment from Irakaar or eternal slavery. Faced with such a decision, the creatures withdrew from Irakaar immediately and have never returned. Since then, the knowledge of how to build and enchant the orbs has remained privy only to the high mage, and only he was to know the true secret of Irakaar's distant past.

Nim knew immediately that he found the information he needed. He set about gathering the items necessary for the building of an orb. Soon he had completed one. Shortly after its completion, he destroyed all information regarding the orbs so that none other could reconstruct one. The easy part of his plan was done. Then, Nim had to figure out how a portal could be opened to another plane. The problem seemed insurmountable at first, but with months of study and research in the old vaults, Nim discovered how it could be done. However, he needed a powerful magic spell and two artifacts of vast power to accomplish the task. The spell was the easy part. The artifacts, on the other hand, needed to be

recovered.

In time Nim thought of the best way to go about gaining the artifacts. He would hire a group of foolish adventurers to find the artifacts and have them use them to open the portal. He knew, of course, they would have to believe that they were doing the exact opposite...

#### **NEW MAGIC ITEM**

##### **Orb of Domination**

This 6 inch diameter orb is constructed of polished marble and enchanted with powerful controlling magic. Each orb is specifically tuned to the mind of a particular species. In the case of the orb built by Nim, the device is designed to affect only Krie of the planar dimension Krielaar.

With the orb firmly in a person's possession, the wielder is able to exert an indomitable will over all creature's of the specific type (i.e. Krie). The number of creatures affected is equal to the wielder's intelligence score multiplied by 10. In addition, the controlling power may automatically transcend to subordinate creatures under the wielder's control. Treat all control affects as a powerful charm person that can only be resisted on a successful saving throw versus spell at -12.

Control over the specified creature lasts as long as the possessor of the orb is within 3 miles. If the controlled creature is beyond the 3 mile range, the effects wear off after 3 days.



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# REALMS OF ARKONUS

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## Advent of Darkness

by Thomas J. Scott

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The inhabitants of Arkonus believed their greatest nightmare was over when they accomplished the impossible in driving the forces of darkness back to the unspeakable fragments of an evil plane. It was a dark time for Arkonus, a time the people didn't care to remember and so knowledge of the terrible war was carefully suppressed through the generations.

Now over a thousand years later, the high mage of Tower City has revealed the discovery of a portal opening from an unknown plane of evil to the Realms of Arkonus. The player characters are summoned by the high mage and told they must follow his instructions to recover a pair of magical artifacts that can reverse the opening of the portal.

Advent of Darkness was an official tournament module used at Gen Con/Origins 25 and Origins '96 under the title of Darkness Rising.



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