



CASTLES & CRUSADES

THE UMBRAGE SAGA

THE WICKED CAULDRON

STRONE RIDGE

ARATOCI
MOUNTAIN

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THE UMBRAGE SAGA

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THE UMBRAGE SAGA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A0 The Rising Knight	7	Level 2	97
Baleon Nakt Maps	22	Level 3	99
Malforten Map	24	Level 4	103
		Level 5	105
A1 Assault On Blacktooth Ridge	25	Level 6	110
Botkingburg Map	50	Level 7	115
The Varbgolg/Kruggle's Lair	51		
Level 1 – 52	52	A4 Usurpers of the Fell Axe	122
Level 2 – 57	57	Ground Floor	132
		2nd/3rd Floor	133
A2 Slag Heap	64	Palace Cellar	134
The Road to Slag Heap	56	The Sanctum	136
The Slag Heap	79	The Pitts	138
The Palisade	85		
The Black Hole	80	A5 The Shattered Horn	144
The Barrow Mound	87	The Blighted Screed Map	167
		Tower Maps	168-170
A3 Wicked Cauldron	92		
Level 1	96	Appendix A: New Monsters/Spells	171



AENOCHIAN UMBRAGE: IN THE TREE'S SHADOW

A HISTORY OF THE BLACKTOOTH RIDGE

The history of the Blacktooth Ridge begins with the Ineng Tree. In the Days before Days this tree wandered the earth; twisted with evil it took the shape of a troll, indeed it was the first of the trolls, and wreaked havoc on the world at large. In time Ineng grew weary of his struggles and settled upon a small patch of earth along a ridgeline overlooking a river. The river tumbled in slow gyrations to the east before it turned south. Here Ineng settled into his new home. The roots of his evil grew deep, spreading through the ridge, cutting tunnels that became caves, breaking rocks and opening fissures deep beneath the ridge. The ground rose until the depth of his evil pushed the ridge up, breaking the earth into many gulches, banks, crags, and escarpments. Ineng did not pass into stone but melded with the earth and the magic of his being fed the whole region, attracting many creatures who knew not its source, nor its evil. So the jutting finger of broken hills that men later called the Blacktooth Ridge came to dominate the whole region.

The land changed. The ridge now dominated the area; high and barren, it pushed the river south and flooded the lowlands, making the land fertile and ripe. Many small rivers and creeks crisscrossed the area, as did ponds and lakes. A forest took root and grew, birch and oak mostly, but a generous amount of sycamore and broad-leaved popular trees. Wild tribes of Aenochians settled in the forest, which they called the Saelic Forest, but most did not stay, for they deemed it an evil land, and they moved further south to the fertile coastlines. But the elves came and made the forests their home. The ridge called to them and they knew it possessed great magic. They named the place the Avishean Ridge, that is in their own tongue, the "Wellspring" and the forest and river they called the Hruesen River Valley, though later the forest took on the more sinister name of the Barren Wood. They made peace with those wild men who remained and they did not fear the fey that came and settled in this enchanted country. So they lived for many long years.

But the world's ages turned, and so with them the fortunes of those who lived along the Blacktooth Ridge.

Long ago, beyond the memory of most that now live in the Hruesen River Valley, the region came under the rule of the Kings of Men, the Lords of Aenoch; and they ruled from their city of Al Liosh for many long centuries. Their power waxed and waned as the tides over time. They grew masterful in the art of sorcery, and the Lords spent their days upon the silken pillows, besotted with the corruption of wine, but their nights they spent in exploring the worlds beyond their own. It was then that one of their own rose to power, a wizard of such dreadful capacity that all feared him. Nulak-Kiz-Din ruled behind the throne and guided the Emperor and the priest, using them for his own means. With their powers he navigated the deeps of the Maelstrom and found what he sought, the source of a wondrous power. He summoned it to Aihrde, to the very halls of Al Liosh, where the court of the Emperor watched in amazement.

So the horned god, Unklar, came to walk the worlds of men. The Emperor died, as did the priests; Nulak he bound to him as a slave. Unklar destroyed the great city of Al Liosh and it fell beneath

his cloven hoof. He rebuilt it then, fashioned a tower of dreadful horrors that he named Aufstrag, which is the Citadel of Command in the tongues of men. He gathered a great army about him and lay waste to the world at large.

In those days, the Horned One's shadow hung over all the world and he ruled from his great fortress of Aufstrag, whose long shadow cast a dark pall over the Blacktooth Ridge. When the Horned One first conquered the lands of the Hruesen, the land was as restless and troublesome as its inhabitants; the elves, fay of many type, and those stalwart men of noble bearing did not easily bend to his will. So it was, after many a rebellion and uprising, the Horned One turned his armies loose upon the lands of the Hruesen. A great many orc and goblin issued forth from the foul pits of Aufstrag and laid waste to the lands of the Hruesen, driving the inhabitants south into the sea, enslaving them, or scattering wide the free peoples that had been living there. His evil emptied the forest of its inhabitants and razed all the region's cities and towns.

For centuries after, the woods and vales of the Hruesen lay abandoned and empty. These were the long years of the Winter Dark. The ridge now stood forth from the wasteland as a great black scar as the orcs occupied it and made it a fortress of sorts. They tunneled beneath it and built squat towers upon it. They carted folk to the Ridge as slaves and there they became lost to memory. The ridge was named anew, the Blacktooth Ridge, as it devoured all that entered it, and the lands about were renamed the Barren Wood, for little remained of the once great Saelic Forest.

The fortunes of those lands changed only with the passing of the Horned God and the dissolution of his kingdom. Aufstrag was made a shell of its former self, if not wholly destroyed, and the evil hosts of the Horned One scattered to the winds. Throughout the wide world war waged; men fought the orcs and unger and the Horned One, and the world groaned from the agony of it all. In the lands south of Aufstrag, the men, long suffering the yoke of tyranny, rebelled.

Heimstadt, Vilshofen, Dundador, Ascalon, Aesperdi, Meteria, and Kourland all rebelled against the tumbling might of the Empire; these cities lived under the shadow of Aufstrag for a thousand years. They had grown wealthy through control of the overseas trade routes and they suffered little from the hand of Unklar. In consequence, a powerful, educated merchant class came to rule these cities. When war came to the Horned One's realm, the Lords of Aenoch banded together in a loose confederation and prepared to rebel. Pryzmira, last daughter of the House of the Old Empire of Aenoch, came to them and promised wealth and power if they would support her claim to the ancient lineage. They agreed to league with her under the stipulation that each of the seven lands together possess the rights to elect the Empress and her heirs to the throne. In turn, she demanded that their borders remain permanently fixed, that they give her the city of Ascalon to rule from, and that they grant her other privileges aside.

The Empress then turned to the western lands, where the yoke of the Horned One had already fallen, and called for a crusade, promising land and wealth. The summons generated wide enthusiasm in the

west, and hosts of men came for the glory and renown, but also for the land they could capture and which the Empress promised them. Many built small realms in the wilds, carving out holdings for themselves and swearing an oath to the Empress for a granted title. These Crusader States spread in a haphazard, disjointed way, and they rose and fell with a rapidity that defied description.

Though the coming years saw many victories, they saw as many defeats. The men carried their banners deep into the country, even as far as the Blighted Screed. They founded small townships on the edge of wild, Botkinburg and Ludenshiem being two of the most notable. But others flourished here and there. For many years the country of the Hruesen knew a peace of sorts, though it never flourished again. The evil which had resided there passed into memory or vanished into the deep recesses of the Blacktooth, and the distance from Ascalon and the Empress proved just far enough to make it difficult for those in power to meddle in the affairs of the men of the Blacktooth. Thus the world stood for many years.

In time elves, in search of ancient homelands and shrines, and men, in search of fertile and peaceful lands to farm, returned and settled in the Barren Wood; the fey awoke as if from a long slumber, and the forest assumed the shadow of its former self. The forested valleys, still lakes, and meandering streams all came to life again; and the free creatures wandered the paths as they had in the long ago of yesterday. But the country of the Hruesen remained a haunted place, for there are as many evil fey as good, and these creatures thrived in the ruins of minions of Aufstrag. And as in all lands some of the Horned One's servants survived and hid themselves away in the dark places waiting for the return of their dark master.

The years spun out and those who remembered the Winter's Dark grew very old, and few listened to their tales. They paid no heed to the rumors that a new lord seized power in Aufstrag and that he sought to rebuild the kingdom of his master. But the rumors bore more than a hint of truth, for Coburg the Undying, long a lieutenant of the Dark Lord's, ruled the Citadel now. Coburg ruled with a madness unknown in the tower. He spent his days raging against foes both real and imagined, and during the night, thoughts of Empire stirred his slumbers. At last he turned his attention to the lands beyond Aufstrag and he schemed how he might conquer them. Of all the Kingdoms, New Aenoch and the Crusader States stood closest and it seemed to him weak and divided. He called upon the creatures of Aufstrag, promising them power and a return to the glory of the old days. He sent them across the Blighted Screed and into the Blacktooth Ridge to make the land ready for his hosts.

OF THE HORN OF OPENING

In all of towering Aufstrag there is but one physical gate, the *Ahargon Den*, the Great Maw. Those who entered called it the *Art et Unklar*, the Mouth of Darkness, for all that entered there were devoured by the malice of Aufstrag.

The dwarves fashioned this gate for Unklar, for in those distant days, he bound them to him by chains of servitude that they could not break. And they put all of their skill into the project and made for Aufstrag an unbreakable set of doors. They cast the doors of bronze, but laced that bronze with iergild, that magical ore from beyond

the worlds of men. They scripted runes into the doors, words of making from their forges that the bronze absorbed but that gave the doors a magical property that protected them against sorcery. They set riddles into the bronze as well. These riddles captured sound and absorbed it into the bronze so that none could speak words of opening to it. Thus protected, they ordered it set into the frame of stone, and trolls, huge and monstrous, came at the bidding of Unklar and set the doors in place. There it stood, overshadowing the Wasting Way.

To open the door was a Herculean task. But many tried. In the early wars it was the men of Al Liosh who found a way. They discovered powerful dwarven runes of opening, and with them crafted a horn of exquisite beauty. Shaped from the horns of a dragon, bound with bands of platinum, and inlaid with thin strips of gold, the instrument's final shape resembled a ram's horn. Upon the mouthpiece they carved runes which opened gates to the Rings of Brass. Upon the inner coils of the horn were more runes, and these they set with a chime of opening, and it alone could force the gates wide. Only the very strong or clever were able to master the horn, and those who tried and failed activated the runes of the Rings of Brass. Torn from the world, they fell into the Rings of Brass and the maelstrom beyond. The horn they gave to their greatest warlord, the Baron Kul. It was Kul who attempted to destroy Unklar by breaching the gates and sacking the lower halls. He rose up the heights of that dread tower until at last he came to the throne room. There he faced the Horned God and sought to overcome him, but before he could attempt the feat one of his own, a squire in his service, slew him. Stabbing him from behind, Coburg lifted the horn from his dead master and gave it to Unklar. Kul cursed Coburg with his dying breath, "May you live forever."

Unklar feared the *horn of opening* and he gave it to one of his greatest servants, Vaul the Frost Lord, a Val-Eahrakun of the outer worlds. He bid him unmake the horn so that it could never be. This Lord Vaul did, but in secret he called his brother to him. Avram he bid to lace the horn with sorcery that could make it whole again. They plotted thus to use it as a weapon against the Horned One if ever they needed it.

But in time the *horn of opening* was forgotten by the brothers, and unbeknownst to them, stolen from the hall. The pieces of it were magical devices in their own right, but few understood the meaning of the pieces made whole. Few knew even that such a horn existed or that it could be remade, and fewer still knew that it alone gave easy entrance to the gates of Aufstrag.

NEW BEGINNINGS

The men of the Hruersen River are like all men, quickly forgetting, or choosing to forget, that each new age fosters new challenges and past evils often haunt the hopes of the future. The Blacktooth Ridge lies in the shadow of Aufstrag, and the fell pits of that horrid place are a never-ending source of foul creatures hungry for the easy pickings of the world of man and elf. Now many creatures long away from this land find its fresh fields and peaceful inhabitants easy filling for their gluttonous desires.

4 CASTLES & CRUSADES

FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

The *Umbrage Saga* is a loosely connected series of adventures designed to bring a group of characters from low to high level. They are designed as stand-alone adventures or as adventures that are parts of a complicated long-running campaign that pits the characters against the powers of Aufstrag. They begin in the lands of the Hruesen River in Malforten, crisscrosses the Barren Wood, the Blighted Screed and the Grausumland, ending at last at the gates of Aufstrag. In *Rising Knight* the characters are brought into the complex world that is the Hruesen River Valley; from there they enter Botkinburg and adventure along the Blacktooth Ridge; *Slag Heap* draws them south into the Barren Wood and leads them to *Wicked Cauldron* where they encounter the first true creatures of Aufstrag; *Usurpers of the Fell Axe* brings them to the town of Ludensheim and puts them face to face with the power of Aufstrag; the *Shattered Horn* is a bridging adventure from the light adventures of the low-level characters to the more difficult and meaning-driven adventures of high-level characters.

Each adventure lists the suggested levels the characters should be before they embark upon the adventure. Castle Keepers are encouraged to launch their own adventures in the environs of the Blacktooth Ridge and the Barren Wood in order to help characters attain the necessary levels before embarking upon the next adventure in this series.

The adventures that the characters embark upon with the *Umbrage Saga* are preparatory adventures that allow the characters to learn the lay of the land, meet interesting NPCs, make allies of many of them, establish themselves in a solid base, learn to face the powers of Aufstrag and pick up hints of the complicated plots that emanate from Aufstrag. All this is of course setting the stage for the very high level adventures in Aufstrag itself.

A few notes on the campaign plotline are, however, in order. Coburg the Undying styles himself as the Lord of Aufstrag; however he actually only controls the upper chambers. He is the most powerful

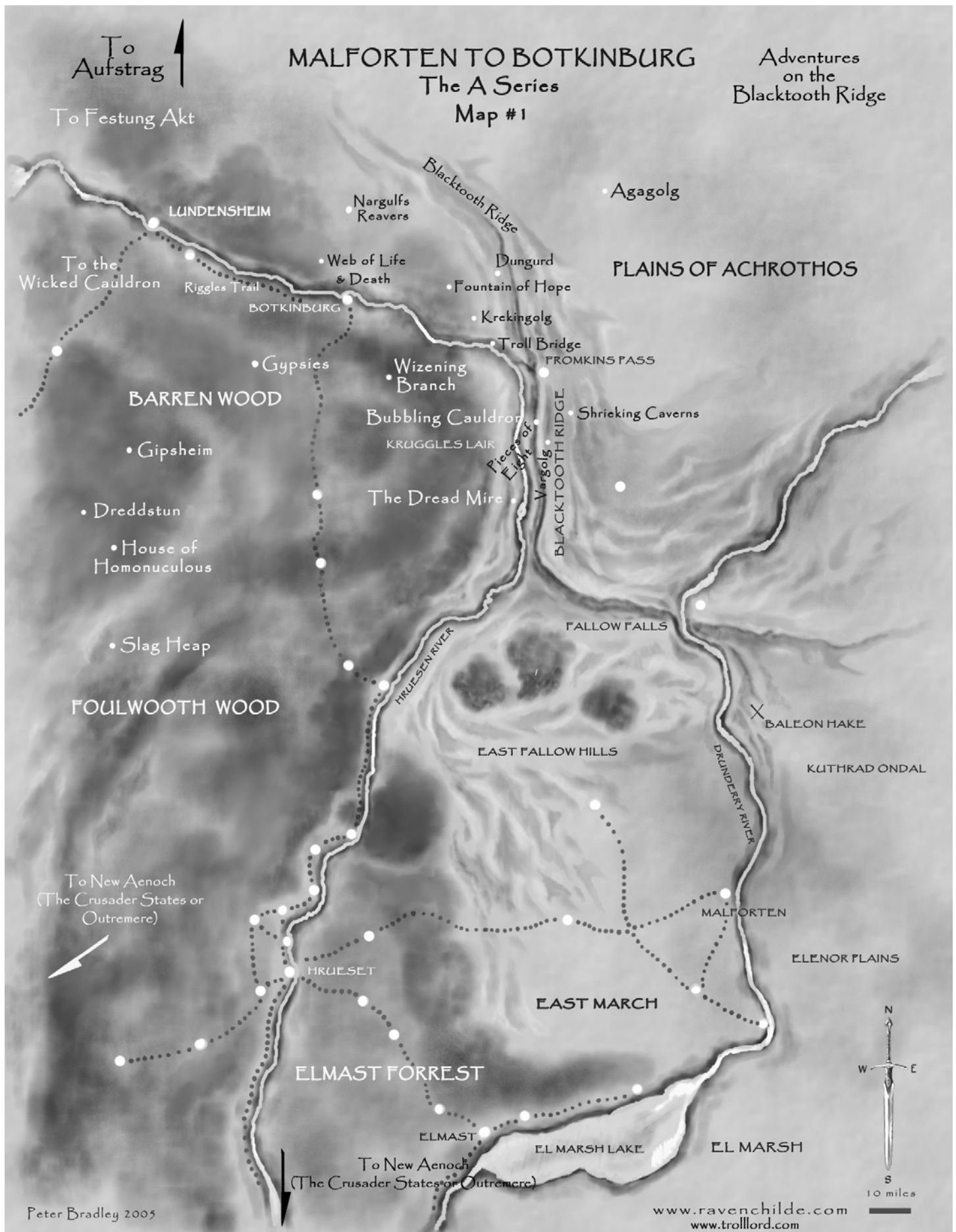
of a number of very powerful minions of the Horned One. In order to consolidate his power in the tower, he is attempting to start a war in the south. By directing the energies of the other powerful lords into a war with the humans of New Aenoch and the elves of the Barren Wood, he hopes to keep them from fighting each other and him; in his mind, some few may fall in the coming war, and if so, all the better. Of course, in the back of his mind, he too dreams of a great empire over which he can rule. To this end he has sent several powerful agents into the south to feel out the area and establish bases in the Blacktooth Ridge and Barren Wood.

The most powerful of his minions is the Witch Queen. Though she herself does not leave Aufstrag, she has sent a number of her minions to establish these bases. The most powerful of which are found in the *Wicked Cauldron* and the *Shattered Horn*. Neb-Eprethat rules in the Cauldron and she serves the Witch Queen's lieutenant, Balonakalon. They are the powers behind the merchants in Ludensheim, the goblins of the Blacktooth Ridge, and the ugnern and orcs of the *Slag Heap*. All of these events swirl around the broken pieces of the *horn of opening*, the magical artifact that alone can open the doors of Aufstrag.

The *horn of opening* is one of the major subplots of the whole epic adventure. Scattered throughout the region are shards of the broken horn; several are located in the adventures in the *Umbrage Saga*; others are located in the follow-up adventures. They are not obviously placed and should not be obvious to the players themselves, unless for some reason they have successfully legend lored them or used some other device to discover what they are. There is every reason for the CK to hint that the pieces must be from something great. The true nature of the horn is not revealed until much later in the series, when the characters are left with the obvious task of entering the dread tower of Aufstrag itself.

In the meantime, and for the purpose of these adventures the *Umbrage Saga* takes place in the shadow of the Ineng tree and contains a host of minor subplots and plots, with only the hint of the epic tale that is to come.





AO: THE RISING KNIGHT

This is an introductory adventure for those playing **Castles & Crusades**. The module has been designed to allow for the players and Castle Keeper alike to begin using the **Castle & Crusades** rules in a fairly non-demanding game setting. The goal is to familiarize the Castle Keeper and players with the basic rules and their applications while undertaking an exciting adventure.

The module is also designed for modularity and expansion. Many of the encounters, monsters, settings, and non-player characters can be removed from the context of this adventure and placed within those of your own making. We here at Troll Lord Games encourage all gamers to do so as this is the quickest route to ever more fulfilling game-play. As with the **Castles & Crusades** rules, this module is a tool to use as you will. Please do so.

Furthermore, should the players or Castle Keeper care to continue with the adventure and follow its thematic development, the follow-up module, *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*, begins on page 25. Several references and avenues for continuing the adventure are mentioned within the text, but the Castle Keeper will have to devise the most meaningful manner in which to carry this out.

Finally, the adventure is designed for a party of 4 – 6 1st-level adventurers. The challenge level should rarely exceed 1. Any exceptions are mentioned in the adventure. Should the party exceed 6 characters or have several members who are of 2nd level, simply increase the number of creatures encountered, their hit points and their armor class so as to adequately challenge the party.

INTRODUCTION

The Drunderry River runs narrow and fast through much of its course before tumbling into the lowlands beneath the Fallow Hills. From there, the river spreads out across fertile plains, laboring slowly to the south before emptying into the Elmarsh Lake. Until recently this area was unsettled. The writ of the King of New Aenoch has changed all this. Several small villages, thorpes, and farming communities have been settled in this region since the King's permission was granted. The village of Malforten, nestled along the banks of the Drunderry River near the Fallow Hills, is just such a place.

The people of Malforten are few in number, but are sturdy folk with many a stout heart amongst them. Knowing they were settling at



the edges of the kingdoms of New Aenoch and far from help if ever there was need, those who came here were of the uncommon and daring type. Lacking support otherwise, the people of Malforten have banded together and fought off many a wild beast, bandit, and raiding goblin. They even managed to defeat a marauding band of ogres before it laid waste to surrounding farms. They are proud of their independence from the Lords of New Aenoch and their capacity to care for their own. This is why they consider their current position with not a little embarrassment.

Malforten lies in the East March. This frontier region is known to be open to raiders, bandits, and other nefarious creatures who fear no retribution from the West; so many villainous malcontents and upstarts thus come here to raid, and with each passing success, act with ever more audacity. Now Malforten has come under a more dire and grievous threat than ever before. A viscous gnoll warrior, Gritznak the Bold, has come to the Fallow Hills and taken up residence in an abandoned temple. From here, his band of raiders has encroached ever more often upon the steads of Malforten, taking cattle, grain stores, and stealing away a few residents for slaves or worse.

Though the men of Malforten have attempted to locate, trap, or capture Gritznak, they have failed each time. Each failure has emboldened Gritznak to greater depredations, culminating, with his coming to Malforten and demanding tribute. At their wits end, the leaders of Malforten called upon the Lords of New Aenoch for knights and soldiery to help defeat Gritznak the Bold (as they are duty bound to supply). However, the delegates from Malforten were rebuffed and their request for soldiery denied, as the wars to the west and south have consumed most of Outremere's veteran warriors. However, to minimally meet their obligations, several Lords of New Aenoch have offered a bounty to any who might bring an end to the depredations of Gritznak the Bold.

FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

Gritznak the Bold is massive and mean spirited, even for a gnoll. He is also canny and aware that the inhabitants of Malforten do not have the ability to confront his troops in force and defeat him. As such, he no longer fears reprisal for his raids and threats. He has also changed his tack. He is no longer raiding Malforten; rather, he is now demanding tribute from the town so he does not have to fight for it. He takes cattle, grain, and other goods he desires.

His extortion has worked, as no one in Malforten has overtly challenged him in a long time, and Gritznak receives his tribute on a regular basis. Recently, Gritznak has learned through a source in Malforten that a bounty is being offered for his capture. This, too, bothers Gritznak little, as he is safely ensconced in his lair with many veteran goblins at his side and believes no one will be able to find nor confront him.

Gritznak has encamped inside the bowels of an ancient temple, an unholy place in which many vile deeds were once performed and in which he feels very comfortable. Though the temple has long been abandoned, the power of its deity, the Horned One, resonates therein even to this day. The temple itself has a mind and will of its own and acts to protect Gritznak and increase his strength. This is being done in order to bring worshipers back to the temple, and, with them, sacrificial victims who can be used for resurrecting the last High Priest of the temple.

This process has been going well. Gritznak has brought back enough victims to almost complete the process of resurrection. The High Priest is buried in the bowels of the temple, and with one more sacrificial victim, the temple will have succeeded in this horrific deed. The temple, also knowing of the bounty upon Gritznak, has "encouraged" him to allow the bounty hunters to come to the temple to find him, as the temple has figured out it is far easier to have that sacrificial victim come to the temple rather than have Gritznak retrieve him himself.

None in Malforten know of this process, and none suspect. To them, Gritznak is simply a cunning brigand who needs eliminating. There are problems for the people of Malforten, though, as several members of the community are now giving information to Gritznak about happenings around town. Any action the characters take will likely be known by Gritznak within a short period of time. Several of the leader of Malforten suspect this is the case and are eager to know who the traitors amongst them are.

INVOLVING THE CHARACTERS

The easiest manner in which to bring characters into this adventure is to have a sheriff or constable inform them of the bounty offered for Gritznak's capture. The characters might also hear of the reward at a tavern or other establishments where such rumors run amok. The characters should then find themselves on the road to Malforten in search of fame, fortune, adventure, treasure, and even, incidentally, Gritznak. They must present themselves to the town officials and have the mission explained to them, settling any terms of service before returning to the more civilized lands of New Aenoch for their reward.

TRAVEL TO MALFORTEN

Travellers approaching Malforten from the east usually do so along the road known as the West Way. This road is fairly safe, as raiders and bandits rarely frequent those roads, and when they do they generally only concern themselves with bands of unarmed peasants, farmers, or merchants. Of these, there are not a lot, but enough to keep the road well worn.

There is a small chance of encountering something other than traders, travelers, herdsmen, or similarly benign encounters along the West Way. If the Castle Keeper intends to have the characters travel to Malforten or west of the town, roll a d10 two times a day with an encounter occurring on a 1. There is a 50% chance this encounter will be nothing more than a band of 2d6 merchants, farmers, herdsmen, or the like. These will either be coming from or going to the Drunderry River Valley to trade or heading back east to New Aenoch for the same. Otherwise, roll a d20 and consult Table 1 below for the type of encounter.

Traveling north, south, and east of Malforten carries a greater risk of meeting less than benign inhabitants of the region. For travel north, south or east of Malforten, roll a d10 twice a day and once at night. An encounter occurs on a roll of 1. Then roll a d20 and refer to Table 1 below to determine what is encountered. For travel along the Drunderry River and in the Fallow Hills, please see Tables 3 and 4.

8 CASTLES & CRUSADES

Table 1: Wilderness Encounters

1–2:	Wild Boar	(1–4)
3–4:	Wolves	(1–3)
5:	Worg	(1)
6:	Pixies	(1–6)
7:	Stirges (1–2) & Ghoul (1) at night	
8:	Inhabitant of Malforten	(1–3)
9:	Bandits	(2–5)
10–11:	Gnoll (1) with goblins (1–4)	
12:	Goblin band	(1–6)
13:	Ogre	(1)
14–15:	Large Snake	(1)
16–17:	Bugbear	(2)
18–19:	Herd animals	
20:	Blink Dog	(2–4)

MALFORTEN

The West Way is a dusty track leading across the grassy plains of western New Aenoch. It passes through several small villages before ending at the settlement of Malforten. Here, two-dozen or so wood and stone houses with thatched roofs are huddled closely together on the upper banks of the Drunderry River. Large willows and oaks are clustered along the river's banks and around the town, while fields of grain spread out north, south, and west of the village. Cattle graze fretfully even further afield. Amongst the cattle and fields are several herdsmen who spy the comings and goings of travelers to Malforten. They call out sharp warnings in the direction of Malforten when anyone approaches, while their large cow-dogs howl and bark guardedly. Before reaching the first of the houses in Malforten, a bell set in the town center near a well is usually rung by someone nearby, alerting all that travelers are arriving.

The inhabitants of Malforten live by farming and raising cattle. Most are subsistence farmers who have come here in order to escape the wars and depredations that are a constant in New Aenoch. As such, with the exception of a few, they own little of value and generally barter for goods or services in lieu of coin, as services often have a more immediate and beneficial effect than a stack of gold. Food is plentiful and cheap, and board can be had at the Empty Flagon, or, should the characters befriend any of the inhabitants, with the locals. Once every month a tinker and his band come to town to sell goods that might otherwise be difficult to obtain. Other traders also come to Malforten, but on a very irregular basis. The townsfolk are usually friendly and open to new arrivals, but do not take insults lightly, and gaining their trust takes time.

Days begin early, as work in the fields is demanding and the cattle need milking before the rise of the sun. Many gather at the Empty Flagon after the morning chores for a drink or food. The rest of the day is spent laboring on their farms. Evenings are quiet, and most people stay at home, while a few gather again at the Empty Flagon. A dozen or so of the men gather once a week to travel up or down the Drunderry, or to the hills north of town, to fell oaks for firewood

and other purposes. Fishing is quite common, and most have small boats tied up along the bank of the Drunderry River.

There is no sheriff or any official leadership in Malforten. However, Eryl the Hoskin is considered the most able and fair minded of the villagers, and so is often looked to for leadership in times of need or when decisions need be made concerning the community's welfare. Eryl the Hoskin commands the Malforten militia, numbering some 40 men. They are ill equipped, poorly trained, and incapable of countering Gritznak's seasoned raiders.

A priest of Corthain, Griffry the Hat, and a priestess of Wenafar, Amanda Rhyan the Paish, also reside here. Though no church or temple has been constructed for communal worship, there are several shrines located around the village. Both Griffry and Wenafar care for the area's inhabitants in their own ways, but neither offer much leadership.

ARRIVALS, INTERVIEWS, AND BED BUGS

After the characters arrive in Malforten, they need to gather information about Gritznak the Bold. The Empty Flagon is a likely place to begin. It does not take long for the unofficial town council, Eryl the Hoskin, Amanda Rhyan, Blodwyn Lycharn, Griffry the Hat, and others to make an appearance, since the arrival of a band of well armed travelers is very unusual. The townspeople are not entirely excited about the prospect of angering Gritznak and fear the consequences of a failed raid. However, they supply the characters with what information they have and hope for the best. They have no idea where Gritznak is encamped, other than north of town along the Drunderry or perhaps in the Fallow Hills.

Though generally thankful for the arrival of help, several members of the community take issue with the lack of courage on the part of the locals to deal with the situation themselves. These people consider those who have come here for the reward to be at best nothing more than bounty hunters or mercenaries, and at worst, brigands.

The first people the characters are likely to meet are Eryl the Hoskin, Amanda Rhyan, and several of the more outspoken villagers. They greet the party politely and explain the situation. They offer as much information as they can, though some have secrets, ideas, and opinions they would rather keep to themselves or pass along in more private settings. This information is in the descriptions of the personages of Malforten.

It is explained that, once the party has killed and proven the death of Gritznak, Eryl the Hoskin will give them a ring that needs presenting to a lord in New Aenoch for compensation. The promised compensation is 250gp. None agree to accompany the group into the hills, though some may be willing to travel up the Drunderry a ways to ensure the party gets on the right track.

More information is forthcoming if the characters spend a few days in Malforten. A rumor table is supplied below for the Castle Keeper and, other than what is specifically mentioned in the non-player character descriptions, can be used to randomly determine who knows what. Also, should the Castle Keeper care to give the characters information prior to entering Malforten, using the normal travelers encountered along the way would be opportune

for such purposes. Use the Rumor Table for this also. There is only one rumor per person. Roll a d12 to determine which rumor.

The table below contains a list of rumors the party may overhear or glean from various inhabitants of the town.

TABLE 2: RUMORS

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1: | Gritznak has a spy in town who tells him if anything foul is afoot. (True) |
| 2: | The tavern is a meeting place for local rangers. They used to meet there once a month but have recently stopped. Perhaps some evil has befallen them. (False) |
| 3: | "I've got a rotten feelin' bout this boys, a rotten feelin' between my toes." |
| 4: | It is said a spirit of great evil lurks in the waters of the Drunderry and only awaits a full moon to come out and take people back to its watery hole. (False) |
| 5: | "I've lost five of my cows in the past year to them goblins. I don't know how I can make it any longer." |
| 6: | Gritznak often travels to the north along the banks of the Drunderry, accompanied only a few guards, where he meets others of his kind to discuss business. (False) |
| 7: | When the sickle moon is high and the 'even star' sits in its cusp, a spirit of the dead comes from the river's deep to watch over the fisherman and fight evil. (False) |
| 8: | "It's that tower, deep in them swamps, it's sendin' agents to raise an army of the dead." (True, though not here!) |
| 9: | "Red Cap it is; it's Red Cap the Goblin who is behind this." (False) |
| 10: | "Runin' scared I tell you, we got' em runin' scared; should make easy targets." (False) |
| 11: | "Wat, wat yuh askin' me fur? I don't keer 'bout no Greeetznak. I got mee potatoes to git! Now git. Git out tuh the Drunderry der and go up and git dat Greeetznak; he's in some 'ole temple or sich, I got no knowin.'" (True) |
| 12: | "Keep your eye out for them little elves fellah's; they don't like us big 'uns at all, and 'll take your stuff and steal your goods right there while your watching." (False) |

PERSONS OF IMPORT

The following is a list of important personages in Malforten. These are the significant non-player characters with whom the characters are most likely to interact. There are other inhabitants, however, and the Castle Keeper is encouraged to develop them as necessary. A list of potential names is supplied at the end of the module for the Castle Keeper's use to develop locals.

Eryl the Hoskin: Eryl the Hoskin is the local militia leader, and one of the first people with whom the characters meet after arriving. He resents the characters' arrival, as he believes that he and the militia can win against the gnoll, given time and planning. Eryl is confrontational and not a little derisive of the characters, and doubts they will be able to accomplish what he has yet

to do. However, he does not seek out a fight with the characters and does not insult them. He is willing to give the "mercenaries" a chance, because if they do succeed, he has lost nothing. It was Eryl who decided to petition the Lords in New Aenoch to offer aid in the first place, and he will feel vindicated in having done so should the party succeed in their task. He will also be thankful to the party and offer them his friendship in return should they appear honorable in undertaking the task.

He suspects someone in town is giving information to Gritznak about the militia's strengths and weaknesses, but has no idea who. It is merely a suspicion, and one he does not voice to anyone unless he really trusts them.

Eryl is tall and thin with a thick beard and shoulder-length hair, usually braided. He has a slight limp from a battle long ago and speaks slowly to ensure others understand what he is saying. He lives in a farmhouse outside of town with his wife, Sara, and two sons, Joskin and Dale.

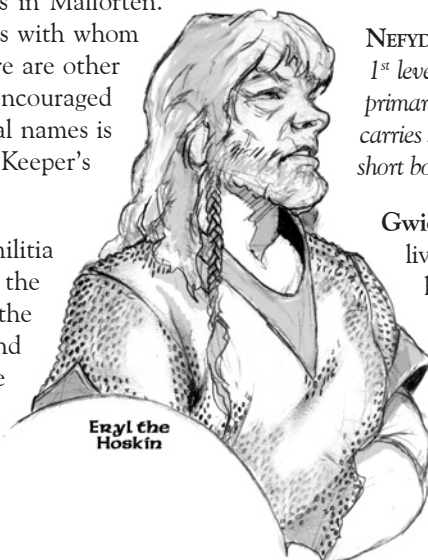
ERYL THE HOSKIN (He is a chaotic good, human, 3rd level fighter, whose vital stats are: HP: 16, AC 14. His primary attributes are strength constitution and intelligence. He carries a chain hauberk, medium shield, longsword and glaive.)

Nefydd Goff the Airhder: Nefydd has lived in Malforten for nearly a dozen years and is familiar with the area around the town. He willingly talks about the happenings therein. He is from the south, near the coast of the Amber Sea. He was once an active highwayman, but when he killed several members of a local noble's family he sought out more peaceful lands where there was no bounty upon his head. He landed in Malforten and has, presumably, changed his ways. Nefydd lives alone in a small house near the Empty Flagon and raises several cows. He also has a potato field and carrot patch. He enjoys fishing, as it affords him the opportunity to be alone.

He suspects several of the farmers give information to the goblins in exchange for their lives or a reduction in tribute, although he has no idea who might be doing so. Nefydd knows that every couple of weeks some goblins who ride wolves camp out north and east of Malforten on a hillock that overlooks the town. He has not shared this information with anyone, as he is waiting to see how the situation with Gritznak develops. "Taxes to New Aenoch, taxes to Gritznak – what's the difference?" he often mumbles to himself.

NEFYDD GOFF THE AIRHDER (He is a neutral evil, human, 1st level fighter whose vital stats are: HP: 6, AC 14. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity and wisdom. He carries studded leather armor, small shield, short sword and short bow.)

Gwion the Conner: Gwion is a farmer and fisherman living with his wife, Owena, and one remaining child, his daughter Vivianna. His other daughter died of an illness some years ago, and he faults his move to Malforten for this. He regrets having come here and hopes to leave soon. He lives near the Drunderry and spends most of his time fishing and caring for his few cows. His house has only one small room in which all three live.



Several months ago, while looking for a stray cow, he was caught by some goblins and threatened with death. He offered the goblins information on the militia and the reward in return for sparing his life. He now meets a goblin near the banks of the Drunderry River once a week or so on his frequent fishing trips. On these trips, he gives the goblins information on what is occurring in Malforten.

GWION THE CONNER (*He is a chaotic neutral, human, 0d6 level commoner whose vital stats are HP 2, AC 10. His significant attribute is strength 17. He carries a woodsman's axe and dagger.*)

Ifon Picton: Ifon moved here some time ago to avoid the chaos of his personal life back in the west. His philandering at the courts in New Aenoch left many a broken heart in his wake, and not a few angry and vengeful lords seeking his head. He has since decided on a life of anonymity. This decision does not rest well with him, as his natural inclination for travel and trouble making is bound to lead him to dire straits some day.

Other than regaling patrons at the Empty Flagon once a week or so, he keeps a low profile and sporadically tends to his few thin cattle. Ifon is well versed in the ancient lore of the region and knows much about the history of the Horned One, the Curse of the Drunderry, and other sundries. He willingly parts with this information over a flagon of brew at the tavern or in his house.

IFON PICTON (*He is a lawful neutral, human, 3rd level bard whose vital stats are HP 17, AC 10. His primary attributes are charisma, intelligence, and wisdom. His significant attributes are: wis 14 and cha 15. He carries a longsword, dagger and ring of enchantment.*)

Amanda Rhyan the Paish: Amanda worships Wenafar, the Goddess of Fey. She comes from the north where the worship of Wenafar is more widespread and accepted. She, like many of her order, has come here to help intervene in and smooth relations between the fey and humans, as they are often contentious. As is the manner of those who worship Wenafar, Amanda never proselytizes, rather she acts. She blesses the locals' crops and cattle, heals the injured if asked, pays tribute in food and wine to the fey, and tries to attract others to her ways by example. Many inhabitants appreciate her gifts, and voluntarily bring her food and other goods in exchange for her services. Many in the community have also given over to following her habits of leaving goods and trinkets for the fey on every full moon.

However, several in the community do not consider the fey beneficent creatures at all and view her, and her worship, with suspicion. It is not unknown for milk cows to suddenly go dry, crops to wither, and moles to get into food storage. Often, these events are seen as actions of the fey. Those who view the fey with suspicion are not entirely incorrect to do so and, not coincidentally, those who leave food and wine for the fey suffer less from the natural hazards of farming.

Amanda meets with a group of pixies in the forest to the north of Malforten every other full moon. She has never taken anyone with her to meet the pixies, but will do so if she believes that person is sufficiently disposed towards her manner of belief and capable of keeping the information secret. She and the pixies meet for celebrations and to exchange information. Amanda is concerned

about Gritznak, and anxiously awaits her next meeting with the pixies in hopes of gleaning information about his doings. The pixies, for their part, would rather have the current inhabitants of Malforten here than have the orcs, goblins and ugnern make a return to this land. In truth, though, the fey would rather no one be in the area.

Amanda lives in a small hut on the north side of town. She collects hundreds of herbs for various medicinal purposes and, not surprisingly, for spicing up food. She is well known for making good-tasting meals for celebrations.

AMANDA RHYAN THE PAISH (*She is a chaotic good, human, 4th level druid whose vital stats are HP 15, AC 15. Her primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence and wisdom. Her significant attribute is: wis 14. She carries staff, dagger, scale mail and a +1 shield.*)

Kiint the Leper: Kiint the Leper is an ugly man, and few enjoy speaking to him or even being in his presence. He is a loner and spends most of his time hunting for the small gazelle so plentiful across the Drunderry. He showed up in Malforten one afternoon and has never left. None know anything of his past, as not only are most unwilling to speak with him, but he tends to be rather private himself. Kiint actually has a type of leprosy that none has ever been able to heal. Of course, he has never had the coin to pay for such a healing either. He is actually a good man with a healthy mind; it is just that his particular disease has left him scarred and ostracized.

He knows much about the surrounding territory and can show the characters safer passage along the Drunderry River than is otherwise possible. If he accompanies and leads anyone around the Drunderry, the Castle Keeper only makes one random encounter check during the day and one at night. He knows the location of the Imperial Road along the Drunderry River Valley and is aware that goblins move up and down the east bank of the river unmolested. He is willing to travel to the edge of the Fallow Hills, but does not go further unless pressed.

For those who befriend him, he shows great loyalty. If Kiint the Leper acquires 1000 experience points while traveling with the characters, he can become a 1st level ranger should the Castle Keeper choose. He lives by the river in a small shack made of driftwood and bramble. He has hidden a *potion of sleeping* and 25sp here.

KIINT THE LEPER (*He is a neutral good, human, 1d6 HD commoner whose vital stats are HP 3, AC 12. His prime attribute is wisdom. His significant attributes are dexterity 16 and charisma 6. He carries a longbow, leather armor, and axe.*)

Blodwyn Lycharn: Blodwyn is a wizard who lives in a small house on the edge of town. Ostensibly, she raises a milk cow and tends to a vegetable garden, but is usually too busy reading old texts to tend to her farm's needs. She lives with her cousin Menlaus who is currently her understudy. He has grown quite bored with his time in Malforten and eagerly seeks any manner of leaving the village.

Blodwyn moved to Malforten to study local flora in the hopes of finding new and interesting objects for use in creating spells and potions. For it was not long ago that, on one of her trips to the Blacktooth Ridge, she recovered a tome with potion recipes in it.

Her hope is to gather the more exotic items necessary for the concoction of those potions rather than hiring others to do so for her. The Drunderry River valley is replete with rare herbs and objects used in potion making. Also, the bones of dead fey are rather valuable and Malforten is, purportedly, near a fey graveyard. To date her attempts to find this graveyard have not been successful, but she continues to research, never the less.

Not much of a traveler these days, and having little desire to go to dangerous places any more, she is unlikely to leave Malforten and undertake any great escapades. However, she might be willing to make trips to nearby places should she believe rare herbs or materials for making potions can be gathered.

Blodwyn is anxious for Menlaus to leave. She finds his company grating and his impatience taxing. She offers to acquire equipment for him if others take him away. Her house, a broad building near the Empty Flagon, is full of texts, papers, herbs, flora, concoctions, and brews. She has the makings of a lab but is not quite there. Blodwyn is concerned about the latest developments with Gritznak but has few solutions to offer.

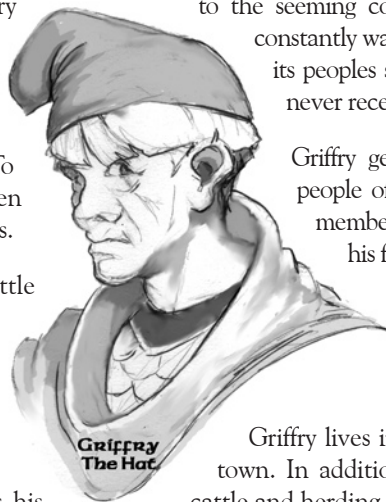
Hidden about her house are the following items: *potion of giant strength*, *potion of levitation*, three scrolls (*hold portal*, *sleep and shield*), a *wand of magic missiles* with 10 charges, a spell book (0 – *read magic*, *light*, *detect*, *magic*; 1st – *hold portal*, *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*, *sleep*, *shield*, *spider climb*; 2nd – *acid arrow*, *knock*, *levitate*), a *tome of potions* that has the recipe for 12 potions in it, 100sp, and 45gp.

Menlaus, for his part, does not want to stay in Malforten any longer. He is young, impatient, and ready to move on and face the challenges many of his family have. He has little fear, having never been injured in a fight, and no experience in traveling the more desolate areas of the world.

BLODWYN LYCHARN (She is a chaotic neutral, human, 4th level wizard whose vital stats are HP 8, AC 11. Her primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence, and wisdom. Her significant attributes are dex 16, con 6 and int 16. She carries a staff, dagger, ermine cloak and a +2 dagger in addition to those items listed above.)

MENLAUS (He is a lawful neutral, human, 1st level wizard whose vital stats are HP 2, AC 11. His primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence, and charisma. His significant attributes are dexterity 14 and intelligence 13. He carries a staff, clothing, dagger and has a spell book with the following spells in it: 0 – *read magic*, *light*; 1st – *magic missile*, *shield*, *spider climb*.)

Griffy the Hat: Griffy the Hat is a priest of Corthain but has given up adventuring for the life of an ascetic and, incidentally, much of what Corthain requires in a priest of this order. Griffy no longer forcefully rights wrongs, and his sense of revenge for grievous crimes has dissipated. Events in his life have left him jaded, angry, and second-guessing himself. In the wars of New Aenoch it seemed to Griffy that, in righting wrongs, more people were suffering than if the acts had just been ignored. In particular, the wars were devastating to communities that were not involved in the conflicts. He has not reconciled himself



to the seeming contradictions of his order and the demands of constantly warring upon those who would make the world and its peoples slaves. If Griffy does not adjust his ways, he will never receive further dispensation from Corthain.

Griffy generally only has healing spells, and helps the people of Malforten by curing the injured and ill. Some members of the community expect more from him, and his failure to live up to those expectations has left him not a few detractors. Should a player convince Griffy to act more like the priest of the god of vengeance and righteousness, they will have a powerful ally and lifelong friend.

Griffy lives in a well-made wooden house near the edge of town. In addition to his duties about town, he raises several cattle and herding dogs. Inside his house he has various robes and accouterments of his office as well as two *potions of healing*, three scrolls (*delay poison*, *sanctuary*, *remove paralysis*), 210sp, and 71gp.

GRIFFY THE HAT (He is a lawful good, human, 3rd level cleric whose vital are: HP 13, AC 16. His prime attributes are strength, wisdom, and charisma. His significant attributes are strength 13, dexterity 14, and wisdom 14. He carries a mace, scale mail, and a ring of spiritual hammers with 7 charges left.)

Ian Meanz: Ian Meanz is a lowly thief and malcontent. He escaped the hangman's noose by sheer luck some years ago. He is a wanted man, and one particular baron in New Aenoch would pay dearly to have Ian brought back for justice. He left New Aenoch and headed east, and about a year ago settled in the Empty Flagon until his money ran low. He then moved into an abandoned house on the edge of town, where he whiles away his time doing little other than trying to decide whether he should head back west or not. His real concern is whether or not the bounty is still on his head.

He is wary of strangers, especially those who are in town to collect a bounty in the first place. As such, he avoids interaction with the characters until they show themselves to be unconcerned about the bounty on his head. Once having decided the characters are not after him, Ian will eventually approach them and try to hire on or attach himself to the party should they head back west or up north. He reveals as much as he can about the town and its inhabitants, and in private conversation expresses his disdain for most of the village's inhabitants.

Should the characters travel with Ian, they will be set upon by some fey. These may be pixies or nixies or others. Ian has been stealing from the plates of offerings that are left by Amanda and others. The fey do not find this at all humorous. Although the fey will do little to harm the characters or Ian, they will make life difficult by spoiling food, stealing shoes, and doing other acts that would irritate the characters. The focus of their pranks will be Ian.

Ian Meanz (He is a neutral evil, human, 2nd level rogue whose vital stats are HP 7, AC 13. His primary attributes are dexterity, constitution, and charisma. His significant attributes are str 13, dex 14 and cha 15. He carries studded leather armor, 3 daggers, light crossbow, magical thieves tools that confer a +1 to all checks involving picking locks, 34sp and 210cp.)

Mathonwy the Gibber: Mathonwy raises dogs. And that is about it. There are a series of large pens in the back of his house where the dogs spend much time barking and howling for food. His dogs are very well trained and sold as cow dogs, hunting dogs, guard dogs and, on occasion, fighting dogs. His dogs are highly prized in town.

Mathonwy is also known for his short temper, which he often takes out on his neighbors, though never on his dogs. He knows how to use his whip both to keep his dogs in line and to fight, if ever necessary. However, he never abuses his dogs and takes poorly to those who do—even after the dogs have been purchased. Several years ago, Mathonwy took his whip and beat a poor farmer who had brutalized a dog the farmer had purchased several months prior. Mathonwy did this in the center of town in front of everyone.

Mathonwy sells his dogs for a high price. They are about 25 gp or a year's worth of meat for one dog. However, should the dog be killed or mistreated, he will not sell another dog to the same person (or group) for under 50gp. There will not be a third time.

MATHONWY THE GIBBER (He is a chaotic neutral, human, 1st level fighter whose vital stats are HP 12, AC 11. His primary attributes are strength, intelligence, charisma. His significant attribute is dexterity 15. He carries a dagger and whip.)

DOGS (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 1d6, HP variable, AC 11, attacks bite 1d4, special these dogs are difficult to surprise and confer a +5 bonus to any surprise checks against them or their companions. Hunting dogs can track like a 5th level ranger.)

Madith Carn the Old: Madith is an older man who once served in the armies of the Lords of New Aenoch before having his title taken away for a misdeed on the battlefield. Shortly afterwards, in a battle against orcs, his leg was hewn off. Shamed and beaten in battle, Madith retired and wandered for a few years before arriving in Malforten to settle permanently. He lives alone and tends to a vegetable garden and a few cattle.

Madith lives a life of regret for his misdeed, and deems himself a failure after the battle in which he lost his leg. This was, to him, a sign from the deities that his name and being were forever besmirched and no redemption was possible. Strong of body but not of heart, he hopes to find a deserving recipient of his prized lance. He believes this last act is very important, and it is in fact more important than he knows. For not only does he believe that the act of finding a deserving recipient of his lance will bring him redemption, it actually will. Giving away his lance will be an act of utter humility and a signal of his acceptance of defeat. It will be the most humble act in his life. This act of humility will bring him back into the good graces of his deity and allow him to gain heart again. After giving away his lance, he will give away the remainder of his worldly possessions excepting his arms and armor and head back to the west and into New Aenoch to seek out his destiny—whatever that may be.

MADITH CARN THE OLD (He is a lawful good, human, 4th level knight whose vital stats are HP 21, AC 16. His primary attributes are strength, constitution, and charisma. His significant attributes are strength 14 and constitution 13. He owns chainmail, large metal shield, broadsword, halberd, dagger, +2 lance, ring of harm resistance which reduces damage received from one attack per round by 1 point, 124gp and 213sp.)

PLACES OF IMPORTANCE

THE EMPTY FLAGON

This is the only tavern in town. It is owned by Kerrywyn the Yellow, who is so named because of his bright yellowish-blond hair, which flows long and unbraided down his shoulders. The Empty Flagon is a single-story wood structure with a thatch roof. The front of the building is a large common room with a dirt floor, stone fireplace and a single bar. Numerous tables are spaced about the room. In the rear of the Empty Flagon is a series of small rooms that let for 1sp a day. Separate from the main building is the kitchen and several rooms where Kerrywyn and his entire family sleep. Kerrywyn has a wife, two sons and four daughters, one of whom is married and with child. His children help around the tavern and raise the cattle, chickens, and sheep, which are used for meals.

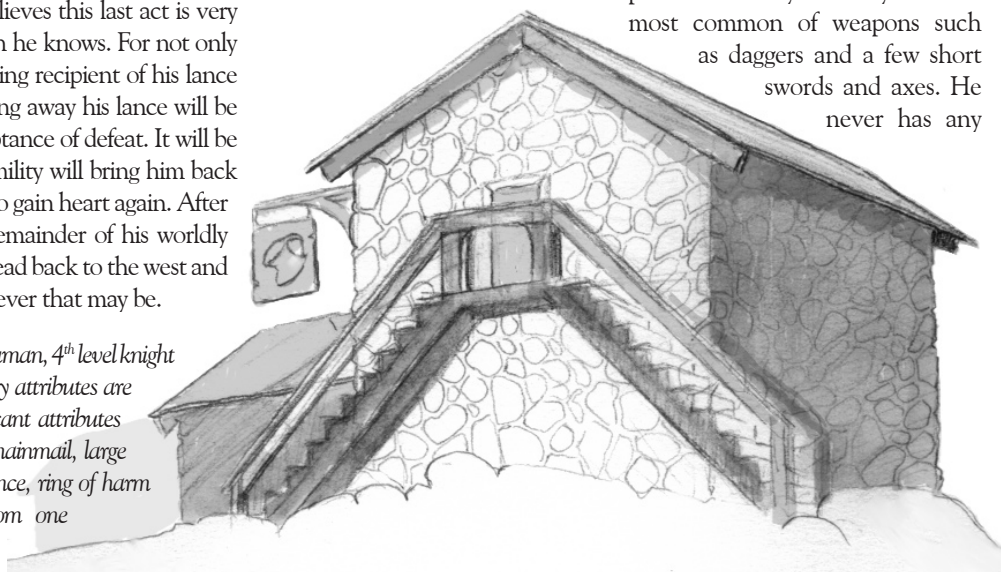
The whole family is fairly affable and doing quite well considering their circumstances. Kerrywyn is hoping to marry off his oldest daughter as soon as possible, and makes this intention known to any newcomers who appear well-off or who might be able to care for her.

The Empty Flagon is usually empty during the day, but in the mornings and evenings, it fills up as people come to enjoy about the only brew to be found in town. Kerrywyn's brew is not the best to be had, nor even really good, but his potato flapjacks and sausage links are praised for their taste. The food is good and plentiful, with a breakfast costing 5cp, noon meals 10cp, and evening meals 5cp. The brew he offers costs 1cp per cup. He often trades food and beer for favors, as most of the townspeople have little coin to spend.

THE ROPE AND BARREL

This is the only trading store in town. It is run by Walker the Shrub, a grizzled old man with a large unkempt beard who spends more time chewing tobacco and ruminating than selling wares. He carries a wide assortment of farming equipment, but usually lends them out rather than sells them. In return, he is well fed and taken care of. He travels west every couple of months to gather more goods. He often trades foodstuff from Malforten for the farming implements.

He is always stocked with rope, barrels, salt, and lamp oil. He rarely has any but the most common of weapons such as daggers and a few short swords and axes. He never has any



armor nor the more exotic of weapons. His wife, Nelda, badgers him constantly about his profligate habits and wasteful or lazy nature. However, thankfully for Walker, Nelda is found more often at the Empty Flagon complaining to neighbors than at home complaining to him.

THE SHRINE OF WENAFAR

On the outskirts of Malforten is a pagoda-like shrine to Wenafar, the Goddess of the Fey. Two sides of the structure are open to the elements, while the other two are constructed of planks of wood. Atop this is a rickety wooden roof. Within is a statue of the goddess Wenafar sitting down with her hands out. In front of her are offering bowls, usually filled with foodstuff of some type. Pixies and nixies sometimes sneak into town after dark to take the food in the offering plates. If, for some reason, food is not here when they arrive, someone in the village suffers the loss of a cow, finds some food stores with mice or rats in them, or even gets some leaks in their roof. The pixies are a little demanding.

THE GAOL

Though Malforten has no sheriff or real “legal” authority figure, it does have a gaol. On occasion the town must punish a wrongdoer and does so by placing him in here. The gaol is located across from the Empty Flagon and is nothing more than a small log building with a metal grate over the door. In the rear of the goal is a large, dying oak tree use to hang people when necessary. It has not been used in a long time, though an old frayed rope still hangs from it. At one time they had a goblin in here, but eventually hanged it.

During full moons on winter nights, mushrooms sprout up underneath the tree. These are known as Hangman Spirits. They are not eaten, but are prized by assassins and the like for making mild poisons. The poison is easy to make. Simply take the stalks, ground them up, boil them, scrape the froth, allow the residue to dry, and one has a powdered poison.

Hangman Spirit Poison: For the poison to activate, it must be ingested or enter the bloodstream through an open wound. It is often placed in drinks or applied as a paste to daggers or arrows. It causes 1d2 points of damage and paralysis for 1d12 hours unless a constitution save is made, in which case the subject experiences nausea and sleepiness for 1d6 hours instead.

WILDERNESS AREAS

THE CRAGGY RIDGE

This is a high point located about a mile north of Malforten. It offers a decent view of the river valley leading down to Malforten. One can easily see the town from this vantage point. Every month or so, several of Gritznak’s wolf-rider goblins come here to watch the comings and goings in the village.

Few suspect how much happens upon this ridge after the setting of the sun and the rising of the moon, for it is the final resting place of many a dead fey. For ages beyond count, the fey, should they feel the icy cold hand of death coming their way, come here to commune with Wenafar and pass on through to their final resting place. Many fey have spent their last moment alive

speaking to Wenafar on nights of the crescent moon. The place is now haunted by fay “guardians of the dead,” although it is no longer used as it once was. The guardians of the dead do not care that others climb atop the rocks and linger there, but do become quite irate should they ever begin rooting around at the ridge’s base and digging up things. For buried here are innumerable fey, their bones like sticks of ivory.

During the night and under the crescent moon, one can see a thousand pin pricks of light twinkling at the foot of the ridge, each light being the soul of a fey. They appear only under the crescent moon and then only for as long as the remains out.

Should anyone attempt to dig up any of the bones of the fey, he will be accosted. At first these will only be smaller and less powerful fey but, as they pass the information along, ever more powerful fey come to do harm to the those disturbing the bones.

THE DRUNDERRY RIVER VALLEY

The Drunderry River runs through the Fallow Hills down into the plains below and then empties into the Elmarsh Lake in the south. It is narrow and fast in the Fallow Hills, rushing and tumbling over rocks and boulders and around sharp bends. Once in the plains, though, the river fans out and slowly courses south. It is a shallow and broad river with many sandbars thick with vegetation. The river valley is mostly populated by normal fauna, and attracts large herds of gazelle and wildebeasts to its banks. There are also giant leopards and crocodiles which pose occasional problems for those who are not careful.

On the east bank of the river runs an old imperial road. Most of the road has been covered beneath sand or washed away entirely during spring flooding, so following it is nearly impossible. However, a close search up and down its course does reveal intact portions here and there that lead in the direction of the Fallow Hills or south, depending on the direction one cares to follow it. A family of pixies and a nymph live in the Drunderry River Valley between Malforten and the Fallow Hills.

Travel in the Drunderry River Valley uses Table 3 for random wilderness encounters. Roll a d10 for encounters three times during the day and twice at night for travel up or down the river. A 1 indicates an encounter has occurred. If an encounter occurs, roll a d20 to determine the type.

TABLE 3: DRUNDERRY RIVER VALLEY ENCOUNTERS

1–2:	Wild Boar (1–4)
3–4:	Wolves (1–3)
5:	Crocodile (1–3)
6:	Nixies (2–8)
7:	Stirges (1–2)
8:	Inhabitants of Malforten (1–3)
9:	Bandits (2–5)
10–11:	Pixies (2–7)
12:	Goblin band (1–6)
13:	Leopard (1)
14–15:	Large Snake (1)
16–17:	Bugbear (2–3)

14 CASTLES & CRUSADES

18–19: Herd animals

20: Nymph (see Liquid Song below)

TREE FORTS AND FAIRY FIRES

About 20 miles north of Malforten, a family of twenty pixies and their queen live in the Drunderry River Valley in the bowls and upper limbs of the massive cottonwood trees that grow along the banks of the river. They ignore most traffic along the river unless it comes too close to their abode. Then, they come out and try to confuse any travelers and reroute them in another direction. If the travelers appear to be well disposed towards them or any are elves, they will not bother with such antics, instead attempting to stop the travelers and converse with them. They have much information they can share with any adventurers should they bother to listen to these wee people. They tell the characters the location of the Imperial Road and offer tantalizing hints about the location of a tower in the Fallow Hills. This is the Tower of Kuthrad Ondal and not the Temple of Baleon Nakt.

PIXIE x20 (*These chaotic neutral creature's vital stats are HD 1d6, HP variable, AC 16. Their primary attributes are mental. They have daggers.*)

PIXIE QUEEN (*This chaotic neutral creature's vital stats are HD 3d6, HP 15, AC 18. Her primary attributes are mental. Her equipment is +3 dagger, Special: Polymorph self, permanent illusion 3x a day), know alignment, confusion that is permanent duration unless removed with remove curse, dispel magic at 10th level ability 2x a day, dancing lights 3x a day, detect thoughts, and sleep at 20% chance 2x a day.*)

LIQUID SONG

A nymph, Ewi' ah' hnana, lives in the Drunderry River about 30 miles north of Malforten. She rarely allows others to know of her existence—even other fey. However, two events bring her out of hiding. On the full moon of each month, she leaves the river and performs a ritual to the goddess of the moon, thanking her for the rise and fall of the tides and the push and pull of the world's forces. Often this ritual is performed on her own and involves little more than a sacrificial fire and intonations. Should the characters come upon her performing one of these rituals, they all suffer the possibility of being charmed by her divine beauty. On these nights, she makes her way up and down the river, attempting to force any unwanted creatures away. She helps goodly aligned individuals, though she may take a servant if it fits her mood.

NYMPH (*This chaotic neutral creature's vital stats are HD 3d6, HP 14, AC 17. Her primary attributes are physical. Her special abilities are divine beauty.*)

THE IMPERIAL ROAD

The Imperial Road is an ancient roadway that stretched from the heart of the Horned One's empire in the Dread Mire all the way to the sea. This roadway was paved with large blocks of granite carved by giants and placed in the earth by some of the greatest engineers of the age. Yet, as with most things, time and nature slowly destroyed it. The Imperial Road was poorly maintained even during the height of the empire, and since its collapse, it has essentially eroded away or been buried by the shifting banks of the Drunderry River.

The Imperial Road is difficult to follow, though an observant character will note its appearance on occasion along the east side of the Drunderry River. When the roadway lifts up into the Fallow Hills, it is a little easier to follow, as the processes of erosion has not affected it as much here. In the Fallow Hills a fairly constant stretch of it is easily noted. Following the Imperial Road takes travelers all the way to the Blacktooth Ridge and beyond.

FALLOW HILLS

The Fallow Hills stretch far to the north and are a rocky, tumultuous landscape that is difficult to travel through. The vegetation is thick with small trees, thorny brush, and other undergrowth. Steep, though short, cliff faces dot the hillsides. Overhangs are common and occasionally home to bears, wolves, and mountain lions. Few trails cross this land, and rarely do any civilized folk travel in this region, as it is home to orcs, goblins, and worse. It is a wild landscape and not hospitable to those in need of safe places to sleep at night.

The Drunderry River runs swiftly through the Fallow Hills and courses over numerous precipices and falls before emptying into the plains to its south. The Drunderry also acts as a demarcation between the eastern and western Fallow Hills. The eastern portion of the Fallow Hills is rockier with shallow granite bedrock. Its hills and cliffs are steep and the vegetation is more sparse. The western Fallow Hills are primarily sandstone and limestone bedrock, are well watered, and have thicker vegetation. The hills there are riddled with natural caves and underground streams. It is rumored that many an ancient shrine to the fey is located in this region. It is also rumored to be the location of burial grounds of lords and ladies from ancient times, times preceding the arrival of the Horned One, the Age of Heroes.

Travel in the Fallow Hills can be dangerous. Table 4 is the random encounter chart for travel here. Roll a d10 for encounters three times during the day and twice at night. An encounter occurs on a 1. Then roll a d20 to determine the type of encounter.

TABLE 4: FALLOW HILLS ENCOUNTERS

1–2:	Wild Boar (1–4)
3–4:	Wolves (1–3)
5:	Brown Bear (1–3)
6:	Zombie (dead goblins, 2–8)
7:	Stirges (1–2)
8:	Bugbear (2–3)
9:	Kobold band (2–5)
10–11:	Large Spider (1–4)
12:	Goblin band (1–6)
13:	Ogre (1)
14–15:	Mountain Lion (1)
16–17:	Gnoll (1–2) and goblins (2–7)
18–19:	Herd animals
20:	Dryad

RUINS OF KUTHRAD ONDAL

Kuthrad Ondal is the remains of a ancient elvish watch tower. It was constructed long before the coming of the Horned One, and even before the founding of the kingdom of Al-Liosh. It was built as a prophetic device, and is one of many such towers that hid within its locals the directions to the Tree of Life. It was also built with the knowledge it would one day be laid to waste, and only after the fall of the one who razed it, would its prophetic magic become apparent. It is said that time destroys all things but the elves. This may also be said for what they build. When Unklar spread his rule over the world, he sought this place out and laid it to waste nearly a millennia ago. Yet after his fall, the true nature of the tower came to fulfillment, for it now acts as a beacon to elves and, in its own way, points to the Tree of Life.

Few tread near this place now, and even the orcs and goblins fear it, for there remains the bewitchments of ancient elvish magic. The goblins have even named it Kuthrad Ondal, The Tower of Waste, having no knowledge of its original name. The ruins are located on a hilltop about one mile east of a section of the Imperial Road and near the southern edge of the Fallow Hills. At night, careful observation of the horizon shows a bluish glow coming from this direction. The tower ruins glow a bright blue at night, the blue of the first royal house of the first elves.

Travel to the tower is dangerous, as many fey and other creatures of ancient origin now guard it. They do not care who approaches nor for what reason, but only try to prevent anyone from getting to it. On the way to the tower, the following six events occur, starting six hours away from reaching the tower. One event occurs each hour, but in no particular order and only once each.

- 1: *Darkness* (as the spell) is cast on the party as if from a 7th level cleric.
- 2: 2–5 pixies harass the party, but do not harm them unless they appear of evil bent.
- 3: A ghostly horn sounds, causing fear as if a 7th level cleric cast the spell.
- 4: A magic trap drops one person into a 10 foot deep pit (this trap is challenge level 5).
- 5: A large ethereal flying snake approaches the party, warns them not to go further, and curses (CL 7) them if they do. For 72 hours the characters suffer –1 to all rolls.
- 6: All the characters' food rots.

If the characters continue on despite the above occurrences, they eventually reach the tower. The ruins are a jagged, stark-white series of crumbling walls and abutments in the center of which are the remains of a tall, thin tower stretching some 50 feet into the sky. A blue light glows from the center of the tower's remains. Nothing resides in the tower at the moment, though a lammasu occasionally comes here for rest. The lammasu is the only creature who does not face the above-mentioned nuisances.

Nothing remains in the center of the tower, save for crumbling stones and the bones of long-dead goblins and orcs. The blue light originates from the few remaining flagstones at the center of the tower. Any elf who places his hand in the light gains a single level while within a mile of the tower. That character gains all the benefits of that level.

Should the characters arrive when the lammasu is in residence, they will have a powerful foe to deal with should they appear aggressive. Otherwise, the lammasu, Nefratel, likely ignores them. However, should a goodly aligned character of noble bearing try to engage Nefratel in conversation, he will be pleasantly surprised to find a very talkative companion. Nefratel can impart the following information about the tower.

Many ages ago, before the arrival of man in the world, the towers of Hithel were constructed by the elves to guard the Tree of Life. This is one such tower. Though none know where the Tree of Life is, it is said that once all the Towers of Hithel are located, the location of the Tree of Life will become apparent. Nefratel does not know where any other towers are located. He also doubts anyone would be able to locate any others, since the armies of the Horned One destroyed almost everything they could that was of elvish make. In this they succeeded for the most part, as Nefratel has never learned of another of the Towers of Hithel.

The lammasu is only partly correct. There are other Towers of Hithel remaining, though they are well hidden. Should the characters move in a direct line 150 miles northwest, they will encounter another tower. This tower is now called Fromkin's Eyrie (this is described in greater detail in *Al Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*). There are more.

Nefratel knows much about the local area and can tell the characters about the Imperial Road and the location of the Temple of Baleon Nakt. Other information, or even quests Nefratel may have for the characters, is left up to the Castle Keeper to decide. Bear in mind, Nefratel is a fairly new arrival in the region, having only been here about 100 years.

NEFRATEL (This is a lammasu. Refer to the M&T if necessary. Characters should not fight the lammasu.)

THE TEMPLE OF BALEON NAKT

Baleon Nakt was once a small but active temple to the Horned One, an evil lord and deity who once ruled over this land. It housed a high priest, a Knight of the Dark who had a cohort of lesser acolytes and troops to do his bidding in the region. When the power of the Horned One waned, so to did the power of this temple. For several decades the last High Priest, Unguath Kine, remained here with his most loyal servants until he died mysteriously in his chambers. The survivors then left the temple and scattered to the four winds. In the time since, the upper portion of the temple succumbed to the elements, collapsing into rubble and virtually disappearing beneath brush, bramble, and thorn, while the deeps beneath the temple remained open and intermittently occupied.

The temple is located near a section of the Imperial Road, several days' travel into the Fallow Hills. If the characters are following the Imperial Road, after several days, they note a large statue of a horned beast in the center of the road. It rests upon a black basalt pedestal covered in vines and worn by time. The statue has eroded with time so that it is chipped and pock-marked, but its right arm is stretched out pointing to the east. This is a statue of the Horned One and was used as an indicator that one is entering hallowed grounds. The arm points to the Temple of Baleon Nakt.

The temple is difficult to locate, and only the concerted efforts of those who travel the wilds of the world can pick up the trail to

its location. In fact, if it were not for Gritznak and his men, the location of the temple might never be known. But, as they have traveled to and from the temple many a time in the previous years, a small but well-worn trail leads directly to it.

Ten miles due east of the statue, atop a mound surrounded by bare gray rocks, are the remains of Baleon Nakt. All that appears to remain of the temple are several free-standing walls covered in vines, a few columns, a set of stairs going up to nothing, and heaps of rubble. However, close inspection reveals otherwise. There are trails leading in and out of the rubble, going north, south, and east. They all converge on a large opening in the center of what was once a large building. Here, there is a black hole in the earth with stairs leading down into darkness.

BENEATH BALEON NAKT

The dungeon beneath Baleon Nakt is sentient and capable of thinking and acting. It is alive! The power of the Horned One still lingers here and gives life to these walls and floors. In the years of the Horned One's waning power, the temple killed the last High Priest, Unguath Kine, in hopes of preserving and raising him when the time was beneficial. The temple senses the timing is right and hopes to raise this last Knight of the Dark. Through Gritznak, whom the temple has protected, sacrificial victims have been brought to the temple and rituals performed for raising the High Priest. The process is nearly complete and lacks but one more sacrifice.

Once the characters enter the dungeon, the temple attempts to manipulate the characters into moving closer to the sacrificial room (Level 2, Area 8) and prevents them from exiting the complex. In order to manage this, the temple creates illusions and obstacles for the characters. The temple is capable of creating an illusionary 10-foot wall once per hour and of creating an actual 10-foot wall once every six hours. Through these means the temple intends to confuse the party and prevent their escape by controlling and influencing their movements. Gritznak is in the sacrificial chambers awaiting the arrival of the party and the enactment of the last sacrifice.

There is one known entrance to the dungeon complex beneath the temple and it is guarded by some goblins, though they are often lax in keeping watch, as the temple has never been raided, and they do not expect anyone to enter their abode. This will not be the case once a raid occurs. The goblins then keep a keen lookout for interlopers.

The walls of this complex are a mixture of stone, brick, and the granite bedrock. For the most part, the walls are all intact, if not a little worse for wear. However, all walls that the temple creates are weak and easily broken through. A pick and about 10 minutes of labor will knock holes in any of them. The same is true of any walls that abut one another. The noise caused by this activity increases the chance for random encounters; for every two minutes spent digging through a wall, a random encounter check is made.

Little more than goblins and kobolds live in the dungeon at this point. Other than those mentioned above, or in special circumstances described in the following text, a random encounter check occurs every two hours the party is in the dungeon. A 1 on a d10 indicates a random encounter. If an encounter occurs, roll a d6 and refer to Table 5 for the encounter type.

TABLE 5: DUNGEON RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

1:	1–4 goblins and gnoll (1)
2:	2–4 goblins
3:	2–8 kobolds
4:	1–4 kobolds and 1–2 war dogs
5:	2–8 goblins
6:	1–2 gnoll and wolf (1)

BALEON NAKT

LEVEL 1

AREA 1: ENTRY

This is the only known entrance for the dungeon complex. However, all such complexes, when initially designed, had alternate entries and secret exits. Where these may be, no one currently knows.

There is a large statue in the center of the room depicting a maleficent-looking creature with two large, curved horns protruding from its head. In front of the statue on the floor is a small golden bowl. Elsewhere, there is a long roughly hewn table with several chairs around it. There are flagons on the table and the smell of stale beer permeates the air. Several piles of hay with blankets on them are lumped against a wall, while a make-shift fire has been set in the middle of the room, giving the entire room a ghastly red glow.

There are four goblins in the room now. These goblins are not keeping a good lookout; two are asleep, one is drunk (suffers –2 to hit) and the other is rolling some dice against a wall. If the party makes a lot of noise coming down the stairs, the goblin playing dice investigates and, if able, gives warning to the others.

The golden bowl (50gp value) in front of the statue is an offering plate and is crusted with dried blood. Before passing beyond the statue and down the corridor, an offering of blood must be placed in the bowl or, once the last character passes from the room and deeper into the dungeon, the statue emits a low howl that rumbles down the corridors, causing a random encounter check and alerting several goblins to the presence of intruders. The blood sacrifice can be as little as a small drop of blood from a finger or a much larger amount, from a dead goblin perhaps. Anyone's blood will do as long as they are alive when it splashes into the bowl. The blood of good-aligned creatures smokes and sizzles like water in boiling fat if put in the bowl.

GOBLINS x4 (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD1d6, HP 2, 2, 3 and 4, AC 12. Their primary attributes are physical. They have leather armor, shortspear, and short sword or mace, and 1d4cp each.*)

AREA 2: STOREROOM

This was once a storeroom used by the priests and held various cloaks, hats, and other accouterments of ritual use. It is now nearly empty except for old crates and other useless sundries the goblins have stolen from caravans or farmers over the last year. There is a barrel of dried fruits in here, enough for 10 days of rations. The rest of the foodstuffs have rotted.

AREA 3: MEETING HALL

This was a general meeting hall for the priests of Unklar when the temple was in use. Large blood-red columns stretch to the ceiling, meeting in a confusion of angles and arches far above the floor. At the far end of the room are two open passageways and a raised section of floor.

Currently, this is a stabling area for the wolves the goblins ride into battle. Six makeshift wooden stalls and cages line the far wall, containing six large, mean-looking wolves. The wolves begin to howl and gnash their teeth as soon as anyone enters the room. In addition to the cages, hay covers much of the floor, and several large animal carcasses hang from hooks at the far end of the room. A table is pushed up against a wall and large chunks of meat are piled on it. A massive, blood-smeared cleaver is stuck in the table.

The howling of the wolves does not alarm anyone in the dungeon, since they do it so often and so ferociously. It does, however, attract the attention of the stable master, and he comes to quiet the wolves. The stable master (in Area 3a) is a massive gnoll with an ill temper and short fuse. As soon as he enters the room, he begins bellowing at the wolves. His muscular frame virtually quivers with rage as his voice echoes loudly down the hallways. He beats on the cages and wolves until they are quiet.

If the wolves begin to yelp in pain before the arrival of the stable master, this sends out alarms, as no one ever messes with the wolves. The stable master charges into the room with a massive battle axe and shield, along with four goblin helpers (also from 3a). Should the stable master encounter anyone in the room, he calls upon the four goblins for help.

WOLVES *(These neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 8, 10, 12, 12, 14, 15, AC 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with 1 bite for 2–8 points of damage).*

Area 3a: Antechamber This room was once used to store goods used for meetings. It has been taken over by the stable master and his helpers. There is a large table in the center of the room, a fire pit with a pot hanging over it, one cot and four bedrolls. There are cards and dice on the table, along with several soup bowls and a few daggers. A pile of copper coins sits in the middle of the table (28cp). Several small clubs, chains, and harnesses are hanging from a wall. There is a chain mail shirt of special make here also. This is used for one of the wolves, giving the wolf the equivalent of an AC 16 in battle. This barded wolf is used by Gritznak.

STABLE MASTER *(This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 16, AC 15. His primary attributes are physical. He has chain hauberk, shield, whip, club, pouch with 18gp and 32sp).*

GOBLINS x4 *(These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD1d6, HP 2, 2, 3 and 4, AC 12. Their primary attributes are physical. They have leather armor, shortspear, and short sword or mace, and 1d4cp each.)*

AREA 4: SAGGING FLOOR

This passageway is in need of repair. It sits over a corridor in Level 2 of the dungeon. The goblins know not to use it, as it is about to collapse. Close inspection reveals a sagging floor with broken and cracked masonry. One familiar with stonework might note it is about to collapse. (A wisdom check is made at CL 5).

18 CASTLES & CRUSADES

Walking down this hallway is dangerous. If the total weight placed on any given 10 foot section of floor exceeds 400 lbs, the floor has a 1 in 10 chance of collapsing. For each 20 lbs over 400 lbs., the chance of collapsing increases by one (420 lbs has a 2 in 10, 440 lbs 3 in 10, etc.). If the corridor collapses, it does so in 30 foot sections, 15 feet in front and 15 behind the center. Those falling suffer 1d6 falling damage and 1d6 damage from the rubble (a successful dexterity check halves the damage). They fall into the corridor marked "XXX" on level 2. Also, should the floor collapse, a random encounter does occur.

AREA 5: PRIESTS' CHAMBERS

This once housed four priests of the temple. Currently, it houses about 10 goblins at various times. At the moment, there are only four goblins in this room and they are gambling, arguing, and drinking some mash whiskey they stole from Malforten. The room is cluttered with blankets, hay, old foodstuffs, roaches, and other vermin. A large brazier is in the middle of the room, providing light. A small keg of lamp oil sits in one corner of the room. This is enough fuel for one lantern for 12 hours.

GOBLINS x4 *(This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD1d6, HP 2, 2, 3 and 4, AC 12. Their primary attributes are physical. They have leather armor, shortspear, and short sword or mace, and 1d4cp each.)*

AREA 6: WELL

This room was the well chamber, producing water for the inhabitants of the temple. There was a hole in the roof where buckets could be lowered down into the shaft in the floor, but it was covered up when a wall on the surface collapsed and fell on top of it. The well encasement is still here and fairly intact, though one can no longer draw water from it. A retractable pulley mechanism is still located beside the well. Along the walls are various tubs and buckets, some wood, some metal.

A large spider lives in the well shaft. The goblins occasionally feed it, so when anyone enters the room the spider crawls up the shaft, expecting some corpse or other morsel to chew on. This is a massive wolf-like spider that does not spin webs but leaps in for an attack. The spider has hauled several victims down into the well, and if anyone cares to enter the shaft, he finds mounds of rotting flesh and cracked bones. The goblins pick most of their victims clean before hauling them in here, but the wolf spider has brought a few unwary explorers down into its shaft over the years. In 3–18 rounds of searching the bottom of the well, 25gp, 37sp, a rusted chain hauberk (human sized), and a necklace with gems on it (150gp) are found. This is a demanding task, and should a character undertake it, he risks of contracting a contagion. A constitution check is necessary, and if the character fails, he becomes ill within 24 hours, becoming incapable of moving more than 1/4 normal movement for 2d4 days due to a fever and stomach cramps. Combat and spell casting are impossible during this time, and all other checks are made at –2.

WOLF SPIDER *(This evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 19, AC 14. its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a 1 bite for 1d3 points of damage. They can jumps 30 feet, and their bite delivers poison. A constitution save must be made or the person bitten is paralyzed for 48 hours.)*

AREA 7: MINER'S CHAMBERS

This room once housed two large ogres. The ceiling in here is very high, and several deep alcoves were built in it to make the ogres feel even more at home. The ogres were responsible for construction, mining and related activities.

The rotted and rusted remains of the tools of their craft still remain in the room. There are very large picks, shovels, and hammers heaped up in one corner of the room. Chisels, smaller hammers, and other large-sized stone-working implements are in another. Each of the alcoves contains old and rotted piles of fur and tanned hides. When searched, roaches, mice, spiders, and other vermin scatter. If searched carefully, in one pile the characters find a small bag with 30gp and 50sp in it. The goblins have not bothered searching this room, figuring the tools are useless, or worse, they might be forced to use them in some way.

AREA 8: STOREROOM

At one time this was nothing more than a storeroom for incoming goods. The room is currently used as a loot collection point. Four goblins are in here going through boxes, looking for something to eat, like dried meat or salted fish. There is a large mangy dog with the goblins. The dog is sniffing around some of the crates. Unless the party is sneaking down the corridor, the dog hears them and begins to growl, attracting the attention of the goblins and allowing them to prepare for combat. If the dog is not silenced quickly, it barks and yelps for a bit and then dashes off down the hallway at the far end of the room to its master in Area 9.

The goblins have broken open every box and crate in the room, and there are piles of cloth, rope, beaver pelts, and other odds and ends lying about. Additionally, there are several crates of apples, potatoes, dried beans, and other assorted foodstuffs in the crates. Some salted fish has been found, and the goblins are eating it as if it were their last meal, and perhaps it is.

GOBLINS x4 (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD1d6, HP 4, 4, 5 and 6, AC 12. Their primary attributes are physical. They have leather armor, shortspear, and short sword or mace, and 1d4cp each.*)

DOG (*This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 2, AC 11. Their primary attributes are physical. The bite for 1d4 damage.*)

AREA 9: SCRIPTORIUM

This room was once used as a scriptorium. Commands and edicts from the capitol in Aufstrag were copied and sent on from here. Copious records of all this were also kept. The records were partially destroyed when the temple was abandoned, and most those that remained decayed with time.

This room has three kobolds and their kobold leader, Slissas, in it. They are riffling through the remains of the records, looking for something. Slissas is hoping to find a map of the complex so he can locate treasure rooms, secret passages, or other important material. He cannot read, but knows how to interpret a map. The kobolds generally ignore the ruckus the goblins make and only leave this room if the dog comes in barking. They then head down the hallway to investigate.

The room has several overturned chairs and desks in it and huge wooden cabinets cover the walls. Several of the cabinets are burned. There is an old pile of burned and half-burned material in the center of the room which has moldered with age. The few extant documents remaining in the room have been collected and piled on the floor near the door. A lantern sits nearby these documents. This is where Slissas sits and goes over them.

If the characters investigate the documents, for the most part they find letters and letters and more letters to various lords, dignitaries and others. However, if the characters spend at least 10 minutes going through the papers in the burn pile in the center of the room, they find a *comprehend language* spell written upon a piece of vellum. The magical nature of the vellum prevented it from being burned. If the characters peruse the documents by the door for at least 15 minutes and are careful to examine the documents, they find one that mentions treasure houses along the Blacktooth Ridge. The Blacktooth Ridge is far north of this location and the treasure houses are called the Vargolg and Krekingolg.

KOBOLDS x3 (*These evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 3, 3 and 4, AC 15. Their primary attributes are physical. They have short spears, shield, blow gun and d12 sp each.*)

SLISSAS (*This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d4, HP 7, AC 15. Its primary attributes are physical. It carries chain hauberk, short spear, shield, blow gun, 12 gp and a gem studded necklace worth 50gp.*)

BALEON NAKT

LEVEL TWO

Area 1: Empty Hall This is an abandoned room with nothing in it except a few piles of wood, remains of old chairs, and a broken table. The entire north wall of this room is very unstable and likely to collapse if any weight is placed on it. It was thin to begin with, with only brick and mortar holding it together. Time and water have worn most of the mortar away, making the entire wall little more than a pile of bricks.

If a character slams into this wall, a large portion of it collapses. Anyone within 10 feet receives 2–3 points of damage from falling debris unless a successful dexterity check is made, in which case he takes only half damage. Knocking down the wall reveals Area 2 beyond. Listening at the wall enables characters to hear the noise in Area 2.

AREA 2: MESS

This room was once used as the temple mess. Currently, the goblins also use it as a mess, even though they had no idea of its previous purpose. The central area of the floor in this room is about five feet lower than the walkway around its rim. Columns are located all along the walkway. One stairway at the south end of the room descends into the lowered portion of the room. Two huge cooking pits blazing with fire have pigs on a spit roasting over them. Goblins are sprawled out all over this room, singing songs and dancing their vile dances while imbibing a fairly strong liquor. There are 16 goblins in the room in various stages of inebriation, a gnoll war chief, and the cook.

Each goblin is inebriated and this affects his combat skill and all checks. Randomly subtract 1–3 from all rolls made for the goblins, including the to-hit roll and any attribute checks, though not damage.

The gnoll war chief has not had enough to drink to affect his combat abilities. Immediately upon noticing the characters, he rouses the goblins to attack, but he holds back and throws his daggers. If the battle starts going poorly, he attempts to run away in search of reinforcements. If the battle starts going well, he joins the melee and attempts to subdue as many characters as possible in order to bring them to Gritznak.

There is a head cook in the room. This is a grotesquely fat goblin with globs of flesh swinging and swaying with his every move. He avoids combat if at all possible, and if attacked falls to the greasy floor crying out for his life. He promises the characters anything they want, even telling them where all the other goblins are.

GNOLL WAR CHIEF (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 15, AC 15. Its primary attributes are physical. It carries scalemail, shield, warhammer, shortsword, two daggers, gold earrings x 3 worth 20 gp each, silver nose ring worth 15gp and a gem-studded belt worth 50gp.*)

GOBLINS x16 (*These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD1d6, HP 2, 2, 3 and 4, AC 12. Their primary attributes are physical. They have leather armor, shortspear, and short sword or mace, and 1d4cp each.*)

THE GOBLIN COOK: (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD1d6, HP 2, AC 10. Its primary attributes are physical. It has no equipment.*)

AREAS 3–9: SENTIENT CHAMBERS

This portion of the dungeon emanates evil, and anyone capable of detecting evil recognizes it as such. The temple's "will" is great here. Characters in this area are under a constant strain and suffer a –1 to all checks and combat rolls.

AREA 3: ANTECHAMBER

There is a broad archway leading into this room. There are gold-gilded letters engraved on the arch lintel. It is an intonation written in the ancient tongue of the Horned One, "In one is all." Intoning it prior to entry dispenses with the previously mentioned curse for non-good-aligned characters only. If those of good alignment repeat the passage, they must make a charisma save or suffer 1 point of damage.

This was a waiting room for those wishing to seek an audience with the High Priest. Entering the room gives everyone an eerie feeling, as if something is not yet completed, as if a sentence has been left half finished. This feeling of discomfort fills all the characters. The room has rotted furniture in it. Large chairs, several cabinets, and a large brass bell on a stand are arranged about the room. Ancient scripts are engraved on the walls.

The spirit of the last high priest, Unguath Kine, lingers in these rooms. It is incapable of action, and the characters never directly see it or interact with it, but they always sense that something is watching them, as if from afar.

AREA 4: SPIRIT CHAMBER

This is a cursed chamber. It was once used to call forth or talk to the spirits of the dead. The walls and floor are carved all over with bizarre and ancient scripts. There is also a dead, rotting goblin in the middle of the room. It has obviously lain here for quite some time and is missing huge chunks of flesh.

This room has a pervading sense of evil about it. Upon entering, the glyphs and portions of the script on the walls begin to move. Within three rounds, a figure emerges out of the wall above the entry. It is a ghoul that guards this chamber. It attacks until killed, at which point it begins to dissipate and sinks back into the floor, only to come out again 4d6 rounds later if anyone remains in the room. At the far end of the chamber is a secret door; other than this, there is nothing in the room.

GHOUL (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 14, AC 15. Its primary attributes are physical. A successful hit may cause ghoul fever. It has no equipment or treasure.*)

AREA 5: SECRET CHAMBER

This is a secret chamber once used to store vitally important information and material for rituals. Much if it was taken away when the temple was abandoned. There are a series of old rotting wood shelves cluttered with jars, candle holders, scrolls, ink wells, pens, religious items, and other like paraphernalia. In the center of the room is a tall desk with two chairs by it. This is a scribe's desk. Over the desk, a chandelier (see below) is hanging from the ceiling. It still has the candles in place. There are several items of interest in this room, and at the south end of the north nook is a secret compartment.

Most of the scrolls are blank, or have the beginnings of spells written upon them. Several contain manners of calling forth the spirits of the dead, but they do not work. They are failed experiments. In the mess of the scrolls is one with a *hold person* spell written on it and another with *cause fear* written on it. The desk has old quills and dry ink wells, along with unused vellum, in the drawers, along with three gold-plated rams' horns. These are three holy symbols of the chaotic evil deity the Horned One and worth 60gp, 120gp, and 180gp.

Behind a pile of bottles and decanters filled with viscous materials and dried liquids, is a concealed panel. The panel itself is not trapped, but the interior of the compartment is trapped. There is a latch above the panel and inside the chamber that, when pulled, deactivates the trap. If someone reaches his arm into the chamber without deactivating the trap and lifts the gold statue inside, the trap is triggered, and a guillotine-like blade drops from within. The blade delivers 1d6 damage. If 6 points of damage are delivered, the d6 is rolled again, and if another 6 results, an arm is severed and 12 points of damage are received; otherwise, the second roll is ignored. If a successful dexterity check is made (+2 to this check due to the age of the mechanism), 1/2 damage is received. However, if a 6 is rolled, roll again as before, and instead of the arm being severed, just the fingers are lost. When the trap is released, the chandelier actually jerks up. Close inspection of the chandelier reveals it is not

hooked to the ceiling; rather, the chain goes into the ceiling. The trap is set again by pulling down the chandelier.

Within the compartment is a long white mace with an ebony head (+2 damage vs evil creatures), hidden here awaiting a time to be destroyed, then forgotten; a small golden statue of a tree worth 300gp; and a small sack of clay tablets. There are six small clay tablets about two inches square in the sack. Upon each is a glyph. Each tablet has a special function. When a tablet is thrown to the floor, the following occurs, depending on the tablet.

- 1: **Fire Glyph** – 5-foot-diameter ball of flames shoots up from the shards causing 1d6 damage.
- 2–4: **Ice Glyph** – Cold blast from the shards causes no damage but prevents all in 10-foot cube from taking an action for one round.
- 5: **Death Glyph** – Causes fear to all in a 10 foot radius.
- 6: **Bone glyph** – Breaks a bone of the person nearest the broken shards. Roll d4: 1–right arm, 2–left arm, 3–right leg, 4–left leg.

AREA 6: PRIVATE QUARTERS

This was once the private quarters for the High Priest of Baleon Nakt. Gritznak lives in it now. Several large chairs, a rickety bed, a table with chunks of meat on it, piles of furs, a keg of ale, and three trunks are scattered around the room. There is a large snake hidden in a pile of fur on the floor. There is a broadsword, a spear, a longbow, 40 arrows, and a mace in one corner. None of the trunks are trapped. Two trunks contain clothing and valueless household items like lamps, while the third, which is locked with a padlock, contains 240gp, 380sp, and 7000cp as well as eight gems with a 20–80gp value each.

SNAKE (*This evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 13, AC 15. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with 1 bite for 2d4 points of damage. It is able to constrict. The victim must make a successful strength save or they receive 1d2 points of damage a round and can not act.*)

AREA 7: GUARD'S QUARTERS

This is where Gritznak's kobold guards sleep. Both doors to the room are locked. Seven kobolds are in here at the moment, with their four large pet spiders. The kobolds are wary, having been told by Gritznak to expect visitors. Half-eaten food, moldering hay, and other trash litter the room. The kobolds have no treasure, which is why their leader, Slissas, is off hunting some.

KOBOLDS x7 (*These evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 3, 3 and 4, AC 15. Their primary attributes are physical. They have short spears, shield, blow gun and d12 sp each.*)

SPIDERS x4 (*This evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 2, 3, 3,4, AC 12. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a 1 bite for 1d4 points of damage.*)

AREA 8: SACRIFICIAL CHAMBER

This is the sacrificial chamber where Gritznak, acting through the temple, is attempting to raise the spirit of the last High Priest of Baleon Nakt. Gritznak is here with eight goblin

warriors. Should a fray occur, the temple itself joins in as described below. The room is strangely lit with a bluish haze that emanates from the walls. In the center of the room is a stone dais upon which chains and manacles are piled. In front of this is a stand with a red velvet cloth thrown over it with a large sickle lying on top. The floor is covered with the markings of an ancient script, and a blood-red eye the size of a platter peers from the center of the east wall.

As soon as the characters enter the room, the goblins leap to attack (unless they are in manacles), and Gritznak begins intoning a prayer the temple has taught him. The goblins attempt to subdue the party, or at least one of them, so that a sacrifice can be made. If the attack is going well, Gritznak does not join in the fray; if it is going poorly, the temple causes Gritznak to quit praying and attack. The temple also attacks. The goal is to have at least one character left alive to sacrifice.

If Gritznak survives to perform the final act of the ritual and sacrifices an individual, the raising of the Unguath Kine will have been successful. Area 9 contains details on this matter. The sickle used for the sacrifice is a magical blade that causes +4 damage to all lawful good creatures.

The temple can only help in a few ways. If it still has the ability to create a wall, it does so. The temple can also heal Gritznak once for d6 hit points. As a final act, the temple can summon a *spiritual hammer* that fights for two rounds as a 2nd level fighter and which cannot be destroyed. The power of the temple can be temporarily ended by attacking and destroying the eye on the wall.

GRITZNAK (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 18, AC 17. His primary attributes are physical. He carries chain mail, shield, +1 broadsword, +1 ring of protection, 10pp and a gold necklace worth 100gp.*)

GOBLINS x8 (*These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD1d6, HP 2, 2, 3 and 4, AC 12. Their primary attributes are physical. They have leather armor, shortspear, and short sword or mace, and 1d4cp each.*)

TEMPLE EYE (*This evil creature's vital stats are HD 0, HP 24, AC 10. It has no primary attributes.*)

AREA 9: BURIAL CHAMBER

This is the chamber that housed the body of the last High Priest of Baleon Nakt and other personages of import. Each nook in this chamber contains a single stone sarcophagi, all of which are open. The process of raising the High Priest has been partially successful, however, in a manner the temple had not foreseen. Due to Gritznak's inability to pronounce the words in the incantation properly, all the High Priests in the burial chamber have been raised as skeletons, rather than just raising Unguath Kine as a living, breathing human. Each of the priests was buried with a ceremonial mace, and they now use them in combat. Each mace is inlaid with silver and gold and has a value of 20–120gp each.

The skeleton of Unguath Kine is nearly sentient, but acts as a normal skeleton for combat purposes unless the last sacrifice has been made. In the latter case, the skeleton of Unguath Kine has become sentient and is "growing" back his body. His skeletal

remains then receive 8 more hit points (for a total of 16) and the ability to regenerate at 1 hit point per 24 hours.

If Unguaith Kine is ever hit, he falls to the ground in a clatter of bones. If the blow did not kill the skeleton of the High Priest, he falls anyway, acting as if destroyed. If it kills the skeleton, Unguaith Kine is dead, and the process of resurrection must begin anew. However, if the skeleton is only acting dead; the High Priest will remain in that spot and await a more proper intonation of the resurrection incantation, which the Temple of Baleon Nakt will see to.

Only by looking closely into the eye socket of Unguaith Kine's skull can one perceive the slight flicker of a blue flame in the back of the skull, which indicates the soul or spirit of the skeleton still lives. The only manner to truly destroy the skeleton of Unguaith Kine is to take it (all of it) to a lawful good priest of high standing and have it desecrated or interred in a temple devoted to a lawful good deity.

SKELETONS x 5 (These neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 2, 2, 5, 5 and 6, AC 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They each carry a mace.)

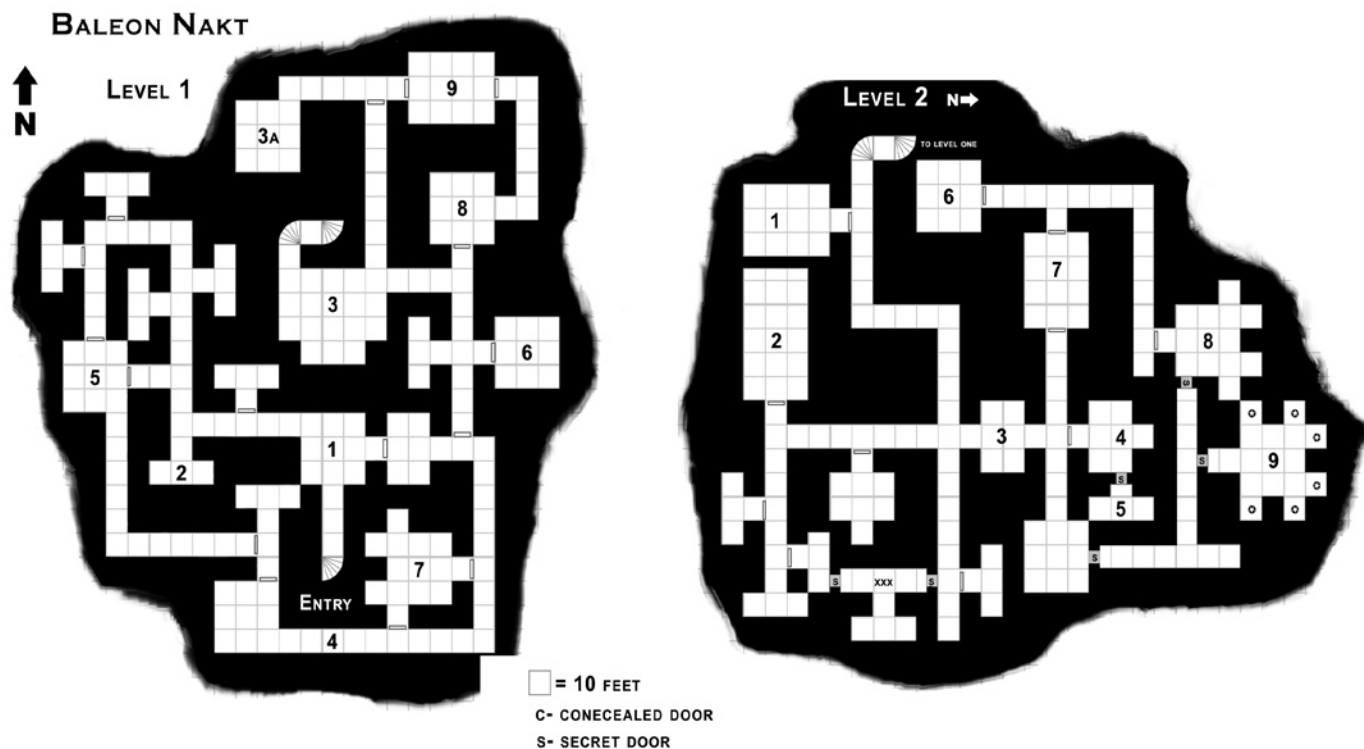
UNGUAITH KINE (This evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 8/16, AC 13. Its primary attributes are both physical and mental. It carries a mace. Special: if in second stage of raising, regenerates at 1 hit point per 24 hours.)

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

Adventures never end, just adventurers. Adventures around Malforten can continue. The Temple of Baleon Nakt may not be completely destroyed and can, in that case, still manifest its will upon the lands about. Perhaps there are deeper levels to the dungeon. Perhaps hidden beneath an illusory floor one can find the dark abode of the temple's heart. Have other more sinister creatures or people heard of Baleon Nakt and traveled here as the adventurers finally confront Gritznak? Do several of the more nefarious inhabitants of Malforten plan on ambushing the characters and claiming the reward for killing Gritznak for themselves? Have the characters angered the fey? Are the evil creatures of the Fallow Hills on the move to fill in a sudden power vacuum in the region? All these avenues can be explored by the characters and the Castle Keeper.

Or, perhaps the characters have found the map to the Blacktooth Ridge and seek the treasures rumored to be buried there? The Blacktooth Ridge lies many miles to the north and one must cross through some fairly dangerous territory to reach it. Unless, of course, the characters travel back to New Aenoch proper and travel through those more populous (though no less deadly) regions.

And what of Kuthrad Ondal? Will the characters discover the secret of this place? Have they met Nefratel? Perhaps someone steeped in elvish lore may, after much exploration and research, discover its meaning and origin. In fact, should such a person travel to the Blacktooth Ridge along the Old Imperial Road, he will end up at the tower on top of Fromkin's Pass. And close inspection of



that tower will reveal its elvish footstones. Then and finally, one might note it lies 150 miles due northwest of Kuthrad Ondal.

NAME LIST

The following list of names are provided for the Castle Keeper should they be needed. There is a naming convention for this region of New Aenoch, though it need not be adhered to; rather it is supplied for reference.

Family names are generally not given to those of low standing. That is, few peasants, craftsmen, farmers and others of low social standing have family names. Family names are accorded to gentry and nobility almost exclusively. The one exception is with merhcants of great wealth and influence. These individuals have begun giving themselves family names to mimic nobility and to thereby confer upon themselves some degree of pedigree.

As for the lower classes, there are many common names for females and males. To differentiate, the practice of giving epithets to individuals has become popular. Hence, names like Eryl the Hoskin and Griffry the Hat. Usually these epithets relate to a town (Eryl the Hoskin is from Hoskin), personal appearance (Griffry the Hat is fond of hats of odd colors, and Kerrywyn the Yellow has yellow hair) or the nature of that person (Walker the Bush has an exceedingly large family tree which he refers to as a bush).

As a matter of technical commentary, the naming convention for this region is Welsh derivative, though people from across Airhde do live here, so this should not be considered exclusive.

Alun	Maddox	Adain	Jane
Alym	Marvin	Amanda	Mairwyn
Arwyn	Merddin	Annwyl	Mega
Brinley	Mervyn	Brangwyn	Meleri
Brinmore	Morvin	Blancefor	Morgana
Cledwyn	Nai	Caron	Myfwany
Daffi	Owain	Cate	Nia
Dillon	Penrod	Ceri	Owena
Edar	Prydwyn	Del	Rachel
Eoin	Reis	Delwyn	Rhianwyn
Galvin	Rhod	Eira	Sarah
Geraint	Rwith	Eirlys	Siana
Gowan	Seren	Enid	Taffine
Hamen	Sionym	Gaenor	Vanora
Hugh	Steven	Glenys	Vivian
Idris	Taff	Hywella	Wynne
Inir	Tewdric	Idella	Ysbail
Jenkin	Trefor	Issolde	
Kane	Tudor		
Kay	Urien		
Llud	Walter		
Lyn	Wyn		

MALFORTEN TO BOTKINBURG MAP

The map on the following page is of the westernmost region of New Aenoch. It shows the location of Malforten and Botkinburg in the "A" series. It also shows the location of several encounter areas: Vargolg, Kruggle's Lair, Kuthrad Ondal, and Baleon Nakt.

NOTES

- West Way:** This is the road from Hruaset to Malforten.
- River Road:** This roadway stretches from about 100 miles north of Hruaset all the way to the sea in the south.
- Barren Track:** This road stretches south from Botkinburg to where it connects with the River Road.
- Hruaset:** This is the largest city in the region. It has a population of nearly 4000 humans. Hruaset is ruled by Duke Huw Bengrisse.
- Elmast:** This is a large town of some 1000 inhabitants. It is ruled by Baron Maugen Lodwick.
- Ludensheim:** This is the northernmost town in this region of New Aenoch. It has a population of 2000 and is ruled by the Baron Dietbold Heimer.





A1: ASSAULT ON BLACKTOOTH RIDGE

This module is designed primarily for adventurers who have just recently begun on their path to glory, wealth, and fame. In all, it should allow characters a safe place from which to begin exploring a dangerous region, accumulate some wealth, some enemies, and even some friends. If properly executed and attention given to small details, it will allow for the development of plots and themes of numerous types and natures, which should engage the characters for several gaming sessions, if not more.

There is an underlying plot and theme for *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge* which allows for an initial adventuring focus and continuation in the next module, *The Slag Heap*. However, this is by no means the only plot or theme in the module. There are numerous monsters, creatures, and non-player characters who have little or no relation to the plot underpinning the adventure. They act of their own accord, usually at odds with others in the setting and tangentially to those related to the plot. Those many persons in Botkinburg and the encounters in the surrounding forest and along the Blacktooth Ridge offer adventures unto themselves; adventures that can lead to further encounters, quests and activities wholly unrelated to the one at hand. Allow the players time to explore these tangents if they desire and develop them as necessary. It matters little if the players stray from the central theme as long as they are having fun. The plots and themes in the adventure should unfold with time and exploration rather than be foisted upon the players. Allow them to discover and explore rather than follow some arbitrary scenario, as this is their tale to weave.

The first part of this module contains a brief history of the region, the underlying plot, and a description of the town of Botkinburg. The second part of the module contains encounters along the Blacktooth Ridge and the dungeon of Vargolg, where a band of goblins have taken up residence. For ease of reference, maps of the region Botkinburg and the dungeons are located on pages 50-51.

This adventure is designed for 3–5 characters of 1st–2nd level, but, should a larger number of characters be participating in the adventure or their average level be much higher than 2nd, the number of creatures encountered in the adventure needs to be increased to better challenge the characters. Encounters can also be augmented by increasing the hit points of various creatures, increasing their armor class, or giving them weapons which do more damage. In general, the challenge level for most attribute checks should be 0 or 1, unless otherwise noted. The challenge level can be increased to 3 if there are a large number of players or higher level characters are being used.

INTRODUCTION

The town of Botkinburg lies far from the settled lands of the south and the fabled Kingdom of Outremere. It sits upon a bend in the Hruesen River in the shadows of the slopes of the rugged hills of the Blacktooth Ridge, in a land known as the Barren Wood. However, it was not always referred to in such dour tones. In happier days this land was a wild, forested country named the Hruesen. The forest was of an exceedingly large expanse and filled with many beasts as well as settlements of man, halfling, and elf. The great ridge offered



hunting aplenty and was called by men the Highlands and by the elves the Avishean Ridge. There was peace in the country and little troubled the folk who lived there. But the world's ages turned, and so with them the fortunes of those in that wondrous wood.

Long ago, beyond the memory of most in the Barren Wood, a power arose in the north and the whole part of the world fell under the rueful eye of a great and evil lord, The Horned One, as he was named. In those days, the Horned One's shadow hung over all the world and he ruled from the great fortress of Aufstrag. When the Horned One first conquered these lands many aeons ago, it was as restless and troublesome as its inhabitants fey of many type and stalwart men of noble bearing did not easily bend to his will. So it was, after many a rebellion and uprising, the Horned One turned his armies loose upon the lands of the Hruesen. A great many orc and goblin issued forth from the foul pits of Aufstrag and laid waste to the lands of the Hruesen, driving the inhabitants south into the sea, enslaving them, or scattering wide the free peoples that had been living there. His evil emptied the forest of its inhabitants and razed all the region's cities and towns.

For centuries after, the woods and vales of the Hruesen lay abandoned and empty. The ridge now stood forth from the wasteland as a great black scar, as the orcs occupied it and made it a fortress of sorts. They tunneled beneath it and built squat towers

upon it. They carted folk to the Ridge as slaves, and there they became lost to memory. The ridge was named anew, the Blacktooth Ridge, as it devoured all that entered it, and the lands about were renamed the Barren Wood, for little remained of that once great forest.

The fortunes of those lands changed only with the passing of that malicious monarch and the dissolution of his kingdom. Aufstrag was made a shell of its former self, if not wholly destroyed, and the evil hosts of the Horned One scattered to the winds. For many years, the lands knew peace, though they never flourished again. The evil which had resided here passed into memory or vanished into the deep recesses of those hills. Thus the world stood for many years.

In time elves, in search of ancient homelands and shrines, and men, in search of fertile and peaceful lands to farm, returned and settled in the Barren Wood; quickly forgetting, or choosing to forget, that each new age fosters new challenges and past evils often haunt the hopes of the future. As the elves and humans returned, so too arrived remnants of the Horned One's armies; for the Blacktooth Ridge lies in the shadow of Aufstrag and the fell pits of that horrid place are a never-ending source of foul creatures hungry for the easy pickings of the world of man and elf. Now many creatures long away from this land find its fresh fields and peaceful inhabitants easy filling for their gluttonous desires.

As for Botkinburg, it was one of many new towns and thorpes that were settled after the fall of the Horned One. Several fishermen, hunters, traders, and foresters, along with their families, founded the village, building near where an ancient stone bridge crossed over the Hruesen River. In those early days, the village consisted of little more than makeshift houses and hovels huddled together along the banks of the river. The settlement became permanent as the clean and meandering Hruesen River proved an abundant source of fish and the pastures about very fertile. Few creatures or maleficent beasts roamed those parts as the town took shape. They named the town Stoneway, and it quickly prospered, attracting more settlers, and later, folk wishing to escape the meaningless wars and petty uprisings in the south and west of the world.

So arrived Clement Botkin, the third in line of a large noble family of Outremere. Clement Botkin chose to make his own way in the world, and after many travails and adventures, arrived in Stoneway, where he decided to retire and claim this place as his own. He brought with him several knights and some soldiery and built a tower in the town. As time passed, the dangers increased, and Clement built a stone wall around his tower and enclosed a wide bailey to protect the villagers in times of war. For two generations, his family provided protection for the village that eventually bore his name. Through his wisdom and strength, Clement kept the town and its folk safe for many years, until time robbed him of both his wits and his son, who died at the hands of orcs while exploring the Blacktooth Ridge.

Clement's grandson, Volkmar Botkin, has now taken the charge in his father's stead as Clement has grown too feeble of mind and body to do more than moan in pain and eat soup. Volkmar, however, has neither the wisdom nor intelligence of his grandfather or father, and so (despite the advice from his loyal servants) has failed to notice and act upon the recent events along the Blacktooth Ridge, events that presage significant trouble for



the people of Botkinburg and the whole of the Barren Wood.

FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

Ludensheim, a town near Botkinburg, has a new ruler, Ritter Diethold Heimer. He likens himself a baron and seeks to acquire an oath of fealty from Volkmar Botkin and to control Botkinburg. Heimer has too few resources to manage this on his own, though, and so has decided to seek help from another source.

Dietbold has concocted a plan to force Volkmar Botkin to come to him for aid. He has offered a notorious band of goblin raiders, the Red Caps (or Rottenkips), gold and a free hand in raiding along the Hruesen River if they focus their raids on Botkinburg. After a time, Dietbold expects Volkmar to come seeking aid to defeat the goblin raiders. In compensation, Dietbold will demand fealty of Volkmar, and once given, end the raiding by paying off the Red Caps. In the meantime, Dietbold, through his agents, is supplying the Red Caps with the information they need to raid and making certain that they do not betray him.

The Red Caps, recognizable by the red skullcaps they all wear, are a large band of goblins who have been raiding wealthier towns and trade routes far to the south of the Blacktooth Ridge for a decade or more. They have a frightful reputation, and their very name strikes fear into the hearts of normal men. They are led by the horrid Grallkrug, or "The Rottenkip," as he is more commonly referred to. Lucky for the inhabitants of Botkinburg, Grallkrug

and the vast majority of his band are not in the vicinity; only his lieutenant Marglerod roams these parts. The Red Caps generally do not raid this far north since they use the Blacktooth Ridge and its many abandoned fortresses and caves as hideouts. For his part, Marglerod has decided Dietbold's offer is too good to pass up and, acting without the permission of Grallkrug, carries out the few raids as "agreed" upon with Dietbold. Of course, Marglerod has his own plan and it does not mesh well with Dietbold's. Marglerod plans on following through with the first part of his deal with Dietbold, but intends to continue raiding to extort more gold from him than had previously been agreed upon. To ensure that Dietbold understands this, Marglerod kidnapped Dietbold's emissary and several of Botkinburg's inhabitants and now holds them for ransom.

Marglerod is aware that his plans are dangerous. He only has a small contingent of raiders with him, and they would not be able to withstand a concerted attack on their dungeon-outpost, so fears retribution by either Dietbold or Volkmar. Further, he has been ordered by Grallkrug to guard their outpost, protect their supplies and treasures, and do nothing to attract the locals' attention. If Marglerod's plans fail, he will be in great danger, but success may elevate Grallkrug's estimation of him.

Further, Marglerod's raiding has encouraged many of the other denizens of the Blacktooth Ridge and beyond to come out of their forts, dungeons, and other hiding places to begin raiding also. Dietbold has, in fact, unleashed through his machinations a horde of problems for the Hruesen River region, and no amount of gold or ransom is going to solve it.

INVOLVING THE CHARACTERS

True adventurers and heroes need little encouragement to travel to unknown lands. The prospect for adventure, glory, or treasure is often more than enough. Blacktooth Ridge offers that and to spare. Rumors and tales of easily acquired treasures buried in abandoned forts and treasure houses along the ridge, as well as monsters and beasts lurking in the vicinity of the ridge causing no end of trial and tribulation for the region's inhabitants, should be invitation enough.

However, this may not be enough to attract the more demanding player. There are several reasons, suggested below, for the adventurers to go to Botkinburg. However, what truly brings an adventurer to this place can only be found in the heart of that player's character and not in the place itself.

- 1: Relatives or friends who live in Botkinburg; perhaps one has died recently.
- 2: The group is traveling to locate a famed soothsayer and learn what fate has in store for them.
- 3: The group has been asked to come to Botkinburg by the town leaders to help in fending off attacks by goblin raiders.

BOTKINBURG

(SEE AREA MAP PAGE 50)

Botkinburg is located deep in the Barren Wood on a rise overlooking a bend in the Hruesen River. Much of the land surrounding the town has been cleared of trees and now serves as pasture and farmland for row crops. A road leads to Botkinburg from the south, and another less-traveled road heads off to the north. The town consists of small wooden and stone houses with thatched and shingled roofs. These are clumped together around a large stone keep located on the highest point of the rise. Botkinburg is mostly inhabited by humans but has a sizable halfling population who live close to one another around several large hills on the west side of the village. They interact freely with the rest of Botkinburg's population, though they are viewed with caution and circumspection by some of the human members of the community.

Botkinburg is not a wealthy community. Its inhabitants are mostly farmers or fishermen, with a few skilled tradesmen amongst them. It is self sufficient, though trades with other communities for rare foodstuffs or manufactured goods in exchange for salted fish, lumber, and dairy products. Every month during the summer an open market is held at the Oak Grove, a sacred place near the town's square. This usually attracts several outsiders pawning their wares. Other than this, most commerce and trade is conducted between families and individuals and is generally in the form of barter rather than with coin. The closest Botkinburg has to a store is the Bent Hook, a local tavern. The proprietor stocks a small amount of items imported from the wealthier communities to the south and north which the locals may find useful.

The days of most in Botkinburg are spent in the pastures, on the river, or in gardens with the crops. The pastures have a mixture of sheep and dairy cattle grazing in them during the day. These are brought in every evening and taken out every morning to the cacophonous sound of cow and sheep bells, bleating sheep, mewing cows, barking herd dogs, and the calls of herdsman. Crops are plentiful and cheaply purchased, as most have full larders.

Most in the community worship at the Chancel, a temple devoted to the many deities who watch over the lands of man and halfling, fertility, herding, or harvest, and the Hruesen River in particular. Rituals and devotionals to the deities are held on numerous occasions and are often accompanied by large communal gatherings during which beer and food are plentiful and served freely. On other occasions, fasting and abstinence are called for. Most of the farmers and fishermen, as well as the halflings, also worship at the Oak Grove, a shrine serving the deities of the sun and moon, plentitude and harvest, and the fairy queen. There are many rituals the people of Botkinburg follow on a daily basis to keep the evil spirits away and to mollify the various fey that still reside in the surrounding forests.

There are roughly 300 people living in Botkinburg, with an additional 50 halflings. Unless noted otherwise, all the human inhabitants of Botkinburg are treated as humans. In times of conflict, a militia can be called up. It consists of nearly 30 adult humans.

HUMANS (*These neutral creature's vital stats are HD1d4, HP 4, AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry clothing and if carrying a weapon they have a knife or handaxe and 1d6cp. Children and young adults have 1–2 hp.*)

HALFLINGS (*These neutral good creature's vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 4, AC 11. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry clothing and if carrying a weapon they have a staff, knife or handaxe.*)

The following are descriptions of the more notable places and people in Botkinburg. This is followed by a rumor table that mixes both truth and fiction.

AREA 1 THE BENT HOOK OR ORTOLF'S HOUSE OF SLUDGE

The Bent Hook, locally known as Ortolf's House of Sludge, is the only tavern in Botkinburg. It is owned (but not operated) by Ortolf Heimpel. His sons and daughters, their spouses, and their children manage the establishment while Ortolf whiles away his few remaining years consuming vast quantities of ale and mutton at a table in the center of the common room. Besides serving large platters of food and dark brews and offering rooms to weary travelers, the Bent Hook serves as the community's gathering place, and, when necessary, Town Hall. It is a popular establishment frequented by most every member of the community, at one time or another, during the week. The Bent Hook is especially crowded when inclement weather makes work in the fields difficult, during festivals, or times of community concern.

The main building is a large, square, two-story establishment with a stone facing on the lower floor and wooden planked facing for the upper floor. The roof is made of red slate, steeply pitched to accommodate heavy snows during winter, and has a cluster of chimneys and heating pipes poking out of it. The rear of the Bent Hook has a single-floored, wood-planked rear attachment that houses the kitchen and storerooms. Behind the tavern is a large yard enclosed by a stout stone wall and fence, with a barn and stables at one end and the Heimpel's house at the other.

The door to the common room is almost always open and, other than in the late hours of the night, one of the many Heimpels are around cleaning, fixing, cooking, sleeping, drinking, or eating, but are always willing to serve a customer. The room is spacious, though the paneling of the interior is so darkly stained from years of collected smoke and grime that it is dark and, without the glow of friendly fires, lanterns, or candles, can be brooding and oppressive. There are many tables and chairs of all shapes and sizes haphazardly scattered about the room and two large stone-faced fireplaces at either end of the room. A staircase leads up to the second floor of the establishment, while two large oaken doors open on to the brewery and the kitchen beyond.

The second floor is a series of rooms for let. The largest is a common room where several coppers gives one a place to sleep on the floor for the evening. During festivals or markets, this room is often full. There are six other rooms for let at 1sp a night, each essentially the same. These rooms contain four large oak beds that nearly fill up the entire space, a single table, and one trunk.

The Bent Hook is also known as Ortolf's House of Sludge due to its dark brown, near-black brew. "Officially," the Heimpels call

the brew Kaiseren Bock or the King's Brew. However, it is of such a dark and viscous nature that it eventually became known as River Sludge, or just Sludge. Other than the "the Sludge," the Bent Hook serves a decent, though local fare. The food consists mostly of take from the river and is served fried, boiled, broiled, stewed, grilled, and even raw. Other meats like beef and poultry are also available, though tend to be more expensive. Locally grown vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, spinach, cabbage and legumes such as pinto beans, lima beans and red beans augment most meals. Supplies of food are plentiful overall and prices cheap. A full meal can cost as little as 1sp, but soups and breads are cheaper, while elaborate meals can cost as much as 1gp. The beer is cheap, costing 5cp a tankard.

The common room is often full and talk is plentiful though mundane. However, of late, there have been several raids by goblins and other more "horrid" creatures who take cattle and burn food stores. These stories are related with much exaggeration and occasional outright fabrication. Talk has just recently been dominated by the disappearance of the Molkin twins, who tend cattle out in the pastures. They have disappeared without a trace, and many claim an evil magic is afoot and the "Wood Witch," an old hag who lives deep in the Barren Wood, has returned.

There are several guests staying at the Bent Hook.

UTHER SHODER (*He is a 3rd level lawful good human knight. His vital stats are HP 15, AC 15. His primes are strength, intelligence, charisma. His attributes are strength 13, dexterity 10, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wisdom 14, charisma 13. He has a riding horse with all the accouterments. He carries a chain coat, shield, helmet, longsword, longsword, halberd, lance, dagger, 125gp, 77sp, and 14pp.*)

Uthar is from a barony to the south and, after having been rebuffed by Volkmar Botkin, is attempting to gather some stalwart men in order to wrest away his inheritance and lands from an uncle whom he claims has illegally taken it. He has two loyal retainers traveling with him. All share one room.

Farank and Helda: These are members of the tinkers, caravan located near the Oak Grove. They just married and are spending their nuptial nights in the Inn. They have a single room.

MALINAMOUS (*He is a 3rd level neutral good human wizard. His vital stats are: HP 8, AC 10. His prime attributes are dexterity, intelligence, wisdom. His attributes are strength 10, dexterity 10, constitution 10, intelligence 17, wisdom 14, charisma 14. He is carrying a spellbook, clothing, 5 daggers, a pouch with spell components, a wand of fire balls with 6 charges. His daily spells are – Zero: dancing lights, detect magic, detect poison, message, 1st: comprehend languages, hold portal, jump, spider climb, 2nd: acid arrow, enhance attribute.*)

This young wizard has traveled here from the west in search of employment or adventure. Having arrived and found the region too dangerous for a lone man to travel in, has decided to bide his time and await more interesting happenings or if traveling companions can be found. He is willing, though reluctant, to head out into the wilderness. He is staying in the common room.

GURDIN (*He is a 3rd level neutral evil dwarf assassin. His vital stats are HP 14, AC14. His prime attributes are Dex, Intelligence. His attributes are Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Intelligence 10, Wis 10, Chr 10. He carries 2 daggers, light crossbow, short sword, leather armor, mason equipment, and 50gp.*)

Gurdin is an agent of Dietbold. This dour old dwarf claims to be here looking for a job as a mason at the fortress. He has tried on several occasions to get work there, but has not been hired on yet. He needs to use the job to gather information on what Volkmar is doing. Once a month he travels to Ludensheim to visit relatives, as he says, but in reality he reports to his superiors there. He would be very interested in what the characters are doing along the Blacktooth Ridge and might be willing to travel with them if they appear to be close to acquiring some information he would rather they did not. He is staying in the common room.

AREA 2 THE KEEP

The Keep is an impressive large square tower with a bartizan at each corner of the roof. The tower is made entirely of stone and has three floors and a cellar beneath it. It is about 50 feet tall at the roof's peak. The Botkin family banner, purple over red with eagle claws, tops the keep and is visible for miles around. There is one entry to the Keep on its west side and facing the river. The large oaken doors to the Keep have a smaller inset door that is usually open and guarded by several men-at-arms.

The Keep houses the Botkin family and all their retainers. Volkmar Botkin and his grandfather Clement are both here. Clement has aged poorly and is little more than a tottering old man on his death bed. Volkmar, young and in the prime of his life, appears eager and willing to engage with the world around him. However, this is an appearance only, for Volkmar is not terribly intelligent, is a poor judge of character, and is more concerned with his pomp and position than with actually performing the duties as the protector of Botkinburg. He is willing to entertain visitors of some renown and listen to stories and tales of evil doings and evil creatures along the Blacktooth Ridge, but considers them to be no more than "the fears of old wives and tales of peasants." He traditionally chooses one day a month where the locals can come to him to settle disputes, an act which he takes great pleasure in.

Volkmar's attitude has angered Clement Botkin's longtime ally and friend, Aldadius Mastinfelderin, a wizard of some repute. However, out of loyalty to the dying Clement, Aldadius keeps his thoughts and advice to himself, only awaiting Clement's death to assert his power in the Keep. He also maintains his distance from the inhabitants of Botkinburg, considering them little more than subjects. He is willing to take on any apprentice if he appears well disciplined and highly motivated to learn and work.

The Botkins' extended family also lives within the Keep. Volkmar's wife Inelda, unhappy to be in so desolate a region, is desperate to leave. Volkmar's uncle Frekin, who lost an arm long ago in battle with an orc, is now in charge of the Keep's soldiery. Young Thadius Seedmayer, Volkmar's first cousin, and an honorable knight, believes his talents and calling are for fields greater than Botkinburg. There are 10 well armed men-at-arms and a sergeant-at-arms who live here as well. There are others, each with their own particular and

peculiar habits and desires. Many get along well with the locals, but several chafe at such a rustic lifestyle and pine for the lands of the south where royalty is well treated and shown greater respect.

Within the bowels of the cellar there is a secret chamber housing Clement Botkin's vast treasures. Neither Volkmar Botkin nor any of the family know of its location, as Clement only departed that to Aldadius. Aldadius is not revealing the location of the treasury, as he fears it will be squandered. The treasury contains 400gp, 1600gp, 4000sp, and 7000cp. Additionally, there are gems valued at 4000gp and jewelry valued at 2000gp. There are 10 arcane scrolls (random spells), 15 divine scrolls (random spells), a wand of magic missiles [30 charges], a set of +3 chain, a +2 halberd, and a +3 short bow with 15 +1 arrows.

VOLKMAR (*He is a 4th level chaotic neutral human fighter. His vital stats are HP 27, AC 15. His primes are strength, dexterity, constitution. His attributes are strength 7, dexterity 5, constitution 10, intelligence 8, wisdom 9, charisma 10. He is carrying banded mail, large shield, long bow, +2 battle axe and a ring of fire resistance.*)

THADIUS (*He is a 5th level lawful neutral human knight. His vital stats are HP 36, AC 19. His primes are strength, wisdom, charisma. His attributes are strength 16, dexterity 10, constitution 14, intelligence 10, wisdom 10, charisma 10. He carries +2 splint mail, large shield, +1 longsword, helm of arrow deflection giving him a +2 vs missile weapons, lance, light war horse named Hammerhoof, and a +2 ring of magic resistance vs arcane magical effects.* **WARHORSE, HAMMERHOOF**, HD 3d10, HP 17, AC 13. Her prime attribute is physical. She attacks with two hoofs 1d4+2 and a bite 1d4.)

FREKIN (*He is a 6th level chaotic neutral fighter. His vital stats are: HP 43, AC 18. His primes are strength, dexterity, constitution. His attributes are strength 15, dexterity 13, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wisdom 14, charisma 11. He has a riding horse with all the accouterments. He carries a chain coat, shield of blows which confers a +2 to armor class and absorbs one point of damage each round, helmet, longsword, spear, dagger. All Frekin's dexterity attribute checks are made at -2.*)

ALDADIUS (*He is an 8th level lawful neutral wizard. His vital stats are HP 22, AC 16. His primes are constitution, intelligence, wisdom. His attributes are strength 14, dexterity 10, constitution 13, intelligence 16, wisdom 10, charisma 10. He carries a ring of protection +3, padded armor, cloak of displacement, 3 +1 daggers, wand of fireballs with 16 charges. His daily spells are: Zero – endure elements, ghost sound, light, mage hand, message; 1st – alter size, charm person, change self, shield, shocking grasp; 2nd – detect thoughts, fog cloud, levitate, scare; 3rd – blink, dispel magic, stinking cloud; 4th – detect scrying, wall of fire.*)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS (*He is a 3rd level chaotic neutral human fighter. His vital stats are: HP 21, AC 18. His primes are strength, dexterity, constitution. His attributes are strength 14, dexterity 10, constitution 13, Intelligence 10, wisdom 10, charisma 10. He carries banded mail, large shield, long bow, battle axe and has 14 gp.*)

10 MEN-AT-ARMS (*Their vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 14, neutral good. Their primary attributes are physical. They are carrying studded leather, large shield, short bow, battle axe.*)

AREA 3 THE CHANCEL

This is a temple where the many gods, whom the locals worship, are paid homage to. It is a large wooden structure with several floors and two tall, thin towers rising from its center. Most of the inhabitants have helped construct one portion or another of this temple, and the town considers it, collectively, their own. The Chancel is overseen by Hermannus Tersteeg and his followers.

Hermannus is middle aged and getting plump. After having studied in the great Chancels of the south, Hermannus plunged into the northlands to locate a good place to build a new temple. After many adventures and escapades for which he is locally famous, Hermannus decided to settle in Botkinburg and offer his services to the community. He is well liked and much more respected than Volkmar Botkin. He keeps his personal affairs to himself but is very kind and giving to the locals. After settling in, Hermannus became quite comfortable with his position and the Chancel itself. He put on some weight, grew a beard, and relaxed in his new-found and peaceful life. However, troubling portents have, of late, caused him much consternation. Hermannus is tense and spends a great deal of time at the altar trying to divine the future of Botkinburg or disavow what is stirring in the lands about. All to no avail.

Hermannus does not travel outside of Botkinburg to help the characters unless they happen to be on the route to one of the three neighboring villages which he visits once a month or so. He has, after settling in, become somewhat cowardly and fearful for his life. As such, he chooses not to spend it frivolously and rationalizes this decision by claiming the town depends on him too much for his life to be spent cheaply.

There are three other priests living in the Chancel. Two arrived in the past year, Dionijs and Bertis. Both came in search of Hermannus, whose fame in the south has only grown with his absence. The other, Maik Felder, is the son of a local farmer, Steffan Felder.

Dionijs sincerely likes Hermannus and admires him. The same is true of Maik. Both are often seen with Hermannus, though rarely with one another as Dionijs finds Maik too rustic, while Maik finds Dionijs too sleek and civilized to be trusted. Bertis seems to get on well with both of them.

However, Bertis finds Hermannus to have grown weak and chafes at his manners. And, though seemingly friendly with Dionijs and Maik, he believes neither are worthy enough to wear the vestments of the Chancel. The lack of fulfillment at the Chancel in Botkinburg has led Bertis to seek wisdom elsewhere. For some time, Bertis has been making trips to Ludensheim to visit the Chancel there. He has fallen under the influence of Imgard Pifnor, the High Priest at Ludensheim to whom he tells of the happenings at the Chancel.

The treasury for the Chancel is in the basement behind a secret door in Hermannus' room. It contains numerous gold objects and vestments worth 1000gp. There is also a chest with years' worth of collections in it. There are 250gp, 500sp, and 1000cp locked in it. This is also where Hermannus keeps his valuables and accouterments of war – +2 banded mail, shield, +2 footman's flail, battle tabard and helmet, nine scrolls: 3x cure light wounds, 2x delay poison, remove paralysis, prayer, continual flame, and aid, a ring of protection from evil and his personal holdings of 150gp, 200sp, 400cp.

HERMANNUS TERSTEEG (He is a 6th level neutral good human cleric. His vital stats are HP 35, AC 20. His primes are strength, constitution, wisdom. His attributes are strength 10, dexterity 13, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wisdom 16, charisma 10. He carries clothing and vestments. His daily spells are – Zero: create water, detect magic, detect poison, first Aid x 2, purify food and drink; 1st: bless water, command, cure light wounds x 2; 2nd: augury, delay poison, hold person, lesser restoration; 3rd: create food and water, remove disease.)

DIONIJS (He is a 2nd level neutral human cleric. His vital stats are HP 10, AC 15. His primes are dexterity, wisdom, charisma. His attributes are strength 10, dexterity 10, constitution 13, intelligence 13, wisdom 10, charisma 10. He carries scale shirt, shield, mace, spear, 1 cure light wounds scroll, 14gp, 28sp and 40cp. His daily spells are – Zero: create water, detect poison, first aid, light; 1st: command, sanctuary.)

BERTIS (He is a 1st level chaotic neutral human cleric. His vital stats are HP 6, AC 12. His primes are strength, wisdom, charisma. His attributes are strength 15, dexterity 10, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wisdom 15, charisma 10. He carries padded armor, shield, mace, 10gp, 46sp and 92cp. His daily spells are – Zero: detect law, detect poison, purify food and drink; 1st: cure light wounds, protection from law.)

MAIK FELDER (He is a 3rd level chaotic neutral human cleric. His vital stats are HP 14, AC 16. His primes are intelligence, wisdom, charisma. His attributes are strength 14, dexterity 10, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wisdom 16, charisma 13. He carries ringmail, large shield, footman's flail, 6gp, 13sp and 24cp. His daily spells are – Zero: detect magic, endure elements, first aid, light; 1st: bless, bless water, shield of faith; 2nd: aid, augury.)

AREA 4 THE OAK GROVE AND SHRINE

Off the town square is a wide and shallow sloping hill upon the top of which is a tremendous oak. The ground about the base of the hill is well worn and dusty from many years of use during festivals and markets. The upper portion of the hill is covered in thick and verdant green grass and flowers, all year round, despite any weather. The oak is likewise festooned with bright green leaves year round.

The Great Oak is a holy place where many come to offer worship to the deities of the sun, moon, and harvest. There is no cleric or druid who watches over the tree, but many travel to Botkinburg to worship here. The Great Oak is covered in many glyphs that have been seared into its bark. They were placed there by the servants of Mordius, the Lady of the Forests, many centuries ago when the tree acted as a receptacle for the deity's will.

The tree itself is sentient and capable of movement and action, though it has not moved in well over two centuries. No one in Botkinburg is aware of this, but the fey who live in the surrounding wood are, and when occasion permits, come to the tree and lay offerings at its roots. The tree does not react, or come to life, unless attacked.

TREANT (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 9d10, AC 20. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with tendril-like branches, grappling for 2d8 points of damage. It can conduct four such attacks per round. This treant has a permanent protection from evil spell cast on it and can regenerate 3 hp a round.)

30 CASTLES & CRUSADES

AREA 5 TINKERS' CARAVAN

The area at the base of the hill on the Oak Grove is used as the town market or gathering place for festivals. There are three wagons drawn up and several families of tinkers here now. They travel far and wide through the region and collect and sell all manner of items. For any item requested which costs less than 25gp, there is a 50% chance it is in their supplies. There is approximately 1000gp worth of material in the wagons. For items over 25gp, there is a 10% chance they will have it.

There are three women, five men and four children in this group including the two recently married who are staying in the Bent Hook. The tinkers are led by the wily Garfeld, an experienced tradesman with a good eye for a deal and a steal.

GARFELD (He is a 4th level chaotic neutral human rogue. His vital stats are: HP 15, AC 14. His primes are dexterity, intelligence, charisma. His attributes are strength 10, dexterity 16, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wisdom 10, charisma 14. He carries +2 leather armor and a +1 short sword.)

AREA 6 HOUSE OF D'AMTER

This is the home of Lars and Gisela Haffner, devotees to the deity of healing and curing. They live in a large single-story, wood-framed house with an attached barn. Above the front door is a lintel with a carving of an owl and an inscription on it, "With my hands, I bring life." A small smokehouse is located in their backyard, along with several milk cows. Their dog, a large white mastiff, lingers in front of the house and barks loudly when anyone approaches.

Lars is an older man, stooped and bent, with a long white beard and skin wrinkled and cracked with age. He is a cleric but has devoted his entire life to healing and has never laid a hand on anyone in violence, and does not intend to do so. His wife, Gisela, is an accomplished herbalist and knows much about curing the ill and wounded, and helps Lars in his duties. Their services are ostensibly free. Yet, there is an understanding between those in the community and the Haffners. They are "paid" in service or offered 'gifts' of food. Further, whenever the Haffners need something, generally all they have to do is ask for it and they receive it. Though not greedy, Lars and Gisela do expect some compensation and from more powerful individuals, they expect service of some kind. He is not afraid to mention his need for rare herbs, animal parts, or similar items. One object of particular interest to him is the feather of an oslen owl, a rare species of fowl who lived in the Barren Wood ages ago. Upon acquiring this feather, Lars gains one point of wisdom as a gift from the deity of healing.

The Haffners have acquired some wealth through the years. In a jar in their attic they have 12pp, 67gp, 156 sp; and in their bedroom they have 13sp and 211cp. Also, in their basement they have numerous herbs and some medical equipment that healers and rangers might find useful. They are willing to sell or trade them.

LARS HAFNER (He is a 2nd level lawful good human cleric. His vital stats are HP 7, AC 11. His primes are intelligence, wisdom, charisma. His abilities are strength 10, dexterity 10, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wisdom 10, charisma 16. He carries padded armor, a war hammer, 2pp and 4gp. His daily spells are – Zero: create water, detect poison, first aid x 2; 1st: cure light wounds x 2.)

AREA 7 BUTCHER SHODFOOT

Tirten Shodfoot is the only dwarf of permanent residence in Botkinburg. Long ostracized from his kin in the Aneer'rafe Hills for theft, he came to Botkinburg to avoid contact with other dwarves. In this, he has been fairly successful. He took up butchery. He is of very ill temperament, treating other dwarves especially poorly, but performs his tasks dutifully and with great professionalism yet with grumbles and complaints all the while.

Tirten seeks to redeem himself at this point in his life but sees little opportunity to do so in this remote and "honorless" land. The arrival of the characters is viewed as a potential boon to Tirten, as they may offer an opportunity for him to travel and face down many a foe. If the party appears to be honorable rather than greedy, he may offer his service to them.

TIRTEN (He is a 3rd level chaotic neutral dwarf barbarian. His vital stats are HP 20, AC 17. His primes are strength and constitution. His abilities are strength 15, dexterity 10, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wisdom 10, charisma 10. He carries a breast plate, shield, +1 battle axe, gloves of ogre strength that confers 18 strength when they are worn, 120gp and 300sp.)

AREA 8 SCHULER'S TWO STORY FARMHOUSE

This is the home of the Schulers. Fritz and his wife Lisa live here with their six children, all of whom are under the age of 15. Fritz has a large two-story, wood-framed house and barn. The family lives on the upper floor, with the lower floor acting as a barn. Fritz is an affable person, but his wife is more like a shrew, constantly complaining about Fritz's laziness.

She is, to some degree, accurate in her assessment of Fritz. He works as little as possible, bartering away a great deal of beef every year to the Bent Hook in exchange for beer, which he drinks to excess. Lisa has long grown tired of her husband's indolent ways and has begun to think of doing away with him. To this effect, she visits the Witch of the Wood (see below) on occasion in an effort to purchase small amounts of poison, with which she can slowly kill her husband. Lisa has secreted away several coins over the years, and hides them in a clay jug in the rafters of the lower floor of the house (48 cp, 22 el, 12 sp, 2gp).

AREA 9 MEEKAL'S FARM HOUSE

A dairy farmer lives here. He and his only son spend much time hunting for food, while the wife spends most of her time tending to the few cows they have. Eggar and Meekal know the woods west of Botkinburg fairly well and are somewhat familiar with the Blacktooth Ridge, though they rarely go that direction as "there are more than just animals along that ridge; there are evil things a'flittin' about now." The family has secreted away a little gold for hard times. They have 22gp, 72sp, and 124cp in a sack beneath a loose plank in their house.

Meekal is bored with his life as a farmer and hunter and can easily be convinced to adventure along the Blacktooth Ridge. However, once he has had a taste of battle, he is likely to decide farming is the life for him unless convinced otherwise.

MEEKAL, HUMAN (His vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 13, neutral good. His prime attribute is mental. He carries a hide jerkin, longbow and a dagger. Meekal can track as a 2nd level ranger.)

AREA 10 OLD MAN NESTER'S

Nester is one of the few remaining inhabitants of Botkinburg who can remember when the town was first being settled. He is in his late 90s and usually sits on the front porch of his house, whittling away at a stick. He is still spry enough to tend his chickens and gather some food, but mostly his neighbors care for him, ensuring he is well fed and has enough firewood during the winter. If Nester is not on his front porch or in his house, he is likely at the Chancel praying, resting, or chatting with Hermannus; or at the Bent Hook drinking sludge.

Nester is an endless source of information about the region and its history. Though he often elaborates and creates tales, they are sprinkled with enough fact to make sitting with him worth any curious character's time. He can explain who the Horned One was and what he did; he knows of the Blacktooth Ridge and correctly points out that new arrivals are coming into the region. He is aware that fey live nearby, and he always, without fail, leaves a little something on his stoop once a week for them. He warns others to do the same, lest they attract the ire of the wee folk.

AREA 11 SHERIFF AARON VON BEDERING

This is the office of the sheriff and jail. It is a small wooden structure with several cells along its backside. The current sheriff, Aaron von Bedering, spends most of the day here but lives on the outskirts of the town. Should he ever need help in catching or watching wrongdoers, two of the militiamen, Weslin and Erhardt, accompany him. He is empowered to get more from militia members if need requires it.

The Botkins appoint a sheriff for Botkinburg who acts as their representative and has the authority to arrest and execute people he considers to have committed a crime. Traditionally, the sheriff sits on the council with the head of the Chancel and a member of the Botkin family in order to determine someone's innocence or guilt. However, of late, Hermannus has been sending Bertis to act in his stead. It is rare that anything happens in the village of much import. Occasionally, someone steals something or a fight breaks out, but this is usually handled by those involved. Mostly the sheriff spends his time at the Bent Hook.

Erhardt, one of Aaron's helpers, is a member of a secretive order of woodsmen of holy lineage, the Guardians of the Tree. This group is devoted to hunting down and locating any remnants of the Horned One's agents. Erhardt is here because of persistent rumors of an ancient and rising evil along the Blacktooth Ridge. When occasion permits, he travels to the Blacktooth Ridge region, trying to discover the nature of the threat now rising. He would be very interested in any information the characters may have on Blacktooth Ridge.

AARON VON BEDERING (*He is a 2nd level chaotic neutral human fighter. His vital stats are HP 12, AC 14. His primes are strength, constitution, intelligence. His abilities are strength 10, dexterity 10, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wisdom 10, charisma 10. He carries a chain shirt, club, battle axe, small pouch with 4gp and 32sp.*)

ERHARDT (*He is a 5th level neutral good human ranger. His vital stats are HP 29, AC 18. His primes are strength, dexterity, wisdom. His abilities are strength 10, dexterity 16, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wisdom 10, charisma 10. He carries +3 studded leather, shortsword of slicing which gives the wielder a +2 to damage, clothing, 34gp, 67sp.*)

AREA 12 FARRIER GREDEN MERKMEN

Greden Merkmén hunts the entire range of the Hruesen River, looking for beaver, fox, or other animals whose hides bring a fair value in Ludensheim or Botkinburg. He is a quiet man and keeps to himself and as such, has earned the distrust of his neighbors and fellow townspeople. Greden shares some of his knowledge of the river and the Blacktooth Ridge if pressed or if the characters manage to befriend him.

Greden is the only member of a society of River Wardens who have returned to the region in the past several decades. Sent here in search of the remnants of the Horned One's minions, they remain incognito to protect themselves, as they are weak at the moment. Greden follows the characters once or twice into the forests near Botkinburg to determine what they are up to, but will not intercede on their behalf should they get in trouble. If the characters appear to be of good alignment and concerned about the depredations of evil creatures, he might help them out by supplying them with information. Should a ranger of good alignment be amongst the characters, Greden offers to train him or her.

GREDEN (*His is a 6th level chaotic good human ranger. His vital stats are HP 39, AC 17. His primes are strength, dexterity, constitution. His abilities are strength 14, dexterity 16, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wisdom 10, charisma 10. He carries a +2 longsword, +2 leather, 2 potions of healing, shield, longbow, pack, hunting gear, 25gp, and has 15 gems worth 10–16gp each buried in his yard.*)

AREA 13 BLACKSMITH VELDENMAN

Darmek Veldenman is a general-purpose blacksmith and not highly trained in weapons making or armor repair. He has several longswords he made, but they are of such poor quality that they have a –1 damage modifier. He can do general repairs and maintenance on weapons and armor, and only charges 10% the value of the item. He is capable of making all manner of other goods commonly found in farming communities, though.

AREA 14 THE WOODSMEN KRIEGER

This rambling house and series of sheds belong to six brothers who are carpenters and woodsmen. They are a jovial lot who drink too much and work too little. None of them farm and only exchange firewood, cut wood, and services for food or other needs. They are often found at Ortolf's House of Sludge drinking long into the evening.

The Krieger brothers have on occasion gone deep into the woods east of the river in search of hidden temples, abandoned forts, or anything else that may contain lost treasures, hoping to make a life's living in one fell swoop. Having failed, all of the brothers are eager to hire on for ventures along the Blacktooth Ridge or elsewhere, though they agree to do so only if all six can go. They also require a significant share of the loot, should any be acquired.

THE BROTHERS, HUMAN (*Their vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 2, 3, 3, 3, 4, 5, AC 12, neutral good. Their prime attributes are physical. They carry leather hauberk, woodsman axe and dagger.*)

AREA 15 FARMER VON STOCK

This family spends most of their time working the garden in the rear of their house and tending several milk cows. They have been

here for several generations. The father is not fond of strangers and tries not to have dealings with them. His son and daughter both work in the Keep as cooks part of each day.

The head of the household, Mertin von Stock, had a rather nefarious past as a highwayman. In his youth, he robbed innumerable travelers and accumulated a hefty amount of loot before giving up that rather dangerous career. He settled in Botkinburg and married about 15 years ago and has managed to keep his identity a secret. His wife died after the birth of their second child. He is getting on in years and has only recently begun to hint as to his adventures as a youth. He would consider taking on and departing his skills to someone who shows the right amount of respect and interest in his abilities. Mertin keeps his remaining treasure buried under an old barrel in his barn (280 gp, 320sp) and his most valuable personal possessions locked in a chest at the foot of his bed.

MERTIN VON STOCK (*He is a 5th level chaotic neutral human rogue. His vital stats are HP 28, AC 13. His primes are dexterity, constitution, intelligence. His abilities are strength 10, dexterity 14, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wis 10, charisma 10. He carries leather armor, light crossbow, daggers, shortsword +2, ring of silent movement that imparts +2 to all move silent checks.*)

AREA 16 FARMER KELLER

This narrow two-story building is home to a friendly and affable family of 10. Well fed, the Kellers have several dozen dairy cows. Much of their time is spent milking the cows and preparing cheeses, which they sell locally and send to markets in larger cities once every three months. Lately, the roads have become unsafe and journeys often postponed or abandoned. They have accumulated a small sum of coin kept in a jar on a rafter in the father's bedroom (22 gp, 76 sp, 321cp). They usually hire several people to travel with them to Ludensheim during the winter when the roads are rarely traveled, poorly guarded, or intermittently patrolled.

AREA 17 FISHERMAN & DAUGHTERS

This fisherman lives with his two surviving daughters. He rarely fishes and spends most of his time at the bar drinking away his daughters' catch. The daughters, Gisella and Nina, are very familiar with the river and truly dislike their father. Gisella has decided to leave and go to live with the witch in the woods, with whom she is familiar. Nina is somewhat of a troublemaker in town and pilfers occasionally, is usually from travelers and visitors who drink too much at the House of Sludge. They have gathered a little sum of booty over the years and have hidden it in a clay jar in the outhouse (2pp, 31gp, 41sp, 67cp, brooch (30gp), 2x rings (20gp and 30 gp)).

GISELLA (*She is a 1st level chaotic neutral human cleric. Her vital stats are: HP 5, AC 11. Her primes are strength, wisdom, Charisma. Her abilities are strength 10, dexterity 15, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wisdom 10, charisma 14. She carries a wooden holy symbol and a cudgel. Her daily spells are – Zero: detect poison, endure elements, light; 1st: command.*)

NINA (*She is a 2nd level neutral evil human rogue. Her vital stats are: HP 6, AC 16. Her primes are dexterity, intelligence, charisma. Her abilities are strength 7, dexterity 16, constitution 8, intelligence 10, wisdom 10, charisma 16. She carries a dagger and leather armor.*)

AREA 18 FISHERMAN HORFANE

The house of Grunald Horfane hangs halfway into the water. He has a boat attached to his windowsill and spends most of his time on his front porch, the only part still out of the water. The house was built some time ago on the side of a steep hill on the banks of the Hruesen River. Over time it has slowly slid halfway into the water. Oblivious to the eventual collapse of his house, Grunald continues living here, often fishing from atop his roof.

Grunald has a secret. A neryad lives in the waters beneath his sinking house. She comes up through a hole in the floor and, on dark nights, spends time talking with Grunald. He has, of course, become enamored of this being and waits eagerly for her arrival every night. If the characters befriend Grunald, in time, he may reveal the presence of the neryad, and she may also find the party agreeable. If so, she can fairly well ensure the characters' safe travel up and down the Hruesen River.

GRUNALD, HUMAN (*His vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 4, chaotic neutral. His prime attribute is physical. He carries fishing spear and a ring of water breathing. He has 10gp in a jar in the water.*)

NERYAD (*Her vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 19, AC 15, neutral. She is able to control the weather in her immediate environment, not more than 40' by 40'. She can, for instance keep the morning's mist from dissipating until late in the day. She possesses an uncanny beauty, and there are hidden melodies in her voice that allows her to charm as per the charm spell three times per day. If threatened she lures her charmed victim into the water and throttles him.*)

AREA 19 BOAT RAMP

This was once a wooden bridge; its remnants jut out into the river about 15 feet. Many of the fishermen gather here in the morning and afternoon before and after fishing. They discuss the day's catch, mend nets, and sell fish.

BAFLER HILL, THE HALFLING QUARTER

The halfling quarter of town, the "Burrows," as the humans call it, is located on the north side of Botkinburg on the slope of a hill overlooking the Hruesen River. Halflings began moving into town several decades ago as rumor of its peaceful nature and distance from warring lords in the south made it sound ideal for comfortable and calm lives. They are successful farmers and sheep herders, and have supplied Botkinburg with much needed skills in the few years they have been here.

The halflings are very diligent and work hard most of the time. They are very successful farmers and craftspeople, actually outproducing most of the human farmers and craftsmen in both quantity and quality. Although the halflings get along well with most members of the community, some humans are envious of the wealth the halflings brought with them and have accumulated, and heap scorn on them for their work habits. Some even say they use magic or are in cahoots with the fey in the region.

Though the halflings adhere to age-old traditions of offering foods, wines, and trinkets to the fey every week, few are in contact with any of the fairies that live in the Barren Wood. "A pie on the

porch is better than a sty in the eye,” they are want to say. But their wealth comes not from magic, but rather from hard work.

The halfling community, through its extensive contacts with relatives from all over the region, is also much better informed about events outside of Botkinburg than are most others. They willingly share this information, and are not averse to using it to their advantage when trading and selling items of value.

The halflings usually worship at the Great Oak but occasionally the Chancel as well. They are not typically involved with town affairs, though a good 10 members of the militia are halflings, and in times of stress, energetically offer their services to the Baron.

AREA 20 THE SWILLING SWAN

The Swilling Swan is a small brew house and bar built into the side of Bafler Hill. It is almost exclusively frequented by the halflings in Botkinburg, as it is built only to accommodate people of their size. However, some of the humans do gather outside at several tables to partake of the good halfling wines the brew master concocts.

This is usually a jovial place as the owner, Megarin Paracook, does this for fun rather than for a living. Having some experience at a winery, when Megarin arrived, he immediately started gathering local berries and set about making wines. All his wines are seasonal, and he often runs short, as he does not collect enough ingredients to make enough wine to last the season. When he does have the wine, though, he sells it very cheaply and offers it for parties, gatherings, and other social occasions.

Megarin lives nearby with a large family of nine. They spend much of the year tending their crops and raising sheep. Two of Megarin's children, Namel and Mose, are adventurous sorts and have traveled far and wide in the Barren Wood. They have been to Fromkin's Pass. Being curious sorts, these two brothers have also struck up a friendship with several pixies who wander the Barren Wood and who, they meet occasionally to enjoy Megarin's wine or even help the pixies plan pranks and enact devilish, though never harmful, deeds upon Botkinburg's inhabitants.

NAMEL (He is a 2nd level neutral halfling ranger. His vital stats are HP 14, AC 14. His primes are strength, dexterity. His abilities are strength 10, dexterity 16, constitution 14, intelligence 10, wisdom 10, charisma 16. He carries a short sword, sling and leather armor.)

MOSE (He is a 3rd level neutral halfling rogue. His vital stats are:HP 12, AC 14. His primes are dexterity, constitution. His abilities are strength 10, dexterity 16, constitution 10, intelligence 13, wisdom 10, charisma 10. He carries thieves tools, 2 daggers, shortbow, leather armor.)

AREA 21 CARPENTER NEEDLEMIRE

This is the home of the halfling Befren Needlemire, a carpenter by trade and farmer by necessity. Having come here several years ago expecting to set up shop and earn a living doing carpentry in what appeared to be a growing community, Befren quickly realized that his skills were not in great demand. He makes a passable living, but only by supplementing his income by farming. He and his two older sons are familiar with the construction of traditional halfling

homes and quite eagerly look forward to building a new structure on Bafler Hill. His wife and four daughters mostly work around the house with the animals and in the fields.

Befren's youngest son, Millipen, is a curious sort who is desirous of travel though reluctant to actually manage it himself. He is well versed in the tales and traditions of the region as his father has seen to his education. He has become quite a decent speaker and storyteller, bedazzling those at both the Swilling Swan and the House of Sludge. If properly enticed, Millipen may be willing to go along on a “grand adventure.”

MILLIPEN (He is a 1st level neutral good halfling bard. His vital stats are HP 7, AC 13. His primes are dexterity, charisma. His abilities are strength 10, dexterity 16, constitution 10, intelligence 13, wisdom 10, charisma 15. He carries a dagger, shortbow and padded armor.)

AREA 22 FARMER HALE

Edward Hale raises a few cattle but mostly tends to a large variety of crops in an expansive garden. He has a family of eight and lives in a two-story, wood-framed farmhouse. Part of the first floor is reserved for a barn.

One of his sons, Jared “the Spleen” Hale, has become a near professional hunter and brings in game quite often to supplement his family's resources. He sells the excess at the Bent Hook and the Swilling Swan and during the summer at the Oak Grove. He knows the surrounding area fairly well and has stumbled upon a secluded well-head that he claims was guarded by a magical dryad. He named it the Fount of Hope, saying that waters could heal. He stumbled upon it many years ago, but has not been able to retrace his steps to it.

AREA 23 FISHERMAN ELDEN'S WIFE

This halfling family lives in a small burrow located on top of the hill. Their home is warm and cozy, filled with old furniture and many rugs and carpets. Mrs. Mar Elden, “Mrs. Elden if you please,” runs the household. Her husband drowned in the river some years ago, a happenstance she talks about constantly, particularly at the Swilling Swan, where she spends a good deal of time tipping back mugs of brew. The whole family is a fairly gregarious bunch and eagerly gather for family feasts in which friends or new acquaintances are invited. They enjoy tales of high adventures and exciting escapades. The older of the children looks forward to some traveling and a life of adventure.

AREA 24 FARMER FRIZZYFOOT

The Frizzyfoots, another of the halfling farm families in town, are an exception to the general industriousness of that community. This man, Barstow Frizzyfoot, has many children and a large wife whom he calls “B.T.” The name has taken over the years so that few but herself know her real name, and most everybody, including her children, call her “BT, or sometimes Betty.” Barstow has never revealed what the initials stand for, though he is often found in the Swilling Swan drinking brew and laughing to himself, all the while muttering “B.T.” over and again. They constantly bicker and fight about what a poor job one another does in raising the children,

and their screaming can be heard far down the banks of the river. For their part, the children run about the fields half dressed and poorly fed, rarely attended to. They are frequently in trouble with the town Elders for petty crimes such as theft and vandalism.

AREA 25 FARMER SHIPP

This family of halfling woodsmen, the Shipp, live in a one story building near the other burrows. They spend much of their time in the woods, cutting and hauling wood. They also have a sawmill near their house where they cut and prepare wood for sale and make barrels and boxes as well as furniture and other objects. Recently, one of the sons, Buckeye Shipp, spotted some strange signs in the woods. "The Trees were bent back at the tops, as if something were looking through the high spots all about!" he'll exclaim. He fervently believes a giant or something is about.

RUMORS

The following is a list of rumors and unusual events that the inhabitants of Botkinburg may know about. These should be used to spur the characters on to action or raise questions the answers to which involve intrigue or exploration of the surrounding area. Talk is currently dominated by the disappearance of the Molkin twins and the recent raids by goblins on farmers and travelers. The Molkin twins were abducted a fortnight prior in the fields while tending cattle. Their mother is beside herself with grief.

- 1: "Dose Ludensheimens want a war? We'll give 'em a war if'n they want one!"
- 2: "Daemons is out at nights; watch you feed 'em well!"
- 3: "Thase a witch in the woods and her familiars are here."
- 4: "Eatin' them halfflang foods 'eel get ya killed."
- 5: "The Baron is goin' crazy and his son has poisoned him."
- 6: "Them pixies and nixies need their food, so don't forget to feed 'em!"
- 7: "Someone here is giving the Redcaps some information. As my tooth is yellow its true."
- 8: "Them tinkers is thieves and scoundrels, I tell yeh!"
- 9: "The Blacktooth place, it be the home to evil sorcerers and the living dead."
- 10: "There's more gold there than in all the south kingdoms."
- 11: "I fear there is more afoot than simple garden variety thieving, ancient evil I says."
- 12: "I know one thing only, the Witch King is back."

WILDERNESS AREAS

The region around Botkinburg is fraught with dangers and evil creatures, as well as a few benign and even helpful ones. The following section contains a brief description of the Blacktooth Ridge, the Barren Woods, and the Hruesen River Valley. Three random encounter charts are supplied for encounters in those regions. Following this are descriptions of various places along the ridge or in the woods which the characters are likely to come across. Castle Keepers should give particular attention to "Beneath the Moon" in which the fey who live around Botkinburg are described.

Those listed are by no means the limit of monsters or creatures inhabiting the region of the Blacktooth Ridge. The Castle Keeper is encouraged to expand upon the encounters as necessary and even add more encounters which might better fit the mood of their adventure or interests of the adventuring party.

THE BARREN WOODS: This is an oak and birch forest extending from the Hruesen River in the east to the massive Ingeld Lake in the west. Its deeps have only recently been encroached upon with those settlements developing along the upper Hruesen River and far to the north of Botkinburg. Many creatures of ancient origin roam the deep woods, as it was once a land belonging to the elves and fey and the Horned One never truly conquered the region. Other monsters, spawn of the Horned One, occasionally crawl forth from the holes where they have been hiding these many long years to take the lives of all they can. Of late, their numbers have increased, and the danger of travel here has become great indeed.

THE HRUESEN RIVER VALLEY: This river spills out of the Great Morass or Blasted Heath far to the east and lazily makes its way through plains and forests until it abuts the Blacktooth Ridge. It has many feeder streams along its width and breadth. Its course narrows and becomes tumultuous some 50 miles north of Botkinburg as it enters the rougher hilly lands of the region. After passing through this region, it tumbles on south until it spills into Lake Elweth.

The river is plentiful with fish and offers a wealth of food to settlers, bears, and others who depend upon fish for food. But this also attracts fell creatures of all sorts, and makes travel along the river perilous in those lower reaches far away from the settlements of man. Many a strange and ancient creature can be seen in its blue waters.

THE BLACKTOOTH RIDGE: This ridge line stretches from the Plains of Atrothos in the east before breaking up in the rocky flats of the Elenor Plains in the south. The Blacktooth Ridge is a rocky outcrop dotted with innumerable fracture caverns and deep natural caves on the western edge of the Plains of Atrothos. The escarpment above and to the east of the Blacktooth Ridge is forested with scruboak and evergreens, and is littered with huge boulders-detritus of glacial contraction.

For ages beyond count, the caverns of the Blacktooth Ridge have long attracted orcs, ogres, goblins, giants, and other even more evil and malignant creatures who prefer the dark depths to the open sun. After the coming of the Horned One, the Blacktooth Ridge became a significant source of creatures with which to people his armies. Eventually, guard posts, fortresses, treasuries, and barracks were built in the caverns beneath the ridges and huge hosts of troops were housed here under the command of

powerful lieutenants and captains. After his fall, many of these were abandoned and left uninhabited for many years. Now it boasts many renegade elements of that ancient and most foul evil as the ridge offers safe hiding and deep holes-easy defense from those who seek to kill them.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

There are three wandering monster charts for use when the party ventures outside of Botkinburg. These encounters are not the only ones which can occur while the characters are traveling through the region. The Castle Keeper should feel free to develop other encounters, or augment the encounters below to develop story arcs that are integral aspects of the adventure.

BOTKINBURG

This chart details encounters that occur within 20 miles of Botkinburg. Check for encounters once during the day and twice at night. Roll a d10; a 1 indicates an encounter. Then roll a d20 to determine the type.

d20	ENCOUNTER
1-3	Villagers (2 - 5)/herding animals, collecting wood, etc.
4-7	Stray animal (1 - 3)/sheep, cow, horse, or other
8	Remnants of a goblin or orc encampment
9	Mountain Lion (1)/tracking party, may attack
10	Wolves (4 - 12)/eating, tracking party, moving
11-15	Herd Animals/deer, elk, oxen, boar, or other
16-17	Fey (2 - 8)/traveling, see "Beneath the Moon" below
18	Goblins (7 - 12)/spying, raiding, stealing cattle
19	Travelers/merchants, party, knights, soldiers, clerics
20	Bandit (2 - 8)/ambush, after a raid, encamped

THE BARREN WOOD

This chart details encounters that occur while traveling in the Barren Wood. Check for encounters twice during the day and twice at night. Roll a d10; a 1 indicates an encounter. Then roll a d20 to determine the type.

d20	ENCOUNTER
1-2	Bandits (2 - 8)/ambush, after a raid, encamped
3-4	Goblins (7 - 12)/spying, raiding, stealing cattle
5	Lost traveler (1 - 3)/villager scared, hiding, fleeing
6	Mountain Lion (1)/tracking party, may attack
7-10	Herd Animals/deer, elk, oxen, boar, or other
11-12	Wolves (4 - 12)/eating, tracking party, moving
13	Giant Spiders (2 - 8)/nest area, with prey, moving
14	Brown Bear (1)/hunting food 1 in 10 with cubs
15-16	Fey (2 - 8)/traveling, see "Beneath the Moon" below
17-18	Orcs (2 - 8)/raiding, scouting, lost, encamped, after fight
19-20	Ogre (1)/traveling, searching for home, raiding



BLACKTOOTH RIDGE

This chart details encounters that occur along the region of the Blacktooth Ridge. Check for encounters twice during the day and three times at night. Roll a d10; a 1 indicates an encounter. Then roll a d20 to determine the type.

d20	ENCOUNTER
1-2	Goblins (7 - 18)/spying, raiding, stealing cattle
3-5	Orcs (3 - 12)/raiding, scouting, lost, encamped
6	Bandits (3 - 12)/ambush, after a raid, encamped
7	Hyenas (4 - 16)/hunting, around carcass, sunning
8-9	Wild Boar (2 - 6)/rooting around, relaxing at mud hole
10-12	Stirges (1 - 3)/hunting, with prey, flying overhead
13-14	Ogre (1 - 2)/hunting, traveling, looking for a home
15	Wolves (3 - 18)/eating, tracking party, moving
16	Bear, large (1)/aggressive male or female with cub
17-20	Herd Animals/deer, elk, oxen, boar, or other

BENEATH THE MOON

Numerous groups of fey live in the vicinity of Botkinburg. There are nixies, pixies, and sprites of all makes and sizes. They have lived in the region since before the arrival of the Horned One, and they remained throughout his reign, avoiding contact with any and all as fortune permitted. The recent arrival of humans and

even elves has encouraged them to once again involve themselves in the affairs of the forest and with those of men.

For the most part, they are harmless and do not bother the inhabitants of Botkinburg. However, as they consider this area their ancestral land, they do expect some tiny compensation for allowing the humans and halflings use of it. It is “understood” that every household “give” some offering of food, coin, clothing, or other goods at least once a month. This is usually placed outside the house of the family making the offering so that it can be retrieved easily. These offerings are usually placed on stoops, window sills, at the Great Oak, or at one of the various shrines located on the outskirts of town. If a family or individuals do not participate on a fairly regular basis, then some slight ill may befall their property—a sick cow, burned crops, a leaky roof, spoiled food, dulled hoes or weapons, etc.

The fey are generally not violent nor predisposed towards scaring away the majority of the people in Botkinburg, though a few of the inhabitants are looked upon with a disdain bordering on dislike. Most of the fey tend to stay out of sight, only rarely making appearances before others, and then only to those they are well disposed toward. The only exception is when people travel far into the Barren Wood or up the Hruesen River. In this case, they are generally seeking to discover the whys and wherefores of the interlopers traveling into what they consider their home.

The fey are nomadic and rarely stay in one place or abode more than a month. They usually move into the boles of trees in the winter and live up in the branches during the summer. Finding their temporary abodes is an exceedingly difficult task that might take years of searching and involve much travel, and no one has ever heard of it happening. It is rumored that they do have a communal gathering place deep in the Barren Wood and it is there the Faerie Queen lives.

2–16 PIXIES/SPRITES (*Their vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 16, chaotic neutral. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack by weapon doing 1d2 points of damage. Once per day they can become invisible. They can also cast command twice a day and ghost sound three times a day. They carry a dagger or 2–5 darts and 2–20gp.*)

2–16 NIXIES (*Their vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 16, chaotic neutral. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack by weapon doing 1d2 points of damage. Twice per day they can become invisible. They can also cast, as the spell, faerie fire 2 times daily, and goodberry 3 times daily. They carry a dagger or spear and 2–20gp.*)

FROMKIN'S PASS

Here, the Hruesen River bends slightly away from the base of the ridge and spreads out in rocky shallows. A large stone bridge arches over the entire length of the Hruesen River, and was so solidly built in ages past that it has withstood the ravages of man, nature and time.

Fromkin's Pass is the location of the only remaining bridge that crosses the Hruesen River to the escarpment above the Blacktooth Ridge. It is a blocky utilitarian bridge, broad enough for two wagons to pass abreast. Along both sides are low stone rails. The stone is worn smooth from uncountable thousands of footsteps and wagon wheel groves, from years of wear, scar the center of the

bridge. Statues once adorned each corner of the bridge. All but one have long since been destroyed. At the east end of the bridge is a broken and cracked statue of a large predatory bird perched atop a helmet. The giant beak and malicious eyes are stretched to the heavens, as if looking for direction.

The bridge connects with a timeworn, paved path on the ridge line side. This is Fromkin's Pass. The path is broad and wide and created in such a manner as to allow wagon traffic, and so angles up the ridge in several switchbacks. At each turn in the path is a small, stone, one-roomed building which once housed soldiers of the Horned One. As the path nears the summit of the ridge, the top of a large crumbling tower can be seen—Fromkin's Aerie as it is locally known.

This ruined tower once had a wall and several buildings surrounding it, though all have fallen into rubble now. The tower itself has only a little of the internal and external structure left. It is entirely hollow, and one section of it is completely collapsed, revealing gutted and burned insides. Except for the upper floor of the tower, only a few old and rotted beams remain. Nearly half of the uppermost floor remains, while a portion of the staircase clings precariously to the wall of the tower. The ground about the tower is littered with small carcasses, and bones, and the decayed remains of animals.

Nothing lives in or around the tower except some stirges. The stirges sometimes bring back small game for the young to suck on, and the bones drop from the nest above to collect at the base of the tower. The stirges nest in the decayed walls and rubble of the upper reaches of the tower. There are 15 stirges nesting in the tower, though at any given time 3–12 of them are gone. All of the nests are located on the wall, while the remaining floor is used as a feeding area. There are several animal carcasses here as well as a kobold carcass. Unless really hungry, the stirges do not attack prey as large as a human. However, should a halfling, gnome or dwarf make themselves easy targets or stand out alone, the stirges may consider them prey. Should anyone attempt to climb the tower or threaten the stirges nesting area, they do attack.

If much weight is placed on the upper floor, there is a chance it will collapse. Roll a d20. For every 10 lbs above 100 lbs of weight on the upper floor, add 1 to the die roll (120 lbs is +2, etc.). If the result is 20 or higher, the floor collapses. It is a 30-foot fall to ground. Damage from the fall is 6d6. A successful dexterity saving throw halves the damage. If the saving throw succeeds by more than 10, no damage is taken, as the character has grabbed a beam and not fallen. Though that character now hangs in midair above the ground while the stirges gather.

Much like crows, stirges collect small baubles that are shiny. There are several pieces of treasure in the nests, and should the time be spent searching, 13gp, 43sp, a brooch (10gp), ring (5gp), and an ivory statuette of Wenafar, Goddess of the Fey (50gp) are found. The statuette is valuable to many fey and should it be returned to them, no matter his alignment, the giver receives a single favor, within reason and capability.

12 STIRGES (*Their vital stats are HD 1d10, AC 14, neutral. Their primary attributes are physical. They have bite attacks that inflict 1–3 points of damage. If they successfully bite an opponent they can drain blood for an extra 1d4 points of damage a round.*)

KRUGGLE'S LAIR

(SEE MAP PAGE 51)

Kruggle's lair is nothing more than an ancient guard post once used for keeping watch on traffic moving up and down the Hruesen River. It is located on the east cliff face overlooking the Hruesen River and on the Blacktooth Ridge. It is only accessible through a secret tunnel above it, or by climbing to it from the river's edge. Even when occupied by troops of the Horned One, it consisted of little more than a few rooms for quartering troops, storerooms, a mess, and a "watch ring" (described below). Currently, the only resident is an aged and crotchety ogre, Kruggle, who has managed to survive the length and width of several centuries through luck, some wit, and a strong right arm.

Kruggle occasionally raids farms in Botkinburg and other nearby communities in order to gather food when stores run low or when little game can be found. He eats rabbit and deer for the most part but prefers pig. This preference brings him into close contact with Botkinburg's inhabitants. Though not itching for a fight and more than willing to bargain his way out of a confrontation when faced by superior numbers, if he feels threatened or believes he can beat the party in a fight, he attacks and fights aggressively. His only other habit is an irrepressible desire to capture goblins and threaten to cook them and eat them. Being of small mind and not too keen on details, he often mistakes halflings and gnomes for fatter plumper goblins, and under no circumstances would actually eat them (the goblins) as they are too stringy. But fat hobbits???

AREA 1 ENTRANCE

On top of the ridge, amongst the bramble and massive cottage-sized boulders is one boulder with an illusory portal in it. There is a trail leading near it that is easily discernable to anyone familiar with the forest. A successful tracking check allows the trail to be followed to the rock, where the trail abruptly ends at the foot of what appears to be a cottage sized boulder.

The boulder's face is, in fact, an illusion disguising the entrance and stairs that lead down into Kruggle's lair. A successful wisdom check (at +4) reveals vague inconsistencies in the face of the boulder. However, disbelieving in the illusion does not remove the illusion. A successful tracking check can reveal the ogre's footprints; otherwise, it takes between 1–10 hours of searching before anyone has the chance of noting the illusory portal (elves, dwarves, and others with detect secret doors or similar abilities can attempt to detect it with a +4 to the check). All this is negated, of course, if someone leans on the boulder, and fall right through.

If discovered, one can simply walk through the portal and enter a corridor several paces long and wide with an old wooden door at the far end of it. The door is barred from the other side and must be broken through to get beyond (the door has an armor class equivalent of 10 and 30 hit points). The racket created when breaking through the door has a chance of alerting Kruggle. If entered during the day, Kruggle is asleep, and there is only a 3 in 10 chance he awakens with the breaking of the door. If entry occurs between dusk or dawn (or the party is in the lair at that time), Kruggle is awake and is alerted on a 7 in 10 chance. If alerted, Kruggle arms his trap and starts looking for the intruders.

AREA 2 STAIRCASE

A broad, winding, stone staircase covered in twigs, leaves, rat droppings, and other refuse descends into a darkness rank with the smell of overcooked meats, excrement, and the pungent, eye-tearing aroma of a slaughterhouse in summer. The stairs are slippery, worn smooth, and covered in moss and the drippings of recently killed animals or other creatures. Each person descending the steps must make a dexterity check or slip and fall. No damage is taken, though the noise of the fall has a 4 in 10 chance of alerting Kruggle if not already aware of the interlopers. Items carried may also be dropped (dexterity check at –2).

AREA 3 HALLWAY

This broad, dank hallway is littered with debris and detritus. The south end of the hallway is particularly rank. Here, heavy silken bags like moth cocoon, are woven to the walls and ceiling and hang from the rafters. Literally, thousands of beetles, spiders, roaches, and other vermin are crawling around. The corpse wyrms (Area 9) drag their food here to store it by binding it in the silken residue and cocoons.

AREAS 4–8 BARRACKS

These rooms once housed soldiers in the army of the Horned One. They are now completely empty except for some bits of debris like armor remnants, broken weapons, a few pieces of wood, and other detritus. Kruggle does not use the rooms. None of the doors are locked, and all stand slightly ajar.

AREA 9 BARRACK

This is the nesting area for the corpse wyrms. These foul looking wyrms are much like centipedes in appearance, with many legs on their segmented bodies and two hand-like claws. They have gathered here and built a huge gelatinous hive where they have placed hundreds of larvae. The corpse wyrms are almost always in here and only await Kruggle's offerings in the hallway to come out. The door is open and a putrid, rank smell spills out of the room like heat from a forge. The corpse wyrms attack as soon as anyone enters the room.

There are a few interesting items in the nest if the characters look. Bones and wood from around the lair were used for support in building the nest. With 1–3 hours of searching, in addition to a lot of worthless junk, the following items of value are located: large belt with little slot pouches containing 20pp, 3 rings (10gp, 40gp, 45 gp), 15 crossbow bolts (deliver +1 damage, non-magical just well made with barbs), small helmet with diadem atop (120gp).

6 CORPSE WYRMS (*Their vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 13, neutral. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two grasping claws located near the head of their many-legged and segmented body. A successful attack can cause paralysis. The victim must make a save or be paralyzed for 3d10 rounds. Corpse Wyrms are able to bind their motionless prey in a cocoon of thin gossamer silk. Once bound a victim cannot break free unless they make a successful strength attribute check.*)

AREA 10 PORTAL

If Kruggle is alerted to the interlopers' presence, he sets a trap on this door; otherwise, it is as a normal door. He traps the door

by removing the beam beneath the lintel. This beam currently prevents the stone above the door from collapsing. Kruggle shuts the door halfway, such that the weight of the stone rests on the door. If the door is opened any further, the lintel collapses onto those within five feet of the door (dexterity check, challenge level +1, damage 1d6, save for half damage).

AREA 11 WATCH RING

This is a very large room, the watch ring for the troops of the Horned One. Light spills into the room from six narrow windows located along the west wall (unless it is night). The room has a large open pit in its middle where many a large fire has been lit. The room is otherwise piled with debris: large pieces of wood, piles of hides, a huge pile of bones picked clean, and the equipment of the numerous kobolds, goblins, humans, and halflings Kruggle has snatched over the years. There are caps, robes, pants, belts, boots, helmets, leather jerkins, shields, small swords, knives and other junk in abundance. Most are in a very poor state of repair.

If he has been alerted, Kruggle is in here; otherwise, he is in Area 13, still asleep or just rousing. Kruggle sizes up the party before deciding whether or not to attack. If he thinks he can overtake the group, he attacks by throwing several small boulders, and then rushes in with his broad-bladed, double-bitted axe. If he believes the party to be more powerful than he, he may try talking to them, asking them, "Wut be it uh, wyy yuze sturbin me rest?" He does this in order to avoid a confrontation, give himself time to escape, or to catch the party unawares and then attack. If Kruggle believes he is going to be killed or overtaken he makes a break for it and charges down one of the hallways, and runs up the stairs and out into the wilderness.

AREA 12 PRISON

The door to this room has three large cut stones stacked in front of it, each weighing over 100 pounds. Kruggle has blocked the door, keeping it shut, making a prison of the room. Kruggle has taken several prisoners over the past few months. Two kobolds and one halfling are all that remain. Kruggle makes no distinction amongst his prisoners. He threatens to cook them all the time, keeping them in a state of terror. Needless to say, the prisoners are a bit on edge.

The room they are kept in is large, dank, and nasty. There is little in it but for the three hapless prisoners and the rotting corpses of their one time cell mates. Each prisoner has one hand in a manacle that is hooked to the wall. The manacles are locked but not through the use of any key; rather ingeniously for an ogre (ogres can be ingenious when put to the task of binding their prey), Kruggle has twisted large iron nails into the manacle's links, binding them as well as any lock, thus preventing any locks from being picked.

The halfling, Waddo Brikker, is from Ludensheim and was on his way to Botkinburg with a group of traders when they were set upon by a band of unger and orcs. He escaped into the woods, only to be picked up by Kruggle. His family owns an Inn in Ludensheim, and will be grateful for his return. If the party does return Waddo, they are awarded 100gp and many free night's room and board (if they keep their manners about them).

AREA 13 BED AND BREAKFAST

This is Kruggle's lair. It is a simple room once used by the captain of the watch. This is where Kruggle keeps all his finery. There are piles of furs and cloth that he enjoys sleeping on, a large bronze platter he eats off of (likening himself to a lord), a brazier which is usually lit, some special bones (femurs from large bovine, used when hunting), and a gigantic round shield (this belonged to a cloud giant before Kruggle made off with it. The giant's name is carved on the front of the shield, Sarvas Barzikos Noblis Adaluisian Fortudnous Appalateon. It is a family heirloom, so the giant would be grateful for its return). Kruggle's prized procession, a chest of treasures. The chest is locked with an old padlock that is rusted and difficult to pick. The chest can be broken open easily or unlocked (challenge level +2). Inside are 500 large copper coins (about one inch to a side), square in shape and each equivalent to 3 copper coins currently (these are old imperial coins), 100 silver pieces (a dozen of modern make and the rest imperial), 20 gold coins (of modern mint) in a small box, three statuettes of gods, all made of silver (120gp, 60gp, and 20gp), a jeweled scabbard for a longsword (100gp), and about a dozen sheaves of paper. One of the sheaves of paper is actually a map of the region. It shows the location of various forts and one or another points of interest. Botkinburg is not on the map but the Vargolg is (below).

AREA 14 ESCAPE ROUTE

The far wall of this chamber has a secret door Kruggle has never located. It opens onto a small corridor with steps leading down. These steps end on a dark landing with another secret door beyond which can be heard rushing water. It opens onto a bank of the Hruesen River which is densely packed with shrubs and thorny bushes.

KRUGGLE, OGRE (*This neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d10, HP 31, AC 15. He attacks by weapon doing 2d6 points of damage. With a successful hit he gets an overbear attack.*)

THE BUBBLING CAULDRON

This is an ancient area of the Barren Wood crowded by aged and gnarled oaks with twisting roots and heavy boughs that have never felt the bite of an axe nor the gnawing of saws. The trees stretch tall and spread at their tops, forming a dark and leafy canopy in spring and summer and an airy and tangled web of branches in winter. The lower reaches of the wood are covered in thorny undergrowth, with the brown husks of long-dead trees covering the ground.

Snaking amongst the undergrowth is a trail that is difficult to locate. The trail is mostly used by deer, boar, and small-horned bovine, but is also used by the occasional traveler seeking knowledge, aid, or divination from the witch who lives at its end. This trail can be found by a person well versed in woodland lore. A tracking check can be made at a -3 to discern its unique nature. If successful, faint human and boot tracks are noted.

Following the trail is a six day trek through the wood to the hovel in which the witch lives. Each day a tracking check must be made (no modifiers), and if successful, the trail is located and is easily followed. A failure on the tracking check indicates the characters are lost and must begin searching for the trail again. One check is made each

day at an extra –1 penalty (cumulative) until the trail is located (for example, after losing the trail twice, a –5 tracking check is made). This continues until the characters find the hovel or give up trying.

In a dark patch of the Barren Wood, beneath a tangle of massive branches and amongst entwining roots, is a hovel made of thorn brush and dried bramble piled and tied together. In front of the hovel, on a bare patch of earth, is a large black iron cauldron sitting over a fire of blue flame. Large belching green bubbles froth and steam at its surface emitting a pungent odor like a charnel house.

Neegle the Witch lives here. Though called a witch by the locals, she's much more. Neegle is an ancient creature, a Fraonoth, or what the dwarves call the Taonu Gorth, those who came before the beginning. They are ancient creatures who stole into the world from the Void. Some of the Fraonoth are powerful creatures, and Neegle is one of them. Neegle's particular gifts are that of divination and immortality. She can see into "a" future - not necessarily the one that will unfold, but one that may unfold. She has lived here for ages beyond count and hid herself away with the coming of the Horned One. Few know of her presence, and those who do either consider her an evil that needs exterminating or an oracle deserving reverence. Neegle is wary of strangers and often hides when others approach. If the visitors do not appear to want to harm her, Neegle makes herself known to them and agrees to divine their future should anyone want to know it (see casting the bones below).

Neegle lives with Gunald, a stunted dwarf of ancient lineage. Gunald is malformed with a giant tumor on his back and a clubfoot. Neegle took the dwarf in aeons ago after he was tortured in the dungeons of the Horned One, escaping during the Trench Wars. He has lived here ever since and is a loyal servant of Neegle's. The dwarf usually approaches strangers before Neegle ever comes out. Occasionally, there are sprites in the vicinity of the witch's lair. These sprites are Neegle's friends, and they too will aid her in a fight if one proves necessary.

Neegle, being of that age before the coming of man and elf, carries with her the taint of the world's founding. Though she is immortal, should she ever kill any of the children of the All Father, she will lose her immortality and powers. As such, Neegle makes every effort to avoid harming others or fighting and willingly abandons her hovel to do so, teleporting Gunald away with her.

Neegle also makes potions and herb pouches that many may find useful, and she is willing to trade them for goods or services, though never gold, gems, or mundane treasures which will never do her any good. She can create healing potions or salves, gathers herbs to counteract poisons and help with diseases and other common ailments. The vast majority of her spells are utilitarian in nature or have to do with augury. Her special ability is "casting the bones."

With this ability, in which she literally casts bones from a pouch onto the ground, she can augur "a" future for the recipient once a day. The auguring process is automatic. The prediction is vague with (the Castle Keeper never knowing what a player may do) descriptions such as, "You will find yourself in a dark place with many enemies surrounding you intent upon your death," should suffice. The prediction can be used to point the players in a particular direction or give them a piece of information they would

otherwise not be able to acquire. Finally, should the characters convince her to cast the bones, the player for whom she augurs a future should be allowed to add a +5 to any check, attack or saving throw which might be appropriate. Such an instance may be in which the Neegle informs a character that a great axe will fall upon their head. Then when in battle with Kruggle or some orcs, that character should have a déjà vu moment and receive a bonus in combat or a saving throw.

Also, if the characters evince an interest in the Vargolg, Neegle perks up, as she is also concerned with the Vargolg. Though she does not know its location, she will offer a divining stone to the party in exchange for "bringing me the eye of serpent." Something for which she offers no more explanation. The stone is a black rock that just grows hotter until the character divining it locates the door to the Vargolg, at which point it turns cold.

NEEGLE, FRAONOTH (*This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 10d8, HP 50, AC 22. Her primary attributes are mental. She has innate spell ability and can cast the following spells three times a day: all cleric and druid of 1st – 5th level and 3 spells of each 6th – 9th. She can become invisible at will and teleport once per day at will. She carries a magical bag of bones and a staff.*)

GUNALD (*He is a 4th level chaotic neutral dwarf rogue. His vital stats are HP 16, AC 19. His primary attributes are constitution and dexterity. His abilities are strength 10, dexterity 17, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wisdom 10, charisma 10. He carries +4 leather armor, +1 ring of protection, +3 short sword and a cloak of elvenkind.*)

Sprites 4–12 (*Their vital stats are HP 1d6; AC 16; prime mental; atk 1; dmg 1d2; special: invisibility x1 day, command x2 day, ghost sound x3 day; eqp: dagger, 2–20gp.*)

Bag of Bones: This is a bag of small bones from a long dead owl who once was a pet to the deity of foresight. Using the *bag of bones* to tell the future requires a cleric of at least 5th level. Simply throwing the bones on the ground and intoning the name of the deity allows for the augury. However, the bones must be read, and learning to read them can take a lifetime. To do so, the character must find a 10th level cleric devoted to the deity of foresight and study under that cleric for at least a year to learn the script carved on the bones. The augury works as described above, with each five years of study conferring a +1 to the appropriate dice roll to a maximum of +3. The bones can be sold, but some would just as well kill to get the bones as pay for them.

FOUNTAIN OF HOPE

In this glade is a large fountain carved from the bole of an ancient tree. Water bubbles from the bole and slowly spills onto the ground. The area is soggy and moss ridden, with many large ferns and leafy plants growing in great abundance all around it. A dryad, Nymania, lives nearby in an ancient oak that stretches 80 feet into the sky. She keeps an eye on the fountain and ensures, to the best of her ability, that no harm comes to it. Nymania has an aid in this endeavor, Fertermen Gidner, a druid who was long ago ensnared by the dryad's charms.

Fertermen tends to the tree and the fountain. He is a wary fellow and immediately distrustful of any arrivals. He approaches anyone who does not appear outwardly hostile and asks their business. Of course, Fertermen is not concerned in the least about anyone's business but simply makes small talk before trying to usher anyone away. If the characters seem benign, Fertermen allows them to drink of the fountain but warns them: those ill at heart or even those too pure at heart may suffer dire consequences.

For those of lawful good alignment, the fountain offers refreshment and nourishes the body to a point well beyond satiation. It is as if they have just eaten three days' worth of food and are rendered immobile for 24 hours. For those of chaotic evil alignment, drinking from the fountain fills them with a ravenous hunger, forcing them to eat three days' worth of food in one day or be unable to perform any tasks, being severely famished. If they eat three days' worth of food, they are rendered immobile for 24 hours. For characters of any other alignment, drinking from the fountain heals 1d4 hit points and fulfills thirst and food needs for three days.

The dryad has tired of the druid and seeks to rid herself of his company. If any of the characters have a charisma score of 17 or 18, she attempts to charm them, releasing the druid from his charm.

DRYAD (*Her vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 14, AC 17, neutral. Her primary attribute is mental. The dryad is a powerful fey with a beauty such that it creates a magical dweamor around her that makes her appealing to almost every living creature. She is able to take advantage of this and charm a victim once per day. She carries a gown of radiance that increases her charisma score by two points, a ring of shields with 10 charges that when activated places a magical shield around her giving her a bonus +3 AC for 4 rounds.*)

FERTER MEN GIDNER (*He is a 3rd level chaotic neutral human druid whose vital stats are HP 17, AC 13. His primary attributes are strength, constitution, wisdom. His abilities are strength 15, dexterity 10, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wisdom 10, charisma 9. He carries a +1 sickle, +1 leather armor, +1 ring of spell resistance and 50gp brooch. He has no spells.*)

TROLL BRIDGE

Among the bramble and shrub of the Hruesen River is an old stone wharf once used as a staging post for troops of the Horned One. The wharf has collapsed, worn away with time, and very little of it is recognizable or even visible at this point. Beneath the wharf is a small series of rooms built by a gnarly river troll.

The area around the wharf is dense with undergrowth and bramble making the wharf itself difficult to see unless one is traveling along the river's bank or along the ridge line above it. An observant character might notice that the banks of the river have no tracks on them. This is very unusual since wild game often come to the river for refreshment. But, since the troll has a tendency to eat everything it can, the animals tend to stay away.

Though the troll usually eats his prey in the tunnels beneath the wharf, he occasionally sits upon a high rock nearby and devours whatever he has caught, tossing the remains into the river. The river is shallow near this rock, and even a brief glance into it



reveals a pile of bones and shreds of armor, along with a few weapons in the sandy river bottom. Most of these remains are of animals, though a few human, dwarf, and other remains can be located. In the sand are a few baubles and coins that the troll never noticed: 18gp, 42sp, 71cp, necklace (40gp), 3x rings (15gp, 20gp and 25gp), gold buckle (10gp), and a silver holy symbol (50gp). The weapons and other accouterments have rusted so much so that they are not useful.

The troll lives in some tunnels it has built beneath the wharf. They are accessible through an entry in the river beside one of the footings. One must swim several dozen feet under the wharf before coming up in a corridor 10 feet in height with four feet of water in it. Much of the rest of the complex is similarly flooded. There are four crudely hewn rooms dripping in mud and grime which stretch, one after another, deeper into the side of the bank. Each room is approximately 10 feet in diameter and piled high with the bones of prey.

The final room in the complex is above water level and is moderately dry, meaning there are only puddles on the floor. This is where the troll sleeps and keeps the goods he has pilfered over the years. Several swords, some armor, and a few helmets as well as the tattered remains of clothing are piled up as a nest. The metal objects are rusted and useless, except one short sword

giving off a faint bluish glow. It is magical, delivers +2 damage to all evil creatures as well as emanates a five-foot radius bluish glow in the dark. There are 80pp, 234gp, 450sp, and 490cp in various places around the room; two silver brooches (20gp each); one ring (10gp); as well as a blessed holy symbol that confers a +1 to hit bonus on all creatures in a 20-foot radius if held by a cleric whose deity is a god of war (even the enemies of the one holding it).

The troll either spots the characters aboveground or learns of their presence as soon as they enter his complex. The troll only fights if it believes it can win. Otherwise, it follows the party at night and tries to steal away the smallest member and bring him back to its lair, where he will be promptly eaten.

TROLL (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 6d10, HP 45, AC 16. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with 2 claws for a 1d4+4 points of damage each and a bite for 2d6 points of damage. If he strikes with both claws he can rend for an extra 2d6 points of damage. Trolls can regenerate 4 hp per round.*)

BENEATH THE BLACKTOOTH RIDGE

The Blacktooth Ridge is located far from Botkinburg and is home to several deep dungeons, ancient temples, vast barracks complexes, and twisting caverns which offer much for adventurers and explorers. Locating these dungeons is often a difficult task, as many are well hidden from normal view and they must be searched for. Others are more easily located and visible to most. Travel along the banks of the Hruesen River and careful observation of tracks often reveal the location of hidden or concealed dungeons.

The innumerable dungeons and temples along this ridgeline are not described in this small sheaf of papers. Only one such place is described, the Vargolg, as it pertains most closely to the adventure at hand. The Castle Keeper is encouraged to create other dungeons and complexes for the characters to explore, as this alone is unlikely to slake their thirst for adventure, fame, and gold.

The Vargolg is located on the eastern banks of the Hruesen river up a narrow defile. Locating the Vargolg might take the players some time since it is so great a distance from Botkinburg and so few know of its location. However, many villagers have heard rumors of such caves and old forts along the Blacktooth Ridge so the players should be able to surmise that the lair of the Red Caps is located someplace along its length. Locating the exact one may prove a challenge.

There are several ways the characters can locate the dungeon: they can track a raiding party back to the Vargolg; they can travel down the Hruesen, investigating all hidden caves and fortresses; they can look at the map provided in Kruggle's lair, negotiate with Neegle or ask her for a divination. Each manner has its own hazards and difficulties as well as rewards.

TRACKING

Locating the Vargolg by back-tracking the Red Caps is possible though difficult since the goblins are careful to cover their tracks. Any ranger tracking the goblins makes his checks at -1 with an additional -1, for each 24-hour period that passes between the start of tracking and locating the Vargolg or losing the trail.

KRUGGLE'S MAP

The map from Kruggle's Lair neglects to show the exact location of the Vargolg, offering only a vague idea of direction and that it lies along the base of the ridge. The most revealing clue given on the map is that the Vargolg is located up a defile and is held by a great double door.

H RUESEN RIVER EXPLORATION

If the characters explore the Hruesen River, they are likely to find the Vargolg eventually. However, the nature of these explorations is such that missing the Vargolg is entirely possible. The characters are likely to spend a significant amount of time undertaking this and encounter a host of other problems and dungeons along the way.

DIVINING STONE

The witch offers the characters a divining stone. Should they chose to take this item, the characters can use it to divine the location of the Vargolg.

THE VARGOLG

SEE MAP, PAGE 51

The Vargolg is an ancient underground complex once used as a secret storehouse and barracks for one of Aufstrag's regiments. The complex was abandoned long before Unklar's demise and, except for an occasional wandering ogre and other maleficent creatures, sat unused for many ages. Recently, Rottenkip's band of goblins located the dungeon and decided to use it as one of their many hideaways. Rottenkip and the majority of his troops rarely spend any time here, as they are usually off on raids to the south or in one of their many other hideouts. However, he has left a trusted lieutenant, Marglerod, and some of his band to guard the treasures stored here and to keep the place ready for Rottenkip's return.

This complex is located in an area where the Hruesen River abuts the Blacktooth Ridge and is entirely underground. The entry is fairly difficult to locate, as it was designed to be kept secret. The dungeon is divided into distinct upper and lower sections, though the lower section is not really beneath the upper, just deeper in the ridge line.

The upper section functioned as a barracks for troops and contained armories, a smithy, storerooms, barracks, meeting halls, cooking halls, and the like. Currently, the goblins and other members of Rottenkip's band reside here. The agent from Ludensheim is also located in the upper section of the dungeon. He is being held here against his will while negotiations for his release are underway. The Molkin twins are also here.

The lower section is recessed in a deeper part of the complex. It is accessible from only one corridor. This section was never completely transformed into a functioning part of the upper complex, as it was never seen as necessary. However, it was used for burials, secret rituals, and a treasury. There remain many strange things in the lower section. So strange and frightening that Marglerod and his retinue rarely make trips down into it. It is abandoned except for the ghost naga that resides there as a guardian to the treasures. Entering the lower portion awakens the ghost naga, who proceeds to hunt for the interlopers.

UPPER SECTION

AREA 1 ENTRY

The main entry to the Vargolg is located on the north side of the Hruesen River, down and inside a long and narrow cleft, in the ridge face. A great deal of brush and shrub grow in this cleft making it difficult to observe. However, any successful tracker easily locates tracks on the south side of the bank and might note that the Hruesen is very broad and shallow at this point. The river actually has a bunch of large cobbles built up down stream to spread the flow of the Hruesen, making it about one foot in depth at this point. On the north side of the Hruesen, near the entry to the cleft are many easily discernable tracks.

Across the river and down the cleft is a narrow path hemmed in by shrubs and small trees. The cleft ranges from 10' to 20' in breadth while the path is only several feet wide. At the end of the path is a large stone portal with a tightly shut wooden door barring the way in. To the side of this door is a pile of rubble and stone that was once a door. Above the door, on the lintel is a series of timeworn runes and glyphs. Only someone versed in ancient tongues can recognize these runes. They are territorial markings and ownership glyphs. Uncommon in these days, in times of old, glyphs were used to designate ownership and name current leaders for territories. This one is particularly ominous since it states that what lies beyond belongs to the Lord of Ice and Snow and that the last ruler was named Gethgord, Servant of Mell. This door is not guarded. The door is broad, about 5' wide, swings inward and is open a little.

Should the rubble of the original doorway be examined, more ancient script can be discovered. After several hours, placing the pieces back together reveals the following to those who read the ancient script.

Pass these portals, with empty grace

Make solvent a pact, to that with no trace

Or lay your life low, in this lonely place

The poem is a riddle and warning to all who enter. This place was once guarded by greater and lesser devils who were instructed to attack all who entered. Those who fought back were killed, but those who did not fight, but stood passively by while the demons attacked them, were spared and allowed to enter the dungeon. The demons were forbidden to attack those who refused to defend themselves as these were often the troops or servants of the Horned One. Only one demon remains in the lower halls and still abides by this stricture.

Once the characters have entered and then left the Vargolg, there will be a guard positioned outside the doorway.

AREA 2 GUARD ROOM

The door is easily opened but the hinges creek loudly as it does so. Beyond is a large room with a low-slung ceiling. A table with several chairs around it is in the middle of the room. Leather tankards and meat scraps are piled on the table. A large open barrel sits nearby. On the floor is a fire ring with red coals in it, and in another corner is a large brass brazier with a small fire burning in it. Across the room is another wide double door that is open. Noise comes from down the hall. There are large guffaws of laughter and yelling.

Several goblins are usually here guarding the entrance. However, they have moved down the hall to their sleeping quarters to gamble and drink. A small group of raiders has just returned from the south with some loot for entertainment and it is with these that the guards are gambling. If someone listens, he can hear the guttural language of the goblins, followed by laughter and the clackclacking of something small and light on the stone floor. If care is taken and someone speaks goblinoid, he can hear the goblins placing bets. The clacking noise is the dice being rolled and coin falling to the floor.

Every 5 rounds, there is a 1 in 6 chance that a goblin comes into this room from Area 3 to fill up a tankard of ale. If he arrives and has time, the goblin sounds the alarm and races back to Area 3, while others charge out to confront the intruders. If, for some reason the goblin is incapacitated, another comes to look for him in 1d12 rounds.

The second time the dungeon is entered, 3–5 (d3+2) guards will always be in this room.

AREA 3 ENTRY HALL

Peering through the doors reveals a large, broad hallway with four doors opening on to it. All the doors are open, and light spills out of two of them. The hallway ends in a brightly lit chamber several lengths away from which is coming the noise of bleating sheep. Combined with the laughter of the goblins in Area 7, a cacophony of noise echoes through the hallway.

AREA 4 & 5 REFUSE ROOMS

The doors to these rooms are closed though not locked. They are filled with the trash and detritus the goblins have created over the past decade, including broken crates and barrels, pilfered goods, rotted foodstuffs, and the leavings of innumerable goblins. The rooms stink and are crowded with beetles, roaches, rats, and small spiders.

There are also roach worms who live in this mess. These are large roaches the size of small dogs but slender, round, and bluish. They burrow deep in the mess and rest there until disturbed or hungry. They are aggressive and attack if the characters disturb the garbage.

8 ROACH WORMS *(These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 12. Their primary attributes are physical. Their bite attack does 1d2 points of damage. A successful hit delivers a foul virus that requires a constitution save at +4 or the victim suffers all constitution saves at –2 until cured or after 1–2 weeks of bed rest.)*

AREA 6 FRONT BARRACKS

Originally used for housing a large contingent of guards, this room has now been converted into a loot-sorting room. As such, it is piled with a mish-mash of broken sundries and discarded junk from various caravans and houses that have been raided over the past few months. There are piles of clothing, a few broken crates of foodstuffs, one of nails, another of metal ingots as well as several lanterns, some pitchforks, and hoes. Most of the valuable or useful material has been moved down the hall to Area 8.

AREA 7 BARRACKS

Another barracks room, though this one is in use. The door to the room is open and light spills out of it. A group of goblins has just returned

from successful raids to the south and are enjoying some of the loot. There are a dozen goblins in the room playing dice and drinking.

The room contains several dozen bedrolls where the goblins sleep. There is a large cooking pit in the middle of room high with flames licking a roach worm cooking on a spit. Two goblins are standing by the fire with long spears poking at the large worm and laughing all the while. A large open cask sits on the ground by the fire and pile of wooden cups beside pools of spilled wine and an empty overturned cask. All the other goblins are gathered at the far end of the room, throwing dice, drinking, and eating.

Only four of the goblins in the room have armor on; the others are only wearing tunics. None are anticipating any trouble so are startled at the arrival of the characters. There are weapons lying all about the room, and it only takes the goblins 1–2 rounds to gather them up if attacked. As the goblins are not completely unused to having human visitors in the Vargolg, they do not respond aggressively to humans at first. On the other hand, should any elves or dwarves be present, a fight is to be had. A fight will alert the gnolls in Area 8, who will come to inspect.

8 GOBLINS (*These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by weapon. They carry boiled leather armor, short spear, 2d4 gp, 2d6 sp and 3d10cp.*)

AREA 8 THE LONG HALL

At one time this large hall accommodated wagons and other carts for unloading as well as the mustering of troops. Currently, the goblins use this room to store some of the loot they intend to keep or larger items for which they have no use. Usually, the material in here is utilitarian while treasures and valuables are taken further into the dungeon.

The room is crowded with mundane loot. Currently there are three wagons in here, several donkeys, a half dozen sheep, crates and barrels, and piles of ill-gotten gains from numerous raids on caravans and other places to the south. There are also two wagons half torn apart, as they offer an easy source of firewood. Several large fires are burning in pits at either end of the room. Three broad passageways lead off from this room.

A massive gnoll is standing on one of the wagons, rifling through a crate and casually tossing aside the stuff he finds. Another gnoll sits on the end of the wagon, focusing upon a small object in his hands (a small metal sundial). Both are wearing their armor and weapons, but their shields and spears are located near the entry. Upon seeing the party, they give off a war cry and charge them, regardless of the odds. If they go investigate a battle in Area 7, they pick up their shields and two spears each on the way.

The metal sundial has a large "A" stamped on the back. It was part of a shipment of goods belonging to Aldadius in Botkinburg. He will be very pleased at its return and favorably disposed towards the characters from that point forward. The rest of his goods are located in the priest's chambers in **Area 22**.

2 GNOLLS (*These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 12, AC 17. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by weapon. They carry shield, scalemail, helmet, mace or battle axe, 4d6gp & 5d8sp.*)

44 CASTLES & CRUSADES

AREA 9 KITCHEN

This room was once used as the kitchen for the troops that lived here, as high as six companies of orcs at one time. The kitchen is a large room with several storage areas attached to it. Although the number of Red Caps in here now does not approach the original garrison, the kitchen is still used to prepare meals, butcher pigs and goats, and store food.

The room stretches a good spear throw across and is half that wide; it is brightly lit with the flames from a grill. There are four large round raised brick grilling areas in the center of the floor and stretching down the room. Metal rods are placed on either side of the grills and used as spits, one of which has a massive boar on it roasting over a bright flame. A goblin is slowly turning the spit and keeping a close eye on the boar. Nearby four more goblins are hefting a large black pot and trying to angle it onto the rods over another grill; they are planning on making a stew.

Along the north wall are various tables and shelves piled and scattered with pots and pans of all sizes and makes, plates, cups, dishes, bowls, and flatware. One goblin is wandering along the tables and randomly kicking pieces off while quaffing brew from a tankard.

There are two lowered storerooms attached to the kitchen. Both are used for piling foodstuff in and butchering animals, or other creatures, for food. There is ample food in the larders, including everything from potatoes to apples and salted fish to freshly butchered pig. The goblin chef is standing at the top of the steps to one of the storerooms and barking orders to three goblins below. He is carrying a huge butcher knife in one hand and large ladle in the other. He is telling the goblins what vegetables to get for the stew. The goblins are scurrying about and making a big pile of stew ingredients in the center of the storeroom.

None of the goblins in here are armed or armored except the chef. None are really willing to fight over food either and try to escape unless pressed, in which case they gather up pots and pans and fight back or beg for mercy. There is little of value in the room other than the food found in the larders.

8 GOBLINS (*These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by weapon. They carry boiled leather armor, short spear, 2d4 gp, 2d6 sp and 3d10cp.*)

GOBLIN CHEF (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 7, AC 14. His primary attributes are physical. He carries a leather smock that acts as leather armor, a cleaver, and a butcher knife. He can fight two handed without penalty.*)

AREA 10 MAJOR BARRACKS

Both hallways leading into this room are slanted downward somewhat, dropping about four feet from the the hallway leading into this area. This was once the major billeting area for the contingent of troops living here. The room is very large, with a vaulted ceiling and support columns running down its middle. It is currently the billeting area for the Red Caps. Luckily, there are only a few in residence. Before even approaching this room, loud raucous noise can be heard in the hallway. There is singing, yelling and all manner of racket coming from down the hallway.

The remains of the bunks can be seen around the room. Small metal cots hang from chains attached to the ceiling. Several of these are still intact and hold up to six cots, like bunk beds. Also, a metal throw ladder is attached to each cot system, allowing one to climb to the top bunk. In all, there are dozens of intact cots hanging from the ceiling and hundreds of ruined ones piled on the floor. Several large fire pits burn throughout the room. There are also dozens of goblins in here lounging around, sleeping, singing, and gambling.

A group (10 goblins) is gathered around a large fire in the northeast area of the room. They are swilling brew and singing some foul song so discordant as to give one a headache. Another group (six goblins including the sub-Chief) in the southwest corner of the room are gambling with dice. Others (eight) are wondering about, sleeping, or just lounging. No guard is kept, and other than daggers, the goblins are unprepared for any type of combat. If attacked, it could take a couple of rounds for them to gather weapons and fight back. There is little of any value in this room. The loot generally goes to the stronger of the tribe, and these most assuredly are not them.

22 GOBLINS (see above Area 7.)

GOBLIN SUB – CHIEF (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 8, AC 15. His primary attributes are physical. He carries clothes, dagger, short bow, short sword, shield and a +1 battle axe. The axe is cursed so that anyone who picks it up cannot drop it unless a remove curse is cast from a 10th level or higher cleric.)

AREA 11 WELL

This was once the well for the troops billeted here. The goblins use it for water, but they also use it as a refuse pit. Drinking from this well is ill conceived and will cause an illness in all humans and demi-humans, leaving them sick for one week.

AREA 12 STOREROOMS

These rooms were once used as storerooms for weapons, tools, and various other types of equipment needed by the troops stationed here. They have been searched and cleaned out of any useful material.

AREA 13 WORKROOM

At one time this was a workroom for making weapons, wagons or any other paraphernalia needed in the dungeon or for war. Several gnolls have taken up residence here. Though members of Red Caps, they do not like goblins and have become members more out of convenience rather than desire.

There are three gnolls in the room. They have recently returned from a raiding venture and are currently repairing their equipment. One is sitting by a fire slowly sharpening its sword. Another is trying on a chainmail shirt he stole and has refitted. The final one is snoring loudly, tucked up in his bedroll. Other than three bedrolls, the fire pit, and a large trunk, the room is nearly empty (gnolls being of rather Spartan and militaristic nature detest goblin clutter). If attacked, they fight back ferociously, grabbing weapons and shields from nearby.

The trunk contains some of the gnolls' loot. It is locked but easily picked (+2 to check). Inside are two silver candle sticks and a



snuffer, three silver plates and silverware (20gp total), five rings (1–10gp each), a badly chipped black statuette of the Horned One (100gp to collector), and a small gold mouthpiece to a musical instrument (powerful magic emanates from this, see **Appendix C New Magic Items p. 174**). There are also coins of various makes. There are 48gp, 135sp and 220cp.

2 GNOLLS (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 12, AC 17. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by weapon. They carry shield, scalemail, helmet, mace or battle axe, 4d6gp & 5d8sp.)

AREA 14 SMITHY

This was once the smithy. It is occupied by three very large ogres. They happen to be away to the south with the Red Caps at the moment. They work well with the gnolls, who make sure no one messes with the room while they are away.

There is a large fire pit and furnace in the center of the room, obviously the remains of a smith's forge. It is piled with ash and recently burned wood-though all is cold. There is a large table against the wall with the month old remains of a half-eaten sheep on it and utensils and several daggers stuck into the wood. The floor is littered with the bones of many animals. Three large piles of hay and cloth are situated around the room. Against the wall are a large shield; a five-foot-long, 40 lbs club; a spear the size of a lance; and an axe nearly as third again as large as normal. These are all ogre weapons.

There is a false stone underneath one of the piles of hay. It can be located as if it were a secret door. Within it are several sacks with some of the ogres' loot. There are 45gp, 120sp and 410cp, some

dice made of bone, a gold chalice (30gp), and a mirror. There is also a dead snake in here. The ogres put it here to attack anyone who got in the hole, but it died of starvation.

AREA 15 ENTRY CHAMBER

This chamber is the entry for the throne room. Currently, this room is used for guards, but none are present at the moment. There is a table with a pile of rotting food on it, some chairs, and a spittoon. A large board hangs from the wall at one end of the room with targets drawn on it and daggers sticking in it. A large set of double doors are at the far end of the room and two smaller doors are at the other ends.

AREA 16 THRONE ROOM

This was once the throne room for the ruler of the Vargolg. The door appears plain, but upon opening, two great glowing snakes with human heads appear on the door. It opens into a broad, narrow chamber that stretches back to a large throne made of slate, with a plush red piece of cloth draped over it. The floor is made of multicolored blue and red tiles, with a narrow strip of black slate running down the middle and up the front of the throne. Upon each of the hundred or so red and blue tiles covering the floor is a single rune, each unique in character. There are six concealed doors in the room each of which can be opened by pulling on each the six sconces in the room.

The room radiates evil, as it was once used by the High Priest of the Horned One for all manner of evil acts. The tiles are, however, the only thing in the room that still retains any of the powers of the evil that once resided here. A creature of any alignment can walk down the black tiles. There is only enough room to do so in single file. The blue and red tiles are placed in a checkerboard pattern and have deleterious effects upon anyone not of the correct alignment who walks upon them. The blue tiles are safe for chaotic evil creatures, and the red tiles are safe for lawful evil creatures. All tiles are safe for pure neutral aligned characters.

Should anyone walk on one of the tiles that is not safe for his alignment, one of the following effects occurs if the appropriate save is not made. Roll a d10 to determine which effect occurs. Effects are cumulative if applicable.

- 1: Paralysis for 3d10 rounds
- 2: Loss of all memorized arcane spells – int save
- 3: Loss of all memorized divine spells – wis save
- 4: Lose 1d4 hp – con save
- 5: Lose 1d2 points of charisma for 24 hours – cha save
- 6: Lose 1d2 points of wisdom for 24 hours – wis save
- 7: Lose 1d2 points of intelligence for 24 hours – int save
- 8: Lose 1d2 points of strength for 24 hours – str save
- 9: Lose 1d2 points of dexterity for 24 hours – dex save
- 10: Lose 1d2 points of constitution for 24 hours – con save

Few creatures enter the throne room at this time. However, the goblin priest Grakmuk and his acolytes do come in on occasion in

an effort to commune with the Horned One. For every 10 minutes the characters are in the room, there is a 1 in 10 chance one of the acolytes enters the room, gives warning and calls d6+2 guards.

Five of the concealed doors open onto small apertures where guards were once placed and who could come out at a moment's notice. The concealed door closest to the throne and to the west leads to the royal chambers.

22 GOBLINS (see above Area 7.)

17 GUARD STATION

Two large bugbear guards in red capes and chainmail are standing here. They are very attentive, as they are here to ensure that the harem room is not entered except by those deserving. This is usually only the captain or lieutenants of the Vargolg.

2 BUGBEARS (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, AC 17. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by weapon. They carry chain, shield, heavy flail, dagger and the stronger of the two has eight gold clasps worth 5gp each in a small pouch, where he also keeps his prized collection of scalps from his victims.)

AREA 18 HAREM

This chamber was once used as an elite guards barracks. Currently, it houses the harem for the Rottenkips. This is a fairly large room and it is crowded with female and young goblins. There are 30 or so bedding areas for the females, while the younger goblins sleep together in the center of the room. There are sconces that burn brightly with torches and a large cooking pot at the end of the room.

There are 22 females in the room. All are under the watchful eye of the harem leader, Grikkeka. If any of the party is spotted in the room, warning is given, and all the goblins panic except Grikkeka. She calls upon the harem guards and attacks while the others race from the room in search of safety. If the guards do not respond, she also runs away.

There are few items of value in the room except amongst Grikkeka's belongings. These items are in a locked and trapped trunk near her sleeping area at the far end of the room. There is a deadly needle trap in the lock, and when picked or opened without releasing the mechanism, a poisoned needle springs out. Disarm trap attempts are made at -2, while find trap checks are made at +2. The poison causes d8 damage (1 point per round) unless a save is successful, in which case, the damage is halved. The trunk contains 15 pieces of jewelry valued between 11–20gp each, 100sp, and a holy symbol of the Dark One with no value.

GRIKKEKA, FEMALE GOBLIN (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d4, HP 6, AC 15. She carries a dagger, 2 throwing knives, and leather armor. She has spell-like abilities and can cast cause light wounds, curse, and bless once a day. Grikkeka has a high dexterity giving her a +1 to her armor class and all dex save/checks.)

21 FEMALE GOBLINS (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 12. Their primary attributes are physical. They wear rags. They have no weapons but attack with 2 claw attacks for 1 point each.)

YOUNG GOBLINS (*These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d2, AC 12. They have no primary attributes. They carry ragged clothing. They have no weapons and cannot attack but are skilled at getting in the way.*)

AREA 19 MARGLEROD'S ROOM

This room once housed the High Priest of the Vargolg, but now houses Marglerod. The room now contains a large bed with old sheets and blankets on it, a chest, a table, and an arms rack. Marglerod is not here; he is with the priests at the moment. The rack contains several spears and polearms as well as a short bow and some arrows. The trunk is locked and contains odds and ends of personal use such as clothes, 20gp, 120sp, and 10 pieces of jewelry valued at between 1–10gp.

If the trunk is moved and a successful detect secret doors check made, a loose stone in the floor can be located. Removing this reveals Marglerod's real collection of treasures. In here are 10pp, 50gp, a gold crown (a single gold band with a jewel in front) worth 120gp, and three gold brooches each worth 50 gp.

AREA 20 LIEUTENANTS' ROOM

This room once housed the High Priest's lieutenants. Currently, it is the room used by the bugbear guards. It is bare, except for a large fire pit in the center of the room used for the occasional cooking they do, and three piles of hay and cloth where the bugbears bed down. The third bugbear is with Marglerod. The bugbears have little particular loyalty to Marglerod or the goblins. They do, however, have loyalty to Grallkrug, so they remain here. Bear in mind, in any fights the bugbears have with the characters, they are unwilling to lay their lives down if they know it is a hopeless fight, so will try to escape being killed. They have some treasure here. Each pile has 2d10gp and 3d12sp hidden in it. There are several shields and polearms in here as well.

AREA 21 ACOLYTES' CHAMBER

This room houses two goblin priests who are now traveling with the Rottenkips. Currently, the room is occupied by several lesser acolytes who have begun assuming the roles of their superior, Gakmuk. This has irritated Gakmuk, who is leading a battle of wills against them and perhaps even more. The two goblins, Chekak and Glimglud, try to assume the leadership of the goblins should any of the current leaders die. Should this occur, a power struggle occurs as other lieutenants and war leaders vie for power. In any respect, the goblins become more concerned with killing one another rather than with killing intruders, and the entire complex becomes a battle ground, as various factions battle one another for control.

There is a small shrine located along one wall of this room. It consists of a series of candles spread across a wooden shelf (all alight), a large statue of the Horned One on a wooden platform and some incense burning in a large metal bowl. Two beds are arranged at the other end of the room as well as a large trunk. The trunk contains, incense, candles, and strings of prayer beads.

2 GOBLIN ACOLYTES (*These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by weapon. They carry ring mail, mace, and 1d6cp. They cast spells*

as 1st level clerics. Their daily spells are – Zero: create water, first aid, light; 1st: command.)

AREA 22 GAKMUK'S ROOM

This was once a small shrine of the Horned One. It now houses Gakmuk. Currently, Gakmuk, Marglerod, Marglerod's bugbear bodyguard, and two goblins are here discussing what to do with the prisoners. He attempts to make this room as lavish as possible and has taken most of the good stuff he finds. There are several stuffed chairs and sofa, a large oak table, and several cabinets here.

One-half the room is a shrine devoted to the Horned One. It consists of a massive basalt shelf with dozens of small niches bore in it. In each niche is a little ivory statue of a demon or captain serving the Horned One. Above this is a giant statue of a demon with two giant horns on it. The statues are like millstones. Should any be taken, they cannot be dispensed with and must be carried around by the character who took them until a *remove curse* is cast upon the character. If encumbrance rules are being used, they have a 5 encumbrance value. If encumbrance is not used, for every two carried, the character's movement rate is reduced by one.

Gakmuk's treasure is in a locked, but not trapped, trunk. It contains 100gp, 250sp, 140cp, a set of silver plates (10gp each), silverware (10gp value), a bolt of red silk (30gp), an eyeglass, a scroll of *bleed* and two *potions of cure light wounds* (this mixture smells wretched, looks like oil and tastes like rotten meat).

Marglerod and Gakmuk are arguing about what to do about the situation with Dietbold Heimer. Gakmuk does not want to ask for more gold but Marglerod does. Between the two sits a small box of freshly minted platinum coins from Ludensheim. There are 25 coins in the box.

MARGLEROD (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d6, HP 18, AC 19. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks by weapon. He carries chainmail, +1 shield, 3 throwing daggers, and a short sword. Due to his skill with the daggers, he receives a +1 to hit when throwing these.*)

Marglerod is debating with Gakmuk over what to do with the prisoners.

GAKMUK (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 5, AC 14. His primary attribute are physical. He attacks by weapon. He carries ring mail and a mace. He can cast spells as a 2nd level cleric. His daily spells are – Zero: detect magic, first aid x 2, light, 1st: cure light wounds, cause fear.*)

Gakmuk is grotesque both in size and appearance, even for a goblin. He casts spells before entering into combat.

BUGBEAR (*see above Area 17.*)

2 GOBLINS (*see above Area 13.*)

AREA 23 PRISONER ROOM

This once housed priest's vestments and other material needed for worship and rituals. It is currently used to hold the prisoners the goblins have caught. The room is now bare, except for manacles which have been nailed into the wall. There are three people in here now.

BARLDUS MIKENFIRD (*He is a 3rd level chaotic neutral human rogue. His vital stats are HP 13, AC 11. His primary dexterity, intelligence, charisma. His attributes are strength 10, dexterity 13, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wisdom 10, charisma 10. He has no equipment.*)

Barldus is an agent of Deitbold Heimer. He was sent to negotiate for a cessation of raiding in this area, but has been rebuffed. Marglerod wants more gold and is threatening to kill the Malkin twins and others from Botkinburg if he does not receive it. Barldus will attempt to escape as soon as possible if released. He then heads for Ludensheim. He claims to have been captured outside of Ludensheim while on a trip to Botkinburg.

MALKIN TWINS (*These neutral good humans vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They have no equipment.*)

The Malkin Twins will be relieved to be returned to Botkingburg and offer undying friendship and service to the characters. This latter does not mean they will become their servants.

AREA 24 SHRIEKING HALLWAY

This broad hallway is covered in a rich green vegetation much like moss. Many small and large mushrooms (up to two feet in height) festoon the floor and cling to the walls. It is obvious many have been cut at the stalk, and there are several straw baskets on the floor with mushroom heads and stems in them. A large wooden stand sits by the entry to this corridor with several cut mushrooms on it as well as a sickle and incense burner.

Most are for eating, and the goblins pick them whenever they can. The more insidious type of mushroom here is the screecher. There are only three of these in the hallway, and they are located at the north end. In many respects they look similar to the other mushrooms, but they are, in fact, small fey with thick torsos and short stumpy legs. When anything not carrying the incense burner with incense from Gakmuk's chamber moves within 20 feet of the screechers, they begin to wail, possibly alerting other creatures within a 100-foot radius.

Locating the screechers amongst all the mushrooms can take up to d4 rounds. A successful wisdom check halves the amount of time it takes to locate the screechers. If all the shriekers are killed within two rounds, there is only a 5 in 10 chance of anyone being alerted. For each additional round, that chance increases by one. If anyone is alerted, they will come to investigate. The latter does not include the wandering goblins, who do come to investigate.

3 SCREECHERS (*These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 12, 16, 18, AC 13. Their primary attributes are none. They have no attack ability they simply screech.*)

AREA 25 EMPTY ROOMS

These rooms are being used as storerooms and have several casks of beer, food, and other supplies in them. The food consists of dried fruits and meats, enough to supply 30 goblins for a month or so.

THE DEEPS OF THE VARGOLG

This lower level of the dungeon is rarely used, but was cleaned out somewhat after the abandonment. A few goblins are camped down here as guards against the creatures who live beyond the lake room. Here, the rooms are rough hewn with only a few places where brick and mortar have been used. Other than the goblin guards mentioned below, only the ghost naga dwells in the Deeps.

AREA 26 GUARD ROOM

This hallway leads down a twisted passage to the lower level. The way is blocked by a metal door. The door is rusted but easily opened. It grates loudly when this happens, and warns those on the inside that something is coming. Inside the room is a large goblin and several smaller goblins. At first, they are not shocked but once they get sight of the characters, they immediately spring into action, knowing that humans mean no good for them.

The room has two large tables in it and a cot. A large pot of boiling soup is sitting over a fire. The room is half full of acridic smoke making it difficult to see and breathe. Upon one of the tables is a large corpse wyrm pie.

4 GOBLINS (*see above Area 7.*)

GOBLINS CHIEF (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 6, AC 14. His primary attributes are physical. He carries boiled leather armor, shield, short spear, 2d4 gp, 2d6 sp, 3d10cp.*)

AREA 27 LAKE ROOM

This is a broad room that is part of a natural fracture cavern. A small fissure in the west end of the room leads to the Hruesen River. It is all underground and is the source of the water in the room. During the dry season, this room is nearly empty of water while during the wet season, the room is always full.

Crossing the room is difficult, as the water is about 20 feet deep and the ground is blocky and uneven. If the characters look closely in the water, they can see a small skiff hanging on a rock shelf about five feet down beneath the water. They can attempt to retrieve the boat to cross the water, swim across it, or alternately, they can build a raft to cross the water. Although no creature resides in the water, as soon as any character enters it or even touches the water in this room, a low howling noise erupts from the cavern entries on the other side of the room. Likewise, the water begins to ripple and thrash a little.

As soon as any character crosses the midpoint of the water, the demon (ghost naga) that guards the rear portion of the dungeon is alerted to the presence of a fresh soul. Its howling can be heard all over the lower portion of the dungeon. From this point forward, an encounter check should be made every two turns (20 minutes) to see if the ghost naga locates the characters. A 1 on a d10 indicates the monster has located the party. See Ghost Naga at the end of the dungeon description (page 49).

AREA 28 COLLAPSING CEILING

The ceiling in these sections of the dungeon is in danger of collapsing. All rooms and corridors within a 30 foot area are loose.

48 CASTLES & CRUSADES

Any loud noises (combat, yelling) or any spells that cause jarring may cause the ceiling to collapse (1–3 on a d10). If enough noise or vibration occurs to cause this, a 30 foot diameter section of ceiling may fall near the center or origin of the noise. Roll a d20 and this is the number of feet away from the center that the collapse occurs. If anyone is caught in the collapsing portion, he must make a dexterity check to avoid damage for every 10' section he has to move through to get out of the way. A successful check indicates he moves through that 10 feet without taking damage. A failed check indicates d6 damage. Two failed checks in a row indicates the character is stuck beneath a large boulder and receives another d6 of damage.

The ceiling can collapse, even if the characters are not under it or close by. If the characters make a lot of noise in nearby sections of the dungeon, the ceiling may collapse and block this passage.

AREA 29 SACRIFICIAL ROOM

To satiate the lusts of the beasts that once roamed the hallways in the deeps of the Vargolg, a sacrificial room was erected. At one time, elaborate sacrificial rites were followed before any sacrifice was made but they ceased to be used once the greater demons left the Vargolg or were killed. However, knowing that something resides in the depths of the dungeon, the goblins still make sacrifices, though very irregularly and with much fear.

In the center of the room is a large stone dais with manacles and chains still attached to it. The base of the dais is etched and embossed in elaborate glyphs and carvings of various creatures. Upon closer inspection, the carved images of demons and lords of the abyss loom from the dais. The floor is a reddish marble while the walls are made black slate.

A large opening is on the far side of the room with fresh, cool, moist air coming out of it in a soft breeze. The room, however, is filled with rotted and decayed corpses of animals, goblins, humans, and others. Piles of skeletal material are heaped along the walls, and the rancid stretch is acidic to the nostrils.

AREA 30 TREASURY

This room is one of the lesser treasure rooms and has remained untouched for ages. It is the room the ghost naga is guarding. The door to the room is iron and has a series of three interlocking locks on it. They must be opened in the correct order to actually work. The middle lock must be picked first, followed by the first lock, and then the third or bottom lock. All pick lock checks are made at a +2 due to the age of the locks and the broken mechanisms.

If the incorrect order is chosen, a trap springs and a scything blade swings from the ceiling. Should this trap be searched for, it is difficult to

locate, but a success indicates the searcher has noted the slit in the ceiling above the door. The only manner of disabling the trap is to block the slit from which the blade will drop. If the trap is sprung, a large double-bladed axe swings down in an arc across the front of the door. Because of the age of the mechanism, those in the path receive a +2 dexterity check to avoid being hit, since it clicks and clangs and sticks for a moment before swinging down. A failed dexterity check indicates 2d4 damage. Should the blade not hit anyone, the force of the pendulum swing allows it continue its arc back up into the slit, and the trap is reset. Should the blade strike anyone, the force of the pendulum is reduced, and the blade cannot swing up to reset.

Beyond the doorway is a small room with many shelves running its length. The shelves are full of scrolls, piles of vellum, and many large and small boxes. Reading through the scrolls and looking over the vellum, reveals list upon list upon list of items that have passed through the treasuries in the Vargolg. Literally tens of thousands of pieces of gold, silver, copper and even platinum. There are also lists of troop movements and allocation of resources indicating troop numbers in the thousands stretching over hundreds of years.

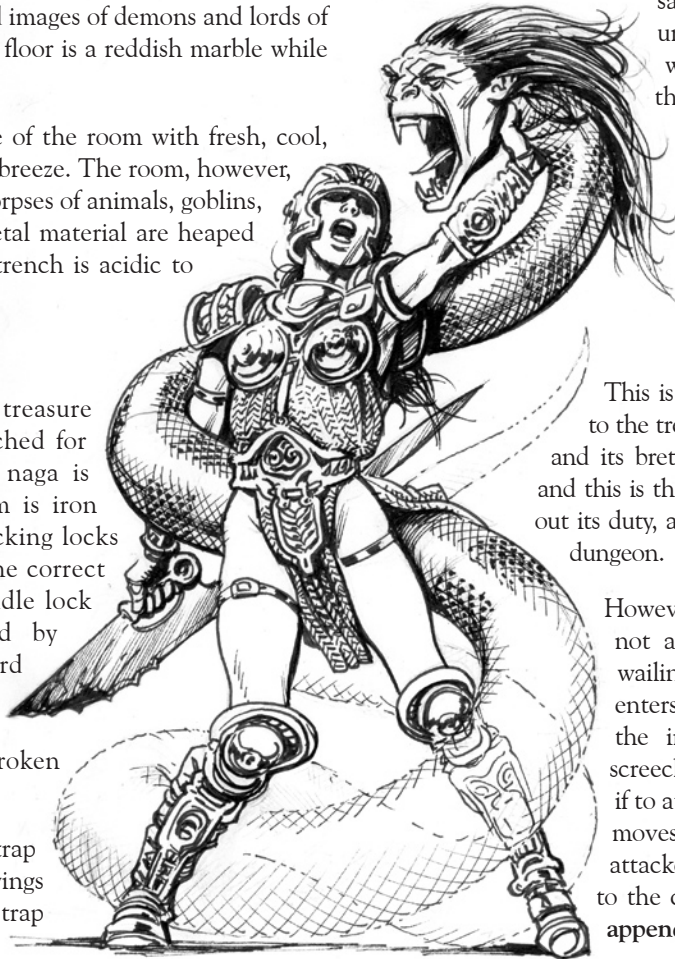
None of the boxes are locked. There are about 186 of them. Each contains small stone tablets with single glyphs in them and a ring. These are name glyphs and signet rings belonging to each of the rulers of Vargolg. The rings are silver and have a single small black stone in them, all with two glyphs: one unique and the other the same. Each ring is only worth 2d10sp unless an antiquarian can be located who values such ancient artifacts. In this case, the lump of the rings is worth nearly 1000gp, or 10gp each if sold individually.

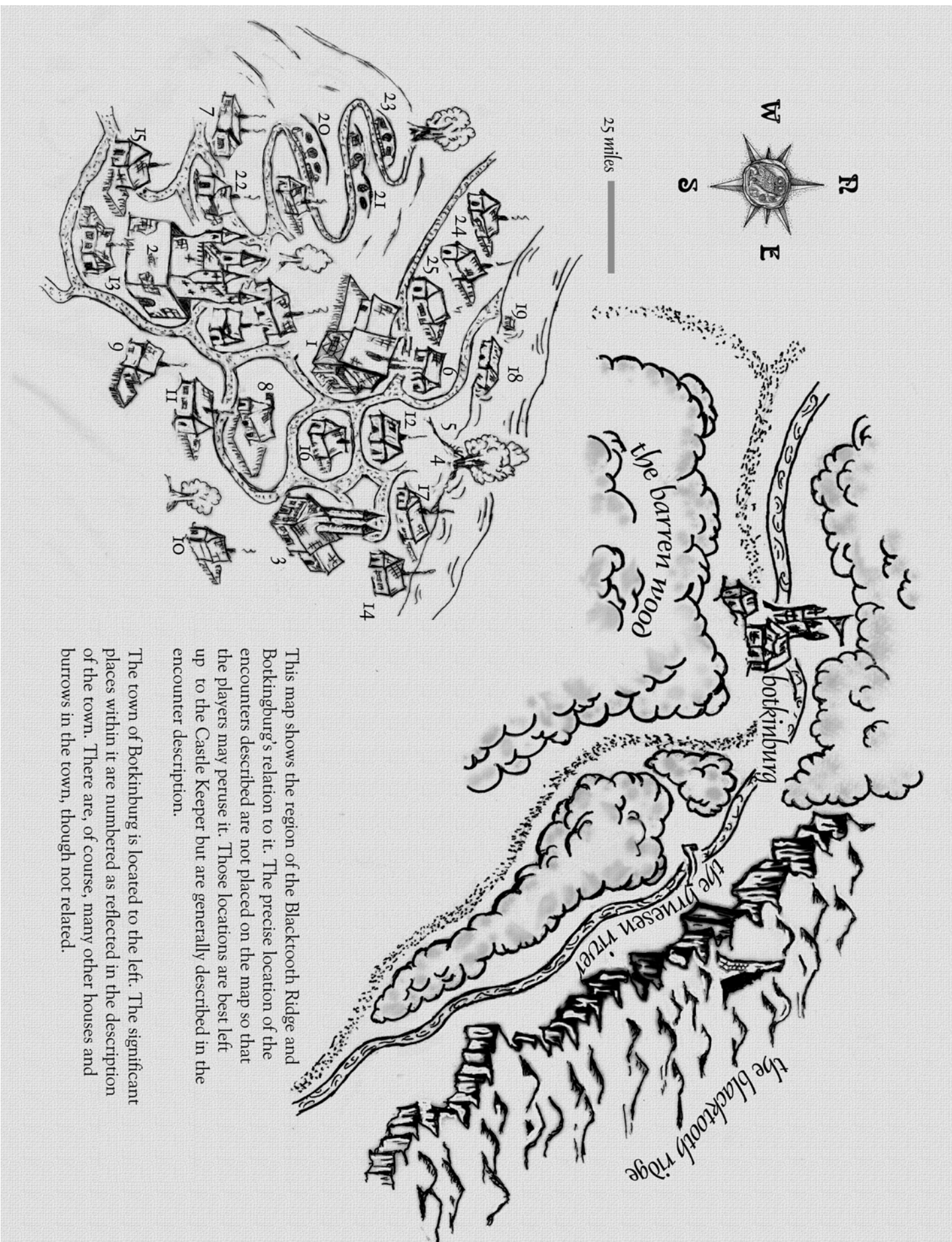
If the ghost naga has not been encountered by this time, it will show up as soon as the first box is opened.

THE GHOST NAGA

This is a lesser guardian of a door that leads to the treasure room above. The elder guardian and its bretheren were all killed some time ago, and this is the only one that remains. It still carries out its duty, attacking all who enter this area of the dungeon.

However, it does not attack those who do not attack it. The ghost naga will begin wailing and screeching as soon as anyone enters the water in Area 27 and move to the interlopers. Upon spotting them, it screeches to cause fear, begins ghost move as if to attack the interloper. As the ghost naga moves through the character, it will either be attacked or not. If not, it no longer pays heed to the characters. If so, the battle is on (see appendix for her stats.)





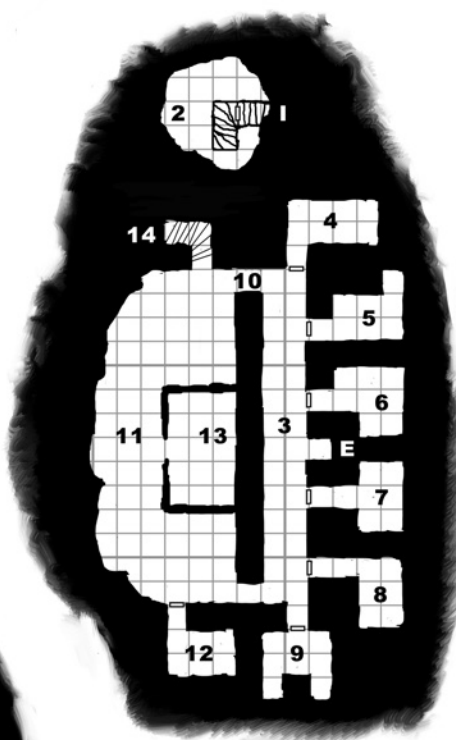
This map shows the region of the Blacktooth Ridge and Botkinburg's relation to it. The precise location of the encounters described are not placed on the map so that the players may peruse it. Those locations are best left up to the Castle Keeper but are generally described in the encounter description.

The town of Botkinburg is located to the left. The significant places within it are numbered as reflected in the description of the town. There are, of course, many other houses and burrows in the town, though not related.



THE VARGOLG

KRUGGLE'S LAIR



□ = 10 FEET

C- CONCEALED DOOR

S- SECRET DOOR

BACK TO BLACKTOOTH RIDGE

INTRODUCTION

BACK TO BLACKTOOTH RIDGE is a short adventure that takes place in a cavern with an old crypt at its bottom. The crypt was well hidden down a defile and inside a natural cavern, called the Dungurd, along the Blacktooth Ridge. Only the bottommost portion of the cavern was carved into funeral chambers, blessed, hidden, and guards set within. The remainder of the cavern was left as is. For many years only wild animals took up residence in the cavern as the magics hiding and guarding it were strong. With the demise of the Horned One, those magics have weakened.

Recently, a small band of kobolds has taken residence inside the Dungurd cavern. These kobolds are aware of the crypt, but avoid that area as much as possible. They otherwise live the normal miserable kobold existence, scraping a living from the lands about while avoiding orcs, goblins, giants, unger, elves, wild beasts, humans, and any others that may do them damage.

There are 60 kobold males in this cavern, making it an exceedingly dangerous place. There are also eight females (their prized possessions) and 22 pups and 42 eggs. The kobolds are lead by Seeztak, formerly a sub-chief of the Sawtooth clan. He is a vicious and nasty leader of great intelligence. Each of these traits contributed to his downfall within the Sawtooth clan and eventually to he and his family being expelled. This is their last refuge, and they will guard it and their females to the last.

FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

This adventure is designed for 4–6 characters of 3rd–5th level. This adventure can be very deadly for an ill-prepared group of adventurers, but a fun and exciting challenge for a well-prepared party. The adventure is best approached as an aside to other adventures, as it begins and ends here. To best accomplish this, the characters should be informed of the general location of Dungurd and the “crypt” by some captured orc or unger who is pleading for his life and offers the crypt’s location as a bargaining chip. Or perhaps the characters find a map to the location, or even hear about it from the wizard or other important personage at Botkinburg (see *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*).

A note on kobold arrows and javelins. These are stone-tipped and made locally from materials the kobolds can easily gather. Being stone-tipped makes them much more difficult to penetrate armors than their steel-tipped counterparts. They receive a –1 penalty to hit.

DUNGURD

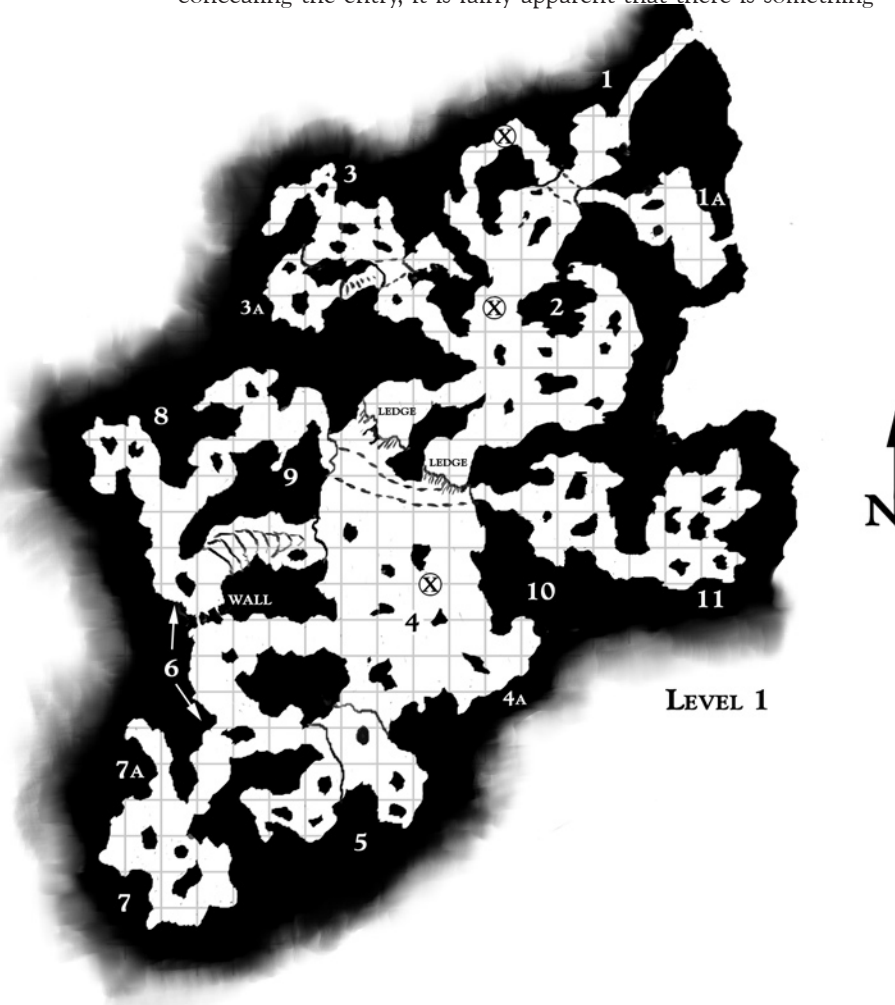
ENTRIES: The entries to this cavern are well-hidden in a deep and narrow defile off a small bank along the Blacktooth Ridge. The defile’s entry is covered in bramble and thorny bushes, making it difficult to locate. If informed of the general location of the crypt (known to a few orcs, trolls, and unger), a

ranger must make a successful tracking check (challenge level 5) to locate the trail leading to the defile. For each day spent searching for the trail, the ranger adds +1 to the tracking check. If the characters are simply traveling through the area, spying the defile is nearly impossible, as its natural position and location make it look as if the ridge line simply continues without break. A wisdom check (CL 10) is necessary to observe the defile.

Once observed, the kobold trail has slight impressions of clawed feet that might be confused with several of the wild animals in the woods were it not for the telltale signs of weapons dragging the ground, clipped branches, as well as a few tiny scraps of cloth and leather. The trail leads to the edge of the river, where it abruptly ends, at a broad and shallow part of the river. Across the way is a small bank upon which the defile is apparent.

The defile is merely 6 feet wide and stretches nearly 200 feet into the ridge line, becoming progressively narrower towards its end. It is thick with bramble, thorny bushes, and vines. Moving down the defile is a noisy affair for most people, as the bushes have to be cleared along the way. Unless crawling, only a small person, about 3 ½ feet in height or less, can move down the trail without causing much of a disturbance and then only if he moves very slowly. All move silent checks receive a –3 penalty, except for those crawling or who are under 3 ½ feet in height.

About 50 feet down the defile there is a small opening concealed with a frame wicker door laced with vines. Despite the attempts at concealing the entry, it is fairly apparent that there is something



unusual here. It is easily removed. Continuing down the defile another 60 feet or so another opening, just as the previous, can be located. Both entries are about seven feet tall and three feet wide. The one furthest down the defile has obviously been modified from its original size. Both the entries are guarded (See Area 1 and 1a below), and the any characters moving down the trail are likely to be heard or smelled once they get within 30 feet of an entry.

AREA 1 AND 1A

This room is littered with twigs, leaves, branches, and other debris. There are also several piles of cooked and uncooked meat and some sleeping blankets tossed about.

There are four kobold guards and five large rats in each of the rooms at all times. The guards are fairly attentive, but do jabber amongst themselves, depending upon the large rats to smell or hear anything coming down the defile. The rat packs in each room get one check to detect if anyone is coming down the defile. If the characters are simply moving through the defile with no attempt to be quiet or cannot be quiet, the rats make a detection check (mental) at +12. If the characters are attempting to be quiet but are over 3 ½ feet tall, the rats receive a +6 to their check. If smaller characters are sneaking down the path, the rats get a normal check if the characters' move silent checks were successful. If the characters' move silent checks were not successful, the rats receive a +6 to their check.

Should the rats note the presence of something moving down the defile, they begin twittering and making noise. A single kobold sneaks out of the door to investigate. If the kobold sees anything, it attempts to give warning to the others and escape back inside to prepare for a fight. One of those kobold guards gives warning to the rest of the tribe. If need be, the kobolds retreat back to Area 4 with the rest of the tribe to set a trap. While doing so, they encourage the large rats to attack the characters and stall their approach. In setting traps and planning attacks on the characters, the kobolds use the two entries to move around and behind the characters if possible.

The tunnel leading from Area 1a to Area 2 dips beneath the tunnel leading from Area 1 to Area 2.

There is a trap in the tunnel leading from Area 1 to Area 2. Midway down the tunnel and old animal trap has been placed beneath some leaves and twigs. There is a 1 in 6 chance that any character passing over it sets the trap off, triggering it to snap on a leg, causing 1–3 points of damage and reducing the victim's movement by 10 feet a round until healed. A successful dexterity check reduces the damage by 1 and mitigates and movement penalty.

KOBOLD x8 (These chaotic evil creatures vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 12, HP 2 each. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry leather armor, small bows, 5 arrows and short sword.)

RATS, LARGE x10 (These neutral creatures vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 13 and HP 2 each. Their primary attributes are physical. A bite can cause disease.)

AREA 2

This is large cavern. Loose rocks, debris, stalactites, and stalagmites make it hazardous to move through. A fire burns brightly in the southwest corner, casting shadows all about. Two dimly lit corridors exit to the south. Noises can easily be heard down these corridors. Elsewhere about the room are piles of blankets, scattered utensils, and slivers of meat hanging from twine tied to rocks and stalagmites.

This is where the guards sleep. There are 10 kobolds and a war leader here at the moment. These are the first to react to any warning from the guards, arming themselves and waiting to attack any unwanted guests. If the guards from 1 and 1a retreat, they gather here.

Most of the kobolds hide amongst the stalagmites and stalactites in the northeast section of the cavern. Any checks to spot the hidden kobolds are made at a –3 penalty due to the shadows cast by the fire. Four kobolds wait in the tunnel leading to Area 4. These four race down the tunnel as soon as the characters appear, hoping to draw them into the complex a little further. Once the characters have moved down the tunnel, the kobolds hidden in the northeast corner of the room attack, first with arrows and javelins, and then they charge into the melee.

Movement through this room is difficult, and unless the characters slow to half movement or less, they must make a dexterity check or risk slipping and falling. While engaged in combat, the characters must make a check each round or risk falling. Casting spells or using ranged weapons does not require this check.

KOBOLD x10 (These chaotic evil creatures vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 13, HP 3 each. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry leather armor, shield, 3 small javelins and short sword.)

KOBOLD WAR LEADER (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 15, and HP 6. His primary attributes are physical. He carries leather armor with metal plates, a shield, 2 small javelins, short sword, and wears a necklace with a gold medallion worth 130gp.)

AREA 3

This area reeks of urine, feces, and wet, rotten rags. The corridor is piled with tiny bones and scraps of dead vermin.

This is the rat den. Two-dozen large rats and the kobold rat keeper nest down in this corridor. The keeper sleeps on a pile of rags and hay in the nook in the west end of the room. The rats generally gather in 3a. The kobold owns a magical pipe, allowing him to control the rats (described below). Once the kobold hears the sounds of combat, the kobold gets his pipe and calls the rats in the corridor to action and attacks in 2–6 rounds. If his situation gets desperate, he releases the wererats in Area 3b.

RATS, LARGE x12 (These neutral creatures vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 13 and HP 2 each. Their primary attributes are physical. A bite can cause disease.)

KOBOLD RAT KEEPER (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 12, and HP 4. His primary attributes are physical. He carries leather armor, short sword, and carries pipes of rat control.)



PIPES OF RAT CONTROL: This is a simple instrument with two flutes tied together and two holes in each flute. It is made of rat bone and tied together with rat tendon. It takes a month at least to learn to play this instrument and then in the presence of rats to ensure that one is learning the correct notes. Once mastered, this instrument allows the one playing it to telepathically control any rats within 50 feet of the pipe that could normally hear it.

AREA 3A

This is the area where the large rats usually gather.

AREA 3B

This tunnel runs down and underneath that leading to Area 3. It is filthy and smells even more wretched than the rest of the caverns in this rat infested area. Chained along the north wall are two hideous creatures, caricatures of rat and man, a nasty hybrid of both. Both froth at the mouth, hissing foul and nasty words at all who get near.

These are wererats. Two humans were caught several years ago and subjected to a bite. These wererats obey only the rat keeper (who keeps them well-fed). If released, they assume human form (male and female) and attempt to beguile any party member by seeking aid and rescue. Once the party is vulnerable, the wererats will assume their wereform and attack. Just prior to this, though, they will summon a rat swarm.

WERERATS x2 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, AC 17 and HP 16. Their primary attributes are physical. A bite can cause disease and possibly lycanthropy.)

AREA 4

This large cavern is dominated by two large fires in its center. Dozens of sleeping mats and piles of hay are scattered around the room. Several deer carcasses, with large chunks of meat pulled from them, are hanging from the ceiling.

There are, of course, many kobolds in the room as well. However, the Castle Keeper should describe their location and activities,

as much of their locations depend upon the characters' actions. This chamber is used as the main hall for the kobolds, with fire pits being focal points for activities. There is little of value in here. These kobolds' tools are makeshift and made of stone and rock. The nook along the east wall is where the stone-tipped arrows and javelins are made. There are three small bows here also.

By the time the characters reach this room, the kobolds should be aware of their presence. If not, the two-and-a-half dozen kobolds in here should notice them quickly. All these kobolds arm and get ready for a fight. There are three war leaders in this room. They do not lead in attacks, rather command from the rear. If the chief (Area 7) and shaman (Area 8) are not here already, they will be shortly to help out.

The kobolds attempt to draw the characters off of the ledge and to the south end of the main chamber. To do this, the kobolds scatter, forming up into several groups and hiding behind the various piles of debris and in the nooks and crannies of the room. The chief, shaman, and two of the sub-chiefs stay around the entry to **Area 6**.

If the kobolds are successful in drawing the characters into the center of the room, the characters are pelted with ranged weapons and the shaman casts hold person or other helpful spells. The chief will have called out his rust monster pet at this point but does not send it into combat unless it appears that the combat is near over. He keeps it for a last stand in the rooms below. Should 20 or more kobolds die in here, the remainder retreat to Areas 15–17 for a last stand.

KOBOLD x30 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 13, HP 3 each. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry leather armor, shield, 3 small javelins and short sword.)

KOBOLD WAR LEADERS x3 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 15, and HP 6 each. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry leather armor with metal plates, a shield, 2 small javelins, short sword and each wears jewelry worth 30–180 gp.)

AREA 5

These two chambers each have a small shrine in them. Upon rock piles are small, crudely carved stone statues of kobolds holding spears. Beneath the rock piles are remnants of food and small fires.

These are statues to the kobold deity Ahrshsl (kobolds only have a few vowels to use and don't waste them).

AREA 6

This hallway ascends steeply to both the north and south. A large pile of rock, like a wall, crosses the far southern end of this hallway.

The kobolds have built small rock wall across the southern corridor. They hide behind this and fire at anyone moving this direction in hopes of delaying or deterring any further penetration. The corridor to the east descends steeply and leads to Areas 13–25.

AREA 7

This thoroughly dirty chamber has piles of furs spread all around, scraps of meat and bone heaped here and anon, and smells of old dog and a refuse heaps. In the middle of this is a chair of sorts as it is built of tree limbs and bones and no more than one foot off the ground. A pile of javelins sits in one corner and several small kegs rest in the other.

This is Secztak's room. Two guards sleep here and stay with the chief at all times. His servants bring him all the food he needs, and he rarely leaves this place anymore. When he leaves, he takes the rust monster with him as well as his guards.

KOBOLD BODYGUARD x2 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 15, and HP 8 each. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry leather armor with metal plates, a shield, 2 small javelins, short sword, and each wears jewelry worth 30–180 gp.)

KOBOLD CHIEF, SEEZTAK (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 17, and HP 14. His primary attributes are physical. He carries chain armor with metal plates, a shield, small bow, short sword, and wears jewelry worth 250 gp. He also wears a parapet of partial protection. This gives the wearer a +4 to armor class against one swing a round-the wearer's choice.)

AREA 7A

This cavern has a large piles of refuse in it and a large wooden trunk in its center. The trunk is unusual in that there does not appear to be any metal fixtures on it and the top is covered in small quills.

This is the treasure room. The rust monster is usually here, though by the time the characters get here, will likely have already been called into combat. All the treasure the chief has collected is in the chest.

The chest is odd in that there are no metal fixtures on it and the top is covered in small sharp quills. A druid or ranger immediately recognizes them as porcupine quills. The lid is trapped, though so rudimentarily that bypassing it should not present a problem (the easiest being to smash the trunk). Once the lid is lifted, a string attached to a springboard releases the quills, which fly about the room. The trap can be disabled by hooking the string prior to fully opening the lid and holding it taught or cutting it. Most fall harmlessly to the floor, but several have a chance of hitting a character in the face or hands. A successful dexterity check avoids all quills. A failed check indicates a character was struck by 1–2 quills, which cause no discernable damage but are poisoned. A constitution check (challenge level 3) is required to avoid the effects of the poison. The poison causes paralysis in 3–18 turns and lasts for 1–6 hours.

The chest contains 200cp, 120sp, 55gp, six gems worth 25gp each, and jewelry worth 300gp. In this jewelry is a necklace with a long glass pendant on it. The pendant is actually a vial with a single draught of liquid in it that cures serious wounds.

RUST MONSTER (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, AC 18, HP 24. Its primary attributes are physical. It can cause any metal item to rust with a successful hit.)

AREA 8

This chamber has a small cot and a shelf made of sticks and limbs in it. The shelf has many small candles, clay statuettes, pebbles, rocks and bones.

This is the kobold shaman's room. Most of the items on the shelf are small religious items of no particular value. The only exception being a gold pendant with a symbol of the underworld upon it. This is a pendant of zombie repelling, causing all zombies (who can see it) to back away from the wearer for 1–12 rounds unless a saving throw is made. Then they back away for 1–6 rounds. The shaman is probably not in here but joined any fight occurring elsewhere.

KOBOLD SHAMAN (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 12, HP 6. Its primary attributes are mental. It carries leather armor and a stone club. It can cast the following spells once per day; 0 – create water, endure elements, first aid, detect poison; 1 – protection from good, sanctuary, bless; 2 – aid, hold person; 3 – glyph of warding.)

AREA 9

This cavern is foul and littered with the detritus of rat's nests. Several large rats sit on rock, twittering madly at all who enter.

The six large rats will attack.

RATS, LARGE x6 (These creatures vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 13, HP 3 each. Their primary attributes are physical. A bite can cause disease.)

AREA 10

This cavern reeks of decayed and rotting flesh. Within lie four flayed bodies of kobolds.

This kobolds here have been turned into zombies by the shaman. They guard the pups in Area 11 and come to life whenever anyone crosses the threshold and into this room.

ZOMBIE KOBOLDS x4 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 12, HP 8, 7, 6 and 4. Their primary attributes are physical.)

Area 11

This chamber has a few piles of fur and bone, a pile of small leather pouches, a hammer, chisel, knife and small lock box and a pile of tusks in the corner.

This is the shaman's treasure room. There is 45sp in the lock box. The tusks are about 2 feet long, thick and curved. They are worth about 50gp each.

LEVEL TWO

AREA 12

This small chamber is piled with the carcasses of small rats, tiny bones and other refuse. The walls of the chamber have dozens of small holes bored into them. In a few of the holes, yellow eyes peer out.

The holes are about one foot wide and two feet deep. There are about 40 of them. These nooks are where the kobold pups curl up and sleep. This cavern is used to house 22 kobold pups. All these kobolds are defenseless and scatter if attacked. Should the kobolds from above have retreated this far, they will gather as many pups as they can and take them deeper into the cave for protection. In any case, there will still be a few in this room.

KOBOLD PUPS x22 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d1, AC 10, and HP1 each. They do not attack.)

AREA 13

Two large manacles hang from the wall in here. Refuse is piled along both sides of the area.

These two wererats will be released by the kobolds as they retreat down the corridor. They move up and attack any interlopers.

WERERATS x2 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, AC 17, HP 16. Their primary attributes are physical. A bite can cause disease and possibly lycanthropy.)

AREA 14

This cavern is heaped with piles of hay and grass. In some of the piles are large oval green eggs.

During their retreat, the kobolds gather as many of these eggs as possible. These eggs are worth perhaps 100gp each to an apothecary if delivered whole.

AREA 15

This chamber has a pool in it, a pile of buckets, and small cups.

The kobolds get their water from this pool. A few kobolds attempt to hide in here and attack the characters from the rear should they make it further.

AREA 16

This corridor slopes down at a steep angle.

If the kobold chief has managed to make it this far, he grabs two small barrels of oil hidden in the corridor and busts them open, dumping them in the hallway. The oil is not flammable, but can cause any creature moving over it to slip. Any character moving across the oil must make a dexterity check (challenge level 3) or slip and fall, sliding 1–10 feet down the corridor. He is considered prone for all combat purposes.

AREA 17

This narrow and long chamber is lined with piles of furs and blankets and several raccoon carcasses hang from the ceiling. A pool of water is located towards its end.

The females get the best and most fresh food as well as the nicest furs. However, even considering this, the items are barely palatable and have no value. The females look much like males, except they are fat with large engorged teats. The female kobolds do fight.

KOBOLD FEMALES x8 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10, HP 2 each. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry daggers, and each wears 1d10gp worth of jewelry.)

AREA 18

This corridor ends in a pile of rocks, bones, skulls, and the detritus from above. It is heaped and piled, covering the corridor from floor to ceiling.

To go further, the characters must dig through this pile of material. It will take several hours; it is loosely packed so should present no problem.

AREA 19

This broad, long hallway descends down into the earth at a slight angle. The walls are plastered and painted blue with frescoes of black hounds leaping after unicorns. The floor is tiled in alternating red and black marble squares. Several kobold skeletons lie on the floor.

The hallway descends into the charnal house of the crypt. It is guarded by shadow mastiffs. These creatures were summoned many ages ago to prevent anyone from going further into the crypt. The shadow mastiffs are actually blended into the wall, and only after the characters pass midway down the hallway, do they begin to emerge from the wall to attack. However, with a successful intelligence check, an observant character may note that several of the eyes of the hounds are looking at and following the characters as they walk down the hall.

SHADOW MASTIFFS x3 (These neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d8, AC 14, HP 17, 16, 15. Their primary attributes are physical. Their special abilities are bay, trip and blend.)

AREA 20

This room's walls are plastered and painted blue. There are depictions of armies at war painted on the walls. In the center of the room is a 8-foot-tall statue of a minotaur with a spear stabbing into the heart of a human knight.

The spear in the statue's hand is the one which belonged to the general buried here. It can be removed by breaking off the hand of the statue and chiseling the fingers away from the haft. It is a +2 wolf spear.

AREA 21

Two rotting doors open into a room with bare walls. A table is pushed up against the southwest wall and some votive candles and small statuettes are placed in nooks along the northeast wall.

There are seven statuettes of Unklar in the nooks along the wall. To a collector each is worth 100–400gp.

AREA 22

Within this room is plain and solid stone table with one large carving on its center. The room has many shelves and nooks carved into the walls which, in turn, are filled with jars and vessels of various sizes.

This chamber was used to prepare the body of the entombed. The carving on the stone table is that of Unklar. The vessels and containers in the shelves contain the internal organs of the general entombed herein.

AREA 23

The walls of this small room have been plastered and painted a pale blue. The floor has black and white tiles. A large statue of alabaster marble is placed against the northwest wall. It depicts a corpulent horned beast sitting cross-legged and staring straight up. In one hand is a golden bowl and the other a golden sickle. At the foot of the statue is a brass plate with an inscription etched upon it.

The statue is that of Klot, the deity of wounding and pain. A secret door is located in the statue. The inscription on the brass plate is in an ancient and foul tongue. It says, “I am the defiler, the scourge and pestilence. Two lives need I. From one who would sooth the lie and from one who for evil does cry.” The inscription refers to blood from any lawful or good character. If any lawful or good character places two drops of blood in the bowl held by the statue, the secret door swings open. Otherwise, the door will not open, and the walls must be dug through in order to go further. The door is difficult to locate (challenge level 4). Digging through the walls or statue to reach the corridor or rooms beyond takes 1–6 hours with the appropriate tools. Once the bowl and sickle have been removed from the statue, the secret door will never again open. The bowl and sickle are worth 2000gp each.

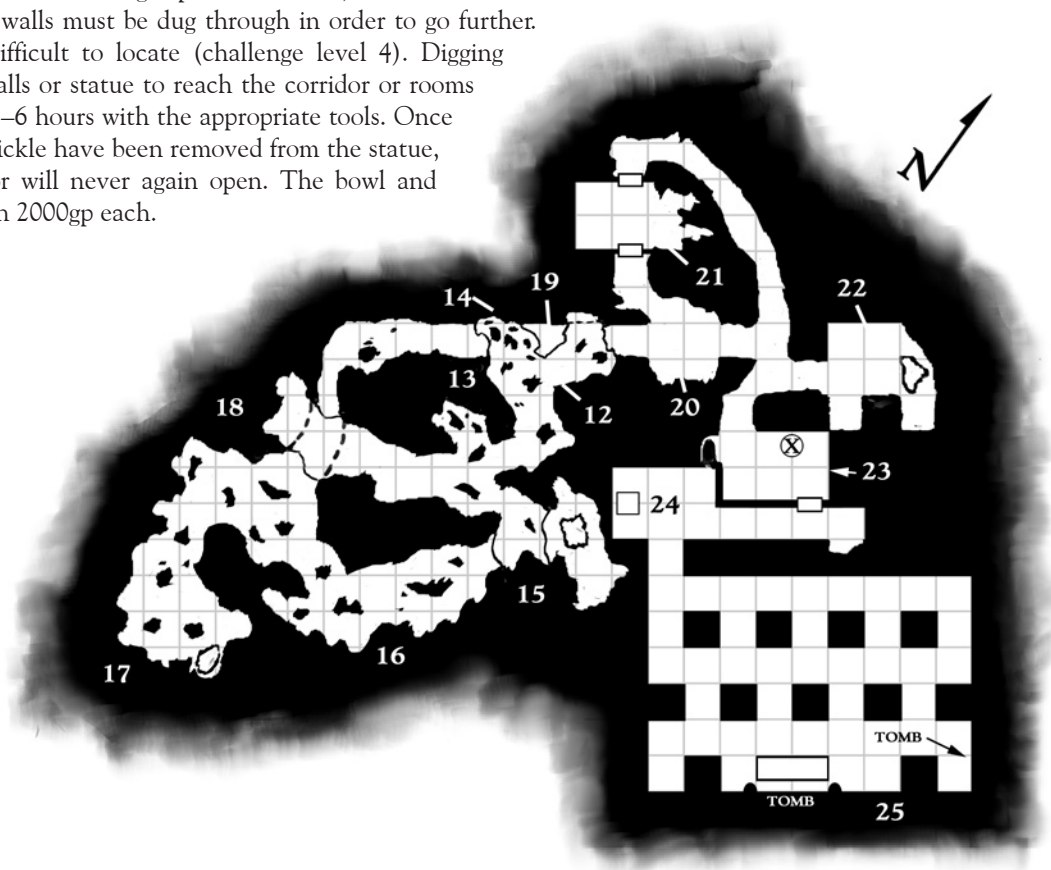
AREA 24

The walls in this room are painted blue and the floor has blue and white tiles on it. There are no paintings on the wall. At the southwest end of the room is a large stone sarcophagi. Atop it is a carving of armored figure with fanged teeth and clawed hands. An emblem of a minotaur is upon it.

This is a false tomb and the room contains a guardian spirit. When the sarcophagi is opened, a shadow emerges momentarily before slipping back in. This is a shadow that guards this place. It comes out, slides beneath the sarcophagi, and then comes up though the floor to attack a member of the party. The shadow cannot move more than 100 feet from the sarcophagi. The sarcophagi is empty.

The secret door is no door at all. The doorway here has actually been bricked up and plastered over so it looks like the rest of the room. The only way through to the other side is to knock down the wall. If a check for secret doors is successful, the character only hears a hollow rapping. A dwarf will likely be able to determine that the wall here is different than the other sections.

SHADOW (This neutral evil creature’s vital stats are HD 3d12, AC 13, HP 27. Its primary attributes are mental. Its special abilities are strength drain, create spawn, and blend. It can also move through solid objects.)



LEVEL 2

THE UMBRAGE SAGA 57

This massive chamber stretches far in every direction. Large stone columns, five feet in diameter, are spaced evenly across the room. The floor has black, blue, red, and white tiles interspaced across it. The walls are plastered and painted blue with depictions of warring armies depicted on them. The columns are painted red and have stylized geometric patterns painted upon them. The room is crowded with plush furnishings: couches, chairs, tables, nightstands, and other items of similar nature. There are shelves with books and dozens of personal items upon them.

Many of the items in this room are valuable, but not greatly so. Most items have a value of 1–10gp, with a few having values of up to 50gp. Many of these items are very bulky (chairs, tables, etc.), but some are small. Careful searching reveals 13 items (combs, pendants, etc.) worth 1–10gp each.

After being in the room for a few moments, the characters hear the sound of frogs croaking. Loud, deep croaks as if from large frogs. And after a few more moments the “bullfrogs” become visible. Several can be seen jumping about the room and croaking. These are not really bullfrogs, rather they are quasits disguising themselves as bullfrogs. There are 12 of them, and they have been tasked with protecting the spirit of the long-dead general which now resides here.

The long-dead general is actually a wraith that haunts this room. It cannot leave the room. Once the characters enter the room, the wraith awakens and begins moaning. When it moves, it does so through the columns in order to do so safely. The wraith watches the characters for a while, groaning and making a little noise all the while. Once the characters get within a few feet of the sarcophagi, it begins its attack, as do the quasits.

The quasits stay out of melee until they have cast all their spells; at which point, they change to their natural form and attack as a group, usually trying to swarm one character—preferably a spellcaster. The wraith moves between the columns, trying to avoid being hit while sneaking up behind a character to strike.

Inside the tomb area lies the corpse of an ancient human. It has decayed little with time and looks like an exceedingly old man with a narrow head and fanged mouth. It is wearing +2 scalemail armor, a black surcoat with a stylized minotaur sewn into it (30gp value), holds a golden scepter (250gp value), has a jeweled crown on its head (7500gp value), a jade signet ring (250gp) on its hand, and a small trunk rests at its feet. The trunk contains 500gp in coin, 5 moonstones worth 25gp, 4 fire opals worth 500gp, a set of ivory troll knuckles worth 3000gp, and a scroll with five spells on it: *command*, *bless*, *magic circle*, *restoration*, and *discern lies*.

WRAITH (*This lawful evil creature’s vital stats are HD 5d12, AC 15, HP 50. Its primary attributes are mental. Its special abilities are energy drain, create spawn and it can only be struck by magical weapons.*)

QUASITS x12 (*These creatures’ vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 14, HP 4 each. Their primary attributes are physical. They can polymorph three times per day and cast the following spells once per day as a third-level caster: protection from good, darkness, and pyrotechnics.*)

BLACKTOOTH UNCOVERED

The level ranges on the encounters are between 1 and 3. Simple adjustments in the number of creatures encountered, hit dice, hit points, and armor class should suffice to make these encounters more or less challenging.

NARGULF’S REAVERS

This is a band of vicious, cruel goblins and orcs who are led by a particularly beastly hobgoblin named Nargulf. They journeyed from the far north, across the Grausamland, on a scouting and assassination mission for their master to seek out none other than the leader of the Red Caps. Nargulf’s plan was to locate the lair of this renegade goblin, bring him to tow, and force him to serve their master, or kill the goblin if he did not obey. After some searching, they located one of the Red Cap’s bands and discovered that the number of goblins in the band was far too great for them to assault.

Nargulf has decided attacking the Red Caps would be suicidal, so has chosen to hide and ponder his next move. He is aware that returning to his homeland and to his lord empty handed would result in a rather brutal ending to his short life. Remaining in the region has its own dangers, with the Red Caps and human soldiers wandering about. Nargulf is considering several options. He could join the Red Caps, but he would then have to serve under their leader. He could cross the Hruesan River, find and join Seroneous, the Lord of the Witch Queen’s servants in the Barren Wood, or he could leave the country altogether and move east to where the Hlobane Kingdoms of orcs lie. He is truly at a loss, lingering in this perilous state of indecision. The one thing he is certain of is the loyalty of his crew.

The members of his band are a desperate lot, even for their race. Most of them were branded criminal or worse in Aufstrag, and given over to Nargulf because it seemed a good way to get them killed. They have been unable to achieve their mission, and for that reason are unable to return home. They are “in between the horns” as the folk of Aufstrag are wont to say whenever they find themselves in impossible situations. The one thing they do have going for them is their master, Nargulf. He has proved a brutal captain, and for this reason alone, they have warmed to him. He has saved them from several potential fatal scrapes, so they have faith in him to bring them out of this latest one.

Nargulf’s Reavers are a dangerous encounter for any venturing onto the Blacktooth Ridge. Nargulf is under tremendous stress and must contend with his own unruly band, the Red Caps, wandering knights and mercenaries, and other such riffraff. He suspects the Red Caps know he is about. Nargulf is aware the local human population will chase him down and slaughter him if discovered. He has become very protective of “his pretties,” as he calls his roguish band; therefore, he does not want to be discovered and will do anything to prevent it. As such, he tries to avoid contact with anything or anyone, if possible, and seeks to save the strength of his band for the important battles looming in his future.

THE STONE HOUSE

Nargulf and his band are currently encamped in an old stone building. This once imposing stone fort was an ancient way post, but

is now little more than a jumble of stones where the walls and donjon once stood. Nargulf's band have made the best of this encampment and built a makeshift wooden beam roof over a portion of the ruins. Here, they cook, eat, divide their meager spoils, and sleep. All their cooking gear, blankets, and other odds and ends are here. They also have a store of some armor and weapons they have acquired along the way. There are three suits of leather armor, 14 shields, 12 spears, one broadsword, four battle axes, two short bows, and 100 arrows. It is all in fair condition and usable. It can only be sold at half value.

At any given time there is a 50% that 1–4 orcs and 1–6 goblins are out hunting.

Nargulf is an intelligent leader and has two lookouts constantly posted. They are positioned on either side of the stone fort, about 20 yards out on the south side facing the Hrueson River, and on the east side facing the wilderness where the Red Caps are located. They use a series of bird calls to warn Nargulf of approaching danger. They also use hand gestures, learned from the ungern soldiers of Aufstrag, to silently communicate.

Nargulf is very intelligent and he does not spend his life nor the lives of his troops needlessly nor foolishly. He has managed to organize and discipline his followers so that they actually obey his commands. If he is able to gather his order of battle, he places the goblins in the center and the orc foot soldiers on the flanks. The orcs help keep the goblins from running. His two archers he keeps in the rear on each flank and uses them to constantly pepper the enemy with arrows. Nargulf will order the Reavers to retreat a good distance in order to marshal his band and place them in a fighting position. They do not fight to the death. If pressed too hard, they scatter and will rally several days later, north along the Blacktooth Ridge.

If the area around the old guard tower is searched carefully and rubble removed from the central portion of the encampment (one day of work for four people), an iron trapdoor is located. It opens into the donjon and a series of six large rooms containing old and rotted foodstuffs, beds, and other accouterments that are usually stored in these places. This was a place of last refuge for several of the fort's inhabitants during its final siege. The wall collapsed over the door, and the few remaining who were trapped here, died here. There are a dozen or more skeletons in the place, as well as some old rusted and pitted weapons and armor. In the farthest room, behind a locked door, is a treasure chest. It was the last tax collection for this region before the fort was destroyed in a battle.

TREASURE (The chest contains 125gp, 670sp, and 1240cp, all of ancient make.)

Note: The area beneath the tower ruins can be expanded as desired, perhaps haunted by the undead spirits of those lost in the battle.

NARGULF, HOBGOBLIN (This chaotic evil hobgoblin's vital stats are HD 3d8, hp 21, AC 16. His primary attributes are physical. In battle he wields a morningstar for 2d4+1 points of damage and a wickedly curved tulwar for 1d6+1 points of damage. Nargulf receives a +1 to AC, "to hit" bonus, and damage due to his combat experience. He carries a medium shield, scalemail, morningstar, tulwar, and 25sp. He has a small pouch on his belt with a ulep charm in it. He is constantly rubbing this charm between his finger and thumb.)



GOGREN, ORC (This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 12, AC 14. His primary attributes are physical. He wields a scimitar in battle that does 1d8 points of damage. Gogren can track like a 4th level ranger and has a ranger's survival ability. He carries studded leather armor, scimitar, short bow, dagger, and 5sp.)

ORCS x 10 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 5 each, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield scimitars in battle that do 1d8 points of damage. They carry studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, dagger and 1–6sp.)

ORCS, ARCHERS x 2 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 4 each, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield scimitars in battle that do 1d8 points of damage. They also use heavy crossbows that shoot for 1d10 points of damage. They carry studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, short bows, 10 arrows, dagger and 1–6sp.)

GOBLINS x 14 (These chaotic evil goblins' vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3 each, AC 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield shortswords and do 1d6 points of damage in battle. They carry light crossbow, shortsword, studded leather armor and 1–10sp.)

Ulep charms are made from the bones of dead dwarves, gnomes, halfling or elves. They are carved from the knee caps of the fallen demi-humans and made very smooth. They are often attached to a chain or bracelet. These charms, fashioned by the orc shamans of Hlobane from Aufstrag and the south are highly prized by folk of that ilk, as they impart a sense of calm and reason to the bearer. Those with ulep charms cannot be demoralized or affected by fear spells.

THE WIZENING BRANCH

Tales of the Wizenning Branch abound in the lands south of the Hrueson River, especially in the Barony of Botkinburg. Folk tell all manner of tales about that ancient tree and the meadow that surrounds it. Old Man Nester (*Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*, page 32, Area 10) seems to be the very source of much of this material.

"It is a dangerous place. I know. I've ne'er been there meself, but I've known many a folk that went seeking that old sliver of bark, and they aint ever come back . . . and if they did they wouldn't of talked about it no how. The Wizenning Branch. The Wizenning Branch. Aye, somes tell you that it don't exist, that 'tis an 'oldout from the ancient times, long gone to dust with the power in the north. But that ain't the truth of it. That old tree is evil, and its roots are evil and the birds that nest in its branches are evil, and anything to do with it is evil to boot. Avoid it I say; don't seek her out, or it'll gobble yers up, heart and soul. But mind ye, them fey folk of the Barren Wood, they hid up their treasure at the feet of that old tree and there be mounds of it!"

Nester doesn't know where the tree is, only that it lies south of the Hruesen River. If pushed about who or what he knows, he'll spin a yarn or two about people he knew in the old days who have long since died.

The tree itself is very old, having rooted upon the Blacktooth Ridge for many hundreds of years. In the deeps of the Winter Dark, Meltowg, the lord of the Vale Knights, planted its seed upon this ridge in a hidden meadow. He named the tree Ineng, which means "beacon" in the elvish tongue of those days. He made the meadow a rallying place for his soldiers in their war upon the dark with the cry of "be with Ineng," so that they knew in their haste where to meet. Time and again they gathered beneath the young tree and made what merriment they could in that long, dark season. But with the passing of the years, the Vale Knights came to the tree less and less. Their wars carried them into the west, and there they withered away. Many died at the hands of the Horned God's minions; others faded in the sorrow of their loss. Meltowg fell as well, slain by his own kin in the Castle of Spires.

But the tree lived on. In time its lonely vigil came to an end. An owl had come to roost in its higher branches. No ordinary owl, this creature was one of an ancient species that thrived in the Days before Days. They were always friends to the sentient trees, men, and elves. In time, the tree and owl grew inseparable, and they lived their lives out together, their fates becoming intertwined, one with the other.

Lonely upon the ridge, nestled in the comfort of the hidden meadow, Ineng and the owl stood thus for hundreds of years.

But the absence of the elves did not go unnoticed. As is common knowledge, the whole of the Hreusen River Valley and the accompanying Blacktooth Ridge and Barren Wood have long been the homes to the fey. These creatures, who come in a variety of shapes and forms, have ranged here since time immemorial. One particularly evil fey has taken a keen interest in the tree because of the owl. Mallow's Bone is a fowl creature; small, spindly and bent with his crooked ways, this fey knows of the owl's nature; that it comes from the great Void beyond and that it came to Aihrde in the days of its creation. He longs to slay it and devour

its feathers for the wisdom that they will bring. But the owl is safe in the old tree and beyond the reach of Mallow Bones.

So he has gathered a small army of pixies and the like, and they have set out to kill the tree. They are doing this by digging tunnels deep beneath its stem, chewing up its roots with the ultimate hope of finding the heart of the tree and suffocating it. When the tree falls, the owl will have no home.

Mallow Bones and his crew of fey have been secretly digging beneath the tree for several years. Time has no meaning for the fey, so there is no "hurry" in the traditional sense, but Mallow Bones does guard the meadow from all comers, trapping and slaying the good and evil alike, and keeping them from the tree and its great prize.

THE OLD MAN OF THE FOREST

The tangled game trail gives way to a wide meadow, and before you, in a clearing, is a tree of massive size and ancient lineage. The tree is nearly dead, with only a few branches still bearing leaves and piles of deadfall at its base. The tree stands a staggering 200 feet high and the bole is a good 20 feet wide at the base. Gnarled bark and stumped limbs bedeck this old man of the forest, and it leans a little as if longing to fall to the earth from which it came. Roosting in the top of the tree is a huge owl, nearly the size of a stout Grundliche dwarf.

The Ineng tree is dying and with it the owl. The owl has a symbiotic relationship to the tree, and as it dies, so too does the owl. Currently, the owl is not capable of flight because its feathers are falling out. The tree is dying because Mallow Bones has so viciously attacked its roots. The owl is aware of this, but unable to do anything to stop it. He watches anyone's approach with keen interest. He has seen others come, even talked to a few, but they have failed to root out the horrible fey that inhabit his home.

The owl notes any approaching people that are goodly aligned or have an elf with them. If he deems they can aid him and the tree, he hops to the lower branches and relates his plight and that of the tree to them. For those who manage to engage the owl in conversation, he asks for help and hopes the party will enter under the roots of the tree and engage whatever it is that is down there and kill it. This, the owl believes, will allow the tree and himself to become healthy again.

If the party agrees to do this, the owl begins hooting and after a time the bole of the tree splits open until a wide portal of twisted and raw wood is open to the party. It descends down beneath the bole of the tree. The opening extends down to a narrow corridor cut through the ground.

Beneath the tree, the party will find Marrow Bones and his crew of miscreants.

The tunnels beneath the tree are narrow, cramped and slick with mud and debris, making them very difficult to walk through. They spill into rooms of many sizes, obviously denoting where Marrow and his band were looking for the Heart.

Heavily armored characters simply cannot manage to move through them, as the tunnels are only 2–3 feet wide in some

places. Combat in the tunnels is difficult. For anyone other than small creatures, large weapons are used at a -4 to hit, and even small weapons receive a -2 to hit. Movement is halved for everyone. Using lanterns and torches produces enough smoke to fill local areas with noxious fumes relatively quickly. Within 20 minutes, any given 20-foot space, not in a corridor, will be so full of smoke and lack oxygen that anyone in there will have to leave or make a constitution check every minute to stay conscious.

The tunnels twist, turn, bend and fall back in on themselves. There really is no rhyme nor reason to this series of tunnels as they follow root lines, loose dirt, and the rather incoherent thought patterns of some nasty but determined fey. The one thing the tunnels do have in common, however, is going down deeper into the earth.

NOTE: No map has been supplied for this encounter due to the nature of the tunnels. The Castle Keeper should feel free to sketch the tunnels out. Caution should be taken, however, to not make the tunnels so vast that the party becomes fatigued with their exploration.

Encounters should be rolled once for every hour of time in the tunnels. A roll of 1 on a d8 means an encounter of 1d6 fey will occur. The fey will generally try to flee and may or may not warn Marrow Bones (for more on the dark fey, see the notes below).

The fey leave by their exit located some 200 yards to the west of the tree, just outside the meadow, when they feel the desire to be beneath the sun or moon. The owl will note this fact for the characters, and they may set up an ambush for those fey who come out. In any instance, the ambush will not be easy to manage as a harpy, sister to those found at the Shrine of Water in the Barren Wood (see *The Slag Heap*, page 78, Area 1), keeps watch over the entrance. She isn't expecting any company, however, and anyone who attempts to sneak up on her gains a +4 to their relevant checks. However, the ambush will not kill all the faerie. Marrow Bones and a handful of other fey should always be in the tunnels.

HARPY (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 18, AC 13. Her primary attributes are physical. She attacks from the air with two claws for 1d3 points of damage each, or with darts for 1d3 points of damage. Her special abilities are captivating song.)

DARK FAERIE x 8 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3 each, AC 15. Their primary attributes are mental and physical. They attack with darts for 1d3 points of damage or by using small swords and axes that do 1d6 points of damage. They are able to polymorph twice per day and possess all first-level rogue abilities. They are also able to cast obscuring mist, entangle, pass without trace, light, and silence image once per day.)

Within the tunnels are always 3d4 fey and Marrow Bones. They do not suffer any negative effects of fighting in narrow confines. Marrow Bones is presently in the room described below along with 50% of the fey remaining in the lair.

HEART OF THE TREE

The narrow, dirty tunnel spills into a large chamber about 40 feet by 40 feet. The whole room is entangled with ancient, twisted roots, rocks, and other debris. The floor is covered in thick loamy mud. Over it all hangs one huge, gnarled root with a massive knotty protrusion jutting from its length. Within this protrusion is a tangle of root about 2 feet thick. The whole hangs about five feet above the floor. This large green, gem-like mass of green wood is the heart of the tree. A thin, small leather-skinned creature stands beneath the tree holding a flickering torch with the obvious intent of burning the tree's roots. All about him are a dozen or so other fey, evil and wicked-looking.

Marrow Bones has just found the heart of the tree. He is attempting to set fire to it while the other fey are planning to dig it out of the root, which is wrapped around it.

MARROW BONES (He is a chaotic evil creature whose vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 16, AC 15. His primary attributes are mental and physical. He attacks with magical +1 darts for 1d3+1 points of damage. He is able to enchant sticks so that any stick he picks up and breathes on turns into one of these darts. It remains magical until broken, dispelled, or it wounds someone. He also uses a magical whip, a pine branch with which he slashes and whips his victims. The whip acts as a +1 weapon in Marrow's hands and does 1d6+1 points of damage. He is able to polymorph twice per day and possesses all the first-level rogue abilities. He is also able to cast obscuring mist, entangle, pass without trace, light, and silence image once per day.)

For the other fey, refer to the stat block above.

THE DRY GULCH

This gulch is about 100 yards beyond the fey entrance, hidden in a thick part of the wood. Here is where the fey drag their victims and toss their bodies, the same place they will throw the characters if they should fall in the attempt to rescue the tree. They do not steal anything for themselves, so whatever valuables the unfortunates were carrying are lying with them still in the gulch.

TREASURE (There is one set of good chain mail, two shields, and a variety of good weapons and helms. There is also a spellbook, clutched in the hands of Aaron the Prestidigitator. In it are the first-level spells comprehend language, feather fall, magic missile and one second level spell protection from arrows. He also has a +1 dagger. There is some scattered jewelry worth no more than 125gp and a total 55gp, 123sp, and a gem worth 25gp.)

GARDENS OF MISERY

Upon the hill, the Ineng Tree creaks in the wind, its great trunk bending only a little, but its old bark groaning from the effort. Faintly, in the dim recesses of its mind, voices echoed. The sounds of it awakened something in the old tree that brought memories to the fore.

Much of what happened to Ineng was lost to him, buried in the thick recesses of time that wrapped him like the bark of the old tree that he was. The many events of his life overflowed with as many

tragedies as triumphs, with as much suffering as comfort. Memories of the sun upon his skin came to him first, when he realized such things and thought upon them. He was young then, without a shape of his own, before the All Father established the order of things. The memories of the warmth of the sun hung with him, banishing thoughts of the gathering snow on his gnarled branches.

He remembered then a great sea of grass. Empty of all things but the sky and the waving green of the deep grasses, the plain seemed to roll on for leagues without count. Filled with the promise of silence, the country was open, inviting him to dwell there without molestation. He drank of the earth deep in those days and feasted upon the silence of the grasses. Why he left he could not remember, but thoughts of the land being befouled came to him, and he wondered what deeds of his may have brought this about.

His mind turned dark then and images of wars and battles came to him. This was in the later years, for there were many of the little all fathers armored and armed with axes and hammers. They waged war over all the lands. Wherever the troll went, he could not stay for long for the armies of these creatures would soon be around him. Though they did not always fight him, more often themselves, they did attack him when they could. So he waged a war upon them whenever he could. He destroyed their houses and emptied their barns of livestock, tore down walls, and plundered their lands when he could. Many died beneath his grinding trunk like feet, and even more did he crush and slay with his sword. They named him a Troll.

This war did not end when the goblins came, but they bound Ineng in spells and used him as a weapon against the little All Fathers. These years were long and filled with deeds of blood and iron. The memories were only shades of red, black, and an overriding darkness from which he could not escape. Of all the tumult, his mind settled on a set of great doors, bound and sealed in bronze workings. His masters compelled him to bash the doors in, and he set to the task with a relish, for he took great joy in the destruction of things. But the doors would not yield, and the rage of frustration that overtook him allowed him to break the bonds of sorcery that held him and he slaughtered the goblins in droves and ground their bones to pulp and dust. He pulled the roof of the cave down and buried himself and the ancient doors beneath mountains of rocks. There, he pondered the doors and sought to shape the earth, and he did so, but the doors would not open nor yield. Eventually, he tired of the pointless endeavor and left for the light of the sun again.

He came forth from the mountains into a deep forest, the Ethvold, or so it was called by the All Fathers. He dwelt there for awhile until he wandered east again.

A kingdom was his for a while, where he lorded over lesser trolls and orcs and other untidy creatures that had crawled from the morass of time. He enslaved men and dwarves and others and built cities and temples in worship of the sun god. This kingdom ended in fire and ash, and Ineng left it in ruins to wander into the south and west where he hunted for many years.

At last, his limbs grew tired, and he crawled atop a high ridge to look over the land and ponder his next course of action and to discover where his next journeys would take him. Cool water greeted him, bubbling up from the earth, spilling around his toes.

He remembered this first sensation and thought upon how nice it was, how good the water felt. He drank of it and settled in for a spell to see the world unfold. He had grown accustomed to sitting for long spells on his travels, rousing himself when the need or desire struck him.

Ineng groaned, for no memories came after that. Deep thoughts of the forest to the south and what vitality it promised, but these faded into silence. He tried to move, but only a little, giving the effort scant attention. His feet were so rooted to the ground that he could not move any longer, his torso was as stiff as any trunk, and his arms had long since ceased moving. He could not remember what came after the cool waters and his slated thirst.

After a moment, the thoughts escaped the old troll. He settled back into the wind, and his mind drifted out to wide plains of grass and warm sunlight upon his back. But those memories were little more than forgotten moments. Ineng was a troll no longer, but a now a tree, rooted to the ground upon a small patch of cold, rocky ground. His lonely perch looked over a bleak landscape of frozen, dead trees. In the distance, a torpid river crowded with floating ice meandered through an otherwise empty world. The snows of Winter's Dark fell about him, piling slowly upon his branches, covering his roots, and catching in little pockets where the bark of his skin was jagged enough to allow the icy purchase. Gray clouds hung overhead, a crown to his lonely, forgotten misery.

THE INENG TREE

The Ineng Tree is the single oldest creature living upon the Blacktooth Ridge; in fact, it might be the oldest creature in the whole region. Ineng was born into the order of Sentients, trees who mastered the Languages of Creation, those first creations of the All Father. But Ineng, like many of his kind, grew mistrustful of the All Father and his kindred and sought to follow his own path. He took a new shape, one that mimicked that of the All Father, but imperfectly, to become what later men called a Troll. It traveled the world as a troll for countless eons, but as with all old trolls, Ineng eventually stopped traveling. And eventually he rooted to the ground, bound to the earth by the weight of his life's evil deeds.

He rooted upon a high, barren ridge, overlooking the Hreusen River, what later men called the Blacktooth Ridge. He overlooks a bend in the river, watching with his sightless eyes the ever-moving flow below him.

In a wide bend of the Hreusen River, where the Blacktooth Ridge tumbles off to the north stands an ancient tree, gnarled and weathered. This ancient thing seems as much a part of the landscape as the stone. It is huge, 15 odd feet in diameter, but not so tall, only 40 feet. Once its branches stretched further, but now it stands largely dead to the world, a short squat thing reminiscent of the days of old, with only a few branches here and there. There is a vertical split in the tree, barely discernable, as if the tree had some old wound that closed in folds its bark.

The ground around it is rocky, covered in light vegetation and small scrub oaks. Some fields of grasses grow along the rocky edges, and hosts of wild flowers grow everywhere. A single trail crosses in front of the tree, following the ridge.

At the foot of the tree, where the split enters the ground, water bubbles up. It is magical water that many others have learned possesses healing qualities. There were flowers too, small violet flowers that grow here, mostly in the late spring and early summer. They push up through the snow and spread their petals, soaking in the sunlight.

The water is magical. If someone drinks the water they first realize how cool and reviving it is. They feel refreshed, but also a little sleepy. They must make a successful intelligence (CL 5) save or fall under the effects of a powerful *sleep* spell. Regardless of whether they fall asleep they heal 1d8 hit points of damage. Every drink of the water heals 1d8, but brings the danger of falling asleep. Each drink adds 2 to the challenge level, so the 2nd drink is CL 7; the third drink is CL 9, and so forth.

Anyone who falls asleep cannot be woken short of a *remove curse* spell and they stay asleep for double as many hours as hit points they healed. For example if they heal 4 hit points and fall asleep, they sleep for 8 hours. Anyone who sleeps at the foot of the Ineng Tree, dreams the dreams of its memory. Use the story above or consult the expanded one in the *Crusader Issue* 8–12, or invent your own. Remember to note that the Ineng tree was a troll and is tens of thousands of years old.

OTTER TALK

Upon the banks of the Hruesen River there dwells an ancient and benevolent creature. It is a fey who long ago took the form of a giant otter. He dwelt in the lands of the Hruesen, hunting its bountiful currents, even before the coming of the Dark. In those days, the elves and other fey of the Avishean Ridge paid him homage and called upon him when they needed intimate knowledge of the river. The elves named him Beuren, but the dwarves and gnomes called him Tarouth; men called him simply Boris. It is that name he favored above all else, for Boris saw men as the most noble of the creatures of the world, for though their flaws were many, they never ceased striving to overcome them.

Boris the otter lives where Wizing Creek spills into the Hruesen River. There, he

has long had his residence, a series of tunnels and rooms. Some are much as one would expect of a giant otter, wet and muddy, but others he fashioned for visitors, plushy and comfortable. There are innumerable entrances to his home. He has hidden them well and designed them so that no one can easily surprise the otter; and if they do, he can escape.

Boris is a major problem for Red Cap, Kruggle and all the evil denizens of the river basin. He routinely interrupts their raids, by capsizing their boats and drowning the raiders. They despise him and have for a long while attempted to capture or kill him.

Unbeknownst to Red Cap, Boris has landed himself in a great deal of trouble.

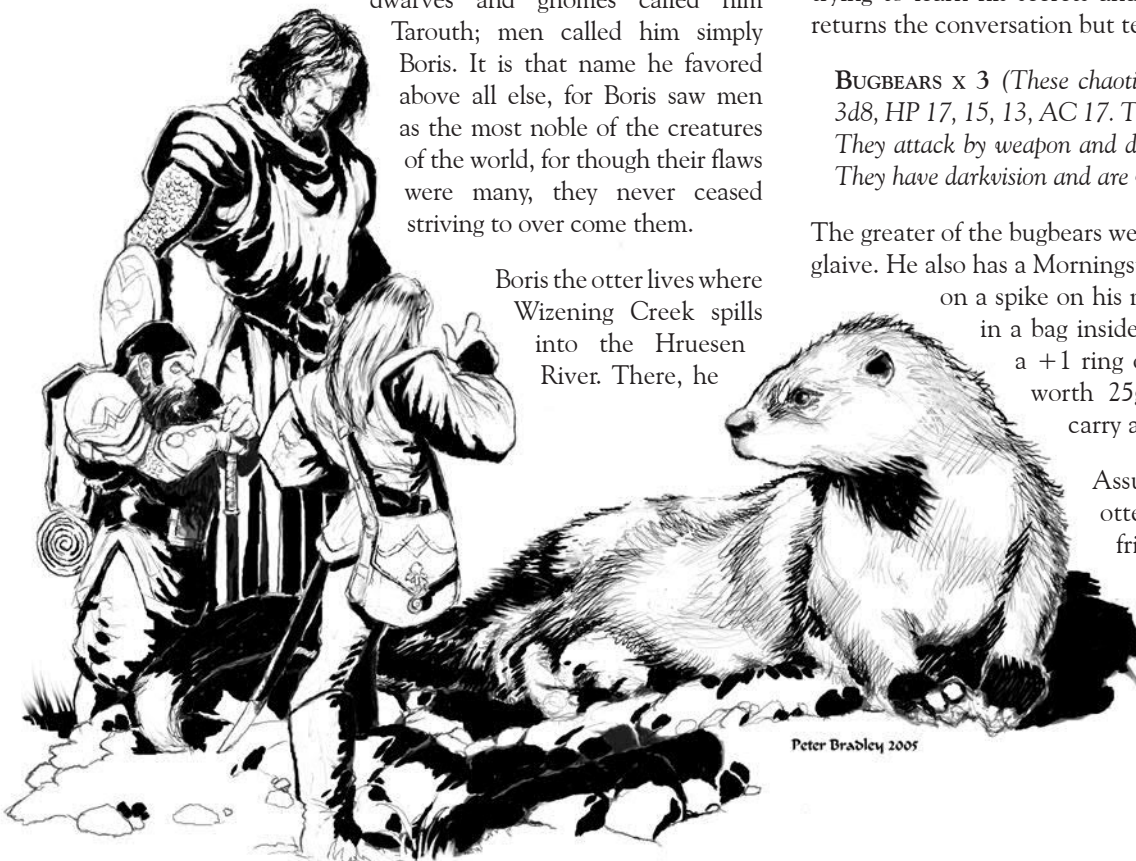
Not long ago a small band of bugbears entered the area. Bugbears are not normally native to these regions, but upon hearing of the bounty of food and wealth that is available, they took the long journey from the eastern steppes, crossed the Arratok Mountains, and arrived in the river's valley. They have hunted for a few days, but recently stumbled upon Boris' track. Bugbears are clever hunters and they laid a trap for the otter, thinking only that he would provide enough food for a few days. They managed to snare Boris. Only then did they discover that he was more than an otter. They now have him pinned, debating what to do with him.

The bugbears are camped on the southern bank of the river (Castle Keeper's should feel free to move the encampment anywhere convenient on the river in order to allow the characters to stumble upon them). They have made little attempt to conceal themselves. A camp fire burns freely, sending black smoke up into the air and the area stinks of wet animal. The bugbears are filthy beasts. They are keeping the otter tied and blindfolded, hanging from a tree. The lead bugbear is constantly talking to the creature, trying to learn his secrets and if he has any treasure. The otter returns the conversation but tells him very little.

BUGBEARS X 3 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 17, 15, 13, AC 17. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by weapon and do the appropriate weapon damage. They have darkvision and are very able hunters and trackers.)

The greater of the bugbears wears a breast plate and carries a long glaive. He also has a Morningstar that he generally keeps hanging on a spike on his mail. He keeps the group's treasure in a bag inside his mail. The treasure consists of a +1 ring of protection, 65gp and a bracelet worth 25gp. The two remaining bugbears carry axes.

Assuming the characters rescue the otter they have made a very good friend. He will help them whenever he can. He knows all the water ways quite well and offers them a safe abode in his home. For stat purposes, Boris has the spell-like abilities of a pixie.



A2: THE SLAG HEAP

This module is designed primarily for those adventurers and heroes who have only recently whet their appetite for glory and fame. Should any characters brave enough care to venture deep into the Barren Wood, they will find many enemies to battle and some to spare. Here, they can engage in combats and battles under the eaves of an ancient forest and beneath the black earth of the Slag Heap, where they will face creatures of mythic evil and dire portent. In these dank and forbidden holes, glory and wealth lie for the taking, and the iron bonds of friendship and forged on such adventurers. Beware though, for death lingers at every corner and beneath every tree. And should their time come, it is theirs to choose: die valiantly against mighty foes, or fall a craven coward in a vain attempt to forestall the inevitable.

This adventure is best suited as a gateway to other adventures and escapades of the Castle Keeper's making. The module's monsters, characters and settings, though tied together by themes and plots, all offer an abundance of interesting asides and the potential for other adventures which are wholly unrelated to *The Slag Heap*. It is strongly recommended that the Castle Keeper develop and expand upon the encounters and associated adventures the characters may find themselves engaged with or interested in. Allow them to explore what interests them most, and greater fun will be had by all.

Those picking up the adventure after exploring *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge* will find the material related in *The Slag Heap* both different and familiar. *The Slag Heap* details a region south of the Hruesen River, Ludensheim, and Botkinburg; and the events that unfold here are only loosely connected to those related in the previous module. Though it is recommended, it is not necessary that this module be played in conjunction with *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*.

The Slag Heap is presented in three parts. It begins with a brief description of the two small thorpes which set the stage for the trip to the Slag Heap. This is followed by a similarly brief exposition on the areas between the thorpes and the Slag Heap and what may be encountered along the way. The final portion of the module details the Slag Heap and what lies in its winding tunnels.

This adventure is designed for 3–5 characters of 2nd–3rd level. Should a larger party of adventurers be involved, increase the number of creatures encountered and their armor class, or give them better weapons to adequately challenge the party. For the major non-player characters or monsters, increasing hit points and levels might also be necessary. This should suffice to maintain a challenge for the characters. Further, attribute check challenge levels should

be between 0 and 2. Those of special note are described in the module.

INTRODUCTION

A great empire once spread across the known world and enclosed all within its grasp. These were cold and wretched times for many peoples. Winters were long and thick snowy blankets lay across the world like a white mantel for many months out of the year. The skies were perennially overcast, gray, and carried cold winds from the fortress of Aufstrag. It was an unhappy time for many and was known as the Winter Dark.

Through much of this time, the gnomes of the world remained far from the grasping fingers of the empire's governors, generals, ambassadors, armies, and tax men. They hid themselves far away in remote hills and mountains, deep forests, and trackless savannahs. The Barren Wood was just such a place. Its expanse of ancient trees and undulating hills are dotted with

hidden dales and valleys that are known only to a few. So the Barren Wood provided a perfect place in which to escape the choking hold the empire had on much the rest of the world. In these woods resided many fey of varying nature but all of the same mind concerning the Emperor in Aufstrag. They cared nothing for him and labored ceaselessly to prevent his finding their most sacred and holy spots.

In one such hidden dale a large family of gnomes settled. Long friends of the fey, these gnomes were guided there and offered safety. The dale they settled in was nestled at the foot of a large hill, and their new home they named Havenwale, for it was a place of safety to them. The fey called it Syvanwale, which is the speech of man, Sparkling Hill. They called it thus for all the quartz crystals that were found in the area and, in this particular spot, the diamonds.

For many a long year, the gnomes lived there in safety, having little contact with the world at large. The clan grew and prospered, though never so much as to expand beyond the dale. Only with the passing of the evil lord in Aufstrag and the return of the long summers did the gnomes begin venturing forth again into the wide world.

They quickly established commercial ties with several nearby communities of men. Ludensheim was the nearest large town, and it was here that the gnomes began trading diamonds for goods and wares they had long grown accustomed to living without. The folk of Ludensheim coined the name Diamond Dale for the gnome community, and it soon stuck, while the name Havenwale was used almost only by the gnomes. The new name proved a propitious event.

In the long years after the passing of the Winter's Dark, the gnomes relaxed and became less watchful. They did not see that



the Horned One's passing only diminished the power of those in far off Aufstrag, but not the evil that resided in the hearts of man and the other nefarious creatures of the Barren Wood.

Soon miners and diggers of all sorts came to the Barren Wood in search of diamonds and similar wealth. Several mining communities were established. These were often peopled by greedy types, eager to make a quick fortune and move on. The gnomes hid their homes and trafficked less with the folk of Ludensheim. The mining towns never prospered and shortly became the abodes of bandits, brigands, outlaws, and the general flotsam of society.

In more recent days, the gnomes watched with growing concern when the Lords of Ludensheim fought amongst themselves and the rightful lords were turned out. They sought only the protection of the Vale and the magic of the fey to keep them safe. This proved a disastrous move, for long before the Red Caps fell into the employ of the Baron Dietbold (see *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*), the gnomes of Diamond Dale fell to ruin.

A creature, called the Witch Queen by her servants, had come from the ruin of Aufstrag seeking to cast her power upon the people of the Barren Wood. Hearing rumors of limitless wealth from the Diamond Dale, she thought to gird herself for war with the coin of gnomes. Her servants soon invested the mining towns and, through means magical and foul, disovered the location of Havenwale. She sent her loyal cohorts into that dale and they quickly overcame the gnomes. Few survived, and those that did were either ensorcelled and enslaved, or fled deeper into the Barren Woods or abroad.

For several decades, it has been such. The Witch Queen's servants have fortified Havenwale and dug many a pit in search of diamonds and other precious minerals. All to little or no avail, as they have neither the inclination nor skill to mine the diamonds with any efficiency and have delivered very little to the Witch Queen. The once-beautiful gnome village and dens became a warren of viperous fiends and brigands. The foul debris of these folks turned it all to brackish rock and a heap of ruin, so that in time it came to be called The Slag Heap.

Seroneous, the present ruler of The Slag Heap, cares little for any of this history. This abomination from the pits of Aufstrag was sent here for one reason only: to make ready for war and conquest. He was supposed to have helped sew the seeds of war and discord in the communities about and make Diamond Dale a gathering point for the cohorts of the Witch Queen in her planned conquest of the area. Had the Witch Queen a reliable servant, her desires may be closer to fulfillment and war already be upon the land. Yet, Seroneous is a faithless servant to the Witch Queen and her goals are a long way off. Though the wheels have been put in motion and winds of war are blowing, her servant's self-obsessions have delayed her plans; such are the ways of the evil malcontents of the world.

Of late, however, a new arrival in the dale has changed things and this loyal servant of the Witch Queen may fulfill his mission and satisfy her desires with greater relish and efficiency than Seroneous. It is into this gathering storm that our heroes are heading.

FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

The hunt is on: the infamous Red Caps are raiding along the Hruesen River, and the Baron Volkmar Botkin of Botkinburg wants their depredations to end. It is rumored an agent has hired the Red Caps to undertake the raids that are causing so many problems or even that a sinister alliance between the bandits of the Barren Wood and the Red Caps of the Blacktooth Ridge has been arranged. Baron Volkmar Botkin is in need of men of stout heart to uncover the truth of this, find the perpetrators, and have them brought to justice. The truth is, of course, both less and more than the Baron suspects.

Dietbold Heimer, the Baron of Ludensheim, has indeed contracted the Red Caps to undertake raids in and around Botkinburg, and they are being paid for it. His agent managed this agreement through various meetings with the leaders of this nefarious group of goblin raiders. Baron Dietbold Heimer had hoped that Baron Volkmar Botkin would come to him for aid, aid which would be given in exchange for an oath of fealty.

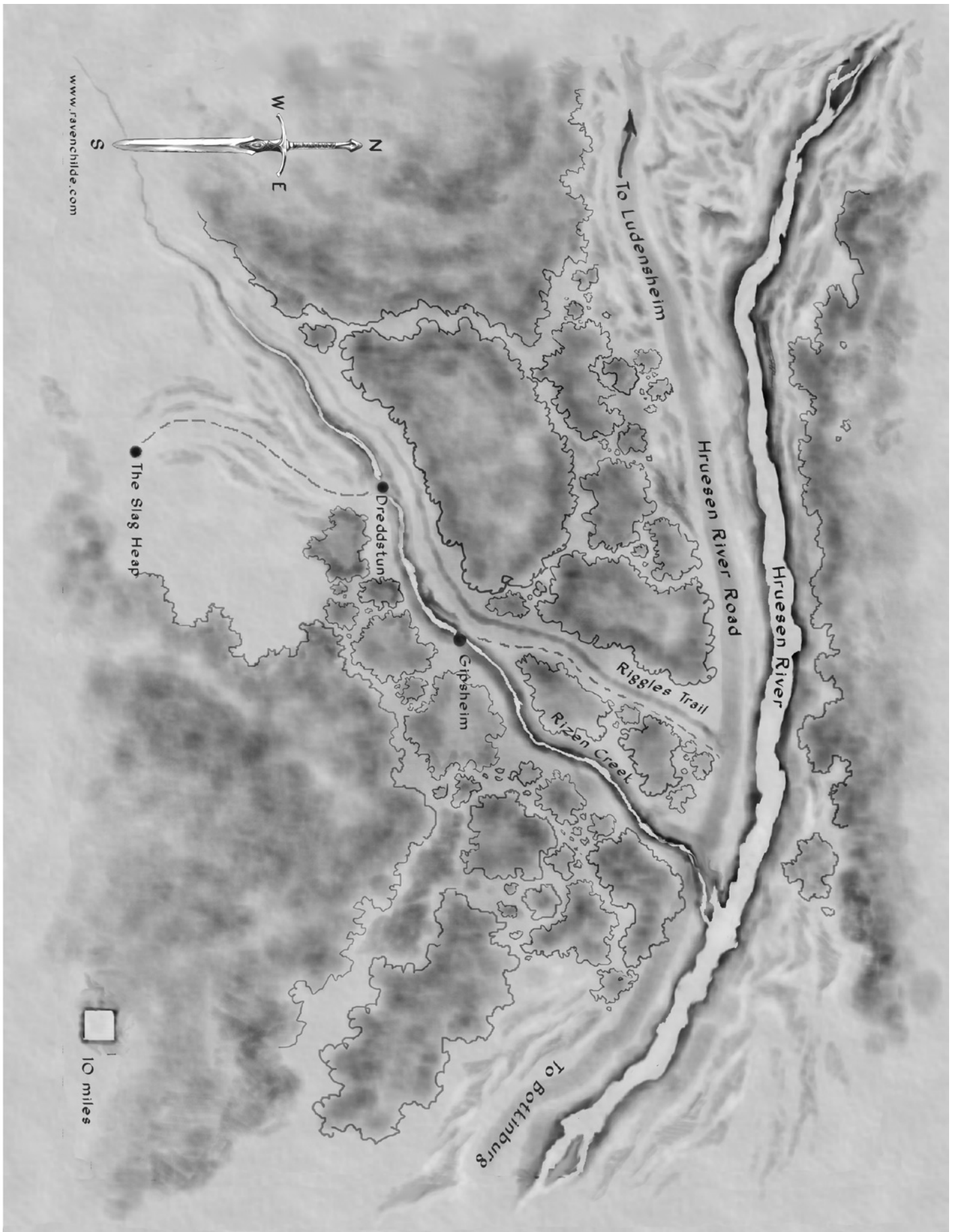
However, things have gotten out of hand and the goblins' persistent raids have raised the ire of Baron Volkmar Botkin, but he has not called upon Ludensheim for aid. But rather he has turned to those folk who wander these lands of Outremere. To the great annoyance of Dietbold, Volkmar has called for aid from knights, rangers, adventurers, bounty hunters, and whatever other folk he can rouse. To further Baron Dietbold Heimer's problems, the Red Caps are now demanding more gold than was agreed upon to discontinue their raids. If he does not pay, they have also threatened to expose him to the folk of Botkinburg and the other lands about.

Baron Dietbold is desperate to prevent anyone from discovering the truth of his machinations. The gathering of notables and nefarious characters alike in Volkmar's Botkinburg presages disaster, so Dietbold has sent agents out to waylay anyone attempting to disover his plans and some others to pay the Red Caps to cease raiding.

The hotbed of this activity is centered on two old mining communities in the Barren Wood, Gipsheim and Dreddstun. It is here that the agents of Dietbold Heimer have met and meet with the Red Caps and the bandits of the Barren Wood. And it is here that they are now gathering. These two thorpes are ostensibly overseen by Miles Freland, a notorious brigand, and his crew of malcontents. Though not initially involved in any of Baron Dietbold's shenanigans, he has become enmeshed in solving the problem as bounty hunters and others have started to make their way to his hideouts. He would rather all Baron Dietbold's men leave and the bounty hunters be eliminated.

There are several important personalities involved in this rather complicated mess the Castle Keeper should be aware of: Deertrik Shelentz, Kreetkruk the Ogre, Miles Freland, and Ragnar the Toothless.

Deertrik Shelentz, an agent of Baron Dietbold, has come to Gipsheim to pay off the Red Caps. He has brought several of his henchmen with him to ensure that the issue is resolved. If the Red Caps do not accept a final payment and promise to stop the raiding, he has been instructed to kill his contact and send the head back with a threat of martial retaliation if the Red Caps do not quit raiding.



Kreetkruk is Deertrik's new contact with the Red Caps. His previous intermediary has gone missing, and in his place is this nasty ogre with a jutting jaw and cruel disposition. With him are several of the more capable and sneaky Red Caps. Kreetkruk has been instructed to demand even more money from Deertrik, and should he be refused, to kill Deertrik and send his head back to Ludensheim and threaten even more pillaging should they not be paid.

As both parties to this negotiation have brought conflicting demands and the forces to back up their demands, both have retired from their negotiations while they plan their next move. Deertrik is in Gipsheim, while Kreetkruk is in Dredstun.

Miles Freland and his crew of ne'er-do-wells are spread out between Gipsheim, Dredstun, and the surrounding territories. Miles is concerned about harming either of the above-mentioned parties, as this will bring down the wrath of one or both the Red Caps and the Baron of Ludensheim. Miles also has a claim to the Barony at Ludensheim, a claim he intends to make good on (see below).

Rugnar the Toothless is an old-fashioned assassin. Thoroughly evil and inconveniently capable, he has been hired by Baron Dietbold to rid the woods and lands about of bounty hunters, treasure seekers, and other ilk. He is currently in Gipsheim, awaiting his first target.

Other than greed, iniquity, depravity, and villainy (characteristics one can liberally sprinkle upon all the aforementioned), what currently propels the action in this area is none other than the arrival of an unger battle lord, Froithmot, the Slag Heap.

Froithmot has been sent to the Slag Heap by the Witch Queen in order to bring fire back to the rule of Seroneous. He has taken to the Witch Queen's mission with religious zeal and is trying the sew discord in the region as never before. He has managed to engage the Red Caps and pays them generous sums to continue raiding along the Hruesen River, and is even offering aid in their endeavors. He has also agreed to help

Deertrik negotiate with the Red Caps, knowing full well it will come to naught. And finally, Froithmot has cast his support behind Miles Freland's desires to regain the throne of Ludensheim.

So, this is the stage upon which the characters will make their appearance. Where it shall end up, none may know until all the die are cast. As the adventure begins, the situation is static with each party gauging the other's capabilities and their own options. The characters may be able to connect the trail of deceit and treachery, or they may not, depending upon their want, desire and action. Nevertheless, upon their arrival at the Slag Heap they should find Froithmot or any of his various minions, and be introduced to even more strange and horrible monsters as the characters first meet the servants of the Witch Queen.

The Castle Keeper should keep the motivations of the various actors in mind when running encounters in the adventure, as any activity can have great or small impacts on the others in the adventure. In essence, the Red Caps are after more gold, Froithmot simply hopes to cause strife and war between the local barons, while Miles Freland ultimately desires a return to his birthright. As the negotiations, actions, and conflicts are in a stagnant stage, alliances can shift and plans can change. The characters' actions will have much impact on this should they choose to become enmeshed within the rivalries, or even should they enjoin each as enemies or allies, collectively or individually.

INVOLVING THE CHARACTERS

As with most adventures, only the most general of reasons can be supplied that encourages players to stroll down a particular boulevard of adventure. In the case of *The Slag Heap*, encouraging players to travel to dangerous places with such unattractive names as Gipsheim and Dreddstun can almost only be done by bounty or greed. Several manners of bringing the characters into the action are described below. Of special note: if continuing the adventure from *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*, read the final entry.



Hook 1. A 500gp bounty has been offered for the capture of Miles Freland, a notorious bandit known to be in the area. This can offered by either Baron Dietbold Heimer or Baron Volkmar of Botkinburg.

Hook 2. Numerous peasant and merchant families in and around Ludensheim have demanded that Baron Dietbold locate and free the slaves thought to be in Gipsheim and Dreddstun. The characters are hired to locate the slaves and report back on their condition and who is holding them, or rescue them if possible.

Hook 3. Rumors abound that agents of the Witch Queen are south of the Hruesen River. An order of goodly knights or river wardens has contracted the characters to

discover if this is true. They point to Dreddstun and Gipsheim as possible locations for these nefarious and evil people.

Hook 4. It is rumored that there is a town named Diamond Dale somewhere in the Barren Wood. A long-abandoned mining community where many a sparkling bauble was found, the mines are said to be ripe for the picking, as the gnomes have all but disappeared.

Hook 5. If continuing this adventure from *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*, the characters' attention might turn to the Slag Heap for a number of reasons. Barldus Mikenfird, if he escaped the Vargolg, will go to Gipsheim and thence to Dreddstun to escape the characters, should they be giving chase. As a last resort, he will make his way back to Ludensheim. While in Gipsheim or Dreddstun, Barldus and Deertrik will work together to eliminate those who trail.

If Barldus is killed and the characters have cleared the Vargolg, they quickly find that the Red Caps are still raiding. Baron Volkmar may have been impressed by the characters' mighty prowess and ask them to go to Gipsheim, where he suspects something sinister is up, as the Red Caps have been seen in the vicinity of the two small mining communities. Further, Miles Freland has been raiding the lands about again, and he needs to be stopped.

Hook 6. As a final option and perhaps the most promising, the characters hear a tale of Diamond Dale from several of the Halflings in Botkinburg or even from an itinerant gnome at the House of Sludge. So impressive should this tale be that no self-respecting adventurer would consider anything other than going to investigate.

IN THE BARREN WOOD

In any respect, the characters must travel to Gipsheim for the adventure to get underway. They will likely begin their travels from either Ludensheim or Botkinburg along the River Road or, as it is known in Ludensheim, the Ludensway. From here, the characters must travel south along Riggler's Trail until they reach the town of Gipsheim and thence to Dreddstun.

RIGGLER'S TRAIL

Riggler's Trail is the path leading to Gipsheim and thence onto Dreddstun. It leaves off the Hruesen River Road about midpoint between Botkinburg and Ludensheim. A mere 60 miles must be crossed before arriving in Gipsheim. Rarely used anymore, this thickly overgrown track passes over gentle hills, through shallow dales, and across occasional grassy fields before finally ending in Gipsheim.

The trail appears to be laid out in a fairly haphazard fashion, moving first one way then another. In many places, the road has been completely washed out or covered with so much bramble as to be nearly impossible to make out. At other times, it crosses soggy lowlands flush with tall grasses. It also crosses numerous small creeks which flood to impassable in the late spring and early summer. These aspects, combined with the usual chiggers, ticks, spiders, ants, gnats, mosquitos, snakes, and other small pests make travel along Riggler's Trail an altogether unpleasant experience unless one prefers lonely abandoned byways in which to spend time.

Several old farmsteads and abandoned shacks are also located near the old trail. Of course, all that is left now are the weed shrouded husks of houses, barns, and outhouses. Some have been used recently, as is evidenced by fire pits and refuse, but none are inhabited. Occasional wheel ruts and horse tracks are also noted along the trail, revealing that some traffic passes this way.

But that is not the least of it. The trail passes through a region uncontested by any civilized baron or lord or most anyone or anything of good will. This stretch is wild and untamed by any standard, such that roaming bands of humanoids, wild beasts, and some even say, giants terrorize any caught moving through here.

Of the bandits and thieves, the most notorious is Miles Freland and his surly band of cutthroats. These are known to be robbers and thieves of the most nefarious kind, and any encounter with them is "surely to lead to death – or even worse," the locals often say. They never say what the "worse" might be, though. The Baron of Ludensheim has placed a 500gp bounty upon the head of Miles and a 25gp bounty upon the head of any of his followers. One is left to wonder though, if Miles is so evil and a wanted man, why so many have had encounters with him and lived to tell the tale.

RIGGLER'S TRAIL RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Check twice during the day and once during the night for encounters. Roll a d10 and a 1 indicates an encounter has occurred. Then roll a d20 and refer to the table below for the type of encounter.

1	2–8 Brigands, members of Miles' band with 3 rd level fighter
2	4–12 Goblins, members of the Red Caps with 3 rd leader
3	2–6 Bounty Hunters, see below
4–5	3–12 Fey
6–7	2–8 Orcs
8–9	1–6 Boars
10	1 Brown Bear
11	2–4 Ogres
12	Knight and 2–4 retainers, see below
13–15	Herd Animals
16	Traveler, see below
17–18	Cougar
19	Giant Owl, see below
20	Escaped Captive, see below

Bounty Hunters This band consists of a mix of characters. Minimally, there is one tracker (1st–3rd level ranger) and a capable fighter (1st–3rd level fighter). The Castle Keeper should determine the class of the others (though they should all be 1st–2nd).

Knight and Retainers This group consists of a knight (4th level) and his esquire (2nd–3rd level fighter). The knights will be mounted, but the others may not be. Half the retainers should be men-at-arms (HD 1d8) and the remainder more stout warriors (1st–2nd level fighters).

Traveler The lone traveler should be any one of the following characters.

Lars Birghit is a priest in search of a holy relic believed to be located in the woods south of Dreddstun. *(He is a lawful neutral, human, 3rd level cleric. His vital stats are HP 16, AC 15. His primary attributes are strength, wisdom, and intelligence. His significant attributes are wisdom 14 and constitution 14. He carries a chain shirt, shield, heavy mace, staff, spear, 10gp, and two potions of healing, as well as some traveling equipment. He can cast the following number of spells: 0–4, 1st–3, 2nd–1.)*

Liesl Lamprekt is the daughter of a wealthy merchant who is believed to have been killed by Miles Freland, and she seeks revenge for this act. *(She is a chaotic neutral, human, 2nd level fighter. Her vital stats are HP 12, AC 16. Her primary attributes are strength, constitution, and dexterity. Her significant attribute is dexterity 17. She carries a chain shirt, halberd, dagger, mace, 2pp, 14gp, 2sp, and traveling equipment.)*

Darin Gobbleneck is a gnomish prospector looking for his distant family in Havenwale. *(He is a neutral good, gnome, 2nd level monk. His vital stats are HP 17, AC 12. His primary attributes are constitution and strength. His significant attribute is dexterity 13. He carries a staff of maiming that delivers +2 damage, a light flail and 2 throwing daggers, 2gp, 15sp, and some traveling equipment.)*

Farl Turkl is an escaped convict from Ludensheim seeking to join Miles' band *(He is a neutral evil, human, 3rd level rogue. His vital stats are HP 8, AC 13. His primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence, and wisdom. His significant attributes are dexterity 14 and charisma 8. He carries leather armor, 3 throwing daggers, short sword, short bow, 35sp, and traveling equipment.)*

Litheriam of Solin Felthium is an elf traveling east and searching for his ancient birthright *(He is a chaotic good, elf, 2nd level ranger. His vital stats are HP 14, AC 16. His primary attributes are strength and dexterity. His significant attributes are strength 15 and dexterity 16. He carries scale mail, shield, longsword, longbow, dagger 120sp, 55gp and traveling equipment.)*

GIANT OWL This large owl is of an ancient breed. They are intelligent and wise, knowing a dozen languages or more. The owl is seeking out an ancient roost. When the characters meet the owl, it has been wounded and cannot fly.

GIANT OWL *(This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 28, AC 14. His primary attributes are mental. It can attack two times with its claws for 1d4 points of damage each or once with its beak for 1d8 points of damage. It possesses the bardic ability legend lore.)*

Escaped Captive: This fellow has escaped from Miles' band and is making his way back to Ludensheim, or so he hopes. He is the nephew of the head of the Shepherders Guild in Ludensheim, and his safe return will be greeted with much enthusiasm by his uncle. It is also not improbable that he is being chased by none other than Miles Freland.

ARAD *(He is a neutral, human commoner. His vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3, AC 10. His primary attribute is intelligence. He carries only clothing.)*

MILES & HIS MALCONTENTS

Miles Freland is detailed in the following paragraphs, though he may never be used in this adventure. Miles is provided as a bogeyman for the adventure and for future adventures which the characters may undertake. He is a notorious bandit whom all the characters should fear to meet and should be used only to propel the story forward or scare the characters into action, such as being approached and given the information that "Miles is coming." Before bringing the characters into contact with Miles, the Castle Keeper should make them aware that he is of some repute and not a person to be trifled with. In fact, Miles and his close companions are capable of quickly dispatching a low level party of adventurers. The real value of this non-player character is not as a typical adversary, rather he is a potential ally and offers a whole slew of adventures unrelated to the one at hand, should the characters chose to ally themselves with him.

Miles and his close companions are rarely in Gipsheim or Dreddstun. Often he is out raiding, carousing, or traveling. Miles and his companions (the "Malcontents") travel the road between Ludensheim and Botkinburg, the South Way and the Hruesen River Road, raiding and waylaying travelers. For the most part, they are careful not to kill people, as that would bring down the wrath of those at Ludensheim, Botkinburg, the Guilds, and others. So simple thievery is considered the safest route to prosperity and safety. While in Gipsheim or Dreddstun, though, there is little to prevent them from doing as they please to whomever they please and whenever they please, as there is no authority other than the capacities of the inhabitants. For the most part, however, they leave the inhabitants alone and occasionally offer protection to them from goblins and others. Many of his brigands, however the less reliable and capable, remain in Gipsheim and Dreddstun. These are described below.

Should he arrive, or be used in this or following adventures, the following knowledge will be of use. The crew is led by Miles Freland, a notorious thief and brigand. Miles has a past! His grandfather was the Lord of Ludensheim before the arrival Dietbold Heimer. Some three decades before the present day, Miles' grandfather and father, along with most of his family, were killed in a violent palace coup led by an upstart mercenary from the south, Dietbold Heimer. Since that time, Miles has sought alternately to regain what was lost to him or to forget it. His banditry is, in part, personal and at other times survival. Often times, he sees himself attempting to start a revolt, destabilize Dietbold's hold on power, and regain his rightful inheritance. At other times, he views himself as nothing more than a renegade out to gather some gold, food, or goods. In all, though, he is neither an evil man nor a good man. Though capable of evil deeds, he is also capable of profoundly good acts. He is simply a man whose time has passed or, perhaps, whose time lies somewhere in his future.

Miles Freland and the Malcontents consist of those listed below and others of lesser note with little or no repute who occasionally follow him on raids. The actual wealth they gather from brigandry is hoarded in a small cave some two dozen miles from Gipsheim's location only known to those named below.

MILES FRELAND (He is a chaotic neutral, human, 7th level monk. His vital stats are HP 51, AC 17. His primary attributes are constitution, dexterity, and intelligence. His significant attributes are strength 13, dexterity 13, and constitution 14. He carries a +2 spiked gauntlet, a ranseur of tripping which causes anyone hit with it to fall prone unless a successful dexterity check is made, a +3 armband of protection, a gem-studded belt worth 500gp, fine (if not worn) clothing, 50gp, and traveling gear.)

THADS MULLINGIN He is Miles' right-hand-man. Loyal and brutal, Thads is feared by all who know him. (He is a neutral, human, 6th level ranger. His vital stats are HP 45, AC 19. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and intelligence. His significant attributes are strength 16 and dexterity 17. He carries +4 leather armor, +1 ring of protection, +1 flail, a longbow, 5 gems worth 10–100gp, 20gp, and traveling gear.)

Abner Dirst: This priest is Miles' spiritual advisor. Abner is a secretive person and dedicated to the Miles who saved him from an execution many years ago. He is obsessed with Miles' heritage and placing him back on the throne of Ludensheim (see above) but is quiet about it. (He is a lawful neutral, human, 5th level cleric. His vital stats are HP 28, AC 15. His primary attributes are wisdom, intelligence, and strength. His significant attributes are wisdom 14 and intelligence 17. He carries a +5 blessed cloak of protection which confers this armor class only to those who worship his ancient and uncommon deity of the dead, a +1 mace, a flail, a holy symbol worth 1,000gp, 30gp, and traveling gear. He can cast the following number of cleric spells: 0–4, 1st–4, 2nd–2, 3rd–1.)

NELLY “THE AXE” JEGGER: She is Miles' significant other and one mean-spirited agitator here for very personal reasons. (She is a neutral evil, human, 5th level assassin. Her vital stats are HP 22, AC 14. Her primary attributes are dexterity, wisdom, and intelligence. Her significant attribute is dexterity 18. She carries padded armor, +2 dagger of paralyzation that causes anyone hit by it to be paralyzed for 1d12 rounds unless a successful constitution check is made, a hand crossbow, 10pp, and traveling gear.)

MARTZTEN SLUDGEHURN: He is Miles' mild-mannered schemer with a bent towards self-serving stratagems. (He is a lawful evil, human, 5th level illusionist. His vital stats are HP 16, AC 11. His primary attributes are wisdom, intelligence, and charisma. His significant attributes are intelligence 18, dexterity 7, and charisma 17. He carries a +3 ring of protection, a +2 dagger, a vial of gaseous form, a vial of invisibility, a scroll of color spray, 50gp, and traveling gear. He can cast the following number of illusionist spells: 0–5, 1st–5, 2nd–4, 3rd–2.)

KILLIAN STEMSTER: The gem in Miles' crew is this shrewd and hawkish thief. Often called “The Nose” or simply “Stem,” Killian is an expert thief, burglar, pick pocket, and sneak. (He is a neutral, human, 7th level rogue. His vital stats are HP 32, AC 15. His primary attributes are dexterity, wisdom, and intelligence. His significant attributes are dexterity 17 and intelligence 15. He carries +1 leather armor, +1 short bow, gloves of the rogue conferring a +2 to all rogue ability checks, a dagger, 16gp, and traveling gear.)

GIPSHEIM

Before you lies a small thorpe consisting of several dozen dilapidated buildings and a score or so of small cottages in various states of disrepair. A single muddy lane twists through the center of town, with a few houses on either side of it. The other buildings are spread out to its left and right amongst small farm plots and animal pens. Only two structures stand out. There is a two-story wooden structure with a large sign hanging above its doorway. This is the Ram's Head Tavern. The other is a mill house, just visible over the brush and scrub, located on a small creek north of town. There are a few folk moving about, some working their plots and fields. They are a mangy lot, being ill-clothed and generally poor. However, those employed with sitting on steps or generally hanging about are armed with light weapons and armor. They look as surly and suspicious as the others do poor and tired.

Gipsheim was once a community of miners and prospectors. That was some time ago. Most of the inhabitants have since left, having given up on finding diamonds or any other precious stone in the nearby hills. Those that remain now “make a living” farming small plots of land and raising cattle. They sustain themselves and even sell or trade their extra food to Miles' crew. Most of these would prefer to leave the area but are simply not allowed to do so at this point. Miles has ordered that any caught leaving are to be brought back or executed. Occasionally, Miles takes prisoners and forces them to work the fields and care for the cattle. This is the source of all the slavery rumors in Ludensheim and elsewhere.

Several members of the community are nothing more than bandits and thieves from Ludensheim and elsewhere. There are also numerous members of Miles Freland's band here. They rarely leave the town and then only to go on raids where large numbers of people are needed. Those who profess loyalty to Miles usually stay at the Old Mill House.

The thorpe is ostensibly controlled by Miles. In practice, however, he offers little in the way of enforcing anything other than the fulfillment of his immediate desires, wishes, or needs. Miles keeps his men in check for the most part, as he needs this thorpe as a place of refuge. In general, when newcomers arrive, they are not immediately accosted. Rather, they are ‘sized up and measured for their strength and intent. If perceived as weak or working for the authorities of any local baronies, they are often robbed and used or sold as slaves, or simply killed.

Gipsheim is also a place of refuge for several escaped convicts, petty criminals, and other nefarious individuals. Though not members of Miles' crew, they still abide by his wishes while in Gipsheim. They travel through here, taking a room at the Ram's Head or occupying any of the abandoned buildings in town. Often they must pay Miles a fee or do some service for him for the right to remain here. Some few agents of the Witch Queen also pass through here.

The remainder of the inhabitants of the community are made up of commoners. Almost all are kept here entirely against their will, and some have been kidnapped from merchant caravans and farms near Ludensheim. They do some farming and raise a few cattle to feed Miles' crew. All would enjoy being freed. The commoners can and should be used for further adventures or

even replacement characters should any die in this adventure. These are not all humans either. There are dwarves, gnomes, and halflings amongst their numbers.

The farmhouses and shacks in which these people live are almost all dilapidated and rotting. The interiors are dark, dank, and moldy since no one cares for them in the least. Several are abandoned and can be occupied should the characters choose, though that might cause some issues with those in the Mill House.

COMMONERS (*These humans' vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 3, AC 10. They have no primary attributes. They have no equipment.*)

Overall, Gipsheim is a potentially dangerous place. It is little more than a den of thieves and bandits who bide themselves only because of the threat posed by Miles and his close compatriots. Few bother challenging him or the status quo. Those who have stayed or are being forced to stay here live a precarious existence as serfs or slaves and have only a thin veil of protection from the thieves and brigands who also live here. The characters will be treated with suspicion and wariness (it is not just anyone who would walk into such a place), but little will be done to them unless they start any trouble with the farmers or with any of Miles' crew. Then, all of Miles' men will attack the party and likely dispatch them.

THE RAM'S HEAD TAVERN

This is an old dilapidated, two-story building with a broad balcony on the front. It is a wood-frame structure with little in the way of ornamentation. A large sign dangles below the balcony with an engraving of a ram's head drinking from a mug of brew engraved upon it. The place was built more than fifteen years ago when Gipsheim had many miners and travelers passing through. Its prosperity was short lived, though, and after most of the town's inhabitants left, it fell into disrepair.

The ground floor has a large, single common room with several chairs and tables in it. A large door, often propped open, leads to the rear of the ground floor where the kitchen and living quarters of the owners are located. The upper floor has a half-a-dozen small rooms with several cots in them and one large dormitory or common room. All the furniture in the place is rickety and old, barely serving its purpose as furniture. Candles are often used to light the common room at night; during the winter, the fireplace is used for light and heat.

The owners, Jakoby and Nate Fardelnerl, live in the rear and make a living serving brew to the locals. They often do not charge for brew, rather giving it to whomever asks and receiving goods in return. As for Miles and his men, they are the ones who give Jakoby and Nate the brew more often than not, so are, of course, not charged. Jakoby and Nate essentially watch over the Ram's Head at Miles' pleasure. His men occasionally stay in the rooms on the upper floor.

The rooms themselves are unfurnished, and if available, are free to whomever wants them. There is no care for the rooms, though. They are dirty, unkempt, and foul. Newcomers are charged a few silver coins for a cot, nothing too steep for the establishment. This is usually done simply to see how much coin the person has. Food costs vary for newcomers (Miles' men and those working the land

do not pay), running between 5cp and 1gp, depending on the amount of food requested. Payment is always in advance. Beer costs between 1cp and 1sp, depending on the desires of Jakoby and how much he believes the characters may have on them.

The arrangement works as well as could be expected for those involved. Although Nate would rather be in Ludensheim or some other place which offers more safety and greater anonymity from the powers-that-be. Jakoby, for his part, concerns himself with little of anything, other than tapping the keg that is. Most especially, he avoids thinking about what a future might hold and focuses on simply surviving the present. They think anyone who comes here is escaping the law, but do try and figure out what the characters are doing in town.

Deertrik Shelentz and several of his men are here. They are staying in the common room so, unless they have gone, no one else should be allowed to stay in this room. Barldus Mikenfird is also here if he was not killed or captured, (see *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*, page 47, Area 23). Deertrik's companions are: Karl-Heinz, a drunk with an attitude and always ready to fight; Stafen Goodlemier or "Lurch," a quick-witted rapscaillon and knave; Ralfin-albitron Thedemoneous, a mean and lowly maker of magic; and Gisela Lector, a devoted servant to the Lords of Death.

Deertrik and the others do not suspect any newcomers are after them, believing themselves to be on a secret mission that is unknown to anyone else. The only exception to this will be if Barldus is here. He may recognize the characters immediately upon their arrival (assuming they met in *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*). If this is the case, Deertrik and his men will attempt to ambush the party and kill them. In all other cases, Deertrik's men ignore, as much as possible, the party. However, drunks, taverns, and weapons are a notoriously bad combination. Deertrik and his men often gather in the tavern, but do not discuss business there. This is reserved for when they are in the common room. It should be noted, the walls in the inn are flimsy and easy to hear through. All attempts to listen through the walls are made at +3.

If Deertrik and his crew get into a fight with the party, they will attempt to kill all of them to a person. If the party manages to defeat Deertrik and his entire crew, upon interrogation, several do reveal their plans and mention Kreetkruk. Those that escape, if any, go to Kreetkruk for help, claiming that they are found out and it would be in their best interest to help dispatch the party. Deertrik may also decide that the characters are perfect patsies and try to use them to defeat Kreetkruk. He does this by secretly confiding in them that he is an agent of "powerful people" in Ludensheim sent here to eliminate some Red Caps known to be in Dreddstun. He also throws in the untruth, but seeming possibilities, that Miles is in cahoots with the Red Caps.

DEERTRIK SHELENTZ (*He is a neutral evil, human, 4th level assassin. His vital stats are HP 17, AC 15. His primary attributes are dexterity, wisdom, and intelligence. His significant attributes are dexterity 14 and intelligence 16. He carries +2 leather armor, +1 hand crossbow, thieves tools, a short sword, 6 vials of poison causing paralyzation upon contact for 3d12 rounds, a dagger, 56gp, and traveling gear.*)

BARLDUS MIKENFIRD (He is a chaotic neutral, human, 3rd level rogue. His vital stats are HP 13, AC 11. His primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence, and charisma. His significant attribute is dexterity 13. He now carries leather armor, a short sword, a dagger, 1gp, and traveling gear.)

KARL-HEINZ (He is a chaotic evil, human, 3rd level fighter. His vital stats are HP 22, AC 16. His primary attributes are strength, constitution, and charisma. His significant attributes are strength 17, dexterity 14, and charisma 13. He carries a chain shirt, shield, falchion, short bow, dagger, club, 12gp, 22sp, and traveling equipment.)

STAFEN GOODLEMIER (He is a neutral evil, human, 3rd level rogue. His vital stats are HP 12, AC 13. His primary attributes are dexterity, wisdom, and intelligence. His significant attribute is dexterity 14 and wisdom 13. He carries leather armor, crossbow, thieves' tools, a short sword, a dagger, 6gp, and traveling gear.)

RALFIN-ALBITRON THEDEMONEOUS (He is a lawful evil, human 2nd level wizard. His vital stats are HP 6, AC 12. His primary attributes are wisdom, intelligence and dexterity. His significant attributes are intelligence 16 and dexterity 16. He carries a poisoned dagger that deals +1d6 damage unless a constitution save is made, 3 scrolls of comprehend languages, 20gp, and traveling gear. He can cast the following number of wizard spells: 0-4, 1st-3.)

GISELA LECTOR (She is a chaotic evil, human, 3rd level cleric. Her vital stats are HP 16, AC 14. Her primary attributes are wisdom, dexterity, and strength. Her significant attribute is strength 15. She carries a chain shirt, mace, flail, a holy symbol worth 100gp, vial with one sip of a strength potion, scroll with sanctuary on it, 10gp, and traveling gear. She can cast the following number of cleric spells: 0-4, 1st-2, 2nd-1.)

THE OLD MILL

Upon the banks of a slow moving, wide creek stands the remnants of an old water mill. A turn wheel, still in some decent shape moves slow in wide, lazy circles as the creek gently pushes it on. The outside of the mill is a wreck. Weeds, tangled briars, and small scrub oak dot the area and grow up to the long-untended building. Old wagons and broken and discarded material are thrown all around. Years of plundered goods that have been discarded litter the area. There are big fire pits, piles of rotted food and refuse everywhere. Big-leafed, clinging vines camouflage much of the building. A half-dozen slovenly brutes lounge around outside the mill, playing games, wrestling, slinging knives, or occasionally fishing.

This is an abandoned mill house. It is a large structure sitting on the banks of the Rizin Creek. A large turn wheel still moves ponderously when the waters of the Rizin are flowing fast. Although once used to mash grain, it is now occupied by Miles' men. These men are a fairly useless lot as far as Miles is concerned. Though ruffians, they are poorly motivated and utterly undependable. As such, they stay in Gipsheim until Miles needs them. The latter case is rare and only when big raids are being planned. Within are always 3-36 of Miles' men.

They set no guards and spend most of their time drinking, joking, gambling, and fighting one another and whatever else it is lazy criminals do. There are no guards nor lookouts in the place. If

confronted with a fight, many simply run away. Each common brigand here must make a successful mental saving throw or run should a fight break out. The few ringleaders present are not required to make the check, though should over half the brigands run or are killed, they begin looking for a way to escape or surrender.

The First Floor: This floor is spacious but cluttered with the belongings of those staying here. In the center of the room is a large grindstone and the trough in which the wheat was once ground to meal. The mechanism is broken so no longer works. There are a half-dozen trunks, opened and emptied except for common goods: piles of rope, two barrels of nails, some woodworking tools, boxes of salted fish, several kegs of beer, cloth, grain, rotted apples, and other goods taken from plundering over the years. The brigands do most of their cooking here and outside by the creek. A large fire pit is near one end of the room while piles of food scraps are littered about the floor.

The Upper Floor: This floor houses the machinery for turning the grindstone on the first floor. The connection to the water wheel is snapped so none of the gears are turning. Furthermore, the machinery is so old and poorly kept that it would not work even if the connection were fixed. This is also the sleeping quarters. There are three dozen blankets and a few beds haphazardly scattered about this room. There is little loot except what is carried by the brigands, but many common items can be found up here such as rope, hats, shields, arrows, knives, some chain, pots, tinder boxes, a few flasks of oil, and other sundries. Most valuables are kept on the brigands', persons.

BRIGANDS x3-36 (These are neutral evil, human, 1st level fighters. Their vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 12 or 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They wear leather armor with a 50% chance of having a shield. They use a club, a short sword or longsword determined randomly, and 20% have short bows. All carry daggers. Each also has 2-20cp, 1-10sp, and 16gp.)

BRIGAND RINGLEADERS: 1 for every five brigands (These are neutral evil, human, 3rd level fighters. Their vital stats are HP 15, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry studded leather armor, shield, crossbows, longswords, and 2-20gp in various coin.)

DREDDSTUN

Dreddstun is located some 35 miles south and west of Gipsheim. It too sits upon the banks of the Rizin Creek, though here the water moves a little faster and the creek is a little wider.

The road leading to this little ramshackle hamlet is little more than a muddy track. It is rarely used and overgrown. At times one might have difficulty even locating it. The road ends on top of a knobby hillock cleared of all vegetation. There are several old shacks and houses that seem to be piled atop it.

During its most prosperous times, Dreddstun was a backwater and poor community. Now, it is little more than a dozen or so small houses and shacks teetering and leaning askew, awaiting a strong wind to blow them over. At the center of the hamlet is a broad, two-story building that was once the general store, tavern, trading depot, and religious center. Now it is nothing more than a home for the most powerful ne'er-do-wells in the vicinity. It has been renamed by its latest inhabitants, the Ogre Inn.

Other than those in the Ogre Inn, there are only 30 or so people and several of Miles' men in Dreddstun. All but Miles' men are kept here against their will and essentially used as slaves by the others. They raise some pigs, a few cattle, and have several vegetable gardens. Mostly though, they just serve beer, run errands, and get kicked around and beat a little too much. There is one family of gnomes here as well, the Guttleburs. As for Miles' men, they do not stay in the Ogre Inn, rather, they have moved to another house a few doors down.

All newcomers to Dreddstun are treated with outright distrust and hostility until they prove themselves to be of the mean sort and capable of fighting. This does not mean that the locals will attack strangers immediately, but they will threaten any interlopers and test their will. It takes only a little to slight any of those here, and a fight to the death could be had in moments. If any of Miles' men or those in the Ogre Inn suspect the interlopers are bounty hunters or working with any "de pantylooned curs in Ludensheim," they will dispatch them forthwith.

There is much to be learned in Dreddstun and much to be feared. The slaves and Miles' men are well aware of the forces of evil gathering to their south in the Slag Heap. They have all seen the ungern in Dreddstun and the Ogre Inn talking. They impart this information to the characters if a reasonable rapport has been established.

THE OGRE INN

Before you is a ramshackle building, long and low, fashioned of stout trees with a thatched roof. Its size is greatly diminished, however, as half of it lies in ruins. Some poor excuse for an artisan has sketched a crude portrait of an ogre bashing a gnome with a club on the building's teetering door. A lone bench sits outside the door, upon which sits an old man, whose lackluster appearance denotes both dumbness and deafness.

The Ogre Inn is a broad, two-story, wooden building with a thatch roof. One-half of it has collapsed and lies in ruins. The roof leaks, and during a heavy rain, water pours into the upper floor and down into the lower floor. The lower floor consists of three large rooms.

Main room: Here is the main room and bar area. It is approximately 50 x 100 feet in size. There are many tables and chairs of all types in here as plundering has afforded some comforts. There is one large red velvet stuffed chair which Kreetkruk sits in. No one else does, and should anyone attempt it, a fight will occur. Kreetkruk and/or some of his goblins will almost always be here or in the kitchen unless they are away on some business. There are large kegs of beer in the room and many cups piled near it. Additionally, there is always some village inhabitant or two in the room to serve Kreetkruk. It is up to the Castle Keeper to decide upon the disposition of Kreetkruk and his goblins in order to best serve the adventure.

Kitchen: In the back is a narrow room once used as a kitchen but now used for sleeping and storage, as it is the driest place in the whole building. It is about 20 x 40 feet in size with a door leading to the outside at its rear. Kreetkruk and his goblins all sleep in here. They rarely keep watch, stay up late drinking and gambling, and get up well after the sun rises, sometimes near dusk sleeping the whole day away. There are a dozen crates of food in here, bolts of cloth, barrels of beer, several lanterns, a large barrel of pitch, a

dozen small ceramic containers with oil in them, a grappling hook, some woodworking tools, and a plethora of cooking utensils.

There is also a small metal trunk in a cabinet. This contains some of the payoff offered by Baron Dietmold to put an end to the raids. The trunk is locked and trapped. Kreetkruk has the key on a chain around his neck. A trap is inside the lock and impossible to locate by detecting traps, until one tries to pick the lock. If the key is used, the trap is disabled. Once the lock is being picked, the character must roll a detect traps check. If successful, the character notes an odd sound of glass clinking and can stop his action. He has detected the trap. At this point, the character can attempt to disable the lock but must roll a disable lock and pick lock at the same time to be able to do so. Both rolls must be successful in order to succeed at the task. If either fails, the trap is sprung. If the character elects to stop and remove his tools and try to disable the lock without picking it at the same time, the trap will spring also. The Castle Keeper may warn the character that this latter might occur by indicating his tool seems to be caught on something inside the lock.

If the trap is sprung, a poisonous gas is emitted that covers 20-square feet. It causes all within its sphere to collapse, paralyzed for 2–24 hours and take 1d6 damage unless they make a successful save versus poison. In this case, paralyzation for 1d6 hours occurs. It is a powerful toxin. The trunk contains 100pp and 10 gems each worth 100gp.



Room of Worship: The other room was once a chamber for worship but is now simply abandoned and desecrated. In the center is a large stone basin. Once filled with holy water, it now is scribed in foul runes and filled with trash. No one enters this room anymore.

Upper Floor: The upper floor of the Ogre Inn is usually abandoned. Occasionally one of Kreetkruk's men will come up here to sleep off a drunk, but other than that, few ever come up here. There are six small rooms sitting over the main room down below. They are separated by a hallway such that three rooms are on each side of it. Each of the rooms is empty except for broken furniture and other debris. They are moldy and, depending on the time of year, lice and flea infested.

The following are the important members of Kreetkruk's band. Each wears a dark red cap.

Kreetkruk: He is a mean-spirited and cruel ogre of massive proportions. He is also quick witted and smart, unusual for an ogre. He is not in Dreddstun to start any trouble, just to kill Deertrik or get some more gold. That said, he is not unwilling to smash a few heads. Kreetkruk speaks the common tongue of the region but in a somewhat broken manner.

KREETKRUK (This chaotic evil ogre's vital stats are HD 5d10, HP 32, AC 15, His primary attributes are physical. He receives a +1 to hit and damage. He carries both a ball and chain as well as a large club into combat. He uses the club to knock opponents down and follows up with a swing of the ball and chain for 2d8 points of damage. He carries a leather jerkin, a key hangs around his neck on a chain, and has a pouch with 45gp in it.)

Nordin the Vulture: He is the only human in the bunch. He has come along as a translator to aid Kreetkruk if necessary. His keen eyes, combined with the moist grimace constantly etched on his face, makes him look like a vulture, hence his nickname.

NORDIN (He is a chaotic evil, human, 3rd level assassin. His vital stats are HP 15, AC 14. His primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence, and wisdom. His significant attributes are intelligence 17 and dexterity 16. He carries leather armor, short sword, 6 x throwing daggers, a potion of levitation, a potion of healing, 22gp, a ring valued at 150gp, and traveling gear.)

Grazsh: This goblin is a spiritual leader for the band. He is a cruel fighter and enjoys entering the fray. He also knows the location of the Slag Heap and is planning on making a trip there in the near future to confer with Froithmot.

GRAZSH (This chaotic evil goblin's vital stats are HD 3d6, AC 15. Its primary attributes are intelligence and wisdom. This goblin can cast spells as a 4th level cleric. He carries a shield, chainmail hauberk, large mace, 3x javelins, onyx holy symbol in the shape of three javelins worth 100gp and traveling gear. He can cast the following number of cleric spells: 0–4, 1st–3, 2nd–2.)

Ooglz: is cunning and sneaky even for a goblin. He attempts to escape should serious trouble occur and return to the Vargolz. He, too, knows the location of the Slag Heap as he once followed Grazsh there, without Grazsh's knowledge.

OOGLZ (This chaotic evil goblin's vital stats are HD 3, HP 12, AC 14. His primary attributes are strength and constitution. He receives a +2 to armor class, he is so fast. He can make back attacks and climb as a 3rd level rogue. He carries a shortsword, leather armor, 3x throwing daggers, thieves' tools, 15sp, and clothing.)

The Red Caps: These are Kreetkruk's foot soldiers. They are a wily, tough band of goblins. They all wear the familiar red caps.

RED CAPS x 12 (These chaotic evil goblins' vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield shortswords and do 1d6 points of damage in battle. They carry light crossbow, shortsword, studded leather armor, and 1–10sp.)

THE KNOCKERS

The Knockers are a dozen or so members of Miles' crew. They have been here for some time, rarely going to Gipsheim or raiding with Miles. They are here at Miles' behest as part of his effort to lay claim to the territory for what that is worth. In truth, though, these are some of the least reliable of those who claim allegiance to Miles and have been sent here to keep them from causing trouble elsewhere. They are an abusive lot who fight with one another more than with anyone else.

They are currently staying in a large house on the north edge of town and close to the fast-flowing Rizin Creek. The house is dilapidated but, unlike the rest of the town, has wooden shingles and is thereby a little drier during wet weather. It is a single-story structure with only two rooms. There is a large room where the Knockers gather and eat and sleep and another smaller room where they have stored their material. In here they have some foodstuffs, clothing for winter, and various and sundry items taken from raids. Most of it is worthless.

The group is lead by Reglar Mud, a ruffian of the highest order, and his companion in arms, a dwarf named Gratl Durhill. Reglar is aware that there are some unger and orcs located somewhere to the south of Dreddstun but he does not know where and has not gone looking for them. He cares little for anything other than what immediately affects him.

The two have taken as much loot as they can hide from Miles, and hidden it in a small box buried beneath an old oak across the Rizin Creek. In it are 80gp, 175sp, 575cp, and 22 pieces of jewelry worth between 1–10gp each. There is also a box of goods in the mess in here that belonged to the Guttleburs. Within it are several pieces of cookware, some candles, and other sundries. Along with this are several sheets of paper listing items which they carried with them and a genealogical note establishing heritage to the clans at Havenwale. This latter sheathe of paper is actually a map to Havenwale (the Slag Heap) disguised as something else. To access the map though, a simple word must be said over it, Havenwale. The map reveals the quickest and easiest route to Havenwale.

REGLAR MUD (He is a neutral evil, human, 4th level ranger. His vital stats are HP 24, AC 15. His primary attributes are dexterity, strength and intelligence. His significant attributes are strength 17 and dexterity 14. He carries a chain shirt, large crossbow, 10 x +2 non-magical bolts, a halberd, dagger, 26gp, 47sp, a 20gp, and traveling gear.)

GRATL DURHILL (*He is a neutral evil, dwarf, 2nd level fighter. His vital stats are HP 24, AC 17. His prime attributes are strength and constitution. His significant attributes are strength 15, constitution 13, and dexterity 14. He carries a chainmail, shield, crossbow, shortsword, +2 throwing dagger, 16gp, 97sp, and traveling gear.*)

THE RUFFIANS x10 (*These neutral evil humans' vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 12 or 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by weapon. They wear leather armor with a 50% chance of having a shield. They use a club, a short sword or longsword determined randomly and 20% have short bows. All carry daggers. Each also has 2–20cp, 1–10sp and 16gp.*)

GUTTLEBURS

The Guttleburs are a family of gnomes who came here in search of their cousins in Havenwale. The father of the family, Nurfin, and his two sons, Hopple and Neeble, are the only ones left in town. Reglar sold (or traded, as he likes to think) Nurfin's wife, Frema, and daughter, Owlin, to Froithmot the ungern in return for some gnomish wine (which Froithmot took from a wine cellar at the Slag Heap). This arrangement also ensures that Nurfin and his sons will stay here and acquiesce to Reglar's requests, as he promises to return his wife and daughter as soon as possible. Reglar is, of course, lying.

Nurfin, Hopple, and Neeble care for some hogs and have a little garden with which they supply food to Reglar and those in the Ogre Inn. They are exceedingly despondent as a result of their situation but imagine no way out of it until Frema and Owlin are returned. They will be grateful for any help the characters can give them. They will even agree to leave Dreddstun with the characters and guide them to Havenwale if the characters promise to free Frema and Owlin, or at least try.

However, they do not know exactly where Havenwale is. That information is located on a map which Reglar took from them when they were captured. Without it, they can only guess where Havenwale is and will most likely end up getting the party lost.

NURFIN, HOPPLE AND NEEBLE (*These chaotic neutral gnomes vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 7, 5, 4, AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They have no equipment.*)

THE INHABITANTS OF DREDDSTUN

The inhabitants of Dreddstun are kept here against their will. Their fear is palpable, and they all would be happy to be freed of the place. However, they fear the wilds about Dreddstun almost as much as they fear staying in Dreddstun. They will request the characters lead them to Ludensheim or Botkinburg should they be freed. There are 35 humans here. Six are children, eight are adult women and the remainder are adult males.

Many of the inhabitants have seen the comings and goings of many people here. Several will mention Miles' passing through on occasion. However, what is interesting are the Red Caps. Recently, they have been here in large numbers, and they have been having many men of Ludensheim. Further, a great ungern chief comes to Dreddstun on rare occasions. This should inspire concern and fear in any hearing it. Ungern are rare south of the Hruesen River. They

are the true minions of the Horned One, made in his image, and their loyalty resides to him above all things. With them around, nothing good can be in the making. Many here have also heard of Havenwale or Diamond Dale, though none know where it is.

COMMONERS (*These humans' vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10. They have no primary attributes. They also have no equipment.*)

TO THE SLAG HEAP

The trip to the Slag Heap from Dreddstun is long and arduous. There is a trail, but it is indistinct and so rarely used that it is virtually indistinguishable from the forest floor. Without a guide or the map, travel to the Slag Heap is nearly impossible. One other option is to trail one or more people moving to and from Dreddstun and the Slag Heap. Froithmot and several of his orcs will eventually go to Dreddstun to meet with Kreetkruk and then travel back. Grazsh and Ooglz know the location and may reveal it if forced to or they can be tracked to it.

If the characters attempt it on their own, they must make a successful tracking check every day of the trip. This tracking check begins at a –1 penalty. The penalty increases by –1 each day so that on the 5th day of travel, the tracking check is at –5. It takes six days to get to the Slag Heap from Dreddstun assuming 10 miles of movement a day.

And 10 miles of movement a day will be a challenge. This ancient forest is littered with dead fall, small mires, thick undergrowth, and all manner of obnoxious critters that bite, sting, slither, crawl, latch, buzz and simply annoy. All this and the constant attention needed to keep an eye on the trail makes movement very slow. Overland movement is halved. It is about 60 miles to the Slag Heap.

Should the characters lose the trail, they are on their own. The Barren Wood is deep and wide and filled with all manner of creatures. Many small paths crisscross this area of the forest and many of those end up at The House that Meg Built (see below) or the Dread Mire (see below). Regardless of whether the players stumble upon that haunted place they must, if they remain lost, find their own way to Dreddstun, Gipsheim, or wander around until they find Havenwale. The author trusts that at that point the Castle Keeper will find a method to entertain the party in a most horrible and deadly fashion.

THE HOUSE THAT MEG BUILT

South, deep in the Barren Wood, along an unnamed creek that meanders through an equally unknown meadow stand the remnants of an old house. Shoddily built, the house has not stood the test of time. Its roof is gone and the walls little more than a row of planks sticking haphazardly from the ground. The whole meadow is dark, and cobwebs hang from the surrounding trees and stretch across the ground. The grasses of the meadow have not grown in some time, and the area looks more like a beaten down clearing.

A horrible stench hangs over the meadow, and shadows pervade it all. The trees are old, the barks blackened with soot and the leaves, brown and clinging on more by the webs hanging from the trees than anything else. At the mouth of the only path that leads into the Meadow, where the creek enters it, hangs a long cylinder of web. It rocks gently in the breeze. Upon closer examination, an old, gnarled, petrified hand protrudes from the web.

This is the house that Meg built.

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Meg. Meg was born into a farmer's family that dwelt upon the edge of the Barren Wood. They lived in the comforting shade of the Baron of Botkinburg, enjoying that Lord's protection. But Meg was different than most children, for she was mean, cruel, petty, and vicious. She loved to tease her siblings and reveled in the torment of animals. At an early age she displayed unusual abilities, able to cast petty spells and illusions. She used these abilities to ever greater mischief so that by her teenage years young Meg had become a living terror to her family, other farmers, and the farm's animals.

Meg's father, a stern man not governed by the superstitions of many folk that dwelt in Botkinburg, threatened Meg with banishment if she failed to mend her ways. Many said it was the fey that made Meg touched, and her mother made excuses for her. But Meg's father was unflappable, and he said unto her: "Continue this behavior and you shall live out your days in the dark of the Barren Wood!"

Meg, tiring of her father's idle threats, enchanted her father's work boots so that they gave her father boils whenever he wore them. In a rage, he gathered up her few belongings, bound her, and tossed her over the back of his best mule. For four days and nights, he traveled into the wood, cutting no trail, but meandering through glen and dale, down animal tracks and across streams and creeks, until at last he came to a lonesome meadow where a slow-moving creek wandered through. Setting her and her satchel upon the ground, he cut her bonds and spoke to her, saying only, "Meg. You're an evil child and you'll make a worse woman. You mean nothing but harm to those around you, so I give you to the forest where the harm you do will pass unnoticed by the long years."

With that, he turned and left her, never looking back.

For a great while Meg wept, pulled at her hair, wailed and howled to the deepening dusk. Eventually, she collapsed in a pitiful heap and lay thus for many long days and nights. She lay that way until a young hobgoblin came across her. So wretched was her condition that he took her for one of his own. But no sooner than he fed her did he realize that she was a human and then thoughts of eating her overcame him. But Meg, having recovered her strength, saw through the hobgoblin and bewitched him, taking him as her spouse.

And so, Meg dwelt in the forest with her hobgoblin husband for many years. Both of them grew more wretched and evil with each passing year, and they haunted the lands around, terrorizing any and all creatures that came into their domain.

Meg bore five horrid sons to her hobgoblin husband before she slew and ate him. They were not human, nor goblin, but evil ettercaps that followed her everywhere and did as she bid them to. They built her a house of horrors there in the meadow and along the banks of the creek mostly of spider webs that they spun themselves. Eventually, Meg died and the ettercaps bound her in web and hung her from one of the trees on the edge of the clearing where they go to pay her homage and keen over her. Since those days, two of the ettercaps have left, but three still remain in the house of their mother.

The ettercaps live in and about the meadow. They dwell in the trees mostly, living out their miserable lives in the dark cones of webbing that they themselves have spun. They are always hungry, extraordinarily evil, and likely to attack anything that comes into the clearing.

ETTERCAPS 3 (*These neutral evil creatures' vital stats are HD 5d8, HP varies, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with 2 claws for 1d4 points of damage apiece and a bite for 1d8 points of damage. They are able to deliver a poisonous bite as well as an improved grab and web traps.*)

In and about the meadow lies the accumulated treasure of Meg and her sons. There are 340gp, 750sp; there is a lyre worth 250gp in working condition, a box of mechanical dwarf toys, mostly marching soldiers and orcs worth 150gp; lying in the ruins of the house is a much corroded +2 battle axe (easy enough to knock the corrosion off) and a rod of wonder; in the cocoon where Meg hangs, upon her finger is a magical ring of evasion.

THE DREAD MIRE

The Dread Mire is an ancient battleground that has now become a swamp. Some millennia past, a local elfin lord aligned himself a human kingdom to battle against the onslaught of the Horned One's army. In the first clashing of arms, the human king betrayed his ally and fell upon the elfin rearguard as the armies of the Horned One weighed into the vanguard. The humans slaughtered all of the elves in a horrific battle. But Andual, a warrior priest and the last of the kindred to die, laid a curse upon these men: "May your treachery bind you to this earth! May it devour you and spit you back up as a shadow of yourself. Thirst now for a life you cannot have. I curse you and bind you here until the Damnnun sakes your agony. Know no peace."

The men laughed at Andual and slew him, casting his body aside. But soon they found the elfin curse bore teeth, for they could not leave the ground upon which they stood, the battlefield of the elves. If they approached the edges of it a great terror overcame them, and they fell back upon themselves, fighting for room. Eventually, the men went mad from fear and raged against each other until they were all dead.

The Horned One, ever appreciative of deceit, despised the men for their treachery and left them to die.

The Dread Mire begins abruptly. The trees of the Barren Wood break onto an open, poorly drained pasture with numerous bogs, pits of quicksand, small creeks, and thick, thorny undergrowth. The bleached trunks of long-dead trees dot the landscape and a wispy mist shrouds the ground. The stench coming off the bog is horrendous and difficult to bear.

Anyone who enters the bog must make a successful constitution save (CL 3) or begins retching uncontrollably. The retching is violent and last for several minutes, causing 1 point of damage each time the character fails their save. This damage heals at one hit point every two hours.

This region is an exceedingly dangerous place, as many undead live here. Within 1d4 rounds of entering the bog, the souls of the dead begin to moan, muttering strange curses in a forgotten tongue. After the first four rounds have passed from entry, the first of the undead begin clawing their way out of the bog, rising from the dead.

The weakest of the undead, those barely clinging to the grave, rise first, followed by more powerful creatures. The first hour, 1d12 skeletons rise; the second hour, 1d8 zombies rise; the third hour, 1d6 ghouls rise; the fourth hour, 1d4 ghastrs rise. Their numbers are cumulative, so that by the third hour, the party is encountering skeletons, zombies, and ghouls.

These creatures are not all evil and bent on destruction. Some may be enticed to talk to the characters if the characters are able to distract them in some manner, i.e., sing a song of heroism or lost luck or something of that nature. They impart the nature of the curse if the opportunity arises.

They are particularly fearful of elves and refuse to fight them. Elves can, in fact, prevent any fighting whatsoever. If an elf is with the party, the undead may surround him, but will not attack.

SKELETONS (These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 1d12, HP varies AC 12. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with long swords doing 1d8 points of damage.)

ZOMBIES (These neutral evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 8, 9, 11; AC 11. They have no primary attributes. They attack with one claw that does 1d8 damage plus possible rot grub infestation.)

GHOULS (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 12 each, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with 2 Claws for 1d3 points of damage and a Bite for 1d6 points of damage.)

GHASTRS (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 20 each, AC 17. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with 2 claws for 1d4 points of damage and 1 bite for 1d8 points of damage. Their special abilities include ghoulish stench, paralysis, ghoulish fever, and darkvision. They have a vulnerability to iron.)

There is no manner of clearing this land of the undead unless the curse is lifted. To do so one has to fetch water from the Damnum River and pour it into the swamp.

The Damnum River is one of the Seven Rivers that flow through Shindolay, the land of fey where the elves originate. The Damnum

intersects the Material Plane in the Twilight Wood through the Dreaming Sea. The god Utumno watches over its material spring. It is from this river that water must be drawn in order to cure these men of their curse.

OVERLAND ENCOUNTERS

This chart details encounters that occur while traveling in the region. Check for encounters twice during the day and twice at night. A roll of 1 on a d10 indicates an encounter. Then roll a d20 to determine the type.

d20	Encounter
1-2	Bandits (2-8) / ambush, after a raid, encamped
3-4	Goblins (7-12) / spying, raiding, stealing cattle
5	Lost traveler (1-3) / villager scared, hiding, fleeing
6	Mountain Lion (1) / tracking party, may attack
7-10	Herd Animals / deer, elk, oxen, boar, or other
11-12	Wolves (4-12) / eating, tracking party, moving
13	Giant Spiders (2-8) / nest area, with prey, moving
14	Brown Bear (1) / hunting food 1 in 10 with cubs
15-16	Fey (2-8) / pixies
17-18	Orcs (2-8) / raiding, scouting, lost, encamped, after fight
19-20	Ogre (1) / traveling, searching for home, raiding

THE BARREN WOOD

This chart details encounters that occur along the region of the Blacktooth Ridge. Check for encounters twice during the day and three times at night. Roll a d10 and a 1 indicates an encounter. Then roll a d20 to determine the type.

d20	Encounter
1-2	Goblins (7-18) / spying, raiding, stealing cattle
3-5	Orcs (3-12) / raiding, scouting, lost, encamped
6	Bandits (3-12) / ambush, after a raid, encamped
7	Hyenas (4-16) / hunting, around carcass, sunning
8-9	Wild Boar (2-6) / rooting around, relaxing at mud hole
10-12	Stirges (1-3) / hunting, with prey, flying overhead
13-14	Ogre (1-2) / hunting, traveling, looking for a home
15	Wolves (3-18) / eating, tracking party, moving
16	Bear, large (1) / aggressive male or female with cub
17-20	Herd Animals / deer, elk, oxen, boar, or other

THE SLAG HEAP

Slag Heap sprawls over a wide area and consists of loosely linked encounter areas. These are made up of small mines and barrows, a haunted wood/shrine, and a host of tangled, winding tracks. There is little left of the gnomish community. Most of it has been uprooted or buried. What is left is occupied by servants of the Witch Queen. The Shrine of Waters, once a holy place, has been befouled by harpies. The Deepening Well is an active mine filled with gnome slaves. Black Hole is the pit within which Seroneous dwells. The Collapsing Caverns serve as a compound for the orcs and ungern, and the Maze serves as a house for prisoners.

The Slag Heap, or Havenwale as it was once known, sits in a remote vale deep in the Barren Wood. Steep hills, tangled forest, and a mishmash of ravines, ridges, and washes hide the vale from most interlopers. However, in recent years many of the trees have been cut down to feed the fires of Slag Heap, leaving a swath of destruction apparent to all a mile or so before arriving in the vale. Once an idyllic community of small, colorful houses; deep, comfortable barrows; dark green grass; and many a spring flower, it is now a jumble of dark and dingy huts, churned earth, muddy pits, and dark, unforgiving barrows. Heaps and mounds of detritus from the diggings and tossings of the orcs and ensorcelled gnomes lay all about. Fires are constantly burning, day or night, as the orcs and ungern enjoy the heat and ashen smoke the fresh wood renders. Within the vale, one can observe the movement of orc and ungern alike as they make their way to and from barrows and shacks.

Much of the Slag Heap mines are in horrible condition, and many portions have collapsed or are nearing collapse. The debris and wreckage offer a host of good and safe hiding places from watching eyes.

However, entering the vale can be very dangerous. Should the characters attempt to storm the complexes in the vale with no thought to stealth, the entirety of the inhabitants will come out and work together in its defense. Only through stealth, wit, and playing off one group against another will the characters manage to clear this place of its filthy inhabitants. Cautious characters will soon discover that entering local areas does not necessarily raise the ire of all the inhabitants, as there are many conflicting loyalties. For instance, both the ungern chief and drider would welcome the others death so that one or the other could take over the entire complex. So, if either knows that the other is in trouble, he will not respond.

There is the option for numerous other burrows and mines which can be designed and populated as the Castle Keeper desires. Manners of handling this are discussed at the end of this section.

TRAITORS AND SERVANT

The Slag Heap is loosely controlled by the drider Seroneous, an agent of the Witch Queen. He was sent to the area to find the diamonds of Havenwale and to build an outpost and gathering place for others in the Witch Queen's service. Seroneous has proven to be less reliable than the Witch Queen hoped. His mistress is far from the Slag Heap, and being vile and evil by nature, he has decided to pursue his own grotesque needs and amusements, while giving little attention to those of the Witch Queen.

Seroneous, through intermediaries in Dreddstun or his spider minions, captures or purchases demi-human chattel and uses them for sacrifices, food, torture and simple execution. Occasionally Seroneous uses them to help the ensorcelled gnomes. But only occasionally. These pasttimes consume Seroneous to such a degree that he cared little for what else occurred in his compound or even the region.

That was until the arrival of Froithmot, an ungern in the service of the Witch Queen. Having been sent by the Witch

Queen to augment Seroneous' forces, Froithmot quickly discovered that Seroneous was a fool and bent only on the pleasures of his tortured flesh. In the few short weeks since his arrival, Froithmot has gained virtual control of the vale and all of Seroneous' forces. Froithmot cares little for Seroneous and would just as well see him dead as alive.

AREA 1: THE SHRINE OF WATERS

The Shrine of Waters is holy ground. The spring and waters are magical and once served as a shrine for the wood fey and gnomes. That was in happier times.

Years past, the princess Adel, a fey of wondrous beauty, fell into the grasp of one of the Horned God's eldritch goblins. Ezelweed was twisted and foul, his body the mirror of his soul. He forced Adel to consume a potion that would strike her mind dumb, so that he could force her to love him. But Adel consumed the potion reluctantly and was taken with madness. She broke free of Ezelweed's clawed grasp and fled from him. His short and stubby legs were no match for her long stride, and she quickly left him behind. In rage he cursed her and flung a dart after her fleeing form. It struck true, though Ezelweed did not know it, for she fled on, deep into the Barren Wood.

At last, Adel came to the end of her road and life. She lay down beneath the shade of an old willow tree and clutched at her dying heart. A pod of sprites found her thus, and they wondered at her end. She could not speak, but they fussed over her, nonetheless, and begged her life to remain. To their dismay, she passed beyond them and died there beneath the willow tree. But their magic had worked an enchantment upon her.

In time her blood became a pool of water, and flowers grew where she fell. Short, wide-mouthed blue bells sprung to life everywhere her form had lain, except where the dart pierced her. There, a briar grew, long and perilous thorns springing from its horned hide. The sprites formed a bowl of wood into which the water could flow, and there, in later days, they gathered to frolic and dance, and from it they drew much sustenance. The arrival of the gnomes changed little and they too enjoyed the sustenance of the waters of the shrine. They then built a pedestal of stone upon which the wood bowl was placed and up to which the water would flow.

The arrival of Witch Queen's servants ended all this. Seroneous, the drider, befouled the Shrine of Waters and had two columns of stone erected by it. Between them he hung foul webs and laid many an egg so that his venomous offspring would forever keep the place unclean and the waters unavailable. "Evil begets evil," as they say. So arrived four harpy sisters. Aged enemies of the fey, the harpies delighted in the befoulment of the shrine, and they came and lit upon the columns as if in victory. They feasted upon Seroneous' hatchlings and grew fat.

The harpies have made the Shrine of Waters their home. Their nest has been built in the willow tree, and they often rest upon the tops of the columns, waiting easy prey-be it orc, goblin, man or gnome. Their favorite food is, of course, the fey and their kin, most especially elves. Two of the harpies are often in the Barren Wood hunting prey and trying to lure them back to the Shrine spot

where they are killed and devoured. For Seroneous' part, he wants them gone, and he has continually concocted plans to rid the vale of the harpies, or alternately, bring them under his control. The harpies guard the shrine better than he or his hatchlings ever could and are devilishly difficult to kill in any respect.

Before you are two large, ivy-covered, blocky, stone columns sitting upon either side of a small stone pedestal. Upon the pedestal is a great wooden bowl of seeming common make. The ground is a shrine of some type. About the shrine, the ground is churned and dug up such that nothing grows but weeds and briars. The trees have been chewed upon and chopped at. They are only ghostly reminders of their once great selves. An old willow survives this ruin, but it is sorely bent and scarred. All about are bones. Some are picked clean, glistening white in the light of the moon, but fresher kill is patched with rotten skin and tawny half-chewed muscle.

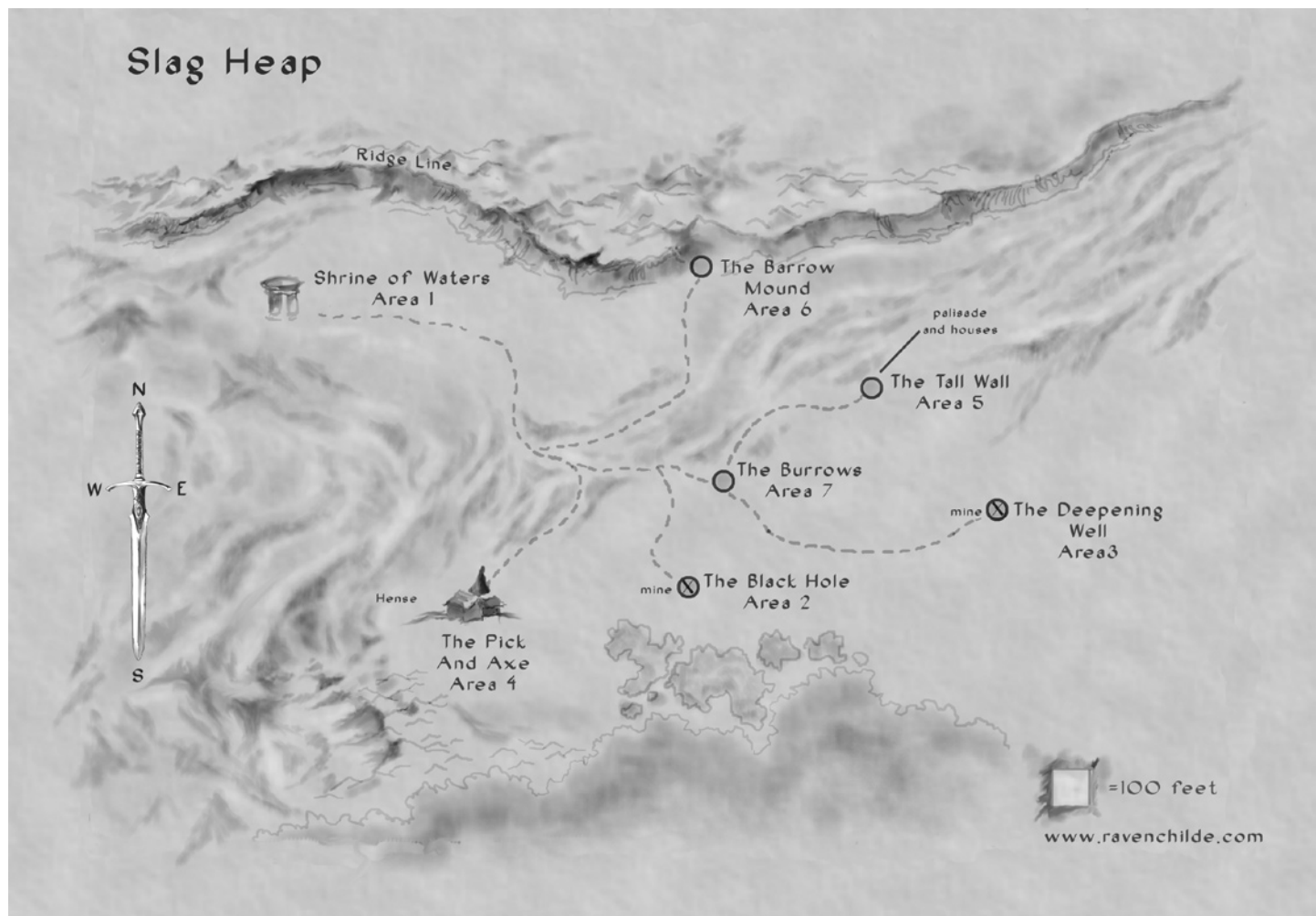
The Pedestal and Bowl: Water flows up the pedestal and spills into the bowl such that the pedestal's column is damp and the bowl always full. The water and shrine are not actually befouled, simply occupied and surrounded by foul creatures. The harpies have tried dumping the wooden bowl over but have not been able to do so, as the magic of the wood fey is too great. They have tried emptying the bowl, but it fills back up almost immediately. They have tried fouling the waters, but within moments, it returns to its clear, crystalline nature.

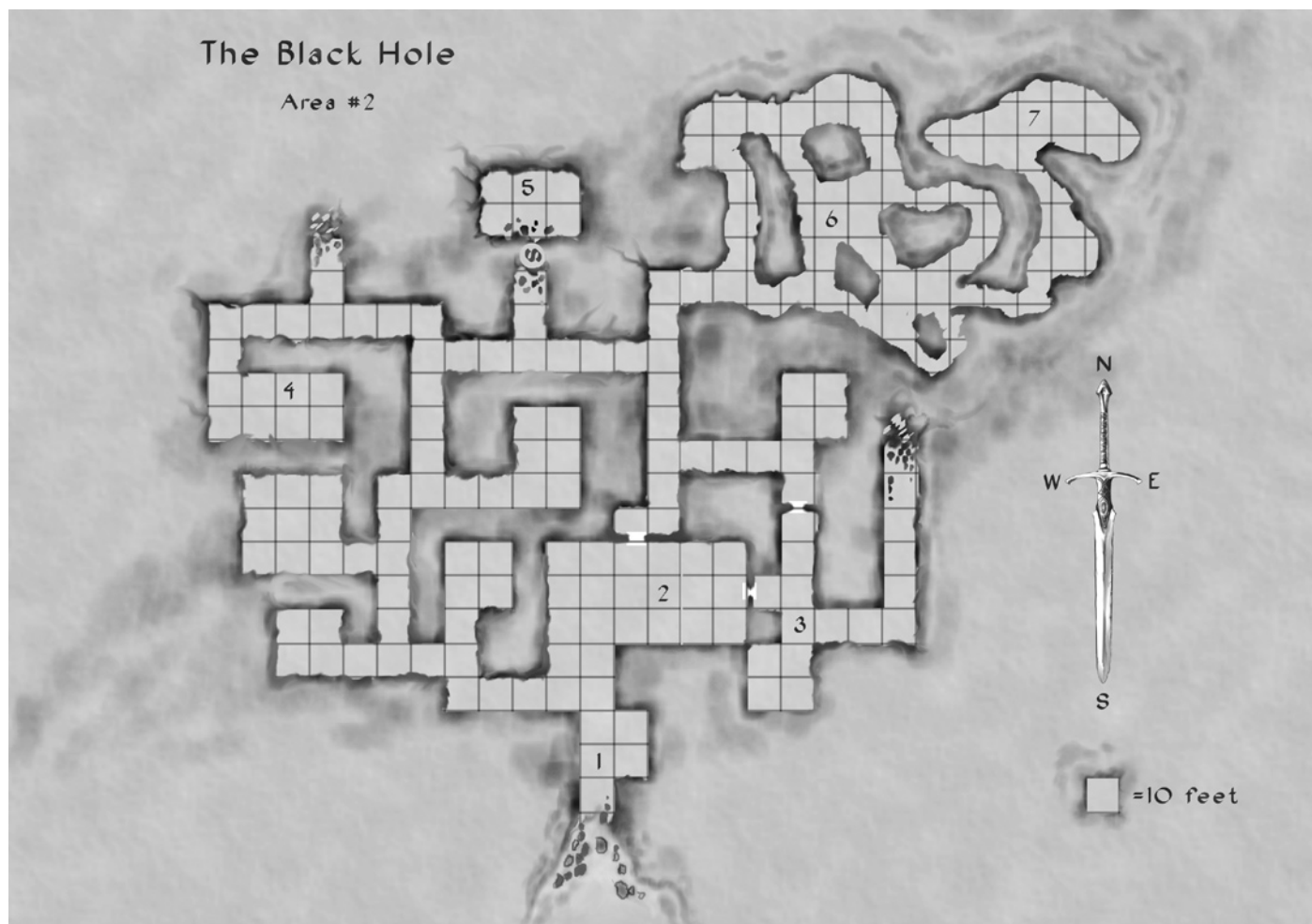
The harpies content themselves by sitting on their perches, devouring what they can and littering the landscape with the wretched remains of their victims. The bones offer solace to the harpies and a warning to any interlopers.

Depending on the size and power of the party, the Castle Keeper should have either two or four of the harpies at the Shrine of the Waters. Whichever the case, the harpies hide themselves in the canopy of the trees nearby and begin to sing a song, attempting to woo the characters in. In general, they each sing a song in turn and not together. In this manner they attempt to attract as many victims as possible to the Shrine of the Waters. Once they have them at the shrine, they attack those characters not suffering from their particular charms. The harpies will also leave the area if they are being sorely pressed, as they, like many living things, would prefer not to die.

HARPY x 4 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 14 each, AC 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two claws for 1d3 points of damage each, or with darts for 1d3 points of damage. Their special abilities are *captivating song* and *captivating chorus*. *Captivating chorus* allows the harpies to sing a song together. For each harpy joining in the song, a -1 modifier adjusts all saves versus their song. A maximum of six harpies can join a *captivating chorus* for a total of -6 to saving throws.)

Should the characters choose to search through the bones of the dead, they will find some items of interest amongst the rotting





debris. In addition to shredded armor, ripped clothing, rotted foodstuffs, bits and pieces of weaponry and traveling materials is a set of scrolls in a wooden case. There are three scrolls in the case, each having one 1st level spell written upon it. The Castle Keeper should choose the spells to fit the party. There is a large +1/+2 kite shield which shows no signs of rust or decay. Anyone who uses the shield gains a +1 armor class; in the hands of a knight, it offers a +2 to armor class. There are some coins here: 55gp, 122sp, and 120cp. There is a necklace with a jewel dangling from it valued at 210gp and a silver ring worth 30gp.

The water in the shrine is magical. When a drink is taken, 1d8 hit points of damage are instantly restored and all charisma checks and charisma saving throws receive a +2 bonus for 24 hours. Its effects only occur once per day, per person. The water must be taken directly from the bowl. Furthermore, it only affects lawful and chaotic good characters; all other alignments are refreshed by the water, but gain no other benefit.

AREA 2: THE BLACK HOLE

What was once an airy, homely abode for a family of gnomes is now a dreadfully dark maze of crisscrossing tunnels, chutes, holes, and dens wherein live many a grotesque aberration and unctuous malediction. This is the lair of Seroneous the drider, a one-time servant of Aufstrag, and now a Captain of the Witch Queen's. Seroneous has occupied this barrow for many years, peopling it with his minions so that the place is now a hive filled

with them. They scurry, creep, and crawl through the wet, slick, ichor-covered warren of tunnels, hoping to avoid the ire and hunger of Seroneous. Mostly, they are kin to those horrid spiders that linger yet on the out-walls of Aufstrag.

The complex is small, originally of gnomish make. As such, the tunnels, though well-made and lined with wood panels and stone flags, are small. They are usually five feet wide and six feet tall. Exceptions are noted on the map and in the description. The tunnels the spiders have made are very small, usually several feet in diameter. Room 6 The Hive is wholly made by the spiders. Beyond this area, the spider tunnels are easy to spot, as they are rough hewn and horribly out of place.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

There are very few areas of this barrow that are anything other than empty rooms with destroyed furniture and rotted material in them. However, the complex is overrun with hatchlings of Seroneous. Every half hour the characters are in here, the chance for a random encounter occurs. A 1 on d6 indicates an encounter. Then roll a d6 to determine the type.

1	1 small spider
2	1-2 small spiders
3	1-3 small spiders
4	1-6 small spiders and 1 medium spider

5 2–4 medium spiders

6 1 drider

Room 1: The Entry The entry to this complex is unguarded. A door was once here, but it has long since been removed, as have all the other doors in the complex.

The entry tunnel is wide and about six feet in height. Within is a small, dark room filled with cobwebs and a moist air, thick with the stench of death and decay. Beneath the foul coat, you note the remains of paneled walls and cobbled floors. The ruins of an old bench lay on the floor, and the stubs of broken pegs line the walls, no doubt for hats, coats, and the like. Once, no doubt, this place was an inviting home to those who came before the servants of Aufstrag.

There is nothing of value here. A door on the far side of the room leads to the Long Hall beyond. A few bones, with marrow sucked out of them, lie beneath the rubble of the bench.

Room 2: The Long Hall This was once used as a foyer by the gnomes who lived here.

The room is long and largely empty. Webs dangle from the thick, wooden beams that line the ceiling. Like the entry, this room is rank with the stench of death. A host of doors line the walls to the left and right. Some are closed, others lie upon the floor, rubble and debris spilling out of the apertures.

There is little of value in the hallway. Most of the doors are inaccessible, revealing only rubble and collapsed rooms. The doors that do lead to rooms are marked on the map.

Room 3: The Kitchen Here, the gnomes of old cooked wondrous meals and brewed cider for themselves and neighbors.

The room was once obviously a kitchen. Cabinets and counters line the walls, a large island counter sits in the middle of the room, and huge fireplace dominates the back wall. Cans, barrels, and all manner of cooking ware lie scattered and ruined about the floor. The only thing that seems to be in tact is a huge brewing barrel, wherein, no doubt, some creatures concoct their foul brew.

The room has little of value in it. A search reveals some few good pans and a little bit of old, stale, bad-tasting beer in the brew barrel.

Room 4: The Living Room Once a hall for entertaining guests, it is now a storage room for junk.

Upon entry you are greeted by mountains of junk. Five huge piles of stuff from wheelbarrows and buckets to garden implements to crockery and furniture dominate the room. There is no order, nor rhyme or reason to the collection. On the far end of the room stands an ornate mantel crafted of brass and iron. It enshrouds a fireplace, before which stands a cot and a small table. A gurgled snoring rises from the cot. The room has the strange smell of cinnamon and garlic.

Idglu the orc lives here. He is tall and lanky, his legs being longer than his torso. Idglu serves Seroneous as a runner, bearing news about the Slag Heap or even beyond to the Witch Queen. He is a coward and has little fight in him and no loyalty to Seroneous or his chief ungern



rival, Froithmot. He is presently drunk on old gnome cider, a stash of which he keeps for himself, and filled to the gills on fried red spider.

IDGLU (He is a lawful evil creature whose vital stats are HD 2+2, HP 15, AC 14. His primary attributes are physical. He uses a long dagger in combat which does 1–4 points of damage. He wears a leather shirt and has an earring worth 25gp.)

Stashed in the rubble not far from his cot are four bottles of gnome cider and a roll of unused paper. A bucket next to his cot has four dead drider offspring in it and two pouches with garlic and cinnamon in them. He's using a bundle of robes as a pillow. These are elaborate ceremonial robes fashioned from spider silk that he has bound together with twine. There are six of these purple robes, two each with white, red, and black trim. These are for servants of the Witch Queen to wear when entering the Loklu-Mal Ziggurat (see *The Wicked Cauldron*.)

ROOM 5: COLLAPSED TUNNEL Beyond the rubble lies a hidden chamber that the Witch Queen's servants never found.

The Long Hall ends in a door which leads into an antechamber. The far end of this antechamber is collapsed.

Anyone entering the small entryway should make a wisdom check. If they succeed, they notice that there is a pattern to the roof's rubble. All the beams seem to be lined up in an almost orderly fashion. Any miner, dwarf or gnome, makes this check at a +4.

Removing the rubble reveals an empty wall. The empty wall has a secret door of course. If this is discovered, it opens into a room.

You see a small room before. It is paneled in gorgeous wood relief, with stone cobbles on the floor. There are several trunks and cabinets within. A large tapestry hangs on the far wall and two velvet chairs sit beneath it. Sitting in one is the skeleton of a small humanoid creature. The remnants of a dress cover its bones and a crossbow, unfired, sits in its lap.

The gnomes who held this place against the Witch Queen's minions fought them off for some time. The matron of this barrow fled into this inner chamber and pulled the lever that collapsed the ceiling beyond. She died here, with the gathered wealth of her family.

The trunks are filled with clothes, cloaks, boots, and the like. The cabinets are filled with crockery, fine plates, silver dinner ware, and candelabra. There is a strongbox under one of the cabinets that has 42pp and a diamond necklace worth 100gp. There are also papers here, which, when examined, reveal the names of the gnomes who lived here. There are four small glass balls within which burn small fires. The silverware is worth 100gp and the tapestry 500gp. If the items are returned to the Micklewax family, the remnants of which now live in Ludensheim, they will give the party 1000gp in reward.

TRUE FIRE BALLS: (When hurled or tossed, these glass balls explode on contact, engulfing the victim in an oily flame. Each ball does 2–12 points of damage, save for half.)

ROOM 6: THE HIVE

All the tunnels, passageways, and chutes throughout this area of the complex are covered in a wet slimy and viscous material. These are spider trails and rotted webs. In many areas, webbing dangles from the ceilings and walls, covering any remaining furniture and occasionally presents obstacles for passage. Fighting and moving through these tunnels is difficult and dangerous. The tunnels are narrow, slick, and cramped and the webs can snag anyone moving through them.

Here reside the host of Seroneous' children. They are small, red, thin-legged spiders with human-like faces. They are constantly hungry. They attack anything that comes their way, including Seroneous himself. Generally, however, they stay in the hive area, for they are eaten by most everything. The orcs find them a wonderful delicacy, grilling the drider's offspring, and smothering them with garlic and cinnamon. Seroneous himself eats his children when he finds them.

Movement in this hive is slowed to half. Moving any faster may result in the character becoming caught in a strand of webbing. Characters over five and a half feet in height suffer an additional movement penalty for a total of 3/4 penalty. Once caught up in the webbing, they are stuck and must make a strength or dexterity saving throw at –4 to get out. They can try this once a round, but failure indicates that they are even more wound up in the webbing, and the next saving throw is made at –5. This penalty increases by one after each failure. For example, on the tenth try, the character makes a save at –14. They must be cut free if they cannot save themselves. The webbing does burn, and a torch, judiciously applied, destroys the web and frees those ensnared.

Combat in the hive is likewise difficult. Any character over five and a half feet in height suffers a –2 penalty to hit. Further, lengthy, slashing weapons cannot be used effectively in such close quarters. Slashing weapons over 3 feet in length suffer a –1 to hit. Those over 4 feet in length suffer a –3 to hit. Slashing weapons over 5 feet in length can only be used as thrusting weapons and only do 1d6 points of damage and still suffer from the penalties mentioned above. Bows and crossbows are excepted. Polearms and spears can be used as thrusting weapons, but cannot be used; once combat is closed the space inside is just too cramped for effective use of these weapons. These rules do not apply in those areas greater than 10 x 10 feet in size. In all cases, the Castle Keeper should use his best judgement.

Check the map for the locations of tunnels and rooms. It is very dark, and the characters could easily become lost in here. There are hosts of spiders in here, at least a hundred already hatched.

DRIDETS (These neutral evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a vicious sting for 1 point of damage and a bite for 1 point of damage. Anyone stung by a dridet must make a successful constitution save or suffer a further point of damage. Medium dridets have HD 1, AC 12 and sting for 2 points of damage. There is a 10% chance that any medium dridet will be a young drider (see Monsters & Treasure and half all stats.)

ROOM 7: SERONEOUS' LAIR Once a staircase and lower pantry, this room has become the lair of the dreaded Seroneous.

The doorway opens to a stairwell caked in filth. Webs cloak the walls, and a viscous slime covers the floor and oozes down the stairs. Bones hang from the webs here and there. But the stair leads to a darker opening. The tunnel of webbing leads to a wide chamber filled with a stench that is palatable. You can taste the horror of it as you enter. Beyond lies a room, wide and long, tunnels of webs flow to and from the ceilings and walls. Dried husks of corpses lie or hang about the room. One in particular catches your eye. Hanging to the right, about 40 feet in, it holds a dimly glowing sword in its hand.

As soon as the party enters, or if they hesitate, as soon as one or two of the party members enter, a trapdoor is sprung and seals the room. The trapdoor is made of web and blends seamlessly with the webbing in the tunnel. It can be detected only by a dwarf and this at a –2 from their normal check.

Once the door is closed, it takes 10 rounds to hack through. It cannot be burned or otherwise destroyed except by magical fire. Those within the room take the full brunt of the drider's attack. He does not kill any of them if he can avoid it. But rather preserves them in his webbing to be eaten later. He talks constantly, in combat and out of it. Most of his conversation is devoted to the harpies, cursing them and wishing to be rid of them. He looks upon the interlopers as little more than dinner, driven here, no doubt, by his servants.

Seroneous rarely leaves his pit in the bowels of this maze. When he does, it is usually to torture some hapless slave or meet with Froithmot the ungerm. With him he concocts overly zealous and dastardly plans of regional conquest; or on off days, some less than savory and feasible route by which to exploit the slaves in the mines. Seroneous is not an altogether intelligent creature, but his cunning and seeming loyalty to

the Witch Queen have given him a prominent place in her schemes.

Currently, Seroneous is trying to figure out how to get the harpies at the Shrine of the Waters to quit that place so that he can reclaim the magical water. Seroneous has tried all manner of traps and other devices to capture and kill the harpies, all to no avail. Now he is attempting to enlist them as his allies with promises of loot and treasure. The harpies are, not surprisingly, reluctant to form any alliance with Seroneous as they know his nature. His latest gambit has been that of offering sacrifices to the harpies. At first these were just slaves, captured humans or even the occasional gnome. This had little effect on the disposition of the harpies, though, so Seroneous changed his plan and sought out fey of whatever sort to sacrifice to the harpies.

The latter idea worked well for Seroneous, who was able to gainfully employ and distract Froithmot, as the ungern lord takes great joy in the sport of capturing fey. He especially enjoys the prospect of capturing the various sprites that roam the wilderness area of the Barren Wood, as it harkens back to his youthful days as a hunter in the plains north of the Hruesen River. The harpies are also somewhat pleased with the development, as they consider the sprites, the most common of the fey in the Barren Wood, mortal enemies. Several have already been sacrificed, and Froithmot has a few more in his dens awaiting sacrifice.

If the party is overwhelmed, it is possible for them to make a deal with Seroneous. If they glean through his babbling that he needs the harpies destroyed, they may offer him a deal for their freedom.

SERONEOUS (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 36, AC 17. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a large +1 mace for 1d8+1 points of damage. His special abilities include web, poison, and elf traits.*)

Seroneous has a great deal of treasure stored in a hollow in the rock behind his webbing.

TREASURE: (*He has there 356gp, 700sp, 10 gems worth a total of 500gp, and various pieces of jewelry worth 200gp. He also has a +1 mace, a scroll case with three scrolls in it, a magical stone horse, and the mirror of the Witch Queen (see below). Each scroll has one first level spell on it. They are dancing lights, magic missile, and shield.*)

Mirror of the Witch Queen: The mirror is one of 12 created in the pits of Aufstrag by Nulak-Kiz-Din in ages past. They are oval shaped, tall, and narrow and framed in ornately carved cherry wood. They mimic the mirror through which the Horned One stepped as he came to Aihrde before the Winter Dark. Nulak made them so that he could communicate with the Witch Queens, those dread servants of the Dark. During the Winter Dark Wars, the mirrors were destroyed or scattered.

Each mirror is a communication device. It allows the users to speak and hear as if they were in the same room. Powerful spellcasters can cast spells through them, and powerful creatures can actually travel through them, though the last maneuver is dangerous and can end in the user's death.

Fresh blood must be sprinkled on the mirror to activate it. A minimum of 5 hit points of damage must be dealt to the person who spills the

blood. At the same time as the blood is being spilled, one must intone the incantation written upon the mirror's frame. Once this is done, any other open mirrors can be seen as if looking through a window.

If a spellcaster is 10th level or higher and makes a successful intelligence check, they can cast a spell through the mirror. Any 15th level/HD creatures can pass through the mirror so long as they are intelligent and make a successful intelligence save. A failed save means instant death.

AREA 3: THE DEEPENING WELL

This is the only active mine in Havenwale. "Active" may be an overstatement, as only ensorceled gnomes are working it and their overseers are quite lazy and know nothing of mining. For their part, the gnomes who have been ensorceled are not quite themselves and incapable of mining to the peak of their abilities. However, despite these problems, some diamonds are recovered once in a while.

When the gnomes were overtaken and ensorceled by the Witch Queen's servants, this mine was the only one still producing wealth. The gnomes of Havenwale had been taught some fairy magic in their time here and knew a spell that could divine the general location of diamond clusters beneath the earth. Casting this spell allowed the gnomes to dig in a fairly organized fashion and find a fair amount of diamonds. Seroneous had no idea that the gnomes were using a spell when he took over Havenwale and ensorceled and enslaved the gnomes.

Since that time, the gnomes, malnourished, overworked, and not a little deranged due to the effects of the ensorcement, have dug deep, twisting tunnels into the earth. This is a near maze as the gnomes only guess where the gems are clustered, and rather than branching the tunnels out in an organized fashion, they dig randomly, first this way, then that. All sense of organization and even maintenance is lost, and the gnomes are digging pell-mell into the ground.

THE ENTRY: Currently, the mine entry is well guarded to prevent any of the gnomes from leaving as well as to protect the mines against the more nefarious occupants of the Slag Heap from getting in and snatching something of value. The ungern who guard the entry are of small mind, but singular in purpose. If approached by any other than the Witch Queen, Seroneous, or Froithmot, they tend to react and attack. They prefer not to ask questions before or after a confrontation.

The trail here opens up to a deep and wide bowl-shaped crevice in the ground. There is an opening to a mine on the far side. But in the middle is a small encampment of tall, thick muscled humanoid creatures. They are well armed and seem to possess more than common discipline. They are presently gathered around a fire pit, listening to one of their number recount some tale or command.

These are four ungern and six orc guards placed upon the mines by Froithmot. They are fiercely loyal to their chief and will not permit any other to pass unless it is Seroneous or the Witch Queen. If attacked, they form into a wedge formation, hurl their spears at the oncoming enemy, and attack with axes, crowbills, and military picks. If any of the characters speak the tongue of Aufstrag, they can

overhear the standing ungern recounting a tale of the days when the tower of the Horned God stood great in the annals of the world.

UNGERN x 4 (*Their vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 16, 17. AC 14. They are lawful evil. Their primary attributes are physical. Ungern have twilight vision and a spell resistance of 2. They attack with either 2 claws for 1–2 points of damage, or gore for 1–6+2 points of damage, or with weapon. They always favor cleaving weapons, i.e. axes, bardiches, cleavers, and the like. All the ungern are armed with battle axes, crowbills, or military picks. One of the ungern has maximum hit points and is the troop's leader. They are wearing bits and pieces of chain, scale, and leather armor. Each ungern has 2–12sp.*)

ORCS x 6 (*These creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 5 each, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield scimitars in battle that do 1d8 points of damage. They also use heavy crossbows that shoot for 1d10 points of damage. They carry studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, heavy crossbow, 8 bolts, dagger, and 6sp.*)

When the guards are overcome, the characters can investigate the mine. They discover a squalid pit of interconnecting holes and tunnels filled with several hundred gnomes. The gnomes are scattered through the complex. They are not particularly friendly, but nor are they hostile. Anyone who observes can determine that they are under some type of spell.

The Castle Keeper does not need to bog down the game with a lengthy exploration of these tunnels. Suffice it to say that a few hours' exploration will convince anyone that the place is a squalid mess and has little of apparent value. If characters persist in exploring the mines, after about six hours, a change of guards from the Collapsing Caves comes to relieve the ungern.

THE GNOMES: The gnomes have been ensorcelled by the Witch Queen and currently obey the commands of Seroneous. It is as if they are in a trance. This was accomplished after Havenwale was raided. All the surviving gnomes were rounded up and brought before Seroneous. He forced each of the gnomes to look into the *mirror of the Witch Queen*. When the gnomes saw her, they were ensorcelled through the mirror.

Currently, the gnomes live to mine and eat. They do not harvest any of their own food and depend upon the ungern and others to bring it to them. They live inside the mine and have not seen the light of day in many a long year. They are all wasting away. Time, poor nutrition, the lack of sunlight, a heavy workload, and diminished mental capacities have taken their toll.

The gnomes will fight if they are attacked, but they make only a meager showing before trying to run away, hide, or surrender. The ungern, orcs, and others have never attacked them, so they are not considered the enemy. The gnomes were ensorcelled long before their arrival.

There are a few evil gnomes who gladly joined the Witch Queen's forces when they arrived. They are rarely found in the mines here, but live alone in the only habitation not despoiled by the current inhabitants, the Larder Hole. When they do come by, it is to collect the bodies of the dead or weigh the diamonds drawn out of the mines.

Breaking the ensorcelment on the gnomes can be done in one of three manners. The first is to locate the Witch Queen and dispatch her, thereby ending her spell and its influence. She is far to the

north (see *Wicked Cauldron* below). The other is to locate the *mirror of the witch queen* in The Black Hole (see above) and break it. This destroys the link between the Witch Queen and those ensorcelled. The final manner is to give each of the gnomes a draught of liquid from the Shrine of Waters.

If the gnomes are freed, their memories return, and they are aware of everything that has happened to them in these many years. Most of them, beaten and worn out, flee the mines and into the surrounding woods. Some, however, are still young and possess some strength. They arm themselves with mining tools, or with equipment from the dead ungern, and will join the party in eradicating the remaining evil or at the very least, take to the hills to fight a guerilla war against Seroneous and his folk. They are 12 in number and led by Boris Micklewax (see The Black Hole above). If they are able to, they attack and kill every evil gnome at the Pick & Axe.

BORIS MICKLEWAX (*He is a chaotic good, 3rd level gnome fighter whose vital stats are HD 3d10, HP 17, AC 12. His primary attributes are wisdom and constitution. His significant attributes are strength 17, wisdom 14, dexterity 15, and constitution 17. He has no weapons but what he picks up on the field.*)

GNOMES x 11 (*They are chaotic good, 1st level gnome fighters whose vital stats are HD 1d10, HP 7, AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They have no weapons but what they pick up on the field.*)

AREA 4: THE PICK & AXE

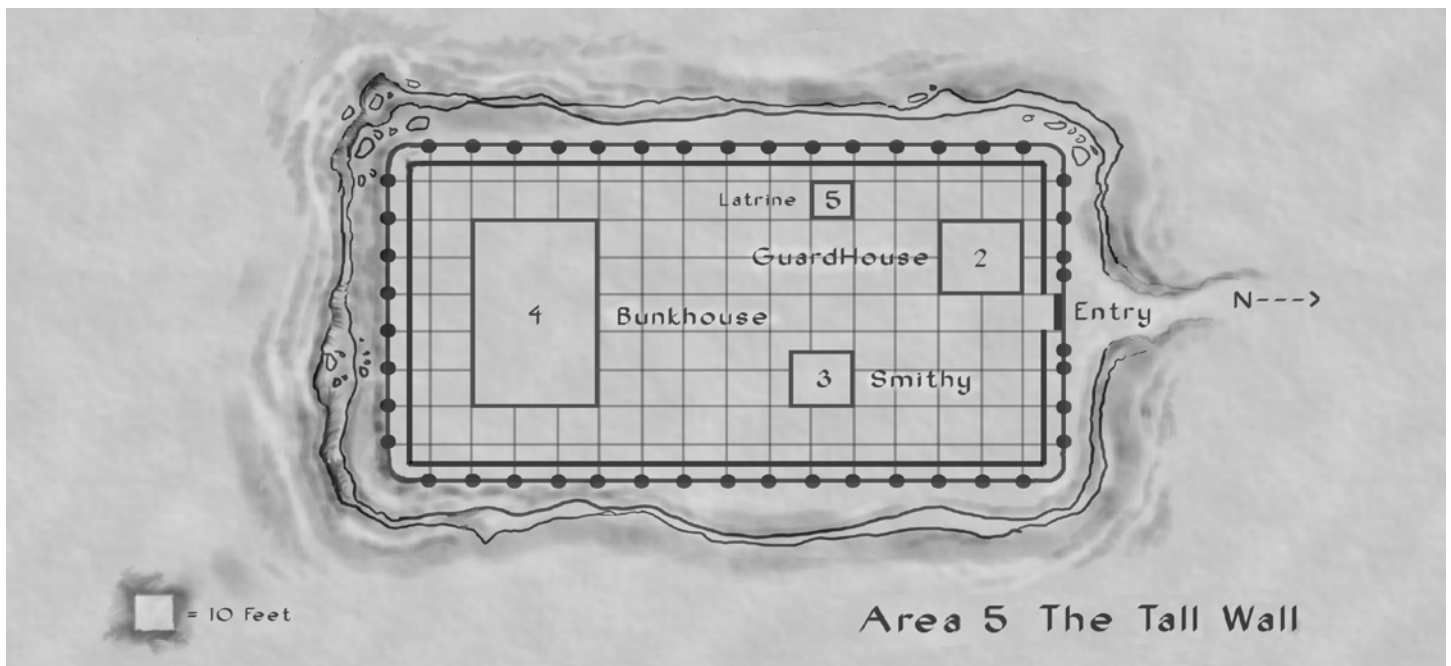
This is an inn located in the vale's center. The last standing structure of Havenwale, it is occupied by a group of evil gnomes who have joined forces with Seroneous.

The building is old and rickety with obvious fire damage. There are no windows but gaps in the walls where frames of windows probably once stood. A warped porch runs along the front of the building and offers a little shade to the entry. A sign with a pick and axe on it has been tacked to a post outside.

The Pick and Axe is occupied by miscreant gnomes. They hitched their wagons to Seroneous' train years ago, and it is only that which has kept them alive. The inn has little in the way of hospitality, serving as a bunkhouse for the gnomes. If they are approached in a friendly fashion, they serve the characters food and drink, assuming that they are bandits. However, at the first sign of trouble the gnomes flee, particularly if the gnomes of Deepening Wells have been freed and are present. If any are captured, they fall to the ground at the feet of the character they deem the most "good" and grovel, begging for their lives. They promise to give up any secrets of the Slag Heap they may know. Some of them are aware of the trapdoor in Seroneous' lair in The Black Hole (above).

AREA 5: THE TALL WALL

This complex is separated from the rest of the mine area by a small palisade. The 12 ungern and 30 orcs who live here have little to do with the rest of the vale or its occupants. They serve Froithmot and act as guards for the Deepening Wells. The palisade surrounds several buildings and a small burrow that once belonged to the chief of the gnomes of Havenwale.



Froithmot, their chief, is an ungern of dreadful reputation. He is clever, cautious, and a skilled tactician. He is old enough to remember Aufstrag in its waning years and to have tasted the power of his dreaded master. He relishes a return to the old days. Froithmot maintains tight control of those under his command and does not allow them to raid or plunder needlessly. He seeks to remain hidden from the nearby human communities of Ludensheim and Botkinburg until such time as he has raised enough forces to overthrow them. He is also concerned with pleasing the Witch Queen, for he has placed his hopes in her for a return of the “good times.” He also avoids the attention of his erstwhile commander, Seroneous, whom he seeks to kill.

1: THE PALISADE

This is an 8 foot tall wall made of logs sharpened at the tops. There is a small berm built up around the outside of the wall.

The inside wall of the palisade has four stands to allow archers or others to defend the walls. Only one gate allows entry or egress inside the palisade. If the complex is ever attacked, the palisade will be manned by at least eight orcs with crossbows. There are always two orcs on guard here, standing in one of the stands. They are supposed to keep an eye on the vale, but there is an 80% chance that they are in the guardhouse (see below).

Orcs x 2 (These creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 6, 5, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield scimitars in battle that do 1d8 points of damage. They also use heavy crossbows that shoot for 1d10 points of damage. They carry studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, heavy crossbow, 8 bolts, dagger, and 1-6sp.)

2: GUARDHOUSE

The entry to the palisade consists of a stout wooden gate with a small wooden structure to the door's right. The rough hewn logs denote the place as relatively new and within the compound it is unusually clean and tidy.

The gate is usually open and two orcs are supposed to be on guard here at all times. Inside the guardhouse is a fire pit and table. There is a small box with a store of biscuits and jerky here as well. Although the orcs are supposed to be guarding the entry, as often as not, they are not even here and are off gambling, drinking, sleeping, arguing, fighting, or engaged in other activities which they are not supposed to be doing. There is a 50% chance the orcs will not be here when the palisade is first approached. If the mine complex is ever attacked, the guardhouse will always have at least two guards and the gates will be closed and locked.

Orcs x 2 (These creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield scimitars in battle that do 1d8 points of damage. They also use heavy crossbows that shoot for 1d10 points of damage. They carry studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, heavy crossbow, 8 bolts, dagger, and 1-6sp.)

3: SMITHY

This is a three-walled wooden structure with the open side facing the setting sun. Within is a large bellows and stone fire pit with a two-foot lip. Heaps of wood and coal are stacked outside of it. A fire is burning inside the pit.

The ungern ordered the smithy built outside, underneath the sun. Although orcs find the glare of the sun uncomfortable, the ungern do not, and the ungern smith, Thucklus, prefers to work in the full light of day to better see what he is doing. Its upkeep is the responsibility of the gnome slave, Stoin Brittlewood, who is chained to a large rock. Numerous benches and buckets of iron ore ingots are arranged against the far wall. The smithing tools are scattered amongst the benches and near the forge. Stoin is chained to a large post and ensorcelled. The chain only allows him access to the wood and the bellows but not near the tools.

Most days the smith is usually at the forge making some type of weapon, trap, or interesting device for torture. He is often assisted by two orcs. There is a 25% chance that the smith is here. If he is

not, he is either in his room in the barrow, with Froithmot, or eating in the Great Hall. If he is not here, at least one orc will be here. This orc is often preoccupied with pestering Stoin by throwing rocks at him or burning his skin with a piece of charcoal.

Thucklus is a very skilled smith and has several well-made weapons and other devices. There are 40 crossbow bolts, three metal animal traps, six dozen short bow arrows, three spetums, four spears, two metal rimmed wooden shields, one broadsword and four battle axes. All are in good condition.

THUCKLUS (This creature's vital stats are HD 3d10, HP 15, AC 13. His primary attributes are physical. His significant attribute is strength 17. He wields a battle axe in battle for 1d8 points of damage. His equipment includes studded leather armor, battle axe, 25gp gold ring, 100gp silver necklace, 2gp each nose ring, 7x earrings, eyelid ring, 10x shoulder rings.)

ORC (This creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 4, AC 14. His primary attributes are physical. He uses a dagger in combat for 1d4 points of damage. He wears studded leather armor, and has a dagger and 1–6sp.)

STOIN BRITTLEWOOD (This chaotic good gnome's vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 3, AC10. His primary attributes are physical. He has no equipment.)

4: BUNKHOUSE

This building is built into the ground. The roof, covered in old tile and slanted is almost level with the ground, the door lies at the bottom of earthen steps that lead down into the ground. There are no windows and only a small chimney from which a little smoke curls up into the sky.

This building houses those ungern and orcs not on patrol, or hunting or guarding the gnomes of the Deepening Wells. The place was once a meeting hall for the gnomes. The walls were paneled in tongue-in-groove pine slates, the floor cobbled and a great four-faced fire place set in the middle of the room. The orcs use it as a bunkhouse. Froithmot's troops have been living here for some time, and the place shows it. The walls are scarred and the floors damaged and fouled. The fireplaces have all been ruined, only one working enough to cook meals. The ungern sleep at the far end of the room; there they have organized their bunks and keep the place clean. The orcs, on the other hand, sleep nearest the door and have piled all their refuse in heaps with their sleeping gear.

There are six ungern and 30 orcs stationed at the Collapsing Caves. Four of the ungern and six of the orcs are always at the Deepening Wells. Any orcs encountered at the palisade, guardhouse, or smithy should be subtracted from those at the Bunkhouse. Furthermore, two ungern are always guarding Froithmot and will be with him in the Barrows or wherever he is presently located. If they are caught unawares in the daytime they will most certainly be sleeping. A few may be up and about, going to the latrine, or eating. In battle, the ungern let the orcs soften the enemy before they attack. The orcs will scatter or surrender if a third of their number has been slain. The ungern fight to the death unless ordered to halt by Froithmot. Every 4th ungern has maximum hit points and is that squad's leader.

UNGERN x 6 (These lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 11 each, AC 14. They are lawful evil. Their primary attributes are physical. Ungern have twilight vision and a spell resistance of 2. They attack with either 2 claws for 1–2 points of damage, or gore for 1–6+2 points of damage, or with weapon. They always favor chopping or cutting weapons, i.e. axes, bardiches, cleavers, and the like. All the ungern are armed with battle axes, crowbills, or military picks. Each ungern has 2–12sp.)

ORCS x 24 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 4 each, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield scimitars in battle that do 1d8 points of damage. They also use heavy crossbows that shoot for 1d10 points of damage. They carry studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, heavy crossbow, 8 bolts, dagger and 1–6sp.)

5: LATRINE

A foul, wretched smell rises from this small cleft, the sides of which are stained with blackish crud and a host of crumpled leaves. A few wretchedly hanging bushes dot the area around the cleft.

This is the compound's latrine. The orcs and ungern use it frequently, and it stinks to high heaven. They make the gnome Stoin (see The Smithy above) climb down and slop it out once in awhile, more to torture him than to actually clean the latrine. However, he has the last laugh for he has stolen a number of items from the ungern and hidden them down in a small crevice in the latrine. He has 4gp, 21sp, three 10gp gems, a sapphire ring worth 25gp, a Knight's Ring and, his most prized possession, a philosopher's stone. This last he took from Thucklus after that ungern took it from one of the gnome chiefs. Thucklus did not know of its power. Stoin is patient, knowing that if he can escape alive, he can take the Knight's Ring south to Ascalon and there use the stone to make himself fabulously rich.

Finding Stoin's treasure will require the searcher to completely dig out the latrine as he has hidden it in a box in a crevice under great heaps of orc and ungern dung. It cannot be found casually.

Knight's Ring: These rings are given by the Empress in Ascalon to those Knights who have done great service to the throne. They are not altogether rare, but are given only to those who command her respect and attention. Possessing one grants the possessor immediate entry into many levels of the Imperial government and almost all high-brow social events in Ascalon. They cannot be sold in the open market, but on the black market can bring up to 500gp. If returned to the court, the one responsible is granted 25 acres of land in truage and granted citizenship.

AREA 6: THE BARROW MOUND

This small ridge, located at the far northern end of the vale, is punctuated with one large hill located in its center; this hill has a doorway in it, leading down beneath the ridge. Trees and shrubs once decorated the slope and a creek tumbled down its face to pool at the vale's center. But all that is gone; the trees burned out, the shrubs stomped to earth, the creek scarred, and the pool is now little more than a mire.

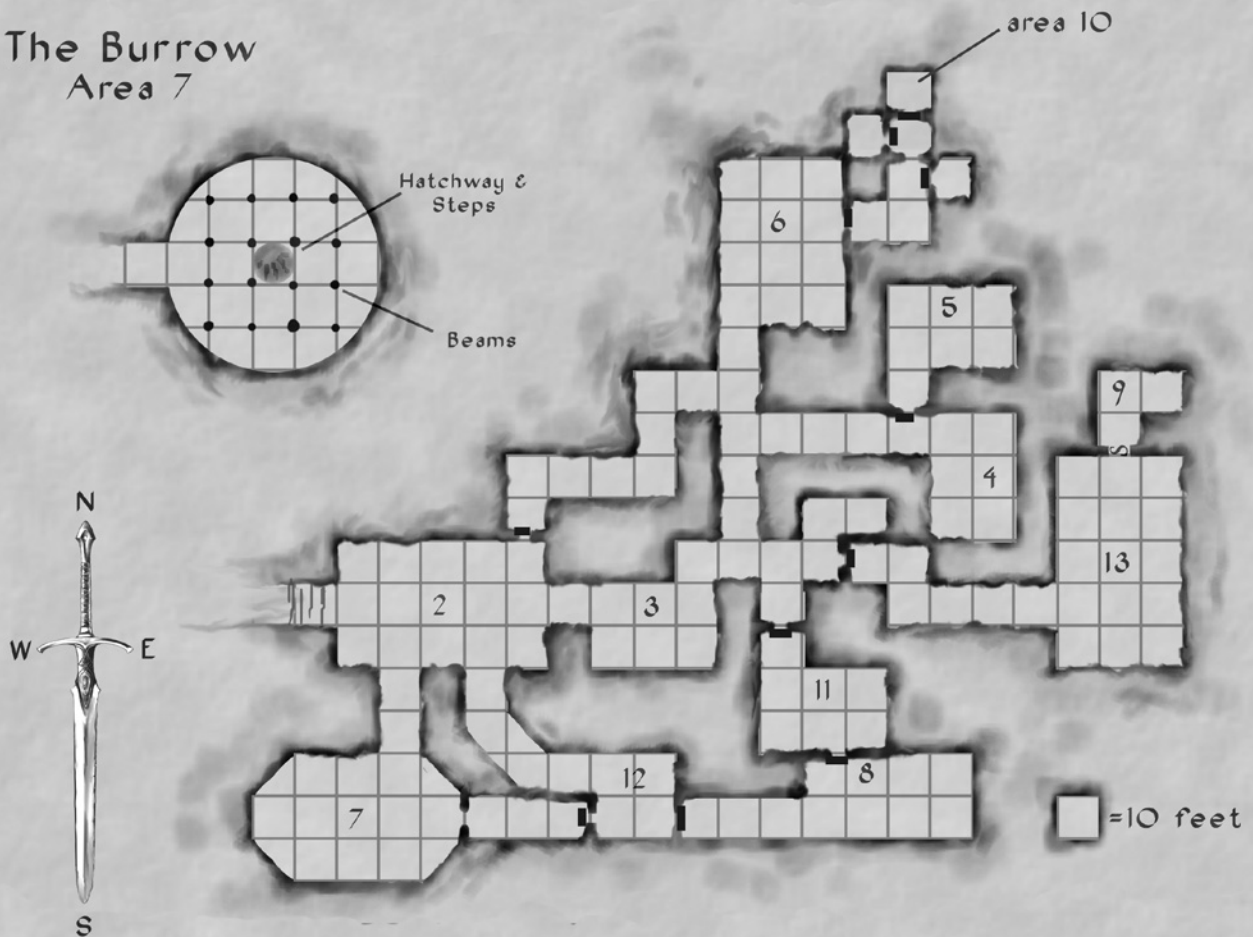
The Barrow Mound

Area 6



The Burrow

Area 7



The small “hill” in the ridge’s center was actually the burial mound for the gnomes, of Havenwale. Called simply “The Barrow” by the gnomes it was the last place they defended when Seroneous entered the vale. It consisted of a number of rooms and tunnels, dug out, paneled, and floored by the gnomes. Rooms were used for individuals or whole families depending upon their burial arrangements.

The orcs of Seroneous cared little for the dead. They slew the last of the gnomes and fey who held the vale and ransacked the whole place. Much of it collapsed or was pulled down, leaving the whole place in ruins. They piled all the gnome dead in one room, desecrating them and eating what they could. But their violations did not last long, for three of the gnomes rose from the dead and fell upon the orcs. Ghastly creatures, these ghouls were mad for revenge. They slew several orcs before the rest fled the Barrow, sealing the door behind them.

GHOULS X 3 (These chaotic evil creatures’ vital stats are 2d8, HP 15 each, 14 AC. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two claw attacks for 1d3 points of damage or 1 bite for 1d6 points of damage. Their special abilities include undead traits and paralysis. They possess a small treasure scattered in the mountain of bones located in the great hall’s center: 44pp, 200gp, and 400gp is jewelry. There is a +1 short sword, 4 +2 bolts, and a helm of comprehend languages and read magic.)

AREA 7: THE BURROWS

The Burrows were the center of Havenwale. The gnome chief made his home here, as did other prominent members of the clan. Here too were the town’s large brewery, storage for the militia, and other administrative offices. When Seroneous arrived, his folk plundered the Burrows and slew everyone inside. They set about making the place their headquarters. However, they found the quarters too cramped. To open them up, they dug up the floors, making the halls and rooms deeper. They used rough-cut logs to hold up the walls and ceilings. This rebuilding is readily apparent to anyone who takes a moment to look. However, a skilled miner, dwarf, or gnome will note that several of the walls have collapsed due to all the digging, and many more are on the verge of collapse.

Seroneous has, of course, left the Burrows and made his new home in The Black Hole (see above). But he left the bulk of his troops behind to live in the Burrows. These comprise 45 orcs. Some are in residence, but at least half are always on patrol or keeping watch in the woods. The rest are within. Froithmot has recently moved into the throne room of the Burrows. He has done this with the specific intention of undermining Seroneous’ command by billeting with the drider’s troops. He is meeting with a great deal of success.

There are presently 22 orcs in the Burrows. Unless a general alarm has been raised in the Vale, they will be caught unawares. If they meet any party members, they will initially suspect that they are part of Mile’s men and are here on business. For this reason they will be slow to raise the alarm and bring out the whole compound. If any battle occurs that is prolonged or orcs are allowed to escape

then they will raise the alarm, and all the orcs in the compound try to assemble in Room 2.

1: ENTRY TO THE BURROWS

The entry to the Burrows has been dug out and widened. Piles of debris are heaped around the entry and a mountain of detritus and trash lies scattered down the slope of the ridge. There are broken plates, chairs, tables, strips of cloth, rugs, broken weapons, glassware, empty bottles and shattered kegs and other such debris. All in all, the entry is a messy place, and the stench is overwhelming. The door to the burrow sits in a steep sided but small hill. It is large and square made of hard oak, and recently bound with metal straps. A large iron ring serves as its handle. The door opens outward.

This is the entry room to the Burrow. It is some 40 feet in diameter, with a dome shaped ceiling. It is paneled in oak and has a flagstone floor. The ceiling is supported by large wooden beams placed at 10-foot intervals around the room. In the center of the room is an open hatchway with stone steps leading down. It is fairly dark inside the room as the wood is old and darkly stained. As well, only a few lanterns, hanging from the beams, are lit. This is the only area where the orcs have not done reconstruction of the burrow, as the roof is high enough to allow them freedom of movement.

Two large dogs are chained up on the far side of the room. These are surly, half-starved beasts, and unless enticed with food or magic, they start barking ferociously whenever anyone enters.

DOGS x 2 (Their vital stats are HD 2, HP 7, 8, AC 18. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a bite for 1d4 points of damage.)

2: LOWER HALL

A wide set of stairs lead down to a lower hall that was used as a gathering point for the gnomes.

The room is very large, being nearly a spear toss in all directions from the center. The floor has some flagstones on it but it has obviously been excavated and dug deeper. The support beams have been replaced and are fairly new. There are four large central pillars holding up an arched wood ceiling stained with smoke and grease from ages of use. There are six exits from this room. Though each had a door at one time, currently only two have doors.

The orcs and ungern use the room for weapons and arms storage, repair and occasionally have pit fights here. The center of the room is dominated by a wide circular space that has no flagstones but only dirt and sand. The floor in this area is dark in color and stained with blood. Close inspection will reveal a few fingers, flakes of blood, bone, and bits of metal from those killed in the pit fights.

The north wall has crates of arrows. There are about 400 in all. There are also 15 short composite bows and a large table scattered with tools where the arrows are assembled. The east wall has a series of racks with polearms piled on it. Beside this is a stack of 20 light crossbows, and a barrel with 200 bolts in it. The west wall has some benches and several tables clustered along the wall. These are pulled up during fights so that orcs

and ungern can sit around and watch the contestants. A huge barrel of bitter beer sits near the exit leading to **Area 3**. This beer is watered down and not tasty, though safe to drink.

There is a 50% chance that while the characters are exploring this room that a troop of four orcs enter. The orcs are getting armed for a patrol. Anyone who is paying attention can hear them approaching from Room 3.

ORCS x 4 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 6 each, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield scimitars in battle that do 1d8 points of damage. They carry studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, dagger and 1–6sp.)

3: UPPER HALL

This tunnel is narrow and cramped, as it was not widened after the orcs took over. It is only four feet wide and use of any weapons over 5 feet in length cannot be used effectively; those from 3–5 feet in length suffers a –5 to hit, and those from 2–3 feet suffer a –3 to hit.

4: THE SCRIPTORIUM

This was once a study, but the orcs use it as their headquarters.

A narrow table sits in the middle of the room with three large chairs around it. The table has several mugs, plates, and flatware on it. There is a trunk in the room, a candelabra hanging from the ceiling, a barrel of beer, and a large roasted boar hanging on a spit. Chunks have been removed from the boar as if something has cut them off. There are two exits from the room.

The trunk is locked, though not trapped. Within are inks and quills, paper and some correspondence. The language used on the letters is the Imperial Script of Aufstrag, and unless a character specifically has knowledge of it, cannot read it. A character well versed in languages may recognize it as such, but still not be able to read it as the language is no longer taught in any civilized environment.

If the characters manage to decipher the letters, they learn that the letters are from the Baron of Ludensheim's one-time agent, Barldus Mikenfird (see above page 71), to the goblin leader of the Red Caps Grallkrug, who are presently raiding along the Blacktooth Ridge. The letters outline payments and terms of payment from Baldrus to Grallkrug. It is clear from these letters that someone wealthy and powerful is paying Grallkrug to raid Botkinburg and that these raids were supposed to stop only when Baldrus said that it was time.

5: THE CHIEF'S QUARTERS

This luscious two room area used to be a home for a gnome merchant; it has become a room for the orc captain and his lieutenants.

The heavy wooden door gives way to a room in considerable disarray. The floor and roofs have been heavily worked on, and a large fire pit sits in the middle of the room. The roof is blackened with soot and refuse from the pit and the room stinks of sewage and rotten meat. A large orc in an iron jacket is sitting on a hollowed-out stool, relieving himself. He's reading a tangled bit of a tapestry.

The orc chief is caught totally unawares. He looks up and tells the party, in the common tongue, "Get out! I'm busy. Cursed Fried Red Dridets! Go bother Froithmot with your needs! Get out, Dogs!"

If the party leaves, he goes on about his business. If the party attacks, he reacts quickly, calling for his lieutenant, while leaping to his feet and hurling the fouled stool, with all its contents, at the party. He has a huge battle axe at hand. He picks it up and uses it two handed.

ORC, CHIEF (This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 22, AC 16. His primary attributes are physical. He wields a two handed battle axe that does 1d12 points of damage. He has a heavy iron jacket on, shield, dagger and a pouch with 12gp, 32sp. He wears an earring worth 35gp.)

ORC, LIEUTENANT (This lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 16, AC 15. His primary attributes are physical. He wields a morning star in battle that does 2d4 points of damage. He carries studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, heavy crossbow, 8 bolts, dagger, 3gp, and 20sp.)

The lieutenant is in a side chamber, resting on his bunk. He is armored, as he has recently come from a patrol. He will call for aid with a small horn if given time. The Castle Keeper should allow for at least 4 rounds to pass, as the orc will have to look in on his chief and see what the commotion is and then fetch his horn.

The room itself is a mess with little left of any real value. Seroneous has not given the chief any treasure. There are three bottles of orc brew that can each heal 1d4 points of damage. The liquid is foul, but nourishing

6: GUARDHOUSE

Down a long corridor, half collapsed, is a tunneled-out doorway. This room was once the feast hall of the gnomes. The orcs have turned it into a bunkhouse. There is a troop of orcs here at present. They are presently resting, lately returned from a patrol.

The tunnel is in shambles, half dug out and half collapsed. A foul stink lingers in the air. It ends in a wide opening that once may have been a door. Beyond you hear the plain speak of orcs. They are talking together and laughing in their cruel tongue. Peering into the room, you see a mass of debris heaped against the far wall and bunks and beds scattered haphazardly about the room. Some orcs are sleeping; others are talking and eating.

Unless the alarm has been sounded elsewhere, the orcs are caught unawares. A determined fight will put them to flight, and they will flee around the party if they can. They are led by two brothers, Lark and Ent. These are slovenly, foul-mouthed beasts. Ark is always chewing a huge wedge of tobacco, often days old, and Ent is as often as not carrying a chunk of beef, half cooked or half eaten in hand. As long as these two brothers stay alive, the orcs have a will to fight. When they are killed, or if they flee, the other orcs yield.

Note: Lark and Ent are notorious orcs, well known throughout the lands of the Blacktooth Ridge and the Barren Wood. They are mean, foul, cuss constantly, and are always fighting with each other.

They will not stay and fight if they think they are going to be killed. Rather, they will use the smaller orcs as shields and throw them on the party to make good their escape. Ent has a *potion of invisibility*, which he will share with Lark in order to allow them to escape. They both have 2d8 HD, Lark with 15 HP and Ent with 14.

ORCS x 12 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 5 each, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield short swords in battle that do 1d6 points of damage. They also use light crossbows that shoot for 1d4 points of damage. They carry studded leather armor, shield, short sword, light crossbow, 8 bolts, dagger, and 1–6sp.)

7: BREWERY

The gnomes had set up a very fine brewery in here. The orcs have managed to keep it working, though the quality of the brew is not quite so tasty.

The room is large and well used, smelling of brew. There are three large wooden vats for beer in the center of the room and a vast set of spoons and ladles used for tasting and stirring. Each vat is covered and has a spigot at the bottom. There is a large stove along the south wall, a dozen barrels filled with barley and grains, and several crates of apples. There are also ten five-gallon clay pots full of honey.

The orcs do not know the refinements of brewing and have removed everything that hinders their simpler technique. All the pipes have been removed and placed to the side. Should any brew master be available, putting the whole thing back together again will take some time, but is possible.

Within are six orcs. At any given time, 2–3 will be inebriated while the others are tasting or prepping the hops. They are not armed nor are they wearing armor, but do have weapons nearby should a fight occur. Fighting while inebriated incurs a –3 to hit for the orcs.

ORCS x6 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 5 each, AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They have access to short swords that do 1d6 points of damage.)

8: KITCHEN

Obviously a kitchen, this room is still in use. Shelves and cabinets line the walls, a large cooking pit and several small tables are in the center of the room, and two small pot-bellied stoves are against the far wall. Stacks of foodstuffs abound, as do cooking implements and the like. The smell of cinnamon and garlic is everywhere.

The kitchen is still in use as a kitchen. The orcs have fairly well smashed all the crockery and burned all the wooden plates. In general, the orcs and ungern eat off of the remaining metal pans and cookware. They have accumulated some foodstuff over the past few months. This essentially consists of dried and salted meats or various types. They are not a discerning lot, so there is racoon, squirrel, beef, pork, boar, fowl, etc. The dried and salted foods are piled on the shelves facing the wall. There is a sealed barrel filled with Seroneous' living offspring. If someone investigates the barrel, they can hear the telltale scratching sounds of the little spiders crawling about. If it is opened, the spiders attack anyone at hand.



DRIDETS (These neutral evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 2 each, AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a vicious sting for 1 point of damage and a bite for 1 point of damage. Anyone stung by a dridet must make a successful constitution save or suffer a further point of damage.)

9: TREASURY

This room is hidden very well. The door to the treasury is concealed in the closet of Froithmot's room. To open this door, one has to find it as well as find and trip the lock (see below), and then push on the door itself. When checking for secret doors in the closet, the check is made at -3, so well was it made.

If they find the door, there is no way of opening it without triggering the lock. To get to the lock, one must move aside the shelf in Froithmot's quarters and then find the loose brick in the wall. Finding the brick requires a successful search check (CL 11). Removing the brick reveals a small space. This space is about six inches deep. At the end of it is a small handle that must be turned to release a catch that keeps the secret door locked. Releasing this catch unlocks the door in the closet. The door does not swing open nor is it made more apparent. Once the lock is triggered, the door requires only a push to open it.

Froithmot discovered the room purely by accident, of course, but that mattered little as he came upon the stored wealth of the gnome community. The room is well made and solidly constructed. It has not been altered by the orcs, so it is only 10 feet square and 6 feet tall. Broad shelves run the entire length of the walls. Most are empty now. But there are six scroll cases (all with beer recipes), a half dozen books, a silver chalice, small music box, and three vials with different colored liquids in each. Underneath and on the floor are three old wooden trunks. Each is bound in metal straps and locked with a thick metal padlock.

Froithmot's Treasure: In one trunk are 1500sp. Another trunk has 1000gp. A third trunk contains a velvet-lined platform with a beautifully worked gold and platinum holy symbol of the Horned God, a crescent moon on short staff. It is unsullied. The books contain histories of the Winter Dark Wars (refer to the Codex of Erde). The chalice is worth 50gp. The small music box is worth 100gp, and when opened, plays a dirge of The Lay of Mourilee, a popular tune of Kayomar. Any Knight of Kayomar will give 1000gp for the music box.

3 POTIONS (The potions are potion of tongues, protection from arrows, and sanctuary.)

10: PRISON AREA

These were once the rooms for the various family members of the clan. They have since been turned into cells for those captured by Froithmot. They are all empty at present. A search reveals the signs of many victims of many races, but little of any value.

11: STORAGE ROOM

This room has always been and is still a storage room. It is filled with all manner of tools: shovels, pick axes, wedges, hammers, wheelbarrows, etc. The room is often used, but is in quite a bit of disarray.

12: WELL ROOM

This room was once used for drawing water to meet the needs of the gnome clan.

The small chamber is walled and floored in stone. A wide, circular opening sits in the middle of the room. It is deep, and from down into its darkness, you hear the gentle tapping of water falling. A bucket and long, thin chain sit next to it.

The well is still working, though the crank and frame are long gone. The well is about 70 feet deep and touches into an underground waterway that if explored, goes far underneath the Barren Wood, with openings in many places. Escape from the Slag Heap is possible through here, but would require several days of deep caving and splunking.

13: THRONE ROOM

Calling this a throne room would be a stretch. When the gnomes ruled the vale, this was the room in which the chief would sit in council with the clan leaders. Froithmot currently uses this room as his own personal residence, being fond of its large size.

The hall is long and deep. The paneled walls here were high enough to allow the orcs to move in without destroying the place. Four columns hold up the vaulted ceiling and cobbles cover the floors. At the far end of the hall sits a large pile of debris, shaped loosely into a chair. A huge, wickedly horned ungern chief sits upon the makeshift throne and standing around him are four armored ungern warriors. In his rough, gravelly voice he speaks: "Enter, friends. Welcome to my pit. I'll have your names before I have to do away with you."

Froithmot will talk with the party if they talk with him. But he has no intention of doing anything but killing them. He'll make offers or pretend to listen to them while he sizes the party up. If an all-out brawl is called for, he will attack the strongest party member. If there is a paladin or knight in the party he will challenge him to a duel. In all concerns, it is a fight to the death.

FROITHMOT (This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 30, AC 18. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with either 2 claws for 1-2 points of damage, or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage, or with weapon. Froithmot is armed with a shield and longsword. He is able to fight multiple opponents at once and is an accomplished sword fighter. All ungern have twilight vision and a spell resistance of 2. He carries chainmail, large +1 iron shield, +2 longsword, curved tulwar. He has a pouch with 5gp and a banded iron and a gold ring forged in Aufstrag worth 500gp.)

UNGERN x 4 (These lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 15 apiece, AC 14. They are lawful evil. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with either 2 claws for 1-2 points of damage, or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage, or with weapon. They always favor chopping or cutting weapons, i.e. axes, bardiches, cleavers and the like. All the ungern are armed with battle axes, crowbills or military picks. Ungern have twilight vision and a spell resistance of 2. Each ungern has 2-12sp.)

A3: THE WICKED CAULDON

The adventure presented here is only for the brave of heart and those willing to chance death in the name of good. Many challenges await those adventurers willing to travel into the deeps of the Barren Wood to the Gnarl. Here, the ancients built a ziggurat within which dwells the Witch Queen, a foul beast of Aufstrag. From within this black place, the Witch Queen concocts her machinations and controls minions whose only purpose is to spread dread and destruction. But beware, for confronting the Witch Queen in her abominable hole may lead to wreck and ruin, for within those twisted corridors are beasts of evil intent and maleficent desire. But glory and wealth and likely a few battle scars are to be had for the brave, the bold, and the lucky.

This self-contained adventure takes place in a single locale. Though this adventure can be played separately, the characters and plot are part of a greater story that began in *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge* and continued in *Slag Heap*. The storylines for continuing the adventure are well described throughout this module and should be abandoned or used at the Castle Keeper's discretion. Otherwise, the vast majority of the adventure will occur within the ziggurat and perhaps the small town outside it.

The Wicked Cauldron was designed as a single walk-through adventure (with several nights of play). To manage this though, the players must be stealthy and smart, trying not to alarm the entirety of the ziggurat's inhabitants of their presence. The Castle Keeper should do everything possible to impart the need for stealth and smarts to the players prior to and throughout play. It should be noted that the ziggurat appears to be lacking in foes and creatures with which to give battle to the adventurers. This was done so as to allow for a single walk-through. Add more if necessary by simply increasing the numbers of the creatures already present.

The adventure is designed for 3–5 characters of 3rd to 4th level. Should a larger party of adventurers be involved, increase the number of creatures encountered as well as their armor class and perhaps give them better weapons to adequately challenge the party. For the major non-player characters or monsters, increasing hit points as well as levels might be necessary. This should suffice to maintain a challenge for the characters. Further, attribute checks and challenge levels should be between 0 and 2. Those of special note are described in the module.

INTRODUCTION

In times past, a vast shadow hung over the world. It was as if the sun was blotted out and creatures stirred, fearful and restive beneath gloomy clouds. The Horned One ruled, and the shadow Aufstrag hung over all. These were not good times.

The Horned One extended and maintained his control over the world through a vast array of imperial minions, troops, and priests. To this end, an order of grotesqueries, the Witch Queens, was established to watch over the minions who watched over the lands of man or dwarf. In the opening centuries of the Horned One's wars, great ziggurats were built to house the Witch Queens



and their cohorts. To them was given the task of sewing discord and dissension amongst the enemies of the Horned One and spying the activities of those under his service.

Loklu-Mal was but one of the many ziggurats constructed during the Winter Dark. Hidden in the Barren Wood, there was much secrecy surrounding its construction, for many dangerous fey inhabited those lands. So well hidden was Loklu-Mal that few knew of its existence and fewer still of its location. A powerful but lesser acolyte to the Witch Queens was placed there, and she ruled there for many years. So began the descent of the region into chaos and war—even before the arrival of the Horned One's armies. For her minions paved the way for the coming of the Witch Queen through a brutal bush war with the fey of the Barren Wood, many of whom ended their lives in the deeps of the Loklu-Mal, what they called the Wicked Cauldron. Loklu-Mal has been ruled since its creation, by a series of lesser acolytes to the Witch Queen. One resides there to this day; Neb-Eprethat is her name, and she continues with a duty and mission long lost of its significance, but one inherent to her being.

Neb-Eprethat is old and has served the Paths of Umbra for many years. A minor creature in a great play, she was given the watch over the Barren Wood and the southern fences of Aufstrag. During the long Winter Dark Wars, she watched as men and elves returned to the Wood. But ever fearful of the wrath of the Undying Lord, she plots to keep them in disarray and at war with each other. She lamented the demise of Aufstrag, and has aligned herself with the remnants of his folk that dwell to the north in the Tower of the Tree.

Neb-Eprethat is a lesser acolyte of the Witch Queens, though well on the road toward transforming into a greater Witch Queen. Though distressed, Neb-Eprethat has not abandoned her mission and uses what powers she has to cause troubles for the region. In so doing, she has aligned herself with other minions of the Horned One who survived his downfall, with whom she plots and schemes as best she can, hoping for the return of the Horned One.

FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

What brings our erstwhile adventurers to such a dread place? Nothing less than an unraveling of the machinations of the Witch Queen's various minions. Primarily, the characters will have learned of the Witch Queen from adventures in *The Slag Heap*. They should also have learned the location of the Slag from those adventures as well. This is discussed in the following section, "Involving the Players Characters." The Witch Queen is involved in other plots and schemes, the most pertinent of which are described below.

Not the least of Neb-Eprethat's co-conspirators is a cabal of priests in Ludensheim. These priests have ensorcelled the Mayor of Ludensheim, Dietbold Heimer, and turned him into their lackey. In order to increase the Baron's strength and hold over Ludensheim, silk produced at the ziggurat is given to a guild of merchants under his control. As this costs the Baron nothing (except his soul), he is garnering a rather hefty profit with which to hire and supply mercenaries and others to do his bidding. Several agents of the Baron are located in the ziggurat as well as in the town outside it. Many are under minor ensorcellments themselves, but others willingly partake in the spoils derived from the machinations of the priests. Neb-Eprethat is wary of these people and fears they may divulge the location of the ziggurat to those who would seek to destroy it. She keeps them under tight guard and spies upon them constantly, both here and in Ludensheim.

Neb-Eprethat is beholden to a lesser lord of Unklar located in the husk of an ancient fortress named Festung Akt. This lord and the Witch Queen connive together and against one another for power and control over the realms along the Hruesen River. The Witch Queen, if allowed and in need, will escape through her magic mirror to Festung Akt and seek this powerful lord's protection.

The Witch Queen has many agents across the land. Some are described in *The Slag Heap*. Other agents and activities are left up to the Castle Keeper to create. In all considerations though, the Castle Keeper should bear in mind the Witch Queen is simply sewing discord in the region. She does not have the wherewithal or instincts for managing large forces and gaining control of a region. The latter is the pervue of the lord in Festung Akt and his master the Undying Lord of Aufstrag.

INVOLVING THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

The players will most likely come to know of the Witch Queen and the ziggurat by adventures in *The Slag Heap*. Information on the location of the ziggurat can be gleaned from several parties in that adventure as described below. Otherwise, the characters may

come to know of the Witch Queen through encounters unrelated to a previous adventure. As always, only the most general of reasons can be supplied, as each campaign is slightly different, and the Castle Keeper must add details and context as needed.

Hook 1. The magic mirror located in Slag Heap (**Seroneous' Lair, Room 7**) can be used as a scrying device to locate the ziggurat. Staring into it and activating it reveals the location of the person to which Seroneous last spoke. This is done as if viewing a movie in which one travels from the room in which the mirror is located to the ziggurat. What is revealed is a trip through the Barren Wood and then to the Gnarl along Track #1 (described below) to the Cauldron. A trail can be seen leading west from the Slag Heap through the forest and to the ziggurat.

Hook 2. Froithmot and his ungern and orc troops in Slag Heap know the location of the ziggurat, though they will not part with the information willingly; a certain amount of pressure applied to the lower ranking individuals, however, will encourage them to do so-or at least point out the trail leading to it.

Hook 3. After the characters finish their adventures in Slag Heap, they should come upon a small map with the location of the ziggurat placed upon it. This could be located in any of the various treasures gained therein. If that adventure has been completed, the map could be uncovered later in a sack or pocket heretofore not looted.

Hook 4. Some bandits or orcs on the Southway or the Hruesen River Road waylay the characters, and one of them knows the location of the ziggurat.

Hook 5. The characters locate a runaway slave from the Spiders' Lair (see below). The slave is seeking to make it to Ludensheim or some other location of safety. He knows the location of the ziggurat in a general way. He would not know the location of the tracks leading to it (see below).

THE GNARLS

However the characters come to know of the Witch Queen and the ziggurat's location, they must travel through a section of the Barren Wood known as the Gnarl. The characters are likely to begin their journey from a town nearby and make their way through miles of the Barren Wood before reaching the Gnarl and thence to the ziggurat. There are two unnamed tracks that can be used. Both are fairly difficult to follow.

Track #1: This track leads from the Slag Heap to the ziggurat. Several days travel are necessary before reaching the Gnarl, and from there it goes on to the ziggurat. This trail resembles a faded deer track in size and nature, which makes it difficult for any but smart trackers to find. Every day on the trail, a tracking check (challenge level 3) must be made to stay on it. Once lost, a successful tracking check must be made to locate it again. One check is made each day.

Track #2: This track leads west from the ziggurat to the Southway, the road leading south from Ludensheim to lands further south. This track is slightly easier to follow being only a challenge level 1. In other respects, it is similar to Track #1.

The Barren Wood is an ancient oak and birch forest stretching from the Blacktooth Ridge in the east to the Ingold Lake in the west. Within the Barren Wood are the Gnarl—a region of twisted, stunted trees, thick bramble, briars, and the like. The forest here is rotting. The trees are scabrous and dying. Many are leafless, and the ground is covered in the detritus and deadfall of many trees, making travel difficult at best. It is an area seldom traveled to, for it is fraught with danger. After two days of travel from Slag Heap or the Southway, one enters the Gnarl. This region of the forest stretches for 50 or so miles in every direction from the Cauldron or ziggurat.

Travel through this area is at one-half the normal rate. It is also a dangerous area, as many evil creatures have come here to escape the huntsmen and adventurers who are clearing the Southway and other portions of the Barren Wood. Use the following random encounter check while traveling in the Gnarl (even for that section in the Barren Wood proper).

D20	ENCOUNTER
1–4	Bandits (2–12) ambush, after a raid, encamped
5–6	Goblins (3–18) and sub-chief Red Caps traveling to raid
7	Owlbear hunting
8	Satyr (1–3) seeking ancient magic circle
9–11	Orcs (2–16) with sub-chief ambush, raid, encamped
12–14	Giant constrictor snake
15–16	Ungern (2–4) traveling to ziggurat
17	Brown bear
18	Ogres (1–3) raiding party
19–20	Giant Spiders (2–8) nesting area, hunting

THE SPIDERS' LAIR

The Spiders' Lair is nothing more than a dozen squat, stone buildings located in front of the ziggurat. These house servants of the Witch Queen and many of her slaves who tend to the spiders' nests and who harvest their silk.

Amongst the gnarled wood and detritus of this ancient and gloomy forest is a massive ziggurat which looms ominously above a dozen multi-level squat, stone buildings covered in ivy and lichen. These houses are placed to either side of a dirt track leading straight to the foot of the ziggurat and disappearing into the forest to the south. They are obviously occupied as the sounds and smell of habitation are everywhere . . . a thin strand of smoke rising from cooking fires, the stench of a nearby latrine, and debris lying about in the brush.

There are six buildings on the east side of the road and six on the west. They are two stories high, with the upper floor being slightly larger than the lower floor. All the building interiors are identical. The lower floor is 30x30 feet and the upper floor is 40x40 feet. There are no internal partitions, and the upper floor is attained by a staircase located in the center of the room. The roof is likewise attained by a staircase in the center of the room. The roof is flat with a small stone banister.

Those buildings on the west side of the street house the servants and slaves. They reside on the upper floor, while the lower floor is used to process silk. Cooking and other activities take place on the ceiling. Each building contains 15 or so people—male and female, old and young. There is little of value in any of these buildings.

Those buildings on the east side of the road house guards and weavers. The weaving takes place on the lower floor, while the upper floor is where the guards, and weavers reside. There are 2–6 weavers (female orcs), three orc guards and one ungern sub-chief in each. Other than what is carried upon the inhabitants, the only thing of value in these buildings is bundles of silk. At any time, the whole community has between 4–16 bundles, each worth 100–400gp.

SLAVES (These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10, 2 HP each. They have no primary attributes and carry nothing.)

WEAVERS (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 10, 2 HP each. They have no primary attributes and carry nothing.)

ORCS x3 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 12, HP variable. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry leather armor, short swords, clubs, and 1–6gp in jewelry.)

UNGERN SERGEANT (This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 15, AC 14. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks by weapon or with 2 claws for 1–2 points of damage or gore for 1–6+2 points of damage. He carries a chain coat, morningstar, dagger, and 2–20gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

The “village” produces a fine grade of silk and high-quality clothing. They harvest spider webs from a spider lair in the forest. The villagers try to trap any interlopers to be used as food for the spiders. Anyone entering the village wearing the proper ceremonial robes can move about unmolested. The robes are made of silk produced here. Several might have been found in the Slag Heap. The robes are purple silk with the color on the trim designating the rank of the individual. All the robes are purple with red, white, or black trim. White is the highest rank, red secondary, and black is the lowest rank. All others will be attacked and taken prisoner if possible.

SPIDERS NESTS

In the forest surrounding the ziggurat and village are large nesting areas for the spiders. The spiders' whose silk is refined are small normal-sized non-poisonous spiders. There are literally tens of thousands of them located in the woods about. The trees are covered in cocoons and strands of silk.

Amidst all these spider nests, though, are large guardian spiders. The spiders nest amongst the small ones but do not bother them. They do, however, attack any who enter into the nesting areas other than the slaves, weavers, and orcs. For every 10 minutes spent in the nesting area, there is a 1 in 4 chance of encountering 2–6 guardian spiders who attack mercilessly.

MEDIUM SPIDERS (These neutral evil creatures' vital stats are HD 3d8, AC 15, HP variable. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a poisoned bite for 1d6 points of damage.)

THE CAULDRON

The top of a great ziggurat looms above the forest's canopy like a beryl moon gleaming silently in the night. It is a bulky and imposing edifice, a great blocky weight holding the forest in place. Bright blue tipped flames leap up from the ziggurat's peak and down the ziggurat's steep, ochre staircase as if a river of blue flames pours down from its top.

As one begins to approach the ziggurat, its seven tiers, each resting ponderously upon the other, slowly consume the horizon, so massive is this structure. Its sheer faces are all plastered with reliefs of garish faces and figures while its edges and corners have many a gargoyle and chimera peering down. At the very peak of the ziggurat is a great bestial relief of the Horned One, that dreaded and demonic creature who once ruled the world.

This ziggurat, the Cauldron, is the abode of the Witch Queen. Here reside remnants of the Horned One's armies and priests. Few in number, they are huddled together for safety, practicing their dark witcheries and dread rituals in an effort to bring the Horned One back to this world. The Cauldron has remained untouched through the ages, but has fallen into disrepair since the fall of the Horned One. Yet, despite this, through the machinations of the Witch Queen, her superiors and servants continue unabated, if somewhat less effective.

There are five methods of entering the ziggurat. The most obvious is from the front, up the face of the ziggurat. There is also an entry at the ziggurat's back, but only servants of the lowest type, such as goblins, use that entrance. Two entries are located on **Level Six, Area 55** on the front of that tier. The final is in a secret room accessed only through the Witch Queen's personal chamber.

The exterior of the Cauldron consists of seven tiers, each 20 feet in height. Each is also smaller than the other such that the uppermost tier is but 70 feet across. On top of it all is a 40-foot-tall square altar with two gigantic braziers on it, with bright blue flames in the braziers licking up toward the sky. On each level of the ziggurat, on each corner, there are braziers that burn with blue flames. Likewise, every 10 feet on the steps are small platforms upon which large brass bowls rest, each alight with flame. The vast majority of the ziggurat

is plastered over in a light bluish plaster. Upon this are etched, drawn, and occasionally in bas relief many pictographs of ancient and forbidding deities. The place is altogether evil, and only the most naive of individuals will not notice it as such.

All the braziers on the ziggurat are tended to by the goblitts, who act as the Witch Queen's servants. There are vast stores of oil stored in the lower levels of the ziggurat that are used for this purpose. Goblitts are generally swarming all over the place, fixing things and bringing food, tools, drink, and others items around the edifice. They do not give heed to anyone who approaches them other than their taskmasters. They only attack if attacked and cornered; otherwise they try to run away if threatened.

The interior of the ziggurat is, for the most part, plastered over and painted with many murals depicting battles, inaugurations, and important religious events. Each tier has a different theme to it that is described at the beginning of that tier's description.

Those portions of the temple that do not have plaster over the walls are in the goblin quarters and their domains within the complex, as well as the ungern barracks and their domains within the temple. The different types of walls and other features are described below.

Stone Walls: Most of the interior walls in the ziggurat are five feet thick. All the blocks are granite and so tightly placed that no mortar holds them together (so tight that not even a piece of paper will slip between them).

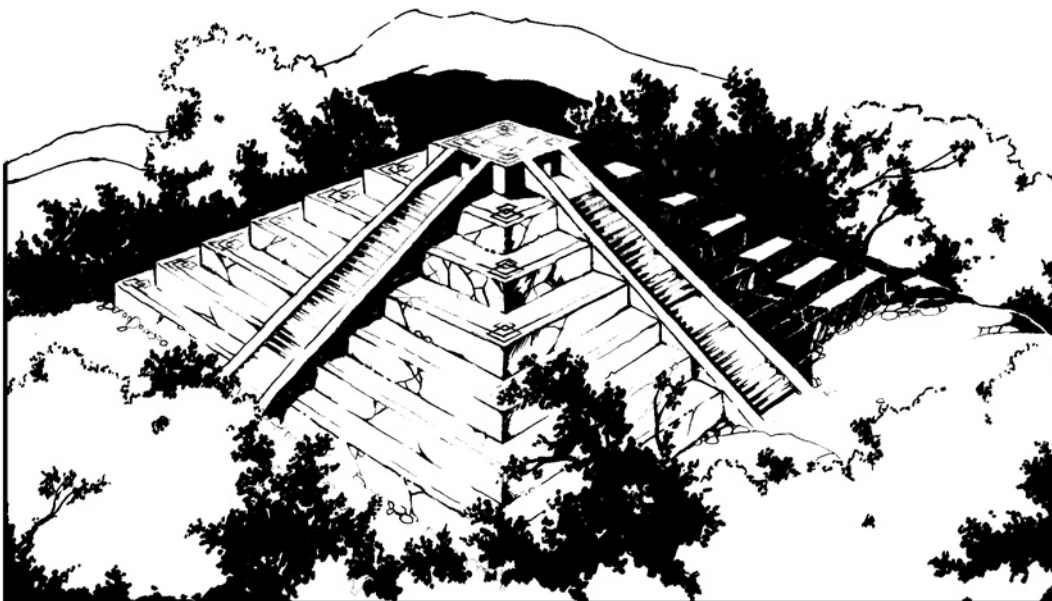
Plaster and Stone Walls: These walls are covered with a plaster. They are old, cracked, chipped, and broken in many places. Murals adorn the plaster walls as detailed in the appropriate sections. They are easy to break though, requiring a strength check at challenge level -3.

Tapestries: These ancient and thick tapestries cover only a few walls and spaces in the lower portion of the ziggurat. These are rotting and very dingy, but have held up remarkably well for being several hundred years old.

Metal Grates: Most of these grates are rusted and easily broken. A successful strength check is required to break the hinges. Ripping the studs from the wall requires a strength check with a challenge level 2.

Concealed and Secret Doors: There are many concealed and secret doors located throughout the complex. Their challenge levels for locating are described with rooms or corridors into which they open.

Combat Considerations: Many areas of the complex are small and cramped. Any corridor is five feet or less in width, and the spiral staircases are so small as to impose a -2 on to hit rolls with weapons over three feet in length.



WANDERING MONSTERS

The temple is a thriving and active community, and as such, it has a constant flood of creatures coming and going. Encounters are high, though not always deadly, as any characters wearing the appropriate robes can pass as visitors. The Castle Keeper should use discretion with each encounter. Encounters are checked every 4 hours. On a roll of 1 in 8, an encounter occurs. Castle Keepers should feel free to change that to 1 in 10, or even 1 in 12, depending upon how many encounters they need or desire.

Roll	Encounter
1–4	Goblits
5	Goblin warrior/messenger
6–7	Ungern guard (1–4)
8	Priest (1–3, of 2 nd or 3 rd level)
9	Dog (1–2)
10	Troll
11–12	Orcs (1–6)
13	Darkmantle*
14	Imp**
15–16	Giant Rats (2–20)
17	Farkin, Escaped Slave
18	Emissary of Aufstrag†
19	Spy from Ludensheim††
20	A Grig†††

* Only 1 Darkmantle can be encountered. The creature wandered in here some months ago and has sustained itself by devouring goblits.

** Several of these haunt the temple complex. They are not servants of the Witch Queen, rather they have lived here from many centuries and keep themselves hidden. The characters may illicit their interest.

***Farkin is quite mad. He has spent the past year in the pits of Festung Akt, the subject of horrible tortures by the lords of that fell place. He remembers little but his name, that he comes from the south, and where Festung Akt is. He will attach himself to the party if they are kind to him and will guide them to Festung Akt if they ask (see A5 *The Shattered Horn*)

† A 3rd level knight from Aufstrag coming to investigate or discuss matters with the Witch Queen. This encounter should happen only once.

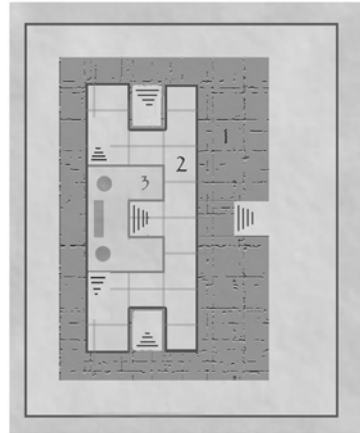
†† Spy from Ludensheim hired by one of the guilds (Castle Keeper's choice) to spy on the Witch Queen. He will not reveal anything to the party about where he comes from, though he will help them if needed. He reports back to his masters when he can make his escape. He has priestly robes.

††† This grig was captured by one of the ungern, and it has recently escaped. It can't find its way out of the temple.

LEVEL 1 THE PINNACLE

AREA 1 ZIGGURAT SUMMIT

A dizzyingly narrow set of thick, steep, granite steps, painted ochre, lead up to the ziggurat's pinnacle. For each dozen steps, there is a small landing on which sits a large brazier filled with dancing blue flames. The steps are etched with thousands of hideously shaped pictographs and iconographs painted in faded but garish colors. Black lichen and green mosses cling to most every surface, giving on the whole a sense of preternatural decay lingering over the edifice.



Level 1

As the pinnacle is attained, four muscular, hairy, brutish-looking humanoids position themselves on the topmost steps. They wear coats of chain that shimmer blue, highlighting their protruding jaws, large tusks, and curved horns that dangle with silver and gold loops and beads. Each carries menacingly gleaming bardiches. Behind them is the uppermost tier of the ziggurat. Large, vivid frescoes of demonic faces cover the panels of the sanctuary highlighted by red light spilling out of three portals along its front.

Atop the sanctuary is a horrid statue of the Horned One's ghastly head, with his horns twirling wide and coming together in a platform on top of it all. Up the maw is a nearly vertical set of steps ascending to the terrace, ending at an alabaster dais at the side of which are two massive braziers burbling with blue flames.

Four ungern sub-chiefs are guarding the entry to the sanctuary. There are three portals through which one can enter the ziggurat. Any and all coming up these steps should be wearing the purple vestments or robes denoting membership in the Witch Queen's retinue. If anyone ascends the stairs that is not wearing the robes, the ungern attack. There are four more ungern armed with longbows just inside the sanctuary that aid those outside.

If the guards are approached by those who are in robes, they step aside and allow entry into the sanctuary, but only if they enter the correct portal, as each is dedicated to a particular rank. The color on the trim of the robes designates the rank of the individual. All the robes are purple with red, white, or black trim. White is the highest rank, red secondary, and black is the lowest rank.

Those wearing robes with white trim should enter the center portal and descend the center shaft. This is the noble and guest entry. Those wearing black robes with red trim should enter the portal to the right. This is the entry for members of the priesthood. Those wearing robes with black trim should enter the portal to the left. This portal is usually for servants. Ungern are allowed through any portal and anywhere in the ziggurat.

As those in robes approach, the ungern step aside in a particular manner, depending on the type of robe worn. If everyone is wearing

a robe with a white collar, the ungern split and stand to either side of the center entry, weapons held low. If there is a mixture and one has a white collar, they also stand to either side. If all have black trim, they move to the east portal; and if all have red trim, they move to the west portal. If there is a mixture of black and red, two go to the left portal and two to the right portal.

If the characters act suspiciously, the ungern watch them closely but do not act unless anyone enters a portal he should not. If anyone enters a portal that is forbidden to him, the ungern move to intercede. If the characters offer any resistance, the ungern attack them. Initially, this is with the intent of subduing the characters, but if significant resistance is offered, the ungern try to kill them.

UNGERN x 4 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16, and HP 13, 12, 12, 9. Their primary attributes are physical. They can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1–2 or gore for 1–6+2 points of damage. They each carry a +1 chain coat, bardiche, dagger, and 4–40gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

AREA 2 SANCTUARY

Beyond the portals are three narrow apertures with steps leading down. The central staircase is flanked by two large brass braziers with red flames leaping out, coating the room in a flickering ochre light. At the far ends of the room are two smaller alcoves, each with two ungern guards sitting in them, their mail glowing blue and their eyes gleaming malevolently.

The chamber atop the ziggurat is rectangular with a flat roof constructed completely of stone; three portals face the steps. Inside the chamber are two alcoves with two ungern guards in each. They are armed with bows and are here to help those in Area 1 above. Two large braziers are placed to either side of the central staircase. They are lit.

Each portal has a staircase. There is a large, faded, colored face carved into the stone above each portal. Each is colored in a specific manner with white, red, and black. These correspond to the staircases one should descend depending on the color of the trim on the robe. Should someone enter the wrong staircase, the guards confront him or her.

UNGERN x 4 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16, and HP 13, 13, 10, 10. Their primary attributes are physical. As above.)

AREA 3 SACRIFICIAL ALTAR

Nearly vertical, narrow steps ascend to the ziggurat's peak in the middle of a terrifying visage of the Horned One. Atop is a large black stone slab resting on a pedestal and two massive copper braziers blazing with blue flame.

This is a sacrificial alter made of basalt. The walls around the steps are carved with many pictographs of the Horned One in varying states of "soul consumption." Characters moving up these steps are stricken by the images and may be unable to ascend of their own free will. Characters must make a charisma check when moving up these steps. Should they fail, they cannot continue

moving up the steps of their own free will. Further, should the Castle Keeper care, if the charisma check is failed by 10 or more, the character becomes so fearful, he leaves the ziggurat and is not able to return for 24 hours.

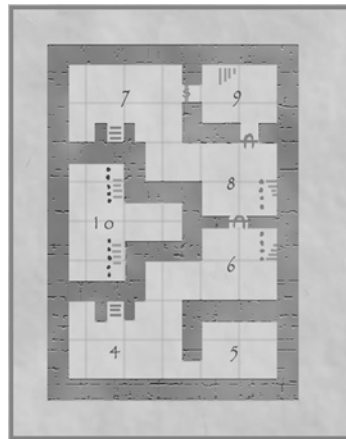
There is a groove running down the center of the slab of stone and into the floor beneath it. It leads to a point at the top of the stairs where a large bowl has been carved into the rock of the temple. These grooves are for blood that pools in the bowl.

LEVEL 2 THE TEMPLE FOYER

AREA 4 GOBLIN ROOM

Steep, greasy, narrow steps covered in mold and grime descend down into the ziggurat's bowels. Sputtering torches light the way, revealing timeworn pictographs adorning the walls and even the ceiling. Depicted are many a battle and the gory rituals of sacrifice that befell those who succumbed to the Horned One's armies.

The steps end in a small room with a low roof and a stone shelf



running along the entire wall. Dozens of small, toothy goblins their putrid green skin pockmarked with boils and festering wounds, wearing nothing but sackcloth girdles sit around while chattering to one another in their reprehensible tongue.

The goblins are sitting on a stone shelf about five feet off the floor. Several small wooden ladders lead up to the shelf. There are two portals leading out of the room. In the center of the room is a

crockery basin upon a short wooden pedestal. A table is placed against a wall with 10 wooden mugs on it. Pegs line the northern wall, and several cloaks with black trim are hung there.

The goblins are the Witch Queen's thralls and do nothing but what she bids. In this case, they are simply here to serve other servants. The goblins will fill the mugs with water, take cloaks and robes and hang them up, and help anyone undress should they need it. However, they only do these things if asked, and unless someone speaks the Dark Tongue, they cannot be communicated with.

They do not attack anyone nor will they scamper off to tell anyone that someone is in here. The only exception is if the goblins are attacked. In this case, they run to Area 5 and escape down to the lower parts of the ziggurat and closer to their abodes on Levels 6 and 7. Still, since they are used to being beaten and treated poorly, they will tell no one of the characters other than other goblins.

GOBLITS x12 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10, and HP 2 each. Their primary attributes are none. If pressed to attack, they can do so with a single claw for 1–2 damage. They carry nothing.)

AREA 5 GOBLIN DESCENT

This cramped room reeks of rotting foodstuffs. In the center of the room there is a large silver bowl sitting upon a pedestal. It is filled with fresh and not-so-fresh foodstuffs. Several pegs, both high and low, are located on the walls. Many cloaks are hanging from them. Murals of elves fleeing from hordes of goblins adorn the plastered walls.

This room is used for donations of foodstuffs to feed the crawler in the pit located on Level 7. The goblitts collect the food once a week or so to bring down there. This is a ceremonial act only, as the food from here is only a small morsel for the monster below. The bowl is worth 150gp.

There are 12 servants' cloaks in the room hanging from pegs. In one of the cloaks is a flute left here by accident. The flute, if played correctly, can be used to charm 1–12 goblitts into doing something they would otherwise not do. However, they will not attack anyone but merely disobey rules they should be following or do something they would otherwise not do. There is a music sheet in one of the priest's quarters located on Level 6 in Area 53G. Without this music sheet, the flute plays as any other.

GOBLITTs x 1–12 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10, and HP 2 each. Their primary attributes are none. If pressed to attack, they can do so with a single claw for 1–2 damage. They carry nothing.)

AREA 6 SERVANTS' DESCENT

Before you is a small angular room with several stone bench seats along the walls and a large stone pedestal in the center of the room. On top of the pedestal is a wide and shallow silver basin. The murals along the walls depict the coming of winter in a desolate and barren landscape. The winter is being ushered in by a dragon breathing snow and ice.

This room is for servants to wait in before descending to the lower levels. The basin has water in it that is chilly to the touch. Any water withdrawn from the bowl freezes within 5–10 seconds. It then proceeds to melt normally. The bowl is worth 5,400gp to a collector, but it may be difficult to sell, as it contains inscriptions upon its bottom that are odes to the Horned One. The bowl holds 10 gallons of water. The water must sit in the bowl for one hour before it acquires the ability to freeze. It is three feet wide and one foot deep.

AREA 7 ENTRY ROOM

The stairs end in a long room with several chairs and lit braziers in it. Two emaciated, unctuous humanoid with greasy green skin, broad fleshy noses, and wide mouths full of tooth and fang stand by the door. They are dressed in white cloaks and stand with their eyes cast downward. On the far wall are pegs with cloaks hanging upon them. Murals of a host of dragons descending from some black fortress adorn the walls.

This room has two orc servants in it at all times. These are usually female orc servants who do whatever is requested of them. If food or even water is requested, one orc will shuffle off to retrieve some. They will enter Area 9 through the western secret door and get water or food there. If there is not enough water or food available, the servants must descend two levels to retrieve more, so it could take a while to do so. The cloaks on the wall are clean, and the

characters can change out if they so choose. The secret door in the wall cannot be opened from this side and is virtually undetectable. Searching checks are made at a challenge level of +5. Should anything unusual happen in here, the five ungern guards in Area 9 will come out and challenge the characters.

ORC, FEMALE x2 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 11 and HP 4 each. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry nothing.)

AREA 8 DESCENT CHAMBER

This is a small room lit by several lanterns. At the far end is a staircase leading down. There are 12 individual stone seats protruding from the walls with iconography of various malevolent deities engraved upon them. Beside each there is a peg in the wall. In the center of the room there is a large pedestal in the shape of a grapevine, upon which rests a broad silver bowl.

This room is nothing more than a waiting area for those who have business below. As the ziggurat receives few visitors these days, the room is rarely used and most of the seats are covered in dust. The iconography on the back of the seats each represents one of the 12 servants of Unklar. When anyone sits in a seat and intones the name that the iconograph represents 12 times, they receive a blessing of sorts. Any task performed at the behest of another is done so much better than it would otherwise be performed. The character must be obeying an order or command and they should receive a +3 to any check or die roll associated with that task. This includes all attribute checks, to-hit rolls, damage, saving throws, etc. The effect lasts 12 hours. A peculiar side effect to this condition is an increase in any damage a character receives. When struck, excessive bleeding occurs and the character will lose 1 hit point per round thereafter until the wound is healed by magical means or bandaged. Bandaging only slows the blood loss and the character loses 1 hit point per turn. Hit point loss only occurs while under the effects of the *dweomer*.

The silver bowl on the pedestal contains wine. The bowl itself is magical and produces wine constantly such that the bowl is always full. The wine is a deep dark burgundy color with an acrid smell to it. It tastes poor but has high alcohol content. The wine also has the ability to heal 1–4 hit points of damage to anyone or thing of lawful or evil alignment who drinks of it. For those with chaotic or good alignments, they suffer 1–4 hit points of damage. The wine does not affect neutral characters. The bowl is worth 4000gp. It holds 10 gallons of wine and refills to the brim once it is drawn from. The bowl will only do this while on a pedestal that has been dedicated to the god of wine as this pedestal has been. Further, if removed from the pedestal it is currently on, it will only produce a good wine but with none of the healing or damaging capacities described previously. The latter are special incantations placed upon the bowl ages ago. It is three feet wide and one foot deep.

AREA 9 SPY CHAMBER

Sitting at a table in the center of the room are four, large hairy brutes sheathed in shimmering blue mail and bristling with arms. These beasts are ready for battle. Their tusks are adorned with metal tips and their hairy manes bristle with the anticipation of battle.

This Spartan room reveals the cold gray stone of the temple's construction, as there are no murals covering the walls. A long narrow table with high backed chairs around it fills the central portion of the room. It is heaped high with foodstuffs, tankards, and several small barrels. A brazier casts a red flame over much of the room. A rack of weapons leans against the far wall, and several crates full of arrows sit on one side of it, while shields are piled on the floor in front of it.

This room is used by the ungern guards for rest while on duty above and keeping a watch on those who enter and leave the complex through this area. There is a door on the west side of the room with a peephole in it. It looks into Area 7. Those on the other side of the door do not know the door is there of course, but from in here it is easily seen. A small metal plate covers the peephole. One peers out through the eye of a dragon on the other side. The door cannot be opened from the other side.

The table is piled with foodstuffs, mostly meats and not well cooked at all. There are also several small barrels of beer, some crockery and a deck of crudely made cards. The weapon rack has six spears, five long swords, six maces, three long bows, and two large ranseurs on it. There are 500 arrows in the crates. There is also a small wooden board painted with multicolored hexagonal spaces and upon which are placed 12 pieces of wood in the shape of various beasts. This is a game the ungern play to keep themselves occupied. If sold to a reputable dealer of rare items, this game may be worth 700–1200gp.

UNGERN SUB-CHIEF (This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, AC 16, HP 20. Its primary attributes are physical. He can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1–2 or gore for 1–6+2 points of damage. He carries a +1 chain coat, bardiche, dagger, and 200gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

UGERN X 4 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16, and HP 13, 13, 10, 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1–2 or gore for 1–6+2 points of damage. They each carry a +1 chain coat, morningstar, longbow, dagger, and 4–40gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

AREA 10 ENTRY FOR NOBLES

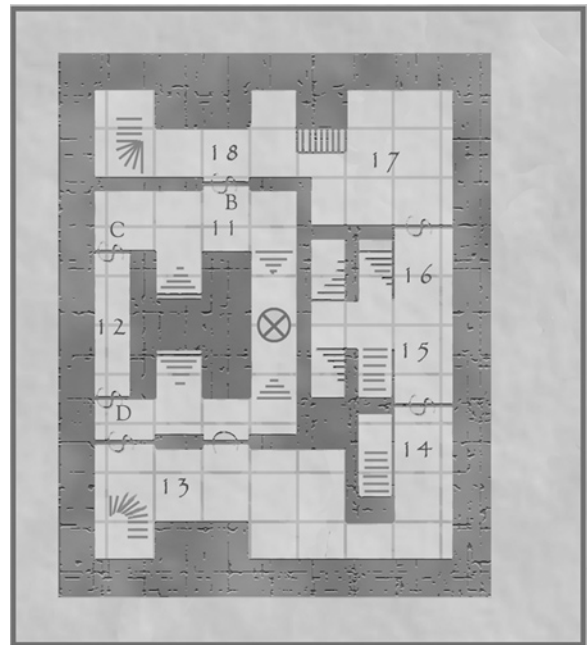
The stairs descend onto a broad landing with more stairs leading down to both the right and left. The wall to the north is seated with a fresco of a grinning demon upon a throne surrounded by many hundreds of small worm-like creatures.

This is the entry foyer for nobles. There is a large statue against the north wall. It has a magic mouth in it that intones a challenge and welcome to all newcomers. A large gold candelabrum hangs from the ceiling with candles wafting a relaxing incense.

LEVEL 3 SERVICE LEVEL

AREA 11 FOYER

The stairs continue down. They are well made and covered, from one end to the next, with icons and glyphs of ancient make. There are murals on the wall depicting a great storm of snow and ice coming from the sky and with it a great host of blue clad warriors marching to war.



Level 3

This is simply a continuation of the nobles' descent.

AREA 11A STATUE

Two sets of steps, facing each other, lead down to a landing below. Overhanging this landing is a massive statue of a double-sided head looking down upon those on the steps. It hangs like a chandelier above those who descend, foreboding doom to any who pass beneath it. The head is strange in that there is a single eye and nostril but it has many mouths. A dozen horns stretch up to the ceiling acting as anchors holding the bust in place. As one descends the steps, the great eye moves, peering over you, the nostril flares a bit, and the mouths begin to open and close, smacking stone lips.

This is a large two-sided bust of the Horned One. It is also a guardian that is alive and recognizes those who do not worship the Horned One who attempt to pass through here. There are manners in which to disguise this fact: the robes, doing the correct blessing, etc. If any good-aligned character or those who do not attempt to disguise themselves walk down these steps, however, the mouths begin asking questions such as "Who are you?" and "What do you here?" and then saying loudly "Go no further!" and finally "Enjoy the pain below!" and then as they step on the landing below a mouth underneath the statue booms in a violent and deep voice that resonates far and wide, "Your sacrifice will grow the blood Pools of Unklar!" This latter instance attracts 2–4 orc guards from **Area 18** and 1–4 orcs from **Level 4, Room 23**. The latter ascend the steps, while the others approach the interlopers directly.

AREA 11B SECRET DOOR

There is a mural here of a knight with a blank face holding a massive shield with the symbol of Unklar upon it.

This secret door is covered by the shield on the mural and is opened by simply pushing the symbol on the center of the shield.

AREA 11C SECRET DOOR

The mural here is of a castle wall with a banner hanging upon it while an army lays siege to it.

Pressing on the banner causes the door to open. The entire castle wall is the secret door and it swings inward.

AREA 11D SECRET DOOR

There is a mural of a demonic creature opening a gate to the pits of Aufstrag here.

This door is opened by pressing on the orb of fire that is the gate to the pits. It swings inward.

AREA 12 CORRIDOR

Beyond is a cramped corridor with a very low ceiling barely reaching the height of a small dwarf. It is completely unadorned and empty.

This hall was once used for servants to move quietly back and forth. Almost everyone in the complex has forgotten about this corridor. The floor in here is dusty and has no tracks. The corridor is unlit and littered with old decayed torches. There are also some old gold platters, rotted cloaks, and several small lamps on a shelf. There are oil casks here, but they are empty. There are eight gold platters that are worth 10gp each.

AREA 13 STORAGE CHAMBER

This chamber is crawling with small, green, naked goblinoids heaving loads and moving equipment to and fro. This long narrow room is bathed in the bluish light of many lamps placed in nooks along the walls and dangling metal chandeliers. Piles and racks of lanterns, braziers, lamps, torches and candles are spread out along the walls. In a far corner are a dozen wooden casks, stacked neatly together.

This room is for storage of lighting material and other related sundries. There are several large drums of the oil used throughout the complex. The oil in these casks produces the bluish flame found in many areas of the complex. There are some food scraps, broken plates, and utensils scattered on the floor. There is a rack with many torches on it, a table with several tinderboxes and matches, and a stack of ladders of all shapes and sizes. A set of steps at the end of the room spirals down into darkness below.

GOBLITT X 20 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10, and HP 2 each. Their primary attributes are none. If pressed to attack they can do so with a single claw for 1–2 damage. They carry nothing.)

AREA 13A

This is a door with a small peephole in it.

This secret door is visible in here and opened by pulling a handle on the right side. There is also a peephole that looks out in the corridor.

AREA 14 EXIT

This hallway is littered with the detritus of hundreds of goblitts tramping back and forth. A door lies at one end of the room and stairs lead up.

There is a secret service door here set into the wall.

AREA 15 EXIT

Two large swaggering unctuous creatures stand here with their arms akimbo and their bulbous eyes glaring menacingly. Their elongated muscles and bony protuberances set oddly against their massive fleshy heads and fang infested mouths.

This room is narrow, with murals of giants attacking an army of elves covering the facing wall. The walls here are plastered and covered in murals. The center wall (dividing rooms 15 and 16) is made of wood and plastered over. All listen checks through this wall are at +10. The two creatures are trolls.

TROLL X2 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 6d8, AC 16, and HP 43 and 22. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two claws for 1–4 damage and a bite for 1–6 damage or by weapon type. These trolls carry short-hafted battle-axes that cause 3–12 damage.)

AREA 16 EXIT

This room is identical to 15.

AREA 17 GUARD ROOM

There are several large racked beds and a table in here. At the table, one compact, hairy brute with a potbelly stands, cleaver in hand, slicing huge slabs of meat. Behind it, a fire burns in a wide metal stove, and dangling from hooks along the ceiling are slabs and chunks of bony meat.

The walls to this room are stone. This room contains several beds and some arms, a table, and some meat hanging on hooks-uncooked meat. This is where the guards stay on this level. There is usually an ungern captain of the guard in here. The secret door is for access to the entry chambers. It has a peephole.

UNGERN CHIEF (This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d8, AC 15, and HP 24. Its primary attributes are physical. He can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1–3 damage or gore for 1–8+2 damage. It carries a cleaver that causes 1–8 damage. Additionally, the chief is very good at cutting meat so causes an extra +4 damage to each damage roll with the cleaver.)

AREA 18 ARMORY

This long, bare room contains a series of weapons racks against the west wall. There is one rack for pole arms, another for maces, another for swords, and another for long bows. Three tubs of arrows sit next to the bow rack. At the north end of the room, there is a small table with several torches sitting on it.

This is one of the weapon rooms for the ungern and orcs. The spiral staircase is made of stone and extends to the depths of the

ziggurat with an exit on each floor. The secret door shown in the map is secret only from the other side. It is clearly visible here. There is also a working peephole in the door.

LEVEL 4 THE CHANCEL

AREA 19 VESTMENT STORAGE

This room has many shelves and boxes piled in it. One wall is entirely devoted to racks of vestments and ceremonial robes. The shelves are stacked high with brass candleholders, candelabra, candlesnuffers and other items of similar ceremonial nature.

The vestments and robes are for servants. Those towards the rear of the closet are very dusty. There are several stark white silk robes at the very rear of the closet, and unless the closet is searched, will not be found. These robes were used for ceremonial purposes by the high priestesses of the past and placed here, quite accidentally, by the goblitt servants. If the robes are worn, the characters will be given away immediately, as everyone at the ziggurat knows full well that only the high priestess can wear all white, and she only does so on holy days. There are six of these robes, and if sold to the correct dealer, can fetch 1,000–6,000gp each. Selling them may also attract unwanted attention, especially if sold in the nearby city of Ludensheim.

There are 10 crates in the room. All but one contains more brass or tin ceremonial goods packed in hay and cloth. One crate contains gold ceremonial goods. There are six candleholders worth 50gp each, a candelabra worth 150gp, an incense ball worth 500gp, and a wickedly curved golden blade. The blade is a ceremonial one and was once used for sacrifices atop the ziggurat. It is called a *heart finder*.

Heart Finder: These blades were created long ago for use in sacrifices and were designed and enchanted to make those sacrifices go much more efficiently. They come in many shapes and sizes but each has an inscription that says, “Seek the Heart” in the Dark Tongue. The blade is only useful against prone and defenseless opponents (asleep, knocked out, completely unaware, tied down, etc). One holds the blade above such an opponent, intones the words “Seek the Heart” and the blade will go for the heart as soon as the character swings. (The heart finder receives a +5 to hit and +10 to damage against all prone and defenseless opponents. The blade causes 1–6+10 points of damage a round until pulled out. Pulling it out causes 1–6+10 points of damage. The blade is thoroughly evil.)

An enraged imp lives in the back of this room. It was once the familiar of a priestess. That priestess has long since died, but the imp remained loyal to her and now resides near the only remaining earthly presence of the priestess, a white robe. It does not attack



or in any way molest the party unless the robe the priestess once wore is handled. The imp uses all of its abilities to dissuade anyone from doing anything with her cloak, short of directly fighting them. If the robe is removed from where it is, the imp follows and molests the party from a distance, awaiting a moment to reveal the party to guards or other servants of the Witch Queen. This latter should be done at a very inopportune moment for the party or the particular character that has the robe.

MEPHIT (*This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 15 and HP 14. It attacks with a bite for 1d6 and a stinger for 1 point of damage.*)

AREA 20 COMMUNAL CHAMBER

Beyond the doorway lies a wide and long room with lavender walls covered in a half-a-dozen small tapestries. Resting in the center of the room is a long oaken table surrounded by two-dozen dark oak chairs. Upon the table are heaps of freshly cooked foods and not-so-fresh half eaten foods. Many goblits are scampering around the table, picking up and cleaning up. A large, man-sized gold statue of the Horned One sits at the end of the room.

This dining area is solely for the use of priests and the record keepers. The food is constantly being changed, with rotten and half-eaten material being taken away at a fairly consistent pace and being replaced by fresher foods. The goblits do all of this and are moving in and out of the room most of the time. The only time this room does not have food in it is late at night to early morning. There are several large barrels of beer in here as well. The food is fairly good as it is made for humans. The gold statue of Unklar is not entirely gold. It is gold plated soapstone. A close inspection will reveal chips and gouges in many places that reveal a wooden interior.

There is a chance some priests or scribes will be encountered in here. A one on a d10 indicates the presence of 1–4 priests or scribes. Also, for every 10 minutes the party is in here, roll a d10, a one indicating the arrival of 1–2 priests. All the priests will recognize the party as interlopers if they are not dressed appropriately. Even so, after a few questions as to their purpose they will be revealed as interlopers. In some cases, the priests try to act normally and warn others of the characters' presence after they are out of harm's way. Other priests may not be so careful and call for help immediately.

PRIESTS (*These lawful evil, human, clerics' vital stats are Level 1–2, AC 12, HP 2d8. Their primary attributes are intelligence, wisdom, and constitution. They can cast spells appropriate to their level. They carry leather armor, staves, and 2d6gp worth of jewelry and coin.*)

SCRIBES (*These neutral evil, humans' vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 10, HP 3. Their primary attribute is intelligence. They carry nothing of value.*)

AREA 21 CHAMBERLAIN'S RESIDENCE

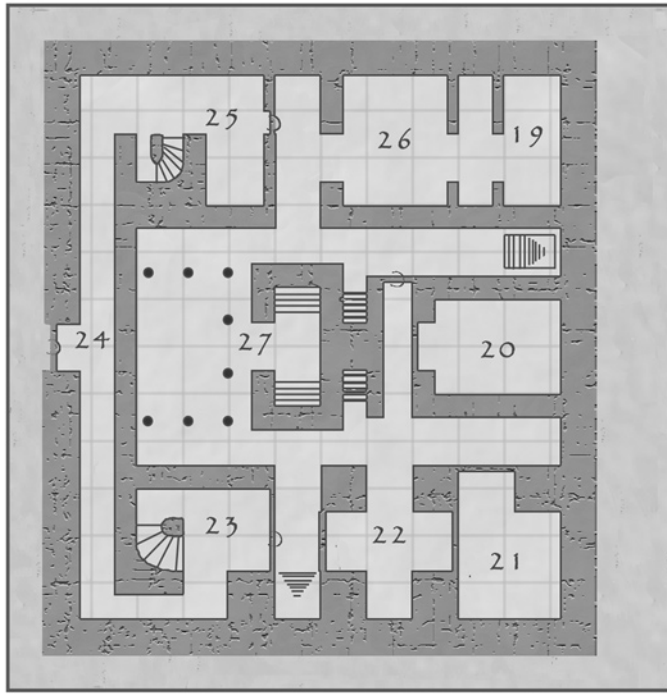
The door opens onto a dingy room cluttered with junk, do-dads and bric-a-brac. Beneath all this clutter are a large desk and chair, a sumptuous though dusty and unmade bed, and a nightstand cluttered with books, papers, quills, and other odds and ends; and there is a bureau in here as well. The walls are covered in tapestries.

This is the room of the head record keeper and chamberlain, Garrulus Sump. The Castle Keeper should decide where he is when or if the characters discover this room. He keeps track of all the comings and goings at the complex, ritual processions, trade goods, important dates, and things of this nature. He can recall a great many facts about the temple due to a prodigious memory and knack for object – fact association. This partly explains his room. Garrulus has accumulated a great many items, both mundane and extraordinary, to jog his memory regarding certain events or to recall important dates. It is an oddity for sure. He cannot remember a date without the object, but can remember where the object is that will allow him to remember the date. This can be a problem.

The room is littered with junk. Every open space is literally covered in bric-a-brac. Most of the items are mundane, if not downright common, such as a unique spoon with a letter on it, some small statuette; a chunk of crystal, a ball of cloth, a saucer, a cutting from a rose bush, a small wood box, some candles, and other similar items. There are some interesting items, but of no particular value as well. These include an old miner's lamp, a small rent helm with a nose-guard, an ornately carved wood candleholder shaped like a dragon, a large multicolored candle, and an extremely large pinecone. These items should suffice to keep curious characters interested and busy for some time. There are some real treasures in here, but they will take some searching to locate.

There are hundreds of pieces of paper with writings and scribbling on them and dozens upon dozens of scrolls. Most of the paperwork in here references rituals and how they should be performed. Many are wrong or dated incorrectly, all the correct ones being located in the vaults below. The others are records of visitors, contracts, lists of soldiery, weaponry, etc. All of this is very mundane. There are however, three pieces of vellum on the desk underneath a pile of papers. The writings upon them appear to be mundane. This is but an illusion, for the vellum pages are actually magical scrolls. The illusory writing can be dispelled by pouring cold water over the vellum or casting a *dispel magic* upon it. The spells are *invisibility*, *enhance attribute*, *sphere*, and *scrying*.

There is a birdcage hanging from the ceiling. Be sure to point this out as nonchalantly as possible to the players. Close inspection reveals that there are many small, hollow glass tubes with holes in them crisscrossing the interior of the birdcage. Attached to the outside of the birdcage are two silver rods, one slim and one thick. Each is five inches long. If the cage is closed and the metal rods struck against one another, a tiny air elemental is summoned in the cage. It cannot leave the cage unless the door is opened. Striking the two rods together does not produce a sound audible to anyone except elves. The creature weaves in and out of the glass tubes, making an odd and eerie music. If the metal rods are struck twice, a small air elemental arrives; thrice brings a medium elemental, and four times brings a large elemental. All are locked in the cage, and each makes music particular to their size. One must be within 10 feet of the object for it to work. Only one elemental can be in the cage at a time. One can let the elemental out. If this is done, it attacks the nearest sentient being. If the door is open, innumerable elementals can be summoned, but only once every 10 minutes. The item is priceless. It is also large, being perhaps two feet high and one foot in diameter. It is easily broken, and once even a single glass tube is cracked, it will no longer work.



Level 4

The bureau is ornate and has several dozen cloaks, pants, shirts and socks in it. Much of the clothing is piled on the floor. It is all dark in color. At the bottom of the bureau, beneath some socks and other dirty clothing is a cloak that appears rather plain compared to the rest. Upon opening it up, a shimmering red silken lining is noted. This is a *cloak of etherealness*.

Underneath the bed are many items one might expect to find such as clothing, a book or two, some dust, bits of food, a shoe, some coins, and other bric-a-brac. There is also a special marble beneath this bed. It is called a Troll's Eye. The eye of a troll was placed inside a glass ball. It could not regenerate, as the body has nowhere to grow to, but the eye still looks out. There are only two ways to break the glass marble. The first is to cast *dispel magic* upon it and then strike it with a hammer whose head is made of glass. The other manner is with a tuning fork. Should a tuning fork ever be used within 30 feet of the marble, it has a 20% chance of breaking. If the marble shatters, the troll's eye rolls out and begins to regenerate. Otherwise the marble allows the handler to use it to hit any other item made of glass within 50 feet. All the wielder must do is decide what it will hit and it will.

One of the drawers in the desk has a secret compartment at the end of it containing 150pp.

The chamberlain, Garrulus Sump, is a tall, thin man with beady eyes, a greasy beard, stringy hair, sunken chest, and flaring nostrils. His breath is wretched, and he knows it. He gets a perverse pleasure out of getting real close to someone's face while talking to him and using his long bony fingers to poke and prod those he does not like or intends to belittle. He is absolutely loyal to the Witch Queen, as she supplies him with potions that extend his life span. He is also a thoroughly despicable human being.

GARRULUS SUMP (He is a lawful evil, human, 5th level cleric whose vital stats are Lvl 5, AC 12, HP 31. His primary attributes are intelligence, wisdom, and dexterity. His significant attribute is wisdom 16. He carries leather armor, a +2 staff, and 500gp worth of jewelry. He can cast the following number of spells: 0-4, 1st -5, 2nd -4, and 3rd -1.)

AREA 22 SLEEPING CHAMBER

This is a cross-shaped room. There are alcoves on the north, south, east, and west walls. In the middle of the room is a large stone pedestal with a bowl on it. Inside all the alcoves save the north one are two sets of wooden bunk beds and four chests. The beds have straw mattresses and woolen blankets. Curtains separate the alcoves.

This room is for several sub-priests and record keepers. Priests who are resting often occupy it. There is a 65% chance that there are 1-4 priests in here and a 70% chance for 1-2 scribes. There is little of value in the room, as these lower priests are not supposed to own personal items. Most do not, and those that do keep those items on their person.

The bowl on top of the pedestal appears unremarkable and is filled with water. However, if the basin is removed, a small button is noted on top of the pedestal. Pressing the button causes the north panel of the pedestal to open. Within are two *potions of healing*. If the button is pressed again while the door to the north panel is open, the south panel opens. Within are two *potions of etherealness*. To open the east panel, the north panel must be closed while the south panel is left open; then the button in the bowl pressed. Inside the east panel are three *potions of gaseous form*. There is no west panel to open. However, should the south panel be closed and the east panel left open then the button pressed, a trap is set off. Four porticulus drop from the ceiling around the pedestal, locking everyone in the center room. Detecting this trap is a CL +3.

If priests are found in the room, there is an equal chance for each being either a Priest of the First Order or the Second Order.

PRIESTS (These lawful evil, human, clerics' vital stats are Level 1-2, AC 12, and HP 2d8. Their primary attributes are intelligence, wisdom, and constitution. They cast spells appropriate to their level. They carry leather armor, staves, and 2d6gp worth coin.)

SCRIBES (These neutral evil, humans' vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 10, HP 3. Their primary attribute is intelligence. They carry nothing of value.)

AREA 23 GUARD CHAMBER

This stark chamber has a large wooden table in it with several vicious *ungern* standing up hefting blades notched from many battles. At the far end of the room, the steps spiral down.

This is a guard chamber. There are always six guards in here keeping a watch on those on this level and to help in Area 24. There are some meats and tankards of ale on the table. The concealed door is visible from within here, but is behind a curtain on the hallway side.

UNGERN x6 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16, HP 13, 13, 10, 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1-2 or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage. They each carry a +1 chain coat, morningstar, longbow, dagger, and 4-40gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

AREA 24 SECRET EXIT

Sitting in this small alcove upon a gnarly wooden chair is a massive hairy beast with jagged yellow tusks and a wickedly curved blade. Behind it is a large wooden door interlocked with various metal bars.

This exit is visible from the interior of the ziggurat, but not the exterior. It is used by the goblitts to go out onto the patios in order to light the braziers outside the temple. The guard will kill anyone but goblitts and ungern who enter or try to leave this door. Otherwise, he will completely ignore any who pass him by.

The door no longer closes properly so is left a little ajar at all times. At night, if the rear of the ziggurat is observed closely, the outline of the door can be noted, as a small amount of light spills out from around the cracks. Opening it is easy. Though once locked with a series of strong bars, they are now broken and merely pressing on the wall causes the door to open.

HAIRY TROLL GUARD (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 6d8, AC 16, and HP 40. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with two claws for 1–4 and a bite for 1–6 points of damage. This troll carries a short, thick bladed scimitar that causes 1–10 points of damage.)

AREA 25 GOBLITT PREPARATION AREA

This narrow, angular room smells like rotting food mixed with freshly cooked meats and vegetables. The floor is littered with old crumbs, bones, chunks of meat, dried bread all covered in mold, slime, roaches, and beetles. There are also piles of jars, buckets of brushes, sacks, and barrels filled and overflowing with various materials. The northeast area of the room is lined with low wooden tables heaped with platters of freshly cooked foods and half-empty plates. A half-dozen goblitts move to and fro within the room carrying plates and platters while singing songs and whistling tunes.

Goblitts use this room to prepare lots of things for maintenance around the ziggurat. There are cans of paint and dye, mixtures of plaster, heaps of lye and other material needed for the creation of the plaster used around the place. There are also foodstuffs in the northeast area of the room. The goblitts do not cook in here but stop over and collect freshly cooked foodstuffs in here before carrying them on to the food's various destinations. They do dump the leftovers from meals in here.

GOBLITTs x6 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10 and HP 2 each. Their primary attributes are none. If pressed to attack they can do so with a single claw for 1–2 points of damage.)

AREA 26 WAITING ROOM

The portal opens onto a wide well lit room with a portal on the far end. The walls are plastered and covered in frescoes of many eyed beasts in an icy plain. About the room are half a dozen high backed wooden chairs, a large oaken table, and a wooden pedestal with a large brass bowl on it. There is a rack with several cloaks on it in the corner. In one of the chairs sits a tall, thin, pale, emaciated man, nearly naked. He stares blankly forward. He stands as you enter.

This is the waiting room for servants. They often sit here awaiting instructions from their masters, who are often gathered in Area

27. Sometimes they sit here a long time. Goblitts will come and serve anyone in here who is in robes.

This room has one servant in it. He is a servant to a visitor who is downstairs with the Witch Queen. He is a human from Ludensheim, under a permanent charm type spell. Should the characters seek to communicate with him, he can offer little information other than who he is, his master's name, and where he is from. He has been here for two days and is sleeping on the chairs. His name is Ferris Lukler. Breaking the *charm* spell is impossible without killing his current master, Ardu Karlenkeller, who is in Ludensheim.

FERRIS LUKLER (He is a neutral, human, commoner whose vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 10, HP 2. His primary attribute is dexterity. He carries nothing of value.)

AREA 27 ENTRY FOYER

Leaving the staircase brings one into a lavish foyer with a multicolored tile floor covered in alternating white and blue tiles. The ceiling is slightly domed and edged by eight columns carved in the shape of nine great demons holding the arches aloft. At the northern end of the room, broad double stairs lead down into darkness.

The demons presented on the columns are mogrl. Each statue is unique in its details as these represent real mogrl. Passing through the columns into the area where the steps leading down triggers a saving throw against fear (CL 3) as the statues radiate terror. Only the true servants of Unklar are exempted from this check.

This is the foyer for the visitors awaiting permission from an emissary of the Witch Queen to proceed further. This room is spacious, well lit, with plastered walls in fair condition.

LEVEL 5 RECORD HALLS

AREA 28 STATUE AND ENTRY

The flagstone steps give way to a brightly lit landing whose far wall is utterly consumed by a garish and grotesque stylized relief of the head of a demon or some such creature from the abyss. Its head stretches from one of the walls to the other and from floor to ceiling. Its great maw easily covers half the wall and is open wide, its tongue licking out over many jagged teeth. Painted in a chaotic mixture of greens, reds, blacks, blues and yellows, the relief causes a momentary sense of discomfort to all who see it.

The back of the statue's mouth hides a secret panel that opens up onto a staircase that descends to the areas below. Finding the secret door is very difficult, as it is magically concealed with a permanent illusion. So, not only will the illusion have to be bypassed, then the door and its lever must be discovered. This is where the Witch Queen ascends when she wants to meet guests in the hallway beyond. If there are guests in here, she simply has the goblitts create smoke in the room below, which trails up through holes in the teeth of this relief and fills the room. She then steps through the illusory door in inky smoke and darkness.

The back of the relief's tongue is an illusion (CL4). Behind it is a wall that is a secret door. The wall has five jewels set into it. These can be pried out of the wall fairly easily and are worth 5gp each

and were placed here as a simple ruse to convince those who saw through the illusion that the gems were what is being hidden. The actual secret door is difficult to detect so well was it made. Search checks are done at a challenge level +4. If detected, it is by a small seam along the edges of the door. Finding the latch is also difficult. It is located behind one of the teeth and simply requires that a handle on the tooth be pulled to allow the door to be opened. The door can then be pushed inward but swivels both ways, so can be pushed out from the other side. The door is easily seen from the other side and can be opened by merely lifting the handle.

AREA 29 FEASTING CHAMBER

This is a broad and deep room with large, red, velvet tapestries with intricate geometric patterns covering every wall. The north end of the room is dominated by four columns in the shape of elves trapped in a stone jar and writhing in agony. The southern portion of the room has one long table in it with brass braziers alight with licking red flames at either end. The table is carved of some stone that emanates an ever so slight bluish light.

This is a feasting chamber and official gathering hall for guests and the Witch Queen. It is rarely used, though meticulously cleaned by the goblitts. Usually, singers intone odes from behind the curtain, but there is nothing back there at the moment.

The columns are actually elves that were changed into stone columns by the Horned One. Nothing known to neither man nor beast can be done to change this. Should the characters examine the statues closely, they might notice a slight twitching of a hand, eyes changing positions, and other things of this nature. This should be played up as a trick of the eye.

AREA 30 CORRIDOR

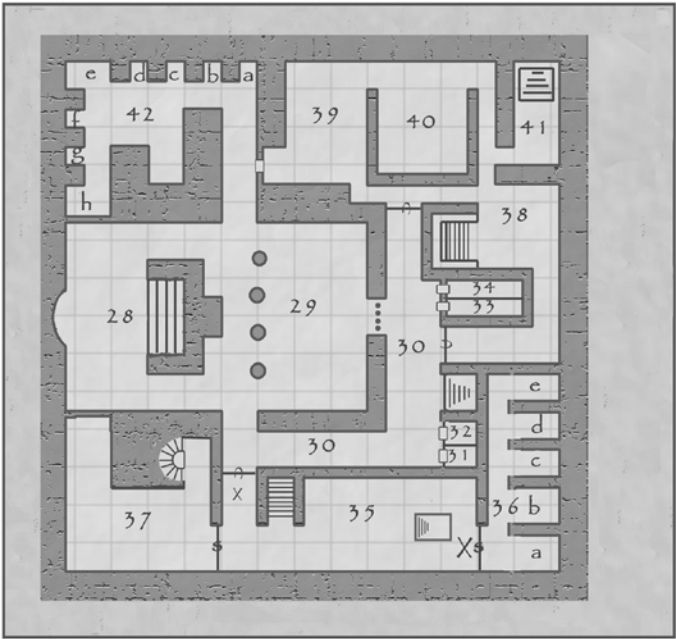
This poorly lit, but spacious corridor is flagstone with blue and white tiles and the walls are covered with murals of armies of the Horned One attacking foes, both great and small. A staircase in the southern portion leads down further into the depths of the ziggurat.

The stairs lead down to the royal apartments below. There are several secret doors in this corridor. None are visible from this side and each is very well hidden with checks for searching and locating them occurring at a challenge level +4.

ROOM 31 STOREROOM

This door opens into a small room lined with many rickety wooden shelves stacked awkwardly with bottles, decanters, vials and ceramic vases of all sizes, shapes, and colors. Many shards of glass litter the floor and the aroma of alcohol lingers thickly in the air.

This room contains hundreds of small decanters of beers, wines and spirits. These are used by those going down to their own rooms and the servants are supposed to hand them out to whomever asks. As well as the wine and spirits, there are several poisons and other odd concoctions, that are kept here and used to kill or bewilder those the Witch Queen does not like. The latter are not marked in an obvious manner and are labeled wines or beers. However, each bottle of poison is unique in shape. All the poisons are in glass decanters with long chutes and corked with



Level 5

wood. Only the servants and makers of the poisons know what is in them.

The types of poison vary, as the maker is not terribly exacting in the concoction process, and some have degraded over time, and the effects of others have been completely negated. There is a 10% chance that a decanter with poison in it will be chosen should the characters choose to pick up anything on the shelves. Afterwards, the player needs to roll a d10 to determine the effects of the poison.

ROLL	POISON'S EFFECT
1-4	No effect
5-7	2-4 damage, save at -1 for half damage
8-9	4-8 damage and suffers -2 to all physical activities, save at -2 for half effects
10	8-16 damage and suffers -4 to all physical related activities, save at -3 for half effects

ROOM 32 STOREROOM

The door opens into a narrow and long room with many shelves stacked to the ceiling with cloth, towels, robes, sheeting, blankets and other wares of such nature.

This room contains towels, cloaks, sheets, pillowcases, pillows, blankets, and other sundries of this nature. The finer materials are located on the east side of the room, while the plainer ones are located on the west side.

ROOM 33 STOREROOM

The door opens into a small room with shelves crammed with plates, saucers, cups, mugs, bowls, basins, pots, pans, and other objects of this nature. There are several unopened crates on the floor as well.

This room contains pots and pans as well as those items mentioned above. Although seemingly mundane, several of the items in here are a very ancient lineage and an antiquarian may be willing to pay a great deal for them. For characters with such knowledge, and on a successful intelligence or wisdom check (challenge level 2), they find 10–60 pieces of flatware worth 10–60gp each. However, the character may be lucky and get something even more valuable. While examining the pieces, the character makes a wisdom check at a challenge level of 5 and if their intuition was right about the age of the item, they have located a piece worth a lot and can get 1–4 pieces worth 100–400gp each.

The crates contain items of a similar nature though much more recent in make. None have been opened. If they are opened, it will be noted that these crates contain new flatware with the maker's marks on the bottom. These indicate the flatware was made in Ludensheim. There is only one person in Ludensheim who makes flatware of this fine a quality: Edmut Khan.

AREA 34 STORE ROOM

Beyond is a cramped room stacked high with dusty chairs, desks, nightstands, bedposts, picture frames, chests, and trunks.

This room contains furnishings. Some of it is very old and worth quite a sum to collectors. A piece can be valued between 10gp and 1,000gp. Carrying these items will be difficult, and as such, will likely never occur.

ROOM 35 RECORDS HALL

This is a long, narrow room cluttered with desks piled high with papers and ink pots, several rows of bookcases jammed and stacked with dusty volumes and tightly bound scrolls, and several tables heaped with plates, tankards, glasses, books, and other detritus of those who have spent too much time in here. A thick layer of white dust covers much of the room as if it were snow on a mountaintop. There are trails in the dust and debris indicating where some few people walk through here and even, apparently, work. . . .

If the characters have managed to get this far without raising an alarm, the scrivener will be in here working at his desk. Otherwise, he has taken his valuables and gone down to his chamber on Level 7. If the scrivener is in here, read the following in addition to the above.

. . .as does one now. Sitting in a tall chair, behind a plain though cluttered desk, sits an old man with long wispy white hair. His face is wrinkled like a waterlogged prune and he has one eye, which is covered in a hexagonal spectacle. He is scribbling upon a piece of parchment at the moment. A single candle illuminates his work area.

The one thing that kept Unklar's Empire together was the record keeping and being able to move supplies, money, and material to whichever place needed it in a quick and orderly fashion. The practice of record keeping has remained with many of the Horned One's servants who survived the fall as a continuation of habits formed long ago, even though there is little to be gained by it in these days.

106 CASTLES & CRUSADES

This is the records hall. Here, scribes keep ledgers and lists and notes of all things that happen in and around the ziggurat. The head record keeper, the scrivener (once known as Dadarus Skevinbeld to his mother and father), does the vast majority of the work in here and has filled several volumes himself with information so mundane as to bore even the most fastidious and punctilious of individuals. To help him with this task he has, in the past few years, engaged a few others to help him, as he senses his death lingering on the horizon.

The scrivener may appear a harmless old man and he even, most of the time, believes himself to be incapable and incompetent. However, this is not the case. When pressed and his ever so valuable books, ledgers, and other material become threatened and he is incapable of flight, his inner demon comes out, quite literally. The anger, pain, regrets, jealousy, and a host of other emotions have been bottling up inside Dadarus since youth. In this foul place, those pent up emotions have found a home and nourishment. A demon has come to roost in the scrivener's chest that feeds on his anger. When the scrivener is pressed, his books or ledgers destroyed or messed with, or he is interrogated, the demon will come out to attack anyone nearby.

If so, read the following:

The scrivener's frail body goes limp, his skin begins to crinkle before you and his eyes roll back in his head. He begins to gurgle and dark purplish blood drips from his mouth. Suddenly, his mouth opens wide and two small clawed hands reach out, stretching the mouth wide and out leaps an oily skinned, small, muscular beast with six arms, tiny tattered bat wings, and a glaring, fanged face. It leaps up into the air.

The demon gets out of the body in one round. During that round, the one in which he is emerging, he is vulnerable, and any swings at him are done so at a +5 bonus and cause double damage. Any round thereafter, any damage the demon receives, the scrivener receives one half that amount of damage. The demon will attack until it receives one-half its hit points in damage; then it tries to escape and hide. It then attempts to follow the scrivener around and reenter his body, no matter how far from this place Dadarus travels. He will constantly harry him and the party if he is with them, until dealt with.

Should the demon get out alive, he takes all the evil and hate out of the scrivener's body, so much so that the scrivener becomes chaotic good in alignment. The scrivener slowly becomes aware of his past misdeeds and seeks repentance and egress from this place. Should the characters manage to save the scrivener and return him to a place where he can live in peace or live a life of repentance, they should receive a hefty experience point story award. This should be in the range of 500xp for each individual involved and 1000xp for those persons instrumental in his rescue (those who choose to wait until the demon is out to attack it, who plan for the possibility, etc). The Castle Keeper is, of course, the final arbiter in this.

DADARUS SKEVINBELD (He is a neutral evil, human, commoner whose vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 10, and HP 4. His primary attributes are intelligence. His significant attribute is intelligence 16. He is carrying three large gold coins of imperial make.)

DEMON (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d10, AC 18 and HP 31. Its primary attributes are mental. It attacks with two claws for 1–4 and one bite for 1–6 damage points of damage. It is immune to fear or fear type spells, can fly 60 feet per round, and cast color spray once per day.)

The secret door located at the south end of the room is part of the bookcase. Behind the books on the bottom shelf is a large metal lever, which if pulled, causes the door to open.

The vast majority of the books and scrolls in this room are of little value though perhaps of great interest. They chronicle almost everything that has happened here for ages and ages. There are accounting records, trade good ledgers, troop movement ledgers, contracts, letters, notes and other types of correspondence. Much of this is written in the ancient tongue and is unreadable without the correct knowledge of that language or some type of *decipher script* spell. There are a few interesting items, though. Each is described below.

Ever-burning Candle: This candle is located on the desk where the scrivener works. This is literally an *ever-burning candle*. The flame cannot be put out by anything other than a *dispel magic*. Even in this case it has a challenge class of 15. It burns underwater and even in the Void.

Correspondence from Adolf Neimer: There is a leather sheath filled with letters located on the floor by the scrivener's desk. It is in a pile of other leather cases, so should take 2–6 minutes to locate and only if the characters are examining the writings. These letters are in the local language, so should jump out at anyone examining them.

The letters are from a person named Adolf Neimer in Ludensheim. They are mundane affairs simply listing the number of bolts of silk Neimer has received and of what type. Of note, at the end of each list is the comment, “no payment.” Neimer has received several hundred bolts of silk of varying colors over two years. Should the characters examine the correspondence closely, they will discover that Neimer also received three robes. For more information on Neimer, the silk, and the robes, see the next module in the series, *Usurpers of the Fell Axe*. Alternately, the Castle Keeper could use this as the starting point for another adventure.

Correspondence from Felthin Wrung: This series of letters is in an innocuous leather folio located on a bookshelf behind the desk upon which the scrivener works. It should take some time to locate if anyone is looking, perhaps 10–60 minutes. The correspondence is written in the Dark Tongue, so is illegible to any except those who speak and read it. The correspondence is easily recognized as recent since the paper is fresh.

The letters are from a Felthin Wrung, from a place called Festung Akt. For

the most part, they concern tribute amounts that should be sent to Festung Akt in gold, gems, and silk. There are also missives concerning the progress of plans in Ludensheim, though no reference to what those plans may be. Vague references to “our lords in Ludensheim” and “the Minster of Akt” are prominent. Comments such as “our desires are being met,” “we have attained the desired result with our lord in Ludensheim” and “meetings are planned as to be expected” reference the progress of the plans. For more information on the plans and actors in the events unfolding in Ludensheim, please reference to *Usurpers of the Fell Axe* or simply expand upon them as desired.

Silk Ledger: This ledger is on the scrivener's desk and is easy to find. Although it is written in the Dark Tongue, it should be easy to translate the basic idea since it simply records the same item over and over again. It records bolts of silk being traded. The difficulty in translation is disassembling to whom the silk is delivered, the amount and the price.

Diamond Ledger: The diamond ledger is much like the silk ledger and located on the scrivener's desk. However, it is essentially empty with a missive located in the last entry: “the queen expects more soon.”

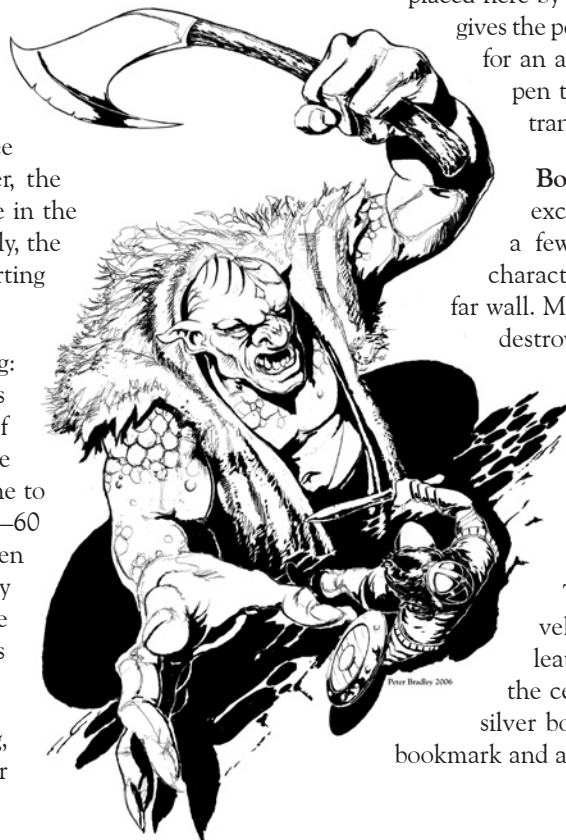
Inkpot with golden ink: This little pot of ink is located on a shelf full of other inkbottles. It is not labeled uniquely in any way so can only be spotted as unusual if the lid is opened. Inside is ink with liquid gold in it. The recipe for this type of ink is long lost and this happens to be the last of its kind inside the ziggurat. It is only used when the Witch Queen signs her name. It can fetch up to 1000gp if sold to a discerning collector or wealthy individual.

Quill of Thought: This quill is located in a box full of used and discarded quills. It is notable since it is made from a peacock. It was placed here by a goblitt long ago and forgotten. The quill gives the person using it a +2 to all intelligence checks for an action being taken that involves use of the pen to figure out something like an equation, a translation, a spell recipe, a forgery, etc.

Book of Incantations: This book is exceedingly difficult to find and should take a few hours to locate it, depending on the character's actions. It is on a shelf against the far wall. Many of the books in the section have been destroyed by water damage and are even covered

with a coating of lime in some places. Where the lime is thick (about 3”), a pile of books simply looks like a cave wall with a few titles peering through the sheen. Breaking the lime casing results in the destruction of all the books except this one, which remains pristine.

The book is thin, with but four-dozen vellum pages bound within it. It has a dark leather cover embossed with a silver “O” on the center of the front cover. It also has a thin silver bookmark made of silk that serves as both bookmark and a tie to keep the book tightly closed.



The book is magically sealed and nearly impossible to open without the proper command word being spoken. To open it one must simply tap inside the “O” and say “open” in the Vulgate or Common tongue. Otherwise, some magic is required. *Dispel magic*, *knock* or similar spells will work, but the book has a spell resistance of 18. Otherwise, the book remains resolutely shut. Inside are written seven wizard spells and four illusionist spells.

BOOK OF INCANTATIONS (There are three 1st level, three 2nd level, and one 3rd level wizard spells. There is one 1st level, one 2nd level, and two 3rd level illusionist spells. The choice of spells is left up to the Castle Keeper.)

AREA 36 SECRET ROOMS

In this narrow, short hallway, five doors are arrayed against the southern wall. A metal rod in the wall holds an unlit lantern.

Taking the lantern off of the rod sets off a trap. The characters will have time to react as the trap is old and has not been well maintained. The rod is connected to a chain and pulley system attached to a large chunk of stone in the hallway ceiling and the secret door. This drops after a few seconds, and a grinding gear sound reverberates throughout the hallway. The secret door is locked shut and blocks of stone drop from the ceiling where each “X” and “x” are. The “X” indicates the stone has fallen all the way to the floor and causes 1d8 damage to whoever is under it, while the “x” indicates the stone has only fallen part way to the floor and causes 1d4 damage. Save halves damage in both cases. All the stones are attached to chains so can be hauled back up into the ceiling. The mechanism for this is located on Level 6, Area 53.

36A RECORDS

This wooden door is closed with a seemingly seamless fit into the doorframe. In the center of the door is a single round hole, about an inch in diameter and framed by a gold band. There are no other markings on the wood and no hinges to be seen.

This door is sealed by a simple mechanism. One simply rolls a gold standard coin of imperial make into the slot and it rolls down a chute, releasing the mechanisms along the way. A few clicks later and the door shifts a little and can thence be pushed open. There are not many coins of imperial make remaining anymore. Characters could have picked them up from previous modules or gathered them from this adventure. If the wrong coin is placed within, it just consumes it. There is a box of 32 old imperial standard gold coins to the side of the door (each worth 5gp in weight and about 100gp each to a collector).

This room contains vast stores of very old records on transactions that have occurred here since the founding of the edifice as well as supplies for the scrivener. The room is jammed top to bottom with scrolls, piles of parchment, old and new boxes of ink, quills, and other items. Mostly however, it is just records, and there are thousands upon thousands of sheets of paper in here—some used, some not, some valuable, but mostly not.

AREA 36B SILK STORAGE

This wooden door is locked with three massive padlocks and a regular lock. The wooden door is carved with strange glyphs and icons, and in the center is a small handle in the shape of a wolf.

The locks are difficult to open. In order from top to bottom, they are CL2, CL4, and CL6. The center lock is CL8. If an attempt to pick any of the locks fails, the handle’s head comes to life and whips around, growling. It is but a small head no bigger than the palm of a hand, but its growl is mighty and can be heard for 100 feet in every direction. It likely brings guards.

Within the room are piles and piles and heaps of rolls and bundles of silk. Some are tied together and others are loose. After a moment’s observation, one notes two distinct divisions of the silk. Those on the left are bundled and have small pieces of paper attached to them while those on the right are more loosely bundled and have no tags. Those towards the rear of the room are covered in dust, while those toward the front are not.

This is the storage room for special outgoing silks. Some silks have been here for a very long time and will never leave. The ones bundled up on the left have specific designations while those on the right do not, having been used as bribes or gifts. They are worth 300–900gp per bolt. There are 123 bolts in the room, each weighing 40 lbs and being about five yards wide and 30 yards long, overall having a 6 encumbrance value. Looking at the addresses on the labels, the destinations of some of the silks become clear. There are many individuals whose names are unrecognizable, but a few are. One Garten Onestdell, a silk merchant in Ludensheim, is named on several bolts of silk. Ten bolts are going to a Varreus Treffle in Festung Akt. Two bolts are going to one Johan Essenstern. These people are detailed in the *Usurpers of the Fell Axe* and *The Shattered Horn*.

36C MILITARY RECORDS

This large oaken door is slightly open. Beyond is a stark room with a series of shelves along one wall. The shelves are full of books, scrolls and piles of paper. In the center of the room is a thick desk behind which sits a very old and gray ungern. In his clawed and desiccated hand is a quill with no feathers on it. A small lamp burns with a blue flame beside him, casting the entire room in bluish light.

This room was once used for military record keeping, but no longer. All the records here are 100 years old or more. The ungern sitting behind the desk is long dead and has mummified in here. He is actually dusted and cleaned every once in a while by the goblits. He has mummified in place.

When this venerable ungern war leader died, the previous Witch Queen had him cursed—for some slight infraction (like dying at an inopportune moment)—and his spirit now guards these halls. When this room is entered, the ungern’s spirit awakens and appears at the west end of the hallway outside the door (described below). Should the characters search the body, they will find that the only thing of value is a polished, black, oval stone hanging on a silver necklace around the neck of the ungern. Breaking this stone releases the curse and frees the ungern’s soul. It breaks as easily as glass and as soon as it does, the apparition described below dissolves.

A low moaning and groaning as if from a boar being stuck emits from the west end of the hallway. A blue glow fills that space and coalesces to a vaguely humanoid shape, then to that of a brutal beast with two large, curving horns and massive a snout. Festooned with ethereal jewelry and pulsing tattoos, the beast leaps forward, baring a large broad-bladed spear.

UNGERN LESSER GHOST (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 6d10, AC 17, HP 45. Its primary attributes are mental. It attacks with frightful moan and telekinesis.*)

The only other things of value are some maps on the scrolls. These are old maps with several showing the location of Festung Akt as well as a fortress where Ludensheim is now located. Other information should be made available to the characters at the Castle Keeper's discretion. The maps are excellent devices to spur on further adventures and give the location of other dungeons, temples, or fortresses.

36D VISITOR LOGS

This is a wide oaken door securely locked with a dusty padlock. Within is a small room crammed with ledgers on shelf after shelf after shelf. The floor is strewn with ledgers and many piles and stacks have been knocked over. A cursory glance reveals they are all blank.

These ledgers list visitors and their purposes—all in invisible ink. To make the ink visible, a citrus juice needs to be applied to the papers. Almost all of the ledgers are written in the Dark Tongue. A few are in other languages. There are thousands of people listed on the ledgers stretching back 300 years or more.

36E PRISONER AND EXECUTION ROLLS

A metal bound door hangs loosely on a hinge. A key dangles from the lock. The door creaks open to a small room with several tall bookcases filled with scrolls.

These scrolls list prisoners and those being executed. Examination reveals minute details about the crimes committed by those executed and sentenced to prison. Usually, this has to do with treason and blasphemy. In the rear of the room, in a pile of scrolls are six that were placed here accidentally. These are scrolls of *extra healing* (heal 2d8 points of damage), not easily noted, for they appear no different than the others to all except those of good alignment. The seals on these scrolls are that of the deity of health and recovery.

AREA 37 GUARD EATERY

This stone-walled room smells of meat and spices. Specifically, a large boar has been skinned and is roasting over a raised pit with bright flames licking its sides. Tending it is a gargantuan and exceptionally hairy ungern sharpening its tusks with a metal file while poking the boar with a metal prod. Behind him is a large oaken table with several cleavers and knives stuck in it as well as bits and pieces of meat and bone. Scattered about the floor are more pieces of bone and entrails and other mess from butchering. A rack of pots and pans and utensils of all sorts is located in an alcove against the wall to the south as well as some buckets and tubs stacked by the steps.

The fire pit is situated against the east wall and the table against the west wall by the steps, so that the ungern cook's head is turned away from anyone coming up the steps. The rack of pots and pans is in front of the secret door to the south, and it must be moved before the door becomes apparent. It is easily visible once the rack is moved. Should the ungern ever use this door, they will make a lot of noise coming through as they throw the pans to the side. The concealed door to the west is easily visible and has a handle. It also has a peephole in it, though it has not been used in ages and is rusted shut. The door opens easily and swings inward. The buckets and tubs contain watered-down beer as well as water. The surface meat on the boar is ready to eat, but the interior is very rare. A bucket of boar innards sits at the back of the fire and is slowly boiling for a stew. Piles of potatoes and other tubers are heaped up under the table.

The cook will not immediately attack anyone, even if they appear strange or out of place. He is simply too busy cooking. However, should the characters pester, bother, or make threatening moves towards him, he does attack and with a vengeance. He is not opposed to slinging innards, boiling water, or whatever might be handy to the interlopers. Eventually, he will opt for a large cleaver with which to attack.

UNGERN COOK (*The lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d10, AC 14, HP 19. His primary attributes are physical. He can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1–2 damage or gore for 1–6+3 damage. He carries a poker that deals 1–6+2 damage or can throw knives for 1–2 damage. If it attacks with the poker, it attempts to subdue opponents.*)

AREA 38 SERVANTS' ENTRY

This chamber is bare, excepting a large brass brazier located in the center of the room. A bright blue flame leaps up from it, warming the entire room and casting an eerie blue glow across murals of sacrificial rites performed, apparently, atop this very ziggurat.

This chamber is an entry chamber for servants and a reminder of the fate awaiting those who disobey the high priests of this place.

AREA 39 SERVANTS' FOYER

This room is plastered with murals of servants performing duties for priests dressed in white robes. There is a large table in the center of the room with two large benches running down either side of it. Food and the detritus of many meals are piled high on the table. There is a pile of crusty bread sitting beside a bowl of steaming broth at the west end of the table. Two large open-faced bureaus are against the west wall with plates, dishes, lamps, lanterns, several flasks and other sundry items in it. Several washbasins are placed on a narrow table along the south wall.

There is a 50% chance that someone will be in here eating from the bowl of soup at the end of the table. If so, there are 1–2 servants in here. There is a 60% they are orcs and a 40% chance they are humans. They will be here to serve some visitor or actually work here and live in the town outside. It is unlikely they will attack; although if not killed, they do warn others of any interloper's presence. Other than this, there is little of interest in here except the four oil containers in the bureau.

AREA 40 SERVANTS' QUARTERS

This dingy, crowded room has eight sets of bunk beds in it, each with a pile of blankets and pillows on a straw mattress. A person is curled up asleep in one bed.

The servants use this room. The one sleeping in here now is an orc. He is drunk and will have to be roused roughly to get him up. Two other beds are obviously being used as the beds are mussed up. The orc wears a silver medallion indicating his master, one Gordru Nuk. The medallion is worth 10gp.

ORC (This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 14, and HP 6. His primary attributes are physical. He carries leather armor and a scimitar.)

AREA 41 STAIRS DOWN

These narrow steps lead down. The lintel over the doorway is of a series of people in robes carrying large packs.

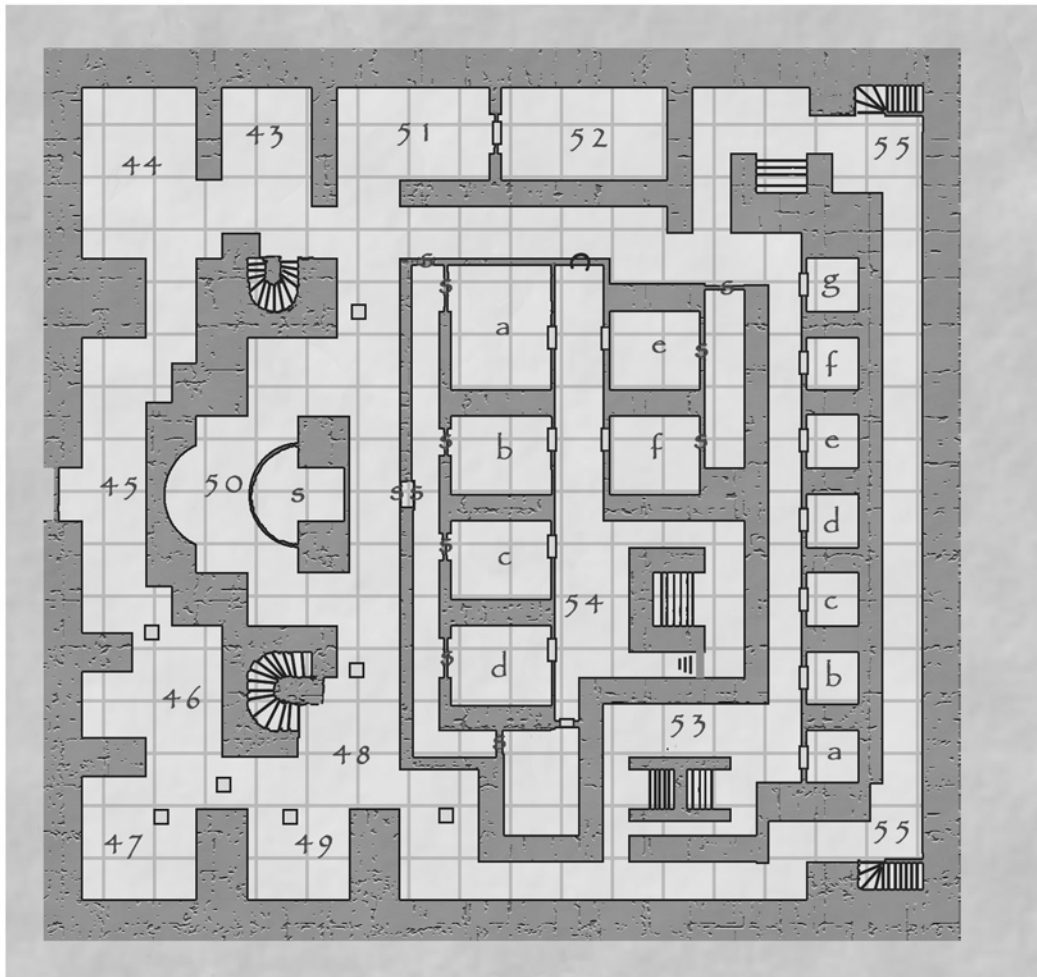
These stairs lead down to the floor below to **Level 5, Area 19**.

AREA 42 GOBLIN HANGOUT

You enter dirty area with many small alcoves. The place looks like the sewer system of some great city. The floor is awash in putrid water; it smells like dung, and piles of garbage are everywhere and small metal cages hang on the walls on every conceivable open spot. Goblits of all shapes and sizes are running to and fro, chanting, eating, and going about the business goblins should.

The most notable aspect of this area-other than the dozens of goblits-is the overwhelming stench of urine and feces. The goblins are supposed to dump it outside, but often collect it here before doing so. There is little of value here, and the goblits will not bother anyone moving through the area, though they will watch with curiosity as it is a very rare occasion that they are visited. They will get out of the way of anyone moving through here and not contest anyone's actions.

GOBLITS x22 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10 and HP 2 each. Their primary attributes are none. If pressed to attack they can do so with a single claw for 1-2 damage. They carry nothing.)



Level 6

AREA 42A

There are eight small metal cages hanging from the bare, cold stonewalls in here. A large wooden curio at the west end of the room has several dozen small grotesque shrunk heads in it.

Eight goblins live in this room. There is 1–4 here. One of the goblits is a head shrinker. He shrinks the heads in a room on **Level 7, Area 70**. The cages are all open and each contain several rotten, torn, and flea-infested blankets and scraps of clothing. Dung is heaped upon the floor as well. The head shrinker is downstairs.

LEVEL SIX THE DONJON

AREA 43 STORE ROOM

This room is filled with boxes, crates, barrels, and slabs of meat hanging from hooks in the ceiling. Light spills out of the chamber to the north, as does the singing and laughing of high-pitched, annoying voices.

The goblits use this chamber to store food in. It is crowded and stacked end to end with foodstuffs. Several ladders can be found about the room that, affording the goblits access to those items at the tops of the stacks.

AREA 44 KITCHEN

This sweltering, smoke-filled room is cluttered with a dozen goblits cooking all manner of foods. A large oven and two long stoves cover two of the walls in here. Two tables, one used for food preparation and another for food collections, are overflowing with foodstuffs.

This is the lesser kitchen used to prepare foods for guests and others in the upper levels of the ziggurat. As with most goblitt activities and areas, it appears chaotic but is not actually the case. Any excitement here attracts the ogres in Area 45. There are 11 goblits in here.

GOBLITS (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10, HP 2 each. Their primary attributes are none. If pressed they attack with a single claw for 1–2 damage. They carry nothing.)

AREA 45 GUARDS

In this aperture are three massive, thickly muscled human-like men with gnarled faces and giant fangs in wide mouths. Each carries a spiked club and a sheet of metal strapped to his chest. They rise from a table heaped with steaming food, while several goblits scurry away.

These three ogres guard the rear entry to the ziggurat. They attack any who seem out of place.

OGRES x3 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d8, AC 17 and HP 28, 24 and 11. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry scale armor and spiked clubs.)

AREA 45A RAMP AND ENTRY

This corridor opens up to the north and a wide portal leads to the outside. Two large metal doors, partially open, are the only things blocking the way out.

The metal doors are guardian doors. Each has many identical murals and iconographs upon them, but both have unique graven faces in their center. When anyone passes these faces from the outside who has no business here, he will be questioned. The faces automatically suspect any other than goblits, ogres, ungern, and those in the special robes. If the faces' questions are not answered correctly and promptly, the faces sound an alarm, attracting the ogres in Area 45.

AREA 46 GUARDS' CHAMBER

A metal portcullis blocks this room. Beyond are several chairs around a table with a small cask upon it, some foodstuffs, and four hefty, well-armed humanoids playing a game with tiny stones. They are yelling at one another and deeply immersed in their game.

This is the guards' chamber. The ungern gather here before moving to their posts or just come here to play games, eat, or do any other activity they may find amusing. The ungern in here now are about to go to the top of the ziggurat and replace the guards in Area 1. Before leaving, though, they intend to finish their game of Dwarf Crusher. These guards only respond to a commotion in Area 45 if the din from that area is great indeed, so immersed are they in their game.

The alcove to the north contains weaponry: longbows, arrows, maces, ranseurs, broad swords, and battle-axes.

UNGERN x4 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16 and HP 13, 13, 10, 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1–2 or gore for 1–6+2 points of damage. They each carry a +1 chain coat, morningstar, longbow, dagger and 4–40gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

AREA 47 SMITHY

Behind the grate in front of this chamber is a large furnace and sundries associated with a smithy, including hammers, an anvil, workbench, several crates, and piles of wood.

The smithy is a fairly important place in the ziggurat, even though it is rarely used. The ungern smith is a master of his craft and creates armor of extraordinary strength and blades that are wickedly sharp and light. In addition to all the material used in a typical smithy, there are five crates of metal ingots from Aufstrag. These are very valuable, as this metal can be used by a master smith to make armor and weaponry that confers a +1 armor class to armor made of it or +1 to damage for weapons made from it. These ingots also have a bluish luster to them, which can be enhanced by smelting techniques. There are no finished pieces in the smithy at present, and beyond the ingots, little else of value.

AREA 48 GUARDS, CHAMBER

Metal grates surround this chamber with large open doors leading in and out of the room. The entire room is bathed in an eerie blue light. Within are racks of weaponry: bardiches, longswords, bows, as well as shields, helmets, and arm and leg greaves.

This area is for weapon storage and serves as a gathering point for the guards in time of conflict. No one is here at the moment. A blue

light emanates from the bardiches, all of which are made from the ore that glows blue. They each confer a +1 damage in combat.

UNGERN X3 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16, HP 11, 13, 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1–2 or gore for 1–6+2 points of damage. They each carry a +1 chain coat, morningstar, longbow, dagger, and 4–40gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

AREA 49 WOODWORKING ROOM

The area behind the bars has a large workbench covered in tools. There are piles of wood on the floor and leaning against the wall, tools piled on shelves, and planks of wood in the process of being hewn into smaller pieces.

This is the woodworking room. Primarily bows and arrows are made here, though occasionally other objects of use to the ungern are made as well. Often any tables, chairs, or beds are made in the town outside and brought here. There are dozens of types of tools here: hammers, files, planes, saws, nails, and other items that the characters may find of use. The woodworker is not presently in the facility. He does have a stash of finely made arrow shafts in a special box underneath the worktable. There are two-dozen arrow shafts made for short bows, and when fixed to arrow tips, they confer an extra 50 feet to the arrow's range.

AREA 50 FOYER

This is a preternaturally dark room. Flames flicker in sconces but cast little light upon the floor and walls. A broad statue of the Horned One, painted all in blue, dominates the south side of the room. This grinning beast sits upon a throne holding a scepter in each hand. A red glow from the torchlight masks the whole in an eerie, scabrous orange sheen.

This area has steps leading down from the secret chamber above (near **Level 7, Area 59** and **Area 56**, see map **Level 7, page 115**). There is also a statue of the Horned One on the wall to the south. It is a secret door that leads to a narrow set of steps going down. Opening the door is managed by pulling the scepter in the left hand of the statue downward. This opens a narrow panel in the throne portion of the statue. This secret door leads to a tunnel only three feet wide.

AREA 51 SERVANTS' ROOM

This spartan room has bare walls. Inside is a single table with five chairs around it and several against the wall. The table has the remains of a meal on it. One large metal lamp hangs from the wall, illuminating the entire room. Two thin, ragged orcs sit in here talking to a rather fat, ugly human.

This room is used by the servants of the priests for eating and lounging. Currently the orcs and human are arguing over a bet. The orcs have only daggers and serve the priests who stay in **Areas 53A–G**. They will not fight unless provoked, and then try to run away and warn their masters. The human, Gideous Filch, serves the priests likewise and is hoping to become a priest one day. He has some abilities. Gideous will not fight unless cornered. He carries no weapon though. He attempts to explain away his presence here and

even offers to convert if his life is threatened. If he can escape, he warns others in the complex of the characters' arrival.

ORCS X2 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 12, HP 5 and 4. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry daggers and 2–20gp in various coins.)

GIDEOUS FILCH (This lawful evil commoner's vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 10, HP 3. His primary attribute is wisdom. He carries a cudgel. He can cast two 0 level cleric spells.)

AREA 52 SERVANTS' CHAMBER

This room contains five wooden beds and a large cabinet. There is a sconce on the wall. It is fairly dirty and unkempt with a wide, full bedpan near the door.

Servants use this room. All the beds have been used and are in disarray. Some dishes are piled beneath an unused bed. The bureau contains three cloaks for servants, several pairs of shoes, some hats and two packs. The packs belong to the orcs from **Area 51**. They contain traveling equipment: a tinderbox, two pans, dried food goods, a small knife, 20 feet of cord, a hatchet, and two empty water flasks.

AREA 53 FOYER AND PRIESTS' QUARTERS

The stairs descend into a narrow chamber with several hallways leading off from it. Two burly ungern warriors are in here sitting at a table. They stand and reach for their swords. The walls are plastered and painted in a blue–green shade, with images of priests marching towards a great fortress of spiraling towers.

The two ungern guards will raise an alarm and attack any but priests who enter this area. The guards from **Area 48** will come to investigate. Should anyone dressed in priestly garments enter, they will be ignored, as will those moving with him. If the trap has been set off in **Area 36**, these guards will have gone up to investigate. The lever for the trap mechanism in **Area 36** is located here. A metal rod is placed above the table. Pulling it down resets the trap in **Area 36**.

AREA 53A–G

Each of these rooms is reserved for priests or special guests. Each room is paneled in a dark pine and, unless otherwise noted, has two bunk beds, a table, two chairs, and a washbasin within it. The rooms also contain the personal items of those who are staying there.

AREA 53A

This room is unlocked and empty other than the furniture mentioned above.

AREA 53B

The door to this room is locked. The current occupant is on **Level 7, Area 63A** being tortured.

The door opens into a rank room. A small pool of blood is on the floor. One of the beds is unmade and the table is overturned. A trunk, opened and obviously ransacked, has been thrown against a wall. Clothes and small personal items are scattered about the room.

One of the merchants who delivers silk to Ludensheim, Martin Hunderd, was invited to stay here. Little did he know the Witch Queen believes that he was giving out information about the ziggurat, so she has him brought here to be tortured and executed. He is currently on Level 7. Going through the personal items, the characters' recover a comb, some make-up sticks, a large skeleton key with the Number 18 engraved upon it, and a writ with an order for 20 bolts of silk. The key is to Martin Hunderd's house in Ludensheim.

AREA 53C

The door to this room is unlocked and is empty other than furniture.

AREA 53D

This door is closed, and from beyond, a muffled humming can be heard. A large gold embossed horn hangs above the doorframe. The room beyond is bare, except for a single male in a loincloth sitting on a black bearskin rug humming. A candle and a bowl rest on the floor to his right.

This priest is communing with the vestiges of Unklar's spirit and has been for some time. Goblitts bring him enough food and water to stay alive. The priest does not initially recognize any intruders as hostile since he is busy. However, should anyone disturb him, like entering the room and doing anything other than grabbing the bowl, he angrily comes out of his trance and attacks whomever disturbed him.

The horn above the door is not actually gold embossed. It is, rather, gold-painted embossing and is used to denote a priest is busy. There is nothing else of interest in the room.

MONK (This lawful evil, human, 6th level monk's vital stats are HP 27 and AC 14. His primary attributes are constitution, strength, and dexterity. His significant attribute is dexterity 15. He carries nothing. Refer to the Castles & Crusades Players Handbook for a full list of his abilities.)

AREA 53E

The door to this room is slightly ajar, and firelight spills out from around the frame. Within, several guttural voices can be heard talking.

Two orc priests are putting on robes for a meeting with the Witch Queen. These orc priests are from Festung Akt and have traveled here to consult with the Witch Queen about the movement of troops from there to here. They leave the room only if there is a fight in the hallway or in one of the other nearby chambers. Otherwise, they are unconcerned with the arrival and movement of anyone in the ziggurat. However, if any large combat occurs, they will aid the Witch Queen's forces.

They each carry robes with red lapels. Each also has a trunk with personal items within. The first trunk has robes, clothing, and other items of that nature; the second trunk contains 200 imperial gold coins, a small silver chalice worth 100gp, several sheaves of paper describing the troops to be sent here from Festung Akt, a ceremonial wand with two horns at one end, incense sticks, and

a black glass orb in a velvet bag. Other than the orb, everything in here is meant for the Witch Queen. There is a map amongst the sheaves of paper, showing the location of Festung Akt and the route of travel for troops.

The orb is a magical item. When removed from the bag, a silvery symbol makes itself apparent within. It is the symbol for the god of healing. Lifting the orb up and intoning the name of the god of healing causes all within 25 feet of the orb to heal 2–16 hit points—friend and foe alike. It can be used twice a day.

ORC PRIESTS x2 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD2d6, AC 12, HP 9 and 5. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry leather armor and staffs. They can cast the following number of cleric spells: 0: 3–0, and 1st–2.)

AREA 53F

This room is unlocked and empty other than furniture.

AREA 53G

The door to this room is locked. A groaning sound comes from within.

This room contains a lone priest. He sits upon one of the beds groaning, as he has lost his flute (see Level 2, Area 5). This priest is difficult to arouse, so distraught is he at having lost his flute; he has come here to be alone. Several sheaves of sheet music are on the floor (reference Level 2 Area 5).

PRIEST (This 2nd level, lawful evil, human, cleric's vital stats are AC 12, HP 12. His primary attributes are intelligence, wisdom, and constitution. He can cast clerical spells but has none memorized. He has leather armor, a staff, and 18gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

AREA 54 FOYER AND GUESTS' QUARTERS

This corridor is paneled in dark wood. There are seven doors in the corridor. Draped between each is a small tapestry, each sewn in a checkerboard pattern of blue and red squares.

The tapestry at the end of the hallway covering the concealed door is magical. The Witch Queen can peer through it from another tapestry in her room (Level 7, Area 75). She can also send small items or creatures through it. Whenever the characters are in this corridor, there is a 1 in 20 chance the Witch Queen is looking through it. If she sees the characters, she raises the alarm and sends something through the tapestry to molest the party. Refer to Area 75 for the available pets she can send through.

AREA 54A

Other than furnishings, this room is empty.

AREA 54B

There is a large oaken door here. This room is well furnished. There is a four-poster bed, a desk with one drawer, a pedestal with a washbasin on it, a bureau, and a large plush chair. The paneled walls are draped in tapestries and a large rug is on the floor.

No one occupies this room at the moment. Several cloaks are in the bureau. The pedestal is an intelligent mimic. It will note, after some time and especially if the characters converse a lot, that they do not belong here. The mimic is cursed and is usually tasked with killing the room's occupant. However, it is of no particular bent to do so with the characters. The mimic wants to leave. It will make its wishes known.

The mimic has little to bargain with, as it has been in here a long time and cannot even remember what the rest of the ziggurat looks like. It does know there is a secret door on the far wall and how to open it. It also knows that the Witch Queen's lieutenant carries a rod that, if broken, will release it from its curse. Should the characters undertake to please the mimic and break the rod, it will also reveal a secret panel in the floor underneath the bureau. In a small compartment is a necklace worn by a near permanent occupant many years ago. It is an *amulet of protection against poison* allowing a +3 to all saving throws versus poison.

If pressed, of course, the mimic will defend itself.

MIMIC (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 7d8, AC 15, HP 35. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a slam attack for 3d4 points of damage. It has darkvision 60 feet, the ability to crush an opponent, and can mimic shape. Refer to the *Monsters & Treasure* book for details.)

AREA 54C

A large oaken door rests securely in place here. This room is cluttered with junk. There is a four-poster bed piled high with towels, blankets and clothing. A desk is pushed up against a wall and cluttered with serving dishes, plates, flatware, and scraps of food. A pedestal has been knocked over, and a cracked washbasin lies nearby. A bureau with open doors is piled high with clothing. Tapestries line every wall except the north, where that tapestry lies in a heap on the floor.

The goblitts use this room to pile cleaning material, plates and junk from other guest rooms. This room is dusty and messy. The secret door on the far wall is easy to note since the goblitts have not taken care of it. All checks to locate it are made at a +2.

AREA 54D

This room is empty except for furniture.

AREA 54E

Many candles, smoldering and smoking with sputtering green flames, adorn the floor and furniture in this room. A bed, bureau, chest, several stools, a chair, and a table all have candles perched on them casting a greenish tint to the entire room. Above, smoke has gathered in a thick black blanket, collecting faster than the flues can carry it away.

An emissary from Festung Akt, the priestess Kasanadra stays here but is not here at the moment. This priestess has brought a message from her lord of Festung Akt. The Witch Queen is to submit to him and follow his will, or else he shall open the holes of the spider eaters and send her way.

Kasanadra has stored several valuable items in this room while she is speaking with the Witch Queen. There is a small wooden trunk under

the bed. It is only 12 inches high and 16 inches long. A series of five small locks run down its front and back, although there is no telling which side is the front and which is the rear. Each conceals a hinge, and when all the locks have been successfully picked, the trunk's lid snaps open in the middle of the top. Each lock is a CL 2. The interior of the lid is lined with fairly thick glass tubes containing acid. If the chest is hurled or broken open, the tubes will break and destroy everything in the trunk as well as a good portion of the trunk itself.

The trunk is designed so that it takes time to open. And time is deadly in this room. The thick black cloud above is really a living entity that can sense those in the room. It is attuned to the trunk and its one purpose is to guard it. It is not the best of guards (being made up of little more than smoke), and it takes time for it to realize that someone is messing with the trunk. There is a word that stops it from meddling-Ardanasak-(Kasanadra reversed). Each time a lock is picked (with the key or not), the creature makes an intelligence check. If it succeeds, it attacks. Each time a lock is picked after the first, it receives a +1 to this check.

Within the trunk are several letters and scrolls, a ring, three potions, 25pp, and, of course, the vials of acid. The letters are to the Witch Queen and outline the demands of the lord at Festung Akt. There are three magical scrolls. The first has *invisibility*, *lightning bolt*, and *freezing rain* on it. The second has *acid arrow* on it. The third has *magic missile*, *shield*, and *shrink* on it. The ring has a raised portion emblazoned with a small arrow. This ring can be used to open the postern entry to Festung Akt. The potions are *cure serious wounds* (4 droughts), *restore* (1 drought) and *gaseous form* (3 droughts).

SMOKE GUARDIAN (This neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16 and HP 11. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks by enveloping the victim in coils and tendrils of blackish smoke and choking them. See Appendix A for details.)

AREA 54F

This room smells rank. It contains a large bed piled high with sheets and pillows, a broad desk with two drawers, a bureau, a trunk, and a large sofa chair facing the far wall, its back to the door. Beside this is a small table. As you watch, you see a clawed, green hand reaching out to the table and grab a crystal glass off of it. Then you hear the filthy, gravelly voice of a humanoid speak.

Gah'dru'nuk, an orc shaman, is staying here. The Witch Queen intends to kill him and he knows it, so Gah'dru'nuk is waiting for his assassin in front of the secret door, a door he knows is there. When he speaks, he uses the Dark Tongue, and unless anyone speaks it, Gah'dru'nuk cannot be understood. He says, "So little assassin, you have come to face me like a War Chief?"

Once Gah'dru'nuk realizes that the characters are not his assassins . . . well, they may very well be his killers, but never-the-less . . . he senses an opportunity. He does not attack nor challenge the characters and will even go so far as to supplicate himself to stop from being killed. He tells the characters he is to be killed by the Witch Queen and would rather see her dead and will help the characters in their quest to kill her if they promise to spare him. He tells the characters much about the ziggurat and agrees to show them around and get them past guards if possible.

Gah'dru'nuk is actually using this as an opportunity to get back in the Witch Queen's favor. He seeks to lead the party into a trap. Ideally, he will lead them into the conference hall below (Level 7, Area 66), but at least to the guard rooms where the Witch Queen's cohorts may be (Area 59). Once in either locale, Gah'dru'nuk proceeds to attack the party, screaming and prancing like a maniac all the while.

This room contains little of value. Gah'dru'nuk has prepared himself for battle, so carries a mace and wears his chain shirt. In his trunk, which he suspects will never leave this place, Gah'dru'nuk has left his traveling clothes and gear as well as a small silver statue of some demonic creature worth 100gp, a gold brooch worth 50gp, and a silk cape. He has moved the pedestal that sat in the middle of the room in front of the secret door.

GAH'DRU'NUK (This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, AC 15, and HP 16. Its primary attributes are mental. He carries a +2 mace, chain shirt, and 100gp worth of jewelry. He can cast spells as a 3rd level cleric.)

AREA 54G

This room is empty except for furniture covered in sheets and dust. This room is used as an access by the Witch Queen and goblitts, so never has any guests in it.

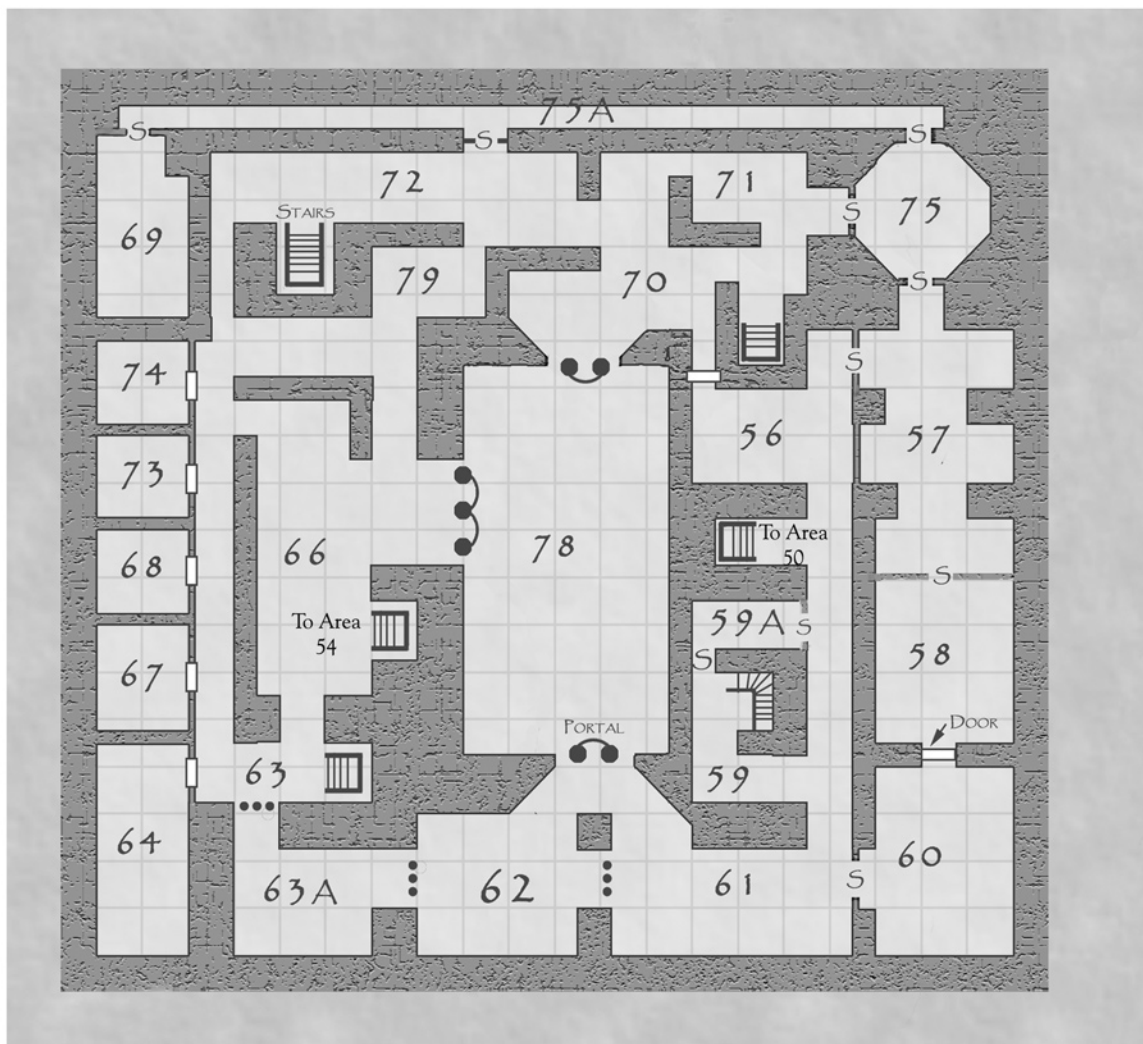
AREA 55 GUARDS' ACCESS TO PLATFORM

The cracked masonry of a spiral staircase dominates this small alcove. The stairs and floor are littered with leaves and twigs and other detritus of the forest. The stairs ascend only a small way to a wooden hatchway with two handles on it above. Midway up the staircase is a metal lever sticking out of the wall.

These stairs lead up to the platform on Level 5. One must release the lever locking them in place to open them. Pulling on the lever unlocks the mechanism holding the door in place. Then one just pushes up and the doors swing out, revealing sunlight or moonlight depending on the time of day.

LEVEL 7 THE TEMPLE

Deep within the ziggurat lives a foul and ancient beast, what the inhabitants call the Crawler Beneath. The Crawler Beneath is actually an Erder Wurm, a creature from the Klarglich in Aufstrag, those pits of woe where so many creatures were fashioned by the Horned God at the height of his power. This creature may be encountered at any time. It wanders this level and eats whatever it finds whenever it is hungry. Because the goblitts feverishly supply it with heaps of food, it is generally satisfied. Through many years



Level 7

of experience, it has learned not to molest the ungern, orge priests, and Witch Queen. However, the smell of fresh and new flesh to eat (halfling, elf or dwarf) may excite it. For every turn spent on this level, a wandering monster check should be made. Use a d12, and on a roll of 1, the Crawler Beneath is encountered.

THE CRAWLER BENEATH, ERDER WRYM (*This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d10, AC 18/12, HP 36. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 2 claws for 1d6 each and a bite for 3d4 points of damage. The erder wyrm is able to attack with its deafening roar. For complete details refer to Appendix A.*)

The Crawler Beneath: This creature is a slithering beast that crawls around the bowels of the ziggurat eating whatever it can. It never molests the Witch Queen, the ungern, trolls, or ogres. It sometimes eats a goblitt and occasionally eats a visiting guest-though the Witch Queen attempts to prevent this. The Witch Queen controls the crawler like a well-trained dog. She feeds it prisoners or slaves and makes sure it does not cause too much trouble, but otherwise allows it to roam. There is a 2 in 10 chance during each turn of the first hour the characters are down here that they encounter the crawler. This increases to 4 in 10 during the second hour, 6 in 10 the third, etc., until the crawler is encountered.

If the creature is embattled and roars, it will only alert the Witch Queen on a 1 in 4, as she often hears the beast as it attacks and eats goblitts and other creatures.

AREA 56 ENTRY CORRIDOR TO WITCH QUEEN'S ROOM

Upon descending the steps, one is greeted by frosty air. This room is very cold. The walls are plastered with red outlining the slightly blue-gray icy figures carved in relief onto the many panels of this room.

This room is very cold, and the longer one stays in here, the colder they become. For each minute, the temperature drops one degree. The current temperature is 35 degrees Fahrenheit. The characters should be dressed for this weather, or begin to suffer the results: loss of energy, shivering, etc. Once the temperature reaches freezing, the character's attributes are affected in the following manner. These effects last for the equivalent amount of time spent in the room, and the attribute scores return at the rate they were lost. The temperature change is for the first round only. The rate is halved each round until one degree is reached.

Elf	every 20° change, -1 each physical attribute
Dwarf	every 15° change, -1 each physical attribute and intelligence
Human	every 5° change, -1 each physical attribute and intelligence
Halfling	every 10° change, -1 each physical attribute and wisdom
Gnome	every 10° change, -1 each physical attribute and wisdom
Half-Orc	every 10° change, -1 each physical and mental attributes
Half-Elf	every 5° change, -1 each physical attribute.

The icy frescoes are of various beasts and animals, beautifully rendered and fascinating in their detail. There are unicorns, dragons, gazelle, and others as well. The reliefs are magically enchanted and

even looking at them momentarily allows this magic to work. The person staring at it must make a charisma save at challenge class 3 or be charmed. The charm does nothing more than cause the character to remain looking at the carving for 1-60 minutes.

The secret door is located behind the only fresco that does not have the capacity to charm those who look at it.

AREA 57 ANNEX AND TEMPLE

This eerie room has blue and red multicolored tiles arranged in a spiral pattern. Spirals emanate from each alcove and center on one in the middle of the room where a pedestal with a small golden statue sits. There are six other pedestals besides this one, one in each cardinal direction away from the central one and in each alcove. On these four pedestals are ivory figurines of snakes in various poses. The walls have a light blue plaster on them with snake images all over them while the ceiling is adorned with nothing more than tiny limestone stalactites.

If the characters do not bother anything in this room, nothing will happen. However, should anything be touched and the proper prayers not said (something which would be impossible for the characters to know), much ill will befall them. The room reeks of evil and a paladin will note it without even detecting evil. The statue in the center of the room is that of Unklar, while the rest are of those muses of pain and hatred, the Four Vipers.

If the golden statue is touched and the proper intonation not made, its mouth opens and a fine blue frosty mist comes out. It is nothing more than very cold air. It continues to emit this cold air until stopped by an incantation. The room is 60 degrees Fahrenheit when the characters enter. The temperature drops by 10 degrees per round until it reaches -20 degrees. The characters must escape the room or suffer the below listed consequences. Removing this statue, as in lifting it off the pedestal, causes the holder to turn to ice unless a constitution save is made at challenge level 5.

Temporary loss of 1 point of dexterity per round after the fifth round.

Temporary loss of 1 point of constitution per round after the fifth round.

Loss of 1d4 hit points per round after the temperature hits 0 degrees.

Liquids begin freezing.

Metal becomes brittle.

If any of the statues of the vipers are touched without the proper intonations, 1-6 asps form from the images on the walls and fall to the floor in seek of prey. Should they be removed, 10-60 asps come falling from the walls in search of those who took the statues. They also act as loadstones, attracting snakes of all types to the characters for the remainder of their life until a remove curse is cast upon them.

ASPS (*These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 13, HP 2. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack for a bite that does no damage other than type 1 poison. Refer to the Monsters & Treasure book for the poison's effects.*)

AREA 58 WITCH QUEEN'S RECEPTION

This sumptuous room is brightly lit by blue flames leaping out of four large brass braziers located in the corners of each room. The floor is covered in a thick green rug and mounds of sumptuous pillows lie scattered all about it. Bottles and glasses sit near the largest pillow, and a giant golden hookah sits in the middle of it all.

This is the Witch Queen's reception area. She talks to her servants, the ungern guard, and visitors in here. The room is a dangerous place to be, as the Witch Queen has made it one in which her powers are amplified. The green carpet can, upon command of the Witch Queen, entangle any standing on it in the same manner as the 5th level druid's *entangle* spell. The hookah has eight tubes. It can be used as a pipe or the Witch Queen can use it as a weapon. Upon command, the hookah comes to life. The character's can take and use the rug and hookah, but they must learn the proper command words. The braziers contain a magical fluid that the Witch Queen can grab hold of and throw while still afire with the blue flames. These act as tiny *fireballs* and deliver 1d4 points of damage.

AREA 59 GUARD CHAMBER

Two massively muscled creatures sit in here. Their orange skin, covered in a viscous ichor, and fanged mouths in a flat face, bemoan death. Each sits on a large wooden stool, and they carry broad-bladed axes. They furrow their brows as anyone enters and smile menacingly and without the comfort of a good conversation. A heap of bones and rotted meats are piled along the eastern wall.

Two large trolls are always on guard in here; they protect the entry to the Witch Queen's reception room.

TROLL x2 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 6d8, AC 16, and HP 40. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two claws for 1–4 and a bite for 1–6 points of damage or by weapon type. In addition to their axes, the trolls carry a short, thick-bladed scimitar, which causes 1–10 damage.)

AREA 59A GUARDS' QUARTERS

Three plain wooden beds are lined against the west wall. Pegs line the east wall and a weapons rack is located on the south wall.

There are always 1–3 ungern guards located in this cramped space. Ostensibly, they are here to aid the trolls in Area 59, but in reality, they are here to guard the ungern priest who lives in Area 60, and go immediately to the secret door in front of Area 60 at the first sign of trouble. The secret doors to this room are accessed by pulling down on a bardiche in the weapons rack in Area 59. The doors then swing open. If there is any commotion in Area 59 or 61, one ungern in here goes to warn the priest, while the others investigate or help the trolls.

UNGERN x3 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16, HP 15, 14, 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1–2 damage or gore for 1–6+2 damage. They each carry a +1 chain coat, morningstar, longbow, dagger, and 4–40gp worth of jewelry and coin. Each of these ungern wears a broach of protection against arcane magic that allows them a +2 saving throw versus any arcane spell use.)



AREA 60 QUARTERS

This smoky, cramped room contains a single large wooden chair, a stone altar, a table with several bowls on it, a large wooden bed covered in old blankets, and a trunk. The walls are plastered blue and are painted with murals of the Horned One and many followers performing horrific acts of sacrifice. A small bowl in front of the altar contains smoking incense balls.

This room houses the priest of the guard, and unless he is alerted to the presence of strangers in the edifice, he will be here when the characters arrive. Or if battle elsewhere has gone poorly, the priest returns here to recoup. This room, as with many in the complex, is Spartan. The altar is a simple stone affair. It is carved in the shape of the Horned One with his hands held aloft. In his hands is a portion of a horn, one-half a real horn, to be precise. It emanates a powerful magic, though is useless without its remaining parts (one part of which was located in the Vargolg in *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*, form ore information refer to page 164 below). One of the bowls on the table contains blood, while the other contains water. A pile of incense balls lies between the bowls.

The trunk contains the personal belongings of the priest. It is magically locked, and unless the command word is spoken ("close" in the Dark Tongue, while "open" closes the trunk and sets the trap) when one attempts to open it, a curse may befall all within 10 feet of the trunk. A charisma save at challenge class 4 must be made to avoid the effects of the curse. The curse causes the afflicted to lose any desire for others' belongings—no matter whose belongings, be it and orc's pantaloons or a dragon's horde. The afflicted simply will not take material goods that belong to others. The trunk can be removed from the dungeon and kept. It has, over its centuries of use, turned many a dishonest man honest.

In addition to clothing and other personal items, the trunk contains 100pp, a golden goblet worth 500gp, a pearl ring worth 100gp, seven scrolls in the Dark Tongue (*protection from good, cause fear, darkness, lesser restoration, glyph of warding x2, restoration*) and an ivory baton with a gold tip. The latter item is important, as it is a sign and symbol power. Those who carry it are accorded a great deal of respect by servants of Unklar. If the characters continue with this adventure in *Usurpers of the Fell Axe*, this baton allows the carrier of it unhindered access to the Temple in Filf.

UNGERN PRIEST (*This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, AC 15, HP 17. His primary attributes are mental. He can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1–2 damage or gore for 1–6+2 damage. He carries chain coat, a morningstar, and 120gp worth of jewelry and coin. He can cast the following number of druid spells: 0–3, 1st – 2, 3rd – 1.*)

AREA 61 RECEPTION HALL

Large tapestries, with scenes of huge armies being led by a beast of unimaginable terror, cover all the walls in this room. A massive, octagonal, oaken table dominates its center. Four bright braziers are located in each corner. The floor is covered in several carpets. There are no chairs and the table is clear.

This room is empty and has nothing of interest in it other than a

gold coin stuck underneath one of the legs to the table. The coin is ancient and has been used to prop up the leg to even out the table's wobble. It is worth 20gp in weight but 1000gp as a collector's item.

AREA 62 GUARDS' QUARTERS

Thick metal bars with doors built into them enclose the entries to this room. Within are a half-a-dozen wooden bunk beds with blankets and other odds and ends piled on them. A weapons rack, bristling with axes, bardiches, swords, and bows sits in the center of the room. The floor is covered in filth that reeks like a cesspit. Smoldering sconces light the room in a dark orange.

This is the guards' room. There may or may not be any guards here depending on the characters' actions and whether or not they have gone on to other parts of the complex. If none have been called to duty, there are 3–6 ungern guards in here. There is a 25% chance that any will not be wearing any armor but weapons will be close by. There is no treasure to speak of in this room excepting the armor and weapons and the items carried with the ungern.

UNGERN x3–6 (*These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16, HP 13, 13, 10, 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1–2 damage or gore for 1–6+2 damage. They each carry a +1 chain coat, morningstar, longbow, dagger, and 4–40gp worth of jewelry and coin.*)

AREA 63 HALL

This ominous room has several exits that are covered in bars with thick metal padlocks on them. The floor is greasy with filth of some nature mixed with water dripping from the ceiling. A table sits in the alcove. It is piled with chains, locks, manacles, ropes and a variety of padlocks and a box of keys. The wall to the east has a large mural of prisoners being brought before a tribunal.

The ungern use this room to prep prisoners and keep an eye on them—they are usually in 63A. The concealed door in the alcove is not concealed from this side. It is plain to see once one looks in the alcove.

63A PRISON

This nasty room is covered in filth. The bare walls are scorched and have chains and manacles hanging from them. One bruised and scarred person, covered in filth and blood, is chained against the far wall.

This is a prison. Martin Hunderd is the only person in here at the moment, but this is the perfect place for the Castle Keeper to have a few prisoners chained up to replace those party members who may have been killed.

Martin Hunderd is a merchant from Ludensheim who was beguiled by his superior and once worked for the Witch Queen. He is no longer beguiled and sits here bloodied and bruised on the verge of death. If he is revived, he will help the party as best he can and beg to be returned to Ludensheim. He retains little memory of the events that have occurred during his ensorcelment, but can impart some information, such as his superior's name, etc. He has no memory of how he got here or what happened from the moment he was ensorcelled.

MARTIN HUNDERED (*This neutral good human commoner whose vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 10, HP 1. His primary attribute is intelligence.*)

AREA 64 SCRIVENER'S ROOM

This is a dark-paneled, though flimsy looking door. This is a large wood-paneled chamber, somewhat messy with a wide bed in it, three desks, a bureau, two trunks, a thick rug in its center, and several lamps burning brightly hanging from the walls. The desks are heaped with papers, quills, inkpots, and models of various contraptions as well as miniature temples, towers, and forts.

The scrivener will be in here if he escaped from upstairs or was not in the library (Area 35). This room is fairly messy and unkempt. The desks are essentially full of personal papers, diaries, and missives, though mostly drawings and designs for temples, forts, siege machinery, and the like. The drawings will fetch quite a sum to those who value such things. From 100–1000gp will be offered for eight of the drawings. These show how to increase the range of a ballista, the accuracy of a trebuchet, the strength of a castle wall, and increase the pounds of force delivered by a battering ram and similar things. The models are useful, though not necessary for the correct making of these implements. They will add 10% on to the offer mentioned previously. Otherwise, the desks simply have quills and inks on them.

One of the trunks has clothing within. The other trunk is locked and contains various objects valuable to the scrivener. Everything is neatly and fastidiously arranged in this trunk. A small model of a trebuchet and parchment is in here. Following the instructions on the plan will produce a trebuchet with 15% more power, range and accuracy than normal. The plans are worth up to 3000gp. There is a stack of letters containing innocuous meanderings and observations about the environment around the ziggurat. There is a small wooden box with 12 rubies in it worth 10–100gp each. There is a lock of silken white hair about one foot long. This was taken from a unicorn's mane many years ago and is very, very valuable. The rarity of unicorns is known to all, and the fact that many died in the cooking of Unklar's kitchens in Auftrag, makes this lock of hair even more rare. The hair is worth about 500gp. It can also be woven together to make a bowstring. The string is unbreakable and imparts a magical quality to the bow, giving it a +1 to hit. In a small bag there are 22 platinum imperial crowns in here also, each worth 20gp. A monocle with a gold rim lies on top of the wooden box. This monocle is magical and allows the person who places it in their eye to translate anything into a language intelligible to the reader.

The remainder of the stuff in the room is rather mundane other than the two lamps. The lamps are essentially ever burning, as they contain tiny fire elementals. Close examination of the lamps reveals that they are covered in magical scrawls and pentagrams. Opening the lamps releases angry fire elementals that will attack whomever is near.

FIRE ELEMENTALS x2 (*These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD2d8, AC 15, HP 9 and 16. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with slam for 1d4 damage and burn 1d4 damage. They possess all the properties of a fire elemental as presented in Monsters & Treasure.*)

AREA 65 HALL

This long, narrow hallway is lined with many doors on its south side. The walls are bare, and each footstep echoes ominously.

Often there are several goblitts sleeping in this hallway, ready to run errands for any who come by. There is a 75% chance for 3–12 goblitts in here.

GOBLITTs (*These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10, HP 2 each. Their primary attributes are none. If pressed to attack, they can do so with a single claw for 1–2 damage. They carry nothing.*)

AREA 66 HALL

Three giant wolves range the center of this broad chamber. They glare menacingly and begin to growl. The hallway is otherwise plastered and painted a brilliant blue and red. On the south wall is a mural of 13 females dressed in black robes ascending an edifice much like the ziggurat at the top of which sits a horned beast-Unklar.

The wolves are actually worg guards. They can sniff out those of good alignment, and unless the characters are wearing robes of some sort or are attended by a resident of some rank, the worgs attack. If they attack, the noise likely awakens the rest of the area (especially those nearby) of intruders.

WORGs x3 (*These neutral evil creatures' vital stats are HD 4d8, AC 14, HP 28, 20 and 19. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a bite for 2–8 damage and are able to pull down opponents.*)

AREA 67 PRIEST'S CHAMBER

Here is a large oaken door strapped with iron plates with a large keyhole. The room beyond is smoky and Spartan with but a cot, small table, bearskin rug, mirror, chair, and a bureau. The walls are plastered blue. A small niche is set into the south wall with an ivory statuette in it. On the floor in front of this is a bowl with smoldering incense balls in it. A lantern hangs from a metal rod in the wall. The table has a candlestick and an opened scroll. The priest who resides in this room, Nadlus Ded, is very a severe person, hence the Spartan nature of the room.

The bureau contains clothing and vestments for a high priest. They are well kept and clean. There is an upper shelf in the bureau upon which is a mace, large belt, chain shirt, iron metal wrist bands, and two vials. The mace is ornate and the metal flange glows blue. It delivers an extra two points of damage when it hits. The vials contain potions that heal 1d8 points of damage when consumed. There is one drink in each. The iron wristbands, when worn, create a shimmering sheen of ice over the wearer. This ice shield can absorb 20 hit points of damage before breaking in 4 hit point increments (it can absorb a maximum of 4 hit points per round). It takes 24 hours for the iron bands to regain this power once all 20 hit points are absorbed. Nadlus will be wearing these items if he has forewarning of the characters' presence and expects battle.

The scroll on the desk is a series of prayers Nadlus is memorizing. They are to the Horned One, Unklar.

NADLUS DED (He is a lawful evil, human, 5th level cleric whose vital stats are AC 10, HP 21. His primary attributes are wisdom, strength, and intelligence. His significant attribute is strength 15. He carries nothing at the moment, but in case of battle, will dress and carry the items mentioned above.)

AREA 68 PRIEST'S CHAMBER

No one lives in this room at the moment, and it is completely empty.

AREA 69 TELEPORTATION ROOM

The secret door to this room is exceedingly difficult to locate. All searches are conducted at, challenge level 8.

The door opens onto a long, narrow room. Blue and white ceramic tiles, dusty and worn with age, adorn the floor. The walls are plastered and painted a dark orange with a zigzagging blue pattern across them. At the far end of the room is a plush white carpet upon which sits a small golden bowl as well as a massive mirror encased in a silver frame.

This room contains the mirror through which the Witch Queen contacts several of her cohorts in Ludensheim, the Slag Heap, and Festung Akt. The room itself is a danger to enter. The pattern of zigzagging blue lines on the wall casts a *confusion* spell on any who enter the room and fail a wisdom saving throw (CL 5).

The tiles upon the floor are likewise potentially dangerous. Anyone who enters the room without intoning Unklar's name comes under the effects of the tiles. With each step, the character must roll a d6. A 1–3 indicates a blue tile has been stepped on, while a 4–6 indicates a white tile has been stepped upon. Stepping on a blue tile causes the character to slip as if on ice if a successful dexterity saving throw is not made. The white tiles cause a jolt of frost, causing 1–2 points of damage, with a successful constitution save negating that.

Mirror of the Witch Queen: The mirror is one of 12 created in the pits of Aufstrag by Nulak-kiz-din in ages past. They are oval shaped, tall, narrow, and framed in ornately carved cherry.

Each mirror is a communication device allowing the users to speak and hear as if in the same room. Powerful creatures can cast spells through them as well as walk through them. Though the latter can end in death as often as not.

Fresh blood must be sprinkled on it to activate it. A minimum of 5hp of damage must be caused to the person spilling blood on it. At the same time one is spilling the blood, the incantation writ upon the frame must be intoned. Once this is done, the mirror can be peered through to any other mirror.

Spellcasters of 10th level or higher can cast spells through them with a successful intelligence check. Any 15th level or higher hit dice creature can move through them with a successful intelligence check (the Witch Queen can move through the mirror with a check). Failure means instant death.

If the Witch Queen has recently passed through the mirror, she will place a curtain over the receiving mirror so that the characters see nothing. If she has not and the characters peer through it, they will see a massive bare-stoned walled room with a statue of the

Horned One sitting prominently in the middle of it. This looks into the mirror room of Festung Akt.

AREA 70 HEAD SHRINKING CHAMBER

This foul smelling alcove has several tables in it with vials and jars of liquids and a few heads on them. The walls are adorned with cutting implements, ropes, cords and many strange looking metal devices. A large pot sits in the middle of the room over a low flame.

This alcove is where heads are shrunk. Currently, the pot is bubbling and holds six heads being boiled down in some nasty frothy liquid.

AREA 71 GOBLITT CHIEF'S CHAMBER

A ragged tapestry covers a portal that opens onto a small chamber. Within is a large bed of hay with many rotting blankets and pillows thrown upon it. The walls are adorned with many nails and spikes from which hang a variety of lamps, utensils, tools, cloaks and some weaponry. A pile of dirty plates and spoiled food with roaches and spiders crawling on it sits in one corner.

The goblitt chief is almost always with or near the Witch Queen and rarely in this room. There is little of value in here except for a few items the goblitt has taken and hidden away over the years. These are buried in his bed in a small sack. It will take a careful examination of the bed, approximately 10 rounds, to locate the sack.

It contains a small wooden bottle with a rune of water engraved upon it. A silver plate worth 10gp, a spoon, a fork, a knife of cutting, a gem worth 100gp, and a necklace worth 50gp. The wooden bottle is magical, and by simply saying "water" while holding it up, causes it to fill with one quart of water. This can only be done once every six hours. The spoon, by all appearances a plain wooden item, nevertheless, is magical. The word "soup" is engraved upon it, but this engraving is so covered in grime and worn that it is barely visible. By saying 'soup' while the spoon is in a bowl, it creates one quart of a thick, frothy stew.

GOBLITT CHIEF (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d4, AC 12 and HP 10. Its primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a short sword for 1–6 damage.)

AREA 72 HALL

This broad hallway is littered with bones and huge piles of fecal matter. Unlike much of the rest of the edifice, there are no murals on these bare stone walls but many scratch marks.

This is where the Crawler Beneath eats most of its meals. If the Crawler has not been encountered by this point, it will be encountered in here.

AREA 73 STOREROOM

A dark oaken door with a thick padlock confronts you. The door opens into a dark, cramped room filled with boxes, crates, baskets, and ceramic jugs piled atop one another and on shelves.

This storeroom contains, for the most part, mundane material used for the upkeep of the complex. There are many tools (chisels, hammers,

cut nails, pitons, etc.), building material (hinges, sconces, cut nails, etc.) and supplies (jugs, jars, and other containers). Many of the items in here may be of use the characters, but little is of any value.

AREA 74 STOREROOM

The door to this room is unlocked and partially open. It contains many boxes, crates, sacks, piles of food such as potatoes and carrots.

This room has some dried foods in and nothing else.

AREA 75 WITCH QUEEN'S CHAMBER

Before you is a magnificently adorned octagonal bedroom. The blue plastered walls and red ceiling highlight a raised stone platform in the room's center. This is framed on all sides by red diaphanous curtains and piled high with silken pillows and throws. The floor is laid with thick white ox-skin rugs. Some the walls have floor-to-ceiling shelves filled with books, papers, small chests, jars, vials, personal items, clothing, blankets, and all manner of interesting items; other facets have large tapestries hanging from them depicting various animals. The most interesting of all though are the cages. There are a dozen or more small cages in the room with exotic animals in them—a colorful parrot, a pot-bellied lizard, screeching ferrets, a multi-colored toad, albino rats, and a slithering green snake.

This is the Witch Queen's personal chamber. If she is not in the great hall, she will most likely be in here. The pets will all start screeching and making noise as soon as anyone enters the room. Four are familiars of the Witch Queen (parrot, toad, pot-bellied lizard, and one of the albino rats). The one activated as a current familiar will be with the Witch Queen (her favorite for the complex is the toad) and not in the room.

The tapestries each depict one of the familiars. They are magically attached to the familiars such that they, the familiars, come from the tapestry and not the wild. Also, the tapestry in Area 54 is a complementary tapestry, whereby any familiar summoned from one of these tapestries can travel through its originating tapestry into the compliment tapestry. When holding a familiar in front of a complementary tapestry, she can see through the tapestry in room 54. These tapestries can be taken and familiars summoned out of them.

One tapestry covers a concealed door to the hallway. The Witch Queen uses this to escape to the mirror room if confronted and she has time to leave.

The room contains many mundane items of value. The nature of these should be left up to the Castle Keeper but should befit a vain and self-obsessed person concerned with beauty. There are rare perfumes, silver combs, fine silks, exotic make-up, brooches, jewelry, and other items totaling 3000gp in value.

Some valuable magic items are also located in the room. There is a *rod of the python* located beside the bed, a *ring of animal friendship* in a small chest with about 30 other rings of non-magical nature, and a *potion of longevity* is located in a small box with some perfumes. There are also three scrolls mixed in with sheaves of paper each containing 1–3 spells for a wizard or cleric of 1st – 3rd level (Castle Keeper's choice). Finally, the Witch Queen has a book of magic

with 16 spells written in it (again Castle Keeper's choice). Of all the items in the room, this is the one she will take if fleeing.

AREA 75A SECRET CORRIDOR

This corridor is narrow, only just big enough for a single man to walk down. Its roof is low and drips cold water. There are many small limestone stalactites and stalagmites.

This corridor is known only to the Witch Queen, the goblitt shaman, the ungern wizard and chief of the guard. It is rarely used.

AREA 76 GREAT HALL

This massive chamber is dominated by a huge pot in its center. A fire leaps around the pot and a frothy mess is bubbling forth from it, while green steam rises to cloud the ceiling and much of the room. Dozens of goblitts lie about the room in various states of repose. Some are singing, some dancing, and some sleeping. Beyond the pot is a large garish throne flanked by two large burly creatures about seven feet tall, each carrying a gigantic spiked club. On the throne sits a woman of phenomenal beauty, dressed all in black and blue robes and carrying a staff in one hand and an orb in the other. Her raven black hair drips down her shoulders like the limbs of a willow tree, and her gaze turns to those who enter. All around the room are signs of feast. There are piles and heaps of pillows and rugs, plates, and serving dishes with discarded food and drinking vessels.

This is the throne room where the Witch Queen entertains and sometimes kills her guests. When anyone unwantered enters the room, the ogre guards sound the alarm and attack. Within moments, the goblitts will begin to attack, and guards from all locations in the complex will begin descending upon the room to protect the Witch Queen. She will cast spells, but will seek to escape the place and find safety in her chambers if the battle seems to be going badly.

WITCH QUEEN (She is a lawful evil human, 5th level cleric whose vital stats are HD 5d6, AC 16, HP 31. Her primary attributes are intelligence, wisdom and dexterity. Her significant attributes are wisdom 14, intelligence 16, dexterity 16, and charisma 18. She carries a wand of frost with 21 charges, an orb of goblitt control that allows her to control all goblitts within 400 yards of her, +4 bracers of defense, and 1000gp in jewelry. She can cast spells appropriate to her level and class. Her wizard spells must correspond to those in her room, see Area 75 above.)

OGRES x2 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 4d8, AC 17 and HP 28, 24, 11. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack for 1d10 points of damage. They carry scale armor and spiked clubs.)

GOBLITTs x24 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10, HP 2 each. Their primary attributes are none. If pressed to attack, they can do so with a single claw for 1–2 damage. They carry nothing.)

AREA 78 WAITING ROOM

This small aperture contains two plush chairs leaning against the wall and a brown bearskin rug between them.

This room is a waiting area.

A4: USURPERS OF THE FELL AXE

This module is designed for 4–6 characters of 4th–5th level. The adventure is a continuation of the previous adventures in the “A” series, *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*, *Slag Heap*, and *Wicked Cauldron*, but can easily be used without them. The adventure takes place in a large town. As such, there are many encounter areas and non–player characters for the Castle Keeper to contend with.

The nature of the adventure dictates a certain presentation to be most useful. There are three parts to this adventure. The first part lists all significant places and describes them. This also includes significant people who frequent or inhabit those places. The second section lists all the major non–player characters and their various motivations and suggested actions should certain events occur. The third section lists the stats and describes the individuals involved. One might want to photocopy the last section for easy reference.

It is up to the Castle Keeper to keep track of the happenings of the disparate locals and with the numerous peoples as the adventure progresses. This can be a daunting task at times, but fun. Just keep a pencil and paper handy and keep notes. Players are very adept at noting holes and inconsistencies that Castle Keepers’ seem to forget or overlook (Castle Keepers have much more to track).

The adventure itself is fairly straightforward. A group of evil priests have ensorcelled the mayor of Ludensheim and are using him to do their bidding. The characters, it is hoped, will discover this and lay waste to the priests, undo their spells, and save the town from eventual wreck and ruin—or at least the influence of these foul priests of that dread lord Unklar. The difficulty is that the characters arrive in the middle of the story. Events are underway and activities occur without reference to them. Also, town adventures can be fairly fluid so require more work on the part of the Castle Keeper.

INTRODUCTION

Ludensheim was once called Geerdes Gag and ruled by evil princes who served the dreadful lord Unklar. Geerdes Gag, when initially settled, consisted of little more than a bridge over the Hruesen River and several towers to guard that crossing. Many giants and trolls labored long and hard to make the bridge and towers to the exacting specifications of Unklar’s engineers. Their work was a wonder then and is even now. So well were they made, they stand undiminished 1,000 years later.

Geerdes Gag changed in size and scope over the centuries. After the armies of orc and ungeru poured over the Hruesen, the Captain Kings of Aufstrag decided to make Geerdes Gag a fortress to oversee the nearby lands, barrack the many troops needed to keep the region under their dominion, and host troops moving through the area. A keep was raised, walls raised round it, and a labyrinth built beneath it.

After the banishment of Unklar, Geerdes Gag was forsaken by all but the most stalwart of Unklar’s soldiery. The crusaders of New Aenoch (Outremere) eventually made their way to Geerdes



Gag and laid waste to it, killing all its inhabitants and pulling the keep and portions of the walls down, though leaving the bridge and towers beside it intact. Thereafter, Geerdes Gag was named Ludensheim after Prince Luden, the commander of the army who brought the orcs of Geerdes Gag to their knees, and who decided to occupy the towers. A slow trickle of people moving to Ludensheim quickly became a flood once gold was discovered in the Hruesen River, and the place has grown into a walled town once again.

The gold has since given out and fewer and fewer crusaders make their way here, as internal strife in Aenoch is beginning to consume their time and efforts. As a result, the power structure of the town has changed, and those knights and their orders have diminished greatly in power. The priests of Unklar saw an opportunity and decided to move in and eventually take power. They ensorcelled Dietbold Heimer, helped him overthrow the previous ruler, and have since worked behind the scenes to diminish the power of those whom they believe will oppose them in the future.

FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

Usurpers of the Fell Axe takes place in the city of Ludensheim. The leader of the city, Baron Dietbold Heimer, has been ensorcelled by a cursed axe (The Fell Axe) given to him by some priests of Unklar. Heimer now does the bidding of these evil priests. The priests worship a fallen deity, the Horned One (Unklar), and are attempting to gain control over the city and help lay the foundations for that god’s return. They are using Heimer to do

what might not otherwise be possible. To wit, he provides cover for the various allies and cohorts of evil creatures being brought into Ludensheim. Some of these creatures already dwell within and many more are making their way here. The priests simply await the day to rise up and take over the city entirely from the Baron and the few knights of Outremere remaining within its walls.

The characters will not be able to fight everyone nor everything, nor undertake all the fights that are likely to occur should they successfully uncover the Cabal of priests in Ludensheim. At best, the characters should be able to disarm or even kill Heimer and disassemble the Cabal. The mop-up should be left to the City Guard, as it is hoped the characters discover a larger problem looming on the horizon that needs their immediate attention. This being that the Cabal of priests that have been organized and are under the command of a great and evil Lord in Festung Akt. The characters should go there to kill him off.

In this adventure, the characters should focus on locating the minions of the Dark Lord as their first order of business and then move on to the upper echelons of the Cabal. Eventually, they must confront and fight the Baron and his retinue, or convert him back to the good ways by removing the Fell Axe from his possession.

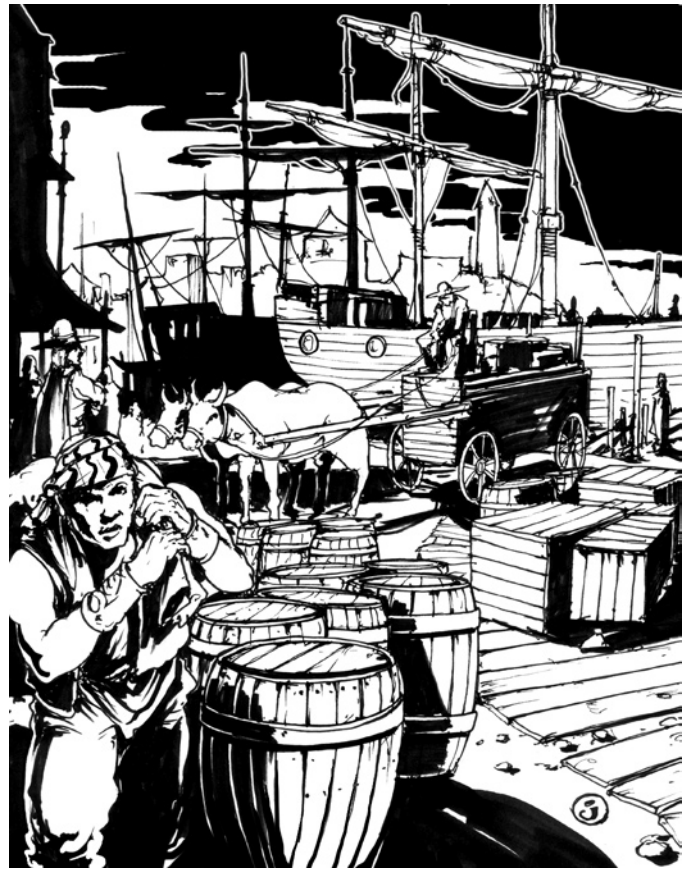
One important magical item is located in the sewer complex beneath the city. This is a portion of a magical horn that, once assembled and blown, opens the front gate of Aufstrag. Should the Castle Keeper care to continue this adventure over the next 27 years it will take us to write it, the horn is important for module A13. This encounter area can be located in many sections of the sewers so it is left up to the Castle Keeper to place. If one wants the option to continue the adventure for years, allow them to do so; it is not necessary to allow the characters to find the horn in this adventure for them to continue on to the final in the series.

INVOLVING THE CHARACTERS

The easiest method to bring the characters into this adventure is to play the previous modules in the "A" series. Otherwise, several possible avenues to do so are listed below.

- 1 The characters have heard that Baron Heimer is an unfair ruler and involved in many nefarious deeds. His has angered the Sheep Herders' Guild and the Smithies' Guild which, it is said, are offering great reward to those who bring him down.
- 2 The local silk trade is monopolized by a guild located in Ludensheim. This has aroused the envy and even anger of silk merchants and traders elsewhere. The characters have been asked to investigate the guild and figure out how they have come to dominate the trade (and put an end to it if they are of such nature).
- 3 The characters are simply moving through the area to grander adventures, suspecting nothing. Stopping for a good night's rest brings them into direct conflict with some of the Cabal of priests. Perhaps it is a case of mistaken identity and the characters are robbed, or even worse, someone attempts to kill them.

However the Castle Keeper chooses to bring the characters into this adventure, bear in mind the characters' eventual goal (by



design or accident) should be to confront the growing evil they come to suspect is in the city.

LUDENSHEIM

The presentation of Ludensheim is divided into several parts. The first describes the town and important locals therein, the second describes the keep, and the third the tunnels and sewers beneath the town. It goes without saying that in such a short book, much of the city, its inhabitants, and locales are not described. The Castle Keeper should feel free to elaborate as is necessary or desired.

Ludensheim was designed and laid out in the time of Unklar. It has grown much since those days. Old Ludensheim is the only part of the city which existed during Unklar's time. The New City stretches out and to the west of the Old City along the Hersonbroodge. The streets coming off the Hersonbroodge are haphazardly designed and constructed, not well paved, and reflect the chaotic nature of recent growth. There are remnants of an inner wall around the Old City. The inner wall and its towers are no longer used as defensive positions; rather they have become habitations or places of business.

The streets of Ludensheim are busy during the morning and evening, though not so much during the day since most of the inhabitants are busy with their herds or fields or other such business. The same goes for the inns and taverns. The streets are no longer well patrolled, though an occasional troop of 4–16 troops wanders through. The type and nature of any encounters are up to the Castle Keeper. These should be usual city encounters of little or no import. Encounters involving members of the Cabal or Baronial Guard should occur for a reason and be orchestrated.

AREAS OF INTEREST

OLD CITY: The Old City consists of that area once occupied by Unklar's forces. It is well organized and built on a grid pattern. Many of the more wealthy inhabitants live in this quarter, though certainly not all. The Boorgegate, the Baronial Keep, the Temple Mount, and a few other important places are located in the Old City. The Baronial Guard primarily stays within the Old City, and the City Guard stay outside of it. The Old City is demarcated by a series of old walls and Diller's Lane, which wraps around it.

NEW CITY: The New City is that area of Ludensheim outside of the Old City. It is a sprawling affair built along no pattern, as it was settled quickly by miners, gold panners, merchants, and farmers in quick disorder. It consists mostly of twisting lanes, small houses, and farmers or herders houses. The City Guard remains in this area.

The New City is surrounded by a 30-foot-tall stone wall. There are three entries in this wall; one on the south side, one on the east, and one on the west.

SHODFOOT LANE: Shodfoot Lane is an area within the New City. It houses about a dozen halfling families. They all live in brick houses on the surface (not in delves underground), though some have extensive cellars. One bar, the Tippy Tin, caters to halflings.

THE BAZAAR: This area of the city houses most of the trade establishments and manufacturing houses. It is located in the New City. The area includes the Bazaar, House of Silk, The Crossed Swords Blacksmith and Guild, and the Sheep Herders' Guild. There is also a brewery, a wood workers' area, and a tannery here as well.

HAYCOCK LANE: This entire area houses farmers and herders. It is often crowded with cows and sheep in the morning and evening being taken to and from fields outside the city walls.

There are many places that inquisitive characters can gather information in Ludensheim such as taverns, the Bazaar, and Haycock Lane. Some of the information may be good, some of it not so. Below is a short list of some of the information that may be picked up by inquisitive players.

A list of rumors follows. The rumors are subject-oriented rather than specific commentary so that the Castle Keeper can more easily tailor them to specific encounters. Each subject area is discussed from the varying perspectives of the observers. When or if the Castle Keeper chooses to use these rumors, they should be couched in the perspective of the person delivering the information.

The CK should amend or alter the information or rumor as fits the game and circumstance.

POLITICAL CURRENTS AND EVENTS IN LUDENSHEIM

THE CITY GUARD

The City Guard is, as its name indicates, responsible for guarding the city. Traditionally, this has included service to the baron of Ludensheim, patrolling the city, and acting as the main defensive body for the city.

The commander of the City Guard, Josker Nital, is not happy with the Baron and suspects he's involved in some corrupt scheme. He is torn between his duty to the city and to the Empress. His overriding loyalty is to the city but, as an Imperial Knight, he is beholden to the monarch. Heimer overthrew the previous baron in a palace coup. The previous baron was hated and his family corrupt, so Nital thought the coup was a boon for his beloved city. Nital is at a crossroads but is leaning towards allowing for a new power to come to the throne in Ludensheim.

Because of Nital's duties to his order and questions about his loyalty, Heimer removed him from the Keep but still allows him to act as the commander of the City Guard. The fact that this has happened to so many of his men has only aggravated Nital's stance, as he sees several dozens of his troops hanging around or looking for work.

In general, the City Guard is looked upon favorably by residents, as they not only help protect the city but do a lot of good works; however, the baron no longer desires their service. Or at least the Cabal no longer desires their service. The baron is simply awaiting the most opportune time to have them removed from power and disbanded.

THE LETNERS

Many of the members of the City Guard are part of an order called the Letners ("The Bearers of the Light").

The Letners are based in southern Aenoch. The order began as a small group of knights protecting unpatrolled roads between small hamlets and villages. Its fame grew and devotions to it increased, and so its size increased. The reputation of the Letners for bringing law and order to a region is well founded. Now the Letners are found throughout Aenoch but especially in the more remote regions. In many areas they effectively run entire baronies, though they are not landholders or title holders. Their credo is such that they perform service at request, not by demand. The Letners wear a small brooch upon the cloaks; it bears an Eagle with sword and flowers in its claws, the arms of the Empress.

THE BARONIAL GUARD

The Baronial Guard is a new addition to Ludensheim. It was started by Baron Heimer as his personal bodyguard and now outnumbers the City Guard. Many of the Baronial Guard are little more than toughs, some having come up from such places as the Slag Heap to join the troop. The Cabal has many spies in their midst, and the loyalty of the guardsmen to the baron is questionable.

RATS AND WYRMS

The rat catchers in Ludensheim have had an increasingly difficult time making a living lately as the rat population has decreased within the past couple of years to nearly nothing. The rat catchers complain loudly about having no income anymore, though are powerless to do anything about it, and no one even cares. The precipitous drop in the rat population has been noted by more than the rat catchers. Tavern owners, farmers, herders, and the population in general are aware of it (rats having been fairly common just two years ago). Though the rat catchers consider this a curse, everyone else sees it as a blessing.

The truth of the matter is that the rats are being eaten by the giant wyrms in the sewers. These wyrms have almost completely wiped out the rat population and are moving on to larger prey such as cats, dogs, small children, and others.

RUMORS

1 "Oh, I've had it on good authority that the City Guard chose to pick no fight in the unpleasantness between Heimer and his predecessor. Old Dietbold Heimer is having them secreted away and killed, don't you know . . . the guardsmen that is.

2 "Oh, I've heard it otherwise. The City Guard tried to kill old Heimer in his sleep and bring in the Lord of Botkinberg, as if that butter thumper could manage this lot!"

3 "The guard be a'leavin soon, cutting out and heading south to help the miss princess in the capitol. You mark my words, they'll be gone within the fortnight."

4 "Where are the rats? That's what I want to know! Something is eating them up, something big!"

5 "The rats have all up and left because the Horned One is returning and don't no mammal's like the Winter Dark . . . though I guess reptiles don't much like it either.

6 "Wild dogs are eating us out of house and home, but who cares; someone's murdering priests! They've poisoned the well

and waters of the Temple Block, and those poor fellas are wasting away."

7 "I hear that a gargoyle has taken up residence on the roof of the Boogergate! Creature comes awake at night and haunts the streets of our fell town!"

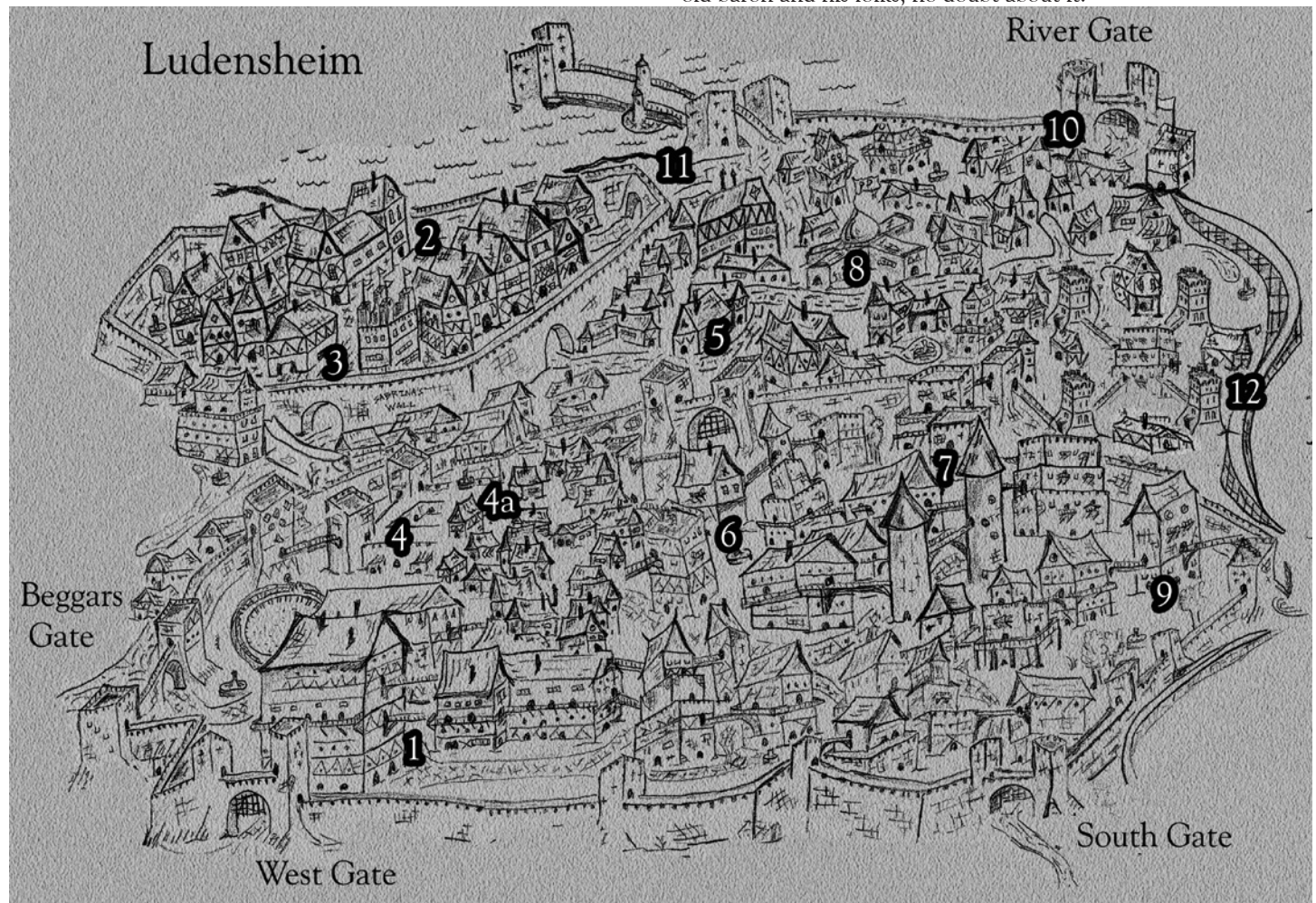
8 "Durn if old lady Mueller isn't breeding feral cats and letting 'em loose all over the city. Says she ain't, but I know she's a doing it cause I live within spit's distance of her house and been havin' cat every night for the past week on my dinner plate."

9 "There is a large troop of orcs coming from the north, the Agolgang or some such. They mean to take the Blacktooth Ridge back and drive us folks off."

10 "There's a fella in the silk merchants' guild, names Steph Kupl, Krapl, Krastoff or some such that is involved in some not-so-kindly trades with folks from the Barren Wood. Kid's friends with one of the apprentices from the apothecary, Itto."

11 "The Painted Veil is open up to some secret Cabal of wizards that serve the Dark Lord."

12 "Them sheep herders, them's the ones what rolled on the old lord and started the revolution! They think no one knows, but I know; had it from a fella in an alley one night. Fella kept baa baa baaing at me all night as I tried to get some sleep. They killed the old baron and his folks, no doubt about it."



MAIN ENCOUNTER AREAS OF LUDENSHEIM

ENCOUNTER AREA 1: THE GRIFFON ROOM

This tavern is located near the western gate to Ludensheim. It is a very large building consisting of four floors, a barn, a brewery, a barnyard, and a coach house. The Griffon Room is the largest and most posh tavern in Ludensheim. It hosts travelers of all sorts, whether merchants, farmers, knights, or others. The Griffon Room occupies what was once a gatehouse in the walls. The walls were torn down some time ago, as the city expanded but the gatehouse remained.

An old gatehouse crosses over Herson Lane. Its tall towers overlook a large building on the west side of this portal. A wooden sign hangs above a door; upon it is engraved a griffon sitting at a table drinking from a cup. The building is four stories tall, with each floor being slightly larger than the one below, and is topped by a peaked, red-tiled roof clustered with chimneys and flues.

The tall towers of the gatehouse are the personal quarters of the owners of the Griffon Room, Darin Hirst and his partner Otto Bremger. Each lives in one tower with their families. They have run the Griffon Room for many years. Darin is the friendlier of the two and ensures the guests are well taken care of. Otto is an accountant and ensures that the Griffon Room remains a profitable venture.

The ground floor of the main building faces the street. Broad double doors open onto a cavernous common room recessed into the ground. The flagstone floor is worn smooth with use and the crossbeams and walls are black and dingy with age, smoke, and grease. The room is cluttered with benches, tables, and even a few chairs. A large fireplace beckons warmly, day and night, summer or winter. Two sets of steps lead to the upper floor, while one large opening leads back to the kitchen, and another narrow door leads off to private dining rooms.

The private dining rooms are located on the east side of the common room. A narrow door opens onto a hallway with a half-dozen small private dining rooms. These dining spaces each have a table that can easily accommodate six people, and more if necessary. The dining rooms have thick curtains that can be pulled across the entry. They are usually reserved for the wealthier or more influential clientele who come here. They are not for rent and Otto gets to chose who can use them.

This inn is the place where most newcomers come to rest. It is large and spacious and not terribly expensive should one choose to live cheaply. However, the better rooms and food can be costly. Many knights and others coming to this region seeking adventure make their way here.

The Castle Keeper is encouraged to add many interesting characters to this particular milieu, as the characters may be spending a lot of time here, and the tavern could be used as the jumping off point for many an adventure.

The prices listed below are the average. They can range up or down significantly, depending upon the season, the economy or the profit/loss statements Otto is constantly generating.

Josker Nital, the Captain of the City Guard, resides here in an attic room. The City Guard themselves are spread throughout the city in homes and on Temple Hill.

Beer	1cp–1sp		
Wine	5cp–1gp		
Breakfast	5cp	1sp	10sp
Lunch	3cp	8cp	1sp
Dinner	10cp	3sp	1gp

Common room	1 sp a night (common long bed)
Room for four	3 sp a night (two long beds and chamber pots)
Private room	5sp a night (single bed, chamber pot, table)
Elaborate room	1gp a night (single bed, chamber pot, table, trunk, candle)

ENCOUNTER AREA 2: THE GOLD PAN

This tavern is located in the Old City along one of the walls which overlooks the Hruesen River and near the Boorgegate. It is an inexpensive place frequented by poorer or more frugal travelers. It was once almost exclusively used by gold panners, but that is no longer the case; the gold played out so few make it this way anymore.

A broad clapboard building is built at the base of the sturdy wall along the Hruesen River. The two-story structure is partially plastered. In front are many hitching posts and drinking troughs. A sign hangs over the door with a pan engraved upon it.

The door to The Gold Pan opens onto a narrow common room that stretches back like a tunnel in a mountain. Many candles and lanterns light the room which, incidentally, has only one window. A small bar sits at the far end. A staircase leads up to the second floor, where there are many rooms for let as well as two common rooms. Overall, the place is dark and dank with only a few narrow windows in the whole place (dwarven construction, hah!).

The Pan is run by an old wizened dwarf named Brifer Rustgut. There are two halfling thieves, Nigel Wigginsfirth and Pampin Mittenlin, who make this place their home. Other frequent customers here are Tideos Wate and Charles Otto Murtel. See the section on NPCs of Import for a description of these people.

Beer	1cp–8cp
Breakfast	3cp–1sp
Lunch	6cp–2sp
Dinner	3cp–4sp
Common room	5cp
Private quarter	1sp (sleeps up to six)
Private room	5sp (sleeps one)

ENCOUNTER AREA 3: THE DROOLING DWARF

This is a small bar located in the Old City. It is in what was once a guard tower along the walls of the Old City. The ground floor is where the brew is served. The Drooling Dwarf is owned by Tristan Falsouth.

A tall, broad tower juts up from a section of crumbling wall in the Old City. One large wooden door hangs open and light spills out from within. A wooden placard bearing a crudely drawn face of a drooling dwarf leans against the wall next to the door.

The demeanor of Tristan and the bar he keeps attracts a rather mean-spirited crowd and many drunkards. His beer is of poor quality and watered down, but is plentiful and cheap. He only serves one type, and it comes in a large tankard (2cp). He serves a soupy gruel every day for those who want it.

Three men, Robert, Farn, and Middler, who are regulars here, are servants of the Cabal. They serve as bodyguards and brutes who deal with pesky and nosy people. These three are toughs who enjoy nothing more than fighting. They are found here when not working in the labyrinth or carrying out orders. They occasionally meet others of the Cabal here for a beer.

ENCOUNTER AREA 4: THE BAZAAR

The Bazaar is a large courtyard where several streets come together. Once located on the outskirts of town, as Ludensheim expanded, it enveloped the area. Local merchants, farmers, and herdsmen gather here to sell and trade their wares.

A tangle of stalls and stores crowd around this intersection of streets and open square. Vendors loudly hawk a variety of wares, including everything from fresh cuts of meat, vegetables and grains, to pets, cloth and wool bundles or clothing.

Most everything sold in the bazaar is of local make, though some vendors from far away can be found. Many common goods can be purchased here. This includes rope, sacks, small weapons, farm implements, foodstuffs, clothing, fishing gear, mining gear, panning gear, and an assortment of other wares. Charms and common items used for magical incantations are available as well.

No large weapons or armor can be found here, as the sale of these items is controlled by the Crossed Swords Blacksmith and Guild and only sold through them. Rare items for use in magical incantations can only be found at the House of the Setting Sun (an apothecary). The Silk Merchants' Guild, the Wool Guild, and several other guilds are located on this square. Two bars, the Nugget and the Two Towers, are located on this square as well. Both serve only beverages and food.

The bazaar should be used as a type of general merchant for the characters (as there are no general merchants in town). There are many interesting characters and events which occur here. The Castle Keeper is encouraged to develop these as desired or needed. There are several important places in the bazaar, including the Silk Merchants' Guild, the Sheep Herders' Guild, and a stall run by a wily gnome by the name of Dibblegurm Bitterbumen.

ENCOUNTER AREA 4A. DIBBLEGURM'S STALL

Dibblegurm is a gnome who collects and sells rare herbs and minerals. Many of the herbs are used for cooking and are sold to locals as well as merchants moving on further south. He makes a nice profit off this venture. This stall consists of three wagons,

one of which has a drop-side from which his wares are sold. Dibblegurm does not actually sell his wares, as one of his three assistants handles sales. Dibblegurm travels north of the Hruesen River into those lands few dare to tread to collect his herbs.

A large wagon with a drop-down side sits on the edge of the square. The counter is covered with bowls, jars, and small bags. Many herbs and plants are tied up and bundled together or placed in bowls. Several smaller bowls and boxes have minerals of various sorts in them. In the wagon a youngish man of decidedly unkempt appearance and a bored look on his face half heartedly tries to sell the goods.

This nasty old gnome is also an agent of the Cabal. His greed and avarice combine to make him a perfect candidate for bribery. Also, his various nefarious contacts north of the river made him open to extortion. Should anyone find out he has dealings with unger, orc, goblin, and dark fey, it is unlikely his head would remain on his shoulders for long and would most likely be adorning a city wall or gate. The Cabal has leveraged Dibblegurm (without much effort) into smuggling both people and goods into Ludensheim which may otherwise not be easily accomplished.

On this particular trip, Dibblegurm has opened himself up to discovery. He is selling a rare and precious mushroom, the Black Cap, which grows only in the shadow of Aufstrag's walls. He is not aware what it is, and its presence has been overlooked by everyone-so far.

Black Cap, when ground up as a paste, severed as a tea, or consumed in any manner, gives a temporary increase of 1–3 to each of the imbiber's strength, constitution, and dexterity scores. Temporary hit points come with any increase in constitution. It takes an hour for the effects to take place, after which they last an hour as well. It is also known as Unklar's Appetizer because the soldiery of Unklar's armies regularly used the mushrooms before battle. Dibblegurm is selling the Black Cap for 1gp per cap. Each cap is good for the effects described above. He has 20 caps remaining when the characters arrive.

A character may be able to identify the mushroom. A successful intelligence check allows him to do so. Rangers receive a +3 bonus to their check, rogues a +1, assassins a +2, and wizards a +1. The Castle Keeper should amend any checks based upon a character's background or possible knowledge thereof.

If the Black Cap is identified and Dibblegurm confronted on the issue, he claims to have taken it from some unger he slew. However, from all appearances it is unlikely this fat, greasy gnome could have slain anything other than a bag of baked potatoes slathered in butter. His equally slovenly assistants are all likewise of such paltry appearance as to be unlikely to manage much more than a swarm of flies in battle-and even then be hard pressed. If pressed, Dibblegurm will not break but stick to his story. However, he will immediately go to his contact at the Drooling Dwarf, Farn, and tell him about anything the characters did. Farn will, of course, investigate in a most violent manner.

ENCOUNTER AREA 5. THE CROSSED SWORDS BLACKSMITH AND GUILD

This smithy deals exclusively in the arms and armors of war. They have a good market. Many knights, mercenaries, and travelers move

through Ludensheim in search of gold, fame, and honor (though not as many as in previous years), all of which are often found at the end of a sword. This captive market allows this guild to charge prices for weapons that some might consider exorbitant. However, they have no competition, as the administrators of Ludensheim and the Guild have colluded and made laws such that only the Crossed Swords Blacksmith and Guild can sell weapons and armor.

Freyan Nooseguard is in charge of the guild. He employs six smiths and a dozen or more helpers to work with him. The grounds of the smithy encompass a large area of one block on Weltwood Lane just outside the Bazaar. The three buildings on this block are separated into a smelting area, forging area, and selling area. Few are allowed anywhere but the selling area.

The latter is a large stone-faced building with a single room, two windows, a door facing the lane, and a single exit to the rear. Two or three of the helpers are in here at all times. They can call upon any of the smiths or Freyan for detailed questions. They charge around 30% more for items here than that listed in the *Castles & Crusades Players Handbook* but can make any item therein.

But selling weapons and armor is not the only thing going on here. Freyan has grown weary of Baron Heimer and fears an encroachment upon his business. He is also well informed about events in the Keep and is putting together a group of people to help the town guard in what he believes will be a fight between the Baronial Guard and the City Guard.

Freyan's decision to aid the City Guard rests in part upon his belief that should Baron Heimer become the uncontested ruler of Ludensheim, guild taxes will increase on his smithy, or it might even be closed altogether. In addition, Freyan has little regard for the large number of mercenaries, louts, and drunkards in Heimer's retinue and does not want them to have the run of the city. Should Freyan come to trust the characters, he tells them about his concerns for the community.

ENCOUNTER AREA 6: THE HOUSE OF SILK

This Merchant Guild is ostensibly run by Dietbold Heimer; in reality it is run by the Cabal of priests who have ensorcelled him. Nevertheless, Lord Heimer is the apparent leader of the Guild. Though always powerful, the Silk Guild has become exceedingly wealthy in the past few years due to the trade Heimer has brought to it. He receives silk for free from the Wicked Cauldron and then the Guild sells it. Any price reflects a massive gain in revenue. With this money, Heimer's control, and the Cabal's influence, the Guild produces more money (and thence influence) than any other of the guilds in Ludensheim combined. This influence is beginning to spread far and wide.

At the northern periphery of the bazaar is an imposing and elaborate stone building. Scaffolding surrounds one portion of the building as a new stone façade is being added to it. The new façade is obviously elaborate, expensive, and incongruous with the rest of the buildings on the square. Not only are there heaps of stone and many workers moving about the structure, there are several armed guards in front of the building wearing the insignia of the Baronial Guard.

The Silk Merchant's Guildhall is a large structure and is constantly being added onto. Its new wealth is prominently displayed by the new stone façade. The building consists of two floors and a basement. The basement area is used for storage and also has access to the labyrinth beneath Ludensheim. It is through here that many members of the Cabal enter the city proper. The ground floor is where all business is transacted, records are stored, and the guards sleep. The upper floor consists of a dining room, several studies, and residences for the leaders of the g Guild.

The Guild leadership is comprised almost entirely of Cabal members. Those that are not members of the Cabal are under its influence. The members who opposed the Cabal's takeover have long since been removed. Most of the people who work here suspect nothing and go about their business as usual. There are, however, a few who suspect something unusual is afoot.

In short, the Silk Merchants' Guild was taken over by Heimer when he offered to bring in some lucrative business. He managed this through the Cabal, which gave him free silk. The amount of profit the Guild made increased significantly under Heimer such that he was able to bring in his "own" people to run the show. The Cabal now runs the Guild. They use it to gather gold and as a legitimate base from which to begin spreading their influence in the south.

There are 6-12 guards on the ground floor at all times. They are well-armed and well-paid, experienced warriors. In addition, a priest always accompanies the captain of the guard. There are several well-armed miscreants working in the storerooms as well. These are the only people in the building who will fight intruders. The two-dozen or so others are packers, records keepers, servants, weavers, cutters, and the like.

The silk in the storerooms is worth thousands of gold. Though ample reward is offered should the characters successfully conclude the adventure, silk is not part of it. One bolt of silk sells for 100 gp in the south, should the characters decide to purloin a few bolts for themselves. In the upper quarters there is 500 gp in various coins in a lockbox in Heimer's office.

CAPTAIN (He is a lawful evil, 5th level fighter whose vital stats are HP 34 and AC 17. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and charisma. He wears +2 chainmail and carries a +2 flail, dagger, and 300 gp in coin and jewelry.)

CLERIC (She is a chaotic evil 4th level cleric whose vital stats are HP 17 and AC 14. Her primary attributes are wisdom, intelligence, and dexterity. Her significant attribute is dexterity 16. She wears leather armor and a +2 cloak of protection, and carries a +2 mace, scroll of curse, potion of healing, and 240 gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

GUARDS x12 (These chaotic neutral 3rd level fighters' vital stats are HP 18 and AC 15. Their primary attributes are: strength, constitution, and dexterity. Their significant attributes are: strength 13. They wear chainmail and carry maces and 40 gp in jewelry and coin.)

ROGUES x 3 (These chaotic evil 3rd level rogue's vital stats are HP 11 and AC 13. Their primary attributes are dexterity, wisdom, and intelligence. Their significant attributes are dexterity 14 and intelligence 13. They wear leather armor, and carry +1 short swords and 10-60 gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

ENCOUNTER AREA 7. THE HOUSE OF THE SETTING SUN:

This is an occultist apothecary shop. Risticulian sells all types of rare items for use in spellcraft and wizardry. The place is located near the Keep and has the sole license to sell such items (though some items are so common that they can be found in the bazaar or elsewhere).

A tall building of four floors stands squeezed between a wall of the Old City and a sprawling barn. A small sign in front of the door depicts a sparkling rod. Within is a very organized and tidy shop with many shelves lined with boxes, vials, vases, and assorted containers. All are neatly labeled and stacked. An old man with a twinkle in his eyes and a tall, pointy hat greets any who enter.

Risticulian is a retired wizard with several apprentices; his shop is also where he teaches. Risticulian has much prestige in town, in part because he rarely involves himself in matters of the city, but also because he is very traveled and has quite a reputation for his services to the lords of New Aenoch. He is a good man and enjoys magics, though now of the mundane and common kind.

He sells all types of items for use in magical incantations. Almost any item can be found in this store from bat wings to ground up ruby dust. He actually keeps such a good stock because he uses the material more often than his customers. His prices are steep, but in such a remote area this is not unusual.

Risticulian has become aware of some powerful magics at work in Ludensheim, though he has been unable to ascertain their source or nature. In part, this is because he is busy with other things but also because he generally stays out of town affairs and considers himself somewhat impervious to any permutations in power which may occur in Ludensheim. Risticulian will offer advice and share information with the characters (especially other wizards of kindly disposition) if respectfully asked.

In the long haul, Risticulian would rather the Cabal of priests not come to power. Should he become aware of the Cabal and be convinced Baron Heimer was under their influence, he would aid the characters in their quest to convert the Baron (though not kill him). To avoid having this non-player character dominate events or become a pivotal player in the characters' actions, Risticulian will, shortly after being convinced of said deeds, go after a powerful wizard he suspected of being in town. This chase leads him out of Ludensheim so that in any final confrontations, Risticulian is not to be found nor depended upon.

One of Risticulian's apprentices, Itto Catil, is actually in league with the Cabal, though Risticulian does not know it. Itto Catil has struck up a friendship with one of the lesser acolytes, Steph Kerner, and feeds him information about Risticulian. The characters may discover this relationship should they observe Itto with Steph Kerner. The two meet in the Two Towers at the bazaar. The characters must also know of Steph Kerner's relationship to the Cabal to ascertain Itto's complicity.

ENCOUNTER AREA 8: TEMPLE BLOCK

This is more a convent for the Holy Order of Ore-Tsar than a house of worship for the public. The complex is large and sprawling, containing several buildings, a temple, barracks, armory, and stables. It is mostly abandoned now, as many of the knights have left to fight in wars to the south and west.

Several large, long stone buildings form a square on a rise. These imposing structures are all but a single story tall and have blue-tiled, peaked roofs with many banners fluttering in the breeze. From the center of the block rises a large tower with no walls; simple columns support each floor. Atop this structure is a statue of Ore-Tsar, sword in hand, facing northwest.

Other than climbing over the ceiling and dropping into the compound, there is no entry to this complex except through the front gate. This is a broad gate that is always open during the day, and is wide enough to allow four horsemen to move through it abreast. At all times there are 2–3 young clerics manning the gate or nearby. They greet all of goodwill with pleasure but are not disposed towards those of ill will at all. (All the clerics have *detect evil* memorized at least twice and use it when anyone enters the complex to determine their nature.)

The complex has four long, single-story buildings surrounding a courtyard. In the center of the courtyard is a four-story stone tower built of columns. Atop this is a statue of Ore-Tsar looking in the direction of Aufstrag.

The south-facing building has the entry in its center. In this building are the rooms for the servants and lowly acolytes who serve Ore-Tsar. Food, water, and beer are also stored in this building. The east building contains the barracks for the knights as well as the stables. The north building houses the library, kitchens, dining hall, and rooms for the higher authorities. The west building contains a woodworking shop, a smithy, and utility storage. Much equipment and weaponry are stored in the buildings.



Currently, there are only 14 servants and seven acolytes at the complex. The High Priest and his followers left about a year ago with the promise to return as soon as the situation permitted. The acolytes are not really aware of what is going on in Ludensheim, though they do know unsavory sorts have made their appearance lately. They are also well aware that the Baron Heimer is an altogether unsavory character, as are as his followers. However, they are powerless to do anything about it and hope for the return of their High Priest to help right the wrongs in Ludensheim. Urgent messages have only been met with replies encouraging them to hold on a bit longer.

The acolytes are willing to help in any way they can should the characters be deemed worthy and their goals honorable. If not, their assistance is given grudgingly, if at all, as they care not to replace one evil with another.

ACOLYTES x2 (These are lawful good 2nd level clerics whose vital stats are HP 12 and AC 14. Their primary attributes are strength, wisdom, and intelligence. Their significant attributes are strength 13 and wisdom 14. They wear studded leather armor and carry shields and flails.)

ACOLYTES x5 (These are lawful good 1st level clerics whose vital stats are HP 5 and AC 12. Their primary attributes are strength, wisdom, and intelligence. Their significant attribute is wisdom 14. They wear leather armor and carry maces.)

SERVANTS x14 (These are lawful good, 0-level commoners whose vital stats are HP 2 and AC 10. Their primary attribute is constitution. They carry nothing but staves if forced into combat.)

ENCOUNTER AREA 9. THE SHEEP HERDERS' GUILD

This is the most powerful Guild in Ludensheim. Most of the income for the city as a whole is derived from the trade and taxing of wool. Fully half the city's inhabitants are involved in the trade. This includes the herders, drovers, shearers, weavers, muleteers, and tradesmen. The Guild itself is not the wealthiest (the Silk Merchants and the smithy have far more gold) but by virtue of the number of people involved in the trade, the Sheep Herders' Guild is very powerful and influential.

On the south side of the bazaar square is a large wooden building three stories in height. Broad stone steps lead up to its double-door entry. Above the well-worn doors is a simple wooden engraving of a sheep. The front of the place is crowded with farmers, herdsman, and often several sheep. The side of the building is always crowded with wagons in various stages of being loaded and unloaded. The cacophonous bleating of sheep and braying of the dray mules, rumor-mongering farmers, and dealing herdsman and merchants fills the air.

Many Guild members are capable of fighting. They have little loyalty to Heimer and much to the family preceding him (the taxes were lower then, and the silk trade appears to be a rapidly growing economic influence in the city).

The Sheep Herders' Guild hired a spy, Tul Merriweather, who successfully infiltrated the Silk Merchants' Guild. Tul managed to make it all the way to the Wicked Cauldron (a large and very ancient temple complex south of Ludensheim where the followers

of Unklar have begun to gather, see A3 *Wicked Cauldron*) and observed things there. He has just now returned to Ludensheim to tell the Guild what he saw. The characters may have encountered Tul previously; if so, he will be of some assistance to the characters if they choose to ask him or even meet him. He knows that the silk merchants have some connection to the Wicked Cauldron but he isn't sure exactly what that connection is. He will impart this to the characters. If the characters have not met Tul but he learns that they are willing to help him in uncovering the machinations of the Silk Merchants' Guild then he will give them a name of a ranger, Greden Merkmén, who dwells in Botkinburg but frequents Ludensheim often to sell pelts and meat he captures while hunting on the Hruesen River. Greden can be contacted by visiting the Hunters' Inn.

ENCOUNTER AREA 10. THE HUNTERS' INN

This is a guild hall for the local hunters. All those who hunt and sell the gain from the Hruesen River basin, the Barren Wood, or the whole of the Blacktooth Ridge come here at one time or the other. They must come here to sell pelts in Ludensheim, as they must do so through this guild or face punishment. Usually, this is nothing more than fines or confiscation of goods, unless a miscreant is encountered in the wilderness where he is likely to be roughed up a bit.

The Hunters' Inn is a friendly place. Its wooden floors are built slightly off the ground and moan and creak a great deal if the foot traffic becomes too great. The walls are decorated in monster and animal trophies that hunters and rangers have, over the years, given to the proprietor, Bartleby Jones. A huge fire, vented through the roof, burns in the middle of the room. Around this there are several men sitting, drinking, and eating. A plethora of tables are set about the room as well in no discernable order. The place is always thick with customers and a palatable layer of smoke hovers in the air. The smell of brew and sweat permeates the room.

This elderly Bartleby began hunting the region in the waning days of the Winter Dark and he remembers the fall of Aufstrag and the arrival of the Crusaders. As a lad he traded with the post commander of the Geerdes Gag, and as an old man he deals in traffic with the knights of the Empress' Court to the south. He does not want to see a return of the old days, but he has seen disturbing signs that the minions of the Horned One have begun to return: animals have become scarce, the previous winter was far colder than it had been in decades, and the disturbing return of huge ravens, a breed that once served as the Dark Lord's minions.

Bartleby is a kindly man and a good judge of character. If the characters approach him in a friendly manner and indicate their willingness to see the evil rooted out, he'll give them the information he knows and introduce them to Greden Merkmén, who is presently staying at the inn. He can also offer them the sanctuary of the Temple Block, as he supports the church and its acolytes with a great many donatives.

Greden is a ranger from Botkinburg. The characters may have encountered him in previous adventures (A1 *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge* or A2 *Slag Heap*). He is a member of the Society of River Wardens, an order of rangers dedicated to keeping watch on the whole region. Blacktooth Ridge stands between the struggling

powers of Aufstrag and New Aenoch and often suffers the depredations of both factions. The River Wardens are mostly scattered now and few if any remain. If Greden met the characters previously and knows their willingness to help, he'll be glad to offer them his guidance in getting to the Cauldron if they have not already found it. Otherwise, he can offer little in the way of support but to confirm that a great deal of "secret" traffic is being conducted by parties inside Ludensheim and the Cauldron. Trails he has followed are lost in the town.

GREDEEN MERKMEN (*This 6th level chaotic good human ranger. His vital stats are HP 39, AC 17. His primary stats are strength, dexterity, and constitution. His significant abilities are strength 14 and dexterity 16. He wears +2 leather armor and shield, and carries a +2 long sword, 2 potions of healing, longbow, 20 arrows, pack, and hunting gear. When in Ludensheim he carries a fair amount of gold, usually around 25gp.*)

ENCOUNTER AREA 11. BOORGEATE

Boorgegate is located in the Old City. It is the gate which overlooks the bridge crossing the Hruesen River and consists of the two ancient towers and a bridge originally constructed by the engineers of the Horned One. It is the only northern exit from the city.

The bridge is a massive stone structure almost 50 feet across and stretches in one great arch over the river. At its apex, the arch is almost 40 feet above the water. On the southern side of the bridge, in Ludensheim, sit the two towers and the gate. The towers are 70 feet tall and 90 feet to a side. They are placed 80 feet apart and connected by a stone causeway. Underneath the causeway are the two gigantic, ironclad doors. The doors are almost always open these days though are easily closed from within either tower.

The towers are identical in structure. They are 70 feet tall and 90 feet wide with three 50-foot wide levels and a basement. The walls are 20 feet wide and constructed of blocks of stones 20 ft. x 20 ft. x 10 ft. The basements are connected by an underground tunnel. The ground level of each has a large ironclad door to the outside and houses the guard. The second floor contains weapon stores; the third floor contains spare parts for the ballistae and other equipment used for anti-siege such as oil caskets, rope, and small stones. The roof has three-foot-tall battlements, two ballistae, and a large mobile bucket used to dump oil. The basement is used for storing food and other materiel.

Each tower is occupied by five Baronial Guards. One guard from each tower acts as gate guard during the day and evening. The commander, Carl Restern, resides in the eastern tower. All movement through this gate from the north is taxed 1 cp per person and 1 sp per wagon. The collections are brought to the Baronial Keep every evening.

The fishermen and other folk who make their living from the Hruesen River usually exit and enter the city through this point. In the early morning, the gate is very crowded. Likewise the evening is exceedingly crowded as the fishermen hawk their catches just inside the gate and the local tavern keepers, merchants, or other purchasers come to the area to buy things.

The Boorgegate is also one of the few locations with an entry to the sewers beneath Ludensheim. This entry is accessed from the well just to the south of the city wall and east of the tower. Only a few people know this. Nigel and Pampin (located in The Gold Pan, Area 2) know where it is.

ENCOUNTER AREA 12. THE KEEP OF LUDENSHEIM

The Keep of Ludensheim is not an elaborate affair. The central part is located in what was once the Tower of Geerdes Gag. This is a square tower some 120 feet tall with battlements atop. From the roof, a good view can be had of the city, the bridge, and the river. Extending out from the central block are four wings. These wings were added after the arrival of the Crusaders of Outremere. The construction of the wings is not as well done as that of the tower proper but serves its purpose. The Keep is named Cerrok Hruesenette (meaning "The Rock Palace by the River Hruesen").

The central area of the Old City is dominated by the blocky Keep of Ludensheim. This small but imposing structure consists of a central square tower built higher than any other structure in the town. Atop it and stretching above the battlements is the ragged banner of Ludensheim fluttering in the wind. Stretching out from the central tower are four wings, each branching off one of the corners of the keep and ending in smaller square towers. A small stone wall, some 10 feet high, stretches around the entire affair.

The Keep houses Baron Heimer, his staff, retinue, and personal guard. Several members of the Cabal have moved into the Keep as well. The general layout of the Keep is described below. The exact location of all staff is not described, as it changes all the time and depending upon when the characters arrive they will meet different people. The areas which usually have people manning them simply list the usual occupants. It is, ultimately, up to the Castle Keeper to place all the individuals within the Keep.

GENERAL LAYOUT OF THE KEEP

There is a central square block with four wings coming off of it, each wing connected by a curtain wall.

The northwest wing is devoted to the living quarters of the ruler and his family. Since Heimer has little family, it is for the most part, empty of people but does have some finery left over from the previous monarch.

The southwest wing is devoted to the servants of the household and their workspaces, such as the cooks and their kitchens, the woodworker and his shop, etc.

The central block is where the conference rooms are, the throne room, administrative offices, and so forth. There was once a temple here, but it has now been abandoned, as the High Priest left and no one has come to replace him. That hall is closed to all. (This fallen chapel also has some of the minions of the Dark One in it. They have slowly infested it.)

The non-player characters are described in the NPC section of the module. A list of the Keep's usual occupants includes: Lord Heimer, Lady Sliever, Charles Otto Murtel, Kleffert von Graff, Master Blisting, Silvanus, Theres Crule, various servants, and the Baronial Guard.

THE CENTRAL KEEP

The central tower of the Keep contains the meeting hall, barracks, and access to the storerooms beneath the Keep. In cases of siege, the central keep is the fall-back position. The outer towers will be given up and final positions taken here. The structure is made entirely of stone except for interior walls, supports, and the upper floors.

THE GROUND FLOOR

AREA 1: Large iron-bound oak doors, which are usually closed, offer the only public entry from the outside into the Keep. This room has four exits: one leading to the southeast tower, one to the southwest tower, and the others to Areas 2 and 3. There is also a large trapdoor with steps leading down to the dungeon. A large table dominates the center of the room where guards mill about. During the day, the Captain of the Guard (Kleffert von Graff) is here or in Area 2 or 3. There are 1–3 axmen and 2–4 pikemen on duty in here with him as well. During the evening Sergeant of the Guard (Charles Otto Murtel) is here with the same numbers of troops.

AREA 2: This room offers access to the northeast wing of the Keep. A table, a couple of chairs, and a stove are in here as well. Kleffert or Charles are often in here while on guard duty and only come out when necessary.

AREA 3: This room offers access to the servants' wing of the Keep. Utility items used for upkeep in the Keep are kept in here.

AREA 4: This broad hallway is lined with tapestries.

AREA 5: This room is used for the relaxation of the Baron. There is a large fireplace, table, and tapestries on the wall, several sitting chairs, and sumptuous rugs. The only person who regularly uses this room is Lady Sliever. The finery in here (candle holders, silverware, etc.) is worth about 2,000 gp.

AREA 6: The doors in the hallway are always locked. Two large guard dogs roam this hallway and bark viciously when anyone enters. They are usually chained up and attack only when given the command. The dogs belong to Master Blisting.

AREA 7: This chamber is used for recording various activities in the Keep. There are shelves full of papers along all the walls in here. Three large scribes' desks are in the center of the room. Master Blisting and Silvanus can often be found in here during the day or early evening. No servants or guards have the keys to this area, though Nefrous has a set.

AREA 8: This hallway leads to the servants' quarters.

AREA 9: This room is used for storage of various necessities in the Keep. There are crates of mortar, some stones, picks, mortar tools, woodworking tools, some lumber, rope, casks and crates of nails, and other sundries.

AREA 10: This hallway contains several large, sturdy pieces of wood (used to brace the door to the Keep in time of war), barrels of water, and several barrels of dried pitch.

AREA 11: This chamber houses the Baronial Guard. There are bunks for up to 12 people in here. A small table is located in the

center of the room. At any given time there are 3–9 guards in here who are off duty. All their weapons and armor are stored in here.

FIRST FLOOR

AREA 1: This chamber is used as a meeting room and throne room. When Baron Heimer holds audience (rarely), this is the room used by he and whomever he is meeting. It is usually empty. A large table is placed to one side of the room and a massive chair, draped in bearskins and raised upon a small platform, sits against the south wall.

AREA 2: This waiting room contains a small bed, chairs, table, and trunk. Although he is supposed to sleep in the servants' tower, Silvanus has made this room his home. No one really seems to care. The trunk contains little more than Silvanus' personal goods and 20 gp in coin. The door to Area 4 is locked.

AREA 3: This room always contains two guards. There is one chair here for one of the guards to rest in.

AREA 4: This hallway leads to Area 5. It is lined with shelves filled with knickknacks and junk such as lamps, oil, candles, a few chairs, and other utilitarian items. The far door is always locked.

AREA 5: This room contains records for the keep. Specifically, the two types of records kept are the genealogies of the knighted peoples and tax records (along with the treasury contents—altogether inaccurate). Master Blisting, Nefrous, and Baron Heimer are the only ones who come in here these days, though Silvanus occasionally makes his way through the room (and in the dark of night occasionally goes over



some of the records). Master Blisting has taken over the records and made a complete mess of them. He has misplaced and misfiled almost everything, and not only had no idea how to keep the records, he attempted to forge them as well, since he was siphoning off funds. Luckily for him, no one really cares any more.

AREA 6: This hallway leads to the baronial quarters. No one is supposed to use this hallway other than Nefrous, Baron Heimer, and Heimer's bodyguard, Theres Crule. It is empty excepting a large rug running down its middle and two sets of armor to either side of the door at the far end. The door is locked. The only thing of interest in this room is a small bat living in the rafters. This bat is little more than a spy for Nefrous. It reports any movement through here to Nefrous. It may take it an hour or more to relay the information.

AREA 7: This is Baron Heimer's private audience room. It is here that he meets with his guard, Nefrous, or any others close to him. The room has several small tables and chairs, lamps, a shelf with books on it, and a fireplace. Heimer spends most of his time in this room, sitting and pondering his next moves. Theres Crule is here more often. Theres sleeps on the floor by the steps leading up to Heimer's personal quarters whenever Heimer is up there.

AREA 8: This hallway is empty and the doors always unlocked.

AREA 9: The male servants sleep in this room. There are a dozen cots and a round table in the center of the room where they eat or gamble. There are 2–5 servants here at any given time. There are few valuables in here, as the servants are generally only paid in food and lodging.

AREA 10: This hallway contains a large weapons rack holding various types of pole arms. The doors are usually unlocked.

AREA 11: This chamber is used to barrack troops. At any given time, there are 2–5 pikemen in here sleeping, gambling, or wasting time (as only troops can). There are bunks for up to 12 people. A large

cask of water and table are located in here as well. There is little of value in here, though 20 gp worth of in coins can be recovered.

2ND FLOOR

AREA 1: This chamber once contained a shrine. It has since been removed. The room is unused at the moment and contains little more than a few pews. Some empty crates and boxes are stored along one wall.

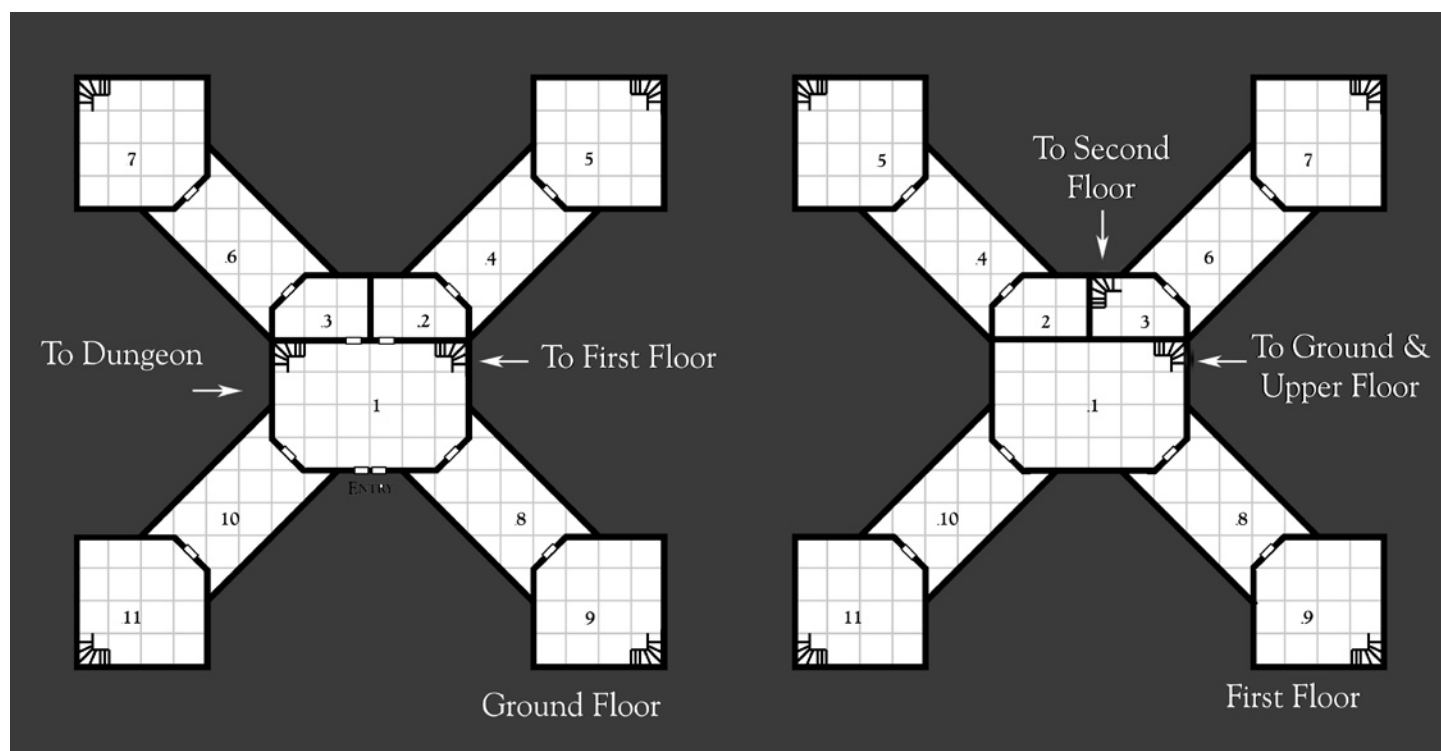
AREA 2: This room contains the bits and pieces of stone from the old shrine. The marble chunks can be placed together to reveal a statue of Ore-Tsar.

AREA 3: This room offers access to the 3rd floor of the tower.

AREA 4: This is Baron Dietbold Heimer's personal chamber. It contains a large poster bed with curtains, a thick ornamental rug, several bookcases, a table cluttered with foodstuffs and flatware, a fireplace, two sitting chairs, an armoire, and two large trunks. Most of the windows are covered with tapestries. Heimer is usually found in here; he almost always sits in a chair, holding the *Fell Axe* and staring at the fire. His wife is often found on the bed reading. Heimer never wears his armor while in this room and in repose.

Most of the goods in here are clothing, jewelry, and common items of varying value (perhaps 1,000 gp to those who care). Heimer keeps his arms and armor on a rack next to his bed. The two trunks contain the valuables of both Heimer and Lady Sliever, his wife.

Heimer's trunk is locked with a huge padlock (the key to which is around his neck). It is easy to pick, with any attempt having a +2 added to it. Within are many articles of clothing as well as 1,000 gp in jewelry and 2,000 gp in coin and gems. There are three *potion of healing*, one *potion of giant strength*, a +3 *ring of magic resistance*, and a *cloak of elvenkind*.



AREA 6: This chamber is used for storage of military implements such as weapons, whetstones, water, oil, lubricants, and other items for the day-to-day needs of repairing equipment. There is also room to barrack six troops here, though it is often used by the commanders to sleep in and not the troops. Generally no one is here unless to gather supplies.

AREA 7: The female servants sleep in this room. There are a dozen cots and a round table in the room for eating and other activities. This room can only be entered through a locked and closed hatch. There are only five female servants on staff.

AREA 8: This chamber is the 3rd floor of the central keep. It was primarily designed as a defensive position, hence the many arrow slits in the walls. Currently, the room is used for storage. There are crates and boxes of dried goods and trade goods of all types. There is no item or single type of object in here of great value though collectively the material is worth about 1,000 gp. The material is stored closer to the center of the room and not the walls in order to keep the arrow slits open for use.

ROOF: The roof of the Keep has a small entry chamber atop it. A pole extends up from the roof and carries the banner of Ludensheim, while beneath it is the personal banner of Heimer. The perimeter of the roof has battlements. There are two ballistae placed up here. Two crossbowmen are always on duty here.

PALACE CELLAR

AREA 1: This large chamber has a broad table on its east end with several benches around it, a fire pit nearby, and several ovens by that. Two smaller tables are near the ovens. Pots and pans of all sizes are arranged on the tables, and foodstuffs lie about everywhere.

The west side of the room has weapon storage racks for pikes and assorted gear, barrels of arrows, a rack of swords, and six light crossbows. This room is used for cooking and is where the Baronial Guard and servants eat. There are almost always a few servants in here as well as a few troops eating, cooking, or milling about.

AREA 2: This room is used as a barracks and houses up to 12 people. There are bunks, personal goods, and casks of water in here. There are always 1-4 guards in here sleeping or off duty.

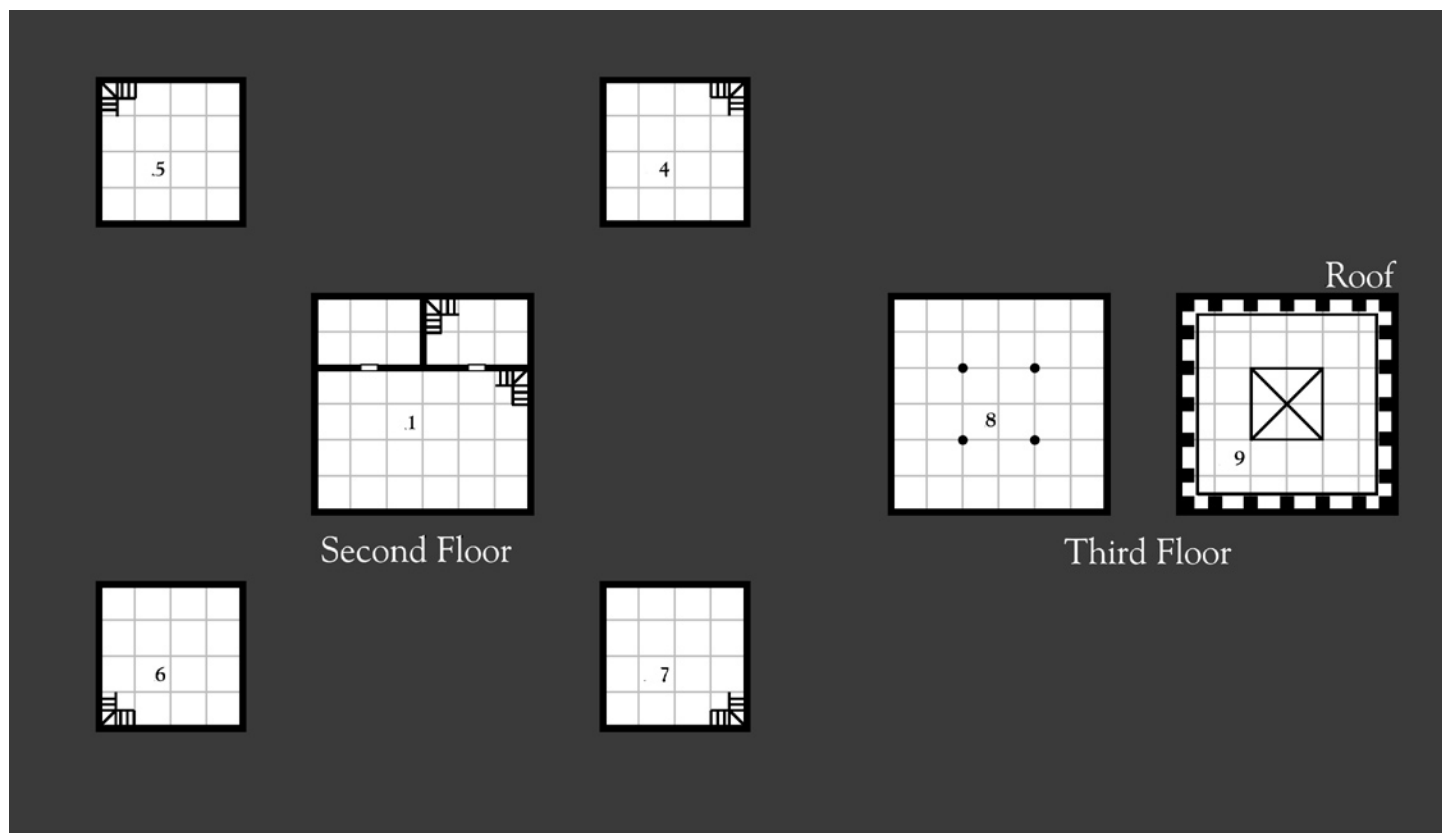
AREA 3: This room is used as a barracks and houses up to 12 people. There are bunks, personal goods, and casks of water in here. There are always 1-4 guards in here sleeping or off duty.

AREA 4: This area of the dungeon is no longer used. Old casks and crates, broken tools, and other junk are found in here. Silvanus uses this area to hide his money. Often seen down here rooting around old junk, he is really hiding his coins and valuables. In a fake bottom to a cask in the back room is 340 gp in coin and jewelry.

AREA 5: These rooms contain various and sundry material used around the Keep. There is rope, wood, tools, blankets, clothing, dishes, tankards, etc.

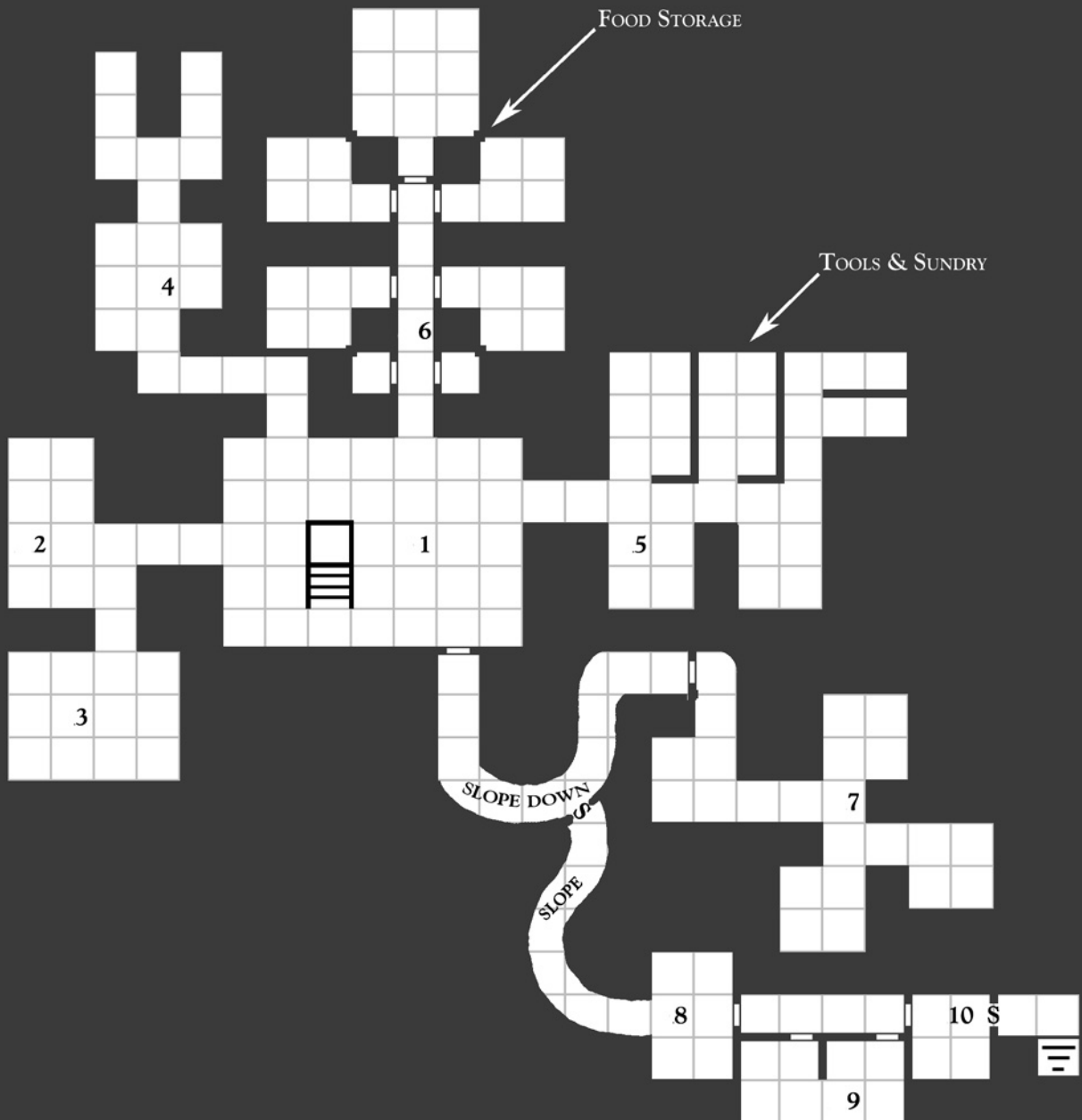
AREA 6: All the rooms down this corridor contain foodstuffs of various types. All the doors are locked. Within are dried goods, grains, beer, and many barrels of water (as there is no access to water from within the Keep).

AREA 7: A large iron-bound and locked door stands in the entry to this area. The only people who have the keys are Silvanus, Kleffert, Charles, and Heimer. This area houses the prisoners kept by the lord. There are several petty thieves down here now.



Palace Cellar

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



There is also a secret door in the tunnel leading down to the prison rooms. This was once a door but has been hidden, though not well. Add a +3 bonus to any checks to locate the door.

AREA 8: This area gives access to the labyrinth beneath the city. The door here is locked and there is a magical inscription upon it. Unless the proper command word is spoken (“Unklar”) when opened, a loud chiming occurs. It alerts the guards in Area 9.

AREA 9: These rooms are used to bunk several of the Cabal who act as guards. There are six bunks in here, a table, some food and water along with a little personal gear. Additionally 1–4 guards are in here resting. One cleric is always here.

CLERIC X1 (*This chaotic evil, 3rd level cleric’s vital stats area HP 15 and AC 15. His primary attributes are strength, wisdom, and charisma. He wears full chainmail, and carries a +2 mace, a potion of healing, a scroll of fear, and 130 gp in coin and jewelry. His prepared spells are command, sound burst, and aid.*)

CABAL GUARDS (*These are lawful evil, 0-level conscripts whose vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 5, AC 13. Their primary attribute is strength. They wear leather armor and shield and carry a short sword and 1d10 gp each.*)

AREA 10: This room always contains three Cabal guards. There is nothing but a table in here upon which the guards are often gambling. The secret door is activated by a pressure plate on the floor in the northeast corner of the room. The door is not concealed from the east side and is easily opened from that direction. If attacked in this area, one of the guards leaves via the secret door to warn those below.

The secret door leads to a series of small corridors which descend beneath the city and into the sewers. The area of import for this adventure is The Sanctum. As mentioned previously the rest of the complex’s extent, design, and inhabitants are at the discretion of the Castle Keeper.

CABAL GUARDS X3 (*These are lawful evil, 0-level conscripts whose vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 5, AC 13. Their primary attribute is strength. They wear leather armor and shield and carry a short sword and 1d10 gp each.*)

BENEATH LUDENSHEIM

When Ludensheim was constructed by the forces of Unklar, some of his best engineers undertook the job. They excelled in the construction of underground labyrinths through which flowed excess water and sewage, where repair tunnels fanned out beneath the earth, and tunnels and holes were built to withstand the ravages of time. But the sycophants of the Horned God did not forget from whence their power was derived, and they built places of worship and safety for those needing them. These underground labyrinths are intact if a little worse for wear. In only a few spots have they collapsed or become buried in debris.

A broad scheme of the labyrinths has not been supplied; suffice to say it is vast, spacious, organized, and interconnected. The two areas necessary for the adventure are described: the Sanctum and the Black Pits. The Castle Keeper is encouraged to detail the labyrinth and other areas as desired or ignore them altogether.

This area could be used for further adventures in order to bring the characters up a level or so before continuing the “A” series or to further detail the city. It should be noted, though, that the labyrinths were cleared of most inhabitants shortly after its fall to the Crusaders. On the other hand, a few wily creatures have stolen into discreet locations and hidden themselves in rooms and holes beneath the city, where treasures still await eager explorers.

THE SANCTUM

The Sanctum lies beneath the Keep, but is only accessible through the many sewers beneath Ludensheim or the Keep’s cellar. Access through the Keep’s cellar is described previously.

Should the characters attempt to find the place from the labyrinth, they will spend anywhere from 1–3 hours locating the entry to the Sanctum. In the meantime, they will have wandered through many stinky and foul corridors and rooms.

There should be no wandering monsters in the labyrinth unless the Castle Keeper cares to place them here. However, there is one encounter the characters will have. A flesh golem has been created by Nefrous and his minions. Nefrous has decided to make many of the creatures to guard the corridors, but has only managed to produce one to date. The golem should be encountered as the characters get close to finding (or leaving) the Sanctum.

FLESH GOLEM (*This creature’s vital stats are HD 7d10, AC 18 and HP 49. It slams opponents with its fists for 2–8 damage. It can be struck only by magical weapons with a +2 bonus or better. It is immune to nearly all magic; see M&T for specific details*)

AREA 1: The steps from the cellar area lead down at a steep angle for some 30 feet before one enters the dark chamber. At the south end of the chamber stands a large, garish mouth as tall as a man, which emits wisps of foul air. As the characters enter the room, a deep, low voice emits from the area of the mouth.

The sound has the effect of a *fear* spell. It does not affect those who are evil or who worship Unklar (yes, the gods know). A save versus fear (CL 3) must be made or the character refuses to go any further. Any attempt to force the character to go further results in his fight or flight. This effect lasts for four hours. A character can be affected by this mouth’s spell-like ability only once per day.

There is no door in the room; rather, one must go through the mouth to proceed. Beyond is a hallway with a permanent *darkness* spell cast upon it. At the end of that hall is a secret door. It opens automatically when 120 pounds or more in weight is on the 5 ft. x 5 ft. area in front of the door.

AREA 2: This is a guard room and 2–4 members of the Cabal are always here. One or two will be asleep at any given time. They will fire upon anyone they do not recognize. The doors to this room are locked and barred. The doors must be beaten down to enter. The room contains several beds, a barrel full of crossbow bolts, six heavy crossbows, a table and the bric-a-brac of ancient fantasy world lives. Should anyone enter the northern hallway who is not a member of the Cabal, one of the guards goes to Area 7 to give warning to those below.

CABAL GUARDS x2-4 (These are lawful evil, 0-level conscripts whose vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 5, AC 13. Their primary attribute is strength. They wear leather armor and shield and carry a short sword and 1d10 gp each.)

AREA 3: The door to this room is blocked and locked. Inside is a single cot and table with a chair pulled up to it.

AREA 4: The door to this room is locked and barred. Within is a large guard dog. On the floor is a smattering of bones the dog chews on. A torch is always lit in this room. If anyone the dog does not recognize enters the room, it barks, then attacks. The barking rouses the priest in Area 6.

GUARD DOG (This creature's vital stats are HD 3d4, HP 9, and AC 12. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a bite for 1d4 damage.)

AREA 5: This room contains a rack with several cloaks hanging from it.

AREA 6: This chamber once housed a massive shrine to Unklar. The shrine was destroyed long ago, but the current occupants are in the process of rebuilding it. There are several large blocks of marble in the room and some cutting tools. A table is pushed up against the west wall and upon it are some paper and chalk and a small statue of Unklar.

A priest is in here as well. He is a master carver and is in the process of making the first cuts into the marble. He attacks anyone who enters the room who is not a member of the Cabal. If he has warning given by the dog in Area 4, he prepares himself for battle by casting his *bles*, and other combat spells prior to the characters coming in. This priest's personal gear is located elsewhere in the complex.

PRIEST (He is a lawful evil, 5th level cleric whose vital stats are HP 27, AC 12. His primary attributes are strength, wisdom, and intelligence. His significant attributes are strength 14 and dexterity 14. He wears a leather jerkin and carries a large hammer.)

AREA 7: This is another guard room. The hallway is empty except for a few crates.

AREA 7A: This room houses six guards and a priest. There are several bunks in here but little else. Half the occupants are asleep at any given time of day or night. The others are on duty. They keep an eye out for intruders. Using the arrow slits in the north wall, they will fire upon anyone who enters the area who does not appear to be a member of the Cabal. Wearing any clothing from other Cabal members will cause them to think twice about attacking.

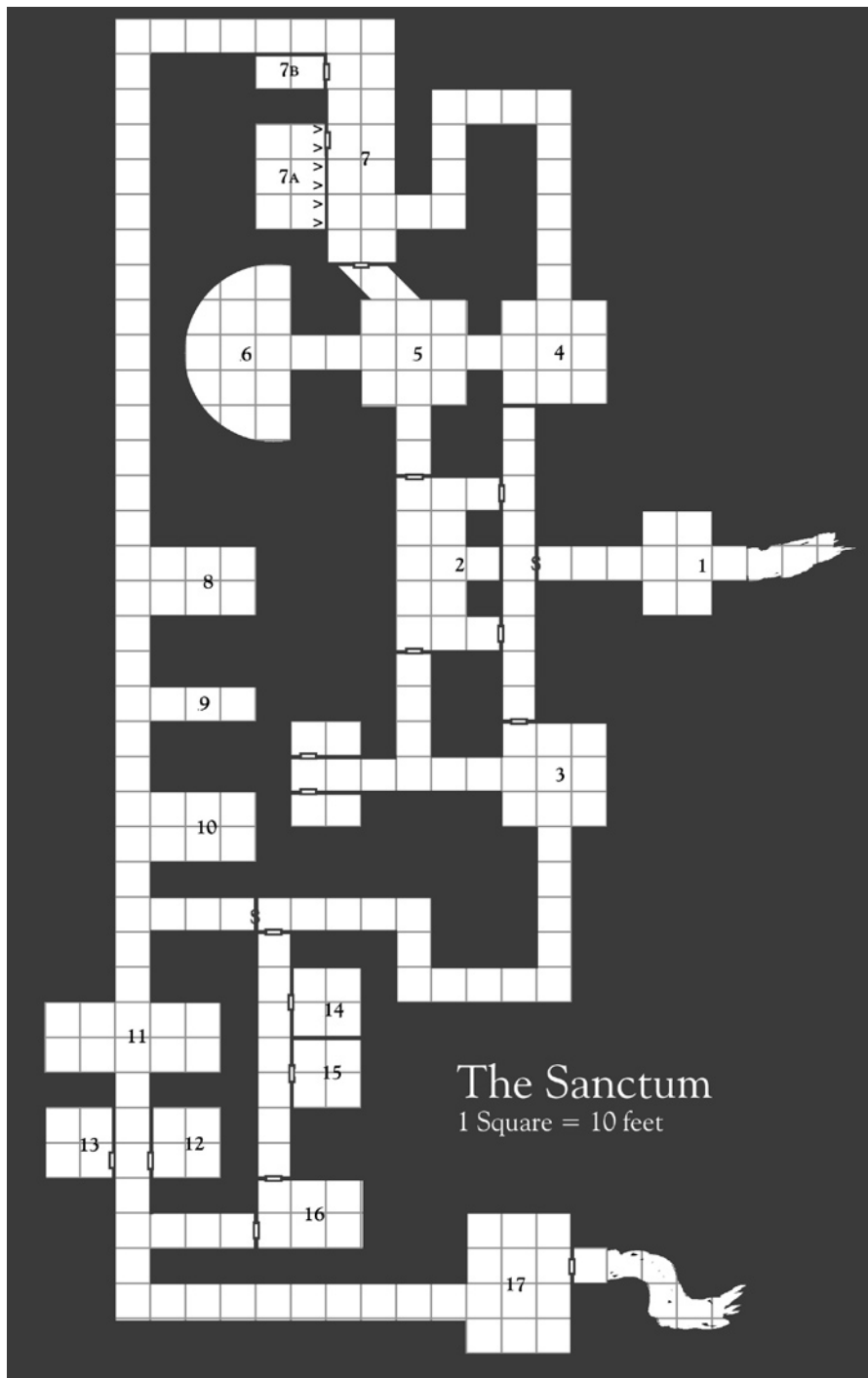
PRIEST (He is a lawful evil, 4th level cleric whose vital stats are HP 20, AC 13. His primary attributes are strength, wisdom and intelligence. His significant attributes are wisdom 14 and charisma 13. He wears a +1 leather jerkin and carries a +1 large hammer.)

CABAL GUARDS x6 (These are lawful evil, 0-level conscripts whose vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 5, AC 13. Their primary attribute is strength. They wear leather armor and shield and carry a short sword and 1d10 gp each.)

AREA 7B: The closet contains foodstuffs and clothing.

AREA 8: This closet contains clothing and food.

AREA 9: Several dozen large empty cages are in here.



AREA 10: The corpses of five people are laid out on tables in here. These corpses are used by Nefrous to create flesh golems.

AREA 11: An empty bookcase, three chairs, and a table are in this chamber. Should a fight be occurring in this area, this is the room where everyone converges to engage intruders. Otherwise, the room is empty.

AREA 12: Four acolytes live in this room. They sleep on straw mats on the floor. A large bucket of water sits in one corner.

***ACOLYTES x4** (These lawful evil 2nd level human clerics' vital stats are: HP 9, AC 10. Their primary attributes are wisdom, intelligence, and strength. They wear priestly vestments and carry maces.)*

AREA 13: Nefrous uses this room to create his flesh golems. Well, will use, as he has only created one and it is wandering around in the labyrinth. There are all manner of cutting instruments in here as well as sewing instruments. There is a large wooden table covered in blood and a shelf full of powders, liquids, and other paraphernalia used to create the golems. There is also a book on the shelf which gives instructions on how to create flesh golems; the book may only be used by clerics dedicated to evil gods.

AREA 14: This room houses four Cabal guards. They sleep on straw mats.

AREA 15: This room houses four Cabal guards. They sleep on straw mats.

AREA 16: This is Nefarious Iout's room. It is filled with many sumptuous furnishings, and it screams of decadence. Some of the furnishings have been taken from the Keep and others brought in or purchased from above. There are two large plush chairs with many cushions, a wide oaken table, a poster bed covered with crushed-velvet feather pillows, several armoires, three trunks, a small table, and three large braziers in the room.

Everything here is very expensive and nice. There is silverware, candle holders, and other mundane items worth 400 gp should the characters care to pilfer everything. A large tapestry on the wall will sell for 500 gp to the right buyer but more than likely 50 gp in this region. The armoires contain clothing and a few other items such as shoes, hats, staves, and frippery for wearing around town. The trunks are the only things that contain objects of real value.

Trunk 1. This trunk is locked (CL 3) and contains many fine pieces of clothing. It also contains a white ermine robe that prevents anyone from detecting the alignment of the person wearing it.

Trunk 2. This trunk is locked but is easily picked (CL 0, +3 bonus to any attempt). Many personal items are located in here as Nefrous is quite a fastidious dandy. There are soaps, perfumes, combs, pins, silver mirrors, and similar items, worth around 150 gp. The trunk has a false bottom; a simple catch is located on the hinges that, when pulled, releases the bottom, which can then be pulled up. Within the false bottom is 1,000 gp worth of jewelry, mostly rings, medallions, and necklaces.

Trunk 3. This trunk is locked (CL 6) and trapped (CL 6). When opened, the trap springs and a vial of poisonous gas is released.

The gas causes 1d6 points of damage and makes the person groggy for 1d4 turns (–1 on all dexterity and constitution checks). The trunk contains several boxes, vials, and small boxes contained all manner of materials for use in spell-casting altogether around 500 gp worth of materials.

AREA 17: This chamber has two guards in it. One is usually asleep. The door leads to a tunnel that descends a little before entering the labyrinth proper.

***CABAL GUARDS x2** (These are lawful evil human 0-level conscripts whose vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 5 and AC 13. Their primary attribute is strength. They wear leather armor and shield and carry a short sword and 1d10 gp each.)*

THE BLACK PITS

The Black Pits are located in the sewer system beneath Ludensheim near the Sanctum. Locating this area is fairly difficult, as access to it is through a small off-shoot tunnel from the main sewers. As there are numerous small tunnels like this leading off from the main sewer works, it is nearly impossible to identify the right one without a guide or a map, or some other device allowing for finding paths or locations.

Numerous members of the Cabal know the location of the Black Pits, and if forced, can reveal its location. Also, should any character be captured, Nefrous may decide to throw them into the Pits to die rather than execute the character himself (a classic bad-guy move). A tracker who is keeping a vigilant eye while in the sewers may note the passage of people through the tunnel leading here (CL 3). Other than these methods, the Castle Keeper may just have the characters stumble across it because a powerful magic item is located in here.

This area contains a series of deep, rough-cut pits connected by small passages. The whole area was constructed for the rulers of Geerdes Gag. Into these pits were tossed those who disobeyed the law, were insolent, or who in any way displeased the lords and they wished them to experience fear before being devoured. For, within this maze of rooms and tunnels lived many otyughs. These foul creatures chased down and devoured anyone thrown in here. When the city was razed by the crusading armies of New Aenoch, this is one of the few areas never destroyed and only cursorily explored. Today, only three otyughs remain down in these holes.

Over the years, sewage overflow and an errant explorer have made their way in here. This is the only sustenance the otyughs have had. Searching the area recovers nothing but the debris from years of scavenging by the otyughs (other than in the two areas described below). Recently, Nefrous has had those who displease him thrown in here, giving the otyughs a little more food. Most of those who were thrown in here were stripped of all goods before entering.

The tunnels have very smooth walls, are five to 10 feet wide and have 10-foot-high vaulted ceilings. The rooms are all round and quite similar, with smooth walls and 20-foot-high vaulted ceilings. The only thing distinguishing the rooms is the debris (very little of that) and the number of entries or exits. It should all be very confusing to move through-as was its intent.

The otyughs wander aimlessly through the Pits looking for any fresh meat or debris to consume. They can smell anyone moving down here and move towards them. The first turn the characters are in the Black Pits, there is a 1 in 10 chance of meeting an otyugh. For each turn thereafter, the chances increase by one such that on the 5th turn there is a 5 in 10 chance of meeting one. A die is rolled for each otyugh. By that 5th turn, assuming none of the otyughs have been encountered, the Castle Keeper should make three rolls. Anything 5 or under indicates an encounter. There is not much else in the Black Pits, as the otyughs keep it fairly clean.

OTYUGHS x3 (These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 6d8, AC 17, HP 24, 31 and 34. They attack with two tentacles for 1d8 damage and a bite for 2d4 damage. Special: disease, improved grab, dark vision, and light vulnerability.)

AREA 1: A set of steep steps leads down to a wide platform in a circular room. There is a 40-foot drop to the floor below. The walls to the platform are angled inwards. A pile of rope sits on the platform.

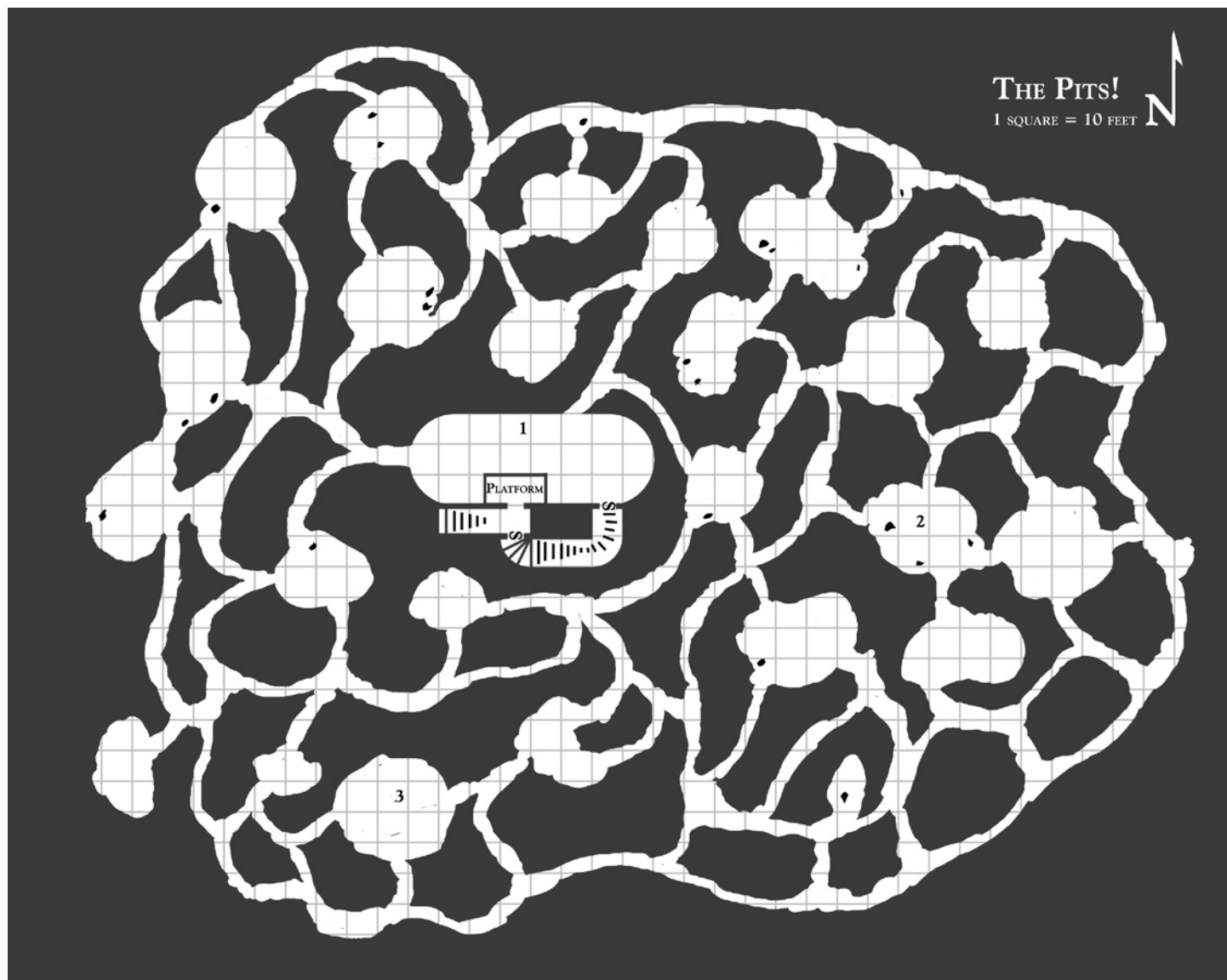
The rope is used to lower people into the pit. There is a secret door here that Nefrous has not found. It has not been used in ages and is very well hidden, with a CL 4 for detection. It was well

made, though, and opens easily by pushing one of the stones on the wall. There are panels located on both sides of both doors.

AREA 2: Some time after the razing of Geerdes Gag, a knight who was helping to clear the labyrinth stumbled upon these rooms. In the process of exploring them he took a mortal blow, died, and was consequently consumed by the otyughs. Some of his rusted and worthless gear remains scattered about. Amongst this are two items of note. A sword, which appears well worn, lies against the wall next to a rusty shield. Once the sword is picked up, though, it glows with a faint blue light.

Clearing away all the accumulated grime of the years on the sword allows the full glow of the sword to come out. This is a *sword of ungerm slaying*. When used against ungerm, the sword receives a +3 to hit and +6 to damage; it provides a +2 to hit and +2 to damage against any other opponents. It also casts a 20-foot diameter sphere of blue light when carried unsheathed.

Amongst the other debris is a golden cord. A *detect magic* spell reveals a powerful enchantment. This cord is part of the *horn of opening*. When wrapped around the sundered halves of the horn of opening it binds them together. Other than this, the cord can



sell for as much as 1,000 gp to a knowledgeable vendor—though a regular merchant might offer around 25 gp for the apparent artistic value. In addition to the above, there are 350 gp worth of jewelry and other durables amongst the debris in this room.

AREA 3: A member of the Cabal scryed a great magic in this area and came wandering down here to find it. He was met by the hungry otyughs and devoured. All that remains are his cloak and some of his personal gear. Amongst the debris is a small crystal sphere of magical nature. When the command word is spoken (“detect”), the sphere detects the most powerful magic item within a 500-yard radius, but no other item. As one approaches the item, the glow becomes brighter and brighter to the point it illuminates a 50-yard radius. This item can be both a good thing and a bad thing. Play it up.

ENVIRONS OF LUDENSHEIM

GOT MILK

About a day’s travel south of the town of Ludensheim, lies the small walled manor house belonging to the farmer Edward Buroface. Edward is one of the oldest residents of the area. He settled on this particular bend of the road when there was little road. He built his house next to a small stream that came from the Barren Wood and spilled itself into the Hruesen River. When he first built his house, Edward was a very young man and had no family. Stout and brave, he shrugged off the dangers of the area. Over the years, the town grew in size and Edward in wealth. The dangers of the region, of course, grew as well. Red Caps’ raids caused him great losses in livestock and the like. Further depredations from other raiders, from the temple to the west, caused him to build walls around his

home and to fortify it. He set great dogs to guard his livestock and his family which had grown large and robust by this time, in the increased comfort of their walled compound. He lived then for a great while in peace, and grew prosperous, for the lesser creatures of the Hruesen were no threat to him and his family.

At no time did Edward, older now, gray and a bit grizzled, turn to the town of Ludensheim for aid, for he rightfully suspects that the merchants themselves are in some way responsible for the ever-growing problems of the Hruesen River Valley.

But lately, his problems have markedly increased. A giant has come to the roost. It has settled on the banks of a small pond a half mile or so from Edward’s fortified house, and from there it raids his livestock, picking the fittest of his cattle to feast upon. Recently, the giant has become a little bolder: daily he demands Edward turn over vegetables from his stores, bake him bread, and deliver fresh butter for the bread. Edward has had little recourse but to deliver the goods for fear of his family.

Edward is desperate to be rid of the giant and warmly welcomes the characters into his home in an attempt to convince them to aid him. He offers them food and shelter. If the characters manage to drive off or kill the giant, Edward and his family are very grateful. Assuming the characters are generous in their dealings with the farmer, they may strike up a long-lasting friendship with him and his family and find a warm house of refuge in the future.

STONE GIANT (*This neutral creature’s vital stats are HD 10(d8), HP 54, AC 24. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a slam for 2d8 points of damage. He has no weapon per se, but does wield a cow with deadly proficiency, striking opponents for 2d6+6 points of damage. He is able to throw rocks, has twilight vision and dark vision.*)

The giant is open to negotiation and leaves the area if the characters can convince him of richer hunting grounds further south, something that does exist in the Barren Wood around the Slag Heap. If they do not, he fights them ferociously. However, the giant does not suspect that the farmer would have acquired aid, so the first time he comes to Edward’s house he is utterly surprised by the characters’ presence. If a battle ensues, he immediately grabs the nearest cow by the hind legs and begins swinging it as a weapon, smashing whichever characters come within reach.

TREASURE: The stone giant has a large sack within which he keeps all his valuables. He has a sleeping roll made of a large bearskin, somewhat threadbare and smelling horrifically; he has small bag of animal bones, charms for the giant; a ball of tangled rope, another small satchel with a 212gp, a scroll with *detect snares* and pits on it, a +2 dagger, 14 +1 arrows, *rope of climbing*, and a book titled: *Edible Herbs and Plants of Gausumland*.

GYPSY ENCAMPMENT

A caravan of gypsies has moved off road and set up camp for a few weeks while they decide their next destination. The gypsies have been persecuted in the south and recently moved north in hopes of a kinder reception. However, because their arrival is oft times viewed with displeasure, they have taken care to stay out of sight, staying on the back roads and off the beaten track. One member



of the group, Mellan Fostwyth, is planning to travel to Botkinburg and determine what the reaction of the villagers to the gypsies might be. Until such time as he returns, the gypsies have made a temporary camp about five miles off the road.

Once located, the gypsies are wary but cordial until they determine the intent of the characters. If they consider them friendly or at least not hostile, several of the gypsies offer to perform a play or some other form of entertainment for the characters. They also ask for gold, "to help us through the hard times," they claim. Virtually any amount makes them happy. If none is forthcoming, they do not force the issue but are certainly not well disposed to the characters in the future should they ever need aid.

Many of the members of this band are simply looking for a place to settle, others are escaping persecution in the south, and some are wanted criminals; but the core and leadership of the group resides with a band of traveling minstrels who perform for money and occasionally rob or pilfer from the "too wealthy" or "those who can afford to shed a few pounds." There are 28 of them in all; eight females, six children, and 14 males over the age of 16.

The significant members of the band are:

Patka, the chief, is a wanted criminal in the far south. This is not for any petty crimes, though. He is wanted for treasonous activities against a lord. It seems his songs were a bit too critical of the lord's rule. The lord has a 500gp bounty upon his head.

PATKA (*He is a neutral good, human, 4th level bard whose vital stats are HP 16, AC 13. His primary attributes are charisma, dexterity, and wisdom. His significant attributes are dexterity 14 and charisma 15. He carries dagger, crossbow, short sword, leather armor, 2pp, 12gp, 120sp, and owns a lyre of enchantment that allows a +2 bonus to all charisma checks.*)

Ena is a distant relative of Patka is who decided to travel with him, as she was very dissatisfied with her life in the south-dissatisfaction derived primarily from an arranged marriage. She yearns now for a place to settle and call home, as travels through the wilder areas of the world have worn her out. It is not that she is averse to danger; rather it is the travel that is weighing her down.

ENA (*She is a lawful neutral, human, female, 5th level bard whose vital stats are HP 31, AC 17. Her primary attributes are wisdom, charisma, and intelligence. Her significant attributes are dexterity 18 and cha 15. She carries leather armor, short bow, short sword, dagger, diadem of charm resistance which allows a +2 save vs. charm spells or effects, gloves of defense which confer a +2 to her armor class, a harp 100gp, and 350sp.*)

Garth Mangle is a vile little man with little to offer the lot of the group he is traveling with. However, he has put on a friendly face and acts nicely toward everyone, as he is desperately in love with Ena. He has become aware that his amorous desires will never be returned, so is now looking for a good way out of the band-perhaps at Botkingburg or traveling with another group of adventurers will give him further opportunity. He is capable of great deception and more than willing to travel with someone for quite a time before abandoning him or her in a moment of need-with their goods if possible.

GARTH (*Garth is a neutral evil, human 3rd level rogue whose vital stats are HP 13, AC 12. His primary attributes are dexterity, charisma, and intelligence. His significant attribute is charisma 14. He carries a dagger, short bow, leather armor, 20g, and 45sp.*)

In addition to those characters described above, the caravan consists of two 2nd level fighters, four 1st level fighters, three 2nd level rogues, one 4th level cleric, two 1st level barbarians and one 5th level ranger.

Within the wagon train are the following items: 300 days worth of food, rope, woodworking tools, clothing for winter and summer, many musical instruments, leather making tools, pots pans and various other materials. Of interest are two large kits used for costume making and make-up, a chest with 20gp, 50sp, and 256cp in it.

NPCS OF IMPORT

JOSKER NITAL [Captain of the City Guard]: When Nital was asked to leave his residence in the Keep, he decided to move to the Griffon Room. He now resides in an attic apartment there. He has no loyalty to Heimer, though he retains a residual loyalty to the city and his position as Captain of the City Guard. He is not actively seeking to bring about the downfall of Heimer, but would certainly not be opposed to it. As events unfold, it will be necessary to convince him of Heimer's involvement with the Cabal or his evil in order to get him to act directly against the Baronial Guard or Heimer.

THERES CRULE [Personal Bodyguard of Baron Heimer]: He also acts as the Baron's personal manservant and rarely carries anything more than clothing and a dagger-though he has a staff that looks like a walking stick but is magical. Theres rarely uses the staff, saving its waning powers for times of great need.

Theres is a thoroughly evil person. Theres works for Nefrous, and his loyalty is in that direction. This does not mean that he will go to all lengths to protect Heimer. Nefrous, for his part, could care less about Theres, as he is but one of many disposable pawns in his game. Theres detests and fears Josker Nital and wants him dead. He is only awaiting an opportune moment to have him dispatched.

NEFROUS IOUT [Leader of the cabal of priests who control Dietbold Heimer and the Baronial Guard]: Nefrous is old beyond measure (he does not even remember his own age) and was around in the time when Unklar ruled the world. He has survived these many years after the fall of that terrible lord by remaining secretive and sticking to the hidden pathways of his old masters. Though his postings during the reign of Unklar were far from here, he came to this region to align himself with any of the powerful princes who also survived the fall of Unklar. This brought him to Festung Akt and the lord of that frightening place, Balonakalon. It is to Balonakalon that Nefrous owes his allegiance.

As instructed some years ago, Nefrous took the *Fell Axe* and gave it to someone whom he believed would be easy to control and who could gain a position of power in the region. This was, of course, Dietbold Heimer. He has since remained close to and is sometimes a direct accomplice of Dietbold's in his various activities over the years. It was not until Dietbold came to Ludensheim, however, that Nefrous had taken a more direct involvement with Dietbold.

Nefrous is the power behind the throne. He instructs Dietbold in all things, and many of the changes in Ludensheim recently are a direct result of the policies designed by Nefrous. Dietbold's sanity is slipping; every day he becomes more paranoid (a result of possessing the *Fell Axe*) and so remains more and more within the confines of his Keep; this is not to Nefrous' dislike. He would prefer that when Dietbold is killed no one will miss his passing. That plan is a few years off.

Nefrous' plan is to slowly take over the city from within by removing the Crusaders and their allies from power and replacing them with people more to his liking and willing to do his bidding. It is a difficult game, as all must be kept secret and, if he should succeed, all outward appearances must be that of a law-abiding and good city. Only through subterfuge can the influence of Unklar be spread again. To this end, the City Guard has been replaced with a Baronial Guard and all opposing powers moved out of the Keep. Nefrous is currently busy trying to have the Crusader Priests removed from the Temple Mount, and has nearly succeeded.

As events unfold, Nefrous' greatest concern is being caught. He will only fight if absolutely necessary and take any course of action to escape. He will try his best to keep a lid on things and use his minions to attack, kill, or dissuade any from involvement in his affairs. Again, he avoids direct confrontation if at all possible and quickly abandons his allies should it appear things are unraveling in a manner he can't fix. When pressed, he escapes overland to Festung Akt or tries to get back to his personal chambers and teleport there. His second concern in the same vein is the recovery of the *Fell Axe*. This powerful magic item is very useful to the forces of Unklar. He will kill Heimer, bring him with him, or steal the *Fell Axe* if possible, and then make his escape.

NADIA [Waitress, scullion maid, and prostitute at the Griffon Room]: Not a terribly discerning person, Nadia does a lively trade in her goods and makes a tidy profit for both herself and the Griffon Room. Her income is enhanced only slightly by petty thievery (undertaken only in those circumstances where being detected or found out is nigh on impossible).

Nadia is, of course, more than she appears. Nadia is in league with Nefrous Iout, the leader of the Cabal. She has been given the task of staying in the Griffon Room and keeping a vigilant eye upon Josker Nital and the City Guard. She also keeps an ear open and an eye peeled for any rumors or activities of interest to Nefrous.

Nadia is a tall, flaxen-haired beauty who uses bashful looks and virginal mannerisms to engage any prospective client or a person in whose activities she is interested. She is willing to spend days or weeks trying to coax information out of an individual should it be necessary. All interesting information is passed on to Nefrous Iout.

Nadia keeps all her possessions well hidden in the rafters in her attic room. She rarely dresses in anything other than a smock coat.

Nadia's loyalty to Nefrous is from coin and nothing else. Nadia is a member of a cryptic organization named "Jade." This organization sells its services to any buyer willing to pay the price. These services include theft, murder, assassination, spying, or any evil deed of which you might imagine, and even some of which you can't.

NIGEL WIGGINSFIRTH AND PAMPIN MITTLENIN [Halfling thieves at home at the Gold Pan]: Nigel and Pampin are fairly wise thieves in that they do not steal from locals and only rob from travelers in the bazaar, the Griffon Room, or other similar locales. Their front is that of fishermen. The two spend their mornings fishing, afternoons selling fish, and evenings stealing. The entire thing is a setup as they use their stall in the bazaar to pick their targets. Although they could make a decent and honest living fishing, they are simply bent to pilfering. Their targets are rarely the wealthy or powerful, usually merchants and the like.

The two possess a wealth of knowledge about the comings and goings of the inhabitants of Ludensheim. They know of the entry to the sewers by the towers and various other places. The Castle Keeper should use the two of them to give important information to the characters or even help the characters should they need it. Ultimately though, the two could care less what happens to Ludensheim or its inhabitants and will never directly involve themselves in any power struggle. Should the situation become untenable, they simply plan to leave and head south.

TIDEOS WATE [Servant at the Keep]: Tideos seems to be a simple servant and nothing more. Yet, he is a big player in the affairs around town. Because no one ever pays him any attention (other than beatings for poor service), he is able to get away with many illicit activities. He steals things, breaks things, messes up orders, and causes all manner of small havoc in the Cerrok Hruesenette. He acts somewhat "dumb" to all, but by no means is dumb. He is quick-witted, quick footed, and enjoys watching the minor aches and pains his actions cause for the others in the house. Although he considers himself a prankster, should he ever be found out his limbs, torso, and head will festoon a half-dozen trees outside of town.

Tideos is difficult to meet, but should the characters have a chance to encounter him, Tideos takes advantage of it. He will likely see in the characters a chance to wreak an awful joke upon his masters. He is also very well informed of events in the house and quite aware of the Cabal's presence. He frequently is sent to the bazaar to purchase foodstuffs. The characters may encounter him there. He occasionally slinks off to the Pan for a drink or two, and the characters may find him there as well.

BRIFER RUSTGUT [Proprietor of the Gold Pan]: He was once a gold panner but quickly realized there was more money to be had selling brew and rooms to panners than panning. Of late his business has suffered, and he has had his fill of Ludensheim and wants to leave as soon as possible. He is on the verge of simply abandoning the tavern and heading out. Should events unravel in a violent manner or truly chaotic nature, he will simply pack his bags and go, suggesting that others "enjoy the interesting turn of events in Ludensheim." He will sell the Gold Pan to virtually anyone for the meager price of 500 gp. That, of course, must meet with the approval of the authorities—something unlikely to happen unless the current baron is removed from power. Brifer does not involve himself in any struggle for power and is an unlikely source of knowledge about the area, its history, or politics. He is simply quiet.

OTTO BREMGER AND DARIN HIRST [Proprietors of the Griffon Room]: These are both predisposed towards a lawful and orderly authority running the town. The current state of affairs is not

to their liking and they would prefer that Dietbold Heimer be replaced. However, they are discreet and quiet about their desires, knowing that confronting him is fraught with many dangers. They remain quietly supportive (free rooms, medical service, food and the like) to those opposing the Baron but not publicly. They will not throw their weight behind anyone opposing the Baron until a certain, favorable outcome is apparent (or fairly certain at least).

TRISTAN FALSOUTH [Proprietor of the Drooling Dwarf]: Tristan is a mean spirited, aging man who once owned a large tavern in the south. He lost it in a gambling match to a dwarf named Oolin Nobfoot. He is not fond of dwarves. He is not fond of much, actually, and cares not what occurs in this city.

ROBERT, FARN AND MIDDLE [Patrons of the Drooling Dwarf and Cabal members]: These three are servants of the Cabal who carry some of the unsavory tasks in town. They are little more than toughs with bad spirits and drinking problems. They are found at the Drooling Dwarf when not carrying out orders from the Cabal or sleeping.

CAPTAIN KLEFFERT VON GRAFF [Captain of the Baronial Guard]: He is a foul man of particularly evil disposition. The road from bandit to Captain of the Baronial Guard is long, and many nefarious deeds and questionable contacts have brought him to this position. A survivor, he has thrown his lot in with this group solely for the position offered. Little else ties him here. Should it appear that he is in an untenable situation or that the whole façade he labors under is about to collapse, he attempts to escape. If ever in a fight, upon reaching 50% of his hit points, he attempts to surrender or run away. Kleffert has amassed a tidy sum of money and goods he keeps hidden in a hollow log in the woods south of town. This includes 600 gp in coin, 1,000 gp in jewelry, a +2 longbow, and a *potion of invisibility*. He invariably visits the trove before making any escape.

SERGEANT CHARLES OTTO MURTEL [Sergeant of the Baronial Guard]: Charles is an old hand at war and has fought on both sides of many conflicts. His loyalty to Heimer is questionable but his loyalty to gold is not. He is a mercenary's mercenary. Charles has had an uncanny ability to choose the losing side of almost every conflict he has been in. Though a survivor, he has little to show for years of bloody warfare other than a strong fighting arm and a strong will to survive. Charles will turn on his masters for as little as 100 gp and fight for the characters or pass along information. He frequents the Gold Pan.

LADY SLIEVER [Wife of Baron Heimer]: She and the baron have been married for only a few years. It is an arranged marriage she cares nothing for and in a position she cares even less for. Any chance to escape and maintain her status will be readily taken up.

MASTER BLISTING [Baronial advisor]: Master Blisting is an old cuss and associate (not friend) of Heimer's. He is not an altogether evil man but is exceedingly greedy, secretive, and power hungry. He advises Heimer but eventually hopes to replace him, so has developed a very familiar relationship with Nefrous, the head of the Cabal. To meet that end, he will allow Heimer to die, but try his best to not allow the Cabal to be defeated.

SILVANUS [Master of the Keep]: The old and wizened master of the Keep has seen several barons come and go. He is unhappy

with the current state of affairs in the house, but by tradition (and exhaustion), resigned to it. He manages the daily affairs of the Cerrok Hruesenette. Silvanus is all business and harsh on all of his servants.

DIBBLEGURM [Herbalist]: Dibblegurm is a weaselly gnome who runs a stall in the Bazaar. He is in with the Cabal though by no means part of its inner circle. In fact, he knows very little of what is actually occurring only that he is making some extra gold while working for them. He has no loyalty to them outside of gold and quickly leaves the vicinity should any untoward events occur.

FREYAN NOOSEGUARD [Guildmaster of the Crossed Swords Blacksmith and Guild]: Not an altogether unfriendly person, he is gruff and slightly superior. He does not like the current leadership in Ludensheim and is aligning himself against it in any upcoming fight.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTER STATS

CITY GUARD

CAPTAIN JOSKER NITAL (*He is a lawful good 4th level knight whose vital stats are HP 42 and AC 19. His primary attributes are: charisma, intelligence, and strength. His significant attributes are: strength 13 and charisma 14. He wears a +2 large metal shield and full chain suit, and carries a morningstar, a +1 long sword, and has 1,000 gp worth of jewelry coin and other possessions.*)

SERGEANT MERLIK TERRNER (*He is a lawful good 3rd level human fighter whose vital stats are HP 22 and AC 18. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and intelligence. His significant attributes are strength 15 and dexterity 13. He wears a large metal shield and full chain suit and carries a morningstar, a +1 flail, and has 100 gp worth of jewelry coin and other possessions.*)

CITY GUARD x24 (*These are neutral good, 2nd level human fighters whose vital stats are HP 13 and AC 14. Their primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. Their significant attribute is strength 13. They wear scale mail and carry a pike or axe (50/50) and short swords, and have 20–60gp worth of jewelry and coin upon them.*)

BARONIAL GUARD

CAPTAIN KLEFFERT VON GRAFF (*He is a neutral evil 7th level human ranger whose vital stats are HP 36 and AC 18. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. His significant attribute is dexterity 14. He wears full chain mail, a shield, ring of +3 magic resistance, and carries a +2 flail and 250gp worth of jewelry and coin.*)

SERGEANT CHARLES OTTO MURTEL (*He is a neutral 5th level human fighter whose vital stats are HP 45 and AC 15. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. He wears a mail hauberk and carries a broadsword and 50 gp worth of coin and jewelry.*)

BARONIAL GUARD AXMEN x 6 (*These are neutral, 2nd level human fighters whose vital stats are HP 13 and AC 15. Their primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. Their significant attributes are strength 14. They wear scale mail and shields, carry battle axes, and have 10–20gp worth of jewelry and coin upon them.*)

BARONIAL GUARD CROSSBOWMEN x 10 (These are neutral, 1st level human fighters whose vital stats are HP 9 and AC 15. Their primary attributes are: strength, dexterity, and constitution. Their significant attributes are dexterity 14. They wear scale mail, and carry crossbows, short swords, and have 10-20 gp worth of jewelry and coin upon them.)

BARONIAL GUARD PIKEMEN x12 (These are neutral, 0-level human conscripts whose vital stats are: HD 1d8, HP 5 and AC 12. Their primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. Their significant attributes are: strength 14. They wear leather armor and carry pikes and have 1-10 gp worth of jewelry and coin upon them.)

NPCs

DIETBOLD HEIMER (He is a neutral lawful evil human 7th level human fighter whose vital stats are HD 7d10, AC 20, and HP 65. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity and constitution. His significant attributes are strength 14, dexterity 16 and charisma 14. He wears +1 scale mail, carries a +1 shield of stunning and uses the Fell Axe in combat – see that magic items description for details. He wears a necklace worth 50gp, three rings worth 100gp each, a jewelled belt worth 200gp and a small metal crown with a single emerald in it worth 1000gp.

Special abilities: Dietbold's excessive paranoia has made his nearly impossible to surprise or take unawares and increased his senses of danger, generally increasing his ability to ward off attacks. All hide or move silent attempts are made at a -5 when Dietbold has a chance of detecting them. A sneak attack minimally requires a wisdom check against Dietbold at -5. Flank attacks do not receive a bonus and a back attack bonus to hit is only +1. The shield of stunning can be used as a weapon and if a successful hit is made it delivers 1d6 damage and stuns the person for 1d4 rounds such that they can not act but stumble around.)

NEFROUS IOUT (He is a lawful evil, human 8th level human illusionist whose vital stats are HD 8d4, AC 19, and HP 29. His primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence and charisma. He significant attributes are: Dexterity 16, Intelligence 17 and constitution 14. He wears a Circlet of Persuasion, an amulet of natural armor +5, a ring of protection +2, carries 2 vials of dust of disappearance, a robe of blending, a ring of evasion and a vial of heal serious wounds.)

MASTER BLISTING (He is a chaotic neutral 6th level human wizard whose vital stats are: HP 15 and AC 16. His prime attributes are dexterity, intelligence, and wisdom. His significant attributes are intelligence 17 and dexterity 18. He wears a +3 ring of protection, a ring of damage absorption that absorbs 1-3 hit points of damage per blow per round, and carries two healing potions, a potion of haste, and a wand of magic missiles with 33 charges. He has 500 gp in coin and finery.)

DARIN HIRST (He is a neutral good 0-level human commoner whose vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 10, and HP 3. His primary attribute is intelligence. His significant attribute is intelligence 16. He wears common clothing and carries a dagger and 100-200 gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

OTTO BREMGER (He is a neutral good 0-level commoner whose

vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 10, and HP 5. His primary attribute is charisma. His significant attribute is charisma 13. He wears common clothing and carries a dagger and 50-100 gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

NIGEL WIGGINSFIRTH (He is a chaotic neutral, halfling, 4th level rogue whose vital stats are HD 4d6, AC 15 and HP 16. His primary attributes are dexterity and intelligence. His significant attributes are dexterity 17. He wears +1 leather armor and carries a short sword conferring +2 to initiative rolls, sundry gear, and has 400 gp worth of goods and coin hidden in his room.)

PAMPIN MITTLENIN (He is a chaotic neutral 3rd level halfling rogue whose vital stats are HD 3d6, AC 13 and HP 9. His primary attributes are dexterity and wisdom. His significant attribute is dexterity 13. He wears leather armor, and carries a short sword, small crossbow, sundry gear, and has 300 gp worth of goods and coin hidden in his room.)

BRIFER RUSTGUT (He is a lawful neutral dwarf 3rd level ranger whose vital stats are: HD 3d10, AC 15 and HP 20. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and intelligence. His significant attribute is strength 13. He wears mail hauberk, and carries a +2 battle axe, short bow, sundry gear, and has 1,200 gp worth of goods and coin hidden in his room.)

TIDEOS WATE (He is a chaotic evil 4th level rogue whose vital stats are: HD 4d6, AC 12 and HP 21. His primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence, and wisdom. His significant attribute is dexterity 16. He carries little and owns less, but has managed to steal away almost 500 gp worth of goods, now hidden in the attic of the Palace.)

TRISTAN (He is a 0-level neutral human commoner whose vital stats



are HD 1d6, AC 10 and HP 4. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. His significant attribute is constitution 14. He wears normal clothing and carries a club or dagger in a fight. He has 1–10 gp in coin on his person and has amassed a fortune amounting to a whopping 60 gp kept in a lockbox in his room.)

NADIA (She is a lawful evil 4th level half elf assassin whose vital stats are HD 4d6, AC 13 or 15 and HP 13. Her prime attributes are dexterity and wisdom. Her significant attributes are dexterity 14, intelligence 13, and wisdom 14. Special: She is of human lineage. She sometimes wears leather armor, and carries a dagger, a +2 short sword, an ankle band conferring +2 to armor class, three draughts of white poppy, two draughts of mandrake, one draught of meadow saffron and 600 gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

THERES CRULE (He is a lawful evil, 4th level human monk whose vital stats are HD 4d12, AC 14 and HP 37. His prime attributes are constitution, dexterity and intelligence. His significant attributes are dexterity 16 and intelligence 15. He carries clothing, a +2 dagger and a +2 staff of frost with the following spells in it: wall of ice x23 and cone of cold x13.)

LADY SLIEVER (She is a lawful neutral, 0 level human commoner whose vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 4 and AC 10. Her prime attribute is wisdom. Her significant attribute is: con 14. She wears 1000 gp in jewelry and clothing.)

SILVANUS (He is a lawful neutral 0 level human commoner whose vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 2 and AC 10. His prime attribute is intelligence. His significant attribute is intelligence 16. He wears servant's clothing with a purple sash denoting his position and has a ring worth 50 gp. He has 90 gp in coin hidden in the dungeon.)

DIBBLEGURM (He is a neutral evil, 3rd level gnome rogue whose vital stats are: HP 12 and AC 12. His primary attributes are dexterity, constitution and intelligence. His significant attributes are con 13. He carries leather armor a short sword, robe of blending and 200 gp in coin and jewelry.)

FREYAN NOOSEGUARD (He is a neutral good 4th level fighter whose vital stats are HP 29 and AC 20. His primary attributes are strength, constitution and intelligence. His significant attribute is strength 15. He carries +1 plate mail, +2 medium shield, +3 longsword and 200 gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

ROBERT (He is a neutral 2nd level fighter whose vital stats are HP 12, AC 14. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity and constitution. His significant attribute is dexterity 14. He wears leather armor and has a +1 dagger. His other weapons include a short sword and hand axe. He has 50 gp worth of coin and jewelry.)

FARN (He is a chaotic neutral, 2nd level halfling rogue whose vital stats are HP 8, AC 14. His primary attributes are dexterity and charisma. His significant attributes are wisdom 13, dexterity 18, and charisma 14. He carries studded leather armor, dagger, thieves' tools, 6 caltrops and a +1 ring of protection.)

MIDDLER (He is a neutral, 2nd level human fighter whose vital stats are HP 14 and AC 13. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity and constitution. His significant attributes are dexterity 14.

He carries scale mail, crossbow, shortsword and has 200 gp worth of jewelry and coin upon them.)

CABAL BOWMEN (These are neutral evil, 2nd level human fighters whose vital stats are HP 16 and AC 12. Their primary attributes are strength, dexterity and constitution. Their significant attributes are: dexterity 16. They carry heavy crossbows, shortswords and have 10–30 gp worth of jewelry and coin upon them.)

CABAL GUARDS (These are neutral, 0 level human conscripts whose vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3 and AC 11. Their primary attribute is strength. They carry padded armor and short swords.)

THE FELL AXE: In ages past, many weapons were created in the foundries of Aufstrag. A select few of these weapons were imbued with the will of Unklar and given as gifts to opponents or to those Princes the lords of Aufstrag wished to convert to their ways. These powerful magical items succeeded by guile and magic what no gold nor reason nor fear could manage. These weapons converted those who carried them to the ways of Unklar.

This is a large double-bladed axe with a +3 to it's to hit and damage rolls. It confers a +2 to the armor class of the bearer when being used in combat and gives a +1 bonus to all initiative rolls. It has the ability to mask the alignment of the person carrying the axe. They will appear as if they are lawful good. This latter ability can be "seen though" on a successful charisma check (CL 8). It is also cursed. The person who carries the axe converts to lawful evil over a period of one year. Upon picking the axe up, a charisma saving throw must be made (CL 8). Failure indicates the person *wants* to use the axe above all other weapons. Thus begins the conversion process. For the conversion to work, the axe must simply be in close proximity to the character for much of that year and be regularly used in combat.

A5: THE SHATTERED HORN

The adventure presented in the following pages possesses appeal for the ever more foolhardy, umm, I mean brave, adventurer. The locale within which the adventure occurs is far from civilized lands and borders upon those realms ruled entirely by evil, malign, and vile creatures who once ruled the entire world. The adventurers must travel far away from the world of men and, laws to that of the Blighted Screed and thence, to an ancient administrative center named Festung Akt. Here, they discover an ally of the Witch Queen and her erstwhile lord, Balonakalon, as well as other bizarre and maleficent creatures.

The Shattered Horn is designed for a single walk-through by 3-5 characters; it has a challenge rating of 5-8. This may take several gaming sessions to complete. Having run this adventure and playtested it, I should impart upon the Castle Keeper to somehow convey upon their players that time is of the essence, curiosity can kill the cat, there are two peas in this pod, and, as Steve mentioned, if the character's don't settle down and quit acting like "a fart in a frying pan," they'll end up, "happier than a dead pig in the sunshine" (he really did say that, and no, I do not understand it fully).

The Shattered Horn is the most recent adventure in a series beginning with *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*, and continuing through *Slag Heap*, *The Wicked Cauldron*, and *Usurpers of the Fell Axe*. However, this adventure has been designed such that it can be played independently of the series. The Castle Keeper would only be responsible for creating a reason for the characters to come to such a remote and deadly place (discussed in *Involving the Characters* below). In case this adventure is used as a stand-alone, any storylines or plot arcs referred to can easily be ignored or modified without impacting the play of the adventure in your hands.

INTRODUCTION

Festung Akt was constructed ages ago during the early Winter Dark, when Unklar reigned over the world. Originally a way station that marked the final drainage of the great system of canals that sprawled out from the roots of Aufstrag, Festung Akt only later became the tower and fortress it is today. Here, the wastes of Aufstrag slowed to a crawl and emptied onto the fertile plains, the source of their original blight. The distance from the city being as great as it is, the flushed filth only arrived in a slow-moving slag. After a while, the canal (along with its many sister canals) became clogged and its upkeep forgotten. In time, the lords of Aufstrag tore down the small way station and built a fort in its place. The new masters of the tower forgot the canals, if indeed they ever knew of them. At first, Festung Akt served as little more than an outpost overlooking the Avishean Ridge, but as



Unklar's empire expanded ever outward, it became an administrative center for much of the Blighted Screed. Eventually, its utility as such declined, and it has been used variously as a prison, military headquarters, and for other similarly mundane purposes.

In the last century of the long Winter's Dark, Festung Akt had become a prison where criminals, traitors, suspected traitors, those who had fallen out of favor, and others were bound, tortured, interrogated, and then killed. The fortress earned a new name from its ungern commanders: Iggh Nag Teerg, the Torture Gardens.

In the declining decades of Unklar's rule, Festung Akt received little attention as other wars and battles required his attention. The post languished, troops and administrators dispersed or were withdrawn to other realms and few were left to watch over the fortress and the country about. The minor lords who concerned themselves with the management of Unklar's vast empire sought a mere lieutenant who might manage the region without much assistance, for there were few aides to spare in these latter years, as the wars to the north and west were costly. Festung Akt's new lord would need knowledge of the very lands and animals to serve his needs and make the fortress a realm of its own. A druid of dutiful mind, Deuranimus the Crow, was ordered to Festung Akt and told to manage the affairs of the castle and region. Deuranimus took his post shortly before the final collapse of Unklar's realm.

Deuranimus had served as a minor assistant to a troop in the Blighted Screed for a number of years, and his assignment to Festung Akt surprised him as much as his immediate superiors. Perhaps it was a sign of the decline of Unklar; a portent really, for such a person as Deuranimus would never have been offered a position like this in times past or perhaps a more spiritually influential Unklar would have kept Deuranimus' one small personality defect in tow. Deuranimus, it must be known, had a conscience and was capable of feeling guilt. For many long years, he buried these emotions and acted faithfully to the cause which bound him. Once in charge of Festung Akt, however, the sheer volume of his heinous deeds got the better of him. Remorse, guilt, and an effort at repentance guided his actions over time.

For years Deuranimus had been torturing people for information and executing them for the slightest of wrongs. After a time he quit "completely executing" the prisoners and he saved many whom he felt were not deserving of such a punishment. He even began seeing that the goodly-minded men of the world might do a better job at ruling than had Unklar.

To wit, Deuranimus began taking the souls of those to be executed and placing them in gems which were subsequently placed on medallions and hung from the necks of the crows which flocked about him and aided him in his various undertakings. For several years, Deuranimus managed to do this and, in part, it assuaged the guilt he felt for so many murders. By placing the souls in the gems, the intended victims of the headman's ax or the torturer's suffering were bound in time. Instead of eternal banishment to the nether realms to languish in a state of slow decay, they remained in a world that was neither here nor there, but rather one that lay between "this one and that one." He knew that with the proper spells, those souls were fully capable of redemption and a second chance at life. They could be brought back into the world of Aihilde.

It just so happened that at the moment Setiva, the elven lady, carved the Unklar's horn from his own brow and banished him from the realms of man, Deuranimus was in the process of placing the soul of a great paladin into a gem. In the ensuing spiritual eruption of Unklar's passing, the gem shattered and the spell went awry. The paladin's soul and body were bent and twisted, and the paladin emerged as a powerful shadow. Seeing this, Deuranimus went entirely mad. The guilt of a lifetime's evil overwhelmed him when he realized that he altered someone so good into something so evil. He threw his servants out, closed the doors to Festung Akt, and escaped to its highest tower. He remains there to this day, raving and screaming mad.

In the ensuing decades, the binding forces of Unklar's empire simply eroded and chaos engulfed the Blighted Screed with ungern, orcs, goblins, trolls, and the other creatures who resided there. They wandered aimlessly about, slaughtering one another and all who entered the region. From the chaos, several surviving lieutenants or generals had stepped forward and attempted to unify the area. None succeeded. One of the latest of these efforts is from a man named Balonakalon.

Balonakalon, whose single significant redeeming quality is having survived the collapse of Unklar's reign, was an unimportant underling in the administration of that long-dead empire. He found Festung Akt nearly abandoned (Deuranimus never leaves the high tower of Festung Akt), took up residence in the Tower, and has slowly gathered about him those willing to do his bidding. This is a motley collection of evil humans, a displaced and leaderless ungern battalion, slavish orcs, nasty goblins, and other foul beasts. Some reside in Festung Akt with Balonakalon and others are out doing his bidding.

Balonakalon intends to unite the disparate groups of ungern, ogres, orcs, and goblins of the Blighted Screed into one huge army and conquer those realms south of the Hruesen River. The characters are headed to Festung Akt, to put an end to his machinations-or not.

FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

The Shattered Horn takes place almost entirely in Festung Akt. The several encounters leading to the place are designed to set the "environmental" tone of the adventure. Make the characters aware that they are far from civilization and what this implies. There is no place nearby to go for safety. The characters must face this trial on their own and by their wits. Outside aid is simply not available. There is no going back to town to heal up and try again.

When or if the characters should ever return to civilization, the road back should be as hard as the one leading from it.

Once the characters arrive at Festung Akt, they must contend with several factors. The first is time. There is a troop of 1,000 ungern who are leaving the Festung Akt upon the characters' arrival. They should witness this. Further, in the course of the adventure, the characters should become aware that the troop of ungern is returning in short order, perhaps within 48 hours or so. This is discussed in more detail in the appropriate section. Once the troop of ungern return to Festung Akt, the probability of the characters' survival is significantly reduced.

There are also two powerful non-player characters in Festung Akt, Balonakalon and Deuranimus the Crow. Both are very powerful and present a real challenge if fought. Balonakalon is a coward, though, and if allowed, escapes to avoid a fight. Deuranimus is good at heart but insane. If the players act accordingly, a fight with him could be avoided.

The dungeon is divided into four distinct areas of activity. There is the post outside the tower itself where the ungern legion is billeted and in which only a few ungern remain. The troops stationed there are returning shortly. The main portion of the complex is occupied by Balonakalon and his cohorts. A large cavern underneath the main complex contains a powerful shadow and several other creatures as well. This portion is never entered by Balonakalon or his allies. Finally, the upper portion of the tower is occupied by Deuranimus and his crows.

The upper portion of the tower and the caverns beneath it are independent of the other two areas and can be dealt with separately and can even, should it be necessary, offer a short respite for the characters.

INVOLVING THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

Should the players continue the adventure as part of the "A" series of modules, then finding out about Festung Akt should be easy. Any number of the non-player characters in Ludensheim, as presented in *A4 Usurpers of the Fell Axe*, know of the place and many knowledgeable people may as well. During a routine interrogation or encounter, have the characters learn of the place and even hear the name Balonakalon. The characters should, of their own accord at this point, move forward to Festung Akt. If they seem unwilling, have the town elders offer a reward for locating the place and finding out about the inhabitants therein. The reward should be a town house and citizenship-perhaps some gold if the characters seem unwilling to do so without monetary compensation.

As part of Balonakalon's plan to overtake the region, he has planted spies and minions throughout the Blighted Screed and even south of the Hruesen River. One such agent of Balonakalon's is the Witch Queen found in *A3 The Wicked Cauldron*. He was in contact with her on a fairly regular basis. Should she no longer be in contact-for whatever reason-he will suspect that his machinations are being uncovered in the south and may be more wary of interlopers.

Further, should the Witch Queen have escaped the Wicked Cauldron, she would have come here and would be located



somewhere in the tower near Balonakalon (Area 25). The Witch Queen would recognize the party and inform Balanakolon of their abilities. It might also be the case that attacks on her presage attacks on Festung Akt. Balonakalon would act accordingly. It is up to the Castle Keeper to determine what Balonakalon would do, but minimally he would not allow as many of the unger to leave Festung Akt and would post more guards and increase regional patrols.

As for running the adventure independently of the “A” series, consider the following options:

1. The characters hear about Festung Akt at a local tavern, read about it in a library (from a dungeon or perhaps some place they are plundering), or from some learned scholar. In general, the description remains (old outpost of a collapsed empire, etc.), but the rumor of a treasure house should be the enticement.
2. The characters hear about a mad druid living in an ancient tower. It is rumored that he has learned the secret of turning rocks into gems and has festooned many a crow with this adornment as an insult to those who value such things.
3. As the characters are wandering across some strange or poorly explored area, they note the tower in the distance. In this manner, the whole event comes off as a surprise.

THE BLIGHTED SCREED

The area of the Blighted Screed stretches west from the left bank of the Hruesen River, across the open country to the Uduinlay River; in the north it is hemmed in by the Grausamland, and in the south by the Kellerwald and the Northern Marches. It is a barren land with but a few small rivers running through it; rocky soil with slate and shale outcropping dominates the topography. Blasted by the icy cold during Unklar’s reign and the massive run-off which occurred after the sudden melting of the various snow fields and mini-glaciers to the north, it has yet to recover and grow to its naturally lush state. Only small scrub oaks, cedars, scrub brush, and weeds grow here and those primarily near springs and the few small lakes found in the region.

Not much lives here-or can live here. Ground squirrels, moles, chipmunks, rabbits, and their like can be found here. There are grey deer, small antelope, and wild sheep, though in no great numbers. Occasional bobcats and mountain lions adapted to the region hunt along its periphery. Wolves are found in its interior, and rarely, bears that have wandered in from other lands in search of greener pastures. None of these pose dangers as all are wary of man, humanoid and demi-human. Even the least of them can sense the coming of death and make to hide or run away. Catching food here is no small feat, as the region is overhunted by the inhabitants of the fortress. Any hunting checks are made at CL 7.

There are dangers, though. The remnants of Unklar’s various cohorts roam the land, warring with one another and all who come into this realm. There are ogres, orcs, goblins, unger, giants and many other rare beasts who have survived the wars. Some wander freely across the lands, and others have holed up in one of the many hundreds of camps, forts, palaces, treasure houses, guard houses, dungeons, castles, and caves dotting the land. This was once, one

must know, a staging area for the countless legions that poured out of Aufstrag that headed to war in the south and east and lands beyond. For many centuries it served this purpose alone.

Finding Festung Akt can be a task, though not terribly so. A road leads north along the left bank of Hruesen River, at the feet of the Blacktooth Ridge and into eastern plains of the Blighted Screed. This old road was once well-paved and marked for the armies of Unklar with giant stone markers. Large stones jutting forth from the ground, some stretching nearly 40 in height, were placed along the road’s length at 2000-yard intervals. Simply finding the stones (many of which have fallen) and then locating the remnants of the road, gets one very close to Festung Akt. Festung Akt is notable several miles away. It sits on a high point of rugged shale and towers up into the sky. On the topmost tower is a balcony upon which burns a bright blue fire visible for many miles.

After 100 miles of travel (usually taking 5–6 days) the road passes within a few miles of Festung Akt. At this point (or some time therein) a faint blue glow can be seen in the distance. This is the fire on the balcony at the uppermost level of the tower. Here are also several recent and well-used trails heading off the road to the tower as well.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE BLIGHTED SCREED

Encounters are rare in the Blighted Screed, though deadly. All encounters are, of course, optional, but it is suggested the Castle Keeper roll for an encounter at least once a day and once during the night. Roll a d10. A “1” indicates an encounter has occurred. Roll on the appropriate chart below.

Lighting a fire at night increases the likelihood of an encounter. Roll twice during the evening with a “1” or “2” indicating an encounter has occurred.

Each encounter can only occur once, except the ravens which occur as many times as rolled. Further, should the same encounter be rolled twice, it is ravens rather than any of the others. Both special encounters can occur once.

- 1–2. **Wild animals:** These are any of the various animals described above. They make haste to leave the area.
3. **Screed Ogres (3–9):** These are described below.
4. **Orcs (4–16):** A band of wandering orcs in search of easy prey and loot.
5. **Goblins (3–30):** This is a band of nasty goblins making a hasty movement across the Blighted Screed. If the number of goblins encountered outnumber the party by at least three to one, the goblins make an attack; otherwise, they attempt to avoid the party.
- 6–8. **Raven pack (60–600):** Though harmless, the packs of ravens fly across the Blighted Screed in massive numbers, looking for something to eat. Once used as messengers for the various armies encamped here, their numbers have grown significantly since the fall of Unklar.
9. **Trolls (2–3):** These wily creatures are simply seeking something to eat, or just something to kill.
10. **Special:** Use either the gorgon, or ogre magi encounter described below.

SPECIAL ENCOUNTERS

THE FLESH PITS

On the northern fringes of the Blacktooth Ridge, where that line of hills meets the Blighted Screed, are the ruins of a fairly modest laboratory-of sorts. Here, in a vast round chamber open to the sky sits a flesh pit. In it, some wizards of a particularly foul nature, dumped the remains of the dead-the dead and the near dead. The pit was named the Flesh Pits after a time by the ungerm and orcs who lived in the region. It was avoided by all living things excepting those who were required to come and those foul priests.

The priests gathered what remains they could, and with them built grotesqueries of nature-flesh golems. These golems were bid to do their tiding or that of whomever they were giving. For a time, the Flesh Pits produced many of these things and they went out into the world.

However, as time moved on, the Flesh Pits were used less and less, such that even during the waning year of Unklar's reign they were rarely producing golems. The Flesh Pits were essentially forgotten by all but those who remained there. With the fall of Unklar, the Flesh Pits fell into disuse, as the priests who lived there moved on.

They left several flesh golems in their wake. The area around the Flesh Pits has several dozen flesh golems wandering around killing things and throwing them into the pits. The characters, should they happen upon the northern end of the Blacktooth Ridge, should encounter a Flesh Golem in the woods thereabouts, or even upon the escarpment above the ridge as it wanders in search of prey.

The flesh golems leave a trail of stink behind them that is easy to follow. They can also be smelled a fairly good distance off. They shamle and wander the wastes in search of any living thing to kill. They then bring it back to the Flesh Pits. They also travel in packs, so more than one can be encountered. A trail back to the pits should be easy to follow as well.

The pits themselves consist of a large circular wall with one opening in it. Outside the wall are two broad stone buildings, both completely abandoned. The entire area has the stench of a slaughterhouse to it. The golems do nothing but kill things and throw them into the pit.

It is up to the Castle Keeper to devise an appropriate number to be located at the pits when they arrive there and the number encountered along the way. There is treasure in the pit of rotting flesh but it would be difficult to get as it is buried in decades' worth of rotting bodies and animals.

GOLEM, FLESH (*This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 7d10, AC 18, HP 49. It slams opponents with its fists for 2–8 damage. It can be struck only by magical weapons with a +2 bonus or better. It is immune to nearly all magic; see M&T for specific details*)

GORGON: Use this encounter with caution, as it can be very deadly, and note the weakened breath weapon in the stat block.

This gorgon has wandered the Blighted Screed since the fall of Unklar. It was once a part of Unklar's army, trained and encouraged to kill, maim, and slaughter upon command. It traveled with the

armies of Unklar and was under the command of frost giants. The gorgon still has the markings of its previous life. Its horns are tipped with iron, and several partial plates of black iron are still strapped, by solid chain, around its back, neck, and rump. The battle training and years of war have left the gorgon with a particularly foul temperament (even for its kind) and it now wanders the Blighted Screed killing, eating, or turning everything it can to stone.

The encounter occurs at dusk or just before dawn to late morning – this gorgon rests most of the afternoon and late at night. It was taught to hunt all manner of fey, and, as such, has an uncanny desire and ability to locate them and kill them. The gorgon focuses its attacks on any elves or fey in the party. First, it charges them in an attempt to trample them underfoot or gore them. When unable to charge, it then uses its breath against those fighting it in an attempt to get away. Should it get away, it runs far off, rests for a few moments, then charges back into battle. Fearless, the gorgon fights until dead or it has managed to kill one or more opponents and all others run away.

The gorgon has no lair. Backtracking the beast only results in frustration, as it has wandered rather aimlessly about for many years. Occasionally, stone squirrels, birds, rabbits and even deer are found along its trail. These are rare, though, as the gorgon prefers eating these animals to turning them to stone.

The value of several of those stone animals can be fairly high. To one who collects such things, a perfect statue of a squirrel can fetch several hundred gp or more. The value of these items and the location of those willing to purchase them are up to the Castle Keeper to decide.

On a side note, once combat is over and if the gorgon has turned anyone to stone, it proceeds to knock the statue over and ram it until it is broken into many small parts.

GORGON (*This neutral-evil creature's vital stats are HD 9d10, HP 67, AC 22. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a weakened breath weapon acting at half the challenge level, gore attack for 2d6 damage and trampling. If a gore attack is successful, the iron tips deliver an additional 1d4 points of frost damage. A constitution save at CL 0 reduces that damage by half.*)

The iron tips on the gorgon's horns are of a special black iron forged in the smithies of a clan of warrior frost giants. They are imbued with the magic of these mighty humanoids. Should the tips be removed and reforged as usable weapons, they cause 1d4 frost damage when a hit is scored. Opponents make a constitution save with a challenge level of 0 to half the damage. There is enough metal to make three spearheads or two daggers, a small war hammer, or similarly sized item.

OGRE MAGI: This lone ogre magi was once part of a clan of ogres before being kicked out for breaking with traditions holy to them. It now seeks redress in the form of 100 human/elf/dwarf heads. It is only on kill 54. The magi is headed south to the lands of man, where it intends to quickly gather the remaining lot of heads from farmers, herdsman or other easy prey.

There are two possible methods of encountering the ogre magi: the magi is surprised, or the players are surprised. If the magi is surprised, it attempts to avoid combat with such obviously superior foes and/

or numbers and turns invisible, only to fly away. In this case, the ogre magi flies far away and attempts to track the characters for a few days launching an ambush at some point. The magi is patient enough to follow them all the way to Festung Akt and even to wait until the players exit place before attacking them.

Should the magi surprise the characters (or the encounter occurs at night), it changes itself into human form, acts like a wounded knight and wanders up to the characters, seeking aid. It then travels with the players or sits by their camp for up to 1 hour (the polymorph spell's duration), waiting for an opportune moment to strike. If that moment does not arise, it excuses itself prior to the spells dissipation (perhaps on a bathroom break), turns invisible, and flies away, only to follow the characters and find a more opportune moment to strike them (see the previous paragraph).

The ogre magi carries well-made banded armor and a large magical bardiche. It is frosty white/blue in color and heaves in mighty muscles. He carries, in a large bag, the jaw bones of his 54 victims as well as other sundries listed below.

OGRE MAGI (*This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 34, AC 18, lawful evil. Its primary attributes are mental and physical. It attacks with a +2 bardiche or dagger and/or with its special abilities. It carries three potions of healing, a potion of heat resistance, a ring of freedom of movement as well as 1000gp worth of coin and jewelry.*)

SCREED OGRES There are many names for the ogres which live in this region, the kindest being rock ogres but, in order to distinguish them from the "true" rock ogres found far to the east of this land, we shall call them screed ogres. These are truly hulking creatures with massive shoulders, bent backs, thick muscles wrought tight as iron, and skin tanned to a tawny ochre shade. Once members of the cohorts gathered near Festung Akt, they now wander the wastelands in search of food and sport, for these screed ogres truly love to torture and tease all manner of living things. If encountered camping, they almost always have some poor animal hobbled or caged and are beating it, throwing rocks at it or in some manner having sport with it. Although uncommon, it is even possible they are doing so to a humanoid, human, or demi-human. The latter is entirely at the Castle Keeper's discretion.

Screed ogres carry an assortment of weapons gathered from their fallen foes or plundered from the many armories located in the abandoned fortresses found in these lands. Unlike most of their brethren, these ogres have been trained to fight and are capable of using a variety of weapons skillfully and are not above rudimentary tactics. These ogres do not use shields of any kind considering them the mark of cowards or less.

Being nomadic in nature, screed ogres rarely have lairs. However, it is rumored several of the fortresses in the Blighted Screed are home to that most unusual and terrifying of screed ogres-shamans.

SCREED OGRES (4-11) (*These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 5d8, HP variable, AC 16-18. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with normal weapons with a +4 to all damage rolled or a slam attack for 1d10 damage. Each ogre carries 100-1000gp worth of coin, gems and jewelry. There is a 10% chance a rock ogre carries an expert weapon.*)

FESTUNG AKT

Festung Akt sits upon a substantial uplift of shale, and its towers and domed chambers, rising in a step-like formation, one above the other, dominate the skyline. A blue light emanates from a balcony near the pinnacle of the topmost tower. Many hundreds of crows circle around Festung Akt, making a horrible racket. Just south and east of the main structure is Camp Orojon. This large area is enclosed by a palisade of wood. Several towers are located about its perimeter, and many red banners with black markings upon them extend up from its interior.

SPECIAL NOTE: THE UNGERN OF FESTUNG AKT

The ungern who reside here are a fairly disciplined group of soldiery. Many fought in the armies of Unklar and, as is their nature, retain the vestiges of their military training. However, time, defeat, inactivity, and poor leadership have left their mark. They are not as keenly observant as in times past, nor as willing to sacrifice themselves for their leaders. Their morale is not as high as it could be. As such:

1. When in combat and facing obviously superior foes, the ungern must make a charisma check or flee. Superiority can be measured by the number killed in combat or sheer numbers. The "morale" check is a numbers crunch. For each ungern killed a -1 is incurred; for each party member killed a +2 is added. If the ungern outnumber the party members, they get to add a +1 for each member more than the party (i.e. if the ungern have 3 more than the party, a +3 is added to the roll). If the party outnumbers the ungern, they receive a -2 per less member. Checks should be made at the beginning of an encounter and at least every four rounds of combat, though more often if the Castle Keeper so desires or massive losses ensue.
2. Those ungern on patrol or at Camp Orojon and in the halls of Festung Akt tend not to pay much attention to their surroundings, as they have never been attacked here and do not fear anyone nor expect an attack of any type. They are simply going through the motions of their patrols. Each spot check to notice any party members attempting to hide is made at -3.
3. Surprise checks on the ungern are made at +2.

Unless otherwise described, all ungern fall into one of the three types below:

UNGERN, x4 (*These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16, and HP 13, 12, 12, 9. Their primary attributes are physical. They can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1-2 points of damage or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage. They each carry a +1 chain coat, bardiche, dagger, and 4-40gp worth of jewelry and coin.*)

UNGERN SERGEANT (*This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 14, and HP variable. Its prime attributes are physical. It can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1-2 points of damage or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage. It carries a chain coat, morningstar, dagger, and 2-20gp worth of jewelry and coin.*)

UNGERN SUB-CHIEF (*This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, AC 16, and HP 20. Its primary attributes are physical. It can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1-2 points of damage, or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage. It carries a +1 chain coat, bardiche, dagger, and 200gp worth of jewelry and coin.*)

CAMP OROJON

Outside the tower proper is a large rectangular palisade constructed of logs, brambles and branches. Within, are the makeshift houses and structures used by over 1000 ungern soldiers. A tower is located at each corner of the compound, and two larger towers are near the entry.

When the characters arrive (no matter the timing), they should witness the process of an ungern battalion leaving the fortification. There are nearly 1000 ungern in this patrol, and the site is mesmerizing. The ungern are organized, marching in tight formation, and carrying war banners. At the front of the procession are six ungern mounted upon massive black war horses.

Luckily for the characters, there should only be several dozen ungern outside the tower within half an hour or so after their arrival.

The characters should learn, in short order, that the patrol is returning within 48 hours. This information should be imparted to the characters as soon as possible. Primarily, because it is important for the characters' survival but, secondarily, it creates a tension for the players, knowing they have to get in and out quickly or face slaughter at the hands of over 1000 well-armed ungern. This can be managed in many ways. For example, the characters could overhear the ungern talking to one another about it or from any of the various encounters inside Camp Orojon or the tower. It is easiest if two scouts pass by the characters (if necessary fake a die roll for the ungern to "detect" the party). The scouts are talking to each other. The first says, "Ul-Ion, how long is the battalion out this time?" The other responds, "A short time only, two days I think when we return to our coves from the screed!" This would be an opportune time to describe the ungern in all their horror.

Each tower at Camp Orojon has two ungern guards in it, armed with heavy crossbows. At night, the same number of guards are on duty. The gate is closed and three guards are located just inside it. There are only 30 other ungern, one sergeant, and two lieutenants remaining inside the compound.

Importantly, there are also ungern guards on **Level Three** of Festung Akt and on the roof in **Level Two, Area 8–9**. Any *obvious* shenanigans by the players attract their attention; otherwise, it is unlikely they even pay attention to Camp Orojon. Those guards are allowed a spot check (CL 4 minus the number of guards on patrol) should the characters be involved in an open brawl or obvious movement in Camp Orojon. Should the ungern succeed, they note the characters' presence and begin gathering the forces within the tower to go and confront them.

The majority of the structures in Camp Orojon are barracks for the ungern. These are long wooden structures with entirely open interiors strewn with hay. They are largely empty, as the ungern are trained to carry their weapons, gear, and food on their backs. The barracks themselves have only a little of the bric-a-brac of their daily lives left in them.

There is a smithy near the center of the compound where weapons are made and repaired. There is a large forge with bellows, fire pit, coal, and other tools sitting about. A large pile of spears, pole arms, swords, cleavers, and buckets of arrows are located here. Little else of value can be found there. There is a stable for the horses, though



no horses are in it. A small temple area is located at the north end of the compound. Nearby are several dozen casks of mead.

Those ungern remaining at Camp Orojon make their way to the temple area and begin drinking and gambling. Eventually, they wander to their barracks and doze off, as their duties are done. The entire camp goes quiet fairly quickly.

Very little of any value remains at the camp. Should the area be ransacked and searched thoroughly, 10–100gp worth of coin, jewelry and other assorted items per ungern in the camp can be found. It takes time to do this. It takes 1–20 minutes to locate that first 10–100gp and 1–20 minutes for each effort to produce 10–100gp more. Other than that, there are plenty of weapons, lots of cookware, all manner of camp equipment, food, barrels of mead, some shields, and odd pieces of armor.

FESTUNG AKT

Festung Akt proper is a series of interconnected towers and chambers built in a step-like formation. The towers become smaller as one ascends. The uppermost towers stretch far above the surrounding lands and are an imposing site to those who first lay eyes upon them. Once covered in a gleaming white limestone veneer, it has now decayed so much that the structure is a dark gray-brown color. Only the uppermost tower has an unblemished veneer, and it veritably shines at night and gleams during the day. This, along with the blue light emanating from the patio outside the uppermost tower, creates a magnificent site. This tower is visible from several miles off, appearing as a light slash of white rock, capped in a sharp blue light against the darker, morose background.

The walls of Festung Akt are constructed of large blocks of granite and as noted, were faced with white limestone. When examined closely, some areas of the façade are still splashed with the bright white rock. No mortar was used in the construction of the fortress. Every stone has been carved and precisely fitted for its location. The architecture is stunning and its art known to only a few. Even dwarves can admire the architectural feats in the creation of the domed roofs. For all its uses and oft financial neglect, Festung Akt was well maintained over the centuries such that, even to this day, the structure is sound and, other than a thick layer of dust and debris over portions of it, shows few signs of decay. Those familiar with architectural history suspect its age to be nearly five centuries and magic appears to have been used in its construction.

The roofs of the towers all have domes in the center and parapets around their length. The Level 3 parapet always has a patrol of 2–8 ungern on it watching over the area. These guards are visible to those who take the time to look.

This is important. Magic was used in its construction. Many of the architectural features were built with spells and the use of reforming rock and mud and vice versa. The domes are all imbued with a little lingering magic and are NOT stable in and of themselves. The Castle Keeper should be aware of two things. A *detect magic* spell cast near any large columns, the domes, several doors, portion of the floor, the balconies, and other areas, reveals the stones to be magic. Further, a *dispel magic* spell cast within the domes or near the columns can cause them to COLLAPSE. These are generally noted in the text, though the Castle Keeper must keep his head about him and make decisions as to whether a portion of the architecture is magic or not. As a final note on this, if a collapse occurs, it can be substantial and weaken the entire edifice. Injury can range from falling masonry causing 1–6 damage to large sections of roof and wall collapsing causing 10–100 points of damage. Much of this is at the Castle Keeper's discretion.

LEVEL 1 (See Map p. 168)

AREA 1 ENTRY CHAMBER:

This spacious, circular room is constructed with thin blocks of stone stretching up to a painted ceiling. A marble staircase, without railing, spirals up from the center of the room. Shaped in a gentle U shape, it rises from the floor, leading to the second floor of the tower above. The ceiling here is open, exposing the tall ceiling of the room above. Thin, triangular columns set at regular intervals around the room, support the ceiling. Six apertures are evenly spaced around the chamber, each containing a tall, ceiling-high, thin statue of a crow.

The ungern and all those who stay here are very wary of these statues and do not go near them or even approach them.

NOTE: A special note for the Castle Keeper. There is a 1 in 10 chance the characters will be observed entering this room by some ungern from the room above (Level 2, Area 13).

An examination of the room reveals a clear trail running through the center of the rooms to an exit beyond the other side of the staircase. Dust and debris have collected in all the apertures, on the statues of the ravens, and along the rim of the room. Other than movement through the room, nothing in here has been touched in many long years.

Close examination of the raven statues reveals that each is slightly different than the other, though on the whole they are quite similar. These statues were constructed under the direction of Deuranimus the Crow. There is a guardian spirit in each statue representing some aspect of death. These spirits impart a curse upon those who gaze into their eyes. The occupants call this curse the Black Curse of the Crow.

NOTE: Deuranimus had the previous statues, representing war and battle, removed. All six were placed in a perfect circle one



mile north of Festung Akt. A plan to build a temple specifically to those deities was underway, but imperial collapse rendered the construction impossible.

These crows are the speakers of the dead and serve Festung Akt as guardians, cursing those who enter them. Deuranimus had a special priest set at the door whose sole task was to tend these statues. The priest was specially rendered blind with hot brands in order to keep him from constantly succumbing to the Black Curse. Prisoners who were brought into this place were all forced to pay homage to the birds by looking into their eyes. They were then cursed with each of the following curses (see below).

In all cases, as soon as a character looks into the eyes of one of the statues they begin to feel a little light headed and nauseous. That is the first effect of the curses. The characters should be made aware that they are feeling nervous, tired, demoralized, etc. Each raven has a specific curse described below. The effects last for 24 hours. A *remove curse* can be used to remove all the effects placed on a person:

- 1a: **The raven who sees death:** An extra 1-4 points of damage is received each time the character is on the receiving end of a damage roll-no matter the source.
- 1b: **The raven who carries the message of death:** The character is demoralized and makes all charisma checks at -4.
- 1c: **The raven who carries the dead:** The characters' movement is halved.
- 1d: **The raven who eats the dead:** This causes seeping lesions around the eyes, nose, ears, and mouth of the cursed, making hearing, seeing, and smelling things difficult. A foul odiferous smell of decayed flesh envelops the character as well. All checks involving the use of those senses receive an additional -4. Characters so cursed also find it more difficult to hide since their stench is so pervasive. This gives the characters a -6 to their hide/conceal checks or a +6 to the checks of those trying to find them.
- 1e: **The raven of lost hope:** This raven causes a malaise to descend upon the character, making decisive action difficult. A charisma check must be rolled whenever the character must make a bold or decisive action (charging into combat, sneaking into a room etc). If they fail the save, they are overcome with doubt and either hesitate or refuse to take the action. All checks should be made at a -2, as well as attacks and initiative roles. The Castle Keeper is at their discretion as to how best to implement this curse. It is not meant to completely inactivate the character, rather to hinder them.
- 1f: **The raven who buried the dead:** This curse causes the character to sleep. At any given moment when given the chance, the character goes to sleep. Should they stop for a rest, to eat or even a breather, they go to sleep. They cannot be awakened for at least ten minutes once a character falls asleep; unless, of course, *remove curse* is cast upon them.

AREA 2 GUARDS' CHAMBER: This room was once used by guards for resting and storage. It has not been used in many long years and was thoroughly ransacked in times past. The current inhabitants stay away from this room as well as Area 3. Primarily, this is a result of fear of the raven statues in Area 1. They simply make haste through the entry area.

The room is currently empty except for old weapons racks, broken boxes and crates, broken beds, and a litter of useless debris scattered about the floor. It is obvious that it has not been used or entered in many years.

AREA 3 ACOLYTES' CHAMBER: This chamber was once used by acolytes when on duty near the entry. Once sumptuously decorated, the room has been completely ransacked and all items of value taken from it. There is a litter of broken furniture, obviously of fine make, scattered around the room.

A character with keen observation skills (wisdom, CL 5) may note that this room is smaller than Area 2 though in all other construction details, identical. Around the room runs an interior wall. Between the exterior and interior is a series of rooms accessible by a secret door located on the wall. These rooms were emptied when the previous inhabitants fled.

Both Areas 2 and 3 can be used by the characters as temporary hideouts. The guards, fearful of this area, will not search these rooms until they have cleared all other routes of escape or hiding places. Should the characters locate the secret rooms in Area 3, they can hide in there for a long time since no one knows of its existence. Unless, of course, the characters do not bother to cover their trail and leave drops of blood or scrapes in the dust leading up to the secret door or make it appear as if they left through the front door. Unless convinced of the characters' departure, any ungern who may be alerted continue to search the tower. It will take a while (perhaps 2-8 days), but an ungern or someone else eventually locates the secret door; then, assuming they are hiding, the characters are trapped.

AREA 4 HALL OF THE MOUTHS OF THE DEAD: Above the entryway to this room are the words, carved in stone, "Where the Dead Speak." The central portion of this room has a large well in it filled with a brackish looking liquid. Each of the alcoves contains a statue of a large, amorphous creature with many mouths. Above each statue is an inscription written in the ancient and vile tongue of the Horned One. An intelligence check (CL 10) must be made for a literate person well versed in ancient tongues to know the inscription. It reads, "Three times their Name to call." (Deuranimus knows the inscription.) Several torches in sconces are alight in this room.

The statues are conduits for speaking to the dead. The dead, however, speak their own tongue, and listening to them can drive one insane! One must simply cast a *speak with dead* spell to activate the mouths of a statue. To talk to a specific person, that person's name must be spoken three times at the end of the spell's casting. They can talk to that person normally. As a side note, the dead perceive and remember things differently than the living. The statues (each one) can be activated once every seven days.

If someone is not specifically named during the casting, then the hosts of undead souls begin to speak in their strange tongues all at once. For each round the character who casts the spell remains in the room, a charisma check must be made with a cumulative -1 modifier per round. A failed check indicates they have been driven somewhat insane. The screams of the dead should forever be heard in the character's head (making him sort of quirky and not good company). The CK should be careful to avoid ruining the character and the fun of play. A gibbering idiot is no fun to play, and more of a bother for the CK to work with, whereas giving the character some mental

hurdles could be very fun. For instance, describe things backwards to the character. “The door is hinged on the bottom, not the side,” or “Out of the corner of your eye, you see something clinging to the back of your comrade; when you look, it is gone.” A cure is left up to the Castle Keeper (*remove curse*, drinking a magic elixir, etc.), but the idea is to turn the curing process into an adventure.

5A: WELL AND STAIRCASE: The material in the well is actually not a liquid, but rather a viscous material, concealing a set of steps that lead down to the Lower Halls (*see p. 163*). One must walk up the side and descend into the pool, through the viscous material which is only several inches deep. Once through, characters can see the cavern below. Looking at the rim of the well, one notes a solid silver circle stretching around its entire circumference.

The ungeri and others know the steps lead to caverns below the keep; however, they never go down there, for those who have, have either never returned or have come back with horrible stories of the creatures which live down there. It is altogether avoided. The ungeri melted some silver and dropped it around the rim of the well in the hopes it would keep all the creatures down there from coming out. Although this did not actually work, the creatures in the caverns beneath cannot come up for entirely different reasons, but the ungeri believe the silver ring to have worked and are, therefore unafraid of the inhabitants of the lower hall coming forth.

AREA 5 HALL OF THE UNGERI: This series of small rooms houses several ungeri guards and servants.

There are 10 ungeri who live in this area. Though they are supposed to be on permanent guard and patrolling the rooms on this level, they rarely ever do, spending their time gambling, fighting each other, visiting Camp Orojon, hunting on the Screed, or whatever else it is creatures of this ilk do to enjoy themselves when not out pillaging and plundering.

At any given time, there are 1–6 ungeri in this room, with a 25% chance of an ungeri sergeant and an acolyte being in here as well.

UNGERI, x9 (*These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16 and HP 13, 12, 12, 9. Their primary attributes are physical. They can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1-2 points of damage, or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage. They each carry a +1 chain coat, bardiche, dagger, and 4-40gp worth of jewelry and coin.*)

UNGERI SERGEANT (*This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 14 and HP 16. Its primary attributes are physical. It can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1-2 points of damage or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage. They each carry a chain coat, morningstar, dagger, and 2-20gp worth of jewelry and coin.*)

CLERIC (*She is a lawful evil, human, 5th level cleric whose vital stats are HP 17 and AC 18. Her primary attributes are wisdom, intelligence, and dexterity. Her significant attribute is wisdom 17. She wears a full suit of chain mail, a +2 ring of protection, carries a +2 mace, scroll of curse, potion of healing, and 240 gp worth of jewelry and coin. Her spells are 0 level: create water, detect chaos, etc., detect magic, endure elements. 1st level: curse, invisibility to undead, protection from good, shield of faith. 2nd level: aid, darkness, hold person. 3rd level: animate dead. One of her favorite tactics is to cast sanctuary on herself, then to raise a fallen ungeri and cast invisibility on it.*)

Here, characters find 10 well-organized packs hanging on pegs on the wall, minus any number of ungeri not in the room. Each pack has the following items tucked into it: sleeping mat, one flask of water, four days of dried meats, roll bandages, small hatchet, small lodestone, and a metal repair kit with pliers and wire in it. In the room is a bit of straw and other bric-a-brac and detritus of an ungeri's daily life-like an overflowing chamber pot.

AREA 6: TOWER STAIRS: Access to this room is gained through room 5. There is no door, only an opening. The room is empty other than a staircase leading up. The staircase is walled in and dominates the center of the room, basically representing a room in and of itself. The room is lined with statues of heroes of the Winter Dark's empire. A successful legend lore check (CL 7) reveals one of the statues to be of a young Coburg the Undying, the present lord of Aufstrag and a warrior priest of Unklar's. Coburg served the Dark Lord for the whole length of his reign, surviving the final Battle of the Tree to eventually rise to power in the upper reaches of that dreaded fortress Aufstrag. The statue leans upon a large lucern hammer. Its part of the statue and not magical, but can give the party clues as to the weapon that Coburg favors.

These stairs lead up to **LEVEL 2, AREA 14**.

LEVEL 2 (See Map p. 168)

AREA 7: OBSERVATION CHAMBER: This wide chamber resembles, in structure, the chamber below it, though it is somewhat smaller. The staircase from below ascends to a platform. The central portion is open, with a stone railing around it, allowing observation of Area 1 on Level One. The floor is a complex mosaic depicting trees, mountains springs, and a whole slew of creatures belching fire and carrying massive whips. Six triangular columns support the ceiling above. The room itself consists of six semicircular rooms, or apertures.

There is a 1-in-10 chance there is an ungeri patrol in this chamber when the characters enter the complex, or when they come in the room (SEE **LEVEL 1, AREA 1 ABOVE**).

UNGERI, x5 (*These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16 and HP 13, 12, 12, 11, 9. Their primary attributes are physical. They can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1-2 points of damage or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage. They each carry a +1 chain coat, bardiche, dagger, and 4-40 gp worth of jewelry and coin*)

UNGERI SERGEANT (*This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 14, and HP 16. Its primary attributes are physical. It can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1-2 points of damage or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage. He carries a chain coat, morningstar, dagger, and 2-20gp worth of jewelry and coin.*)

Sharp, angled walls flank the six apertures. Where these two walls meet, are openings in the floor (marked with a X on the map). These openings look down onto the tops of the heads of the crows. On top of each head is a small opening. A normal man can reach down into this opening (the crow statues stretch this high). There is a black ichor inside of them that smells atrocious and sticks to the hands like molasses. This material is the essence of the crow. The liquid has no effect or seeming purpose unless someone attempts to eat it. It does radiate magic.

Eating the liquid has several effects. First, eating a whole handful heals 1d8 hit points of damage. For each handful after that, the person eating it begins to change. The characters hearing and vision become sharper. This is a good side effect. However, their eyes start to darken and their ears shrink in size. This change is slight, but noticeable. The next imbibing witnesses a narrowing of the nose and a shrinking of the teeth. By the fourth drink, the addictive qualities begin to take over. The character must make a charisma check or imbibe again. For each failed check, the character goes out of their way to get some of this ichor and drink it.

In essence, the character is being changed into a crow. For each person the process is different and the Castle Keeper must decide on how the change occurs, but they do occur. The character literally begins to shrink, stoop, grow small hairy protuberances grow all over (eventually to become feathers), and sprouts wings from the character's back. With time the character's mind goes and they become a crow. In general, it should take about 12–16 servings for the character to become a crow.

The addictive qualities are so pervasive that the character leaves the party to come and get more. They sneak off or steal it from other characters, etc.

Reversing the effects are fairly simple though time consuming. A *minor restoration* erases the effects of one serving. This can only be done once per 24 hours. It also causes 1d8 points of damage. Once addicted, the character always yearns for the ichor. A *cure disease* spell, however, cures the addiction.

AREA 8–9: ROOFS: These are the domed roofs over Area 2 and 3 on Level One. There is a parapet with battlements running the circumference of both. Occasionally, a group of ungn guards find their way here. There is a 1-in-6 chance for 2d4 ungn to be patrolling here. If ungn were encountered in Area 7 then they will not be encountered here. There is only one patrol as well, so if they are encountered on one roof there will not be any more on the other roof. Should no guards be present, lots of crows are gathered on the roof. If the crows have not been seen before, the characters note that many of the crows on the roof wear a necklace from which dangle a small red bauble.

UNGERN, x5 (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16, and HP 13, 12, 12, 11, 9. Their primary attributes are physical. They can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1-2 points of damage or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage. They each carry a +1 chain coat, bardiche, dagger, and 4-40gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

UNGERN SERGEANT (This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 14, and HP 16. Its primary attributes are physical. It can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1-2 points of damage or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage. He carries a chain coat, morningstar, dagger, and 2-20gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

The crows wearing the gems are those who carry the souls of the dead. Should the characters take their time with the crows and not act belligerently towards them, the crows flock about and begin squawking their story. The souls speak through the crows.

Of course the characters cannot understand them (unless someone speaks crow). The crows know not to talk to the ungn. Should the characters listen or make the effort and not treat the crows poorly, Deuranimus finds out. This can act in the characters favor in any encounter with Deuranimus (see below **Level 7, Area 35–36**).

AREA 10: TEMPLE CHAMBER:

The center of this room has a large statue of Unklar in it. On the bottom of the statue, is one word "OBEY." The three apertures each contain smaller statues with men, heads bowed and weapons pointed to the ground; each faces the statue of Unklar.

A figure lies prone in front of the statue of Unklar. This is an acolyte deep in meditation and does not hear any commotion. He must be physically interrupted for him to break meditation. This can be dangerous, as he is in ritual communication with the spirit of Unklar. Striking a killing blow upon the acolyte while he is in this state causes a magic reverberation that thunders through the room. No damage is caused, but all characters must make a constitution check (CL 4) or lose their hearing for up to 30 minutes. It also alerts the ungn and priests in the surrounding levels.

Waking the acolyte from the trance slowly has less detrimental effects. It takes him a full 10 minutes to recover, during which time, he is completely defenseless and can be killed without any negative impact (unless one considers guilt to be negative). Once he regains his senses and realizes his predicament, he tries to fool the characters. He explains that he is a rogue from Ludenshiem and has come to Festung Akt to steal its riches. He has disguised himself as a cleric of Unklar in order to pass the guards. While he is talking, he sizes up the characters and recovers his strength. If at any point he can escape, he will do so by fleeing out the door in Area 7 and drinking his fly potion. On the other hand, if he thinks he can attack and win, he does that as well. If all else fails, he surrenders and acts to aid the characters; but, when the opportunity presents itself, turns on them, or leads them into a trap. He answers questions to the best of his ability, but he reveals nothing about the druid. He is actually in search of the horn fragments located in the **LOWER HALLS, AREA 10** (see below).

TIERN (He is a lawful evil human, 6th level cleric whose vital stats are HP 30 and AC 18. His primary attributes are wisdom, constitution, and intelligence. His significant attribute is wisdom 17 and constitution 15. He wears +2 scale mail and has a +1 buckler. He wields a +1 lucern hammer. He has a potion of flying in his pocket, and 100gp in coin in a pouch. His spells are 0 level: create water, detect chaos, etc. detect magic, endure elements, first aid. 1st level: command, cure light wounds, sanctuary, sound burst. 2nd level: aid, darkness, paralysis (opposite of remove), spiritual weapon. 3rd level: dispel magic, cause blindness (opposite of remove). Tiern is a battle priest and uses his spells offensively.)

AREA 11: ELITE GUARD CHAMBER: The door leading to Area 11 and beyond is closed and locked. It is made of wood and very stout. The lock can be picked (CL 5). Picking it will not alert anyone in the next room, as they simply think someone with a key is coming in. That is, if the lock picking is successful on the first try. On the second try, those in the room come over to investigate

and are angered that someone does not know how to use the lock and get up casting obscenities about—i.e., they will not be totally surprised, and, of course, the characters won't either, recognizing the guttural shouts of the unger.

This area is reserved for the elite guard for Festung Akt. The unger in here have higher hit points, better armor, weapons, and higher morale than the rest in Festung Akt. They are all battle-hardened warriors, capable of skillful tactics. They are not averse to fighting, retreating, then attacking again, etc. Play them smart.

Currently, they are all sitting around drinking some brew and gambling or eating. Only if alert to someone trying to enter do they get up. Should a character open the lock and door on the first try, they look into the room and see a group of unger huddled around an area on the floor playing dice, eating, and drinking. None are watching the door nor even care to. This situation does not last long, but it will give the characters one round to act before being noticed.

A battle follows, no matter the approach, as the unger have little fear of humans or demi-humans and are not going to give up their post. They use the tight quarters to their advantage, the toughest getting in the front to block the characters while the weaker standing in the rear stab over their shoulders. They throw furniture, hurl dead bodies, food, or anything else they can think of to defeat the interlopers. This should be a battle royal.

A battle in here attracts the attention of the sergeant in Area 13.

There are 11 unger in here. This chamber is used as a common room. There is a large table pushed up against the wall, several chairs, a pile of freshly cooked meat on the table and other sundries in the room.

UNGERN, x11 (*These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 17 and HP variable. Their primary attributes are physical. They can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1-2 points of damage or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage. They each carry a +1 chain coat, heavy long sword, dagger, and 4-40gp worth of jewelry and coin.*)

AREA 12: GUARDS' CHAMBERS: The guards have divided these three rooms into sleeping chambers, each fitting six unger. The door between the two rooms has been removed. Weapons, armor, sleeping rolls, and other personal items are located in these two rooms. The six other unger are on patrol above in **LEVEL 3, AREA 25**. If the characters search the unger is personal items for half an hour or so, they find 80 gp worth of coin and jewelry as well as many serviceable items. Their backpacks are well taken care of and filled with the following: sleeping mat, one flask of water, flask days of dried meats, roll bandages, small hatchet, small lodestone, and metal repair kit with pliers and wire in it. There are 17 packs in all.

AREA 13: UNGERN SERGEANT'S CHAMBER: This chamber and the adjoining closet have been taken by the unger sergeant in charge of the tower. This is a large, battle-hardened unger veteran. Any noise from the adjoining room brings the sergeant into the fray. He attempts to keep his fellow unger focused and in line through brute force and terror (something that generally works for unger) yet, he is aging, and the scars of many wars are telling. He has grown physically weak and fears his demise at the hands of his troops.

As such, the sergeant attempts to avoid combat and prefers directing his minions in battle. If his troops seem to be failing in their battle with the characters, and given the chance, he escapes upstairs to join the lieutenant, acolytes, and Balonakalon. If forced into combat, he uses a magical weapon gained many years ago, a +3 mace of minor disruption (which he always carries).

UNGERN SERGEANT (*This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, AC 20, and HP 27. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with its mace of disruption or with 2 claws for 1-3 points of damage or gore for 1-6+4 points of damage. It wears a +1 bronze breastplate and a heavy iron +1 shield. Along with its mace of disruption it has a short gladius and a double-edged, large dagger.*)

This room is sparse, with but a bed and table with a chair. There is always food about. Several spears, a halberd, mace, sword, three large shields (emblazoned with the symbol of Unklar upon them) sit in one corner of the room. The closet contains his personal items and treasure. Here, in a locked chest are 300 gp in coin, 500 gp in jewelry and sundry small items, several maps of the region (showing locations of various storehouses and forts), some old war records, two potions of healing, and one potion of protection from good.

AREA 14: STAIRCASE: This chamber contains the staircase leading up to **LEVEL 3, AREA 15** or down to **LEVEL 1, AREA 6**.

LEVEL 3 (SEE MAP P. 169)

AREA 15: STAIRCASE: This chamber contains the staircase leading up to **LEVEL 4, AREA 21** or down to **LEVEL 2 AREA 14**.

AREA 16: COOKING ROOM: Several goblins tend this room. It is sparse, as generally baked foods come up to the tower from Camp Orojon. However, per Balonakalon's instructions, the unger keep the room stocked. There is a ham here, some dried venison, potatoes, and other sundry items. All the foodstuffs are fresh. Often, a stew is brewing over a fire for morning and afternoon meals, while the solid foods, the goblins keep for the evening meals.

Balonakalon has brought with him several goblins whose sole duty is to cook. Reviled around the camp, they tend to stay in here and only go out to gather the foodstuff's necessary for their master. The food seems to be plentiful for them (another reason to stay). They are all fat and greasy, even for goblins. They are not great cooks but serve their purpose well enough.

The goblins do not fight for anything and run if they have the opportunity. They have no loyalty to their master and simply have no manner of escaping this place. If the characters give them even a slight chance to talk, they buy their freedom with information, warning the party of the ogres in **AREA 19** of this Level and of the glyph of warding in **LEVEL 4, AREA 21**. They freely give the password of "OBEY" as well. Conversely, if spared and they encounter any unger, they squeal about the presence of the characters.

AREA 17: SMELTING CHAMBER: This room has several worktables, fireplaces, and other items used for smelting. The floor of the room is awash in silver and gold shavings. The place literally shines and glitters. Someone has stacked piles of silver and gold coins on one side of the room. An old goblin is sitting on a high workbench going over some paperwork. He only looks up when the characters enter the room. The goblin is completely impassive and stares at

the characters while eating a juicy peach. The goblin picks up a fruit jar, opens it, and offers it to the characters.

The goblin has a jar with rochun fiends in it. When he opens the “peach jar,” he releases two rochun fiends. (See Appendix A for a description of the rochun fiends.)

ROCHUN FIEND (*These chaotic evil creatures’ vital stats are HD 8d10, AC 17, HP 49. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with 6 tentacles for 1d8 points of damage each. These creatures have an SR of 7 and are able to strike their opponents with a bolt of electricity for 1d4 points of damage. They can fly and have extra-sensory abilities.*)

The ungern bring all the treasures gained from raids to this room. They catalogue the treasure and decide whether to smelt it, keep it intact, or to dole out appropriate portions to the leadership and troops. After everyone has been given their due, 99% of the time the choice is to smelt everything possible, including coin, and restamp the metals as new coins. The new coins resemble old Unklarian imperial coins, except the image of Balonakalon is on one side and Unklar on the other.

There is some 2,000 gp in new coin in this room in unlocked boxes and crates. In general, use of this coin would not be well received in the southern realms—it does have an image of Unklar imprinted upon one side. Even taking the coin to be melted down would raise eyebrows. Bringing it in as ingots (should the characters melt it) would not bring in as much as 1,000 gp, perhaps less than that amount (it is not pure).

AREA 18: STOREROOMS: Once a storeroom, this series of small rooms housed all the sundry items necessary for the efficient running of this administrative center. Most is now gone. There are some vases, containers, boxes, pulleys, a few tools (mostly old and broken, or rusty). Of interest is a large crate full of vellum and another full of quills and glass ink wells. Several of the ink wells (they have to be tested) were sealed well enough that they have not dried and are still usable—or sellable, as the ink is made from rare fruit juices found only in the fetid swamps to the north.

Sadly, the some of the ink was of an odd nature (bats’ blood, toad stools extract, juice of the rare “suk” tree, and such) and has congealed to form a blood ooze that only needs oxygen to bring it to life (see description at the end of the module).

It takes several minutes for the ooze to come to life once exposed to oxygen and several more minutes for it to become active. For the most part and in most circumstances, the blood ooze is harmless because one can just walk away from it (it can only move as fast as a snail), brush it away, or stomp it to oblivion, or even burn it. When it gets on the skin, though, it becomes demonstrably more difficult to remove (see description below).

Importantly, should the characters be testing the ink and get any of the ink (blood ooze) on them, they will be in trouble, as the blood ooze leaches through the characters’ skin and starts eating and replicating.

BLOOD OOZE x4 TO INFINITY (*These neutral creatures’ vital stats are HD neg, HP 1, AC 10. They have no primary attributes. They can drain blood for 1 hit point a round. They have the ability to replicate.*)

AREA 19: OGRES’ CHAMBER: There are five ogres who dwell on this level. The ogres variously wander from room to room, but most often, to the kitchen and back here. Occasionally, they are found on the roof (Area 25). If they hear any commotion on this floor, they immediately go to investigate. Otherwise, 2-4 are in here with the remainder in Area 25. If those in Area 25 hear any commotion in here, they arrive to investigate 1-2 rounds later.

The room is large with heaps of bedding, poorly-tanned furs, bits and pieces of half-eaten meat, bones, broken crates and kegs, and the detritus of these slovenly, filth-ridden creatures. A fire is usually burning in the center of the room. Large spears, axes, bardiches, shields and some chest plates are piled against one wall.

The ogres grab whatever is immediately available if a fight erupts. They do not take the time to don armor unless given at least 20 minutes’ warning (i.e., someone comes and gets them for a fight).

One of the broken crates contains some of the treasure the ogres have accumulated. There are several obsidian holy items (worthless except to a collector), bones from exotic animal kills, the skull of a massive bat (the bat would have measured 10 feet from wing tip to wing tip). A ranger or druid may note the nature of the skull with a successful wisdom check. These bats are found in the swamps around Aufstrag, some silver necklaces, and a small pile of newly minted Unklarian coins (around 500 pieces – see above **LEVEL 3, AREA 17**).

OGRES x5 (*These chaotic evil creatures’ vital stats are HD 4, AC 16, HP 13, 17, 22, 22, 28. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a weapon for 1d10+3 points of damage or their powerful fists for 1d10 points of damage (one attack, one damage). They have dark and twilight vision.*)

AREA 20: ROOF: This domed roof covers **LEVEL 2, AREA 7**. A narrow parapet surrounds it. The ogres wander out here occasionally to keep an eye on things. They are notoriously bad-sighted, so are ill suited to the task and spend most of their time just looking at the stars. There are also many crows here as well, many of them hounding the ogres and squawking their life’s sad tale to the ether.

LEVEL 4 (See Map p. 169)

AREA 21, STAIRCASE: This chamber contains the staircase leading up to **LEVEL 5, AREA 27** or down to **LEVEL 3, AREA 19**.

There is a *glyph of warding* half way up the staircase that detects anyone who does not worship Unklar. Unless it is detected and dispelled, a worshipper of Unklar passes over it, or the password of “OBEY” is uttered (which can be learned from the goblins in **LEVEL 3, AREA 16**, a blast of freezing air engulfs the staircase with a massive crackling sound causing 5d4 damage (1/2 with a successful constitution save). The crackling sound notifies Balonakalon of the presence of intruders.

AREA 22, THE LIBRARY: The library circles **AREA 21, THE STAIRCASE**. Stone shelves line the walls of this chamber. Much of the library was ravaged by looting when Deuranimus scattered those who once resided here. Some of the shelves are shattered or fallen down; piles of burned book debris are scattered across the floor. The shelves are almost all bare except on the southwest end.



Balonakalon has gathered what books he could and placed them here, adding those few volumes he has gathered over time. Balonakalon is not a book collector and not much of a reader, so he has not bothered thumbing through most of those books he has gathered. There are books about the flora and fauna of Airhrde, some geography books, but mostly books on the lineage of several noble families. Other books include those dealing with spells and alchemy (common knowledge to spellcasters but the books are worth 200gp each and there are 12 of them) and one describing battle tactics. Balonakalon envisions himself a general in the style of the great lords of Unklar's time, yet, he is simply incapable of such.

There is one book that may be of great interest to the characters. This is a book on engineering: *The General Alignment, Cutting, and Placement of Stones And Material for the Construction of Curtain Walls and Block Towers. Appendices Detailing Stone Types*. This book details the construction methods for building curtain walls and block towers used by Unklar's best engineers when making a fortress. Using the book as a guideline, anyone building curtain walls or block towers should add 10% above normal value to all construction values. So, for example, should a wall have a HP value of 1000, using the methods described herein, the wall would have 1100 HP. It also describes methods for increasing fields of fire and such, adding great tactical value to a fortresses' construction. The book is worth about 5000 gp or more. Many, should they find out about the book, may simply try to take it rather than buy it-so the characters need to use caution when trying to sell it-if they sell it.

The library contains a small heating stove and chair as well. A small stack of fresh-cut wood is set next to the stove.

AREA 23, SECRET CHAMBER

The entire perimeter of this tower room is a secret chamber. There are two entries to it through a secret door a on the wall of the library. One must first locate the section of wall upon which the door rests and then press the appropriate stone to open the door. Balonakalon knows that it is here. It was not completely ransacked, so contains many of the items that were placed here many long years ago. Some have been removed by Balonakalon, and others by Deuranimus, before he locked himself in the tower above.

There is a wide range of alchemical materials, weapons, treasures, and trophies. Mundane items of interesting make are located here as well. Records and important documents are stored here. In fact, these "stacks" fill much of the room. None of the items in here are magical and much is of common use (well as common as alchemical practices are) so does not offer much use to the characters. It is, however, a good place for the Castle Keeper to allow some characters a chance to replenish spell components or locate items that a character may find interesting (scales, grinders, measuring spoons, weights, etc.). It is up to the Castle Keeper to decide what is in here. It should take 1+d4 minutes to locate one item and then another 1+d4 minutes to find the next, etc.

There are narrow windows that stretch nearly three feet in height, but are only two inches wide placed along the walls at two-foot intervals around its perimeter. They are almost impossible to note from the outside but, they offer an invaluable view of the lands about.

Balonakalon uses this room to hide in if the interlopers make it this far and he is able to escape to it. As the characters go in one door, Balonakalon escapes though the other, if possible, and makes his way out of the camp to gather his troops-if any remain.

AREA 24, VAULT OF THE MIRROR

This is the mirror room, which drew Balonakalon to the fortress. Here he sits and communicates with others who have similar mirrors.

A mirror is located in the center of this room. It is large, about five feet in height, with an ornate silver frame encasing it. It does not appear to be secured to the floor in any way. One large ornately carved ivory chair studded with opals and emeralds sits in front of the mirror. To either side of it are braziers for light.

In the shadows roam four large shadow mastiffs set here to guard the room. They attack anyone who enters the room other than Balonakalon or those who accompany him.

SHADOW MASTIFFS x4 (*These neutral evil creatures' vital stats are HD 4d8, HP either 23 or 22, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack for 2-8 damage with a bite. Their special abilities are bay, trip, blend, darkvision and sunlight vulnerability.*)

Knowledge of the mirror brought Balonakalon to Festung Akt. Finding the mirror unused and unsecured, he at first tried to move it. This, however, was not possible by any device he could manage so Balonakalon decided to make Festung Akt the fortress from which he would command his armies. He uses it to communicate with the Witch Queen (*see A3 The Wicked Cauldron*).

MIRROR OF THE WITCH QUEEN: The mirror is one of 12 created in the pits of Aufstrag by Nulak-kiz-din in ages past. They are oval shaped, tall, narrow, and framed in ornately-carved cherry.

Each mirror is a communication device allowing the users to speak and hear as if in the same room. Powerful creatures can cast spells through them as well as walk through them. Though the latter can end in death as often as not.

To activate the mirror, the user must sprinkle fresh blood upon its surface. The user must inflict a minimum of 5 hp of damage in order to activate it. At the same time one is spilling the blood, the incantation writ upon the frame must be intoned. Once done, one can peer through the glass to any other mirror.

Spellcasters of 10th level or higher can cast spells through them with a successful intelligence check. Any 15th level or higher hit dice creature can move through them with a successful intelligence check. Failure means instant death.

The mirror is magically secured and it is nearly impossible to move. A *knock* spell can cause the magical seal on the mirror to release (CL 12). It weighs 5000 lbs. It is worth quite a sum of gold. Selling, storing, and using this item (should the characters try to take it) is best left up to the discretion of the Castle Keeper.

The braziers light when Balonakalon enters the room and intends to use the mirror. Otherwise, the room is bathed in dark shadows. Incidentally, and for those who care about such things, the opals and emeralds on the chair are worth 100gp. There are 16 of them.

AREA 25 PERSONAL CHAMBERS: Balonakalon has taken up residence in the three rooms on the east side of the tower. If Balonakalon has not been encountered yet, there is an 80% chance he is encountered in here. If not, he is in **LEVEL 5, AREA 30**.

The smaller room to the north is simply a storeroom and closet containing some clothes, packs, and other sundries of daily living.

The room to the south is a sleeping chamber containing a bed, small table and chair, a washbasin, and large chair. A lit brazier is in here as well.

The central chamber is the largest and is Balonakalon's workroom. He casts his spells and practices incantations in here as well as makes his plans and sits and ponders-a lot. This room is littered with debris and items used for his sorcery. Shelves and tables and chairs are piled with, papers, scrolls, casting materials, devices, vials of fluids, and other bric-a-brac. It would take a long time to go through all this stuff, and most of it is useless junk or commonly found in cities elsewhere. The Castle Keeper can make up whatever they care to and place in this room. However, the following items can be found.

A spellbook with 26 spells in it (determined randomly all level 1-3), a spellbook with 12 spells in it (determined randomly all level 4-5), a *staff of frost*, a *tome of leadership* (used to prop up a desk leg and left unfinished by Balonakalon), eight scrolls containing randomly determined wizard spells of level 1-4, and stuck behind a pile of beakers are the *eyes of doom*.

There is also some magical yarn sitting on a table. This yarn can be used to mark a path. It is infinite in length but can only be seen by the person laying the yarn. Nothing can destroy it once laid other than the person who has laid it. If he clips the yarns, it all goes away.

BALONAKALON (*This 6th level, lawful evil wizard's vital stats are HP 14, AC 15. His primary attributes are intelligence, wisdom, and charisma. His significant attribute is intelligence 18. He uses a +5 ring of protection, staff of frost, and a +3 dagger. He uses the following wizard spells: 0th-5, 1st-3, 2nd-3, 3rd-2.*)

Balonakalon fights if cornered and he cannot escape. He has no desire to die and offers to pay a big ransom from monies he has stored to the north in Utring Akt (*see A6 Banishment & Blight*) if they are interested. If all else fails, he does fight, but does so with the intention of fleeing at the first opportunity.

AREA 26 ROOF: This is the domed roof over Area 19. Balonakalon uses the parapet occasionally.

LEVEL 5 (See Map p. 169)

AREA 27 STAIRCASE: This staircase opens up to an empty hall and continues up. The staircase leading up is encased in rooty tendrils and narrows as it goes further up. It leads to **LEVEL 6, AREA 32**. The chamber contains one door and an exit onto the roof (Area 30).

A secret door along the north wall leads to **ROOM 29**. It is well-hidden (CL 5), locked, and magically trapped. Three tiles in the floor must be tapped in the right order to open the door, otherwise, it cannot be opened. The tiles are located as if searching for a secret door (CL 5 for each).

If the tiles are not tapped in order on the first try a gentle humming sound begins. The humming can be heard everywhere on this level. On the second try, a sphere begins to emerge in the center of the room. If the correct order is not managed on the third try, a creature steps out of the sphere and attacks all who are in the room. The creature vanishes when everyone who was in the room at the time the monster appears has 0 hit points or less (essentially, it has to be killed). The correct order for the three tiles are 2–3–1 or middle–east–west.

ALLIP X1 (*This neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d12, HP 27, AC 15. Its primary attributes are mental. It attacks with an ability drain touch attack. The allip is incorporeal, and has the ability to hypnotize through its babble. It has mental protections.*)

AREA 28 SHRINE: There is a secret door leading to this chamber. It is well hidden (-2 to all detection checks) but opens with an easy push. This room still contains an intact shrine to Unklar. Balonakalon uses it every day. A large black marble statue of Unklar placed in an alcove jutting out from the wall dominates the room. A sacrificial altar stands in front of it. A mistaken belief has arisen amongst many of Unklar's surviving followers that enough sacrifices will bring him back. It won't, but the belief is growing, and several cults have formed. Balonakalon is one person adhering to such a belief and perhaps one of the reasons he has not gained more power than he already has as he spends far too much time on sacrificial rites than pursuing more useful methods of bringing Unklar back.

The altar is obviously new, with a wood base and stone slab atop it. Sacrifices are generally humanoid but particularly members of the fey races. The floor is stained dark and the room stinks of death. The Castle Keeper can make this room as macabre as they like.

A stone pedestal has three long knives placed upon it. Each is used in sacrificial rites. Each is magical. One paralyzes its victims for 1d4 rounds (constitution save). One bleeds the victim (causing a seeping wound that, until magically healed, causes 1d4 damage a round following an initial strike). And one "aims" at the heart (every fourth round of use and if a hit is successful on that round, the victim must make a constitution check or die instantly). Each of these knives are very evil in nature. The character carrying or wearing any of these knives automatically registers as lawful evil to any detection spells, glyphs or and any other magic used to detect such things.

A large silver bowl is lying beside the pedestal. It is used to catch the blood from the sacrifices.

The statue of Unklar actually "drinks" blood by absorbing any that touches it. The blood magically teleports to the "Well of Blood" in the Klarglich pits of Auftrag. A scrying or similar magic used upon the statue itself allows the viewer a glimpse of the Well of Blood.

They see a large stone chamber with a massive vaulted ceiling. Through the chamber's center is a river of blood flowing out of a portal or well. The ceiling drips blood. A gigantic humanoid dips a broad gold platter in the blood river and carries it away through a brass door.

There are hundreds of these statues placed throughout Aihrde. Each transfers blood to this chamber in Auftrag. The blood is used to feed various creatures who live therein.

AREA 29: TREASURE CHAMBER: Balonakalon has collected a lot of treasure since moving in here. Mostly, the ungern raid and pillage from others in the Blighted Screed. The fortune he has amassed is, or so he thinks, to be used to pay and feed the numerous tribes and such going off to war once united.

There are a lot of gold coins and gems in here. The 10,000 newly minted Unklarian coins are simply stacked up in neat little rows. A small table with a ledger upon it sits along one wall. Several chests with gems in it are placed along another wall. There are 300 gems in the crates with an average value of 10gp. See the mint above for coin value.

AREA 30: INVIGORATING POOL: The domed roof over **LEVEL FOUR** is not quite a complete dome. The construction of the room below may be an indicator. On the dome, at its pinnacle, is a small pool area no more than a few feet deep and perhaps 10 feet wide. This pool of water is magical. The water steams and smokes, creating small tendrils of vapor that dissipate quickly in the breeze. The water is invigorating. For every 10 minutes spent in the pool, 1 HP of damage is healed, and it is the equivalent of getting 1 hour of sleep. One feels fully refreshed after spending 90 minutes in the pool. As an interesting note, should spellcasters need to sleep to get spells, the invigoration offered by the pool can allow such. For example, sitting in the pool for 90 minutes is the equivalent of 8 hours of sleep.

The pool was used by the many leaders of the tower for cleansing, healing, and refreshing themselves. Balonakalon uses it daily. In this way, he can stay awake and refreshed for a very long time.

AREA 31: THE ENDLESS CORRIDOR: A simple wooden door opens onto a slightly curved corridor with another door at its end some 30 feet away.

This is a magical room. Once entering the room and closing the door, the magic comes into effect and the characters have entered a pocket dimension. The door at the far end of the corridor opens into a nearly identical corridor with a door at its end. This goes on forever. Each time the room and corridor are entered, they change slightly in color. It is somewhat random. The color of the walls is slightly different, the pattern of flagstones, the shape of the door, etc. It is random, so just make it up as you go. One can go forward forever. Those in the room never feel the effects of time, never get hungry or thirsty. Aeons could pass in here-and have for some individuals. The way out is simply to return and go back.

One must go back an equal amount of space one went forward. When going back, the rooms change slightly as they did going forward-no two corridors are the same. The characters should note this. Also, any markings left in a corridor are erased whenever a door closes on it. Two doors cannot be opened at the same time. As there is no direction in this pocket dimension, no character can sense which way is which. Even up and down do not exist. The latter can only be discovered should the characters try to walk on the walls. They can. They can also walk on the ceiling. The doors always appear right side up no matter where the characters are located in the corridors.

Should the characters split up, they enter different pocket dimensions and cannot come back together until exiting into the tower.

If the characters travel forward 20 corridors they find a corpse. An initiate priest came in here and got disoriented and could not get



out, as he kept going back and forth and back forth. He eventually went mad and slit his wrist. As time does not pass in here in a normal sense, he has not decayed, and it appears as if he has died only recently, but he has actually been dead several years. He was not wearing much so only his cloak is left and the knife he used to slit his wrists lies on the floor beside him.

Should the characters forget the number of doors they passed through or get disoriented and forget which way is which, the Castle Keeper must keep up with what is going on. A lot of time can pass on the outside.

One method of marking one's way is with the magical yarn found in the Balonakalon's room in **LEVEL 4, AREA 25**.

LEVEL 6 (See Map p. 169)

AREA 32: CROWDED STAIRWELL: The druid has accidentally blocked entry and exit to his tower.

Before you lies a staircase that leads to the upper towers of the fortress. The steps leading up twist ever tighter and narrower. Tendrils of roots extend down from the tower above, growing thicker very quickly until they choke the entire staircase, allowing no movement upwards whatsoever. The roots also have small red gem shards dispersed amongst them.

Deuranimus had cast a spell in the room above to grow a pear tree. He did not get what he wanted, see below, **AREA 39**. For now, the characters need to move through a tangle of thick roots which cover the entire stairwell. The gem shards stuck in the roots are the remains of thousands of shattered gems Deuranimus brought up here, which then got caught up in the sudden growth of his magical root ball.

The roots are not sentient, cannot defend themselves, and do not attack. However, they do not burn. They can be hacked through, but several simple spells will cause them to move aside.

Hacking the roots to bits to open a space in the stairway takes several hours of time. The following druid spells cause the roots to move aside: *entangle* (*disentangle*), *warp wood*, *plant growth* (*shrinking*), *freedom of movement*, *control plants* or similar spells.

AREA 33: ROOTING CHAMBER: This is where Deuranimus spends most of his time. The room is dominated by a massive, leafless tree, or rather, a root ball all bathed in blue light (the light emanates from a glowing orb on the balcony, **AREA 34**). The roots stretch and wrap around the entire room, covering every surface. The roots glitter red with the many thousands of red gem shards caught up in their growth.

Walking in here is very difficult as the room is little more than a gnarled bundle of roots. Because the roots are meshed with the shards of gems, movement in the room is difficult without getting cut. Walking barefoot in here causes 1 hp of damage a round. Any exposed flesh that scrapes the roots has the potential for being shredded by the gem shards. An unsuccessful dexterity check indicates 1 point of damage (for example, when a character falls over and attempts to get up there is a check).

A portal opens onto a balcony at the far end of the room with a large blue light drifting in it. The roots have been formed into an uncomfortable-looking bedding area with several tattered blankets on it and a single sitting area like a throne near the balcony.

Deuranimus is in this room should the characters have entered it by chopping their way through the roots. Otherwise, he is upstairs (see **Area 35**). There is nothing of interest in here. The gem shards are worthless except in bulk (1 pound would bring 1gp).

AREA 34: BALCONY: This is a roofed balcony. Upon it is a large stone, perhaps 10 feet in diameter with a blue sphere floating above it. Upon the stone are scribed two concentric circles with words etched into the space between them. The orb is a beacon and nothing more. The magic used to keep the orb in place is contained within the stone. Should the stone be broken, the orb disappears.

An enterprising magician might note the concentric circles and scribbling upon the stone, copy them into a book and attempt to replicate the magic here. It is possible. The only limitation is finding the correct type of rock to scribe the spell onto. Obsidian, carved and sanded to a near perfect disc, is the only stone that can be used in such a spell.

LEVEL 7 (See Map p. 169)

AREA 35: THE MADDENING CHAMBER: This chamber is where Deuranimus spends most of his time. A portal opens onto the roof of the balcony (see below). The room is full of crows, all of which have a necklace with a gem hanging from it. Deuranimus is in here when the characters enter the tower.

Deuranimus had gathered a few items which he considered valuable when he first came up here. Only two items remain, as he has thrown the rest off of the balcony. There is a water clock, but it has no water to run it. It sits still as if time has stopped. Also,

there is a small pendulum in the center of the room. Often he sits in front of it and pushes the silver ball, watching it swing back and forth. He can spend hours doing this until he loses his temper and kicks it across the room (only to gingerly pick it up again later). A pile of old moldy and rotting clothing are heaped in one corner of the room, and several large gems lie about.

Upon the wall is etched a spell, *redemption* (see **New Spells** at the end of the book). The spell describes how to revive a person's bound soul, in this case, those imprisoned in the gems. The spell, however, is not complete. The intonation portion of the spell is not writ upon the wall. However, the cryptic words are on the wall:

"Utring-Akt et Oonmakling-where the Screed meets the Gray Pools upon the River Road."

There is a rough map as well, etched in the stone, which shows a great forest in the south (the Kellerwald) and a road that stretches from it to some marshes (the Gausumland). Anyone familiar with the area, as the character should be now, also notes the far western edge of the Blacktooth Ridge intersecting with the forest.

NOTE: This map is presented in full in *A6 Of Banishment & Blight* already published.

Deuranimus explains (if he is able) that an Oonmakling who lives in a castle far away (*A6 Of Banishment and Blight*) knows the intonation. Deuranimus becomes very cooperative and helpful if the characters are interested in freeing the souls from the birds.

Deuranimus offers the characters a small scroll case with a map inside. The map shows much of the region of the Blacktooth Ridge. The map is relatively new, as Deuranimus took it from an ungern soldier. The location of the Oonmakling fortress, Utring Akt, is easy to discern. (See map on page 167).

Writ upon the map is the following arcane reference: "Utring Akt. The Oonmakling may reforge it."

The "it" refers to the *horn of opening*, that magic item that many believe when once restored, can summon Unklar back to the plane. The characters may have gathered parts of the *horn of opening* on their travels.

AREA 36: BALCONY ROOF: On the balcony and the dome above the topmost tower are hundreds and hundreds of crows, all cawing, telling their stories in the language of the crows. The crows can also, in a creaking voice, speak in the tongues of the souls of those entombed within the gems they wear. If one listens, they will tell their tale. Deuranimus often sits here listening to the tales of those he placed into the gems.

DEURANIMUS

Deuranimus is an aged man, far older than his crinkled skin, balding head and gray scraggly beard suggest. So much has his guilt consumed him that he can no longer die until it is assuaged. He is tall, emaciated, has large bulging brown eyes and stoops when walking, as if carrying a massive weight upon his shoulders. He yells and screams when he talks and makes no pretense whatsoever to polite conversation. Not having bathed in decades, Deuranimus does not smell at all delightful. He really, really stinks.

He is crazed, of course, and consumed by his guilt and seeks nothing more than to undo the wrongs he has enacted over time. But he knows no way to do such. His madness is all-consuming, leaving him with little control over his emotions, which range from the suicidal to the homicidal to the passive and forgiving. Only during very short periods of time does he come to his senses and realize the depths of his madness. In his sane moments, he does not want to kill, but he knows those moments are far and few between, so stays hidden up here.

Characters interacting with Deuranimus take a great chance of being killed. There is only a 10% chance that he will be lucid when they arrive. There is a 45% chance he will be on the homicidal side of the coin. Otherwise he is on the guilt side of his personality and only thinks of suicide and is full of self-loathing. The CK should check for his mood every 10 minutes. He switches to homicidal quickly.

There are only a few methods of ensuring that he does not attack the characters. The first is if the characters spend any time talking with the crows or listening to their stories—which may not happen, considering the imminent return of the 1000 or so ungern on patrol. Deuranimus always takes time to talk to the crows. However, if the characters have taken the time to listen to one of the crow's stories at any point in the adventure, there is a 50% chance Deuranimus is aware of the event. Should he learn of it, when the characters arrive, his chance of being homicidal upon the first encounter is reduced by 5%. Should eight or more crows tell Deuranimus of their encounters with characters in which a whole story was told in full, there is a 99% chance Deuranimus recognizes them when they approach and stays in a neutral/normal mode for 2d6 x 10 minutes.

LOWER HALLS (See Map page 170)

The Lower Halls are where the druid practiced his craft of binding the souls of his prisoners in gems and the gems to the crows of Festung Akt. Areas 6–12 are inhabited by a band of shadows, a one-time paladin and his victims (see **Area 8 below**). These shadows freely wander the halls and rooms of all the Lower Halls, hunting they know not what. The lesser shadows do not stray far from the great one, the paladin. They do not hinder the otyguh, nor molest the fey. If the characters should encounter one of the shadows, it flees back to Area 8 where the greater shadow dwells. The characters should see a shade moving in the shadows, but nothing more.

Several ungern and Balonakalon have recently entered the Lower Hall. The ungern were slain by the greater shadow in **Area 8**. The rest of the ungern avoid these halls unless they suspect the characters are down here and the ungern are chasing them. It is one of the places the characters may find refuge should the ungern troops return and they find themselves inside the tower. It is also a very dangerous place, for several shadows dwell in here as well as many other creatures.

There are many empty areas in this level. Small alcoves and cave offshoots dot the area. They were used for storage and sometimes as sleeping quarters. They are not detailed, as nothing of value remains here unless otherwise noted. Also, the three dots indicate the presence of a metal grate door. Unless otherwise noted, none are locked.

AREA 1: ENTRY CHAMBER

The stairs from above (**Level One Area 5A**) descend into a large cavern consisting of natural walls. Some sections have been carved to give the room a nearly round appearance. Several openings lead from this chamber.

You are greeted by a round, cavernous room. The central area of the cavern is dominated by a dozen metal cages dangling from the ceiling. They are suspended by massive chains and pulleys. The whole lot of them (cages, chains, and pulleys) are old and rusted. Three of the cages contain the skeletal remains of unfortunate prisoners. Their bones hang between the cage bars like alabaster vines. The cages are large enough to hold humans. Scattered about the room are several tables, chairs, pails, casks, and a shelf. All have been overturned and knocked around.

A low whistling sound can be heard. It is coming from the east side of the room. Very cold air is coming from the west side of the chamber. The further one moves in that direction, the colder it becomes. There is nothing of value in the area.

AREA 2: GEM ROOM

This room contains seven, medium-sized chests, a table with one chair, and a shelf with several tools on it. A leather apron hangs on the far wall and two small buckets lie on the floor beneath it.

The tools on the shelf were used for cutting and shaping the gems. There are several small drills, chisels, hammers, and a small monocle used for magnification. The buckets contain shards of worked gems (this total debris has a value of 5gp). The tools are in good shape.

Each chest is made of wood and padlocked. The dampness has caused the wood of the trunks to decay and the mechanisms in the locks to corrode and rust. The chests can simply be broken open with a strong hammer or rock but not picked or otherwise opened normally. Once the chests are broken open, red gems spill out onto the floor. The baubles Deuranimus gathered in which the souls were placed were not rare and only of moderate value. There are, however, a lot of them in here. Each chest contains around 300 gems, each about ¼ the size of a small egg and have a value of 5gp a piece.

Busting open the chests attracts the shadows from Area 8, if they have not already been encountered.

AREA 3: BROKEN ANVIL

This room has a small forge in it. Nearby is a workbench and table with tools of that trade spread around. Many have been knocked to the floor. Several ungern corpses in the early stages of decomposition lie on the floor. In the center of the room is an anvil which has cracked apart, both sides lying on the floor next to the table upon which it once sat. A massive metal table rests against another wall. Shackles hang from it. On the floor near the broken anvil, two gems are clearly visible, glowing as if imbued with a dim light.

In a pile of debris along the wall is a long, unfurled parchment. Written upon it is a ritual spell for the transferring of a soul to one of the gems. It takes 12 hours to transfer a soul to the gem. The person must be dead for at least an hour but no more than 24 hours. The process requires an anvil, hammer, the corpse, a



gem, and silver powder. The latter must be sprinkled over the body prior to “hammering” out the soul. An action followed by hammering the soul into the gem.

This area was used by Deuranimus to take the souls of those he was supposed to execute and transfer them into special gems. These gems were then placed in medallions and hung from the necks of crows and, ostensibly, scattered to the four winds.

At the moment of Unklar’s banishment from Airhde, the anvil cracked at the same time Deuranimus was transferring the soul of a paladin to a gem. The paladin was caught in the dead zone between the realms of the living and the dead. His body died, but his soul lingered, aware of an aching agony that he could not relieve. He became a shadow of himself and began haunting the room, tethered to the room that played witness to his last waking moment. He now wanders these few rooms seeking to kill anything it can. It has even turned a few others into its thralls. As with many undead of this nature, the shadow is confined to certain areas of the Lower Halls and should he try to leave simply reappears near the anvil.

If the characters approach the anvil, one of the lesser shadows appears to their rear and approaches. After two rounds, another appears as if emerging from a wall; in two more rounds, another, then another in 2 more rounds, when finally, the greater shadow forms near the anvil and attacks.

The two gems near the anvil are actually the two halves of the broken gem. Bringing the two halves together in the presence of the greater shadow causes it to turn away and wail. It lingers 20 feet from the gem, wailing the whole time.

Casting a *minor restoration* spell on the gems, as they are held together, causes them to fuse. Should they fuse, the greater shadow dissipates, as do the lesser shadows. The gem is worth 1000 gp.

GREATER SHADOW (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 5d12, AC 16, HP 35. His primary attributes are mental. He attacks with an incorporeal touch for 1d4 points of damage. He causes strength drain with a successful hit, doubling the amount of loss that a normal shadow causes. He can also blend into the darkness and has a vulnerability to sunlight. He can create other spawn as well.)

LESSER SHADOWS x4 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 3d12, AC 13, HP 14, 17, 18, 18. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with an incorporeal touch for 1d4 points of damage. They cause strength drain with a successful hit. They can also blend into the darkness and have a vulnerability to sunlight. They can create other spawn as well.)

AREA 4: HEATED HALL

Like much of the Lower Halls, this room has been chiseled to resemble the above tower.

This huge, round room has several large tables braced against a pillar of rough-hewn rock that seems to hold up the ceiling above. Casks, crates, piles of chain, metal hooks, and heaps of manacles are all lying about. Shelves line the walls with small boxes filled with bolts and metal wires. Above the tables, hanging from hooks on the pillar, are a number of iron key rings. You can clearly hear a wheezing from across the room. The air here is slightly warmer than the rest of the Lower Halls you've explored. A slight glow comes from the far side of the chamber.

There is a glow coming from the north end of the room. In no time at all, the characters see three large snake like creatures, glowing red hot, curled up in a writhing pile at the north end of the room. They are three tavis wyrms.

No one knows much about the tavis wyrms. They travel from the elemental plane of fire to the material worlds in search of sustaining material. They eat their way through veins of volcanic debris left in the cracks and fissures of the earth. When full, they rest, either here or in the world from which they emerged. Several have found themselves in the Lower Halls of Festung Akt, curled up like great snakes, resting in the far corner of the room. This rest could last an hour or a decade, since time has no meaning for tavis wyrms.

The tavis wyrms are, obviously, sleeping and pay no immediate heed to the characters. However, movement in the room may disturb the wyrms. If one skirts the south side of the room away from the wyrms, the movement may not wake them. Unless the party is able to move silently, such as a rogue, the wyrms must make a wisdom check to determine if they wake up or not. Should they succeed, they awaken and consider anything in here to be an enemy and go for the kill. Otherwise they stay asleep. The wisdom check is offset by the sneaky roll bonus of rogues and rangers. If the party approaches the wyrms, they automatically wake up.

TAVIS WYRMS (These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 3d8, AC 16, HP 20, 21, 21. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a bite for 1d8 points of damage. They are also able to launch a heat attack that can destroy non-magical weapons, or cause a further 1d6 points of burn damage.)

The wheezing sound is air rising up through holes in the chamber's floor (see Area 7 below).

AREA 5 PRISON CHAMBERS: This entire area is where prisoners were once kept prior to being taken to the main entry chamber for questioning and execution. Shackles and chains are randomly pinned to the walls along these halls and alcoves. There are hundreds of them. Skeletons still dangle from many of the chains. These are the remains of the last prisoners of Festung Akt; they were abandoned and left to starve. There is nothing of value in this entire area and, unless one has a particular fascination with skeletons, nothing of interest. Except that is, **AREA 5A**.

AREA 5A FEY: There is a small cage, about the size of a bird cage, hanging from the ceiling in this room. Within are three small fey. Unless one looks closely, they look just like the twigs from a small tree with leaves attached to them.

These fey are immortal. But, to thrive, they need sunlight. Without it, they linger as if in a deep sleep. They can exist like this for many hundreds of years before eventually perishing. With some sunlight, they can live forever. They are not near the end of their lives, but if left here for another century or so, they will die.

If a little light is shined upon them, from a torch or lantern (not magical light), they begin to stir after 10 minutes or so. For them to truly revive, they need to be brought out in the sunlight. Even then, it takes a month for them to reach full health.

The fey do not speak any common tongues, but they do have one. A *comprehend language* spell reveals their language as one of the fey tongues. Their value to the party lies in future adventures, should the Castle Keeper bother to keep track of such things. They are forever indebted to the characters and seek to help them however they can. The fey can speak to many woodland creatures, including treants. Please use these creatures at your discretion. They are not powerful, but are very interesting. They will not become "members" of the adventuring party, but can follow them and or offer up help in specific settings.

FEY x3 (These chaotic good creatures' vital stats are HD 1/2, AC 22, HP 1/2 of 1. Their primary attributes are physical. They have no ability to physically attack or harm other creatures. They know the languages of the woodland creatures, and as such can speak to gnomes. They also have the ability to cast *web* spell. It takes 10 fey to cast as a 3rd level wizard; 20 fey to cast as a 4th level, and so on.)

AREA 6: WEAPONS STORAGE

This was once a storeroom for some very well made weapons of war. A large metal door set into a metal frame blocks entry to this room. Locked these many years, the locking mechanism has rusted over, making it very difficult to open. A rogue can pick the lock though (CL 5). The hinges are old, rusted, and not a little bent, so a loud grinding and squeaking occurs upon opening it. It produces enough noise to automatically awaken the tavis wyrms in **LEVEL 2, AREA 5**. If the characters can prevent the noise by use of oil or magic, then it is unlikely the wyrms awaken.

The room beyond has not been touched in many years. Though at one time, the room was a mass of weapons, the ungern removed most of them some time ago when they abandoned the complex. Of the few which remain, the weapons wooden parts and leather straps and other material of that nature have decayed over time, such that they

are useless in the short term. However, if the metal of the weapons is taken to a master smith or woodworker of the proper type, they can be repaired and made usable again. Of the weapons in here, there are two expert crossbows (+1 to hit and +1 to damage with an increased range increment of 20 feet) and four expert swords and polearms (each conferring a +1 to hit and +2 damage). Bear in mind these are non-magical weapons. The cost to repair them is high. There are dozens of other weapons as well. Again, none of these weapons are usable as of this moment, as they are in need of repair.

AREA 7: THE WATERS OF FILTH AND TREASURE VAULT

This area includes a main chamber and several interconnected chambers (10A–10D). Access to them is gained from **AREA 1**. The secret door is exceedingly difficult to locate (CL 7). The chamber can also be accessed through underground, water-filled corridors from the Canals.

There are several large pools of water in this room. These are not spring waters. This is water carried here from the fetid pools beneath Aufstrag, far to the north, by a series of slow-moving, underground canals. The pools actually sit above these underwater caverns and corridors, which themselves are filled with this thick, viscous, soupy water. These corridors and chambers all connect and lead through many miles of canals to the feet of Aufstrag. Festung Akt was built upon the drainage of these canals years ago. Little comes from the north anymore, but the canals are clogged and thick with debris, which has pushed the waters up and into the Lower Halls of the fortress here in **AREA 7**.

The inhabitants of Festung Akt have long since forgotten about these canals. Even the druid remained oblivious to their existence, assuming that the pools beneath his fortress were nothing but natural waterways. If the characters should explore the pools, swimming down into them, they may discover the hewn rocky walls of the canals. Following them for the best part of a quarter of a mile north will bring them out and into a long, dark, narrow, and very straight tunnel. The tunnel is the canal itself. It has two walkways, wide enough for a single individual, that lead on and to the north. The canal itself still has a thick, wet, damp mud along its floor. Only once in a great while, it floods and fills the canal bed. The tunnel itself is about eight feet wide. The CK should discourage immediate exploration of these tunnels, as they lead to Aufstrag. But some indication should be given that these are long, old tunnels. Should the characters persist, then an opening exists, where the tunnels have collapsed some 8 miles north of the fortress. The characters can exit there.

Many corpses were thrown into the pools in this chamber over the centuries by Unklar's servants for the otyugh to consume. This monster is now quite hungry. It can hear well and is very active-being magical in nature-and often comes to the surface seeking something to eat.

There is nothing of value in the pools. The water itself, though filthy and seemingly valueless, is a major ingredient for summoning the spawn of the shadow realms, and is, therefore, valuable to magic users and others interested in such stuff. A vial can fetch as much as 500 gp. It may take some research and time to figure this out, if ever.

Also, weapons smeared in this liquid can cause disease if they strike someone. The person so struck must make a constitution check.

Failure indicates they suffer from a disease, which saps their strength over time. Every 12 hours after being inflicted, the person struck loses 1 point of strength. After another 12 hours a point of constitution is lost. A flip-flop loss occurs until a *cure disease* is cast upon the character. The lost attribute points can be restored with a *minor restoration* spell. The 'goo' remains on the weapons for up to seven days. Wounded characters entering the liquid must make a constitution check, -5 with an open wound, or they will similarly become afflicted.

As for the otyugh, it travels from chamber to chamber randomly. Once the characters get near any pool and disturb it (especially entering it), the creature makes haste to locate them. This should take from 11-22 (d12+10) rounds.

Should the characters enter the waters and travel through the chambers, there is a 40% chance they notice a faint glow in the water in an alcove. A magic user who crept his way in here some 10 years ago was killed by the otyugh. All that remain are some remnants of clothing the otyugh spit up and an *ever-burning torch* tucked away, half buried in silt in this alcove. The otyugh just could not stomach it.

In the far east corner of **AREA 7** is a treasure chamber (marked with a T on the map). It contains several unlocked chests. There is very little in the way of treasure here, as most of the material and coin collected in taxes at Festung Akt the lords had sent to Aufstrag. Some does remain, however; in sum, both chests contain the following; 4000 gp in coin, 7000 gp in jewelry, and 1000 gp in statuettes and other small items. Inside one of the chests is a small wooden box. Within the wooden box is one half of an ivory horn about 1 and ½ feet in length. This item resonates magic. It is useless however unless the characters have brought together all the parts of the horn and the item fashioned. It is part of the horn of opening (when all parts are assembled, it can be used to open the lower gate of Aufstrag.)

OTYUGH (*This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 6d8, AC 17, HP 32. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with two tentacles for 1d8 points of damage and a vicious bite for a further 2d4. It has an improved grab and cause diseases as well.*)

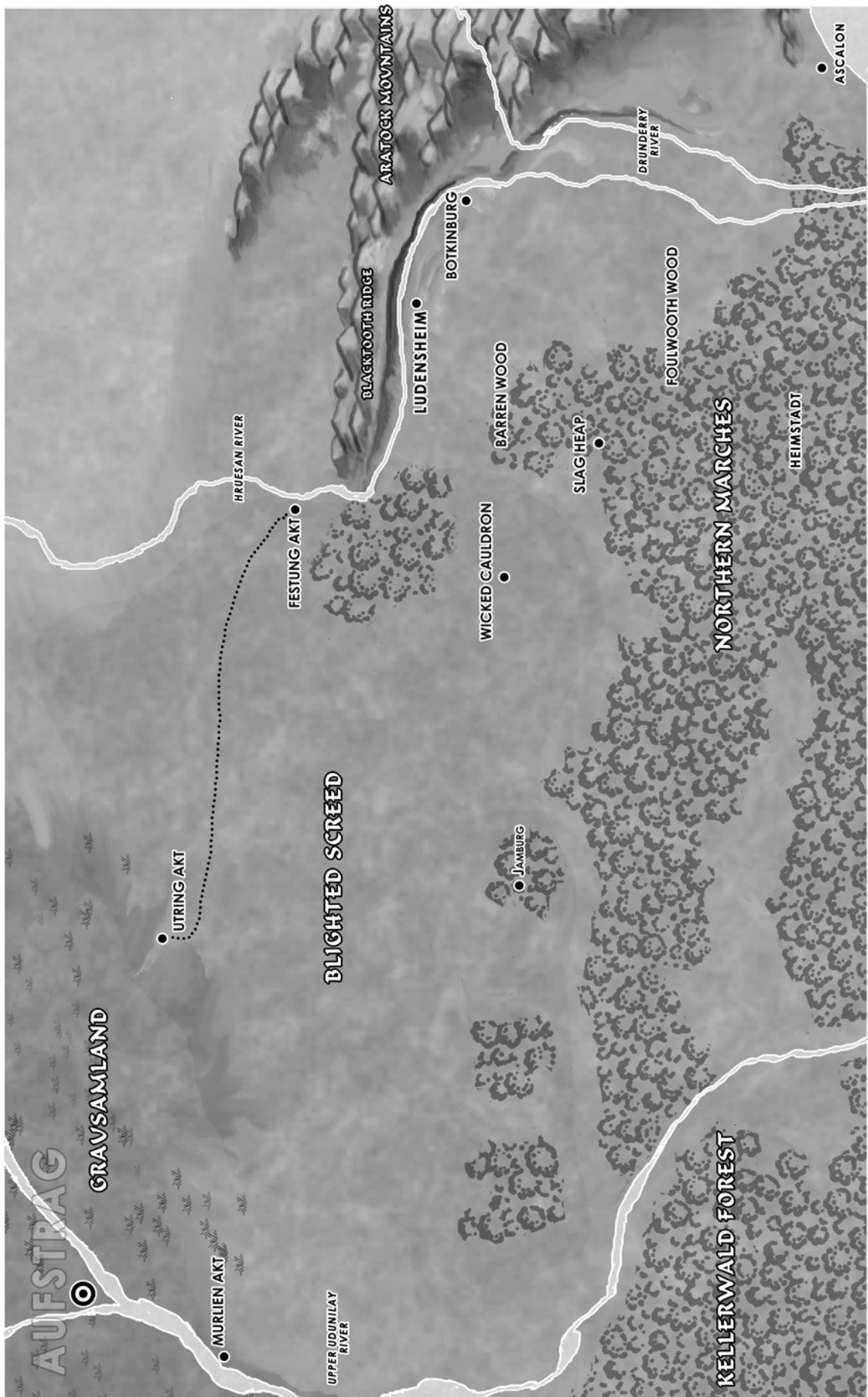
CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

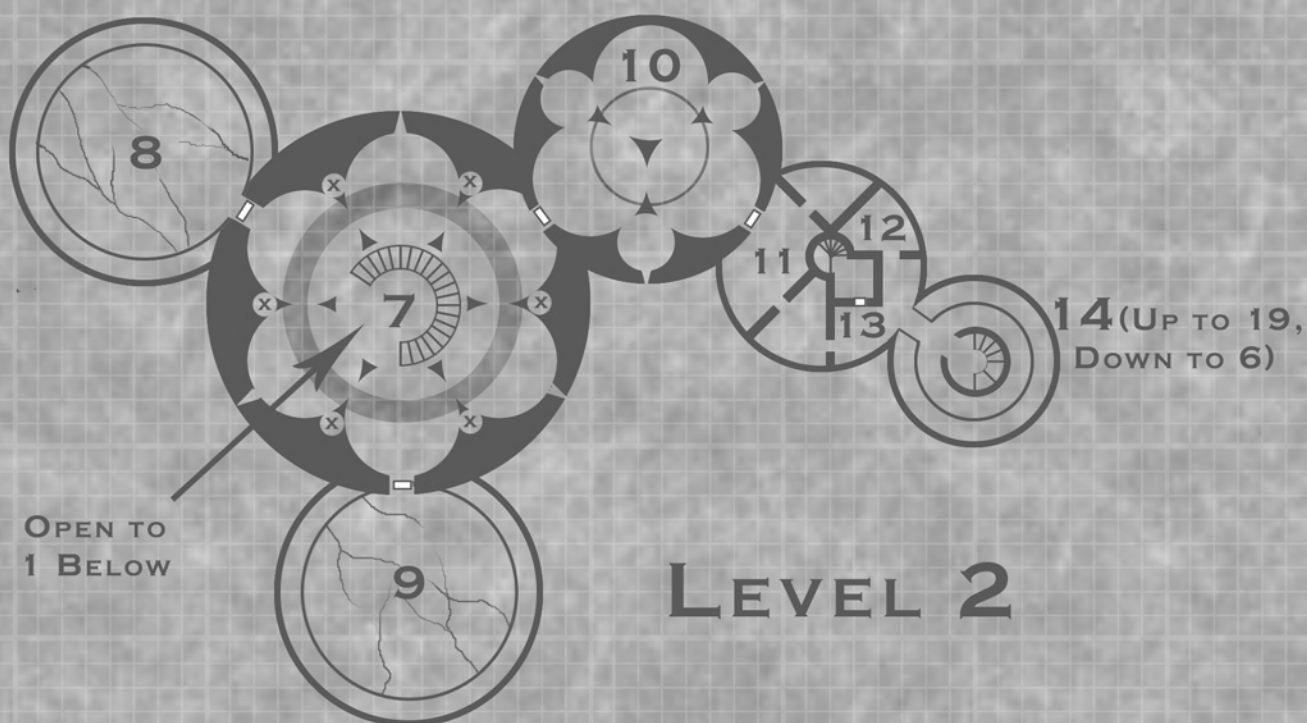
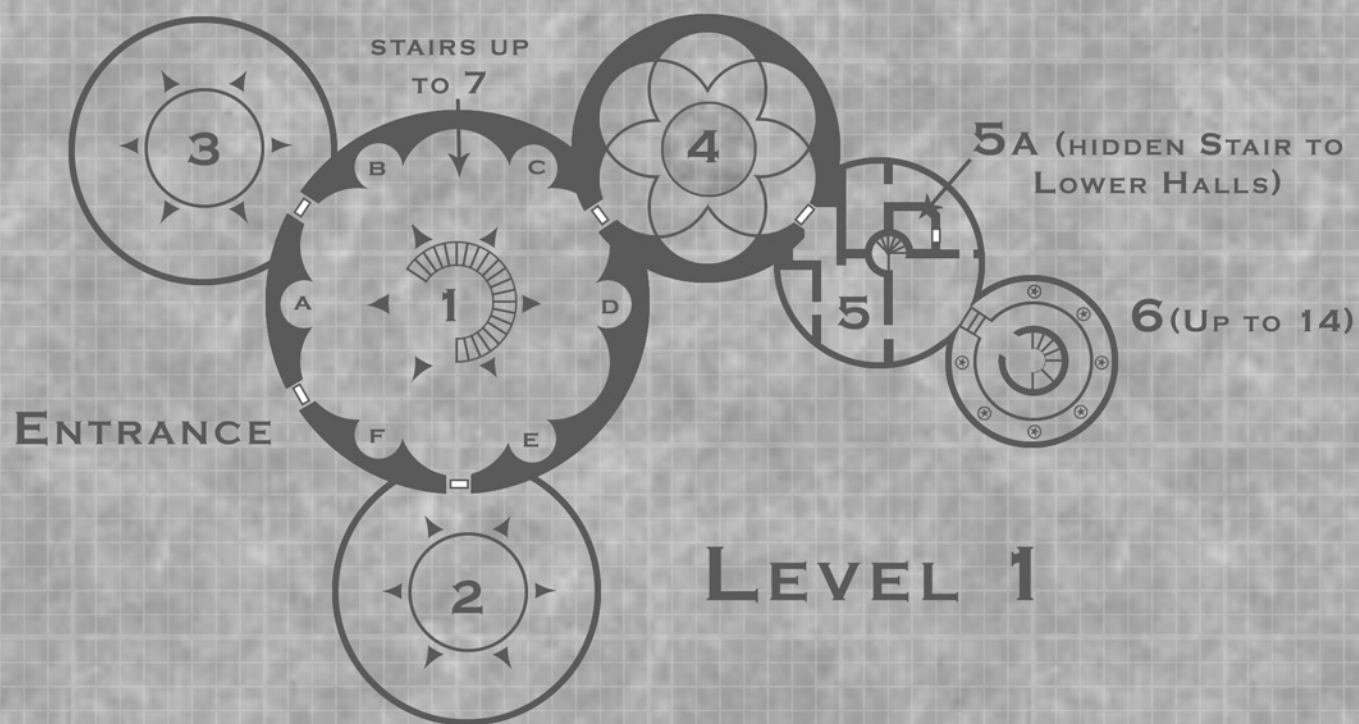
Thus ends the characters' adventures within the walls and environs of Festung Akt. The adventure to A6 can continue in several manners. The first and best method is for the characters to attempt to free the souls of those trapped in the gems by adventuring to Utring Akt as mentioned in Area 35 and 36.

As there is no direct linking of plots and devices between A5 and A6 (the creatures in A6 are not allied with those in A5), the characters must be encouraged to find the place.

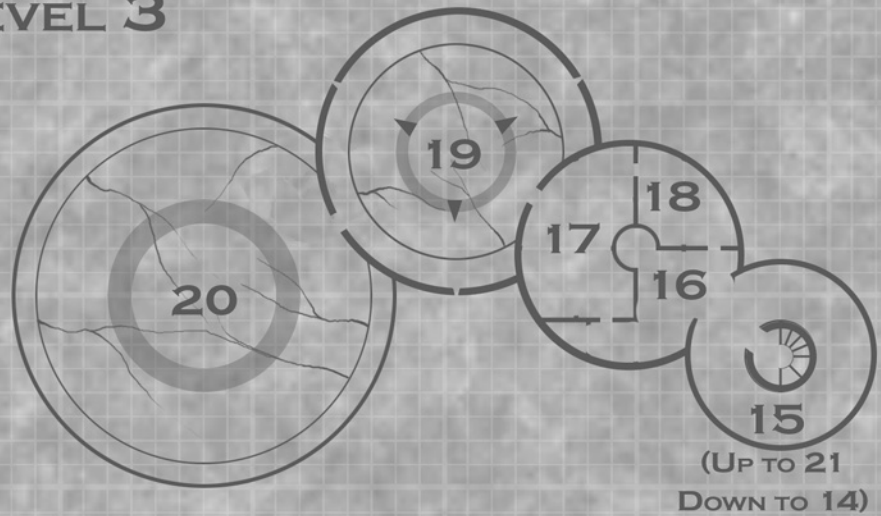
If this fails, the Castle Keeper may encourage the party to follow one of the trails leading from the place. A ranger or druid would note its recent use by a small group of men and unger. The trail leads to the Oonmakling fortress.

The third, final, and perhaps most interesting method is by use of the ogre magi the characters may have encountered earlier. If the ogre magi survives, he approaches the party about traveling to Utring Akt to aid him in settling an old score; he would like the party's help in killing of an ogre frost magi that dwells there. The ogre magi here will, once the party has slain the frost magi, turn on them and try to kill them at an opportune time.

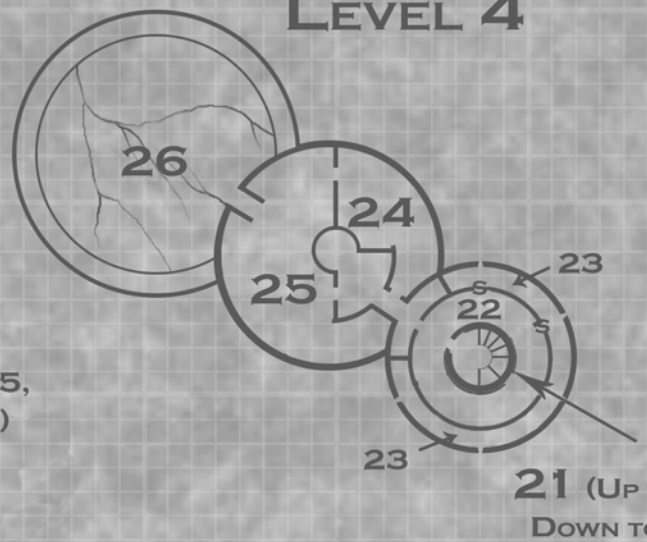




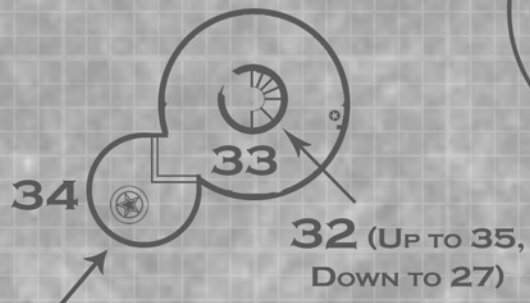
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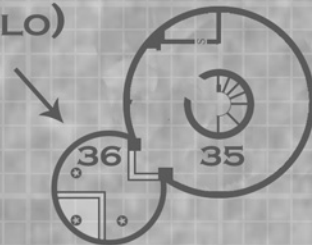
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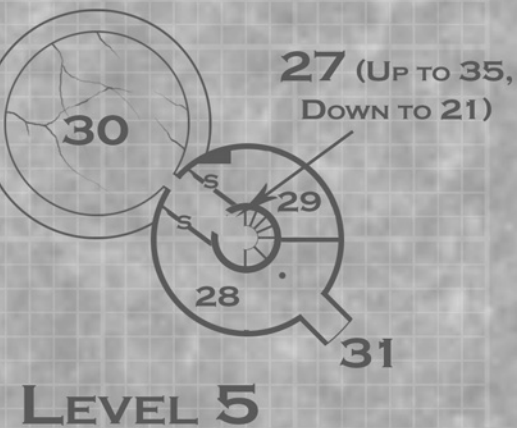
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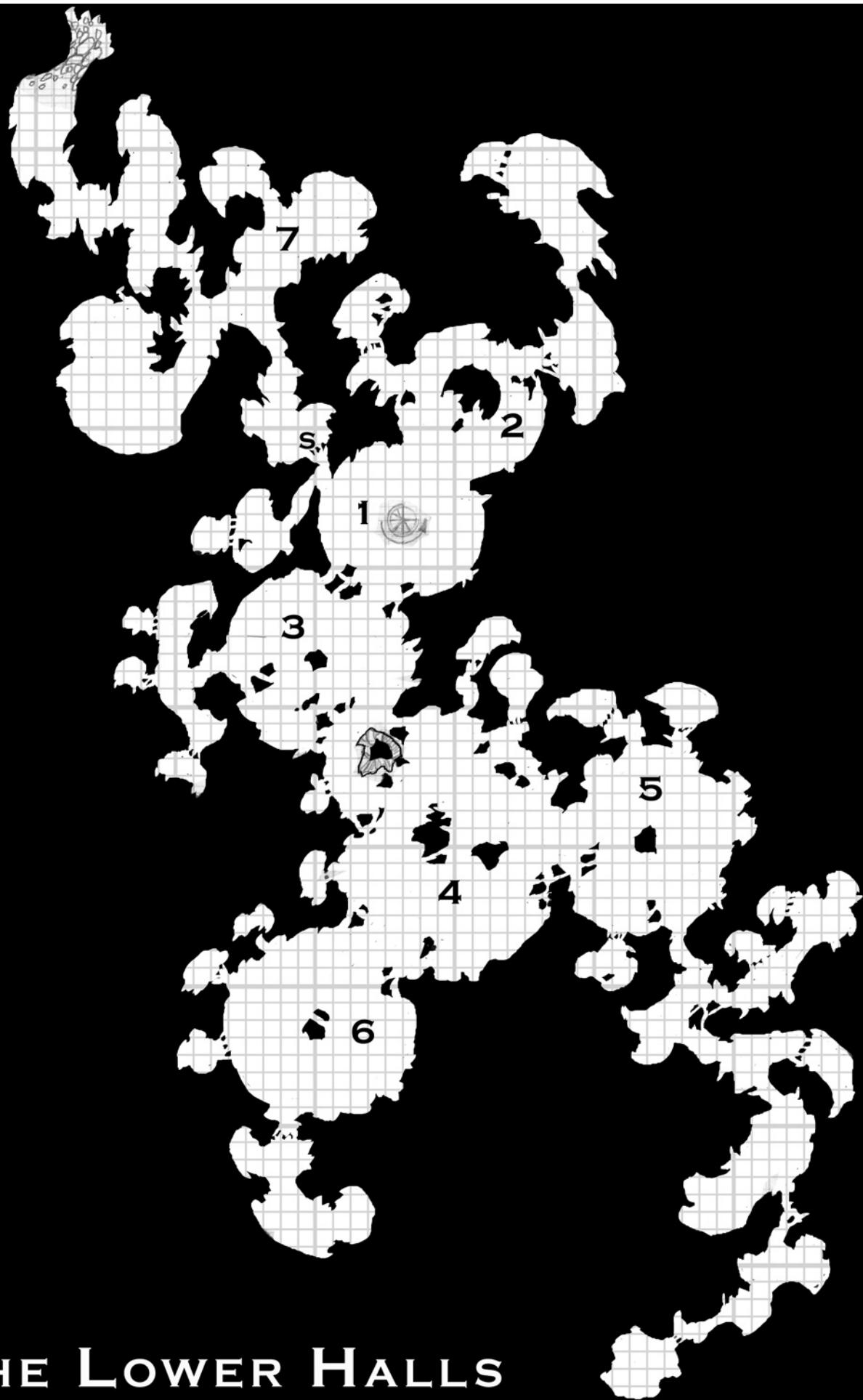
THESE TWO AREAS
JUT OUT OVER TOWER
(SEE COVER ILLO)



LEVEL 7



LEVEL 5



THE LOWER HALLS

170 CASTLES & CRUSADES

APPENDIX A: NEW MONSTERS

BLOOD OOZE (LEACH)

NO. APPEARING: 1–4

SIZE: S

HD: 1 (1 hp)

MOVE: 1 ft.

AC: 10

ATTACKS: Blood drain (1 hp)

SPECIAL: Replicates

SAVES: Nil

INT: Nil

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

TYPE: Magical beast

TREASURE: Nil

XP: 10

Blood ooze are small, worm-like creatures roughly one inch in length. They are fat to the point of looking as if they will explode and segmented like maggots but colored a distinct dark red. Upon either end of the worm are small, teeth-lined apertures which they use to bite their victims. They move by sliding and pulling themselves along. Their skin is thin, almost translucent, allowing one to see shadows of veins within the creature. They are pulpy and smash very easy. When they do, they explode with a pop and splatter tissue and blood everywhere.

Blood ooze are dangerous creations, for when they strike a victim and cause damage, they instantly replicate, splitting into two. The second blood ooze immediately attacks. In this way, a few blood ooze can turn into scores and threaten even the most powerful person or creature. They are highly susceptible to flame, cold, or any temperature variant.

The blood ooze is a magical creature formed in the laboratories of evil wizards. These creatures are created to cause pain and suffering, serving many an evil lord as a plague upon their victims. The worms reproduce so quickly that any region afflicted with only a few can suddenly find itself swamped with thousands of them.

COMBAT: The blood ooze attacks by biting a victim and releasing it. As soon as it scores a hit it drops to the ground immediately. It attacks immobilized victims if it can or attaches on to anything that passes by as they move very slowly. Its whole purpose is to score a successful bite so that it can replicate. It does not care if it dies after that or not. But it will release and bite again in order to create more.

REPLICATE: If the blood ooze scores a successful hit, it automatically does 1 point of damage; the worm then releases and moves to bite again. The wound sprouts a second blood worm, replicating from the first one almost immediately.

THE BLOOD OOZE IN THE WORLD OF AIHRDE

The Umbrian wizards created the blood ooze in the pits of Aufstrag in the latter days of Unklar's rule. The worms were unleashed on the dwarves, goblins, and halflings in the Trench War under the roots of the great city fortress. There, they spread like a plague, as the tunnel fighters tended to ignore them, at first. After that, they became one more danger in the long list of dangers in that horrid

long war. The goblins eventually found a way to keep them at bay with various incantations and minor sorceries.

But the plague of the creatures spread beyond the confines of the dungeons beneath Aufstrag. Some enterprising merchants took them and began to peddle them on the markets of the east. They were much liked by assassins and others of that ilk, but they were used by evil wizards and others as well. After the Winter Dark Wars ended, the blood ooze became scarce, but they are still sold on the black market to the highest bidder and are encountered in deep dungeons long hidden from the gaze of men.

DARK FAERIE

No. Appearing: 1–6, 20–100

Size: Small/Medium

HD: 1 (d6) or 2 (d8)

Move: 20 ft., fly 30 ft.

AC: 15

Attacks: Dart (1d3), short sword (1d6)

Special: Spell-like Abilities, Twilight Vision, Polymorph, Rogue traits

Saves: M & P

Int: Average to Superior

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Treasure: 1, 3

XP: 35+1, 90+3

Dark Faerie are outcasts from the land of Faerie, and for this reason they hate beauty of any sort. They take many shapes and forms. Their natural form is that of a small winged, humanoid creature, mottled dark green in color. They have long faces with deep set eyes and unusually horrible teeth. Occasionally, they take on the shape of deformed gnomes. They are found in most climes and almost any terrain. However, they much prefer deep, temperate forests where they live in dens or warrens dug beneath the roots of very old trees. Dark fey are violent creatures and do not work well with one another. When encountered in large groups, there are always several factions that frequently fight one another.

Dark fey work to undo all that is good in the world, and they long for the return of Unklar and the Age of Winter's Dark. They tend to seek out powerful, evil creatures and aid them against other lesser folk. They love to steal and rob human establishments and are frequently responsible for kidnapping the young.

Dark Faerie have an inexplicable hatred, which borders on fear, of birds.

Combat: Dark Faerie rarely stand and fight unless they feel that they have a better-than-average chance of overcoming the enemy. They prefer hit-and-run tactics that keep the enemy unbalanced, gradually weakening them until chances of a successful attack improve.

Polymorph: Dark Faerie have the ability to *polymorph self* twice each day as a 7th level caster.

Spell-like Abilities: They can cast, as a 6th level wizard, the following spells once per day – *obscuring mist*, *entangle*, *pass without trace*, *light* and *silence image*.

Rogue Traits: Dark Fey have all 1st level rogue abilities and act as 5th level rogues.

ERDER WYRM (TYPE II)

NO. APPEARING: 1–2

SIZE: Large

HD: 4d10

MOVE: 30ft.

AC: 18/12

ATTACKS: 2 claw (1d6 each), bite (3d4)

SPECIAL: Darkvision 120 feet, Scent, Immunity to Cold, Deafening Roar

SAVES: P

INT: Low

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil

TYPE: Magical Beast

TREASURE: 4

XP: 220+5

In its mature state, the erder wurm is a 10-foot-long, slithering lizard-like beast with 6 thin, double-jointed legs. It has thick, short claws, and a long crocodilian head with rows of sharp, jagged teeth. It ranges in color, but is most often a mottled gray, with a bluish sheen along its flanks. It is well-adapted at hiding in dark, murky environments. The beast has two yellowish eyes with reptilian pupils. It is able to dislocate its jaws so that it can swallow prey much larger than its maw would indicate.

Erder wyrms have a thick scaly hide on their back, tail and head. Their underside is another thing altogether. There the scales are thinner and weaker. As such, the erder wurm has two armor classes, an 18 for the scaly upper hide and a 12 for the underbelly. In general, a mature erder wurm of this age will not fight in a manner that exposes its belly.

These creatures are perpetually hungry and eat constantly. They are dimwitted brutes, but have keen eyesight, an extraordinary sense of smell and can detect motion through vibrations. They often find some hole or crevice to den up in and stalk the area for prey. They are commonly found in cities, particularly the sewers and any underground cavernous chambers. They prey on almost anything, digesting bone, wood, or metal as easy as meat and vegetable matter.

Combat: They stalk their prey by finding a good hiding place and launching out at passing creatures. Though squat, the creatures are able to move remarkably fast and often rush opponents using their deafening roar to knock them senseless. Once senseless, they fall upon the hapless victim, using their jaws and claws to pull them from the area where the creature may swallow them in safety.

Deafening Roar: From the bowels of Aufstrag come these vile creatures and they carry with them the echo of the fear emanating from those deep dungeons, torture pits, lightless tunnels, and dank avenues beneath the earth. The erder wurm can roar three times a day. This roar causes panic in the hearts of men. The roar acts as a *fear* spell. Creatures subjected to the roar must make a successful charisma saving throw to avoid the effects. Creatures with a 4 or less HD become panicked and flee. Creatures of 5 or more HD become shaken and suffer a –2 from attack, damage and attribute check rolls.

NAGA, GHOST

NO. APPEARING: 1

SIZE: Medium

HD: 4d8

MOVE: 60 feet

AC: 16

ATTACKS: Bite (1–2), tail (1–2)

SPECIALS: Constrict (3–12), Ghost Move, Shriek

SAVES: Mental

INT: Low

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil

TYPE: Aberation

XP: 215

The ghost naga is a grotesquery from the infernal pits. It has a large yellowish or multi-colored body in the shape of a snake topped with a hideous human like head.

The ghost naga is often summoned from the planes of the Abyss to guard treasuries, hallways, prisoners, or other things that need a constant and loyal eye. Having little will of their own, these creatures usually perform their job well. They are immortal and can remain in one area from ages beyond count before either being dispensed with or released from their summoning.

In battle, ghost nagas prefer to drag out fights and play with their opponents. They will attack and disappear for some time, and then return and attack again. If their opponents are trapped and unable to escape (such as in a maze), these attack routines can take days or even weeks. The ghost naga use their ghost walk ability to move through and around its opponents, causing fear in them and then escaping through walls.

Constrict: On a successful attack by either a tail whip or bite can lead to a constriction attack. In the round following the successful attack, the naga makes a grappling attack against that opponent. If successful, the defender is entwined and being constricted by the naga for 1d10+2 points of damage a round.

Ghost Move: The ghost naga can ghost move three times a day. When it ghost moves, it becomes nearly invisible and loses most of its physical being. While in this state, the naga can move through any solid objects without effect. This ability lasts for eight rounds. The naga can only be struck by magical weapons of +1 or better while in this state or by magical attacks. The naga can not make any attacks while in this state except to shriek (see below). The difficulty in seeing the naga in this state increases its armor class by four points.

Shriek: The shriek of a ghost naga causes fear in those who can hear it. This ability can be used three times a day. A save is allowed.

ROCHUN FIEND

NO. APPEARING: Special

SIZE: L

HD: 8 (d10)

MOVE: 20 ft.

AC: 17

ATTACKS: 6 tentacle attacks (1d8)

SPECIAL: Electrical Bolt,

Extra-Sensory Perception, Fly, Invisible, SR 7

SAVES: M

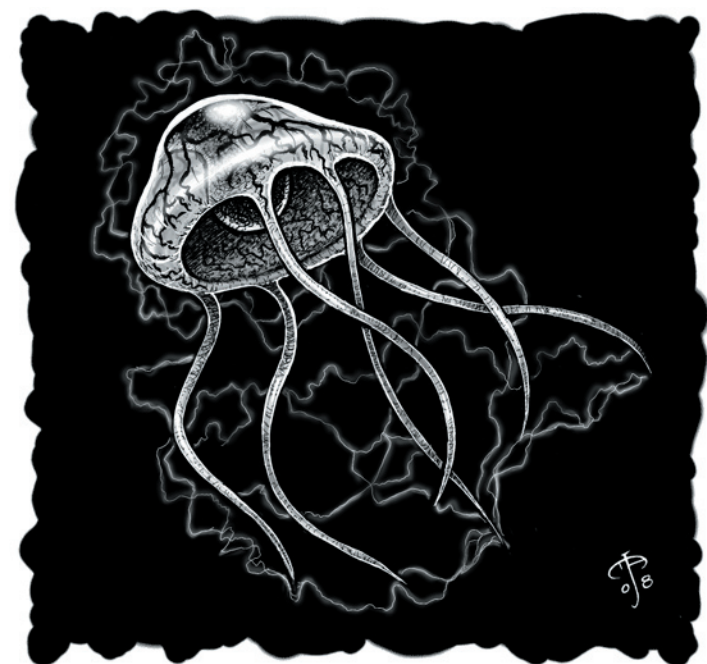
INT: Very
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil
TYPE: Magical Beast
TREASURE: Nil
XP: 1350+8

Consisting of magical energies drawn from the negative planes, the Rochun fiends are invisible, appearing to the naked eye only when they attack. When visible, usually only for several seconds, they appear as huge, translucent, jellyfish-like creatures. They have hosts of tentacles dangling from an overarching dome. The dome protects their sensory organs, which are located on a large bulb in their center mass and consist of millions of small organs sensitive to electrical activity. These allow them to “see” almost anything within a short distance, usually about 30 to 40 feet.

Created by wizards of extraordinary power, Rochun fiends are used as guardians of treasure and other magic. Their highly aggressive nature makes them dangerous to employ and they require careful management. Wizards keep them in vials, jars, or other receptacles in order to contain them and release them when needed. The container must be glass, as this substance makes them docile.

Though they possess a definite shape when they attack, the Rochun fiend has no actual shape or form. It consists of energies, only, and usually occupies extraordinarily small spaces. It can pass under doors, through the cracks in windows, and so forth. The fiend is usually contained in glass jars. These jars appear empty to the casual observer, however a *detect magic* spell will expose them as powerful magical items. When opened, a cold gas rushes out of the jar as the creature escapes. A command word, usually known only to the wizard who created the creature, sends the fiend back into the jar.

COMBAT: The Rochun fiend attacks anything within reach. It can move slowly through the air, remaining invisible until it strikes its victim. Whenever it scores a successful hit, the electricity arcs back up through the creature, briefly revealing it as described above. It fights until it is killed or forced back into its prison.



ELECTRIC SHOCK: A Rochun fiend can discharge electricity from any one of its six tentacles. It must successfully strike an enemy to discharge the electric shock. There is no save, and the recipient takes 1d4 points of damage.

EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION: The Rochun fiend is not restricted by what it can see or hear as it has no ability to see or hear anything. It perceives everything around it by sending out short electrical bursts that bounce back to the creature, allowing it to “see” that creature. It can see in any environment.

THE ROCHUN FIEND IN THE WORLD OF AIHRDE

These creatures were brewed in the depths of Aufstrag during the long Winter Dark. They were creations of that priesthood of wizards, the Umbra. High ranking members of the Guild found it necessary to guard their own laboratories against the intrusions of their surrogates and minions. What they created were the Rochun fiends. Using what little of the Paths of Umbra they understood they opened portals to the deeps of the Void and farmed from it tiny vestiges of magic and brought it back to Aihilde. There they coaxed it into life and drew from it its natural properties. They discovered, through trial and error, that glass was the only property that could safely contain the creatures and so it came to pass that many of these creature were stored away, eventually becoming lost amidst the chaos of collapse of the Unklarian Empire.

Powerful magi in Aihilde still venture in the Void to create the Rochun fiend. However, the spells to create the fiends continue to be very complex and draining, so that only the boldest and powerful wizards dare to meddle with them. Many have fallen victim to the confusion of the Paths and become lost in the Void. The spell is a 9th level spell.

SMOKE GUARDIAN

NO. APPEARING: 1
SIZE: Large
HD: 2d8
MOVE: 10ft.
AC: 16
ATTACKS: Constriction attack only
SPECIAL: Constriction
SAVES: P
INT: Low
ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil
TYPE: Magical Beast
TREASURE: Nil
XP: 22+2

These creatures are magical in nature and are born only from certain ceremonial candles used by the lords of law and evil. These candles, always green in color, put forth a faded green light and smoke incessantly. The smoke gathers above the candles, never moving many feet from them, unless a powerful wind is blowing. If left alone for several hours, the smoke takes on a sentience born of the evil imparted into the candles. The user of the candles is then able to communicate basic commands to these creatures, instructing them as guards or assassins.

These creatures are rare and almost always used as guardians of

rooms, portals, treasure and the like. Once they attune themselves to an area, they remain there until dispelled or destroyed. They are always given a command word that drives them back, as they are not always able to discern master from foe.

Combat: The smoke guardian is slow, both mentally and physically. It always takes it a round or two to realize that intruders have entered its protected area. Once noticed, however, the smoky cloud descends upon its victim, attacking anyone that falls into its grasp. The smoky guardian can attack up to four targets in a 12 foot area simultaneously, trying to constrict each target separately. It attacks by coiling tendrils of thick smoke around the victim, lifting him off the ground a few feet and squeezing him until he is crushed to death.

Constriction: A successful attack by the smoke guardian can lead to a constriction attack. In the round following the successful attack, the victim must make a strength save. If this save fails, the victim is constricted by the guardian for 2d6 points of damage per round. A victim can make additional strength saves every round to escape constriction, but escape becomes more difficult as the creature tightens its grip. All strength saves, therefore, suffer a -2 cumulative penalty for each round after the first that the victim is constricted.

UNGERN

NO. APPEARING: 1-8, 10-100

SIZE: Medium

HD: 2d8

MOVE: 30 ft.

AC 14

ATTACKS: 2 Claw (1-2), or Gore (1-6+2), or by Weapon (weapon)

SPECIAL: Twilight Vision, Spell Resistance 2, Camouflage, Cold Imminuty

SAVES: P

INT: Average

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil

TREASURE: 1

XP: 46

The ungern are spawn of the Horned God and their form reflects his own. They have dark brown or red skin, are largely hairless but for a short mane that stretches the length of their spine and shocks of it around their cloven feet. Their hands are clawed, feet are hooves and their legs have triple joints. They have wolf-like heads with long tooth filled snouts. They stand about six feet tall, and though they are rather thin, they are powerfully built creatures. Their lean muscles are like corded iron. Their torso and back are shaped like beaten metal. Their necks are thick, with bands of iron muscle stretching into their broad shoulders and backs, all this to support their great horned heads. Sprouting from the creatures backside are great horns and these range in shape, size and form. Some rise directly from the spine and are more like a ridge from head to tail, others rise from the upper back and sprout above the head like a set of antlers and yet still others grow up and through the skull and rise - like their masters - like great horned crowns.

These horns are the most distinguishing marks the ungern carry and generally the greater and more ornate the horns, the greater the

ungern. These horns grow with age and require much trimming and care and they are often decorated with all manner of jewelry, studs and the like. The ungern are fond of growing their manes to great lengths and braiding them and decorating them with bits and pieces of jewelry. They often travel without clothing, carrying only their weapons, but they are wickedly intelligent beasts and don shields and plates of iron for war. Their armor is always ornate with glyphs and runes carved throughout. They are able smiths and forge their own weapons and armor, build their own war machines, or at least instruct their slaves how to do this.

The ungern are well groomed and rather social in their own circles, but when in the company of lesser races, such as orcs, goblins or the like they display a tremendous amount of unbridled rage and cruelty. They have no particular hatreds for anyone, but complete disdain for all living things that do not serve their master. And most of those that do are tolerated only for the sake of their service to the Horned God. Only the Mogrl command respect from the ungern and they serve them loyally and without question. They are highly organized and work together in all things. They are not migratory, and rarely move once they have taken a castle or refuge as their own. Their culture is one of power and violence. Strength and intelligence are prized above all things and the greater ungern usually have both properties in abundance.

When away from their master's dens, they live in tight social groups of several hundred to a thousand. They do not build their own homes but rather settle in someone else's. They do not do menial tasks themselves, but utilize slaves, often stolen from villages, caravans or bred in their dens. They do not mate, but rather spawn like reptiles. Females, who are utterly unrecognizable from males, lay huge clutches of fertilized eggs in mounds of wet, sodden earth. The young hatch several weeks later, crawling from the mounds with tremendous appetites. They are largely on their own, forced to steal food from the other ungern until they are large enough to force their way to the community board and hunt with the others. The young are fierce and their boldness is rewarded by the adult ungern, who largely ignore the small creatures. In this way, they are taught that boldness of action is always rewarded. The pups do not suffer a high mortality rate, only the mewling weak are left to die, and thus the ungern communities, when left unchecked, grow quickly.

In war, ungern travel in organized units ranging from 10-100. For every 10 encountered, there is at least one sub-chief with maximum hit points and an AC of 15. If two or more of these captains are encountered, there is always a chief with 4d8 hit points (minimum 18 hit points) and an AC of 16. If 100 are encountered, there is an ungern battle lord with 56 hit points, AC 18 whose weapon does 2-12 points of damage. They fight using tactics and are generally able tacticians.

The ungern live in any clime, but prefer the colder latitudes to the warmer ones. They possess a natural affinity to the cold and do not suffer, as do other races. They prefer to dwell in large fortified towns, castles or cities and only when they are on the march do they live in tents or yurts. They seek the rule of law, particularly that of their master. They do not understand chaos and seek to destroy it in all its guises, good or evil. They take great pleasure in one on one combats, following a vague code of ethics and honor in such battles.

Though often if an outsider defeats an ungern in single combat, that person is killed by the collective group.

Combat: In battle, the ungern almost always dress in armor, helms and shields. They wield axes and other heavy cleaving weapons such as bardiches or halberds. Their archers are famed for using great horned bows, and though they can only fire one arrow every other round the damage they do, 2-16, more than makes up for it. If there are more than one, they always fight as a unit, speaking their own guttural language to communicate actions.

Cold Immunity: Ungern suffer half damage from cold-based attacks if they succeed at their saving throw, regardless of the source. If they fail their save, they take full damage.

Camouflage: Ungern are able to take advantage of most of their environments. When in wilderness settings they are able to conceal themselves. When concealed, they have a +1 bonus to hide checks, and a +2 bonus to surprise rolls.

The Ungern in Aihrde

All fell to the Horned God with an ease that made that beastly creature forever after hold great disdain for the folk of the All Father's fashioning. So immediately he gathered to him the substance of the Void and with the languages of his Father, he crafted the ungern, the "black spawn." Some say that they were born of a union between the dark fey and wild evil men enslaved in Unklar's service. But this is not so; they are of the Val-Austlich, those creatures forged from the Language of Creation and the Val-Eahrakun, of which Unklar was the greatest. The Judgement of Corthain does not bind them and the ungern move freely about the planes as few other creatures can.

In the black days of the Winter Dark when the Horned God, Unklar, ruled the land, the ungern issued forth from the fortress of Aufstrag. They served Unklar as soldiers and captains, and spread his evil throughout the lands. They were the battle lords that destroyed Kayomar, drove the elves of the Shelves of the Mist into ruin and plundered the dwarf halls. Their numbers were great and they led the armies in countless battles, ever in the service of their dark master. They filled the holds of Aufstrag with their evil and their numbers grew beyond scope. But during the Winter Dark Wars they suffered greatly. In a myriad number of battles their numbers were wasted away. When at last Unklar was driven from the plane, they fell into disarray and fled to distant parts.

Since those days, they have recovered some. The live now in scattered holds all about the world of Aihrde, but most frequently in the east near the Grunliche Mountains, Aufstrag and the Grausumlands. In the west they are found in the Darkenfold and the wilds north of Kayomar and south of the Gottland where they contend with the fierce hobgoblins of those lands.

They ever search the dark parts of the heavens, looking for their master to whom they continue to make dark sacrifice.

APPENDIX B NEW SPELLS

REDEMPTION (Cleric 4, Druid 4)

CT 12 hours	SV None	R See description
SR yes (h)	D permanent	Comp V, S, M, DF

The caster can free anyone bound within a magic item, jar, mirror, gem, etc. The caster can liberate anyone, no matter how long the individual has been trapped. The individual can be a monster, demi-human, or human. The item within which the individual is bound must be present for the spell to work. Casting the spell is a 12-hour ritual with intonation. If the caster is disturbed, the spell is lost, requiring rest and memorization. After the ritual silver is sprinkled upon the item and it is crushed on the anvil, the person returns whole and alive again.

The individual returns where the caster destroys the item. They return whole and unharmed. All wounds, diseases, and curses are healed or removed.

APPENDIX C NEW MAGIC ITEMS

BLACK CAP: When ground up as a paste, severed as a tea, or consumed in any manner, these mushrooms temporarily increase the imbiber's strength, constitution, and dexterity scores by 1-3 points. Temporary hit points come with any increase in constitution. It takes an hour for the effects to take place, after which they last an hour as well. It is also known as Unklar's Appetizer because the soldiery of Unklar's armies regularly used the mushrooms before battle.

HORN OF OPENING: The horn of opening has long since been destroyed, severed into many parts. These parts are spread throughout the lands of the Blacktooth Ridge and beyond. Several pieces are found in these adventures. Below is a brief list of the pieces that characters might find. A *detect magic* spell cast on any one of these reveals a powerful enchantment but does not lend itself to any particular discovery. The pieces are obviously parts of a broken instrument; a powerful bard may, using Legend Lore, discover the item's true nature or value (CL 23).

The Mountpiece: This is located in **A1 Assault on Blacktooth Ridge, in the Vargolg, room 13 Workroom**, page 45. It has no particular magical value in itself.

Shard of the Horn: This piece is located in **A3 Wicked Cauldron, Area 60 Quarters**, page 118.

GOLDEN CORD: This piece is located in **A4 Usurpers of the Fell Axe, The Black Pits, Area 2**, page 139. Amongst the other debris is a golden cord. When wrapped around the sundered halves of the *Horn of Opening* it binds them together. Other than this, the cord can sell for as much as 1,000gp to a knowledgeable vendor-though a regular merchant might offer around 25gp for the apparent artistic value.

URSL SWORD: When used against ungern, the sword receives a +3 to hit and +6 to damage; it provides a +2 to hit and +2 to damage against any other opponents. It also casts a 20-foot diameter sphere of blue light when carried unsheathed.

KASDA R.

BLIGHTED SCREED

ANS R.

JAMBURG

WICKED CAUL

NORTHERN MARCH

LEITA R.

EAST BRANCH R.

VOER

ANS R.

LLERWALD
FOREST



GUNZ